Making Your World Work -- a conversation, scripting, and atmosphere introduction

The goal of this tutorial is to build on the last tutorial (Making Your World) by fleshing out the world you've created and making it a bit more compelling. This tutorial assumes that you've finished the basic Aurora Toolset tutorial, the ScriptEase tutorial, and the Making Your World tutorial.

In this tutorial, we will add a sign with some information, make some conversation with the Guardian, make a lever move, and add some atmosphere via lighting and sound.

The player is a wandering adventurer who happens upon a tower in the wilderness. Inside the tower, the player finds a friendly Guardian who tells the player about the magic levers. If they are pulled in the right order, the vault opens and the treasure may be obtained.

Getting Started

1) Open the Aurora Toolset.

2) Open LeverMagic1 and save it as "LeverMagic2" (using the "Save as" option under the "File" menu).

Scripting Inanimate Objects:

The Sign:

3) Select the "Countryside" area. In the "Paint Placeable Objects" tool, under "Standard, Penants & Signs" palette, choose one of the "Signposts" and "Edit Copy".

4) In the "Placeable Object Properties" window, change the name to "Welcome Sign", the tag to "welcomesign", and check the "Useable" checkbox then click "Ok".

5) Place the sign you just created in front of the tower and rotate it so that it faces the player start position. The screenshot below shows one possible location and orientation.
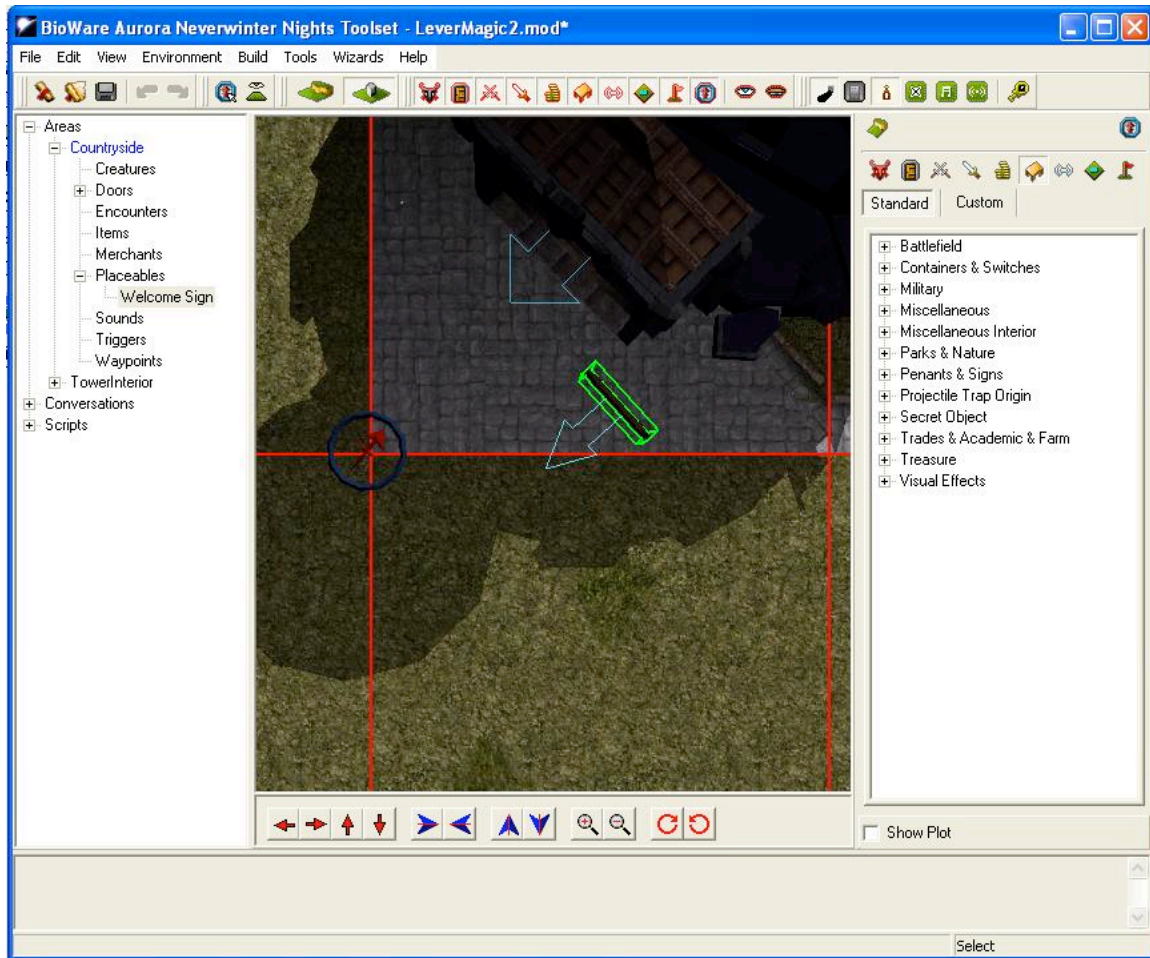
6) Save your module and close it.

