MIKAMI GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

NARRATIVE AND PLAY

FGMD7003

MA GAME DESIGN 2021-2022

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Contents

Content Warning

- Epilepsy
- The content of this game intends to be respectful to all cast, religions and faiths.
- Blood and violence

Description

One liner

Mikami is an open world action-adventure game, it represents Japanese mythology in a way never perceived before.

Concept

The game is set in pre-Jomon period before (12,500 BC). There was no law and order in the lands of Japan. As demons are set free from the underworld it is up to the three youngest Gods of the Japanese pantheons to send them back to where they belong and save their worshippers from doom. While on their journey as they explore, they discover more about themselves and their family ties to the pantheon. The after math of this quest sets the legacy of Japan as we know it today.

Genre

- Action adventure
- Souls like exploration
- Moderate APM (Actions Per Minute) combat

Target Audience

Age 18 and above because the game will feature gore which is suitable for mature audience, action and explorer gamers.

Summary

The world of Mikami has lost all hope as the demons of the underworld dwell on the surface freely. It is up to a dynamic trio of young Gods to send these demons back to underworld and bring hope back to humanity as they unravel the mysteries beyond the horizon.

List of Key Features

- World exploration
- Combat
- Character and lore progression

Research

Primary sources

Kojiki By Ō No Yasumaro (English version)

Ō no Yasumaro, 716 AD, *Kojiki*, Kyoto Japan, is the oldest written record of Japanese mythology. It was written in 716 AD and translated to English in 1882. For the reason of cultural appropriation my idea was to go straight to the oldest books and base my research around them. It helped me understand the Japanese pantheon, their culture and believes. To find out more about the book press *here*, to access the book click *here.*

Nihon shoki by Ō No Yasumaro (English version)

Ō No Yasumaro, 720 AD, *Nihon Shoki,* Japan. This book and Kojiki were the first books to be written about Japanese mythology. It is the only book that contains records of mythical origin of Japan up to 697 AD. It has some gaps in information from Japan's origins up to 5th century. I especially studied these gaps to make sure there is no information to fill them and inserted my creative vision in these gaps, which became the narrative plot for my game. To find out more about the book press *here*, to access the book click *here.*

Secondary sources

Books

Shinto the sacred art of ancient Japan by Victor Harris

Victor Harris, 2001, *Shinto the sacred art of Japan,* British Museum Press, London. This book is a simplified version of my primary research books, but it helped me decide the personality of characters, combat mechanics and lore for side quest. Before making any solid decisions I double checked with the primary sources of Mikami. To access the book, click *here.*

Japanese mythology by Juliet Piggott

Juilet Piggott, 1969, *Japanese mythology,* Chancellor Press, London. This book laid out the foundation to design side quests and legendary quest for Mikami. It helped decide npc's for Mikami. To access the book, click *here.*

Asian mythology by Rachel Storm

Rachel Storm, 2002, *Asian mythology,* Select Editions, New York. This book is the secondary source for world building for Mikami.

The Book of Yokai: Mysterious Creatures of Japanese Folklore by Michael Foster

Michael Foster, 2015, *The Book of Yokai: Mysterious Creatures of Japanese Folklore,* 1st Edition, University of California Press, Los Angeles. All the enemies, side quest npc, critical path bosses and their move sets, mechanics and art are derived from this book. The book has majorly helped to make enemy AI choices and gave plenty of design options to choose from. To access the book, click *here.*

Games

- *Legend of Zelda breath of the wild.* (2017). Nintendo switch [Game]. Nintendo.
- *Dark souls 3.* (2016). PS4, PC, Xbox one, Nintendo switch [Game]. From Software.
- *Bloodborne.* (2015). PS4, PS5 [Game] From Software.
- *Sekiro shadows die twice.* (2019). PS4, PS5, PC, Xbox on, Xbox series X [Game]. From Software.
- *Ghost of Tsushima.* (2020). PS4, PS5 [Game]. Sucker Punch.
- *God of war.* (2018). PS4, PS5 [Game]. Santa Monica.
- *Final Fantasy XV.* (2016). PS4, PS5, PC, Xbox on, Xbox series X [Game]. Square Enix.

The research done in each game and its result that was included in Mikami is written under the design philosophy section. Click on *Design Philosophy* to jump to that section.

Articles

- Bycer Josh. 2021. *Debating difficulty in Game Design.* Game Developer. 18th October 2021. <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/disciplines/debating-difficulty-in-game-design>

- Bycer Josh. 2019. *The Conflicting Design of the Zelda-Rogue.* Game Developer. 18th October 2021. <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/design/the-conflicting-design-of-the-zelda-rogue>

- Bycer Josh. 2018. *The Maturity Breath of the Wild Brings to Nintendo's Game Design.* Game Developer. 18th October 2021. <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/design/the-maturity-breath-of-the-wild-brings-to-nintendo-s-game-design>

- Bycer Josh. 2021. *Can approachability 'fix' Dark souls?* Game Developer. 19th October 2021. <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/design/can-approachability-fix-i-dark-souls-i->

- Bycer Josh. 2021. *The Impact of Dark Souls on Boss Design.* Game Developer. 19th October 2021. <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/disciplines/the-impact-of-dark-souls-on-boss-design>

- Bycer Josh. 2021. *How Difficulty Impacts Motivation in Game Design.* Game Developer. 19th October 2021. <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/design/how-difficulty-impacts-motivation-in-game-design>

- Bycer Josh. 2019. *How I Broke Sekiro Shadows Die Twice.* Game Developer. 19th October 2021. <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/design/how-i-broke-sekiro-shadows-die-twice>

- Bycer Josh. 2019. *A Different Take on Sekiro Shadows Die Twice.* Game Developer. 19th October 2021. <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/design/a-different-take-on-sekiro-shadows-die-twice>

- Bycer Josh. 2019. *How Punishment Systems Hurt Gameplay.* Game Developer. 19th October 2021. <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/design/how-punishment-systems-hurt-gameplay>

- Bycer Josh. 2020. *How to Judge Game Design with Achievement Analytics.* Game Developer. 21st October 2021. <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/disciplines/how-to-judge-game-design-with-achievement-analytics>

- Jolicoeur Draven. 2019. *Teaching Player Through Failure Rather Than Success.* Game Developer. 21st October 2021. <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/design/teaching-players-through-failure-rather-than-success>

- Jolicoeur Draven. 2020. *The Significance of Introductions in Games.* Game Developer. 21st October 2021. <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/disciplines/the-significance-of-introductions-in-games>

- Njiki Eddy. 2021. *Zelda: BOTW and the "BOTW Like".* Game Developer. 21st October 2021. <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/disciplines/zelda-botw-and-the-quot-botw-like-quot->

- Johal Sukhraj. 2020. *Ghost of Tsushima – The Art of Compelling Quest Design*. 22nd October 2021. <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/disciplines/ghost-of-tsushima---the-art-of-compelling-quest-design>

- Johal Sukhraj. 2019. Writings on the wall: Sharing Accessible Narratives Through Environmental Design. 22nd October 2021. <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/design/writings-on-the-wall-sharing-accessible-narratives-through-environmental-design>

These articles helped me derive results from the games I was undertook as case studies. These articles helped me understand the design aspects of the AAA games mentioned under the *Games* section.

