



UNIVERSITÀ
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PONG
Playlab For inNovation in Games

LEVEL DESIGN DOCUMENT

STRANGER THINGS

Secrets of the Upside Down



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1 High Concept

1.1 Game

This is a single player adventure game, mainly focused on storytelling, exploration and real time combat. The player's avatar is a twisted version of the main character of Stranger Things: Eleven. This copy has the same memories as the original, so at the starting point they are identical. The game has, in addition to the main combat system, two main features:

- After a certain level, you can use demons to explore new areas that can only be reached through a mini-game.
- During the adventure, the player will be accompanied by several NPCs who will be able to give active and passive support.

Lastly, during boss battles, it will be possible to interact with some elements of the map that can change the flow of the fight, such as giving buffs, malus or damage.

1.2 Story

The story stars BAD Eleven, a copy of Eleven, looking for a way to leave the Upside Down. After learning the basic techniques of survival from a mysterious man named Kyle, Elby will undertake a journey in search of the Numbers, people on whom experiments have been conducted, just like his original counterpart. Each of these people has special abilities, which led them to have different survival methods and goals. They will therefore be described the rules behind the Upside Down and the events that will lead it to a radical change.

2 Settings/Fundamental concepts

The story is set in the Upside-Down, a dimension parallel to ours, in which there is little light and everything is covered with organic matter. The starting point is Hawkins, a small town in Texas, where there is a school and a library. The city is surrounded by a forest, called Mirkwood, at the center of which is the energy laboratory, connected by drains to Lake Hawkins. Crossing the Old Sabine Wildlife you can reach Lindale, home of the museum. Far more distant is instead Dallas, the only fortified city not covered by organic matter. Finally, using an underground tunnel, you reach Fort Worth, now in ruins and a creature's lair.

The following laws, theories and concepts that govern the dimension of the Upside-Down will be explained by characters and/or documents within the game.

- Time and Space: The Upside-Down is an alternative dimension that has the same characteristics and the same physical structures as our reality, but covered with organic material. It is therefore possible to hypothesize that this mass is produced by an organism that extends over an extremely large area, if not all over the globe. This non-sentient creature, called Upside-Down Core, has the Chronokinesis, a skill that allows it to replicate the structure of our reality at a given instant of time and apply it to the Upside-Down. This process takes place with a fixed and continuous cadence, but only in the areas in which its organic matter extends.
- Dimensional Travel: when a person with high kinetic abilities abuses his power, there is the possibility that he does not die but is transported to the Upside Down. Here, with the exception of fortuitous cases or particular abilities, it remains trapped there without the possibility of escape.
- DemoCreatures: Except for the DemoGorgon with which Eleven had come into contact, no other demon has the ability to open gaps between dimensions.

3 Synopsis

The death of the DemoGorgon, killed by Eleven, starts a paradox that, in addition to carrying the girl in the Upside-down, generates a reincarnation of the demon in the form of El herself, called B.A.D. Eleven (Biological Altered Demon #011), having the same memories and abilities as the original.

3.1 Act I

BAD Eleven (Elby for short) wakes up in Hawkins school, confused and scared. Wandering through the building, she sees Eleven escaping through a portal, but later, after trying to get in, discovers that she can't cross it. Escaped from the library, she meets in the courtyard Kyle, a survivor of the Upside-Down, who leads her to his shelter. Here, after having taught her the basics of survival, he suggests that she should go to the laboratory to escape from the Upside-Down through the portal opened by Eleven.

Elby then walks towards the structure, but once she reaches the gap, she again fails to cross it. While heading for the exit, she finds the data and photos of projects #003, #005 and #009. Back at the shelter, she uses her telekinesis to locate the three numbers and decides to go looking for #005, while Kyle will meet #003.

After crossing the Old Sabine Wildlife, Elby reaches Lindale and, inside the museum, meets #005. The latter, after listening to the story of the girl, decides to follow her as interested in the portal. Elby and #005 return to the shelter, where he begins to become suspicious of the identity of Kyle. Having no further clues about the portal crossing method, they decide to leave for Dallas to meet #009. Meanwhile Kyle managed to find #003.

3.2 Act II

Arriving in Dallas, Elby and #005 meet #009 and #010, who welcome them inside their hiding place. After several days of assignments, Dallas comes attacked by a horde of monsters. Kyle takes advantage of the chaos generated by the clash to kidnap #005. The true identity of Kyle is then revealed: he is #001, the first experiment.

Elby and #010 then start in pursuit of #001, reaching the Giant Chasm.

Reached the Upside-Down Core, Elby and #010 are captured by #001 and assist while he kills #005 and extracts its powers through the use of a parasite. Having now both the biocynesis and the mental synchronization with the demons, #001 is able to take control of the Core and use its chronocynesis at will. Threatening to kill #010, he forces Elby to open a portal, thus completing his plan to return home in the time instant he craves.

