LIGHT THE SHADE

DESIGN DOCUMENT

Designed by RandomSpaceCow for the 2024 Pirate Software Game Jam

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Introduction

Game Development Pitch

Light The Shade is a 2D, minimalistic platformer about making your way through a dark cavern, illuminated by only very few torches.

Inspiration

Animal Well

Animal Well challenges the player to find their way out of a **dark** well by finding tools, solving puzzles, defeating enemies, and **finding candles** to **illuminate and reveal** areas.
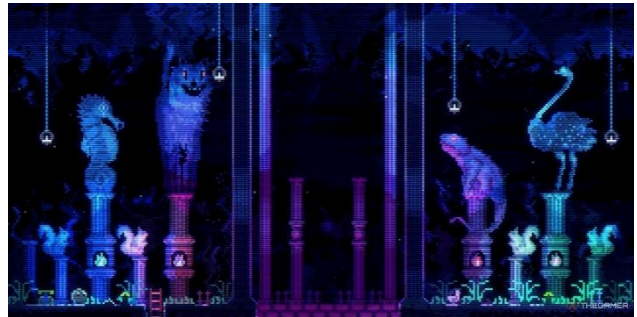
Thor

The one the only Goblin King, Long Lemon, Peeler and Wearer of Hot Dogs, and the one who **inspires** so many of us to **create and pursue**. I personally owe him thanks for entering this GameJam and for being a constant source of **inspiration, motivation, mana, and wisdom.**

Player Experience

The player controls a little shadow guy named Shade, and their job is to navigate him through a cavern across a variety of different levels. The player must control Shade, platforming from rock to rock, and avoiding falling into the darkness. If Shade falls into the void, the player must start again from the beginning. Levels will be in sets of two or three, with there being a checkpoint at the end of a set.

Platform

The game is developed to be released on Windows PC and Itch.io

Development Software

- Gamemaker Studio for programming
- Aseprite for all the art.
- FamiStudio and Audacity for music and sfx.

Genre

Single-player, platformer, dark, casual

Target Audience

At the core, the game is simple enough for **casual gamers to enjoy**. The platforming and lighting levels have proven to be a bit tedious at times, but not super difficult.

Concept

Gameplay Overview

The player controls a little shadow guy named Shade, and it's their job to **navigate him** across several layers/levels of a cavern. The only thing making it so you can see the **torches scattered** about within the cavern itself. The game consists of pretty **straightforward platforming, jumping across and climbing up** cave floors. The **goal of every** level is to make it to the **black "door"** which takes you to the next level. After level one, if you **fall**, you **reset** to the very beginning until you reach a **checkpoint**.

Theme Interpretation (Shadows and Alchemy)

Shadows interpretation- Light, or in this case, fire, has a very

interesting relationship with the dark. Providing vision in darkness

and illuminating or showing the path.

This is my first proper game and GameJam ever. I felt quite challenged when the theme was announced, but then I realized how broad it actually was. I immediately thought of a super cool idea for a platformer where you must find light sources and illuminate your way through a cavern. Only to find out that I don't quite have enough experience or knowledge to make a game like that quite yet. So, I went simple and minimalistic, while still being able to include caverns and torches and explore that interesting relationship between fire and darkness.

Primary Mechanics

JUMPING --- Jumping across and to platforms

MOVING --- Moving across platforms

FALLING --- Falling results in a restart of the level set

Secondary Mechanics

TORCHES --- Torches illuminate your entire path and control what is visible.

Art

Theme Interpretation

Using a very simple color palette of mainly shades of **black** and **gray** with a little bit of **oranges**, **yellows** and **whites**. It gave the game that perfect feeling of **darkness** and **rockiness**. The contrast between the darker colors and the lighter ones gives a real emphasis on the torch **light** and cavern **darkness**.

Design

A very **simple**, **minimalistic** approach was taken from the very beginning because I'd never made pixel art before, and I didn't want to overwhelm myself by trying to do too much. Everything from Shade's character design to animating the torches was all done with the intention to **not be too much** and be **simplistic**.

Credits

Thank you to **Vannzilla** on Newgrounds for the cave background art!

Audio

Music

There's no conventional music in this game. Instead, it's sounds you'd hear in a giant dark cavern; water dropping, static silence, deep groans, and a distant waterfall. All made with the sounds from my mouth and Audacity. Magic.

Sound Effects

To make the game more exciting, I used FamiStudio to create a simple jump and walking sound. I wanted the sound effects to feel different then the dark ambience to give it a cool contrast. I tinkered the sounds in Audacity to make them feel more alive. I also used Audacity to create a death and next level sound. (with my fingers this time).

Game Experience

UI

The game has little UI and is only present on the title screen and when returning to the menu. It's presented in a different style than the rest of the game but is still fitting the setting and vibe.

Controls

Keyboard

A/D – Left/Right Arrow Keys – Space

Development Timeline

N/A

If I do work on this in the future here's a list of some things to develop;

- More Levels
- Polished and Improved Art
- Fix Scaling and Resolution Issues

- Better Animations
- Improved UI