

VIDEO GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT FOR
“LOST VANGUARD”
A TACTICAL ROLE-PLAYING GAME

by

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HONORS THESIS

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, who have supported all of my hobbies and interests for as long as I can remember. It has always been extremely comforting and inspiring to have parents who will listen to me ramble for hours about video games and who sometimes excuse my thousands upon thousands of hours playing video games as career research.

I would also like to dedicate this to all of my friends who listened to me ramble about my game ideas nearly every day as I brainstormed in our group chats and car rides. I don't know how you all had the patience to respond to my ideas, but I appreciate that I have people who will listen to my endless flow of consciousness from time to time.

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I would also like to thank the Honors College for providing me an opportunity to pursue projects like this during my undergraduate career. Being able to apply my interests to my various honors papers and projects these four years has been enlightening and has enriched my education as well as my understanding of how different fields can interact. This thesis in particular was a valuable experience in stepping outside my comfort zone to apply my knowledge and experience in a creative project in contrast to the technical nature of my degree.

ABSTRACT

Lost Vanguard is a tactical/strategy role-playing game (SRPG) set in a mixed high fantasy world with strong science fiction elements. The game follows Valos Tyr, a general from the human kingdom of Rylon. Valos finds himself in the future, where the once-great kingdom he served is a shadow of its former self. Once the domain of the feared Elder Dragon Army, the kingdom now suffers from a lack of resources, a dragon-less army, and is now dependent on a dwindling supply of Elven technology. Valos, driven by duty to his land and a desire to find the cause of his circumstances, decides to assist the prince of this future kingdom, Warrec. This prince is young, inexperienced, and burdened by the mistakes of his predecessors, yet he is determined to repair his shattered kingdom.

The game features an exciting journey through the storied lands of Aedrest, a continent home to several factions of humans, elves, dragons, and magical cyborgs. The journey follows the protagonists as they build their army of unique characters and rebuild their lands and alliances of old. The game progresses through strategy missions where the player orders their characters around on unique grid-based maps to defeat opponents, seize locations, rescue civilians, and complete many other interesting objectives. While fighting, characters can gain experience and level up, allowing the player to build their units over time and grant them interesting abilities. Various characters include diverse role-playing classes such as lance-wielding wyvern riders, sneaky spies with poisoned daggers, and technological mages with portals that summon fire explosions.

WORLD

Geography:

Aedrest:

Aedrest is a small continent, inhabited by many diverse beings. The center of Aedrest, known as the Great Plains, is a large open expanse of grassland, scattered forests, and many rivers. This land has a plentiful distribution of vegetation and wildlife, and became a key spot for the people of Aedrest to settle in. The plains are surrounded by a mountain range to the south and west, and a barren tundra to the northeast.

Because of this uneven distribution of resources, most of the people here stayed in the plains and fought for control of the resources in this region. The mountains to the west do, however, offer some plentiful mining resources for those brave enough to face the dangers of the active volcano and its strange crystalline forest that bars entry.

The Great Void:

Somewhere far away from Aedrest is a strange, barren land with no sun. Because this land has no sunlight, nothing lives here. Where the Great Void physically is, no one knows, but there have been reports of people stumbling upon it while exploring caves, and then eventually finding their way back to talk about it, never to find it again.

All that is notable in the void is a rich supply of a strange mineral called Eternite that is always in flux, changing its form randomly. Eternite contains a massive buildup of potential energy that, when released, causes a strange phenomenon where the material

and its surroundings to transport somewhere else. This mineral is the only way to travel to the Great Void, and many people that find themselves there do not realize that this is how they got there. This mineral is sometimes found in the caves of Aedrest, but it is incredibly rare.

History:

Land of Turmoil:

For centuries, the people living in Aedrest, both humans and elves, were but squabbling clans, constantly fighting over land and food. During this time, the strong survived and grew stronger, while the weak lost their land, their identity, and often their lives. Sometimes the stronger clans absorbed the weaker clans, and sometimes the weaker clans were chased off, left without homes. One of the elven clans was of the latter fate.

This clan, fearing the loss of their lives, fled into a cave nearby. Inside this cave, they discovered a strange glowing mineral that, when struck, transported these elves to somewhere else. This place was called The Great Void, and they named their shelter in this place “Voidhaven”, for it was in this strange dark land that they found safety from the conflicts of Aedrest.

Another notable elven clan during this time fortified themselves in the western mountains, defending their land with pure might. One of these mountains was abundant in ores and easily defendable due to the dangerous crystal forests that deterred other clans from approaching, which gave them an impenetrable fortress to build a society. Over

time this clan became known as the Amethians, who adapted to their harsh climate, developing tough physical characteristics, and a society built on honor and strength.

The Unification Wars:

Eventually, one of the stronger human clans discovered the elder dragons, a rare kind of beast hiding in the southern mountains. The clan saw the potential in these massive, flying reptiles and they took the opportunity to capture and train the dragons as mounts. With powerful, mobile weapons of war, this clan began a campaign to conquer the great plains and unite the human clans under a single, powerful rule. This nation became known as Rylon, named after the first king, Rylonus, and the kingdom ruled the great plains of Aedrest for many centuries.

During the Unification Wars, the army used their influence to chase the elven clans from the great plains for only human rule. Even though they did not conquer the western mountains as well, they were strong enough that they earned the respect of the Amethians, and the two nations formed the Diamond Scale Alliance that lasted for the duration of the kingdom's reign of unity. Thus, only the strongest of the Elves and Humans remained in this region of Aedrest, and peace lasted for a long time.

The Great Ambush:

After centuries of unity and peace, the long forgotten lost elves of Voidhaven returned, now calling themselves the Lacunae Void Elves. The Lacunae had survived in

the barren void and over time had conquered other lands, establishing a dimension-hopping empire that hungered for resources, due to the status of their world. The Lacunae had created very powerful technology from the strange material that empowered their teleportation abilities, but they wanted more power, and had set their sights on the Rylonian elder dragons, whose blood they believed to have endless regenerative qualities if refined properly.

The Void Elves suddenly attacked one of the Rylonian fiefdoms, completely catching the kingdom by surprise, and they took the entire fiefdom prisoner. They experimented on these humans, melding their skin with their synertek machinery, turning them into a new race of easily controllable and resilient cyborg servants, the Augmana. The Elves then turned these cyborgs and their hordes of augmented soldiers against the rest of Rylon, swiftly defeating the Dragon Army.

The humans eventually surrendered, and agreed to the Lacunae's peace treaty, in which Rylon agreed to trade their elder dragons for the mysterious technological weapons that defeated them. After a period of time where the defeated humans adjusted to using this new technology, the Lacunae suddenly disappeared, and they took the supply of technology and fuel with them, leaving the humans with no dragons and a dwindling supply of the synertek they had grown dependent on.

Decades passed, and the kingdom now sits a shadow of its former self, barely able to maintain its borders against bandits. The once strong Diamond Scale Alliance had also fallen after the ambush, as the Amethians no longer respected the weakened kingdom, and as such Rylon had no more allies to count on.

FACTIONS

Kingdom of Rylon:

This game's main faction, home to a resilient and human population. For ages, this kingdom had ruled over the great plains of central Aedrest. Rylon was a military powerhouse that was respected for its well-trained army and powerful dragon riders. However, after being defeated by a sudden attack by the Lacunae Void Elves, the kingdom had lost land, people, and even their elder dragons, and was left with a dwindling supply of elven synertek tools and weapons. The people no longer trust their monarchy, who was responsible for making the trade that cost them their might.

Decades have passed in a fragile state. The kingdom is beset by bandits and shattered internally due to resource struggles and lack of faith in the monarchy, as recent rulers have not satisfied the lords' demands. Furthermore, the king recently passed, leaving leadership to his young, inexperienced son. Now young prince Warrec must prove his right to rule and reunite his kingdom.

