

# Game Design Document Outline -- FINAL

## *Pumpkin in the Forest*

### The Basics

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#### **Game:**

Pumpkin in the Forest (PITF) is a game about a gerbil named Pumpkin who has let curiosity get the best of him. After seeing a strange shadow at the window, he finds himself trying to go outside to investigate. During his investigation, he becomes lost in the forest outside his house. The game follows Pumpkin through his many circles throughout the Turnabout Forest and nearby areas. Along the way, Pumpkin comes across various adventures and mysterious things, all the while making friends and learning how to make the most of this journey.

#### **Genre:**

PITF is an RPG puzzle game that revolves around a cute and cozy story with graphics to match. The game is meant to be relaxing and easy to take breaks from; ultimately, it isn't too difficult or time-consuming to finish in just a few sittings. At the same time, it will offer some potential branching to make it fun to replay and cater to different playing styles.

#### **Audience:**

The game is intended for casual players who prefer a story-driven, light-hearted, and laid-back game. Its main mechanics are collecting, puzzles, and interacting with NPCs / the environment.

#### **Unique Selling Point(s):**

PITF's unique selling point would be its unique perspective and the wholesome, adventurous story itself. There is some customization and choices that will lead to a different playthrough each time. Also, the game has a few autumnal/Halloween aspects, meaning it has potential to be a reoccurring fan-favorite every autumn!

# Story

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## Plot:

### PUMPKIN IN THE FOREST: An Introduction

#### \* Opening Cinematic \*

[Introduction to player character, initial setting, and overall tones]

**Placement in game:** Occurs after the player has chosen to start the game for the first time - “New Game” option

FADE IN ON:

We are outside, it is autumn. It is dark and raining. A wide-angle shot of some trees and a dark figure on one of the branches. A rough voice can be heard from the figure. The sound of rain is prominent. Pan past the various trees, showing various figures that represent the creatures of the forest. Silhouettes of foxes, bats, rats, and some other ambiguous shapes.

ENIGMA (‘dark figure’):

“Thanks for cooperating. Best to keep this up and not disappoint me.”

BAT 1:

“Ay, ay.”

BAT 2:

“Are we free to go now?”

ENIGMA:

“Yes.”

A crack of thunder can be heard. The figures all disperse back into the forest.

FADE OUT

FADE IN ON:

A wide shot of a room lined with bookshelves full of books and knickknacks. It is dark and a window is in the center of the room. It is storming outside. There are some art pieces scattered along the walls, some are slightly askew, some are framed. Some feature crudely drawn art, some feature nature scenes.

To the right, we begin to zoom in on a dresser with a cage on it. The cage looks like a castle, with little towers and a large door. The colors are mostly shades of blue.

The walls of the room are mostly a plain beige, with the bookshelves being similarly plain. The window is the focal point, though the cage is the only differentially colored item in the room, stealing the player's focus before the zoom-in begins. Thunder can be heard occasionally while a light rain effect is playing all throughout. We zoom in on the cage, where we find Pumpkin rearranging wood chips in his cage. Flashing lights from a TV can be seen blurrily through the bars of the cage behind him.

TELEVISION COMMERCIAL (in the distance):

"Buy yours today! A military flashlight that will save you from any situation— bear attack? Say no more! Your grandma's spooky basement? Just flick the switch on our military-grade flashlight— no more ghosts!" [fades out]

PUMPKIN:

"Just gotta get comfy..."

The sound of something soft bumping against glass is heard, Pumpkin jumps a little and is visibly disturbed

PUMPKIN:

"W-what was that?"

The camera follows Pumpkin as he runs up to the edge of the cage, we then follow Pumpkin's gaze toward the window, where we see a shadow take off into the night

PUMPKIN:

"Hm...I should go see what that was..."

The player is tasked with the first 'quest': Escape the Cage. They can control Pumpkin.

"I should dress warm. It's chilly outside."

Upon equipping a squirrel costume, a tooltip reveals that the costume makes Pumpkin feel confident.

Most of the following is the player messing around until they learn how to escape the cage, so there isn't much dialogue other than subtle comments when the player interacts with certain items.

## **Chapter I. Pumpkin in the House (Introduction)**

- Introduction to the main character, Pumpkin (a gerbil)
  - the objective of this chapter is to familiarize the player with the MC and the controls
- Setting: Pumpkin's humans' home
- Mostly dialogue with player controlling movement to keep them engaged
  - Become familiar with controls and Pumpkin's belongings, helping to further introduce his personality, interests, and capabilities (pre-costume)
- Though we cannot see the humans (at any point in the game), we can see their speech bubbles as their voices can be heard from under the door of the room where Pumpkin's cage is
  - a short exchange of "goodnights" occur, letting Pumpkin know he can now be a bit rambunctious
- Interact with various objects
  - toys, wheel, sun seed stash, food bowl, water, wooden block, second floor, tube
    - each object provides a unique one-line dialogue from Pumpkin, displaying his personality and potential hints for when the player is tasked with escaping the cage
- Pumpkin is up late into the night as a storm is brewing outside. As he is rearranging his wood chips, he notices a large shadow looming nearby at the outside window
- Curious, he hurries to the edge as the shadow of a large bird disappears into the night
- Though he is frightened, this makes Pumpkin curious about the world outside of his cage and outside of his humans' home
- To satisfy Pumpkin's curiosities, the player is tasked with the first puzzle:
  - Escape the cage (example of a quest, this is the first)
    - the player is introduced to the concept of equipping a "costume" (in this case, squirrel) to help Pumpkin feel as though he blends in/to help build his confidence (he has this due to his humans giving it to him in preparation of Halloween).
    - as the player learns to utilize items and make their way around the cage.
    - the player must push the food bowl over to the door and sacrifice a beloved sun seed to finagle their way out of the cage
      - the player can do these steps before sleeping to wait until the rain stops. though if they do, they will later realize they need to wait the night out anyway. if the door is left open, Pumpkin will wake up to find that the cage has been locked again and the puzzle will start over
    - since it cannot be raining for Pumpkin to escape the house, the player must sleep before escaping. Once this has happened, the player can then proceed to escape from the cage

- Once out of the cage and it is not raining, the player will have to find their way out of the house
- Once this is accomplished, Pumpkin comes to realize the window is a further drop than he was expecting, but by then it is too late and he has fallen into the brush
- Upon coming to, Pumpkin realizes he has accomplished his goal and now wants to explore before returning to his cage (which he hasn't thought through yet)
- Enter Chapter II, title screen + instructions on how to save if the player has not already done so (Pumpkin is still in his squirrel costume)

## **Chapter II. Pumpkin in the Forest**

- the player is now given full control in terms of movement without confinement of a one room map. Though some areas are blocked off, the player can choose a path, though they will ultimately end up at the Talkabout Tree regardless (there are more path breaks in the future that don't lead to the same places)
  - along the way, the player will be introduced to collectibles, including ammo (acorns, as we learn later), unique leaves, and sun seeds (as a sort of currency).
- once the player enters proximity of the Talkabout Tree, they enter a cutscene/dialogue with Lesley, one of the main squirrels. Lesley initially mistakes Pumpkin for a baby squirrel.
  - from this, we learn that Lesley is an aloof character, all while being well-meaning. She befriends Pumpkin very early on
- Pumpkin explains to Lesley that he is lost in the forest and that his current main goal is to learn about the shadow that had been stalking him the previous night
- Lesley warns Pumpkin against accomplishing his goal, though he insists. She doesn't know what the shadow was, but has a feeling it was a nasty spirit
- Lesley leaves to get Bradley, the lead squirrel.
  - Bradley immediately is confused because Pumpkin is very obviously not a squirrel, though he likes Lesley, so he tries his best to play along
- Bradley also discourages Pumpkin from furthering his investigations and introduces him to the inner workings of the Talkabout Tree, where the player can explore various squirrel homes and a shop that sells some items that will be important as the game progresses
- Bradley informs Lesley that Pumpkin is not a squirrel as a major reason Pumpkin wouldn't fare well in their forest
- Against the squirrels' best wishes, Pumpkin says he will explore the forest anyway.
- Bradley and Lesley wish him the best
  - as a parting gift, Lesley teaches Pumpkin some important abilities for a squirrel to know.
    - after some tutorial, the player learns the following skills/abilities:
      - tree climbing (perfect for hiding, spending the night)
      - acorn retrieval (perfect ammo)
      - acorn disposal (a way for Pumpkin to protect himself using the found acorns as ammo)
- Pumpkin makes his way deeper into the forest
  - encounter some puzzles and quests along the way from squirrels
  - Enter Chapter III