7) Open your module in ScriptEase.

8) Create a New Specific Encounter-->Placeables-->Placeable use.

9) Under the "Description" tab, change the "Instance Name" to "Welcome Sign".

10) Under the "Placeable" tab, "Module Blueprint", pick the "Welcome Sign" you created in Aurora.

11) Expand the "Encounter" to show the "Situation: Use placeable - add actions".

12) By right-clicking on the "Situation", Add an Action-->Action Atom-->Text-->Make an object speak text.

13) Under the "Speaker" tab, "Select Object", choose "The Placeable" from the dropdown.

14) Under the "Text" tab, in the "Constant" textbox, put the following text (don't include the quotes):

"Welcome to the Tower of Three Levers. Treat them right and they will return the favour. Treat them wrong and they will return the favour. The Guardian will explain more."

Have a look at the screenshot to give you an idea of how ScriptEase should look at this point.
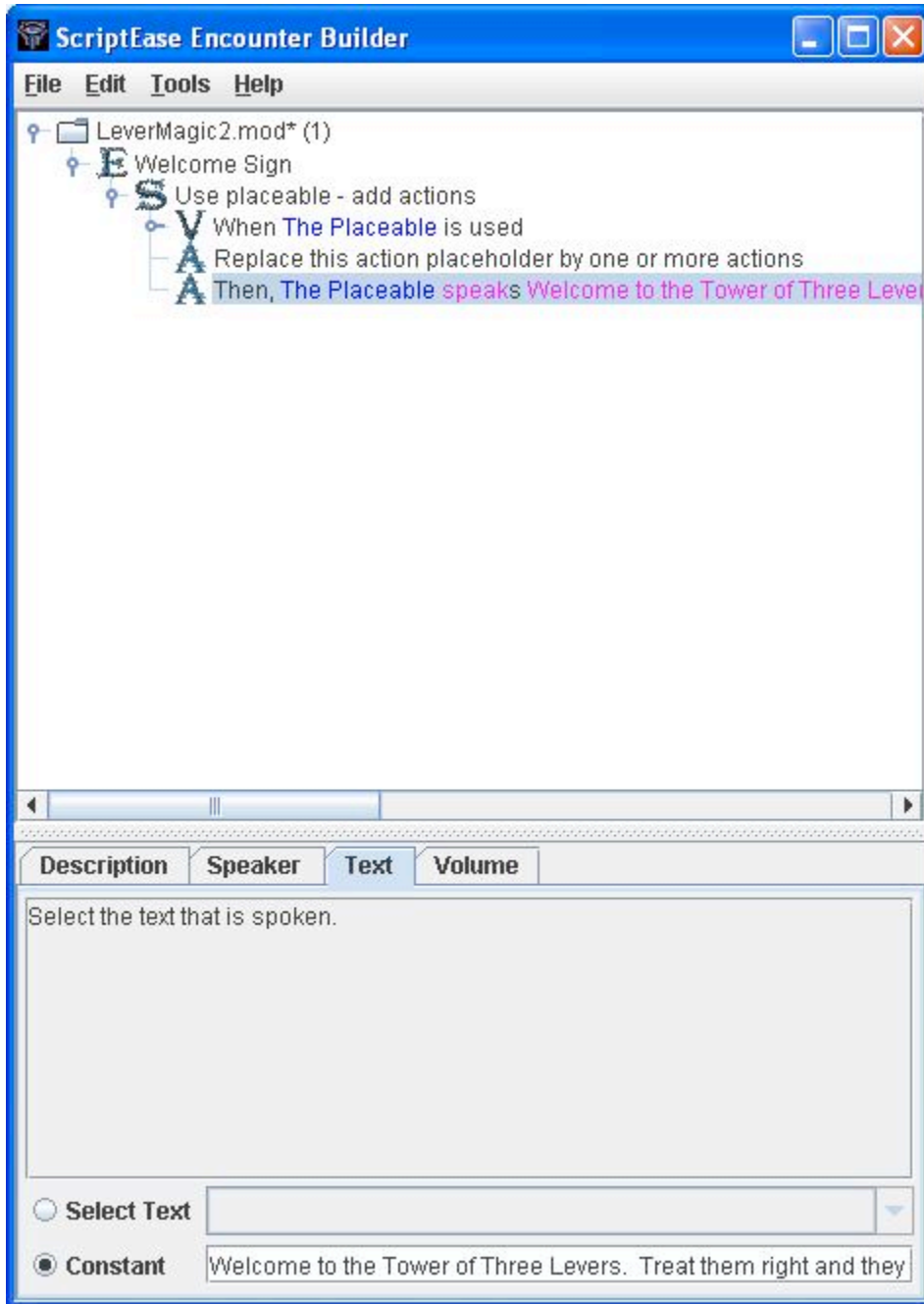
15) Save and Compile your module, close ScriptEase, and try it out in NWN. The text that the sign "displays" is not important as long as it gives the player some idea of what they're getting into. Since we've promised some information from the Guardian, let's give him some.

