The Wizard's Apprentice

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Vision

The Wizard's Apprentice is a third-person action-adventure RPG set in a medieval fantasy kingdom with elements of exploration and combat. A fearsome dragon has attacked the kingdom and killed the Master Wizard, leaving nobody to protect the land from magical threats. You play as the Wizard's apprentice, and your objective is to navigate the depths of the Dark Caverns below the kingdom to find the Master Wizard's "Plan B", hidden at the heart of the caverns to be used in this dire situation. You must travel through the caverns, exploring the different tunnels, helping the various characters and creatures inside the caverns, and fighting enemies with the limited knowledge you have of magic in order to find Plan B and save your kingdom.

Genre

The game is an action-adventure roleplaying game, focusing on exploration with elements of finding and collecting items for mini-quests as well as combat with NPC enemies.

Platform

The Wizard's Apprentice is designed for computer/PC as well as Xbox.

Type of Play

This game is a solo game, however has the potential to become multiplayer (questing through the caverns as a team, race to reach Plan B first, etc.).

Emotions and Experiences

The game is designed for the player to be fully immersed in the game throughout, and to be a form of escapism and fun in playing a fantasy role. The narrative and the way the character talks is quite light for comedic effect, and much of the game is light hearted and relaxed. There is also frustration and determination through the caverns getting progressively difficult, and many enemy NPCs suddenly appearing without much notice, inspiring feelings of triumph, confidence and exhilaration upon defeating them.

Mood, Style and Visual Treatment

The game is very cartoon based (similar to below images) which helps demonstrate its light-hearted nature. The enemy NPCs will look more menacing, but the style is innocent and appealing to younger audiences as well. The game is 3D with a third-person perspective which will make the characters look slightly different than the 2D references, however the visual treatment will be more or less the same. The caverns will have a dark colour scheme featuring black, grey, dark purples and greens, with characters and NPCs having lighter colours to be distinct from the background.

The Main Character

The main character is the Master Wizard's apprentice and all other characters play only minor roles. They are a determined, bright young wizard/witch with the desire to do good and protect their kingdom, and can be played as male or female, with the player being able to choose their name. Other important characters include the Master Wizard (deceased but featured in the opening cutscene), the King and Queen (sends you on the quest and congratulates you upon completion), and the NPCs throughout the caverns who request help through quests.

The Storyline

A dragon has attacked the kingdom, and the Master Wizard is killed in battle. The King gives the Wizard's apprentice (the player) a box, which has instructions from the wizard directing them into the Dark Caverns where he has hidden 'Plan B', a mysterious object that will save the kingdom now that the Master Wizard is gone. As the apprentice travels through the caverns, they find clues (pages from the Master Wizard's diary) through helping NPCs which give them clues on what Plan B is. At the end, they find a pedestal holding the wizard's diary with the pages ripped out. Upon putting all the pages back, the pedestal reveals the Master Wizard's magic staff, showing that the apprentice was in fact Plan B and heir. They return to the kingdom to defeat the dragon and save the kingdom.

The Major Goals and Challenges

The goal of the game is to find Plan B and save your kingdom. Along the way, many NPC enemies will attack, increasing your strength the further you progress into the game. There are friendly NPCs who require help in finding objects or solving problems who provide rewards such as EXP and diary clues. Smaller goals include completing quests, levelling up, and completing all achievements.

Key Features

The player can wander around the caverns as much as they wish and interact with friendly NPCs who will make a comment or request assistance/remind the player of their quest. They can also pick up items and open chests. In combat, the player can attack by hitting the enemy with their staff (close range) or shooting fireballs using magic (long range). These attacks become stronger the more NPCs they defeat.

The Core Audience

Gamers who enjoy the Legend of Zelda series may enjoy this game as it is similar in gameplay and style but is simpler, less detailed and something quick to play that doesn't require too much dedication and time. Fans of easy to play, cute and simple games but who still love an interesting story and narrative detail would find the game very in tune with their tastes and interests.

What makes this game distinctive?

The Wizard's Apprentice is distinctive to other games on the market in that it appeals to gamers who enjoy exploration and puzzle solving without giving them a time limit, and providing an entertaining and interesting story that is allowed to progress without the frustration of your character constantly dying at certain difficult checkpoints – the game gets more difficult as you progress, but doesn't significantly impact your ability to progress to the point of stress and annoyance. Even beginner gamers are able to complete the game without too much frustration.