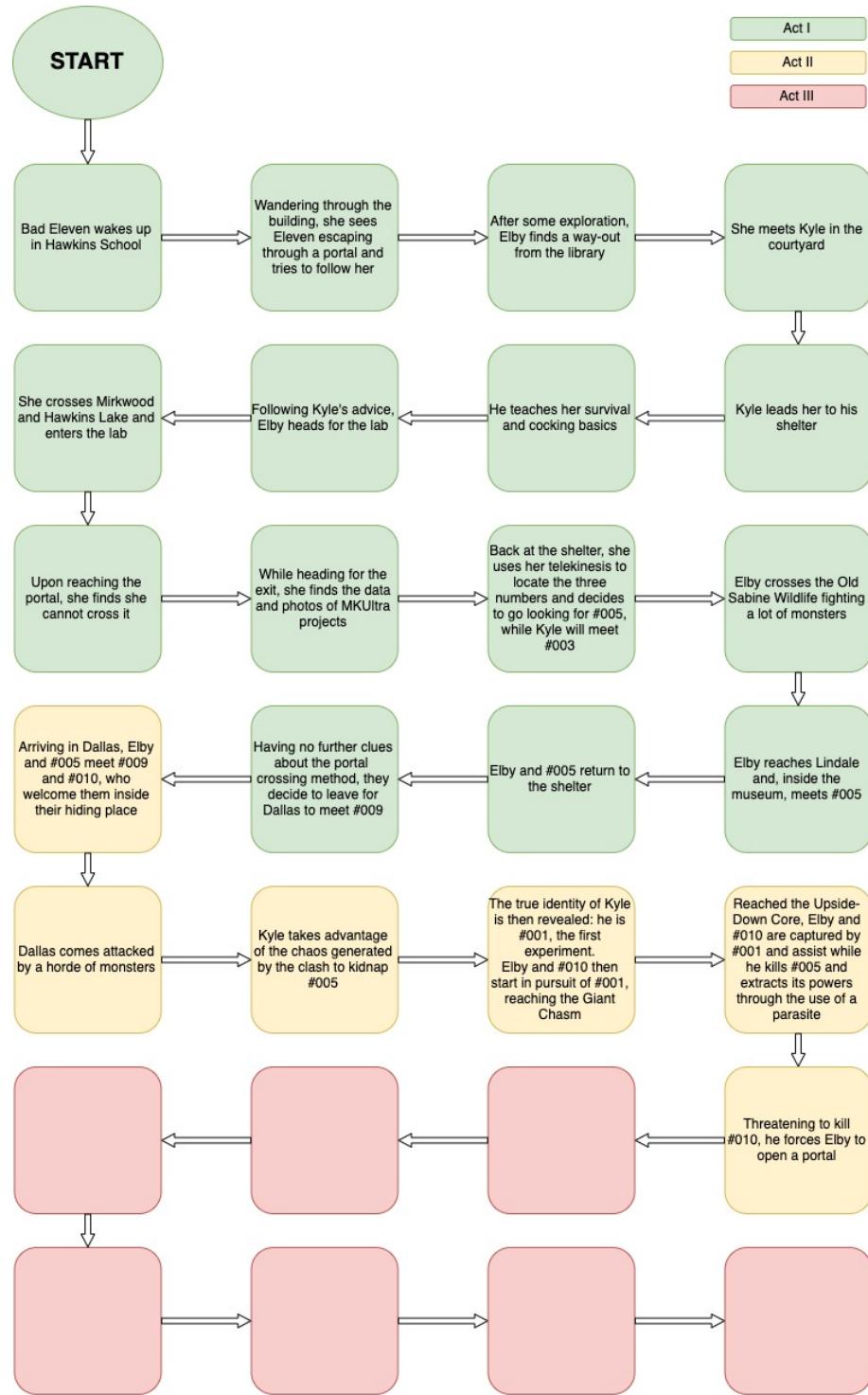
3.3 Act III

It is revealed that this is another alternative reality, and that it is therefore impossible to recreate the conditions to have the correct time and space. This causes a psychological breakdown in #001, which kills #010 and uses its powers to create a giant creature for the purpose of transporting the Core and expanding the Upside-Down to all realities, starting with that he came from.

Back in Dallas, along with a desperate #009, Elby manages to break down the DemoWalker, allowing her to reach #001 hidden inside. Here, after a last exchange of ideals, the last battle takes place.

After the final battle, which foresees the death of all the surviving numbers, it is possible to see the Upside-Down Core, still active, while incorporating the corpses of #001 and BAD Eleven. This causes a mutation in the creature, which takes shape of a giant spider and becomes a sentient entity, later called Mind Flayer. Reference is therefore made to the will of the demon to invade other dimensions (influence of #001) and to the hatred it feels towards Eleven (influence of BAD Eleven), characteristics seen in the Second and Third Season.

4 Story Flowchart



5 Periodic Table of Storytelling



Description of the elements:

[P] **Protagonist:** Bad Eleven is the protagonist of the story.

[3as] **Three Act Structure:** The story begins with a Setup act (introduction of characters setting and context), continues with a Confrontation and Evolution act (meeting with #009 and #010 encounters #001) and ends with a Resolution act (after the final battle the protagonist ends his evolution).

[C] **Conflict:** Kyle had an evil plan to obtain a great power and killed 009. 010 wants her revenge.

[Moo] **Mooks:** The standard enemies, like Demonrats and Demondogs.

[Chs] **The Chessmaster:** Kyle gets the name of chessmaster from his ability to manipulate events. he uses the protagonist to obtain informations about the numbers and uses them as if they were pieces on a chessboard.

[Hrz] **Moral Event Horizon:** After the end of the Act II, Kyle'll have a mental breakdown and will become like a mindless man seeking only destruction. From that moment he will be pure evil.

6 Themes

What is right and what is wrong

Motivations and actions of the various characters are always analyzed from different points of view, questioning whether they are right or wrong.

Endless Isolation, Eternal Darkness

Each character faces the solitude and desolation of the Upside-down in its own way, leading to different psychological evolutions.

