

8

Initial Consultation Document

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(Proofread and slightly reformatted by Michaël Samyn)

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

This document presents a framework for revising the core game design of 8 with the goal of preserving its core values, but developing a gameplay (and toyplay) layer suitable to a target audience.

In this way, the game preserves its artistic identity, whilst simultaneously fulfilling broader commercial goals.

1.2. Vision Statement

The vision statement for the game remains unchanged. It is that the player should be delivered the following experiences:

- ☐ **Immersion** in a beautiful and peaceful environment
- ☐ **Interaction** with an autonomous character in an emotionally moving fashion
- ☐ **Creativity** on the part of the player
- ☐ **Discovery** of the stories buried within the game world
- ☐ **Satisfaction** at witnessing the Palace regaining its former splendour

This vision statement immediately implies a slightly different audience to most computer games, but therein lies the commercial potential.

1.3. Unchanged Game Elements

The following game elements are not affected (or are only trivially affected) by the changes proposed in this consultation document:

- The game draws inspiration from variations of the Sleeping Beauty myths
- The game is non-violent
- The central character identity and autonomy (the girl is not an avatar of the player)
- The game will not feature any speech
- The game will not include conventional “HUD” style interface elements
- The framing story of the Wicked Fairy and the eight unworthy princes is unchanged
- The game still takes place in a palace filled with sleeping people
- The essential scenes will be maintained, **but** the underlying puzzles will be altered in order to maintain logical game flow and achieve a layer of gameplay
- Non-linear play will apply, **but** there will be a structure to the exploration; the Palace will not be wholly available from the start of play

2. Overview of Gameplay

2.1. Gameplay versus Toyplay

In order to satisfy the target audience for this game, it is necessary to provide Toyplay – that is, a set of interactions and abilities which are entertaining to apply to the environment in and of themselves (c.f. *The Sims*, *Animal Crossing*, non-mission elements of *GTA: Vice City*). This type of play is supported by the existence of Toys within the game world.

However, in order to satisfy the evangelist clusters essential to reaching a wider audience (see: Target Audience, at the end of this document) it is necessary to provide Gameplay, that is, challenge in the form of goals and processes. This type of play can be supported by a number of ways, but it is proposed to support gameplay for this project by the use of Tools.

This section describes the key structural elements which will provide the dual gameplay and toyplay layers.

2.2. Framework of Gameplay

The following elements define the framework by which gameplay is produced:

- **Hub – Mausoleum:** the Mausoleum where the Princess sleeps functions as a central hub for the game. The player will return here often.
- **Framing Quest – Escape Palace:** the opening sequence gives the player their framing motivation, which is to escape from the Palace.
 - *Exploration:* as the player moves around the space of the Palace, the motivation gradually becomes curiosity/exploration.
 - *Wake the Princess:* the resolution of the situation ultimately involves waking the Princess.
- **Progress – Alcoves:** completing the dioramas in the Mausoleum (and hence acquiring Spells) provides the central measure of progress in the gameplay layer.
 - *Alcove objects:* placing the appropriate items in the alcoves to complete the dioramas serves to frame the player's short term goals: find a new object in order to fill an alcove (and also acquire a new spell).
 - *Secret Passages:* Additionally, each completed diorama opens up a secret passage connecting to a new part of the Palace, thus further fuelling curiosity/exploration.
- **Housekeeping – Repair the Palace:** a secondary layer of gameplay (which doubles as a toyplay layer) is provided by a housekeeping task; repairing the damage to the Palace. The player is not directly rewarded for this task.
 - *New Routes:* repairing the Palace in some cases may allow the player to gain access to new routes (or shorter routes) around the Palace, thus providing an additional gameplay reward to the repair task.
 - *Secret Trophies:* each of the repair tasks (see Framework of Toyplay, below) has a symbolic representation within the game world; an iconic item which changes to show the degree of progress on a particular task. Goal-oriented players can therefore engage themselves with the task of completing the various repair tasks.
- **Tools:** a toolkit of eight everyday items is provided from the very start of the game. The player must determine how to use these tools to solve the puzzles and situations they encounter in the Palace.
- **Spells:** although none of the spells are necessary for the completion of the game, their acquisition may make progress easier. Hence, there is a gameplay reason for the player to acquire the spells.

