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Hello everybody welcome to episode 6 of season 2 of chapter select a seasonal podcast where we bounce back and forth between a different

Series of games and explore their evolution design and legacy for this season

We are covering the God of War series in today's episode as you can tell by the title is going to be all about

God of War 3 or technically God of War 3 remastered because that's what we played. I am your host Logan Moore

Joining me as always for this God of War discussion is Max Roberts. Hi Max. Hi Logan

Yeah, I guess technically it's it's got to wear three remastered but they're based they're the same game

Just ones is a little bit prettier a little bit smoother if the trophy lists don't transfer between games, then they're different

That's the rule that Mark Cerny created I think

is um

But what about the save data so

purely you try to make it not for God of War 3, but I was thinking spider-man

So the trophy lists are separate, but the saves say transfer

That's a that's an evil dark magic hack that they've come up with recently that would probably shouldn't be allowed but uh

Sometimes you got to do those things because just because I mean yeah, you gotta get the plat right I?

Still haven't I mean this is a total aside

I still have not done that for spider-man even though I have all the trophies in that game

Even the deals have a free plat. You just want to cash in you're saving it for when you get in a bet

I've told you this but like when I replay games

And I think we've talked about it kind of with the God of War games to the ones where I did not have

Full trophy lists to pursue were the ones where I was like, oh man

This kind of sucks

Like I got the original God of War and God of War 2 I had played previously

So I didn't I didn't have really any trophies to gain on them on the main path throughout the game. I

I like getting trophies over the course of a

Whatever a 15 to 20 hour game that I'm playing so I have intentionally not gotten them in the spider-man one

Because if I replay that game, which I want to do especially before the sequel comes out

I think I would just prefer to get up paying all the trophies again as I go through it

I don't know

I mean you totally can that's and then if and then if I get to the end and it's like I don't feel like doing

all these like

Clear out the warehouse missions or whatever then I could just transfer the save afterward and do that. That's very strange

I know but I

Like the satisfaction of seeing it ping one after another like once that once every what 20 or 30 minutes get a little trophy ping

keeps your uh

Keeps here. What's what's the what's the the chemical thing that makes you happy?

levels high I guess yeah

I don't know. I'm not a biologist or a

Chemist or whatever the heck I write for a living and I do it very poorly to be honest, but anyway God of War 3 um

So this episode as you can tell this is our sixth episode of the season if you have not been following along with the

Season 2 so far. This is our final

Episode of the original God of War arc which is I mean God of War 3 is the final

Game of the Greek God of War arc

Typically we bounce back and forth like we said at the top

Play the first game in the series and play the most recent one

But we put God of War 2018 at the end of this series

Which we have talked about multiple times over the course of this podcast if you want to hear more about why we did that just go

Listen episode 1 if you haven't already

But yeah, this episode is going to be all about God of War 3, which means we will be closing out the Grink--

the Greek Pantheon this time around.

You know, it was your idea to

slightly tweak the structure this way for this particular season and

I've told you off-air throughout this season and whatnot, but I am again really excited that you convinced me of this because

especially playing this game,

the hype

To replay God of War 2018, which I've already played twice now

So this will be my third go-around. You have two playthroughs and you don't have to plait. That's pretty shameful. Come on

Well, it was a lighter casual playthrough with Abby. So it wasn't I was just doing the story beats

Yeah, I'm I'm glad that we did it this way and I'm very very excited to start 2018 very soon

Yeah, I downloaded that on my ps5 today. And as I as I did I was like, oh, yeah

They put out an update for this game.

Heck yeah!

4K 60 baby!

4K 60 FPS on the PS5.

Let's go.

Yeah, that'll be...

I have not replayed that game, conversely.

So the last time I played that game, going off my Platinum status on that game would have been May 2018, I think.

So I have not touched that game in over three years.

So yeah, I'm very much looking forward to diving back into that.

But God of War 3.

That's a game we played this week.

Let's break down everything about this one.

So once again the game was developed by Sony Santa Monica Studio.

It came out on the PlayStation 3.

It was later remastered for PlayStation 4, which is the version we played.

That game is part of the PS Plus collection.

So if you have PlayStation Plus you own that game.

Congratulations.

It released on March 16, 2010.

The remaster came out July 14, 2015.

The game director was Stig Asmussen.

The producer was Steve Katerson.

Combat lead was Adam Poole.

And music once again was Gerard Marino with help from Ron Fish, Mike Reagan, Chris Velasco,

and Jeff Rona who was new this time around.

I actually did my research for the music this time.

It wasn't so much that Gerard was leading, while he does have most of the credits, because he's been with God of War the longest along with some of these other composers, but they apparently all just composed their own tracks and that fused together to become the soundtrack.

It wasn't like a lead composer, and then the rest underneath, they were all apparently

equals in the creation of the music for the game.

That makes sense with how this game is structured though, because it is very much, you go from

one god to the next and each one kind of has their own different vibe and tone to them, and has their own little area.

And the previous games have been like that too, but perhaps for this one that made more sense than even normal.

Metacritic this time around, once again coming in at a very high score for the most part.

92 out of 100 for the original version on Playstation 3D.

You know what the remaster got out of curiosity?

81.

81.

That sounds about right.

As a game reviewer myself who like contributes, I'll just say this.

when I review remasters it's hard for me to ever want to like rate them high

because if I if it's just a if you just played the game and it's like yep this

is a remaster I feel like I usually just try to default to giving it about an 8

or so there has to be some other special things in the mix for me that usually

want to go higher on certain remasters rather than be like bonus content they

included or all the DLCs you can fold it in as well?

It's definitely a struggle to balance it because this game, you know, God of War 3 may be a

92 or 93 out of 100 in general, but then all they've really added was a photo mode and

I guess it was 1080, 60, and I think later there's a pro patch to bring it up to 4K.

I'll double check that.

But really it was just a resolution bump, frame rate bump, and photo mode.

So where do you...

It's a tough thing to balance, I think.

Even when you look at the Metacritic for the remastered version, like some of the pull

quotes here like you had PlayStation universe gave it a 9 out of 10 but they say as far as remasters go God of War 3 is a welcome one but a welcome but unnecessary one the single edition of a photo mode and updated graphics or something that just aren't worth paying \$40 for a five year old game yeah like that's how I feel like if you're if you're not including anything super noteworthy it just feels like you're kind of trotting out the same thing or just trying to hey let's get more money from this in a very easy way we can get more people to pay for this game, so sure, let's just release it again."

And so that's something I'm typically very critical of.

But yeah, it doesn't ever speak to the quality of the game itself.

Because you're not...

I don't know.

When I review remasters, I feel like I'm reviewing what's been remastered and then the additional

things around the edge more so than the game itself.

Anyway, God of War 3 Max, what was your experience with this one?

Obviously you've played it before, but have you played it just once or a bunch of times?

This is my third go around with God of War 3.

Played it twice before I played it once on PS3 and then back in 2018 before the PS4 God of War game came out, I replayed 1, 2, and 3.

And that time I played it on the remaster version on my PS4 and then I've done that once again this time around. I remember, I think anyone who was following God of War or PlayStation at the time remembers their E3 demo with the Titan fight and Helios and that whole fight with the, it's not a manticore, but the snake, lion, and goat.

It's a, no I know what the name of it is. It's a...

It'll come to you.

So it's that demo though.

It's really, I think it's actually one of PlayStation's more iconic demos that people

can remember.

Chimera.

Chimera, thank you.

So it was that demo and at Best Buy you could play that demo at some point, probably closer to launch, not around that particular E3.

And I remember being in a Best Buy somewhere and they had one of those gaming rocking chairs

like the ones that just are curved

and they sit on the floor

and they probably had speakers in them

and it was some Best Buy demo key.

No one else was around, this big TV sitting on the floor  
in the middle of a Best Buy and I played that demo there

and this was before I had a PS3 and I went,

"I need to play that, I need this to play that."

Because I just thought it was so cool

and it was one of the first PS3 games that I bought

when I finally got a console in 2011.

So yeah, I've loved God of War 3 so much.

What about you?

Yeah, so I've played this before, played it on PS3, I've not played the remaster.

Yeah, when I was really into, when I started getting really into consuming E3 each year  
and stuff like that, it was around the 360 and PS3 era.

I would say I really started to pay attention to E3 being the tent pole show each year.

And what what used to be what's now the game awards? What what was like the spike VGA's  
or VGS or whatever?

