

Warmhearted



Vers. 1.2.2

Amanda Baker

Game Design Technologies

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Tim Samoff

Abstract

Nobody believed the Eternal Warmth was real - just a symbolic bit of magic in an orb to remind people of the legendary guardians of old. One day, Kaya's brother was practicing magic when he accidentally doused the orb in a cold spell, one strong enough to extinguish the warmth within. Suddenly that bit of magic in an orb became a lot more important as Kaya's world froze over, and her brother with it. Now Kaya must track down the old legends to discover how to restore the Eternal Warmth to her world before it is consumed by the Eternal Winter.

Design Statement

There's a kind of wonder that comes with winter, but there also lurks danger and darkness. I wanted to build a game that embodied that kind of theme, one that worked its way from that initial snowy wonder and into the danger that waits in the ice and cold before resolving itself by finding the warmth hidden deep within. While this vertical slice may be an extremely simplified version of this formula, it's meant to reflect the feel of the overall game.

Audience and Context

Warmhearted is designed to be a low- to medium-difficulty kind of game. It's built for people who want some challenge, but not an overwhelming amount. People who are looking for a 2D platformer game with some action, lots of puzzle-solving, and a mostly calm atmosphere will find this game right up their alley.

Features Included:

- Puzzle Solving
- 2D platforming
- Story-driven
- Single player

Core Gameplay

At its most basic level, *Warmhearted* is all about moving and jumping. Environmental elements help build on those simple mechanics to create a broader experience.

Basic Mechanics

- Moving (left or right using arrow keys)
- Jumping (using up arrow keys)
 - Jump height is affected by how long up arrow key is held down

Expanded Mechanics

- Defeating enemies (snowballs)
 - Jump on top of enemies to destroy them
- Avoiding obstacles that result in character death
 - Pits must be jumped over
 - Spiked bricks in Level 3 must be jumped over or avoided
 - Enemies will kill character upon collision (if not jumped on)
- Picking up items
 - Powerups - Boost jump height of character for five seconds
 - Snowflake key - unlocks door in Level 1 (picked up in Level 2)
 - Warmth - lights up receptacle in Level 3
- Navigating the environment
 - Jumping and moving on platforms
 - Going through portals

Look and Feel

Warmhearted has a wintery, snowy kind of theme that is reflected everywhere from the level art design to the sprites that populate the game itself.

Player Sprite



Kaya's design is simple and eskimo-inspired. She has very rounded edges to blend her in with the soft theme of the environments in Levels 1 and 2. The purple color of her outfit is meant to set her apart from the mostly white and blue setting.

Enemies



Enemies are essentially giant snowballs. They are almost as big as the player sprite and are deadly if faced head-on but easy to destroy with a simple jump.

Checkpoints



Checkpoints were inspired by what I see when I think about the North Pole. A candy-striped light post felt like a solid way to mark the character's progress.

Key and Door



The key and door both embody a wintery theme with the symbolism of the snowflake. The snowflake on the door itself is meant to indicate to the player that the snowflake in Level 2 is the key to open that specific door.

Powerups



Powerups have a sparkly, starry kind of feel to them. They're meant to draw the player's attention so that the player can find the boost they need to get through some areas.

Portals



Portals keep with the cool-color theme of the environment, but their dark color sets them apart from the mostly light-colored environment they're placed in so they can draw the attention of the player and guide them to the next area.

Warmth and Warmth Receptacle



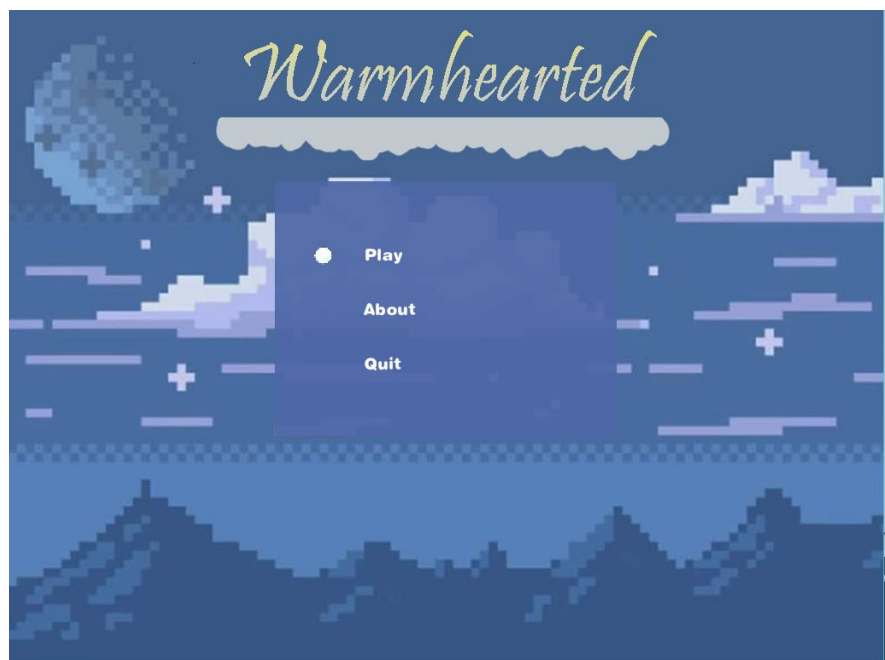
The Warmth and Warmth Receptacle are in the coldest, most grim-looking level out of the three. They are meant to inspire a sense of warmth (of course) and light.