Suddenly, Valos, a general from the past, appears with knowledge about the Lacunae and their teleportation technology. Valos is lost in a new time, but he is determined to help the kingdom he served regain its former strength, and with his leadership experience and battle-prowess, he is a welcome ally for the uncertain prince Warrec. Will the two be strong enough to regain the respect of the five rebelling lords of Rylon and reunite the kingdom? Will they be able to regain their lost might from the Lacunae?

The Amethians:

A noble clan of elves that pride themselves on their might and craftsmanship. These people have been hardened by the volcano they live on and the bountiful crystals and ores supplied by it. Through their strength and willpower alone, they survived on this mountain and defended it for centuries against the other warring clans. They formed a society called the Amethians, led by a council of their strongest fighters and most talented artisans. Their culture is that of pride and honor, and they value strength above all else.

With hardened diamond skin and weapons, the Amethians are the strongest fighters and best blacksmiths in the common land. This natural armor offers them great physical resistances to both physical damage and heat, which makes them perfectly adapted to the active volcano and harsh terrain. They are able to mine deep into the side of the mountain and work metal with more precision than most others. As such metalworkers are highly respected in their culture. The governing council is divided by two branches representing the fighters and artisans of their culture, and these two sides create a strong balance in governing policies between culture and militarism.

When the Rylon was at its strongest, the Amethians were the first to acknowledge their might and a strong alliance was formed. However, this alliance was broken when the humans chose to trade their source of strength for the technology these people viewed as cowardly. The clan also saw the threat of the Lacunae Empire and chose to cut off all ties to focus on fortifying their own strength. Now the clan lives isolated on their mountain, separate from the rest of the realm that is obsessed with strange magic. Will

their mighty warriors and strong defenses be able to hold out against a potential invasion by their lost cousins, the Lacunae, or will their isolationism be their downfall?

The Augmana:

A secretive group of augmented humans living in the Tundra. During the war between the Void Elves and the Humans, many human soldiers and villagers were captured by the void elves. As prisoners of war, they were experimented on by the elves and transformed into cyborgs, called Augmana. For decades they were forced into loyal servitude by the elves to fight for them during the war, and later as miners in the frozen tundra. Over time, however, their utility to the elves dwindled as the tundra's resources dried up and no wars were being fought, and the elves eventually abandoned the Augmana, leaving them free, but without supplies to survive. Now they live a wary life. Hurt by the betrayal of their masters and starved for fuel, they are distrustful of others and they seek resources by any means necessary.

These cyborgs are a blend of flesh and magically powered machinery, whose bodies have been "improved" with technology. As such, the cyborgs have an advantage in using technological weapons and tools and make great mages and strategic fighters. Due to their current situations, many of them also work as spies and thieves, using their cunning and desperation to find and steal fuel for their people, often from the other humans who were once their brethren decades ago. This lifestyle is not sustainable, however, and they are running out of resources to steal, and with no allies to help them, they just might die alone in the frozen wasteland.

The entire Augmana population lives in a factory built into a glacier that they turned into a small city. The cold climate helps their machinery from overheating and is the perfect place for the Augmana to hide from the other nations, due to the hostile climate. From here the Augmana stockpile resources and weapons that they have stolen from the other nations. Augmana society is run by a single leader who issues jobs and fields requests from the people. These requests almost function like a democratic method of governance, but their leader makes the decisions on which requests to pursue. The Augmana are currently surviving, but will they be able to achieve true sustainability like this alone?

Lacunae Empire:

This game's antagonist faction, a mysterious and secretive group being led by a malicious technocracy. Once denizens Aedrest, this faction fled the land during a time when the clans were still in turmoil. They had discovered a resource called Eternite that, when manipulated properly, could transport them to another realm. They formed a city in this Great Void, called Voidhaven, to stay here in solitude to research the potential of this strange place and the resource that brought them there. Over time, they became the Void Elves, and the elves that controlled the resource began controlling information there and kept their people in blissful ignorance.

Eventually, the Lacunae leaders needed resources, and began travelling to other realms to conquer the people and take their supplies. One day, they set their eyes on the land they originated from, and recognizing the great potential of the elder dragons, they

invaded with all their might. They were victorious, and they made a strategic trade of some of their technology for the kingdom's dragons, with full intent to withdraw the supply after a short time. And withdraw they did, leaving taking their new prizes and all of their tech with them back to the void.

Now their attention is focused on their dragon experiments, trying to understand the secrets of their blood, which they believe has regenerative properties that will solve their supply problems indefinitely. Their mages are nearing a breakthrough, but they are missing key research that was stolen from them during the Unification Wars by a human general who disappeared entirely from history. They cannot complete their experiments until this research is acquired, which means they need to return to Aedrest once more to find this research, or at least extend the supply of their resources until they can find this research. What lengths will they go to just to survive, and can any of the Aedresti nations defend against another invasion?

GAMEPLAY

Missions:

Gameplay takes place in missions with their own boards/maps. Each board has a unique layout with different tiles, enemies, and objectives. Boards are built on a grid system of squares, which determine the spaces that characters can move around on and obstacles are placed on. Board victory and defeat conditions often differ from mission to mission. One mission may feature a rout objective that requires the player to defeat all enemies on the map, and they lose if all their units die, but another map's victory might be determined by obtaining resources before the enemy does.

Mission gameplay has two phases, the player phase and enemy phase, and thus the player and the game-controlled enemy take turns directing their units on the board to beat the other. During the player phase, the player can direct each of their characters individually until each character is out of actions, or the player decides to end their turn. When the player turn ends, the enemy phase begins, and the enemy's characters begin moving.

Terrain:

These are some terrain types that are commonly found in missions

(Stats such as DEF and RES will be explained later in the Character Stats section)

- Plain: has no effects, most common terrain type (ex: fields and floors).
- Road: grants a boost to move distance (halves move subtraction).

- Cover: grants a boost to avoid rates (ex: forest and columns).
- Rough: grants a boost to DEF/RES (ex: mountains and rubble).
- Fortified: grants a boost to DEF/RES and avoid rates (ex: forts, cache).
- Hazard: deals damage to unit standing on it at start of turn (has status types).
- Wall/Chasm: cannot be traversed by grounded units.

Combat:

During a mission, characters can be ordered to attack a character on the opposing team. When this happens, the two characters enter a battle state where the attacking character uses their equipped weapon to attempt to damage the opponent. The attacker has a chance for hitting. If the hit connects, damage is inflicted based on the attacker's strength, weapon power, the opponent's defense, and any modifiers caused by terrain and status effects. After the first character attacks, if the opponent is still alive, they can counterattack with their own weapon. The character with the higher AGL stat often gets two attacks per battle, which is determined by an AGL difference calculation and factors in their weapon weights. Both characters also have a chance for their attack to become a critical hit, which does much more damage than normal; this rate is affected by their dexterity stat. Some weapon and character abilities may activate depending on certain conditions that could change how the battle plays out.

Once both characters have finished, the battle ends and the game returns to the board screen and the normal gameplay continues. Additionally, if one of the characters takes enough damage, they will die, and the battle will end at that point. This game

features a permadeath system, which means that when a character dies, they are dead for the rest of the game. Because of this, players will need to be careful about how they use their units so they don't take risks that will cost them units that could be useful in later missions. Some players may choose to start the mission over if they lose a unit, but others may decide it was a worthwhile risk to achieve victory. This gives players choice in their own view of a game over state, as they can make the game easier or harder based on what they consider a failure.

