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**Course:** IASC 3P96 - Level Design

## ASSASSIN'S CREED CHUKCHI

### Overview

#### Main Character:

Akhvakh

#### History / Lore:

Russian Cossacks were military people that were involved in many wars with the Russian indigenous people called the Chukchi. The story takes place in Murmansk which is a city in Siberia that is located close to the arctic circle. The climate and surroundings are harsh and very cold. This makes it harder to hunt and get food. Since *Assassin's Creed* tends to include people from actual historical events, the game is based on the Russian aboriginals. The side quest features an evil witch by the name of Baba Yaga. Based on Slavik folklore, she fries kids and eats them. Also, the game will feature undead monsters that look like Koschei, the undead. Koschei was put under a spell that makes it unkillable. As a player you can kill the monster, but it comes back to life after a certain amount of time. Additionally, there are multiple Koschei's lurking in Baba Yaga's lair.

#### Narrative and Settings:

The Russian Cossacks are enslaving indigenous people and killing / enslaving those that do not obey them because they are using the people to find an ancient artifact called the "Blade of Power". The indigenous people created a new assassins order that passes on Altair's teachings (An assassin from *Assassins Creed I*) and they are planning a revolt against the Cossacks, who are the templars. Akhvakh was trained to use his surroundings, such as the snow since the narration takes place in Siberia. In addition, the character may plant traps for the enemy. The character can wield poison darts, a pair of hidden blades, a rope and a stone axe. The main mission of this specific level is to kill one of the Russian commanders that has a heavily invested enemy death camp with tons of slaves which the player must free trying to not trigger any alarms and assassinate commander Vladislav Alexievich. However, there is also an optional side objective that the player can complete and that is to defeat Baba Yaga. If the player finds their way in the labyrinth and defeats Baba Yaga, they get a cloak of invisibility which makes it easier to complete the main quest. There will be many evil demons that the player must defeat in order to get to Baba Yaga.

## World Design

### The World

The player will be progressing through aboriginal style architecture as well as dense forests in a harsh snowy Siberian wasteland. The player will also progress through 1700's style Russian architecture. Additionally, the side quest will feature environmental fantasy elements from Slavik folklore.

| <b>Mechanic</b>                                                                                                                        | <b>Description</b>                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Placing Bear Traps                                                                                                                     | Places a bear trap.                                                                                                                                            |
| Taming Animals                                                                                                                         | The tame animals function allows a player to instruct their non-human companion to attack and/or distract the enemy.                                           |
| Placing Leaf Traps                                                                                                                     | Places a leaf trap.                                                                                                                                            |
| Using Sled Dogs for Travel                                                                                                             | Use dogs to travel across snow because of the harsh environmental conditions.                                                                                  |
| Exploring                                                                                                                              | The player can explore, collect enemy loot and open chests to find health potions and treasure, as well as mythical items with special abilities.              |
| Platforming                                                                                                                            | The player can climb many surfaces and use the height for an advantage over the enemy.                                                                         |
| Combat (Hand Combat, Sword Combat, Axe Combat, Dagger Combat, Gun Combat and Using Turrets)                                            | There are many types of combat and all function similarly, but their mechanics differ and give more options for the player to use when in the state of combat. |
| Stealth (Using single hidden blade, double hidden blades, smoke bombs, rope, poison darts, berserk darts and using the snow as cover ) | Same with combat, the player is given lots of agency to use anything to achieve their goal, from using blades to darts to hiding in the snow.                  |
| Using a Bird                                                                                                                           | Used to get a top-down view of the map and get an understanding of the enemies' positions and approaches the player may take.                                  |
| Using Heal Potions                                                                                                                     | Health potions heal a certain amount of life.                                                                                                                  |
| Upgrading Armour / Weapons                                                                                                             | Items can be upgraded to become stronger.                                                                                                                      |
| Buying Armour / Weapons                                                                                                                | Player can purchase new weapons over time.                                                                                                                     |
| Free Captives                                                                                                                          | Players can save slaves that are being held captive.                                                                                                           |

Table 1: Global Game Mechanics

| <b>Mechanic</b>            | <b>Description</b>                                                                         |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Using Invincibility Elixir | Can use invincibility cloak only in this level and only after Baba Yaga has been defeated. |
| Poisoning Barrels          | You can only poison barrels in Cossack strongholds and destroy large amounts of enemies.   |

Table 2: Local Game Mechanics

## World Design Cohesion

First, the rich environment tells a lot about the character and Slavik culture, from the Russian architecture, Aboriginal architecture, the harsh snowy environment and the magical creatures and villainous monsters from Russian folklore. All these things work together with the narrative to build a highly immersive world. The sound is used well because detection levels change based on how much noise the player makes. This makes it harder for a stealth approach. Additionally, the visual splendor of the world around the player and the rich environment makes the players experience more enjoyable.

## Objectives / Obstacles

### Main Objective

The main objective is to get to the Russian Cossack commander and assassinate him.

### Secondary Objective

The player can do a side quest and get an invincibility cloak after defeating Baba Yaga. It can be used to sneak into the Cossack barricades. Can also free captives on the way.

