

# Puppet Knight

*Game Design Document*

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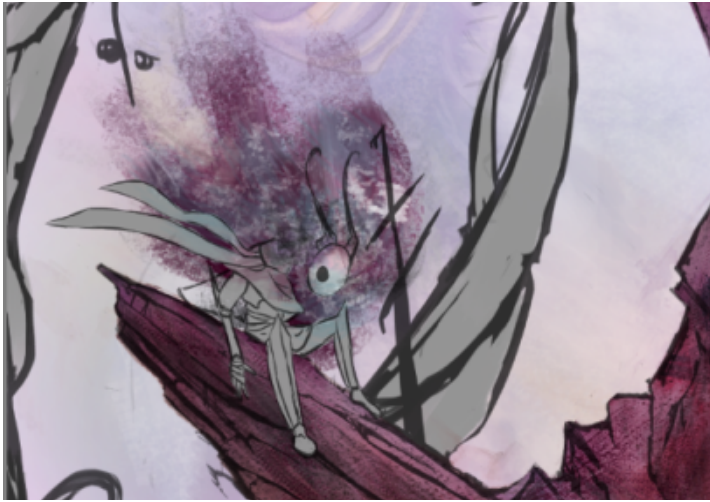
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## INTRODUCTION

Puppet Knight is a third-person VR game where the player fights, casts spells, and moves around in an alien world as a possessing spirit to collect vital resources in order to preserve their own civilization.

## STORY

Desolation.

There is nothing left of the world you knew. There are still people: they congregate, work futilely, bicker, pray. But there is no hope. It is all gone, all of the Ardor. The bodies that once were vibrant are now husks. The spirits that once took shelter in them are now all that weakly pushes them along. The world is dying, everyone knows. The only question is how long does it have left?

However, out of despondence came a spark of hope. A new world, new Ardor. Vast, untapped quantities in great pools and storms. A gate was found, and now it must be traversed.

You were chosen. You volunteered. To move into this great and deadly world. To harvest its Ardor, and to be shaped by it. To risk your very being. To, for the first time in many eons, be alive.

You create your puppet at the gate, made of the stuffs of your world. A shambling, crude thing. It is all that you still have in you. Inwards you delve, body flaking away and mind discombobulating in the harsh atmosphere. The world looks dead, old, not as vibrant as you remember your world was when it was alive. But as you look deeper you see the hidden auras of alien Ardor that even now tear at your substance.

In order to bring it back, first you must survive.

You seek shelter, finding areas of calm in the storm. As you become acclimated, you build onto your puppet, first defensive layering, then replacing pieces. You fight off the hostile creatures and strange phenomena. You learn their tricks and replicate them. You build yourself again to not just survive, but thrive on this strange energy. Like the ship of Theseus, you are born anew and yet the same as you always were.

But, Ardor is what allows for life. As the old emotions fade, as fear and joy and hunger are replaced with formick and audnes and jut, so too fades your connection to your old world. You are more alive than you remember ever being, but that life is not yours.

Are you what you were? Have you perished and a new being sprung up from your corpse? Are you irreconcilably changed? Are you now a part of this world, or stranger, something in-between?

Your people, if they are still your people, will expire if you cannot harvest and purify this strange Ardor. But, if using it changes them as it changed you, is that not a kind of death in itself?

Die or Change. Perish or Perish.

Desolation.

## KEY FEATURES

**VR:** Uses Oculus in order to provide a compellingly strange and immersive world

**Dynamic weather:** Simplified weather system is very important to gameplay, and will be forecastable by players that develop that skillset.

**'Puppet' controls:** Uses kinematics for a completely novel method of interacting with the world. Players physically grab and push their 'puppet' in order to move, fight, use abilities, and interact with the world

**Alien creatures:** CPU creatures will have strange appearances, behaviors, and abilities

**Strategic resource management:** Real benefits and drawbacks to using and not using resources. Leveling up, casting spells, passive effects, enemy attacks and behaviors, and story are all based on managing the same resource

**Strategic combat:** Combat interfaces with the prevalent conditions (area and weather) in different ways. Adaptability and awareness are just as important (if not more!) as mechanical skills

## GENRE + SETTING

**Genre:** Real-Time Strategy (PvE), Adventure, Resource Management, RPG

**Setting:** Fantasy, Space, Post-Apocalyptic

## PLATFORM

- Single Player VR for Oculus Rift
- Potential Multiplayer

## CHARACTERS

**Puppet Knight:** The player plays as a spirit possessing a mechanical ‘puppet’ that protects them from the harsh environment. Physically, they are frail, covered in garments (to accentuate movement), and wear a mask. A cloud is emitted from behind the mask, which adjusts to reflect the resources currently being carried by the character. The character carries a large sword and is adept in both combat and a particular sort of wizardry.

**First Explorer:** The first explorer is encountered by the character several times throughout the game. The first explorer looks similar to the Puppet Knight, but warped. It looks more ‘native’ to the planet. The First Explorer has similar abilities to the Puppet Knight, as well as several that the Puppet Knight can only get through interacting with the world. The First Explorer adapted themselves to the new world, and does not anger it or its inhabitants. The First Explorer would expect any colonists to do the same.

**The Directorate:** The group of spirits who live on the other side of the portal, and are

cheering you on! They aren't as tough as you, so they don't risk their lives in a puppet, but they put their existence on the line in order to retrieve the puppet when you die. It costs them their lives, but it is a small price to pay for the salvation of the species.

**The Faction:** A group of spirits from the Puppet Knight's world have set up base in Oasis, and are aggressively claiming their territory. They resemble the Puppet Knight in movement, but have heavier cloaks, more protective equipment (tubes and whatnot), and more destructive spells. They are the cause of a lot of the violent weather that will be experienced by the player. They speak the player's language, although this is not revealed in the first encounter. They are generally good people, but feel that they are in a life-or-death situation, and so do not give quarter. The Faction is attempting to wall off Oasis from the other world, and terraform it to be more like their own. They do not anticipate that adaptation is possible, nor widespread colonization. They are primarily looking out for themselves, but wouldn't be against helping the homeworld if they could. After testing the life here for intelligence, they determined that they were not intelligent enough to have moral weight, and so don't care for them. They are initially aggressive towards Puppet Knight and First Explorer.

**Creatures:** the wondrous beasts that stalk the lands and skies and seas are the Creatures. Little is known about them outside of the tests performed by the Faction. They have strange abilities, but are not thought to be intelligent.

## Potential Development Difficulties

**Dynamic Weather:** designing the weather patterns, as well as permanent spots of certain climates, and story-based weather events. I think that this will be the most difficult part of the game.

**Kinematic Movement:** Moving one part of the 'Puppet' creates movement throughout the rest. I need to determine how much and where in order to keep balance and create a good 'look' for the movement. I think that this may be the second most difficult part of the game.

**Mobs:** I haven't done 3d modeling before, and the requirements for these are fairly high. Most important is fluid movement. Designing their behaviors may be difficult as well.

## DEVELOPMENT SCALING

**Smaller:** In order of what I can lose: Cut down the non-unique enemy types from 4 to 2. Switch to a simpler graphics style. Reduce the leveling system to flat stat increases. Cut down on the resource types from 6(12) to 3(6). Reduce world size. Switch to a more conventional control system.

**Larger:** Increase enemy types! Implement body retrieval minigame?