

# Follow the Lantern Man

## Game Design Document

By Amalie Kaeseler  
LCC ID: KAE16487475

Version 1.0: March 2017

Follow the Lantern Man	1
High Concept	2
Folklore	2
Other Norse myths featured	2
Verbs	3
Goals	3
Challenges	3
Matrix	4
Moodboard	4
The Game	5
The Following Phase	5
The Combat Phase	7
The Shop	8
A note on strategy and flow	8
Learning the ropes	9
Programming	10
Object Relationship Diagrams	10
Finite State Machines	11
Player Data	14
List of Enemies	14
List of Shop Items	15
Lucky Streak Items	15
Object Models	16
Follow the Lantern Man: Design Diary	17
Bibliography	21

## **High Concept**

A game about following a mythical creature, and fighting ancient monsters.

You are lost deep in the woods, when a heavy fog appears out of nowhere. You think you will never find your way out, when a small dancing light appears. Now your only option is to follow the curious creature, hoping that it will lead you home.

But something ominous is waiting in the fog..!

## **Folklore**

The *Lantern Man* is the Norse mythology's equivalent of the *Will o' the Wisp* from Celtic folklore. This strange phenomenon and mythical creature has been documented all across world, and is known by many different names. The list of names includes *corpse candle*, *jack o' lantern*, and *ignis fatuus*.

These small luminescent creatures, are in some cultures considered a fairy, a spirit, and sometimes a demon. But no matter the explanation, it is always described as a floating ball of light, that appears after sundown, during heavy fog, or in thick woods.

The Scandinavian equivalent, the *Lantern man*, is most known for appearing in marshes and swamps. It is said, that the Lantern Man will seek out lost travelers, and attempt to lead them deeper into the troublesome landscape, in hope of devouring their souls.

In pre-Christian Scandinavia, the Lantern Man was credited most of the deaths, which was caused by drowning in swamps and marshes.

In some communities, the Lantern Man would even be a known entity, which would take a human sacrifice once a year.



*Marsh Light (circa 1860)*



*Nixes - Thomas Keightley (1880)*

## **Other Norse myths featured**

**Draugr:** The Draugr are animated skeletons from Norse Mythology, normally known to guard burial sites of the rich and important. It was believed that the Viking men who did not pass on to either fight in Valhalla, or suffer in Hel, would simply come back to life, walking the earth, blinded by greed over material possessions.

**Nøkken:** Nøkken (Or *Nix*, in German folklore) is a shape-shifting creature, living in lakes and streams. Nøkken will usually take the shape of either a beautiful woman or a majestic animal in the attempt to lure lost travellers to their demise.

## **Verbs**

**Memorise** the path of the Lantern Man.

**Recreate** the path you memorised.

**Earn** gold to upgrade your gear and replenish your health.

**Think strategically** about what the best investment of gold is, and at what time.

**Fight** enemies.

**Complete** cycles to find your way out of the swamp.

**Survive.**

## **Goals**

**Immediate Goals:** Follow the Lantern Man to avoid unnecessary fights. If a fight do occur; make sure you get out of the fight alive.

**Mid-range-goals:** Save up enough gold or points to buy new items and upgrades. Plan out a strategy to survive for as long as possible.

**Long-term-goals:** Kill the Lantern Man, and find a way out of the swamp.

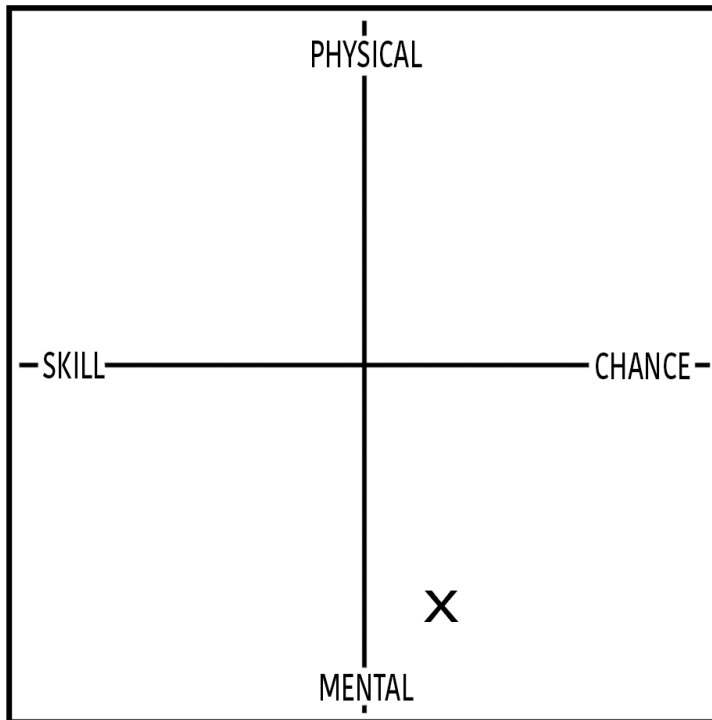
## **Challenges**

**Memorising:** The movement of the lantern man is randomised every cycle, and gets harder with time. The player must focus to memorise the pattern.

**Spacial awareness:** The player must re-create patterns from memory on a grid.

**Strategising:** There is more than one way to win the game, but you have to think ahead, and form a long term strategy to ensure victory. (See *A note on strategy and game flow*)

## Matrix



The experience of this game will be almost purely mental.

