

The Last Torch

GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

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Introduction

Elevator Pitch

The Last Torch is a top-down Dungeon Crawler that focuses on exploration and combat in a dungeon overtaken by evil forces.

Software/Tools Used

- Unity 2022 for General Game Development
- Aseprite for Required Pixel Art
- Jsfxr for Sound Effects

Genres(s)

Casual, Singleplayer, Dungeon Crawler, Bullet Hell

Platform(s)

Windows (PC), WebGL

Concept

Theme Interpretation (Shadows & Alchemy)

‘Shadows’ was interpreted directly as ‘player visibility’ during development. The goal was to build a game that placed emphasis on the amount of light available for the player to see. To start, the player can only see a short range around their character, but as they progress, they can upgrade their light source, directly increasing the amount they can see.

‘Alchemy’ was interpreted as crafting/upgrading within the context of this game. The player must kill enemies and use the different items they drop to upgrade their weapons and stats as they progress further into the dungeon.

Genre Inspiration

This game does not take inspiration directly from any one game in particular, but instead borrows elements from several broad genres and combines them together.

Dungeon Crawler

The most prominent influence is from the standard Dungeon Crawler. The game focuses heavily on players exploring and progressing through a labyrinth-like environment, fighting different enemies along the way. As they progress, they will find several different weapon types, area environments, and distinct bosses.

Survivor-Like (Vampire Survivors)

This game uses the auto-battling system that most Survivor-Like games use, where the player focuses primarily on controlling player movement and the weapons will fire themselves at enemies. The player still does have two manually-activated abilities in this game, but the primary damage dealing is done by automatic targeting and firing weapons.

Bullet Hell

Bullet Hells are a very broad genre of game, and this game has many similar qualities to others that fit in the category. Fast-paced gameplay with tons of swarming enemies and projectiles moving around the screen at once are staples of both bullet hells and this game.

Gameplay

Controls

Movement

Player Movement: 'WASD'

Abilities

Fireball Spell: 'Left Click'

Dash Spell: 'Space'

Others

Opening Chests: 'E'

Buying Upgrades: 'Left Click' in Shop(s)

Gameplay Loop

The general gameplay loop consists of players leaving the sanctuary (safe zone with shops) to explore the dungeon. Along the way, they will fight enemies, which will drop different resources depending on which one dies. While exploring, the players can find chests containing other abilities and weapons. They can also find other sanctuaries or bosses depending on how deep into the dungeon they go. Once they die or return to a sanctuary, they can spend the resources they earned on upgrades for their weapons, abilities, or player stats (health, move speed, etc.) The cycle of exploration, fighting, upgrading persists until the player defeats the final boss, thus ending the game.

Progression Loop

This game is much more focused on player progression than individual micro-mechanics.

Upon starting the game, the player is told to defeat the three protectors of the shadow curse to cleanse the lands. This is the driving force behind the player's progression. The game also points the players to the East and West corridors by saying that is where the first two bosses can be found. Each area of the dungeon will have unique enemy spawns, which get progressively harder as the player delves deeper.

Once the game starts, the player will only receive the fireball spell. Everything else must be found/upgraded through exploring the dungeon. Weapons can only be upgraded so far before the player has to search for different materials that are required. This also forces the player to explore and encounter new enemy types.

For example: The starting zone only spawns zombies and skeletons as enemies, which drop leather and bones respectively. This will allow the player to purchase the first upgrade for their fire spell, but the second upgrade will require sludge, which can only be found in the second area and beyond, forcing them to venture deeper. This is the general 'big picture' loop that the progression in this game follows.

Other Facets

Art

As primarily a programmer, I felt it was best to use premade assets rather than create art for this game from scratch.

The art for this game is taken primarily from [SnowHex's](#) Dungeon Gathering sprite sheets, and some of the characters are taken from [Snoblin's](#) Pixel RPG Character Sets. These sets were chosen due to their art style fitting the general vibe that was desired while still leaving lots of room for interpretation and clever use while in development.

Story

This game does contain a simple story, mostly to facilitate the gameplay loop. The story is as follows:

The world has been overtaken by a curse, falling into eternal darkness. Monsters and possessed creatures take over with no resistance. The player takes the role of the 'last torch', a magical torch and the world's

last hope at dispelling the curse. They must traverse a dangerous dungeon and eliminate three protectors of the curse in order to cleanse the lands.

UI

The goal was to keep the UI simplistic and out of the way as much as possible. Players can see their ability cooldowns, the amount of each resource they have, the boss they are currently fighting, or the area of the map they are in, but only at times where that information is important so as not to clutter the screen.

The few UI assets that are used are taken from one of [Kenney's](#) packs. These assets fit the style, look, and vibe of the game perfectly and accentuate the elements that need it.

Audio

Similar to the UI, I did not want the player to feel an overwhelming amount of 'audio clutter', so most of the audio elements are very lowkey.

The music changes depending on if the player is in a sanctuary, the dungeon, or a boss fight to try and better match the mood of that specific environment. The sound effects are very minimal and only played at relatively important times (i.e. player taking damage, player killing enemy, purchasing an upgrade, etc.) so as not to overwhelm the player with constant sounds of enemies attacking, taking damage, moving etc.