Level Design Document

Butterflies and Hurricanes

Intentions

- *Butterflies and Hurricanes* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIZ-iYNRHWE) : le chaos du cyclone est violent, mais Ilham est déterminé à l'affronter, into ascension finale dans l'oeil du cyclone et climax.

- Le cyclone représente **une figure parentale** qui est **imposante** et intimidante (création de stress)

- Le boss en général représente une **ascension** qui est freinée par ses attaques, mais on ne se laisse pas décourager, on lutte contre les pensées et souvenirs du rabaissement pour se frayer un chemin.

- Les **fragments** sont des souvenirs/pensées qu'on libère pour créer des checkpoints.

- En atteignant le **coeur** final, Ilham peut changer les pensées corrompues pour se détacher de son emprise et le contenir.

Storyboard
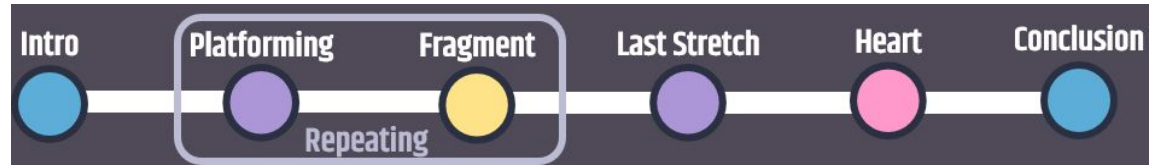
1. *Intro :* Découverte de l'arène (square de grande ville), découverte du cyclone

2. *Platforming :* Ascension / esquive d'attaques

3. *Fragment :* Atteindre un fragment, se faire emprisonner et devoir survivre pendant un temps donné pour ensuite le libérer (& création d'un checkpoint)
   → Répétition platforming / fragment jusqu'à atteindre le haut du cyclone

4. *The last stretch :* Ilham tombe dans le cyclone et doit remonter jusqu'au coeur

5. *The Heart :* la destination finale est atteinte, interaction avec pour laisser apparaître les mauvaises pensées puis les changer une par une

6. *Conclusion :* Le cyclone est "apaisé" et devient plus faible, Ilham redescend

Platforming - Intentions

- Climb up through **linear platforming sections** all around the cyclone. The LD gets higher and closer to it.

- But while moving up, you also have to **avoid attacks**, as they try to slow you down, hurt you or make you fall.

- The first platforming parts serves to <u>learn the dangers,</u> while the next ones are <u>challenging the player's skills</u>:
    - Variation (e.g. use different wind strength values, or change wind angle to increase jump range)
    - Multiple dangers at the same time

- The <u>Ilham's entire moveset will be needed</u> to complete the level, each move being more or less used depending on the sections to create variety, pacing and different type of challenges.

- The ascension will mostly be in diagonal, <u>a mix of horizontal and vertical climbing</u>.

Platforming - Intentions

Objectives

Macro :
Get to the heart

Micro :
Get to the fragments and free them

Challenges

Macro :
Survive through all the challenges of the ascension as they become stronger.

Micro :
Use your skills to get to the next platform while avoiding the dangers (wind, thunderbolts, gaps)

Rewards

Macro:
- Music gets more vibrant as Ilham approach the top of the cyclone.

- Get the satisfaction of becoming better at the game by overcoming difficult obstacles.

Micro:
Get to feel the flow by mastering Ilham's moveset and the use of the environment (platforms and wind).

Platforming - Narration

What Ilham feels

His mindset during this chapter:
Already did work on his lack of energy and low self-esteem. He has still issues with it, but he's on the right track.

What does he fight:
Ilham is deconstructing his parental relationship, being something that keeps holding him back. He needs to confront his representation of his abusive parent to understand he is not what his parent depicted him as.

How does he fight it:
By keeping going forward, dodging its attacks, and confronting the wind it blows. It takes time to get to the heart and the ascension is rather hard, as it is a long lasted relationship between the two. As such, Ilham needs to understand how these attacks work to dodge them.

How the world transcribes this

Dandelions growing in the environment, because Ilham is starting to accept himself, but they aren't strong enough to serve as platforms. However they can act as support signs to lead him toward his goal.

