

MindSlayer

Concept Overview

Genre

MindSlayer is a stealth based action horror game with strong movement based sections. The player plays as a roguish psychic assassin, known as a MindSlayer, sent to kill a religiously fanatical Baron. Navigating their way through the maze-like castle, they must avoid enemy detection in tense stealth sections, and take down cult leaders in movement based mind games in order to locate and assassinate the Baron.

Conceptual Statement

Set on an island in 18th century France, in a castle similar to the Neuschwanstein, a Baron has started a cult worshipping a supposed 'Sea God' that grants its followers powers and alters their bodies in demonic ways. The MindSlayer corps sees this situation as a threat to themselves, and has sent out an assassin to take out this false god and its followers.

The player plays as this assassin, a member in the group of psychically enhanced individuals that have been secretly keeping the balance behind the scenes for centuries, with themselves on top. Using their psychic abilities they must kill this fanatical Baron without leaving as much as a fingerprint of evidence behind. Using their telekinetic powers to wield a clockwork creature/knife from afar and using telepathy to enter the minds of the immortal cult leaders and destroy them from within.

Inspirations

Games

It draws inspiration for its aesthetic from similar titles such as "Dishonored", "Bloodborne" and "Resident Evil" whilst moving in a different direction with its parkour sections more akin to the gameplay of "Neon White". Navigation will be more inspired by the "Dark Souls" series with its unique and impactful map design, having the layout be inter-connected and giving more power to the player to solve for themselves. The game should put an emphasis on stealth but allow the player to tackle the problem more directly in a pinch much like the game "Metal Gear Solid".

Art

The game's visuals are realistic in nature, blending both dark fantasy and gritty horror into its style. Taking inspirations from lovecraftian cosmic horror, gothic/brutalist architecture, and cultish eldritch beings. Enemies will be swarmed in otherworldly mutations, giving them a horrific yet intriguing design. Taking inspirations from

Intended Player Experience

Core Pillars

Fluid:

- When thinking of something that all aspects of the game must encapsulate, the first concept that comes to mind is fluidity.
- Not only must the parkour mechanics have a sense of urgency, they must also be fluid. In this context fluidity refers to both how diegetic it is and how well the movement flows.
- The same of course can be applied to the stealth sections, but fluidity goes beyond the individual styles of play. It also refers to the smoothness of the transition between.
- For these reasons Fluid should exist as a core pillar throughout the development process, as something we can ask each individual element if we feel it has reached the minimum acceptable standard.

Tense:

- Existing as a survival horror, the player must experience tension in some form from the gameplay and setting.
- The subtlety of this concept means that we would not want fear as a core pillar as true fear is only a part of the experience, encapsulated far more by specific elements.
- Tension on the other hand, is a constant throughout the game. It exists subtly in the navigation and stealthing throughout the map, whilst also existing at a near breaking point during the chasing movement sections.
- By choosing Tense as a core pillar, we aim to give the player an experience that will only end when they pause or finish the game.

Diegetic:

- In order to not break the immersion the game sets up we want each element to be as intuitive and diegetic as possible.
- This means minimalist UI, good signposting, and colour association.
- Making the rules of the game clear from the outset, so they become second nature to the player.
- By doing this we can remove the subconscious buffer created by the player and amp up the fear they feel.

Mechanics Overview

Parkour:

- *Normal Plain:* In the real world (or normal plain) the parkour is much more stripped down and simple. A jump, a basic vault, short wall run, and a brief telekinetic double jump for minor corrections, all of the basics required to navigate the map and nothing more. This of course is to make the player feel weak and vulnerable, so they feel their only option is stealth. We want to give the player options on how they tackle challenges with this system but it should have a heavy emphasis on stealth as the intended style of play.
- *Psychic Plain:* Oppositely inside the minds of those the player wishes to kill (or the psychic plain) the parkour is far more advanced and ever growing. Faster movement speed, not just a vault but a full wall climb, and not just a dash along walls but the ability to run all the way along them. The goal here is not to remove this thick layer of tension but instead to condense it into sheer fear. Giving the player the ability to do much more but raising the danger equivalently.