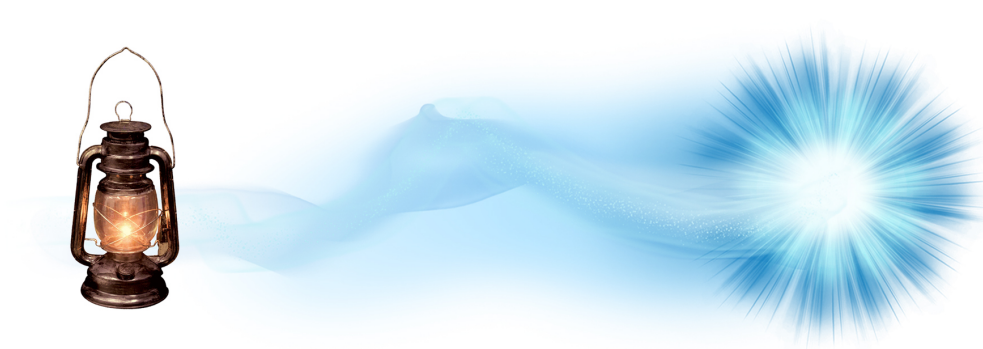
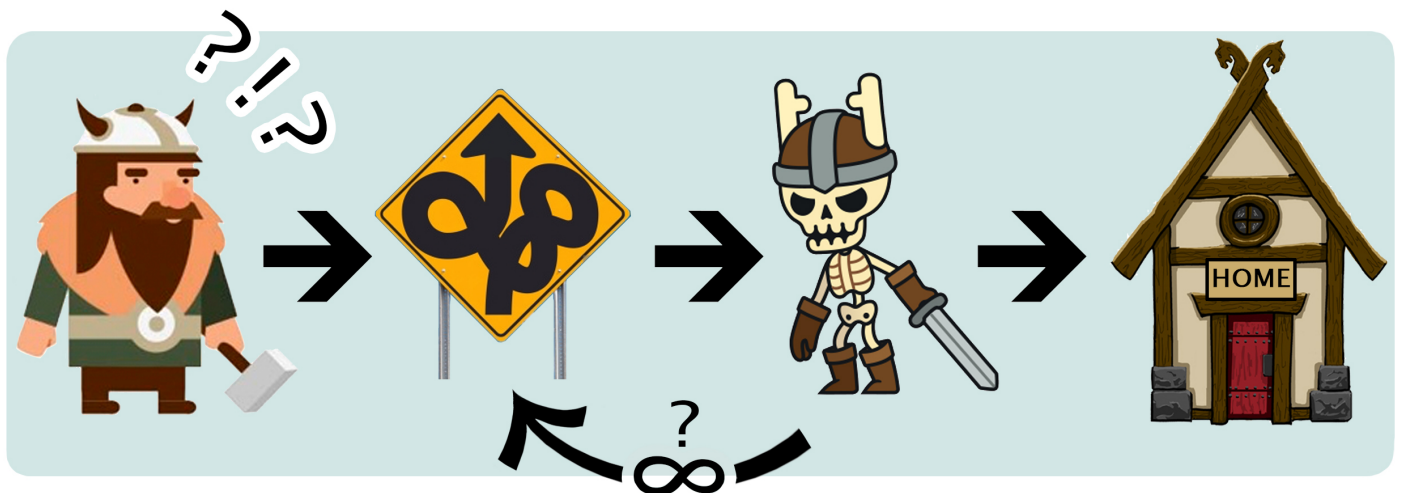
The main challenge comes from remembering patterns, and then replicating them.

Furthermore, the game requires strategic thinking, when spending gold or points.

The game does rely on a fair bit of chance, since some things will be randomly generated, such as the path taken by the lantern man (where some might be easier than others to remember), and the damage done by the player and the enemies.

The game does still require skill, however, since the player will need to think ahead and spend their hard earned gold wisely.

## Moodboard





## The Game

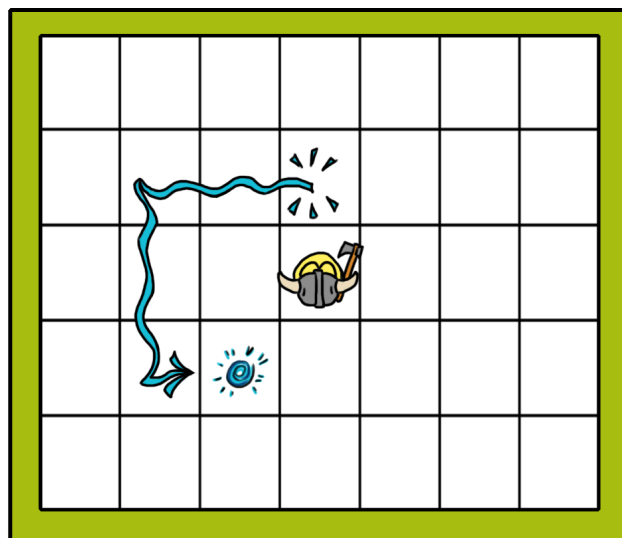
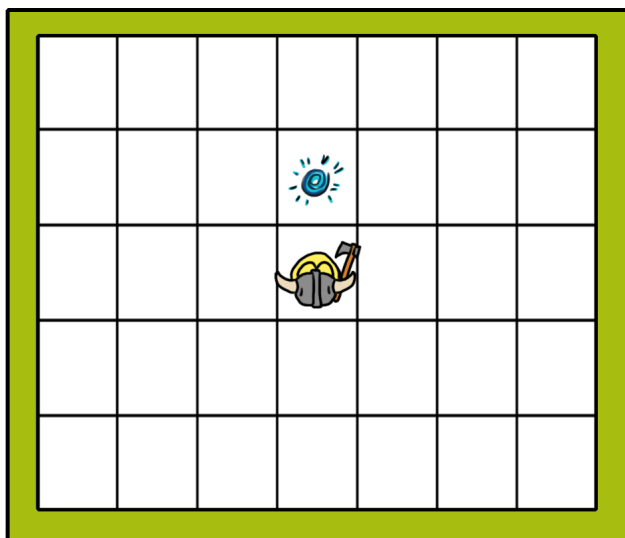
The game consists of two separate phases, and a Shop-screen.

### The Following Phase

The playing area consists of a grid. The player character is placed in one of the squares.

When the game starts, another object (the Lantern Man) will appear in one of the squares adjacent to the player character. (The Lantern Man can only appear adjacent - above, below, left or right - to the player, never diagonally).

