

SYZYGY Narrative Bible (Abridged)

Contributors

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Game Overview

SYZYGY is a charming character-driven puzzle platforming game for 1 or 2 players following two main characters: Atlas, a human boy; and Cosmo, a girl from the stars. These characters learn to use their complementary abilities and personalities to the fullest as they adventure to the edge of the universe. SYZYGY will follow these characters via episodic expansions that highlight key moments of their journey as they travel and grow together for many years.

Purpose

The SYZYGY Narrative Bible document serves to provide a clear vision and maintain narrative consistency throughout all aspects of the project. It outlines core elements of the story, characters, and worlds in one place. Access to coherent information about the narrative components of SYZYGY encourages effective communication and fluid collaboration between anyone on the team. Its primary intent is to generate a breadth of documentation that supports the development of high-quality narrative components, which in turn create immersive worlds and characters. The information contained is **not** intended as a representation of project scope.



Setting

Eryliiad (Eclipsed)



Background

Eryliiad is named after the Eryllic people who developed astute astronomical prowess as a developing culture on this planet before leaving it behind to pursue starfaring. Once imagined by many across the galaxy as harboring some secret key to Eryllic intellect, uncovering its location only resulted in a handful of conflicts, raids, and looters before word spread how typical of a planet it seemed.

Eryliiad's geography includes plenty of biomes and features familiar to us on Earth: plains, forests, rivers, lakes, mountains, and caves. With its most advanced life long gone, flora and fauna on this planet remain undisturbed, often reclaiming ruined structures.

What most looters missed out on was this planet's reaction to celestial alignments. When eclipsed, the environment itself reacts, channeling astral energy and assuming surreal new traits. Spots and swaths of grassy land float midair, dew sparkling in the starlight. Once-dormant fungi feed on this energy, swelling enormously and glowing brightly. Ruined Eryllic structures creak to life, uncovering hidden passages and machines powered by astral energy. The planet of Eryliiad is more than meets the eye.

Ruined Structures

The ancient ruins of Eryliad hint at the advanced technology of the Eryllic people, who are absent not because their culture collapsed, but because they transcended it: advancing to the stars.

Though seemingly derelict, these structures creak to life as the eclipse aligns and fills the air with astral energy. Powered doors, moving platforms, and other intricate contraptions transform the space, revealing hidden secrets. Symbols and star charts glow: luminescent paintings awakened by the starlight on the brick walls. Designed for beings who stood taller than adult humans, the ruins feel vast and spacious rather than cramped or oppressive.

However, these ruins are not devoid of risk. The Eryllics devised traps, originally meant to ensnare smaller prey creatures, which may pose a challenge for any curious adventurers. Pressure plates might trigger a barrier to raise or a floor to collapse, creating a sticky situation that requires ingenuity to escape. These traps focus on containment rather than harm, as the Eryllic people preferred their prey alive.

The Eryllic people viewed construction as a spiritual endeavor, resulting in meticulously crafted structures adorned with rich runic symbology. Bricks were a favored construction strategy, and their technology is derived from the magical clay that lifts in starlight. Any manually-operated machinery requires four hands to operate, reflecting the physiology of its creators.

The Towering Observatory

The observatory is one of the Eryllic people's greatest structures. It is constructed with the same advanced technology and spiritual craftsmanship as their other buildings, but its painted inner walls constitute a sprawling literature of star charts: documenting alignments and detailing the timing of the Eryllic exodus. The observatory's silhouette carves a pillar of ambition into the sky.

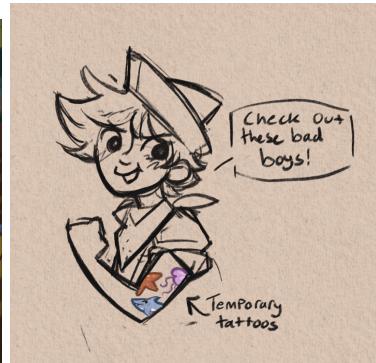
Inside, on the lowest level, is where Atlas has made his home. Once a gathering place for serpentine stargazers, this area now bears the effects of a resourceful child. His belongings include kid-sized furniture that he built, tools, ropes, and baskets of fruit. Hand-drawn maps of the surrounding area are pasted to the brick walls. Atlas keeps his favorite treasures on makeshift shelves: the coolest rocks, jewels, and curious trinkets he has found on his adventures. A cozy nest of old cloth piles near an opening in the wall, warmed by rays of starlight.

