

Overview

Purpose of This Document

This simultaneously a reference Guide, as well as a story bible which we will work on every Saturday until satisfactory.

High Concept

Aphotic Descent is a First-Person underwater horror game where a team of divers are sent out to investigate the disappearance of a mobile research base. When the team's submarine is damaged due to a sudden impact, the player is stranded on the ocean floor. Separated from the crew, it is up to the player to evade horrifying creatures and discover the truth hidden in the Mariana Trench.

Narrative Concept

Three divers are sent to investigate the disappearance of a mobile research base. As they descend towards their destination however, they are greeted by the ruins of a mysterious facility and wreckages rivaling that of the Bermuda Triangle.

The game begins with a simple escape puzzle utilizing the knife and flashlight to navigate through parts of the ship in order to reach the bathysphere; essentially a deep sea elevator. The player character says their goodbyes to the other two divers, and begins their descent towards the ocean floor.

As you are admiring the sea floor around you, a sudden flash of light and a loud impact strikes the submarine above you, disconnecting the bathysphere & sending it hurling into the void.

The player character wakes up with no signal from their submarine, and a damaged bathysphere rapidly filling with water. Just barely managing to put on the diving suit and escape the sea craft, the player's priority becomes survival as you begin to wander the sea floor with strange things hanging just out of sight.

Eventually you discover that small pockets of the facility are still intact, many of them overrun by strange creatures and covered in natural growths.

Follow as the player-character searches for a way to reach the surface, whilst being chased deeper and deeper into the belly of the beast

Narrative Team Considerations

Making the Dream Work

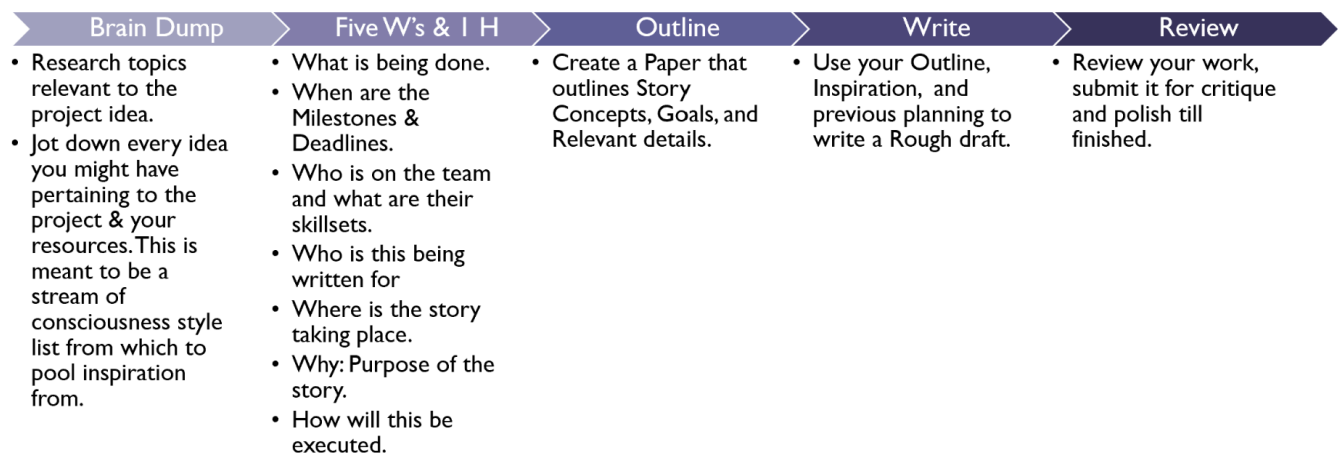
“Teamwork makes the dream work” is a phrase you’ve probably heard before. This is because of how fundamentally powerful a team of people can be when putting their minds together on a problem or project. In our case, our team is working to bring a narrative experience that frightens and enchants our audience, as well as keeps them hooked into the game as a whole.

Collaboration & Feedback

[Prolific Author Brandon Sanderson on Writing Groups](#)

- Don't be afraid to reach out that's #1
- Try to always bring up the positives and negatives when critiquing.
- YES-&-ing is incredibly important

Narrative Pipeline



Meat & Potatoes

Main Content Philosophy

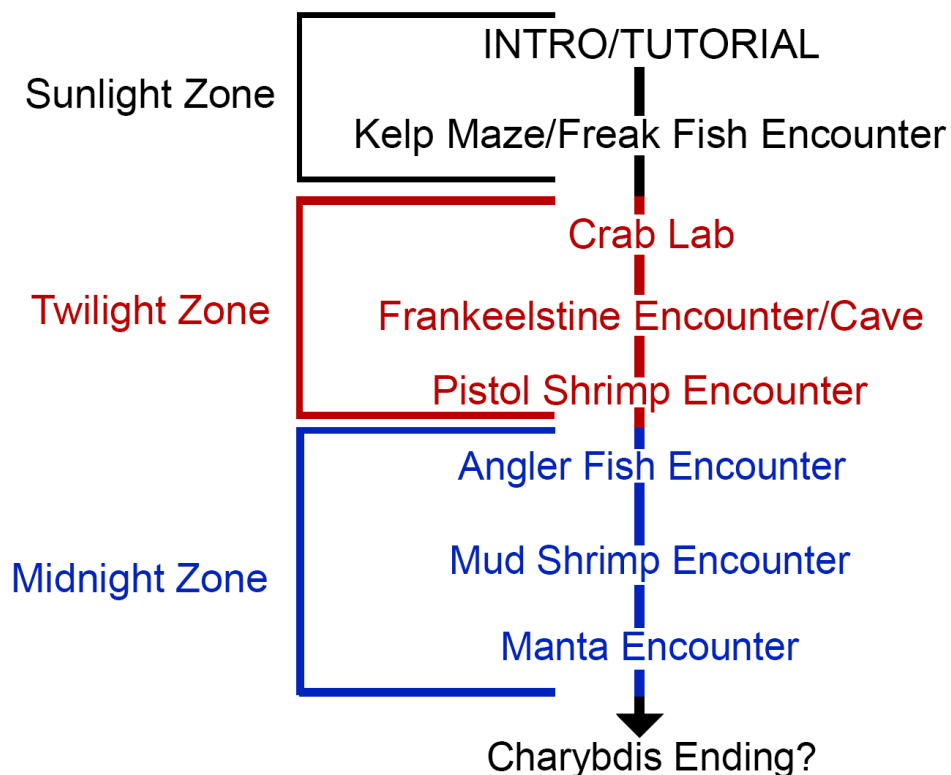
- Showcase the terror and beauty of the things found at the bottom of the ocean.
- Keep players on edge with subtle atmospheric horror, alongside the immediate threats.
- Make sure to make sure the Narrative feeds into the gameplay and aesthetic without stealing the spotlight.

