

SKIRMISH

DESIGN DOCUMENT

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Initial Conceptualisation

This section will detail the initial design process.

Core Concept

Regarding genre, Skirmish is a **character action** game. Character Action games are hack-n-slash games that feature flashy attack combos, a wide arsenal of weapons and a style system that assesses the player on their combat performance during the game. Notable character action games include Bayonetta 3 and Devil May Cry 5.

Skirmish is inspired by the hectic and chaotic gameplay of Character Action games. Skirmish will feature mechanics and features that are commonly found in this genre. At the same time, Skirmish will feature fresh new elements to add a new twist to the genre.

Overview

Skirmish is a 3D Action Hack-n-Slash game you take control of Axel, a "Remnant Slayer" with the ability to control clones while his adrenaline is high. Set in the neon-lit city of Luminous, "Remnants", crystalline creatures, hunt civilians in the shadows. Expunge Remnants using the "Phase System", a mechanic that allows you to summon clones to attack with you. Once your energy is high, fuse with active clones to enter Eclipse Mode, an awakened form that allows you to wipe out foes with ease. Armed with a crystal Greatsword, players must summon, shift, and slay whoever gets in their way, to regain their powers and to annihilate the Remnant threat in stylishly.

Executive Summary

An executive summary is a short paragraph or two that will describe the core features of a game.

Skirmish is chaotic 3D action hack-n-slash game you play as Axel, a "Remnant Slayer" with the ability to control crystalline copies that fight with him during combat. Skirmish will feature the "Phase System", a system that provides players with special abilities during combat. Dodge attacks at the right time to "Phase Summon" a crystal copy that will attack with you. Enter "Phase Vision" and "Phase Shift" to active copies, allowing you to take their place allowing you to "Phase" nearby enemies. Unleash damage to "Phased" to gain access to a "Phase Slay" finish, a stylish combo ender.

By playing aggressively, players will be able to fill up the phase meter, once full, players can enter "Eclipse Mode" a beautiful but deadly form that temporarily awakens you're weapons, activating their innate special abilities. Style is the aim of the game, during combat players will be rated based on their Adrenaline, which is a

style rating system that rewards players that use the Phase System with skill.

Advertising Blurb

There's a Skirmish taking place in Luminous City, and you are the prime suspect. In this hectic hack-n-slash game, you are Axel, an extravagant Remnant Slayer with the taste for thrill. On a standard job to exterminate some Remnants in a night club, Axel loses his heart, ripped from his chest by an Unfriendly Music star but while he should've died, he awakened the power to summon and control clones of himself.

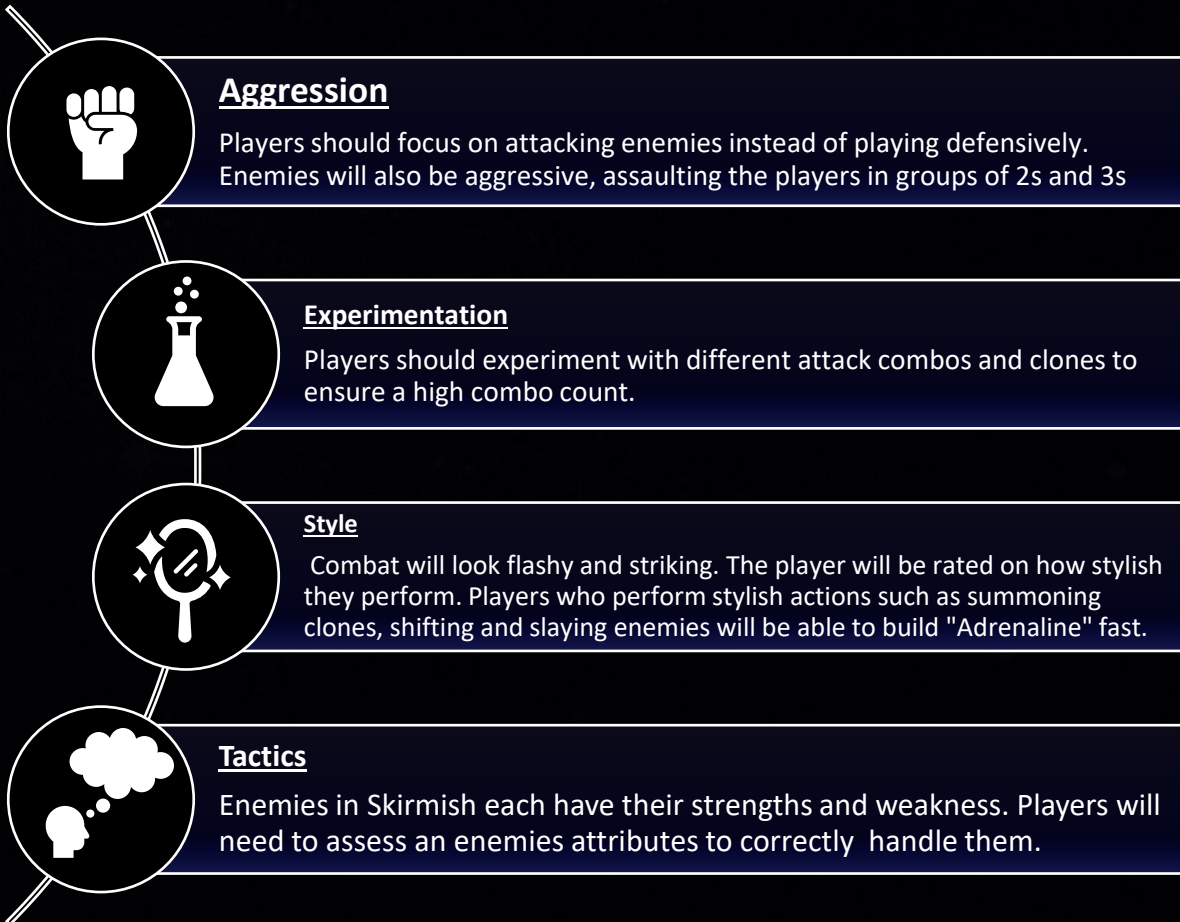
Join Axel as he races across the neon-lit party city of Luminous, diving into each district on a mad dash to reclaim the missing pieces of his heart. Each Band Member of "The Crystalline Chains" contains a piece of your heart, but they won't back down from the fight. Along the way, smash, shift and slay any Remnant blocking your path using a variety of Crystalline Weapons, and the help of your aggressive Phase Clones. Only you can reclaim the pieces of your heart, in this adrenaline-pumping, nail-biting, phase slaying bout of adventure!

Unique Mechanic Concept

The unique mechanic in Skirmish is the phase system. The phase system is a mechanic themed around clones and copies. This system allows the player to summon and control spectral copies of themselves. These clones can assist the player during a fight. This system was inspired from a power-up item found in Bayonetta 1 (year). In this game, there's an accessory (Sergei's Lover) that allows the player to summon afterimages that trail the player. These images copy the players move and extend combo duration. Another feature that inspired the phase system was, Yang's super move in Street Fighter 3, which allows him to briefly summon afterimages that help extend combo duration. The phase system was birthed from the design question, "How could flesh out clone combat further?"



Design Pillars



Aggression

During combat, the player should prioritise attacking. Playing it safe will often result in being stuck on the defensive. The player can only summon a Phase Clone by building up enough Phase Energy through dodging enemy attacks. Enemies will be aggressive with multiple enemies attacking the player at a time. This will give the player some advantage as it will allow them to utilise the phase system. The player will also get better Style Rating Grades if they remain on the offensive while interacting with the Phase System.

Experimentation

The player will be provided with a wide array of combos and weapons. Players will be rewarded for stringing together long combos. Phase clones give the player the chance to attack another enemy or to dogpile on one together. Players should experiment with which phase summon clones works best with each weapon. Player's should also experiment with which clone they choose to fuse with to enter Eclipse Mode. The form of Eclipse Mode can change depending on which type of clone the player has fused with.

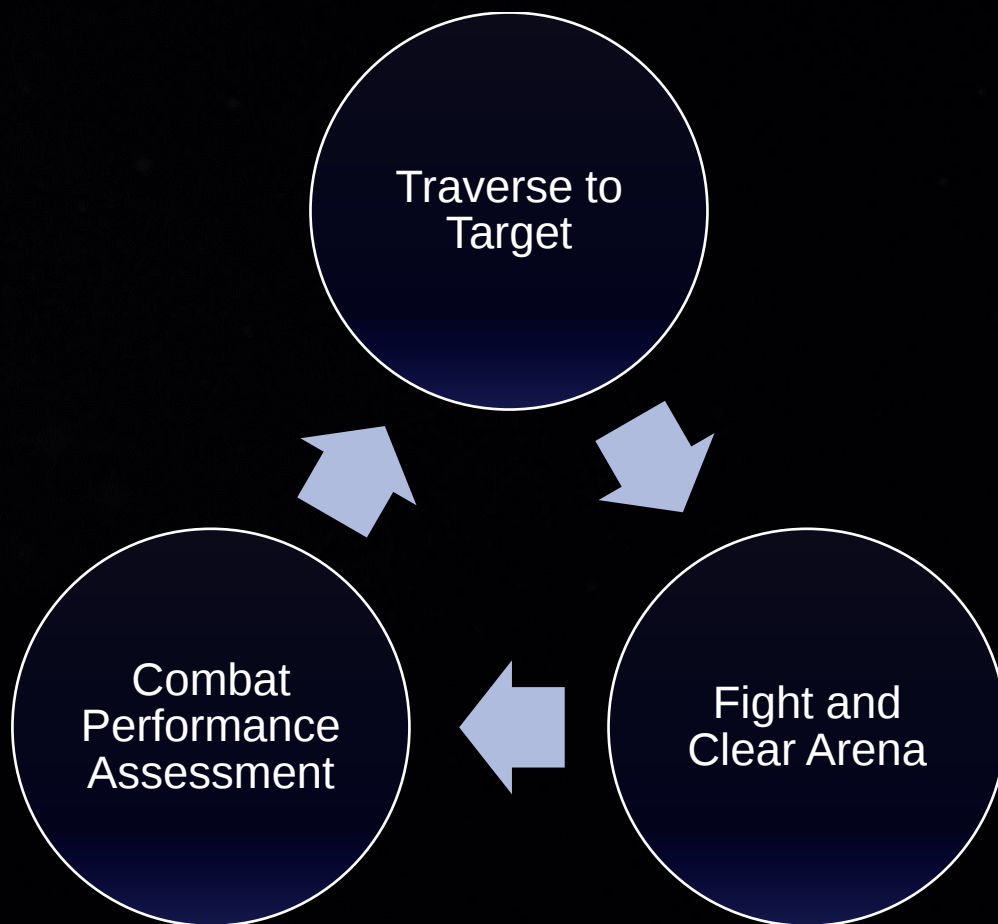
Style

Visually, combat will look like a stylish dance as opposed to crude combat. Style will be a core element in combat with player's being rated based on how well they perform during combat. This system is tied together through "Adrenaline", which is a meter that builds points based on the players actions. Players who perform stylish actions such as summoning clones, shifting and slaying enemies will be build "Adrenaline" quickly. Player's who have built up a lot of Adrenaline will be rewarded with gameplay bonuses such as reducing the Phase Energy cost to summon a clone.

Tactics

Skirmish will be challenging due to wide array of enemies featured. The player will have to think tactically on how to approach combat depending on the enemy. For instance, some enemies might be impervious to front damage while others aren't. The player will need to rethink their approach to find nifty way to dispatch these enemies. Enemies will also adapt to the players habits on the fly. Enforcer Remnants and Boss enemies will have the ability to get "Aggravated", which is a state that boosts their power. Enemies will become "Aggravated" if the player uses the wrong tactic multiple times.

Core Loop

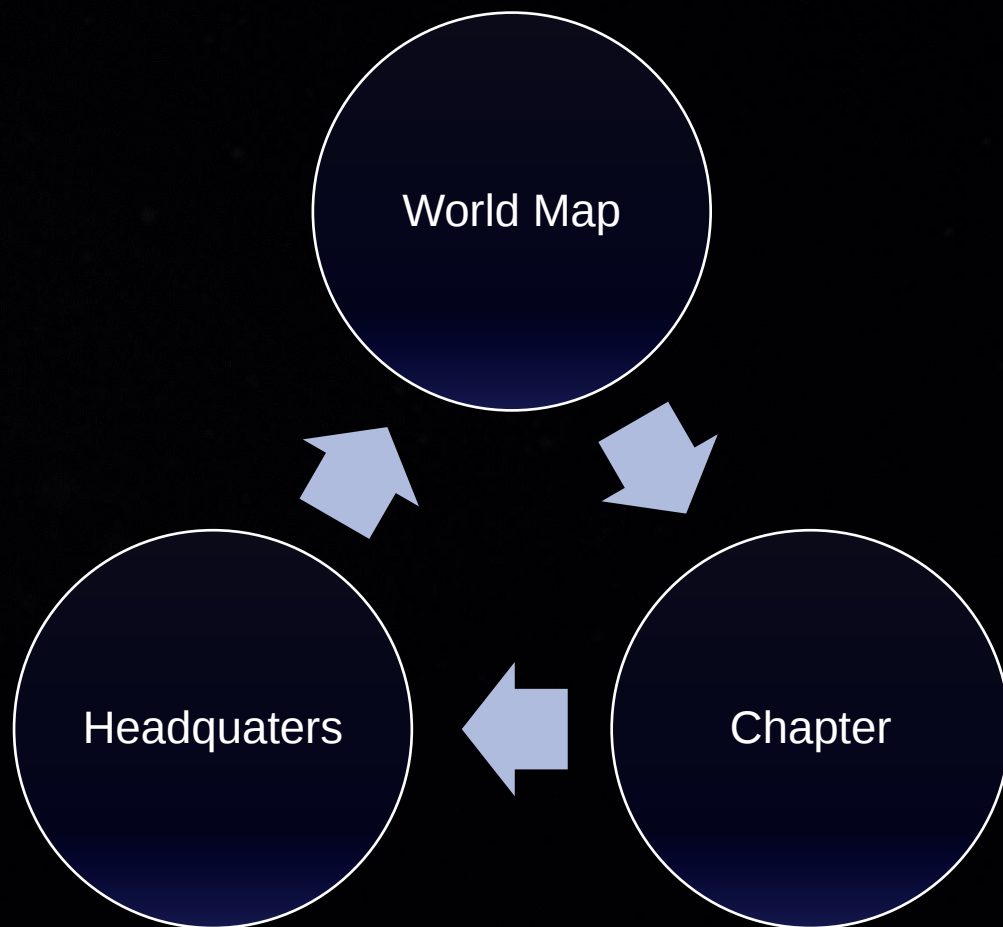


Traverse to Goal Objective - Levels in Skirmish are chapter based. At the start of every chapter, players will be briefed on their target. Players will need to navigate their way through their surroundings to reach their goal. Levels will be filled with challenges such as platforming and roadblocks that require the use of different phase abilities.

Fight & Clear Arena - During a chapter, enemies will ambush the player, locking them into a small arena. The player won't be able to leave until all the enemies are defeated. Players will have a wide variety of tools to utilise in defeating enemies such as the phase system, offensive manoeuvres, and different weapons.

Combat Performance Assessment - At the end of every fight encounter. The player will be rated on their combat performance. Performance takes in consideration, the utilisation of the phase system, how much damage the player has received and how quickly the player cleared. Once calculation is over, the player will get a final rank to show total performance, with each rank providing the player with a different amount of currency.

Meta Loop



Headquarters - Before selecting a chapter to undertake, the player will begin in their headquarters. Here, the player can do various actions such as purchasing items and abilities from the SHOP. The player will also be able to customise their clones here, including their actions and what moves they will perform when they're first summoned.

World Map - This is where the player will be able to select which chapter they want to play. The world map will be a map of Luminous City. Once the player selects a chapter, the chapter will begin. Player's will be able to return to their headquarters at any time.

Chapter - The main playable levels of Skirmish. Once the player starts a level, they can't return to headquarters unless they quit the mission or complete the level. Levels will test the players skills through either combat encounters or platforming sections.

Compulsion Loop



Desire – Players of Skirmish will be compelled with the feeling of desire. This desire could be emotional, with players wanting to feel a sense of adrenaline during battle or physical, with the player wanting to purchase new attacks combos or new accessories to spice up gameplay. For examples, players may feel compelled to fight against band members which are the hardest and most exciting battles skirmish has to offer.

Challenge – In order to get the object or experience the player desires, they will need to overcome a challenge. In Skirmish, this challenge comes in the form of battle. In Skirmish, players will need to think tactically if they want to survive, as button mashing will not get them through battle. Especially against special grade remnants or band members that can adapt their behaviour to the player's playstyle. Challenging the player is important because it allows them to feel like they must overcome something to gain what they desire.

Success – Through challenge comes eventual success. This part of the loop describes the feeling that players will experience once they have overcome a battle and gained the object of their desire. Success allows players to gloat in their skill and proves that they are getting better at the game. Once the player has succeeded, they will ultimately set their sights on something else, leading them back to the desire stage of the loop.

Core Combat

This section will detail all aspects of combat in Skirmish. This includes, the players general movement, basic moves, the combo system, the phase system, and the eclipse mode.

General Movement

Jogging and Running



Pressing and holding the **Left Analogue Stick** will allow the player to jog in any direction. Holding down the **Left Analogue Stick** for few seconds will allow the player to enter a sprint. Sprinting is broken once the player stops or gets hit. Pressing either attack button during a sprint will allow the player to execute a dash attack (See Melee Combat).

Jumping



Jumping launches the player into the air, allowing them to traverse obstacles and reach air-borne entities. Pressing the **Cross** button will launch the player into the air. Holding the button will allow

the player to ascend higher. The player can also execute a Double Jump. Pressing the Cross button during a jump will ascend them higher into the air. The player will be able to execute air-attacks and dodge in the air.

