Soul Bound

Game Design Document

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Game Design

Summary

Soul Bound is a strategy role playing game set in a magic filled fantasy world. The player controls a party of 3 to 5 characters - along with their familiar helpers - to defend the world against a 1000 year old threat that has been awakened.

Explore:

     The player will be making their way through this vast world of magic, meeting new characters, helping those who call upon them and finding old and forgotten lands and creatures.

Forge Bonds:

     The player will meet and bond with many characters, of various size, races and genders, on their adventure. Some will aid them in their travels, and others will follow them into battle against the forces around them.

Summon Familiars:

     Awaken and summon special beings known as familiars to take aid you on the dangerous road ahead. As the player explores the world, they will find a vast array of magical crystals known as Lorestones, which house the spirits of familiars inside of them.

Fight How You Want:

     Bringing the right team for the job is key. Players will choose the best team of characters and familiars, each with their own unique abilities to defeat the various monsters and enemies they will encounter on their path.

Save The World:

     Embark on a quest to learn the secret behind the malicious forces that have started to affect the world. Follow the story of peacekeepers from the Mage's Guild, as they are thrown into an epic journey to stop an evil that has been lying in wait for 1000 years.

History, Antecedents and Related Games

The following games are inspirations and have influenced the creators of Soul Bound.

Gameplay

Gameplay is broken into a 4 sections:

- Interacting with towns
- Interacting with other characters
- Exploring fields/dungeons
- Battling.

Interacting with Towns:

The purpose of the towns in the game are to hold a group of characters and quests in an area for the player to interact with. In each town there will be a mages guild branch, which along with various shops to and areas, serve to give the player quests and the capability to complete them. Additionally, there are characters within the town who will give flavor and lore to the world, to create an interactive, immersive experience.

Interacting with Characters:

(Preliminary concepts – can change) Each non-player character that the player gets to use in their party has a backstory and a personal quest line that can be completed to unlock new and interesting powers, items, etc.

Exploring Mission Zones:

Exploration happens on a mission based fashion, with quests sending the player to specific areas in the world. The game runs on a strategy grid system where the player will walk around the maps in real time.

During exploration, the player will reveal the level from the fog of war. When the player can't directly see an area that has previously been revealed, the area is greyed out by the fog of war, with the environment still shown.

Exploration on missions will occur outside battles and serve for the purpose of finding items hidden around the level as well as meeting other characters in the world.

Battle:

Battles are triggered when entering a combat zone. These battles occur in the same world space as missions/exploration and move the player from a semi real time movement system to the battle grid system. At the start of engagement players will be able to position their team relative to where they were prior to the battles beginning. Battles are turn based, where the

player's team and the enemies they are fighting are added to a queue based on initiative. From there, after the player takes an action the next character in the queue will immediately take theirs, and so on until it returns to the player's turn. These actions include Movement, Attacks, and Skills. Characters also have the option to summon a familiar into the battle field, which will take its own place in the combat queue. At the end of battle, the player's party, if alive, will unsummon their familiars and regroup with the player's character. From there the player will continue on with the mission and level.

Battles should be preferably 4 – 10 minutes in length, with additional time added for the difficulty of battles against core beasts and boss enemies.

Narrative / Dramatic Context

Technical

Theming

A bit more about the narrative, but connected with the gameplay mechanics and how they drive and reflect the story. Such as summoning familiars being a thing in the world, and how they function.

Mechanics

The mechanics section covers topics on Combat, Movement, Towns, Mission, and Character Interaction.

Combat

Action Points:

During combat, characters are given a set of action points (AP), which they use for an array of actions throughout the turn. The breakdown of these will depend on the types of weapon, armor and skills the character is using during battle. The base number of AP per character will be **five** for now, and upgradeable with level in the future. The basic breakdown would look like this:

Weapon Class:

Weapon class defines the base strength of a weapon in the world. Stronger weapons will require more ability points to use, trading off multiple attacks for high damaging attacks. From the graph above its shown how this is currently broken down into 3 levels.

Armor Class:

Like weapon class, armor class defines how much damage the character can take based off their body types and any equipped armor. Characters with more health are generally slower and those with less health can generally move a lot faster. So where it costs a less tanky character 1 AP, per space, to move, tankier characters only require 3 AP, per space.

