

PolarWorks Studios Presents

# *Light the Way*

Design Document



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# Game Overview

Light the Way is a 2-D side-scrolling puzzle platformer for the PC and tablet devices. Featuring a stylized cartoon setting and a vast array of obstacles, Light the Way relies on the player's problem-solving skills and quick reflexes to keep Lucky the fox safe as he makes his way through an environment full of challenges and secrets.

After losing his sister, Spooky, in a vast system of caves, Lucky the fox must brave the dark tunnels to find her. The player takes on the role of the caves itself, using lights and activating mechanics around Lucky to guide him through each level as he learns about the mysteries of the caves, Spooky, and himself.

## Gameplay Example

Each level begins with Lucky at the start point of the map. Each map has lights strung along the pathways for Lucky to follow. After a small animation of Lucky taking in his environment, the timer for the level will start ticking down and he will begin to move to the left and follow the lights ahead of him.

For this particular level there are three floors - the start is on the bottom floor and the exit is on the third floor. In order to complete this level successfully, the player must clear obstacles around Lucky and guide him to the key on the third floor to unlock the exit.

For the first obstacle, the player must activate a conveyor belt with a block on it in order to move the block close enough to the next floor of the level for Lucky to climb up. If it looks like Lucky will reach the block and try to climb up before it is close enough to the next floor, the player can make Lucky stop by turning one of the lights off in his path. Lucky will pause in the dark spot for a maximum of two seconds before moving again. As long as the block is in the right position, Lucky will climb to the next floor and continue moving to the left.

On the second floor, there is a an upward-facing activatable fan and a platform near the end that moves vertically. Lucky will continue moving across this floor and go over the fan toward the platform. While the fan can be activated, it will only push Lucky up a little without slowing his progress. Instead, the player must focus on timing Lucky's movement towards the moving platform so that he steps onto it at the appropriate moment.

Once Lucky is on the platform, the player must activate the light on the platform to prevent him from moving towards the lights lining the second and third floors. At the top of the level above the vertical platform is a light that is turned off and the key to unlock the exit. In order to guide Lucky to pick it up, the player must wait until the platform is as close as it can get to the key before activating the light. Lucky will then jump up and grab the key. When Lucky obtains the key, an extra five seconds is added to the timer as a boost for the player to complete

the level. As the platform moves back down, the player must turn off the light on the platform at the right time for Lucky to exit to the right onto the third floor.

The third floor is made up of two static platforms with a gap between them. Beneath the gap is the upward-facing fan from the second floor. At the right moment, the player must activate the fan to keep Lucky airborne as he moves between the gaps. If this is successfully completed, Lucky will continue to the exit, unlock the door, and exit the level.

# Characters

## *Lucky*

### Physical Attributes:

Lucky is small in form, about the size of your average toy-sized dog in real life. His most significant physical characteristics are:

- big ears
- fluffy tail (shaped like a raindrop)
- small eyes
- stubby legs

### Movements:

Lucky's main movement is running. His gait is bouncy, like he has to leap with every step he takes. Some special movements include:

- running in a tight circle if a light turned off
- struggling to climb up platforms with little kicks of his legs
- tucking himself and flipping when airborne between platforms

### Personality:

Lucky is an adventurous little fox with determination to match. He's sweet and peppy and curious, but he has one major weakness: he's afraid of the dark. Lighting, or lack thereof, greatly influences his movements. While he can eventually force himself to keep moving forward if one light is out, two or more will frighten him enough to cause him to turn around in the opposite direction.

## *Spooky*

### Physical Attributes:

Like Lucky, Spooky is also small in form, only slightly smaller than Lucky himself. The features that distinguish her from Lucky are:

- large, *rounded* ears
- flowy tail
- white fur

Her other features, such as her stubby legs and small eyes, are almost exactly the same as Lucky's.