Oh, that's why...

A fundamental point of the game is the explanation of the laws and / or properties of the upside-down. The player must be able to fill in the gaps of the main series and understand why things have evolved in a certain way.

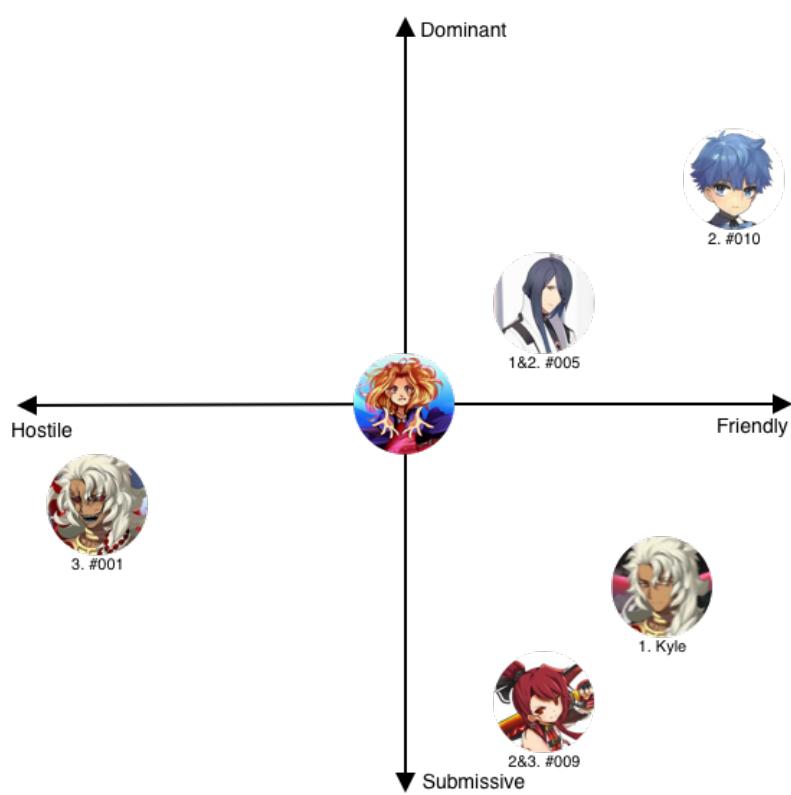
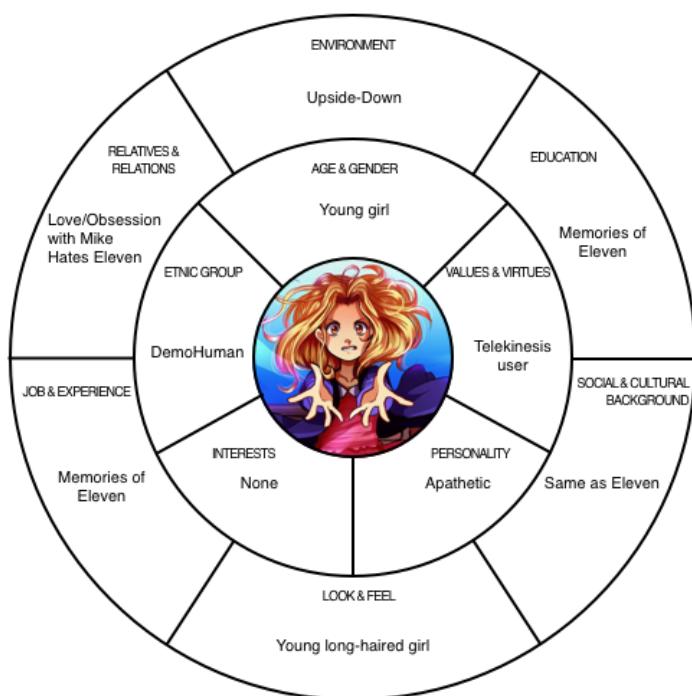
7 Characters

7.1 B.A.D. Eleven

Copy in everything of Eleven, BAD Eleven (Biological Altered Demon #011, Elby) initially shares with her physical appearance, memories and attitudes. However, during the course of the story, it will be increasingly evident that, unlike the original, Elby cannot manage her emotions, for example by transforming "her" love for Mike and the desire to see him again in pure obsession. This will lead her to be apathetic and unscrupulous, ready to eliminate any obstacle between her and her escape.

She has the same telekinetic prowess as Eleven, but the side effect is greatly reduced and the development of her ability is clearly superior, probably due to the influence of the Upside-Down and her origins.

