"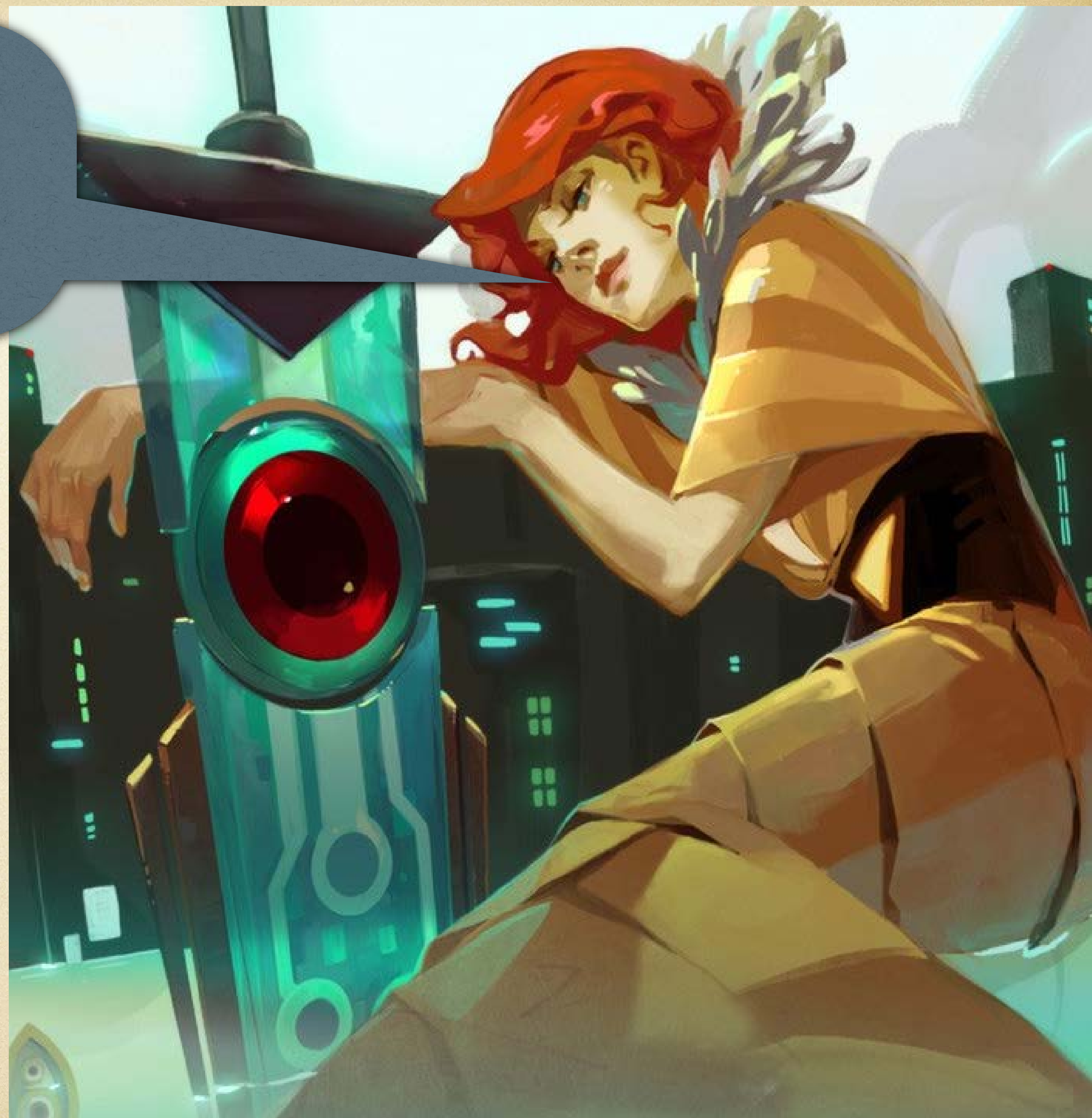An important skill for level designers is to distill ideas into solid, workable games while leading players through the experience of the game without revealing their designers' presence"

Week 10

Level Synopsis
&
Player Path

Overview

- Remaining GDD meetings

- Next Assignments: Characters, Setting

- Dev chat is back: Jarryd Huntley!

- Experience: Transistor
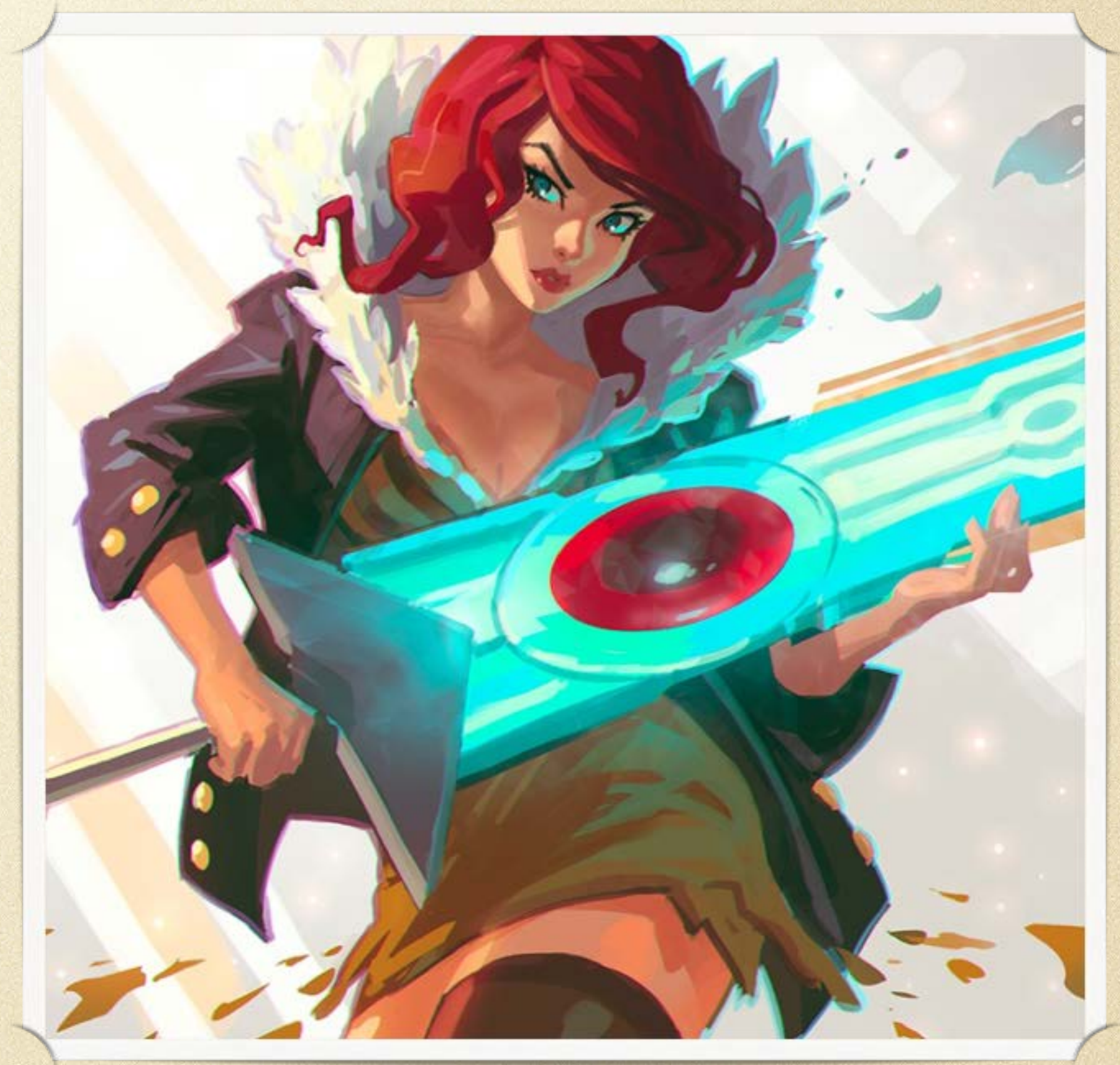
- New Assignment:
  Level Synopsis & Player Path