Derivation from research

My intention was to specifically tackle the stories of Amaterasu, Tsukuyomi and Susano. As I researched, I found out about their birth, their personalities and ties to the pantheon. This gave me the basis for my character design. I wanted to portray the hero's journey and hence I did extra research on their flaws. These three are the children of two major deities in Japanese mythology. There are stories about their birth and what happens after they ascend to the throne of heaven but the process of their ascension, them developing Godly powers and them understanding the world is never explained. Thus, I targeted this missing segment of history as the narrative plot of my game.
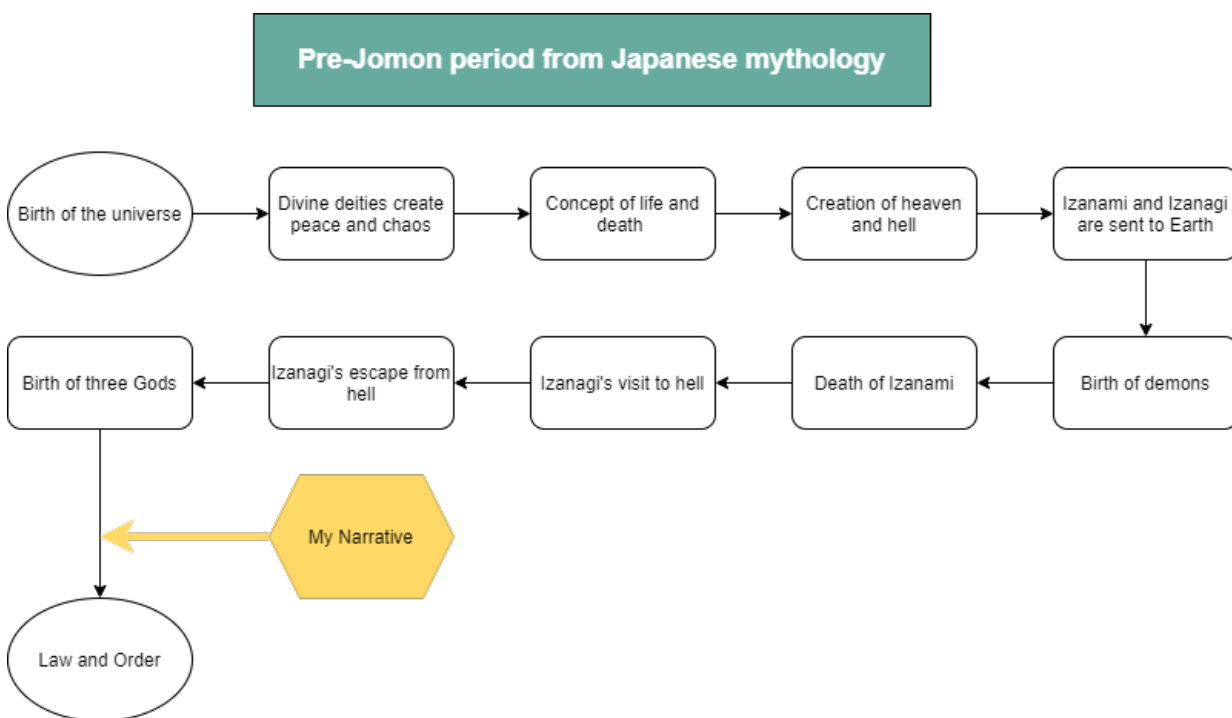
The trio's relation to their father is explained briefly. The trio's relationship to their mother is mentioned scarcely in the myths. But there is a huge chunk of lore about the trio's mother and father. Staying true to these mythical tales I took these three points as my constraints and developed a narrative plot for Mikami.

Design Philosophy

Open world gameplay

Dark Souls

This game is NOT a soul's game. The game includes elements of dark souls via exploration. Dark souls allow the player to choose their next sector/location for exploration. The game does not give players any quest points or POI (point of interest) to look for, the player survives in a hopeless shadowy world to discover its secrets.

Figure 1

The hopeless world is exactly what Mikami aims for. Similar to from software games Mikami will not hold/guide the player's hand after initial onboarding sequence. The world is for the players to explore in any order they want and to tackle challenges that seem fit to their own play style.

Legend of Zelda breath of the wild

LOZ BOTW allows the player to raid Gannon's castle and challenge calamity Gannon just after clearing the first region. On a similar ideology Mikami will allow the players to challenge the BBGs or bosses of the game right after the initial sequence but will not allow them to fight the last boss of the game directly. There are seven bosses that the player must defeat to trigger the final sequence of the game. Defeating these seven bosses will provide the player with enough upgrades to barely challenge the final sequence of the game. These seven bosses can be challenged in any order the player wants. In LOZ: BOTW defeating the legendary beasts increases the number of hearts, size of the stamina bar and reduces the challenge level of the final boss. In Mikami undertaking side quests, legendary quest and bonus objectives will have direct consequences on the final sequence.
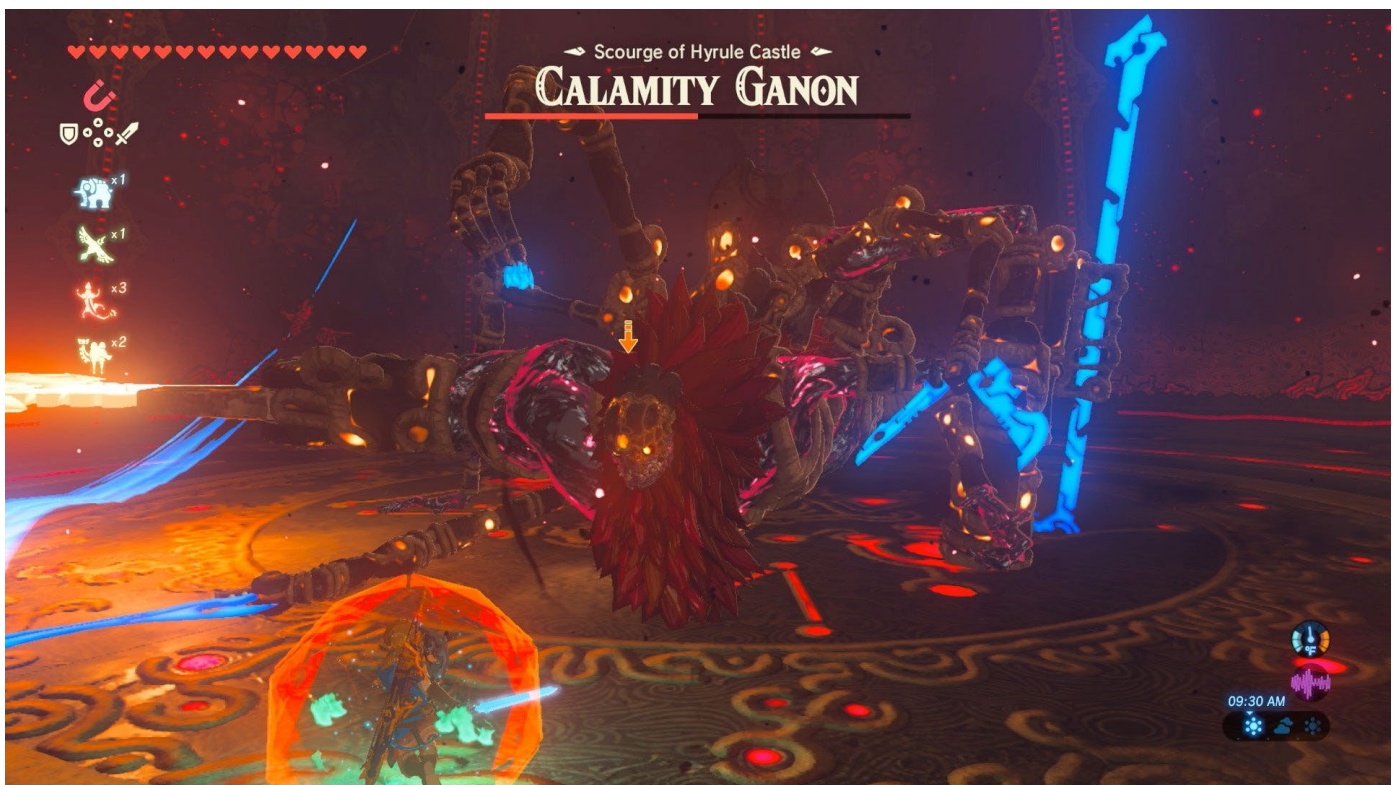
Figure 2

