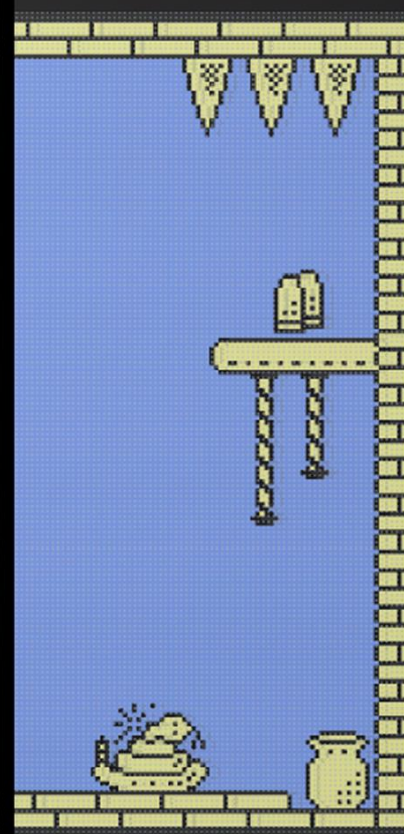




THE ADVENTURES OF
ELENA
TEMPLE



DESIGN BOOKLET



A game by Catalin Marcu
GRIMTALIN SRL ©2018

DEAR PLAYER

Thank you for trying The Adventures of Elena Temple! While I have more than 10 years working in the games industry, this is my first indie game and I couldn't be more happy and proud of it! To be able to share it with you is a dream come true for me.

What drove to make such a quirky little game? Who in their right mind creates a monochrome old school platformer made to look and play like it was made in the eighties? Well, I guess that would be me. Definitely not because I saw some market opportunity, but because I think it's something worth making.

Pitfall was one of the first games I've played, on a Sinclair clone, or maybe it was a knock-off of Pitfall,

who knows, what I remember for sure is swinging over crocodiles. In many ways, it inspired Elena Temple, starting with the Indiana Jones like character. And it fascinated me how good the black & white art in Prince of Persia and Dark Castle could look on the original Macintosh, hence my art style!

I always loved that starting era of the games industry and wished I had been a part of it, making games side by side with industry legends, creating so much fun with so few elements and so many limitations.

The Adventures of Elena Temple is my love letter to those times long ago, when there still was a certain purity about making games. I hope you enjoy it!

PROTAGONIST

For the first version of Elena, I was going for a more feminine looking hat, but I ended up with her looking like Robin Hood. And the character stance wasn't right, with her looking like she was always leaning back. She's a chill woman, but still!



Idle1



Walk1



Walk2



Shoot



Idle2



Jump



Die

In the second and final version I fixed her stance, switched to more of an explorer's hat and used less conditioner in her hair. Which also made her look a bit slimmer, or at least not so big headed.



Idle1



Walk1



Walk2



Shoot



Idle2



Jump



Die

ENEMIES



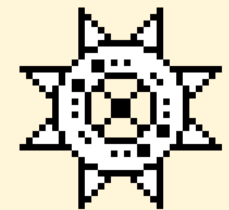
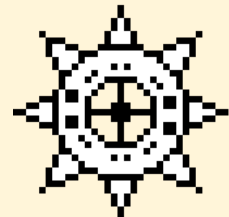
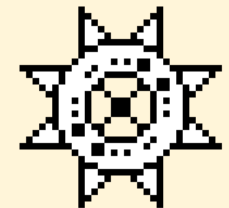
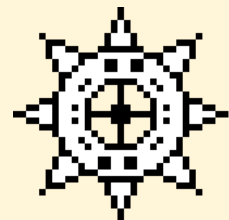
Snake



Scorpion



Giant Bat



Spiked Wheel

If you're thinking these are pretty familiar enemies, you're right, because what I was going for were the most typical enemies from games back in the day. And I don't think you can get any more typical than snakes, scorpions, spiked wheels and bats! From a mechanics standpoint, each enemy type is unique, with snakes staying in one place, scorpions patrolling left-right, sometimes even on ceilings, bats zig-zagging through an area and spiked wheels being invulnerable to bullets.

COLLECTIBLES

Ah, the lure of gold! How easily it takes over Elena Temple, pushing her to jump into an unknown dungeon! When she realizes she must find another way out, Elena's only choice is to get her hands on all the gems hidden in treasure chests scattered around the dungeon. There sure are a lot of pots lying around, but nothing a good old bullet can't break! Well, what do you know, some of these have coins inside, ah, that lure of gold takes its hold again!

Speaking of pots, their content is randomized between playthroughs, but only between the pots in the same room. So, one time the lower left pot might hold a coin and the other time it might be empty and the upper right pot might hold that same coin. Why? Just to add some diversity between playthroughs.



