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# Game Overview

## Concept

A 3rd person action role-playing game centered around Philippine mythology. While there have been a plethora of games made around the mythologies of certain cultures, these tend to focus on Greek, Norse, Egyptian and to a lesser degree Chinese and Japanese. Games such as the Witcher, God of War, and Darksiders, are excellent proof of concepts for the model of adapting established real-world mythologies for the purpose of creating compelling fantasy worlds, stories, characters and gameplay.

Shaman will utilize similar principles for this vertical slice, with heavy reliance on research into Philippine culture and mythology to inform design and art decisions. We are not aiming to make a perfectly historically/culturally accurate representation however, more of an interpretation, similar to the examples discussed above. As such, final decisions will always prioritise what fits the rest of the game best over what is ‘accurate’.

## Narrative

The player will embody the character Alejandro Del Rosario, a half Filipino half Spanish male in his 20s, who was taken from his Filipino mother and village as a child and raised as a Spanish conquistador soldier. Alejandro was on a naval mission to the Philippines when his ship was wrecked off the coast, and he eventually washed ashore, unconscious. Some locals who witnessed the shipwreck found him and carried him to the safety of their camp in the forest, where he slowly recovered.

The gameplay will begin in the forest with the player controlling Alejandro as he regains consciousness, and the player will be able to interact with the natives who rescued them to find out about the events leading to their current situation. The player will discover that the natives are from a nearby village but have been forced to abandon their homes due to attacks by a horrific creature called a Tik Tik. The villagers beseech Alejandro for help ridding them of it, as he has the tribal tattoo of a powerful shaman, and they assume he was sent to save them, as an answer to their prayers.

Alejandro will help the villagers reclaim their home from the creature, learning about his Filipino and Shamanistic heritage in the process and unlocking his innate shaman powers. After multiple encounters with the Tik Tik, culminating in a desperate fight to the death, Alejandro slays the creature using a combination of his martial skill and newly learned shaman powers.

The villagers thank him, and the village elder notices that his shaman tattoo is the same as their Babaylan’s (head shaman). This is no coincidence and means that Alejandro is a direct descendant of the Babaylan, i.e. she is his long-lost mother! When the Tik Tik initially attacked the village, she fought it off and then went to close the rift it appeared from, to prevent more monsters coming through. She was only able to close it from the inside however, trapping herself in the spirit realm.

Armed with this knowledge and his new powers, Alejandro finds the rift and enters the spirit realm to rescue his mother. End demo.

## Objectives

* Deliver a compelling 3rd person action experience involving fun abilities and a meaningful skill tree, and enjoyable, fluid combat basics.
* Deliver a compelling story with interesting characters.
* Capture the feel and atmosphere of a dark fantasy forest setting in the colonial era.
* Fight against a unique and powerful monster from Philippine mythology.

## Gameplay Aesthetics

* **Narrative –** The player will ideally be drawn into the story, and actively want to find out more about the world, characters, and events. This curiosity will be facilitated by rich dialogue and lore, and by aligning the player and character motivations as much as possible.
* **Fantasy –** The player should be able to become easily immersed in the fantasy of being a conquistador soldier with fantastical powers, chasing lost knowledge about their own background.
* **Challenge –** The boss fight should be challenging, likely requiring multiple attempts, and active learning and adaptation by the player to overcome. Defeating the boss should give the player a sense of achievement and satisfaction.

## Art Style & Visual Aesthetic

The narrative and world of Shaman will have predominantly serious and dark tones, and we want the art style to reflect this. Given the scope of the project, trying to accomplish anything approaching hyper realism is likely unviable, so we will instead be using stylized realism leaning towards realism. The art style and aesthetic will be further documented in the Art Bible (separate document).

## Gameplay Features

### Interaction

The player will be able to interact with certain objects and characters in the environment. Interacting with objects can provide options such as collecting them, inspecting them or using them. Interacting with characters will open a dialogue screen which allows the player to talk to NPCs via text options.

### Skill Tree

Shaman will feature a skill tree with two alternate branches, each offering powerful upgrades to the character. The Shamanism branch will feature more defensive bonuses, while the Theomancy branch will be more offensive in nature. The player will be able to unlock the full tree by the time they face the final encounter, and bring all the power contained in it to bear against the Tik Tik.