7.1.1 Circumplex



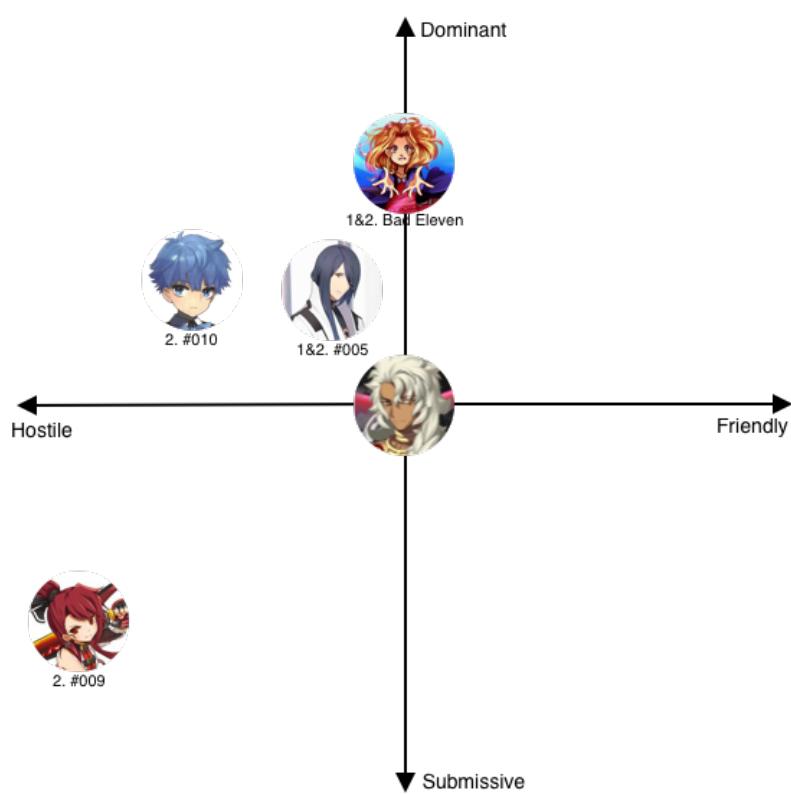
7.2 Kyle

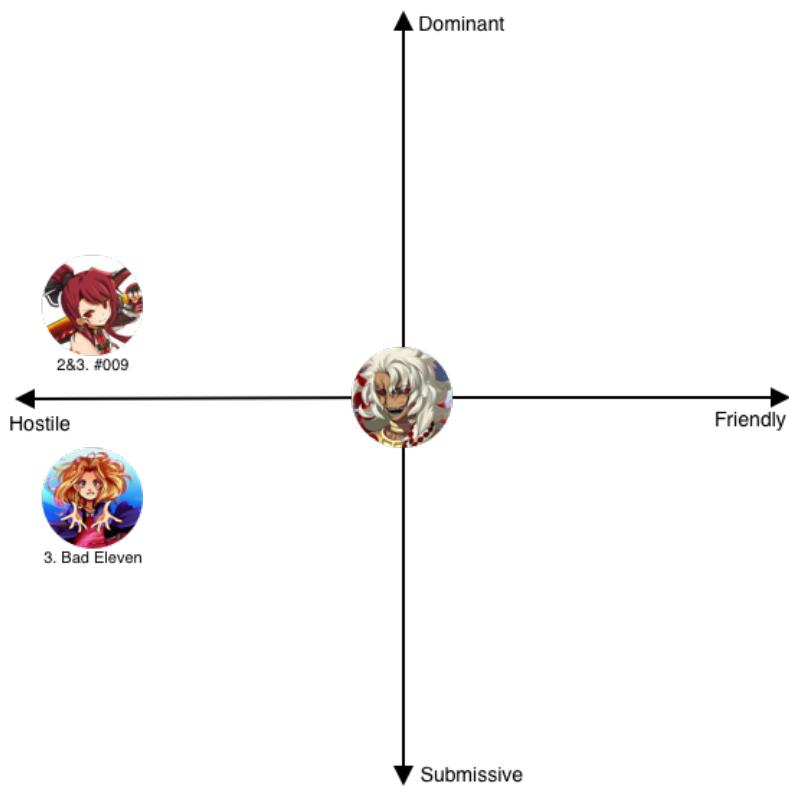
Kyle, alias #001, is the first experimental subject of the MKUltra project. He's a 29-year-old boy, trapped in the Upside-Down since he was 15. Despite the friendly and gentle attitude, the long period spent in darkness and solitude has greatly affected his mental stability, making him bipolar and easily irritated. Since birth he has the mental ability of biocytosis, the control and manipulation over organic matter. This ability applied to the Upside-Down allows him to control the ramifications of the Upside-Down Core, on condition that he is quite far from it. His goal is to return home, not in the present time, but when he was kidnapped for experimentation, so that he could regain life and happiness denied to him. To do this he requires the temporal ability of the Core and Elby's telecynesia to open the gap. His personality changes drastically after discovering that, due to the laws of the multiverse, his plan is destined to fail. It therefore becomes extremely violent and sadistic, not even sparing the other numbers, which he believes are destined to suffer and need to be released through death. Moreover, he decides to transport the Core in various dimensions, in order to expand the Upside-Down and make all the inhabitants of the alternate realities suffer the same torture imposed on him.

7.2.1 Backstory

Born in a quiet Texas town, Kyle lives a happy and carefree life with his family. At the age of 6 he began to show the first signs of biocytosis, succeeding in bringing back a withered flower. Initially the use of his ability caused him violent migraines, but the more years passed and he became stronger, the less the side effects were intense. Although his ability had been kept as secret as possible, at the age of 12 he was tracked down by Brenner and, after witnessing the massacre of his family, he was imprisoned in an experimentation facility. In addition to continuous blood withdrawals, necessary for the creation of a serum to be used for the artificial production of test subjects, he was forced to use the biocytosis for war purposes, until the day when, exceeding the limit of his ability to attempt a escape, he was wrapped in a black cloud and disappeared.

7.2.2 Circumplex





7.3 Minor characters

7.3.1 #005

A shut-in, he doesn't like be with others.
 He has the Mental Synchronization Kinesis, the ability to control beasts, with the condition of them being weaker than him.

