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NARAKA: BLADEPOINT

From Prototype to Release: Melee Combat and Battle Royale Games

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#GDC22



NARAKA

BLADEPOINT 



NARAKA: BLADEPOINT From Prototype to Release: Melee Combat and Battle Royale Games



1. Overview of “NARAKA: BLADEPOINT”



NARAKA: BLADEPOINT is a 60-player action combat offering players insane mobility powered by parkour and grappling hook, a vast arsenal of melee and ranged weapons, and a roster of characters with powerful abilities—transform yourself into a gigantic

80% of the 49,947 user reviews for this game are positive.

RECENT REVIEWS: Mostly Positive (12,790)

ALL REVIEWS: Very Positive (49,947)

RELEASE DATE: 12 Aug, 2021

DEVELOPER: 24 Entertainment

PUBLISHER: NetEase Games Montréal

Popular user-defined tags for this product:





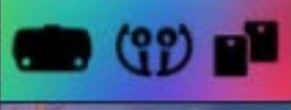





Gore Battle Royale Multiplayer Martial Arts +

Top games by current player count

CURRENT PLAYERS	PEAK TODAY	GAME
412,334	696,380	Counter-Strike: Global Offensive
394,593	699,434	Dota 2
180,125	316,872	PUBG: BATTLEGROUNDS
111,688	217,115	Apex Legends
75,612	478,838	New World
66,164	82,910	Team Fortress 2
61,739	98,018	Grand Theft Auto V
58,287	115,734	NARAKA: BLADEPOINT
49,864	53,988	MIR4
44,581	58,344	Wallpaper Engine

Top sellers for the week ending 15 August 2021

Week 32

	#	Name	Developer	Release Date
	#1	NARAKA: BLADEPOINT	24 Entertainment	12 August 2021
	#2 ↓	Back 4 Blood #1 last week	Turtle Rock Studios	12 October 2021
	#3	Car Mechanic Simulator 2021	Red Dot Games	11 August 2021
	#4	NARAKA: BLADEPOINT	24 Entertainment	12 August 2021
	#5 ↓	Valve Index VR Kit Package #4 last week		28 June 2019
	#6	HUMANKIND™	AMPLITUDE Studios	17 August 2021
	#7 ↓	It Takes Two #6 last week	Hazelight	26 March 2021
	#8	DOOM Eternal Deluxe Edition Package	id Software	20 March 2020
	#9 ↓	Tribes of Midgard #3 last week	Norsfell	27 July 2021
	#10 ↓	Grand Theft Auto V #5 last week	Rockstar North	13 April 2015

1.2 Official Review on IGN: 8



24 ENTERTAINMENT



NARAKA: BLADEPOINT REVIEW

GREAT

REVIEWED ON: PC

Superb melee combat and gravity-defying movement make Naraka: Bladepoint a clever spin on the familiar battle royale formula.

PLAYSTATION 5 PC



1.3 > Differences between NARAKA and current Battle Royale Games

Battle royale games in current market



PUBG

Realistic shooting + Battle royale



FORTNITE

Building + Battle royale



APEX

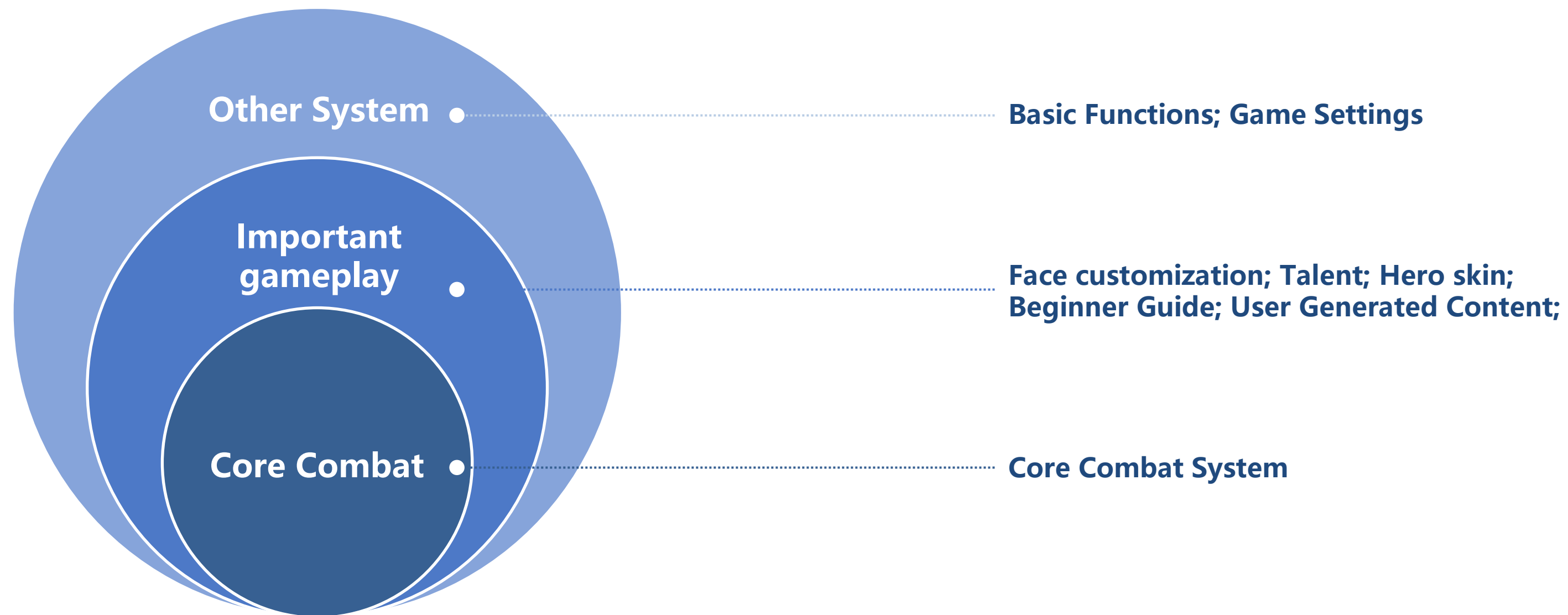
Hero Skills + Battle royale

1.3 > Differences between NARAKA and current Battle Royale Games

Why NARAKA is unique?