### Chapter III. Branches of the Forest

- The player now has access to:
  - The Creek
  - The Abandoned Barn
  - Pumpkin Prairie Fields
- depending on which path the player chooses, they will meet different animals and go through different quests and main story missions.
- Finishing quests gives the player bonus advantages for current playing as well as for later story elements.
- Finishing main story missions is essential for the progression of the story. Each branch has at least one main story mission, meaning although the order does not matter, it is important that the player eventually finishes all of them before gaining access to The Depths of Turnabout.
- There are some advantages to completing certain areas first, though the player can always go back after acquiring the necessary ability to get any collectibles in that area.
  - For example, if a collectible is in water and in the Pumpkin Prairie Fields, the player will have needed to gotten the swimming skill from Phyllis in The Creek before being able to get said collectible.
- **Option A. Somewhere with an Ebb and Flow: The Creek**
  - On the creek route, the player is trying to find any possible leads on the stalker
  - new critter/costume/ability: Phyllis the turtle/shell/defense
  - bad guy(s): fox
- **Option B. On the Farm: The Abandoned Barn**
  - On the abandoned barn route, the player falls into a hole while exploring (cutscene). Here, they meet Rapture and his family
    - Raccoon hole home
  - new critter/costume/ability: Rapture the raccoon/stealth/grab
  - Halloway Peaks
    - Rapture takes Pumpkin to the nearby neighborhood to help him find resources and possibly his home
    - Pumpkin is not ready to return home, however, and asks that they head back to the raccoon home. There, Rapture equips Pumpkin with the raccoon costume to help prepare him for his forest journeys.
  - After Pumpkin returns, Rapture tells him how to get to the abandoned barn, where Clarity – a “good, wise guy” archetype will give Pumpkin advice and warns of Enigma and assigns quests.
  - The outskirts of the barn and the inside is guarded by rats. The player can choose to avoid the rats or they can choose to defeat them.
    - Avoiding them results in obtaining the rat costume.
    - Defeating them has no penalty other than the absence of the rat costume.
  - bad guy(s): rats
    - squirrel costume is best against
  - Upon reaching the inside of the barn where the lead rat is, you will be judged depending on your approach—avoid vs defeat. There is no penalty for defeating,

though having avoided the rats will reward the player with the optional rat costume.

- **Option C. Into the Fields: Pumpkin Prairie Fields**
  - On the pumpkin prairie fields route, the player is tasked with the main mission of meeting the pumpkin mice who may be able to give Pumpkin some advice about his stalker.
    - they ultimately let Pumpkin in on the fact that the stalker is likely a raptor, something that they and many of the forest critters fear
  - new critter/costume/ability: pumpkin mice/pumpkin/hiding
  - bad guy(s): crows
    - squirrel costume ammo is best, though once you have the pumpkin costume, you can avoid conflict altogether.
- REGARDLESS of which branch you choose, you will encounter Toodles, the hamster.
  - The Creek: the player comes across Toodles along the creek. This initiates the dialogue of conflict where Toodles tells Pumpkin that she had heard about him from the squirrels and that he belongs in the forest and encourages him to keep seeking out his stalker (as she knows it is Enigma, who she has made a deal with – touched on later)
    - the player can choose to not interact with Toodles, meaning either
      - a) she remains there for when the player goes back to choose a different branch
      - b) she will still appear in the two other locations until the player interacts with her.
  - The Abandoned Barn: same as with the creek, though along the way to the barn
  - Pumpkin Prairie Fields: same as with the creek, though along the way to the fields
  - if the player fails to interact with Toodles at any point in chapter Chapter III, they will be approached by her once they have finished the three branches in III.
  - once the player does speak with Toodles for the first time during this chapter, she will disappear from all areas until the next chapter
- once the player has collected all that is necessary for the main story from these three branches, they will return back to the Talkabout Tree to rest, gather/disperse resources, and get their next mission from Bradley.

#### **Chapter IV. Roots of the Forest**

- This chapter is where Pumpkin is introduced to Earl, a bat. Earl warns Pumpkin of Enigma and introduces him to Toodles. Toodles and Pumpkin having already met, leads to an altercation where Toodles lets Enigma know that Pumpkin is in their home.
- before meeting Earl, the player is tasked with trekking further into the forest, completing a maze and some other puzzles along the way. They are also given the opportunity to finish some more quests for currency which will let them buy more things from an upcoming market (in chap V) which will prepare them for when they must face Enigma.

#### **Chapter V. Depths of the Forest**

- Chapter V begins as Pumpkin enters the Depths of Turnabout Forest, Enigma's lair and home of many bats. Most of which don't share Earl's kind heart.

- among the depths, the player passes through a little mole city where there is a shop and things for the player to prepare for their showdown with Enigma (which is foreshadowed as they get closer to the lair)
- This chapter ends once Pumpkin defeats Enigma using all the costumes and collected items

## **Chapter VI. Return to Holloway Peaks**

- After defeating Enigma, the player is tasked with finding their way home, where the main portion of the main game ends (at least for part 1)
- This leads to a mini quest back to Holloway Peaks, walking along the main road and avoiding getting caught.
  - this may be a sort of maze

## **Chapter VII.**

- This chapter is the post-game chapter. It allows the player to complete unfinished quests and collect any remaining collectibles.
- at this point, the player can go back through major areas, befriending what were previously enemies, gaining even more abilities for even more puzzles
  - the crows
  - Enigma
  - the fox
  - the rats
  - the other bats
- Pumpkin's home acts as a hub from this point on, as opposed to the Talkabout Tree

## **PUMPKIN IN THE FOREST: The Fight in The Depths of Turnabout**

### **\* Closing Cinematic \***

[Final fight scene (before the actual fight, in Chapter V)]

**Placement in game:** Begins once the player enters the entrance of Enigma's lair in the Depths of Turnabout

FADE IN ON:

A dark forest, though there is some light peeking in through the leaves of the trees. It is still clearly autumn.

Toodles and Pumpkin are walking on a path through trees to where Enigma's tree is.

ENIGMA (disembodied voice):

"So... you choose to approach the core of the forest. Brave little rodent, you are."

TOODLES:

"I am brave, yes."



ENIGMA:

“Not you, rat. I mean the gourd-bil.”

PUMPKIN:

“At least he isn’t calling me a rat.”

By this point, Toodles and Pumpkin have reached near the center of the core, below Enigma’s tree. Enigma swoops down in front of the two, causing an intense vignette to appear, along with a caption announcing Enigma’s presence – “ Enigma, king of Turnabout”.

ENIGMA:

“The gourd-bil is a part of the rat family, and rats are my favorite snack.”

TOODLES:

“That’s insensitive.”

PUMPKIN:

“Can we talk this out? Does the forest even need a king?”

ENIGMA:

“You’ll have to take my crown.”

TOODLES:

“Wait, you have a crown?”

PUMPKIN:

“If that’s what it’ll take!”

The battle commences, having the player utilize various costumes and tactics learned throughout the game so far to defeat Enigma. The following bits take place after the player has won against Enigma.

ENIGMA:

“Ahhhh. You rats have done quite a number... you both would make as great elites under my wing.”

PUMPKIN:

“That wasn’t the point of this. We don’t agree with your monarchy!”

ENIGMA:

“Wouldn’t you rather I give you more power and protection?”

PUMPKIN:

“Protection? From what, you? You need to stop playing king – if not, we will bring the rest of the forest here.”

ENIGMA:

“I suppose there’s nothing I can do, then.”