Character Leveling:

When characters fight in combat, they earn experience. Experience is measured in EXP points, and after they acquire enough EXP points, they can level up. When characters level up, the player chooses two stats to increase the value of. Character stats are values that determine how the units behave in combat, affecting things like damage dealt or received, which fighter attacks twice, and more (Character stats are further detailed in the following section). How much the stats increase if the player selects them depends on the character's growth rates. For example, one character might have a high growth rate in strength, but a low growth in dexterity, which means that if the player selects the two stats on level up, the strength stat will increase much more than the dexterity stat. This is done to differentiate characters from each other through different things they are good at, while still allowing the player choice in how they build their characters over the course of the game. Normally, increasing a stat with a higher growth rate would be the optimal choice, but sometimes a character might be struggling in a specific area, so the player might increase a weaker stat just to eliminate that weakness.

Character Stats:

- Endurance (END): determines how much damage a character can take
- Strength (STR): determines how strong attacks are with physical weapons.
- Intelligence (INT): determines how strong attacks are with magical weapons.
- Defense (DEF): determines protection from physical damage.
- Resistance (RES): determines protection from magical damage.
- Agility (AGL): determines double attack calculations (character with higher Ag attacks twice).
- Dexterity (DEX): determines the hit rate and avoid rate.
- Skill (SKL): determines the critical hit rate and critical avoid (and activation for many other skills).

Class Leveling:

Characters have Movement and Weapon classes that represent their skill in their particular movement type and the weapon types they can equip. These two classes improve as the character gains EXP just like the character's level does. As the classes level up, the player is given choices on what skills the character should learn. Some of these skills are passive skills, which do not need to be activated by the player for the character to benefit from them, and some of the skills are active skills, which have to be activated by the player to be used.

Some passive skills just give the character a permanent increase to a stat, but others may only work in more specific situations, like an effect that happens after the

character defeats another in battle. Active skills on the other hand tend to be things like weapon arts or spells, which can be used as a powerful alternative to regular attacks, only at the cost of the character's health. Other active skills include actions that temporarily aid allies or hinder enemies.

Movement:

Movement classes represent the way a character moves on the battlefield and how they are affected by the map and other characters. The four movement classes, Infantry, Cavalry, Armored, and Airborne all represent different playstyles. Infantry units are foot-soldiers that focus on offense and they benefit the most from bonuses due to terrain, but they suffer from low defenses. Cavalry units ride on the backs of large land animals such as drakes, and they focus on long distance mobility, while being at a disadvantage in rough terrain. Armored units are slow, bulky foot-soldiers that prioritize defensive strategy. Finally, Airborne units ride on the backs of flying creatures like Wyverns, which offer them the advantage of high mobility and immunity to hazards, but they cannot benefit from terrain bonuses. These classes all have their own share of strengths, which are developed through their skill trees, as well as weaknesses, which can be taken advantage of by specific weapon types.

Weapons:

Equippable weapons are categorized by the type of damage they do and what movement types are weak against them. There are four main types of physical weapons:

Slash, which are effective against unarmored infantry; Stab, which are effective against mounted cavalry; Bash, which are effective against armored soldiers; and Projectile, which are effective against flying scouts. Each character has a type of weapon they specialize in, which makes each character good when facing characters of specific movement types.

Furthermore, there are magic weapons which differ in damage type and function. Some of these weapons may be able to damage in large areas of tiles or can cause stat changes on their opponents like a temporary strength decrease. Magical damage dealing weapons have an element tied to them that causes status effects like burn, freeze, shock, etc. These status effects last for a few turns and can negatively affect the enemy during the duration of the effect. Elemental status effects can be detonated by using a different element on them, causing reactions that do extra damage, or create tile or weather effects. Combos do, however, end the status effect that the enemy was under, so players may choose to not detonate these effects.

Physical weapons can also be made to do magical damage through upgrades, which grants them new attacks and can make damage calculations more complex and interesting.

- Slash Weapons: (strong against infantry units)
 - Sword: Balanced
 - Saber: Accurate and fast
 - Claymore: Heavy, sacrifices speed for more damage
 - Dagger: Fast; can be thrown, and causes bleed damage
 - Battle Axe: Powerful, high crit chance, but low hit rate

- Stab Weapons: (strong against cavalry units)
 - Pike: Light and fast
 - Javelin: Balanced; can be thrown
 - Lance: Strong and accurate
 - Glaive: Fast, causes bleed damage
 - Halberd: High crit
- Bash Weapons: (strong against armored units)
 - Mace: Balanced
 - Morningstar: Accurate, Causes bleed damage
 - Flail: Low damage, but disables shields
 - Warhammer: Very strong, very slow
 - Gauntlets: Very fast, but low damage
- Projectile Weapons: (strong against airborne units)
 - Bow: Balanced, 2-4 range
 - Longbow: Inaccurate, 3-6 range
 - Chakram: Accurate, 1-3 range
 - Boomerang: Weak, hits multiple enemies
 - Bomb: Damages an area with shrapnel (Bleed damage)
- Magic Weapons: (can have one of three elemental types)
 - Elemental Portals: Summons elements to deal damage to a large area and multiple enemies.
 - Particle Cannon: Blasts projectile energy in a straight line to deal ranged damage.

- Antimatter Conductor: Controls antimatter to cause debuffs on enemies and make them weaker.
- Energy Booster: Boosts an ally's energy levels to cause buffs that make them stronger.

Status Effects:

Status effects occur for a certain number of turns and cause their effect on the afflicted character at the start of the turn in which that character would be controlled.

- Elemental (does damage per turn):
 - Shock: reduces a unit's STR/INT by 20%
 - Burn: reduces a unit's DEF/RES by 20%
 - Frost: reduces a unit's DEX/SKL by 20%
 - Poison/Bleed: does increased damage per turn
- Other:
 - Slow: reduces a unit's AGL by 50%

CHARACTERS

There are 40 characters that will be available in Lost Vanguard's main story. Additional characters can be recruited as rewards for completing side missions, which are not required to complete the main story of the game. Additionally, some characters are only available on one route of the game, as a consequence of the player's choice in Act 2.

The number of characters recruited per act of the game are as follows:

Prologue: 1

Act 1: 15

Act 2: 12

Act 3: 10

Act 4: 2

Example Character Information Screen

The image shows a character information screen for Valos Tyr: Spearhead Vanguard. The screen is divided into several sections with orange borders. The top left section displays basic stats: END: 50/50, LVL: 1, EXP: 76/100, Status: Fine, MV: 8, and CL: Airborne. Below this is a 'Character Stats' section with a 'Total: 50' and a list of individual stats: STR: 10, INT: 2, DEF: 10, RES: 5, AGL: 7, DEX: 8, and SKL: 8. The top right section is titled 'Inventory:' and lists items: Iron Lance (C), Scrap Shield (C), Scrap Pike (C), and Weak Tonic. Below the inventory is a 'Weapon Class' section showing 'Stab (C)' and 'Weapon LVL: 1'. The bottom section is titled 'Skills:' and shows three skill icons: a triangle, a square, and a circle. At the very bottom, there are three buttons: 'X: Details', 'A: Select', and 'B: Back'.

Valos Tyr: Spearhead Vanguard		
END:	50/50	Status: Fine
LVL:	1	MV: 8
EXP:	76/100	CL: Airborne
Character Stats:		Total: 50
STR:	10	
INT:	2	
DEF:	10	
RES:	5	
AGL:	7	
DEX:	8	
SKL:	8	

Inventory:		
Items:		
E >	Iron Lance	(C)
	Scrap Shield	(C)
	Scrap Pike	(C)
	Weak Tonic	

Weapon Class: Stab (C)		
Weapon LVL: 1		

Skills: Δ \square Σ		
X: Details	A: Select	B: Back

Important Characters:

General Valos Tyr:

Type: Main Character

Movement Class: Airborne

Weapon Type: Lance

Recruited: Prologue

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	50	5	RES	5	1
STR	10	5	AGL	7	3
INT	2	1	DEX	8	3
DEF	10	5	SKL	8	3
			Total	50(-END) 100(+END)	25

Personality: The rash and determined leader of the former Dragon Vanguard, Valos Tyr is an experienced tactician and brutal fighter. Valos will do everything he can to protect others, even at the cost of his own life. He often takes calculated risks and is well known for succeeding at very dangerous missions.

