# Level Design Document

Shattered Charms: Through The Veil

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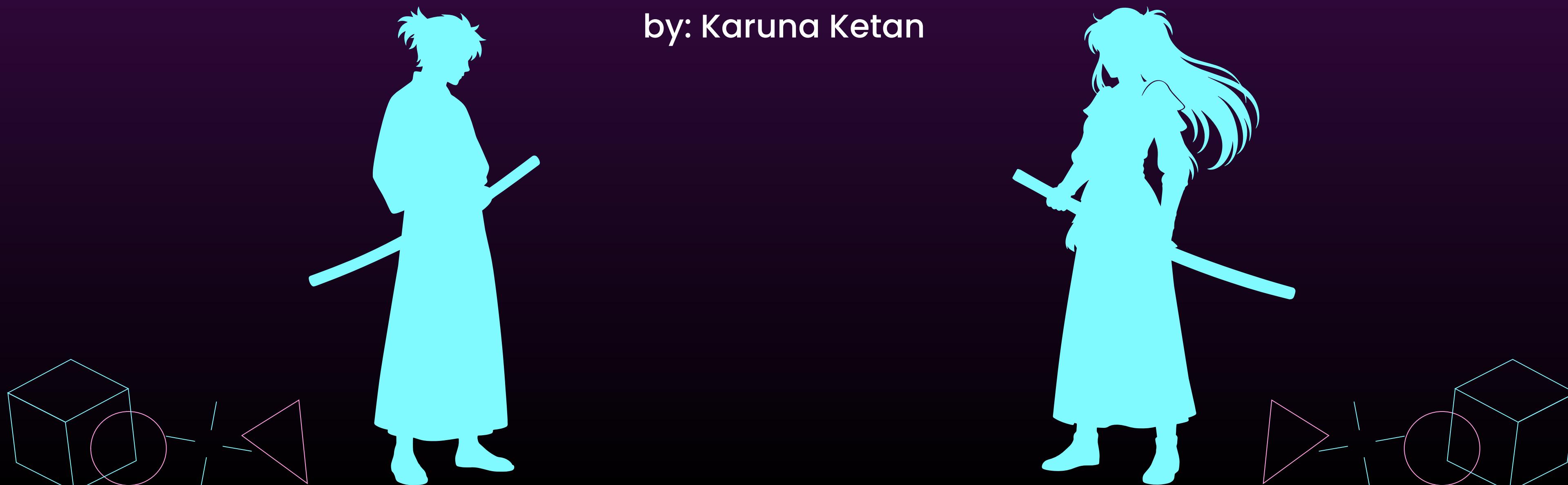
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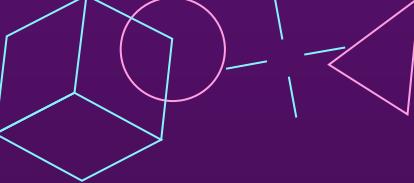
LEVEL BRIEF

This document outlines the level design for the "Shattered Charms" regional prototype, a 20-30 minute vertical slice of a story-driven action RPG. This level is a small, open-world region built on a "Hub-and-Spoke" model.

