



Level Design Document – The Temple of Green Ice

Spellborn NV



SPELLBORN LEVEL DESIGN DOCUMENT ~ THE TEMPLE OF GREEN ICE ~

Version

Version 0.1
Version 0.2
Version 0.3

Date

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Version	Revision Date	Description
Version 0.1	09-06-09	<i>Implementation of map drawings and accompanied explanation.</i>
Version 0.2	10-06-09	<i>Implementation of enemies and tactics.</i>
Version 0.3	11-06-09	<i>Finished writing first pass of entire document.</i>
Version 0.4	12-06-09	<i>Added some additional illustrations</i>

Overview

This document contains the complete description and workflow for The Temple of Green Ice Level Design. All information and corresponding screenshots used are property of Spellborn NV and it is therefore not allowed to be commercially published in any kind of way.

This document is meant to be used for all internal communications within Spellborn NV to have the required resources, needed disciplines and all estimations for that project.



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OVERVIEW

Quick Summary

This document is a very extensive description of the intended level design for the instance called 'The Temple of Green Ice' (or ToGI).

This instance will be a level 30-40 instance with challenging gameplay and a few entertaining main events.

The population will consist of Vhuul, Arionites and some heroes of old which have come back from the dead to test the worthiness of any that wish to pass through ToGI.

Hidden treasures, a tricky boss fight and farmable resources, which can later be exchanged for various rewards will be motivators for people to come back to ToGI more than just a few times.

Design Goals

The intention of this design is to create a very challenging instance, which players shouldn't be able to finish without a few deaths the first time around.

It is also meant as an instance with quite a bit of replay value, players should be wanting to come back for extra prizes and to finally see if they can kill the final boss this time around.

Location

ToGI is located in Ringfell Stonedeep, since it's very similar to ToTA (Tomb of the Ancestors) in style it will also be roughly in the same area. That way the similar visuals will seem a lot more natural.

Difficulty

ToGI is meant to be quite a challenge, the players that will enter the instance are level 30 at least and far more likely to be 35-40. This means that they should have a thorough understanding of their class, its strengths and its weaknesses. So far, most instances and challenges have been met by players with relative ease and this instance is meant to make them sweat for the loot they will earn.

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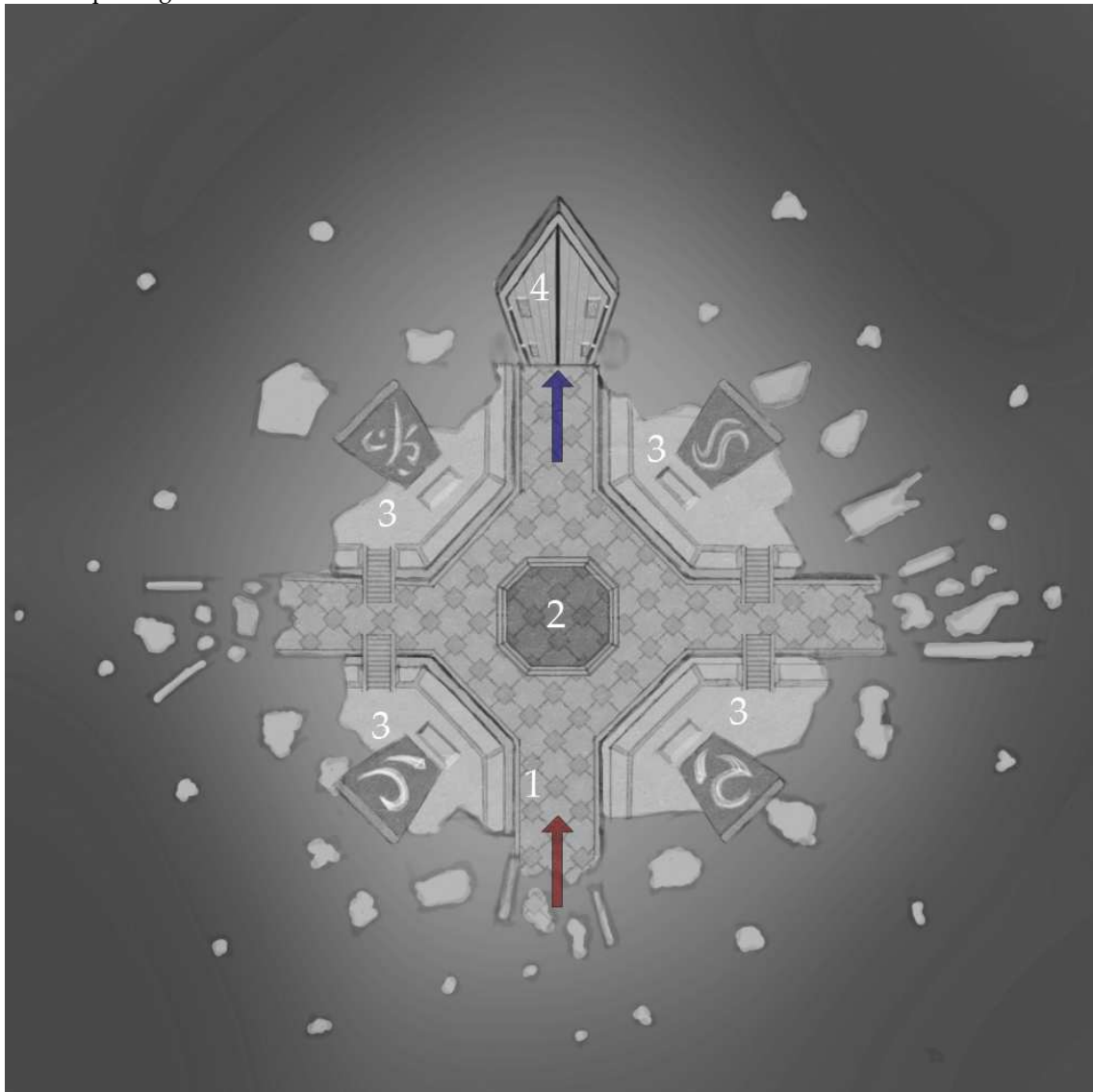
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DETAILS

Level

The following paragraph contains a schematic drawing of all the key rooms in the Temple of Green Ice. The illustration of each room is followed by an explanation of intended gameplay and extra explanation of the points of interest that are indicated on each illustration.