Horror via Gameplay

Ensure that we have the narrative lead into building the atmosphere, but doesn't take away from the direct threat presented by the gameplay.

- Visual Hallucinations
- Audio Errors concerning Helmet mic
- Voices in the darkness
- Hidden messages revealed by black light, perhaps trigger lore events
- Notes in dry places
- Audio logs hidden for fun maybe
- Jumpscare used tastefully
- More cutscenes should be done with player control but this is not a hard rule

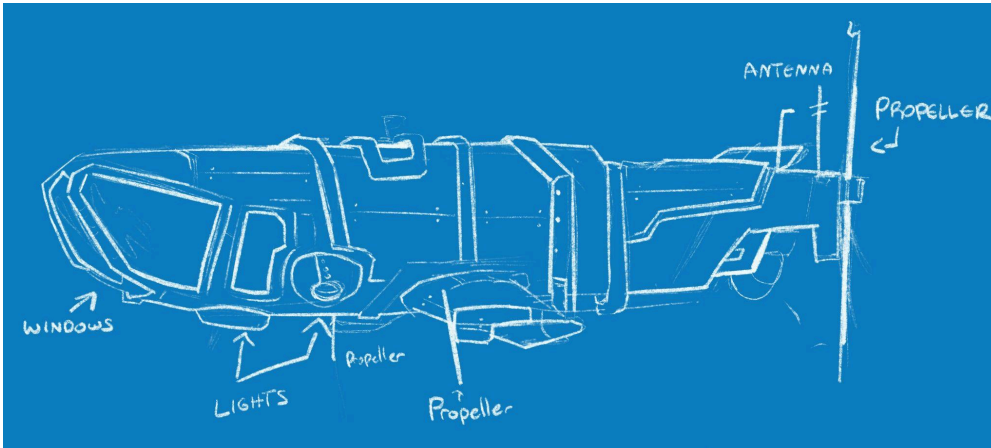
Story Overview



Sunlight Zone

"Since most light reaches this zone, this is where most marine life thrives. This zone is characterized by active coral reefs and vibrant animals. Warmth and light from the sun provides an abundance of food for all creatures. While this zone inspires much awe, there is still a sense of mystery and artificial security."

Intro(Tutorial + Bathysphere)



We have two characters other then the diver;

Commander Caspian (Commanding, Stern, but understanding)
Lieutenant Morgan (Friendly, Kind, Energetic)

The three of you are sent by the Marshall & Waits company to investigate the state of the Mobile Research Base CARCINOS. the story beats are

- You come up upon the trench but it's just out of sight, looking only like shapes in the distance.
- They give you information on why your here
- Then the Submarine puzzle begins
- During the puzzle, the two Npcs will guide you through using the tools to get to the back of the ship



Once you complete the puzzle you descend in the bathysphere and get a clear view of the shoulder of the base and undersea mountains surrounding it (twin peaks that look like jaws) but then the submarine is attacked by the manta and the bathysphere hurtles into the abyss landing at the beginning of the game.

This is a script in progress for Jared

Crash Zone

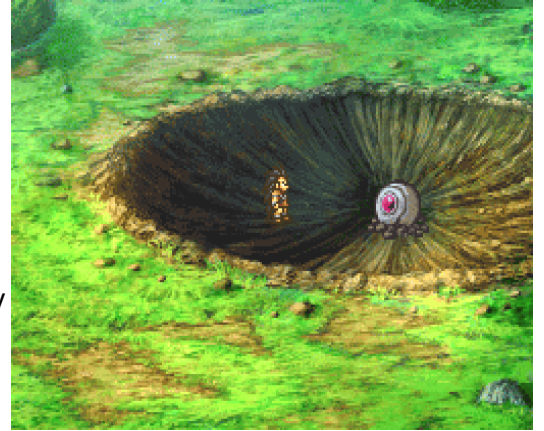
Player awakens and exits the pod faced with a coral reef and debris from the attack on the submarine.

Once exiting the bathyscaphe, the player witnesses the freshly damaged submarine, hurtling in the direction of the lab.

Having no other choice, the player begins their journey in that very same direction.

It's soon after that the player is greeted with the apparition of a Scientist/Diver, muttering to himself about a Discovery, and this place being locked off.

As you follow this "Echo" You are eventually led to the beginnings of the Kelp Forest.



Kelp Maze

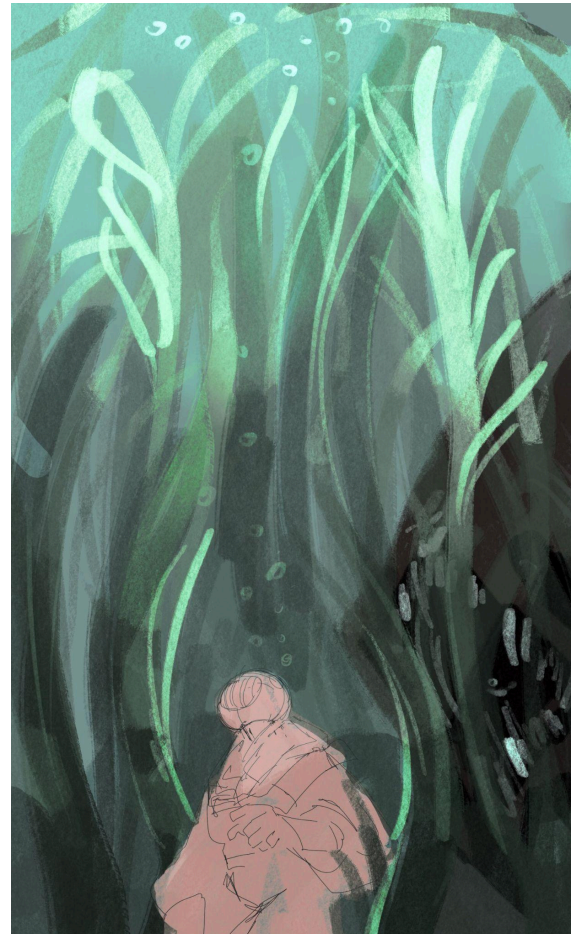
Credits to - Charles

Greeted with the kelp maze, they continue to hear the apparition speaking to itself in the distance, however this time the voice is distorted and repeating as if glitched.

