

Kohara

A Game by Kanishka Siriwardana

Pitch

Sadly, when the truly evil among us pass on, they do not take the destruction they cause with them. The damage they had caused on the people around them is left to fester. The places they occupied feel oppressive.

They seem to linger, causing further damage. Perhaps through those they influenced. Perhaps their impact causes more poor decisions to be made. An immovable fog, blinding the good and concealing the evil.

It is an enormous struggle when those we love pass on. It is a much bigger struggle to move on from those who hurt us. Because even if we manage to, we are left with nothing. No worthwhile memories. Just warnings.

Minha is a city with a problem. Inhabitants are becoming ill and confused. A fog seems to be the culprit. Once it infects an area, it doesn't dissipate. It remains, causing the people to slowly become insane. It's cause seems to be from those who have lost recently. Those who have lost people who caused them harm.

Kohara is a tag team Action RPG where you play the roles of both The Angel Of Hell and The Angel of Heaven. Action games like Devil May Cry and Bayonetta are usually played with a single controllable character and it is a test of dexterity more than thinking. Kohara's duo of simultaneously controllable characters and RPG elements allows for a game more about strategy and planning while maintaining the fast paced nature of action games.

This is achieved using a stance system. Both controllable characters can assume stances that allow them to perform different actions. The player must determine what combinations of stances are required for combat and switch between them when they need them. This allows the player to control both characters despite only directly controlling one at a time.

Kohara is intended to be made for the PC, Xbox One and Playstation 4.

Players

There are only two controllable characters, Zalika and Layla. Zalika is the Angel of Hell and Layla is the Angel of Heaven. Zalika is the primary character and will be controlled most of the time. Layla is the secondary character and will be controlled on occasion during combat. It is a single player game.

Look and Feel

The game will be a 3D open world action RPG. When controlling the characters in the game, the game screen will look similar to action games such as Bayonetta with a bit more peripheral vision.

The game takes place in a fictional city of Minha. It is also a fictional world. The buildings and structures within the town (and the surrounding areas) will have a Middle Eastern look to them (similar to Agrabah from Aladdin or Damascus from the Assassin's Creed). The culture and imagery of the town will have more of a Buddhist or Hindu aesthetic. Hindu and Buddhist art tends to be very colourful and would look good against the plain looking buildings. The surrounding areas around the town will be varied as well. There will be around 4-5 distinct areas surrounding the city. Things like a forest, a lake, a beach, a volcano and market.

Art Examples

[Henna Patterns](#)

[Hindu Art](#)

[Buddhist Art](#)

The inhabitants of the game world will have brown skin (Middle Eastern). Their clothing will be similar to the clothing worn during the crusades period again with the colours and patterns of Hindu and Buddhist art (or South Asian art in general).

Clothing Examples

[Female Clothing](#)

[Male Clothing](#)

The music should be influenced by music from the period but should be a modern take on it.

Music Examples

[M.I.A. - Warrior](#) - This song uses indian music samples to reinforce a hip hop track. While hip hop would clash with the rest of the game, the combination of the sample with the modern song is the kind of thing that I want to go for.

Tonally and pacing wise, the game will be like a detective thriller with a romance subplot. While the overarching story will be dark, the interactions between characters will be much lighter. The dialogue should be quick with occasional humour interlaced.

Tone Examples

[Shutter Island](#) - Thriller

[American Hustle](#) - Dialogue

Story

Backstory and Prologue

The game takes place in a fictional city called Minha. The city is experiencing a surplus of murders, missing persons and strange occurrences. Furthermore, parts of the city are becoming uninhabitable. These areas are covered in a green tinged fog. It is unclear what is causing it but the effects are clear. People are becoming very sick in these areas. Some are displaying odd behaviours. So far, attempts by the local authorities to find out the cause of the problem have not been fruitful. All these issues co-opted with the regular problems the town faces has become unmanageable for the local law enforcement. This has led to more problems for the people living in the habitable areas.

Eventually the fog finds its way to the local orphanage. While the children are become sick, taking care of them is not a problem. The problem occurs when a madman breaks into the orphanage, killing the owner and severely injuring some of the children. He is stopped by Zalika, one of the workers.

