

# Tavern Keeper

By Barking Beagle Studios

Game Design Document



**DISCLAIMER:** Sections highlighted  are sections that are more interesting and worth reading. While as leader as Game Director of the project I had hand in most sections, there are sections that were either written by my team or have less interesting content than the highlighted ones. You are welcomed to read everything however.

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# ..... 1. Game Overview .....

## Tavern Keeper - Working Title

### 1.1 Concept Statement

"Casual management game where you take the role of a tavern keeper, serving and forging relationships with adventurers and patrons alike, while guiding them through life."

### 1.2 Genre

RPG, Casual and Management

### 1.3 Target Audience

Players who enjoy reaching milestones such as unlocking rare recipes, completing quests, and building the most successful establishment.

Players that enjoy games with narrative depth, discovering hidden stories, and uncovering the secrets of characters, quest and world by diving into and exploring the NPC backstories, quest logs and items lore.

#### 1.3.1 Demographic Profile

**Age Range:** 18-25 years

**Gender:** Gender-neutral appeal

#### 1.3.2 Psychographics

##### 1. Motivations:

- a. Emotional connection with characters and stories.
- b. A sense of progression and meaningful impact through player choices.
- c. Creativity and customization opportunities.

##### 2. Interests:

- a. Fantasy media (books, movies, games).
- b. Story-driven RPGs and simulation/management games.
- c. Games with a blend of hope and melancholy.

## 1.4 Unique Selling Points

Unique approach to the management system integrated narrative allows not only for replayability, but also for players to experience different story outcomes based on how they select each quest and fulfill requests. Maybe the world will be different when you're done...

## ..... 2. Player Experience .....

### 2.1 Look and Feel

The game's visual and auditory design hopes to immerse players in a cozy yet emotionally rich tavern, capturing the duality of heroic struggles and the refuge of the tavern. The game delves into the personal struggles of heroes, showing that even the strongest need support. A blend of hope and melancholy envelopes the game, players will feel a sense of warmth, nostalgia, and connection, with moments of triumph.

The art style is cozy, welcoming both the player and the characters that enter the tavern. The characters' colder tones illuminated by the tavern's glow, reflect the safety and warmth of the tavern. Characters are stylized and distinct, their exaggerated expressions convey their emotions and personalities, drawing players into their stories and feel their emotions.

The audio design reinforces the game's emotional depth. Soothing instrumental melodies played by a tavern bard create relaxing and cozy ambiance, while somber or triumphed themes that reflect the burdens of the heroes or their victories. The music theme and flow mirrors the game's emotional journey, offering comfort in moments of loss and euphoria in moments of victory and success.

The overall atmosphere hopes to balance the weight of serious themes with moments of levity and camaraderie, creating a space that feels both comforting and inspiring. Players will feel like they are part of something larger, finding solace, laughter and inspiration as they navigate the lives of heroes and patrons alike. The game seeks to evoke a sense of belonging, empathy, and hope, making every triumph, loss, and emotional connection deeply rewarding.

### 2.2 Player's Premise

The player steps into the shoes of a retired adventurer who had been the leader of their own party of adventurers that, after many years of service, have decided to disband and move on with their lives. Our main character (the player) didn't think it was their time to retire just yet, but after one of their fellow party members suggested channeling that will for adventure elsewhere, our main character decided to become a tavern keeper and help the next generation on their path to becoming adventurers.



Fig 1: In-game screenshot from the vertical slice build;

As a tavern keeper in a classic medieval fantasy world, the player serves as the heart of the adventuring community. Adventurers, patrons, and townsfolk come to your establishment not only for food and drink but for guidance, solace, and camaraderie. The player will manage the day-to-day operations of the tavern, crafting meals, and customizing the space, while forging relationships with those who pass through their doors.

## ..... 3. World Design .....

### 3.1 Setting

- Medieval Fantasy.
- Evil forces are present and active but are commonly challenged by selfless individuals and kindness is generally found in the population.

### 3.2 World Concept

The world is a vast and a largely unexplored place filled with all manner of dangerous creatures. Despite their threat, monster parts make for valuable resources and a cornerstone of the world economy, attracting many adventurers to pursue a life of perilous battles, explorations and expeditions to make ends meet. Orphans and the wounded are commonplace in the world.

Settlements come in many sizes but are mostly small and isolated villages connected through trading routes. Large cities are commonly capitals or trading centers where many cultures meet and interact together putting aside their differences and old disagreements giving rise to a complex melting pot.



Fig. 2: Early map concept of the world of Tavern Keeper;

Despite that, society still shows deep fractures between classes, especially high standing nobles and aristocrats, frequently looking down upon the remaining populace.

The story takes place in a large northern commercial city located in a vast continent that spans across multiple environments.

## ..... 4. Narrative Design .....

### 4.1 Story's premisses

Our story consists of a tavern keeper that aids adventures not only in thriving in quests but also solving their problems and faults in life.

As the game progresses, the main character will have the possibility of increasing their relationship with the patrons of the tavern, and build meaningful relationships that will change the course of their lives.

### 4.2 Protagonist

Our main character is a retired adventurer, previous leader of their adventurer group. After a failed attempt at keeping the party together, the party is dissolved due to the member's old age. Advised by one of the party's members, our main character buys a tavern in order to keep living their dream through the patrons of the tavern.

Our protagonist is not happy with this decision, but the reality is that they also don't have energy to keep adventuring.

Confident, experienced, hurt, but caring, our main character will have the opportunity to create bonds and aid those younger than them.

### 4.3 Antagonist

There is no direct main antagonist to the game, but we can consider the world our biggest threat. The world of this game consists of a dark and grim world where people live their life fearfully, but with hope that the gods will bring them better days.

Each character also has their own antagonists. Sometimes it's exterior people (in the case of the doppelganger) and others it's themselves (in the case of the perenith). These characters can face their antagonists and become better versions of themselves with the aid of the tavern keeper.

### 4.4 Characters

The characters in this game represent a part of the game's world. These are characters that have lived through some grim times, but hold their heads up high with the hope that the future will bring them more luck. Each character has a set of problems that they can't solve,

but are trying their best to solve it. However, without some intervention, their destinies are to fail.

Knowing that, we can say that our characters:

- Are struggling with something in their lives. Sometimes it's themselves (perenith), sometimes it's an exterior force (princess and doppelganger killer).
- Are destined to fail in solving these problems.
- Present a spark of hope and capabilities. All the characters have the possibility to succeed in their lives, but they all require some sort of assistance.
- Can be helped by our tavern keeper. Whether they need a small push or lots of advice, our characters can have a good ending to their lives with the help of the tavern keeper.

#### 4.4.1 Benji - The Perenith

Benji is a mecha-like character with the dream of being something more, but with the small defect of wanting to please everyone. This is a character that has lived their life under the pressure that their purpose is to serve and only serve.



Fig. 3: Final design for Benji (The perenith);

They are very opinionated, but keep these opinions to themselves so that they might not hurt anyone.

They dream of being in a position where they can help other people, but wish to be more assertive, confident, and free-willed. They are trying their best, but the social pressure of not having a "rightful" purpose makes them anxious and prevents them from expressing what they really want.

The job of the tavern keeper is to aid the perenith in becoming more confident and assertive. Their destiny is to fail, but this destiny can be changed with our help.

Personality: shy, anxious, caring, good-willed, and hopeful

Types of quests: fetch

#### 4.4.1.1 Intro

Benji comes into the tavern wanting to buy something but they don't know exactly what. After a moment of not being able to decide what would be best for the tavern (ask for a pricey meal, or go away to not bother the keeper) they leave the establishment embarrassed.

#### 4.4.1.2 1st Visit

Benji shares that they have difficulty making decisions and telling people what they want. The player can send them on a quest that involves making decisions (a quest to bring 1 of 2 ingredients for the tavern, the perenith has to choose).

##### **Outcomes:**

- Death (in this case they lose a lot of relationship points): perenith is too stressed from the failed quest and never comes back
- Failure: affinity points +0
- Success: affinity points +1

From this point on we can send them on training quests to increase affinity points between visits until they reach each relation threshold.

- Training quests should be of type medium/easy to the character: failure results in -1 affinity points, success raises affinity points +1
- If the relationship reaches a certain negative threshold (-10 affinity points for example), the perenith never returns.

#### 4.4.1.3 1st Relationship Threshold

Benji tells us that the choice was difficult, but they managed to choose one of the ingredients (even though they brought both anyway).

#### 4.4.1.4 2nd Relationship Threshold

The tavern keeper tells the perenith that it's time to make harder choices. The player can send them on a quest to bring more customers to the tavern (go to village square and announce tavern to customers).

##### **Outcomes:**

- Death (in this case they lose a lot of relationship points): perenith is too stressed from the failed quest and never comes back

- Failure: affinity points -1
- Success: affinity points +1

#### 4.4.1.5 3rd Relationship Threshold

Benji reveals that they have an interest in working for our tavern keeper. The player can send them now on a quest to sell tavern food in the market

**Outcomes:**

- Death (in this case they lose a lot of relationship points): perenith is too stressed from the failed quest and never comes back
- Failure: affinity points -1
- Success: affinity points +1

On success of this quest the event of this character appears at the end of the day.

#### 4.4.1.6 Final Event

Benji returns after selling food on the market and asks for an official position of tavern employee. The player can make the decision to decline the perenith, in which the perenith will continue coming to the tavern regularly as a customer, or they can accept them and gain a new “companion”.

If the player accepts the perenith as a companion, they will gain the buff “More money per day” in which the character will serve customers throughout the day and bring more money to the tavern.

Narrative wise, this character will also start to make appearances and give suggestions in the dialogue of other characters that come to the tavern keeper for either service, or advice.

#### 4.4.2 Clarafeyli - The Princess

The princess of the kingdom is a porcelain-like woman that presents herself as a proper and contained soul but who is very energetic and courageous. This is a person that has been sheltered all her life, but whose adventurous spirit has taught her to be explorative and question everything.



Fig. 3: Final design for Princess Clarafeyli Kaolin (The princess);

She is bubbly, decisive, and smart but she lacks the power for making her own path and aiding those she loves.

Being born as a princess has taught her that even the smallest decision can affect someone's lives greatly and she dreams of one day being able to make other lives the best possible. Her destiny is to fail, but this destiny can be changed with our help.

Personality: confident, energetic, bubbly, righteous

Type of quests: fetch, research

##### 4.4.2.1 Intro

Covered in a dark cloak, a mysterious stranger sits in one of the corners of the tavern. Upon speaking to them, it is obvious to us that the person in question is the princess of the kingdom, whose job of hiding herself is going terribly.

Talking to this character we find out that a recent trip to a nearby kingdom forced the princess' carriage to pass through a working field with less than optimal conditions, and the sight shook her to the core. Keen to solve this issue, the princess exposed the problems to her father, the king, and was preventively dismissed.

After questioning her handmaid about the lives of her people she soon understood that her family were terrible rulers. Convinced that they have enough security to prevent a successful revolution, her parents focus all their ruling efforts on the higher class, leaving those who are poor to fend for themselves.

Determined to figure out how to solve the lives of her people, the princess escaped from the palace in order to watch their day-to-day life for herself. The tavern was the first place she found.

However, due to her sheltered upbringing, the princess has a hard time understanding what the real problems are, focusing on things that don't matter. She asks the tavern keeper for advice and promises she'll return in a more appropriate time.

#### 4.4.2.2 1st Visit

Clarafeyli returns and asks to go on a quest relating to her problem. Quest is close in distance so the tavern keeper can keep tabs on her and it involves a fetch quest.

##### **Outcomes:**

- Death: character doesn't appear (event with princess death where kingdom raises taxes ex.)
- Failure: affinity points stays the same
- Success: affinity points raises +1

#### 4.4.2.3 1st Relationship Threshold

Clarafeyli returns and tells us how hard the work was. On quest success: she is motivated to continue. On quest failure: She thinks she may not be able to go on. Regardless, from this point on we can send the princess on training quests to increase the relationship with her and progress through her personal arc.

- Training quests should be of type medium/easy to the character: failure results in -1 affinity points, success raises affinity points +1
- If the relationship reaches a certain negative threshold (-10 affinity points for example), the princess never returns.

#### 4.4.2.4 2nd Relationship Threshold

Clarafeyli returns, now with more knowledge of what is the work of peasants. She is motivated to learn more and wishes to go on tougher quests. We can send her on a tougher quest: clean pigs poop, farm something

##### **Outcomes:**

- Death: character doesn't appear (event with princess death where kingdom raises taxes ex.)
- Failure: affinity points lose -1
- Success: affinity points raises +1

#### 4.4.2.5 3rd Relationship Threshold

Clarafeyli returns and tells us the quest was much more difficult than she expected, but that the people she met were extraordinary and she would like to keep on going for them. We can send her on a quest to sell something on a market.

