



Design Document for Blackstone

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Table of Contents

I. Design Document	5
Introduction.....	5
Version History	5
II. Overview.....	6
III. Game Mechanics	8
Overview.....	8
Saving.....	8
Auto-Saving.....	8
In-Game Help.....	8
Camera	9
In-Game HUD.....	9
World HUD.....	9
Journal HUD.....	11
Player Movement	12
Basic movement	12
Sneaking and Crouching	12
Jumping.....	13
Movement Speed	13
Water.....	13
Attacking.....	13
Melee Weapons.....	14
Ranged Weapons.....	14
Thrown Weapons	14
Player Health	15
Healing.....	15
HUD.....	15
Inventory	16
Acquiring Items.....	16
Selecting and Equipping Items	16
Torches	17
Using Objects.....	17

Open and Unlock Doors.....	18
Open Containers.....	18
Flip Switches.....	18
Initiating Dialog.....	18
Effects.....	19
Lighting.....	19
Fire.....	19
Control Summary.....	19
IV. Resources.....	21
Melee Weapons.....	21
Club.....	21
Mace.....	21
Ranged Weapons.....	21
The Blackstone Pendant.....	21
Holy Blackstone.....	22
Unholy Blackstone.....	22
Life Blackstone.....	22
Death Blackstone.....	23
Fire Blackstone.....	23
Thrown Weapons.....	23
Holy Water.....	23
Liquid Fire.....	24
Rock.....	24
Miscellaneous Objects.....	24
Torches.....	24
V. NPCs.....	25
Health and Damage.....	25
Standard Enemies.....	25
Wolf.....	26
Zombie.....	26
Skeleton.....	27
Living Statue.....	27
Shadow.....	27

Ghost	28
Boss Enemies	28
Nathaniel	29
The Golem	29
Brother Fine	29
Cook	30
The Banshee	30
Friendly Characters	30
Villagers	30
VI. Story	32
Game Progression Overview	32
Illustrated Story Sequences	33
Back-story	36
The Tailor and his son Harry	36
Nathaniel and the Blackstone Pendant	36
Friendly NPCs	38
The Innkeeper Aaron	38
The Blacksmith Cooperfeld	39
The Caretaker Blaine	40
The Dead Priest Geis	41
VIII. Maps	43
Neuheim	43
The Village of Neuheim	43
The Castle	43
The Library	44
The Servant Quarters	45
The Main Hall	45
The Dungeon	45
The Secret Room	45
The Afterworld	45
The Village of Neuheim	45
The Halls of Light	46

I. Design Document

Introduction

This structure of this document is based on the format suggested in “Chapter 19: The Design Document” in *Game Design Theory and Practice* by Michael Rouse¹ and inspired by the different design documents found in the book’s appendixes. Other inspirations are the articles from Gamasutra (*The Anatomy of a Design Document* by Tim Ryan² and *Creating a Great Design Document* by Tzvi Freeman³) as well as the Design Document Template suggested by Chris Taylor⁴.

The first draft of the Design Document was based on the initial concept of *Blackstone* after several brainstorming sessions, and has been updated in a running fashion alongside the development of the game, as can be seen in the Version History below. Some paragraphs and sections are marked with a grey background, which signifies that they will not be in the in the first slice of *Blackstone*. It should be noted that the final version of the game will not necessarily be the same as the one pictured in the Design Document, as the game has evolved and grown in various ways during production.

Version History

1.0: The initial version of the Design Document.

1.1: The Mechanics and Resources sections of the document have been expanded, revised and finalized.

1.2: The remaining sections NPCs, Story and Game Progression have been drafted.

1.3: The NPCs and Story sections of the document have been expanded, revised and finalized.

1.4: Final revision of the document.

¹ Rouse, R. *Game Design: Theory & Practice* (2. Ed). Wordware Publishing, Inc., Plano, Texas, 2005.

² http://www.gamedevelopment.com/features/19991019/ryan_01.htm

³ http://www.gamasutra.com/features/19970912/design_doc.htm

⁴ http://www.runawaystudios.com/articles/chris_taylor_gdd.asp

II. Overview

Blackstone is a single-player first-person survival horror based on the Unreal Engine™ with a focus on stealth and wit over combat and weapons. The player is thrust into a dark medieval fantasy world as a simple traveling tailor who must overcome lethal dangers in order to save his son from the mysterious Castle Blackstone. It is slated for the PC, although it could be ported to different consoles.

The player's main task in *Blackstone* will be to travel the game world while overcoming, and not necessarily defeating, the evils he encounter. Rather than supplying the player with a limited amount of weaponry to fight off enemies, the player starts out with barely any weapons or combat abilities and will have to rely on gathering information about locations and enemies, as well as using stealth, wit and the environment to his advantage. The use of exploration, interrogation and avoidance is highly desirable, as most foes are lethal to an unskilled combatant. The discovering and use of the Blackstones will provide the player with unusual weapons to combat the evils of the castle, with each stone serving a specific purpose in a mad sorcerer's schemes. One of the most prominent effects is the ability to travel between the world of the living and the Afterworld, the home of the dead, but also flames, life and the fabric of mortality are subject to the Blackstones' influence.

Blackstone is easy to pick up and play for anyone familiar with First-Person Shooter movement controls. The game will not feature an in-game tutorial, although the controls will be described in the manual and help will be offered in-game. During the game, the player will acquire information regarding controls and game mechanics, as well as the world and its inhabitants, from books and other characters.

The setting of *Blackstone* is a dark fantasy world. It is set in a dark medieval European style, where life is hard and people usually don't live to see much more than their fortieth summer. While magic does exist it is not commonplace and is generally distrusted by the population, as magic often is the cause of more harm than good. Religion has a role in peoples' lives, as a mean to try and brighten a dark existence, but the gods have no active involvement with the world or its inhabitants.

The game's story starts with the Tailor traveling towards the city of Graffstadt with his son acting as his apprentice, to sell their goods, seeking shelter in the small village of Neuheim. During the night he awakes to find the son missing and searches for answers from the surrounding village and the villagers. Far from other settlements, the only place nearby is the abandoned Castle Blackstone, which the investigation points in the direction of. Traveling to the castle, he finds that a great evil has taken hold there, an evil that swept through the village several months ago, attracted by a mysterious artifact called the Blackstone Pendant. After obtaining a black stone from an undead priest, the Tailor suddenly finds himself trapped in the Afterworld, where he learns more about the Blackstone Pendant from the ghosts of Neuheim. The pendant was created in ages long gone with the intent of bringing down a god, and the original creator, a dark sorcerer named Nathaniel, has returned to the world to finish his work, needing the son of the Tailor to fulfill his evil machinations. The only way of fighting back is learning more about the Blackstone Pendant and its powers, valuable knowledge not easily obtained, and obtaining the pendant to combat the sorcerer Nathaniel. But the Blackstone Pendant has been shattered, with each piece being held by a powerful evil located in different parts of the castle, which the Tailor must overcome. After completing the pendant, he finds that his son is nowhere to be found, but he finds the dead body of Nathaniel. The sorcerer has taken

control of his son's body and travelled to the Afterworld, home of the dead and their keeper, the God of the Dead, to obtain the mantle of godhood. The Tailor confronts Nathaniel shortly after disposing of the God of the Dead, and has to kill his own son in order to free him from the evil sorcerer's hold. But with Nathaniel out of the way, that leaves open the place of God of the Dead, with the power to bestow life and death.

Rather than relying on the action to engage the player, the story and suspense is what will carry the game, from the tragedy of the lost son to the mystery of the Blackstones. Using dialogue and a journal system, the player will become immersed in the world of *Blackstone* and will be able to recount his travels and findings. Due to its dark nature and plot, *Blackstone* might appeal mainly to older gamers, specifically familiar with the survival horror or First-Person Shooter genres.

III. Game Mechanics

Overview

Blackstone is a first-person 3D survival horror game in the tradition of *Resident Evil* or *Silent Hill*. The genre is mainly defined by its dark and supernatural themes, while the game play elements typically are gathered from a plethora of other genres. The game play in *Blackstone* focuses on several different areas from the survival horror genre:

- Puzzle solving and exploration: with the use of the surrounding environment and knowledge of the game world, the player must overcome challenges by using brains over brawns.
- Limited resources and safety: the player has limited resources in the form of offensive weapons and health, while safety is typically only granted when together with friendly NPCs.
- Strong enemies and weakness: all hostile NPCs are highly lethal to the player and as such should be avoided when possible, with the player being an average unskilled fighter.

Saving

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not have the ability to save his progress, but will instead have the ability to select which level to start on.

In *Blackstone*, the player will be able to save at any time in the game. There's no limit to the amount of save-games beyond the player's data capacity. Like saving then loading a prior save-game is possible at any time from either the main menu or the in-game system menu. Loading a save-game will restore the world's and player's status to the point where he saved the game.

Auto-Saving

The game will automatically save the game at certain points. For example after major challenges, so that in the case that the player forgets to save his game and has to start over, he can load the prior automatic saves. Auto-saving happens automatically without any actions on the player's part, and allows for the player to play through the game without having to worry about saving his game.

In-Game Help

Blackstone will not feature a tutorial level, but will instead make use of in-game help through the use of text and the journal explaining various aspects of the game play at relevant points in the game. When the player encounters something new, like a new action or mechanic, text will appear explaining how to perform actions and how the mechanics work. It will utilize either the Information interface element and will persist on the screen for a fixed amount of time to assure that player received the information, or it will be written in the journal.

