



Undeceived

Version 2.0

An original game concept
By Nicholas R. Solari

Executive Summary

TITLE

Undeceived

GENRE

Action-Adventure / Stealth Hybrid

VERSION

2.0

CATEGORY

In *Undeceived*, players glide through a dark fantasy world with the smooth acrobatic navigation of *Assassin's Creed*, form bonds with compelling characters in tense combat and stealth moments a la *The Last of Us*, and traverse a medieval inspired civilization with the depth and shadow of *A Plague Tale: Innocence*.

PLATFORMS

Designed for exclusive release on PS5 & PS4, later followed by PC

THE BIG IDEA

When his sister becomes “marked” by a demon-wound that only a banished order of knight-priests can heal, a backwater courier must deliver their last holy relic in order to prove their legitimacy and ensure his family’s survival. On a perilous journey across what remains of the Protectorate, Brennan of Aldo finds himself up against more than just abominable demons and ravenous mobs when he discovers his sister has embraced the newfound powers of her corrupted form.

PLAY MECHANIC

The player controls Brennan as he deftly traverses the horror-besieged land of Avarim. Brennan can run, jump, climb, and reach high places with his grappling hook. Taking a quiet approach, he may choose to sneak, use his relic to detect nearby demons, or silently takedown weaker enemies. In the heat of combat, he can leverage his abilities as a quick-thinking courier to catch a glimpse of his available options, all while guiding allies to safety, creating diversions, or entering hand-to-hand combat. Parkour and stealth are key elements of *Undeceived's* 3rd-person gameplay.

LICENSE

The game draws from only a brief period of Avarim’s history, whetting players’ appetites with glimpses of a golden age that might one day be restored. From the roving mobs of the Bulwark to the battle-hardened, honorbound Knights Refulgent, players are encouraged to take a side & a stand. Humans are far from the only sentients in Avarim, and the Protectorate, far from its only nation. In the IP of *Undeceived*, the possibilities are as expansive as the unguarded lands beyond the Protectorate’s walls.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Undeceived is a game for mature audiences (17+) who enjoy losing themselves in deep worlds, carefully crafted narrative experiences, stealth-adventure gameplay, and the rush of close encounters. It caters specifically to the high quality visual and narrative experiences players have come to expect from PlayStation’s exclusive titles, and avoids elements like persistent jump-scares that would wedge it firmly into the horror niche, instead striving for the broader appeal achieved by horror-tinged titles like *Call of Duty: Zombies* and *The Last of Us*.

The Setup

The year is 1231 in the Ecclesial calendar...



The once great order of Knights Refulgent, has been all but hunted down after the deathbed decree of the Ecclesial High Patriarch Kraxos II — the authenticity of which is hotly debated.

Without the Refulgent to keep vigil, their ancient enemies, The Emerged, have grown numerous and bold. Terrifying demon attacks on the outskirts of the Protectorate have become commonplace, even as The Bulwark rises to fill the vacuum. A loosely regulated network of brutal and superstitious militias, these glorified ruffians earn their savage reputation, purging settlements at mere rumors of Emerged sightings and executing any suspected of summoning them.

The Marked — those who survive a Emerged attacks with the scars to prove it — find no sympathy among the Bulwark, and are equally targeted, further tightening the grip of paranoia around Avarim. Some of the Marked turn to the last remnants of the Knights Refulgent for protection and healing, while others join the ranks of the Vengeant, embracing the dark powers their wounds bestow and enforcing their own twisted justice.



At the dawn of this new age of conflict and mistrust, Brennan carves out a life for himself and his family as a trusted courier. That life falls to shambles around him when he returns to his hometown of Aldo to find it smouldering in the wake of an Emerged attack. His family is alive, but not unscathed— his sister Naea bears the dreaded mark of a Deceiver.

With nowhere else to turn, Brennan seeks the protection of the legendary Knights Refulgent. Entrusting him with a thurible containing the last of the sacred ever-embers, the Refulgent ask more of Brennan than he ever believed he was capable of. To disprove the claims that the Knights have fallen from divine favor, he must reach Stanislone, the seat of the Ecclesia's power, embarking on a perilous journey across the Protectorate— a journey which promises to alter the fate of his family, and all Avarim, forever.

