

LEVEL DESIGN

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VILLAGE

RESIDENT EVIL™

- THE DARK FOREST -

• IMPORTANT NOTE •

About the purpose of this level design document

This file contains the documentation of an original level design inspired by the video game *Resident Evil 8* (Capcom, 2021). All graphics, including diagrams and layout maps, are self-made except for the reference pictures.

The author of this document is Ricardo Caballero Pascual, as of September 2022.

Level design brief

[A summary of the characteristics of the proposed level]

Resident Evil 8 (Capcom, 2021), the video game that inspired the level described in the following pages, belongs to the **survival horror** genre. This means that the level must give special importance to the **management of resources** and the use of **appropriate pacing** to create a **suitable and scary atmosphere**.

○ MISSION OBJECTIVE

The objective of the level is to reach Castle Dimitrescu.

○ DURATION

This level includes puzzle solving and some backtracking.
It will have a duration of 25 - 30 minutes.

○ GAMEPLAY

Exploration, puzzle solving and combat.

○ CAMERA

First Person Perspective

○ COMBAT

The player will have a pistol to defend himself.
However, there will be only one enemy to defeat: the boss of the level.

○ PERSONAL AIM

Horror game design fascinates me. I would like to create this level to improve my understanding of the elements that contribute to create a terrifying atmosphere.

To design the proposed level, a study of the video game in which it is inspired has been carried out in order to create an experience **as faithful as possible to the original material**. Therefore, **mechanics and elements present in Resident Evil 8 will be replicated**.



Narrative brief

[A summary of the narrative events that will take place in the level]

The proposed level is called “ **The Dark Forest** ”.

Ethan Winters, protagonist of *Resident Evil 8*, will wake up disoriented in the **basement of an abandoned cabin**, and his goal will be **to reach Castle Dimitrescu** where he believes he will **find clues about his missing daughter**.

In other words, The Dark Forest is a level that works as an extension of the plot of the original video game.

The narrative and structure of the level can be divided into 2 distinct parts:

PART I: The Cable Car

Ethan Winters wakes up in the basement of an abandoned cabin. After exploring it and going outside, he discovers that **he is in the middle of a forest in the mountains**. Everything seems quiet at first, but the strange sounds of footsteps in the snow and the rustling of branches **make him believe that he is not alone**.

As Ethan advances through the level he ends up discovering **Castle Dimitrescu** in the distance. But to reach it quickly, **he will have to repair an old cable car**.

To get the device back up and running, he will **need to find two fuses**. The first one is at the cable car station, but **the second one he has to fetch from the gripman's house**.

When he picks up the second fuse at the gripman's house, the building shakes as if a very large animal had landed on the roof. When Ethan returns outside, he discovers that whatever caused the shaking is gone.

Ethan **returns to the cable car** and **repairs it by solving a puzzle**. He boards the cable car to descend to Castle Dimitrescu.

PART II: The Surma

While descending from the mountains, the cable car **is attacked by a creature** that cannot be seen at first. The vehicle breaks apart and falls down the mountain, causing Ethan to **lose consciousness for a few minutes**.

When Ethan awakens, he discovers that he is in danger. A monster (the Surma) is stalking him to hunt him down, and since he is unarmed, **he must flee as fast as possible** to save his life.

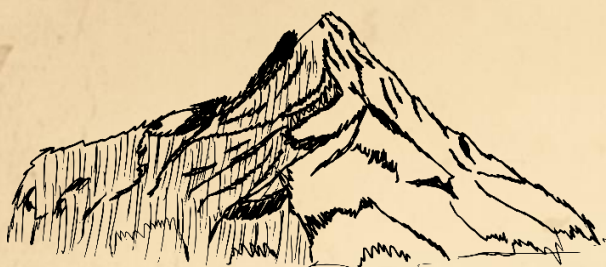
In his flight, Ethan **discovers the hunter's hut and seeks refuge inside**, where he **finds a gun and supplies** to confront his enemy.

