

# **(Shadow) Retriever**

## **Game Design Doc**

Made by BifrostGames

# Introduction

## Game Summary

A metroidvania platformer about navigating through an alchemist's library to retrieve their lost artifacts.

## Inspiration

Hollowknight, Apollo

## Player Experience

Single-screen platformer rooms for 6 levels including a lock-and-key style progression in the form of areas that require the player to unlock certain abilities before accessing. As the player unlocks new abilities, the platforming will reflect this in the form of new hazard/obstacle types and layouts specifically designed to test the player's use of their movement abilities.

## Platform

Developed to run on the web.

## Development Software

- Unity (engine)
- Aseprite & Gimp (art)
- Audacity & Waveform (Music & SFX)

## Genre

Metroidvania, platformer

## Target Audience

Incorporating tried-and-true platforming elements, this game offers an approachable experience to the casual gamer. Gamers with metroidvania experience will find the platforming challenging yet familiar.

# Concept

## Gameplay overview

The player controls a shadow brought to life by an alchemist, and is tasked with retrieving the alchemist's lost alchemical artifacts. The shadow will venture forth to complete platforming challenges to reach and claim the lost artifacts, which upon collection grant the player further movement abilities, increasing both their movement capabilities and the difficulty of platforming.

## Theme Interpretation “Shadows and Alchemy”

The **alchemist** sends their **shadow** to retrieve **alchemical artifacts**.

Combine the twisted and misunderstood nature of alchemy with the ghostliness and fluidity of shadows.

Challenging platforming may make the tone **hopeless** at times but the player uses their alchemical movement abilities to push ahead.

Collecting the final ability brings the player a sense of **satisfaction**, which is not reflected in the **alchemist's** less than enthusiastic congratulations for completing their bidding.

The game leaves the player **triumphant yet disappointed**, reflecting the **futility** of alchemical “science” and the **dynamic yet stagnant** nature of shadows.

## Primary Mechanics

Move: A/D, left arrow/right arrow

Jump: Space, up arrow

Drop (through platform): down arrow

Interact: X

## Secondary Mechanics

Double jump

Wall cling/wall jump

# Art

## Theme Interpretation

## Design

# Audio

## Music

Alchemy - twisted science magic - haunting baroque tone

Balance music tone with player emotion

- Challenging gameplay leads to frustrated players
- Calm music tone contrasts the challenging gameplay but may serve to calm the player subconsciously
- A more upbeat score may accentuate the stress caused by the platforming challenges or overwhelm the player

## Sound Effects

Player - accentuate shadow aspect in sfx

Timed Hazards - clear indication of danger

# Game Experience

## UI

Minimal UI

## Controls

Horizontal movement - left/right arrow, A/D

Jump - up arrow, W

Drop (through platform) - down arrow, S

# Development Tasks

| #  | Assignment   | Type     | Status     | Finish By | Notes |
|----|--|----------|------------|-----------|-------|
| 1  | Main Menu music  | Other ▾  | Finished ▾ | Jun 22... |       |
| 2  | Game scene music   | Other ▾  | Finished ▾ | Jun 23... |       |
| 15 | Intro cutscene <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Start alchemist dialogue</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player spawn animation</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue alchemist dialogue</li> </ul>   | Other ▾  | Finished ▾ | 📅 Date    |       |
| 16 | End Cutscene   | Coding ▾ | Finished ▾ | 📅 Date    |       |
| 8  | SFX <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jump</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Die</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Respawn</li> </ul> </li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Timed Hazard               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Turn-on</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Turn-off</li> </ul> </li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dialogue text scroll sfx</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ability text sfx</li> </ul> | Audio ▾  | Finished ▾ | 📅 Date    |       |
| 3  | Player controller <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wall-cling</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Double jump</li> </ul>  | Coding ▾ | Finished ▾ | 📅 Date    |       |

| #  | Assignment   | Type     | Status     | Finish By | Notes |
|----|--|----------|------------|-----------|-------|
|    | <input type="checkbox"/> Dash?<br><input type="checkbox"/> Shadow dash?  |          |            |           |       |
| 12 | Collectable interact with player (gain movement ability)   | Coding ▾ | Finished ▾ | 📅 Date    |       |
| 11 | Player Animator  | Other ▾  | Finished ▾ | 📅 Date    |       |
| 9  | Art <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Platforms and scene art</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Title               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Animate?</li> </ul> </li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UI               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Main menu button</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   | Art ▾    | Finished ▾ | 📅 Date    |       |
| 13 | Animations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collectables hover</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Alchemist               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Speak</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Idle</li> </ul> </li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wall cling</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jump</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | Art ▾    | Finished ▾ | 📅 Date    |       |
| 4  | Scene spawn locations  | Coding ▾ | Finished ▾ | 📅 Date    |       |
| 10 | Audio System   | Coding ▾ | Finished ▾ | 📅 Date    |       |
| 5  | Itch page  | Other ▾  | Finished ▾ | 📅 Date    |       |

| #  | Assignment   | Type     | Status     | Finish By | Notes |
|----|--|----------|------------|-----------|-------|
|    | <input type="checkbox"/> Screenshots<br><input type="checkbox"/> Animated gifs?  |          |            |           |       |
| 6  | Write dialogue lines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alchemist introduce player</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alchemist after 1 ability</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alchemist after 2 abilities</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alchemist win</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collecting items and unlocking abilities</li> </ul> | Other ▾  | Finished ▾ | 📅 Date    |       |
| 7  | Dialogue trigger system  | Coding ▾ | Finished ▾ | 📅 Date    |       |
| 14 | Double Check <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All room hazards</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All room platforms</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All room walls</li> </ul>  | Other ▾  | Finished ▾ | 📅 Date    |       |