

Game Design Document



Game Details

“The Lost Thread”

Genre

Eerie 3D adventure & exploration game with escape room puzzles and progressive narrative elements.

Art Direction

- Hazardous industrial environment
- Atmospheric particle elements, interactable object glow
- Junkyard/warehouse map

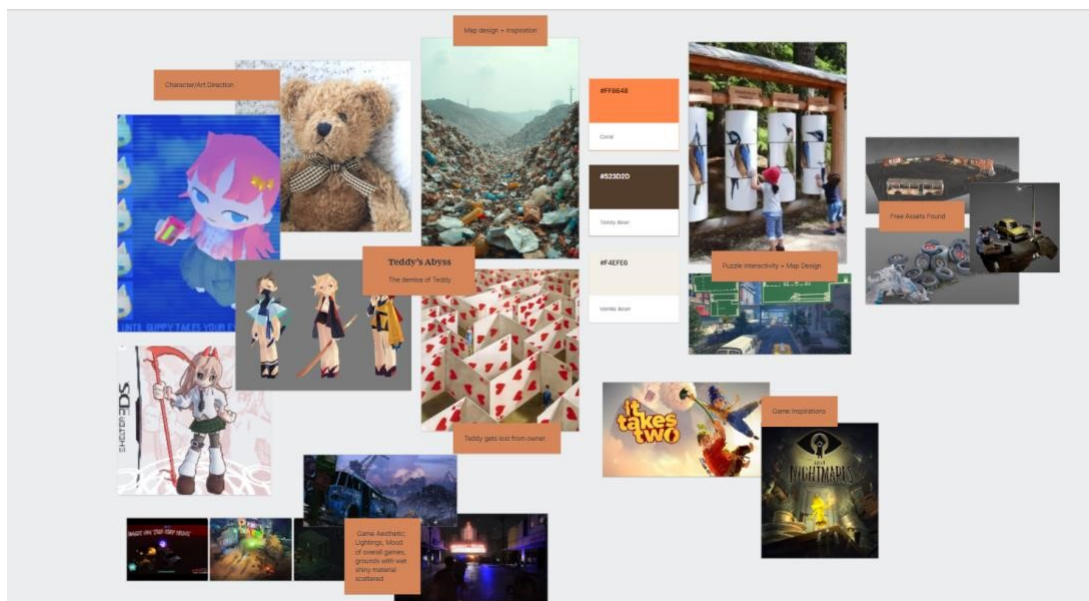
Core Premise

A teddy bear wakes up and finds itself trapped in a junk yard. To escape it and return to their human, it must navigate through the junkyard, solving logical environmental puzzles and collect pieces of code scattered throughout the journey to progress and escape, all while avoiding dangers such falling into sewage or barrels of toxic liquid material.

If/Else: The player’s interactions will determine *if* the protagonist can escape the junkyard.

Mood Board

Moodboard



<https://app.milanote.com/1ViNdm1yJVpH1k?p=VMgEg86dOkK>

Gameplay

The game itself starts with you, the toy, being lost and ending up in a junkyard. Through a series of puzzles, the player must figure out how to escape this junkyard and find their way back to their owner by navigating through it and unlocking the path by exploration and solving environmental puzzles. In every puzzle, the player will find a sticky note with a part of the code they will ultimately need to escape the junkyard.

Puzzle 1

As the player ventures around the map, they encounter an electromagnetic crane, a window to the security office and a sewage river, which cannot be crossed or jumped over without the player dying and respawning at the last checkpoint. The player must find a screwdriver, use it to open a vent and through it to the security office. There will be a control board for the electromagnetic crane, which they must manipulate to forge a path over the pit, and a sticky note near the panel with a code to collect/interact with. The player must use the magnet controls to build a bridge over the sewage, which they can then cross and explore the next area of the map.

Puzzle 2

After the player crosses sewage, they find a puzzle that consists of an array of plug sockets on a wall and scattered wires with plugs near it, hooked up to big fan. There is a sticky note above them. The player must plug all the wires into the right sockets which will activate the fan. Another sticky note is be found near the fan. The player can then use the wind of the fan as a boost to jump up to a scaffold platform. There, they must cross it, jumping over gaps- with bubbling barrels of toxic material below causing death and respawning if fallen into. At the end of the scaffold platform the player finds a note to collect.

