

Soul Catcher

Game Design Document

Eleanor L. Morgan

Prepared by:



www.ironbellystudios.com

Table of Contents

Overview

- Visual Style
- Audio Style

Starting Out

- Game Start
- Menus
- In-game Options Menu
- In-game HUD
- Game Over Screen

Gameplay

Mechanics

- Power-Ups
- Controls
- Winning The Match
- Challenge of Importance

Cinematics

References

OVERVIEW

‘Soul Catcher’ is a Halloween themed, survival horde mode where players need to defeat the ancient spirits and harvest their souls whilst trying to protect their own. As soon as the player starts the game they will be encountered by the first wave of ghouls and they must withstand against their attacks for as long as possible. The overall feel still remains playful and upbeat by keeping away from any dark themes/subject matters and by having a cartoon stylization to the game.

The intended platform for Soul Catcher will simply be for the PC but keeping possibilities open about having versions for consoles.

Visual Style

The visual style for Soul Catcher is similar to popular animations from Tim Burton, by it having a mystical look but still being very much family friendly, I want to have a monochrome and dark colour schemes but still have elements of high saturation colours to keep in tune with the cartoonish style of the game. I want to give off a feeling of mystery and enigma and will use typical cues to help me do this, eg. fog, magical fire as this will help me tell a narrative through the look of my level.

Some inspiration images that help reflect the type of visual style I aim for:



Audio Style

The background music in Soul Catcher I would want it to not take over all of the other sounds in the

game and want it to be more calm and quieter, this will also help add to the creepy factor and as well as this it will allow the player to focus on audio cues as this will help them determine where the enemies are spawning from and if there are any power-ups near them.

Enemies:

I aim to have those stereotypical audio cues of ‘ooooos’ that people recognise as the sound of a ghost, this way it will make it easier for players to locate the enemy and also adds onto that playfulness of the game as its not some sort of shrieking or wailing noise which could potentially ruin the experience if it was too loud and could become annoying very quickly.

Powerups/Health Packs:

Another way that will help the player navigate around would be to also use sound effects for whenever there is a powerup or health pack nearby them, I would aim for a subtle tinkling/sparkling sound effect to indicate the type of things that can benefit the player.

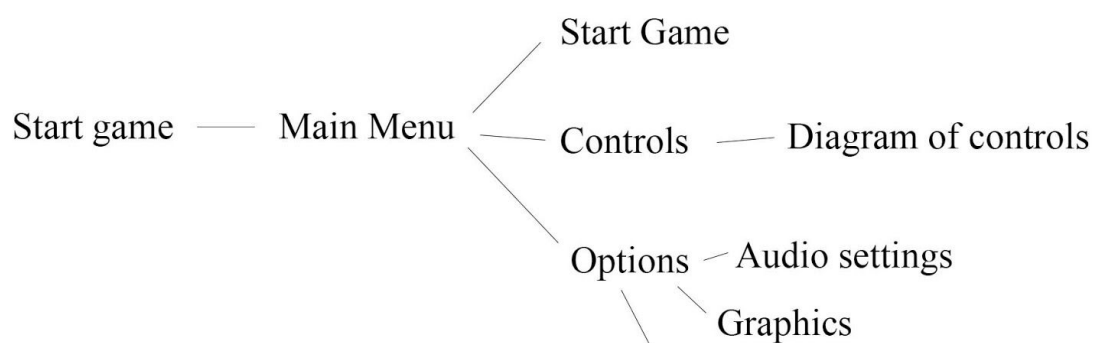
Starting Out

Game start

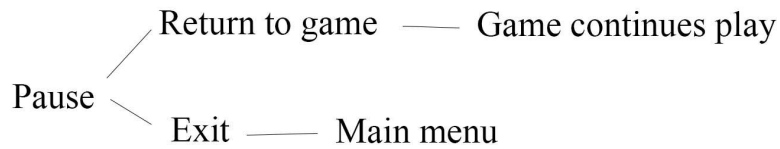
When the player first starts up the game they will be taken to the main menu where they can make some adjustments, learn the controls before play and begin the game. I want to keep this simple as I don't want to overcomplicate and have too many submenus as the majority of the time players want to get stuck into the game as soon as they can.

