play!
zine

GAME OF THE MONTH:

XCOM 2
JOIN US OR BECOME THEM

REVIEWS:

Dragon's Dogma - XCOM 2 - Homeworld: Deserts of Kharak - Resident evil 0 HD - Darkest Dungeon
Assassin's Creed Chronicles India - Underrail - Life is strange - That Dragon, Cancer - Oxenfree

Author: Bogdan Diklić

REVIEW

XCOM 2

INVENTORY

E.X.O Suit

Cannon
PRIMARY WEAPON

Grenade Launcher
SECONDARY WEAPON

Rocket Launcher
HEAVY WEAPON

Frag Grenade
UTILITY ITEM

SGT. JASON 'JUNKYARD' FLORES

MISSIONS: 7   KILLS: 12   STATUS: AVAILABLE

HEALTH	MOBILITY	AIM	WILL
9+6	12	71	67

ARMOR	DODGE	HACK
0+1	0	10

E.X.O. SUIT
HEALTH   5
ARMOR   1

TACTICAL INFO
· As a heavy-class armor system, the E.X.O. Suit allows a soldier to mount a heavy weapon.
· Only the Rocket Launcher is available. Additional heavy weapons projects Grounds will unlock more heavy we construction.

Already after 10 minutes of the first mission it becomes very clear why XCOM 2 wasn't developed on console systems. The game is simply too difficult. Not to mention the advanced mechanics and planning which aren't standard for console games. This may be viewed as a negative side of the game, but in XCOM's environment it works and adds to the overall, positive feel.

The mankind has lost the war in XCOM Unknown from 2012, no matter how well you played that game. Which means that in the sequel you're not clearing up leftover enemies, instead you are the leftovers who are trying to free the Earth from aliens as freedom fighters, and also a group that supports aliens, called ADVENT.

The environment in which you are conquered and in which the enemies are all around you supports Firaxis' decision to respond to some of the players' demands regarding the gameplay system. First of all, the fact that you are subjugated but still have the relative freedom of movement means that the aliens and their lackeys won't view you as an enemy until you come up close enough or fire in their direction. This way you can prepare for the mission and think through your next moves. If you've played Enemy Unknown, but are wondering "How can I even tell if I got close enough when there are no indicators?", you're not alone. The main criticism of a large number of XCOM (1) players was that it was impossible to tell on which locations of the map you'll be exposed

The first war is lost, and the battle for **survival** begins

to the enemy and which locations would provide cover and to what extent.

Now, all of that has changed. Red markings determine the current field of view of every enemy, while an empty, half empty and full shield determine the extent of protection a cover provides. You might think this would make the game easier, but you would be wrong. This way, Firaxis somewhat removed the element of "unknown" from the game, and brought in a new one – "unpredictable". That may be a fine line, but it's there . The inability to know something that is definitely there and is happening caused a lot of frustration among the players. Unpredictable events on which you can't have any kind of influence are a different matter entirely.

And the first of these unpredictable events is the procedural generation of maps. Although there are some similarities between the generated maps, it's still refreshing to see different elements and different behaviour of enemies when you restart a mission. The behaviour changes even when you load a previously saved game, so there is no possibility to completely copy someone else's strategy. Global strategies are, of course, a different matter, so it's desirable and necessary to work out all the details about the team you will take on a mission and how
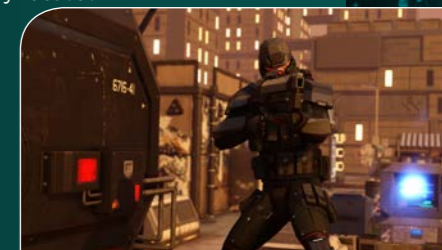
would you want it to unfold.

Speaking of teams, they too have undergone some minor, albeit significant changes. One of them is not as important for gameplay - the possibility to detail the appearance of every solider you send out on the battlefield. Successfully completed missions unlock more cosmetic options, so at some point you'll be able to create a solider that looks like anyone that comes to your mind. There's only the issue that in XCOM 2 soldiers will drop like flies, so you'll feel very sorry about them at first, and after a while you'll probably stop spending as much time on their "makeovers". The second major change is the class system. Although it shares some similarities with the one from the first game, classes were redefined from scratch - mostly by having a wider range of actions to choose from beside their main specialty and aren't so narrowly focused.

We have mentioned that the soldiers die easily, and it would seem that that is as it should be. A reality you will face from the first mission (and even in the tutorial). You can try your best to save your comrades, and sometimes you will succeed, but in the end, you just have to get over the fact that the game expects you to make sacrifices. Certain missions are nearly impossible to complete unless you sacrifice one or more soldiers to create a diversion or leave one sniper behind to eliminate aliens trying to intercept your retreating team from a distance.

And while in XCOM Enemy Unknown you could have progressed over time to a point where the final missions are a piece of cake, that definitely won't be the case in XCOM 2. Again, the game is highly unpredictable and you will reach for the 'load game' button often. In most cases you can only slow down the current chain of events, but can't take them out of the equation permanently. "Dark Events" are the events in which the ADVENT

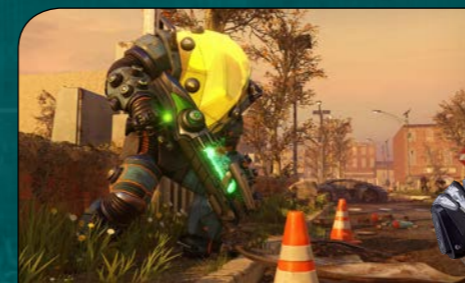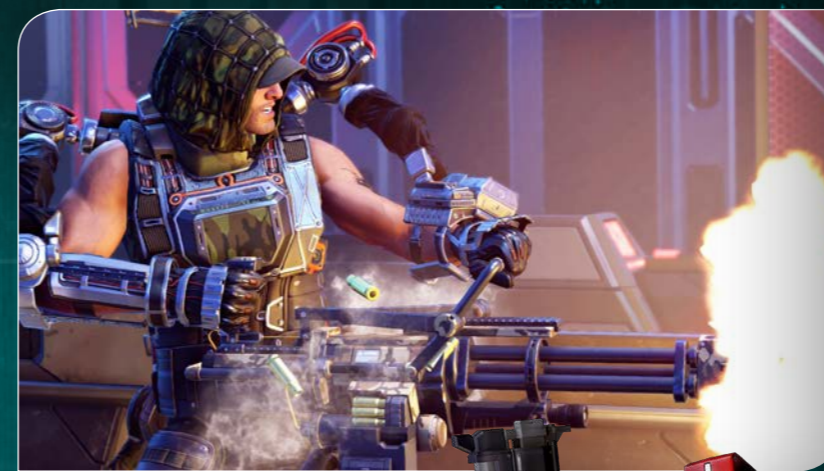**"YOU CAN CREATE YOUR OWN MISSIONS AND SHARE THEM WITH OTHERS ON THE STEAM WORKSHOP"**

OBJECTIVES

☐ Investigate the ADVENT Blacksite

Junkyard
Katia Flores

early, you'll stand no chance in that fight. Perhaps even more than in Enemy Unknown, the story in XCOM 2 is a very important segment and adds to the overall atmosphere, which is why beside the details we shared, we really shouldn't spoil anything else.

