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Game Development

Video Game Proposal outline

**Dark Legacy**

(Title in Progress)

Possible Titles: Undying, Undead, Eternal, Aden

Genre: Stealth Action/Adventure

Platform: Xbox, Xbox 360, Playstation 3

**Overview**

Dark Legacy is a stealth action game set in the tradition of *Tenchu: Stealth Assassins*, and *Assassin’s Creed*. As a single player game played from the third-person perspective, the game focuses on two primary aspects of game play: action and stealth.

Stealth consists of how well you can avoid your opponent’s field of vision, and action refers to how well you can take down your opponent using your select abilities, as well as solving problems that come in your way that prevent you from reaching the end of your mission.

While borrowing elements from modern hack-and-slash games, the game itself follows a complex storyline that guides our character through his mission objectives. The appeal to gamers is the freedom to play as an actual vampire, sharing the experience of stalking victims, blending into shadows, leaping from rooftops, all while manipulating a miniature arsenal of athletic abilities that will showcase the various aspects of animation that only a skilled team of designers can create.

Targeting ages 18+, Dark Legacy’s key to entertaining its players is the seemingly endless maneuvers that our main character can pull off, with a control scheme that makes the most difficult of kicks and jumps seem accessible by any range of gamers, from the mediocre to the advanced. The game itself will be rated M for mature audiences, due to the epic death scenes the character inflicts upon his foes during his stealth kills.

Set in a world of fantasy, where humans, elves, vampires and demons all exist in a virtual playground of imagination, this game takes a look at the darker side of creative fantasy, and sets the player in the role of an anti-hero named Aden Eternal.

Aden comes from a family of monsters, a once feared race of creatures in human form that have since all but been dropped to the bottom of the food chain, as vampires have been slowly spreading and thinning out the population of the planet. While other races still exist, it’s clear that the vampires have become the dominant species, and intend to remain in power as long as possible.

Born as the first monster to have mixed blood with a vampire, Aden starts the game as a ghost, being revived by his suspiciously powerful brother Marek, who serves as a narrator for the game’s tutorial, as well as a guide for the player.

Upon his revival, Marek reveals to Aden that he died many years ago, and as of now, he is still an incomplete spirit, a ghost too weak to be revived into a physical body. While Marek has the ability to revive his brother, he can only do so with the power that five ancient weapons can provide him. Acting under his brother’s orders, Aden is given a mission to eliminate five boss characters, which will in turn provide him these weapons. Little does Aden know, that Marek is actually sending him to recover these weapons, in hopes of carrying out his own personal agenda, of ending all life as we know it.

The title “Dark Legacy” refers to our main character’s background, coming from an ancient race of evil monsters, who have all previously tried unsuccessfully to end existence. As Aden arrives into the game as a ghost, an incomplete one at that, he does not share his brother’s evil intentions, but remains oblivious to them until such time that Marek reveals himself to be the main villain by the end of the story.

By the end, Aden has gathered enough spectral energy, to restore himself to a full and complete soul, thus giving him the ability to question and resist Marek’s control, allowing him to eventually discover his brother’s plan, and engage him in a fierce, epic boss battle to save the world.

As a ghost, Aden has the ability to shift in and out of shadows, phase in and out of certain walls, go invisible, and execute stealth kills, which consist of their own, individual animation scenes. Using what is referred to as the “Dash” button, (the “R1” button), Aden can amplify his jumping, his running, his counter moves, and his attack moves, thus adding a new element of combat to our main character.

In terms of level design, each level acts as its own, miniature world. Open ended, with the freedom to go wherever the character desires, Aden will follow the targets in his “Heightened sense” view mode to determine which path leads him to his next objective. From rooftops and buildings, to mountain ranges and dark castles, Aden will run and jump across an array of obstacles, and in return be stalked himself by his opponents.

Using his long, ever-moving cape, Aden can hide by pressing his body against walls, and peek out around corners. With the element of lighting in the game, Aden can sink through walls wherever a shadow is, and seek cover from passing enemies, while his cape swarms over him. Upon completion of each level, awaits a boss character, wielding one of the weapons that Aden will eventually be able to add to his arsenal, and upgrade through the game, as spirit points are accumulated.