The player is guided through a linear tutorial zone before arriving at a central, safe "Market" hub. From this hub, the player is given agency to explore three distinct "spoke" zones (a Farm, a Cave, and a Temple) in the order they choose. The level's purpose is to showcase a complete gameplay loop: exploration, questing, combat, and a climactic, gated boss encounter.
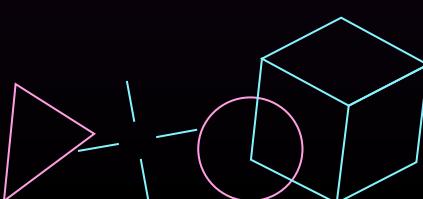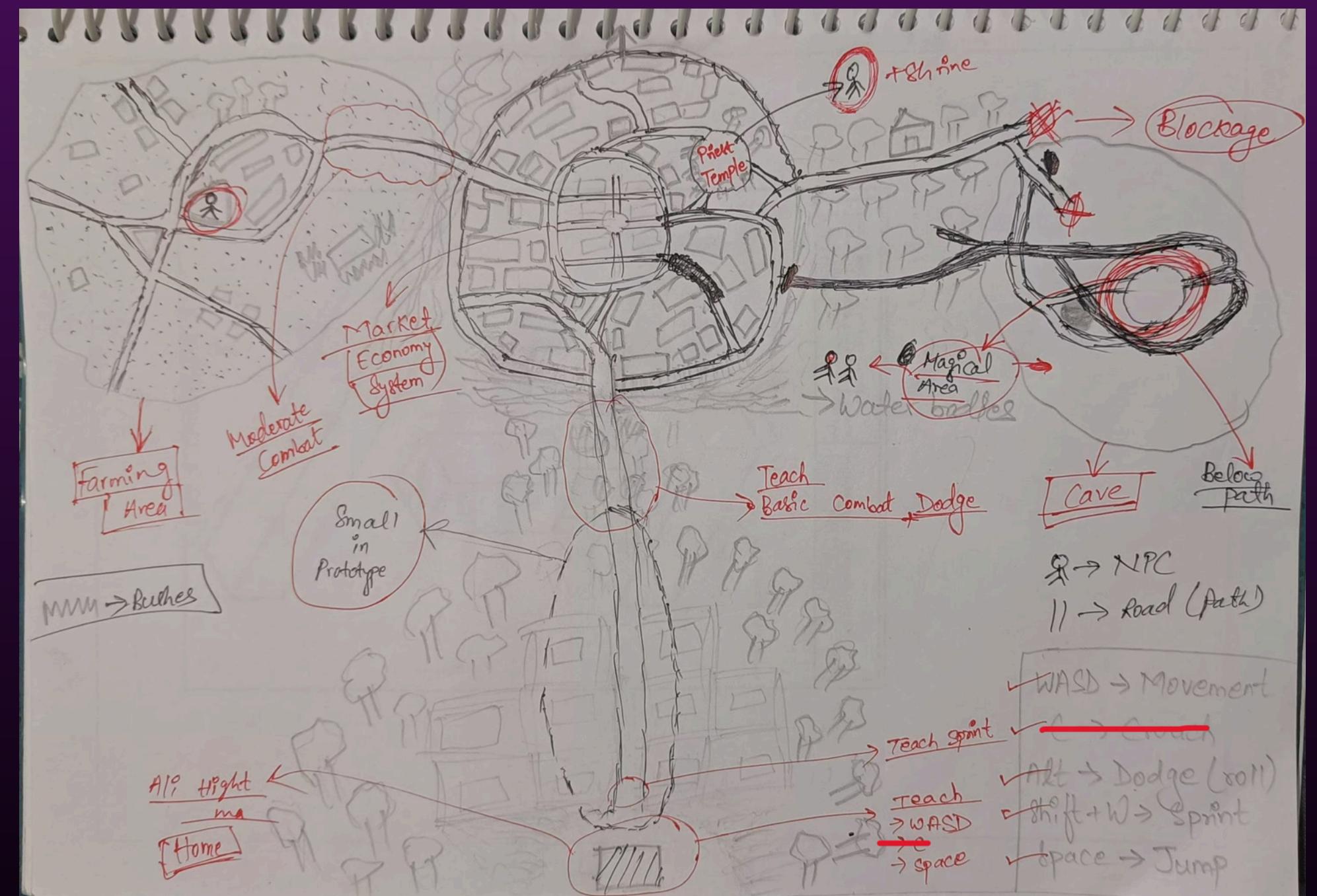
NARRATIVE CONTEXT

Who?:

The player is a survivor in a world reeling from a "shattering" event. They are not a destined hero, but a capable individual seeking safety and answers.

What?:

The player's initial goal is survival, leading them to the "Market," one of the last fortified safe havens. Once there, they are given a new objective: the source of the local corruption is a powerful entity in a nearby arena. To face it, they must find an ancient Shrine to empower their weapon. This "main quest" path leads them to the "Cave," while side-quests encourage them to help the struggling "Farming Area" and the secluded "Priest Temple."

When?:

The game is set just weeks after a mysterious cataclysm (the "Shattering"). The world is quiet, somber, and filled with a creeping corruption.

Where?:

The setting is an isolated river valley. It features a fortified "Market" town, which serves as the central hub. This hub connects to a struggling "Farming Area," a secluded "Priest Temple," and a dangerous, winding "Cave" system that holds the key to the region's main quest.

