Back and Forth Again,

A Duck's Tale by:

DUCKLAS

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SYNOPSIS & PITCH

In the future, ducks are on the verge of extinction due to a war against duck-made machines called duckines. A brave soldier travels to the past in search of a prophesied weapon that could turn the odds in their favor, but is attacked on the way and barely escapes alive, crashing his ship in the process.

Ducklas and his girlfriend Duckota find the dying soldier, who asks them to complete his mission just before passing away. Now it's up to Ducklas to save the duckkind from demise.

Travel through time and space!

SAVE THE DUCKS FROM EXTINCTION IN THIS 2D ADVENTURE WITH UNIQUE MECHANICS!

MOVE BETWEEN THE BACKGROUND AND FOREGROUND TO AVOID ENEMIES AND OVERCOME OBSTACLES

FACE ENEMIES IN SPACE IN ACTION-PACKED ESCAPE SEQUENCES   REPEL ATTACKS WITH YOUR SHIELD

FIGURE OUT HOW TO FIGHT WITHOUT DIRECTLY ATTACKING NOR JUMPING! EVERY ENEMY AND OBSTACLE IS A PUZZLE TO BE SOLVED. ARE YOU READY FOR THE CHALLENGE?

FULL STORY

Prologue: The Prophecy

It's a sunny day in the city of Ducktown, on the planet Ducktooine. Ducklas sits on the grass with his girlfriend Duckota, looking at the sky. Suddenly, a vortex opens among the clouds and a small spaceship emerges from it, coming down fast. The vortex closes and the spaceship crashes.

Ducklas and Duckota approach the crash site. A hatch opens in the ship and a dying duck from the future emerges from it. He tells the couple of the terrible fate of the duckkind a couple of centuries from now, in which the ducks are on the verge of extinction because of the war against duck-made machines called duckines. The dying duck presents himself as part of a resistance movement called *Rage Against the Duckines*. Almost with no hope of survival, the resistance heard about the prophecy of a Chosen Duck who, after retrieving an ancient secret weapon, would neutralize all duckines and bring peace to Ducktooine once again. According to the prophecy, this secret weapon was hidden somewhere yet unknown and, in order to access it, the Chosen Duck needed a big, ancient key that was divided in three parts to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands. They called it the *Trilock*.

Rage Against the Duckines managed to find one of the pieces. Unfortunately for them, the duckines also heard about the prophecy and destroyed the other two parts. Considering him to be the Chosen Duck, the resistance sent the dying duck to the past in order to retrieve the other two pieces, assuming they would still exist in the present day. But the duckines found out about the resistance's plan, followed the soldier in space and shot him with everything they got. The soldier barely escaped alive, but managed to flee the attack and travel to the past successfully, although losing control of his ship in the process.

Before dying, he gives Ducklas the piece of the Trilock he brought from the future and tells him that, according to his investigations, the second part should be located in a hidden temple in a forest near Ducktown. He also gives Ducklas a special watch from the future that provides its user with certain abilities. One of these abilities is limited teleportation to specific spots in the surroundings. The other is generating a temporary shield around the user that can repel enemies.

After the soldier dies, Ducklas gives Duckota the piece of the key and asks her to keep it until he finds the other two parts. Then he embarks on his journey. The adventure begins!

Chapter One: An Old Enemy

Ducklas tries his new powers while traversing Ducktown. Before he exits the city, he is intercepted by Birdie, his sworn enemy from high school. Birdie really hates ducks, and he heard about the quest Ducklas is about to embark on. Determined to stop him from preventing the war in the future, Birdie attacks Ducklas with an axe. With the help of his watch, Ducklas defeats Birdie and proceeds to enter the forest.

Chapter Two: Combat Enlightenment

More dangers await Ducklas in the forest, including wild vermin and natural obstacles, but he manages to avoid them and reach the temple. Inside, he meets Zen Duck, who presents himself as the guardian of the key. He has been waiting for long for someone to come by and claim the piece he is keeping, but only the Chosen Duck of legend has the right to own it. If he wants to prove he is worthy, Ducklas must defeat Zen Duck in combat. Once again, Ducklas fights aided by his new powers and wins. Zen Duck congratulates him and gives him the key, as promised. Then he tells him his next destiny should be the planet *fRe'e'S in KoLd*, and gives him a paper with the coordinates.

Ducklas returns to the crash site, where he finds Duckota and gives her the second piece of the Trilock. While thinking how he'll get out of Ducktooine to continue his quest, Duckota tells him that, apparently, the ship of the deceased duck of the future has an auto repair function and that it fixed itself while Ducklas was gone. Ducklas says goodbye to Duckota and enters the ship.

Chapter Three: Outgunned in Outer Space

In space, Ducklas uses the coordinates given to him by Zen Duck to set course for *fRe'e'S in KoLd*. While the ship makes the calculations to jump to hyperspace, Ducklas is attacked by Duckines from the future. Realizing the auto repair function of the ship hasn't fixed the turret guns yet, Ducklas must avoid the attack for a couple of minutes until he is ready to make the jump, which he manages to accomplish, not without effort.

Chapter Four: Who Wants to Chill?

Once arrived in *fRe'e'S in KoLd*, Ducklas finds himself on a hazardous ice planet with slippery floor and areas with extremely low temperatures he has to avoid if he doesn't want to freeze to death. He reaches the spot indicated in the coordinates and finds a large closed gate. The access to the last piece of the Trilock is closed, and a big ice monster called *Chilly Jimmy* appears when he sees Ducklas standing there. Ducklas defeats the monster and then the gate opens by itself. Instead of finding the missing part of the Trilock, Ducklas sees a paper note that says "Thank you, Ducklas! But the key is on another planet". Although infuriated, Ducklas also sees coordinates written on the paper to a place called *Planet Dirt*.

Chapter Five: Roasted Duck

En route to *Planet Dirt*, Ducklas is once again attacked by Duckines. They incapacitate his ship and he crashes on a desert, barren planet called *hO't-as hEl*. The heat is so strong it slows down his movements. Several duckines, unaffected by the burning sun, search for him

everywhere. Ducklas must avoid as many of them as possible and repel the rest with his shield.

He reaches the enemy camp. There, an alarm activates and one of the duckines shouts "Terminate target at all costs! Repeat: terminate target at all costs!" and detonates a TNT next to several other explosives. Ducklas gets into a fridge to save his life. The fridge flies away, but Ducklas survives. With all the duckines destroyed, he then steals a duckine spaceship and continues his journey to *Planet Dirt*.

Chapter Six: The Duckines Strike Back

While traveling to *Planet Dirt*, Ducklas is again attacked by Duckines. This time, the turret guns work! Unfortunately, they are also programmed not to shoot at other duckine spaceships… Which also means they can't shoot him. However, some duckines will try to suicidally crash into Ducklas' ship. Others will shoot at space objects near Ducklas in order to damage him. Maybe he should do the same…? Well, not the suicide part, of course.

After avoiding several duckines and using space elements to his advantage, Ducklas buys enough time to make the jump to hyperspace once again.