2.3. Framework of Toyplay

The following elements define the framework by which toyplay is produced:

- **Toys:** the Palace will include many items which serve no gameplay purpose, but which the player can use for their own entertainment and amusement.
This has an added benefit: since the player will learn that all problems are solved with the Tools, there is no implied frustration at not knowing which items are 'valuable' and which are Red herrings.
- **Spells:** as well as serving a (minor) gameplay purpose, the spells serve a primary purpose as a source of toyplay interactions for the player.
- **Housekeeping – Repair the Palace:** the housekeeping tasks serve as a toyplay element. Since the indications of progress are hidden, the player can satisfy themselves with the repair of the palace as a process which is its own reward.

3. Puzzles & Tasks

3.1. Tools

3.1.1 Toolkit

Provisional

The player is provided with a set of eight tools – all of an everyday nature. The familiarity of these items means that every player will understand how these items are to be used. For example, it is apparent that a pair of scissors is used to cut, and that a candle is used to burn or to illuminate.

The following are the suggested eight tools for the player's toolkit:

- ❑ **Scissors:** used for cutting.
- ❑ **Candle (or: matches):** used for lighting fires and for illumination.
- ❑ **Needle & Thread:** used for repairing torn fabric primarily and anywhere that a needle is an appropriate tool.
- ❑ **Brush:** a wire-bristled brush, used for cleaning away dust, or sweeping up things on the floor.
- ❑ **Ball of Twine:** the ball of twine can be used to bind things, or to pull upon things, or to leave a trail. It can also be used to play with the cat.
- ❑ **Handkerchief (or: cloth):** can be used to touch things the girl does not want to touch, or for polishing dirty glass
- ❑ **Empty Bottle:** can be used for carrying water (to solve water-related puzzles prior to the acquisition of the Water spell). This is the only storage the player has access to, and can hold one appropriate Toy item (e.g. a flower).
- ❑ **Eyeglass:** a jeweller's eyeglass; it can be used to look at things in detail (or potentially to see distant objects). May even be used to start a fire in a room where strong winds make the candle untenable.

3.1.2 Interface

The toolkit is normally hidden in the black bar at the bottom of the screen. If the player allows their cursor to move to the bottom of the screen, the toolkit is revealed. The process for tool use is therefore:

1. Move cursor to black band at bottom of screen
2. Toolkit is revealed
3. Select tool
4. Tool becomes 'attached' to player's cursor
5. Little girl will take the tool from the player

When the tool is in the little girl's hands, she can use it to solve puzzles and problems.

The player can right click to ask the girl to return the tool (the girl gives the tool back to the player, and it returns to the toolkit). This is the same interface as is used for dropping 'Toy' items.

If the player indicates for the girl to pick up a 'Toy' item while the little girl holds a Tool, she will automatically come to the player to return the Tool before picking up the 'Toy' item.

3.2. Examples of Tool-driven Puzzles

3.2.1 The Hot Air Balloon

This puzzle already exists in the current specification of 8 . The engineer constructed the hot air balloon to escape the Palace, but fell to his death before lighting the pyre.

The player can use the candle to ignite the pyre with the Candle to complete this puzzle. (If the player has the Spell of Fire, this can also be used).

The pyre may also be blocking a route in the Palace, allowing new areas to be reached.

3.2.2 Smoke

A path is blocked by smoke from the pyre lit for the hot air balloon. When the girl approaches, she coughs and withdraws.

Using the Handkerchief, the girl can cover her mouth, allowing her to path through the smoke.

3.2.3 Broken Pipe

There is a broken pipe. Initially, this does nothing, but at some point water begins flowing down this pipe (possibly from the repair of a fountain; possibly from another task). The pipe hangs down and won't connect.

The player can give the girl the Twine to bind the pipe into place.

3.2.4 The Dusty Mirror

In the corner of one room is a particular dusty wall. The girl coughs when she approaches it.

The player can give her the Brush to clean away most of the dirt, revealing a dirty mirror, or can collect water in the Empty Bottle and use that to wash away most of the dirt.

Then, the player can give her the Hankerchief to polish the glass.

The girl seems intrigued with what she sees in the mirror. The player can use the Eyeglass to examine one of the details in the mirror, which shows a switch near the ceiling on the other side of the room which is not visible directly.

The girl immediately goes and climbs on a chair, putting her hand up to where she saw the switch. The switch activates something allowing further progress.

3.2.5 The Windmill

In one corner of the palace is a small windmill, used for grinding corn. The millstone is still in place, but the sails are tattered. There is a pulley system for raising and lowering bags of grain, but it runs of the same mechanism as the mill and won't move.

The player can get the girl to climb down the rope, (to an area below which is connected to the main paths) but she lacks the strength to pull herself up.

Closer examination of the sails (using the Eyeglass) reveals that the sails are made of cloth which has torn.