**Levels**

From his father’s castle, which serves as a tutorial level, Aden will execute a series of tasks throughout the many corridors, as Marek speaks into his mind, instructing him on the control scheme. From there, Aden will head out to his first open-ended city level, a snowy, medieval village full of innocent civilians, and shady vampire hunters looking to make a living. Assassins and hunters wait around every corner, from the ground levels to the rooftops, searching for our hero as he makes his way across the city.

After disposing of his first boss, the first of five weapons, a sword, is added to Aden’s arsenal, which can be accessed by the L2 button. Gradually, Aden will also receive a set of daggers, a double bladed lance, a scythe, and a bow and arrow.

The weapons add a new element of game play, as they eventually become crucial for solving the various puzzles Aden will encounter along the way.

For one, they give Aden new attacks, and new stealth kills, executed by sneaking up behind an enemy and hitting the attack button before they have a chance to notice you. These weapons also are able to absorb and amplify any magic spell cast upon them, when used in conjunction with the block button at the exact moment of impact. Upon hitting the weapon, the weapon will radiate that color of magic, and will return it to its caster. For example, if an Ice spell is cast upon our hero, he need only block it with his weapon, and cast the ice spell immediately back at his attacker, thus freezing his enemy in kind.

After the village level, Aden will venture fourth into a much larger area, a vampire city. From there, his journey will take him from an epic battlefield that he must sneak his way through, to the depths of the underworld itself, where the Grimm Reaper himself awaits Aden, eager to reclaim the lost soul stolen from him.

Cut-scenes between levels will fill in the background story, of Aden’s race, of his death, and his relationship with his brother. With seven major stages, (the first and last being a tutorial and a final boss level,) each level will include going in and out of the many buildings and structures of the environment, and interacting with NPC’s that provide you with new information on where next to go.

**Game play**

**A Button:** Jump button: Pressing twice equals a double Jump. (Can also be used to bounce off objects like walls, or other characters.) (Hold down and use with dash button to run along walls) (While running along the wall and holding **A**, let go of **A** to jump off the wall, or keep it held down to pull yourself up a ledge or building)

**X Button:** Attack Button: Hold dash button and **X** to execute a stealth kill. When jumping, if you hold lock on and dash, you will zoom in on target and home in on them, performing a kick maneuver used to knock the weapons out of your opponent’s hands.

**Y Button:** - Feed from Prey: Hold Dash button and **Y** to execute a violent feeding. Also works on ghost characters, though the animation is different.

**B Button:** Cape Button: Auto-dodges when pressed and held down. Holding down **B** button and moving will cause you to roll out of the way. Pressing **R1+circle** Just before the bad guy swipes at you will (while locked on) causes you to counter attack, or throw them to the ground, where you can either use **X** to violently finish them, or **Y** to feed on them.

**L1:** Lock On: Can be toggled to hold or auto lock on

**L2:** (white button for Xbox): Weapon Drop down menu

**R1:** Dash Button: Hold it down to amplify all of your moves. You can hover when held down. Tilting the joystick down softly will cause him to hover gently, and as you press the joystick further, it becomes a quick, running dash. When moving, if you press against a shadow or a wall with a shadow, you can phase through it, or simply disappear into the shadows when enemy patrols pass by, then leap out at them. You are also able to leap for long distances, run alongside walls, or grab onto ledges. Aden’s cloak spreads open when jumping long distances, allowing you to glide.

**R2:** (Black button for Xbox): Equips and un-equips weapons

**Up:** Speed: Slows down the animation on screen, making it easier to dodge attacks. This will be an upgrade learned when enough spirit points are acquired.

**Down:** Spectral Realm: Transitions into world of the dead. See ghosts of enemies you killed, or other random souls and monsters that otherwise could not be seen in the physical realm. Helps you walk through certain walls, or go invisible in the physical realm, to easily pass through large areas undetected. However, the longer you are in this realm, the quicker your health with deplete.

**Left:** Heightened sense mode - Makes goals or directions more clearly, highlights objectives and doors that need to be opened. This also lets you see how much life your enemy or boss character has left, based on how brightly they glow in this mode

**Right:** Hypnosis : This lets you take control of an enemy NPC by facing them directly, and pressing Right. It will be used to determine enemy locations, or to open doors and spy on other opponents. This will be a necessary upgrade given after defeating a boss, as the next level will require this move to solve certain puzzles.

**Left Analog:** Movement- This button will control his movement. Tilting it gently forward will cause him to walk, and the further this joystick is pressed, the faster Aden will run.