Zalika realizes that the madman was under the effects of the fog. She goes to the town hall to ask for the fog to be moved from the orphanage. They explain to her that they are already spread thin.

Zalika goes to her best friend Layla. Layla has been working on a solution to the fog problem for a while and wants Zalika's help in testing out her equipment. She convinces Zalika to test out the equipment on the orphanage.

Layla believes that the fog is caused by wayward souls. Wayward souls are created when a human being of hate dies. Wayward souls hide in the bodies of the distressed. It is currently a theory.

At the orphanage, they find their equipment is not functioning properly. In order to stop the fog, Layla suggests looking for the person who could be creating the fog. They discover it in a young boy who moved in recently. The boy is severely depressed. Upon questioning, they find that the boy wants to find out what happened to his mother.

Layla believes that by finding out what happened to the mother, they can come closer to solving the problem. They travel to the house where the boy once lived. There, they begin to look for clues. They find the body of the mother in the attic of the house, dead. The clues reveal that the mother had died protecting her child from an abusive father.

When they return to the boy and deliver the news, he seems at peace. Suddenly, the wayward soul appears from within the boy. The soul kills Zalika when she attempts to protect Layla. The soul runs away. Layla takes Zalika back to her house and places her in her bed. She is unsure of what to do. She ends up falling asleep on Zalika's chest.

When she wakes up, she hears Zalika's chest is making a very strange noise. She remembers hearing about such an occurrence in one of her books. In order to save Zalika,

she needs to turn her into an Angel of Hell. To do this, Layla must become an Angel of Heaven. Not fully believing the book, Layla attempts the procedure. No effects are observed.

The next day, Layla takes her body to the nearby river and digs a grave for her on the bank. As she attempts to place Zalika's body in the ditch, she trips and falls into the river. The current drags them both away. As Layla begins to drown, she grips her friend's body tightly only to find Zalika's arms wrapping around her.

Zalika swims to the shore, dragging Layla with her. At the shore, Layla discovers that her procedure had worked. They go back to the orphanage, find the wayward soul and fight it. They have been granted strange abilities.

When they attempt to present their findings to the authorities, they are laughed at. Layla wants to personally go out and deal with the problem.

Narrative

- Clearing of the fog is easy at first. The pair make good progress.
- A problem arises when the fog returns to areas that it was removed from.
- They find that the fog is being pumped into the areas from carts around the city.
- They stake out and catch someone refilling one of the carts that is producing the gas.
- The person refilling the carts is a servant of one of the king's advisors. They have no knowledge of why the gas is being spread but does reveal the advisor.
- Zalika and Layla question the advisor. He reveals to them that there are others doing similar operations but he is unsure as to why as well.
- Zalika and Layla start eliminating both the carts and the fog from the areas.
- Eventually their actions cause the advisors to stop them. They are captured and delivered to the head advisor.
- He informs them that the King's public opinion is at an all time low and now is the perfect opportunity for a revolution. He allows the two to leave on the condition that they do not continue to stop the spread of fog.
- One the night they are back at home, an attempt on Zalika's life is made. Layla arrives just in time to stop it.
- Realizing that she is no longer safe in her home, she stays with Layla.
- They form a resistance group with the people in the districts they helped and start to eliminate the fog once again.
- Their efforts are in vain as the advisors spread the lie that the king is causing the fog and he is killed for it.
- The advisors begin to control the city and the happiness of the people drop even further. The advisors do not remove the fog as it allows them to control the people more easily.
- The resistance group is now being hunted by the authorities so Zalika and Layla switch to proving to the people that the fog is pumped into the city by the advisors.
- They track down an advisor who feels the guilt of what he is doing and tells them that he will speak out against his peers.
- He presents his evidence to the public and a manhunt is conducted to find the other advisors.

