



Deck of Ashes

Developer Q&A

Genre: Adventure / Collectible Card / Turn-based Strategy

Platform(s): Windows PC

Release Date: (Early Access) April 11, 2019

Developer & Publisher: [AY Games](#)

Press Kit: uberstrategist.link/presskit_deckofashes

Q: First off, please introduce yourself and your role on the *Deck of Ashes* development team.

A: My name is Stas Spirchenko. I'm a production and game design lead on *Deck of Ashes*.

Q: How did AYGames come about - were you developers from different studios who decided to create your own studio? Are there any games your team members worked on that we'd recognize?

A: Well, *Deck of Ashes* is the first game for the majority of the team. I had previous experience in Saber Interactive and Gameloft. When we formed the team, we looked mostly for passion and enthusiasm. As a team, we have learned a lot during the development process, and we're going to learn even more during Early Access — that's exciting!

Q: Tell us a little about *Deck of Ashes*, what is the core idea behind the game?

A: Deck of Ashes is all about building yourself, step by step, piece by piece — becoming stronger than you were just yesterday! It's about the surprising discoveries and risky experiments in the face of great danger. And after each fall, tirelessly trying again. And ultimately, it's about finding yourself.

Q: How did you create the story behind the Ash Curse and the world of *Deck of Ashes*?

A: Well, I guess the story grew on us over the course of development. At first, we focused on mechanics and didn't even think much about a story! But when we arrived at the vision of the gameplay, we asked ourselves, "where could such things take place?" The story within *Deck of Ashes* became a natural extension of gameplay.

Q: What inspired the dark tone of the *Deck of Ashes* story? Do you think the darker, more serious tone, is something new for the card game genre?

A: I guess we just like dark stories! The darker angle let us explore the themes not commonly explored in videogames; themes like oppression of minorities, othering, the quest of finding yourself, and what it means to be a hero or an antihero. Ultimately, the darker story gave us a chance to make our characters "alive" and very human in their imperfections. And that's not something I've seen a lot of in card games or roguelikes.

Q: How does *Deck of Ashes* differ from other card games? What types of gamers do you think will enjoy the game?

A: In general, card games are strongly associated with randomness. You shuffle your deck, you draw cards in random order, etc. That's great in terms of gameplay variance, but the skilled players find it frustrating to lose a game due to a combination of these random factors. We know these feelings firsthand, as we're card game players with thousands of hours behind our belt. So from the get-go, we wanted to give our players as much control as possible while preserving the gameplay variance. We implemented all sorts of skill-intensive mechanics that will allow the more experienced players to gain an edge. We also made sure that people that like ridiculously powerful combos would have plenty of moments of rewarding discovery, even though those combos won't be easy to piece together!

Q: What games do the members of the development team enjoy in their free time? Any that would surprise us?

A: Apart from the videogames, we are huge fans of board games! Especially those involving mind games and bluffing, like Werewolf. We really hope someone makes deception a major videogame mechanic, that could be an awesome thing! There are a few musicians among us. If the game is successful, who knows, maybe we'll write a song for the occasion!

Q: What are some of the characters and monsters you'll encounter when playing the game? What are some that you feel are "special" or "unique"? Are there any based on real-world mythologies, or did you create all the "friends and foes" from your own minds?

A: We did a lot of research to find the monsters that are the best fit for our bestiary. We love all of our monsters, but my personal favorite is Cannibal. It's a huge human opponent with powerful attacks and a unique twist. And in particular, I like how its mechanics and aesthetics came together to form a very flavourful and unique foe. The Cannibals are blinded by hunger; that's their main drive. And for as long as it is human flesh, they are eager to devour both friends and foes. And the player can use that to their advantage. It's hard to survive in a one-on-one fight with a Cannibal, but you can strategically send Cannibal's attacks into their own allies. But beware, if a Cannibal kills a human, ally or foe, it will summon another Cannibal to join the feast and you will have to deal with them both!

Q: What can you tell us about the music for the game? Who is the composer? Have they worked on any other games?

A: Our sound designer and composer is Mark Braga. He's got a lot of experience creating music and sound effects for games. We really love the intense and eerie music he's created for *Deck of Ashes*. I remember when we heard the final music theme for the first time - it just clicked and breathed life into the game, a fantastic feeling!

Q: With *Deck of Ashes* arriving on Early Access on April 11, when do you anticipate the final game being available?

A: We are working hard for the final game to hit the shelves as early as possible. But above all, we are committed to delivering the highest possible quality. So the answer here is a classic 'when it's done'.

Q: During Early Access, will you be releasing new characters or other content updates, or will you use Early Access to test the game engine, fix any bugs, etc.?

A: It's gonna be both. We have big plans for Early Access. First, we plan to implement a ton of content for the game: new characters, each with their unique playstyles and sizable card set. We plan on expanding our already impressive bestiary. Who knows, maybe a new monster class isn't far from being finalized. But you didn't hear that from me!

We have a lot of ideas for our procedurally generated world and ways to make it more awesome!

In short, a lot of content is coming and Early Access promises to be an exciting time for both us and the players!

Engaging the community in the development process is at the core of why we're going Early Access! We'll have exclusive perks for the players that join us and help us shape the future of the game. For example, we plan on releasing completely ridiculous cards that will be available for a limited time, and only during Early Access! Then the community will decide which of those will make it into the final game, if any. There will be even more perks coming, so stay tuned!

Q: What does the future hold for *Deck of Ashes*, if the game is successful, do you expect a sequel within a few years, or maybe creating new games in the same universe?

A: Oh, if only we had a time machine to answer that question! For now, our main focus is delivering the best possible game to the players. Whatever comes next, only time will tell.

Q: If it hadn't been *Deck of Ashes*, what do you think would have been your runner-up idea for a game? Would it be the same genre?

A: We love games with a deep tactical component. But we do not confine ourselves in terms of genres. What we do like is dark themes and worlds! So no matter which genre we'd go for, it'd be a dark story-driven game.

Q: What is the driving force within AYGames? What is the passion that the team shares that brought you all together and keeps you together?

A: At AYGames, we are passionate to create the games that we'd love to play ourselves. Also, as a small team, we work together every day in the same room, and that creates strong bonds between people. And that unity and passion are what drives us forward.