



A Minecraft adventure map

Made by

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Why make this small book?

I have always really been into game design. Creating something well-crafted is just something I enjoy doing. Then, some time ago, I got to play “The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild”. It was and still is one of the best games I have ever played. And after some time is discovered that there is a book about the game made by its developers called “Creating a champion”. This book has 433 pages full background information about the game and lots of early concepts, which never made it into the game. I remember fondly how much I enjoyed reading through this book and with “Making of – The Greenhouse Soul Spawners” I want to give other people, who share my love for game design and/or behind the scenes material, the ability to get some enjoyment out of reading through this (really small) book.

Minecraft Dungeons – The inspiration

In September of 2019, the first trailer for a new Minecraft Spin-of, called Minecraft Dungeons aired. I remember that I was pretty excited about it. It just felt really fitting to connect the exploration and fighting mechanics of Minecraft and to turn them into a small spin-of game. Just like Minecraft: Story Mode did.



But on the other side, dungeon crawler games in the spirit of Diabolo were nothing I had ever played before. I forgot about the game until release and even after Minecraft Dungeons released, I did not pick it up. Then, in March of 2021, I finally decided to look into it. I started watching a Let's Play and enjoyed it. But I also realized that it's not quite my game in terms of gameplay. And so, to this day, I have never actually played Minecraft Dungeons.

Wait, you did not like the game and yet you made an adventure map about it?

Kind of. I enjoyed the (small) story the game had to offer and all the things which were added to the world of Minecraft. Things like the arch illager, locations, new mobs and such. I wanted to show my enjoyment of a game I never played by making an adventure map about it. Weird, I know. But hey, I think it turned out nice :D The adventure map is supposed to play during the

beginning events of Minecraft Dungeons, while the other heroes are out fighting the forces of the arch illager directly.

The setting

My first goal was to figure out a setting for the map. I did not want to remake an existing setting from Minecraft Dungeons, as that would have been not as interesting as adding a new one. My first idea was to make it take place in an enormous woodland mansion. But I scrapped that idea. Instead, I recycled an old idea I had for an adventure map I never made, back in 2017. I hopelessly overtook myself with this map and never even created a world for it or gave it a name. But I had gathered a lot of ideas. One of which was list of dungeons scattered over the map, which the player would have visited over the course of the story. The first entry on that list read the following:

Overgrown Greenhouses:

- *ceiling has holes in it, which are filled with glass*
- *lots of plants*
- *multilayer greenhouses*

This is what I decided to do, as it was unlike everything I had ever encountered before in a video game. The closest was probably a section from the 2002 game “Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets” for the Play Station 1. There the player had to lead Harry through the herbology class greenhouses of Hogwarts.



Figure 1: Screenshot from the Play Station 1 video game “Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets”, released in 2002.

To me it always felt more like the greenhouses were located underground, given that all the windows were not see-through due to the technical limitations back in 2002. Although there are notable differences, I think one can see certain similarities between this setting and the one from the adventure map.

The first line listed on the original idea list suggested to fill up the holes in the ceiling with glass. I originally had it like this in the map for the first few rooms, but I decided to get rid of it. In the original map it would have served to keep the player from stumbling into the dungeon from within the main island map, but this was not necessary in this case, which is why I removed it. I think it looks a lot better with any obstruction of the sky.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

I know, technically this is a quote for waste management. But it also fits the way I made this adventure map really well (I'm talking about the 3Rs' here, not the waste management part :D). Something which has happened to me countless time, is that I had a good idea for an adventure map, started working on it and then got bored after a few weeks or so and then halted development indefinitely. With this map, I wanted to change that. I said to myself: No custom made models, textures, sounds and no longer than 15 minutes. And despite what the final map actually looks like (Hint: It has none of the four mentioned things), I actually stuck to this notion until I finished building about 80 % of the map. After that I was sure that I would finish the map and so I started adding things. Most of the custom models used are recycled from other projects I made. The most notable one would be an unreleased adventure map called "Skylanders Highlands".



Figure 2: Screenshot from the Minecraft adventure map "Skylanders Highlands", which, as of now, has not been released. The "[Decorative Fur Rugs](#)" datapack I released was actually made for this map.

