

The Deep Within

Sunken Dream

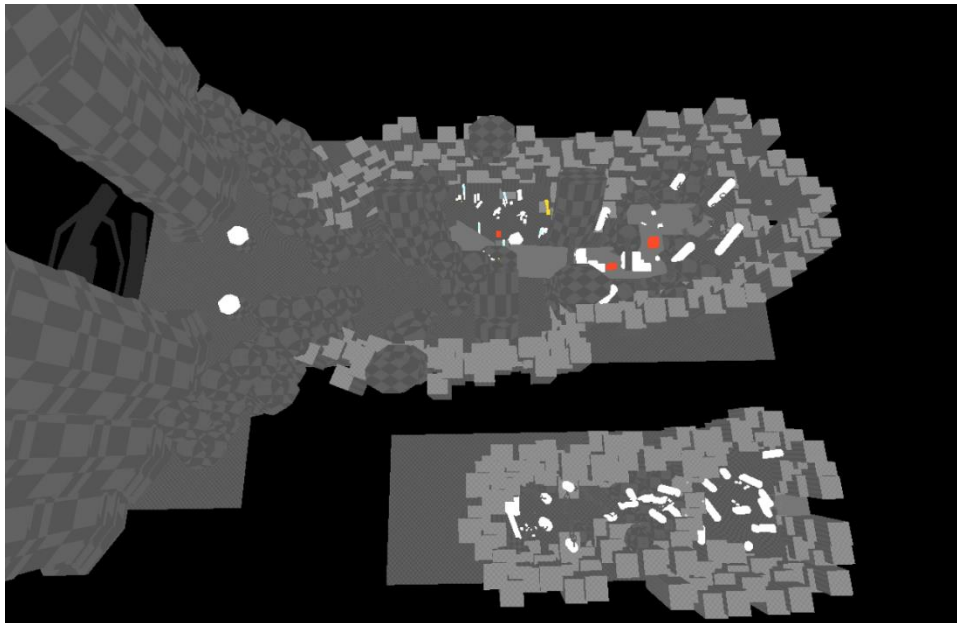
Level Design Document

Adam Jones

Sunken Dream Overview

Similar to all other Dark Picture titles, the Prologue is used as the tutorial for new and returning players of the series in which the players will be introduced to the worlds setting, mechanics and the mysterious beginnings to the main plot.

The Prologue, called ‘Sunken Dream’, will take two researcher’s point of views as they are currently running away from an unknown entity that has shook the duo. They end up crashing and are forced to move ahead on foot – where they find an impossible city.



WOW Moments

- A classic ‘Directional QTE’ introduction to the gate that leads to ‘R’lyeh’
- Searching the dead city remains while foreign noises beating in the distance
- Showcase moment of ‘something’ waking up causing level to shake and scare characters – they hear Whispers that foreshadows the hallucinations system
- When the chaos ensues, the Player will be introduced to the ‘Remaining Still’ mechanic and then into a harsh choice that leads into the official beginning of the game

Features

Mechanics

The Deep Within is an interactive horror game in which the player will have to explore areas, complete puzzles and correctly pass action events. These mechanics are all shown in the Prologue level and are presented to the player throughout the game.

Systems

- **Interactive Dialogue** – *Throughout the game the dialogue will be interactive by allowing the player to choose their response which can alter game choices further into the game / development.*

Tutorialised Mechanics

- **Inventory** – *Players can acquire items throughout the game specific to who they are in control with, these characters can then use these items/tools later for gameplay changes.*
- **Choices and Action Events** – *Characters will be placed into situations to make harsh choices that drastically change the flow of the plot and even gameplay (some causing characters to die). Action Events refer to the quick time events throughout the game such as: QTE, Button mashing, Heartbeat, Aiming etc.*

Unique Mechanics

- **Collectables** – *2 of X collectables included in the Prologue level that are categorised as: a) Gameplay hints (Deaths, Choices and Injuries) and b) Unravels (Revealing the story of how/what is happening).*
- **Whispers** – *As the game is set within cosmic horror and all its madness, there will be the use of Whispers that signify the starting of certain attacks or events. For example, when the player hears a Whisper, they will start to hallucinate causing monsters and even the environment to alter. These events can also start to stack and mentally drain the player – meaning that continuous failure with certain QTEs will start to spiral the player even further than what normally would take place.*