Yeah at the time

I really started getting in the end into that stuff in addition to you know, like reading gaming  
magazines and stuff

Which was primarily how I think I had consumed gaming media beforehand probably around the time that this game would have been Getting shown off at those kind of shows

So about what?

This came out in 2010.

So I distinctly remember being exposed to this game at those shows and I was like, "Okay, I need to play this at some point in the future.

I need to play these games finally because people say they're awesome, the new one looks really cool."

Yeah, I distinctly remember that Helios demo that you were talking about.

showed off something with the Poseidon fight before release as well.

Maybe it was a preview they did on X-Play or something like that.

Because I remember X-Play was talking about this game a lot back in the day.

It was really big that this was coming out.

So I remember seeing a lot of those moments, but it wasn't until a few years later that I played it for the first time.

So yeah, I mean this was the game that really pushed me to kind of try to find a way to play the other two, which I eventually did, like I've talked about on the show before in the previous episodes.

And yeah, I mean just basically, just how this one previewed and how this one looked really pushed me to get into this series more so than any of the critical praise or anything like that from the other ones.

Because I had obviously known the others were good, but it wasn't until this game's hype cycle really started that I was like okay I should yes I must play these at some point I should get on board yeah so whenever I got a ps3 I started trying to look into that and a few years later eventually did it um so coming back to this because this would have been the first time in I don't know I mean again



I could look up my original trophies for the original game I don't necessarily need to unless you want to but this would be the first time I played this game in probably seven or eight years.

"Knee Jerk Reaction" I guess I'll start.

This is probably the best one I think we've played so far.

For some reason I always remember thinking I liked two more.

And two is really good, like I'm not poo-pooing "God of War 2" at all.

of the six that we have played so far, this one is probably aged the best. The pacing is the big thing that I think is great in this game. I sat down Monday and I was, I think I was right around that Helios fight or something, maybe even, I wasn't very far in. I had basically done the opening with Poseidon. I had played about an hour of the game. I sat down Monday and by the time I went to bed Monday I was at Zeus ready to fight Zeus. For reference we're recording this on a Wednesday. So I basically beat the entirety of this game in a single day and this is one of the longer ones and it doesn't feel like it at all because they keep putting things in front of you every couple minutes which are a ton of fun. We'll get into it more with the gameplay stuff but the items they give you in this one are by far the best they've given you in any of the games. Yeah, this is, for some reason I did not think this one was, I don't know, it wasn't that I thought it was bad, but for some reason it never made like an extreme impression on me when I played it for the first time. But now having come back, no, this is a very, this is a very fun game first and foremost I think. Like it's hard not to have a good time playing this one. It absolutely is. I had a similar thing this time around and I honestly believe each time I've played this game it just has this infectious pace to it that you just one more boss or let me just get to the next area like let me do one more thing because it's so grand and epic and I know these words are used quite a bit actually in game criticism but really I do think this honestly captures the spirit because of just the scale of it and the notion of destroying the Greek gods of Olympus and tearing it all down. It really is that big, grandiose

action adventure game. To momentarily circle back to your trophies, I think I have a better picture now of your God of War experience. You popped, you beat the game according to your trophies back in on May 14th of 2015. Okay. Which was just a couple of months before the PS4 remaster. I think they would have announced the PS4 remaster at E3 though is the thing. Maybe, possibly, but if we go back and we look at your God of War 2 trophies you got those in late April of 2015 so you

- You clearly were playing the God of War trilogy

like in those early months of 2015.

- Early college years.

Why was I playing these in college?

I don't know why that was a thing.

No, we wouldn't have been doing our previous podcast by that point.

- We started--

- We would have a couple more, we would have done it a couple months later I think.

Would have been like bull.

- We were talking at that point.

-Yeah, for sure.

So we started our show in March of 2015.

So actually, yes, no, you were playing those.

-So if we listen to some early episodes of our show,

Millennial Gaming Speak, which is now actually totally available to listen on podcast services, thanks to Max doing some work on that front the past week or so, I wonder if I talk about these.

But yeah, I mean, God of War 3, I mean, PlayStation announced that we're bringing God of War 3 to PS4 and it was just, hooray?

Are we supposed to celebrate that? I played that game five years ago. I didn't play that game five years ago.

I'm hoping to play that game within the next couple of weeks. But that's another story.

Yeah, I'm curious. It's so interesting. I mean, around that time, PT was out.

I definitely would have talked about playing these on the show. For reference, too, by the way.

So this is very weird. Like, I'm piecing it. We're piecing this together retroactively.

God of War 3 Remastered was announced in March 2015. So did I see that? So did I see that? Get

announce and I was like hold up wait I never played these I'm gonna play them

now cuz like that that that that's the catalyst I think for me to then well

play one oh the month after soda but let's I remember your story being that a

friend in your neighborhood got a ps3 bundle that came with God of War one and

two that's true and I still borrow that from him that I believe so I still

chance you played those and were just in a "I need to play God of War 3 now, like I can't wait until July?"

Maybe. I think it may have just jogged my memory of like "oh yeah I never played these, I should do

that." But also where did I play them? I had- no I remember this because this would have been first

year of the- this is such an aside I'm sorry if you don't care about any of this, but I- the first year

much like uh well I was gonna say much like I do now but that's not true did you still have your ps3 hooked up when the ps4 came out because I definitely did for probably a good 18 months to

two years I would say Logan I I still have my ps3 hooked up and I have a ps5 so yes I mean I I still

have my ps3 hooked up to my main entertainment center now but eventually I put it away in storage

at some point. I also used to have a TV in my...anyway. Yeah, I don't know. I don't know

what prompted this. Maybe there are podcast documents that we can go refer to and find out.

But anyway, everything I said previously though still stood true about how like me seeing this game at E3 made me want to play it. Apparently the wait for me to actually play it though was

five years for some reason. I don't know why. I don't know. Time goes... time is weird when you're younger I guess. Yeah. Anyway, uh, so this game is good. I don't know... I... let's... I know

we usually start with the story. Let's save the story for the end this time because I... the story is gonna kind of tee up... Okay. ...some things with the next God of War that I would like to touch on

on before we transition into that episode. So let's talk more about the gameplay because gameplay wise, this is the main reason why this one I think is the best. The gameplay in a lot of the others has been very tight and very good, but they don't give you the toys that this one gives you. And that is why this one is very good. Like in the past we've talked about how some of these other games give you secondary weapons to use, but Most of the time I feel like when we've talked about our own experience we're like, "Oh yeah, I didn't ever deviate from the chains though."

I deviated from the chains in this game a decent amount, especially when it comes to the big ol' Hercules fists.

But even outside of that, there's a lot...

Even in the final boss with Zeus, I was bouncing between a bunch of, I think all four different of my weapons at one time or another.

So this game really gives you a lot of things to use and I think it equally, it makes each item unique to the point that you feel compelled to use all of the different, maybe not all of them, but some different aspects that each of them have to them.

Do you agree with that?

Oh yeah.

There is a good chance I used the Hercules Lion Fist more than the Blades.

I was all about him this time around. It is, your tool set, I think is perfect. Because in the past we've talked about in God of War 1, like the Poseidon magic, the lightning AOE, like that was our favorite. But the rest were kind of fine or good or, you know, who cares? Or heck, even in

the Chains of Olympus episode, we couldn't even remember the magic they gave you because it was

just so forgettable and the only side weapon was the gauntlet which I personally forgot about until the final boss when I was stuck but this game every power-up stuck with you as you earned them and gained them and I part of that could be the pacing of it but also just the design and gameplay elements of these weapons you go from a bow to the head of Helios which is a stun but also a flashlight, to weapons like Hades' claws, which arguably are just different blades of chaos. And then you get to the Hercules fist, which are arguably just different blades of chaos. And then you get the sickle electric things, which arguably are different blades of chaos. So maybe they just figured out that we need to give you different blades with different powers, but they all feel good and have different heft to them, some quite literally heavy and others snappier and electric, it just all feels good and the way that they connect them, all of the gameplay from a grab to a heavy hit to a light hit is so fluid and fast and lets you keep the combos going.

You were talking about how you use the bow to keep combos going at a distance and then you'd go in and close it off with a different type of weapon.

I think the bow in particular is like

One of the best secondary items they've ever given you in any of these games because it really just helps you

Chain together combos that much better. It doesn't work

Well with large groups except for the the fire

It kind of does you can get one person on fire and then they can connect to other people and that's really cool

but

Yeah, is it the bow of Apollo? Is that Apollo?

