

Apotheosis

Game Design Document

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*This is a consolidated GDD based on the documents written in Obsidian.
Please refer to the obsidian HTML to get a better picture if this document creates any confusions*

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Vision & Pillars

Elevator Pitch

Apotheosis is a deliberate dance with death where patience transforms into explosive brutality. Players embody the broken deity, Rah-uh, reclaiming stolen emotions through precise, high-stakes combat that demands mastery of timing over button-mashing. Every encounter is a puzzle of positioning and prediction, rewarded with the visceral satisfaction of shattering a composed enemy into vulnerability.

Three Core Principles

- **Patience Rewarded with Violence:** Combat flows from observation to precision timing (Goad), to explosive attacks.
- **Readability over Spectacle:** Every attack, enemy state, and visual cue must be crystal clear at 60fps
- **Skill Expression Through Mastery:** Low skill floor (learn patterns), High skill ceiling (perfect execution)

What players should feel

- **Moment-to-moment:** Tension —> Recognition —> Execution —> Catharsis
- **Session:** "I learned enemy X's pattern and now I can dismantle them"
- **Overall:** "I transformed from studying threats to becoming the apex predator!"

Tone & Aesthetic Direction

Visual

- **World and Ambience:** Beautiful, thriving, lively and vibrant. Harmonious but still and unaffected; no signs of life influencing it. Areas near Wardens take on their respective vibe, flowing from weak to strong influence in proximity to the boss.
- **Combat:** High contrast, juxtaposed with the ambience — brutal and visceral.
- **Composed enemies are colourful:** broken enemies are muted. Enemies splatter with blood and gruesome effects when killed or attacked.

Audio

- Ambient drones during exploration.
- Sharp, precise sound design for combat actions: Goad success, enemy break.

- Musical swells only during major, wave-based fights and bosses, reflecting furious and constant violence.

Narrative Tone

- Melancholic mythology (*Shadow of the Colossus* meets *Hades*).
- Environmental storytelling over exposition.

Reference Framework

Reference	What's taken	What's NOT taken
Sekiro	Posture/timing-based combat, learning enemy patterns	Stamina management for player, parry-focused defence
Hyper Light Drifter	Top-down precision	Gunplay
Hades	Narrative through runs, boss personality	Roguelike structure, power scaling randomness
Katana ZERO	Frame-perfect timing satisfaction, stylish execution	Time manipulation, platforming

*Note these might be deprecated with respect to the current build of the game.

Narrative Premise

*Following all subject to minor changes

The Severance

Once, the world pulsed with the **Navra**, nine emotional currents that flowed through gods and mortals alike: Love, Joy, Sorrow, Anger, Courage, Fear, Disgust, Wonder, Tranquility. They were the architecture of existence itself.

A faction within the pantheon grew obsessed with perfection through stillness. They believed emotion was entropy, that feeling was a flaw that bred chaos, conflict, and decay. They performed the **Vichheda** (cutting apart): in a single, surgical moment, the Navra were ripped from the fabric of reality. Nine emotional essences became nine independent entities, no longer integrated into the world but bound within living vessels. These vessels became the **Wardens**, god-like beings who now embody the emotions of the Navra.

The gods who opposed the Vichheda were not destroyed, that would have been mercy. Instead, they were fractured, left with only a single emotion, a cruel mockery of their former wholeness. Each Broken God is now a prisoner of one feeling, unable to experience the spectrum that once defined them.

Mortals were hollowed entirely. Without the Navra flowing through the world, they became husks, aware but unfeeling, moving through routines they no longer understand.

The Current State

The world did not collapse after the Vichheda. It endures. The sun still rises and sets, rivers flow, forests grow thick with green. The world continues its cycles with indifferent beauty. **The world is perfect. It is the people who are broken.**

The husks move through this beauty like ghosts, performing the motions of life without comprehension.

The Broken Gods are different. They tower over the husks. They are massive, monument-like figures carved from grey stone, each locked in an eternal expression of their singular emotion. They are the only things in this world that still feel.

The Broken Gods

Each Broken God was left with a single fragment of the Navra.

- The Joyful One laughs at everything: the empty cities, the silent husks, the horror around them, utterly blind to the tragedy.
- The Sorrowful One weeps without end, mourning the world but unable to act or move beyond grief.

- The Fearful One cowers from shadows that do not exist, paralysed by terror of everything and nothing.

The Broken Gods are aware of what happened. They remember the Vichheda, the world before, the pantheon as it once was. But they are trapped in their singular emotions, unable to synthesise understanding into action. They can point toward danger and share fragments of lore but they cannot act.