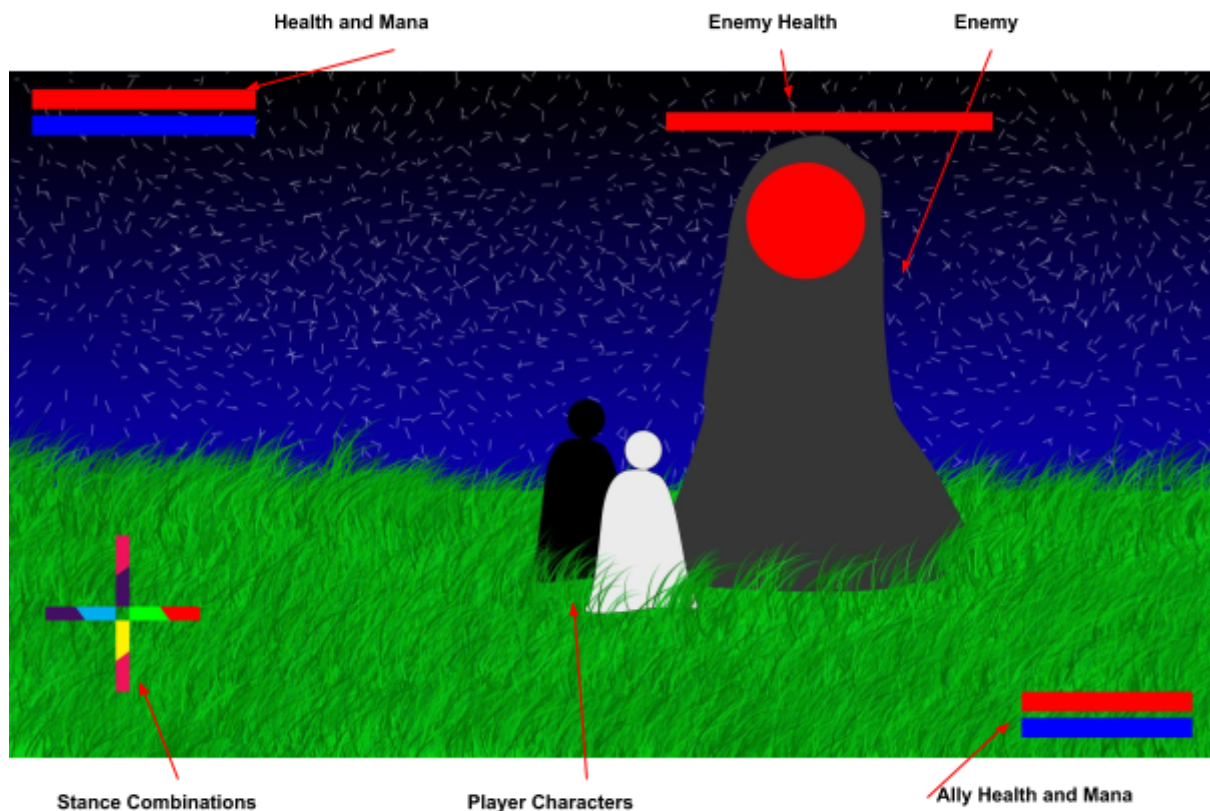
- Unfortunately, the remaining advisors are now able to control the wayward souls and begin slaughtering the newly formed revolution.
- Zalika and Layla confront the head advisor and kill him. This scatters the others and they are eliminated as well.
- The fog is slowly cleared from the city and a new council is elected with Layla as the head.

Character Backstories

Zalika is one of the workers in an orphanage in the city. She is 25 years old. Her father is a contract killer who used to work for the king. She is a reserved girl who doesn't interact with a lot of people apart from her best friend Layla. She spends a huge amount of her free time writing but few have taken interest in her work due to her being a woman. Zalika also acts as muscle for the orphanage. The children who are adopted sometimes go to bad homes and it is Zalika's job to bring them back. Some tend to become violent as a result. The orphanage is also an easy target for robberies and raids so Zalika has gained her fair share of combat experience.

