



Orpheus' Descent

Published By:

Forge Studios

Bachelor of Science in Entertainment and Multimedia Computing

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Version

Beta

Last Updated (09/20/2025)

Date (09/15/2025)

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a complete overview of the game design and development of Orpheus' Descent. This document will serve as a foundation for the main objectives of this game, its technical requirements, and its development timeline.

This document is crucial in the development of Orpheus' Descent to ensure that all aspects of the game, from gameplay mechanic, story, art direction, and technical specifications will give a clear vision on what the game looks like. It serves as a guide in the development of this game to ensure its success and timely launch.

Game Overview

Orpheus' Descent is a 2D narrative-driven Metroidvania game that follows the story of Orpheus from Greek mythology into descending into the Underworld to retrieve back his beloved wife, Eurydice. Orpheus will have to run, fight, and dash his way to four different main regions of the Underworld to get back his beloved Eurydice. Along the way, players will unravel Orpheus' past and the mystery behind the Underworld.- Provide a brief description of your game.

- Include its genre, setting, and main concept.

Target Audience

Players who enjoy Greek mythology will surely enjoy this game, since this game will be littering around some Greek mythology references such as meeting some familiar Greek Gods or items and places related to Greek mythology along the way. Those who enjoy playing Metroidvania games or Platformer games will also enjoy this, since this game will try to balance out the difficulty level according to the player's preferences for players who only want to experience the game's narrative story.

Game Concept

Orpheus' Descent focuses on about grief, lost, and love. Players will descend through the Underworld's 4 regions, and uncover Orpheus' past while also unlocking unique abilities and gathering items and money as you go along your adventure.

Game setting

The Underworld has 4 main regions each with their own unique visuals, enemies, and lore. contributing to the oppressive yet hauntingly beautiful atmosphere. Sound design uses environmental audio and dynamic music to reinforce the tone—shifting between somber, haunting, and intense depending on the player's progression.

1. **Asphodel Meadows** - A peaceful but unsettling meadow where wandering souls linger.
2. **Elysium** - Radiant field with buildings and statues scattered with enemies hiding in plain sight, a perfect place of beauty and deception.
3. **Tartarus** - A fiery abyss filled with lava rivers and crumbling platforms
4. **Fields of the Weeping** - A fog-covered wasteland of eternal sorrow where enemies lurk and hide in the fog.

Gameplay Mechanics

The game's core mechanic are designed to emphasize the exploration, the combat, and the puzzles within a 2D side-scrolling framework.

Core Mechanic

Movement- Players can run or dash around the map by simply using the left and right arrow keys or 'A' and 'D' keys, while for dashing is to right-click the mouse.

Fight - Players can fight enemies by using left click to punch, or do a plunge attack with Jump + Punch by simply using Space bar and left click. When dashing towards enemies, it can knock back enemies by using and temporarily stun them, except for mini bosses or bosses.

Lyre abilities - Orpheus' lyre can stun, group, and blow away enemies to be able to progress through the map. It can also help call forth the wind to lift Orpheus high up, especially on platforms that are hard to reach. Abilities can be used using 'E' key, but take note, abilities are limited and therefore can use once.

Puzzles and side quests - Puzzles and side quests are being scattered across the map for players to discover. Some of them are not required to complete, but they can offer some interesting rewards when completing them, while some do require you to complete them to progress through the narrative.

Checkpoints - Checkpoints help heal Orpheus and reveal fragments of Orpheus' past.

Death system - If player dies, he/she will have to restart their progress, but abilities acquired will be kept.

Characters and Entities

Main characters:

Orpheus: Main protagonist.

Eurydice: Main protagonist's love interest.

Sub characters

The 12 Greek Gods and Goddesses: Assists Orpheus on his quest by giving him buffs or special items.

