BABEL



A refuge built on faith.
A tower ruled by ambition.

A 2D dark-fantasy Metroidvania. Descend into a buried labyrinth, earn new ways to move, and return to challenge the ruler above.

YIBO WANG

Game, gameplay, level & narrative design
Programming and implementation

Personal project · Unity 6 · Windows
Free development build · v0.56.0

PLAY BABEL → hajimi9914.itch.io/babel

Watch gameplay & design overview →

AI-assisted visual assets and synthetic voices.
Cover illustration; gameplay images inside.

A World Read Twice

LEVEL DESIGN / The entire campaign is a connected space; each victory changes what the player can read and reach.

Descend before you ascend

The forest gives way to buried rooms. Four guardians grant traversal powers; the route then folds upward into the tower. Familiar stonework becomes a new possibility, rather than a discarded early level.

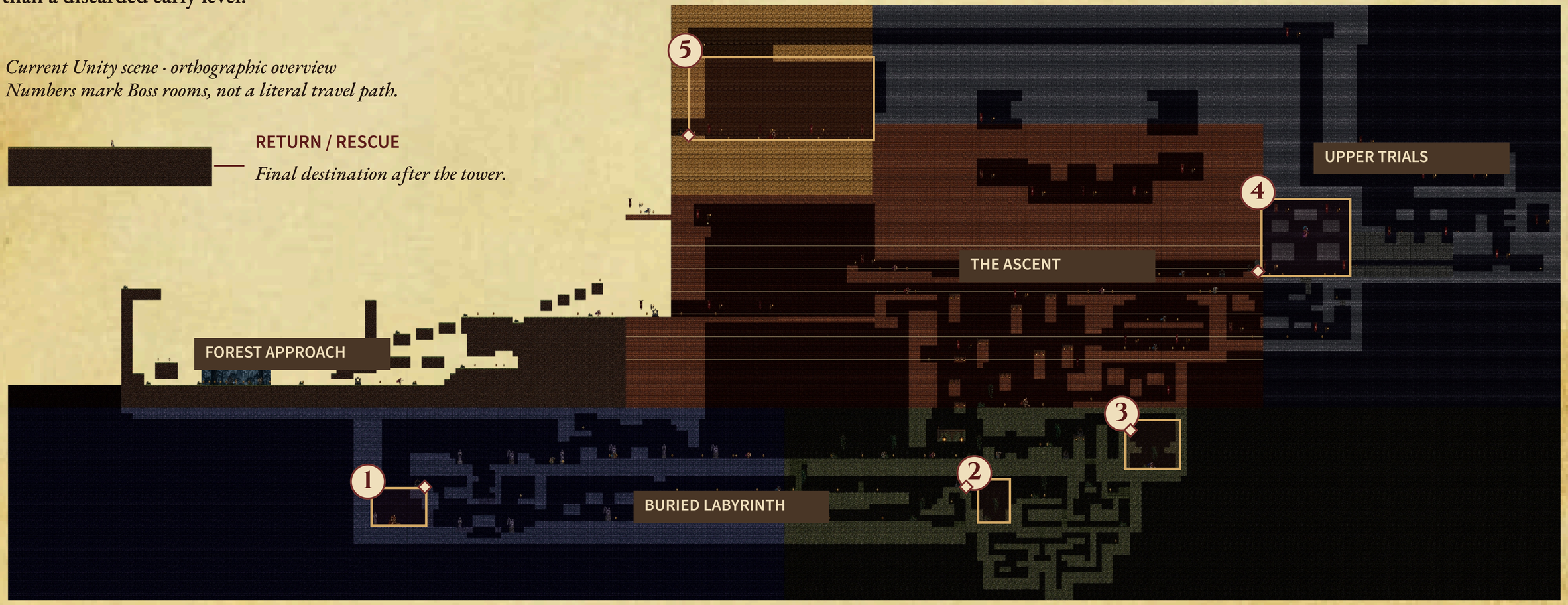
Current Unity scene · orthographic overview
Numbers mark Boss rooms, not a literal travel path.

RETURN / RESCUE

Final destination after the tower.