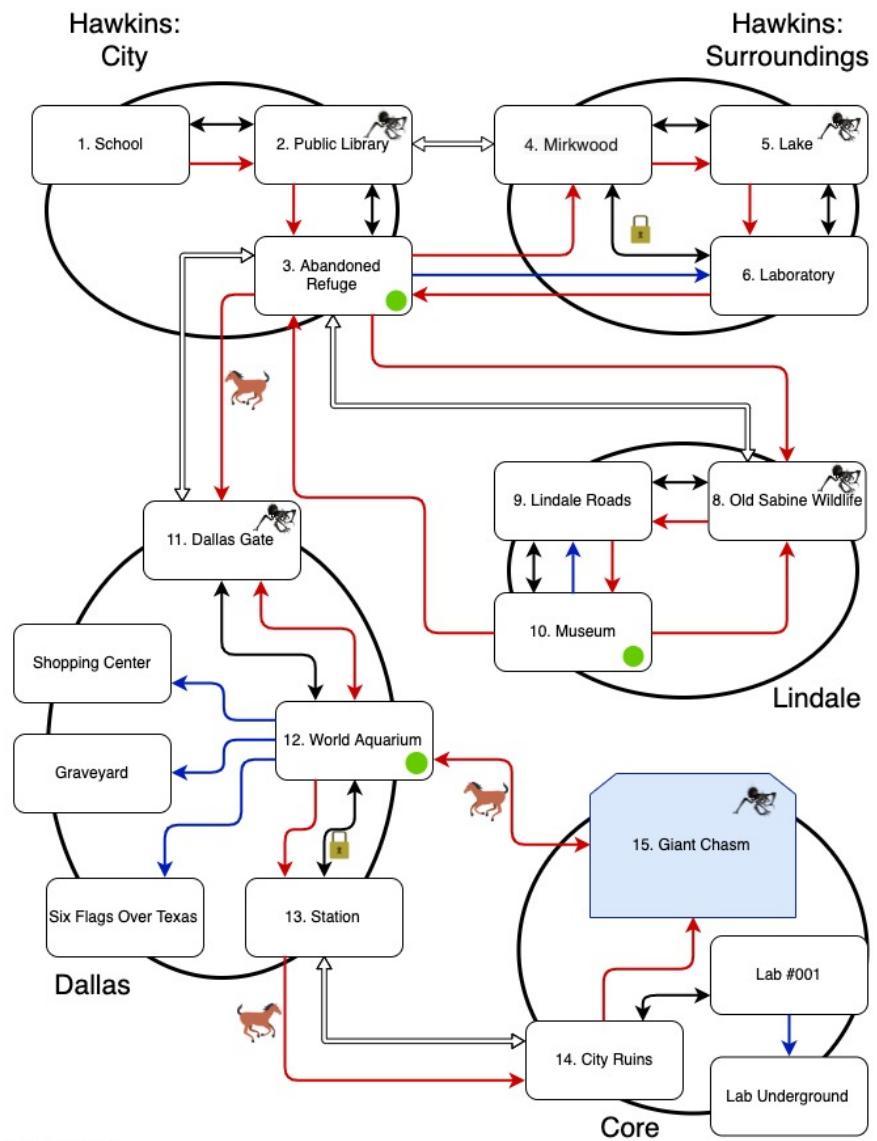
7.3.2 #009

Self proclaimed Queen of the Upside-Down, she is a very strong and passionate girl.
 Her prowess is the Pyrokinesis, the ability to accelerate atoms and create fire.
 She is extremely protective towards her little twin brother #010.

7.3.3 #010

A very shy guy, always hiding in the shadow of her older twin sister #009.
 He has the Cryokinesis, the ability to slow atoms freeze things.

8 World Diagram



LEGEND

Level	Environment
Level of this document	
Main quest path	
Side quest path	
Levels connector	
Environments connector	

9 Goals Outline

9.1 Hawkins: City

- Real World: Dream
 - Tutorial
- School
 - Find the East Hall Key
 - Defeat the DemoRats
 - Find the Public Library Corridor Key
- Public Library
 - Find the Library Section C
 - Defeat Barbara's Corpse
 - Exit from the Public Library
- Abandoned Refuge
 - Talk to Kyle
 - Survival tutorial
 - Cooking tutorial

9.2 Hawkins: Surroundings

- Mirkwood
 - Defeat the DemoBats and DemoRats
 - Craft a chain
 - Inspect the gate
- Lake
 - Find a route to the lab
 - Defeat the DemoLeviathan
- Laboratory
 - Find the elevator
 - Defeat the DemoDogs
 - Find an alternative route
 - Inspect the Dimensional Gate
 - Look for a way out
 - Read the documents
- Laboratory - Side Quest Kyle
 - Find the archive
 - Retrieve #003 Data

9.3 Lindale

- Old Sabine Wildlife
 - Open a new path (puzzle)
 - Look for food
 - Defeat the DemoAnts
- Lindale Roads
 - Find the key of the newsstand
 - Defeat the DemoWolves
 - Look the newspaper
 - Find a Rope
- Museum
 - Talk with #005
 - Find the backdoor
 - Defeat the DemoCerberus
- Lindale Roads - Side Quest #005
 - Find the Radio Tower
 - Protect the DemoEgg

9.4 Dallas

- Road to Dallas
 - Complete the DemoDog minigame
- Dallas Gate
 - Talk with #009 #010
 - Search for a way in
- Shopping Center - Side Quest #010
 - Find a path to the 7th Floor
 - Defeat the DemoDogs
 - Find the gate knob
 - Destroy the den
- Graveyard - Side Quest #009
 - Speak with #009
 - Find the 3 requested items
 - Defeat the DemoMoles
- Six Flags Over Texas - Side Quest #009 & #010
 - Try to have fun
- Dallas Gate (part 2)
 - Help #009
 - Help #010
 - Defeat the DemoNemesis
- Station
 - Clear the railroads
 - Defeat the DemoDogs