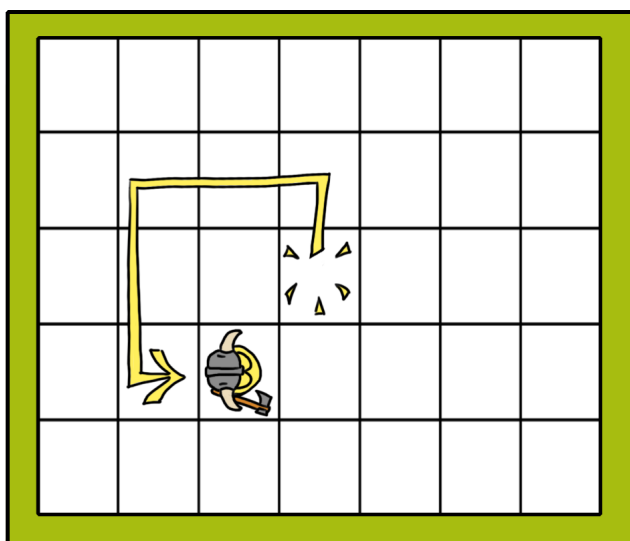
The player cannot move at this stage.



The Lantern Man will now move across the grid in a random pattern. It is the player's job to memorise this movement.

After the Lantern Man's movement is done, it disappears, and the player can now move his/her character with the arrow keys and/or the A, S, W and D keys.

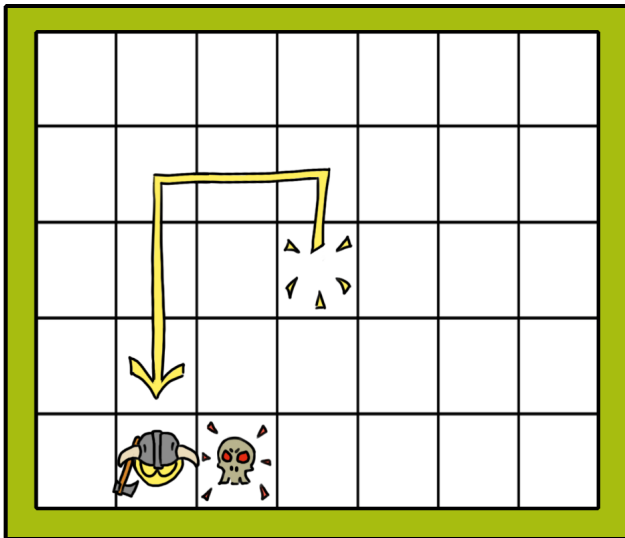
The player must now replicate the movement pattern of the Lantern Man.



If the player gets this movement pattern right, he/she is awarded with 1 point to the Lucky Streak count.

Then the cycle starts over with the Lantern Man appearing adjacent to the player once again.

This adds 1 to the count of cycles completed.



If the player gets this movement pattern wrong, a monster will spawn adjacent to the player, and this triggers the second phase of the game: *The combat phase*.

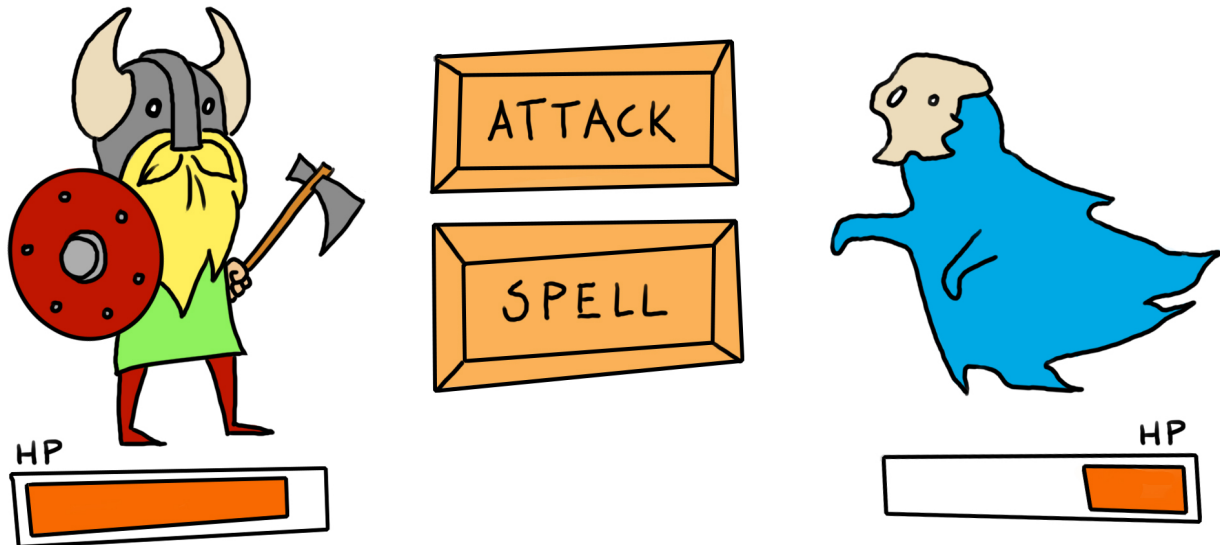
This sets the Lucky Streak to 0.

## **The Combat Phase**

When an enemy spawns next to the player, this opens up a new screen on top of the grid.

The combat is turn-based.

(While the combat takes place, the *following phase* is paused and idle in the background.)



This phase of the game is controlled by clicking the attack-buttons with the mouse.

The player always attacks first. There is no option to flee or otherwise exit the combat.

The attack damage is determined by generating a random number based on the player's current weapon. (example: 5-7)

The enemy also has a base damage number, which is randomly generated the same way. (example: 10-15)

The damage is subtracted from the player's or the enemy's health bar displayed below the corresponding graphic.

If the player's health = 0, the game ends, and the player loses.

If the enemy's health = 0, the player is awarded gold, which is added to the player's total gold.

This returns the game to the *follow phase*, and starts a new cycle. The Lantern Man will now again appear on the grid.

This adds 1 to the count of cycles completed.

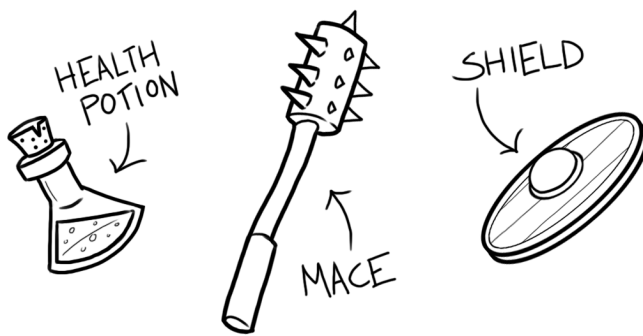
This cancels out the current Lucky Streak and sets it to 0.

