

Final Annotated Portfolio

# Reckoning of the AIAC

Hanna Luu, Mark Robles, Catelyn Sue, Erika Wang  
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OVERVIEW / CONTEXT

## Reckoning of the Rift

Our project is a 2D side-scrolling action-adventure game that builds upon our group's previous IAT 313: Narrative New Media & IAT 410: Advanced Game Design course projects.

Since these courses largely focused on the game and narrative design aspects of video game development, through this project our group aims to explore more specific aspects of video game development, such as sound and interface design, with the goal of gaining a deeper understanding of the variety in the field of design involved in video games.

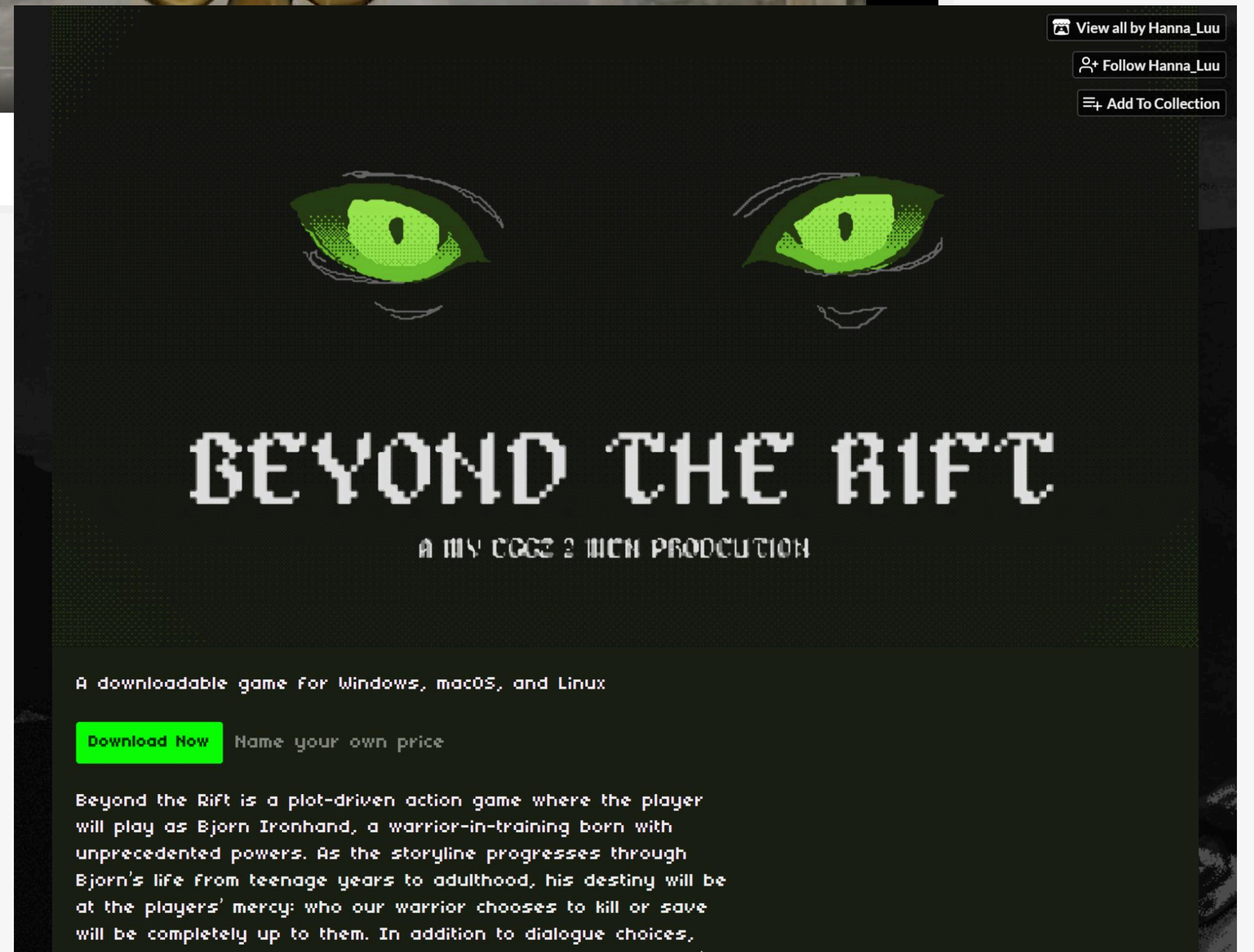
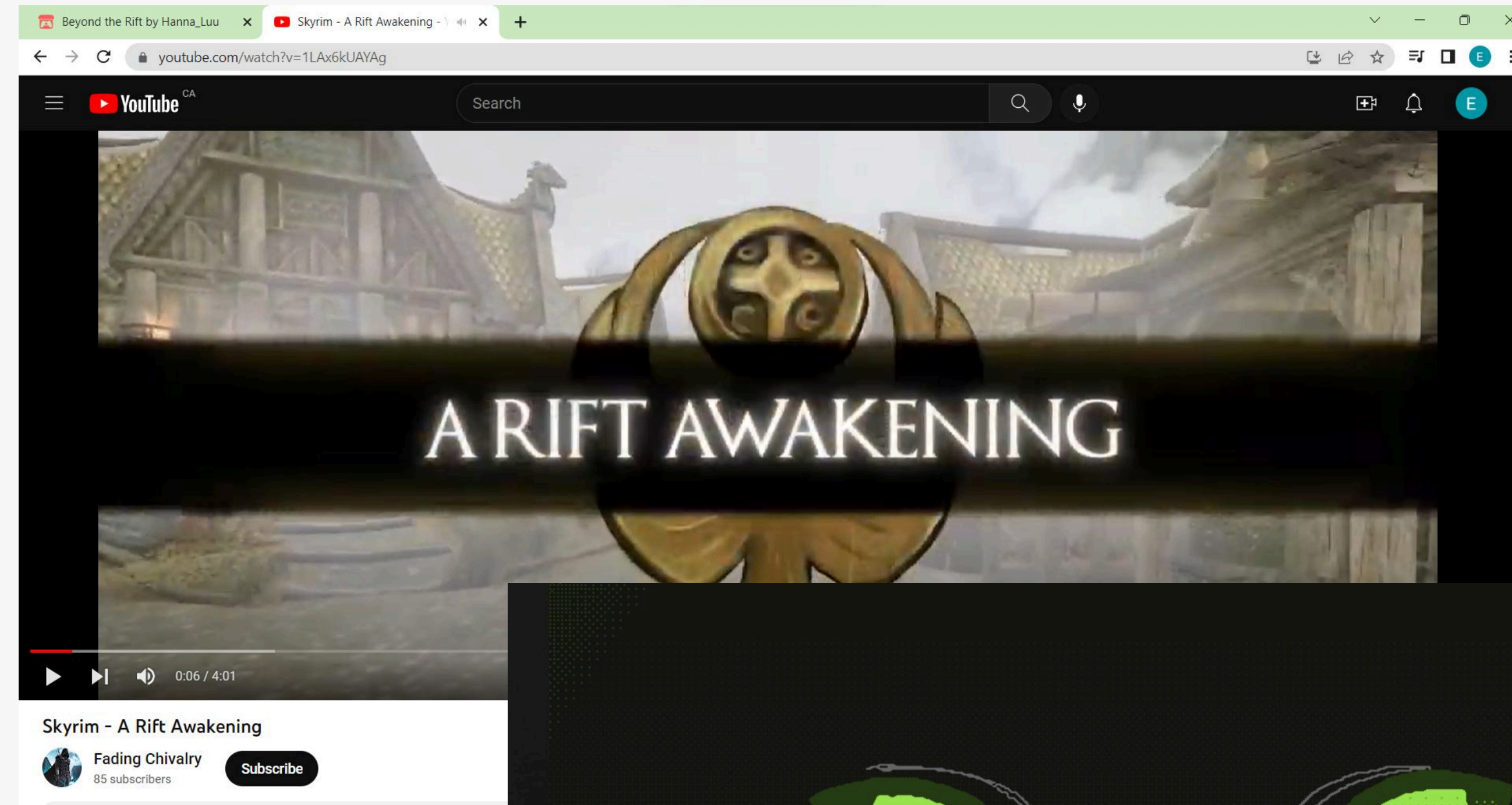