##### **Outcomes:**

- Death/Failure: character doesn't appear (event with princess death where kingdom raises taxes ex.)
- Success: affinity points raises +1

#### 4.4.2.6 1st Event

Clarafeyli returns immensely satisfied with her work, but is unmotivated because she can't rule. She has to marry someone who will listen to her in order to make a difference. We can suggest that she fight back with the people on her side.

Increasing the relationship with the princess, and teaching her these values will allow the player to experience the second half of her arc.

Upon creating a shared experience with her people, the princess comes to our tavern keeper unmotivated due to her lack of power in royal matters. Due to royal rules, a person of female gender cannot be instituted to have power of decision over the throne, only give suggestions and advice in the absence of her husband.

During this event, the player has the option to either comfort the princess or suggest that she start a revolution. Choosing the first option will finish the character's story preemptively and the character will start coming to the tavern as a regular customer. Choosing the second option allows the character to progress to the second part of her arc and create a revolution that will put her on the throne.

#### 4.4.3 Holt - The Doppelganger Killer

Holt is a human man with a no-bullshit attitude, great focus, and a big heart. This is a disciplined man who lives their life by a set of rigorous standards. Despite this, he still makes time to cherish and enjoy life with his loved ones.



Fig. 4: Final design for Holt (The Doppelganger Killer);

He has 3 children and counting. His family means the world to him, but he understands that the world is dark, so he ensures that his children are taught that life is not always fun.

Due to that negative point of view, Holt has no real life aspirations besides making a living and surviving the perils around them. However, because he lacks experience in warfare, it's difficult for him to protect his family the way he wishes. His destiny is to fail, but this destiny can be changed with our help.

Personality: rigorous, serious, orderly, good-willed, brave

Type of quests: research, combat

##### 4.4.3.1 Intro

Holt appears in the tavern and sits down at one of the tables, distracted by a bunch of maps in front of him. Upon being called out by the tavern keeper, the man dismisses the keeper and continues working. Upon further insistence from the player, the man finally responds in

a crude tone. The dialogue finishes with the keeper making an observation on Holt's terrible plans and the man gaining an interest on the tavern keeper's advice.

#### 4.4.3.2 1st Visit

Holt comes back and insists on knowing about the keeper's background. After a short back and forth between the two, the man asks the keeper for help and reveals that the village they intend to attack is indeed their own. He explains that the village's people are acting strange and weird and he is sure that something evil is afoot. We can send Holt on a quest to gain access to the library's secret tomes and previous battle plans.

##### **Outcomes:**

- Failure: affinity points lose -1
- Success: affinity points raises +1

From this point on we can send Holt on training quests to increase the relationship with him and progress through his personal arc:

- Training quests should be of type medium/easy to the character: failure results in -1 affinity points, success raises affinity points +1
- If the relationship reaches a certain negative threshold (-10 affinity points for example), Holt never returns.

#### 4.4.3.3 1st Relationship Threshold

Holt is able to find the tomes and gains further insight into plan making. They reveal that after studying the kingdom's ancient creatures and perils they are now considering that their village has been slowly replaced by a creature called Doppelganger. They mention their wife and children. The keeper prepares a warning letter for the king's guard. We can send them on a quest to defeat a werewolf to train for the doppelgangers (identify shape shifting signs).

##### **Outcomes:**

- Death: character never returns, and you never get an event telling you that.
- Failure: affinity points lose -1
- Success: affinity points raises +1

#### 4.4.3.4 2nd Relationship Threshold

The keeper informs Holt that the kingdom is not taking the Doppelganger threat seriously. Their request for aid is denied and Holt breaks down. After back and forth, Holt admits that he is confident that he can make a plan that will be successful in dealing with the Doppelgangers. He departs for his village to draw a more detailed layout and prepare for the upcoming battle. They go on a quest alone to draw the layout of the village.

#### 4.4.3.5 2nd Visit

After a few weeks, Holt returns and reveals that the village was never in danger. Confident that all the strange behaviour was just in his head, he confesses about his family struggle and says goodbye to the keeper. The player has a chance to discern Holt's strange behaviour. The player can choose to say goodbye to Holt or send them on a death quest.

##### **Outcomes:**

- Success: the real Holt returns
- Failure: if the player says goodbye to Holt, he never returns

#### 4.4.3.6 1st Event

Holt returns, and confirms the Doppelganger replacement theory. After being kidnapped by one of the creatures, the man managed to find his son and escape together. They admit not knowing of the whereabouts of his wife and daughter. The event ends with the player making a decision between abandoning Holt or aiding the man in fighting the Doppelgangers.

# ..... 5. Art Design .....

## 5.1 Art Style Definition

### Theme

- The tavern should feel warm, inviting, and familial.
- Characters should reflect their story:
  - Serious characters: Poised and composed design.
  - Comedic characters: Livelier, more animated appearance.

### Color

- Tavern: Warm and saturated tones (Browns, Oranges, Yellows).
- Characters: Defined by a single, saturated color:
  - Warm or cool tones depending on the character's nature.

### Form

- Organic, free-form, natural shapes.

### Line

- Thin black outlines for characters and objects.
- Thin black lines to define details.
- Minimal or no size variation in line thickness.

### Space

- 2D assets with a 3D feel, achieved through shading and perspective.

### Texture

- Smooth overall.
- Textures suggested by thin black lines rather than intricate rendering.

### Value

- Dark values with deep shadows and bright highlights for contrast.

### Light

- Dramatic lighting with a candle-based, evening ambiance.

### Movement

- Tavern:
  - Small looping animations to enhance liveliness.

- Examples: Fireplace flames, flickering candles, swaying curtains, moving trinkets.
- Characters:
  - Not fully animated but capable of:
    - Various expressions.
    - Dynamic poses to match mood and conversations.

### Proportion

- Characters: Realistic proportions with exaggerated key design elements for uniqueness.
  - Example: A knight's oversized sword reflecting their prowess as a fighter.

### Style Consistency

- Backgrounds: Less detailed in distant areas.
- Characters: Should stand out against the environment while respecting its lighting and mood.

#### 5.1.2 References

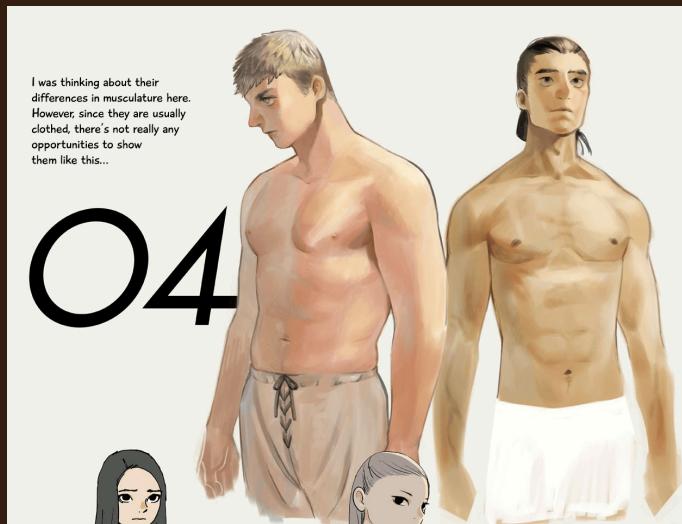


Fig. 5: Daydream Hour Volume 4, Ryoko Kui;



Fig. 4 and 5: *Le Livre des maisons extraordinaires*, Seiji Yoshida;



Fig. 6 and 7: Reference art for the Tavern environment;

## 5.2 UI/UX Design

The UI should evoke a medieval European aesthetic to complement the tavern setting. It should focus on creating a balance between functionality and immersive design, with elements that feel like they are part of the world but that still stand out from the non-interactable assets.

Color:

- Warm browns, golds, and yellows to reflect the cozy tavern atmosphere.
- Accent Colors: Deep reds, greens, and blues for emphasis on important elements (examples: buttons, highlights).

#### Texture:

- Materials: Hand-painted wood, leather, and parchment with subtle imperfections to evoke a crafted feel.

#### Shapes:

- Rounded corners and organic forms to match the inviting and familial tone of the tavern.
- Frames and borders with carved or embossed designs reminiscent of medieval furniture or manuscripts.

#### Typography:

- Fonts inspired by medieval calligraphy or serif styles:
  - Primary Font: Clean and elegant, used for titles and headings. Gothic or Carolingian-inspired. (Examples: Carolingia, BichOGothic, Uechi Gothic)
  - Secondary Font: A simple serif or sans-serif for body text and smaller UI elements.
  - Both fonts should have an easier to read version (check Accessibility section)

#### Animations:

- Subtle and fluid animations to enhance interactivity:
  - Buttons "press" or slightly indent when clicked
  - Small animations to add dynamics:
    - Menus slide into view or animate into view
    - Quests can be ripped from the board when assigned
    - When cooking the recipient will move, bubble or smoke depending on what the player is cooking

#### Accessibility:

- Scalable UI for different screen sizes and resolutions
- Adjust font style and size: Due to the fact that gothic and carolingian fonts are not always the most readable for people with reading disabilities, there should be fonts that accommodate those necessities, as well as the option to increase font size, for players to be able to have a pleasant experience.

## 5.2.1 Menus

### 5.2.1.1 Main Menu

- New Game
  - Starts a new game session.
  - Includes a confirmation popup if there's already an active save file, asking whether to overwrite or return to the main menu.
- Continue Game
  - Resumes the most recent save.
- Options
  - Divided into the following categories for easy navigation:
    - Language
      - Dropdown menu or icons to select language.
      - Immediate preview of changes to ensure accuracy.
    - Visuals
      - Resolution: Dropdown with supported resolutions (e.g., 1920x1080, 2560x1440).
      - Fullscreen Check: Toggle between fullscreen and windowed mode.
    - Audio
      - Master Volume: Slider to adjust overall audio levels.
      - SFX Volume: Slider to adjust sound effects.
      - Music Volume: Slider to adjust background music.
      - Option to reset to default audio settings.
    - Accessibility
      - Text Size: Slider to adjust the size of all in-game text with previews of size
      - Easy Read Fonts Check: Toggle to enable a high-legibility font style with previews of changes
  - Credits
    - Displays a list of the development team, contributors, and special thanks.
  - Quit
    - Exits the game.
    - Confirmation popup: "Are you sure you want to quit? Unsaved progress will be lost."

Concept Art:



Fig 8: Final Concept for the Main Menu;

#### 5.2.1.2 Pause Menu

The Pause Menu overlays the current game state, while players interact with its options.

- Resume
  - Closes the Pause Menu and resumes gameplay seamlessly.
- Save: Saves current state of the game.
- Options
  - Visuals
    - Resolution: Dropdown with supported resolutions (e.g., 1920x1080, 2560x1440).
    - Fullscreen Check: Toggle between fullscreen and windowed mode.
  - Audio
    - Master Volume: Slider to adjust overall audio levels.
    - SFX Volume: Slider to adjust sound effects.
    - Music Volume: Slider to adjust background music.
    - Option to reset to default audio settings.
  - Accessibility
    - Text Size: Slider to adjust the size of all in-game text with previews of size
    - Easy Read Fonts Check: Toggle to enable a high-legibility font style with previews of changes
- Quit: provides two options

- Save and Quit: Saves current progress and returns to the main menu.
- Quit Without Saving: Displays a warning: “Unsaved progress will be lost. Are you sure you want to quit?”

Concept Art:

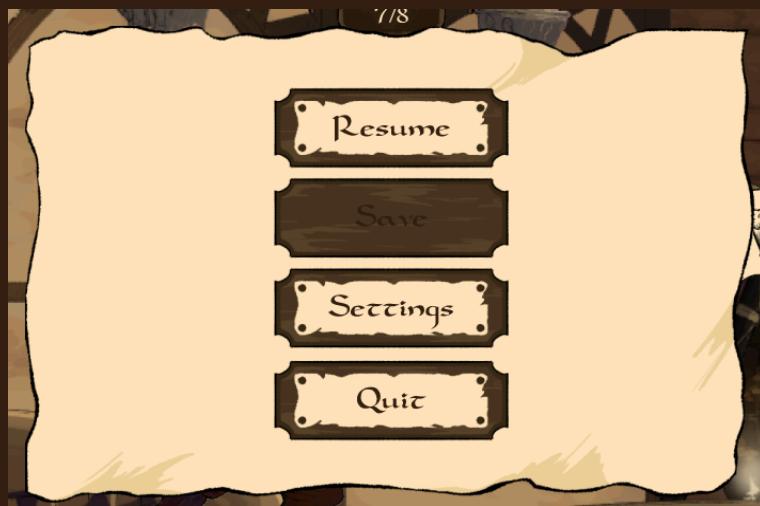


Fig. 9: Final concept for the pause Menu;

#### 5.2.1.3 Talking/Order Menu

The Talk/Order Menu appears as an overlay when interacting with a client, providing clear dialogue and interaction options while keeping the tavern setting visible.

