

REKUDITE RUINS

**ROUGE-LIKE GAME CONCEPT
& NARRATIVE DESIGN DOCUMENT**

CONCEPT & NARRATIVE DESIGN DOCUMENT BY MADISON FIGG

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CONCEPT:

An overhead, 2D, roguelike side scrolling adventure game where the player(s) can utilise magic, and different fighting styles to level up and progress further into the dungeon/story.

The player(s) will be an initiate at the Arcane Institute, a school in the fantasy Realm of Litoven founded by an infamous old sorcerer named Master Asral.

The player(s) will be informed that Asral's top student at the Arcane Institute, Maya, has gone rogue (using forbidden blood magic) and has left to seek out a cursed ancient artifact called the Undying Heart.

As Asrals next most adept protege(s), he asks the player(s) to go try and stop Maya, before she becomes too powerful to defeat. Teleporting to a set of ancient ruins, the player(s) must battle their way down through each level of the ruins - facing off against corrupted beasts and spectral monsters in order to reach their final foe (and to ultimately prove their magical capabilities).

Unbeknownst to the player - Master Asral is actually more twisted and powerful than he appears. He has been manipulating his students over generations, absorbing their power/killing them in order to live longer and sustain his abilities through the Undying Heart.

Maya has discovered this, and is seeking out a way to stop Asral regardless of the cost. This will be revealed later in the game, and hinted at throughout.

SETTING(S):

Continent -(*Realm of Litoven*):

The Realm of Litoven is the continent in which the game will take place. Whilst the players will only be within a specific area of Litoven - there will be some lore/history

blended into the game that might reveal bits about the greater world. It is a medium sized land-mass governed by a fantasy/mediaeval style kingdom and similar architectural styles and attire.

Homebase - (Arcane Institute):

The Arcane Institute is where the player begins the story, and will find resources, shops, NPCs, and additional flavour/story.

The Institute is a medium sized building, somewhat like a castle, yet aged and a bit in need of repair. It would have boarding rooms for students, places for learning such as a library, armoury, alchemy, etc. Item and Arcana shops can also be within this building, or outside the front doors on a pathway as vendors. It would have a welcoming, safe, atmosphere to it until later in the story.

Action/Dungeon - (Rekudite Ruins):

The Rekudite Ruins is where the player goes to fight through levels, gain experience, and further progress the story through exploration in order to stop Maya.

The Rekunite Ruins would be the ancient remains of an old building, believed to once be a temple. It would appear to be made of stone, with vines and nature taking claim over time. The visuals here would be dark, and creepy - utilising lighting and darker tones to make things ominous. Catacombe-like.

MULTIPLAYER INTEGRATION:

This game would allow for 1-4 players. The story will outline that Master Asral has asked his other students to seek out and defeat Maya before they reach the relic. This allows for multiple players to fit into the narrative going forward.

When joining the game the players can choose different starting 'archetypes' of magic that will subtly customise their abilities and characters. This would allow for

the multiple players to each have their own unique experience, and could also play into certain mechanics in the game (for example: a magical barrier that can only be broken by magic damage) adding to replayability.

CHARACTERS:

Head Master Asral:

- Age/Gender: 80+ years old, male.
- Appearance: Silver hair and beard, fancy robes, slouched frame.
- Voice/Personality: Wise yet frail, displaying age (After Story Climax: Malicious and cold).
- Role/Intent: Master Asral is the founder of the Arcane Institute - and who asks the player(s) to assist him by going after Maya and stopping her from reaching the Undying Heart.
 - He will appear in cutscenes, and will be stationed next to the teleportation pedestal for the Ruins. Can offer advice and/or dialogue.
 - Later in the story Master Asral will be revealed to have malicious intent, having lived as long as he has through nefarious means. At that point he will become the final enemy of the player(s).

The 'Betrayer' - Initiate Maya:

- Age/Gender: 26 years old, female.
- Appearance: Green long hair, dark grey robes, lanky.
- Voice/Personality: Serious, and forceful.
- Role/Intent: Maya is the top Initiate that has allegedly betrayed Master Asral, and left to go and retrieved a cursed artifact to gain its power.
 - Unknown to the player(s), Maya has discovered a secret about Master Asral and is attempting to stop him from causing harm - no matter her personal cost.
 - She will be using forbidden magic (perhaps blood magic alongside chaos magic), which is slowly corrupting her.

- Later in the story Maya will either reason with or fight against the player(s) on the final level of the Rekudite Ruins, right before the artifact room.

