***DRAFT Design Document***

***“Once Upon A Time In Misthaven”***

***Pixel Brothers***

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What is it?

“Once upon a time in Misthaven” is a top down, hack and slash adventure game where the player needs to fight through various levels and arenas in order to progress.

What we want this game to do is make the player have an emotional attachment towards the characters and really understand the emotions they are going through. Since our game is very story heavy, we think that this can be done well. We also want players to have fun with our game. Since our game is a hack and slash with some unique levels, we think that players will find our game fun to play.

The look and feel of the game is inspired by old Nintendo games like Pokémon and The Legend of Zelda, where they have an 8-bit stylistic feel. Our game will be represented with 8-bit maps and characters that are very minimalistic in design, but still give the impression that they are characters with depth. Our game is unique as the levels in the game are designed as explorable arenas that the hero has to search, each one having a different theme than the previous one. For example, one of our arenas will have a ghostly spirit chasing down the player and spawning monsters. The ghost cannot be hit normally, so the player needs to find its weak point. In order to progress, the hero will have to defeat the monster. We also have a unique currency system that acts as a time saver. If your hero faints in the level, he will be revived back in the village, but he can also give a certain amount of “plasma” to a wandering spirit in order to revive him at the start of the level. This is why currency is much rarer in our game so that we can give players a challenge.

Interact Modes

Storytelling

Synopsis:

In “Misthaven”, our hero needs to rescue his kidnapped wife from the elders of their island before she is sacrificed to the Dragon of Serapion. Along the way, he needs to save the other 4 sacrifices and he learns that he must destroy this Dragon once and for all.

Backstory:

The planet of Misthaven, a peaceful planet where everyone got along and there were no problems. There were no wars, crimes, or corrupt leaders. The planet of Serapion, a planet whose inhabitants wanted nothing else but power, had noticed Misthaven and how vulnerable the planet was. Thus, they sent a dragon to the planet and ordered it to assume control over the inhabitants by any means necessary. This dragon began smashing the planet and breaking up the land. Eventually, Misthaven became a planet of five floating islands. The people of Misthaven were so terrified of the dragon that they decided in order to keep it happy, they had to sacrifice themselves as food. Every month, one person was chosen from each island as a sacrifice.

Our hero was very young when the dragon of Serapion attacked. He grew up in a world that was ruled by this dragon. He lost both his mother and father to the dragon as they were chosen by the island elders as sacrifices. He vowed that someday he would put a stop to the dragon and become a hero, but he was never a fighter. He eventually gave up the dream when he married his wife. Months went by as they saw their fellow villagers leave and never come back. The following month however…

Story:

Both our hero and his wife had been placed on the sacrifice list by the elders for some time now. Our hero was sure that he was next, since he was on the list before his wife was. The night before the sacrifice was announced while the hero was sleeping, he heard the sound of struggling and shuffling. He woke up to see his wife getting dragged out of the house by two thieves. The hero dashed after them and tried to save his wife, but he was too slow, he couldn’t catch up. He had to save her, she was his everything. He grabbed a weapon and vowed that he will save his wife and village. The hero then went into the island transport portal and went to rescue his wife.

Action

“Misthaven” is a hack and slash adventure game where the expectation is for the player to fight against the monsters in order to save the sacrifices. The game will send many types of monsters to kill the player ranging from simple creatures from the forest who are looking for food, monsters who`s only satisfaction is from killing anything, and cultists who will do anything to stop the player from interrupting the sacrificial ritual. The game will also have some boss fights in the game that would require different strategies to be able defeat them. The ghost in the second level chases the player around the map to the final boss which is a dragon that the player will have to dodge incoming fire balls. When the player defeats the boss at the end of a level, a portal would open to allow access to the next level.

In terms of arsenal equipment, the player has a sword as his primary form of attack. The sword is used to attack any enemies nearby. The sword would damage one hit point whenever the player hits a monster. The player can also cast powerful spells ranging from energy shots, to an area of effect spell to a spell which even allows the player to heal themselves. However, casting spells costs plasma and each spell’s cost differs depending on the effectiveness of the spell. One example would be the healing spell that would cost a lot of plasma due to how effective it would be for the player to regenerate health.

Currency

Player Progress

While playing “Once upon a time at Misthaven”, the player will be progressing through the game by unlocking and going through a series of portals by completing the levels using hack and slash mechanics. That is the main progression theme of the game.

When starting the game for the first time, the player will start off at the first level in the village. The first level is the tutorial where the player will be able to interact with the NPC’s to learn more about Misthaven. It also becomes the revive point when you die in future levels. There will also be combat training in the first level and will be introduced when the player gets interrupted while talking to an NPC by a flock of seagulls that come into town. The player will have to get rid of the seagulls by using abilities. This will train the player for future combat

The game has a total of 4 levels including the first level which is the town. Each of the levels are unique and have a variety of monsters, puzzles and content. To get through these levels and progress through to the next level, the player will be able to use hack and slash mechanics and a spell(s) against the monsters and other enemies within the maze. In the final level of the game, the player will have to save a sacrifice from a fire breathing dragon.

As the player progresses through the game, they can get stronger by obtaining more plasma to be able to use the spell(s) more often. As the player gets stronger, they can defeat more difficult monsters and complete harder levels within the game. Although, plasma can be very difficult to find in the game, especially as the game progresses.

