

Mirror Image

Overview

I have chosen the prompt for the fantasy RPG. This is for an open world game.

The prompt asks for a fantasy setting with a dark tone, so I have chosen a setting similar to games like the *Dragon Age* and *Witcher* series: a medieval setting with a dark look to it, prone to the occasional gruesome and gory scene. The look of the characters will reflect this as well, with the main character often appearing as a literal light in the darkness, in both good and bad ways (depending on which version of the character it is). This is because the main character in this game is two characters stuck in the same body - a human woman and the demon possessing her.

The game's premise is simple but has the potential for complexity: two countries are at war, and to win it, one of them has turned to making their troops into magical super-soldiers by summoning demons from another dimension and forcing them to possess them. One day, a woman named Ash from a small village stumbles upon such a ritual, and an accidental possession leads her to set out to find the one object which can free her from it. But to find the object, she has to find the man who got her possessed in the first place, and that will prove less than simple.

Framework

Some simple explanations of most aspects of the game are summarised below.

In terms of **gameplay**, the game's combat should be similar to most RPGs with action/hack and slash dynamics. I envision dynamic real-time fights in which the player has to rely some on their reflexes to use opportunities and not be overwhelmed. I would liken this to games like the *Legend of Zelda* series and *Kingdom Hearts*. Similarly, there should be an exploration aspect similar to these games as well.

In terms of **narrative**, the game is a linear story spread out over a map that places more emphasis on the beginning and end parts than it does the exact order of the middle ones. Character development will be linear, but the player has choices in where they want this development to happen. I would liken this in part to *Dragon Age: Origins*, in that the player has autonomy on where to go, but not necessarily on what happens to the characters.

In terms of **overall experience**, I want the emphasis to be on the narrative of this game. The map should be an expanse, but smaller than, say, that of *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* in order to give more room for story density. Each place has importance, with less subplots and side quests, giving the player a more focused experience.

The Narrative Pillars of this Project

These are the main themes of this game, the foundation on which I based my choices for its design. Other sections will relate back to them when relevant.

Internal Conflict

The prompt calls for internal conflict, and I want that to be reflected by both the characters and the mechanics. Possession and demons are a good way to do that, but I do not want a demon character with no personal bearing on the story. Instead, I want to write the story of two characters who both suffer from a loss of agency, one because they are possessed and the other because they are trapped within someone else, and the conflict that arises both within the characters and between them because of this.

An essential part of depicting this is the theme of internal conflict being mirrored by external factors. The main characters are Ash; a human woman, and Moranel; a demon summoned by the antagonist and forced to possess her. These characters' arcs are a big part of the main storyline, and their shared conflict is what drives the story forward. There are three main aspects to this.

There is a very **personal aspect** to this, as both characters' anxiety over this situation leads to the more violent one (Moranel) lashing out blindly and the calmer one (Ash) having to learn to fight for calm with the lives of bystanders at stake. Working together is chaotic and messy for them, but their development in doing so will drive the plot throughout this game. Then there is the **gameplay aspect** of it, in which the player has to figure out how to navigate the dynamics of these characters - what each of them can do, where they are useful, and what they should do when the switch is made in battle from Ash to Moranel's form. This only happens in larger conflicts, as demons only emerge once their hosts are in danger. Finally there is the most simple one: **the symbolic aspect** of an internal war being reflected by an active, external one - a war Ash is dragged into as a direct result of being possessed.

I want the narrative to be immersive in tandem with the gameplay. Playing as Moranel should not simply be a matter of getting a powerup in a fight, but the player should have to think through their actions and use Moranel in a deliberate way, even if she herself is lashing out with little thought to what she is doing. Controlling Moranel becomes easier as the game progresses (beginning with a complete loss of agency as she only appears in cutscenes at first, then gradually getting to "aim" her attacks more and more), and drawing on her power as Ash without manifesting her outright becomes part of Ash's skillset as she levels up, the story progresses, and the two characters begin to come to an understanding.