Conversation Basics:

The Guardian:

16) Open your module in Aurora and select the "TowerInterior" area.

17) Right-click on the Guardian and choose "Conversation" from the menu.

18) In the "Conversation Editor" window that opens, click the "Add" button: .

19) In the "Input Text" window, type the following:

"Welcome, <FirstName>. I am the Guardian. If you pull these levers in the right order, the vault door will open, and you can have some treasure."

When you've got all the text in, click "Ok".

20) "<FirstName>" is an indicator to AT that the PC's first name should be inserted there.

21) Click the "Save as" button: .

22) In the "Save Resource" window, change "Resource Name" to "guardianwelcome" and click "Save" to close the window. At this point, the "Conversation Editor" should look like the screenshot below.
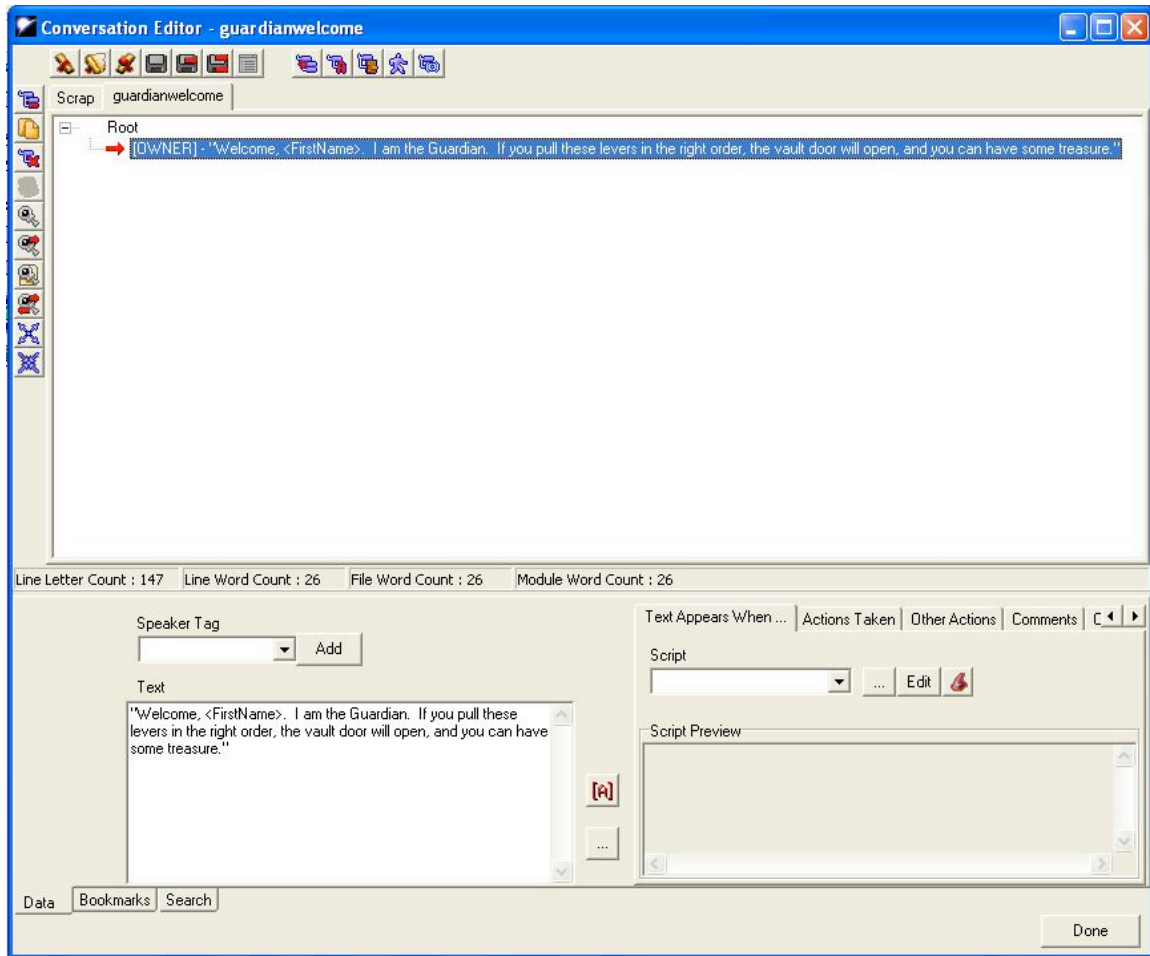
23) Save your module and try it out. You've created a very basic conversation in which the user is given some information, but they are unable to respond.

