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Hello everybody and welcome to chapter select a seasonal podcast where we bounce back and forth between a series of games

Exploring their evolution design and legacy. I'm one of your hosts max Roberts and I am joined as always by Logan Moore. Hi Logan

Hello max. How is it going? It's going fine and dandy is fine and dandy on this

What is today? Today is Monday Monday afternoon

this is not a normal time that we record but we found some time fitted in. It

nearly being pitch black outside is also throwing me off because it feels like

we're recording this at night it's very strange actually. Yes we I think this

might be the first episode post time change anyway season two is all about

God of War and on this fine and dandy episode five we are talking about Chains

of Olympus, the first PSP game in God of War. It was developed by Ready at Dawn

Studios just like its inevitable sequel for the PlayStation Portable. It came out

March 4th 2008, later re-released on PS3 with Ghost of Sparta September 11th 2011.

So a bit of a bigger gap there to come to HD home consoles. It was directed by

Ru-Ri-Rasoria, I corrected the pronunciation from last time,

or at least something that makes more sense to me now.

We also have the producer Mark Turndorf coming back.

Combat was Philip Noel, he was the lead gameplay programmer,

so I kind of, that just seemed to make sense

as far as the credits goes.

And music, our favorite God of War composer.

Oh gosh, now I feel the pressure to pronounce this,

- Gerard.

- Gerard.

- Gerard Mariano.

He returns to compose The God of War.

Music, a couple of like, bonus-ish credits.

It was written by four people,

including Rurii Rosoria, Mark Turndorf,

Cory Barlog helped write this one,

and then Mary Ann Krawczyk.

I looked up how to pronounce it, hopefully that is correct.

She actually helped--

- It's definitely Polish, I would imagine, right?

- Yes, that is what Google kept saying, so.

- Yeah.

- She helped actually write all of the God of War games,

and actually you see her name prominently

in the God of War 3 opening credits.

I think she's the second one billed.

So she helped write all of them except 2018,

but she also helped write NAC 2.

- I haven't played that game.

I own it.

everyone knows Knack in Knack 2. And the consultant once again Eric Williams kind of keeping this

Corey Barlog and Eric William touch points through every major God of War game.

Yeah if anybody ever felt uncomfortable with him being the director of Ragnarok if you're listening to this podcast and you see how frequently his name pops up I would imagine

you've got to feel a little bit more comfortable seeing him in the director's chair for the next one? He is, yeah, he's touched everything. So it's really good to see all these people here for the first portable, maybe this came out before Betrayal, I don't know, the first PlayStation portable version of God of War. It's Metacritic score, which you and I both had a reaction to, a whopping 91 out of 100. What is this nonsense? If that's not indicative. So this game came out in 2008. How old was the PSP? I think that was 2006 I believe? Right?

Let's find out. I will duh, I got it right here.

Because I would imagine the reason this is so high is because this would have been one of the first really big games to come to PSP that kind of resembles its console counterpart and people would have been like "Wow it's like I'm playing a PlayStation 2 game on a handheld!"

I would agree with that train of thought. The PSP came out in North America on March 24th of 2005. So this was three years into the launch here in the States. I do agree with that sentiment though, that this was very much God of War in your hands. And I think that's why the score is so high. What I don't understand is why Ghost of Sparta was sitting at an 83 because Ghost of Sparta is clearly a better game than this.

When did Ghost of Sparta come out once again?

2010.

November 2010, which is not even six months after God of War 3.

Yeah.

Okay.

That's probably what it was then.

Everybody had seen 3 and then you go and pick up Ghost of Sparta and it's like, "This is kind of..."

This feels like a downgrade.

I just played God of War 3 a couple months ago and this is taking a huge step back."

Or maybe not a step back, but it probably pales in comparison in some aspects.

- Yeah, it's just, thanks to the way that we record and do this show, I mean, we both came in saying that this was the best, or Ghost of Sparta was arguably the best looking God of War game that we've played so far.

And we both were really positive on it, and being able to kind of play these PSP games specifically out of order just makes me go, appreciate Ghost of Sparta way, way more, because I think the jump in quality between chains and Ghost is actually quite astounding.

- Yeah, I mean, we can get into our initial impressions and histories and stuff, I guess, off that, but yeah.

This is actually one I've played before and I did play it on PSP back in the day.

- Okay.

- And I remember thinking it was solid.

It was actually the first one I had played too because I was not allowed to play the ones on consoles, but a friend had this and he lent it to me.

And it's like, I'll just play this in my bedroom hide on my handheld and my parents won't know what I'm playing.

So it was the first God of War game I played in that sense, if I remember correctly.

Yeah, I liked it at the time.

Revisiting it here though, this is the most, I think I texted you and just, I think the word I used was bland.

I have no harsh feelings about this game either way.

I don't think it is terrible, like in some senses like I did with Ascension, but I also don't think it excels in any way whatsoever. It is the most middle of the road God of War game I think we have played up until this point. Even more so than like the original God of War. The original God of War I straight up said didn't age well and I didn't think it was very good by today's standards. I don't even think this game is awful except for the final boss in some ways. It's definitely very bad. There are bad aspects of this game but more so, it just, it absolutely feels like the first God of War game on a portable platform. Yep, that's what this is. And I have more thoughts about like the story and gameplay, all that stuff, as we'll get into that. But yeah, in a general sense, just very, yep, this is God of War. It's, it definitely is God of War. My, my experience with this game was My best friend at, I guess when this was 2008-ish, maybe I had come back to visit or something.

Anyway, I was visiting a friend and he had the Chains of Olympus PSP, which is the one that you thought of last week.

They all had PSP and he showed me the game, the beginning of the game, and was like, "Look,

there's some ladies over here after you beat this boss."

You know, this classic.

Oh, they give you the sex scene very early in this game.

I guess they happen very early in most of them, though, honestly.

Like opening 10 minutes of most of the games.

God of War 2 it's in the bath sequence when he gets blown through the roof.