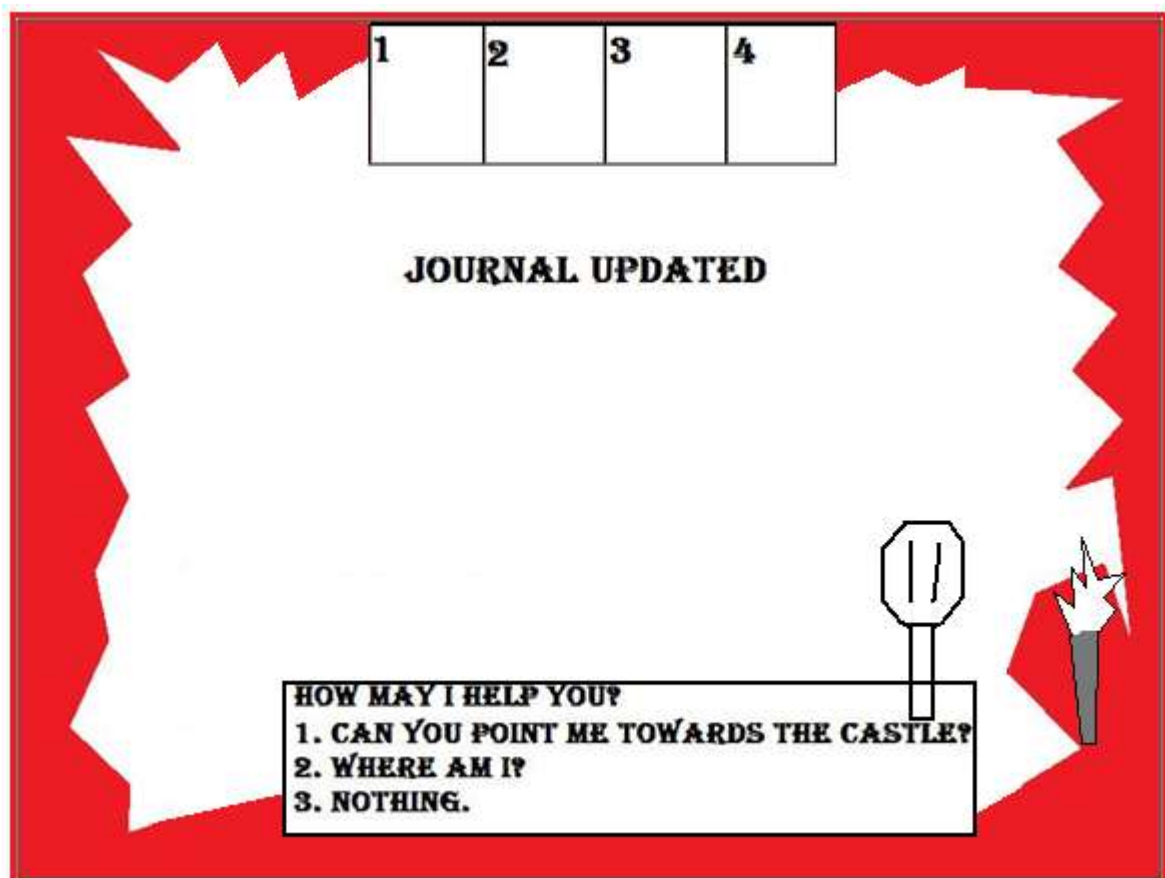
Camera

In *Blackstone*, the player will control the character of the Tailor. The game will be viewed in first-person, from the eyes of the Tailor, and as such, the player will not be able to see the character he controls, besides when he is using items, which will disclose his hand and the held item. The camera will give a view similar to that of a person, and thus the player won't be able to see through walls, but whenever he moves, even slightly the camera will follow his movements, allowing the player to quickly survey an area, but only allowing the player to watch one section at the time.

In-Game HUD

World HUD

The world HUD will be kept very open and clear of interface elements like buttons or graphics (with a single exception as noted below), offering a rich and uninterrupted view of the game world. All interface elements that are used will appear temporarily to update the player about important game information, so the screen won't become cluttered and the player will have a greater sense of immersion.



- **Health:**

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone* the player will have no way of measuring his health until he dies.

Whenever the player is damaged, by either hostile NPCs or the environment, it will display by coloring the edges of the screen red in a blood spattered pattern as well as playing a sound cue, such as grunting. The amount of blood displayed will depend on the severity of the player's injuries. It will abate as the player receives healing. Example: The player is attacked by a zombie and suffers damage from a punch, the edges of the screen turns slightly red.

- **Information:** Whenever the player encounters important objects, signs, books, his journal is updated or he picks up items, he will be notified with a string of text appearing slightly above the middle of the screen making sure that important information or objects aren't overlooked. An audio cue will sometimes follow as well. The text will fade away after giving the player ample time to read it. Example: The player is looking at the sign above the inn in Neuheim, text appears stating "The Black Rose".

- **Inventory:**

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not have an inventory.

Whenever the player picks up or loses an item, changes to another item or an item is modified, the inventory will appear at the top of the screen with icons representing items, allowing the player to select between different slots containing items. If an item was picked up, it will also be outlined. If the item has a countable attribute (like arrows or coins for example), it will be displayed as well. Example: The player picks up a mace to fight his enemies; the inventory appears at the top, now showing a mace in one of the slots.

- **Dialog:** Whenever the player engages in dialog with NPCs, the dialog will be displayed at the bottom of the screen. It will slowly disappear after it appears, to allow the player to read it in a timely manner. Example: The player interacts with an inn patron, text appears at the bottom stating: "We're not used to seeing strangers here.", shortly after it fades out and is replaced by new text stating "What do you want Tailor?"

- **Equipped Item:**

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not have an inventory and so cannot equip items.

Whenever the player equips a melee weapon, a Blackstone or a thrown weapon, his selected item will be shown and animated as held by the character, located right from the middle of the screen. Example: The player decides to equip a Blackstone allowing him to control the element of fire. The Tailor's hand holding a black stone with a hint of flames appears, to let the player know his currently equipped weapon.

- **Torch Timer:**

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not have the need to "recharge" his torch, as the torch will be permanent.

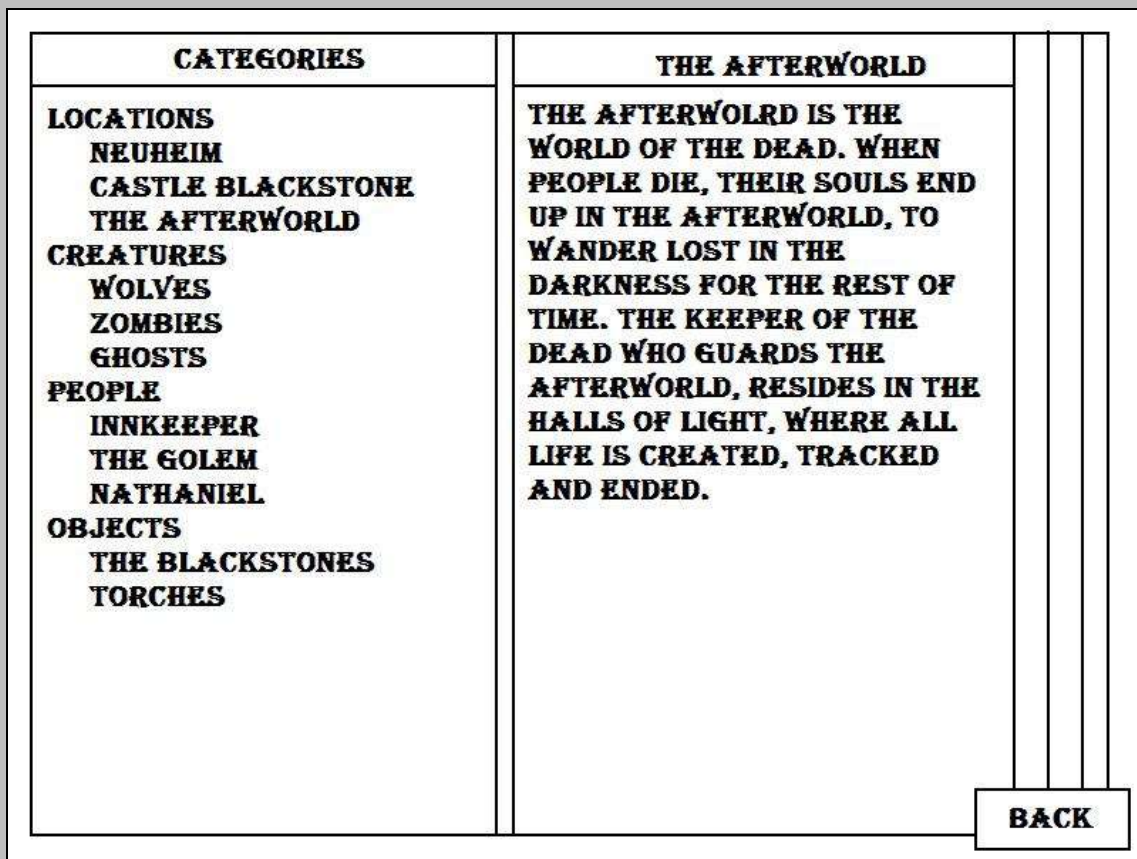
Whenever the player equips a torch, the torch timer will appear on the far right side of the screen, and like the Time-bar it will start to drain, signaling the remaining amount of light available to the

player. Example: The player pulls out a torch to light his way, with the Torch Timer starting to drain, but then picks up a new torch, instantly refilling the timer.

Journal HUD

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not have access to a journal.

The journal HUD will replace the world HUD when the player enters the game Journal. It resembles pages from a book and will give the player an overview of the history of the game world, specific locations, hostile NPCs etc. It is meant as a guide to help overcome some obstacles as well as a general information source about the game world.



- **Index:** The index is located on the left side of the screen, and present the player with the different categories noted in the journal. He can then click on the specific categories to see a list of topics.
- **Body:** The body is located on the right side of the screen, and displays the main body of the topic selected.
- **Exit:** The exit button is located in the lower right corner. It enables the player to return to the world HUD (besides using the Close / Menu key).

Player Movement

The player will use a number of different controls to navigate through the game world of *Blackstone*, which consists of a three-dimensional environment that allows for exploration. All controls in the game will be tight, meaning that when the player presses a control key, he gets an immediate action, allowing for precise game play.

Basic movement

The player will navigate the Tailor through the game world using the Movement keys to move forward, backwards, and to the sides, with the mouse used for turning the player and his field of view. It is possible to combine the act of moving forward or backwards with that of moving to the side (also called strafing). There are two different modes of movement, normal movement and sneaking.

Sneaking and Crouching

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not have the ability to sneak.

Sneaking (which include crouching) will be activated by holding down the Sneaking key and will cause the player to crouch down, thus lowering the player's movement speed, but otherwise functions the same way as the basic movement. It serves to access small spaced and hide behind objects, as well as lowering attention paid to the player while moving and standing nearby hostile NPCs (a so-called stealth-mode). It will be affected by various factors in the game, which adjust the chances of the player being discovered.

- **Lighting:** Different degrees of lighting will provide different amount of cover, ranging from bright light to shadows to total darkness. Bright light will not provide any cover, while shadows will moderately improve the player's sneaking and total darkness will make the player hard to discover.
- **Sound:** Sound will also influence the player's chance of being discovered. While the darkness may provide cover from sight, it doesn't cover sound. Walking normally is noisier than sneaking, while the surface the player is traveling on also affects the sound-level.
- **Hostile NPCs:** Some hostile NPCs will have the ability of heightened senses or supernatural powers, to get a greater chance of discovering the player, fully pierce the darkness and any attempt to hide or noticing even the slightest of sounds.

In *Blackstone* there are 4 different levels of sneaking, with each depending on lighting and movement.

