

## Bare the King

*Trapped in your own mind, you must break free using the chess pieces of your very psyche.*

# **STS 350 - Understanding Video Games**

## **Design Document**

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**Setting:**

A strange chessboard, in the final stages of a game. The board is surrounded by darkness that will destroy the player if they step into it. The chess pieces on the board represent aspects of the player's life from before they arrived, with the white pieces fighting to save the player's psyche from destruction at the hands of the black pieces.

**Challenges:**

- Careful where you step: certain squares are threatened by the enemy pieces. Either find a way around, or find a way to destroy them.
- Beware the darkness: if you step into the darkness, you will fall into the darkness of your own mind forever.
- Save the chess pieces: they are your allies, save them to push back against the enemy forces and bring light back to your own mind.
- Collect the fragments of your mind: after defeating an enemy piece, you can collect pieces of happy memories that will enable you to escape

## Characters:

### Protagonist:

- The player character wakes up in a strange twilight realm dominated by the chess board they find themselves standing on at the beginning of the game, with no knowledge of who they are or how they got there.
- As they meet chess pieces on their side, they experience flashbacks to the real world, giving clues to how they wound up trapped on the chessboard.
- After helping the chess pieces defeat an enemy piece, the enemy pieces will drop pieces of the player's life, which the player can pick up to trigger a positive flashback that counters the earlier negative flashbacks.

### Chess pieces:

#### The Knight:

- Having lost his noble steed, you must return it for him to carry on in the battle.

#### The Bishop:

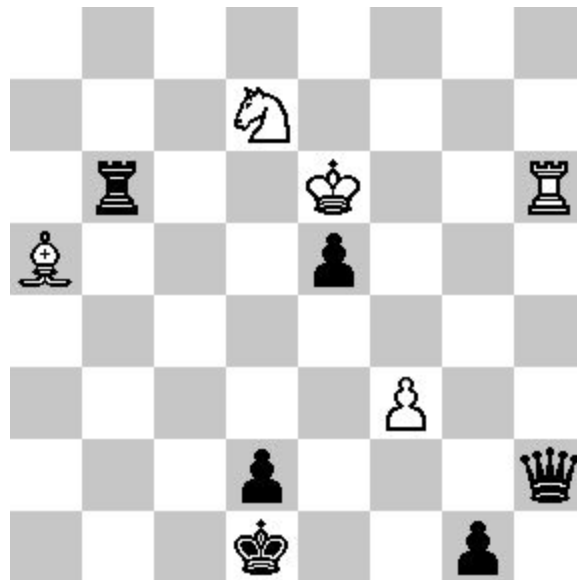
- Sensing the end of the game, the Bishop no longer wishes to fight, thinking the battle is hopeless. You must bring him a token to show that there is still something worth fighting for.

#### The Rook:

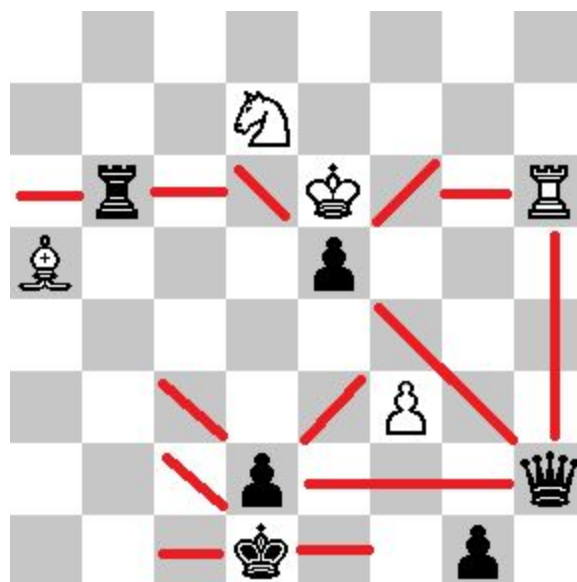
- Broken and crumbled, the Rook is missing several bricks that you must locate to rebuild its structure.

#### The Pawn:

- The Queen has fallen. Only one Pawn remains to take up her robes and abilities. The Pawn must be supported in its endeavour to reach the end and "queen" itself.



