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Ready at Dawn , SIE Santa Monica Studio

God of War: Chains of Olympus

United States (2008)

TAGS: Atlas Basilisk Calliope Charon Eos Graeco-Persian Wars Hades Helios Morpheus Muses Persephone Persians Styx Triton Underworld Zeus

Logo of the *God of War* franchise owned by Santa Monica Studio. Retrieved from Wikimedia Commons, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0 (accessed: December 29, 2021).

General information	
Title of the work	God of War: Chains of Olympus
Studio/Production Company	Sony Interactive Entertainment
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2008
First Edition Details	Ready at Dawn, SIE Santa Monica Studio, *God of War: Chains of Olympus*. Directed by Ru Weerasuriya, PlayStation Portable, San Mateo, California: Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2008.
Platform	PlayStation Portable (PSP); PlayStation 3 [part of God of War: Origins Collection (2011) and God of War Saga (2012)]; PlayStation Vita [God of War Collection (2014)]
Official Website	sms.playstation.com
Genre	Action and adventure video games*, Hack-and-slash*, Platform*
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Creators

Ready at Dawn (Production Company)

Ready at Dawn is a video game developer, mostly known for games for the PlayStation Portable (PSP) console. Founded in 2003 in Irvine, California, consists of ex-members of Naughty Dog and Blizzard Entertainment studios.

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The Santa Monica Studio team at the 2019 Game Developers Choice Awards. Retrieved from Wikipedia, licensed under CC BY 2.0 (accessed: December 30, 2021).

SIE Santa Monica Studio (Company)

SIE Santa Monica Studio (or Santa Monica Studio) is an American video game studio owned by Sony Interactive Entertainment, as part of SIE Worldwide Studios. It was established in 1999 in Santa Monica, California. Currently based in Playa Vista, Los Angeles.

Santa Monica Studio is widely known for the *God of War* series, its most popular title so far.

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Additional information

Sequels, Prequels and Spin-offs

One prequel, *God of War: Ascension*,

and five sequels:

- *God of War,*
- *God of War: Betrayal,*
- *God of War: Ghost of Sparta,*
- *God of War II,*
- *God of War III.*

Summary

The story revolves around Kratos, a Spartan hero seeking to redeem his sins by serving the Olympian gods.

During his journey, Kratos receives a number of weapons and magic items. In the *God of War: Chains of Olympus* there are: weapons – Blades of Chaos given to Kratos by Ares (default weapon), Gauntlet of Zeus forged by Hephaestus; magic – Efreet, an ability to use the spirit of a fiery Djiin, Light of Dawn, orbs of light to hurl and Charon's Wraith, green, ravenous blasting flames.

He can also collect gorgon eyes and phoenix feathers to boost his health and mana respectively – this is a standard option in all God of War games. Since 2010, minotaur horns are also available and boost usage of other items.

These weapons and magic items are remotely based on different ancient mythologies and have no meaningful effect on the plot whatsoever.

The gods are greatly preoccupied with the Persian invasion on Attica and send their best champion, Kratos, to deal with the situation. Soon after he joins the fight a basilisk appears, set free by the Persian king to cleanse the Greek lands. However stopping the Persians and their beast does not satisfy Kratos. Leaving Attica, he raises his head and asks the gods if there is no other labour he could perform. At this very moment, clouds shroud the sky; the hero witnesses the sun falling down and the resulting complete, nocturnal darkness. Kratos, unsettled, follows the fading light, straight into Morpheus' domain; the god of dreams awakens with Helios' downfall and spreads his

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power through the omnipresent shadows.

Reaching the city of Marathon, Kratos has to battle countless numbers of Morpheus' spawns. In the suffocating fog surrounding the area, he keeps hearing a haunting melody that will stay with him for most of his quest.

Both Attica and Marathon are obvious references to the Greco-Persian wars.

Fighting through the undead soldiers, he finally reaches the temple of Helios and realizes that no simple task lies ahead. It is when Athena comes, and speaking through one of her statues, makes another request of Kratos; he's weary of his never-ending servitude and sees no end to the tormenting nightmares – the nightmares that gods have promised to take away. Athena explains why the Olympus needs his obedience; Helios has been torn away from the sky and his faithful chariot returned to its resting place – but without a rider, the sun will not rise and the eternal shadows will keep spreading, leaving all gods in deep slumber.

Seeing no other option, Kratos follows Athena's lead and pushes through the temple. On his way, an unknown goddess speaks to him through a statue, revealing an alarming truth - it was Atlas who kidnapped Helios – and requesting immediate action, otherwise the world will fall.

Armed with Helios' shield, he keeps on going and finally meets the goddess in person, visibly weakened by the absence of the sun – Eos, goddess of dawn, Helios' sister. She begs Kratos to save her brother and shows him a way to reach the light of dawn that will enable him to control the Fire Steeds.

Leaving the temple, Kratos once again hears the haunting melody and finally recognizes it – it's the tune his daughter, Calliope sung.

Kratos reaches the Fire Steeds and reads a small memo explaining the role of the winds in Helios' work. Boreas, the north wind, shows the path of the chariot and guides his brothers Zephyros, Euros and Notos.

He manages to awaken the Steeds and sets forth on a journey through the skies, not knowing where they'd take him. However the deadly fog

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of Morpheus keep expanding and without realizing it, Kratos falls into a restless sleep. The images appear in his head - it's him and his family, living a peaceful life in Sparta. He sees himself giving his wife, Lysandra, a beautiful necklace, one of the many riches he obtained during his recent campaign. And there is his daughter, eager to see her father safe and sound; she watches Kratos whittling a small flute for her – a flute, on which she played her memorable tune. Suddenly, but not unexpectedly, the grim visions of him killing his family cause Kratos to wake up.