Dodging

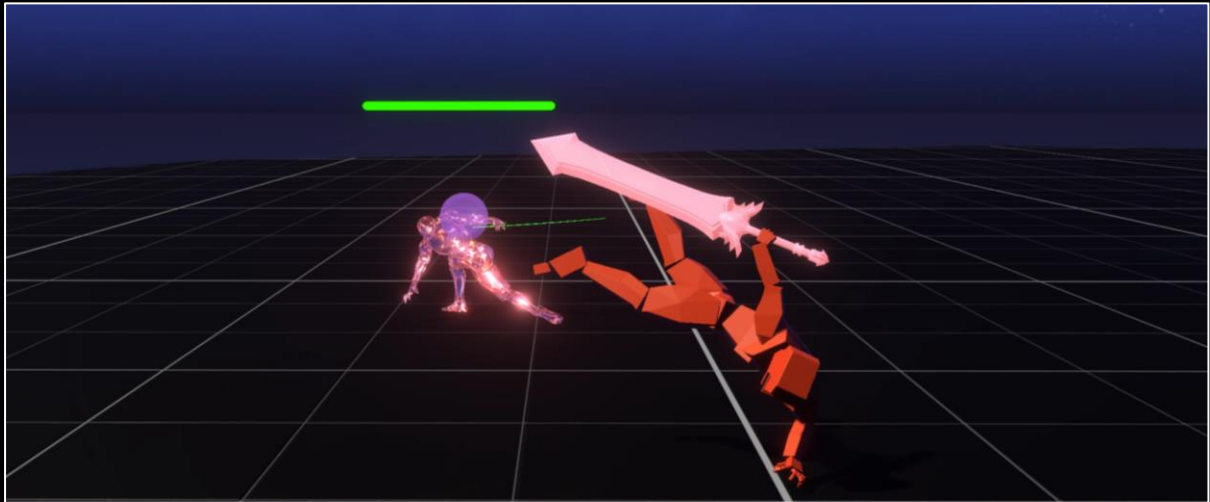


Figure 1: Normal Dodge



Figure 2: Well-Timed Dodge

A trusty evasive maneuver that allows the player to move out of harm's way. Pressing the **Right Trigger** will allow the player to roll in the direction they are facing. While in the air, pressing the right trigger will execute an **Air-Dodge**. A dodge is composed of invulnerability frames and recovery frames. During invulnerability frames, the player will be invulnerable to damage. The player will be vulnerable during the recovery frames of a dodge. A well-timed dodge during an enemy attack will build up **Phase Energy**. (See Phase System).

Basic Attacks

Basic moves describe any moves that are simple to execute and can be found in similar hack-n-slash games.

Basic Attacks

Start-Up frames: First frames on an attack that serve as a wind-up animation. The lower the amount of Start-Up frames, the quicker the attack is to execute.

Hit frames: Frames in which attack deals damage.

Recovery Frames: Frames in which the player recovers to deal next attack. The higher the amount recovery frames, the longer the time it takes start next attack.

Light Attacks

Light attacks are attacks that are quick to execute and low risk. Pressing the **Triangle** button will execute a light attack. Light attacks are comprised of start-up, hit and recovery frames. Light attacks are faster than Heavy Attacks but deal less damage. Pressing either the Light Attack or Heavy Attack during an Attack's recovery frames will allow the player to execute another attack, forming a combo.

Heavy Attacks

Heavy attacks are attacks that are slow to start but deal large damage. These attacks pose a higher risk. Pressing the **Circle** button will execute a heavy attack. Heavy attacks contain higher start-up frames than light attack, meaning they take longer to activate. Heavy attacks can also initiate a combo.

Ranged Attacks

Ranged attacks are attacks that can be activated from afar. These attacks are the fastest to activate, with a low number of start-up frames. Ranged attacks don't deal as much damage as Light or Heavy attacks but can instead be used to juggle enemies in the air or to finish off enemies with very low health. Ranged attacks can't initiate a combo.

Air Attacks

Light, Heavy, and Ranged attacks can all be initiated in the air. Initiating an attack in the air will briefly stop the players fall, keeping them into the air. Light and Heavy attacks can be stringed together to form air combos.

Unique Attacks

Unique attacks are attacks that can be initiated by using directional input with the analogue stick. These moves each serve a unique function.

Launchers



Figure 3: Player executing a launch attack.

Launcher attacks are unique attacks that launch the player and the enemy into the air. These can be initiated by holding back on the left analogue stick while attacking. The behaviour of launcher attacks changes depending on the basic attack inputted. Light launchers will only launch the enemy into the air, while heavy launchers will launch the player and the enemy into the air.

Stingers

Stinger attacks are unique attacks that launch the player at the enemy that the player is focusing on. These attacks can be initiated by flicking the stick forward while inputting a basic attack. Like the launcher attack, the behaviour will change depending on the type of attack inputted. Light stingers are quick to initiate but don't travel far, while heavy stringers take longer to initiate but travel the furthest.

Radial Strikes

Radial Strikes are unique attacks that allows the player to attack enemies in a 360 area. These attacks can be initiated by rotating the analogue stick in a 360 direction. Light radial strikes are faster to execute but deal less damage than Heavy radial strikes, which are slower.

Combo System

Skirmish will feature a deep combo system. The player can initiate a combo by chaining light and heavy attacks together. Stringing different moves together will create different combos. There are 3 types of combos in Skirmish:

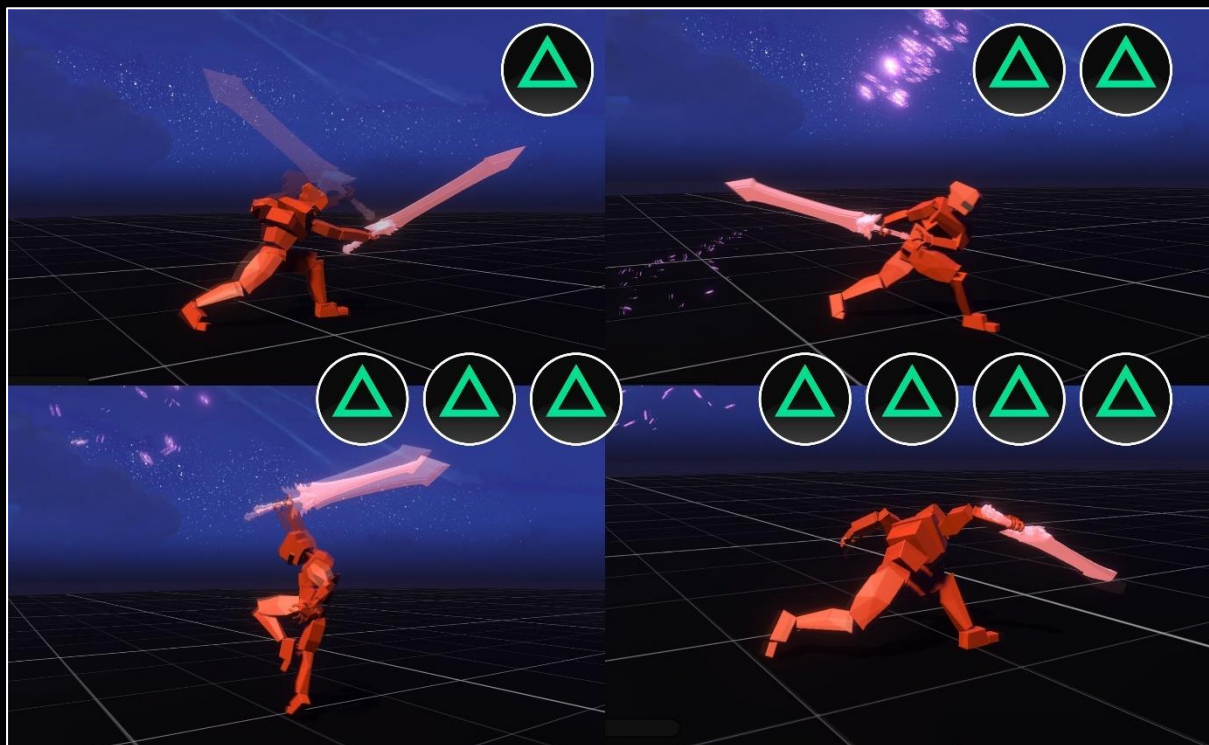
- Light Combos: Attacks chaining using only Light attacks.
- Heavy Combos: Attacks chaining using only Heavy attacks.
- Hybrid Combos: Attacks chained using a mixture of light and heavy attacks.

One of my design pillars is **experimentation**, meaning the player should be varying the combos they use often. To promote **experimentation**, the player will gain more style points if they vary their attacks.

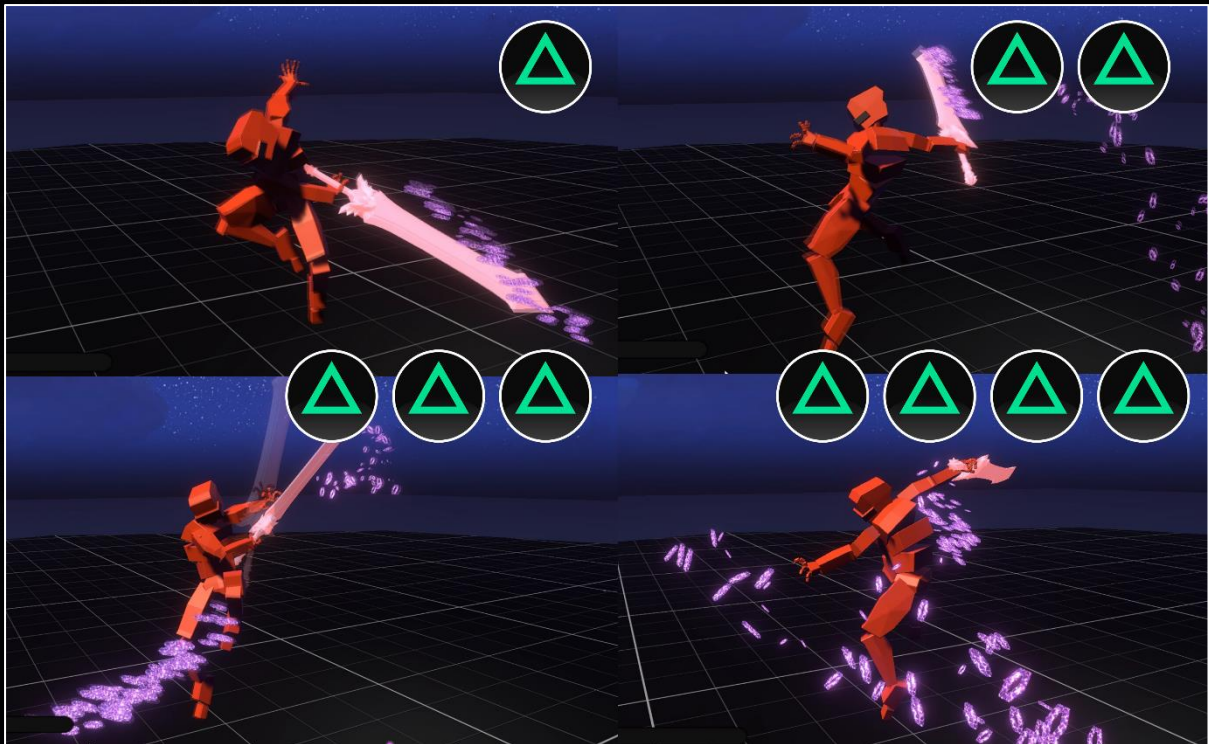
Light Combos

Light Combos are series of different light attacks chained together. Light combos are quick to pull off, so can rack up combo hits faster. The player can pull off different types of light combos by inputting different light attack combinations. The player can vary their input by adding times gaps between their inputs.

Light Combo Example



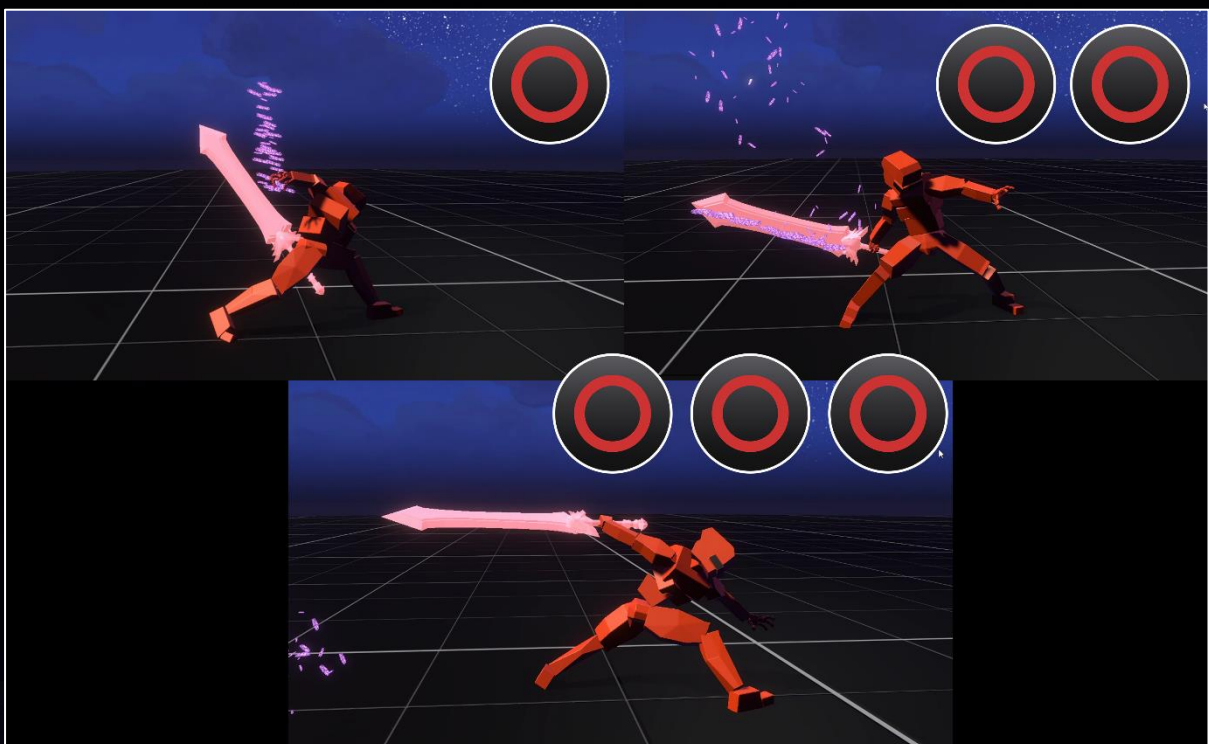
Air Light Combo Example



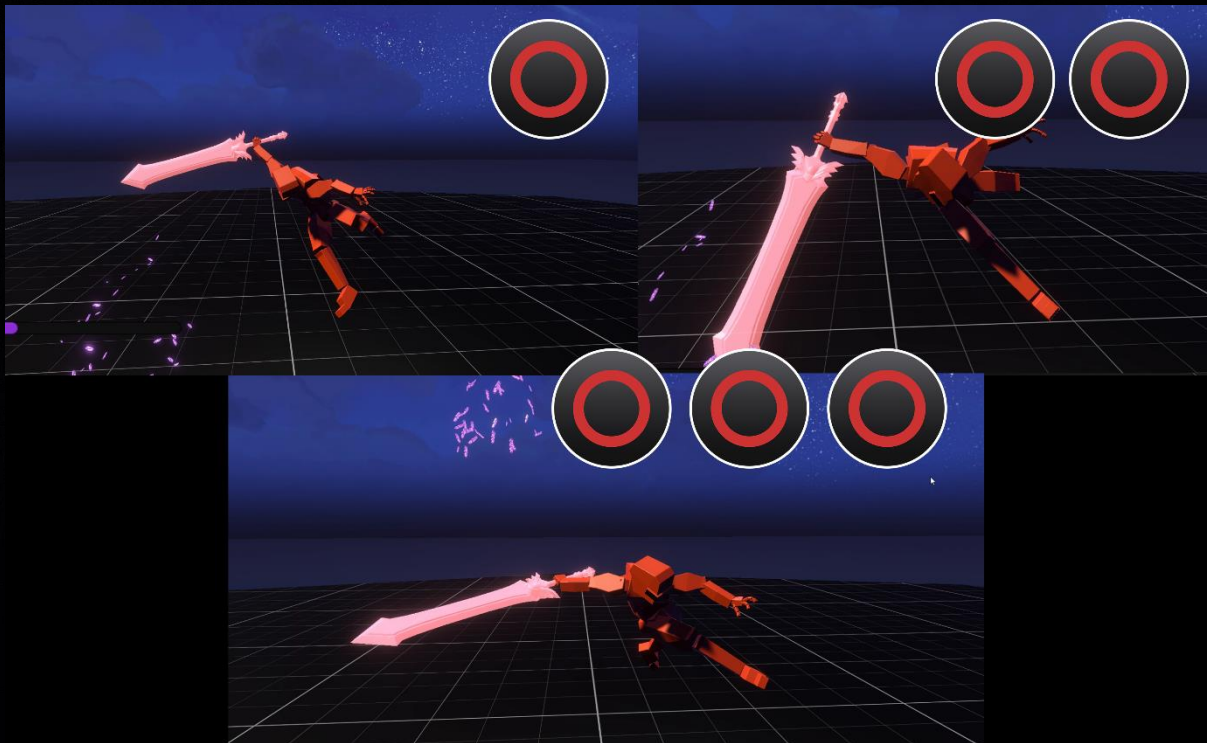
Heavy Combos

Heavy Combos are series of different heavy attacks chained together. Heavy combos are slow but pack a punch. The player can pull off different types of light combos by inputting different light attack combinations. The player can vary their input by adding times gaps between their inputs.

Heavy Combo Example



Air Heavy Combo Example



Hybrid Combos

Hybrid combos are a series of light and heavy attacks chained together. The properties of a hybrid combo depend on the first attack inputted. There are two types of hybrid combos, **light hybrid**, and **heavy hybrid**. Hybrid combos allow the player to add to variety to a combo that is already being executed.

Miscellaneous

This section details other moves that don't fit into the other sections detailed above.

Lock-On



Figure 4: Camera is focused on Remnant.

Lock-on is a feature that allows the player to target the camera on an individual enemy. This allows the player more freedom to attack

the enemy as the player doesn't need to move the camera while attacking. There are two types of lock-on in Skirmish, **Hard** and **Soft** Lock-on.

Hard Lock-On Example

Hard lock-on is initiated when the player holds down the lock-on button. While this button is held down, the camera will stay focused on that enemy until the player lets go. The player will be able to switch targets by pressing the switch target button. Hard lock-on also simplifies the inputs for unique attacks such as the stinger and launcher, both attacks requiring 1 tap and not 2.