Ra-uh: The protagonist

*The name is placeholder

Name: Rah-uh (pronunciation: "RAH-ooH")

Title (Pre-Vichheda): Dhar-nyaya, the Divine Justiciar

Current State: Broken God who retained Anger (Krodha)

A towering figure of grey stone, 2–3 times mortal height. His body is not rigid but flowing like water frozen mid-cascade, or wind carved into stone. Every line of his form suggests forward motion. Cracks run through his stone form like fault lines, glowing faintly with ember-red light from within.

His face is set in a controlled mask, jaw clenched, features locked in restraint. But his eyes betray everything: wild, untamed fury, the only part of him that moves freely. He does not explode with rage. He contains it. And the containment itself has become a form of motion. He cannot be stopped. He can only move forward.

Dhar-nyaya vs Ra-uh

Dhar-nyaya was the god of justice: complete, logical, balanced. He held all nine Navra within himself, but his divine purpose was to adjudicate with clarity. He did not feel anger as mortals did; he understood it, channelled it into righteous action, but never let it consume him.

The Vichheda severed him. Only anger remains. Justice requires balance, requires all the Navra to function; without compassion, without fear of injustice, without joy in fairness, what is justice but vengeance? Rah-uh knows he is no longer capable of true justice. He can only act through anger now.

Why Rah-uh Alone Can Act (and other gods cannot)

The other Broken Gods are static. The Joyful One sees no problem to solve, the Sorrowful One is paralysed by grief, the Fearful One cannot move toward danger, the Loving One cannot harm the Wardens, the Tranquil One accepts the Vichheda as it is, the Courageous One has nothing to be brave for, the Disgusted One recoils from everything, the Awed One is frozen in wonder at the tragedy itself.

But Anger moves forward. Anger demands action. Rah-uh is cursed to be the only one capable of rebellion and blessed for the exact same reason.

Combat Philosophy: Iced Fury

Rah-uh's combat style is the physical manifestation of his singular emotion. Anger moves forward; it does not retreat.

- **The Dodge is not Escape:** every backward movement is repositioning, a breath before the next forward strike.
- **Patience is Containment:** his iced fury keeps him in a state of patient preparation. He watches, waits, finds the opening.
- **The Release:** when the opening arrives, Rah-uh surges forward. All that contained fury collapses into a single, brutal moment.

This fighting style looks like justice (disciplined, methodical, precise). But it is not justice. It is controlled vengeance. Dhar-nyaya would have found another way. Rah-uh only knows one direction: toward the enemy.

***Wording Note:** Earlier drafts of Rah-uh's motivation and the wider narrative framed his goal around climbing a Divine Tower toward a summit. That structural premise has been scrapped. The core character truth, a Broken God who can only act through Anger, seeking vengeance against the architects of the Vichheda remains current. The literal Tower/climb framing does not.

Core Combat Loop



CD2 does not change this identity. It expands what each phase means at the macro scale of a full Perilous Room encounter, and introduces Fury as the cathartic payoff the loop has been building toward.

*The game is currently at its second version of combat design: referred to as CD2 in this doc

Mirco Loop: single enemy

At the micro scale, the player studies an unfamiliar enemy, Goads their attack chain, breaks them, and eliminates them. If the enemy is unfamiliar, the player baits an attack and observes; once familiar, they commit to a Goad sequence, hold the Dodge Field until Composure allows a Goad attempt, and push the chain to its final attack to force the Broken state before unleashing attacks to finish the kill.

Macro Loop: Perilous Room

At the macro scale, the player is no longer managing one enemy. They are managing an arena of threats simultaneously while building toward Fury. Patience becomes spatial awareness: reading the full arena and identifying priority targets.

If Composure is unavailable, the player attacks composed enemies to recover it and build Fury simultaneously. Once Composure allows it, the player commits to a Goad sequence on a chosen enemy, breaks them, and chooses between a standard-strike kill or a charged-dash kill through a crowd for larger Fury gain. When the Fury Meter fills, the player faces a genuine dilemma: spend it on Fury Mode to brutalise at scale, or spend it on health recovery to survive.

How the three phases scale

Phase	Micro expression	Macro expression
Patience	Study individual enemy attack patterns	Spatial awareness, read the full arena, identify priority targets, reposition
Preparation	Hold Dodge Field, Goad the attack chain	Manage Composure Meter, commit to a Goad sequence on a chosen enemy
Brutalise	Kill the broken enemy	Build Fury through kills, spend Fury to eliminate multiple enemies instantly

Fury's Role in the Loop

Fury is a **suspension of the loop**, not a phase within it. When the Fury Meter is full, the player may skip patience and preparation entirely and deliver brutalise at maximum scale, darting between enemies and eliminating them instantly. Fury does not replace the loop; it is the loop's payoff. A player who cannot Goad consistently cannot build Fury efficiently. **The catharsis is proportional to the discipline that earned it.**

The Resource Triangle

CD2 introduces three interdependent player resources. Every decision in the macro loop involves trading between them: Composure (access to Goad), Fury (catharsis/survival), and Health (staying alive).