The Knife:

- *The Knife:* The knife is a multitool switchblade designed specifically for the use of a MindSlayer. With clockwork wings and tabs allowing it to be controlled in the air. This tool can be used for all purposes from lockpicking to assassination.
- *In-game:* In the game this will be controlled in a perspective switch to the knife after it is thrown, allowing the player movement in any direction within range. If the knife escapes the range or completes its task it will return to the MindSlayer and the perspective will switch back to them once again.

Psychic Powers:

- *Telekinesis:* As a MindSlayer it is imperative to not get one's hands dirty both metaphorically and literally. The player character keeps their hands in their pockets at all times, and interacts with their environment using telekinesis as well as enhancing one's own abilities with light telekinetic manipulation.
- *Telepathy: Another facet of the MindSlayer's abilities is telepathy, or more accurately the ability to enter the minds of others. They use this to enter the minds of their enemies and access memories, put them to sleep, or kill them entirely by stealing their consciousness. - (Shelved until further notice)*

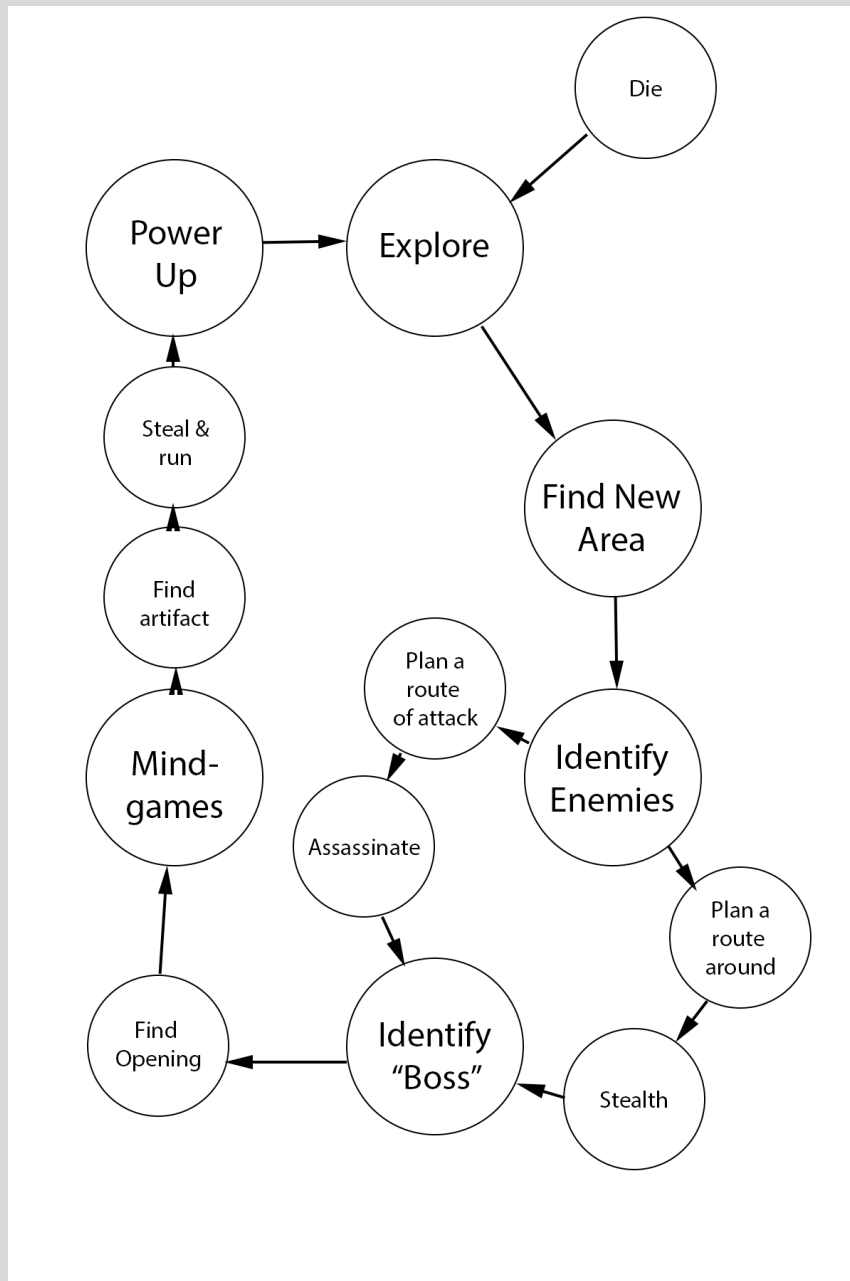
Enemies:

- *Hierarchy:* Amongst the enemies there exists a hierarchy, ranging from mansion staff such as butlers and maids, cult leaders that have been granted life eternal by the false god, all the way to the Baron himself who wields his power like an iron fist. Any enemy that does not observe this hierarchy is more than likely too strong to be required to do so, such as the sea god himself.
- *Staff:* The most basic and common enemy in the game, they are too weak to block a ranged attack from the knife but have a large detection radius. They can easily dispatch an otherwise unprepared player, and with their sheer numbers they may overwhelm one that is out of position.
- *Guards:* Stronger and more heavily armoured than the staff, they limit the players options. A tougher enemy to deal with but their armour makes them move slower and

have a smaller detection radius. An enemy generally best avoided by the player if at all possible.

- *Cult Leaders*: Due to their state of immortality granted by the beast, they are incapable of being killed by traditional means. The player must enter their mind to kill them, which for the majority is optional. However, if the player does choose to kill them they will be granted additional movement abilities/options in the psychic plain.
- *The Sea God*: ...

Core Game Loop



Mock-Ups

UI



- This mock-up features a thematic bar for both the recharge of stamina as well as the knife cooldown.
- The arm animations also serve as visual feedback to player input.
- It also features a simplistic filter to alert the player when they have been spotted, a common mechanic featured in stealth games. It both makes the player aware of dangers they have missed and adds a layer of panic and confusion that can culminate in *fear*.
- Finally a minimalist set of subtitles for those that are deaf or hard of hearing.

Narrative

Summary

The game follows an unnamed assassin from the Mindslayer organisation, a member of the Contractors family, who's been sent on a mission to investigate the Island of Zarkonia.

The Mindslayer Organisation

The Mindslayer organisation is an organised group with unnatural abilities. The members of this group all share and are born with telepathic, telekinetic and special ability that is linked to their family bloodline. All the members of this organisation are part of a certain family. The goal of this organisation is to have full control over the world and eliminate anything that threatens this goal.

For more information follow the link down below:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/172z2VaH6MkvtdQq0a0RjFD-MedD1MzUYIzChfdrM-Z4/edit?usp=sharing>

The Barons Family

The Barons is the ruler of the island of Zarkonia, his family has been in charge of the island

The Sea God

Marketing

Similar Titles

Dishonored (Arkane Studios, 2012):

- A very popular action-adventure franchise, for its assassin themed gameplay and steampunk aesthetic.
- On top of the assassin themed gameplay the assassin also has supernatural powers which help the player character both traverse the environment and complete their job of assassination.
- This “assassin themed gameplay” primarily revolves around stealthing and avoiding detection, but the tools the players are given are open-ended enough that they have multiple playstyle options.

Hitman (IO Interactive, 2007):

- Another popular title in the action-adventure genre, this time a more modern assassin with third person shooter mechanics.
- This title focuses on using the environment in a variety of creative ways to distract, assassinate or simply cause chaos.
- Similar to *Dishonored*, the core gameplay loop revolves around giving the player an objective and the tools to accomplish it but leaving the solution up to them. This sandbox style of play appears to be a popular theme amongst the genre.

