

Trails of Pandora - Game Design Document

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1. Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to provide higher learning and specialized training in our respective disciplines, elevating our portfolios for future opportunities. The goal is to better understand workflow within an agile environment and enhance the potential for a successful internship at a game development studio.

Scope

This project will be developed during full-time game development education, primarily during evenings and weekends. Given the limited time frame, the title will maintain a low scope, with the objective of delivering a playable vertical slice before summer 2024. This will allow for player testing and iterative improvements, with a long-term plan for a Beta, Alpha, and ultimately, a Gold Phase for release on Itch.io and Steam.

Reference Material

To align with our vision, we are studying reference materials from past successful games that share key characteristics with our project. These include first-person shooter (FPS) mechanics, heavy narrative integration, mythological themes, and structured gameplay systems. Reference titles include *Halo*, *Hades*, and *God of War*.

2. Narrative and Story Overview

Elevator Pitch

Prometheus grants the last descendant of Pandora the power of the ancient Greek gods in the palm of their hand. Enter the world of the damned and embark on a narrative-driven FPS adventure. Uncover the missing piece hidden within Pandora's Box and save the world before it's too late.

Narrative

The protagonist is a descendant of Pandora, seeking to retrieve Pandora's Box to release *Elpis* (Hope) and free the world from suffering. However, the path is fraught with peril, as the box is heavily guarded by formidable challenges left by the Greek gods. To aid in this quest, Prometheus bestows upon the protagonist the *Olympus Bracelet*, granting divine abilities.

As the journey unfolds, the player ventures through treacherous levels, each revealing deeper secrets of the box's history. Along the way, an ancient beast lurks within the caverns leading to the final destination. Ultimately, the player must face a climactic battle, culminating in the release of *Elpis*, bringing salvation to the world.

Mythological References

The narrative is deeply rooted in Greek mythology, featuring authentic mythological elements and characters. Extensive research has been conducted through various entertainment mediums that incorporate Greek mythology, ensuring an immersive and faithful adaptation of these legends.

3. Game Design Overview

Gameplay Loop

- Combat is the core of the experience, with players switching between melee and ranged attacks.
- Each room presents new combat encounters and mission objectives.
- Defeating enemies and completing objectives unlocks the next area.
- Players collect enemy souls as a resource for upgrading abilities.
- Progression is encouraged through a structured upgrade system.

Combat Design

Ranged Combat: Players unleash lightning attacks to damage enemies from a distance.

Melee Combat: Close-quarters combat allows players to strike multiple enemies at once.

Switching Mechanics: The game encourages switching between combat styles through the *Momentum Buff*, temporarily enhancing attack power and movement speed.

UI & Player Feedback

- Dynamic UI elements provide real-time feedback.
- Visual indicators such as red flashes appear when the player takes damage.
- Elemental effects highlight transitions between attack styles.

Health, Death & Respawn

- The player starts with a fixed health pool.
- Dying resets the player to the previous room without additional penalties.

- Potential iterations include health upgrades via the progression system.

4. Enemies & Behavior

Enemy Types

- **Enemy Type 1 (Creeps):** Fast-moving enemies that attack in groups.
- **Enemy Type 1.5 (Elite Creeps):** Larger, slower variants with higher damage.
- **Enemy Type 2 (Flying Enemies):** Aerial foes that attack from a distance.

5. Progression System

Points & Upgrades

Players accumulate points (enemy souls) to unlock abilities at upgrade stations located at the end of each room.

Offensive & Defensive Systems

- **Offensive Abilities:** Focus on enhancing attack power and elemental effects.
- **Defensive Abilities:** Provide shields, dodging improvements, or health regeneration.

6. Level Design

World and Level Design

- The game follows a structured level progression across **seven combat-driven rooms**.
- Each room presents unique enemy encounters and narrative beats.
- The final room features a **boss battle**, concluding the experience.

Level Progression Breakdown

1. **Levels 1 & 2:** Tutorial introduction, establishing mechanics and narrative.
2. **Levels 3 & 4:** Expansion of world-building, increasing difficulty and combat complexity.
3. **Levels 5 & 6:** Climax of combat challenges, testing the player's mastery of mechanics.
4. **Final Level:** Boss fight, unveiling Pandora's Box and concluding the story.

Save Points & Progression

- Players can save at any point during the experience.
- Reloading starts the player at the beginning of their last saved level.

7. Art & References

Artistic Vision

The art style draws inspiration from historical depictions of Greek mythology, blending realism with stylized fantasy elements. Environments will showcase **ancient temples, labyrinthine caves, and divine landscapes**, reinforcing the mythological setting.

Visual & Gameplay References

- **Halo** – FPS combat and level progression.
- **Hades** – Mythological theme and fast-paced combat.
- **God of War** – Narrative-driven storytelling and Greek mythology integration.

Conclusion

Trails of Pandora is designed as a high-impact, narrative-driven FPS that blends **Greek mythology with fast-paced combat and a structured progression system**. The goal is to deliver a polished vertical slice by summer 2024, with potential for future development leading to a full release.