OVERVIEW / BACKGROUND

## Narrative Preface

The narrative for Reckoning of the Rift is a continuation of the narrative from our group's series of previous projects.

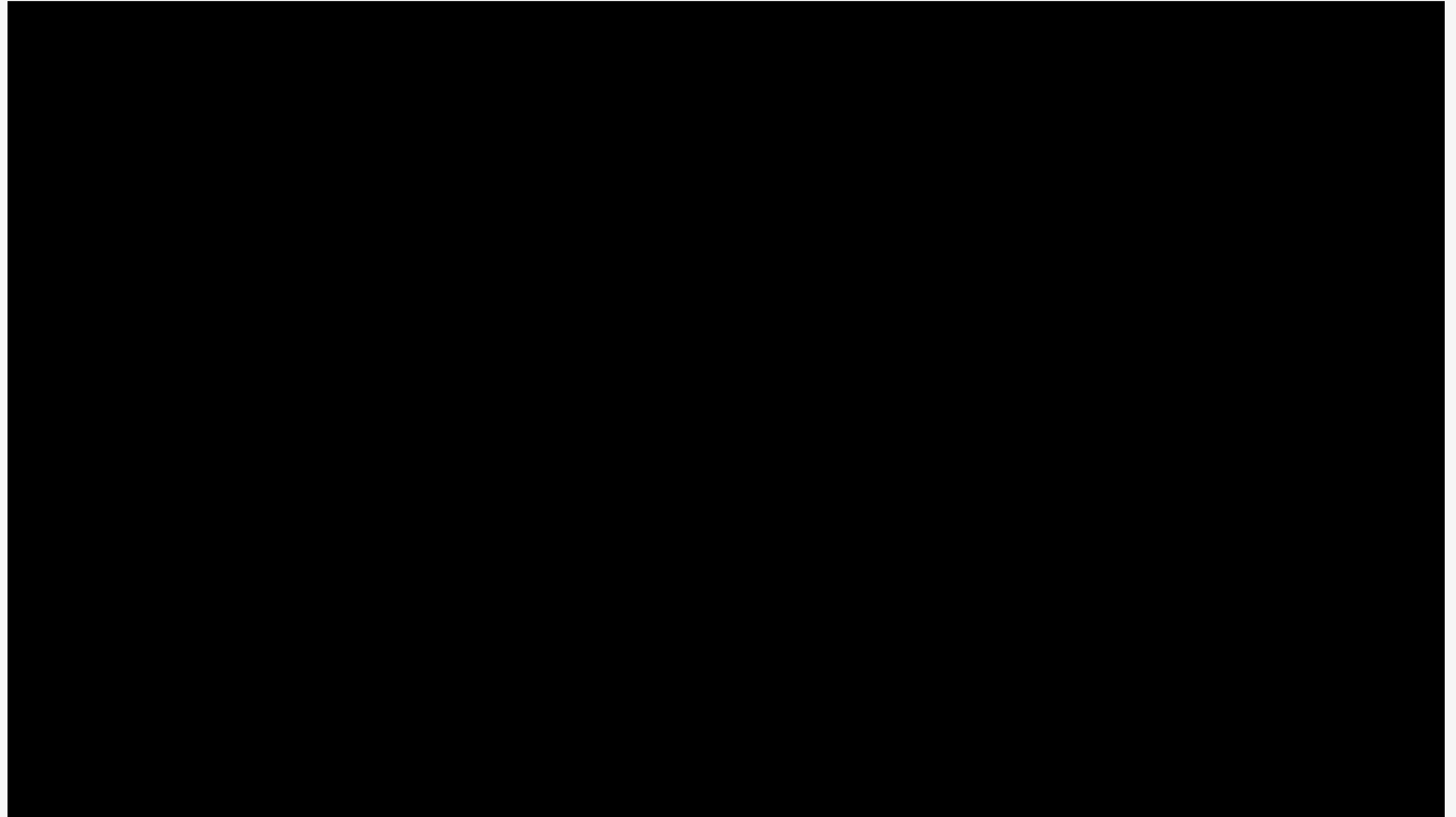
While the narrative will be a continuation for those who are familiar with our past projects, prior knowledge will not be a necessity to understand and enjoy this game's narrative.