Skills:

Skills are special abilities, which vary in how much AP they need in order to be used. Skills, like weapons will have varying ranges as well as how much damage they do, very similar to how weapon classes work. Some skills will also be used for support purposes such as healing or buffing allies. Whereas others will change the characters position as well as cast effects onto enemies.

- Damage Dealing (Single)
- Damage Dealing (Group)
- Movement

- Effect (Positive)
- Effect (Negative)

Range:

Currently range is broken into 3 types:

- Close-Range: Any tile adjacent to the character using the attack/ability.
- Mid-Range: Any tile under 3 tiles away from the character.
- Long-Range: Any tile under 5 tiles away from the character.

The breakdown is like this so that in situations where a long range character is fighting a normal speed close range character, they will be able to use at least 2 attacks before the enemy is in range of them for a close range attack.

This will have to be balanced so that a fast long range character isn't invisible should they be fighting a high damage bruiser who is slower than them. Varying skills and abilities should allow for this to keep the battle tense but still giving advantages to characters when they should have it.

Familiars:

Familiars are combat aids to the characters in game to support them in battle, typically by balancing out what the character is lacking. Similar to enemies they will need to be able to act on their own, however, unlike enemies they will be able to have their AI changed through commands from the player.

Commands: These are skills that a character with a familiar will have to change the AI behavior on a familiar / have them use more powerful abilities than what they would normally.

Persistent: These commands change the behavior state of familiars. EX: "Charge the Enemy", "Fall Back", etc.

Active: These are commands for direct skills the familiar should use in combat, such as telling them to use their "Fireball" skill on an enemy. This is also used for high level skills, which familiars will not instinctively use (at present).

The decision to separate familiar command is to get the feeling of commanding them, versus the typical Pokémon route of direct control at all times. So instead of managing 6 characters at the same time, the goal is to have it so you manage 3 who affect their own familiars.

Current State as of 3/19

At the moment familiars are under direct player control and will each have only one attack related to it, in future iterations we will be aiming to have them with multiple skills. AI control for Familiars is still under consideration, based on how future testing goes.

Enemies:

Demo First encounter – Earth Golem

Battle Details: The first battle in the game is against a large earth golem which is blocking the way into the main portion of the forest. For the tech demo, this will be a fight only including the player's main party, excluding familiars.

Note 3/19 - For the in class presentation we will be demonstrating the fight including familiars

Skills: For the fight the Earth golem will have 2 basic skills

- **Earth Pulse**: A line spell based on the size of the attacker, sends out a shockwave up to 4 spaces away from the attacker.
- **Rock smash**: A point attack with a short range, used for hitting targets immediately around the attacker.

Behavior Tree:

- Root (Selector) :
    - Attack (Sequence):
        - Choose Skill (Decorator)
            - EP (Distance > X)
            - RS: (Distance <=X)
        - Players in Target Range? (Distance of Skill)
        - Pick Target at random from group returned
    - Pass

Battle Flow:

1. Initiate battle set up
2. Place Boundary
3. Get characters in battle (Possible placement of characters)
4. Roll Character initiative
5. Start Battle
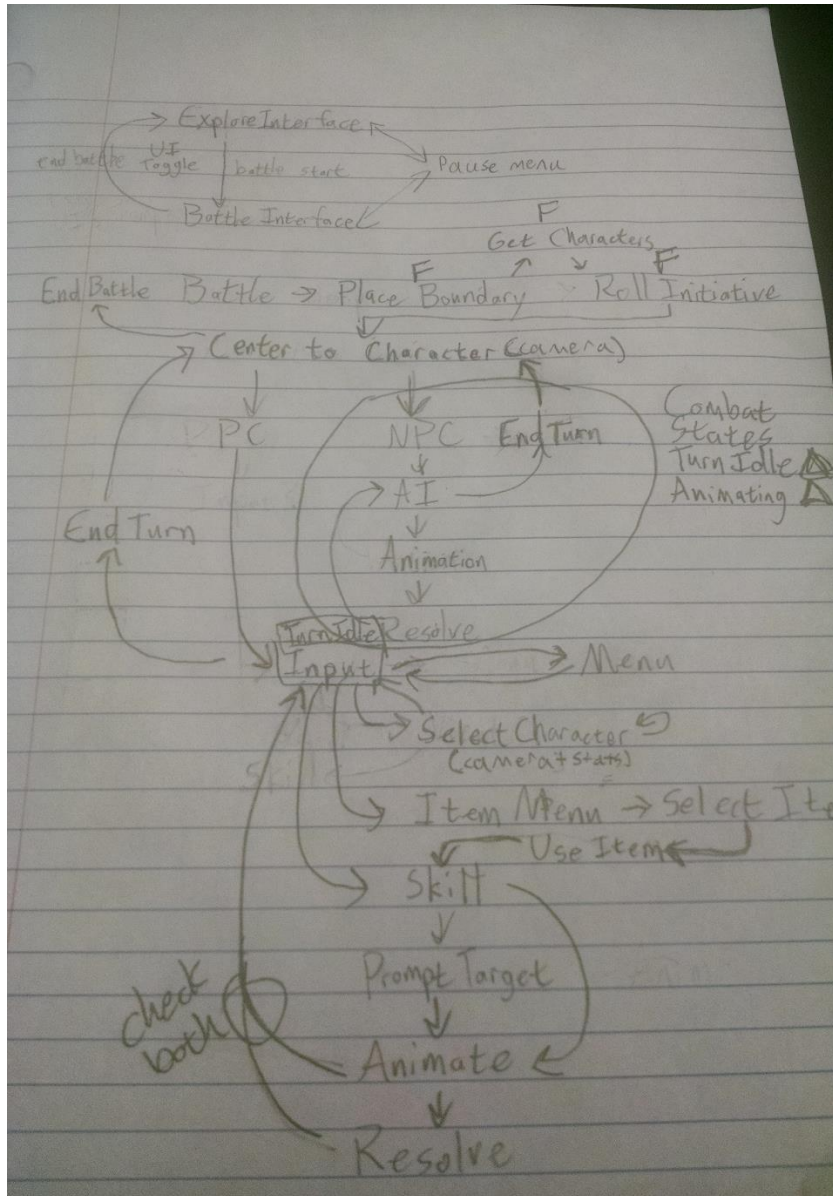
Changes 3/19

Battle setup starts when players step on the **Super Tile**. After the battle setup begins, the game will activate the **Fog of war**. While the fog is up, players won't be able to see enemies that are out of their view radius, but those enemies will still be in play and able to move around. After this, the player will then position their allies, relative to their position. From here the game will **Roll Initiative** and battle will begin in the order returned.

Super Tile: An isolated group of tiles used for battle.

Fog of war: A cover over the area for anywhere outside the player and their party's view distance.

Rolling Initiative: Decision of turn order based on character speeds as well as how battle began.

Movement

The game itself runs on a grid based movement system which we are working on currently. Both in and out of combat / in and out of the over world, the character and their party will move around according to this.

<u>Out of Combat:</u>

While out of combat, the player will have control over the character with the **arrow keys/ WASD**, in which they'll freely move around the grid. This is currently set so that the transition between each tile is seamless, which will allow us to transition between battle and out of combat experiences without much trouble. During this time the players companions will follow directly behind the player and stop on tiles, in a line behind the player or adjacent to them. Also, during this time, should the player try to move on a square that a companion is on, they will simply trade positions with one another.

Change 3/19

We have changed the movement out of combat from travelling with the entire group on the map to now having just the player on the map until battle begins.

<u>Inside Combat:</u>

During combat, many of the freedoms of movement allowed out of combat will be removed. Such as the ability to swap positions with teammates as well as them being required to follow directly behind the player. The control scheme also switches to a click and act system, where the player will select the character whose turn it is currently and either move or attack, then can either move/ choose a skill to use. Should they choose to move, based on their armor class, the player will spend AP to move the character X spaces for that turn.

<u>Character Size:</u>

This represents the overall size of a character in tiles.

This section requires group discussion on the best way to handle the effective move/attack range of these characters. - Dillon (Resolved)

Characters will come in sizes based on tile and shape, larger creatures will begin taking up more tiles such as 2x2 or 3x3. At present this will stick to a 1->1, with a focus on making their movement and actions match their size on the grid.

<u>Fleeing Combat:</u>

Once the battle has started, the grid will generate a border area for the player's party and the enemies to fight in. Should the player / one of his/her party members reach the border of this area and use the escape command, as well as the battle be escapable, then the party will cease the battle and regroup around that characters position, with a temporary invisibility from enemy line of sight so that they may get away.

Note 3/19

Currently fleeing combat is not a feature under construction

Town
Information on the mechanics of in town – Quest givers, the gate leading to the map, shop, talking to people, etc.