The temple of green ice – Room 01: The Runemasters



The first room of The Temple of Green Ice Top down view



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Room 01: The Runemasters explained:

The gameplay in this room can be boiled down to two battle challenges that need to be overcome in order to unlock the door.

The first challenge is an arena test. The players will be guided to the center of the room (no 2 in the illustration) and they will be forced to stay there while surviving a high number of enemies without rest. The trick during this challenge will be to make short work of each incoming warrior before their friends have a chance to join them. If players can't handle the steady flow of enemies they will soon find themselves horribly overwhelmed.

If they manage to survive this first challenge, they will be allowed to fight the Runemasters (no 3 in the illustration.) These spirits have been deemed the strongest individual warriors in the temple and have therefore received the task of guarding the four locks that keep the door from opening.

Once the Runemasters are defeated, the players will be allowed to interact with the runes to open the door and move on to the next room.

While in this room, players should constantly be aware of new enemy spirits spawning around them.

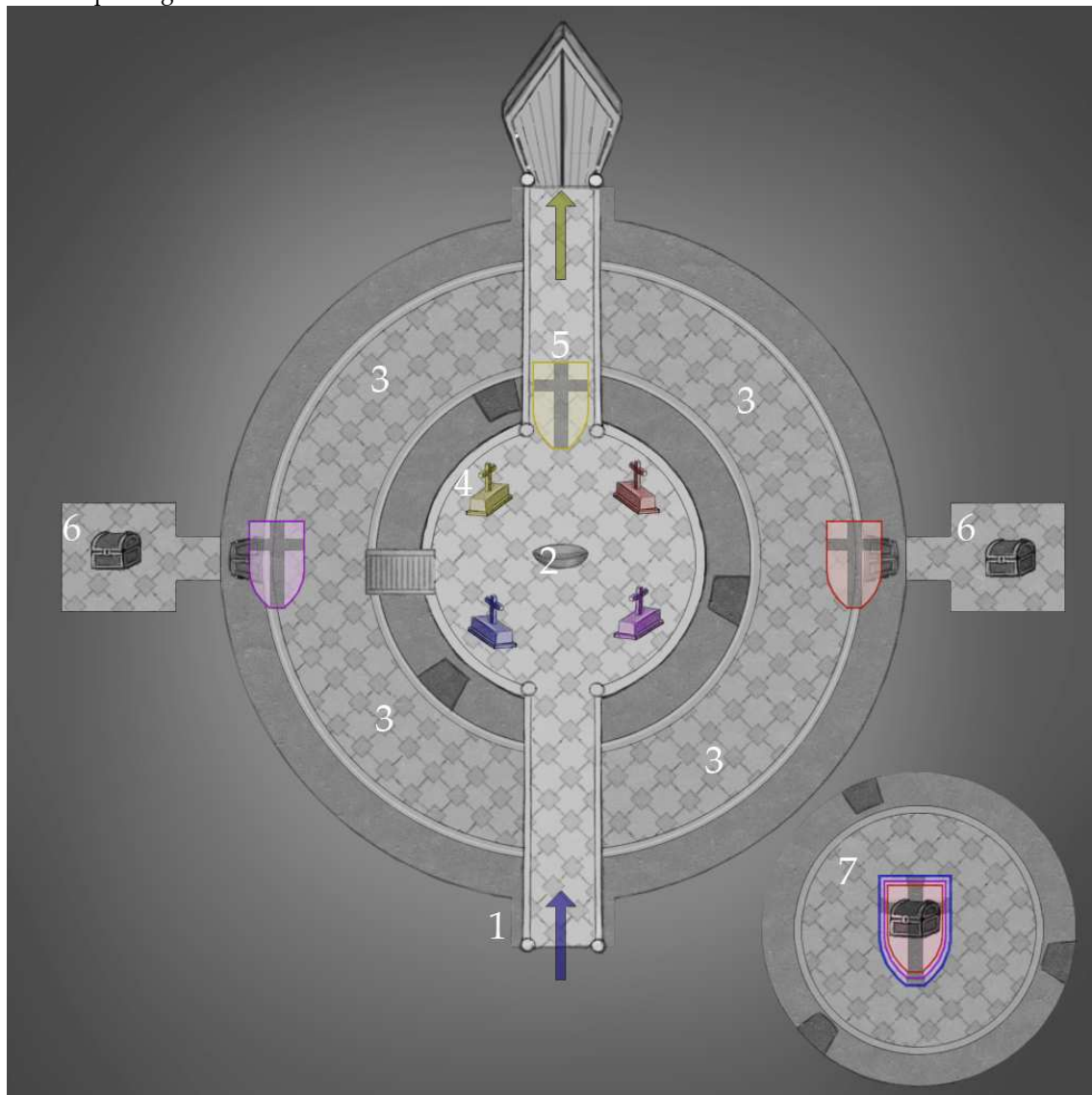
The points of interest explained:

1. The entrance:
As soon as you enter the door of the temple, this is where you'll end up. The only way to progress is to move forward.
2. The Arena/Octagon
This is where the players will be forced to stand during their first challenge
3. Location of the Runemasters
Once you have completed the Arena challenge, they will allow you to test your strength any way you want, 1 vs. 1 or 4 vs. 1, doesn't matter.
4. The exit
This door is locked with the energy of 4 mysterious glowing runes; each is defended by a Runemaster. No progress until the players beat them.

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The temple of green ice – Room 02: The Shield Guardians



The second room of The Temple of Green Ice Top down view

Room 02: The Shield Guardians

This room revolves around two key concepts, farming and some simplistic puzzling. The players are told to summon the four spirits that maintain the shields that are located throughout the room.

