
Wizard Cabals

where a Commandos-like game meets a fantasy setting

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1. Introduction

Disclaimer:

The purpose of this design document is to hopefully show my creative thought process as well as conveying my skills as a designer in game mechanics, narrative and level design. It is meant as a vehicle for discussion and feedback is welcome as well as any use to this material that you see fit.

Should you use any of the content for your own purposes, a mention will always be welcomed. If you manage to make a game out of this let me know. I'd love to play it!

This is not a pitch for this game, which is otherwise incomplete. Only some beginning strokes are provided on game mechanics, lore, characters, abilities and levels, as a full document would be too time consuming and defeat the purpose of it as a vehicle for discussion. Therefore, any described aspect of this game, including the name, is subject to change.

Inspiration avenues:

Many pieces of culture have inspired me to design the following game. Mostly anything related to fantasy settings that I have ever read, watched or played has done their part in one way or another. To name maybe the 3 that had a more direct impact:

- Shadow Tactics: Blades of the Shogun
- Anima: Beyond Fantasy (Spanish Pen & Paper RPG)
- Wizard Wards (Half Life 1 mod)

2. Game Genre

This game would be placed within the real-time strategy-stealth genre, in a very similar fashion to Shadow Tactics, Desperados III and the Commandos series.

The player would be commanding wizards with helpful spells to stealthily succeed through the level.

As a differentiating factor from the above mentioned games, Wizard Cabals will have an added focus on environmental puzzles in addition to getting-rid-of-enemies puzzles, along with few selected sidequests within the levels that can chain through the game, fleshing out its narrative impact.

- For environmental puzzles I mean more exactly that the different wizard skills can both be used against enemies or against the environment, showing different effects depending on the target. For example, a wizard that is able to freeze water could use the spell on a waterfall so another character can climb on top of it or use it on an enemy to immobilize it for a period of time. To ease developing, uses on the environment should be scripted and limited to specific level elements. More on this on "Character" section, where abilities are explained.
- For sidequests, I mean a system very similar to the sidequests on the Dark Souls games. The player will be presented with the choice of helping characters at certain points in the game. Successfully completing side objectives will trigger either further appearances of that same character with other needs in further levels or just a related next step on the quest story line. However! Due to this genre being already time-consuming, lengthy sidequests will hurt the pacing of the main story, which already lies in a shaky balance. Sidequests should be very few and carefully crafted to not become a nuisance towards the main objective of the level. Potentially, they could serve to add different endings and/or feed to the game's replayability. There could be a total of 3/4 questlines, each one being presented in isolation in the first 3/4 levels and the later stages sprinkled throughout the rest of the game, but never more than one sidequest per level.

3. Developing Requirements

Wizard Cabals will be a 2.5D game. More exactly a 3D game with an isometric perspective very much in the vein of the games mentioned in the previous section of this document.

To ease developing time, 2D-Sprites in isometric perspective can be used instead of 3D models, as the intended camera rotation will be static between its different possible positions.

Isometric perspective lends itself very good to grid-based systems, which this game will be based upon for building the levels. However, the player and enemy movement will be free and independent from the grid.

Every level will have a starting point and a main objective that will end the level and transition the player into the next one.

Enemies will feature scripted behaviour. The player will need to find out the pattern(s) in order to complete the main objective.

4. Player Experience

Players should feel strategic and tactical while looking at the game screen, as well as encouraged to be careful. There should be a ample amount of affordances that allow them to notice patterns and easily make gameplay-based decisions.

As Wizard Cabals deals with magic, the player should feel as powerful as a wizard when the character is in full possession of their powers, as well as fragile as a wizard after using them. To allow for this, skills need to be balanced so they can only be used either sparsely (through a cooldown), a finite amount of times per level (could potentially be increased through items found) or any other limitation that would cause players to feel exposed and vulnerable (i.e. a character can't move while a spell is active, their movement is impaired for a set amount of time after it or an after effect is triggered that could potentially draw the attention of nearby guards)

5. Core Mechanic

Making use of the different characters abilities', players need to overcome the different challenges throughout the levels and move from A to B to complete the objectives without dying in the process.

Challenges include both overcoming enemy patrols and enviromental blocks and hazards. Players sometimes will need to create their own ways to progress through the level, for example by freezing waterfalls as already mentioned or mind-controlling a bull to charge against a locked door.

6. Core Gameplay Loop

The player can perform easy physical actions like moving around, climbing ladders, opening doors, picking items, etc. and use spells against enemies or the environment until the level's main objective is reached. Game will restart from last saved point after player death.

7. Game Theme

Name: Wizard Cabals

Art: Medieval fantasy with isometric sprites (or full 3D models depending on budget and development time constraints)

Atmosphere: A fantasy setting with medieval touches similar to Sapkowski's Geralt de Rivia series. However, magic is only possible due to the existence of an atmospheric element that has been mysteriously decreasing for the last few decades in a process called "The Thinning". Powerful spells as well as fantastical creatures are a rare sight to come at the time the game takes place. Low level magic is still possible, albeit nobody is able to predict for how long still. Wizards use a mixture of this element and their own life essence to power their spells, exhausting themselves in the process (i.e. in-game they may see their movement halted or impaired for brief period of time). They naturally replenish the spent life essence by reabsorbing part of this atmospheric element. The less there is, the more exhausting is the use of magic and the harder is to perform big spells, which need greater concentrations of this atmospheric element on the spot. This rule doesn't apply fully to necromancers, more on them in the Characters section.

A brief note on the atmospheric element: Think of this element and its interaction with magic and wizards like a combustion. Combustions use fuel and oxygen and create water vapor and carbon dioxide as byproducts, then trees and plants take the carbon dioxide and return oxygen back.

Magic in this world needs the wizard's life essence (fuel) and the atmospheric element (oxygen) to then create the spell (water vapor) and a magical byproduct (carbon dioxide). This magical byproduct is then absorbed by living things, who then "exhude" the atmospheric element back to the atmosphere. The absorption of this element to refill the used life essence doesn't happen quick. This is the reason that in-game a global cooldown to all magical abilities can be imposed to a character when magic is used.