### 3rd Person Action

The player will have access to basic melee and ranged attacks, a defensive dodge, an advanced defensive ability and an advanced offensive ability to use in combat encounters. Encounters will be purely single target, with the player facing off against a single monstrous and fearsome enemy multiple times. The enemy will display different behaviours during each encounter to keep the player interested and attentive.

## Target Market

The game is aimed around mature audiences (15 years+) who own aPC. According to the 2020 research data of the Entertainment Software Association (ESA):

· Average gamer is 35- 44 years of age, 41% of gamers are women and 59% are male

· 49% of households own a PC

· Gamers age 18 or older represent the majority of gamers, more than 70%

Interesting story/premise is one of the factors influencing decisions to buy a video game. This factor shows that 59% of gamers consider this for buying a game. 65% of gamers also play with friends; this might not be a multiplayer game, but gamers can compare, for example, what they did with other people to see how they went about beating the tiktik. Also, sharing their thoughts with each other on the story as well as discovering an unfamiliar mythology that baffles their imagination.

Based on the data, the game will aim for people who are interested in a 3D action, adventure RPG experience revolving around myth and fantasy as well as a strong immersive story.

## Project Scope

The project is aimed in creating a vertical slice/demo of a game to showcase the abilities and talents of its team members to put into their portfolio

### Target Platforms

Windows PC.

### Software, Tools, Resources

* Unity 2019.3.6f1 (URP)
* Visual Studio (C#)
* Trello
* Audacity
* Soundsnap
* Zapsplat
* ZBrush
* Substance (Painter, Designer)
* Photoshop 2019
* Maya
* Mixamo

### Project Schedule & Deliverables

See Project Schedule and Asset List (separate documents).

# Gameplay

## Game Steps

1. Game start – players regain consciousness in a dense Philippine jungle/forest. They are in a camp and there are some natives nearby. The natives tell the player the following information when they wake up:

● Your ship was wrecked in a storm, you are the only survivor.

● They carried you from the beach to their forest camp and helped you recover.

● There is a dangerous creature prowling the forest, it drove them from their village.

● They believe Alejandro was sent to them to help in answer to their prayers, as he has the beginnings of a tattoo signifying he is a powerful shaman. (If he wants to find out more he should seek out the village Elder etc.)

1. Player progresses further into the forest and encounters a dead villager with strange wounds on the body, claw marks etc.
2. Player is ambushed by the Tik Tik for the first time. After a short fight it flees to regenerate.
3. Player continues along the path and finds some living villagers around a campfire. Including the village elder (a very old, wise lady).
4. The player can converse with these characters and the elder to learn more about the Tik Tik, and general context for what is going on in the area (including the following key points):

● A few days ago a rift to the spirit realm opened mysteriously in the nearby Balete tree (spirit tree).

● The Tik Tik emerged from the rift and attacked the village.

● The Babaylan (head shaman) of the village drove it away, injuring it in the process (hence it having a broken wing), but it severely drained the Babaylans power, and she knew she would not be able to win another fight against the Tik Tik.

● Knowing this she went to the rift to try and seal it, so that the Tik Tik would weaken and no more creatures would come through.

● She could not seal the rift from the ‘outside’, so she entered the rift and closed it from within, trapping herself in the spirit realm to try and protect her people.

● The Elder also tells Alejandro more about his shamanistic/Filipino heritage, and teaches him to harness his powers (unlocks the Earth Shield Skill).

1. Player continues and is attacked by the Tik Tik a second time. After a short fight it flees to regenerate.
2. Player continues and encounters a Filipino priest who is tending to some wounded villagers. He tells the player more about the Tik Tik and reveals some strengths, weaknesses, behaviours. (eg. It’s tendency to run away and regenerate when wounded).

● He tells the player that the Tik Tik will be cautious now, and to lure it out to fight they must find an item/items (e.g. certain herbs which can be used to make a concoction), and bring them to him. He can use them to make the item.

● The priest will also tell the player more about their Theomancy (holy) abilities and give them the final upgrade point.

1. The player searches for the required item down an offshoot/s from the main path, once they’ve found it they proceed back to the priest, who helps the player prepare the final item.
2. Armed with the knowledge and new powers they have gained; the player continues into the abandoned village where the Tik Tik has made its home, and uses the item to lure the Tik Tik out, and the Tik Tik boss fight ensues.
3. After the player defeats the Tik Tik, the villagers return to their village to rebuild. A dialogue ensues (with the elder) where the following points will be covered:

● She thanks Alejandro for his help.

