

Mar. 8, 2018
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Game Treatment and Spec: “Dream State”

1) “Dream State” is the story of a large behind-the-scenes organization of fairy-like creatures who work endlessly to protect people’s dreams from being infected by nightmares. The main character is a newborn fairy beginning their life’s journey of keeping the darkness outside of peoples’ heads as a part of the Fae Guard. They begin by shadowing another fairy and working on training type missions, while they learn the skills in order to defend against nightmares. These nightly adventures involve delving into the dreams of someone, typically a child, and exploring the dream, maintaining the positive aspects while eliminating or converting the negative-appearing aspects. After several missions and upon completing a fully unaccompanied trial, the fairy is then gifted their own weapon, forged of any type of available material with any type of emotional core, meaning its power is based on human emotions and will affect the nightmares in different ways. The journey commences battling against the seemingly never-ending nightmares, and the story continues with the main character being required to collect Scare-cores after successfully protecting a dream. Scare-cores can be cleansed and forged into new weapons, converted into weapon boosts and upgrades, or planted in the Crescent Gardens headquarters to increase the strength and expand the reaches of positive dreams across the world. Upon venturing into a greater variety of dreams and encountering different types of nightmares, the main character is confronted by an extremely powerful nightmare, that they are unable to defeat, and must instead hide from it, as it steals all Scare-cores currently being held by the character. Any dream that is being invaded by Odecru, the creator of nightmares and entity of everything evil, cannot be saved and the fairies must escape so they do not become nightmares themselves. The Fae Guard has been developing a weapon made out of purely dark and untreated nightmare essence in order to defeat Odecru, but they need a pure-hearted fairy soul who has collected one of every type of emotion crystal, and a piece of every weapon forge-able material to wield it, so they do not become a nightmare in the process and have every ounce of power available to them. The main character’s quest is to now remain hidden from Odecru while they continue to save all the dreams they can while collecting the remaining pieces of the shadow weapon. After the character has completed the main task and the battle with Odecru has been fought, the player is able to continue defending dreams, as fragments of evil are never truly gone. The player earns an honorary position in the Guard’s inner circle of commanders, giving them free reign to return to any world already visited if they please.

2) The most defining genre of “Dream State” is a platformer, with prominent action/adventure aspects, as it features an overhead-camera following the main character, and the ability to survey the area around them to a certain distance and/or visibility. There are platforms to be climbed, jumped or dropped onto, puzzles to be solved, and enemies to be fought. There is an open-world feeling to the game, as each level is each individual dream which features their own unique layouts, collectibles, and overall narrative, which determines the shapes of enemies and the types of puzzles and obstacles which will need to be circumvented. It is clearly not a traditional platformer in the two-dimensional aspect and limiting view of each area but brings a new perspective on beloved simplistic narrative-driven games, that also features character and personal gameplay customization. It is still true to platformers in how it is reliant on leveling and

ability upgrades, where the character must still beat certain areas before advancing, as some levels require a higher level of skill and character abilities in general, but a lot of activities may still be completed before advancing, as there is only a minimum requirement before continuing the story, and any additional exploration is left to the discretion of the player.

3) The game includes brief cut-scenes that act as transitional points in the story and help progress the story forwards through world-building narrator points and includes dialogue in order to explain things to the main character and player. The illusion of choice is a key feature of “Dream State” as there is only one ending, but through minimal dialogue differences in the available options during each cut-scene or character interaction, the player is able to formulate a particular attitude for their character to progress through the game with. The introductory phases of the main character shadowing another fairy through the dream worlds act as the tutorial, in order to explain the moving, jumping and puzzle-solving button styles and combinations to the player, introducing each new thing one at a time so not to overwhelm the player.

Slowly introducing combat into the tutorial, the player is shown that the enemies are based on visual awareness in the sense that the character may remain outside of combat as long as they remain outside the line of site of an enemy, which is displayed by a red highlighted area in front of the enemy. Once combat is engaged, the character automatically draws their weapon and with unique controller or keyboard buttons it can unleash different moves, and with progression into the game comes stronger fighting abilities and advantages. When an enemy is defeated, they have a chance of dropping an item for the character, and each enemy gives the main character a certain number of Scare-cores, which are the game’s type of currency and a sort of resource that can be used for many things. Puzzles are another key component of the game because they act as locks to doors or gates, reveals new pathways or platforms, and even gives hints and game tips in order to enhance the player’s experience. The puzzles must be approached by the character and initiated by the press of a button where a new screen will pop up and act as a sort of mini game, where the player must accomplish a series of tasks on a two-dimensional plane, in contrast to the three-dimensional world.