Yeah, the bow of Apollo. It's I love that like it's such a simple thing in practice

But what's great about it because they've given you ranged items what?

The range abilities like this in the past, and this is very similar actually to the magic little

Ball or Chuck thing that I think you have in I think it's chains of Olympus. Yeah

It's pretty similar to that in some ways

But you can obviously fire it way faster

And it doesn't use up your your magic meter use that uses up a totally different meter that they put into this game for the first

time I believe right? It technically predated Ghost of Sparta. Ghost of Sparta had the fire

meter which wasn't too dissimilar in that concept. Yeah so so yeah I love the bow I think the bow is

great the other thing I want to add about all the different main weapons though that I liked is that

they even have different aspects to each of them that you wouldn't think about like for instance I

I really like that the Hades claws,

there is like a different right stick dodge to it.

Rather than dodging, he like throws the hook

and pulls himself somewhere else.

And you can get a little further,

he dodges further because of that.

They even like tweak little like ancillary aspects

about that that they wouldn't in the previous games.

They would add a little bit of extra flair

to each of the items in certain ways.

And then the other thing is,

They tie the magic then to the weapons as well.

So the magic is in an independent system, but they tie specific magical abilities to each of them, which prompts you to then...

That's the one thing that prompted me to switch it up the most, I think, because my least favorite weapon of the four is the electrical whip things.

I couldn't figure out how to use them well.

I know they're not bad because I've seen people in walkthroughs using them a lot, but I just get a good grasp on them but the thing I did like was the electric shock attack that you can use because it was a really good way to deal like AoE damage to a large group of enemies. So I like that

and so I would bounce over to that just to use the magical ability on that every now and then and

then switch back over to the fists and deal out some more direct damage in that way. Like I felt felt like I was using every aspect of my kit in this game for the first time, rather than just being like, "Oh, they gave me this? I don't like that. I'm gonna keep using this!"

'Cause that's what I've done in all the other five games up until this point have been that exact thing. And even when they try to do interesting things, like the Spartan Arms in Ghost of Sparta or something like that, it's like, "Okay, this is cool. I don't like this though. Back to the chains!" No, I mean, everything in this game I feel like got pretty be equal use to me at least to some degree. I mainly did the chains and the fists, but

then I would loop in the others as well occasionally depending on what I needed because they each

had really unique abilities, especially with the souls, with the Hades clause. I told you one strategy I used on those but there are some satyr, there's one part in the game, We played on hard too.

There's one part later in the game.

Because we continued our platinum journey, which again, we have platinumed the game.

I've almost platinumed all of them.

God of War 1 is the only one I haven't platinumed and it makes me feel kind of bad now.

You quite easily could do it in three hours one morning, just like a Saturday.

It's not hard.

But that's three hours I could spend on something else.

No, but it's a platinum.

And then you could have all the God of War Platinum's like me, which I'll have here in

a month.

Maybe.

Maybe.

Anyway, yeah, well you said you didn't know if you were going to, but you should.

Because the God of War Platinum is good.

Yeah, like there's one point late in the game that I was having trouble with where you have to fight a big ol' fire dog and then they throw three satyrs in the mix.

And satyrs in this game are probably the toughest enemy type, I think.

really difficult to kill them and I couldn't do it and I looked up some help online and I found somebody said hey one of the souls with your Hades chains that you can use because you have I think like nine different souls you can use with the Hades chains they can summon different different creatures and different people to come in and do special abilities one of them that you can summon is just a Gorgon who just comes in and freezes things so if you line it up properly you can get the Satyrs rock solid with the Gorgon. You have to be careful though because that ability is so strong it uses up literally half of your magic bar. Like they realize how over tuned that is. So you have to be very careful with how you do it. And eventually

I got it lined up and I froze the Satyrs rock solid and crushed them and I was like okay cool now I just have to focus this dumb dog. But yeah, long story short, all the weapons are great, they all have different elements that I used at one point or another to help me get to the end of the game. Yes, very good job on the weapon design this time Sony Santa Monica. Very, very good job.

Yeah, and I think that also leads into the fluidity of combat. I found, so typically you you can launch something, you can grab, you light, you're heavy, and you can jump, and then, you know, you could do like L1 square, and do maybe your spin attack with the blades,



or L1 triangle, do a heavier thing.

But then they also added something,

L1 circle was also a previous combo,

but then they added L1 X as a rapid switch,

like you could just switch to the next weapon

instead of punching on the D-pad to keep your combo going,

without interrupting it.

"Oh my gosh, awesome, I loved it."

And then maybe you got a group of enemies coming around you

and you stun 'em all, and then you could grab one

with circle, and then from that you could either

punch them, rip 'em apart, use 'em as a battering ram

into other enemies, or throw 'em at other people.

There was always an option to do,

and those options were always on the face buttons.

So it was never far out of reach

or difficult really to memorize.

it was accessible and felt really good and fun.

And I just, it really is the best feeling

God of War game that we've played so far.

And I think that's a huge accomplishment

considering we've played five other games.

- Yeah.

- And I kinda also think that it's really surprising  
how Ascension feels, because Ascension is made--

- Is this from this?

- Yes, because they really nailed it.

Like why did, I mean they threw it,  
I say throw away a little harshly,  
but they threw it away because they took a multiplayer  
and then applied it to the single player.

And they had to slow things down for multiplayer,  
which led to more heft,  
which led to those alternate weapons.

And they really like had the combat nailed in this game.  
and then it's shocking how far Ascension strays from this formula.

Well there are a lot of things Ascension does, like Ascension's way uglier. I know we played a PS4

remaster of this game, but even like color palette wise there's so much more going on in this game.

Yeah like Ascension's ugly man. That game is just not... That game is so weird that it released after this. What are we, like three years later right? 2013?

Yep 2013.

- Yeah, there was a quote where John Hite,  
I don't actually know who John Hite is in this context,  
but the quote was at the, to Joystick in January of 2010,  
he said, "While God of War 3 will conclude the trilogy,  
"it won't spell the end of the franchise."

AKA, they were in pre-production for Ascension.

- I remember them saying this at the time too,  
other people I think said it, yeah.

- We're going to be really careful about what we do next.

And it's just like...

- We're gonna be really careful,  
and by that we're gonna adopt the norms of the day,

which is multiplayer everything.

'Cause that's basically what they did.

- I give them props for trying,

and then I also give them props

for pivoting away from it when the time came.

- I wonder how, obviously this is probably

very well documented because this game itself

very well documented, the God of War 2018. I wonder how quickly they had the idea after this to

like go and go to a different pantheon and use different gods because clearly it's something

that I think even Corey has talked about that they obviously had ruminated on for a pretty long time.

And I wonder if it was Ascension kind of sucking that led to them going, "Okay, let's do that idea

now or if it was like something they were kind of working on even behind the scenes

throughout Ascension Cycle. And again, Corey wasn't at... When did Corey go back to Sony

Santa Monica? Do you happen to know?

I do. I had the post.

Because Tomb Raider came out in 2013 as well, I believe, and he worked on that.

He did.

I believe he probably would have gone back around the same time.

He came back in... Where is this? Returns to Santa Monica, August of 2013.

Okay.

post-Ascension, but actually speaking of course, he left in November of 2007. So just seven months

after God of War 2 came out into pre-production on 3, I watched the documentary. This documentary

was literally the same crew just stayed there. They just shot God of War 2 documentary and then

kept shooting for God of War 3. They didn't leave. They didn't stop.

They're really good about documenting this stuff. They really are. They've been doing this for over a decade with their games. Well over a decade. Like 15 years they've been doing this. It's rare to actually see, especially from a big first party developer. I think it's quite rare for them to be so forthcoming about the development of their games. And so, yeah, it's fascinating to just see how they've pivoted both ways. I do remember David Jaffe saying his original vision was for Zeus to actually die at the end of God of War II and God of War III to be about this power vacuum in Greece and having Egyptian and Norse gods coming in to like fill this vacuum. So they were thinking about other pantheons of mythology, you know, way back in the day.

It was something they've been toying around with for a while, but they're like, "Wait, we should probably kill all of the ones in the current pantheon we're in before we move on elsewhere. Before we have this man go fight Odin and Thor."

Speaking of Thor and Odin, I think another great thing that God of War 3 does, which Ragnarok is also seeming to do is saving the best for last.

God of War 2018 teases Thor the entire game and Odin, but you never actually see them, except for Thor at the very, very, very, very, very end as a tease for Ragnarok.

And God of War 3-- - You don't actually see him.