### List of Core Obstacles:

- Archers
- Armoured Guards
- Light Weight Guards (Fast at dodging attacks)
- Baba Yaga's minions
- Baba Yaga
- The Russian Cossack
- Tree Platforms
- Wall Platforms
- The Snowy Environment
- Magic Doors
- Animals (Learning to tame them)
- Having money to buy new armor
- Having enough health potions

### Uniqueness

The game is unique in many ways because it features Slavik folklore / mythology which was not featured in past *Assassin's Creed* games, and it has a couple of mechanics that allow either to plant traps such as bear or leaf traps as well as to poison barrels with water. Additionally, after defeating Baba Yaga the player gets the ability to use an invincibility cloak and hide from enemies. Almost forgot you can also tame animals and use them to distract or attack the Cossacks. In this games case, it's a bear that strikes.

## **Dynamics / Aesthetics**

### **Dynamics**

**Collection** – The large open-world environment and the ability to travel lead to finding new waypoints, treasure chests and special loot that the player can collect.

**Chasing / Evading** – Since the game is mostly stealth focused the best strategy is to evade enemies and use a quiet approach. Also, the snowy environment lets the player hide which supports stealth.

**Territorial Acquisition** – In the game the objective is to also capture Templar strongholds and make new assassin's headquarters.

**Avenging** – Since Templars kill every person that is dear to the character, the dynamic is to avenge his loved ones.

**Fight for Freedom** – The freeing people mechanic allows people to be free and it is done by unchaining them. This allows to also gather allies and fight for freedom.

**Exploration** – The open-world environment allows the player to explore the world and even explore the magic realm of magical creatures and monsters.

### **Aesthetics**

The mechanics and dynamics all work well in tandem with narrative, fantasy, discovery and challenge because they allow the player to explore the real world and fantasy world in a rich environment and story. This plays well with the discovery as well. Additionally, there is always a challenge for a player to see how quietly they can get through enemies and assassinate them without being caught.

## Reference Board



Figure 1: Reference Board

For the reference board images collected were related to the winter, Slavik folklore, Russian history, the geography of a Siberian city, Murmansk, the Chukchi (Aboriginal People of Siberia), the type of architecture and traps that existed. The winter has harsh environments, people use sled dogs for travel and there are a lot of bears. From Russian folklore there is a witch that eats kids, flies on a wooden barrel and lives in a house that has chicken fingers. Also, the main conflict in the game is that the assassins (Chukchi) are battling the Templars (Russian Cossacks), who burned Aboriginals homes and took children and women hostage. Murmansk tends to have night for the entire day, the northern lights can be seen, and it is very cold since its located in the arctic circle. Therefore, aboriginals build warm huts where they can hide in the very cold winters. Russian Cossacks had brick architecture with warm straw roofs since they had more resources than the aboriginals. The aboriginals used tools for hunting and set traps such as bear traps and leaf traps. The Cossacks had rifles as well as arbalets and they would overpower the Aboriginal people with. Also, there is a Templar and Assassin symbol in the reference board to indicate the main conflict in the game.