The cyclone wind can affect some rocks (they move), but not the buildings, that city is the new place of Ilham. It can still be a little clumsy here and there for him to move but they will not move.

Crystals represent Ilham's thoughts: grappling points, fragments, the heart, safe zones and himself.

Platforming - The wind

- As you get closer to the cyclone, **the wind blows** against you. Use walls to avoid falling down, pull through, and advance carefully. It may be the most useful way to create interesting platforming variation by variating its strength and so the moves the player can use.

- **How does it works:**
    - The wind is not always there, it is assigned to specific parts of the level, that way we can create pacing.
    - The wind can be oriented differently for each section.
    - ~~A specific strength is assigned to the wind for each platforming section separating by a fragment. Each one becoming stronger.~~

- **How does it affect Ilham:**
    - Both his idle, run, jump and fall movements are normally affected by the wind.
    - The invulnerable part of his dash isn't affected, while it's vulnerable part is affected by the wind. The goal of it is to still give a good reactive option for the player to dodge.
    - The grappling hook isn't affected at all by the wind, either its direction or its speed, until Ilham is jumping off of the grappling hook point.

# Platforming - Thunderbolts

- A multitude of thunderbolts will repeatedly target you. Dodge them to not get zapped.

  - An **area of effect is drawn on the ground and above** a short time before a strike, in order to know where and when it will land.

  - Thunderbolts activates **when Ilham enters a start trigger** and deactivates when he enters the corresponding end trigger. Thunderbolts strike every X seconds after entering the trigger.

  - They are **mainly placed manually** in platforming sections,

  - But certain thunderbolts can be set to appear **according to one or more of those patterns:**
    - Random in a certain radius
    - Activate where the player stands
    - Activate ahead of the direction the player is walking
      → *the last two can be played together to put the player constantly on the move*

  - If a thunderbolt hits Ilham, he will take **1 damage point**

# Platforming - Thunderbolts & destroyable platforms

- In addition to hurting you, thunderbolts can also destroy fragile parts of the level, so you have to <u>make quick decisions to travel to safe platforms.</u>

    - Only **specific platforms** defined in the level can be destroyed.

    - A destroyed platform **respawns after a certain amount of time.**

    - A destroyed platform will **respawn after a death/respawn** at a checkpoint.

    - A destroyed platform is **fully destroyed,** none of it remains.

    - These platforms are **destroyed by a single thunderbolt.**
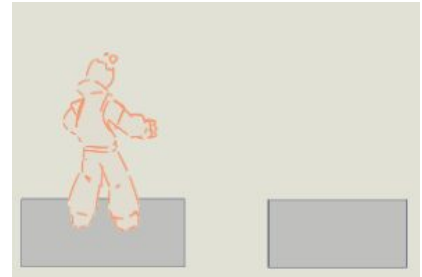
Fragment - Intentions

While Ilham is ascending, <u>corrupted fragments</u> punctuate the way. But when he tries to interact with them, <u>a wall of wind</u> appears around him: survive in it for a defined amount of time. Once free, interact with it again in order to reveal the way to continue climbing the cyclone. The fragment becomes <u>a safe checkpoint place</u>.

- Only one fragment is visible at a time: because the next platforms aren't revealed yet, the player have to free the fragment before continuing.

- Each fragment is placed after a platforming phase where the player already had a chance to take damage so it shouldn't be too much difficult. It is more of an **endurance challenge.**

- Having multiple fragments, we **need to create diversity** over their challenges: it can be through the use of wind, different kind of attack patterns, twists (e.g. playing with holes or verticality).

- A strong idea linked to the fragment phase is to give an opportunity for the player to **act more proactively:** we could have some foes we can destroy through acting on them as an example.
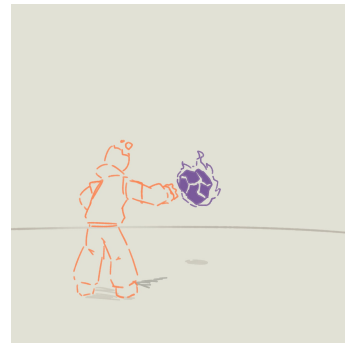
Fragment - Imprisonment

- As soon as Ilham tries to interact with the fragment, **a protection** appears around it and **a prison** of wind appears around Ilham to not let him get out of it.

