Ink GDD

Version 1.0

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1. Introduction

This document is intended to be read by game developers and enable them to understand how we intend to develop Ink.

We aim to develop Ink as a 2D shooter game with a satisfying and impactful shooting feel, a deep card system with diverse builds, and well-organized Roguelite elements that provide replayability.

1.1 Key Points

Platform: PC

Genre: 2D shooter, Roguelite, Deck Build, & Platformer.

Scale: Three Chapters: each chapter needs a maximum of 20 minutes to finish.

The scale of this game is set to meet the standard that normal players approximately take 10 hours to pass the final Boss since their first plays.

Target Audience: Indie gamers, Roguelite gamers, & Deck Build gamers.

Gameplay Reference: *Noita*(card-shooting), *Slay the Spire* (deck build), *The Binding of Issac & Rogue Legacy 2* (roguelite elements).

Art Style: Thick outline, bright palettes, simple cartoon-style game.

Art Reference: *Hollow Knight*, *Brotato & Rogue Legacy 2*.

Audio: Crisp impact sounds with clean and simple layering & impactful and powerful UI sounds.

3. Story and World

3.1 Characters

Elvira - Protagonist

Background: Elvira was an artist from the town who survived the catastrophic fire in Ink Theater. Living in solitary in her studio made it easier for her to adapt in the ruins. She used her imagination to create a whole new world from the ruins. After a while, she heard a voice in her head, telling her that what she created was not perfect, that there were evilness disrupting peace.

Magic: In Elvira's world, she processed cards with magical power. Every card she owned contained different magical power. She was a apprentice in card casting, so she couldn't make sure every cast could hit a target. Perhaps she would be better. She also wanted to collect more magical cards to make her stronger.

Reviving: In Elvira's world, she was immortal. Even though during her journey the foes always caught her by surprise, she would always wake up in the little cabin of hers. That was where her next journey began.

IT - Narrator

Background: IT was the voice in Elvira's head, guiding her forward and telling the story of Elvira's adventure. IT was emotionless, bodyless, and soulless. It was nothing but a voice.

Althea - Starting NPC

Background: Althea was Elvira's imaginary friend. She was not the warrior like Elvira, but a gentle and kindhearted person. She always helped Elvira clean up her

cabin when she was gone. Each time Elvira failed, it was Althea who healed her and prepared her for the next adventure. It was said that Althea was the person who carried Elvira's body back to the cabin each time, it made people question if Althea can fight.

Mirella - Healer

Background: Mirella was the doctor living in the forest's village. She usually helped people in the village with diseases and illness. After Finn took over the village, she tried to escape like many other villagers. Luckily she was able to escape and hid in the woods. After Elvira arrived in the woods, she decided to help her fight Finn and took back the village together. She also agreed to follow Elvira to finish her journey.

Heron - Merchant

Background: Heron was a card casting master. After seeing Elvira using magical card he was touched, thinking that Elvira could be his apprentice. He agreed to teach Elvira with more skills and giving her more cards. He even agreed to give her some magical items to help her fight. However, it could only happen in one condition, gold. He was also a wanderer, it was not surprising to see him anywhere.

3.2 Enemies

Lilith & Finn - Fairy Tale Chapter Final Boss

Background: Lilith was a naughty orphan that caused a lot of troubles in the village. Finn was a insidious wolf that everyone hated. One time, Lilith was caught stealing Finn's food. The cunning wolf appreciated Lilith's talent in evilness and adopted her. After adulthood, Lilith started to do all kinds of evil. She and Finn cooperated and made the village feared them. Lilith's intelligence and Finn's cunning was there greatest weapon to slain anyone they came across. The villagers hope one day their will be someone to save them. What Lilith didn't know was, Finn was the person who killed her only relative, and what Finn didn't know was, the first person he ever killed was Lilith's grandmother.