God of War 1 it's right when you wake up on the boat after killing the hydra.

This is right after you fight the Persian guy, the Persian leader.

And the reason that actually those three are similar not just in that regard but in general is because this game was actually originally pitched

right after God of War launched,

buy ready at Dawn 2 Sony.

And then it wouldn't come out until,
what is this, in 2008.

So it actually took them a long time to figure this out.

- Four or five years, yeah.

- Yeah, and God of War 2 would beat it to market,
but God of War 2 would also tease Chains of Olympus.

But anyway, my friend had this game,

I saw it, it was cool, and then that was the third

God of War game that I bought on my 17th birthday,

in the story that I've told quite a few times now,

so far on the show, but that was the other one that I bought

and at the time I was like, cool, this is Kratos in my hand,

and now playing it, I think, depending on the day

you ask me, I think this goes toe to toe with Ascension

is the worst one.

I have a lot of...

It's definitely not great. Yeah, I have a lot of issues with it, but I do think it's,

I kind of want to use this, you know, that it was pitched right after God of War one

kind of as a launching point to maybe talk about go into the gameplay of this game. But

this feels more like a sequel to God of War one than God of War two does. And I mean that

in the way of like almost how you would look

at an Ubisoft game where it's like,

here's Far Cry 3 and here's Far Cry 4,

or here's Assassin's Creed 2,

here's Assassin's Creed Brotherhood.

And doesn't, I understand the restrictions of the PSP.

You're trying to just translate

the home console experience on the go.

So you're already tightened in.

But this feels so, just like do everything God of War 1 did.

It's aimless, it's just like fitted in your hands.

And you go and you look at Ghost of Sparta

and Ghost of Sparta is far more

well developed and consistent.

It's more in line with God of War 2.

And I thought that would be kind of a good spot

to launch into it and talk about the game play and stuff.

But what do you, I mean, how do you feel about that?

This being more of a sequel?

- Yeah, I agree with you.

The scale is way toned down

there's even like larger like every environment in this game feels very very

small for the most part with a few a few excuses in there a few that wouldn't

abide by that but yeah it feels very small in scale the combat feels very

resembling of the first game even some of the abilities and powers that they

throw in like what is the magic this time around it's throwing the magic orb

ball thing which is probably one of the most basic like just whatever magic

abilities they've ever given you the fire the fire slam thing can't remember

what are the other two do you know I don't I didn't even write about the

magic it's not even in my notes I just like I honestly really probably didn't

even use it all. Oh, yeah, it was the big fire thing. It's all coming back to me.

The big fire flame. I like that one. I like the fire bolt thing.

It's not bad. It's forgettable.

Yeah, I think that's the thing. This whole game is forgettable. I don't want to get too

deep into the story because I know we'll touch on that in a second, but I think this game's weakest aspect is that even the first game, I had issues when we went back to that, but I still found the... I know I complained about it in our first episode that I thought the story was not great and it didn't hold up and it was very much one of those games that did all the storytelling in the cutscenes and it was odd to go back to because of that. But at least it had a story that made some sort of sense. This game feels discombobulated. Like I don't even know... It's super disjointed. It's very weird. You start off fighting Persians and fighting a giant monster and then all of a sudden Kratos sees some shiny lights and he runs towards them and then all of a sudden his daughter's playing a flute and then he's at the titans and it's like I'm like how are we getting from one thread to another here I don't understand why this is happening there's no I think that I think the shiny I think him running towards shiny lights after the closing of the Persian section where you're fighting the Persians is the most baffling part there's no sort of there's There's no real narrative thrust to this game at all.

It's just Kratos running around saying his classic Kratos-isms, "The gods!

Blah, blah, blah!"

Like he's just shouting out his greatest hits at this point.

And it's so funny, it's not even, how can he have greatest hits, you know, two games into it?

This is chronologically the first one?

Or, no, Ascension.

This is, so it's actually between Ascension and 1, allegedly it's set five years before the events of God of War 1, which I don't understand. I'll double check that.

But the game- I think you're right, we've talked about that before. That sounds right.

It definitely just, it is discombobulated. It feels very cut and pasted together, not in the sense of computer copy and paste, but like let's cut this section, which is

maybe the Persian assault. Hey, we made this level and it's a temple and let's somehow connect it to

to this city that we designed.

- How are we gonna get Kratos from this temple to these caves?

I know, let's put a Super Mario 64 painting in the temple.

And it just goes through it.

And you, it just feels, oh, here you go.

And then the gameplay kinda just goes, here's the Kratos you know and love, and here's like a big cool Persian magic dark whatever, and then go?

In the game, we both again, flattened it.

So far our pace is pretty good.

We'll see how this fares here toward the end.

- I'm not, well I've already done 2018.

Three I've already committed to not doing, so.

- It's actually not that bad.

I looked at the list again. - Doesn't it require two play threes?

- No, you can do it in one.

- Oh no, why did you tell me this?

- So, you know, so we played it on hard.

and the game I would say for two thirds, easy.

Easy breezy.

Then they're like, "Oh yeah, you're on hard mode.

"Let's crank up the difficulty at the very end

"when you get into the pits of Tartarus."

- It was completely the inverse of Ghost of Sparta for me
in a lot of ways.

Ghost of Sparta got easier as I went
'cause you're upgrading Kratos, getting more health,
getting more magic, upgrading your chains,
and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

You get to the end of this game
and everybody's hitting like a truck for some reason,
and I don't know why.

- It is, I was so frustrated.

It just didn't feel balanced.

They give you the block,
and you get the parry a little bit later,
so those aren't intertwined necessarily up front.
And it's just, there wasn't a good flow,
And if you got caught in an attack from an enemy,
you would be punished, and like you said,
they hit like a truck, and you just would lose
over and over and over, and it wasn't fun,
until the point where you'd have to figure out a way,
not necessarily to cheese it, but, you know,
you'd have to find a very safe way to play,
back into the corner so no one can get behind you,
and square square triangle your way through,
or use your magic and stuff.