### Movements:

Spooky's main movement is running, but her gait is far less bouncy than Lucky's. There is a flow to her movements, almost like water, and she moves slightly slower than Lucky. Some special movements include:

- pausing beneath lights that are turned on

- gliding between platforms (she does not need the aid of fans to make short jumps)
- leaping up to platforms instead of climbing
- pausing in front of ledges and waiting for moving platforms

#### Personality:

Spooky is a calm, quiet fox. While Lucky is outgoing and almost child-like, Spooky's personality verges more on the ethereal. She is shy and easily frightened, preferring instead to stick to the shadows and take a little more time to reflect on her movements.

### *The Guardians*

There are five Guardians that Lucky must find and rescue throughout the game.

Light: the first guardian Lucky finds at the end of the early levels

- Shaped like a large lizard
- Carries a lantern with his tail
- Splotches of his body glow
- Grants the fire ability

Ice: the guardian at the end of the ice levels

- Shaped like a polar bear
- Has frost patterns throughout fur
- Glows somewhat iridescent blue
- Grants water ability

Fire: the guardian at the end of the fire levels

- Shaped like a boar
- Looks a little sooty
- Tusks light up like candles at the tips
- Ember patterns all over
- Grants smash ability

Crystal: the guardian at the end of the crystal levels

- Shaped like a tortoise
- Shell is made of all different crystals
- Shell glows a little
- Grants Lucky the ability to use all three abilities in the same level

#### The Cave:

- Shaped like an owl
- Large, round eyes - very dark with lights reminiscent of bioluminescence in final level
- Gradient of color in feathers - from white to black
- Takes Lucky and Spooky back home

# **Rules and Objectives**

## **The One Rule**

There is one overarching rule in *Light the Way*:

### **Nothing bad happens to Lucky**

Because the player plays as the caves and not Lucky himself, it is of the utmost importance that the player adjusts the environment around Lucky to keep him safe from harm at all times. If Lucky falls upon unfortunate circumstances (falls from a ledge, burned, hit by a moving platform, etc.), the player fails the level and must restart it from the beginning.

## **Objectives**

### ***Clear Obstacles***

The player's first focus should be on finding ways to clear obstacles in front of Lucky. This could mean anything from having Lucky smash through a stone wall, activating a fan to keep Lucky airborne over a jump, or guiding Lucky onto a platform at just the right moment, etc. Keeping Lucky safe is the most important part of the game, and this objective keeps the player focused on sticking to that rule.

### ***Find the Key***

Each level requires a key to unlock the exit. Beating a level isn't just about guiding Lucky safely around to the exit - the player must locate the key within the level and guide Lucky to it so he can pick it up.

### ***Reach the Exit***

After the player guides Lucky to the key's location and Lucky has the key in his possession, the final step is to safely guide Lucky to the exit of the level. There Lucky will use the key to unlock the door and proceed to the next level. If Lucky reaches the exit without the key, he will immediately turn around and move in the opposite direction without interacting with the door.

### *Beat the Clock*

Each level has a time limit for the player to complete the three main objectives. A running clock in the corner of the screen ticks down how much time is left for the player, but time can be added by successfully overcoming obstacles, obtaining the key, or in some levels finding special items to boost the amount of time remaining. Time is also added when a player successfully unlocks a guardian in a challenge level.

Challenge levels (at the end of each section of levels) have an added objective

### *Unlock the Guardian*

These levels require an extra key to be found to unlock an area within a level where a Guardian is locked away. After a Guardian has been unlocked, they will hand the key to the exit over to Lucky.



# Levels and Progression

## *The Beginning*

Early levels start off as a tutorial mode to get the player used to the game's mechanics without overwhelming them. These cover the basic obstacles and mechanics such as moving platforms, conveyor belts, fans, and pulleys.

Progression through these levels is a simple formula:

Enter level → Obtain Key → Exit Level

Each level has a timer unique to its level of difficulty (e.g. a longer, more challenging level would have a longer timer than a much simpler level). The formula for the level above must be completed within the time limit given for the level.