Chapter Seven: It's Not as Bad as it Smells

Planet Dirt is a grimy industrial planet full of rubbish and waste as well as monsters that go from zombies made of mud to robotic industrial workers with a rather great contempt for intruders. There are also several construction machines that pose a danger to our hero. Ducklas overcomes all obstacles and reaches another large closed gate. A big, smelly monster made of garbage called *Smelly Jerry* emerges and fights Ducklas, who defeats the disgusting guardian and goes through the now open gate. This time, he does find the last part of the Trilock, and also a note with coordinates to a new destination: *Foerriban*.

Chapter Eight: Undying Resentment

Ducklas goes back to Ducktown to visit Duckota and ask her for the two parts of the Trilock she is keeping. When he arrives at Duckota's place, he finds her house is a mess and sees her tied up on the couch. From the corner of his eye, Ducklas sees some movement, reacts quickly and dodges an attack. It's Birdie again, determined to stop Ducklas from completing his mission!

Ducklas defeats Birdie once and for all. Before dying, it is revealed Birdie was a duckine all along, sent to the past to find the Chosen Duck before he became such. He must have suspected of Ducklas all along!

Ducklas is now able to complete the Trilock and sets course to *Foerriban*.

Chapter Nine: Flower Power

Where is everybody? There are no enemies nor obstacles in *Foerriban* that prevent Ducklas from reaching the spot on the coordinates. Sooner than later, Ducklas finds what he is looking for: a big, shiny octagon in the center of the screen. It looks powerful, probably some kind of ancient power unit.

Thinking he simply has to grab it and leave the planet, just like that, Ducklas realizes the power unit is embedded on the chest of a big, scary and twisted-looking flower-like monster called *Fearsia*. Getting the power unit won't be so easy, after all…

After a long and stressful fight, Ducklas defeats *Fearsia*. The power unit detaches from the monster's body by itself and reaches Ducklas' hands. Apparently, the power unit comes with some instructions: "Place at the top of the central command tower. The power unit will generate an energy surge that will override all electronic activity. Not recommended for children under 7". Furthermore, Ducklas finds a paper note with coordinates indicating him to go to a specific place in his home planet, Ducktooine, as well as an alphanumeric code that Ducklas doesn't know how to interpret.

Chapter Ten: The Enemy of my Enemy is also my Enemy

Ducklas finds himself in space again, hopefully for the last time! Unsurprisingly, more duckine-made spaceships appear, but before engaging in combat, they are destroyed by a big space monster resembling a gargantuan eel called *Space Eelness*. The monster tries to destroy Ducklas' ship as well, but he dodges its attacks until he is ready to make the jump to hyperspace.

Back in Ducktown, Ducklas travels with Duckota to the spot marked in the coordinates. They find a cave and, within, a cryogenesis sleeping chamber. Ducklas soon realizes he must use it to travel to the future and stop the ongoing war. He also finds meaning for the alphanumeric code now: according to the instructions on the chamber, he must type it on the keyboard embedded on it in order to travel to the era of the war.

He says goodbye to Duckota, not sure he will ever see her again. Then he enters the sleeping chamber and… well… sleeps. Like, A LOT.

Chapter Eleven: Against Time

Ducklas wakes up in the future. He exits the cave and sees a panorama of chaos and destruction. Among the shouting, killing and overall mayhem, he encounters the soldier who gave him the first part of the Trilock. He's still alive! Well, in the future. Still alive in the future, but dead in the past? This is getting very confusing…

He tells the soldier he is looking for the central command tower. He points it out to Ducklas and, in doing so, gets distracted and killed by a duckine.

Not again! This duck was destined to die…

Now Ducklas enters a time paradox: if the soldier never traveled to the past to recruit Ducklas for the mission, Ducklas shouldn't be there at all… He starts to glitch and slowly but surely disappear. He doesn't have much time to reach the tower before vanishing!

Hurrying for his life and the duckkind's sake, Ducklas avoids and fights killing duckines on the way. He finally reaches the tower, climbs to the top, and places the power unit on a spot within the machinery that looks perfectly fitting for that purpose. A huge explosion of energy runs through the machinery and then expands out of the tower. Ducklas starts to hear how the sounds of battle dwindle. In his last moments before losing consciousness, he says "I saved them. I saved them all". Then he fades and the screen goes black.

Epilogue: The Ending No One Wanted

Ducklas wakes up on a bed surrounded by ducks, including the soldier from the future whom he saw die twice. How is this possible?

The soldier tells him basically every duck saw Ducklas' heroic efforts while reaching the tower. Noticing his clothes and the power unit he was carrying, the soldiers realized he came from another time. They also noticed he was glitching and about to fade from reality.

Since the duck that was supposed to travel to the past was found dead in the battlefield, they also understood the time paradox Ducklas was in. So one of them traveled to the past, but only moments before Ducklas arrived in this era, and protected the still alive soldier who was supposed to travel to Ducklas' time. Ducklas stopped glitching and survived, but was unconscious by the time they found him.

A celebration is held in his honor. Ducklas joins them for a while, but then he remembers her girlfriend Duckota and expresses his desire to go back to his time. Since all electronic activity has ceased, the technology allowing time travel is no longer available. Luckily a duck scientist, anticipating Ducklas' wishes, developed "reverse cryogenic" pills that could allow Ducklas to sleep all the way back to his time. According to the calculations made by the scientist, he should take six pills in order to go back to his era.

The ducks from the future go back to the cave in which lies the chamber used by Ducklas to travel to the future. They say farewell to him and leave him there with a jar of reverse cryogenic pills. Ducklas enters the chamber and starts swallowing them. He takes the fifth one and suddenly says "I think I should have gone to the bathroom first". Because of this distraction, he miscalculates the amount and takes another pill that he counts as the fifth one, and then another one, making a total of seven instead of six.

Ducklas wakes up a century or two before his time. He realizes this and screams "Oh, no! I slept too much". Then shouts "NOOOO!", and the screen goes black. A big "To be continued…?" appears on screen and then fades.

Bonus: Unlockable Post-Credits Cutscene

Ducklas attends an aristocratic party wearing a peruke. An undetermined figure approaches him and asks "Ducklas? Is that you?". Ducklas widens his eyes in disbelief.

CHARACTERS

-The Good Guys-

Ducklas

The hero and savior of all ducks. Ducklas embarks on a bizarre and unexpected journey to save his species from being exterminated in the future. He is also the only painted character in this GDD because of… reasons.

Duckota

Ducklas' love interest. She might not be the brightest duck lady in the world, but she has a pure soul and a heart of gold, among other… attributes.

The Soldier

This soldier from the future thought he was the Chosen Duck of Legend. Although proved wrong by fate, he plays a pivotal role in saving the duckkind from extinction. He's also an expert at dying several times in different eras.

Zen Duck

Don't let his looks fool you! He may look like a peaceful old duck, but he fights like an enraged demon.
He's definitely a good guy, but will put Ducklas to the test to prove his worth.