- Text Box
  - Placement: Stretches across the bottom of the screen.
  - Purpose: Displays the client's dialogue or the narrative text during the interaction.
- Nameplate
  - Placement: Top-left corner of the text box.
  - Purpose: Displays the client's name.
- Client Portrait
  - Placement: Left side of the screen behind text box
  - Purpose: Provides a visual representation of the client.
  - Poses and expressions change depending on the dialogue or client's mood.
- Interaction Options
  - Placement: Right side of the screen, above the text box.
  - Purpose: Allows players to choose responses or actions during the interaction.
  - Buttons reflect the current situation
    - Buttons can be grayed out if unavailable or conditional.
  - Make order option opens cooking menu

- Assign quest option opens quest menu



Fig. 10 and 11: Final vertical slice designs for Talking/Order Menu for Patrons (Top) and Adventurers (Bottom);

#### 5.2.1.4 Cooking Menu

The Cooking Menu appears after selecting to make orders in the talking/order menu. It is set in the tavern's kitchen.

- Text Box (Request Prompt)

- Placement: Bottom of the screen.
- Purpose: Displays the client's request in text form, describing the dish or the desired properties. As well as the success rate of the quest, if a dish is being made after selecting a quest.
- Ingredient Selection Area
  - Placement: Left side of the screen.
  - Purpose: Displays all available ingredients for selection.
  - Design:
    - Ingredients are arranged in a grid format for easy browsing.
    - Each ingredient is represented by an icon with its name beneath it.
- Ingredient Details Panel
  - Placement: Right side of Ingredient Selection Area
  - Purpose: Provides an in-depth view of the selected ingredient.
  - Design:
    - A vertical panel that updates dynamically when an ingredient is selected.
    - Includes:
      - Ingredient name.
      - Properties/attributes (e.g., "Sweet," "Earthy," "Mild").
      - A short description (e.g., "Locally sourced honey, ideal for desserts").
      - Visual indicators for primary flavor types (e.g., icons for Sweet, Savory, Spicy).
- Mixing Area (Selected Ingredients)
  - Positions for ingredients to go into and a button to mix.
  - Placement: Center of the screen.
  - Purpose: Displays the items the player has selected to mix.
  - Design:
    - A mixing bowl or cauldron icon represents the combination area.
    - Selected ingredients visually stack or arrange near the mixing area.
    - Players can click on an ingredient to remove it.
- Serve or Discard
  - Placement: Bottom right above text box
  - Purpose: Serve or Discard the prepared dish after cooked
  - Design:
    - Buttons appear after the dish is prepared and the success rate of the quest is updated.



Fig. 12: Final vertical slice design for the Cooking Menu;

#### 5.2.1.5 Buffs/Skill Tree Menu

- Buffs Section
  - Position: Left-side of the screen
  - Purpose: Displays all active buffs the player has earned, their effects, and the sources.
  - Content:
    - Buff Icons:
      - Small, easily identifiable icons representing each buff.
      - Hovering over an icon reveals a tooltip with more details.
    - Buff List:
      - Lists buffs with a short description of their effects.
      - Includes the source of the buff (e.g., “Earned from completing [Character Name]’s story” or “Granted by [Specific Quest]”).
    - Duration/Status:
      - Shows whether a buff is permanent or temporary (e.g., active for a certain number of in-game days or quests).
      - For temporary buffs, includes a countdown indicator (e.g., “2 in-game days remaining”).
- Cooking Skill Tree
  - Position: Right-side of the screen

- Purpose: Displays the player's progression and potential upgrades in cooking-related skills.
- Content:
  - Skill Nodes:
    - Nodes represent skills and upgrades.
    - Unlocked Skills: Highlighted or colored.
    - Locked Skills: Dimmed or grayed out, with a description of requirements to unlock.
  - Skill Paths:
    - Paths connect nodes, showing possible progression routes.
    - Highlight the current path the player is progressing along.
  - Skill Details:
    - Hovering over a node reveals details about the skill:
- Money Indicator:
  - Indicates the money available to spend.
  - Displays how much money is required for each skill.

#### 5.2.1.6 Quest Menu

The Quest Menu combines a quest board filled with different quests and requests, as well as a map for easy navigation and assignment.

- Quest Board
  - Placement: Left side of the screen.
  - Purpose: Displays available quests as pinned notes and papers on a wooden board.
  - Design:
    - Quests appear as parchment papers or tattered notes, each styled uniquely to give a sense of variety (e.g., torn edges, ink stains).
    - Each note includes:
      - Quest Title (e.g., "Lost Artifact Recovery").
      - Brief Description (e.g., "Retrieve a family heirloom from the nearby ruins").
      - Quest Type (e.g., Fetch, Research, Combat).
      - Reward (e.g., 50 gold, rare item).
      - Success Rate: Displayed as a percentage based on the selected character's.
- Map Section
  - Placement: Right side of the screen.
  - Purpose: Players can select regions to filter the available quests on the quest board.

- Design:
  - A map composed of small maps all in different styles and interpretations.
- Go back
  - Placement: Top-left of the screen
  - Purpose: Leave quest screen in case the player decides they don't want to assign a quest anymore.
- Finalizing the Assignment
  - Once a quest is selected, the player clicks an "Assign Quest" button.
  - A confirmation popup provides a summary of the assignment (e.g., quest, character, success rate, and rewards).



Fig. 13: Final vertical slice design for the Quest Menu;

#### 5.2.1.7 Shop Menu

The Shop Menu appears at the end of each day, featuring the tavern keeper's pantry showing what they have and a list of items they can order.

- Money Counter
  - Placement: Top-right
  - Design: A coin pouch that showcases how much money the player has
  - Visual Changes:
    - Number increases or decreases depending if the player earns or spends money.

- Pantry
  - Placement: Right-side of the screen
  - Design: A shelf-like scrollable grid-like menu.
  - Visual Changes:
    - Items added or removed depending on if the player sells or buys.
  - Quantity:
    - Indicate the available quantity of the ingredients
    - Placement: Bottom right of the ingredients
    - Visual Changes:
      - Number increases or decreases depending on if the player sells or buys.
  - Value:
    - Indicate how much the ingredient will sell for
    - Placement: Bottom left of the ingredients
  - Ingredient Details Panel:
    - Placement: Under pantry.
    - Purpose: Provides an in-depth view of the selected ingredient.
    - Design:
      - A vertical panel that updates dynamically when an ingredient is selected.
      - Includes:
        - Ingredient name.
        - Properties/attributes (e.g., "Sweet," "Earthy," "Mild").
        - A short description (e.g., "Locally sourced honey, ideal for desserts.").
        - Visual indicators for primary flavor types (e.g., icons for Sweet, Savory, Spicy).
- Shopping Flyer
  - Placement: Left-side of the screen
  - Design: A flyer scrollable grid-like menu.
  - Visual Changes:
    - Items removed when player sells them
  - Quantity:
    - Indicate the available quantity of the ingredients
    - Placement: Bottom right of the ingredients
    - Visual Changes:
      - Number increases or decreases depending on if the player sells or buys.
  - Value:

- Indicate how much the ingredient will sell for
- Placement: Bottom left of the ingredients
- Ingredient Details Panel:
  - Placement: Under pantry.
  - Purpose: Provides an in-depth view of the selected ingredient.
  - Design:
    - A vertical panel that updates dynamically when an ingredient is selected.
    - Includes:
      - Ingredient name.
      - Properties/attributes (e.g., "Sweet," "Earthy," "Mild").
      - A short description (e.g., "Locally sourced honey, ideal for desserts.").
      - Visual indicators for primary flavor types (e.g., icons for Sweet, Savory, Spicy).



Fig. 14: Final concept for the Shop Menu;

### 5.2.2 HUD

#### Overall Design Principles

- The HUD should feel like a natural extension of the tavern keeper's POV without breaking immersion.
- Consistent with the medieval theme, using parchment textures, wooden frames, and subtle decorative flourishes.

## Client Interaction Indicators

- Speech/Order Bubbles:
  - Displayed above clients' heads when they are ready to interact.
  - Design: Styled like small speech bubbles with an exclamation icon to show that they are ready to be interacted with
  - Animation: Slight bounce or pulse to draw attention.
- Hover Outline:
  - When hovering over a ready-to-order client, a cream-colored outline appears around the character.

## Tavern View and Camera Shifting

- Camera Shift:
  - Moving the mouse to the screen's right or left edge slightly shifts the camera, revealing additional parts of the tavern.
- Edge Indicators:
  - Subtle arrow markers (faded and small) appear when the camera can move further, providing visual guidance.
- Animation: Smooth and gradual transition as the camera shifts to maintain immersion, and to not affect the selection of clients ready to interact.

## Order Counter

- Placement: Top-center
- Design:
  - A wooden plaque or parchment scroll with a clear numeric display.
    - Example: "Orders Left Till Closing: 10."
- Visual Changes:
  - Numbers dynamically decreases as orders are fulfilled

## Money Counter

- Placement: Top-right
- Design: A coin pouch that showcases how much money the player has
- Visual Changes:
  - Number increases or decreases depending if the player earns or spends money.

## Auto-Save

- Placement: Bottom-right
- Design:
  - Small faded medieval icon, with the goal of informing the player that the game is auto-saving

### 5.2.3 References



Fig. 15 and 16: Reference art for the UI artstyle - Hearthstone (2014);

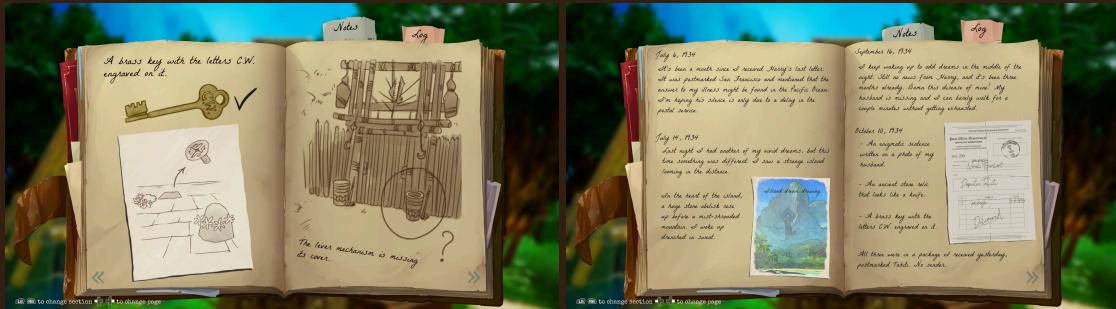


Fig. 17 and 18: Reference art for the UI artstyle - Call of the Sea (2020);



Fig. 19 and 20: Reference art for the UI artstyle - Pentiment (2022);

### 5.3 Character Design

#### 5.3.1 Artstyle

- Semi-Realistic design with low/medium level of rendering detail in order to achieve a painterly look.
- Each character has multiple illustrations featuring different poses and expressions in accordance to the character's feelings.
- There is a great variety of species:
  - Characters belonging to the same species are easily identifiable and share common features.

- Different species are easily told apart and can show a wide range of contrasting features.
- Not all characters share human proportions.
- Characters come from different backgrounds and do not need to share a common shape language when it comes to the design of weapons, armor, clothes and accessories but should do so at a base level when sharing a common race or cultural background.

### 5.3.2 Individual Characters:

#### 5.3.2.1 Princess

##### Design Key Points:

- Rich / Noble character.
- Discrete - trying to conceal themselves.
- Kindhearted.
- Oblivious / Disconnected from reality.

The character looks like a porcelain doll. Should have an elegant petit build and a small barely visible scar as a fracture repaired in kintsugi to hint at an adventurous / rebellious past.

The body has a palette focused on blue / colder hues that contrasts with the gold ornaments, and kintsugi scars as well as a dark concealing robe. The robe's palette should be mostly dark washed out brown / reddish tones.