Menus

Main Menu

The main menu is full of cool colors and a dark night sky. Along with the gentle background music it is meant to hint at the cold yet calm feel of the game to come.

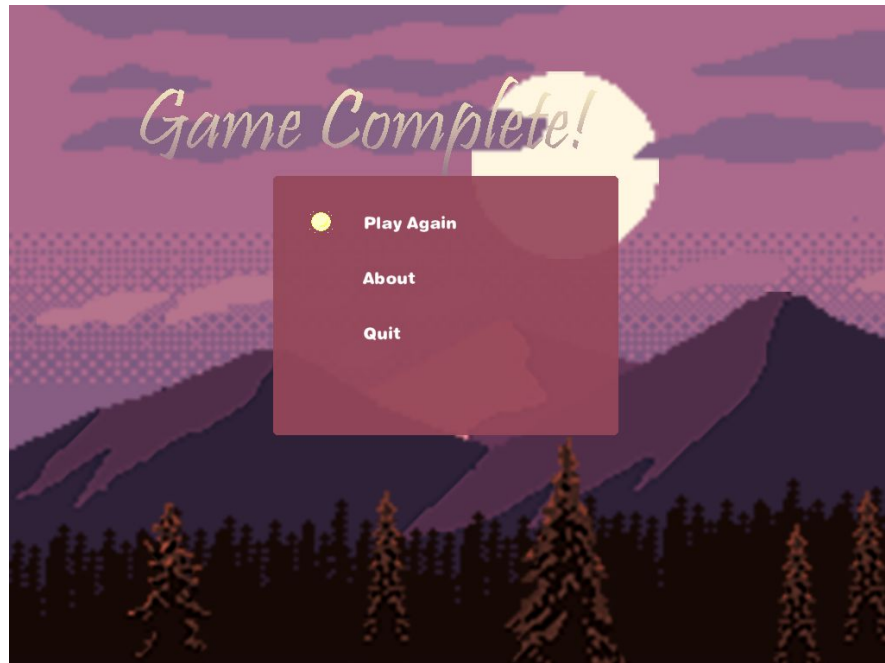
(Background Art:
Alexander Rachyov
Youtube: PIXEL BOY)



Game Complete Menu

The Game Complete menu is full of warmer colors than the main menu. After the player brings the Warmth to the receptacle, it creates a change in the world that would be reflected in a full version of the game, but for now it is reflected in this screen.

(Background Art:
ansimuz from
opengameart.org)



Levels

Each level has its own distinctive theme and setting to give it its own character and feel.

Level 1 - The Snow Forest



(Pine Trees: KnoblePersona
from opengameart.org)

The Snow Forest is the calmest of the three levels. With gently falling snow, dusted pines, soft (yet somewhat playful) background music, and only one enemy, it's meant more as a way to allow the player to get a feel for the controls and the basic gameplay before moving on to more complex tasks.

Level 2 - The Snow Fort



The Snow Fort brings the intensity up with more enemies and more consequences for failing the jumping puzzle. Its duller color scheme, dark background, and slightly more mysterious music lessen the emphasis on simplicity while still maintaining a sense of wintry wonder.