Gameplay



Navigation. Much of *Undeceived* involves parkouring across Avarim's dynamic landscape, often with formidable enemies in hot pursuit.

Looking back. Brennan can quickly glance over his shoulder while fleeing his enemies, though it's unlikely he'll find comfort in what he sees.

Thurable. The holy relic Brennan carries can reveal nearby Emerged. The quantity and direction of smoke describes their location. If the smoke billows straight up and around him, a Deceiver is likely closeby. The light from the thurable can also illuminate dark places.

Silver knife. Any line of work that involves traversing the Old Roads is dangerous, so Brennan keeps a silver knife on him, which can be used as a last resort if he gets up close and personal with Deceivers. It can also be used to stealthily takedown weaker human enemies, but is too fragile for armor piercing or open combat.

Throwable objects. Brennan is resourceful. In a pinch, he can grab a heavy object like a tankard or stone and chuck it, even at breakable objects like windows, for a distraction or a quick escape.

Map. Brennan's meticulous notes make his map a useful tool for navigating the world of Avarim and completing his most pressing objectives.

Quick VS Long Use. Some situations call for precision, while others call for haste. Brennan can always choose how he uses his equipped items. He can stab his knife forward in a quick jab, or get set for a crushing takedown -- chuck his grappling hook underhand, or wind up to lob it high and wide.

Glimpse. Any courier worth his salt is quick on his feet, literally and figuratively. Brennan can temporarily slow time and get a glimpse of his available options, highlighting key objects in his immediate vicinity.

Sneak (Crouch). Discretion is a courier's most sought after trait. By keeping a low profile, Brennan can avoid detection

Consumables. When he needs a pick-me-up, or a competitive edge, Brennan can use consumables he finds along his journey to recover health, buff his damage, or boost his stamina.

Avarim

The Setting of *Undeceived*

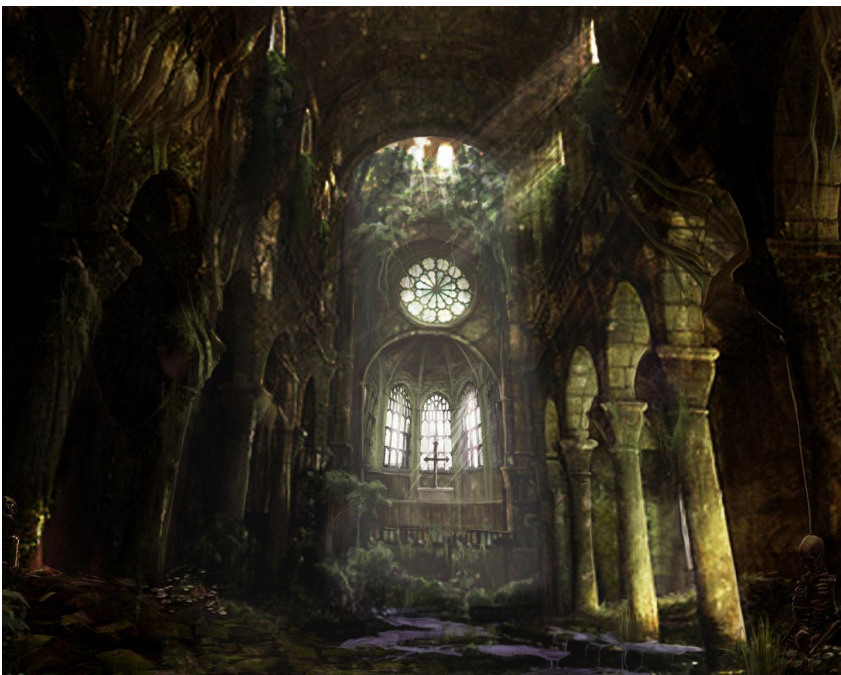
Avarim. A large landmass with varied biomes and microclimates, spanning from stark mountain ranges and dense forests to open fields and an expansive coast.

Aldo. The birthplace and hometown of the courier, Brennan. A backwater town on the frontier of the Protectorate, Aldo is just the kind of place that invites attack from roving Deceivers. Our story starts here.