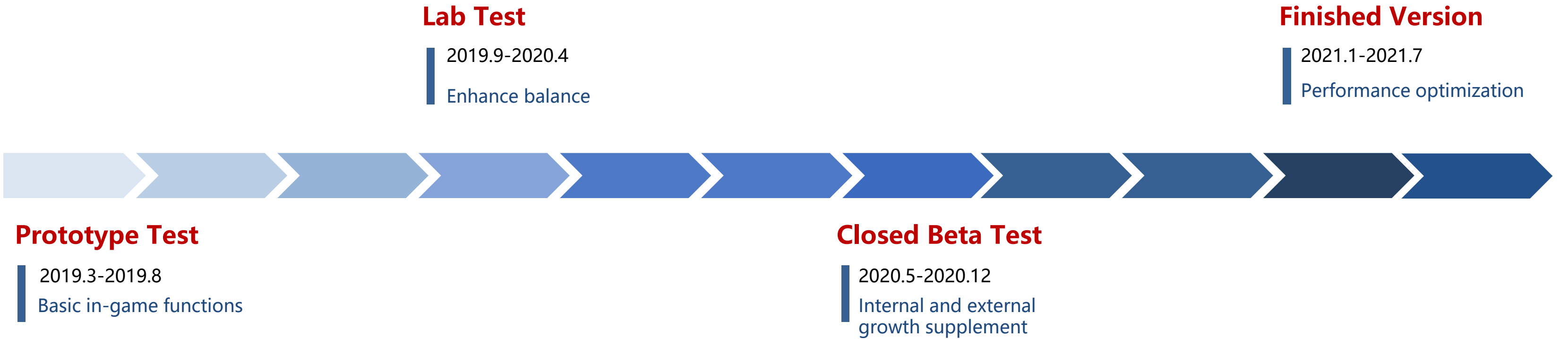


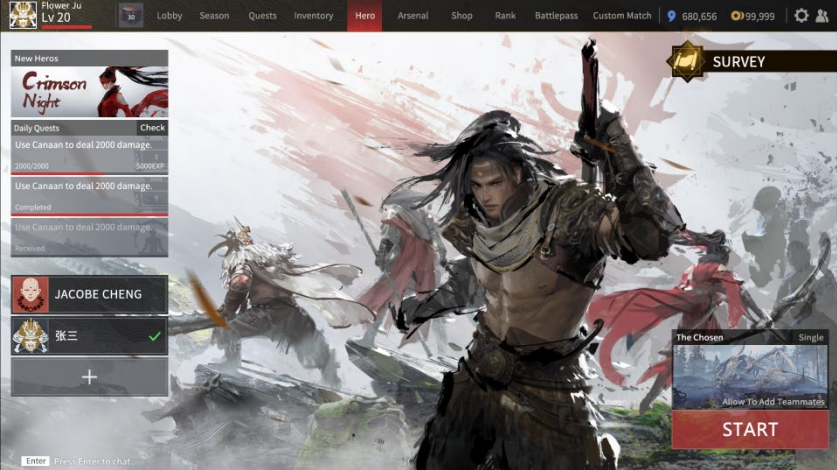
1.4 > Construction of NARAKA



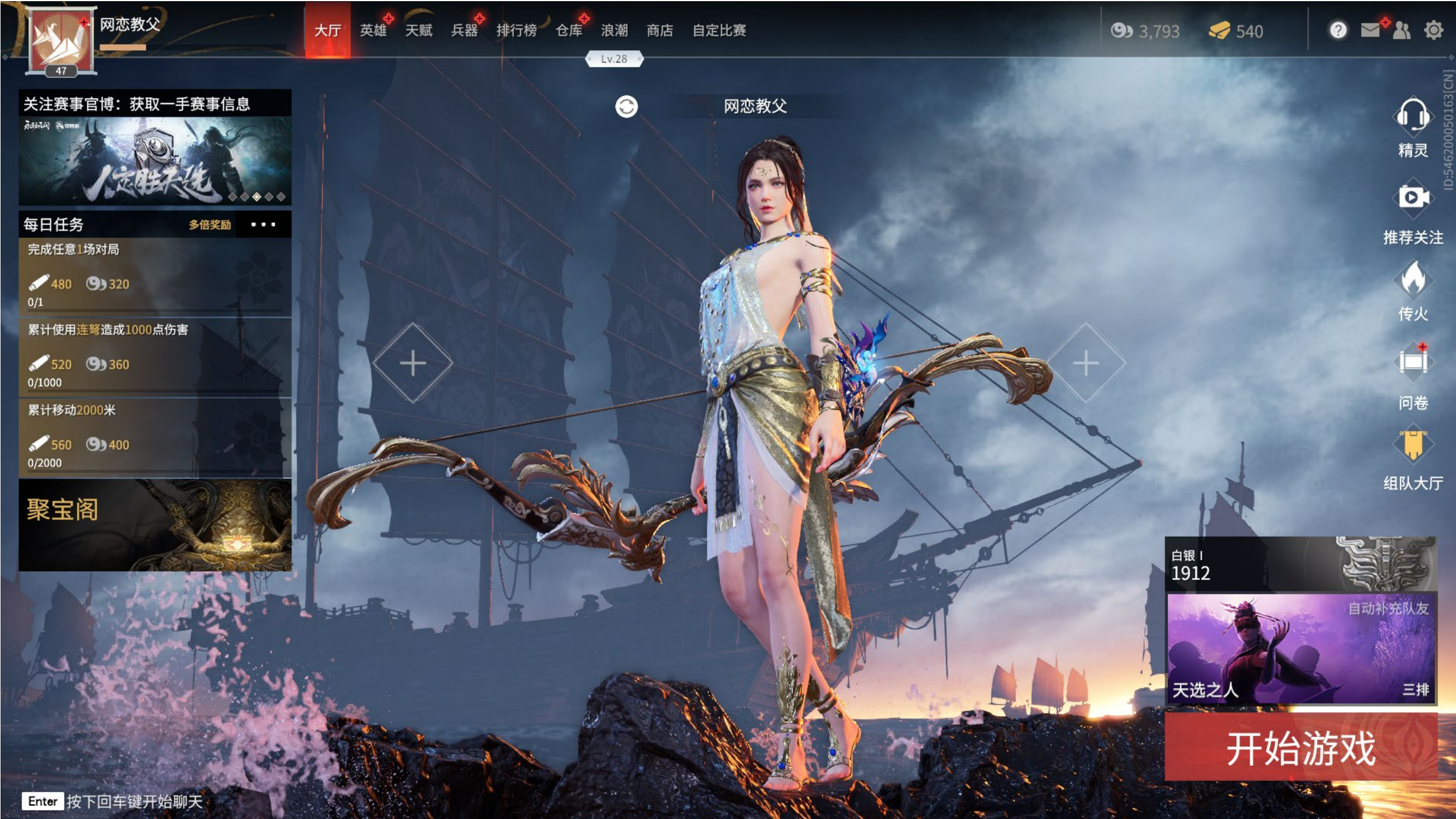


2. Design Challenges in Four Development Periods





Before



NOW

1

Prototype test

Design challenges in start-up period

2.2 > Main Design Concept of NARAKA



“UNCHAINED”

Melee combat + Parkour

We want to make a battle royale game based on ancient Chinese martial arts which is different from other games like apex and pubg.

Prototype test



Only melee weapons

At first we wanted to make a battle royale game with only melee weapons. In prototype test, we have long sword and katana.

Death Match of 20 players

In the prototype test, there is only one game mode, deathmatch.

Parkour

The action system in our prototype allows players to parkour, such as climbing rock, jumping through windows or running on a beam

Result of Prototype test

Players' gradings have huge difference		
Player's ability	Score (-5~5)	Number of players
T1	3	2
T2	2.4	14
T3-1	1.4	15

T2 - Hardcore gamer
Around 13,000,000.00 in China
This type of players spends lots of time in game and has rich experience.They like to challenge complex and difficult games

T3-1 - Moderate gamer
Around 50,000,000.00 in China
This type of players uses games as the main form of entertainment and has a long-term gaming habit

2.2 > Prototype Test: Problems

Problems we found in prototype test

Most players participating in the prototype test thought that NARAKA was too hardcore

WHY?