Level 3 - The Ice Castle

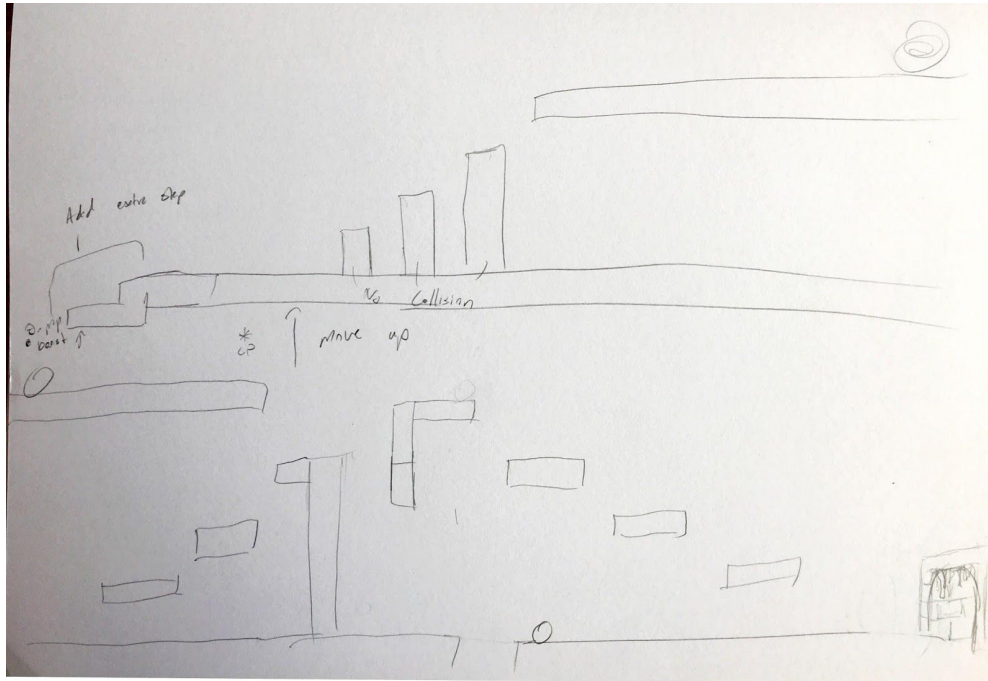


The Ice Castle is the most challenging level. Its cold colors, stark background, sharp edges, and more intense music are all meant to evoke a more serious tone than the previous two levels. This is the level where the lessons learned earlier - avoiding enemies, jumping powerups, picking up a specific item to do a thing - all come together with the added twist of the spike bricks to bring some extra challenge.

Maps and Game Flows

Level 1

Draft



Final

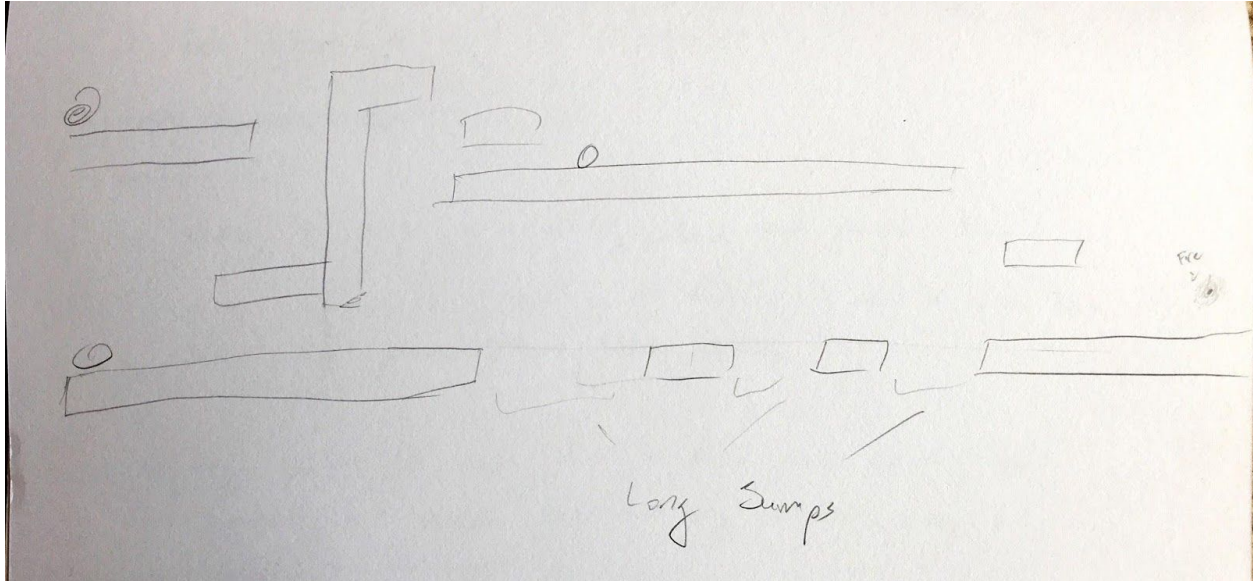


Level 1 Final Changes

- Added powerups and reduced ledges in lower left of map
- Removed enemy from bottom right
- Removed columns in upper middle and added steps to reach highest platform
- Added checkpoint to mid-left