The higher the cycle count is, the harder the monster is. (See *List of enemies*)

## The Shop

At any time during the combat phase, the player can open up a shop screen. (While this screen is open, both the *combat phase* and the *following phase* is paused and idle in the background.)

Here, the player can spend their gold and buy upgrades for the character. These upgrades will have an impact on the player's damage, the monster's damage, and the player's health.



The shop is shown with images of the things the player can purchase.

The items are purchased by clicking on them. This makes them disappear.

Every item (aside from the health potion) can only be bought once.

## A note on strategy and flow

There will be two major separate ways of winning the game:

**1 - Follow the Lantern Man successfully:** This can be done in order to save up for the two special attacks that can be unlocked. These can then be used in order to fight the final boss.

**Reason to choose this strategy:** If the player believes his/her memory is good enough to get a high lucky streak, this would be a good gamble. By avoiding fights, the player's health will never drop.

**Drawback / Risk:** if a single mistake is made, the lucky streak is compromised, and the player is left with no gold, no special attack, and - if the lucky streak is lost late in the game - very hard enemies.

**2 - Ignore the Lantern Man completely:** Fight your way out by actively spawning enemies, and save up gold for upgrades.

**Reason to choose this strategy:** This way, the player can acquire a lot of gold, and save up for as many upgrades from the shop as possible. With all these items, the player should not need the special attacks from the Lucky Streak.

**Drawback / Risk:** With this tactic, the player is at the mercy of the randomly generated damage-numbers. If the player is unlucky, he/she might end up spending all of the gold on replenishing health, instead of on upgrades.

**Switching from strategy 1 to 2:** If a player is attempting to save up for the special attacks with the lucky streak, but loses it, there might still be an option to buy enough upgrades to win.

Likewise, it may be an idea to save up for the first special attack, and *then* actively fight enemies for gold.

## **Learning the ropes**

The player will learn the game, by playing it. The first couple of rounds will function as a slow introduction to how the following-mechanic works.

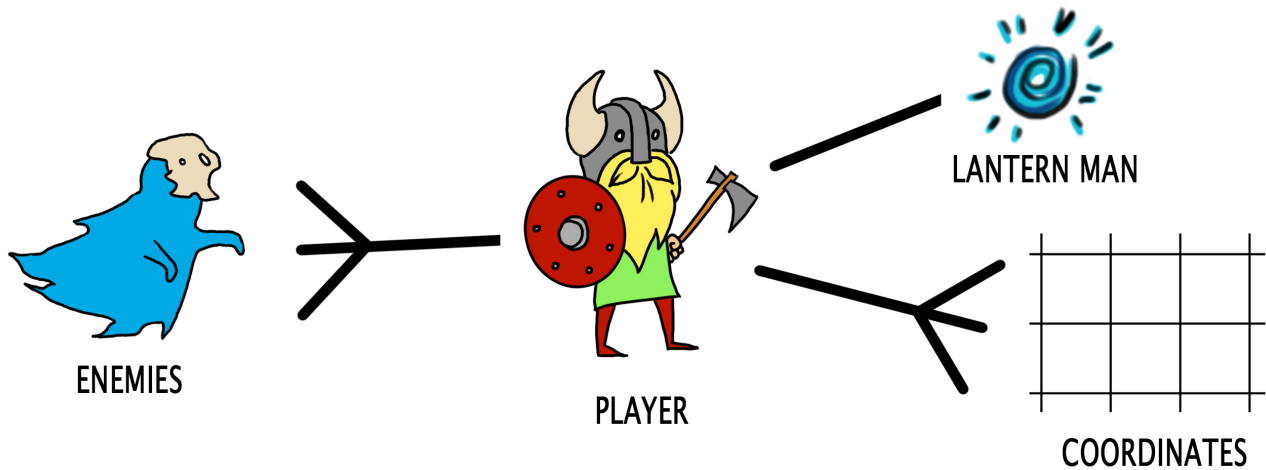
If the player should decide to not follow the lantern man, the combat phase will be self explanatory. The first time the player sees the unlock-able special attacks in the combat menu, and clicks on the shop-window though the combat phase, the options for different strategies should become apperent.



## Programming

### Object Relationship Diagrams

#### Player:

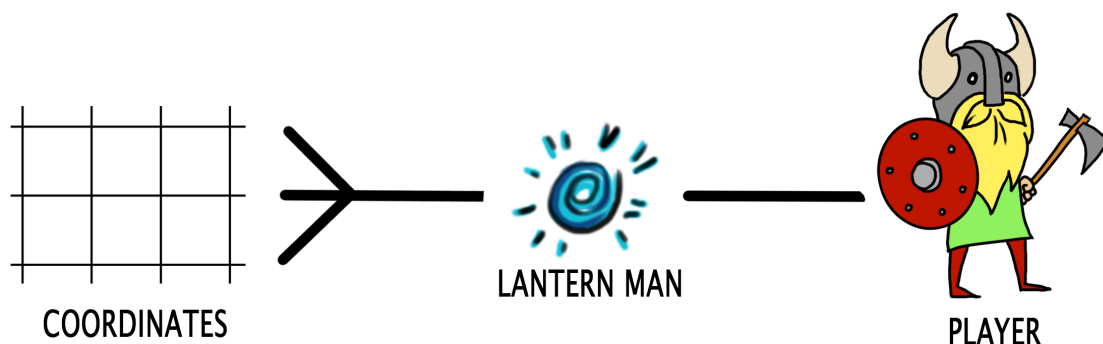


**Player to Enemies:** When the player attacks the enemy, enemy health goes down. When the enemy attacks player, the player health goes down. If player health = 0, game over. If enemy health = 0, enemy dies.

**Player to Lantern Man:** If the player's trail matches the lantern man's trail, the player progresses to the next cycle.