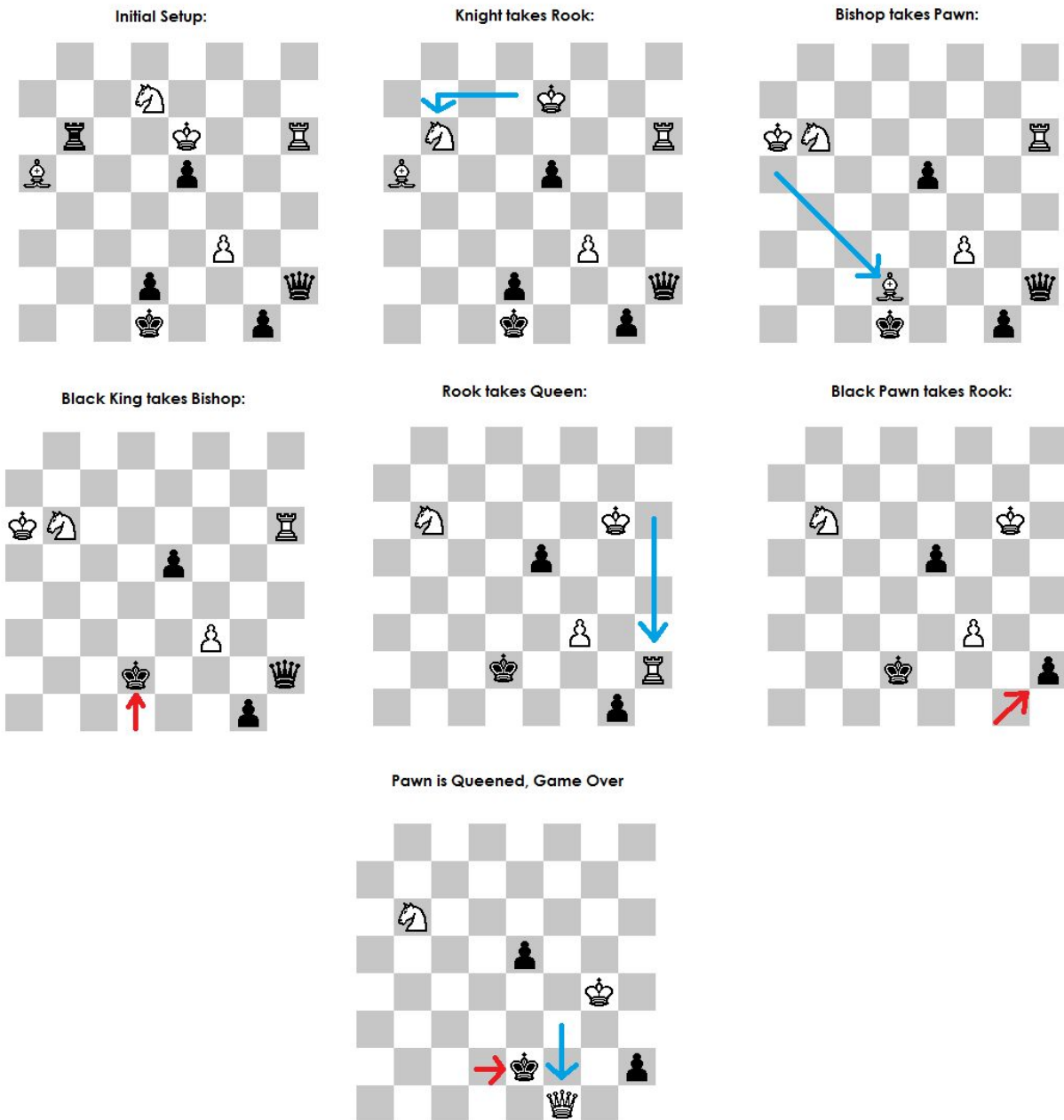
Initial setup of the chessboard



Initial threatened squares

## Progression:

Each chess piece, once aided by the player, will eliminate one enemy chess piece. Once the Knight, the Bishop, and the Rook have been aided, the Pawn is free to advance to the final rank and “queen” itself, checkmating the enemy King. The player’s allies will also help to complete the other pieces' challenges.



A step by step progression of moves from the beginning to the end(s). Blue arrows indicate friendly piece movement, red arrows are enemy piece movement.

### **The Rook:**

The Rook has been damaged and is unable to continue fighting. His bricks are scattered around the board to encourage the player to explore, but in places that aren't necessarily accessible immediately. There are two bricks on the board in positions that are initially threatened; they can be collected after the player helps the Knight and the Bishop. The Bishop also holds one of the bricks, and will give it to the player once they helped him. After the Rook is completed, he eliminates the last piece threatening the Pawn's move.

### **The Knight:**

The Knight has lost his horse in the darkness surrounding the chessboard. He is the only chess piece that the player can both reach and assist at the beginning of the game. To lure the horse back, the player must collect grass that is growing around the base of the Rook and take it to the edge of the board. The horse will smell the grass and find its way out of the darkness to get back to the Knight. After the retrieval of his steed, the Knight gives the player a token of gratitude, in the form of a handkerchief. He then eliminates an enemy piece that is preventing the player from getting to the Bishop.

### **The Bishop:**

The Bishop has lost hope, and refuses to continue fighting. The player must convince him to continue the battle, and can do so by presenting him with the Knight's token. The Bishop then realizes that the other pieces haven't given up hope yet, and that he must continue even if all hope seems lost. He then gives the player a brick to fix the Rook with, explaining that he thought if he sabotaged the Rook, the game would end more quickly. He then eliminates a pawn and draws the enemy King out of hiding.

### **The Pawn:**

After all the other chess pieces have been helped, the Pawn is safe to approach. The player must encourage the Pawn to continue advancing, as it is the only thing they can do other than wait for death. The Pawn moves to the end of the board and becomes a Queen, checkmating the enemy King.

After the Pawn "queens" itself and ends the chess game, the player receives one of two endings.

## **The Ends:**

There are two endings, based on if the player collected the good memories dropped by the black pieces after they were defeated.

### **“Good” Ending:**

- The player, thanks to flashbacks from good memories, realizes that hiding in their own mind isn't how they're going to get better. They realize that they were the King all along, and wakes up from the coma in which they have been trapped.

### **“Bad” Ending:**

- The player, having been bombarded with more negative thoughts than positive ones from the chess pieces, chooses to stay on the chessboard once the game is over, hiding in their own mind from the pain of their life.



## **Game Engine:**

We will be using the Quest engine for our game. The ability to create custom scripts is a huge draw for us. Quest has a sophisticated enough engine that we can implement all the mechanics we desire, while still being a user friendly experience for those creating it.

Due to the precise nature of movement in our game, we find that the ability for Quest to update a map of rooms the player explored to be a large draw. The player must be aware of which opposing players can destroy them if they chose to move a space; with the help of a map, they have a better chance of surviving their choice. By having a continually generated map feature, we can minimize undue frustration and provide an optimal gameplay experience for the player.