- Plot twist: Throughout the story, the characters will discover that all living things need this atmospheric element to live, too. While the cause of "The Thinning" is unclear, its further development is caused by overpopulation. However, an overpopulated world can still live a long time as the use of the element by non-magical living beings is small, although wizards wouldn't be able to exist anymore. Players will also be presented with a way of reverting "The Thinning" by being able to somehow manipulate the number of people that can develop "The Skill". Increase in wizard numbers can unintuitively increase the amount of the atmospheric element, as magical beings synthesize the magical byproduct in a more efficient way than non-magical living things. The danger is that a world with too many wizards and magical beings creating too many spells at the same time (a wizard war, for example) could altogether destroy all living things by manner of exhausting the atmospheric element too quick for it to regenerate itself.

Background Story: In the world of Osnaea, the magical and the ordinary have lived in careful balance for a long time.

Wizards have always been too few due to its intricacies being unteachable to people who isn't born with the ability to "feel" the atmospheric element that makes magic possible. And this ability is quite random, even mingling between wizards isn't a sure chance that this will happen and studies to predict newborns holding "The Skill" have failed every time.

No school or teaching facilities exist, as wizards rather wander the land looking for young kids who possess "The Skill" to take them under their wing as pupils, and namely one at a time. Parents, with kids showing weird behaviour, fearful of the strange events that sometimes happen around are sometimes too eager to give them out, in a sad outcome of affairs. However, this usually proves the only way of these kids to survive a land that otherwise would grant them an early death.

Wizards in Osnaea can usually be counted in 4 groups:

- Those that curse their skills and live in hiding among regular people, never showing their powers in public. The Deniers.
- Those that prefer the isolation of inhospitable or otherwise unsettled lands, like deep forests, to dedicate their lives to their craft and research. The Hermits.
- Those that pledge allegiance to the ruler of the land and become part of their inner trusting circles as counselors. The Wise.
- The rarest of them all, those who travel the land showing allegiance only to a personal (or collective, if there is more than one together) vision of greater good, meddling in the world's affairs in hidden and unknown ways to meet their purposes. They might form temporary alliances with other wizards, might employ themselves as spies for rulers while hiding their powers from everyone (only using them for their own purposes) or just gaze time in hiding until a proper time to act arises. Some people call them The Wanderers, although they call themselves The Observers and only very reluctantly tell others of their true nature, usually trying to pass as any of the other three types.

Due to their few numbers in relation with the normal populace, it was only a matter of time till wizards would group together in like-minded circles which they keep away from the public knowledge. Two have survived the test of time:

- The Circle of Gamus: which got its name from Argos Gamus, its founder. Comprised mostly of Wise, their main purpose is to keep in check other wizards from disturbing the public peace. Some would say their desire for control goes too far, as they actively use their positions of power in their respective governments to manage vast information nets that allows them to keep track of the existence of other wizards and keep an eye on them, specially Deniers and Hermits, who have proven (in their eyes) "to have too much of a random behaviour" in the past. They actively look for children with "The Skill".
- The Cabal of Warros: with a mixture of Wise and Observers, but sometimes even with the rare help of a cynical and/or misaffectionate Denier or Hermit, they believe that society should follow a structure of the "wisest and strongest" at the top, ruling the "weak and ignorant" below them, whether with cruelty or pityness and paternalism depending on the individual. Preferring subterfuge and conspiracy rather than open war, most of the time they seek the weakening of the different governments from the inside, putting a puppet they can control as ruler rather than one of them, as there is real risk that other wizards, and specially the Order of Gamus, would recognize such a move right away.

Not everybody is trusting of wizards in Osnaea. Specially The Brockan Empire which has avoided for centuries the infiltration of wizards in the ranks of the government and actively imprissons anybody they find that shows "The Skill".

Their lands have the greatest numbers of Deniers and Hermits. However, they don't doubt using wizards for their purposes against other kingdoms if they show unabashed allegiance and partisanship. Specially for their secret services, which are thus among the best in the world, granting them victories without as much as raising a sword sometimes.

Yet troubled times are nearing in the horizon, for the strange disappearance of Molka Tross, the last leader of the Cabal of Warros, half a decade ago in unknown circumstances coincided with the beginning of "The Thinning" , where the atmospheric element that allows the existence of magic has grown lighter ever since. This new reality has both instilled fear and joy on wizarddom, some going as far as ending their own lives, seeing no purpose in living anymore.

Hastiness has taken over the members of Gamus and Warros, making their best to keep "The Thinning" a secret from the regular people, precipitating their different plans of societal control. Specially among those in The Cabal of Warros, which see their powers dwindling day by day.

And The Brockan Empire knows, and feeling that their time is nearing to take action, they are squeezing their resources to weaken every kingdom around them. War is nearing.

8. Game Plot And Characters

Premise: Players take control of Gren Devka, an elemental wizard in the service of Queen Morallia, the ruler of Soleisha. Secret tidings from a spy of Warros that has infiltrated the Queen's court has landed him in prison.

Warros hopes to get their own agent in the place of Gren, so they can influence Morallia into an alliance with The Brockan Empire with the purpose of infiltrating it.

The spy of Warros is unknowingly following the advice of another person who he believes to be a Denier living in that land, however that Denier is actually an Observer that is part of the Empire's secret services with the task of causing ruckus and disorder in the different kingdom's courts.

Gren knows nothing of this. He needs to escape, for he has been sentenced to death following accusations of high treason against the crown. What will he learn in the quest of clearing his name?