Enigma spreads his wings and quickly takes off. The sudden escape leaves Toodles and Pumpkin victorious, thus resulting in the ultimate end of the main story.

TOODLES:

“That’s right, leave!!”

Toodles shakes her fist toward the sky.

Upon returning to the tree after the credits roll, we discover that Enigma has decided he will just do his own hunting elsewhere. He is upset with Pumpkin and Toodles but has always known he was in the wrong.

### **Characters:**

#### **The Player Character:**





Pumpkin – A Mongolian gerbil. Pumpkin is a shy gerbil that lives by himself in a large, castle-shaped cage, and he has lived there ever since being adopted from the local pet store only a couple weeks after his birth. He has never seen or met another animal, other than the occasional fly or acting animal on the television. His goals are to keep his routine and not disappoint the two humans who let him have his cage house in their home. That is, until he learns he has a stalker...



### Kind Critters of Turnabout:

- Squirrels – based off Eastern Gray Squirrels →
  - Bradley – the lead squirrel who decides to at first play along with Pumpkin “being a squirrel”. He is an older gent of a squirrel and makes all the squirrel calls for the squirrel folk.
    - Bradley likes to build things with what he can find near the Talkabout Tree. His favorite things to build include acorn weaponry and beds.
  - Lesley – another squirrel. She teaches Pumpkin the squirrel skillsets. She is kind and genuinely thinks Pumpkin is just a strange looking baby squirrel from a different forest.
    - Lesley likes to take long walks and stalk humans.
  - Paisley – another squirrel. She’s a bit older and frequently misplaces her acorns. Her quests and requests are a good way to get easy acorn refills.
    - Paisley like to collect knick-knacks she finds in the forest and on the nearby sidewalks.
  - Stanley – shop owner squirrel. He is kind and likes to talk about his prized possessions (screws)
    - Stanley is obsessed with pink things—he has a pink eraser from Paisley that he cherishes.
  - Presley – a squirrel citizen of Talkabout Tree who has quests and achievements for the player
    - Presley likes to sing and dance. He also likes conspiracy theories. He will often link the quests and achievements he gives to theories and legends.
- Raccoons – in reality, they only live about 2-3 years; but in PITF, they live longer
  - Rapture – He pretends to be scary, but he’s really not. He’s a kind little scavenger who teaches Pumpkin his ways and helps him create a stealthy little costume. He also introduces Pumpkin to his little raccoon friends.
    - Rapture likes to keep shiny, little things he finds in the trash and gifts them to Clarence.
  - Clarence – Rapture’s son. He is bubbly and is part of the reason Rapture shows mercy to Pumpkin when he falls into their home.
    - Clarence likes to play chase and is very clumsy. He isn’t allowed outside without supervision due to his clumsiness.
  - Susan – Rapture’s wife. Kind and wise. She likes doing puzzles and gives some tips.
    - Susan requests that Rapture brings back puzzles—be it actual cardboard puzzles or things such as Rubix cubes—if Rapture finds anything along these lines in the trash, he will bring it back for Susan.
- Turtle – based on an Ornate Box Turtle



- Phyllis – Phyllis’ main purpose is to teach the player the skillsets of the turtle. She is also meant to be a friend to add to Pumpkin’s portfolio of pals.
    - Phyllis doesn’t fall into fast or slow stereotypes—she just likes to make a lot of puns. She likes to relax in and around the local creek. She likes to eat wild berries.
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- Bat – all species in PITF are based on Northern Bats – more on this in the “enemies” section, as well as a photo
    - Earl – Earl is friends with Toodles and is hesitant at first to help Pumpkin but agrees once Pumpkin explains he’ll be out of everyone’s hair once he is back home. Earl gifts Pumpkin a “bat costume” which helps the player with some flight and echo location mini games.
      - Earl likes to read a comic book he found at the forest edge about a man who dresses like a bat and saves his local city from bad guys. Earl thinks the man is a lot like himself. It is his favorite possession.
  - (“good”) Owl – based on a barn owl
    - Clarity – an owl who watches over the barn. She is old but tries her best to keep her barn a safe place for small critters who don’t want to owe anything to Enigma.
      - Clarity likes to listen to rumors that are brought to her by the many critters of the forest. If there is a rumor going around, she has more than likely heard it and will keep it to herself unless it becomes relevant.
  - Pumpkin mice – based on the North American Deermouse
    - the pumpkin mice are a group of mice who help Pumpkin in the pumpkin fields, they are kind and helpful, as they help the player learn how to avoid the crows
      - the pumpkin mice like to play hide and seek in the pumpkin fields. They also like to play tricks on the crows.
  - Moles – based on the Eastern mole
    - the moles live in the depths of turnabout forest, toward the entrance to Enigma’s area/lair
      - they are helpful and kind while also a bit oblivious
    - Mayor Miles – kind and old. Talks a lot about the good old days
      - Miles is a strict leader. He likes to play table games with his son, Miles Jr.
    - Molly – a friendly mole with a little inn for Pumpkin to rest
      - Molly likes digging holes in hopes of finding rare treasures. She never finds any, but she doesn’t give up.
    - Miles Jr. – shop owner in the mole market town
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- Miles Jr. looks up to his dad, though often talks to outsiders about how he thinks his capitalistic background would benefit the mole community more than his dad's traditional beliefs.
- there are many more moles, though they are not named and do not offer much more than one-liners.

### **Less Kind Critters of Turnabout:**

- Hamster – based on a Syrian hamster (or otherwise known as, and referred to in the game as, “fancy hamster”)
  - Toodles – The second foe, who is another character, is a hamster by the name of Toodles. She is not meaning to harm Pumpkin, though her inaction, jealousy, and attitude lead to conflict. Her goal is to convince Pumpkin he'd be better off as a wild animal like her, mainly out of spite toward her own past.
    - Back before Toodles was a critter of the forest, she lived a life of luxury. She wore little toy crowns, sat at the tea table, and had lots of treats. This luxury has led her to a life of entitlement and a snarky attitude. Her humorous view on her turn of events (being abandoned in the forest) often makes her more palatable, as she doesn't take herself too seriously.
- Fox – based on the Red Fox
  - Louis – lives near the creek. He is very territorial and serves as a threat to Pumpkin as he attempts to pass by the said creek.
    - Louis likes to play mind games. He likes riddles, hiding in leaves, and hunting.
- Rats – based on typical rats
  - Carol – lead rat. The barn is guarded by the all-seeing owl (not to be mistaken by Enigma), and the rats can't risk word getting out by letting an outsider in.
    - Carol has no ill-intent, though she is used to outsiders, under the command of Enigma, trying to breach the barn in hopes of running out any critter using the barn as a safehouse under Clarity's watchful eye. Upon learning Pumpkin means well, she is persuaded into trusting him and is no longer an enemy.
  - there are many other rats, though most serve as shallow enemies you have to get through in order to reach Carol
- Crows – based on the American Crow
  - The crows are mostly unnamed enemies until the post-game, where you can befriend one and gain access to a crow costume.
    - the crows are in the pumpkin fields
    - Atticus – (post-game) a nice business-oriented crow who sees Pumpkin as a budding entrepreneur (due to the many costumes). He offers to sell Pumpkin a crow costume and the respective crow abilities.
- Bats – covered above with Earl (all are the same species)



- direct henchmen of Enigma
- nameless enemies
- (“bad”) Owl – based on the Great Horned Owl (image below in “enemies” category)
  - Enigma – The main baddie. An ill-intending foe by the name of Enigma. Enigma is a firm believer in the food chain and lets his stomach speak for him (not in a literal sense). He’s wise, but his stomach often gets in the way. For the main story, it is imperative that Enigma does not get his “meal” (Toodles); though after the main story, it is imperative that Enigma is met *after* his meal (whatever that may be).
    - Enigma’s traumatic backstory leads him to be the strict leader he is. He believes this order of ways will keep the forest from chaos and ultimately, avoid it from somehow catching fire ever again, as he believes it was caused by bad omens.

