

Side Scrolling Action RPG

# Macro Croma

Game design document

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Winter 2020

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## PART 1: GAME ANALYSIS

### 1a. Mission statement:

To explore the creation of a game that's similar in style to Vanillaware's Muramasa the Demon Blade (side-scrolling ARPG). The game is going to focus on narrative design and slick action combat, with hand-drawn environment and character animations.

### 1b. Genre:

Side-scrolling ARPG.

### 1c. Platforms:

PC.

### 1d. Target audience:

Fans of anime style

Action game enthusiasts

Teens & young adult

### 1e. Monetization:

Macro Croma is going to be sold as a premium game with a one-off payment with future expansions focusing on other major characters.

## PART 2: STORY

### 2a. World Building:

The story takes place in a post-apocalyptic universe where the general population has been reduced to small populations ruled under laws akin to the middle ages. In truth the current world is being overlapped with the Underworld, causing dead spirits to manifest as monsters known as Shades. Shades are generally mindless puppets driven to kill so that they can fully convert the world to their realm, but there exist individual Shades with their own will. The main goal of the game is to undo the overlap by cleansing the world of Shades.

Being overlapped with the Underworld, people have learned to control supernatural powers akin to magics.

### 2b. Characters:

**Chloe:** the main protagonist of the story. She woke from a dark cave with amnesia and found herself able to “consume” Shades. She can partially transform into a Shade-like form and uses this to combat the spirits.

As the story progresses Chloe will slowly regain her memories.

In the past she was a medium who’d help lost spirits ascend from the world, but not all spirits can ascend, and she was completely possessed by the hateful dead. Before she lost her sense of self, she sealed herself in the cave and shut herself from the world for a long time, so long that even the continents have shifted from their original places. As a result of her possession she is more Shade than human and is effectively immortal even though she looks normal.

**Morrigan:** a stray catlike Shade Chloe found. She is friendly toward humans for whatever reason and follows Chloe around wherever. She can seemingly understand Chloe but cannot speak. She can transform into a more humanoid form of similar stature to Chloe and protects Chloe with this form.

Morrigan is a manifestation of more souls merging with Chloe’s subconsciousness while she was sealed and is the reason why Chloe can understand people even though she is in a completely different world.

**Templars:** an organization of warriors with the power to dispel Shades for good and hold considerable political power over the currently standing nations.

(Normal people in the world can repel Shades by “killing” them but these monsters will regenerate in time, Templars are magic users that are so proficient they can permanently destroy Shades)

**Marie:** an ex-templar who is being hunted down by other templars after suffering fatal wounds in a mission. She was able to survive by manipulating her own blood with magic, causing her to become undead and immortal. Marie will become a playable character if the game continues further development.

## 2c. Story so far:

Chloe wakes in a dark cave with no recollection of herself or her surroundings. She walks out to find that she is on a beach, to her left she can see the coastline extending into a cliff, atop the cliff there seem to be buildings. As she looks around to learn her surroundings she is suddenly attacked by a Shade, overpowering her. As she braced for the worst, a dark figure repelled the monster and the monster faded into a wisp of smoke only to be absorbed by Chloe. Chloe looks to the dark figure and asks for explanations, but the dark figure leaves without a word – Chloe leaves to look for the dark figure only to be approached by Morrigan. Morrigan seemingly points to a direction for Chloe to head toward, and Chloe follows.

## PART 3: GAMEPLAY

### 3a. Overview:

Macro Croma is a story driven 2D side scrolling ARPG. The main gameplay loop revolves around executing combos in combat to defeat enemies to level up and learn new moves. The new moves will aid the player in exploring and progressing through the story.

### 3b. Player experience:

Fast, responsive combat and a linear story following our protagonist. Player is driven to keep playing through engaging story and character growth in terms of power and narratively. The player needs to experience an enjoyable gameplay loop just in the combat itself and so there needs to be impactful feedback on the action. The gameplay must be fair so there will not be cheap-shot attacks by enemies.