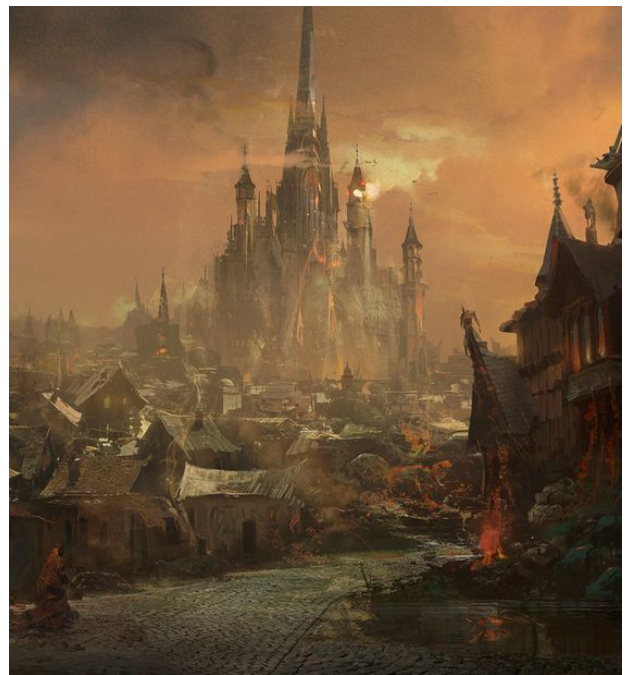
The Pilgrim's Road. The central thoroughfare that cuts through the heart of the Protectorate, all the way to the capital, Stanislon. Heavily patrolled by the Bulwark.

The Unguarded Lands. Untamed and Uncharted regions beyond the control of the Protectorate. This is where Emerged roam freely, and the Protectorate's outcasts make their home.

Stanislon. The capital city of the Protectorate and the seat of the Ecclesial High Patriarch. Once the shiniest jewel in the Protectorate's crown, today the city amounts to little more than a sprawling urban slum, its poorly maintained architectural marvels the only echoes of the great metropolis it once was. Our courier, Brennan, is charged with delivering the holy relic to the Seventh Filiarch there.



The shattered land of Avarim retains many glimpses of beauty, echoing the golden age that blossomed under the Knights Refulgent.



Stanislon — the capital of the Protectorate and seat of the Ecclesial High Patriarch.

Brennan of Aldo

The Player Character



Born 27 years ago in the outskirt town of Aldo, Brennan provides for his sister and mother by offering his services as a local courier. He's quiet, agile, and reserved, as his profession draws only the most deft and unscrupulous.

When his sister is wounded in a Deceiver attack, his family becomes the target of a Bulwark "purge." Brennan guides them to safety among the last survivors of the Knights Refulgent. The Refulgent employ his services, charging him with delivering a thurible containing their last holy relic, an ever-burning ember, to Damien, a sympathetic Filiarch in the capital. With the thurible, they believe Damien can prove the order is alive and still carrying divine favor, empowering him to rally the other Filiarchs and elect a High Patriarch who can reinstate the Refulgent, restoring order to Avarim.

Along the way, Brennan will discover his sister has abandoned all hope of healing her wounds, instead opting to lay waste to the Bulwark among the ranks of the Vengeant. As his journey nears its end, he must seek either to heal or destroy her, bearing the weight of knowing even his split-second decisions will echo in history for ages to come.

Factions & Organizations



The Emerged

A host of relentless, hostile creatures (changeling-like Deceivers & siren-like Callers among them) who wander unfettered into human settlements from the unguarded lands beyond.



The Knights Refulgent

Disbanded by the alleged deathbed decree of the last High Patriarch, this once-powerful martial order held the Emerged at bay for decades, and secured an unprecedented golden age.



The Ecclesia

The exclusive religious and governing body of the Protectorate. Ruled by the High Patriarch, or the Filiarchs representing the Ecclesia's 13 Sanctuaries in his absence.



The Bulwark

A loose network of fanatical militias who carry out haphazard attacks on the Emerged and purge settlements suspected of colluding with them or harboring "marked" survivors.



The Faithful

The civilians of the Protectorate. Though their spiritual and physical health is the Ecclesia's primary responsibility, they are often the first to suffer when order gives way to chaos & fear.



The Vengeant

Unwilling to seek healing and defiant in the face of those who would have them purged, the Vengeant are a violent cult of survivors who embrace their marked wounds, dealing out justice for the apathy of the Ecclesia and the cruelty of the Bulwark.

