

Swords & Platforms: Capture the Kingdom

Design Document

Version 1.0

This document and Swords & Platforms: Capture the Kingdom are
© 2011-2012 John Matthew Griffis, all rights reserved.

Table of Contents

<u>I. Introduction/Overview.....</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>II. Game Mechanics.....</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Overview.....</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Camera.....</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Look Around.....</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Zoom Out.....</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>In-Game GUI.....</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>HUD Elements.....</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Health.....</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Boss Enemy Health.....</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Current weapon.....</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Available weapons.....</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Mini-map.....</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Map icon.....</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Total Captured – Room.....</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Current Dialog.....</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Action Icon.....</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Map.....</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Total Captured.....</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Room.....</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Level.....</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Kingdom.....</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Transition.....</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Current music track.....</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Level name.....</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Replaying and Saving.....</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Saving the Game.....</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Save rooms.....</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Checkpoints.....</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Loading the Game.....</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Quick restart.....</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Control Summary.....</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Up, Down, Left, Right.....</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Jump.....</u>	<u>14</u>

Attack.....	14
Switch Weapons.....	14
Action.....	14
Look.....	14
Map (Pause).....	14
General Movement.....	14
Walking.....	14
Jumping.....	15
Moving through Platforms.....	15
Surfaces.....	15
Advanced Movement.....	15
Double-jumping.....	15
Hovering.....	15
Grappling.....	16
Grapple-jumping.....	16
Wall-climbing.....	16
Actions.....	16
Action button.....	16
Capturing Platforms.....	16
Talking.....	17
Branching dialogue.....	17
Reading.....	17
Opening Doors.....	17
Activating Triggers.....	18
Looking.....	18
Using the Map.....	18
Items.....	18
Picking up items.....	18
Using items.....	18
Combat.....	18
Attacking/Defending.....	19
Jumping.....	19
Grapple attack.....	19
Weapon Triangle.....	19
Switching Weapons.....	19
Defeating enemies.....	20
Regular enemies.....	20
Revival.....	20
Boss enemies.....	20
Health.....	20
Taking Damage.....	20
Knockback.....	21
Knockback (air).....	21
Recovering Damage.....	21
Dying.....	21
Continuing.....	21
Cut-Scenes.....	21

Storytelling.....	22
Environments.....	22
Allies.....	22
Enemies.....	22
NPCs.....	23
Signs.....	23
Levels.....	23
Non-linearity.....	23
Training area.....	24
Hub.....	24
Teleportation.....	24
Interconnected.....	24
Level Order.....	24
III. Artificial Intelligence.....	26
Enemy Artificial Intelligence.....	26
Player Detection.....	26
Motion.....	26
Pathfinding.....	26
Taking Damage.....	27
Combat Attacks.....	27
Evading.....	27
Non-Combatant Agents.....	27
IV. Game Elements.....	28
Items.....	28
Level Elements.....	28
Platform.....	28
Wild.....	28
Captured.....	28
Door.....	28
Lever.....	28
NPC.....	28
Weapons.....	29
The Unity Blade.....	29
Upgrade.....	29
Upgrade 2 (2nd ending).....	29
Bubble Shield.....	29
Upgrade.....	29
Missile Launcher.....	29
Upgrade.....	30
Power-ups.....	30
Boost Boots (Double-jump).....	30
Hover.....	30
Grappling Claw.....	30
Health Upgrade.....	30
Map.....	30
Compass.....	31
Essence.....	31

Health Refill.....	31
Characters.....	31
[Elena].....	31
Allied NPCs.....	31
Idris.....	31
Mother.....	31
Father.....	32
Glenn.....	32
Neutral NPCs.....	32
Enemies.....	32
Grunts.....	32
Level – Forest.....	32
Basil Boar.....	32
Quick-Draw Macaw.....	33
Ohh Deer.....	33
Level – Lake.....	33
Jitter-Skitter.....	33
Mouthy the Wheeze.....	33
Bass Desire.....	33
Level – Cave of Regurgitated Dreams.....	33
Fang Flutterfly.....	33
Eight Legs, One Fist.....	33
ReckonForce.....	33
Level – Volcano.....	34
Erik.....	34
Aerik.....	34
Batbot.....	34
Level – Desert.....	34
Doom Hog.....	34
Lion Truth.....	34
Treading Water.....	34
Level – Castle.....	35
Mr. Kitty.....	35
Soldier of Misfortune.....	35
Chandle Leer.....	35
Level – Prison.....	35
Ohh Rats.....	35
Wild Webbed Wonder.....	35
Bugged Out.....	35
Level – Zeppelin.....	36
Superfly.....	36
ChopperChamp.....	36
Walt Weapon.....	36
Level – Fortress.....	36
Mad Blogger.....	36
Twitterpated.....	36
Relentless Ruby.....	36

Level – Robot Titan.....	37
Loopy Lupe.....	37
Jawsome.....	37
CounterAxx.....	37
Boss enemies.....	37
New Guy Alex.....	37
Fishing Frenzy.....	38
Livingstone VI.....	38
Drake, Dangerous Demon Dragon.....	38
Sandman Sam.....	38
Lazer the Laughing.....	38
Cuddlywampus.....	38
Chaos Engine.....	39
“Evil” Twinn.....	39
Lord Tekne.....	39
V. Story Overview.....	40
VI. Game Progression.....	41
Setting.....	41
Introduction.....	41
Fallow Fecund Farmland.....	42
Blue Saxophone Forest.....	42
Notable Town of Hubbub.....	42
Roiling, Boiling Lake of Total Tranquility.....	42
Cave of Regurgitated Dreams.....	42
Anger-Mouth Volcano.....	43
Green Cheese Desert.....	43
Simpler Times Castle.....	43
Poignant Prison.....	43
Zed the Zeppelin.....	43
Ultimate Technological Fortress, “Elba”.....	44
Robot Titan “Albert”.....	44
VII. System Menus.....	45
Title screen.....	45
New Game.....	45
Load Game.....	45
Erase Game.....	45
In-game menu / map.....	45
Quick restart.....	45
Quick save.....	45
Game Over.....	45
Continue.....	45
Load Game.....	46
Quit Game.....	46

I. Introduction/Overview

Swords & Platforms: Capture the Kingdom (hereafter referred to simply as “Capture the Kingdom”) is a colorful adventure that combines the precision of platforming action with the exhilaration of claiming and holding territory. It includes non-linear exploration, evocative music, and a humorous narrative. The player explores a kingdom and uses a magical sword to lay claim to the platforms that make up the game world, representing the territory of the kingdom. Along the way he encounters both friends to assist him and foes to hinder him in his quest, all of whom help to reveal the narrative.

The player's primary goal in Capture the Kingdom is to navigate the game's protagonist successfully from platform to platform, defeating or avoiding any enemies he encounters. Once he has secured the magic sword, the player can use it to “capture” each platform, but only if he has cleared it of enemies. The more platforms the player captures, the more of the kingdom falls under the banner of the sword and its owner. If the player leaves a room before capturing all the platforms, any captured platforms will revert to a pre-captured (“wild”) state and defeated enemies will return; successfully capturing all the platforms in a room will secure the room permanently, and enemies will no longer appear.

Capture the Kingdom emphasizes non-linear exploration and ability upgrades, similar to games like *Super Metroid* and *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*. The first time the player travels through a room, he may not be able to capture every platform, obtain every item, or explore every path, because they are out of reach of his current abilities. Only once he has progressed through the game and earned new abilities (for example, a mid-air jump) can he return and complete the room. The game minimizes the tedium associated with this “backtracking” through the use of a “teleportation” system for easy travel and thoughtful, wrap-around level design that connects areas in multiple ways.

Capture the Kingdom also emphasizes combat, with many enemies to overcome, from low-level, common “grunts” to unique and powerful boss enemies. The player can wield multiple types of weapons, as can some enemies; the weapons make use of a “paper-rocks-scissors”- type mechanic in which each weapon is strong against another type of weapon and weak against a third, and no weapon has an overall advantage.

The control is simple, making use primarily of traditional platforming controls for moving and jumping, plus a context-sensitive Action button for attacking, capturing, and interacting. The game explains the controls, game mechanics and narrative entirely through in-game elements, from signs around the various areas, to NPCs with whom the player can speak, to the GUI. The player does not need to consult any resources outside the game play, although a help screen is available. The game starts off gently, to allow new players to learn the mechanics and as befits the narrative, then ramps up its difficulty gradually, posing a real (though reasonable) challenge by the end of the game.

Capture the Kingdom takes place in a combined fantasy/science-fiction setting. The visual focus is squarely on fantasy, with bright colors and rural environments from farmland to forests to caves to lakes. The land is a kingdom and its champions wield swords and fight monsters. Peasants eke out a humble existence and life is often difficult (though the tone of the game is always lighthearted). However, there is a sudden and surprising technological movement in process, with strange weapons (e.g. missile launcher, bubble shield) and creatures (robots) appearing all over the land. The later stages are more urban and technologically-developed to reflect the forces at work.

Capture the Kingdom's narrative starts with the game's protagonist, [Elena], exploring the woods near her home, looking for her lost dog, which was captured by monsters. On the way back, a cloaked figure

appears and presents her with a magical sword. He tells her that there is a sudden wave of mysterious technology sweeping over the land, with rumors of a powerful figure seeking to take over the kingdom by force of arms. The wild creatures are becoming ever more hostile and the whole land is on the brink of crisis. [Elena] must take up the sword to unify the kingdom and protect it from this encroaching evil.

After some initial resistance, [Elena] takes up the sword and embarks on a quest to Capture the Kingdom. During her adventure she meets many people and learns that not is all as it seems. When she confronts the villain, she learns he has been manipulating her from the start and has gotten her to do his dirty work. He takes the sword and throws [Elena] in prison, but she escapes. At this point the player has a choice either to confront the villain and reclaim the kingdom, or take up a secret second sword and recapture the kingdom, stripping the villain of his power. The two choices lead to different endings with varying degrees of challenge. Throughout, the tone of the game is lighthearted despite its serious themes thanks to snappy dialogue, plentiful humor and strong personalities.

Capture the Kingdom is simple enough to control and understand that it appeals to inexperienced players, but its non-linear world, multiple endings, deep game play, and snappy writing attract more-experienced players as well. The game does not shy away from violence but it is sufficiently exaggerated and inoffensive as to be suitable for players of all ages. The narrative hints at some of the philosophical and sociological consequences of the encroachment of technology on traditional life, but it never gets in the way of the game play and is subtle rather than heavy-handed.

II. Game Mechanics

Overview

Capture the Kingdom is a 2D action-platforming game that combines the non-linear exploration and ability upgrades of games such as *Super Metroid* and *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* with a “King of the Hill”-inspired focus on claiming – and retaining – territory, in the shape of platforms. The game strikes a rough balance between exploration and combat, slightly favoring exploration. While the majority of combat during the level is secondary to the exploration and platforming, end-level boss battles focus on combat. As such, the game mechanics focus on providing the player with a) simple but precise control that accommodates a wide variety of actions and b) an engaging world that is exciting to explore.

Camera

In the game, the player controls the protagonist [Elena]. The game play is 2D and as such requires a relatively simplistic camera, which always maintains the same perspective, perpendicular to the game world. During most game play, the camera maintains a consistently-sized view of the environment around [Elena], large enough to provide a reasonable view of the surroundings and not to feel cramped, but small enough to prevent the player from seeing much of the level at any one time. The camera centers itself on [Elena], unless she gets too close to the boundaries of the room – the camera is “smart” enough not to go outside the room and will hold its vertical or horizontal position (perpendicular to the boundaries in question) until [Elena] moves sufficiently inward that the camera can center on her again.

Certain items and/or achievements cause the camera to zoom out for a larger view of the level on a temporary or permanent basis. Refer to the [Zoom Out](#) and [Items](#) sections for more information.

On certain occasions the camera is fixed, for various dramatic purposes or if the screen is simply small enough to fit inside a single camera view.

Look Around

The player can examine the surroundings a short distance beyond the limits of the current view by holding the Look button and moving the arrow keys in any direction. The camera shifts slightly in the chosen direction as long as the player holds a direction, then snaps back to center on [Elena]. Look Around disables any other player action, but the rest of the game world carries on as usual and the player must still beware of danger. The player can only use the Look function while standing still.

Pressing the Look button also causes the HUD to appear. Also see: [HUD Elements](#).

Zoom Out

Under certain conditions, the camera zooms out for a full view of the level. Defeated enemies may drop [Essence](#), the manifestation of their geographical knowledge. Collecting the essence causes the camera to zoom out; however, the effect is temporary. Also see: [Essence](#).

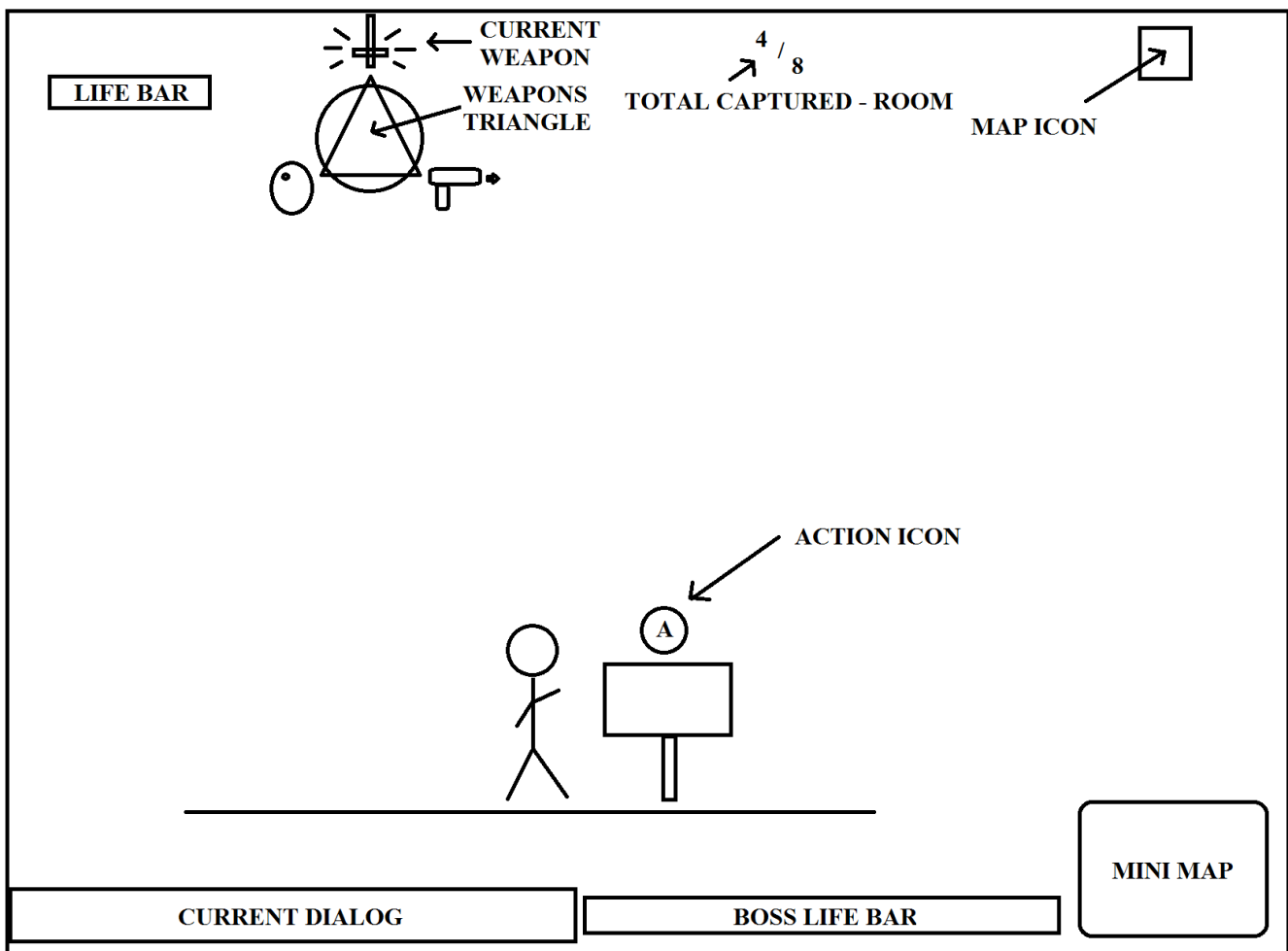
Once the player captures all the platforms in a screen, the camera zooms out and remains permanently zoomed out for that screen, to reflect the player and [Elena]'s collective knowledge of the surroundings.

In-Game GUI

The majority of the player's screen features a view of the game world, typically with the player-character, [Elena], at or near center. The interface minimizes onscreen elements to allow the player to enjoy the game world to the fullest.

HUD Elements

The in-game HUD is minimal but does feature some elements to indicate current statuses and goings-on. They are designed to appear only as needed. The player can also push the Look button to see the complete HUD at any time, after which it will linger for a few seconds and then disappear. Also see: [Look Around](#). Here is a concept sketch of the HUD design:



The HUD elements include:

Health

There are two ways to track the player-character's health. One is a life bar that appears in the upper-left of the screen. The life bar only appears when [Elena] takes damage or the player pushes the Look button, after which it lingers for a few seconds and then disappears. At 25% health, the health bar

remains onscreen until [Elena] either restores her health or dies.

The character animation also indicates the current level of health. At 100% health there is a slight glow around [Elena]. At 50% health, the animation changes to appear weary. At 25% health the animation changes to appear on the verge of death.

Boss Enemy Health

The boss enemies have a life bar just like [Elena]'s. This appears only during boss battles and remains on-screen in the lower-right as long as the battle lasts.

Current weapon

There are two ways to track the current weapon. One is the weapons triangle that appears in the upper-middle-left of the screen, which highlights the current weapon. Also see: [Available weapons](#).

The current weapon also appears visually on [Elena], stored on her person if not currently in use.

Available weapons

The HUD includes a weapons triangle in the upper-middle-left of the screen, which displays however many of the weapons are currently available and highlights the current weapon. The weapons triangle only appears when the player presses the Look button or when switching weapons. Also see: [Switching Weapons](#).

Mini-map

The HUD includes a mini-map in the lower-right of the screen, which shows a zoomed in view of the main Map. The view displays current and adjacent rooms. The Mini-Map is visible at all times but the player can turn it off on the main Map screen, in which case it will only appear when the player pushes the Look button. Also see: [Map](#).

Map icon

Once the player acquires the Map, the HUD displays a map icon in the upper-right of the screen. There is a visual representation of the Map button overlaid on top of the map icon. This serves as a visual reminder to the player of what button to press to go to the Map screen. The Map icon only appears when the player presses the Look button. Also see: [Items](#) and [Map](#).

Total Captured – Room

Once the player acquires the Compass, the HUD includes a fractional tally – number of platforms captured in the current room / total number of platforms in the current room – in the upper-middle-right of the screen. This way the player can see progress in the current room without having to go to the Map screen. The Total Captured – Room icon only appears when the player presses the Look button or captures a platform, after which it lingers for a few seconds and then disappears.

Once the player captures all the platforms in a room, a star appears next to the tally and the room changes color on the Map. Also see: [Map](#) and [Compass](#).

Current Dialog

[Elena] and/or the player may overhear or participate in conversations during game play. Most dialog is fully voiced but also includes captions for those who play with the sound off, have hearing difficulties, or just don't like the voices. The player may also encounter signs or other printed material. The text appears across the bottom of the screen, and the player must press the Action button to proceed through each block of text. The player can also press Action as text is scrolling to cause the entire block to appear at once. A 2D sprite appears next to dialog to indicate who is speaking.

Players may turn off the voices via the Options screen if they so choose. They may not adjust text speed because it is synchronized to the speech; however, they may skip through text blocks using the Action button as previously described. If the voice sample has not finished playing, it skips the rest and cuts to the new voice sample. Also see: [Options](#).

Action Icon

Like the Current Dialog, the Action Icon is not a permanent part of the HUD, but rather a special element resembling the Action button. The Action Icon appears whenever [Elena] moves into the proximity of an interactive element that the player may use by pressing the Action button. For example, if [Elena] approaches a sign, the Action Icon appears above the sign to indicate the player may read the sign's contents. The Action Icon persists as long as [Elena] remains close to the interactive element. Also see: [Actions](#).

Map

Early in the game, the player discovers the Map item, which displays the entire kingdom on a separate screen when the player pushes the Map button. However, many details are lacking at first and the levels are little more than silhouettes. Similar to games such as *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* and *Super Metroid*, the Map fills itself in automatically as the player explores, adding rooms, connections, places of interest, etc.

Similar to the *Metroid Prime* games, the Map is color-coded to provide additional information at a glance. Each level has its own color. Unexplored rooms in a level (which the player can see with the Compass) are grayed out; rooms which the player has explored but not fully captured are light-colored; those fully captured are dark-colored. There is a flashing highlight over the current room.

Similarly, icons indicate [Save rooms](#) and [Transporters](#). See those sections for more information.

Total Captured

The Map also indicates the player's success at capturing the all-important platforms, through several tallies, all in the style previously described (see: [Total Captured – Room](#)). Tallies for a level only appear once the player finds the Compass for that level (see: [Compass](#)). The tallies include:

Room

The Map does not display a tally for rooms other than the current one, since any room not fully-captured reverts to a wild state if the player leaves. However, the Map does indicate the current room's tally.

Level

There is a tally adjacent to each level (colored the same as the level) to indicate the number of platforms captured out of the total within the entire level.

Kingdom

Once the player finds the Compass for every level, the Map displays a tally for the entire kingdom.

Transition

Certain elements transition from one state to another during game play; where appropriate, the HUD displays the name of the new state in the upper-right of the screen, which lingers for a few seconds and then disappears. Besides being informative, this also serves as a source of comedy, as most names are humorous in nature (e.g. Cave of Regurgitated Dreams). These elements include:

Current music track

The music changes when moving between levels, during special events, and within levels that feature more than one piece. During the transition, the old music fades into the new and the name of the new track appears.

Level name

When moving from one level to another, the new level's name appears.

Replaying and Saving

Capture the Kingdom does not include “lives,” though the health bar is somewhat analogous. When the player-character, [Elena], loses all health, she dies and the game is over. The player can resume the game either at the last save point or at a more recent checkpoint.

Saving the Game

The player cannot save at any time, but must locate special save rooms or reach a checkpoint. He is free to try a particular section as many times as he needs to finish it, but must then record his progress at a Save room before quitting the game or dying, or else he will lose his progress. This promotes exploration and freedom to act (since no “lives” limit constrains the player), but also introduces an element of caution, since a false step may cost a great deal of work if the player has not bothered or managed to save in a while.

Save rooms

Scattered across the kingdoms are special “Save” rooms, featuring mysterious technology that records [Elena]'s current condition and restores her if she dies (this is the in-game explanation and a perfect way to introduce the concept of foreign technology). There is a pad on the ground connected to a computer; when [Elena] stands within the pad and the player pushes the Action button, a circle of light parallel to the pad and the ground runs up and down her body, much as science-fiction frequently depicts holographic or scanning technology. The player then receives a message that the game has been

saved, and he must press the Action button to proceed.

Crucially, these Save rooms are placed in such a way and with such frequency that there is sufficient challenge for the player to make it from one to the next, without causing undo frustration. In other words, neither too many, nor too few – everything in moderation.

Checkpoints

The game creates automatic and transparent checkpoints before certain events such that if the player dies she can resume play at that location, rather than having to go back to the Save room. For example, a checkpoint may precede a surprise boss battle.

The checkpoints are used sparingly. For example, if it's reasonably obvious that there is a boss battle imminent, then there is a Save room available rather than a checkpoint and the player is responsible for thinking ahead. However, for events that the player cannot be expected to have anticipated, or very long battles, checkpoints protect the event's challenge while preventing frustration.

Checkpoints do not take the place of Save rooms, as their effects only last as long as the player doesn't quit the game. If she quits or shuts off the game before reaching a Save room, the game will revert back to the last time she used a Save room.

Loading the Game

The player can load a saved game from the title screen and the Game Over screen. The game resumes from whichever Save room the player used most recently. The Map screen also includes a Quick Restart option (see: [Quick Restart](#)).

Quick restart

The Map screen includes a Quick Restart option, which immediately restarts the game at the current checkpoint if applicable, or whichever Save room the player used most recently if there is no checkpoint. This way if the player gets stuck or is dissatisfied with his playing, he can easily restart the current section without having to get a Game Over or quit the game. Also see: [Checkpoints](#).

Control Summary

The player uses a variety of controls to navigate [Elena] through the game world. These controls are designed to allow a wide variety of actions with minimal complexity or memorization on the part of the player. The player should be able to control the game with a reasonable degree of intuition, relying on the game to “know” what actions are currently appropriate. This does not mean a sacrifice of precision or control, but simply that the game makes use of context-sensitivity to compress many actions into one button, rather than assign each action to an individual button, which the player must then remember.

A detailed description of the various actions/controls follows, but first is a summary of the buttons (inputs) needed to play the game, which give a general overview of the various actions available. These can be easily adapted to fit any modern game system or computer.

Up, Down, Left, Right

The player uses these controls to move [Elena] around the horizontal plane of the game world and to

aim certain actions, such as the Look function. They are not analog. Also see: [Look](#) and [Walking](#).

Jump

The player uses this button to make [Elena] jump, as well to make various in-air advanced movements such as hovering and double-jumping. The button is analog – pressing it lightly results in a smaller jump than pressing it strongly. Also see: [Advanced Movement](#).

Attack

The player uses this button to attack with a weapon. The function and method of use depend on the weapon. Also see: [Weapons](#).

Switch Weapons

The player uses this button to switch weapons. Tapping the button switches to the next weapon automatically. Holding the button highlights and magnifies the weapons triangle, freezing the player-character's movement (but not the rest of the game) so that the player can use the direction controls to choose a weapon.

Action

The player uses this button to perform a wide variety of actions that are neither combat- nor movement-related. The button is context-sensitive and changes its function appropriately. Also see: [Actions](#).

Look

The player uses this button in conjunction with the direction controls to shift the camera to peek in a direction. Using the Look function freezes the player-character's movement. Also see: [Look Around](#).

Map (Pause)

The player uses this button to view the Map screen, which also pauses the game. The Map screen includes various options. Also see: [Map](#).

General Movement

Movement is confined to the 2D plane of the game world, so directional commands are absolute (as opposed to relative to a camera view). Whether on the ground or in the air, [Elena] can move left or right; she can jump from the ground and fall through the air. Gravity handles the falling; the player controls the other motions using the directional buttons.

Walking

Capture the Kingdom focuses on precision control rather than realistic motion. As such, there is a single movement speed with no force of inertia. [Elena] moves at a fast walk. Changes of direction and stopping are instantaneous.

Jumping

As previously mentioned, inertia is not a factor and therefore plays no role in determining jumping distance. [Elena] can leap the same distance while moving as from a standstill. However, the jump button is analog, so a light touch yields a short jump while a heavier one yields a high jump. [Elena] can change direction in mid-air, allowing the player to reposition, react, or change his mind in the middle of a jump.

Moving through Platforms

Most platforms are solid from below as well as above; however, there are some platforms which [Elena] can jump through from below but which become solid underfoot. See: [Platforms](#).

Surfaces

Generally, [Elena] can walk and land on any flat surface, whether ground, floating platforms, conveyer belts, etc., or even the backs of some enemies. She can ascend inclines up to 45 degrees from the horizontal – and will stay in place if the player ceases pressing a direction – but will fall if the player attempts to make her land on anything steeper, sliding down the slope until she reaches a lesser incline or flat ground.

For the most part, surfaces do not affect [Elena]'s mobility, as previously described in the [Walking](#) section. However, there are slick surfaces in the game, such as those covered by ice or slime, which cause a loss of traction. [Elena] can move on these surfaces but will begin sliding as soon as there is some horizontal input. Depending on the surface, [Elena] will continue to slide either for some small distance beyond when the player stops providing horizontal input, or as long as the surface lasts. [Elena] may jump while sliding but cannot stop or change direction.

There are some surfaces in the game which [Elena] cannot walk upon. These include hazards such as spikes, lava, electrified floors, and deep water. Coming into contact with such surfaces results in death; these hazards, along with the enemies, typically provide the peril in platforming sections.

Advanced Movement

There are many parts of the kingdom which [Elena] cannot reach simply by walking and jumping. These might include a platform too high to reach with a regular jump, a distance too wide to leap, or a door blocked by an obstacle. By progressing in the adventure [Elena] obtains special abilities that allow her to reach those places.

Double-jumping

An upgrade allows [Elena] to perform a second jump in mid-air, reaching twice the height and distance as before. The second jump is analog, just like the first. The player taps the Jump button while in the air to perform a double-jump.

Hovering

An upgrade allows [Elena] to hover at a consistent elevation for some seconds, greatly increasing the horizontal distance she can travel in the air. The player presses and holds the Jump button while in the

air to hover and can move with the left and right directional buttons while hovering.

Grappling

An upgrade allows [Elena] to use a Grappling Claw, which latches onto surfaces and pulls her towards them. The player holds a direction and presses the Action button to use the Grappling Claw (if there is a context-sensitive Action appropriate at that position, it will take precedence). The hook fires and retracts automatically, and if the player provides no further input, [Elena] will hang suspended at the contact point. Pressing the Action button while suspended will cause the hook to disengage, at which point [Elena] will fall. Pressing a direction while suspended will cause [Elena] to start swinging in the appropriate direction – for example, if she is suspended from a ceiling, she will begin swinging in the direction of the button; if she is hanging onto a vertical surface, she will kick outwards and swing upwards. Inertia and gravity both apply to swinging – it is necessary to swing back and forth multiple times to traverse the greatest arc.

Grapple-jumping

Adept players can use the Grappling Claw to make jumps they could not accomplish normally. For example, they could grapple onto the bottom of a platform, swing out and around the edge of the platform, then use the double-jump to land safely atop the platform. It is necessary to use this mechanic in order to capture some platforms.

Wall-climbing

Very adept players can use the Grappling Claw to climb vertical surfaces. They can grapple onto the surface, kick out and swing upward, release the hook, perform a double-jump (optional), then grapple onto a higher point on the wall, repeating the pattern all the way up the wall or until an obstacle interferes. It is necessary to use this mechanic in order to find all the power-ups in the game.

Actions

Many actions beyond movement and combat are necessary to complete the game. Capture the Kingdom makes these as easy to perform as possible through a context-sensitive system.

Action button

The player has a special Action button that causes different effects depending on the circumstances. An automatic context-sensitive system determines which action is appropriate. If there is something interactive (denoted by a floating Action Icon above the object; also see: [Action Icon](#)), [Elena] will interact with it. If there is nothing with which [Elena] may interact, the Action button deploys the Grappling Claw. Context-sensitive actions take precedence over the Grappling Claw. In the unlikely event that more than one context-sensitive action is possible at once in the same space, the game will determine which is likely to be more pressing and will perform that action.

Capturing Platforms

Pressing the Action button while on top of a platform in the Wild state will initiate a check for enemies on the same surface. If there are any, the Grappling Claw will deploy; otherwise, [Elena] will plant her

sword in the ground and begin to Capture the platform. This process takes several seconds to complete, and it will be interrupted if [Elena] takes damage or an enemy makes contact with the platform, requiring her to start over. Once [Elena] successfully Captures a platform, it will transform visually to indicate its new status and will not revert to Wild so long as she stays in the same room. Once [Elena] Captures all the platforms in a room, she has permanently secured the room for the kingdom, purifying it of enemies, and can leave without worry. If she leaves before capturing every platform, all Captured platforms revert to their Wild state and she must start afresh the next time she enters the room.

Talking

[Elena] can talk with many of the characters she meets on her journey. Some may be willing to share helpful information; others may intend to mislead; still others may just make idle chatter. Enemies and some allies are liable simply to talk on sight (if they do not attack first); others the player will need to approach and press the Action button when the Action Icon appears. In either case, during conversation the action stops and the player loses control of [Elena]. The player must press the Action button to advance through pages of dialog and can tap it as dialog is appearing to cause the whole page to appear at once.

Talking fulfills several purposes. It fills in the back story of the world. It provides clues on what to do next, enemies' weaknesses, the location of hidden power-ups, etc. It gives the world and the specific characters personality. Finally, it provides a means to secure certain upgrades.

Branching dialogue

During some conversations the player has a choice of responses to certain prompts. Often this takes the form of different questions, which the player may ask in any order she chooses and for which the order has no effect on successive conversation options. However, occasionally there is a conversation where the player must make a choice, which has an effect on game play and may close off certain possibilities. In such cases it will be obvious by the nature of the conversation that an important decision is at hand. The player uses the directional and Action buttons to make conversation choices.

Reading

[Elena] may find signs or other written materials scattered about the world, which she can read for information (useful or otherwise). Some reading materials trigger automatically as soon as [Elena] comes into contact with them, such as a note left on the ground; others the player must press the Action button to read. The Action Icon appears above any readable object once [Elena] approaches. Reading causes the action to freeze as the contents appear in a text bubble. The player uses the Action button to navigate through pages of text and/or close the window and resume play. Reading material may contain anything from idle chit-chat to directional markers to helpful clues to back-story information.

Opening Doors

There are many closed doors in the kingdom; some of them the player can open by pressing the Action button when the Action Icon appears. If the player needs to fulfill a condition before the door will open, pressing the Action button when the condition is unfulfilled will yield a “negative” sound effect and the door will remain closed.

Activating Triggers

[Elena] may encounter switches, levers and other triggers during the adventure, which she can activate by pressing the Action button when she approaches the object and the Action Icon appears. Triggers may cause effects such as lowering a bridge, activating an elevator, detonating an explosive, turning on a machine, etc.

Looking

The player can preview the surrounding area a little way beyond the default camera view by holding the Look button and using the directional buttons. See [Look Around](#) for details. Looking (as an Action) is never required to survive the game's hazards, but it does give players an edge and may reveal secrets just out of view.

Using the Map

The kingdom is huge and comprises many levels of different natures (forest, cave, desert, etc.). Each level comprises many rooms. Early in the game the player finds a Map item which then automatically fills in the details of the areas explored, making it easy to find certain locations again such as Save rooms. This map functions similarly to those in such games as *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* and *Super Metroid*. The player can examine the Map via the pause menu. Also see: [Map](#).

Items

[Elena] will find many items in her adventure. These typically take the form of power-ups of various kinds. Some upgrade her abilities. Some expand her life bar. Some provide additional information about the level. [Elena] also wields various weapons in her quest to Capture the Kingdom.

Picking up items

[Elena] picks up items automatically as soon as she comes into contact with them. Items such as [Essence](#) gravitate towards [Elena], making it easier for the player to collect the item; others stay in place, such as upgrades, typically in hard-to-reach areas or as rewards for completing a difficult section.

Using items

How to use an item depends on the item. The player uses weapons and movement items via their appropriate buttons, as described in the [Control Summary](#). Items such as [Health Upgrades](#) take effect automatically and are permanent; items such as [Essence](#) take effect automatically but wear off over time. See the relevant sections for more information.

Combat

Combat plays a major role in Capture the Kingdom, of roughly the same significance as platforming. Combat takes place in real time – the player has direct control over [Elena] and is responsible for making her attack, defend and evade enemy attacks. Combat flows freely along with the platforming. For example, [Elena] may defeat an enemy, jump from one platform to another, take damage, jump to a

third platform, and defeat another enemy. The transition between the two modes of action is seamless.

Attacking/Defending

Over the course of the adventure, [Elena] obtains three primary weapons as well as two secondary weapons. Various enemies have different strengths and vulnerabilities and it is necessary to use every weapon to survive. Two of the primary weapons – the [sword](#) and the [missile launcher](#) – are offensive, while the third – the bubble shield – is defensive, and the three operate within a [Weapon Triangle](#) (see the section below for details).

In addition to the primary weapons, [Elena] can put her jumping skills and the Grappling Claw she acquires to use for offensive purposes. These are the secondary weapons. With a few exceptions, enemies are neither strong nor weak to these attacks, but some may react humorously or surprisingly.

Jumping

Like classic Mario Bros., [Elena] can jump on enemies' heads, doing minimal damage (although some few are weak to the attack). Enemies with spikes or other hazardous elements on their tops will damage [Elena] instead if she tries to jump on them. It is always visually clear when an enemy cannot be jumped on.

Grapple attack

Though the Grappling Claw is intended to facilitate mobility, [Elena] can smack enemies with it for minimal damage (although some few are weak to the attack). Some boss enemies may yield Health Upgrades if [Elena] hits them enough times with the Grappling Claw. Enemies with grabbing moves may catch the Grappling Claw and pull [Elena] towards them for damage, so the player must watch their attacks carefully.

Weapon Triangle

The primary weapons – sword, missile launcher and bubble shield – operate within a Weapon Triangle, in which each weapon is strong against one weapon and weak against another. The sword cuts through the shield. The shield blocks missiles. The missile launcher overwhelms the sword. Enemies use variants of these weapons, too, and can switch between them just as the player can, so the player must be ready to switch weapons in order to get an advantage. For example, an enemy may attack with missiles, then put up a bubble shield, so that the player must defend with the bubble shield and then switch to the sword to cut through the enemy's shield and dispatch the enemy.

Switching Weapons

The player must switch weapons frequently to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances, so the game makes this as easy as possible. Weapon switching is instantaneous, using the Switch Weapons button. See the [Control Summary](#) for details. [Elena] can jump on an enemy or use the Grappling Claw at any time and does not need to Switch to those attacks.

Defeating enemies

Many enemies stand between [Elena] and a Captured Kingdom, from the lowly grunts who prevent her from Capturing a platform to the boss enemies who rule over a level and guard special power-ups. [Elena] must defeat them to progress.

Regular enemies

Every level features basic enemies unique to that level (with some spillover between levels), which appear in most rooms and do their best to stop [Elena] from completing her quest. These enemies have a variety of offensive and defensive strategies and pose different degrees of threat. They may employ the same weapon-types as [Elena] or entirely different techniques. The player does not have to defeat them to progress; however, defeated enemies sometimes drop [Essence](#) or a health-refilling item. Furthermore, [Elena] cannot Capture a platform without clearing it of enemies.

Revival

Platforms which [Elena] has not captured exist in a Wild state that attracts enemies. If [Elena] captures a platform, it becomes part of the kingdom and enemies will no longer appear there. However, if [Elena] does not capture every platform in a room before leaving the room, the captured platforms will revert to a Wild state, since any remaining Wild platform will allow enemies to encroach on the kingdom's territory. Any enemies [Elena] defeats will reappear the next time she enters the room until she captures all the platforms and purifies the room permanently.

Boss enemies

“Boss” enemies rule over each section (“level”) of the kingdom and typically guard a special power-up. Each boss is unique, only appearing once. They have distinctive (often bizarre) personalities and often engage in conversation with [Elena] before and/or after battle. The bosses wield powerful attacks unique to them and feature much more complex attack patterns than regular enemies. They also take many more hits to defeat. The bosses become more and more difficulty to defeat the further the player progresses in the game, though the strategies they employ are always fair and the player must always feel he can defeat them with just a little more practice. Boss battles often require the player to use advanced movement capabilities as well as offensive and defensive strategies – they are a chance for the player to put to use all of the skills he has learned so far. The battles are enjoyable despite the challenge and should provide a feeling of satisfaction when won.

Health

[Elena] starts off the game fairly weak but becomes stronger as her adventure progresses. She can take multiple hits from enemy attacks before dying and the player tracks her health through a health bar as well as the character animation. See [Health](#) under [HUD Elements](#) for details. The player can expand [Elena]'s health bar by finding health upgrades hidden all over the kingdom, allowing her to take more damage.

Taking Damage

When an enemy attack hits [Elena] it does damage. The amount of damage depends on the attack.

Regular enemy attacks typically do a smaller amount of damage (especially early in the game) while boss enemy attacks do a great deal of damage. Later in the game it is necessary to obtain some health upgrades in order to survive even a single hit from the most powerful attacks.

Knockback

Some enemy attacks knock [Elena] backwards. For the most part it should be intuitive which attacks cause knockback – those with a horizontal force. For example, an enemy missile or a horizontal sword swipe from in front or behind [Elena] will knock her in the direction of the strike. However, a missile from above or below, or a vertical sword swing, will not cause knockback. Most enemy attacks only knock [Elena] back a short distance; however, more powerful ones may knock her back a great distance, such as the width of the room. During knockback, the player loses control of [Elena] and she is helpless; the player regains control as soon as [Elena] stops moving. If the player is not careful, enemy attacks may knock [Elena] right into further damage or even death.

Knockback (air)

[Elena] is vulnerable to knockback in the air as previously described; furthermore, she is also vulnerable to vertical knockback while in the air. Enemy attacks may smack her into the ground or even give her a boost into the air. Clever players may exploit this latter possibility to get to heights they couldn't reach otherwise.

Recovering Damage

The player can restore [Elena]'s health through various methods. Using a Save room fills her health completely. Collecting a health upgrade also fills her health. If [Elena] dies and the player chooses to continue, [Elena] will start over with a full health bar. Furthermore, defeated enemies sometimes drop health-refilling items. These restore a certain portion of health, depending on the item. Also see: [Items](#).

Dying

If [Elena] depletes her health bar, she dies and the game is over. She may also encounter hazards, such as electrified floors or spiked pits, that cause instantaneous death. In either case, the player receives a Game Over message and can choose whether to continue or quit the game.

Continuing

If [Elena] dies and the player chooses to continue, player will resume from the most recent Checkpoint if applicable or the most recent Save room if not. Also see: [Saving the Game](#).

Cut-Scenes

Capture the Kingdom makes limited use of cut-scenes to convey the narrative to the player. These cut-scenes employ the same game engine as the rest of the game for visual consistency. Cut-scenes typically are no more than the player temporarily losing control of [Elena] during certain events. For example, the player might move [Elena] into a certain room, at which point he loses control as [Elena] walks towards an enemy, engages in conversation, then falls through a trapdoor when the enemy pulls a lever. Moments later, [Elena] finds herself in a dungeon cell, at which point the player regains control.

Whenever possible, Capture the Kingdom uses in-game elements such as signs and conversation during game play to convey the story without taking control away from the player; however, to stage certain game moments it is necessary to remove control and make use of a cut-scene. These must be minimal in length in order to restore control to the player as soon as possible. If a cut-scene is becoming too long, it is important to weigh the merits of the narrative opportunities versus the risk of the player becoming bored.

Storytelling

Although Capture the Kingdom is at heart an action/platforming game with light RPG elements (in the form of character upgrades), the narrative is an essential part of the experience, tying the adventure together and giving it significance as well as amusing the player with a strong dose of humor. The tone of the game is light-hearted and funny, but contains serious moments. Despite the irreverence of the protagonist and the bizarre personalities of the enemies she fights, the narrative must never lose sight of the fact that [Elena] is an individual fighting a desperate battle against an oppressive force.

Capture the Kingdom uses multiple narrative devices to convey the story to the player. These include the cut-scenes previously described. They contain the information most essential to understanding the story and finding success in the game. However, they are not interactive, so the game employs other devices within game play to enrich the characters and the world of Capture the Kingdom.

Environments

A narrative is nothing without a developed context in which to enjoy it, and nothing is more key to establishing the setting of Capture the Kingdom than the environments themselves. Each level in the game is a particular section of the kingdom with a distinct environment, such as forest or desert. Each level has its own unique enemies, dangers and rewards, as well as a distinctive art style so each level feels fresh. The humor in the game comes through as much in how things look as how the characters act and speak. It is important to take care that the levels all fit logically within the context of the kingdom and each other, and that no environment conflicts with any story element.

Allies

[Elena]'s family and the friends she makes throughout the adventure are happy to share with her the information they have, from the history of certain events and locations to tips about boss enemies to details that simply serve to make the characters more three-dimensional. The player learns this information through engaging in conversation during non-combat situations; the conversations appear as part of the in-game GUI as previously described in the applicable section. Note that some allies present during battles may offer tips in the heat of combat, in which case the text appears on screen without interfering with the action or requiring input from the player.

Enemies

Allies are not the only ones who talk to [Elena] – some enemies will, too, especially the boss enemies, who are all rather talkative. Most of their conversation consists of threats and bluster, but sometimes they accidentally let details slip which fill in the player's knowledge of their plans and the true nature of the events taking place in the kingdom. These conversations – which take place prior to and after battle – also serve as the primary way to convey the enemies' unique personalities.

NPCs

[Elena] encounters many NPCs in her adventure, many of whom are not necessarily interested in providing direct assistance but who are willing to share information about the area, from geographic details to the location of hidden power-ups, as well as tips on how to defeat the local enemies. Such conversations take place exclusively in non-combat situations and the player must approach the NPC and initiate conversation, as previously described. Also see: [Talking](#).

Signs

There are many signs scattered about the kingdom, some of which provide directions but others of which provide information such as details about a local landmark. Signs include notes [Elena] may find on the ground and can appear anywhere, including in combat situations. Also see: [Reading](#).

Levels

Capture the Kingdom is different than other platforming games in that it does not feature self-contained levels, which the player completes once before moving on and which include little or no connection to other levels. Instead, Capture the Kingdom bears a closer resemblance to games such as *Super Metroid* and *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*, in which the game world is one interconnected entity. The world consists of distinctive sections, each of which has unique theme and might be considered a “level.” Each level comprises many individual rooms, and the levels connect with each other in multiple ways, such that the player can move between levels via different paths.

Capture the Kingdom places as great an emphasis on platforming and exploration as it does on action, so the level design plays a major role in determining the fun of the game. Each level in Capture the Kingdom is a different environment within the kingdom, and each one approaches its level design in a unique way befitting the environment. For example, the [Volcano](#) is primarily a vertical environment, requiring a great deal of precision jumping to avoid the deadly magma, while the [Prison](#) consists mostly of confined horizontal spaces with little opportunity to jump around.

The player will revisit levels multiple times as she attempts to capture all the platforms and find all the upgrades. While additional abilities will allow her to reach new areas, the player must still navigate through certain sections of the level multiple times. As such it is crucial to design the levels such that they are fun to look at, explore, and navigate even on repeat trips. Certain elements within the game will also facilitate travel around previously-explored territory. Also see: [Teleportation](#).

Non-linearity

Much like the *Metroid* and *Castlevania* games previously mentioned, Capture the Kingdom features a non-linear world. All the sections connect to each other in multiple ways, and the player can go wherever [Elena]'s current abilities allow her. It is not possible to reach certain areas without the necessary abilities, so the player must complete certain sections of the game before being able to access others. However, the player can never collect everything within an area during the first pass through and must revisit areas with new abilities in hand in order to capture all the platforms, find all the upgrades, and discover hidden passages. Furthermore the player is always free to leave the current level at any time and explore other levels as much as current abilities permit. However, the player must complete each level and defeat its boss in order to finish the game.

Training area

At the beginning of the game, [Elena] goes to look for her missing dog in the [Forest](#) outside her family's [Farmland](#). The limited sections of those levels accessible at the game's start serve as a relatively safe environment for players to learn the controls and basic mechanics. There are no enemies in the Farmland (yet), minimal enemies in the Forest, and only the lightest platforming challenges. Once [Elena] recovers her dog and heads back toward the Farmland, a mysterious character approaches her just inside the Forest's edge and gives her the sword, along with an optional tutorial on how to use it.

Whenever [Elena] earns a new weapon or ability, the current room requires her to use it in order to leave the room. For example, once she earns the missile launcher, a rock slide covers the door and she must blast her way through. This gives the player a safe environment to learn all additional techniques.

Hub

The town of [Hubbub](#) is the largest metropolis in the kingdom and lies near its center, connecting all the other regions. [Elena] finds her way to Hubbub early in the game, and from that point on it serves as her home base, from which she ventures into the many levels that make up the kingdom. Though the levels connect to each other as well, all roads lead through Hubbub. The town itself is the safest environment in the game, with no combat (except for story-based instances) and an abundance of NPCs with helpful information. The town also includes platforms to capture and plentiful hidden secrets and passages. See the [Game Progression](#) section for more information on the various levels.

Teleportation

The kingdom is vast and would prove quite challenging to explore only on foot. Fortunately new technological advances make it easier to travel to previous areas. Throughout the kingdom [Elena] finds small rooms with mysterious machines. These are Teleport Rooms and, once discovered, they show up on the [Map](#). [Elena] can activate the machine and step into the circle on the floor to teleport to any other Teleport Room already discovered.

Certain Teleport Rooms are broken, emitting showers of sparks. If [Elena] uses the teleport device, it will send her to an unknown destination, and she cannot get back the same way. This is the only way to reach certain areas in the game.

Interconnected

Though the town of [Hubbub](#) links all the levels of the kingdom, there are other paths that connect levels directly. It is possible with sufficient abilities to move through all the levels without setting a foot in Hubbub. Many of these paths lead to power-ups, rooms and platforms otherwise inaccessible, so it is in the player's interest to explore as thoroughly as possible.

Level Order

The player has some choice in the order in which she explores the game's levels. The game starts in the [Farmland](#) and progresses to the [Forest](#) and then [Hubbub](#), after which the player can explore levels in any order. However, it is necessary to complete all previous levels before moving on to the Castle and the levels that follow.

As previously mentioned, the player will not be able to get everything in a level on the first pass. All levels require abilities from other levels in order to find every upgrade and capture every platform. Depending on the level, the player may not be able to explore very far into it before finding the way blocked by an obstacle that he cannot overcome using his current abilities. In that case he will need to leave and explore another level until he finds the ability he needs. However, the player may choose to play just far enough in a level to earn an ability before leaving the level to complete other levels, returning only when necessary. Similarly, if he is finding a particular section too challenging, he can explore other levels for upgrades to make [Elena] stronger before returning to the challenging section.

There is a suggested order to the levels, as presented in the [Game Progression](#) section. This is how the levels connect via the most obvious paths. For example, after exploring the [Lake](#) the player will find a new route back to Hubbub, as well as a direct path to the [Cave](#). Following this route is the easiest path. There is also a hidden path to the [Forest](#). But the player is free to go back to Hubbub and from there see how far he can get in the [Volcano](#), too. Employing different design approaches (see: [Environments](#)), such as a vertical versus a horizontal level, makes it possible to offer distinctive challenges that take advantage of different abilities without forcing the player to go through the levels in a certain order.

III. Artificial Intelligence

Since Capture the Kingdom is roughly balanced between exploration/platforming and combat, the artificial intelligence must be sufficiently sophisticated to provide the player with an interesting challenge in the combat scenarios.

Enemy Artificial Intelligence

The great diversity of enemy types in the game allows for a great diversity of degrees of intelligence. Many of the regular enemies [Elena] encounters in the game are either animals, robots, or hybrids of the two classes. As such they are free to be less intelligent, with simple-minded offensive and defensive patterns that are believable in a mindless beast or a single-function robot. The challenge may be as much in the combination of enemy attack patterns and platforming hazards as in the combat with specific enemies itself. For example, jumping onto a narrow platform over spikes becomes much more dangerous if there's a creature on the platform, even if all it does is to run back and forth.

However, as the game progresses and [Elena] gets closer to the heart of the technological wave, the enemies become smarter and it becomes more of a challenge just to defeat them. In particular, the boss enemies throughout the game must be “smart” enough to provide a real challenge to the player, though their attacks are often pattern-based.

Player Detection

The ability to detect, track and respond to [Elena] varies from enemy to enemy. Some have no awareness of her presence and merely move and act blindly, damaging whatever gets in their way. Others stand passively until she enters their awareness (which might be a narrow vision cone; a 360-degree view; the vibrations of her footfalls on the ground; a few feet away; across the room; etc.) and then leap into action, chasing her until they either lose her, defeat her, or fall to her. Whatever their specific abilities, all enemies react when attacked, either by pursuing [Elena] if she is close enough or by moving back and forth until they either detect her or forget what they are doing.

Motion

Enemies move in believable ways (for example, a creature with wheels should not be flying through the sky) and are subject to a simple physics system; that being said, the world of Capture the Kingdom is whimsical and fantastical and far from bound to authenticity. The enemies are as free of the effects of inertia as [Elena] is and their motion is weighted towards fun rather than realism.

Pathfinding

Once enemies detect [Elena] they must try to reach her, and their ability to do so depends on the enemy. The more brainless enemies will simply move towards [Elena] as quickly as possible and are not prepared to maneuver around obstacles. More sophisticated enemies can get around obstacles but may be unable to deal with sophisticated movement skills like hovering and double-jumping. The most intelligent and capable enemies, such as bosses, can get at [Elena] wherever in the room she is. No enemy can move between rooms, but [Elena] cannot leave certain rooms (such as boss battles) without defeating her foe(s).

Taking Damage

Most regular enemies in the game can only withstand one hit, but getting that hit in may require some work. For example, a robot with a bubble shield may launch missile attacks at [Elena] as she tries to get close enough to cut through the shield with her sword, after which the robot jumps out of range and continues to fire missiles, at which point [Elena] can retaliate with missiles of her own, blowing the robot to smithereens.

Some of the stronger enemies can withstand multiple hits – their animation indicates the current state of health. The boss enemies have their own health bar, similar to [Elena]'s, and can take many hits.

Combat Attacks

The simplest enemies in the game only have a single attack, but many enemies have multiple attacks, including some of the same weapons as [Elena] has, which they use depending on the situation. For example, a robot with sword and bubble shield might deflect [Elena]'s missiles with the bubble shield, then try to sneak up on her and cut through her own bubble shield with the sword while she is under attack by another enemy. The enemies can tell which attack is most useful at the moment, and will choose at random if more than one is appropriate.

Boss enemies have their own unique attacks, which they employ in a pattern-based way. However, they have several different attack patterns and can choose from them either at random or depending on the player's current actions.

Evading

While most enemies are not good at evading close-range attacks, some are fast enough to dodge the missiles and Grappling Claw, forcing [Elena] to engage at close-range where she is vulnerable to their own attacks. Some regular enemies and bosses have special abilities that allow them to evade close-range attacks, frequently enough to provide an enjoyable challenge for the player.

Non-Combatant Agents

Hubbub may be the biggest town, but people live throughout the whole kingdom and [Elena] will encounter non-combatant agents in every level. They are there to add color to the levels as well as provide useful information or even power-ups to assist [Elena] in her quest. Typically [Elena] finds these civilians in houses, buildings, safe rooms, and even smaller town settlements around the various levels.

Occasionally a non-combatant agent may turn up within a combat zone. If [Elena] approaches, the agent will ask her to offer protection on the way back home. If the player accepts, the agent will follow [Elena]'s every movement – no AI required. [Elena] must be careful not to get hit, or the agent suffers damage and [Elena] must start over. If she successfully makes it to the safe zone, the agent will give her a reward for her assistance, such as a health upgrade.

IV. Game Elements

Capture the Kingdom consists of various game elements – items that make up the levels and game play, and characters that make up the narrative.

Items

Items include the components of the level design as well as the weapons and power-ups that the player uses to succeed during game play.

Level Elements

Certain level elements are an integral part of game play. [Elena] can interact with them for various effects.

Platform

Platforms are the heart and soul of Capture the Kingdom – the physical manifestation of the deed to the kingdom's territory, so to speak, though there is plenty of regular ground as well. Whoever controls the platforms controls that part of the kingdom. When the game begins, the kingdom has gone to seed and all platforms are in a Wild, uncontrolled state.

Wild

“Wild” is the default state of all platforms in the kingdom. No one rules a Wild platform and it serves as fertile ground for monsters and other dangerous creatures. The only way to purify a Wild platform is to capture it with a special sword.

Captured

Once [Elena] captures a platform, it changes its appearance and repels enemies. She now owns the platform and has the chance to capture the other platforms in the room and restore the room permanently for the kingdom, purifying it of all Wild taint. Captured platforms revert to the Wild state if [Elena] leaves a room without capturing all the platforms.

Door

Many buildings and paths between rooms feature a door, which [Elena] can open, though she may need to satisfy some condition first.

Lever

Throughout the kingdom [Elena] will find many levers, switches and triggers, which she can activate for various effects.

NPC

[Elena] can talk to, protect, and occasionally do battle with, the citizens of the kingdom for various

rewards, from information to power-ups.

Weapons

[Elena] wields multiple weapons in her quest to Capture the Kingdom, all of which are essential for overcoming the many enemies and surviving the many challenges. The weapons operate according to a [Weapon Triangle](#) – see the applicable section for details.

The Unity Blade

Key to the entire adventure, the Unity Blade allows the wielder to claim territory in the name of his or her cause. [Elena] plunges the sword into a platform's surface to capture the platform for the kingdom. The sword also dispatches most enemies and cuts easily through the [Bubble Shield](#). It is of little use against the [Missile Launcher](#).

Upgrade

During the adventure, [Elena] finds an upgrade that allows her to swing the Unity Blade and capture platforms much faster, as well as deal greater damage to enemies.

Upgrade 2 (2nd ending)

See [Story Overview](#) for more on the multiple endings. If [Elena] chooses to recapture the kingdom, she receives the special [Silent Sword](#), which captures platforms instantaneously and destroys all but the strongest enemies in a single blow. At full health she can swing the sword to send out a shock wave that destroys enemies and captures platforms from a distance.

Bubble Shield

The Bubble Shield is one of the first pieces of foreign technology that [Elena] finds. It generates an energy bubble around the user that repels all projectiles, providing a perfect defense against the [Missile Launcher](#). It can also short-circuit certain electronic enemies if [Elena] gets close enough. The Bubble Shield is no defense against the [Unity Blade](#) and will burst if cut, leaving the user vulnerable as the device recharges.

Upgrade

During the adventure, [Elena] finds an upgrade that expands the diameter of the Bubble Shield and allows it to endure two sword strikes before bursting. The upgrade also reduces the recharge time of a burst shield.

Missile Launcher

The Missile Launcher is a powerful long-range weapon that fires homing missiles and dispatches most enemies. The missiles will lock onto any nearby targets and home in on them, fast enough to be a threat but slowly enough that targets on their toes can dodge the attack. The Missile Launcher excels against the [Unity Blade](#) but is useless against the [Bubble Shield](#).

Upgrade

During the adventure, [Elena] finds an upgrade that increases the rate of fire of the launcher as well as the speed of the missiles themselves. The missiles gain explosive tips, causing damage to any enemies in close proximity to a strike.

Power-ups

Hidden around the kingdom are various power-ups that grant [Elena] advanced movement capabilities, expand her health bar, and contribute to her knowledge of the kingdom. While it is not necessary to collect every power-up in order to finish the game, they confer a distinct advantage both in combat and exploration.

Boost Boots (Double-jump)

A pair of boots with advanced air propulsion technology in the heels allow [Elena] to perform a jump in mid-air, giving her two jumps' worth of vertical capability as well as enabling various other advanced maneuvers in conjunction with the [Grappling Claw](#) (not to mention a chance for [Elena] to recover from what would be a fatal fall).

Hover

An upgrade to the [Boost Boots](#) enables them to sustain a burst of vertical air along with short horizontal bursts, allowing [Elena] to hover over distances too wide to jump or grapple.

Grappling Claw

The Grappling Claw is a sophisticated mechanical wonder that propels a claw on a steel chain at high speeds. When the claw hits a surface, it grapples on and then retracts the chain, pulling the user along with it. [Elena] can use the Grappling Claw to cross otherwise impassible hazards as well as for various advanced movement techniques. See: [Advanced Movement](#) for details. [Elena] can also attack enemies with the Grappling Claw and can pull certain enemies' defenses or hidden items right off them.

Health Upgrade

Health upgrades are hidden all over the kingdom. Each one expands [Elena]'s life bar by a few points. [Elena] may find them hidden away, or receive them as gifts from NPCs, or steal them from enemies with the [Grappling Claw](#). There are only enough Health Upgrades to expand the life bar to its full length, but they are placed in such a way that the player can always obtain them. For example, if the player fails to steal a health upgrade from a boss enemy, one of the regular enemies will carry it around until defeated.

Map

Early in the adventure, [Elena] finds a Map that allows her to record her knowledge of the levels' geography. The Map is essential for moving about the kingdom and updates automatically as the player explores. See the applicable sections for more details.

Compass

Each level includes a compass item. Collecting the compass reveals the number of platforms in each room, which shows up in the onscreen tally and also on the Map screen. The Compass also reveals any unexplored rooms in a level. Also see: [Total Captured – Room](#) and [Map](#).

Essence

Essence is the manifestation of a creature's knowledge of local geography. Sometimes a defeated enemy will leave behind Essence. Collecting Essence imbues [Elena] with the same knowledge of the area, causing the camera to zoom out for a full view of the room. The effect of Essence eventually wears off, restoring the view to normal.

Health Refill

Defeated enemies sometimes drop Health Refills, which restore various amounts of [Elena]'s health bar. The refills take the form of food items and the bigger they are, the more health they restore.

Characters

[Elena] encounters many characters in her adventure. Some help her, some attempt to harm her, and some are indifferent to her. All of them have bearing on her quest.

[Elena]

A spirited, independent young woman in her early 20s, who lives with her family on their [Farmland](#). [Elena] is fairly content with her farming life, but her family drives her crazy, which is what gets her started on her adventure. She has a strong sense of humor and justice, and a rather dry view of people and their motivations. Very handy with a blade; a quick learner. [Note: the default name is Elena, but the player can name the protagonist whatever he wants upon starting a new game.]

Allied NPCs

Most NPCs in the game have their own motivations, though their agendas may agree with [Elena]'s, but her family is squarely in her camp. The members include:

Idris

[Elena]'s dog, Idris, adores his master and would do anything to protect her...but he's not very smart and often ends up in need of her protection instead. Very enthusiastic and courageous, sometimes overly so.

Mother

[Elena]'s mother is always chastising her for not getting up earlier in the morning to help milk the cows. She also doesn't think much of her daughter's choice of clothing or her preoccupation with exploring the Forest and jumping on wild beasts' heads instead of staying home and farming. Despite this, she loves her daughter and is not afraid to take up a hoe and bring it down on the head of anything that threatens her family.

Father

[Elena]'s father is an accomplished weaver and a celebrated local chef. His cheese curds are the stuff of legends. He's a bit of a dry wit and loves puns, much to the exasperation of his daughter, who finds herself making them too despite her best intentions. Like father, like daughter. The father secretly loves to go jump on the heads of wild beasts too, but knows better than to step off the farm and face the ire of his wife. A man with a deep sense of pride in providing for and protecting his family, he takes it the hardest when [Elena] takes up her sword and plunges into danger.

Glenn

[Elena]'s younger brother, Glenn (15 years old), loves to get under his sister's skin and has driven away every one of her boyfriends by pelting them with cowpies, much to the secret satisfaction of her father. Despite Glenn's wild nature, he is a diligent worker on the farm and a skilled swordsman, which helps him survive his sister's rage after a boyfriend incident.

Neutral NPCs

The many citizens of the kingdom are all willing to talk to [Elena], if she can track them down. Some will ask her for help, some will provide information, and some will just shoot the breeze; none of them will take any guff (but they might give it).

Enemies

The kingdom's disrepair is fertile ground for the beasts of the wild, who have taken over most of the areas between settlements and attack anyone who sets foot on their territory. If that weren't bad enough, along came Lord Tekne with his robot army and the boss minions who have taken control of the various sections of the kingdom under his banner. Furthermore, the unexpected and explosive emergence of technology has had unusual effects on the local wildlife, resulting in some curious hybrids of beast and technology.

Grunts

The low-level bad guys, who may not have it in for [Elena] personally or even any allegiance to Lord Tekne...but what they all have is some terrain of their very own, and they'd rather sell their grandma than let anyone take it from them, even if the taker is a feisty girl with a sword and the power to save her game. The grunts are generally fairly easy to defeat and appear all over the place. Defeated grunts will come back if [Elena] leaves a room before capturing all the platforms.

Level – Forest

Basil Boar

Basil Boar knows only one way of life: running headfirst into things until those things fall over or yield yummy fruit. Charges ahead blindly; sometimes changes direction; no jumping power. Vulnerable to being jumped on.

Quick-Draw Macaw

A transplanted parrot with illusions of air superiority. Macaw secretly wants to be a falcon and prides himself on his dive-bomb attack...but he's not really very fast, making him easy to dodge. Vulnerable to the Missile Launcher.

Ohh Deer

Ohh Deer loves to prance about the forest almost as much as she loves leaping gracefully onto pesky interlopers' heads. Her fluttering tail and big brown eyes are so cute! Her stomp attack is not. Vulnerable to the sword.

Level – Lake

Jitter-Skitter

A large, over-caffeinated water bug with a bad attitude. Runs across the surface of the water and leaps onto platforms to attack with pincers. Vulnerable to being jumped on.

Mouthy the Wheeze

An overweight pelican. Sometimes can't hold himself up and plummets to the water's surface. Attempts to engulf [Elena] in his massive maw. Vulnerable to all weapons.

Bass Desire

A bass-playing bass with a love for funk. Leaps onto a platform and attacks with a wicked groove. Returns to the water in a huff if [Elena] blocks his music with the Bubble Shield.

Level – Cave of Regurgitated Dreams

Fang Flutterfly

A bat who sleeps during the night, preferring the magnificent sunrise over the lake and the day's majesty. Attacks with swooping motions and attempts to drain [Elena]'s health. Vulnerable to sword attacks and the Missile Launcher.

Eight Legs, One Fist

Eight Legs, One Fist studied martial arts as a young spider and seeks ever stronger opponents against whom to match his skills. The fact that hardly anyone visits the Cave makes him all the more aggressive when [Elena] appears. Attacks with various fighting styles. Vulnerable to the sword.

ReckonForce

The first robot [Elena] encounters is the prototype scout ReckonForce. Flies through the air as a sphere until it finds an enemy, then deploys one leg vertically to stand and pivot on and another leg horizontally for offense. Attacks with whirling kicks. Vulnerable to the Bubble Shield, which causes ReckonForce to return to sphere-mode, in which it is vulnerable to the Missile Launcher.

Level – Volcano

Erik

This lava-loving lizard has always been called “Erik,” though no one remembers why. Dwells in pools of magma, emerging only to prey on passersby. Attacks with its body – which is too hot to touch – and a flaming tongue attack. Vulnerable to all weapons. Fatal if jumped on.

Aerik

Lord Tekne created this air-conditioning robot specifically for the volcanic environment before learning of the local lizard population. By then, the patents were in place and it was too late to change the name, leading to much confusion. Aerik resembles a refrigerator on wheels and is a master of air manipulation. Attacks with horizontal and vertical air streams, which do no damage but knock [Elena] into harm's way. Vulnerable to the Missile Launcher when not attacking and the Grappling Claw otherwise.

Batbot

The first of the wild beasts to receive technological enhancement from Lord Tekne. Batbot resembles Fang Futterfly but with cybernetic visual upgrades. Attacks with sonic waves and pellet bombs. Vulnerable to the Missile Launcher, though his sonic waves deflect the attack. If [Elena] uses the Bubble Shield in proximity to Batbot, he comes crashing to the ground, rendering him vulnerable to the sword.

Level – Desert

Doom Hog

Lord Tekne taught an ordinary Basil Boar to ride a motorcycle, tricked him out with a helmet and a scarf, and set him loose on the Desert – the result is Doom Hog. Attacks by running over its enemy. Doom Hog can pop a wheelie to catch [Elena] in mid-jump, bringing her crashing down to earth. Doom Hog also uses an acceleration-powered Bubble Shield that renders him invulnerable. [Elena] must wait until he changes direction, during which the Shield falls, then attack with the Missile Launcher.

Lion Truth

The lion population vanished from the Desert long ago. But Lord Tekne captured several and gave them hover packs. Lion Truth leaps from a sand dune and burns through the sky on rocket jets towards his enemy. Attacks with powerful claw swipes and bites. Sometimes flips over in mid-air, at which point [Elena] can jump on his stomach. Vulnerable to all weapons. The Grappling Claw and Bubble Shield cause Lion Truth to lose his hover pack, falling on his back to the ground where his stomach is also vulnerable to being jumped on.

Treading Water

Lord Tekne briefly entertained the idea of turning the Desert green, and designed this robot before abandoning the idea. Treading Water gets around on tank treads and sports an enormous water cannon, which it supplies with a water tank on its back. Attacks with pressurized water. Vulnerable to the

sword. If [Elena] can hit the water tank with a Missile, Treading Water will lose his supply, leaving him defenseless.

Level – Castle

Mr. Kitty

Lord Tekne loves cats and keeps several about the Castle, but he doesn't have time to give them all names...or check their gender. Mr. Kitty loves to hunt mice and will take a swipe at anything that scares them away. Attacks with claws, teeth, and annoying yowling. Vulnerable to the sword. Sometimes flops onto her back, and if [Elena] uses the Grappling Claw, it will scratch Mr. Kitty's stomach, prompting her to cough up a health-refilling item and go on her purring way.

Soldier of Misfortune

Another early Tekne robot design, the Soldier of Misfortune resembles the knights who used to guard the king. Wields a sword in place of one hand and a Bubble Shield in place of the other. Slow-moving, but powerful. Vulnerable to all weapons.

Chandle Leer

Hangs from the ceiling like a decorative object before crashing down on unwary intruders, then winching itself back up again. This robot wears a contemptuous smirk and glitters with diamonds. Attacks with the force of gravity and the sharp points on its underside. Vulnerable to the Missile Launcher. The Bubble Shield knocks Chandle Leer off course and sets it swinging from side to side, make it easier to attack.

Level – Prison

Ohh Rats

Like its distant cousin Ohh Deer, Ohh Rats likes to jump on heads. Unlike its distant cousin, Ohh Rats has extendable robotic legs and a motion tracker. Attacks with pounces; relentless in its pursuit. Vulnerable to the sword and being jumped on.

Wild Webbed Wonder

This spider/robot hybrid spins webs of ultra-thin steel. It also blends into the ceiling with camouflage technology until it starts moving. Attacks with webs, with which it ensnares its enemies and swings them about. [Elena] can use the sword to cut the web, then finish WWW off with the Missile Launcher.

Bugged Out

Even the cockroaches in the Prison have stumbled their way into technological enhancement. In this case, previous exposure to the radiation of the Teleport Rooms enables Bugged Out to teleport short distances. It can cling to any surface. Attacks with bites. If [Elena] touches Bugged Out, the germs it carries cause her to lose health continuously for a short period of time. However, if she flips Bugged Out over and then jumps on his belly, she can catch a ride when he teleports. This is the only way to

reach certain areas of the Prison before recovering all of [Elena]'s equipment.

Level – Zeppelin

Superfly

This tubular robot uses jet engines to fly, giving it superb aerial mobility. Zooms all over the Zeppelin protecting its inner workings. Superfly will sound an alert whenever it catches sight of [Elena], summoning any nearby robots to assist. Attacks with jet streams, pulling [Elena] in for damage, or pushing her into danger. Extremely vulnerable to the Missile Launcher and Grappling Claw.

ChopperChamp

Engaged in a bitter rivalry with Superfly, ChopperChamp uses propellers to get around. What it loses in mobility, this robot makes up in power, as the spinning blades pose a greater threat. When not chasing [Elena], ChopperChamp and Superfly often race each other. Attacks with its spinning blades. Extremely vulnerable to the Missile Launcher and Grappling Claw.

Walt Weapon

The most eccentric of the robotic guards, Walt Weapon disdains flying, racing and even moving. Instead, it spends all its time admiring its vast collection of weapons. Anyone who makes the mistake of engaging it finds out just how much it loves those weapons. Attacks with all weapons. Vulnerable to all weapons.

Level – Fortress

Mad Blogger

Everything was fine until this robot discovered the Internet. Since then, it has become obsessed with the banal. A very long cable gives it a permanent connection to the Internet, which it guards zealously. Attacks with inane blogs. [Elena] must use the Bubble Shield to deflect the blogs, then sever the Internet cable with the sword.

Twitterpated

Twitterpated spent too much time with the Mad Blogger and now it can't wait to share everything with everybody, all the time. This robot has no ill intent but there is no bigger annoyance in the kingdom. Does not attack or cause damage, but dogs [Elena]'s footsteps as soon as it spots her, deluging her with its thoughts...and in doing so prevents her from being able to interact with any game elements. Vulnerable to the Bubble Shield, but only when it pauses to buffer. The Shield knocks it away, at which point [Elena] can dispatch it with the sword or Missile Launcher.

Relentless Ruby

The most senior of the robotic Fortress guards really gets fed up with the nitwits she has to work with, and takes it out on [Elena]. This projectile-happy battle machine climbs over every surface at high speeds. Attacks with a barrage of Missiles. Relentless Ruby moves too quickly to fall to the Missile

Launcher, but a flaw in her programming causes her to overheat occasionally, at which point she cannot attack and is vulnerable to the sword. A formidable enemy.

Level – Robot Titan

Loopy Lupe

Wolves used to roam the Forest until Lord Tekne scooped them all up to guard his Robot Titan and equipped them with jets on their paws and flamethrowers at their mouths. Loopy Lupe moves quickly and is relatively untroubled by the frequent changes in orientation as the Titan moves. Attacks with bites and bursts of flame. Vulnerable to all weapons.

Jawsome

Lord Tekne built a robot shark, equipped it with a laser beam, and called it Jawsome. Makes its home in various tanks of water around the Robot Titan. Attacks with lasers and powerful bites. Invulnerable while in the water. [Elena] must shatter the lid covering the water tank with the Missile Launcher, then evade Jawsome's attacks until the level changes orientation and the water drains, leaving Jawsome slower and vulnerable to the sword.

CounterAxx

The most powerful robot Lord Tekne ever designed reads every move [Elena] makes and counters it completely. Attacks with everything. Invulnerable to all weapons. [Elena] cannot defeat CounterAxx. The secret is not to attack at all. If [Elena] provides no stimulus, CounterAxx has nothing to counter and remains immobile. This proves challenging if fights with the other enemies cross over into CounterAxx's territory.

Boss enemies

Certain of Lord Tekne's minions have risen to prominence and power through various means, usually without Tekne's permission, and have taken over sections of the kingdom. The boss enemies pose a special challenge for [Elena], employing powerful and unique attacks and requiring many hits to defeat. Each only appears once and guards a special power-up. If [Elena] hits them with the Grappling Claw, she can sometimes steal a Health Upgrade. The boss enemies talk with [Elena] before, after, and sometimes during, battle, and prove to be the wackiest personalities in the game.

New Guy Alex

Boss of the Forest. Alex just joined Lord Tekne's staff, and taking over the Forest is his first mission. He's nervous and eager to prove himself. Attacks with a shock wave, which [Elena] must leap over. The equipment Lord Tekne provided protects Alex from direct attack. However, all his interest is wrapped up controlling the local territory. If [Elena] captures all the platforms in the room, Alex will realize he has failed in his mission and will run away. This is the only boss battle in the game which the player wins not through direct attack but by means of environmental manipulation.

Fishing Frenzy

Boss of the Lake. Fishing Frenzy was one of Lord Tekne's top lieutenants, but when Tekne sent him on a scouting mission to the Lake and he discovered the joys of fly fishing, he gave himself a new name and career and hasn't looked back since. He knows Lord Tekne well and suspects his involvement in [Elena]'s quest, but fears that her success will direct unwanted attention to himself. Uses a fishing pole to catch [Elena] and reel her in, at which point he smacks her with a fish for damage. Also employs a sophisticated pumping system to direct water attacks. [Elena] can cut his fishing line with the sword and knock his fishing cap onto his eyes by jumping on his head, at which point he is vulnerable to sword attacks.

Livingstone VI

Boss of the Cave. Livingstone VI is one of Lord Tekne's earliest experiments with artificial intelligence, in this case a robot with the mind and spirit of an explorer. That spirit led Livingstone to wander deep into the heart of the Cave, where he draws maps and examines rock formations. He's none too happy when [Elena] shows up and starts firing missiles everywhere. Attacks with an extendable cane, a razor-sharp monocle, and wit so savage it causes damage if [Elena] isn't using the Bubble Shield. Livingstone's chassis is resistant to direct attacks – [Elena] must use the Missile Launcher to bring down stalactites upon his head.

Drake, Dangerous Demon Dragon

Boss of the Volcano. Unlike most of the boss enemies, Drake has no doubts about who he is. He's a Dangerous Demon Dragon, and don't you forget it! Drake was Lord Tekne's pet lizard until he fell into the lava during a visit to the Volcano. The magma unexpectedly reacted to the miniature Bubble Shield with which Tekne protected his pet and the resultant mixture of electrical and heat energy caused Drake to grow to enormous size. Attacks with fire, headbutts, and sweeps of his tale. Vulnerable to the Missile Launcher and sword attacks. Using the Bubble Shield will cause Drake to regain energy. Loves soda.

Sandman Sam

Boss of the Desert. Sam had the unenviable task of sweeping the sand off Lord Tekne's boots during their forays into the desert. One day Lord Tekne took off in the Zeppelin without missing Sam and he's been stuck in the Desert ever since. A fierce hand with a sword, Sam is untouchable at close range and [Elena] must attack him with the Missile Launcher instead. If she attacks the ground and discovers a waterspout, Sam will throw himself into the water and get distracted, at which point he is vulnerable to sword attacks. Likes air-conditioning and the works of Keats.

Lazer the Laughing

Boss of the Castle. Lazer likes lasers. He was in charge of putting on laser shows for Lord Tekne until he made a mistake during Tekne's favorite song and Tekne threw him in the Prison. Cuddlywampus let him out, and when Tekne was away, Lazer snuck back into the Castle and took control of the defense system. [Elena] must use the Bubble Shield to deflect the laser attacks back at Lazer.

Cuddlywampus

Boss of the Prison. An oversized floppy-eared monster with a heart of gold. Cuddlywampus tends the

Prison on arrangement with Lord Tekne, who provides financial support for his sanctuary for injured wild beasts. Cuddlywampus is secretly divided about working with Lord Tekne and would be supportive of [Elena], except that most of the members of his sanctuary for injured wild beasts are there *because* of [Elena]. Cuddlywampus attacks with the force of his cuddly body, throwing himself around the room, bouncing off walls and repelling most attacks. His head is vulnerable to being jumped on.

Chaos Engine

Boss of the Zeppelin. The Chaos Engine is the sentient AI that pilots the Zeppelin, leaving Lord Tekne free to trim his bonsai trees. Chaos Engine has a secret love of bonsai trees and wishes he could trim them too; he redirects his frustrated passion into an aggressive flying style. Chaos Engine lives within a computer console and has no attacks of his own, relying purely on environmental controls and waves of robotic servants to attack [Elena]. Vulnerable to the disruptive effects of the Bubble Shield. Likes to read philosophy and watch movie musicals.

“Evil” Twinn

Boss of the Fortress. Twinn was a lowly computer technician in the Fortress until she started watching [Elena]'s exploits on the video feeds. She became fascinated with [Elena] and reinvented herself as “Evil” Twinn, copying [Elena] in all respects. She's a bit clumsy though and gets it wrong sometimes, such as switching to the wrong weapon or holding the wrong end of the Grappling Claw. Nonetheless, a formidable opponent. Favorite expressions: “You always end up destroying the ones you love”; “Oops!”

Lord Tekne

Boss of the Robot Titan. Mastermind of the technological assault on the kingdom. Manipulator who tricked [Elena] into capturing the kingdom for him and cutting down the overambitious minions who had the nerve to call themselves “bosses.” Likes to say “Fool!” frequently. Has a secret fondness for chocolate pudding.

Lord Tekne disdains hand-to-hand combat and employs a variety of technological attacks using consoles around the Titan's head. He triggers a nearby computer to fire a laser at [Elena], which she must block with the Bubble Shield. Another console activates pistons around the room that shoot from the floor into the ceiling, which she must dodge. Another electrifies the floor, requiring her to hover. Tekne's most powerful attack summons a series of platforms that spin around the room, connected to each other with a web of light. [Elena] must quickly leap onto a platform and stay within the web as lasers fill the remaining space.

Lord Tekne has his own Bubble Shield, advanced enough that [Elena] cannot cut through it. Instead, she must use his own computers against him. She must wait until he is standing over one of the piston slots, attack him so that he puts up his shield, then continue to fire missiles at him so that he keeps up his shield as she makes her way to the console and activates the piston. The piston holds Tekne within his shield in place, at which point [Elena] must activate the platform console. The resultant laser bath destroys Tekne's shield and renders him vulnerable to [Elena]'s attacks.

V. Story Overview

Capture the Kingdom takes place in what was once a thriving kingdom, now gone to seed. The last king died without an heir, and the resultant power struggles left the kingdom a shell of what it once was. There has been no ruler for the last 50 years, and hostile creatures have taken over most of the undeveloped areas of the kingdom, making it dangerous to go outside a town.

The narrative starts with the game's protagonist, [Elena], exploring the woods near her home, looking for her lost dog, which was captured by monsters. On the way back, a cloaked figure appears and presents her with a magical sword. He tells her that there is a sudden wave of mysterious technology sweeping over the land, with rumors of a powerful figure seeking to take over the kingdom by force of arms. The wild creatures are becoming ever more hostile and the whole land is on the brink of crisis. [Elena] must take up the sword to unify the kingdom and protect it from this encroaching evil.

After some initial resistance, [Elena] takes up the sword and embarks on a quest to Capture the Kingdom. As [Elena] progresses through the kingdom's many environments, she meets individuals both friend and foe who gradually make it clear that all is not as it seems. She battles robots as well as beasts corrupted by technology before facing off with powerful boss enemies who have taken control of each section of the kingdom. Eventually she encounters the figure at the helm of the technological assault and learns his true role in the events shaking the kingdom. It was he who gave her the sword and she has been doing his dirty work, taking down his overambitious minions (the boss enemies) and capturing the kingdom for him. He takes the sword and all of [Elena]'s equipment and throws her in prison.