The player can give the girl the Needle & Thread to sew the sails back together. Once this is done, the wind picks up the sails, and turns the wheel. This also operates the pulley. The girl can hold onto the rope to travel up to the floor above.

(Alternatively, the Spell of Repair, when it is known, will repair the sails).

3.3. Toys

As already mentioned, every item in the Palace *except the Alcove objects* is a Toy (or Red herring) with no purpose except to entertain the player.

The player may collect these items in fixed places, if they wish, or arrange them in a pleasing manner for decorative purposes. Or they may ignore them entirely. They provide a diversion from the main processes of the gameplay.

3.4. Spells

The following is the proposed (revised) spell set:

Spell Name	Prince	Appearance	Effects
Spell of Dreams	Priest	Tiara	Can see into sleepers' dreams
Spell of Water	Hunter	Bells along hem of dress	Water plants, activate fountains
Spell of Cleaning	Traveller	New shoes	Clear away dust while dancing
Spell of Pruning	Poet	Arm jewel	Can trim and remove Wicked Branches
Spell of Healing	Actor	Cat (or: TBA)	Comfort/heal troubled sleepers
Spell of Masonry	Tailor	Toy Wings	Repair damage to walls
Spell of Fire	Brother	Decorative design on dress	Light candles, fireplaces
Spell of Repair	Engineer	TBA	Fix broken devices and mechanisms

Summary of changes:

Spell of 'Telepathy' renamed to 'Dreams'; 'Telepathy' seems too science fiction for the setting.

Spell of 'Nursing' renamed to 'Healing' for clarity.

Spell of 'Repair' renamed to spell of 'Masonry', to confine its role to repairing damaged walls

Spell of 'Instrument Operation' replaced with spell of 'Repair' to repair damaged devices

The following table shows how the various Spells act as alternative solutions for Tool puzzles, and also any unique House keeping effects they may have.

'Depth' refers to how hidden in the logical space of the game world the spell will be, and hence how late in the game the player is likely to encounter that spell. (See the section on 'Structure' for more details on this concept of 'depth').

Spell Name	Effect	Depth	Supersedes	Unique Functions
Spell of Dreams	Can see into sleepers' dreams	0	–	See Dreams [Witness Dreams Task]
Spell of Water	Water plants, activate fountains	1	Using <u>Empty Bottle</u> (once filled with water) to water plants [Grow Plants Task]	Simply acquiring this spell reactivates the fountains in the Palace
Spell of Cleaning	Clear away dust while dancing	1	Using <u>Brush</u> to clear a patch of dust to see what is underneath	Cleaning entire rooms of dust [Cleaning Task]
Spell of Pruning	Can trim and remove Wicked Branches	2	–	Eliminate Wicked Branches [Wicked Branches Task]
Spell of Healing	Comfort/heal wounded sleepers	2	–	Heal Wounded Sleepers [Healing Task]
Spell of Masonry	Repair damage to walls	3	–	Repair collapsed doors (Opens new shortcuts) Repair damage to walls caused by Wicked Branches (if Branches have been removed) [Masonry Task]
Spell of Fire	Light candles, fireplaces	3	Using <u>Candle</u> to light other candles and fireplaces [Lighting Task]	
Spell of Repair	Fix and broken devices and mechanisms	4	Use of various Tools to repair broken devices [Device Task]	-

As can be seen, the most likely abilities to be acquired early on simply make it easier for the player to perform certain tasks; then, the player gains abilities which are entirely new (removing the Wicked Branches and healing Wounded sleepers). From there the abilities the player acquires (assuming they follow the most likely sequence) make life much easier for them, providing new short cuts, an easier way to light fires and finally a short cut which automatically solves some Tool puzzles for them.

3.5. Housekeeping Tasks

3.5.1 Purpose of Housekeeping Tasks

One model of game structure shows that there are two basic means of organising game tasks:

- **Pathfinding** processes involve the player trying to work out how to get from A to B (either in physical space, as in an FPS game, or in logical space, as in an adventure game). Pathfinding activities are strongly correlated with the Type 1 play style preference (see Target Audience at the end of this document for more information on play styles).
- **Housekeeping** processes involve the player participating in the game space in some fashion that is divorced from issues of direct progress. They can include collecting similar tokens (as in a platform game) or cultivating game resources (as in a Sim). They are correlated with the Type 2 and 3 play style preference, with Type 2 being associated with Housekeeping *challenges* and Type 3 being correlated with a Housekeeping *activities*.