It just--

- I think this one had the least,

the least thought out combat encounters too.

They just kind of throw everything at you.

- It's just a combat room.

- Yes, like more so than any other God of War.

The only other God of War that I can think rivals this

is in 2018 when there is literally just a room

you are stuck in for like 10 minutes.

Do you remember that part towards the end of the game?

And all these creatures just keep pouring in

out of these doors.

You'll remember.

- Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, I do remember that.

- But it's literally just a room

and you're just fighting stuff.

A lot of encounters feel like that in this game.

Whether it's just enemies showing up and you're just in a very small play space and you gotta fight them.

And Ghost of Sparta was like that to a degree, but I think the way that they mixed up which enemies they were throwing at you was a little interesting.

The final hour of this game is awful.

It's really really awful.

You go into this, you get out of Tartarus, you fight Charon, which is fine.

That's a decent boss fight.

It's kinda cool.

I was gonna say, that's the only good boss fight.

there's only four. It's the Persian King who you fight ten minutes into the game,

who's just a basic boss fight to open a game, the Basilisk, which is

whatever. Giant lizard thing. Typical giant monster that you fight over multiple locales, which I feel like they've done in multiple God of War games. Chiron, who's the only kind of interesting one, and then Persephone, who's got, I freaking got off what we could go into. We will specifically touch on Persephone here in a minute but yes his fight's fine it's it's a decent it's interesting it's got some interesting mechanics and they tease you with it which is actually a really cool moment where yeah they put you in the fight and they intentionally kill you like you cannot win there as far as I know so they Kratos can go visit Hades for the fourth time in the series or whatever it's cool though because he goes to the pits of Tartarus which you yeah only really get a go to a couple of times with Atlas and God of War 2 it's just

- It's funny, 'cause almost in every single game, he's like, "Oh, I gotta go to Hades," or some sort of--

- Yeah.

- He gets killed in nearly every game.

It's really funny.

- So they tease it, and so then you have to climb out to fight him again.

So that's actually a really, that's a good example of them not using a painting to teleport you.

There's a good flow to get back to that fight.

And you get, I forget what power you get in Tartarus or something.

- I think you get the gauntlet.

- The gauntlet, yeah. - The fist.

- The Zeus glove.

And then you go out and you fight him again,

and then you win and that's fun.

But then they put you in Persephone Tower,
which is literally just combat rooms connected
with very little health in between.

You just go, you fight, climb up the tower.

Maybe it's three, four floors of this.

Maybe a total of six to eight rooms.

- I was just gonna say, you texted me
and were complaining a lot about this.

- Mm-hmm. - And it was difficult
and I had trouble with it, but I feel like I got through it way easier than you did.

I want to ask you something. Were you using the blades or were you using the gauntlet?

I was using the blades primarily. I learned a couple good cheese strategies for some of
the...

This is probably what I did not learn.

For some of the enemies. Specifically, were the minotaurs giving you a hard time?

Yes.

So you can jump in the air and spam L1 square and you can do the spin thing

And you can do it about three times in a row and in the air and the minotaurs have no way

No real way they can still hit you

But most of their moves that they might be using against you are

Directed to your character when they would be on the ground

So they can't hit you really as long as you're in the air

So you just kind of have to keep jumping and spamming the spin

Which is really stupid, but it worked for me.

It never feels good in an action game when your best course of action, even on the tougher
difficulties is to cheese it like that.

But I'm glad you figured something out because I had very little health.

It was maybe like a two, three hit run and it was like, "Kill a minotaur, kill a minotaur, kill a minotaur."

I was like, "I can't do this."

That's another thing about this game.

It was really, I don't know if this happened for you, so in all the other games if you died and then you revived. You respawn with full health and not necessarily, I don't think full magic, but they would give you full health at least to take on the encounter. This game did not do

that, so it was very punishing in that regard. However, there were times where I would die and I would respawn and I'd all of a sudden have a lot more health than I did before. And I'm like, "Wait, I've not been respawning, I've been respawning this whole game with the amount of health I had when I started this encounter, but sometimes I would respawn and it would give me

more. Was that, there's the dental, was that just a worked in system to help you out a little bit?

I think they were tracking deaths and encounters and then they would give you a bump because that

happened to me, we'll use this to segue into Persephone herself, that happened to me specifically

in the fields of Elysium that one part of the stairs before you get to the safe spot to go go fight her, they'd bring a gauntlet in.

And I had a fraction of health going into that fight,

and I was like, this is miserable.

And after dying who knows how many times,

I mean I actually have the footage,

I could count it I guess.

- Was that the part that you said reminded you of Ascension?

- Yeah, well that and the tower,

they're kinda together in that way of just like,

get me through this.

And finally after so many deaths,

I did spawn with more health

and was actually able to pull it off.

wasn't and then I'm out of the and if I had against the wall for another however

much longer for yeah about three more play sessions so let's let's talk about

Persephone Logan they they committed the sin that you've brought up to me before

they made it a trophy they that's how like that's how that's how like in the

know they were that this is gonna piss people off is that they made a whole

trophy dedicated to watching the cutscene before the final boss more than three times,

which is probably one of the top three dumbest trophies I've ever heard of in my life.

It's a quick tangent because this game has some really good trophies, like meta level

of just funny good trophies, like the beam walking one or um...

Oh yeah.

Like there's some really funny trophies in this game, but then there's also that garbage,

which is we know this is gonna happen to you,

so we're just gonna make it a trophy.

- To explain the beam walking one

to people who may not look this up,

the beam walking one is you get a trophy

for walking across all of the beams in the game,

there's one beam in the game.

So you get it after clearing the first beam

you come across because it's the only one,

which is really funny.

- Yeah, it is, it's very funny.

I'm looking at the trophies now.