God of War 2018

The boss design for the seven essential bosses was inspired from the Valkyries quest of God of war. The Valkyries can be tackled in any order the players want, hence providing the players freedom to decide battles at their own pace but the final Valkyrie cannot be challenged without defeating the seven. Each of the seven essential bosses of Mikami will provide the player with significant upgrades, an important piece of lore connecting to the main story and contain their own boss lore.
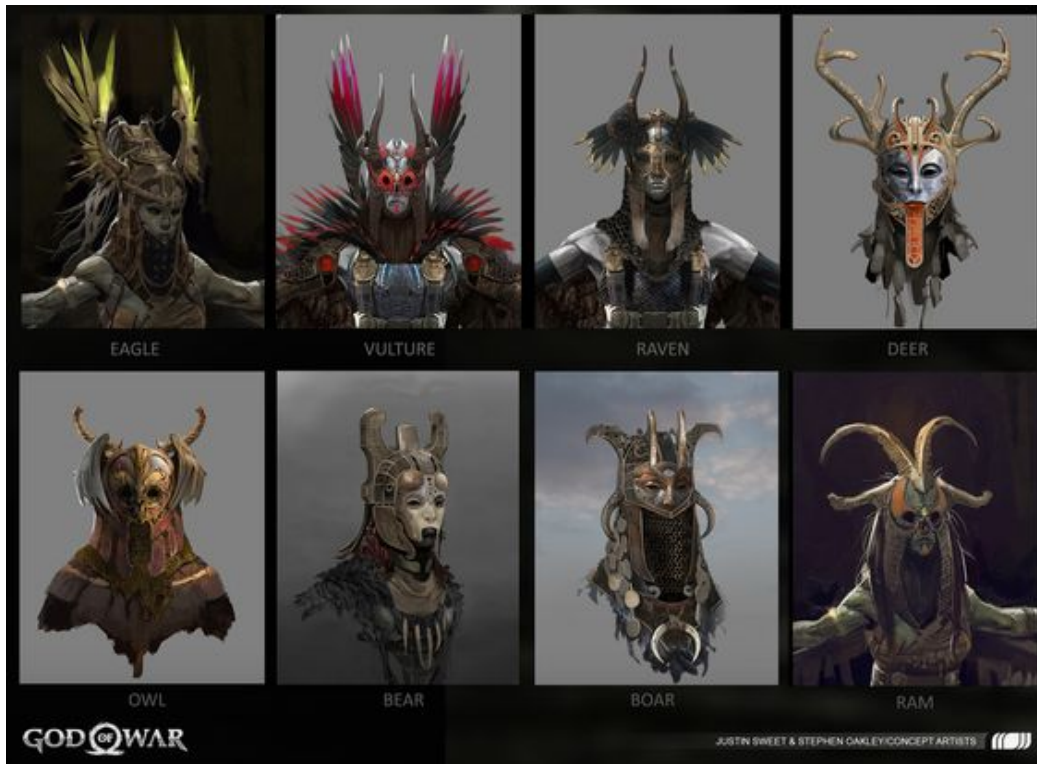
Figure 3

Figure 4

Sekiro Shadows Die Twice

Sekiro provides the player with diverse types of upgrades like external tools, combat skills, mobility upgrades and but at a limited pace. The player can acquire all the upgrades only if they defeat all the mini, sub and main bosses of the game. Mikami's upgrade system will also follow a similar ideology, players can get all the upgrades they need to challenge the final sequence by defeating the main bosses on the golden path but to make the game comparatively easier later it is advised to defeat the mini and sub bosses.

Figure 5

Ghost of Tsushima

Ghost of Tsushima has unique linear quest design that keeps the player intrigued by not directly giving the player a location to go to but subtle hints pointing towards the direction of the goal. Mikami will feature subtle hints like Ghost of Tsushima but will not have a wind guiding system to direct the player towards the goal.

Core Gameplay

Players can switch between the three main characters during combat and exploration. As it is an open world game the players can decide which activity they want to tackle first. The aim is to give players maximum amount of freedom possible in terms of tackling narrative segments, combat, unlocking skills, side quests. Players can explore an area to defeat an optional mini boss for extra exp, tackle a side quest to defeat a sub boss for earning rewards like better gear/armor, additional lore, and exp. The golden path is divided into ten segments, players can decide the order in which they tackle the first seven segments clearing these segments grants the player similar rewards to as sub boss but on a larger scale.

Exploration

Exploration plays a huge part in Mikami. The players will discover lore about the islands of Japan, the Gods of Japan, and the personal relationships among the three protagonists via exploration. Certain dialogues, side quests and legendary quests will only be triggered at special locations. These triggers will not be hidden in far corners of the world, they will be at a visual key location (example: Top of a mountain, by a river or at a beach). The dialogue once triggered will give the players location for side quests, mini boss location or a deeper lore. Triggering lore dialogues will grant the player extra exp points thus allowing them to level up at a quicker rate. Exploration will always be awarded in Mikami in numerous ways.

Travel mode

As the map of Mikami will be huge, walking all the way from one point to another will not always make sense. Each region of the map will feature one or two (depending on the size of the region) fast travel points. These fast travel points will allow the player to switch already visited zones instantly but while discovering a new zone or new part of a previous zone the players can enter travel mode. Upon entering the travel mode each of the three characters will transform into a beast and gain movement boost. This can be used to either cover long distances or escape from a fight. Players cannot attack while in the beast form (travel mode), but they are vulnerable to damage. If a player escapes from a fight a timer will start and once the timer ends the enemy's health will be restored if the player has not re-entered combat.

Combat

Bloodborne

Mikami will NOT be as difficult as bloodborne. The combat for Mikami will be leaning towards a melee action genre. Once an attack starts the animation cannot be cancelled by players and enemies both. This commitment to the attack is what makes the fight feel strategic and creates moments of absolute high & lows. The bosses will use a random action chooser like from software games; they are just the inspiration for combat the actual combat will not as difficult from software games.

Bloodborne: Lady Maria Boss Fight (1080p)

Figure 6

Boss Fight Database (2015). *Bloodborne: Lady Maria Boss Fight (1080p).* [Online Video]. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdWOFrFbcz8&t=122s. Accessed: [4th October 2021].

Figure 7

Figure 8

Final Fantasy XV

Final fantasy has a system in combat that allows the player to change characters while in a fight. The system also allows the player to give commands to other npc characters and perform chain attacks or link attacks with them. The relationship between the three characters will be highlighted via this combat feature. This will also contain flavor texts in the form of dialogues during combat. As the player characters level up, they can unlock new commands and combo. All the playable characters will feature different playstyles, this feature is to create a sync among these playstyles and harness their full potential in combat.

FFXV All Link Strike Attack | Takedowns | Finishers | Finishing Moves | Kill Montage | Combat

YouNicIce (2016). *FFXV All Link Strike Attack | Takedowns | Finishers | Finishing Moves | Kill Montage | Combat.* [Online video]. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jeSUbhstmzg&t=66s. Accessed: [4th October 2021].

Figure 9

Figure 10

God of War 2018

Atreus plays a passive yet vital role in God of War 2018. He provides the player with audio que for incoming damage and its direction during combat. Often gives resources in combat like health pickup. Mikami will have a similar feature, the non-controlled characters in combat will provide the player with audio ques for danger and randomly share resources like healing potions. This is for highlighting the bond among these three core characters and adding additional flavor text during combat.

Atreus Help Kratos with Health! Traveller VS Kratos | God of War | New Game+ Mode

Figure 11

MrT (2021). *Atreus Help Kratos with Health! Traveller VS Kratos | God of War | New Game+ Mode.* [Online Video]. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYNC-V4qwrc&t=31s. Accessed: [4th October 2021]

The combat of Mikami will be melee and ranged combat. Mikami features three main characters out of which one will be heavily close-range with heavy attacks. One of them will be a mid-range character well suited for melee and ranged attacks. The third character will be a long-range character, she will have heavy fire power and good defense. Player can switch between these three characters whenever they want both in and out of combat. This approach is taken so that players can focus on a character well suited for their own playstyle and it provides the players with options to tackle combat instances as they seem fit.