Gameplay Modes

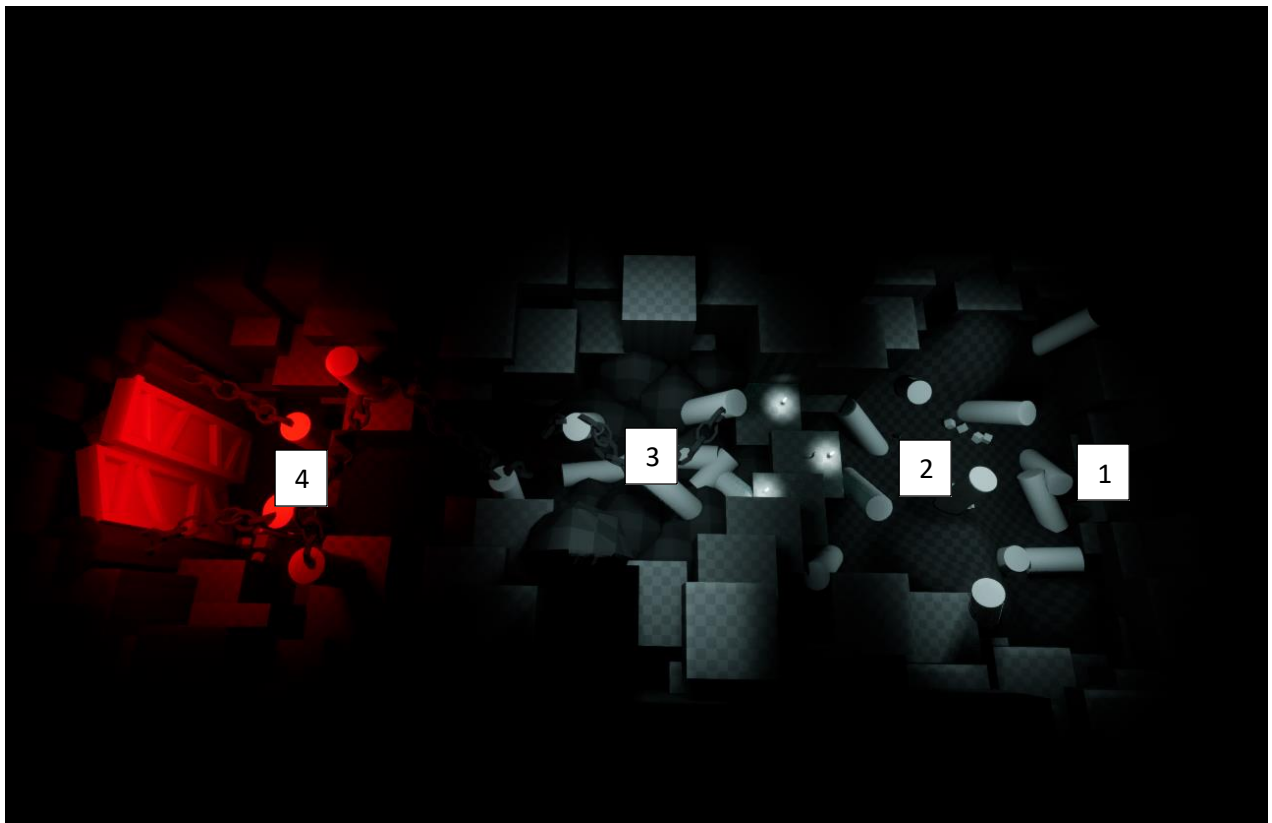
The Dark Picture games are crafted to blend the traditional cutscenes of other games and the freedom that usually follows. However, this series can blend the two to create a fantastic cinematic journey. The two forms are showcased as

- **Exploration Mode** – *This mode is usually given to the Player allowing them full control with their Character, this includes being able to search the area for secrets/collectables which can help inform the Players decisions while also giving new dialogue/options for the Characters. This mode has been further enhanced throughout the games by adding more movement options and in world puzzles for the Players to complete.*
- **Cinematic Mode** – *This mode is easily the more prominent game mode within the Dark Picture Series giving each game the film like feeling and the incredible cinematic experiences the game provides. With this mode the Players will be made to participate in Dialogue selections, that affects Character personalities and information, and QTE, which help keep attention kept throughout important cinematic scenes – such as Chase scenes and Fight scenes.*

With the nature of this level design being more aimed towards creating an environment to harbour my design intentions, it will be marked and made clear in what areas and moments that the cinematic mode will be active. This will help narrow the aim towards completion and will help get across the direction of the game.