##### Concept Art:



Fig. 21 and 22: Early concept art of The princess;



Fig. 23: Color and paint design study of The princess;



Fig. 24 and 25: Robe study (Left) and Final concept of The princess (Right);

### 5.3.2.2 Perenith

Design Key Points:

- Shy.
- Anxious.
- Clumsy.
- Struggles to make independent choices.
- People pleaser.

Mechanical character. This character does not have human body shape, should have predominantly rounded blocky elements (friend shaped) and show some age or wear to hint of a past of use as an automaton.

The body should appear retracted hinting at the possibility of a larger build that he keeps hidden. The character is made of mechanical looking parts that can either be metal, wood or both.

Prior service as a farming tool or house servant.

Concept Art:

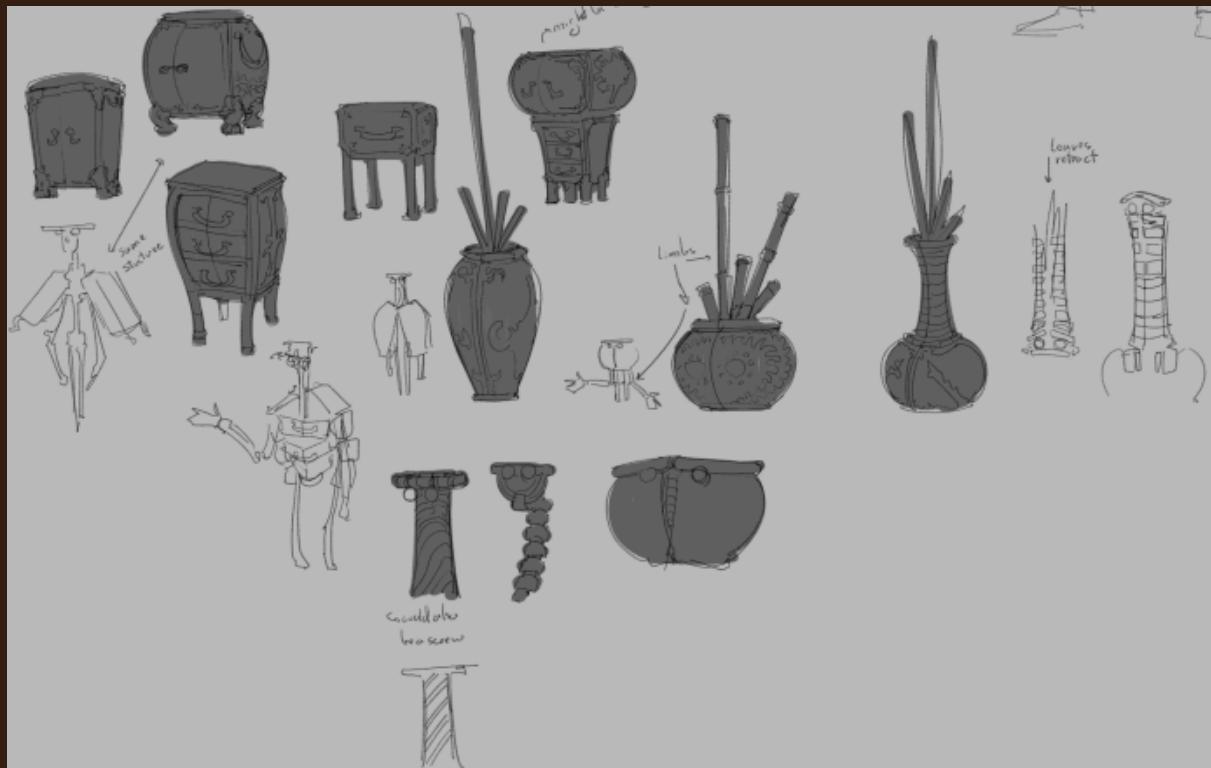


Fig. 26: Early concepts of The perenith;



Fig. 27 and 28: Final concepts of The perenith;

### 5.3.2.3 Doppelganger Killer

Design Key Points:

- Anxious.
- Messy.
- Distressed.
- Nervous.
- Paranoid.

Middle aged human man with a standard semi muscular build. Slumped over a table absorbed in paperwork, the character should have simple clothes, worn and a bit tattered as the character is a refugee and shouldn't have had the time to bring all of his belongings. The doppelganger could have an overall happier expression and fixed / cleaner clothes to contrast with the prior interactions and visually warn the player.

Concept Art:



Fig. 29: Early concepts of The Doppelganger Killer;



Fig. 30: Final Concepts of The Doppelganger Killer;

### 5.3.3 References

#### 5.3.3.1 Artstyle



Fig. 31 and 32: Reference art for the Character Design artstyle - Border Village Knights Order, Nula, Artstation;



Fig. 33: Reference art for the Character Design artstyle - 山灵系列, Nula, Artstation;



Fig. 34: Reference art for the Character Design artstyle - Folk Actor,十一妖, Artstation;

### 5.3.3.2 Characters

#### 5.3.3.2.1 Princess

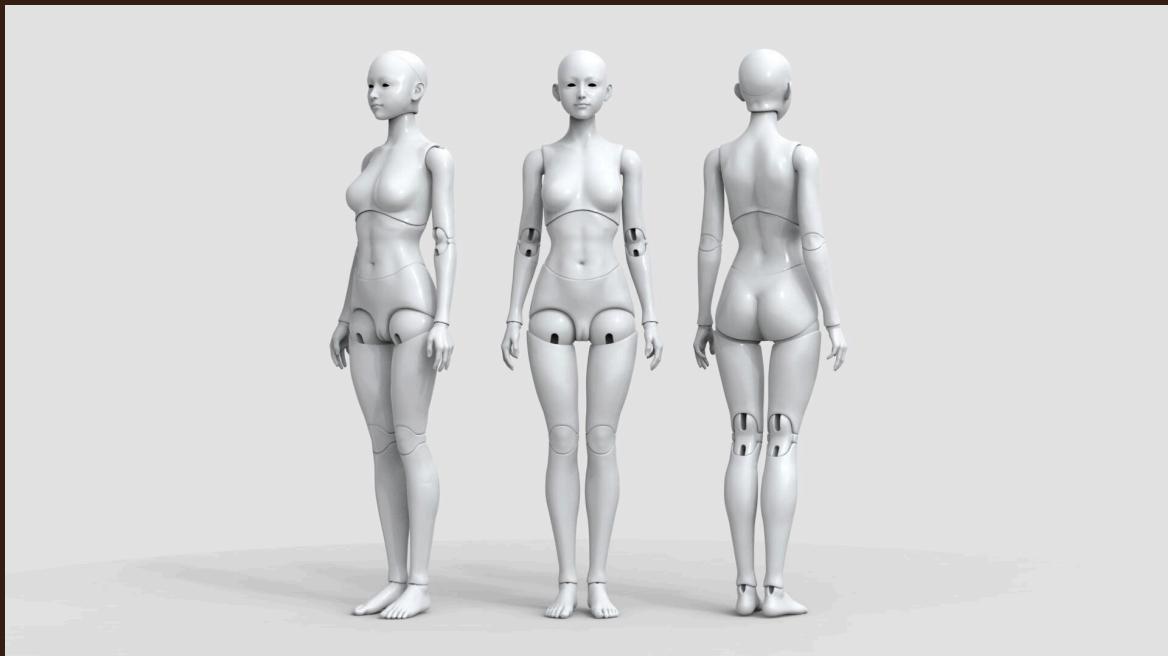


Fig. 35: Reference art for the Character Design of the Princess character - BJD doll Liana ball joint doll, Mina, Artstation;



Fig. 36: Reference art for the Character Design of the Princess character - Porcelain dress porcelain flesh, Yuumeiart, Artstation.  
Qinghua, Qi Sheng Luo, Artstation;



Fig. 37: Reference art for the Character Design of the Princess character - Alita: Battle Angel - "Doll" Body design, Vitaly Bulgarov, Artstation;

### 5.3.3.2.2 Perenith

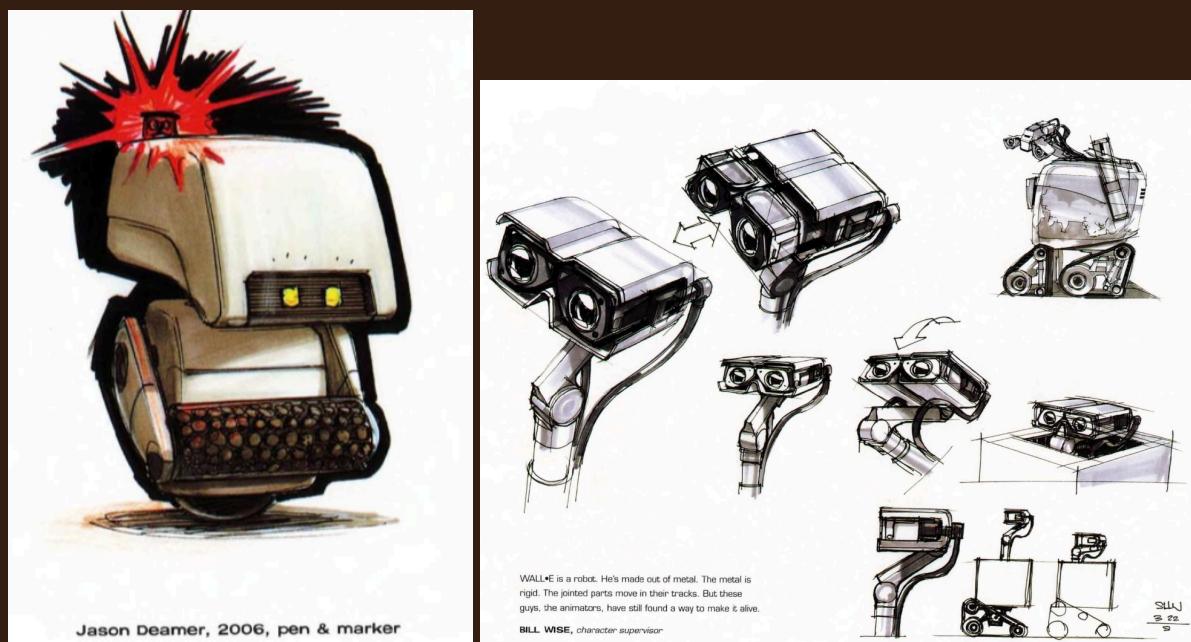


Fig. 38 and 39: Reference art for the Character Design of the Perenith character;

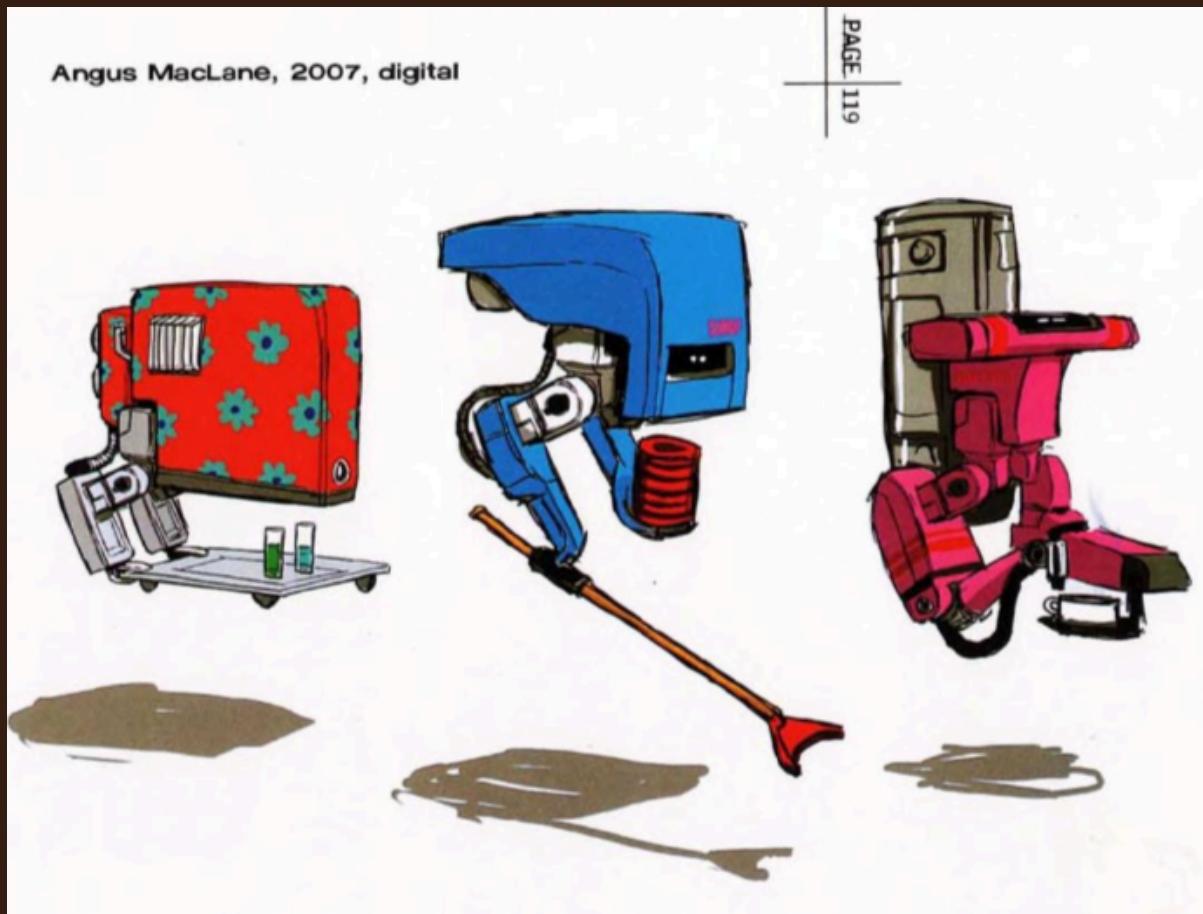


Fig. 40: Reference art for the Character Design of the Perenith character;