An NPC spirit will tell you which items are needed to complete the ritual and how to obtain those. This assignment will force the player down to the lower level (no 3 in the illustration) for some ghost slaughtering gameplay. This ring is filled with a rather high amount of spirits, all of them have a chance of dropping one of the items the players might need.



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Once all items are obtained, players will return to the NPC on the top level (no 2 in the illustration) who will advise the party to put all things gathered in the scale and light it. The burning of the items will summon the four shield guardians. Each with a different color (this should be very clearly visible). Each colored spirit represents the protector of their identically colored shield. To remove the shield, you kill the shield guardians.

There is a catch however, the level contains (as is shown on the second illustration) a few treasure chests. These are protected by different shield than the exit.

Once you kill the yellow shield guardian, the way to the next chamber opens up. But this also means that the event ends. If you haven't killed the other shield guardians by then they will simply leave, but their shields will remain intact. That means the players won't be able to loot the treasure chests.

If the players choose to fight for the loot as well, that increases the difficulty of the encounter greatly, demanding more tenacity and more tactical behaviour. Since it will all be a waste if the yellow shield guardian doesn't die last.

The chests in the side rooms each contain moderately interesting loot, since they are only moderately guarded. (1 shield each)

The chest below the center platform contains very good loot, and since it is guarded by all three shields; is only lootable for players that have perfected the encounter.

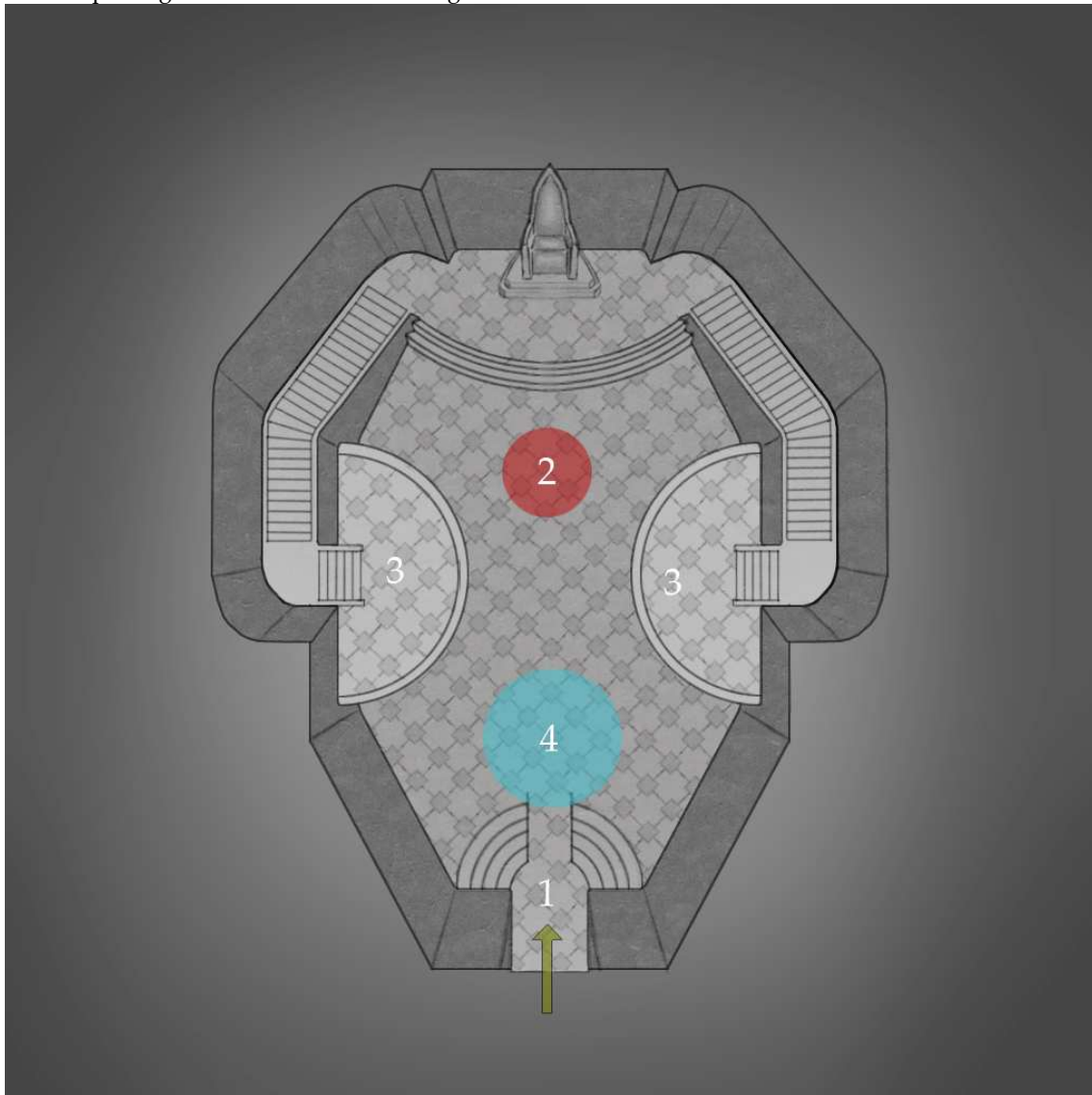
The points of interest explained:

- 1 The entrance:
Once you exit the First room, this is where the players will end up.
- 2 The Scale & the quest NPC
This is the location that introduces players to the challenges that this room has to offer. And where you return to summon the shield guardians
- 3 The outer ring
Masses of lesser spirits populate the outer ring; these spirits carry the items you'll need to summon the shield guardians
- 4 The Crypts
These color coded crypts indicate the spawning locations for the Shield guardians
- 5 Exit
This bridge leads to the exit; players will be able to walk over it once they have killed the yellow shield guardian
- 6 Moderate treasure chests
These treasure chests contain loot for those players that managed to kill at least one of the other shield guardians before killing the yellow one.
- 7 Elite Treasure chest
This chest is guarded by all other shields of the shield guardians, the loot is very good. But unless the players execute the fight perfectly, it is unlikely they will be able to reach the chest.

