

Starshine

by Kendra Islam

Overview

This is a game follows the life of a young witch as she is ousted from her home and forced to seek shelter from those hunting her. It is designed to be an puzzle-adventure with numerous challenges to complete in order to advance gameplay, such as collecting the pieces of tools in order to create them. The player will move her avatar around the world through the expansive forest as well as small towns in order to find items to use to complete the final objective, safety.

The game while designed primarily to be fun to play will also touch on real life themes. The plot will serve as an example of the dangers of xenophobia and its effect on people. The gameplay will aim to educate the player about both navigation via constellations as well as properties of medicinal plants. The items and sky in the game will be recreations of real life in order to give the player knowledge that can transfer to their personal life as well.

As such, the main character will navigate through the forest she resides in, collecting items along the way that she can use to create potions, as well as cast spells and fly using a broomstick. These tools are used in order to evade capture by the witch hunters hunting her. The witch will have to avoid patrols, find her way through towns without being recognized, and collect the tools she needs in order to win the game, a mortar and pestle, a broomstick, and a wand.

Story

The beginning of the game will be mainly cutscenes in order to set up the world that the witch resides in as well as some basic tutorial to teach the player how to move in the world. The final goal of the game is to reach safety by becoming the student of an old witch hoping to pass on her knowledge of the dying craft. There are several objectives that must be completed in order to achieve this goal, firstly she must reach the witch's home, where she will learn she needs to replace the tools she was forced to leave behind, her broomstick, her wand, and her mortar and pestle, in order to prove her ability to her potential teacher and win the game.

After the initial cutscene, the player will be shown the game mechanics through instructions from her girlfriend, such as picking up and using items as well as navigating the world through the use of constellations rather than a map. Once the player understands the basics, the plot will continue and the pair must start their escape. On the road, the player will be taught to read the constellations in order to navigate the world by the witch's girlfriend. There will be no world map provided to the

player. Once that lesson is completed, witch hunters will catch up to them and the pair will be forced to separate, the witch's girlfriend forcing her to run while she distracts the hoard. Once alone, the witch must make her way to the witch's home. Patrols will not be set up yet; they will start once the secondary objectives are revealed.

Upon arrival at the witch's cottage, the old woman tells her that she cannot trust her word alone, and as the young witch has no magical tools she can't possibly demonstrate her power to her.

Therefore the witch must endeavor to replace her tools. As the young woman explores the forest in order to remake her tools, she must avoid the patrols of witch hunters looking for her. They can be evaded through either using one of her tools to escape, such as flying over them or using a spell to put them to sleep, or helping someone along the side of the road, in which case they will vouch for her and the witch hunters will leave them alone. There will be towns along the way, and the only way to gain entrance is by escort of a villager she's already helped. Select towns will be the gates in between the different sections.

The main rewards will be the tools the player is collecting, which are used in order to evade enemies as well as help people in need. There will be randomly generated plants specific to each region which can be added to the player's inventory and are similarly usable.

There is no specific order in which the player must collect the tools; each region of forest is separate from the others in terms of the puzzles within. The broomstick must be assembled by collecting a large stick, straw, and rope. The stick will come from the branch of a fallen elm tree; the rope from a villager in need, and the straw from inside the village that that villager belongs to. The mortar will be found in the scorched ruins of another witch's home, and the pestle will be made from a crystal given to her by a villager. The wand will be made from the branch of an alder tree, and it will be shaped by a woodworker inside a village.

Main Character

The main character is a orphaned young adult witch who lives alone in the forest outside of a small village. Her parents were some of the first casualties in the witch trials, and she was saved as a baby by her mother's best friend, whose daughter, the witch's girlfriend, grew up alongside the main character and is currently in the army stationed in her hometown and appears in the beginning of the game to guide the player through the cutscenes.

The witch begins the game with no tools as she was ushered from her home rapidly by her girlfriend who came to warn her and was forced to leave everything behind except for her bag and a cloak. As she collects new tools during gameplay she gains abilities.

The broom allows her to fly for short periods of time, regulated by her stamina, over the heads of witch hunters. This will only work at night, otherwise they will be able to see her. Stamina will be replenished by sleep, which she does during the daytime in order to travel at night.

The mortar and pestle will allow her to make potions using plants she's collected along the way.

There will be four different potions she can make specific to the ingredients she uses (ingredients specific to each of the four regions), and the potions will be used to heal people along the side of the road or traded for favors in villages.

The wand will allow her to use a sleeping spell on witch hunters so that the witch can advance, a spell to clear clouds so that the stars are easily visible, a locating spell for pieces of tools she has not yet found, and a spell to hide her while she sleeps during the day. Each spell will cost her mana, which can only be regained by eating food. Food will be either plants she has collected that contain nutrients (which will be identified) or bought in villages through the trading of potions.

The game is played via an avatar of her in third person. This avatar will be mildly customizable; the player will choose a skin tone and hair color for her as well as a name when a new save file is created. Her appearance will not be changeable during gameplay but her abilities will increase.