Background: During the height of the Kingdom of Rylon's power, Valos was born to a poor family in the capitol. Valos joined up with the army at a young age to provide for his family, and quickly proved himself, rising in the ranks to become one of the earliest squadron leaders. He led the Dragon Vanguard, a squadron of dragon riders who were dispatched to take out bandits and possible enemies before they could become a major threat. One day the vanguard was investigating rumors of an unusual elven presence in the southern mountain range when Valos comes across a strange device.

Lumina:

Type: Main Character Movement Class: Airborne Weapon Type: Energy Beam

Recruited: Act 3 (Temporary in Prologue)

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	50	5	RES	10	5
STR	2	1	AGL	8	3
INT	10	4	DEX	9	3
DEF	5	2	SKL	6	2
			Total	50(-END) 100(+END)	25

Personality: Lumina is a Lacunae scientist working on energy production and dragon blood research. Lumina is kind-hearted and calculated. She is always considering multiple options to find the best solution. This leads her to sometimes making unexpected decisions and taking calculated risks, often scrapping her plans to begin new projects. She is very interested in the source of the beasts' power but is unsure if the way the experiments are being conducted is sustainable, or responsible. She wants to find a way to harness their power without harming so many of them.

Background: Lumina grew up in the Lacunae empire. Her family has influence and got her into the empire's best academy. Her research into energy production quickly found her a place in the national science labs, where she began working on new sources of sustainable energy. When the council requested that they focus on dragon blood as an energy source, her team led the endeavor.

Prince Warrec: (A1C1)

Type: Main Character

Movement Class: Cavalry

Weapon Type: Stone

Recruited: Act 1 Chapter 1

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	15	5	RES	5	5
STR	5	3	AGL	5	7
INT	5	10	DEX	5	10
DEF	5	5	SKL	5	5
			Total	35(-END) 50(+END)	50

Personality: Thrust into responsibility at a young age, Warrec is not ready to lead a city, let alone an army or an entire kingdom. Warrec has no combat training, and very little experience in governing. However, Warrec has a strong moral compass and is motivated to prove himself, despite his shortcomings. He wants to bring peace to his kingdom and wishes to learn more of the world so he can foster better relations with their neighbors.

Background: Warrec was second in line to the throne, but when his father, the king, and his older brother, the crown prince, were assassinated while supervising reconstruction efforts in the eastern province, Warrec was suddenly next in line and forced to leave his sheltered life behind.

Overlord Mulciber:

Type: Villain

Movement Class: Armor

Weapon Type: Stone

Description: Mulciber is the current Overlord of the Lacunae Empire. Little is known about his past, but he is obsessed with Aedrest's Elder Dragons and the latent potential in their blood. His rule has lasted for a long time, and he has total control over the flow of information and resources within the Empire, allowing him to keep the civilians happy and ignorant while employing his forces at will to accomplish his goals.

Leaders and Minor Characters:

Warrec's Advisors:

Watcher Quivel: (A1C1)

Type: Leader

Movement Class: Infantry

Weapon Type: Bow

Recruited: Act 1 Ch 1

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	30	3	RES	5	2
STR	8	5	AGL	7	2
INT	5	2	DEX	10	7
DEF	5	2	SKL	10	7
			Total	50(-END) 80(+END)	30

Personality: Quivel is Warrec's best friend and his closest retainer. Educated in politics and foreign relations, Quivel assists Warrec in political and diplomacy efforts. Quivel is a quiet and responsible man and is very young for his position, but he also has an aversion to conflict and does not get along with Warrec's knight commander, Garris. Quivel's disdain for violence has held back the commander's plans to stifle the kingdom's rebellion and bandit problems, which has kept the kingdom from making progress. Nevertheless, Quivel sees the problems that plague the kingdom's territories and Lords and is working hard to find a peaceful solution to these problems.

Commander Garris: (A1C1)

Type: Leader

Movement Class: Armored

Weapon Type: Claymore

Recruited: Act 1 Ch 1

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	60	5	RES	5	1
STR	10	5	AGL	5	1
INT	4	1	DEX	8	5
DEF	10	7	SKL	8	5
			Total	50(-END) 110(+END)	30

Personality: Garris is the commander of the royal knights and is the current strongest warrior in the kingdom. Garris is old, rugged, and experienced, and has much wisdom behind him. Garris's primary role is to advise the prince in military and defensive matters, as well as to lead the armies in defense of the kingdom. He feels responsible for the deaths of the King and the former crown prince and will do anything to keep the current prince alive. Prince Warrec looks up to Garris as a hero and mentor who has taught him much.

Lords of Rylon:

Lady Dralia:

Type: Leader

Movement Class: Cavalry

Weapon Type: Javelin

Recruited: Act 1 Ch 2

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	40	5	RES	4	2
STR	8	5	AGL	8	5
INT	2	1	DEX	8	5
DEF	7	3	SKL	8	5
			Total	45(-END) 85(+END)	30

Personality: The governing Lady of Drakendel. Dralia's ancestors led the storied drake riders, and their people keep up the tradition, riding drakes in the great plains for sport, hunting, and combat. Dralia has trained as a rider for her whole life and is among the finest riders in the land. Dralia inherited the pride of her realm and is driven to protect her people at all costs. Furious at their neglect by the kingdom, Dralia has very little faith in her rulers and has taken matters into her own hands. She is a brave fighter, a talented rider, and a serious threat to the kingdom should she rebel. Dralia often feels burdened by her duty to lead her realm, a feeling that often drives her to prove herself and refuse help, so she does not seem weak.

Researcher Zelo:

Type: Leader

Movement Class: Armor

Weapon Type: Energy Portals

Recruited: Act 1 Ch 3

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	40	5	RES	10	5
STR	2	1	AGL	3	1
INT	10	5	DEX	6	3
DEF	8	3	SKL	6	3
			Total	45(-END) 85(+END)	25

Description: Zelo is an eccentric researcher who is obsessed with his work and understanding how Lacunae tech works. Zelo believes synertek offers answers to understanding the world and reality, as it offers them ways to manipulate the elements, and even physical space itself. Because of this, the lack of human access to Lacunae tech frustrates him, and his research is hindered by dwindling supply. He is unimpressed by the kingdom that cannot fund his research and has taken it on himself to find new ways to acquire technology.

Spymaster Caid: (A1C4)

Type: Leader

Movement Class: Infantry

Weapon Type: Daggers

Recruited: Act 1 Ch 1

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	30	5	RES	2	2
STR	6	3	AGL	12	5
INT	4	3	DEX	10	5
DEF	3	2	SKL	8	5
			Total	45(-END) 75(+END)	30

Description: Caid has used his family's influence and connections to establish a large knowledgebase and information network across Aedrest. His family has long been diplomatic, yet secretive, and Caid is no exception. He is ambitious and thrill-seeking, and he loves bets. For a few years now, Caid has been looking into secret operations occurring in other regions, and his information is incredibly valuable. He is, however, not very loyal and he might change allegiances if it benefits him to.