OVERVIEW / BACKGROUND

## A Rift Awakening

A short machinima style film project made for IAT 313, follows the tale of how the entirety of Wulfgard stood against the invasion of demonic forces from other dimensions (Rifts), which were enacted by Bjorn Ironhand's father after the death of his wife. This resulted in Bjorn receiving demonic powers from another Rift at birth.



*Click to pause video*

## Beyond the Rift

A 2D narrative-driven action game that was also made for IAT 313. The narrative follows the tale of Bjorn as a young adult who's learning the extent and gravitas of his powers, which includes teleportation, gravity manipulation, and space-time manipulation by being able to open Rifts to other dimensions. Bjorn finds out that there is a cult plotting to kidnap him and utilize his powers for evil purposes, and must fight against them.

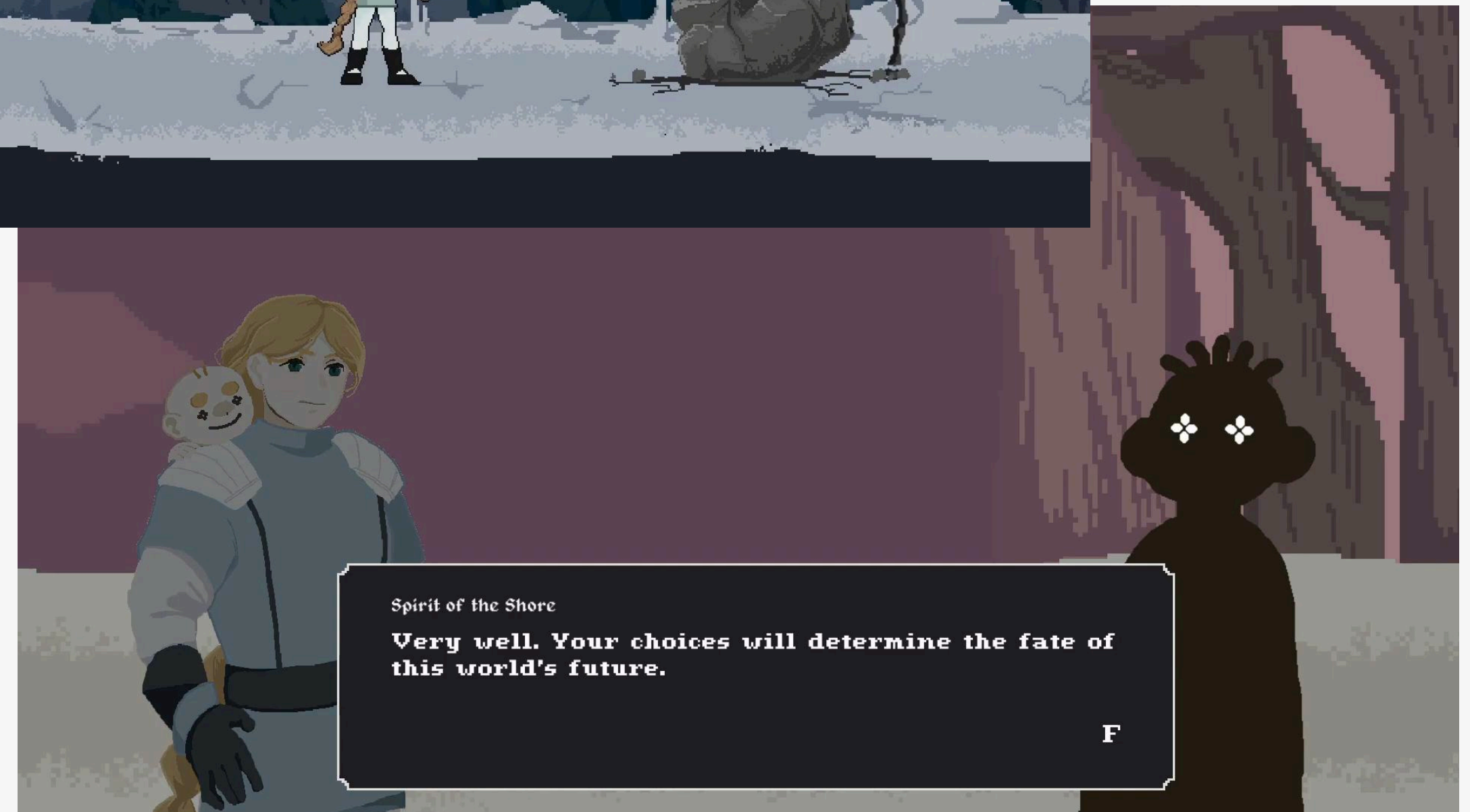
Due to the 2 week time constraint of this project, Mark, Erika, and Hanna largely focused on the interactive and branching narrative arch of this game, which was the focus for IAT 313.



