

Eep! A Game of Lost Sheep

Concept Document

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Game Development Studio

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Introduction

Eep! A Game of Lost Sheep takes place at midnight when Mariam, a young shepherd, is woken up to find her sheep are all missing! Mariam must travel the surrounding areas to find them all, collecting items and defeating enemies along the way.

Design Statement

The first idea kind of sprang from nowhere: A shepherd searching for their sheep. While originally a collect-a-thon styled game, it slowly became more of a Zelda-esque adventure game with combat and finding various items for progression.

Audience

The target audience would be teenagers to young adults who enjoy Adventure games and general exploration.

Gameplay

The core of the gameplay is finding your lost sheep, with each one requiring a different solution. Some may require you to find certain items, others may require completing challenges. The idea is kind of like a scavenger hunt. All the sheep are easily visible to the player but are locked behind a location or lock-and-key mechanism. There are enemies too to keep the player on their toes.

Core Mechanics

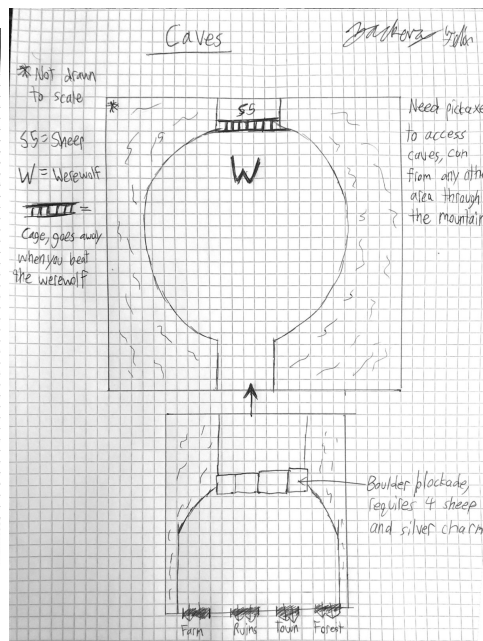
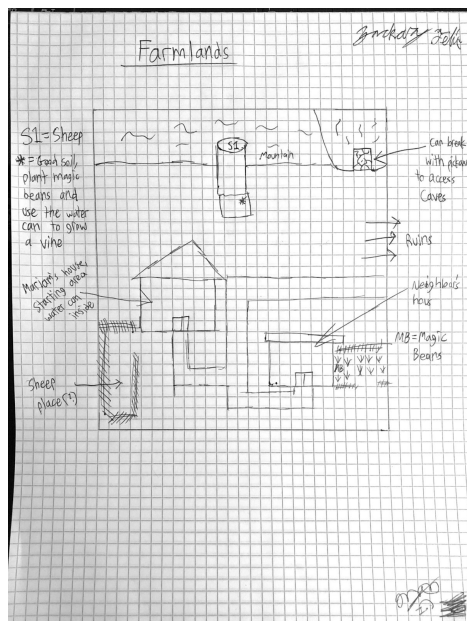
Walking and interacting with both objects in the world and character. Monsters do appear, and you can defend yourself by swinging your crook. If the player gets hit, they are sent back to their home (though their progress is saved). Lock and door-esque system similar to say Zelda, though in a more open format than typical Zelda games (Besides the last one, sheep can be obtained in any order).

