Shelob's lair level design document

Overview

Frodo enters the caves that lead to the lands of Mordor. He will have to get past the caves to the other side and enter the lands of Mordor safely. During this level he will be followed and attacked by Shelob, a giant spider. While he tries to make his escape through the caves he will be able to collect loot from chests that will allow him to upgrade his equipment.

Player focus & gameplay

The player's focus is to get past the caves and get rid of the giant spider that secretly follows him through the level. He will have to jump, fight and illuminate the enemies to get past the level.

Intrinsic goals

- Story advancement
- New dynamic introduction

Extrinsic goals

- Orientiating skills
- Fast decision making

Main goals

- Get past the caves to enter Mordor
- Kill the giant spider and obtain her loot

Secondary goals

- Kill the enemies (spiders)
- Use the new dynamic (using the Phial of Galadriel to scare the spiders)
- Loot the chests

Characters

Main character
Frodo: The playable character of this level. A hobbit.

Enemies
Shelob's daughters: Basic enemies of this level. They are little spiders.
Shelob: Main enemy of the level. A giant spider that lives in the caves.

Look and feel
Architecture style
Considering that this level is cave themed it is clear that the architecture style is that of a series of paths and corridors naturally constructed with rocks and stones. Because we want to create a set of caves that belong to Shelob we have decided to add spider webs on the whole level.

Materials
The materials we will be using for this level are: Rocks, stones, torches, chests, spiders and a giant spider. All these props are required in order to construct the level as it is designed for.

Environment
This level takes place on the border between Gondor and Mordor. The level takes place during daytime. The player starts at the main entrance of the caves, As the player advances enemies are heard and seen and "Shelob" makes hearable noises and is visible at some points.

Pacing
First, the player will be attacked by spiders, at this time he will be able to choose between paths to discover. When choosing the main path that leads to the end of the level the player will be attacked by Shelob, the main enemy. He attacks her and his sword breaks, which only gives the option of running away. After running away from the spider the player will escape through a tiny cave and will get out of the cave, having the Eye of Sauron left ahead of him. The spider appears and stings him in their chest

Lightning
The level will take place during daytime, however in Mordor there is no sunlight because of the thick fog that exists in the air. Because of this all the light comes from torches that have been left there by other explorers that didn't survive to Shelob.

Weapons and items

Iron hobbit sword: The main weapon that the player carries during this level, meant to be used to kill enemies.

Wooden shield: A simple shield that partially protects from incoming attacks from enemies.

Phial of Galadriel: A bottle with a special liquid that shines when there are orks nearby, it is useful to scare creatures which don't like light.

