

Draft v4.5.7

WIP (add concept art)

FIRST SPRINGS

A Himalayan action RPG — brain, brawn, or trickery.
You have 30 days. The Ritual will not wait.

The Hook

"Take down the beast in human skin.

Protect the human in beast kin.

Clergy, merchants and occult — silk from the same cocoon."

Genre

Action RPG · Story-rich · Detective

Visual

Hyper-saturated Himalayan fantasy — bold reds, golds, violets, turquoise

Platform

PC + Console

USP

Three paths through every obstacle. One truth behind all three.

The World

The City of First Springs is a walled Himalayan city-state — historically closed to outsiders. At its heart: a geothermal vent that powers the legendary Ritual. At its edges: three factions who each control access to it.

The Clergy

Public face of the Ritual. Privately terrified the geothermal vent is failing.

The Merchants' Guild

Sell access and information. Know the Ritual is partially theatre. Profit anyway.

The Occult

Sub-faction inside both groups. The only ones performing the Ritual correctly — for the wrong reasons.

"Clergy, merchants and occult — silk from the same cocoon."

The Story

Act 1 — Arrival & The Clock

A traveller enters the city at Day 1 with 30 days on their permit and a genuine illness. The city presents itself as welcoming. It isn't.

Act 2 — The Three Paths Converge

Each investigation path reveals the same truth: three factions, one organism. The Ritual is not a cure — it is a culling mechanism, maintained to control population. The traveller was not sick by accident.

Act 3 — Choice

Disrupt the Ritual and expose all three factions. Participate anyway — the cure is real even if the mechanism is corrupt. Or use what you know to become the fourth power. No canonical ending.

Core Mechanics

Rhythm Combat

Bloodborne rally · Sekiro parry · Hi-Fi Rush beat-sync.
Attack on the rhythm. Hits that land on-beat deal +15%.
The game never tells you this.

Investigation System

Collect 2 of 3 evidence items → unlock deduction dialogue. Evidence is in the environment, not marked.

Trickery & Dialogue

Three-node branching dialogue. Failed trickery has permanent consequences — NPCs remember. Reputation is shared across factions.

The 30-Day Calendar

Global day counter. Visible in the environment (crowd density, shop states, weather), not as UI. Some events permanently miss if the player doesn't move.

Weapon Mastery

Each weapon type has a separate XP tree. Mastery unlocks combo extensions and stance abilities. Choosing your weapon is a commitment.

NPC Relationships

Disposition -100 to +100. Affects dialogue options, information sharing, romance and rivalry (Day 20+).

Vertical Slice — The Three Paths

One location. Three ways in. Each path mechanical, distinct, and replayable. This is the pitch-in-play.

⚔️ Combat Path

Guard captain blocks the gate. Fight through — full combat system, parry/rally. Captain's body persists on return visit.

🔍 Detective Path

3 evidence items in the zone. Collect 2 of 3 → unlock deduction dialogue with gate official. Official records you as permitted. Returns: nod, immediate entry.

🎭 Trickery Path

3-node dialogue tree with the official. Success: waves you through as a merchant. Failure: official becomes suspicious, combat is mandatory. Teach the player to read NPC states.

All three paths converge at the gate. Different time, different feeling, same entry point.

Visual & Audio Direction

Hyper-saturated Himalayan fantasy. Bhutanese dzong geometry + anime-influenced character design + bold colour pushed into painterly territory. The city is surreal and dreamlike — not a travelogue. Reds, golds, violets, turquoise.

Day Lighting

High-altitude directional sun. Strong shadow contrast. Fabric banners casting coloured light.

Night Lighting

Lanterns, incense smoke. Geothermal amber glow from below. Cool moonlight above.

The Undercroft

Bioluminescent moss. Geothermal vents. Deep blue-purple shadows. Pre-colonial architecture.

Music

Traditional strings (piwang, dramnyen), singing bowls, bells. Distorted undertones deepen as truth is discovered.

Diegetic Singing

Citizens sing in streets. Hymns contain narrative information. Singing follows NPCs, not locations.

Combat Audio

Each weapon has a pitch. Hits on-beat have a distinct resonance. Misses are soft. Hits are loud.

Market & Audience

First Springs sits at the intersection of three well-served audience categories — each of which is currently underserved by games with Himalayan or Himalayan-adjacent settings.

Action RPG Entry Point

Age 12+. Accessible rhythm combat. The parry exists but is never demanded — the game scales to the player's willingness to learn.

Detective / Lore Archaeologists

Deep faction investigation, multiple truth layers, permanent event system. The city rewards players who pay attention.

Performers

Mastery-driven combat with Hi-Fi Rush rhythm bonus, Bloodborne rally, Sekiro parry precision. The skill ceiling is high and visible from the first encounter.

0 comparable games with Himalayan city-state setting + detective + rhythm combat combination.

Technical Foundation

Built on the shared reactive architecture developed for UKoR and Koel. First Springs inherits the faction standing system, NPC memory bank, and world state flags — all built once, deployed across the studio slate.

Engine

Unreal Engine 5 · Blueprints-first · C++ post-funding

Faction System

Port of BP_KoelSubsystem — FName disposition map, WorldStateFlags Set, NPCMemoryBank with decay

30-Day Calendar

BP_CountdownSubsystem (GameInstanceSubsystem) — day clock, faction event triggers, environmental visibility

Combat

BP_CombatComponent with rhythm bonus (beat-sync), rally (Bloodborne), parry window (0.4s)

Investigation

BP_DeductionComponent — evidence actor component, deduction unlock condition, narrative payload

Dialogue

BP_DialogueTree — data-driven per NPC (DA_DataAsset), tone modifier on relationship standing

Roadmap & The Ask

Now (Jun 2026)

GDD + Pitch deck complete. Blueprint scaffold begins on IGDC side track.

Nov 28, 2026

Vertical Slice: 3-path Ritual Gate zone, packaged Windows build, pitch video (3 playthroughs).

Jan 2027

Publisher pitch round with all six studio slate builds. Kickstarter pre-launch.

Post-funding

Full 5-district city. 30-day calendar fully implemented. 3 faction endings.