Puzzle 3

Puzzle 3 consists of accessing a keypad back in the security room and inputting the code that the four sticky notes collectively make up. This ends the game and prompts credits.

Target Experience

The targeted experience is the player feeling curious, vigilant, and slightly uneasy. Clues to its survival are hidden throughout the environment, encouraging exploration and discovery. The game rewards logic and observation over speed, while occasional fast-paced chase sequences heighten tension and create a dynamic, engaging experience.

Target audience: Indie game fans, players aged 15-35, narrative enthusiasts, players who enjoy escape rooms and video games

Emotional goals: We aim to evoke tension and curiosity through challenging puzzles, adrenaline during chase sequences, and a sense of discovery and satisfaction as players uncover clues and progress toward escape.

Tone: The tone blends mystery and whimsy with an overall eerie, fever-dream atmosphere.

Pacing and intensity: The gameplay alternates between slow, observant puzzle-solving and high-intensity chase sequences that break the rhythm and heighten tension.

Gameplay Flow

Game Loop

Core Loop:

Explore > Interact with Elements > Find & Solve Puzzle > Unlock Path/Retry Puzzle > Progress/Go back to last checkpoint if health reaches 0

- Player explores the available map
- They find a puzzle with an interactive element
- If they complete the puzzle, a new area will be available to player, and with it collectible notes
- If the player's health reaches 0, the player will respawn at the last checkpoint.

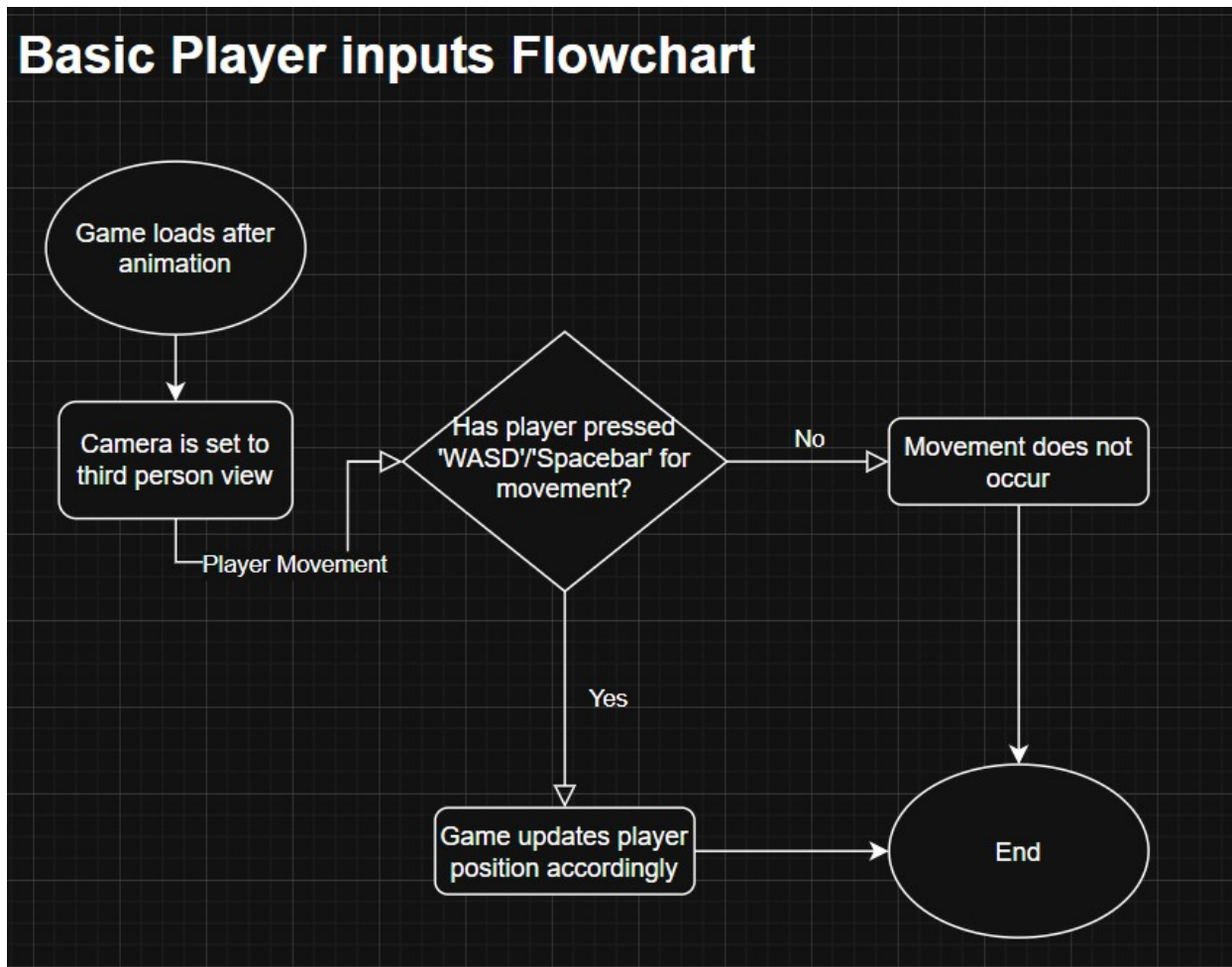
Achieving Code Loop:

Player Completes Mission > Part of a Code is Shown > Code is Stored in Player Inventory > New Puzzle is Unlocked

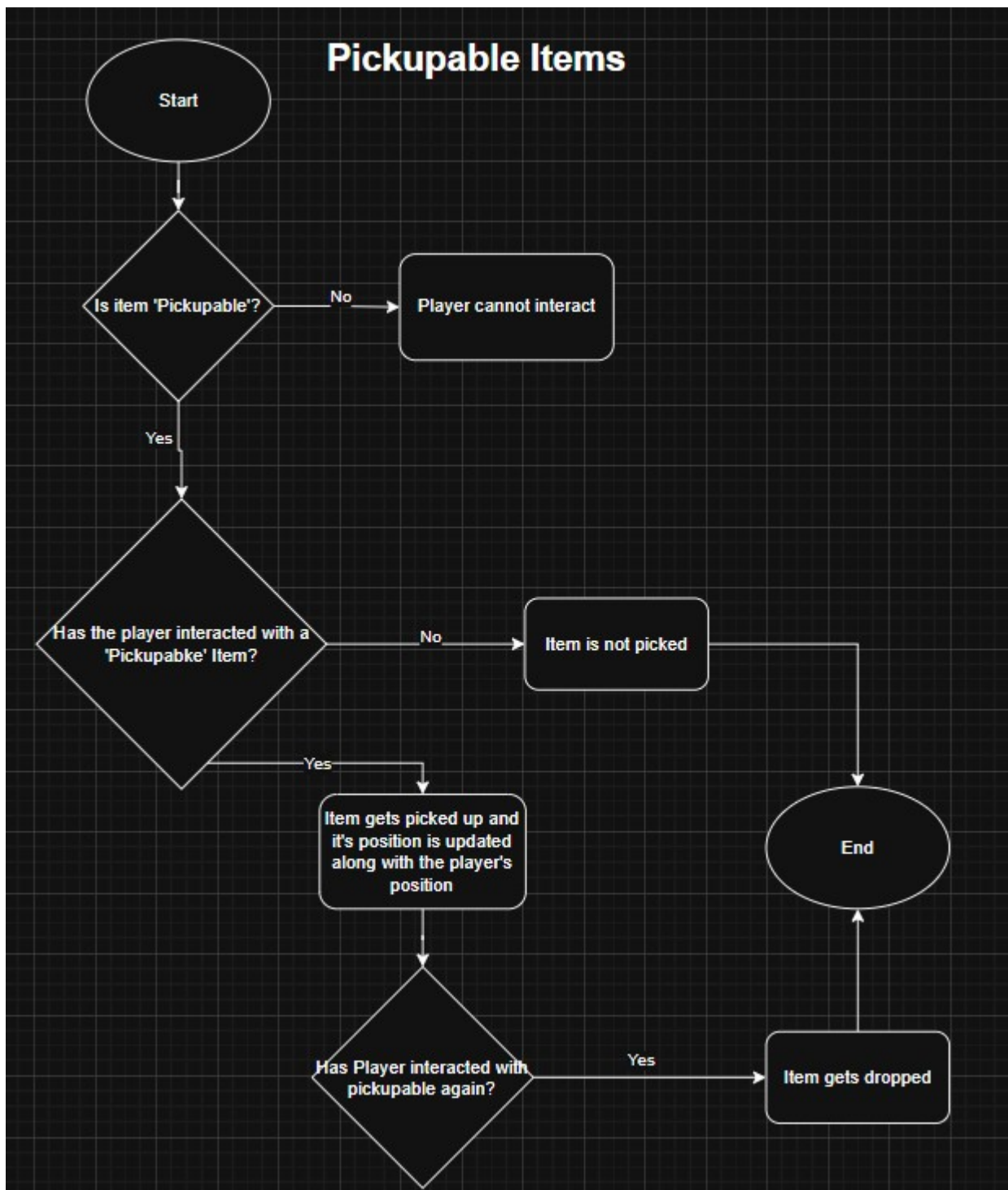
- Has the player successfully completed the mission?
- If yes, a new area unlocks, where a code can be picked up
- Code is shown in player screen
- When all puzzles are completed, the player will have had all the sticky notes made available for collection
- When all sticky notes are collected, the player is ready for the final puzzle to finish the game