Including Housekeeping activities broadens the appeal of the game design considerably, to all play styles. For example, although Type 1 style of play prefers a core mechanic of pathfinding, they may still become engaged in Housekeeping *with the goal of fully completing the Housekeeping task*. Conversely, the Type 3 style of play is more likely to take part in the pathfinding element of the game in order to *discover more Housekeeping activities*.

3.5.2 The Eight Housekeeping Tasks

The eight housekeeping tasks can be completed in part through the use of the Tools, but require the use of the Spells for them to be fully completed.

Each housekeeping task is completely separate – the player may participate in as many or as few of these tasks as they wish, and complete as many or few as they wish.

These eight tasks (or activities) are:

- **Witness Dreams Task:** involves witnessing the dreams of all the sleepers.
- **Grow Plants Task:** involves finding all the wilted plants in the Palace and watering them. This can be done using the Empty Bottle tool (and some water), or by use of the Spell of Water.
- **Cleaning Task:** involves removing all the dust from the rooms. Although this could be achieved with the Brush tool, it is much easier using the Spell of Cleaning.
- **Wicked Branches Task:** involves pruning away the branches that grow in the Palace (this is the closest to a violent act that the player can perform). The Spell of Pruning is required.
- **Healing Task:** involves comforting those dreamers who are considered Wounded using the Spell of Healing. Wounded sleepers are indicated by some bruises and similar marks on their model; furthermore, the cat (if implemented) will be particularly interested in those dreamers who are designated Wounded.
- **Masonry Task:** involves repairing damage to the Palace caused both by the Wicked Branches and the ravages of time. The Spell of Masonry is required, as well as the Spell of Pruning in some cases (as the branches must be removed before the walls are repaired).
- **Lighting Task:** involves lighting all the candles and fireplaces in the Palace. This can be done with either the Candle tool or the Spell of Fire. Some candles will be out of the player's reach and require the Spell of Fire, but most can be lit with the Candle.
- **Device Task:** involves repairing any broken mechanisms and devices in the Palace, e.g. the broken gramophone. Many can be repaired using the various Tools, but all can be repaired with the Spell of Repair.

3.5.3 Secret Trophies

Provisional

In order for Hardcore players to discover goals with which to keep them sufficiently challenged, there are hidden in the game a number of 'Secret Trophies'. These each serve as a measure of progress for a specific housekeeping task, and when complete become a trophy or bookend to show that the task is complete. When all are complete, another trophy is also added, to demonstrate to the dedicated player that they have fully "completed" the game. *This should be added to the park when the player ends the game.*

Task	Goal	Trophy	Finished Trophy
Witness Dreams Moderate	See all the dreams in the Palace	Planetarium A domed ceiling, within which stars light up as each dream is seen.	The ceiling begins to turn, and the stars flicker.
Grow Plants Long	Water all flowers and plants in the Palace	Tree of Life A sapling in an appropriate place in the Palace; it grows as the task progresses	Tree of Life blossoms, and scatters blossoms into the location it is placed
Cleaning Trivial	Dust all rooms	Hourglass A large hourglass exists, but it contains no sand.	Hourglass is full of sand and changes colour. It begins keeping track of time, taking one hour to empty of sand.
Wicked Branches Trivial	Remove all Wicked Branches	Snow Globe There is a large snow globe in the Palace. It begins with no brambles, but becomes more overgrown as the player removes the brambles.	Palace in the snow globe is filled with brambles; the snow in the snow globe is perpetually in snowstorm (rather than just after it is shaken).
Healing Easy	Heal all Wounded sleepers	Doll Collection A certain room contains a collection of dolls, representing the various sleepers. The Wounded sleepers are absent.	No gaps in the doll collection.
Masonry Easy	Repair all damaged masonry	Matchstick Model There is a collection of matchsticks in a particular place. As the masonry is repaired, it builds a model of the Palace.	Matchstick palace is complete
Lighting Long	Light all fires and candles	Dollhouse Model of Palace As each room is fully lit, each room of the dollhouse model of the palace becomes illuminated.	There are no sources of light in the room with the dollhouse model. Once everywhere else is lit, this room is fully illuminated.
Devices Moderate	Repair all devices	Clockwork Owl A damaged clockwork owl. Many pieces are obviously missing. As each device is repaired, more pieces are returned to the owl.	Finished owl can be repaired with the <u>Spell of Repair</u> and then begins flapping and hooting mechanically.

Note:

All the above trophies are suggestions – Tale of Tales should feel free to substitute any other trophy. However, it must be possible to display at least 8-10 different states for each trophy, and the final state must be definitive in some way.

