

Narrative Design Document

by Crystal Lee

In the words of the one, the only [Andrew Zhou](#), this is all **very much a work in progress** and subject to change. Please drop your comments, questions, etc. in the [Discord](#)!

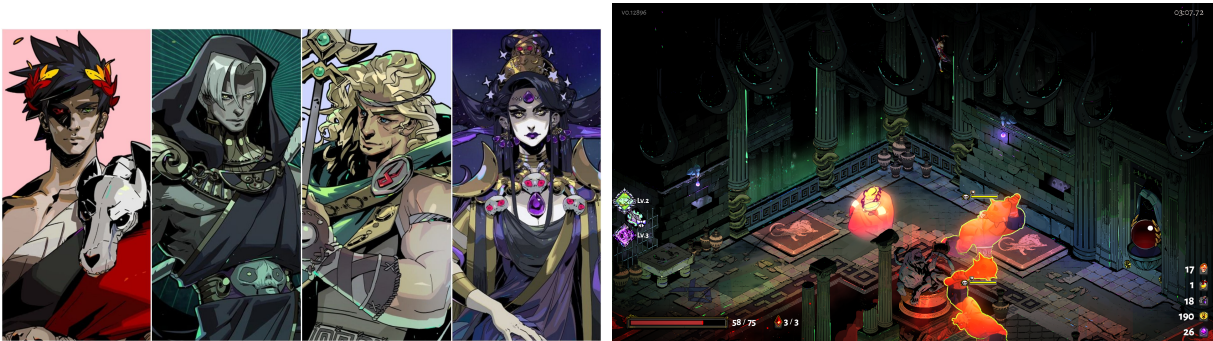
SYNOPSIS

Three consecutive winters. War across Midgard. And now, your Earl murdered by an undead hand. Ragnarok is here.

Your village lies in the path of the army of the dead marching to Asgard. But you and your village and aren't going down so easily. Rally your villagers, pray to your gods, and prepare to fight for your life!

TONE: Serious, fantastical - bright, saturated, varied colors, perhaps less realistic character/sample designs

References

The image block contains five visual references. On the left, there are four vertical panels of character concept art. The first panel shows a character with dark, spiky hair and a red eye. The second panel shows a character in a dark, hooded cloak. The third panel shows a character with blonde hair and a golden crown. The fourth panel shows a character with dark hair and a purple crown. To the right of these panels is a larger screenshot of a game environment. The environment is a dark, stone-walled room with a large, glowing orange fire in the center. There are various UI elements on the screen, including a health bar at the bottom left and a list of items or stats on the right side.

CONCEPT: Player character (PC) and their village are just bit players in the apocalypse. They will never be prophesized about, or remembered after they die. Even their gods barely know who they are. They know this is Ragnarok, and that they will probably not survive—but another day, another minute, another second of life is worth fighting for. The player fights through a seemingly endless night, and the game ends with the sun rising again.

CHARACTERS:

- JARL, or EARL: title for the leader of the village; dies before the first scene
- LIEUTENANT (Player Character, gender-neutral): is thrust into leadership when the JARL dies
- LITTLE GIRL: She's going to be important somehow, TBD
- ELDER: probably a kind of advisor character, more details TBD
- and more: TBD

PLACE: a small Norse community

Ocean Mountain Outside the village (see [Map Progressions](#) for more detail)

TIME:

- BEGINS at the beginning of the prophesied events of Ragnarok, just after the three consecutive winters and as the Fenris Wolf is eating the sun and moon
- ENDS after Ragnarok, as the sun begins to shine again

The entire game thus takes place over an extended night.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Scene 1 -> Map (Easy) -> Scene 2-> Map (Intermediate) -> Scene 3 -> Map (Hard) -> Scene 4

SCENE ONE (summary): Necessary exposition of the following:

- Player Character's identity, place within the village (lieutenant, Jarl's right hand)
- Jarl is dead, killed by an undead (exposited by a boy who was with him)
- Undead army is approaching from the South
- How they're going to get gods' help through temples

SCENE TWO, SCENE THREE (later elaboration incoming): likely small, character-driven interactions to develop investment in the village, with some small plot justifications for game mechanics. Also, where most of the humor is going to be, if I can find any left in my soul.

SCENE FOUR (summary): the sun begins to rise; dawn is here; Ragnarok is over (?).

PROGRESSION OF MAPS

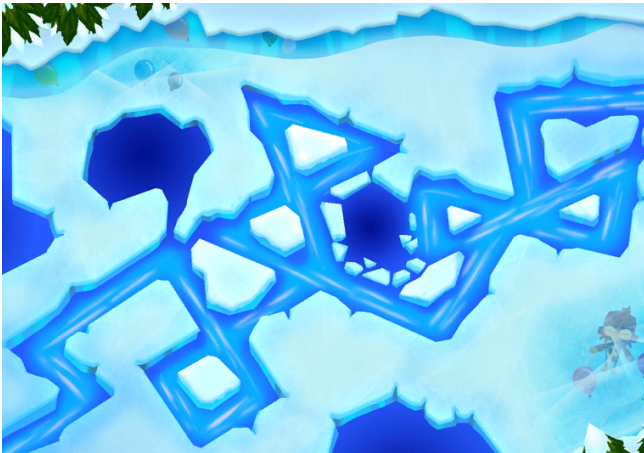
Summary: With each map, the ghost army is getting closer to the village. **Tone** goes from bright lighting, high/medium-energy but not panicked (1st map) a little more grim, struggling in 2nd map serious, darker/torch-based lighting, more "fighting for your life" energy in the 3rd map

Maps should feel distinct, but not completely disconnected. Idea: have a little bit of the previous and next map environments (seawater, ice, w/e) present in each map.