Small core player group

Melee weapons is too difficult to use

2.2 > Prototype Test: Solution

Solution: " Rock Paper Scissors "



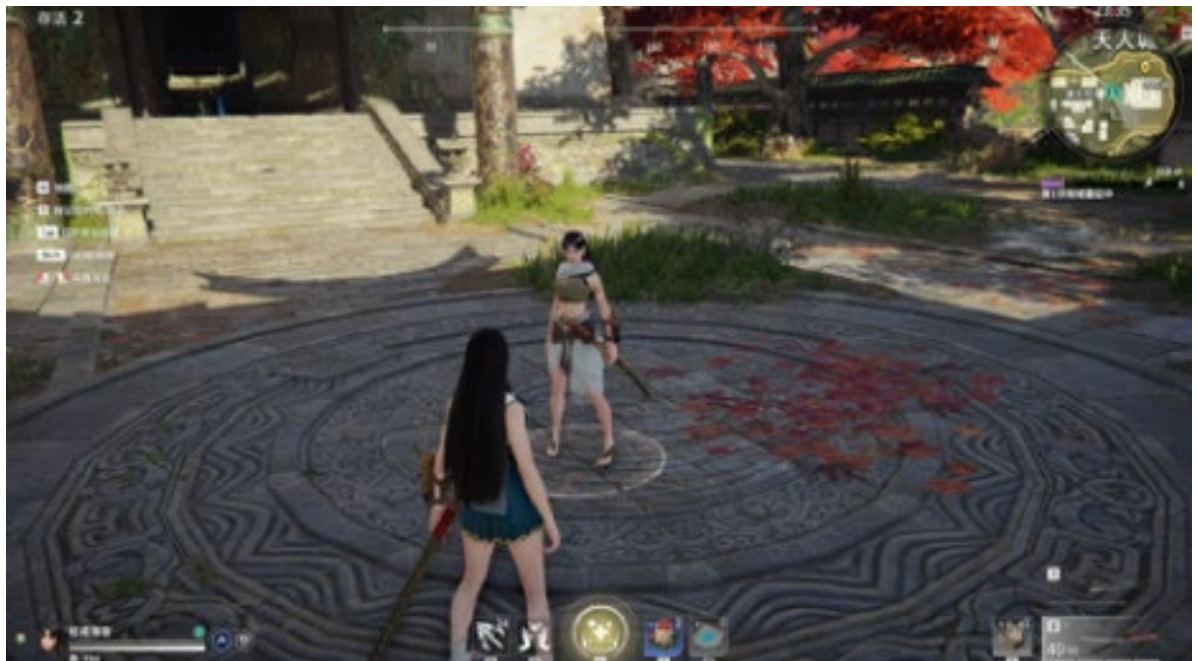
What is "Rock Paper Scissors" ?

In order to solve the problems mentioned above, we **simplified** the operation of melee weapons and formulated a combat rule. There are three ways of attack in NARAKA:

- Common Attack: Click left button or right button
- Focus Strikes: Hold left button or right button
- **Counterstrikes**: Click left button or right button at the same time

These three basic combat moves have different effects colors, white, **red** and **blue**. Players can quickly switch between various moves

2.2 > Prototype Test: Solution



Focus Strikes



Common Attack



Counterstrikes

Highlight: "Counterstrikes"

High-risks and high-rewards

Focus strikes can make huge damage. However, **Counterstrikes** is against focus strikes by knocking back and **disarming** the enemy. The case in the video is to use red moves (**counterstrikes**) to restrain blue moves (focus strikes)

Advantages of this combat rule

1. In line with player expectations
2. Easy for beginners
3. Masters can have higher operations



Solution: Add Ranged Weapons

In movies describing ancient Chinese wars, people use Zhuge Nu or some other long-ranged weapons in addition to melee weapons. Considering the players' imagination of ancient battles, we designed long-range weapons in NARAKA. In this way, the players who like TPS and the players who like ARPG can play in one match.



Various ranged weapons in NARAKA

2.2 > Prototype Test: Solution

Solution: Add Ranged Weapons

Players who love ranged weapons can also find fun in NARAKA. This made the **expansion of the core player group** of our game.



2

Lab test

Design challenges of a complete version

Lab test



Melee+Ranged weapons

In this test, we hope to collect feedback from players about long-range weapons

Death match+ Battle royale

In this test, we added battle royale in mode selection

Smoother parkour system

Based on the feedback from the prototype test, we optimized the parkour system

New Problem after we adding ranged weapons:

Ranged weapons are really strong, and often leave melee weapons useless in some degree

Players with Melee Weapons

At a disadvantage

- Difficult to counteract after being attacked
- Can't fight close with long-ranged players

VS

Players with Ranged Weapons

At a advantage

- Higher damage
- Kill other players in a safe situation



less people use melee weapons

~~Melee~~

New elements (ranged weapons) make the original design goal impossible to achieve.

Ranged weapons are far better in most situations in combat. Players are running away from fights and they simply just using ranged weapons instead of trying to fight with melee.

Through the test we found that some weapon re-balance is needed. So we needed **to focus on melee combat again** because it is the **main difference** between NARAKA and other battle royale games.

2.3 > Same problems in other Melee+Battle Royale Games

Why they failed?



The Swordsmen X



Nine Trials

In the other two battle royale games with melee weapons above, we found the same problem. Players prefer to shoot each other with ranged weapons rather than fight with melee because it is difficult to catch up with the enemy and fight closely.

Main Problem: Difficult to catch up with the enemy

2.3 > Challenges of Closed Beta Test: Balance between melee and ranged weapons <

Solution A: The Design of Grappling Hook



+



Each hero comes with a grappling hook, players can find grappling spool in the battleground of NARAKA

2.3 > Challenges of Closed Beta Test: Balance between melee and ranged weapons <

Solution A: The Design of Grappling Hook

We believe that modifying the weapon damage value will not solve this problem completely



2.3 ➤ Challenges of Closed Beta Test: Balance between melee and ranged weapons

Solution B: Melee weapons can block bullets



Second Part

Self Introduction

林景涵

Jinghan Lin

- UX designer of NARAKA BLADEPOINT
- Lecturer of School-Enterprise Cooperation Course, School of Design, Shanghai Jiaotong University



3

Closed Beta Test

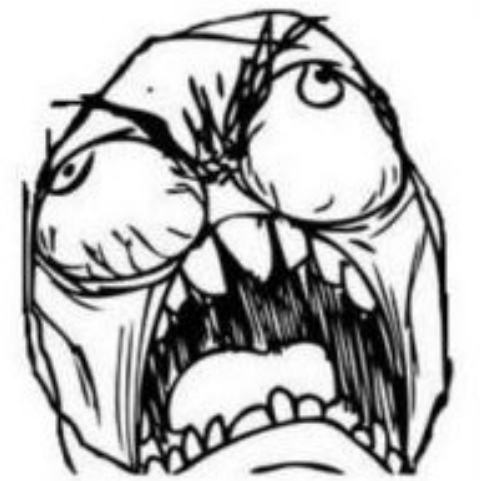
Design Challenges before the game is released