OVERVIEW PICTURE
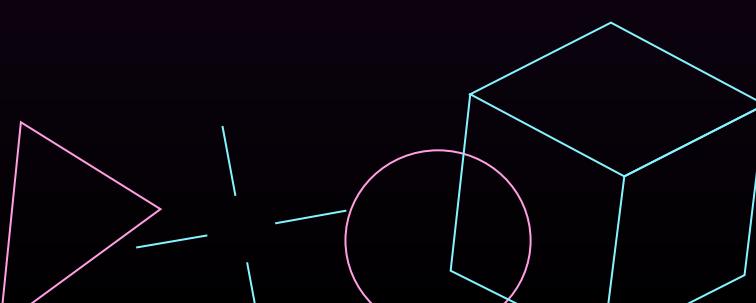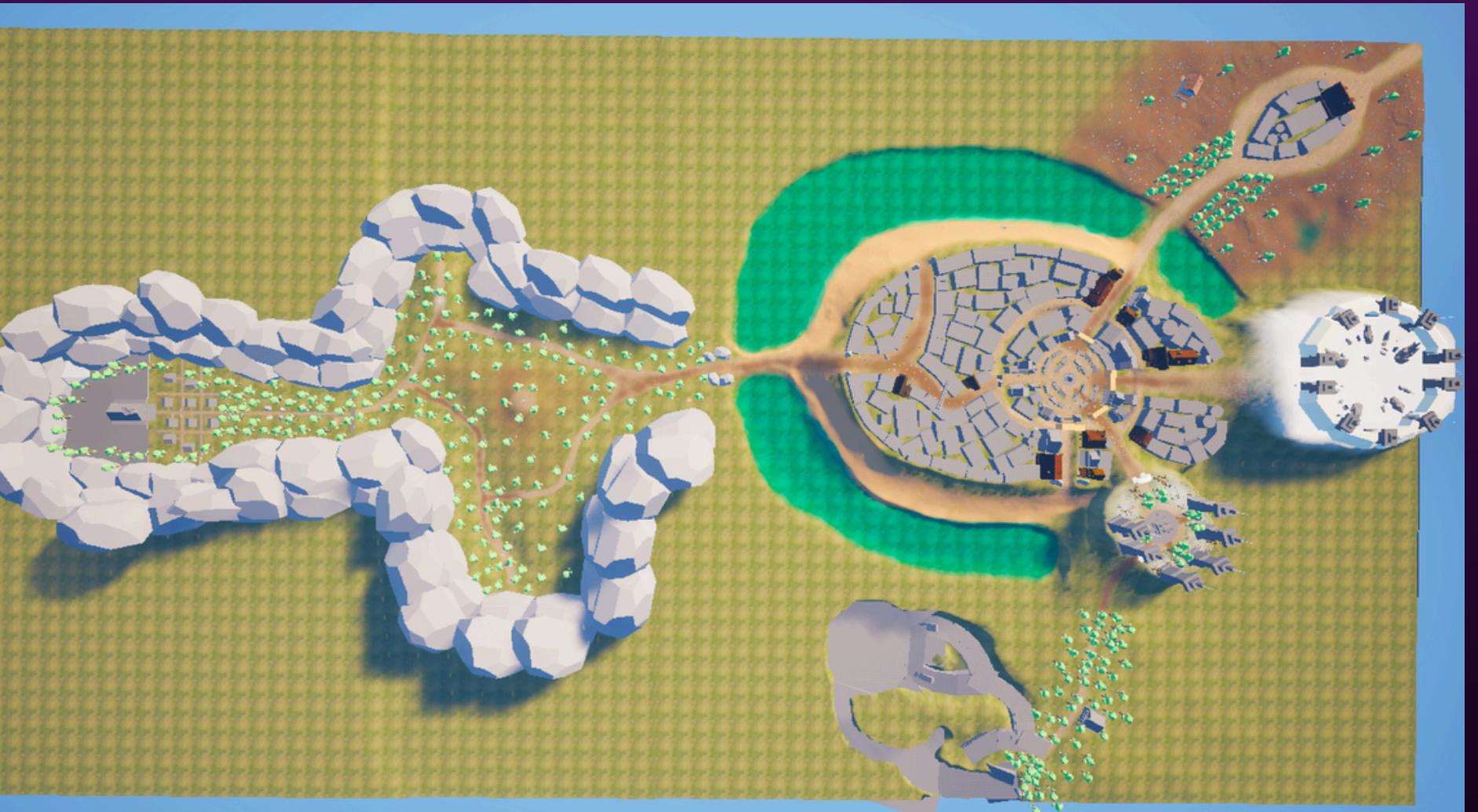
Zones:

Tutorial
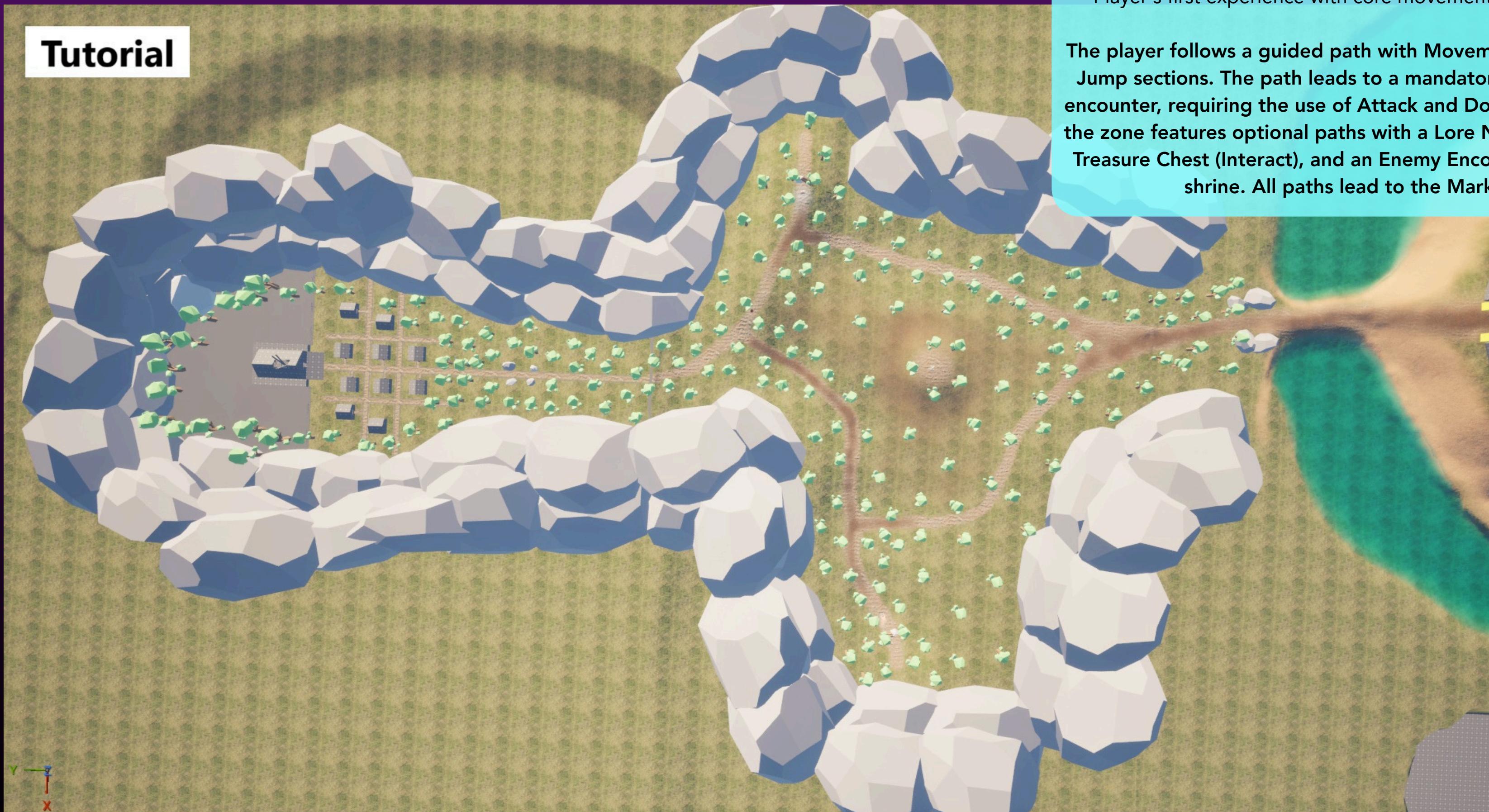
Zone 1: Forgotten Woods (Training Level)

Player's first experience with core movement and combat.

The player follows a guided path with Movement, Sprint, and Jump sections. The path leads to a mandatory first Combat encounter, requiring the use of Attack and Dodge. The rest of the zone features optional paths with a Lore Note (Interact), a Treasure Chest (Interact), and an Enemy Encounter guarding shrine. All paths lead to the Market.

Zones:

Hub (Containing Market)

Player gets the main quest and gains agency.

The player enters a safe, non-combat hub. A Key NPC provides the Main Quest (Find the Shrine) and Side Quests (Help the Farm). The player can explore, visit vendors, and choose which of the three "spokes" to explore first.

Zones:

Cave

Zones:
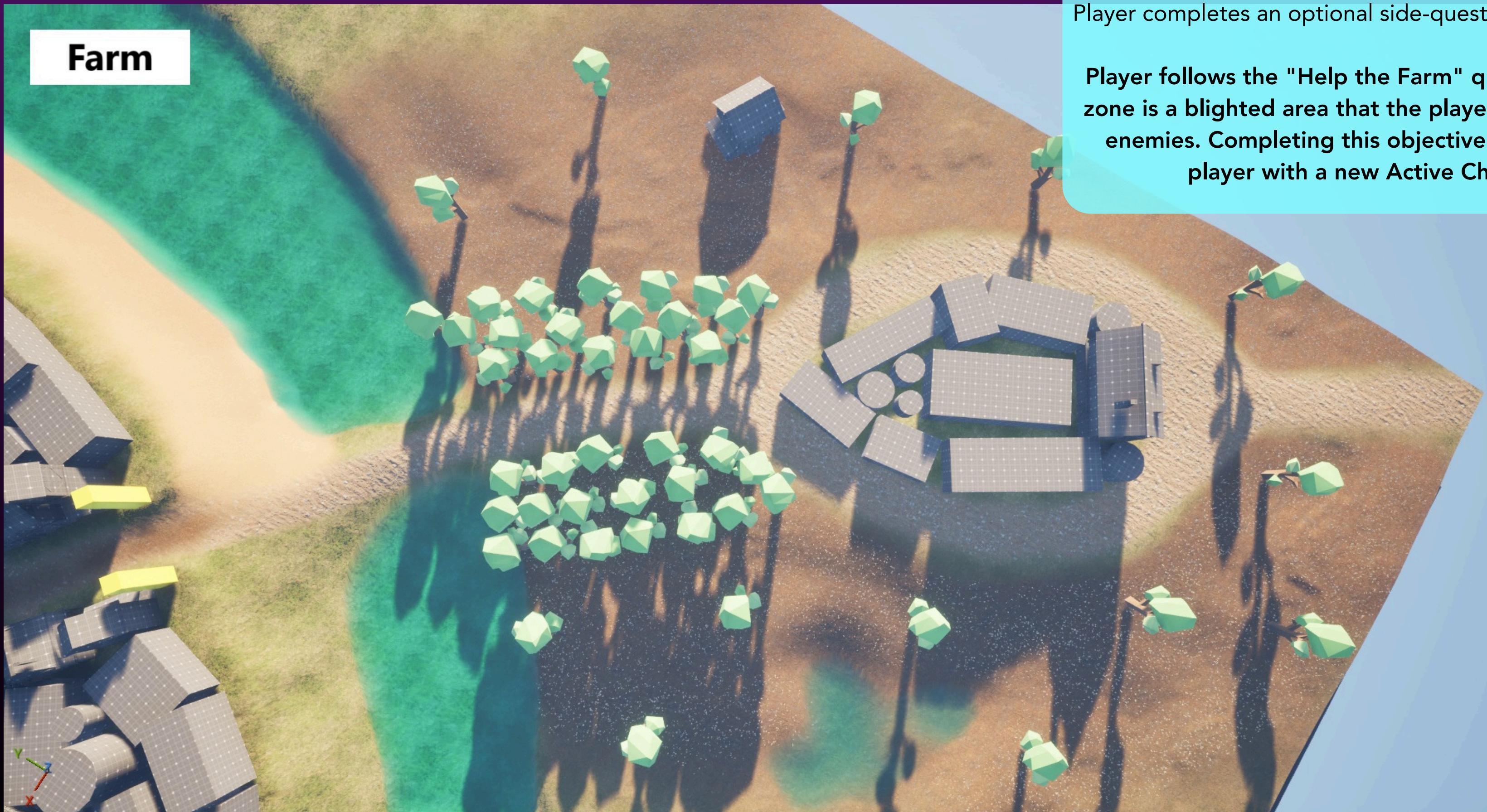
Farm

Player completes an optional side-quest for a power-up.

Player follows the "Help the Farm" quest path. The zone is a blighted area that the player must clear of enemies. Completing this objective rewards the player with a new Active Charm.

Zones:


Boss Arena

Zone 5: The Boss Arena (Climax)

Player is tested on all mechanics in a final encounter.

The SwordUpgradeLevel grants access to the arena. The player enters, the BP_Boss appears, and the final battle begins. The player must use all their skills— charms, dodge, and melee—to defeat the boss, completing the prototype loop.

