

GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

!!! YOU NEED TO HIT ESCAPE AND THEN RETRY IF A CREATURE DIES !!!

Summary

Azazial is a puzzle platformer about a little shadow creature who can transform into shadows to possess the creatures around it.

Theme: Shadows and Alchemy

Our character and art style are both heavily inspired by the theme. The original idea was to have the character collect shadows in the flask on its back and use them to make potions, but we ended up scrapping this in favor of leaving your cloak in the form of a shadow and possessing creatures to solve puzzles. We left the flask in as a little reminder of the game's roots (and maybe as a way to store collectibles in the future???) We originally wanted to add a mechanic where you could turn possessed creatures into shadows for your flask, but we decided it wasn't a priority for this build of the game.

The theme also lightly inspired our gameplay. Turning the player into the creatures around them is heavily linked to alchemy's theme of turning materials or items into others, and you leave the cloak to become a shadow. Our first build of the game had the shadow stuck to the walls and floors, but it didn't feel as fluid as we wanted, so we decided to let it roam freely.

Inspiration (Gameplay)



Gameplay-wise, smooth movement, game feel, and accessibility are first priority. We want the fluid movement and platforming of Celeste, and the intense and engaging feel of Hollow Knight, all while making it as enjoyable and fun of an experience as possible. We're taking Celeste and Hollow Knight's approach of leaving in lots of skips and tricks for speedrunning to make the game still enjoyable even after hours of playtime.

Inspiration (Art)



The art direction we're taking is a darker, more gray-blue pixel art style.



Our main character is cute and squishy, but the faceless and mysterious nature of it gives it a darker, somewhat edgy tone.

The environment reflects the player's dark theme, with lots of bricks and spikes. The original idea was to have the beginning of the game be an explosion of color, and as you go about stealing shadows and draining color, it gets progressively more grayscale, but we've ended up scrapping a lot of this for the moment due to time constraints.

Game Loop/Narrative

The game will begin in the tutorial, where the mechanics are taught and the player character is introduced. You make your way through a mysterious dungeon, possessing enemies to help push buttons

The boss is Bibby, an angel who shoots you with beams of light. When you pause the game, its eye can still move, and breaks the fourth wall and stares directly forward and out of the screen at you.

Original Idea:

You learn that the player hates color, and has been taking the shadows of everything that comes near its home. The player is then dropped into a colorful environment and makes their way through several areas, stealing shadows as they go. They then come across a final boss. The way they defeat the boss (and past enemies) matters for which ending they get.

Mechanics

Just like any other puzzle platformer, you'll be able to jump and move left/right. To improve game feel, we're including Coyote Time, Jump Buffering, and more.

Shadow Flight:

You'll be able to leave your cloak in a shadow form to access areas you can't with your normal movement. This shadow was originally locked to the floor and walls, and able to pass through certain walls and all spikes, but it was too difficult to make challenging gameplay. In your shadow form, you can either press the shadow button to instantly return to your cloak, or you can run into a creature. Once you hit an enemy with the shadow, you'll possess that creature.

Possession:

You can possess any creature in the game, and they each have their own movement scheme. The rat is fast but difficult to control, and the bat can fly but can't walk on the ground. These are the only 2 creatures we'll be adding in the short term, but in the future, we'd like to add possessable enemies that can kill you.

Deaths and Checkpoints:

We're going for a similar death mechanic as Celeste, where deaths are unpunishing and happen frequently. There are checkpoints after each small gameplay section that are unlocked after walking into it.

Puzzle Elements:

Doors and moving platforms that can be linked to either buttons or levers. Levers will be toggleable, and buttons will be pushed down only if the player or a creature is standing on top of it.

There will be 3 gates (add more if needed).

1. Stop the shadow but let everything else through
2. Stop creatures but let everything else through
3. Let only the shadow through

Software

- Godot Engine 4.2
- Aseprite for all art assets
- Ableton Live 11 Standard for music and SFX
- Audacity for further audio editing, formatting, and compression
- Trello and Google Docs for coordination

Genre

Singleplayer, Casual, Puzzle Platformer

Music

The title screen music will be sparse.

Level music will be playful and bouncy with a dissonant tinge.

Boss music will start with an angelic choir, then go into heavy electric guitar.

If time allows, add credits music, and separate tracks for each level, getting progressively darker as the game continues.

The soundtrack will be available at <https://www.youtube.com/@Luxiah>, and on most streaming platforms under the name “Luxiah” or “Autumn Shinn”

[SFX Trello Board](#)

Programming Notes

Most of our notes are in comments in the scripts, this is just for things that are referenced frequently and are annoying to find

Collision Layers:

- 1 = Player Hitbox, Floor Tiles, Doors
- 2 = Floor Tiles, Shadow Hitbox
- 3 = Kill Tiles, Player Killbox
- 4 = Interact With Player Hitbox, Checkpoints
- 5 = Player Interaction Hitbox, Levers, Buttons, Pushable Enemies
- 6 = Shadow, Floor Tiles
- 7 = Possession interactions
- 8 = Enemies, Floor Tiles
- 9 = RATSTACK
- 10 = Shadow killbox and Bibby collision
- 11 = platforms and player
- 15 = Player only

Fix for future builds:

No indication that you need to hit pause -> retry when a creature you need dies.
Maybe make them automatically respawn??

make options menu accesible from pause menu as well

timer flickers on screen transitions. Maybe set z index to lower than screen wipe?

some things aren't running on delta time and it causes skips that shouldn't be possible

Notes for future game jams:

Clean up code so that if someone else needs to go back and change certain things about a function it isn't an absolute mess that you need to explain to them.

Make systems and prefabs for creating things instead of hard-coding everything

Don't assume players will know what to do or have the same game knowledge as you do.

Stay cohesive, focus on fleshing out one core mechanic rather than adding a bunch of rough ones. Keep character, boss, and environment design themed and consistent.

If a mechanic seems clunky and you don't have time or energy to fix it, don't leave it in place. Either scrap it completely or rework it.

Make sure all members of the team are available for the full jam 🤖