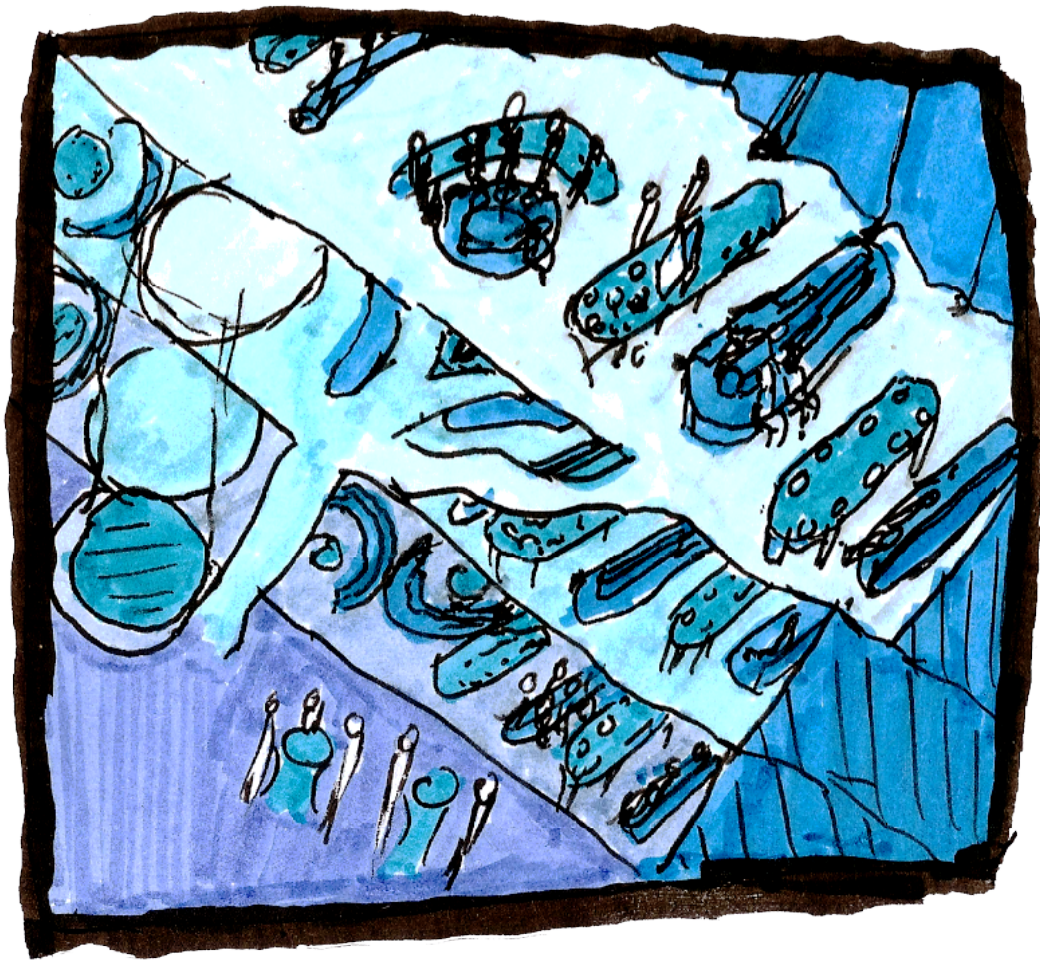


# Terra's Heritage devlog

Development notes for **Terra's Heritage: the conference**. *Choose and roll to stop a massacre – if you can.* A small game for [Spring Lisp Game Jam 2026](https://springlispgamejam.com/).



I decided to build a game based on the story of the [RaumZeit Technophob Flyerbook](#) from the German Free RPG Day 2024.

You can **try the current state** on [arnebab.itch.io/terras-heritage](https://arnebab.itch.io/terras-heritage) or [dryads-wake.lw6.org/terras-heritage](https://dryads-wake.lw6.org/terras-heritage).

Written in [Guile Wisp](#) using [Enter Three Witches](#) as engine.

The source code is at <https://hg.sr.ht/~arnebab/terras-heritage>

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## 1 Day 1: adjusted looks, prepared infrastructure

Spent the first day mostly working on infrastructure and style adaptations.