Menus

The visuals of the menu and HUD will stick to the same theme and aesthetic of the game all around with the similar colour schemes and a text style that suits the game.



In-Game Options Menu



In-Game HUD

- Health
- Amount of power left in the gun before reloading
- Recent power up picked up

Like the menu, the HUD will be very simple as to not overcrowd the screen and also because the gameplay is simple it is easy for players to know immediately what information means what. I will also use bars and imagery instead of numbers as to not draw the players attention away from the gameplay.

Examples from other games:



Game Over Screen

When a player dies in the game they will be met with a game over screen, it will fade to black from the gameplay and will read the text 'Your Soul is lost'. It will then give the player the option to try again or exit the game, similar to the pause menu.

Gameplay

When the player first enters the game in the first level an onscreen message will appear instructing players on what they need to do, then after a while, the first set of enemies will appear which the players will then begin fighting and this basic sequence will continue with the game increasing in difficulty each time.

To increase the difficulty each round I will do it gradually by increasing the difficulty of enemies as a player progresses through the game. We will start introducing a special type of enemies after a certain number of rounds that have increased health and attack power and also their own individual unique abilities that separate them from the normal enemy. There will also be special rounds where there will be either a significant increase in enemies or some sort of boss character. The amount of health and power-ups will also decrease the further on they progress, providing another layer of challenge for the player and gives them a higher incentive to collect these.

I will want to introduce these special elements at times when the player is beginning to feel familiar and comfortable in order to keep the challenge constant throughout playtime. This will also give them moments of slight panic at being thrown a new challenge which could cause them to change their playstyle by either being on the defensive or on the offensive, so because of this I want certain special enemies to have their weaknesses based on if you attack more aggressively or if you hold back and wait for the right moment to strike.

In order for this game to be rewarding, we will offer players extra points depending on if they have a critical hit, perform combos, collecting a certain amount of power-ups granting them an extra ability and certain upgrades gained from beating boss enemies. It is important for Soul Catcher to have these reward systems in place as players will not find a purpose to replay and will become frustrated at the game.

Mechanics

The combat is the main focus in this game but it will be simple and familiar to players. They will have sci-fi guns and will simply have to shoot at the enemies in order to destroy them, but it will not be with bullets but with something electrical and magical similar to the Proton Packs in GhostBusters. The way the enemies will be able to damage the player will vary depending on the type of enemy but the main, common enemy will harm you if it touches you.

Power ups

A list of some of the power-ups included in this game in order of rarity:

- Grants you health
- Increases your damage for a period of time
- EMP Grenade - produces a blast that destroys enemies caught in the area.
- Grants movement speed
- Sight - allows the player to see enemies through objects for a period of time

- Permanently adds an upgrade to your gun
- Trickster - this will reverse the effect of what you expect (slower movement, removes health, decreases damage etc.)

Controls

W,A,S,D/Arrow Keys = Movement

Spacebar = Jump

Mouse = Look around

Mouse Left click = Fire weapon

Mouse Right click = Activate current power up.

WINNING THE MATCH

At the end of each round the player wins in order to move on to the next level, in order to do this the player must destroy all enemies to start up the next round of enemies.

Challenges of importance

There will be a few boss fights scattered throughout the levels within any number of levels, this is done in order to become less predictable. These enemies will be significantly harder to fight than the common enemy and will require the player to think more tactically about how to defeat it. After defeating them the player will be rewarded with a special upgrade to their weapon that will allow them to explore a new type of playstyle. For example a scope (sniper) heavy gun (offensive) etc.

CINEMATICS

There will be a short cinematic sequence to introduce new enemies each time they appear for the first time, this is to allow the player a moment to analyse and think of how they could defeat them but I don't want them to last for too long as it will break the rhythm of the game as I want to keep it fast paced. They will be able to have a moment of rest before the beginning of each level so that they can relax before starting up again.

References

The Nightmare Before Christmas (1994) Directed by Henry Selick [DVD] United Kingdom

Corpse Bride (2005) Directed by Tim Burton, Mike Johnson [DVD] United Kingdom

Bioshock Infinite (2013) Irrational Games [Video Game]

Assassin's Creed Syndicate (2015) Ubisoft [Video Game]