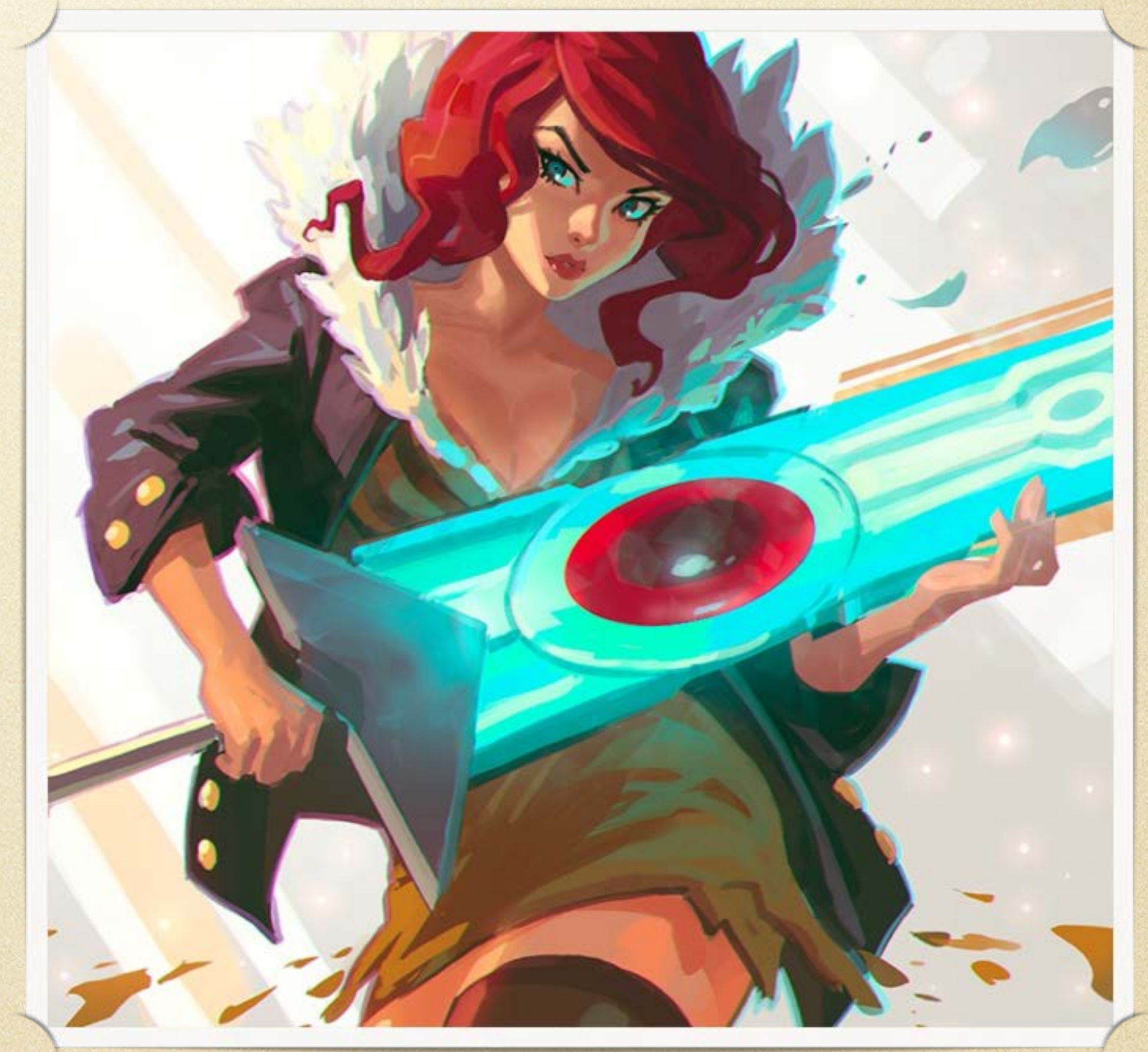# Next Assignments:

Characters (April 10)
&
Setting (???)
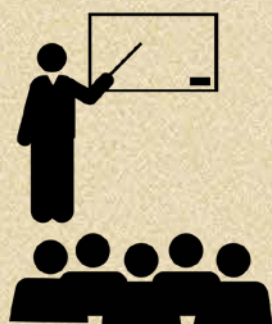
Assignment Schedule

