Fortress (Grin)

Fortress is the code name of a cancelled action role @-@ playing video game that was in development by Grin . Director Ulf Andersson devised the concept for Fortress and preproduction began in the second half of 2008 . During development , Square Enix approached the developer and proposed making the game a spin @-@ off of Final Fantasy XII . Grin reconceived the game in the recurring Final Fantasy world of Ivalice , and included elements of Final Fantasy XII such as stylistic motifs and character designs ; additional elements included chocobos and other recurring creatures from the Final Fantasy series . It was to be released on the Microsoft Windows , PlayStation 3 , and Xbox 360 platforms .

During development , Square Enix did not pay Grin over several months , and disapproved of the game 's Nordic art style . Grin worked to bring the game 's art style closer to the Final Fantasy series , but after six months of development was told that no funding would ever come from Square Enix , and the developer filed for bankruptcy several days later . Word of the project leaked out through art portfolios of those who worked on the project and even a tech demo surfaced . In 2011 , Fortress was thought to have been in development by an undisclosed studio , but this was also suspended and the game will not be released in any form .

Premise

According to scenario writer Ulf Andersson , the story was set several years after the events of Final Fantasy XII : Revenant Wings . The plot revolved a magical fortress designed to defend Ivalice from a being known as the Sea King Loemund , who rose every 10 @,@ 000 years to attempt to conquer the land . During his last attempt , he was slain and his crown was lost in the fortress . Though the myth is mostly disregarded , the story is believed by Basch fon Ronsenburg , now serving the current Archadian Emperor Larsa Solidor under the name of " Judge Gabranth " . Marching to the fortress ' location , he and his forces would have needed to fend off the forces of Loemund , who seeks vengeance against his killer 's descendant Queen Ashelia B 'nargin Dalmasca . A central character plot was to be a romantic connection between Bache and Ashe that would fade as Larsa and Ashe grew closer and Bache became entrenched in his fight against Loemund . Other characters involved included the sky pirate Balthier , and earlier main protagonists Vaan and Penelo . A new character , a demigod named Laegd , would join Bache after being defeated in single combat . The main aim of the story was to bring the entire cast of Final Fantasy XII back together for a final fight to save Ivalice .

Development

Fortress started out as an original fantasy game concept designed by Ulf Andersson , Grin 's co @-@ founder . Preproduction began in the second half of 2008 . Lead character artist Björn Albihn described Fortress as " a game with an epic scale both in story and production values . " The project was developed on a game engine compatible with Microsoft Windows , PlayStation 3 , and Xbox 360 . The development team , led by Andersson as a creative director , produced concept art and 3D assets under art director Anders De Geer and Albihn . The game design was led by technical artist Erik Lindqvist . The art style of the game was supposed to be realistic and similar to The Elder Scrolls V : Skyrim according to Guillaumue Mraz , a level designer at Grin .

The game was pitched to various publishers , and the Japanese gaming company Square Enix took an interest in the project . Square Enix president Yoichi Wada visited Grin several times , and liked the action role @-@ playing game concept and its Nordic visual style . After getting the chance to see a boss fight from Bionic Commando , which at the time was being developed by Grin for the Japanese company Capcom , Wada said he had seen enough , and decided that Square Enix would publish Fortress as a Final Fantasy spin @-@ off .

Once it became a Final Fantasy title , the Grin founders stated , " We wanted to come in and revolutionize Final Fantasy , which is exactly what they need . " Fortress was to be set in the

fictional world of Ivalice , specifically the version seen in Final Fantasy XII , only set some time in the future . In addition to many original characters and locations , concept art for the game included the character Ashe and a Judge from Final Fantasy XII , as well as chocobos and other recurring creatures of the Final Fantasy series . A portfolio video created by lead technical artist Anders Bodbacka revealed that Larsa Solidor and Basch fon Ronsenburg from Final Fantasy XII were also to be featured . The setting was to be different from a normal Final Fantasy game , with familiar characters exploring a " Nordic " version of Final Fantasy , and " primarily set in a massive fortress " according to Linda Dahlberg , a Grin associate producer . Other landscapes such as plains , forests , deserts and snowfields were also designed .