- The fragment protection dissolves itself after **a certain amount of time.** Then the player needs to interact with it to free it from the corruption and himself from the wind imprisonment at the same time.
  - This time is shown to the player thanks to a sign easily accessible: maybe placed at the protection around the heart (ex : a spatial UI around it symbolized by a colored timer decreasing ?)

- The wind imprison Ilham in a small circular area but big enough to still have the possibility to move around and dash to dodge attacks. This area **can variate in width and height** to create different challenges through the level.

- **The wind walls don't hurt** Ilham, they simply act as walls preventing him to get out of the area.

Fragment - Intentions visuals

- the fragment is seen as a heart, made in crystals
    - vfx ? movements ?
        - it's beating but doesn't move
    - start imprisonment ?
        - something should already be there to corrupt it but something add up when Ilham close the distance
            - weak heart before, need to be feed
            - a word pierce it and infect him with the cyclone aura
- interaction & liberation ?
    - when Ilham interact with it, the word is removed (disappear) and the heart grow strong again, creating the safe space
        - the heart can become the safe space or just give it birth from a shockwave ?
        - a good word can appear when Ilham free the fragment
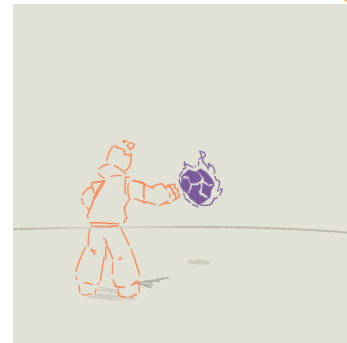
Fragment - Attacks overview

- Thunderbolts

    - The thunderbolts used in the fragment phases are the ones with behaviours of targeting the player position and some random places in the area.

    - However, each one isn't used as often:

        - Random thunderbolts are the more used, creating a place with traps that can spawn everywhere to make the player feels constantly in danger.

        - The thunderbolts that target the position of the player are more rarely used, spawning if the player don't move or keep being at the same spot for too long (x seconds).

- Foes

    - Foes are violent entities that move to reach Ilham and attack him with a close range attack.

    - Ilham can destroy them by acting on them at close range. If he doesn't they'll continue chasing and attacking him.

Fragment - End & Checkpoint

- As soon as Ilham tries to interact with the fragment, a visual and sound effect of its liberation from the corruption is used. **Ilham acquired a new checkpoint.**

  - We can oblige the player to interact with the fragment by letting him restrain to this place even if attacks stop.
    OR
    We can oblige the player to interact with the fragment to stop the storm of attacks.

  - It can be the fragment that crackles and explodes into a comforting warm light.

- **There isn't an attack or wind that can go inside of it and affect Ilham.**

- That space created by the now free fragment is big enough for Ilham to be inside and walk a little inside it : it should be reassuring to be inside and a relaxing place for the player.

  - The music can be softer and slow down inside it ?

- After this moment this place will act as the **active checkpoint** where Ilham will return every time he falls down a platforming section (touching a death plane) or lose all of his life points.

  - If a new checkpoint is acquired, it will be the new active checkpoint instead of the last one.

- The tornado becoming angrier after its liberation, the **deathplane** will be elevated to just below this checkpoint.

  - visually represented with a large sea of wind ? or isn't visually represented, but when Ilham touch it an effect (based on the checkpoint color) takes him back to the active checkpoint

The Heart

- After overcoming the last stretch, the player can get close to the corrupted heart **without dangers anymore.**

- Interacting with it makes **a small number of thoughts** coming out from it.

    - They are not too close to each other so the player can choose to interact with whichever they want without touching an other.

    - Visually they can be represented with words that seem corrupted falling down to the ground (being hard to bear) ?

- By interacting with a though, **it transforms itself into a better though** that start floating in the air and being partially cleaned up from the corruption.

- When all the thoughts have been changed, the heart absorbs them and becomes shorter and less conflicted. The cyclone and the environment become less frightening (shorter, change of color, more sunshine ?). Ilham then takes it, his head repairing itself.