Flowcharts

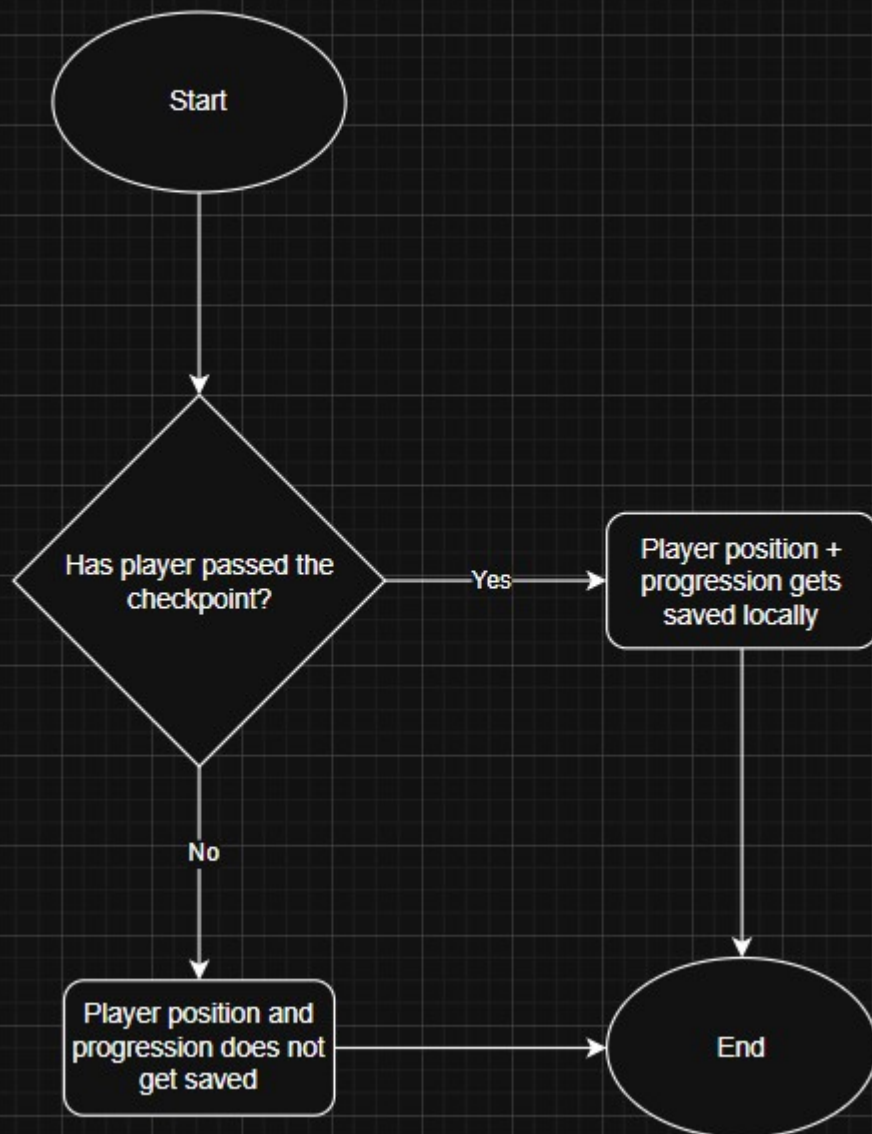
Basic Player Inputs



Pickupable Items

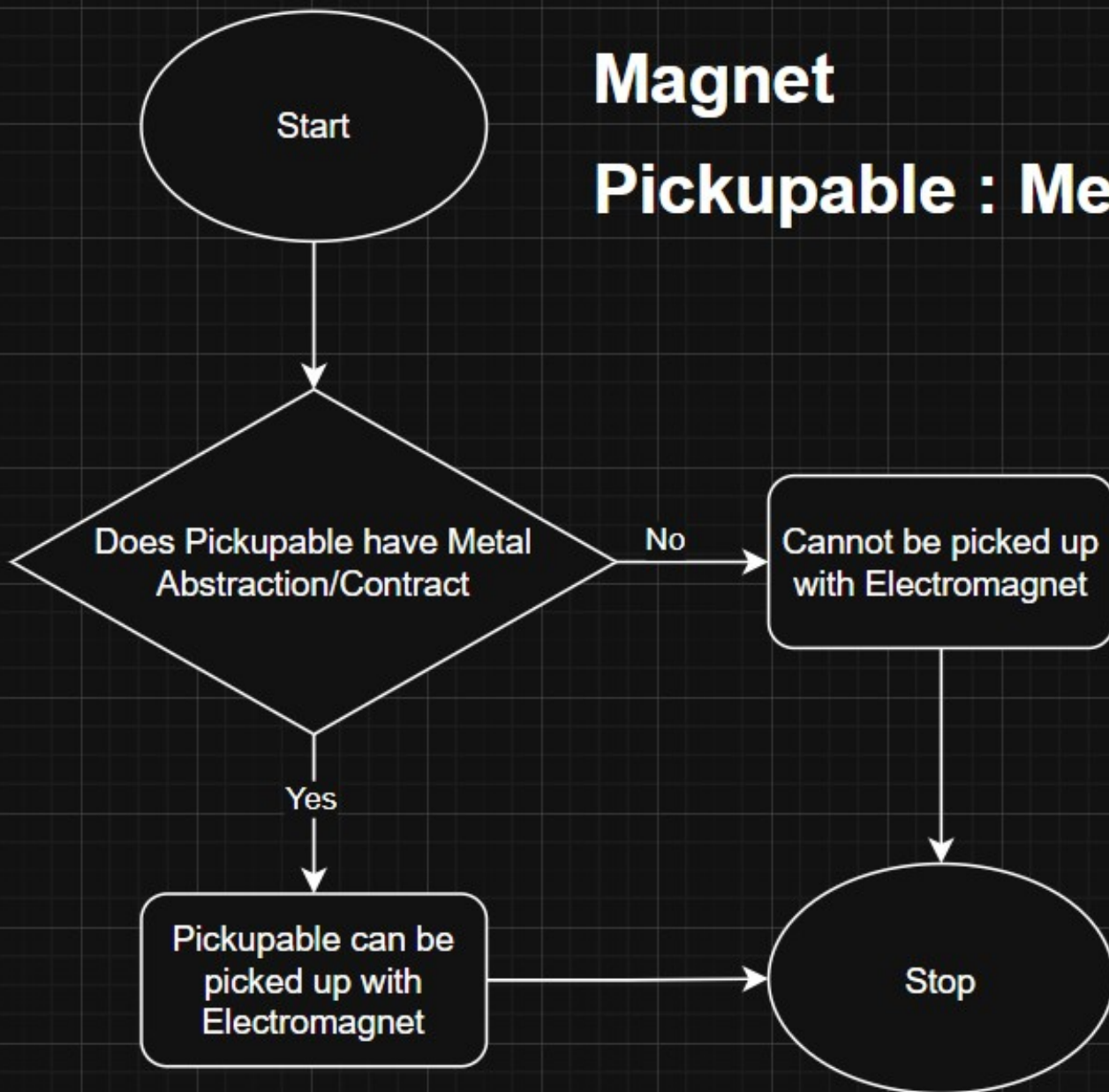


Checkpoint Mechanic



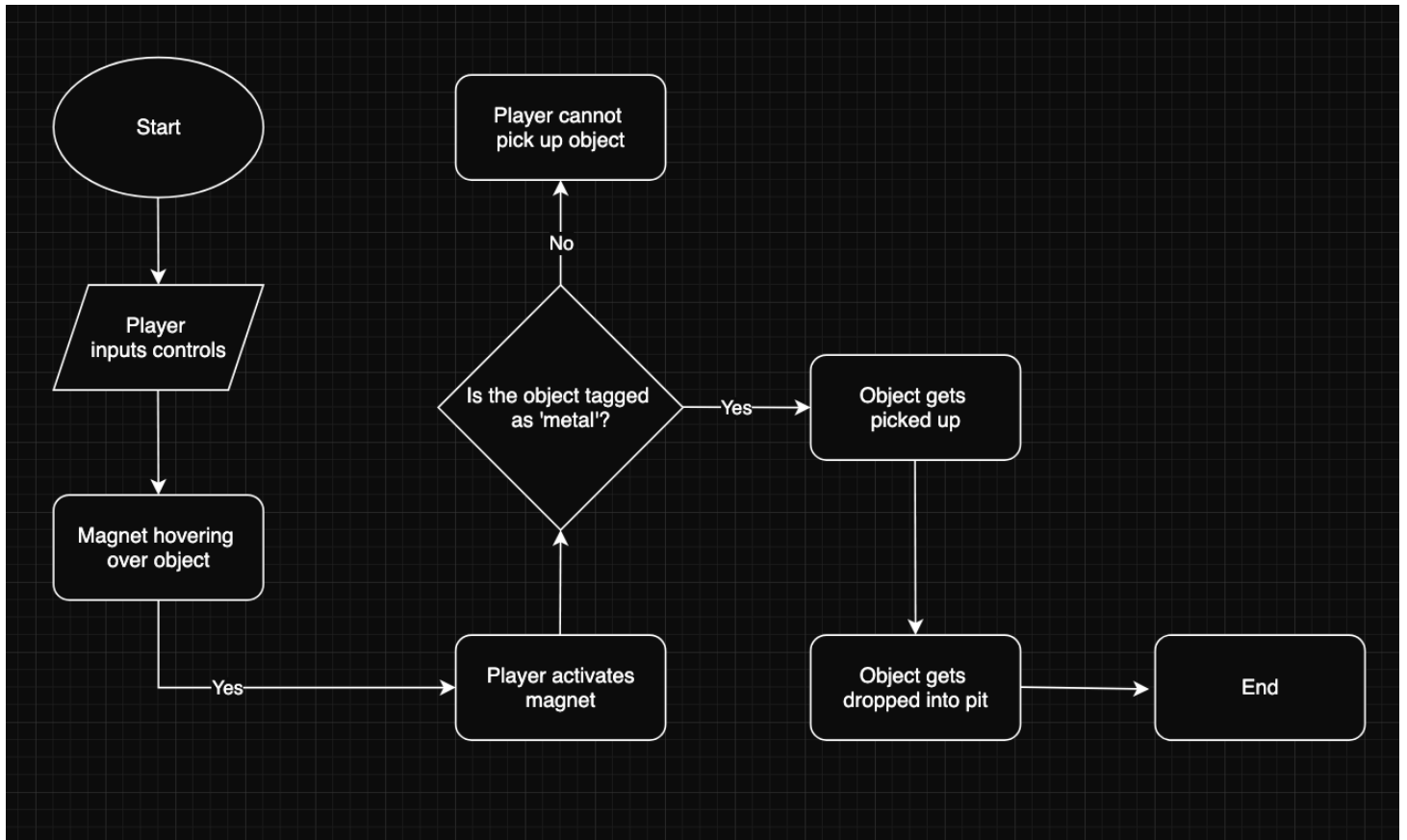
Magnet

Pickupable : Metal

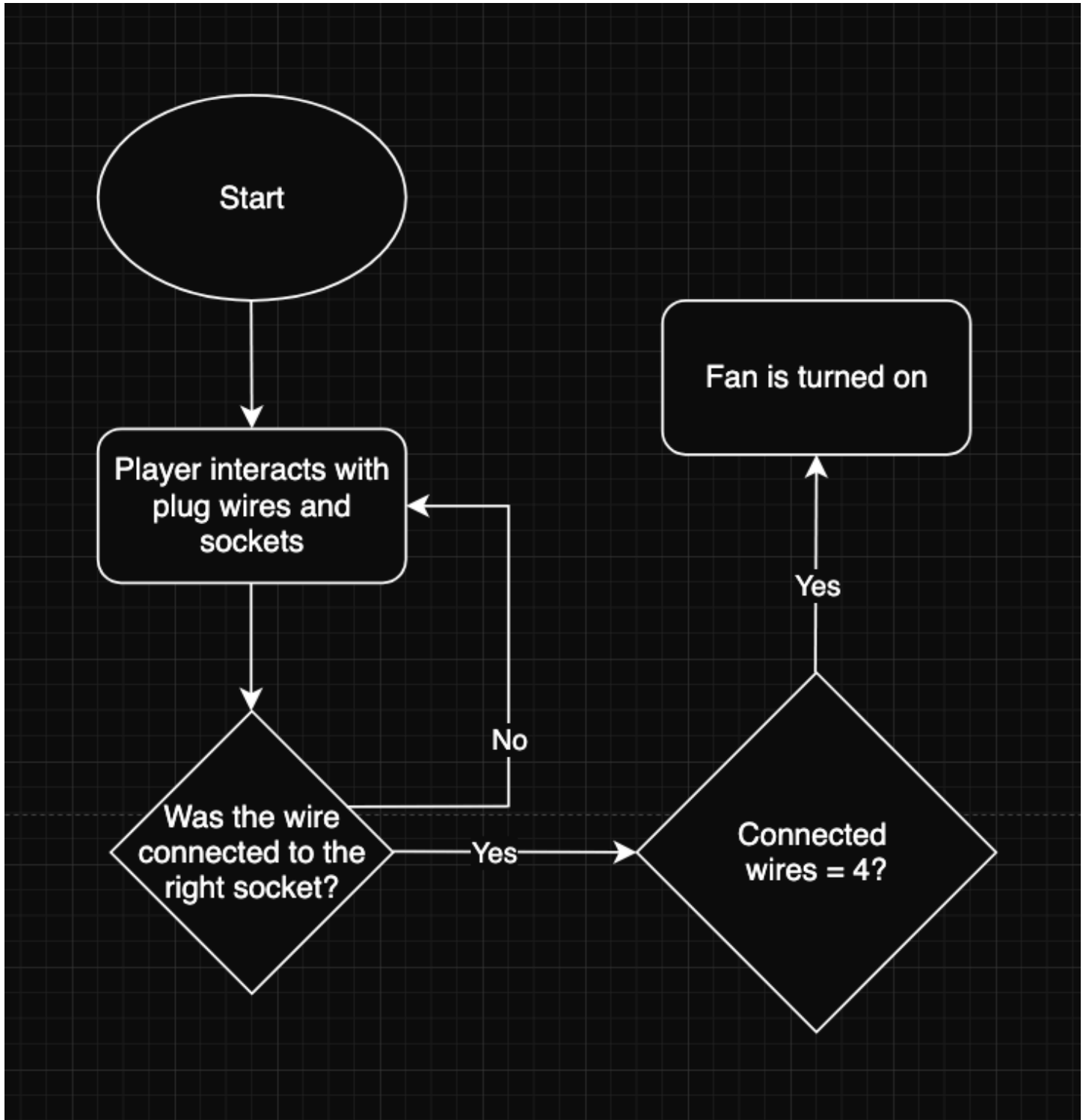


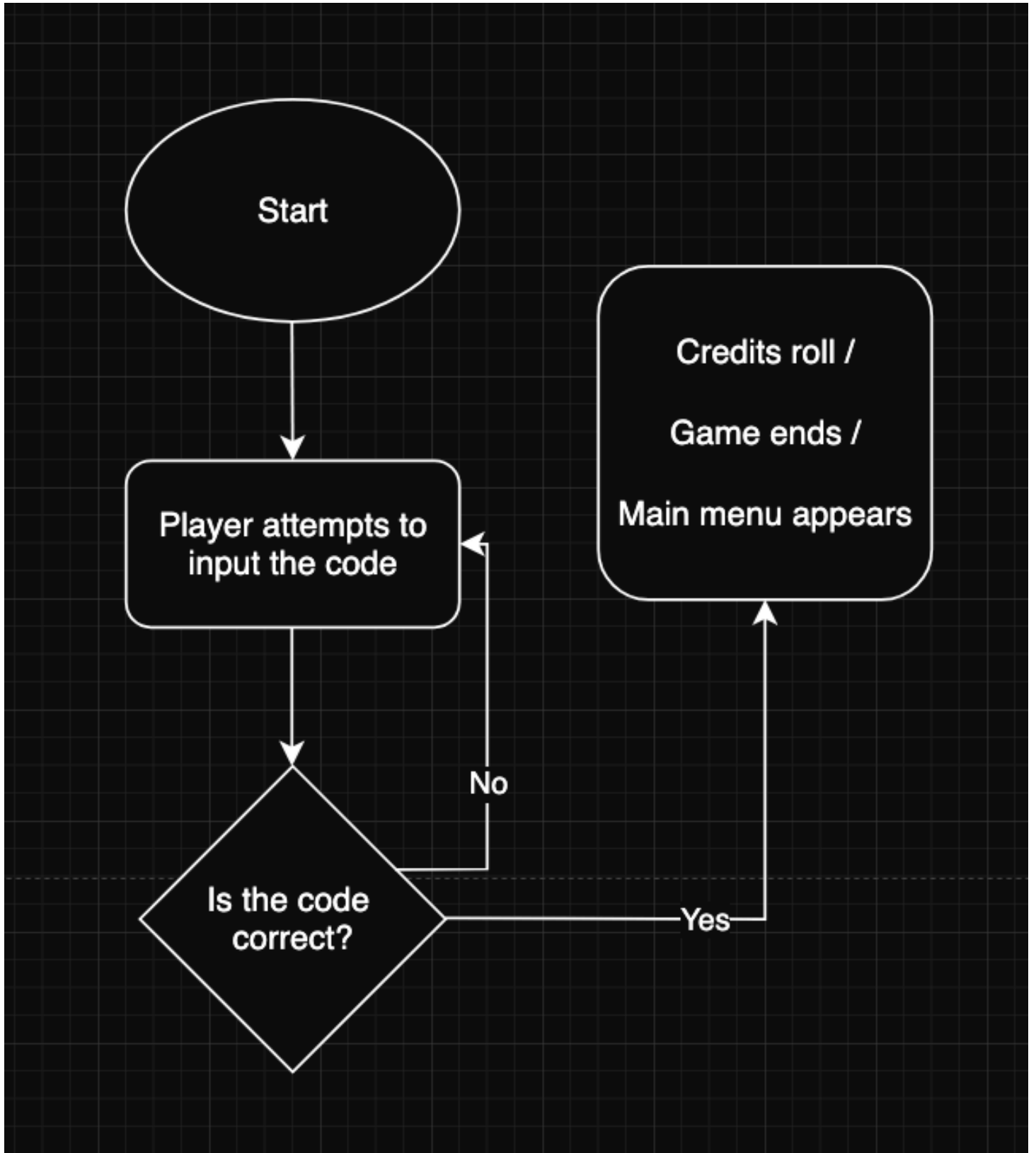


Electromagnet Puzzle Flow



Fan Puzzle Flow





Mechanics

CRC Cards



CRC Link: <https://app.milanote.com/1VjENT1BrILL5c?p=fxnXWzU50lw>