Finally the player is led to the body of a dead researcher, with an audio recording playing on repeat.

It turns out this echo is tied to Dr Kepler, a researcher with a strange obsession with the inhabitants of the kelp zone. This is despite it being "Off limits" due to the many casualties caused by the freak fish.

It's through his Data & Audio logs, that the player is made aware of the puzzle, enemy, and base just beyond the maze.



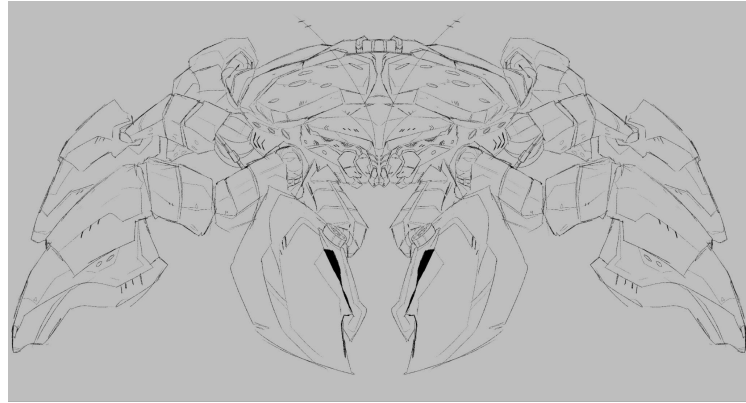
Twilight Zone

"This zone is cold, dim, and rough on the edges. With barely any light, most creatures here are predators or scavengers. The lack of light introduces marine life that produces bioluminescence! Sea creatures begin to look weird and prehistoric and encounters begin to be frequent. It is no longer safe, and it begins to feel unsettling in this unfamiliar place. This zone provides a new challenge as new explorable areas are unveiled."

Coming Upon the Lab + Lab Hide n' Seek

Note - This is WIP for Charles

Once escaping the maze, the player is greeted by what looks to be the body of an enormous Crab, keeled over on the side of a mountain. However, once coming upon it, the player recognizes it as the lab from earlier and swims up into its moon pool. This section concerns learning the fate of its crew whilst gaining the blacklight + Invis Suit Upgrades.



We learn that the researchers initially created the blacklight to investigate the strange messages hidden on walls. Eventually however, these messages turned from communication to threats, as the creatures found in this place began to become more and more violent. In response, the researchers developed the Invis suit to protect divers from harm.

This ramp up in workplace accidents, along with the strange reports from staff members of ghosts in the water (the Echos) as well as encroaching overgrowth at an alarming pace lead to tension and chaos. The final straw came when a huge underwater earthquake shook the lab and dislodged its many sister bases.

Hint at Eel + Exit towards cave

Eventually the later half of the level will communicate that a creature escaped the lab, scorching lichtenberg scars all along its path.

This is revealed through the lore notes to be Frankeelstine, a creature that was tortured and mutilated into an abomination. One of many it seems.

Frankeelstine Encounter + Pistol Shrimp encounter

WIP for Charles + Gracie

This I've left blank because it's being worked on, but I think it will probably center around the eel + electricity + a sadder tone despite it being terrifying.

Shrimp Love story pt.1

One of Intern Doug's two giant pet fish

Midnight Zone Narrative

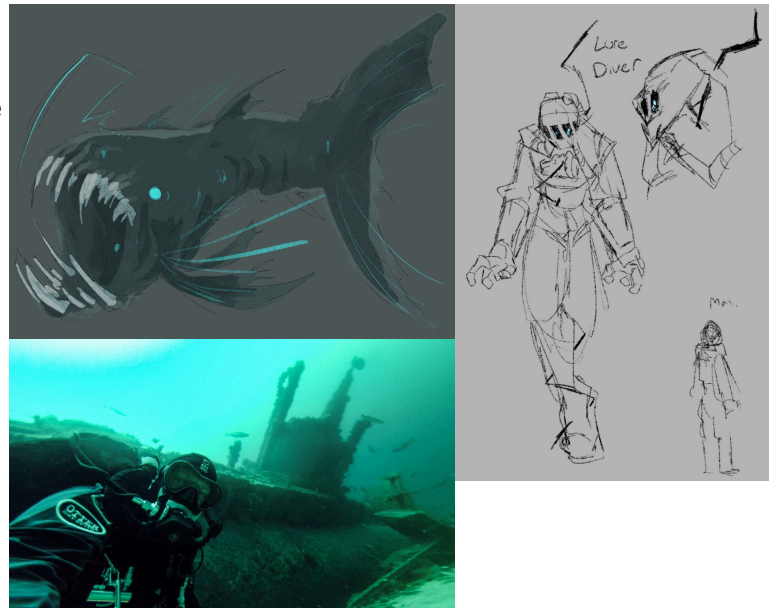
"From here on out, there is no light. The creatures become either ghostly or huge but terrifying regardless. Big monsters and creatures rule this zone and are not friendly to visitors. Creatures can easily blend in and camouflage within the darkness. The lack of light makes food scarce, making these creatures compete with each other. They are extremely sensitive to light and movement. The stakes increase as danger becomes merciless and eager for food. This is as dark as it gets but the circumstances will worsen and become dreadful until the end."

Angler Fish + Fate Of Submarine

WIP

We'd Find the Crashed whale sub and one of the two divers controlled by the Angler fish.

This is a haunting uncomfortable bit in near darkness.



Mud Shrimp + Beginnings of Ray's Queendom

Credits to Gracie

Shrimp Love story pt.2

Mud shrimp intern Dan spliced with his beloved pet giant shrimp.

Pistol Shrimp shows up for surprise tag team fight

Pistol shrimp kills mud shrimp and self terminates due to sadness 😞

Credits to Gracie for Ray's Queendom

Once Shrimp Man's been dealt with, we begin to come upon what looks like naturally formed structures that almost feel like homes formed from the crust (SHELL?!?!) of a creature



Ray's Queendom

Queen Fight slay

still being worked on but a fun concept for the location is having it be what looks like a gladiatorial arena made from natural formations.

You would then finally exit into the last bit of lab, but this one is fully submerged and damaged as hell.



Ending!?(TBD)

Lore

Lore Philosophy

The environment is numero uno (yes)

Lore delivery device should make some lore useful in puzzles so that they are motivated

Lovecraftian/Creeping Horror

Some things just can't be understood, and that's terrifying.

Setting

Marshal & Waits™ is a for profit company concerned with dominating the scientific world. It is a well known fact that any discovery or invention founded under their contract pays handsomely, so researchers are encouraged to produce results by any means possible.