Coin



Gem



Treasure Chest



Pot



Bullets



Secret Scrolls



Guardian

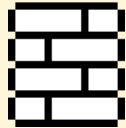


Chalice of the Gods

ENVIRONMENT



Decorative
Spear



Wall



Spike



Platform



Platform Off



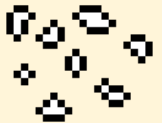
Pressure Plate



Chain



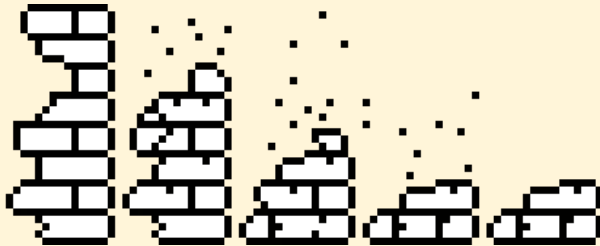
Altar



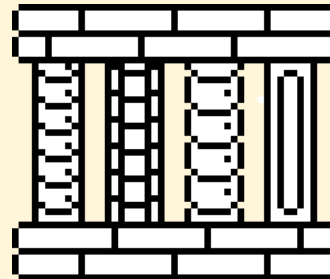
Crumbling
Platform



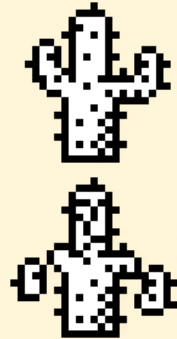
Decorative
Shield



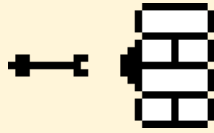
Destructible Wall



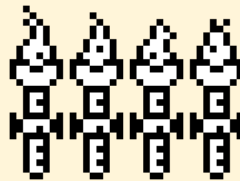
Columns



Moving Spike



Wall Arrow



Torch

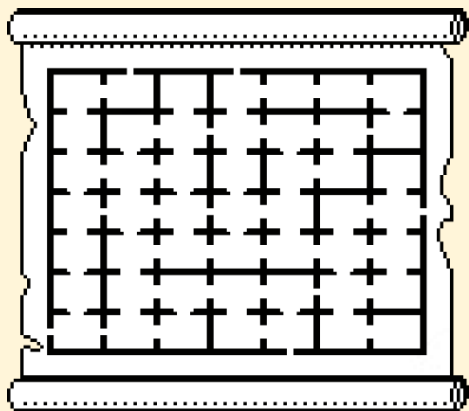


Moss

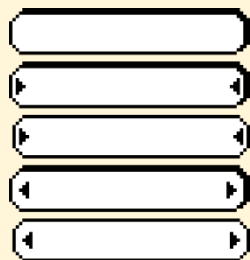


Cactus

USER INTERFACE



Dungeon Map



Normal Button

Selected Button

Pressed Button

Selected Values Button

Pressed Values Button



Fog Tile



Tutorial Icons



Guardian Icons



Leaf Decoration



Save Icon



Bullets Indicator



Map Player Icon



Map Completed Room

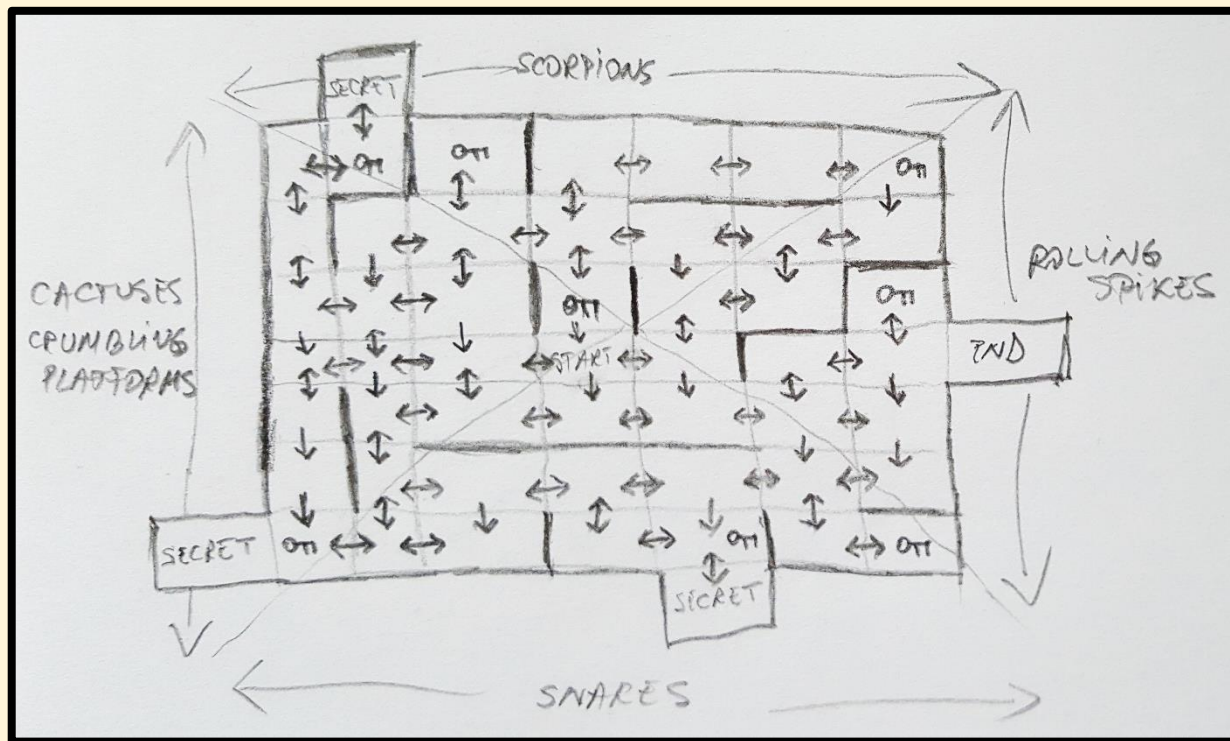


Map Treasure Chest

When it comes to the user interface, the most important thing to me was the map. I wanted an open exploration experience and I knew I needed to help out the player with the layout of the dungeon. The map truly becomes complete once you collect all the secret scrolls, adding to it information about secret passages, the location of the treasure chests and marking the rooms you've fully completed so far. Since that's a lot of powerful information to possess, I wanted the player to work for it, hence the secret scrolls. There is also another type of subtle info on the map when it comes to the gaps between the rooms: a big gap means you can go back and forth, a V-shaped gap means you can only fall through, but not go up, while a small gap means there's a secret passage or breakable wall linking the two rooms.

DUNGEON

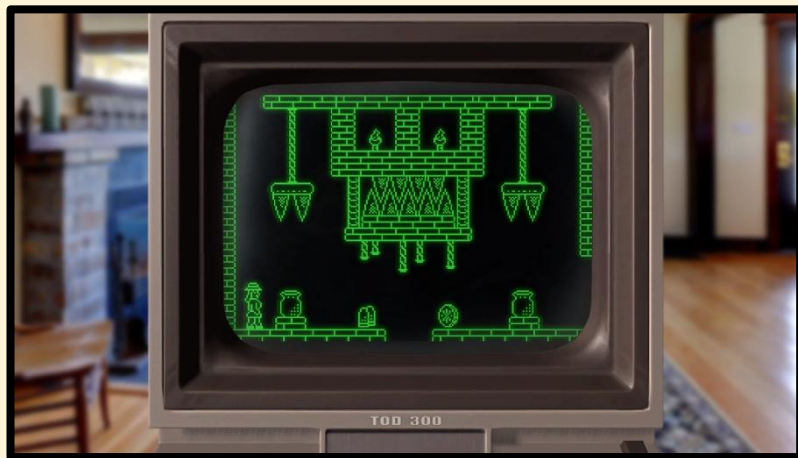
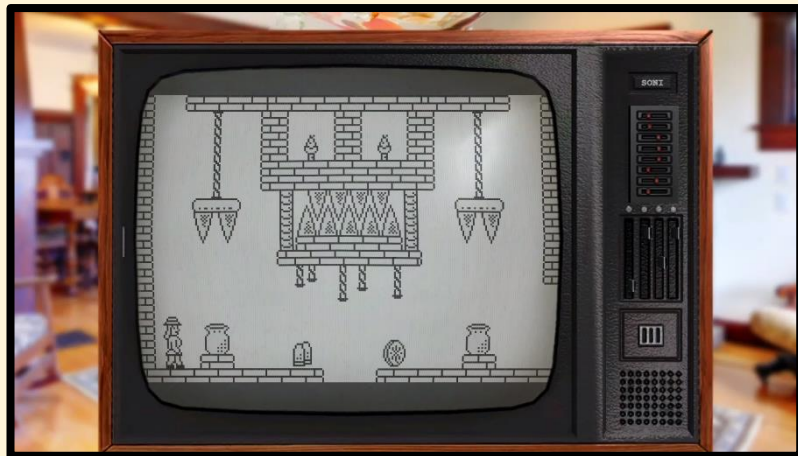
Spoiler alert! This is the first sketch I did when laying out the dungeon. It's not 100% accurate for the final game, but most of it is the same. Those little keys became the locations of the treasure chests holding the gems. As you can see, the map is split into four sections, each with its own particular mechanics. The final shape of each area is different, but their general locations of top, bottom, left and right were kept. And each section now has three unique mechanics.