2.4 > Problem 1: Players cannot reach all places in game

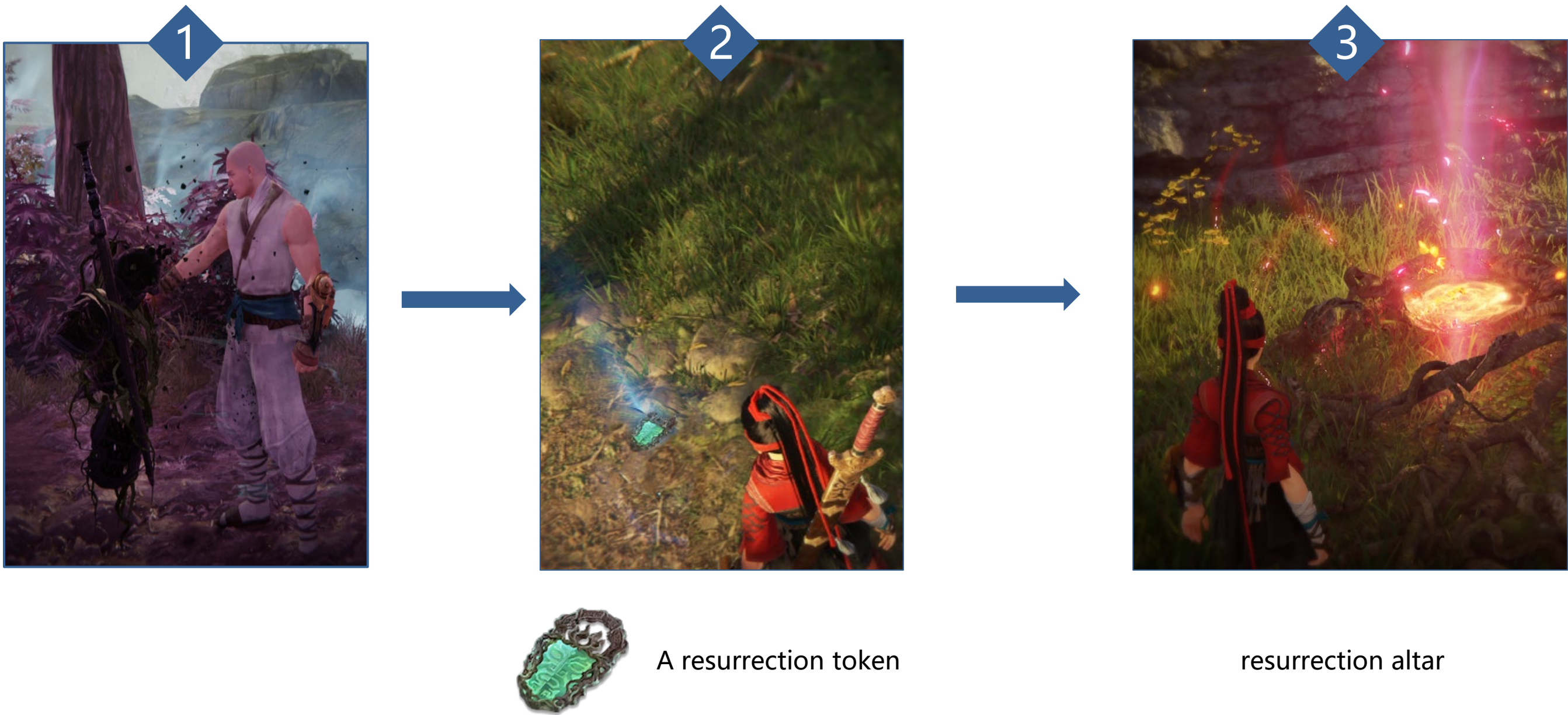


Allows players to reach anywhere as they wish

2.4 > Problem 2: Players' resurrection relies too much on teammates



First attempt:



2.4 > Problem 2: Players' resurrection relies too much on teammates

First attempt:



Resurrection Token



Disadvantages

1. Rely on teammates
2. Player killed will lose the sense of participation

Unchained **×**

Final Solution: Soul Run



 resurrection on map

 The mark help players find nearest altar quickly



"soul" state

2.4 > Problem 2: Players' resurrection relies too much on teammates

Final Solution: Soul Run



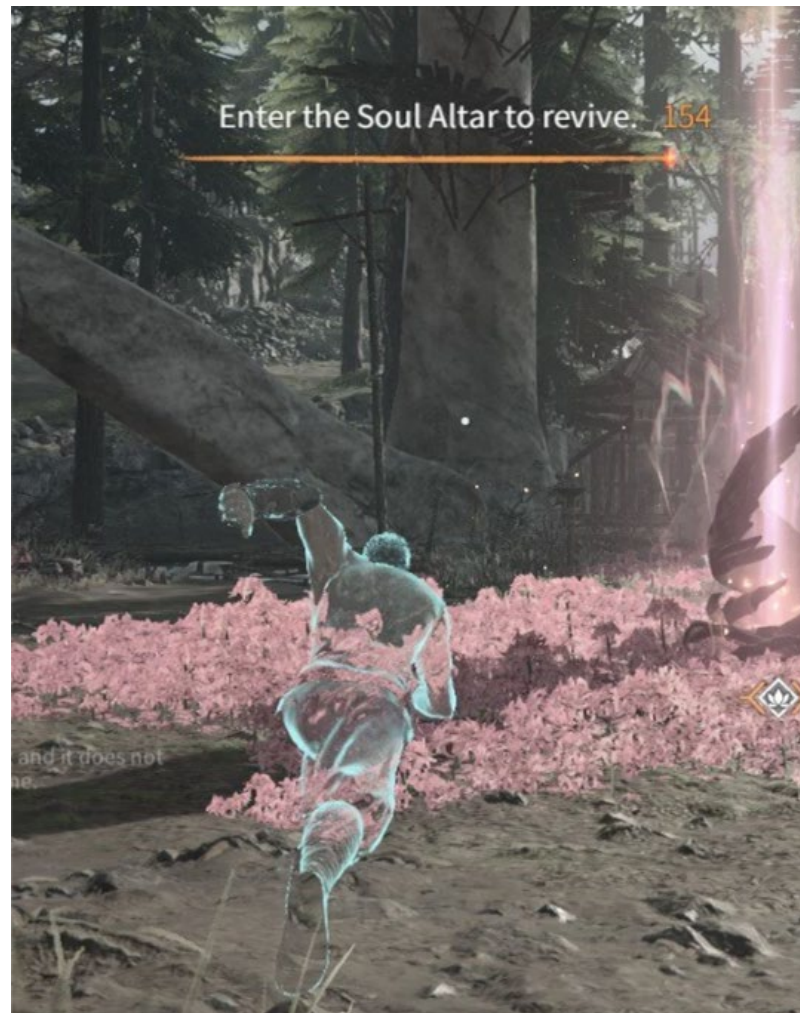
Players can go to the resurrection altar to revive



We provide low-level armor and weapons for the resurrected players

2.4 > Problem 2: Players' resurrection relies too much on teammates

Final Solution: Soul Run



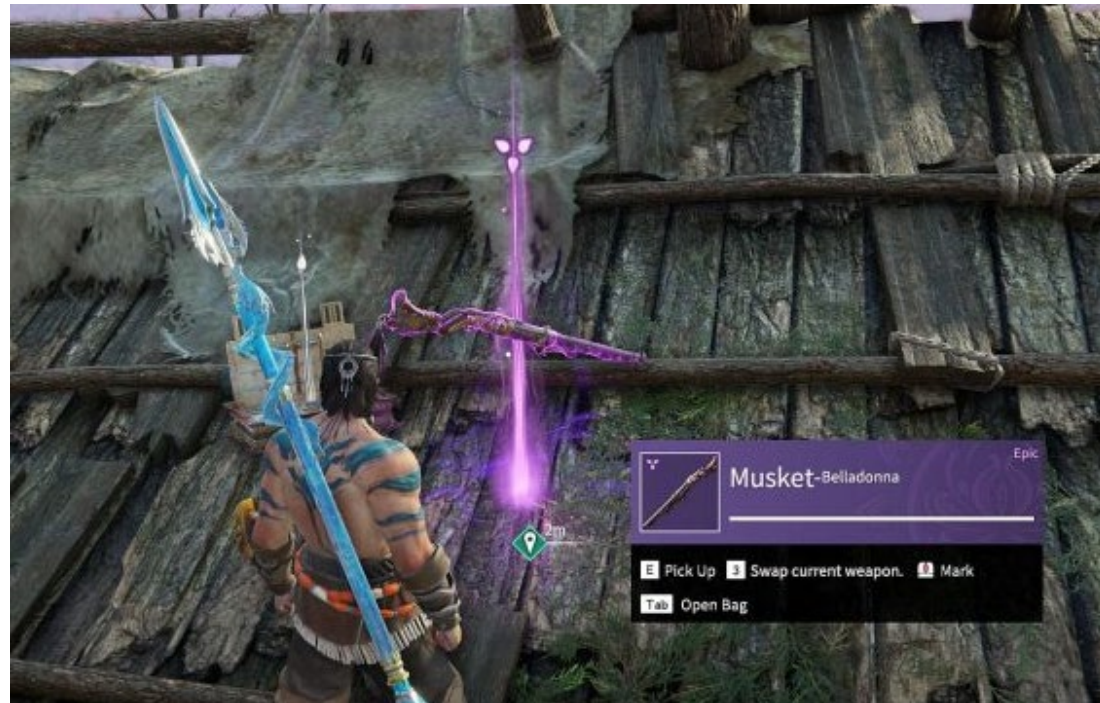
Soul Run system

Improvement

1. The player killed can choose the time and place to revive as they wish
2. Whether the player killed can be revived is no longer dependent on his teammates

Unchained ✓

2.5 > Problem 3: Highly repetitive game experience



Loot

A cycle

Fight

The game experience is highly repetitive, and it will be boring if you play for a long time

2.5 > Problem 3: Highly repetitive game experience

Solution A: Add interactive props in game

In order to increase the fun and randomness of the game, we have added a lot of interactive props into the game scene.