The final level of the early levels is completed by finding the first Guardian and unlocking the cell their hand is trapped in. This Guardian will grant Lucky the fire ability that will get him through the ice levels he will face next.

## *Ice, Fire, and Crystal Levels*

As levels start to grow in difficulty, so does the complexity of the mechanics. Lucky's special abilities are granted in these levels and can be utilized throughout the rest of the game. There are also new hazards to be cautious of, especially Temperature-variant Zones (see note in Terrain section).

At the end of each section of environmental levels, there will be one final challenge level where Lucky will have to find two keys: the key to the exit and the key to unlock the elemental Guardian. The key to the exit is always kept with the Guardian, but it can only be obtained by unlocking the Guardian. The player must then guide Lucky to the exit of the cave, but if they have a level failure it will reset them at the location of the Guardian instead of at the very beginning of the level.

## *The Final Level*

By this point Lucky has access to all three of his abilities, and the Crystal Guardian has granted him use of all three whenever he wants instead of limiting him to one type per level. With all three abilities, Lucky can successfully navigate the final level.

The final level has one additional feature: the player must also guide Spooky through her side of the level. Her basic mechanic is the exact opposite of Lucky's: she will not move unless there

are no lights on near her. Once that is shown with a quick cutscene, it will be the player's job to manage both Lucky and Spooky until they can come together in the middle and unlock the Final Guardian together.

# Terrain

Light the Way is set in a massive system of caves for Lucky to find his way through. As the game progresses, so does the complexity and variety of the caves.

## Early levels

For the most basic levels, especially the tutorial mode, the terrain is a generic cave. Think of a simple mine shaft - wired, bare lights, rocky edges, random tools left behind. Nothing fancy, but full of enough obstacles for the player to learn the ropes of the game without being too distracted.



[Source](#)

## Progressive Changes

As the player continues through the games, the levels start taking on a character of their own. At first it's small things such as different lights or gemstones twinkling in the scenery. Soon enough the levels will settle into three general themes: ice, fire, and crystal.



## *Ice Levels*

Cold and slippery, beautiful and yet a little dangerous - the magic of the caves and in Lucky himself begins to exhibit itself in such levels. While some wired lights remain, there will also be special lights encased in ice that give off a soft blue glow to guide Lucky around. Hazards in these areas would include ice walls and spikes, slippery ledges, and "freeze" zones\* amongst other obstacles.

[Source](#)

## *Fire Levels*

With the ice levels melting behind them, the next levels that begin to show up are the fire levels. Think lava, flames, orange and red and black and *hot*. These levels bring on a new set of challenges for the player to overcome along with new kinds of abilities for Lucky to discover. The wired lights have been replaced with torches, and Lucky will move faster through these levels in order to keep away from “heat” zones\*.



[Source](#)



## *Crystal Levels*

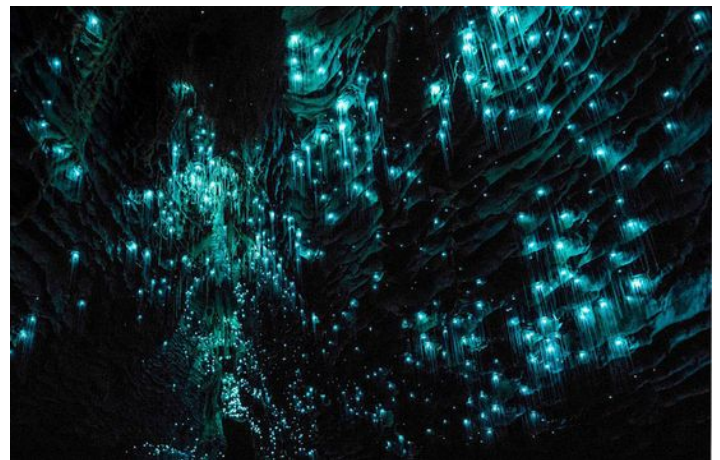
The crystal levels offer a brief respite for the player after the intensity of the fire levels. While the challenges are mixed with fire and ice hazards cropping up, the most important part of these levels is the beauty within them. Geodes and crystals make up much of the walls of these caves, creating a splash of color to liven up the setting.