Soft Lock-On Example

Soft lock-on is initiated whenever the player attacks next to an enemy. In this case the camera targets the enemy until the player stops attacking them. The target will switch depending on proximity to the player. The player can't switch targets manually.

Taunting

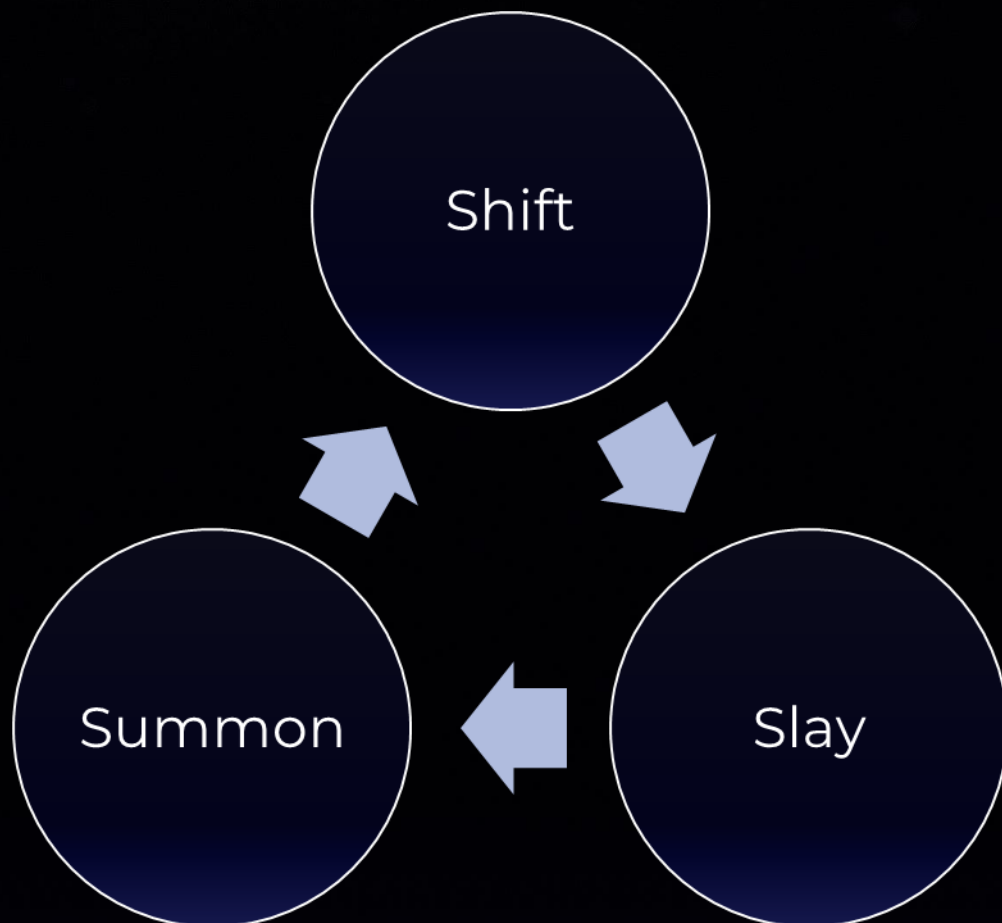
Taunting is a move that allows the player to mock the enemies they are facing. This animation will vary depending on the weapon the player is equipped with as well as the number of clones active. Taunting fits into the design pillars of style and aggression, as it's a move that will increase the aggression of enemies. The value of aggression increase will be higher with more clones being part of the taunt.

The Phase System

The phase system is the core mechanic of Skirmish. This system allows the player to summon and control powerful clones of themselves to help during battle. The player will have different special abilities themed around the system too. This section will detail the ins and outs of this system.

All abilities and actions are governed by **Phase Energy**, this energy is displayed with a UI bar element in-game. When the player executes an action, this will either cost a set amount of Phase Energy or increase Phase Energy. The core phase moves in this system are the **Phase Summon**, **Phase Shift** and **Phase Slay** moves. The order of these moves can be represented in a loop.

Maximum Phase Energy: 250 (See Numeric Design Document)



Phase Summon

Phase Summoning is the core ability the player will constantly be using. Phase Summoning allows the player to summon a clone of themselves at the cost of **Phase Energy**. Players can only summon once they've accrued enough Phase Energy. The player can build **Phase Energy** by dodging enemy attacks at the right time. Once the player has built enough energy, there are two ways to summon a clone.

- Manual Summon
- Advanced Summon



Figure 5: Summoned Clone attacking Remnant.

Manual Summon

Once the player has enough Phase Energy, the player can manually summon a clone by holding summon button (Left Trigger). This will put the player into a summoning animation, leaving them vulnerable. Once this animation is complete the player will summon a clone. Manual Summoning is a basic way to summon a clone, with Advancing Summoning offering a far superior way to summon a clone.

Advanced Summon

Advanced summoning allows the player to dynamically summon a clone during battle. To execute an Advanced Summon, the player needs to have successfully dodged an enemy's attack. During this, the player will have a short window of time where they can summon a clone mid-dodge, if they have enough energy. This clone will target the enemy that failed to attack the player.

If the player presses an attack button instead of the summoning button, the summoned clone will initiate a combo related to that

attack button. For Example, if the player presses the light attack button during this window, a clone will be summoned and will attack the enemy with a light attack combo. The player can further control the clones first attack by adding direction to the input. For example, if the player holds back on the left directional stick while summoning a clone, that clone will do a launcher attack followed by an air-combo.

Advanced Summoning allows the player to manipulate the introductory behaviour of the clones that they summon.

Clone Behaviour & Attributes

Once the player summons a clone, a UI element will appear below the players health bar to display the clones' attributes. The information displayed will correspond to:

- Type
- Phase Energy
- Hits
- Sync

The type of clone is determined by the weapon equipped before the player summons a clone. For instance, if the player summons a clone while equipped with the **White Crystal Greatsword**. That clone will be a **Striker Clone**. Phase Energy refers to the energy that the clone has. Like the player, the clone also has their respective phase energy, but in this case, a clones' phase energy determines how long this clone will remain active for. Hits serve as the amount of hits that clone has against enemies. Sync is a value that determines if the clone can be used to enter Eclipse Mode. Clones can build sync by attacking enemies.

While the clone is summoned, it will target the enemy that is closest to it. The player can also assign targets for the clone while in **Phase Vision**.

Clone Phase Energy

Clones have their own respective phase energy, which determines how long that clone is active for. While a clone is active, their phase energy will deplete over time. A clone can keep phase energy topped up by consistently attacking enemies. Once the clone loses all energy, that clone will dissipate. The starting Phase Energy of a clone will be determined by the way that clone has been summoned.

- Manual Summoned Clone: 100% starting energy.
- Advanced Summoned Clone: 120% starting energy.

Phase Shifting

Phase Shifting is a core ability that allows the player to teleport to an active clone's location as a cost of **Phase Energy**. To phase shift, the player will first need to enter **Phase Vision**.

Phase Vision

Phase Vision is ability that provides the player access to different phase abilities. To enter Phase Vision, the player needs to press and hold the Left Bumper. On activation, the player view will shift to a first-person viewpoint. These abilities all revolve around controlling the behaviour of active clones. These abilities include:

- Phase Shift
- Phase Switch
- Phase Target

Phase Shift

Phase Shift Cost: -30 Phase

Phase Shift is an ability allows the player to teleport to a clone's location. To activate this ability, the player will need to look at the clone while in Phase Vision. Once this happens, a prompt to "Phase Shift" will appear. Activating this ability will transport the player to the clone's position at the cost of **Phase Energy**. Once shifted, any enemies located close to the players new position will be "**Phased**".



Figure 6: Player enters Phase Vision and looks at clone.

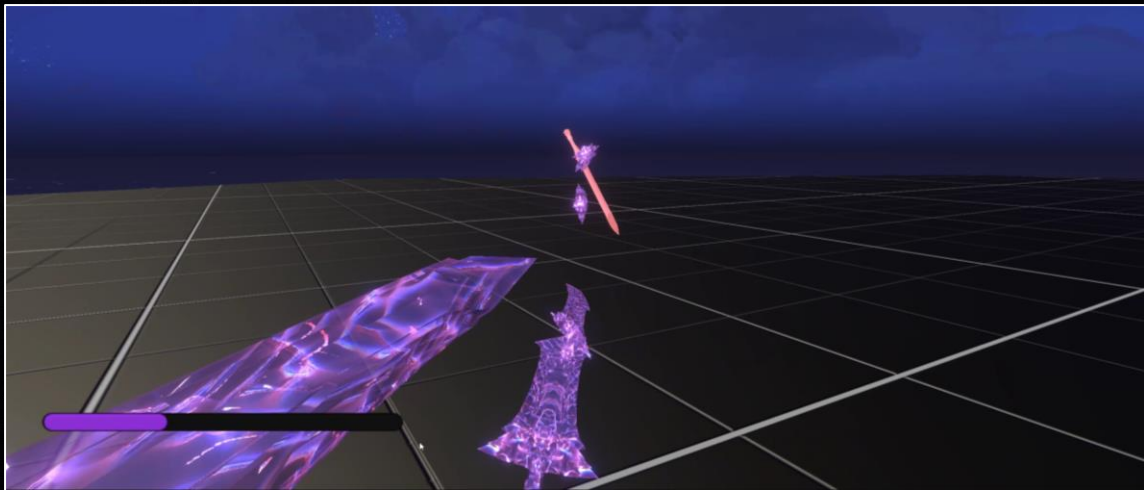


Figure 7: Player activates Phase Shift, begins teleport.

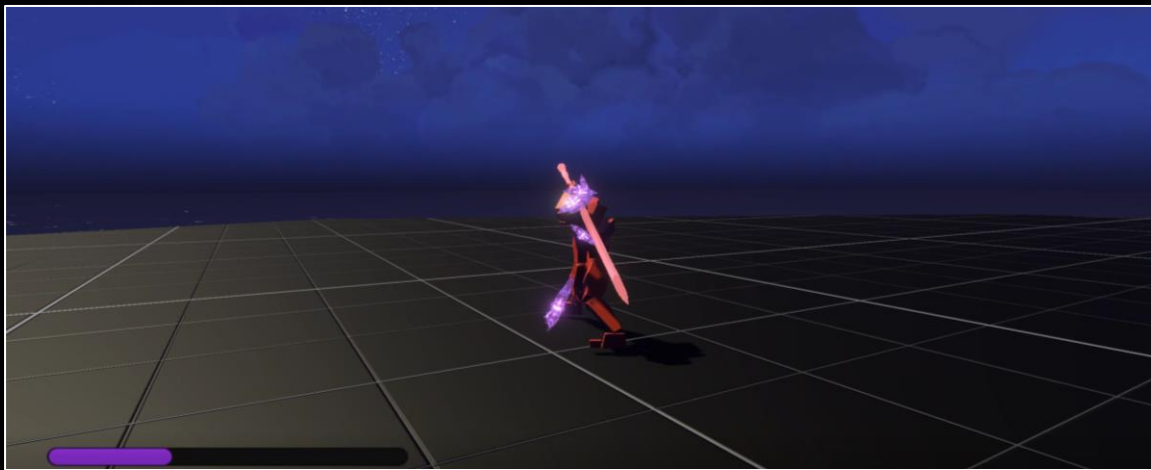


Figure 8: Phase Shift over, player has changed location.

Phase Switch

Phase Switch Cost: -45 Phase

Phase Switch is an ability that works similarly to the Phase Shift except it also changes the clone's location. To activate the Phase Switch ability, the player will need to enter Phase Vision and look at an active clone, once within range the "Phase Switch" prompt will show. Once activated, the player will teleport to that clone's location and the clone will teleport to the player's last position. Once switched, enemies that are near the player or clone's new position will be "Phased". This ability is more powerful than shifting because it allows more enemies to be **Phased**. The Phase Switch will cost more Phase Energy than Phase Shift ability.

Phase Target

Phase Target Cost: -15 Phase

Phase Target is an ability that allows the player to control which target a clone is focusing on. To activate, the player will need to look at the target while in Phase Vision. When the prompt "Phase Target" appears, press cross will allow the player to command the clone to attack that clone. Phase Targeting allows the player to change their target on the fly.

Phased State



Figure 9: Player enters Phase Vision to Phase Shift



Figure 10: Player has Phase Shifted and Remnant is now Phased!

"!Phased!" is a state that enemies will enter if they are in the range of the player or active clone that has shifted or switched. **Phased** enemies can be stunned far easier and will have their behaviour changed. For example, phasing a specific enemy could cause that enemy to drop their guard allowing you to punish them.

Once an enemy is Phased, a UI element will appear over their head. This UI element will include:

- Player Phased Bar - A bar representing the players contribution to phase.
- Clone Phased Bar - A bar representing the players contribution to phase.
- Time Left - How long until enemy gets out of Phased.

When either the player or a clone deals damage to a Phased enemy, the bar above their head will fill up. Player damage will fill up the Player Phased Bar and clone damage will fill up the Clone Phased Bar. Also, attacking an enemy that is Phased will cause that enemy to drop chunks of crystal shards from their body, these crystals can be picked up and will provide the player will different benefits depending on if the player or clone attacked.

When the player attacks a Phased enemy, that enemy will drop crystal shards that replenish Phase Energy to any active clone. This allows clones to stay in the fight longer before dissipating. When a clone attacks a Phased Enemy, different types of crystals can drop. These crystal shards can replenish health or Phase Energy.

Phase Slay

Energy Refilled: +100 Phase

Phase Slay is the final core ability of the Phase System. This ability is a finishing move that will allow the player to destroy an enemy in style. The player will be given an opportunity to slay an enemy when either of their Phase Bars are filled up. Once the requirements are met, pressing the heavy attack button will initiate a phase slay finisher. When initiated, the player will momentarily summon a copy, executing the enemy in flashy tag attack. Slaying an enemy will cause that enemy to explode into more crystal shards the player can pick up. This will reward the player and the clone with extra Phase Energy.

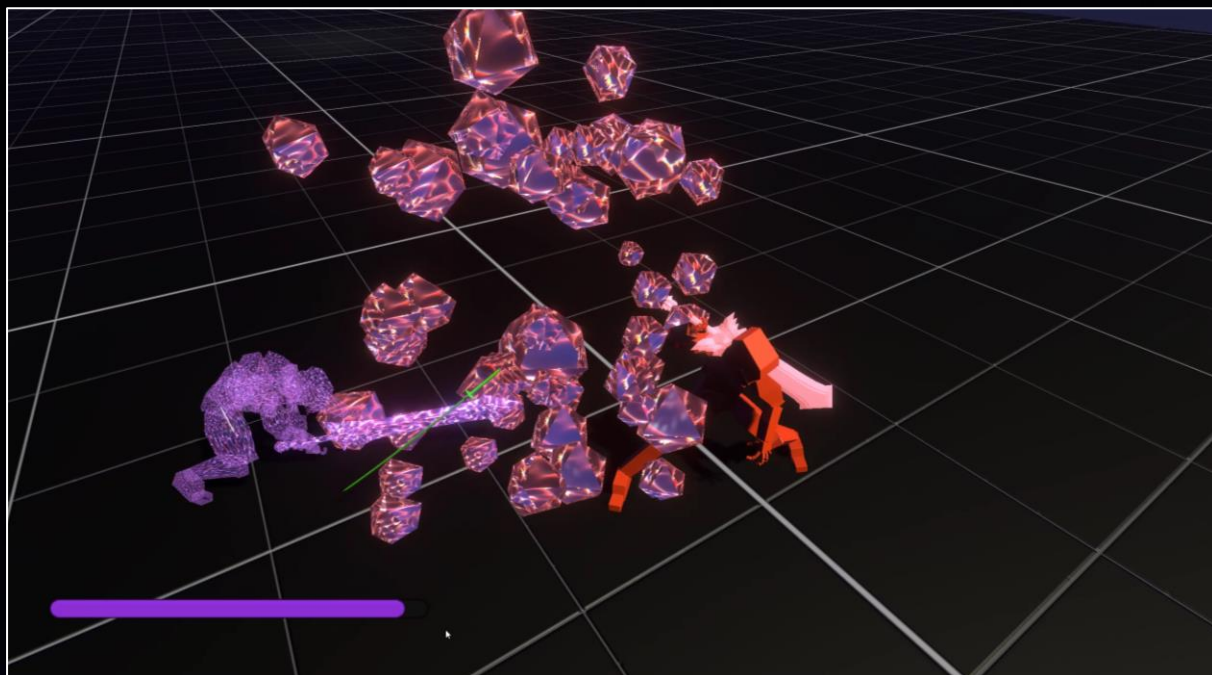


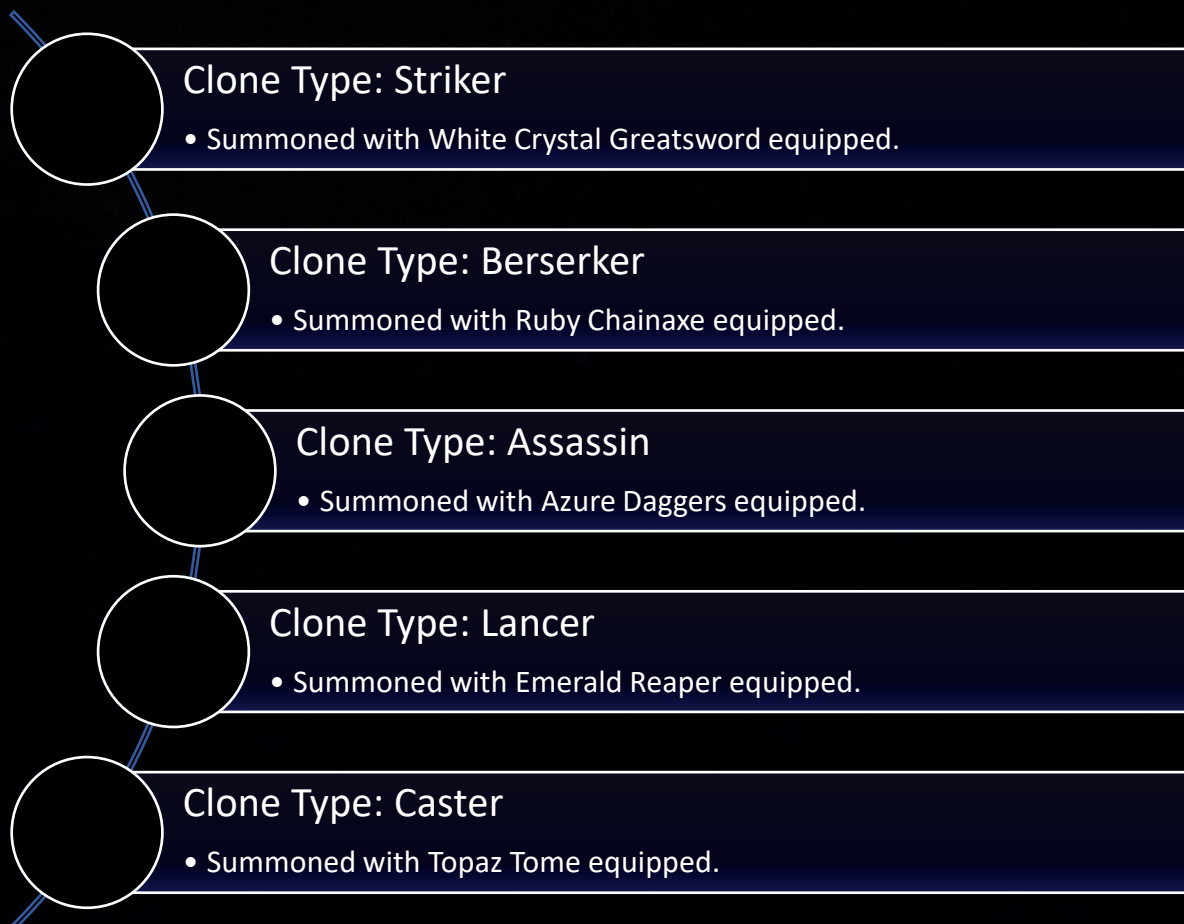
Figure 11: Finisher executed.