- **Level 1:** Full light and normal movement. Hostile NPCs will still notice the player, even if not facing his way.
- **Level 2:** Full light and sneaking or shadows and normal movement. Hostile NPCs will not notice the player unless they're facing him.
- **Level 3:** Full darkness and normal movement or shadows and sneaking. Hostile NPCs will not notice the player, even when facing him.

- **Level 4:** Full darkness and sneaking. Hostile NPCs will not notice the player, unless they have heightened senses or supernatural powers.

While not being discovered, any hostile NPCs act normally as if the player wasn't present. If discovered the player will lose any benefits of sneaking and hiding.

Jumping

At almost any time in the game the player will be able to jump by pressing the Jump key. This serves to cross terrain, avoid enemies or overcoming obstacles. If performing another action simultaneously, for example moving, jumping will combine the action, resulting in a running jump.

Movement Speed

Various creatures will have a different speed from the player, as outlined below:

1. Very Slow (sneaking, some enemies)
2. Slow (some enemies)
3. Normal (normal movement, some enemies)
4. Fast (some enemies)

This will enable some hostile NPCs to present a lethal danger, while still giving the player the chance of outmaneuvering them, while other hostile NPCs are faster than the player. By placing sneaking as the slowest movement it serves to limit the amount of hostile NPCs that can be outrun while maintaining the act of sneaking.

Running has been omitted, as normal movement is considered the one to use when in need of swiftness, while sneaking should be resorted to in most cases while exploring potentially dangerous areas.

Water

While there will be some water in *Blackstone*, it will be rare that the player encounters bodies deeper than what can be walked through, which won't impede movement. If the player would encounter water deep enough for him to swim or drown in, he will be prevented from going into it.

Attacking

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not have the ability to overcome hostile NPCs with the use of weapons, but must instead rely on the environment to assist him.

In *Blackstone*, the player will be able to at any time press the Use Item keys to perform an attack or action with his currently selected weapon (or item, for example in the case of the Blackstones). Although, if nothing is selected, the player is considered unarmed and attacking will have no effect. The effect of the attack will vary according to the equipped weapon and nearby targets. For example, utilizing a club and

attacking would strike if a hostile NPC were nearby, while if used to clobber a friendly NPC, nothing would happen. Since there is no targeting reticule, the player will have to aim by using his own judgment. Any reference to weapon can also refer to other useable items.

Some weapons function by the player pressing the Use Item key and then performing a single attack, while other allow the player to hold the key down and keep attacking or using the weapon.

There will be no big variety in the selection of the weapons present in *Blackstone*, as noted in the Game Mechanics Overview, the usefulness of weapons will be limited and not that common, but a comprehensive listing can be found in the Resource section.

Melee Weapons

Melee weapons will be available and will allow the player to attack enemies indefinitely. It serves to empower the player to feel more secure when exploring and giving him a simple line of defense, although that if actively engaged in melee combat, the weapons and the player's use of them, will be far inferior to the skill of the hostile NPCs.

There's will be no big differences between various melee weapons, as the amount included is very limited. As the player obtains new weapons, the only difference between them will be the amount of damage they inflict on hostile NPCs.

Ranged Weapons

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not have the possibility of obtaining any of the Blackstones before the end.

Ranged weapons refer to the Blackstones, as being the prominent offensive (and defensive) items with ranged powers. They will function in a way similar to the melee weapons, although they will be more useful, as they can be utilized out of the reach of danger from a moderately safe range.

The Blackstones will differ from one another in the various effects they have on the game world, as well as what limitations there are to the use of their powers. They shouldn't be viewed as much as offensive weapons, but instead tools to avoid combat and support exploration.

Thrown Weapons

Thrown weapons will function similar to the ranged weapons and will be thrown in the direction the player is facing. Thrown weapons differ from one another; in that they're not all used for attacking and some have infinite charges while others do not.

There will be two basic types of thrown weapons, grenade-like and rocks.

- **Grenade-like:** Grenade-like thrown weapons will function much like grenades in standard first person shooters, except that their effect is applied on impact rather than after a set amount of time. Holy Water is an example of a Grenade-like Thrown Weapon.
- **Rocks:** Rocks will be used as a mean of distracting hostile NPCs, thus allowing the player to sneak by them as they turn to investigate the place where the rock landed.

Player Health

The player will start the game with 10 points of health. This number will decrease by taking damage from various sources in the game, while it will replenish itself over time.

- **Melee Attacks:** The player will be attacked by hostile NPCs throughout the course of the game, almost all of whom will have melee attacks in which some part of their body, a sharp blade or fist for instance, comes in contact with the player, causing him damage.
- **Ranged Attacks:** The player will sustain damage from being hit by various projectiles, either as part of a hostile NPC attacking or through traps.
- **Collapsing and Falling Objects:** Ceilings and other objects typically activated through traps, will fall from above and wound the player. In some cases, these objects will do a sufficiently large amount of damage that they will kill the player immediately.
- **Fire:** Fire will also cause damage to the player when moving near and through it.
- **The Death Blackstone:** By using the Death Blackstone the player will inflict damage upon himself.

Once the player's health reaches 0, the player will be dead. The player will lose control of the game and the in-game system menu will come up, prompting the player to exit or reload a prior save-game.

Healing

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not heal over time.

The player will automatically regain health up to his maximum of 10. This health will slowly increase, taking a full 45 seconds to go from near death (1 health) to full health (10 health), with 1 health being regained every 5 seconds. The amount of health regenerated is constant, whether the player is standing still or moving.

HUD

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not have a visual counter of his health.

The player's current health will be represented by the health interface element, which appears as part of the game's in-game HUD. The health interface element shows up only when the player is wounded and below full health. As the player loses health, in addition to the health interface element becoming more aggressive (increasing in color, taking up more of the screen), audio cues such as grunting will also be played to notify the player of his health failing.

Inventory

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not have an inventory.

Blackstone will feature a simple inventory system similar to the ones present in most FPSs, where weapons and items are divided into different categories and the player then can select between which to have equipped. Items don't take up a defined amount of space, so the amount of items that can be carried doesn't matter, which frees up the responsibility of the player to perform inventory management and instead allows for focusing on the game play and the narrative. When first picked up, items cannot be dropped again, although they can be unequipped or removed by the game in favor of another item or after fulfilling their purpose, and if limited by an amount of charges or similar, then they can be drained and thus removed from the inventory.

Acquiring Items

The player will be able to acquire items in his travels through the game world from various sources, the most common being items lying around on floors and tables or being contained in chests or similar. Friendly NPCs can also give out items through their dialog, while hostile NPCs can drop items after being vanquished. Items don't have any specific distinguishing traits that make them stand out clearly to the player, so he is required to keep his eyes open and search carefully.

Items lying around will be picked up into the player's inventory when the player walks nearby them. Those contained in containers requires the player to open it first, where after it will appear in the player's inventory. Items that are obtained through dialog will automatically appear in the player's inventory. Whenever an item is obtained the inventory interface element will be displayed, with an outline around the newly acquired items and the information interface element will be displayed, notifying the player of the name of the newly acquired items (and possibly a journal entry update). Lastly a sound will be played to further notify the player.

Some items will not be able to be picked up if one is already owned, as carrying more than one would serve no purpose, for example in the case of melee weapons, as these will not break or disappear. At the same time, then some items serve a similar function. For example in the case of a club and a mace, with the mace being the sturdier weapon, there is no reason to use the club when the mace has been obtained. This will result in the club disappearing.

Selecting and Equipping Items

The player will be able to switch between different weapons and weapon groups by using the Select Item keys. When pressing a key corresponding to a category with a useable weapon, it will select the last used item in the category and switch to it. This will make the player put away the old weapon and drawing the new one. As the player progresses through *Blackstone*, he will be able to find various weapons and items in the game world. The weapons are divided into the following groups:

- **Melee weapons:** Club and Mace
- **Blackstones:** Holy, Unholy, Life, Death, Fire
- **Thrown:** Rocks, Holy Water and Liquid Fire
- **Quest:** Keys and Miscellaneous Items

As each category can contain more than one weapon, the player will be able to switch to different weapons within the same category by pressing the Select Item key corresponding to his currently selected weapon. This will change the equipped weapon to the next in the equipment list within the same category. Whenever the player accesses the inventory, either to equip the last used weapon of a category or scroll through its contents, the inventory interface element will be displayed.

Torches

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not have a torch.

At the beginning of *Blackstone*, the player will be able to obtain a torch to light his way. The torch can be toggled by pressing the Toggle Torch key. The torch serves several purposes; the most important of course being to light the area surrounding the player, but it can also be used as a mean of combating enemies vulnerable to light. When the torch is held, it casts an area of light around the player, making it easier to see the immediate surroundings.

Whenever the player is using the torch, the Torch Timer interface element will be displayed, draining the energy from the torch until it is unable to cast even the smallest of lights. The player will need to find additional torches to replace his currently used torch as it burns down. Whenever a new torch is acquired, if the old one is still burning, it will receive additional time on the Torch timer Interface element, allowing the player to keep his light source active.

The player will also encounter unlit or burned down torches hanging on the walls. These will be able to be lit by the player by pressing the Perform Action key. While some of these are permanent in duration, others will last for a limited amount of time before they burn out.

In some parts of the game the player will be unable to use his torch and must rely on the torches already present in the area to provide light, if any. This serves to unnerve the player, forcing him to brave the darkness.

Using Objects

The player will be able to use different objects in the game by pressing the Perform Action key. When pressing the Perform Action key, if there are any useable items nearby the player in his field of view he will attempt to use them. There are a number of different actions that can be performed, as outlined below.

Open and Unlock Doors

If encountering a closed door or gate (or secret door), the player can attempt to open it by pressing the Perform Action key. If the door can be opened then the player will be able to pass through and the majority of doors will be able to be closed again, or might even close automatically after some time.

Some doors may be locked and will require a key or other method of opening it, for example by finding a secret switch or defeating a hostile NPC that is barring the door. If the door required a key to be opened, the key will disappear from the player's inventory if it's no longer needed. Typically the player will be informed through the information interface element when a locked door has a way of being opened.

Lastly then some doors will be unusable and only serve as a way of restricting access for the player. The player will not be informed that the door isn't meant to be opened.

Open Containers

Opening containers will work in the same way as doors, by pressing the Perform Action key. Example containers include chests, cabinets, barrels or even books. These will typically contain useful items or information.

Flip Switches

In *Blackstone* it will be possible to utilize switches to activate different events, for example starting events or opening doors. There are three different types of switches.

- **One-time Switch:** Can be used a single time.
- **Reset Switch:** Can be used multiple times and it will reset to the default configuration after use.
- **Toggle Switch:** Can be used multiple times and it will toggle between different states.