Mobile research Base CARCINOS is owned by Marshal & Waits™ and was created in order to study deepsea phenomena all across the world.

- Like most of their technology, the base has an animal theme: that of a gigantic mechanical Crustacean.

A Sleeping Leviathan (Possible name, [Charybdis](#)) of impossible size provides nutrients and [Icor - a rapid evolutionary agent](#), that allows for the formation of an ecosystem on/within its body. The creatures here consist of twists on common sea creatures, long dead species, as well completely new ones entirely unique to its domain.

- It uses its ghost-like visions (Echoes) and small bioluminescent [bacteria/zooplankton \(the blacklight stuff\)](#) to communicate with the player and is both highly intelligent and aware.
- It has a direct relationship with the manta, acting much as a pilot fish might symbiotically bond with a shark.
- Its is hostile towards those from the facility, but is altogether neutral/curious towards the player's disposition
- As a result of this, things like the coral bodies as well as the skull coral started appearing as warning signs.

Cast & Crew

Player Character (nick name tbd)

Height: 6ft

Name: The diver, Rook/Rookie, Newby.

Skill Set: Diving and Research

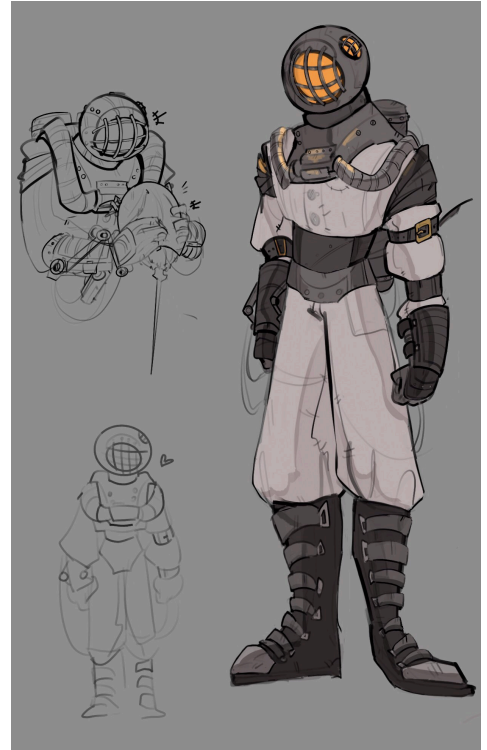
Biography:...

Intentions Concerning The game:

- Is reactive, but generally quiet.

Concepts To Expand Upon:

- Proficient in underwater research.
- Flashlight and Knife
- Log device
- Is inquisitive and determined but suffers from thalassophobia
- Has strange visions and hears auditory delusions on underwater mic.



Commander Caspian

Age: 52

Gender: Male

Race/Ethnicity: White

Height: 5' 9"

Build: Full built, muscular but not "buff"

Key Visual Traits/Quirks: Graying spiked hair, goatee,

Key Personality traits: Hardass but not without his soft side.

Cares deeply about the mission but not more than his crew.

Short Biography: A veteran member in the organization that sends the crew to investigate the distress signal from the lab.

Been going on deployments for a long time and seen many people pass under his leadership. His new team consists of Morgan and the Player character. Morgan has lasted the longest on his team as most people desert or ask for new assignments.

Intentions Concerning The game: Will be one of the voices tutorializing the player I the submarine before the crash. Will also serve as a natural motivator for the player as the mission turns from investigating the lab to rescue the diving team. I intended for him to die at the end of the game rescuing the player.



Junior Lieutenant Henrietta Morgan

Name: Henrietta Morgan

Age: 37

Gender: Female

Race/Ethnicity: Black

Height: 5' 5"

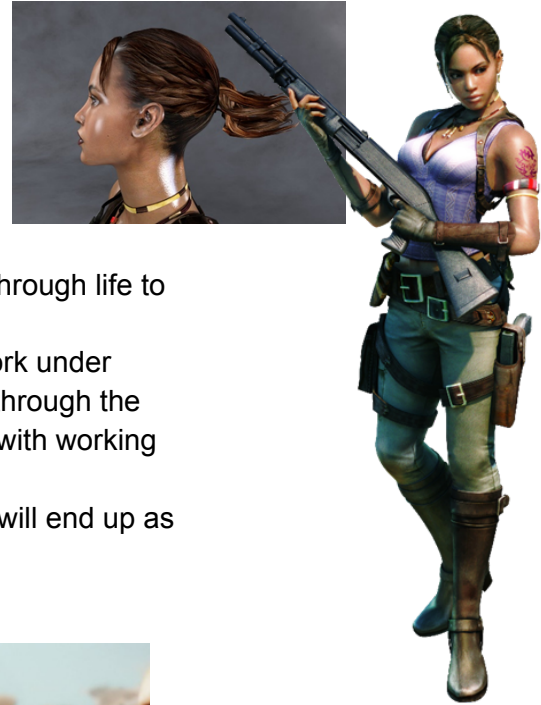
Build: Toned

Key Visual Traits/Quirks: Short braided side hair. Bangs

Key Personality traits: Doesn't like to work hard. Wants to coast through life to a comfy desk job.

Short Biography: Despite being averse to work she sought out work under Caspian. As those who make it through his leadership tend to rise through the ranks quicker. Eager for this opportunity to retire early she puts up with working harder than others now to not have to work at all later in life.

Intentions Concerning The game: Will not survive the crash and will end up as the diver attached to the angler.



Dr Kepler

Name: Zach Kepler

Age: 34

Gender: Male

Race/Ethnicity: White

Height: 5' 5"

Build: Skinny smol

Key Visual Traits/Quirks: glasses bald

Key Personality traits: Selfish hubris "goblin like" irritable cant take a joke.

Short Biography: Scientist stationed on the crab. He oversees the research in the kelp forest. After the outbreak of the freak fish and the corruption of the kelp forest he becomes obsessed with researching the freak fish to publish it as a scientific breakthrough. Furious that Director Peek suspends all research in the kelp forest he continues experiments in secret. During the tragedy of the crab lab, he is killed in the kelp forest by the freak fish.

Serves as a natural mechanism to teach the player about the freak fish and the kelp lab level. The player finds his notes as collectible logs as well as his corpse during playthrough.

Intentions Concerning The game: Serves as a natural mechanism to teach the player about the freak fish and the kelp lab level. The player finds his notes as collectible logs as well as his corpse during playthrough.