Clone Types & Customisation

This section will expand on how clones work and how clones can be customised.

Clone Types

When the player summons a clone, that clone will be equipped with the player's current weapon. This denotes a clone's type. There are 5 types of clones based on the five weapons the player can gain. Here are the types:



The player can have a maximum of 3 clones active at one time. The player will also not be able to summon multiple clones of the same type. Each of the clone's behaviour will be based on their type. For example, Assassin and Striker clones will rush into crowds of enemies while Caster clones will stay far.

Advanced Attacks

When the player summons a clone through an Advanced summon, that clone will immediately attack the enemy that just attacked the player. The specific attack can be determined based on the attack button pressed (light or heavy attack) as well as the directional input (analogue stick). Overall, there are 3 types of Advanced attack:

- Neutral attack
 - Input: (Heavy or Light) Attack + No Stick Input
- Forward Attack
 - Input: (Heavy or Light) Attack + Forward Directional Stick Input
- Back Attack (Backwards)
 - Input: (Heavy or Light) Attack + Back Directional Stick Input

Customising Clones

The player will be able to customise the function and attacks that the clones will have access too. The areas that the player will be able to customise are:

- Clone Behaviour
 - The behaviour of the ai
- Clone Advanced attacks.
 - Attacks that are initiated when a clone is summoned via Advanced Summoning
- Clone Slay attacks.
 - Finishing moves once you fill up an enemy's phased meter.

Eclipse Mode

Eclipse Mode is a powerful form the player can transform into once certain requirements have been met. Eclipse mode causes the player and a clone to fuse together. The Eclipse Mode is inspired and will work similarly to transformation modes such as "Devil Trigger" and "Formchanges" in Devil May Cry 5 and Kingdom Hearts 3 respectively. In Skirmish, the Eclipse mode allows the player to attack even more aggressively and will serve as a gameplay sub-goal to work towards during battle.

How to activate

The Eclipse Mode can only be activated once certain requirements have been met. These requirements are:

- Player's phase bar is maximum.
- At least 1 clone is active with sync rate of 100%

Once the requirements are met, the player needs to press down on both analogue sticks to activate Eclipse Mode. This will cause the player to enter a special animation while the clone chosen will run at the player. Once they meet, the player and clone will fuse while a stylish transformation animation plays. Once this is over the player will enter Eclipse Mode. Eclipse Mode will change the player's appearance temporarily, with the player becoming crystalline in appearance. The player will also gain two gigantic chains that will act as a scarf around the player character's neck. These chains will represent the duration of Eclipse Mode. Over time while Phase Energy drains, a chain will break off the player's scarf. Once there are no chains left, the player will exit Eclipse Mode.

Effects

Eclipse mode is a special form that drains the player's Phase Energy over time. While the player is in Eclipse Mode, they won't be able to summon any clones. However, in return they will gain a bevy of positive effects:

- Health will slowly regenerate.
- Equipped weapon will awaken (See Eclipse Mode Forms).
- Any other active clone will stay active, pausing their Phase Energy drain.
- Attacks create clone afterimages that will connect extra hits.
- Combo Finishers will create clones that join in with the finisher.
- The player can now Phase Shift to opponents without the need for clones.
- The player can now Phase Slay opponents without the need for clones.

Overcharge

While Eclipse mode only requires 1 clone to fuse with, the player can boost the effects of Eclipse Mode by overcharging it. The player can overcharge Eclipse Mode by fusing with extra clones. **Overcharge** can be split into levels. For instance, fusing with 2 clones will put the player into **Overcharge: Level 1**. The player will only be able to fuse with a maximum of 3 clones. Boosted effects include:

- Faster health regeneration.
- Attacks will create bonus afterimages based on overcharge level.
- Phase Energy will drain slower.

The player will only be able to overcharge Eclipse Mode by fusing with different types of clones. Eclipse mode provides the player with a fun mode that will allow them to aggressively decimate foes in stylish fashion, but only if they successfully interact with the phase system.

Eclipse Mode Forms

The physical form and attributes the player takes when the player enters Eclipse Mode enters varies depending on the clone type the player has fused with. There are different types of forms Eclipse Mode can take based on these combinations. These forms allow you to wield powerful awakened versions of the weapons you own. Each weapon has a special ability or trait that activates once its awakened in Eclipse Mode. Relating this to overcharge, the more clones you include, the better Eclipse Mode Form you can enter, thus the more weapons you can awaken. Here are some combinations and their results:

- Striker Form
 - o Clone combination: 1 Striker Clone
 - o Weapon Awakened: White Crystal Greatsword
- Berserker Form
 - o Clone combination: 1 Berserker Clone
 - o Weapon Awakened: Ruby Chainaxe
- Assassin Form
 - o Clone combination: 1 Assassin Clone
 - o Weapon Awakened: Azure Daggers
- Lancer Form
 - o Clone combination: 1 Lancer Clone
 - o Weapon Awakened: Emerald Reaper
- Caster Form
 - o Clone combination: 1 Caster Clone
 - o Weapon Awakened: Topaz Tome

Equipment & Player Customisation

This section will detail the different types of equipment that the player will have access to, as well as the different ways the player can customise Axel, the main character.

During the game, the player will have access to different equipment. This includes weapons, accessories, and consumables. The player will also be able to unlock new attacks and abilities.

Crystal Weapons

In Skirmish, the player will be able to collect a wide variety of crystal weapons. Each weapon will have their own unique playstyle and move set. Each weapon will also have a special ability that is activated when it is awakened in Eclipse Mode. Since one of our design pillars is **experimentation**, the player will be incentivised to switch weapons often. Some weapons will be effective against certain enemy types too. Clone type is also based on the weapon that the player currently has equipped.

Crystal Weapon Details

When the player starts the game, they will only have one weapon unlocked. That weapon will be the White Crystal Greatsword. Here are the rough stats for the White Crystal Greatsword.

Name	White Crystal Greatsword
Type	Greatsword
Description	A crystal Greatsword of legend. Axel's treasured weapon. This weapon is wrapped in chains, masking its appearance. Once awakened this weapon will glow pure white.
Stats (See Numeric Design Document)	Damage - 250 (Light), 300 (Heavy) Speed - 1.4 (Attacks per Second) Range - 2m
Light Attack Behaviour	Quick melee strikes with the Greatsword
Heavy Attack Behaviour	Slow melee strikes with the Greatsword
Ranged Attack Behaviour	Player will fire crystal rocks from their palm
Special Ability	Crystallization - When awakened, this weapon will send out sword wave projectiles that can crystalise foes, freezing them for a short time.
Chapter Obtained	Chapter 1

With the aim of the game being to reclaim the pieces of your heart from the band members, each of those members will have a crystal weapon that the player can gain once they defeat them. Below are the different weapons the player can obtain and where/when they can obtain them from.

Name	Ruby Chainaxe
Type	Axe
Description	A ruby axe with the ability to extend its range using a chain attachment. This weapon strikes fears into foes as there is nowhere to hide from its range. Once awakened, this weapon will glow a crimson red.
Stats	Damage - 675 (Light), 810 (Heavy) Speed - 0.3 (Attacks per Second) Range - 8m
Light Attack Behaviour	Slow melee strike with the Chainaxe
Heavy Attack Behaviour	Chainaxe extends to execute a very slow melee strike
Ranged Attack Behaviour	Player will hit Chainaxe into the floor to shake the ground
Awakened Ability	Quake - When awakened, this weapon will create shockwaves on hit that will stun enemies in an area
Chapter Obtained	Chapter 3

Name	Azure Daggers
Type	Set of Blades
Description	An azure set of throwing daggers that take extreme skill to wield. These blades of the ability to teleport back to the wielder once they are thrown. Once awakened, these daggers will glow a cobalt blue.
Stats	Damage - 112.5 (Light), 135 (Heavy) Speed - 2.25 (Attacks per Second) Range - 1.2m
Light Attack Behaviour	Very quick melee strike with the daggers.
Heavy Attack Behaviour	Quick melee strike with dagger.
Ranged Attack Behaviour	Player will throw a series of daggers at a single foe
Awakened Ability	Azure Grimoire - Player can summon extra astral daggers that will descend from the sky and attack enemies
Chapter Obtained	Chapter 5

Name	Emerald Reaper
Type	Lance/Reaper combo
Description	An emerald weapon with the ability to switch modes. The Emerald reaper has two modes: Lance and Scythe mode. Lance mode pierces foes with quick stabs while Reaper mode cleaves foes with wild swings. Reaper will glow bright green when awakened.
Stats	Damage - 300 (Light), 360 (Heavy) Speed - 1.2 Attacks per Second

	Range - 3.6m
Light Attack Behaviour	Quick stabs with Reaper in lance mode
Heavy Attack Behaviour	Slow swings with Reaper in scythe mode
Ranged Attack Behaviour	Player will throw reaper like a boomerang into the centre. Pressing ranged attack again will call it back.
Awakened Ability	Reapers Curse - When awakened, weapon will gain life steal effect. Light attacks will steal health while heavy attacks will steal Phase energy
Chapter Obtained	Chapter 9

Name	Topaz Tome
Type	Magic book
Description	A book with crystal hardcover. This tome allows the owner to cast magic attacks at the cost the pages it contains. To cast a spell, the user must tear out the page and chant their attack. The user can change the element of the attack by absorbing energy from foes. Player can't cast spells when the tome runs out of pages.
Stats	Damage - 200 (Light), 240 (Heavy) Speed - 0.75 (Attacks per Second) Range - 10m
Light Attack Behaviour	Player will tear out a single page to cast a basic magic attack
Heavy Attack Behaviour	Player will tear out three pages to cast an advanced magic attack
Ranged Attack Behaviour	Player will absorb energy from foes to refill the pages of the book.
Awakened Ability	Entropy's Law - While awakened, Topaz Tome cost's zero pages to use.
Chapter Obtained	Chapter 11

Weapons: How to switch weapons

The player will be able to switch weapons on the fly during battle. This removes unnecessary inputs and helps promote experimentation, since the player will have easy access to each weapon. To switch weapons, the player can use the DPAD. The player can assign a weapon shortcut to a button on the DPAD. For instance, the player assigns the AXE to the Left DPAD, pressing that button will equip the player with that weapon. If the player wants to switch back to the Crystal Greatsword, the player will need press that button again.

Accessories

Accessories are equipable items that can provide the player with gameplay bonuses. The player will be limited on how many accessories they can have equipped at one time. Accessories will need to be purchased in the SHOP before the player has access to them. At the start of the game the player will only have an option to buy a small number of accessories, as they progress through the game, more accessories will be available to buy. In to calculate the worth of accessories correctly, each accessory will be placed into a tier based on its usefulness.

Accessory Example

Here are three examples of accessories.

Name	Party Ring
Tier	1
Description	A novelty orange ring. Resembles a chicken.
Special Ability	Combos become easier to pull off, but final score is reduced conversably.
Chapter Available	Chapter 1

Name	Mirage Earrings
Tier	2
Description	An iridescent pair of earing that gleam in the light.
Special Ability	Summoning clones requires less phase energy, but clones summoned this way lose Phase Energy faster.
Chapter Available	Chapter 5

Name	Pristine Choker
Tier	3
Description	A fancy lace choker. Wearing this makes you feel like a new, powerful person.
Special Ability	Eclipse mode will not drain Phase Energy over time. However, being hit with any attack will cause you to exit Eclipse Mode instantly.
Chapter Available	Chapter 8

Accessories: How to equip accessories

The player will be able to equip and switch accessories by entering a MENU. There the player will be limited to selecting and equipping up to 3 different accessories.

Consumables

Consumables are single use items the player can use to provide them with gameplay bonuses. The player will be limited on how many

consumables they can carry. Consumables should only be used in a pinch, as using them will penalise your score. Unlike accessories, all consumables will be available to purchase from the shop from Chapter 1. Like accessories, these consumables will be split into tiers to denote their value by their usefulness.

Consumable Examples

Here are three examples of consumables.

Name	Emerald Drops
Tier	2
Description	Emerald crystal in the shape of dew drops. Crushing these drops are said to rejuvenate the life of the user.
Special Ability	Refills a portion of the player's health

Name	Pristine Drops
Tier	1
Description	White crystal in the shape of dew drops. Crushing these drops are said to refill the energy of the user.
Special Ability	Refills a portion of the player's Phase Energy

Name	Crimson Drops
Tier	3
Description	White crystal in the shape of dew drops. Crushing these drops are said to boost the power of the user for a limited amount of time.
Special Ability	Temporarily boosts player damage

Permanent increase consumables

Permanent increase consumables are consumables that the player can use to permanently boost an attribute. To obtain these consumables, players will need to collect 4 parts of the consumable. Once all 4 parts are collected, the consumable will reassemble, and the player will gain the chance to boost that attribute. These consumables can also be bought from the shop, with the price increasing with every single purchase.

Name	Scarlet Star
Tier	1 (tier increases every purchase)
Description	Red crystal in the shape of star. Crushing these drops are said to boost the vitality of the user.
Special Ability	Permanently boosts the player's health. Can only be used once all 4 parts are assembled

Name	Lavender Star
Tier	1 (tier increases every purchase)
Description	Purple crystal in the shape of star. Crushing these drops are said to boost the abilities of the user.
Special Ability	Permanently boosts the player's maximum phase energy. Can only be used once all 4 parts are assembled

Consumables: How to use consumables

To use consumables, the player will need to enter the menu and go to the items section. Once they spot 1 consumable they want to use, they need to hover over it and hold down the CROSS button. This will expend 1 consumable. Having consumables be in a menu, as opposed to a quick shortcut in-game, is a deliberate design choice, as entering it should disrupt the flow of combat, a punishment for using consumables. Enemies will also become **enraged** if the player uses consumables often.

The Shop

The shop is where the player will be able to purchase accessories and consumables. The player will also be able to purchase other goods from the shop. The shop can be accessed during the mission select. During levels, the player will also be able to access the shop, by interacting with Shop posts. The main currency of the shop is **Moontears**. Moontears are rewarded to the player after every combat encounter and mission completion. Players will also be able to collect Moontears from hitting enemies while they are **Phased**.

New attacks & abilities

The shop will offer the player will a full list of different attacks and abilities that are available to purchase using moontears. New attacks refer to new combos the player will be able to unlock. For instance, the player will be able to purchase a 4-hit hybrid air-combo. New abilities refer to new techniques the player can learn. For example, the player will be able to purchase a technique that allows them to parry enemy attack.

Clothing & Costumes

The shop will also offer the player with clothing to purchase. Clothing has no direct benefit for gameplay but will offer a nice way to customise the main character. As the game progresses, the shop will offer more clothes based on the band-members and enemies they have faced. On completion of the game, the shop will sell special outfits that do give the player special bonuses.

Enemies

This section will detail who enemies are, the different types, how enemies work and some in-depth examples of enemies.

Overview

In Skirmish, the player will be fighting against the Remnants. Remnants are crystalline creatures that assault citizens in packs. In relation to the design pillars, Remnants are enemies that will look **stylish** but are also extremely **aggressive**. During the game, the player will constantly run into new types of enemies that will test their skill with core combat and the phase system.

Enemy Types

Enemies in Skirmish will be split into different types. Each type of enemy will serve a different purpose. I've decided to handle enemy design in this way so that enemies have enough variety to feel distinct. Also, each enemy could be seen as a gameplay test, with each enemy serving a test to the player in a specific way. To add to this, enemy aggression and style will also be determined by their type.

Smashers - Smashers are enemies that pose a low risk. They should be easily dealt with so the player can have some low-risk fun. Compared to Challengers and Enforcers, smashers will be the least aggressive enemies.

Challengers - Challengers are enemies that emphasise the use of a specific tactic or weapon. They should encourage players to use tactics to defeat them. Challengers will be more aggressive than the smasher but will be less aggressive than the Enforcers.

Enforcers - Enforcers are enemies which force the player to use a specific weapon or tactic to defeat them. This means the player can only defeat them using these weapons/tactics. Enforcers will be the most aggressive types of enemies.

Enemy types were designed with the Design Pillar, **tactics** in mind. Enemies should require the player to switch up their playstyle to take out an enemy, thus requiring different **tactics** per enemy. This in turn keeps combat fresh as each enemy will have their own way to take them out.