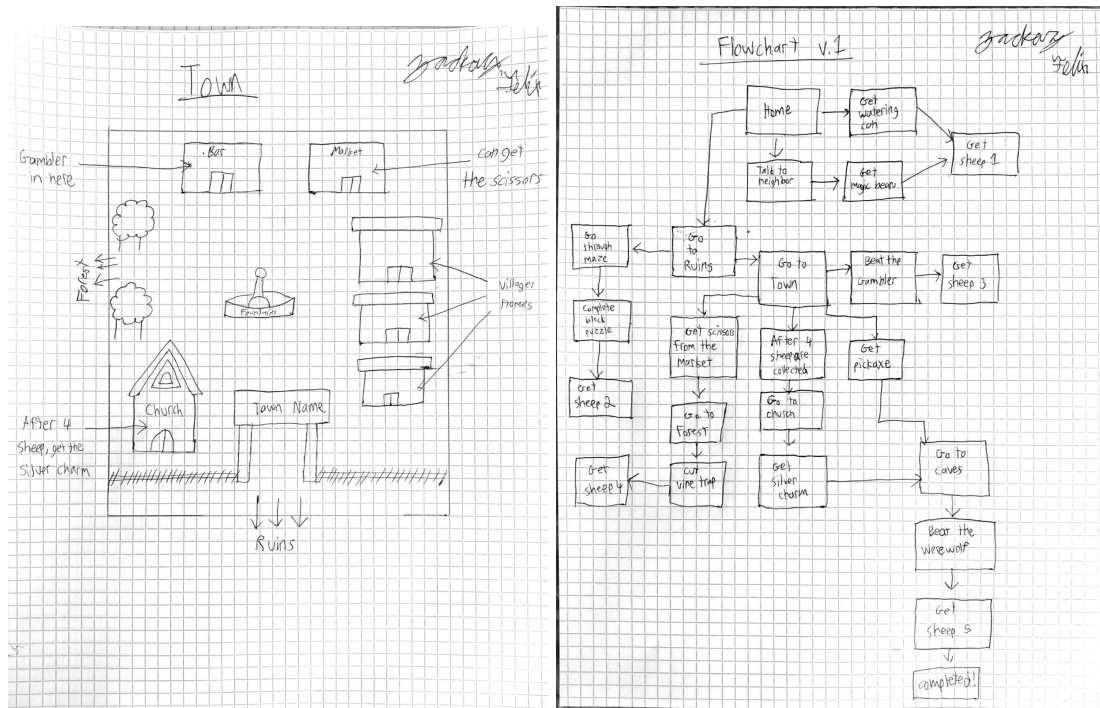
Look and Feel

Creating readable graphics with such a limited color palette was rough, so I often went back to Pokemon Red as a source of inspiration. Since my game is somewhat Zelda-inspired as well, I took a look at Link's Awakening for inspiration as well.

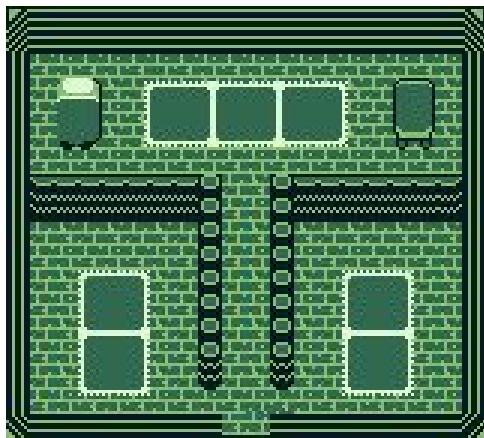


Maps and Flowcharts





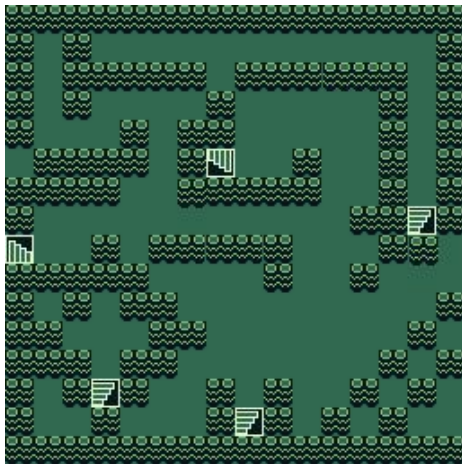
Gameplay Scenes



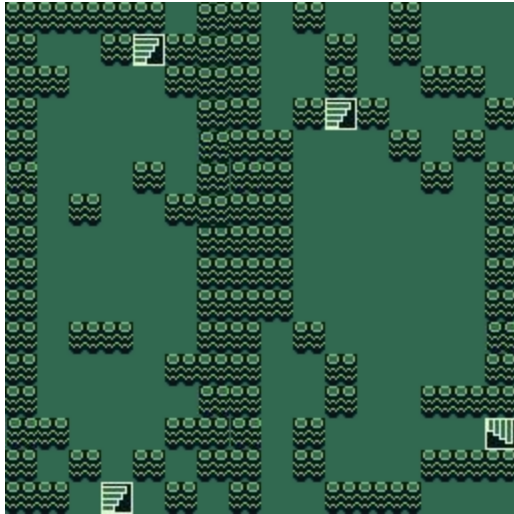
Mariam's house, where the player begins.



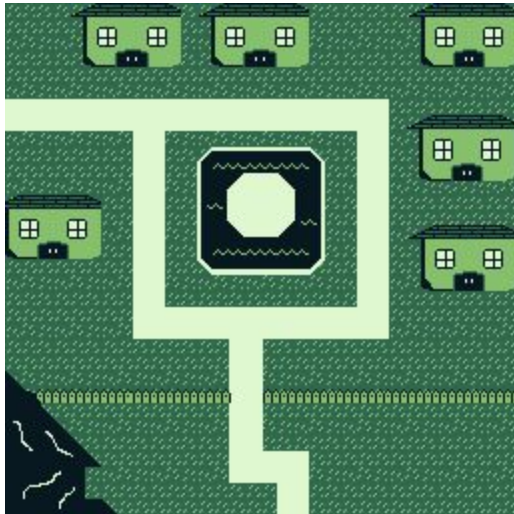
The first of the five areas, the Farmlands. Here a sheep is trapped on a cliffside.