- Tue Apr 10 – Characters

- Tue Apr 17 – Setting (probably) AND Levels

- Tue Apr 24 – UI

- Fri Apr 27 – Final GDD Submission

**This schedule will be a lot easier if you don't wait for deadlines to complete the sections!

Level Synopsis & Player Path
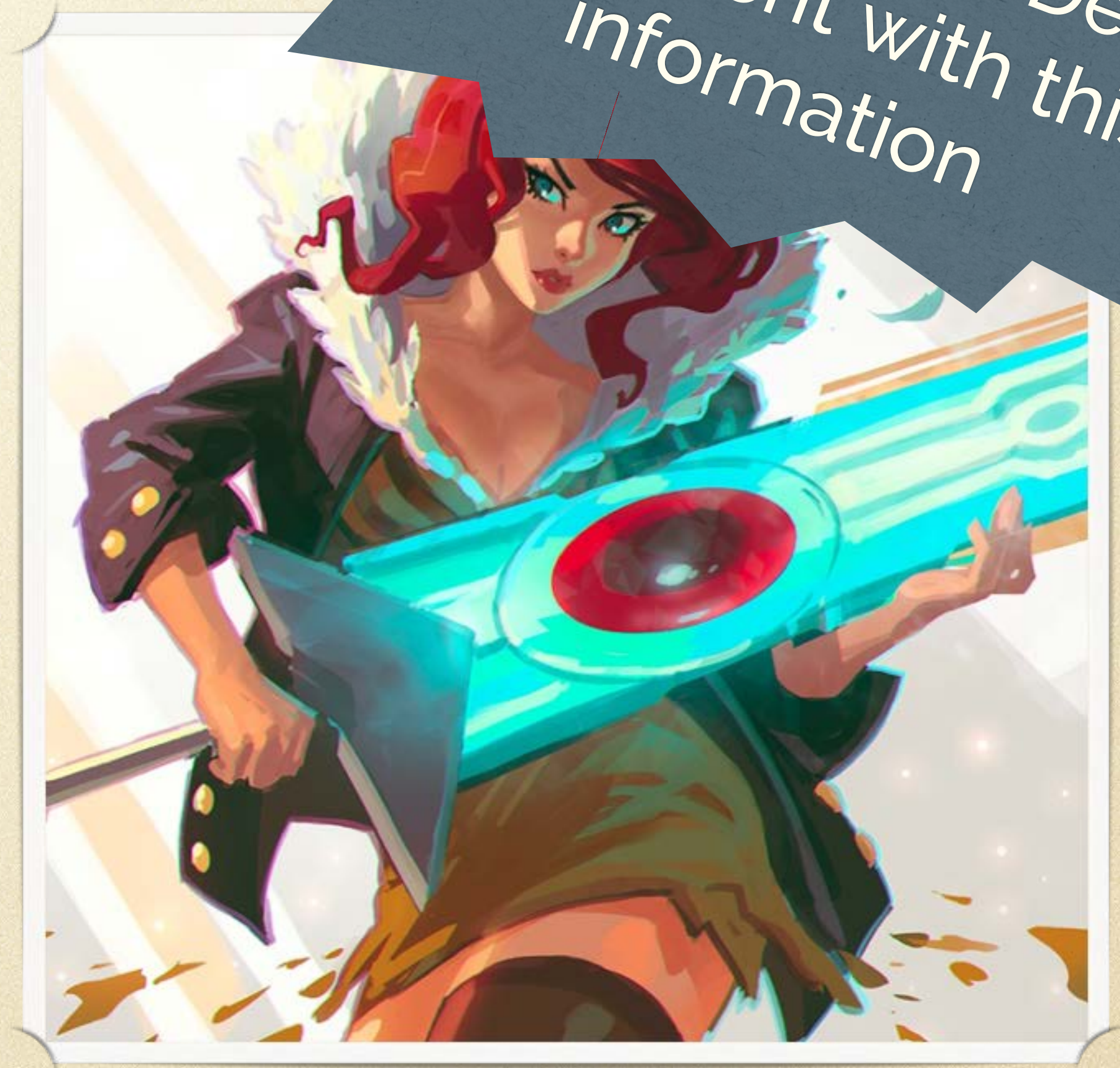
Section Headers

Synopsis

Player Introduction

Player Objectives

Level Details

Player Path
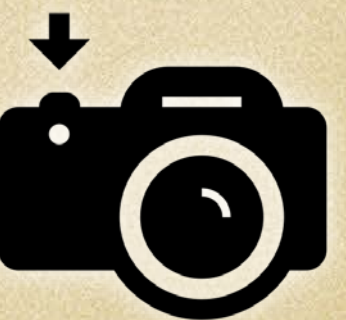
Level Synopsis

- A level synopsis gives a detailed example of what a level is all about

- What is the level's **purpose**, relative to your game?

- Examples?

Level Synopsis

- "Level 1-1 introduces the player to the basic mechanics of the game, 2 - 3 different baddies, and potentially 3 power-up items."

- Which game might this be?

Level Synopsis

- "In this level, the player will lose all of their learned abilities in exchange for 7 cut scenes containing quick time events."

- Which game might this be?

Level Synopsis Example

Level 1a (Tutorial)
Camera and Rain

(NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION)

