



FAR: Lone Sails Analysis  
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# FIRST IMPRESSIONS

- *FAR: Lone Sails* was created by developers of the company Okomotive, based in Switzerland. It could be considered a post-apocalyptic adventure title.
- There was very little context to the game and its opening scene, which found the central character reflecting at a makeshift gravesite or memorial. We then traveled through a barren tundra, with dried-up lakes.
- From the beginning, *Lone Sails* featured simple instructions. Players could move to the left and right with page keys, as well as jump around the terrain with the space bar or page-up key. Items and gadgets could be picked up, moved, and generally used with the V key.



First scene,  
memorial in  
lower left

# LONE SAILOR & VESSEL

- The central character is a small figure in a red cloak or cape, not unlike Red Riding Hood. She usually signifies travel, and is a universally-known fable.
- To move around the environment more quickly, players learned to operate their vehicle. It was half-sailboat and half-tractor trailer, which added to the game's "steampunk" theme.
- The ship seemed easy to use at first, but it became very complicated as we progressed.

Pre-sail, start of game



With sail near the end

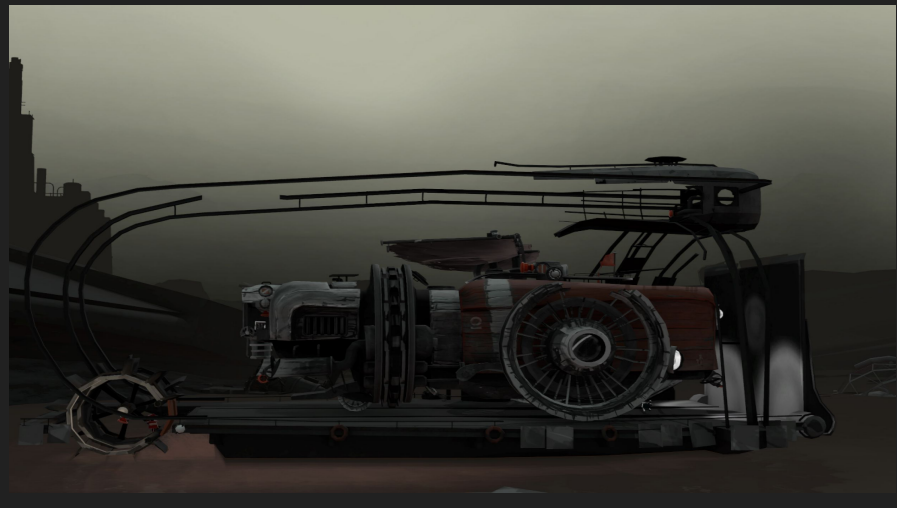
- There were many different levers and objects in the rover. Each had its own purpose in moving the ship. These could be "pushed" up, left, and right with the page keys.
- Additionally, there were gauges that showed the working status of each section. Storms, plus man-made complexes/ruins made it almost impossible to protect the ship.





# STYLE AND SOUND

- *Lone Sails* was animated in dark and neutral tones. It was very lonely playing through these gray landscapes.
- Green mountainside in the area called “Blue Isles”, with a couple of sunrises and sunsets provided vibrant natural colors. These were literal breaths of fresh air from the depressed setting we had been traveling through.
- During these scenes, the music became serene. Violins played as the clouds changed colors and the sun rose against haze.
- Other sections of *Lone Sails* were completely silent, enunciated only by random clangs of the vessel. The machine itself almost became a character, sounding out when it malfunctioned, broke down, or crashed.
- Sound effects littered the game, but they sounded extremely realistic. Many of them blended into the music, but some were manipulated into transition between scenes.





## TRAPS AND PITFALLS

- While chugging along in the vessel, we became stuck at “dead ends”, including metal walls, deep waters, mud, broken bridges, and thunderstorms that destroyed entire parts of the ship.
- Also, if players weren’t watching their speed or surroundings, they could further damage the ship from slamming into these barriers.
- The sail of the vehicle could similarly be crushed under low objects, if it wasn’t put down, and so on.
- After understanding how to push the ship’s breaks, it became a lot easier to stop short.