-The Bad Guys-

Birdie
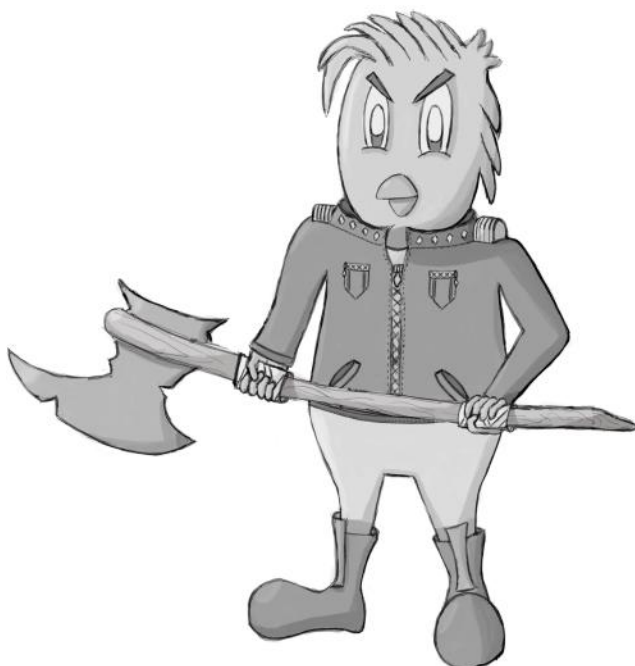
Ducklas' sworn enemy from high school. He'll do everything he can to stop Ducklas from preventing the war in the future. This guy really hates ducks!

Duckine

These killing machines were created by ducks to make their lives easier. They never expected them to evolve to the point of becoming a threat to the whole species!

Chilly Jimmy

The guardian on the planet fRe'e'S in KoLd. He'll try to kill Ducklas in cold blood. No pun intended.
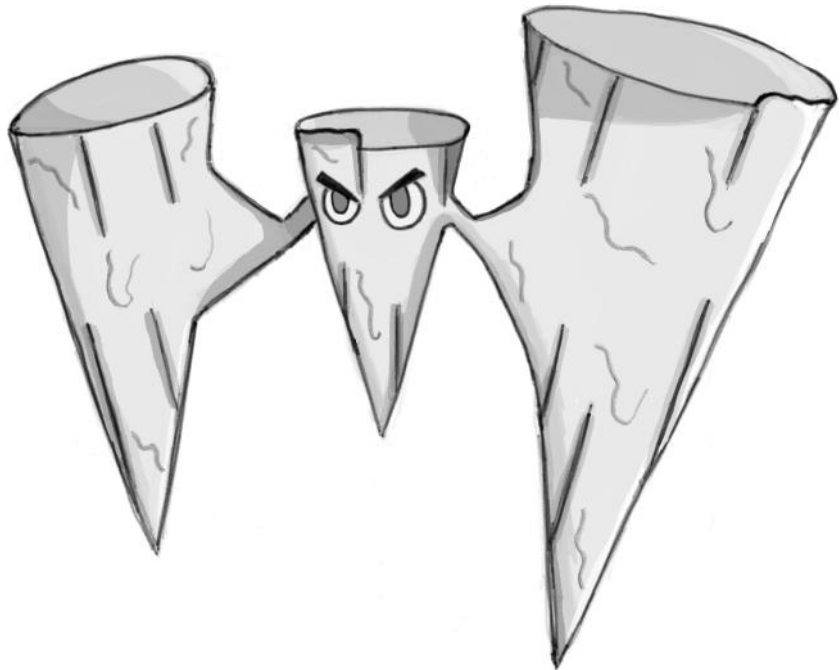
Smelly Jerry

From junk, garbage and mud emerged this putrid fella with ill intentions. Its smell is so disgusting he could simply kill you from afar by suffocation.

Space Eelness
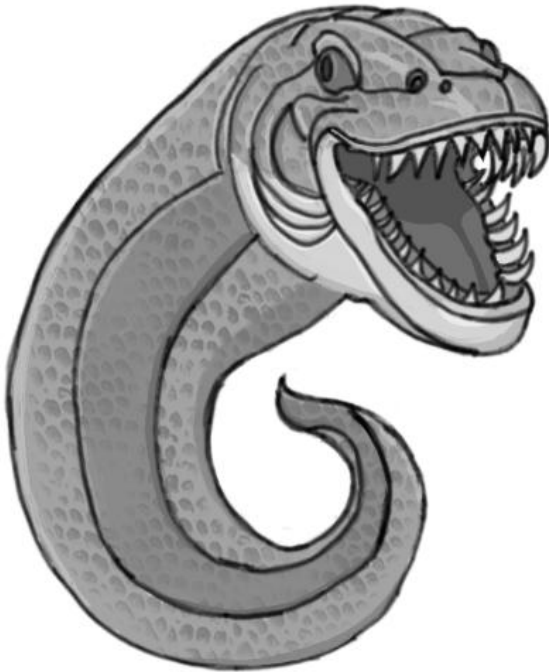
This gargantuan eel predates on unsuspecting space travelers. It crushes them, squeezes them, bites them and finally swallows them. Then they spend a thousand years being digested. Some zoologists theorize this is its way of saying "I love you".

Fearsia
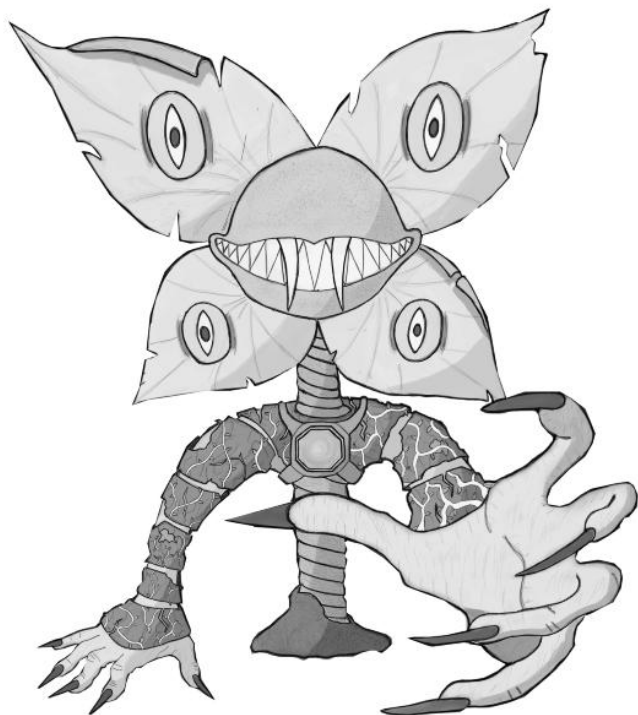
The keeper of the ultimate weapon that will allow the ducks to destroy the duckines once and for all.
Is it a flower or a demon? Who knows, but this guy sure is scary!

CHARACTERISTICS

Back and Forth Again, A Duck's Tale by Ducklas is a 2D action videogame with a detailed pixel art visual style that pays tribute to the 16-bit era of videogames, meant to be enjoyed exclusively as a single player experience. It's a classic side-scroller with a little turn of the screw: it's main mechanics aren't typical 2D for the genre. Ducklas can't either jump nor directly attack. Although there are enemies and confrontations, they are overcome mostly by evasion and action-packed puzzle-solving rather than engaging in combat.

As in many side-scrollers, players will have to move forward from left to right until they reach the end of the level. There will be foes and obstacles along the way, and most stages will end with a boss battle. After completing a level, players will be able to access the next one. Unlocked levels can be replayed at any time.