That's a dream, don't you know?

But it feels like the future.

- So God of War 3 does as well, right?

it's we've been waiting the whole series up to this point, three games before, so this is technically the fourth.

We're waiting to fight a Hades Poseidon.

We gotta fight Zeus at the end of God of War II, but it didn't end in a satisfying way.

Even the Titans, to a certain degree,  
we didn't necessarily think we were gonna fight them per se,  
but you end up fighting all the Titans as well.

The game does so good at, like you were saying earlier,  
pacing out these bosses.

I mean you start out by killing one of the big three.

And then the second boss is another one of the big three.

- Yeah, yeah, you kill two of your uncles  
to start this game very quickly.

But it doesn't, well, yeah, the thing I like is  
that it doesn't have their sort of like effect  
on this world feel lost even though they're gone.

One, because they've died and then things happen  
because of their deaths.

But I like even like later on that you start toying around  
like Poseidon's area of Mount Olympus. Like reminding you like, "Oh yeah, you killed him  
earlier, but this was like a huge dude who had like a whole section of this place that  
you're in and so now we're gonna send you to where he was kind of his stomping grounds."

And I really like that as well. They do a really good job of making you feel like this  
is their home. This is where they reside, this is where they chill, you are an unwelcome  
intruder in their homes and you're uprooting all of it and they're very mad about that.

They do it so well in Hades. The whole time you're down in the location in Hades.

Oh you mean like your fifth trip to Hades in this series?

Sure, yeah you know he's...

The game starts with you falling off another cliff going to Hades? I was like oh I forgot  
about that. I forgot that he was the opening like outside of Poseidon. I forgot that he  
He was like the first main path boss once the game kind of starts after the big grand

opening and I couldn't help but laugh.

And the whole time you're in there, Hades himself is taunting and saying like you're in my domain.

You even pull up Persephone in her coffin, her glass snow white coffin.

Witness the end, Spartan.

You really do feel like you're invading their space and tearing it all down and it's so satisfying.

Yeah, they do a really good job of building all of that up.

The thing that I like about each of the gods is that not all of them are these big bosses as well.

Like you fight Poseidon and it's a huge fight.

You fight Hades and it's a huge fight.

But when you find Hermes for example, well he's kind of a ninny.

You don't really need to go toe to toe with him in the way that you would Hades.

So it's more of a chase.

You do go toe to toe with him when you chop his legs off.

You do, yes.

But that fight is not, you're not fighting the same way that you did against the other ones who are more powerful.

It doesn't try to turn boss fights into boss fights for the sake of it.

Actually what it does really well is it respects Kratos' own power.

Like Kratos is very strong, if he gets a hold of Hermes it's just going to be game over the end.

He's not going to need to go toe to toe with this guy because he's Kratos, he's literally the god of war in this realm.

He could kill this guy in two seconds if he really wanted to.

If he can just get a hold of him.

Helios too, I mean he gets knocked down by the titan and you just walk up and kill some enemies and bam, Helios is gone.

He says "feel the power of the sun" or something, and then like the Sunny Delight, and then Kratos is just like "I'm just gonna put my hand up in front of my face and that'll do here."

But yeah, I really like that as well because it gives you that satisfaction of "oh, another one off the list, another one off the list" but you're not, like when you, again, later with Hera, she's not like all of a sudden got these crazy powers, she's just drunk and sad and angry and Kratos is like okay I'll just kill you and then I'll throw your body in this basin I found. Pretty much. And kind of on the other end of that spectrum they also know how to make it like truly epic beyond a Poseidon or an Aedes. Look at Kronos. Kronos

is still one of the craziest fights like just to remember this the quite literal scale of it. You are crawling on his arms, in his chest, in his stomach. The whole thing is just so big. Yeah, they do a really great job with that fight. The scale of this game overall from minute one is something they really do a great job of as well. Again, putting into context that Kratos is very powerful but also he's so... like in the grand scheme of what he's trying to do here he is so like outmatched you would think on paper obviously he blows through everything because he's I don't know he's Kratos and he's the protagonist and he has to do that but uh like it makes him seem like he is up against these insurmountable odds from the start and the only reason he's able to even get where he's at from the start at the start is because of the help of the titans and then that whole quick all quickly changes. Maybe we can talk about that a little bit more with the story. Overall with the bosses though, yeah I think boss-wise this is the best in the series as well. Like by far I think.

- The only boss I wish was different I guess is the scorpion. Just because all it is is a giant scorpion. Like it didn't feel... - It's just a scorpion that falls out of the sky and then it's

- It didn't feel tied to the labyrinth.

Narratively, like they tease it a little bit,

like Daedalus is talking about it,

and notes to Icarus, but--

- Which is also really good.

I like those callbacks a lot to God of War II.

- There's callbacks this whole game,

but the scorpion just felt out of place.

It didn't feel Greek, it didn't feel God of War-y.

It just, I don't know, it just felt weird.

I wish it could have been different.

- Yeah, that's the main one.

I will say though, I wish some things went different

in Zeus's fight.

I wish it would have been more of a grand bombastic

toe to toe fight to end the series.

I think it's anticlimactic fighting him

and basically beating him to,

it's not his final forms technically.

Fighting him and pretty much being done with him in Gaia's chest is kind of like eh.

I don't care for that.

I like the idea of Kratos taking both of his biggest foes down in one fell stab of the

blade of Olympus or whatever.

I like that idea but I don't...

I felt like they had built Zeus up so much that he deserved his own just like huge bombastic

like flying all over the screen beating the crud out of each other. Like what he

did at the end of God of War 2 basically? Yeah kind of but yeah and I guess they

had already done that so maybe that's why they decided not to do that maybe?

Because I think Zeus is really a four phase fight when you really think about



it although phase four is really just a cutscene where you interact with some buttons. Yeah. I think phase one is phase one is that like I'm gonna kill Zeus moment where they turn it into a we joked about it's basically like Mortal Kombat like it's 2d which they did and God of War 2 with the silhouette with the other Spartan so they've expanded but it just that it reminds me a lot of and heck they may even pulled it from it but it reminds me of the end of Metal Assault 4 where you fight Liquid up top and it's a 2d total fighting game and and you go through each of those arrows.

That feels awesome.

Then phase two is where you fight him out, basically where you fought him in God of War II before Gaia shows up and then you go inside for phase three and then phase four is his spirit floaty form.

I think phase two is the weakest because it's the same as before and I think being fighting inside Gaia while the fight mechanics are similar in the same out as they were outside, I think the setting actually lifts that up a lot.

It does a lot of the heavy lifting.

Mechanically not so much, but narratively it does, I think.

- Yeah, I can agree with that. - And then obviously, using the blade of Olympus to kill both of them, Zeus and Zeus's mother, or surrogate mother, I suppose, the one who raised him, it just, it definitely hits those parts. - Yeah, thematically and storytelling-wise, I agree that I think

that's a good moment, but yeah, I wish there was a little bit of a bigger dust up just between.

I would have liked to have seen a moment where, kind of like what you get before Gaia shows up where Zeus is looking around and he's like, you destroyed everything, nothing's left, the only thing that's left is for you and me to kill each other right now.

I really like that setup and then Gaia comes in and is like, no, I'm gonna eat you now.

Now you're in my belly.

So I, yeah, I just like how that was being set up before Gaia kind of intervenes.

I understand that she has to intervene because she's still lingering.

It all makes sense.

I wish they could have found a way to maybe right Gaia out of it, kill her in that moment, and then really bring it down to literally all that's left is Zeus and Kratos and that's it.

Everything has toppled except for these two.

Kill each other.

That would have been a really cool ending.

But it's not something that I feel like is like a lingering disappointment about the game or anything like that.

Want to say, I was going to say do you want to say anything else about the bosses before we potentially move on?

Not about the bosses, no.

I did have just one more thing about gameplay in particular.

Sure.

Uh, there's a guitar hero game in here?

There is!

Yeah, we talked about this off air.

- There's a lot of mishmash of weird mechanics in this game.

- Yes!

There's the Guitar Hero game

where you have to tune the harp.

There's what you mentioned earlier with Helios

where you have to like use your hand to block his,

this is the brightness of the sun.

There's the-- - You have to do QTEs

from the first person perspective of other characters.

- Yes, although, you're talking about Poseidon,

I think specifically, that is awesome.

- I mean, let's just, the, especially, I still remember,

I actually wrote about it for my IGN blog back in the day.

Like I said, "God of War 3" was one of the best game openings of all time.