When Atlas returns home after rescuing Cosmo from the plains, the influence of the eclipse has activated the observatory, animating its structure and revealing access to its upper levels. Making use of Atlas' boomerang to clear rubble and Cosmo's bridges to climb higher, they uncover untouched Eryllic lore. Complex symbology and astronomical charts surround a disrepaired orrery, inciting curiosity in the young explorers.

At the topmost level, the walls and ceiling have retracted into the structure - except where obstructed by rubble - revealing the sky and seemingly welcoming the eclipse. The cool air from atop the tower smells of discovery, as if the towering observatory itself begets adventures to come. A marvelous obsidian telescope stands firmly, its four handles ornate.

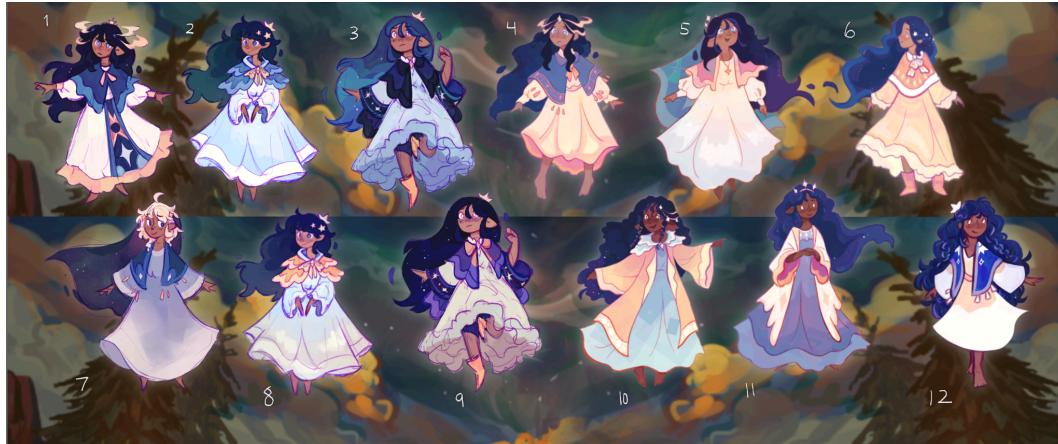
Characters

Atlas



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|---------------|---|
| Details | Human, Boy - 13 years old - He/Him |
| Motivations | Dreamer As a young kid aboard the Starship Persei, he would glue his eyes to the windows, imagining himself exploring new worlds across the universe. Adventurer His adventurous spirit drives him towards new experiences, which he finds fulfilling for the sake of novelty and challenge. Loneliness Growing up for years on an unpopulated planet, he has developed a strong sense of independence but also a deep-seated loneliness. |
| Themes | Familiarity <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Relies on existing experience and knowledge- Seeks the unfamiliar (wishes to have new experiences) Optimism <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Has been his own leader growing up on Eryliad- Dreams of more worlds, eager to explore Destruction / Resolution <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Destroys obstacles- Often makes bold decisions without hesitation |
| Personality | Optimistic, Tough, Bold, Curious, Confident, Inventive, Ambitious |
| Likes | Crafting, Engineering, Exercise, Adventure, Throwing things |
| Dislikes | Eating mushrooms, Sitting still |
| Items | Starlight compass (can be used as a boomerang) |
| Abilities | Run (one-speed), Jump, Wall jump, Throw boomerang |
| In-Game Roles | Action-oriented, Platformer character, Explicit destruction |

