The Sunset
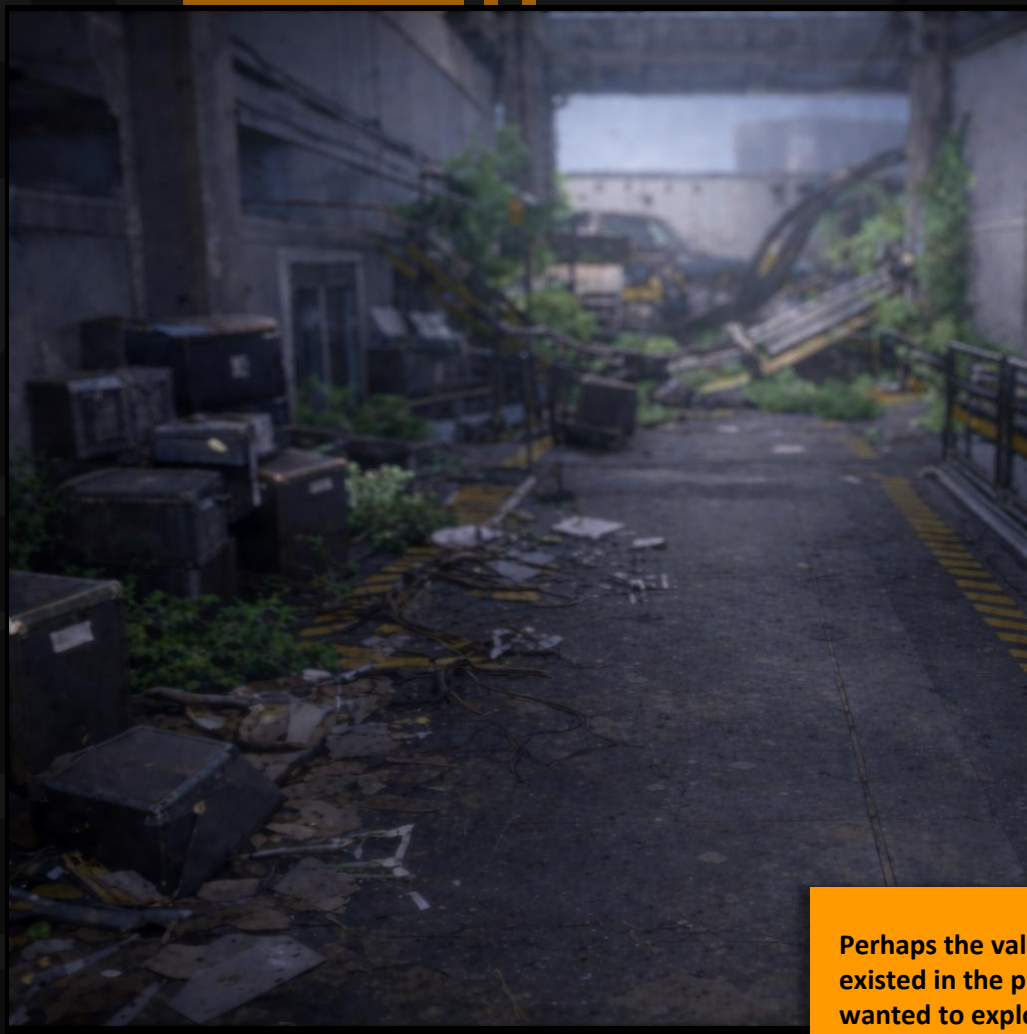
[From a Concept to a Playable Game.]

Civilization is a movement and not a condition, a voyage and not a harbor.
[Arnold J. Toynbee]

Idea Behind the Project

What first drew me in was much simpler. I was interested in moments where people keep moving forward, even when the world around them becomes so dangerous or unstable. There is something powerful in that kind of persistence, and it feels worth remembering and worth honoring.

But when I thought about it more, one obvious question came up. "When the world collapses, and the structures and responsibilities of society are gone, what meaning is left in simply staying alive?"

At the same time, I found myself thinking about those moments like riding an old, outdated train, or standing in a museum, looking at the remains of carefully built steam engines. In those moments, it isn't hard to feel a sense of romance in human history.

Civilization itself stretches across countless generations. An individual, or even an entire era, is small within that scale. And yet, in every period of human development, there are always things left behind, relics like old machines, scattered along the path forward. They are not always intentional; they are little quiet marks left by humans in the act of pursuing their values.