Key Characters



Dyanne – Brennan's Mother

Faithfully raised Brennan and his sister, Naea, after her husband was conscripted and died in an Emerged ambush.



Naea – Brennan's Sister

Marked by a Deceiver in an Emerged attack on Aldo. Resents the Bulwark and chooses to embrace the dark powers of her mark, rather than be healed.



Raymond – Local Bulwark Captain

Craven leader of Aldo's Bulwark. Conscripted Brennan's father and sent him to his death.



Wulfred – The Marked Warlock

A demon-marked warlock and former client of Brennan's. Lives on Aldo's outskirts and knows the remnants of the Knights Refulgent.



Ezran – Local Refulgent Warden

Heads up the remnants of the Knights Refulgent in a secret encampment near Aldo. Accepts Brennan's family into his care.



Grandmaster Garrith

Fatally wounded leader of the Knights Refulgent. Entrusts Brennan with a thurible containing the last of the sacred ever-embers.



Nymra – The Lost Dryad

An orphaned Dryad, mistaken by the Bulwark for a Deceiver, who Brennan returns to the safety of her mistrusting Dryad clan.



Cosima – The Noble Captain

Leads a Bulwark regiment in a southern settlement of the Protectorate. Helps Brennan navigate through a horde of Emerged.



Olyn – The Thirteenth Filiarch

One of the Ecclesia's 13 Filiarchs. Has refused to speak or vote on the election of a new High Patriarch since Kraxos II's death.



Damien – The Seventh Filiarch

One of the Ecclesia's 13 Filiarchs. Leads the sub-faction of Filiarchs supporting the Knights Refulgent and doubting Kraxos II's decree.



Iarnago – The Fourth Filiarch

Architect of the forged decree to disband the Knights Refulgent. Pulls strings from the shadows in the High Patriarch's absence.



Kraxos II – The High Patriarch

The late pontiff of the Ecclesia, whose lifeless body sits on the throne until the election of the next High Patriarch.

Plot Beats

Missions & Objectives

Act I

Aldo - Get work from your handler at the edge of town.

Discretion - Deliver an order to a marked warlock in the Unguarded lands, and return a vial to the Governor's mansion.

The Purge - In the wake of an Emerged attack on Aldo, find your family and save them from the Bulwark's Purge.

Refuge - Track down the warlock and question him about the Knights Refulgent. Seek out the Refulgent for protection.

A Dire Message - Deliver a message from the local Refulgent, who risk exposure, to their Grandmaster in the south.

Ever-ember - The camp is under Bulwark attack. Find the Grandmaster and agree to deliver the thurible to Stanislon.

Flight of Fire - As the Bulwark closes in, escape through the fire line they're burning through the forest.

Into the wilds - With the Bulwark behind you, survive the Emerged-infested forest. Use the thurible as a guide.

Act II

The Nymph - Reunite an orphaned nymph you encounter along the way with her mistrustful tribe.

Vengeance - Escape capture by the Bulwark. Survive an execution of alleged Vengeant, and the Vengeant's retaliation.

Broken Siege - Help a local Bulwark captain break through a Siege of Deceivers to rescue a mountain settlement.

The Call - Come face-to-face with monstrous Callers as you take the shortest route to Stanislon.

Act III

Stanislon - Find a way into the heavily guarded city.

A Powerful Ally - Locate and make contact with Filiarch Damien.

Cloak or Dagger - Address the problem of Filiarch Iarnago (blackmail or assassinate).

Deceived - Survive the Deceiver attack on the capital, orchestrated by the Vengeant.

One Blood - Face off with your sister, Naea. Attempt either to heal or destroy her.

Epilogue

Homecoming - Return to Aldo and help your family begin a new life.

Strange Reports - Assist the local charter of the Refulgent as they investigate strange reports on the outskirts of town.



Tone & Theme

Tone:

Dark. The tattered world of *Undeceived* is built on the worst of human nature and emotion. Fear, greed, selfishness, weakness, and despair reign as Emerged roam free.

Tense. Brennan is not a knight, so he relies on the shadows, rather than the sword, to survive. Still, between suspicious townsfolk, the fanatical Bulwark, Deceivers, and Iarnago's assassins, there's plenty working to kill him. Brennan needs to stay on his toes if he wants to survive.

