Prototype

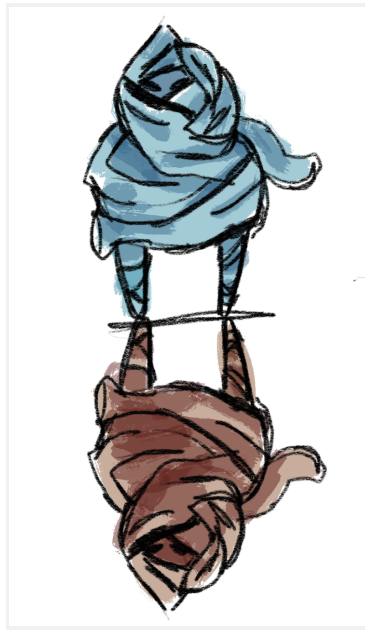## Soulbound Escape:
The board game

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1. Game Rules

Gameplay Description: Soulbound escape: the board game

For our prototype, we opted to make a turn-based RPG to simulate the simultaneous actions in the hack and slay and test out perks, events and combat system. The lone hunter must navigate a game board filled with enemies, portals, spells, and traps in order to survive the nightmare of the realm by successfully completing a set amount of cards without succumbing to the enemies on both the overworld and the underworld or reach the objective spots on the board.

The game board is set up as described in the game setup section. The player is present in both the Overworld and the Underworld and moving in one world will be mirrored in the other world. The player has control over the player in one world at a time to use attacks or take other actions. They have 10 hitpoints and if that reaches 0, they die. The player and enemies take turns navigating the board and taking action. On the start of the player's turn, they draw a card from the enemy spawning card deck to spawn enemies. After, they use their move and attack action in any order to navigate the board. Once the player's turn is finished, the enemies attempt to either move closer to the player or deal damage to the player if the player is currently in a spot next to them.

The player wins if they survive 50 turns or reach all 4 objective points. The player loses if their hitpoints reach 0 at any given point.

Goal of the prototype

***How can we incentivize the player to explore the map?***

Our main objective with this board game is to simulate real-time action through turn-based combat and experiment with enemy spawning, combat system and random events. Through that, we gain insight into the appeal of further gameplay mechanics that go beyond the survival aspect of the game and give the players further incentive to both navigate and fight.

Materials:
- Two paper boards representing the Overworld and the Underworld with hexagonal spots
- Paper card decks that make up the enemy spawning card deck and an event card deck
- A player figure
- Small paper balls representing enemies