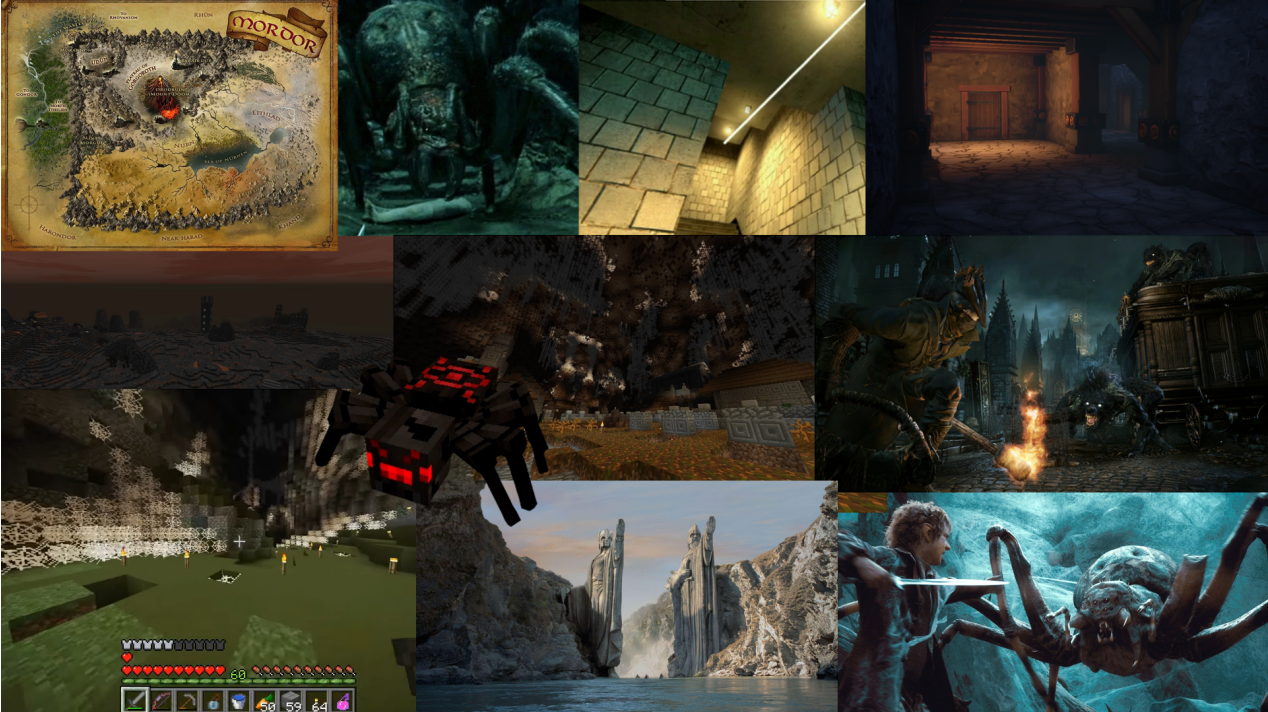**Silver coins**: Lootable object found on the chests. Can be used to buy equipment in the cities.

Uruk armor: Lootable object found on the chests. It is an armor belonging to the Uruk Hai orcs.

Ork arrows: Lootable objects that can be found in the chests. When a bow is equipped, the arrows can be used to kill enemies.
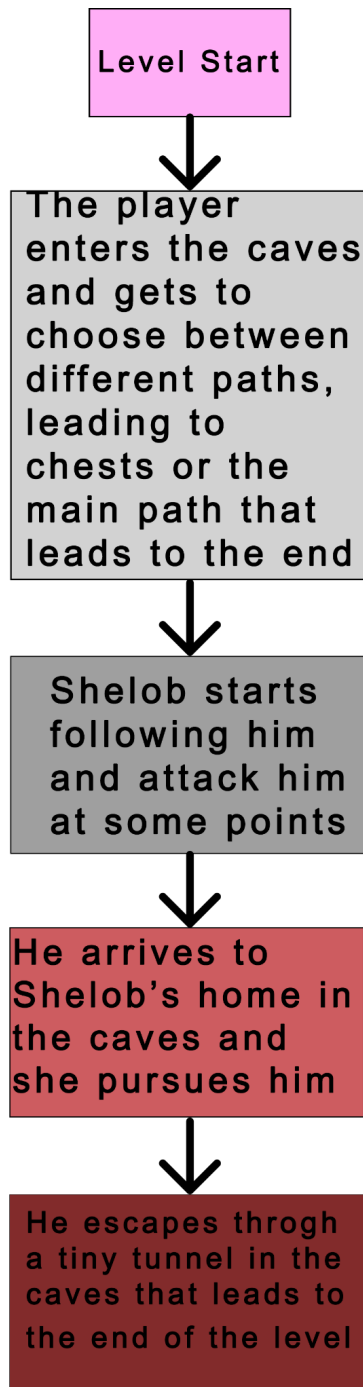
Plot