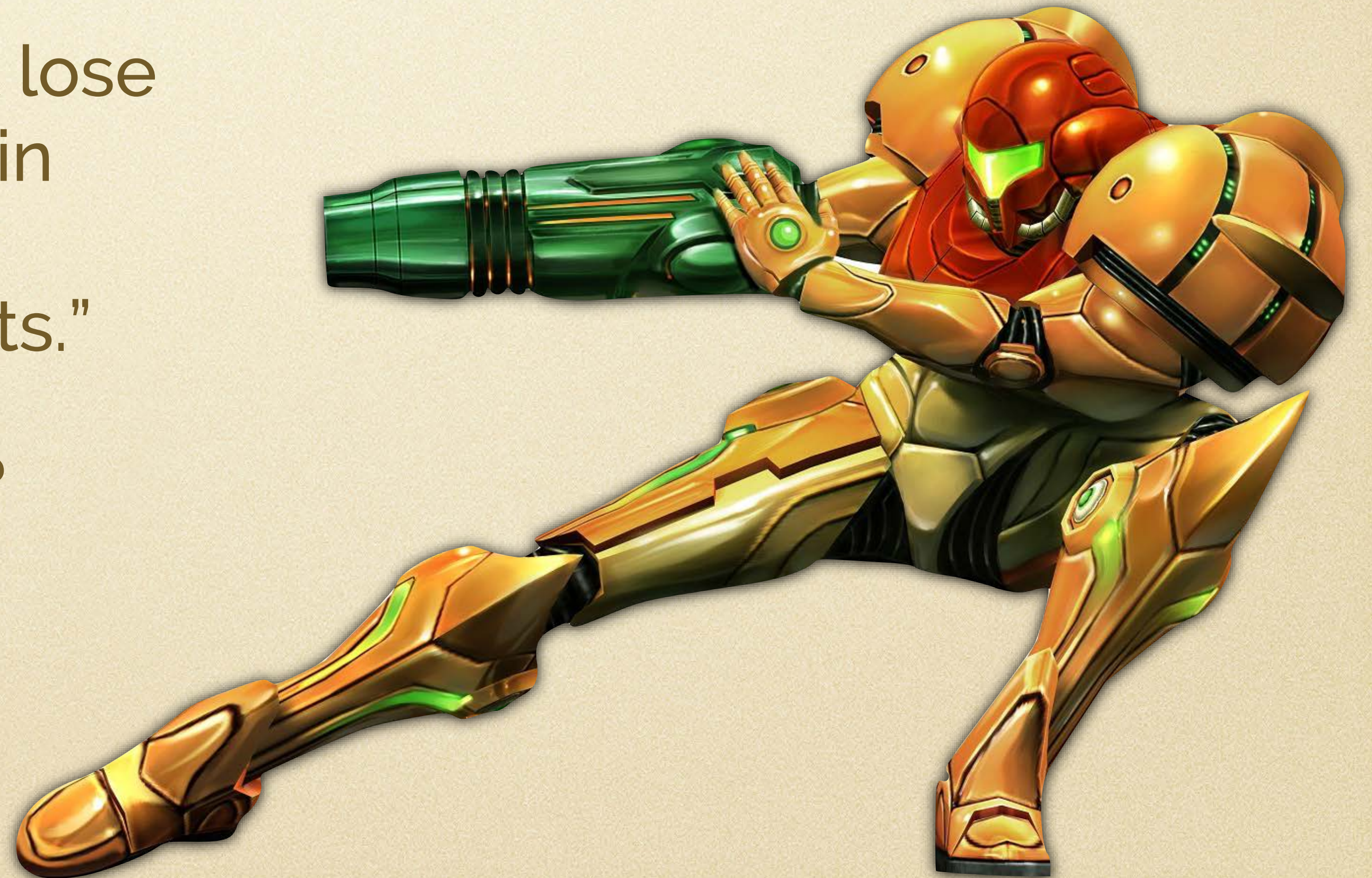| Characters	Shaman, Shepherd
Minor Cutscenes	After level: *Leaving the Western Elder Tree: Chapter 1-1 MinorCS*
Major Cutscenes	None
Tribes	Elephants
Primary Plot Points	• Shaman explains that Shepherd can use weather powers. • The Elephants leave the Western Elder Tree
New Mechanics	• Camera movement • Rain • Groves
Primary Goal of Level	• Learn to use the camera (pan, zoom, etc.) • Learn to use the Rain power for causing life to appear
Primary Puzzle	• Shelter • Use camera to look around and find 3 groves that need watering
Visual Notes	• Time of day: Morning • Lots of life, savannah biome • Elephants stationary • Elder Tree/pathway is main object in the level
Music Notes	Level music: Shepherd/Elder Tree theme (loop)

Level Synopsis

- Think of what a developer or programmer would need to know...

- NOT the player

Player Introduction

- This section of the GDD describes what the **player** will see.

- Think about **loading screens** here

- What information will your player need **just before** they drop into a level?

- Think about what your player would like to see to **get excited** about a level

- Examples?

Player Introduction

Player Introduction
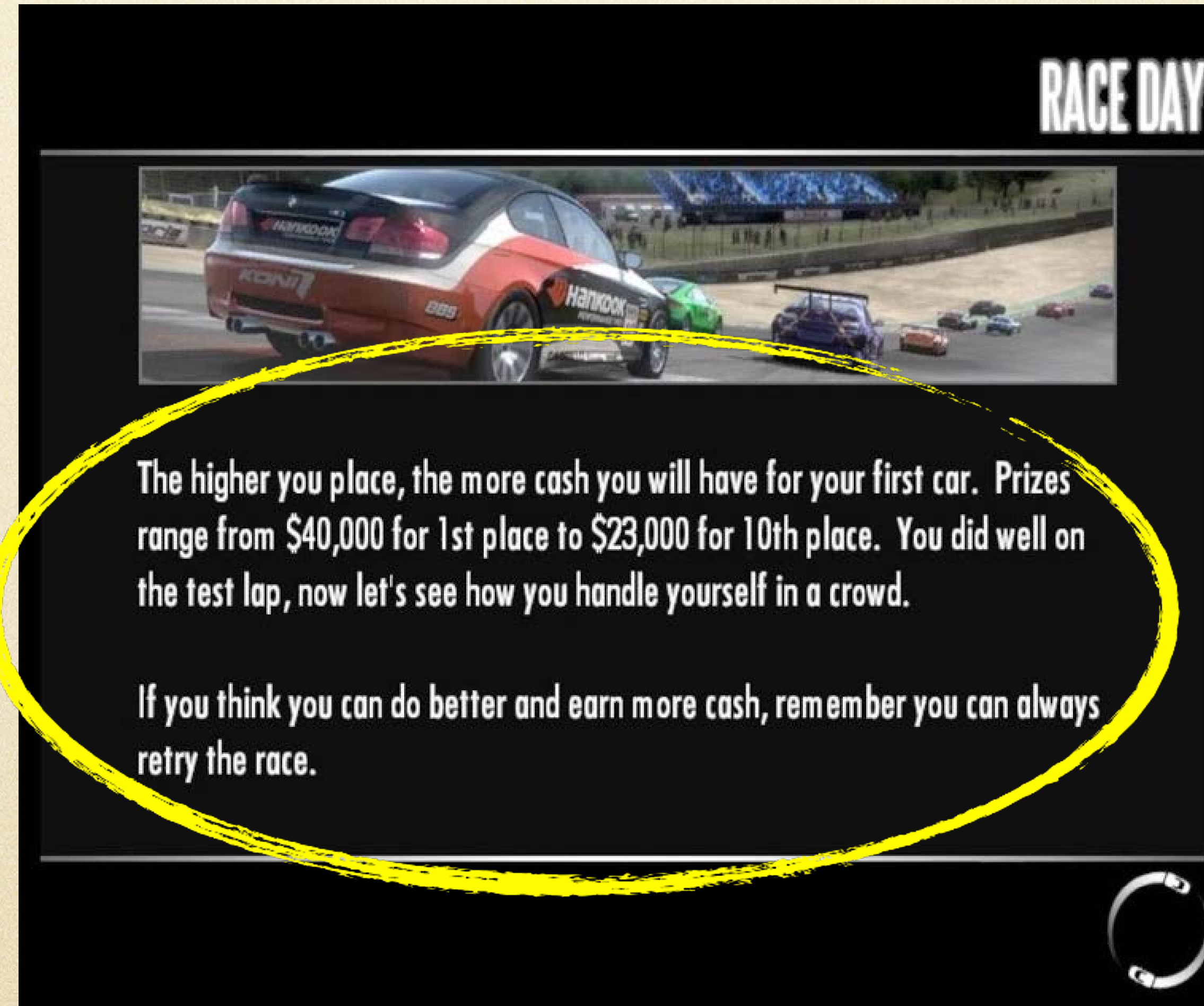
Player Introduction Example