Ethan goes outside and **faces the monster in an intense boss battle**. After defeating the Surma, the level ends as soon as **Ethan finds a new route to Castle Dimitrescu**.

Location breakdown

[An overview of the locations that exist in the level]

The level is made up of three different types of environment: the **mountain**, a steep area where the player will find thick vegetation, streams and wooden huts; the **cable car station**, which will be a concrete and metal building; and the **Dark Forest**, which will be a very dark grove as it will be the territory of the Surma.



MOUNTAIN

- Forest area located at a high altitude.
- From the mountains, Ethan can see the whole valley, including the village and Castle Dimitrescu.
- This is a section without danger, but with a high sense of threat. The player will have to have the feeling of being stalked by someone.

CABLE CAR STATION

- A concrete building, rough and sturdy.
- It has a broken cable car that Ethan has to repair by solving a puzzle.
- It has been abandoned for a long time, so most of the furniture is damaged.
- Ethan can find documents explaining the local legends of the Dark Forest and the monster that dwells in it —the Surma.



DARK FOREST

- Forest area located at low altitude. The trees are much taller and denser than those in the mountains.
- Very dark area. It is difficult to see what is around.
- Ethan can find the skins of the Surma victims hanging from the trees. It is meant to be a very disturbing location.
- This is where a boss fight takes place.

Mountains References

[A gallery of references for the mountain]

MOUNTAIN FOREST



CABIN



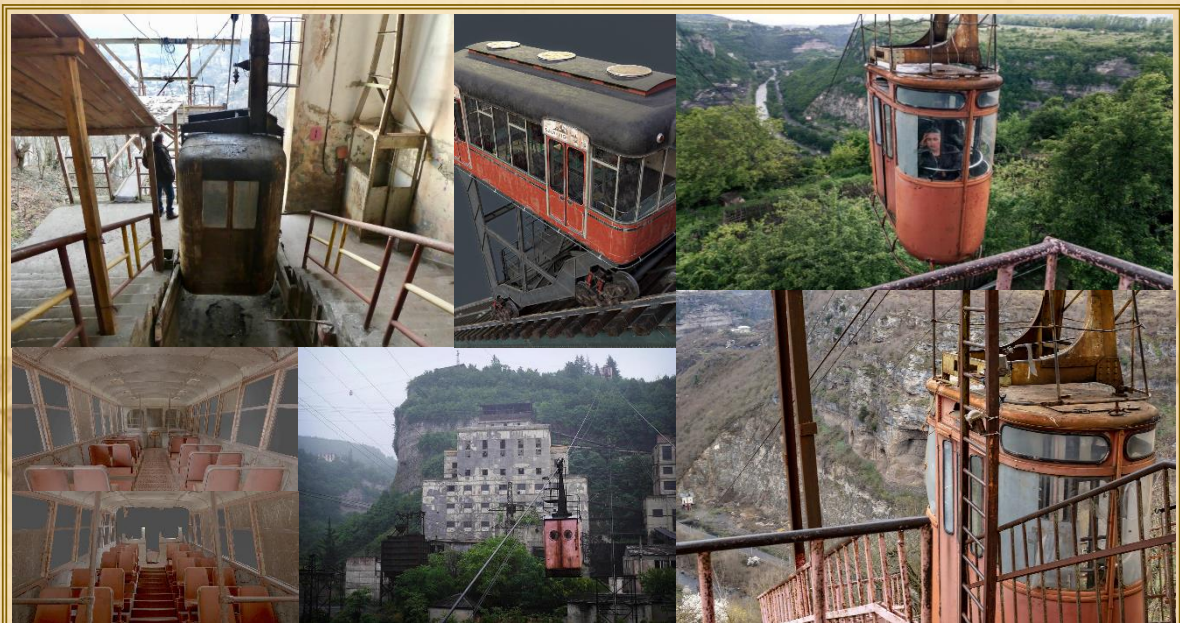
Cable car station References

[A gallery of references for the cable car station]

STATION



CABLE CAR



Dark Forest References

[A gallery of references for the Dark Forest.]