Catalina

Name: Angel Catalina

Age: 33

Gender: Female

Race/Ethnicity: Latina

Height: 6' 2"

Build: slim but Toned

Key Visual Traits/Quirks: Mole under left eye Brown hair ponytail/ long hair boots

Key Personality traits: Secretive, "mean girl", Calculated, Confident

Short Biography: An ichthyologist stationed at the crab lab. Merely tolerates her coworkers. The sole reason all the bad things happen to the crew. Her torment of the eel is the catalyst for the lab's destruction. It is also the reason for the creation of the upgrades to the suit and the light.

Intentions Concerning The game: Her research creates the suit and light upgrade. She turns the eel into a franken eel. She also puts the events in motion that destroy the crab lab killing its crew.



Sammy Peek

Name: Samantha Peek

Age: 39

Gender: Female

Race/Ethnicity: White

Height: 5'9"

Build: Well endowed short yet full hair. Heels

Key Visual Traits/Quirks: glasses,

Key Personality traits: polite, kind, distressed, overworked.

Short Biography: Lead scientist and director of operations in the crab lab. She can feel everything around her slip through her fingers as little by little as the disasters that befall The lab piles up. Believes everyone is good inside everyone which ultimately leads her to be deceived by Catalina.

Intentions Concerning The game: Her death at the hands of Catalina is the event that Causes the eel to escape and which causes the crab to lose power and strands the crew. Which kills them.



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Intern Doug

Name: Austin Douglass

Age: 25

Gender: Male

Race/Ethnicity: White

Height: 6'4"

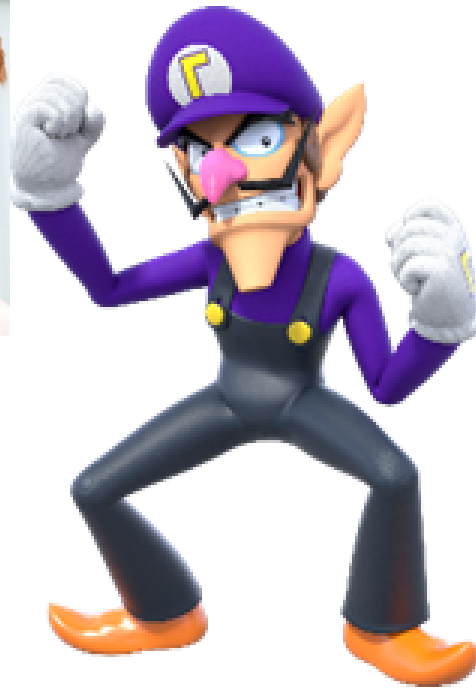
Build: Tall lanky

Key Visual Traits/Quirks: freckled ginger short hair

Key Personality traits: trusting optimistic kind helpful happy

Short Biography: The lab team's assistant. Think of Austin like an intern. Helps in everyone's research. His helpful spirit will be taken advantage of by Catalina and Kepler the later of which will get him killed in the kelp maze. Which is the incident that has Peek suspend operations in the forest. Catalina will take advantage of him mutilating his corpse to keep the eel alive.

Intentions Concerning The game: Assistant to the scientist meant to be a device that drives home the depravity of the scientist and meant to hammer home themes and reinforce core values.



Doc Blackwell

Name: Dwayne Blackwell

Age: 61

Gender: Male

Race/Ethnicity: Black

Height: 5'8"

Build: dad bod

Key Visual Traits/Quirks: slightly overweight balding but not bald

Key Personality traits: tentative, doesn't like to jump the gun, worried that the younger scientists don't think things through.

Short Biography: A standard physician stationed at the crab. Friends with Peek. An old soul.

Intentions Concerning The game: Completes the autopsy on Austin after his death in the forest.



Captain Morrison

Name: Frederick Morrison

Age: 58

Gender: Male

Race/Ethnicity: White

Height: 5'10"

Build: bulky in figure; heavily built; corpulent; thickset; fat

Key Visual Traits/Quirks: big beard captain hat

Key Personality traits: Superstitious respects the ocean.

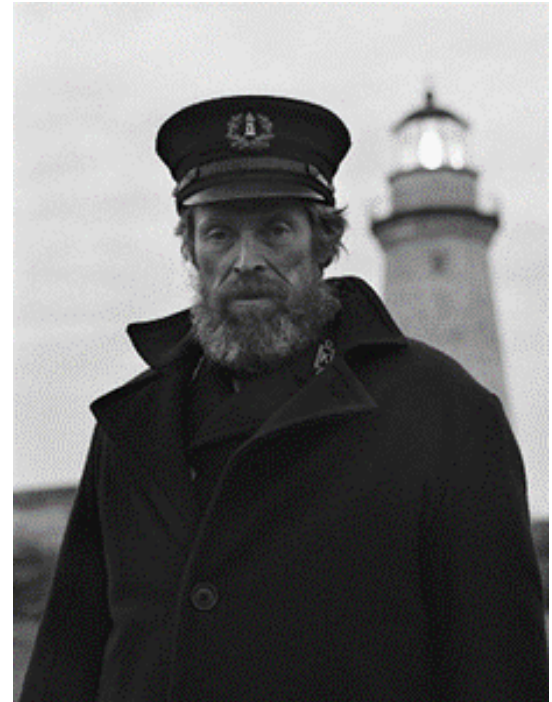
Grounded in tall tales and

The crew perceives him as a bit crazy.

Short Biography: Used to be a ship captain in the navy before joining the Organization.

Thinks that the cook and the doctor are the only "sane" people in the crab. Detests the scientists' general disregard for the ocean and folklore.

Intentions Concerning The game: his office is where the light upgrade is as he was using it as a lighter to smoke his pipe in his final moments before his death.



Chef Matty

Name: Daniel Matty

Age: 45

Gender: Male

Race/Ethnicity: White

Height: 5' 6"

Build: round boy

Key Visual Traits/Quirks: mustache

make him like this ->

Key Personality traits: jokey lighthearted.

Short Biography: Ex-navy cook stationed in the crab. Gets along with

Everyone But specifically Morrison. The two share drinks and stories at night.

Intentions Concerning The game: The kitchen is an area the player has to enter to solve the puzzles in the crab.