Duality and Juxtaposition

This has to do with the theme of contrasts the prompt asks for, and there are many ways to include such contrasts in this story. The objective here is to contrast in order to highlight, and this applies to the two main characters (Ash and Moranel) who are meant to be foils of each other. They have very different personalities and learn to work together in a way that lets them both grow. Their visual designs mirror this with a blue theme for Ash and a red theme for Moranel. The overarching story of the world is of a war and the game's villain highlights the dangers of a grey area in such a situation. These contrasts and comparisons make the story memorable and digestible even should the player return to an old save. The base premise is there, of two countries at war, of two women working together, and the details can be developed at pretty much any point in the story without being too jarring because of it.

The gameplay I mentioned earlier in which Moranel takes control should feel monumental and important to the player - a narrative turn rather than simply a way to beat the more difficult bosses. Once Ash and Moranel gain more control and learn to use each other's powers more seamlessly, the player should get to feel more powerful for it as they learn the steps of the new dynamic with each new ability Ash gains. Subsequently, when the game nears its end, the two are separated for a time, and the loss should feel significant, but the player also gets to see Ash fighting on her own using what she has learned, just without the demonic highlights of it. In this way, the difference is not only felt, but actively overcome as Ash learns to be strong and make decisions she would not have at the beginning of the story. This brings us to the final pillar.

Growth

One of the points mentioned in the prompt is the strength and vulnerability of the main character and how it should be highlighted by most parts of the game. To do this, I've chosen to write two characters in one, and both share the part of the protagonist. On the surface, one is strong and the other is weak, but once played, there is more depth to this storyline and the strengths and weaknesses of both characters. This contrast should be felt at every turn by the player as well, and the mechanic of switching between the characters at critical points makes it so.

The overarching theme is the growth of the two main characters in this game. While Ash (human) learns that strength is necessary sometimes, Moranel (demon) learns that vulnerability is not always a weakness. These two perspectives are an essential part of the story I want to tell with this, and at its core is the way in which they learn to shore up and strengthen each other.

Worldbuilding

The Setting

This game is set in a classic villages-and-countryside fantasy setting (including woods, farms, long stretches of land, and villages and towns). The whole game takes place in one country (Ecreau) but there are forces in it from another one (Degrad) because of a war taking place between them. This war is a central part of the main plot, and a part of the inciting incident for it, though the focus is smaller than the final outcome of it.

The Genre and Tone

This is a fantasy game with a dark, dramatic tone, but it needs a balance of humour and lighter tones as well. When things are good, they should be noticeably so to the player. Ash should have moments of doubt, despair, and grief when the gravity of being possessed becomes clear to her, but as she and Moranel find an understanding, there should be moments of levity and hope to balance it out. I would liken it to stars in darkness, small but significant, except the few that grow bigger than that.

The Tropes

These are some of the tropes involved in the story:

Symbiotic Possession

Ash and Moranel go from a place where they are enemies to a place where they learn to share one body and trust each other with their abilities. This is a classic interpretation of the possession trope, familiar and yet interesting, and it gives the characters a lot of room to carry the plot through the development of their friendship. This also leaves a lot of room for character development for both Ash and Moranel.

This trope has to do with the duality and juxtaposition pillar, as well as the internal conflict. A big part of Ash's challenge is learning to keep control in a situation where even her own body is working against her at times.

Fish Out of Water

Ash is out of her element here, but Moranel more so. A large part of Moranel's arc is learning to cope with the vulnerability of being not only in an unfamiliar place, but also stuck in someone else's body. Moranel initially reacts to this by lashing out, contrasting her emotional vulnerability with physical strength, but her development leads to trusting Ash enough to feel comfortable in the situation. Once they achieve this trust, the player has access to easier control of the demonic powers Moranel has, being able to access them without Ash having to shift fully into Moranel's form.

This pillar deals with the internal conflict pillar, as it has to do with Moranel's struggle being in an environment and a body she is not used to and does not have total control over. This powerlessness is also juxtaposed with her past, in a realm where she was not only physically powerful, but politically influential as well.

Well-intentioned Extremist

This trope applies to the antagonist, Gregor Halval. Halval is the reason Ash gets possessed in the first place, though it is an accident, and once he realises how powerful a demon she got, he goes to great lengths to try to either separate or control the two.

Halval is in charge of a task force for the Ecreauan army meant to facilitate the possession of soldiers with demons from an alternate dimension. This is meant to create and control super soldiers who can give Ecreau an edge in the war against Degrad.