Characters:

- Gren Devka - Elementalist: being among the very lucky few to be born of wizard parents, Gren lived a mostly peaceful life, with plenty of opportunity to learn to control "The Skill". His parents migrated to Soleisha from prosecution in The Broken Empire and managed to be accepted under the protection of Queen Morallia. He saw old age take his father and "The Thinning" take his mother. He occupied his father position in court after his death.
 - Plot twist: His father isn't dead and really joined the ranks of Warros for fear of "The Thinning" removing him and his family from their place in Morallia's court. His mother knew of this and eventually couldn't keep the secret when rumours of atrocities allegedly committed by his husband reached her, falling into depression and eventually ending her life.
- Magic Abilities:
 - Elemental Shapeshifting:
 - Heat Manipulation:
 - Shock:
 - Dust Gathering:
- Physical abilities:
 - Staff:
 - Elemental Reading:

- Issendra d'Glaces - Ilusionist: found as a young kid aimlessly wandering around the city by a Hermit and taken under her protection, she raised her and taught her to control "The Skill" after she assumed her parents had abandoned her. She showed a great ability for secrecy, subterfuge and agile combat. Eventually left her protectress after her coming of age and wanders the world as an Observer, with a clear purpose of helping troubled kids like she was.
 - Plot twist: Eventually during the adventure, Warros will reach out to her and appeal to her purpose to join their ranks, as they will promise to give her near unlimited resources to help troubled children. What will she do?
 - Magic Abilities:
 - Twisting Appearance:
 - Feigning Sound:
 - Oblivion:
 - Faking Smell:
 - Physical abilities:
 - Short knife:
 - Round Kick:
- Wallace Kolmikor - Chronologist: A Wise and member of Gamus at the service of King Mithra in the land of Blesse. A childhood friend from Gren, separated in their early teens and raised to specifically serve the purposes of Gamus in Blesse, the land with the longest shared border with The Brocken Empire. He fears and obsesses about "The Thinning" committing every bit of his free time to study it. This behaviour he mentions nobody. Glen seeks him in his escape and begs his help in clearing his name.
 - Plot twist: he will eventually find out the cause of "The Thinning", for which purpose will he use this information?
 - Magic Abilities:
 - Haste:
 - Slow:
 - Paralysis:
 - Teleportation:
 - Physical Abilities:
 - Wand Whip:
 - Swift Running:

- Lia Zneck - Naturalist: A Hermit living in the Everdeep Forest, lying between Soleisha and Blesse. Naturally antisocial and withdrawn, prefers the companion of trees and animals. Attempts of Gamus to bring into control the few Hermits in Everdeep brought her into the open to change her hideout. Elements of Blesse's military tried to violently force her to come with them to the court. Gren witness this and decides to help. She joins his quest as she doesn't see a peaceful life in Everdeep anymore.
 - Plot twist: Lia never talks about her master, a former Observer turned to Hermit with quite the knowledge about the courts from the different lands around. Knowledge that he taught her and that she shares in droplets, making the rest doubt her allegiance and trustworthiness, as they feel she manipulates them for her own purposes. She wants to vindicate herself for something but would not mention it. Her master was killed in the past by what she thought was agents of the Empire, but were really enemies he made from some members of Gamus who thought he grew too dangerously powerful.
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 - Magic Abilities:
 - Beautiful Orchid:
 - Animal Control:
 - Chamaleon:
 - Animal Shape:
 - Physical Abilities:
 - Long Blowpipe:
 - Retractable Nails:
 - Herb Gathering:

A brief note on necromancers:

- Necromancers are wildly rare in Osnaea. Usually, kids with "The Skill" will naturally develop a preference on a type of magic that is in balance with the atmospheric element permitting magic in the first place. However, necromancy corrupts the essence of life itself, thus necromancers have found out they don't absorb the atmospheric element when performing spells, but rather exclusively use their own life essence, which they never get back again, ageing them prematurely in the process. Thus the reason behind some people with "The Skill" gaining preference over this kind of magic is still unclear. In current times, they are even more feared as before, precisely due to this independence from the atmospheric element. Their power levels are kept intact while everybody else around them keep getting weaker. This doesn't make them more eager to jump to the public wizard scene and take over, though, as that would make them die rather quickly, preferring to stay in the shadows, mostly indifferent unless bothered too incessantly. Still, they don't reject a one-on-one encounter which they will most probably win. It is said that the current amount of necromancers can be counted with one hand and there are still fingers left.

- Molazar Tiodan (a.k.a. Nestor) - Necromancer: Is he a Hermit? An Observer? Sometimes even a Denier? Is he a member of Warros? He calls himself Nestor as a disguise of his real personality, because all necromancer names are well known within the wizard community. The reason Molazar joined the team is unclear. His own words "This will be fun!" with a frightening subtle chuckle before joining allows for too broad a range of interpretations. But he saved the life of the team and seems trustworthy, albeit with a special preference for dark humor and questionable methods for problem solving. For an unknown reason, during the adventure he grows fonder of the rest of the members, maybe because of all the years of solitude and rejection he has faced, finally feeling a new sense of belonging?
- Plot twist: Molazar is powerful, using him can be a kind of a "joker" to make the game a tad bit easier dynamically. However, this can be used narratively due to the very nature of necromancy already mentioned. A system of checks throughout the game can be put in place where it is compared how much he has been used by the player, making him age faster and eventually dying prematurely before the end. If he has been used sparsely, he can survive. This can lend itself to different endings or maybe even extra levels.
- Magic Abilities:
 - Raise Corpse:
 - Create Darkness:
 - Emotional Manipulation: (maximising of current emotion)
 - Imp Summoning:
- Physical Abilities:
 - Staff:
 - Commanding Voice:

9. Characters' Abilities

Gren Devka - Elementalist:

- **Magic Abilities:**
 - Elemental Shapeshifting: Gren is able to transform himself in a small pond of water, a flame of fire or a mound of dirt. However, a suitable place must be near him. A shallow hole or a wooden stick for the flame. Nevertheless, the water doesn't wet others or flow, nor does the flame exude heat (but it does light) or the dirt separate itself as that would break Gren's own body. This causes enemies to immediately suspect about what is going on if they come in touch with his shapeshifted form.
 - Gren can't move while shapeshifted nor he can shapeshift once normal again or go back to normal after shapeshifting for a brief amount of seconds.
 - Heat Manipulation:
 - **Effect on Enemies**: Gren can choose to overheat the enemy's weapon or freeze the air around them to briefly impair their movement.
 - **Effect on Environment**: Gren is able to alter certain environment elements from afar for a brief period of time, like evaporating/freezing ponds of water/waterfalls, etc. or kindling fires on flammable materials. This can open new ways to advance forward or impair enemies in different ways (i.e slipping on ice).
 - Gren can't move while the spell is being prepared and takes a couple of seconds. His movement is impaired briefly afterwards. The effect lasts only a while and is not permanent.
 - Shock:
 - **Effect on Enemy**: Gren delivers an electrical shock from his staff to an enemy in line of sight, who will fall to the ground KO'd for the same amount of time as a staff knockout.
 - **Effect on Environment**: Gren delivers a shock on a surface with an area of effect that can affect various enemies, leaving them KO'd for a shorter amount of time compared to the single effect. Can be used on water for improved effects. Be aware! it can affect Gren or allies, too!
 - Dust Gathering:
 - **Effect on Enemy**: Gren gathers dust nearby an enemy and can choose to briefly impair one sense of the enemy by placing that dust on the eyes, mouth or ears.
 - **Effect on Self/Ally**: Gren can cover himself or an ally in dust to disguise strong smells coming out from them or provide a brief camouflage on dirt terrains.
 - The effect is always temporary, Gren can't move while the spell is readied.
- **Physical abilities**:
 - Staff: Gren needs his staff to perform magic. It's his catalyst. It's made of really strong wood and he can use it to knock out enemies for a period of time.
 - Elemental Reading: Gren can evoke recent memories by touching things that have been affected by an element shortly before, like the ashes after a burning, a wet surface after a rain or a dirty object after a sand/dust storm (or strong winds).

Issendra d'Glaces - Ilusionist:

- Magic Abilities: (she can only use one spell at a time)
 - Twisting Appearance: Isse can trick nearby eyes by taking the appearance of someone in her line of sight (only people, no animals). She can even choose to take the aspect of wind, being effectively invisible (but still touchable) for a very brief period of time.
 - The spell is temporary or disappears when she decides to attack someone. She can only take the aspect of things similar to her own physical complexion.
 - Feigning Sound: Isse can trick someone's ears with the sound/voice of a nearby object or person from a distance to attract the attention of enemies to desired places.
 - There is a cooldown to this ability.
 - Oblivion:
 - Effect on Enemy: Isse will play the illusion on an enemy's mind where all memories of everything will be erased for a brief period of time. The enemy, during this time, will wander confused and aimlessly, attracting the attention of other enemies. They can bring the person out of this state with a swift slap.
 - Effect on environment: Isse creates a static and temporary small area of effect where the above mentioned consequences will be suffered by anyone entering it, even allies. This means that enemies can leave the area when aimlessly wandering.
 - Faking Smell:
 - Effect on Enemy: Isse tricks the sense of smell of an enemy for a long period of time. The effect varies on the situation. A hungry enemy may smell a nice cooked meal and abandon the patrol. An enemy around smelly animals may smell a highly increased disgusting odor that causes the enemy to run away, etc.
 - Effect on Environment: Isse creates the illusion of a very attracting odor in a static spot which will draw nearby enemies for a brief period of time.
- Physical abilities:
 - Short knife: Isse masters swift, impactful combat. She can use her short knife to damage enemies or kill/question unaware enemies. This knife is her catalyst.
 - Round Kick: A powerful area kick that can knock out up to four enemies within range. The knocked out time maximises itself with just one affected enemy and decreases with each extra affected enemy.

Wallace Kolmikor - Chronologist:

- Magic Abilities: (all area of effect spell require wallace to not move while they are active)
 - Time Manipulation:
 - Effect on Enemies: Wallace can cause a reality change around an enemy, who will move much more slower than normal without realizing it. Other enemies around will realize this, though, and be attracted.
 - Effect on Environment: Wallace can rewind or fast forward a couple of hours into the past/future of elements in an area of effect if he is certain of the state of the object in that moment of time (i.e he is able to unlock a locked door he knows it was unlocked half an hour before).
 - Paralysis:
 - Effect on Enemy: Wallace can completely negate an enemy's ability to move or talk, but the enemy will realize this and ring the alarm after the effect wears out.
 - Effect on Environment: Wallace can prevent things or people from moving within a static area of effect. The effect lasts less than when applied to a single enemy.
 - Teleportation: Wallace is able to bend space and time to his will up to a certain degree, allowing himself to teleport anywhere within a certain range, being able to reach places other can't. This uses up a fair amount of magic and he will be confused and unable to move for a few seconds after teleportation.
 - Fake Telekinesis: Similar to teleportation, Wallace can bend time and space to change the placement of objects within a certain range at will. He can also grab faraway objects with this skill. This ability can also be used to move allies, but in a far smaller range than he can teleport himself.
- Physical Abilities:
 - Wand Whip: His catalyst, a small flexible wand that he can grow at will to harm enemies or grab far away objects. He can KO or kill unaware enemies by revolving the whip around their necks. However, strong or aware enemies may avoid this and pull the wand from his hand altogether.
 - Swift Running: Wallace has internalized time manipulation to a physical level, allowing him to move very quick while the ability is active.

Lia Zneck - Naturalist:

- Magic Abilities:

- Beautiful Orchid: Lia always carries with her 5 seeds of her favourite orchid. When buried in dirt, it quickly grows in a plant of such beauty that nearby enemies are drawn to it for a period of time.
 - After a big while the plant generates a seed that Lia can gather. She may gather seeds of other orchids that she finds through the levels.
- Animal Control: Lia can temporarily take up the mind of animals in her line of sight, making them move by her command up to a certain range. For example, she can manipulate a bull to attack enemies or take down a sturdy locked door or manipulate a rat to enter a locked room through a small gap or manipulate a bird to fly away and listen to a secret conversation.
 - Lia must stay still while the controlling takes place. Moving breaks the chain.
- Chamaleon: Lia can imitate the color changing of one of her favourite animals to blend in the background for a brief amount of time. If she either moves or enemies come close enough she will be seen again.
- Healing Touch: Lia can tune herself with nature around her to heal her wounds. Other people that she touches may also be healed.
 - Anybody affected by this spell will break it when moving. It only works if there are plants or trees nearby and the healing amount and speed is affected by the nature density around: within a forest the healing may as well be almost instant, with a single plant in a closed room in a building it may take up several seconds to fully heal.