More Inanimate Objects:

The Levers:

24) At this point, your levers still don't do anything. For this tutorial, all we want them to do is react when the PC uses them. Close your module in Aurora and open it in SE.

25) Add a New Specific Encounter-->Placeables-->Placeable use.

26) Under the "Description" tab, change the "Instance Name" to "Lever #1 use".

27) Under "The Placeable" tab, "Module Blueprint", pick "Lever #1".

28) By right-clicking on the "Situation" (under the "Encounter" you've just created), choose Add an Action-->Action Atom-->Animations-->Animate a placeable object

29) Under the "Actor" tab in "Action" you've just created, Select Placeable-->The Placeable.

30) Under the "Animation" tab make sure that Constant-->Activate is selected (should be done by default). Now, ScriptEase should look like the screenshot below.
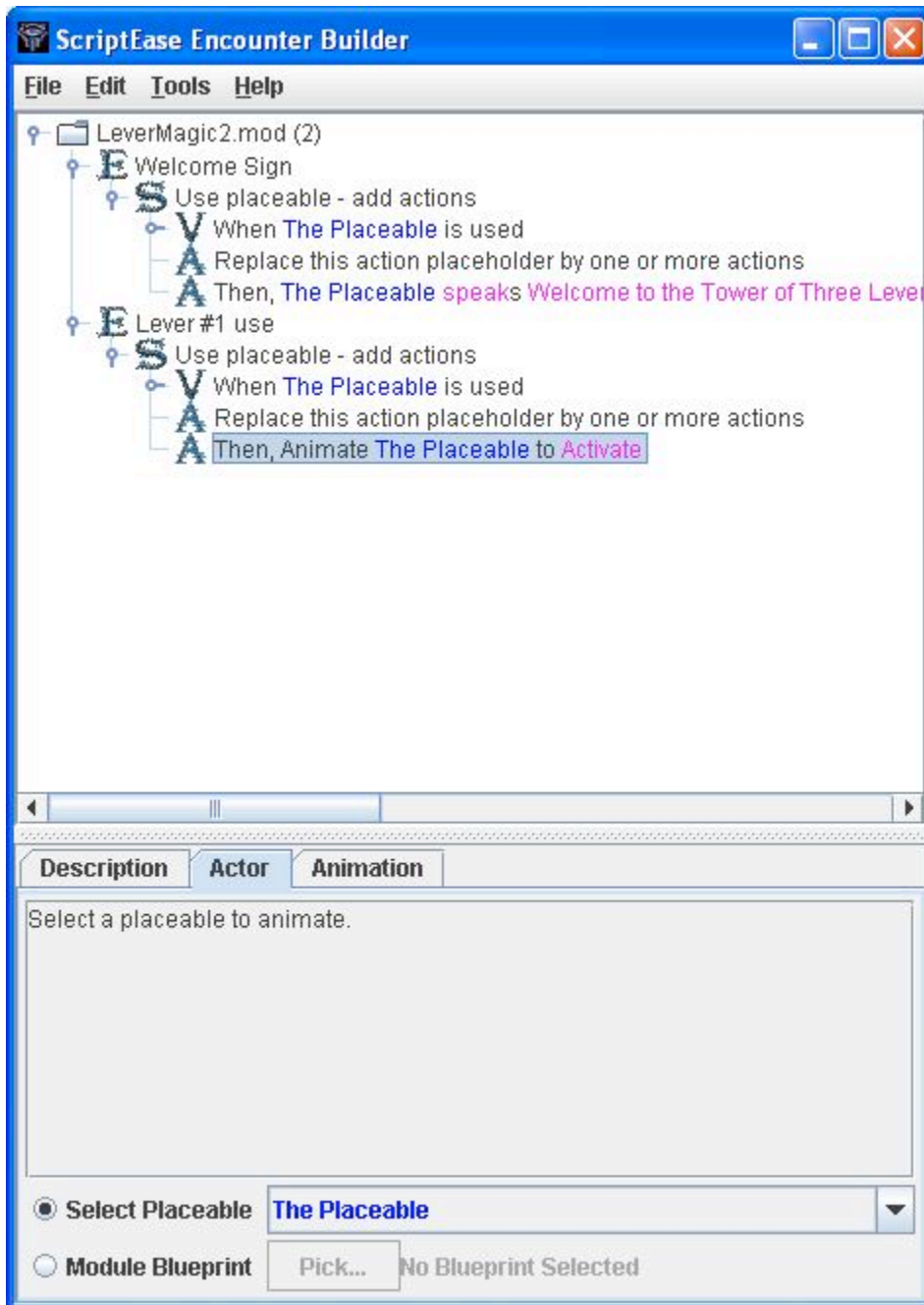
31) "Save and Compile" your module and try out your new lever! You may notice that only one of your levers is working and even the working lever is not really having an effect on the world. Fear not, we'll get to that in next tutorial.