Resource	Primary Source (tap)	Primary spend (sink)
Composure	Attacking composed enemies, killing broken enemies, entering Fury	Holding Dodge Field, executing Goads
Fury	Killing broken enemies, attacking composed enemies	Fury Mode, health recovery
Health	Fury meter spend	Taking hits from enemy attacks

No resource is an island. Losing Composure threatens Goad access. Losing health forces a Fury spend that delays catharsis. Entering Fury restores Composure, changing the entire resource picture instantly.

Dodge field, Goad & Composure

The Goad System is the cornerstone of Apotheosis's combat. Its the engine that drives the entire loop. Everything else, the Fury Meter, the attack system, the enemy break conditions, derives its meaning from what the Goad System demands of the player.

The dodge field

What changed from CD1: In CD1, the Dodge Field was a transitional state. Pressing (X) activated it for a fixed window of frames, and if the window elapsed without detecting a hitbox, the player automatically dashed. The player had no agency over which outcome occurred.

In CD2, the Dodge Field is a **declared stance of readiness**. The player holds (X) to activate it, and it remains active for as long as the input is held. No movement occurs automatically. The player retains full movement while the field is active. The only automatic outcome is Goad: when the Dodge Field detects an enemy attack hitbox, the Goad executes instantly in the last inputted direction.

This shift is fundamental. The Dodge Field is no longer something that happens to the player. It is something the player chooses to sustain at a resource cost.

Dodge Field Properties

Property	Data
Activation input	Hold (X)
Field radius	1–3 units from player centre
Startup frames	0 frames
Active duration	Indefinite — while (X) held and Composure > 0
Player movement	Retained while active
Auto-exit conditions	X) released / Composure depleted / Goad executes
Post-Goad behaviour	Reactivates instantly if (X) still held

Goad

Goad is the primary and most expressive mechanic in Apotheosis. The bread and butter of the game. Everything the player does either builds toward a Goad opportunity or is a consequence of one.

The Goad is not a player-initiated action; it is the automatic resolution of the Dodge Field detecting the right condition. The player's skill is expressed in creating that condition, not in a button press.

What Goad Does

- The player dashes a short distance in the last inputted direction.
- The player is completely invincible during the dash.
- The dash cannot be cancelled, and there are no recovery frames — the player can act immediately after.
- The Composure Meter takes a flat cost.
- The enemy whose attack triggered the Goad becomes compelled, forced to perform the next attack in their chain.

Goad Properties

Property	Data
State name	isGoading
Startup frames	0 frames
Active duration	5–10 frames
I-frames	5–10 frames (full invincibility)
Recovery frames	0 frames (full invincibility)
Direction	Last inputted direction
Composure cost	Flat drain on top of passive Dodge Field drain

*CD2 Break Condition In CD2, enemy stamina is removed. The sole break condition for all melee enemies is Goading the final attack in their chain. There is no stamina attrition path. The player must Goad to break. This makes Goad not merely optimal but mandatory.

The Attack chain system (enemies only)

Every melee enemy has a defined Attack Chain, a fixed sequence of attacks it can perform consecutively, expressed as an integer chain length (2–4 for standard enemies, longer for bosses).

The enemy never commits to its full chain up front. When an enemy initiates an attack sequence, it randomly decides to perform somewhere between 1 and N-1 attacks and never the complete chain. This is deliberate: it stops enemies from self-breaking without player interaction, and it means the player can never simply wait out a chain to see everything an enemy has. The only way to reach the final attack is to Goad for it.

Two outcomes branch from here. If the player Normal Dodges, the enemy just finishes whatever length it already decided on and returns to idle. If the player Goads, the enemy forgets its decided length entirely and is compelled to perform its

next attack. Goad again, and it's compelled again, the player can push an enemy through its entire chain purely by Goading, attack by attack, until the final one lands. Goading the final attack in the chain is what breaks the enemy. In CD1, this coexisted with stamina depletion as a second path to breaking; **CD2 removes that path entirely, so Goading the final chain attack is now the only door to Broken.**

This is also why a non-Goadable attack, such as a projectile, must sit at the end of an enemy's chain rather than anywhere else. An enemy can't perform its Nth attack unless the (N-1)th was Goaded, so a non-Goadable move only works as the final position.

The composure meter

The Composure Meter is the player resource that governs access to the Dodge Field. It drains while the Dodge Field is held and takes a larger flat hit each time a Goad executes. If it reaches zero, the Dodge Field cannot be activated and the player enters the Broken State.

