ROGUE PACIFIST
Game Design Document
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1. *Project Description*

1.1. What is Rogue Pacifist?

Ever wanted to play a game without hurting the enemies directly? Then Rogue Pacifist is the game for you! Use your weapons to push enemies into hazards and traps, since your weapons will not deal any damage to them. Clear your way through the levels to end the occupation of your village in the most peaceful way action videogames can offer for you.

Rogue Pacifist, as describes in the pitch, is an action game where an extra step is added between the shooting and the killing. The player has to, with help of their arsenal, push the enemies or objects into the hazards in order to kill them and progress further into the game.

1.2. Unique Selling Points

Rogue Pacifist has a very unique selling point. Where most games in the same genre focus a lot on killing enemies with direct player input, this game does it indirectly. In most cases, the player can kill the enemies by shooting them with their own weapons and killing them once enough damage is dealt. In Rogue Pacifist, the player kills enemies by shooting them into hazards or traps that deal the damage for them. The game lets players knock back enemies into these dangers by positioning themselves in the correct way.
The uniqueness of the game makes it so the player has to think a step further then just 'if I hit the enemy enough, it will die'. It forces the player to consider on what happens after shooting an enemy and predicting where that enemy will go.

The name of the game, Rogue Pacifist, also refers to this unique selling point.

1.3. Design Pillars

<u>Action</u> – the player navigates through levels encountering various enemies to defeat by shooting them into hazards.

<u>Knockback</u> – the game revolves around pushing enemies or objects around the level and ultimately progress through the game. Without knockback, the game wouldn't have a point in existence.

1.4. Core Gameplay

The core gameplay of Rogue Pacifist centres on a unique knockback mechanic.The player needs to use the knockback in order to push the enemies into the hazards and kill them.

Played in third person, the players travers through a 3D stylized environment encountering different enemies in a lot of different levels. The character is bound to the ground, unable to jump. The game is split in three chapters, each chapter having 9 levels, for a total of 27 levels. Each level introduces new elements or combinations of the core mechanic such as moving hazards, shooting hazards, or a mix of both, to make sure that every level feels distinct and challenging!

The player has an arsenal of weapons that can be expanded by playing through the game. The weapons cannot damage the enemy directly, making the player dependent on the hazards and environment. Throughout the game, the player will pick up new weapons to play around with and learn the ins and outs of it.

The game is quite chaotic and requires some strategy and thinking. The player only has three lives per level and cannot heal throughout it. After those three lives are gone, the player has to restart the level.

At the end of the chapters is a big boss fight in which the player's knowledge is tested. The big bosses are complex in their move set and are a direct challenge to the player.

2. Target Audience And Context

Rogue Pacifist is for players who like action games. Even though the game sounds quite innocent, there is some violence involved as well as graphic violence. The game can be considered as humorous and non-serious, since the two words in the title already contradict each other. So Rogue Pacifist targets players who like action games and prefer to play a game with a more silly tone in nature then serious.

The game doesn't require a lot of skill from the player. With a low skill floor and high skill ceiling, Rogue Pacifist can attract a broad audience of players. There isn't a specific age range that the game targets to, but the game will be 12+.

Rogue Pacifist can contain graphic violence so is not suitable for all audiences. Blood will be seen when enemies get hurt and bodies stay on the ground after they are defeated. The quite cartoony nature of the art style can mask this violence quite well and even write it of as funny or amusing. Just to be safe and protect the innocent children, we will not market our game towards them.

3. Story

3.1. Plot

During the Great War 25 years ago, the coalition between the Iron Mountains, the Desert Kingdom and the Sun Empire fought against the alliance of the Deep Ocean Tribe, The Northern World, Silent Peaks and the Citadel on our grounds, Mighty Meadows. The two alliances were fighting for control of our fertile lands. The Sun Empire together with the Desert Kingdom and the Iron Mountains, ultimately ended up winning the War. The Might Meadows got split in three and fell under ruthless rule of the neighboring powers. Exploitation and suppression plagues the once peaceful and calm lands.