Character interactions are important, because there will be the occasional lost Fae Guard in a dream which may have items to sell the player, an item they wish for the player to find, or simply returning to the Crescent Garden. The Crescent Garden is the main hub between dream worlds, featuring shops, storage and quest giving characters for the main character to interact with. Approaching a vendor in the Marketplace brings up a list of various options for the player to choose from, like buying and selling goods, reinforcing weapons, or simply having conversations to expand the immersive experience. Different items for the player to use are things such as health and mana regenerating items, charms to increase Scare-core or random item drops, and other items to temporarily boost certain abilities. All these items may be accessed through the player’s main menu, no matter what world they are in. Character customization is introduced early on in the game, as the player is given different hair, face, and body style options, and is kept throughout the game through various clothing combinations, but the original body choices are contained. The ability to choose a unique character name is available as well, to increase player involvement. Each piece of clothing and accessory has its own unique effects on gameplay, but all have an equal significance depending on the character’s level.

From the Crescent Garden the player may access the dream vault, where they will go to decide which level to play next, view previously completed missions, the active quest log, and the darkness meter, which tells the player how many nightmares they must eliminate before

being able to progress into the next story point. The Crescent Laboratory shows the production status of the darkness weapon that is being made to defeat Odecruux. The player can choose when to set aside certain emotion crystals and other crafting materials to advance the creation of the darkness weapon, while keeping in mind that it must be completed before the final Odecruux battle of the game.

In order to obtain emotion crystals, the player must complete a full dream cycle (completing a level), and after defeating the mini boss at the end of the level, a chest containing various goods is revealed before the portal to return to the Garden, that has a chance to contain a crystal. The crystals are distributed across a section of dreams randomly, so the player will randomly choose a level to start with, and sometimes they may only have to play two out of five levels to obtain the minimum required crystals to advance, or they may have to play all five.

Leveling in the game is based on experience gained from accomplishing certain world activities such as fighting and completion of puzzles. Each level grants the character an ability point, in which they are able to unlock active or passive skills, such as new moves, or enhancements to already existing skills. There are a variety of weapons in this game so that they can each fit a certain players' visual or fighting style. They each do a different combination of damage types, range, and speed, but there are benefits to the players that generally stick to one weapon type, as older models will become infusable in order to increase the power of a newer weapon. The final weapon in the game however, is broken upon the defeat of Odecruux, due to its sheer size and power. If it were to be left in the game, it would render the entire point of collecting pointless, as there would be no need to infuse other weapons as the strongest available would already be in the players' possession. The game is able to be continued after completion of the story, because some earlier levels may have contained previously unreachable items that the character may now gain access to, holding interesting items for increased customization and collection of all the game's available items.

4) "Dream State" is a very bright and colorful game, featuring vibrant, detailed landscapes, and dark, desaturated grim looking enemies. The characters and level designs would be done in a cel-shaded style to add a uniqueness to the three-dimensional design, with crisp lines and colours in the general Garden hub, and wispy escaping colours from the lines in the dream levels. Each level will have a different colour and style theme, for example an outdoors-based level would include a ton of trees and green shades, whereas a desert dream would have barren landscapes and prominent orange tones. When a level was invaded by Odecruux, the overall color saturation was lost to hint towards the darkness taking over, making the player want to return the dream to its original, beautiful colors and lively state. The heads-up display includes a set of health icons to display how much damage has been taken, as well as a magic bar, on the top-center area of the screen, to notify the player of how many special abilities they can use before needing to take a rest or use restoration items. There is no mini map to allow the player to have the most enjoyment in exploration, and no weapon information unless in the start menu where the player can view their inventory and character status, (weapons, outfits, abilities, etc). Interactive button prompts will appear on screen when the player approaches interactive items and characters in order to direct the player in the right direction.