

Design document ver. 1.0

Fear the Darkness



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Game Overview

Introduction

Fear the Darkness is a 2D topdown action with boss fight mechanics where you can run from your nightmares or defeat them.

In the game, the player takes on the role of a child. As soon as the lights go out in a cozy room and the character plunges into their dreams, a real nightmare begins. The protagonist wakes up in a pitch black attic and the only source of light is a torch in their hands. After finally recovering, the hero falls into a stupor, because they see countless spiders. The first thing that comes to their mind is to run. To run as fast as they have ever run before. Their life is at stake. This is not just a bad dream, there is no easy way out. Running away and avoiding various obstacles, they must fight back to save their life.

Game Description

This game aims to evoke unforgettable, diverse emotions in players, ranging from fear and hopelessness to a sense of victory over phobias and peace of mind.

Most of the gameplay is an escape from the "wall of death" with obstacles and fighting the boss. You cannot stop, you cannot slow down either, because with each damage received, the torch will go out - it acts as a health indicator and the field of view will become smaller.

The main goal of the player is to find a light at the end of level. Boss will try to stop him. Boss has different mechanics and ways of fighting him. The further you go through the level, the harder it is to pass it, which makes people stay in the game longer, because each level is unique.

Controls

Horizontal Movement: A/D

Torch Movement: Mouse

Game Mechanics

Player Movement

In the game, the character moves forward automatically. The player can only control horizontal movement by pressing the "A" or "D" keys.

Torch Movement

The game character carries a torch in their hand. The player can rotate the torch around the character by using the mouse.

The torch has several functions:

- **Enhanced Visibility:** It illuminates an area around the player, increasing visibility within that range. Anything outside this area becomes harder to see. By moving the torch, the player can adjust the area of visibility according to their needs.
- **Obstacle Destruction:** The torch enables the player to destroy specific obstacles, providing a way to avoid contact with them.

Additionally, the torch features four levels of intensity, each influencing the size of the area of visibility:

1. **Very High Intensity:** This level provides a brief burst of intense illumination. It allows the player to destroy obstacles that are usually indestructible and offers the largest area of visibility. However, this high visibility (85% of possible visibility) lasts for only a short period.
2. **High Intensity:** At this level, the torch emits a normal-sized area of visibility (60% of possible visibility), offering a standard field of vision.
3. **Medium Intensity:** This setting offers a limited area of visibility (45% of possible visibility), making it challenging

for the player to navigate. The reduced brightness complicates the gameplay by narrowing down the visible space.

4. **Low Intensity:** With this setting, the torch provides an extremely limited area of visibility (25% of possible visibility). Players can barely see their immediate surroundings, making it difficult to discern the environment. Moreover, this level doesn't allow the player to destroy even special obstacles, adding an extra layer of difficulty to the game.

The intensity of the torch can be enhanced by interacting with healing objects. Conversely, encountering specific obstacles diminishes the torch intensity.

If the torch intensity falls below the low level, the game will end, and the player will have to replay the level from the beginning.

Level

The level is designed as an endless corridor, enclosed by walls on both sides, restricting the player's movement within this confined space. The area between the walls is filled with a variety of obstacles and healing objects, forming a challenging path for the player to navigate. This setup not only tests the player's skills in maneuvering through tight spaces but also requires strategic decision-making as they balance the need to avoid obstacles with the necessity of collecting healing objects to maintain their torch intensity.

Level Generation

The level is constructed using pre-generated templates, with three templates always present on the scene: the active template, the one preceding it, and the one succeeding it. When the player transitions from one template to another, a template shift is initiated. This process involves despawning the oldest template while simultaneously spawning a new one ahead of the one that was spawned during the last shift, ensuring a seamless and continuous gameplay experience.

Obstacles

Obstacles within the level are tangible physical objects strategically placed to challenge the player. Each obstacle is designed to interact with the player in unique ways, and different types come with their own distinct properties.

- **Common Obstacle:**
 - A basic physical obstacle that cannot be traversed.
 - If not avoided, it will physically halt the player's progress.
 - It cannot be destroyed by the torch.
 - Appearance: Resembles a box or a drawer.
- **Destructible Obstacle:**
 - Shares the same properties as the common obstacle but can be destroyed by the torch.
 - To destroy it, the player needs to move the torch through it.
 - Appearance: Fragile objects.
- **Slowing Obstacle:**
 - Doesn't physically stop the player but reduces their speed while inside the obstacle.
 - Appearance: Spider web.
- **Water Obstacle:**
 - Doesn't physically block the player.
 - Passing through it causes the torch's intensity to decrease by one level.
 - Appearance: Stream of water or a puddle.

Interactive Environmental Enhancements

1. In specific places on the level stationary torches or campfires could be found. They have the ability to increase the intensity of the torch by one level. To achieve this, players can simply drag the torch across the flames.
2. A rope hanging from the roof. When a player interacts with the rope, they grab onto it, and the rope pulls them a certain distance forward, giving them a slight advantage.

Boss

After first templates, the player finds themselves pursued by a colossal spider boss. The spider's body remains at the bottom of the screen during the whole level.

In the intense battle against the boss, players face a variety of challenging attacks, each requiring quick thinking and precise action:

1. Limb Extension Attack:

- The boss extends one of its limbs onto a specific area of the level, moving it around to damage the player.
- The player can counter-attack by using the torch, damaging the boss's limb.
- After the player's successful attack, the boss retracts its limb, temporarily halting the assault.

2. Head Strike Attack:

- The boss attacks using its head, triggered when the player stands directly in front of the boss's head.
- The boss retracts its head slightly and strikes, attempting to damage the player.
- Players must quickly move out of the line of attack to avoid getting hit.

3. Summoning Little Spider:

- The boss summons a smaller spider that travels ahead of the player and positions itself somewhere on the level.
- Players can damage the little spider, and when they do, the boss also takes damage.
- Dealing with these smaller spiders becomes essential, as defeating them not only removes an immediate threat but also weakens the boss itself.

To defeat the boss, players have two options:

1. **Deal Enough Damage to Limbs:** Players can attack and deal damage to the boss's limbs and minions. Once enough damage is inflicted, the boss will be defeated.
2. **Run to Safety:** Alternatively, players can choose to evade the boss's attacks and continue running. If the player manages to outrun the boss for a certain duration, they will reach a safe zone, successfully escaping the chase.

UI

UI

The user interface is built into the game mechanics and world. No buttons, health bars, or numbers. Health indicator will demonstrate the brightness level of the torch (read more Health & Torch mechanics). Boss health indicator demonstrates one of several stages of his sprite (depending on the level of damage, the appearance of the boss changes).

Main Menu

When you start the game, everything starts with the main menu, where the character is sitting on a bed near a desk lamp, the llama button - start. Also on the table will be a turntable and media player to control the volume of music in the game.

When the lamp button is pressed, the light goes out, scary music begins along with a short cutscene that seamlessly transitions into the start of the game.

Game pause

Pause during the game by pressing the 'Esc' key. When you do so, the game stops, and a dark background with various options, including pausing, exiting to the main menu, returning to the last checkpoint, and continuing, appears.

Music and Sound Effects

Music

The music should help to create a tense and creepy atmosphere. Two simple types of ambient will be created in the Audacity program:

- low-frequency cyclic sound
- a looped violin sound that should become more unpleasant due to less health.

Sound Effects

Sounds will be taken from publicly available assets. They should add to the atmosphere of chase and horror. Ambient levels (e.g. thunderstorms), creaking floorboards, moving spider legs, torch crackles, taking damage and more.

