**Title:** Lifebound

**Author:** Ben Strick

**SYNOPSIS:** The player is a shaman in a fictional land. The player lives alone in a hut in the jungle because years ago a leading shaman from the player’s hometown exiled him for using forbidden shamanistic techniques. The player encounters a dark spirit that is pretending to be an injured jungle panther that wants to use the player’s forbidden magical items for evil means. The player has to make decisions about whether to conspire with the creature to exact vengeance on his hometown, or to try and kill the creature. Some attempts result in player death / others get rid of the spirit. The main goals of the story are: to entertain the player with mysterious/unique/interesting description of the fictional world that it takes place in, intrigue the player by the number of different possible endings and their implications, as well as to evoke a somewhat dark/existential tone through the player’s thoughts and what goes on in the plot.

**SETTING:** Takes place in a Jungle where both humans and beasts live.

All locations are mandatory unless the player dies before getting to one of them. That results in a valid end of story (death).

The locations are:

The Shaman’s Hut (where the player starts out)

- most of the game’s most important items are found here

The Jungle Enclave (the area immediately north of the Shaman’s Hut)

The Path to the Painted Village (path west from the jungle enclave to the village where the Shaman was born and also exiled from)

-fleshy root item found here, which can influence the possible endings

Village (the player’s once-hometown, located west of the Path to the Painted Village; this place will either be left alone or destroyed by the power of the Bone Effigy by the end of the game)

**Backstory:**

In this fictional world, the influence of the ancestors (which can interact with the world as spirits) is very prominent and known to most people. In the Jungle where the story takes place, each living being also has soul energy. Shamans in this land are very few, but they are the people who know of this soul energy. They can also manipulate elements such as stone and fire to their will depending on how powerful they are.

When the player was young, he fell in love with another member of his village. After she was maimed by spirit beast (beasts that are in between reality and nonexistence – the player has one named Windwhisper in the story), the player saw that she would soon die if something drastic was not done. He took part of his own soul and used it to fuel dark magic that saved her life. Acts of this kind are shunned by nearly all people in society because they are known to the attract the presence of evil. This act tainted the player forever and his dark energy was detected by the local village Shaman. The player was exiled by the elders of the Village without a chance to say goodbye to his lover or family. This caused the player to fall deeper into the recesses of the soul magic… the player adventured through the woods for many years learning about the elements and becoming a more skilled Shaman as well. By the time the story starts, the player is undergoing an induced spiritual vision in the safety of his hut with all of the mystical items that have been collected since the exile.

**Plot Structure:**

Through examination, the player can figure out what to do in this story. The player must, through examining the objects while lying on the Woven Mat, realize that they need to touch the stone totem to acquire its strength to get up. The player is drowsy because he woke up too early from a vision quest and can’t stand until that point. Then, the player can go outside but is restricted from going back to the Village until the dark spirit arrives, tempting him to. Once the player finds the transient orb, the baby jungle cat (inhabited by the spirit) enters the hut. Once the Transient Orb has been examined AFTER the cat walked in, the player realizes this jungle cat is no ordinary animal. From this point, the story can fork off in a few ways. If the player uses the Insidious Artifact to incinerate the animal, the player will die because he has not yet eaten the Fleshy Root to protect him from possession by evil spirits. If the player gives the Bone Effigy, a dark chapter emerges. This signifies that the player knew what the spirit was there for, and decided to join it in its quest to vanquish nearby life (happening to be the player’s village where the player seek revenge). This plotline can end with the player incinerating the Bone Effigy with the Insidious Artifact, destroying the village and fulfilling the dark spirit’s plan. Or, the player can pick up the Fleshy Root on the way to the Village and then incinerate the dark spirit, choosing a path of light. The other ending occurs when, as the Baby Jungle Cat enters the hut, the player decides to grab, capture, or attack the Cat. This effort wouldn’t succeed in destroying the beast like the incineration would, so the cat just evades and knocks all of the player’s Essence of the Jungle Toad (used for vision quests) into the fire, causing the player to pass out. When the player wakes up, they can walk to the Village and realize that it has long since been destroyed by the spirit inhabiting that jungle panther. The only plotline that could be said to be heroic/good is when the player CHANGES their mind from slaughter to redemption. The rest are either tragic or neutral.

The following diagram tells which actions need to occur in order to reach each possible ending.