Missions
Mechanics of missions and how they appear on the map

Character Interaction
How character interaction functions, how it affects narrative and can lead to side missions for your people.

Screens

What screens exist, such as start menu, options, in-game interfaces, town/mission, etc.

Controls

Interface and how the player interacts with the game.

Future Work

Level Design

Themes

Mission 1

Ambience:
> Stuff here about Mission 1

Objects:
> Objects of significance. Subheadings: Ambient, and Interactive.

Challenges:
> Any challenges in the level, such as boss battles, puzzles, etc.

Game Flow

Give a description of a quick play through, what the player will do from town, getting a mission, going to the mission area, fighting, etc.

Development

Classes / Programming Structure

Explanation of the code structure in the project. What classes inherit from where, how scriptable objects are used, etc.

Sound & Music

Styles & Attributes

Sounds Needed

Music Needed

Art

Design & Visual Style

Aesthetic:

The game will be using cell (toon) shading for all of the art. Currently we are looking for art somewhere on the spectrum between *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* and the *Borderlands* series.

-Versus-

After doing research, it's been decided that we will be following the style cell shading, and using the unity toon shader on top of our models, which will texture in what the shader misses. The textures are going to be more of a hand drawn style similar to *Valkria Chronicles*.

*Note from tests: the line work is simple and fits the models well, however using vectors for the line art will add the feeling much better than hand drawn, in the case of basic forms of clothing. In terms of creases on clothes and faces, it will require us to taper the edges to look appropriate

* Increase Saturation & contrast
* Max 4 tones
* Smoother modelled clothing, with normal map for folds on clothes.
*Mudbox for carved in details (show off cuts)

Postindustrial era clothing and armor for humans.

Concept Art

Characters
Protagonist: Abel (Player Character)

- **Fighting Style:** Avenger

- **Weapons:** One-handed Sword and Magic Gauntlet

- **Personality:**

  - Loyal Protector: A natural protector, joined the guild in order to help protect those close to him.

  - Orphan: Village was destroyed as a teenager by a core beast, saved by the guild.

  - Void Mage: A mage who isn't bound by a set element, although cannot use high level skills of any element.

  - Variable Core User: A mage who is capable of using multiple familiars at once.

  - Leader: Capable of building connections and having characters follow the party.

