

# *The Morning After*

**Target Audience:** 7+ (core audience: 35+)  
**Gamer Type:** Casual  
**Target Platforms:** Mobile and/or Web  
**Genre:** 2D Flip-Screen Platformer, Roguelike, Dungeoncrawl  
**Number of players:** 1  
**Project Release Date:** Late 2018/Early 2019

## Design Document for:

# The Morning After

Or, blah de blah de blah

“blah de blah”™

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Written by Steve Hall

Version # 0.3



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# Design History

This is a brief explanation of the history of this document.

This gives an overview of how the design has evolved over time.

## Version 0.1

Version 0.1 is the work-in-progress initial version.

## Version 0.2

Version 0.2 contains the list of rooms (although some still require fleshing out).

## Version 0.3

Version 0.3 refines some of the room descriptions based on decisions made during the development to date (also, the idea of keys to unlock doors has been dropped, since it is not clear what benefit this brings).

# Game Overview

## Philosophy

### Philosophical point #1

This game is about nostalgia. It is intended to be a retro-experience similar to that you would expect of a game from the mid-1980's. Graphics should be obviously pixelated and tend toward the garish, while the music should be resolutely 8-bit (chiptune) and slightly irritating.

### Philosophical point #2

The gameplay is directly inspired by the game Jet Set Willy (1984). Although some liberties are allowed to broaden the appeal to a modern audience, fundamentally this game should involve moving a character through a 2D platformer/dungeon-crawl while avoiding monsters and collecting items. The link back to Jet Set Willy should be clear to those "in-the-know" (without stepping on any existing copyright issues!).



### Philosophical point #3

The player should have a limited amount of lives and it should not be possible to continue the game if all lives are lost (i.e. permadeath-lite). While the user has lives, the current session may be saved in a single save slot and restarted but the saved session will be deleted when all lives are lost. The game may include a limited amount of extra lives (available as power-ups), but these should be very rare.

### Philosophical point #4

An element of the game is frustration. Portions of the game should be difficult to complete (however not so difficult that players give up).

### Philosophical point #5

The game will initially be designed for in-browser play, however it may be ported to a mobile app in the future, so this should be borne in mind.

## Common Questions

### What is the game?

The Morning After opens with our hero waking up in the bathroom the morning after The Event. The details are hazy, but memories of a wild party, followed by an unwise combination of unusual mushrooms and a ouija board, suggest that things may have gone a bit too far. Something alarming moving in the shadows suggests they went far too far.

All our hero wants to do is go to bed, in the hope that a good sleep will make everything go away, however his maid has other plans. The house and grounds are mess; detritus is

spread far and wide; strange creatures are roaming the halls and something suspiciously like a portal to another dimension appears to have opened in the basement. This all needs to be tidied up and fixed before anyone is getting any sleep.

### **Why create this game?**

This game is resolutely aimed at people at people with fond memories of playing early computer games in the 1980s. This is, admittedly, a limited market, so the goal is also to expand the gameplay to make it more attractive to a wider market (e.g. more varied gameplay but with the same retro-aesthetic). Although some aspects of the game may be challenging, the basic gameplay is intended to be simple, so the learning curve is shallow.

### **Where does the game take place?**

The game takes place in the interior and grounds of a mansion (with an excursion into a parallel dimension). Each screen displays an entire room.

### **What do I control?**

You control the as-yet-be-named hero. He (he is currently a he for historical reasons, but this may change) can walk, climb and jump. As he travels he is required to traverse various room while collecting items and avoiding monsters. At times he may need to destroy the monsters.

### **What is the main focus?**

The main focus is exploration of the game world while collecting all of the collectable items. Bonus features include destroying monsters and closing the trans-dimensional portal. Progress is marked by the number of items collected.

### **What's different?**

This game strives to be different through its aesthetic, which is decidedly retro, while at the same time being sufficiently interesting to drive exploration of the game environment. At a superficial level the design of the game should speak to those people who played computer games in the 1980's, but the game play itself should be engrossing enough to pique the interest of all ages.

# Feature Set

## General Features

2D flip-screen platformer.  
Fixed camera position.  
32-bit color.  
Chiptune music.  
Simple controls (right/left/up/down/jump).

## Multiplayer Features

There are no plans for multiplayer features.

## Room Editor

Rooms will be edited in Unity and an export tool will be used to save the completed room to a text file. Saved rooms can be imported back into Unity for further editing.

The saved text files can also be manually edited.

