

DROPLET

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DES303-C

PROJECT LOGLINE

When a hopeful young raindrop is precipitously plunged into the world below, she must overcome self-doubt if she is to recover her once hopeful, colorful self and leave a lasting impact on a dispassionate world.

TYPE / STYLE of GAME

Droplet is a 3D, atmospheric third-person exploration game that delivers a consequential story in a non-linear fashion.

PROJECT MOOD

A black and white, doubtful mood sets the stage but is quickly overrun with colorful tones of passion and hope that lead to a bittersweet conclusion.

OVERVIEW

Droplet is a 3D, third-person platformer with exploration and infinite runner elements. Using rooftops and drainage systems, the player will go through the water cycle to find and make their way to a city's water sources. In doing so, they will restore color to a gloomy, black, and white city, but at a climatic cost.

As a raindrop named Droplet, the player will be carried away to a dispassionate city where they must recover their once hopeful self after succumbing to self-doubt and terror. Once found, they will spring, slide, and splash their way through a black and white city, using their newfound hope and the city's water sources to restore it back to its colorful, glorious self.

EMOTIONAL START

Self-Doubt.

CATHARTIC EVENT

Passion is restored.

EMOTIONAL END

Hopeful sacrifice.

BASE TECH SPECS

ENGINE

Unity 2019.4.1

NUMBER of PLAYERS

Droplet is a single player game.

ESTIMATED GAMEPLAY (MINUTES)

~15 minutes of gameplay.

CONTROLS

Droplet is designed for both **controller (Xbox One)...**

- **Left Joystick (Player Movement) / Right Joystick (Camera Movement)**
- **Right Trigger (Jump/Splash)**
- **Right Bumper (Evaporate)**
- **Left Trigger (Sink)**
- **X (Interaction)**

...and mouse/keyboard.

- **WASD (Player Movement) / Mouse (Camera Movement)**
- **Spacebar (Jump/Splash)**
- **Left Click (Evaporate)**
- **Right Click (Sink)**
- **E (Interaction)**

CAMERA

Droplet's camera is in the third person perspective. It will be fully maneuverable around the character during less-tense, cinematic moments but locked forward during infinite runner-like sections. The player will move in the forward direction of the camera and it will lerp slightly behind the character as everything will have a water-like feel to it.

MECHANICS

Jump/Splash - The ability to launch oneself into the air will be a necessary ability when traversing the rooftops of the main city. However, since the player is a raindrop and water does not necessarily “jump”, this will not be a typical platformer jump. Instead, it needs to adhere to the feeling and flow of water, so it is more of a “splash”. The player will either charge it up and release in a particular direction or only be able to jump when landing after a fall or previous jump. Think **jumping water fountains**.

Vaporate - With the core game loop following the water cycle in reality, evaporating is a key element. When in hot air, Droplet will be able to gain extra height, even after jumping.

Sink - This is more like the opposite of the jump. Instead of launching into the air, the player will sink into the ground to be able to pass under/through specific objects in the environment, like a dash with i-frames.

Interaction - This is a standard mechanic that will allow the player to interact with NPCs and things in the environment that require their help.

UNIQUE / SPECIAL SYSTEMS DESIGN

Water is a huge focus of this game, both literally and figuratively. Playing as a raindrop means movement and mechanics are quite different from a standard third-person adventure game with platforming. The flow of water and the water cycle are two real life systems that I am trying to replicate within this project. Using downward slopes and momentum to move around and carve out a path, like water does in reality, is the main gameplay loop. Once an objective is complete or a reset needs to happen, evaporation will allow the player to return to the main hub. Also, color and how it is used will be a new and difficult undertaking that will elevate the game.

LEVELS / AREAS

LEVEL 1

Act - Setup

Theme - This level is full of hope, excitement, and preparation for something that is beyond both the player and the character. It gives purpose to Droplet's character and creates necessary buildup for a harsh, reality-checking hook.

Description - This level's purpose is to introduce the player to not only the mechanics, but the character they are playing as and her goals/purpose in this world. In a brightly colored playground, they will learn the mechanics as Droplet practices for her big moment which is just days away. When they come back to her home, they meet her parents where much of that aspiration and hope comes from.

LEVEL 2

Act - Hook

Theme - It is here where the reality-check that splits Droplet into two occurs. It is the initial hurdle to get over, it is also the biggest hurdle. Self-doubt plagues Droplet's mind but with a final push, she restores her hope. Overcoming this is what gives her purpose behind her newfound goals and understanding of the world.

Description - This level is also the intro to the city and a twist on the core gameloop (jump/sink). The true game unfolds here, and an ultimate, final goal is revealed.

LEVEL 3

Act - Development

Theme - With this newfound hope and knowledge, Droplet finds what she needs to help other raindrops who succumbed to a similar fate and restore color and hope to the city.

Description - Upon coming to a rooftop of the tallest building in the city, Droplet finds three other raindrops who need her help. She is able to choose who to help here which determines the path she takes.

