

# **Arena of Ascension**

Design Document of  
pre-Production Phase

By

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# 1. Concept

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## 1.1 Logline

Arena of Ascension (AoA) is a 2d Roguelite Deckbuilder in which the player takes control of a group of believers that try to prove their worth to their gods by facing mythical beasts in arena challenges. Set in a tournament in which different pantheons of gods try to prove that their favors are the most powerful, the group is bestowed with blessings and new members each time they master one of the challenges set by the gods, getting stronger with each victory but losing the gods favor and all their strength if they fail. Trying again and again to prove their devotion and their gods power.

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## 1.2 Story

Since time immemorial the gods of different pantheons argue about the strength they provide to their followers, each one claiming that only they should be worshipped because they bestow the most power. After millennia of discussion and threats of war they decide to hold a tournament in which their followers have to prove to all other gods the strength their faith gives them. So the gods set out to recruit their champions and bring in creatures that will test the contestants setting up a Tournament the likes of which was never conceived before. They hold it inside the, only for this purpose build, Arena Of Ascension.

Given this setup it is possible to integrate different factions the player can choose from. These factions are associated with their respective pantheon e.g. Norse Pantheon, Greek Pantheon and so forth. This allows upscaling over time and the implementation of different playstyles in each faction. Also the designer is not limited in choosing mythical creatures as challenge opponents. Northern trolls, Greek Cerberus, Japanese kappa all is possible. Giving a huge variety of possible enemies to implement.

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## 1.3 Reference Projects

In the idea for this game I was heavily influenced by games I enjoy playing. Most prominent of these is **Slay the Spire** by Mega Crit Games. As a digital deckbuilding roguelite especially the way how to progress in runs and the deckbuilding will leave its mark on AoA.

**Tash Kalar Arena of Legends** is a board game by Vlaada Chvátil. A game I particularly enjoyed because of its strategical thinking and the way the board is influenced by the cards. The 2D grid component that serves as Arena as well as hand to board interactions will be noticeable in AoA.

**A Game of Thrones LCG 2nd Edition** is a more 'classical' analog card game. Though countless hours it never got boring for me. The main reason therefor lies in its countless deckbuilding possibilities and ways to integrate cards into different play styles.

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## 1.4 Scope

Given the solo development of this project the initial scope is set to one playable faction. a factions cardpool should be extensive enough to allow different play styles and avoid the player seeing the same cards each run. Given 10 challenges each run in 9 of which the player chooses a new card out of 3 the player will see at least 3 cards each run (if the same cards show up every time) and at most  $3 \times 9 = 27$  (if the same card never shows twice) on top of that the starting deck (of 10 cards) has to be added to the overall card pool. So a rough estimate of 50 cards per faction seems in order.

In addition to that there should be a number of challenges that allow the player to encounter different creatures each run and allow the building of different Decks. The broad estimate is:

10 challenges per run 2 of which are bosses

Before first boss easy challenges. After first boss hard challenges. Boss at challenge 6 and challenge 10 (final boss) = 5 easy + 1 middleboss + 3 hard + Endboss = 10 challenges.

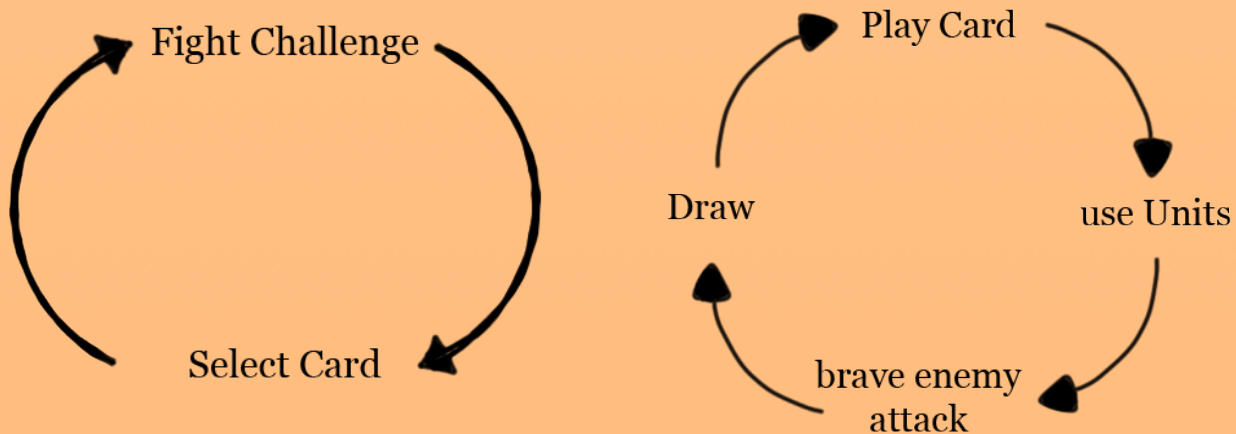
To avoid the player encountering the same challenges each run a pool of 15 easy, 6 hard, 2 middle bosses, 2 Endbosses is planned == 25 different challenges.