This trope deals with the duality/juxtaposition pillar in a basic way, because Halval contrasts Ash in many ways. Where her goals are small, his are grand. Where her struggle with other characters is mainly personal, his is distant. Where she learns to work with Moranel, Halval orders his soldiers to throw themselves at a demon rather than lead them into an actual fight, only to be defeated alone by the two main characters now working together. These are all easily digestible symbolism that make for a foil to not one, but two characters. He also contradicts Moranel, who was willing to lead rather than order her subjects around even in Barial (the demon dimension) before she was brought out of it.

Noble Fugitive

This applies in some measure to Moranel, who was important in her home dimension of Barial before being abducted and forced to possess a human by Gregor Halval and his men. Moranel must learn to cope with having less power, both politically and physically, as she learns to mesh well with Ash's methods of doing things. Coming to terms with being less politically powerful is a part of Moranel's development.

This trope deals with the internal conflict pillar. Moranel has a lot to come to terms with after she is brought to the human world to possess Ash. Her character development is one half of the most important development, the other being Ash.

The Conflict

There is both a bigger, wider conflict and a smaller, more personal one overarching this game. The bigger conflict is the war, the political conflict happening between the two countries. Most aspects of the smaller conflicts stem from this one, from the tension in the side characters and the hostility of rival soldiers Ash encounters. The more personal one is the possession, which effectively puts Ash at odds with both sides of the war, as now the army of her own country (Ecreau) is searching for her as well. This isolation is a

contrast to the concept of Ash never again being alone, as she is no longer the only person present in her own body.

The Scope

The scope of this story encompasses Ash's journey through Ecreau to find the temple with the mcguffin which can cure her possession. Upon reaching it, the final stage of the game begins, and Ash's story begins to come to a close. There are some key stages to the story present in the outline that should be included before this point, but the actual length of the journey should be subject to more discussion to see how many subplots could comfortably fit in it.

The Possible Futures

As Ash and Moranel come to an understanding at the end of the game, there is much potential for a sequel featuring the two with more established and seamless abilities. This possible future has several options:

- Ash and Moranel finding a way to end the summoning of demons.
- Same with the war, though it would need a bigger scope.
- More people finding the same understanding that Ash and Moranel did. A force of possessed soldiers in control of their abilities, for good or evil.
- Ash and Moranel considering the long term consequences of their partnership and trying to figure out what their shared future should be, or if it even should be shared.

The Stakeholders

Ash

Ash's investment changes from the beginning to the end of the story to the end of it. She begins with purely survivalistic instincts, to save herself and to find out how to reverse her possession. She ends on a note where she now sees the danger in using demons not only to humans but to the demons who are taken from their home dimension and forced to fight. She sets out with the goal to end this practice, and perhaps even the war itself.

Moranel

Moranel, too, begins with the desire to free herself from Ash's body and return to her own dimension. She ends on the same note as Ash, though here she represents the perspective of the captured demons, another side of the people victimised by the war.

Halval

Halval's career and life are dependent on the war to some extent, because the dangerous practice of possessing soldiers is something he is in charge of validating as a good

practice rather than something he should be arrested for. He is on thin ice with Ecreau's ruler already, and proving that he can control the demons is what's most important to him. Getting Moranel under control and fighting on their side would validate his position and establish the necessity of what he's doing, and so he remains committed to that until he is defeated at the end of the game.

Everyone in Ecreau and Degrad

Perhaps an obvious fact, but the people of Ecreau are stakeholders in the result of the conflict between them and Degrad. Though they are not directly involved in Ash's storyline, it will come to affect them one way or another in the future.

Similarly, the fate of Degrad depends in some part on the result of Ash's decisions in the story, as the use of a powerful demon like Moranel would give the Ecreauan army an edge over them in the conflict.

Characters and their Development

The following are the main characters of this game.

Ash

Ash is the protagonist and primary player-controlled character.