Monster Encyclopedia

Shrimp Man



Height: 9ft

Name: *Pandalus borealis*

Skill Set:

Biography:

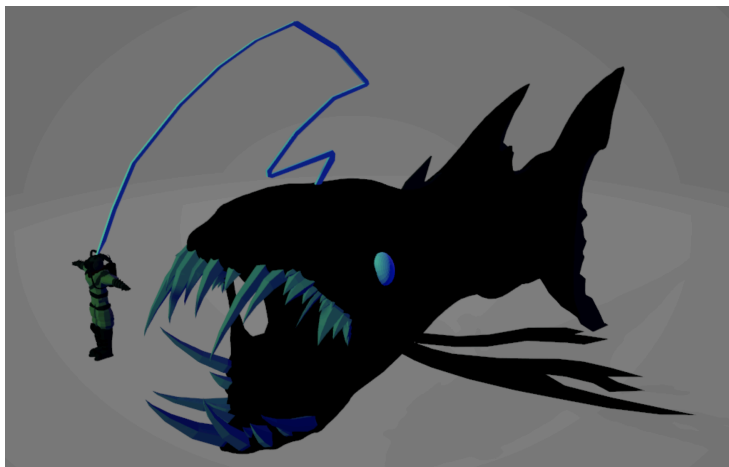
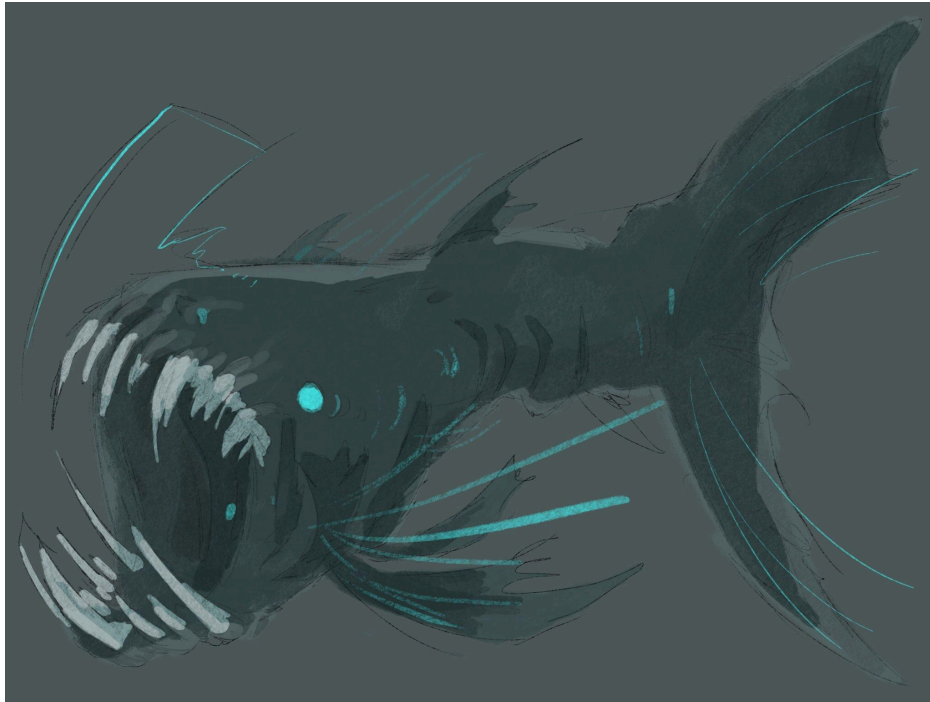
Intentions Concerning The game:

Concepts To Expand Upon:

- Ambush Predator
- Abomination, constantly in pain.
- John carpenters the fly



Angler Fish



Height:

Name: *Bufoceratias wedli*

Skill Set:

Biography:

Intentions Concerning The game:

- The lure would be one of the two you descended with originally.

Concepts To Expand Upon:

- Intelligent.

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- Props up a body as its puppet.
- Diver body will grab you when close, this is a fail state.
- Can speak through diver, and perhaps retains recent memory.
- Less articulate when speaking directly & not pretending/teasing.
- Is Bio electric, can remain invisible even under direct blacklight, but has glowing patterns & eyes that always remain visible.
- Siphons electricity from the facility, and hinders technology.
- [Ends in chase scene for exit](#)

The Key focus is an angler fish monster, and its hideous brood. They are feeding off the power so the lights are flickering & access to the rest of the facility is cut off.

This section focuses on using the echo gun to reroute power in order to get to the third portion of the building. Through the level the angler is a looming threat, choosing to lure and harass you by propping up one of your crewmates from earlier in the game and speaking with their voice. (the person being used as a lure changes based on which route you picked earlier on) We also get more direct confrontation with the false diver. Once the powers successfully rerouted the level becomes a chase scene, wherein a pissed off angler fish is charging at you in the dark down corridors lit up by bioluminescent sea slugs leading towards the exit. Once you successfully escaped the mama angler, it's out of the frying pan and into the fire

Shark Pup



Height: 15ft

Name: *Squalus acanthias*

Skill Set:

Biography:

Intentions Concerning The game:

Concepts To Expand upon

Freak Fish



Height:

Name: *Serrasalmus brandtii*

Skill Set:

Biography:

Intentions Concerning The game:

Concepts To Expand Upon:

Pistol Shrimp

Height:

Name: *Alpheus digitalis*

Skill Set:

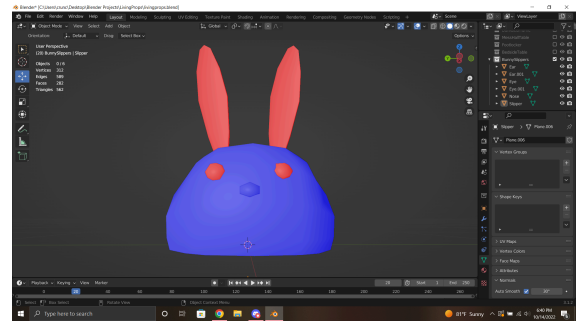
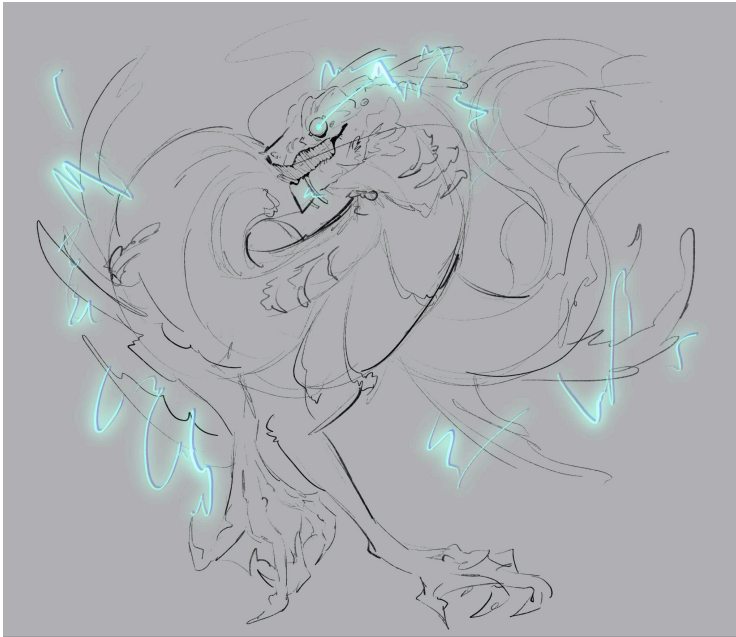
Biography:

Intentions Concerning The game:

Concepts To Expand Upon:

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Frankeelstine



Height:

Name: *Electrophorus electricus*,

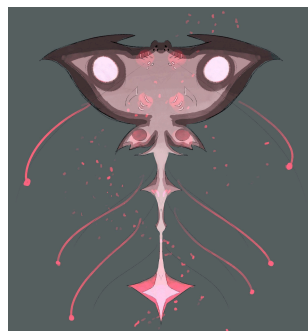
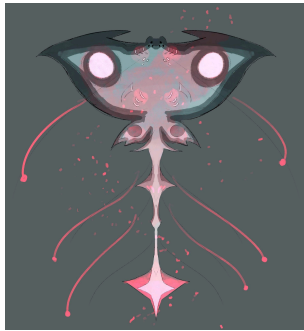
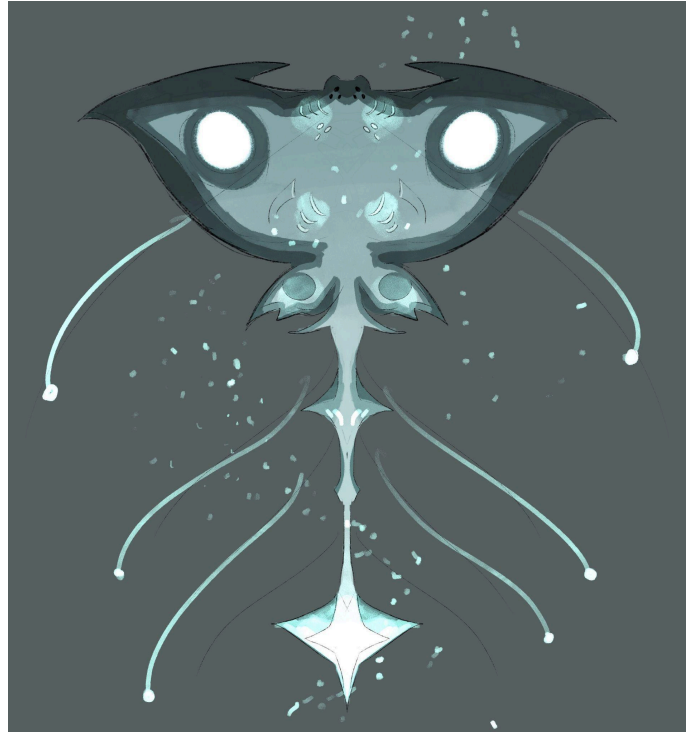
Skill Set:

Biography:

Intentions Concerning The game:

Concepts To Expand Upon:

Manta Queen



Height: ???

Name: **Scylla**

Skill Set:

Biography:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1beJgxrtetHk0mQDb-0K-vsLC1450PMzzDbGh-xsNI8o/edit?usp=sharing>

Intentions Concerning The game:

Sea Deity

Height: ???

Name: **Charybdis**

Skill Set:

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Biography:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1beJgxrtetHk0mQDb-0K-vsLC1450PMzzDbGh-xsNI8o/edit?usp=sharing>

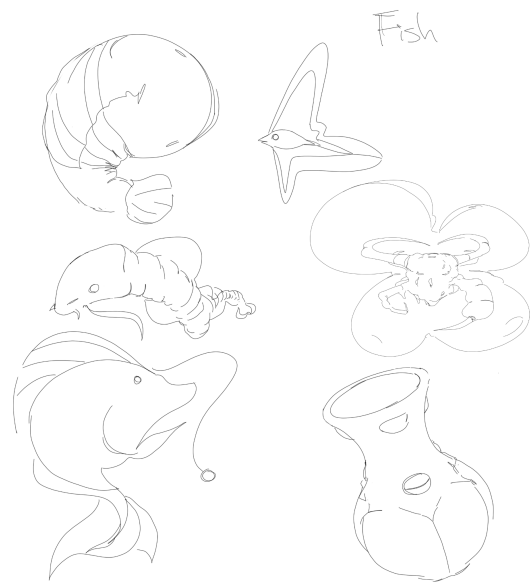
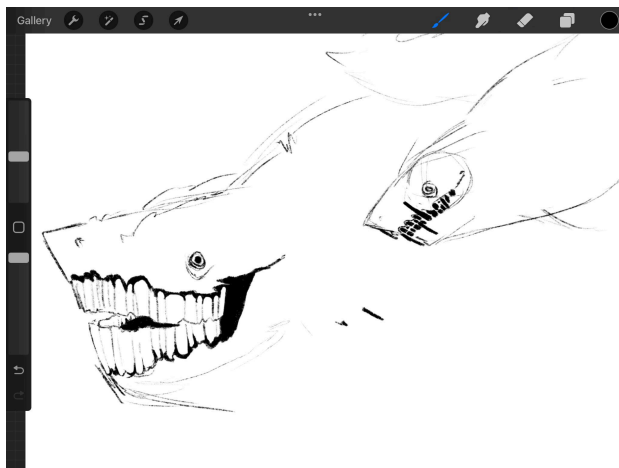
Intentions Concerning The game:

Concepts To Expand Upon:

Other fun creature ideas

- Crab Man
- Toothy Sharks

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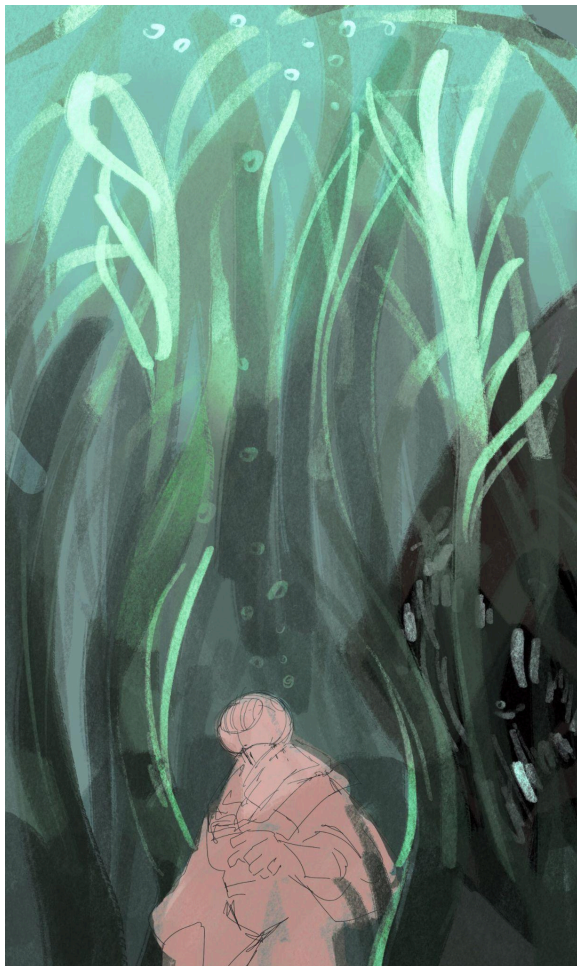
Locations

Submarine Intro

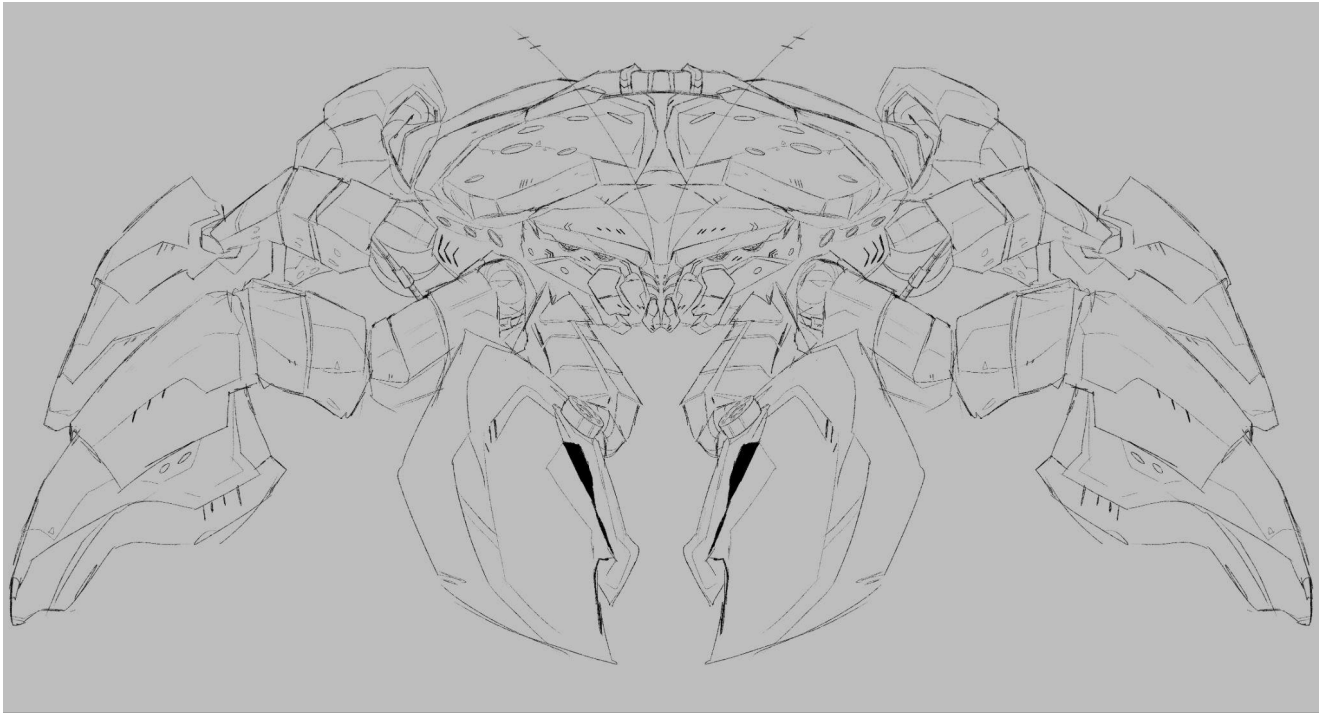
Crash Landing Area

Kelp Zone

A labyrinth of winding pathways bordered by stalks of kelp and rock faces. The diver enters the kelp forest after surviving being separated from the rest of the crew. The kelp forest is the home and natural hunting ground to the freak fish (name to be changed). In order to survive being hunted the diver must utilize the functions on his knife and flashlight. The diver can cut away at kelp stalks to create alternate pathways to outmaneuver the fish. Upon exiting the maze the diver stumbles upon the entrance to a dilapidated building. Quick to escape the forest he enters the building through the moonpool at the bottom. Safe from his pursuers the diver catches a brief respite inside the decaying laboratory. Unwilling to return to the kelp forest the diver ventures further into the laboratory.



Facility 1A (Crab Lab)



Eel Caverns/Lab research areas



Mud Pits

Facility 2A

Angler's Domain

Ray's Queendom (< BRUH)

Ruins

Chamber

Ideas To Workshop

GRACIE SLAYCIE ZONE

Ideas

- jumps between 2 themes

man made structure -> marine environment

(submarine) (reefs)

man made structure -> marine environment

(labs) (trenches)

man, technology, nature,

- 10/21 jumping off of living lab and nature reclaiming, could have players hand gradually grow barnacles as a subtle way to show theme without being verbal about it

Dan's Future Plans

Ideas 10/9/10

"living places"

1. lab becomes living

monster house movie

overgrown with corals, taken by monsters (subtle) strange growths?

map designed to resemble living thing

→ merges man made technology with nature (WRITTEN BY SLAYCIE GRACIE)

Charlie

Ideas

- Kepler
- Lab staff
- Eel subplot

Jared

Ideas

-

Well of INSPIRATION

Point of this?

Just a place to share things that inspire you, if they tie into the project even better!
Also this is totally optional, I just wanted a place to share stuff.

Wk1 Inspiration



[Jacob Geller's Fear of Big Things underwater](#) -Daniel H



[Jacob Geller's Fear of Depths](#) -Daniel H



[Pyrocynical's Why Iron Lung Is The Scariest Game Ever Made](#) -Daniel H

Wk2 Inspiration