Above all things, *Ducklas* has been conceived as a parody game, full of references to other videogames and products of popular culture. As such, it's supposed to be fun, colorful, upbeat and even a bit wacky. There are some hard challenges here and there, but overall this is not meant to be too difficult an experience. Reaching a 100% completion requires some effort, though.

Characters have no voice in this game. Instead, written dialogue can be read in cutscenes through which the story is told. But that doesn't mean there won't be voice acting: during gameplay, Ducklas will make some sounds and noises when certain actions are triggered.

The target audience is that of young adults and adults, mostly millennials and centennials, but it should be suitable for children too. The game should also be available both for PC and last-generation consoles like Nintendo Switch, Xbox One S and Playstation 5.

Given its accessibility and the need for inclusion of some minor 3D elements as well as a few 2D/3D hybrid sequences, the game will be developed in Unreal Engine 5.

So, at the risk of sounding repetitive, here's a more visually appealing list of the most important general characteristics mentioned above:

- **2D action side-scroller**
- **Single player**
- **Pixel art style** (and a few 3D elements)
- **Unusual mechanics** (neither jumping nor attacking)
- **Parody game** (very important for aesthetics!)
- **Evasion** and **puzzle-solving** rather than combat engagement
- **Linear progression**
- **Boss battles** at the end of the level (most times)
- **Intermediate level difficulty**
- Story told through **cutscenes**
- **Written dialogue**, not spoken
- **Family friendly** with focus on millennials and centennials
- Available for **PC** and **last-generation consoles**
- Developed in **Unreal Engine 5**

MDA

Mechanics

Back & Forth

Ducklas has the ability to move from the midground to the background and vice versa. This movement is not completely free, though. He'll only be able to teleport to specific spots once he reaches very constrained areas called *teleportation zones.* Teleportation zones per se are not visible to the player, but once they reach them, they will see a point of light they can teleport to. Until they reach teleport zones or once they leave them, these points of light won't be visible.

Activate
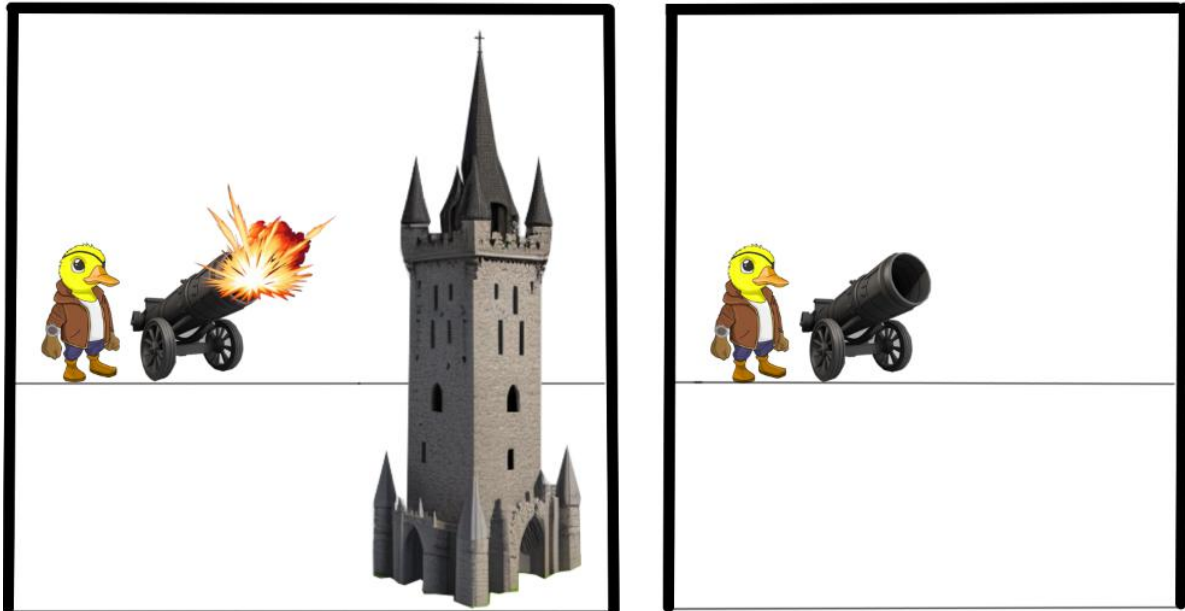
Some elements and objects in the environment can be activated to trigger an action. This will be mostly used to remove obstacles that block Ducklas' way. Some elements in the background can remove obstacles from the midground and vice versa.

Another use of this mechanic will be during boss battles. Since Ducklas can directly attack enemies, he'll have to use some elements in the environment to damage his opponents.

Shield

Ducklas has a shield that can either repel attacks and destroy some enemies. When used against weaker or common enemies like duckines, the shield will directly kill them. Some other foes are too big or too powerful either to be repelled or destroyed by the shield, so the player won't be able to use it against them all.

This mechanic will also be heavily used against boss battles. Ducklas won't be able to damage bosses this way, but he can block and parry some of their attacks.

Once used, the shield needs ten seconds to recharge. A *battery icon* will be seen on a corner of the screen indicating the status of the shield. If recently used, the battery will be depleted; if full, it will have a total of five bars. A single bar will be charged every two seconds.

Duck & Roll!
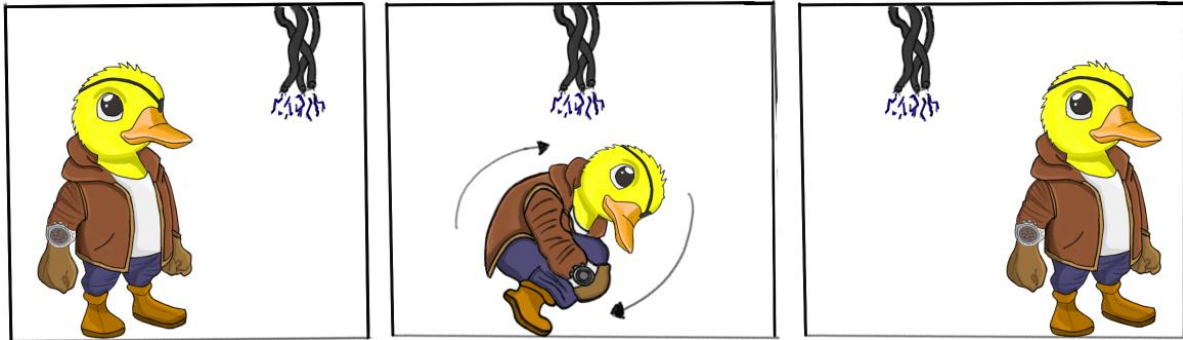
Ducking and rolling allows Ducklas to avoid obstacles blocking the way and reach areas that would otherwise be unreachable. That's right, you won't always be able to use *back & forth* for this purpose. Where would the fun be in that?

Additionally, this move set provides players with a small speed boost, which can sometimes be very useful to avoid enemy attacks and reach hidden *teleportation zones*. If you happen to be in front of a cliff and have no idea what to do next, why not try ducking and rolling into the abyss? You may be surprised at what happens.