- But yeah, they give you a trophy

watching this cutscene that you cannot skip before the final boss and fortunately it's not that long

it's like a 30 second cutscene i would say roughly but it still gets very annoying because it gets

you out of your rhythm witness the end yeah they give you a trophy for watching that three times

so you're gonna get it automatically probably if you play on hard mode and get your face kicked in

because Persephone can kill you in about five hits if she wants to.

- Depending on how much health you have, yeah. At most, five. She is brutal.

- The rock attack that she has knocks out probably, what, a good fourth of your health, I would say.

- Yeah. She really only has maybe three main attacks in that first phase.

- She does.

- A rock kick and then two different kind of like dash swipes. One kind of swings across, and then one's more of a close range punch.

It's just all about avoiding the rock. That's avoid the key to the whole fight and you got to stay close to her

So I mean we're gonna get into talking about how terrible this fight is

But for me you had a lot of trouble with it

You were texting me about it and you said it was terrible and I had trouble with it, too

Like don't get me wrong. It was kicking my face in for a good minute

but I did beat it after about

15 to 20 minutes of trying and the way I learned how was you just have to keep

You have to make sure that you stay close to her because if you stay close to her she won't proc her rock move and

Then that's the one that's that's the one you need to look out for that's the one you need to make sure she is not

I found I found her swipes and punches were worse. Well, you can lock those

Those are bad

Yeah, I was just apparently not very good at blocking them because there was

There's some really close timing. There's some really close timing on those

I was by no means good at it either but the rock is the one that does the most damage so I could

You could take hits of the other ones and be a little bit

Okay, the rock thing is the one you need to look out for so I realized the best way to stay close to her

Is to get the fist out and to spam the like charge move the L1 and L1 plus square

But one attack where he like launches himself forward

Because that allows you to close the distance between her quickly and it's an attack rather than a roll

You're talking about the gauntlets now. Yes the gauntlet which is basically that is what changed the fight for me

Yes, the gauntlet is how you have to beat that fight, especially on hard I would imagine

It is I didn't like the gauntlet at first. I will say I will say it's one of the better side items

They've given you up until this point because I found it useful in certain situations like a lot of the other

Items that we have come across in these games

Even most recently with ghosts of Sparta with the shield and the spear the Spartan arms

I didn't use it because I didn't feel like it had any sort of
of great use other than chucking the spears.

That was about the only good thing I used it for.

I felt like this actually,

the thing I liked about this was

there was an actual trade-off.

It was like, do I wanna do AoE style attacks

that do decent damage with the chains,

or do I wanna do heavy damage

that's largely for a single target with the gauntlet?

And I felt like that was a good trade-off,

and I felt like the game actually encouraged you to play in two different ways, depending on which one you had.

Because previously, I think the reason we haven't really switched off the chains is because the chains always have that area of attack, or area of effect where you can kind of flammel them around and deal damage to a lot of enemies at once and also they have a higher, or not necessarily a higher, but they have a considerable level of attack power to them as well.

The gauntlet definitely out damages the chains by a good amount.

And yeah, I feel like of all the things with the gameplay, that's the one thing I will say Chains of Olympus does very well.

And maybe 3 does that as well with the fist, the Hercules fists that I know are in the game.

We'll find out in the next episode.

But yeah.

It's funny, it's really funny.

I wrote, as soon as I got the gauntlet, I first of all didn't remember that this was even in the game.

So I clearly forgot that from the past, but I did the tutorial with it, kind of punched around, and at the time I was still leveling up the chains, so I wasn't at that point in my playthrough of leveling up magic and other items and stuff.

I focused chains first and then do the rest later.

And so I wrote, "Gauntlet is lame secondary, lame in practice, cool in premise."

And I didn't really touch it.

I didn't think it felt good until I had leveled it up, which I did toward the end of the game.

- Yeah, same.

- And I didn't think about it in those trials in the tower.

It didn't occur to me until I had to look up some,
I looked up on PlayStation Trophies
how they were beating Persephone,
and they were using the gauntlet,
and I was like, "Oh, let me switch to that."
Became a total powerhouse and changed the fight for me.
And then it became the item I used the most
in the challenge of Hades?

- That's what I was gonna say.

So I didn't really use it in the Tower of Persephone
all that much, but once I beat Persephone with it,
I started to realize, hey, this thing actually
has some decent uses, and then when I went
and did the challenge of the gods or titans
or whatever the heck it is in this game,
then I started to use it more and I found value in it,
especially with, again, that L1 square attack with it
is very good because it closes gaps
and it's an offensive attack.

'Cause previously I feel like closing the gap,
I rely on dodge rolling.

But this is just, nope, blast forward
or blast in a direction that you're trying to go towards
and you're dealing damage.

It was good to dispatch of the Gorgons
in the challenge I found.

Even though I got stuck, I mean,

quick aside on the challenge,
I died on that fifth challenge too many times,
probably five or six times and it was like three in the morning when I was trying to
play this and I just was like this is it, this is the only trophy I have left, I want
to get this platinum, just go to bed, I have to think about this game anymore. Or not think
about it, I mean obviously we're talking about it here but I'll be done with it, I can move
on. Um, and I kept dying, dude I was getting so mad, I was like screaming at my TV and
it was like 3.30 in the morning. Um, because I kept getting, just bad luck, I kept getting
frozen solid and then one of those soldiers would come in and kill me. I was like, "Are
you kidding me?" And that fifth challenge is so long. It's like 12 minutes long or something
like that of enemies. It's very lengthy. It's not hard, but it's just lengthy.

I kept doing this jump and slam attack with the gauntlet, which gives you a little AOE
and it stuns everybody, and that's what I kept using.

But it's just, like the rest of these other parts
of the games, the gameplay is just inconsistent
to a certain degree.

It feels patched together and doesn't feel fleshed out.

Even like the block, the game you start out,
you just have the standard God of War block,
and then, but it's not as strong,
but then you get the sun shield, which kinda amps it up,
but then you get the parry later.

Like you don't get the parry when you get the block.

And so that just feels inconsistent.