And I think I'd still stand by that to this day,

but the moment, the first time you play it,

and it prompts you to push L3 and R3, it's awesome.

And then the screen goes black.

- His thumbs pop out, yeah.

- Yeah, that's just so good.

- 'Cause you don't know what's gonna happen at first and then just, konk.

- Yeah, it's very good. - Oh, it's good.

- You know, there's that and what was the other,  
the Icarus Ascension where you fly up the chain between,  
so a little bit of the Pegasus system from God of War II,  
just tweaked a bit.

There's a lot of interesting mechanics,  
the puzzles are still here,  
they're paced I think fairly well,  
they're nothing is too complicated,  
it actually, they actually feel really good  
'cause they give you that moment to breathe  
before you go kill someone else really cool.  
Like it does break it up really well.

- A couple other things,  
since we're mentioning more gameplay things,  
'cause I'm thinking of things too.  
One thing I wanted to mention before  
is that they add more ways for you to take down enemies  
that previously were difficult,  
specifically, the one example I think about this specifically  
is like with the digger dudes,  
the guys who can dig underground.

Previously, if they dug underground in the previous games,  
you just kind of had to wait for them to pop up and then try to dodge it. This game you  
can straight up rip them out of the ground with your chains which is an awesome, like  
I don't feel like you are ever, for every enemy they throw at you there is a good way  
mechanically that you can fight back against them and take them down in some way shape

or form which I think is a very good decision because you're not standing around waiting trying to look for an opening like you had in some of the previous games. For example ascension. Remember the big elemental soldiers if they went into their powered phase you had to wait for them to come out of it. That's not fun. Having options and being able to execute combos and choices, that's what's fun. And then the one other thing, I told you this the other day when we were talking about the game a little bit, the one other thing I really like about this game is that they don't remove everything that Kratos has obtained since God of War 2.

Obviously they have to do a soft reset to your health and your magic bars at the start of the game because it's a video game and that always happens and that's just...

They always have to nerf the main character back to some lesser form of their former selves so that you can gain upgrades and junk like that over the course of the game.

But they don't remove everything!

Like you keep the wings from God of War 2, which is a great...

Like, 'cause most video games, like, you get an item like that in one game, and then you go to the next game,

and it's like, "Oh, they're not even... we're not even gonna make him a part of this game anymore.

We're gonna totally forget that he even had wings once upon a time."

No! He keeps them, and it's like a huge element of the game.

Uh, what's the other thing he carries over?

Oh, the blade! The Blade of Olympus as well.

Like, he's still got that tucked away in his hidden back pocket.

He just whips out occasionally.

He still has the blade on him and that's his Spartan Rage ability in this game.

It's also his finishing move for a handful of the bosses in the game.

Like they don't have him lose these things that he's gained in the previous installment.

I feel like that's really rare because I can't think of any other games, like even name another, something like Metal Gear Solid.

I mean that's not as, that doesn't deal as much with like iconic weapons or anything like that but like.

Weapons OSP.

Yeah, but like if Snake obtains something in Metal Gear Solid 1 and then in Metal Gear Solid 2 it started off and he's immediately like "Hey I kept this thing from Shadow Moses." Like I just feel like that stuff doesn't happen in many other games.

So it's really cool to see them make sure like "Hey you obtained this stuff over the course of the last game, let's make sure you can keep it.

make it actual like big part of the game and make it there from the outset not like oh Kratos lost his Icarus wings, Daedalus stole them from him because they reminded him of his son and now he has to kill Daedalus to get the wings back or like sure they didn't do anything dumb like that like a lot of other things would. I think a big part of why that is is because this game does pick up where God of War 2 ends. Yeah. There was no time for any of that to go awry. Really the only thing they strip away is giving you a different blade, they're technically the Blades of Exile this time, but it goes in line with keeping Kratos as powerful as you want him to be. Like no one wants to weaken Kratos, that feels cheap, it feels wrong to strip him of his power unexpectedly. I think that's why in God of War 2 when you do pour your Godly power.

- Pour your energy into a sword.

- Yeah, but that makes sense for Kratos because he's doing it as a power exchange to take down Athena.

You gotta remember narratively.

- I guess.

- Like that, but if a lightning bolt struck him

and he lost all his power, that would feel cheap.

But Kratos making the choice

and then you actually executing it on the controller

makes sense narratively and you're in line with it

and it doesn't feel cheap later.

and then you're actually motivated to go and become more powerful

which then

and by the end of that game you are and that leads you into

this momentum and energy so it really

it's quite good

uh... i have to say something i have to chime in with something very funny

here and unless my math is wrong

if you watch and we can attach this in the show notes i just had this pulled up

and i just watched it on the side

a second ago because i mentioned

the God of War 3 remaster and when it was announced and I pulled up the original trailer

for it.

In the trailer for the God of War 3 remaster announcement it opens up with words and the

words say "10 legendary years and 7 critically acclaimed games."

The 7 games that means they're counting God of War Betrayal am I wrong?

No they absolutely are.

If you go, no joke, if you go to the God of War website today, it says, there's like a

Q and a FAQ at the bottom, and one of the questions is how many God of War games are there?

And they say eight.

That's pretty good.

And there are, they count betrayal.

Betrayal is canon.

Sony, Sony acknowledges God of War betrayal.

It's just very funny because it says seven critically acclaimed games.

I'm like, wait a minute, we're doing episode six of this podcast.

Which one did we miss?

And I've tried.

Listeners, I've tried to convince him to play God of War Betrayal.

He won't do it.

It's not too difficult.

Just need a PC.

Anyway, back to God of War 3.

Let's talk about this game's aesthetic before we get into the nitty gritty of the story any further, because there are some big things to talk about with the story that I, like I said, I want to hold over.

Visually, do you have anything that really stood out to you about this game?

I mentioned it before but I think they do a great job with the color palette in this game more so than a lot of the ones previously.

I think there is a lot of...

I think they do a really good job with the different style and look of the various gods that you see in this game and also the different realms in which you come across them and where

you see them at and their little home areas that you find them in.

I think they do a really good job with that.

I think the environmental design is top notch.

I think most of the areas you're going through in this game are very solid.

The only thing I think design-wise that I don't really understand...

The Labyrinth was always a weird section of this game to me.



I always...

I don't know.

The Labyrinth in Greek lore is actually like the giant stone labyrinth.

It's like a giant maze.

game they made it large boxes suspended in midair and I never really enjoyed that take.

It felt like a modern... it feels like what Assassin's Creed would do to a Da Vinci invention.

Maybe except in Assassin's Creed Odyssey there's literally a labyrinth side quest you can come

across and there's quite literally a labyrinth in that game and there's a minotaur at the

center of it that you can fight? I was thinking more Assassin's Creed 2 like

Ezio when he meets Da Vinci type stuff. Yeah. It just it feels like a modern

interpretation of a cool idea that someone could have come up with back in

those times. It's unique and I think the labyrinth is the one place that

they really could flex that sort of modern creativity because Hades is Hades,

Mount Olympus is Mount Olympus like the labyrinth had creative freedom. I did I

mean we've been you've been playing these games up till now on PS now on

your PS 5 so you've actually been using your PS 5 this whole time but I've been

playing on the PS 3 and I want to just say that coming from visually speaking

not hardware wise or anything like that but just visually speaking coming from

the lowest of lows, which was Ascension at 720 with an unstable 30, to a rock-solid 4K60

HDR game. Oh my gosh, I love it so much. This game is beautiful, it pops. I think adding

in the HDR via the PS5 gives it this real, those brights are bright, those darks are

dark, it gives it this mood and atmosphere that, you know, I'm not sure if the PS3 really

would have had that. It's been a very long time since I've played the PS3 version or

even really seen it. So it's just visually that front feels great and I think we've mentioned

it here in this episode, like Ascension does not look good, it's a major step back from

this and I think a big part of it is that art direction. This game is... it has the

spirit of the PS2 games but gives it that realistic but not too realistic look. It gives

it the God of War Greek world with the power of the PS3 and it pays off. And you know,

This game is now over 11 years old and I think it's aged remarkably well.

It's not one of those games that's like "we're gonna make Kratos super realistic now because we have the cell processor."

It was "we're gonna make God of War 3 look like God of War should look on a modern HD console and it's paid off in spades."

Yeah I think as a whole this series hasn't aged all that poorly honestly.

I think a lot of these character action games from the early 2000s have actually aged pretty well depending on which one you might be playing.