9.5 Core

- Road to the Core
 - Complete the DemoDog minigame
- City Ruins
 - Find the exit of the labyrinth
 - Find the Core entry
 - Open Kyle's Lab
- Kyle's Lab
 - Unlock the door
 - Defeat the DemoParasites
 - Destroy the lab
- Laboratory Underground
 - Kill #003's Corpse
- Giant Chasm
 - Explore Section 1
 - Explore Section 2
 - Explore Section 3
 - Defeat #001
 - Escape from the Core

9.6 Dallas (final)

- Return to Dallas
 - Complete the DemoDog minigame
- World Aquarium (destroyed)
 - Help #009
 - Defeat the DemoWalker

9.7 Core (final)

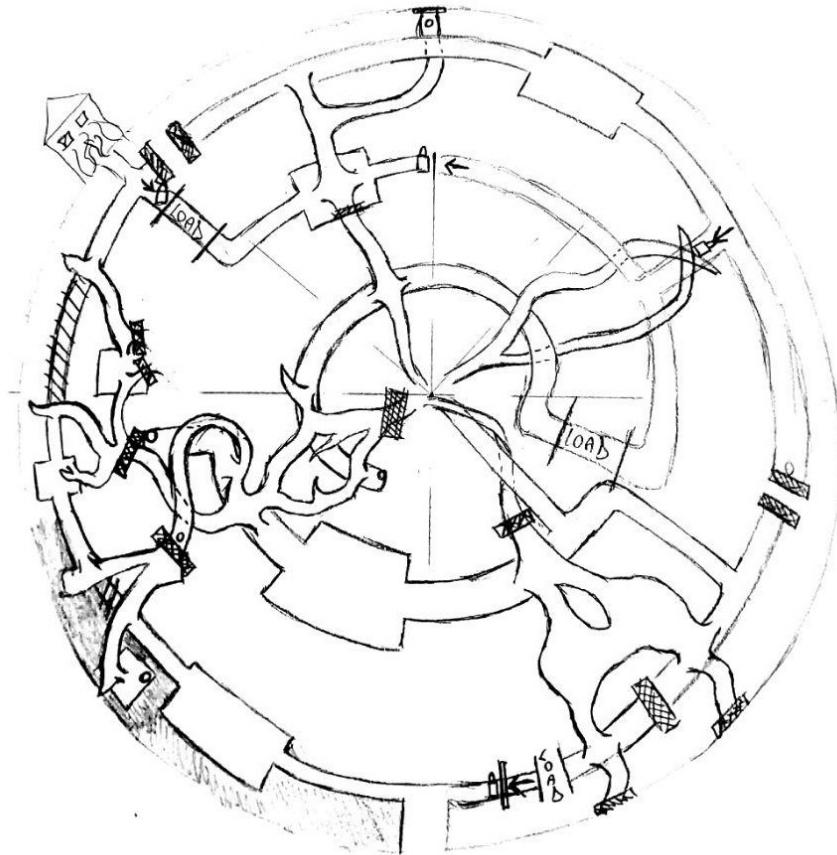
- City Ruins (fused with Giant Chasm)
 - Reach the dungeon core
 - Defeat #001

10 Level Design

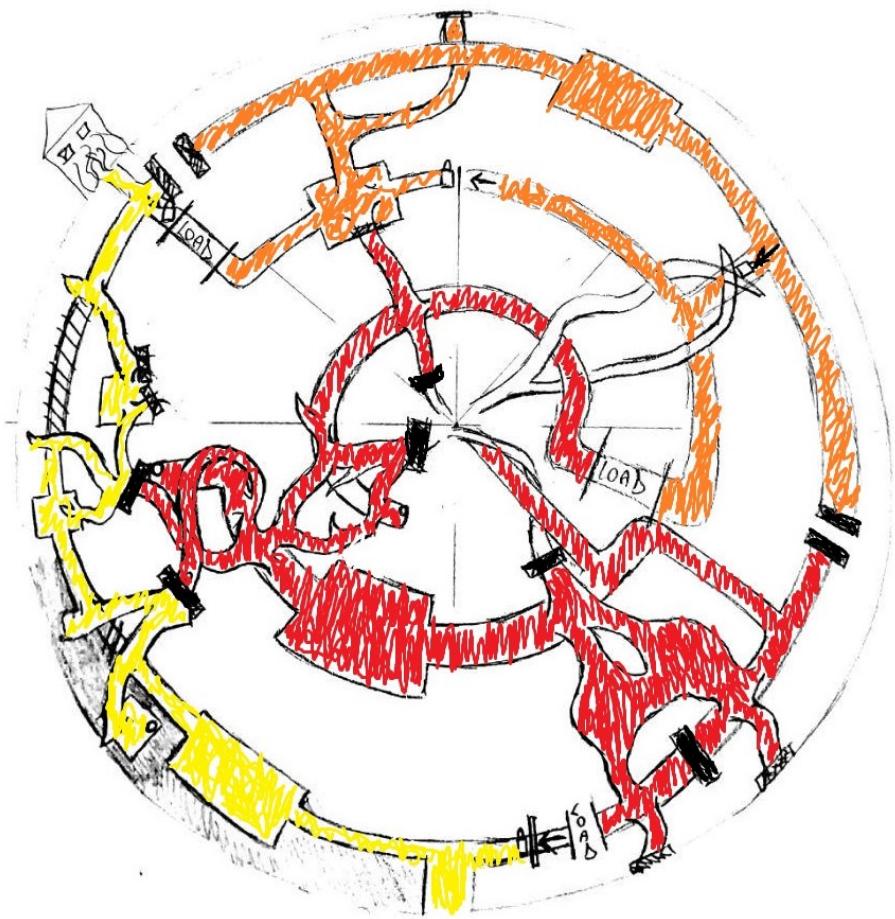
In this section the sequences of the implemented level "Giant Chasm" are explained. The level is divided into 5 sequences.