Border outposts were established and military presence was all around. The Great War victors were enjoying their new territories, while the losers had to deal with the aftermath. And so the Might Meadows, once known for being peaceful and kind, became a military playground.

For 25 years, our village endured these horrors, but enough is enough. There is revolution in the air across the occupied lands, but we would need one catalyzer to set it in action.
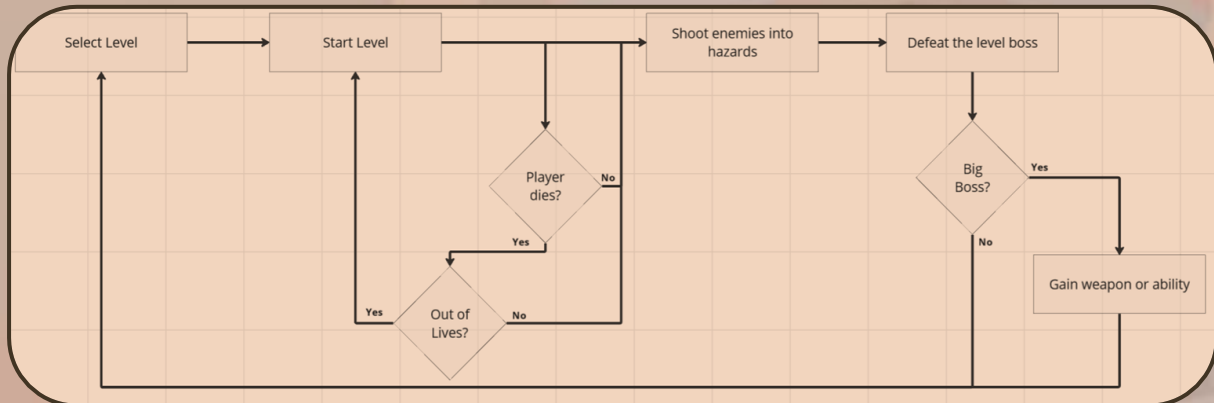
3.2. Player

The player will be the one to start the revolution. The story begins with the first stage, where the player breaches an outpost of the Desert Kingdom. Since the inhabitants of the Meadows are known to be quite peaceful, the breach happens in a peaceful way (at least for the player). The player takes the role of Isa, the Meadows girl that invades the outposts and takes down their soldiers. As the player progresses, becomes stronger and encounters more important enemies, hints of the revolution happening will be spread. When the player breaches further into the occupied lands, the revolution will follow and take care of the other outposts that are behind the player.

Isa is a young, rebellious girl with a good sense of justice. She is very energetic and fights her fights in her way. She wears clothes that are typical to her homeland, the Mighty Meadows and carries weapons that don't deal damage, but sure are helpful into making progress.

4. Gameplay

4.1. Gameplay Loop

The gameplay loop of Rogue Pacifist is quite simple. The player chooses a level to play (this will usually be the level after the level they just completed). The player then plays through the levels and pushes the enemies to their death. After that, the player can go to the next level. The player has three lives, if the player runs out of lives, it has to restart the level. If the boss at the end is a big boss (the third and ninth level of each chapter) the player gains a new weapon or ability on defeating it.

4.2. Main Mechanic

The player can use its weapons to push back enemies into hazards. Important to note is that all the weapons throughout the game can never directly deal damage to an enemy. Every weapons is thus supposed to push the enemies in certain directions, apart from some cases which will be discussed later.

The hazards in the level will always be the cause of death for the enemies. They have to be present in the levels and be the main focus of the level design. This is further discussed in the next paragraph.

4.3. Level Design

The game is divided into three chapters, each containing nine levels. The levels should roughly take about 5 to 10 minutes to complete for a player of average skill. To finish a level, the player has to beat the final boss at the end of each level. Finishing a level is required to unlock the next level. The player beats the chapter if the final boss of that chapter is defeated, located in the last level of said chapter.
The first few levels teaches the player to core of Rogue Pacifist and are thus completed faster.