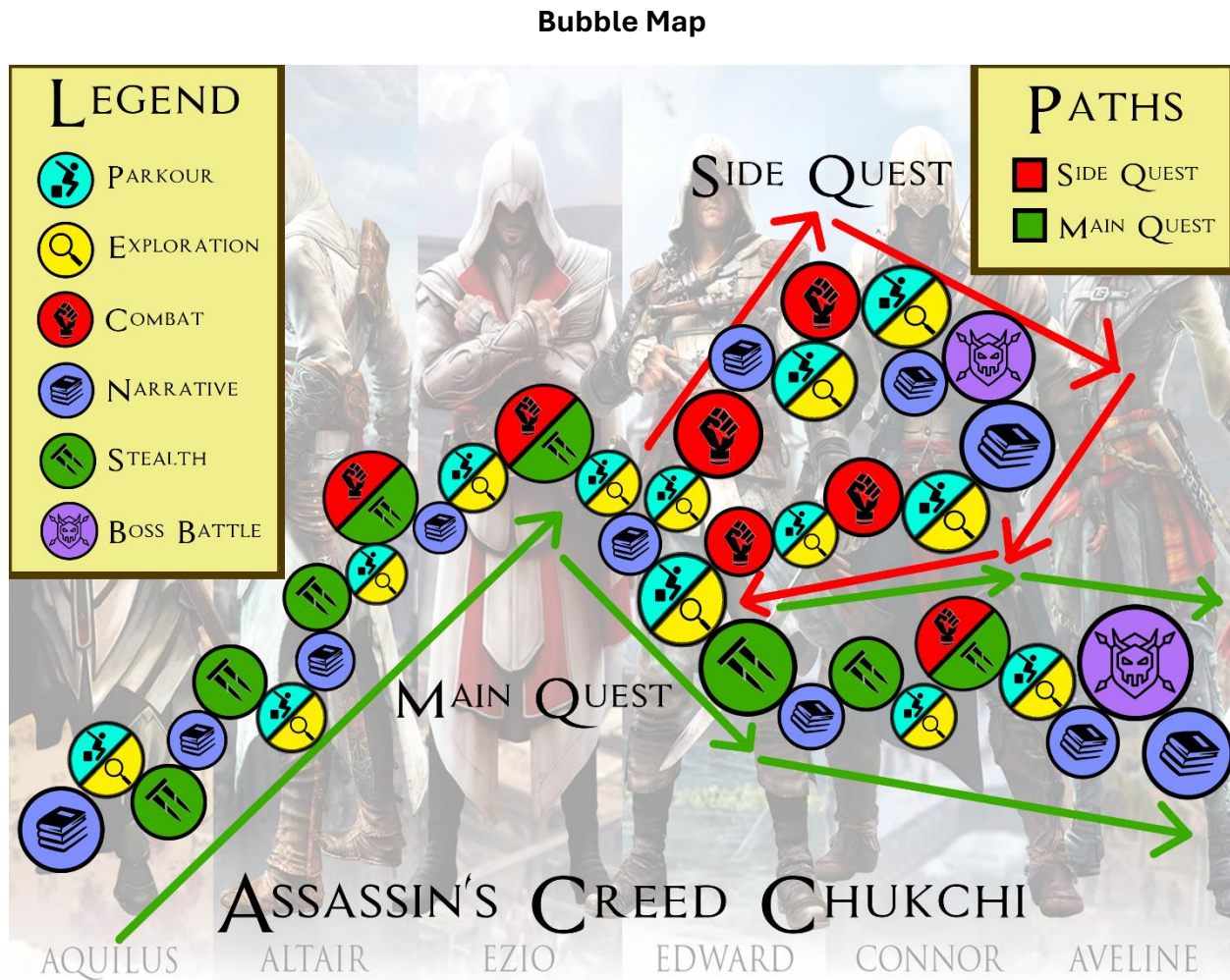


Figure 2: Bubble Map

In the bubble map, items were split into 6 categories which are Parkour, Exploration, Combat, Narrative, Stealth and Boss Battle. Additionally, there are two coloured paths that allow to distinguish between a main and side quest to accommodate for player agency. The red path shows that the player can first complete an optional objective (described in document later) that will help the player in completing the main objective with ease. That is why there is a loop. The player goes back to the green path. The most intense elements are boss battles, stealth/combat actions, narrative, and parkouring/exploration actions. Lastly, the split circles represent that the player can do either or. So, for example the player can either use stealth/combat or parkour/exploration.