### 3c. Gameplay guidelines:

Most of the game focuses on the action and the story, with a minor focus on platforming. The tone of the game features some violence but no gore. The action needs to be slick and responsive. There will be challenging moments, but the player will be able to overcome them by learning the movement and weaknesses of the enemies. To aid the player there will be telegraphed movement for when an enemy is about to use a strong attack and clear indications when an enemy uses a weaker attack. **All attacks should be visibly avoidable.**

### 3d. Game objective and rewards:

The objective of the game is to reach the end through Chloe's story arc. The narrative is its own reward, but combat segments of the game will reward players with experience points and help the character become stronger. As Chloe grows, she will also be able to learn new abilities allowing her to perform more spectacular moves. In turn the enemies fought by Chloe will also become stronger as the story progresses to provide more challenge. Ultimately combat needs to be satisfying, and the story must be interesting enough to keep the player wanting to finish the story.

### 3e. Gameplay mechanics:

The player has access to a basic attack combo, skills and movement. The player's movement options are running on a horizontal plane, jumping and possibly more tools to help with traversal as the story progresses. The basic attack combo consists of 3 close range hits when used in succession. Skills are equipped as chosen by the player and can perform more diverse actions like ranged attacks. The player levels up and defeats Shades to unlock more skills. Shades' skills learned by the players will be reflective of the Shades' original skills – i.e. a ranged Shade can give the player a ranged attack (think Castlevania).



## PART 4: LEVEL DESIGN

### 4a. Background information:

The current version of the game will only feature the first level of the game. The levels of the game allow the player to explore the world set in Macro Croma and uncover Chloe's past, how the world ended in its current state and how to prevent the world from further becoming part of the Underworld.

### 4b. Level story synopsis:

The first level is a forested area leading toward a survivors' settlement. The forest is overgrown on previous man-made structures which serve as obstacles and environmental hazards. This stage is to serve as a tutorial level to the player and so the enemies will be weak. There will be a boss enemy at the end of the stage which the player must defeat before they can make their way into the survivor's encampment. The boss in this scenario will be attacking a survivor and the player will help fend it off to rescue said survivor, thereby gaining the trust of the survivor and will be shown the encampment.

### 4c. Level mechanics:

The first level will showcase simple environmental hazards like swampy land slowing the character's movement and thick foliage blocking the player's vision.

Full save / load access points will be added to the game in future versions, but the one-stage test version will not feature this function. Save points will be present in safe havens like the survivor encampment at the end of the level, the beginning area of the level where there are no enemies and before a boss fight.

There will be mini checkpoints in the level such that the player does not have to fully backtrack if they are defeated.

## PART 5: SYSTEM DESIGN

### 5a. Systems design:

The game will have a leveling system complete with experience points, increase in character stats and improved skills.

Due to the need of character stats there will be associated enemy stats to reflect their power levels.

### 5b. Gamewide systems:

Numerical stats to determine power, enemy targeting / AI, interaction with NPCs. Save / load system for progress.

### 5c. Cooperative play / multiplayer:

Currently there are no plans for multiplayer in Macro Croma.

### 5d. Combat mechanics:

The player's stats are divided into 3 basic stats: attack, defense and health points. Attack determines damage output, defense determines damage intake, health points determine whether the player lives or dies. Enemies will have telegraphed moves that will instantly kill the player. The player defeats the enemy when they reduce the enemy health points to zero. The enemies have preset health points according to enemy type, the types of enemies determine their stats, not the player's level.

### 5e. Economics system:

In the current phase no items / currencies are planned. In future versions there will be NPCs that the player can trade with. The trading system will follow an item / item trade rather than an item / currency trade to reflect the derelict state of the world.

As there are no equipment for Chloe, there will be no need for upgrading equipment via currencies or material either. The items featured in the game will be along the lines of foods, drinks and medicines.