## Gameplay

An example of typical gameplay is the following:

- 1) The player starts the game and, after a splash screen, is presented with menu. This has options to start a new game (which will overwrite any saved game), load the currently saved game (if any), view help, change settings. There is no quit option since this is not applicable to either browser or mobile use.
- 2) The player starts a new game. A loading screen is displayed, shortly followed by the initial game screen.
- 3) The player “awakes” in The Bathroom (in homage to Jet Set Willy). The Bathroom contains several platforms, a ramp and a ladder (example of the various features found throughout the game). On one of the platforms roams a creature (safely away from the player); other locations in the room contains collectable items, a bath and a toilet. If the player pushes the bath, it will move. There are also two doors: one has a signpost indicating that it leads The Bedroom, the other leads elsewhere. In the background can be heard an 8-bit rendition of “In The Hall Of The Mountain King” (originally by Grieg). The style is immediately reminiscent of Jet Set Willy. In addition, this room contains examples of all of the main game mechanics.
- 4) The player navigates to the door to The Bedroom and passes through. The scene changes to a new room that again will be familiar to anyone who has played Jet Set Willy. The only features in the room: are a wall dividing the room in two; a doorway at the base of the wall; a bed in the opposite side of the room; the Maid who is blocking the doorway between the two halves of the room. There is also a ladder that leads down from the top of the room; the base of the ladder is too high to jump to. If the player approaches the Maid, a text will be displayed giving instructions for the game (essentially, collect the collectable items and return). If the player touches the Maid, they will be initially just be repelled (bounced) backwards and a

“don’t do that again” warning will be displayed. A subsequent attempt to touch the Maid will lead to losing a life.

- 5) The player returns to the bathroom and navigates to the other doorway (avoiding the creature and collecting items as necessary). From now on, the user navigates in a similar manner from room to room. The rooms are roughly laid out based on a layout of a mansion and it’s grounds (although the player does not know this; no map is provided). Some rooms do not follow any logical plan (particularly those related to the trans-dimensional portal). Some rooms require keys to enter them; the keys are found in various parts of the house and are typically obtained by solving a puzzle. Puzzle rooms typically require the player to use movable decorative items to access or block certain parts of the room.
- 6) At some point the player will reach the portal. Beyond the portal, rooms play with the mechanics of the game (for example, speeding up creatures or the player, or reversing the direction controls, or playing with gravity), although the basic goals are the same. One room beyond the portal contains a weapon (the only weapon in the game). This room is only accessible if the user has found all of the collectable items.
- 7) After collecting all of the collectable items, the player must return to The Bedroom. If they don’t have the weapon, they must navigate back through the rooms in the same manner as previously. If they have the weapon, they can use this to bypass the creatures and intricacies of each room. The weapon is ridiculously overpowered; when used it will annihilate any creatures in the way, along with sizeable chunks of the room’s internal structure (although the player runs the risk of making a room impassible if the weapon is used injudiciously). The purpose of the weapon is to make the journey back to The Bedroom less of a slog.
- 8) Upon returning to The Bedroom, the Maid will be waiting (as before) but this time will tell the player to approach and give her the collectibles. She will then disappear and the player is free to walk to the bed. Upon reaching the bed, the game ends, the player is presented with a congratulations message accompanied by an 8-bit version of Brahm’s “Lullaby”.
- 9) At any point in the game the player may pause the game. When doing so they will be presented with options to resume the game, save the game or quit the game (which will return to the main menu).

## Hours of Gameplay

Total gameplay should be of the order of a couple of hours. A typical room, at first play through, should take around 5 minutes to complete. At least initially, there should be around 20 rooms.

## Victory Conditions

The player wins the game if they successfully collected all available items and returned to the bedroom.

## Difficulty

Different rooms will have different levels of difficulty.

- Some rooms will simply require navigation while avoiding monsters; some will be easier than others.