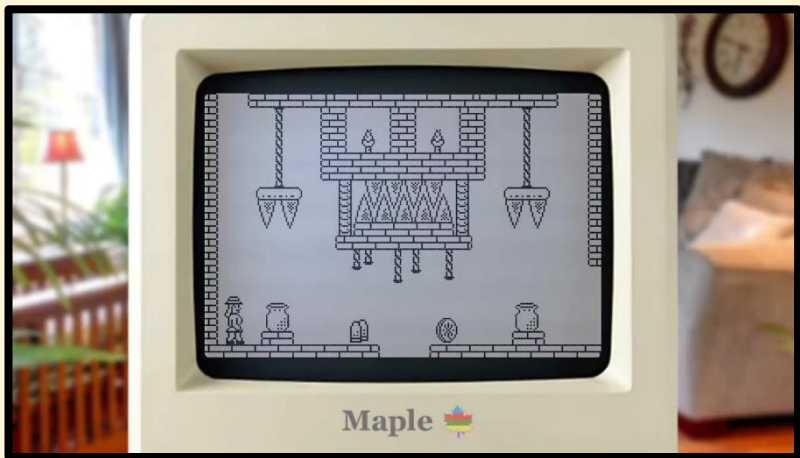


OLD MACHINES

Simple black and white graphics were fine and all, but the plan always was to nail the old school look by emulating styles found on actual machines from back in the day.

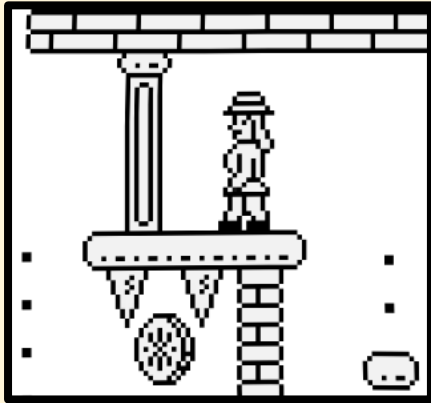
While the accuracy might not be spot on for some, I tried to get the feel right without falling into the “complexity for complexity’s sake” trap. Only you can judge the results!



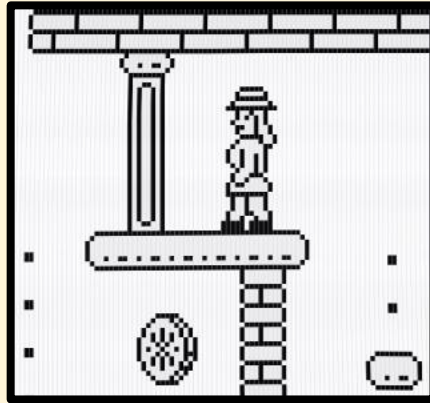


SCREEN EFFECTS

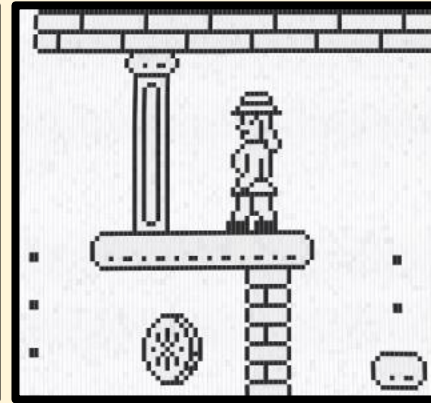
Like I said before, I used simple approaches to emulate the various displays from the past. Take the Pomo D'Or 4 for example. I started out with the display buffer mapped onto a sphere, but tiled enough times so that the spherical effect is visible, but not too obvious. Then I added some vertical interlace lines, plus some moving horizontal scan lines of various widths - they're a bit subtle to be seen here, but give a nice effect in real time. Since the Pomo D'Or 4 displays the game on an old TV, I had to add a noisy pixels effect, created very simply using a noisy texture, rotated in steps of 90 degrees through an animation, making noisy pixels pop around. Finally, the TV screen overlay is added on top.



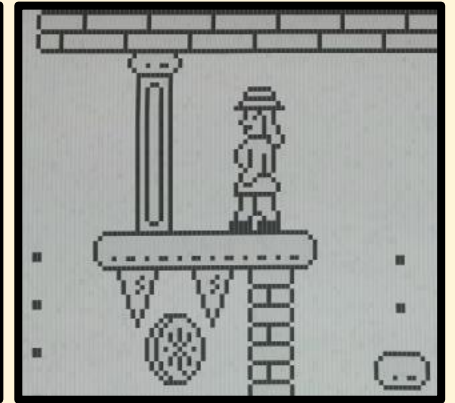
Spherical Display



Vertical Interlace + Scan Lines

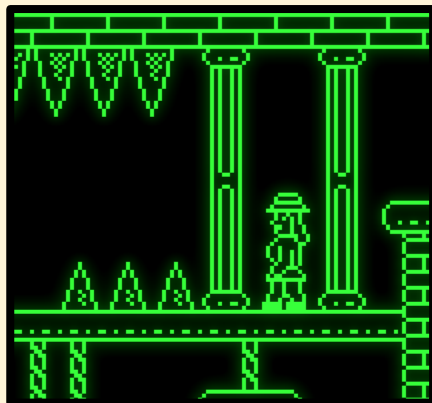


Noisy Pixels

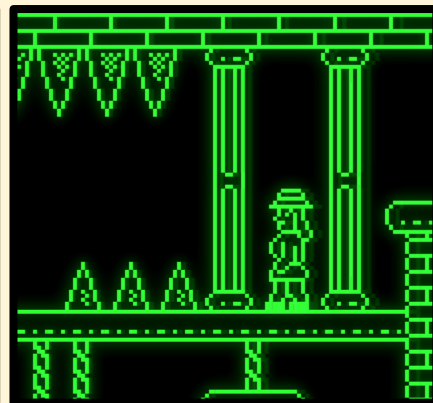


Screen Overlay

For the TOD 300, first I inverted the display buffer and colorized it green. Then I duplicated it and offseted the copy, making it look like the image isn't calibrated properly. Finally, I added a bloom effect and the screen overlay.