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Moment-To-Moment Gameplay

The Wizard's Apprentice aims to be a relaxed yet engaging single player game. The main focus of the game is the storytelling, exploration and problem solving, with combat and levelling up as a significant part of the game. The freedom to explore and discover at the players whim is one of the most compelling aspects to the game.

In *Beyond Game Design: Nine Steps Toward Creating Better Videogames* (2009), it is stated that "What separates good game mechanics from the boring ones are how gripping they are, and how quickly and completely the choices absorb player attention". In order to absorb the players attention and motivate action, the game is designed to contain more than one type of player engagement – combat, exploration, and completing quests to collect items.

The book also details how "Player experiences must be accessible and fun", and in order to ensure that there is a balance of knowing how to play the game and how to have fun in the game there is effort in creating a balance between open world exploration and having the storyline continue to push the player forward in the game.

Having multiple types of player engagement also helps to appeal to more player types. In Step 4 of the book, "Understanding the Limits of Theory", Richard Bartle explains his player type model of Achievers, Explorers, Socialisers and Killers. The Wizard's Apprentice appeals to all of these player types on some level, but most specifically Achievers and Explorers, allowing a wide range of players to be interested in the game.

Single Player Gameplay Mode

The Wizard's Apprentice has one gameplay mode, due to having a detailed storyline that requires having a specific method of adventure/exploration. The player controls the apprentice from a third-person perspective and can move around the area in any direction. Enemies spawn in each segment of the cavern and will move to attack the player once the player enters that segment. If the player were to leave for longer than a few seconds and return, the enemies will have respawned and can be fought again. Each enemy defeated adds experience points to the player and makes them stronger, giving them more hit points per attack. In several areas there will be a friendly NPC with a side quest. These quests earn more EXP and/or a diary page. The goal is to collect the diary pages, complete all the quests, and successfully win the game, as well as complete the achievements.

The game revolves around a player's skills and strategy rather than chance, and balances player progress with game difficulty. This reflects "Hard Fun" (Nicole Lazzaro, 2004) - Emotions from Meaningful Challenges, Strategies, and Puzzles, and is an effective way of appealing to players who enjoys challenges and feeling accomplished. The exploration and narrative of the game also implements "Easy Fun" - Grab Attention with Ambiguity, Incompleteness, and Detail, as the desire to discover everything and find out what Plan B is inspires curiosity and immersion in the player.

Avatar Actions and Abilities

Health and Experience

The character's progression through the game is signified by experience gained, while the health bar is an indicator of damage through combat and potential death. There is a maximum of 20 levels that can be gained. Each level up grants the player extra health and damage. The health bar replenishes itself in between combat, allowing the player to stop and "rest" to regain health. If the player runs out of health, they are sent back to the last 'checkpoint', archways in between each section of the caverns. The health bar starts with 10 health.

Level	EXP Required (EXP resets each level)	Rewards/Benefits
1	10	+5 health and learn Fireball
2	25	+10 health and +1 damage
3	50	+10 health
4	75	+10 health and +1 damage
5	100	+10 health
6	150	+10 health and +1 damage
7	200	+10 health
8	300	+10 health and +1 damage
9	400	+10 health
10	500	+5 health and learn Quick Heal
11	600	+10 health
12	700	+10 health and +1 damage
13	800	+10 health
14	900	+10 health and +1 damage
15	1000	+10 health
16	1500	+10 health and +1 damage
17	2000	+10 health
18	2500	+10 health and +1 damage
19	3000	+10 health
20	3500	+10 health and +10 damage

Actions and Abilities

The player is able to move around the caverns in any direction and anywhere around the floorspace except where objects or NPCs already are. Initially, the players only weapon/ability is the Wooden Staff, which they can use to attack enemies.

Upon defeating the first room of the cavern, levelling up unlocks the Fireball spell for long range attacks. As the player progresses they can also unlock the Quick Heal spell. Jumping allows the player to dodge or manoeuvre attacks. Weapons are used automatically if an enemy is clicked on and they are available to use or can be specifically used by clicking on their icons at the bottom of the screen.

Weapon/Spell	Initial Damage	Maximum Effect	Description
Wooden Staff	2 (cooldown time of 1 second)	20 damage	A simple wooden staff. The Master Wizard gave you this after you completed your initial training.
Fireball Spell	6 (cooldown time of 2 seconds)	24 damage	A powerful spell you learned while training but hadn't fully mastered until now. Perfect for long range attacks.
Quick Heal Spell	+25 health (cooldown time of 6 seconds)	+25 health	A complicated but useful spell to regain health. Takes some time to cast, though.