Rewards

Tangible Rewards

Experience Points

Exp points will help players level up their characters to unlock new skill sets, combos, and link attacks. On each level up the player characters will each get an exp point individually which will allow them to spend it on their individual skill tree. The points cannot be carried over or transferred from one character to another. On each level up the characters will also gain a stat boost, but additional stat boosts can be purchased from the skill tree.
To access skill tree sheet please click *Mikami_SkillTree.*

Gear

Upon defeating a mini boss, sub boss or main boss players will be rewarded with better armor or weapon. These will always have better stats than the currently equipped armor or weapon. The armor or weapon will be dropped for all three of the characters, with each character getting only one reward. The armors and weapons will have different aesthetics based on the type of boss defeated. Each character will have one legendary quest in the game. These will be individual quests and the only time when the player will not have the option to select their playable characters. During this quest, the other two protagonists will not accompany the player but completing this quest will reward players with the best possible weapon/armor for that character.

Black Essence

Black essence is the currency of Mikami. This is dropped by the demons upon death. This black essence can be traded with a vendor to buy potions and other items.
To access item sheet please click *Mikami_ItemSheet.*

Intangible Rewards

Lore

Discovering the story of Mikami, its lands and the characters comes under the lore rewards. These grant the player with not only a deeper understanding of the story but also exp points that help in levelling up the characters.

Flavor Text

Completing some of the side quests and triggering character dialogues will help the player unlock new voice lines and the characters will better help each other in combat. This is a passive reward and hence might not be noticed by some of the players.

The core game loop would be the player exploring an area, defeating enemies, gaining rewards. The player uses these rewards to go ahead and explore further which spawns more enemies, the loop continues.

Timeline for the lore

Before the game

"Izanagi" and "Izanami" were sent from the heaven to earth to populate it. The two Kami worked together to form the landscapes and wildlife of Japan. Eventually they fell in love, Izanami invited Izanagi to lay with her in union. Izanami initiated this union and hence due to the unnatural course of this union demons were born out of Izanami. These demons rushed out of Izanami and started to lay waste on the land. Izanami and Izanagi banished these demons to the underworld. After peace was restored to these lands Izanagi invited Izanami to mate and this time fire was born out of this union. The fire deity was named "Kagu-Tsuchi." While Izanami was in labor with Kagu-Tsuchi she died because of the intense fire. Izanagi blamed Kagu-Tsuchi for his beloved's death and wondered around the world to find the entrance of underworld. Once Izanami found the entrance to the underworld, he descended into the unknown depths. At the edge of underworld, he finally found his beloved, but she did not face him. He requested her to come back to the world of living with him. She initially hesitated but then she agreed but with a condition. She said "For tonight I shall lay in another chamber, do not look at me. I will follow you back to the world of living but do not turn to look at me." Izanagi tussled in his sleep; he could not wait to see his beloved's face again. While Izanami was sleeping, he sneaked into her chambers to catch a glimpse of her. What he saw terrified him, she was no more the beautiful maiden he fell in love with. Her flesh had melted all the way to her bones, her gorgeous eyes were spoiled, her beautiful hair was now crisp and burnt. Izanagi let out a scream when he saw her. Izanami woke up and saw her beloved husband terrified of the way she looked. She said, "My beloved it's still me your dear Izanami." Izanagi started running towards the exit of the underworld. Infuriated Izanami started chasing him through the underworld. Izanagi escaped barely escaped the underworld.

Lore of the game

Golden Path Segment 0 -Opening scene to the game

As soon as Izanagi escaped the underworld, he blocked the entrance to the underworld by a huge rock and sealed it with Shime-Nawa. Izanami let out a cry. She made a promise to herself that she would destroy everything that Izanagi had created and held dear to him. She started chanting out a ritual from the underworld. Izanagi, heartbroken and tired, entered a small lake in front of the entrance to the underworld to wash himself. Kagu-Tsuchi came rushing to the lake in which Izanagi was bathing the moment he came to know of his father's deeds. The sky turned blood red. Kagu-Tsuchi launched a deadly surprise attack on Izanagi. The moment before his blade was about to touch Izanagi's throat a female warrior parried it with a flat stone and took a defense stance in front of Izanagi. A male warrior as light as a feather flanked Kagu-Tsuchi and kicked him on his chest to create some distance among them. A second male warrior charged straight at Kagu-Tsuchi and punched him in his face. Startled by this sudden turn of events Izanagi commanded these warriors to introduce themselves. The female warrior said, "I am Amaterasu I am born out of your right eye's tear". The first male warrior said, "I am Tsukuyomi born out of your left eye's tear". The second male warrior exclaimed "I am Susano, born when the tear from your nose touched these waters. Old man talks less, fight more". Izanagi gave each of the warriors a sacred treasure from his arsenal of mystic weapons. After subduing Kagu-Tsuchi, a red rift opened and pulled him in, and the red sky went back to normal. The rock blocking the entrance of the underworld shattered and ominous aura, black souls burst out in the sky making it dark.

The heroes embark on their quest

Izanagi recognized the abnormal magic and had a terrifying expression. The three young Gods recognized Izanagi as their father and enquired about his concern with this magic. He told them that the origin of this magic is the underworld, and these escaped souls need to be sent back to the underworld. Before the warriors embarked on their journey Izanagi gave his heavenly necklace the Yasa beads to Amaterasu to save his life from Kagu-Tsuchi's first attack. Izanagi decided to stay put and guard the entrance of the underworld. He turned himself into a giant magical tree to block the entrance. The band of young Gods set out on their journey to explore and save the world their father held close to his heart.

For further reading the story please click *Mikami Narrative.*

Character Design

Amaterasu

Character history, Weapons, and Beast form

Amaterasu is the sun Goddess from Japanese myths. She is the eldest of the trio. Her father is Izanagi. She is always shown as a proud leader in Japanese myths. She wields the Yasaka Beads given to her as a parting gift by her father. Yasaka Beads have strong life magic in them. She also wields Yata-No-Kagami also known as the heavenly mirror. This mirror acts like a shield and reflects any incoming damage to the enemy. Amaterasu is often represented as a white wolf in Japanese myths and hence that will be her beast form in Mikami.
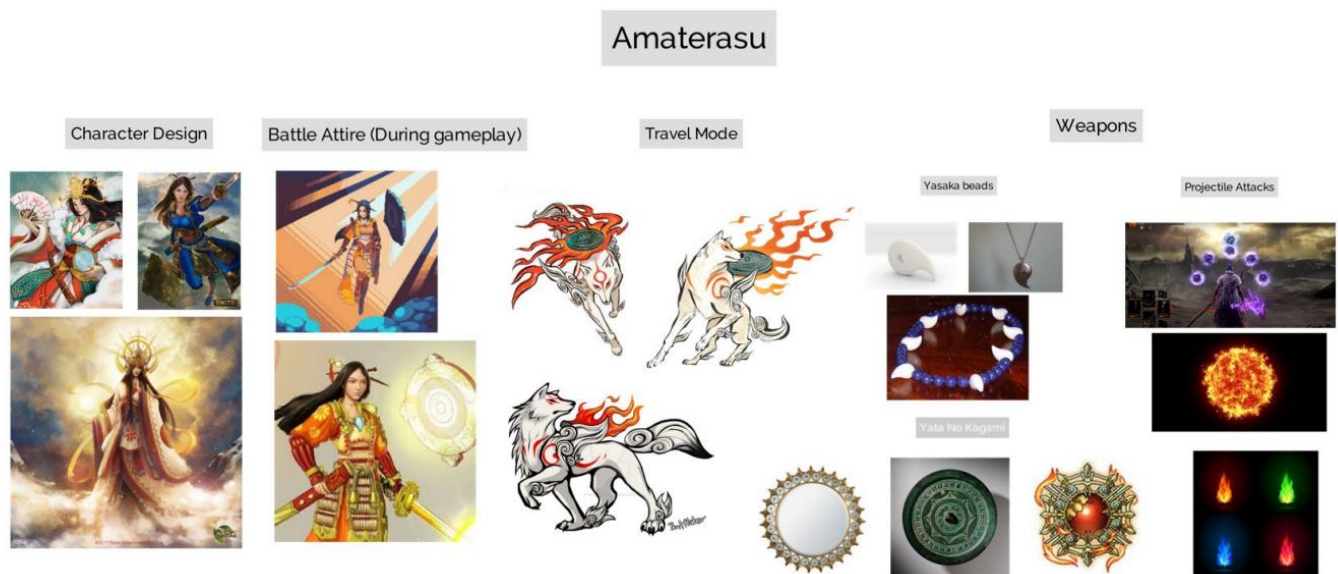
Mood Board