Game Board
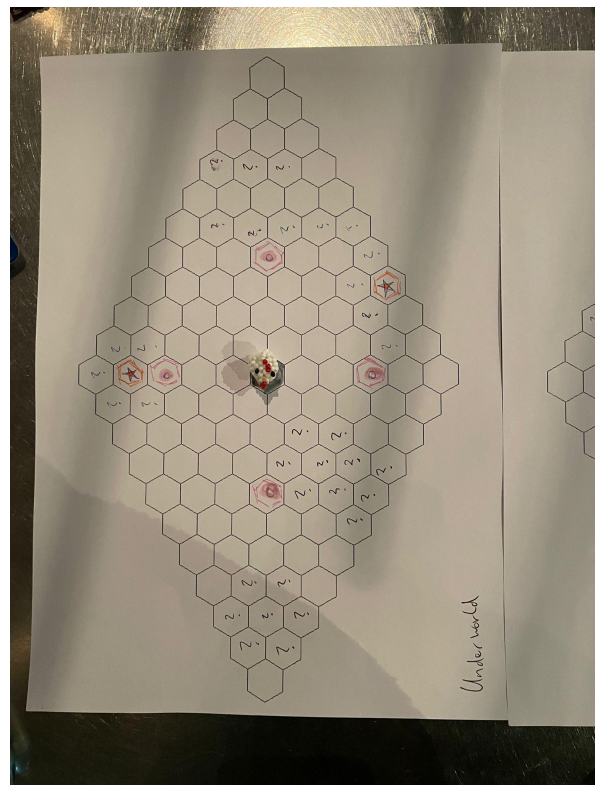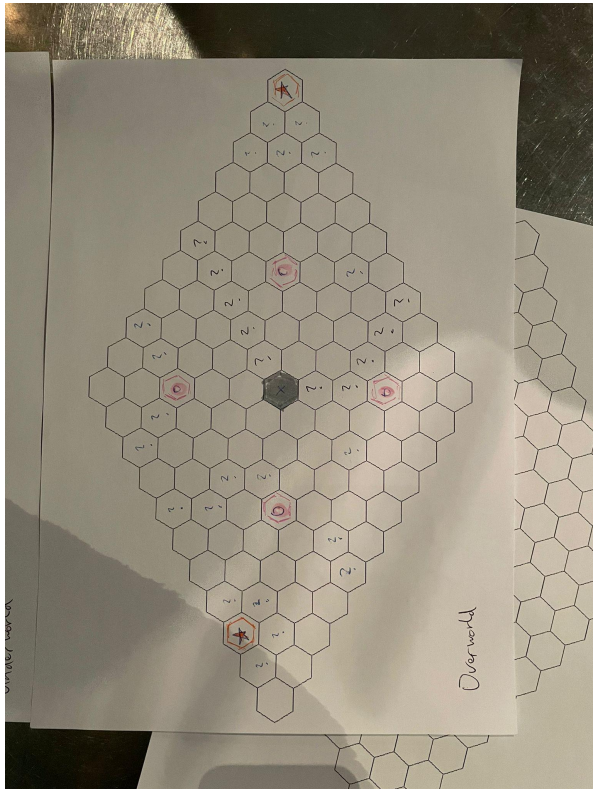
- *Grey Spot:* Player spawn point
    - Spawn the player here

- *Pink Spots*: Enemy spawn points
    - Spawn the enemies here. Spawn priority goes from furthest to player to closest to player

- *Star Spots:* Objective points
    - Player can reach all of these points to win the game

- *Questionmark Spots:* Event points
    - Player draws an event card if they land on them and are controlling the world the point is on.

Game Setup:

1. Player Position: Start in a central position on the game board.

2. Decks: Shuffle the enemy deck containing enemy spawning cards and the event card deck.

Turn Structure:

1. Draw Phase:

   - Draw a card from the enemy spawning deck. Spawn enemies as described by the card on the furthest enemy spawn points away from the player. If there's a tie between distances between points, the player chooses a furthest spawn point.

   - Your fate is determined by the drawn card, setting the stage for your next move.

2. Action Phase:

   - *Move Action:* Move to an adjacent spot on the board. Movement is essential for strategic positioning and avoiding incoming threats.

   - *Attack Action:* Choose one of three actions - flip the world or attack an enemy or skip the attack action

3. Attack Actions:

   - *Flip the World:* Flip the board to control the character on the other world. This can be strategic for avoiding enemies or reaching new areas.

   - *Attack an Enemy:* Use a piercing attack to strike an enemy in your line of sight dealing damage or a conal attack, dealing damage to two spots adjacent to each other next to you.

4. Enemy Movement:

- *Behaviour:* Enemies move one spot closer to you each turn. If an enemy reaches an adjacent spot, they will take their next turn to deal 1 damage instead. Plan your movements carefully to avoid confrontation.

Evaluation and Takeaways

The main difficulty designing this prototype was pinning down balance between player strength and enemy strength and numbers. It also made us think about emergent player behaviour that would go against the core idea of the game, for example if the player is too fast or has no reason to fight the enemies, they could simply run to the objective points and win without fighting at all. The idea of having random events built-in in the game such as traps or boons will definitely make the gameplay more interesting and diverse providing incentive to explore and navigate while they won't completely turn the tide for enemies or the player. Enemy spawning behaviour and balancing enemy stats are going to be very important for our game as they will determine how difficult the game is going to be and therefore impact the game experience the most. Furthermore, the prototype shows that while the player has control on one world, the other world should only have enemies being active for the most part as it might get very overwhelming for the player dealing with essentially two games at the same time if there is too much happening on the world the player is not currently controlling.