Relic Curator Vaeril:

- Age/Gender: 36 years old, male.
- Appearance: Short brown hair, alchemist clothes, nerdy.
- Voice/Personality: Quirky and awkward.
- Role/Intent: Vaeril is the Relic Curator at the Arcane Institute and interacts with the players by selling relics to the player(s).
 - He may also be a possible source of additional quests/tasks in the game, asking for certain materials or items from the Ruins - perhaps a type of crystal for example, or item that a specific enemy might drop.

Enchanter Elex:

- Age/Gender: 28 years old, male.
- Appearance: Medium blonde hair, wizards outfit and hat.
- Voice/Personality: Charismatic and friendly.
- Role/Intent: Elex is a merchant of Arcana within the Institutes grounds, and will offer various wares to the player(s).
 - He may also be a possible source of additional quests/tasks in the game, asking for certain materials or items from the Ruins.

Other characters would include other vendors of shops, NPCs such as staff of the arcane institute, and merchants that might appear in the Rekudite Ruins.

MONSTERS / CREATURES:

Inside the Rekudite Ruins the player(s) will face a variety of enemies. I envision these enemies ranging from corrupted animals (wolves for example), to more spectral monsters such as ghouls, and animated skeletons/corpses. This will

reinforce the darker theme of the game, and also juxtaposes against the safe/lighthearted atmosphere at the Arcane Institute. Some example monsters and creatures that could be in the game are:

CLASS	NAME	APPEARANCE	DESCRIPTION
Normal	Spectral Siren	Feminine succubus with ghost tail	A Spectral Siren will attack by screaming and sending a blast of air at the player(s).
Mini Boss	Blood Knight	A dark suited soldier with red eyes and a red sword/shield.	The Blood Knight will do a slashing attack, a charge attack, and can heal through lifesteal with a buff ability for a duration while dealing damage.
Undead	Greater Flaming Fiend	Large burning shadowy figure, with long claws.	The Greater Flaming Fiend will have multiple fire based abilities and can shift to different spots on the map.

PLOT/ OBSTACLES / CONFLICT:

‘Rekudite Ruins’ will follow an embedded narrative medium (mostly linear), showcasing key pieces of information through cutscenes, providing a clear goal for the player(s), and allowing them to discover/unlock more information by progressing further in the game.

Below I will break down the game’s narrative arc, the overall conflict, and obstacles that the player(s) will encounter.

THE CURSED RELIC - UNDYING HEART:

The relic that Asral tells the player(s) that Maya is going after is called the ‘Undying Heart’. This item contains a powerful curse that will allow an individual that bonds their blood with it to alter the lines between life and death, narrowing escaping demise, and influencing creatures/corpses.

The Undying Heart sits deep within the Rekudite Ruins, allegedly hidden and kept away from those who might aim to use it for their own desires according to Asral.

STORY STRUCTURE / PLOT POINTS:

This game will follow a repeating pattern of heading out to the Rekudite Ruins in order to progress deeper within, and returning home to the Arcane Institute to upgrade and buy items before exploring/fighting more.

The basic structure of the games story arc will go as follows:

Inciting Incident:	Player(s) are summoned to see Master Asral and pass through the Arcane Institute to meet him. They are informed of Maya's betrayal, and that she needs to be stopped in time.
Lock In:	The player(s) agree to go through a portal to the Rekudite Ruins to try and find Maya, and are teleported there beginning their quest.
<u>Pinch Point One:</u>	<i>Further in the ruins the player(s) encounter animated undead who appear to inhabit parts of the ruins (smaller boss enemies). These enemies will drop items, journal pages, or have titles that will hint to a connection to Asral.</i>
Mid Point:	The player(s) work their way deeper into the ruins, eventually leading to a large doorway where the Undying Heart (and Maya) should logically be. From here they will head back to the Arcane Institute to regroup before the final push.
<u>Pinch Point 2:</u>	<i>Upon arriving back at the Arcane Institute the player(s) discover monster(s) were summoned through the portal, and have been killing/wreaking havoc inside the building. After defeating the monster(s) the player(s) cannot find Asral, and discover some NPCs have survived. They can buy items and prepare for the final levels.</i>
Turning Point:	The player(s) make it through the last levels and enter the area where the relic is. Maya is there looking bloodied, almost turning monstrous in her appearance - and the player(s) confront her. Tension is high, and a branching option between a fight transpiring, or de-escalating could be

	presented here.
Climax:	Before things can progress further with Maya, Asral appears and attacks her - absorbing her remaining life and magic. He then turns on the players.. A brief dialogue exchange happens leading to the big reveal of Asral's true intentions. Then the player(s) end up facing Asral in their true final battle.
Falling Action:	The player(s) defeat Master Asral and in the process discover that the Undying Heart was the source of his life-stealing abilities.
Resolution:	After returning to the Arcane Institute the player(s) will be left to either return the school to its former glory, or move on to greater things now that they themselves have proven to be powerful sorcerers themselves.