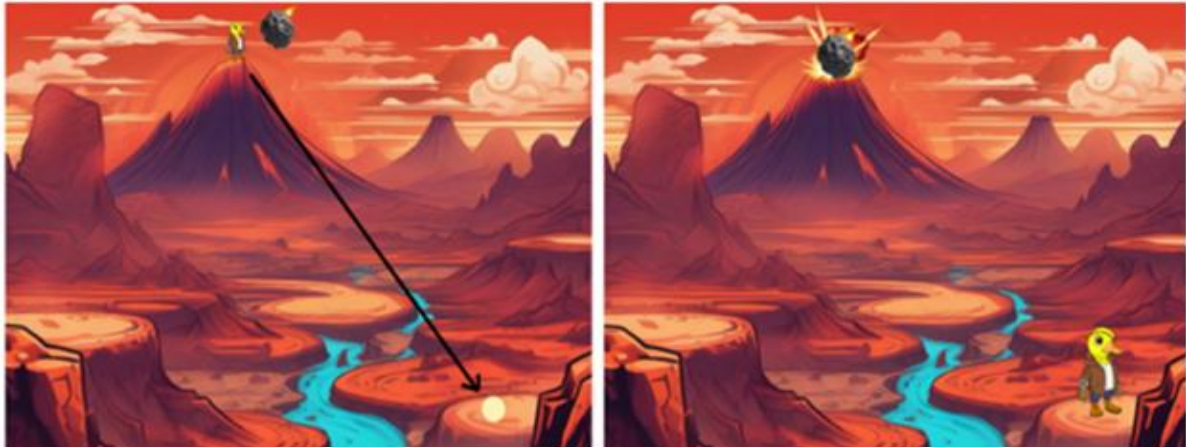# *Dynamics*

Evasion

Some foes will be either too big or too powerful to be stopped by the shield. Or it could happen that the shield is depleted. In this case, players will have the option to evade enemies using the *back & forth* mechanic.

Hurry!

You might have reached this point thinking this was a slow game, but it's not. It's actually fast-paced. Most times, Ducklas will have to move between background and midground rather quickly. If he doesn't, he might lose a life, so speed up!

Aesthetics

If we take into consideration the nine types of aesthetics described by *Hunicke, LeBlanc* and *Zubek* (yes, we did our research), it could be said that *Ducklas* is mainly characterized by three of them:

Challenge
Although *Ducklas* is not supposed to be a super hard game, an important hook for players is to discover how to overcome obstacles, avoid or defeat enemies as well as beat bosses. This is not an intensive twitching experience, but some good old brain-muscle coordination is still required! This will also lead to some replayability, as implied below in this GDD.

Narrative
This might not be a specially story-driven game, but *Ducklas* tells a story nonetheless. And a good story it is, right…? Right…? Well, we hope it is.
Either way, players will want to know what happens next and how this adventure ends. This will drive them to keep coming back until they finish it at least once.

Submission
Last but not least, it's extremely important for us as developers that players *have fun*. This should be, in our humble opinion, the main goal of most games. *Ducklas* in no exception to that rule.
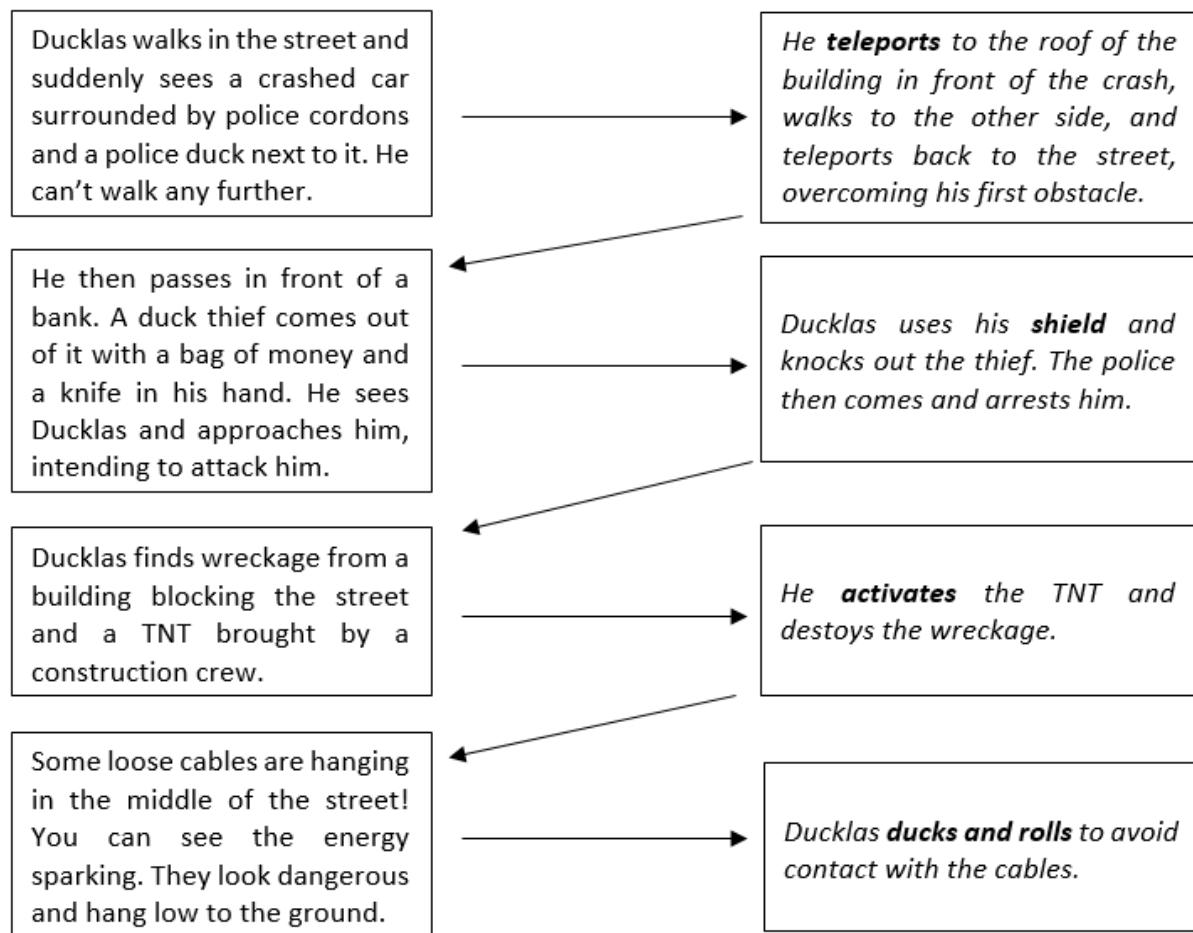
LEVEL DESIGN

Each chapter described in the "Full Story" section represents a level, except for the prologue and the epilogue, which will consist purely of cutscenes. That is, the game will have a total of eleven levels.

LEVEL 1: An Old Enemy
This will be the tutorial level, as logic dictates. The player **won't be able to die** until he faces *Birdie*, the first boss of the game. It will also be the only level with **interactive cutscenes**, in which the player will have to follow prompts indicated on screen in order to continue the action.