## Pacing Graphs

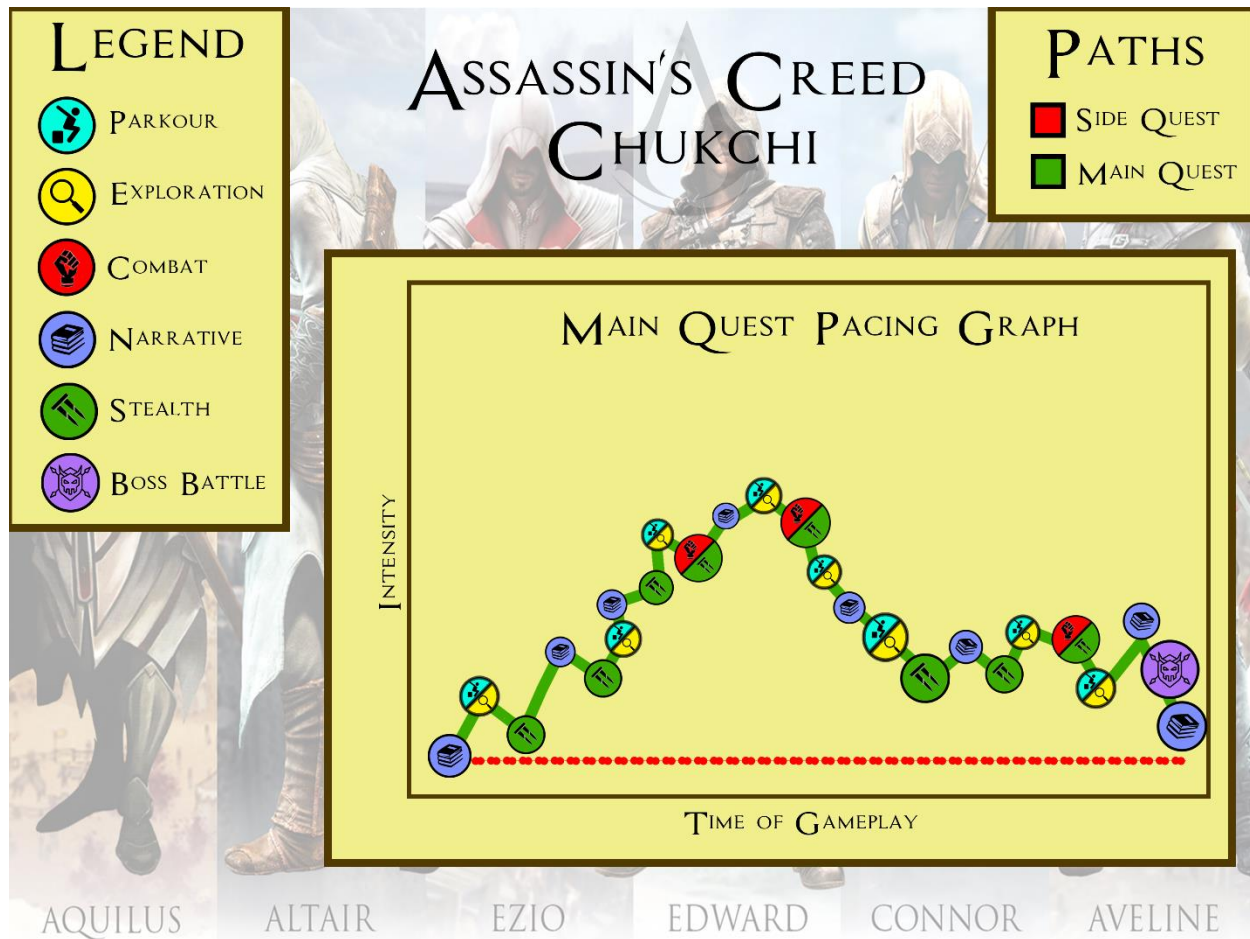


Figure 3: Pacing Graph of Main Quest

For the graphs, inspiration was taken from the bubble maps and added on. It was however difficult to incorporate because there was also a side objective. So, the graphs were split into two graphs, one for the main objective and one for the side objective. The dashed lines represent that something is constant, or nothing is happening in that specific time frame. So, for example if the player is doing a main objective nothing is happening in the side objective path which is the case in this graph. The pacing graph works like a narrative piece because it goes up until it reaches the climax and then comes down to get to a resolution.

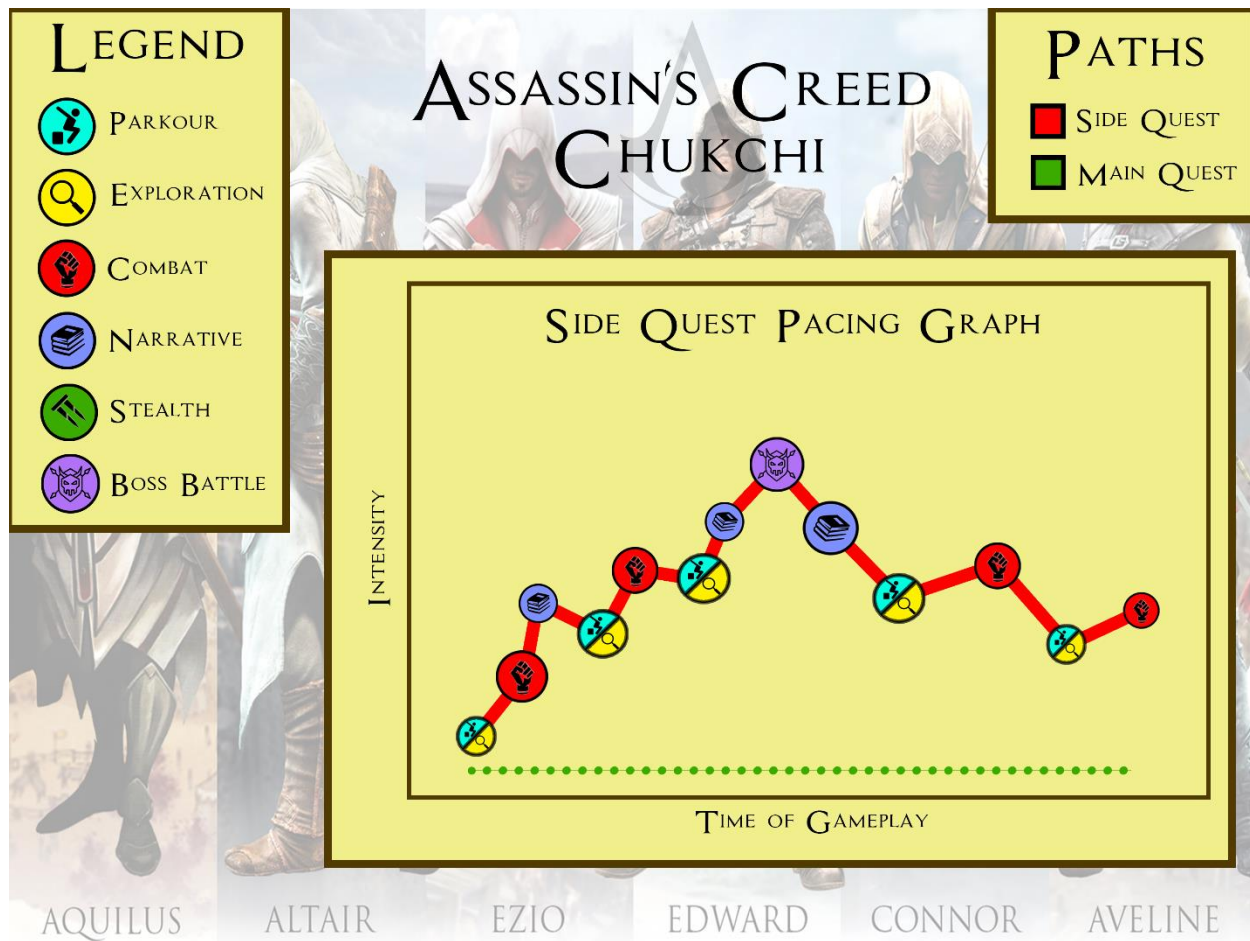


Figure 4: Pacing Graph of Side Quest

This pacing graph is of the side objective which is similarly structured to main objective pacing graph and will not be explained in much detail. In this specific graph the only difference is that it includes bubble graph elements from the side quest and the main quest dashed line is constant because it represents that the player is currently doing a side quest. The way the pacing graphs were made helps easily distinguish between a main and side objective.

