

# Game Design Document

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## 1. Game Overview

**Game Title:** Once Upon a Blob

**Game Genre:** Puzzle adventure with narrative elements

**Target Audience:** Players who enjoy lighthearted storytelling and puzzle challenges.

**Platform:** PC

**Link:** <https://hugopiet.itch.io/once-upon-a-blob>

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## 2. Game Concept

### Core Concept:

c struggling to break free from the shadows of his accomplished ancestors. As Blob embarks on a quest to achieve something noteworthy, he's unknowingly accompanied by Gnist, a small, watchful flame with a silent mission to support him. Through a series of humorous and heartfelt challenges, Blob eventually discovers that true accomplishment lies not just in monumental feats, but in the friendships made along the way.

### Game Summary / Elevator Pitch:

Players guide Blob as he stumbles through imaginative, history-themed levels inspired by his remarkable family lineage. Although Blob is a bit clumsy and often unsure of himself, he's determined to make his mark. With Gnist—who he only gradually realizes is there to help—Blob finds clever ways to solve puzzles and progress toward his ultimate goal: to reach the moon, just like his ancestor, Blob Armstrong. The journey brings Blob closer to understanding the meaning of legacy, companionship, and what it truly means to leave a mark.

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## 3. Gameplay Mechanics

### Player Objectives:

- Progress through levels by solving puzzles inspired by Blob's ancestors' achievements.
- Navigate Blob's emotional journey as he grapples with his own identity and aspirations.
- Find an unexpected friendship with Gnist and use your joined powers to figure out the puzzles
- Realize ultimately that the companionship with Gnist is not a means to an end, but the end itself.

### Core Mechanics:

**1. Blob's Abilities:** Blob can walk, crouch, jump and interact with interactable objects. Blobs' interactables:

- Button: starting a sequence or lighting a cable to start a timed challenge (in current game)
- Levers: turning things on and off (not made)
- Balloon: hanging onto a balloon controlled by Gnist (in current game)

Commented [1]: dont get this

**2. Gnist's Abilities:** The player controls Gnist, positioning her to assist Blob. Gnist can flame up, which can be used to:

- Burn a rope: drop items on specific locations, allow access to blocked areas. break links (in current game)
- Fly a hot air balloon (in current game)
- Charge a solar panel: Allow for the use of electrical current and momentary light, power, charge, etc. (not made)
- Manage movement: start, speed up or slow down moving objects like lifts, belts or carts driven by steam engines (not made)
- Light up torches and other incomplete objects to allow passage (on a level which is pitch black), start a cutscene, etc. (not made)
- Melt ice (not made)
- Ignite engines
- Serve as a subtle guide, offering cues or small glows in moments when Blob feels lost. (not made)

Gnist has a stamina bar that will slowly recharge whenever she is close to Blob, the player can then send Gnist to the wanted location within the view boundaries. Whenever Gnist is at a position the stamina will slowly deplete, if Gnist is activated she will flame up and interact with any interactables she is close enough to, however this will deplete the stamina faster and once depleted Gnist will come back to blob to slowly recharge. This introduces a timing element into the game that can act as a timer for puzzles and challenges.

This mechanic introduces the ability to change the stamina variable and add power ups. This has not been done for now, but could act as a good way to make puzzles easier for less skilled players as they will use more time to explore and find the powerups compared to more skilled players that will challenge themselves and do the levels as fast as possible.

### **Unique Gameplay Example:**

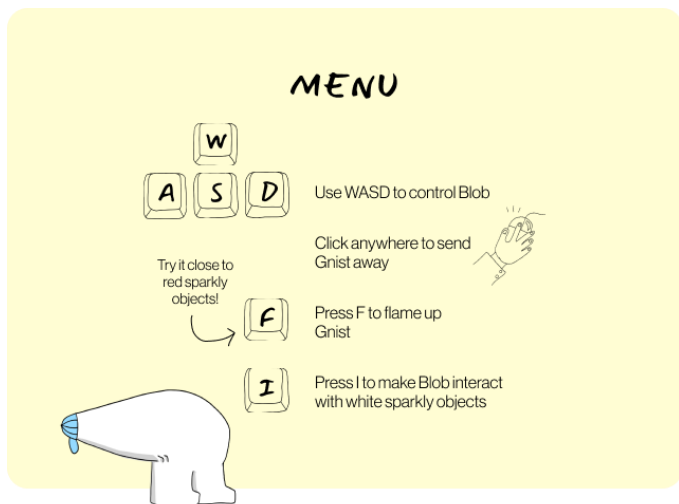
"I'm standing before an empty portrait frame, my name below it in brass. An engraved plaque reads, 'Achievements: ...' Blank. My reflection stares back at me in the polished metal. Frustration wells up as I turn toward the castle doors and step outside, determination fueling my every move. Unknown to me, the torch flame beside the frame stirs, its tiny eyes opening with a flicker of warmth as it slips from the torch and follows close behind."