Fig. 41, 42 and 43: Reference art for the Character Design of the Perenith character;

### Doppelganger Refugee:



Fig. 44: Reference art for the Character Design of the Doppelganger Killer character - Storyboard inspired from Certce monologs from Snow Piercer/ Some concept art for Harbor Valorant, TB Choi, Artstation;

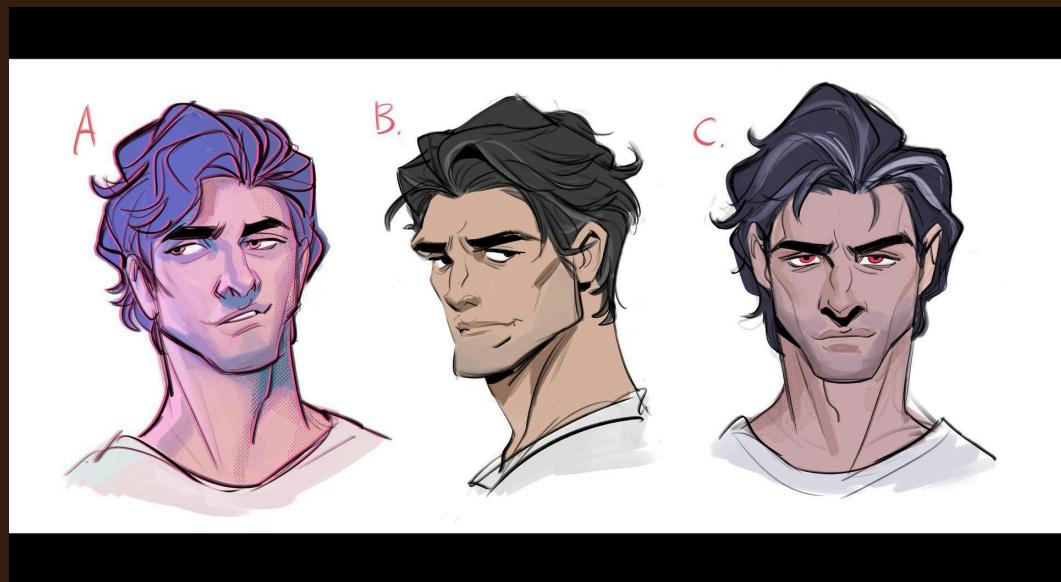


Fig. 45: Reference art for the Character Design of the Doppelganger Killer character - Spiderman across the spiderverse, TB Choi, Artstation;



Fig. 46: Reference art for the Character Design of the Doppelganger Killer character - Pirate - CG Cinematic Character, arnas\_\_\_\_\_, Artstation;

## 5.4 Environment Design

Environment:

Artstyle.

- Semi-Realistic design with low to medium level of rendering detail in order to achieve a painterly look.

Depicted through a single illustration preferably with an ample view that showcases most of the place's space.

Tavern:

- Medium to large sized establishments.
- Warm, inviting and lively place - Should use warmer tones and a palette rich in brown, red, yellow and orange tones.

- Medieval Setting - Fitting the medieval aesthetic the materials used in the building should be mostly wood and stone having only metal present in decorative pieces, chains or as reinforcement of the base structures. Tapestry and banners can also adorn some of the walls, but their design should not be too extravagant as to stand out in a tavern, the patterns should be fairly simple as well as extravagant details would suggest nobility.

- Silverware - Mostly made of metal, should show some use. Glass is an expensive resource and a monetary risk in the current setting where the consumption of alcohol is frequent and entry is granted to anyone, because it could easily break in a number of scenarios. Plates and utensils should be either wooden or metal once again due to their price and high availability.

- Illumination - Candles. Long lasting should be somewhat worn and share a consistent level of wear according to their area. For example in a chandelier all candles

should be similarly worn since they're all lit at the same time at nightfall, but don't need to share the same level as a table candle.

- Architecture - In order to help the place feel more spacious the ceiling should also be rather high.

Being a place where all manner of individuals of different races come together there should be structures in place to comfortably accommodate the many different sizes and aspects of these clients.

- Animations - Some elements such as light have small movements, animations no longer than 3 to 5 frames to showcase the flicker of the fires. The light from bigger light sources such as the door, windows or fireplace can also have a slow pulsating bloom effect done in the engine.

### 5.4.1 Concept Art

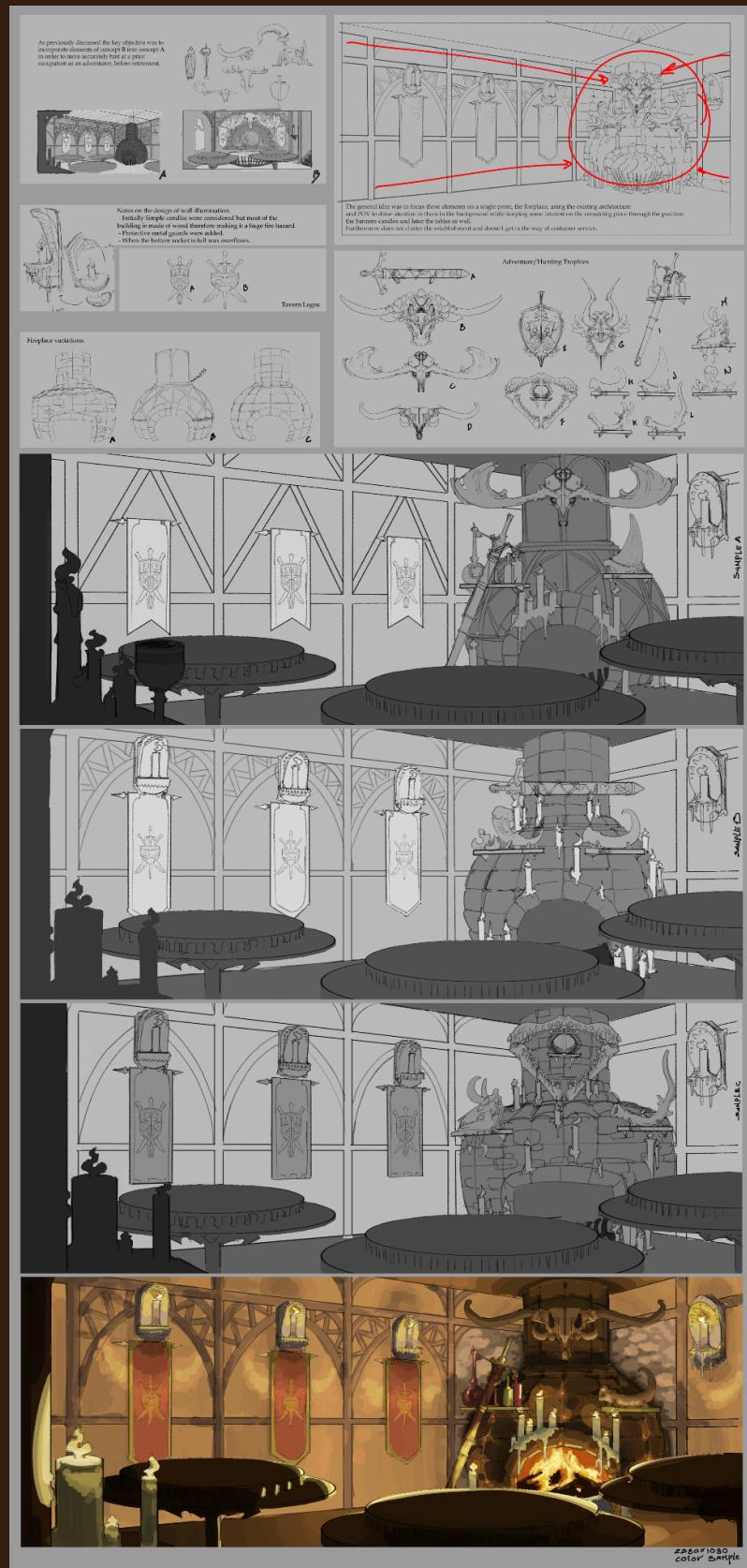


Fig. 47: Full concept study of the tavern;

# ..... 6. Music and Sounds

.....

## 6.1 Soundtrack

### 6.1.1 General Tavern Atmosphere

#### Theme

- Warm, familial, with a sense of adventure.

#### Instruments:

- Acoustic instruments typical of medieval Europe:
  - Lute, harp, flute, hurdy-gurdy, and fiddle.
  - Percussion: Light tambourines or frame drums for subtle rhythm.

#### Tempo:

- Medium, steady rhythm to create a relaxing yet lively background.

#### Vocals:

- Not necessary in every song but can be present if they enhance the emotional depth of the music without distracting from gameplay or voiceovers.
- Types:
  - Wordless Vocals:
    - Gentle "oohs," "aahs," or "uums" to complement the melody.
    - Should blend seamlessly with instrumental arrangements.
- Subtle Lyrics:
  - Occasional songs can include lyrics in a fictional language or softly sung English.
  - Lyrics should serve as background ambiance, not foreground storytelling.
- Mood:
  - Reflect the tone of the scene:
    - Warm and inviting for the tavern (e.g., soft, layered harmonies).
    - Mysterious or ethereal for specific character themes (e.g., haunting, airy soprano lines).
    - Epic and stirring for quest or event-related tracks (e.g., a choral buildup).
- Performance Style:
  - Soft and subdued to avoid overpowering other elements.

- Solo or small group vocals for intimacy; no large, bombastic choirs
- Implementation:
  - Vocals should fade into the background when character voice overs are present.
  - Use sparingly to maintain impact and avoid repetition.

### 6.1.2 Character Themes

- Each character should have their own distinct theme that reflects their personality and story. These themes should replace the tavern's ambient music when talking to the character.

### 6.2.3 References

#### General Tavern Atmosphere References

- [光田康典 - Dance of Our Beautiful Homeland](#)
- [光田康典 - To the Inexperienced Adventurer](#)
- [Evan Call - A Well-Earned Celebration](#)

#### Character Themes References

- [Marcin Przybyłowicz - The Vagabond](#)
- [Jeremy Soule - Secunda](#)
- [Brad Derrick - Alas, the Dragon Shall Break](#)

## 6.2 Sound Effects

### Ambient Sounds

- Layered with the music to enhance the tavern's atmosphere.
- Examples: Crackling fire, soft background chatter, clinking tankards, shifting chairs, and occasional footsteps. Outdoor sounds, such as a distant owl hoot or the murmur of wind through cracks. Doors creaking open/closed. Occasional laughter or cheers from patrons during lively moments.

### Clients (General NPCs)

- Lines:
  - Non-voiced, relying on short remarks or sounds for interactions.
- Reactions:
  - Bad Food: Emit sounds of disdain (e.g., exaggerated "Ugh!" or an unimpressed grunt).
  - Good Food: Emit sounds of pleasure (e.g., a satisfied "Mmm!" or cheerful chuckle).

- Variation: Include multiple versions of each sound to avoid repetition and enhance immersion.