DARK FOREST



Gameplay Mechanics

[List of available mechanics in the proposal]

In order for the player to complete the level proposed in this document, some of the movement, investigation and combat mechanics present in *Resident Evil 8* will be imitated.

MOVEMENT MECHANICS



Walk



Run



Crouch

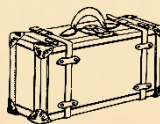
INVESTIGATION MECHANICS



Read



Examine



Inventory

COMBAT MECHANICS



Shoot

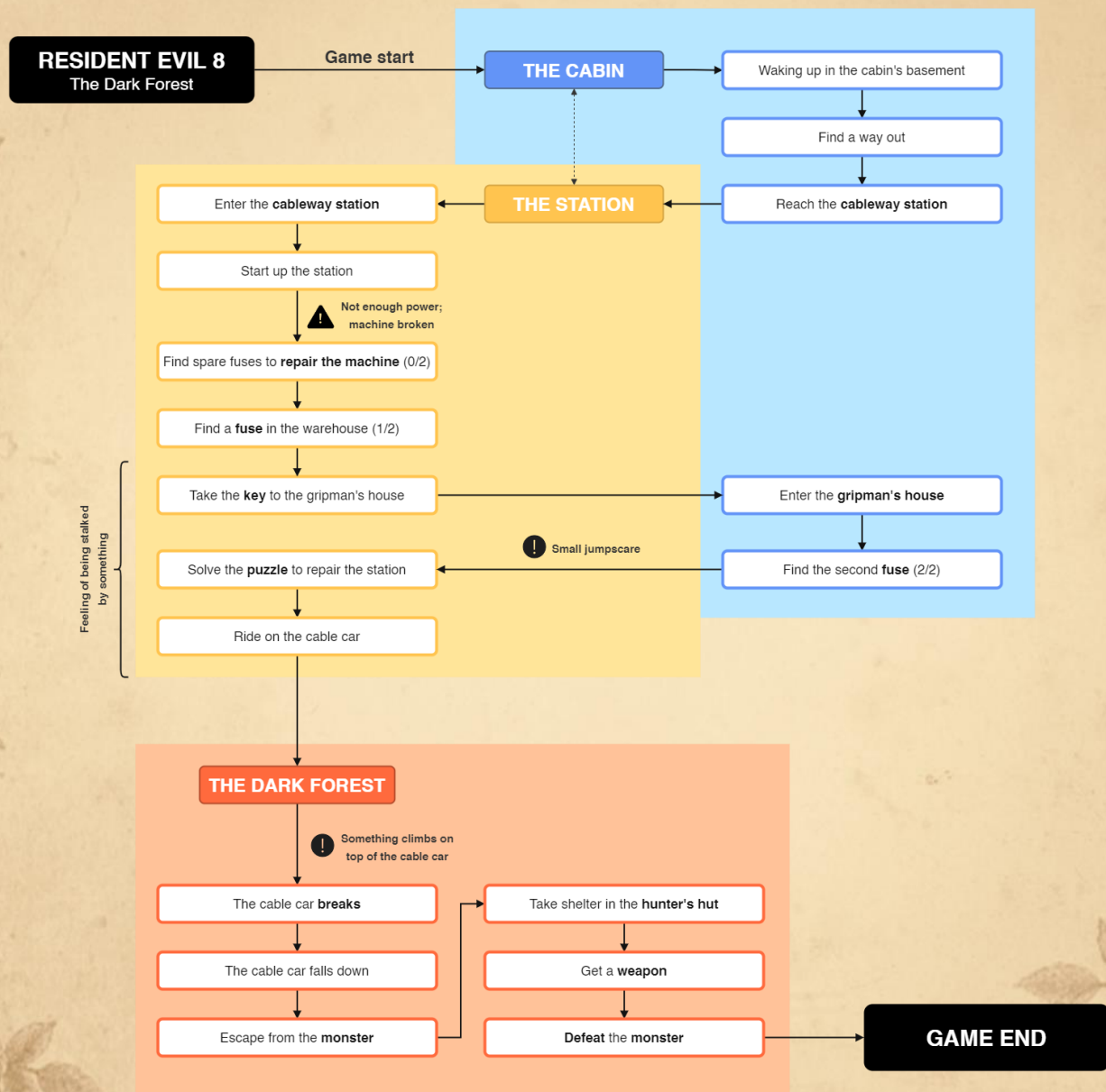


Reload

Level Flow

[Diagram representing the flow of the level]

