

Ruinscape Teen Brother

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The run bar strictly delimits the pace. Running from the mining patch south of Falador to the Port Sarim bank deposit box takes 24s 88ms and 50% stamina. Getting back takes 30% stamina since I weigh a little less. I get back 10% while I mine the copper. I run out of stamina before I reach the deposit box again. I'll get my energy back in 5m 55s 84ms (a free player with 1 agility will require 12m 30s). The next several trips are all walking. Running is twice as fast as walking, so these trips all take 49s 76ms.

Running is already not very fast; walking is excruciating. It is so tedious that play hinges on circumventing it. The whole game sighs and heaves to the run bar's tempo. From the moment an account is created her first goal is to open up every alternate transport system as quickly as possible. Bit by bit, Gelinor turns from a three dimensional space to a Markov chain. Fairy rings, charmed amulets, lunar magic, charter ships, improvised canoes. A cursed phial that turns you into slime and sucks you up. Every town and cabbage patch is threaded together by a wormhole cluster of rifts and slippages.





But large areas of the map are a teleporter desert. When mining there is typically no alternative. You have to run to the bank and back. Your energy will deplete and you'll walk. The pits at west Varrock are a little faster: 23s 37ms to the bank, in a game where saving milliseconds can make millions. But you can't use it because it's always flooded with bots; bald, goatee, sexless and anonymous, ruthlessly edging

you out of the race for ore. When walking it is most efficient to enable running as soon as you regain 1% of the bar as it gives you a little extra because of how the game measures squares and game ticks; you can run up to as much as 27% extra this way¹. The ideal account is always teetering on the brink of exhaustion; sweating, drooling, eyes caked in sleep and tears, at any moment sucked into a black hole highway.



¹ https://www.reddit.com/r/2007scape/comments/2ky0y0/heres_a_trick_to_make_your_run_energy_go_further/

In 2009 they added NPC musicians. They kept playing music for-ever, and you could sit beside them to rapidly recover your stamina. Twelve minutes go by in twenty seconds; in a game where space-time is always compressing and releasing they were like little oases out of the world. By this time I had stopped taking the game very seriously. I never figured out farming and couldn't understand how to operate the Grand Exchange, and all my childhood friends had stopped playing. I was never a master of the game and spent most of my play-hours picking flax. I decided to make a new account and become an anchorite. I would not level a single skill nor bank a single gold piece. Instead I went and sat by the musician outside the Edgeville Monastery or sometimes Falador and talked to whoever came by.