Hopeful. Despite the dark world around him, Brennan carries, in his thurible, the source of the Refulgent's hope -- the hope of all Avarim. His actions (or inactions) have a direct impact on the characters and world around him. The game will also feature moments of both emotional and graphical beauty (think Giraffe scene from *The Last of Us*) which remind us that even this dark world is one worth saving.



Themes:

Weakness, fear, and despair are a potent recipe for the reign of evil. When evil reigns, the only possible antidote is strength, courage, and hope.

If there's good to be done, or evil to be thwarted, take action yourself. There's never any guarantee anyone else will come along and do it for you.

As dire as circumstances get, we always have a choice when it comes time to act. Whatever choices we make will have consequences that echo in our lives and the lives of those around us -- and perhaps even in the annals of history.

Narrative Description of Gameplay

NOTE: Player-controlled actions are **CAPITALIZED**. This account is an example of a gameplay experience. In actual gameplay, whenever Brennan faces an obstacle, he can choose from multiple courses of action.

When Brennan returns to his hometown of Aldo, smoke rises high in the sky. *Deceivers*, he mutters. A clamor -- wailing and shouting, clashing steel, crackling flame -- rings out from beyond the front gate, where two Bulwark soldiers block the path.

He tries to slip between them, but they push him back. "Oy, where do you think you're going?" says one. "Trying to get himself purged," sneers the other. He'll have to try another way... Brennan **LEAPS** up on some nearby barrels and **VAULTS** over the wall, landing with a roll on the other side. The destruction is total: burnt buildings, overturned carts, a pile of smoldering corpses.

He **WALKS** up the main road, past a dilapidated house where two Bulwark soldiers drag out an old man. He feebly protests as he's hogtied and thrown on the back of a horse. At the road's end, Brennan comes to a modest church, groaning and covered in ash and embers. With all other outlets obstructed, he **LOOKS** up and sees a window in the steeple. He **CASTS HIS GRAPPLING HOOK** at the ledge, shattering the glass, and **CLIMBS** up the rope into the church. Inside, he **BALANCES** on a beam, navigating carefully across until an iron-cast chandelier comes crashing down, splitting the beam and forcing him to **JUMP** to the nearest ledge.

On the other side, he **DROPS** down into an alley, alerting a large Bulwark soldier who turns to face him. He raises his axe. "Looters," the soldier spits. "Worst kind of scum." Brennan sprints towards the soldier and **SLIDES** between his legs. Back out on the open road, he **SEARCHES** for his home. Bulwark soldiers set fire to the buildings all around him. Through the ash and smoke, he catches a **GLIMPSE** of his house. [The glimpse mechanic reflects Brennan's courier instincts, which help him pay special attention to his available options in time-sensitive moments.]

He **SPRINTS** over and tries to **INTERACT** with the door. It's locked. He backs up and **CHARGES** it, bursting it open. On the floor, his mother shields his sister with her body, shakily raising a knife. She lowers it as she recognizes her son. "Brennan..."

[CUTSCENE: Brennan suggests they relocate to a nearby town when his mother reveals that his sister has been marked by a Deceiver. Now, they must flee into the forest.]