### **Story Vehicles:**

The gameplay revolves heavily around quests and exploring the forests. Interacting with random objects gives the player a more unique playthrough. Certain quests unlock features that are purely cosmetic—the cosmetic features complement the game’s aesthetic and can advance the story in a unique direction. Other quests unlock prominent, game-advancing features such as costumes and abilities. Examples of this are below “Quests”.

The game will mostly deliver the story through text dialogue. There will be alternate options the player can choose to direct the story slightly, though for the most part, most of the interactivity lies within the quests and puzzles. Cutscenes will play once the player has achieved certain things, such as getting a new costume, getting new skills, making new friends, and encountering a new enemy or something along those lines.



# The Game World

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## Environments:

PITF takes place mostly in a forest, though it starts from within a castle-shaped cage. The player gets to trek through beautiful pixel scenery full of trees, a river, and various animal factions. There is a creek and some abandoned areas, such as an old barn.



Here are some images of potential scenes of the forest, but imagine it is autumn flavored. Perhaps a pumpkin field rather than flowers.



Here is an image of what the abandoned barn looks like.

## Key Locations:

- **Turnabout Forest** – The most important location in PITF is of course the forest. This area includes the entrance and the squirrels, among other things.
  - ***The Talkabout Tree*** – a tree where a majority of the squirrels live. This is Pumpkin's starting location, where the player is introduced to Pumpkin's situation of being lost and wanting to find his way home.
    - Various squirrel homes, most are strictly cosmetic/offer non-quest related dialogue/small talk.
  - ***The Creek*** – a creek that leads from the forest to the fields and goes past the abandoned barn. The creek is a major path Pumpkin takes in his main goal of getting home. It has many puzzles along the way.
    - The Creek-River Conjunction
      - This is where Pumpkin meets Phyllis, the turtle
  - ***The Abandoned Barn*** – in the outskirts of Turnabout, a home to some nocturnal critters which involve side quests.
    - Clarity and a bunch of rats
    - *Entrance* – maze layout as described in the quest far below
    - *Roost* – the area of the barn where Clarity resides
  - ***The raccoon hole home*** – Pumpkin is introduced to the cast of raccoons and is given the raccoon suit (more on this below).
- **The Depths of Turnabout** – further into the forest, only accessible further into the game. It is full of puzzles and enemies for the player to work through in hopes of getting to the end, where they are faced with Enigma.
  - ***Earl's home*** – inside a decrepit tree in the Depths of Turnabout, Earl the bat and Toodles share a cozy space. This is where Toodles takes Pumpkin on their way to Enigma so Toodles can complete her task of paying Enigma in prey to earn her stay in the forest.
  - ***The Mole Hole*** – toward the entrance of the depths lays a hidden getaway where the moles conjure. This is where Pumpkin meets a bunch of moles, gets quests, an optional mole costume, and more. There is a shop, inn, and more like with the Squirrel hub.
  - ***The Forever Tree*** – In the depths, this is where the owl, Enigma, is. Some of his allies also reside here, making for a difficult runthrough.
- **Pumpkin Prairie Fields** – a bountiful pumpkin patch not far from the forest. Some vigilant crows roost here. Pumpkin fits right in here, having to work through various puzzles, many optional, and avoid the crows/make friends. Up to the player.
- **Halloway Peaks** – the neighborhood in which Pumpkin's humans reside.
  - ***The Human Home*** – the house in which Pumpkin's home resides (2-story house)
    - There will likely be more areas of the house accessible much later in the game once the player has returned home and gained access to the ability to leave again for the postgame content.
    - This is the only house the player can ever go inside



- *The study* – where Pumpkin’s cage is, as well as bookshelves and some other miscellaneous items
- *The foyer* – this is the entrance of the house, it has a hallway which branches to the upstairs where the study is or on that same level, the kitchen and dining room.
- *Kitchen* – not much here, not much to do. This area is explorable, though only in the postgame. It is mainly available to add immersion and a sense of adventure! It also does have some hidden collectibles. Same with the other rooms of the house.
- *Dining room* – same as the kitchen, with a table and chairs
- *The streets* – Rapture and Pumpkin take on the streets in hopes of finding Pumpkin’s home. The player can see other houses along the street, though none are accessible. Many trashcans!

### **Game Flow:**

The player character experiences a mostly linear game world, with each skillset acquired opening a new branch. The order in which the mainline and side quests are done in does not matter, though it may benefit the player to follow a logical, linear path.

The forest, Turnabout, is, as the name implies, a huge circle with confusing, sudden turns and various shortcuts. This is the first place, after the accidental escape via curiosity (a cutscene), that the player is allowed to roam freely and play with the controls/explore. While exploring, the player will more than likely come across various attractions such as one of the trees in which one of the squirrels live in.

After learning the skills relevant to the squirrels, the player is encouraged (via the plot) to follow the creek to the abandoned barn, falling into the raccoon hole along the way. The player could choose to go to the creek before experiencing the plot, though the hole will not be an event yet, as Pumpkin isn’t “in a rush”, and so he does not “fall in”. Regardless, the player is allowed and encouraged to explore, though there is only so far and only so many side quests they can do before the game slowly encourages them to go back to the main story.

After the forest area is done and the raccoons are now helping Pumpkin, a new area is unlocked via the raccoons taking Pumpkin to it. This area is in the Holloway Peaks neighborhood—a trashcan at a house not far from Pumpkin’s. After some time, Pumpkin decides the raccoons can’t really help and continues following the creek to a field. Pumpkin Prairie Fields, specifically, where Pumpkin can indulge in various side quests. Among the quests, there is a mainline continuation where Pumpkin meets a turtle. This turtle further progresses the story by teaching Pumpkin/ the player skills necessary to move forward.

The next, and “final” (for this main questline) place is the Depths of Turnabout, where the player is confronted with the mainline’s first and maybe only “boss”, Enigma the owl. After this, Pumpkin is led home and the player can choose to venture more or call it quits. There is a lot more to do, though the idea is that it can be a short and sweet game, with it taking longer being optional.

**Interactivity:**

The player can interact with the game world in multiple ways, such as finding secret entrances/exits, climbing things, and even manipulating objects. A main objective throughout the whole game is to collect various things (nuts, seeds, costumes, food items, tools); these objectives lead to a lot of interactions, such as with not only the objects, but also the NPCs. An example of an interactive item would be the acorns in the forest. An example for objects would be the climbable trees. As for locations, there are whole areas where the player must interact with certain pixels in order to complete a puzzle.

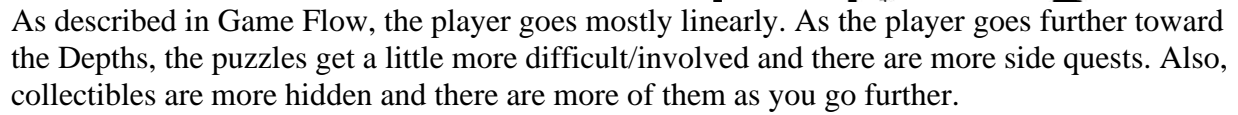
The player can interact with most any NPC, whether it be to chat, get a quest, or finish a quest. Some NPCs may even be an enemy, meaning the interaction may be to “shoot at” (acorns) or avoid said enemy. There will likely also be some shop and buffing elements.

**Training:**

Between the entrance of the forest and the Talkabout Tree, the player experiences dialogue from the player character himself saying small things such as, “I need to walk with the arrow/awsd keys.”

Each time the player acquires a new skillset/costume, they will go through a small stage where they must be taught the skills in order to use them. There will also be a point in Turnabout Forest where the player can choose to repeat steps to earn currency, items, or maybe even experience. With each repeat, a little less is earned, but it encourages the player to become familiar with the controls and mechanics without being too tedious.

A hand-drawn map of the 'Halloway Peaks' area. The map is divided into several sections by a road and a creek. On the left, a 'neighborhood' is shown with two houses. A 'creek' flows from the neighborhood towards the center. In the center, a character is running through 'PUMPKIN PRAIRIE FIELDS'. A 'road' runs horizontally across the bottom. To the right of the road, there is a 'FOREST' area. A 'The Talkabout Tree' is marked with a blue arrow. Another area is labeled 'the Depths of Turnabout'. A character is also shown in the forest area. The map is drawn with simple lines and includes various labels and arrows indicating directions and locations.