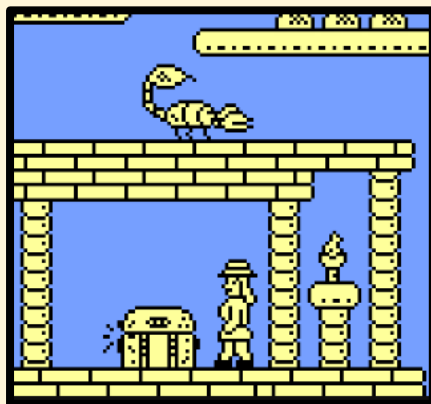
Inverted & Colorized Buffer



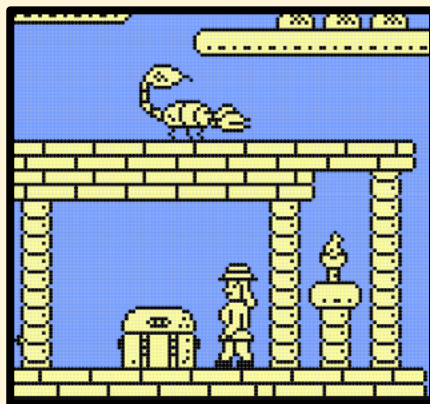
Offset Duplicate Buffer



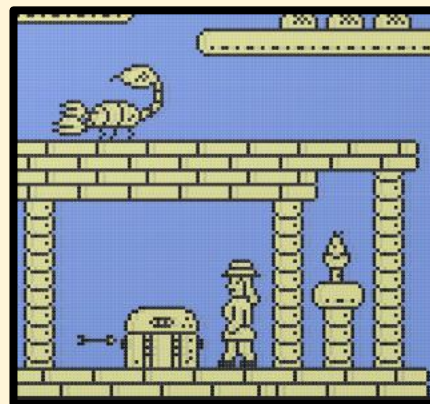
Bloom + Screen Overlay



Colorized Buffer & BG Color



Matrix Interlace + Scan Lines

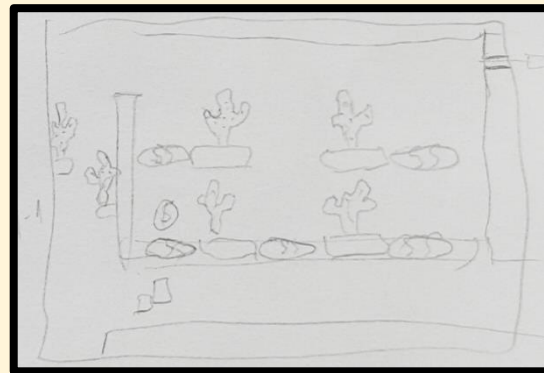
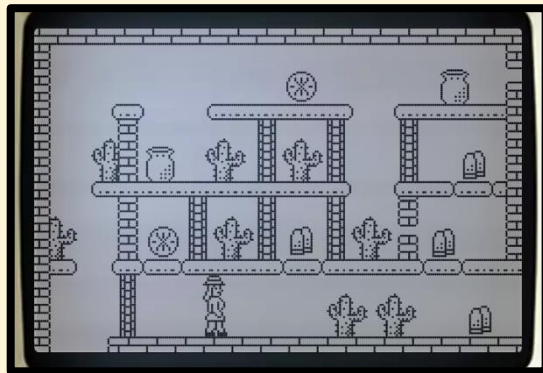
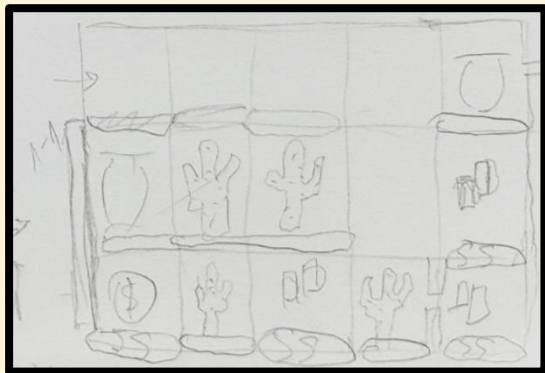


Offset Outlines + Screen Overlay

The NS-Bos PC has a blue background, while the display buffer is also colorized. The matrix interlace makes the pixels look closer to dots. I duplicated the buffer and kept only the black outlines, then I offsetted this copy for a new uncalibrated look.

LEVELS

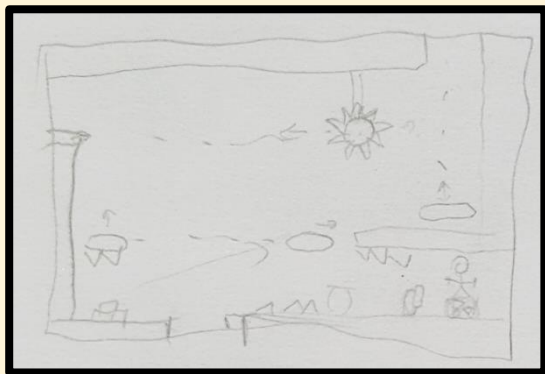
I strived to make each level in The Adventures of Elena Temple unique, through a combination of layout, player movement flow and puzzle elements. When designing a level, I'd start out with a desired trait, like a staircase layout made of platforms or an arrangement of various elements in a grid like structure. Or maybe I'd want the player to move up and down in a snake like level or jump between moving platforms to reach a certain area. Sometimes I started out with a puzzle, like the "snake hideout" in level 7-2. With this first trait settled on, I'd build around it, keeping in mind my three pillars of level design for this game: layout, movement, puzzles. Each aspect should stand on its own when compared to other levels, but the most important rule is that the combination must make the level obviously unique.