Players can use these props to kill enemies or make tactical plans



Various interactive props in NARAKA BLADEPOINT

2.5 > Problem 3: Highly repetitive game experience

Solution A: Add interactive props in game



Waterwheel



Poisonous mushroom

2.5 > Problem 3: Highly repetitive game experience

Solution A: Add interactive props in game

Ballista



In some place, like high towers or Mining farm, we placed some ballistas.

In this video, you can see a player driving a ballista moving on the track and killing enemies



2.5 > Problem 3: Highly repetitive game experience

Solution A: Add interactive props in game

- Increase the variability of terrain and environments
- Increase the randomness of each match
- Allows players to develop tactical plans

2.5 > Problem 3: Highly repetitive game experience

Solution B: Soul Jades

Soul jade is a kind of items that can be looted in the game. There are more than 60 types of soul jades which you can find in-game.

Weapon soul jade is most special and popular. Because weapon soul jades affect playstyle in various ways.



Soul jades in NARAKA BLADEPOINT

2.5 > Problem 3: Highly repetitive game experience

Solution B: Soul Jades

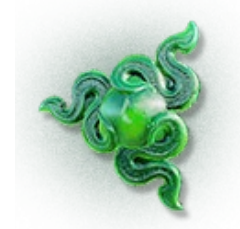
Example: The Soul Jade 'Soul Slash' can change the charge attack of Katana



Katana



Katana



"Soul Slash"

2.5 > Problem 3: Highly repetitive game experience

Solution B: Soul Jades

Example: We also designed healing-related soul jade for players who like to play support heroes



Repeating Crossbow



Repeating Crossbow

+



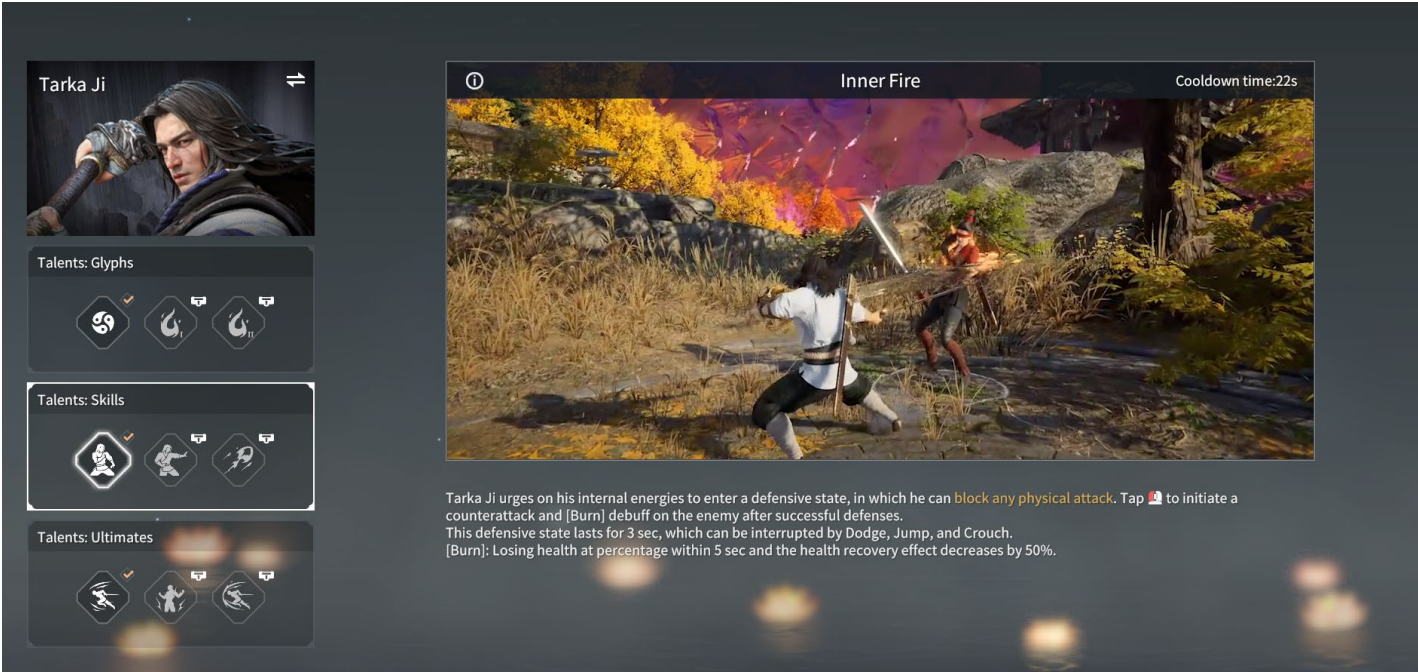
"Healing Bolts"

2.5 > Problem 3: Highly repetitive game experience

Solution B: Soul Jades

- Increase the depth of the in-game experience
- Let the player have a goal in the game: collect soul jades that match his weapons, or switch their weapons and playstyle according to the best soul jades they collect.

Solution C: Talent System—Skills



In NARAKA, each hero has two skills: primary skill and ultimate skill.

Each skill has two branches which can be switched before match begins.

Even if a player encounters several identical heroes in the game, the skills they carry may be different.



Tarka Ji' s primary skill

2.5 > Problem 3: Highly repetitive game experience

Solution C: Talent System—Skills



Basic Skill

Block any physical attack
and counterattack



Talent Skill1

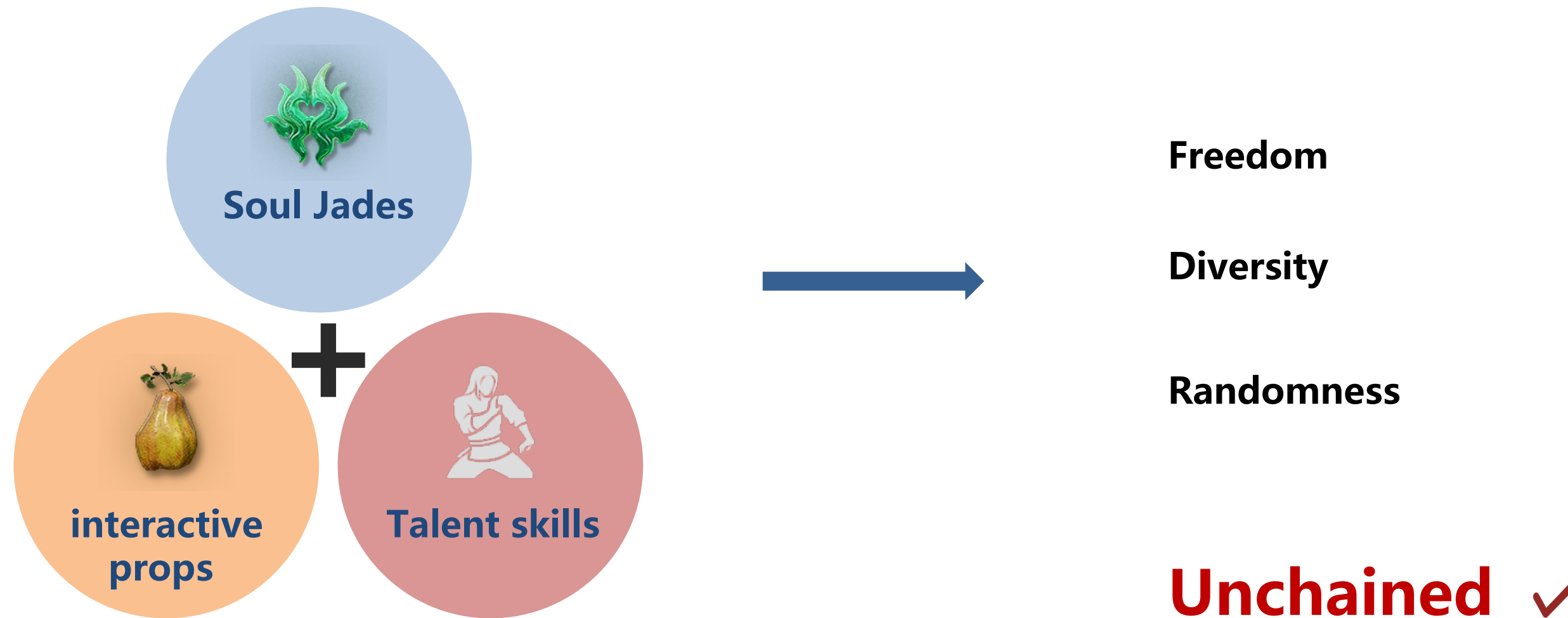
Block any melee attack and counterattack
Counterattack moves can be upgraded