The word switch is chosen as a generic term, but can also refer to other objects the player will be able to interact with, for example ropes or similar, that are used to affecting the game world. A torch that the player can light is an example of a one-time switch.

Some switches doesn't react instantly but will instead require the player to focus his attention on it, by pressing down and holding the Perform Action key for a duration.

Initiating Dialog

The player will be able to initiate dialog with friendly NPCs (and some hostile) encountered in the game world. By pressing the Perform Action key, he will attempt to initiate dialog, which can result in additional information about the game world, help on how to progress or even in receive items.

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not have the possibility of selecting between multiple branches of dialog.

The player will be able to select between multiple options when in conversation with NPCs, which enables the conversations to be less shallow and containing more information and allowing the player to take charge of the direction of the dialog.

Effects

Different effects will be used to set the mood in *Blackstone's* dark setting. Those that have a specific effect regarding game mechanics are described below.

Lighting

Lighting will be essential in creating a frightening experience for the player, as the things that lurk in the dark are frightening, and even more so are those that dwell at the edges of light. Being a horror-themed game, *Blackstone* relies heavily on lighting to set the scene.

Lighting will also be able to influence some hostile NPCs with an aversion to it. That way, the player will be able to utilize light sources to avoid combat encounters and assure his own safety. Lighting will also affect the chance of the player being discovered by hostile NPCs, according to the amount of darkness and whether he's sneaking or not.

Since light will be scarce beyond that carried by the player in the form of his torch, it is important to manage it wisely. The player will also be able to locate torches situated on the walls, which he will be able to light to provide additional illumination, as noted under the Torches section.

Fire

Fire, while not the most frequently encountered effect, will still have an effect on the game world. Beyond providing light, fire also causes damage to the player or hostile NPCs, and can be used as a weapon in that regard. It will not set the player on fire or spread to other flammable nearby objects, but hostile NPCs on the other hand can be burned to death by walking through fire, while others will be immune to the effects.

It won't be possible to extinguish fire through normal means, but one of the Blackstones will have the ability to affect fire by either diminishing or increasing its volume, allowing the player to use it to his advantage.

Control Summary

Different controls have been referenced above and here follows a full listing of player controls.

- **Movement – WASD:** The player will use this control to maneuver the Tailor along the horizontal plane of the game world; forward, backward and to the sides.

- **Jump – Space:** The player will use this control to traverse the vertical plane of the game world, where possible, and reach destinations and overcome obstacles that isn't possible simply by moving there.
- **Use item – Mouse Button 1:** The player will use this control to use the currently equipped item's primary function.
- **Secondary use item – Mouse Button 2:** The player will use this control to use the currently equipped item's secondary function, if applicable.
- **Perform action – E:** The player will use this control to perform different actions in the game world, such as opening doors, flipping switches, initiating dialogue etc.
- **Crouch / Sneak – C:** The player will use this control to crouch down, to access small spaces and hide behind objects, as well as lowering his movement speed and the attention he draws from hostile NPCs.
- **Select item – Number #:** The player will use this control to have the inventory interface element displayed and the item corresponding to the # will be selected.
- **Close / menu – Escape:** The player will use this control to exit or abort actions, such as the Journal HUD, dialog or performing a timed action. If nothing can be aborted, it will bring up the system menu.

IV. Resources

Melee Weapons

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not be able to use weapons to defeat hostile NPCs.

Club

The Club is a simple weapon, ranging from a branch to a board of wood or similar, as long as it's sturdy enough to withstand being used to attack with.

When attacking with the Club by pressing the Use Item key, the player makes a simple forward overhead swing without moving from his position. This attack can be repeated as many times as the player wish, without any change in speed, durability of the weapon etc.

The Club has a short range and inflicts low damage, not making it very suitable weapon for combat, but it's practically the only weapon the player has to inflict damage on hostile NPCs.

Mace

The Mace is very similar to the Club, consisting of a metal or wooden shaft with a metal head at the end, usually outfitted with spikes, that allows for more powerful blows.

Attacking with the Mace functions the same way as the Club, with the Mace functioning as an upgraded version of the Club.

The Mace is similar to the club, except that it allows the player to inflict twice the damage of the Club when attacking, making it slightly more useful.

Ranged Weapons

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not have the possibility of obtaining any stones of the Blackstones Pendant before the end.

The Blackstone Pendant

The Blackstones are part of the Blackstone Pendant, a jewelry consisting of a golden frame inlaid with 5 circular gemstones, 1 white and 4 black ones. Each stone serves a specific purpose, with the white containing elements of pure good and the black containing elements of pure evil. Each evil Blackstone is both a blessing and a curse, granting powers to the bearer at the same time it is granting disadvantages.

Holy Blackstone

The Holy Blackstone is unique among the Blackstones being the only one that isn't black but instead white and radiates good instead of evil. It radiates a subtle golden light. Its main functionality is to protect the bearer of the Blackstones from the corrupting influence of the other stones. It can be found in the village church, if one knows where to look.

Attacking with the Holy Blackstone by using the Use Item key, allows the player to paralyze certain hostile NPCs, but not all are susceptible to its effects. The player will need to hold down the Use Item key to keep up the attack for as long as he desire. Only one hostile NPC can be affected at a time, forcing the player to choose his target wisely if more are present.

The Holy Blackstone is effective as a way of circumventing hostile NPCs that have already noticed the player's presence, or as a means of gaining the upper hand in combat. It will not assist the player in disposing of enemies, so once the player is discovered he will need to find another way to do so.

Unholy Blackstone

The Unholy Blackstone radiates a subtle black light. Its main functionality is to allow the bearer to travel freely between the normal world and the Afterworld. It can be found on Brother Fine, the undead priest, located in the Castle Library.

Using the Unholy Blackstone by pressing the Use Item key, allows the player to travel to the Afterworld. If wishing to return the stone must be used again. While in the Afterworld the world will largely look the same, except for a few possible changes in the scenery and the presence of hostile NPCs. The player is unable to stray far from his point of entry, and the Afterworld is far from safe.

The Unholy Blackstone serves to avoid the direst of conflicts and to move around blocked terrain or similar. It should only be used when needed, as the Afterworld contains dangers of its own, dangers not noticeable from the normal world.

Life Blackstone

The Life Blackstone radiates a subtle white light. Its main functionality is to allow the bearer to become invulnerable for a short amount of time or make another creature vulnerable if it wasn't in the first place. It can be found on The Golem in the Castle Main Hall.

Using the Life Blackstone by holding down the Use Item key, allows the player to become impervious to damage from any source. He will be able to keep up the effect for as long as he desire by keeping the Use Item key pressed down. While doing so, his movement is slowed down as if he was sneaking, and if trying to sneak he will be unable to move at all.

The Life Blackstone is a tool to help the player overcome challenges he wouldn't be able to survive due to damage, for example walking through fire or similar.

Death Blackstone

The Death Blackstone radiates a subtle black light. Its main functionality is to allow the bearer to detect and influence the fabrics of life and death. It can be found near The Banshee located in the Castle Dungeon.

Using the Death Blackstone by holding down the Use Item key, allows the player to appear undead to most hostile NPCs, effectively making him invisible. The player will be able to keep up the invisibility by holding down the Use Item key. While doing so, he'll slowly be drained of life as death seeps into his body, granting 6 damage every 5 seconds, effectively allowing him to keep up the effect for 10 seconds, where after he will die.

The Death Blackstone, as with the other stones, serves to help the player avoid combat and overcoming obstacles. This one contains a more tangible drawback, but at the same time allows the player to move almost freely about.

Fire Blackstone

The Fire Blackstone radiates a subtle fiery light. Its main functionality is to allow the bearer to control existing flames. It is also the only Blackstone without an opposite stone. It can be found on Cook, the burning skeleton, located in the Castle Kitchen.

Attacking with the Fire Blackstone by pressing the Use Item or Secondary Use Item key, allows the player to manipulate existing fires, by either increasing them to a limited degree or diminishing their volume, effectively putting them out.

The Fire Blackstone serves more to overcome the environment than actual hostile NPCs, although these could be burned by an increased volume of fire.

Thrown Weapons

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not be able to use weapons to defeat hostile NPCs.

Holy Water

Holy Water is contained in a glass vial and has been blessed by a priest to combat evil, but they are moderately rare. It is used by throwing the vial at a hostile NPC, causing the vial to break and spilling the contents. It is single use only, but the player can carry multiple of these.

When attacking with Holy Water by pressing the Use Item key, the player throws the vial in the direction he's facing. Upon impact, the vial shatters causing damage to all nearby hostile NPCs, with those being hit directly suffering the most damage and the rest suffering less in the form of splash damage.

Holy Water is only effective against undead and other especially evil creatures.

Liquid Fire

Liquid Fire is like Holy Water also contained in a glass vial and is created by an alchemic process to allow the fire in the vial to keep burning and make it stick to whatever it touches, causing serious burns. By throwing it at a hostile NPC, the vial will shatter and spill the substance. It is single use only, but the player can carry multiple of these.

When attacking with Liquid Fire by pressing the Use Item key, the player throws the vial in the direction he's facing. Upon impact, the vial shatters causing damage to all nearby hostile NPCs, with those being hit directly suffering the most damage and the rest suffering less in the form of splash damage.

Liquid Fire is effective against all creatures susceptible to fire.

Rock

The Rock is a simple rock or pebble, commonly found everywhere, that can be used for throwing and that will make a sound when striking a surface.

When attacking with the Rock by pressing the Use Item key, the player will throw a rock in the direction he is facing. Upon impact it will make a sound, causing nearby enemies to turn on focus their attention on it for a short period, allowing the player to more easily sneak by.

The Rock is unlike the other thrown weapons not used offensively, but is meant to help the player survive and pass hostile NPCs.

Miscellaneous Objects

Torches

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not have a torch.

The Torch is an important asset to the player, as it serves to protect him from the dangers of the dark as well as light his way. The player will always be able to toggle the use of the Torch by pressing the Toggle Torch key. It is important to turn it off at times, as the use of the Torch is limited, forcing the player to use it sparingly and wisely. More information can be found under the Game Mechanics Torch section.

Additional torches can be found various places, most commonly lying on the ground, and allows the player to use the Torch for a longer period of time.

V. NPCs

The hostile NPCs encountered in *Blackstone* offers a mix of monstrosities, with the majority of them being of the undead or the living dead. The majority of them have been conjured by the main villain Nathaniel, the sorcerer intent on becoming a god, with the rest of them being there “naturally” (ghosts in the Afterworld, wolves in the wild etc.).