Level 2

Draft



Final



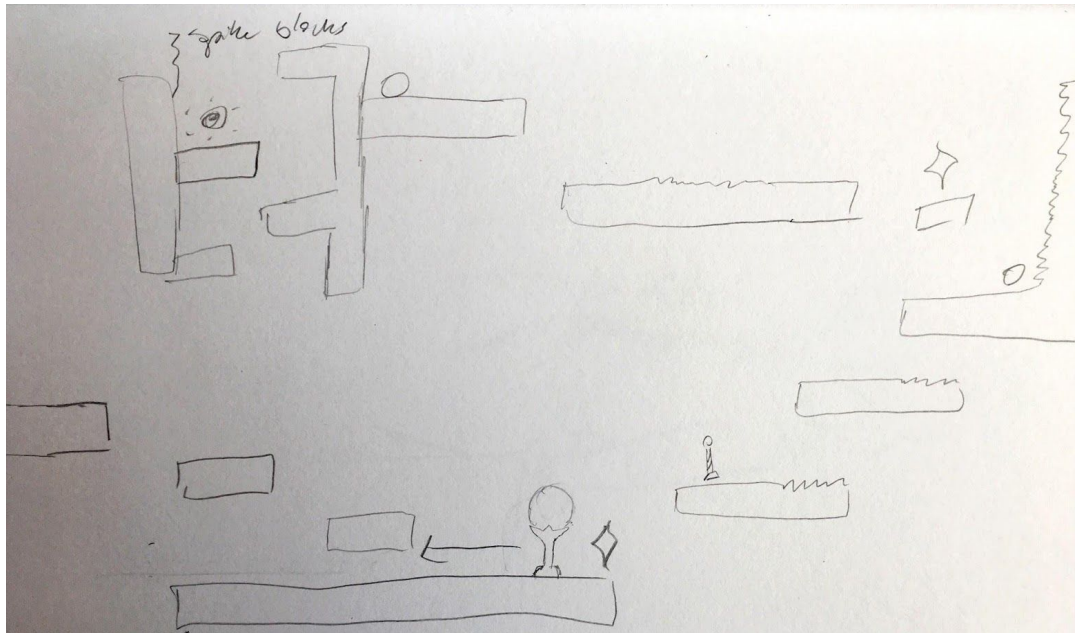
Level 2 Final Changes

- Added platforms with enemies and powerup beneath long jumps
 - Players can still fall off but have one layer to catch themselves with some consequences (enemies and more difficult jumpss)
- Added checkpoint to first hanging platform
- Fire is now snowflake (still unlocks door in Level 1)
- Added some extra steps for jumping
- Background Image: Indie Squid from opengameart.org, edited by me

