

Introduction

Hi, my name is Saorsa, my pronouns are he/him and I am an animation major. One of my favorite topics growing up is Ancient Egypt. Today I am going to share with you my project a pitch deck for Council of the Gods, an animated series set in ancient Egypt. I chose a pitch deck as my project because it is good practice for me professionally to share a story that I am passionate about so that it can become an actual series. In the animation industry all entertainment media including television shows start out as a pitch. Pitch decks are designed to introduce and excite people about a story so that they will want to invest in the effort into making it happen. Without further ado let's get into the pitch deck!

Pitch Deck

Council of the Gods follows the journey of two mummies who upon discovering that the souls are going missing in the Hall of Truth on their first mission find out that they are being sacrificed to Apep, an ancient being of chaos. It is up to them to unite the four regions in order to awaken Nehebkau, the only being able to defeat the chaos serpent.

The target audience for this series will be a PG age range similar to shows like Lego Ninjago or movies like The Prince of Egypt. The genre is Educational Fantasy and the target demographic is for Egyptians, people who have a love for ancient Egyptian mythology and people who enjoy stories about unity.

Here is the main cast of characters for Council of the Gods. I chose this cast because the core message in my show is about unity in diversity. Although everyone in the cast is Egyptian they all vary in social class, species and gender. They all need each other in order for their world to function. These characters walk in all various ways of life which is precisely why they are

vital to the story they all take part in. The first is Ta-Nehisi who is the protagonist of the story. He is compassionate especially towards souls so when he finds out that they are in danger he feels their pain which motivates him to seek their protection. Next is Ramla, the sister of Ta-Nehisi. She was born with the power of prophecy as a blessing from the gods. Due to her receiving visions of future events such as the rise of Apep, she values knowledge and tends to take the leader position when she and her brother are going on missions.

Keket is the villain due to family drama during childhood which led to her to choose a dark path. Naunet is Ta-Nehisi and Ramla's childhood friend in a high position who offers hope when all seems lost. Nehebkau is Egypt's last hope and the Unifier of Souls. Thutmose is the mentor of our protagonists and the Pharaoh of Lower Egypt. His teaching style is hands-on and encourages thinking outside the box. Imhotep is the sagelike priest who is an ally to the protagonists and confidant of the Pharaoh of Upper Egypt. Zahur is the confident Pharaoh of the Nile Tribe who offers support to our protagonists in their quest to save Egypt.

The Council of Heliopolis is where the four regions of Egypt meet to make decisions as a unified voice. The people who work here are Naunet, Thutmose, Zahur, Djoser (The Pharaoh of Upper Egypt), and Menes (The Pharaoh of the Mummies). This is the place where Ta-Nehisi and Ramla warn the council about Keket and Apep. This is also where Pharaoh Djoser dismisses their warning while Naunet the mermaid offers a solution. In the later half of the series Ta-Nehisi and Ramla are invited back to this place where they lead a strategy to defeat Apep in a final battle.

Upper Egypt is the Kingdom that values legacy and tradition while also keeping order in Egypt by managing the temples to the gods. The people who live here are Imhotep and Djoser. This is where Imhotep helps Pharaoh Djoser interpret a vision about Keket's plan to wage war

against order through Apep. During the final battle Imhotep invites the mummy siblings and the Pharaoh of Lower Egypt here to call on the gods for help in one of the temples.

Lower Egypt is the cosmopolitan Kingdom that provides most of the wealth to Egypt through trade. The character that lives here is Thutmose. When Ta-Nehisi and Ramla arrive here on their quest they are ambushed by the Animals of Set until Thutmose comes to their aid. This is also the place where Ta-Nehisi and Ramla learn Nehebka's whereabouts with the guidance of Pharaoh Thutmose in his royal library.

The Nile Tribe is a Kingdom of merpeople who create the annual flooding of the Nile through a dance ceremony to provide life-giving crops for Egypt. The people who live here are Naunet and Zahur. Here Ta-Nehisi and Ramla are invited by Naunet to learn about Nehebka in the Library of Ancients. When Naunet feels conflicted during a rehearsal in the Nile Tribe Pharaoh Zahur makes arrangements for her to help look for Nehebka. During the final battle Naunet returns to the Library of Ancients to release Nehebka.

Kingdom of the Valley is where the mummies prepare to guide the souls safely from the realm of the living through the Duat to the Hall of Truth. The people who live here are Ta-Nehisi, Ramla and Menes. Here Ta-Nehisi and Ramla prepare for their first mission as Soul Guardians while they explore Khufu's Pyramid. About halfway through the series Ta-Nehisi and Ramla return to the Kingdom of the Valley to ask for Pharaoh Menes' blessing before heading out on their quest for Nehebka. During the final battle Pharaoh Menes gathers all the mummies in this region as they prepare to defend Egypt from Apep.

The Duat is the gateway for souls to find their fate in the afterlife by being judged based on their moral choices from the mortal world in the Hall of Truth. The people who work here are Ta-Nehisi, Ramla and the underworldly gods. Ta-Nehisi and Ramla escort the soul of Pharaoh

Khufu to the Hall of Truth. The villains of chaos escape the Duat with their army to wreak havoc on creation.