Read the route, plan the retry

Gold outlines mark the five guardian rooms. Diamonds mark nearby altars: a failed attempt should ask for another decision, not a long repeated commute.



01 · Abaddon

Shockwave opens fractured stone.

02 · Korah

Wall Jump turns shafts into routes.

03 · Azazel

Double Jump extends aerial choices.

04 · Bel

Crystal Dash crosses long passages.

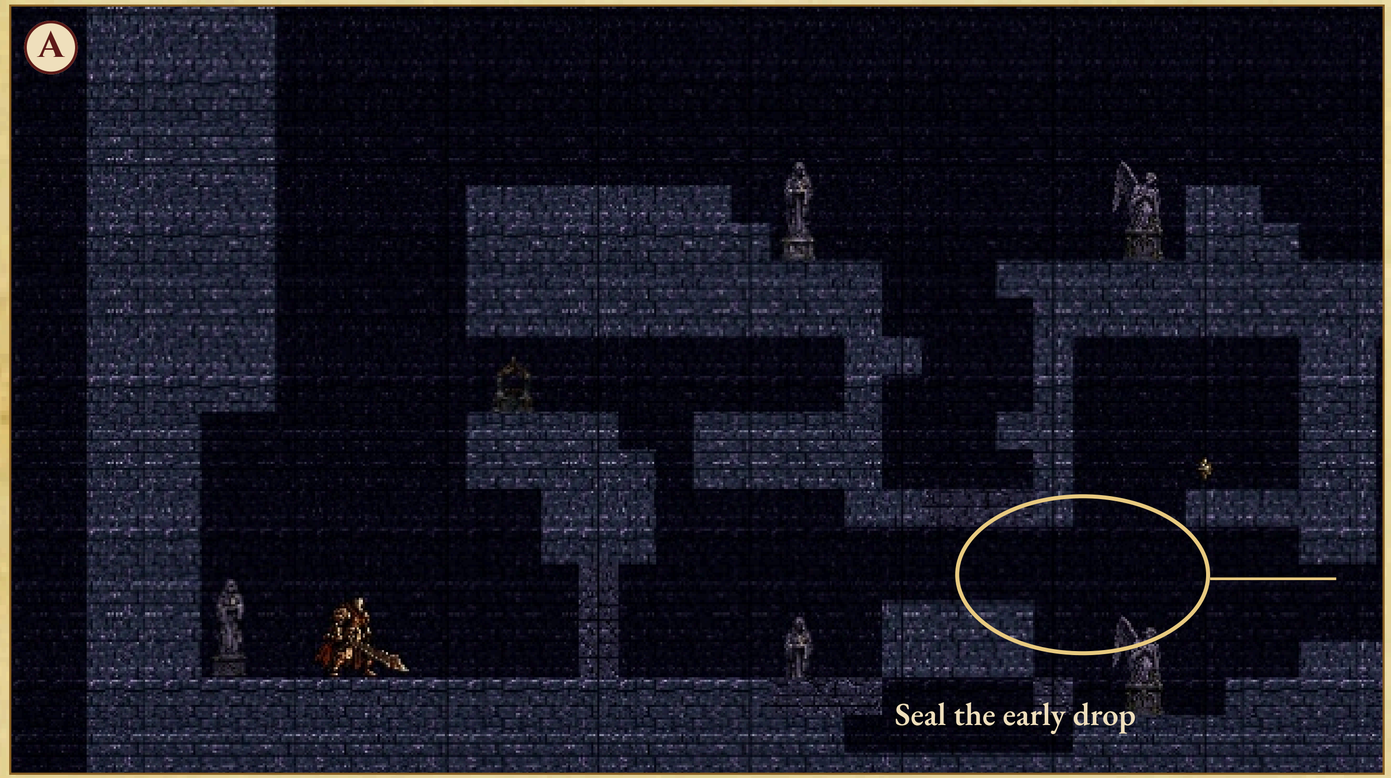
05 · Nero

The final encounter combines the journey.

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A Gate Must Tell the Truth

LEVEL DESIGN / Preserve the intended route, then let the new ability rewrite it.



A · Abaddon approach. Current campaign map; annotations explain the route.