4. Structure

4.1. Overall Structure

It is suggested to take the following structure as the basis for 8:

- Player commences in the Hub
- Initially, they are able to access a large proportion of the Palace (perhaps 60% of the Palace) via a circular route (**Logical Loop One** – see below)
- Solving Tool puzzles allows one of two things to happen:
 - Access to an Alcove object, thus allowing access to a new Spell and Secret Passage.
 - Access to an extension to the existing logical loop such that at least one more Tool puzzle is discovered
- Placing an Alcove object in its diorama opens a new Secret Passage, thus unlocking a new **logical loop**.

We will look at the details of this structure in detail.

4.2. Hub

4.2.1 The Mausoleum

The Mausoleum serves as the players Hub area. They will return here many times, primarily because they must bring the Alcove objects here.

Also, the 8 different secret passages that extend from the Mausoleum effectively create a series of shortcuts which allow the player to navigate the Palace more effectively.

4.2.2 Secret Passages

The 8 secret passages can be inside or outside the Mausoleum. After entering an Alcove object into its diorama, a new passage opens up outside. (A camera case can be used to show this to the player).

This allows the player to travel to somewhere new within the Palace, thus driving curiosity and rewarding the player in multiple ways for achieving the goal of returning the Alcove object.

4.3. Logical Loop One

4.3.1 First Route

Logical Loop One is the first route through the Palace that the player will discover. It begins and ends at the Mausoleum. The player will not feel that Logical Loop One is a fixed path – games that use this kind of structure feel as if the player is exploring a fully open environment, but because the locations are structured on a loop, the player will not become lost (as whichever way they go, they will end up completing a single logical loop).

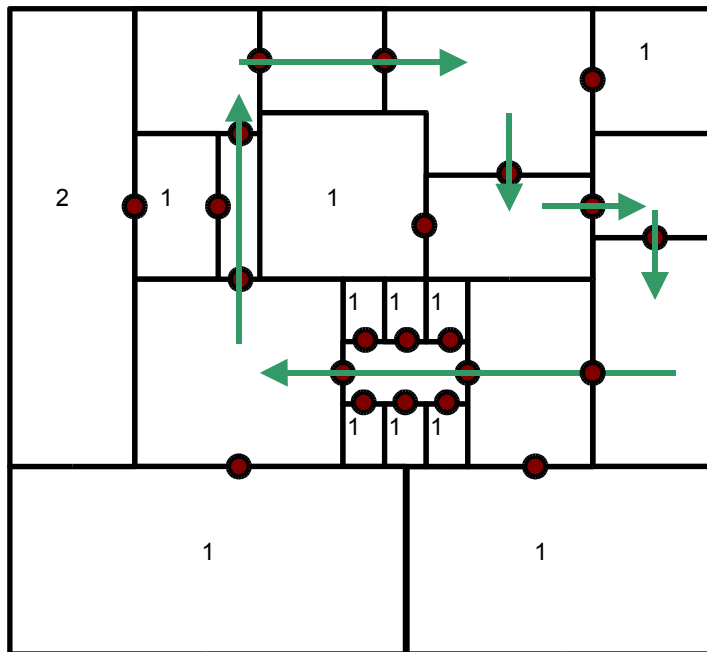
There can and will be locations that are ‘off the loop’ – however, these will invariably be dead ends, and not stray more than a maximum of two locations from the loop itself.

From within Logical Loop One, the player is at “Depth 0” – therefore, they will be able to access two of the Alcove objects by solving a single Tool puzzle within the loop.

A third Tool puzzle will give them access to Logical Loop Two.

4.3.2 Example

The following gives an example of a logical loop in a hypothetical map:



As can be seen, although this seems to be just a 'random' collection of rooms, there is a "circular" route (the logical loop) as marked by the green arrows. A player, in this situation, can choose to follow the arrows, or go in the opposite direction. Either way, they get to see the whole area covered by the logical loop.

Various locations are attached to this loop, but never more than 2 rooms away (we can see locations marked with a '1' or a '2' to show how far from the loop they are).

The vast advantage of the logical loop structure is that players cannot easily get lost when the first route they are introduced to is a logical loop such as this.

4.3.3 Additional Logical Loops

It is suggested that the Secret Passages provide extensions to the initial logical loop (logical loop one). Each extension would consist of a number of new rooms that connect to existing points in logical loop one.

Additionally, there is a second logical loop which is independent of Logical Loop One (Logical Loop Two). This should cover perhaps 10% of the Palace. There would be additional extensions which expand upon logical loop two.

Finally, a third loop (Logical Loop Three) which also covers perhaps 10% of the Palace. The logical extensions to this loop connect it to the other two.