### **Game inputs**

Gnist will under normal circumstances follow Blob, whenever the player wants Gnist to move to a specific location the player can click on the dedicated location to move Gnist to this location, here Gnist can use her ability to flame up using the key bind "F". If the player wants Gnist to return the key bind "R" is used to recall Gnist, if the stamina bar of Gnist is empty she will return to Blob as well.

Blob is able to interact with objects in the environment that are interactable, these objects emit particles and darken whenever they are close enough to be interacted with, this applies for both Gnist and Blob although the effect differs slightly with color and effect. "To interact" is left vague on purpose to allow for maximum customisation per level to fit the theme as best possible and dynamic gameplay. The effect from interacting with a certain type of object however should be consistent across all levels to avoid confusion.

By clicking the escape key, the player enters the menu. The menu can be opened throughout the gameplay. It shows the user the different keys and provides options to restart, remain in the current level or get back to the menu/main level.



## 4. Story and World Setting

### Setting/World description:

Blob's family castle is both grand and worn, lined with portraits of famed "blobs" from all periods in history. Each portrait leads to a thematic level—a portal into a key moment from Blob's ancestry, where players experience unique puzzles related to each ancestor's accomplishments. The world alternates between Blob's castle and levels representing the achievements he strives to emulate, ending with a launchpad for his moon-bound rocket.

### Story Summary:

- **Background:** Blob has spent his life overshadowed by an esteemed family lineage—each ancestor a renowned figure, from Blob Armstrong, the moon-landing hero, to the inventor Johan Gütenblob, to Khnumblob-Kufu, an Egyptian pharaoh. Struggling with his lack of accomplishments, Blob embarks on a mission to do something grand that will earn him a place in the family legacy.
- **Inciting Event:** While examining the empty frame waiting to be filled with a depiction of his most memorable achievement, Blob decides he cannot rest until he's done something remarkable. Without realizing it, Gnist, a small flame from a nearby torch, detaches and follows him, staying out of his direct sight throughout Level 1. Towards the end, Gnist assists Blob in lighting the fire without him knowing it, as Blob fails to use the flint rocks to light it himself. Gnist is by this point no longer incognito,

because Blob mistakenly thinks HE made fire. As she looks back from the newly lit bonfire, he admires his first 'creation'.

- **Final Level:** After numerous failed attempts to make his mark, Blob assembles a ramshackle rocket from scraps in a landfill and plans his own moon mission. As he launches, he realizes in the silence of space that he's incomplete without Gnist. He returns home, finding his true achievement in the friendship he had - up until that point - failed to recognize.

### Main Characters:

- **Blob:** The protagonist, a well-meaning but clumsy character with a desire to achieve greatness. Blob's journey from insecurity to acceptance is central to the game's narrative as he tries to live up to his family's legacy. Blob is hesitant for help and often ungrateful when others might lend a helping hand; a warm friend like Gnist might be what Blob needs to thaw his grumpiness. Although Blob is not uniquely good at anything, he is persistent and will try and fail everything until he succeeds, the only question is when.

*Description:* Blob has a rounded, slightly drooping form, a blue cap. He has no facial expression and so rarely moves his arms that they almost merge with his body.

- **Gnist:** A silent companion, a curious flame that starts out following the main character. Though unnoticed, Gnist grows attached to Blob, providing subtle hints and enabling Blob's progress. Gnist becomes the unexpected hero having key abilities related to his fieriness as Blob tries to emulate his ancestors' works.

*Description:* Gnist is a small, spirited flame with expressive eyes and a warm glow. It crackles quietly when still, flaring up when called to action. Gnist is a curious and excited spirit eager to go to the corners of the world and curious enough to help Blob find his way.

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## 5.Level Design

### Level Progression:

Each level can be accessed through a portrait in the castle (level 0), acting as a portal to a setting reflective of Blob's ancestors' accomplishments. It is also the place for players to come back and select the levels they might want to attempt again.

#### ***Level 0 - Ancestor hallway***

This level is the level selector.