Seeing the Steeds approaching Hades, Kratos has to act - he knows very well that the sun and its servants are not welcome in the Underworld. Pushing through the lost souls and restless monsters, he finds his way to the river Styx and meets Charon – another soul on gods' errands. The ferryman of the Underworld refuses to grant him passage, saying "begone, it isn't yet your time, mortal." A fight begins and Kratos kills Charon; using the ferry, he gets safely on the other side of the river.

He ends up in the temple of Persephone and as soon as he enters, Calliope's melody can be heard and Kratos sees her fleeing deeper into the temple.

During his visit, he reads about the plight of Persephone and the origin of seasons – how Persephone was obligated to spend half a year in Hades, and the other half with her mother, Demeter; how her return to Earth is marked with blooming growth and when she goes back to the Underworld – all growth stops. Kratos rushes through the dark temple, following his fleeing daughter. Then he reaches the groves of Persephone, the only place in the whole Underworld covered in greenery and heavenly beauty. But instead of meeting Calliope, he sees Persephone - the goddess sits under a pomegranate tree, playing with one of its fruit while talking to the Spartan warrior. He's eager to see Calliope, completely forgetting about his quest for the Olympians, what the queen of the dead fairly points out. But Kratos is determined – seeing his daughter once again is all that matters for him now, even if it means the end of the world. Persephone agrees, but on one condition - he has to lay down his weapons under the forsaken tree and be cleansed from his sins. Only then will he be granted passage to Elysium.

Kratos does everything Persephone tells him to. Entering the Elysium, he's thrilled to see his Calliope once again. Unfortunately, the joy does

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not last long; Persephone reveals her whole plan, admitting to have released Atlas and letting him kidnap Helios, only to see the pillar holding the two worlds – the world of the living and the world of the dead – collapse. Persephone points out the torment she has to suffer because of the gods, the solitude, as she was forsaken for the benefit of Hades. She, a pawn in Zeus' hands, decides to perish – but the choice is finally hers.

In his current state, Kratos is powerless and cannot fight Persephone – changing it would mean leaving Calliope forever and becoming the monster he once was. But it is the only way to save his child and the rest of the world, even if it means losing himself.

By killing the Elysium souls, Kratos regains his lost strength and curses the gods whose plans – again – are the source of his suffering. Fueled by anger and despair after leaving Calliope, he rushes to kill Persephone.

The queen fights with all her might, but ultimately – falls. Her death creates a powerful wave that blasts through the world pillar; Atlas, losing Helios, can neither escape, nor let the world go. In his talk with Kratos, the Titan points out the treacherous and unreliable nature of the Olympian gods and even though Kratos answers that the gods' word is all he has, Atlas asks rhetorically – but what good is it?

The epilogue offers little hope in regard of Kratos' fate. Long years of servitude still await him, his daughter is lost to him forever and there is nothing in his life worth caring for. The next games in the series reveal that Atlas was right – the gods do not keep their word and in the end, look only for themselves, which is mirrored in the fluid narrative structure.

Analysis

God of War: Chains of Olympus was the first game of the series to be released for the Playstation Portable (PSP) console – a console that along with Nintendo DS and a couple of others were mostly used by children and adolescents.

It continues to deliver classical content to vast audiences (see the God of War entry for information about the series), with the story suggestively based on Greek mythology and history, but changing the original content to suit a modern video game. This time the player

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sees the first and only historical reference in the series, i.e. the Greco-Persian war. Until now the creators based their ideas solely on mythology. Both Greeks and Persians are presented in a typical for pop culture way – Greeks as fierce, beauty-loving warriors and Persians – bloodthirsty, avid and occult-oriented barbarians, ready to release a monstrous basilisk to see their enemies crumble.

The story itself focuses on Kratos saving the world from destruction. The real villain is not Morpheus, as it is initially suggested, but Persephone – taken by force to Hades, she considers herself a pawn in Zeus' hands, a ransom that Zeus paid to stay on Olympus' throne and let Hades rule over the dead. Destroying the world and perishing with it is her choice only.

This idea of Persephone – a female goddess tired of her servitude and ready to take matters in her own hands – is a modern one. She opposes the ancient Greek patriarchy that diminishes the roles of women into supporting male gods in their race for power.

The game also presents the negative sides of the Olympus rule over men and gods alike. Both of these groups experience suffering because of the Olympians' choices and some – like Kratos and Persephone – decide to stand against them. This motif can be found in the original ancient Greek mythology, yet the rebels serve as an example to never oppose gods. In this case, Kratos succeeds (see the God of War III entry to see the details) and Persephone is the first woman to actually create a threat to Olympus.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Atlas Basilisk Calliope Charon Eos Graeco-Persian Wars Hades Helios Morpheus Muses Persephone Persians Styx Triton Underworld Zeus

Addenda

Trailer Available Online: www.youtube.com

The *God of War* series has sold over 21 million copies worldwide (2012), i.e. without *God of War: Ascension* www.webcitation.org – *God of War: Chains of Olympus* – 3,2 million games sold worldwide

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Genre:

An action, adventure, hack and slash, story-driven video game

It is important to stress that Kratos' genealogical tree looks different in the *God of War* series than in Greek mythology. Instead of being a son of the Titan Pallas and the river-deity Styx, a brother to Nike (victory) and Bia (Force), he's the son of Zeus and Callisto, i.e. a half-brother to Ares and many other Olympian gods and heroes. He is married to Lysandra, and has a daughter, Calliope and is a brother to Deimos, another half-god. All three of them bear no resemblance to any mythological or historical characters.

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