The name has nothing to do with the Skylanders franchise, as I started development years ago, before I knew this franchise existed. But I really like the name of it and so I stuck with it. As one can see in Figure 2, I copied certain aspects from this work-in-progress map over to “The Greenhouse Soul Spawners”. Mainly the custom models of the statues, the big villager statues, which can be seen during the fight for the second Larriara tree at the end of the map, as well as the general “quartz and yellow stuff” building style for ancient constructions. Something like this significantly cuts down the production time of a map (or a game in general).

The second thing was to keep the map short. 15 minutes was the goal, but I underestimated just how much time a fighting heavy playstyle actually adds to the game. Which is why it ended up being around 45 minutes long if one takes its time and looks at the scenery in the map.

The Larriara trees

The concept of a tree yielding some magical fluid was inspired by the 2009 video game for the Play Station 2 called “Uncharted 2: Among Thieves”. There, the protagonist discovers a tree that yields fluid which makes one immortal. I took this concept and integrated it into the quasi-lore of Minecraft.



Figure 3: Screenshot from the 2009 video game “Uncharted 2: Among Thieves”. This is where the inspiration for the Larriara trees came from.

There is theory about soulsand, which states that it actually contains the souls of dead creatures. The addition of the soul speed enchantment and especially the small soul-freeing particles produced by this enchantment are what led me to the concept of a now extinct tree, which grew in the nether in soulsand valley biomes and produced a viscous, sticky fluid. That fluid poured over soulsand would activate the soulsand, which could then be used to dissolve mobs and force their souls into empty spawner cages, where they could be duplicated indefinitely. This process is hinted at near the end of the first Larriara tree room. The entire concept is actually an explanation for why there are spawners all over the map.

The word “Larriara” does not mean anything, which is intentional. Originally, I wanted to call them “Animaea trees”, from the Latin term “*anima mea/meus*”, which means “my soul”. But this was a term which was already in use for other things, and I did not want to draw any unwanted connections to real-world stuff.

Also, I could not quite get behind the concept of destroying the last existing specimen of a now extinct species by blowing it to pieces, which is why I added the sapling at the end. Plus, it has the upside of getting the player to think about the lore of the map a bit more and how the depicted events might continue.

Early development and cut content

Given that I pretty much knew what I wanted to make, I didn’t cut much content from the map. But a few ideas still ended up unused.

Mobs drop potions

In Minecraft Dungeons, mobs can sometimes drop potions. I wanted to add this to the map to, but never did so in order to have more control over the difficulty curve of the map. The potions in the map are consumed instantly because otherwise, players would just hold onto them and never use them until the map is already over, thinking they might need them later.

Blowing up the second Larriara tree

The final fight for the second Larriara tree went through some conceptual redesigns on how to destroy the tree. Originally, I thought of using TNT Minecarts, but those tend to explode randomly when looked at from the wrong angle, which is why I did not use them. Then I wanted to use enormous versions of the explosive Larriara liquid barrels to blow up the supporting pillars of some greenhouse structure above the tree, to make said structure collapse onto the tree. I scrapped this idea, because one tree could not have reasonably yielded enough liquid to fill the four big barrels I had planned. The faucet the liquid comes out was added, so that the player could easily see what was inside the barrels without looking into them first. The concept barrel seen in Figure 4 is actually still inside the map close to the room the last battle takes place in. This is also the



Figure 4: Concept for a big, explosive Larriara liquid barrel.

reason the Larriara liquid block was introduced, which can be seen inside the amulets the big villager statues at the end are holding.

Actual TNT cannons

Originally, I wanted to use actual Minecraft TNT canons one might build in survival mode for the final fight, instead of the piston ones used in the final version, which are powered by command blocks instead. But it would have been too complicated to figure out a good in-game reasons why the cannons seen in Figure 5 would reset, if the player would mess up the timing of one of these. Therefore, I went with a less vanilla style, command block powered version, which could not accidentally be messed up by the player.



Figure 5: Early design for the TNT canons which would be used in the final fight.

Evokers with hats

I wanted to add hats the evokers at the end would wear, similar to the turban style hats the enchanters in Minecraft Dungeons wear. But I scrapped this idea, as it didn't quite feel right and would have added more development time than necessary.

A big ocean at the end

Originally, I planned to add a small port at the end of the map, where the player would get into a boat and would sail off into the distance, in order to end the map. But that would have been a lot of effort to build and given that I wanted to keep the map short, I scrapped the idea and went for a cave design, similar to the one at the beginning of the map.

And there you have it ...

A bit of background information about a small adventure map I made. I hope you enjoyed reading this (really) small book. Have a nice day :D