The setting will be *Ducktown*, a cute looking city with two-story houses, hills on the background, statues of national duck heroes as well as coffee and donuts stores called "Duckin' Donuts". One or two drunk ducks sleep on the streets and demonstrations against taxes take place here and there, but the rest of the picture is quite cheerful. The skies are blue and the sun has the face of a smiling duck.

The idea here will be to explain to the player how the **four mechanics of the game** work. For that purpose, there will be a sequence of actions as follows:

Ducklas walks in the street and suddenly sees a crashed car surrounded by police cordons and a police duck next to it. He can't walk any further.	*He **teleports** to the roof of the building in front of the crash, walks to the other side, and teleports back to the street, overcoming his first obstacle.*
He then passes in front of a bank. A duck thief comes out of it with a bag of money and a knife in his hand. He sees Ducklas and approaches him, intending to attack him.	*Ducklas uses his **shield** and knocks out the thief. The police then comes and arrests him.*
Ducklas finds wreckage from a building blocking the street and a TNT brought by a construction crew.	*He **activates** the TNT and destoys the wreckage.*
Some loose cables are hanging in the middle of the street! You can see the energy sparking. They look dangerous and hang low to the ground.	*Ducklas **ducks and rolls** to avoid contact with the cables.*

When Ducklas is about to leave *Ducktown*, he is faced on the outskirts of the city by *Birdie* and the first boss battle begins. Time to put mechanics into practice!

LEVEL 2: Combat Enlightenment

No more help from the devs from now on! Players will have to figure out on their own how to avoid obstacles and face enemies without prompts.*

This level is set in a *forest*. There will be wild animals that have to be **repelled with the shield**, and stampedes that will have to be **avoided by teleportation** to the background. Ducklas will also have to teleport when facing natural barriers such as fallen trees blocking the way, rapids or holes on the ground.

He will then enter the hidden temple and fight Zen Duck.

* Given the nature of the mechanic *activate*, a prompt will indeed appear when Ducklas stands next to an object that can be used by him.

LEVEL 3: Outgunned in Outer Space

The first level in outer space! This should be fun.

Ducklas will fly his ship and will have the sole objective of evading shots of enemy ships. In order to do this, the player can either move around the screen or look for **passing meteors** in the background to teleport to before they disappear from the screen or collide with other meteors. There will be a **timer** on screen indicating how much time he needs to evade the attacks until he is ready to make the jump to hyperspace.

LEVEL 4: Who Wants to Chill?

A level with no enemies? Sounds easy, but don't let that fool you.

fRe'e'S in KoLd is an ice planet with **slippery floors**, falling stalactites that can either be evaded or **destroyed with the shield** and **extremely cold areas** in which Ducklas can't stay more than a few seconds without losing health. Some ice obstacles can be melted by **activating** hot or burning elements like torches. And be aware of giant snowballs trying to crush you! You will have to hurry while it chases you. Some obstacles will try to block your path, but Ducklas can **duck and roll** to avoid them.

This level will also have a 2.5D perspective with 3D assets, while Ducklas will still be a 2D pixel art style character. This will lead to some funny jokes! (see **MISCELLANEOUS** section). After reaching the gate, a new boss battle against *Chilly Jimmy* will begin.

LEVEL 5: Roasted Duck

hO't-as hEl is… well, hot as hell. So hot, in fact, that some areas of extreme heat **slow down** Ducklas' movements. If he stays in these areas for too long, he'll faint and lose a life. Luckily, there are some **blue flowers** containing water along the way he can **activate** to cool down a bit. He will be able to move normally again when he reaches places with **shade**.

Beware! Extreme heat causes the watch to malfunction, so Ducklas won't have the chance to use the shield or teleport while in these areas.

Some duckines will be looking for Ducklas in the background, so try not to be spotted by them! Use shaded areas as cover. If they see you while in an area of extreme heat, you won't be able to use your shield against them until you reach a shaded spot. If this happens, escape won't be easy, since your movements will be slowed down.

LEVEL 6: The Duckines Strike Back

This is the second space level of the game. Let's add some degree of difficulty, shall we? Apart from **dodging meteorites**, some duckines will try to suicidally crash with you. Don't feel too comfortable when teleporting to a passing asteroid in the background, even if it won't collide against another asteroid or takes too long to disappear from the screen: duckines might not be able to shoot at you directly this time, but they sure can **shoot at the meteorites** you are standing on! **Debris** from these meteorites can also harm you, so try not to stay too close to them when they explode. Luckily for you, though, you can also use this same tactic against your enemies.

Once again, this level features a **timer**. When it reaches zero, Ducklas can jump to hyperspace.

LEVEL 7: It's Not as Bad as it Smells

There are several **moving machines** in *Planet Dirt* that Ducklas must avoid mostly by **ducking and rolling**. Some other machines will have to be directly destroyed by **activating** certain elements. Many of these elements will be set in the background, and activating them will destroy the machines in the midground.

There are zombies made of mud that can be easily **repelled by shielding**, but there's an infinite amount of them! In certain areas, they won't stop emerging from the muddy floor until you leave them behind. Other enemies are robotic workers that will **throw tools** at Ducklas and **jump to smash** him. Tools can be deflected with the shield, but Ducklas will have to duck and roll to avoid the robots when they jump. These enemies can't be defeated, so Ducklas will have to avoid them.

When the player reaches the next gate, a boss battle against *Smelly Jerry* will begin.

LEVEL 8: Undying Resentment

This level will be basically a second fight against *Birdie*. The rest will consist of cutscenes. This time, Birdie will have a similar but new set of moves, so this battle will be more challenging!

LEVEL 9: Flower Power

Level 9 will also consist mostly of a boss battle, but not entirely.

In *Foerriban* there are **no enemies nor obstacles**, simply a large **corridor** within a cave that will set the tone for and mood for the upcoming fight. While walking through the cave, Ducklas will make remarks about the lack of enemies and make one or two jokes along the way.

Ducklas will emerge in a dark but open space where the final boss battle against *Fearsia* will take place. This will be the most challenging battle of the game.

LEVEL 10: The Enemy of my Enemy is also my Enemy

The last space adventure of this ride, this level will feature an enemy called *Space Eelness* resembling a gargantuan eel in space. Ducklas will have to avoid its attacks, but this eel is **fast**! It can cross the screen in many different directions and in rapid succession. It can also move quickly from the background in an attempt to devour our hero.

Ducklas will still be able to **teleport to meteors** in the background to avoid Space Eelness' attacks. **Debris** from meteors shattered by the monster could also damage Ducklas.

LEVEL 11: Against Time

It's time to **rush**!

In a dystopic *Ducktooine* of the future, Ducklas will have to reach the central command tower before vanishing. Use every resource at your disposal to save the duckkind from extinction! **Avoid** enemies and obstacles at all costs by **shielding**, **ducking and rolling**, **teleporting** from the midground to the background and vice versa as well as **activating** elements to destroy anything blocking your path. This level will be **timed**, and there **won't be checkpoints**. If the player runs out of time before reaching the goal, he'll have to start the level all over again.

Generic elements for all levels

Ducklas uses an **autosave** feature. When players reach a **checkpoint**, an **icon** will be displayed on the right corner of the screen. This icon will consist of Ducklas' face. When the game finishes autosaving, the icon will disappear.

