

Design document ver. 0.1

Game Overview

Introduction

Fear the Darkness is a 2D escaping game with boss fights. The player plays as a child. As soon as the lights go out in a cozy room and the player character plunges into his dreams, a real nightmare begins. The protagonist wakes up in a pitch black attic and the only source of light is a torch in his hands. After finally recovering, the hero falls into a stupor, because he sees countless spiders. The first thing that comes to his mind is to *run*. To run as fast as he has ever run before. His life is at stake. Fear, misunderstanding of what is happening around him, this is not just a bad dream, there is no easy way out of it. Running away and avoiding various obstacles, he must fight back to save his 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.

Development plan

Stage one - escape

The goals of the first phase of development are to create a prototype of the main phase of the game - escape from the wall of death. This phase includes the implementation of the following mechanics: player movement, level generation, obstacles, healing, sounds, music, UI and the standard ending - reaching the end of the level.

Phase two - adding a boss

The goal of the second phase of development is to add to the realized part of the game, the escape, a boss that will perform attacks on the player, and the player will be able to fight him. Optional lighting design. The introduction of the second ending - killing the boss.

Phase three (optional) - adding a boss battle phase

Optional development phase. When reaching a certain health level or after a certain timer expires, the boss will block the player's way forward and the final battle will begin.

Game Mechanics

Player Movement

During the game the character is moving forward automatically. The player has the ability to control horizontal movement by pressing "A" or "D" keys.

Level Generation

Level consists of pre-generated templates. Each template is filled with different obstacles and bonuses. Once the player leaves one part of the level it will be deleted and the next one will be spawned. Templates might be appearing either in a specific order or randomly.

Torch Movement

The player is also able to move the torch in the limited space around the character. It allows the player to change the area of visibility. Additionally, the torch could be used for interaction with obstacles or dealing damage to the boss. Torch also represents the player's health.

Obstacles

There are different obstacles on the level for the player to avoid. Each type has its own properties. Some of them could be destroyed using the torch or could be used to deal damage to the boss.

- Common obstacle

Prevents the player from going forward. If not avoided will force the player to lose time and get closer to the boss. Might look like an old box or a drawer.

- Water obstacle

Make torch fire weaker. Might look like a stream of water or a puddle.

- More...

Healing

In specific places on the level stationary torches or campfires could be found. They have the ability to restore the flame of the torch. It could be achieved by dragging the torch across the fire.

Boss

While running the player is being chased by the giant spider. Its body is located at the bottom of the screen, above the wall of spiders. The boss is capable of simple attacks. Its limbs are periodically placed on the map providing additional challenges to the player. Limbs could also be destroyed by the torch which will also deal damage to the boss.

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.

Health & Torch

Torch is a core mechanic. It is responsible for overall visibility and character health [UI]. The lower the brightness, the less visibility = less health. Zero brightness is defeat.

The torch has 4 levels of intensity:

1. Very high brightness ~ lasts for a short period of time. Idea: During the duration, the character gains the ability to set fire to obstacles ahead of him
2. High brightness ~ at high brightness increased visibility in the dark.
3. Medium brightness ~ standard brightness, medium visibility, little difficulty in locating obstacles and fuel for the torch.
4. Low brightness ~ Penalty in the form of limited visibility, critical brightness level.

Damage, or factors affecting torch brightness:

1. Indestructible obstacles (in the attic it is crates, old furniture): when ignored (direct collision) the character is pushed closer to the wall of death.
2. Destructible obstacles (in the attic it is cobwebs, old curtains, drapes, empty boxes) : when ignoring the obstacle (direct collision) the character sets fire to the obstacle, but severely damages the power of the torch and slows down. The correct strategy is to bring the torch to the obstacle in time [further mechanics of touch movement & fight].
3. Traps:
 - 1) Water drops in the attic. Water droplets fall in certain areas, which reduces the torch's power.
 - 2) Holes in the flooring, a very rare trap, but fatal. If hit, the game ends immediately.

Torch Movement & Fight

Within a limited radius, the player can move the torch with the mouse ~ thereby lighting their way, interacting with interactive objects, or setting fire to destructible obstacles.

Interactive objects

New interactive objects are gradually appearing in the game. These can be candles on the walls, which temporarily increase visibility on the level, or spider cocoons (in case the boss is a big spider), which deal damage to the boss.

Boss-fight

The boss appears some time after the main tutorial of the game. The player has 2 scenarios to defeat the boss:

1. Interact with a certain number of interactive objects that will appear during the level and damage the boss, thus the possibility to finish the level early.
2. Ignore the attacks on the boss, hold out with the defense method and run to the end of the level. Over time, the speed of the boss increases, as well as the falsity of combinations of obstacles.

Music and Sound Effects

Music

The music should help to create a tense and creepy atmosphere. The music will also change depending on the player's health level.

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.