Player Resources

In “Once upon a time at Misthaven”, the player has 2 main resources. The first resource would be the plasma. The plasma acts as a source of currency within the game. The plasma can also be used to spawn closer to the current level. It can also be used to activate the spellbook which allows the player to use spells for a certain amount of plasma. To obtain the plasma, a player can collect it on his path to complete the quests/levels and further themselves within the game. Plasma can become very difficult to obtain as the game progresses. This is due to the fact that plasma is very powerful as it can be used to cast spells and allow you to save time and defeat the game quicker.

The spellbook is the second resource and it can be accessed mostly anytime or place in the game. The spells within the spellbook can help you get out of sticky situations and avoid dangers or loss of lives. To use the spells in the spellbook, the player must have the necessary amount of plasma.

The player is capable of casting spells in the game to use against the enemies in the game. However, magic costs plasma to cast and are not plentiful within the game. Unfortunately, because magic is a powerful spell, it can be too useful of a tool that players may ignore the use of the hack and slash mechanic. The cost of plasma will fix this problem because the player will have to be careful with how often they use spells in case of losing all their plasma.

Rewards

Checkpoints, Saving and Continuing

In “Misthaven”, checkpoints are of major importance for the game due to the length of the game in which the players will experience. They will spend a lot of time battling monsters or completing quest and there is a chance that the players may face defeat in their progress or where the players would need to leave the game. This can be a frustrating situation as progression can take some time to complete, especially when having to complete it again from scratch, and make players find the game repetitive and frustrating. The checkpoints, as the name suggest, would allow the players’ current progress to be saved in case the players leave or die in-game. Usually the game would set the checkpoint system on as a default option but players can turn the option off if they feel daring enough. If the player happens to leave the game, the game would make the checkpoint as the up to date save access and allow the continue option in the menu to access that file.

As previously mentioned before, there will be times that players would have to leave the game to do something. if the player is about to progress through to the next level by going through the portal, the player would be given the option to save the overall progress before accessing the next level. The save option will advise the player to make a save before progressing to the next level. The advantage of the saving over the checkpoint is that the player could just explore the next level if they wish to without having to make any progress for future purposes. Like the checkpoint, players can access the save file in the menu if the player makes the save before a level without any checkpoint progressing in that file.

The game can be difficult and there is no guarantee that the player would be able to complete the game in just one attempt. The players will experience death, halting the game’s progression. However, death in “Misthaven” is not absolute as players can retry the progress in the game. Should the player die; there are two options for the player to restart. The first option would allow the players to return to the last checkpoint that the player made with absolutely no cost. The second option for the player is to restart at the same position, costing them plasma. In order to ensure that this option does not harm the experience of the game, the cost of the plasma can be costly and due to the rarity of the plasma, this option should be reserved for emergency uses only.

U.I.

One of the important things for the player to understand about the game is to learn the User interface, or UI, of the game. The first UI that the player would encounter in the game is the starting menu where the players have access to New Game, Continue, Options or Exit. When the player press left or right, the menu selection would move to the next selection for the player to access when hitting enter to select. New Game would allow gamers to begin the game from the start; Continue would allow players to return to the current progression of the game, Options would allot the players to edit the default settings of the game to meet the player`s play style and Exit which allows the players to exit the game overall.

During in-game, the player will have 3 UI Symbols in the game. The first of the symbols is the hearts, located in the upper left corner of the screen. This symbol would represent the overall health of the player, showing how much is left and how much is lost. Each heart would represent 2 hit point that the player can take, once there`s no more hearts the player dies.

Another symbol in the game UI is the action bar in the lower right corner of the screen. The action bar displays the action that the player can perform in-game.

The upper right corner of the screen is where the score counter is kept. When a player defeats a monster, the player`s score counter would accumulate based on the amount of damage dealt to a monster. The score will not have any effect on the overall gameplay and will be used only to tally the score.

Depending on the quest`s goal, there will be other types of UI symbols made specifically for the quest`s mission. One example of this would be the Navigation compass which would allow the players to see the direction of which the players have to go to. There are also times where players will talk to npcs which brings up the Dialogue box in which displays the avatar of the person talking and the text of what the person is saying.

Gameplay Modes

Once upon a time at Misthaven, offers only a single gameplay mode: “hack-n-slash”. The game is supposed to be quick, rapid gameplay and the player must defeat the enemies in a small period of time. This mode was selected due to the style of art and gameplay that it is going for. The goal of the player is to save the sacrifice which creates a fast paced game environment. As we have an extremely short development cycle, going for a game like this we can include rpg elements without going into a full unwanted RPG. In order to make a game that is both playable and functional, there is only a single mode.

Goals

The overall goal of our game is to try and give the player an emotional as well as fun experience. We intend to do this by creating an engaging storyline and using many mechanics like hack and slash to our advantage.

Some goals that we have set for ourselves and completed are:

- Designed arena levels

- Created all arena levels

- Designed NPC’s

- Designed Mini-Bosses

- Designed the Dragon of Serapion

- Designed weapons/items/spells

- Added music/sound effects

- Designed U.I.

The main goal of our game (gameplay wise) is for the player to rescue each of the five sacrifices and eventually destroy the dragon. Each level contains many different monsters that the player needs to kill in order to progress. If a player fails to kill every monster, the portal that leads to the next level will not open.