And finally, good news for everyone who loves this series is the support for mods and a complete Steam workshop. This way everyone who wants to create additional missions and share them with the player community will be able to do so, and Firaxis as the game's creator already signed contracts with some of the greatest modders about creating new missions. A co-op mode had already been announced as well as many others, along with the standard multiplayer that was in the game from the beginning.

How can you tell the game has succeeded? If it's hard, gets on your nerves, forces you to load saved games much more often than you'd like to, but you still keep coming back for more and you're thinking about the mission you're stuck on while you're not playing. This is the case with XCOM 2.

"DARK EVENTS BRING A MODICUM OF NON-LINEARITY TO THE CAMPAIGN"

faction tries to complete important missions, advance globally, research new weapons or creatures. These events are chosen randomly and there's always an option to choose one of the two possible events to focus your attention to. So it's up to you to decide which the greater evil is for you and try to stop it. The second project will then certainly be completed, so in a way, its up to you to decide what kind of enemies you'll get to face in your next mission.

Simultaneously, ADVENT is working on a big project called Avatar, whose completion can't be stopped, only postponed - but even that will be of extreme importance, because if they complete the project

"PROCEDURALLY GENERATED MAPS ARE A REFRESHING CHANGE."

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:
OS: Windows 7 64-bit
CPU: Intel/AMD Quadcore 3GHz
GPU: GeForce GTX 770 or Radeon HD 7970
RAM: 8 GB
HDD: 45 GB

XCOM 2

GAME PROVIDED BY: CD MEDIA

PLATFORM: PC
PUBLISHED BY: 2K
PRICE: 50€

DEVELOPED BY: Firaxis
TESTED ON: PC

RATING 8.5

✔ Hard and challenging

✔ Good atmosphere, story and mechanics

✘ Hardware requirements

✘ Bugs

Author: Milan Živković REVIEW

Dragon's Dogma: Dark Arisen

Or "How not to hunt a dragon at night" HD

remastered game, but a console port. A fine, pure-blooded port. Considering this is a game from the last generation of consoles, which didn't have state of the art graphics even when it came out, it won't amaze you with it now either. However, since this is the version in which many graphical options are now unlocked, the frame rate is at about 60 frames per second even on average machines and the resolution doesn't have an upper limit, you won't help but smile to the fact that a game worthy of such technical support finally got it.

Watching the game run will now be a true pleasure for anyone who had the opportunity to try it out on PlayStation 3 or Xbox 360. The textures, as well as the models aren't noticeably better, but getting to see everything in a sharp, fluid display of, still impressive, play of light and shadow, is truly more than satisfying. Though, to stop admiring the technical polishing of this jewel for a moment... what exactly is Dragon's Dogma?

Dragon's Dogma is an open world action RPG which might not impress you with it's story, but it's atmosphere and spirit surely will. The game starts with choosing one of the three possible classes for your character, which can later be changed, or rather, upgraded. And just as a heads-up, if you want one of the wackiest experiences, choose the Strider class without hesitation! The instant Lord of the Rings association isn't for naught, because after you choose it and complete the tutorial you will realise that you're not playing just any game - you're playing a Legolas simulator. Without exaggeration, you will frantically kill hordes of goblins with your arrows, climb over giant opponents, and stab them with your (elven) daggers and sabres. No matter what anyone says, the Strider (later Ranger) class is a simulator of Legolas' and Aragorn's unborn twin brother.

Don't you just love it when during the holiday season your auntie Mary cooks the Sunday lunch? And she even calls you to watch her cook. She says: "Here, pass me some of that Dark Souls from the freezer, and two jars of last year's Elder Scrolls I've been keeping in the pantry." Leave all of that to slowly cook on a mild fire, while stirring regularly, then add a bit of Shadow of Colossus, and finally pour the whole pot over long-stewed Monster Hunter. When all is done, serve it with a glass of fine, matured Devil May Cry. And after all of this you are left with only one reaction - Auntie, this is all wonderful, but... I'm so overwhelmed. Well that's exactly how players around the world felt when they, nearly four years ago, got served fresh Dragon's Dogma on last generation's consoles. But to clarify...

Capcom made a colossal effort to create a game that would almost obviously draw inspiration from some of the action-RPG genre's strongest titles - and they were successful. Dragon's Dogma was created as a mix of great elements from all of these games, and neatly assembled into one epic world. Everyone who's looking for something different will fall in love momentarily. But, as it is with every infatuation, you begin to notice the flaws after a while.

While when it comes to gameplay the game was flawlessly fun and original, it had technical difficulties. Frame rate was constantly dipping and was generally unstable, which resulted in long loading screens and frustrating battles. In the end, only the most faithful remained with

the game, hoping for some new, better polished sequel or at least a remake. Then the sequel came in the form of a few DLCs, all packed up together in a package that was Dark Arisen. The game was vastly expanded, but the technical problems still remained. And now, several years later, a new remastered, wonder-game, free from technical difficulties, comes to our computers to remind us what was that brilliance we saw in it all that time ago. In reality, this isn't an actual

return bring you valuable gifts from his adventures. You can also hire other people's pawns to help you on your own journey in the same manner. Just don't forget to turn up your speaker's volume and hear what the pawn has to say. You'll feel like you just took a bunch of mentally challenged delinquents on a field trip. Their comments and reactions are mostly hilarious. The "Pawn" system, although flawed, surely makes the game unique and is an endlessly fun element.

If you've already played the game, you know what to expect. If not, let this be a strong recommendation to give it a shot. You may have missed it's momentum once it was originally released. Maybe you didn't have a chance to venture into this different world at the time. So now, as a fair compensation, get the PC version with no special foreknowledge and let it engulf you. You won't find the same juicy atmosphere anywhere else. Nowhere else will nightfall be as exciting as it is in Dragon's Dogma. This is a unique opportunity which no RPG lover should pass up. Not now, when we can finally get to play the polished version of this game that we longed for so long. Because everything's there - epic music and chaotic adventure the likes of which is hard not to love. Best of all, it's masterfully cooked, but served cold. A true delicacy!