Layla works at a pastry shop with her mother. She met Zalika when they were about 9. She is interested in chemistry and physics. Her being female means she is unable to attend a school that will teach her. She spends her earnings on buying science textbooks and supplies so that she can learn herself, usually with the support of Zalika. She is very fond of Zalika as she is one of the few people who approve of her interest. Even her own mother doesn't like it. Over the years, she has developed a crush on her best friend. She supports Zalika by reading her material, which has become a guilty pleasure for her. Her crush becomes more over the course of the game.

Interface



Above is a mockup of the interface. It depicts a combat scenario against a Demon Knight. The interface during combat is very minimal. It is all represented in color. The health bars as red with blue mana bar below them. The only other visible interface item is the stance combination selection at the bottom right. Even this is represented in colors. Each color represents a stance so the user can easily identify what combinations of stances he/she has at the ready and switch accordingly.

The placement of the player character is the same as other action games such as Bayonetta. They are placed in the middle and small enough that the player has a lot of peripheral vision. The player can also freely rotate the camera. The other controllable character is behind them when not in combat. Their position during combat is dependant on their stance and current situation.

Ideally the game will be controlled using a gamepad. For the description here, the Xbox 360 controller will be used as it the most common gamepad used on the PC and is nearly identical to the Xbox One controller.

- The movement of the player character will be controlled using the left analogue stick.
- The right stick is for movement of the camera.
- The directional pad is used to select stance set.
- The A button is used to jump.
- The X button is used for melee attacks.
- The Y button is used for ranged attacks.
- The B button is used for magic attacks.

- The right bumper(RB) is used to change the currently selected magic or trap(Layla only).
- The left bumper(LB) is used to switch to the other playable character.
- The right trigger(RT) is used to dodge.
- As Layla, the left trigger(LT) is used to lay traps.

Start Up

After the initial tutorial section of the game, the player will be able to explore the city. There will be a couple of possible quests they can complete. These will be relatively easy.

In terms of location within the city, the player should be in front of the police station. They will have some basic weapons and the most basic armor in the game. All of the stances will be available to them. They will start off with no currency.

Objectives

The overarching story objective initially is to rid the city of the fog. As the story continues the objective will be to stop the cause of the fog. In individual levels, the objectives will initially be to solve the puzzle. The end goal of the puzzles is to find the person inflicted with the wayward soul. If the person is found on the player's first attempt, they will be given buff during combat with the boss. Identifying the correct person will release the wayward soul. The next objective will be to kill all the enemies in the level.

Tokens

Zalika - This is the main player character and who you will be controlling the majority of the time.

Layla - This is the Deuteragonist. She is a support character that you will control intermittently.

Enemy - These are the enemies you will face. This type of token will come in many forms.

Aasif - This is the shop keeper. You will interact with him to buy items.

Clues - These can be interacted with during the investigation part of the game to help the player find the culprit.

Layla's pastry shop - This is where you can start new missions, store gear and upgrade Zalika and Layla.

Aasif's shop - This is where you can buy gear and items.

Weapons - These are usually swords, bows, hammers, knives and other medieval weapons.

Gear - Equipable gear that can be put on either Zalika or Layla.

Investigation locations - This is where investigations will take place.

Combat locations - This is where combat will take place.

Gameplay

The primary gameplay is built on the stance system. Standard character action games like Bayonetta and Devil May Cry are built on a combo or dodge systems that reward quick reflexes. Kohara does have a basic combo system but is more about stance switching to take advantage of situations or to limit the effect of negative situations.

Stances are roles that each of two characters can take that allow them to perform specific jobs during combat. This includes things like attracting attention to themselves to create openings or healing. Stances allow the player to determine the actions of their AI controlled party member without having to directly control them. There are no combinations of stances that will beat all enemies. The player will be forced to switch between combinations frequently as the enemies will do large amounts of damage and will have a significant advantage if only regular combat is used. Most enemies will have resistances and have 5 times the health of the player characters. The player has limited mana during a combat scenario so if they do not find a good strategy for the enemy, they will not be able to heal, cast magic, buff/debuff or even lay traps.

Aside from combat, players will be spending their time solving puzzles. These puzzles are solved by gathering clues from talking to NPCs and collecting items. The player needs to determine who has a wayward soul inside of them so that they can eliminate it.