Figure 12

Personality

Amaterasu will exhibit some leadership qualities from the opening sequence of the game, but she will be filled with self-doubt. She always goes out of her way to help others. Her character alignment is lawful good. During the journey she will build confidence and grow as a leader. Amaterasu is always depicted in myths as the ruler of heavens and the leader of Japanese pantheon. There is information on when she becomes the leader of Gods but there is not a single story that says how she attained this title. Hence, I want to fill in that void with my creative vision for Amaterasu. Because I want to stay true to the myths there is no alteration of events in which

she receives Yasaka Beads or when her worshippers start growing. My aim is to show that Amaterasu had her own set of personal difficulties that she worked hard to overcome and attain the title of leader of Gods.

As combat plays as essential role in Mikami, so does the character's personality in combat. Amaterasu will give more call outs (help) during combat when not controlled by the player. Her attacks are medium to long range with the magic of Yasaka beads. The heavenly mirror helps to defend when a character is being revived or Amaterasu is being attacked at a close range. When a player is not controlling Amaterasu, she will mostly stay next to the controlled character to neutralize incoming damage. As the player progresses through the golden path Amaterasu will develop as a strong leader. Her character development will be on a tangent of conquering her nervousness and believing in herself.

Tsukuyomi

Character history, Weapons, and Beast form

Tsukuyomi is the moon God of Shinto pantheon, and he is the second child of the Godly trio. He is a calm tactician who strikes with precision. He wields a scythe symbolizing the sharpness of the crescent moon. He also wields Shime-Nawa the sacred ropes of Shinto religion. Tsukuyomi's beast form is a black wolf. Amaterasu and Tsukuyomi are depicted white and black wolves to symbolize day and night.
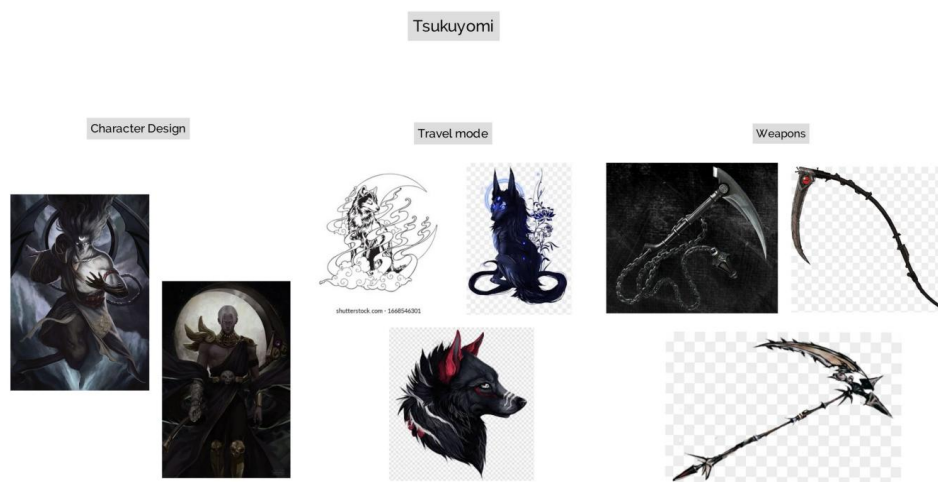
Mood board

Figure 13

Personality

Tsukuyomi is a born genius tactician. His personality is usually calm and observant but in the heat of battle he is bound to get emotional and make mistakes. He is effective and proficient in every task he undertakes. His character alignment is neutral good. During the journey he will hone his reading of the battlefield and decision-making skills.

Tsukuyomi will learn how to control his emotions in the heat of the battle and chart the most optimal strategy. He will be the calm but deadly character in combat. His attacks will not be as powerful as the other two characters but his movement and attacking speed will be faster. His attacks will expose weakness of enemies, especially in boss fights. When a player is not controlling Tsukuyomi, he will give hints in voice lines both in and out of combat. Thus, the character himself sort of a hint system for the player because I feel this is a better way to keep players immersed.

As the player progresses through the golden path Tsukuyomi will develop as a battlefield commander. His character development will be on a tangent of gaining control of his emotions.

Susano

Character history, Weapons, and Beast form

Susano is the youngest of the Godly trio. He is the God of storms. He is a hot head who acts first and thinks later but throughout his journey he learns the importance of patience and discipline. He wields Tozuka which translates to a ten-fist sword. He also has control over wind and thunder. Susano's beast form is myths is a Japanese dragon but for the scope of this game it will an eagle.

Mood board

Figure 14

Personality

Susano is a proud but also arrogant Kami. He acts first and thinks later. He has the strength to defeat most of his foes, but raw strength is not always the best way to solve every problem. He starts off as an emotional knuckle head who is impatient. His character alignment is chaotic neutral. Along the journey he will learn how to focus, be patient and humble.

As the combat starts Susano will always be super aggressive. He is the heavy hitter of the team in terms of power. As his title suggests Susano will take the battlefield by storm. When the player is not controlling Susano is combat, he will usually charge in on every possible occasion to deal damage. Out of combat Susano's personality is partly goofy to his siblings but to others who don't know him well, he seems intimidating.

As the player progresses through the golden path Susano will start cooperating with his siblings during the fight and come out as a mature warrior. His character development will be on a tangent of humbling himself and letting go of his ego.

To read about more characters of Mikami please click *Mikami Character Design Document.*

Enemies

Mood board

Enemies

Figure 15

The enemies of Mikami will be demons and Gods. These demons will have monstrous and humanoid features. The Gods will have humanoid and holy features. The enemies can we broadly divided into five categories grunts, stronger grunts, mini boss, sub boss, main boss.

Grunts: will be present all over the map and the easiest to defeat.

Stronger grunts: will be a variation of grunts in the higher-level regions of the map. The variation in these stronger grunts will be either stats or the status they can inflict upon players.

Mini bosses: will be easy to find in each zone. They will be zone specific, defeating them will grant players tangible rewards.

Sub bosses: will be a liter harder to find. Players can either find them via exploration or by triggering certain quests. Defeating them will grant players tangible and intangible rewards.

Main bosses: will be present on the golden path of the game. There will be nine main bosses in the game. Defeating each of the main bosses will grant players a substantial number of tangible rewards and progress the lore of the game.