### Main Characters

- Lines:
  - Fully voiced to bring their personalities to life.
- Reactions:
  - Smaller interactions accompanied by quick remarks or sounds.
    - Examples:
      - Good Food: A cheerful “Thanks!” or an audible sound of enjoyment (e.g., a satisfied “Ahhh!” after sipping a drink).
      - Bad Food: Remarks such as “Did I get a bad batch?” or an exasperated groan.
- Character-Specific Touches:
  - Each character’s voice tone, cadence, and remarks should reflect their personality.

### Interaction-Specific Effects

- Food Serving:
  - Plate or mug clinking on the table.
  - Pouring drinks with a slosh or fizz, depending on the beverage.
  - Knife chopping or sizzling for cooking scenes.

### Quest Interaction:

- Paper rustling for handing over quests.
- Coin jingling for rewards evolving money. Thud sounds of dropping something for ingredient rewards.

# ..... 7. Detailed Game Systems Design .....

## 7.1 Objectives and Progression

The player's main objective is to keep the tavern profitable. On a more micro scale, the player's objectives are to cook the most suited meal for the task, to send adventurers on successful quests, and to advance the story of secondary characters.

Progression comes from the secondary characters, with whom the player can build relationships, which in turn reward them with bonuses, and from purchasable upgrades which improve the player's abilities.

## 7.2 Challenges and Difficulty

The challenge comes from managing your resources: time, adventurer, and inventory.

- The player must manage their limited time slots to prioritise interactions that best fit their strategy
- The player must send adventurers to quests they are most suited
- The player must be careful with spending ingredients on a client as they can only restock (and on a limited amount) at the end of the day

## 7.3 Game Experience Goals

- For the player to live the fantasy of a wise and experienced tavern keeper, often a mentor
- For the player to feel the pressure and growth of managing an establishment

## 7.4 Actions and Controls

The game is controlled exclusively through interfaces.

## 7.5 Relationship System

### 7.5.1 Affinity Points

The relationship system can be defined by the points of affinity that a character has for the tavern keeper. Through the story, the player will have multiple opportunities where they can decrease, increase, or maintain the amount of affinity points they have for a character and progress through their storyline.



Fig. 48: Concept art for Relationship tracker UI;

There are two ways to alter the affinity points of a character:

- Send the character on quests that are relevant for their arc: characters will increase their affinity points with you when they succeed on quests that help them overcome their current problem. However, if the player chooses to send the character on a quest that does not make sense for the character's arc, their affinity points will not increase even if the character succeeds on the quest. For example, sending the perenith on quests that involve combat will only result in a decrease or maintaining of the relationship, since those quests do not relate to their core problem.
- Options during events/talking with a character: during the storyline, the player will have many opportunities to comment on what the characters are doing, and those answers can increase/decrease their affinity points as well as influence the route a character takes. For example, during the event where the doppelganger killer tells us that they're going back to their village for a mission, dismissing the character will have a negative impact on their relationship with the player, while giving a cautious support will increase their affinity points.

### 7.5.2 Relationship Thresholds

Each character has a limited number of relationship thresholds that define when important moments in their arc are unlocked. They are measured by the amount of affinity points the player has with a character and allow for the player to know when it's time to progress through a character's story.

There are two types of thresholds that can be reached in the relationship system:

- Negative threshold: this indicates moments where the player has made a number of bad decisions for that character leading them to not engaging with the tavern keeper anymore. When this threshold is reached, that character's story is closed and they will not return to the tavern again.
- Positive threshold: the relationship of the player with the character can hit various positive thresholds. Each one of these thresholds determine how advanced the player is in the character's storyline and what events they receive at the end of the day. For example, the "send princess to clean farmhouse" quest only becomes available when the player has hit a threshold of at least 3 affinity points with the character, while the event of starting a revolution will only trigger upon reaching 6 affinity points with the character.

Once the player reaches the maximum number of points with that character, they will not be able to gain more points with them.

Upon reaching the end of the main story, the final outcome for each character will be determined by the amount of affinity points the player has with that character:

- Negative threshold: the character doesn't complete their arc, leading to the worst ending possible.
- Minimum threshold or no points: the character progresses through their story as if they never met the tavern keeper (default behaviour).
- Medium threshold (the player reached at least 2 thresholds): the character has a better ending than their default one but with still solve problems to solve.
- Maximum points: the character succeeds on their arc and has the best narrative ending possible for their story.

### 7.5.3 Buffs

Characters can offer buffs to the player depending on the quests they are sent to and how many affinity points they have with the player. These buffs affect the main cooking/managing game loop of the tavern and can either be temporary or permanent depending on the event that triggered them:

- Temporary buffs: available for a determined amount of time either while the effect is active or the player has a certain threshold of relationship with the character. For example:
  - The princess lowers tavern taxes upon succeeding on the "send princess to clean farmhouses" quest. This buff is temporary and is determined by a threshold of relationship with the character. While the player maintains the affinity points above that threshold, the buff will be active.

- The perenith is able to call more customers upon succeeding on the “bring more customers to the tavern” quest. This buff is temporary and is only active for a few days after the quest is successful.
- Permanent buffs: only given when the story for that character is finished and can never be taken away from the player. For example:
  - The perenith brings more tips/money upon becoming the tavern keeper’s assistant. This buff is available to the player permanently.

#### 7.5.4 Events

When a character reaches a relationship threshold that contains an event, the player will be able to watch the event occur at the end of the day. These events are story moments that progress the narrative of the character’s arc and often require for the player to make certain decisions that influence the character’s next step. For example, the “revolution” event of the princess occurs at the end of the day when the player has reached a threshold of x affinity points with the character and the player can choose to either suggest a revolution to the princess or that she accept her fate.

### 7.6 Time System

The time system of the game is measured by days and action ticks and consists of spending each day at the tavern, serving, interacting, and assigning quests to the customers and characters.

#### 7.6.1 Days

A day is defined by a full loop of the game and begins with the tavern keeper opening their tavern. They will automatically receive customers and play right away.

The day ends when either all action ticks have been spent or if the players chooses to close the tavern earlier. Upon closing the tavern, the player will have the option to restock the ingredients and watch all the events scheduled for that day.

#### 7.6.2 Action Ticks

An action tick is defined by an action the player takes. Choosing to serve a customer takes 1 action tick, as well as talking and assigning quests. However, if the player chooses to talk with a character and they request to be sent on a quest, the player will not spend more action ticks on that character (the action of assigning that quest will be free).



Fig. 49: Final vertical slice design for the Clock UI;

## 7.7 Cooking System

The cooking system consists of mixing various ingredients with different properties in order to satisfy a customer's request or increase the base chances of success of a quest.

The player will be able to cook in two circumstances:

- Serving a customer: this happens when the player chooses the option "serve" on the tavern when clicking a customer. The customer will then make a request for properties they wish to have on their food.
- Sending a customer/character on a quest: this happens when the player either clicks the option "send on quest" on the tavern when clicking a customer or when the person they are talking to specifically requests to go on a quest. In both cases, the NPC/character will hint at one of the properties needed to increase the chance of success of the quest.

Sometimes the character will flat out say what property they desire and others they will request you solve one of their problems. For example, we might have a customer that says: "I need something cold for this quest" or they might say "This quest is in a place that is hot". It comes to the player to mix the ingredients that better solve the customer's problem.

In the case of requests, the prime objective of the player is making the customer satisfied. The more satisfaction the customer feels with the food served, the bigger the tip the player will receive. Regarding quests, the cooking only affects the chance of success, and therefore the probability to hit the quest bonus thresholds.

### 7.7.1 Ingredient Property System

All ingredients have a three base properties:

- **Flavor Profile:** Affects customer satisfaction, meaning how well it satisfies the request, and the quality of the final product. A meal with too many different flavour profiles has less quality than the meal focused on 2 or 3. Some ingredients can have more than one flavor profile (eg. An egg might be both savory and sweet).
  - Flavor profiles can be:
    - **Savory**
    - **Sour**
    - **Sweet**
    - **Spicy**
    - **Bitter**
    - **Umami**
  - How It Works:
    1. **Ingredient Contribution:** Each ingredient contributes specific points to one or more flavor profiles. For example:
      - A lemon might contribute +5 Sour and +2 Sweet.
      - A chili pepper might contribute +4 Spicy and +1 Bitter.
    2. **Balancing the Meal:** The player's task is to combine ingredients in a way that aligns with the customer's requested flavor profile. For example:
      - If a customer requests a meal that is Sweet, the player should prioritize ingredients that contribute high Sweet values while avoiding excessive contributions to conflicting profiles like Bitter or Spicy.
    3. **Hexagonal Graph:** The meal's final flavor profile is visualized on a hexagonal graph, showing how well it matches the customer's request.

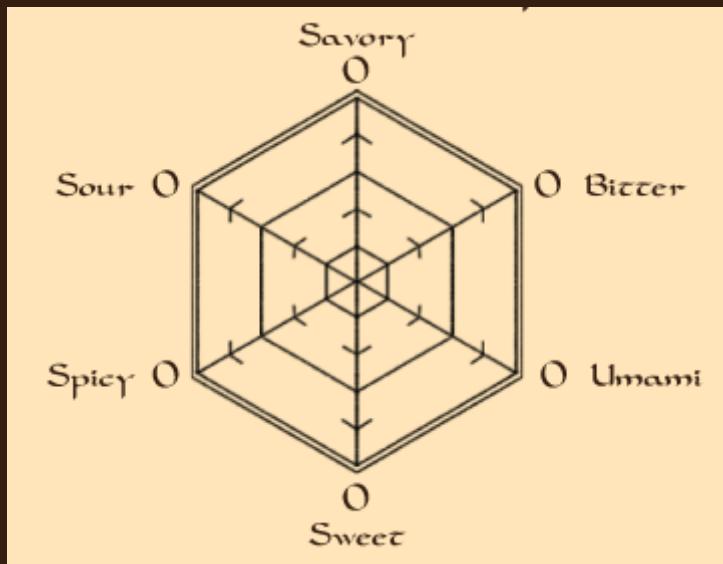


Fig. 50: Final vertical slice design for the Hexagonal Graph UI;

- **Rarity:** Indicates how difficult it is to acquire and the quality of said ingredient. Rarer ingredients yield higher quality meals and stronger buffs.
  - Rarity can be:
    - **Common:**
      - These ingredients are easily found in quests of low difficulty.
      - Can be acquired for cheap and in high quantities, during the restocking section. They take no time to restock.
      - The buff strength provided by these ingredients are the weakest.
      - Can only provide one buff type.
    - **Uncommon:**
      - These ingredients are harder to find than the common ingredients but still easily found in quests of medium difficulty.
      - Can be acquired during the restocking section after acquiring it as in a first quest, but at higher cost than common and lower quantity. They take a low amount of time to restock.
      - The buff strength provided by these ingredients are in the middle.
      - Can only provide one buff type.
    - **Rare:**
      - These are the second hardest ingredients to find, requiring quests of high difficulty to be found or higher than 100% chance of success in quests of medium difficulty

- Can be acquired during the restocking section after acquiring it as in a first quest, but at high cost and in very low quantities. They also take a very long time to restock.
  - The buff strength provided by these ingredients is medium to high.
  - Can provide 2 buff types.
- **Legendary:**
- These are the hardest ingredients to find, requiring specific quests of high difficulty to be found.
  - Can not be acquired during the restocking section.
  - The buff strength provided by these ingredients is highest.
  - Can provide 3 buff types.



Fig 51 to 52: Rarity Icons for the ingredients, in order from left to right - Common, Uncommon, Rare and Legendary;

- **Buff type:**
  - Ingredients can have one or multiple of these buff types:
    - **Hearty:** Increases the health of the adventurers, increases the chance of success in combat focused quests.
    - **Energizing:** Increases the stamina of adventurers, increases the chance of success in exploration or transport focused quests.
    - **Powerful:** Increases the strength of the adventurers, increases the chance of success in combat, transport or help focused quests.
    - **Tough:** Increases the toughness of the adventurers, increases the chance of success in combat or exploration focused quests.
    - **Hot:** Increases cold resistance of adventurers, increases the chances of success of quests in cold regions, decreasing the chances of success of quests in hot regions.
    - **Cold:** Increases heat resistance of adventurers, increases the chances of success of quests in hot regions, decreasing the chances of success of quests in cold regions.
    - **Lucky:** Influences the items rewards received from quests, affecting amount, rarity, and increasing the chance of extra ingredients.
    - **Antidote:** Increases toxic resistance of adventurers, increases the chances of success of quests in swamp or toxic regions, but does not increase or decrease the chances of success of quests in any other region.

- **Inspiring:** Increases the chances of success of investigation or gathering quests.