# Gameplay

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## **Player Experience:**

The player will experience an emotional tale about being lost and having to find their way home. Along the way, the game should inspire a feeling of loss while gaining many things along the way. Be it friends, trinkets, knowledge, etc., the player will slowly build up a satisfying collection of things to remember their journey.

## **Player Character Actions:**

- The PC controls Pumpkin through various puzzles, dialogues, and most of all: the game world.
- Puzzles:
  - Mazes
  - Battles
    - More on this in combat
  - Search and find
  - Matching
  - Strategy
- The PC can find and pick items up, throw items, and collect mementos for the scrapbook.
  - More on this in Combat
- More about PC Actions are covered in Objects, Items, Weapons, etc.
- Buy and sell items in the Turnabout Forest tree

## **Player Character End Goal:**

The PC's end goal is to get Pumpkin back home while establishing relationships, collecting items, and trying to make sense of life as a gerbil in such harsh environments. The rewards vary, whether it be the connections, the collectibles, or the in-game currency. Regardless, these relationships and items are relevant to the gameplay and can be viewed in the scrapbook.

## **Enemies:**

The player's foes throughout the game are bats who are trying to earn their stay in the forest for their King of the Forest, Enigma (the owl).

Many nocturnal critters work under the order of Enigma.

In the pumpkin fields, there are crows which work for themselves to protect the pumpkins.



(left) Concept image of Enigma, based on a Great Horned Owl.

Concept image of Earl, a Northern bat (below)



The Order of Enigma member species:

- Fox – Louis
  - Near the creek
  - **Fight, quiz, or leave**
    - If the player chooses to fight Louis, they are entering a mid-tier battle sequence that will rely on the player having the appropriate costumes and skills.
    - If the player chooses to play along with Louis' quiz, they will
      - win: be free to pass
      - lose: enter the battle
    - if the play loses in battle against Louis, they wake up from the last checkpoint. If they win, they may pass
- Rats – multiple
  - in the abandoned barn
  - the rats are a low-tier enemy that **attack in swarms**. They are easy to defeat so long as the player manages to not let any through.
  - if one gets through, the player wakes up at their last checkpoint (outside the barn)
- Crows – multiple
  - in the pumpkin fields
  - the crows are a mid-tier enemy that **attack from above** and at a constant, staggered rate (they peck at you)
  - you can try to avoid fighting them by running through the pumpkin field obstacles, though to do so is very difficult on a first playthrough.
- Bats – multiple
  - in the depths of Turnabout
  - the bats are similar to rats in that they can attack in swarms, and similar to crows in that they can attack from above. Bats are also capable of **homing** in on targets – if the player is not moving fast enough, the bats can throw fruit seed projectiles. Because of these combinations, they are considered mid-tier enemies
- Owl – Enigma

- the main enemy/boss who is in charge of most of the enemy forces (bats, specifically – with loose authority over the rest via scare tactics/force)
- Enigma is a high-tier enemy. You have no choice but to fight him at the end.
- Enigma has 3 main styles of fighting (in this order):
  - bone projectiles and wing winds (blows Pumpkin away from Enigma)
    - avoid with movement (turtle costume will reduce damage)
  - pecking (melee)
    - avoid with movement/lead Enigma into accidentally pecking at rocks (ouch)
  - hard landing/quakes (melee)
    - not avoidable with movement. The player character will need to utilize different costumes to do various things, slowly taking Enigma's health down
      - squirrel costume, climb trees/throw projectiles
      - use the bat costume and risk close combat

### **Combat:**

Combat in *PitF* is very simplistic, relying mostly on simple arcade-style shooting and jumping. The attack style/ “weapon” varies with each costume.

- ❖ Uses real time combat (as opposed to turn-based)
  - Main game costumes:
    - Squirrel costume:
      - use acorns as ammo (ranged attack) against Enigma's scouts and other forces of the forest. Also, climbing to travel and jump on top of enemies.
    - Raccoon costume:
      - scavenge for items easier and hold things firmly. This costume makes Pumpkin stealthier and uses “clever” traps (trash) to stop/defeat opponents.
    - Turtle costume:
      - the main “attack” of the turtle costume is its defensive properties which will cause a ricochet effect. Furthermore, the shell provides great general defense.
    - Bat costume:
      - the bat costume allows flight and utilizes echo location. The bat costume's attack is “bite”. It's like the acorn ammo but melee.
  - misc. costumes:
    - mole costume:
      - get this from the mole shop
      - dig for treasures
    - rat costume:
      - get this by choosing a pacifist route when you get to the barn area (there will be prompts that hint toward how to avoid conflict, making it to where if any rats are hurt, it is due to the player's intentional decision to do so)
      - summon some rats to help fight with/for you for a short period of time
    - pumpkin mouse costume:

- get this from a side quest with the pumpkin mice where you protect them from crows while they collect pumpkin seeds
  - this costume will let you eat pumpkin seeds to heal your health during battles
- post-game costumes:
    - crow costume:
      - fast travel map

### **Obstacles:**

The biggest inanimate challenges throughout the game, which are major for progressing through the story, are puzzles. The puzzles vary from mazes, brain teasers, races, battles, etc. and vary depending on the difficulty the player is currently playing through. The player can also come across traps, burrows, and more which will lead to battles, level restarts, and more.



- - albeit a LOT less complex than in *Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*, PITF will feature multiple small mazes, such as on the way from Turnabout into the Depths of Turnabout.
  - There will be both top down mazes as well as first-person mazes to help keep the player from getting bored of the mazes
- there will be a point in the game where Pumpkin must catch Toodles, which turns to a short race mini game. The difficulty will depend on the player's familiarity with the obstacles, since it will be in the Depths (roots, darkness, dirt piles)
- utilizing the mole costume to find hidden objects
  - there is a side quest where the player must have the mole costume and is instructed to go to an underground region of the Depths to find special stones. This will prompt a short bout of puzzles like the underground puzzles in Pokemon Platinum



○

- Another type of puzzle PITF will feature will be similar to that in Piglet's Big Game where the player is tasked with finding "levers" (in the case of PITF, strange roots) which will help gain access to certain areas of the game.



### Objects, Items, Weapons, etc.:

With each costume, the player can interact with different objects. These are also touched on above, but for example, the squirrel costume Pumpkin can pick up acorns which will be used as ammo (stored in the squirrel suit).

- Squirrel costume:
  - use acorns as **ammo** (ranged attack) against Enigma's scouts and other forces of the forest. Also, climbing to travel and jump on top of enemies.
- Raccoon costume:
  - scavenge for items easier and hold things firmly. This costume makes Pumpkin stealthier and uses "clever" traps (**trash**) to stop/defeat opponents.
- Turtle costume:
  - the main "attack" of the turtle costume is its defensive properties which will cause a ricochet effect. Furthermore, the **shell** provides great general defense.
- Bat costume:
  - the bat costume allows flight and utilizes echo location. The bat costume's attack is "bite". It's like the acorn ammo but melee.
- mole costume:
  - hide
  - interact with the ground to find hidden objects
- rat costume:
  - swarm allies
  - can also be used to knock down deteriorated wood
- pumpkin mouse costume:
  - healing
- Some rocks in the environment will also be interactive, revealing hidden items (acorns+), currency, and sometimes hidden entrances.
- The collectibles are interactive until you pick them up to store in your scrapbook.



### **Replayability:**

- Given the autumn theme of *PitF*, it is our hope that the game is an annual occurrence for players who enjoyed the game the first time around.
- There are certain areas that will have random encounters. Furthermore, many of the mini games can be played again without having to restart the game.
- As you level up the PC, some of the more involved mini games will also level up to keep the difficulty on par with your current settings.
- The game will also have multiple difficulties, some of which feature paths exclusive to that difficulty.
  - This will make it so players not only have more variety and options, but also in hopes that a player might want to experience the game in every game mode, since it will be advertised as having different potential outcomes/developments.