Perhaps the value of civilization has never been about reaching an endpoint. It has always existed in the process itself. This idea became the core of the post-apocalyptic idealism I wanted to explore in The Sunset.

Even after the world has fallen apart, people continue to leave traces behind, endlessly creating meaning through the act of moving forward.
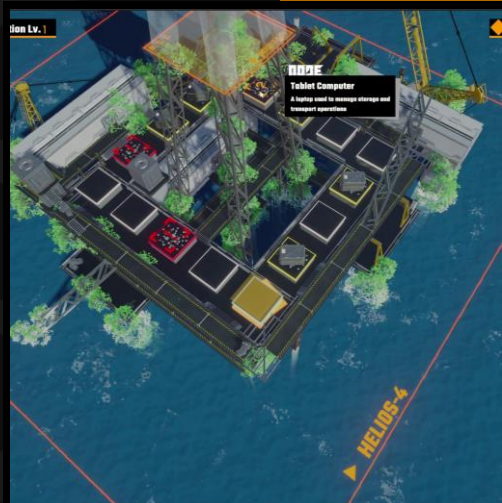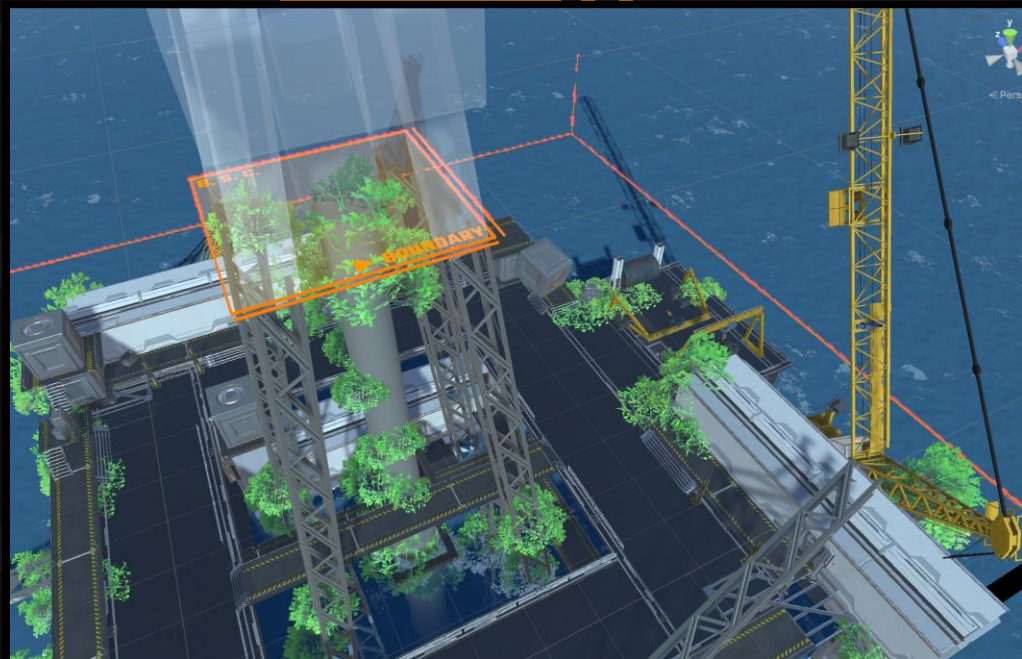
How the World Is Presented

On a visual level, I wanted the environments to be integral to my narrative. The story of The Sunset is set in a post-apocalyptic world, where collapse and continuation coexist.

In nature, fungi often exist with plants, so I tried to make the world look as though it hasn't been destroyed by violence, but rather overtaken by nature.

I chose to show abandoned human structures being reclaimed by those greens. These scenes show that the remnants of civilization hidden rather than erased. I want to make the player feel that humanity has stepped away, while the world itself continues to move forward.