There are hence three complete loops (covering 60%, 10% and 10% of the palace respectively plus seven loop extensions which make up the remaining 20% of the rooms).

4.3.4 Latched Doors

In order for the extensions to connect to the main geography, it is necessary for there to be some locked doors in the Palace, leading from the main loops. These would be *latched doors* – when the little girl is on the 'wrong' side of these doors, she can pull on the handle but they will not open.

When she is on the other side, she can lift the latch (with a satisfying click) and thereafter the door can be traversed from either side.

There are several advantages to latched doors:

- They permit the player to become aware of future routes (foreshadowing)
- They provide a simple, understandable reward for the player
- The opening of latches allows the loop structures to gradually become more complicated – the player can learn the layout from a simple structure and then gradually acquire more routes and choices

One or two latched doors for each extension are required (about a dozen in total).

4.4. Possible Structure

Provisional

4.4.1 Overview

The following is one possible structure using three logical loops and seven extensions. Where the term 'Access' is provided, it can mean a number of different things:

- Solving the Tool puzzle gives direct access to a door or other connective device
- Solving the Tool puzzle causes a change in the circumstances of the palace which indirectly reveals another direction that can be explored
- Solving the Tool puzzle causes a change in the circumstances of the palace which by a causal chain causes a physical change – for instance, a hot air balloon may take off but then crash through a wall somewhere, creating a new route.

Therefore, the scope of the word 'access' in these cases is logical, and should not be taken as literal.

4.4.2 Initial State (Logical Loop One)

Initially, the player has the Spell of Dreams and access to Logical Loop One. They can either go through the secret passage, and around the loop back through a door that leads back to the Mausoleum, or they can go through the door, go around the loop and end up at the secret passage. Logical loop one includes the Mausoleum, as the player has only returned one item to it at this stage, therefore the Mausoleum should be specifically 'on their path' until they have been taught (by at least 2 iterations) its role – a place to bring Alcove objects to. Choices:

- **Tool puzzle:** The player can acquire the Spell of Cleaning, and access to loop extension 1a.
- **Tool puzzle:** The player can acquire the Spell of Water, and access to loop extension 1b.
- **Tool puzzle:** Access to Logical Loop Two.

4.4.3 Extension 1a

Connects to logical loop one via latched doors.

- **Tool puzzle:** Access to Logical Loop Two

4.4.4 Extension 1b

Connects to logical loop one via latched doors.

- **Tool puzzle:** Access to Logical Loop Three

4.4.5 Logical Loop Two

Unconnected to logical loop one initially; therefore, the player can only access this section from the Hub (via a secret passage opened from an Alcove object, passing through either extension 1b, 2a or 3b).

- **Tool puzzle:** The player can acquire the Spell of Pruning, and access to logical loop three.
- **Tool puzzle:** The player can acquire the Spell of Healing, and access to loop extension 2a.
- **Tool puzzle:** access to Logical Loop Three

4.4.6 Extension 2a

Connects to logical loop two via one latched door, and logical loop one via another latched door. This section serves to join loops one and two together, and also provides a connection to loop three.

- **Tool puzzle:** Access to Logical Loop Three
- This route joins logical loops one and two

4.4.7 Logical Loop Three

Unconnected to logical loop one or two initially; therefore, the player can only access this section from the Hub (via a secret passage opened from an Alcove object).

- **Tool puzzle:** The player can acquire the Spell of Masonry, and access to extension 3a.
- **Tool puzzle:** The player can acquire the Spell of Fire, and access to loop extension 3b.
- **Tool puzzle:** Access to extension 3c (single chamber).

4.4.8 Extension 3a

Connects to logical loop three via one latched door, and logical loop one via another latched door. This section serves to join loops one and three together, as well as providing a route to 3c.

- **Tool puzzle:** Access to extension 3c (single chamber).
- This route joins logical loops one and three

4.4.9 Extension 3b

Connects to logical loop three via one latched door, and logical loop two via another latched door. This section serves to join loops two and three together, as well as providing a route to 3c.

- **Tool puzzle:** Access to extension 3c (single chamber).
- This route joins logical loops two and three

4.4.10 Extension 3c (Single Chamber)

A single room, the location of the eighth Alcove object. Choices:

- **Tool puzzle:** The player can acquire the Spell of Repair, and access to extension 3d.
- Any remaining tool puzzles from other areas

4.4.11 Extension 3d

A short cut which connects to a number of other extensions via latched doors. (Thus allowing the player alternative access to several extensions).