The gauntlet doesn't feel great to start out with,
but it's super powerful if you max it out by the end,
but they don't really incentivize you beyond,

look, you can put orbs into it.

And you may be like I was, pouring it into the blades
or some other magic spell or something.

The difficulty spikes, at least in hard mode,
who knows what it's like in normal or even very hard later
when you unlock it at the end of the game.

The spikes toward the end are just extremely frustrating.

There was one other thing really quick
about the gameplay at least that I liked from this game,
that the enemies, certain enemies,
felt way bigger than they normally do.

Like the minotaurs and the cyclops.

Like they towered over Kratos.

and in the other games, they feel more just like
a little bit bigger than Kratos, and he's a big dude.

He's, you know, six, seven feet, however tall.

Like, Kratos is a big, big dude.

But you know, he could wrap his arm around a minotaur
and like stab it in the face.

In this game, the minotaur is towering over,
and I kinda like that.

I liked how they played with the scale
of traditional enemies in this sense.

They even did some things a little differently,
like with the Morpheus enemies,
they kinda have this cool look to them
and those Gorgons would scream.

They would scream, I guess they were sirens maybe,
instead of freezing you.

So they mixed it up a little bit,
but it's just, it's too inconsistent.
It fluctuates too much in quality.

- Yeah, I agree.

Yeah, it's just the most,
I think with this one,
it is the one that tries the least too.

I think that's why we're now five games into this series.

So we're obviously playing these in an interesting order.

And I think this is an instance where the order we've played these games in has not
lended itself well to this being one we're playing in the back half of this season.

Because it is the least...

It's just trying to be God of War on a portable platform.

So it's just trying to check those boxes in a very basic sense.

Even Ascension, I feel like, was trying to do some different things, and those things
didn't work but they try to mix up certain aspects of the combat.

This one is very much just very basic outside of the one thing I said with the gauntlet
which I feel like was one of the key standouts with this.

But yeah, otherwise it's a total, there's not much to write home about with this on
a gameplay front.

It just feels like it's going through the motions, just trying to do that God of War
experience on a mobile platform, or a portable platform.

Different from, the difference between mobile and portable, although not really, but the
words mean totally different things.

'Cause that's video games for you.

Mobile would be God of War Betrayal.

Be careful.

That's true.

I might trick you into playing that game.

On a Razer phone.

Speaking of just taking the God of War experience and putting it on a portable, let's quickly talk about the music.

Because guess what?

It's God of War!

Thank you Gerard for your continued work.

I mean I wonder if Gerard gets royalties for all these games.

I don't want to undersell his work, but it is very much, it feels like more so than normal

They absolutely recycled a lot of the previous themes from the previous games in this one.

I want- I've been thinking about this because again, this is the discussion we have every week.

It's probably not all that exciting.

It will probably change with 2018.

It will.

3 as well.

And so, I mean, my plan- my thought process is on God of War 3, so our next episode,

I want to talk about why the God of War music works before we get to the change with Bear McCreary. Okay.

So we can do a large-scale conversation on just the yeah because all the music in these themes

in God of War you know in the God of War games are good there are good themes in combat music

and it is strong, but five games in a row,

I'm really like, it's God of War music in your hands.

It's great in that sense.

That's why I was so excited for the horns last week,
or not last week, but the last episode with Ghost of Sparta.

It was changing it up a bit,
and this again fits into that formula of,
hey, we're putting God of War on the handheld,
So here's God of War music, powered by the UMD,
the PSP, it's a disc, so it sounds really good.

Super loud, by the way.

I booted up my PSP and turned it up all the way.

Super loud.

Impressive little speakers on that thing.

So.

- Well, 'cause you had to watch movies on it.

- Yes.

- And listen to music.

If we had MP, that thing was,
my first MP3 player was my PSP.

Yeah, I used to pull that out at school,
quick tangent aside, talking about the PSP because we won't be able to do this anymore.

Back in the day at school, because we grew up in the era of iPods and MP3 players and
Zooms and stuff, when people started letting us listen to that stuff, I assumed like your
teachers at school and stuff like eventually was like, "Okay, you guys can listen to music
or whatever if you want to while you're working."

I would whip out my PSP and I was like, "I'm not playing games.

I just have music on this and I would have to explain this to people."

And that was the first device that I had.

I remember I downloaded a couple Foo Fighters albums to it.

I had some Jimi Hendrix music on it.

I think I had some Rush on there as well that I would listen to.

Also my background screen on my PSP.

You remember the original test footage or the original image of...

This is really gonna date us.

The original image of...

What's his name?

Heath Ledger in the Dark Knight. Do you remember the original image that?

Released for him in the clown makeup

It's like the first image of him that hit the internet looking in like the Joker like in the Joker makeup

That was like my background on my PSP for

ever

Probably still is if I dug it out, so I don't know. I don't actually think I still have my PSP, but if I did

That would be the background on it. It was always Heath Ledger is the Joker

Wow very so if you were a kid today if you were a kid today and you had a PSP would it be Joaquin Phoenix?

No, I don't know

Probably be something far dumber like my current wallpaper on my desktop computer is

persona for golden

Because sure, I mean that's a good that's a good game though. My PC backgrounds are always anime

I don't know why I don't know what that says about me

Probably something someone else will figure that out though

Let's talk about the visuals, the graphics here.

Speaking of wallpapers, sure.

This game is a whole lot of brown and gray

with hints of red.

This game's got no flavor, no style.

- Yeah.

- It is wild.

- I don't know how much, yeah.

- It's wild how much better Ghost of Sparta looks.

Like what happened, what changed?

Yeah, I don't know. It just felt very... I guess... I will say this. This is the first game... Well, no, this isn't the first game, because God of War 2 would have been out by this point. And we would have already seen Atlas as well by this point.

Yes. And Atlas had said, "We'll talk about this, but Atlas isn't God of War 2."

He recalls the end events of this game. I was going to say, if this is the first one where we see certain aspects like that, then that would stand out, but that's not even true.

