

Title: Bloodcry

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Brief 3

The client has asked you to create an open world high fantasy RPG with a dark tone.

- The main character is an outsider and should feel powerful in some ways but not without vulnerability – mechanical and otherwise.
- The main gameplay involves killing monsters and there's lots of ways to kill them, but this doesn't have to be the Macguffin.
- Narrative is very important to the game world, so it's important that it features as much as possible in the mechanical design.
- As much as possible must fundamentally contrast the main characters emotional conflict/Macguffin
- The journey the player is going on is a personal one, the task doesn't have to be of world shattering importance. Try not to make it too urgent, so the player is encouraged to kill monsters and do side quest things too.

How to stand out in a crowded marketplace

Bloodcry will probably be associated with games like Skyrim, Assassin's Creed, Shadow of Mordor and The Witcher. Going head to head with such titles is not what I strive for and in order to stand out it is important for Bloodcry to find it's own niche. For example, I believe that by making the story darker, more tragic and more personal than these titles as well as going for a cell shaded graphic style Bloodcry can find its own place next to the titles mentioned instead of competing with them directly.

Narrative Pillars

Personal Character Focus - Since the game revolves around a personal journey, this pillar is a given. Through cutscenes, relevant dialogues and interactions with other characters our protagonist The Shapeless One / Branowin will be humanized and easy to relate to.

Believable, Authentic and dark - It is important that the game is realistic even if it is in a made up world and setting. In this dark tone fantasy world one of the key pillars is to keep the story, world and characters detailed and realistic. They should feel authentic, relatable and their world must make sense.

Characters

Branowin

A former assassin with many names, but generally known as “The Shapeless One”. Branowin has never failed a single mission and used to spread fear and death throughout the cities and villages of Sothia. Today he is retired, he buried his daggers and his identity, and settled down in a small village where he now runs an inn. He has a 5 year old daughter named Eniara.

External wants: Branowin wants answers and revenge. Who murdered his daughter and why? He will find the murderer and hunt them down no matter what.

Internal wants: With his little girl buried outside his cabin Branowin really has no reason to live. After he gets his revenge, he plans to go on a suicide mission and get himself killed.

Elas and Rowen

These sidekick characters are both members of the underground organization, Soulflame. They are criminals, a bit deranged and they are excellent thieves. They are initially blamed for the murder of Branowin's daughter.

External wants: Elas and Rowen want to clear their names. They are hunted by Branowin and the city guard for the murder of a young girl, Branowin's daughter.

Internal wants: Collect enough gold to leave Soulflame and this part of the world. Buy a farm and get married on the other side of the ocean, in another country.

Saraya

A deranged cultist who recently rose to power and claimed the role as leader of the bloodthirsty cult known as “The Liberators”. She is feared by everyone and considered to be just as deadly as Branowin.

External wants: Kill Branowin to collect the bounty put on his head by the king. With the gold from this mission she will build another temple for the Liberators by the borders to the neighboring country and start recruiting more members.

Internal wants: Kill Branowin to prove to herself and the world that she is better than him, that she is the most skilled assassin of the two.

World Building

ORIGIN - The game takes place in a medieval inspired fantasy world. While magic and different races are indeed a part of this world, they are not a very common phenomena, meaning you do not run into for example orcs, elves etc, around every corner. Every race has its place in the world.

GENRE - Drama/Adventure. This is a story about vengeance and justice so drama is a fitting genre with adventure as a subgenre.

TONE - This story is set in a dark fantasy world and the tone of the story is a tragedy. Branowins world is one where the good guys do not always win, happy endings are rare occasions, fairness and good karma are beliefs that have lost their meaning. This touches on the second narrative pillar about believability.

TROPES - The antagonist, Saraya, together with the final boss, are meaningful tropes that will add to the whole experience.

CONFLICT - In this dark world, conflict is an everyday phenomenon, whether it's on a personal, local or global level. The game is set in a world torn apart by a 50 year old war between humans and a highly intelligent humanoid race known as the Zaegons - a war which the human race is slowly losing. This again touches on our second pillar about creating a believable world.

SCOPE - This story is a highly personal one and will change Branowins life forever, but as a result of his actions the world is affected as well and his actions change the outcome of the war between humans and Zaegons. However, this will not be a game focused on the war. The war is part of the setting and the game is about Branowin, as the first narrative pillar suggests.

HISTORY - The protagonist of this story has affected his world in many ways, almost only for the worse. Branowin has assassinated kings, rulers and all sorts of influential people before he retired and much of the state of the country is his fault.

POSSIBLE ENDINGS

1. Branowin gets his revenge and his answers, and dooms the country of Sothia by killing the king who murdered his daughter.
2. Branowin abandons his mission at the end of the game and his noble actions help the humans WIN the war.
3. Branowin does not get his revenge or his answers and goes berserk and ruins the chances of the humans to win the war.

STAKEHOLDERS - Branowin, Elas, Saraya, Rowen.

Plot / Analysis

Act 1 - Key Events

- We are introduced to the game by Branowin walking into his inn. Only the chef is present. A dialogue between the two men reveals pieces of Branowin's past and lets us in on some narrative points related to our first narrative pillar (character focus). For example:
Branowin's wife left him and their daughter for another man.
"The Shapeless One" has not been seen in over five years.
- The daughter, Eniara, is introduced to us, playing with her doll house in her room. A sound catches her attention and she decides to investigate. It is a creepy scene where Eniara sees a shadow outside her window. She goes to find her father. Branowin searches the area around the house and picks up on a trail. Branowin will choose to ignore them or follow them.
- Following the trail Branowin finds a couple of street thugs. He confronts them politely, asks them what they were doing on his property, but gets no answers. They attack him and a short fight breaks out. Branowin takes care of them without breaking a sweat and leaves the scene unharmed. As he leaves he sees a dark figure in a corner, it disappears.