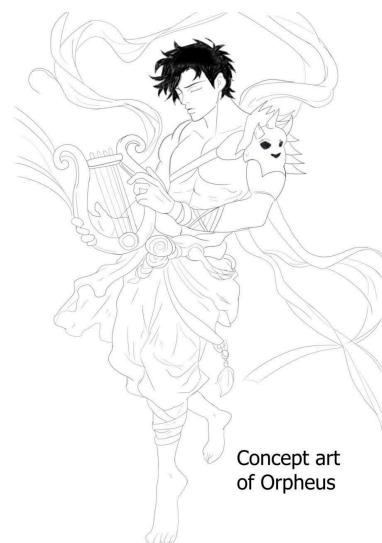
Some of them can also unlock some of Orpheus memory fragments.

Thanatos: Assists Orpheus on his quest by giving him buffs or special items.

Charon: Merchant that sells useful items and abilities.

Enemies:

- First layer: Wraiths, Wisps, and Undead warriors
- Second layer: Sirens, Corrupted Fighter, Gorgon, Medusa
- Third layer: Fiery thief, lava hounds, Cerberus
- Fourth layer: Specters, Ghastly, Weeping Whooper, and Scylla



Concept art
of Orpheus



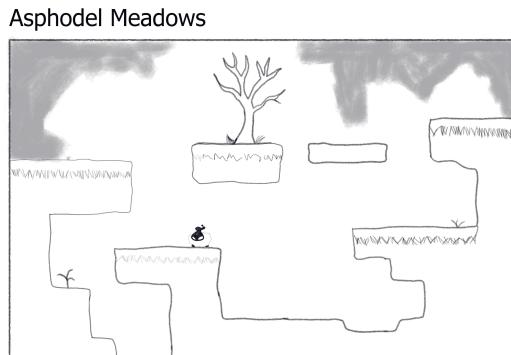
Wraith (Angry and Idle)

Wisps

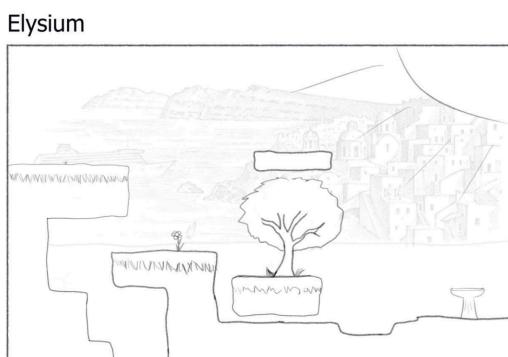
Game Levels and Progression

The game features four main regions of the Underworld:

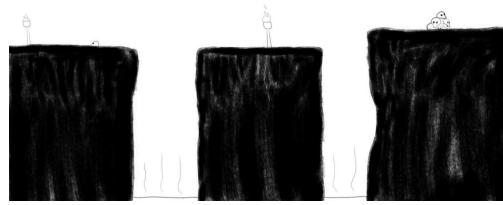
1. **Asphodel Meadows.** First layer will consist of puzzles, optional quests for some NPCs that will give you rewards once the player completes a specific mission. Players will encounter enemies such as Wisps, Wraith, Undead warriors. This region will also introduce the core mechanics of the game. The Wisps enemies do not go after the player, but touching them or going near them will burn the player. Try to avoid these Wraiths cause once they spot you run! Or fight them head on... The undead warriors are skeleton warriors that can equip different weapons, some of them can equip bows, swords, and maces.



2. **Elysium.** Just like the first layer, it will consist of puzzles, optional quests, and enemies like the Sirens and Corrupted Fighter. Try not to get hit by the Siren's voice because not only will it hurt, but it can also stun your player. Corrupted Fighters are the same as the Undead warriors, but there more stronger and are equipped with armor. Beware also of those stone statues because some of them may turn out to be Gorgons who will kill you.

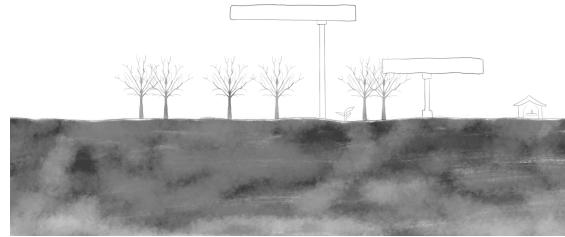


3. **Tartarus.** Unlike the first two layers, the environment of this place is much more dangerous with enemies like Fiery thief that can steal your items, lava hounds that can inflict burn on you, and some mini bosses like Cerberus. Ground is also made of lava, so falling off or stepping on a weak platform will result to your death.