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The temple of green ice – Room 03: Bossfight



The third room of The Temple of Green Ice Top down view

Room 03: Bossfight explained:

The bossfight starts out as soon as the players attack the boss, the boss does not move at all during the fight. There are two essential features to this fight:

- If the boss has no one in melee range, he will go into berserk turret mode, which means he will start to attack everyone at the same time for immense amounts of damage. If players make this mistake, they are supposed to be dead within 10 to 20 seconds maximum.
- The boss has a melee DoT which he will keep stacking on one of the party members. This DoT begins to do so much damage after a while that the only solution will be to back out and get to the healing well. The healing well's effects (No4 in the illustration) will counter the effect of the DoT. This also means that another person will have to be ready to start receiving the DoT.



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Once the players have gotten used to this phase of the fight, things start to become a bit more heated. At 75% of his total health (and once again at 50% and 25%), the boss calls upon the assistance of his guarded healers (No3 in the illustration), which will start healing him for vast amounts very quickly

Unless two of the players decide to take out the healers and their guards, the boss will start regaining health. At the same time however they are not allowed to leave the boss unattended, since he will go into ranged berserker mode if all players leave him. The difficulty here will be that two people will be forced to take care of the DoT damage while the other two take care of the healers, essentially doubling the difficulty of dealing with it.

So correctly executed, the players first will learn to deal with the DoT for a while, and once they've got the hang of that part they will be faced with the healers. These healers and their guards will have to be taken down by two of the 4 people in the instance one by one. After the healers have been killed, the boss can slowly be brought down to 50% and the healers spawn again, rinse and repeat, and once more at 25%.

!Note: To keep things interesting until the very end we might want to consider a berserk mode for the last 25%

The points of interest explained:

1. The entrance
This is where the party enters the final room.
2. Boss location
This is where the boss will be waiting for the players assault. The red circle indicated that this is where players will receive the DoT
3. Healers Locations
This is where the healers will hide and attempt to heal their ruler.
4. Healing Well Location
This is the location where players will be forced to go once the DoT becomes too much to handle, as long as they stay here the DoT will not be able to kill them.



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Gameplay

Enemies:

This Paragraph will address the various types of enemies you will encounter in the Temple of Green Ice. Since most (or all) enemies in the instance are humanoids, team set-up will be a major part of the information in this paragraph. Unless mentioned otherwise, all of the enemies mentioned below are Vhuul.

Trash:

The trash groups have no other reason to be where they are than to give the players something to do while they make their way through the instance. They might give some mildly interesting loot and of course some experience, but that's it. These groups will consist of the following classes:

Melee Tank:

- The melee tank should have traits akin to the Blood Warrior, draining his enemies to keep himself, and specifically his team stronger.
- He should be the biggest of the Vhuul classes in the instance, since he's supposed to be the toughest among the Vhuul. He should wear as much armor as can be put on him.
- In an ideal fight this unit would die second or third, since part of his skill deck will allow him to strengthen his allies, and weaken his enemies.

Melee Damage:

- The melee damage class should mostly be straightforward damage, he will be quite breakable in terms of hitpoints but deals scary damage. Typical Glass Cannon.
- This unit would ideally be a bit smaller than most of the other Vhuul while carrying a very impressive weapon (big sword or axe). In terms of armor he'd end up in the middle together with his ranged ally.
- In an ideal fight this unit would die first or second, the damage he deals should make him an immense nuisance. Because of the low hitpoints, players should be able to take him down before his allies can heal him back up.

Ranged Damage:

- The Ranged damage class is mostly an annoyance, he will break your physique so slow you down, so there is no way to get to him or his long ranged ally, the support caster. His damage is normal, and so are his hitpoints
- To make this unit look like a sniper as much as possible, we'll use only a few armorpieces and a bow. In terms of size he should end up at average height, together with the support unit.
- In an ideal fight this unit would die last, he's a nuisance and should definitely be killed, but he's also the least beneficial to the rest of the group.



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Support:

- The support class is the healer and duffer of the group; he doesn't deal any direct damage, but can make it harder for the players to deal with the rest of the group. Players themselves will be weakened, and his fellows will be buffed and healed.
- This unit should be clearly recognizable by giving him clothing that differs greatly from what the others are wearing, in terms of size he's like the Ranged Damager
- In an ideal fight, this guy dies first or second. He'll be able to keep the others alive for way too long. But since he's at the back he might be too difficult to kill right off the bat.

The temple of green ice – Room 01: The Runemasters:

Arena Gladiators:

The Gladiators are the units that the players will face once they enter the challenge that will allow them near the Runemasters. These should be considered one big endurance test, which means the Gladiators mostly exist of easily killable cannon fodder with the occasional champion in their midst.

Gladiator:

- A pure melee unit, meant to swarm over the player in large numbers, unless they are dealt with before their friends join the brawl, player will soon realize that they are horribly overwhelmed. We should experiment with a stackable debuff that emphasizes this feeling (dot or increase on damage received)
- They look completely generic and anonymous. They should wear a mask but no other elaborate armor.

Champion:

- Once the players progress past 50% of the arena test, champions will occasionally start spawning. These are a lot tougher and deal a lot more damage, it should be a very high priority to kill these as soon as possible. We should experiment with an extra debuff that allows the common gladiators to deal more damage while a champion is near.
- The Champions should be as big as possible without breaking their gameplay. We should give them a couple of pieces of armor which aren't Vhuul. It should appear as if they earned these pieces by vanquishing his enemies.



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Runemasters:

The Runemasters are the guardians of the next room. Once the players have proven themselves in the Arena, they will be allowed to challenge the Runemasters. If they are defeated the Runemasters will be forced to assist you in opening the door.

There are 4 Runemasters in total; each of these should be considered a kind of discipline master.