● She notices that your shaman tattoo has grown (it is tied to the skill tree and more of it is revealed as the player levels up - they will be max level at this point) and that it is the same as their Babaylans tattoo (who went into the spirit rift).

● This means that Alejandro is a descendant of the Babaylan, and they realise it must be his mother!

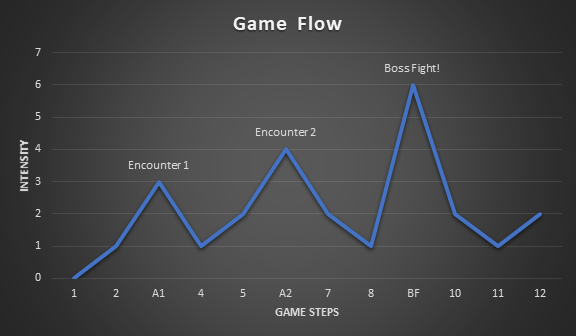
● Alejandro insists they tell him where the Balete tree is and tell him how to open the rift so he can rescue his mother.

1. The player leaves the village and heads toward the balete tree.
2. The player reaches the balete tree, opens the rift and steps inside, and as the screen fades out menacing, demonic laughter sounds out. (As a stretch goal a Tikbalang may be guarding the tree that the player can either fight(extreme stretch) or talk to.)

END GAME

## Game Flow

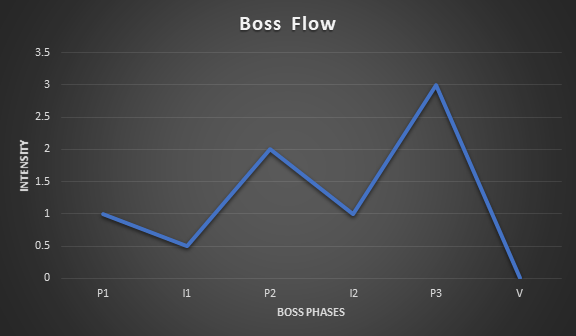
The gameplay flow of shaman will follow a pattern of slowly building intensity towards each encounter, a spike of intensity during each encounter, and a dip in intensity once the encounter has been overcome to allow the player to rest and recharge before starting to build the intensity back up towards the next encounter (See *Game Flow* chartbelow). For the purposes of this section we will define intensity as the mental load placed on the player by the game at a given point.



The final boss fight will follow a similar model (see *Boss Flow* chart below), with phase one being relatively low intensity and not requiring too much of the player. This allows the player to acclimatise, and become familiar with the area, their own toolkit (if they’re aren’t by this point), and the basics of the Tik Tik’s size, behaviour and movement. Once a phase transition occurs an intermission is triggered, which will drop the intensity briefly and allow the player a breather before the next phase begins.

Each phase will be progressively more intense than the last, with increases to the boss’s damage output and overall animation speed, as well as modifications to it’s behaviour. As the intensity increases, more mental attention is required of the player. They will need to plan and react faster, and will be under increased stress as their resources diminish.

This model of dropping and raising intensity with an overall upwards trend has been shown to be effective at engaging players in a sustainable state of flow. As they learn the game systems and improve at utilising them, higher intensity is required to ensure the challenge of the game remains at an appropriate level for the player.



# Mechanics

## Global Mechanics

### Stagger

* All combat actors are subject to the stagger mechanic. Currently this includes the Tik Tik enemy, and the Player character.
* The stagger system will keep track of total damage received by combat actors.
* Once damage received by an actor reaches a certain threshold, e.g. 10% of the actor’s maximum health, a stagger will trigger.
* If an actor receives no damage for X seconds, their stagger tracking will clear to zero.
* When a stagger is triggered, the actor’s current action will be immediately interrupted, and further actions/inputs will be blocked for the duration of the stagger. The actor will be forced into a stationary state and their stagger animation will play.
* At the end of the stagger animation, inputs and actions will resume as normal.

## Player Mechanics

### Melee Attacks (Left Mouse Click)

* Melee attack 1 – sword slash right to left, assign damage to enemies with a trigger box on the weapon.
* Melee attack 2 – sword slash left to right, assign damage to enemies with a trigger box on the weapon.
* Attacks can chain together from 1-2-1-2 etc if the attack button is used again within a certain window of the previous swing.
* Attacks can be called as unity events and the relevant functions can be called from keyframe events in the animations.