Some of the early Devil May Cry games maybe not as much.

But yeah, I think everything in this series has largely aged pretty well and this one specifically I can't see feeling dated or old for the foreseeable future at all.

I feel like this one is really going to stand the test of time in the coming decades specifically.

So yeah, I think visuals, gameplay, all that stuff, it's really top notch on all those fronts.

Let's talk about the thing we said we were going to talk about more in depth this time, which is music.

If you've listened to this full season so far, you know usually we just kind of shrug our shoulders at this point and we say, "Hey, it's God of War music again!" We said we were going to make a more concentrated effort this time to try to focus on listening to the songs that are in this game and how we feel about them. I kind of mentioned at the top what my big takeaway was when we briefly talked about the composers, but I really did feel like again, each area of this game had its own unique vibe and tone depending on where you were at and I think the music that they put together really matched that quite well.

I think overall the score, there's no single track in this.

These games, these first six games as a whole, I don't think the music is bad but there's nothing in it that like stirs something in me the way that like, again looking at the

next installment in the series, the "oh, oh."

I hear the like opening couple notes of God of War 2018. I'm like, oh my god, I'm all in but like but those notes

Came from here. They just

Restrained back. It's they did and that's not to say I it's just I guess I should say

They tried to make a Greek focus soundtrack and I don't know if I like Greek mute style music I

I think these games, what I've said from the start with all of the music in these games is I think it's good for these games.

But I don't really...

think it ju- I just don't think this style of, this Greek style of music that they went for...

really, yeah, I don't know, it just doesn't resonate with me. It's good for the games. It matches the games quite well.

But outside of that, yeah, I don't know. Did you have any larger...

Thoughts this time you wrote a lot of notes. That's is holding up a huge notepad

Well, first of all, all of those notes weren't just the music. It's maybe

3/4 of a page. It's music. I should start I should start I I have so many notepads laying around exactly like that

I should start doing the same thing. I

This is all note stuff of just different things that we do

the music

Let's just God of War 3 in general. It's big

It's loud, it's moving in the sense of energy to keep you moving just like the game's pacing does.

It is in lockstep with the mechanics here and the narrative and your goals pushing you forward.

It is in step with you.

But today I deliberately took, normally when I work I listen to a podcast or I listen to

music but music music with lyrics and things or video game music it depends but today I deliberately

put on the God of War 3 soundtrack and went all right I'm taking notes um and my notes aren't all

that thrilling there are a few songs I like um and just kind of my general thoughts which I've iterated here.

Like the main theme in Swell that, you know,

the dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun,

and it just kind of feels mystical,

which is in line 'cause this is Greek myth.

And then you put the choir in and it just feels,

it is transportive in that way.

It feels like something you would see or hear

in an old movie or imagine in a book

or picture alongside it.

It really, I think the best compliment I can give it is

because it is, they do go together.

And while the game, the music during the gameplay

from like moment to moment

or while you're going through the environment,

while it doesn't necessarily stand out,

those core themes, you know, which I wrote down as,

let's see, revenge, falling is one of them.

Like these names don't stand out, you know,

but when you hear it, you go, that's gotta work.

that's got to work. And I think that's what's quite powerful about it. They really do have

a unique sound and those two, three themes, particularly with the choirs, that's the identity

of this music. And when I hear it, I get excited. And I think that while I can't name the songs

or always hum it, when I hear it, I know it's about to go down. And I'm excited about that.

And I think that is, I mean, overall the legacy of God of War's music up to this point, and

I think what Bear McCreary does with that legacy really honors it in a great way. And we'll talk about that in the next episode. For kind of just a brief, kind of an example in another Sony IP, look at Uncharted.

Uncharted 1 through 3 was Greg Edmondson,  
and then God of War, or I'm sorry,  
Uncharted 4 and Lost Legacy was Henry Jackman,  
who does big Hollywood blockbuster movies.  
He did Winter Soldier and a couple other Marvel movies.

And while there's some respect  
to the original Uncharted trilogy,  
Henry Jackman's music is different,  
And it does capture the adventure and I like that music a lot.  
It's different and you can tell.

And it's not a bad different per se, it's just, it's different.  
But I do think that God of War 2018, you know, that's God of War.  
I watched the E3 2018 reveal, or I'm sorry, E3 2016 reveal of the 2018 game.  
And then they, do you remember that conference?

They opened with an orchestra.

- I remember that very clearly.

- And you could hear it and who knows,  
maybe you didn't know it was God of War  
'cause you had only played it a year prior,  
but you're like, that's God of War?

We're playing God of War music?

That's big.

I think when you can get a sound  
that an audience immediately associates with your IP,

you've struck gold, musically speaking.

And God of War's done that.

And I feel like through the season we've not been harsh, but we've been dismissive.

Yes. And not intentionally so. Like I don't think any of these soundtracks are bad. The thing that I've mentioned before is

that none of these soundtracks are really ones that I would want to pop on just for the heck of it.

But at the same time I wouldn't do that for

95% of game soundtracks. The only like orchestra-based

video game music that I can think of that I would intentionally go out of my way to listen to is

For I'll let you take a guess

It's the way you listen to like orchestra based music

For a soundtrack for a video a very popular video game series. I would say Zelda

No, that's a good that's a pretty good one. Halo. Halo is the one I think of

Yeah, Oh which again

Halo's got like the theme. I mean when infinite

multiplayer was coming out people were

You know tweeting about how the the start screen gives them chills because it's those monks come in

And then it picks up and they go

And we've talked about how the main God of War theme here throughout this series has felt recycled a little bit too much

The one thing I'll give it credit for in this game because they do tweak it a little bit more

They make it sound more menacing than before, which I like.

The previous games have sounded like this grand, almost adventurous type of theme.

This one kind of changes it and turns it from that into "Oh boy, he comin' now."

That actually was one of the goals because I watched...

I swore I was going to have something to say about the music this time.

I watched the behind the scenes music video specifically that's included with God of 4-3.

And they, I'm paraphrasing here, but the quote was along the lines of telling the orchestra players any melodic or nice notes that you feel coming on or whatever, don't go there.

Divert.

Go for the brutal.

Go for the hard, the shocking, the powerful.

Like go in that direction.

That clearly was the aim of this particular soundtrack.

It matches the box art very well, which is just Kratos looking mad like he's done everything up to this point and now it's time to roll.

And so in that sense I think even the main theme for this game specifically has been altered in such a way that is good.

Again though, but like, I couldn't tell you anything, like you mentioned Uncharted, I couldn't tell you anything about those soundtracks really all that much either other than "da  
\*imitating the music\*

and so like if we did a series on Uncharted right now, I'd be like "yep, that main theme's still pretty good!" like... I don't know. Um... I just, yeah. I don't know. And it's not like I've not been listening over the course of this series. I think the music they have in this game is, in all the games, is largely quite good. There was only one that I remember where we were like "I don't think this is actually a good soundtrack." I think it was for, it may have been for Ascension.

or for... let's just pile it all on Ascension. Yeah we'll just keep piling it on to Ascension here.

The music though it's good. I think, and we can talk about this more, I think we'll have more to say about the next soundtrack too, but spoiler alert the one thing I do like about the God of War

2018 soundtrack a lot more is that there's just a diversity of instruments. It is not this orchestral choir like okay now let's do this big bombastic video game score with an orchestra.

It has a bit more of a range. Yeah there's a lot of different things that they fold in there which I like a lot with that. But anyway we'll talk about that more next time. Let's close this out and kind of finalize this discussion talking about the story because there are a lot of things that we have not talked about with the story. I don't know where you want to start. There

are some... I guess the thing here that we've talked about a lot of things I feel like naturally over the course of this game, especially when we talked about the boss fights and things like that. Because those are integral pillars of the story in this game. I think a lot of the things that happen in the closing moments of this game, and it's specifically maybe everything involving Pandora and Kratos as well. It's kind of the central, they're the central characters of this game. How did that all, I don't know, let's start just with Pandora I guess. How

did you feel about Kratos and her? Because that whole situation feels very forced to me where he

just is like I'm gonna project that this is my daughter, like he goes from zero to, he goes full Joel Miller in a span of 10 minutes in this game. He, that's a really great way to put it. I wrote down in my notes early in the playthrough before you even really meet Pandora, I wrote down, "Not sure if I've ever loved the surrogate daughter in Pandora Angle." And I said, "We shall see." And I still don't really love it because it does, it goes from zero to 60 like you said.

He is very dismissive of Pandora until Athena tells him Pandora can remove the flame of Olympus.