LEVEL 4

Act - Development

Theme - More color is restored to the city and the final push necessary to save it is revealed. A looming understanding of what needs to be done creeps in.

Description - Droplet helps one other raindrop leaving the third to be sadly ignored. This again changes the dynamics of the upcoming challenge.

LEVEL 5

Act - Turn/Resolution

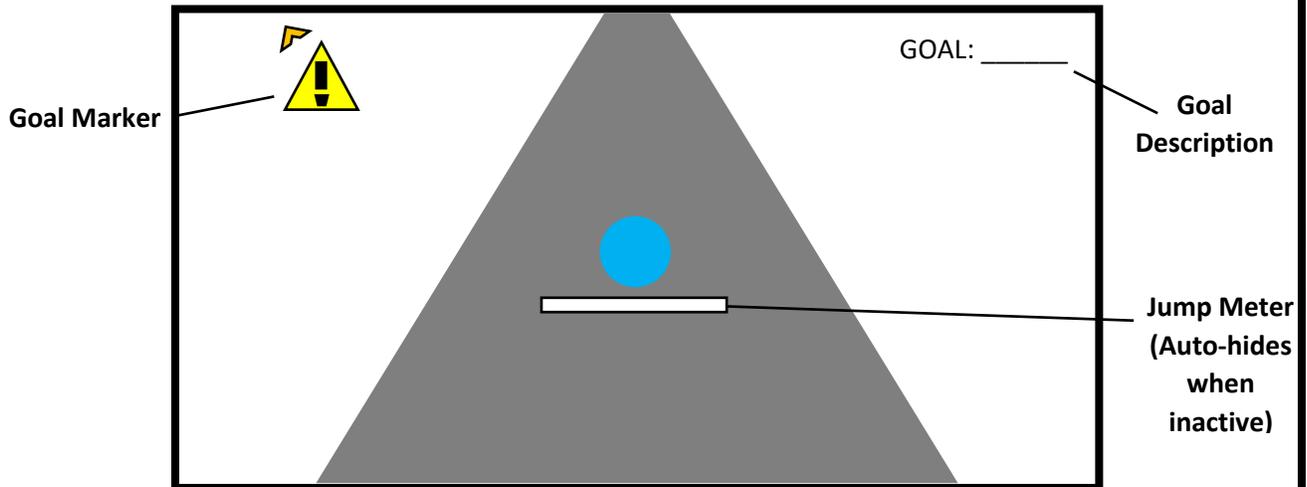
Theme - The story climaxes and comes to an end as Droplet faces a final challenge where even the most physically strong would fail. An ultimate sacrifice is made (or not?) and consequences are issued.

Description - Mechanics and story come to a head here where Droplet is tested in both physical and mental strength. However, in the end it all comes down to a final decision by Droplet and a potential sacrifice.

BASE UI / UX ELEMENTS

The User Interface will be incredibly minimal. Besides UI for the player's current objective/goal, interactable objects/NPCs, button interactions, and a potential jump meter, there is no other UI currently planned. Health is non-existent as it follows a one-life approach.

HUD WIREFRAME



LEARNING

Initial mechanics and core gameloop are taught through guided gameplay. The main menu will have players controlling Droplet. Here they will be able to instantly pick up the movement and interaction controls through natural gameplay or prompts. When the game starts, they will drop right into the middle of Droplet's training where they are introduced to the level design within the world and maybe the jump mechanic. At the very least, the core gameloop will be established. Once they move on in the story and get past the hook, new mechanics will be earned. Small pop-ups will give the player a basic idea of how they work to let them move on quickly.

AFFORDANCES / SIGNIFIERS / FEEDBACK

With so much focus on Catharsis, feedback in the world is of the highest importance. Players need to be able to see the impact their actions are having not just on the world, but on other characters and themselves. By starting in a world that is drained of color, all player actions, even simple ones such as movement, will paint color back into the world and its inhabitants to show that effect. This contrast is the main source of ASF for the whole game.

CHARACTER

As mentioned above, a large part of the main character's A/S/F comes from the restoration of color in the environment and other characters. Moving around the world will paint a trail of color behind them and each time they jump or sink, a larger splash of color will explode around them.

Button prompts and a jump meter are UI pieces that signify and reinforce mechanics to eliminate the need to remember bindings or vital information.

Since the main character is a raindrop, all actions and movement in the world need to flow like water. Feel, not realism is the goal here. Moving through and interacting with the environment will utilize ramps, gutters, slopes, and various objects to keep momentum as the player races towards their goals.

ENVIRONMENTAL

The environment will reflect the player's actions mainly through color. As stated above, the city is initially black and white but with each action and completed goal of the player, it will return to its former, colorful self.

With levels taking place on rooftops and the player being a raindrop, a unique perspective/scale is required. Platforms and slopes need to take the shape of AC units and gutters, things that make sense for both a rooftop and a raindrop.