Runemaster 1- Death Hand:

- The death hand Runemaster should use some very specific traits (poisons) only available to the Death Hand.
- A skill that would make use of the poisoned state of a party member as a finishing move would also be very nice.
- In terms of appearance, he should appear a bit green (to solidly communicate the poison trait)

Runemaster 2- Blood Warrior:

- The blood warrior Runemaster should use some very specific skills (Bloodlinks) only available to the Blood Warrior.
- In terms of appearance this unit should be bigger than the others and quite heavily armored. Emphasize the fact that he is tough and strong.

Runemaster 3- Rune Mage:

- The Rune Mage Runemaster should use some very specific skills (Runes) only available to the Rune Mage.
- In terms of appearance he should be a mix between physical strength and ceremonial clothing.

Runemaster 4- Ancestral Mage:

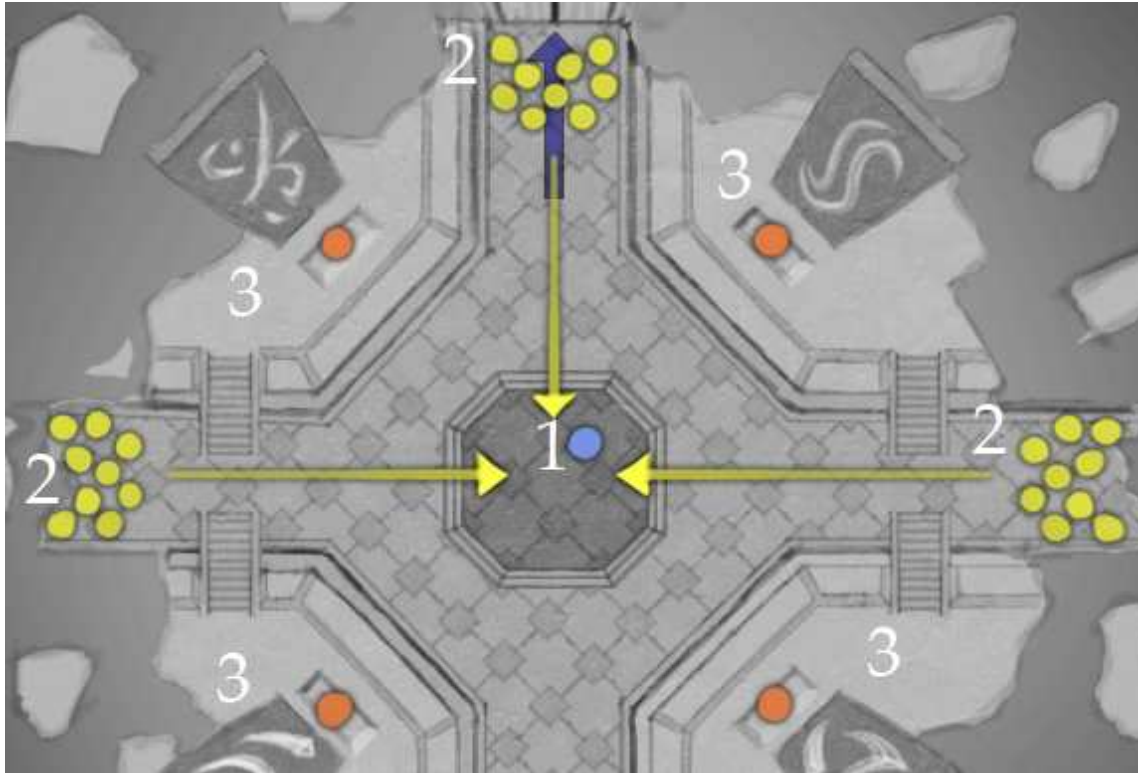
- The Ancestral Mage Runemaster should have a pet, this pet will clearly indicate that he is an Ancestral Mage and has the skills that are associated with this class.
- In terms he should be a stereotypical mage, skinny and only clothes (perhaps add a ceremonial looking headpiece.)

After the chamber of the Runemasters is exited, players will encounter a few trash groups in the hallway that will lead them to the second room.

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The temple of green ice – Room 01: The Runemasters – location of NPC's and enemies:



The first room, top down view including enemy and NPC spawn locations.

The points of interest explained:

1. The Arena Master
This is where the party starts the Arena Challenge.
2. Gladiator start location and attack direction
The Gladiators will spawn at the end of three of the four hallways and charge towards the center of the room, where they will meet the players.
3. Runemasters locations
Once the Arena challenge has been mastered, players will be able to fight with each of the Runemasters at these locations.



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The temple of green ice – Room 02: The Shield Guardians

Gladiators:

- For a thorough description of the Gladiator Class, see page 11
- The Gladiators will be placed in the outer ring of the room, they will function as the grind mobs for the gathering quest you need to complete in this room.

Trash:

- For a thorough description of the Trash Classes, see pages 10 and 11
- The Trash will be stationary or patrolling in the outer ring as well. Since the Gladiator units are very easily killable, players will likely get a bit overconfident. Running into one of these much stronger groups (maybe even while already fighting Gladiators) will scare them back into handling the instance with care.

Shield Guardians:

Yellow Shield Guardian:

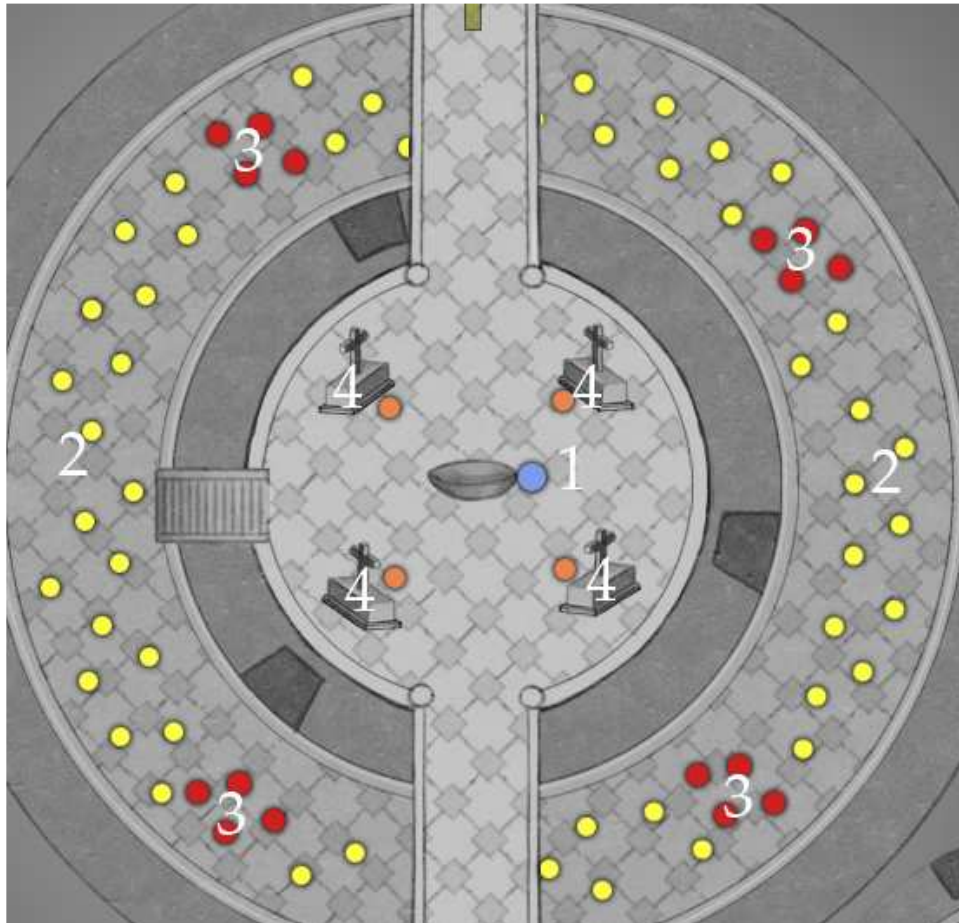
- The Yellow Shield Guardian is the only one that the players are obligated to kill if they wish to proceed to the next room, to enforce this behaviour he should be one of the aggressive units (Melee Damage type – info on page 11) This will make it harder for advanced players to specifically kill him last.
- Since the Shield guardians are a mini boss of sorts, their hit points should be substantially more than that of their fellow instance dwellers.

The Other Shield Guardians:

- The Other Shield Guardians should be a mix between Melee Tank and Ranged Damage (info on page 10 and 11). This will once again make it less interesting to kill one of them first before people realize the tactics, and it will make it harder to kill them first once they do. We should consider adding a healing skill to one of the classes here as well (The Yellow Shield Guardian seems to be the most likely candidate for such a thing.)

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The second room, top down view including enemy and NPC spawn locations.

The points of interest explained:

1. The Master of Ceremonies
This is where the party will receive its quest requiring them to farm the creatures down on the lower platform.
2. Gladiator locations
The Gladiators walk around here until the players decide to come down to the lower platform. These will be highly aggressive and should attack en masse and straight away.
3. Trash locations
Far stronger trash group divide the troop of gladiators, this should keep players on their toes about where they move during the fights.
4. Shield Guardian locations
This is where the shield guardians will spawn once the summoning ritual is completed.



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The temple of green ice – Room 03: The Boss Fight

The Boss:

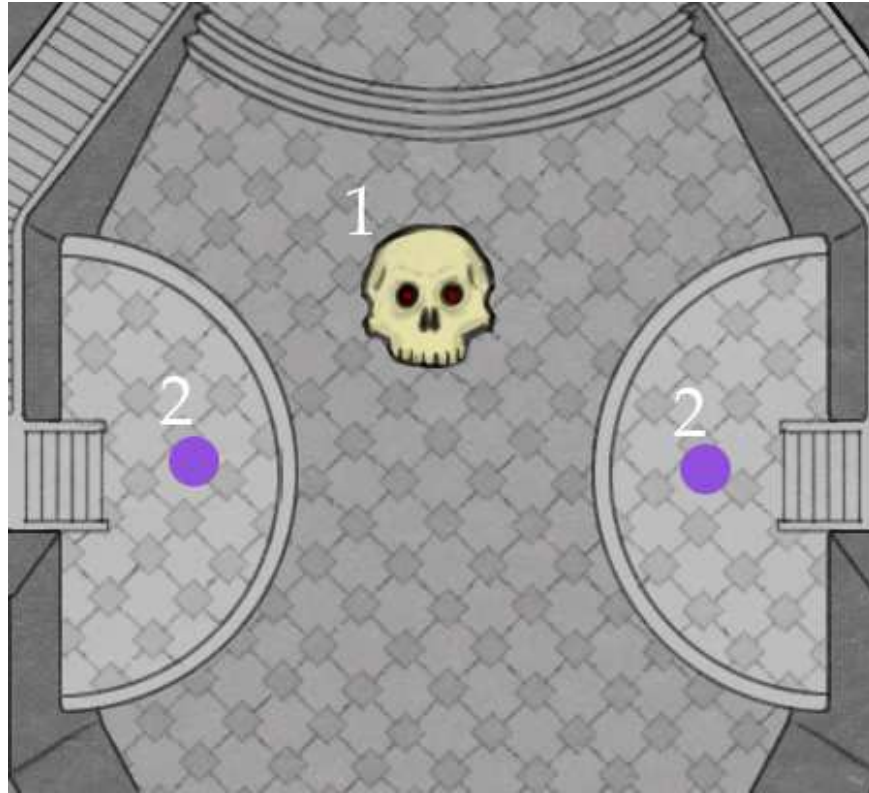
- The boss will be a very strong and very tough melee themed boss. With one exception; if the boss is left unattended once the fight starts, he will go into turret mode. That means that he will start spamming an insanely strong ranged attack which is specifically intended to destroy the players party within 10 or 20 seconds.
- Part of his melee arsenal is a stacking single target debuff, this debuff will force the player receiving the brunt of his attacks to move towards a healing well located in the same room after he has been hit by the debuff 5 or 6 times. This will force the stationary boss to switch to another target or, if there is no other target into ranged turret turbo kill mode.
- Once the last group of healers dies and the boss is below 25% we should consider doing something extra to create the 'almost there but not quite yet' feeling. Perhaps he should go berserk (extra damage) or perhaps he could call upon a few Trash groups to help him out.

