For a long time after being defeated by his nemesis, a Samurai is out to take his final revenge.

But, ...

Synopsis

The story is about a samurai, Chen, who is out to defeat his archnemesis but in the process finds that the universe has bigger plans for him.

Based in Japan in the year 1904, or so it seems 24 year old Chen is out to defeat his archnemesis, Moto, to win his title as the world champion. As soon as Chen gets to know that Moto is visiting a crypt in a forest, he goes out there to find him and challenge him for a final battle.

On his way to the crypt, Chen meets a spirit of a wise old man who calls itself Jian. Chen and Jian become good friends and Jian guides him to find Moto.

Chen finally encounters Moto and is a few seconds away from defeating him. But is that it?

Moto in his last few breaths says that he was out there to stop an alien invasion. Chen is taken aback.

The old man's spirit takes its true form of the alien that it was, and the game begins now.

Tone

This is a game about deception, wonder and thrill.

Deception. We want the player to feel surprised as the narrative of the game unfolds and pause the game everytime with a blown out mind.

Wonder. By using a crypt, a spirit and a spaceship, we want the player to realize how large the world is with all its wonders. This feeling of smallness will be captured by our setting.

Thrill. The surprises in this game are meant to create a feeling of thrill while playing it. For example, when the spirit turns into the evil alien. Also, the satisfaction of achievements like solving puzzles, winning combats leads to thrill.
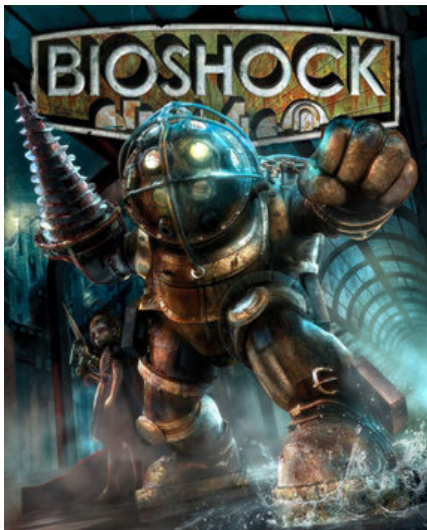
Setting

The game takes place in ancient Japan, in a mysterious crypt within the forest (or so it seems...).

Deception

We want deception to be a core part of the game. What is revealed to the player at the beginning hides the true nature of the game. This makes the game interesting and creates a more memorable narrative experience. It will also create moments of satisfaction when players discover these unexpected secrets.

Deception will be incorporated in both the level of the plot and mechanics. We want to emulate how successful games like Bioshock uses deception in the plot to create a meaningful narrative, and how games like Undertale uses deception in mechanics to challenge players' preconceived notions of video games.

Deceptive Story

The game starts off with the setting of a samurai exploring an ancient crypt in order to seek revenge from his archnemesis. However, as the player progresses through the game, they discover that the crypt is not what it seems. At some point in the early game, the player reaches what looks like the end of the dungeon. There, the player confronts and defeats his archnemesis. The player then discovers that the crypt is actually the prison of an ancient alien evil being who wants to conquer Earth, and the archnemesis was in the crypt to stop the alien's revival. What the player thought was the end of the game is actually just the beginning, as the true map is now revealed to be much larger. The initial old derelict ruins that the player travels through gradually turns into a sci-fi environment.

At the beginning of the game, the player encounters the spirit of a friendly old man. The old man introduces himself to be the spirit buried within this crypt and serves as a helpful guide for the player through the crypt. Later, it is revealed that the old man is actually the alien, and his true objective is to lure the player into the crypt to free him from the prison. The final boss battle will be against the alien.

The engaging narrative filled with twists and turns should provide plenty of fun for the player.

Deceptive Mechanics

On the mechanics side, we will feature various deceptive puzzles with surprising solutions that take advantage of the narrative transition from ancient fantasy to sci-fi.

- A puzzle involves moving rooms on the minimap to unlock hidden paths (narratively explained by sci-fi spacetime warping mechanisms).
- A puzzle where the player has to go down some blocked decrepit stairs that turn out to be high-tech elevators.

The old man spirit guides the player in the first half of the game. However, the players will be able to perform actions outside of what the old man says to do or what is given in the tutorial (narratively, the tutorial is unreliable because it given by old man spirit who is actually bad guy), leading to alternate story paths. For example,

- If the players pick up on clues that the crypt is a fake facade before the turning point, they can prematurely kill the old man spirit and reach an alternate ending.
- The players can choose to not fight the monsters encountered within the crypt. This will make the final boss fight easier, because the true purpose of the monsters are revealed to be security for the alien prison.
- The player can choose to not defeat their archnemesis at the turning point, instead making an alliance with them and progress as a team for the rest of the game.

Gameplay

The game can be described as a 2D explorative game with a mixture of puzzle, platforming, and combat elements. The most similar games would be games such as Hollow Knight, Metroid, and Castlevania. The player will have an HP bar and perhaps a limited inventory.

The player will progress through several zones and levels of the crypt, connected and interwoven into one big seamless map. There would not be traditional levels where the player simply progresses to the end goal at the right, instead there will be a series of rooms that can be freely explored and traveled between.

Some rooms will feature combat challenges that will test the players reflexes and skills in dodging enemy attacks and attacking at the right time.

Some rooms will feature platforming challenges where the player must time their jumps and movement to avoid dangerous traps and progress to the desired area of the room.

Finally, some rooms will feature puzzling elements in order to progress. These puzzles will tie into the theme of thinking outside of the box and deception, encouraging the player to take nontraditional actions in this genre of games such as talking to an enemy or changing the camera/perspective of a room.

Key challenges

Our key challenge for design will be how to encourage out of the box thinking with puzzles and deception as a theme without it feeling like we are withholding too much from the player and asking them to do completely illogical things. We will need to hint at and clue in players in a way that allows them to still feel the thrill and satisfaction from coming to an innovative solution without spoon feeding them said solution. We also want to design an overall map that is fun to explore and doesn't ask the player to backtrack too often or lose their place. A map screen and or minimap will likely be included to help address this.

Another key challenge for our design will be versatility in action and freedom of movement, which we will address during the game development and iteration of our game. Players should be able to have freeform 2D movement throughout the game, and the only constraints for movement should be environmental-based not software-related.

A key challenge for design and art will be creating an integrated aesthetic between an ancient Japanese crypt and an alien spaceship. The latter reveal should not come out of nowhere and be supported by visual clues in the environment. The player should feel like something is off from early on and that things are more than they seem.

Who is this for?

While this game is intended to be eerie and deceptive, we do not think that its intended to appeal to horror-seeking players only.

The game does have some violence in it, so we expect an age restriction of 7+. Also, the environment and the music is meant to induce fear and excitement making it inappropriate fr younger ages.

Players who like to find surprises in the narrative as the game is played, and feel a kick upon solving puzzles and winning combats would love to play this game.

Appendix

Eric's Post:

https://mechanicsofmagic.com/2024/05/06/checkpoint-1-individual-deliverables-5/

Fahad's Post:

https://mechanicsofmagic.com/2024/05/06/checkpoint-1-individual-member/

Oluseyi's Post:

https://mechanicsofmagic.com/2024/05/06/p2-checkpoint-1-individual-deliverable-oluseyi-ogundipe/

Rishi's Post:

https://mechanicsofmagic.com/2024/05/07/p2-checkpoint-1-individual-deliverable-2/