Meaning the current scope is set to one faction = 50 cards and 25 challenges (15 easy, 6 hard, 2 middle, 2 endbosses).

## 2. Gameplay

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### 2.1 Loop



### 2.2 Run Progression

The player starts their run with the base deck of the chosen faction and is thrown into the first challenge. If the challenge is mastered, the player chooses one of three cards for their deck and is thrown into the next challenge. Until the middle boss. If the middle boss is mastered, the player chooses a boon or the goods. A special card that is only dropped after defeating said boss. This card is meant to be a powerful key card that improves the player's deck significantly in order to enable them to face the much harder challenges to come and eventually defeat the endboss, by doing so successfully ending the run. Should the player be defeated during a challenge, the run ends, the build deck is lost, and the player has to begin a new run. The **rougelite** element comes into play after a run is finished. Then the player gains XP, after a certain threshold of XP is gained, new cards are unlocked that will show from that point onward as cards to choose from.

### 2.3 The Arena

The Arena is where the main part of the game takes place. It is represented by a two-dimensional grid of rectangular tiles. Each enemy or Card in Arena is inhabiting (occupying) one of those tiles so their position can be defined clearly with a Vector 2 such as 1,1. It remains to be seen if the size of the Arena stays consistent during each challenge. Challenges might be designed by adding constraints to the arena such as obstacles that occupy tiles, a limitation as to where the units may be placed and so forth. This adds, apart from the enemies and their behavior, more ways to make the challenges feel unique and memorable and can be utilized to deepen the strategic aspect of the game.

### 2.4 Challenges

In challenges, the player enters the arena. In there, mythical beasts are spawned for the player to defeat (or be defeated by). The game is divided into enemy turns (in which the beasts perform their actions) and the player turns (in which the player puts cards into play and performs actions).

Should all beasts be defeated, the player wins the challenge. Should the player's health drop to 0, the player loses the challenge and with it the run. The player's MaxHealth equals the combined defense

of all the units in his deck. At the start of each challenge the playerHealth (HP) is set to this value. Should a unit die, the respective defense value will be subtracted from the player health. So if no units are left the player loses. To avoid the players buffing (applying defense modifiers to a card) so it is not killable anymore, by that way making losing impossible the player also loses HP when the player turn starts and there are no cards left in Deck. That way making a quick victory desirable to the player.

For more information about Cards see 3.

## 3. Cards

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### 3.1 Card Values, Types

Each card has a number of values and one Type associated with it. The values describe the Cost, STR (strength), DEF (defense). The type describes what kind of card it is, **Unit**, **Prayer** or **Attachment**

Units represent the entities in the players deck. They can be placed directly into the arena and moved around in it.

Attachments are item cards that can be placed onto a unit in order to improve their stats or give them special abilities or traits.

Prayers are one time events that give an effect.

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### 3.2 Card States

Each Card has four distinct states it can be in. These states are represented and set by their current location. The locations are: Deck, Hand, Arena, DeadPile so the associated states are **inDeck**, **inHand**, **inArena** and **inDeadPile**. In each of these states the cards have distinct properties. Generally speaking the player can only interact with cards inHand or inArena, except when card abilities specifically claim otherwise.

If a card is inDeck it can not be looked at but drawn (either on turn start or through card effects).

If a card is inHand a card can be played (put inArena).

If a card is inArena it can be moved or its effect can be triggered (unless otherwise specified).

If a card is inDeadPile it can be looked at but not interacted with (unless card effects claim otherwise).

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### 3.3 Card Traits

Each card has at least one but can have a multitude of traits. Traits are ways to define a cards identity and flavor e.g. Berserk as Human, Warrior & Valkyrie as Divine, Warrior. Also Traits are important when considering card to card interactions. Where some effects may only have influence over or can only be attached to cards with a certain Trait. Traits will be instrumental to implement different archetypes. Meaning that cards of a certain trait might all go into a similar direction.

The current Traits are:

For units

**Human,  
Divine,  
Devout,  
Warrior**

For Attachments

**Weapon,  
Blessing,  
Amour,**

For Prayers

**none**

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## 3.4 Card Concepts

Following the names of the cards included in the Norse faction. In due time this will be updated with detailed descriptions of the cards Values, Traits and Effects for easy reference.