"YOU'LL COMPENSATE FOR LACK OF HORSE RIDING BY RIDING A WILD BOAR. ONE THAT DOES NOT APPROVE"

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:
OS: Windows 7
CPU: Intel Core i7-4770K
GPU: GeForce GTX 760
RAM: 8GB
HDD: 20GB

DRAGON'S DOGMA DARK ARISEN

GAME PROVIDED BY: CAPCOM

PLATFORM:
PC

DEVELOPED BY:
Capcom

PUBLISHED BY:
Capcom

TESTED ON:
PC

PRICE:
30€

After you finally run out into the open game world with your Argolas (A.N. That's just too much!) and like an overly excited child head towards the nearest dark forest to attack a pack of wolves, remember - this game is a death sentence for such adventurers! In Dragon's Dogma: Dark Arisen, success awaits only a patient, cunning player. Danger is lurking behind

every corner and biting off more than you can chew will mean a smack to your teeth. Nobody will stop you from running to the end of the world, but it's only your own end that awaits you there. Only by carefully strengthening your character and choosing your opponents wisely, will you over time become strong enough to face harder opponents who guard the real prizes.

There's a great system with using the "Pawn" characters. As the name obviously suggests, those are AI-controlled characters who will help you on your journey. You can create one and "share" it with players from all over the world, and he will in

RATING 8.5

✓ A well transfered port
✓ Excellent atmosphere accompanied by great music
✓ Still fun "hybrid" action

✗ Story is still mediocre
✗ As is the voice acting

Author: Bojan Jovanović **REVIEW**

Resident Evil 0
HD Remaster

The evil before the first evil

Prequel, introduction, Chapter 0, the game before the game. No matter how we call them, publishers simply love making them to broaden the story of their virtual universes and, of course, take a few more green bills from us. Capcom wasn't immune to that either, when they decided to publish their Chapter 0 over a decade ago, the game that serves as an introduction and explanation to everything that happened before the first Resident Evil game. Originally, it was a Nintendo Gamecube exclusive, but now we've got the chance to play it on all other platforms.

"YOU'LL LEAD TWO CHARACTERS SIMULTANEOUSLY: REBECCA AND BILLY"

"THE ATMOSPHERE IS A GOOD OLD MIX OF CLAUSTROFOBIA AND TENSION"

and needlessly ruin the overall good impression of the Remaster.

The quality of RE0HD is not much better than the last year's reissue of the original Resident Evil, not really because of the lack of anything new, instead because of the fact that the original "Zero" was one of the weakest games in the series. Capcom managed to create an excellent remaster, but had also missed an opportunity to improve upon the game that even back in 2002 lagged behind the rest of the industry. Therefore, RE0 remains the game that's going to be played only by the series' biggest fans.

So, we return to the very beginning of Resident Evil – the moment before all the zombies and meddling by the Umbrella Corporation. And that moment are – leeches. Or alternatively furious slugs. Already in the opening animation we can see them being the product of a person in a white cloak that's trying to take revenge upon the Umbrella Corporation by attacking a train. Yeah, a grandiose evil plan indeed. That's where STARS forces enter the stage led by Rebecca, one of the game's lead protagonists. Without further delving into spoiler territory, we can only say that what follows is a classic RE story.

We have mentioned Rebecca as one of our protagonists. Throughout the horrors her compatriot will be Billy Coen, an ex-marine en route to his execution for mass murder who, through a strange series of events, escapes the police vehicle and ends up in a no less deadly scenario. From the moment they join forces, you will lead the two characters simultaneously and be able to switch direct control from one to the other at any time. There's also the possibility to issue simple commands, but most of the time the other character will be controlled by the computer, whose AI's not the best out there

and who uses way too much ammo. Leading two characters also means juggling the items between two very limited inventories with only nine slots each. RE always had that silly logic when it comes to inventory management where you could carry a hundred bullets or two cans of gasoline in one slot, but every leaf of grass took a slot each. You'll be seeding items everywhere

just to clear up enough space for a key item that you need to open a passageway, or a weapon that you'll only use once on a particularly difficult enemy. The constant walking to and fro just to pick up ammo and healing items you had to leave previously is an artificial way of extending the game and will get on your nerves pretty fast, especially because the transitional animations between

the rooms were left in – a former mask for the loading screens.

Luckily, the atmosphere is still that good old mix of claustrophobia and tension where you have no idea what's waiting around the corner. The foreboding is permeating every room of the train, as well as the enormous villa in which you'll spend the second half of the game. The zombies themselves aren't as scary as they used to be back when the series started, but at least there's the fantastic surround sound effects and camera angles which were always the series' trademarks. If you really want a retro experience, you can switch the

controls to classic scheme, the so-called "tank manoeuvring", and play using your D-pad instead of the analog stick. Content-wise, the game is identical to it's original Gamecube release, which means that there are no new modes or bonus segments. The only major improvement is the visual element, which is a giant leap even compared to the Nintendo Wii re-release. The scenes feature further enhanced lighting, detailed textures and other details that weren't supported by the old hardware. However, it's uncertain why the cinematics didn't undergo the same treatment, because the transitions from sharp graphics to blurry cut-scenes are painfully obvious

You don't have to like it. Just hurry, before you get locked in!

"IT'S A GAME THAT WILL BE PLAYED ONLY BY THE BIGGEST FANS OF THE SERIES"

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:

OS: Windows 7
CPU: Intel Core 2 Quad 2.7GHz
GPU: GeForce GTX 560
RAM: 4GB
HDD: 13GB

GAME PROVIDED BY: CAPCOM

PLATFORMS:
PC, PS4, PS3, XONE, X360

PUBLISHED BY:
Capcom

PRICE:
20€

DEVELOPED BY:
Capcom

TESTED ON:
PS4

RATING 7

✓ Huge visual improvement

✓ Classic Resident Evil atmosphere

✗ Inventory juggling

✗ AI of your comrade

✗ Brings nothing new besides improved graphics

Author: Igor Totić

REVIEW

Homeworld: Deserts of Kharak

Kharak, dune, desert planet

In the last few years a wave of MOBAs (Multiplayer Online Battle Arena) F2P games had flooded the gaming scene and became the focus of professionals and amateurs alike. If we consider the roots of this genre, they'd lead us all the way to fabled DOTA, which was in fact a mod made for a Real Time Strategy. This genre was popular in the nineties and early 2000s, but is now slowly fading into oblivion, swallowed up by the MOBAs dominating the market. The only remaining and still popular survivor of the genre remaining is Starcraft, boasting both a single player and multiplayer audience, and remaining the most well known RTS representative.