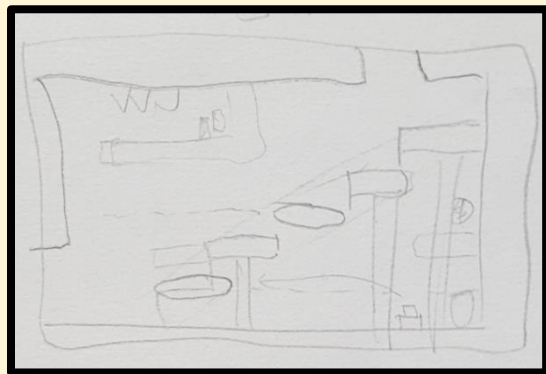
Level 1-1



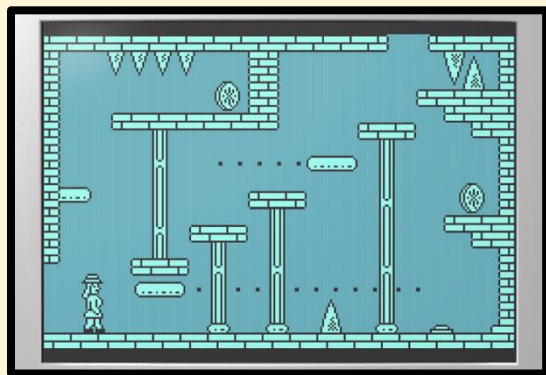
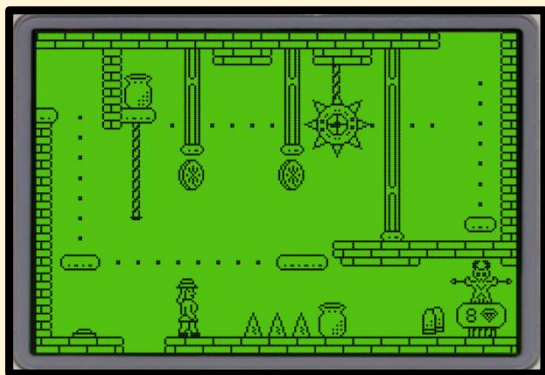
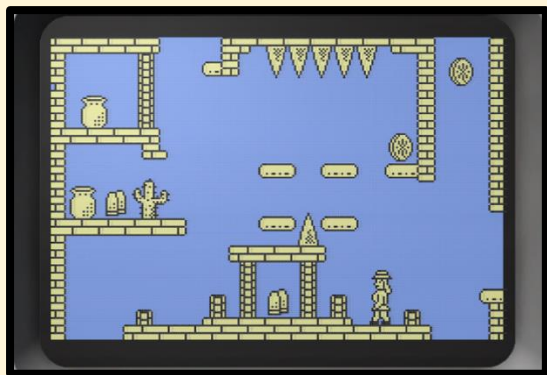
Level 4-2

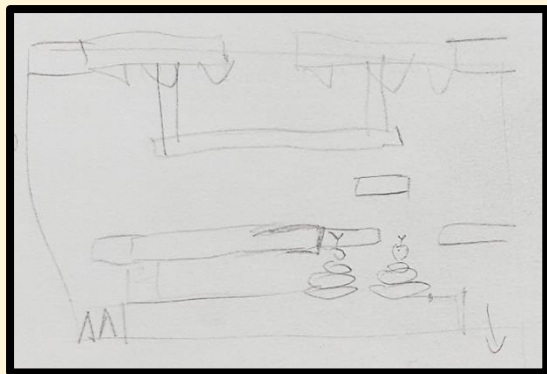


Level 4-7

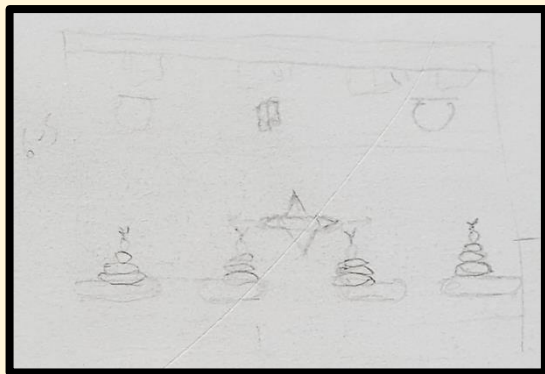


Level 6-7

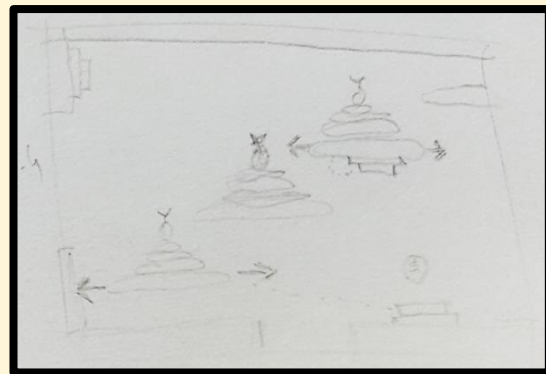




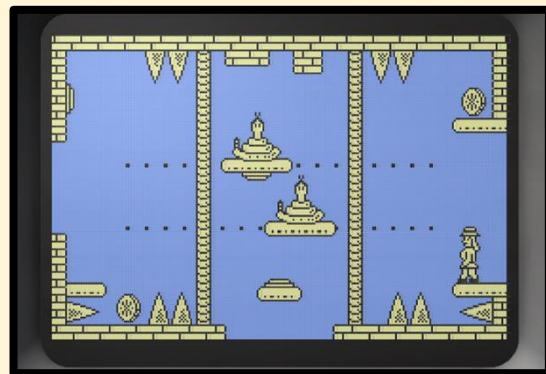
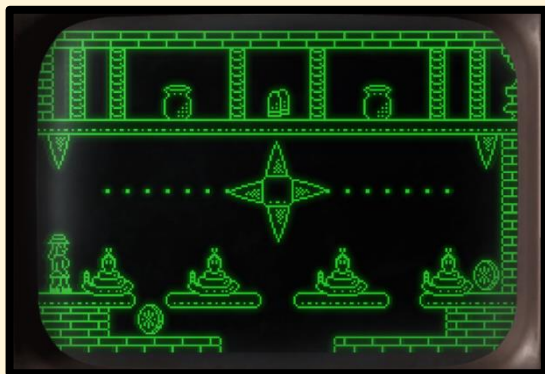
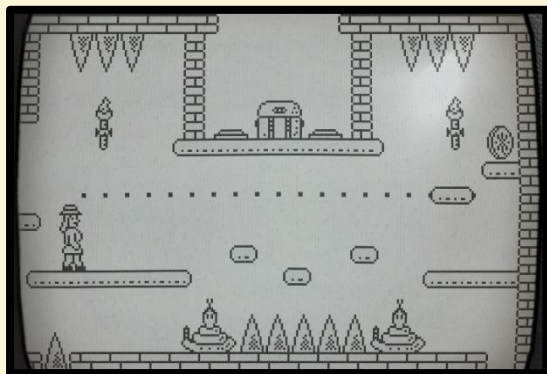
Level 7-5