Units:

Pesant,  
Berserker,  
Shieldmaid,  
Priest,  
Valkyrie,  
Hunin,  
Munin,

Attachments:

Roundshield,  
Ulfbert,  
Mjölñir Chain,  
Valkyrie's Spear,  
Battle Axe,

Prayers:

Prayer to Odin,  
Prayer to Thor,  
Prayer to Tyr,  
Prayer to Loki,  
Prayer to Freya,  
Prayer to Baldur,

Boons:

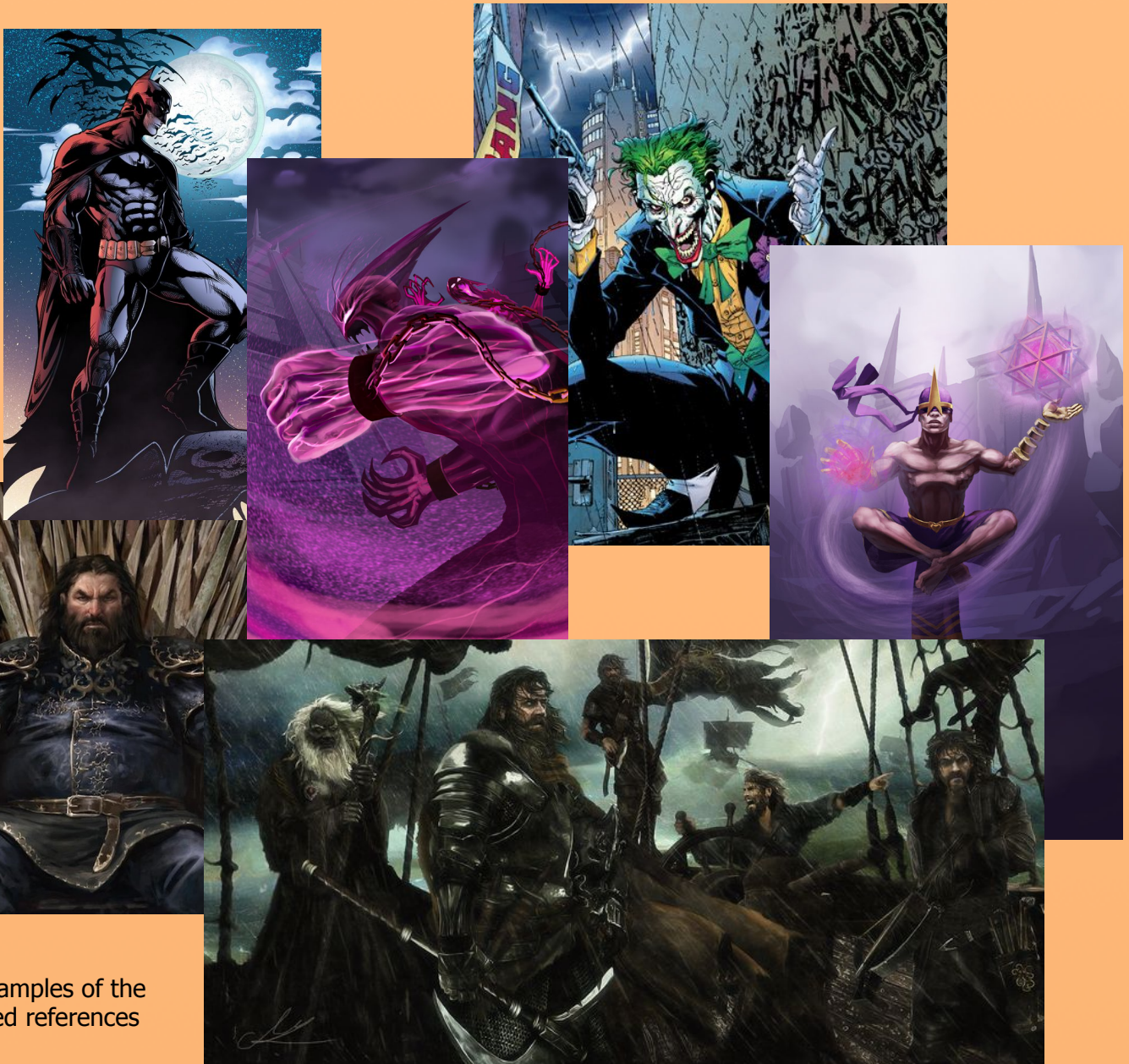
Thors Lightning,  
Odins Wisdom,  
Lokis Treachery



## 4. Visual Style

The visual style of Arena Of Ascension is thought to be a combination of dark comic aesthetics and hand-drawn artworks, drawing inspiration mainly from AGOT LCG 2nd edition, David Cochard's style (as Used In Tash-Kalar), and DC comics. It should present a mature, gritty and moody atmosphere with a touch of darkness, as the fate of entire pantheons of gods are on the line. Accentuation by bold, heavy lines and a somber color palette seems to be fitting. Inspired by AGOT LCG 2nd edition, the illustrations can lean onto a detailed if not too realistic approach. Influenced by David Cochard's style, our artworks should depict expressive characters with atmospheric coloring. Additionally, elements from DC comics should bring dynamic energy, intense action poses, and visually stunning compositions to our illustrations. This combined visual style captures the essence of a dark comic world, providing striking Imagery for players.

Given the new technologies available for the creation of artworks it is the goal to train a text-to-image model tailored to the above mentioned specifications to allow possible upscaling of the project in the future. First attempts of artwork creation have already been done using Leonardo AI's Leonardo Diffusion model. References and early attempts can be seen below.



Some examples of the mentioned references





First examples of concept art  
made by Leonardo diffusion