Frodo needs to get past the caves in order to enter Mordor and keep his journey of destroying the ring going. However, right when he enters the caves Shelob hears him and starts seeking for him, all of that without Frodo knowing anything about her existence.
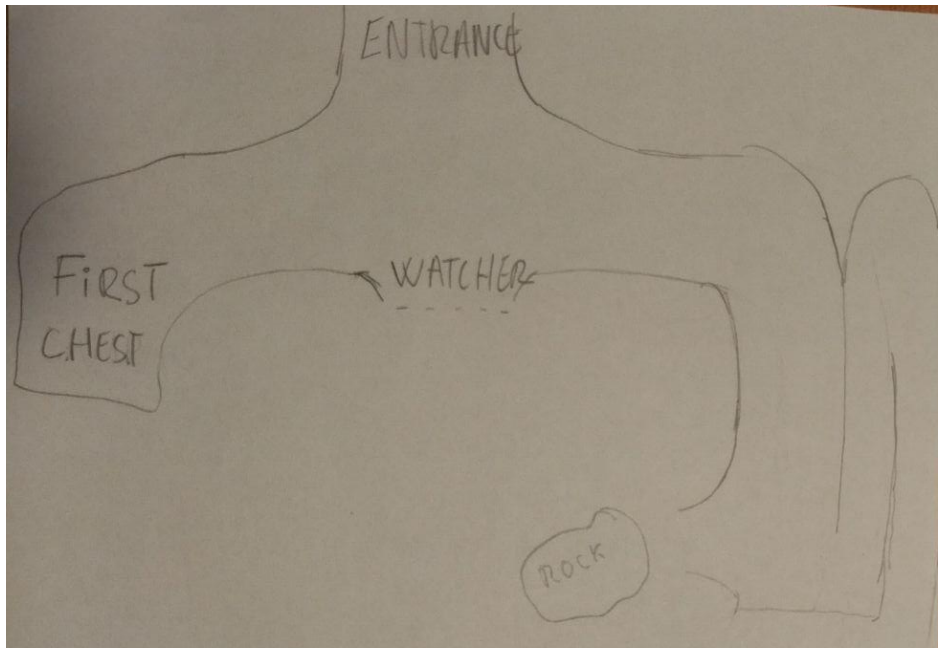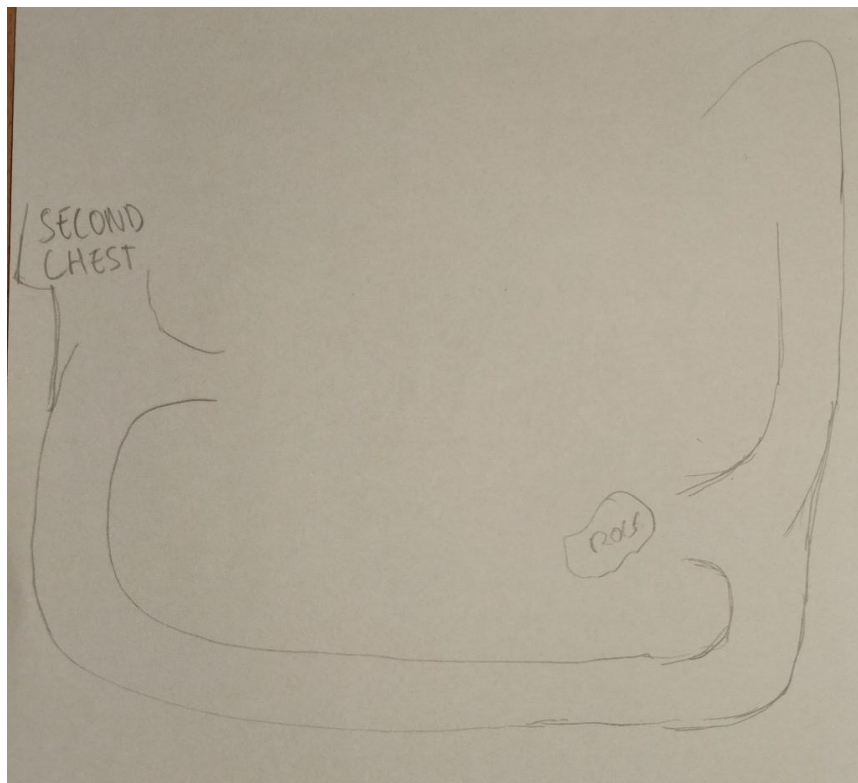
Moodboard

Level flow chart

Level Start

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The player enters the caves and gets to choose between different paths, leading to chests or the main path that leads to the end

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Shelob starts following him and attack him at some points

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He arrives to Shelob's home in the caves and she pursues him

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He escapes throgh a tiny tunnel in the caves that leads to the end of the level