- Physical Abilities:

- Extended Blowpipe: Her catalyst. A blowpipe that can be extended to almost 2 meters long that grants great shooting range. The ammunition are darts that Lia carries with herself and can be retrieved back wherever they land. These darts may be with or without venom (see herb gathering). Without venom the impact will just annoy enemies, who will look around, another impact while alerted will make them sound the alarm. The blowpipe is rather robust and stiff and can be used to knock out enemies.
- Herb Gathering: Whether on levels with nature or regular plants elsewhere, Lia can recognize and gather herbs she can use in her darts for different effects. Namely a sleeping poison, a paralysis poison or a very quick death poison.
- Retractable Nails: Lia possesses big, strong nails she can retract at will. She can kill unaware enemies with them or climb terrain where she can stick her claws, like ice and soft stone.

Molazar Tiodan - Necromancer:

- Magic Abilities:
 - Raise Corpse:
 - Effect on Enemy (dead): Molazar can raise an enemy from the dead that will automatically fight nearby enemies (and eventually maybe killing some, depending on health and enemy might levels), creating a ruckus that the characters can take advantage of. The effect lasts a short amount of time or until the corpse is "killed" again.
 - Effect on Environment: If many dead enemies are close together nearby Molazar or he is in a graveyard, he is able to raise up to four corpses. The raised taim decreases for all corpses with each extra raised corpse (starting from just one) and Molazar can't move while the effect is active. He can't move altogether to cancel the effect. Use with caution!
 - Create Darkness:
 - Effect on Enemy: Molazar will create a curtain of pure darkness within the eyes of the enemy, effectively blinding them as long as the effect stays active. Funnily enough, evil in heart characters and beings will still remain visible to the person.
 - Effect on Environment: Molazar sets a darkness area of effect where anybody who enters will turn immediately blind and light sources will automatically be sucked out of their light. From the outside it takes the aspect of a pitch black dome that may seem like a pit depending on the angle.
 - Emotional Manipulation: Molazar will dig into the life essence of the enemy to discover the one emotion that is affecting the person the most and corrupt it to exacerbate it beyond human proportions. Angry enemies will be dominated by an unstoppable rage, Afraid enemies will run for their lives even throwing themselves at cliffs or going out of level bounds in the process, sad enemies will fall into an unfathomable depression, crying and crawling into into a baby position on the ground. This will create conmotion among nearby enemies.
 - Imp Summoning: Molazar is able to summon a demon present in the world and subjugate its will to him to help in fighting for a brief amount of time. The size and strength of the demon is inversely proportional to the time he can sustain the summon. A small imp can fly and annoy enemies, a medium imp can shoot fireballs from afar, a big imp can tear down small structures or throw enemies away.
 - As in Raise Corpse, Molazar can't move at all during the effect, not even to cancel it.
- Physical Abilities:
 - Staff: Like Gren, it's his catalyst. Done of very strong wood, it can be used to knock out enemies for a brief amount of time.
 - Commanding Voice: To unaware enemies, he can give short commands that weak enemies will follow without a doubt, like moving out of sight. To aware enemies it can make them stop attacking for a very brief period of time that Molazar can use to escape.

10. Some Enemies And Bosses

ENEMIES

Regular Enemies: The basic type of enemy, all spells affect them in full capacity. They will move out of their patrols when hearing/seeing anything suspicious. They never fight alone and will sound the alarm first and attack in groups, unless they are truly alone. They aren't familiar with magic and won't sound the alarm when they suffer or see a magic effect. They are armed and armored lightly, are of course unable of using magic and will follow the commands of any superior in the chain of command.

Liutenants: The second basic type of enemy, all spells affect them in full capacity. They will stay put in their positions unless an alarm is called. They are somewhat familiar with magic, being able to recognize the most obvious spells like oblivion, elemental shapeshifting, paralysis or create darkness. Being better armed and armored can be quite a challenge to beat, specially when more than one are present. Different versions of liutenants carry different weapons and some can also carry ranged weaponry.

Generals: A strong type of enemy that usually patrols with a small group of regular enemies. They carry a specific anti-magic device that causes no magic to function within a certain range. Along their patrol path, they may place items like this at certain guarded spots to increase security. They carry a whistle to sound the alarm in a bigger radius, attracting more allies than other enemies. Strongly armed and armored it is really hard to beat in close quarters. Magic only works partially on them and, if wearing a helmet, can't be knocked out until it's gone.

Wizards: Physically weak but wise, magic works only partially on them, being able to counter effects when they feel they are being attacked or fooled. Usually proud, they won't call for help if they see an enemy, preferring to enter combat themselves or flee and hide if they feel the foe is more powerful. They can be of any type, but also like the player characters, but will present most of the time original spells to them due to the specific nature of "The Skill" on every individual. The design of this enemy can be thought out specifically for each level.

BOSSSES

A brief note: Bosses in this game are not intended to play out like in regular action games, but more like the sniper level in Commandos 2. A strong enemy with particular powers that causes specific, original puzzles and obstacles in the level that the players need to solve and navigate through until they reach the boss, which in that case would be either beaten in a cutscene or the player must approach while remaining unnoticed to kill/KO the boss like in the last level of Shadow Tactics.

The Sitting Lord: with unique, really powerful eyes, the range of vision of this powerful wizard reaches the whole level in distance and follows a rectangular shape instead of the regular triangle. He loves sitting down at the topmost spot he can find, where he can leisurely gaze unhindered around him. His call is also far reaching, being able to set out the alarm anywhere in the level. Players must crefully navigate it while avoiding the line of sight. The Sitting Lord still needs to move his head around and his vision doesn't go through objects, giving players the opportunity of hiding behind properly placed obstacles.

Shadowlurker: This magic creature controlled by a Warros member loves the darkness and is able to move itself to any shadow in the level that is connected through other shadows from the place it currently stands. It sees perfectly in the dark but the light blinds it, so it only sees the players as long as they try to hide in the shadows, making them easy targets to patrolling guards. It attacks swiftly and then flees, informing its master who then sets off the alarm. This creature doesn't die, but can be dispelled by locking it into a dark room without shadows connecting outside of it and lighting it in a way that it doesn't cause a single shadow. This means a present player can cause shade that the Shadowlurker can use to hide if only one light source is used.