**Player to Coordinates:** If the player moves over a coordinate, that coordinate is added to the player's trail.

#### Lantern Man:

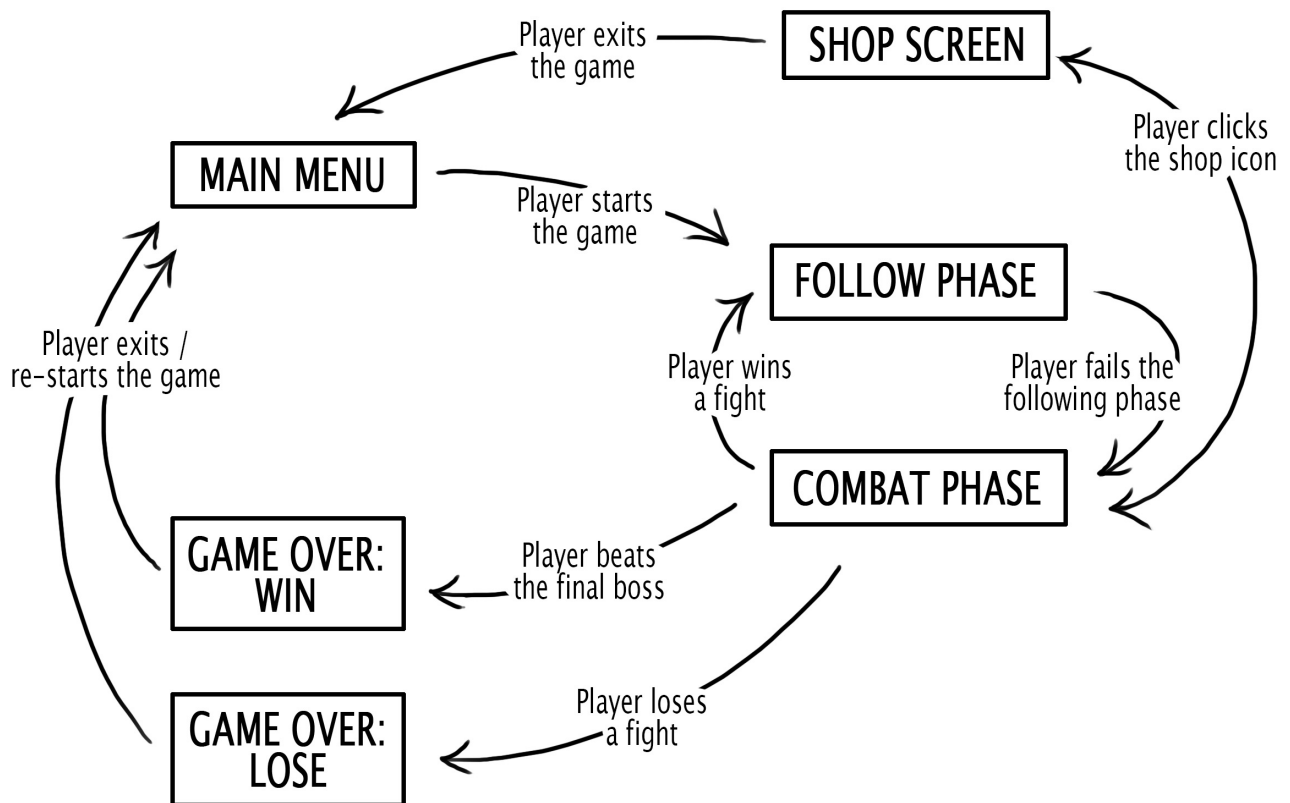


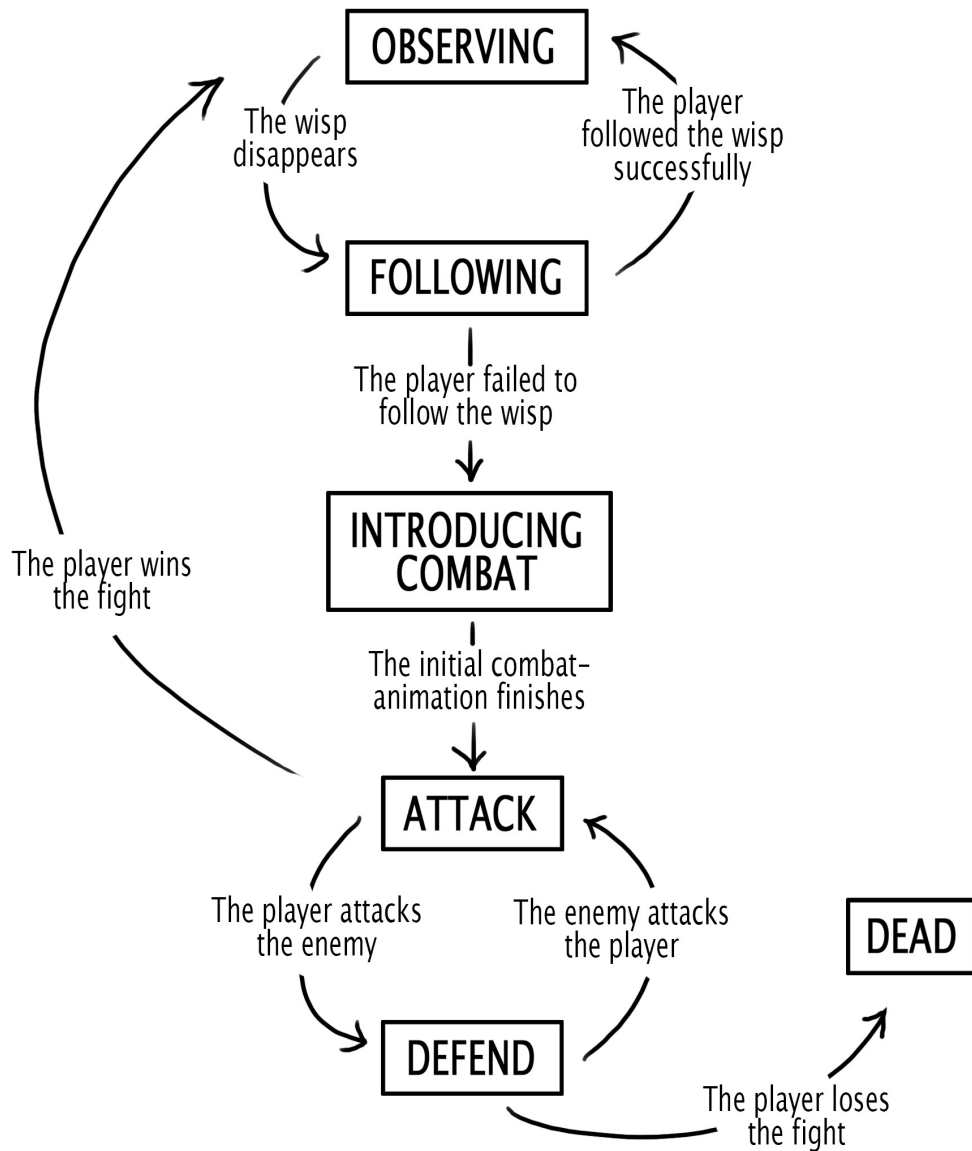
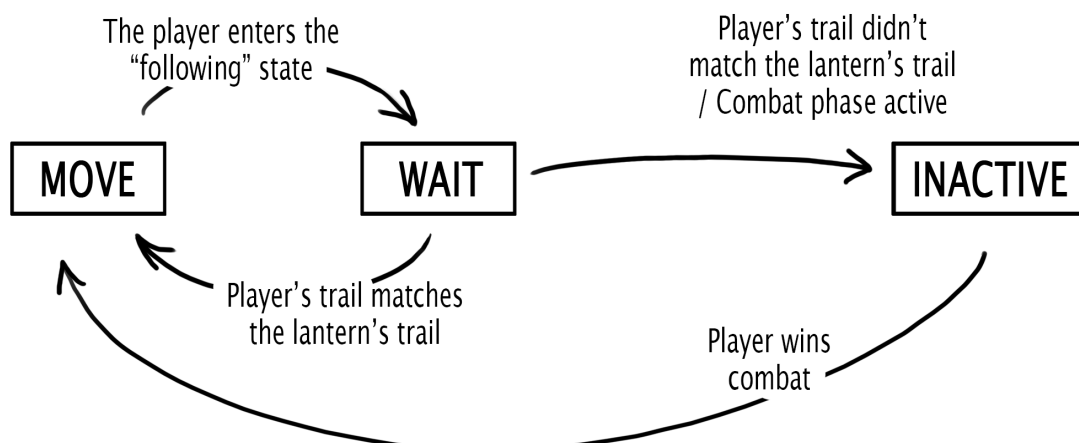
**Lantern Man to Coordinates:** If the lantern man moves over a coordinate, that coordinate is added to the lantern's trail. This is stored, in order to be compared with the player's trail later.