Atmosphere:

Light up your life:

32) Open your module in Aurora again. Before we get going, make sure that you can see lighting affects in the "Area Viewer". You're looking for the "Use Area Lighting" button on the top toolbar. It looks like this: . It should be on by default, but it's good to check. Right-click on the "Countryside" area and choose "Properties" from the menu.

33) In the "Area Properties" window that opens, select the "Visual" tab. You should see that "Exterior Clear" is selected. This is the most generic lighting package, and represents a nice day outside. Choose "Exterior Dark" from the list and click "Apply".

34) You'll notice that the lighting in the area has changed quite a bit. Hopefully it should now reflect a nice evening outside. This is a start, but we've got a tower here with some treasure in it (well, not yet, but it will have some eventually), so maybe we should make it look a bit scarier. Still in the "Area Properties" window, click the "Customize Environment" button.

35) In the "Environment Options" window that opens, click on the coloured square next to the "Sun – Ambient Color" label.

36) This should bring up a simple window entitled "Color." Try a few of the colours here and compare them in the "Area Viewer" and while playing the module. The "Environment Options" window reflects a choice of "Navy" and should now look like this:
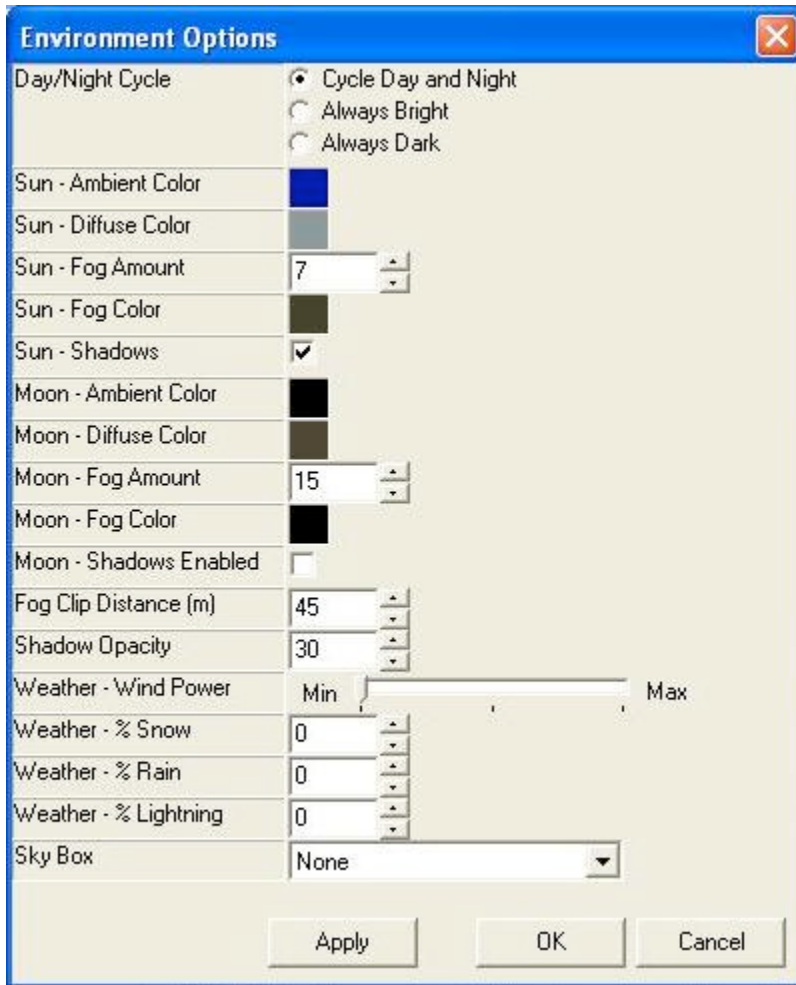
This little light:

37) We've done a pretty good job of making the area look a bit scarier, but we can do better. Where is the source of this "scariness"? In our case, we would like to highlight the tower so that it is very clear to the player where they should go next. To do this, we use tile lighting. First we'll need to select the tile we're interested in.