## Level Maps

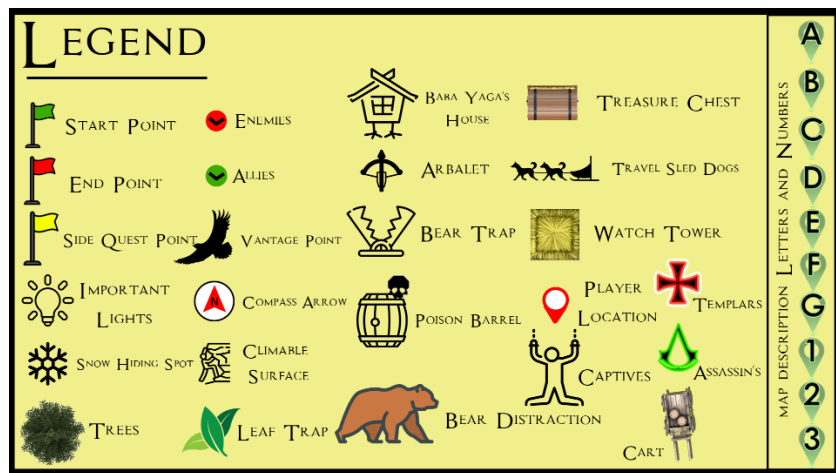


Figure 5: Map Legend



Figure 6: Overview Level Map

Since most of the maps are quite explanatory, a brief overview will be provided. The whole point of the level map is to promote player agency, exploration as well as an option to do a side quest. The numbers represent additional maps that are used to help explain the level better. The number 1 on the map represents a level map of the forest, number 2 represents the level map of the Cossack stronghold and number 3 represents a level map of Baba Yaga's house and labyrinth. There is also a close-up on the map of the climbable surface as shown above. Lastly, there will be letters to indicate the specific sequences in the game as well as player paths and enemy AI paths.