- She is a farm girl who hunts, and so she knows how to use a bow and arrow from the beginning. Fighting humans is another matter altogether, which she will come to learn.
- Not naive but inexperienced and idealistic. Prior to the events of the game, and throughout the very beginning of it, her philosophy is to avoid the war to the extent she can and wait for it to end.
- That said, she is also impulsive and stubborn on her decisions, being able to argue with a demon on the merits of sparing people's lives while still unsure what is even happening (in regards to the possession). She has a few core values that she will not waver from, such as her opinion that everyone deserves to be saved. This value, however, will change when it comes to the antagonist (she makes the decision to kill him in order to save others at the end of the game).
- Her main weapon varies, as it goes from a bow (at the start) to a dagger (in the middle, which takes some practice) to a short sword at the end (symbolising her synchronicity with Moranel, who uses sword-like protrusions on her limbs to fight). This symbolises her own growth as well as her learning to grow together with Moranel, and by the end, their fighting styles have practically combined to cover each other's weaknesses.

Backstory

Ash grew up in a nameless village near the woods at the edge of the country. This means that she has been out of the way of the fighting and only feeling the economical effects of the war for almost her whole life. She lived a normal life up until she was possessed, and so the switch from farmer to adventurer is jarring for her.

Character Arc

Ash's character arc is a coming-of-age story, in which she learns not only to be strong in battle, but also what her already innate strengths are. The resolution to her arc is the ability to not only fend for herself, but also to see the world the way it is with black, white, and grey in between (so to speak). She learns to make decisions for herself and others, and this culminates in the decision to kill the antagonist and try to put an end to the war. Whether this is the right thing to do is up to the player's interpretation.

- Ash starts out as a normal villager. She works on her family's farm and has nothing to do with the war other than being one of the civilians affected by it. She can use a bow and arrow (and a dagger for some non-fighting parts of it) to hunt.
- As the story progresses with her and Moranel learning to coexist, it becomes clear over time that while Ash is scared, she is also stubborn when it comes to her own beliefs. Throughout the story, Ash is devastated whenever people end up hurt or killed because of Moranel and their situation. Her decisions are guided by her need to protect others.
- Towards the end, Ash has grown and some of her beliefs change. Together with this, she learns to accept that she is not always right, even with something she feels this strongly about. The decision to kill the antagonist is something she is sure of, whether or not the player is, and the ending is meant to challenge the player to have their own opinions on it, the way Ash has learned to do. Though the answer seems clear initially, the meaning is for there to be grey areas and things that are not certain. Ash learns to question and examine what she thinks is right, and she acts accordingly towards the end of the game.

General Aesthetic

Ash is a woman in her early twenties, meant to be practically innocent in the beginning of the story and grow into a more mature adult towards the end of it. Her participation in the war and the adventure is symbolic of her growing, and her clothing should reflect that.

I have not settled on the specific mechanics of Ash's clothing and gear, but her theme is blue colours to contrast Moranel's theme of red and flames. I'm picturing a blue cloak for her that she wears throughout the game, perhaps with a change towards the end to symbolise her stepping into the grey area (purple, perhaps?). I'm partly inspired by the

character of Jaina Proudmoore from *World of Warcraft*, but only insofar as the blonde hair and the blue cape.



[A rough concept.](#)

Moranel

Moranel is the second protagonist of the story. She is a demon from an alternate dimension who is summoned to possess soldiers by Gregor Halval and his men. When that happens, the ritual is interrupted by Ash, who subsequently becomes Moranel's vessel.

Backstory

Moranel is from a dimension the humans call Barial. She was a powerful and influential demon before her abduction to the world of humans, and her powers remain strong in comparison to other demons who have been similarly weakened and taken to possess humans. One of the most powerful demons brought over this way, she has the power to wreak a lot of havoc if left unchecked, but it soon becomes clear that she may not actually want to.

Character Arc

Moranel's character arc is a mirror of Ash's, and the lesson she learns throughout the game is that physical strength is not the only kind of strength there is. This is something both women learn to some extent, but Moranel's journey also teaches her the value of being vulnerable and trusting others.

- Moranel starts the game as something almost feral from both Ash's and the player's perspective. Like other demons forcibly given vessels, she is unused to the situation and lashes out when she senses that her host is under great stress. Moranel has difficulty adjusting to the outside world and attacks blindly when she emerges.
- Over the course of the story, Moranel begins to communicate with Ash and learns how the human world works. Moranel is a powerful demon and politically powerful in the dimension she comes from, but in this world she is vulnerable, and she reacts badly to it just as she does emerging when Ash is under stress. Talking to Ash, arguing over their course of action, and seeing the world around her as she and Ash learn to channel her without the wild rage, she begins to understand that she cannot solve this situation herself and she does not have the complete control she used to have.
- Towards the end of the story, Moranel has begun to trust Ash and the two are able to fight in sync with each other. Losing Ash and becoming a formless entity, but still caught in the human world, Moranel is more vulnerable than she has ever been, and it makes her realise just how much she misses her then. When they are reunited, Moranel is happy about that, and she pledges herself to Ash's cause of ending the coercive possessions.