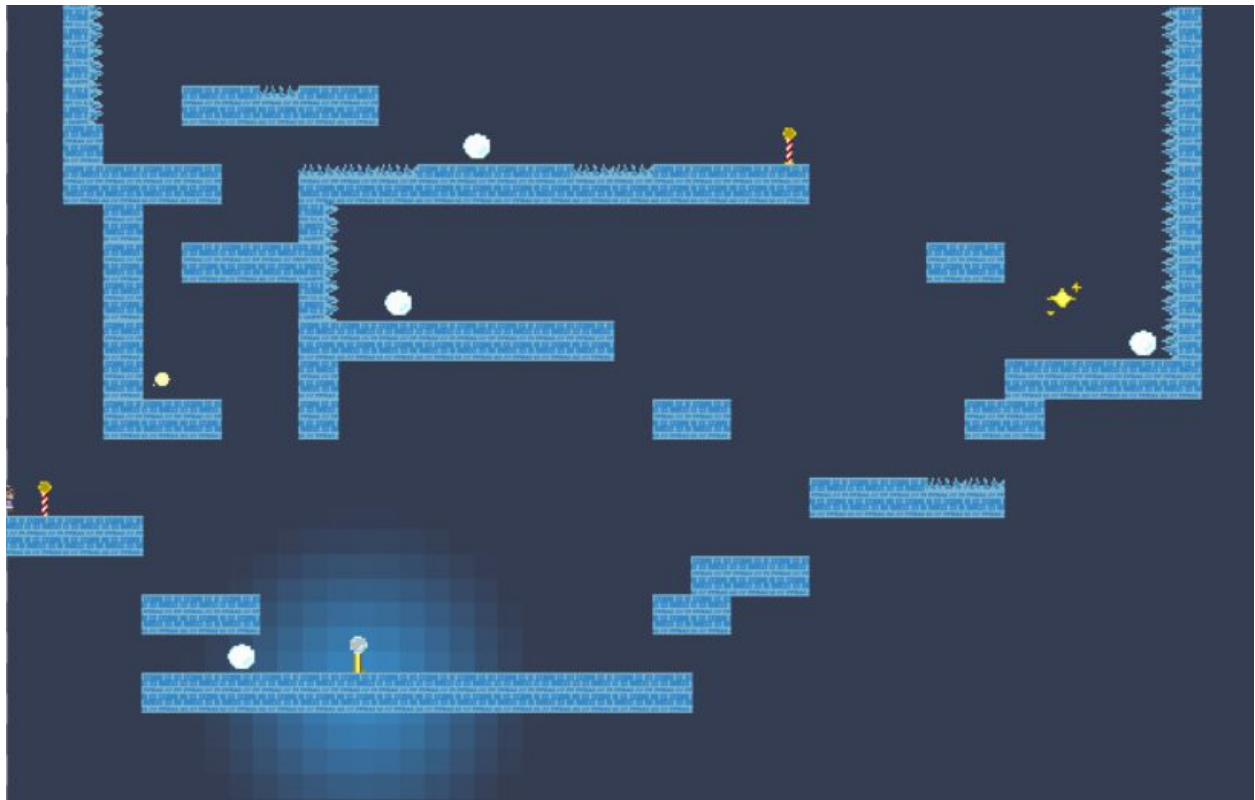
(Level 3 - see next page)

Level 3

Draft



Final



Level 3 Final Changes

- Added more platforms and spike blocks
 - Creates bigger challenge
 - Less of a hand-holding feel that the original design embodied
 - Added checkpoint to start of level and moved second checkpoint to upper platform
 - Removed powerup from lowest platform
 - Moved warmth receptacle to center of lowest platform

