Shadow Slider

Design Document

for Pirate Jam 15 – Shadows and Alchemy

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Introduction

Game Summary Pitch

Shadow Slider is an action-focused platformer with movement designed to feel like the player slides around like a shadow to position themselves to make attacks with thrown potions.

Inspiration

- I picture the player's attacks similar to the Plague Knight boss from Shovel Knight.
- I'm not familiar with any games with movement similar to what I'm picturing.
- If time permits, the planned upgrade system takes inspiration from Rounds' upgrades and Tunic's stat boosts.

Player Experience

The player will dance around the level(s), switching between forms while throwing attacks at their enemies. The exact experience will start simply with a single level and a minimal selection of enemies. If time permits, additional levels/areas, enemies, and player abilities will be added to the experience.

Genre

Single player, Platformer, Action

Concept

Gameplay Overview

The gameplay will focus on switching between the character's two forms. Alchemist form isn't as nimble as Shadow form but is better at attacking; the intended gameplay is to dodge attacks in Shadow form until you find a safe space to switch forms and attack.

If time permits, the player will also collect ingredients that they can bring back to a cauldron to mix new upgrades.

Theme Interpretation – Shadows and Alchemy

I am interpreting both themes very literally: the main character is both an alchemist and a shadow. Potential idea: parallel the community's reaction to the joined theme in the game jam itself: the shadowy form of the character imposes restrictions compared to

other alchemists, but the combination also helps the character think of out of the box solutions to problems.

Primary Mechanics

Platforming

Combat

Secondary Mechanics

Upgrades

Asset Overview

Art Design

Pixel art doesn't feel right for this, I want the shadow to feel smooth. I'll probably stick with pixel art for now, though, since that's all I know.

One option is pixel art everything but a smooth shadow. This could clash, but it would hopefully emphasize the smoothness of the shadow. Or maybe a pixel art core with a smooth exterior that gloms onto the nearby environment? I probably don't have time for this, but a shader could be cool here.

Sound Design

The music takes inspiration from the combined theme: "alchemy" is represented by a cheerful xylophone while "shadows" is represented by string instruments like violins and cellos.

Game Experience

UI

I would like a minimal UI with as many indicators as possible being diegetic (e.g. health = size? Or maybe screen border? Or maybe the character flashes at low health. Selected weapon = potion colour?)

Controls

A platformer lives or dies by its controls. I'll be spending a lot of time fine tuning the controls to feel responsive and intuitive.

Movement

Shadow form's horizontal movement could be confusing if not done correctly. Consider avoiding completely vertical walls, and experiment with inverting controls while upside-down.

- This ended up not being an issue for the game jam submission as the ability to walk on ceilings was removed due to it causing too many problems.

Action	Controls
Horizontal Movement	A/D, Left/Right arrows, Left Stick, left/right D-pad
Jumping	W, Up arrow, Space?, A button
Change form	S, Down arrow, Space?, X button

Combat

I'm not sure at this point if the shadow form should be able to attack.

Action	Controls
Aim potion	Mouse, right stick
Throw potion	LMB, click right stick
Switch attack	Q/E, RMB, R-Shift/R-Ctrl, Bumpers?, mouse side buttons?

User Interface

Action	Controls
Change selection	Mouse, left or right stick
Select	LMB, Space, Enter, A button
Back	RMB, Backspace, B button
Open menu	Esc, Menu, Select

Development Details

Platform

The game will only be intended for web platforms with an html5 export specifically for itch.io.

Development Software

Program	Purpose
Godot 4.2.2	Game engine
Aseprite	Visuals
Illustrator	Visuals and user interface
Musescore	Music and sound effects

Requirements Breakdown

Priority Level	Description
VH	This is integral to the project; the project literally will not function without it.
H	This is extremely important, if not 100% necessary.
M	This is important but can wait until higher priorities are done.
L	This isn't important.
VL	This would be nice to have.

Minimum Viable Product

Category	Description	Status
Character Abilities	**VH:** Movement, jumping, potion attack **H:** Transformation, "jumping", slam attack? **H:** Character art	80% 25% 60%
Level	**VH:** Basic level to demonstrate game features **H:** Environment art	100% 50%

Enemies	**VH:** 1-3 enemy types to demonstrate combat	100%
Sounds	**H:** Basic sound effects **H:** Basic music	50% 80%

Additional Potential Features

Category	Description	Status
Character Abilities	**M:** A simple alchemy-themed upgrade system **VL:** Enemy takeovers?	0% 0%
Level	**M:** A more complicated level to better show intended gameplay **M:** Light-based hazards	0% 0%
Enemies	**L:** Additional enemies	0%