Pay-off grid

The following is a pay-off grid for combat against a demon knight. The numbers within the grid indicate the net damage from the interaction. Positive numbers mean that the demon knight has received more damage and negative numbers indicate that the player has received more damage.

Demon Knight Attack: 5 Damage

Demon Knight Casting Time: 0 Damage

Demon Knight Magic: 10 Damage

Demon Knight Block: Reduce player attack damage by 2. If net damage is below 0, no damage is done to either party.

Player Melee Attack: 3 Damage

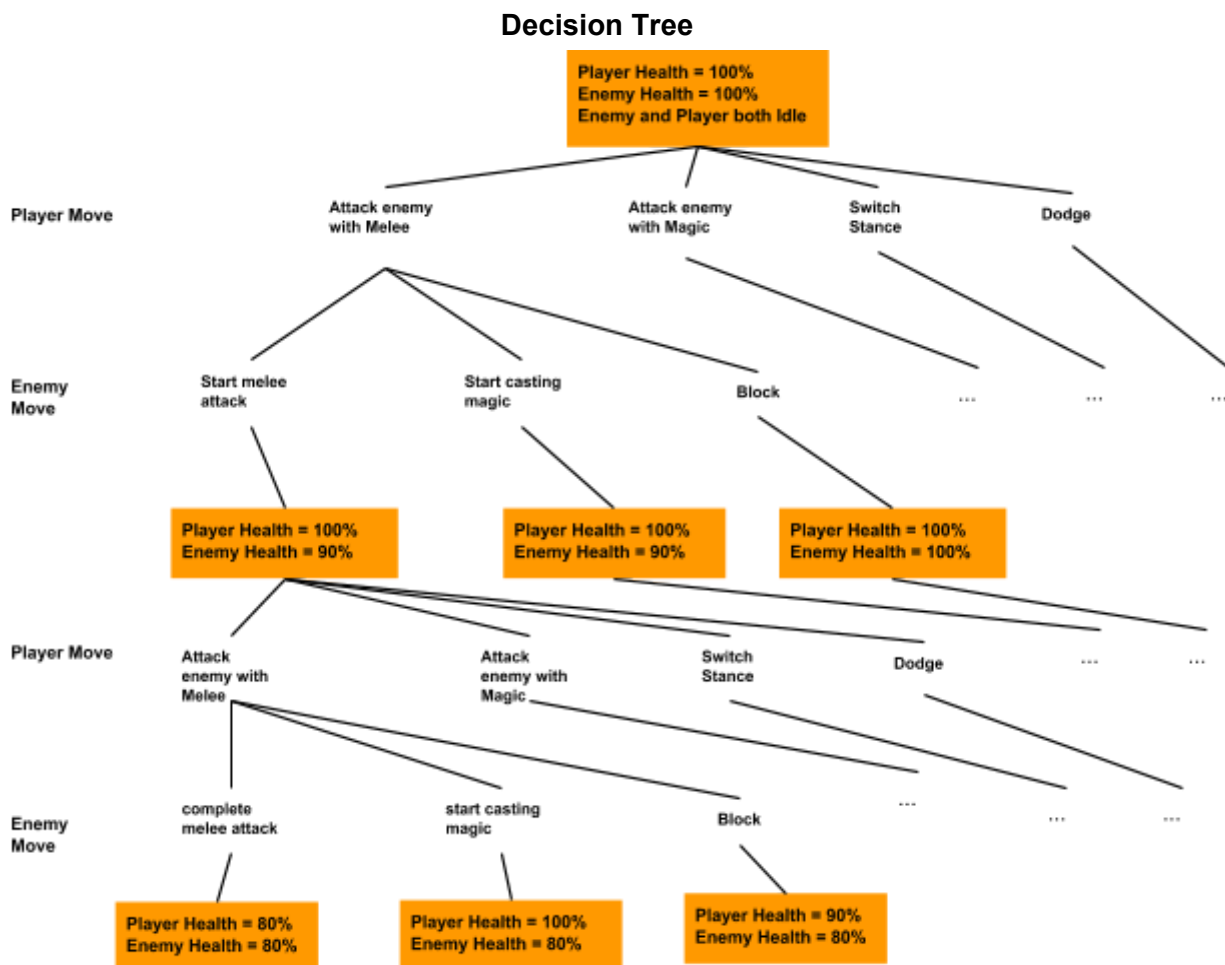
Player Range Attack: 1 Damage

Player Dodge: Negate Damage

Player Magic: 6 Damage

| | Player Melee Attack | Player Range Attack | Player Dodge | Player Magic |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Demon Knight Attack | -2 | -4 | 0 | 1 |
| Demon Knight Casting Time | 3 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| Demon Knight Magic | -7 | -9 | 0 | -4 |
| Demon Knight Block | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

From this grid alone, dodging would be the optimal strategy. This assumes that both the player and the demon knight have the same amount of hit points. In actuality, the demon knight has more hit points so performing Magic when the demon knight is attacking would result in an eventual loss. With this new information, it would only be useful to perform magic when the demon knight is casting or blocking. Furthermore, the player will only be able to perform magic if they have enough charge(basically mana). This means that the player should not use magic when they are blocking or the potential damage that could be inflicted using magic drops. The player should perform regular melee attacks or other actions such as setting traps or switching stances.



This is a small section of a complete decision tree for combat against a Demon Knight. This encounter is also explained in the 60 seconds of gameplay. Due to the game being in real time, both players will make moves and the state will be defined after both players have completed an action. It is very difficult to represent real time combat in a decision tree, especially as some actions can be performed simultaneously such as attacking with a melee attack and switching stance. This would complicate the tree even further without adding anything particularly useful.

60 Seconds of Gameplay