Under the representative map of the section are listed all the dialogues belonging to that specific time section.

10.1 Level Map (First Sketch)



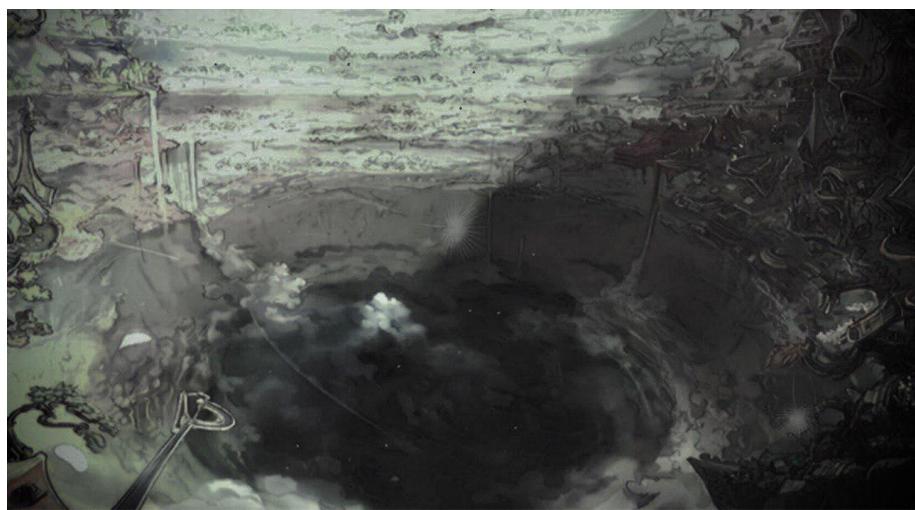
Complete map of the level (Boss Room excluded)



Section 1: Yellow, Section 2: Orange, Section 3: Red

10.2 Visual References

10.2.1 Giant Chasm Outside



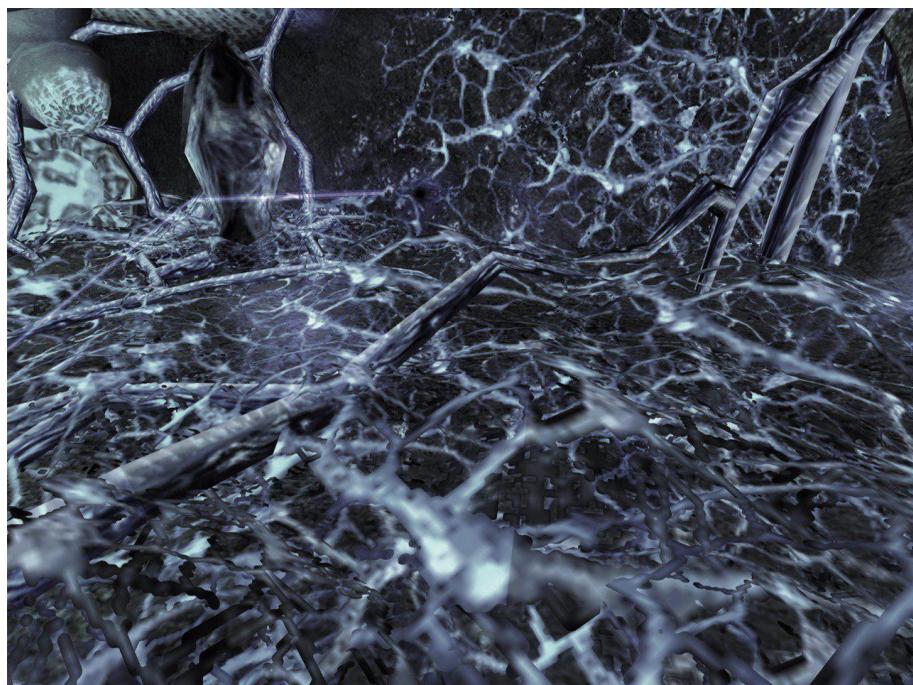
Overview of the Giant Chasm. *[Made in the Abyss]*

10.2.2 Giant Chasm Section 1 & 2



Path of the first and second section

10.2.3 Giant Chasm Section 3



Ground in the third section

10.2.4 Giant Chasm Core



Core of the Upside-Down (in-game it will be more organic and it will emit more red light)

[Metroid Prime]

10.3 Dialogues

10.3.1 Section 1

Entered the Giant Chasm, Elby and #010 remain stunned by the dense network of ramifications that cover the whole area.

#010: [Astonished] "So this is the place where the core of the upside-down resides. It looks like a giant crater, it is possible that ..."

ELBY: "I have no time or interest in your hypotheses, we must reach Kyle."