## Legacy of the Rift

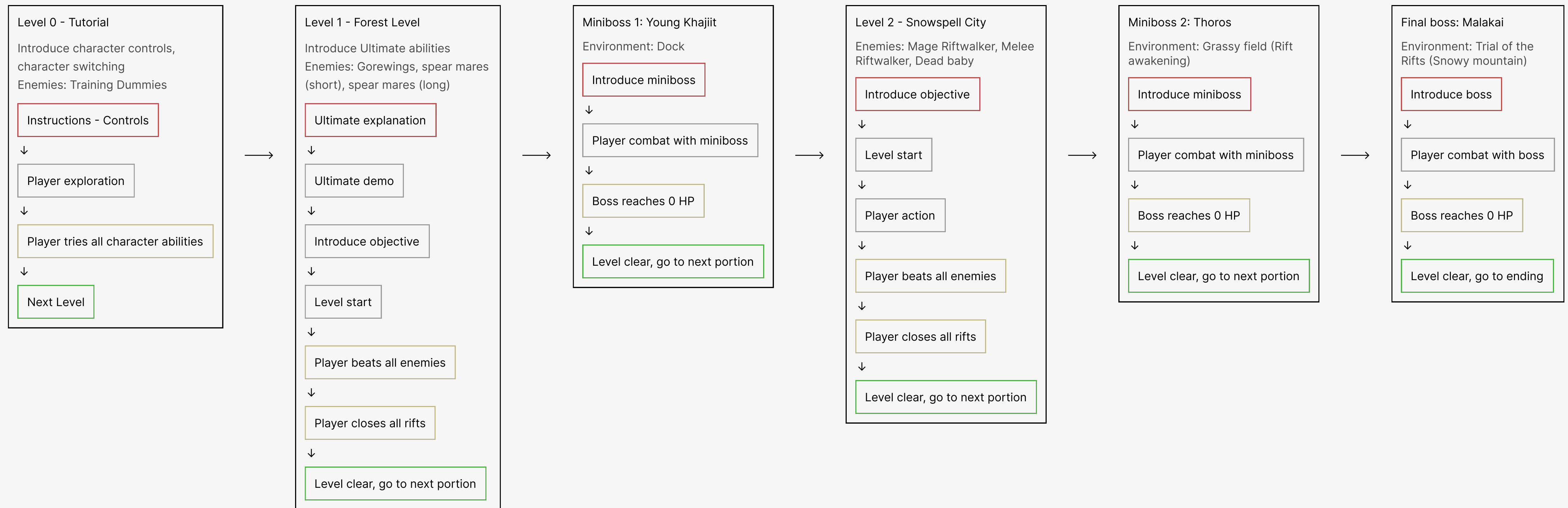
Legacy of the Rift built upon the interactive narrative system from Beyond the Rift and focused more on creating a more developed combat system.

The story takes place many years after Beyond the Rift, and tells the tale of how a deadly plague suddenly swept through the entirety of Wulfgard, turning people into bloodthirsty monsters. Bjorn and his wife, Mjoll, ventured to a faraway island in hopes of finding a cure, but they ended up going missing. His three firstborn children, Lokir, Halvar, and Ursa, then decided to go on an expedition along with the younger Ironhand triplets, Morkvar, Hjallna, and Eerika to find their parents and finally unravel the mystery behind the plague.



# Level Structure

Our goal is to have a minimum of three playable levels, with the following structure:



## Player Character Mechanics

Before a level, players will be able to craft a party of 3 characters from a roster of 6 - all of whom possess unique combat roles, elemental affinities and attacks. This adds another layer of strategy when approaching a level, where players can build diverse combinations of party members. For example, players can build a party consisting of 2 healers and 1 damage dealer.

Each character has a combo attack and a special ability. The former mechanic enables the player to attack three times, with the last hit of the attack yielding a special effect that hinders enemies, such as an Area of Effect (AoE) damage effect or a freezing effect.