The hostile NPCs encountered in *Blackstone*, is considered to be the main challenge for the player to overcome to progress through the story of the game. All of them will be able to attack the player, with the Standard Enemies using simple melee attacks and the Boss Enemies using a more diverse range of attacks. Both types move along the ground level when moving around, and are unlike the player unable to travel to higher grounds by jumping.

Additionally then the Hostile NPCs can also contains special powers or conditions to further enhance their challenge and the game play.

Health and Damage

All hostile NPCs encountered will be able to sustain damage. The amount of health they have will determine how many blows they can take before dying, but in almost all cases it's greater than that of the player. The amount of damage they take varies, depending on the player's weapon as well as the hostile NPC's vulnerability to it, but in general either they will take normal damage from it or none at all. The different damage types are listed below.

- Physical (Club, Mace and other physical objects)
- Holy (Holy Blackstone, Holy Water and holy locations)
- Fire (Liquid Fire, Fire Blackstone and environmental fire)

The hostile NPCs health points (as well as the possible damage they can inflict) can be divided into the same categories as used for movement speed from the Game Mechanics Overview, as seen below.

- Very Low (same as the player)
- Low
- Normal
- High

The different source the player can be damage by, as listed under Game Mechanics, also applies here, and as the player, once their health reaches zero, they will be dead and pose no further threat. Unlike the player however, the Hostile NPCs do not heal after some time.

Standard Enemies

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not encounter all of the various enemies that can be found in the game world.

Wolf

The Wolf is an animal somewhat resembling a black dog. The Wolf in *Blackstone* is a more vicious beast, influenced by the events happening in the Castle, which will attack people on sight.

- **Speed:** Fast
- **Damage:** Low
- **Health:** Low
- **Immunities:** Holy
- **Special:** Heightened senses, fear of fire, indifferent to Death

Wolves have the benefit of being able to outrun the player, forcing him to fight. Wolves are never encountered alone; preferring to travel in packs, and are only encountered outside the Castle.

Wolves attack with their teeth.

Wolves also have the special ability of heightened senses, effectively reducing the player's sneaking level by 1, making them very difficult to avoid. Additionally they are not affected by the Death Blackstone, and will attack the player regardless of its effects. By using fire the player can more easily keep them at bay, as they fear fire and will try to avoid it when possible.

Zombie

The Zombie is a walking corpse, typically missing parts of its body with the remaining being in a state of decomposition, brought back to a resemblance of life by dark magic. Zombies are used for simple tasks like guard duty or manual labor, but when not commanded to action, they are no different from any other corpse.

- **Speed:** Very Slow
- **Damage:** Very Low
- **Health:** Normal
- **Immunities:** None
- **Special:** None

Zombies move very slowly, allowing the player to easily outmaneuver them. Even when sneaking, a Zombie will be unable to catch up to the player, keeping an even pace. Zombies are rarely encountered alone. If on guard duty, they're usually stationed as a pair, while other labor is also best performed with multiple Zombies.

Zombies attack with their fists by pummeling the player, offering one of the weakest attacks in *Blackstone*.

Skeleton

The Skeleton could be said to be kin to the Zombie. It's a skeleton that has been animated by dark magic, and it's used for tasks like guard duty and warfare. It's commonly found wearing some resemblance of clothing, preferably armor, and wearing a weapon like a sword or axe.

- **Speed:** Normal
- **Damage:** Normal
- **Health:** Normal
- **Immunities:** Fire
- **Special:** None

Skeletons function much like humans, besides the lack of flesh, being able to move as fast as the player. Unlike Zombies they can be encountered alone, as they are more reliable.

Skeletons attack by using their weapon.

Living Statue

The Living Statue is a statue of some form, made by stone or metal, which has been animated and brought to life by magic. It most commonly resembles a knight in armor, but can also take other shapes like that of a winged demon, an angel or a human.

- **Speed:** Slow
- **Damage:** High
- **Health:** High
- **Immunities:** Holy, (Physical), (Fire)
- **Special:** Vulnerable to vision, conditional immunities

Living Statue has a distinct movement pattern in that it is unable to move or attack, while the player has it in his field of vision. Whenever he isn't looking it will slowly move towards the player to attack, forcing the player to keep an eye on the Living Statue and making it difficult when facing more than one. While they make excellent guardians on their own, they are usually stationed in pairs, if guarding something of importance.

Living Statues attack with their fists or their weapon, depending on their design, delivering heavy blows that will quickly bring an intruder down.

Beyond the movement pattern mentioned above, then when being viewed by the player, Living Statues benefit from the additional immunity to physical attacks and fire, making it almost impossible for the player to destroy them.

Shadow

The Shadows is an undead creature composed entirely of shadows and filled with a hatred for all things living. Having an aversion to light it is rarely seen, but it has a humanoid form with glowing red eyes.

- **Speed:** Fast
- **Damage:** Normal
- **Health:** Normal
- **Immunities:** Physical
- **Special:** Vulnerable to light, indifferent to darkness

Shadows are vulnerable to light and so are only able to travel in darkness. At any time when a light source is present, for example a torch on a wall or the player's torch, they are unable to close in on the player. Shadows are always encountered alone, thankfully being a rare encounter.

Shadows attack by slashing the player with their shadowy claws, although if able to do so, the player won't be able to see the attack coming.

Shadows thrive in darkness, with it conferring no benefits to the player whatsoever, allowing the Shadow to locate the player even if sneaking. Being indifferent to physical attacks, the player has to rely heavily on the Shadow's only weakness to combat it.

Ghost

The Ghost is the spirit of a person who died. Depending on the circumstances regarding the death, the Ghost can be either malevolent or benevolent. Ghosts are commonly found in the Afterworld, but some have strong ties to the normal world and refuse to leave.

- **Speed:** Normal
- **Damage:** Low
- **Health:** Normal
- **Immunities:** Physical, Fire
- **Special:** Dual-world

Ghosts, although being incorporeal, follow the same movement patterns and restrictions as other hostile NPCs when moving around for simplicity's sake. Ghosts in the normal world are always encountered alone, while those in the Afterworld are always encountered in groups.

Ghosts attack by touch, slowly draining the life out of the player.

Ghosts, being incorporeal, are immune to most attacks and such, when encountered; present a major challenge for the player to overcome. Additionally, when encountered in the normal world, Ghosts will also be present in the Afterworld if the player chooses to journey there, but not the other way around. While the majority of Ghosts are malevolent, a few can be encountered that will not attack the player.

Boss Enemies

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not encounter all of the boss enemies that can be found in the game world. Not all of them have been finalized, but instead been shortly described.

Nathaniel

Nathaniel, also sometimes simply referred to as N, is an old sorcerer, easily several hundred years old. As a result of this, his powers over magic are strong, but his body has started to fail the battle against time. Not wishing to be influenced by the magic of the Blackstones, he doesn't carry any of them or keep them near his person. He is located in his private chambers in Castle Blackstone, which aren't accessible by normal means.

The Golem

The Golem is similar to the Living Statues, except that while the Living Statues are animated by "normal" magic, the Golem is made alive by the Life Blackstone. It was created by Nathaniel as an experiment with the Life Blackstone, trying to learn more of its powers as well as making a loyal and undefeatable guardian. The Golem resembles a suit of armor, larger than the Living Statues, with a gemstone radiating a subtle white light, set in its chest.

- **Speed:** Very Slow
- **Damage:** High
- **Health:** High
- **Immunities:** Holy, Physical, Fire
- **Special:** Achilles' Chest

The Golem guards the main hall of the castle, keeping intruders from entering through the gates, although it has already destroyed these, blocking entrance. It is not encountered alone, as Living Statues can be found in its vicinity.

The Golem attacks by slamming the player with its fists after closing to melee combat.

Being invulnerable to all forms of damage, the player is only able to hurt the Golem by attacking the Blackstone lodged in its chest. Approaching the Golem is dangerous as it will retaliate, and at the same time the Living Statues will have to be avoided. The Golem is too large to fit into all of the passages connecting to the Main Hall, which allows the player for some respite and at the same time not to be cornered too easily by the Living Statues. As the player runs from passage to passage, the Golem will smash its fists against the opening, trying to reach the player, the impact loosens the Blackstone. After enough attacks against the walls, the stone will fall from the Golem's chest. As soon as the Blackstone is removed from the Golem, it ceases to function.

Brother Fine

Brother Fine was once a Priest in the church located in the Village of Neuheim. He was tasked with carrying one of the Blackstones after its sundering, and ended up with the Unholy Blackstone. He got away from the village, but influenced by the stone's energies, he soon found himself wandering lost in the Afterworld, where he got infused by the essence of death, effectively turning him into one of the undead. After

adjusting to his new existence, he made his way back to the normal world and the Castle Blackstone, where he offered his services to Nathaniel. Brother Fine looks like any of the other Skeletons present in the castle, except that he is wearing a brown robe.

- **Speed:** Normal
- **Damage:** High
- **Health:** High
- **Immunities:** None
- **Special:** Love of knowledge

Brother Fine patrols the main study of the Library castle wing, overseeing the tomes as he conducts his studies. No other creatures are allowed in there, and so he is encountered alone.

Brother Fine attacks by using magic. He will not close with the player but instead use fireballs to kill the player. These are projectile attacks that move at a pace, which enables an alert player to avoid them.

While having a high health pool, the player is practically unarmed and so unable to defeat Brother Fine. To defeat him, the player will need to utilize the surrounding environment to turn the tomes in the Library on fire, while keeping himself alive, dodging fireballs. When enough tomes have caught fire, Brother Fine will leave the Library to get help putting out the flames, leaving the player free to investigate the Brother's private chambers.

Cook

Cook can be encountered in the Servant Quarters of the castle and resembles a skeleton on fire. When the Fire Blackstone was placed in the Servant Quarters, it was given to him as part of an experiment to test its powers. Gaining a limited sentience, he is in constant pain from the fire that engulfs him, a pain which can only be relieved by burning other objects and creatures. As such, the Servant Quarters are filled with fires and ash.

The Banshee

The Banshee can be encountered in the castle Dungeon where the Death Blackstone resides. The banshee resembles any other Ghost, with the exception of being female. Gone mad by her entrapment in the normal world and with the Death Blackstone emanating pure essence of death, she has come to believe it to be her companion in this afterlife, a companion she'd defend to the second death.

Friendly Characters

Villagers

The people of Neuheim are the only friendly NPCs the player will encounter. Neuheim will function as a safe zone for the player to return to when needing a break, and so the friendly NPCs are non-combatants.

The main purpose of the Villagers is to help tell the story of *Blackstone*, as well as help the player with various information about the game world through their dialog. They also serve to make Neuheim appear like an isolated but not deserted place, adding further atmosphere to the game.