To access more mood boards about the environment and other characters please click *Mikami_MoodBoard.*

Story board

Opening scene
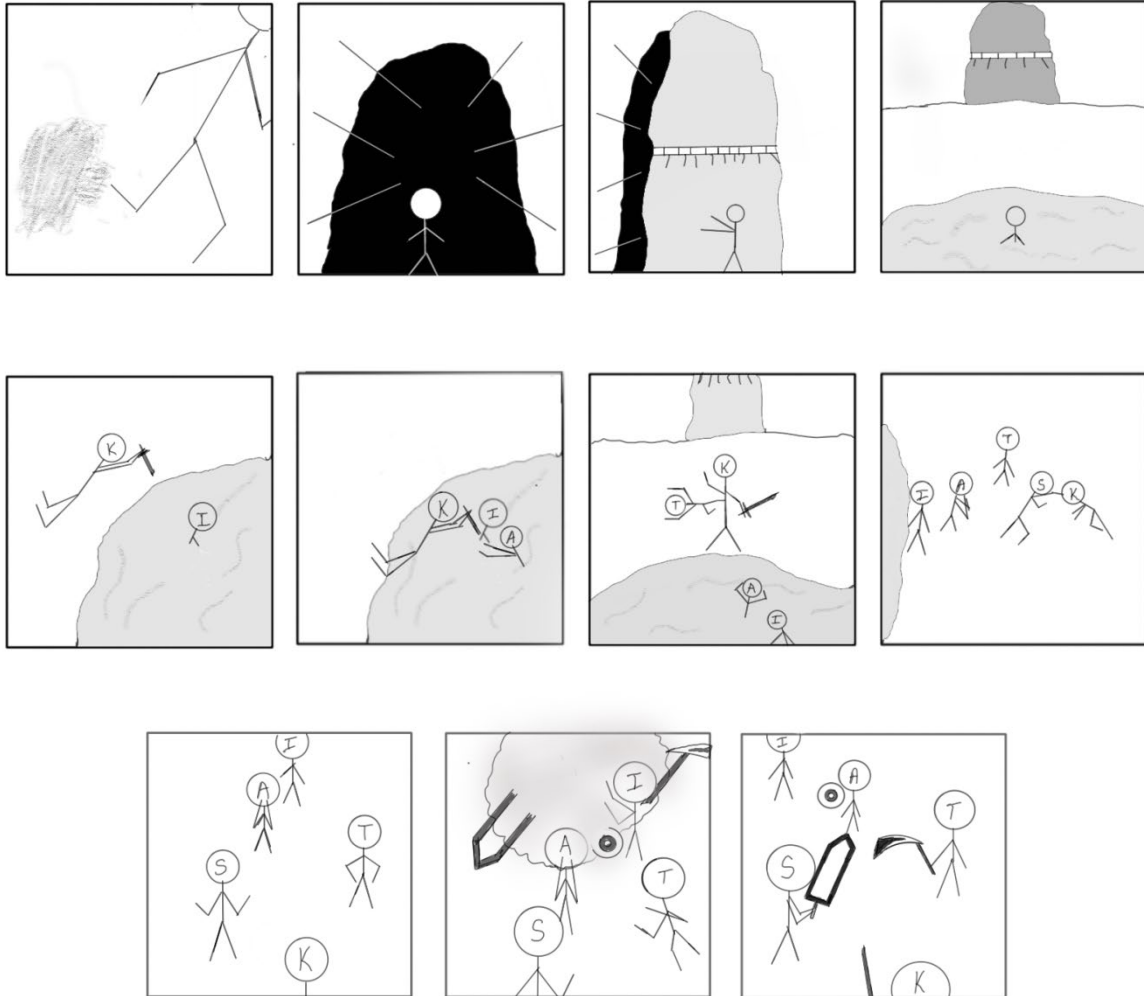
This is the story board for opening scene of the game. Please refer to the dialogue section to understand the complete meaning of the story board. Please refer to the story board document to read other story boards. To access the story board document please click on *Mikami Story Board.*

Dialogues

Golden path

Opening scene

Hasty footsteps and heavy breathing. A loud demonic screech from a dark cave. Izanagi closes the cave entrance and seals it.

> Izanami: Izanagi I loved you with all my heart, now I will hate you with all my heart.

> Izanagi: You are no more the women I once loved, you are someone, no you are something else.

> Izanami: I will destroy every creation of yours that you hold close to your heart.

Izanami starts chanting a ritual inside the cave.

Izanagi walks off to the lake in front of the sealed cave entrance to wash his impurities. Izanagi takes a dip in the lake.

Kagu-Tsuchi rushing towards Izanagi with his weapon drawn out.

> Kagu-Tsuchi: How could leave mother behind, you do not deserve to live.

Kagu-Tsuchi strikes with his blade.

A female warrior deflects his blade with a flat river stone and takes a defensive stance. A male warrior flanks Kagu-Tsuchi and kicks him on his rib cage. A second male warrior charges and punches him in the face.

> Izanagi: Warriors who are you? On your honor name yourself!

> Female warrior: I am Amaterasu, born from your left tear.

1st Male warrior: I am Tsukuyomi, born from your right tear.

2nd Male warrior: I am Susano, born from your nose's tear. Old man talks less, fight more.

Kagu-Tsuchi: Izanagi you should have been the one in there. She did not deserve this; it was all my fault not her. You did not save her; you watched her pass on.

Izanagi: Warriors! Take these weapons and help me withstand this grim time.

Warriors in unison: Yes father!!

Kagu-Tsuchi fills with rage. Charges towards Izanagi.

Kagu-Tsuchi: Izanagi you do not deserve to be a father.

Combat starts
(Tutorial for controls in the game)
Combat ends

All the warriors panting.

Tsukuyomi: Amaterasu hold the defense line, Susano wait for my mark before attacking.

The sky turns red, and a rift opens next to Kagu-Tsuchi. He gets sucked in the rift and the rift closes.

Izanagi with a tense expression.

Izanagi: That magic! It was from the underworld. It is the cultivation of dark souls.

The sky darkens, the seal to underworld entrance breaks and souls, wraith, impure beings start pouring out in the sky.

Izanagi contains them with all his life force and turns himself into a giant tree covering the underworld entrance.

(Somber music plays)

Izanagi: Children beyond this point in the land of the dead, I am going to block this entrance for as long as I can. You need to defeat the escaped demons before they lay waste to all my creations.

Susano: What will happen to you?

Izanagi: I shall be the barrier holding off the demons inside.

Tsukuyomi: Father, how do you know all this? Who are you exactly?

Izanagi: I am a Kami, the ruler of heavens. Everything you see till the horizon and beyond is my creation. These demons roamed these lands, I and Iza...... I defeated them and sent them to the underworld.

Tsukuyomi: You want us to do the same thing alone? We are not as powerful or experienced as you are.

Susano: Don't worry I am quite sure I can kick these demon asses, just cover my flank.

Izanagi while transforming into a tree

Izanagi: My children work together, help the people of this land and be better than me. Amaterasu takes this.

Izanagi gives the Yasaka beads to Amaterasu. Amaterasu accepts the gift with tears in her eyes.

Amaterasu: Fathe.......

Izanagi: Yasaka beads have powerful magic in them, use them wisely. Children give these lands hope when all hope seems lost.

Izanagi solidifies into a tree with a smile on his face.

Izanagi: Protect my creations my dear Mikami.

(Somber music plays and the game title appears on screen.)

Free roam

During combat

(Assume the player is playing as Amaterasu)

<u>Enemies behind</u>

1. Tsukuyomi: Sister behind you.
2. Tsukuyomi: Watch out for demons behind you.
3. Susano: So now I must kill demons and protect your back.
4. Susano: Don't go dying on me sister look behind.

(Assume the player is playing as Tsukuyomi)

<u>Health low</u>

1. Amaterasu: You do not look well; I shall support you with all my might.
2. Amaterasu: Back up, I will cover you.
3. Susano: Fall back and recover I can take care of these demons by myself.
4. Susano: If you die, I will be stuck with Amaterasu alone, please heal.

(Assume the player is playing as Susano)

<u>Health drops to zero</u>

1. Amaterasu: I shall kill these demons in your name Susano.
2. Amaterasu: Ah look how the mighty has fallen.
3. Tsukuyomi: Sorry my tactics failed; I shall avenge you.
4. Tsukuyomi: Susano please can you follow the plan for a change.

<u>Character revives Susano</u>

1. Amaterasu: We need our hard hitter, get your head back in the game.
2. Amaterasu: Stand strong brother.

3. Tsukuyomi: I cannot let my only brother die.
4. Tsukuyomi: Follow the plan this time, please!

While exploration

(Assume the player is playing as Amaterasu)

Interest points near by

1. Tsukuyomi: Sister, I think we should explore that cave.
2. Tsukuyomi: I have a bad feeling about that cave.
3. Susano: Stay vigilant, I sense danger.
4. Susano: Looks like that cave might have a good challenge, I am itching for a fight.