Fig. 53 to 55: From left to right, icons for Antidote, Cold and Energizing buff types;



Fig. 56 to 58: From left to right, icons for Hearty, Hot and Inspiring buff types;



Fig. 59 to 61: From left to right, icons for Lucky, Powerful and Tough buff types;

Ingredients can be mixed together to increase/decrease the chances of success/satisfaction of a customer in your tavern.

The biggest challenge of this system is balancing these properties in order to satisfy the customer as much as possible. For example, a customer comes to the tavern and asks for a meal that is “Sweet” and is going to do a quest in a “Hot” region. The player will have to balance making a meal that provides the flavor profile of “Sweet” and the buff type “Cold” to increase the chance of success of the quest. It comes to the player to solve these problems while managing the ingredients they have in stock.

### 7.7.2 Requests and Quality

The Cooking System revolves around fulfilling customer requests with meals that align with their needs and preferences. Each request made by a customer will specify the Flavor Profiles and occasionally the Buff Types they seek. The meal's final quality rating hinges on 2 and occasionally 3 main factors: the flavor profile satisfaction, the quality of the ingredients, and in the case of Buff Types being requested, if the Buff Types have been met.

### 7.7.2.1 Quality Calculation

#### 1. Flavor Profile Quality

- **Difference Calculation:** The difference between the requested flavor profile and the resulting meal's flavor values is calculated. The closer the difference is to zero, the higher the quality.
- **Margin of Error:** A tolerance range is applied to each level of quality, allowing slight deviations without significant penalties. For example:
  - **5 Stars:** Difference of 0 to ±2
  - **4 Stars:** Difference of ±3 to ±5
  - **3 Stars:** Difference of ±6 to ±8
  - **2 Stars:** Difference of ±9 to ±11
  - **1 Star:** Difference of ±12 or more

The overall **Quality** of a meal is determined by three factors:

#### 1. Flavor Profile Satisfaction:

- How well the meal matches the requested flavor profile. A precise alignment results in higher quality.
- Overloading the meal with too many conflicting flavor profiles reduces the meal's quality and lowers customer satisfaction. For example if a meal has at least 2 or more points on all 6 Flavor Profiles.

#### 2. Ingredient Rarity:

- The rarity of the ingredients used affects the quality multiplier. Higher rarity ingredients contribute more to the meal's quality.

#### 3. Buff Synergy:

- If the meal includes ingredients with Buff Types that align with the customer's needs (e.g., a quest in a cold region requesting the "Cold" buff), the quality increases further.

The final quality rating determines the amount the customer is wheeling to pay for it.

The final score is represented through a rating that goes from 0 to 5 stars.

### 7.7.2.2 Example Request

**Customer Request:** "I need something Sweet to keep me energized for my quest in the swamp."

- **Flavor Profile Needed:** Sweet.
- **Buff Type Needed:** Energizing + Antidote.

### Possible Ingredients:

- Honey (+7 Sweet, Energizing Buff +4).
- Mint Leaf (+3 Sweet, Antidote buff +2).
- Apple (+5 Sweet).

### Resulting Meal:

- Final Flavor Profile: High Sweet.
- Buffs Provided: Energizing, Antidote.
- Final Quality Rating of the meal: High due to the alignment with the request.

### 7.7.3 Cooking Skill Tree Progression:

- A skill tree for the cooking mechanic, where the player can choose to master a specific cuisine. The tree will contain a range of passive and active abilities that will allow the player to specialize in a certain type of play.

#### a. Cuisine Mastery Examples:

- **Master Baker:** The skills of this mastery are focused on increasing the quality and buffs of meals with the flavor profile of sweet or sour. For example, one ability might be:
  - *Meals of these flavor profiles have the "Sugar Rush" property which always provides "Energizing" buff or increase it, if it already has it.*
- **Grill Guru:** The skills of this mastery are focused on increasing the quality, buffs and ingredients interaction of meals with the flavor profile of savory or umami. For example, one ability might be:
  - *Meals of these flavor profiles provide the adventurers the "Hearty" buff or increase it, if it already has it.*
- **Spice Connoisseur:** The skills of this mastery are focused on increasing the quality and buffs of meals with the flavor profile of spicy or bitter. For example, one ability might be:
  - *Meals of the flavor profile "Spicy" and providing the buff type "Hot", ignore the debuff in hot regions.*
- **Regional Specialist:** The skills of this mastery are focused on increasing the quality, buffs and ingredients interaction of meals with ingredients from the same region. For example, one ability might be:
  - *A Meals buff strength is multiplied by the amount of ingredients of the same region.*
- **Restaurant Professional:** The skills of this mastery are focused on increasing the value and quality of the meals. For example, one ability might be:
  - *Everyday you can choose to double the value of 3 meals.*

## 7.7.4 Restocking

At the end of each day, the player will have the possibility to restock some of their ingredients. These include ingredients that are considered common, uncommon or rare and the player must pay a sum of money in order to buy them. To get rarer ingredients, the player has to send adventurers on quests and receive the loot on their success.

It's important to note that ingredients do not have an unlimited stock in the store. These will not only depend on the rarity of the ingredient but in the store.

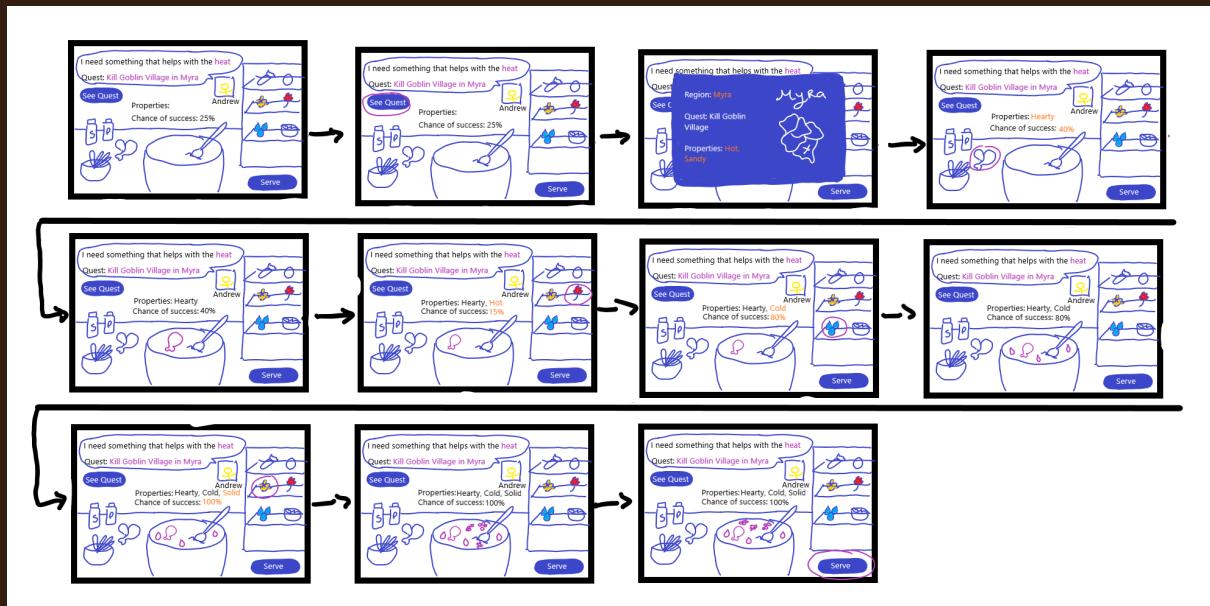


Fig. 62: An example of serving a customer for a quest;

## 7.7.5 Lore

Ingredients also provide a small piece of lore that hints towards the broader world outside the tavern, how it functions. It could range from small tidbits about the ecosystem it resides to a small myth/legend about it.

## 7.8 Quest System

The quest system is a core component of the game, offering the opportunity for players to engage with the world and its characters through two distinct categories of quests: **Generic Quests** and **Narrative Quests**.

### 7.8.1 Generic Quests

**Regional Focus:** Generic quests are tied to specific regions in the game world. Each region has a pool of rewards that can be obtained.

**Random Selection:** These quests are randomly generated, providing variety and replayability. Players will encounter different challenges and rewards on each playthrough.

## 7.8.2 Narrative Quests

**Character-Specific:** Narrative quests are tied to specific characters. Only the hero associated with the quest can complete it successfully.

**Progression-Based:** These quests unlock as the player progresses through the narrative arc of the associated character, offering deeper insight into their story and development.

## 7.8.3 Quest properties

Besides two main categories of quests (Generic Quests and Narrative Quests), quests have 3 properties:

- Region
- Difficulty
- Types

### 7.8.3.1 Region

Can be 1 of 4 regions:

1. **Town:**
  - a. These quests are set in the tavern town and surrounding area..
  - b. Tend to be of low difficulty and the type of "Help", "Transport" and "Gathering".
  - c. The rewards tend to be mostly common and uncommon rewards.
2. **Desert:**
  - a. Quests set in the desert region. A very hot environment with a lot of hidden dungeons and ancient tombs and dangerous monsters.
  - b. Tend can be of any difficulty and of all quest types.
  - c. The rewards can be of any rarity.
3. **Icy Mountains:**
  - a. Quests set in the icy mountain region.
  - b. Tend can be of any difficulty and of all quest types. A very cold environment with hidden treasures and unique ingredients.
  - c. The rewards can be of any rarity.
4. **Swamp:**
  - a. Quests set in the swamplands region. A toxic environment, with dangerous wildlife and bandits.
  - b. Tend can be of any difficulty and of all quest types.
  - c. The rewards can be of any rarity.

### 7.8.3.2 Difficulty

The difficulty of a quest determines the base success chance the hero has of completing it and duration of the quest, meaning how long does it take for the hero to come back to the spawning pool after it's been sent on a quest.

In both categories of quests (Generic and Narrative), duration is a fixed and predetermined value. As for the base success chance, in **Generic Quests**, this is a predetermined value, but in **Narrative Quests** this value is influenced by the amount of **affinity points** the player has with the character of said quest. In both cases the base success chance is influenced by the quest type preference of the character. For example if the quest type is not of the preference of the character the base chance is decreased, and vice-versa.

Can be 1 of 3:

1. **Low:**
  - a. Tend to be non combat focused quests. For example: "Help", "Transport" and "Gathering".
  - b. The rewards tend to be mostly common and uncommon rewards.
  - c. Example base chance: 50%-65%
  - d. The duration of these quests is 1 day.
2. **Medium:**
  - a. Can of any quest type.
  - b. The rewards tend to be mostly uncommon and rare rewards.
  - c. Example base chance: 30%-45%
  - d. The duration of these quests is 7 days.
3. **High**
  - a. Can of any quest type.
  - b. The rewards tend to be mostly rare rewards, with some uncommon and might contain one legendary reward.
  - c. Example base chance: 10%-25%
  - d. The duration of these quests is 14 days.

### 7.8.3.3 Types

Can be up to 3 of 6:

1. **Gathering:**
  - a. Tasks focused on collecting specific items or resources from the environment or creatures.
  - b. Examples:
    - i. "Harvest rare herbs from the swamp."
    - ii. "Collect glowing crystals from the desert caves."
    - iii. "Retrieve a yetis pelt from the icy mountains."
  - c. Commonly of low difficulty but can range to medium or high depending on the region and rarity of the items.

**2. Investigation:**

- a. Quests involving solving mysteries, uncovering secrets, or tracking down information.
- b. Examples:
  - i. "Discover the source of strange noises in the town sewers."
  - ii. "Investigate ancient ruins in the desert for hidden artifacts."
  - iii. "Follow clues to uncover the bandit hideout in the swamp."
- c. Can range from low to high difficulties depending on the region, rarity of the items and danger.

**3. Transport:**

- a. Tasks requiring the delivery of items or escorting someone or something safely to their destination.
- b. Examples:
  - i. "Deliver medicine to a sick villager in the town."
  - ii. "Escort a merchant caravan through the desert."
  - iii. "Protect a traveling scholar crossing the icy mountains."
- c. Usually low to medium but can be high depending on the region, rarity of the items and danger.

**4. Help:**

- a. Quests focused on assisting NPCs in non-combat scenarios, often involving problem-solving or crafting.
- b. Examples:
  - i. "Rebuild a collapsed bridge in the town outskirts."
  - ii. "Aid villagers in draining a flooded area of the swamp."
  - iii. "Prepare special meals for a mountain festival."
- c. Typically low but can escalate depending on the region, rarity of the items and danger.