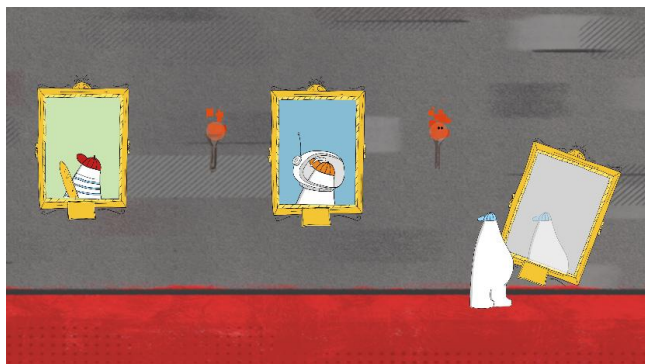
*Story:* Blob has, throughout his whole life, lived in the shadow of his ancestors. Compared to great men like Blob Armstrong – the first blob on the moon, and Johan Gütenblob – the inventor of the printing press, the bar feels unbelievably high to achieve something even vaguely relevant.

Now, he struggles with the idea that his life will be in vain if he has nothing to show for it, all the while his family tree is ripe with accomplishments... - things which have immortalized them forever, but at the same time set him up for failure.

One day, he walks the corridors in his family castle. On the walls, there are paintings of remarkable members to the blood line, stretching all the way back to the great pharaoh Khnumblob-Kufu of ancient Egypt – even an artistic recreation of the first man-made fire, struck by his prehistoric cave-man-looking original family father – Rock Flintblob. In the end of the hallway, there is an empty frame, with his name under it. On the brass plaque next to the “Achievements:”, he can see the swirly reflection of his face on the blank metal.

As he stands looking up at these majestic characters, the frustration grows within him. He decides that he has no time to lose and marches out the front door; he will not rest until he has done something memorable[1].

But, as he exits the door, the flame on the torch next to his (empty) painting opens its eyes. It's a bright orange, burning creature. As the doors slam shut, it (Fire) jumps off the wooden stick and follows Blob; always making sure that Blob does not see him by skipping to the other side when Blob turns around.

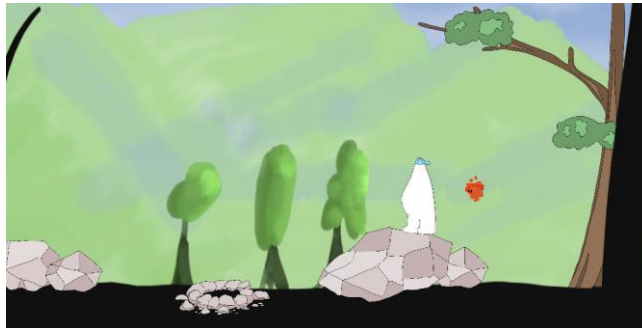


**Level 1 - Blob Flintstone**

Long ago, Mr. Blob Flintstone, a courageous homo erectus, was the first to discover the secret of fire. In an age of cold and darkness, his spark ignited warmth, light and hope for all humanity.

Now, many generations later, Mr. Blob's descendant embarks on a bold journey to recreate the legendary flame that changed the world. Will he succeed in rekindling the fire of his ancestor and reclaim the lost legacy of the first fire maker?

Your mission is to find the flint stones and bring them back to the fireplace where your adventure begins. Along the way, you'll climb over trees and explore a small cave. Inside, you'll encounter a timed challenge: interact with the button to open a pathway, but be quick! The door will close if you don't make it to the other side in time.



**Level 2** - *Khnum Blob-Kufu*

**Level 3** - *Johan Gütenblob*

**Level 4** - *Blobileo Blobilei*

**Level 5** - *Sir Isaac Newblob*

**Level 6** - *The Blob who built the Eiffel Tower*

**Final Level** - *Blob Armstrong - The Rocket Build:*

Long ago, Mr. Blob Armstrong became the first to set foot on the moon, changing history with his courage and vision.

Now, Mr. Blob embarks on the same journey, but first he must find the missing top of his rocket to continue his ancestor's legacy and reach the stars.

Your mission is to find the missing top of the rocket and return it to prepare for liftoff. Along the way, you'll need Gnist's assistance - burn ropes to operate cranes and rise to new heights with the hot air balloon. But watch out for the clouds - they'll push you back if you're not careful!





### Winning conditions:

Each level is a puzzle where Blob tries to recreate the great “achievement” of his ancestry. The level will start off showing a nearly completed project (for example a rocket with missing parts, an unlit fire, an unfinished pyramid, a printing press missing some keys, etc. The challenge is then for the player to find these missing objects and return them to the project. This will slowly become more difficult and more and more require the use of Gnist and her ability to flame up. Besides being an interesting mechanic this will support the story of a growing friendship. When the object that is being sought for is found, Blob will have to return and complete the project. Following the story most of these projects will fail ( usually either spectacularly or somewhat slapstick-like). This will then allow the player to move on to the next level.