Invaders from the sea were to be the main enemies of the game . They were visually based on the Vikings and wielded armor and weapons decorated with sea and sea monster imagery . Planned boss battles included fighting a gargantuan version of the Final Fantasy monster Malboro , where the player would use the seaweed on its back to climb on top of it and drop bombs on the creature 's weak spots . According to a design document , the game was divided into at least seven chapters , starting at the gate of the Fortress and leading up to the top of the stronghold . Grin 's music director Erik Thunberg was responsible for the game 's score , including a track that features a rearrangement of the " Prelude " theme from the Final Fantasy series .

= = Cancellation = =

Square Enix was supposed to pay Grin US $ 16 @.@ 5 million for the production of Fortress in successive waves in accordance with the project 's milestones . No payments were made during the first two months of development , but Grin 's co @-@ founder Bo Andersson was initially not worried as he considered delayed payments common and had faith in the project . However , several more months went by without payments , costing the studio 12 million krona a month . Grin closed all of their offices except for the main one in Stockholm , but still no money came . In 2009 , Grin released Terminator Salvation , Wanted : Weapons of Fate , and Bionic Commando to negative reviews and poor sales , which caused further financial woes and seemed to make Square Enix nervous . The publisher wanted updates and asked that all of the game 's assets , including the code , the music files , and even the game 's developer language be faxed to them . This move was described as impossible and " almost a criminal behavior " by Andersson .

Square Enix had changed its mind , and no longer liked the Nordic style of this spin @-@ off game , so a last @-@ minute style change was attempted . The game had been such a well @-@ guarded secret , and had been through so many changes , that most employees did not know they had been working on a Final Fantasy game until very late in development . Grin attempted to change the art style to fit more with traditional Final Fantasy games , but still did not receive any positive feedback . In response , Grin sent Square Enix an image of one of the latter 's own games , Final Fantasy XII , and were told that it does not look like a game in Final Fantasy 's style . Following that exchange , Grin came to the conclusion that there was no longer any way to satisfy the publisher .

In early August 2009 , a call was received from Square Enix telling them that no payments were coming . Grin 's founders considered suing , but had run out of money , leading them to stop production after six months of work . Furthermore , Grin ceased production on all of their other projects and declared bankruptcy due to Sweden 's severe laws against operating businesses under a debt load . Magnus Ihrefors , one of the 3D artists who worked on the project , stated that he had only found out about the game 's cancellation in August , but it was like a " punch in the belly ; this was our last chance to get on track again . " The developer closed its offices on August 12 , 2009 , stating that delayed payments from " too many publishers " caused " an unbearable cashflow situation , " and referred to Fortress in a farewell note as an " unreleased masterpiece that [they] weren 't allowed to finish . " According to the bankruptcy papers , Square Enix felt that the development goals for Fortress " had not been met in a satisfactory way , " whereas Andersson claimed the contrary , arguing that the milestones initially set up with a producer from Square Enix had been met . Mraz stated that Grin seemed to have ignored Square Enix 's requests for changes , and the Final Fantasy franchise was too important to overlook this behavior .

= = Aftermath = =

After Grin 's closure , the former existence of Fortress spread as mentions and concept art of the project appeared on former employees ' resumes and portfolios . In January 2010 , footage from an alleged tech demo of Fortress was leaked onto the Internet . The video description stated the game 's events are " set some time after Final Fantasy XII : Revenant Wings , " and mentioned Square Enix 's subsidiary Eidos Montreal as a possible new home for the project . Replying to a fan question in May 2010 , David Hoffman , director of business development at the North American branch of Square Enix , mentioned Fortress without confirming its existence , stating , " I have and had no involvement in the rumored project Fortress . " The Fortress project , still supported by Square Enix , was for a time being developed by a different , undisclosed studio , but this ended as well . At an interview at the 2011 Electronic Entertainment Expo , Motomu Toriyama of Square Enix stated that Fortress was suspended , saying that the game " won 't be released . " In 2012 , music director Erik Thunberg posted a music track intended for the game .