

Level Design

Game basis : Borderlands 2

I) Context

Follow up to the monologue document.

Here, the player must explore a mining complex, inside a mountain, to fight a miners uprising, and get back emeralds, for the Maliwan company.

The center of the mine is controlled by the rebels and thus inaccessible at the start of the mission.

The area is mostly filled with repurposed robots, and mutated humans (the rat faction).

II) Mission's walkthrough

1) Arrival and discovery

The mission starts once the player reach the top of the mountain.

The beginning of the level is shown by the debris of a huge metallic door, which can be interacted with in order to change area.

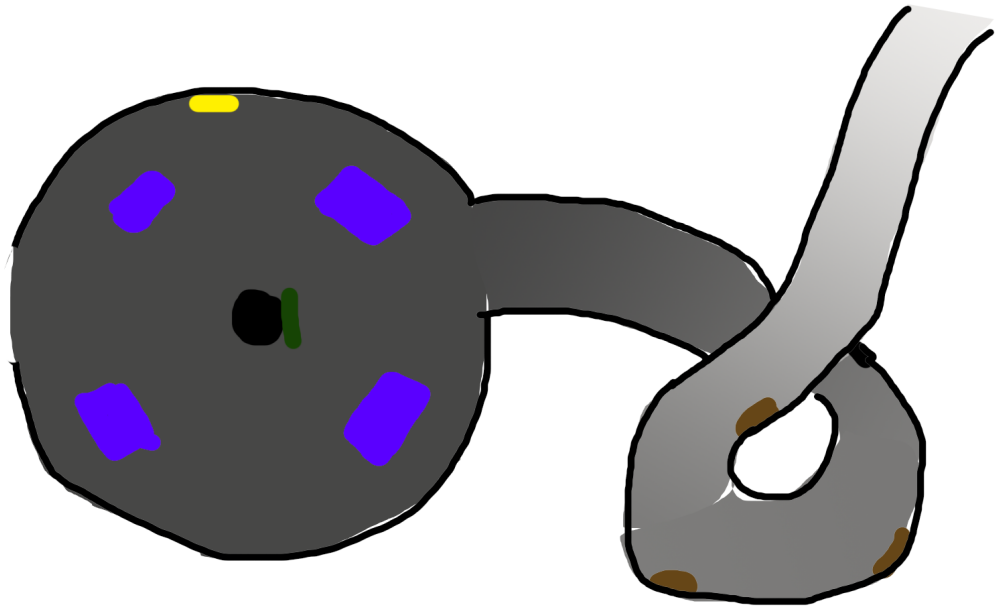
As usual for the game, there is a health and an ammo vendors at the beginning of the area.

The player can then enter the mine, for a first sequence, made to get more familiar with the zone. The environment is mostly mineral, with only some miners' barracks here and there, along with their everyday's stuff. This part of the cave have already been completely exploited, which explains the lack of machinery.

This introduction is mostly linear, since it's the main tunnel. It's fairly large, to be less annoying to move through. Some skags nest are present along the way, for some quick fights.

The hallway stops once the Alpha campment has been reached.

Here lays the barracks and basic equipments mentioned earlier.



Legend :

- The greyer an area is, the lower it is. The path starts in the white part in the up right corner.
- Yellow : Small weapon chest.
- Green : Ammo chest.
- Brown : Skag's nest (spawn point)
- Purple : Baracks (spawn point)

The Alpha campment is a mini arena, in which the player will fight some simple bandits and basic Rats, teaching them what's to come.

In the center of the area is a large pillar, here to maintain the grotto's ceiling. It may be used as a cover.

In front of the pillar is an ammo chest. It's easy to see, and can be used to "lure" the player toward the center of the arena, while still replenishing them.

Sideway is a small weapon chest, which will be a reward after the fight. Contrary to the ammo one, it is a bit "hidden" on the side, because the player is supposed to see and reach it only after surviving the fight. Also, the weapons are a bonus but not a necessity, unlike the ammo.

2) *Main Obstacle*

Once the alpha campment dealt with, the player can take an elevator towards the bowels of the mine.

During the ride, the environment is visibly changing, getting more and more overwhelmed by technological elements.

The elevator ride is still somewhat short, with fast movements, in order to not bore the player while also not needing an elevator fight, given that nobody likes them.

Once the bottom is reached, there is a door. It's here to keep the next part a surprise, without having another hallway.

Behind it lies the central "hub" of the mine.

It's mostly round, with a lot of machines and small constructions. The place is made to be autonomous.

When going in, the player can see a huge path, leading to the end of the mine. However, entering the room triggers an alarm, with a blue code. This tints the room with a bit of blue, and activates a small cutscene of two Rats pushing a button. One of them is high up, while the other is at the player's height, but hidden behind a security screen. This action closes a massive reinforced door, stopping the player's progress.

Also, a fight breaks out, with a group of Rats.

The objective then switches to "Find the two buttons", in order to progress.

3) *Going round*

From there, the player can choose between two main paths. The order doesn't matter.

a) High button

This button asks the player to go through an old maze, full of Rats. The way is made of chaotic tunnels, branching and meeting again with no real order.

Here, the player often meets small Rats groups, with a growing difficulty.