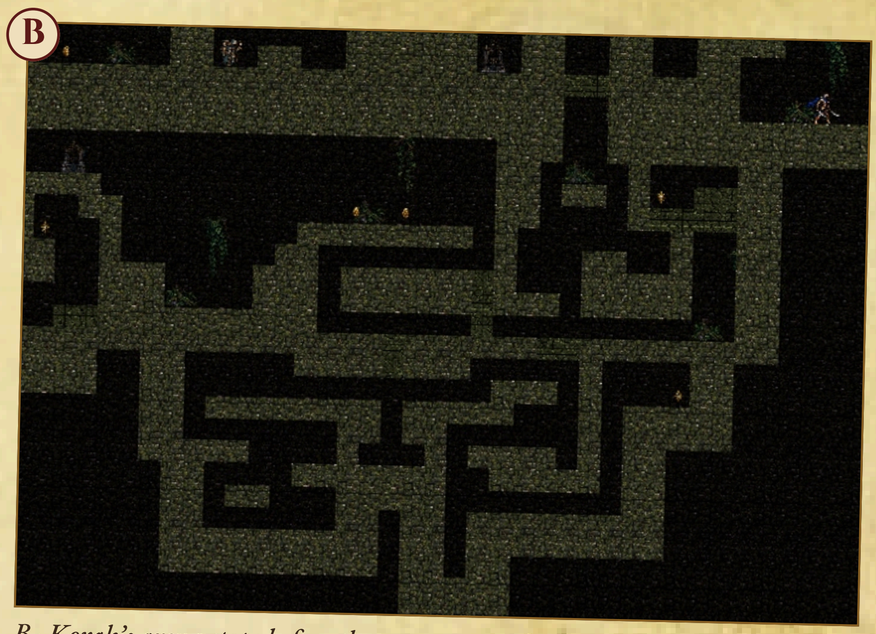
APPROACH → COMMIT → REWARD → RETURN

01 Protect the approach

A premature drop can strand a player who lacks the next ability. A sealed floor preserves the way back; the player can read the intended climb.

02 Make the reward useful

Enter Abaddon's room before dialogue starts. After victory, the beam opens the fractured exit: the first use of the reward teaches its wider purpose.



B · Korah's arena stops before the narrow corridor.

One material, one promise

Fractured stone means "return with Shockwave." Use it on every breakable gate, including floors. Ordinary masonry must remain visually distinct.

Gate audit

Check the route with only the abilities available at that point. An all-abilities test save cannot prove a progression gate works.

Power, Passage & a Shared Price

GAMEPLAY & SYSTEMS / Movement expands the map; Spirit makes some of that movement a decision.



Shockwave · 1 Spirit · 2.5 s · about five tiles before modifiers.

Spend one Spirit...

HEAL — hold for 3 s to restore 1 health.
SHOCKWAVE — sustain damage and break a passage.
CRYSTAL DASH — commit to a long crossing.

Why the beam grew

A short, one-block cast made travel too costly. One longer cast now breaks successive gates while the player moves; solid stone still stops it.

Double Jump



1 · Take off *2 · Press again* *3 · Correct*

Azazel's reward adds a second timing choice in the air. Delay the extra jump to correct a landing or extend a gap.

Wall Jump



1 · Contact *2 · Push away* *3 · Re-climb*

Korah's reward turns a vertical stop into a route. The body must visibly leave the wall so the new rule is readable.

Crystal Dash



Charge → launch → cross

Charge for 0.7 s; cancel for free. Spend 1 Spirit only on launch, then release before charging again. Aim in any supported direction.

Growth without free mobility

Each unique Boss victory adds 1 maximum Spirit. The launch cost is implemented; whether it leaves enough healing on long return routes still needs player observation.

Relics, Risk & Reasons to Return

RUNES & ECONOMY / Eight discoveries, four sockets: prepare a way to play instead of collecting eight passive upgrades.



Inspect anywhere. Change the four active runes at an altar.



Gold can solve an immediate need or fund lasting capacity.

Two examples of deliberate tension

Rings

Low health raises attack power. Stay hurt for offence, or spend Spirit to heal?