If the player loses a life, they will automatically start from the last checkpoint. If they lose all lives, they'll have to start the level from the beginning (the only exception to this rule will be the last level, in which there won't be checkpoints, as stated above).

There will also be five **hidden collectibles** in each level called *Duckota Tokens*. These are basically tokens shaped like Duckota's face. Collecting these tokens will allow the player to unlock some features in the main menu.

Each level will also have a **time trial mode** that will be unlocked when the player finishes it for the first time (again, the last level will be an exception to this rule).

There will be a level menu in the form of a **map** from which the player can choose which level to play (levels will be unlocked according to story progression, though). In this menu, there will be **three symbols** next to each **level icon**: one with Duckota's face, one of a clock and another one of Ducklas' face. This symbols will indicate whether the player has obtained all *Duckota Tokens*, completed the time trial challenge and managed to finish the level without losing a life. When they complete these challenges, a **green checkmark** will appear on them (the last level icon won't have a clock symbol). This checkmarks will also appear in the pause menu in each level.

About boss battles

The main idea of this instances is to challenge the player in situations not experienced up to that point. Therefore, all bosses will have a very distinctive move set and game mechanics can be applied in unusual ways. For example, the shield can be used to **stun** the enemy, which will give players time to activate **a world element that damages it**. Also, ducking and rolling can be used to **dodge** fast attacks.

The main mechanic of the game, *back & forth*, will allow battles to take place both in the background and the midground. Ducklas may need to move between them to avoid attacks and activate world elements. Some bosses will be "stuck" in place in the background, while other battles will take place primarily in the midground.

REFERENCES

This section will cover both the games, movies, franchises, etc., that are parodied in *Ducklas* and those used as inspiration for the game's aesthetics.

Parody References

- The game's title, in addition to foreshadowing *Ducklas*' main mechanic, is a reference to Tolkien's T*here and Back Again, a Hobbit's Tale by Bilbo Baggins* as shown in Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, when Frodo opens the book given to him by his uncle Bilbo.
- The idea of ducks being on the brink of extinction in the future as victims of machines created by themselves and the need of traveling through time to save themselves is a nod to James Cameron's *The Terminator*.
- The planet Ducktooine references *Tatooine* from George Lucas' *Star Wars*.
- In Ducktown there are stores called "Duckin' Donuts" referencing the food chain *Dunkin' Donuts*.
- The resistance group name *Rage Against the Duckines* is a clear reference to the band *Rage Against the Machine*.
- The idea of a key that was divided in three parts to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands called the *Trilock* is a reference to *The Legend of Zelda*'s *Triforce*.
- After defeating *Chilly Jimmy*, Ducklas finds a paper note that says "Thank you, Ducklas! But the key is on another planet". This parodies *Super Mario Bros.*' line "Thank you Mario! But our princess is in another castle!"
- In Chapter Five, Ducklas gets into a fridge to save himself from an explosion. This is a reference to the famous scene from Steven Spielberg's *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*.
- The name of Chapter Six is a parody of *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*.
- Ducklas jumping to hyperspace is also a reference to *Star Wars*, although the concept has been used in several other works of science fiction.
- *Foerriban* is a reference to the planet *Korriban* from the *Star Wars* universe.
- When Ducklas beats *Birdie* for a second time, it is revealed he was a duckine all along. This scene will reference the final showdown against the *Terminator* in the first film, when the machine burns down and only its endoskeleton remains.
- In the epilogue, Ducklas takes one more cryogenesis pill than he was supposed to and wakes up in a different time than his own. This is a reference to the original ending of Sam Raimi's *Army of Darkness*.

So far, the references listed above could have been identified just by reading the story, but there are more! So, without further ado, let's add them to the list, shall we?

Parody References Reloaded

- Right before entering the scene for the very first time, *Birdie* will shout "Duucklaaaaas! Come out to plaaaaaaay!". This line is a reference to the famous scene from the 1979 movie *The Warriors*.

- When *Fearsia* threateningly emerges from the darkness, Ducklas will cry out "Holly mother of Linnaeus pretending to name species with Darwin in a room full of Martians! What the hell is that!?". This is a nod to Sam's witty exclamations from the Sam & Max videogame franchise.
- Right at the end of the epilogue, when Ducklas awakes a century before his time, he shouts "NOOOO!" very much like *Darth Vader* in *Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith*.
- In the very first cutscene, the dying soldier from the future will ask Ducklas who he is, and he will answer "My name is Ducklas. But you can call me Ducker, His Duckness or El Duckerino, if you're not into the whole brevity thing". This is a reference to the Coen brother's film *The Big Lebowski*.
- If the player doesn't do anything for 10 seconds, the idle animation will change and Ducklas will start to do a little dance similar to that of Tobey Maguire's Spider-Man in *Spider-Man* 3 by Sam Raimi.
- Chapter Four will be a specially fast-paced level, since there are many areas with slippery floors. At some point, Ducklas will start to gain too much speed, go around loops and eventually end the sequence when **activating** a yellow spring that allows him to reach a high area, very much like in the *Sonic the Hedgehog* series. Right after landing, he will say "I hope they don't sue me for that".
- After defeating *Zen Duck* in combat and getting the second part of the Trilock, Ducklas gives Duckota both pieces for safekeeping and gets ready to travel to space. Before entering the spaceship, will say "I love you, Ducklas", and Ducklas will answer "I know". This is a reference to the famous dialogue between *Princess Leia* and *Han Solo* in *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*.

Aesthetic References

- There will be mainly two types of cutscenes in the game: in the form of still images with text at the bottom of the screen, very much like in *Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire* for the Nintendo 64, and "intervening" cutscenes that interrupt the in-game action, much like in LucasArts's graphic adventures of old.
- The visual style and definition will be similar to that of 16-bit era videogames, although landscapes and backgrounds should be more detailed in order to better implement mechanics and dynamics. A perfect example of what we are aiming for here are the aesthetics of *Shantae: Risky's Revenge*.
- *Planet Dirt* should have aesthetics similar to that of *Earthworm Jim*'s level *New Junk City*, although the landscape will be more industrialized.
- In the very first moment of the initial cutscene, when Ducklas and Duckota look at the sky, the music should be reminiscent of that of *Super Mario RPG*'s first cutscene, right before Peach gets kidnaped.
- Ducktown is supposed to feel cute. It should have a slight influence from *Yoshi's Island* first level.
- Space levels will basically be a modern variant of multidirectional shooters in the style of *Mad Planets*, but adapted to the game's main mechanic *back & forth*.
- The final level should be reminiscent of *Super Metroid*'s escape sequence at the end of the game, which should also be reflected in the music, although the character's speed will be significantly slower than that of *Samus* and adjusted to Ducklas' specific move set.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Achievements in this game consist of unlocking certain features after completing optional quests in each level. Specifically, these quests consist of collecting all *Duckota Tokens*, successfully completing the time trial mode and finishing the level without losing a life.

Concept art and soundtrack: If all five *Duckota Tokens* are collected in a level, a gallery with concept art and the music for that level will be accessible from the main menu.