4.4. Layout

The levels are always a more or less straight line. The camera is positioned so the player is forced to look forward and makes its way to the end of the level. Each level is divided into rooms. The rooms are distinct from each other, having different enemies or different hazards. In some cases, the rooms are separated by a door that can only be opened if all the enemies of that room are defeated. The boss room and the end of the level is always separated by a door, meaning the player has to defeat the boss in order to continue.

4.5. Hazards

The main focus of the levels are the hazards. They are the most important part, seeing that they are the crucial component of clearing a level. The hazards can be, dependent on the chapter and setting, quite different. The first few levels introduce the normal hazards of spikes and lava. Later, the hazards can be turrets, void, wild animals, traps, friendly prisoners, ...

4.6. Progression

As the player completes more levels, the player can unlock more weapons. The weapons can be given at the end of some boss fights. The level after that usually focuses on introducing the weapons mechanics. The weapons can only be unlocked from completing the levels and in no other ways. Once obtained, the weapons will always be available in the player's arsenal.

Level progression

The player has three lives in total. Once those lives are gone, the player has to restart the level from scratch. Once a level is completed, it will always stay completed and the next level will open up. Progressing in the levels will come with increased difficulty and story progression.

4.7.   Weapons and Abilities

The player can make use of a variety of weapons and abilities. There are two slots available, a weapon slot and an ability slot. The player can cycle through their unlocked arsenal, but will always have only one ability and one weapon active at the same time.

Crossbow	Default – Weapon	Shoots an arrow that pushes enemies back. The player can shoot three times before needing to reload the crossbow. This is the main attack.
Explosion	Default – Ability	Player can hold a button to charge an explosion that pushes back enemies in a certain radius. Has a cooldown.
Blunt Dagger	Ch.1.Lvl3 – Weapon	Can be thrown towards enemies. The dagger slows them down, making them an easier target.
Anti Newton	Ch1. Lvl9 – Ability	Launches enemies upward. Enemies take damage when they fall back onto the ground, stunning them for a short while. Has a cooldown.
Pew Pew Bow	Ch2.Lvl3 – Weapon	Upon hit will knock back the enemy and stuns them for a short time. Has one arrow at the time.
Magic	Ch2.Lvl9 - Ability	Summons three homing projectiles. A hit enemy will take more knockback for a short time. Has a cooldown.
Flagpole	Ch3.Lvl3 – Weapon	Can be swung around. Hit enemies will be pushed away with great force. If the enemy hits a wall, it will take damage.
Shield	Ch3.Lvl9 – Ability	All incoming knockback gets reflected towards the enemies for a short time. Has a cooldown.

4.8.   Enemies

There are a variety of enemies in the game. They can be divided into three categories: melee, ranged and boss. The melee enemies need to get close to the player in order to hurt them. They usually just charge towards the player, making their paths predictable. Melee enemies are quite though and take medium knockback. The ranged enemies can hurt the player from a certain distance. They are quite vulnerable and take a lot of knockback. When the player approaches, they reposition themselves to stay outside of a certain range. The bosses are enemies that are quite thought to deal with. They require clever use of the object. Bosses are really though and take little knockback. The bosses at the end of the chapters are a lot stronger and more complex then the bosses in the rest of the chapter. Their fights can introduce unique mechanics.

4.9. Player

Personality

As established in the story, the player plays as Isa the rogue pacifist. The movements of the player character feels very fluent and energetic. This translates in the animations of the character, which are exaggerated movements based on what happens.
Isa also reflects the nature of the game. As explained before, Isa is a pacifist that doesn't directly hurt people. This cynical tone is reflected in her model always smiling and being innocent.

Abilities

The player can move in 2 axis, horizontal and vertical. The player cannot jump, but has a dash. The dash shortly give extra momentum in the direction the player was moving. The dash can be used to outrun enemies and quickly reposition themself. Has a short cooldown.