Items/Boosts

There are also items that can be found that give health/EXP/combat boosts to the player when used, as well as the collectables and diary page clues. These are helpful to further move the player along and give them an extra boost, as they are most commonly found before and after the most difficult segments to progress through.

| Item	Effect	Number Available in Game
Health Potion	+30 Health	20
Ring of Knowledge	+50 EXP	15
Titan's Aura (now available in a portable flask)	+10 Damage for 30 seconds	15

The player abilities and powers are refined to only a few weapons and abilities in order to allow the exploration and story progression to be the focus of the game. In *Fundamentals of Game Design* (2009, Chapter 10), Adams discusses striving for simplicity and elegance in order to make the game easier for players to learn and thus have a broader appeal.

There is less stress in choosing a weapon as both are available, and the combat system is simple, easy to understand, and efficient. However, it also still offers interesting variety through the ability to mix and match weapon use and boosts however the player sees fit, allowing them to try different strategies to defeat each enemy most effectively.

I also studied the entities and thought about the resources in the game as also discussed by Adams, looking at how they flow through the game and how to balance out the boosts and EXP gains with the story progression and the NPC difficulty.

Main HUD and Control Scheme

Main HUD
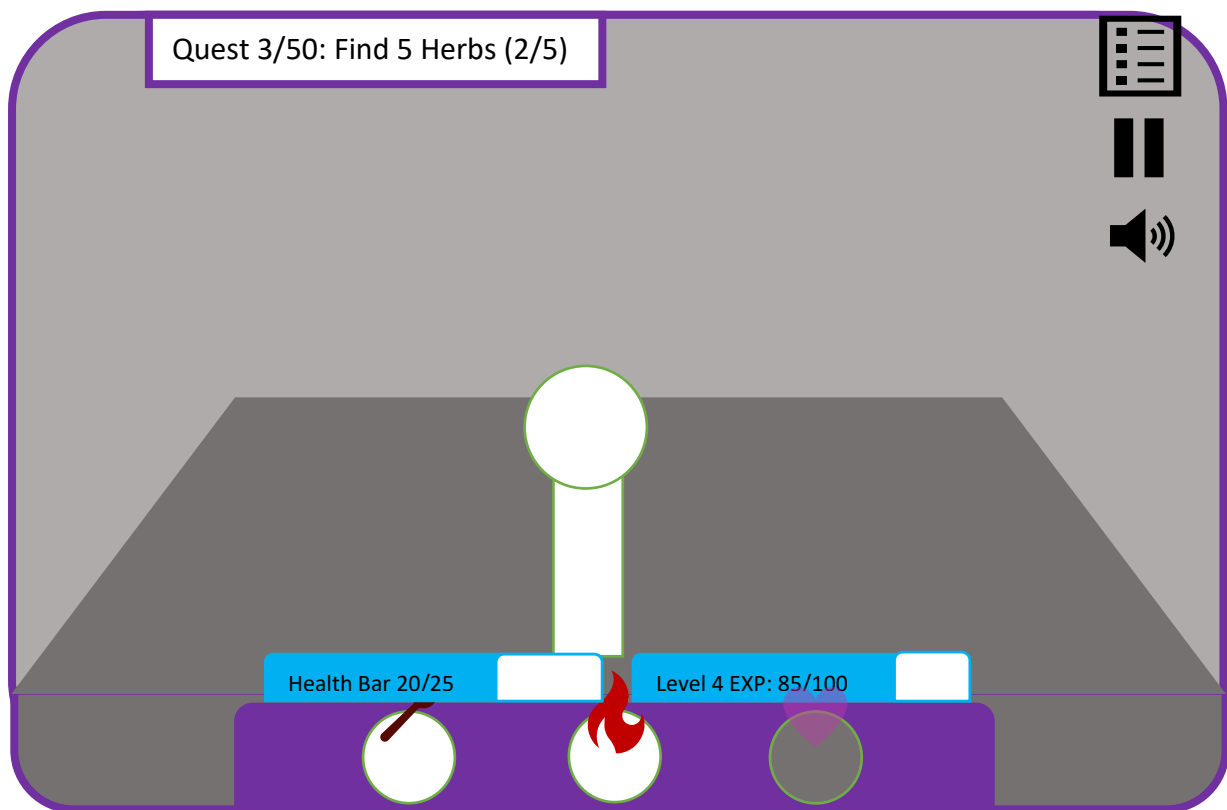
The camera follows the character from this view as they move around and is locked to the character, and the health bar, EXP bar, and weapons/spells available are seen in the bottom tab. As the Quick Heal Spell isn't available, it is greyed out in the spell bar until it is unlocked. The quest bar in the top left shows a brief description of whichever NPC quest, if any, the player is currently working on. The icons in the top right corner are for the menu (load game, save game, home screen), to pause the game, and to adjust the volume of the game music.