Compared to pure destruction, those visible traces of the old world will create a stronger sense of the narrative of the story. They can let the player imagine what had existed before they enter this world.
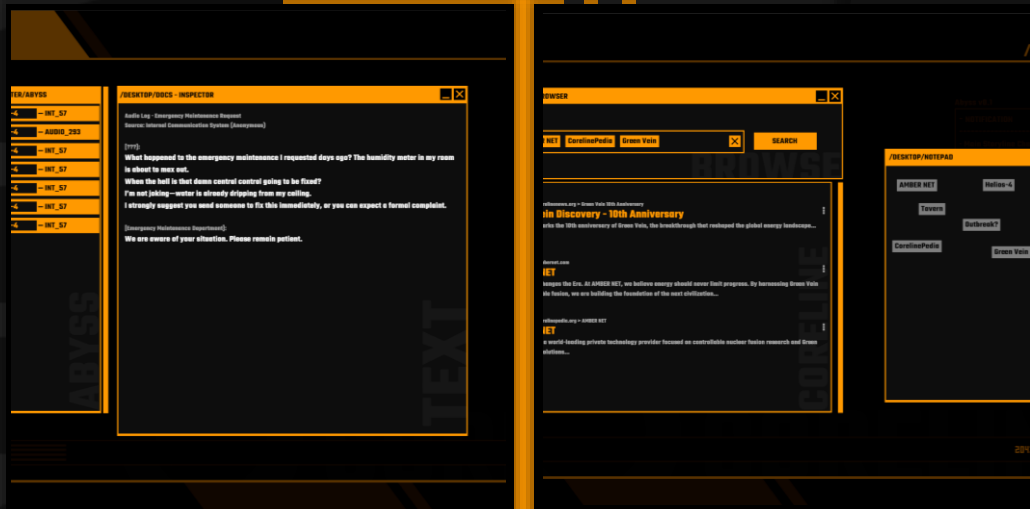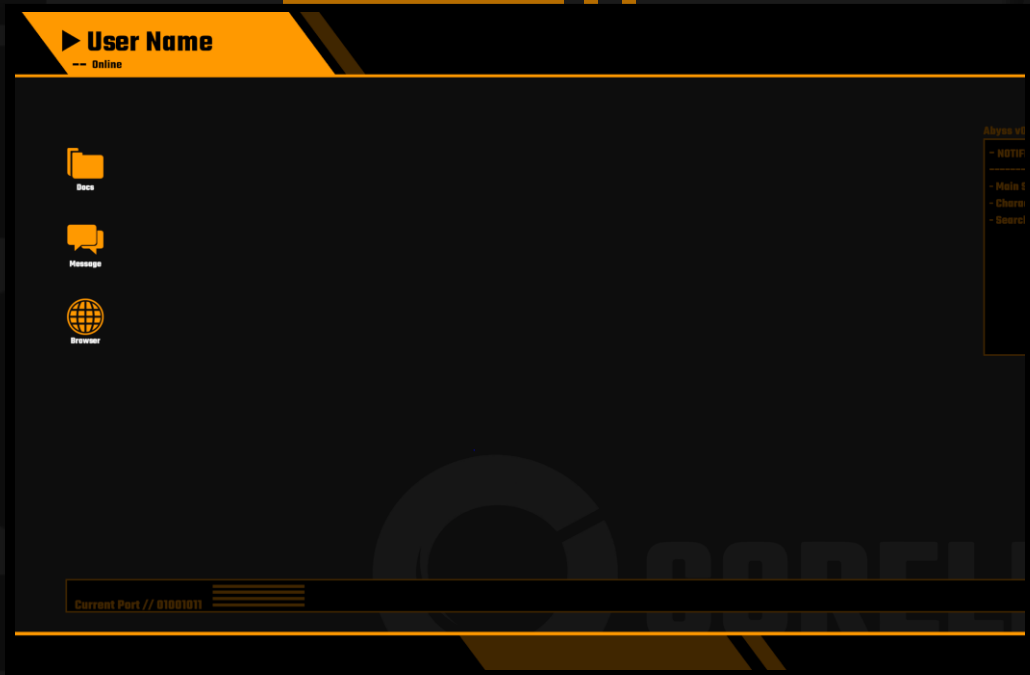
Coreline: Accessing Information

Worldbuilding in The Sunset is not explained directly. Instead of relying on only dialogue, I want players to form their own understanding through exploration, much like how we come to know the real world.

I designed a system called Coreline. It appears as a modern computer terminal, containing documents and a simple search engine to let players check on items that catch their attention.

As players progress through the main story, they may encounter many new objects or concepts, and characters or NPCs will offer some basic explanations in dialogue, but for those players who want to go deeper, they can choose to use Coreline to browse documents or search for information about some objects that appear through the story.