4.10. Camera

The default position of the camera is positioned at ¾ behind the player. This camera angle forces the player to look into the direction of the end of the level, having an intuitive feeling of moving forward. This camera angle stays true for most of the game and only changes under one condition. When the last enemy in a room gets cleared, the camera lerps to a close-up of the enemy's corpse and slows down time. After about 2 seconds, the camera lerps back to its original position.

There is also some screenshake present in the game. A small screenshake can be noticed when the player shoots the main attack. When the player uses its ability, depending on what the ability is, can also cause some light to heavy screenshake.

In some cases, like hitting an enemy with the explosion ability, the game will freeze for a split second. This is called freeze frame and add to the feel of the game.

4.11. Controller

Left joystick: player move (1)

Right joystick: aim (2)

A: dash (3)

B: reload (4)

X: switch abilities (5)

Y: switch weapons (6)

Left Trigger / Left Button: use equipped ability (7)

Right Trigger / Right Button: use equipped weapon (8)

5. Replayability

Rogue Pacifist is a linear experience. Once a level has been completed, players can play it again but the level won't change layout or enemies. So the replayability in Rogue Pacifist doesn't come from the levels themselves but from the challenges the game has.

The game has several challenges per level that the player can attempt to complete. Completing a challenge doesn't give any additional rewards or progression. They just exist for players that want to replay the game or improve their skill.
Every level has three challenges, an easy challenge, medium challenge and a hard one. Challenges can repeat over several levels to reduce the scope and complexity of the game. The challenges can be influenced by the level layout or content.

A example for a level with challenges can be:

- Don't use any abilities (easy)
- Don't lose a single heart (medium)
- Complete the level in under 5 minutes (hard)

By not giving any advantages or progression for completing them, the challenges feel like they are optional and not mandatory. In this way the game doesn't force the player to go back and replay the levels until they get the achievement.

This challenge system gives replayability to the game. Players can replay the levels until their skill is good enough to complete the level. By making this optional, the player also doesn't feel forced to complete them. Apart from these challenges, the game doesn't offer much replay value.

6. Art Design

6.1.   Setting

The setting of the game is in a fantasy medieval alternative world. The world has different nations that have different characteristics, similar the Middle Earth (Lord of The Rings). The locations that the player will go through are dependent on the chapters. The first chapter has a more desert theme, corresponding to the Desert Kingdom. The second chapter will have more mountainous and rough vibes, corresponding to the Iron Mountains. The last chapter will have a lot of wealth, with structures of gold and marble, corresponding to the Sun Empire. The world we are in does have a limited amount of magic, explaining where the abilities come from.

| Chapter 1 - Desert Kingdom | Chapter 2 - Iron Mountains | Chapter 3 - Sun Empire |

6.2.   Art

The art features medium to bright colors, giving the impression that this is a light hearted game. The art style is cartoony, with a lot of rounded corners and 'cute' assets. This art style adds to the joke of Rogue Pacifist. It seems innocent on the surface with even having 'pacifist' in the title. The player will quickly realize that this is not the case. When enemies get hurt, they visible drop blood (same with player) and leave bloodstains on the floor.

The art style stays consistent throughout the entire game. It should always feel like a very silly game.

6.3.   UI

The UI of the game reflects the art style of the 3D assets. They have rounded corners and follow the same color palette as the main part. The colors are a bit brighter to clearly separate the game with the UI.

7. Music And Sound

7.1.   Music

The music will be inspired by some [(dark) medieval music](#), since this is about the time period that this universe is in at the moment. Every level will have its own dedicated music track. The music of the levels will be coherent dependent on the chapter. The first chapter will have more desert vibes to it, while the second chapter will have more industrial vibes. The third chapter will have more grand music, being the final chapter of the game.

7.2.   Sound

The sound effects will be pretty basic. They are supposed to enhance the gameplay by providing support in the player feedback. The explosion for example should feel powerful, while the main attack should feel less powerful. This is where the sound effects can help a lot.