Yeah, I don't have a lot to say about the visuals.

Again, it just feels like it tries to check the God of War boxes, like, "Oh, we got a city in this one part, we've got a temple that you can run around, we've got a Hades underground area, we've got a final level that's just rooms.

The end."

- Yeah, it just, it's not that great.

I will say, you know, in the PS3 port, which we both played just through different means, it still looks and runs nice.

You know, everything's scaled up pretty nice.

I did notice some of the textures were not as great as they were in Ghost of Sparta.

I wrote down that I thought the Blades of Chaos looked like concrete triangles.

Like I didn't think the blades actually looked
all that good up there, the texture of their surface.

So that was a bit of a bummer.

But, you know, it definitely feels like a first outing
to get God of War and again, it just retroactively
makes me appreciate Ghost of Sparta way more
and makes me more baffled why that scored less
on like a Metacritic or something.

Ghost of Sparta clearly is the better
portable iteration here.

And then, because I'm me, I also booted the game up in 3D
and on the PSTV and my PSP.

Yeah, I figured this time I'd actually use the hardware.

The 3D looks just like the last one.

It keeps a nice solid frame rate to my eye
and adds that kind of 3DS level of depth.

It's neat.

I, you know, if I ever go,
when I go back and play Ghost of Sparta someday,
I don't know about Chains of Olympus,
but when I go back and play Ghost of Sparta,
I wouldn't mind trying it out, you know,
playing at least a chunk of it in 3D.

And then the PSP version is impressive for the hardware.

and I think that does a lot of caring for this game.

It carries it pretty far, but it does look good,
both in the hand and on the TV,

scaled up or at its native resolution and stuff.

It's nice.

- Yeah, it's just, it's a really strange game
to go back to.

Like, probably the strangest, honestly,
of all of them that we've done.

Just because you really have to put yourself
in the mind frame of what people would've expected
wanted from a portable console at this point 13 years ago.

By all accounts it would have been totally, I mean again I played this game pretty close
to when it launched back then.

And I thought it was cool.

I will say I didn't have any grand takeaways from it back then either.

In fact my biggest takeaway was once I beat I was like "Oh this is over?

The game is very short."

- So your shirt, even on Hard, we,
I had a roughly five hour safe route.

- I think it'd be like four and a half to five hours, yeah.

So it's-- - It's a quick one.

- I appreciated that for this show, to be honest with you,
because I have a lot of other personal,
or I guess professional, I don't know.

I've got a lot of other things going on.

- You have a job that you need to get going on.

- I got a job that involves other things
with video games sometimes.

So yeah, it's, it was nice that this one

was somewhat short but yeah. And you know I think part of why it feels so short is because this story is a mess. Yes! Why is Calliope in this? Like why is Morpheus in this? The thing I don't understand about- Why is Alice in this? Why is- yeah Alice just shows up at the end she's like "haha I gotcha Atlas is tearing down all the gods in Olympus hahaha" and I'm like he's just like punching the underside of the earth or something. I don't know what he's doing. The Calliope stuff I don't understand and I feel like that's a huge key part of this game. It makes Ascension a little bit more interesting though. I will say because Ascension focuses more on him being distracted by the return of his wife with the Furies. They try to pretend that they're his wife but they don't ever really there's not too many references or illusions related to his daughter in that there's a couple but it's primarily focused on his wife this is all about his daughter I wouldn't even say it's all about her because she doesn't show up until over halfway through yeah but he starts hearing well you all send you just get like halfway into the game it's like Kratos heard a music music that he recognized but he could not tell where it was what it was from and then like you get further on it's Kratos remembered it was his daughter but like like but it doesn't really explain it's just Persephone trying to like no it's not even she's not using Calliope per se Calliope is there like in Elysium I guess she's using him her as bait I suppose to yeah stop the one thing it's so this is the thing that's confusing so it is actually her but because they're in like the dead world place like it's just straight up her it's her see I assumed it was I thought it was like an illusion for something like but that but I know this is her and I see him yeah I guess that makes sense because of how the Greek world is set up why wouldn't he take his daughter with them like just be like alright come on let's get out of here I've run out of Hades like four times you can do it this time with me as well let's go yeah it feels it feels like they

almost like the classic like bravado tough guy but also armadad kind of thing of like trying to sell this they really i think they want you to feel like kratos is a loving father who misses his daughter and would do anything for her and he almost does he almost lets the whole world burn so he could be with her until he realizes that if he does that she'll die too. And so he makes the hard sacrifice to push her away literally. Like he doesn't talk to her, he doesn't try to be a father or anything. He literally just, you mash the circle button. -No, but first you gotta wait a minute. -Well, yeah, you gotta get the trophy. -You gotta wait a minute and get the trophy. And then you literally shove her away with no explanation. And then you have to, in front of your daughter, murder innocent souls in Elysium to gain back your Ghost of Sparta-like godhood.

This... Maybe at the time, in 2008, that was just like, yep, that's typical, like, Kratos. But in, I mean it's just in the hindsight of what we know.

Like this is awful. This is terrible. This makes-

- I lost all my powers, let me kill people.

- This is what I feel like, how I feel about Kratos right now, I think is what you kind of have said here and there throughout this season. Like Kratos is a terrible guy.

- He's really bad.

- This is Kratos, this is Kratos being a terrible guy and a terrible father.

Not because he didn't sacrifice her or like he actually ended up saving her life in this moment instead of murdering her like he does

but he is

He's like looks mad and he pushes her away and goes i'm gonna kill people and it is just so disconnected for me not

Entirely because of what he becomes for atreus, but just in general like this is a bad bad

Moment well, it's it's even stranger when you get when you then think about like what God of War centers around

And it's like Kratos can't forget his misdeeds and killing his daughter

And it's like bro like you had a chance to kind of I mean he really I don't know the end of it

Then events of this game. It's basically like everybody's gonna die unless Kratos stops Persephone and Atlas

So he kind of feels like he has to

Yeah, same time like what what he does to that to do that is pretty

It comes across as like he has no remorse in doing so

Yeah, so this little strange

Yeah, that's that's like a big character moment for Kratos. I think they totally just burned in this game and that they I

obviously

Majorly overcorrect in 2018, but I also think they try to fix it in three if you remember that plot with Pandora and stuff.