Combat is entered. I am fighting against a Demon Knight.

It is currently idle but will attack soon.

I switch to a melee/debuff stance combination.

Since the Knight is still idle, I attack with a regular melee attack while Layla automatically tries different debuff spells to find the Demon Knights weakness.

I get two attack in before the demon knight starts his attack animation.

Before he connects with his attack, I dodge out of the way and he misses.

Layla has not found an effective debuff against the Knight so I switch stance to melee/buffer.

This will make Layla buff me so I can do more damage and take less.

After 3 attacks, the Knight begins to charge magic.

I get in 5 strikes before he summons 3 demon minions to fight alongside him.

I switch to aggro/heal stance and switch control to Layla.

As Layla I begin to lay fire traps around the area while Zalika distracts the demon knight and the minions.

I cast a quick heal on Zalika to get her help back up and switch back to her.

As Zalika, I run away from the group of enemies and coerce them to the traps.

Two of the traps explode and cause the whole group to become incinerated.

The demon knight has a resistance to fire so the effect immediately dissipates.

The demon minions become affected by the damage over time of the fire trap.

I switch to melee/ranged stance so that Layla will start attacking the minions with me.

I switch to the magic spell Drift.

I use Drift on the closest minion to me and the spell damages him and my character immediately jumps to the next closest minion and damages him.

This repeats until all nearby enemies are hit. The last minion I jump to also dies as Layla had been doing damage to him.

The damage over time from the incinerate finishes off the rest of the minions after a few more seconds.

The demon knight is now on about 1/4 health.

The demon knight has entered a last fight mode and will now do more damage.

In an attempt to finish quickly, I attack more aggressively.

The demon knight is faster and gets an attack on me before I dodge out of the way.

The demon knight is now attacking a lot more aggressively so I switch to ranged/ranged stance and kite him. (Kiting is moving away while doing damage).

The demon knight is killed after a few seconds of doing this.

I gain experience.

Rules and Features

Rules

The game is split into two parts, investigation and combat.