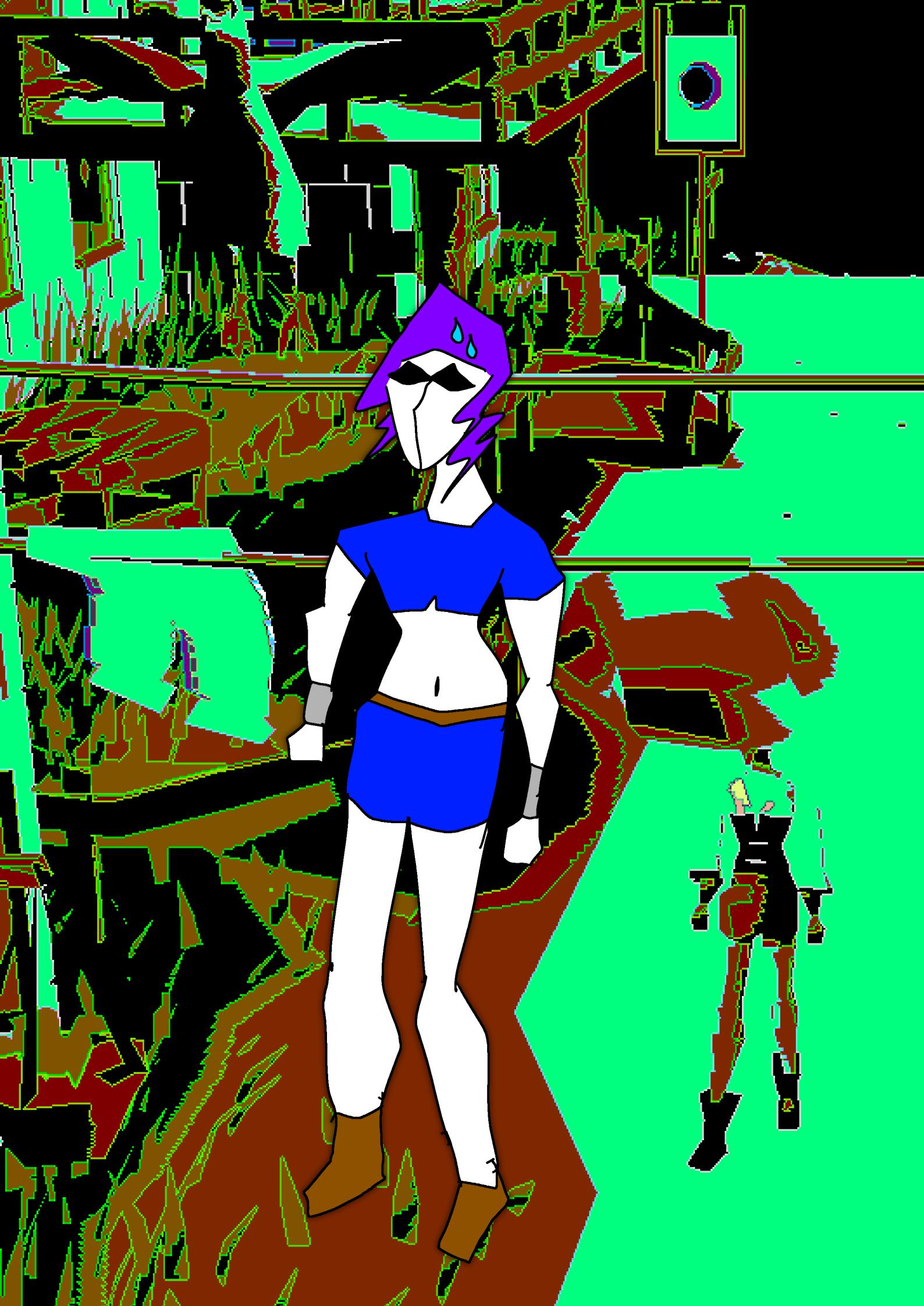


I pretended to be a girl on the internet ever since the quest *Recruitment Drive* gave me an excuse. That quest is a series of inscrutable riddles (one of which requires knowledge of real-world chemistry) and usually involves beating a knight who “no man may defeat”, requiring a sex-change from the Makeover Mage (who periodically changes their own sex). In primary school we all did this quest at the same time and took turns brute forcing the puzzles; every day someone had a new solution and we made it a little farther. I never changed my account back after beating the knight. When I made my new girl I gave her purple hair, or I remember her having purple hair. I invented more lies about myself: I was from the Falkland Islands, which I decided were small enough that you could see from shore to shore; I had a pet penguin and so did everyone who lived there; I studied astrobiology, and no one knew enough about astrobiology to ask me questions about it. I would spend all day spinning tales for weary PK twinks and

keeping them from their ingame chores.

I met another girl. We bonded over being girls because it was felt, in those days, that this was exceptional. She wore a very skimpy blue outfit that turned me on and I kept asking her how to get it. She told me she'd get it for me and she did; it was the Shorts and Woven Top from Keldagrim²; they're skimpy because they're made for dwarves. Once we had matching outfits we got a matching idea: a scheme to transform the balcony of the Falador Party Room into a brothel.

2 In 2010 the youtube channel BagaProductions made the same intuitive connection as me by making them the subject of their video, "Trannylicious: Runescape Style!"