Last year, Gearbox released excellent remasters of first and second Homewrold

games in an effort to rekindle the glory days of RTS' and reward their faithful fans who yearn for a new strategy game with a piece of nostalgia. Homeworld had set the standard for space RTS games, as well as unit control and overall atmosphere of space warfare. Can Deserts of Kharak compete with that and call itself a worthy heir of the Homeworld franchise? This question is somewhat difficult to answer, so we'll have to break it down: is it a good Homeworld game, is it worth the asking price, and is it a good strategy game.

> "ALL UNITS FUNCTION ON THE 'ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS' PRINCIPLE"

The game is set many years before the events of the original Homeworld game, on a desert planet not named Arakis, but Kharak. We follow the 13-mission story through the perspective of a scientist named Rachel S'Jet, who's trying to find a hidden artefact in the dunes of Kharak that could save her civilization from extinction (spoiler: see Homeworld). Accompanying her in this undertaking is a land carrier, Kapisi. This carrier emulates the Mothership from the original Homeworld, but is much more useful and powerful. Kapisi is equipped with weapons, shields and other useful utensils which turn a simple unit

factory into a devastating weapon of the Coalition. Standing in the Coalition's way are Gaalsien, religious nomads who will do anything to prevent the Coalition from delving deeper into Kharak's deserts. It's going to be vital to carefully maneuvre Kapisi in every mission to fully utilize it's firepower. The artefacts are a big addition, and they can be activated on Kapisi to provide special passive bonuses to your army or Kapisi itself. It's only possible to activate one artefact, but they can be switched on the fly which provides an advantage to the players who manage to obtain all of them and use them efficiently.

Unit production is not as accentuated as is their micromanagement. All units function on the "rock, paper, scissors" principle, meaning that one unit is stronger than the other, but susceptible to another, and so on. The game features unit covers and an interesting, although 'seen-before', mechanic of positioning on elevations for bonus precision and damage. Most of the units are slow, which is in keeping with the Homeworld spirit, although it can get tedious on larger maps where you might

need to wait a few minutes to get all units in position. You can press the spacebar at any time to activate the sensor and check the map and positions of your own and enemy units on the field. This great function will help you coordinate groups of units, anticipate enemy movements and set up ambushes. Technically, the whole game can be played using the sensor alone.

An important element in every RTS game is it's skirmish mode in which you can practice tactics against the computer to improve your multiplayer game. Skirmish mode offers measly five maps that are all very similar to each other and will get old pretty fast. The AI is completely hopeless on lower difficulty settings, while it simply outright cheats and nothing else on higher

ones. However, no difficulty will present an obstacle to better players. This is a big drawback, because the same could be said about the multiplayer which also offers only a handful of maps. An interesting situation often arises in multiplayer in which you'll constantly be playing "hide & seek" among the dunes and outcrops against your opponent. At first you might think it's just a cheap tactic because the goal is to destroy the enemy carrier, but soon you'll find yourself in that same situation by necessity.

So, to summarize. Is Deserts of Kharak a good Homeworld game? It is, because

it has that same atmosphere and feeling to a player who played the original, even though it doesn't take place in space. The plot is solid and the cinematics are gorgeously visualized through a combination of live action and oil painting. Is Deserts of Kharak a good strategy game? It is, because it provides everything an RTS game should: good units, good macro and micro management, interesting tactical situations, etc. Is it worth the asking price? No, not even remotely. Multiplayer and Skirmish modes are completely bare and preclude any longevity to this game. Current price is too high compared to it's content. We are sure

that Gearbox will churn out a million DLCs, but that still doesn't justify such a scarce start. Homeworld: Deserts of Kharak should find it's place in your Steam library because it's an excellent strategy game, but only after a Steam sale.

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:

OS:	Windows 7 (64-bit)
CPU:	Intel Core i7-950 (3.0 GHz)
GPU:	GeForce GTX 770 / Radeon HD 7770
RAM:	8 GB
HDD:	12 GB

GAME CODE PROVIDED BY: GEARBOX

PLATFORM:
PC

PUBLISHED BY:
Gearbox Software

PRICE:
46€

DEVELOPED BY:
Blackbird Interactive

TESTED ON:
PC

RATING 7.5

✓ Great nostalgic strategy game
✓ Atmosphere
✓ Desert aircraft carrier

✗ Terrible AI
✗ Small choice of multiplayer maps

"MULTIPLAYER AND SKIRMISH MODES ARE BARE OF CONTENT AND HINDER THE LONGEVITY OF THIS GAME"

Author: Nikola Savić

REVIEW

Darkest Dungeon
It's a trap!

Exactly one year ago, in February 2015 this promising rogue-like RPG appeared on Steam Early Access as another offspring from the small developer's Mecca of Kickstarter. Back then you could read the first impressions of Darkest Dungeon on the pages of our magazine, and now we get to see what a year of stewing in the Early Access phase has brought to this game.

Darkest Dungeon is a game "sold" to the audience as an old-school, hardcore, rogue-like, skill-intensive, Lovecraftian, blah blah blah.....you got the point. So, the target audience for this game is a specific group of people, older (and some younger) gamers who consider themselves hardcore and are looking for a challenge

to test their limits. Darkest Dungeon was indeed very promising; we have all drooled over the first trailers for the game, that dark, mystic atmosphere and seemingly complex mechanics. The game was preceded by a huge hype in the gaming world; everyone played it, praised it, but also showed a degree of concern. It's been a year, enough time to make the necessary changes and improvements, so in our opinion, the time has come for someone to finally break through the hype, take a good look

around, fire a gun into the air to get the needed attention and shout out "People, the king is naked!"

But, let's focus on the good thing first. The game has a truly amazing visual style and a fantastic, dark, comic book-like graphics, all of which gives it a very specific atmosphere. In accordance with the comic book style, the animations are also very simple, short and crisp, and that perfectly fits the atmosphere the game wanted to create. All characters in the game, your fighters, as well as your enemies, are done carefully and with a lot of care, and they represent another eye candy we can enjoy. The color scheme is dark and saturated, and overall the graphic style mostly resembles

> ## "DARK, COMIC BOOK GRAPHICS CREATE A VERY SPECIFIC ATMOSPHERE"

modern cut-scenes which are popular these days and can be seen in the latest Witcher for example. The crown of this whole amazing atmosphere is the epic voice of the game's main narrator (Wayne June) which, combined with the gloomy and unassertive background music, makes for one well rounded experience.

The story of the game, if we can even call it that, is fairly basic and it's only purpose is to provide the player with a basic premise and a semblance of a plot. You take on a role of an heir of an estate whose previous occult-obsessed owner managed to release all sorts of evils and then committed suicide. You travel to said estate and with the help of mercenaries try to rid it of those unholy powers and reclaim your inherited property. It's a shame that a game with such a rich ambient didn't have more narrative elements. But, people don't play rogue-like games for their narrative anyway; instead they do it for their gameplay mechanics. Except that's exactly where this game failed to provide.