Through the assistance of an NPC, [Elena] breaks out of her cell and escapes the prison, recovering all of her equipment (and the abilities it bestows) except for the sword. At this point the player has a choice of whether or not to confront the villain immediately; each choice results in a different ending.

ENDING 1 (harder): the player chooses to confront the villain immediately. [Elena] sneaks onto the [Zeppelin](#) and recovers the sword, pursuing her foe to his hidden [Fortress](#). Eventually she fights the villain in his greatest technological masterpiece, the [Robot Titan](#), and defeats him, claiming the sword's authority for herself again and the unified kingdom along with it.

ENDING 2 (easier): the player chooses not to confront the villain immediately. [Elena] escapes the prison and makes her way back to [Hubbub](#), where she discovers the existence of a sister sword to the one she lost. With this sword, which is more powerful, she easily recaptures the kingdom. Stripped of his newly acquired territory, the villain retreats to his [Fortress](#) to regroup. [Elena] follows him by stealing his [Zeppelin](#) and faces off against him in the [Robot Titan](#). When the two swords clash, their opposing forces cancel each other out, destroying both weapons. With the minions defeated, the technological army in ruins, and the swords in pieces, the villain disappears and [Elena] returns to her family.

Despite the serious elements underlying the narrative, the game maintains a lighthearted and humorous tone throughout via snappy dialogue and the bizarre personalities of the characters.

VI. Game Progression

The world of Capture the Kingdom has a definite starting point and ending point, but a great deal of flexibility in how the player proceeds through the middle. See [Non-linearity](#) and [Level Order](#) for more.

Setting

Capture the Kingdom is set within the bounds of a kingdom in medieval times. The kingdom itself has fallen into disrepair upon the death of its former king and the power struggles that followed, so there are few remnants of the monarchy left. There are no knights, archers, tournaments, or jousts – just broken-down castles and isolated towns where peasants eke out a meager existence. Indeed, without a true leader, the kingdom itself is no longer unified, and the places between towns have grown very wild. Hostile beasts, monsters and outlaws threaten anyone who ventures outside the safety of the borders.

Capture the Kingdom walks the line between fantasy and reality. The setting leans towards the fantastic, with monsters and other strange creatures that do not appear in reality; a vibrant, animated art style; and some looseness regarding the laws of physics. However, there are no magic spells or non-human races. Technology has not developed very far beyond the farming-and-swords stage; there is no electricity or indoor plumbing. This all being said, the bright colors, cheerful art style, evocative music, and the silly personalities of the characters place the game squarely outside the realm of bleakness.

The underdeveloped nature of the kingdom's technology makes the kingdom especially vulnerable to Lord Tekne, whose advanced technology is light-years beyond anything the kingdom has ever seen and even beyond what we ourselves use today. He attacks the kingdom with sentient robots, technologically-enhanced creatures and advanced weaponry, and moves them around using teleportation and data-recording systems. Fortunately [Elena] can take advantage of these things too. The game never explains or preoccupies itself with where Lord Tekne came from or how he came into possession of this technology.

The kingdom comprises many different sections, each of which roughly corresponds to a particular type of environment, from farmlands to forests to deserts to the heart of a volcano. People have learned to live in each environment, and their personalities reflect the nature of the place they call home. Lord Tekne has taken over one of the abandoned castles as well as several other areas on the edge of the kingdom and has built them up with technology – the closer [Elena] gets to confronting the villain, the less wild and more technological the environments become.

Thus medieval fantasy mixes with science-fiction in the world of Capture the Kingdom, seasoned with a dose of the bizarre, as seen in creatures such as the Doom Hog, a boar that rides a motorcycle, and the Mad Blogger, a robot overly obsessed with the Internet. While the citizens of the kingdom do not know what to make of all these mysterious devices and creatures, they take them in stride, and neither the people nor the game ever take themselves too seriously.

Introduction

The player controls [Elena], a spirited, independent young woman in her early 20s, who lives with her family on their [Farmland](#). One day [Elena] goes looking for her missing dog in the nearby [Forest](#) and finds her pet held captive by monsters. [Elena] dispatches the monsters and heads towards home with

her dog in tow; just within the boundaries of the forest, a cloaked figure approaches her and insists she take up a powerful sword and save the kingdom from an oppressive force. At first [Elena] isn't interested, but after returning home and getting exasperated at her annoying family, she decides she wouldn't mind a little adventure after all. She goes back into the woods, finds the sword, and heads toward [Hubbub](#).

Fallow Fecund Farmland

The game begins in the farmland from which [Elena]'s family and others make their living. The people are hardworking, level-headed and very practical. The Farmland is a peaceful place at the beginning of the game, untouched by the technological wave rolling over the land. The rolling fields offer a mostly flat, horizontal environment for the player to learn the controls, free from danger. Certain obstacles block off what will prove to be more dangerous parts of the Farmland until [Elena] returns with more abilities. The Farmland is one of the only two levels without a boss enemy.

Blue Saxophone Forest

The Forest sits on the edge of the Farmland. It is a place of dense growth and little sunlight. Few people live here; those that do reside in the tallest trees to avoid the wild animals that roam the forest floor. The mood is melancholic; the music of choice, the blues. The Forest is primarily a horizontal environment but [Elena] must occasionally climb high into the trees to pass over obstacles such as deadly pits. The player learns the fundamentals of combat here, where creatures pose only a minimal threat. As with the Farmland and all successive levels, parts of the Forest are inaccessible until [Elena] obtains the necessary abilities.

Notable Town of Hubbub

The town of Hubbub is the largest single community in the kingdom and lies more or less at its center. Residents say all paths lead through Hubbub, and indeed the player can reach every level from this town, making it a natural home base with an easily accessible Save room and Teleport Room. Residents also say that all rumors pass through Hubbub and that gossip is the local currency. This is the most reliable place for [Elena] to gain valuable information on where to go next as well as many secrets. Like the Farmland, Hubbub does not feature a boss enemy.

Roiling, Boiling Lake of Total Tranquility

A massive lake lies on the edge of the Forest and Hubbub. People have taken up residence on the many islands that dot the lake. An easygoing temperament is a must to deal with the erratic behavior of the water, which is at times peaceful and other times raging. In large part this is due to the unpredictable waterfall, the top of which sits in clouds. Locals speculate a dragon sits above the waterfall and agitates the water with his tail.

Cave of Regurgitated Dreams

Behind the waterfall sits a Cave, boring deep into the mountainside. Because the Cave sits between the waterfall and the Volcano, it does not get many visitors, and the residents lead a reflective, philosophical life, or at least they would be doing so if not for the robots causing trouble at the Volcano

end. The player must navigate over perilous drops and deep pools and climb through tall vertical passages to make it through to the boss battle waiting at the end.

Anger-Mouth Volcano

Only the fiercest, most stubborn personalities find their way to the Volcano's heart, and only those who are quick on their feet survive past the first day. The Volcano is very much active and constantly belches magma high into the air, though unique wind currents make it a tolerable environment for anyone who can stay outside the lava flow. The player must move quickly through vertical passages, leaping over magma pools and occasionally racing to stay ahead of rising lava on the way to the top of the mountain.

Green Cheese Desert

The constant lava flows and burning temperatures thanks to the adjacent Volcano make what would be verdant pastures nothing but a desolate desert. Nonetheless, those with a chip on their shoulder and grit in their teeth find their way to the small but bustling town at the desert's center. The desert is mostly flat with occasional hills, but strong winds sweep unwary travelers right off their feet. The burning sun has bred particularly hardy creatures, who wander the sands and attack all passersby.

Simpler Times Castle

The Castle sits at the far end of the Desert, and the player can only reach it after completing all previous levels and learning the way from the boss enemies. What was once the home of the king now serves the nefarious ends of Lord Tekne, who has converted it into a technological wonder, full of traps. The only people who live here occupy the Prison below the castle. The paths through the castle lead from side to side, up and down, diagonally, backwards and forwards, often doubling back in a deliberate attempt to confuse intruders and prevent them from reaching the throne room where Lord Tekne leads his war machine.

Poignant Prison

Those who stand against Tekne typically find themselves in the massive prison underneath the Castle, which is where [Elena] ends up after Tekne reveals his plans and takes the sword from her. Unlike most levels in Capture the Kingdom, the Prison is claustrophobic, with very little room to maneuver, jump or evade. For the most part the environment is horizontal, although elevators travel between floors. Because of the close confines, battles are much more difficult, and the player must take special care choosing when to fight and when to avoid conflict. Platforming is also more difficult due to the low ceilings. Because Tekne took the sword and all of [Elena]'s equipment, she starts the level only with most basic navigational abilities. Over the course of the level, she recovers most of her equipment, but the majority of the level is designed with reduced abilities and a different style of play in mind.

Zed the Zeppelin

Lord Tekne's monstrous Zeppelin, which he affectionately named "Zed," is the design opposite of the Prison – a huge open space demanding all of [Elena]'s movement abilities to navigate. Parts of the level take place on the outside of the Zeppelin's surface, where one false step leads to a fatal fall and high

winds make jumps tricky. Furthermore, many of the most powerful robots guard the Zeppelin, requiring the player to bring all combat abilities to bear.

Ultimate Technological Fortress, “Elba”

Lord Tekne makes his true home base in a Fortress outside the bounds of the kingdom. Here the player will find some of the most challenging platforming segments in the game. Unlike the Prison and the Zeppelin, [Elena] can capture the Fortress and expand the kingdom, but Tekne's most powerful minions are determined to stop her. Tekne built the Fortress with technology in mind from the ground up, and nearly every component moves, steams or sounds with the power of machines.

Robot Titan “Albert”

The Robot Titan is Lord Tekne's greatest creation and ultimate weapon, a technological monstrosity 50 stories tall. The Robot Titan is impervious to attack and has many powerful abilities of its own, as well as racks on which it stores robot minions, ready for deployment. [Elena] cannot fight the Robot Titan itself, but instead finds her way inside the machine from an entrance on the foot. From here the player must ascend to the very top of the Titan, where Tekne and the final battle await. The Robot Titan is different than the other levels both in its unique shape – roughly humanoid – and in the fact that it is moving the entire time, walking across the landscape. As the arms and legs lift and fall and the torso bends, the whole geography of the level moves and reorients along with it. What was a vertical passage in the upper leg becomes a horizontal one as the leg lifts, then returns to vertical as the leg falls. Many of the platforms are on pivots such that they rotate to remain perpendicular to gravity – but not right away. As such, much of the challenge in the level comes from anticipating and dealing with the changes in orientation as [Elena] ascends the Titan. As [Elena] battles Lord Tekne in the head of the Titan, he loses control of the machine, causing it to trip and fall, which shakes and reorients the head and complicates the battle. Once [Elena] defeats Tekne, the game is over and the player will receive one of two endings, depending on the choice made earlier. Also see: [Story Overview](#).

VII. System Menus

The player uses various menus to start and control certain aspects of the game. The menus are minimal since the game conveys much of the relevant information visually during game play.

Title screen

When the player first turns on Capture the Kingdom, she will see a menu with several options.

New Game

Start a new game from the beginning. The player can choose from one of three save slots, and uses an on-screen keyboard to name the protagonist (default: Elena).

Load Game

Load a Saved game.

Erase Game

Erase a previously Saved game to free up the save slot for a New Game.

In-game menu / map

Pressing the Map button pauses the game and also brings up a few in-game options. These include:

Quick restart

Quick restart allows the player to resume play immediately either from the most recent checkpoint if applicable, or the most recent Save room if not.

Quick save

Save the game temporarily and quit the game. This allows the player to stop playing at any moment and resume play from the exact spot and state he left it; however, if he does not use a Save room before quitting the game again, he will lose his progress and the game will resume from whenever he last used a Save room.

Game Over

If [Elena] falls, the player will receive a Game Over message and see the following options:

Continue

Resume the game from the most recent checkpoint if applicable or the most recent Save room if not.

Load Game

Load any available saved game.

Quit Game

Quit to the title screen, losing any unsaved progress.