MARKET RESEARCH

SPLATOON 1 & 2

In Splatoon, you can paint the environment with color through various tools, but in Droplet, this color would come directly from the player instead. The paint in Splatoon is strictly one of two colors as well, but this will not be the case for this game. Instead, color of the environment will be returned, so the final city will look like a city instead of a bunch of brightly colored cubes. The second mechanic is the Squid form. Being able to dip into the paint and swim around is incredibly fun and fits the water aesthetic. However, instead of only being able to swim in your own paint, Droplet will be able to "swim" (called Sink) anywhere.



rain

rain nails the feeling of a cloudy, rainy day in a big city. Its visual style and atmosphere are two things I am taking lots of inspiration from. Although Droplet will not have the same fidelity as this game, there is a lot here to pull from to make my own unique, but believable atmosphere. Empty streets and sidewalks, streetlights, and blacked-out windows are all things that add to the feel of an abandoned city, which is what I need to replicate.



Inside

Inside is another game where lots of emotion and story is told/conveyed through large, empty environments. There is no text or dialogue in Inside, yet there is a strong narrative at play that is felt entirely through gameplay. This is a big inspiration for Droplet as I want to keep those interactions to a minimum and have the gameplay, the systems speak for themselves.



ART / AUDIO / PALETTE

ART ASSETS

When I can, art assets will be done by myself, modeling/particles/animations especially. However, when it comes to more advanced assets, such as textures, skyboxes, and shaders, I will most likely resort to third-party assets.

COLOR PALETTE



AUDIO ASSETS

Similar to past projects, SFX and music will be arranged and edited by me, but not entirely created. Freesound and Looperman are two sites I plan on using extensively with help from Reaper and Audacity.

AUDIO PALETTE

Beginning of Game



Hook



RISKS & MITIGATIONS

My biggest worry about this game is the technical side of the style and effects I want the game to have. Specifically the coloring of the black and white city. This along with the look of water (not simulating water – don't worry) are complex to implement, but complex in a department I have almost no knowledge of. Shaders are something that are a bit terrifying to myself but with the water shader already found, I feel this is something I can overcome and learn.

Beyond that, I worry that my game is too heavily bent on level design when I want to showcase systems. I feel that the connection of the two should prove the systems are good, but it is something I want to continue monitoring. A potential additional mechanic or goal with pre-existing mechanics may be required.

Lastly, NPC interaction is something I have yet to do in the past so that implementation, along with writing meaningful and short narrative scripts, is something that does worry me. However, I plan to keep these interactions quite short to make sure it doesn't eat time from gameplay or development.

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LOGLINE

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EMOTIONAL START / CATHARTIC EVENT / EMOTIONAL END

Self-doubt / Passion is restored / Hopeful sacrifice.

ACT ONE

Droplet is an excited and hopeful young raindrop who has yet to venture out into the world on her own, although the time is soon approaching. As she practices for this grand event (known as one's Landfall) on an abandoned playground, she witnesses the passion left behind by raindrops who have already moved on. The once dreary and drained playground is now full of color and passion. This makes Droplet all the more excited to see the big city in which her Landfall will be made. She only hopes there are parts of the city untouched so she too can leave a lasting impact.

ACT TWO

One night, a storm rages past the playground and carries Droplet away. Unprepared and without a chance to say goodbye, Droplet is filled with terror. The storm carries her all the way to the city where she decides to face her fears and commit to her Landfall. As she plunges from the crackling clouds above, she is shocked to find the city devoid of all color. It is nothing like what she had dreamed of. As terror and shock overwhelm her, she splits into two and the once hopeful, passionate young raindrop is blown away into a nearby pond leaving a frail, scared, colorless raindrop plummeting below.

ACT THREE

Droplet's fears and self-doubt cloud her mind as she rolls down the face of a sad and forgotten building. As she nears its edge, ready to fall for one last time, a ray of sunshine lands on the pond in which her other half fell. The pond shimmers as colorful as the playground back home and a small flicker of hope leads Droplet towards the pond. There, she is reunited with her past self, but hope is not fully restored.

ACT FOUR

She refuses to leave a city she once longed for in ruin and with her newfound ability to spread that hope and color, she sets off to spread it to the various bodies of water around the city to bring it back to life. From the tallest building in the city, Droplet begins the hard work. It is here where she runs into other raindrops who unlike her, could not find their past selves and have succumbed to doubt and fear. With her newfound power, she offers to help these onlookers and in doing so, redeems them. This shows the impact she is having but reveals a sinister secret.

ACT FIVE

With all the ponds filled, the city is still not fully restored. However, between rumors from other characters and an educated guess, Droplet heads for the nearby lake, the largest body of water in the city's supply. As she nears this final body of water, she realizes that a body that big will never fully evaporate, leaving her potentially stuck forever. However, she pushes through that final barrier and drops into the water below, finally immersing the city in color and leaving her lasting impact.