About four hours of hacking done:

- The colors match the planned plot.
- All template dialogues (title, prologue, menu) are adjusted to match the game. Will likely change.
- It's set up on [dryads-wake.lw6.org/terras-heritage](https://dryads-wake.lw6.org/terras-heritage). (give it a try!)
- The source is adapted to the basename terras-heritage.
- There's an itch.io page linked to the game jam (release early, release often): <https://arnebab.itch.io/terras-heritage>
- Basic creativecommons assets are imported and added to the copyright info.

*[2026-05-15 Fr]*

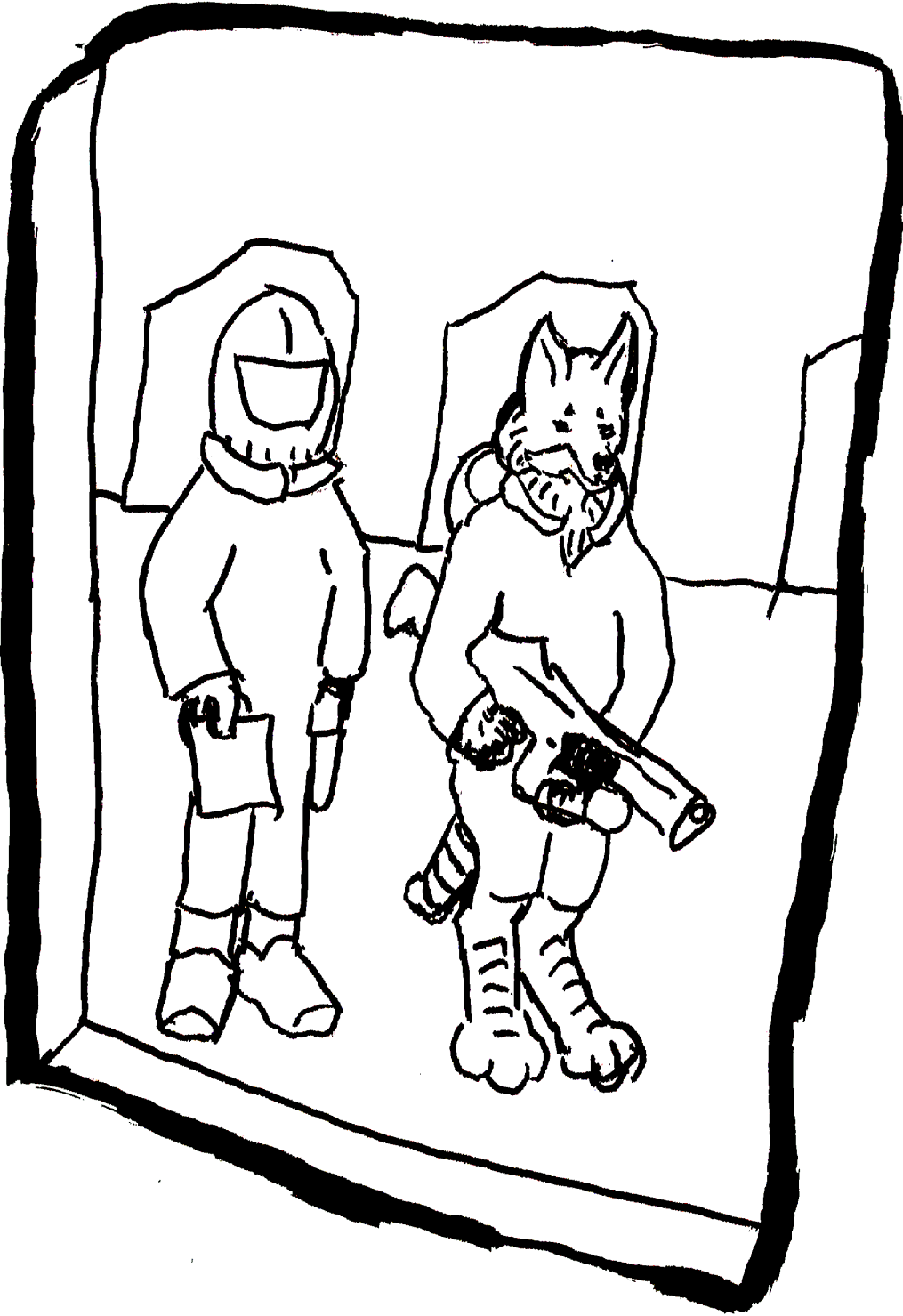
## 2 Day 2: stillstand

Nothing got done except for some thoughts. Sad for a saturday.