Talent Skill2

Throw a huge fireball

Summary



4

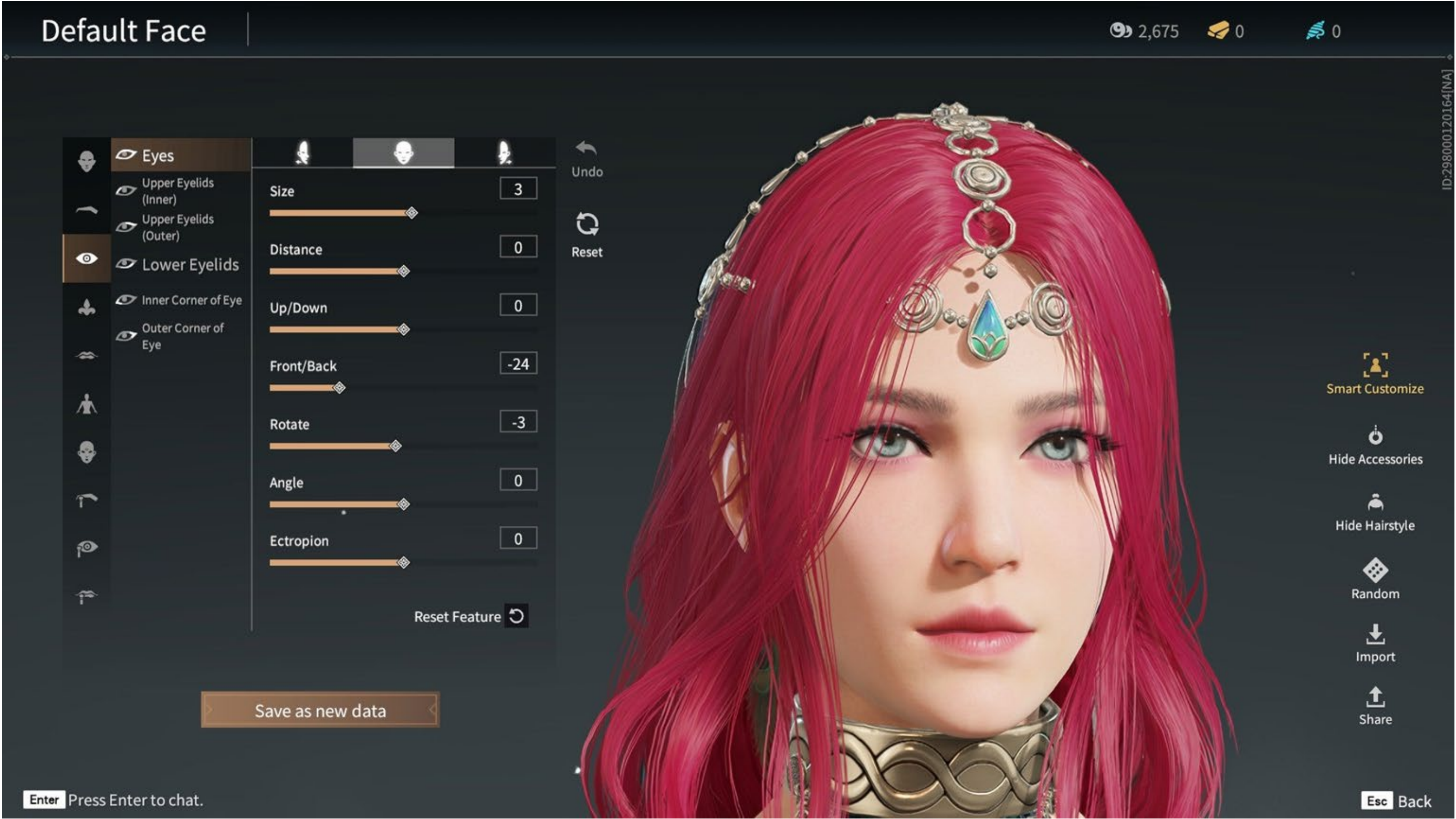
Finished version

Released successfully and current challenges

2.6

► Unexpected Surprise: Face Custom System

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2.6 > Unexpected Surprise: Face Custom System