- **Familiar:**
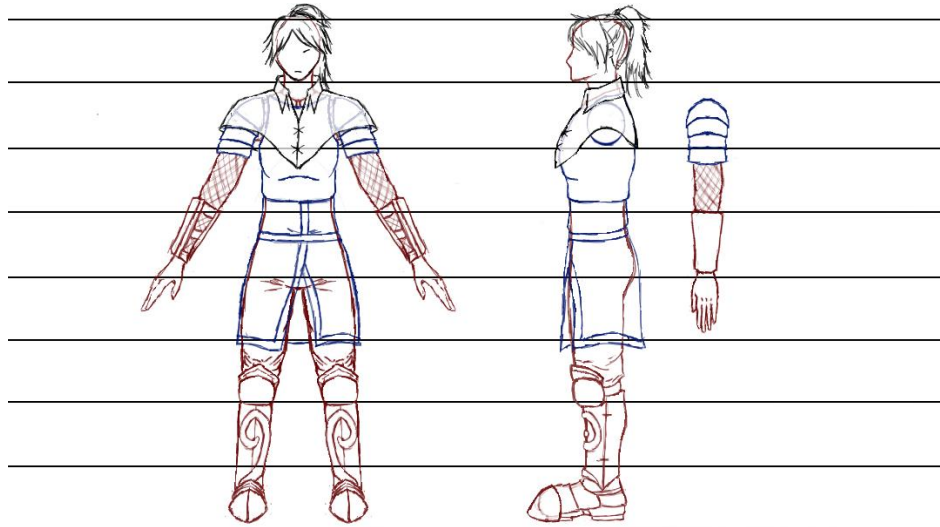
  - Were-Rabbit Strider

  - Earth Golem (Captured)
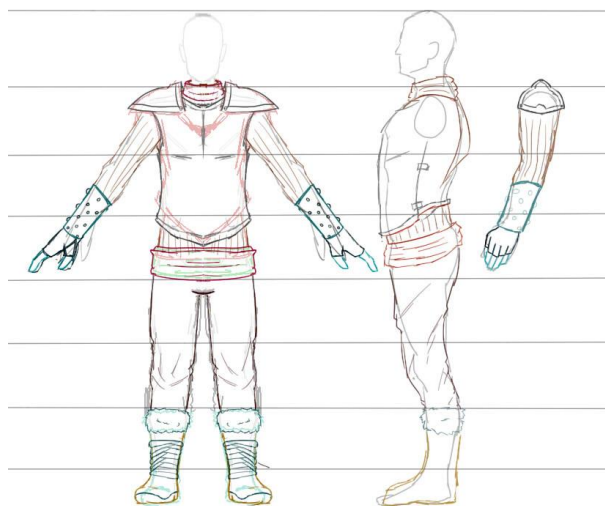
Party Member 1 (Hero): Felix (Party Member)

- **Fighting Style:** Ice Mage

- **Weapons:** Magic Staff and Grimoire

- **Personality:**

- **Familiar:**

  - Ice Golem

Party Member 2: Sofia (Party Member)

- **Fighting Style:** Augmenter

- **Weapons:** Twin Blades

- **Personality:**

- **Familiar:**

  - Blade Wolf

Creatures

Yadda

Locations

Tutorial Level – Corrupted Forest:
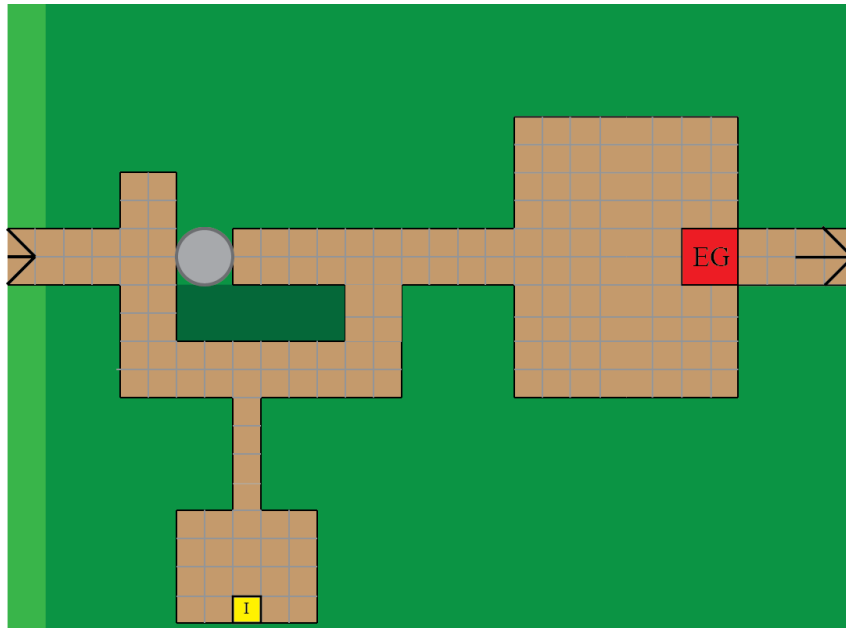
EG	Earth Golem
⬤	Giant Boulder
I	Item Drop/Field area
■	Downed trees
▬	Open Path
▬	Trees

User Interface

Appendices

Team

Dillon Guscott – Lead Design

Douglas Mansell – Producer/Manager

David Erbelding – Lead Programmer

Norman Greenberg – Programmer

Trevor Creed – Programmer

Alex Worley – Programmer

Josh Willsey – Music

Angela Muscariello – Sound

Matt Moseley – Technical Artist

Michelle Linares – Technical Artist

Hanna Doerr – Technical Artist

Story Background Information

Key Terms
These are a list of terms that will be getting thrown around throughout the document. - Dillon

Mage: Someone who dedicates their life to studying and practicing magic, as well as use their abilities to aid other people in the world. Mages form various guilds that take requests from civilians or simply serve to aid each other in research.

Spirits: Beings from the ethereal world, each with their own unique energy that make up the elements. Magic is used when mortals use their own spirits to communicate and guide spirits into magical forms controlled by the mages.

Lorestone: Magical stones which hold memories and stories from the past. Some hold just records of an event or record a tale. Others can hold spirits who linger on the border between the mortal and ethereal plane.

Core: Special items, made from Lorestones and placed into common vessels, like staffs or swords. Mages use these items to house their familiars and bring out their latent powers. Each core has a series of seals on them, used to bind the familiar's spirit and carefully allow the user to control them.