The Lieutenants:

- Once the boss has been reduced to 75% of his health, he will call upon his lieutenants to heal him while he takes care of these nuisances. This will force the players to split up into two groups of two. That means that the difficulty of juggling the stacking debuffs will be doubled while the other two have to take care of the healers, since they will be guarded by trash that can't be dealt with by only one player.
- The boss will summon his lieutenants multiple times, for now the intended behaviour will let him summon them at 75%, 50% and 25% of his total health.

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The third room, top down view including enemy and NPC spawn locations.

The points of interest explained:

1. Bossman of Evilness (placeholder name ^_^)
This is the location where the boss will start out, and where he will stay during the fight.
2. Healer locations
Everytime the boss's total health is reduced by 25%, healers will spawn on the balconies.



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Quest NPC placement and interaction:

The temple of green ice – Room 01: The Runemasters:

Arena master:

The only NPC located in the first room is the Arena master. The Arena master is a ghost/spirit that will tell the players that, in order to be allowed to fight the Runemasters, they'll have to fight their way through the arena challenge. He will ask if you're ready, and once told yes, he will trigger the start of the Arena challenge for the players. If the challenge is lost, he will reappear again.

The temple of green ice – Room 02: The Shield Guardians

Master of Ceremony:

The only NPC located in the second room, he will inform the players of the task that they have to perform in order to get through this room, and give them the quest to do it. He will be located on the center platform near the crypts that keep the Shield Guards. Once the ingredients are gathered he will tell the players to put them in the fire scale and disappear as soon as the final battle starts. If the final battle is lost, he will reappear again.

The temple of green ice – Room 03: The Boss Fight

No NPC's in this room



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Rewards (Added by Geoffroy on 15-06-09):

A grind, collect and trade system:

This instance will be ensured a great amount of replay value if it would have a system in place that allows the farming of resource items, which can later be exchanged for increasingly rare items at increasing rates. Example:

Bathandar's Mark III	+ 175 health	40 spiritual essences
Token of Brawler's Blood IV	+ 5 Body	75 spiritual essences
Celestial Eye IV	+ 5 Mind	75 spiritual essences
Augmented Acumen Sigil IV	+ 5 Focus	75 spiritual essences
New Vhuul head piece		150 spiritual essences
A new weapon		300 spiritual essences
New Vhuul Chest piece		600 spiritual essences
Bloodstone III	+ 86 damage	1200 spiritual essences
Resuscitation Amulet V	+ 5% life regeneration	2500 spiritual essences

The spiritual essence is a resource which drops once of every kill you make in the instance. Including boss drops every player should end up with approximately 40-45 essences each run. As long as people like the items they can farm for, they'll keep coming back for more.

Boss drops:

The final boss will also need something that makes him worthwhile farming, some common items which are fun to get and some epic and rare items which will make people want to go back for more.

Possible Examples

New Vhuul armorpieces (perhaps even an entire set, not at once ofcourse)

A vast amount of spiritual essences

Sigil(s) and/or jewelery

Standard Filigree Band

Substantial Filigree Band

Massive Puce Plain Necklace

Massive Magenta Necklace

Raging Shadows of Meditation II

Chest loot:

The chests in the second room will need some loot that makes the extra effort worthwhile, two of the chests should contain moderately interesting loot, and the final chest, which requires complete mastery of the encounter to open it.

Possible examples for moderate chests

Hieroglyph of the Moontail IV

Seer's Crest of Celerity V

Guardian Crest of Celerity V

Scout's Crest of Celerity V



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The less interesting pieces of Vhuul armor (belt, bracers and/or shins)

Possible examples for Epic chest

Sigil Of Arcane Mastery V

Sigil Of Accurate Shot V

Sigil Of Harmful Rage V

A new weapon

Quest and Lore related information (Talk to Vincent around 15-06-09):

(Have Vincent mail the relevant quest information once it's done):



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Respawn Temples:

Every room will have its own respawn temple, since each of them has challenges that can certainly kill the players very easily. They will however be placed in such a way that if a player dies during a certain challenge (Arena Challenge or Bossfight) he will not be able to rush in to help out straight away after his death. But instead will be forced to stand by and watch while his mates try to keep on going.

The temple of green ice – Room 01: The Runemasters

This respawn temple will be placed in a small room that exists before the first main room; this will function like a sluice or valve that can keep players waiting outside if they die during the Arena Challenge.