Rules of Combat

- Once in combat, the player will win if they can eliminate all enemies.
- The player is in control of Zalika or Layla.
- As Zalika, the player can attack, dodge, change stance set or switch with Layla.
- As Layla, the player can attack, dodge, set traps, buff/debuff/heal, change stance set or switch with Zalika.
- Zalika is the main damage dealer and Layla is the support.
- When controlling Zalika, Layla will attack from range.
- When controlling Layla, Zalika will attempt to pull enemies towards her so Layla can perform actions safely.
- Zalika can attack with a melee weapon or magic.
- Melee weapons and magic will stagger small enemies. They will not stagger bosses or larger enemies.
- The effect of magic used on enemies will vary with the enemy.
- The effects of magic on boss characters is limited or nonexistent.
- If an enemy is defending and the player attacks with a melee attack, the player will be staggered.
- If a player dodges, they will enter a dodge state that will prevent all damage during its duration.
- Traps will affect all enemies. The strength of the effect will vary with the enemy.
- Debuffs will affect all enemies unless they are immune. The strength of the effect will vary with the enemy.

Features

The primary feature in the game is the ability to switch between the two main characters. Zalika is the main damage dealer and will be controlled most of the time. The player only really needs to switch to Layla to set traps or buff/debuff/heal.

The two controllable characters can change stance set. Stances are the role that the character will take in combat. The stances are

- Melee - Attacks with melee attacks (Both)
- Ranged - Attacks with ranged attacks (Both)
- Healer - Heals self or ally (Layla only)
- Aggro - Pulls aggro to self and takes less damage. Cannot attack (Zalika only)
- Buffer/Debuffer - Buffs or debuffs (Layla only)

Outside of combat, the player can set up combinations of these stances to switch between during combat. For example, when at full health, you may want to attack with a combination of melee and ranged stances. If one of the characters takes damage, you may want to switch to a combination of Aggro and Healer. This would allow the healer to do their job while the Aggro took the damage. Different scenarios will require the player to use different sets of stance combinations. Note that the controlled character is not forced to only attack

with Melee or Ranged, that is just for the AI partner. This is why Zalika will be controlled most of the time, she has a wider, more damaging move set.

The different weapon types will also need to be considered. Weapons such as daggers will be able to attack very quickly but will not have any crowd control. Hammers will have lots of crowd control but due to their slow swing speed, will make it hard for the player to hit often.

The game will have fewer combat scenarios than similar games. They will be much harder and will require players to use all their resources. After each combat encounter, the health and mana is replenished so it encourages players to experiment with the tools given to them. Furthermore, the player will not respawn far from their location of death so it allows them to try new things without suffering heavy penalties.

Unlike other actions games, the game will feature a puzzle element in the form of investigations. These are custom built puzzles to determine the location of the wayward souls in a quest. They can range from finding the identity of a murder to the location of a lost will. The player will interact with the objects and people around them to determine the location of the wayward soul. Talking to people will reveal who may be distressed and the objects will clues as to why they are distressed. If the player successfully identifies the person on their first try, they will receive a bonus buff during the encounter against the boss enemy for the level.

Level Design

Level designers will be able to change the following variables when designing levels.

- The number of enemies in a level as well as the types of enemies. The enemy at the end of each level will be a designated boss. The enemies chosen should make it so that one strategy should not work for the whole of the encounter.
- The size of the combat area. Combat areas can be large to accommodate large numbers of enemies or several big enemies. They could be small to force the player to be more careful.
- Environmental Hazards such as poison gas and slippery surfaces. Even things like teleporting doors that lead to different locations. The environment hazards will affect enemies as well so they can be used by the players.
- The shape of the map. This can be things like changing the elevation of the map as you travel through it or having multiple floors. If enemies are attacking from multiple levels, it makes crowd control more difficult and forces players to target threats in specific orders.
- The placement of rewards such as currency, experience and items.
- The puzzle that reveals the distressed individual with a wayward soul within them. This will be somewhat dependant on the story.

Technical Requirements

PC version minimum specs

- Operating System - Windows 7/8/10
- Processor - AMD Athlon X2 2.8Ghz / Intel Core 2 Duo 2.4Ghz
- RAM - 4GB
- Hard Drive Space - 30GB
- Video Card - AMD Radeon HD 4770 with 512RAM / Nvidia GeForce 8800 GT with 512 RAM
- DirectX - DirectX 11
- Controller recommended

The console versions will be the PC version on mid-low settings.