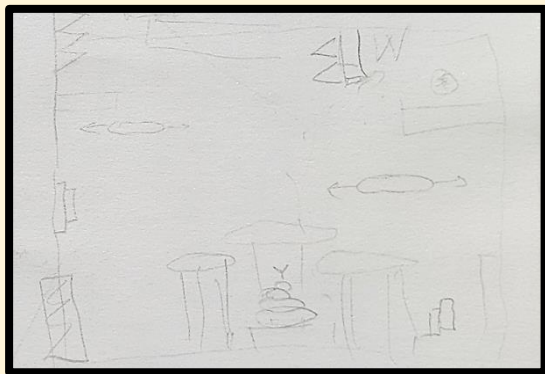


Level 6-5

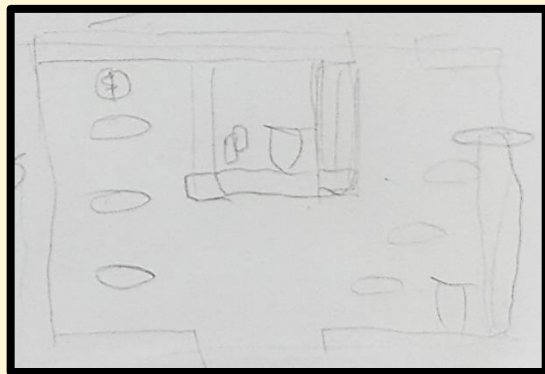


Level 6-4

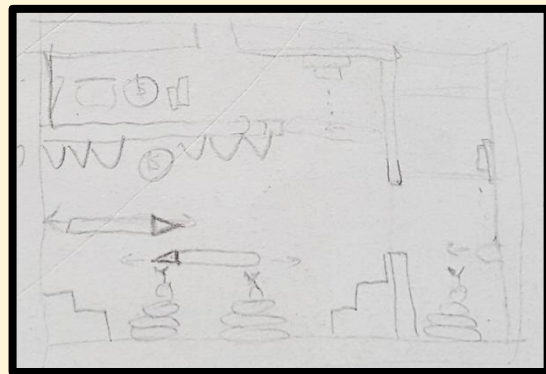




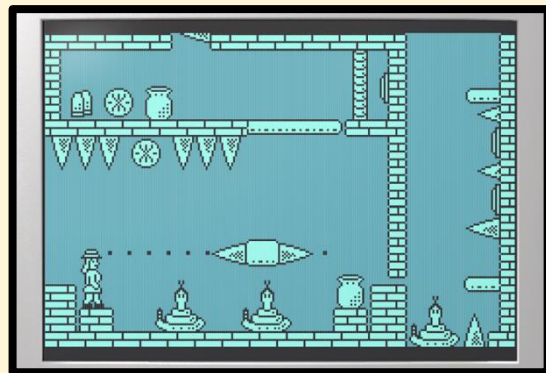
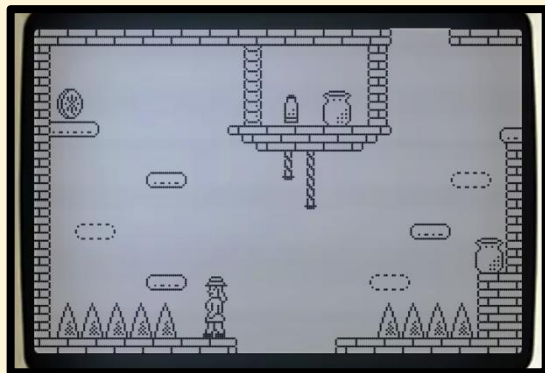
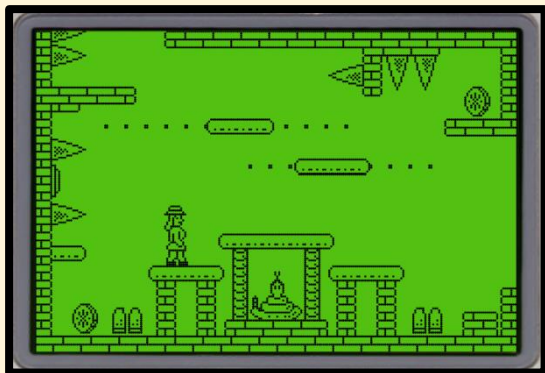
Level 7-2



Level 3-5



Level 7-3

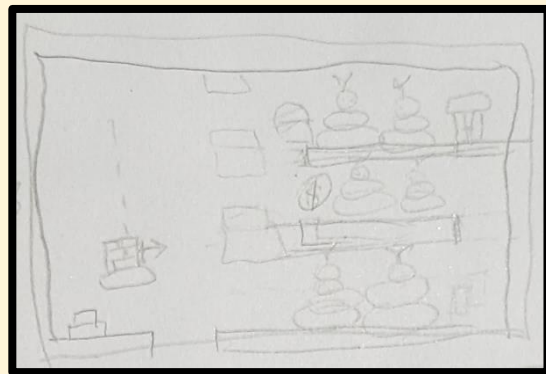




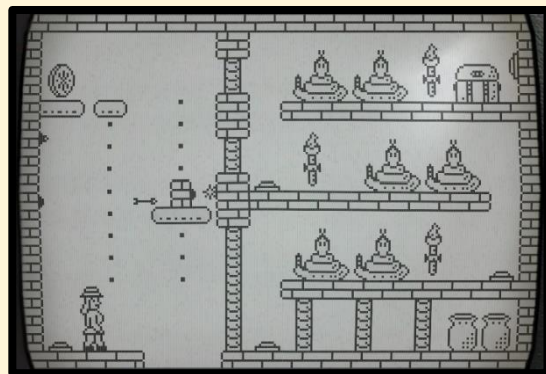
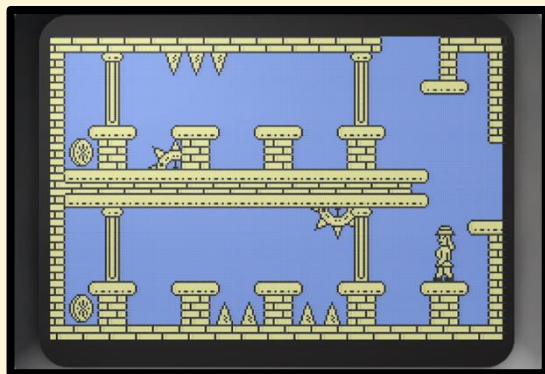
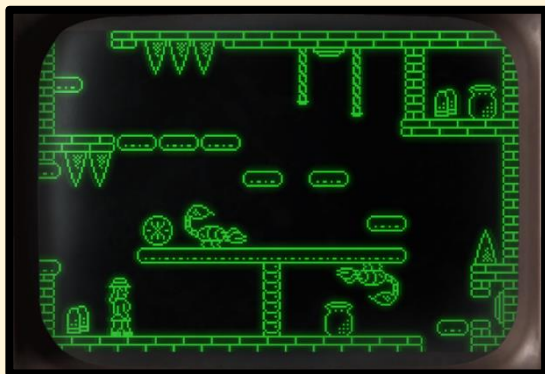
Level 3-3

