

Twilight Lantern

Note to anybody reading this:

This was an *active design document* and **not** a pitch or proposal. It was for *my own use* during development. In the spirit of a game jam, I chose not to edit this to reflect the final product, but instead left it as a record of the game's progress.

No edits have been made to clean up this document for the sake of presentation: other than this paragraph, this file is presented as it was by the end of the prototype's development.

Thanks for playing my little game :)

-finalbossblues

Goals (pasted what you said in discord to keep yourself on track):

- *my game is pretty much the first obvious concept for the theme and i'm sure there's nothing original about what i'm doing, so just gonna focus on the execution and game feel.*
 - *mostly i wanna use this to make something that has light and shaders and particle effects and hopefully it looks somewhat like animal well, because i've never really worked with this stuff before and that'd be good to practice.*
 - *also this style will give me a chance to use some hd audio from the asset bundle that didn't fit in my normal lo-bit style*
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Concept and Gameplay Loop:

Explore out further and further from your base into the shadows of the dark woods. Do so by expanding your movement capabilities. These enhancements all make use of crafting/alchemy using items found and foraged while exploring.

But be careful, because some platforms are only visible in the darkness. And when your lantern is off, the shadow monster draws near!

World Design:

- *Metroidvania-like forest, single-screen rooms with static camera. (Don't wanna deal with camera tracking or smoothing, cameras always takes me way too much time programming. :P)*
- *Main home base in the center of the world.*

- Use recolored assets + colored lighting to differentiate zones and rooms (real tile variety will be beyond the scope of a jam game, unfortunately). Exception is the home base, need some unique tiles and objects for the home.
- Shadow beast will appear in most rooms (except the home base or treasure rooms with big collectibles) and slowly closes in on the player as long as the lantern is off!
- Some platforms and walls only appear when the lantern is off, and vice versa. Position yourself and use the lantern's light to manipulate the shadow beast's movement and work your way around him!

Controls (gamepad and keyboard!!!):

- Move
- Jump
- Interact
- Lantern Toggle
- Back (Menus)/Interact 2
- Pause/Inventory

Character Animations:

- Idle
- Walk
- Jump / Peak / Fall
- Land
- Forage / Interact
- Wall Climb
- Air jump/somersault

Main Movement Mechanics/Upgrades:

- Walk and Jump
- Climb on Walls (and Ceilings?)
- Float/Glide (cut)
- Doublejump

“If there's enough time” Upgrades:

- Map
 - *Full map in menu definitely not gonna happen, but I can probably put together a really quick single-image popup map that the player can access at the house...*
- Lumoth Lead (*expand magnet radius for the wild moth refills*)
 - *Cut -- light mechanic simplified and no longer uses any fuel*

Potential Potion/Upgrades for future expansions into a full game:

- Glide
 - Note: glide, hookshot, or other movement-enhancing abilities would require larger rooms and this an actual scrolling camera

- Bombs (*I want to avoid direct combat, these would be for environmental puzzles and it might just temporarily stun the shadowbeast*)
- Swimming/Waterbreathing
- Climb on the Ceiling

Alchemy:

Straightward UI for inserting items into slots, make it chunky so it feels good. A potion-making minigame would be cool, but likely way beyond scope...

Alchemical Ingredients

- Aurora Moss (Potion Base)
- Spider Silk
- Feather

Cut for time/scope:

- Mist Thistle
- Antimushroom
- Spirit Root
- Lux Resin
- Honeycomb (Upgrade base)
- Ribbon Bark
- Thunder Bloom

Alchemical Recipes

- Spiderlegs Potion (gives you climbing form)
 - Aurora Moss + Spider Silk
- Featherweight Potion (float/glide)
 - Aurora Moss + Mist Feather

Cut for time/scope:

- Skydancer Potion (infinite jumps)
 - Aurora Moss + Antimushroom
- Lantern Intensity Upgrade (makes shadow-beast recover more slowly)
 - Honeycomb + Lux Resin
- Health Upgrade
 - Honeycomb + Spirit Root
- Bomb
 - Spider Silk + Thunder Bloom
- Lumoth Lead
 - Ribbon Bark + Lux Resin

For the Game Jam Prototype -- We're only gonna use these Items and Upgrades:



Just need the 4 collectibles to design the world flow, plus opening lantern and then an end-goal gate. "Story" beats to hit:

- Lantern (opening/tutorial)
- Find the house
- Collect the things and make your upgrades:
 - Aurora Moss x2 (maybe x4 and the recipe takes two? Depends if there's empty spaces in the world to add collectibles)
 - Spidersilk
 - Mist Feather
- Endgame rooms

What Happens when you Die

- Simple -- just respawn at the beginning of the current room, progress saved. Let's not worry about health and lives for now!