Moodboard & Inspiration
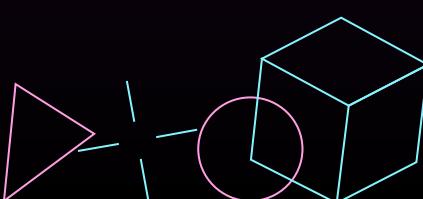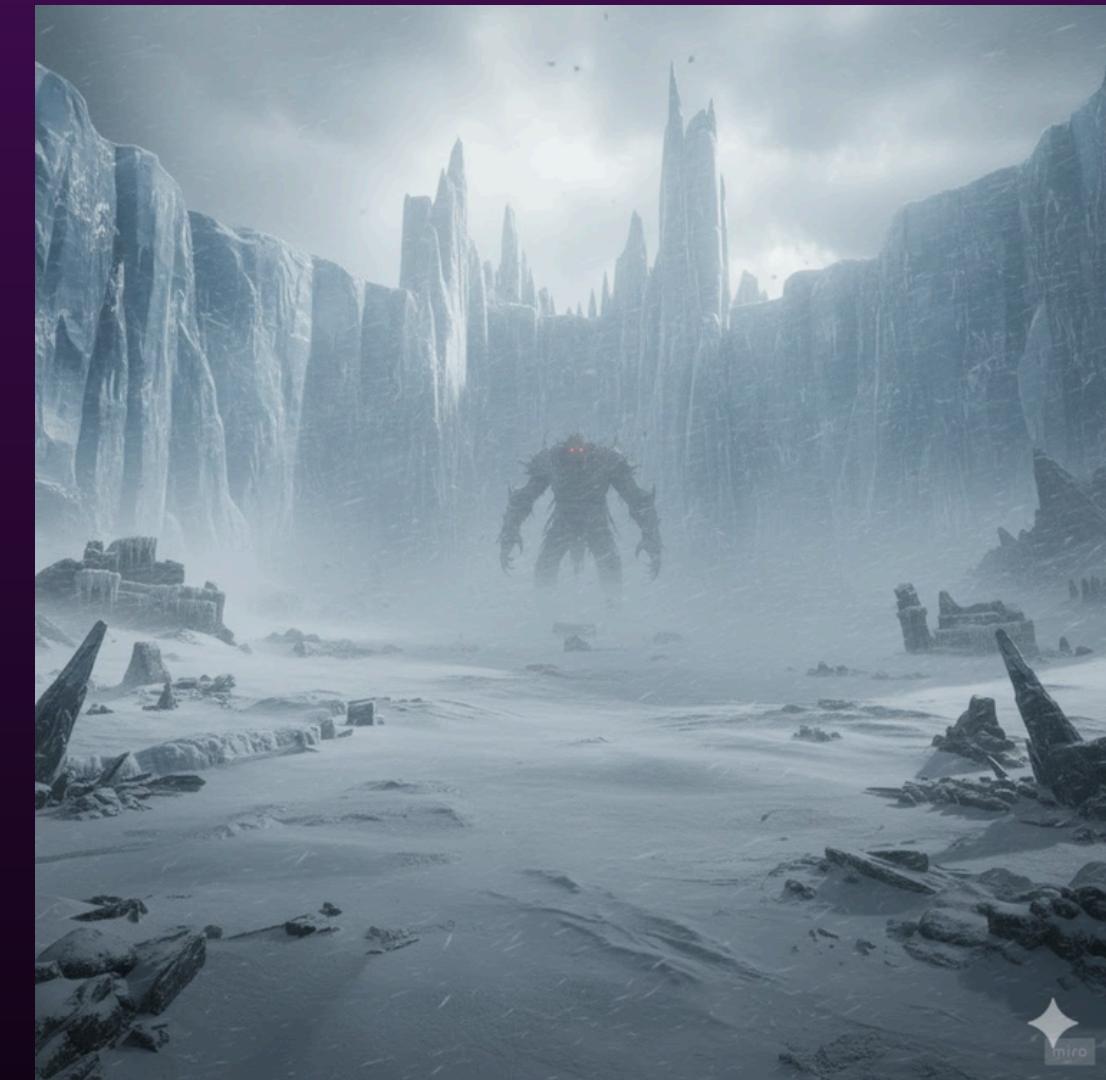
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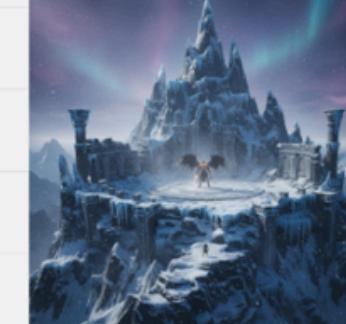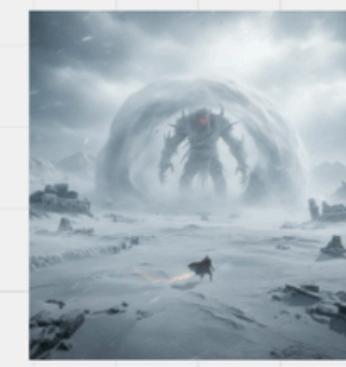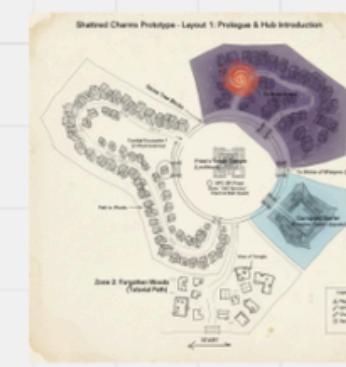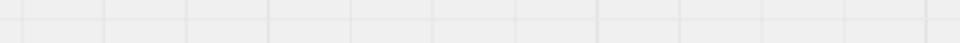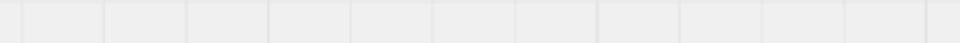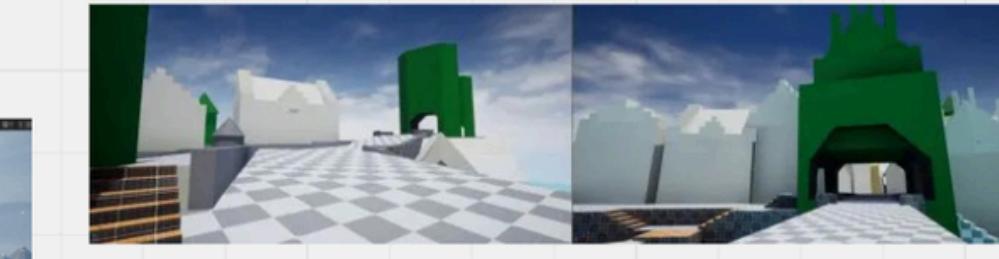
Mechanics & Features

Mechanics:

- *Light Melee Attack: A 3-hit combo.*
- *Dodge Roll: A quick dash with invulnerability frames.*
- *Interact: A single-key action for NPCs, chests, and lore items.*
- *Charm Equipping: A drag-and-drop UI menu.*
- *Active/Fused Charm Powers: Player-activated abilities using the charm system.*

