

Shadowlyn

DESIGN DOCUMENT

By BlueGarrett for the 2024 Pirate Software Game Jam

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Development Timeline

Introduction

Game Summary Pitch

Shadowlyn is a mini Metroidvania platformer where the player must use magical items and potions to traverse the world and restore a magical barrier holding back the shadows.

Game Story Pitch

When her family relocates to her grandfather's old farmhouse, Madalyn, nicknamed Shadowlyn, uncovers an enchanting world hidden beneath the property. This mysterious realm, known as the Shadowlands, exists parallel to our own and is filled with unimaginable treasures and enigmatic creatures called Shadowlings.

Shadowlyn soon learns that her grandfather was part of an ancient order known as the Alchemists. This venerable group was responsible for crafting powerful potions and magical defenses to prevent the Shadowlings from escaping the Shadowlands and causing chaos in our world.

Now, the responsibility falls on Shadowlyn to restore the magical barrier that her grandfather once maintained. To do this, she must journey through the Shadowlands, facing its many perils and unlocking its secrets. Along the way, she wields her grandfather's legendary hammer, "Shammer," to protect herself from the Shadowlings and to channel the ancient magic needed to repair the barrier.

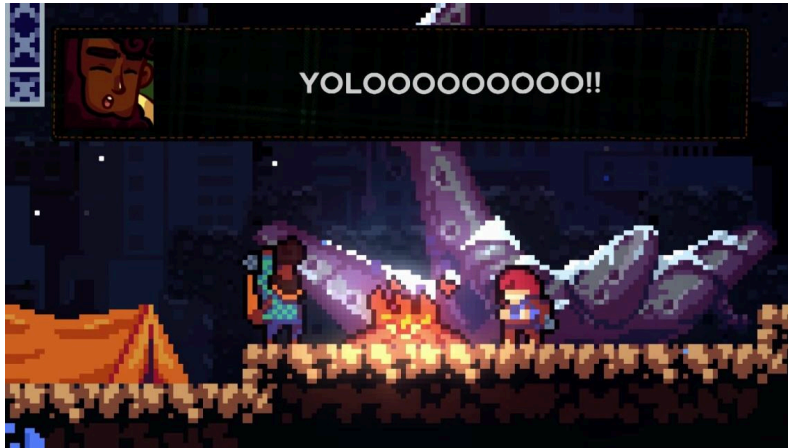
As Shadowlyn delves deeper into the Shadowlands, she uncovers the rich history of the Alchemists and their eternal struggle to safeguard the mortal world. Each step of her adventure brings her closer to mastering the alchemical arts and understanding the true power of the Shadowlings.

The primary objective of the game is to restore the three magical barriers, ensuring the Shadowlings remain contained within the Shadowlands. Players will explore a small contained version of the world, unlocking three different throwable potions. These potions can be used for engaging platforming mechanics and combat.

Can Shadowlyn succeed in her quest and restore balance and security to the unassuming mortal world? The fate of both realms rests in her hands.

Inspiration

Main inspirations from modern platformers and Metroidvanias.



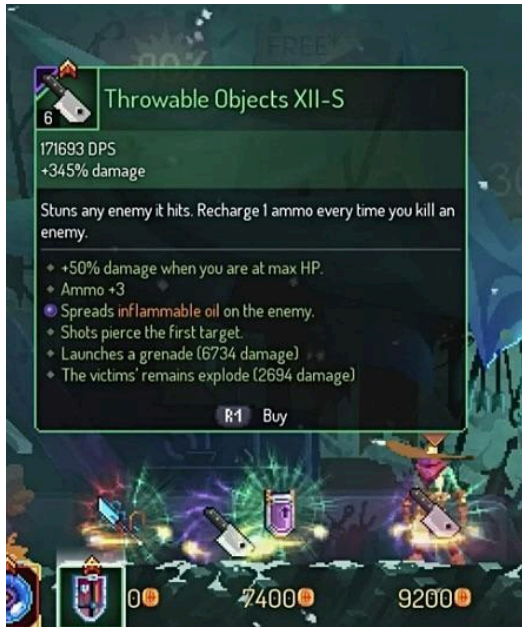
Celeste

Celeste's rich story and characters inspired me when developing the concept for the story. My main character Madalyn (Shadowlyn) is definitely inspired by Madeline from Celeste.