(Assume the player is playing as Tsukuyomi)

(Lore dialogues are triggered via location irrespective of the player character chosen)
Lore dialogue near by

1. Amaterasu: Tsukuyomi a moment please.
2. Amaterasu: Need your advice on an idea, can we talk for a min?
3. Susano: Lets rest here, I am tired.
4. Susano: Brother, I am bored, can we chat for a bit?

To more the all the dialogues from golden path please click *Mikami Narrative Dialogues.*
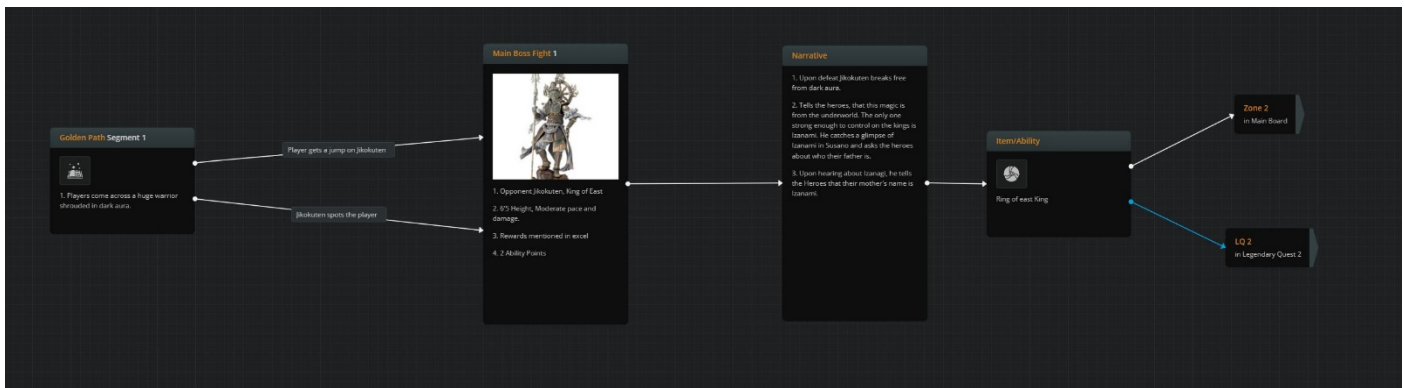
Quest Design

Golden Path

The golden path of Mikami is divided into ten segments. The game starts into segment zero, it's the prologue of the game. The player then has freedom to access segment one to segment seven in any order they want. As the player finishes all the seven segments the event from segment eight is triggered. Once the player enters segment eight go through all the way to segment ten which is the epilogue for the game.
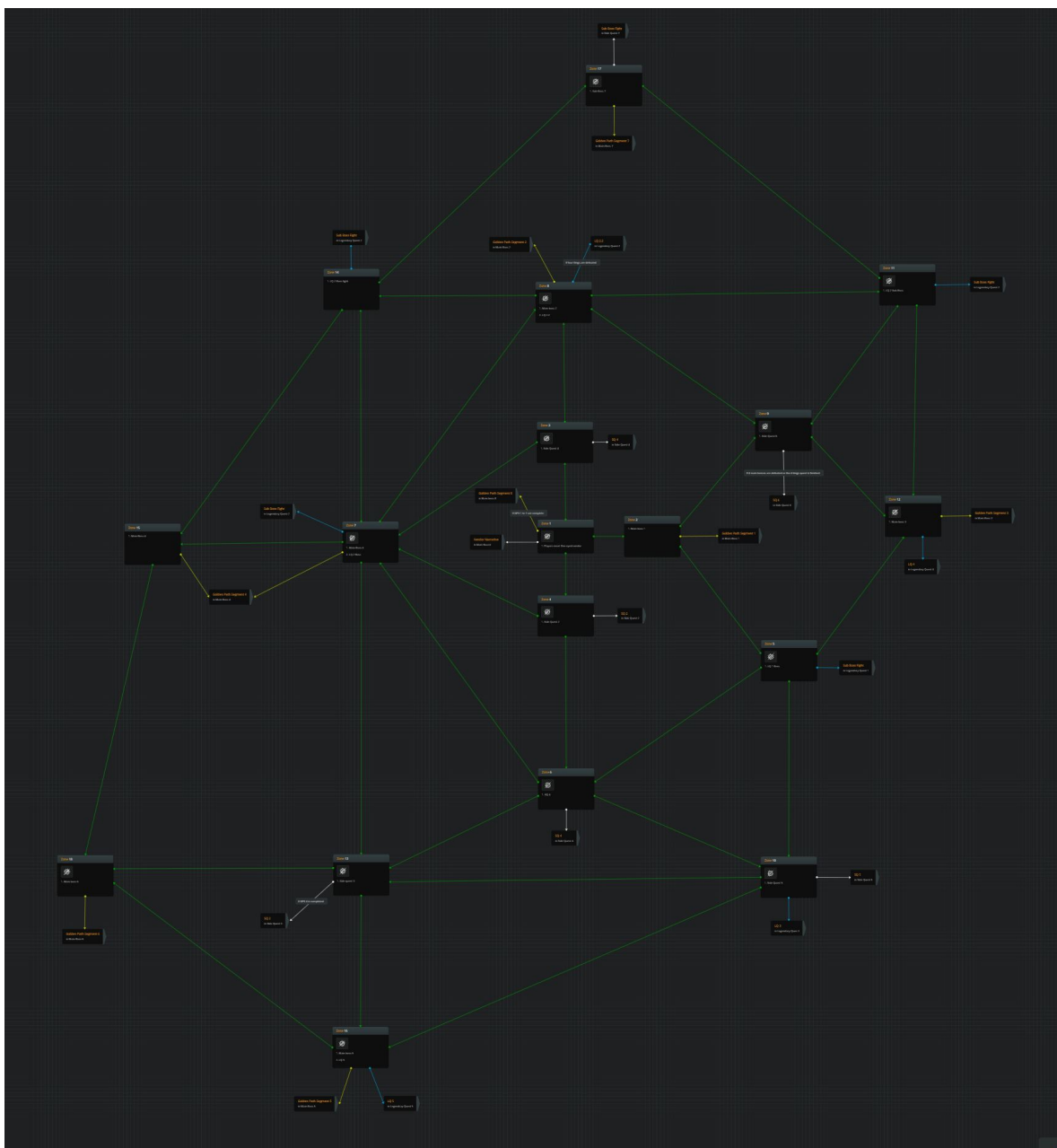
This is the overall flow of quest design in Mikami's map.

This is the flow for golden path segment 1 of Mikami.