Ideally the puzzle to the object differs from the way back, For example the first level includes jumps in trees and above the ground while the return journey is below ground in what looks like a mine or cave. This is so that the player does not get bored with the journey back and is instead continually challenged. The path does not have to differ but obstructions with bringing the object back can act as new challenges.

### Future level ideas

- steampunk: a level using the invention of the steampunk motor, The level could include moving challenges where trains or wagons are moved, Gnist ability would directly play into this by heating up the steam to move or set in motion certain parts
- Lady liberty: A great new world where blob and Gnist visit New York and navigate the bustling city and try to rebuild the lady liberty (or lady Blobity) Gnist is the final touch as she ignites the flame
- Pyramid: Blob and Gnist try to find the peak of the pyramid and navigate through the desert, bringing the peak back is challenging as it is heavy and they need to roll it back allowing for the way back to be a unique challenge although on the same landscape

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## 6. Visual Style and Art

### Art Style:

Cartoonish 2D art with a hand-painted look. Levels balance whimsy with detail, while the characters’ expressions and body language emphasize Blob’s determination and Gnist’s quiet loyalty.

### Key Art References:

- Blob is rounded and soft with a simplistic design that emphasizes his emptiness - a canvas desperate to be filled.
  - Gnist is bright and animated, with subtle changes in glow to signal player commands.
  - Individual levels reflect vibrant historical or fantastical themes (e.g., grays and blues for the land fill, golden tones for the desert). Levels are varied and thematic, mixing historical and imaginative elements.
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## 7. Audio and Music

### Soundtrack Style:

Light, orchestral melodies in the castle; monotonous and cozy music to accompany the forest, and a more open, sharp and melancholic song for the land fill.

### Sound Effects:

- Gnist's faint crackle and flares.
  - Walking sounds for Blobs footsteps
  - Some ambience to set the mood in the forest
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## 8. Past design choices

### Unrealized and future mechanisms

- Gnist colors- The ambition was to give Gnist colors based on his emotion, being bright red when happy or excited and a cooler color when less motivated. This is mainly aesthetic but could also play into the mechanic of Gnists stamina
- Blob idle animation - Although most of Blob's animations were made, additional idle animations and a better jump animation would be nice. A "funny" animation using his fat belly would probably be the idle animation. The same principle applies to Gnist that he might 'hover unsteady' when idle.
- Collectables in the levels - An addition to each level, little caps hidden away in the corners of each level similarly to the stars in Mario. This is a motivator for players to

play levels again and allows for more fingers in world building instead of a simple right-left path.

- Cutscenes between levels - cutscenes to show the failing of numerous projects or Gnist coming to the rescue at the end. The most important one being the cutscene at the end of Level 10, depicting Blob's journey towards the moon - only to return mid-flight and rejoin Gnist.

### Abandoned choices

- Dark levels. Gnist can light up the dark and guide Blob through the level
- Death: Blob and Gnist cannot - in the current version of the game - die. Some elements that were discussed had the result that if the player messes up Blob dies and would respawn. We decided the puzzler would be more fun if Blob and Gnist couldn't die but would rather be sent back, blocked, etc.

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## 9. Technical Requirements

**Game Engine:** Unity

**System Requirements:** Basic PC

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## 10. Resources

Brook in the woods but a guy playing a pop song on his boombox walks past in the distance by thetiniestofthebadgerpeople -- <https://freesound.org/s/663491/> -- License: Creative Commons 0

Left Grass/Grassy Footstep 2 by Ali\_6868 -- <https://freesound.org/s/384858/> -- License: Creative Commons 0

Retro/classic game music.wav by ZHRØ -- <https://freesound.org/s/668879/> -- License: Attribution 4.0

Calming Piano Loop 60bpm by Seth\_Makes\_Sounds -- <https://freesound.org/s/679738/> - License: Creative Commons 0

stove\_flame\_01.wav by matucha -- <https://freesound.org/s/233696/> -- License: Attribution NonCommercial 4.0

Bach - French Suite No. 2 in C minor - BWV 813 - Arranged for Strings by  
GregorQuendel -- <https://freesound.org/s/758253/> -- License: Attribution NonCommercial  
4.0

Brackeys - 2D character controller - <https://github.com/Brackeys/2D-Character-Controller/blob/master/README.md>