King Arthur - Medieval Chapter Final Boss

Background: He was the King of Britain, a well respected legend. His Knights of the Round Table was fearsome and respected. When he raised his Excalibur, the world would surrender. However, a Kingdom will eventually falls, so will a legend. He was not a villain, but a victim of power and desire. He failed defending the intruders, he failed his people, and he failed himself. He gave up and sat on the throne waiting for a champion to write his last chapter.

Fear - Victorian Chapter Final Boss

Background: It was the embodiment of Elvira's greatest fear. Elvira could feel the pain of the whip, the darkness of the empty room, and the rage of her adoptive father. She was a deserted child, who thought she was blessed when her adoptive father

found her. In fact, it was the door to purgatory. Her adoptive father became emotionally unstable after he lost his daughter. He wanted her daughter back and though bringing Elvira home would make everything better. Yet he couldn't feel any love for Elvira so she became a tool for him to work off his temper.

3.3 Lore

Reality

In 17th century Britain, there was a town with an innovative theater, Ink Theater. Unlike other theaters, it provided plays with different genres and different cultures, like fairy tales, medieval, and Victorian. Locals loved the theater culture and many people chose it as their professions. The theater was well known in the country and many people would come from afar just for a show. During a show in mid 17th century, the theater was accidentally caught on fire. The fire spread fast and soon consumed the theater, no one survived.

Imagination

Elvira's imaginary world was based on every play she watched. They merged into one unified world. The kids in the fairy tales would play hide and seek with the medieval knights, and the knights would see people dressed in Victorian costumes. Everything was so peaceful until Elvira realized that the fear in her subconscious was rotting her world. The story of Little Red Riding Hood was twisted, the legend of King Arthur turned into a song of tragic. Those peaceful villages and towns were covered with fear and darkness.

Fairy Tale Chapter

There was a chaos in the woods, many villagers fled claiming there were monsters in the forest. The center of the forest was a village where the citizens lived, but now a wolf named Finn occupied it. He was evil. He set fires, raided, and killed. Those who fled was lucky because those who couldn't was chained and forced to work for the wolf. He ordered monsters to scout the woods and to stop whoever came across. Some said Finn was just the muscle, the brain was someone else.

Medieval Chapter

The realm of King Arthur was broke, and his city was occupied by the foes. The Knights of the Round Table felled one by one resisting the evil enemies. The smallfolks pled the intruders for mercy, and if they couldn't live, then spared the children. Now, only the King Arthur's castle was yet to fell, and the king was sitting in there. The folks hoped the King would walk out the castle and saved them, but he never came. His hope was already broken.

Victorian Chapter

The bell rang and the people prayed, hoping that the life just pasted to have a better life in heaven. There was a plague and people were frighted to step out their doors.

Every bell ring meant a life had withered. This was not the greatest fear. The plague twisted the corpses and made them into lifeless and soulless creatures. Those who dared to walk on the street were all infected by those hollow bodies, and became the next victim.

<u>Areas</u>

Elvira started in her little cabin. In front of her house was the forest where she would encounter different dangers. The center of the forest was a village. Leaving the village and the forest, she would arrive at a medieval town. After facing different challenges in the town, she would arrive the castle. Leaving the castle and the town was a Victorian city. After trying to avoid getting infected by the plague, she would arrive at a familiar house. It was the house she used to live in with her adoptive father, and it was the last of her journey. After that, she would wake up from her imagination and finally escaped the ruins of the theater.

4. Art

4.1 Style

Art style:

-Thick outline

-Bright colors

-Cartoon style

-Even and smooth brushstroke
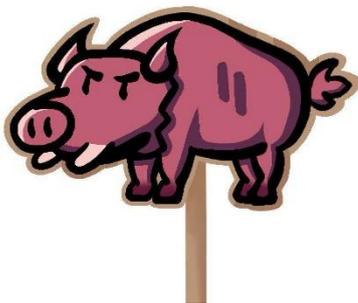
-Nearly no gradient ramp, controlled color palettes