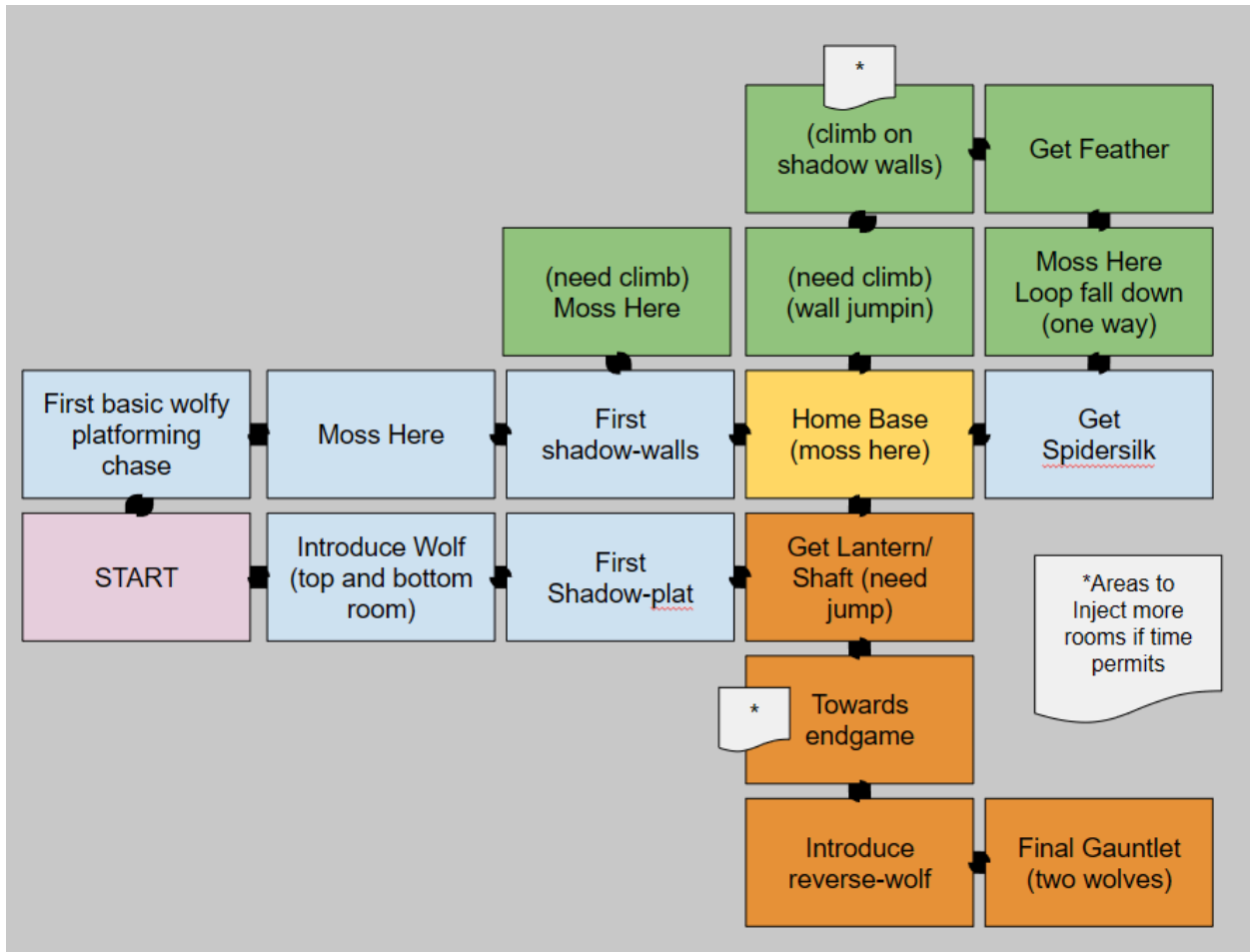
World Progression/Zones

Note: Start with just one or two rooms for each area, get minimum layout necessary for the game. Then you can add platforming challenges as time permits!