[Source](#)

## *The Final Level*

With both Lucky and Spooky involved in the final level, there must be a mix of light and dark to evoke the themes these two characters carry with them. With that in mind, a bioluminescent cave full of colorful, twinkling lights amidst a dark background is what makes up the final level. Everything comes together in this level with obstacles from the previous three cave types creating one final challenge for the player to overcome before they can complete the game.

[Source](#)



### **\*Notes On Temperature-variant Zones**

Temperature-variant zones have two distinct effects on Lucky's ability to move throughout a level. While only a few ticks in length, they can have a critical effect on how a player handles a level.

"Freeze" areas greatly reduce Lucky's movement speed. While beneficial to a player looking to buy time to figure out a level, too much time spent in a "Freeze" area can damage Lucky to the point of level failure. (Solution: heat lamp)

"Heat" zones increase Lucky's movement speed. This can be a benefit for the impatient player, but obstacles still stand in Lucky's way in these areas. If these obstacles are not handled before Lucky can run off the zone, the player risks failure of the level.

# **Objects**

While there are many objects that show up in levels - whether they be obstacles or tools to overcome such obstacles - there are two objects that are critical and present in every level: keys and lights

## **Keys**

To complete a level, the player must first guide Lucky to the key hidden inside it so that Lucky can unlock the door at the end. As the levels progress and the terrain changes, so do the style of the keys.

- Initially the key is simple: brass or silver and generic in shape.
- For the ice levels, stylized ice keys - perhaps with snowflakes or cracked ice accents - can be found.
- The fire level keys should look hot: like black coals glowing with the heat from within. While fire can still be a theme with these keys, the emphasis should still be more on the subtlety of the heat instead of an all-out flame-licked key.
- The keys for the crystal levels should be colorful and reflective of their stony environment. Think quartz, amethyst, emerald, rubies - sharp edges and strong colors should characterize these keys.





Brass Key - Early levels

[Source](#)



Ice Keys

[Source](#)



[Source](#)



Fire Keys

[Source](#)



[Source](#)



*Crystal Keys*

[Source](#)



[Source](#)



## Lights

Like the keys, the lights and their changes are also an important part of characterizing each of the levels. As the game progresses, so does the style of the lights.

### Early Levels

These lights are generic bare bulbs hooked together with thin wires. They line the cave walls and give off a soft yellow glow.



### Ice Levels

While some lights from the early levels, remain, new lights will start showing up. For area lighting, these are simply lights encased in ice - they give off a much whiter glow than the yellow shade of the early levels. There are also activatable red lights at key points in each level - turning on these lights while Lucky is nearby will activate his *Fire* ability, allowing him to melt ice obstacles if the player times activation of the light correctly.



*General aesthetic of ice-encased lights - blue would be near-white color but red is nearly the same as pictured*

[Source](#)



### Fire Levels

Fewer of the original lights remain, if any. The fire levels wouldn't be fire levels without torches, but there is one extra element to some of these torches. To get through the fire levels, the player will need to activate Lucky's *Water* ability. Some torches will have the option to turn up the heat to a blue-hot level, therefore giving off the blue light needed to activate the *Water* ability and overcome some fire obstacles.

[Source](#)

### Crystal Levels

The magic of the caves becomes extremely apparent by the time the player reaches the crystal levels, and the lights for these levels should reflect that. Light no longer has an electric- or fire-based source - it simply emanates from some of the crystals throughout the cave. Lights that can be activated by the player are either encased in quartz (general guide lights for Lucky) or emerald (activates Lucky's *Smash* ability to break crystal obstacles).



*Crystal lights can vary in color and shape, but green and white crystals will be available to guide Lucky and activate his abilities.*

[Source](#)

### The Final Level

The final level evokes the image of a vast, starry sky with its theme of bioluminescent lights.