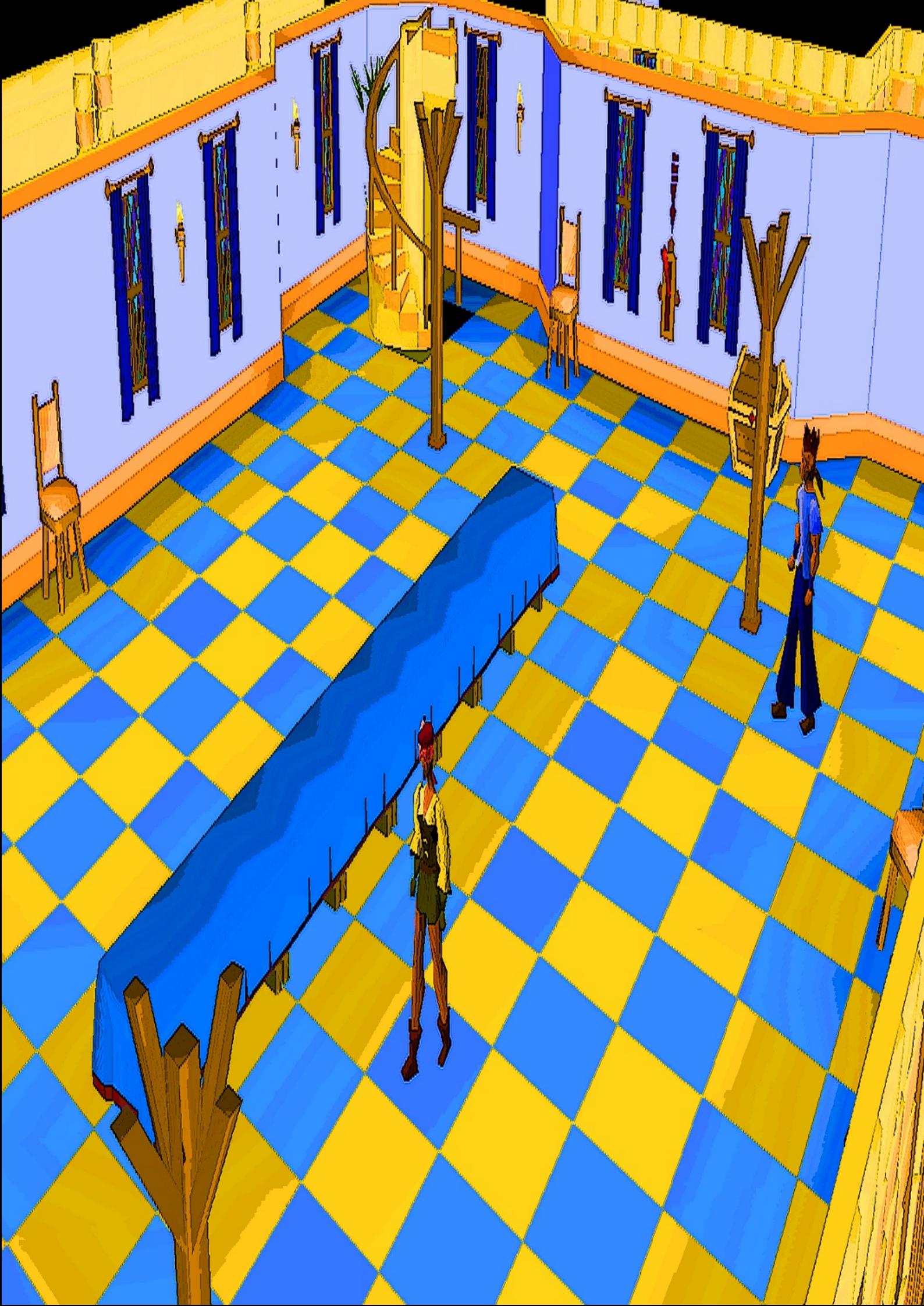


The Falador Party Room is now mothballed by the player community, but it once sat at the center of Runescape's psychogeographical universe. It is hard to explain it to someone not familiar with the game's strange economy, glued together by some combination of conspicuous generosity, reckless wealth-destruction, and excessive gambling; where an ultra-rare cosmetic item, the phat, systematically distorted the value-form to a degree that players voted to remove it from the 'oldschool' reboot; where players willfully submit to age old scams ("doubling gold") or go all-in on 50-50 games of chance. Chief among these ruses is the 