Control Scheme for PC

Control	Action	Details
Arrow Keys/WASD/Left click on target location	Character Movement	Character will move forwards/left/right/backwards for as long as the key is held down. If a target location is clicked, the character will move to that location and then stop.
Left click and drag	Character Rotation	Also allows the player to look around the room.
Spacebar	Jump	Double tap the spacebar to jump higher/double jump.
Click on weapon/spell icons/right click enemy	Attack/Use Weapon or Spell or Interact with NPC, chest or item	If enemy is right clicked, first available weapon will be used.

Control Scheme for Xbox

Control	Action	Details
Left joystick	Character Movement	Character will turn and move in the direction of the joysticks lean.
Right joystick	Character Rotation (on the spot)	Allows the player to look around without moving the character.
B button	Jump	Double tap the B button to jump higher/double jump.
A button (Directional pad to switch between weapons/spells)	Attack/Use Weapon or Spell or Interact with NPC, chest or item	If weapon/spell is still in cooldown, automatically shifts to next available one.

These controls are the default controls and can also be changed in the game settings to make it easier for a player's unique preferences.

In looking at controls, I also read Step 7 in *Beyond Game Design* (2009), which discusses how to include players with accessibility issues. I wanted Wizard's Apprentice to be playable by all gamers, including those with mobility, visual or cognitive impairments. Including the auto weapon choice, the lack of time limit, and the ability to change the default control settings are some of the main methods I could see to help make the game more accessible. I believe that thanks to these the game could feasibly be played with just one hand (changing the main control settings to one half of the controller) or with limited movement.

Enemies

The enemies get more difficult to defeat as the player progresses, however they match the players strength making it unlikely for the player to die easily. There are several categories of enemy – close range, long range, magic only, and tank. Throughout the game these enemies get more difficult to defeat and the harder ones such as magic only and tank enemies appear more often.

The initial enemies are easy to defeat and there are strategies to defeat them without losing health. For example, by staying at a distance from the ghoul or rat and using Fireball, they can't get in range to attack. The difficult enemies such as the dark ghoul, werewolf and cavern spider take more effort and skill to defeat without getting killed, however match the abilities of the player as they level up.

Name	Description	Difficulty	Speed	Attack Type/Damage	Health Points	Spawns In	EXP Gained
Cavern Bat	These overgrown and overconfident cavern dwellers hate intruders more than light.	Very Easy	Very Slow	Long distance attack, 1 damage per second	4 health points	Groups of 5	3
Cavern Rat	These vicious rodents are fat and constantly starving for meat.	Easy	Very Slow	Close range/contact attack, 2 damage per second	6 health points	Groups of 4	5
Ghoul	The lost souls that are doomed to wander the caverns for eternity. They're a little salty about that.	Easy	Slow	Medium range/distance attack, 2 damage per second (Wooden Staff has no effect, but Fireball can be used when ghoul is out of range of attack)	6 health points	Groups of 4	10
Dark Ghoul	Lost souls who have channelled their rage into a dark power.	Moderate	Slow	Medium range/distance attack, 4 damage per second (Wooden Staff has no effect, but Fireball can be used when ghoul is out of range of attack)	10 health points	Groups of 3	25
Werewolf	For a Master Wizard, he sure has made a few mistakes turning people into animals, and they are not happy.	Moderate	Fast	Close range/contact attack, 6 damage per second	12 health points	1 with 2 Cavern Bats	50
Cavern Spider	Giant mutated spiders that are lazy and bad tempered.	Medium	Extremely Slow	Close range/contact and medium range attack, 10 damage per 2 seconds	30 health points	1	100

In designing the enemies for the game, I looked again at the Fun Keys mentioned by Nicole Lazzaro's abstract - *Why We Play Games: Four Keys to More Emotion Without Story* (2004) and thought about how in order to retain player engagement the level of challenge in the game must vary and increase as the player progresses. It was also important to balance enemy strength with player strength – as stated in *Fundamentals of Game Design* (2009), the player should never be able to lose the game all of a sudden or despite not making any sincere mistakes.

