Sprout analysis

Game name: Sprout

Developer: Jeff Nusz, Mindful Mammoth

Publisher: Mindful Mammoth

Play time: 33 minutes (Completed the game 2 times and all achievements)

Sprout is a short puzzle game published by Mindful Mammoth in Steam with a very small size of 80MB as the graphic was just doodle art style and a very short length of the game that could be completed in no time. The game is all about choosing different choices to get through obstacles and reach the goal. It sounds like there is nothing about this game and would be boring, but it turns out that in the Steam store, overall reviews from every players is considered "Overwhelmingly Positive". And that is why this analysis essay is going to look into Sprout's composition and find out how such a small game like this draws attention from people and get a lot of positive feedbacks.

A brief story of Sprout is about the magical seed fallen from a coconut tree in an island, it wishes to become an oak tree. To pursue its dream it needs to find the way to go to the oak woods which is very far away from where it came from. The main objective of this game is to help the seed move through places to reach the oak woods where it wanted to go.

The main loop of Sprout is to choose which kind of plant the seed should grow into, to do so the seed needs to know about the plant of player's choice first. For example, to grow into the persimmon tree, the seed has to know it before. Moment inside the loop is pretty long for each animation when the seed grows and becoming the seed again, and the animation cannot be skipped which is quite annoying for some player who got stuck in the level and going back and forth over and over again. Still, it actually helps preventing player from skipping too much and made a mistake. For the segment of Sprout, verse segments takes action in the most part of the game. All about this verse segments is the player growing the seed to make it go through obstacles. It sure sounds weird but Sprout actually has just one episode, as mentioned before the game could be finished in less than 30 minutes because of the length of the game. With only 1 short episode, there is no checkpoints or save files, player only has to complete the game or they will have to start from the beginning if the game was quitted while it was incomplete. The intensity curve of Sprout would likely to reach the highest point when the player has finally figured out the way to solve the puzzle of each obstacle and reach the next area. Player would get an accomplishment aesthetics along with the pride of being smart enough to solve the puzzle on their own.

Looking into the "Overwhelmingly Positive" reviews in Steam community commenting about Sprout, players mostly talked about how much they like the way it is a casual puzzle game with a great aesthetic they get from the art style in this game which they said "cute". The way it is

a casual child-like puzzle game eases up the nerves player would possibly get from the other hard puzzle game with urgency in the gameplay when they couldn't figure out how to complete the stage. As it is a puzzle game which is played by making decisions, it gives player a curiosity when they passed the obstacles. Player would think back what will happen if they choose the other choices besides the one that is already picked and start going back and forth over and over again for an enjoyable discovery aesthetics. Still, before trying to discover new things from what they have passed, player needs to think quite much on how they will adapt the seed's power with the environments inside the game. For example, growing into a green pea will provide a vine which latches onto a surface, it is suitable in a situation when player has to reach for a higher terrain. Overall, Sprout is still a lot more relaxing than the other puzzle games like Candy Crush Saga which gives quite a big pressure to player when they are inches away from meeting the losing condition of having no moves left before completing the level's objectives.

The so called "cute" art style from the reviews of Steam users is quite of a novelty game art. Not many game turns out well with such doodle art style like the game called Doodle Jump which was greatly famous back when its first release in IOS App Store. But Sprout did, the game truly tried to sell the art style and it was a great success. The way they used colored pencil to draw and colorize the background, sprites and UI gives a nostalgic feeling like being a child making a story up from the imagination through

a piece of paper. The color is not too saturated making the visual clean and clear for eyes.

In conclusion, Sprout is a fast-paced casual puzzle game which gets a great amount of positive reviews from the Steam users who played this game. The story of the game takes place in a fictional world with a seed which has special power of growing into any plant it has befriended with, its goal is to reach the oak woods to grow into the oak tree which leads to the player's objective of helping the seed travelling across the land to the oak woods. The loop of this game is to let player decide which plant the seed should grow into to get to the next area. With such simple puzzle, Sprout eases player's anxiety unlike other puzzle games which just gets more intense and pressuring players. For the doodle art style which is rarely seen in video games turns to be the main selling point of the game with such simple drawings and clear visuals. From all of these it tells that Sprout is one of a kind of casual game that it gets many compliments and being added into the Steam community's liking.