Cosmo



| | |
|---------------|---|
| Details | Celesti, Girl - 12 years old - She/Her |
| Motivations | <p>Strategist Cosmo loves mapping out celestial events, which gave her a knack for thinking several steps ahead.</p> <p>Guardian Raised among the community-focused Celesti, Cosmo has a deeply instilled sense of responsibility to protect the things she values.</p> <p>Insecurity Having been exposed to so much celebration and love from her culture and family, Cosmo tends to lose motivation if she is not supported by a reassuring voice. After her visit to her moon turned into a ticket to tragedy, she struggles with a persistent worry that one mistake could lead to catastrophic failure.</p> |
| Themes | <p>Unfamiliarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lost in a distant galaxy - Reveals clues and secrets - Seeks the familiar (wishes to return home) <p>Caution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thinks through decisions before acting - Volatile form makes her vulnerable - Highly sensitive to risk <p>Creation / Initiation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Builds platforms and opens doors, expanding horizons - Brings with her the main objective of the story - Comes up with novel ideas |
| Personality | Observant, Creative, Curious, Compassionate, Cautious, Insecure |
| Likes | Stargazing, Learning, Creating, Family, Celebration |
| Dislikes | Risk, Uncertainty, Making mistakes, Being ignored, Being out of the loop |
| Abilities | Fling between orbs, Build astral bridges, Interact with items |
| In-Game Roles | Precision-oriented, Transform the space to open doors |

Objects of Interest

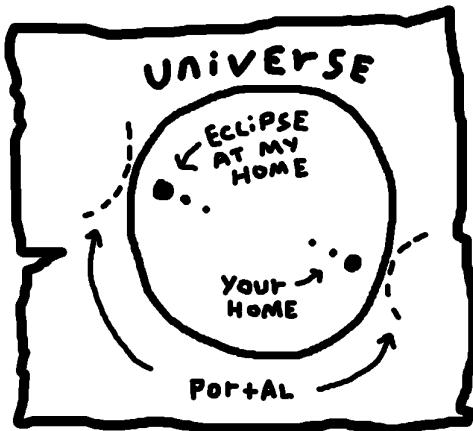
Starlight Compass (and Boomerang)

The starlight compass is a special artifact that was gifted to Atlas by his mother before she ejected him from Starship Persei for his own safety. She told him that it would lead him through the dark and help him find her again. He has kept it in hand or fixed to his waist since.

It is known for its ability to effortlessly store starlight within its round face, allowing its wielder to navigate even at nighttime. Its face can be opened and closed, and Atlas occasionally removes its needle to use as an improvised boomerang.

Upon meeting Cosmo, a Celesti girl, Atlas uses the starlight compass to gather and channel her energy to restore her from harm.

The Portal



The portal that displaced Cosmo from her home to a distant galaxy is no different than what we call a wormhole: a distortion in the fabric of spacetime. This particular portal, Atlas and Cosmo theorize, formed partially because of parallel eclipse alignments near opposite ends of the universe. It is their ultimate goal to travel to where the portal formed so that Cosmo can return home if it appears again.

Escape Pod



Atlas' arrival on Eryliad was the result of being ejected from his home on Starship Persei during a combat emergency. He was ejected in a retrofitted school pod, which are auto-piloting

interplanetary travel pods designed for transporting school children within their home system. They can somewhat-comfortably fit a few children or a couple young adults (with minor provisions.) They cannot fare interstellar travel due to its fuel capacity. The pod Atlas was ejected in is an older model that was stolen and hacked by his parents: a pet project with upgrades such as manual piloting.

After rediscovering its location in the woods on Eryliad, Atlas and Cosmo recognize that the escape pod is their best ticket off-planet. Together, with mostly untouched wreckage, they are able to repair the pod and leave Eryliad.

Themes

Adventure requires bravery

The thrill of opened doors; the intrigue of ancient civilizations; the exhilaration of the unknown: all experiences that define the life of a starfaring adventurer. Each moment presents a new challenge, and with each step forward comes a new risk.

Shown via the escalation of gameplay mechanics in parallel with the characters' perception of risk as they progress through challenges.

Change requires time

Time is a crucial part of this story and it is a subtly threatening and omnipresent force of antagonism: but embracing this is how deliberate change is made.

Shown via the developing friendship between Atlas and Cosmo throughout the duration of an eclipse event. Allusion is made towards their journey to come and its dependence on the eclipse cycle.

Friendship heals forlornness

The weight of being separated from family at a young age is overwhelming, but the light of friendship can pierce the darkest solitude.

Shown via the developing friendship between Atlas and Cosmo as their "found family" bond sprouts.