Below is a diagram explaining in detail the steps the player must follow to complete the level.



Level Beats

[Table listing the most important beats of the proposed level]

Level beats are divided into five different categories: **Challenge, Exploration, Scene, Combat** and **Objective**.

Challenge beats refer to puzzle-type challenges that require the player to use their wits, Exploration beats involve navigating through the level, Scene beats are cinematics, Combat beats are situations in which enemies must be defeated, and Objective beats are markers that indicate the level has been completed.

	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
BEAT 1	 Challenge	Ethan wakes up in the basement of an abandoned cabin. He must find a way to get outside. This section allows the player to become familiar with the basic mechanics.
BEAT 2	 Exploration	Ethan goes outside and walks along the path until he reaches the cable car station. Along the way, he can find documents with useful information about the history of the place and supplies.
BEAT 3	 Challenge	Ethan has to use the cable car to get to Castle Dimitrescu, but it is broken. He needs to find two fuses to fix it. Searching around, he discovers that the second fuse is in the gripman's house.
BEAT 4	 Scene	At the gripman's house, Ethan is briefly attacked by the Surma, which shakes the whole house. This is a moment of great stress for the player.
BEAT 5	 Challenge	Now that he has all the fuses, Ethan must solve a puzzle to start the cable car. When he finishes, he starts the descent towards Castle Dimitrescu.
BEAT 6	 Scene	The cable car is attacked by the Surma at one point, so it breaks and falls right into the Dark Forest. Ethan loses consciousness for a few minutes.
BEAT 7	 Combat	The player must escape from the Surma by running as fast as he can towards the hunter's hut. Once inside he is safe from the creature for a while.
BEAT 8	 Exploration	Ethan explores the house and finds a gun and ammo. He is also able to read some documents left behind by the hunter before he disappeared.
BEAT 9	 Combat	Once armed, Ethan goes outside to defeat the Surma. This is a long and intense battle because the creature knows how to hide in the trees and pounce on its prey when it is distracted.
BEAT 10	 Objective	After defeating the Surma, Ethan finds an alternative path to Castle Dimitrescu and follows it without hesitation. This is where the level ends.

