Game Design Document for:

Boss Chase

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Overviews

Platform
PC & Console

Genre
Endless Runner + Boss Rush

Audience
Boss Chase is aimed mainly at a teenage audience (15+) but will interest anyone who enjoys fast-paced action and/or endless runners.

Rating
T (for Mild Violence)

Gameplay
Players must react quickly to both the enemies and the environment in this fast-paced, high-action 2D side-scroller that brings together the two popular genres of boss rush and endless runner. It is expected that players will have short (under 15-minute) play sessions.

World
The world of the Void is one that is ever-changing. Seperated into biomes, each with their own unique environment and creatures, the Void never stays in one state for too long. These biomes are always shifting, keeping you in the dark on what they will run into next.

Aesthetics
The art style for is a stylized, hand-painted look that follows semi-realism. The intent is to create biome environments that are somewhat realistic, yet retain the stylized, artwork feel. Each of the individual biomes will be distinct, they will flow together with the same art style but will differ greatly in presentation and content. Each biome (and their respective enemies) will have a unique color palette that aids in creating vastly different worlds within each.

Actual art assets implemented into first (Grasslands) level of the game

Story

Plot
The Void, a realm running parallel to ours, preys on the weak, seeking out and capturing the weakened souls of those dangerously close to death. The Void is an eternally living world, hungering for any and all who it may feed off to sustain its existence.

Once human, the unfortunate souls who have become permanent residents of the Void, have succumbed to its immense power and have now morphed into vicious monsters and corrupted humans. Using the power of the captured to survive, these corrupted souls have lived in the Void for so long they have developed the ability to sense the power of the 'pure'. Once that power is sensed, enemies lock on to and charge for its source (you), stopping at nothing to kill you and turn you too into a new soul gem they can feed off for years.

You have found yourself captured within this dark, demented world of the Void and must now find the key to your escape, your most prized possession; soul gems. This will grant you the ability to open a gateway that leads you home. To recover this great possession you must run through the ever-changing biomes of the Void, fending off the its loyal servants who are out for your blood. You will have to cross large fields, pools of lava, treacherous icy lakes, and collapsed cities to make your escape. Do you have what it takes?

The Player Character
The Player Character (you) is a person who has been yanked from their world and pulled into the Void. It is not certain what condition has caused the Void to take you; you may be in a coma, near death, or already dead. Regardless of where you've come from though, you are now yet another victim of the Void and must find a way out. One thing remains the same throughout every character you may play, you can channel the energy from a Soul Gem, formed by those who die in the Void and become a fallen soul. This allows you to use the power and abilities of the Soul within to save yourself from demise.

The Foe
The Void's citizens are separated into two different castes: the Minions and the Elite. The Elites are the strongest beings in the Void and are your main obstacles as you battle your way through-- each biome of the Void has two elites that rule over it. Each elite has their own set of minions that follow them and hunt lost souls that may provide them more power.

Enemies

The Grasslands

Goblin Runt: The smallest goblins of the tribe, young and wild, they must prove themselves to the tribe by tracking down and killing the player. They wield simple, piecemeal equipment and have fairly straightforward behavior--run towards the player and attack. Despite the fact that they have a shield, they never think to block, but they are fast and will hit multiple times in one attack.

Goblin Alchemist: The smartest and most powerful of the tribe, they are the only ones willing to read arcane text and create magical concoctions. They attack the player by throwing explosive vials--getting close to the player before haphazardly throwing them.

Goblin King: He has been imbued with the power of 'The Blood' and knows how to use it. His attacks include moving away from the player, charging right for the player via a leap, and repetitive swinging of the blade he wields. He can also summon a force field that will protect him from any player attacks.

Charging Bison: A normally calm animal, the hunt of a Soul awakens the Bison into killing machines. Fueled by their need for power and using their large bodies to their advantage, they will charge at the player only a few seconds after entering the field.

Agile Cheetah: They live on the thrill of the hunt, the chase, the moments leading up to their target's death. That is why, when they spawn into the field, they do not attack immediately. They will instead try to surround the player, to toy with them, before leaping one at a time. This pattern will continue until either they or the player has fallen dead.

Leader of the pack: Using brains rather than brute strength and thrill, the Leader of the Pack will take his time and move around the field before attacking. At each quarter mark of his health, the Leader of the Pack will let out a loud howl to summon a pack of wolves that will leap directly at the player. Otherwise he will wait it out and attack the player if they get close.

City of Metal

Pulse Engineer: Equipped with their pulse cannons, these engineers are relatively slow compared to other enemies found within the City of Metal.Their cannons are capable of firing large balls of energy that will tear anything that comes into contact with it from limb to limb. These deadly projectiles are fired in a straight line, using a Consistent Trajectory Adjustor mounted to the cannons.

Enhancers: Developing various concoctions, medications and mechanisms, they have strengthened their bodies to deal out and deal with the stresses of combat. Using specialized gauntlets that deliver a great shock to those they hit, they get up close and personal to attack-- delivering quick blows to vital points.