- **Inciting incident** - As Branowin is walking back home, he sees his home is on fire. Branowin runs into the smoke, up the stairs searching for his daughter. He finds her body and carries her outside as his home collapses and turns into ashes. A dagger is sticking out of her chest. She is dead. The dagger in her chest carries a symbol Branowin recognizes.
- **Cutscene:** A foggy night scene. Branowin's back yard. A blood moon hanging low in the dark sky. Cut to Branowin's hands digging in the ground. Crossfading between Branowin digging a grave for his daughter and his hands digging up something from the ground. Cut to Eniaras peaceful face, the coffin closing on it. As it closes, cut to an old chest opening, revealing deadly weapons and armor clearly belonging to an assassin. Cutscene ends with closeup on the innkeeper Branowin staring at the dagger which killed his daughter, and the image transforms to Branowin, the assassin, dressed in black leather armor still staring at the dagger. The innkeeper Branowin is no more. The Shapeless One is reborn.

Act 2 - Key Events

- Branowin pays a visit to the only man he trusts. The leader of the nomad tribe known as the Zadims has eyes and ears all over the country and he gives Branowin critical information about the murder of his daughter. He informs Branowin that the murder weapon belongs to a member of the clan Soulflame. A man named Elas. He also gives Branowin a map and shows him where Elas hideout is located.
- The road to Elas hideout is paved with all sorts of dangers. Branowin has to travel through unknown territory and must fight different monsters to get through. There are side quests to pick up and an open world to explore.
- Branowin reaches Elas hideout and a sneaking mission begins. The end of this mission starts a boss fight where Branowin faces Elas and Rowen. Winning the boss fight reveals

new information. Apparently Elas and Rowen were set up and framed for this murder and the dagger belonging to Elas is actually a replica. **TURNING POINT**

- We follow Branowin, Elas and Rowen in search of the true killer. They go through an epic journey through the lands of Sothia and their relationship is mirrored in the many dialogues between the trio throughout the game.
- All the trails lead to the Liberators temple and to Saraya. Branowin, Elas and Rowen decide to interrogate Saraya and on this mission to get inside the temple, they all get caught and overpowered by the Liberators. Elas gets severely injured, Rowen loses a fight to Saraya herself and before Branowin gets the chance to face Saraya, he is knocked out cold from behind. Branowin is thrown into a prison cell, all beat up and with no hope of survival. His allies are nowhere to be found, for all he knows they are already dead. Has he failed his daughter? **BLACK MOMENT**
- Saraya comes down to talk with Branowin and to kill him. She admits she murdered his daughter. She got paid to do it. She does not say by whom. Branowin has picked the locks on his wrists and attacks her. Branowin gets the upper hand and Saraya spills it: Their own king had ordered the murder of the daughter of the Shapeless One. As the guards storm the room Branowin cuts Sarayas throat and escapes quickly. During this escape mission he finds Elas and Rowens cells and frees them as well.

Act 3 - Key Events

- The royal banquet is coming up and this is the perfect opportunity for Branowin to get his hands on the king. A couple of quests must be finished to prepare for the banquet. For example, Branowin, Elas and Rowen need to find an invitation letter and disguise themselves. Elas and Rowen are still helping Branowin because they want some answers themselves of why the king framed them for the murder.

- The banquet scene will be an epic one and a pretty long one. Getting to the king is no easy task and it will be a mission including fighting, sneaking and hiding and there will be cutscenes and checkpoints throughout the whole mission which ends with a final boss being the king and his guards. **CLIMAX & FINAL BOSS.**
- When the king is finally defeated, Branowin gets his answers and chooses if he will kill the king, gets his revenge and doom them to lose the war. Without the leadership of the king the war against the Zaegons is most certainly lost. Will the player choose to kill him anyway? **Different endings.**

Considerations of problems during marketing and development

During the marketing phase it is important to convey to the audience that this is not just another “Assassins Creed” clone or another attempt at a “Skyrim” or even a “Shadow of Mordor”.

Therefore when it comes to trailers, E3 events and marketing in general it is crucial that the game shows what makes it different from other games in the same genre. For example, the first trailer should really focus on showing that Bloodcry is a tragic story about a father who lost his daughter. Further, gameplay elements shown in the trailer will convey that this game has similarities to the games just mentioned, but has unique features that makes it stand on its own legs.

REACTION TO FEEDBACK

“Hey Soroush! The team here at Futuretech loved your pitch. We had an idea that maybe someone should want revenge on Branowin and is tracking them too. Thanks!”

I responded to this feedback by implementing the character Saraya. She is hunting down Branowin throughout the game and I actually decided to make her relevant to the story.

Reflection & Further Improvements

Writing this story was a different kind of challenge and I already see room for improvement regarding the story and the character development. For example, Elas and Rowens relationship and Branowins relationship with them must be explored and every side character’s reason for helping Branowin must be believable and more importantly: Clear to the player.

Furthermore, writing the story line like this was also a challenge and I do feel there I need to evolve my skills to convey a story like this, especially in english. I also see room for evolving the story plot twists, creating more dramaturgical “highs and lows”.