Apep' Lair is the place where Apep was banished during the Age of the Gods. The people who live here are Keket, Apep and Set Animals. Ta-Nehisi and Ramla spy on Keket sacrificing a soul to Apep here on their first mission. Keket sends the Set Animals to ruin Ta-Nehisi and Ramla's plans. Throughout the series Keket builds an army here from the bodies of souls fed to Apep in order to wage war against the gods.

The Hall of Truth is the first episode of the series where we are introduced to Ta-Nehisi and Ramla's relationship on their first mission and ends with abduction.

Next I will be sharing an animatic of a clip from the episode Tale of two Serpents which takes place shortly after the initial conflict is established in the series. (The video will play for about two minutes.)

A Change of Heart is a mid arc episode where our main characters ask permission from their Pharaoh to continue their quest while Pharaoh Djoser has a change of heart through a vision.

Process

Now it's time for the behind the scenes! My passion for Ancient Egypt began through watching the Prince of Egypt. All the beautiful settings of the palace halls, colossal statues of the gods and life on the banks of the Nile made me want to create my own story but from the perspective of the Egyptians. As I was building the world for "Council of the Gods" I embedded some of my other favorite topics such as ninja and merpeople into the cosmology of ancient Egypt creating the four regions. When I was watching the Chinese drama Ashes of Love it

sparked my inspiration to include a council for my regions because the mythical factions in the drama lacked one which would have helped prevent a lot of miscommunication in the show. As I was developing the plotline and main conflict for Council of the Gods I took inspiration from the first season of Ninjago Rise of the Snakes. In the season the ninja try to stop the snake tribes from summoning a giant serpent called The Great Devourer that will consume all the land. Rather than trying to stop the factions from awakening chaos, “Council of the Gods” relies on the unity of creation to defeat the all consuming chaos.

My original plan for this project was to dive deep into the Nile Tribe and focus on designing characters, backgrounds, props and modes of transportation for my artwork and somehow sprinkle that in throughout the pitch deck. As I began looking at examples of pitch decks for shows I realized it would make more sense for me to expand my focus to create artwork that focused on the whole story of Council of the Gods rather than having it be catered to one region. I am happy I pivoted from my original plan because the final pitch deck communicates a unified story through artwork of diverse characters and locations.

Throughout this process of making artwork for the pitch deck I got to learn new skills and practice old ones too! During my Visual Development and Drawing for Animation classes here at PNCA I learned how to draw characters and backgrounds by working in phases starting out with a gesture or sketch to finishing off with the final illustration at the end. Notice here how I used this process with Ramla’s character design. The first image is of her design in the rough stage after I gave her a pose and shape to her body. Next I cleaned her up and added local tones so she has enough contrast to be readable. Afterwards I added color and lighting to her design bringing Ramla to the final illustration stage. Some new skills I learned was creating a splash image to pair with an episode description and a headshot of Pharaoh Djoser. While I did not

initially intend to create these kinds of illustrations my mentor helped me bridge the gap by guiding my attention to the story in the process of making these illustrations which helped me articulate how I wanted them to read. Reflecting back, I am happy that I decided to try something new because they add a lot of life not only to the pitch deck but to the characters themselves.

Another thing I learned is how to create solid character designs through repeating iconography and personality of the characters. For Thutmose he is hands on, adventurous and humble so I extended the crest of his crown to frame his face so that he feels more approachable. At the same time I used repetition to make him and Pharaoh Zahur read as royalty. For Zahur I chose to bedazzle him with lotus and papyrus motives to call on his role in the Nile while for Thutmose I chose to bedazzle him with squiggly serpent motives to call on Wadjet the cobra goddess and protector of Lower Egypt. Repeating iconography can also apply to designing locations such as the bird motif on Pharaoh Djoser and his palace.

Moving on to backgrounds I learned about how light works in both underwater settings like the Nile Tribe and environments on land such as Upper Egypt. Something they both have in common are how bounce lights affect the atmosphere of the structures within the backgrounds. While bounce lights with caustics create the feeling of under or near water, bounce lights with atmospheric perspective create the feeling of depth on land. For both Upper and Lower Egypt I learned how to blueprint draw to create the buildings in Upper Egypt and the marketplace stand in Lower Egypt. Blueprint drawing is where you create a flat outline of where you want your props to be then stretch it over in perspective and draw them three dimensionally.

Lastly I learned how to simplify detail for things far away such as the mural in the Nile Tribe and the crowds in Lower Egypt by asking myself what tells the story most clearly and what can be left out. References such as Aladdin, Joseph:King of Dreams and Prince of Egypt were super

helpful for helping me balance what details are necessary for communicating a clear story such as the marketplace scene in Lower Egypt.

Outro

Working on my project Council of the Gods taught me how important story is to all aspects of life especially in my art. When I began art school I used to worry if my work was detailed enough but now I know that detail cannot stand on its own without being unified with clarity and a compelling story. Thank you for listening!