4.4.12 Notes

This structure allows the Spells to be discovered in any order – although note that the player must solve more puzzles to find the Spell of Repair first (4) than the Spell of Cleaning or Water (1). It is therefore strongly non-linear.

A minimum of two thirds (10 of 15) of the puzzles must be solved to acquire all the Spells/Alcove objects. This is in keeping with the “70% rule” which suggests that for Casual game players, no more than about 70% of the game materials should be required to be completed in order to progress and/or complete the game.

4.5. Alternative Structures

There are of course many other structures that could be applied to the game. However, most give serious issues:

- **Open Structure:** in this, the player is free to go everywhere from the start. The trouble with open structure is that you are restrained either to only having the Tool puzzles give direct access to the Alcove objects (i.e. there would only be seven puzzles in the game) or it implies an object chain, which dooms the game to be a traditional puzzle adventure, with corresponding narrowing of audience appeal.

Additionally, the open structure is hard to navigate without a map, and adding a map seems against the immersive quality of the game space. (Many players suffer from navigation problems in entirely open spaces; this has been often reported by Japanese game designers as a major problem with this style of structure).

Open structures are possible when core gameplay is challenge oriented; if the player must struggle to explore new areas, a sense of progress is engendered. This structure, successfully implemented in classic video games such as *Jet Set Willy* and *Spindizzy*, is totally at odds with current audience tolerance, as it requires repeat exposure to create sufficient familiarity for enjoyment to emerge.

It is also possible to support fully open structures in an entirely toyplay fashion (e.g. *Animal Crossing*). But in these cases, the game must be nothing more than a playground – they must be truly open in that they have no end point, and no goals of any kind. They imply very different design issues to 8.

- **Choice of Wing:** in this, the Palace is divided into seven wings, one for each of the remaining princes. The player chooses by some mechanism which wing to explore in turn. The trouble with this structure is that it creates levels in a game which should be about an immersive game space. Plus, each wing suffers the same problem as open structure – either an object chain is required, or a linear sequence of Tool puzzles which must be overcome in sequence to complete that wing.

5. Tutorial

5.1.1 Teaching the Controls

It is going to be a requirement that the player is taught the mouse controls for 8. Not only is the control configuration moded (and therefore impossible to immediately intuit) but the intended audience is hoped to include “non-gamers” who will be particularly vulnerable to confusion in the face of an unfamiliar control technique.

It is proposed that the player can be taught at the start of the game.

There are two main choices:

- **Park:** right at the very start of the game. The girl is playing with her ball in the park. She encounters the player – the tutorial plays out as interaction between the girl and the player. The tone is playful.
- **Forest:** after the girl has become lost in the forest, she encounters the player – the tutorial plays out as interaction between the player and the girl. The girl requires help.

The former is probably preferable, as in the park the girl is in good spirits, which is ideal for the mood of the tutorial. Additionally, it will allow the player to befriend the girl at this early stage which will definitely aid the relationship between the player and the girl by establishing a warm rapport between the two.

5.1.2 Nature of the Tutorial

This section assumes the Park option is chosen.

It is suggested that the tutorial proceeds as a process of play between the player and the girl. For instance:

- The girl darts around the (fixed) screen. The player tries to ‘tag’ her with the pointer. When the player successfully tags the girl, she giggles.
- The girl then runs behind the player. The player must rotate 180 degrees in order to face the girl. When this happens, the girl laughs and points at the player.
- The girl runs behind the player and hides behind an object. The player must physically move around the park in order to find her.

Once all the aspects of the control mechanism have been learned, the tutorial ends, and the girl loses her ball and enters the Palace...

5.1.3 Mouse Display

For the tutorial to work, the player must be able to see the action they are required to perform on the mouse.

Therefore, an on screen mouse image is required. This can be in full 3D. It may even be a more baroque form of mouse (a brocade mouse, for instance).

Without such a display image, there will be no way for the player to know what action is required from them, since there is of course no speech in the game.

6. Additional Notes

6.1. Red Areas

The following areas have been designated 'Red Areas', that is, sections in the design which may have to be cut if there is insufficient time to implement:

- **Cat:** although it would be highly desirable to have an autonomous cat character, this may prove expensive to develop.

Replacement: in the event the cat is lost, a simple visual change to the girl's appearance can be used, akin to the tiara addition for the Telepathy spell – perhaps a different hair style could be used.

- **Trophies:** each trophy requires multiple stages and animations which may prove too resource-costly.

Replacement: a single approach which is duplicated for each task. Perhaps adding a specific item to the closing animation of the game for each completed task.

Alternative: a room with seven dials in it, each decorated in a manner to indicate their related task. The dials then rise to show the progress of each task. This would be sufficient for most Hardcore gamers.

