

STELLA'S JOURNEY



BY FT_SKYPOT:

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our project: Stella's Journey!

We are ft_skypot team and we are working on NASA International Space Apps Challenge: "Eclipse Perspective is everything".

The final product we would like to create is a graphic adventure video game that can easily explain what eclipses are, how they happen, what are the variables that participate and much more.

In our videogame Stella's Journey, you play as Stella, an old woman cooking in her lovely kitchen. She is cutting the potatoes, filling the pot with water, and putting the ingredients inside the pot. As she always does to prepare some food for her partner Aurora. But, what is happening? The sky is moving? Is it related to how she is stirring the pot with the spoon? Come with us and join us on Stella's Journey to discover the impact we can make all around the universe. Will you be able to produce an eclipse to make a perfect soup?

Use your curiosity, experiment all over our kitchen and you will find out!

GOALS AND APPROACH

Stella's Journey is a pixel art adventure graphic video game, our intention with this product is to encourage curiosity and experimentation. We are not going to explain to you what an eclipse is. You will discover it by yourself playing with all the elements available in Stella's kitchen. Interacting with the elements the players soon will find out that what they do in the mysterious kitchen has an impact on the sky they see through their window.

The video game has no tutorial, and not that much dialogue. It is up to you to interact with your environment and infer what you can change in your kitchen and how it affects the sky.

We are focusing on this approach because ft_skypot team believes in the huge power of curiosity as the best way to create knowledge and learn. Science is moved by this incredible human capacity, it is the tool we have to use in order to build a better future. We want to tease our players in order to become discoverers.

You will have the freedom to explore Stella and Aurora's kitchen, it will be your playground but also your lab and your astronomical observatory. It will be up to you what you discover, when or even if you do it. We want to encourage our players to interact with the game only as much as they want and as far as their curiosity drives them.

We believe this is the best way to play but also the best way to learn. Why don't we join both concepts in a videogame and let the players do their own? We have faith that they will be motivated to investigate every corner of our kitchen. Maybe they will find every of our secrets and in-game achievements or even they will prepare the best soup ever.

The target group for this videogame could be every person after 8 years old. The only requirement is curiosity. And if you are getting stuck and you don't know what to do maybe you can ask Stella's partner, Aurora. She used to work as an astronaut and she may give you some tips.

LORE AND CHARACTER DESCRIPTION



Our main character is Stella and the players will take their role. She is an old woman and she lives in a cozy house in the countryside. She is very curious and she is addressing every day as a new adventure. Stella is very calm and full of tenacity. Even when she is 80 years old! This shows us that no matter how old you are as long as you have a good attitude.

Stella used to work for a restaurant when she was young. She loved to make their clients happy with their famous soups and stews. "You can find the best of the universe inside a pot", she always says.

This recurring affirmation of her made Aurora laugh the first time they met in the restaurant. It was dark outside, an eclipse in the sky, a sign of two worlds colliding. Aurora came here because Stella's meals were a legend all over their country and she needed good and real food after staying for so long on the International Space Station. She always felt hungry after a mission and Stella's restaurant looked like a good option.

They met that day and Aurora loved how curious Stella was. First she started asking about the eclipse happening outside. She always had the belief that under the influence of an eclipse, her soup reaches perfection. Aurora thought that she was being superstitious and kindly explained to her how eclipses work but was not enough for Stella's hunger for knowledge. Soon she couldn't stop asking questions about stars and space, including some that Aurora couldn't answer. "Yet" Stella said, "maybe we will find out together in the future". So after some dates they moved together and they are living happily together until now.

Nowadays they are both retired but they keep enjoying their lives on the fields. Aurora is always sitting on the couch commenting on the newspapers while Stella is cooking in their kitchen, looking through the window wandering about stars and expecting a new eclipse to happen so they could celebrate the day they met, the day they fell in love.

INFLUENCES

As Newton said, if we have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants. So we would like to highlight the incredible videogames that inspired us to create Stella's Journey.

From old graphic adventures like Monkey Island or The day of the tentacle we take the freedom to interact freely with your environment and the trial and error system of exploration. From videogames like Outer Wilds and Don't push that button we take the no tutorial policy and the emphasis on experimentation with the same few elements.

Finally, as we all met under 42 Málaga umbrella, we were inspired by learning gamification and curiosity encouraging. This method worked for us and we expect it to work for our players.