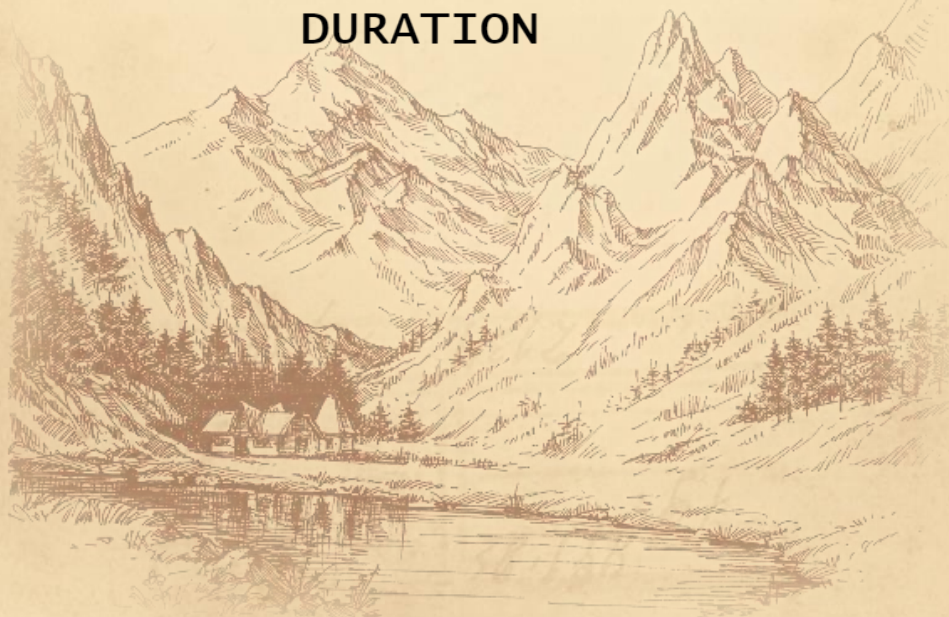
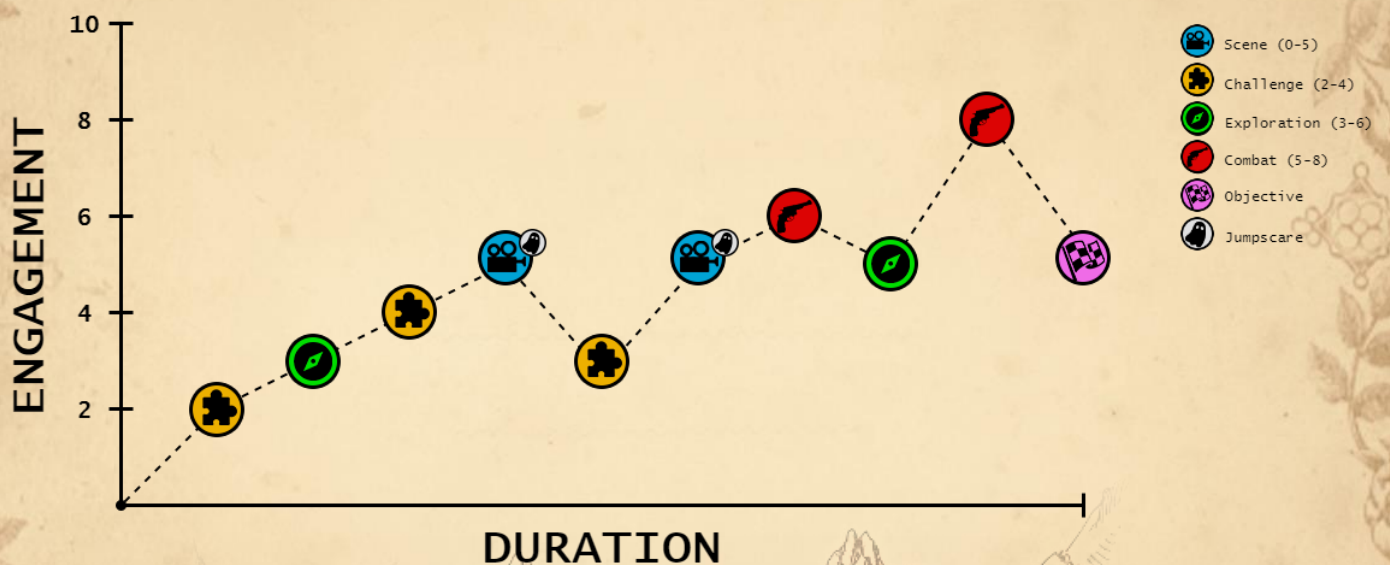
Level Pacing

[Graph depicting the desired variations in level pacing]

In the following graph the beats described on the previous page are distributed to describe the **pacing**.

It should be noted that since *Resident Evil 8* is a **horror game**, the engagement values of the **cinematics** or **exploration** beats are **especially high** due to the **constant sense of threat** that the user will perceive during gameplay.

This sense of threat will be reinforced through **sound effects and scripted events** that will be executed at specific moments.



Level Layout

[Layout of the levels in detail]

To make it easier to understand it, the level layout will be divided in two parts. **Part I** covers the locations of the **Mountain** and the **Cable Car Station**, while **Part II** covers the **Dark Forest**.