Remnant Behaviour

Enemy behaviour determines how Remnants will work during battle. The behaviour of each remnant is determined by its type. At the start of a battle, Remnants will group up and surround the player. Once this has completed, each enemy will have their own behaviour states that they'll run through. These states help determine the actions that they take during battle. Here are some examples of some states:

- Circling
 - Description: While in this state, enemies will circle around the player and wait their turn.
- Pursue
 - Description: While in this state, enemies will actively chase the player. Enemies enter the pursue state when the player gets far away from them.
- Attack
 - Description: While in this state, enemies will initiate an attack. Enemies will randomly enter this state depending on their order in a group. Only a limited number of enemies will be in the attack state.
- Backaway
 - Description: Enemies will enter this state once they have attacked. In this state, the enemy will proceed to back away from the player.
- Hurt
 - Description: Enemies will enter this state while the player or clone attacks them. Enemies will act react accordingly when they notice enemies in the hurt state.

Smasher & Challengers Behaviour

Smasher and Challengers enemies will act together as a group. This means that when the Remnant encounter the player, they will group up and sync their states together.

Smasher Remnants are less aggressive by design as this will allow the player to get the grasp of battle early. Smasher Remnants will often be circling around the player, which each smasher taking turns to attack the player. Due to their meekness, Smasher Remnants will back-away when a Challenger type is pursuing the player. When the Smasher notices the Challenger in a hurt state, they will rush at the player to defend them. If a Smasher enemy watches enough of their own dying, they will get aggravated.

In battle, Challengers like to take charge and protect the smasher enemies due to their weaknesses. This means that Challengers will frequently switch between the Pursue and Attack state but will circle the player if there is a lot of enemies attacking. If an Emphasiser Remnant spots Smasher Remnants being hurt, they will immediately rush at the player. This will act to nudge the player to take out the Emphasiser first. If Emphasiser notices own of their own dying, they will get aggravated. Some Challengers will have access to a **Desperation Move**

Enforcer Behaviour

Enforcers act independently from Smasher and Challengers. This means that they will not wait to attack the player. Due to this, Enforcers do not circle around the player. Enforcers want the player to focus on them, so when it notices the player avoiding them, they will get aggravated. Enforcers require the player to take them out first as they will only get stronger the more time the player leaves them alive. All Enforcer Remnants have a special attack called a

Desperation Move

Desperation Move

Desperation moves are attacks that enemies can execute while they are getting combed by the player. These moves can add some extra difficulty to enemies as it stops easy exploitation. When a Challenger/Enforcer notices that they are getting wailed on for a long time, they will activate their desperation move. This will instantly repel the players attack and allow the enemy to retaliate. If a player manages to dodge a Desperation Move, they will gain extra **Phase Energy**. If the player gets hit by this attack, they take bonus damage.

Challengers will only execute a Desperation Move when a combo reaches a certain health threshold (Eg: Below 10% health). Challengers will then execute their Desperation Move and retaliate. Once this move is over, the enemy will be vulnerable again.

Enforcers have two opportunities to execute a Desperation Move. When they reach a certain health threshold through combo damage or when a combo reaches a certain hit count. The first condition is the same as the Emphasiser's condition, but the second condition is unique to the Enforcer. If the Enforcer gets too many times in a single combo or gets hit with the same combo repeatedly, they will break out of the combo and retaliate with a Desperation Move.

Desperation moves were designed with the Design Pillar of **Aggression** and **Experimentation** in mind. Desperation moves allow the enemy to retaliate, allowing them a chance to get back on the offensive, thus increasing **aggression**, as enemies won't sit idly by while you attack them. Desperation Moves also punish players who are reusing the same combo, promoting **experimentation** with combo choice.

Aggravation

When Remnants are fed up or get angry due to the players actions in combat, they will become **aggravated**. When Remnants are Aggravated, they will become more aggressive and powerful. Each enemy type has a different threshold to enter the Aggravated state.

Smasher enemies are not easily Aggravated. Smasher enemies will only become aggravated when the players defeat enough of the enemies

around them. Challengers can be frequently aggravated. Challengers will become aggravated when the player has defeated a small number of enemies in front of them. Enforcers are easily aggravated. Enforcers can become aggravated in a variety of ways:

- If the Player and a clone simultaneously attack an Enforcer for a long time.
- If the Player is constantly avoiding the Enforcer.
- If the Player defeats an Enforcer in front of an Enforcer.

Enemies' behaviour will change when they are aggravated, here are some examples of what this behaviour entails:

- Bonus damage delt to player
 - o Available to: Smasher, Emphasiser & Enforcer
- Act independently to the group
 - o Available to: Smasher, Emphasiser
- Damage and Stun resistance (Harder to Combo)
 - o Available to: Emphasiser & Enforcer
- Clone damage resistance
 - o Available to: Enforcer

To cancel an aggravation state, the player will need to **phase** that enemy, which requires skilled use of the **Phase** System. Once this happens, that enemy will exit out of Aggravation and become vulnerable. Aggravation is a state that allows the enemies to become even more **aggressive** as it makes them harder to combo and defeat. This forces the player to change their **tactic** mid-battle to defeat this hyper-aggressive foe.

Phased Remnants

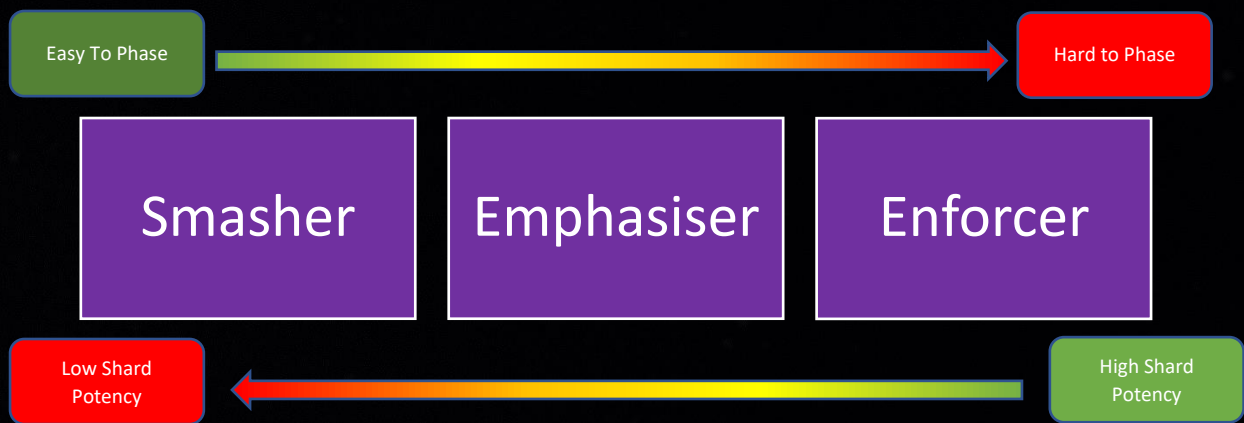
Mentioned prior, the player can phase enemies by using the Phase System. By shifting or switching near an enemy, this will place that enemy in a Phased State. This state differs depending on the enemy type. The requirement to phase an enemy also differs depending on the type.

Smashers are easy to phase as they require a single Phase Shift or Phase Switch. Once this occurs, these enemies will be Phased. Emphasiser and Enforcers are harder to phase as they require the player/clone to attack them after a shift/switch.

Any enemy that is Phased will become easier to combo, exit aggravation and will be susceptible to **Breaking**.

Remnant Breaking

When an enemy is **phased**, the player can break parts of the enemy off. This is known as **Remnant Breaking**. The player and any active clone can break parts off by dealing damage to them while they are phased. Broken enemy parts will take the form of crystal shards that the player or clone can pick-up by walking over them. The shards provide both the player and active clone with bonuses during battle. The strength of these bonuses depends on the enemy type.



Shard Type

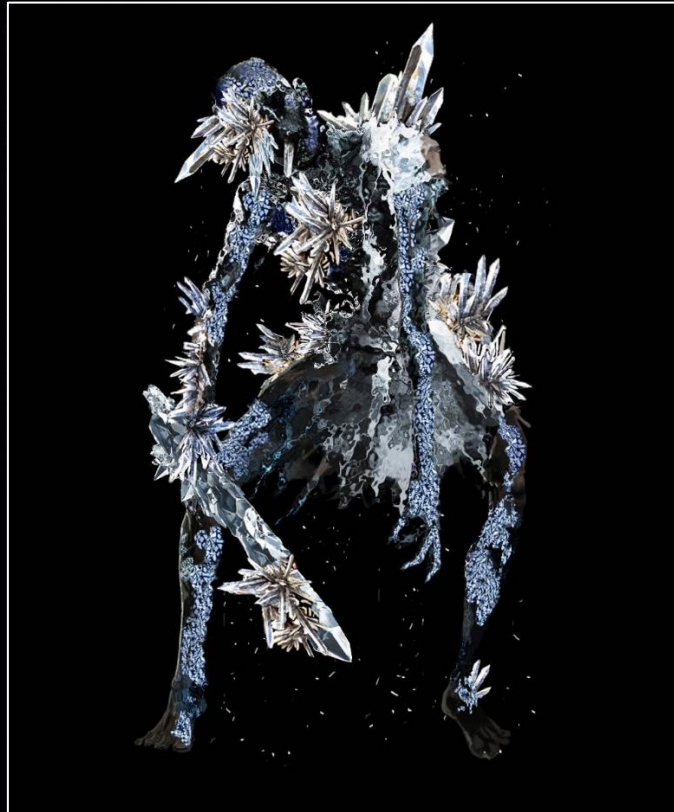
Here are the types the shards the player will be able to pick up during battle:

- Rejuvenating Shards
 - o Shards that refill the players health.
- Phase Shards
 - o Shards that refill the player or clone's phase bar.
- Eclipse Shards
 - o Shards that fill up the player's eclipse bar
- Pricey Shards
 - o Shards that are exchanged for currency.

Example of Enemies

Each enemy will have different stat attributes, each of these attributes go from very low to very high. These attributes serve as a rough template to show these stats value. Here are some examples of Remnants that the player will encounter in Skirmish.

Pion Remnant



Dark Souls, 2011

Type: Smasher

Weapon: Crystal Club

Description: A short hunched-over foe that wields a club

Enemy Stats: Health - 1760HP, Size - Mid, Damage - 60, Range - 7.5m, Speed - 0.8 Attacks per Second

Enemy Behaviour: This remnant will group up with other smasher type remnants and take turns attacking. When it's their turn to attack, this Remnant will charge at the player and attempt to attack them with their Club.

Strategy: Since this is a smasher enemy, there won't be a definitive way to take them out. Players can use any weapon or tactic at their disposal.

Wolf Remnant



Thomas Schuller, 2021

Type: Smasher

Weapon: Crystal Claws and Fangs

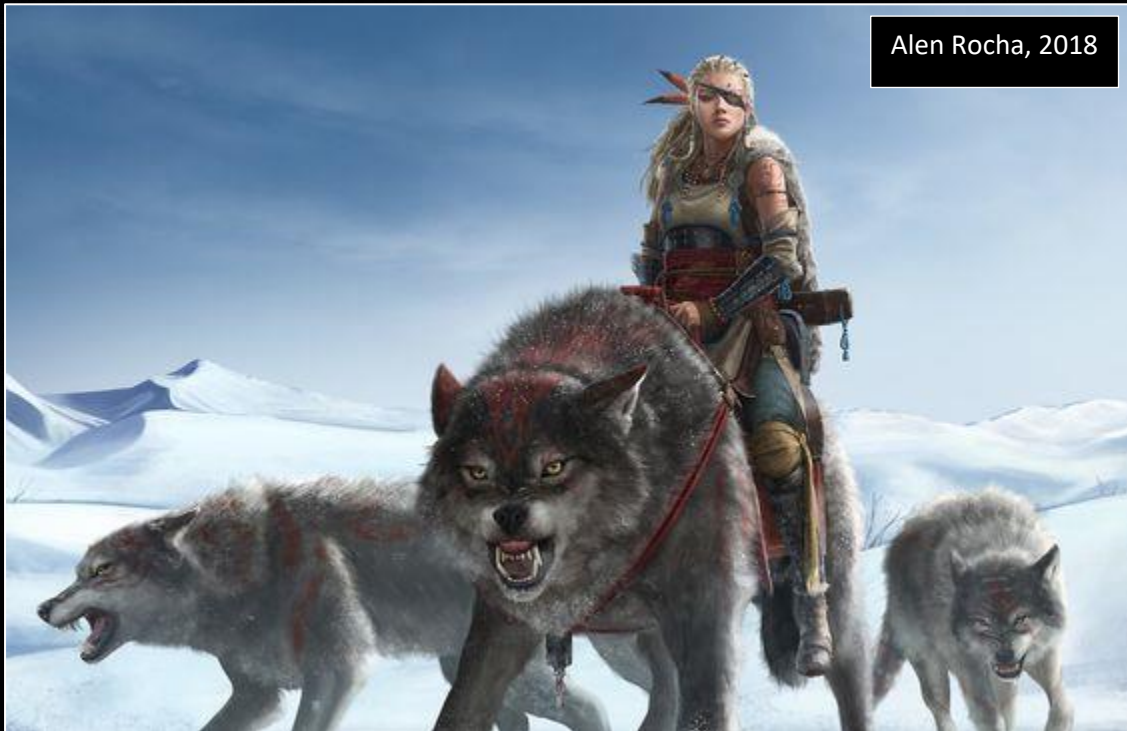
Description: A feral beast with known for its sharp bite.

Enemy Stats: Health - 1320HP, Size - Small, Damage - 75, Range - 3m, Speed - 0.9 Attacks per Second

Enemy Behaviour: This remnant will group up with other smasher type remnants and take turns attacking. When it's their turn to attack, this remnant will charge and leap at the player.

Strategy: Since this is a smasher enemy, there won't be a definitive way to take them out. Players can use any weapon or tactic at their disposal.

Beastmaster Remnant



Type: Challenger

Weapon: Crystal Whip

Description: A intelligent foe who can beckon Wolf Remnants to aid them.

Enemy Stats: Health - 2400HP, Size - Mid, Damage - 90, Range - 20m, Speed - 0.8 Attacks per Second

Enemy Behaviour: This remnant will group up with other challenger and smasher remnant types. The Beastmaster will purposely stay far away and attempt to attack the player with a long-range whip. During battle the Beastmaster can enter a lengthy call animation which will summon wolf enemies to aid them in battle. The Beastmaster will become aggravated when the player defeats enough of their wolves.

Aggravated Behaviour: When the Beastmaster is Aggravated, they will charge towards the nearest wolf and will mount it. This boost the Beastmaster's speed allowing them to chase the player aggressively. All wolfs will also become aggravated when the Beastmaster does.

Strategy: The Beastmaster will usually outrange the player with their whip, they will run away when the player gets close. Players should focus on the Beastmaster while they are calling in more wolves as they will be vulnerable during this animation.

Barbarian Remnant



Hudson Marques,
Pinterest

Type: Challenger

Weapon: Great Hammer

Description: A large savage foe that angers at the slightest of inconvenience.

Enemy Stats: Health - 4550HP, Size - Tall, Damage - 225, Range - 14m, Speed - 0.25 Attacks per Second

Enemy Behaviour: This remnant will group up with other challenger and smasher remnant types. The Barbarian will stick close to the player to compensate for their low range. This Remnant will attempt to strike the player with a large hammer, with their attacks being telegraphed by a long swing. The Barbarian can get aggravated when the player dodges allot of their attacks.

Aggravated Behaviour: When the Barbarian is aggravated, they will destroy their Hammer and will instead use their fists. The Barbarian will then charge at the player and attempt to grapple them. When it lands, he will throw the player to the ground and smash them

repeatedly into the ground. This move can remove a significant chunk of the players health.

Strategy: To deal with the Barbarian, the player will need to bait their attacks and dodge each one. Successfully dodging an Aggravated Barbarians attacks will leave them winded and out of breath. Barbarians will take extra damage when they are exhausted.

Twin-Heart Remnant



Jason Nguyen,
Pinterest

Type: Enforcer

Weapon: Crystal Curved Sword

Description: An elegant fighter with the special ability to split into two halves.

Enemy Stats: Health - 7020HP, Size - Mid, Damage - 140, Range - 7.5m, Speed - 0.7 Attacks per Second

Enemy Behaviour: The Twin-Heart Remnant will act independently from other enemies. The Twin-Heart can split into two separate remnants. The Twin-Heart will split at the start of battle. Each split Remnant will be equipped with a curved great sword. These two remnants, called the Dawn and Dusk, have their own unique behaviour. The only way to take out the Twin-Heart is to destroy both twins at the same time.

Dawn Behaviour: Dawn is first twin of the Twin-Heart remnant. Dawn is a cautious Remnant that likes to stay on the defensive. Dawn will sit and wait until the player will attack them. Dawn can parry the players attacks, leaving them vulnerable to a counterattack. Dawn will become aggravated when the player when their counterpart remnant gets defeated. If Dawn gets defeated while Dusk is still active, they will shortly reawaken with less health.

Dusk Behaviour: Dusk is the second twin of the Twin-Heart remnant. Dusk is the aggressive counterpart to the Cautious Dawn. Dusk will continuously rush at the player to attack them. Dusk has the capability to trap the player in long combo strings. If the player attacks Dusk, there is a chance that Dusk will dodge the player's attacks. Dusk will become aggravated when the player's counterpart remnant gets defeated. If Dusk gets defeated while Dawn is still active, they will shortly reawaken with less health.

Aggravated Behaviour: When either counterpart is aggravated, both parts will begin to work together, with their behaviour changing depending on which half was aggravated. If Dawn was aggravated first, then Dusk will rush at the player with the intent to stun-lock them into a combo, Dawn will slowly approach while charging a powerful single strike. If Dusk was aggravated first, then Dawn will rush at the player with the intent to grab them, Dusk will then follow up with a devastating multi-hit attack.

Strategy: While the player can take out each form individually, the best way to take out the Twin-Heart is to take out each twin at the same time. This will force both twins back together into their original form. Twin-Heart will then be vulnerable for a long time. To do this, the player should team-up with their clone, the player should take out one twin while the clone takes out the other.

Lurker Remnant



Dominiq Vann,
Pinterest

Type: Enforcer

Weapon: Dagger

Description: A sneaky assassin that hunts prey in the shadows.