Why it exists: In CD1, Goad was purely skill-gated. The only cost of a Goad attempt was timing. CD2 adds a second dimension to every Goad decision: resource management. The player must now consider not only whether they can Goad, but whether they can afford to. This creates the productive agency that solves the locus of control problem. Between Goads, the player can no longer afford to wait passively.

Composure Replenishment

Action	Amount Recovered
Attacking a composed enemy	Small amount per hit
Killing a broken enemy	Approximately one third of meter
Entering Fury Mode	Full meter — instant
Exiting Player Broken State (when composure = 0)	Full meter — on recovery

*subject to major change depends on balancing

Player Broken State

If the Composure Meter is fully depleted, the player enters a Broken State for approximately three seconds, mirroring the enemy Broken condition. During this window the player cannot take any action. There is one exception: if the Fury Meter is full when the Broken State begins, the player may activate Fury Mode immediately to escape it, the only available action during the Broken State.

Composure State	Player Condition	Available Actions
Composure > 0	Normal Dodge Field accessible	All actions
Composure = 0, Fury not full	Broken (incapacitated)	None — endure 3 seconds
Composure = 0, Fury full	Broken (escape available)	Activate Fury Mode only

Design Rationale

The Composure Meter does three things simultaneously. It solves locus of control, attacking composed enemies is no longer dead time, it directly enables the next Goad sequence. It gives Goad genuine weight. Spending Composure on a Goad is a commitment, raising the stakes of every Goad decision without changing the timing skill required. And it creates symmetry. The player who runs out of Composure becomes, briefly, exactly what they were trying to create in their enemies. This reinforces the core identity of Apotheosis: the same rules apply to everyone in the arena.

How the three system interlocked

The Dodge Field, Goad, and Composure Meter are one system expressed in three parts. The Dodge Field is the interface, the player declares readiness by holding it.

The Goad is the outcome. The system resolves the stance into action when conditions are met. The Composure Meter is the cost structure. It governs how long the player can sustain the stance and how many Goads they can execute before needing to recover. Together they transform what was a purely skill-gated mechanic in CD1 into a mechanic with two dimensions: **timing skill** and **resource discipline**.

Attack System & Fury

The attack system and the Fury System are one system expressed in two parts. Attacks are the primary means of building Fury; Fury is the payoff that gives the attack system its full meaning.

What changed from CD1: In CD1, the attack system had one expression, a dash attack triggered by holding R2 and pressing (X), used exclusively to eliminate broken enemies. In CD2 the attack system is reworked into three distinct expressions, giving the player productive agency at every stage of the combat loop, not just during brutalise.

Input Structure

Input	Outcome
R2 (tap)	Standard strike, up to 3 hit combo
R2 (hold, release)	Charged dash attack (passes through enemies)
R2 (hold) + Square	AOE reflecting slam, pushes back enemies and projectiles

Standard Strikes

Tapping R2 executes a standard strike. The player can chain up to three consecutive hits before the combo resets. Standard strikes are available against all enemies at all times.

Against Composed enemies

- Deals HP damage, depletes the enemy's health bar.
- Generates a small amount of Fury per hit and replenishes a small amount of Composure per hit.
- Does not break a composed enemy. Goad remains the only path to the Broken State.
- If the enemy's HP reaches 0 while composed, it dies without ever entering the Broken State.

Against Broken enemies

- Kills the enemy instantly, regardless of remaining HP, and generates a large amount of Fury.

Attacking composed enemies is not a safe action. They continue their attack behaviour while being struck, and standard strikes grant no invincibility.

Charged Dash Attack

Holding R2 charges the attack; releasing after a full charge unleashes a dash through enemies. The player passes through anyone in their path, dealing damage to all enemies contacted. Getting hit during the charge phase does not interrupt it — the player takes damage but the attack continues.

Against composed enemies: deals HP damage to everyone passed through, generating a small amount of Fury per enemy contacted.

Against broken enemies: kills instantly on contact and generates the largest amount of Fury per kill — more than a standard strike kill.

Primary use case: a broken enemy positioned behind a group of composed enemies. The player charges through the group, dealing damage and generating Fury along the way, to reach and instantly eliminate the broken target.

The player is vulnerable to incoming attacks during the charge phase and takes full damage from any hits. The commitment to charging is a genuine risk, not an invincible power move.

AOE Reflecting Slam

While charging R2, pressing Square before releasing redirects the charge into a grounded AOE slam. The dash is cancelled and the player does not move. It generates a shockwave that pushes back all enemies and active projectiles within its radius, reflecting projectiles back toward their source. It deals lesser damage than the charged dash.