Elemental Effects Inspiration: Genshin Impact



Combo Attack Inspiration: Street Fighter

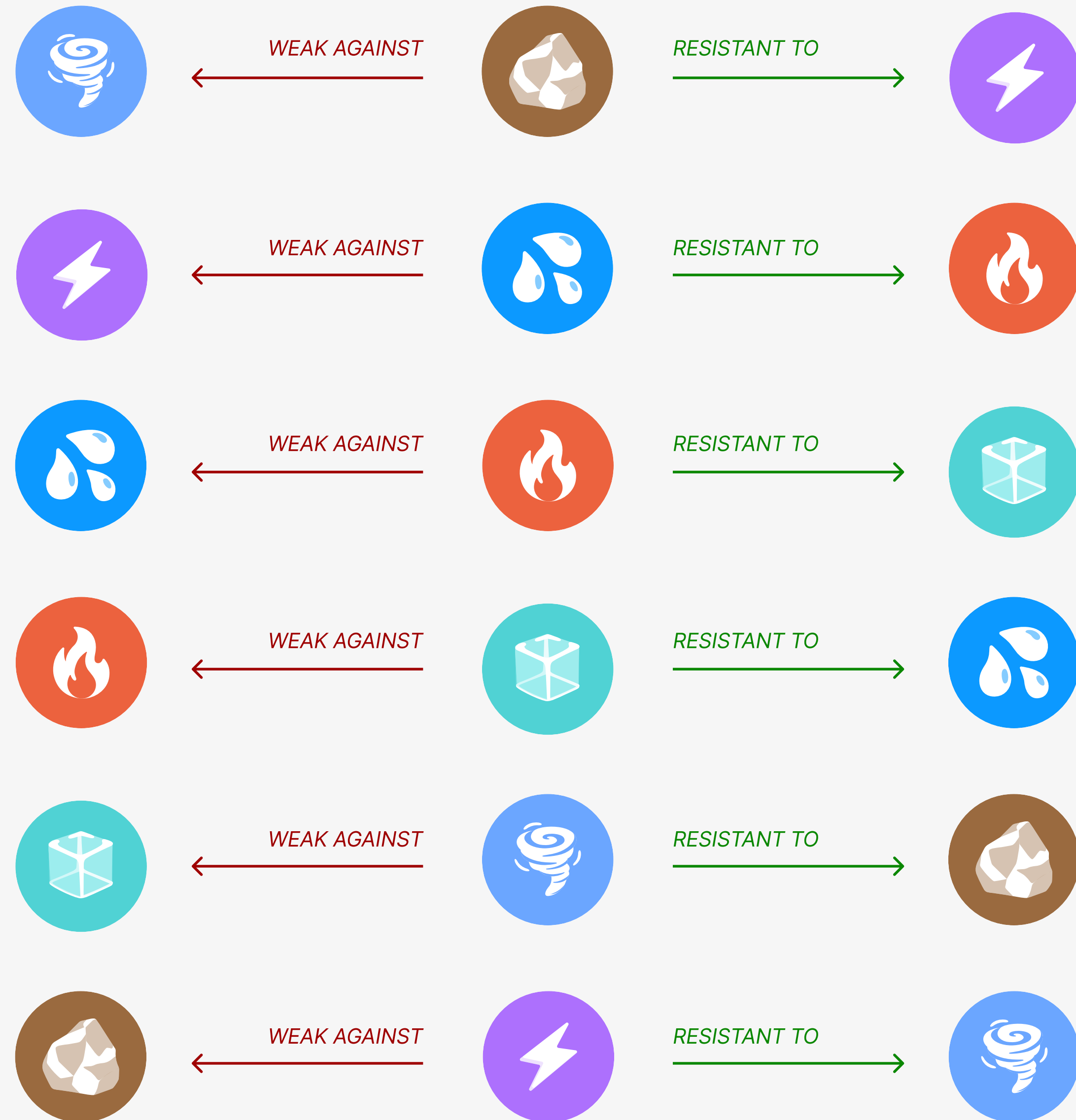


Party Selection Inspiration: Final Fantasy



## Elemental Damage

Our game contains 6 elemental affinities - Earth, Wind, Fire, Ice, Water, and Lightning - where each playable character possesses one of each element. These elements are also effective or resistant against each other, dealing twice or half the damage, respectively.