There will also be hints throughout the Rekudite Ruins of Maya's presence, such as torn journal pages, left behind carnage and bodies, or even messages she's left for the player(s) on the wall in blood.

CUTSCENES / CONVERSATIONS:

Using a more linear/embedded narrative style, the cutscenes (and narration/voice over) will play a big part in moving the story forward and setting the atmosphere/theme of the game. The visuals are the bulk of the descriptions in the medium of a game, and should be utilised to their full potential for this. Below are sample cutscene ideas that will be linked to specific points in the game:

TRIGGER	LOCATION	SCENE	EFFECT
Asral talks about the Rekudite Ruins with the player(s).	Rekudite Ruins	Shows Maya moving through the creepy ruins and enforces the danger there.	Sets up the darker theme, also shows Maya's appearance to the player(s).
Player(s) enter a locked room in the ruins with undead enemies.	Rekudite Ruins	Room is covered in skeletons, left forgotten. They come alive and attack.	Inside the room is a scribbled note that will give the player secret information.

Player(s) return to the Arcane Institute after discovering the undead enemies.	Arcane Institute	The player(s) tell Asral about the horrors they saw, and he appears troubled. He gives them a special item.	This signals an increase in the seriousness of their quest to stop Maya.
Returning to Arcane Institute after reaching the final level of the Rekudite Ruins.	Arcane Institute	Showing the main floor of the Institute under attack by summoned creatures - some NPC's dead.	Adds a twist in the story, and ups the ante. Asral is now missing, and they can explore his room.

Conversations and dialogue exchanges can be expected in certain circumstances. The NPCs within the Arcane Institute can have a few branching lines, and questions available for the player(s) in order for them to interact and learn about the world / institute. Character conversations would be applicable for: Master Asral, Enchanter Elex, Curator Vaeril, NPC staff of the institute, and random vendors/people within the Ruins.

CONFLICT:

The main conflict in the game is first directed towards Maya and her apparent betrayal. This steers the players towards a 'big bad', providing what seems to be a straightforward 'good vs evil' story. However, with the added twist of Asral's darker intentions, the conflict then shifts and the player(s) views on who is the enemy will change - altering the narrative they had been given.

Additional bits of information, and story can be learned via the following:

- Found notes/journal pages in the Rekunite Ruins left by Maya.
- Visuals / Scenes found in the Rekunite Ruins.
 - Example - Skeletons in robes similar to the player(s), or weathered paintings that resemble Asral.
- Speaking with NPCs at the Institute of Magic.

DECISIONS/CHOICES:

Since the game is following a more embedded narrative style, the most meaningful player decisions will stem through character building choices. This will be done through selecting an arcane 'archetype' (or certain skill branch) to unlock specific unique abilities, buying items/buffs, and upgrading their gear and skills.

Archetype Idea/Concept:

For this concept I drew inspiration from the four suits of cards in a playing deck. These archetypes could be a bit more complex with three unique skills that can be unlocked per 'type', giving them an affinity in that element of magic and/or damage.

ARCHETYPE	MAGIC / DAMAGE TYPES
DIAMOND	Air, Piercing
SPADE	Water, Lifesteal
CLUB	Earth, Force
HEART	Fire, Healing
JOKER	Lightning, Slashing

These choices will influence how they fight and make their way through the Rekudite Ruins, and could possibly come into play by allowing them to uncover different areas based on their abilities.

Item Choices:

Through using the various items (relics, outfits, etc) we can also add to that narrative element by utilising their descriptions, names, and effects to paint a picture. This could be done, for example, with a piece of Maya's gear she dropped in the Rekudite Ruins that the player(s) can find:

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	EFFECT
Maya's Amulet	A tarnished necklace with a holy symbol. Its chain is broken, and it has red-brown stains around the odd shaped edges of the amulet.	Resistance to Lightning damage while worn.

Additional decisions can be presented through dialogue with NPCs, and allowing for further branching conversations. Certain NPCs (like Vaeril) could ask the player(s) to retrieve a specific type of gem or crystal that might grow in the ruins - giving the player(s) the choice whether to complete the quest and get a reward, or keep/sell the item to benefit themselves.