1. **Crowd control:** creating space when enemies close in from multiple directions.
2. **Projectile clearance:** reflecting ranged attacks without needing to parry individually.

Using the AOE slam sacrifices the charged dash's larger Fury generation and pass-through kill in exchange for area control. This is a deliberate trade, not a strictly superior option.

How the Attack system solves Locus of Control

In CD1 the player had no productive action between Goads. They waited for the enemy to initiate their next attack. In CD2, attacking composed enemies is always available and always meaningful: it deals HP damage, replenishes Composure, and builds Fury simultaneously. Between every Goad and broken enemy kill, there is always a productive action available that contributes to the macro loop.

The Fury System

Fury is the meter the player builds through combat. Its the macro expression of brutalise, the cathartic payoff that the accumulated discipline of the Goad System has been building toward. When the Fury Meter is full, the player may enter Fury Mode, a temporary state in which the rules of the core loop are suspended: patience and preparation are skipped, and the player darts between enemies and eliminates them instantly.

Fury is a **suspension of the core loop**, not a replacement for it. It cannot be accessed without first doing the work of the loop. A player who cannot Goad consistently cannot build Fury efficiently. **The catharsis is proportional to the discipline that earned it.**

Fury Meter Generation

Action	Amount generated
Hitting a composed enemy (standard strike)	Small amount per hit
Killing a broken enemy (standard strike)	Large amount
Killing a broken enemy (charged dash)	Largest amount

*subject to major change depends on balancing

Goad is the primary path to Fury because Goad is the primary path to breaking enemies, and breaking enemies is the most efficient Fury generation by a significant margin. **Goad is the unsung hero. Fury is the payoff that gives Goad's discipline its full meaning.**

Fury Mode

- The player darts to the nearest enemy in the inputted direction, leaving a streak behind them.
- Contact with any enemy during a Fury dart eliminates them instantly, regardless of state, composed or broken.
- The Fury Meter depletes over time while active; the player may exit at any time and retain the remaining meter.
- Activating Fury Mode fully replenishes the Composure Meter instantly.

Entering Fury Mode immediately restoring Composure is not incidental. It is the structural bridge between Fury and the Goad System. A player who enters Fury Mode mid-encounter exits it with full Composure, able to immediately re-enter the Dodge Field and begin Goading again. Fury accelerates the micro and macro loop.

Fury as a resource dilemma

The Fury Meter serves three distinct functions, creating genuine strategic decisions every time the meter approaches full: Catharsis (enter Fury Mode, dart and insta-kill), Survival (spend Fury to recover health), and Escape (enter Fury Mode from the Player Broken State).

These functions compete, a player who spends Fury on health recovery delays catharsis; a player who saves Fury for catharsis risks having no escape if Composure depletes; a player who burns Fury carelessly has no emergency exit when they need it most. The right choice depends on the state of the encounter.

How attacks and Fury interlock

The attack system and Fury System form a closed resource loop. Every attack contributes to Fury. Fury, when spent on Fury Mode, restores Composure.

Composure enables Goad. Goad breaks enemies. Breaking enemies generates the largest Fury gains. The loop accelerates itself. The more disciplined the player, the faster the resource cycle turns.

What CD2 Does Not Change (from CD1)

- Goad remains the primary and most expressive mechanic. The attack system supports and extends it, and never competes with it.
- Composed enemies remain dangerous. Attacking them is a resource action taken at genuine risk, not a safe fallback.
- The patience–preparation–brutalise loop remains the structural identity of Apotheosis's combat. Fury suspends it temporarily and does not replace it.

Enemy Design

*designed during CD1 but move-sets remain largely unchanged.

Design Philosophy

All enemies in the level before a Warden are dedicated to that Warden. Specifically, enemies' attack chains are derived from their Warden's to condition the player's Goad timings.

Each melee enemy is based on one attack from the Warden's attack chain from its contingent zone 1. Rather than aesthetics, timing is what matters. The goal is not to replicate the boss's moves visually, but to drill the player's hands on the rhythm of when to Goad, so that when the player faces the Warden, their muscle memory is already primed.

Enemy Roster

Enemy	Type	Derives from	Teaching Goal
Enemy 01 — Scourge Derivative	Melee	The Scourge (FEAR Phase 1)	Consecutive quick Goads
Enemy 02 — Death Knell Derivative	Melee	Death Knell (FEAR Phase 1)	Wide hitbox spatial awareness
Enemy 03 — Chain Breaker	Melee	Original (Elite-ready)	Goad-then-Parry transition
Ranged Enemy 01	Ranged	Original	Track and time a slow projectile
Ranged Enemy 02	Ranged	Original	Consecutive parries

*parries are deprecated. They existed in CD1

Frame data throughout (the following) is presented as Startup / Active / Recovery, in frames, at 60 FPS.