OVERVIEW / REVISIONS

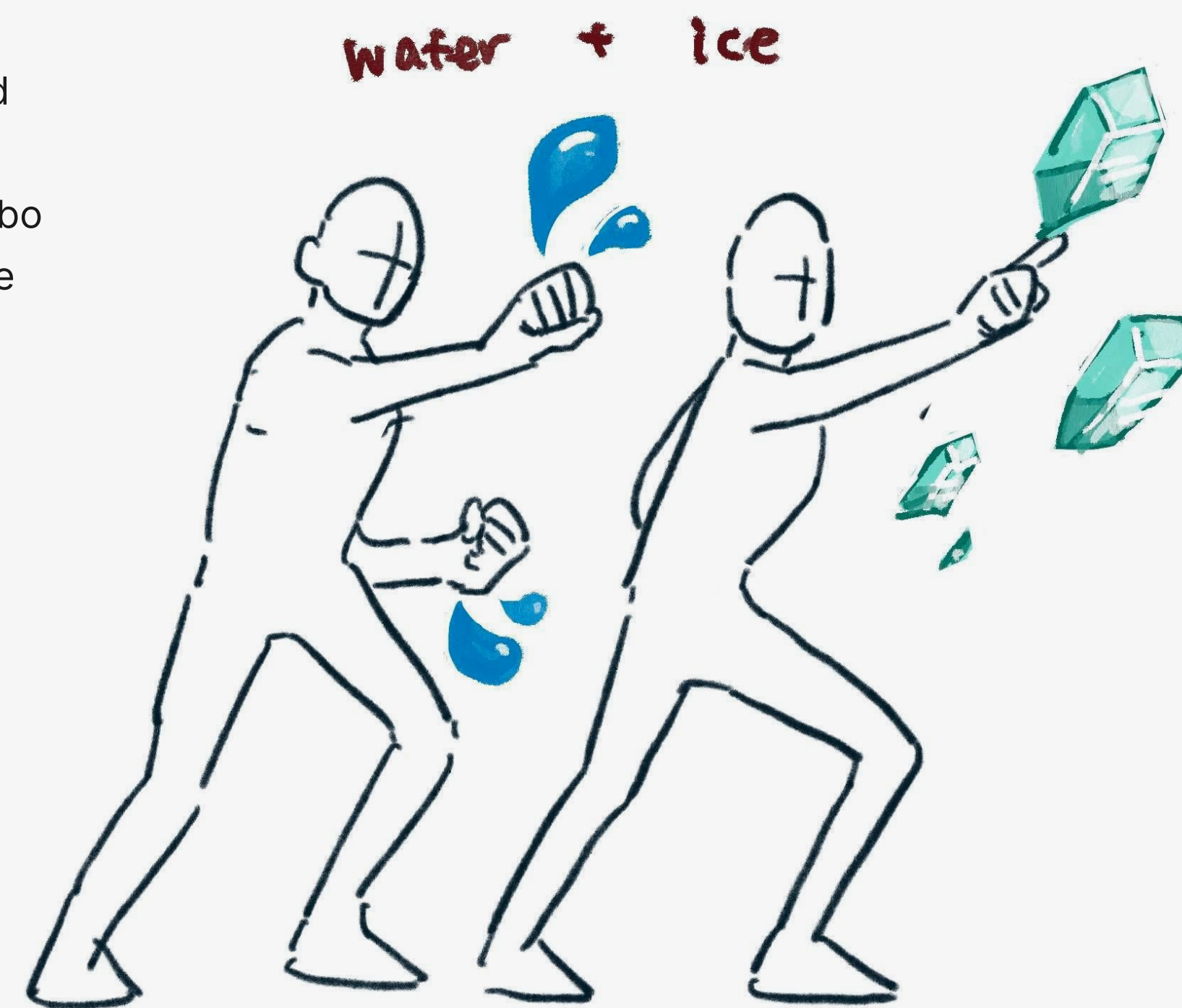
## Project Timeline

- Week 2 | First playable  
Initial sketches
- Week 3 | Meeting w/ Eric Yang to discuss core gameplay concepts  
Research UI and mechanics precedents
- Week 4 | Finalized plot structure/narrative  
Finalized level flow/concept
- Week 5 | Meeting w/ Daniela Valdez to discuss game UI & user flow
- Week 6 | Continued Development & Playtesting
- Week 7 | Alpha prototype & playtesting
- Week 8 | Alpha prototype 2 & playtesting
- Week 9 | Meeting w/ Eric - Discussion of Alpha prototype playtest results and next steps  
Meeting w/ Daniela - Discussion of playtest results and further feedback on UX & UI
- Week 10 | Beta prototype & test
- Week 11 | Meeting w/ Eric - final feedback
- Week 12 | Audio fully implemented  
Art & animation fully implemented  
Final playtest  
Debugging
- Week 13 | Gold code  
Final report  
Presentations
- Week 15 | Final product