Head Engineer: Taking the title of Head Engineer was not easy for Knibble Gnobber, he had to outwit, outplay and outkill the competition. He takes to the field when all others fail, using his flying boots and storm gauntlets. Instead of running, the Head Engineer uses his flying boots to stay in the air, giving him mobility and many more angles of attack. His main attack is shooting bolts of lightning at the player from his storm gauntlets.

Slammer: A humanoid looking machine, the Slammer uses its larger-than-normal fists to its advantage. When spawned into the field it does not move at all, but will instead periodically slam down both fists. The impact of the fists sends a shockwave rolling across the ground toward the player--this shockwave will damage the player if they make contact.

Lobber: The lobber takes the form of a tank with two arms. These arms are constantly rotating, reaching back to grab an explosive 'lob' from its storage and flinging it upward toward the player. The lobs are flung at a consistent arc, so the Lobbers will move back and forth to make them explode on the player. No matter what they connect with, the lobs will explode on contact and damage anything within their splash zone.

Stomper: This is, by far, the greatest artifice made by the Head Engineer. Being the strongest and largest of the artifices, it does not need any weaponry to fight. It will instead stomp down upon all foes.

This is a unique boss in that it does not have phases. Throughout the whole fight it has two attacks.
- One, he will charge 'in place' before rushing back and forth across the battlefield. The player can avoid this by moving toward a spot where its feet will not land (indicated).
- Two, he will launch himself into the air and land in the exact center of the field, crashing through all of the platforms. This sends shockwaves outward that will damage anything on the field.

Molten Fields

Whelpling: The youngest of the dragons, these little guys are the first line of defense for the dragons. Don't underestimate them because of their size, though. They can spit out balls of fire that, while weaker than their mother's, can kill a soul just the same. Not only that, but they are fast, using their small size to dodge attacks.

Young Drake: Grown in size, the Young Drakes are next in line of defense for killing intruders. Instead of using fire, they will get in close and slash at opponents with their newly grown talons. However, because of their size, they are not as fast as their younger siblings.

Mother:When her children cannot succeed in killing an intruder, the Mother Dragon swoops down from her home dwelling to attack. When she is not attacking, she is flying overhead. Otherwise, she has three attacks.

- One is a fire breath that covers an entire row of the field. The fire breath leaves magma on the row for a few seconds, dealing damage to anything that touches it.
- Two is a swipe of her claws at the player, dealing damage if it hits.
- Three happens every time she hits a quarter health mark. She will leave the battlefield, then she will appear in the background in the approximate place she will dive to and sail over the field damaging anything in her line of attack.

Bound Fire: These elementals do not have their Soul Gems yet, so their desire for such is great enough that, instead of transforming their limbs into weapons and shields like their brethren, they use their bodies to sear opponents. When attacking, they will fly into the background, then turn to body slam the player's position when the attack was initiated--not working to avoid any allies.

Desired Fire: Already having their Soul Gems set in their metallic accessories, these elementals do not have the same passion for the Soul Gems that their brethren do. Yet, they still want to fight any Souls that appear. So, using the power of their Soul Gems they form their own limbs into weapons and shields that they use to attack.

Grand Elemental: Those elementals who have gained many Soul Gems and the metal settings they sit in become Grand Elementals--elementals who are surging with the power of the Soul Gems. With this power, they join the fray, wanting to add the Soul's Gem to their collection.

When above 50% health, he runs on the ground--being large enough that getting under their feet will damage anything there. As he runs, he will lob fireballs at the player. When he is below 50%, he will take to the sky and work with two attacks.

- One is that he will fly off screen, then fly back through the field, slamming his fists multiple times down onto the ground.
- The second is that he will move to one side of the screen or the other and send a continuous beam of fire down. As he fires the beam, he will move to the middle of the field.

Gameplay

Player Experience

You should feel as though you are constantly being chased and forever in danger. Enemies will spawn in various points throughout the levels and will attack without mercy or hesitation. Not only that, but the game is fast-paced--you will not have much time to stop and regroup before you must react and fight to survive again. Some of this will come from the environment, as you will only have a small window to react to its changes, and some will come from the enemies with predictable but fast attack patterns. Any mistake could prove fatal.

Tutorial

There will be a tutorial that the player can access at any time. Among the various settings available to the player when starting/preparing for a run is a setting labeled "Play Tutorial." If the run is the player's first run and they do not have this setting set, the game will ask if the player wants to play the tutorial. If they select 'Yes,' then the tutorial is added for them. The tutorial itself is modeled like a normal run. However, there are a few differences:

- The Tutorial is shorter than a normal Biome section.
- It is static. The same level parts are used every time the tutorial is played to guarantee ease of understanding.
- When a prompt for a new control pops up (for example, when the player needs to slide for the first time), the world slows down to a crawl, giving the player plenty of time to find out what button to press and where on their controller/keyboard the button is.
- The tutorial does not count toward the player's final stats.
- The player cannot die, and when the tutorial ends, they are restored to full health to let them play the actual run from the beginning and without a disadvantage.