Choice and Consequence

The game makes the player take choices and receive consequences through environmental manipulation, timing-based decisions, risk-avoidance, collecting pickupables and solving a code.

Environmental Puzzles

Electromagnet: The path across the pit can only be forged by the player, by entering the control room and manipulating the electromagnet controls. The player takes choices to place a metal object over the sewage river.

Consequence: Successful magnet manipulation unlocks the next map area. Mistakes impede the player of progressing and trying to cross the open pit causes falling to death and respawning.

Fan/Motor Activation: The player must connect the motor wires to the fan by trial and error., the player must use the wind generated to jump up to a scaffold platform up above.

Consequence: If all of these steps are not completed successfully, the player cannot get up to the platform, which holds the last sticky note pickupable, impeding the ability to finish the game.

Collectible & Code Systems

Sticky Notes: The notes must be collected by the player during the game, which will serve as fragments of the final puzzle code.

Consequence: Missing a note or not solving the order prevents the puzzle from being solved and the gate to escape being opened, halting process.

Navigation and Exploration Systems

Environment exploration and observation: Exploring the junkyard, the office, the vents and environmental clues drive player curiosity and encourages observation and independent thinking.

Consequence: Thorough exploration makes later challenges easier. Careless exploration leads to missing crucial clues, impeding progress.