Wrynna: (A1C5)

Type: Leader

Movement Class: Airborne

Weapon Type: Halberd

Recruited: Act 1 Ch 1

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	40	5	RES	6	1
STR	8	5	AGL	8	3
INT	2	1	DEX	6	3
DEF	8	5	SKL	12	3
			Total	50(-END) 90(+END)	25

Description: Wrynna is the governing lady for the territory where most of Rylon's military forces are trained. Her family once funded the great Dragon Vanguard that Valos once fought with. The loss of their greatest accomplishment has left their family with poor opinions of the Royal family. Wrynna is an ambitious and aggressive person who hates weakness and cowardice. She believes she can do a better job of running the Kingdom than Warrec can and is planning to throw a coup.

Rylonian Units

Sebra:

Type: Recruit

Movement Class: Cavalry

Weapon Type: Sword

Recruited: Act 1 Ch 2

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	35	5	RES	7	3
STR	7	4	AGL	10	5
INT	5	3	DEX	7	4
DEF	4	2	SKL	5	4
			Total	45(-END) 80(+END)	30

Kilian:

Type: Recruit

Movement Class: Cavalry

Weapon Type: Mace

Recruited: Act 1 Ch 2

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	45	5	RES	5	2
STR	7	4	AGL	5	3
INT	1	1	DEX	10	5
DEF	9	5	SKL	8	5
			Total	45(-END) 90(+END)	30

Orical: A1C2

Type: Recruit

Movement Class: Infantry

Weapon Type: Energy Beam

Recruited: Act 1 Ch 3

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	35	5	RES	10	5
STR	2	1	AGL	5	3
INT	10	5	DEX	10	5
DEF	2	1	SKL	6	5
			Total	45(-END) 80(+END)	30

Fisk: A1C3

Type: Recruit

Movement Class: Infantry

Weapon Type: Gauntlets

Recruited: Act 1 Ch 2

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	45	5	RES	7	4
STR	5	3	AGL	10	5
INT	7	4	DEX	4	2
DEF	5	3	SKL	7	4
			Total	45(-END) 90(+END)	30

Amethian Units:

Ruben:

Type: Recruit Movement Class: Infantry Weapon Type: Energy Portals

Recruited: Act 2 Ch 2

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	40	5	RES	4	2
STR	7	3	AGL	4	2
INT	6	3	DEX	8	4
DEF	10	5	SKL	8	4
			Total	45(-END) 95(+END)	28

Sapphis:

Type: Recruit Movement Class: Airborne Weapon Type: Pike

Recruited: Act 2 Ch 2

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	35	4	RES	4	2
STR	6	3	AGL	9	4
INT	2	1	DEX	9	4
DEF	6	3	SKL	9	4
			Total	45(-END) 80(+END)	25

Emeril:

Type: Recruit

Movement Class: Cavalry

Weapon Type: Flail

Recruited: Act 2 Ch 3

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	60	5	RES	4	2
STR	6	3	AGL	4	2
INT	4	2	DEX	10	5
DEF	7	3	SKL	10	5
			Total	45(-END) 105(+END)	27

Topak:

Type: Recruit

Movement Class: Airborne

Weapon Type: Chakram

Recruited: Act 2 Ch 3

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	40	5	RES	3	1
STR	5	3	AGL	8	4
INT	0	0	DEX	8	4
DEF	8	4	SKL	8	4
			Total	40(-END) 80(+END)	25

Citree:

Type: Recruit

Movement Class: Armor

Weapon Type: Morning Star

Recruited: Act 2 Ch 4

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	40	5	RES	4	2
STR	10	5	AGL	6	3
INT	2	1	DEX	10	5
DEF	10	5	SKL	8	4
			Total	50(-END) 90(+END)	25

Jeid:

Type: Recruit

Movement Class: Infantry

Weapon Type: Glaive

Recruited: Act 2 Ch 4

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	50	5	RES	5	3
STR	5	3	AGL	10	5
INT	5	3	DEX	10	5
DEF	5	3	SKL	10	5
			Total	50(-END) 100(+END)	25

Malacant:

Type: Recruit

Movement Class: Infantry

Weapon Type: Claymore

Recruited: Act 2 Ch 5

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	50	5	RES	5	1
STR	10	5	AGL	7	3
INT	2	1	DEX	8	3
DEF	10	5	SKL	8	3
			Total	50(-END) 100(+END)	25

Corundel:

Type: Leader

Movement Class: Armor

Weapon Type: Warhammer

Recruited: Act 2 Ch 5

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	50	5	RES	5	2
STR	15	5	AGL	5	2
INT	0	0	DEX	5	3
DEF	10	5	SKL	10	3
			Total	50(-END) 100(+END)	25

Augmanan Units:

Vult:

Type: Recruit Movement Class: Airborne Weapon Type: Energy Portals

Recruited: Act 2 Ch 2

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	40	4	RES	8	4
STR	1	1	AGL	8	4
INT	8	4	DEX	10	5
DEF	4	1	SKL	6	2
			Total	45(-END) 85(+END)	25

Protel:

Type: Recruit Movement Class: Airborne Weapon Type: Matter Rod

Recruited: Act 2 Ch 2

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	50	5	RES	10	5
STR	0	1	AGL	10	5
INT	7	3	DEX	6	2
DEF	6	2	SKL	6	2
			Total	45(-END) 95(+END)	25

Quarx:

Type: Recruit

Movement Class: Armor

Weapon Type: Flail

Recruited: Act 2 Ch 3

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	55	5	RES	10	5
STR	5	2	AGL	3	1
INT	6	3	DEX	3	1
DEF	10	5	SKL	8	3
			Total	45(-END) 100(+END)	25

Orbiter:

Type: Recruit

Movement Class: Armor

Weapon Type: Boomerang

Recruited: Act 2 Ch 3

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	45	4	RES	8	4
STR	3	1	AGL	5	2
INT	6	3	DEX	10	5
DEF	8	4	SKL	5	2
			Total	45(-END) 90(+END)	25

Viron:

Type: Recruit

Movement Class: Infantry

Weapon Type: Daggers

Recruited: Act 2 Ch 4

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	25	2	RES	3	2
STR	2	2	AGL	10	5
INT	8	4	DEX	10	5
DEF	2	2	SKL	10	5
			Total	45(-END) 70(+END)	27

Neutrus:

Type: Recruit

Movement Class: Cavalry

Weapon Type: Energy Cannon

Recruited: Act 2 Ch 4

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	45	5	RES	8	4
STR	2	1	AGL	5	2
INT	8	4	DEX	10	5
DEF	6	3	SKL	6	3
			Total	45(-END) 90(+END)	27

Ampid:

Type: Recruit

Movement Class: Infantry

Weapon Type: Longbow

Recruited: Act 2 Ch 5

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	30	5	RES	4	2
STR	6	3	AGL	10	5
INT	4	2	DEX	10	5
DEF	6	3	SKL	10	5
			Total	50(-END) 80(+END)	30

Ohmer:

Type: Leader

Movement Class: Infantry

Weapon Type: Sword

Recruited: Act 2 Ch 5

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	50	5	RES	8	4
STR	2	1	AGL	8	4
INT	12	6	DEX	8	4
DEF	4	3	SKL	8	4
			Total	50(-END) 100(+END)	30

Lacunae Units:

Tenebris:

Type: Recruit

Movement Class: Infantry

Weapon Type: Debuff Staff

Recruited: Act 1 Ch 1

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	25	5	RES	10	5
STR	0	0	AGL	8	5
INT	8	5	DEX	8	5
DEF	7	3	SKL	4	2
			Total	45(-END) 70(+END)	25

Umbra:

Type: Recruit

Movement Class: Armor

Weapon Type: Halberd

Recruited: Act 4 Ch 3

Stats:

Stat	Base	Growth	Stat	Base	Growth
END	50	5	RES	8	5
STR	8	4	AGL	3	1
INT	5	3	DEX	5	3
DEF	8	5	SKL	8	4
			Total	45(-END) 95(+END)	30

STORY

This section describes the story development through the different acts of the game, as well as the missions the player will play through to experience this story

Prologue: Long Forgotten

The Prologue introduces the Kingdom of Rylon before its decline, and it follows Valos Tyr through a secret mission with the Dragon Vanguard. After going off on his own to pursue a mysterious target, Valos finds a strange device and ends up transported to a strange place. In this place, Valos is captured by the Lacunae and is put into stasis. After some time, Valos is woken up by a Lacunae scientist and they escape with a relic that seems to be important. During their escape, Valos and his helper are separated, but he manages to leave through a portal.