#010: "Oh, you're right ... I see a light in the center, I think it's our destination"

After a quick inspection, the two decide to continue along the edge and look for a route to the center.

If the player tries to go on the right:

#010: "This tangle of branches is too thick, we will not be able to pass this way. Let's find another path."

Reached the remains of a building that collapsed inside the crater, Elby and 10 arrive in what appears to be an old ballroom. Suddenly they hear the roars of monsters, which appear one after another around them.

#010: [Worried] "We are in their den after all, just try to save as much stamina as possible!"

Once the monsters are defeated, they continue along the cliff to reach a second room divided in half from a pit.

#010: "I don't think I can jump so much, I'm sorry ..."

ELBY: (That branch ... Maybe with my skills I can create a path)

After using his telekinesis to cross the pit, Elby and #010 follow the ramifications to continue on the track until they reach a third room, where they find several monsters impaled by branches.

#010: "All these pierced monsters, I think it was #001."
ELBY: "You should be happy."
#010: "Why?"
ELBY: ".."
#010: "Ah, if he killed them it means he doesn't have the power to control them, so #005
is still alive!"
ELBY: [Nods towards #010]

Once at a dead end, they begin to look for a route inland.

#010: "This is the only point from which we could descend, but the branches are too thick!
Do you have any ideas?"
ELBY: [Looks around]
ELBY: [Indicates a building on the edge of the crater]
ELBY: [Smiling] "Freeze it"
#010: [Excited] "Maybe by combining our skills we can bring it down. Let's try!"

After freezing the branches that stabilized the structure and having destroyed them by means of telekinesis, the building begins to collapse and the debris, after rolling along the wall, hit the barrier of branches, opening a gap.

#010: "Now we can pass, but let's stay on guard."

10.3.2 Section 2

#010: [Coff coff]
ELBY: "The density of the air has changed, we are getting closer"

Entering the Safe Room:

#010: [Relieved] "We should be safe in here, we can make a brief stop to regain strength"

Leaving the Safe Room:

#010: "Let's go, we should be halfway there"

10.3.3 Section 3

The proximity to the core is increasingly evident: the ground is completely covered with organic branches and the air density is skyrocketing.

#010: "We're getting closer to the core, the light that emanates is much more intense than before"
ELBY: [Angered] "Don't distract yourself!"
#010: "Sorry!"

Unable to follow the ground path, Elby and #010 decide to continue the journey using the ramifications of the core as a route

#010: "The branching of the core is extremely dense at this point"
ELBY: "We are almost there"

Section one link, post skill:

#010: "We can now reach the entrance from here"

ELBY: [nods]

Finally they arrive on a non-natural path, certainly created by Kyle to reach the center of the giant chasm.

#010: "#001 must be close, are you ready?"

ELBY: "Yes" or "Not yet"

If answer is "Yes":

#010: "Ok, let's go ..."

If answer is "Not yet":

#010: "Make it quick, #005 needs us!"

10.3.4 Inner Section

#010: "#001!"

KYLE: [Joking] "Oh, finally. I was starting to think you were dead along the way!"

#005: [Squirms]

KYLE: "Hey hey, calm down, wait for your turn"

If the player has visited Kyle's lab:

#010: "We've been in your lab, we know what you've done and what you are up to!"

KYLE: "So you found out everything ... Great, you saved me a lot of explanations"

If the player has not visited Kyle's lab:

#010: "Why all this?"

KYLE: "I just want back what was taken from me, nothing more"

#010: "And are you going to kill us all for your purpose?"

KYLE: "Not everyone, just the two of them in case they don't want to cooperate" [Points ELBY and #005]

KYLE: "By the way, you are staring at me with a fierce look, do you have something to say?"
[Watching ELBY]

ELBY: [Really angered] "Friends ... don't ... LIE !!!" [Gust of energy]

KYLE: "Haha, so you consider me a friend, how nice!"

KYLE: [Serious look]

KYLE: "Chatting time's over, now give me your powers!"

10.3.5 After Boss Fight

KYLE: "... The effect of the core is more intense than I thought ..."

ELBY: "Free #005. NOW!"

KYLE: "..."

The costrinctions around 005 are released, allowing him to move.

#005: : "Thank y-"

#005 stops moving and suddenly blood starts to come out of his mouth.

KYLE: "You didn't give me a choice."

A branch pierces the chest of #005, extracting a DemoParasite.

#010: [Desperate look and vomit from horror]

ELBY: [Tear from left eye]
KYLE: "And now ..."
KYLE: [swallows the DemoParasite]
KYLE: [closes his eyes]

Elby launches a mental attack, but a barrier of branches block it

ELBY: "????!!?"
KYLE: [Open his eyes]
KYLE: "I have control over the core, there's nothing more you can do."

The whole Giant Chasm begins to tremble. In a few moments, hundreds of branches emerge from the ground, trapping Elby and #010.

KYLE: "If you do not want to follow the same fate as #005 do not resist and open the portal"

A branch wraps around the neck of #010, starting to strangle him

ELBY: [Initially reluctant] "Okay. I'll do it ..."
KYLE: "Great!"

Kyle closes his eyes again, entering a state of deep concentration. Suddenly, the air inside the core changes, almost as if all the space there was in a continuos changing state

KYLE: "The time is right. Go on!"

Elby starts to focus. The chasm begins to tremble again and in few seconds a portal appears in the room. Kyle watches it with a satisfied look and tears running down his face.

KYLE: "Now i can finally go home ..."