

## The Forest Game Concept

The protagonist is a male or female young adult, living in a small cabin in the woods. This cabin has a few basic amenities including a fireplace with a small stack of wood, a bed, and a well outside. The gameplay opens with the character waking up and picking up a “to-do” list from a table in the cabin. The list reads: “cut wood for fire, string bow, draw water, cook meat.”

From here, the character puts the list away and goes through the cabin to find their boots and gloves, or not. Outside, the character finds the well and a block for chopping wood. And as they go about these chores, they spot a bear in the tree line surrounding their cabin. The character must hide until the bear passes by, and then the character would add to the to-do list “take care of bears.”

- The player would then have the option of stringing the bow and supplying themselves with arrows and trying to kill the bears, which proves to be a difficult task that requires more preparation.
- The player can also find a book inside the cabin that details a recipe for a blend of herbs that can be placed on the edges of the yard. Presumably, the smell will keep the bears away.

Either way, the player would finish the “string bow” chore and head into the woods. Hopefully, the player has on their boots and gloves to prevent themselves of being easily hurt by anything in the woods that might lash at the ankles or prick the finger.

If the player is looking to hunt down the bears, the player would start by tracking the bear through clues they can find along the forest floor. These clues will also give them new tasks on their list such as “find the bear den,” “lay a trap,” which prompts the player to find and catch a fish or gather honey, “mask scent,” “find a vantage point,” and finally “slay the bear.” All of these steps are optional, as the player could charge into the bear den once they find it and lobby a few arrows into its side, but this will not end well and the player will be forced to prepare better or to look at the bear problem from a different angle. If the player prepares well and kills the bear, then the game can end here. The player can even make a proper coat from the bear’s pelt and harvest a lot of meat and bones from its body. The meat is useful for the “cook meat” task, and the bones can be used to make arrows or upgrades to their bow.

If the player decides that they want to simply ward the bears away from their cabin, then the storyline offers more branching options to explore the world around them and learn why they are in the woods to begin with, as well as digging up magical artifacts, finding an abandoned castle ruin, and coming across a fairy circle and meeting the fairy queen of the forest. The fairy queen would grant the player a boon to walk freely among the forest as the animals do without fear and with a new respect for the balance of life within.

The player who kills the bears might also have this option, as they can trek off into the woods and explore on their own if they feel so compelled, and they can even fail to kill the bear and instead opt to create wards instead. However, the fairy queen of the forest will remember what the player did and either reprimand the player for needless slaughter or begrudgingly appreciate that the bear’s sacrifice was not in vain if the player utilized its resources well. However, the

fairy queen will not trust the player with her powers and will instead urge the player to prepare for a harsh winter and leave without granting any boons.

The player can continue to explore more of the forest around them with or without this boon, and gain new tasks that prompt them to learn more of the lore and history of the magic forest, improving their cabin, their gear, and they can even experience the onset of winter, but these are simply epilogues and not the overarching conflicts.