

MARA AND THE HANGED GARDEN

(GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT)

A detailed design document.

V 0.1

CONCEPT DOCUMENT

“Mara and The Hanged Garden”, published by the BS EMC 1-A students, S.Y. 2022-2023, is a 2D, side-scrolling, narrative-driven platformer game that is intended to be playable for individuals of all ages. It utilized the GoDot Game Engine v4.0 for programming, Aseprite v 1.2.40 and Clip Studio Paint Ex for asset creation and animation, Mixcraft 9 for sound design, and Autodesk Sketchbook and IbisPaintX Mobile for concept art creation.

The players control Mara, a 12-year old girl on her journey through her home, The Hanged Garden, an ancient forest inhabited by gods, monsters and spirits in an attempt to reunite with her mother, Emunah. Along the way, she comes into contact with the inhabitants of the forest, both allying herself with, and opposing them, foils a logging operation, and uncovers the dark truth about The Hanged Garden.

The game contains simple and straightforward gameplay and mechanics, with context clues scattered throughout the levels to help players move forward.

SIGN-OFF

Game Concept Sign-off

A. Technicals

- **Programmers**

- Rico John Casquete, Erle Jan Hibionada, Aaron Bon Joseph Purigay, Vince Altarez.

- **Sound Design**

- Julius Ralph Alama, Mark David Imperial, Kyle Francis Concepcion.

B. Creatives

- **Concept Art**

- Vincent Blaise Geonanga, John Patrick Capulot, Thomas Dominic Espinosa, John Kevin Langurayan, Ellarie Suero, Christel Shaira Ledesma, Yevgeny Solis.

- **Writing**

- Robert Maverick Garcia, Vincent Blaise Geonanga, Art Joshua Esmael.

- **Asset Creators**

- Sherica Anne Chantal Duñgo, John Patrick Capulot, John Kevin Langurayan, Ellarie Suero, Kent Lynner Acuesta, Thomas Dominic Espinosa, Julius Ralph Alama.

- **Animation**

- Julius Ralph Alama, Sherica Anne Chantal Duñgo, CJ Anthony Asis, Vincent Blaise Geonanga.

- **Game Level/Layout Design**

- Vincent Blaise Geonanga, Aaron Bon Joseph Purigay, Erle Jan Hibionada, Vince Altarez.

INTRODUCTION

“Mara and The Hanged Garden” is primarily inspired by “Ori and the Blind Forest” in both its aesthetics and gameplay mechanics. It is a simple, narrative-driven, 2D, side-scrolling platformer with no combat and an emphasis on solving puzzles in order to progress through the levels.

It takes place in The Hanged Garden, an ancient forest that is inhabited by gods, monsters and spirits of all kinds, which at one point, served as a refuge for the early generations of humanity, who lived in harmony with it and its inhabitants. However, as time passed the humans started to leave forest, establishing settlements across the world until only a few remained within their ancestral home. The last of these humans are Mara, the player-controlled character, and her mother, Emunah, who disappears when she investigates a mysterious noise. This disappearance drives Mara, and thus the player to progress through the game and uncover its story.

Genre: 2D, Side-scroller, platformer, puzzle game

Gameplay: Movement-based and puzzle solving

Player Type: Single Player

Theme: Eerie, supernatural fantasy

GAME ANALYSIS

“Mara and The Hanged Garden” began its life as “Sidapa and The Tree of Fate”, originally following the Capiznon god of death as he attempts to save The Tree of Fate from utter destruction at the hand of human loggers. However, after much discussion, the original plot of a god of death, working to save a sacred tree was reworked into “Mara and The Hanged Garden”. This placed a human girl at the heart of the narrative, providing players with a better connection to the character and what she goes through in the game and its story.

At its core, “Mara and The Hanged Garden” is about faith, love, and learning to let go, all three of which are fundamental to its narrative, and reinforces the gameplay mechanics and puzzles that can be found throughout the game. It draws heavy symbolism from multiple cultures around the world, past and present, as evident in the names Mara and Emunah, both of which are Hebrew words that mean *grief*, and *faith*, respectively. And though its connection to Filipino culture has been diminished with its change from “Sidapa and The Tree of Fate” to “Mara and The Hanged Garden” elements of it persist in the characters, such as the enigmatic Hutik, whose name is the Hiligaynon word for *whisper*.

GAME DESCRIPTION

Game Elements:

Game Content: Exploration, Platformer, Puzzles, Story Immersion.

Theme: Fantasy, Gloomy Forest, Life and Death, Nature.

Style: Supernatural, Nature.

Player: This game is for individuals of all ages, especially those who enjoy platformer, and narrative-driven RPG games, mythology and folklore, and fantastical, yet eerie environments.

Game Technical

Technical Form: 2D graphics

View: Side

Platform: Android

Language: GDScript

Device: Mobile

Game Play

Mara and the Hanged Garden is available to download on playstore for android devices. (SOON)

- Opening the application
- Game Options
- Game Elements
- Game Controls
- Levels
- Lore Screen
- Exploration
- Interactable Objects.
- Story Immersion
- End

Key Features

Explore the Hanged Garden and uncover secrets.

Solve puzzles to perform rituals.

Play through and watch as the story unfolds.

Game Architecture

- Title Screen
- Option Screens
- Game Levels / Builds.
- End Screens

Game Architecture Overview

The game's title screen portrays a gloomy yet cartoony atmosphere that mirrors the game itself. Aside from the title of the game itself, button options that lead to other sections of the game are present.

Under the aforementioned options are the settings, lore, credits and the option to exit the game. These enable the player to alter specific aspects of the game such as sfx and music volumes as well as provide them with a dedicated sector for the game's story in case they want to immerse themselves more in the games' universe. Alongside these are the credits, which give the developers acknowledgement, as well as the quit option which terminates the game process.

Mara and the Hanged Garden offers a casual 2d adventure game experience that lets the players test their platformer abilities and thinking with the game's puzzles. An interesting story unfolds as the game progresses, following the story of Mara who subjects herself in a perilous adventure through the Hanged Garden, meeting new companions and learning secrets about the supernatural world.

To end this passage, the end screen evokes a sense of comfort amidst chaos in the forest. After Mara realizes the truth and meets her goals, she perceives the Hanged Garden and the world itself in a

different light, ready to take on the responsibilities she has to shoulder in the future.

REFERENCES