Map 1 (Easy): ocean shore

(as in the map is mostly in the ocean, and the path ends at the shore, or something else similar but more workable)

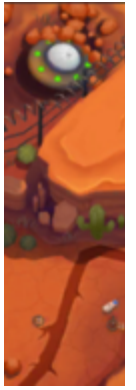
Tone: bright lighting, high/medium energy but not frantic or very frightened.

References	
Amber's concept art:	Bloons TD 6 - Frozen Over
	

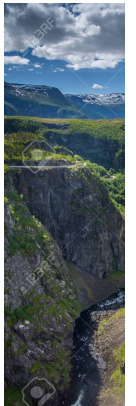
Map 2 (Intermediate): mountain path - maybe in a small path where rocky mountains meet?

Tone: rocky, struggling feeling.

References		
Bloons TD 6 - Streambed	Bloons TD 6 - Cracked	Bloons TD 6 - Cracked

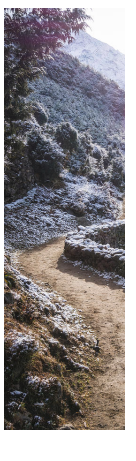
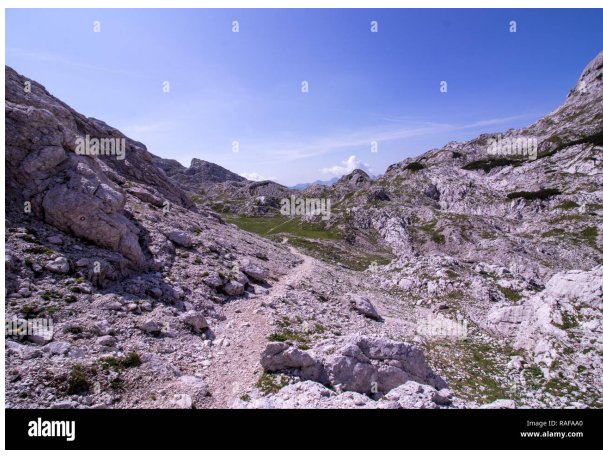


Scandinavian mountains



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Mountain Paths



Map 3 (Hard): area outside village gates of village

Tone: serious, darker/torch-based lighting, more "fighting for your life", "this is our last stand" energy - but still fantastical, still colorful

References

Bloons TD 6 - Dark Castle

Vibes and lighting reference (but it won't be in a cave)



(note: in Bloons TD 6, the trees are removable by paying \$\$\$)

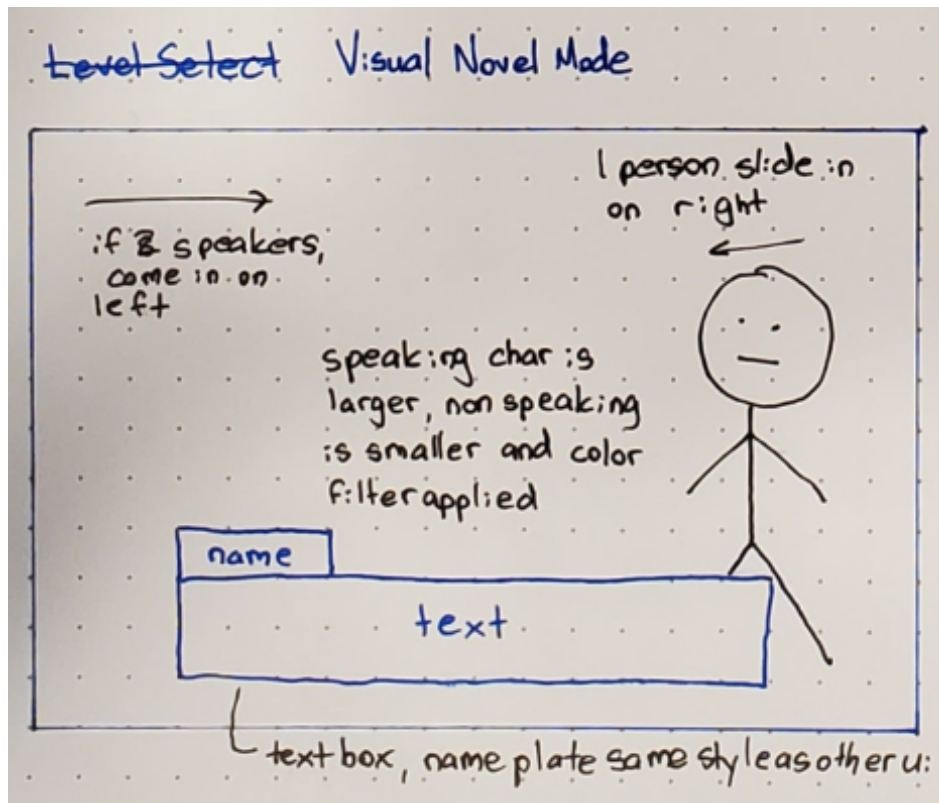


t with less lava? lol

bu

VISUAL NOVEL FORMAT

Andrew Zhou 's beautiful illustration:



With the note of, instead of sliding, do a fade-in (also subject to team discussion)

Probably no branches or choices

Because the visual novel format can encourage player disengagement, have the player press x button for x actions, as relevant to the story

for example: **VN text**: "You walk softly." **Onscreen additional text**: "Press X to walk softly." **Player action**: Press X. **Onscreen action**: move to the next line.

Nikhil is this going to be a pain to implement?

Skippable?

Voiceover?

Questions we need to answer

How is the narrative going to be present during tower defense gameplay?

What is the dramatic question going to be at the end of each scene?

More plot-driven (with an arc carrying through all the scenes) or character/slice-of-life-driven?

...and more to come