OVERVIEW / PROGRESSION:

THE PLAYER EXPERIENCE:

When fighting within the Rekudite Ruins, if the player(s) all were to go down in battle - amulets given to them by Master Asral will teleport them back to the Arcane Institute to be healed. This works with the looping structure of a rogue-like game, and will provide the player(s) opportunities to upgrade their character(s) and receive more information through cutscenes that further the story.

The strength and amount/level of their spells and abilities will also be another element that changes along with the progression of the game. By growing stronger and facing tougher enemies the player(s) will know they are getting deeper into the game itself. The player(s) will also be able to track their progress in the game by viewing the areas they have completed in the Rekudite Ruins map - of which will be separated into several distinctly named sections. Completing certain sections will trigger cutscenes and move the story forward in the game.

SAVE POINTS / NEW AREAS:

When progressing further in levels of the game, there will be designated pedestals that will light with flame and mark a 'progression point' on the map - fully unlocking

that area for when they return. Certain rooms (such as boss fights, or item rooms) will have designated symbols that will appear on the map when the player(s) uncover that area of the 'fog of war'.

INTERACTIONS / DIALOGUE:

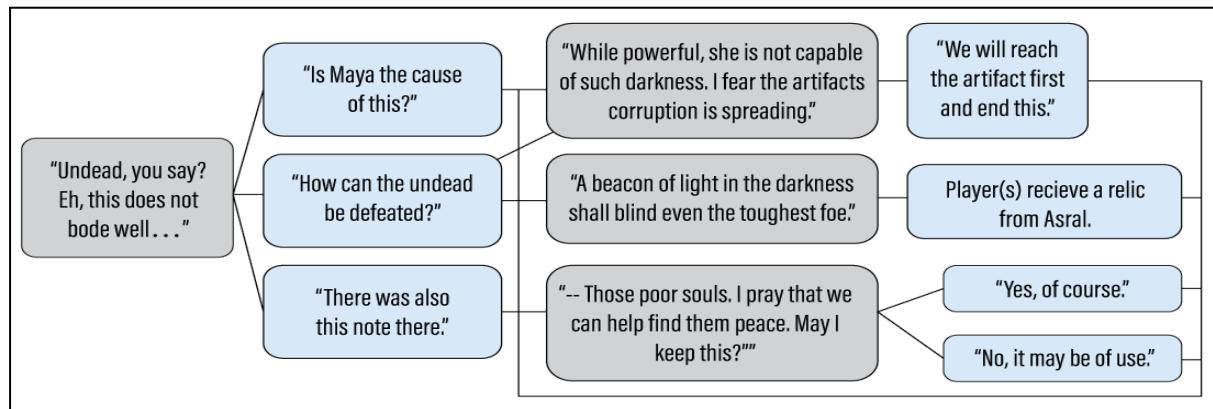
As discussed in this document, the player(s) interacting with NPCs through dialogue will be an important supporting piece to the game's narrative.

SPEAKING WITH MASTER ASRAL:

➤ Player(s) | ➤ Master Asral

Location: Arcane Institute

Trigger: After discovering the undead room in the Ruins (pinch point one in the story's plot), the next time they return to the Arcane Institute there will be a cutscene where the player(s) reveal what they have witnessed to Asral.

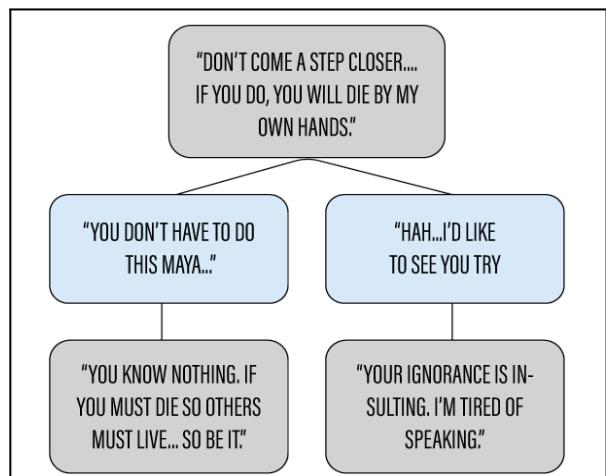


CONFRONTING MAYA:

➤ Player(s) | ➤ Maya

Location: Rekudite Ruins

Trigger: When entering the final room where the Undying Heart should be. The player(s) find her within the room standing over a pedestal.