On paper, Darkest Dungeon indeed brings many innovations and revolutionary mechanics. Your goal is to enlist mercenaries to help you clear out four dungeons of their "unwanted tenants", and then to finally get to the fifth dungeon which bears the game's titular name - Darkest Dungeon, which is the endgame content that shipped with the game's official release. You must pay and maintain your mercenaries, so therefore the first segment of the game is basically a micro-economy game in which you'll have to develop the estate, or more precisely the

> ## "INITIAL EXCITEMENT SOON TURNS INTO A MONOTONOUS GRIND AND A BATTLE AGAINST RANDOM ELEMENTS"

village in it, and where you can develop various buildings, such as a blacksmith, tavern, church etc... All of these play an important role to your heroes and can be useful depending on the needs of your team. The game boasts 14 different classes of adventurers, some of which are standard classes that we see in everything, while some are really original. As in every rogue-like title, perma-death is featured here as well. For this reason, in your village

there's a recruitment center of sorts, where new adventurers thirsty for challenges and rewards can be found all the time. You may hire as many as you like, but only four can be sent to action at a time, so it's of the utmost importance that you have the right composition once you venture off to an adventure.

Your heroes will die - make sure to remember that. No matter how ideal

you think your team is, don't be fooled, because sooner or later you'll lose some of it's members. Something unpredictable will happen and you will be left without your most reliable characters. Even if the most experienced heroes do manage to survive, during the game they will accumulate 'stress' which will make them less and less reliable as the time goes on, by getting various negative traits - becoming selfish, paranoid, masochistic, or something else; and then you'll have to send them on a vacation for a while, to a church to pray, or to drink and gamble in the tavern. Those heroes are of no use to you while they're in recovery, so you'll have to use others. Levelling new heroes from scratch can be very tedious, so it's really important to take good care of your best mercenaries.

We mentioned 'stress'. This is a game mechanic which also represents one of it's "selling points" that the developers used to market the game. The basic idea behind this mechanic is for us to view these adventurers from a more humane angle - as people made of flesh and bones who

can be influenced by the many horrors they face over time. There are many factors that influence your stress scale: dwelling in the dark for too long, too much damage taken, lack of food... Darkness can be easily regulated by carrying torches, but the more illuminated you are, the higher is the chance that you'll get spotted by some unplanned (additional) enemies, so you'll have to find a balance. Food adds to the survival aspect of the

game and you have to carry it with you to every mission, but the more food you take, there's less space that remains for loot and other equipment. Once a character accumulates a critical mass of stress, one of his negative traits becomes active. In case one of your characters suffers from too many of these negative traits at once, it might not be cost-effective to treat him anymore, and it might be better to simply let him go. The missions themselves, i.e.

quests, are simply exploring and clearing out randomly generated dungeons. You walk down a hallway from room to room and disarm traps or battle opponents. Battles are always 4 on 4, in which both your team and the enemies are lined up, and the position in line can significantly determine what can a certain character do and which abilities they can use, making it a key factor when choosing your tactic. To solve any quest, aka go to the dungeon, you have to clear all of it and have 90% of it explored. If you think that you're in trouble, you have the option to abandon the quest - but you will also lose all of your loot. Resources can be used to recover your mercenaries, develop your estate, upgrade armour and weapons, hire new mercenaries.... But the resources are scarce and very important, so you will often barely make ends meet.

All of this makes it seem like the gameplay is rich and diverse, so you're probably wondering why we rated this game so (relatively) low? Simply put – because we got a cat in the bag. The game might amaze you for first ten-or-so hours. Overwhelmed by the different options and gameplay elements, you might feel that the game is heaven for the fans of tactical turn-based rogue-

like RPGs, but that simply isn't the case. The starting amazement with the game slowly turns into monotonous grinding and stress accumulation. Being a hard game is not about having all of your effort goes to waste due to some random factor which you simply can't influence. A few unfortunate mishaps causing you to lose a few key characters is all it takes to set you back to have to tediously grind for new resources and level new characters. Apart from that, the game lacks content diversity, which is why it can quickly become boring. The enemies soon start to repeat and the "advanced" dungeons are simply upgraded versions of those same enemies you fought on lower levels. The dungeons at first look nice and detailed, but then you realize that you've seen the same corridor a thousand times and wonder how is it possible that no one thought of adding a few more designs. We understand that rogue-like dungeon crawlers usually eschew strong narratives, but when every quest is "go open all the doors and kill everything", at some point it stops making sense. Furthermore, the game is brimming with balance issues that would warrant another text that's just as long. Suffice to say that there's a ton of unimportant and redundant characters

and abilities, when damage is more or less the most important one.

If you can get over all of this and are not bothered by the huge amount of random elements which you can't influence, then we believe that you can enjoy some twenty hours of good fun with this game, and we would recommend it on those terms. However, if you're a fan of a true challenge, sadly, all you will find here is a nerve-grinding machine. There's a speck of light though, because the developers have also provided us with modding tools, so there's a hope that someone might be able to harness all potential of this title, which is currently akin to some of our football starlets who've went abroad at the age of 17 and were never heard of again.

RATING 6.5

✓ Excellent visual design

✓ Atmosphere and the narrator's voice

✗ Quickly becomes repetitive

✗ Substantial problems in gameplay mechanics

Assassin's Creed
Chronicles: India

Aladdin or Assassin?

"SECOND PART OF 'CHRONICLES' FAILS TO BRING US MANY INNOVATIONS"