Map

Because we have a level with a lot of verticality we have decided to draw the map floor to floor, in order to avoid chaos when watching it. The map has 5 floors.
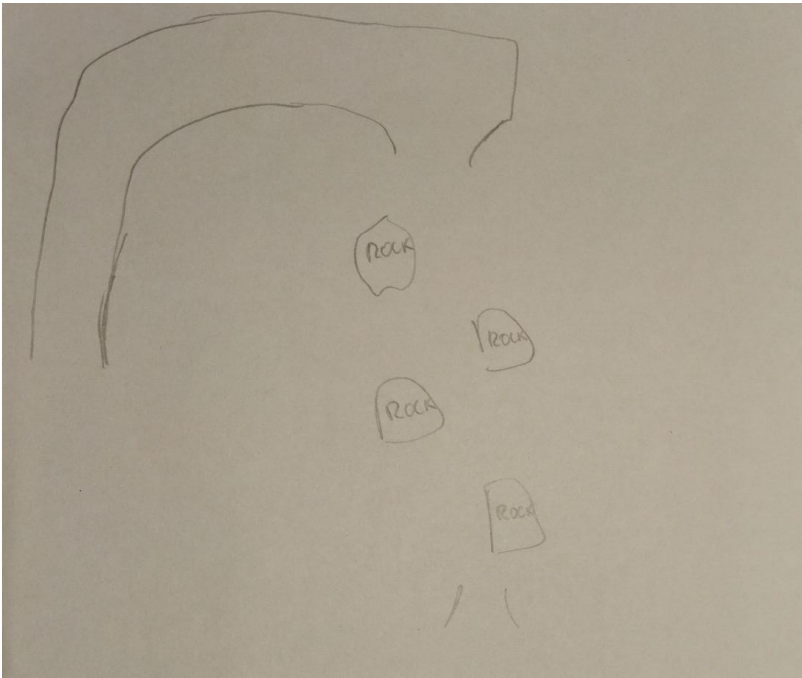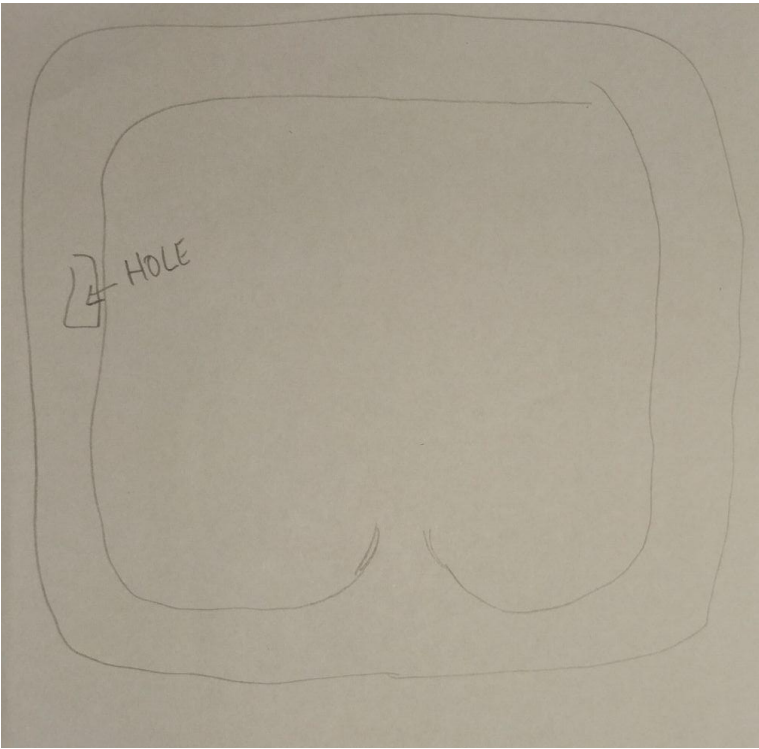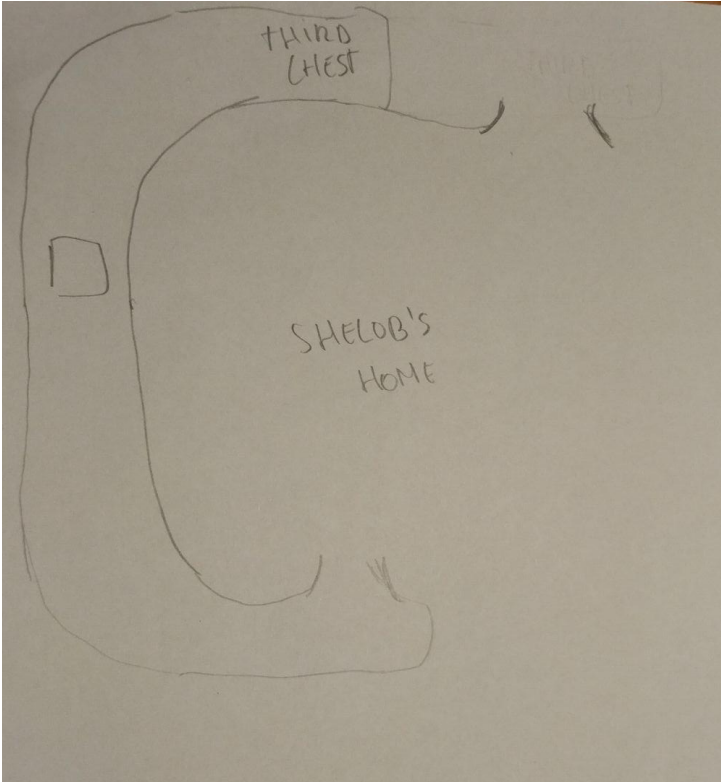
First floor