*[2026-05-16 Sa]*

## 3 Day 3: sketching

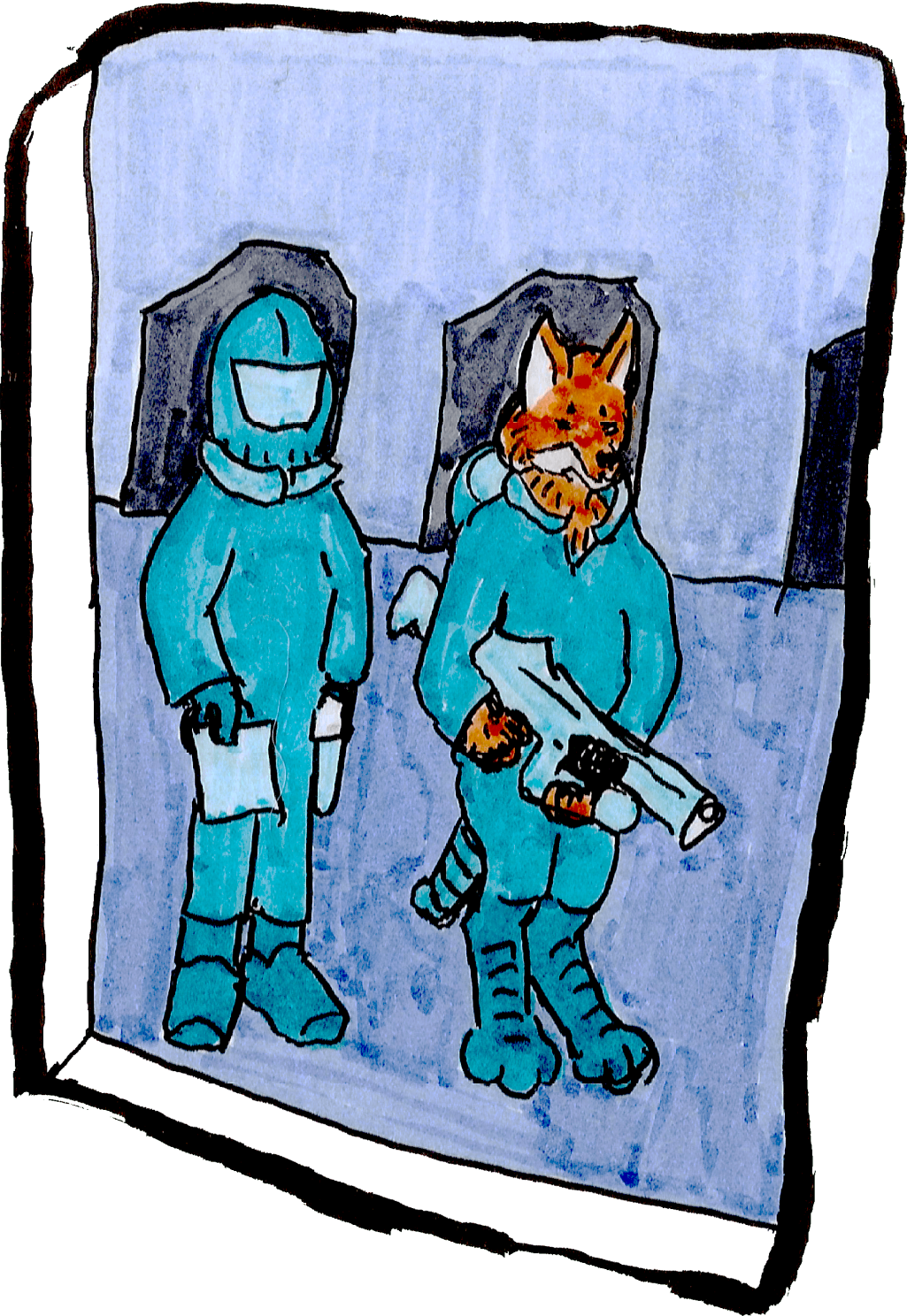
I got the lineart for the sketch of the entry to the docks done.