Boss rush mode: If the player completes all of the time trials, a boss rush mode will become accessible from the main menu. In order to complete this game mode, players will need to defeat all bosses without losing a life. This will be very challenging! But if it's done, Ducklas will wear a crown from then on in all levels as proof of the player's awesome skills.

Secret ending: If all levels are completed without losing a life, a bonus post-credit scene will be unlocked after finishing the last level. This scene is described in the **FULL STORY** section.

MUSIC

As stated before, this is a parody game. That means music will be parodied too. Musician, this will be a mayor challenge for you: to reference music without inflicting copyright.
By the way, there's some information regarding music in the **AESTHETIC REFERENCES** subsection, so be sure to check that out too!

Ducktown: This is a nice, laid back city. Music should be chill and upbeat at the same time. A good reference for this could be *Hill Top Zone*, from *Sonic 2*.

Forest: This setting is perfect for parodying *Donkey Kong* music. So a song similar to *Mangrove Cove* from *Donkey Kong Country: Tropical Freeze* would be ideal in this scenario.

Space levels: These are supposed to be a lot of fun and super wacky. Imagine Ducklas as a cowboy in space. A song like Duane Eddy's *Peter Gunn* would fit really well here.

fRe'e'S in KoLd: In this ice planet music should be calm and deep. The song *Phendrana Drifts* from *Metroid Prime* is a good representation of that.

hO't-as hEI: Cadence should be here slow and feel heavy. *Virginia Highway* from Tigerblood Jewel could be a good source of inspiration for this level.

Planet Dirt: A level influenced by *New Junk City* from *Earthworm Jim*, the music should also resemble that of the level.

Foerriban: Since the level per se is basically a transition to the boss battle, instead of a song there should be a melody with one or two notes extending menacingly and building tension.

Ducktown (future): This level is about racing against the clock and it's inspired by the escape sequence from *Super Metroid*. The song from this sequence should be parodied too.

Birdie: *Birdie* is a metalhead. Music for the boss battle against him should sound something like *Punch Bowl* from *Donkey Kong Country: Tropical Freeze*. The second battle song should be a fast-paced and perhaps heavier version of the first battle theme.

Zen Duck: The dialogue in the cutscene will have a Japanese-like melody, but the battle song will sound like *Super Smash Bros. Ultimate*'s version of *Castlevania*'s *Lost Painting*.

Chilly Jimmy: If the song in *fRe'e'S in KoLd* is *Phendrana Drifts* from *Metroid Prime*, a good transition for the boss battle music would be *Phendrana Drifts (Depths)* from the same game.

Smelly Jerry: This battle should be as much fun as it is engaging. A song like *Roar of Dedede* from *Kirby and the Forgotten Land* captures that idea perfectly.

Space Eelness: Same song as the other two space levels, but more fast-paced and intense, so as to put a little more pressure on the player.

Fearsia: *Fearsia* is a very scary-looking foe, and the battle against him is hard. Music should do justice to that without being too ominous. Something like *Theme of Rundas* from *Metroid Prime 3: Corruption* would fit very well here.

<u>INTERFACES</u>

- **Main menu**: from here players can **start** playing the game, access the **game settings**, select an **extras** option where the unlockable content can be seen and also watch directly the **end credits**.
  - Selecting **start** will prompt the player to either start a **new game** or **continue** a previous one. If the player chooses to continue, a **level menu** resembling a map will appear, as stated in the **LEVEL DESIGN** section of this GDD.
  - In the **settings** section, players can increase or decrease **music** and **sounds**, as well as check the **game controls**. They can also choose among some languages.
  - From the **extras** menu players will be able to access unlocked **concept art** and **soundtrack** for each level as well as the **boss rush mode**.
- **Pause menu**: when pausing the game during a level, players will have the option to **continue** playing, **exit** the game and also access the **game settings**. There will also be icons representing the *Duckota Tokens* obtained in that level, a clock for the time trial mode and another one of Ducklas' face for the win-without-losing-a-life challenge. When complete, a green checkmark will appear next to them.
- **Game over**: if the player loses all lives, a short cutscene of Ducklas falling to the ground will appear and the player will be prompted to choose between **continuing** playing or **exiting** the game.

MISCELLANEOUS

This is a section of elements, dialogues, jokes and ideas that ABSOLUTELY must be included in the game.

Breaking the fourth wall

As already implied in different sections of this GDD, Ducklas will break the fourth wall and talk directly to the player from time to time.

First time encountering a water body

In the second level, in the forest near Ducktown, Ducklas will find either a lake or a river he'll have to avoid using the *back & forth* mechanic. When reaching the water body, an "intervening" cutscene will take place.

Ducklas: Yes, yes, I know what you're thinking: 'Hey, Ducklas, you are a duck, aren't you supposed to swim?'. Well, no. I never learned, okay? You might find that shocking, but ducks are very complex creatures, and there's more to us than meets the eye. Maybe it's time for you to stop typecasting and assuming behaviors based on species, buddy.

Suddenly, another duck appears out of nowhere and jumps into the water.

Random duck: Oh, yeah, I'm a duck! I love to swim and quack!

The duck swims away and disappears, and Ducklas facepalms.

Ducklas: Dammit.

War in the future sequence

When the player reaches the final level of the game, an "intervening" cutscene will appear showcasing the war in the future, right before the soldier duck appears and dies again. Among the explosions and sounds of battle, someone shouts "DUCK AND COVER! (no pun intended)".

First encounter against *Birdie*

When reaching the first boss battle, a short "intervening" cutscene will start followed by a cutscene with still images and text at the bottom.

In the intervening cutscene, *Birdie* (yet unseen to the player), will shout "Duucklaaaaas! Come out to plaaaaaay!", as described in the **REFERENCES** section.

Then the cutscene with still images will start, showing *Birdie* to the player for the first time.

Text at the bottom: Oh, no! It's Birdie, Ducklas' sworn enemy from high school!

Then Birdie pulls out a double handed axe out of nowhere.

Text at the bottom: And he has an axe!

Birdie: I heard you ducks will all die in the future and you are trying to prevent it. Do you really think I'm gonna let you do that?

The cutscene ends here and then the first boss battle begins.

Encountering *Fearsia*
Once arrived in *Foerriban*, Ducklas won't face any foes in the way, much to his surprise. When he finally reaches the boss area, the power unit he needs will be floating in the middle of the screen, the background completely black. An "intervening" cutscene will then follow.

Ducklas: So… I grab the weapon and leave, just like that? No enemies? No scary, challenging boss protecting it? The devs must have gotten lazy.

Then the background slowly begins to light up and a threatening tune starts to play.

Ducklas: Oh, no… Not the ominous music…

Then *Fearsia* appears, the power unit embedded on its chest.

Ducklas: Holly mother of Linnaeus pretending to name species with Darwin in a room full of Martians! What the hell is that!?

The cutscene ends here and the boss battle begins.

3D vs 2D
Level four will be completely 3D (2.5D, actually), except for Ducklas, who'll keep his pixel art style. When starting the level, he will say "What the hell is going on here? Why is everything in 3D?"
After defeating *Chilly Jimmy*, Ducklas will say "Well, that was hard, but I guess nothing can top the 16-bit era of videogames after all".