Romance

More maximum health, less damage. Safety has an offensive cost.

A choice before the next attempt

Bread and draughts answer immediate needs. Sanctuary Oil adds 1 maximum Spirit. Altar-only attunement makes a loadout a commitment, while the repository stays readable during exploration.

Sun +40% reach

Flight Coin attraction

Moon Reflect damage

Star Faster attacks

Woman One revival

Harvest Shop discount

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A Bestiary of Different Questions

ENCOUNTER DESIGN / Four recurring enemy roles establish combat grammar; five guardians test it in distinct rooms.



I · Abaddon

Read range & timing

Close: heavy / quick. Mid-range: a visible wave. An overhead answer prevents a permanent safe spot.

Shockwave



II · Korah

Read the ground

Track the rubble while it burrows; evade emergence and punish the exposed body. Underground is invulnerable.

Wall Jump



III · Azazel

Read height & angle

Air-side strikes, diagonal pursuit and a charged dash ask the player to reposition in two dimensions.

Double Jump



IV · Bel

Divide attention

Aerial shots combine with a separately warned ground trap. Watching only the Boss is insufficient.

Crystal Dash



V · Nero

Combine the journey

Slashes, paired slams, rushes and a charged fan. At 50% health, a visible transformation raises the pressure.

Final encounter



Melee

Learn wind-up → strike → recovery.



Shield

Change angle or wait for an opening.



Archer

Close distance through a readable magic arrow.



Giant

Respect reach; heavy bodies resist recoil.

Shared fairness rule: body contact is not damage. Read a wind-up, evade the active attack, then answer in recovery. Recoil and impact feedback begin only after a hit is accepted.

Teach Through Discovery; Revise Through Play

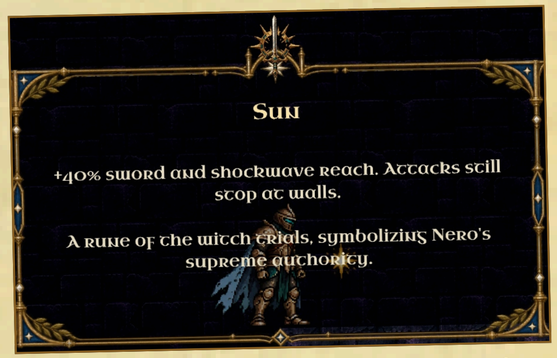
NARRATIVE, GUIDANCE & ITERATION / Give the player a reason to act, the information to act, and feedback they can trust.



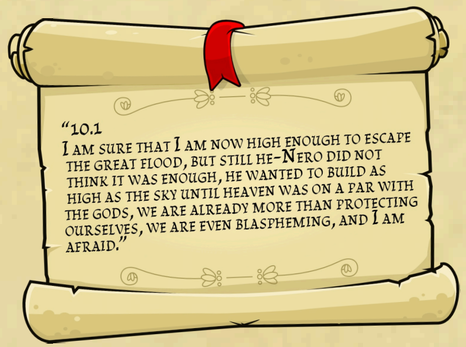
Opening artwork in the game · a promise of refuge.

Teach when a verb matters

Landing teaches movement. The sword teaches directional attacks; the first wound introduces healing. Each new ability gets an input guide and a nearby purpose. Dismissible, remembered lessons avoid a permanent instruction wall.



A discovery pairs a power with a fragment of lore.



Recovered accounts make exploration part of the story.

Faith becomes ambition

The tower begins as a refuge. Builders' and travellers' accounts reveal its consequences; Nero's final confrontation resolves the promise through the place the player has learned to cross.

Make every accepted hit readable

Player damage: brief flash, shake, sound and recoil. Enemy damage: local hit feedback and impact sound. No full-screen flash for outgoing hits; no recoil from a shield block.

The feedback explains the rule where the player is already looking.

What is verified

v0.56 passed 38 targeted checks and both-player smoke tests. Campaign and practice share combat definitions but keep separate saves. The free Windows build is linked on the cover.

What still needs observation

No formal player study or new full campaign traversal is claimed. Next: can players read the gates, find Korah's vulnerable window and balance healing against Dash?