### **Quests:**

#### **QUEST 1**

- **Quest Name:**  
“The Beginnings of a Trash Bandit”
- **Quest Type:**  
Treasure Hunt / Collection
- **Success Criterion/Criteria:**  
The initial goal of this quest is to find Pumpkin’s home, though it changes to finding the necessary materials for a “raccoon costume” as to utilize abilities Rapture teaches you along the way at later points in the game. The player will need to:
  - Meet Rapture at forest outskirts, where you can access Holloway Peaks
  - Find items in the trash and surrounding areas that will make the costume
  - Report back to Rapture
- **Setting:**  
This quest takes place in Holloway Peaks—the human neighborhood that borders one side of the forest. The quest technically starts at the raccoon hole home—though Rapture then instructs the player to meet him at Holloway Peaks for the quest to truly begin. It is night and there is slight challenge in navigating this new area, though there are not any obstacles beyond that, since this is mostly a quest meant to teach the player how to utilize the raccoon costume/abilities.
- **Place in Story:**  
This quest takes place during **Chapter III. Branches of the Forest, Option B. On the Farm: The Abandoned Barn**. After meeting Rapture, you are told to go to Holloway Peaks before being able to continue onward toward the abandoned barn.
- **Characters Involved:**
  - Pumpkin – the player character

- Pumpkin initially starts the quest upon asking Rapture for help finding his home for later, when he's done in the forest
  - Upon not finding it after a bit, Rapture tells Pumpkin he can help him find his stalker, but that he needs to learn the ways of a raccoon, first.
  - Rapture – the mentor for this quest
    - Rapture knows his way around the forest and the neighborhood
    - he likes to scrummage through trash—perfect for a collection quest
- **Story Purpose:**

Throughout the game, the player collects abilities accessible through costumes—this quest works as a learning period/tutorial for using the abilities you will be able to access once you acquire the raccoon costume.

Benefits of the raccoon costume and the abilities:

  - stealth bonus – essential for Quest 2
  - grasp bonus (pull larger objects)
  - be able to set traps (using trash/litter)
- **Gameplay Purpose:**

Since this is the tutorial quest for new abilities, the player character will be taught new things and expected to repeat them a few times to complete the quest. Though it is a bit of repetition to make sure the player understands the mechanics, there is still some variety in methodology.

Obstacles:

  - different ways to get into or search a trashcan
  - avoiding the occasional night driver on the street
  - avoiding outdoor/automatic lights

Difficulties:

  - finding the necessary items without getting caught
- **Miscellaneous:**

**Some** other costume abilities, i.e., the throwing ability from the squirrel costume, can also be used to creatively get through this quest; though it is of course encouraged that the player utilize the new abilities for the sake of learning and variety. This is to encourage creativity and the feeling of freedom in this world.
- **Quest Playthrough:**
  - After Pumpkin falls into the raccoon hole home he meets the raccoon family—Rapture, the father of one child in the den, decides to help Pumpkin upon hearing his goal with heading toward the barn and trying to find his stalker
  - Rapture informs Pumpkin of his trash rummaging routine and invites him, as Rapture might be able to help Pumpkin find where his house is for future reference as well as find stuff that will help him with his mission of finding the stalker

- before embarking on the quest through Halloway Peaks, Rapture gives directions to Pumpkin/the player:
  - “Meet me near the entrance to your hood—Halloway Peaks, y’know. It’s just a quick hop West of here—follow the clear brush trail made by the humans. You’ll know by the lights that you’re going the right direction.”
- Rapture then scuttles off, leaving the player to either follow through with the quest or decide to go elsewhere—Clarence, Rapture’s son, stands in the way of continuing toward the abandoned barn until you return with Rapture after the quest.
- Upon reaching the clearing where the forest ends and Halloway Peaks starts, Pumpkin talks with Rapture.
  - “Alright—so we’re gonna try to find your home, and I’m gonna try to teach you some of my ways. I’ve got a list of stuff we need for me to be able to fully help you.”
  - A list of things is shown on screen
    - a marker (black, blue, green, or purple—whichever you give to Rapture in the end will change which color raccoon costume you end up with)
    - gray fabric
    - safety pins
    - black rubber (for grippy gloves and stealth)
  - The player is given control once more to walk around, Rapture following
- Upon approaching the first trashcan (any trashcan), Rapture will give tips on commencing the scavenge:
  - “First, knock the can over. These cans are too flimsy for us to climb up into. You’ll need to do some back and forth shaking.”
    - The player is told how to grasp the trashcan to shake it.
    - The player can shoot acorns at it, which will also eventually cause it to fall over
  - Upon knocking it over: “Great, and now we just take a peek inside.”
  - Pumpkin goes inside the trashcan, prompting an image with items the player can move and click through—if an item that is either collectible or necessary for the quest is clicked, it is added to the player’s inventory.
  - This process is completed a few more times until all items have been found.
- Upon finding each item: “Great! I’m sorry we couldn’t find your house, but I think it’s starting to get light out, we should probably head back.”
  - Player option: “Yeah, let’s head back.”
    - teleports Rapture and the player back to the raccoon hole home
  - Player option: “You go ahead, I want to see if I can find anything else.”
    - Rapture leaves, leaving the player to wander around and look through some more cans if they wish. They must return by themselves to continue the quest completion

- Once back at the hole, Rapture requests to have a moment while he constructs your raccoon costume.
- After a short period of time, Rapture emerges, rewarding you with the costume and it leads into Quest 2.

## **QUEST 2**

- **Quest Name:**  
“A Light Left On in the Barn”
- **Quest Type:**  
Stealth / Puzzle
- **Success Criterion/Criteria:**  
The goal of this quest is to traverse the barn stealthily, avoiding or defeating enemies (the rats) up until you find the end—where the lead rat is. While the level does have enemies, the focus is more on avoiding them and trying to take strategic paths to do so, as an exclusive prize (rat costume) is alluded to and awarded to the player upon taking the avoidance route.
- **Setting:**  
The quest begins on assignment outside the raccoon hole home, which then leads the player on a dirt, leaf-cluttered path to an abandoned barn. The quest takes place mostly inside of this barn. The barn is decrepit with fallen wood, brush, and other obstacles leading to a maze of sorts which the player must traverse through. The barn is home to many rats and their guardian, Clarity.
- **Place in Story:**  
This quest takes place almost directly after Quest 1—assuming the player follows Rapture’s directions and continues this path linearly (not required).
- **Characters Involved:**
  - Rapture – prompts this quest before you leave
    - After completing the quest with Rapture, “Beginnings of a Bandit”, Rapture informs the player of how to proceed through the abandoned barn branch of the game.
    - The player is given the quest log and directions to the barn, Clarence now letting you pass onward.
  - Pumpkin – the player character
    - Pumpkin is trying to get into the barn to speak with Clarity, who is guarded by a bunch of rats who she keeps safe under her guard away from Enigma.
  - Many rats – enemies of the area

- they mean well, but think Pumpkin is Toodles—a disciple of Enigma—who would potentially hurt their leader or their guardian, Clarity.
  - Carol – the leader rat
    - Carol is kind and once approached, will have a dialogue with the player, allowing them to go to the room where Clarity currently is.
  - Clarity – a white barn owl who watches over the rats
    - Clarity serves as the end of the quest. Upon reaching her, the quest is marked as completed and the player is done with this branch of the map (not excluding non-main game quests and areas)
    - Clarity gives a lot of tips and advice—spanning multiple branches and quests, though her main mission purpose in this case is to inform the player of who Enigma is along with some backstory about why he is the controlling and emotionally distant leader he is.
- **Story Purpose:**
  - This is the first and only branch of the 3 available where Enigma is mentioned by name, as well as some of the reasoning behind his occasional sleuthing in the night. The player will meet the rats, Clarity, and learn about Enigma in this quest.
  - They will potentially receive the rat costume, which will be useful in combat
- **Gameplay Purpose:**
  - The main obstacle is the level design itself, having to “sneak” through the maze.
  - further difficulty is added by rats that are hiding throughout the maze. They are all avoidable, though the player can get through the maze quicker by defeating the rats.
  - the player can utilize the raccoon costume they got from the last quest to move more stealthily.
  - alternatively, they can use the squirrel costume to defeat the rats.
- **Miscellaneous:**
  - If the player has already done either of the other branches, they can utilize the turtle or pumpkin mice costumes’ abilities respectively.
    - turtle: better defense against the rats
    - pumpkin mouse: healing
- **Quest Playthrough:**
  - though you can choose to attack and defeat the rats (or be attacked and defeated by lack of stealth), this playthrough is following the “completionist” route, where the player does not defeat any of the rats