General Aesthetic

Moranel only appears in person a couple of times in the game. The rest of the time, her powers are apparent in Ash's struggling and subsequent use of them. Moranel keeps about her an aura of red smoke and particle effects which mirror the look of the Barial dimension (only briefly seen as Ash is possessed). This sets her apart from the other demons, who have black smoke and particle effects.

In her true form, fully possessing Ash, she stands twice as tall as Ash with long legs and arms. Instead of hands and feet, her legs simply end in points like large spikes.

Parts of the inspiration for Moranel are Nightmare King Grimm and the Hornet Protector from the game *Hollow Knight*. They share the shape of the head and the triangular set to the body, as well as the thin, sharp legs. However, I picture Moranel more monochromatic with a dark red colour all over, punctuated only by black eyes (like the Hornet Protector's). I also picture Moranel with thicker limbs that end in a point as well as wider shoulders (an upside down version of the triangle body you see below).



[This](#) colour scheme, if a bit darker. About this shape of head.



[Another option](#) for head shape, as well as the sharp legs, though they could be a bit thicker.



Body shaped like [this](#), but pointier.

Gregor Halval

Backstory

Gregor Halval is a general in the Ecreauan army. He is the leader of a task force in charge of experiments with demon possession. He grew up in a military family where reputation was an important staple, and when he rose through the ranks of the army, he wanted to make an impression.

Halval sees more importance in growing his family's standing than he does in the soldiers, and so the experiments with possession were in part his idea, though the notion had been floating around the court before then. Halval's task force was successful in training their soldiers to control lesser demons who possessed them, and so he expanded his experiments to include more powerful demons. The beginning of this game places him at the cusp of his greatest experiment yet: possessing a soldier with the demon Moranel, who is far more powerful and destructive than the others.

Character Arc

Halval starts the story with the conviction that he and his soldiers can control Moranel once they have her possess one of them. This conviction drives him to continue to pursue Ash once he has found out what actually happened to the demon he summoned/abducted.

He ends the story defeated, but he does not see Ash and Moranel's perspective at the end of it. As he perceives this as a slight on his honour, he is then set up as a potential returning villain for a sequel. In his eyes, winning the war and restoring his reputation are the only ways to fix what Ash and Moranel have broken.

General Aesthetic

Halval dresses like an official in the Euclean army. Their colours are white and gold, and he wears them in the form of a white uniform with gold details and shoulderpads. He has short black hair and brown eyes.

His model should be taller and slightly bigger than the other soldiers to differentiate him from them in cutscenes and gameplay. The light colours of his look are a juxtaposition with how he is the antagonist of the game, and he wears them like a shield to keep from suspicion of his true intentions.



An approximation of Halval's colour scheme and silhouette, if more detailed than I would want him. I imagine him a little more pragmatic, though just as dramatic with the cape. Reference from [here](#).

Plot of the Game (Roughly)