'drop party', where a wealthy player drops their fortune on the ground in pieces for a horde of poorer players to fight over. In a game organized around the accumulation of wealth, the unparalleled prestige of leading the drop party made it the ultimate horizon of play. What was fascinating about the Party Room was that it was designed to facilitate the drop party. It automated the

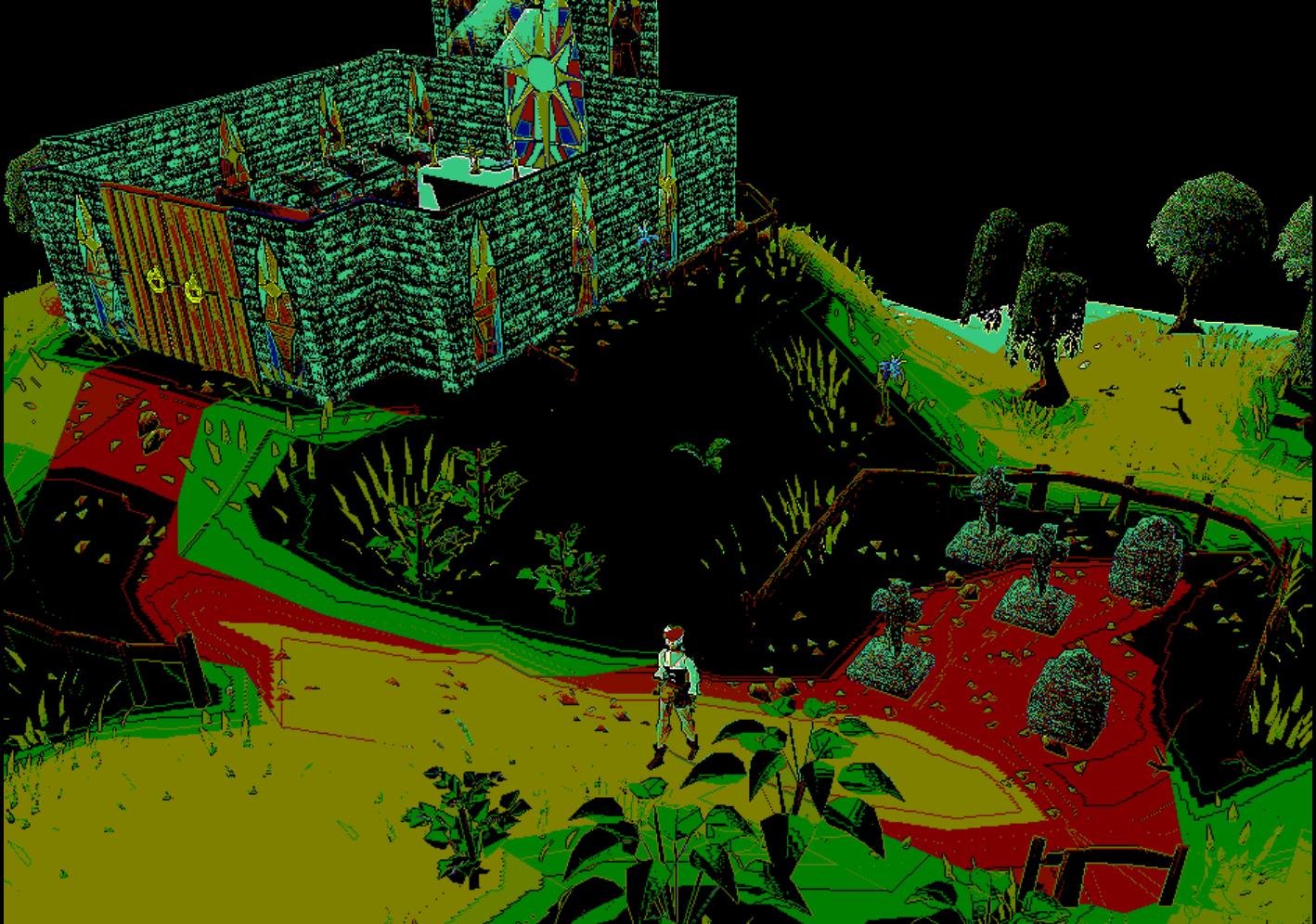
process and inserted systems to ensure fair competition. It was fascinating because it meant that Jagex legitimated not only the official player economy (much later via the Grand Exchange), but the strange anti-economy howling in the center as well.