Hollow Knight

The overall world feel and interconnected levels were inspired by Hollow Knight. Everyone loves a good parallax background! Also, I followed an amazing tutorial by Sasquatch B Studios on how to make a [Hollow Knight like camera system](#).



Dead Cells

I feel my throwable objects are very similar to the ones in Dead Cells. I love the feeling of using throwable items in platformer levels.

Player Experience

The player will experience an interesting story related to the theme with a mini Metroidvania concept. Unlocking 3 main throwable potion abilities enabling the player to platform and fight in unique ways.

Platform

The game is developed to be released on a Windows/Mac Laptop or PC.

Development Software

- Unity Version ???
- Aseprite for graphics and UI
- FL Studio 21 and Splice for all music and SFX

Genre

Mini Metroidvania, Platformer, Singleplayer

Target Audience

With some simple platforming and combat mechanics, this game is marketed towards platformer and Metroidvania fans.

Concept

Gameplay overview

The player will unlock 4 different items in a linear order.

- The first item is a hammer used to destroy shadow projectiles or disable shadow boxes.
- The second item is a blue potion called Shadow Solid. This potion can be thrown on shadow boxes to turn them into solid platforms.
- The third item is a green potion called Shadow Wall. This potion can be thrown to create a green shadow wall. This can act as a barrier and a small platform.
- The fourth item is a red potion called Shadow Harm. This potion can be thrown on Shadowlings to destroy or harm them.

Another notable gameplay mechanic is the ability to turn into a shadow on death. When the player's health reaches zero they become a ghost that cannot interact with anything. They must float to the closest revive statue and regain solid form.

Theme Interpretation (Shadows and Alchemy)

Shadow interpretation: My interpretation of shadow was very literal. The main platforming mechanics revolve around transparent sprites (shadows). As well as the general dark theme and enemy design.

Alchemy interpretation: My interpretation of alchemy was also very straightforward and literal. With a focus on creating a story related to a secret group of guards called the alchemists that fight the shadows. The player also throws potions.

Primary Mechanics (More sprites added soon)

The primary mechanic is throwing a blue potion onto shadow boxes to turn them into solid shadows. Another primary mechanic is destroying solid shadows with the hammer.

Mechanic	Sprite
Hammer (Shammer)	
Blue Potion (Shadow Solid)	
Green Potion (Shadow Wall)	
Red Potion (Shadow Harm)	
Ghost Form (Shadowlyn)	

Secondary Mechanics

Mechanic	Sprite
Breaking Shadow Boxes	
Destroying Shadow Projectiles	

Art

Theme Interpretation

Very literal theme interpretation. Alchemy as in potions and creating things. Shadows as in the main enemy and world design. Also, story related concepts.

Design

Pixel art transparent shadows, and potions.

Audio

Music

To add to the overall theme and vibe of the game, 8 bit music was used. A music library was created to easily call songs across scenes.

Sound Effects

To add more polish and impact to the gameplay, a variety of sound effects were used. For my sound effects I attempt a pitch shift approach to create a feeling of more variety. A complex multi scene sound library manager was created for this project.

Game Experience

UI

For the UI elements I decided to go with a simple pixel art style matching the game theme and color palette. The UI is simplistic yet effective in conveying my needs.

Controls

Keyboard and mouse:

- Movement: WASD
- Jump: Space bar
- Duck: S key
- Attack/Throw: Left click

Keyboard:

- Movement: Arrow keys
- Jump: Space bar
- Duck: S key
- Attack/Throw: X key

Development Timeline

I did not have a detailed development timeline for this game jam. I mainly relied on daily sticky notes that had a list of things I needed to get done each day.

In future projects I would love to make a detailed development timeline to deliver a better product/result. My poor time management and planning resulted in my game being less organized than I had hoped.

Art Assets Used:

Paid:

- <https://muchopixels.itch.io/survival-kit-asset-pack>
- <https://muchopixels.itch.io/fantasy-kit-asset-pack>
- <https://muchopixels.itch.io/dungeon-tileset-pack>
- <https://elthen.itch.io/2d-pixel-art-shadow-entity-sprites>
- <https://joelfrancisburford.itch.io/dark-dissimulation-an-8-bit-metroidvania-music-sfx-pack>

Free (Commercial Use):

- <https://grafxkid.itch.io/sprite-pack-7>
- <https://lil-cthulhu.itch.io/pixel-art-cave-background>