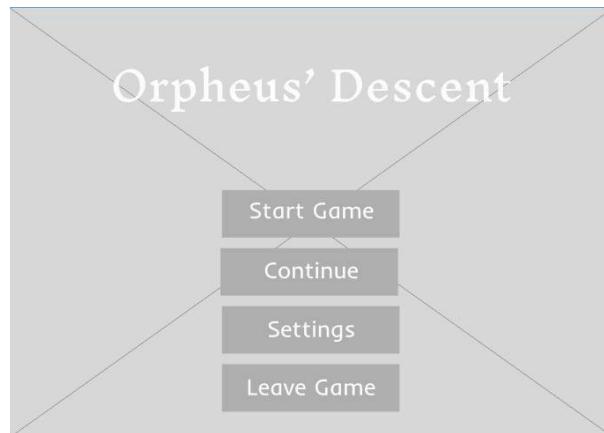


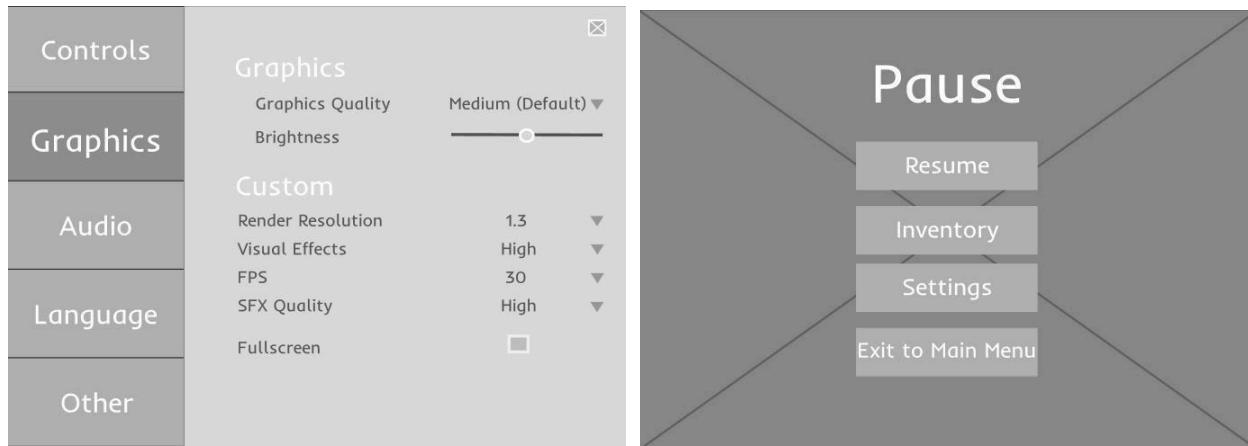
4. **Fields of the Weeping.** This layer is shrouded in fog making enemies a bit harder to see. Enemies encountered here are Specters which are long ranged enemies that uses dark magic powers that can grant negative special effects, Ghastly that can paralyze you, Weeping Whopper, and a tough boss to fight Scylla and is similar to the sirens.

Fields of Weeping

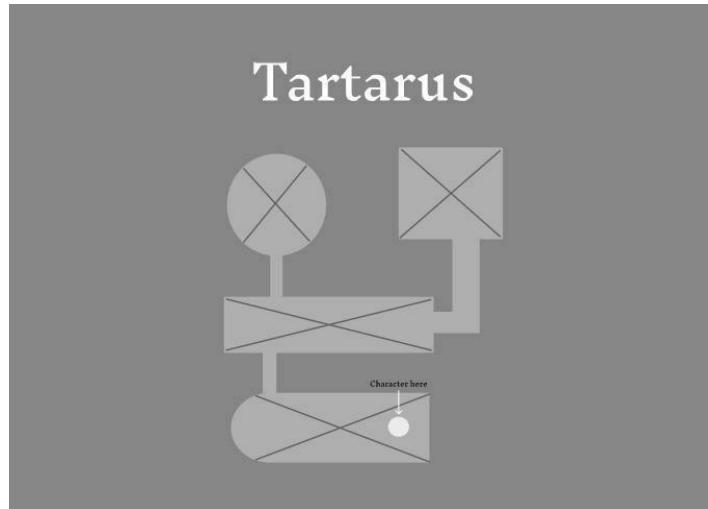


User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX)