Enemy Stats: Health - 3600HP, Size - Small, Damage - 160, Range - 3m, Speed - 0.4 Attacks per second

Enemy Behaviour: The Lurker Remnant will act independently from the rest of the Remnants. The Lurker is a Remnant that specialising in hunting and stalking the players clones. When the Lurker spots a clone, they will proceed to go invisible and approach a clone. When Lurker is close to a clone, it will reveal itself, and attempt to backstab a clone. Backstabs can destroy clones in a single hit. The Lurker will then turn invisible once this is done. Clones can't target the Lurker either. The Lurker will become aggravated if a clone dies before the Lurker kills it, or it's been forced to reveal itself.

Aggravated Behaviour: When the Lurker is aggravated, it will summon clones of themselves that will hunt the player, each clone will cloak itself. The player will need to determine which clone is the Lurker before the Lurker reaches them. If the player succeeds, the Lurker will become vulnerable. If the player fails, then the Lurker will attack with massive damage.

Strategy: The Lurker is vulnerable when they are invisible. When the Lurker is cloaked, they will produce a shimmer effect to telegraph where they are. Attacking them then will stun them for a short time. The Lurker is also vulnerable if the player Phase Switch's to the clone the Lurker is targeting.

Boss Fights

Boss fights will be the main attraction of Skirmish. Boss enemies will be the most difficult and challenging enemies that the player can fight. In turn, they will also be the most rewarding and fun enemies to fight. Boss enemies will symbolise every design pillar that is key for Skirmish.

Boss enemies will be ultra-aggressive, constantly assaulting the player with different moves. Boss enemies will have an expansive move set, with most enemies having up to 5 different moves. Bosses will also have multiple desperation moves.

Bosses will also be the most stylish enemies. Bosses will be visually striking with the appearance being inspired by that bosses' playstyle. Fights against bosses will be a dazzling display that will grab any player's attention, even gamers who haven't played the game.

With a varied move set comes an increased importance of tactics and experimentation. Boss enemies have the potential to switch up their behaviour on the fly. These enemies can study the player's playstyle and will adapt to it. Tactics will be important to both the player and the boss enemy.

To maximize Adrenaline, the player will need to constantly experiment with different moves and weapons, as reusing the same tactics will allow the boss to read them like a book.

There are two types of Boss enemies in Skirmish, **Special-Grade Remnants** and **Band Members**. Special Grade Remnants are extremely powerful remnants while Band Members are other Remnant Hunters with similar powers and abilities that the player has.

Special-Grade Remnants

Special-Grade Remnants are extremely powerful remnants that player will need to fight at the end of most Chapters. Special-Grade Remnants have similar behaviour to Enforcer type Remnants but are more powerful.

Abilities

Compared to regular remnants, Special-Grade Remnants have an expanded move-set and feature far more aggressive tendencies. Special-Grade Remnants also have different Desperation Moves depending on the situation.

Behaviour

Special-Grade Remnants can switch up their behaviour depending on the player's playstyle; thus Special-Grade Remnants can be seen as far more intelligent to their regular counterparts. If the player

stays on the defensive, then the Remnant will constantly assault them with attacks. Like Enforcers, Special Grade Remnants will also get aggravated.

Example: Gilgamesh

Type: Special Grade Remnant

Weapon: Two Long Swords

Description: Gilgamesh is classified as Special Grade Remnant. Gilgamesh is special remnant that takes the form of a tall bulky humanoid with 4 arms. Two regular arms and two arms extending from his shoulder blades. Each regular arm is equipped with a Large Blade. Gilgamesh is an aggressive remnant that enjoys the thrill of battle.

Enemy **Stats:** Health - 14000HP, Size - Tall, Damage - 160, Range - 6m, Speed - 0.9 Attacks per Second

Enemy **Behaviour:** Gilgamesh will immediately taunt the player at the start of battle. He will try to gaud the player into attacking. After he does this, Gilgamesh will guard his body with his two swords. During this the remnant is impervious to damage. The player will need to break his guard.

If the player is staying on the defensive, Gilgamesh will switch his behaviour to become more aggressive. In this state, Gilgamesh will rush at the player and will attempt to combo them. A notable move that Gilgamesh will use is an Air Launcher like the player's launcher. Gilgamesh will execute an upwards strike that will launch the player into the air, Gilgamesh will follow up with a jump and will strike the player multiple times in the air before throwing the player back into the ground. Gilgamesh will become aggravated when the player breaks his guard to many times.

Aggravated Behaviour: When Gilgamesh is aggravated, he will sheath his swords and run at the player with the intent to grab them. Gilgamesh will then grab the player with his dominant set of arms, while his other set of arms reequip his weapons and strike him multiple times.

Strategy: The key with handle Gilgamesh is to break his guard often. The fastest and most efficient way to break his guard is to summon a clone. When the player and clone simultaneously attack Gilgamesh when he is guarding, his guard will break and will be vulnerable to a combo or two.

Band Members

Band members are the cherry on top of the Boss Fight experience in Skirmish. Band members will be the most fun and entertaining enemies to fight in Skirmish. Each Band Member has their own unique playstyle and theme that makes them stand out amongst the Remnants. Narratively, Band Members are fellow Remnant Hunters like Axel (the player character). In Luminous City, each Band Member is part of an in-universe band called "The Crystalline Chains". The player will be able to fight each member of The Crystalline Chains throughout the game. The band consists of a Lead Singer, Guitarist, Bassist, Drummer, and Composer. In the story, Axel gets his heart ripped out of his body by the Lead Singer. That heart is then crystalized and given to each of the four remaining band members. This is how each band member has similar abilities to the player. The goal of the game is to regain the pieces of your heart by fighting against each band member.

Abilities

Each band member has similar abilities to Axel. They each have a powerful crystal weapon and access to their own Phase System. When Axel's heart was extracted from him, it was crystalised and split between the band members. This allows each band member to access their own version of the Phase System which Axel has, though their systems aren't as powerful.

Each band member has a special ability to summon clones of themselves during combat, but will each use them differently. Each band member will also have a crystal weapon that the player can receive of them once they defeat them. All band members will also have access to their own Eclipse Mode tailored to their fighting style.

Behaviour

Each band member fight consists of a multi-phase fight that consists of two phases. The 1st phase of the fight is a standard battle. Band Members are extremely intelligent, with the ability to constantly change their behaviour depending on the player's actions. Band Members will always adapt to the player's playstyle and will even react to the player using the Phase System. Band Members will target clones if they notice they are vulnerable. The 1st phase will last until the player manages to reduce the band member to zero. Out of desperation, a band member will then activate their own Eclipse Mode.

The 2nd phase of the battle will then commence. During this phase of the battle, the player will have to fight against the band member while they are in Eclipse Mode. During the 2nd Phase, the band member is becoming more aggressive and stylish. Each band member's move set will expand once they enter Eclipse Mode. A drawback of entering Eclipse Mode is that the Band Member will become rash and volatile. This means that they will lose their adaptable nature but will make up for it in sheer power. Once the player defeats a band member, they

will regain that piece of their heart and will unlock a new weapon and clone to use in fights.

Example: Roxy

Type: Special Grade Remnant

Weapon: (1st Phase) Guitar Axe (2nd Phase) Crystal Chainaxe

Enemy Stats: Health - 20160HP, Size - Average, Damage - 180, Range - 3m, Speed - 0.4 Attacks per second.

Description: Roxy is the Lead Guitarist of the band "The Crystalline Chains". Roxy is loud, proud, and brashy. Roxy is known for her stylish display of strength, being able to pick up large heavy objects using a single arm. Roxy wields an extremely large axe in the shape of a guitar, though it's not known if the axe can be used as instrument.

Phase 1: In this phase Roxy will use her massive axe. Roxy will frequently charge at the player and attempt to swing her axe, with a telegraphed delay due to the size of her weapon. If the player goes too far, she will smash the ground to shake the earth and stun the player. When the player gets too close, she will attempt to switch her axe.

Phase 1 Strategy: In Phase 1, the player should be reacting to Roxy's long telegraphed attacks with a well-timed dodge. To counter Roxy's ground pound or 360 strike, the player should jump into the air to avoid it. During both attacks she is vulnerable to air-combos.

Phase 2 Eclipse Mode: In this Phase, Roxy's weapon will morph into the crystal axe, while she transforms into Eclipse Mode. During Eclipse Mode, Roxy will become far more aggressive and will rarely wait for the player to attack. Roxy's weapon can now extend itself, increasing its range at the minor cost of damage. Roxy's previous attacks will be enhanced, for instance, when Roxy smashes the ground now, rocks will momentarily float, and she can hit them towards the player.

Roxy will also be able to summon clones briefly to attack the player. For instance, one of Roxy's desperation moves will involve her and a bunch of clones launching different axe swings that extend themselves, which the player will need to dodge.

Phase 2 Strategy: Phase 2 is where the real battle starts, during this phase, the player should be constantly on the offensive, dodging each of Roxy's attacks. While Roxy has increased range than Phase 1, she is also easier to read. One move that players will really struggle is her desperation move involving her clones. To counter this move, the player will need to have a clone active to direct some of her attention. To counter Roxy's enhanced ground pound, the player can hit the rocks back at her by attack the flying rocks at the right time. This strategy will stun her, allowing the player to retaliate.

Style Rating System

Like other Hack-n-Slash games, Skirmish will feature a Style Rating System. The purpose of a system like this is to rate the player's combat performance in real-time. These systems should clearly communicate to the player on how well they are doing during a fight. Style Rating System promote skilled play as players are usually rewarded when they reach the best grades. In relation to my design pillars, the Style Rating system should relate to aggression, style, and experimentation. There are 3 types of criteria that are important to the style rating system. These criteria are **Adrenaline**, **Damage Taken** and **Time Taken**. At the end of battle, the player will be given a final rank using these criteria. Adrenaline is rated the highest, followed by Damage Taken and Time Taken.

Adrenaline

Adrenaline is first and most important criteria in the Style Rating System. Adrenaline is a mechanic that will work similarly to how the style rank system in Devil May Cry works. In that game, the style rank system is split into lettered grades from D to SSS, with the letter rank increasing or decreasing depending on how stylish the player is. Constantly person stylish moves, go up a letter rank, get hit by any moves, go down a rank. Adrenaline will work like this but will add elements to promote stylish play with the Phase System.

Adrenaline will feature tiers that denote how well the player is fighting. The Adrenaline mechanic will help promote **aggressive** and **stylish** play by providing the players with bonuses during battle. To display Adrenaline in game, while the player is fighting, there will be an outline of Axel (the main characters) face which will be located as a UI image towards the right-hand corner of the screen. Each tier will be represented as a different emotion on Axel's face, with the emotion switching when the player changes tiers. When the player enters a new tier, Axel will also give off a voice line. When the player enters eclipse mode, the Adrenaline face will change to represent Axel's form. Here are the adrenaline tiers:

- No Adrenaline:
 - o Axel Emotion: Sleeping
- Tier 1: Dull
 - o Axel Emotion: Tired
 - o Voice Line: "I'm Awake, I'm Awake"
- Tier 2: Clear
 - o Axel Emotion: Smile
 - o Voice Line: "Just too easy."
- Tier 3: Bright
 - o Axel Emotion: Ecstatic
 - o Voice Line: "More, More, MORE!"
- Tier 4: Ablaze
 - o Axel Emotion: Crazy
 - o Voice Line: "I'M JUST GETTING STARTED"
- Tier 5: Sparkling

- o Axel Emotion: Maniacal Laughter
- o Voice Line *"Crazy Laughter"*

The player will be able to build Adrenaline during battle. Performing different stylish actions will fill up the players Adrenaline Gauge. This gauge is located under Axel's Adrenaline Face. Filling up the Gauge will increment Adrenaline by a single tier. The player will need to fill up the gauge five times to reach Tier 5. To gain Adrenaline, the player will need to switch up their **tactics** often and will need to **experiment** with different combos and phase abilities.

The player will be able to gain Adrenaline through these means:

- Adrenaline built through Phase System
 - o (Highest) Entering Eclipse Mode
 - o Executing Phase Slay finishers.
 - o Executing Phase Switch & Shift
 - o Summoning Clones
- Adrenaline built through Core Combat
 - o Executing Combos
 - o Attacking Phased enemies.
 - o Attacking enemies with different weapons
 - o (Lowest) Dodging enemy attacks.

The player can also lose Adrenaline by:

- Remaining in-active
- Reusing the same combos
- Getting hit by enemy attacks.

Adrenaline Bonuses

The player will gain gameplay bonuses while they are in different states of Adrenaline. The purpose of these bonuses is to give the player another incentive to reach for the higher tiers of Adrenaline. Each bonus will stack together, so the player will receive all previous bonuses when in Tier 5. Here are the bonuses per tier:

- Tier 1: Dull
 - o Clones stay active for longer.
- Tier 2: Clear
 - o Increased enemy Phase Bar build up.
- Tier 3: Bright
 - o Increased Phase Energy generation by dodging.
- Tier 4: Ablaze
 - o Enemy's produce extra crystal shards.
- Tier 5: Sparkling

- o Eclipse Mode cost's less Phase Energy to activate.
- o Eclipse Mode lasts longer.

Damage taken is the second criteria of the style rating system. Like Adrenaline, this will also be represented by the Adrenaline UI face. When the player takes damage, the face will get bruised to represent this damage. The face will continue to get beaten up until battle is over, this will represent how much damage the player has taken. The more damage the player takes, the lower the final style ranking. The player will need to study each enemy accordingly to make sure they don't take damage.

Time Taken

Time taken is the last criteria of the style rating system. Unlike Adrenaline and Damage, time will not be represented in-game. Time counts during battle. When battle finishes, the time will be recorded. The longer the player takes during a fight, the lower the final style ranking.

Final Rating Calculation

When battle ends, all criteria will be collected, and the final battle rating will be calculated. The final rating is calculated by taking rating each of the individual criteria and taking the average. Each Criteria will be rated with the following grades:

- Dull (Lowest)
- Clear
- Bright
- Ablaze
- Sparkling (Highest)

Adrenaline, Damage Taken and Time Taken are then rated using these grades. Final Rating is then calculated by taking the average. Adrenaline will be weighted with 65% importance, followed by Damage Taken with 20% and lastly Time taken with 15% importance. The player is then given a final grade.

Rating Rewards

When the player receives their final rating at the end of battle, the player will receive **Moontears** as a monetary reward. The value of this reward is determined by the final ranking. Here are some examples of some values:

- Sparkling = 25000 Moontears
- Ablaze = 20000 Moontears
- Bright = 15000 Moontears
- Clear = 10000 Moontears
- Dull = 5000 Moontears

Level Design

In this section I will be detailing my approach to the design of Levels of Skirmish. I will be focusing on the composition of levels. This includes the structure, level goals, sub-goals, collectibles, and other things the player can do in a level.

Structure

Levels or Chapters in Skirmish will be structured to challenge the player in different areas. The main goal of each Chapter will be to clear the objected associated with the specific chapter. To get to this goal the player will need to navigate their way through a level and clear out any Remnants that get in their way. Chapters will consist of two types of areas, arenas, and pathways.

Arenas are the focal points of each level. Arenas are locations in a level that are filled with Remnants that the player needs to clear. When the player enters the arena, a field will appear, and block all exits out of the arena. Once the player clears the arena, they will be able to leave. Arenas will primarily challenge the player through combat as Remnants will pose the highest threat. The player will be rated using the Style Rating System mentioned earlier.

Paths can be seen as routes to the arena. Paths will serve to challenge the player through movement traversal. Players will need to use their movement abilities and the Phase System to navigate their way through a path. To promote exploration, paths will be filled with different sub-goals the player can interact with.

Main Goal

The main goal of a chapter will vary from chapter from chapter, but there are two types of chapters, each type influenced by their main goal. These types are sector chapters and infiltration chapters.

Sector chapters are chapters in which the main goal is to navigate their way through a Sector of Luminous City, to find a Band Member that has a piece of Axel's heart. Sector chapters are set in open spaces such as streets or roof tops. These missions always end with a boss fight against a special grade remnant, such as Gilgamesh.

Infiltration chapters involve the player infiltrating and fighting their way through a band members hideout. These chapters take place in enclosed spaces, such as bars or shops. Each enclosed space is themed around the band member that is located there. These chapters always end with a boss fight against one of the band members such as Roxy the Lead Guitarist.

Sub-Goals

Sub-goals are every object that the player can interact with in a level. Sub-goals will promote exploration as completing these goals can provide the player with important bonuses such as extra maximum health and more moondrops. Here are some examples.

Pristine Chests

Pristine chests are sprinkled around levels in Skirmish. These chests contain valuable items such as moondrops and items that permanently boost the players health or phase bar. To gain these items, the player will need to break the chest open. Pristine Chests can only be broken by targeting it with a Phase Slay attack. The player will need to summon a clone and shift/switch to the chest to first Phase it. The player will then need to work with the clone to fill up the Phased Meter to execute a Phase Slay attack. Once the player activates the Phase Slay attack, the chest will be broken, and the player will be rewarded with its contents. Pristine Chests help familiarise players with the Phase System.

R.E.S Challenges

R.E.S (Remnant Extermination Squadron) Challenges are extra missions that the player can undertake during a chapter. Each chapter will contain 1 to 2 challenge hubs hidden around the level. Interacting with these hubs will transport the player into a new zone. In this zone, the player will be tasked with mission centred around completing an arena in a special way. An example of a challenge is "complete this arena but you have to Phase Slay every enemy" or "complete this arena but only your clone can deal damage!". Once the player completes this challenge, they will be rewarded with an extra health or phase fragment.

Crystal Monuments

Crystal monuments are shrines that Remnants have built in a chapter. These monuments take the form of large slabs of Crystal in the shape of various entities. The player can break off parts and destroy monuments for bonus moondrops. However, after a certain period of time, these monuments harden, allowing them to become impervious to all damage. The player will need to wail these shrines with as many different attacks to break these shrines to obtain the maximum amount of moondrops possible. Crystal Monuments harken back to the **experimentation** design pillar. To maximise their chances of breaking the monument, the player will need to switch up their combos often as these monuments harden faster if the player reuses the same combo.

