



Game Design Document for...



The First Witch's Hunt

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## Background

### Game Overview

New Haven is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person free form adventure game within the same vein as the Grand Theft Auto, Saints Row and Crackdown style of games. For the most part a single player game but there is 2player co-operative modes which allow for someone to help the main player.

### What are the teams?

There are three major characters which the player controls at different times in the game. Once a certain stage of the games story is achieved play control switches to one of the other major characters and the story follows them for a time. The three main characters are Melissa, a Witch with infernal powers, Megan her younger sister with druidic elemental powers and Father Murdoc who has divine powers.

### Research

The game is set in a parody of Wilbraham Massachusetts in the 1940's. Research was done into this area at this time period but only for a general lay of the land. Some research was done into the witch trials held in America in the late 1600's for accuracy as far as legal dealings with witches.

### Game Summary

The player controls one of the three characters at a time and can simply maneuver around the town at will, exploring, fighting hidden creatures or causing havoc. If the player wishes they can do activities or quests set out by NPC's which if successful will garner uncommon or rare power ups which permanently increase that characters abilities. When they wish they can find and start one of the key quests which advances the game story and moves the three characters closer together until finally they will clash with one another.

### High concept

A free form adventure allowing the character to progress through the game story at the players own pace or wreak havoc on a small town in the 1940's using an assortment of magic spells.

## Story Outline

### Back story

In 1674 three sisters arrived in the new world and settled in the small town of New Haven, Massachusetts. The three were in actuality witches and kept, for the most part to themselves, not using their powers on the mortals of the town for fear that they might be discovered. Of the three Murrion the oldest was the most powerful and garnered favors from spirits and elementals more than the other two. Melissa was content with this as she had known Murrion to be powerful for as long as she had been alive but Megan the youngest was jealous of this fact and poisoned her sister and stole her power. The incantation to complete this task was too difficult for Megan and she became insane. She swept through the town summoning wondrous fairy creatures as she went. In truth though her delusional mind saw good things such as unicorns and fairies but fact was she was summoning their opposite, nightmares and imps. Melissa set out to stop her sister or kill her but along the way both were caught by the townsfolk and hanged for practicing witchcraft with no trial.

### Game Story

When the game begins, the year is 1946 and a young girl has stumbled onto the hidden cave where the sisters would practice their magic's. Leafing through one of their decrepit spell books she attempts a spell with what she can find and inadvertently channels Megan's soul into her body. Megan's spirit fights desperately to control the girl's mind and in the process fires off several spells including one which resurrects her older sister Melissa. Laura leaves the cave and returns home not understanding the voices in her head as Megan slowly tightens her grip on Laura. By the time she is home Megan has control of her mind. At the same time Melissa's new body is done forming and she shakily moves about trying to remember. A ghost sets upon her, that of her older sister Murrion whose death was so traumatic that she has left an imprint on this world. Murrion informs Melissa of what has happened since her death and sets her on the path to kill Megan. As they emerge from the woods the priest who is caretaker of the old church at the edge of town is witness to both the ghost Murrion and the witch Melissa casting a spell. Once he has done research in the old church's records he sets out after Melissa to stop her from any infernal activities.

### Genre

Adventure

### Style

3D/Free form/3<sup>rd</sup> Person

### Engine

LucasArts Euphoria Game Engine

# Gameplay

## Play Control

Players can move throughout the game world on foot and cast spells to aid them in their quest. Spells range from offensive, defensive, transmutation and healing and each character has their own versions. Control is done in the standard 3<sup>rd</sup> person 3D game. The left analog stick moves the player through space while the right controls where you are looking. The right trigger fires the currently loaded spell while buttons allow the character to jump. The left trigger targets the closest enemy and pulling the trigger again targets the next closest and so on.

## Movement

The left analog stick moves the player through space while the right controls where you are looking. The right trigger fires the currently loaded spell while buttons allow the character to jump. There is water through the game found in Marshlands and the very long and wide New Haven River to the south. Once a character is in water up to their ankles their movement is slowed to half normal run speed. Once the character is submerged up to their waist they swim. Swim controls are similar to running except the jump button causes the character to swim up. Other wise the player aims the camera in the direction they wish to swim with one analog stick and the other moves them in that direction. Eventually players will learn powerful spells allowing them flight. Flight is handled in a similar way to swimming but allows for faster movement especially when it comes to covering the town in short amounts of time.

## How the game is played

The player can do whatever they wish, either wandering through the town doing nothing but taking in the sights or killing passers by. If they wish they can find activities, challenges or quests to do. Activities and challenges will result in the garnering of power while quests will also they will also move the game story along.

The game world is divided into districts. There are Hills and woods to the North, Marshlands to the East and Rivers to the West and South. The town is the center of the area as well as activity, it being the easiest to move through. Different areas have differing difficulties prompting the players to choose when they enter these areas wisely. Coming back at a later time is much smarter than dying over and over again trying to get through an area which is too hard.