- The prologue levels walk the player through simple maps with Valos at full strength as a member of the Dragon Vanguard
- By the end of the Prologue, Valos loses his weapons and Dragon and has to rely on Lumine for help.

Act 1: Reuniting a Fragmented Kingdom

Act 1 finds Valos suddenly back in Rylon, but it is over a century after he left. No one he once knew is still alive. He is found by the new prince, Warrec, and his retainers Quivel and Garris. He explains what happened to him and who he is and is told that Rylon has

not had a Dragon Vanguard since the Lacunae defeated them and the dragons were traded for Synertek. He is dismayed to find his country a shadow of its former self, and vows to help them rebuild.

Warrec confesses that he is not much of a leader, and he does not know how to stop his lords from rebelling nor how to fix their resource and bandit problems. Valos vows to lend his strength and battle experience to Warrec so they can first quell the rebellion before it's too late.

Chapter 1: A Broken Land

Valos and Garris suggest they personally go to quell a small uprising nearby to establish an early show of strength.

- Rout map: defeat all enemies and race to get resources (bonus for reaching all of them first)
- Various foot soldier enemies alongside two elite riders and the Drake Lord
- Mostly field terrain, but some forest tiles and mountain exist for defense as well as to slow riders.

Chapter 2: Synergetic Technology

With Lady Dralia, Sebra, and Kilian supporting them, Warrec and co. seek out Lord Zelo's synertek expertise. Zelo wishes to be left to his studies and is allocating resources for his whole region to fuel his experiments.

- Seize map: reach and seize the goal through tight corridors and magical traps.
- Magic units introduce new attack ranges like linear projectiles and AOE spells.
- Map features hazard tiles and traps that further limit how the map is traversed.
- Magic weapons and traps also introduce status damage

Chapter 3: Trust is Earned

Quivel and Warrec are worried that Spymaster Caid is working with outside forces to overthrow the kingdom.

- Boss map: Defeat spymaster Caid to win
- Elite units that are buffing spymaster and debuffing the player's units.
- Many terrain tiles modify stats and make enemies harder to defeat.

Chapter 4: The Wrath of Wrynna

Wrynna has launched a full assault on the castle. Warrec and the rest of the Lords are prepared to defend until she sees reason.

- Defense map, lots of basic units and unique elite units with varied skillsets.
- Defend for 10 turns or defeat boss
- Enemy reinforcements appear every other turn

Chapter 5: Peace is Short-lived

With all of the Lords supporting Warrec, Rylon is ready to move forward. Suddenly, word comes that a village is under attack by void elves.

- Rescue and Boss: reach burning villages and endangered villagers and rescue them while also defeating all enemies. Objective changes into boss in second half of mission.
- Introduces Lacunae with enhanced synertek, several elite enemies.

Act 2: Seeking Valued Help

Rylon is united again, but the recent attack has left Warrec worried that they are not ready for another invasion. Some of the army bring up their past alliance with the Amethians, but others suggest synertek stolen by Augmana.

Path A, Amethians:

Warrec decides that Rylon needs to rekindle its relations with the powerful Amethian warriors, who have managed to avoid all Lacunae attempts of conquest. Warrec believes a strong alliance between the two would give them a strong military advantage with strong soldiers and much better equipment than they currently have access to. However, the Amethians have completely fortified their volcano and the surrounding territory, and they do not wish to deal with the rest of Aedrest.

Chapter 6A: Hostile Territory

Rylon's army enters Amethian territory at the crystal forest at the volcano's base. This forest is known to be dangerous with hostile bandits and dangerous terrain.

- Seize Map: reach the edge of the forest
- This map features harmful tiles and shifting walls of living crystals
- Enemies on this map keep spawning until Warrec reaches the seize tile

Chapter 7A: Burning Flow

Having met some guides through the forest, the heroes now find themselves at the great lava flows, which they have to cross to climb the mountain. This terrain is dangerous, with narrow crossings that could bottleneck the army.

- Boss Map: defeat the boss to cross safely.
- Lava tiles on this map are uncrossable for non-airborne units.
- Narrow bridges across the lava provide chokepoints for either army to take advantage of.

Chapter 8A: Proving Grounds

The army has reached Amethian territory halfway up the mountain, but the Amethians do not think Rylon's leaders are worthy of an alliance. The Amethian general orders a battle at the Proving Grounds to judge the army's worth.

- Rout Map: defeat all of the enemies to win.

- All enemies are elite troops who will be tough to defeat.
- Map features hazardous and defensive terrain to utilize.

Chapter 9A: Mine rescue

After proving themselves, Warrec and his companions are welcomed into the summit city to discuss an alliance with the Amethians. During the meeting, however, an explosion happens in the mine, and the Amethian council requests that their friends help rescue their smiths who are trapped in there.

- Rescue Map: find the master smith and bring him to the mine entrance
- Map consists of rooms and tunnels. Each room contains enemies or hazards.
- Breakable walls give the player options of where to go.

Chapter 10A: Burning Summit

The alliance is formed, and Rylon now has better equipment, but their discovery in the mine warned them of a Lacunae invasion. They prepare to defend the city summit with their new allies.

- Defense Map: defend the city from Lacunae forces for 12 turns.
- Enemy troops continue to spawn from portal tiles, destroy to slow the rate of reinforcements. Elite troops spawn on turn 8.
- Defensive traps and terrain can be used to hold off overwhelming numbers.
- Multiple defense objectives increase the number of victory and failure states.

Path B, Augmana:

Warrec decides to seek out the Augmana to reclaim the technology being stolen, as well as to attempt to improve relations with the mysterious nation. There are rumors that the Augmana is not doing well, despite their augmentation, and it is well known they are searching for something important to them. Warrec hopes that the Augmana would be willing to work with them to find better resources and to get revenge on their mutual Lacunae enemies.

Chapter 6B: Lost Drifts

Warrec's army reaches the start of the tundra, and a thick snowstorm has made it hard to see. They cannot waste any time, however, so they push on through the snowdrifts.

Unfortunately, some Augmana scavengers are in this area looking for loot, and they will defend the salvage at all costs.

- Rout Map: defeat all of the hidden enemies.
- Snow weather obstructs view, restricting visible tiles to a few spaces around player units.
- Some tiles restrict movement due to thick snow buildup.

Chapter 7B: Cold Coffin

After convincing the scavengers they mean no harm, our heroes and their new friends are sheltering from the increasingly violent blizzard in an abandoned outpost. Unfortunately, they are attacked, and they are forced to defend themselves in this small building.

- Defense Map: hold the building for 8 turns.
- This map features multiple paths to defend and some fortifications to use.
- Blizzard weather makes it difficult to see approaching enemies outside.

Chapter 8B: Prison Break

The army is captured by Augmana and thrown in an old Lacunae prison without being given a chance to explain themselves to their captors. Some new allies launch a plan to help them break out.

- Escape Map: get all characters to the escape tile. Bonus for no combat.
- This map features locked jail cells and patrolling guards.
- The mission gives two new characters at the start that are outside of the jail cells.