Main Beats

- 1) Opening scene into the two researchers rushing away from an unknown entity. They are frantically discussing what it was and how to inform the Observatory, while they are chaotically talking, blaming the situation on their 'Adventurous' activities – they completely disregard the position of their watercraft allowing it to crash.
- 2) The researchers are now forced to disembark the craft and make their way on foot. They activate flashlights with the suits giving them vision onto the ruined architecture starting a dialogue between the two about what it is they find. As they look ahead – they spot old blown around gear and a left-over beacon that is dimly lit, giving them a path to take. As the characters are searching, a group of fish fly past blowing into the character unless the Player can complete the Directional QTE.
- 3) With the QTE passed, and a short dialogue between the two, the NPC Character then fires off a short flare down a passageway to reveal a large ancient door standing in their way. After a short word, they decide to mount over some rubble (with the help of 'Button QTEs') and make their way towards the door. If the QTE is passed successfully, the player will make it over with ease. If not however, the player will trip and break a small bit of their suit.
- 4) The characters run towards the door as they hear Whispers from behind them. Once the characters reach the door, the Player is required to complete a 'Button Mash' to break a pillar – breaking through the door. After the door is successfully opened, a large flow of water bursts from behind them dragging the two relentlessly into the unknown.



- 5) As the characters wake up after the large burst, they find themselves in front of a broken bridge that is littered with rubble. Sharp arches that somehow hold impossible lights in the water's depths light up the area around them. The player then climbs over initial rubble and then uses the more advanced movement to get through the area and onto the next. As the two walk forward, the players character fires off a flare to help the characters see in the murky water.
- 6) After a short dialogue, the character finds a broken aged data pad (Standard to that of the Observatory) showcasing the 'Inspection mechanic' within the game. After a short moment of activation, the character plays its final audio log – This audio is the final recordings of what seems to be a research team that first found this city and how they came to perish, setting a dark tone for the duo. With this over with, the Player is now given full control and can explore the area.

- 7) The player in this section is able to search and inspect (3) objects that give information for Players to piece together. These objects include Broken Helmet, Large Hieroglyphics and Collectable. These are inspectable items that are required to be found and examined to allow for the Player to progress and to also show them the general inspect usages.
- 8) After the Players have examined the area and collected the various items, the Characters are then thrown into a dilemma. After the two are progressing through the unknown city, A deafening Whisper is heard by the two that forces them to their knees. After collecting themselves they look towards where the Whisper came from. It is here that the Whisper is first shown to the Player, foreshadowing its use throughout the game.
- 9) After the following event, the two are shook from their moment of safety and hear the incoming rush of noises (The same that forced them to run initially). This shoves the Characters into a mad dash further into the city. While running, the two halt swiftly at the noise ahead of them. Something is hidden by the darkness, and the two researchers refuse to move. This sends the Player into the Heartbeat Mechanic.
- 10) Success or Failure sends the Player into a continuation to their mad dash. Near the end of the run, the secondary Character falls after the Whispers begin to grow and grow. This creates the first Choice, which offers either the Players' Character to go back and help his ally up or to continue running away in an attempt to save himself.
- 11) Choosing the Help option will send the Character back to assist his Ally and the to take shelter towards a nearby structure. After hobbling within the building, his Ally lets go and steps to the side on what he perceives as a normal floor, until it's impossible geometry makes the Ally fall down into a deep pit. The sight terrifies the Character who runs outside in fear back down the path he appeared from. Choosing the Run option will send the player straight on the same path he began with, as he runs the Player is able to hear the cries of his Ally.

- 12) After selecting either, the Player will end up in the same position, that being further down the path in a terrified state. Running further down the path increases the strength of the Whispers until the Character is unable to move anymore without falling to his knees, holding his head in agony. The Character looks up to see multiple crystals light up the murky shadows that reveal gigantic, towering gates that sit at the front of the silhouette of a grotesque monolithic citadel. The Character is stunned at what he sees.
- 13) As the rush of noise catches up with the Character, the alien eye of a hidden goliath form that had been staring at him, as the Character looked on, his mind begins to deteriorate, and the scene ends with the rush of noise catching up and cuts just as he is taken.