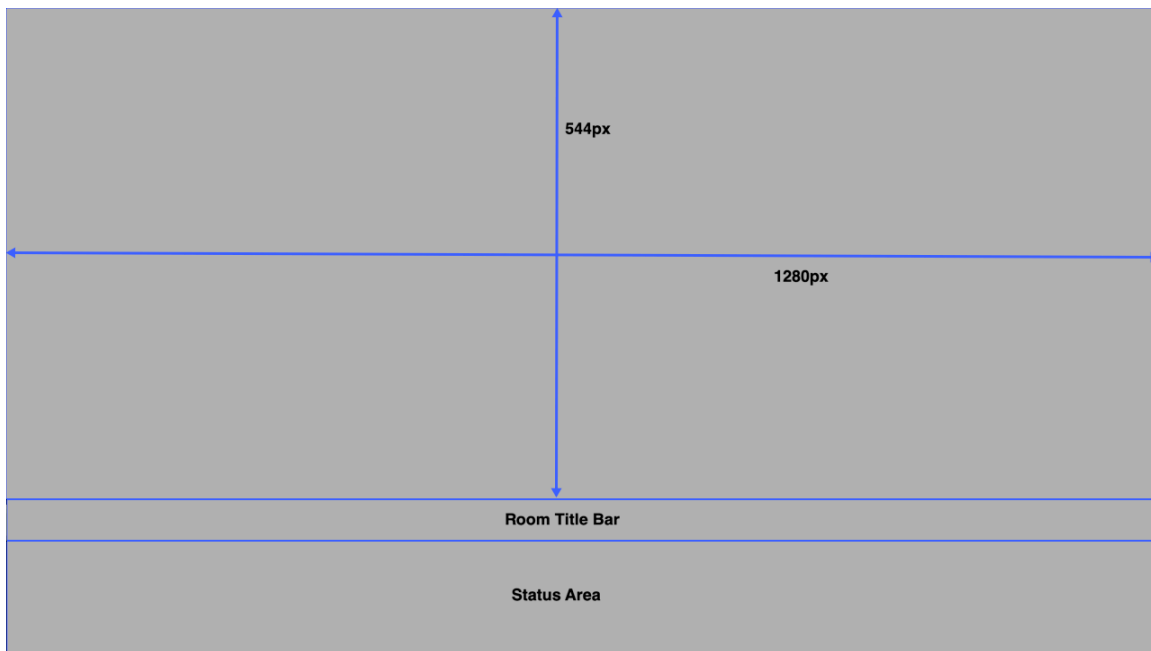
- Some rooms will require rearrangement of obstacles to obtain items, open doors or block monsters.
- Some rooms will enforce different mechanics (e.g. speeding up the monsters and/or player, or reversing the direction controls, playing with gravity etc.)

# The Game World

## Overview

Jet Set Willy had a 4:3 aspect ratio, however this is not practical if a future goal is to release this game for modern mobile devices. For that reason, the base game aspect ratio will be 16:9, with a default resolution of 1280x720.

In Jet Set Willy, the actual game play area occupies approximately 3/4 of the screen real estate, with the remaining 1/4 left for status updates. The Morning After will be similar proportioned. The game area will be 1280x544.



The base of the screen will be occupied by a bar, containing the title of the room (all rooms have unique titles, such as The Bathroom, The Bedroom, The Lawn, etc.), and a status area, containing details of lives left, items collected and the in-game time.

# The Physical World

## Rooms

Rooms (platforms and walls) will be built from 32x32px tiles. Passages should be at least 96px high, or at least 320px high if jumping is required.

Each room will have a unique, identifying title such as The Bedroom, The Bathroom, The Lawn etc. Generally speaking, the theme for each room should be related to the room title, and the design should reflect this.

## Characters

All characters should be represented by animated sprites which are no more than 96x96px in size. Animations should be simple and ideally require no more than 5 sprites.

There are two human characters:

- The Hero
- The Maid

There should be at least 10 different monster designs. These designs need not be recognisably animal-like; they can also look like common household objects. Their colour design should distinguish them from other decorative or collectable items.

## Decorative Items

Decorative items that represent common household furniture. They should be no more than 160x160px in size. Their colour design should distinguish them from monsters or collectable items.

## Collectable Items

Collectable items should be no more than 32x32px in size. They should all be yellow or gold in colour. Typically the items should reflect the theme of room in which they are found. They must each have a unique, identifying name, such as The Cutlery, The Towel, The Ring etc.

## Power-Ups

Power-ups are rare and should be easily distinguishable from other objects. Animation should make them rotate. They should be no more than 64x64px in size.

There are three power-ups available:

- Keys
- Extra Lives
- The Weapon

## The Weapon

The Weapon will require animation when it is fired. The animation should be large eye-catching and explosive. It will be accompanied by a satisfyingly crunchy sound effect.