Familiar: Beings that are summoned from Cores by mages to aid them in their tasks. There are varying forms of familiars, each with their own unique abilities. They range from small supporting familiars, whose purpose is to strengthen their master, to gigantic defenders, who defend their master while they cast spells.

Core Beasts: Apart from the normal creatures in the world, occasionally special beings are formed around lorestones. The stones attract spirits, who bind to it and then go out of control, creating creatures similar to familiars, but unchained and much more hostile. Often mages are called on to put down these foes, due to their power being too much for normal people to deal with.

Story
Three Gods
- **Gaia:** Controls and creates the earth.

- **Spirit:** Controls and creates the ethereal plane.

- **Perceiver:** Bridges the gap between the two. One eye allows him to view the earth, the other views the ethereal plane. Communes and allows both to interesect creating life.

First Age: Age where the three gods are still forming the world, ends when they create the first living creature, a clay golem.

- **Ether:** The power that flows through the world giving life to everything and also elemental properties to various forms of life; Spirit Constantly generates this.

- **Spirits:** Ethereal beings who did not bind together with things of earth. They are raw ether that can generate their specified element.

- **Mortals:** Beings made through the joining of creations from earth and the ether from the ethereal plane.

Second Age:
- **The Great nations**

  A. Earth

  B. Fire

  C. Wind

  D. Water

  E. Sky (Holy/Angelic Nation)

  F. Dark Continent [Formed at the end of the second age]

  G. Gaians (Human) : Separated due to the fact that they weren't bound by any one element

- **Birth of War:** The various races began to have disputes which quickly led to a war between them. It was quickly ended once Gaia and Spirit intervened but many who didn't wish to be part of the war were still killed.

- **The Awakening:** The war took the lives of many who didn't wish for the war, and the hatred towards those that caused it, along with the regret of those that survived, caused the creation of a new form of ether that would start another war.

- **Darkness:** The 6th form of ether was born from the hatred and negative emotions of those that died during the first war. It was like a poison to other forms of ether and had the ability to steal life and ether from them. Its existence was opposite to that of Spirit who gave life. Due to its nature and spirits inability to interact with it without risk, Darkness continued to grow.

- **The 4 Lords:** 4 of the mortals that survived the first war, who also held the strongest regrets and hatred of those still living, were consumed by the new form of ether creating 4 powerful demons known as The four Lords. [Pain, Wrath, Regret, Madness]

- **Sacrifice:** Neither Spirit, nor Gaia could stop the power of Darkness and The four lords, since they could attack both worlds simultaneously yet Spirit and Gaia could not go between. Thus the two, weakened from the constant struggle turned to their creations to stop it. They sacrificed their lives which allowed the perceiver to create blessings to give to their creations.

- **Lorestones (Temp):** The first blessing were the lorestones, which could house the memory and potential of those bound inside of them/ raw ether stored in them.

- **Soul Binding:** The second was the ability of soul binding. Should one desire it and make a pact with a Stonebearer, a mortal could have their being bound into a Lorestone.

- **Cores:** Lorestones could be bound into various items in order to create these vessels, which were later called Cores. These cores were bound with seals that allowed them to release those held insides powers in stages, for neither the Bearer nor those held inside the cores could handle the strain without training.

- **Familiars:** Released beings from within the cores whose potential was brought out by its bearer. The stronger the bearer the more of the familiars power could be released.

- **Mages:** As the name implies mages control magic through channeling ether. They use familiars as they fight, each type of mage varying in how they use them.

  A. *Magus*: High damage spell caster, uses familiar only to guard as they prepare high level spells.

  B. *Puppeteer*: Channel their power through familiars to deal damage. Buff their familiars to increase the familiar's abilities.

  C. *Avenger*: Fights side by side with familiar. Focuses on combined power between the Keeper and the Familiar.

  D. *Augmenter*: Fights directly after receiving buffs from themselves or their familiar, typically uses support type familiars.

  E. *Priest*: Supporter type mage who focuses on healing, curing ailments and defending allies. Their familiars are typically either Support types or Defense types.

- **Awakened:** The third blessing was the increase in the ether of special mortals, who would later be known as The Awakened. Their natural abilities are pushed to the max and are capable of fighting many of the possessed beings without the need of a familiar's support.