It helped me get a better idea how I want to combine my own sketches with images by [Katharsisdrill](#) (page is not suitable for kids or squeamish people) which are much higher

quality but only include two that match the topic (and many that are far to crass for the project).

In color:



*[2026-05-17 So]*

## **4 Day 4: found the matching feeling**

Found a way how my sketches don't seem out of place: it's wrapped in diary entries, and those use my sketches.

Because they are diary entries.

Of a kind of innocent reptiloid ex-diplomat.

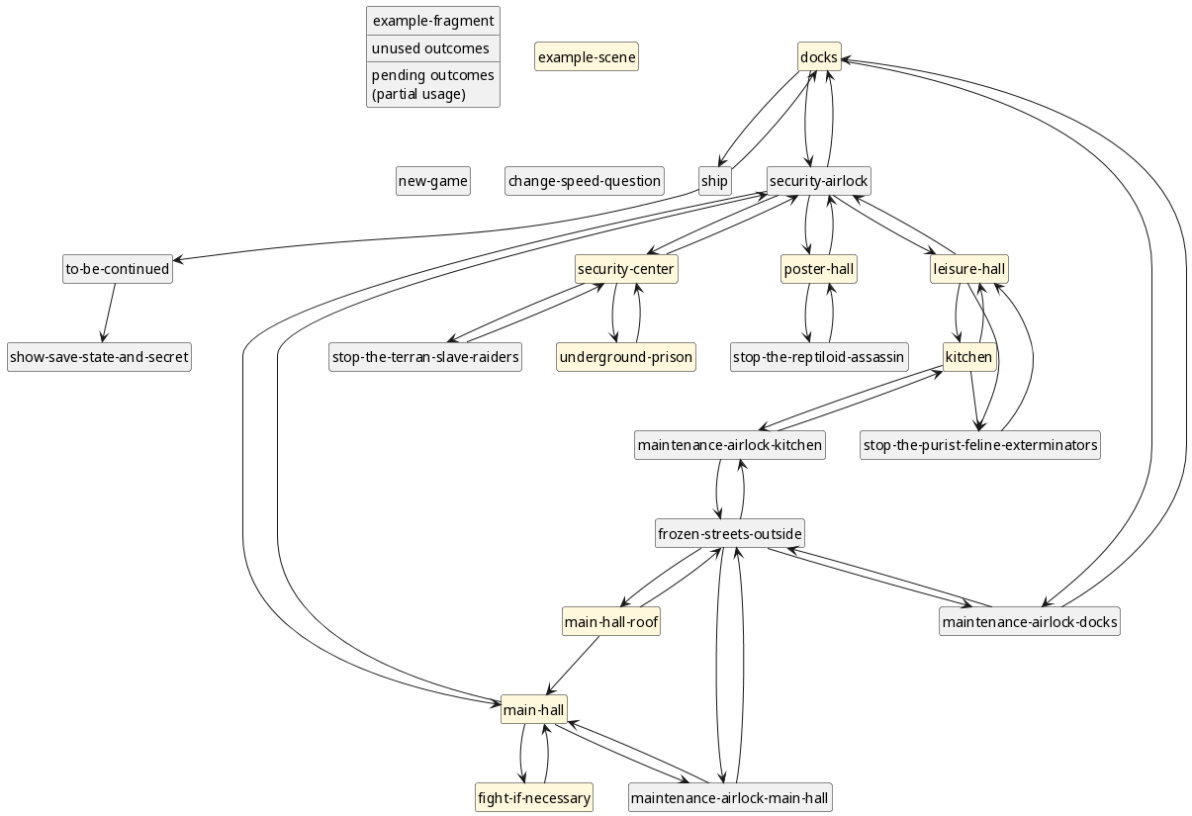
Still only the first scene, but the feeling comes together. Tomorrow I have to finally write out the planned plot steps to flesh out. I want to make it non-linear with a maximum of three paths to take. Maybe two.