Melee Enemies

Enemy 01 — Scourge Derivative

Teaching Goal: Drill the player on two consecutive quick Goads. The exact timing required for The Scourge's opening hits.

This is the easiest melee enemy. It isolates a single variable, the Goad window, by keeping timing identical across all three attacks. Attacks 1 and 2 use a more forgiving active window to build confidence before Attack 3 demands the real Scourge timing.

Chain length: 3 attacks.

Attack	Start-up	Active	Recovery	Hit-box shape
01 — Left Slash	30f	15f	10f	Linear horizontal
02 — Right Slash	15f	15f	10f	Linear horizontal
03 — Double Swipe (Final)	15f	10f, pause (10f), 10f	10f	Two successive slashes

*if the player goads the final attack, enemy broken immediately

Enemy 02 — Death knell derivative

Teaching Goal: Teach the player that dodging behind an enemy is not always safe. The wide circular hitbox of the heel slam can still catch a repositioned player.

A leg-only entity, visually distinct from all other enemies. A leg sweep and heel slam read naturally as wide and low in a 3/4 top-down view. Easier than Enemy 01 in chain complexity but teaches a more spatial lesson. Chain length: 2 attacks.

Attack	Start-up	Active	Recovery	Hit-box shape
01 — Thrust (Front Kick)	20f	20f	10f	Linear thrust
02 — Heel Slam (Final)	30f	30f	20f	Wide circular area

*Chain Completion If the player Goads Attack 02, the enemy enters the BROKEN state immediately. The longer active window on the heel slam is intentional. It gives the wide hitbox more time to catch players who dodged incorrectly.

Enemy 03 — Chain Breaker

*Due for major rework, philosophy use to design this enemy is based heavily on the mechanic deprecated from CD1 such as Parry

Teaching Goal: Break the player out of a pure Goad loop. They must read a two-part attack and execute a parry mid-chain, preparing them for FEAR's Aerogel Slash.

The most complex regular enemy in FEAR's domain, designed with an elite variant in mind. Each attack creates a new problem from the solution to the last. Attack 2 demands a double Goad within a single move; Attack 3 forces a full mode switch from Goad to parrying.

Chain length: 3 attacks.

Attack 01 Horizontal Swipe: a wide horizontal swipe encouraging the player to Goad or dodge backward, establishing the Goad habit before the chain escalates. (20f / 15f / 10f, wide horizontal hitbox.)

Attack 02 Thrust into Oval Sweep (two-part): the enemy thrusts forward, then immediately swings both hands outward in an oval arc. This is a double-Goad test within a single attack — since Goad has zero recovery frames, the player must Goad the thrust and immediately Goad the oval sweep. Part 1 (10f/20f/5f, linear thrust); Part 2 (5f/20f/20f, oval arc). The 5-frame recovery on Part 1 flowing into the 5-frame

startup of Part 2 gives the player a 10-frame window to chain their second Goad is intentionally tight.

Attack 03 — Projectile (Final): the enemy fires a fast projectile, demanding a full mode switch to parry at the point in the chain where the player is deepest in their Goad mindset. A successful parry sends the projectile back toward the enemy.

CD1 superseded by CD2. This attack's original design breaks the enemy via a stamina penalty from the parried projectile connecting ("enemy suffers a stamina penalty... enters the BROKEN state via stamina depletion"). CD2 removes enemy stamina entirely. CD2 takes precedence wherever the two conflict.

Ranged Enemies

Ranged enemies have no stamina system and die in one hit, either from a direct player attack or a parried projectile reflected back at them. Their purpose in FEAR's domain is to teach the player to parry and to manage cognitive load while simultaneously handling melee threats.

*Parry is deprecated. The counters to ranged enemies under CD2 are goad and AOE reflecting slam.

Ranged Enemy 01: Slow Launcher

Teaching Goal: Track a projectile on screen and time a parry. The slow speed and large size create sustained pressure and force a deliberate decision.

Ranged enemies are annoying by design. This one fires infrequently but its projectile lingers, splitting the player's attention during melee engagements. (Startup 40f, recovery 60f, large slow projectile.)

Ranged Enemy 02: Double Launcher

Teaching Goal: Parry consecutively, mirroring the consecutive Goad lesson from Enemy 01 but in the parry domain.

Fires more frequently than Ranged Enemy 01, with a tight 15-frame gap between projectiles that demands a second parry without being frame perfect. (Startup 30f, recovery 45f, medium moderate-speed projectile.)

*Diegetic Feedback Visual and audio feedback for all enemies, including attack telegraphs, hitbox reads, and Goad/parry confirmation, is to be addressed in a dedicated feedback design pass. Art direction owns aesthetic differentiation between attack states.

