

## **Playtest 1: 8/20/2024**

For my first playtest, I sent my friend the latest version of my game. He streamed himself playing the game through discord, and I watched while being quiet and taking notes. At the end, I asked him a few questions about his experience with the game.

### **My Notes**

- The playtester immediately found a bug that allowed the player to tab through the orders by repeatedly clicking the crystal ball
- The playtester was unsure about the meaning of the different amounts of money gained for his spells
- The playtester was confused about the current win condition of the game and about how orders worked
- The playtester assumed each spell gave a certain amount of money as he was not sure why some spells gave him 50g
  - I think changing what happens when a player gets an order wrong would be good because gaining any amount of money makes the player think they did the correct thing
- The gaming experience generally seems to meet the playtester's expectations
  - However, they definitely thought the game still needed some work
- The playtester found a bug that allowed the player to submit nothing as an answer
- Once the playtester figured out how the game worked, they became discouraged after missing too many orders because it was impossible for them to win, and they had to restart
  - I think a timer would definitely be beneficial as it would add another aspect that would affect how much money the player could gain
- There was no rune book implemented in the game yet, so I gave the playtester a temporary rune book to allow them to memorize the runes for spells
  - However, the playtester felt that the temporary rune book was not clear and was hard to understand
- When the playtester was done, they successfully exited out of the game without even noticing that game mechanic
  - They pressed Esc and Quit without even thinking about it, so I don't think the pause menu needs much changing

### **Q&A**

- Did you find that the "X" for the clear spell button made sense?
  - Yes, it helped that it was on the opposite side from Cast, but a trash can would probably be better
- Did you figure out that Orders can have multiple Answers?
  - No, he did not
    - However, I think that is okay
      - I can use it as a mechanic later on
      - I will try to maintain that within the rune book design
- What were your thoughts about the overall game?

- Likes the concept
- Doesn't think it's very intuitive in this state
  - Casting runes
  - Clearing runes
- Thinks is fun that there are different ways to cast spells
- What were your thoughts about the gameplay? Did you find it interesting/engaging?
  - Definitely interesting and engaging
  - Would play it again once fleshed out
  - Wants to learn spells instead of having a list of them
    - Progression
    - Start with easy spells
      - Spells get harder
    - Spells have the same root and are related to each other
    - Can use some form of logic to determine what another spell might be based on a rune they do know
  - Enjoyed playing it
  - Hard to play with just money as the goal
  - Likes the idea of trying to interpret what NPCs want
- Were you able to learn how to play quickly?
  - Yes, but they saw me play it a little bit so it helped them to understand quicker
  - Curious to see how a completely blind player would do
- Is there any additional information that would have been useful to you before starting?
  - How to make the spells that you need to make
  - Creating runes is intuitive, but a tip on how the gems work would be good
  - Was unsure how to create an Arcane spell because there was no gem
  - Feature introduction over time would be helpful
    - Learning one at a time
- Did you find the game too difficult or too easy?
  - A little too easy
  - Mostly because they had access to all of the runes
- Did you find anything confusing?
  - Yeah, but they figured it out pretty quickly
  - So, not really
  - The bugs were confusing though since they messed up the game
- Was there anything you didn't like about the game? Why?
  - No, nothing stood out to them enough at the moment to say for sure
- Was there any aspect of the game you wish you had control over? Something you would like to be able to change in a settings menu?
  - Wish he could play in windowed
  - Music would be good

## **Playtest 2: 8/22/2024**

For my second playtest, I sent another one of my friends an updated version of my game. He streamed himself playing the game through discord, and I watched while being quiet and taking notes. At the end, I asked him a few questions about his experience with the game.

### **My Notes**

- The playtester was confused about what to do at the start of the game
  - Partly because I forgot to tell them introductory information about the game, but I let them continue anyway to see if they could figure it out
- The playtester quickly figured out that they could drag the crystals around the screen
- The playtester had an idea that they could create spells or draw runes but they were not sure how
  - After playing around with the game for a bit, they figured it out
- The playtester struggled with figuring out how to start orders
  - They were stuck on this for a while
- The playtester was able to click the crystal ball to start an order but then failed the order immediately because they were unsure of what to do
  - They then proceeded to keep working on that order when they had already failed it
  - Making the player aware of when they have an order and when they don't should be the solution
  - Possible solutions are:
    - Preventing rune creation until order starts
    - Adding people to give the order some personality
    - Making the crystal ball glow when it is ignored and there is no order
- Once the playtester got a handle on the game, they did just fine
- The playtester was frustrated that they only had one chance to get the spell correct and they wanted to try the order again
  - An explanation of why the player got the order wrong might help
- The player took a lot of time to figure out and create spells even without the order description fully implemented
  - Adding more time to the timer or reducing the quota might help

### **Q&A**

- What is the win condition you are trying to meet?
  - The current win condition is a quota of 1000 gold coins
- Would you have liked more time?
  - The amount of time was good, but only if the player continues to have access to all of the runes they can make
- What were your thoughts about the overall game?
  - The game is cool and fun
  - Think all of the different elements of spells are cool and the game mechanics are great