5f. Weapons system:

Chloe uses the power of Shades as her “weapon”, as such there are no equipment for her aside from skills she can acquire from Shades (think Megaman learning moves from his opponents).

5g. AI systems:

Enemies will react to the player in different ways, their movements are based on predetermined triggers such that the player can learn and exploit their weaknesses after learning the enemies’ move sets. The enemies will have very lethal moves but not such that the player cannot predict their movements. The simplistic nature of the AI behavior is corresponding to the lore that Shades are mindless dead spirits driven more by instincts than intelligence.

5h. Customization options:

The player will have different choices in picking which skills to equip and what skills to specialize in using. Beyond that there will be palette swaps for the player but not drastic visual changes due to the usage of hand-drawn sprites.

5i. Player upgrades:

The player can level up in terms of stats and skills. The more a skill is used the more effective it becomes (to a cap). This allows the player to mix and match different skills to build their own play style.

Upgraded skills will deal more damage, have wider areas of effect, hit more times, (more to be added).

5j. Damage systems:

Aside from lethal attacks that will kill the player in one hit, Shades also have access to weaker attacks that are faster and harder to read. These Shades with minor damage will often serve as obstacles blocking the path forward rather than real challenges, and so the player will be easily able to dispatch them.

## PART 6: INTERFACE

### 6a. Navigating menus and HUDs:

The game starts with a starting screen. In the current build there will be a start game and exit game button. In future builds there will be a load save button.

The player has access to the following HUDs:

1. Current health / max health
2. Current level
3. Current equipped skills
4. Enemies on screen – when they attack with a lethal attack there will be an obvious wind-up and warning effect.
5. Player – when the player is attacked there will be visible signs of taking damage and obvious feedback

The game is paused while the player menu is active. This menu allows the player to view:

1. Current status of player (health, max health, stats)
2. Items (player will be able to use them, discard them or add them to favorite. There will also be an item description showing the effect and lore behind the item.)
3. Skills (player will be shown a list of available skills and can equip them, unequip them or add to favorite. There will also be skill descriptions describing the effect and lore behind the skills.)

A bestiary is planned in the future and will feature lore, loot tables and enemy descriptions for enemy types the player has defeated.

Save / load (saving in dangerous areas and loading will bring the player back to a save point)

### 6b. In game menus:

The player will have access to their favorited skills and items through a shortcut UI. The same UI will show up for the player to bind these favorited skills / items in the player menu. There will also be the same item and skill descriptions for the player to read through. While this menu is active the game will be paused.

#### 6c. Configuration window:

The player will be able to use preset control schemes or rebind to their liking. The player will be able to use controllers and / or keyboard and mouse.

## PART 7: CONTROL SCHEME

The player can use either mouse and keyboard or controllers. The player can move left and right using the arrow keys and attack using ZXC, jumping with the space bar. Alternatively, the player can move with WASD, attack using the mouse buttons and jump using the space bar.

On a controller the player can move left and right using the left analog stick or the d-pad. The player can attack using the X button (on an Xbox controller), Y button and B button. The player can jump with the A button.

## PART 8: AUDIO DESIGN

Currently under work – there will need to be feedback sounds for the character's movement, monster noises for the Shades, effect sounds for when they are defeated, background ambient noises and a soundtrack with a combat variant and off-combat variant.

## PART 9: SOCIAL / MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS

Chloe is a female protagonist.

## PART 10: SCHEDULE & TIMELINES

Feb 14<sup>th</sup> – Chloe’s controls implemented

Feb 21<sup>st</sup> – Basic enemies prototyped (2 goons 1 boss)

Feb 28<sup>th</sup> – Combat implemented

Mar 6<sup>th</sup> – Level white boxed

Mar 11<sup>th</sup> – UI implemented

Next quarter: refinement of artwork (more keyframes, normal maps on environment, UI design)