Or a little bit, yeah I do.

Sort of. Yeah, I think they do

what I remember, they do a little bit better there.

Yeah, I mean

just the one more thing I want to say about that

is yeah, he's

always really terrible in these games

on multiple levels. Not only is he

doing really terrible like

large scale, large scope things that

affect a lot of people, namely in God

of War 3 when he just kind of kills

everybody, which we'll get to.

But he has like no direct... he's not directly trying to kill people I guess in that situation.

It's just a byproduct of what he does that leads to that.

But even then, in situations like this, he just kind of goes full tilt and "Yeah, I gotta

kill these people?

Sure.

Alright, come here, let me tear you in half."

Like, he's... he's not good.

At all.

It's weak.

The, I mean there's more than just Kratos and Calliope

in this game, and I feel like we get some character

whiplash, and a lot of it is like beyond,

is the shallowest of shallows here.

A Persian invasion to kick off the game,

so there's a Persian king character.

Then all of a sudden, the sun disappears,

and Morpheus is mentioned.

Morpheus feels like decoy octopus, except not cool,

because they talk about him, you never see him,

You never interact with him, you never stop him, except when you put Helios back up in

the sky.

Then, you know, Helios, he falls and you've gotta go save him, so then you like go to

his temple and find his sister, for whatever reason he's got like a statue of her naked

in his temple but it's his sister, feels very weird and Greek I guess.

And then you go to Tartarus and there's the Titans and Charon, oh look Atlas is missing,

how'd he go?

Oh guess what?

Persephone was behind it the whole time.

Do you know how many times I mentioned Persephone before this?

Once in a collectible note you can pick up off the ground.

She just shows up and it's "I'm the final boss, fight me, I'm behind this all, I'm disenfranchised

with my husband time to kill everything yeah it's it's just so cramped it's just packed with nothing it's just fluff like Greek fluff like who would be cool Morpheus what is this was more when Morpheus have to do wise Morpheus working with Persephone where did that connection come in is he even working with her is this just a chance he saw when the Sun disappeared who took the sun out of the sky was that Atlas how did he do that it just felt super weak like and whiplashy yeah uh yeah this plot is pretty bad yeah this is if Cory was ever not gonna have his name attached to one of them this would be the one like before we're like wow Cory's worked on the story and all of them at least in some capacity this is one where it's like Cory why'd you let this happen. Also, I didn't mention it at the top because I didn't write it in the notes up there, but in my personal notes, Jaffe also helped with the game. He would have still been around at that point I guess, wouldn't he? Yeah, he was credited in the in the game's credit. So I definitely, you know, it was a lot of people worked on the story for this one and it just it almost feels like that. Like, yeah, maybe this person had that idea and this person had that idea how do we push this forward? I don't know. My other big issue with the story in this game was, I mean, the way it was literally told, as in the narrator would say something like, "And Kratos knew this was a sign from the gods." And then the camera would go to Kratos and he would go, "What sign from the gods is this?" Yes. The whole game is just like, "And Kratos did this." And then Kratos would say or do that thing right after. It was telling and then doing the thing. That was just, oh, that was painful. Yeah, I noticed that a couple times too. I'm glad you took a note of it because they do it multiple times as well. It's not just a one-off instance where something like that happens. It happens, yeah, quite a bit. It's the worst use of the... Typically, I like Gaia as the sort of narrator or storyteller of these games but yeah it's not done to good effect in this one. It's similar like I said before like when he hears a

flute he hears the flute and it's like "Grados heard the flute but he didn't know what it was" and then he's like "What is that sound? That flute!"

Or later what it's like "And then he remembered what it was" and he goes "Caliope?"

- Yes.

- It's so bad.

There was one part of the narrative structure I liked, one.

And mostly just 'cause it was weird to see.

Which was Kratos actively serving the gods.

And in his military prime.

Like this is when Kratos would have been full swing

serving the gods, despite everything that happened

ascension five years prior. He was like gun hoe about serving them to wipe away his debt,

so to speak. But it's, it's Kratos serving and in his military prime. That was interesting

to see. It was kind of cool. We never, we, I think this is really the only game we really

get to see that, um, because they don't dwell on an ascension and obviously everything from

God of War one later, chronologically speaking, has nothing to do with that as well. And so

it's interesting to see that play out.

I think what's upsetting to me about this game, this and Ascension, is I think there

are interesting stories they could have told with Kratos prior to God of War 1.

And the weakest two entries in this entire series are the two before God of War 1.

I think there was a lot of storytelling possibilities that they really kind of let fall.

flat on its face. Ghost of Sparta I think is good. I think that is largely a solid game.

And I think if there were stories that they told that were of that quality, like I wouldn't say

Ghost of Sparta is one of the best stories in a video game or anything like that, but it was very

solid and they were doing different things. And this and Ascension, even Ascension I feel like

had some decent ideas, like with the Furies and stuff like that. That game's problem was just

how it was told was very poor but um it was also disjointed it was very chopped up

i feel like whenever they come into these games i i i've never made a god of war game spoiler alert

but i feel like whenever they would have made these back in the day i'm gonna guess a few people grouped up and they're like all right who from greek lore do we want to include this time around we've already done this this this this and this what big name characters are still out there

that we want to fold into this game?"

And then they would probably start rolling from there.

"Okay, how can we make a story out of using Chiron?"

Or, "How can we use the Furies in a story?"

Or things like that.

- Or even, remember God of War 2 was in development at the same time, and so those were being developed in Sony Santa Monica and Ready at Dawn were in context.

So maybe that's like where the Atlas thing came in.

