

Escape from Tartarus

Game Overview

One-Liner

Escape Tartarus and reach the land of the living by collecting coins and avoiding obstacles in this 2d pixel art arcade game.

Genre

Top-Down, arcade game

Target Audience

The Brackey's Game Jam 2023

Concept Paragraph

You are a ghost trapped in the underworld's most terrible realm: Tartarus. Make a deal with Charon, the Ferryman of the dead, to escape the underworld. As he drags you along the river Styx through Tartarus, Asphodel, and Elysium, you must avoid obstacles and collect enough coins to bribe Charon.

Unique selling points

Detailed and charming 2d pixel art, and arcade style mechanics.

Narrative

Game Setting

The game is loosely based on ancient greek mythology's Underworld. In the underworld there are different realms, like Tartarus, Asphodel, and Elysium, and different obstacles and monsters in each.

Dialogue

Intro Dialogue scene 1:

- P: Hey Charon I heard you ferry souls, can you take me back up to the overworld?
- C: That's not how things work around here pal, not unless you're willing to work for it.
- P: Work for it?
- C: Yeah see, I've dropped some of my drachma in the river, if you can collect enough coins maybe I'll take you all the way.
- P: Deal
- C: Great, first we gotta get out of Tartarus.

Dialogue scene 2:

- P: How's that Charon?
- C: Not bad, but there's still a long way to go until you earn your way out of here.
- C: Next stop, Asphodel.

Dialogue Scene 3:

- P: That wasn't so bad.
- C: Don't speak too soon, Elysium is tightly guarded.

Win Scene Dialogue:

- P: Wow what a trip, did I get all the coins you needed?
- C: Ehh, close enough.
- C: Good luck with your new beginnings, the real world's not as kind as it is down here.

Fail Scene Dialogue:

- C: Sorry Pal, looks like you took a dive in the River Styx.
- C: See you back in Tartarus.

Game Mechanics

Overview

Players can move left and right to different lanes. Each lane will have obstacles and coins spawned randomly that must be avoided. Collect enough coins each round to progress.

Win Condition

There are three different rounds with scaling difficulty. Each round has a required number of coins that must be collected in order to bribe Charon. Collecting the required number of coins ends the round, and players can progress to the next realm of the underworld.

Movement

- └ The screen is split into 7 columns called lanes
- └ Players can move freely vertically in their lanes
- └ Moving horizontally causes the player to “hop” to the next lane to the right or left.

Obstacles

Obstacles are spawned in a random lane and travel at a set speed towards the bottom of the screen. They start scaled very small and quickly grow bigger in size, giving the impression that they are popping over the horizon. Obstacles can take up 1, 2, or 3 lanes, and each deals 1 heart of damage.

- └ Single Lane Obstacles:
 - a. Broken pillar/column
 - b. Single rock
 - c. Vengeful spirit
- └ Two-Lane Obstacles:
 - a. Multiple rocks
 - b. Serpent head
- └ Three-Lane Obstacles:
 - a. Serpent body.

Pickups

- └ Coins:
 - a. Bronze drachma: worth 1 coin.
 - b. Silver drachma: worth 2 coins.
 - c. Gold drachma: worth 3 coins.
- └ Hearts: heal 1 heart

User Interface & Controls

Menus

- ↳ Title Screen
- ↳ Pause Menu

Controls

Menu Navigation

- ↳ Mouse and left mouse button

Player movement

- ↳ WASD or Arrow keys.

In-Game UI

- ↳ Heart counter (3 hearts max)
- ↳ Number of coins collected and number of coins required.

Player Experience

Level structure

- ↳ Round 1: Tartarus
- ↳ Round 2: Asphodel
- ↳ Round 3: Elysium

Visual Design

Mood board



Color palette

Sound Design

Music Feel

- └ Title: Quiet and calm music with a long and slow build. The kind of music you might hear in the halls of Hades. Torches can be heard burning in the background.
- └ Dialogue screens:
- └ Round 1: Tartarus:
 - Action music, the first four seconds start off by teasing the player, then bursts into exciting, heart pumping music.
- └ Round 2: Asphodel
 - Again, first four seconds start slow, then goes to fast paced though not as heart pumping as Tartarus. Asphodel is the land of lost souls.
- └ Round 3: Elysium

- First four seconds start slow, then goes fast paced and slightly upbeat. Elysium is where the most special souls go.

Sound effects

- ↳ Collecting coins
 - Different tones for each value coin, low tones for bronze, higher for silver, and highest for gold.

Unity

Scene 1: Title Scene

- Play button
- Quit button

Scene 2: Dialogue 1

- Different text objects with dialogue

Scene 3: Round 1 - Tartarus

- Gamemanager with “current level” set to 1.

Scene 4: Dialogue 2

- Different text objects with dialogue

Scene 5: Round 2 - Asphodel

- Gamemanager with “current level” set to 2.

Scene 6: Dialogue 3

- Different text objects with dialogue

Scene 7: Round 3 - Elysium

- Gamemanager with “current level” set to 3.

Scene 8: Win Dialogue

- Different text objects with dialogue

Scene 9: Lose Dialogue

- Different text objects with dialogue