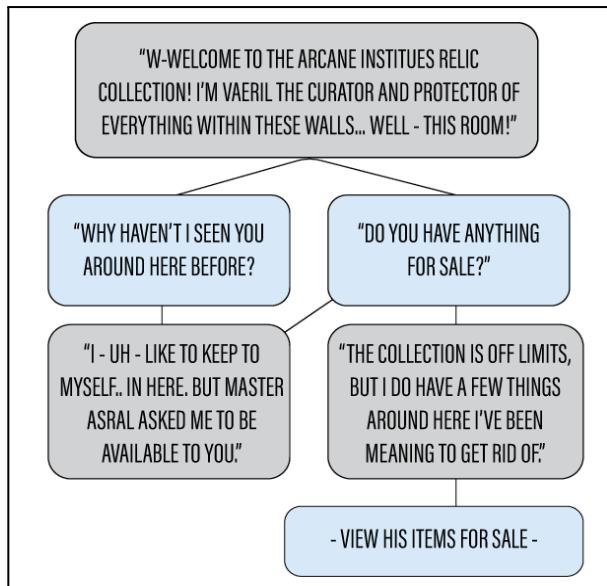


MEETING CURATOR VAERIL:

➤ Player(s) | ➤ Vaeril

Location: Arcane Institute

Trigger: The conversation will happen when first approaching Vaeril in the relic room/museum in the institute. He will be standing behind a counter surrounded by displayed relics.



Other text would include any form of narration within cutscenes, describing what is happening. An example of this might be when the player(s) are returning back from the Rekudite Ruins to speak with Master Asral after reaching the final level where Maya should be:

Narrator: "Now hindered by the magically sealed entrance - the furthest reaches of the ruins almost in sight - the initiate(s) return to Asral with uneasy hearts. Hopeful that he would have a way of surpassing the barrier - so they could stop Maya before it was too late."

Materialising into the back room of the Institute, the initiate(s) are met with a cacophony of chaos. Swirling darkness and shadowy shapes stretch across the walls, their toothy grins morphing into hissing maws while distant screams echo off the walls from deep within the keep. Jumping into action, the heroes are unable to process the gravity of what was happening. They first needed to protect those who might still be alive."

Another example of a narration during a cutscene or key moment would be upon the player's 'death' in the Ruins (either the first time, or randomly during a playthrough).

Narrator: “Fallen, but not yet defeated. Their time left to eliminate the evil at hand was waning ever thinner... an ominous shadow looming over the Realm of Litoven..”

While playing a single-player run of the game (or with less than 4 players), there can be an odd chance of encountering other students within the Rekudite Ruins in precarious situations. The player(s) can attempt to save them, and the rescued initiate will return back to the Institute (while possibly rewarding the player with something as thanks.)

Narrator: “Through yet another doorway they find a lone initiate - sent in to delve deeper into the ruins. Surrounded by clamouring skeletons - the sound of clanking bones ringing into the dusty air - their ally was about to face a terrible fate....”

NOTES / ITEMS:

While exploring or moving through either the Rekudite Ruins or the Arcane Institute the player(s) could come across notes/items hidden or placed there to be found. The notes/texts will serve to add additional story flavour, and characterization. Some examples could be the following:

	DESCRIPTION	CONTENTS	LOCATION
Note	A barely legible note scribbled on a torn piece of paper in reddish ink.	‘We trusted him. Everything we learned was for nothing... we can’t get out... I...’	Rekudite Ruins - Undead Room
Note	A notice posted on Elex’s cart in slanted, fast, writing.	‘Restocking due to... well... the attack. You all know. Be back tomorrow.’	Arcane Institute - Elex’s Cart

Similarly, the player(s) will come across relics/items, or purchase clothing, within the game. These can assist the player, or could also merely be for flavour as well. See some item examples below:

ITEM NAME	APPEARANCE	DESCRIPTION	TYPE
Vampire Blade	Medium sword with a black sheath, and scarlet cracks throughout it.	Increased critical hit chance, but the player takes a point of damage with every hit.	Offensive, Cursed
Elex's Eldritch Elixir	An odd potion that appears to form a cloud-like gas which swirls within.	Masks the player in a mist for a short duration, decreasing enemy hit chance.	Defensive, Misc
Vaeril's Pink Slippers	A set of traditional pink fuzzy slippers.	This pair of slippers are extremely fluffy and soft. They look well cared for.	-

CONCLUSION:

To conclude this document - Rekudite Ruins is a dark roguelike game concept that will also aim to blend the world/story into player interactions, utilising hidden/subtle elements, and NPC dialogue. This game will create a fun, replayable, and rewarding experience that roots the player(s) in the game's world - and retains the satisfaction of combat that comes with dungeon crawling.