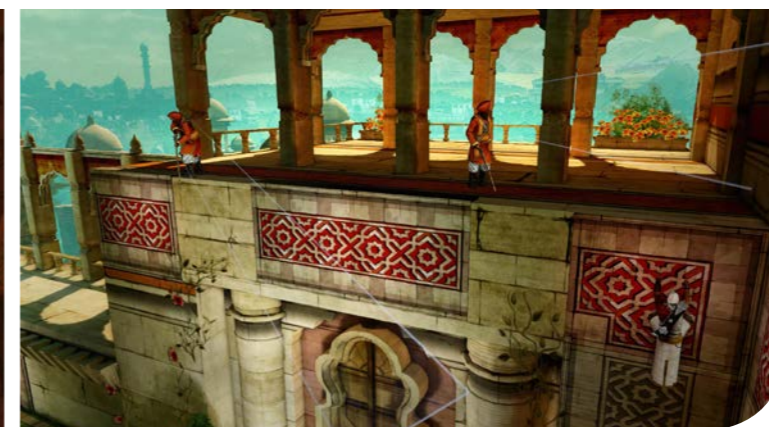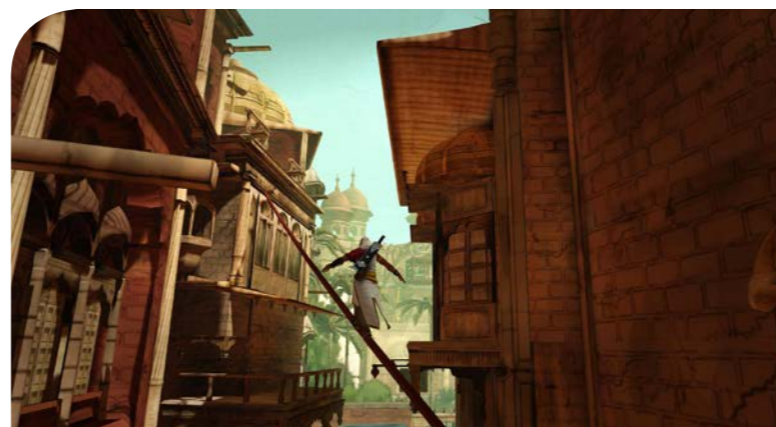**W**e're getting the second part of assassin Chronicles after the holidays, and just in time to fill the void before a new AC game. In the last couple of years, many players gave Ubisoft a hard time. Of course, most of that was brought about by the releases of buggy Unity and totally detached Syndicate. Cautioned by these failings, Ubisoft has decided not to release a main AC game this year, and instead we'll be getting the two remaining Chronicles.

What's new in India when compared to China? Essentially nothing. We take on a role of an assassin operating in India during the mid-nineteenth century as he attempts to acquire a specific artefact, while simultaneously fighting to save his princess. If there wasn't AC in the title, we would have sworn we were playing Aladdin. Basically, this 2D (alright, 2.5D) platformer is great at what it does. You'll be avoiding direct conflict most of the time, but when you do engage in combat you won't feel inferior against your opponents. As the game goes on, the enemies get stronger, but so do you gain access to a growing plethora of assassin skills and weapons. The controls are a bit questionable, but you'll soon get used to them if you've ever played a platformer on a PC. The combat is fluid, as are the

animations, and the colors are like you're on a Goa Trance festival. The colorfulness is so intense that we can only congratulate the authors on this faithful adaptation of the atmosphere of the nineteenth century India. The palaces, gardens, clothing - everything is nicely and faithfully adapted, it makes you want to travel to India on a vacation.

But, after a while you realize that the game becomes repetitive. Luckily it's not too long, so that doesn't affect the overall experience. Compared to China, this game is a technical improvement, but also a continuation of a trend of departure from true assassin values. When it comes to the gameplay, it's not even close to what we've seen in "Mark of the Ninja", but we won't take that against it. What to conclude on? Honor the franchise by pouring a few hours into this game, but don't expect India to reignite the glory days of this fallen series.

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:
OS: Win 7
CPU: Intel Core i3 2105 3.1 GHz
GPU: nVidia GeForce GTX 470
RAM: 4GB
HDD: 4GB

PLATFORMS:
PC, PS4, Xbox One, PS Vita

PUBLISHED BY:
Ubisoft

PRICE:
10€

DEVELOPED BY:
Climax Studios

TESTED ON:
PC

RATING 7

✓ Colorful
✓ Likeable music
✗ Predictable and shallow story
✗ We're moving further away from the assassin's essence

Author: Bojan Jovanović   REVIEW

UnderRail

We've got our own Fallout

"A GAME FROM A LOCAL STUDIO WHICH RESONATED WITH THE HARDCORE AUDIENCE"

The world is almost destroyed. The surface of our small planet is completely uninhabitable and the survivors are relocating underground, into the tunnel networks that used to be metros, where they lay the foundations of new civilization. This is not a plot to some spinoff to Metro books/games, but UnderRail, and RPG from a local studio called Stygian Software, a game that has spent more than half a decade in development and after a long stint in Early Access is finally available to our PCs.
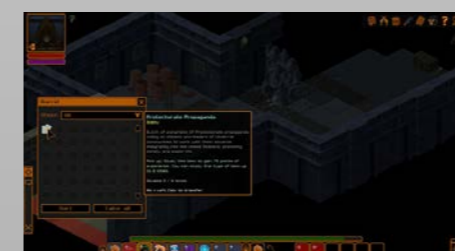
You'll begin your underground adventure as a new settler of South Gate station, a status quo-zone bordering much bigger and not very neutral settlements. In the usual roleplay manner, you'll start by doing small assignments for your neighbors and over time unravel a huge net of conspiracy and political intrigue between several factions. Your character is not predetermined and at the beginning you can spend a lot of time setting up his starting stats, choosing abilities and picking feats. The list of abilities seems intimidating at first, but you'll soon find the ones that are most interesting to you and develop your character accordingly. It's possible to create more or less any RPG archetype and successfully play it in UnderRail.

It's impossible to avoid comparisons with the original Fallout. Starting with the isometric perspective, then retro graphics, all the way to the basic stats which are reminiscent of the famed SPECIAL system and turn based combat. This is, of course, not a flaw in this game – moreover, it's a bold move to release an RPG so ingrained with classic principles, rather than follow the modern trend of streamlining everything. Stealth gameplay is excellently implemented and it's quite possible to finish most of the game without direct confrontations, while strongly charismatic characters can use their honeyed tongues to avoid even getting scratched. You can use the very interesting 'oddity' XP system instead of the standard "kill everything for XP" system, which gives you a good reason to explore the world in detail and which will certainly appeal to players who like to play non-standard characters.

However, when it gets to combat, there's the turn-based system featuring action points for movement and attack that we're used to in RPGs. Weapon arsenal includes both close combat and ranged weapons, crossbows with different kinds of projectiles, as well as psyonic powers if you're more magically inclined. You'll usually end up crafting most of your own gear, because it's most likely better than the pieces you find on dead foes or can buy from traders. It takes an effort to find all the materials and schematics to craft the best pieces of equipment, so there's a feeling of personal success when you finally equip your character with the best gear, instead of simply picking it up along the way.

The biggest contribution to the games retro RPG feel comes from it's visuals. The hand-drawn 2D graphics and "hacker" fonts will make old-school players gr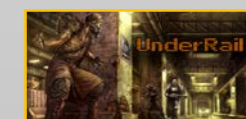in with delight as they explain to the youngsters how the old games were better, truer and more complicated. This definitely helps with the game's minimal hardware requirements, except in certain scenes where it causes the loss of fidelity. A few stronger shadows, especially around characters, would have probably helped there. UnderRail is a fairly long game and you'll gets tens, if not hundreds, of hours from it; especially because different approaches to gameplay offer different experiences and options. This is very commendable for a price this low. In the end, we can say that the Stygian crew's toil had payed off. By making a sort of Fallout 2.5, they have found their niche in an overcrowded genre that has been transforming into pure action FPS games over the years. And finally, UnderRail is a local game that's made it's mark with the hardcore gaming audience. It's not for everyone, but it wasn't meant to be.