The Beginning

- A calm beginning. A day in Ash's village, in which the player gets to explore and gets some exposition on the war from the villagers. In the evening, when she is alone, she spots smoke coming from the woods that looks to be more than a campfire. Worried that it will spread, she goes to investigate and stumbles upon a bonfire ritual in which general Halval and his men are working on summoning a demon. Ash is revealed, surprising them, and just then, the demon appears. As it is out of control, everyone tries to run save for Ash, who does not know what is happening. She gets possessed and passes out on the ground.
- She wakes up the next morning, terrified and confused, and finds nothing but an empty campsite. Filled with questions but alone, she opts to return to her village.
- Over time, as she walks through the woods, she begins to feel strange. Then she is surrounded on the path by a pack of wolves, and she becomes scared for her life. Sensing this, and that her vessel is in danger, Moranel appears for the first time. There is only a flash of red fire before Ash passes out and the screen goes dark. When she regains her consciousness, Ash is laying on the ground again, surrounded by wolves that have been ripped apart. Her cloak is streaked with blood. Shocked, she begins to panic and the screen blurs and tints red, pulsing in this way for a long moment. She stumbles up and out of the bloody circle on the ground. Once it is out of camera range, she begins to get a hold of herself, breathing heavily and telling herself that she has to get back to the village. It isn't safe here. She takes a few hesitant steps and then walks forward to a fading screen.
- Cut to Ash returning to the village and her house. There is a cutscene that cuts to her bedroom where she walks in with her now cleaned cloak. Hesitating at the door, she regards the cloak and thinks out loud that something must have attacked the wolves when she passed out, or perhaps the soldiers returned and somehow saved her. But was what she saw even real? And what will she do if it was?
- Heading outside again, Ash goes to the village doctor to find out if something is wrong with her, but upon approaching their home, she sees a group of soldiers outside it. Recognising them as the same soldiers she saw the other night, she hides, but it quickly becomes clear that they are searching for her as she overhears them question and get violent with other villagers. The player then has to sneak Ash away from them and out of the village.
- As she leaves, it becomes increasingly clear that the soldiers are everywhere and looking for her. She realises that she has to escape it and go somewhere else to get help or wait until they leave. Ash thinks aloud on this as the player moves,

giving exposition without need for cutscenes. However, as the player leaves, there is a two second cutscene in which Ash looks sadly back at the village. The player can then leave.

- Slight breather as the player gets to explore the wilds outside the village on the way to the neighbouring one. This is an introduction to simple combat, as Ash can take on one or two animals on her own with little trouble. Gameplay here should encourage bow and arrow, as Ash is not very proficient in close combat.
- While approaching the neighbouring village, Ash is spotted by a group of searching soldiers from Halval's troop. She runs, but they catch her and a cutscene occurs in which she struggles to get away while the screen pulses red again until red flames abruptly appear around her. The soldiers prepare to fight, and this time the player gets to see Ash start to change forms into something demonic. Moranel's silhouette becomes partially visible among the flames. Then her arm, which is a sharp blade, swipes outside the fire and draws blood from the first soldier. It stops in the air, giving the player a fraction of time to see it, and then the screen abruptly turns black.
- Ash wakes up in a villager's house, safe but with the knowledge that the soldiers outside are looking for her. This is where the story gets a little less detailed to allow for ironing out the details within the team.

The following are highlights for the middle part of the story.

- Ash escapes from this village too, now with the knowledge that Halval's soldiers are after her (though not yet who Halval is).
- During this time, Ash has a recurring nightmare about what happened with the wolves when she was escaping the forest. It goes in three sections over time: the first in which she blacks out (same as the actual cutscene, but now with slower fadeout as she blacks out), the second in which she sees something (Moranel) bursting out of herself, and the third in which she sees Moranel tearing two of the wolves apart. This nightmare is part of Ash realising that what is happening to her is possession.
- Overlapping with this, specifically the last one, is Ash meeting a character who can explain demonic possession and how it happens to her, an old man that camps with her in the woods. This leads her to interpret the last part of the dream as herself being possessed. Ash refusing to accept this at first is the main personal conflict of the early parts of the story.
- The first turning point is when Ash accepts that this is something she will have to fix, having earlier decided not to accept that it was happening. At this point, the character that told her about the possession tells her about the mcguffin, and Ash accepting it begins the quest to find said mcguffin.
 - During this time, Moranel is not present much in person. She appears when Ash is in danger (scripted events) but is not playable yet.