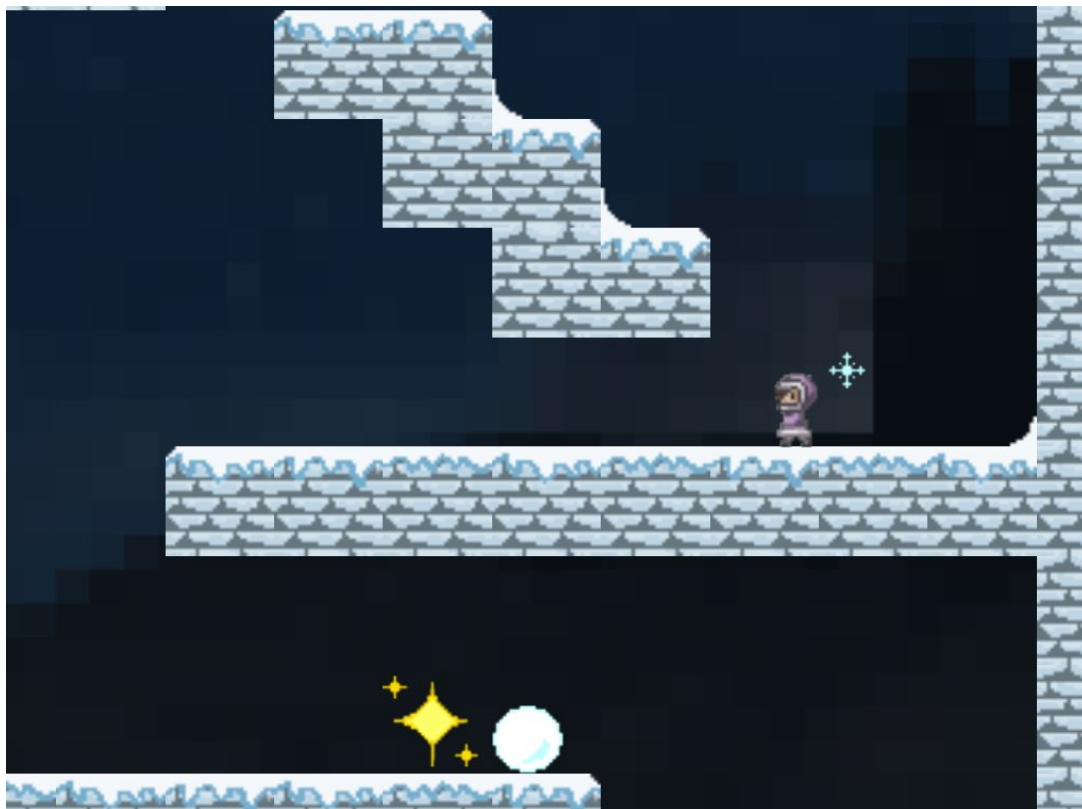
Gameplay Scenes



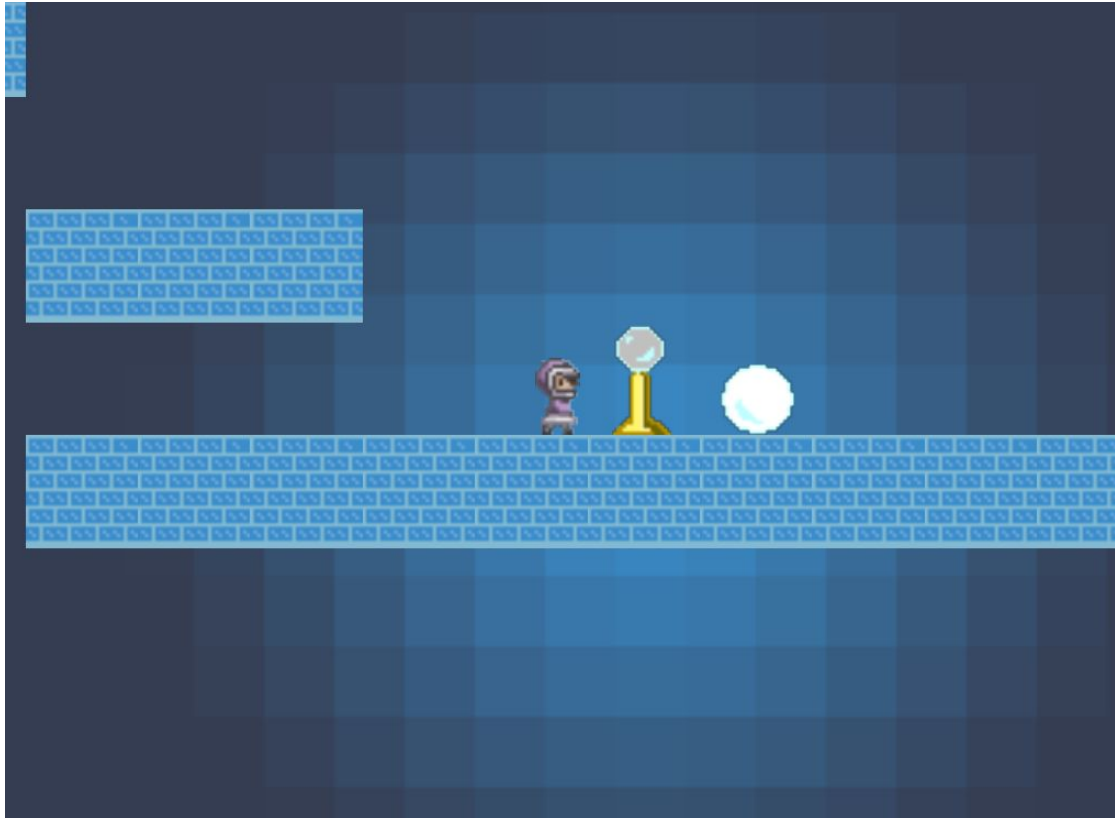
Level 1 - Upper platform, checkpoint activated



Level 2 - far right, next to snowflake key



Level 2 - player sprite after obtaining snowflake key



Level 3 - next to light receptacle, snowball enemy inbound

Conclusion/ Future

Warmhearted was a labor of love and a rewarding experience once it started coming together. It still needs work, even in its current state - there's always plenty of bugs to fix, no matter how small, and the graphics could always be improved. Better backgrounds and more detailed animations would really take this sample to the next level.

I'm going to tuck this game away for awhile, but I already know it's one I'm going to pull out again and work on in the future. There's plenty of levels that can be built and new mechanics I can find a way to work in with time and proper education. I especially would love to expand the story - there's so much potential with each of the guardians Kaya needs to find and learn about, and many levels that can be made to build on that story. *Warmhearted* is a start for me, but it's certainly not at its end.