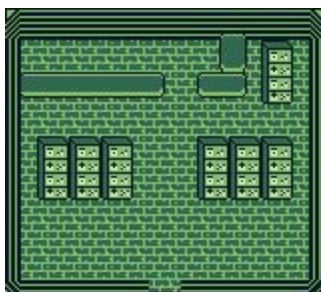
The ruins, a dungeon-like area with monsters, a sheep and an important item.



Second floor of the Ruins, where most of the monsters are held.



The town Prasineton, where most of the NPCs live and a lot of progress can be made.



The Marketplace, where the player can complete a quest to get Shears (which lets you get the fourth sheep).

Post-Mortem

Eep! A Game of Lost Sheep (which I will from now on simply address as Eep!) was the first game I've ever fully made. I've made dozens of concepts before, but never a finished product. It's a really good feeling finally making one and I learned a lot from it. For one thing, how scope can be dangerous. The original plan was to have seven sheep but I reduced the total to five out of caution. Even then, I was working till the last minute on it. Part of what contributed to that time investment was my decision to make all the art original (no placeholders or free-to-use assets). Working with the art limitations really grew my respect for the original Gameboy developers, but also the art portion of the industry in general. That's not even to mention the multiple other mechanics I wanted to have, but ultimately cut. I definitely learned that it's okay to lower your expectations/ideas if it improves the quality of the rest of the project. All in all, this was a fantastic learning experience and while it's not perfect, I'm absolutely proud of what I made with Eep!

Design Notes

The shift from collect-a-thon to adventure game was a fairly natural progression. As I worked on the game, I had a growing desire to add enemies and likewise, action help deal with said enemies. My restricted time limit also meant I couldn't add as many collectibles, so instead I focused on making each item important (quality over quantity). And since I wanted a form of progression and to incentivise exploring, those items became keys in lock-and-key systems. Before you knew it I was making a Zelda-esque game! While I'm happy with the development with the game, the time limit and lower scope did lead to a lot of mechanics and features to be left out.

Originally, Mariam's Crook attack wasn't going to do damage. Instead it was simply going to knock enemies away, and would only do damage after you got the Silver Charm upgrade. However, trying to get that to work in GBStudio was a bit of headache so I gave up on the idea early on so it wouldn't consume too much time from the rest of the game. Additionally, swinging your crook originally had a 1 second cooldown, so you couldn't just throw it out willy-nilly. This mechanic stayed through the entire game development process until the end, where it didn't work properly in the boss's room. That's the most important combat scenario in the game and after working a long time to try and figure it out, I eventually scrapped the mechanic altogether.

Outside of combat, the sheep you rescue were supposed to appear in Mariam's farm after you find them. This was supposed to be a way to keep track of who you have. Unfortunately, at the last minute, this feature got extremely buggy. While I know why it happens, I couldn't figure out how to fix it. Like the attack cooldown feature, this was scrapped out of time constraint.

Outside of mechanics, I wanted to add more flavor to the game. More NPCs in the town to make it more lively for example, more attack options for the boss, etc. While i'm bummed I couldn't get these things done, I'm still very happy with my product! One thing i found very useful towards the end is to do full playthroughs of the game, marking off errors and bugs on a document. After I finish the playthrough, I'd go through the list and fix whatever problems came up! I'd also note how I resolved the issue. Here's an image of the list:

- ✓ 1st sheep sometimes Hides. Just restate Show on Scene Int
 - ☐ Found Jasper screws up the Lost Jasper
- ✓ First wolf in Deep Ruins is too fast
 - ☐ Changed speed to normal
- ✓ Barkeep: 'Awhile' instead of 'while'
 - ☐ Added an 'a'
- ✓ Gambler: 'Lands on' instead of 'Land son'
 - ☐ Relocated space and made dialogue more consistent
- ✓ Bottom house: 'No one' instead of 'Know one'
 - ☐ Fixed
- ✓ Shopkeeper: Collision disabled
 - ☐ Reenabled collision
- ✓ No post-quest text for floral shopman
 - ☐ Added
- Carlson does not appear behind fence after collecting him
 - ☐ Deleted the Found Sheep feature. It was a complicated bug that would take more time than I have to unravel and fix.
- When you collect Sheila, she not only doesn't appear behind the fence, she kills Jasper
 - ☐ Deleted the Found Sheep feature. It was a complicated bug that would take more time than I have to unravel and fix.
- ✓ 'Okumura Marketplace' instead of 'Okukura Marketplace'
 - ☐ Fixed
- ✓ Tip Giver refuses to give tips
 - ☐ Mismatched variables made the multiple choice not work
- ✓ Cathedral Greeter has an extra empty text box
 - ☐ Deleted text box
- ✓ Priest: 'your' instead of 'you're'
 - ☐ Fixed and slightly altered dialogue
- ✓ Boss Battle respawn is off center
 - ☐ Recentered
- ✓ End Credits are too faint
 - ☐ Darkened the font