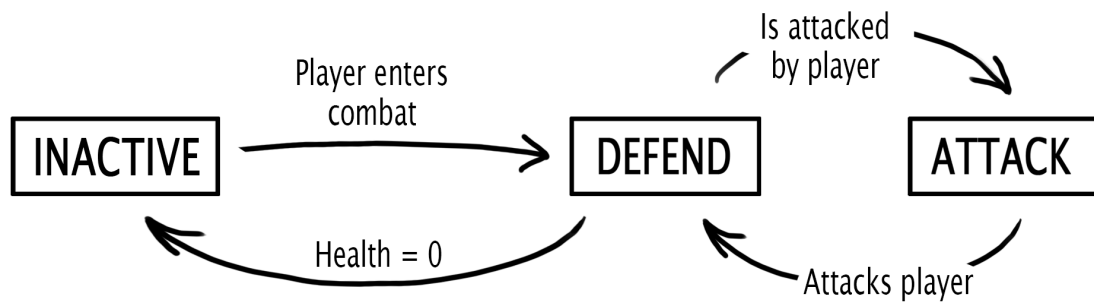
**Lantern Man to Player:** The lantern man always appears next to the player at the beginning of a cycle. Then the lantern man proceeds to show the player the way.

## Finite State Machines

### Game States and Screens:



**Player Character:****Lantern:**

**Enemy:**

## Player Data



### **Player**

HP: 100

Starting Damage: 4-6

Damage if player has *weapon upgrade 1*: 10-15

Damage if player has *weapon upgrade 2*: 20-25

Damage if player has *weapon upgrade 3*: 30-35

Lucky Streak attack 1: 35

Lucky Streak attack 2: 50

## List of Enemies



### **Monster 1: Spirit**

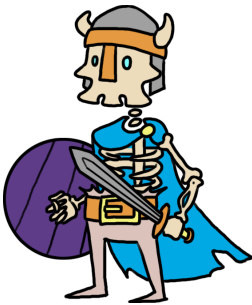
HP: 20

This enemy will be encountered when cycleCount is: 0 or more.

**Gold drop: 5**

Damage: 10-15

Damage if player has a shield upgrade: 5-10;



### **Monster 2: Draugr**

HP: 45

This enemy will be encountered when cycleCount is: 5 or more.

**Gold drop: 15**

Damage: 15-20

Damage if player has a shield upgrade: 10-15;



### **Monster 3: Nøkken**

HP: 70

This enemy will be encountered when cycleCount is: 10 or more.

**Gold drop: 30**

Damage: 20-25

Damage if player has a shield upgrade: 15-20;



### **Lantern Man (Final Boss)**

HP: 150

This enemy will be encountered when cycleCount is: 20

(The Lantern Man appears, even if the player gets the following phase right)

Damage: 30-35

Damage if player has a shield upgrade: 25-35;



## **List of Shop Items**

Gold is acquired by defeating enemies. The harder the enemy is, the more gold the player is awarded (see *list of enemies*).

**The player is awarded no gold, if he/she successfully follows the lantern man.** Instead, the player is awarded a point to their Lucky Streak.

### **Health Potion**

Effect: Player health +50

Gold price: 15.

### **Weapon Upgrade #1**

Effect: Player damage = 10-15.

Gold price: 50.

### **Weapon Upgrade #2**

Effect: Player damage = 20-25.

Gold price: 75.

### **Weapon Upgrade #3**

Effect: Player damage = 30-35.

Gold price: 100.

### **Shield**

Effect: Monster damage - 5.

Gold price: 50.