Art Reference Games: *Hollow Knight*, *Brotato* & *Rogue Legacy 2*

Brotato

Rogue Legacy 2
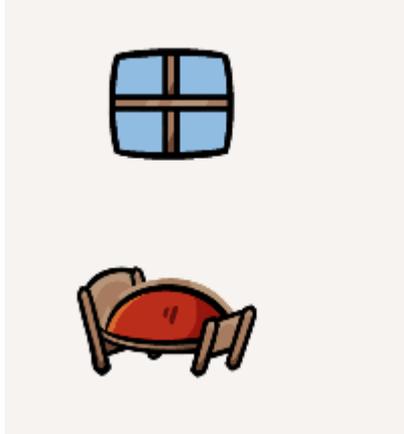

In-game enemy

In-game player

4.2 Animation

Animation Style：

-Priorities in-game performance, enhancing characteristic

-Embrace exaggeration and stretches(Cuphead)

-Animation serves satisfying hit and impact feedback.

In-game boss
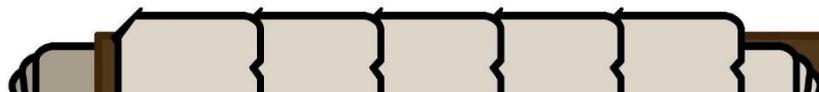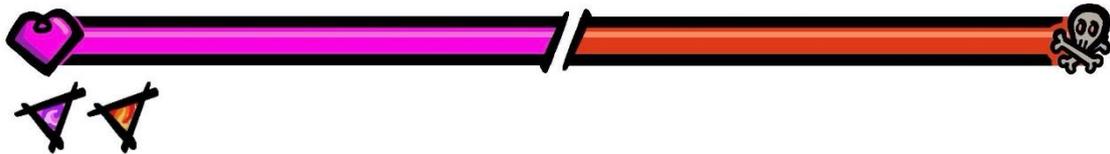

In-game character

4.3 UI

UI Style：

-Convey information clearly with simplicity

-Do not dependent on text

-Fluent UI transition/animation

-Helps player digest cards info

5. Development

5.1 Technical Developing Overview

Target platform: PC

Devices: mouse & keyboard

Development engine: Unity

Language: c#

Source control: Git

6. Audio

Currently, the sound design for Ink is still in the early stages, and specific details have not been finalized. This document only provides a general overview.

6.1 Diegetic Music

Core: satisfying hit and impact feedback and clean layering.

After players build a deck with many synergistic effects, a single attack might trigger the special effects and sound effects of multiple cards. Ink aims to emphasize the impact of each card's action while maintaining a clean audio experience, ensuring that players are not overwhelmed by excessive sound effects.

Diegetic audio reference：

Brotato's cleanness

Heartstone's play effect

6.2 Nondiegetic Music

The core concept: emphasize strong and impactful UI interactions, particularly in the card play and card-slot interactions, to enhance the combat experience and make it feel more engaging and dynamic.

UI-related sound effects should emphasize the interactions between cards—such as cards entering slots, being played to trigger effects, and the sounds of card interactions. These audio cues will enhance the tactile feel and feedback of the card system.

UI audio renference:

Stackland

The background music should align with the different backgrounds in the game, with a wide range of musical styles. However, despite the broad stylistic range, the music should maintain an internal unity in terms of overall tone and theme to ensure consistency throughout the experience.

7. Development Plan

7.1 Development Plan Overview

Three development stages:

Stage 1 (demo): card System (all codes & some visual effects), Player movement and shooting (all codes & all animation), one boss battle (all codes & most animation).

Stage 2 (vertical slice): all enemies in chapter 1 (all codes & most animation)，5 suits of cards (all codes & most visual effects), chapter 1 map (all codes & most visuals)

Stage 3 (Future plan): to be decided.

7.2 Team

Programmer: 1

Designers：2-3 (project management + gameplay design + system design + map and level design)

Art management and coordination: 1

Art: 4-5

Texts and text design: 1

7.3 Time Schedule

2024.11.18: Stage 1 complete

10.29 - 11.9: Character animation

11.9 – 11.18: Chapter 1 boss's keyframes

10.29 – 11.18: Chapter 1 boss's codes.

2025.3.1 – Stage 2 complete (approximate)