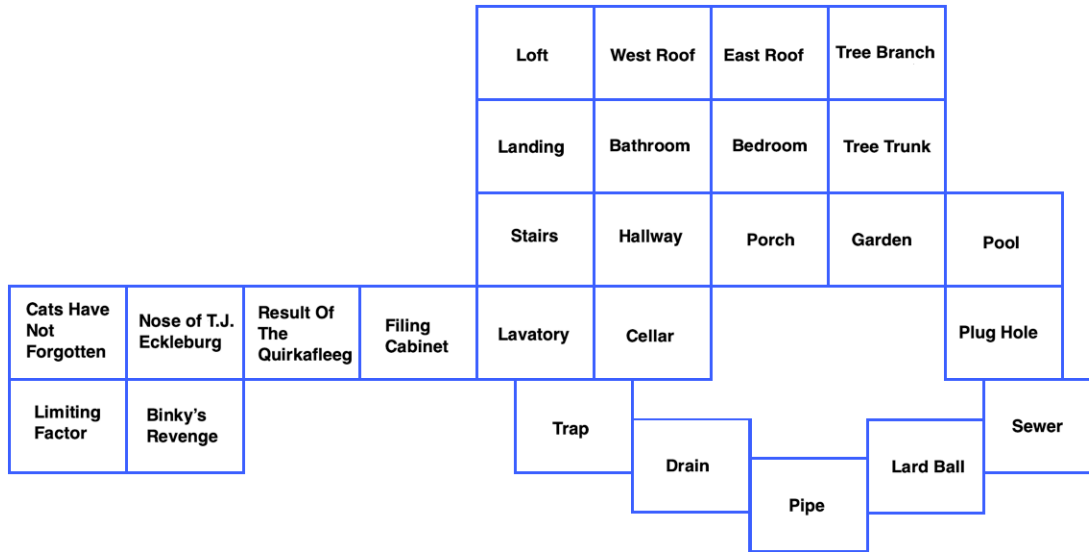
## Camera

The camera is fixed, with the action viewed side-on. An orthographic projection will be used. A secondary camera may be used to provide parallax effects for background images.

# The World Layout

## Overview

There are 27 rooms in the world. The basic layout is the following:



The player never sees this map.

## The Bathroom

This is the room where the player begins the game. The choice of this room is a direct homage to Jet Set Willy (which also starts in the bathroom). As in Jet Set Willy, the room contains a bath and a toilet, and a single creature.

The room contains examples of all the main mechanics of the game: jumping between platforms; traversing ramps; collecting items; avoiding creatures; movable obstacles; climbing ladders. The goal is to allow new users to get used to the mechanics in a low-low-risk environment.

The first time the room loads, the creature is stationary and blocks the entrance to The Landing. This forces the player to visit the bedroom first and gets instructions from The Maid.

The room has two doors:

- The Bedroom (which is signposted to make it the more obvious exit)
- The Landing.

The room contains three collectable items:

- The Sponge
- The Plunger
- The Shower Hat

The background music for this room is "In The Hall Of The Mountain King".

## The Bedroom

This room is another direct homage to Jet Set Willy. It contains a bed, the route to which is blocked by The Maid. Approaching The Maid produces a dialog that explains that the player must collect all of the items scattered around the house before they may go to bed.

Touching The Maid initially causes the player to bounce backwards, with a warning not to try that again. A subsequent attempt to touch The Maid will result in the loss of a life.

The player must return to this room to end the game.

There are two doors to this room:

- The Bathroom
- The East Roof. The door to The East Roof is only accessible via a ladder that is too high to jump to (the player can enter the roof from The East Roof but cannot exit that way)

The room does not contain any collectable items.

The background music for this room is "In The Hall Of The Mountain King".

## The Landing

The Landing is designed to be moderately easy room to traverse despite containing several creatures. Only one creature need be negotiated at a time.

There are three doors from this room:

- The Bathroom
- The Stairs
- The Loft

The room contains four collectable items:

- The Vase
- The Book
- The Light
- The Mirror

The background music for this room is "In The Hall Of The Mountain King".

## The Loft

The Loft is designed to be a reasonable challenge, since it contains multiple creatures, several of which must be negotiated in quick succession to obtain some of the goals.

There are two doors from this room:

- The Landing
- The West Roof (this door can only be reached by jumping to it)

The room contains two collectable items:

- The Box
- The Roof Key

The background music for this room is “In The Hall Of The Mountain King”.

## **The West Roof**

This room contains a test of the player’s dexterity, requiring them to carefully negotiate several creatures while climbing a representation of an aerial.