These characters can release the rest of the army from their cells.

Chapter 9B: Artifact Acquisition

The escape of the Rylonian army has impressed the Augmana, and they request their manpower for a heist. The artifact they are stealing is stored in a highly defended

Lacunae vault, and it should provide enough resources for the Augmana to become sustainable for a long time.

- Retrieval Map: retrieve an important item and escape
- This map features traps and defenses making navigation difficult.
- Enemies on this map try to keep the player's army out of the vault. Reinforcements begin to spawn when the player retrieves the item.

Chapter 10B: Cyber Chase

The artifact has been retrieved, but the Lacunae have sent a strike force to stop the fleeing army. If they can lose their pursuers and reach the Augmana base, they should be able to activate the artifact and turn their defenses on to hold off the Lacunae.

- Mobile Defense Map: Guard the moving transport from pursuing Lacunae forces.
- Enemies have high mobility and attack ranges. They also respawn frequently.
- Defense objective moves, changing the important area of the map.
- There are multiple ways to lose this mission, and multiple ways to succeed.

Act 3: Consequences and Conflict

Rylon has found valuable allies, but it seems that the Lacunae have invaded the remaining faction and established a powerful foothold in Aedrest. Additionally, a mysterious void elf named Lumine has shown up with information about the Elder Dragons, and Valos decided to go with her to investigate, leaving the army without their

best soldier. Nevertheless, Warrec realizes that the Alliance needs to go on the offensive while the active enemy army is still busy organizing their new territory. This leads the army into the other territory they chose not to seek out previously.

Path A:

Rylon was able to help the Amethians defend their summit, and rebuild their legendary alliance, supplying their army with valuable fighters and better equipment from the Amethian forges. Unfortunately, the Augmana had no such help, and the Lacunae reestablished conquest of their former servants, with a stronger military and research presence in the tundra. This region will be tough to invade, but if the Alliance does not strike soon, they might not be able to stop a properly organized, synertek augmented army.

Chapter 11A: Tundra Trek

The reformed alliance has entered the Augmana's frigid territory, but the snowstorm has made advancing difficult. Lacunae patrols are also in the area, but difficult to see through the storm.

- Rout Map: defeat all of the hidden enemies.
- Snow weather obstructs view, restricting visible tiles to a few spaces around player units.
- Some tiles restrict movement due to thick snow buildup.

- Amethian troops are further hindered by the cold.

Chapter 12A: Unwanted Guests

The army takes shelter from the storm in a seemingly abandoned bunker. However, the building turns out to be occupied, as they find Augmana scavengers hiding from the Lacunae patrols. Unfortunately, the army's movements were not hidden, and the enemy attacks the bunker, forcing the alliance and their new friends to defend the shelter.

- Defense Map: hold the building for 10 turns.
- This map features multiple paths to defend and some fortifications to use.
- Blizzard weather makes it difficult to see approaching enemies outside.

Chapter 13A: Early Release

The army learns about a Lacunae prison where Augmana rebels are being held. The prison is supposedly poorly guarded, however, so Warrec decides this is their best option for securing allies and reverse some of the power in the region.

- Rescue Map: rescue prisoners and take them to the escape tile.
- This map features locked jail cells and patrolling guards.
- Some guards drop keys

Chapter 14A: Counter Heist

The Lacunae are attempting to retrieve an old and powerful artifact they need to fortify the Augmana base. The Alliance cannot afford to let them get this artifact and attempts to beat them to it.

- Seize Map: get to the artifact before the enemy does
- This map features traps and defenses making navigation difficult.
- Enemies on this map try to keep the player's army out of the vault. Reinforcements begin to spawn when the player retrieves the item.

Chapter 15A: A Train to Catch

The retrieved artifact was a decoy, and the Lacunae are escaping with the real one on a transport. The transport must be stopped before the enemy can use it.

- Mobile Attack Map: Attack and take over the moving Lacunae transport.
- Enemies have high mobility and attack ranges. They also respawn frequently.
- Objective moves, changing the important area of the map.
- There are multiple ways to lose this mission, and multiple ways to succeed.

Path B:

Rylon was able to help the Augmana find a useful energy source and establish a strong defensive barrier for the Augmana glacier fortress. This allowed them to resist Lacunae occupation, but it left the Amethians with no allies against a sudden Lacunae sneak

attack. The Lacunae now have hold of the most defensible region of Aedrest and the best fighters and ores at their disposal. Rylon cannot let the Lacunae hold this position for long, and they seek to free their former allies from their new rulers.

Chapter 11B: Burning Tension

The New Alliance army enters Amethian territory at the crystal forest at the volcano's base. This forest is known to be dangerous with hostile bandits and dangerous terrain.

- Seize Map: reach the edge of the forest
- This map features harmful tiles and shifting walls of living crystals
- Enemies on this map keep spawning until Warrec reaches the seize tile

Chapter 12B: Fighting the Flow

After convincing some guides that they wish to stop the Lacunae, they are led through the forest. The army now finds itself at the great lava flows, which has to be crossed to climb the mountain. This terrain is dangerous, with narrow crossings that could bottleneck the army.

- Boss Map: defeat the boss to cross safely.
- Lava tiles on this map are uncrossable for non-airborne units.
- Narrow bridges across the lava provide chokepoints for either army to take advantage of.

Chapter 13B: Freedom Fighters

The army has reached Amethian territory halfway up the mountain, where the great proving grounds are. Amethians are being forced to fight here by the Lacunae troops for both entertainment and to identify the most capable fighters. The alliance's new Amethian allies suggest a show of strength to entice a rebellion.

- Rout Map: defeat all of the enemies to win.
- All enemies are elite troops who will be tough to defeat.
- Map features hazardous and defensive terrain to utilize.

Chapter 14B: Back Door

The rescued Amethians suggest a sneak attack through the mines, where secret passages lead to the capitol. The Lacunae don't know these tunnels well, but they do have a presence here, mining for resources.

- Seize Map: reach the mine exit.
- Map consists of rooms and tunnels. Each room contains enemies or hazards.
- Breakable walls give the player options of where to go.

Chapter 15B: Sneak Attack

With their entrance secured, the Alliance is poised to storm the Amethian capitol through its back door. Though they army has the element of surprise, the Lacunae is already preparing for a rebellion and is prepared for any attack.

- Boss Map: Defeat the general in charge of the Lacunae forces.
- Enemy troops continue to spawn from portal tiles, destroy to slow the rate of reinforcements. Elite troops spawn on turn 8.
- Defensive traps and terrain can be used to hold off overwhelming numbers.
- Multiple defense objectives increase the number of victory and failure states.

Act 4: Enter the Void

With Aedrest properly defended and united against the Lacunae, the allied army seeks to take the fight to Voidhaven itself. Their new guide, Lumina, leads them into the Great Void to free the rest of the dragons and take down the Lacunae Overseer, Mulciber.

Chapter 16: Dark Descent

Lumine leads the army to a place where they can enter the Great Void and begin their attack on Voidhaven. This place is a cave in the mountains where Elderite deposits are plentiful. She explains that they can use the Elderite to travel between Aedrest and the void.

- Seize Map: Seize the Large Elderite tile at the end of the cave.
- Lacunae forces are patrolling here guarding the deposits.
- The cave is a maze of disconnected rooms that can only be traveled with small Elderite crystals in each room. These crystals connect caves in both worlds.

Chapter 17: The Void Expanse

The alliance army finds themselves out of the cave in a large open area of the Great Void. In the distance they can see Voidhaven's towers and lights, and they begin their march across the expanse. However, they soon encounter an approaching army from Voidhaven

- Rout Map: Defeat all enemies
- This map feature very little defensive terrain, forcing characters to fight in the open.
- Enemy consists mostly of high-mobility cavalry and airborne units.