Second floor
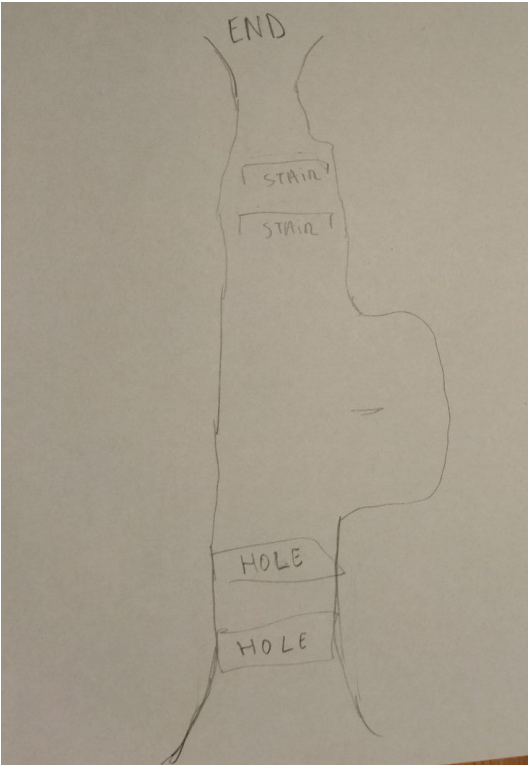
Third floor

Fourth floor

Fifth floor

Fifht floor - final tunnel

Design Workflow

The first thing we did was choose a movie scene that we all 3 had seen. We came up with the idea that Shelob's scene is one of the most iconic and treacherous scenes in *The Lord of The Rings* movies. Not only this, but we believed it to be a scene that would allow any level designer to design a level around it.

Then we proceeded to decide which are the goals for the player to achieve, the story advancement and new mechanics to be introduced during the level. Then we proceeded to see who would be the main character of the level and all the entities that would appear (chests, spiders, Shelob, torches and Frodo mainly).

After that we began to draw and plan the scenery where the level takes place, and after iterating a few times we implemented that drawn level into the level editor.

Postmortem

I believe that even though our workflow was pretty good we didn't follow the correct order all the time. We came up with some ideas before we had a clear idea of what we really wanted to do, which led to misunderstandings between the members and having to redesign a few things. However, in general terms, we learnt how to design a level from scratch without skipping any steps and we feel ready to create a very good level in the near future.

References

- ▶ The Lord of the Rings - Shelob's Lair (HD) (Frodo's part)