Neuros: A magical creature with psychic powers that takes upon the form of a parrot to appear cute and harmless, as well as to allow it swift movement when fleeing is necessary. It is not controlled by anybody, acting independently by pure mischief. It possesses a weaker version of Molazar's emotional manipulation and is also able to temporarily weaken its victim's strength. Flies around the level looking for the player. When found, it will put a spell on the character that will attract nearby enemies. During combat it will weaken the strength of the player. Neuros is immune to Lia's animal control. To beat the parrot, the players need to create a situation where regular enemies, also annoyed by it, will capture it.

A sidequest opportunity is presented here where the players can rescue Neuros, making an ally of it and starting a quest chain into his background and purpose in the world. He can help Wallace in his studies of "The Thinning".

Ored Azka: A specially powerful necromancer and an Observer, former leader of Warros. Molazar knows her but their relationship is never clarified to the others. She finds the party a nuisance to her own goals, which includes making sure nobody fixes "The Thinning", and is only willing to help at some key moments due to the mediation of Molazar.

The party will eventually be faced with the decision of fixing, at least partially, "The Thinning". If they decide positively about it or if Molazar is used too much by the player and dies before a certain moment in the game is reached, Ored will attack the party. Both conditions are independent and only one needs to be met.

The party will encounter her on a gruesome, dark, rainy battlefield shortly after the battle is over (The Brockan Empire against an alliance of kingdoms, the outcome of the battle may be decided by some player's decisions in previous levels). Confused survivors will attack anything moving on sight, even allies of them, and of course the player and Ored herself too.

The amount of corpses will make Ored specially powerful. She counts with deadlier versions of Molazar's spells, as well as some original ones. She is able to shoot dark homing bolts that paralyze and blind, create wraiths from the corpses that can see the player from afar (telling Ored) and instill fear in them (impairing movement) and heal her own wounds by draining the life essence of anybody alive in her line of sight. She is able to swiftly counter and dispell any attempt of the player to hinder her, like casting Issendra's Oblivion.

Survivors will annoy her and she will attack and use spells against them too. Players will only be able to beat her by patiently turning the encounter into a war of attrition, waiting for Ored to use all her life essence and die of old age. The above mentioned dispelling of players' spells counts towards this goal. She realizes this tactic, of course, however her rage will get the best of her in her last moments, driving her mad and more powerful in the last compasses of this fight. If the player manages to flee until the end, the battle will be over.

10. Technical Specifications

Chosen Engine: The game could be developed in Unity. Reasons behind would be its ease of use for a small-to-mid-size team, the readiness of online assets if it came to a point where assets could be needed that couldn't be developed in-house and its platform compatibility.

Target Platforms: As the game could be developed using Unity, target platforms include PC and Consoles.

Aspect Ratio: to account for the level of detail the levels will aim for, an aspect ratio of 16:9 with a resolution of 1920x1080 running at 30fps would be considered ideal.

Input: The game would be developed with controller input as main input source, as the control scheme will include a big range of actions that need to feel as intuitively as possible. For PC it can also be developed an alternative with KB+M. For simplicity only the controller control scheme will be included next:

Example control scheme: (PS4/PS5 controller)

- Options: pause/unpause game
- Left Stick: move character (R3: crouch/stand)
- Right Stick: rotate camera (L3: reset camera)
- L1: choose magical character skill (tap for quickly navigating through them)
- R1: choose character (tap for quickly navigating through them)
- R2: quick save
- L2: quick load
- X: use environmental object
- Square: use skill/grab body or heavy object
- Triangle: aim currently selected AoE spell
- Circle: use physical skill (hold to choose)
- Down Arrow: use inventory item
- Left Arrow: show inventory
- Right Arrow: show questlog
- Up Arrow: highlight interactable objects

12. Interface Diagramm

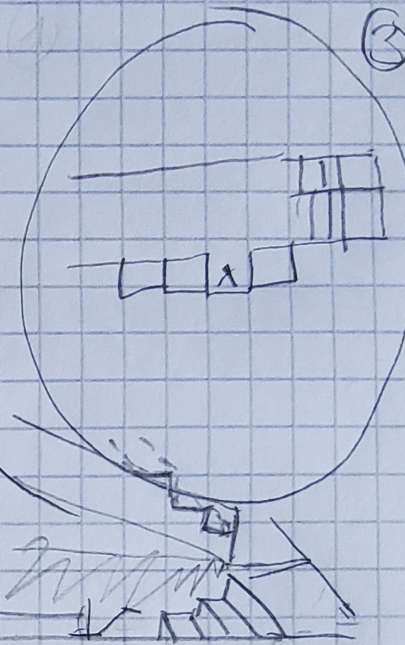
The sketch of the UI is attached next to this section. Explanations of elements are as follow:

1. Name of the greater location followed by the specific in-level location.
2. Time elapsed after last save
3. Minimap
4. Physical skills wheel
5. Magical skills wheel
6. Inventory wheel
7. Character wheel
8. Gameplay window