While obstacles from the previous levels will show up on Lucky's side of the map, the colors needed to activate his abilities will be small, dulled out areas of bioluminescence until activated by the player - essentially, the colors will still be available but utilize a different light source to activate.

On the other hand, Spooky relies on darkness in order to move around. Turning on or off lights (activating bioluminescence) will guide her away from obstacles. These portions will be more numerous on her side, but she will not require colored lights because she has no special abilities to activate.

# **Abilities**

There are two main kinds of abilities in *Light the Way*: environmental and Lucky.

## **Environmental Abilities**

Environmental abilities are the core of *Light the Way*'s gameplay. Guiding Lucky through each level will require the player to activate mechanisms that either hinder or assist Lucky's constant movement. A few examples are as follows:

### *Lights*

Lights are the most crucial part of the game. If Lucky ends up in a small unlit zone, he will stay in that space for a maximum of three seconds before continuing forward. If the unlit zone is two or more lights wide, Lucky will turn around and move in the opposite direction. These kinds of reactions from Lucky can be manipulated by the player to do things such as keep Lucky in continuous movement by activating lights in front of him. The player can also turn off a light to do something such as pause him long enough to time his movement onto a moving platform.

### *Fans*

Fans can be activated with a click by the player. The number written on the side of the fan indicates how long the fan will stay activated before it automatically turns off. Fans can either lift Lucky up a floor or keep him airborne as he jumps over a gap.

### *Conveyor Belt*

Conveyor belts can be activated by the player to move objects around for Lucky. For example, a player could activate a conveyor belt with a block on it to move it closer to the next floor and therefore giving Lucky a way to climb up instead of letting him run into a wall.

## *Lucky's Abilities*

Lucky has three main abilities that he discovers he has as he explores the caves: fire, water, and smash. While these abilities are performed by him, they must be activated by the player through the lights in the environment around Lucky. Each ability is assigned a different-colored light.

### *Fire*

Lucky discovers his fire ability while traversing through the ice caves. This ability is activated by a red light and allows him to sneeze a maximum of three fireballs per activation. Fireballs will reach all the way to the end of the floor of the level before disappearing unless they hit an obstacle. The player must wait until Lucky is near a different red light before it can be activated again.

### *Water*

Lucky discovers his water ability while he is exploring the fire caves. This ability is activated by a blue light and allows him to spit water for a maximum of three seconds. The water flows in a low arc for a maximum distance of five light sources ahead of Lucky or until it hits an obstacle - whichever is closer. The player must wait until Lucky is near a different blue light before it can be activated again.

### *Smash*

Lucky discovers his smash ability while he is going through the crystal caves. This ability is activated by a green light and allows him to rush forward and smash through obstacles for a maximum of five light sources. The green activation glow follows along with him until he either smashes through an obstacle or reaches the maximum distance. The player must wait until Lucky is near a different green light before it can be activated again.

# **Collectibles**

Collectibles can be found throughout the levels or by achieving specific parameters within bonus levels or timed events.

## **Collectibles with Special Effects**

Some collectibles have the special bonuses for Lucky in particular situations.

- Scarf: reduces effect of “Freeze” zones in ice levels
- Sunglasses: reduces effect of “Heat” zones in fire levels
- Helmet: prevents Lucky from stopping after using slam skill to break rocks

All three of these can be useful in the final level, but only one may be worn at a time

## **Aesthetic Collectibles**

Aesthetic collectibles can be worn at the same time as special effect collectibles. These would include but are not limited to:

- Bowtie (black, white, red, or blue)
- Leather jacket (black)
- Beanie (red, blue, green, gray, or striped)

Special effect collectibles also come in different styles and colors

- Scarf: red, green, blue, or striped
- Sunglasses: normal, aviator, heart-shaped, star-shaped
- Helmet: red, green, blue, or motorcycle-style