- Rapture thanks Pumpkin for hanging out with him and gives him the raccoon costume, as well as instructions to the abandoned barn.
  - “Thank you, Pumpkin. The abandoned barn is just north of here...be careful, there are rats all over, but if you just avoid them, I’m sure they’ll reward you for your benevolence.”
- The player is given full control to continue in this branch of the forest
- Continuing forward, the player follows a dirt, leaf-cluttered path with occasional forks in the road for side quests and collection areas.
- Eventually, the player will come to a clearing where they get a quick cutscene introducing them to a still of the barn.
- The player is prompted by dialogue to save their game and enter the barn once they approach a small hole in the side of it.
- Upon entering, the player “overhears” two rats talking about the weather
  - this is just to let the player know that they are now in the rats’ territory without having dialogue that is too on the nose or “convenient”
- if the player gets too close to a rat, they will have an exclamation point above their head (“!”) so the player knows to escape the area.
- The light is from sunlight that is leaking through the cracks of the barn
- there are some parts that are dark, making the trek a bit more difficult
- Once the player has successfully traversed to the end of the maze that is the inside the decrepit barn, they come out to a small room where Carol is. Carol makes note of having not seen Pumpkin around before and asks if he has met the local hamster who they are avoiding since she is in league with Enigma, the villain of the forest (from the POV of the rats).
- Since Pumpkin did not hurt the rats, he is rewarded with the rat costume which will enable the summoning of rat comrades in battle.
- Carol then tells Pumpkin that he is free to go to the next room where Clarity, their guardian, is resting
- Clarity:
  - “Hello, brave one. I heard a rumor about you from the squirrels... I should have known you’d visit my barn.”
  - “Enigma—he’s likely the one you saw a glimpse of at your window—if not him, one of his henchman. He and his bats patrol the night.”
  - After dialogue introducing Enigma and his backstory, Clarity tells the player about where Enigma is located and how Pumpkin can go about getting there / what he’ll need to be ready to confront him in case things go awry.
- This marks the end of the branch.

### **QUEST 3**

- **Quest Name:**  
“The Fallen Family Tree”
- **Quest Type:**

## Exploration

- **Success Criterion/Criteria:**

The goal of this quest is to teach the player more about Enigma's past without directly telling the story. The player can succeed in this quest by successfully interacting with the various areas in this section of the forest which prompt dialogue with lore and history.

- **Setting:**

This quest takes place in a large clearing, west of the abandoned barn. This clearing was once the forest's edge, though it was mostly burnt down about two years before this story takes place. The area is now a dirt-filled clearing with occasional fallen trees and tree stumps.

- **Place in Story:**

This quest takes place after the abandoned barn quest, "A Light Left on in the Barn", after Clarity informs the player of the area. However, it is possible for the player to stumble across it earlier on—though they cannot enter the clearing due to it "Having an eerie feeling to it—I should wait." The player does not have to ever come to this area, as it is an optional quest, though it is on the way out of the branch into the next, so it is an encouraged detour.

- **Characters Involved:**

- Pumpkin – the player character
  - Pumpkin is exploring this area
- Clarity – prompts the quest
  - Clarity meets Pumpkin in the clearing, landing on a stump
  - She will follow the player around, at times sharing short dialogue
  - most of the story is told through Pumpkin's own observations and visual elements, though Clarity can offer more for those who are interested

- **Story Purpose:**

The purpose of this quest is to inform the player of potential lore that may assist in their eventual meeting with Enigma—though it is mostly for players who want to know more about the story and have a hands-on experience with the reasoning behind Enigma's current attitude toward the forest and the reason behind his method of ruling.

- **Gameplay Purpose:**

No prior skills, knowledge, or items are necessary for this quest. It's a simple, side quest that is more of a reward for getting through the abandoned barn branch. It aids to give the player a break to simply explore an area and find items that will fill their scrapbook collection and have the occasional point where they can utilize a costume to knock something over or down to get an item.

- **Miscellaneous:**

This quest can be “repeated” at any time by returning to the clearing.

- **Quest Playthrough:**

- Taking a left at a fork on the way to the abandoned barn (or a right on the way back from that quest), the player will find themselves on a path to a clearing
- If they have spoken to Clarity already, they will be allowed access
- Upon entering the clearing, they will get a quick cutscene of Clarity flying down and landing on a nearby stump.
- She will tell the player about how this clearing was once a large part of the forest, the forest’s entrance, specifically. This was where the owls lived and where they greeted incoming critters.
- Searching around more, the player will find various things, such as:
  - A huge fallen tree, Clarity will come by and inform the player that this was Enigma’s family tree. It fell due to the fire.
  - A lot of little stumps – the humans cleared the area to avoid another wildfire so close to the human homes.
  - occasional holes—once lived in by some of the critters such as the raccoons and foxes. Items will be hidden in some of these areas
- Once enough key areas have been interacted with, the quest will be considered completed and Clarity will wish the player luck on their journey to Enigma.
- She reminds the player that he isn’t a bad owl, he’s just been through a lot and he thinks this is what he must do to uphold the legacy his family put forth before the fire.
- This marks the end of this quest.
- (This area is also where Pumpkin can find Enigma once the battle at the end of the game has ended and the player can participate in the end game activities.)



## Art Style / Aesthetics

PITF is a top-down, two-dimensional 3D-stylized based RPG with cutscenes. It is similar in style to games such as later, 3D Pokémon games. The story progresses mostly with puzzles and it is all heavily story-driven.

The overall look and feel of the game is that of a pixel-esque/3D hybrid, rustic forest adventure. Human areas are modern while nature areas are rustic and atmospheric. The colors are mostly warm and autumn related (oranges and browns).

Main inspiration and art influence for **environment** (Pokémon Mystery Dungeon Rescue Team DX):



The camera angle will be a little more top down for *PitF*, but this is a good example of artistic direction.

**characters:**



The characters will be stylized a bit like this, with similar shading and outlines to keep them from blending in with the environment.

**more inspiration/influence:**



Overall game and style have a similar vibe to “Over the Garden Wall” (Cartoon Network animated series)

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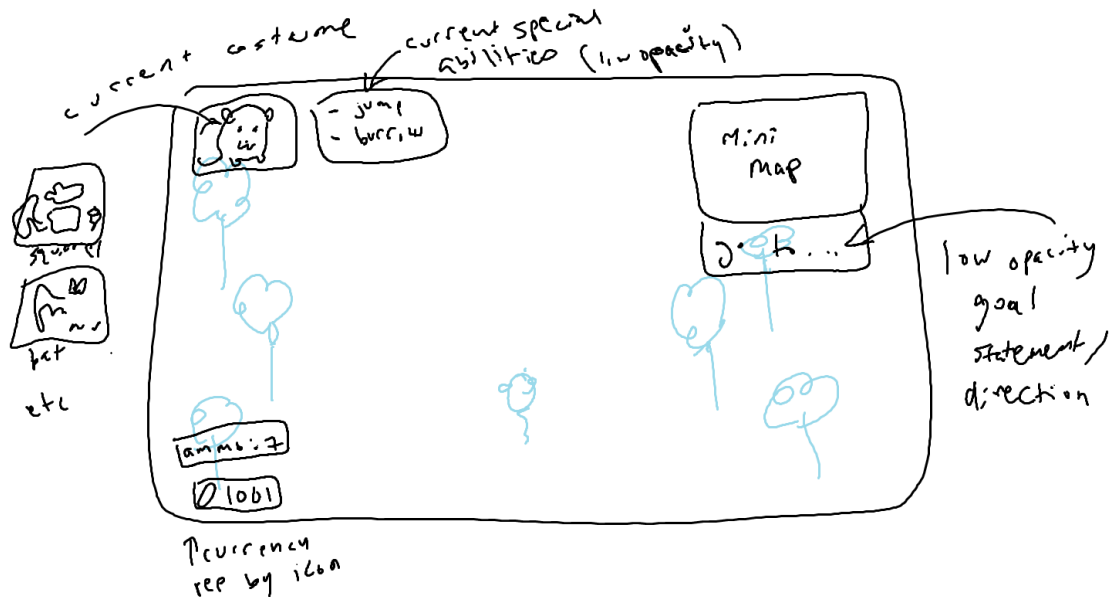
The style of the puzzles will vary depending on the requirements for the puzzle – kind of like the puzzles in Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild. Though for each puzzle, there will be many consistencies so the player is aware this is a puzzle level, and they will be able to start over as much as they need. The only caveat is that most of the puzzles need to be completed in order to move on; not all of them, however. There will be some puzzles that will be bonus/just for fun/just for collectibles. There will also be puzzles specifically meant to teach the player how to use any new costumes upon receiving them.