## **Lucky Streak Items**

The lucky streak is used to unlock special attacks. These can be used during the combat phase.

### **Special attack #1**

Effect: Player damage = 35.

Unlocked if the player's Lucky Streak reaches: 10.

### **Special attack #2**

Effect: Player damage = 50.

Unlocked if the player's Lucky Streak reaches: 15.

## **Object Models**

### **Main:**

- cycleCount, *integer*.
- goldCount, *integer*.
- luckyStreak, *integer*.
- gameState, *string*. (follow, combat, shop, and pause)
- gameOutcome, *string*. (Win and Lose)

### **Trail:**

- coordinates, *array* (of integers. Example: [ [0,1], [1,1], [1,2] ] )

### **Player:**

- currentLocation, *array* (representing where the player is placed on the grid, expressed with x and y. Example [0,1] )
- trail, *trail*. (list of the coordinates where Player visited)
- health, *integer*.
- damage, *integer*.
- (List of items from the shop affecting player damage, to be activated when these are purchased)

### **Lantern:**

- lanternState, *string*. (move, wait, inactive)
- currentLocation, *array*. (representing where the player is placed on the grid, expressed with x and y. Example [0,1] )
- trail, *trail*. (list of the coordinates where Lantern visited)

### **Enemy:**

- enemyState, *string*. (inactive, defend, attack)
- health, *integer*.
- damage, *integer*.
- goldDrop, *integer*.
- (Functions with information for multiple kinds of enemies)
- (List of items from the shop affecting enemy damage, to be activated when these are purchased)

### **Shop:**

- active, *boolean*.
- (List of shop items storing price and whether or not the individual items has been purchased)
- (Nested images for individual shop-items)

### **Menu:**

- menuState, *string*. (startGame, rules, controls)

# Follow the Lantern Man: Design Diary

By Amalie Kaeseler

LCC ID: KAE16487475

## Choice of myth:

I have chosen to work with a mythical creature known in Scandinavia as *The Lantern Man*.

This choice roots in my life-long fascination with Norse mythology.

The lantern man is more commonly known around the world as the *Will o' the Wisp*, *Jack o' Lantern*, or *Corpse Light*.

This particular myth has always fascinated me: It has such a curious, playful and yet dangerous nature, that I thought it would be easy to come up with several game designs surrounding it, and then choosing one final concept to develop further.

## First draft (December, 2016):

Right from the beginning, I knew that the design would have to communicate being lost, and a feeling of adventure.

I came up with the idea of having to follow the Lantern Man, just like in the legend. This is where the decision of a memory game sprung to life. The idea of remembering a movement pattern of the lantern man, and then having to replicate it, seemed very true to the myth. To put this idea into practice, I decided on a top-down grid, which would be able to clearly show these movement patterns.

A point-feature was introduced, and intended as a reward for the player to do well.

The decision of adding combat on top of the original memory game, was a result of trying to establish a sense of consequence.

Something bad needs to happen, if the player can not remember the correct pattern, and as a result, the combat was introduced. This was also an attempt to add a sense of adventure and hardship to the game.

## Adding the shop feature, and refining the reward-system (January, 2017):

For a while, I gave the reward-system some thought.

Would fighting a monster reward as many (or more) points than just getting the pattern right? And if so, what was even the point of attempting to do well in the following phase? Furthermore, what is even the purpose of gaining points?

As a result, I decided to change the reward from simple "points" to a currency of gold.

In true fantasy style, obtaining gold is something I think brings excitement to a game, and is much less abstract than just "points". However, this currency - no matter if it is gold, or points, or something entirely different - still had no purpose.

Therefore, I added the idea of the shop. Through the shop, the player will be able to spend their gold, and purchase upgrades for their character.

My vision at this point was to be able to upgrade the graphics of the character, to the corresponding items purchased in the shop, and thereby provide a sense of progress and development with the player.

Furthermore, I believe that the opportunity for character upgrades, will leave much more room to play with different enemies, and - most important of all - actually make the game harder exponentially. The upgrades also adds an entire new dimension of strategy, in case the player will not be able to afford every single upgrade. This, I hope, will make the player feel more entitled, and much closer to the character, as there now is a direct impact on his development.

At this stage, I also developed the game much more in terms of how exactly it was going to function. I introduced the idea of “rounds” or “cycles”, roughly planned out some of the shop-items, and started thinking about how the game would possibly end.

One possibility was, that the game simply wouldn't have an end state: That the goal for the player is to see how many rounds he/she can survive, before the character runs out of health.

Another option, was to introduce a final boss battle. Possibly against the lantern man himself.

### Visual Design decisions (January 2017):

Since my myth of choice originates in Norse mythology, I felt it was only natural that the player character would be a viking.

I started playing with the idea, that the enemies encountered could root in Norse mythology as well. This strong premise, started to point me in a very specific design-direction. All the new elements i introduced from this point forward, has a clear connection to Norse mythology, such as the viking-style, round shield, and the Draugr enemy.

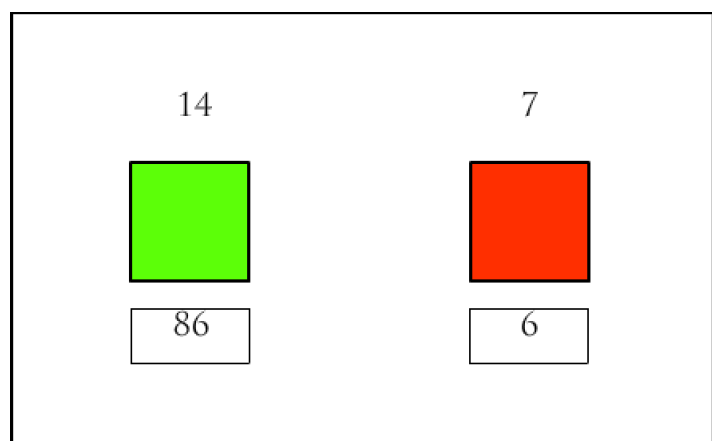
### Detailing and Prototyping (February 2017):

At this stage in the process, I started becoming very aware that I was grasping at a lot of things all at once. I started getting worried about if I could actually get all of these things done within the timeframe. As a result, I did the two following things:

**1:** I started detailing the game as much as possible: The properties and attributes for the different monsters, how the currency would work, which kinds of upgrades would be available and *exactly* what these would do.