Biomes

Grasslands

What was once a lush field of blooming grass and trees is now a demented and dead landscape. Crossing this biome will not be easy with the landscape broken up by floating land masses. Beware of the once happily bouncing, fluffy sheep are now twisted wisps of darkness.

City of Metal

A steampunk-like city that was on the brink of technology has now erupted into a civil war. While crossing, watch out for falling scaffoldings and broken train tracks. One misstep could lead to certain doom. You will be able to run through the streets and atop rooftops.

Molten Fields

The Molten Fields were never pretty from the start. Ruled by fire breathing dragons, this biome is nothing but rock and lava. The landmass is broken up by pools of lava and pillars of fire that you must avoid. There are multiple volcanos sprinkled about that erupt at random times.

Combat

The player will fight against two main foes: The Minions and The Elite of the Void. Combat in

both instances are similar. When fighting against the minions, the player not only has to defend themselves against the minions but also watch out for the environment changes as they will be running through the randomly generated biomes. The minions have individual AI behavior that will react to the environment and the player in various ways. While the player has not started a fight with the elite, minions will keep spawning. Otherwise, the only time the player has to fight minions in the elite's fight is either A) if the elite summons minions or B) if there are minions still on the field when the player starts the fight with the elite.

When fighting against the elite of the biome, unless the earlier mentioned conditions are met, the player only has to fight the elite. The field of battle remains relatively static, only changing if the elite fight requires it. Like with the minion fights, the player will be running through the biome, but the battlefield will essentially move with the player. For example, if the elite's battlefield includes two platforms, those two platforms will remain no matter how long it takes the player to kill the elite. However, the boss may spawn traps upon those platforms that despawn when the player hits them or they leave the field. The elite is also much harder than the minions to kill.

Level Setup
Biomes are set up by putting together chunks of the level together in a randomized way, also called level blocks. This allows the best balance of randomness yet familiarity for the player while making it easier for the team to implement the setup system. Each Biome has a set number of level blocks that can be taken and snapped together. Not included in this is the Elite Encounter Blocks that has its own unique level block made specifically for the fight with the elite of the biome.

Replayability
There is a lot of replayability with *Boss Chase*. Endless Runners have inherent replayability within them with the concepts of getting as far as possible and the fast reactions necessary to survive the environment. Add adrenaline pumping combat and the emotions after a successful victory against a boss and there is great want to go for another run. The concepts of randomness when it comes to the environments guarantees that there is no two copies of a run, helping replayability even more.

Leaderboards
There are local (not online) leaderboards that are updated whenever the player finishes a run. These leaderboards show the player their overall stats (such as Play Time, Enemies Killed and Bosses Killed) but also show stats for each of their runs.

Art Style / Aesthetics

Art Style

All of the biomes and UI will have the same art style, using games such as *Dust: An Elysian Tail* as inspiration. They will have a painterly and cartoonish style that only uses realism as a means to make the environments believable.

Effects Style

Unlike the character animations, the various visual effects (such as getting damaged, collecting Void Crystals and dying) will be done frame by frame and slicing the frames in Unity. These frames will then be put into Animation Clips that play either 'On Awake' or controlled via various Animation Controllers. These will almost always be 'Looping.' The only effects known to not be 'Looping' are ones like explosions, that play once before destroying themselves. They will all be hand painted in the same art style as the game as well as give off artificial light (as appropriate) which will be done in the art frame rather than in engine by faded strokes.

Interface Style

While the general art style of the Interface will be the same as the rest of the game, they will have a darker theme to them. For things such as Health and Crystal Count, the better for the player the count is, the lighter it will glow/pulse. For example, if the player's health is full, then their health icon will have lighter colors, pulse more frequently and glow brighter. If their health is low, then their icon will have darker colors, pulse less and glow dimmer.

User Interface / Controls

Interface

During the run, there will be a minimum amount of things showing on the interface. This is to let the player focus as much as possible on the gameplay. In that vein, the only thing that will be shown to the player constantly will be their health as this is something that the player will want easy access to all the time. The other things that may appear on the interface under certain circumstances are the player's current void crystal count and the current elite's health.

The void crystal count is the total number of void crystals that the player has collected including what is saved on their save slot. This count will only appear when the player collects a void crystal (detailed in the 'Gameplay' section). Once the interface animation plays, the count will stay on for two seconds before fading out. The elite's health is the amount of health the elite that the player's fighting currently has. This will only show up once the player enters the elite's section of the level. It will fade in over two seconds and will animate/fade out as the boss's death animation plays.

Music

Music

The music of *Boss Chase* will be energizing and motivating music. It is music that is meant to elevate the player's adrenaline and fighting spirit. It will do so by having a steady drum beat and moving melody by strings. However, each biome will have their own theme and own instrumentation.

There will be different songs for various conditions during gameplay. For example, while the players health is low, if the boss has low health, if there are a lot of minions on the field, and so on.

Monetization

Boss Chase will be available on Steam for a one-time purchase of $4.99.