

# Analysis of Mechanics

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**Title:** Crypt of the Necrodancer

**Released:** 2015

**Author:** Brace Yourself Games

**Primary Genre:** Roguelike

**Secondary Genre:** Rhythm

**Style:** Retro pixel game

## Analysis

### Story presentation

The player plays as Cadence, who is looking for her missing father in the crypt of the Necrodancer. The Necrodancer steals her heart, tying it to the music of the crypt. As the player progresses to deeper levels, cutscenes reveal more pieces of the story, and on successful clearance of the deepest level, the player unlocks Cadence's mother, repeating the same process with her, and unlocking the grandmother. Unlike the previous two, she starts from the bottom level, fighting her way up. The base game offers many more characters, but these three are the main story-related ones.

### Playstyle

Although the game has a story, it is nearly impossible to play through all of it because of the difficulty, so the main appeal is the playstyle itself. The player can only move to the rhythm of the music; any attempt to move outside of it will be ignored at best, and end the run at worst. Enemies can only move to the beat as well, each type of enemy having its unique moveset, speed, range, etc. There are four zones (five in the DLC), each zone has its own theme, enemies, and style of music, and in each there are three normal levels and a boss level. The player can challenge either a single zone or all zones at once, which takes around 45 minutes to clear.

As Cadence, who could be considered the normal mode of the game, the player starts with a dagger that can only reach the next tile, but during the run can switch to any weapon she finds. She also has multiple health points, can heal if hurt, and can even increase the maximum amount of health points. Since it is a roguelike, dying at any point in the run will reset all progress made in that run. Because of that, as of today only 3.9% of the players have finished all zones with Cadence.

There are more characters, each with unique mechanics, like the inability to kill, ignoring the beat and setting the speed yourself with each move, moving twice as fast, and many more. A decent amount of them even change the genre of the music, though not the melody itself. But an interesting one is Aria, the grandmother of Cadence. She can not switch weapons, which makes her stuck with the dagger the whole run, forcing her to get close with every single enemy (that, or throw her only weapon and be temporarily unarmed). She also has exactly one health point, which cannot be increased, starts in the lowest and hardest zone, and dies upon missing a beat. The player must master the game, knowing each enemy and always thinking ahead to even have the chance at clearing a single zone with her. I finished all zones with Cadence many times, but with Aria I was still unable to leave the starting zone, even after 90 hours of play time.

Despite the difficulty of clearing everything, a more casual playstyle is not punishing with dying, as winning itself does not bring much more than some lore and an achievement, occasionally a new character. The music has a clear rhythm and does not get annoying with repetition, both a necessity in a game like this. Enemies are easily distinguishable and clearly show how they will move next. The pixel art style is not overwhelming, yet gives just enough information to the player. Overall, while visually familiar, the playstyle is one of the most unique ones I have ever experienced in my life.