**5. Exploration:**

- a. Quests involve venturing into uncharted areas to map, locate, or uncover hidden places.
- b. Examples:
  - i. "Chart a path through the desert to a forgotten tomb."
  - ii. "Locate a hidden cave in the icy mountains."
  - iii. "Explore an abandoned fort in the swamp."
- c. Often medium to high, depending on the region, rarity of the items and danger.

**6. Bounty:**

- a. Tasks requiring the defeat of specific creatures or dangerous individuals.
- b. Examples:

- i. "Hunt down a rogue mage causing chaos in the town."
  - ii. "Slay a sandworm terrorizing desert trade routes."
  - iii. "Eliminate a giant crocodile lurking in the swamp."
- c. Typically medium to high, as they involve direct combat or strategy.

#### 7.8.4 Rewards

**Predefined Rewards:** Each quest has rewards outlined in advance, which may include rare ingredients, gold, equipment, or buffs. These are influenced by the quest properties and some buffs.

**RNG Influence:** The quantity and rarity of rewards can be influenced by random chance, adding an element of unpredictability and excitement. These are influenced by the chance of success and some buffs.

#### 7.8.5 Hero preparation

**Resource Investment:** To send a hero on a quest, players must provide resources, such as ingredients and prepared meals. These items improve the hero's readiness and increase the chance of success.

**Food Buffs:** Meals crafted by the player provide buffs that enhance the hero's stats and abilities. Choosing the right meals for the hero and quest type is essential for optimizing their performance.

#### 7.8.6 Quest Outcomes

1. **Success:** The hero completes the quest successfully, and the player receives the promised rewards.
  - a. **Enhanced Rewards:** The quantity and quality of rewards increase based on the hero's level of preparation, which is directly influenced by the player's decisions.
  - b. **Bonus Rewards:** There is a chance for additional, rare rewards if the hero's preparation level is exceptionally high (above 100%).
2. **Failure:** The hero fails the quest and does not bring back the promised rewards.
  - a. **Consequences:** Failure may result in penalties, such as injuries to the hero, loss of resources, or diminished relationship.

The quest system encourages players to strategically manage resources to optimize quest outcomes. By balancing risk and reward, deciding which heroes to send on which quests.

Engaging with narrative quests deepens the relationships with characters and uncovers their stories.

By integrating preparation, decision-making, and RNG elements, the quest system hopes to provide both variety and meaningful player agency.

#### 7.8.6.1 Determining the Success chance of a Quest

1. First the base chance is determined with the difficulty of the quest
  - a. Low: 50%-65%
  - b. Medium: 30%-45%
  - c. High: 10%-25%
2. Secondly the base is influence by the quest type preference of the character
  - a. If the preference match the base chance moves a tier meaning if it was at 10% it moves up to 30%
  - b. In case of a Low difficulty quest it increases by 50%
    - i. Example: If it was at 50% it moves up to 75% (50%+25%)
3. (Conditional) In case of a Named Characters, the affinity points are taken into consideration. The chance is increased by the current % of progression of the relationship.
  - a. Example: If the player is at 25% of progression in the relationship of Named Character, that 25% is added to the base chance.
4. Finally buffs are taken into consideration.
  - a. Every buff influences this chance in different ways.
    - i. **Hearty:** Increases the chance of success in combat focused quests.
    - ii. **Energizing:** Increases the chance of success in exploration or transport focused quests.
    - iii. **Powerful:** Increases the chance of success in combat, transport or help focused quests.
    - iv. **Tough:** Increases the chance of success in combat or exploration focused quests.
    - v. **Hot:** Increases the chances of success of quests in cold regions, decreasing the chances of success of quests in hot regions.
    - vi. **Cold:** Increases the chances of success of quests in hot regions, decreasing the chances of success of quests in cold regions.
    - vii. **Lucky:** Influences the items rewards received from quests, affecting amount, rarity, and increasing the chance of extra ingredients.
    - viii. **Antidote:** Increases the chances of success of quests in swamp or toxic regions, but does not increase or decrease the chances of success of quests in any other region.
    - ix. **Inspiring:** Increases the chances of success of investigation or gathering quests.

## 7.8.7 Quest Examples

### 7.8.7.1 Generic Quest

**Quest Title:** *Crystals of the Sand*

**Region:** Desert

**Difficulty:** Medium, 25% base chance of success

**Type:** Gathering

**Description:**

A traveling merchant has requested a shipment of radiant sand crystals, a rare and highly valuable resource found deep within the desert caves. The crystals are fragile and guarded by desert creatures that thrive in the heat.

**Preparation Requirements:**

- Meals providing heat resistance and stamina recovery are recommended.

**Rewards:**

- Guaranteed: 2 uncommon ingredients, 1 rare.
- Bonus Rewards (RNG): Increase quantity of ingredients and 1 extra rare ingredient.

**Possible Outcomes:**

- **Success:** The hero successfully collects all crystals, returning safely with the promised rewards.
- **Failure:** The hero fails to gather enough crystals, and may return injured.

### 7.8.7.2 Narrative Quest

**Quest Title:** *The Burden of Choice*

**Character:** Perenith

**Region:** Town

**Difficulty:** Low, 50% base chance of success

**Type:** Gathering

**Description:**

Gather either yellow onion or red onions from the town's market. Do not bring both you must choose.

**Preparation Requirements:**

- Meals providing Inspiration or Luck are recommended.

### Rewards:

- Guaranteed: 1 common ingredient of good quantity.
- Bonus Rewards (RNG): Increase quantity of ingredients.

### Possible Outcomes:

- **Success:** The hero successfully collects one of the desired ingredients
- **Failure:** The hero fails to gather any of the ingredients and feels demotivated, losing affinity points.

## 7.9 Systems Interaction

All the systems described above interact with each other in a cooperative way in order to create a fun gameplay experience of running a tavern.

The time system measures how long each run of the game will last and the maximum amount of actions a player can do per day.

During 1 game day the player will be able to play the loop of talking with the characters (relationship system), serving their customers (cooking system), and sending them on quests (quest system).

At the end of a day, the player will be able to restock their ingredients (cooking system) and experience the outcomes of quests and stories (quest and relationship system).

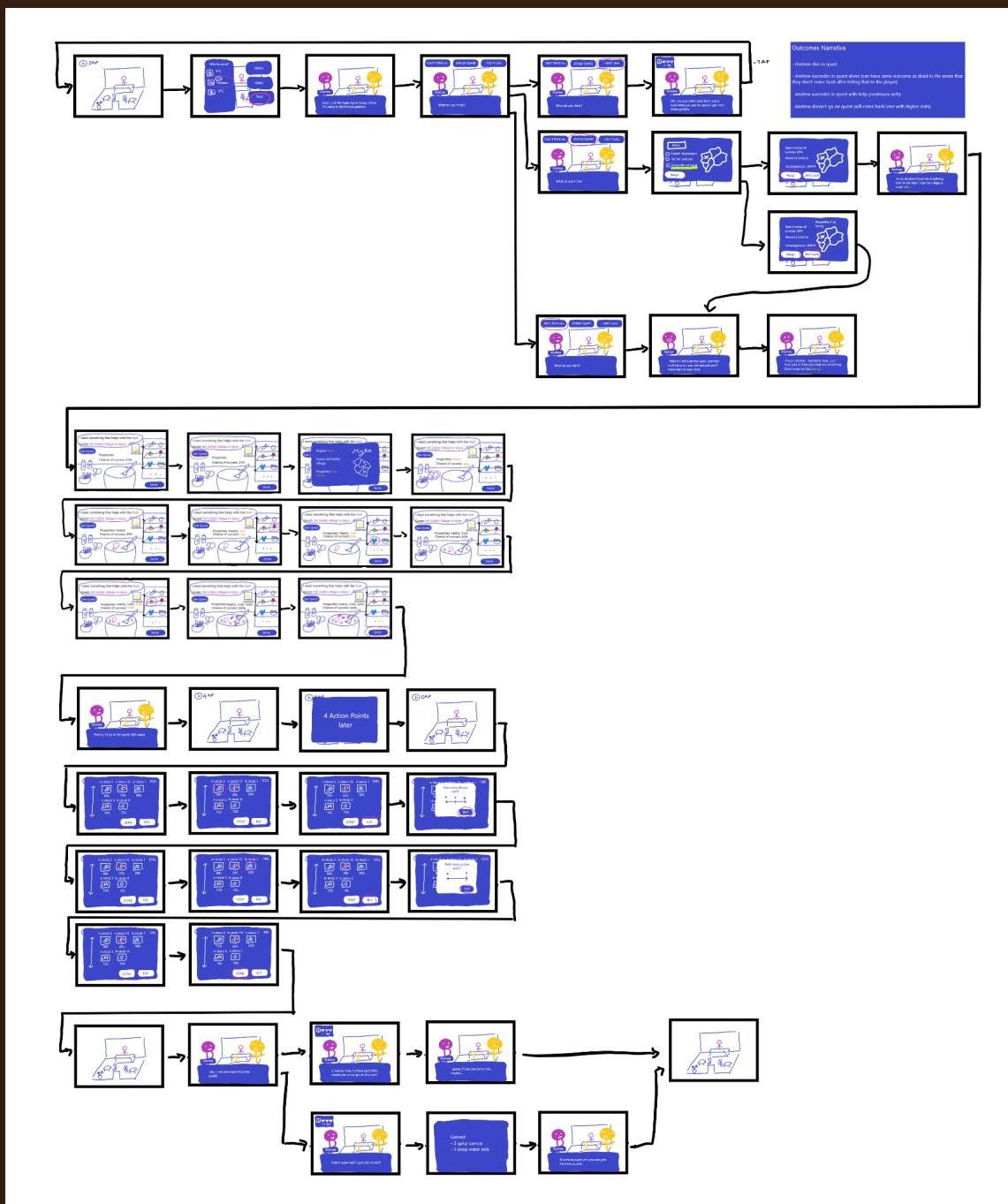


Fig. 63: Storyboard of a whole game loop;

## ..... 8. Technical Overview .....

### 8.1 Target Devices

The game is targeted towards PC - specifically Windows - devices.

### 8.2 Development Technology

The game will be developed using Unity, with Github's git version control.

## ..... 9. Deadlines .....

### **Pre-Production:**

1. End of Ideation Phase (06/01/2025 - 17/01/2025):
  - a. Finalize the core concept, mechanics and unique selling points.
  - b. Complete the writing of the GDD document and other documentation for features, gameplay mechanics, narrative and art direction.

### **Production:**

1. Prototype Development (20/01/2025 - 28/02/2025)
  - a. Create a playable prototype that incorporates core mechanics. (20/01/2025 - 21/02/2025)
    - i. Core Mechanics:
      1. Dialogue and Relationship system.
      2. Quest System
      3. Cooking Mechanics
      4. RPG Mechanics
    - b. Gather feedback to refine mechanics and user experience. (21/02/2025 - 28/02/2025)
  2. Full Vertical Slice Development (03/03/2025 - 04/04/2025):
    - a. Implement feedback from the prototype and polish all core mechanics, a small portion of the narrative, and art assets to represent the final product.
    - b. Vertical slice must be feature complete two weeks before the end of development (21/03/2025)
    - c. Ensure the vertical slice is publisher-ready with strong visuals, polished gameplay, and clear vision.
    - d. Ensure that all required documentation for pitching is in order (eg: GDD, Pitch-deck, etc..)
  3. Full Game Development (1 year):
    - a. Expand on core mechanics and add all missing content and features, (NPC characters, quests, cooking skill tree, etc...)
    - b. Conduct iterative testing by creating builds every 3 months to playtest and gather feedback.
    - c. Create and polish all final art, animations, audio, and UI assets.
    - d. Create and polish all final music and sounds.

### **Post - Production (6 months):**

1. Polish and Bug fixing:
  - a. Bug fixing, optimization, and performance improvements.
  - b. Final round of playtesting, to ensure the game meets studio standards and objectives
2. Marketing (Subject to change depending on publisher):

- a. Build awareness with trailers, devlogs, and social media campaigns.
- b. Distribute demo builds to content creators and press.
- c. Participate in events showcasing the latest demo.

**Live-Ops (6 months):**

- 1. Bug fixing, optimization, and performance improvements.

# ..... 10. Deployment .....

## 10.1 Distribution Channels:

1. Initial PC Launch (Steam & GOG).
  - a. PC-first launch focuses on early adopters who are active in the indie gaming space.
  - b. Release: TBD
2. Console port (Playstation, Xbox, Nintendo Switch).
  - a. Launching it on consoles will probably greatly benefit the game's success, but its achievability is dependent on funding.
3. Mobile Port:
  - a. Given the games "point-click" interactivity might be well suited for mobile devices.