### Ranged Attack (Right Mouse Click)

* Basic ranged attack – fireball. Hold right click to charge up a fireball, if right click is released before fully charged, cancel attack. If right click is released on or after fully charged, throw a projectile forward that assigns damage on contact with an enemy.
* Attacks can be called as unity events and the relevant functions can be called from keyframe events in the animations.

### Skills

* The player will have inherent access to two skills, an earth shield and a weapon imbue.
* The player will be able to upgrade these skills via a skill tree, each skill will have its own ‘branch’ on the skill tree.
* An upgrade point will be awarded when the player levels up.
* The player can gain experience to level up by completing combat encounters, and by discovering new information that is entered into the journal (which can be discovered by interacting with the environment and NPCs).
* Skill points may also be awarded as a result of specific interactions (eg. completing a certain interaction during NPC dialogue).
* All skills will be available before the final encounter with the Tik Tik.

#### Shaman Branch

##### Earth shield (Q)

Base ability: protects the player with a barrier that absorbs <damage> for <time>. Deactivates if maximum damage is absorbed or if the duration expires.

Upgrade 1 – while the shield is active, heal the player for <health> per <second>.

Upgrade 2 – If an enemy strikes the barrier with an attack it will take damage and receive a debuff for <seconds> that reduces the damage they deal by <percent>.

#### Theomancy Branch

##### Divine Fury (E)

Base ability: imbues sword with holy light and causes attacks to deal extra <percent> damage.

Upgrade 1 – Normal melee attacks now project a wave forward that acts like a projectile and deals <damage> on contact with an enemy.

Upgrade 2 – attacks made while the weapon is imbued now also apply a holy burn to the enemy for <seconds> that deals <damage> per second.

### Resources

* Health float value. If health becomes <= 0 player dies. Death: can be called as a unity function, relevant functions will be called from the inspector in the editor.
* Mana (float value)
* Cooldowns (float value)

### Movement (WASD)

* WASD 3rd person standard movement
* No jumping
* No crouching

### Interact (F)

* Players will be able to interact with certain parts of the environment (clues, NPCs) with a button press (F) while near and looking at the target object/NPC.

### Pause (ESC)

* Pressing escape will pause the game and bring up a pause menu.

### Checkpoints

* Before each encounter (ambush 1, ambush 2, boss fight) a checkpoint will be automatically activated that preserves the players progress up until that point in the event of death.
* If the player dies during an encounter they will have the option to reload from the last activated checkpoint.

### Dialogue

* NPCs can be interactable. Interacting with an NPC will bring up the dialogue screen. While a dialogue screen is open the players regular inputs are blocked, and they will be limited to selecting dialogue choices until the dialogue screen has been exited.
* The dialogue screen will contain a number of dialogue / interaction choices for the player to choose from.
* When the player clicks a choice, the NPC will give a relevant predetermined response, which the player will then have another set of choices to respond with.

## Controls Overview

# Interface

## HUD Elements

The HUD will be minimalist and as unobtrusive as possible while still delivering key information clearly. We want the player’s main focus to be on the environment and characters in it to maximise immersion and atmospheric effect. The combat relevant HUD elements will likely only be visible during combat encounters, or when the player uses an ability, attack, or takes damage.

### Player Health

Tracks and displays the player’s health resource. Will be displayed using a fill image in the form of either a bar, circle, or other icon.

### Enemy Health

Tracks and displays the Tik Tik’s health resource. Will be displayed using a fill image in the form of a bar.

### Player Resource

Tracks and displays the player’s ability resource (mana/energy/stamina - tbd). Will be displayed using a fill image in the form of either a bar, circle, or other icon.