There are two doors from this room:

- The Loft
- The East Roof

The room contains two collectable items:

- The Signal Booster
- The Wall Brace

The background music for this room is “The Flight Of The Bumblebee”.

## **The East Roof**

This room is intended to be a simpler challenge, but does require the player to move at least one object to avoid a creature and obtain an item.

There are two doors from this room:

- The West Roof
- The Branch

The room contains one collectable item:

- The Spatula

The background music for this room is “The Flight Of The Bumblebee”.

## **The Tree Branch**

This room is designed to replicate the canopy of a tree. It is a moderate challenge, requiring the player to jump between platforms and avoid creatures.

There are two doors from this room:

- The East Roof
- The Tree House

The room contains four collectable items:

- The Nest
- The Acorn
- The Leaf
- The Kite

The background music for this room is “The Flight Of The Bumblebee”.

## **The Tree Trunk**

This room is designed to replicate the trunk of a tree. It is a moderate challenge, requiring the player to jump between platforms and avoid creatures.

There are two doors from this room:

- The Branch
- The Garden

The room contains three collectable items:

- The Bird
- The Mistletoe
- The Old Man's Beard

The background music for this room is "The Flight Of The Bumblebee".

## **The Garden**

Traversing this room contains a fairly simple challenge that requires the player to carefully time their actions to avoid creatures.

There are three doors from this room:

- The Tree Trunk
- The Pool
- The Porch

The room contains one collectable item:

- The Sprinkler

The background music for this room is "The Flight Of The Bumblebee".

## **The Pool**

This room is intended to be challenging, requiring both dexterity and timing to obtain the items in the room.

There are two doors from this room:

- The Garden
- The Plug Hole

The room contains two collectable items:

- The Rubber Ring
- The Front Door Key

The background music for this room is "The Flight Of The Bumblebee".

## **The Porch**

This room is a moderate challenge and requires both dexterity and timing to traverse it.

There are two doors from this room:

- The Garden
- The Hallway

The room contains one collectable item:

- The Boot Scraper

The background music for this room is “The Flight Of The Bumblebee”.

## **The Hallway**

This room requires several objects to be moved to obtain all of the items.

There are three doors from this room:

- The Porch
- The Stairs
- The Cellar

The room contains three collectable items:

- The Coat Hanger
- The Shoe Horn
- The Door Bell
- The Filing Cabinet Key

The background music for this room is “In The Hall Of The Mountain King”.

## **The Stairs**

This room is requires several objects to be moved with careful timing (to block a creatures movement).

There are two doors from this room:

- The Landing
- The Hallway

The room contains two collectable items:

- The Hat Box
- The Shoe Box

The background music for this room is “In The Hall Of The Mountain King”.

## **The Cellar**

TBD

There are two doors from this room:

- The Hallway
- The Lavatory (the door should be indicated with a sign saying “Beware of the Leopard”, in homage to The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy)

The room contains X collectable items:

- TBD

The background music for this room is “TBD” (ideally this would be “Journey of the Sorcerer”, by The Eagles, however we could never afford the license for this...).



## The Lavatory

This room is intended to be challenging. The prize for traversing the room is an extra life.

There are two doors from this room:

- The Cellar
- The Filing Cabinet

The room contains one power-up:

- Extra Life

The background music for this room is “TBD” (ideally this would be “Journey of the Sorcerer”, by The Eagles, however we could never afford the license for this...).

## The Filing Cabinet

This room is moderately challenging (requiring timing to avoid the creatures). The naming of this room is an homage to The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy.

The single item in this room can only be obtained after the player has obtained The Weapon (found beyond the portal).

There are two doors from this room:

- The Lavatory
- The Result of the Quirkafleeg

The room contains one collectable item:

- The Planning Permission

The background music for this room is “TBD” (ideally this would be “Journey of the Sorcerer”, by The Eagles, however we could never afford the license for this...).

## The Result of the Quirkafleeg

This room contains the trans-dimensional portal. The name derives from a room in Jet Set Willy, which itself got the word “Quirkafleeg” from a US comic, published in the 1970s (<http://www.russandem.co.uk/quirk/>).

The creatures in this room should move faster than those outside the portal. The player should move at normal speed.

There are two doors from this room:

- The Filing Cabinet
- The Nose Of T.J. Eckleburg

The room contains X collectable items:

- TBD

The background music for this room is “TBD”.