*[2026-05-18 Mo]*

## **5 Day 5: prepared the plot**

I wrote the structure for the plot: all scenes that I think I will need, along with their connections: mostly possible transitions between locations.

This is the definition of spoilers, so if you still want to play the game unspoiled, skip the next page.



The plotgraph is generated directly from the code whenever I call `./terras-heritage.w --test`.

You can play the current state at [dryads-wake.lw6.org/terras-heritage](http://dryads-wake.lw6.org/terras-heritage), but it doesn't step into the plot yet. Instead it does:

```
if #f
  docks state
  to-be-continued state

:-)
```

To plan, I just generated stubs for the scenes that only call all other scenes you could reach from them, because the codewalker I use for plot analysis turns that into the plotgraph. Example:

```
define : ship state
  Enter : Pilot :profile :ychra
        Dear Diary :profile narrator

  ;; ...
  if #f
    docks state
    to-be-continued state

define-scene : docks state
  maintenance-airlock-docks state
  security-airlock state
  ship state
```

*Next step:* fleshing out the scenes one by one.

Aside: I am an [Emacs](#) user, so naturally I didn't type out the stubs but created a quick [yasnippet](#) via `M-x yas-new-snippet` so I can create each stub via `des C-TAB`. The snippet:

```
# -*- mode: snippet -*-
# name: define-step
# key: des
# expand-env: ((yas-indent-line nil))
# --
define : $1 state
  . state

$0
```

*[2026-05-19 Di]*

## 6 Day 6: music and accessibility

Asked [Robert Kingett](#) for tips on keeping a game accessible when adding music.

There's already a proposed WAI Accessibility Conformance Testing rule for that: [Audio or video element avoids automatically playing audio](#).

It brings together two existing rules: If your audio plays automatically:

- [have a control mechanism near the start of the page](#), or
- [keep it shorter than 3 seconds](#).

And from Robert himself: **Don't make it too loud.**

Since the [volume property](#) is not supported in Safari, I start with music disabled and there's a menu entry to toggle music, as well as a button in the initial information line for blind people and a volume element after the text controls.

I added music from Opengameart ([The Last Lights of Hope](#) and [City of Rain](#)) so you can already try the result:

<https://dryads-wake.1w6.org/terras-heritage/>

Either click on the audio element to start it or choose "toggle music" from the game menu. Choose the prologue to get a change in music.

*[2026-05-20 Mi]*

## 7 Day 7: minimal polish

Only got some polish done yesterday. Still need to write the story.

Plan until monday morning:

- Start into the actual plot with the option to bribe the guards (and different results)
- Complete the simplest path through the plot, from start to finish, no branches
- Expand choices (e.g. at the start: flirt with the guard) with outcomes and write out the resulting story right away to make the plot non-linear and branching

3 days (only a few hours each) remain.

*[2026-05-21 Do]*

## 8 Day 8: job and family and being terrified and procrastinating

Nothing done on the game today. The morning started with „Little sticky hands Bossy man calls Taiwan a great bargaining chip“.

The rest of the day was dominated by work for my job, doing stuff for the family, talking on Mastodon, and watching random videos (though I'm not sure why; maybe I hoped for some good news to offset the morning).

*[2026-05-22 Fr]*

## 9 Day 9: first scene works, thoughts about zero downtime update

The story is finally progressing. You can play the first scene. But time is running low: there's still a lot of plan and little time.

The code is restructured to enable continuous delivery: you can already play the game and whenever I finish a scene, than scene can be played, too.

Let's see how far I get.

One part I found missing now: I don't have a zero-downtime update path. When I update, running games are broken. To fix that, I'd need a tentative-quit command which does not quit instantly but only quits once there are no active game sessions. Then precompile, `pkill -3`, and start again would enable me to use a load balancer to manage the zero-downtime handover.

The simplest way would be to configure multiple upstreams (I already do that for dryads wake) and set each of them in turn to `down state` in the nginx config. But that would be an awfully manual process.

For now that's put on hold: back to the story.

