

# The Drownyard

## Premise

This dungeon is themed around loss, grief, and confusion. Included mechanics include areas that don't logically connect, dungeon segments that 'appear' to wind into themselves, and large realms encapsulated in spatially inconsistent regions. It embodies grief and loss, and manifests that in the confusing and uncomfortable nature of the cave.

The Drownyard is a flooded cave inlet littered with corpses of wrecked ships nestled haphazardly among the jagged rocks that peek above the tumultuous waterline. It is an ominous and foreboding watery grave for ships and souls lost. There is no key to access, but rather, the surrounding terrain makes a treacherous and risky deterrent.

Dilapidated ship parts cover every inch of the dungeon and provide navigational challenges. Everything from small schooners and galleys to the largest seafaring junks and galleons can be found here. There are a few large puzzle areas that, upon completion, lead further and further down the cave.

Ghastly sounds and voices echo throughout the dungeon, acting as the primary draw to the end of this dungeon and providing ambience and guidance throughout the experience. This dungeon will break expectations of spatial understanding with areas and objects that seem to not belong.

*Narrative drive TBD.*

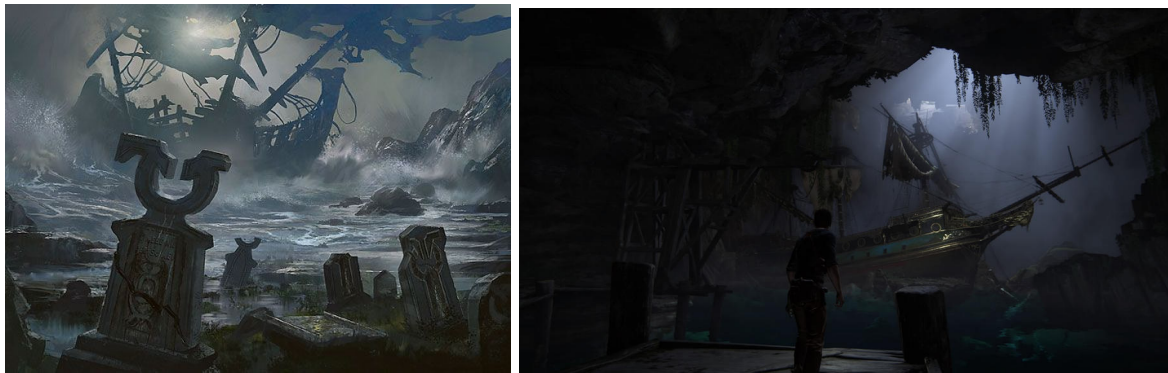
# Beats

## Setting

A defunct lighthouse marks the promontory above the Drownyard; from above, the howling of wind seeping into the dungeon is audible. The entrance to this dungeon is prominently embedded into a concave cliffside facing the rough water. Access is attained by scaling down the treacherous cliff face or through an array of jagged teeth of stone and flotsam that offend any naval vessels attempting to enter. Curiously, water appears to be drawn into the mouth of the cave, creating an event horizon of sorts that ships will inevitably fail to escape.

## Maw

This entrance is large enough to handle several small-sized encounters, with multiple squads of enemies scattered along the shipwrecks and rocks. The player will need to navigate from wreck to wreck in order to reach the narrow entry to the innards of the cave. Combat here remains relatively light, with more focus put on the navigation aspect and environmental set dressing.



Ref: Nephelia Drownyard (MTG), Ch. 22. A Thief's End (Uncharted 4)

This area funnels into a smaller entry where the water converges. A giant wreck blocks further access to the player.

## Rapids

- A few shallow rocky outcrops for footing allow access into this cave from above
- Slanted masts, shrouds, and flotsam allow passage along the wrecks and outcroppings
- Paths are narrow and uninviting, but evident

## Inlet Pool

- Wide, circular pool of churning water with wrecks and rocky perches
- Light encounters are scattered amongst the decks of the shipwrecks
- Debris continues to create solid bridges and grapple points to move from platform to platform

## Chokepoint

- Large frigate-sized vessel broken in half at the narrow passage, blocking access to the next area
- Ship deck provides access down into the next area via an open gunport or a hatch on the upper deck, visibly providing a path forward

## The Falls

The frigate at the entrance chokepoint opens up into the vast expanse of The Falls. This area clearly does not fit inside of the frigate and is a one-way trip down, guided by the flow of water. Instead, it exists as a spatial abstraction of the dungeon, backlit by a cosmic skybox to clearly connote the disorienting and reality-bending nature of the dungeon.

Floating scraps of debris and stone aesthetically fill the empty space alongside smaller nondescript sailing vessels. At the bottom of the Falls rests a spooky ship that foreshadows the final encounter.

## Descent

- A cascade of water falls down an out-of-place chasm complete with floating ship remains as platforms on the way down
- A large, moss-laden vessel lies lower down and acts as the focal point to anchor and guide the player
- Each significant ship on the way hosts a combat encounter that must be defeated for the path forward to open
- A derelict ship floats around and occasionally launches salvos of cannonfire at the platform the player is currently fighting on.
- The ship follows the player down and comes to a rest at the bottom of the waterfall, where the player may board the ship.

## Derelict Ship

- The freighter sports a giant cargo door cordoned off with metal chains and locking devices
- Upon landing on the deck of the freighter, a wave defense encounter is initiated
  - Defeating a wave will break one of the locks on the cargo door
  - OR
  - Waves assault the team as explosives are brought to the door to break the locks
- Opening the door reveals an exit to a deeper area in the real cave.



Ref: A moment, fractured (RoR2), Freighter debris (NMS)

## Winding Tunnel(s)

The tunnels are visibly downstream from the frigate chokepoint at the beginning of the cave and are approached by one of two paths. Water still continues to run down here and throughout the tunnel. The tunnels are naturally formed, with hints of wooden scraps and makeshift points of interest.

These eroded tunnels contain some loot and/or materials, and are similarly riddled with traps. Medium one-off combat encounters occur in the tunnels and navigation should be relatively easy, but the tunnels appearing to wind on themselves will give players pause.

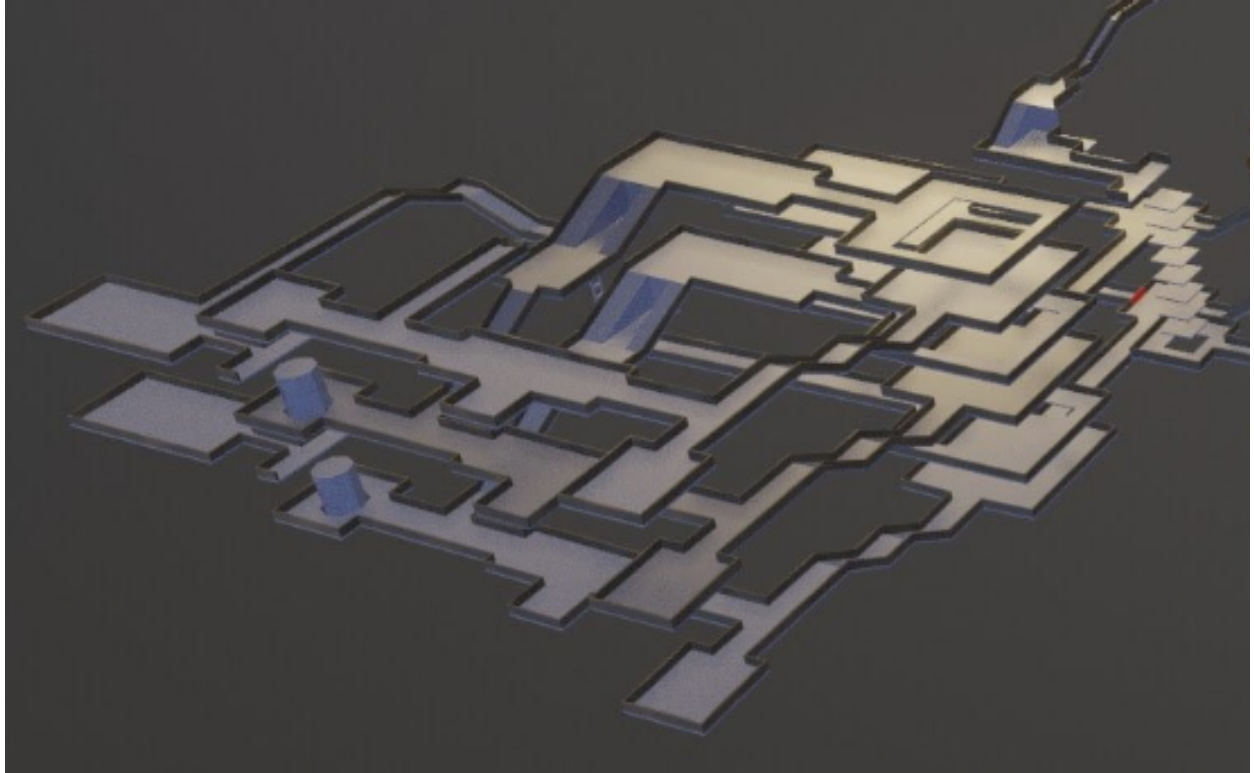
While these tunnels give the impression of looping the player, the tunnels in reality are stacked in such a way to create a puzzle; the player must learn the layout and understand where they are, locate the unlocking mechanism, and return to the start to find the open door forward. The key may be placed in a different location with each instance.

## Split Path

- Upper path leads to a series of parkour challenges off rock formations and blunted stalagmites
  - Additional loot can be found along the upper path
  - Falling will drop the player onto the lower path
  - No combat on the upper path, but enemies are visible below
- Lower path winds and slopes with the water stream down towards the shore lake
  - Player may backtrack to attempt the upper path
  - Contains several small-sized encounters
- Both paths lead to the beginning of the tunnel puzzle

## Tunnels

- A small chamber indicates the start of the winding tunnels
- A heavy locked set of double doors is visible in this beginning chamber, along with a tunnel down which the subsoil has been eroded
- A lever or key to unlock the path is hidden within the Winding Tunnels
- The tunnels will disorient the player, but will always seem to loop into itself with minor differences per floor; the unlocking mechanism is hidden on one of these floors
- When the door is unlocked, the bowsprit of a ship will be found protruding through the doorframe, propping the doors open



Ref: Leyndell Catacombs (ER)

## The Interior

This metal-clad sea-faring vessel is very much out of place in the doorway, and there is no reasonable explanation for why or how it ended up here. The walls of this passage are replaced with a similar cosmic space as a callback to the prior spatial distortion. The interior of this new ship holds a cloister of rooms that do not logically align with each other.

There are no enemies in this area, but ghastly howling can be heard coming from the interior of the ship.

### Topside

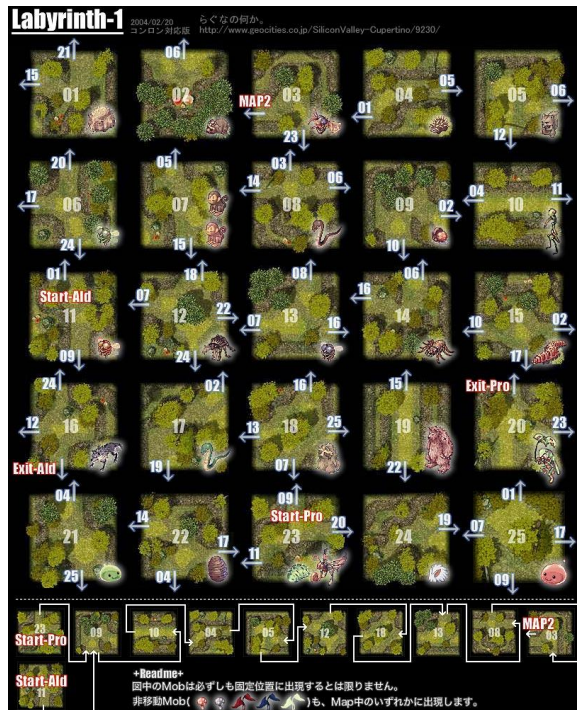
- Upon clambering onto the ship from the bow, the only clear way forward is a staircase leading below deck
- The upper deck is rusted with time and exposure to the elements

### Lower Deck

- Below deck, the ship layout does not conform with expectations of how the floorplan would in actuality be set
- There is a single room with a lit doorway entry to beckon the player in
- Junk and expired freight litter the space

### Cloister

- The door opens up to a wall of fog, which then leads to an instanced puzzle area comprised of multiple X-sided wooden platforms, seemingly torn from the hull of a ship
- Each room has an exit 'portal' on each side and has an identifying property (asset, color, shape, etc.) associated with it
- Portals do not necessarily lead back to the platform for which they served as an exit
- Players will, through trial and error or some other hinting mechanic, learn where each portal leads to get through the cloister and reach the end



Red: Hidden Temple (Ragnarok Online)

## Captain's Quarters

- The final cloister portal leads to a platform with the appearance of a captain's quarters
- When any player reaches this platform, all portals will redirect to this platform as well
- Various objects float around this platform suspended in space
- Additional loot is granted here
- This platform has one semi-complete wall with a glowing window framing a furnished desk
- The window can be obviously broken through to open a one-way drop into the Underground Lake



Ref: Captain's Quarters (Sea of Thieves)



## Underground Lake (Boss Area)

As is the case with the rest of the Drownyard, ruined vessels dot the surface and edges of the lake below as well as the entire path down. Prominently featured at the center of the lake via a shallow beam of light from a crack in the ceiling is a familiar derelict vessel that has seen better days. It is unclear how these ships ended up in this lake to begin with. The stream of water from above pours from around the ship the player just escaped from, heading down to fill the lake.

It is in this area where the phantasmal enemies begin to manifest and attack the player. The player will be drawn down to the lakeside and onto a derelict vessel. Upon boarding this vessel, a violent current shakes it loose.

## Slippery Slope

- Player falls out of the Captain's Quarter's windows and immediately into a slide down towards the lakeshore
- Short segment with a few enemies attacking the player



## Lakeside Path

- Enemies begin climbing out of the tunnels behind the player
- Pathway winds a fair way around the shore of the lake, traversing over several wrecks, leading up to a final large ship

## Final Voyage

- The path appears to continue forward, but the ship is jolted from its resting position
- Central ship raises out of the water as a whirlpool forms underneath, now revealing itself to have been the vessel at the bottom of the Falls
- Cue ghost ship boss fight atop the vessel