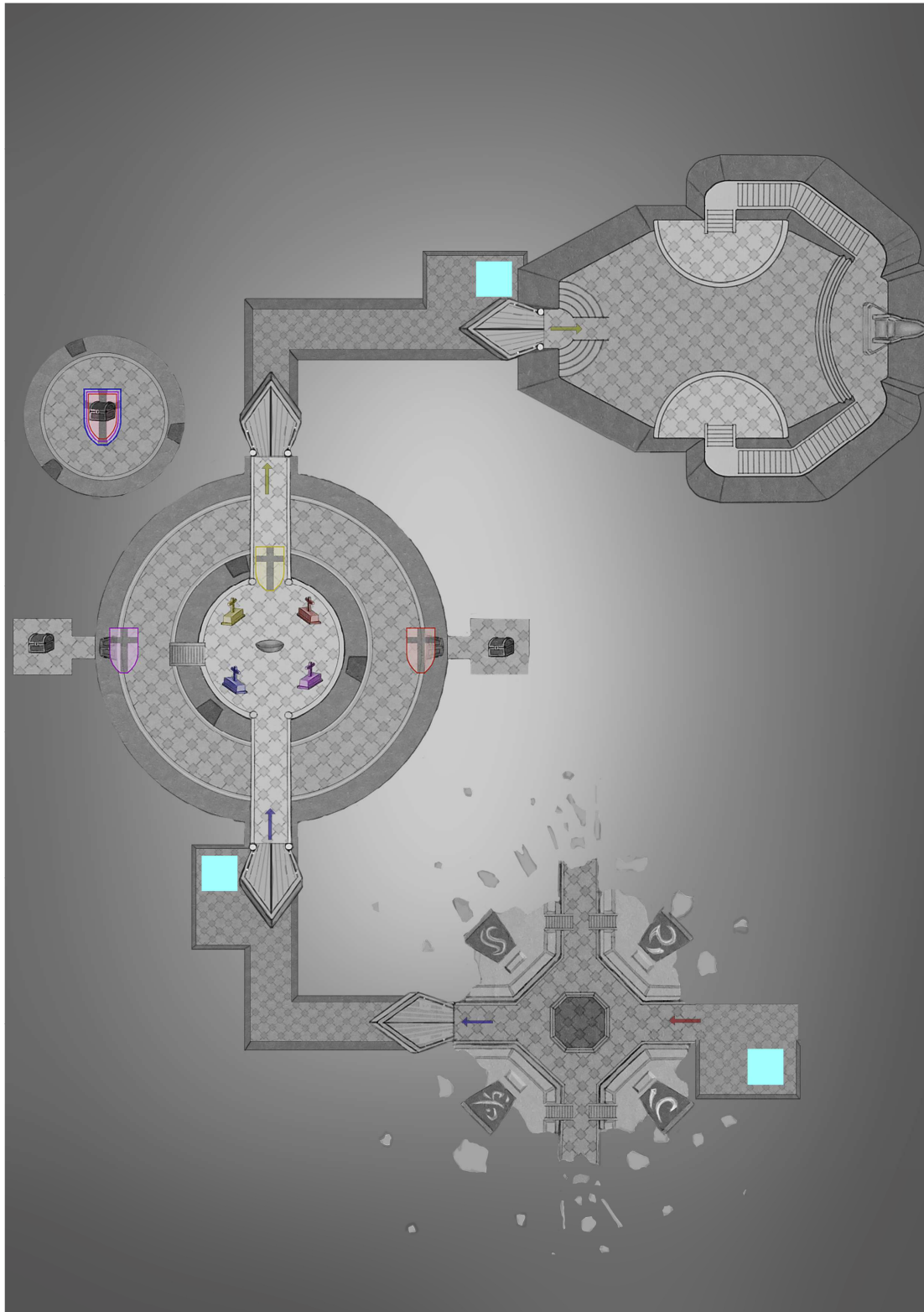
The temple of green ice – Room 02: The Shield Guardians

This respawn temple will be put near the entrance door that will allow for quick assistance during the grinding if a party member happens to die somehow. Once the final fight versus the shield guardians starts, a force field will be spawned around the center platform which prevents the people that died from jumping back into the fight halfway through.

The temple of green ice – Room 03: The Boss Fight

The third room will have a similar construction to the first, a vale or sluice will allow for spectatorship to those players that died during the fight, but it doesn't allow them back into the room to continue fighting.

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The entire instance, the blue squares are where the respawn temples will be located..

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Level Art

The entire art style, most of the meshes and all of the textures will be exact copies of the ToTA instance; the screenshots below will provide some examples:





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WORKLOAD

Which new Art assets are needed?

From Scratch:
Basemesh

Modding existing Assets:

Big door
Sound

Room 01
Runeslabs
Runes (both for the slabs and for the door)

Room 02
Crypts
Treasure Chests
Shields

Room 03
Healing Well

What is required from Gameplay?

Lore:
A (small) questline that guides people up to and through the Temple of Green Ice

Economy:
Rewards for quests, drops from bosses and a grinding system with interesting loot.

What is required from QA?

Functionality testing of all encounters during 2 phases.



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Total amount of required resources and time

	Resources:	People:	Timeframe (days):	weeks:
Start:				
Level design doc	1	Joost	10	2
Research + development	1	Steven, Ron	10	2
2nd				
Whiteboxing	3	Steven, Joost, Ron	15	3
3rd				
Art	3	Steven, Joost, Ron	10	2
Sound	1	Matthew	3	0,6
Testing	4	QA	5	1
4th				
Optmization	3	Steven, Joost, Ron	5	1
Testing	4	QA	5	1
Finalizing				
Fixing	3	Steven, Joost, Ron	2	0,4
QA	4	QA	2	0,4
Total Art:			35	8,4
Total QA			12	2,4

Details for Gameplay are still missing from this schedule, but as soon as that data becomes available, it will be added.



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PRODUCTION PROGRESS

Development Progress

The development will follow a rather common flow:

Level Design document:

In the end, this document will contain any and all info concerning this instance and it's place in the world. This takes about two weeks to be created

White boxing:

As soon as the Level Design document starts taking proper shape, the first basis for the White boxing process can be initialized. This will show us whether or not the idea's we hope to achieve are also practical whether or not they are even possible.

Creating the White Box means creating gameplay in an art less environment, once a white box is finished we will have a flowing entertaining and well balanced gameplay experience.

The final touch in this phase is linking this instance to the rest of the world, which means you should be able to enter it through a door in Ringfell- Stonedeeep

Testing:

Once the White box is complete, QA will spend some time trying to break the gameplay experience in as many ways as possible.

Dress up (Audio and Visual):

While QA is trying to break everything and all of it, art will start working on cosmetics, the white box that currently surrounds gameplay will now slowly start taking the shape of an actual and very beautiful dungeon. Any bugs that are found by QA take precedence over the Dress up task and will be handled as soon as they come in.

Testing:

After Dress up is done, another testing session will take place. The main concern of this session is whether or not the Dress up phase has destroyed any previously operational gameplay.

Optimization:

While this testing session takes place, Art will busy itself with optimization. This mainly concerns removing obsolete items to increase performance, or fixing small graphical glitches such as stretched textures etc.

Done:

After all of these phases, we should have a functional and very entertaining high level, fairly high difficulty instance.