Cragne Manor Structure

Hi! We've finalized the broad strokes of Cragne Manor's progression structure, and we're looking to figure out how your puzzle (if you're planning to do a puzzle) fits in.

Anchorhead is a fairly linear game, telling a linear story. The exquisite corpse-style Cragne Manor paradigm is *not* well-suited to that sort of storytelling. Instead, we want to create kind of a Metroidvania experience, with nonlinear exploration and multiple parallel goals, hopefully creating an emergent story from the juxtaposition of your rooms.

We also want to let everybody on the team do the puzzles they want to do, so we need room for a lot of puzzle types. *But, also*, we need our structure to be resistant to problems (like, say, a team member dropping out two weeks from now for whatever reason). The structure we've found to meet these needs works like this:

There are five progression tracks. Completion of each track rewards a player with an element necessary for the endgame. (I'm being coy! I don't want to spoil anything!) Each track consists of variations on a single puzzle type.

"Mercury Track" - Library Books

The player needs to find a bunch of library books and return them to the public library. This track consists of Class C-1 puzzles, meaning that once a player finds a relevant room, they can acquire its library book without help from any other rooms.

If you write a puzzle for this track, you'll also get to write the text of the book, which can be whatever you want.

(If you don't write a puzzle for this track but you still want to put a book in your room then just do that. We might adjudge that your book isn't a progression-sensitive library book, though.)

"Venus Track" - Biographies

The player needs to collect biographical information about various members of the Cragne family. This track consists of Class C-1 puzzles as well, except that the "prizes" are pieces of text rather than objects. I mean, the texts are probably printed on objects, so it's not all that different.

If you write a puzzle for this track, you'll get to come up with a Cragne and write their life story—although certain details to be used in the "metapuzzle" will be assigned to you.

(As with books: Go ahead and invent your own Cragnes if you want, even if your room isn't on this track. It'll be fun!)

"Mars Track" - Trading Sequence

The player uses items in puzzles that yield other items. The first item is "free," but after that there's a series of Class C-2 puzzles leading up to the final item.

If you write a puzzle for this track, you'll be the one deciding what your puzzle's input item is. Of course, this means that the next person in the track gets to decide what your output item is. You may want to keep in mind, as you design your puzzle, that you don't know what's going to come out of it. Or we can put you in contact with the next person in line and you can coordinate things so they make a lick of sense.

"Jupiter Track" - Information Trading

The player uses information in puzzles that yield other information: You find the combination to a safe, which contains the instructions for escaping a maze, which leads to learning the nun's favorite brand of gin, which can be leveraged to get the convent's wifi password—that kind of thing. This boils down to a series of Class C-2 puzzles, so the same rules apply from the trading sequence track: You'll decide what your input is, but you don't know what your output is, unless you talk to the next person in line.

"Moon Track" - Traversal

A big part of progression is exploring the game map. In order to reach the Least Convenient Room where the quest item lies, the player will have to run all over the rest of Backwater and Cragne Manor. Acquiring keys and unlocking doors is one part of that, but there are also a bunch of Class B-1 "blocked path" puzzles.

Because the Mercury and Venus tracks require a bunch of Class C-1 puzzles, we're (probably) not going to put any in this track, meaning **we're not going to use door keys as puzzle rewards**. Instead we'll allow your teammates who don't want to write puzzles to include those keys in Class E rooms, where they can hide those keys in easily-opened drawers or just leave them lying around on the floor.

Hey, This is Odd

Did you notice that none of these tracks are designed for Class B-2 (blocked path, item-dependent) puzzles? It turns out that basically nobody expressed an interest in writing a

Class B-2 puzzle. If you do want to do one, we can fit it into one of the trading sequence tracks by combining it with someone else's (Class E) room. Your puzzle

- requires an input item (or input information)
- unlocks a path to another room

and then the other room

- gets unlocked by your puzzle
- contains the next item in the sequence, lying around on the floor

and the structure is the same! How nifty!!!

Assigning Tracks

On one hand, I, Ryan, really want there to be roughly the same number of puzzles in each of these tracks. On the other hand, the Cragne Manor Credo/Motto says you can do whatever the heck you want, so I should endeavor to assign you to the track you want to be on.

On a third hand, if one of the tracks is drastically longer or shorter than the others, it may have an adverse effect on the player's experience. Can you imagine playing this game and having to keep track of biographical information for twenty different Cragnes? (Of course, there are only so many concessions a project like this can make to the player's convenience, which is why this third hand is so tiny and withered and hideous.)

This is just by way of saying that there's a slim chance we'd find cause to assign someone to a puzzle track that wasn't that person's first choice. So if you're not married to an idea, please tell us your second choice. (But if you've discussed a puzzle with us in some detail already, you don't have to fill out the following form, because we already know what you're doing.)

ONE OTHER THING: I'm a little bit worried that the Mars and Jupiter tracks won't get as many volunteers, because the Mercury and Venus tracks are more self-evidently fun. If you feel like you could add a really cool step to a trading sequence, I encourage you to volunteer for one of those.

So, finally: Here is the form to request a puzzle track. Please try to fill it out by Friday!