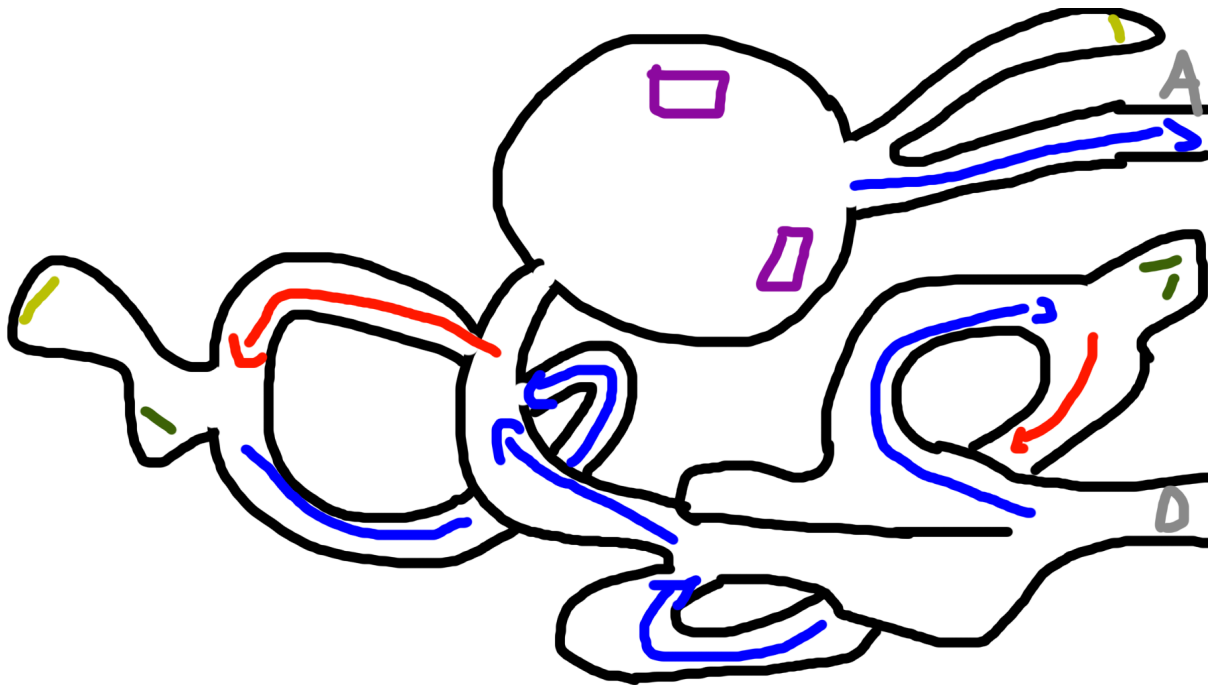
There is a certain quantity of loot in the side tunnels, rewarding a player that would try different paths (or got lost).

This all ends in a special arena, with two barracks.

These are "traps", with only a few enemies going out. However, some Rats waves will come out, but from holes in the ground, all around the room. Every type is here, with even a few "badass" type for the last part of the fight.

Once everybody's dead, there is a single Rat left, easily dispatched, standing between the player and the button.

When the button is pressed, the player can simply drop down to the hub. However, the alarm goes up to yellow mode. Now, some of the discarded Loader Bots around the room awaken and start fighting.



Legend :

- Blue arrow= going up.
- Red arrow = going down.
- Yellow = weapons chest.
- Green = ammo chest
- Purple = barracks.
- D = starting point (down)
- A = where the button is (up)

b) Protected button

This button is found after the mechanical reserve of the mine. This is more of a futuristic setting. Here we can find more massive machines, along with the Loader Bots that helped with the mining.

This section is clearer, with small rooms stringed together. The player has to regularly fight robots, while looking for switches, needed to open the next door.

In the first room, the switch is right next to the door, along with an ammo chest, in order to explain the mechanic to the player.

The second room is a bit harder, with “horn-like” paths on the sides, with the switch on one side, and a weapon chest on the other. Here, some EXP-Loaders join the fight.

The third and last room is made of the assembly/repairing line for the Loaders. Here are two Bull-Loaders and a Badass Loader, creating a pretty hard fight.

The room is also filled with treadmills, which means that the player and their targets are always moving. This is somewhat slow but still enough to make the fight a bit harder. The switch is located on the ceiling, and will only come down when everybody’s dead, leading to the second Rat and his button.

Along with the rats are three chest. One with weapons, and two with ammo, as a reward and replenishment.

Activating the button also removes the forcefield, letting the player go back to the hub.

The alarm goes to its final Red level.

This means one big fight before being able to go through the door. Here, the Rats and the Loaders are mixed, with every kind here, even the hardest one, ending with the arrival of a Badass Lab Rat, one of the most dangerous enemies in the game.

Then, the player can finally proceed.

4) End of the mine

Behind the door is the current mining section.

Once the player is in, the door closes itself.

All around them are emeralds everywhere.

At the center of the room, a giant crab worm, covered with glowing mushrooms.

This enemy is the one that caused the mutations in the mine workers.

The miner leader is riding it, and using it to control his colleagues and “upgrade them”.

There goes the boss battle.

The crab worm uses simple projectiles and its claws to fight the player. It can also burrow and then come out, often right under the player, as a way to damage them.

On top of this, the leader is using a Bandit shotgun. This weapon has a pretty poor accuracy, but a high fire rate and potential damages, which means the player must be careful while dodging.

Inside the room are three big weapon chest, as a nice reward to the player.

Once the duo is vanquished, the player is called by both the Maliwan executive that gave them the quest, but also a Jakobs one, each wanting the emeralds.

Choosing Maliwan gives the player a purple SMG, which is able to inflict a variety of elemental statuses.

On the other hand, choosing Jakobs grants a purple Jakobs Shotgun, shooting bouncing emeralds, with bad precision but high neutral damages.