Features:

- *Dual-Slot Charm System: The core system of equipping Normal and Fused charms.*
- *Loot System: Enemies and chests drop physical pickups (BP_Pickup_Base).*
- *Boss AI: The final boss uses a Behavior Tree for range-based attacks .*
- *Progression Gating: The SwordUpgradeLevel variable is the "key" to the boss arena.*
- *NEW: Quest Journal: A simple UI to track the "Main Quest" (The Cave) and "Side Quests" (Farm, Temple).*
- *NEW: Economy System: "Jewels" (from loot) are a currency to be spent at vendors in the "Market."*
- *NEW: Player Map: A simple, fog-of-war map that fills in as the player explores.*

Third Person Template
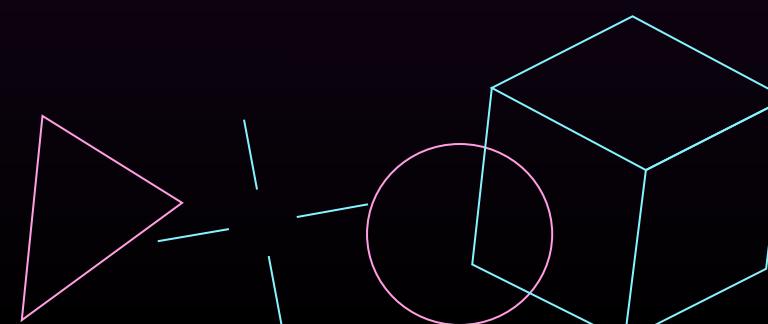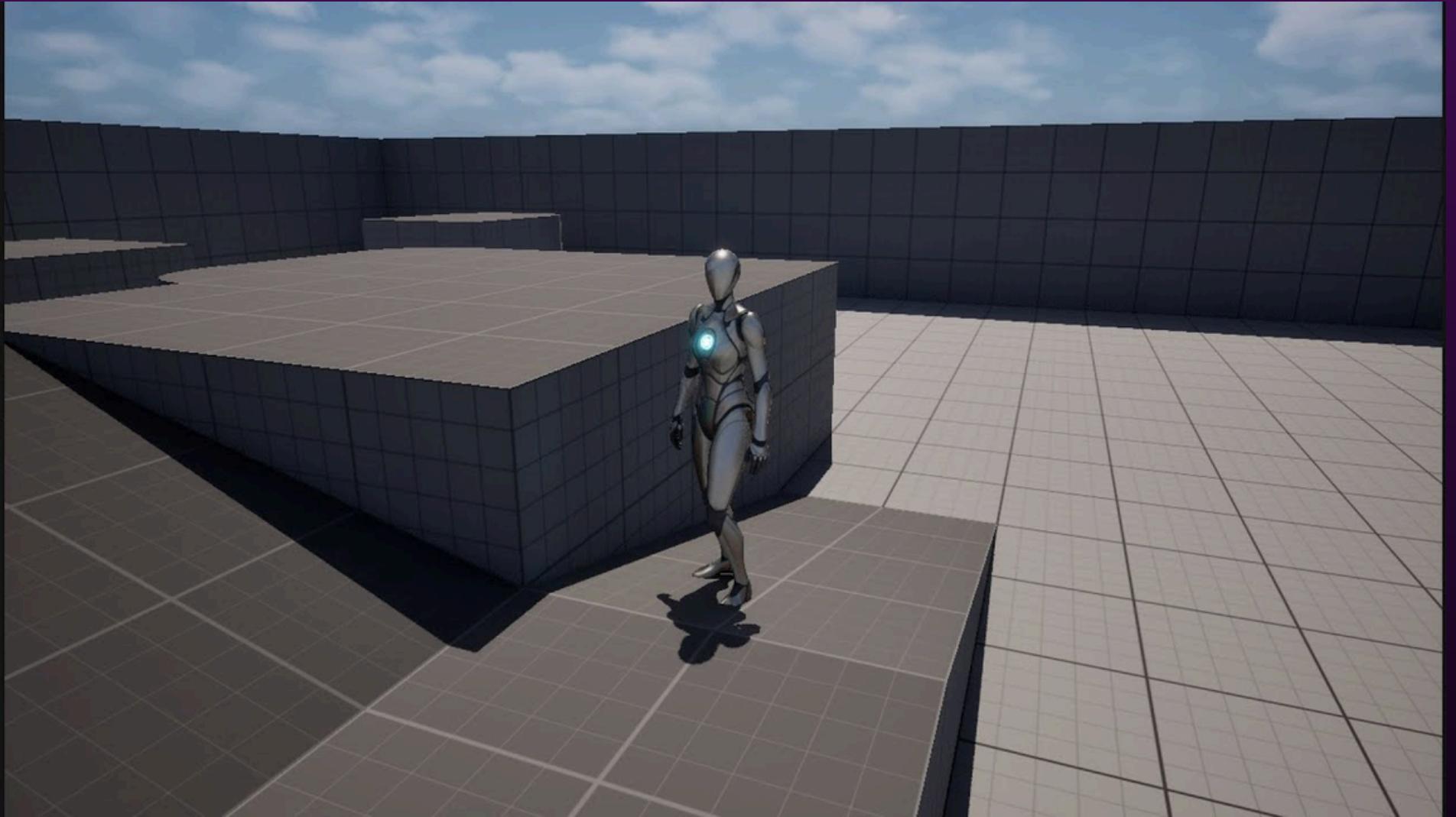
Top - Down Layout
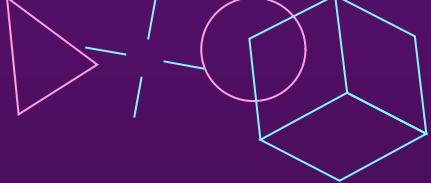
Legend:

- ▶ = Player Start
- = Enemy Lvl 1
- = Enemy Lvl 2
- = Enemy Lvl 2 (stronger)
- = Enemy Lvl 4
- = Boss Enemy
- ▽ = Guiding NPC
- ▷ = Key NPC
- 🚫 = Blocker
- = Item Loot
- = Shrine
- = Guiding hints
- 🏁 = Finish
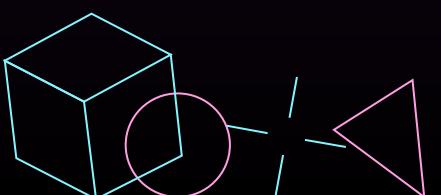
Level Beats & Walkthrough

- Player wakes in **his destroyed home** after the **Veil attack**. Learns **movement, jump and sprint** while navigating the debris, setting up the **emotional tone and basic controls**.

- Player follows **the forest path** and is naturally drawn to a **fake shrine** on the high surface, while a nearby **chest rewards curiosity**. Opening it **teaches that Jewels are a core upgrade resource, encouraging exploration.**


- Player reaches **the Market** where the **large houses act as a clear landmark** drawing attention. Inside, the player meets **a key NPC** who **provides critical guidance for the next objectives and progression.**
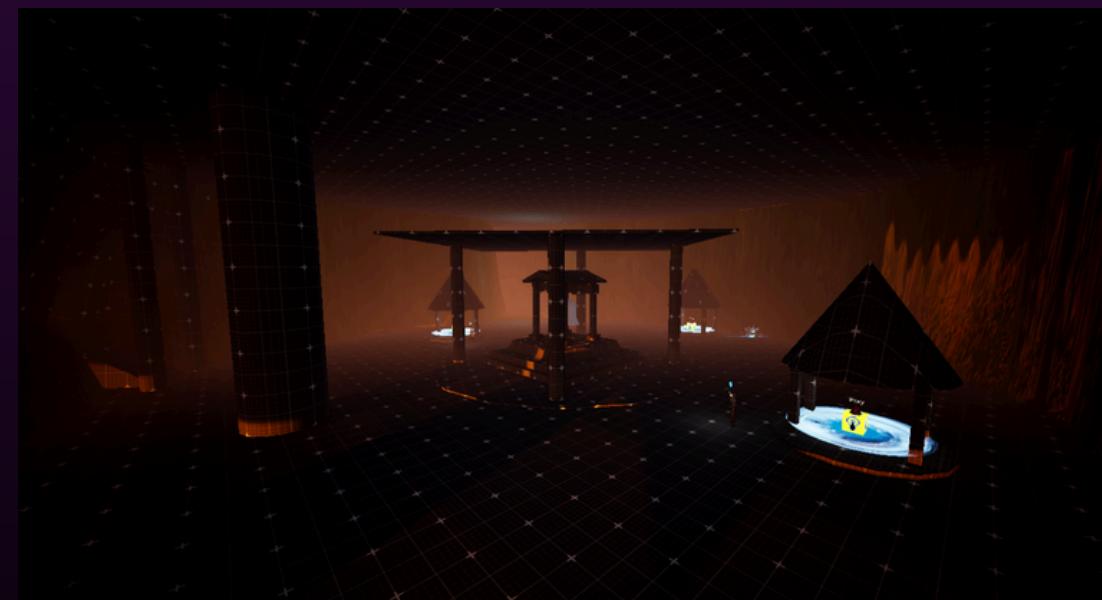
- The player discovers the **hidden underground temple**, reinforcing earlier environmental clues. Here they **learn the lore, unlock new mechanics, upgrade the sword and understand the charm system**, preparing them for **advanced encounters.**

- Player enters the **Farming Area** where **corrupted enemies are ruining the fields**. Through **natural exploration**, the player defeats the threats and saves the farm owner, **receiving a reward** — an emergent **quest without explicit assignment.**

- Player reaches the **Final Arena**, sealed by the **Last Guardian**. The final fight unlocks only after **proving worth in a challenge and collecting every charm**, giving meaning to **exploration and progression.**