**Right Analog:** This is the camera. It allows the player to freely control the camera around Aden to decide which the best view is. While the camera will sometimes default to an automatic system, the player will have free control of this when not in closed areas, allowing them to always be alert of the environment around them.

**Select:** Spirit Menu- This takes you to the menu screen where you can purchase weapon and ability upgrades.

**Start:** Pause- This button will pause the game, but also give the player access to the save and load screen, allowing them to restart at the previous checkpoint when the game last auto-saved. It will also allow the player to exit and go back to the main menu and interface of the game itself.

Time will play a crucial element in the game, as the main character’s health is constantly depleting. To resolve this, Aden must use the **Y** button to sneak up on his prey, and attack them, sinking his fangs into their neck, and draining the life essence from them. By draining life essence, Aden is able to make replenish his health, and gain spirit points, in hopes that Marek will be able to use them to restore his soul, thus allowing him to bring Aden back to life. In death, Aden is enslaved to Marek, and kept a cold, emotionless killer, but the stronger his soul becomes, the more memories he regains, and the stronger his will becomes, enabling him to eventually resist his brother’s control. He died, and all that has happened since his demise.

As Aden drains his enemies of their life essence, it all adds up into the character’s spirit point count, giving the player the ability to choose which select abilities or weapons they wish to level up. Be it new stealth kill animations, stronger weapons, bonus health or unlocking cheat codes, this system will encourage the player to keep playing even after the game has ended, in hopes of making Aden as strong as he can be.

On the bottom left of the screen, Aden’s current health bar, and spirit point number will be displayed. This will only appear when the character either hits the pause button, or when Aden engages in combat.

**Audio and Video**

While the game will not strive for a true realistic depiction, the characters will be fleshed out with detailed 3-D models that encompass a wide range of motion, especially for the abilities and moves that Aden will have to pull off. As a 3-dimensional game shot in the third person perspective, Aden will need enough room from the camera to display his stealth kills in any area. During a stealth kill, the camera will need to switch angles several times, and show the action in the most cinematic way possible. Level design is crucial in these times, as it’s important that the camera at close up range does not cause the frames to break in the background.

Lighting will prove to be one of the most important features of the game. As a vampire, Aden will need to avoid direct sunlight. In a world run by vampires, where sunlight is often scarce, heavy rays of light will be implemented in certain levels, with only the shadows of buildings or objects remaining for Aden to hide behind.

The careful balance of shadows and textures will not only help to provide the haunting atmosphere of a gave tailored to vampires, but it will provide an almost linear set of directed for Aden, as he follows the shadows to blend through walls, or sneak out and attack his opponents when they pass him by.

As with any great hack-and-slasher, the trick to making combat seem as brutal as possible is to briefly slow down movement each time a punch or kick is administrated, then follow it with a terrific ambiance of sound at the exact moment of impact. Audio will also help Aden detect the presence of enemies, as he will need to listen for conversations, footsteps, and the random ramblings of enemies as they seek our hero out.

In keeping consistent with the vampire/fantasy theme at work, the musical score will consist of a subtle, yet elegant symphonic soundtrack, harmonized by the haunting sounds of a church choir, while occasionally slipping into the heavy-metal/goth industrial music during intense fight scenes, to enhance the overall tension.

When creating such a world, it’s important to carefully blend the elements of medieval and modern times into one. For example, there will be no cars or automobiles, but there will be guns, and modern-looking buildings in the environment. Vampires and Assassins can come clad in ninja apparel, but will never wear anything post 19th century.

The design of the environment will range from vast, open villages and monolithic skyscrapers, to underground caves and classic, victorian decorated castles. While the game’s levels will mostly take place at night, the lighting and weather features will give each level its own unique appearance. From the blizzard falling softly over the slums of a human village, to the dark, red and black sky of the vampire city, graphics will play an important factor in making this game as good as it can be. While it will play on the Xbox, it truly is a game designed toward a higher end machine, such as the Xbox 360, or the Playstation 3.

While creating a world and a story to play in, Dark Legacy will allow the gamer to fulfill the fantasy of playing as a vampire, while being able to pick up and play parts of the game at whatever time is convenient to them, thanks to the automatic saving system in place, which records the checkpoints that Aden crosses along his journey.

While catering to the slightly-more advanced gamer, this is a game that will surely draw attention during its stages of development. With the right marketing, such a game will hold it’s own against such epic titles as *God of War*, or *Metal Gear Solid*.