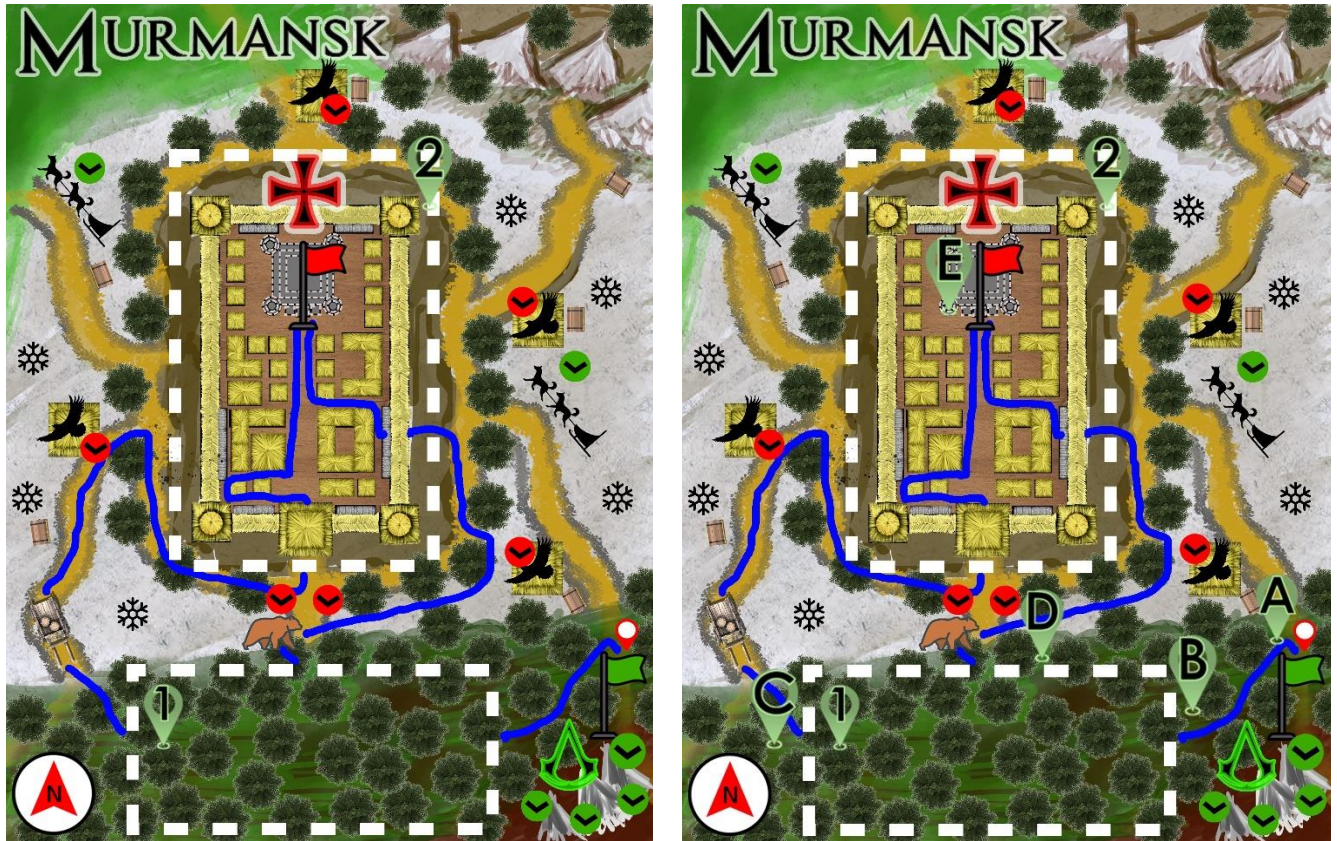


Figure 7: Maps of Main Quest Path

- A) The player begins quest.
- B) Player enters forest zone.
- C) Player uses cart to get into the stronghold.
- D) Or player distracts guards with a tamed bear and takes the side route.
- E) Player infiltrates the Cossack stronghold.

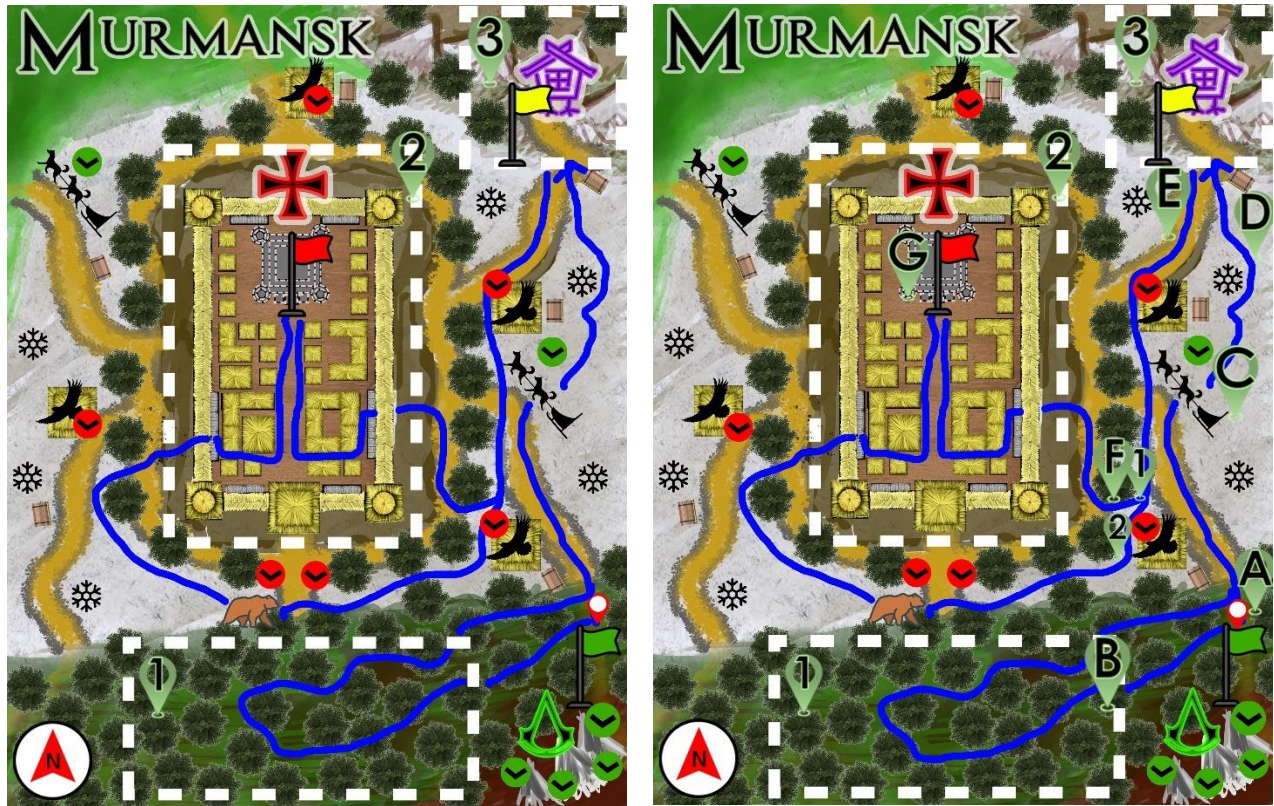


Figure 8: Maps of Side Quest Path

- A) The player begins quest.
- B) Player enters forest zone.
- C) Player gets on sled dogs to travel to side quest destination.
- D) Player enters Baba Yaga's lair in the forest.
- E) Player leaves lair after completing side objective.
- F) Two paths player can choose:
  - a. Marked number 1 path (use invisibility cloak obtained in side quest to sneak into the castle).
  - b. Marked number 2 path (player distracts guards with a tamed bear and takes the side route).
- G) Player infiltrates the Cossack stronghold.