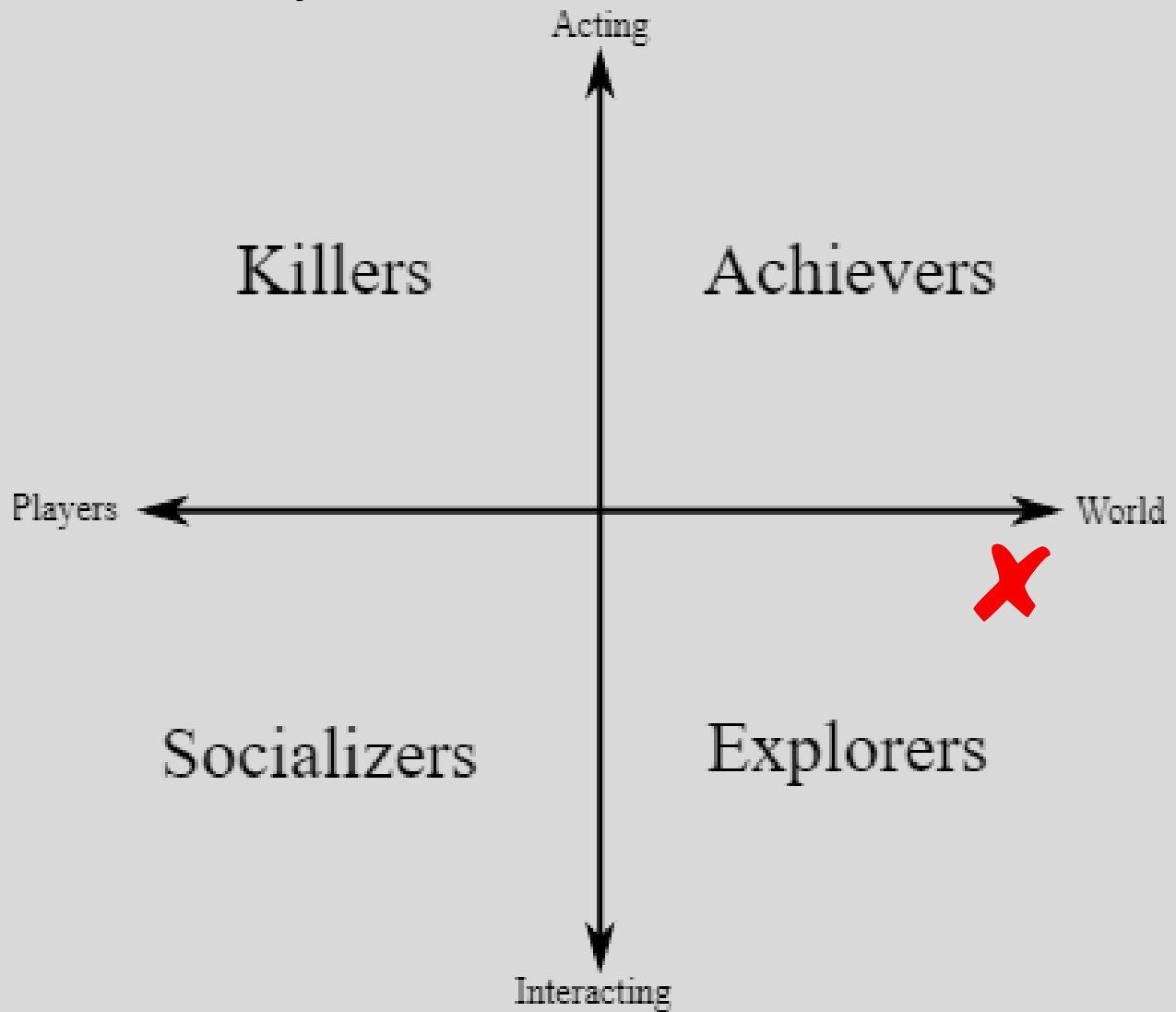
Dark Souls (From Software, 2011):

- An action-RPG, this title has little focus on stealth or movement, however, the map design shares many similarities with *MindSlayer*.
- The maps of dark souls are unique in their interconnectivity, forever looping back on itself with progression being marked by shortcuts and new areas to unlock.
- Their core gameplay loop revolves around navigating an area, analysing, achieving the correct path through its hazards, which inevitably culminates in an encounter with a unique and challenging boss.

Points of Reflection:

- Games that feature an assassin style gameplay excel when they are giving the player agency over how they tackle the objective.
- This must be facilitated by flexible core systems such as a variety of unique abilities or dynamic environments.
- When selecting a *Dark Souls* style map design it's important to understand whether or not it will integrate into and facilitate your core gameplay loop. In the cases of *Hitman* & *Dishonored* both feature unique styles of map design that highlight their mechanics.

Bartle's Taxonomy



MindSlayer is a single player experience with little focus on socialising with players or characters, the core design does not accommodate for a killers' mindset with the focus primarily being around exploring the environment and navigating hazards. It leans towards achievers as an experience that can be beaten, however, with the numerous paths the achievement comes less from beating the game and more from forging your own path through it.

Age Rating