Each character has four skill sets and a mana score. These skills are Offense, Defense, Transmute, and Healing. The skills start at a rating of 1 and increase up to 10. Increasing a skill is done by completing activities, challenges and quests in which an NPC will offer a skill orb which will increase one of the skills by one permanently. The mana score goes from 1 to 100 each

point being worth 10 mana points in the mana pool. Mana is used to cast spells each spell having a different casting cost. Mana orbs are hidden throughout the game in locations ranging from very easy to find to almost impossible to get to.

## Items

There are no weapons in the game but each character must first complete a quest which gets them their focus item which is the equivalent of a weapon. For Melissa it is her wand, for Megan her ring and for Father Murdoc his crucifix. These items are how the focus item from which their magic comes from.

The closest things to weapons the players have are spells. Spells fall in one of four skill categories which are offensive, defensive, transmute and healing. Offensive and defensive spells are simply balls of fire or magical shields which hover around and block incoming attacks. Transmute spells change the state of things in the world and range from moving heavy objects, freezing or melting elements, changing a rock into a duck and flying. Healing spells do just what they sound like they do.

## Quests

The game is full of quests, activities and challenges set forth by NPC's the different characters might run into. These challenges might result in a power-up such as a skill orb which permanently raises a core skill (offense defense, transmute, healing) by one point. Or it may be that they will teach a new spell to the character or as simple as a favor such as allowing them to pass through their land unharmed.

Activities would be simple things such as kill all the monsters in a given area (or summon X number of monsters) in 60 seconds. More complex activities might be long term such as 'Kill the three sphinxes hidden throughout the town and I will give you a reward.' Some activities might result in a dilemma for the player to decide such as one of the sphinxes might offer a spell if her life is spared.

Challenges are more physical. These sorts of activities are like races against the clock on over and through the landscape of the town and the surrounding areas. One might be to make it from the town square all the way to the top of the clock tower in less than a minute while another might be to swim to the three island in the river and back to the docks in 5 minutes. The rewards for these can be skill orbs or favors from NPC's but never new spells.

Quests are more serious challenges such as "fight your way through the haunted school and kill whatever lurks in the head masters office." These activities further the game story of the player and reveal more of the history of the town and the characters as they are completed. These activities are also more likely to result in a favor than any other gift since they will open up new areas the player might not have been powerful enough to go to before, but

along the way these activities usually have several skill ups hidden making them very worth while.

## HUD

The game screens HUD includes a small mini-map in the lower right corner with compass points and beacons for found activities, challenges and quests (they don't show up until discovered by the character though). A small color coded icon for which spell is currently selected (Red for offense, blue for defense, Yellow for transmute and green for healing). There is also a health meter and mana meter. The top of the screen has a hit point meter for whatever monster is currently targeted and what spells are currently in effect on the player.

## **AI**

### **Game response**

Pressing forward makes the character move forward through the game world and they stop when forward is no longer pressed. The same is true for backwards but at a slower pace (you can't see behind you). The character naturally strafes to the sides when left or right is used but the other analog stick points the camera and the character allowing them to turn.

### **NPCs**

Basic enemies will move and dodge incoming attacks using whatever means they can. Smaller enemies might even jump off walls or hang from awnings to escape damage but they are low in the hit point department and die on a single hit. Enemies with wings will fly to avoid damage. NPC will dart forward and attack with whatever natural weapon they have, claws fangs etc. Smarter NPC's might even duck for cover behind rocks, barrels, building etc if they are fairly damaged.

### **Game elements**

Destroyable barrels, crates, boxes and bottle are a must including some trees and rocks which when hit should explode or shatter from spell damage for effect. Vehicles, fire hydrants, mailboxes and other commonly found items should also break when hit, spewing their contents into the air or exploding in gaseous gout of fire.

## **Characters**

### **Melissa**

Melissa is the middle child of the three witch sisters. At the game start she is who the player is in control of. Melissa is working to track down her younger sister Megan whose soul inhabits the body of a 16 year old girl Laura.

### **Megan**

Megan is the youngest sister of the three and was always resentful of her two older sisters because the both seemed to garner more powers and favors from the spirits and elements. She poisoned Murrion the oldest sister years ago due to her jealousy and her brash use of magic without regard was what got the sisters caught, tried and hanged years ago.

### **Father Murdoc**

Father Murdoc is and old and dozy and these days is more of a caretaker of the old church at this point since few come for service anymore opting to go to one of the newer ones in town. The recent discovery that the supernatural does exist had breathed new life into him. He is attempting to track down Melissa and stop her at the games beginning but will have to deal with Megan as well in time.

## **Imps**

The opposite of fairies these evil gargoyle like creatures fly around in packs or walking on two legs. These creatures wreak all sorts of havoc, breaking, cutting or ripping things with their sharp claws and teeth.