VI. Story

Game Progression Overview

As the game begins, the Tailor awakens in his room in the inn after the nightmare, and finds his son missing. Searching the upper floor and finding nothing, he rushes down below to find the inn mainly abandoned, the innkeeper Aaron still awake. After speaking with Aaron, the Tailor leaves the Black Rose to search for his son outside.

Outside the Tailor first encounters Cooperfeld the smith, which spoke with Harry earlier. After speaking with the Tailor, Cooperfeld is unable to tell him where his son went and goes back to work. But near the church the Tailor meets Blaine and strikes up a conversation. Seeing the Tailor's son earlier, he is able to point him in the direction of the castle, as well as providing several useful pieces of information.

Traveling to the castle only to find the way blocked, the Tailor remembering the caretaker's stories, finds the secret door leading into the castle library. Inside the library wing of the castle, the Tailor first encounters a chasm with a bridge suspended above. To cross it he tries to follow the clues left on the nearby walls, but ends up succeeding by trial or error.

After crossing the chasm the Tailor encounters a long stretch of hallways, with open portcullises every few yards. After passing the first one, the portcullises start to close one after another, forcing him to make a run for it. The Tailor, not fully prepared gets captured by the falling metal gates and has to crawl through a small tunnel back towards the beginning of the gauntlet. After this he manages to run all the way through the gauntlet.

After leaving the gauntlet behind, a room with no lights awaits. To navigate the room, the Tailor finds a clue that the light will lead the way, as he notices a candle hanging on the wall. Nearby is another candle, this one unlit. As he lights it, the room brightens slightly, unveiling yet another candle. After passing several candles he finds his way out of the dark.

Only just having left the trials of the darkness behind, the Tailor is encountered with yet another obstacle, a gate barring his way. Nearby the gate is a rope, which looks to be holding the gate closed. Putting the rope on fire, inhuman growls can be heard, as several skeletons shamble towards the Tailor. As soon as the rope breaks, the gate rises to allow entry, but only for a moment. As the Tailor dives through the opening, the gate comes crashing down, trapping the skeletons on the outside.

Making his way through a small tunnel and several rooms, as he passes by them he catches glimpses of a big room filled with tomes. The Tailor enters the main library and spots the librarian, Brother Fine. After a short conversation, the undead priest assaults the Tailor with magic, forcing him to run and dodge. Hanging down from the room's walls, the Tailor notices several ropes leading to chandeliers suspended from the ceiling. Burning a rope causing it to break, hoping to hit Brother Fine, he instead puts a shelf on fire, shocking the undead priest. Burning more ropes puts the entire room ablaze, forcing Brother Fine to get help to extinguish the flames. As he disappears, the Tailor notices something he left behind. A single Black Gemstone, which seems to absorb all light. As he touches it, the world around him begins to blur.

When returning from the castle to the village, the Tailor finds that the village in the Afterworld is even more desolate than its live counterpart. In the grey fog of the Afterworld, the village church stands out like a beacon of light, promising safe haven. Making it to the church, inside the Tailor finds a single ghost with a friendly demeanor. Brother Geis tells his the story of the village and the Blackstones and implores him to help. To offer assistance he teaches the Tailor how to operate the Blackstones through the use of the white stone kept in his possession.

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, the player will not be exploring past the first 3 levels of the game, but a short overview of the remaining levels can be found below.

The Tailor travels back to the Castle Blackstone to locate the remaining pieces of the Blackstone Pendant located in different parts of the castle, including the Dungeon, the Servant Quarters and the Main Hall. The castle is filled with dangers and additionally each Blackstone is guarded by a powerful guardian.

While obtaining the remaining Blackstones, the Tailor learns of Nathaniel and the location of his private chambers. Traveling there seeking to confront the evil sorcerer, he only finds a very old dead man, with no clue as to the whereabouts of his son. Once more confronting Geis and informing him of his discovery, the Tailor learns about what happened to his son and where he can find Nathaniel.

Leaving the church and stepping out into the rest of the Afterworld, the Tailor finds his way to the Halls of Light where Nathaniel, controlling Harry's body, is and confronts him, wanting his son returned to him. A battle commences, with Nathaniel already severely weakened after his ordeals, ending in the Tailor being forced to kill his son to save him and the world from the grip of the evil sorcerer.

The game will consist of a total of 8 levels, with the majority of them taking place inside of the Castle Blackstone. The level tree can be seen below.

Neuheim Village		
Castle: Library		
Neuheim Village (Afterworld)		
Castle: Dungeon	Castle: Servant Quarters	Castle: Main Hall
Castle: Nathan's Secret Chamber		
Halls of Light (Afterworld)		

Illustrated Story Sequences

At certain points in the game, before starting and when traveling between different levels, the player will encounter Illustrated Story Sequences, a series of images and text meant to further enhance the story aspect of *Blackstone*.

Not Implemented: In the first slice of *Blackstone*, all of the ISS will not be included in the game. Additional ISS have been outlined to present the remaining story of the game.

Scene	Text
Start -> Village	
Two people (father and son) riding on a modest wagon being pulled by a donkey. It's late evening and the sun is long gone, with a light mist obscuring the sides of the road.	<i>A skilled tailor and his son one evening finds themselves traveling on the road to the capital city of Graffstadt, with the light of day long gone...</i>
The wagon (seen from behind) is heading down the small dirt road leading away from the main road; a sign is by the wayside with the gnarled letters spelling out the name of Neuheim.	<i>Seeking shelter from the dark, you leave the main road behind and turn towards the small village of Neuheim, where you can rest until the dawn...</i>
Multiple people are at an inn, two of the people (father and son) are dining a light meal at a table. The other patrons don't look too happy having strangers in their midst.	<i>Eating a light meal at the local inn before retiring to your room, only wishing to be on your way, you find the villagers none too friendly towards strangers...</i>
Nightmare: a women is standing on a balcony, but something is wrong (not sure what, something that would make it a nightmare, maybe the maiden is a zombie or some horror lurks in the dark). The idea is that the son had the same dream, but didn't see the bad part of it, so he went to the castle. The father on the other hand saw through it.	<i>Only restless sleep comes, as a vivid dream of a beautiful maiden trapped in a tower finds you, imploring for help, but it soon turns to a nightmare...</i>
A small room in the inn with two beds, the full moon being visible through the window. One bed is empty but has been used and in the other a person (father) is sitting up.	<i>During the night, awoken from your nightmare by the sound of wolves howling, you stumble out of your bed, to find your son missing from the room...</i>
Village -> Castle	
The father has found the path to the Castle, but finds that the gate has been blocked by collapsing stone and other debris, barring his way. It's night so he should carry a torch.	<i>Following the road leading to the nearby Castle Blackstone, you find that the entrance has collapsed, your path being blocked by rocks and other debris...</i>
The father finds the secret entrance leading into the castle that he heard about from the villagers, and with his torch he enters the small entrance.	<i>Remembering the people of Neuheim, you soon find the secret entrance, mentioned by the caretaker, opening into a dark tunnel, leading to the castle library...</i>

Castle -> Dead Village	
After defeating the undead priest, leaving only his robe behind, the father stands over it, with a mysterious black stone in his hand. At the same time the library around him is starting to become more ghostly (it's supposed to symbolize that after he obtained the stone he starts to get transported into the realm of the dead).	<i>As you ponder the significance of the black gemstone carried by the undead priest, the library around you is becoming enwrapped in ghostly vapors...</i>
Finding himself suddenly in the realm of the dead where dangers lurk all around in the form of ghosts with ghostly red eyes, hiding in the shadows just out of sight, the father makes a run for the village, ghosts snapping at his heal.	<i>Suddenly finding yourself surrounded by the malevolent spirits of the dead, the castle transformed around you, you decide to make a run for the village...</i>
Dead Village -> End (Castle)	
Returning to the village church which is safe from the evil ghosts, inside he talks with a friendly looking old ghostly priest that points him to a specific spot on the wall, where the white stone is hidden.	<i>Returning to the village you find the church glowing in the dark, promising safe haven. Inside you encounter a priest that reveals the secret of the Blackstones...</i>
The father returns to the castle to gather the remaining Blackstones. He fights a large golem (large animated suit of armor), making a lunge at its weak spot with his club.	<i>Once more entering the castle, many dangers stand in the way of the remaining Blackstones, with each of the three stones being guarded by a dangerous abomination...</i>
The father finds a secret room, wherein he encounters the body of a very old man. It is the body of the sorcerer that created the Blackstones, who now inhabits the Tailor's son's body and escaped to the Afterworld.	<i>Obtaining the remaining Blackstones, you find your way to the evil sorcerer's hiding place, only to find his old dead body, with your son and his spirit gone to the Afterworld...</i>
The tailor is wandering around the dead world of the Afterworld until he in the distance can see the lights cast by the Hall of Lights (The HoL is a place where the God of the Dead keeps the candles to represent people's remaining lives)	<i>Once more finding yourself in the world of the dead, you wander lost for a time, kept safe by the Blackstones, until in the distance light pierces the eternal darkness...</i>
The tailor and his son are fighting, with the son using some kind of magical attack and the father mainly trying to avoid it, not wishing to harm his son. In the background can be seen shelf after shelf filled with lit candles. The son is instead of his usual	<i>You find your son being controlled by the evil sorcerer and a fight breaks out. The only harm being sought is on your head, as you dodge repeatedly, wishing to save your son...</i>

garb, wearing a black robe or black clothes.	
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Back-story

The back-stories of some areas of the world of *Blackstone* are further detailed in the following sections. They are meant to assist in the development of the game, and all details here won't necessarily be revealed to the player.

The Tailor and his son Harry

The Tailor and his son Harry lives in a small village a fair distance away from the larger city of Graffstadt. They merely try to make their way through the day, with the Tailor teaching his son the art of tailoring. Both hardworking and honest men, they recently came into a large quantity of money after Harry managed to save the daughter of the village mayor from bandits. With their newfound fortune they managed to buy themselves new clothes and horses, enabling them to travel to the big city to barter their goods.

Misjudging the distance of their journey, they ended up having to break and rest in the village of Neuheim, a place that seemed almost abandoned, with the light of day long gone. Here they found the villagers wary of strangers, as something had happened a time back, which had spelled the doom for the village and scarred its inhabitants to their very cores.

During the night they both have dreams of a fair maiden trapped in a tower, but while Harry dreams of saving her, as she implores for help, the Tailor dreams of a nightmarish vision. Harry awakens several hours before his father, wishing to race to the castle to save the maiden, and so he sets off from the inn.