(not final clothes, just temporary)

Opponents

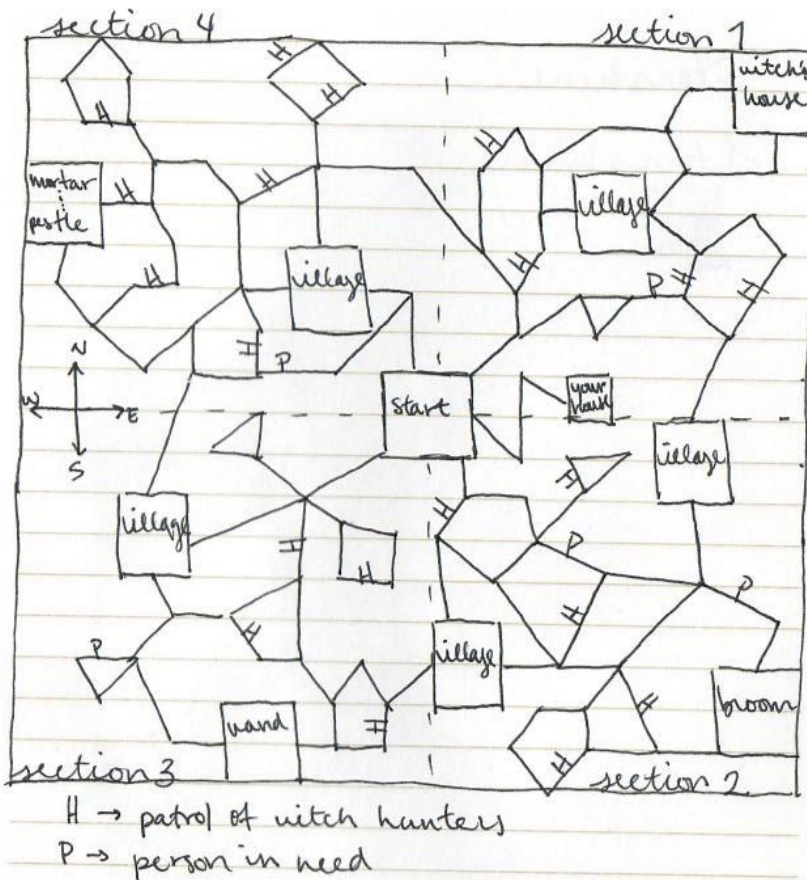
The main opponents in the game will be enemies (witch hunters) both stationed outside of towns and patrolling the woods in pairs. They have moderate intelligence, will be able to see the witch if she isn't properly hidden, and must be evaded in order to avoid death. If the witch is spotted, she must make a hasty retreat or use a tool to evade them. If they catch her it is a death sentence, and the player will be sent back to the last save point. The main objective of this game is survival without the need for fighting, all opponents will be defeated by simply hiding from them and sneaking around, evading them with the aid of tools, or being escorted by a villager who will vouch for the witch. There will be paths that the player cannot get through without the aid of a tool or villager, others will have objects to hide behind so that the player can sneak through.



Environment

The game is set in a forest, with 4 sections that each have different plants that spawn specific to the region. Three of the sections will contain one item to be collected and the fourth will have the old witch's home. Each section will also contain several villages and everything will be connected via roads, which is how the witch gets around. There will be no map; the player navigates via constellations. Some sections of path will be patrolled, others will have people the witch must help on the side of the path, and all will have randomly generated items she can collect. Select roads will have patrols of witch hunters, others will have someone along the side of the road that needs help, and the remaining ones will have nothing, just the plants along the side of the road.

Time will also be a factor, with six minutes in between sunrise and sunset. During the daytime, the witch will be asleep in order to travel at night. The player must set up camp in either a village or a designated safe zone, which will be either a deer trail that is not frequented by people or created by a spell. There will be about 4 deer trails per region. The time will be displayed at all times in the lower left hand corner of the screen.



Menus

Before reaching the title screen, the player will be first asked which language they want to play in (English or Spanish). Then the initial menu screen will have an option to create a new game or load from an existing one (there will be only one save location). Once a game is created, the player will have options to choose a skin tone and hair color for the witch as well as name her. In game, the player will have access to an inventory screen as well as a refresher on the constellations. In the inventory, the tools will be separate from the items she's collected along the way, and pieces of a tool will have their own section as well. The tools will have blocks of text describing how to use them if the player hovers the mouse over one. Similarly each item will have a block of text describing its properties. The refresher will be a map of the constellations with a compass in the upper right hand corner. The game is paused when the inventory or constellation map is pulled up. The witch's mana and stamina will be displayed alongside the time of day. If the player loses, there will be a menu showing the witch burned at the stake alongside the options to either start from the last save point or quit the game.

Controls

The controls for the game will be solely through the mouse. Movement will be clicking where you want to go, items will be picked up by clicking on them once in range, and the game menu will be a button in the upper righthand corner. The witch's tools will have a shortcut in the bottom right hand corner, and the player will activate them by clicking on them. The wand will have a specific hand movement for each spell, and a guide to each movement will be available in the lower right hand corner once the wand is activated. The broom will be used the same way as walking, simply click where to go. The mortar and pestle will pull up a smaller inventory of the items that can be used with it, and each item will have a block of text describing the properties of that specific plant. Items that the player wants to put into a potion are click and dragged into the mortar. Once everything the player wants is inside, the pestle is clicked on and a potion is made.

Sounds

There will be several different music scores in the game. A general theme for roaming the forest, a theme to warn the player of nearby danger, and music in the background of cutscenes. There will be

a sound clip when an item is picked up, as well as a unique clip for using each individual tool. In the title menu, there will be sounds when buttons are clicked and when the game is started up. During the game, there will be background sounds as well, such as crickets during the night, birds during the day, walking, etc.

Summary

This is a game about a young queer witch as she navigates a world in which she is not welcome. She is forced to hide her identity for her own safety as she seeks a home where she will be accepted as she is. While the world she is exploring is open and she can go virtually wherever she pleases once she has all the tools she needs, she does not roam without risk. She can collect limitless items, explore the furthest corners of her forest, and gain abilities as she travels. She is kind and helps others despite the risk to herself. People help her as she helps them and by doing so learn that different does not mean evil or wrong. The morals of this world are shades of grey; there is no one truly evil or good, solely human. Those who hunt witches are not doing so out of evil intent, but fear. Witches are not innately good or evil; they simply are. The same is true of everyone.