Heroes of Apex Legend



Heroes of Overwatch



Kurumi

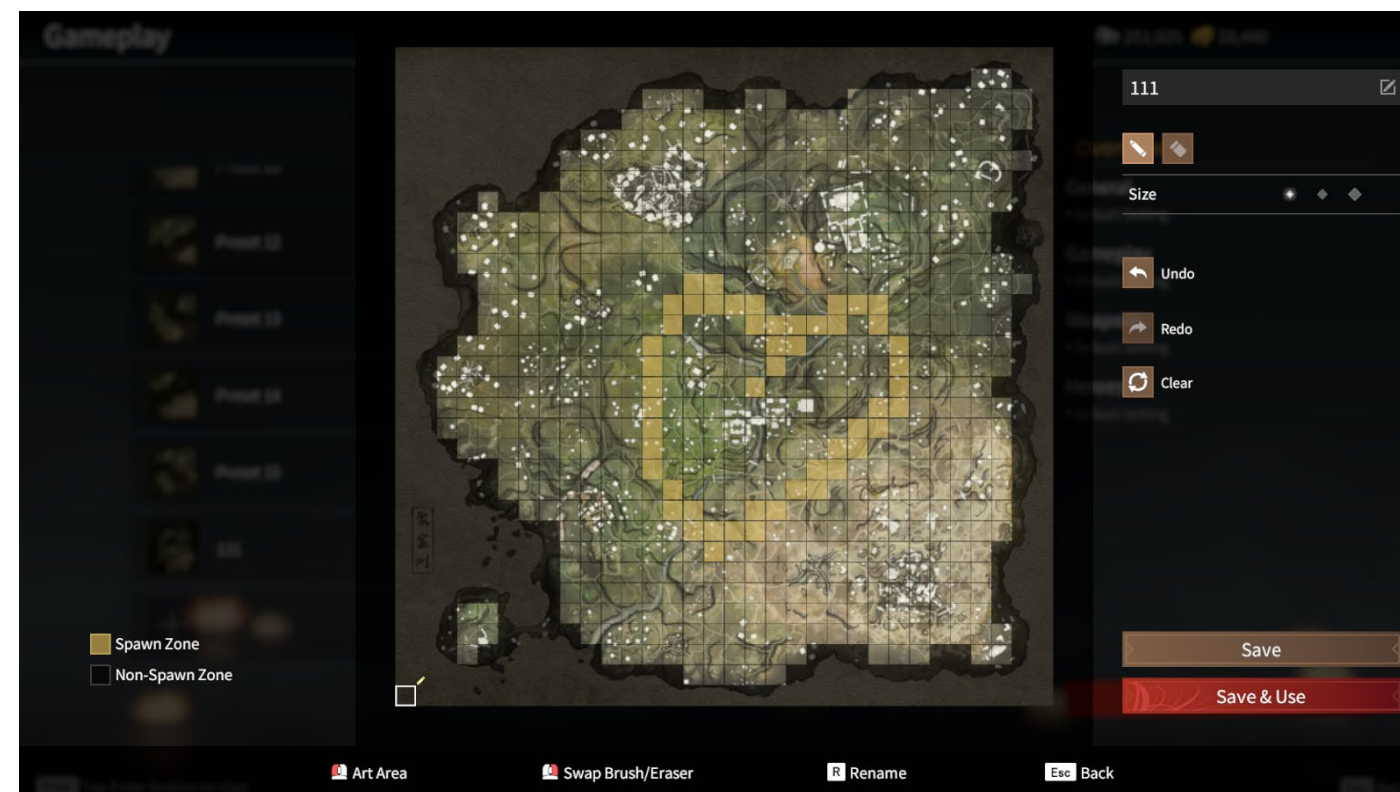
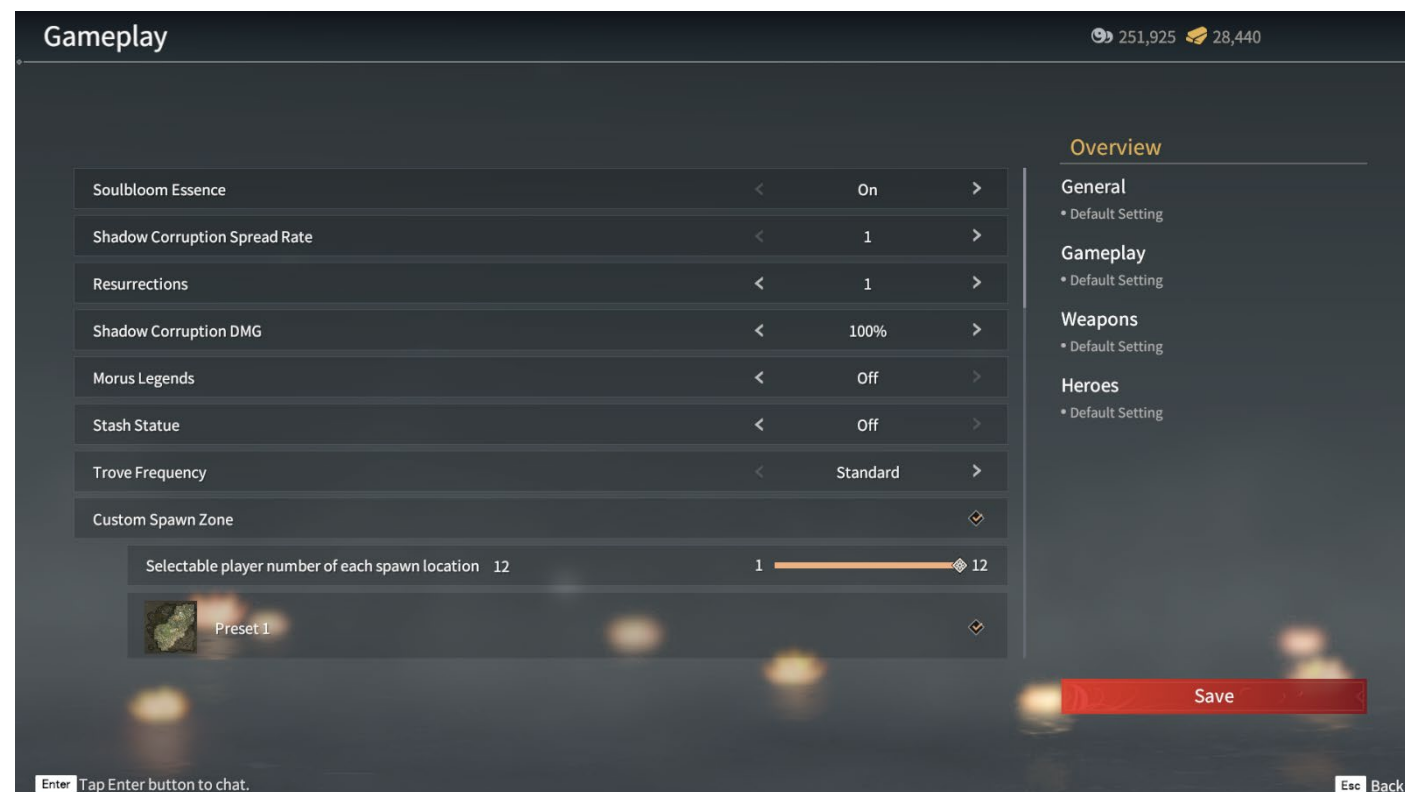
NARAKA: Same hero, different faces

2.6 > Unexpected Surprise: Face Custom System

Players' works



2.7 > Players' Expectations: Custom Match System



In a player survey, 35% of players felt that the custom match system we provided did not meet their needs. For example, 28% of players want to be able to set the spawn point of the game by themselves.

Outside the game, we also hope to provide players with a unchained creation platform, allowing players to freely create their own matches.