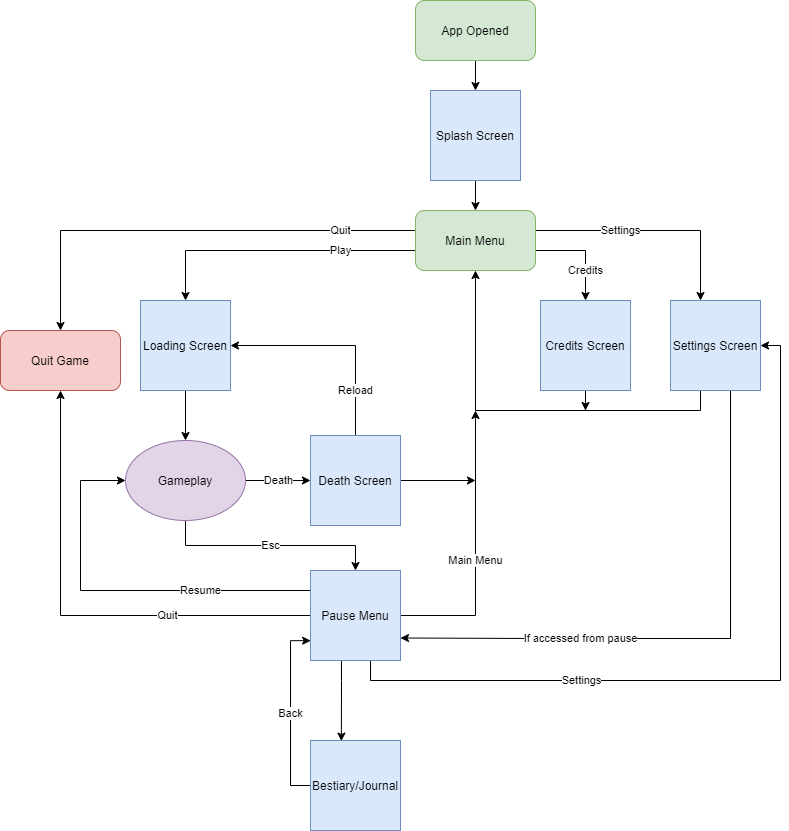
### Ability Icons

Each of the player’s two abilities will have HUD icons that track and display their usability. These will utilise cooldown sweeps, alpha modifications, text displaying the control hotkey for the ability, and effects to denote the current level of usability.

### Dialogue/Inspection

When the player interacts with an interactable object or NPC, the regular HUD will be replaced with the interaction HUD. This will feature a text description area where predetermined information will be delivered to the player, and one or more text options that the player can click in order to proceed with the interaction.

## Menus & Screens



### Splash Screen

A simple splash screen with the team logo that is shown when the app is launched.

### Main Menu

Contains buttons allowing navigation to the credits and settings screens, the quit game button and the start game button.

### Credits Screen

Screen containing scrolling credits. Any input on this screen will return to the main menu. If the credit roll finishes, return to the main menu.

### Settings Screen

Will contain options for audio adjustment, limited graphical adjustment, and if time allows, keybind remapping.

### Pause Menu

Contains buttons for: Quitting the game, accessing the journal, accessing settings, accessing main menu.

### Death Screen

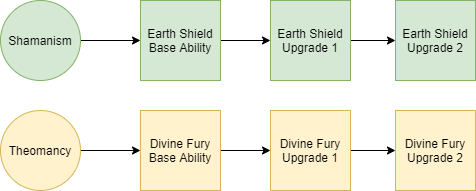
Contains buttons for: Reloading latest checkpoint, accessing main menu.

### Skill Tree

The skill tree will feature 2 branches, as specified in [Skills](#_heading=h.qhujf2qnth2k). Each branch will have linear progression, learning the previous node is a prerequisite to unlock the next node. The two branches will not directly interact. The skill tree will be displayed diegetically as the player character’s shoulder tattoo.

The tattoo will grow as the player gains more skills. This will give a strong visual representation of the player’s progression, as well as being thematic and increasing immersion. This will also play into the eventual narrative reveal of the character’s mother as detailed in [Narrative](#_heading=h.1fob9te).

This will be accomplished by combining shadergraph smoothstep functionality and world space canvases. When the skill tree is navigated to, the game will be paused, the character will be forced into an animation state for optimal display of the tattoo, and the camera view will either switch or rotate to focus on the tattoo.



# Sound Design

The sound design for Shaman will aim to augment the atmospheric immersion of the game, as well as provide important audio cues in combat encounters.

The majority of sounds will be sourced from libraries with compatible licenses such as Soundsnap and Zapsplat, but we will also be recording, creating, and editing our own effects and limited voice acting. The full list of sound assets can be found in the Asset List (separate document).

# AI

## Tik Tik Mechanics

### Melee Swipe 1 (All phases)

* Close range attack with right forward limb.

### Melee Swipe 2 (Phase 2 & 3)

* Close range attack with left forward limb.

### Tongue Lash (All phases)

* Long range attack with tongue.

### Lunge (Phase 3)

* Jumps at the player over medium distance and performs a flurry of attacks after landing.
* Lunge may also end up being used in previous phases or encounters based on panel feedback.