*[2026-05-23 Sa]*

## 10 Day 10: uploaded embed, plot simplified and finished

Uploaded a html file with an iframe as embed so the game is shown as playable on itch.io: [arnebab.itch.io/terras-heritage](https://arnebab.itch.io/terras-heritage)

You can now run it right-away there, or use it directly on [dryads-wake.lw6.org/terras-heritage](http://dryads-wake.lw6.org/terras-heritage).

Small change, big effect.

And I simplified and completed the plot:

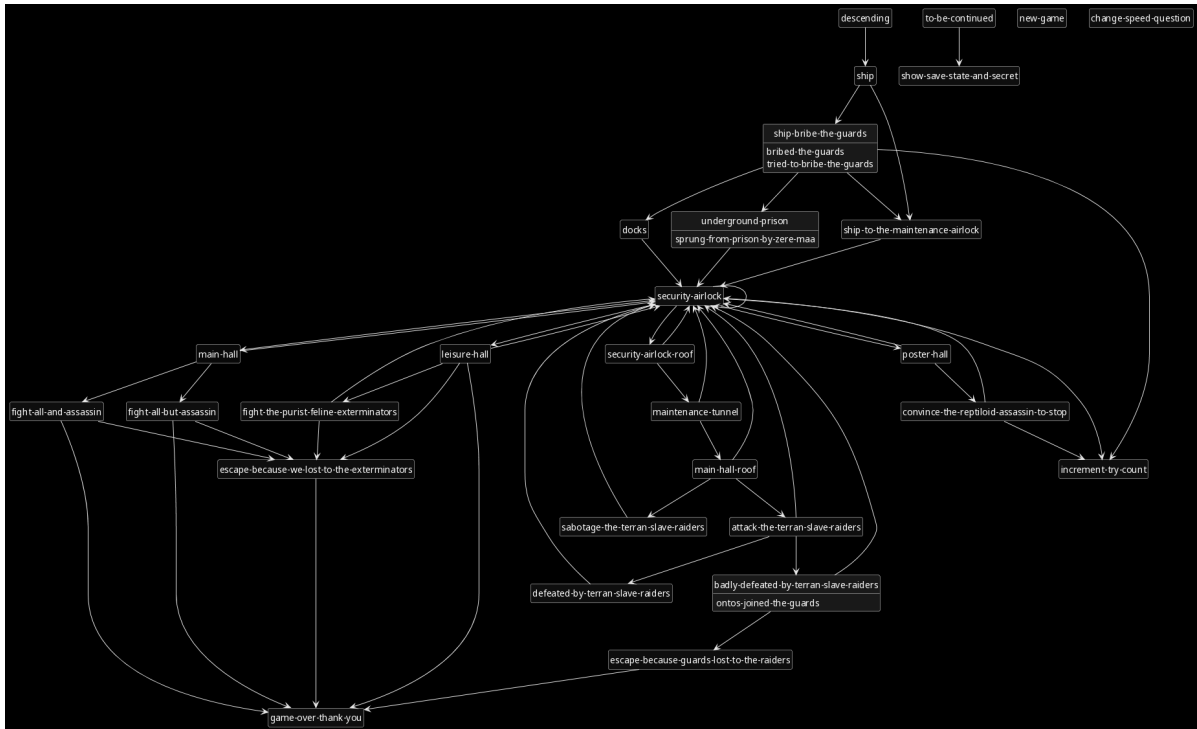
- replaced the frozen streets outside scene by a short description
- removed the security center by asking the guards for help in a short narration
- wrote all remaining planned scenes

All scenes added up, the plot now has about 5000 words, roughly 44000 characters, so it's roughly 2/3rd of the length of a novelette, but the plot you'll actually read will be 1000 to 1500 words, at the lower limit of a short story.

The plotgraph is now white on black, because that made it easier for me to work with it.

Here's the updated plotgraph:

This is the definition of spoilers, so if you still want to play the game unspoiled, skip the next page.



You can [comment on Terra's Heritage in the Spring Lisp Game Jam](#) – if you do, please also try some of the [other submissions!](#)

And [Happy Towel Day!](#)

*[2026-05-25 Mo]*