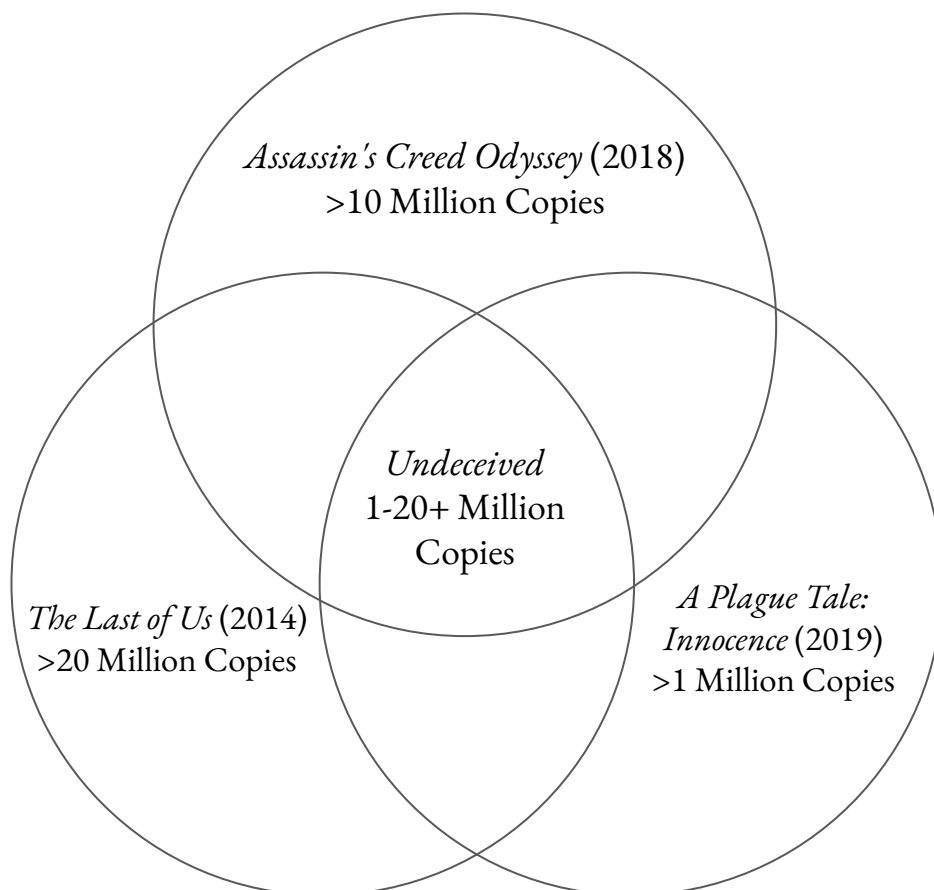
CROUCHING, Brennan leads his family as they sneak along their house. On the other side, Bulwark soldiers ransack an open-air market. Brennan signals his family to **HOLD** and sneaks forward, **HIDING** behind a stall. A nearby Bulwark soldier overturns a chest and distracts himself, picking coins off the floor. Brennan signals for his family to **FOLLOW**, and they catch up with him. In a similar fashion, he leads them towards the rear gate, **SWITCHING** from cover to cover until they reach the mill.

With the rear gate in sight, their path is blocked by a soldier dragging the miller's son out into the street. The soldier lifts his head by his hair, revealing a purple-blue mark on his neck. He pushes the boy to the ground and raises his sword. Brennan takes in the scene, catching another **GLIMPSE** of his options. Rather than moving by behind the mill, Brennan **SNEAKS** up behind the soldier. When he gets close, he performs a **STEALTH TAKEDOWN**, saving the miller's son, who scurries off. As he slips his blade between the soldier's armor, his sister **SCREAMS**. Though his mother quickly covers her mouth, the nearby Bulwark soldiers are alerted and **SEARCHING** for them. Brennan **SPRINTS** to the back gate and motions for his family to **FOLLOW**. They have made it out and into the forest, where new dangers await them.

Marketing

Unique selling points:

- Deep, original IP rife with opportunities for prequel, sequel, and spin-off content.
- Takes inspiration for world and gameplay from hit titles with incredible penetration.
- In *Undeceived*, nothing is as it seems. Players will pull back layers upon layers of mystery, drawing them deeper into the world.



Development



Technological challenges

Undeceived's success depends on an experience that feels smooth and immersive. This requires building or employing a **robust navigation system** that seamlessly animates Brennan around a complex world in alignment with player volition, and accompanying **visuals** to bring that world to life.

Timeline

As an original IP debut for a mid-to-large sized studio, *Undeceived* is designed around a **4-year development timeline**. This could likely be reduced to 3 - 3 ½ years in the hands of an experienced Sony-owned development team with an existing engine that can accommodate high graphical fidelity and parkour navigation mechanics, such as Sucker Punch, Insomniac Games, or Guerrilla.

Budget

In order to effectively demonstrate innovative gameplay and the cutting edge technology of Sony's latest consoles, *Undeceived* requires a budget of **\$60 million** to compete for market share with other AAA titles.

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Born and raised in San Francisco, California, Nicholas is a graduate of the University of Southern California, where he received a Bachelor of Arts in Narrative Studies and minors in Video Game Programming and Russian Language.

After a brief stint in UX, he made the jump to game writing, earning his first credit on Sword and Axe LLC.'s *Dark Deity*. Today, he is employed full-time as a Writer for Deviation Games, where he contributes to the development of an new original IP for PlayStation.