Interactive Environmental Elements and Obstacles

There are no hazardous objects to avoid, however there are items that can be found to be used to improve gameplay or complete quests. They appear in the same locations every playthrough, but the chests will randomly choose one of the three boost items each time. Items include herbs, flowers, books and jewels, as well as diary pages that appear throughout the caverns and as rewards for finishing quests.

The items for quests will only appear once the quest is active, so the player cannot hoard all of the items and then complete quests in rapid succession. The boosts can be collected and saved as the player progresses if they wish, and then used one after the other at the end of the game, however this would not be as effective as spreading them out.

NPCs and Allies

The apprentice is the only real fleshed out character in the game, however there are backstory allies as well as NPC characters throughout the gameplay who provide the quests.

The Master Wizard

The apprentice's master, who dies in the intro cut scene trying to fight the dragon. He is technically the one who sends the apprentice to find Plan B and is the orchestrator of the events of the game. His diary entries are found throughout the caverns which provide clues to the player as to what they will find at the end.

The King and Queen

These characters also are not incredibly relevant to the gameplay except during the intro and end scenes and are the ones who give the Wizard's quest to the apprentice and congratulate them upon completing it.

Quest NPCs

These NPCs are general descriptions, multiple versions of the same NPC type (different character appearance and story) will appear with a different quest throughout the game.

Old Man

A kind elderly man looking for ingredients for medicine in the caverns to help heal the wounded from the dragon attack.

Will ask for: 5-10 Herbs, 5-10 Potions, 5-10 Flowers, 5-10 Toadstools.

Reward: 20 EXP, chance of boost or diary page.

Young Lady

A cheerful young girl looking collecting food for her family.

Will ask for: 5-10 Herbs, 5-10 Toadstools, 5-10 Plants, 5-10 Flowers.

Reward: 20 EXP, chance of boost or diary page.

Upset Woman

A woman wandering around the cavern in clear distress as she has been attacked by a Cavern Bat and has dropped her items.

Will ask for: 5-10 Books, 5-10 Flowers, 5-10 Jewels.

Reward: 30 EXP, chance of boost or diary page.

Knight

A disgruntled knight sent by the king to get rid of the vermin but is secretly terrified of the creatures in the caverns and is too scared to fight.

Will ask for: Defeat 5-8 Cavern Bats, 5-8 Cavern Rats, 4-6 Ghouls.

Reward: 50 EXP, chance of boost or diary page.

To allow Wizard's Apprentice to feature elements from all keys of fun (Lazzaro, 2004) I needed to find a way to incorporate The People Factor, which is harder to use in a single player game without any other main characters.

In Step 2 of *Beyond Game Design* (2009), Katherine Isbister states that "anytime a designer makes a game social at all, such as when there are non-player characters (NPCs) on-screen, they are evoking the player's social skills in a powerful and unconscious way". The NPCs in this game are simple and not incredibly detailed, however have little stories and personality traits that allow them to be appealing and sympathised for when the player encounters them.

Rewards

The rewards system of the game is very simple and not overly detailed. Experience points are gained through boost items, defeating enemies and completing quests, and go towards levelling up your character, which in turn rewards the player with extra health points, extra attack damage, and unlocks spells. The player is motivated to fight the enemies they encounter instead of running away as each kill contributes to their levelling up and are motivated to explore as much as possible to find all of the boost items. There are achievements that can be gained while playing that also encourage full exploration, as well as replaying the game to unlock them.

Achievement	Requirement
Ultimate Quester	Complete all of the quests in the game
Expert Wizard	Cast 500 spells
Good Use of Holy Water	Defeat 100 Cavern Bats
Did Somebody Call an Exterminator?	Defeat 100 Cavern Rats
Ghost Busters	Defeat 100 Ghouls
Supernatural	Defeat 100 Dark Ghouls
Time for a New Moon	Defeat 100 Werewolves
Arachnophobia	Defeat 100 Cavern Spiders

Looking at reward structures in *Beyond Game Design* (2009), I created a ratio schedule with the rewards gained from defeating enemies of EXP. This, combined with the interval schedule of chests containing rewards appearing intermittently throughout the game, creates an appealing reward structure that will satisfy the player as they achieve success.

As mentioned in *Fundamentals of Game Design* (Adams, 2009), "Games that include a story reward the player's achievements by advancing the plot of the story by presenting a little more of it, often in a noninteractive video sequence". Progressing through the game rewards the player with diary pages that reveal more and more of the story to them, encouraging them to continue playing to find them all.