### Scream (All phases)

* Lets out piercing scream that disorients the player, causing the screen to blur and darken and limiting player input for <seconds> uses this before fleeing to regenerate.

### Regenerate (All phases/Intermission)

* Regeneration continues until the boss is full health or interrupted by the player.
* This means that the boss's health in the next phase depends on how well the player dealt with the previous regeneration phase. Each phase is more difficult if the player must spend more time in it due to letting the boss heal for a lot.

### Ambush 1

* Melee focused, aggressive

### Ambush 2

* Ranged focused, more cautious

### Boss Fight

* 3 Phase fight.
* Phases change when a regeneration sequence is completed.
* A regeneration sequence begins when the boss reaches 66% and 33% health.
* During a regeneration sequence the boss will disable the player, flee and hide behind a nearby structure.
* Once hidden the boss will begin recovering % health per second and emitting it’s ticking sound. The player will have to use the sounds to track the location of the boss so they can interrupt its regeneration. A subtle visual cue will also be explored, likely something similar to the Witcher 3 Witcher senses circular pings to indicate sounds.
* The regeneration sequence is considered complete when either the boss has healed for the maximum amount it can, or the boss has been staggered by the player.
* The boss then transitions into the next phase.

#### Phase 1 (100% - 66%)

* Boss is timid and cautious.
* Moves and acts at base speed.
* Deals base damage.
* Prefers using ranged attacks and maintaining distance from the player.
* Can still melee attack if in melee range.

#### Phase 2 (66% - 33%)

* Boss is more aggressive and annoyed.
* Moves and acts at 1.2x base speed.
* Deals 1.2x base damage.
* Prefers staying close to the player and using melee attacks.
* Can still ranged attack when at range.

#### Phase 3 (33% - 0%)

* Boss is hyper aggressive and enraged.
* Moves and acts at 1.5x base speed.
* Deals 1.5x base damage.
* Will prefer aggressive actions and will not attempt to create distance or run from the player, can still use ranged attacks if the player creates distance.

## Villagers

Villagers and hunters will be encountered along the road leading up to the village. They have been displaced from their village by the Tik Tik. The player will interact with these NPCs along the way and learn of their plight via dialogue.

* Some need to be able to walk around a bit within small areas, preferably choosing random points so they’re not walking in complete loops.
* Will need to stop moving and look at the player when the player interacts with them, and when the player gets near them.
* Once the Tik Tik has been killed, the villagers return to the village and thank the player.
* This could maybe be achieved by teleporting them nearby and then walking in? We want them to be visible to the player fairly quickly after killing the Tik Tik so that the player doesn’t miss them. But want their appearance to still feel natural.

# Version History

## 1.1 Changes

[Skill Tree](#_heading=h.ob1xk7xz4r7w)

The skill tree will now be displayed diegetically as the player character’s shoulder tattoo. The tattoo will grow as the player gains more skills. This will give a strong visual representation of the player’s progression, as well as being thematic and increasing immersion. This will also play into the eventual narrative reveal of the character’s mother as detailed in [Narrative](#_heading=h.1fob9te).

Removed final ‘ultimate’ ability that both paths branch into. Mainly to keep scope manageable, but also because we hadn’t generated many interesting ideas for what this ability would be as our planning time in this area went towards fleshing out the existing elements.

[Boss Fight](#_heading=h.rl03ns4hnf5u)

Visual cues for the ticking sound of the Tik Tik will be explored based on feedback from the pitch panel.

[Lunge (Phase 3)](#_heading=h.xwb42ppxmpjs)

Showing this mechanic to the player at an earlier stage will be explored based on feedback from the pitch panel.

[Skill Tree](#_heading=h.r8v1vszbekt0)

All skill points will be available before the final encounter with the Tik Tik to ensure the player gets to experience the most powerful versions of each ability, and so that no work is ‘wasted’ on skills that don’t end up getting chosen.

[Narrative](#_heading=h.1fob9te)

Updated with more detail on what key information needs to be delivered to the player during specific NPC interactions. Updated with narrative additions that have evolved as a result of team discussions.

## 1.2 Changes

Interface

Journal has been cut due to art and UI time restraints.

AI Mechanics

* Wing shield and dodge removed to save animation workload.
* Ticking sound(boss) has been cut from game. Based on feedback, as well as backlogging sounds to focus on making a stable build.

Player Mechanics

Dodge ability of the player was removed to save time on animation workload