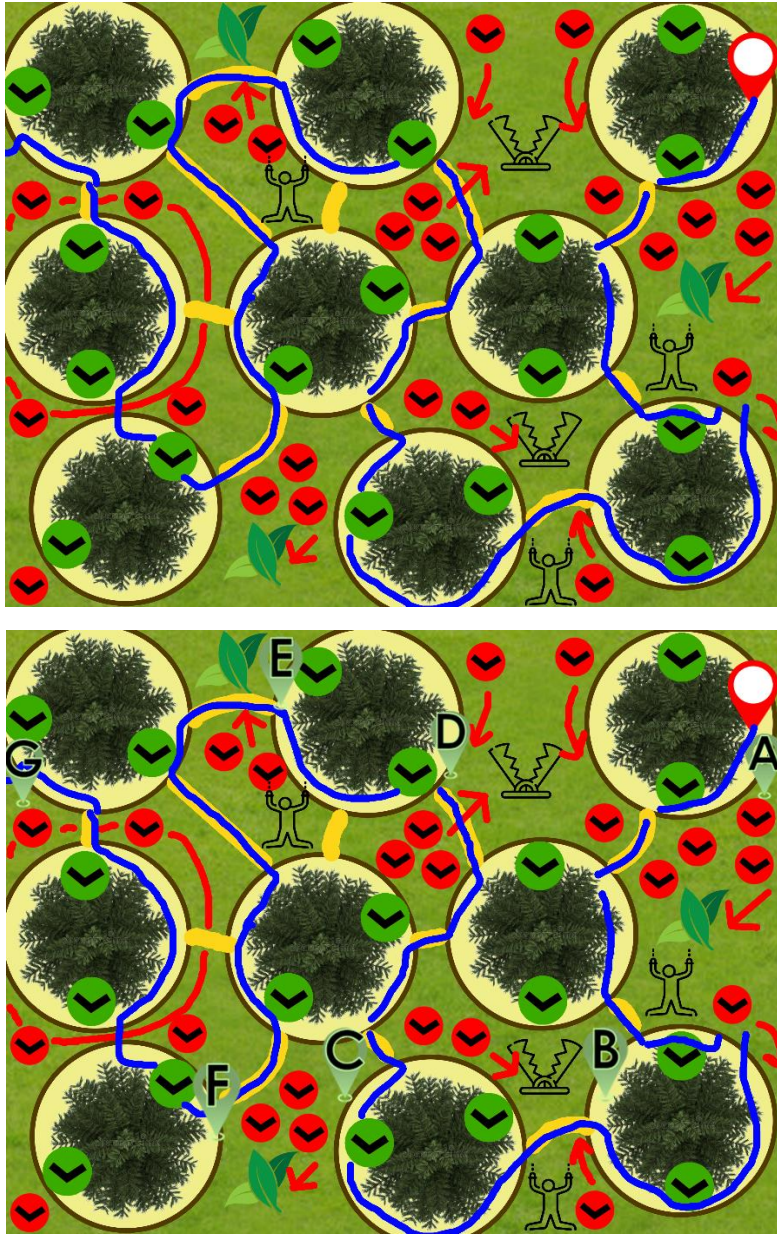


Figure 9: Maps of Forest Section

- A) The player begins section of quest.
- B) Player stealth kills enemies with traps, with the help of fellow assassin allies and rescues hostages.
- C) Player goes to next section and repeats the process, until player reaches G.

**Note:** This section can only be completed in stealth because if the player is detected the hostages are killed. All surfaces are climbable in this stage.