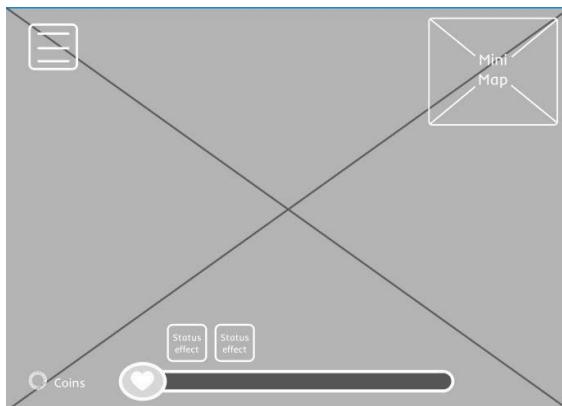
Player can be able to custom their preferred Graphics, Controls, Audio, Language, other Settings options in the Main Menu and during gameplay in the Pause menu. Players may choose their preferred Graphics quality which is Low, Medium, and High. Brightness can also be adjusted accordingly. Custom graphics such as FPS, SFX quality, Visual Effects, and Render resolution can be adjusted accordingly by click on the drop-down button to display options.



A map of the region will be added to the interface so that players will discover nearby enemies or items or areas that have yet to be explored.



This is the Death screen if player dies during the gameplay. This will restart your progress except for abilities gained will be automatically be saved.



Health bar, status icons, and coin currency will be added for the game's interface to assist players during their gameplay. Mini map can be clicked on if players wish to see the larger and more detailed map by clicking on the Mini map. Menu icon is also displayed on the top left.

Art and Audio Direction

-Visuals: A minimalist hand-drawn 2D art-style will be adapted to this game with a parallax scrolling background.

- Music: The game's music will be based from greek music shifting with each region and enemy encounters.

- Sound effects: Will be used with the help of Audacity to make the game's experience more immersive. No voice acting will be added to the game, only game dialogue.

Story and Narrative

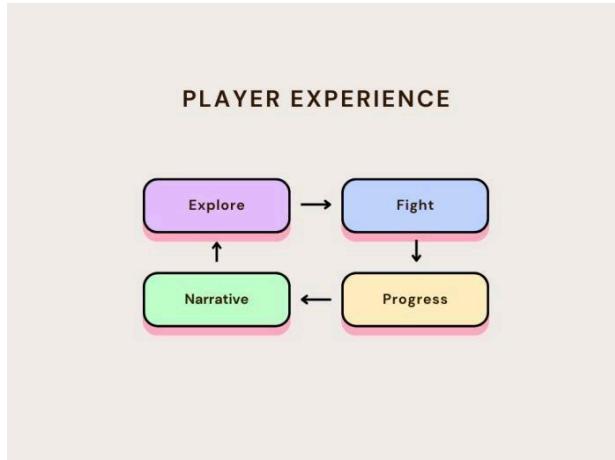
Overview:

Orpheus descends into the Underworld to bring back his beloved wife, Eurydice. Along his adventure into the Underworld, memories begin to resurface back of his past failure and the mystery of the Underworld reveals itself to all be apart of Orpheus' fragmented memories and that Orpheus is stuck in an unending cycle of grief. By the climax of the story, Orpheus will have to choose to repeat the cycle which restarts the game or end the cycle and break free from it.- Explain how the narrative unfolds during gameplay.

Orpheus' fragmented memories can be unlocked during checkpoints (shrines) and after finishing a specific region. Player's can also interact with NPCs and familiar Greek figures to uncover more about mysteries of the Underworld and about Eurydice's status.