## **The Nose of T.J. Eckleburg**

This room derives its name from a symbolic billboard in The Great Gatsby.

Both the player and creatures in this room should move faster than outside the portal.

There are three doors from this room:

- The Result of the Quirkafleeg
- Binky's Revenge
- The Cats Have Not Forgotten

The room contains X collectable items:

- TBD

The background music for this room is "TBD".

## **The Cats Have Not Forgotten**

This room derives its name from a quote attributed to the author Terry Pratchett: "In ancient times cats were worshipped as gods; they have not forgotten this".

The player controls should be reversed in this room.

There are two doors from this room:

- The Nose Of T.J. Eckleburg
- The Limiting Factor

The room contains X collectable items:

- TBD

The background music for this room is "TBD".

## **The Limiting Factor**

This room derives its name from a spacecraft found in the book "The Player of Games", by Iain M. Banks.

Gravity should be reversed in this room and the player controls should be reversed in this room. The room should also contain a puzzle. The prize for completing the puzzle is a weapon.

There are two doors from this room:

- The Cats Have Not Forgotten
- Binky's Revenge

The room contains X collectable items:

- TBD

The room contains one power-up:

- The Weapon

The background music for this room is "TBD".

## Binky's Revenge

This room derives its name from the name of Death's horse in the Discworld series of books, by Terry Pratchett.

Gravity should be reversed in this room.

There are two doors from this room:

- The Limiting Factor
- The Nose Of T.J. Eckleburg

The room contains X collectable items:

- TBD

The background music for this room is "TBD".

## The Trap

This room requires the player to move several objects to block creatures, traverse the room and collect an item.

There are two doors from this room:

- The Toilet
- The Drain

The room contains one collectable item:

- TheEngagmentRing

The background music for this room is "TBD".

## The Drain

TBD

There are two doors from this room:

- The Trap
- The Pipe

The room contains X collectable items:

- TBD

The background music for this room is "TBD".

## The Pipe

TBD

There are two doors from this room:

- The Drain
- The Lard Ball

The room contains X collectable items:

- TBD

The background music for this room is “TBD”.

## **The Lard Ball**

TBD

There are two doors from this room:

- The Pipe
- The Sewer

The room contains X collectable items:

- TBD

The background music for this room is “TBD”.

## **The Sewer**

TBD

There are two doors from this room:

- The Lard Ball
- The Plug Hole

The room contains X collectable items:

- TBD

The background music for this room is “TBD”.

## **The Plug Hole**

This rooms requires the player to time their actions to avoid the creatures and traverse the room.

There are two doors from this room:

- The Sewer
- The Pool

The room contains two collectable items:

- The Wedding Ring
- The Goggles

The background music for this room is “TBD”.

# Game Characters

## Overview

Other than the creatures, there are two characters in this game: the hero and the maid. Of these, only the player is controllable.

## The Hero

The hero should be an everyman type character. Do we want to make gender of the hero choosable?

## The Maid

The Maid only appears in The Bedroom. She should be imposing; a force to be reckoned with.

## The Creatures

Some thoughts on creature designs:

- Water Based (for The Pool)
- Blobby (for The Sewer)
- Cat-like (for The Cats Have Not Forgotten)
- Horse-like (for Binky's Revenge)
- Nose-like (for The Nose of T.J. Eckleburg)
- Bird-like (for garden/tree/roof areas)
- Monster-like (for house areas)

# Musical Scores and Sound Effects

## Overview

All audio will be in an “8-bit” (chiptune) style. This includes all sound effects and all background music.

## Sound Effects

The following actions require sound effects:

- Jumping
- Picking up an collectable item
- Picking up a power-up
- Moving an obstacle
- Dying from touching a monster
- Dying from falling
- Firing the weapon (both the act of firing and the resulting destruction)

## Background Music

Each room requires a background music track, although rooms can share the same track. For copyright reasons, well-known classical tracks are preferred, although bespoke music is acceptable. Bespoke music should try to capture the theme of the current room(s).

The music for the bathroom, bedroom and landing should be Grieg’s “In The Hall of the Mountain King”.

The music for the garden areas should be Rimsky-Korsakov’s “Flight of the Bumblebee”.

In addition to room music, the following tracks are also required:

- For the main menu screen: Beethoven’s “Piano Sonata No. 14 Moonlight” (Third Movement)
- For the completion screen: Brahms’s “Lullaby”
- For the death screen: Chopin’s “Funeral March”

All music must be licensed for use in a commercial game.