Objectives

- What are the objectives for **each level**?

- What will the player need to do?

- How can the player 'win the level'?

Objectives

- What are the objectives for this level?
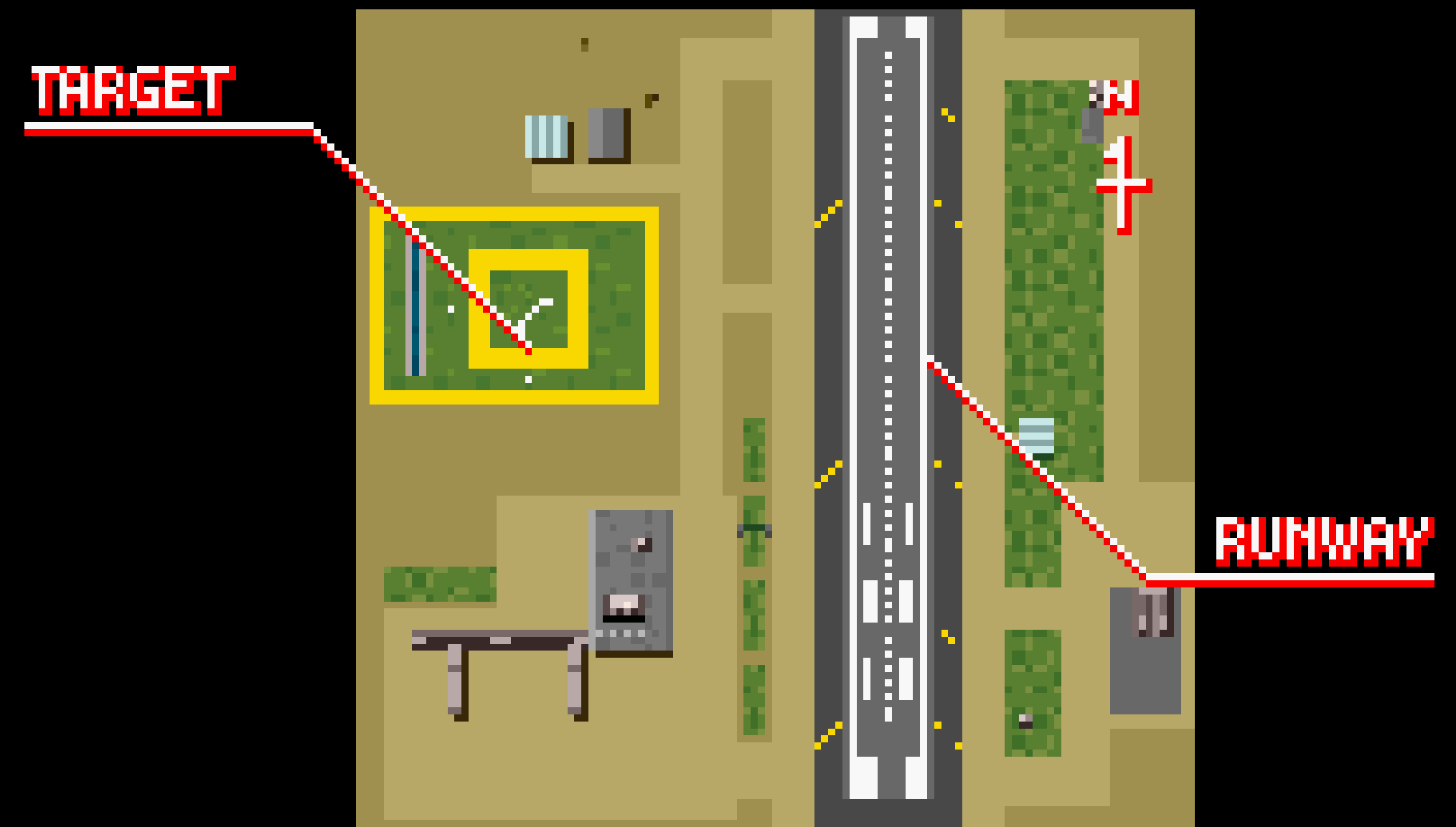
Objectives

- What are the objectives here?