Then suddenly it pivots not from a "I need you to get to Zeus" which is the logical next step, but it shifts from "I will now save and protect you at all costs you are my dog."

You're Calliope 2! Come here!

Calliope 2.0. It does feel forced. It's very quick.

but it leads the moments that come out of it later specifically in the darkness that's like this game I wrote down it feels like they need it feels like they needed a surrogate character for that moment there with like Kratos is like internal shift like who's gonna be somebody that we can finally get to like change him a little bit so the game's overall like themes if you if you had like one or two words that were really the like core theme of God of War 3. It's not vengeance, although marketing would like you to think that. It's fear and hope. Like Pandora's box, in this game its context isn't necessarily like the plagues of humanity, but it's different emotions.



And when Kratos kills one of the gods, while it does release certain things, it's emotions. And in the end, what Kratos has and ultimately gives mankind is not free will per se, but hope. And which Athena wants to take from them and control.

- Which, I have thoughts on that.

- Let's, well, we'll talk about that in a second.

- Hold on that, but, so it's fear and hope are like the core of this game, and ultimately the whole, everything Kratos does is driven out of regret and fear of what has happened, the choices that he made, and ultimately the killing of his own wife and daughter, and it's, He never had hope.

I mean, God of War I--

- He never, I think forgiveness is a big thing too.

He doesn't forgive himself for anything he's ever done.

And he has to come to grips with that.

- Yeah, but think back to God of War I.

The gods of Olympus have abandoned me.

There is no hope.

And then he tries to commit suicide.

- Yeah.

- Kratos has never had hope, and ultimately that is given to him through Pandora.

Now his relationship with Pandora has accelerated very, very quickly.

It doesn't have time to breathe, but the payoff in the end brings Kratos where he needs to go, not only for where we know he goes in 2018, but to wrap up this trilogy, because this game was treating it like the end of Kratos' story.

They wanted to tie all the knots and really wrap it up.

so it just... I mean... it's... I like Kratos's arc here. And maybe it's more the arc of the whole series, not the arc of God of War 3, but I do like where Kratos starts and where he ends.

Uh, the other thing... we need to have a deeper discussion about...

I mean everything involving Pandora's box too and what that does and oh it corrupted Zeus and that's why he

Got went off his rocker at the end of God of War one

Do you like that all of that?

Cuz I think I preferred it where it was just like nah Zeus is just kind of not a great

person in general and they fear and they fear Kratos I

think it's

There's like the surface level of like, oh he opened the box

which he shouldn't have been able to do and like he got the power to kill a god the power to kill a god is

hope and

What in fact like opening Pandora's box released all of those?

different emotions and Zeus was afflicted with fear

Yeah, and so like I get I like that. I like that big

overarching emotional

Touch points and Pandora's box is a huge

key component of like Greek lore, so I'm fine with that playing like a

big role here

With these games and having that event up from the first game play a larger role because it really is like in Greek lore

I don't remember all of it

But all of the evil and all of the all the bad stuff within the world is like

Buried in that box and no one's ever supposed to open it ever if I remember correctly

Yeah, and so when he Kratos just kind of flippantly opens it in the first game

He's like now I'll get big and I'll punch Ares

They don't really focus on the fact that he opened the box and he probably shouldn't have been able to do that

And that's why it was at the center of Kronos's backpack

They recontextualized that event from the first game and I think a more powerful way in the beginning

And got a war when it's the power to kill a god is what he's going there to get and you're right

He gets big and rolls around and fights Ares

but

With God of War 3 kind of shifting the view of the box while yes, he did get big and all that stuff

There's magic or whatever

he unleashed

you know those emotions that I was talking about and

that alters

The gods of Olympus and not just mankind and I I really I like that shift. I I think it works

It kind of just elevates it a little bit not saying like Kratos is this great character all of a sudden, but it does

It just feels a little bit

Nicer more

Rounded not shallow. There's some depth here

I think the one issue I do potentially have with it though

Is that the gods from the beginning were never really portrayed in this world as great people

Ares was clearly not good

And the gods just kind of let him

Run rampant and do his thing and they never really tried to put him in in any sort of check

So then when Kratos comes into power

It's implied that they fear him and or at least Zeus does and Zeus doesn't feel comfortable with him being a god and he tries

To scheme and find a way to undermine his power, but they were also totally fine with Ares

Just kind of running around unchecked left and right

Which it feels like they're enabling him in some sense this

Like this is all shit in the context of those prequels because you have to remember there's a prophecy of the marked warrior and all this

Stuff so like Zeus is actively trying to stop

The whole my son will kill me someday like I did with my father

Well, there's that kind of that kind of changes

like the idea that Zeus has been corrupted by the box too is also kind of weird to me because he seems to have like a

very

personal disdain for Kratos who is his son and he like has regrets from the past that like is he just I

don't know it's very strange to me that like

Had he not been afflicted by the box like is there a or the evils of

Pandora's boxes that are part of them that like would have liked to have like

Reconciled with Kratos at some point. I don't I don't think so because like there's a lot of different like interpersonal

like

relationships that you have to kind of recontextualize and re-examine within this series under the guise of

Box made people bad

So I don't think it's just box made people bad. I didn't I think it

It just leaned into this prophecy that was written into a prequel and it just it wasn't necessary

It wasn't like it took him over and he became like a Sith Lord or something like that

Like it just it's so the fear within him that then guided his actions and in the other games

Yeah, and you know Zeus is supposed to be

The god of Olympus and to have fear is actually quite

crippling I think and yeah, you know

They don't really explore like Zeus doesn't have all these like great deep moments in this game or really any now

It's all not a whole lot of deep story

They try to get a little deeper with this story here at the at the final in the final like 15 minutes

And there's a bunch of things the other two things

I want to talk about one involves Kratos and how he goes into the next game will save that for the end

We got to talk about Athena

Mmm, because we've talked about her a fair amount over the course of this series, right?

I even think in a previous episode we may have talked about some of the things she does here at the end of this game

and how she is kind of

Not really the big bad behind it all but she it's it's shown her hand is shown and she kind of has her

She was playing her own cards. She was she was playing her own game of chess in the background

I

Think I've said before I think I said in her earlier episode that I've never really liked that

I still don't really like it. I think I think the moment he has

and again, we'll see how I feel once we replay the other game, but like I like I

I'm fine with her having her own motives, but I think her own motives are almost too broad like oh

Hope should be mine, and I should give that to people

Why don't like huh like like if Kratos is I don't think she wanted to give it to people

She wanted to control it. She wanted to be one of the or show it. Yeah

So when Kratos unleashes it for everybody she obviously doesn't like that

But it's the other thing too is like hope is such an undefined like

It's like a thematic idea more so than it is this like tangible thing

Obviously, it's implied. There's power with it because he kills gods

through the power of hope but also it's not this like

It's not like Kratos has this tangible thing that he is holding on to it's

It's like this idea in a sense and so it's a very weird thing that she wants to control this

source of great power that is also supposed to be

Reflective of Kratos is changing heart at the same time that makes any sense. I can see that I

Maybe I'm doing heavy lifting or like interpreting on the game's behalf like maybe I'm just carrying this too far

but I

look at it kind of like

Athena, in the context of the series, up until her death in God of War 2, always has watched out for Kratos seemingly out of positive angles, not necessarily for evil purposes.

Like she's been the only one in his corner, basically.

Yeah, and she's also kind of been second fiddle to a lot of the other gods. Ares was taking over Athens, her town, and Zeus and her have disagreements and things like that. And ultimately

she tries to save Zeus and her, like she serves Zeus and like I've mentioned in a previous episode when she died, she ascended to that higher power and she could have been like the one, the one in control of everything. She could have been the god, not just a god,

THE God. Now, I don't necessarily know why, like, you know, maybe it's because she was a nice

lady or whatever, but I don't know why other gods aren't in that ethereal plane with her.