- The second turning point is when Ash realises that even if she is looking for the mcguffin, she is effectively stuck with a demon inside her until then. This is how she comes to this conclusion:
 - During a visit to a town, with some buildup of the characters in it, Ash is discovered by the townsfolk to be possessed when she defends herself and a side character from Degrad soldiers in the woods. Though Ash believes the character was unconscious, she finds out the truth when the local law enforcement corners her as she returns. As Ash tries to reason with them, they threaten her with spears, and Moranel appears. This is the first time Moranel is playable.
 - Ash wakes up by a fire in the woods. Across from her is the old man who told her about possession earlier in the story. When Ash realises what has happened as she is covered in blood, she breaks down, hitting a low point. She realises that it is too unsafe to continue the way she has. The old man explains to her that pretending a demon isn't there is not the way to deal with it, and she resolves to find a way to stop the needless violence. That night, she looks within herself and tries to speak to the demon, and Moranel answers, speaking her first lines in the story.
- The relationship with Moranel develops over several places and several side quests. Without getting too detailed, these are the rough strokes of it:
 - The first time they speak, Moranel is still figuring out communication within a mind just as Ash is. She is also unwilling to trust something (someone) she has been trapped within, so there isn't much understanding between the two at first. Moranel says, in very few words, that she is trapped and angry. Unable to do anything else, Ash pleads with her to stop killing people. Moranel stops responding at this.
 - Note that Moranel not responding here is partly because of spite, partly because she honestly doesn't know how to stop. Protecting the host is an instinctive response demons develop when incorporated into a host, and as such Halval uses them as a form of nuclear option. No one has (officially) attempted to control this with anything other than isolation until Ash and Moranel, and so no one has succeeded.
 - Over the course of several more places, they have more conversations. After Ash runs from a threat before it can get to Moranel levels of dangerous, she tries again and Moranel asks her why she did. Ash explains that it was so she wouldn't hurt people, and Moranel remains quiet.
 - The next lull between quests, Ash tries again, and this time Moranel speaks full sentences, if short ones. Ash asks who she is, and Moranel says "someone that shouldn't be here".
 - There is a turning point in which Ash is caught in a trapping pit by Halval's soldiers. Unable to think of anything else to do, she despairs until Moranel

initiates contact for the first time. Moranel tells her that they can't die here. When Ash has no good answer for her, Moranel asks if she can try. Shocked, Ash asks how, and Moranel has no idea, which she admits. But they approach the wall, look at it for a long moment, and Ash begins to climb it. After several failed tries, halfway up the wall, the background flashes red a few times, and Ash's arms extend into spikes that she uses to climb the rest of the way. This is the first non-violent meeting between them, and Ash can take it for the win it is.

- The second turning point in the plot is this, when they figure out how to work together for the first time. Over the course of the story, this relationship strengthens, and it now becomes how the player levels up. As they reach more synchronicity, the player gets more demonic abilities to play around with.
- As it develops, Moranel also becomes more comfortable talking to Ash. She then reveals some things about herself.
 - Her name.
 - The fact that she was powerful in Barial, and that her underlings were disappearing. She supposes that now, she knows where they went.
 - That she is actually scared, something she has very little experience being.
 - That killing is an instinctive thing when threatened, and she doesn't know how to control it. Ash then promises her that they will find that out together.
 - Note that while Moranel learns this, Ash will come to learn that killing people that want to kill you is not always avoidable, and Moranel will help her understand this with her stories of coming to power in a dimension where power is the only guarantee for survival.
 - This understanding will involve a flashback to the wolves at the beginning, in which Moranel has figured out how to show her what actually happened. The wolves were going to kill Ash, and so Moranel protected her as necessary. Two wolves escaped, because Moranel felt no need to hunt them down. Ash appreciates that.
- As they reach an understanding, Moranel's senseless killing ends and Ash gains new abilities along the way. When they finally find the temple in which the mcguffin is, they find Halval already waiting for them there. This is when we reach the ending.

The ending, which is slightly more detailed.

- At the end of their journey, Ash and Moranel find the temple in which the mcguffin that will separate them can be found. At this point, they have learned to control their shared powers.