Boss Design: The Warden of Fear

*Beyond Current Vertical Slice Scope The full multi-phase FEAR boss fight described in this section is planned design, beyond the current vertical slice. The current build ends the Forest level with an elite encounter and a still-frame cutscene revealing FEAR as a cliffhanger, not a playable boss fight.

This boss has been cut from the game, please ignore any inconsistencies between CD1 and CD2.

Parry and Normal dodging are NOT a mechanics under CD2.

The first boss of the game, and the only one in the demo, is the Warden of Fear. Wardens are the embodiment of their respective emotion. There are two approaches to this boss's design: should the boss be fearful, or should the boss evoke fear? The answer is both.

Fighting a boss who is fearful of the player but who also evokes fear creates an uncanny feeling, not fright or terror, but the odd kind of fear that makes a person not want to deal with it, the kind that makes you uncomfortable. The best example of this uncanny fear is any titan from Attack on Titan: uncanny, mysterious, unpredictable, and above all, dangerous.

What the Boss Needs

The boss features two contingent zones, each assigned an Attack Chain. The boss switches its Attack Chain depending on which zone the player currently occupies.

What is the Warden of Fear Testing For?

A key principle of boss design: the boss must be a test of something. For the first boss, they must test everything the player has learnt in the levels before: Goad, Attack, and Parry are the mechanics under direct test, with the other listed skills breaking the monotony of consistent Goading.

Primarily, the Warden of Fear tests the main system: Goad. The boss must discourage creating distance and encourage attacking and Goading up close. Contingent Zone 2's attack chain punishes the player, while Contingent Zone 1's attack chain rewards Goading.

Boss Phases

The boss has three phases. Think of these phases as different variations of the boss, systematically, separate "enemies," but narratively the same. This is the illusion of transformation; in actuality, enemies are simply being replaced. The boss does not transform based on health percentages. Each phase transition is marked by a short cutscene, a pause with the boss surrounded by VFX, allowing the variation to be swapped, optionally paired with brief dialogue.

Rules of Contingent Zones

Since bosses switch attack chains based on contingent zones, their logic differs from normal enemies and elites.

- **Rule 01:** Contingent zones are always relative to the boss and move with it. The final zone should be large enough to cover the entire boss arena regardless of where the boss is positioned.
- **Rule 02:** The boss must consistently check which contingent zone the player currently occupies, following the standard Attack Chain System logic but checking player position before deciding its attack chain length.
- **Rule 03:** Contingent Zone 2's attack chain is an exception to Rule 02. It ignores the typical decision/execution logic and instead performs its fixed attack sequence on a loop for as long as the player remains in that zone, only switching back to the Zone 1 logic once the player moves into Zone 1.
- **Rule 04:** The boss cannot be Goaded for attacks in attack chain 2. This is crucial. It is the core of discouragement for the player being in Zone 2, and means the boss can only be Goaded for attacks in attack chain 1.

*CD1 superseded by CD2. Rule 05 in the original design states the boss consumes stamina while executing attack chain 1 but not attack chain 2. CD2 removes enemy stamina entirely, breaking is governed solely by Goading the final attack in the active chain. CD2 takes precedence wherever the two conflict.

*The original design lists Dash (Normal Dodge), Goad, Attack, Parry, and Bash (enemies knocked back) as the skills this boss must test. "Dash" here refers to the old CD1 automatic-dash Dodge Field exit, and "Bash"/knockback refers to the deprecated enemy-size knockback system. Neither exists in CD2. The boss's core test remains Goad, Attack.

Phase 1

The easiest version of the boss.

Contingent Zone 2: The Player Must Be Punished

Attack 01 Torus of Doom: FEAR coils and charges aura, then bursts out throwing its arms upwards (60f startup). An area around it in the shape of a donut explodes (30f active).

Attack 02 Convergence: FEAR implodes into a dark sphere as black particles formulate and get sucked in, then explodes and reverts to its original form with an outward shockwave (60f startup). Black particles shoot radially outward and curve, converging toward the player's position (5f active, projectile lifetime 60f). The boss can act while these projectiles are still live.

Attack 03 Renaissance Strike: FEAR grabs its own head, cuts it off, and blows up in a puff of smoke, materialising behind the player in an anticipation stance before releasing a devastating thrust (60f startup, 10f active).

Contingent Zone 1

Contingent Zone 1

Attack 01 The Scourge: A multi-hit attack. FEAR steps in closer, stomps the ground, and screeches (60f startup). It swipes upward with both claws in a cross (10f), pauses (10f), follows with a similar downward swipe (10f), pauses again (30f anticipation for the final hit), then slams its head on the ground (20f).