Nathaniel and the Blackstone Pendant

Nathaniel is a powerful sorcerer more than a century old, which main purpose in life is that of acquiring personal power. He doesn't care for wealth or material goods but only care about increasing his own power, which was what initially drove him into the pursuit of the arcane arts. Nearing the limit of his lifespan, even enhanced by his own spells, he now seeks a way of preserving his own life.

He came up with the idea of obtaining Godhood and masterminded a plan to overthrow the God of the Dead, as the two other gods, one representing good and the other evil, were too powerful to defeat. To do this he used ancient magic, things that even he himself did not understand, to fabric together an artifact of immense power. He named it the Blackstone Pendant. Using its powers he would be able to conquer the Afterworld and control life and death through the powers of godhood. Luckily the pendant never got to fulfill its purpose, as champions on the side of good managed to stop him before he even set foot in the Afterworld. The battle was terrible with lots of casualties, but it ended with Nathaniel forced into full retreat, battered and defeated. The victors took the Blackstone Pendant and made sure that it would never fall into the hands of evil again.

The pendant consists of 5 gems, 1 white and 4 black, set in a golden frame. Each stone serves a specific purpose, with the white containing elements of pure good and the black containing elements of pure evil.

The stones are Holy, Unholy, Life, Death and Fire. Each stone represents a vital step in the fulfillment of the plan:

- Holy: Prevents the corruption of the bearer by absorbing the evil powers emanating from the stones. It will keep the bearer safe to use the other stones' powers.
- Unholy: Opens a conduct between the normal world and the Afterworld. It will make the bearer able to travel to the God of the Dead's domain.
- Life: Manipulates with the fabrics of life to allow the breaking of immortality. It will give the bearer the power to slay a God by weakening his strength.
- Death: Detects death and the absence of it. It will help the bearer find his way through the Afterworld to the Halls of Light.
- Fire: Enables the manipulation of existing fire. It will give the bearer the ability to manipulate the Candles of Fate in the Halls of Light.

Combined, the powers of the stones enable the bearer to travel to the Afterworld and locate the Halls of Light, wherein the Lord of the Dead resides and defeat him to claim his mantle.

Although Nathaniel was stopped, he was far from defeated, and retreated from the world, not to be heard from again, not unlike the Blackstone Pendant that also disappeared from the history-books. Its fate unknown and thought lost to the world, centuries later the pendant reemerged in a small village, where it was kept in hiding. But only few years went by until its existence was once again discovered by evil, as Nathaniel himself also returned, and traveled to the village of Neuheim to reclaim his pendant. His time in hiding had mainly been spent rebuilding parts of his library and research notes that had been lost during his defeat.

Approximately one year before the Tailor appears in the village, Nathaniel came to Neuheim and searched for the Blackstone Pendant. Neuheim, being a busy place close to the main road, was very active and none noticed yet another stranger in their midst. He found that the local priests knew of the Pendant and its whereabouts and he tried to get it by force. But the church was protected from the likes of him, making him unable to enter inside its hallowed walls, so he had to find a different way of getting it back.

Nathaniel travelled to the nearby Castle Blackstone, a site left in shambles as none had lived there for many years. Those that went there claimed it to be hunted, at least those few that returned. Inside he found the ghosts of those that had lived there long ago and died horrible deaths, making them unable to leave behind the world of the living. Additionally he conjured several allies, making stone walk and corrupting the nearby wildlife, to do his bidding. That night Neuheim was in a state of shock, as horror after horror attacked the city in search of their master's prize.

The prior attempt at entering the village church had alerted the priests to the danger that lurked ahead. Their order, tasked many years ago with the duty to guard the Blackstone Pendant, had remained vigilant and prepared for what might happen. As screams filled the night, the priests shattered the Pendant, dividing up the stones between themselves, agreeing to split up and flee for the greater good. What they

hadn't counted on however, was the corrupting influence of the Blackstones themselves, now separated from the white stone. As the five priests fled the church, the Blackstones corruption, being suppressed for so long, burst into effect. One priest caught fire and in turn set several building on fire, while another suddenly disappeared in thin air. One of the priests fell to the ground, unable to move a muscle while another got swarmed by vicious shadowy creatures, as he started glowing with a renewed life-force. The last priest, carrying the white stone, saw it all unfold and retreated back to the church, where he made sure that the white Blackstone would not fall into enemy hands. By using a ritual to leave the normal world behind, he travelled to the Afterworld and hid there, waiting for a day when he would be needed once more.

Despite the Priests most valiant efforts, Nathaniel ended up with four of the five stones. Due to the danger they possessed for those carrying them, he opted to split and place them in different parts of the Castle Blackstone, allowing him to study them each in turn. Each stone was assigned to a special guardian in case someone tried to interrupt his plan. But the studies of the Blackstones' powers without the use of the white stone proved a long and tiring affair, with Nathaniel's lifespan slowly dwindling away. Branching on a new aspect of the Blackstones, that of manipulating life itself, that he hadn't fully studied before he found that by performing a special ceremony he would be able to transplant his soul into a new strong body, fully under his control.

With the Tailor and his son traveling into the almost deserted village of Neuheim, Nathaniel then found his unwilling aide to prolong his own life. The same night he sent dreams to the young man, dreams of a fair maiden trapped in the nearby castle, begging for help. The dreams were filled with persuasive magic that would overcome any carefulness or fear, and would serve to lure the youth to the castle.

Friendly NPCs

During the game the player will encounter several friendly NPCs in the village of Neuheim. These aren't all of the inhabitants of the village, but the majority of them are safely locked inside their homes. The player will be able to interact with these through dialog. Any relevant back-story and information the villagers of Neuheim have will be conveyed through dialogue. The following sections contain a short introduction to the various friendly NPCs followed by their dialog subjects.

The Innkeeper Aaron

Aaron is the owner of the Black Rose, the inn also serving as the main gathering place for the remaining inhabitants of Neuheim. Usually having a more open approach towards strangers, as he set up his business a few months after the attack, he has quickly come to serve as a stout front figure for the village, with the others looking for him to lead them through the tough times.

Dialog:

- Evening stranger, well I guess it is technically night. Pretty bad time of night to be up and about though. What can I do you for?

- The young man? Aye, he came down some hours ago. Warned him not to go outside, but he shrugged me off. I guess if there is a warning worth giving there is something equally worth venturing out for.
- It is the wolves, awfully aggressive on these parts. Some people even say that they are evil. Of course, that is nonsense, never met an evil critter and I have been around. That is not to say that evil is not lurking nearby, just look at the old castle Blackstone. Nobody dares go there.
- I am sure he is in the village somewhere, just head outside and have a look. Some folks are still up at this time, try asking Cooperfeld, he is the local smith. Keeping busy like his father before him, he is usually patrolling or working his smithy.
- No need for thanks. Name is Aaron by the way. Been here around one summer and this place, if any, can use all the help it can get. Luckily the locals have taken a liking to my establishment, so I have settled down for the last time I reckon.

The Blacksmith Cooperfeld

Cooperfeld is the resident smith of Neuheim, having lived there and taken care of his father's business after he passed away a few years back. After the attack on the village he vowed to not be caught unprepared again, and so spend the late nights working in his smithy, if he's not actively patrolling the village.

Dialog:

- Yeah, I spoke shortly with him, Harry I believe his name was. He wanted to acquire a weapon. I am not usually stocked up on arms, but I did give him an older sword I had lying around.
- You should not venture out at this time brother. The dangers that lurk outside our ring of fire are best left alone. Least they turn their attention towards us again, like they did a year ago, when they came from the castle.
- I have been living in Neuheim my entire life. Used to be working with my father back when trade was good. That is, until the day a stranger bent on evil came to our village. I do not know what he was after and I am not sure I wish to know, but he quickly left again.
- Later the same night, the village was attacked by creatures out of a nightmare. Many people died that night, including my father, may he rest in peace, as they tried to fend off the abominations. The church was abandoned back then since all of the priests passed away.
- Ever since that night I have worked the late hours of the night. I will not allow our village to be overrun again, so I have taken to standing watch over us. I will be heading out on my patrol soon, and I will search for Harry if you cannot find him in Neuheim.
- Well, I can only arm you with that little bit of knowledge of what awaits you brother. I pray that Harry have not left Neuheim. May the Light be with you.

The Caretaker Blaine

Blaine is one of the only survivors from the church, acting as its caretaker as he has for many years. While not fully indoctrinated in the on goings of the church and the cause of the attack, he's always been vigilant and has some information to share with those willing to listen, as he has lived in Neuheim his entire life.

Dialog:

- Evening there Sir. I must admit that I cannot seem to remember the last time so many folks was wandering around outside after dark. Come to visit the church or maybe a loved one who passed away?
- Yes, I saw a person sneaking about here earlier. Not the one to be confrontational, I opted to let him on his way. He passed right by here! Where? Well, I can tell you this much. It is a castle and it is made of black stone. Not the hardest riddle around I know, but I am not trying too hard to befuddle you.
- The church? It was besieged by a lone stranger. Twice he came seeking something, and the second time he found it. The priests tried to escape with his prize, knowledge I reckon, but in the end they all failed. It was quite the horrible experience, blood and fire was everywhere. I even saw Brother Fine vanish into thin air!
- That reminds me. I once had a friend in this place, but sadly he passed away a year back. Geis was his name and priest was his game. Very nice man indeed. He left me a key to hold on to, until I met someone who needed to go places. My gut tells me that someone is you. Do not ask where the lock is, for that I do not know.
- If you do find out where it fits, make sure to tell me all about it. I have been wondering about it ever since that key showed up in my dresser some months ago. Well, I did not put it there so it must have been Geis! Good old guy, always watching out for others. If you find his resting place, give him a holler from me.
- Hmm, I can tell you this much. It would not be wise to enter the old castle through the front gate. People that go there never return, well, I am sure you are about to break the rule, but no harm in being extra careful. There is a secret entrance to the side of the castle; it will lead you into the library.
- Make your way to the hidden entrance. I cannot tell you what waits within, but be careful. And if you ever find a chasm which you cannot pass, remember that in old castles, often the walls themselves know the secrets.
- You better be on your way my good tailor. How I know? Well, let us just say I can recognize a man of the cloth after having been around here for so long. Now I got some pondering to do. I got this image stuck in my head, an image of a baby stuck to a chicken or some such. I will solve this mystery!

- The way to the castle is near here. Just pass through the two torches to the right of the graveyard.