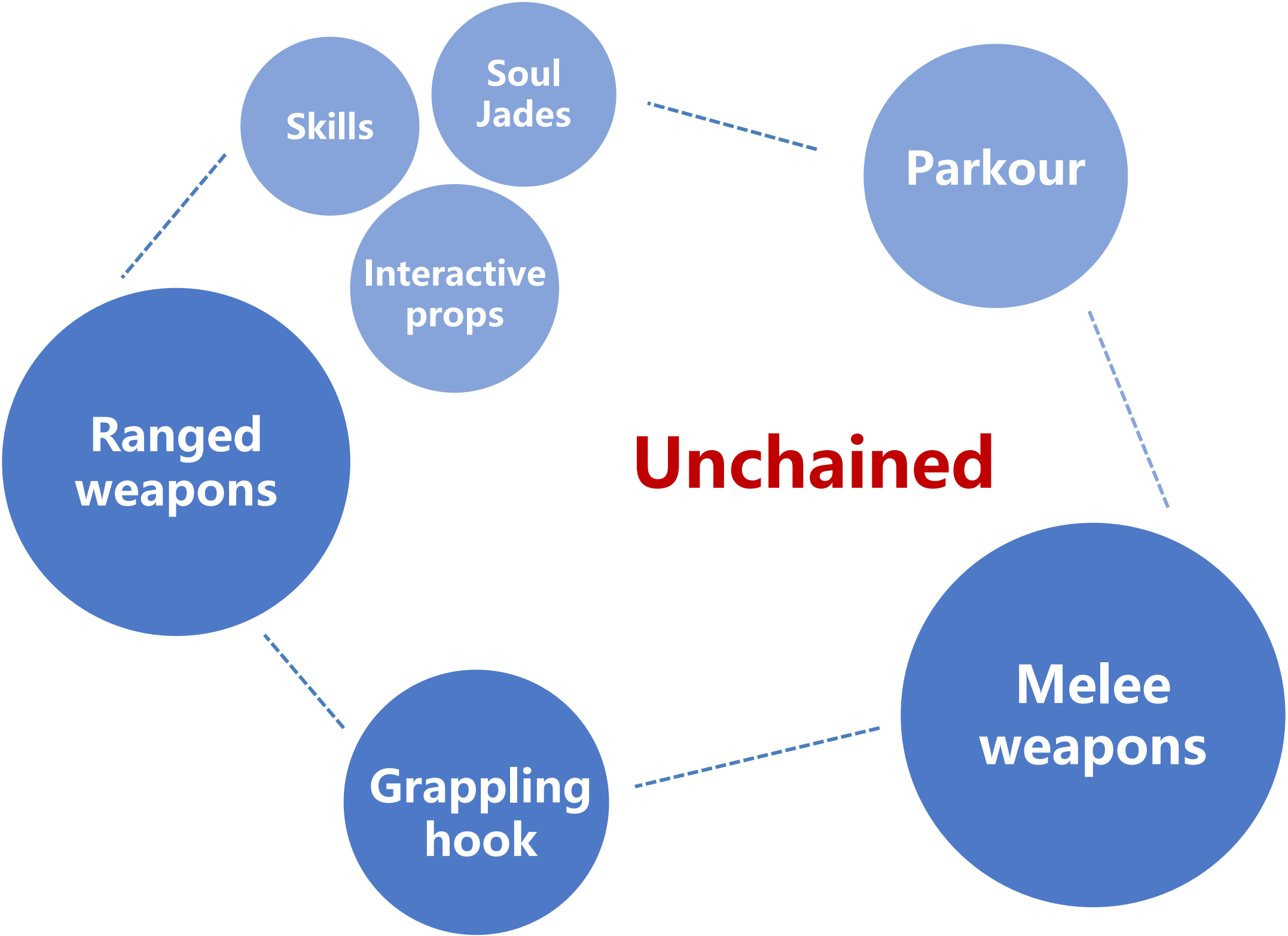


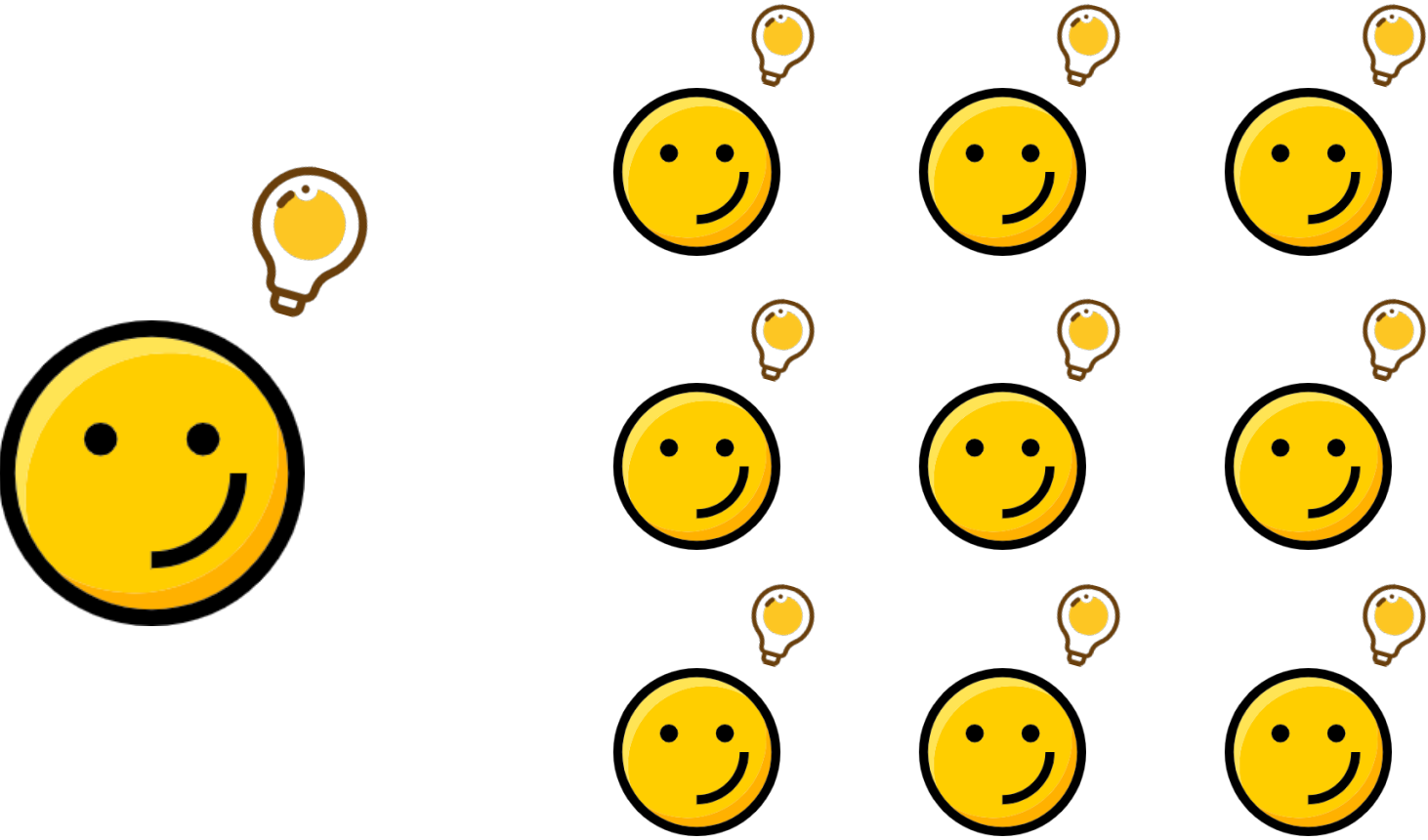
3. Summary: Design Thinking of Close-Loop Experience

The meaning of Unchained:

Creating an unrestrained combat experience for players

Keywords: Freedom, Diversity and Randomness.

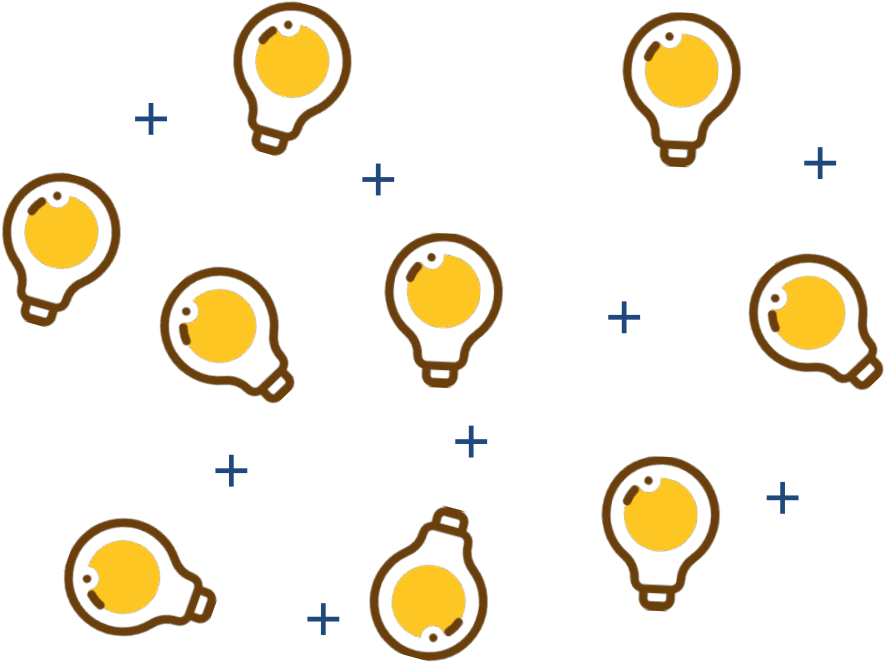




I have a new idea!

We have more new ideas!

A Creative Team



No connection between ideas

A Stitched Monster? ? ?

NARAKA

BLADEPOINT

THANKS



Zhigang



Jinghan