- Outposts for checkpoints and crafting away from home (*cut for jam prototype-- the game world is small enough...*)
- **Firefly Woods (West)**
 - Start here, opening tutorial. Teaches about the lantern and the shadow beast. Leads to the central home.
- **Spider Thicket (East)**
 - Get climb ability, introducing spike hazards.
 - Note: *cut/condensed to a single room-- want to reduce the time spent without having any upgrades. Use spiderweb tiles in the endgame area instead.*

- **Open Treetops (Up)** (*oooh, can we have a cool rain effect here??*)
 - Get flight/dbljump ability. Platforming is trickier, introduce vertical lantern-block walls to jump between.
- **Fog Marsh (Down)**
 - Use all abilities - reach the endgame gate.
 - Fly down and under, hooks down and around. Final platforming challenges.
 - Final “boss” platforming twist: now there’s multiple shadow beasts, so you have to juggle both of them as you switch the lantern on and off!

World Layout (Jam Scope, minimum rooms for everything i wanna do...)



TO DO LIST

- ~~Lighting and shadow system~~
- ~~Hero sprite design, base tileset~~
- ~~Hero sprite animations~~
- ~~Main player movement and collision~~
- ~~wall climb, glide, and multi-jumps (PROGRESSION MOVEMENT MECHANICS!)~~
- ~~fill-out BG tilesets (basic bg autotile, maybe some little-extras)~~

- shadow beast!
 - shadow/Light platforms
 - shadow/light walls (harder than platforms because of the case if you're inside them...?)
 - make quick ugly functional pause/inventory menu
 - death and respawn in room (beast contact and spikes!)
 - debug buttons to turn on/off movement upgrades and give inventory
 - Text boxes (~~do this fast, no typewriter for now, just pop-ups~~ worry about making them nicer if there's time at the end)
 - make a HOME MAP + a couple other maps around it to get systems going
 - Foraging/Collectibles (items and grabbing moth fuel pickups)
 - Bg music/ambience
 - light meter for lantern! (not necessary, cut feature)
 - alchemy/upgrade FUNCTIONAL (~~if for some reason there's not time to make the UI for it, we can cheez it and have it happen instantly upon interaction with crafting station. Just have an effect and pop-up text~~)
 - alchemy/upgrade UI!
 - Make the pause/inventory menu prettier and make sense with crafting UI
 - title screen ("press start")
 - Extended title screen (would be *really* nice to have some basic settings)!!!!
 - Improve text boxes with a simple fade-in
 - Credits screen from main menu (if no time, remember to put credits on the itch page!)
 - Option to disable lantern flicker (make steady)?? Might not be pleasant to some eyes
 - would like to properly design and completely redo the pause/inventory menus... the code is a total hacked hardcoded mess... but that's for another day...
 - THEN.... that's it for the systems: flesh-out levels and content!
 - Endgame state: for now, plan to just have a final gate to take you to a victory screen
 - Visual additions: Foreground tilesets, setpiece assets, rocks and plants and such
 - Map on pause screen (just a simple grid... there might not be time for this...)
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Other Notes:

Combat:

Avoid the shadow beast and manipulate his position with the lantern. Can't fight back.

No combat for now, that's unrealistic scope creep! We'll simply be dodging obstacles or avoiding spikes, with a very simple damage-and-respawn at room start.

Ideally there can be shadow enemies that lash out from the shadows and you can make them shrink away with your light. But that depends on time and is *extremely unlikely*.

A fuller game would certainly have more combat possibilities to give us more reasons to craft and use a wider variety of potions and abilities.

- I like the idea of using your crafted potions instead of any main weapon, an inventory of a bunch of different consumable splash potions (with different trajectories, effects, etc) that can be used for various encounter situations, **but way beyond the scope of this jam proto!**

Fast Travel/Return-Home:

Can you return home via the outposts? Maybe better just to let you craft AT the outpost and not need the trip?

Ehhhhhhhh.... This kinda breaks the main loop, right? Might be something to consider for a endgame upgrade??

Other ideas for expanding the systems (*definitely beyond the jam scope!*)

- More crafting, materials, and potions obv, cooking too could be fun, with expanded UI and possibly microgames for such
- The outposts could be something that the player creates and sets, instead of activating my fixed ones.
- Lumoth Larva and make a cute little farm to grow and raise them :)
- Underwater areas and swimming/breathing potions

Non-Unique Assets and Resources Used:

- Graphics
 - Edited tiles and icons I originally made for other projects
 - Font: SoftSquare by ChevyRay
- Sound and Music
 - "RPG Sound Effects Bundle" - by BlinnSFX
 - BGM by Dark Fantasy Studios/Nicolas Jeudy
 - Ambience Sounds from the Ultimate SFX Bundle by Sidearm Studios
- Other:
 - Grizzlius Maximus - 2D Lighting Shader Tutorial Series
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhnAcNPgyg>