

Celeste



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Overview

Celeste is a love letter to 2d platformers of the old. It was beautiful pixel art graphics, phenomenal sound track pulled me in instantly. It is the tight gameplay, the adorably charming characters and the brilliantly designed yet challenging level design that kept me playing. The game is broken down into a prologue, 7 main chapters, an epilogue, two bonus post game chapters, and finally B and C side levels. The main character Madeline wants to climb to the top of mount Celeste to conquer her anxieties and depression which you have to face in different forms throughout the game. You have 3 main moves which get expanded on later in the game, a jump, a dash and a wall climb. The game is constantly introducing new mechanics so that you never become bored playing it. For this document I will only be discussing chapters 1-7 which is the main campaign while I have attempted chapter 8 and the B side levels they are way too difficult as I shall discuss later.

Prologue

The best thing a game designer can do is teach the player the controls as if this is the first game they ever played. This is what a good prologue should do is introduce the world, controls and some of the characters of the game

The prologue opens with a simple jump up with no hazard showing the player how far they can jump and what the jump feels like. Then they have to jump over a small easy hole on to a platform. Following that there is a loose ice block above the next platform, once you are more than half way across it the ice block falls down. The player sees that entities can fall and crush them to pixels.

In the next screen you see a blue bird on a wall which is far too high to jump up. Once you approach the bird squawks at you the instructions CLIMB HOLD ZL followed by a ZL + (UP), which shows you that you can both grab and climb up walls. The bird flies away and lets you practice what you have learned so far for a couple of platforms.

The third screen is our first introduction to Madeline speaking with her opening line to an old woman in a cabin "Excuse me, ma'am?" written in text with a picture of her with a smile next to the text. The following conversation is her asking is this the mountain trail, telling us the player the plot of the game and that her "driveway is a bit busted" the woman is chuckling to herself saying if her "driveway" almost did her in that the mountain may be a "bit much" for her. Foreshadowing both the emotional journey she will take plus the actual challenging nature of the game. Madeline gives a pouty annoyed face and that if an "old bat" can live out here she thinks she will be just fine. Her self-consciousness is showing as she was polite to begin with but the moment she is confronted she goes to childish name calling. The woman then warns her that the mountain is strange and to prepare for what's yet to come. You leave the woman chuckling to herself and move on

The final screen of the prologue shows a stone bridge that once you walk on starts crumbling behind you with the main sound track and best of the game "First steps" playing. Once you near the end of the crumbling bridge you have to jump to a platform that when

you jump crumbles before you and just before you fall to your untimely death the blue bird flies to the patch of grass at the end of the bridge and time stops. The bird pecks the ground while time is frozen showing us that this bird is more than a bird. The bird squawks DASH UP + Y and the final of Madeline's controls have been taught to you. And the prologue ends with the text you can do this.

The prologue has taught you all of Madeline's movements, her main goal, introduced you to her character's emotional state and that the world of celeste is strange with the mysterious bird and the chuckling woman.



Madeline's movements

Madeline's speed is perfect as you never feel like she is moving fast enough that she doesn't need a sprint button and slow enough that you are in control of where she is. This precise control is helped by a camera that is zoomed out far enough so that you can almost always see the next three things you need to do and it keeps scrolling to reveal more. Not once while playing it did I feel cheated because the game didn't show me a hazard I couldn't see.

Her jumps are also forgiving allowing you to be a couple of pixels off the edge to give you that "I just made it" feel. Her jump is very quick lasting about a second with a very quick jump up followed by a long hang time then a very quick down. This allows the player to back off from a jump if they don't think they can make it and also decide mid-air where to move the player.

Death plays a very important role in Celeste. You die in one hit and respawn in less than a second. This casual nature to death is one of the fundamental mechanics of the game. Unlike other platformers like Mario you are expected to die multiple times in each section of the game. Death works as a learning experience that makes you improve each time and the

quick respawn doesn't make it feel like a punishment more a "try again, you got this" feeling. In each level I have somewhere between 185-1210 deaths with deaths gradually increasing as the chapters went on. This shows the gradual increase in difficulty as levels should naturally be.

There is a hidden gauge which decreases you every time you move up, dash or jump up a wall. Once the gauge is less than half way Madeline begins to sweat and once its half way she begins turning red. Not only is this great for showing the player a crucial mechanic but it also does it without using UI to clutter the screen.

Her dash is sends you off in a direction in a straight line for the first half but gives you as the developers describe it "Wile E Coyote time" for the second half of it. This brief stop in mid-air allows the player to more easily manoeuvre to a platform. This allows players with slower reaction times like myself to complete harder jumps that people with faster reaction to complete while still giving the game the "fast feel". Madeline only has one dash up until chapter 7 where she gains a second dash. To convey when the dash is available to use Madeline's hair changes colour depending on how many dashes she has. Her hair is pink if two dashes are available, red if one is available and blue if no dashes are available. Her dashes refill as soon as she touches the ground or picks up a green gem.

The best moments of the game are when you have to combine all of her movements in unison by jumping to save a dash, then climb a wall then dash to another wall to climb a platform to refill you dash to do a final jump. All her movements have clearly been coded, tested, recoded and then retested to create one of the best movement systems in all of gaming



New Mechanics introduced by Chapter

Celeste is constantly introducing new mechanics and hazards in each chapter while implementing ones from previous chapters. It's what makes every level feel unique in Celeste and what keeps the player interested.

- **Spikes**: The classic video game trope of avoid or die here. Spikes can be found on any surface and are in every chapter of the game. They can only be found on surfaces however Crystals which have the same function as spike which is to make sure your day is the worst can be found in pillars by themselves or be clumped up in corners or walls. Spikes have caused over 1000 deaths for me total I would say so probably to avoid them.
- **Springs**: As well as giving you a massive jump boost, springs also recharge Madeline's Dash ability. The springs can also be found on walls that helps to clear larger floorless areas by jumping onto a wall with a spring then refilling your dash. These section are really tricky but also really satisfying when you pull it off
- **Gems**: Gems refill your dash ability. They are normally placed to both guide the player in a certain direction and to make impossible jumps possible by giving double dashes available early on and quadruple dashes in the late game. Some sections such as the final section of the Mr Oshiro fight has a load of gems bunched up in a row that you have to continuously dash through to get to the other side.
- **Conveyer belts**: are blocks that once attacked to by climbing on them or jumped on launch you in a particular direction. The flinging across the screen normally leads to a lot of death, until you finally find the perfect path to safety.
- **Star blocks**: Star block are solid black blocks that when you can dash straight through. Leaving them refills your dash so you can combo you way between them in a lot of places. However dashing into one leads to death if there is a wall on the other side, you can't cancel out of them so once you dash in you are committed to the direction until you leave it.
- **Shield platforms**: Shields are switches you have to touch to turn them on. Once all shields are on in a room a shield platform will move. Normally the platform is blocking your exit and this can be especially tense in rooms where you are being chased giving it a time sensitive nature like the first Badeline fight or chapter 5. A lot of the shields are place very close to spike or other hazardous object forcing you to do tight jumps.
- **Sludge**: Sludge is found mainly in chapter 3. The moment you touch it you die. How it differs to spike is that it has 3 variants. The first is stationary sludge which can be anywhere on the screen and it's not unusual to see pillars of sludge. The second is

moving sludge they can move up, down, side to side or even in a circular motion around platforms. Moving sludge is designed to get the player to time their jumps and dashes perfectly. The final is the appearing sludge, certain areas have small red tentacles on surfaces that won't kill you however sludge will appear once you leave that spot. This keeps the player moving forward and thinking of the best way to move around the level

- Bubbles: there are three kinds of bubble in the game green, red and purple. The green bubbles give throws you in whatever direction you are going plus refills your dash. The red bubble keeps moving you in a certain direction even when moving between screens and doesn't stop until you hit a wall, an obstacle or dash out of it. The red bubble can be used in very interesting way such as in chapter 5 where in one section the exit on the very left hand side of the screen covered by spikes that you cannot dash through. You have to do long platforming section on the right hand side to reach the red orb so that you can start moving towards the exit.
- Arrow Platforms: Arrow platforms can either be free or fixed. When you stand/hold on an arrow platform it starts moving in the direction of whatever arrow is on it. If it was fixed then it just keeps going until the end of its path where it gets destroyed. If it's free then if you can guide it left and right if it is going up/down or you can guide it up and down if it's going left/right. The platforms are destroyed after colliding with another object so they sections they're in tend to be avoid spikes or walls or you die.
- Torches: Torches are found in chapter 5 which light up the room when you touch them. Most rooms are in the dark in chapter 5 so the first thing in every section you do is light up the spooky room with all the torches as if you don't you could jump right into some spikes.
- Dash platforms: Dash platforms act very similar to the conveyer belts instead they activate when you dash instead of when you touch them. The player has to dash to where they will be instead of where they currently are to catch them.
- Switches: Switches activate gates which let you progress further on in the level. Switches either have to be activated by dashing into them or throwing Theo's cage at them. It gives the extra step as enemies are normally chasing you so delaying you in one spot gives them time to catch up and for the gameplay to feel tenser.
- Angry platforms: Angry platforms have a peaceful default face on them. That is until you dash into them waking them up. They throw themselves across the screen in whatever direction you hit them in. they also destroy certain walls allowing you to gain access to areas you previously couldn't. There are quite a few sections where you have to rid these platforms while dodging spikes. These are really difficult as the speed of these platforms is so fast that if you jump for too long you shall fall into the

endless abyss. You can only hit the platforms in the blue borders and certain platforms will have only blue borders on certain sides to stop the player from going where they're don't need to go.

- Feather: Feathers give you the temporary ability of flight. You can fly in whatever direction you want but you don't stop you just keep moving until the feather wears off. The feather does refill you dash and you can dash out of the feather to cancel it. The feather is normally found to clear large areas or to go through spike that would be impossible to manoeuvre through by dashing
- Bumpers: Bumpers act like they are straight from a pinball machine. They repel you as soon as you land of them even have the classic pinball sound when you hit them. They can be used to bounce across level but are a lot harder to control where you are landing. There are many occasions where if you land on a bumper wrong you'll be thrown straight into spikes so finding the perfect point on a bumper to make it to the next platform is a challenge in itself.

Collectables

- Strawberries: strawberries are collectible found throughout the game. There is almost always one in each section of the game with 175 normal strawberries total. The strawberries are almost always visible or are in a room that you find by exploring. They are in hard to reach places that you have to figure out how to reach. Once you have picked up the strawberry you have to reach safe ground before it is counted as collected collecting them all gives you a reason to replay the level once you have beaten them as finding them all on your first try is unlikely as you will be more skilled if you come back later.
- Winged Strawberries: Winged strawberries have a clever mechanic where if you dash while in the room with one they fly away. To reach them you have to complete platforming sections by only jumping, climbing and using whatever objects the level gives you
- Golden Strawberries: Golden strawberries become available once you have beaten the B-side of Chapter 8. They appear at the beginning of every level and disappear if you die once in that level. The golden strawberry is designed for speed runners or people who have mastered celeste but not for your average player.
- Crystal hearts: Crystal hearts are found in each level in super-secret areas and are what you require to unlock a lot of the post-game such as chapter 8 and 9 and their B-sides.
- Cassette tapes: Cassette tapes are easy enough to find but require some tricky platforming to get to them involving a blue and pink platform that switch between disappearing and appearing to a pattern. The Cassette tapes unlock the B-side of that level.

Characters (Story Wise):

- Madeline: Madeline is the main character of the game and her goal is to climb the top of Celeste Mountain. She has a history of panic attacks and anxiety which is shown throughout the game. Her journey is one of running from her problems then confronting her problems and accepting them. As you are playing as her for the game you have to empathise with her which the dialog does brilliantly while the music and surrounding art emphasises the empathy.
- Badeline: Badeline is referred to as “Part of You” throughout the game but the community has settled on Badeline so that’s what I’m going to refer to her as. Celeste Mountain has magical properties which has brought out all of Madeline’s mental anguish and has given it a form. Throughout the game she is your main antagonist. Causing chaos until Madeline Accepts that she is part of her and that she can’t just be thrown away. She needs to be talked to, eased and comforted. Badeline isn’t actually Bad She is just scared and anxious that Madeline will come to harm climbing the mountain so she tries and tries to stop her until she agrees to stop stopping her and instead help her reach the top.
- Theo: Theo is a fellow climber you meet along the way. He is happiest man and is a photographer who always loves a selfie with Madeline. Early on moments with Theo are some of the most calming moments. You sit with him chatting about his life or your life over a camp fire. He is always a joy to see, especially in chapter 5 where the whole chapter is about finding Theo.
- The old lady: The old lady is a mysterious person who is always laughing. She is very connected to the mountain and seems linked to the bird that helps you throughout. She at the beginning laughs at Madeline for trying to attempt the mountain but the further up the mountain Madeline gets the more she believes in her. She could be the actual mountain in human form but also she could just be an old lady it is never clear. She is always joyous even when questioning Madeline’s capabilities of reaching the summit.
- Mr Oshiro: Mr Oshiro is a man with severe mental illnesses. He shows clear signs of memory loss, multiple personality disorder and an extreme case of being able to turn into a ghost monster. Madeline cleans up his hotel for him and when Madeline rejects his offer to stay and Badeline insults him he breaks down and turns into a monster trying to attack you. It is clear that he just wants someone to talk to and in the epilogue it is shown that he is improving joining the final picture with the old lady welcoming him into her home. You feel sorry for the man you never feel like that he is actually evil.

Music: The music play an essential part of Celeste's storytelling and the emotional impact of the game. As story wise the game is limited to dialog boxes the uses of music help convey the mood of the dialog. It also helps with the level design, the Chapter 5 haunted house's music is creepy. The Music when confronting Badeline is an epic chanting, the music whenever Madeline is having a panic attack is loud and overbearing. For chapter 4 when you meet Mr Oshiro and you're uncertain about the nature of his hotel and him the music feels mysterious to convey that uncertainty. By far the stand out in the soundtrack is the level 1 "First steps" it's conveys this feeling that Madeline is saying to the player "hey lets go on this adventure together. Overall the electrical soundtrack is just beautiful and always fits whatever the level or story needs to be.

Boss fights/ final sections of levels:

The final section of each level should take what you have been taught within that level and give you either hard or really interesting different uses of it.

Chapter 1: Final section of level one isn't that different too much of the rest of the level. The purpose of a level 1 is to get the player comfortable to the way the game plays. As such the final section of the game is just showing the player through frequent usage of the traffic light block how far they can throw you and when you should use your dash. It's nothing special but it does what it needs to do well.

Running from Badeline chapter 2: Chapter 2 is when you first meet the antagonist of the game Badeline who is all of Madeline's insecurities, doubts and self-hatred manifested into reality by the mountain. This boss fight contains no fighting as Badeline can't be killed. She follows every move you make and repeats it exactly. Madeline is literally running away from her fears. The Music that plays is loud, fast and creepy. Story wise this is a brilliant boss without even having to say much and even mechanically it is brilliant. One part puts you in a room with 4 different shields that you have to activate to exit the room. 3 of the 4 of them are over spike and the other one is in a corner that if you don't leave quickly you'll be cornered by Badeline. The further on you get in the level the amount of Badelines increases and the tighter the level design becomes. As the level gets further on suddenly Badeline just disappears and you're left with a dread of where she will come from next. The music gradually gets quitter which relaxes the player and the much simpler platforming with no hazards allows the player to cool down after such an intense segment. Then when you reach a phone booth you pick up a call and after some dialog increasing your self-doubt you get jump scared by Badeline. You wake up at the beginning of the level unsure if that entire level was a dream or real. Then you can talk to Theo who is as jolly as ever and then continue onto find the same phone booth as before. Madeline calls her mom telling her that she feels overwhelmed. Her mom supports her by telling her to breath and the level ends. This level is one of the more heavily story driven levels and is the first proper show of Madeline's level of anxiety and doubt.



Mr Oshirote Chapter 3: After Madeline says she doesn't want to stay and Badeline insults Mr Oshirote calling him a loser and insulting his hotel you leave him to have a mental breakdown. If you speak to him after Badeline leaves you can see him talking to himself doubting himself. When you leave the hotel he follows and when Badeline call's him pathetic he turns into a big ghostly headed monster. The angry Mr Oshirote then chases you while you have to make it towards the end of the level. The platforming here feels epically well designed as it has to give you ample space to dodge Mr Oshirote from running at you, while still coving the level with hazard. This boss is meant to feel fast paced so a lot of the level is covered with growing sludge which kills you if you step on the same place again. This forces you to keep moving forward. Mr Oshirote's attacks you by rushing you from the left side of the screen, just a split second before this he plays an animation that lets you know he is about to attack giving you just enough time to dodge. You can jump on his head although he will respawn at the same speed it allows you to just miss dying. This boss also contains a lot springs which makes dodging him more fun while also allowing you to jump across the level a lot faster. Once you reach the end of the level Mr Oshirote destroys the roof that you and he are standing on. He asks for you to leave him alone once you both recovered from the fall. You have broken this emotionally unstable man and the game makes sure that you know you did.



The wind Chapter 4: Chapter 4 is probably my least favourite Chapter of the main campaign. The wind either makes you a lot slower or faster depending on the direction it is blowing. Of course all jumps are programmed so that they are possible however the jumps feel a lot harder when the wind is slowing you down so much. Moving in the wind feels tedious and just missing a jump because the wind changed is infuriating. While I don't like the wind the snowball mechanic is clever. The wind will throw large snowballs at high speeds towards you that will kill you. This stops you from staying still and taking a breath, they force you to keep moving. The other mechanic the clouds do feel fun once you get the hang of when you actually have to jump. To get the highest jump of the clouds you have to jump when the cloud is at its lowest point, some jumps are only possible while at this point. The pink clouds disappear when you jump on them meaning you have to commit to whatever jump you make.

The highlight and what I remember chapter 4 the most is the ending Cutscenes/mini-game. Madeline is having enters a gondola to reach the next section of a game and Theo tell you to "wait up" and after clumsily falling down he joins you in the gondola. Madeline is afraid that the janky old gondola will break while Theo being his jolly self thinks it will go fine. After Madeline starts to panic about how high up they are Theo tells her to come in for a selfie and Then Badeline appears and stops the gondola. Theo tries to fix thing by moving the level but ends up breaking it. The screen turns darker and dark creepy tentacles come in from the side of the screen, the music get creepy and louder. Madeline is having a panic attack and you the player feel it emotionally. She starts getting angry at Theo for suggesting to ride the stupid thing. Theo being the kind soul that he is tells Madeline to picture a feature. Then a feature appears on the screen. The aim of this mini-game is to keep the feature within the highlighted box until Madeline calm's down. The design of this mini-game is done so well, the way the wind is blowing replicates the feeling of breathing in and out. Once she calms down the gondola starts back up again. They reach the top and after admiring the selfie of

pure terror they took they move onto the next level. Gameplay wise this chapter is not the best but story wise it is one of the most memorable moments of the game



Theo in a cage Chapter 5: Chapter 5 is based on the emotion of loss and fear. The end section of Chapter 5 has Theo in a cage that you have to carry across the level. You have to activate buttons in this section while dodging enemies. These enemies are invisible and can only be temporarily stopped for about 2-3 seconds by jumping on them. They attack by dashing but even running into them kills you. They cannot pass through the transparent barriers which in certain areas gives you a temporary safe space or delay them enough to get you further through the level. Carrying Theo in a cage is surprisingly fun. You can't dash while holding him but you can't jump so they're certain sections where you have to throw Theo across the stage so that you can also get across, or there are certain buttons surrounded by spikes that you have to throw Theo at to unlock the escape. Overall this section makes you think more than other section's as there's a lot of moving elements making it one of the more memorable and unique moments in the game.



Confronting Badeline Chapter 6: Chapter 6's fight with Badeline is not only the best fight in the game but is one of my favourite boss fights in all games which I have played. After trying to get rid of Badeline you have to confront her and ask her to help get out of here. She gets angry and turn's into her boss mode phase. This fight you actually have to confront Badeline, face your fears head on and fight them. The music playing called "confronting myself" feels epic. It has this quire of people chanting to give it this grandiose feel to this final fight with yourself.

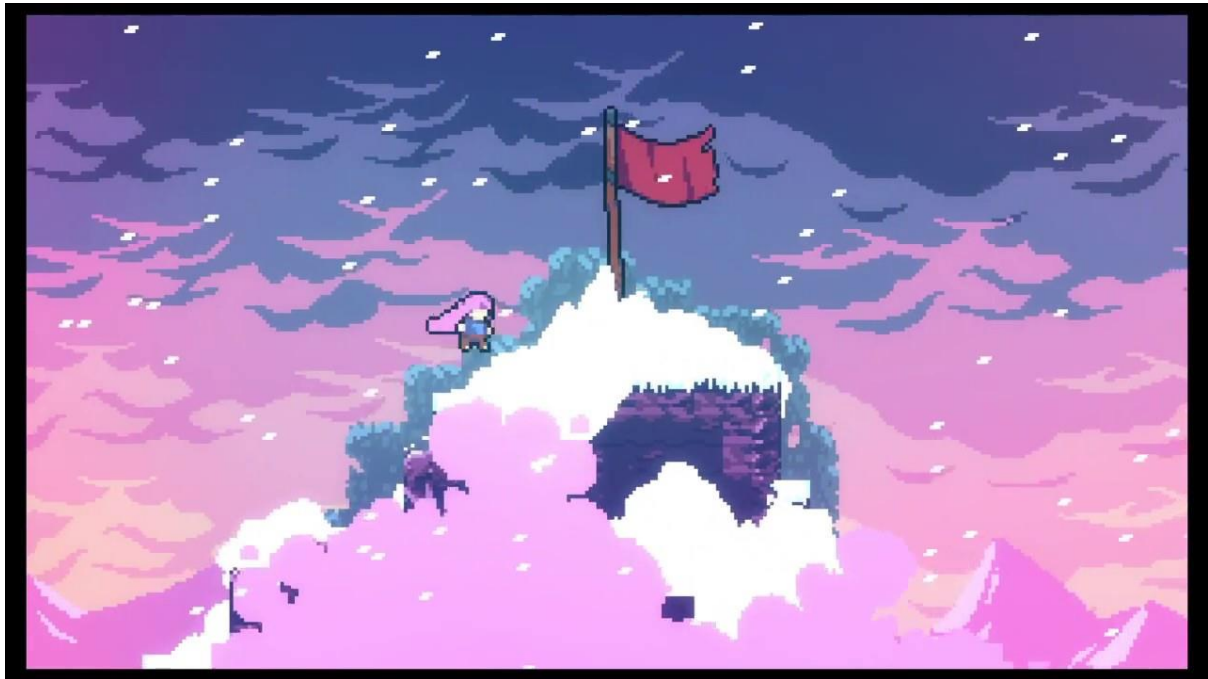
How mechanically she work is that you have to dash or jump into her which moves her further down the level and when you do that she pushes you back while making loose blocks fall from the ceiling. These blocks not only work as a hazard to avoid but they create platforms that allow you to move further down the level. Badelines attacks are in certain patterns which allows you to time the exact opportunity to attack. The best moment to attack is when she is charging her laser beam. This takes a couple of seconds that gives you on most occasion enough time to dash into her. She also shoots purple projectiles which are harder to avoid the closer you are so avoiding them from further away is normally a better strategy. Then there are the sections in the level where you have to combo hitting Badeline to make it across the level. The further you go in the level the more aggressive she becomes, as Badeline is getting more and more frightened. When you get the last hit on her she runs off to the next room while you have to follow her dark tentacles which keep running away from you. She is scared that Madeline will abandon her. Madeline no longer wants rid of her she want her to help her up the mountain. After comforting her telling her that it's ok to be scared all the darkness around Badeline disappears and Badeline the part of you which had been separated fuses back into yourself. Madeline has accepted her fears, confronted them head on. Your hair turns pink and you have now gained the ability to do an extra dash. You are also introduced to the purple orb which throws you up to the next stage. The last few

sections of the chapter is just some very easy, hazard free platforming to get you used to the double jump. This chapter is the best not only because of the gameplay but because of the emotional ending and just awesome boss.



The Final Ascent Chapter 7: The final level in the main story is just stunning. Had fallen all the way to the bottom of the mountain in chapter 6 and now you have to climb your way back to the top. You reach the summit by going through every chapter up until now from the prologue to 5 (not 6 as 6 was the bottom of the mountain). Each section uses the mechanics introduced in each section with new platforming designed for the double dash. At the end of each section you use a purple bubble to fly to the next section and have a talk with Badeline. These talks are Madeline convincing herself that she can reach the summit. When you reach the last 500 meters of the mountain they introduce a checkpoint with a countdown from 30. These checkpoints are really required as the last section of chapter 7 is some really hard platforming but in short sections. The dreaded wind is included in this section however instead of going side to side it is either blowing you up or down. I am actually ok with this a lot more as decreasing your jump height when you finally think you've mastered the double dash gives some extra challenge while not feeling like you are being pushed back in the level. When you are even closer to the top the wind starts to pull you up. This allows you to do even bigger jumps that wouldn't be possible without it and the more floaty nature of the player gives you just a bit more control in air. When you reach the last checkpoint the music starts to quiet down. You reach the top and Madeline and Badeline reflect on the journey and how far Madeline has come and they talk about how she wants them to work together from now on even when they leave the mountain where Badeline will lose her physical form. They enjoy the view and the credits roll with gameplay in the background of Madeline and Badeline walking down the mountain together side by

side or working together when they need to. You see them bouncing on clouds, Mr Oshiro cleaning up his hotel then talking to the blue bird. They make it all the way back to a fixed up version of the bridge that fell in the prologue.



Epilogue: The epilogue has the old lady, Theo, Madeline and Badeline all in a cabin talking about how brilliant the summit was. Mr Oshiro enters the cabin asking to join the party and is welcomed in. Madeline bakes a pie with all the strawberries you have collected throughout the game and enjoy the pie with all the colourful cast of characters you met along the way. It is a beautiful end to a beautiful game.



Issues with the game:

When I beat the main game (chapters 1-7) you are presented with an eight chapter. Once I entered this chapter granny greeted Madeline back and telling Madeline to enter the cave. Once I entered I noticed that Madeline's dash don't refill, this is one of this levels mechanics. Now only gems refill Madeline's dash. After talking granny again I noticed a big blue wall with holes for hearts. Now up until this point I had never seen any hearts only strawberries as collectibles. I didn't know how to obtain them so I googled how to get the hearts. The moment a player has to google how to do something is the moment the game designer has failed. Yes super-secret collectibles are in other games such as the big coins in Mario but to not come across one of these in any of the 7 levels is just bad design. This gate required 4 hearts so I followed a guide for how to get them. I learned and then saw in the game that there is a white light that shows the general area that they should be in the level.

The first level you may if you explored a certain path find a satellite with a flock of colourful bird. The satellite gives a list of colours and the birds each fly in together then out in their unique direction. The aim is to repeat code of colours the satellite gives with the direction the birds are going in with your dash. This took a few tries as I accidentally dashed off the platform a couple of times while trying to input the code

The Crystal Heart in chapter 2 you have to exploit the game's physics. Dashes reload on 3 occasion when you touch the ground, when you touch a gem and when you enter a new scene. To obtain the second heart you have to zigzag dash between the opening screen and the next screen. This leads you to a wall that you can climb and that the heart is on top of.

While cleaning Mr Oshiro's hotel you have to do 4 sets of platforming each to reach a button. When you have completed the platforming section at the bottom left of Mr Oshiro's hotel and hit the button it cleans up some of the dirty clothes left around the place. Then instead of exiting the way you would normally you have to dash up a waterfall and backtrack redoing a lot of the section you just did till you find the heart which was previously covered in clothing.

Chapter 4 is one of the most illogical and confusing one. Finding it isn't that much of an issue as you just follow the white light at a certain section. Then you dash through a breakable stone in the wall which is kind of obvious. Then you are left in a tall room with the heart at the top of it just out of reach. There is a white box at the bottom right that you can stand on top of and go through like a small tunnel. I had been here before without the guide and had no idea how to reach it. What the guide told me to do was hold down on the white box for 5 seconds. I did and I got thrown into the background of the game. This feature is used nowhere else in the game and is apparently a reference to Super Mario 3.

These challenges are more obscure then challenging and I wouldn't have figured them out without the guide however using the guide doesn't give me any of the satisfaction that it would have if I figured them out myself.

Chapter 8: once unlocked I figured out why chapter 8 was so tricky to unlock. Not only does having the dash only refill with gems make the game ridiculously hard the platforming here is more precise then ever and I just didn't have fun while paying it. The main mechanic for chapter 8 is the ability to switch between hot and cold in the levels which does make for a cool concept and gameplay wise it is well implemented. However I haven't completed it after multiple tries I have got stuck. I wanted to beat it without assist mode. As such I can't comment on the level as a whole only about half way through which so far has more deaths then chapters 1-6.

The same goes for the B-side levels of each chapter. B-side levels are shorter harder versions of each chapter and the step up in difficulty is quite significant. So much so that I haven't beaten any of them or even gotten that far. Both chapter 8 and the B side levels are there for people who really have mastered the game and have much quicker reflexes then I do. While I may not like this sudden leap in difficulty I am happy that it's there for people who do.

Assist mode:

Assist mode is one of the greatest features in celeste. I never used it in my first play through as it felt like I was cheating however on my second play through I realized why its there. A challenge is fun however a challenge that you cannot complete is infuriating. If you made a jigsaw puzzle but found out there was a piece missing at the end you are left heavily unsatisfied and the fun you had while making it is diminished. The same goes for games, a hard game that you cannot complete isn't as satisfying as a hard game that you can. There were certain sections of celeste that took me hours to complete and I was having less and less fun as the time went on. That is the purpose of assist mode is to make the game easier. Players can slow down the speed of the game. This helps people who may not have the lightning fast reactions some sections require while still making the players do the same jumps, dashes and dodges. The unlimited stamina lets players climb for as long as they want. This may break some of the puzzles that were designed around not having unlimited stamina. Now the last two invisibility and unlimited dashes completely break the games design but their inclusion is welcome as giving the players the option to skip over sections may go against game design principles however it allows players to explore the rest of the game. Celeste is not an easy game, the developers know this so the inclusion of assist mode is as important to the game as a story about dealing with anxiety shouldn't cause anxiety.

Trivia/misc:

- When you first meet Theo he says that he posts all his photos on Instapix and that his username is @TheoUnderStars . When I saw this I looked it up on Instagram and it is real. His pictures are posted exactly when he said he said he left Seattle and the date you photos you take with him aligns up to the days in game.
- A chapter 9 was released which I haven't played since I haven't beaten chapter 8 however it seems to be a very long and hard level as most speed runs being 18 mins long and most playthroughs being at least twice that.
- The game has been loved by the speed running community with such mechanics such as the golden strawberries or the B and C side levels being designed for them as they require high levels of precision

Final Word: Celeste is not only one of the best 2-d platformers of all time, it is one of the best games of all time. Its fluid gameplay, great level design, colourful cast of characters and important message not only will hopefully keep new players playing this game for the years to come.