38) Using the "Select Terrain "tool (in the top toolbar, looks like this:), click on the Cloaktower. You should get four blue cubes that let you know that the whole Cloaktower has been selected. Since using blue cubes is new, here's a screenshot to show you what I mean. This is what your selected Cloaktower should look like.
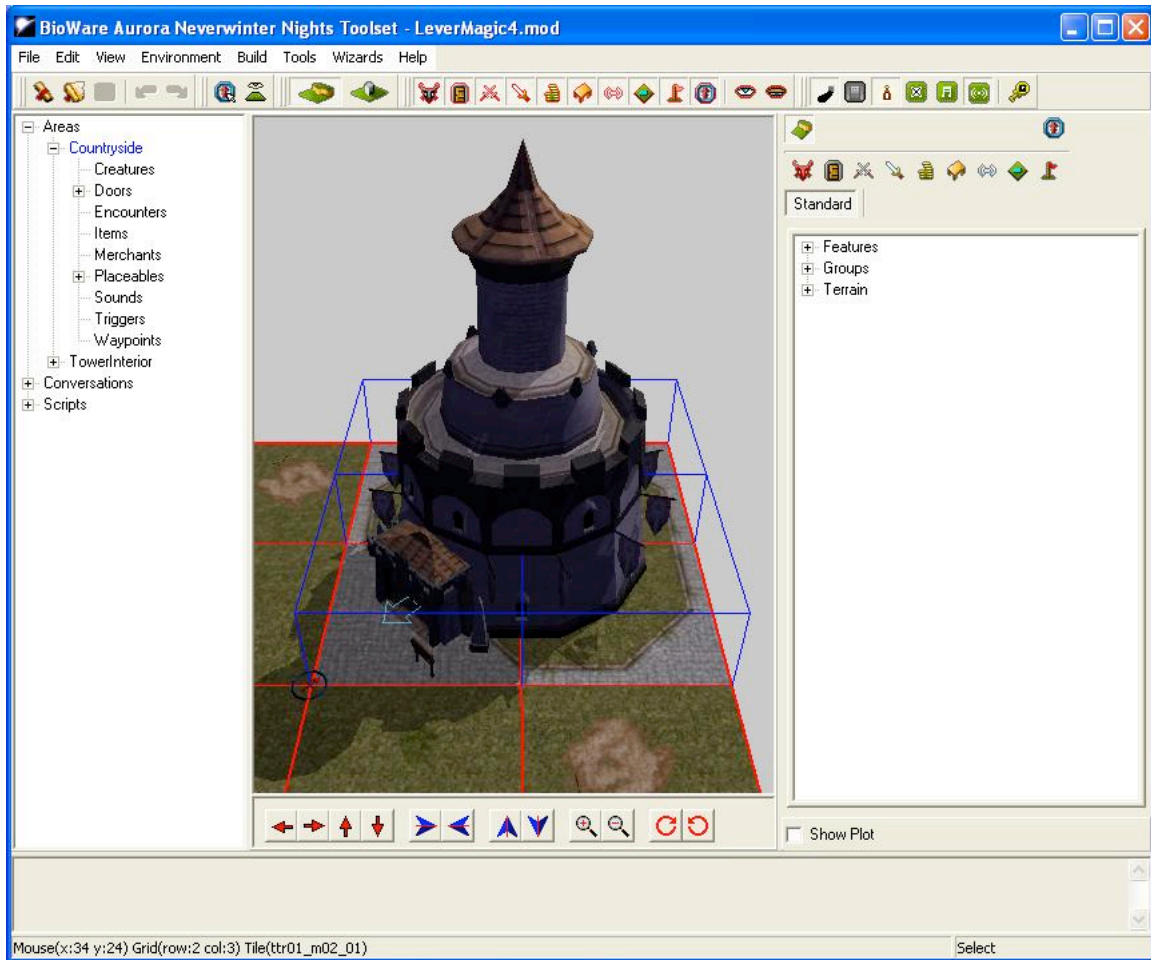
39) From here, it's fairly simple. Just right-click on your selected Cloaktower and choose "Tile Properties" from the menu.

40) In the "Tile Properties" window, click the coloured square next to the "Main Light 1" label.