GAME MECHANICS

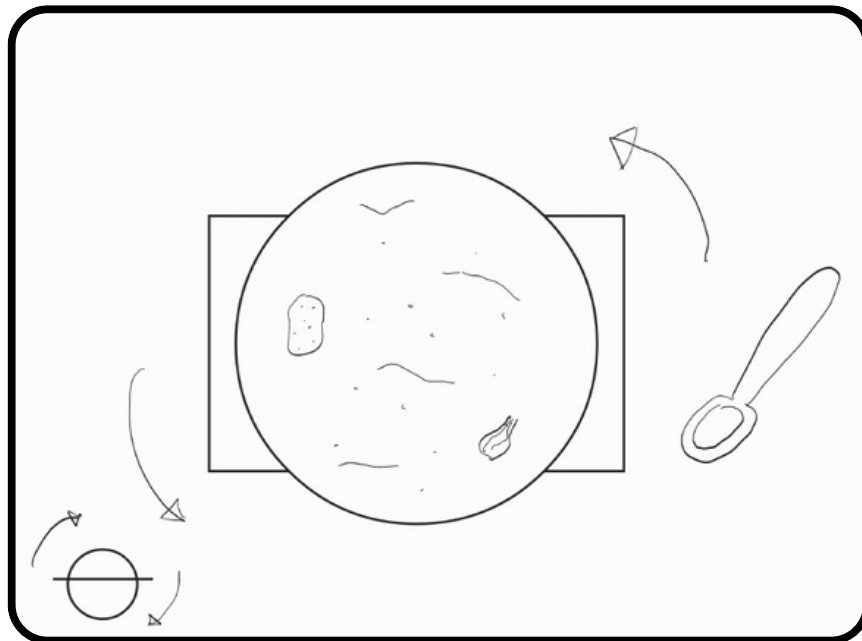


Stella's journey is a point and click graphic adventure. The game may look simple but you will need some time to figure out how to progress in the video game and how to figure out what elements in the kitchen are related to their counterpart in the cosmos.

The game consists of four main frames showing different areas of Stella's kitchen from first person perspective. These frames will be made on pixel art and a cozy aesthetic and you can change from one to another freely. They may look static at the beginning but as soon as you start interacting with the plenty of objects you can click on you will find out what kind of things you can do. This is the main mechanic of the game.

Here we show you a sketch of the four frames, the elements inside those frames, how you can interact with them and the events they trigger:

➡ Stove frame:

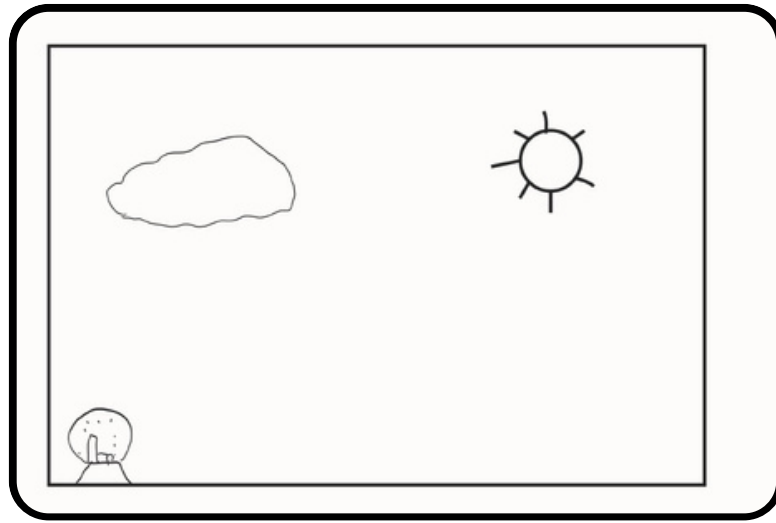


This will work as the main frame. The other three frames (window, left and right corners of the kitchen) will be accessible from here clicking on up, left and right edges of the scene.

This frame will show the following objects:

- The pot: as the main object in this game there will be different ways to interact with it. It will work as a sort of control panel of the cosmos including the earth, the moon, the stars etc.
- Handrips: interacting with the handrips will make you able to turn the pot and this will cause changes on the rotation of the earth.
- Soup/stew: stirring the stew will move the earth and the moon through their orbits depending on what spoon you use (one for the earth and another one for the moon).
- The spoon: this will allow us to try the soup we are cooking. If we could set everything to cause an eclipse the food will be delicious and if not it will be disgusting.
- The fire wheel button: interacting with this you can change the angle of the orbits. They must be rightfully positioned to cause an eclipse.