Objectives Example

Level 1a (Tutorial)
Camera and Rain

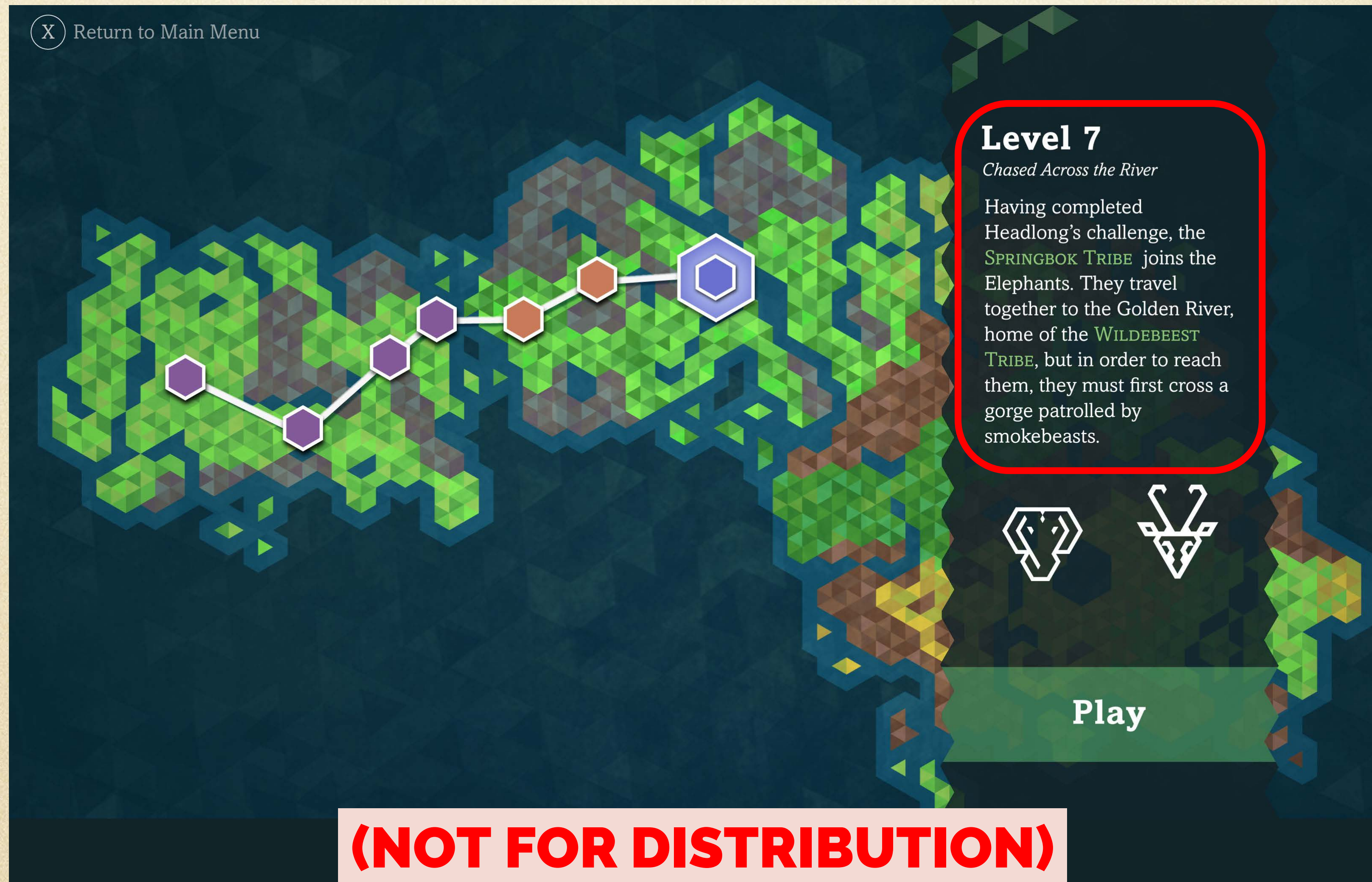|	
Characters	Shaman, Shepherd
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Visual Notes	• Time of day: Morning • Lots of life, savannah biome • Elephants stationary • Elder Tree/pathway is main object in the level
Music Notes	Level music: Shepherd/Elder Tree theme (l

First Steps

Learn to use your Rain power.

Guide Shaman's elephants through the valley.

Objectives

- How can you, quickly & concisely, engage a player?

- Can you do it in a single screen/image?

Level Details

- Think about a **step-by-step level navigation**

- Think about a **walkthrough** from GameFaqs.com

- Pictures might help you here... well... **sketches** really. Settle down Photoshop...

- This section will differ depending on your genre, see your genre for details or ask Tabby/Kris

Level Details

Level 00 (Cosmic Bus 707) - The first level is pretty straight forward, use some Trick Smashes, but not too many you don't wanna run out of time. Make sure you finish with one though.

Level 01 (Cosmic Bus 717) - Use 2 Trick Smashes, one through the top blocks and one through the bottom blocks.

Level 02 (Cosmic Bus 727) - Don't use any Trick Smashes on this one except for on the final block. After you hit the first block, more will appear and so on. When there are two big tall blocks, one on the right side and one on the right side, the final block is right after these, so then use your Trick Smash

Level 03 (Cosmic Bus 737) - Wait for the big clear block to move to the right before you hit the ball. When it moves to the right Trick Smash the blocks on the top

Level 04 (Cosmic Bus 747) - Right when this one starts, press up and Y to do and Trick Smash, right before you hit the ball tap to the right a couple of times, and it is possible to get all of these blocks on one Trick Smash, just keep practicing.

Level 05 (Cosmic Bus 757) - Don't use a Trick Smash, start off the level by hitting the block right in the middle, then a bunch of balls should start helping you out. When there are only a few blocks left, start Trick Smashing to get the last one.

Level 06 (Cosmic Bus 767) - Wait until the blocks start comming together before you hit the ball, right when they come together in the middle, Trick Smash low to get them all.

Level 07 (Cosmic Bus 777) - This is one of the hardest levels for me for some reason. Don't use any Trick Smashes except for on the final block. Right when the level starts, hold to the left on the analog stick and hit the ball all the way to the left, this will knock the ball behind the blocks and it will get rid of some of them. Keep your character in the middle of the map and when the ball comes back, hit it all the way to the right to get it behind the blocks again, when there is only one left, Trick Smash.