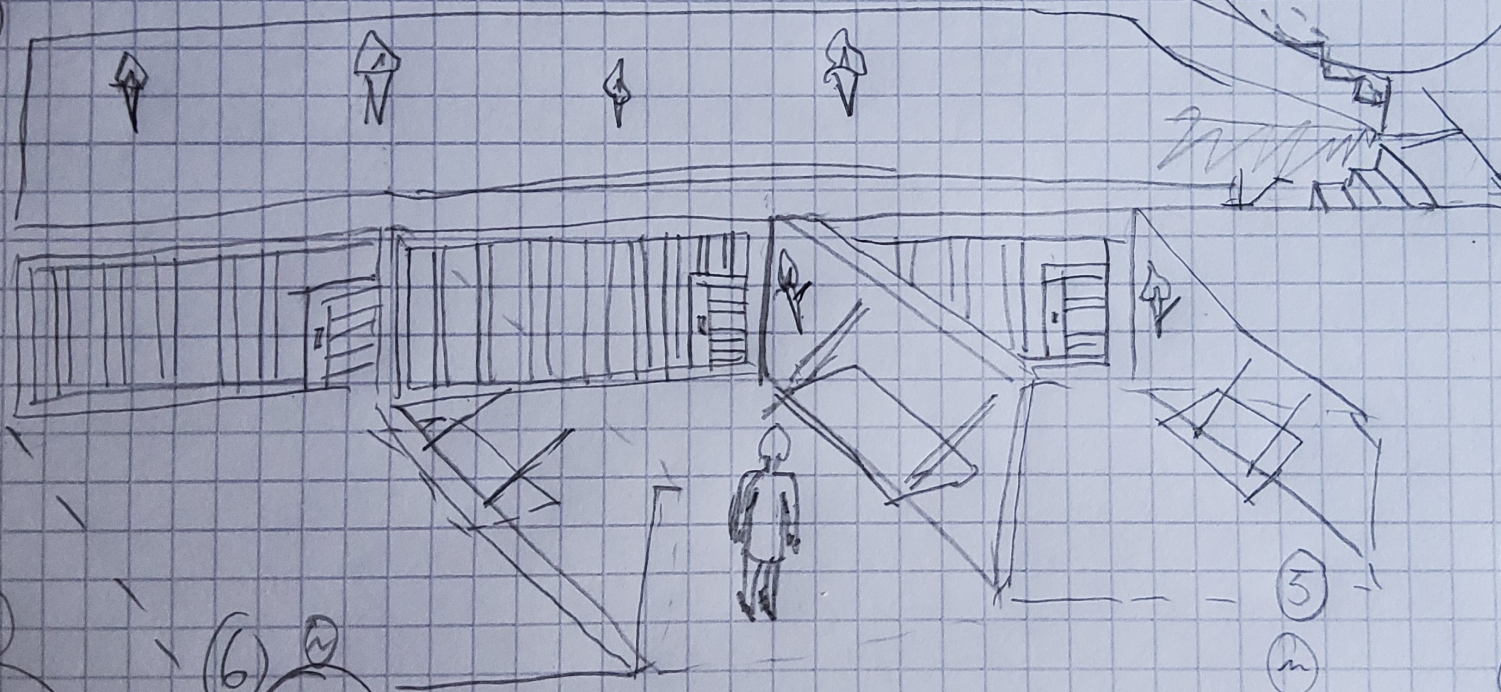
Active skills, object in the inventory and character must be appropriately highlighted for ease of recognizing what is equipped/active.

① CASTLE DUNGEON: GREN'S CELL

② 00:50



⑧

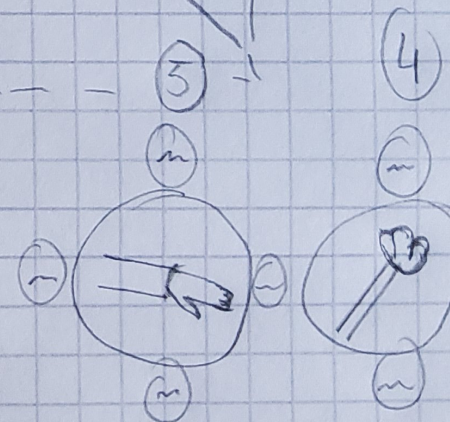
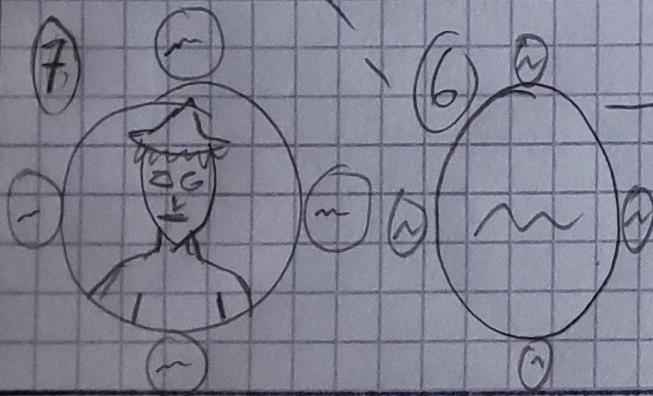


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13. First Level Events

The sketch of the first level is attached next to this section. The layout of all possible interactable objects is not exhaustive and only general ideas are given, as this is one of the main aspects bound to change when iterative process begins. Events will numbered and explained here:

Dungeon 3rd Level:

1. Gren's cell
2. Empty cells
3. Special NPC cell with sidequest
4. 3rd level guard room. Locked with 2 guards inside.
5. Hallway with a single patrolling guard.
6. Stairs up to 2nd dungeon level
 1. Underneath, half hidden in darkness is a metal small door that connects to the sewer system going to the outer walls.

Dungeon 2nd Level:

1. Stairs down to 3rd dungeon level
2. Stairs up to 1st dungeon level
3. 2nd level guard room. Empty. Air flow system connects it with guard room in 3rd level
4. Horizontal hallway with a guard patrolling from stairs to guard room.
5. Standing liutenant watching each hallway for a few seconds each.
6. Vertical hallway with a guard patrolling from stairs (2) to liutenant. Stops for a chat each time.
7. Utilities/guard stash room.
8. Empty cells.
9. Issendra's cell.
10. NPC cells. Will alert guards upon seeing any character. They change between wandering through the cell and laying down on the bunk.

Dungeon 1st Level:

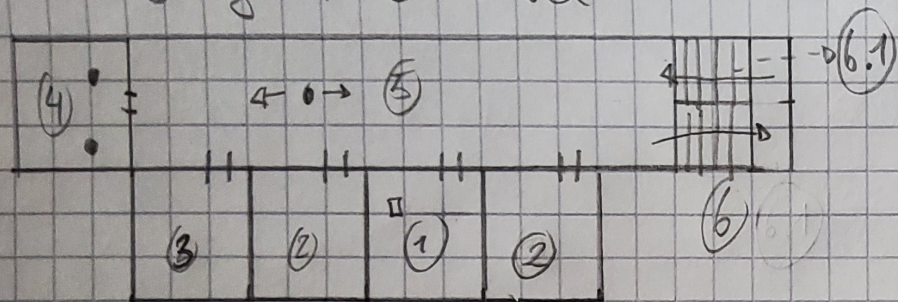
1. Stairs down to 2nd level
2. Entry guard booth with window and door. With liutenant on window, keeping track of guards and prisoners coming in and out.
3. Main entrance/exit to/from the dungeon.
4. Hallway with 2 guards patrolling asynchronously from stairs to entry booth. Short chat with liutenant each go.
5. official closet of confiscated items from prisoners. Contains Gren's staff.
6. Dungeon guards' common room bit beds, trunks beside beds and one wardrobe.
7. Empty cells.
8. NPC cells. Will alert guards upon seeing any character. They change between wandering through the cell and laying down on the bunk.