The positive feedback loop of player achievement is also a large part of Wizard's Apprentice, with achievement earning the reward (EXP) which is traded for power (more health and damage), which in turn makes achievement easier and so on.

Typical Player Experience

Intro Cutscene

Before the game starts, the player chooses a gender and name for their character. The game begins with a short cutscene depicting the dragon attacking the kingdom, and the Master Wizard pushing the King and Queen out of the way of a blast of fire only to be hit himself. This then cuts to the King and Queen handing the apprentice a box containing a letter from the Master Wizard, which explains that there is a Plan B in the depths of the caverns which the apprentice must find to use to save the kingdom in the event of his death. The apprentice then descends into the caverns and the gameplay begins.

Gameplay

Game Segments/Levels

The caverns are split up into ten different segments, with a checkpoint for saving in between each. Each is progressively more difficult than the last and has a different variety of enemies, quests and chests to find.

Segment	Description	Quests	Enemies	Items
1 (Tutorial/Beginner Level)	Shortest segment of them all, introduces the player to the game and allows them to get used to the controls.	1	Cavern Bats Cavern Rats	Quest Items Chest w/ Health Potion
2	Still easy to reflect player level but larger than Segment 1.	4	Cavern Bats Cavern Rats	Quest Items 4 Chests 1 Diary Page (Quest Reward)
3	Introduction of ghouls.	6	Cavern Bats Cavern Rats Ghouls	Quest Items 5 Chests 2 Diary Pages (one in chest, one from quest)
4	Continuation from Segment 3, more ghouls than rats and bats.	4	Cavern Bats Cavern Rats Ghouls	Quest Items 4 Chests 1 Diary Page (Quest Reward)
5	More difficult segment, more quests and introduction of the Dark Ghoul. Small cutscene to introduce it as apprentice ponders what Plan B might be.	7	Cavern Bats Cavern Rats Ghouls Dark Ghouls	Quest Items 6 Chests 2 Diary Pages (one in chest, one from quest)
6	Continuation from Segment 5, bats are more uncommon.	5	Cavern Bats Cavern Rats Ghouls Dark Ghouls	Quest Items 5 Chests 1 Diary Page (Quest Reward)
7	Introduction of Werewolf, another cutscene to introduce the enemy and have apprentice worry about if Plan B is similar to the werewolf.	5	Cavern Bats Cavern Rats Ghouls Dark Ghouls Werewolf	Quest Items 7 Chests 1 Diary Page (Chest Reward)
8	Continuation from Segment 7, difficulty continues to rise with more difficult enemies appearing.	4	Cavern Bats Cavern Rats Ghouls Dark Ghouls Werewolf	Quest Items 7 Chests 1 Diary Page (Quest Reward)
9	Introduction of the Cavern Spider, apprentice expresses fear of spiders and worry about whether they will make it to save the kingdom.	6	Cavern Bats Cavern Rats Ghouls Dark Ghouls Werewolf Cavern Spider	Quest Items 6 Chests 1 Diary Page (Quest Reward)
10	Final Segment, hardest of all, the pedestal with the diary sits in the central area of the cavern and the player must navigate through the outer ring of rooms.	8	Cavern Bats Cavern Rats Ghouls Dark Ghouls Werewolf Cavern Spider	Quest Items 8 Chests 1 Diary Page (Chest Reward)

