

A Folk Tale – Game Design Document

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Author: Anastasis Marinos

1. Concept

Pitch:

A surreal, atmospheric horror experience taking place in a remote Greek mountain village. Explore the village, get to know its uncanny residents, and piece together their entwined tales through rituals, festivals, and bizarre occurrences.

Genre:

Horror, Survival, Weird Wave.

Target Audience:

Adults (18+) who enjoy experimental horror games.

Selling Point:

Create a distinctive horror aesthetic by fusing traditional music, Greek folklore, and eerie dreamlike settings.

2. Story & Setting

Narrative Overview:

You arrive in a mountain village after a hunter finds you and your dog lost in the woods. He takes you to his house, where you will live for this story's duration, and guides you around the village. The village has both friendly and shady residents. The story explores the idea of freedom found away from the weight of city life, social norms, and anxiety. It blends this with modern adaptations of traditional Greek folk tales.

Rewrite this. The game starts with some kind of tragedy to explain a bit of your past and you end up playing as the hunter until you find yourself.

World Building:

- The village, "Name", is located in a mountain in Greece. Although a road connects it with nearby villages and the city, it remains isolated and forgotten.

- A small river passes next to the village, so quite a few bridges are found along with waterfalls deeper inside the forest. You can find villagers bathing in the river or washing clothes.
- Mountains surround the village, some full of vegetation and others with barely any at a high altitude.
- The weather is constantly shifting between sunshine, rain, and some light snow since the game is taking place in spring.
- The village has small water streams running along its roads, ending up in water fountains and farms.

3.1 *Gameplay*

Game Loop:

// Insert Game Loop Flow Chart //

Player Objectives:

Open World exploration, C

Key Mechanics:

- **Dialogue System:**
Player choices impact certain aspects of the story.
- **Event System:**
Each day is divided into 4-5 gameplay scenes, with a major event occurring once a day.
- **Exploration:**
Some events encourage open world exploration, allowing the player to spend some time by themselves, away from NPC's while not disturbing gameplay progression.

Player Actions:

- Talk with the village's residents to start gameplay events.
- Complete tasks: deliver items, help with work, etc.
- Intervene in conflicts between NPCs.
- Form relationships with some residents.

3.2 Details

Event System:

The game is split into many segments to simplify the production process. First, we have Days, each with a unique main event and divided into 4-5 gameplay scenes. Gameplay scenes typically begin with an interaction or immediately after completing the previous segment. A save happens at the end of each segment automatically. The game features a day/night cycle, but time will pause when the player isn't playing a gameplay segment (Freeroaming).

Interaction System:

The game will feature lots of interactables like trees you can chop down, baskets you can carry, keys you can take to unlock a building, etc. There will be no inventory to store or move around items since there is no need for that.

Cooking System:

In a few gameplay scenes, the player will have to cook. The goal is to have a simple but polished cooking system like the one featured in [“While We Wait Here”](#).

Companion System:

Most of the time will be spent with a companion, pet, or NPC. Some companions will assign tasks to you, and other companions will get assigned tasks by you.

4. Art Direction

Visual Style:

Lo-Fi PSX style, realistic but low-res dithered textures blended with new-gen lighting.

Color Palette:

Muted ochres, Deep Greens, Slate Gray, Black Shadows.

References:

[Domiani Village](#), [Viniani Waterfalls](#), [Anifora Bridge](#).

5. Level Design

Village Layout:

- Central square with shops and a water fountain. Lots of major events take place there, so it needs to be quite a bit open but also have multiple height changes that don't affect gameplay.

- Around the central square, we expand the village with tight and wide roads, some paved, some asphalt, and fill it up with houses, small gardens, and some workshops, most of which are abandoned.
- Near the river that passes next to the village lies a church, and at the other end of the village, an abandoned school is located.
- The village is surrounded by a forest with dirt paths, caves, waterfalls, and glades with animals.

Environmental Storytelling:

- Lighting, Fog, and weather effects are used to emphasize a scene's mood.
- Props and notes found in abandoned places can explain some backstory.

6. Audio Direction

Music Style:

Traditional Greek instruments (Lyra, Gaida, Clarinet & Cretan Lute), mixed with (Acoustic & Electric Guitar, Drums & Saxophone)

Environment Audio:

- Village ambiance (Construction, church bells, dialogue, etc.)
- Waterfalls and rivers.
- Weather and time of day ambiance (crickets).
- Echoing goat bells, birds, and other animals.

Voice Acting:

Fully voiced dialogue in Greek (with subtitles), to preserve authenticity and increase immersion.

7. UI/UX

UI Style:

The game will have minimal grunge retro UI to increase immersion.

Accessibility:

- Colorblind modes.

- High contrast mode.
- Scalable text size.

8. Technical Details

Platforms: PC & Handhelds (Steam, Itchio)

Engine: Unreal Engine 5

Input Methods: Keyboard & Mouse, Controller

Performance Goal: 80-100 FPS on low-end platforms.

9. Monetization

Business Model: One-time purchase, no addons. (\$24.99)

Extras: Game Dev E-Book with exclusive behind-the-scenes. (\$14.99)

10. Production Plan

Timeline:

- **Pre-Production:** 3 months.
- **Production:** 12-14 months.
- **QA/Polish:** 3 months

11. Risks & Challenges

Risks:

Challenges:

- Music will most likely need to be composed by finding musicians. Some licensing options might be worth looking into, like [“Gidiki”](#)
- Good photo references, authentic textures, and audio samples don't really exist on the internet. So a small trip would be very beneficial.