**2:** I began a phase of prototyping. First physically on paper with dice to simulate the combat system. This allowed me to fiddle around with different numbers until I had a rough system I was happy with. Next, I made a digital version of this in flash, in order to see if I could in fact manage to create a turn-based combat system, like the one I had in mind.

At this stage, I was confident enough that I would indeed be able to execute the idea.



*Flash prototype of turn based combat*



Prototyping with dice

**Feedback (February 2017):**

This is the point, where I got actual feedback on my idea.

The most worrying aspect at this point, is that the turn based combat isn't exactly original. My worry is, that the mindless clicking of attack-buttons might affect the entire game negatively, and might simply not be interesting enough.

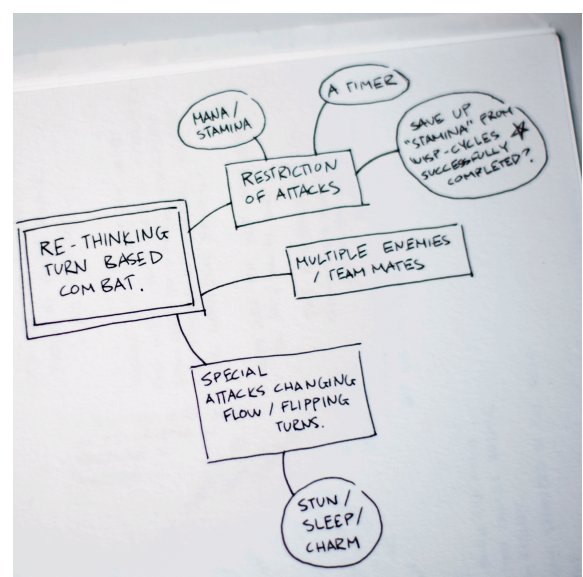
As a result, I decided to try and introduce different aspects into the combat, to bring some originality to an old favourite.

**Reinventing the combat feature (February 2017):**

Due to my worry about the turn-based combat, I spent a long time brainstorming. Turn-based combat is an all-time absolute favourite of mine, but I also know that reinventing an old classic is difficult.

Eventually I came up with the idea of adding special attacks.

These attacks would not be bought with gold - like the other weapon-upgrades - but earned with how good the player is at playing the following-phase of the game.



Brainstorming my options



Prior to this, the only emotional impact from playing the following-phase, was the consequence of failing. However, now, succeeding also has a positive impact. Furthermore, this has given me the opportunity to turn the game on it's head, and add a much more strategical element.

Before, the game was very simple: Fail to follow the lantern man, and it's bad.

But now, there is potential for a different structure, containing choice and different player styles. I believe this change will bring a sense of agency to the player, as his/her play-through are now no longer a set-in-stone test, but a series of choices.

**Game Over (March 2017):**

The final design decision to be made, was concerning how the game was going to end.

Earlier, I had played around with the idea that the game simply wouldn't have an end state. That the lost viking would simply be left in limbo, at the mercy of the Lantern Man.

However, the more I thought about the premise of the game, the more I wanted to convey a sense of hope, that there is indeed a way out of the swamp.

As a result, I decided to introduce the Lantern Man, as the final boss.

Now all the player has to do, is to survive for long enough, to face him.

## **Bibliography**

Allies, Jabez (1885) *On the Ignis Fatuus: Or, Will-o'-the-wisp, and the Fairies*. Deighton and Co., Wochester. pp. 1 - 41.

Available at: [https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=rKQUAAAAYAAJ&ots=f\\_1t2lmc-M&dq=Will%20o'%20the%20Wisp&lr&pg=PP7#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=rKQUAAAAYAAJ&ots=f_1t2lmc-M&dq=Will%20o'%20the%20Wisp&lr&pg=PP7#v=onepage&q&f=false)

*Marsh light*. [image]. circa 1860. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed online 21 Feb 2017.

Available at: [http://quest.eb.com/search/132\\_1247155/1/132\\_1247155/cite](http://quest.eb.com/search/132_1247155/1/132_1247155/cite)

Mysterious Britain [web page] *Will o' the Wisp*. Accessed online 20th Jan 2017.

Available at: <http://www.mysteriousbritain.co.uk/folklore/will-o-the-wisp.html>

Will-o-the-Wisp or Jack-o-Lantern effect [image]. 1811. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed 21 Feb 2017.

Available at: [quest.eb.com/search/300\\_219948/1/300\\_219948/cite](http://quest.eb.com/search/300_219948/1/300_219948/cite)

*Will-o'-the-wisp and Snake* [Image] Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed online 11 Feb 2017.

Available at: [quest.eb.com/search/108\\_249815/1/108\\_249815/cite](http://quest.eb.com/search/108_249815/1/108_249815/cite). Accessed 21 Feb 2017.

### **Draugr:**

Ellis, Hilda Roderick (1968) *The Road To Hel. A study of the Conception of the Dead in Old Norse Literature*. Greenwood Press Publishers, New York. pp. 90 - 96.

Available at: [http://www.germanicmythology.com/scholarship/road\\_to\\_hel.pdf](http://www.germanicmythology.com/scholarship/road_to_hel.pdf)

The Viking Answer Lady [web page] *The Walking Dead: draugr and Aptrgangr in Old Norse Literature*. Accessed online 15 Feb 2017.

Available at: <http://www.vikinganswerlady.com/ghosts.shtml>

### **Nøkken / Nix:**

Thorpe, Benjamin (1851) *Northern Mythology: Comprising the Principal Popular Traditions and Superstitions of Scandinavia, Northern Germany, and the Netherlands, Vol II*. London. pp. 20 - 23

Available at: <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=BGIAAAAAMAAJ&pg=PR1#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Thomas Keightley [image] *Nixes, from 'The World Guide to Gnomes, Fairies, Elves and Other Little People'* Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed online 26 Feb 2017.

Available at: [http://quest.eb.com/search/108\\_276384/1/108\\_276384/cite](http://quest.eb.com/search/108_276384/1/108_276384/cite)