The Party Room has two floors above it; the second floor is a narrow mezzanine overlooking the party room (which is modelled in facsimile below; it is not the same instance of the Party Room and you cannot see the guests there), where you can buy beer from waitresses named Megan and Lucy. Above that is a floor constrained to an even narrower set of corridors, fixed to the walls, looking over the chasm like hanging monasteries, with its own instances of the empty bar and the empty Party Room. Only one corridor is accessible, leading to the balcony, which overlooks a facsimile of an empty Falador. In this ancillary room of the ancillary floor we offered sexual services.



These services did not involve any kind of ERP. They were achieved directly through mimesis. For one million coins you could get a handjob. This was accomplished through the use of the Angry emote. In the Angry emote, your account raises her hand up and shakes it three times in front of her. Normally this looked like shaking one's fist in frustration, but on the balcony, when I stood facing you, you could imagine - making the necessary vertical transformation - that I had your dick in my hand. For two million you could get a blowjob. This time I used the Headbang. Pretty obvious; but in Runescape you raise your fist while you headbang, and it moves alongside your head, meaning that on the balcony it looked like a very pornographic double sex act, where I suck your dick and jerk you off at the same time. I waited on the balcony while my friend went into the square to find clients (the moralizers at the Poppy Project would consider her my pimp). When they were all done, I'd Blow Kiss.



Until my first client private messaged me “i came” it didn’t occur to me, at any point in the process, that guys would really jerk off when I did it³. Now it seems quite obvious. Most of my clients were teenage boys who were excited about participating in sexuality but, when they finally arrived at it, were not sure what was expected of them. During the act they flirted with me, attempting to initiate a seduction that had

³ To paraphrase Gilles Deleuze, 'Runescape emotes are at their most powerful when they compel the body to repeat the movements they suggest.' But outside of the balcony they suggested movements quite otherwise than on it.

already been completed. "your so sexy baby."

One client was a submissive and referred to me as his Mistress. He asked me to direct him and I obliged. I didn't appreciate at the time that every denied orgasm was a million dollars I wasn't making. I asked him what his favourite thing about me was and, after describing many of my erogenous zones he had never seen, he revealed that it was my "big, veiny cock, Mistress." Good boy. Wait, how did you...?

After that, I decided to mess with my next client. Once he told me he came I whispered him: "btw im a man irl." He overreacted, running through the streets crying and wailing, like that gag in any one of your favourite sitcoms. That charade was bound to attract too much attention. We closed shop and moved out of town as multimillionaire sex tycoons.



I last saw that girl in the desert. She wanted to look for the Agility Pyramid which is deep in the Kharidian. It was, in those days, one of the better places to train agility, and rewarded you with cash too; but back then the map had nothing to indicate that YOU ARE HERE, and in the featureless expanse of the Kharidian we walked for hours from dune to dune and found nothing. By the time our waterskins were empty we had reached the edge of the world, an abyss of empty blackness at the corner of the gamespace, and we stared into it until we died of thirst damage. When I respawned, she was gone. Every so often I would go back to the Kharidian with waterskins and wander it like a haunted Mina Loy, waiting for her or her ghost or her mirage.

THE Sun