In certain areas, switching costumes may also require the completion of a puzzle.

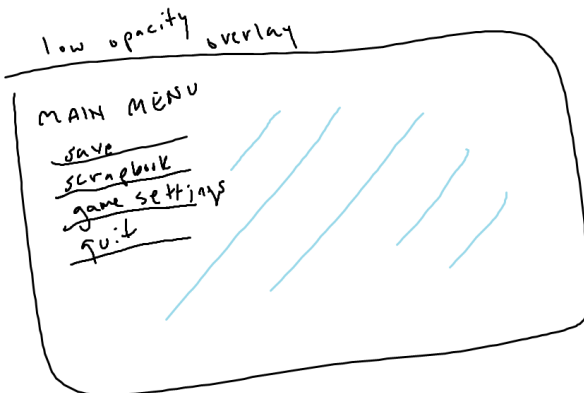
# User Interface / Controls

## Interface:

The interface will show the player a list of their current “special abilities” which will change depending on their costume if they have one. Otherwise, it will just list Pumpkin’s default abilities (jump and burrow). The game will use casual AWSO or arrow keys for movement, shift to dash, space to interact, and esc for the pause menu.

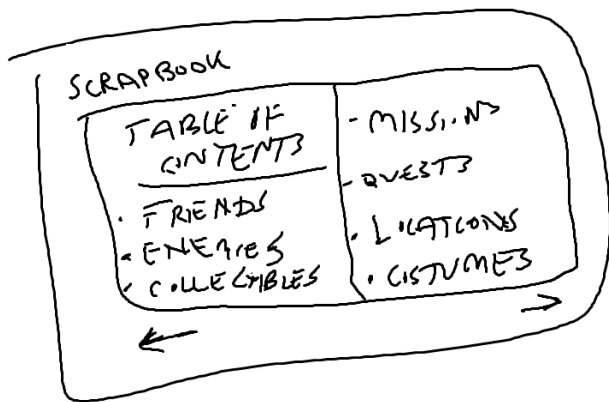


## Menus:



- the main in-game menu (pause screen).
  - It features the ability to save
  - view the scrapbook
  - change settings (volume, quality, speeds, etc.)
  - and quit

- It has a low opacity overlay on the game to ensure the player that the game is paused.
- The actual main menu (upon loading the game) will look a lot like the above, but with screenshots of the game in the background as opposed to the paused gameplay.
- As seen in the interface screenshot, currency and ammo are accounted for on-screen most times, while as we will see in the next image, all other things are recorded in the scrapbook.
- The scrapbook works kind of like an inventory, except none of these items are single use.



- The scrapbook lets the player view a list of their current allies (friends), enemies, collectibles (collected and shadows of uncollected, not including secret collectibles), missions, quests, locations, and costumes.
  - Many of these pages will provide advice and tips, while some will simply remind the player of their current goals, side quests, past achievements, and so on.

### **Messaging:**

Like in the examples above from Pokémon Mystery Dungeon Rescue Team DX, the dialogue will be the main way of getting ideas, thoughts, directions, and so on through to the player. The scrapbook will also do this, though not so much for the story, rather more for reminders and things such as navigation.

# Music and Sound Effects

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## Music:

The general style of music used in *PitF* is ambient and folksy. The atmosphere is mostly meant to give a feeling of adventure into the unknown—it is supposed to be slightly spooky, progressively more so as you get closer to the depths of Turnabout.

- Turnabout Forest – quiet, ambient music that loops.
  - The Talkabout Tree – slightly jovial ambient music which is present during most scenes involving the squirrels.
    - Various squirrel homes – jovial ambient music. It's quirky and if the home is owned by one of the more prominent character squirrels, the music will have an added layer that mimics them based on serious – lower beat, clumsy – clunkier beat. Animal Crossing voice fluctuations would be a good example of what is happening here, but with the music rather than dialogue
  - The Creek – eerie ambient music
    - the creek-river conjunction – the same music as the creek, but with added sound effects (listed below in SE). Since the player cannot go into the river, the SE will convey the danger of a gerbil falling into the river
  - The Abandoned Barn – eerie ambient music (darker for entrance, lighter beat for the roost)
  - The raccoon hole home – darker jovial, light-hearted ambient music
  - The Depths of Turnabout – very eerie atmospheric music and noises
    - Earl's home – eerie ambience, but with slight jovialness – cozy overall
    - the mole hole – light-hearted quirky music that conveys peace, since the player is in no danger and this serves as a resting point / hub
    - The Forever Tree – the most eerie music in the game. A dark, progressive looping beat that forewarns the approach of Enigma, the final boss
      - the battle with Enigma – a mix of the music used for the Forever Tree. The mix will be quicker, in pace with Enigma's fighting pattern. Like with the boss music from Pikmin 3, the music will change depending on Enigma's intended move. Quicker tempo on quick attacks, a more light feeling on air attacks.
- Pumpkin Prairie Fields – somewhat folky, ambient music. Fiddles. The player is safe here and we want to convey that.
- Halloway Peaks – modern ambient music
  - The Human Home – modern ambient music
    - the study – lo-fi beat-esque music. This is the first music the player hears, so it has to set the tone with the game being chill and light-hearted
    - the foyer, the kitchen, the dining room – each of these rooms share different lo-fi music all based off the same beat as the music used for the study. This is to provide consistency throughout the house
  - The streets – atmospheric modern ambient music

### **Sound Effects:**

- Turnabout Forest – the sound of rustling leaves in the background and crunching leaves as the player walks
  - The Talkabout Tree – the sound of rustling leaves and the sound of scratching bark as squirrels climb
    - Various squirrel homes – the sound of walking on wood
  - The Creek – the sound of running water and mud slush as the PC walks around certain areas of it
    - the creek-river conjunction – the sound of little river waves / rapids in the distance
  - The Abandoned Barn – sounds of crickets and hay crunching as the PC walks
    - entrance – airy sounds like you're in a tunnel
    - roost – the sound of birds outside in the distance
  - The raccoon hole home – sound of dirt stepping
  - The Depths of Turnabout – strong winds
    - Earl's home – crickets and occasional settling dirt
    - the mole hole – PC stepping on dirt SE everywhere. An airy abyss SE, but very subtle.
    - The Forever Tree – wind. It varies, picking up occasionally as to sort of make the player feel rushed/ a sense of urgency
      - this stays throughout the boss battle, though it's a little quieter under the boss battle theme
- Pumpkin Prairie Fields – the sound of wind and stepping through leaves/grass
- Halloway Peaks – occasional sound of a car passing in the distance
  - The Human Home – sounds for respective floor types/room sizes
    - the study – when the TV is turned on, you can subtly hear gibberish being spoken
    - the kitchen – an open window is letting some air in so you can hear a slight breeze
    - the dining room – a clock on the wall can be heard ticking
- The streets – occasional sound of a car passing in the distance. The sounds of walking on pavement/the road