Remnant Extermination Targets

Remnant Extermination Targets are remnants that the player will need to scout out and exterminate in a mission. These targets are hidden in the level and it's the players job to find to their location. Once they are found, the player is tasked with exterminating that target in a special way. For example, an extermination target for the player will be Beastmaster remnant and the player will need to Phase Slay them to complete the extermination. These Remnants will also have boosted stats including a higher average health pool. If the player kills their target in a means that wasn't specified, then they will fail that optional mission. As a reward for successful extermination includes bonus moondrops and extra health/phase fragments

The Crystalline Chains Flyers

Crystalline Chains Flyers are collectables the player can pick up in level. These flyers represent the in-game band, the Crystalline Chains. Collecting these flyers allow the player to unlock clothes to customise Axel with. These flyers will promote thorough level exploration.

Sample Levels

Here are some sample chapters of skirmish. I will be giving three different examples of chapters, with each chapter being taken from different stage of the game, such as early game, mid game and late game. Regarding each chapter, I will describe an overview, the style, what happens, the key moments and the overall player journey.

Prologue: A Chance Encounter (Early Game)	
Style	Suspenseful and Intensive. We want the game to start off with a bang.
What Happens	Game opens with Axel on the rooftop of a tall building. Axel is tasked with retrieving some crystals from a night club. Axel crashes into the night club from the roof. Remnants start to appear in the Nightclub and the player is tasked with eradicating them. After the fight, Axel spots a person wearing familiar armour and chases after them. The next section will be a platforming section where the player chases the mysterious figure on rooftops. The mysterious figure turns out to be lead singer of the “The Crystalline Chains”. She introduces herself as Lexi and claims that she needs Axel’s heart. Confused, Axel refuses and fight between them breaks lose. A boss battle against Lexi begins. Lexi defeats Axel and tears out his from his chest, seemingly killing him. Before Lexi can leave with his heart, Axel reawakens and activates Eclipse Mode. A second boss battle against Lexi ensues. Axel defeats Lexi but she manages to get away with his heart. Axel passes out due to blood loss and the chapter ends.
Key Points/Moments	This chapter serves as the first introduction to our main character Axel. This chapter also introduces Remnants, which are enemies the player will constantly be fighting. Band Member boss fights are also introduced in this chapter. These fights are the highlight of Skirmish so including one in the first chapter is a bonus. Axel and Lexi’s rivalry is established in this chapter, the player will be fighting Lexi often in Skirmish. Eclipse Mode is introduced in this chapter too; this mode will spice up combat and will incentivise skilled use of the Phase System.
Player Journey	This chapter serves as the start of their journey. We want the player to be invested into the world and game from the start. As this is the start of the game, this chapter can be seen as the introductory chapter. This chapter will help players get accustomed to the combat. In terms of power progression, the player will have access to 1 weapon, 1 type of clone and will only be able to have 1 clone active at time.

Chapter 6: No Refunds (Mid Game)	
Style	Exhilarating and Nail-biting. At this point we are nearly half-way through the game. So, we want to add some more fuel to the fire.
What Happens	This chapter takes place after Axel has defeated the Drummer of “the Crystalline Chains” and has retrieved the 2nd piece of his heart. On his way back from the commercial sector, Axel gets stopped by a pack of rampaging wolf remnants. Before he manages to pull out his weapon, a pack of bullets eradicate the remnants in style. Among the smoke stands Lexi. Lexi remarks about Axel’s antics in Luminous City and alludes to his past. Axel demands a fight to retrieve a piece of his heart and the two battle it out. During the battle, Lexi unveils her own version of Eclipse Mode, stunning Axel, they both go all out on a bridge connecting the commercial and central sector. Before the two can finish their fight, a large Special Grade Remnant descends and intrudes on the fight. Axel turns his attention to the Special Grade Remnant “Gilgamesh”. Axel defeats Gilgamesh, but Lexi has seemingly vanished. Axel gains the ability to summon two clones at the same time.
Key Points/Moments	This chapter takes place near the halfway point of Skirmish, so it makes sense that we get to have a rematch with Lexi. This fight will be intense with vocal music accompanying the fight. This chapter is unique in the sense that the player gets to fight a Band Member and a Special Grade Remnant in the same mission. In this Chapter, another key moment is the mentioning of Axel’s past. One of the main conflicts Axel needs to face is his own past as he has no memory of it during the first chapters.
Player Journey	As this is the mid-point of the game, the player should feel a dramatic power increase. Both in terms of their skill in combat and the tools that the player has at their disposal. At this point the player will have access to many different combos, three different weapons and clones. The fight against Lexi should also be more difficult than the average boss battle, to accommodate for the players power increase. The player will also gain the ability to have two clones active at the same time. This will further increase experimentation with clone combat and the phase system.

Chapter 13: Encore (Late Game)	
Style	Conclusive but Surprising. This chapter will conclude the Players main goal of collecting all the pieces of Axels heart but a twist in the story will shock the player leaving them with questions.
What Happens	This chapter takes place after Axel has defeated all the members of “the Crystalline Chains” leaving only Lexi left. In the previous chapter, Axel has successfully infiltrated Equinox Headquarters. This chapter begins with Axel riding on the main elevator to the rooftop of the main building. During this ride, the player will fight against many remnants they have fought before. This section serves to warm up the players before the big fight against Lexi. Axel and Lexi meet on the roof of Equinox Headquarters. Lexi explains Axel’s past to him and states why she needs to keep his heart. Frustrated, Axel proclaims that no-one is going to stop him and the two have their final battle for the last piece of his heart. Axel barely wins and regains the last part of his heart. All the pieces float and reassemble together, allowing Axel to insert it into his chest, but when he does so, he freezes. The manager of “the Crystalline Chains” or to Lexi, the CEO of the Equinox Corporation, reveals himself from the shadows. He reveals his grand plan to reawaken a control Axel as a mindless puppet. At that moment, Axel activates Eclipse Mode against his will and dons on Lexi’s Onyx Armor. Through the influence of his reformed heart, the CEO gains the power to control Axel.
Key Points/Moments	The first key moment of this chapter is the final fight against Lexi, the rival character. The player has already fought Lexi twice, with each fight becoming increasingly more difficult than the last. The second key moment is Axel regaining all the pieces of his heart. For 13 chapters the player has followed Axel’s quest to make himself whole, so the moment in which he completes his mission should be a cause of celebration, except it isn’t. The last key moment is the reveal of the twist. That Axel is under control of the CEO of Equinox. This happened because he tinkered with the heart pieces without Axel’s knowledge, so that when they are joined, he would have control of Axel.
Player Journey	At this point in the game, the player’s journey should be coming to an end. By this chapter, the player should be very skilled with the Phase system and will have access to 5 different weapons and 5 different clones. With this power comes the final test in the form of the final battle with Lexi. The battle with Lexi will test every skill the player has picked up during the game. Lexi will be the most aggressive foe the player has fought so far. To beat Lexi, the player will need to rely on their mastery of the phase system.

10 Minutes of Play

In this section I will be giving a description of the first ten minutes of gameplay. This section will focus on the gameplay experience of the very first chapter of the game. In this case, the prologue from the Sample Levels detailed above.

From the very first moment of starting the game, the player will be treated with a cutscene that shows a nightclub blasting loud drum and bass music. This is to set the chaotic tone of Skirmish. The scene then cuts to our main character on a rooftop somewhere, overlooking the nightclub. This will instantly raise tension as players will assume he's going to jump. We cut back to the nightclub and remnants begin materialising and the club begins to go wild, at this moment the tension increased further as the main threat gets introduced. Just as this happens our main character leaps from the rooftop and falls towards the skylight of the night club, crashing through the ceiling while landing on a remnant, crushing it. From that point, players will assume control of Axel and battle begins. The purpose of this introductory cinematic is set up the player's expectations from the get-go and to show off that Skirmish is a game about **Style**.

From this point, the player gains control of Axel and the first battle starts. This battle will serve as introduction to combat. The player will have access to the Phase System, so they'll be able to summon clones, shift and slay enemies, but they won't be able to enter Eclipse Mode. This first battle is where Skirmish will shine, as the aggressive nature of remnants and the stylish combat will blend to make engaging first combat encounter. The player first be fighting smasher remnants as it will help them familiarise themselves with the game. Once this battle is over, the player will then be tested by fighting their first Special-Grade Remnant. This remnant will be "Gilgamesh", a remnant that tests the players skills with the phase system. To beat Gilgamesh, the player will need to remain aggressive and make sure their tactics are up to date.

To complement this first battle, the player will experience the Style Rating System for the first time. This system helps promote experimentation as it rewards skilled players with gameplay bonus that will boost the fun of combat. The first ten minutes should immediately communicate the type of game Skirmish is. A stylish hack-n-slash game about summoning and controlling clones, to decimate aggressive but strikingly beautiful foes. These first ten minutes should also feel extremely fun and should hook the player into delving further into Skirmish.

To describe the mid-game experience, by that point the player will have access to 3 weapons and 3 clones. This will increase the amount of ways the player can experiment with combos and clone combinations. By mid-game, the player should be familiarised with the Style Rating System and Adrenaline. The battles with Remnants will involve mostly Challenger and Smasher types.

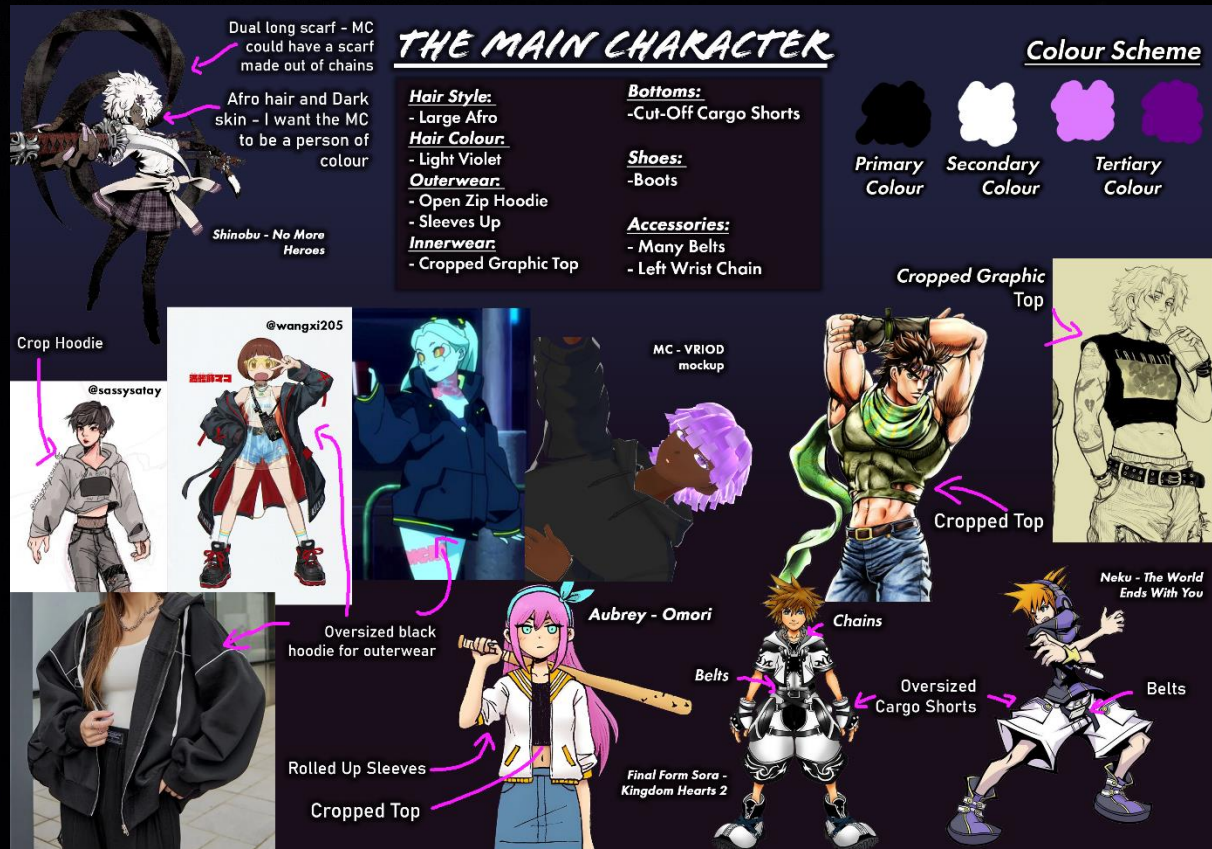
Lastly with the late game experience, the player will have access to the full arsenal of weapons and clones. Due to this, the player will be facing against mostly Enforcer type remnants. By this stage the player should have complete understanding of how to build up Adrenaline.

Aesthetic

In this section I will be discussing about the aesthetic of the game. I will be describing the style of the characters, remnants, and the locations of skirmish.

Axel (Character)

The most important character in Skirmish is Axel since he is the main playable character. Since this is the case, we need to his aesthetic to be unique and visually appealing so that players can gravitate towards him.



The moodboard above shows the aesthetic im going for in regards to the main character's design. The main inspiration for fashion in Japanese Action Role-Playing games such as Kingdom Hearts and The World Ends With You. Characters in these games feature large baggy clothes such as hoodies and shorts. These characters also wear lots of accessories. From this starting off point, I also wanted the main character have a feminine aesthetic with crop tops and high shorts. Though Axel is male, you rarely see video games with lead male characters that have a feminine aesthetic, so I wanted to change that.

White Crystal Greatsword (Weapon)



The next area to tackle was the aesthetic of weapons. In Skirmish I want all weapons the player and band members use to have normal and awakened forms. In the normal form, I want weapons to look brutish and large. The weapons should look like they are hiding something within it. Weapons would awaken to new form when they enter eclipse mode. Once this happens the weapons will take a full crystalline appearance and will begin to glow.

Luminous City (Setting)

LUMINOUS CITY

ARCHITECTURE REFERENCE



Luminous City is a fusion between a metropolitan and island city. Each sector is an island joined by bridges. Large buildings surrounded by sea.

Luminous City will be comprised of 5 islands. The central district will be the center island with each other island surrounding it.

Each sector will have a visually distinct landmark. For example, the central sector will have a large concert hall.



LIGHTING REFERENCE



Luminous City will be lit with bright coloured lights. The sky will be brightly lit too with stars decorating the sky. The lighting of the city will be different in each sector of the city.



For example, if the player is in the nightlife sector, the area will be lit in a orange/yellow hue.

Moving onto the setting, the game will take place in Luminous City. Getting the aesthetic of the city right is important as many hack-n-slash games take place in stylised locations. For Skirmish, I tackled the aesthetic in two areas, the architecture of the city and the lighting of the city. Regarding the architecture, I want the city to look like an Island Metropolis. The city will be surrounded by bright blue water, giving the city a tropical resort feel. Each sector of the city is its own island, with each island being connected with bridges.

The next area to tackle was lighting. I want the city to be brightly lit with saturated colours. Each Sector will have its own colour associated with it. For example, in the commercial sector, the sky and surrounding buildings will shine with green light. The game will mostly take place during the night, so having the stars brighten the sky will also add to the aesthetic.

Narrative

In this section I will be detailing the setting, plot, and characters of Skirmish.

Contextual Lore

Long ago, there was a civilisation called the Lunarians that called the moon their home. Their survival depended on mysterious crystals found in the moon's craters, which fuelled their every need. However, as if in retaliation, crystalline creatures dubbed Remnants ascended from the depths of the excavated craters and began hunting down those who robbed the moon of its resources.

After cloaked Remnants ravaged a mining expedition, the Lunarians focused their efforts on developing weapons and armour to combat this unseen threat, with the help of crystal researcher, Gaius, who discovered an armoury of special crystals that held immense power. Within this armoury Gaius found a White Crystal Greatsword and Black Onyx Gauntlets. Upon doing further tests, he discovered he could use these weapons as a blueprint, to create other strong crystal-like weapons. With these weapons, Gaius managed to raise an army of soldiers that could handle them, and out of these, six people stood out, each able to handle the pure crystal weapons.

The Remnants attacks became a daily occurrence, and new bigger classes of remnants appeared to cause even more disruption. Soon a battle against the Remnants began. On the first day of the battle, every soldier was dispatched to reclaim the craters, with each of the six heroes heading to a different crater. But before long, the Lunarians began to be pushed back to their home city, and a stalemate began.

However, the fall of the Lunarians began when an entity clad in pitch black armour with a weapon of pure white crystal descended from the stars and decimated the Remnants with near clinical accuracy. The entity summoned copies of itself, enough to fill a small platoon, and if it ever took fatal damage, it would simply channel that damage back to the sender.

After four days of carnage, the entity destroyed the main city of the Lunarians, and with all options exhausted, Gaius decided to use a last-ditch weapon, a laser that uses crystals as a disposable source of power. While the five heroes kept the entity distracted, one of them fired the laser, dead centre into the entity. Destroying the black armour and damaging the White Crystal Greatsword, the entity was sent hurtling towards the Earth. Though they won the war, the Lunarians were completely decimated, and Gaius and the five heroes decided that the Earth would be their new home.

Years later, a boy washes up on the coast of the central sector of Luminous City, the world's answer to a place where one could be perpetually entertained. The government takes custody of the boy and the weapon found with him, and a lady named Julianne greets him. She explains that she's there to look after him from now on and that his new home awaits him. This ends up being the Remnant Extermination Squadron, where the boy, under the guidance of Jill, learns about the Remnants and how to fight using his weapon. During a testing accident, it's shown that the boy can also summon copies that can fight with him, though these copies are only active for a few seconds. After a few years of training, the boy becomes a fully-fledged Remnant Exterminator, and a mysterious rock band named "The Crystalline Gems" ascends to the top of the music world in Luminous City.

Beginning

Game opens with Axel on the rooftop of a tall building. Axel has been tasked by Jill to scout of a nightclub for suspicious Remnant behaviour. When he spots some Remnants appearing, he descends and crash lands into the club through its roof. A battle ensues where Axel takes out some Remnants. Before he can wrap up, Axel spots a mysterious person peering into the roof of the nightclub. Before the person can hide, Axel notices a familiar piece of Armour they are wearing and a chase ensues. Eventually when Axel catches up to the person, the individual reveals themselves to be Lexi, the lead singer of "The Crystalline Chains". Before Axel can say anything, Lexi pounces and they battle.