- This temple should be the last “dungeon” of sorts, and it should be difficult and varied. There should be segments in which both Ash’s capability of stealth and Moranel’s destructive potential come to good use, preferably in direct sequence or combination. The enemies are Halval’s soldiers, including those who have been possessed by demons he has summoned in the past.
- After fighting their way through this temple, they come face to face with Halval and the mcguffin, at which point the final boss fight starts. Halval uses the mcguffin to separate Ash and Moranel, and a new segment of gameplay begins.
- This is played as Ash, now human and effectively powerless without her demon. However, she retains some of her fighting abilities without the enhancement of demonic power. She must fight Halval sword-to-sword and he should be a very difficult fight. This has to do with the juxtaposition and internal struggle pillars. The player should struggle with newfound powerlessness the same way Ash does in this fight, and it ends with them losing (reminiscent of [the fight with Leon](#) in the first *Kingdom Hearts*, a fight the player is meant to lose).
- After this, she is captured and meets the old man for the last time in the story. He is infiltrating the temple and breaking her out. At this point, he reveals that he was a part of Halval’s task force in the past, where he watched friends get possessed and die trying to understand and control it. To get redemption and stop Halval, he decided to follow Ash when he saw her get possessed (he was spying on Halval trying to find out how to stop him on his own) and give her as much knowledge as he could. It was too dangerous to stay with her while she was not in control, but her progress showed a lot of promise for stopping this for good.
- Ash fights her way through the temple (this should be difficult since she is missing the other half of her abilities now) until she reaches and confronts Halval, who has the mcguffin (and Moranel) with him. After another brief fight, he comes to the conclusion that enough time and research have been put into this, and he can now figure out how to control a demon of Moranel’s stature. Satisfied with this, he crushes the mcguffin to get possessed, but the bond between Ash and Moranel is now strong enough that even as smoke, in her weakest form, Moranel knows how to find and connect with Ash again. The two reunite and the player gets to fight an angry Halval in Moranel’s demon form, now with far more control than the other times. This fight should be difficult, but there should be balancing elements to it that make it one of the more fun fights in the game. I suggest soldiers that the player can crush between phases with Halval.
- After this final fight, Moranel reveals that their bond is strong enough for them to find each other, and Ash reveals that she wanted to get possessed again because she has never felt more in control than she does now. They then confront Halval, who is now at the stage of yelling about how he won’t lose to them. When

confronted with the choice, Ash chooses to kill him, despite Moranel saying that they don't have to.

- This is some character development in both directions, so to speak, for Ash. Her reasons for killing Halval are both personal and selfless. On one hand, she knows that he will stop at nothing to get this possessed force established and irreplaceable in the army. On the other, a darker part of her wants revenge for everything he has done to them, and even if she wants to be, she is not above that part of her. This could become the topic of further development in any possible sequels.
- The conclusion to the game is that Ash wants to stop the practice of possessing soldiers, and Halval is not the only one. Though they are unsure just how, the two women set out to do this, if not end the war entirely. Something has to be done, and they have figured things out thus far. They will figure out what the next step is, now in perfect synchronicity.
 - Also a possible setup for a sequel with more established controls that can be fairly polished.

General Points

Some choices made and their meanings:

- There are two touchstones in this story which overarch it: the scene with the wolves and the old man who appears seemingly everywhere. They have different meanings.
 - The wolves are simply an explanation of what it means to be possessed. At first, Ash only remembers the darkness (the initial confusion), then the killing (violence and a loss of control) and finally Moranel shows her the mercy at the end (understanding, specifically that Moranel is an individual caught in this violence just as she is. One who does not want to be).
 - The old man is mostly exposition, but he is also a measure of progress. Seeing him means that an important development has happened, and he feels the need to explain it to Ash. While he can't help her control it, he knows enough to help her understand it as a result of his time in Halval's task force of sorts. This is a redeeming action for this character, who feels guilty over his time spent with Halval. He is one of the few who understand the difference between demons as a natural force and demons as individuals.
- The plot written so far focuses far more on Ash and Moranel's relationship than the actual happenings of the world around them. This would need more development in production, but the main focus is now established in some sense, and the internal conflict should shine through in every aspect of the game.

- The game follows the hero's journey, which makes it simple in some sense to digest and adjust in production. It also makes for a recognisable yet interesting narrative structure.
- I'm not sure where else to put this, but when Ash is in the middle of her struggle to accept being possessed, there are times when she sees Moranel instead of herself in mirrors. This is part of the symbolism of the name of the game, as Moranel is both Ash's co-protagonist and her foil. This is simply a visual way of showing that.

Discussion Points

The following are points which could use some discussion:

- Halval's characterisation. While the focus is Ash and Moranel, this character may need more fleshing out. I'm unsure how to do that besides flashbacks and in-game lore.
- Moranel's position in Barial. The political ties between demons could need more fleshing out, whether it's a simple "the strongest rule" or some form of actual political system.
- Subplots. This is something I would want to discuss with the team.