# SOLVING PUZZLES

- Leaving long instructions out of the game was both an aesthetic and a narrative choice.
- Every part of the gameplay was a sort of mini-challenge; even gathering resources to keep the ship running took a fair bit of effort and memory.
- The randomly available resources- from crates, to lamps, magazines, barrels, and even flammable oil- became necessary to memorize for their memory levels.
- The game gave tidbits of direction as we played, forcing us to analyze every scene for buttons or generators that could free the ship.
- Sometimes, the “camera direction” helped us understand locations of solutions in *Lone Sails*. As scenes zoomed in, we knew that the solution had to be in the smaller section. Similarly, background music would become more dramatic, or quiet altogether.



- These puzzles required the player to interact with the entire environment, and leave no stone unturned in their search for extras.





Players had to use the sail, along with other parts of the vessel, as tool to reach solutions



- Red buttons were often the trick towards opening doors and gates.

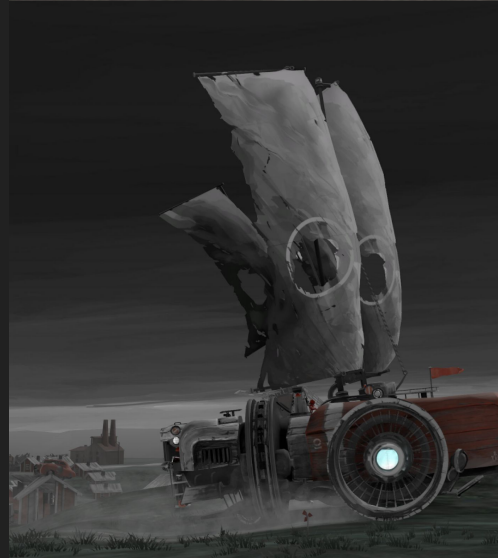


- Random items were thrown in as distractions, but some (like the mailbox) were useful as the story progressed. Sometimes, energy sources must be moved to get into rooms locked by deactivated generators.



# ECOLOGICAL REFERENCES

- *Lone Sails* was set in a later time in our “Anthropocene”, the harrowing age of mankind’s influence.
- There were signs that society was turning towards green forms of energy, like wind turbines in the background and even the use of sails on our vehicle to save resources.
- However advanced humans had become, they still couldn’t save the majority of their ecosystems.



- There were few forms of life to be found in *Lone Sails*, save for the occasional squawking of seagulls. At one point, the vessel traveled through herds of yak, which rushed from the racket.
- Animals were concentrated around human settlements; most of the game, the only figures across the landscape were shells of old ships, dilapidated buildings, and tree-less countryside.



- Throughout their journey, players could unlock achievements.
- One directly referenced *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, which took an entirely different take on the demise of humanity.
- When players used 42 items in the resource chute, we obtained the “42” achievement. In *Hitchhiker's*, this was said to be the “answer to life, the universe and everything”.



- When it comes to environmental issues, the public has hundreds of objections or questions, yet a majority fail to take true action. Sometimes, labor is wasted on philosophical thinking, when it's important to face the reality of Earth's dilemmas. The answer is that there is no answer; technologies such as sails and turbine power cannot simply bring ecosystems back from extinction.

# THE MESSAGE OF *LONE SAILS*

- Much of *Lone Sails* was quiet; its central character never spoke a word, and players were left alone with the hollowed-out environment. The game painted an accurate picture of Earth's landscape after humans had withered it down, a time which may be closer than we want to believe.
- Still, there were signs of hope and change dotting *Lone Sails*. Many ecologically aware ideals were highlighted through the vessel and landscapes.
- However positive even small changes may be, such as adopting wind turbines and sustainable farming, or equipping cars with a mast, *Lone Sails* reminded us that the Earth is far from healing. It was a reflection on our progress, and also of our continuing mistakes.



## Works Cited:

1. Okomotive. *FAR: Lone Sails*. Mixtvision, 17 May 2018.
2. Jennings, Garth. *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Story by Douglas Adams. United Kingdom. 28 April 2005.