Combat-Level Mechanics

Knight Light @ Team Somninauts (September 2024)

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KEY FOR ARTISTS/TECH

VFX Animation UI Audio Environment Tech

Witch Balls

Throughout encounters, the player must defend a central defense point, called a witch ball. These witch balls are wards which protect the villagers from nightmares; if the witch ball is destroyed, the player receives a game over and is forced to restart from the beginning of the encounter.

Visual Rules

- Witch balls are freestanding, requiring them to be suspended from streetlamps, trees, statues, or any other medium/large sized asset.

- Witch balls emit dynamic lighting, which flickers each time the witch ball takes damage.

- Witch balls are connected to windows with a VFX light trail, which also flickers with the lighting. [STRETCH GOAL]
  - A corresponding glass-crunching or breaking sound effect should accompany this.

- The health of a witch ball is represented by a ring decal projected on the floor beneath it – this ring empties radially as the witch ball takes damage.

- Windows connected by a witch ball have a warding glyph over them to represent the Knight's protection. [STRETCH GOAL]

Level Design Rules

- Witch balls may never be placed against walls – the player and enemies need to be able to comfortably path around the witch ball in all directions.

- Each witch ball must be fully visible from the previous witch ball in the same encounter.

- Witch balls must be connected with the same cord in each encounter – it is fine to fake the cord connection between encounters.

Game Flow Rules

- If a witch ball is ever broken, play a cinematic where the witch balls break or turn off, breaking seals and causing the town to be overrun with nightmares. After this, change to a game over state.
  - This needs a corresponding SFX.
- Enemy spawn points target the nearest witch ball (expose a field for "defenseTarget" in engine, spawn point object), causing all enemies from that spawn point to focus the same witch ball. When the pre-set number of enemies to spawn for that witch ball are killed, the witch ball is secured, and no more enemies will spawn to attack it.
  - When a witch ball is completed, flash the dynamic light from the witch ball at a higher intensity briefly. Add a VFX to compliment this.
  - When a witch ball is completed, play a "purification" reward stinger/sound effect.
  - A secured witch ball's health ring decal changes color from yellow to white [STRETCH GOAL].
- When a witch ball is nearing completion (ie. 80%), enable the next witch ball within the encounter.
  - Visually, this should look like the witch ball is being enabled and needs the appropriate SFX/lighting change. Activate its connected enemy spawn points after a delay (maybe a few seconds).

Enemy Spawn Points

Spawn point objects can be placed on "spooky" places in the level: alleys, sewer grates, etc. Enemy spawn points include adjustable spawn placement for enemies.

Visual Rules

- Currently active spawn points should have some sort of dark, maybe stormy cloud VFX play over it to represent that it is actively spawning enemies.
- When next to an active enemy spawn point, the player can hear a spooky ambient hum from its location.
- Enemies should have a spawn-in VFX, SFX and [STRETCH GOAL] animation.

Level Design Rules

- Except for sewer grates, enemy spawn points should be against walls whenever appropriate.
- Never place an enemy spawn point without a corresponding environment asset for them to be "coming from."

- Do not place enemy spawn points near the witch ball – enemies should always have to walk at least some distance to begin attacking.
- Place enemy spawn points in a way that keeps that fight relatively encapsulated.

Game Flow Rules

- Enemy aggro is functionally a timer – if the player has damaged it within x amount of seconds (expose for designers), they focus attacks on the player.
- Enemies spawn aggroed to the player, and the player's aggro is reset whenever the player does damage to an enemy.
- When enemies are not aggroed to the player, they path towards the witch ball. When close enough, they attack the witch ball, dealing damage and potentially breaking it.
  - Enemies who lose aggro and begin sieging pop-up a world-space UI "emote" above their head, indicating their change of interest.
- Enemy spawn points target a specific witch ball (expose a field for "defenseTarget" in engine, spawn point object), causing all enemies from that spawn point to focus the same witch ball.
- Enemies that spawn should not begin acting for a short delay – about 1 second.

Gifts and Upgrades

As Knight Light successfully defends witch balls, "skill point"-style gifts are released in the nearby area. The player can manually walk around to collect them, or after leaving the area they fly to the player for automatic collection. At the end of an encounter (three times over the course of the game), the player will be able to spend these gifts at the shrine placed at the end of each combat area. Gifts can be used to individually increase stats.

Rules

- Gifts are released each time a witch ball reaches 100% completion (all enemies targeting it are defeated).
- Gifts can be manually collected after being dropped. Additionally, when x distance from the witch ball they are associated with, the witch balls fly to the player for automatic collection.
- Gifts that are collected can be spent at the Altar to the Knight Light, which is placed at the end of the level.
- The altar to the knight light cannot be used while enemies are present.

- Interacting with the altar opens a near full-screen UI modal. This is the menu that is used to trade gifts.

- Stats have a maximum upgrade level.

- Stat upgrades cost more as a skill gets upgraded.

- Gifts can be saved between encounters (to save up for a more expensive upgrade).

Level Design

- Witch balls should have windows nearby, from which the gifts will drop.

- An altar to the knight light must be placed at the end of each combat encounter.

Visual/Audio Design

- When gifts are moving, a small VFX light trail should tail behind them.

- The altar to the knight light should illuminate, ideally with a VFX, when the encounter is over, and the player can interact with it.

- [STRETCH] When the player is unable to upgrade anything more at the altar (if all stats are at their max level or if the player does not have enough gifts to trade), the light and VFX should disable.

- Near the altar, an ambient sound should be audible while the altar is interactable.

- When interacting with the altar, a sound should accompany opening the modal.

- A sound should accompany closing the UI modal.

- A sound should be played every time the player upgrades a stat. An additional sound should be played if the player cannot upgrade a stat but tries to anyways (if the stat is at its max level or if the player does not have enough gifts to trade).

- When collecting gifts, a small modal should briefly appear near the bottom of the screen, indicating the number of gifts currently collected.