## Elemental Mixing

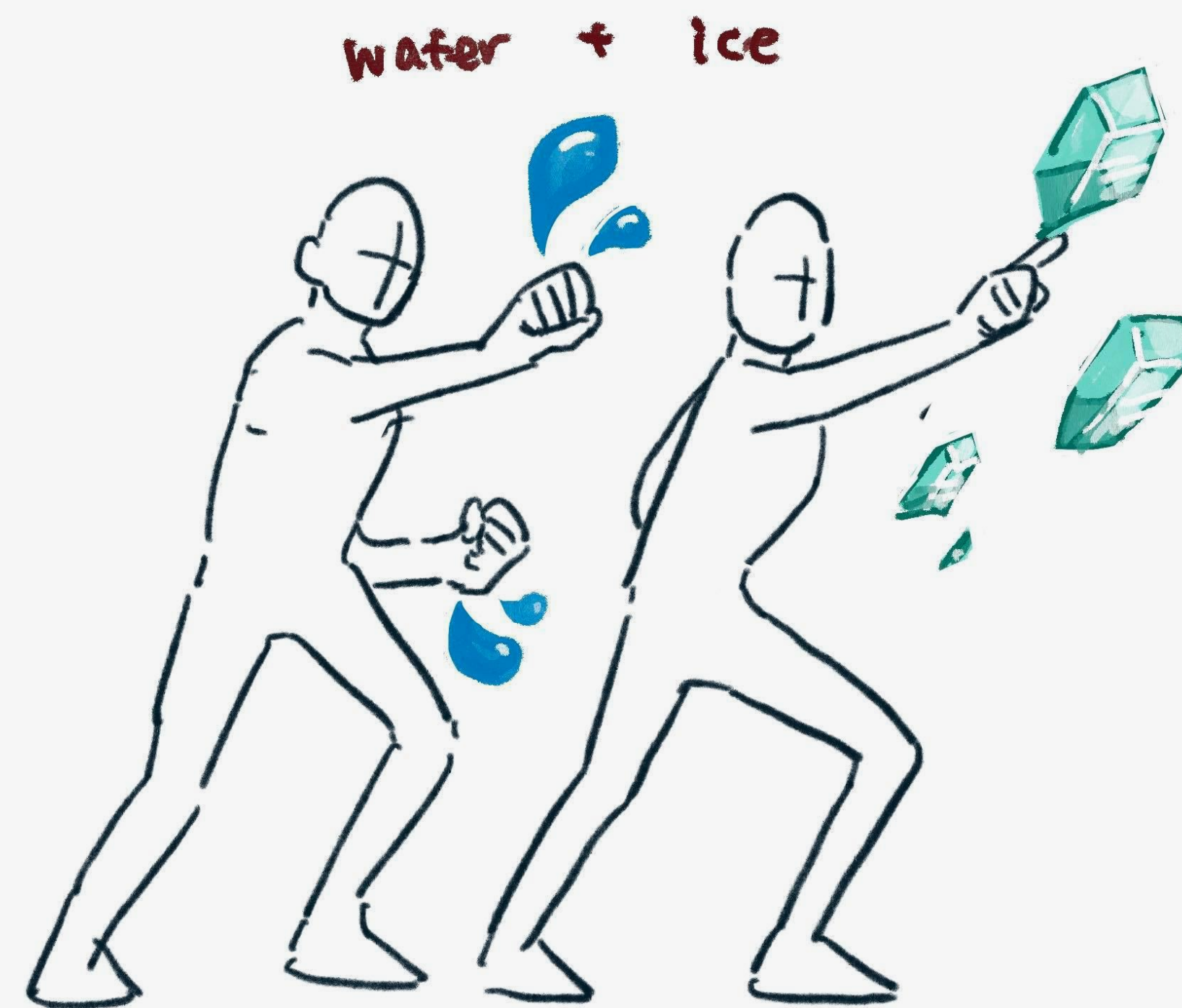
We initially wanted to create unique interaction effects between elements, such as combining water and ice to create a freezing effect.

But due to the game's fast-paced combat and shorter gameplay, we were encouraged to implement those special effects into the combo and ability system of the characters to reduce the cognitive load of the players.



## Eric Yang's Suggestions

After discussing our proposed game design and mechanics with Eric Yang, he encouraged our team to go further and create more depth and allow more player agency in our game design & player strategies.



## New Party System

With this feedback, we decided to add our previous game's characters back into the game & allow players to pick a party of 3 out of 6 characters to control at the start of each level.

This allows us to design more complex party combinations and allow players to craft parties that are more suited towards their own individual play styles.



Quick Prototype of Party Selection Screen

# Reworked Character Mechanics

Eric recommended us to create a bigger pool of characters to choose from to incentivize a deeper level of strategy and decision-making before approaching a level. As such, we tweaked the mechanics of some characters to diversify and ultimately specialize their combat roles.

This also presented an opportunity for us to remedy the lack of vertical mobility in our previous games through implementing such a mechanic in the skillset of one of our characters, Eerika Ironhand.

**-MORKVAR: CROWD CONTROL, RANGED AOE (ICE ELEMENT)**  
**WINTER'S REACH** (Basic attack + slow)  
 • Extend your spear with the power of ice to pierce through enemies.  
 • Deals ice damage  
 • Longest basic attack reach of the 3  
**PIERCING COLD** (AOE + CC)  
 • Imbue your spear with the power of ice and throw it a great distance, piercing through everything in its path, dealing ice damage, and stunning them for 3s.  
 • Only stuns for 1s on bosses (acts like an interrupt)  
 • Small windup

**-HJALLNA: TANK, SUPPORT (WATER ELEMENT)**  
**HYDRA BASHER** (Basic attack + lifesteal)  
 • Deals water damage  
 • Should each hit be a small lifesteal?  
**BULWARK OF THE SEA** (Shield + Healing)  
 • Summon a protective dome of water around you that deteriorates over time (5 seconds?), providing protection from damage and a small heal over time  
 • Damage that exceeds the dome's health will destroy it  
 • Does not disappear when switching between party members  
 • Similar mechanics to Halvar's Legendary Monolith

**-EERIKA: DAMAGE, MOBILITY (LIGHTNING ELEMENT)**  
**FURY OF THE STORM** (Basic attack + dash + jump)  
 • Deals lightning damage  
 • Each punch makes you dash a certain distance  
 • Cannot dash through enemies  
 • Last hit is an uppercut that propels you in the air?  
**RIDE THE LIGHTNING** (DPS +mobility)  
 • Punch through enemies (farther dash)  
 • Small windup?  
 • Leave the enemies electrocuted (Damage over time)

First Iteration of Morkvar, Hjalina, & Eerika's movesets

Lokir's basic attack dashes through enemies  
 His ability spawns a clone that shoots a singular fireball and he can teleport to it's location if it's still alive

Halvar's basic attack slams a hammer into the ground  
 His ability spawns a monolith that blocks enemy movement and attacks

Ursa's basic attack shoots an arrow that can pierce through multiple enemies  
 Her ability spawns a healing wolf that can heal the player if they stand within it's healing aura