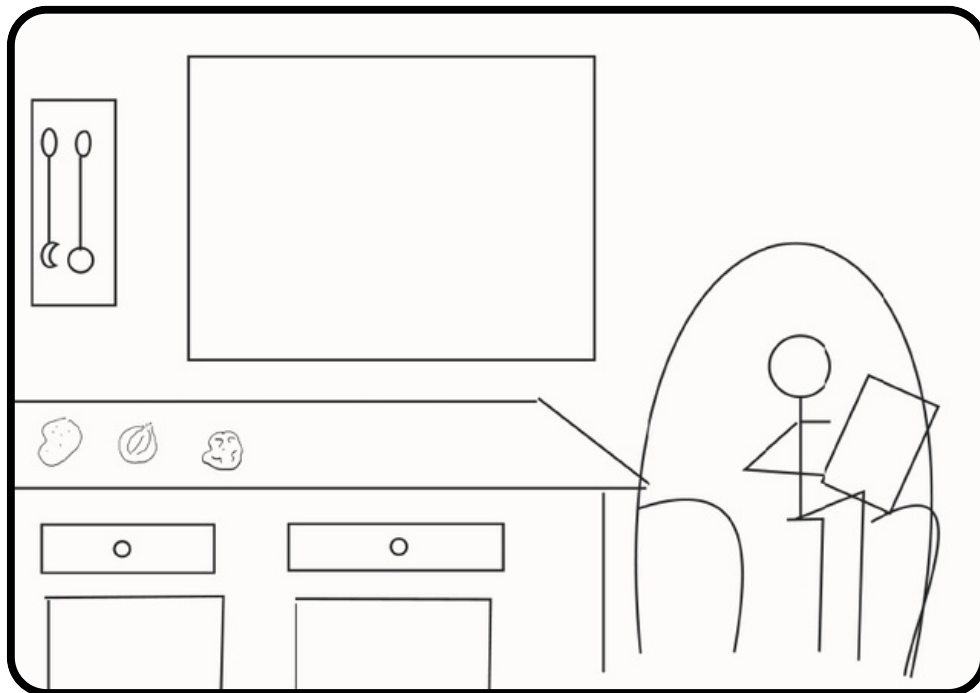
➡ Window frame:



This frame will work as an observatory. Every change we make on the pot will directly affect what we see in the sky through the window. This way the player will be able to infer the effects and the relationships between the different elements in the kitchen and their position on the pot with the elements in the sky.

There will also be a snowball. If we shake it our location on the earth will change from three different available places (USA, Spain and Australia). This will allow the player to learn why you only can see the eclipses from specific regions of the globe.

➡ Right corner frame:



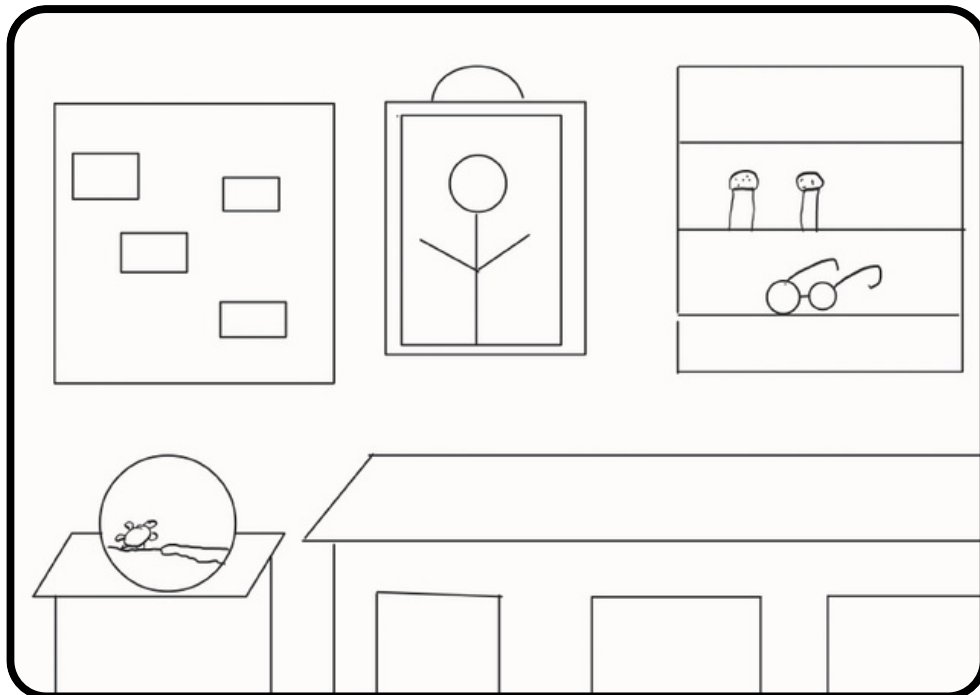
In this frame we will see the rest of the kitchen worktop. Here we will find different ingredients hidden in different drawers:

- Potatoes: they will represent the sun.
- Scallion onion: they will represent the moon
- Meatballs: they will represent the earth.

As you add the ingredients to the pot you will be able to modify their position or their orbits in the sky.

- Two wooden spoons: depending on what spoon you interact with you can move the earth or moon's position in their orbits when you use them on the pot.
- Window: This will help the player identify where they are, what happens outside and get information about the sky.
- Aurora: She will be sitting on a coach reading the newspaper and providing tips or information about the game. They will be subtle enough to anchor the player to experiment, she will never provide direct answers.

◆ Left corner frame:



There will be many objects you can interact with:

- A recipe book: This book will record the different achievements the player achieves and some further information about the cosmic events they get to cause playing in the kitchen once they are unlocked.
- Radio: it will provide some information about the effects of Stella's playthrough and the environment.
- Salt and other spices: if you add them to the soup you will be adding stars and other cosmic objects to the sky.
- Sunglasses: you will have to wear sunglasses to protect your eyes during an eclipse. If you cause an eclipse and you are not wearing sunglasses you will get your eyes damaged.
- Fishbowl: the water will be up or down depending on the moon's position and the tides so the player can infer the relationship between them.
- Mirror: it will allow us to see how Stella looks and maybe change their hair color or hairstyle.
- Photo panel: interacting with the pictures we get tips of Stella and Aurora's background and lore. It will be the way to emotionally connect with our characters. Different pictures will be unlocked with different actions and achievements in-game.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND REWARDS

Through our game process we will come out with different outcomes that will be registered in the recipe book. This will encourage the player to try everything to discover every secret achievement available that will work as rewards for their investigation. These are the main achievements:

- ◆ Lunar Eclipse: it will be unlocked when the player has caused a lunar eclipse. As it depends on our position on the globe, using the snowball we can access to different locations there will be one achievement for each location (Australia, USA, Spain).



- ◆ Solar Eclipse: it will be unlocked when the player has caused a solar eclipse. As with the lunar eclipse there will be three different achievements depending on the location.



- ◆ Lack of sun: this will be unlocked if you remove the potato (the sun) from the pot. It will also trigger an event where the crops die and you cause the destruction of the earth.



- ◆ Lunatic game: this will be unlocked if you change the position of the scallion onion (the moon) too roughly. It will trigger an event where the tides come up and destroy the coastal cities.



- ◆ Damaged eyes: This will be unlocked if you cause an eclipse and you are not wearing sunglasses. If this happens you will not unlock the eclipses events.



- ◆ Disgusting soup: this will be unlocked if you try the soup without an eclipse happening.



🍲 Delicious soup: this will be unlocked if you try the soup during a eclipse



Much more events and achievements in-game will be added during the later game developing process as we add more elements and objects to interact that can drive to different outcomes.

FUTURE IDEAS

As Stella's Journey's approach is coming from simple to more complicated mechanics and ways of interaction this could allow us to extend the game as much as we want.

We are now focusing on eclipses our solar system but It will be amazing to work further. We could extend our cosmos manipulation to different regions of the milky way or even from different galaxies, adding different areas of Stella's house or more tools and ingredients commonly used in the kitchen. This opens the door to use the game to teach about very different and interesting happenings through our universe. Black holes, binary star systems, asteroids and much more.

The sky and the imagination is the limit!

SUPLETORY DOCUMENTS AND FILES

In order to support our project and for you to get a better understanding of our ideas we will provide you with some supletory files:

- IA generated concept art you can check in order to understand the general aesthetic of the game.
- Scratch executable example of the main mechanic of our game.
- Presentation we used for our pitch.