"A NUMBER OF WAYS TO APPROACH THE GAME BESIDE THE CLASSIC HACK'N'SLASH"

GAME PROVIDED BY: STYGIAN SOFTWARE

PLATFORM:	DEVELOPED BY:
PC	Stygian Software
PUBLISHED BY:	**TESTED ON:**
Stygian Software	PC
PRICE:	
14€	

RATING 8

✓ Huge replay value

✓ Oddity system for a different approach to levelling

✓ Price

✗ Overview is not always optimal

✗ Storyline is a bit naive

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:

OS:	Windows XP
CPU:	Intel Celeron 1.66GHz
GPU:	DirectX 9
RAM:	2GB
HDD:	3GB

Author: Nikola Savić

Oxenfree

Those horror eighties

Oxenfree is a debut game from the Night School Studio, a young indie studio, who's in part comprised of ex-developers from TellTale Games. If you're familiar with the work of that excellent development team, then you know that their games strongly accentuate the narrative experience. Layered characters, convincing dialogue and importance of decisions you make are some of the defining points of a TellTale adventure, which means that's something we should expect here as well.

The story and setting of Oxenfree is influenced by the popular 80's horror movie subgenre, the so-called teenage horror movies. Initially everything seems familiar and somewhat generic. A diverse group of teenagers decides to spend an evening on an abandoned mystic island where they plan to do what young people like to do: get drunk, hang out, and indulge in some light drugs. However, our heroes are all but typical irritating teenagers from cheap horror movies and that's where the appeal and beauty of this game shines through.

You take on a role of Alex, a blond girl whose brother had recently passed away, whose mother remarried, and who met her new step-brother that very evening. Joining her is her best friend, his crush, the ex-girlfriend of your lost brother... This seemingly typical group of high schoolers, with all of the problems that puberty and growing up brings, actually hides many complex layers which you'll discover throughout the game. Soon

> ## "MANY DEVELOPERS WHO WORKED ON THIS GAME CAME FROM TELLTALE GAMES STUDIO"

after reaching the island they manage to wake "something" paranormal on it and will spend the rest of the game trying to discover what it actually is. The main and invaluable tool with which you'll uncover the story and communicate with these paranormal activities is a small radio transistor which Alex brought along. As we mentioned in the introduction, the main features of this game are it's narrative and dialogues, and some would mockingly call it a "walking simulator". If you're expecting action or hard puzzles, this isn't the game for you. This is a game in which you'll leave your reflexes and wit behind and enjoy the brilliantly written characters and dialogues, featuring all of their problems with growing up, with relationships, and with hardships with which these young people, on the cusp of adulthood, will have to face.

Throughout the 4-5 hours of gameplay, you'll spend most of the time walking around the island and talking with your friends, and learn details from their and Alex's life through those conversations. During the dialogues, you'll always be able to choose between 3 answers, but you can also decide to stay silent, another detail borrowed from the TellTale games. The dialogues are meaningful and brilliantly written, and many of your decisions from them will accumulate in the end and determine the game's ending and your relationship with each member of the group. That means that although the game is relatively short, there are a number of endings, so there's definitely a reason to replay the game. Besides, while exploring the island, you'll encounter tourist points of sorts, in which you're able to investigate the background and history of the island. It's easy to miss some of them, so there's another reason to play a few more times and learn all the details.

Although it's nominally a horror game, you'll hardly be scared by anything; but, if you start caring about the characters, soon you'll start dreading all paranormal situations out of concern for these kids and their fates. Beside the brilliant dialogues and believable characters, credit also goes to good voice actors, whose naive and adolescent voices fit perfectly with the story and atmosphere. Same goes for the music, which seems like it comes straight from an 80's radio.

Visually, the game looks great with it's watercolor style and kind of reminds us of some old fairytale picture book. The whole style seems mystical and perfectly captures the atmosphere of a spooky night on a deserted isle. And an especially charming detail is the 'noise' effect that happens during certain moments, and which is reminiscent of the 'noise' that appeared when rewinding old VHS tapes.

All in all, this is a classic "feel good" game. You'll simply feel pleasant and fulfilled while playing it, enjoying those hand-drawn backdrops, and listening about life problems of list teenagers. And all that while trying to discover the mystery of a deserted island. We highly recommend it to all fans of old 80's horror, fans of "coming of age" books and movies, and of course, fans of TellTale Games' adventures.

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:

OS:	Win 7
CPU:	2,5 GHz
GPU:	NVIDIA GeForce GTX 460
RAM:	2GB
HDD:	3GB

PLATFORMS:
PC, Xbox One

PUBLISHED BY:
Night School Studio

PRICE:
20€

DEVELOPED BY:
Night School Studio

TESTED ON:
PC

RATING 8

✓ Teenage characters who are actually likeable and well written

✓ Excellent aquarelle visual design

✗ The game has almost no gameplay

Author: Petar Vojinović   REVIEW

That Dragon, Cancer

Time doesn't matter. Only life matters.

"VERY HEAVY AND UNSETTLING STORY"

Or who is God?
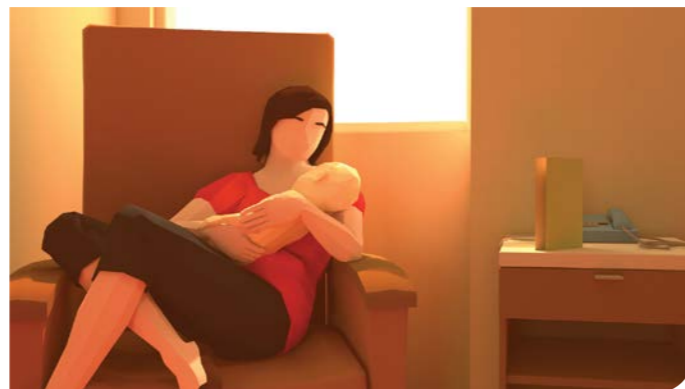
Sometimes a bad game gets published; sometimes a good game gets published. And sometimes a game gets published that makes you remember the popular internet saying about ninjas cutting onions. That Dragon, Cancer is just such a game, which delves into the most painful subject for any parent – the one of illness and inevitable death of their child.