This system is entirely optional. My intention was to make a space for players who are curious to explore the worldview further. I wanted players to slowly feel the shape of the world, rather than be given a full explanation.
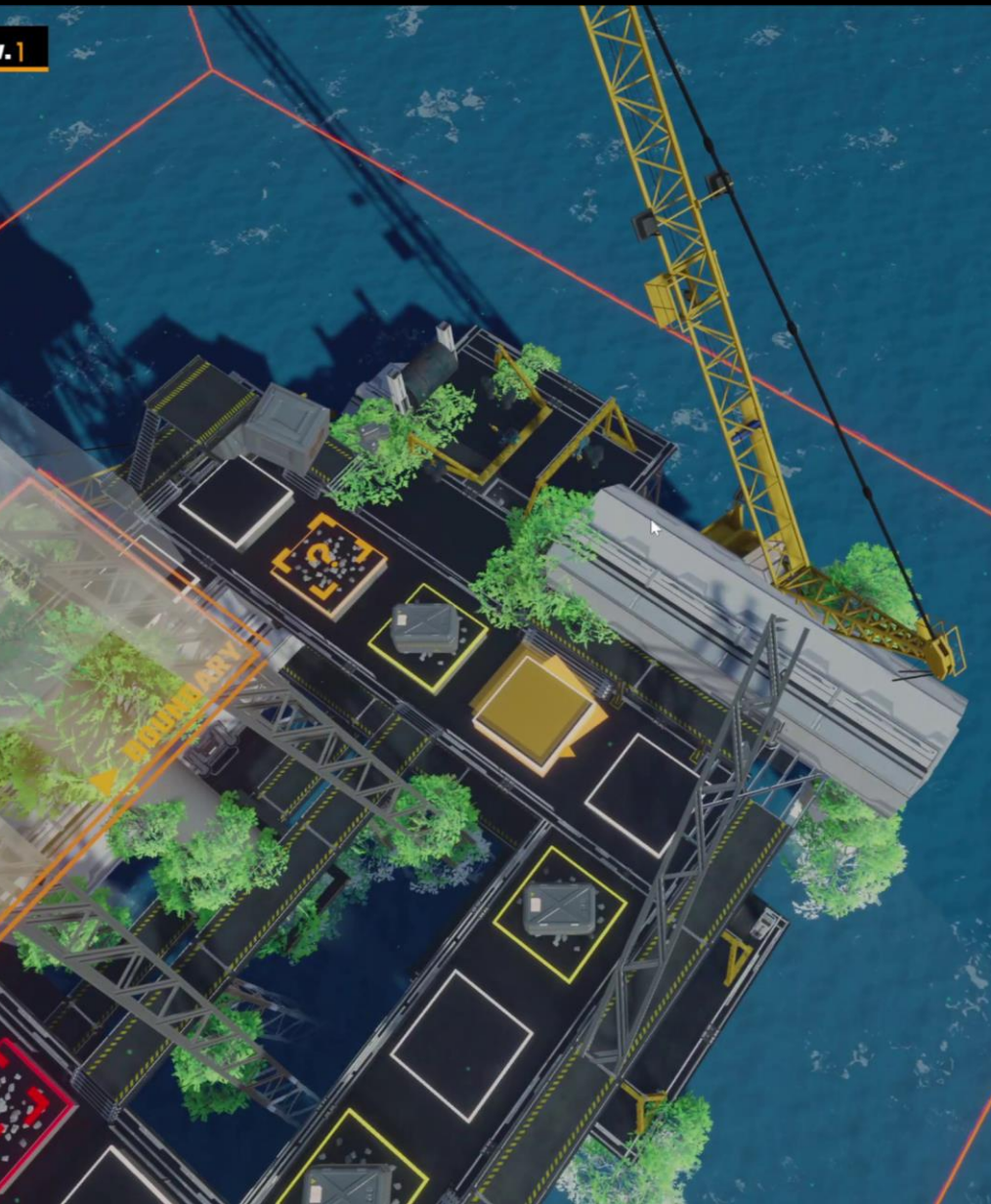
Begin the Exploration
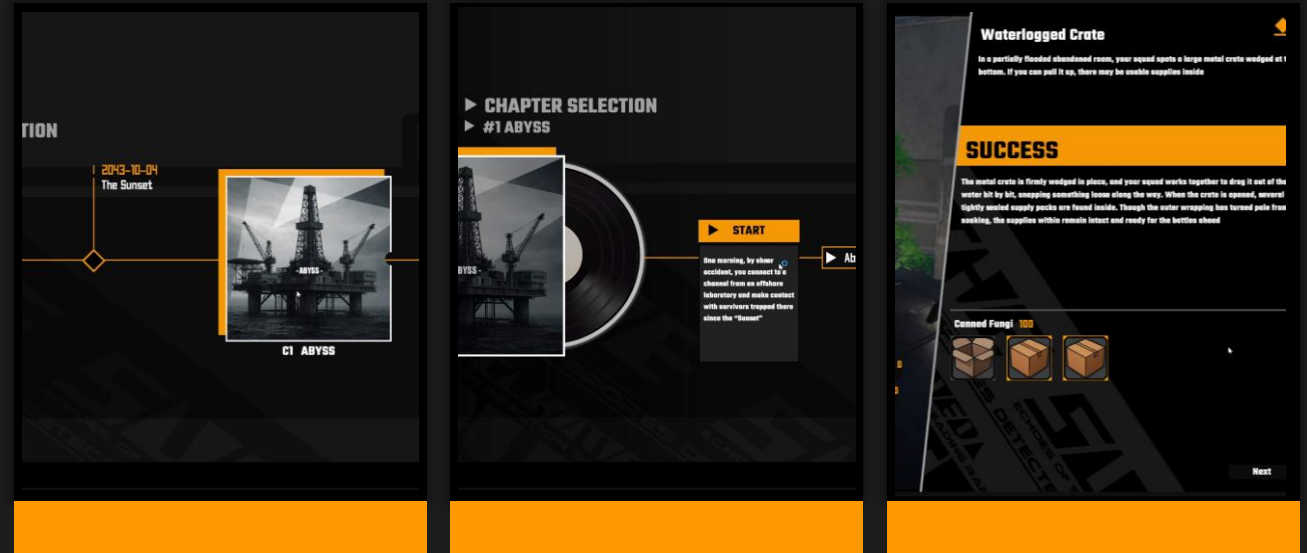
To represent "chapters" in the game, I chose to present them as a series of discs. I didn't want the chapter selection to feel like a normal menu. Instead, I wanted it to feel personal, almost like flipping through records or revisiting moments that already happened. Selecting a chapter is less about choosing a level and more about recalling a part of the player's own journey.