So it's like, how do we put Atlas into this?

because they mention Atlas in 2, so like which, chicken and egg, which one came first here?

- Yeah.

- And it just doesn't feel good, and it's funny--

- That section of God of War 2 is probably the section of the game that feels the most off as well, I think, where it's just kind of a detour.

- Down to the bottom, yeah. - Like you're there at the temple, and then you fall off way down in the middle of the earth-- - And detour us.

- And then you shoot back up, and then, okay.

took a quick tour to go see Atlas there, and now I'm back.

- Yeah, it's a very chunky, and not in a great way.

So, it's a bummer in that regard.

Before we wrap up, there was one more thing

I wanted to touch on, at least mention here.

I thought this was an appropriate episode to talk about it.

There's one part of God of War

that we really haven't talked about yet.

Five episodes into the season.

And that is every God of War game

has included some form of behind the scenes/documentary

content with it.

Every single one of them.

Sony Santa Monica for every game has included documentaries.

One, two, three, Ascension, 2018.

- 2018 released a whole two and a half,

two hour documentary about it?

- They all have a documentary

chronicling the development of each of these games.

and the PSP games, Ghost of Sparta had some behind the scenes clips and art and stuff,

but it was famously paired with the Director's Live panel that I've mentioned on previous

episodes. So that was in a similar vein and offered really great insight and stuff into

God of War. Chains of Olympus has this, and I don't think you watched them. And it's okay if you didn't.

I haven't watched any of them to be honest.

- That's okay.

There were two videos.

There's a Lost Levels video,

which just shows development footage of the game
and things that were cut.

Everything shown in the Lost Levels video
was cooler than what we saw in the game.

There was like this Hydra,
like what I think it is called a Hydra,
the thing that grows its multiple heads
and when you kill one it splits and turns into two.

There was one of those, like a really cool looking fight with that.

There was- They probably felt like they
already used that in the first game though. It looked different though, it looked kind of like
a turtle. It was weird. Again, this is all pre-dev footage, so it looks a little chunky and funky,
but I don't know why that made me laugh so much. Chunky and funky.

Anyway, it just looks- Talking about the Kong family now.

(laughs)

It just was interesting to see these lost potential
and it seemed cooler than the game I had just played.

The other baffling thing though
was the Inside Ready at Dawn video,
which is literally two and a half-ish minutes
of just shots of everyone at their desk doing work
and turning to the camera and making a face,
sticking their tongue out, making gestures with their hands, closing the door.

There is no dialogue, no one says anything, you don't actually see real development of
the game, it is just a montage of everyone at the studio doing something silly at their
desk.

And I'm, I mean, I shouldn't necessarily be surprised, it's not like I went in expecting

a lot from the documentary, but I am bummed that this is like, they did give us anything and I'm a little bummed about that. Yeah, I don't have a lot to say about that I guess.

It, yeah, I just, I wanted to mention it because when we do get to 2018, I at least, I plan on rewatching the documentary and I'm- You plan on making yourself sad again and questioning whether that game's existence is worth it? Because you get to the end of the docu- The whole thing is really fun to watch until you get to the end in the documentary. people are like, "Oh, so did you think it was worth making this?" And everybody's like, "I don't know. I haven't seen my kids in five years and you've got Shannon Studstoe just like bawling her eyes out." That's a hard thing to watch.

- It is hard and it's actually a very good documentary, but I've watched all of them so far for this season of the show and the God of War II stuff. It was really tough. There was a lot of pressure at that time and listening to the director's panel, hearing all of their journeys through this game and how tough it is to change hands between everyone. There's some, and it's rare for a dev to be so forthcoming about the development. Even the Ascension documentary stuff is fascinating because it was all multiplayer focused. Like they were trying to pivot this franchise and the studio to a certain degree and it ended up flopping and to see that work go into it at least made me appreciate the multiplayer effort a little bit more even if it's not my favorite thing.

Especially since it just doesn't fit with the series but I was definitely bummed that Inside Ready at Dawn is just a bunch of silly faces.

So I wanted to mention it here before we definitely talk about the documentary later. wanted to say that. But any parting thoughts with Chains of Olympus here and the PSP?

Yeah, I mean I feel like we really talked a lot about... I really didn't think we would...

I said before we started that I didn't think we would get too deep into this one honestly because

I didn't feel like there was much to say. But yeah, I really feel like we fleshed out a lot of my deeper feelings on this game. But like I said at the top this is definitely the most just, yeah,

very bland, basic, God of War game. I'd say even of the whole series because even Ascension at

least does different things even though those things aren't good all the time. It's at least

like, "Alright, they're trying to mix this up. They're trying to change how this functions."

This and God of War 1 to me are the ones that are just like, "Yep, that's God of War 1."

And the first one makes sense to be like that because it was the first one.

This one is just, "Hey, let's try to do that on the PlayStation Portable.

Do you think we can do that? Okay, cool."

So yeah, it's a God of War video game for sure.

It absolutely is. I've, yeah, depending on the day you ask me, it's this or Ascension at the bottom of my tier list or what have you.

It's cool that they got it on the PlayStation Portable, but I am definitely happy that it paved the way for Ghost of Sparta and that game's development.

I, you know, how much of this really did influence 3 and beyond, I really can't say. I can't imagine that much.

But it is an interesting point for the series and definitely paved the way for one of the better games in the series.

So I'm happy that it existed for that.

But I feel like that does it for God of War Chains of Olympus here on the PlayStation Portable.

Thank you so much for listening.

If you would like to follow Logan online, he's on Twitter @Mormon12 and you can find his writing over at ComicBook.com.

If you'd like to follow me on Twitter, I'm @MaxRoberts143.

You can find my writing over at maxfrequency.net.

Until next time, thanks for listening.

Bye bye.

Chapter Select is a Max Frequency production.

This episode was research produced

and edited by me, Max Roberts.

Season two 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.

To check out previous seasons, go to chapterselect.com.