To access the entire flow chart of quest design and to read the text please click on *Golden Path interactive board*
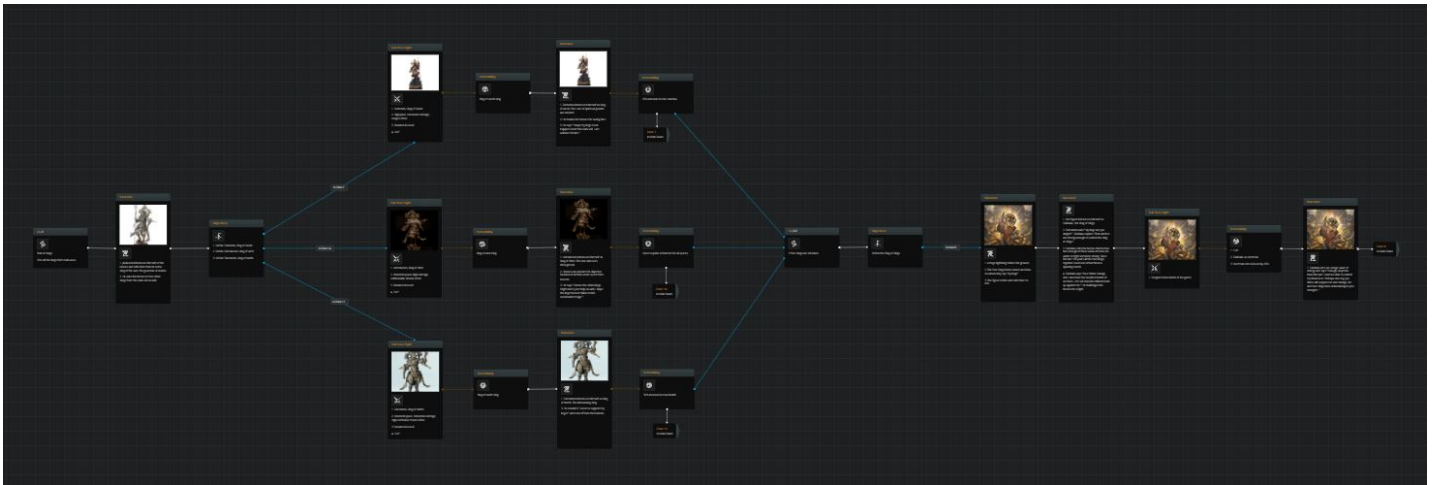
Side quests

Side quests in Mikami support the lore of Japan. It sheds light on the relations between the Gods of Japanese pantheon. It delivers additional lore and contributes to character development in Mikami. The side quest offers the player both tangible and intangible rewards. To access the flow charts of side quest of Mikami please click on *Side Quest 1 - The summon of wind and thunder*

Legendary quests

Mikami has special side quests that are named as legendary quest. These set of quests are longer in playtime and harder to clear. Completing these side quests grants the players with special powers and unique parts of Japanese folklore. There are five legendary quests in total, three out of these five quests are character specific quests. These three quests are the only time in the game when the player is forced to play with a certain character. This is done for cultural appropriation because the stories told in these quests are closes related to only a specific character from the trio. Adding the other two characters on these quests breaks the story and does not stay true to its roots anymore hence, to not offend any religious belief or sentiments the player will be forced to player with a specific character.

This is a flow chart for one of the legendary quests. To access the legendary quest please click on
Legendary Quest 2 - The quest of Kings

The side quests and legendary quests are also accessible by using the main link and opening the side quest folder in the left side of the interactive board.

Art

The art style of Mikami is similar to that of games like Legend of Zelda Breath of the Wild (2017) by Nintendo, Genshin Impact (2020) by miHoYo and Immortal Fenxy Rising (2020) by Ubisoft. The reason for choosing this art style is because Mikami will feature a lot of exploration and combat. The art style and graphics of the above-mentioned games are relatively easy on the eyes of the players, thus allowing them to play for more hours in a single sitting. These three games are the only AAA/ AA games with such art style, I believe this will make Mikami stand out in the world of AAA and AA games in terms of graphics and art style. The lighting, aesthetic of the worlds in all these three games are very bright and colorful on the contrary the lighting, aesthetic of Mikami's world is dark, colorful but gloomy like Sekiro Shadows die twice (2019) by From software. I believe this takes a well-established formula from the industry and adds a creative take on it in terms of art style for the game.

Figure 16

Figure 17

Figure 18

Environmental story telling

Mikami uses environmental story telling to tell the player about the enemy that is ahead, points of interest and world building. For example, a series of dead bodies would mean an enemy is nearby. A broken shrine would mean a demon stays there now or a demon passed through them. On the other hand, once the demon is defeated by the player the next time, they visit the same shrine player would see people rebuilding and fixing it. As the three main characters of Mikami are Gods every time they revisit an already cleared area, they will see human bowing down to them in worship. In the cleared areas the destroyed human villages are settled once again, new shrines are made but in honor of our main characters the young Gods.

Engine

The engine for Mikami will be unreal engine. The major reason for choosing unreal engine is because of the visual quality and code support. High visual quality games like batman arkham series, it takes two and hell blade senua's sacrifice have been developed in unreal engine, I envision Mikami to have a similar level of visuals. Unreal works well with C++ which in my engineering experience is much faster and powerful than C#, hence I choose unreal engine for majorly these two reasons.

Mechanics

Mikami features a variety of mechanics in movement, combat and number of different systems.

Movement

The movement mechanics include the walk and run basic mechanic. A unique type of movement mechanic in Mikami is travel mode where player character can transform into a pre-assigned animal and move at faster but cannot attack or defend in this mode. Entering this mode grants the player higher movement speed but at the cost of being vulnerable to damage. Exiting a fight using this mode launches a timer and if the player has not reentered the fight before the time ends, the enemies are reset to their full health.

Combat

Mikami has active cross battle system as its core combat system, complimented by non-animation cancelling moves. The active cross battle system allows the player to switch between characters in real time. The non-animation cancelling moves restricts the player of cancelling an already launched attack. Hence the player must calculate and decide before making a move because a single move might be the difference between victory and defeat.

Mikami's combat also has link attacks and summons. Link attacks allow the player use two or three character together in a single attack. These link attacks cause more damage than a single character's heavy attacks, but they also take a lot more stamina to execute. If a normal attack would take five stamina from a character's stamina. A link attack would take eight stamina from both the character's stamina bar, assuming that the attack is done using two characters. Each member of the trio has a unique personality and different equation with each other. Link attacks will express these personalities and the dynamic of their relations with each other in combat. Thus, making the characters feel more relatable and showing their personality in combat not just through their playstyle but also through their teamwork.

The summon attacks in Mikami are show the trio's relationship with the Gods of Japanese pantheon via combat. A few of the Gods that the trio defeats decide to help them in combat. Thus, when the trio is on trouble during combat, that is if only one member of the trio is alive and the other two have reached zero health point a summon option will pop for the player. Using this option will allow the player to select one of the summonses that will bring a God that player selected in battle for a short duration and they will deal massive damage to the enemy. Depending on which character makes the summon the voice lines of the summoned character will change which shows the relation between that character and the summoned God.

To understand what inspired these combat features for Mikami and why these mechanics were selected specifically please refer to the design philosophy section by clicking here: *Combat*

Systems

Health and Stamina

This system will determine the health points and stamina points of each character. Attacking will take points away from the stamina bar which will refill over time. Getting damaged will take points away from health. When a character reaches zero health they go into a down state. That character can be brought back from the downed state by using an item or by reviving him/her. A revive will get character back to 5% of its max health points. If all the three characters go into downed state at the same time the game will enter fail state and restart at the last saved point.

Leveling up

Players will be rewarded exp points that help them level up. Levelling up a character will grant the player with increased maximum health, increased maximum stamina and ability points for each character.

Skill tree

The ability points earned by leveling up can be used at the skill tree to unlock new attacks for the character, increase the damage/efficiency of an attack or to unlock new link attacks. To know more about the skill tree please click on *Mikami_SkillTree.*

Economy

The systems featured in Mikami will be an economy system with black essence as currency. Players can buy/sell items. These items can be used in combat or in quest. To know more about the items please click on *Mikami_ItemSheet.*

Inventory

The inventory system will calculate and store all the items the player has collected and purchased. It will also allow them to use it on real time during combat.

Summons

A summon system kicks in when two of the player characters are in downed state. If the player has unlocked any of the summons in the game, they will get an option to call one of those summonses in battle.

Narrative segmentation

Mikami has a segmented narrative structure. These segments have a small amount of branching in them. This system is in place to check these branches and to determine how many segments, which segments the player has cleared. This is to make sure that there is no overlap of the narrative structures and that the events are triggered only when its pre-requisite conditions are met.

Dialogues

This is a secondary system in Mikami. The dialogue system keeps count of which events the player has completed and accordingly trigger voice lines. Depending on the completed quests the voice lines between the characters change to suit the mood and flow of the narrative, this system keeps that in check.

Unique Selling Point

- Japanese folklore
- Freedom of critical path progression and play style
- Active cross battle combat system

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