Level Details Example

Level 12
A Dark Path

Characters	Shaman, Headlong, Grizzle, Flint, Fern
Minor Cutscenes	Before level: *It's Too Dark: Chapter 5-2 MinorCS* During Level: *Walls and Fire: Chapter 5-3 MinorCS*
Major Cutscenes	After level: *Meeting Flint and Fern: Chapter 5-4 MajorCS*
Tribes	Elephants, Springbok, Wildebeest Stag (Enemy), Fossil (Enemy), Baboon (Enemy)
Primary Plot Points	• Shepherd must help animals in the dark to reach baboons • Shepherd must stop baboon traps at the fortress • After level, animals meet Flint and Fern and they tell the story of how they acquired Firestones and built walls to protect against smokebeasts • Flint is very reliant on Firestones and Fern obviously doesn't like it
New Mechanics	• Use lightning to light torches so animals can see the way/avoid enemies • Use lightning to blow up firestone traps (causes pollution) • Use rain to quell firestone traps
Primary Goal of Level	• Get to the fortress by lighting the way in the dark • Disable traps so the animals can enter safely
Primary Puzzle	• Shepherding • Solve a puzzle using torches/fire
Visual Notes	• Deep in the jungle; fairly lush • Baboon fortress is surrounded by pointy fence made of logs from the clear-cut area • Time of day: Night, dark and hazy in the jungle
Music Notes	Level music: Jungle/Baboon theme Cutscene music: Flint theme
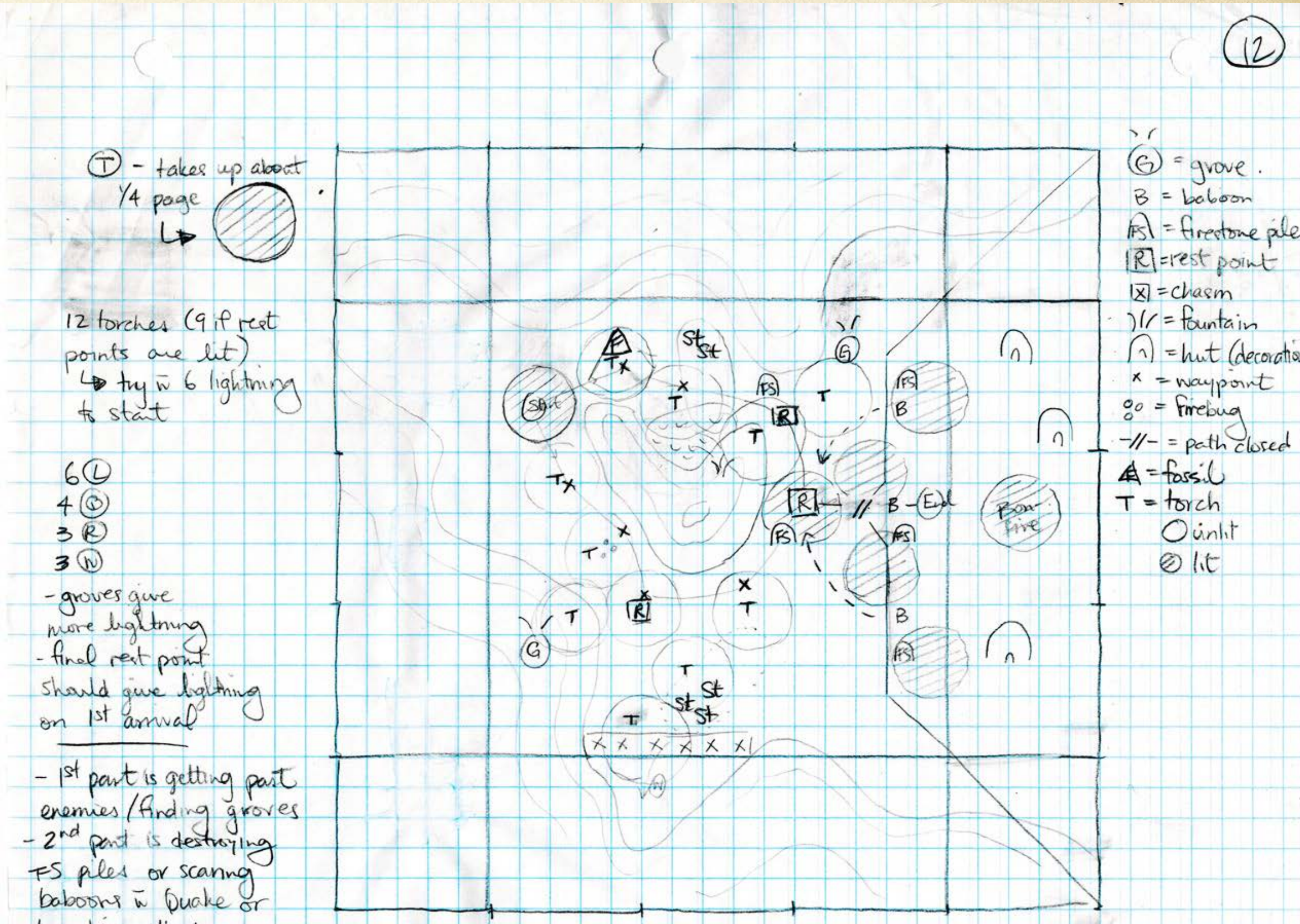
(NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION)

Player Path

- Think about creating an **overworld map**...

- Something with **nodes and paths**

- This is possible by hand or digitally

- Just draw up a flow chart, or sketch one up, and take a picture of it... then drag it into your GDD

- Examples?

Player Path

Player Path

- Level 1-1, Level 1-2, Level 1-3, Level 1-3(a), etc.

- Stage 1 - 3

- The player has to defeat these 10 major tennis players in order to become the champion:
  1. Serena Williams
  2. Venus Williams
  3. Andre Agassi
  4. Andre 3000
  5. Etc!