6.2. Alternative: Spells as Additional Tools

Although the opening of secret passages is an acceptable means of giving the player access to new parts of the Palace, the design team in discussion greatly preferred an alternative approach – namely, that the acquired spells would be used as additional tools in order to open up the new areas of the Palace. This removes the need for the secret passages, but implies no other changes (other than the addition of 7 Spell puzzles, to accompany the Tool puzzles).

This is listed here as an alternative as it is suspected that *Tale of Tales* will feel that this approach would be “too gamey”, although in terms of the principle of elegance, it is probably superior to that of the secret passages.

6.3. Back of Box

In order to create the right “initial mental state” in a player, the back of the box needs to provide information that will be interpreted one way by a Casual or non-gamer, and another by a Hardcore gamer. This information should include:

- **“Suitable for Beginners”**
This should be emblazoned as a large slogan on the box. The Casual or non-gamer will process this as meaning the game is appropriate for them. The Hardcore gamer may take this to mean it is too easy for them, but they will process additional information on the box to make a different decision.
- **“Advanced Challenges for Experts – Discover Eight Secret Tasks”**
This USP (unique selling point) can be as part of the regular bullet points on the box. This will reassure the Hardcore player that the game is not only for beginners.
- **“Mouse with Mouse Wheel recommended”**
The minimum specification should include this point.

7. Target Audience

7.1. Demographic Game Design

Demographic (or market-oriented) game design uses audience models to identify potential candidate consumers for a game product. By identifying the psychological play needs of a target audience, the game design can then focus on meeting the needs of this audience, thus avoiding the unsubstantiated vagaries which usually predominate in game design.

For more information on the DGD1 model used in this section, see www.ihobo.com/articles (Demographic Game Design PDF at the bottom of the page).

7.2. Evangelist Clusters

Evangelist clusters represent sections of the audience for the game with the potential and intent to spread knowledge of the game to a wider audience. The evangelist clusters for 8 would be:

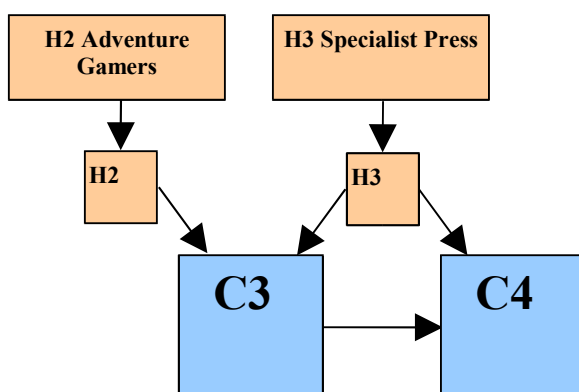
- **H2 Managers (Adventure Gamers):** a “Hardcore” gaming cluster associated primarily with sim-genre games, but also crucially correlated with classic adventure-genre games. It is specifically the adventure gamer community (a mixed gender sub-cluster) which would be used as a primary evangelist cluster – this community has an established collection of websites etc. which can be used to proselytize awareness of the game within this audience cluster. Such low-level support is especially pertinent to low budget ‘art house’ games, where word of mouth is vital to success.
- **H3 Wanderers (“Looking for Something Different”):** this cluster is mixed gender, and samples many different games over the course of each year. They are attracted to new experiences, and are likely to become interested in the game via previews in the specialist press and other conventional means of building audience awareness. *Approximately 20% of reviewers in the specialist press fit this cluster.*

7.3. Target Clusters

Target clusters are the wider audience being targeted. The target clusters for 8 would be:

- **C3 Wanderers (“Low Stress Entertainment”):** related to the H3, these have similar game habits to the H3’s but play fewer games each year. Word-of-mouth and direct personal recommendation is the most likely means by which this audience can be reached. Articles in the Mainstream press will greatly increase uptake with this cluster.
- **C4 Participants (“Emotional Involvement”):** a primarily female game audience cluster. They are believed to have played a key role in the second round of propagation of *The Sims*. It is likely that this audience will be reached tangentially, via more game-literate friends/relations. *This cluster represents a secondary target.*

7.4. Market Vector



As the diagram demonstrates, the market vector relies upon awareness being spread by the specialist press and adventure game sites. This in turn recruits a Hardcore audience (H2 and H3 players) which in turn spread awareness of the game to the C3 and C4 audiences.

Most people who currently do not consider themselves to be game players fall into the Type 3 and Type 4 styles of play, which are very poorly represented in the current market. This gap in supply creates a commercial opportunity.