- **Chosen:** Those fighting needed a leader, someone who could fight evenly with the four

lords, but also keep the world in check once the battle was over. Their origin, gender and race became lost in time but the final blessing was delivered onto one mortal to lead the others. They were given the powers of creation that both Gaia and Spirit possessed, but in a weakened state, so that they could survive being given the power. The perceiver created cores from his own vessel and gave them to the Hero at the end of the sacrifice. In one eye dominion over Earth and the other over Ether (Cores of creation: Perceiver's Left eye (Earth) & Perceiver's Right eye (Ether)

- **The Sealing:** Together with the Mages, Heroes and various armies from the many races, the Chosen struck down the four lords. However, they would always rise the next day and continue their rampage. To end the cycle the Chosen defeated them all on a far off corner of the earth and, together with their familiar (The great golem) sealed them and the dark ether into the continent itself. After its masters sacrifice, the Great golem finished its last duty and broke the continent off from the rest of the world and remained there as it's guard.

Third Age: The world has long since forgotten the stories of the second age, leaving its memory to myth and legend. The great nations have chosen to separate themselves and most of them choose to avoid direct contact when they need not. The only mixed area of the world lies in the realm where Humans reign. Mages and Awakened remain but now they serve mainly as peacekeepers and protectors for the people. They fall under the jurisdiction of varying Guilds in the world and take requests when called upon.

- **Guilds**

- **The King's Army:** The ruler of the Gaian Domain, often sends his army off to deal with large scale uprisings or to look for some strange object that he is constantly searching for. The kings army only accepts S-Rank Mages and Awakened individuals

- **The Dark Continent (Present):** The Dark Continent has become a place where mortals send their criminals or where those who were born their (The marked once) live. Darkness occasionally seeps out as the years go on, leaving strange scar like markings on those who are exposed to it for too long. Even after leaving, these markings remain the rest of their lives.

- **Destroyer of the Second Age (tentative main story title):** It's said that the world has been getting more chaotic in the last century and various creatures and races have begun acting more aggressively towards one another. (Not known to world yet) It would seem one of the Cores from the Dark Continent had been unearthed and its power has begun to spread darkness slowly but surely once again throughout the world. Young (25-30) man had unearthed it when trapped in mine on the Dark Continent, now possessed by Lord of Pain.

Familiars

Body Types:

- **Anima:** Resemble the various forms of animals and the abilities of those animals. They have high sensory skills and are often used by scouts, assassins or hunters.
- **Constructs:**
  - **Elemental:** Familiars of beings made almost entirely of a specified element (Example: Ice Golem)
  - **Tech:** Pseudo-Familiars made by mortals to allow for non-magicians to use familiar-like creations for daily use or for personal defense. They make up the difference in ability to regular familiars by being resourceful; often simulating abilities from multiple classes of familiars.
- **Humanoid:** Familiars with more human like appearances and fight with weapons or abilities based on the spirit inside them.

Sizes:

- **Small**
- **Medium (Average human size)**
- **Large**
- **Giant (Ex. Dragons)**

Classes:

- **Striker:** Fighter class focusing on constant attacks to overwhelm the opponent and moving quickly to avoid damage.
- **Guardian:** Defense Class focusing on intercepting enemy attacks and drawing attention away from others.
- **Caster:** Magic class that focuses on channeling spells overtime and delivering massive damage.
- **Supporter:** Magic class that focuses on strengthening allies and/or healing.
- **Saboteur:** Disruptor class that deals low damage, but weakens enemies for allies. (Debuff)

Ranks:

- **Basic:** Weaker familiars which have lesser spirits, without any potential released, that are used by most beginner mages/ people with enough magical power to command standard familiars.
- **Adept:** Familiars with standard spirits, that of former soldiers or a creature with some form of battle/magical potential available to them as they are summoned. These familiars are slightly harder to control so they are not recommended to mages who have not reached a certain level of accomplishment.

- **Ascended:** Ascended familiars have powerful spirits which range from former generals to grand beasts like dragons. They are often used by mages who have reached a level of prestige where they are in the upper ranks of most mages guilds/armies.
- **Legendary:** These familiars are often legendary or mythical figures in the world which have latent potential that can only be brought out by specific mages. Legendary spirits require a high deal of skill to control and a much higher sync between it and the mage who summoned it; which leads to the spirit not being able to be brought out unless a chosen partner has been found.