- Wish that the harder runes were introduced later, so he could get a grasp of the game easier by only working on easy spells
- Thought some time pressure would be good
  - Maybe adding a patience meter for customers where they will leave if you take too long
  - The playtester did not notice that there was already a 3-minute time limit that could be measured by how far the sun was across the sky
- What were your thoughts about the gameplay? Did you find it interesting/engaging?
  - Yes, the gameplay was really fun
  - Liked all of the schools of magic, especially how the Arcane school was considered the default and the rest were separate because usually magic is split up into schools evenly
  - Liked the shapes of the runes and the idea of selling spells to people
- Were you able to learn how to play quickly?
  - After the first game, he felt like he started to figure out how to play
  - Once he actually read the order prompts, he started to figure it out
  - Didn't understand the prompts until he read them properly
  - Thought that he needed to keep trying to solve an order even though he needed to move on
  - He thinks it's fine that he didn't do so well at first because players need to spend time to learn games like this
- Is there any additional information that would have been useful to you before starting?
  - Wanted it to be clearer that orders expire if you fail them once
  - Maybe some kind of additional visual would help
- Did you find the game too difficult or too easy?
  - The game was not too difficult
  - Had some trouble finding runes, but once they are fully integrated the difficulty should be good
- Did you find anything confusing? Explain.
  - Everything was confusing at first
  - Didn't know about dragging gems, clicking the crystal ball, or how orders worked
- Was there anything you didn't like about the game? Why?
  - Didn't like how difficult runes were mixed with the easy ones and wished they were introduced later once he had more of an understanding of the game
  - Wished there were people attached to the orders, so he could have a better understanding of what is happening with each order
  - Wished the quota was smaller at the start of the game so the player could spend time learning and still win
- Was there any aspect of the game you wish you had control over? Something you would like to be able to change in a settings menu?
  - Not really but adding customization options to your shop would be cool

Additional feedback

- He wished the buttons turned darker when you hover over them, so it is clearer that he could click them
- After I told him that the sun indicates how much time was left, he wished that the order prompt UI wouldn't cover it up most of the time
- He liked the sound effects and is interested in seeing the game once there is more music

### **Playtest 3: 8/24/2024**

For my third playtest, I sent the leader of the game development team I am on an updated version of my game. He streamed himself playing the game through discord, and I watched while being quiet and taking notes. At the end, I asked him a few questions about his experience with the game.

#### **My Notes**

- The playtester noticed that they could move the gems quickly
  - However, they spent some time examining the game before finding out that the crystal ball started the orders
- The playtester had trouble knowing if they successfully added a gem to the spellbook
  - A constant visual of the current rune's element either on or around the spellbook or a visual when a gem is successfully added to the spellbook might help
- After the playtester figured these things out, they didn't have any more trouble with the game
- The playtester had a difficult time telling the Arcane purple from the Water blue and suggested that I make them more distinct
- The playtester noticed that there were multiple runes of the same name, but they didn't know what their meaning was
- The playtester mentioned that they liked the concept and the novel mechanic of creating runes to cast spells
- As the playtester was finishing up playing, they found a bug where the day number would not reset upon going to the title screen and back

#### **Q&A**

- Did you quickly notice that there was a time limit?
  - Yes, the UI definitely helped
  - Wished the timer UI had more detail to make it clearer what it was
    - Such as:
      - Making the sun brighter or more orange
      - Maybe adding an hourglass symbol or a moon to indicate that the day would be over
- Did you find the instructions at the beginning of the game clear and helpful?
  - The instructions were definitely helpful, but a few changes could make it more clear
    - Such as:
      - Changing the word "materials" to "gems"
      - Using text and images to indicate how to draw runes, drag gems, and start orders
- Did you quickly notice that the crystal ball started orders?
  - Yes, he liked that it was flashing and lit up when hovered over, but a bit more indication would be good
    - Such as some small text explaining what to do
    - Maybe making the crystal ball glow faster as time passes
- Would you have liked more time?

- No, the time felt good, but an indicator of which day it is would be nice
- What were your thoughts about the overall game?
  - Likes the concept
  - Understood the reason for the time pressure and that the game was an inconvenience simulator
  - Once he figured out the game, everything made sense
  - The game works well
- What were your thoughts about the gameplay? Did you find it interesting/engaging?
  - Having the beat the clock is a classic game mechanic
  - Liked that things take time to figure out and do, which, with the time pressure, increases the tension
- Were you able to learn how to play quickly?
  - Yes. Once he got it, he was good to go.
- Is there any additional information that would have been useful to you before starting?
  - Indicators for the tutorial would have been helpful
    - How clicking the crystal ball starts orders
    - How to move and add gems to the spell book
    - Maybe how to draw runes
- Did you find the game too difficult or too easy?
  - The difficulty is good
- Did you find anything confusing? Explain.
  - The initial hump of learning how to play the game was confusing
- Was there anything you didn't like about the game? Why?
  - Nothing in particular
  - The art direction could use some work
  - Everything comes together well
- Was there any aspect of the game you wish you had control over? Something you would like to be able to change in a settings menu?
  - Having a fullscreen and windowed option would be nice

#### Additional Feedback

- Likes the concept, it's definitely novel
- The game needs a visual for adding gems or what type the current spell element is
- Adjusting some of the materials, textures, and colors of the runes would be nice
  - Warm up Nature green to yellow
  - Warm up Water blue to green
  - Maybe add a distinct gem icon for each element
- Could even change the "Cast" button to "Craft" so it would make more sense