41) In the "Select Color" window that opens, choose a light blue colour and click "Ok". Choose a dark blue for the "Main Light 2" colour in the same manner. Now, it should be clearer what the source of the "blueness" is. Save your module and have a look at it in NWN. Note that any area-level lighting changes will overwrite your tile-specific lighting choices so make sure that you set up your area lighting first. To make the tutorial screenshots easier to see, I changed my lighting back to the default values but feel free to keep yours with the "sinister" lighting. Speaking of screenshots, your "Tile Properties" window might look something like this one:
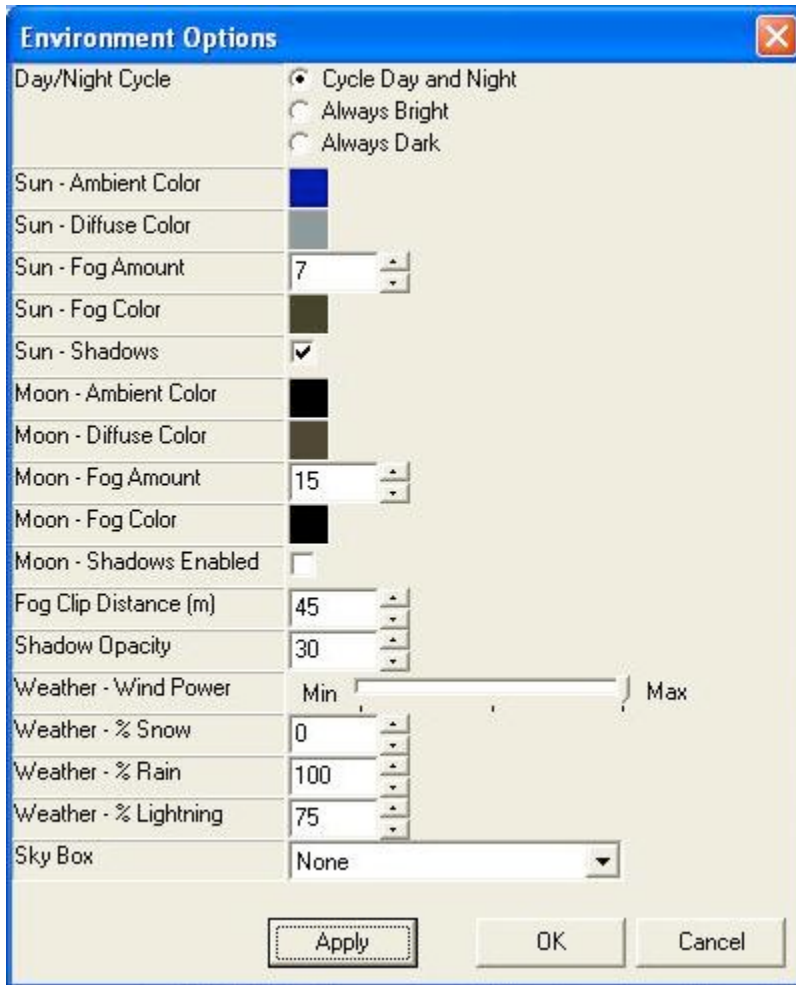
Looks like rain:

42) Another easy way to add a little atmosphere to your module is to mess with the weather. The default weather settings for our area are pretty tame, but we can fix that. Get back to the "Environment Options" window (right-click on the "Countryside" area, choose "Properties", and click the "Customize Environment" button), and adjust the weather forecast a little.

43) First, crank up the wind with the "Weather – Wind Power" slider. Move the slider to "Max", which will give us some nice howling wind.

44) Change the "Weather - % Rain" box to 100 and "Weather - % Lightning" to 75. This means that there will always be a thunderstorm in this area. Talk about ominous. This is how my "Environment Options" are set up.

Environment Options

Day/Night Cycle	⊙ Cycle Day and Night
	○ Always Bright
	○ Always Dark
Sun - Ambient Color	■
Sun - Diffuse Color	■
Sun - Fog Amount	7
Sun - Fog Color	■
Sun - Shadows	☑
Moon - Ambient Color	■
Moon - Diffuse Color	■
Moon - Fog Amount	15
Moon - Fog Color	■
Moon - Shadows Enabled	☐
Fog Clip Distance (m)	45
Shadow Opacity	30
Weather - Wind Power	Min ▭────── Max
Weather - % Snow	0
Weather - % Rain	100
Weather - % Lightning	75
Sky Box	None ▾

[Apply]   OK   Cancel

45) You can achieve some great affects with just by combining ambient lighting and weather. Some of these adjustments (like wind) provide an accompanying sound, but we can do more than that to customize how our world sounds.

Did you hear that?

46) Tuning your audio atmosphere is as simple as changing the lighting. It's done in the same place too. Right-click the "Countryside" area, choose "Properties", and click the "Audio" tab in the "Area Properties" window.

47) By clicking the dropdown box next to the "Ambient Sound, Day" label, you can see the many options we have to make our area spookier. Change both "Day" and "Night" sound to "Forest Night Scary." Have a listen to this ambient sound in NWN.