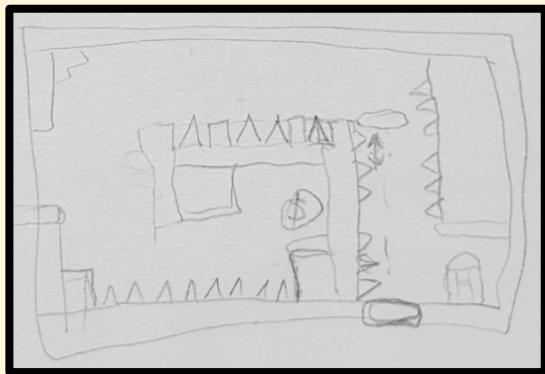


Level 7-6



Level 1-3





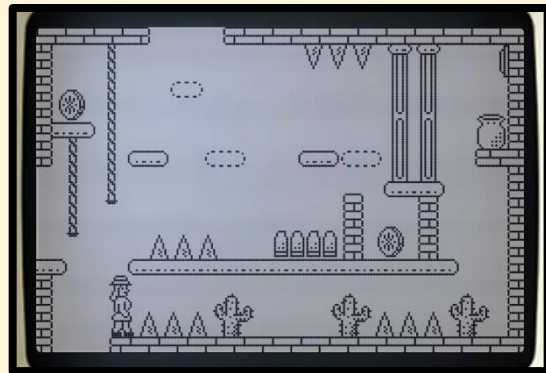
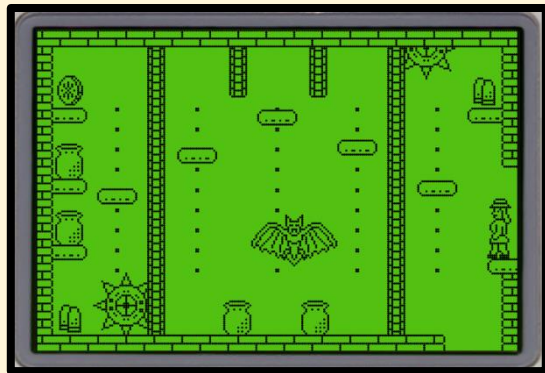
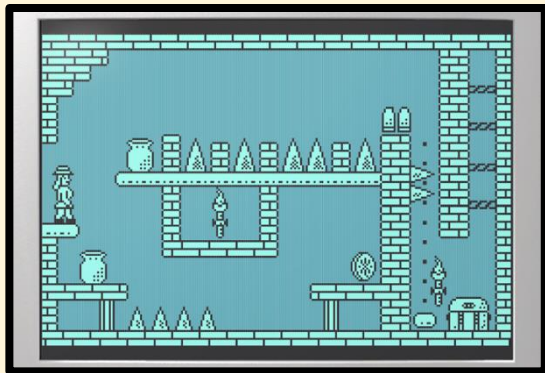
Level 7-7



Level 2-2

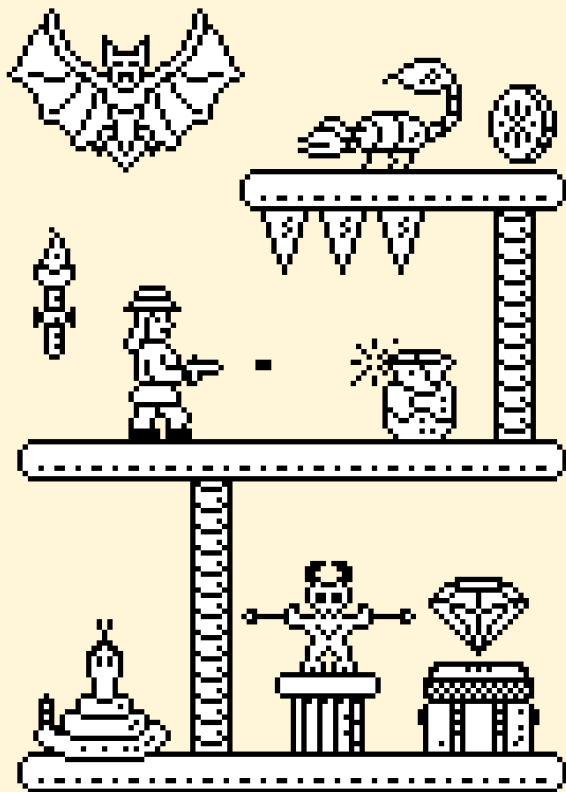


Level 2-3

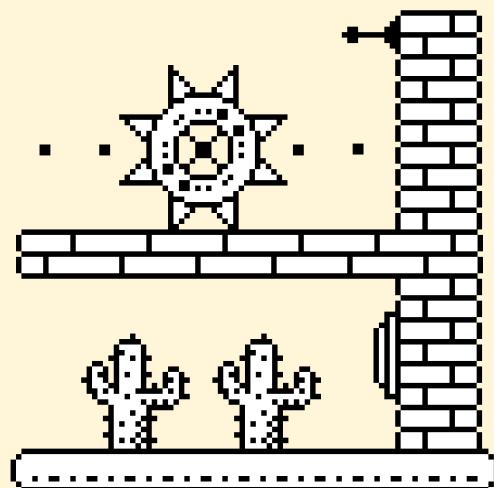
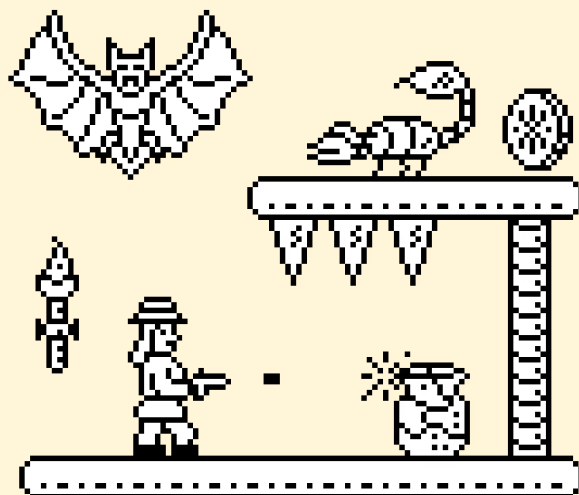
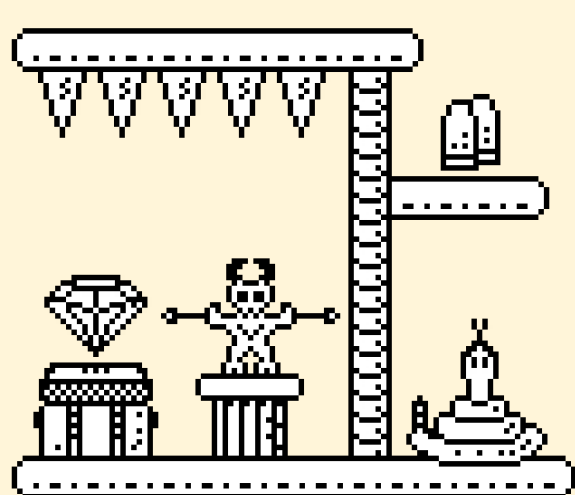