Yeah. Obviously that's not explained, but just accepting that part at face value, like, she finally had an opportunity to be the one in control, and I think she thought she could

manipulate Kratos like she has been to a certain extent the whole time. And, you know, she's trying

to be the puppet master and it ultimately doesn't pan out for her in the end. And it's, you know, Kratos didn't stab himself because he wanted to give mankind hope. Kratos stabbed himself because he was done being used and a servant and he was- he was done. And it wasn't out of a place

of "I have no hope I'm done." It was out of a place of "I'm done and I want to go be with my wife and daughter done. Like I've, my job is I can go rest. It's, you know, Steve Rogers at the end of

uh, yeah, end game. Like I've, I've deserved this now. Ultimately, he doesn't die for whatever reason

and uh, goes on. But you know, I, I like it. And again, I'm also carrying a little bit of 2018 into this because- We'll talk about that in one second. The one other thing I wanted to close off with Athena's though is that you're right she is trying to be this puppet master and have control of these things but even at the end of the game she's like surprised by how things have played out and like oh I didn't expect you to retain the power of hope why well why why don't I have like she's trying to play puppet master with something that she doesn't fully understand herself which I guess is not she thought it was in the box she didn't realize that it was inside Kratos which is you know things other movies do it's like oh the power was actually here or was in this gem or it was the spirit was in you not in this object. One of those types of switches it just she didn't expect it but she wasn't like clueless like she she wanted she basically was like give it to me Kratos yeah and Kratos was like meh. So Kratos he's finished everything that he wants to do by the end of this game next time we see him he's a much different person.

The game obviously tries to set up a lot of where he's going in the final about 10 minutes of this game.

Maybe you could say even with the relationship with Pandora it tries to show that he still has like a softer side to him as well and that he doesn't want to be this brute all the time but everything he cares for even a little bit gets ripped away from him at one point or another. Do you think the game does a good job of setting up where we know that he goes in the future? I think so, yes. Because, and I'm sure part of it is because we've played all of this era of God of War back to back to back. All very close to each other in the last couple of months. But, you know, especially really coming after Chains of Olympus like shoving Calliope away which was a moment I really disliked.

Having him be dead again, again, for the fifth time or whatever, in the darkness and finding his wife and daughter and embracing them again which he does in God of War 1 but this time forgiving himself, which is the thing he kept asking the gods for. He, you know, "Get rid

of these nightmares for me. Like, forgive me, please. I've done my part." Like, he does it himself. He realizes he has the power to forgive himself, I think, and have hope for the future in his own life. But I think it's actually pretty powerful. It's definitely a high moment for Kratos as far as emotionally speaking. It kind of reminded me of- Because he doesn't have many of them up to this point.

- I know, I know.

And it reminded me a little bit of the Sorrow fight in MGS3, waiting through, there was one part in the darkness where you were swimming in blood of your enemies or whatever.

Not quite as cool or good as the Sorrow, but this moment of really soaking in every wrong that Kratos has done and forgiving himself for it.

And even in his death, or self-stabbing I suppose, 'cause he doesn't die, you know, the end of the credits shows that he has crawled away.

And I even think that is a sign of hope.

Like he, even he had hope in that moment for the rest of his life.

And it would ultimately-- - He jumps off another cliff for, again, like the fifth time in this series. - Yeah, but it ultimately

leads to him finding a new partner and having a son

who we know he cares immensely for. Again, this is with our knowledge of where it all goes, but

taking that into context, I think it's actually a really strong ending for this phase of Kratos's story. Yeah, I think I like everything they do in the darkness where they make you revisit



everything again which felt a little too trite to be totally honest like hey you want to see Kratos's wife and daughter die for the 80th time in the series it felt like Uncle Ben getting shot by the end of God of War 3 it's like okay we know but they do make you revisit it one more time but they it feels like there's actually character development with it this time for the first time ever rather than him just being like oh I'm still tortured by this this somebody help me he actually kind of reexamines the situation is like I and and with some help from Pandora learns how to kind of finally resolve it internally the my problem with that is he doesn't seem to maybe not my problem that whole sick that whole darkness section is more metaphorical sort of it feels like or maybe not metaphorical but it's not something that he actively remembers because he wakes up and he immediately kind of acknowledges that he doesn't know exactly why things are happening. He says something that he doesn't know what's going on or why he feels a certain way I think. Do you remember what I'm talking about? A little bit. He says something along those lines to kind of acknowledge that he doesn't really remember the events that the player has just experienced but clearly he's been affected by it to the degree that yeah, once Zeus is dead he stabs himself or he thinks he's killing himself but he doesn't and he just kind of reaches end point and he wants to move on and get a fresh start and I think that's all good and yeah that establishes pretty well where he's going in the future.

I don't know how much time is between God of War and God of War 3, maybe we can figure that out, I know we've got a whole timeline here pulled up.

I guess the best thing I can say is that this does feel like a good, the end of God of War 3 feels like a good starting point for where we know he goes in the future.

Because obviously by the time this game ends he's not going to be Dad Kratos that we know he is in the next game.

Because in fact Dad Kratos in the next game is still very much this Kratos here and he has to keep this part of himself in check and like keep this version of himself from coming out in that game which I still like a lot. And quite interesting enough he's to a degree consumed by fear in 2018. Yeah. Fear of being a terrible father and also... Fear of people knowing who he is. Yeah and a fear of his son killing him So, you know lots of things the timeline

Wikipedia just says many years  
someone on reddit speculates

1500 so, you know, whatever I

Mean yeah, I guess 1500 years would allow your a gaping hole in your chest to heal up over that period of time

No, that was I don't know if it's 1500 years it's it's it's quite a long time but he has to

Yeah, this feels like a good at least starting point and a good first step for where we know he ends up

and thematically they start to

Set those things up pretty well on it the final 10 minutes of this game really sets up on a tee the next game nicely

And it makes me that much more excited that we are

Doing that one next

I don't know is there anything else you want to chime in about with God war 3 here

Or the Greek a larger discussion of these Greek games as a whole no, I think we I think we've uh

Final the longer episode than normal. This is I think our longest episode. I think it is yeah

I feel like this is our longest episode. We've done so far but

There's a lot to cover in this game, and I think we really

touched on quite a bit of it and

Did so well so yeah

That's the end of episode 6 of season 2 of chapter select all about God of War 3

and as I mentioned next time around will be our

Quote-unquote final episode of this season I say I say that because as we've mentioned before when Ragnarok comes out

We will be adding and an amended eighth episode to this season at some point in 2022. We will be

Fingers crossed that it comes out next year. Wow. It's almost 2022 and that game is gonna come out in that year

That's a really cool thing

Supposed to come out anyway

So we'll be adding a Ragnarok episode at some point in the near future, but episode 7 will be all about God of War

2018 which we have intentionally left to the end and I think our discussion on that game will be

Very good because as I have said before I like that game a lot

That's one of my favorite games ever and there's a lot to dig into with that one

So be sure to come back around next time as we dive into that game, but as for this episode

Thank you again for listening if you want to keep following along with all of our other

Doings here at chapter select you can follow us on Twitter at chapter select. We also encourage you to

Subscribe or leave a review and whatever podcast food you might be listening to the show on

You can also check out the show on YouTube as well max puts together a great video edit for all of these episodes as well that

I would encourage you to, at the very least,

if you don't wanna watch or listen to the whole thing

in that way, just go check it out

because he does a very good job with those

and he includes a lot of Easter eggs in those episodes

that I don't think people will ever see.

- I just send Logan all the jokes, basically.

- Yeah, Max tucks away a lot of really good jokes

in those video versions of these episodes.

So I encourage you to go check those out.

But yeah, otherwise you can follow us on Twitter.

Max is at MaxRoberts143 and I am at MoreMan12.

I almost said Max the White.

No, I am at MoreMan12 on Twitter.

Max the White no longer exists.

But that's everything for this episode.

Thank you so much for listening.

And we will be back here next time  
to close out season two with God of War.

Until then, bye bye.

Adios.

Chapter Select is a Max frequency production.

This episode was research produced and edited by me,  
Max Roberts.

Season 2 is hosted by Logan Moore and myself, and it's all about God of War.

For more on this season, go to [chapterselect.com/season2](http://chapterselect.com/season2).

To check out previous seasons, go to [chapterselect.com](http://chapterselect.com).

I never went all out like I did for God of War Ascension.

That's pretty funny.

I can't believe you...

I didn't know you were that big of a God of War junkie.

Oh, I love God of War games. 2 is my favorite, followed by Ghost of Sparta. They can be pretty good games. I mean, it's essentially square and triangle the whole way through, but they're pretty fun.

They are fun. I played through the series recently. I like it a lot.

Yeah, I'm huge on it. I'm excited to see what 4 looks like.

Yeah, I think it's safe to say that it'll probably get shown off next week. I'm excited

to see it as well. It needs a little bit of variety in the series. We won't get too deep into a God of War discussion, but they need to just mix it up a little bit.

We'll see what they do, but yeah, all out for God of War Ascension.