Episode 1 Key Scenes

Beginning of Act 1: The Girl from the Stars (Tutorial)

Overview

Setting: Erylliad (Eclipsed), Open Plains

Characters: Atlas, Cosmo

Scenario: Atlas is collecting orbs in the starlight compass when Cosmo crash lands into the plains. Cosmo restores her form and her health by absorbing the energy collected within the compass.

Outcomes

- ★ Introduce Atlas and Cosmo
- ★ **New Question:** What is the nature of Cosmo?
- ★ **New Goal:** Make sure Cosmo is safe
- ★ **New Goal:** Return to Atlas' home

Middle of Act 2: The Towering Observatory

Overview

Setting: Erylliad (Eclipsed), Atlas' Home / The Towering Observatory

Characters: Atlas, Cosmo

Scenario: Atlas and Cosmo discover the previously-inaccessible, ancient observatory above Atlas' home.

Outcomes

- ★ Expand the bond between Atlas and Cosmo as they introspect about family
- ★ Learn about the portal to Cosmo's home, and introduce time as an antagonist as the eclipse begins to unalign
- ★ Identify the location of Atlas' lost escape pod in the woods
- ★ **Answered Question:** What is the nature of Cosmo?
- ★ **Completed Goal:** Return to Atlas' home
- ★ **New Question:** Did this civilization make it to the stars? Are they still out there?
- ★ **New Goal:** Get to Atlas' escape pod in the woods

End of Act 3: The Escape Pod

Overview

Setting: Eryliad (Eclipsed), Woods

Characters: Atlas, Cosmo

Scenario: Atlas and Cosmo locate the escape pod in the woods and work together to repair it. As they leave the planet Eryliad, the portal to Cosmo's home closes.

Outcomes

- ★ Crystallize the friendship between Atlas and Cosmo as they commit to an interstellar journey together
- ★ **Completed Goal:** Get to Atlas' escape pod in the woods
- ★ **Completed Goal:** Make sure Cosmo is safe
- ★ **New Goal:** Travel to the location of the portal in time for the next alignment
- ★ **New Question:** Where will they go next?

Glossary

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| Astral Bridge | A physically solid beam of astral energy that forms as a segment between two orbs when Cosmo traverses them. Atlas can traverse these bridges or shatter them with his boomerang. |
| Astral Energy | Also called “starlight,” this is essentially solar power imbued with much more magical flavor. Astral energy is shared directly via the brightness of stars in the sky, by Cosmo’s/Celesti presence, and by some special artifacts. <i>Why does a planet’s sun / nearest star not give it immense astral energy?</i> All stars radiate astral energy, but the magical properties begin to dilute in environments that take so much from the same star. The energy has become derivative, so the magic is gone. Similar to how one doesn’t know what their own home smells like because they have gotten used to it. |
| Atlas (AT-las) | One of two playable protagonists. |
| Celesti (sel-LES-tee) | Beings made of stardust (the matter, not the energy of stars,) such as Cosmo. |
| Cosmo (KAHZ-mo) | One of two playable protagonists. |
| Dreamweaving | This is the ability a Celesti has to channel existing matter and energy into new forms. A Celesti develops these skills as they grow: starting with the formation of astral bridges, and later learning to create moons and protoplanets. |

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|------------------------|--|
| Dust bunnies | Newborn Celesti who still only resemble wisps of stardust and plasma with no distinctive features. |
| Eryliad (er-ILL-ee-ad) | The planet Episode 1 takes place on, where Atlas and Cosmo met. Formerly inhabited by the Eryllic people, for which it was named. |
| Eryllic (er-ILL-ic) | Refers to any of the starfaring people descended from those who left the planet Eryliad. |
| Orb | A pocket of latent astral energy, often found suspended in air. Cosmo's presence causes orbs to appear, which is convenient since she depends on them to navigate. She does not control where they appear, instead many environmental factors influence where orbs form. |
| Portal | A wormhole enabling (or forcing) travel between two distant edges of the universe ("edges" are places where the fabric of reality are prone to tearing, not a concrete boundary) |
| Starlight | Refer to: Astral Energy |
| Starship Persei | The vessel that Atlas was born and raised on, and the origin of the escape pod that dropped Atlas onto the planet Eryliad. |