MARKETING

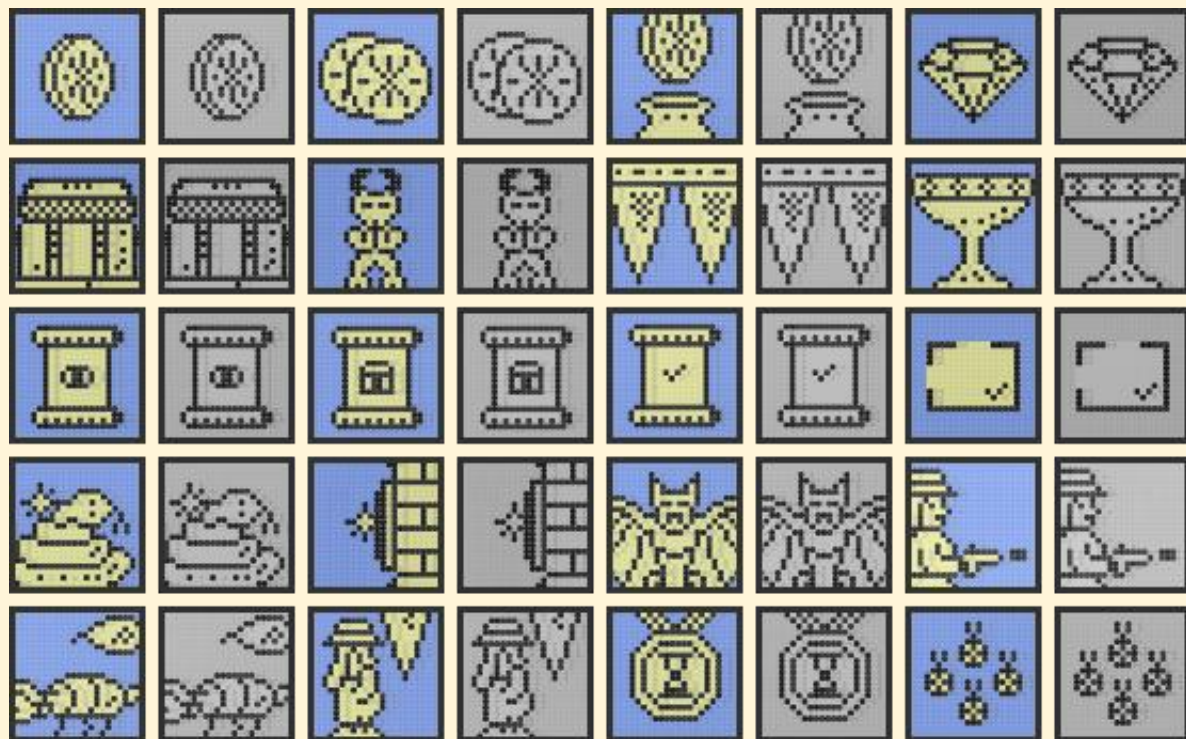
These are some marketing materials used to promote the game. The collage below is the first marketing image I made to announce the Early Access.



THE ADVENTURES OF
ELENA TEMPLE



UNLOCKABLES



Achievements

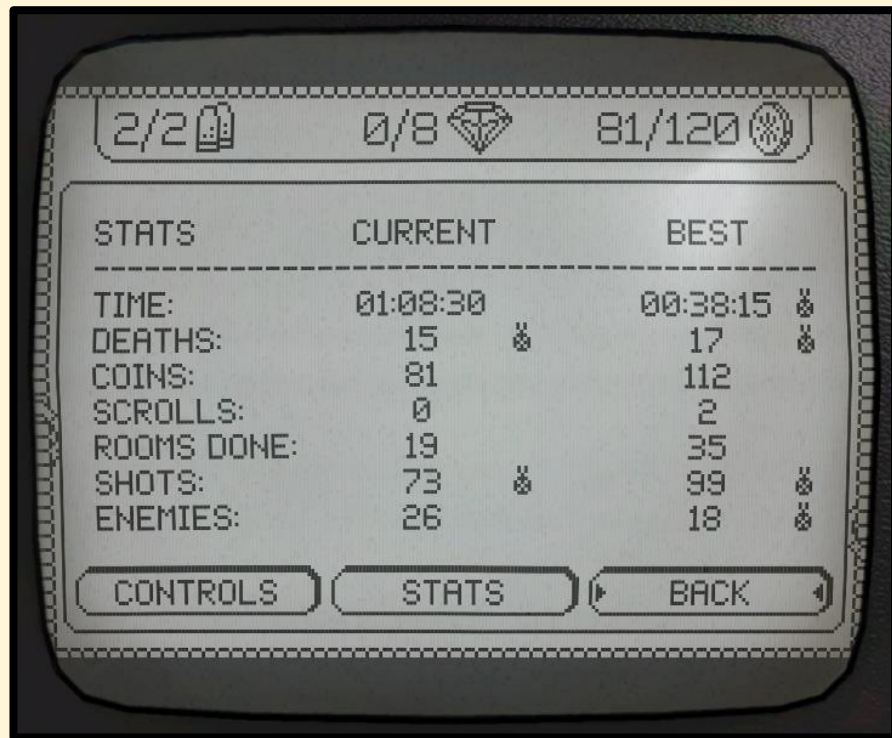


Badges

STATS

One of the most requested features in the reviews for The Adventures of Elena Temple was a Stats screen to keep track of the time played and number of deaths. With the first update to the game, I added not only the Stats screen, but also the possibility to win medals for each field if you:

- Finish the game in less than 40 minutes
- Die a maximum of 20 times during a playthrough
- Collect all 120 coins before finishing the game
- Collect all 3 secret scrolls during a playthrough
- Fully complete all the dungeon rooms - even though you can only see 49 on the map, there are 55 in total including the secret rooms and the final rooms
- Shoot less than 100 bullets before finishing the game
- Dispose of up to 20 enemies during a playthrough



STATS	CURRENT	BEST
TIME:	01:08:30	00:38:15 🏆
DEATHS:	15 🏆	17 🏆
COINS:	81	112
SCROLLS:	0	2
ROOMS DONE:	19	35
SHOTS:	73 🏆	99 🏆
ENEMIES:	26	18 🏆

CONTROLS STATS BACK

Stats Screen

UNUSED ART



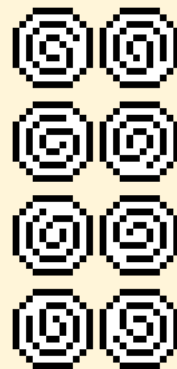
Big Medals



Dum-Dum Guardian



Skull Guardian



Hypnotizing Amulet



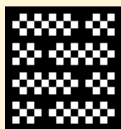
Dotted Wall



Spiked Chain



Small Medal



Dark Wall



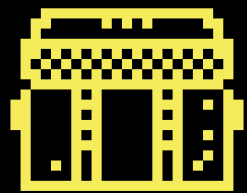
Amulets



Above you can check out a few unused sprites, most of them created while I was exploring the look of some in-game assets, like the Guardian, Amulets instead of the Secret Scrolls, different types of Walls etc.

Oh, man, the Design Booklet is over! Ok, there's enough space for just one final thing. From the bottom of my indie heart:

THANK YOU!



GRIMTALIN