The Dead Priest Geis

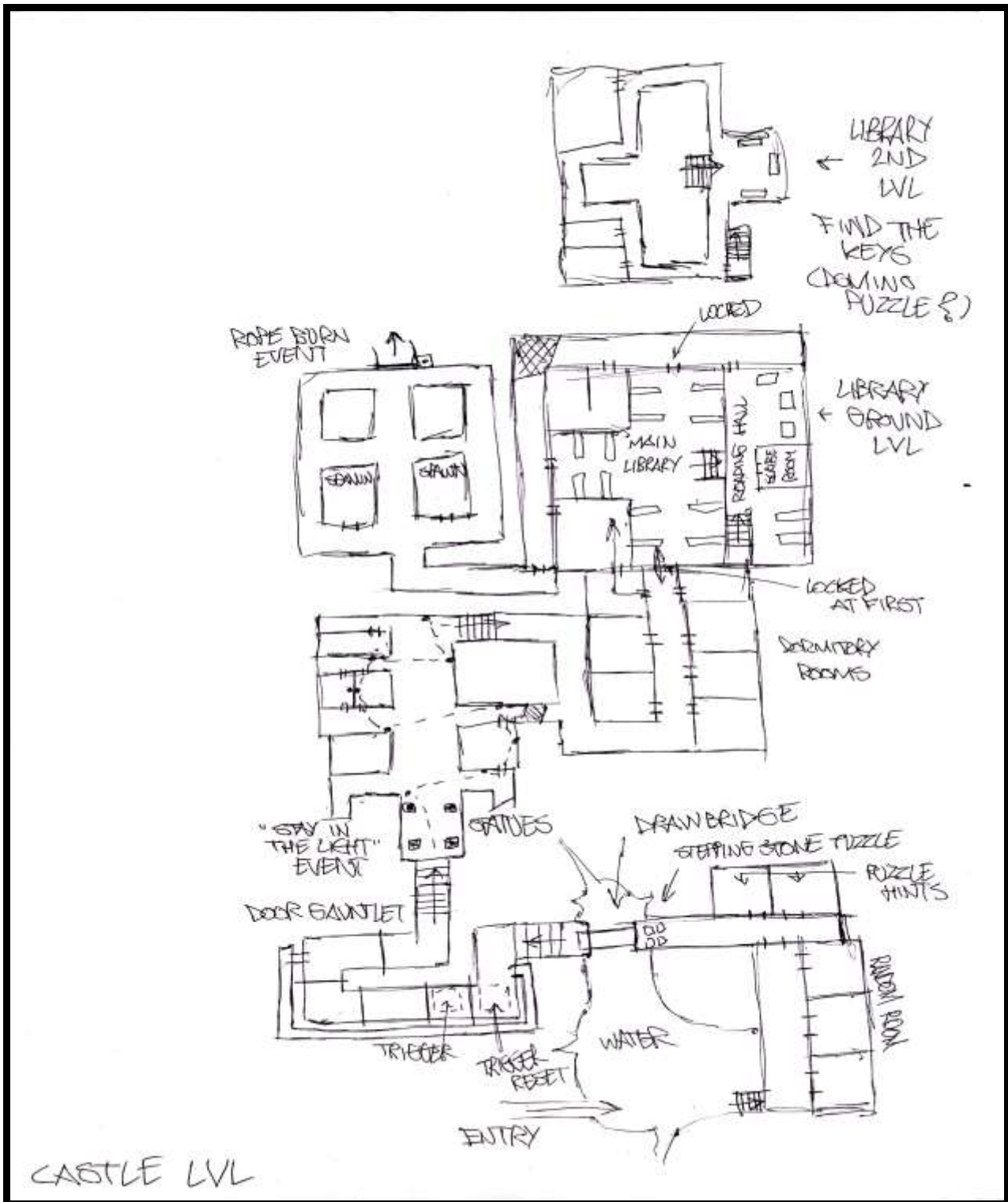
Geis is a priest from the church in Neuheim. During the attack on the village, he sacrificed his own life in order to await the coming of someone to save them from the evil of Nathaniel once more, who he could tell what happened and unveil the mystery of the Blackstones.

Dialog:

- Greetings stranger. No, do not be scared. I am here to guide and assist those that are good of heart and spirit. This church remains as a beacon of hope for those like you. Those that search for answers. I am Brother Geis and I am your friend.
- Blaine told you about me? I knew that we made a good choice making him the guardian of Neuheim. Ever since the fateful night where the church was assaulted and the priesthood decimated, I have waited for one such as you to arrive. To make things right.
- Blaine told you about the attack I assume. Ever since that monster of a man Nathaniel returned to Neuheim and left it ablaze, I cannot imagine that anyone have ever recovered fully. It was a dark night filled with unimaginable horrors and I lost many friends.
- The fog? You are in the Afterworld friend. The place where people go after they die. But relax, you are not dead. There are ways of entering the Afterworld without dying. I did that when the church was attacked, but staying here too long will kill you, as I was killed. You came here by the way of the stone you hold in your hand.
- That which you hold there is a Blackstone, one of five. It is dangerous magic to be sure, not something to manipulate carelessly. It brought you here, perhaps to kill you or maybe to assist you on your quest. Either way, we should thank the gods for your safe arrival to my church.
- The other Blackstones? Yes, there are a total of five stones. Four black and one white. Each of these has a power of their own, but it is when combined that they become truly dangerous. The one you hold in your hands allows you to travel between the Afterworld and the world of the living.
- The three other Blackstones do different things, but just as the one you have, each is dangerous if not handled with care. One controls fire and flame, another makes its bearer immortal while the last enables one to conceal and detect the forces of life and death.
- But what of the last one you say? The white stone is not one of evil, but one made of pure good. Its only purpose is to counterbalance the forces of the evil stones, to protect its bearer. It is the first stone that you must recover before you can gain full use of the one you hold. Luckily for you, I know its location.

- You have my key no doubt. By the sound of it Blaine put a good deal of faith in you. And so I will too. In this wooden chest you will find the white stone to protect you in your travels. But you need to promise me to continue your quest.
- What quest? Why to gather the remaining Blackstones and thwart the plot of the evil sorcerer Nathaniel of course. If you have already come this far, there is no doubt that the gods intended for you to be the one to make things right.
- Your son? Oh no. It all makes sense now. When we were attacked it was not by Nathaniel in person, but rather his lackeys. According to the old tomes, Nathaniel is nearing almost twice the normal lifespan of a human. With his experience in necromancy, there is no doubt that he intends to use your son for some sinister ritual to prolong his life.
- There is no time to waste friend. For both the sake of your son, but also for the sake of everybody alive. Whatever he seeks to do with the Blackstones cannot be good. According to the chronicles the legend says that his purpose long ago was the slaying of a god. If it is possible I do not know, but neither do I wish to find out.
- Fare well friend. My prayers are with you.

The Library



The Servant Quarters

The Main Hall

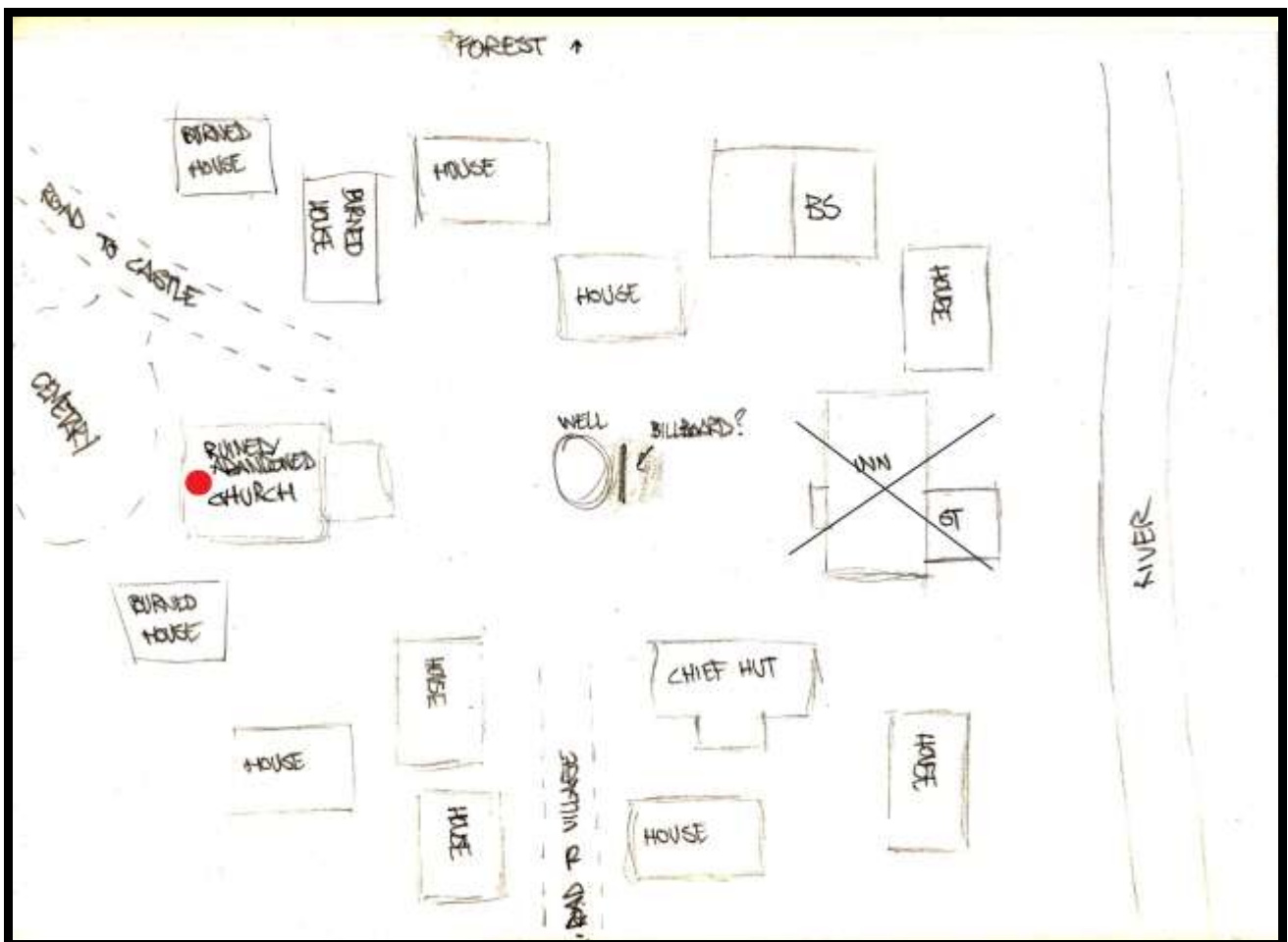
The Dungeon

The Secret Room

The Afterworld

The Village of Neuheim

Red denotes a friendly NPC, while a crossed out building (non-generic) means it is unavailable.



The Halls of Light