## **Gremlins**

These tiny bipedal green humanoids are excellent at hiding in shadowy places and moving items into precarious positions such that they will fall at the slightest touch or disturbance. They also delight in breaking down machine parts gradually so that it appears to be an accident when it finally goes.

## **Zombies**

The marsh is full of the walking dead. These shambling folk have few thoughts left in their head save for the destruction of anything living which comes into their area. They move slowly but are relentless and feel no pain to slow them down.

## **Skeletons**

No longer encumbered by flesh these advanced stage zombies move much quicker and are harder to hit due to not having any flesh on their frames. Their hands and teeth are extremely sharp allowing them to tear flesh with great ease.

## **Giants**

These slow moving humanoids stand 20 feet in height. They seldom leave their caves knowing what danger might wait them if they are detected by humans. Even though humans are much smaller and weaker a large number of resourceful humans could kill them so they tend to keep to themselves though they are extremely dangerous if encountered in their caves.

## **Ghosts**

These can be found all over the area in one form or another. These semi corporeal undead are the echo of their former selves, left here because their deaths were extremely traumatic. Some may simply attack mindlessly while some may parley with certain characters offering quests or activities.

## **Merfolk**

The river is populated with a race of these creatures. These people were once more of a merger between man and fish but now they have mutated into a more bipedal frog like race due to the pollutants in the rivers. Their minds are lost and they slink about with cold white eyes and clammy skin attacking anything which comes to close to their territory.

## **Wights**

## **Wraiths**

## **Key NPCs**

**Murron**

**Xrorat (Demon Lord)**

**Gelson (Ghoul Lord)**

**Victrolixis (Lord of Bones)**

**Savax (King of the Merfolk)**

**The Children of September (Ghosts at the old School)**

**Michael Pryce (Vampire in The Clocktower)**

**Gabriel (Angel in the Cemetery)**

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## **Items**

Barrels, Boxes, Crates, Bottles, Fire Hydrants, Mailboxes etc.

Vehicles (circa 1946, cars motorcycles, boats etc)

Mana orbs

Skill orbs,

Spell orbs

**Objects/mechanisms**

Doors, vehicles, tall grass (parts when moved through), water displaced when walked through, parts when swam through.

## Technical summary

### Game progression

Game progression is done at the player's whim. The player can explore anywhere they can survive without dying due to not being powerful enough to fend off would be attackers. There are no levels but there are areas which cannot be gotten to unless certain spells have been learned, (for instance the merfolk city at the bottom of the river cannot be explored without a water breathing spell). When the player wants to advance the story they can seek out the next quest marker on their map.

### Challenges

The player must thwart small monsters from hordes of imps to legions of the undead depending on where they want to go and what they want to learn or explore. Eventually they must fight bosses which are more difficult, have more hit points, greater defenses, more offensive abilities and smarter AI. As the game progresses it passes control to another character so at one point the player is Megan populating the town with horrible monsters, the next they are controlling Melissa who is killing all the summoned creatures to get to Megan and then they are Father Murdoc who is tracking down Melissa trying to stop her. Eventually each character will become aware of the third and they will all be against each other. The player is effectively playing against themselves, twice! In the end they must choose which character to take all the way to the finish defeating the other two characters and the ultimate evil taint which has taken over the town.

### Items

There are crates and barrels all over town to break and find mana orbs in. There are also skills and spell orbs hidden around as well as NPC's which can teach new spells, give skill orbs or grant favors.

### Experience

Experience comes in the form of skill increases. These are from skill orbs which can be found rarely and be given uncommonly from NPCs for completes challenges and activities. Mana orbs are hidden all over the place which increase a characters mana meter. This allows the player to both cast more spells and regenerate mana faster.

### Appearance

The game takes place in late autumn so weather features include light rain to snow flurries. Generally there is a light breeze here and there with brown, yellow and orange leaves falling and whirling about. Day and night come as normal but due to the tainted state of the area; night seems to last much longer than day with it falling at 5:30PM and the sun not coming back up until almost 8AM.

## **System menus**

### **Overview**

The game begins with a short cinematic of the recent history leading up to Laura invoking the spirit of Megan and Melissa coming back to life. From there the game goes to the title screen allowing the player to select single player or two player co-op. From there the menu for load, save (would be dithered at this time) Audio, Video and Controls would be displayed and this would be the screen you would see when the 'select' or 'back' button is pressed on the controller during game play as well. The start button would bring up an overview map of the whole town marked with icons for any NPC, activity, challenge or quest the player has found so far.

### **Input Devices**

Console versions of the game would use the standard dual analog stick input device while PC versions could incorporate the key board for movement and even the mouse for looking. Mouse buttons could be used to jump and cast spells.

### **Game Save**

Saving is done at any time by pressing the 'back' button and selecting save. The drawback to this is when the game is reloaded the character will be at the entrance to whatever area they were in when the save was made undoing any progress they have made through that area.