Player Path

- Hometown
- The Quarantine Zone
- The Outskirts
- Bill's Town
- Pittsburgh
- The Suburbs
- The University
- Lakeside Resort
- Bus Depot
- The Fireflies Lab
- Jackson

Player Path

```
*** B.   LEVELS ***

I.   THE FULL MAP of the game contains 51 levels.  The 51 being a special
room you get to by getting a high ranking.  I don't wanna tell you what
you do in this room, but it is pretty cool.  I believe you get to this
51 room by scoring in the top 20.  But I may be wrong.  Here is a map.
It's not exact, but it will help you out.
      secret room                                       *
      *                                                /
                                                      *
                      *                              /
                      |                    *---*--*--*
                      *                   /        |
                      |                  *  _      *
                      |                 /     \   /
      *---*--*--*----------*      *----*--*--*--*
                      |          /    / \ /
             *---*--*--*        *    *--*--*--*
            / \  |         \ /   /              \
           *     *          *   *                   *
           |     |          \ / \                  /
           *     *           *    *--*--*/
           |     |           |
           *     *           *---*--*--*--*--*--* start
                 |
                 *
```

Player Path Example

Walkthrough

When play begins, the player is presented with the World Map. The World Map describes the levels the player can play and allows them to see information about their best successful attempts so far, if they have played the level before. When the player chooses to play a level, a cutscene may be presented upon entering the area.

Once the level has loaded, the player is presented with Level Objectives that must be met to complete the level and may be given a short introduction to contextualize the area in the plot or provide instructions. Gameplay consists of identifying threats and obstacles to animals and eliminating them using Weather Powers in order to achieve the Level Objectives. Once the Level Objectives have been met, the Narrative Scoring screen is presented to provide feedback to the player about their performance.

Another cutscene may play when the player exits the level, and following this the player is returned to the World Map. The player may exit the game from the World Map at any time.
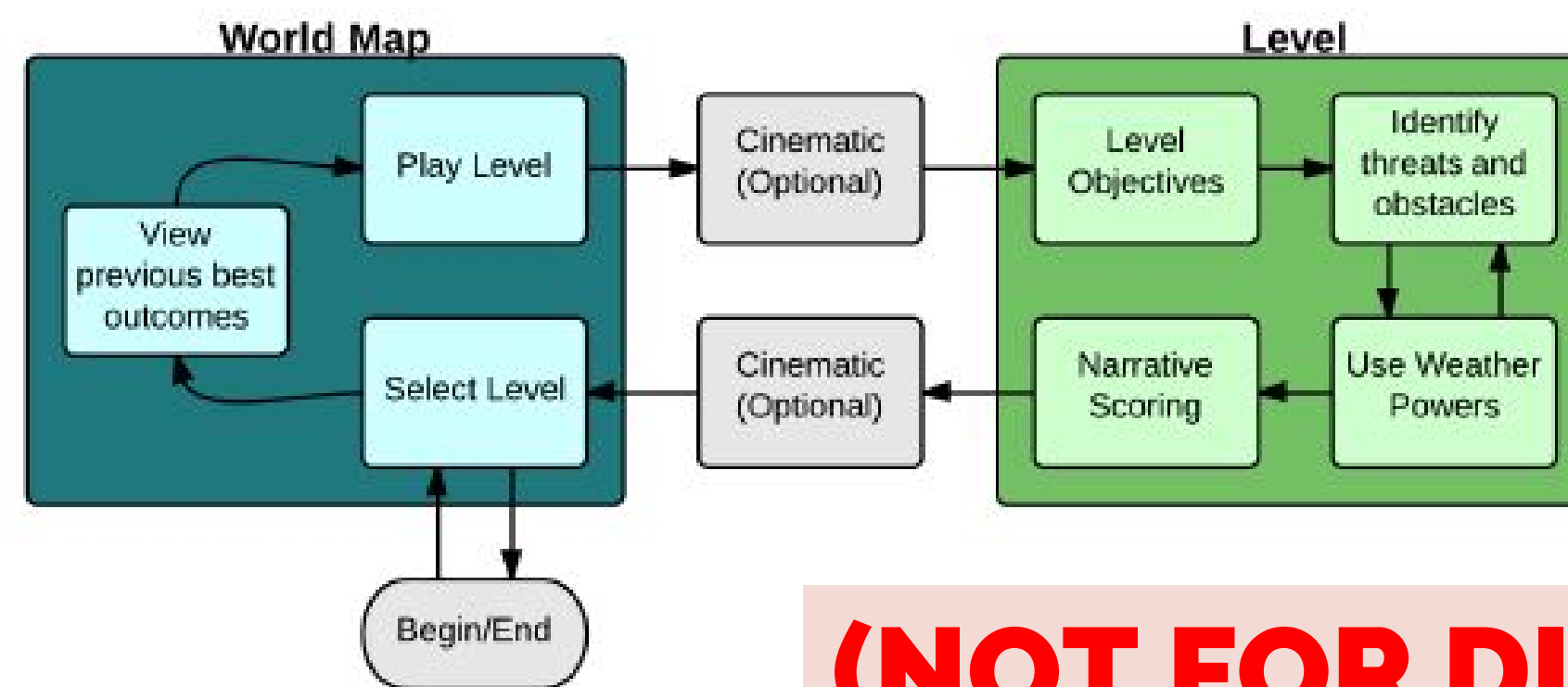
World Map

Play Level → **Cinematic (Optional)** → **Level Objectives** → **Identify threats and obstacles**

View previous best outcomes

Select Level ← **Cinematic (Optional)** ← **Narrative Scoring** ← **Use Weather Powers**

Begin/End

Figure 3 - Diagram describing flow of play.

World Map

Having a world map is a common convention in many types of games. In *Quench*, besides giving the player a view of the world that they will be exploring, the world map is used to direct the player through the game, show game progress, and allow the player to revisit areas that were already played.

At the beginning of *Quench*, the entire map is presented to the player; however, any areas not yet completed will not be labeled or selectable by the player. The player will follow a set migratory path on the map from the Western Elder Tree to the Eastern Elder Tree that will be revealed as the game progresses. Once the player completes an area, the next portion of the path is revealed and the next area on the map is activated. The player may select the new area to advance the story or they may choose to replay any previously completed levels.

Western Elder Tree

Eastern Elder Tree

Figure 4 - Prototype of *Quench* world map showing the completion of levels 1, 2, 3, and 4. The next portion of the migratory path has been revealed, and level 5 is now selectable.

Player Path Example

Player Path

- Feel free to visit Gamefaqs.com and take a look at the level descriptions

- Try finding a game similar in design to that of your own.

Remember...

Synopsis

Player Introduction

Objectives

Level Details

Player Path

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