Game Segment Layout

This is an example layout of Segment 10, the final part of the game.
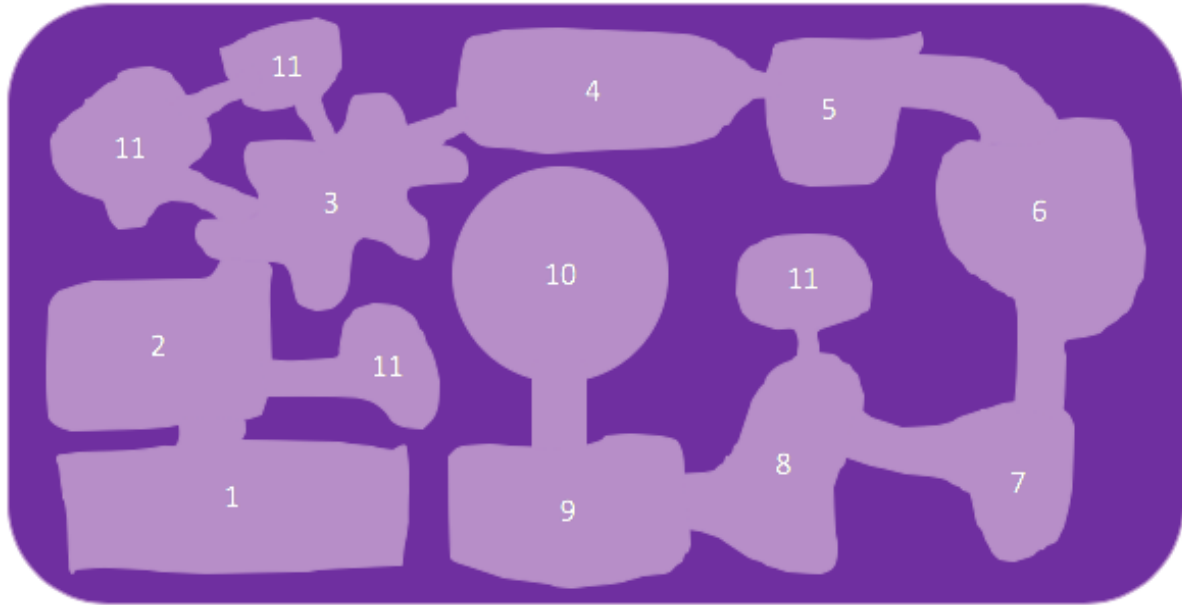
Key	Feature	Notes
1	Player Start	First room after the final checkpoint. Contains ghouls, a chest and 2 quests.
2	Room 2	Second room contains Werewolf, bats and a quest. Also has an alternate path leading to a smaller room (see 11).
3	Room 3	Third room has a lot of manoeuvring space and walls to hide behind. Contains Giant Spider, 3 Cavern Rats and a chest. Also leads to two other reward/quest rooms.
4	Room 4	Room 4 contains 3 Dark Ghouls and 4 Ghouls. Also contains a quest.
5	Room 5	Contains 5 Cavern Bats and 4 Cavern Rats.
6	Room 6	Contains Giant Spider, and quest and a chest.
7	Room 7	Contains 4 Ghouls and a quest.
8	Room 8	Contains 2 Werewolves and a chest. Reward room to the north contains chest with diary page.
9	Room 9	Final enemy room. Contains 2 Giant Spiders.
10	Room 10/End Game	A round room with a pedestal holding a diary with the pages ripped out. Player must get the pages they found and put them inside the book in order to trigger end cutscene.
11	Reward/Quest Rooms	Rooms without enemies but with either a quest, a chest, or both.

To design the levels, I looked at Adams' chapter on the general principles of level design in *Fundamentals of Game Design* (2009) and followed the most relevant principles. I made the first segment of the game tutorial based, made sure to provide the highest number of chests in the most challenging levels, and as shown in the example layout, made sure that the path to the end is not confusing or difficult to follow in game and is more or less linear with some variation. The player is rewarded for exploring to the full extent and the enemies get slightly more challenging as they progress rather than stagnating in each segment, helping with progression and pacing. The reward/quest rooms also offer the player a break from fighting enemies, and completing a room also allows the player to take a break and heal their character.

Player Experience Walkthrough

The player begins by choosing to play as a male apprentice and chooses their character name. The cutscene begins, showing the kingdom looking happy, calm and relaxed. All of a sudden, a large dragon blocks out the sun and begins breathing fire on the townspeople, approaching the castle. On a balcony of the castle, the King and Queen stand worried but defiant, however the dragon flies towards them and rears back to attack. As it does so, the Master Wizard leaps in between, protecting them but becoming overwhelmed by the flames. The scene cuts to the King and Queen in the throne room, handing a wooden box to the male character avatar who kneels at their feet. The avatar opens the box to see a note from the Master Wizard.

The note appears on the screen for the player to read, which is a letter from the Master Wizard to his apprentice. It explains that if the apprentice is reading this, he has died during an attack on the kingdom, and needs the apprentice to help save everyone. A Plan B for if a situation like this were to occur has been hidden in the depths of the caverns underneath the kingdom, and it is the apprentice's role to retrieve it and stop the attack. Clues and further instructions are in many locations throughout the caverns if the apprentice needs further guidance. Many friends and foes are scattered throughout the cavern, and the Wizard trusts that the apprentice will be the hero he always expected them to be. After the player presses to continue, the cut scene shows their avatar, holding their staff and the note, descending into the caverns. This is where the gameplay officially starts.