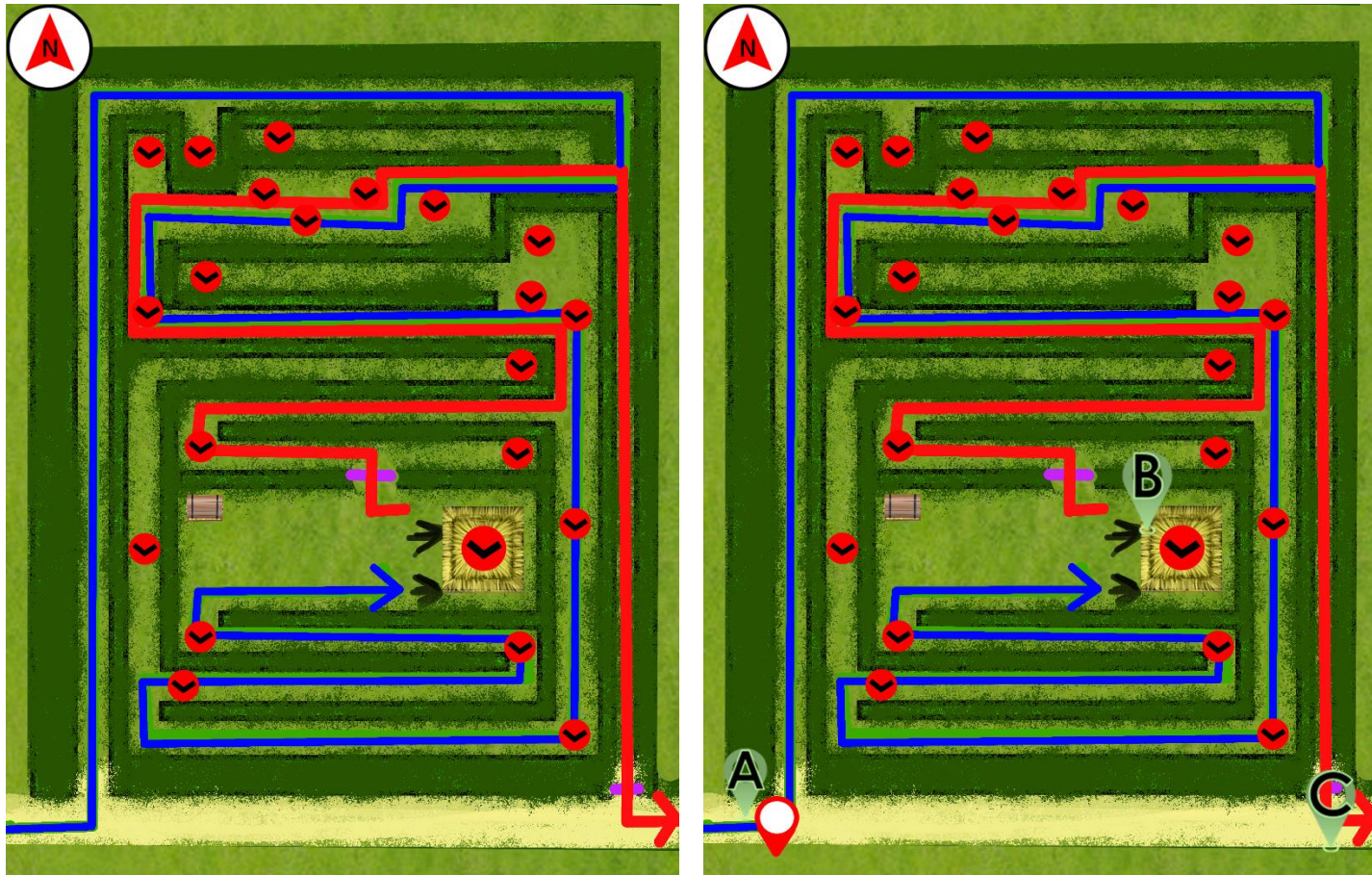
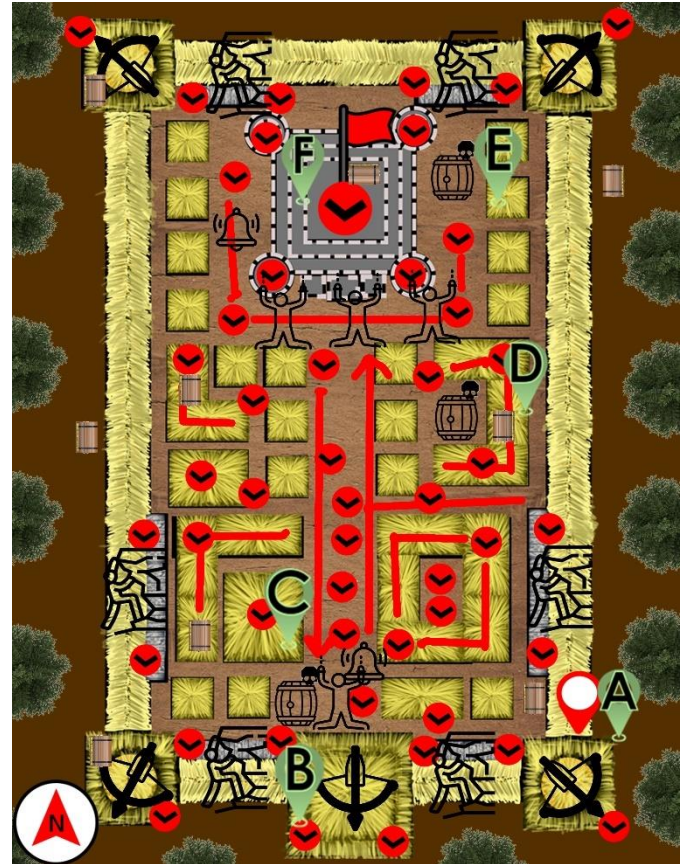


Figure 10: Map of Baba Yaga's Lair

- A) The player begins side quest.
- B) Player kills enemies and reaches Baba Yaga's house on chicken fingers.
- C) Player defeats Baba Yaga, picks up the invisibility cloak from the chest, then battles monsters until they reach the end.

**Note:** This section can only be completed in combat because it's a labyrinth and there is nowhere to hide. The purple lines shows hidden paths that can be entered only with an invisibility cloak.



- A) The player begins the section of the quest.
- B) Player kills enemies from the top first from any approach (Stealth/Combat).
- C) Player then can poison a barrel of water to assassinate many enemies at once, save the hostages, loot some treasure and continue moving on. In the rest of the level, the player repeats similar objectives, until the player reaches step F.
- F) The player fights the boss and defeats them.

**Note:** This section can be completed in stealth or combat mode to promote player agency. All surfaces are climbable inside the Cossack stronghold.

Figure 11: Map of Cossack stronghold (to the top and right)