Level flow algorithm:

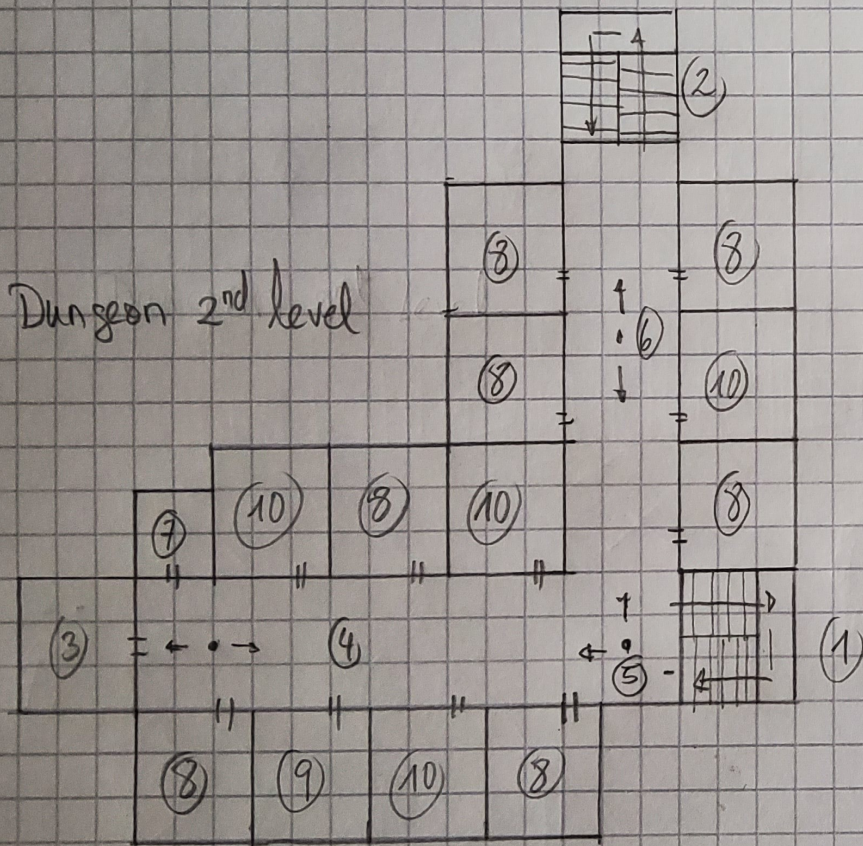
The level is rather small, as this is just a skeleton showing the main idea and tasks to complete. It can be fleshed out from here.

- Gren must get out of his cell but can't do magic as his staff remains in [1st Level(5)]. Luckily, his staff has a small detachable part he has for emergencies that he managed to hide from the guards. This small part of his catalyst allows him only to perform Elemental Shapeshifting.
- Gren can pick up a big loose stone from his cell and keep it in the inventory.
- Gren can fool the patrolling guard into opening the cell by turning into a little pond of water or turning off the candle and transforming into flame.
- Guard opens room and searches. Gren can use stone to kill/KO the guard. Bunks are hiding spots. Stone breaks upon use.
- Loose stones to KO guards can be found at different places through the dungeon, mostly at empty cells. Every level guard room has the keys for the cells of that level. They break upon use.
- Gren can turn to fire into the many torches or hide as a little water pond like the many there are from outside humidity coming through the walls/ceilings.
- [3rd Level (4)] is locked. Gren can hear voices inside but doesn't understand what they say.
- [3rd Level (3)] asks Gren for help, even if he approaches while NPC isn't looking. He wants his McGuffin back. He has overheard guards saying it is kept in a trunk in [1st Level (6)].
- Gren wants to try getting out of there from the main entrance.
- Upon reaching 2nd Level, Gren hears guard and lieutenant whispering about [2nd Level (7)] where they secretly keep items they have stolen from [1st Level (5)], but are angry that the boss confiscated the keys.
- Upon getting close to [2nd Level (9)], Gren approaches Issendra, puzzled at seeing another wizard there. She offers mutual help, but she needs her knife held in [1st Level (5)] and to get out of the cell.
- [2nd Level (3)] is locked. That lieutenant's dungeon level holds the key. The room holds the keys for the cells. The air vent connecting to the 3rd level's guard room allows now for hearing the conversation.
- This conversation is held between the lieutenant in charge of the dungeon and the infiltrated Warros' spy. There he learns how he has been framed and further plans from the spy. He also learns he has zero chance of escaping going through the main entrance and that the lieutenant had a special interest in Issendra's knife and hid it somewhere outside of anyone's reach. After the conversation, the spy leaves the dungeon and the lieutenant remains in the room.
- This lieutenant holds the keys for [2nd Level (7)].
- The door to [3rd Level (4)] is now open. There Gren can also grab the keys for that cells' level and free [3rd Level (3)] if he so wishes.
- Inside [2nd Level (7)] Issendra's knife is hidden under a loose stone under some boxes.
- The 1st level is dangerous for Gren without his staff, it's better to tackle it with Issendra and her sense fooling spells.
- The lieutenant in [1st Level (2)] holds the key for [1st Level (5)]. Inside is Gren's staff.
- [1st level (6)] is open. Inside are 2 guards sleeping. The wardrobe holds a letter speaking of maintenance works that changed the little metallic door in [3rd Level (6.1)] connecting to the sewage system that drives to the outside walls. Inside one of the trunks is the McGuffin for [3rd Level (3)] and can be brought back to him.
- Free and with his McGuffin, [3rd Level (3)] wishes good luck to the characters and will flee not just yet, as he still has some loose ends to tie up.
- With his staff back in his possession, Gren can apply Heat Manipulation to [3rd Level (6.1)] to flee and finish the level.

Dungeon 3rd Level



Dungeon 2nd Level



Dungeon 1st Level