48) This step contains a few changes to the setup we've just done. This sort of tweaking is personal preference, but the changes are illustrative. These changes were made based on the following observations: the music sounded strange (didn't fit the mood) and the ambient sound wasn't loud enough. In Aurora, open the "Area Properties" window and choose the "Audio" tab (to get the "Area Properties" window, right-click on the area

you're interested in and choose "Properties" from the menu). Change both "Music, Day" and "Music, Night" to "(No Music Track)" as there are no tracks that fit our mood. Use the "Ambient Sound, Day Volume" slider to bring out the ambient sound (which does fit our mood). Put it at about 50% of the slider. Do the same with the "Night" volume. Your "Area Properties" window should now look like the following screenshot.
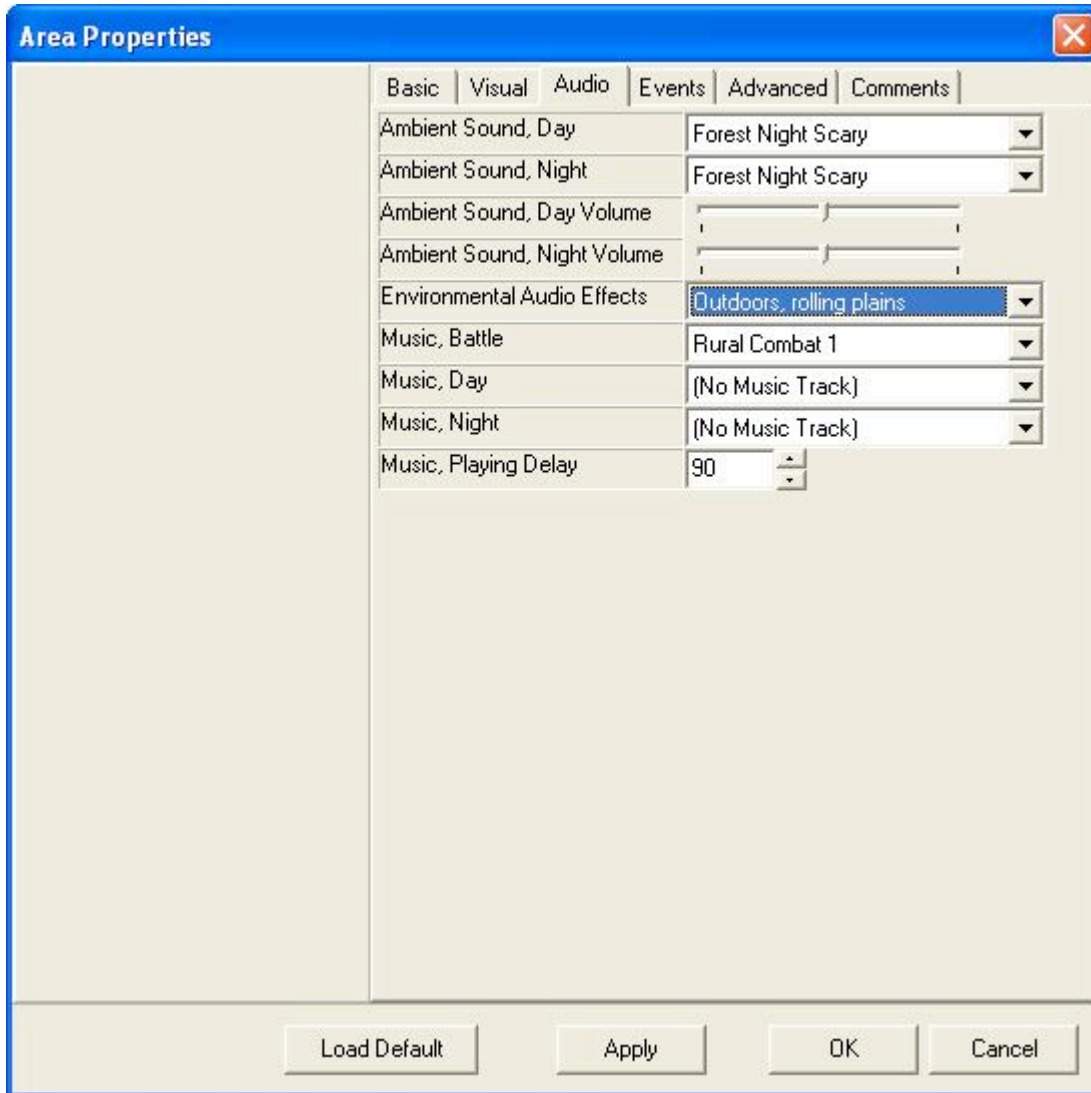
49) Both lighting and sound can do a lot to the atmosphere of your module, but it is possible to overdo it. Thoroughly test your light and sound additions and make sure to try different combinations until the mood is perfect.

Great work! You've just made your world a little more interactive. We'll make it even better in the next tutorial called Making Your World Interesting -- the advanced scripting and conversation tutorial.