Attack 02 Death Knell: A multi-hit attack. FEAR coils up and jumps into the air, swinging its head back (60f startup), then slams its head onto the ground three times in succession (15f each), separated by anticipation pauses (30f, then 20f).

Attack 03 Vacuum Sweep: A two-stage attack culminating in a single devastating horizontal sweep. FEAR walks three units toward the player (60f), then begins charging for the sweep. During this 120-frame anticipation window, the boss behaves like a black hole, constantly pulling the player toward it (dodgeable, but persistent). The charge stops, like the calm before the storm (30f), before FEAR releases a massive horizontal sweeping slash (20f active).

Phase 2

For each phase progression, FEAR's Attack Chain 1 gains one added unique attack. Contingent Zone 2's attack chain remains the same as Phase 1's. In Contingent Zone 1, the first three attacks carry over from Phase 1, with a new attack added as the final position in the chain:

Attack 04 AeroGel Slash: A projectile attack that is parry-able. Like the vacuum sweep's charging telegraph, FEAR charges (60f) before releasing a massive horizontal sweeping slash — half the arc of the Vacuum Sweep (10f active).

*The original design states that parrying this slash and landing it on the boss results in a stamina penalty for FEAR. Under CD2, this outcome should instead compel the boss forward in its attack chain per standard Goad/parry logic, consistent with the no-stamina break condition. Further, ranged attacks are no-longer parry-able. They must either be goaded or reflected using the AOE reflecting slam.

Encounter Design

Encounters in Apotheosis fall into four categories, ranked below in ascending order of danger.

Category	Description
Exploration	Largely fodder enemies and a few small enemies. Not dangerous, serves to break the monotony of running through levels.
Perilous Rooms	Mandatory areas within levels. The player is confined upon entry and cannot leave until all enemy waves are vanquished. This is the bread and butter of the game and occupies most of the play time.
Elites	Largely optional. Feature variations of enemies found in Perilous Rooms, respected as mini-bosses with larger health pools and more aggressive movesets.
Bosses	The final and most spectacular encounter in a region, the amalgamation of everything learnt from the enemies encountered prior.

Wave System

The Wave System manages enemy spawning exclusively within Perilous Rooms, enclosed combat arenas that lock the player inside until all enemy waves are vanquished. They are the bread and butter of the game, occupying most of the playtime.

System Overview

Design philosophy: simplicity and predictability.

No dynamic composition, no randomisation; clean, hand-tuned encounters that designers can balance directly. Each Perilous Room instance has a defined restricted trigger area, predetermined enemy buckets per wave, threshold-based wave progression logic, and a reward on completion.

Restricted Area

A trigger volume defines the combat arena and detects player entry. On entry, barriers close behind the player, room lighting shifts darker, an ominous audio cue plays, and a UI indicator confirms the room is active.

Wave Index & Enemy Buckets

A Wave Index tracks the currently active wave. Each wave is a hand-crafted Enemy Bucket, a designer-labelled list of enemies to spawn, a threshold of remaining enemies that triggers the next wave, and a delay between individual spawns.

Threshold rationale: 0 means the next wave only spawns once all enemies are dead (used for the last wave, for clean completion); 1 keeps pressure fast-paced; 2–3 is the recommended default that balances flow; 4+ creates intense overlap and high difficulty.

Wave State Machine

The system moves through four states: Inactive (before the player enters), Wave Spawning (enemies spawn from the current bucket with a delay between each), Wave Active (combat in progress, monitoring remaining enemies against the threshold), and Encounter Complete (last wave cleared, rewards granted, barriers unlocked).

*An early pass of this document sketched a gold/currency reward system (per-room gold values, reward scaling by difficulty tier) while thinking through the room's completion flow. No economy has been decided on for Apotheosis. This remains open design space, not a confirmed system.

*Early enemy bucket examples in this document use Small / Standard / Large enemy-size labels tied to CD1's knockback mechanic. Enemy size is no longer mechanically relevant under CD2. These labels should be read as illustrative placeholders, not a confirmed sizing system.

Current Implementation Status

This section reflects the current state of the Unity build, separate from the design documentation above.

- CD2 is fully implemented in the current Unity project: the Dodge Field, Composure Meter, three-part Attack System, and Fury System are the live, playable mechanics.
- All enemies described in "Enemy Design" are designed and implemented.
- The Warden of Fear boss is designed, including its multi-phase, contingent-zone structure.
- No playable level currently exists. There is no environmental art and no character animation.

In short: the combat system, enemy roster, and boss design are complete and playable in isolation. The remaining work to reach a vertical slice is level construction, environmental art, and character animation, not further systems design.