All the segments are connected, with the cross into the next one shown by a glowing metal archway in between and also cutscenes between some (as mentioned earlier). The first segment is the tutorial and begins with a small text bubble appearing over the avatar. This explains the controls for walking and jumping, and how to interact with friendly NPCs, items, and chests. The player tests these out, completes a quest, defeats some enemies and is able to level up and unlock Fireball. The tutorial bubble pops up again explaining the auto firing and the use of weapons in the bar. Upon encountering the first chest, another bubble comes up explaining the different boost items that could appear in the chest and what they do. The player has now completed the main tutorial, has levelled up and is ready to continue their quest, excited and determined.

In segment 2, the player has more freedom to roam, explore side passages, and learn more about the game and story. They complete more quests, hearing stories of knights sent in to clear the caverns of evil creatures, kind old men eager to protect their loved ones during this attack, and sweet young women determined to ensure their families are well fed and looked after no matter the dangers. The player also encounters the first diary page, a reward from one of the characters they have helped, which is very satisfying to receive after fighting creatures and searching for items. When received, the diary page pops up automatically and is able to be read, giving the player the first clue. After reading, a tutorial bubble explains the purpose of the diary pages and their use. This intrigues the player and the mystery surrounding the page further encourages them to complete all the quests and search for all the chests in each segment.

As the player progresses, they are introduced to new enemies which provide extra challenge, frustration, and exhilaration as they are defeated and the EXP level rises. The player has reached Level 5, then level 8 in segment 3, and finally manages to reach level 10 during segment 4 which unlocks Quick Heal, a spell they have been dying to unlock due to the rest breaks to regain health nearly starting to get annoying thanks to the more difficult Ghoul enemy appearing more often. The variety of layouts in each segment keeps the player engaged as they get more skilled at combat and keeping an eye out for items and stops them from getting used to the design of the caverns due to the unpredictability.

The diary pages found in these segments tell the story of the Master Wizard realising his age may make him weaker, and that he has recently found himself a naïve but bright young apprentice who may one day take over his role as protector of the kingdom. He has created a Plan B in case his demise occurs without someone to protect the kingdom, and it is the most important thing he has ever created. It is more precious than gold or jewels and has the potential to save us all.

The cutscene in Segment 5 shows the apprentice entering the segment while flipping through the four diary pages found earlier. He ponders the meaning of the narrative so far, wondering what kind of object this Plan B is if it is so valuable and precious to the wizard. Several times during the middle segments as the Dark Ghoul is introduced the player nearly runs out of health but manages to use a Health Potion found in a chest as well as a Titan's Aura to save themselves in the nick of time, feeling successful and proud of their quick thinking. The player manages to reach level 14 by the end of Segment 6 and has become very skilled at balancing fighting and staying alive.

The next few diary pages continue on with the plot, the Master Wizard senses something dark coming and fears he will not be able to protect the kingdom. He has taken extra precautions in ensuring Plan B will be safe and strong by keeping stronger creatures in the caverns but worries that the werewolves might turn them into one of them, which is the first clue that Plan B might be a person. He hopes that Plan B isn't afraid of dogs.

In the next cutscene, the apprentice sees the Werewolf for the first time. Looking at the latest diary pages, he wonders whether Plan B isn't a what, but a who, and worries that he has bitten off more than he can chew by trying to help the Master Wizard due to his crazy schemes and plans. In these segments the player gets a lot more frustrated than before, but with every success becomes more and more determined as the clues become clearer, with every achievement feeling amazing. The chest items really come in handy as the werewolves make it difficult to keep health points at a safe level, making the player glad they saved them for tight spots like this. Adrenalin is definitely running higher than in previous segments, but the player makes it to level 18 and is stronger than ever.

As the final, biggest enemy of the cavern spider is revealed, a shorter cutscene shows the apprentice expressing a mild fear/disgust towards spiders and hopes that Plan B is close, because he sure could use some help if he has to go all the way back through the caverns to get out. In the final two segments, the player reaches level 20 and in segment 10 goes through the final steps to reach the pedestal. Upon reaching the last room, a cutscene shows the apprentice stepping up to the empty diary, and the player gets a final chance to

read through the entire diary. The final page, already in the diary, is a letter to the apprentice, explaining that they were Plan B all along, and they are now a full-fledged Master Wizard. The room fills with light, a staircase appears, and the apprentice ascends out of the caverns to save their kingdom.

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