Lokir, Halvar, & Ursa's movesets from Legacy of the Rift

**morkvar**

**Role:** CROWD CONTROL, RANGED AOE  
**Element:** Ice  
**Attacks:**  
**WINTER'S REACH** (Basic attack + slow)  
 • Extend your spear with the power of ice to pierce through enemies  
 • Each attack makes the spear's range go longer  
**PIERCING COLD** (AOE + CC)  
 • Imbue your spear with the power of ice and throw it a great distance, piercing through everything in its path, dealing ice damage, and stunning them for 3s.  
 • Only stuns for 1s on bosses (acts like an interrupt)  
 • Small windup

**hjalina**

**Role:** TANK, SUPPORT  
**Element:** Water  
**Attacks:**  
**HYDRA BASHER** (Basic attack + lifesteal)  
 • Attacks slice through enemies  
 • Third slash applies heals you for x % of damage (not a big heal)  
**BULWARK OF THE SEA** (Shield)  
 • Summon a protective dome of water around you that deteriorates over time (5 seconds?), providing protection from damage

**eerika**

**Role:** DAMAGE, MOBILITY  
**Element:** Lightning  
**Attacks:**  
**FURY OF THE STORM** (Basic attack + dash + jump)  
 • 1st attack punches you up (small juggle)  
 • 2nd attack punches up (medium juggle)  
 • 3rd attack punches you up (big juggle)  
**RIDE THE LIGHTNING** (DPS + mobility)  
 • While on the ground, Jump up and slam your fist into the ground, dealing damage to enemies around you  
 • While in the air, punch downward at an angle  
 • Enemies hit will float and in the air and be electrocuted (stunned?)

Next Iteration of Morkvar, Hjalina, & Eerika's movesets

**LOKIR:**  
 • **INFERNAL LACERATION**  
 • every hit is a dash  
 • small dash, medium dash, big dash  
 • **INFERNAL ARCHMAGE**  
 • Shoot fireballs  
 • Faster, more damage  
 • Pellets; spread  
 • Clone applies DoT burn

**HALVAR**  
 • **EARTH BREAKER**  
 • 3rd hit will do an AOE hit on both sides  
 • **GODLY MONOLITH**  
 • Bigger monolith  
 • When it spawns, have it deal AOE damage

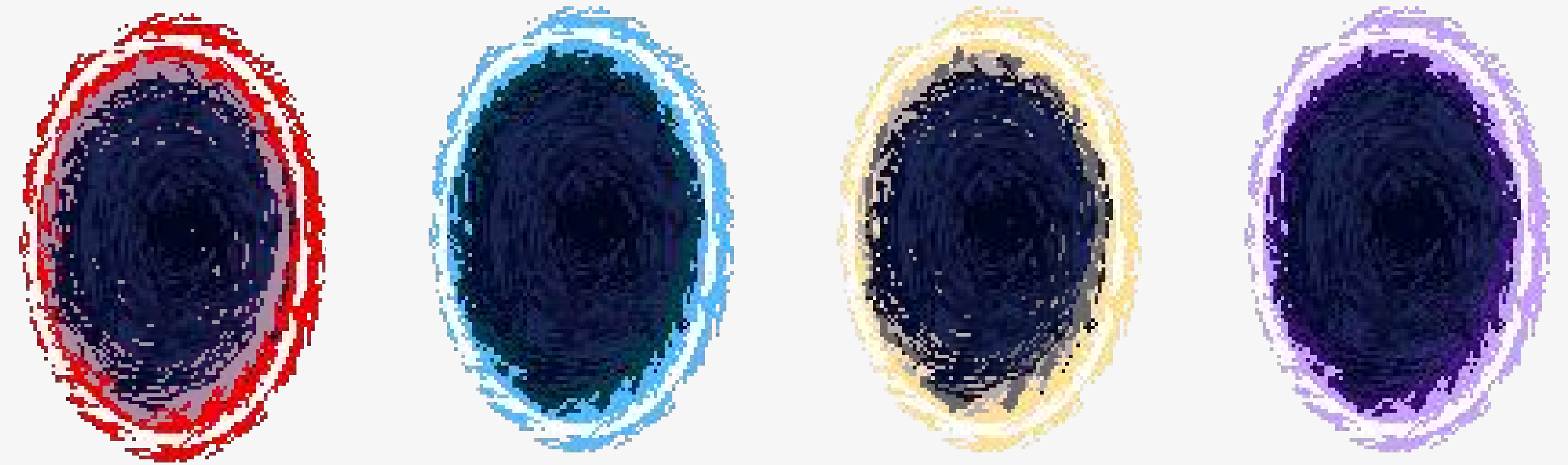
**URSA**  
 • **CYCLONE BARRAGE**  
 • 3rd shot is knockback  
 • **HARBINGER OF CREATION**  
 • Healing tick bear

First Iteration of Lokir, Halvar, & Ursa's movesets for Reckoning of the Rift

## Environmental Opposition

Eric Yang's feedback also led us to designing more environmental opposition for our players to interact with and overcome.

Our first prototype of a potential environmental opposition was having our elemental typed enemies continually spawn out of corresponding typed rifts which players need to defeat in order to stop enemies from spawning and to proceed to the next level.



*New Rift Sprites coloured according to their corresponding elemental type*

## Further Feedback

After receiving feedback about this quick prototype of a potential environmental opposition, we are redesigning how players will need to close/defeat these rifts as simply needing to damage them with any type of attacks did not create much more complexity in player strategies.

At the moment, we are investigating whether players can only close these rifts with their special abilities. This is a mechanic that we still need to prototype and playtest to see if it achieves our goal in creating more complex gameplay.



*Current Rift to be reworked*