During the battle, Axel watches as Lexi matches him in combat prowess. The battle rages on as both fighters continue their fight across the entire city. Eventually they end up on the edge of Luminous City, near the shoreline. Lexi then reveals her own crystal weapon, the Black Onyx Armor, this stunning Axel as he believed he was the only person who owned a Crystal Armament. Using this Armor, Lexi nullifies Axels clones, absorbing their energy to channel at Axel. Lexi uses this chance to plunge her arm into Axel's chest, to extract his heart, leaving Axel to gasp out before he collapses to the ground.

While Axel is passed out, he is flooded with mental images or memories that don't belong to him. To the surprise of Lexi, Axel begins to stand with the help of a clone. The clone takes their heart and plunges back into Axel's chest, causing him to regain consciousness. To the shock of Lexi, she begins to rush at Axel to finish him off, but before this can happen, a bright light knocks her back. Axel activates Eclipse Mode for the first time and the two fight again. The two eventually get stopped when Lexi's band members step in to break up the fight.

While they escape, Lexi makes a public announcement to the city, focusing their attention on Axel. She exposes the existence of Remnants and how they are connected to Axel, before she can finish, Axel passes out.

Axel comes to in his bed. An informant tells Axel to go see Jill to be briefed. When Axel goes to Jill, she welcomes him back and explains the situation with his heart. Jill states that Axel is being kept alive by the heart the clone gave him and that he doesn't have long to live. To survive, Axel needs to reclaim his heart from Lexi. And thus, Axel goes on an Adventure across Luminous City to regain his heart.

Commercialisation

In this section I will be detailing the commercial features of Skirmish. I will be touching on topics such as market research of similar games, target audience, business model, the marketing strategy, as well as the production costs for Skirmish.

Similar Games

Below I have comprised a list of games that are like Skirmish. By identifying games that are similar, we can locate players who would appreciate a comparable experience and may consequently be interested in playing Skirmish. All the games displayed are 3D action hack-n-slash games that feature flashy attacks and complex combat systems.



Bayonetta 1

Release Date:
29 October 2009



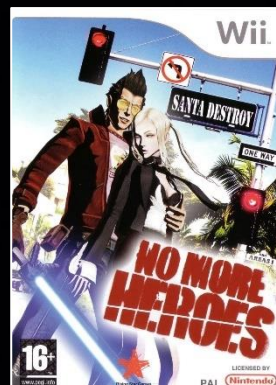
Kingdom Hearts 3

Release Date:
25 January 2019



Devil May Cry 5

Release Date:
8 March 2019



No More Heroes 1

Release Date:
6 December 2007



Ninja Gaiden 2

Release Date:
3 June 2008

Bayonetta 1



Platinum Games,
2009



Like Skirmish, Bayonetta features a unique mechanic that is activated by dodging. This ability is called witch time and allows the player to slow down time after the player successfully dodges an attack. Bayonetta also features a style rating system that ranks the player on their combat performance. While I was inspired by the execution of the mechanic, I didn't want the player to instantly gain a reward by dodging a single time, instead I wanted to reward the player when they dodge consecutive attacks successfully.

Kingdom Hearts 3

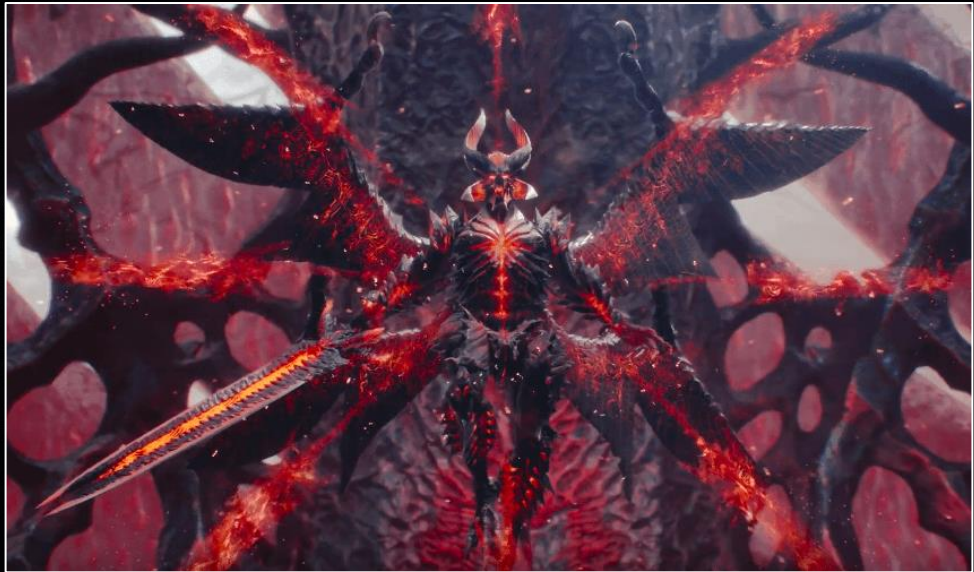


Square Enix, 2019



Like Skirmish's Eclipse Mode, Kingdom Hearts 3 incorporates a transformation system known as "Formchange". This system enables players to temporarily assume a powerful form, resulting in a shift in the player's move set. However, players can only activate "Formchange" once they have inflicted enough damage on enemies in a brief period. Those who take pleasure in playing with these powerful forms will discover that Eclipse Mode offers a similar and enjoyable experience to partake in.

Devil May Cry 5



Capcom, 2019

Devil May Cry 5 also features a transformation system that allows the player to transform into a devil for a short time. This system is called "Devil Trigger". Once the player has filled the Devil Trigger gauge, the player can become a devil, boosting their damage output, and allowing their health to regenerate over time.

Mentioned earlier, one of the main inspirations for the Style Rating System in Skirmish was Devil May Cry 5's grade system. Players will get graded by letters that reflect their performance in battle. This acts to promote skilled play in Devil May Cry 5 as it actively mocks people who play unskilfully. Players who enjoy transforming into powerful forms and like to be rated while they play will enjoy Skirmish.

No More Heroes 1



Grasshopper, 2012

No More Heroes 1 can be described as a “Boss Rush” game, where most of the gameplay time is spent fighting against boss characters. Each boss in NMH1 has their own unique combat style and feel. This design philosophy has influenced the design of bosses in Skirmish, especially the Band Member fights. Players who enjoy complex boss fights which test the players skill on the mechanics they’ve learnt so far, will enjoy Skirmish.

Ninja Gaiden 2



Team Ninja, 2008

Ninja Gaiden 2 features finisher attacks that have helped inspire the creation of Phase Slay attacks in Skirmish. In NG2, the player can execute a finisher attack once they have dealt enough damage to an enemy and has cut off one of their body parts. These finisher attacks are gory displays of graphic violence and aggression, which to most players amps up the fun of battles. These finisher attacks are something I wanted to capture in Skirmish, in the form of Phase Slay finishers. Players who enjoy brutalising and destroying their opponents in Ninja Gaiden 2 will enjoy Skirmish.

Target Audience

In terms of target audience for Skirmish, we are aiming for fans action games which include hack-n-slash games, shooter games, and

fighting games. My research has been influenced by the Gamer Motivation Model developed by Quantic Foundry. According to that model, Skirmish will appeal to players who are motivated by the three aspects identified.

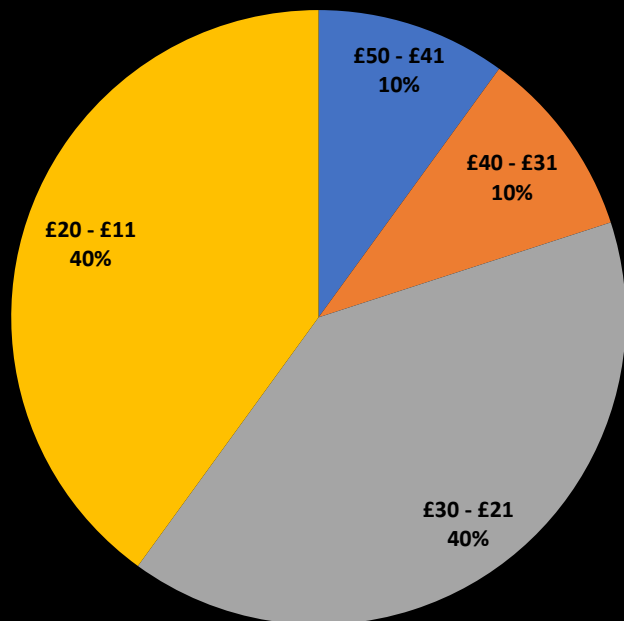


Players who are motivated by excitement will enjoy the thrill, fast-paced action, and adrenaline-pumping gameplay that Skirmish offers through features such as the Phase Summon and Phase Shifting.

Players who are motivated by destruction will enjoy the chaotic gameplay, the variety of weapons, and the ability to destroy enemies in Skirmish. The game offers the players the ability to experiment with different Phase Slay finishers, which are visually stunning and gory. The transformation for "Eclipse Mode" will also provide players with a near overpowered limited time form that is capable of decimating Remnants in mere seconds. This gives players who enjoy destruction an incentive to try Skirmish.

Players who are motivated by challenge will enjoy the gameplay that rewards their skill, the complex moves to master, and the difficult and demanding bosses and enemies in Skirmish. The game will constantly challenge the players with aggressive foes, a style meter that rates their usage of the Phase System and multi-phase bosses. The Band Member bosses are designed around the idea of difficulty and tactics, so players will who enjoy challenge will naturally enjoy Skirmish,

Average Price



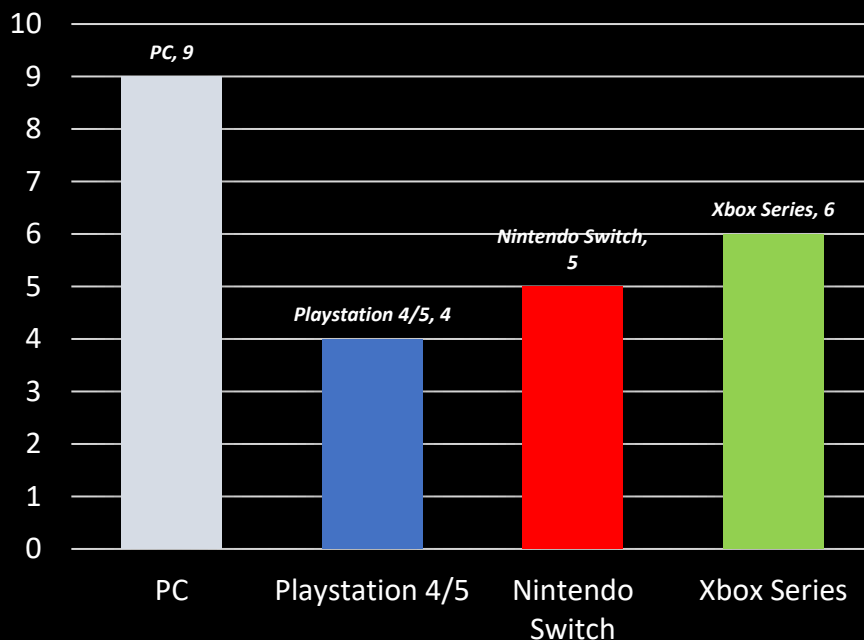
£50 - £41 £40 - £31 £30 - £21 £20 - £11

Games Researched:

- Bayonetta 3
- Bayonetta 1
- Devil May Cry 5
- Devil May Cry HD Collection
- Ninja Gaiden 2
- No More Heroes 3
- No More Heroes 1
- Kingdom Hearts 3
- Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance
- Assault Spy

Note: Data was collected from online marketplaces such as Steam, Epic Games Store (PC). Ninja Gaiden 2 was the exception where data was collected from Xbox Live Store.

Platform



PC Playstation 4/5 Nintendo Switch Xbox Series

Note: Platform data only includes games that are currently available on a digital store front.

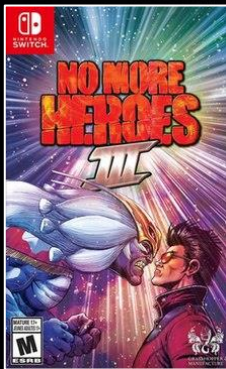
Skirmish Business Model

Price: £29.99

Business Model: Single Purchase Download
+ Updates + DLC

Platforms: PC, PS5 & Xbox Series X/S

Based on my research, I have developed a business model for Skirmish. The game will be priced at £29, which aligns with the pricing of similar games in the market (See Business Model Pie Chart). Skirmish will be offered as a single purchase download, with free updates and paid DLC introduced at a later stage.



No More Heroes 3

Price: £49.99

Business Model: Single
Purchase Download

Release Platform
(2021): Nintendo
Switch

Ported (2022): PS4,



Bayonetta 3

Price: £49.99

Business Model: Single
Purchase Download

Release Platform:
Nintendo Switch (2022)



Devil May Cry 5

Price: £49.99

Business Model: Single
Purchase Download + Updates
+ DLC.

Release Platform (2019): PS4,
Xbox One, Windows

Ported (2020): PS5, Xbox Series
X/S

ggest of the three games, No More Heroes 3, Bayonetta 3 and Devil May Cry 5, was released at £49.99 with 2 out of the 3 games releasing onto to the switch first. We will be targeting the PC, PS5 and Xbox Series X/S as these platforms are platforms that many hack-n-slash games release on

Marketing

I've also devised a strategy regarding the marketing of Skirmish.

Substance

Phase System

Bosses

Enemies

Style

The Aesthetic

The World

The Characters

When marketing a game, we approach it two different ways, we can focus on style or substance. Style refers to the narrative, theming, or aesthetic features of a game. Substance refers to the mechanical meat of the game. In gaming today, gamers respond positively to marketing that focuses on substance rather than style.



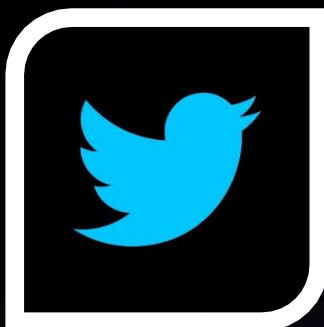
Long-Form Content

- **1st Trailer: Gameplay Trailer**
 - Focus on showing off the phase system.
- **2nd Trailer: In-Universe Band Trailer**
 - Showcase In-universe band and Luminous City
- **3rd Trailer: Overview Trailer**
 - Gameplay, Bosses, Characters.



Short-Form Content

- **Combo Videos**
 - Showcase quick gameplay.
- **Enemy Trailers**
 - Show different types of enemies.
- **Character Trailers**
 - Short Introductions



Community Interaction

- **Fan Q&A**
 - Cultivate Fanbase
- **Development Updates**
 - Show transparency.
- **Influencer Marketing**
 - Spread the word.

The three different platforms we will be focusing on is YouTube, TikTok and Twitter. We will use YouTube to post long-form content, such as gameplay and overview trailers. TikTok will be used to post short-form content, such as combo videos to showcase gameplay and character-introduction trailers. Finally, we will use TikTok to build community interaction, post development updates, and answer fan questions.

Production Costs

In section I will be detailing the approximate costs to develop and produce Skirmish. To work out the costs, I will be estimating the rough development time of Skirmish by researching the development time of similar games.

Bayonetta 1: 3 years.

Devil May Cry 5: 4 years.

Ninja Gaiden 2: 3 years.

No More Heroes 1: 3 years.

Most of the similar games I've researched have taken an average of 3.25 years. For the sake of simplicity, let's estimate the cost of development for 3 years.

Production Timeline

To estimate the cost of development of Skirmish, the timeline involving the stages of development needs to be created. The stages included will be, planning, pre-production, production, testing and launch. Here is a rough estimate for the length of each stage in months.

- Planning: 3 months
- Pre-production: 9 months
- Production: 15 months
- Testing: 3 months

Planning Costs

Staff	Amount	Salary per Hour	Work Hours per Week	Work Weeks	Total Cost
Designer	1	£20	30	12	£7200

Total Cost: £7200

Pre-Production + Production Costs

Staff	Amount	Salary per Hour	Work Hours per Week	Work Weeks	Total Cost
Designer	3	£20	30	135	£243,000
Programmers	5	£22	30	135	£445,000
3D Artists	4	£20	30	135	£324,000
2D Artists	4	£17	30	135	£275,400
Animators	5	£17	30	135	£344,250
Composers	4	£19	30	135	£307,800

Total Cost: £1,939,450

Testing

Staff	Amount	Salary per Hour	Work Hours per Week	Work Weeks	Total Cost
Testers	3	£16	30	12	£17,280
Programmers	5	£22	30	12	£39,600

Total Cost: £56,880

Total Rough Development Cost

Rough Development Cost:
£2,003,530

Glossary

Glossary	
Remnants	Main enemies of Skirmish
Special Grade Remnant	A powerful Remnant variant this is usually a boss encounter.
Band Member	Humanoid bosses with similar abilities to the player.
Light Combo	A series of Light Attacks in a chain.
Heavy Combo	A series of Heavy Attacks in a chain.
Phase System	Core mechanic that allows the player to summon and manipulate clones.
Phase Energy	Energy needed to use the Phase System.
Phase Bar	The Ui element that shows Phase Energy.
Phase Clone	A spectral copy of the player that can attack Remnants.
Phase Summon	A move that allows the player to summon a Phase Clone, at the cost of Phase Energy. Player press and holds (Left Trigger)
Advanced Summon	A move that allows the player to summon a Phase Clone when the player has successfully dodged an enemy attack. Player needs to press an attack button during the dodge window.
Phase Vision	A move that changes the players viewpoint to a 1 st person perspective. Allows the use of Vision Abilities.
Phase Shift	A vision ability. Allows teleportation to clone.
Phase Switch	A vision ability. Allows teleportation to clone and teleports clone to players old location.
Phase Target	A vision ability. Commands an active clone to target an enemy for attacking.
Phased	A state that enemies can enter when a player or clone shifts near them
Phased Energy	Energy that is built up when either the player or clone attack an enemy that is phased
Phased Bar	Ui element showing the Phased energy.
Break	The act of a Remnant getting broken due to an enemy being completely Phased. Generates Crystal Shards on hit
Crystal Shard	Items that the player or clone can pick up from the ground when they have Broken a remnant.
Clone Type	Type of clone based on the weapon the player had equipped prior to summoning.
Eclipse Mode	A special form the player can enter, by fusing with any active clone with 100% Sync
Eclipse Mode Forms	Specific form of Eclipse Mode based on the Clone type the player has fused with.
Aggravated	A state that enemies can enter that boosts their power and aggression.

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