- Provide Storyboarding Image.

Game Flow and Player Experience



Players begin their journey through the first layer of the Underworld, fighting, interacting with NPCs and solving puzzles to progress through the narrative. As player progresses through to later regions, difficulty will keep increasing to make gameplay experience meaningful. Unlocking the narratives like Orpheus' memory fragments will allow players to proceed through the next layer until they reach the final layer.

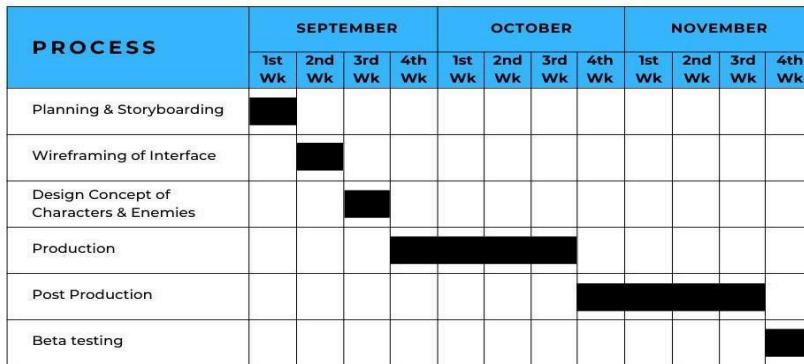
Technical Details

- **Game Engine:** Unity (C#)
- **Tools:** Krita and Adobe Photoshop (visual design) and Audacity (sound design)
- **Platforms:** PC (Windows/Mac)

Timeline and Milestones

Game Development Process

Gantt Chart



Planning & Storyboarding (Week 1)

The game's story, mechanics, and overall structure will be planned out and done on this time.

Wireframing of Interface (Week 2)

Sketching and designing the UI wireframe, this includes HUD, Menu screen, Game screen, and etc.

Design Concept of Characters & Enemies (Week 3)

This is the continuation of the UI wireframe, this now also includes the background layout and design of the game. It is also the start of conceptual design of various characters and enemies.

Production (Week 4 to 3rd Week of October)

This entire month is dedicated to development work. This includes programming and implementing the game's levels, mechanic, and enemy system.

Post Production (Week 4 of October to Week 3 of November)

shifts to polishing—bug fixes, balancing difficulty, improving visuals and sound, and finalizing story integration.

Beta Testing (Week 4 of November)

open the game for beta testing. This lets you gather player feedback, catch bugs, and test gameplay balance before final release.

Glossary and References

- **Beta Testing** – It is a stage of game development where the nearly complete game is tested by external or selected players to find bugs, balance issues, and usability problems.
- **Boss** – A powerful enemy that typically appears at the end of a region or level, it serves as a major challenge for players since it has a unique mechanic than typical NPCs.

- **Checkpoints** – Specific point in the game where the player's health can be restored.
- **HUD (Heads-Up Display)** – It is an on-screen interface element that can consist of health bar, mini-map, status icons, and etc. That can provide the player some gameplay information.
- **Metroidvania** – A subgenre of action-adventure games focused on exploration, backtracking, and unlocking new abilities that allow access to previously inaccessible areas.
- **NPC (Non-Playable Character)** – These are characters that are being controlled by the game itself. They either provide support or attack players according to their role.
- **Parallax Scrolling** – A graphical effect where background images move slower than foreground images, creating a sense of depth.
- **Progression System** – It is a system that serves as a foundation for how the player will advance through a game, gains new abilities, completes quests, and unlocks new regions.
- **UI (User Interface)** – The system of menus, icons, and displays that players interact with to control the game and manage settings.
- **UX (User Experience)** – The overall feel, usability, and satisfaction that a player experiences while interacting with the game.

References

Greek Mythology Sources

- Ovid's *Metamorphoses*
- Hesiod's *Theogony*
- Homer's *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*

Tools & Software

- Unity (C#) – primary game engine.
- Krita and Adobe Photoshop – visual design and asset creation.
- Audacity – sound effect editing.