

Level 2: University Ruins

Below Solura Island, in the foggy sea of the Dream World, lies the University Ruins, the second level of the game. The theme of the level is college, and the areas are drawn from Nilo's memories and experiences from that time, though somewhat more distorted and abstract than the first level. Deeper in the Dream World, the surroundings are no longer drawn from just Nilo's memories.

University Grounds

The bridge from Solura Path leads to a long, winding staircase, descending into the foggy sea, before ending in front of the entrance to the university. A large, imposing building, with a set of double doors that open into the entrance hall. Here, the player will face a scripted boss fight with the Counselor, being defeated and escaping into the entrance hall.

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- As a shadow-type enemy, the Counselor is too fast to be hit by the player, and the player will have no choice but to be defeated.
 - Show that Nilo resents the Counselor, having irrationally blamed them for not having helped him, and that he is still unable to face them.

Entrance Hall

Inside, the hall is large and open, with carpeted floors and high ceilings. A grand staircase leads to the second floor, though the door at the top is locked. Past the staircase is the hallway leading to the Collapsed Library. The hallway is initially orderly and symmetrical, full of natural light, though as the area transitions to the Library, it will begin to twist and turn, have dead ends, making the player go through various rooms with many doors to go forward. This reflects Nilo having to make uncertain choices and feeling more and more lost as they progress through the university.

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- The door at the top of the staircase, which leads to the rooms of the second floor, is locked. The player will return here after escaping the Burned Maze, and will lead to the Counselor's Office.
 - In the progression to the Collapsed Library, the player will reach many points where they will have to choose between several doors or paths, and cannot turn back, the doors being

locked behind them.

- This reflects Nilo having to make uncertain choices as they progress through the university.
- The architecture will become darker, more dilapidated and asymmetrical, with twists and turns, as the player progresses to the Library.

Collapsed Library

After travelling through a convoluted path of hallways and rooms, a door will open up into the large, open space of the Library, towering bookshelves and tables filling the room. As the player progresses, they will meet various students, who talk about how enjoyable they find their studies, and how they are looking forward to their future, and Nilo will reveal his own regrets about his choices (to major in something he turned out not to like, and to push on with it instead of changing).

As the player progresses, the students will become more and more twisted and distorted, and soon, the room will begin to collapse behind them, forcing them to run to the exit. The room will gradually become smaller and more claustrophobic, representing Nilo's feelings of being trapped and unable to escape his situation at the time. The room, collapsing, will have gaps on the floor, and the player will have to do parkour with the dash ability. The students at some point will become eyeball enemies, making the parkour more difficult.

Finally, at the end of the room is a staircase leading down to the Burned Maze.

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- The purpose of this area is to reveal Nilo's backstory and his regrets about his choices, and to show his feelings of being trapped and unable to escape his situation at the time.

Burned Maze

After descending the staircase, it will collapse behind the player, trapping them in the dimly lit, dilapidated hallways of the university. The winding hallways feature many doors, locked and unlocked, which open up to rooms with doors leading to more rooms and hallways. The maze is dimly lit, with flickering or broken lights, and the walls and rooms are dilapidated and run-down. This reflects the height of Nilo's negative feelings during his time at the university, and the feeling of being lost and unable to escape his situation.

There are various shadow-type enemies scattered throughout the maze and gathered at the exit, and initially, the player's only option is to run from them, as they are unable to damage them. However, there are arrows throughout the maze, of several different colors, each pointing to a different component of the Lantern. The player can follow the arrows to find the

components, and assemble the Lantern, which will allow them to fight back against the darkness.

The arrows present a solution to the maze, but naively following all the arrows will lead the player in circles. Only by creating their own solution, by understanding what the different colors of the arrows mean, can the player progress. This reflects Nilo's failings as a person in the past, as he was dependent on others to solve his problems due to his past with Florence. He asked his counselor for advice, but expected them to solve his problems for him, though they could only tell him of several unsatisfactory solutions, and he must create his own solution. Nilo comes to slowly understand this as he progresses through the maze, and this marks the beginning of his character development.

The player can now stun shadow-type enemies with the Lantern, making them vulnerable to their usual attacks. The player can also use the Lantern to unlock dark areas, and find the way to the exit, where they will find a key, and the door back to the entrance hall.

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- The purpose of this area is to reflect Nilo's feelings of being lost and unable to escape his situation at the time, and to show his failings as a person in the past, and his beginning of character development.
 - The maze is a puzzle, and the player must put in the effort to understand the solution.
 - This reflects Nilo's failings in the past, depending on others to solve his problems, and his current self's realization that he must work for his own solutions.
 - Show this in the journal entry for this area, where Nilo writes about his self-reflection and realization.
 - Also show this maybe in him talking to himself? Or maybe in the dialogue of the shadow-type enemies, who mock Nilo for his past failings, and he thinks to himself about his realization.

Counselor's Office

After escaping the Burned Maze, the player will return to the entrance hall, and the door at the top of the staircase can now be unlocked. The player can now access the second floor, and the door at the end of the hallway will lead to the Counselor's Office.

This is a small, dark room, with a desk and a chair. Here, Nilo is confronted by the Counselor, who once more presents him with the choices he was offered in the real world past, both of which are unsatisfactory. The answer is to make his own solution, which is to not choose either of the options, exit the dialogue with the Counselor, take the key which is on the desk, and leave the room through the door at the back, leading out to the end of the level.

At this final area, the Counselor will run up to Nilo, and tell them that if they are leaving the university, they should do so with a diploma, and will initiate the final boss fight. The Counselor will be a shadow-type enemy, and the player will have to use the Lantern to stun them, and then attack them. After defeating the Counselor, Nilo tells them that he forgives them, and the Counselor will disappear, leaving behind a diploma, which the player can pick up to end the level.