Chapter 18: The Calm Before the Storm

The alliance has crossed the expanse and has to prepare for the final assault. Lumine and Valos taught Warrec a way to unlock the power of the Kingstone to break the dome protecting the city, but it needs to be charged up properly before it can do so.

- Defense Map: Protect the VIP unit as they prepare a way to enter Voidhaven.
- Enemies will focus on attacking the VIP, prevent that from happening.

Chapter 19: Lost and Found

Warrec succeeded to take down the dome, and the army is inside the city. They have encountered little resistance inside, surprisingly, but they have their sights set on releasing the dragons from the research labs. Inside the labs however, an ambush awaits.

- Rout Map: Defeat the enemies to survive the ambush
- Close quarters and traps make this lab dangerous

- Enemies on this map are aggressive elite soldiers

Chapter 20: Down with Tyranny

The alliance has now invaded Voidhaven and taken the Elder Dragons back, leaving them with no other goal than the defeat of Mulciber, the Lacunae Overlord. Mulciber is expecting them and has readied the strongest force of Lacunae soldiers to defend him.

This battle will decide the fate of two lands.

- Boss Map: Defeat Mulciber.
- This map features various terrain tiles, as well as traps and multiple paths to approach
- Enemies on this map are all respawning elites of many different types
- Mulciber is incredibly powerful and hard to reach

Game End:

With Mulciber defeated, Warrec decides to leave the fate of Voidhaven in Lumine's hands. She believes she can establish a new culture of knowledge and cooperation, and she has proven a trusted ally to all of the people of Aedrest. The leaders begin plans to rebuild both lands through trade, which fixes resource problems for Voidhaven, and the economic and technological needs of the people of Aedrest.

Warrec has grown into a brave and respected leader, and his people welcome him home a hero. Rylon has begun to regain its pride and with the Dragons back, and strong alliances formed, external threats seem a thing of the past. Though Valos does not have a

way to return to his time, he has decided to train a new generation of the Dragon Vanguard, which operates jointly with the other nations.

PROCESS

This section outlines my process for developing the game and the decisions I made based on research into other games. Ultimately the goal of this game was to take a genre I love and improve on its faults while blending in aspects of other games and fiction that I love.

Research:

In the process of planning Lost Vanguard, I spent countless hours playing Tactics games and Fantasy games with the intent to identify what I enjoyed about them and what I can do to stand out in these genres. I played games I had never played before so I could broaden my experiences and find new inspirations. I also replayed games that I had played before so I could remind myself what I did and did not like about those games, and to look at them with an analytical perspective rather than a recreational perspective.

Most of Lost Vanguard was inspired by Fire Emblem, a game franchise made by Intelligent Systems and published by Nintendo. The first game in the franchise, *Fire Emblem: Shadow Dragon and the Blade of Light* was the first game to popularize the genre, and the series became the template for most SRPGs and Tactics games that have followed in the last 30 years. From Fire Emblem, I have taken influences in much of my gameplay. The missions, with their grid maps, terrain tiles, player/enemy phases, combat scenes, and the general idea for the way stats and weapons are used are all aspects inspired by at least one entry in the franchise.

I also played other Tactics games such as XCOM (Firaxis), Advanced Wars (Intelligent Systems), Final Fantasy Tactics (Square Enix), and Wargroove (Chucklefish).

These games gave me an idea of how different games in the genre can be, and what ways I could make my game different from all of them, often by combining elements of them or doing something completely new instead. Because a lot of these games are tactics games with limited RPG elements, I also researched a lot of RPG games like Elder Scrolls, Final Fantasy, Xenoblade Chronicles, Dark Souls, and Mass Effect for inspiration on how to design characters, stat systems, weapons and magic, healing mechanics, and more. This wide pool of influences helped me craft the kind of game I wanted to play, which I believe is an important part of the game development process.

Gameplay Decisions:

Many Tactics games, including most Fire Emblem games, have a weapon durability system, as do many other kinds of RPGs and adventure games. This feature exists to challenge the player and incentivize them to make decisions on what weapons to use at a given time. This is great as a teaching tool because it forces the player to think about how strong an enemy is and what weapon is appropriate for the situation. This also gives most weapons a use, as even weak, early-game weapons are used throughout to save durability on stronger weapons. However, this system encourages item hoarding for the same reason. Because of item durability, players often hold on to strong weapons and never use them because there is a concern that the weapon will break, and the player will not be able to use it later when they really need it against a tough fight. So, they never use the more interesting, powerful weapons and use early game weapons more than intended, crippling their entire playthrough and taking away the strategy of the choice.

Item hoarding is often also an issue with healing items, specifically in JRPGs (Japanese Role-Playing Games). Healing is often tied to a consumable item, like a potion that heals a specific amount of a character's health and is then used up. Often players will wait to heal their characters until absolutely necessary and only use weaker potions, leaving them with 99 unused potions at the end of the game, making the mechanic pointless.

Because of these issues, as well as my own personal experiences with item hoarding, I decided to remove weapon durability and single use healing items in *Lost Vanguard*. Weapons acquired in game can be used an unlimited number of times by the characters equipped with them, and weapon strategy is instead focused on the types of weapons used and their different qualities. My healing replacement takes inspiration from limited use healing systems made popular in games like *Dark Souls*.

Souls games feature a healing potion with a certain number of uses that can be refilled at safe/save points. This kind of limited item allows the player to gauge how risky they can be because they know how many times they can heal, but by giving the player refills as they make progress in the game players aren't incentivized to hoard the items for the whole game, just be careful how they use them until they get more. In *Lost Vanguard*, heals are limited per mission and have a single method of being used, and they are refilled at the start of the next mission.

To incentivize the use of healing items and introduce an exciting way to play the game, I have designed my game's weapon skills to be incredibly varied but powerful attacks that damage the character that uses them. These skills add a lot of variety to how the player can play as they do different amounts of damage, can cause fun effects, or even

change the range of the weapon. The self-damage concept is used to limit how often these abilities can be used while also giving the player ways to extend their usability by healing the character. This concept was inspired by the way Fire Emblem Echoes does magic, in which spells damage the caster, as well as the way that combat arts work in recent fire emblem games, where they offer new ways to fight at a cost to weapon durability. I combined these two ideas into a new system.

The last major mechanics I designed to be new ways of using old concepts is in my class system. Fire Emblem games use a very in-depth class system where each character has a class that determines how they play, what kinds of weapons and stats they have, and how they move on the battlefield. I decided I wanted to get rid of the traditional class system and instead make characters play based on two classes, their movement type, and their weapon type. The four movement types in the game determine how the character moves and what types of weapons they are weak to, and the weapon type determines the kind of weapons they are allowed to use, and what kind of damage they deal to the enemy. However, this system is rather simple on the surface, so I decided to implement individual levels to both the movement and weapon skills, so as the character improves, the player can choose new abilities for the character to unlock. This allows the player a new level of customization to how the player decides to develop each character's playstyle, on top of the player driven stat increases during level up.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Overall, through this project I set out to design a video game by incorporating aspects of games I enjoy that I believed would contribute to a fun new experience. I designed a tactics game that prioritizes player choice in how the numerous characters in the game are developed. I also created a world that is broken because of old and new conflicts and I wrote a story that follows dysfunctional characters that attempt to fix the world's divisions and find their place in it.

I wanted to create a game that addresses the issues I have with Tactics games and Role-Playing games while also expanding on the aspects of these genres that I think have potential. In doing so I combined many interesting systems into a brand-new experience. I wanted this to be a game that I would like to play and that would satisfy both new and old players of the genre.