Exploration is built around a board-game structure, loosely inspired by Monopoly. Players move across the board, and most of what happens comes from where they land. Sometimes it's an event, sometimes it turns into a fight. Randomness is a big part of it, but players aren't just rolling and waiting. There are a few small ways to interfere with the board or the dice.

The intention here is not to get rid of randomness. Instead, I wanted players to work with uncertainty—deciding where to go next, when to take risks, and how to adapt to whatever the board throws at them. Over time, the experience naturally starts to reflect the player's own playstyle, rather than forcing everyone down the same path.

Building a Playstyle Through **Cards**
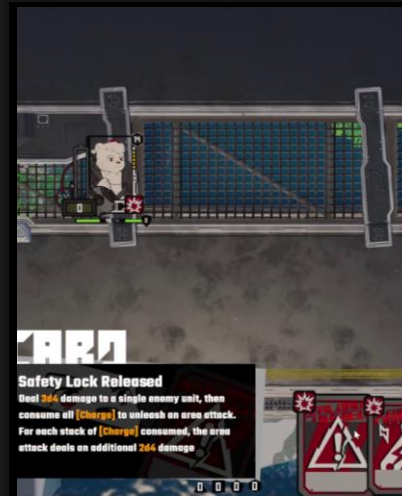
- **C**ombat in The Sunset uses turn-based card play to match the protagonist's role. Instead of fighting on the front lines, the player acts as a commander, watching the battlefield and making tactical decisions from above.

- This card-based system makes every choice matter. Still, relying only on card strategy can get repetitive, so even damage in my game uses random values similar to DND's systems.

- This is where the Perk system comes in. In my game, perks are called "Strategy", and they change how cards work. For example, a damage card might restore health, or a resource card could deal damage instead. These changes are meant to be unconventional.

- Instead of focusing on perfect balance, the goal is to encourage creative and sometimes unpredictable builds. I want players to feel that their choices change how combat works, not just how much damage characters deal.

Movement, Not Condition

Making choices, taking risks, and leaving small traces behind.

In the end, what remains is not a final answer but a path that continues.