That Dragon, Cancer is not as much a game, as it's an interactive story in which you'll relive all emotions of Ryan and Amy Green,

parents of terminally ill Joel, their son whose brain tumor was diagnosed a few months after his birth, and who died before his fifth birthday. TDC will introduce you to these heavy subjects very effectively - from the dilemma about friends and relatives seeing the newborn (Amy is pregnant with another child) as a "replacement" for dying Joel; the complete hopelessness that the parents are living through when the doctors inform them that they've exhausted all possible options; to their attempts to reconcile their faith in God with the situation they're facing.

The game is a mosaic of disconnected scenes which represent the parents' memories of the whole situation and which become progressively more horrifying and gut wrenching; the feeding of ducks at a lake, swinging and see-sawing in a park, driving the cart through the hospital, unsuccessful attempts to get crying Joel to sleep. During a scene the player can glean into the parents' deepest thoughts by clicking on items and the background

I'm sorry guys, it's not good.

– their fears, hopes, their faith a higher power might eventually save their child.

The scenes with their memories are mixed with mini-games which represent fantastic metaphors for their whole situation; so, you might lead Joel thorough something akin to a two-dimensional hallway, or fight a magical dragon who Joel can't seen and has no chance of defeating.

That Dragon, Cancer is hard to rate, and even harder to compare with another game. There are no tasks to accomplish in TDC, no obstacles to overcome or enemies to slay to complete the game. The goal is to simply understand the parents and the horror they had to live through while

caring for their sick child, and if the game manages to make you feel an empathic connection to them, you'll feel at least a bit of their terror after receiving the worst news, at least a bit of Ryan's relief when he finally manages to put the child to sleep, and fake joy while Joel's playing in the park like other healthy children.

Regardless of the "lazy" commands, lack of gameplay in true sense of the word, and other smaller remarks, That Dragon, Cancer perfectly conveys the emotions of a heavy, harrowing tale and is surely a title that will in some way be noted in 2016. Sadly, the smiles it elicit from you from time to time will be painful, and the tears will be those heaviest of all.

"THE GAME IS ABOUT THE MOST PAINFUL SUBJECT FOR ANY PARENT - THE DEATH OF THEIR CHILD"

"Computer games will become art when somebody confesses that they made him cry" – Steven Spielberg

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:

OS:	Windows 7
CPU:	Intel/AMD Dualcore 1.8 GHz
GPU:	512MB VRAM
RAM:	2 GB
HDD:	5 GB

THAT DRAGON, CANCER

PLATFORM: PC	**DEVELOPED BY:** Numinous Games
PUBLISHED BY: Numinous Games	**TESTED ON:** PC
PRICE: 15€	

RATING 8

✓ Emotionally charged and brilliantly told story

✗ Clunky commands

Author: Bojan Jovanović REVIEW

Life is Strange
Life is truly strange

I t's hard growing up. When you're teenager, everything seems strange, your emotions fluctuate, and you make bad decisions after which you wish that you could turn back the time and see what would have happened if you didn't say what you did and perhaps acted differently. We have to apologize for our omission. Because we failed to review each episode of Life is Strange as they came out from Dontnod's studio. But now, with the whole story before us, we'll see why Life is Strange.

The beginning of this story might seem more boring than strange. Max is an insecure girl, new student in Blackwell school in her home town on the west cost of USA. A confused, albeit bright girl, a typical teenager who snaps an occasional selfie and listens to indie-rock, Max discovers that she's not only a gifted photographer, but that she can also rewind time. Simultaneously, she's being visited by nightmarish visions of an apocalypse that would reduce her town to ashes. Yup, a typical teenage life.

"YOU'RE GOING TO CONNECT WITH THE CHARACTERS AND CARE ABOUT THEIR FATES"

The game is divided into five episodes and the gameplay is very reminiscent of recent TellTale adventures, except that you're provided with a wider movement allowance and the quicktime sequences were replaced with timed situations which you can rewind to your heart's content. The introductory chapter serves mostly to help you learn the rewind mechanic and some basic rules (objects you carry stay with you, you can stay on a location during the rewind, etc.), all of which you'll discover through dialogue between Max and her best friend Chloe. Even though the story is linear, many of your decisions will influence the outcome of some scenes, as well as the relationships between a significant number of characters.

Life is Strange is often an extremely difficult game, not because of complicated puzzles or anything, but because of the subjects it tackles. Death of loved ones, depression, suicide and auto-destruction – all very serious themes and scenarios that you'll have to face in this game. There's no 'skip' button, there's nobody who can make decisions for you, and sometimes you'll feel like the whole world is conspiring against

"ONE OF THE MOST SINCERE STORIES OF FRIENDSHIP"

you. Like the movie Guardians of the Galaxy, the music in Life is Strange plays a major role not only in the game's atmosphere, but also as an initiator for the plot. The licensed soundtrack is chock full of excellent tracks and fits perfectly with the tone of every scene. You even get the music disk of it if you purchase the game as a physical copy.

Certain scenes will hit you like a ton of bricks and make it perfectly clear why sometimes the main and episode pause screens feature a warning speaking of possible psychological effects, all with a link towards a depression support group. Personally, I had to lay down the controller and quit the game at one point. I stared blankly into the TV's empty screen while contemplating should I even continue, and should I really allow everything that I thought was going to happen to the characters even transpire (and it did). No matter how awkward the game's writing is, you'll connect to the characters and start caring for their fates; you might take somebody's side or actively work against another and build your own version of the story. It might sound crazy, but don't repeat the episodes before finishing the entire game. Experience it as a whole in which your choices are truly choices, and not a chase for the best outcomes or stats that appear after each episode. Explore every nook and cranny, slowly absorb the world around you, and the game will reward you for your "snooping".

"THE GAME TOUCHES UPON SOME VERY SERIOUS AND HEAVY SUBJECTS"

make it not as stellar as it deserved to be.

There were only two games that struck a chord in this old gamer's heart. Those were Siberia and TellTale's Walking Dead, both games packed full of emotions that make you stare bewilderedly at the monitor while the credits slowly roll over black background. This duo is joined by Life is Strange, one of the most sincere stories of friendship. This game is one step away from being a masterpiece, hampered only by it's sometimes awkward dialogue, but absolutely worthy of your time and money. Besides, if a game can turn a grown man into an emotional ruin, then there's no need to say much else about it's impact.

All of this makes me lament the game's uneven tempo when it comes to events. Sometimes the story gets no development, while at another time you'll be bombarded with information and dialogues because of which you'll wish Max had the ability to freeze time, not just rewind it. You'll hear Life is Strange being called a rollercoaster of emotions, but the same could be said about it's story. The dialogues and written information sometimes suffer from this too, as if an adult tried to think how the teenagers would speak without knowing anything about it. This issue is brushing the fence when it comes to immersion, but luckily it doesn't break it; however it does

GAME PROVIDED BY: COMPUTERLAND

PLATFORMS:
PC, PS4, PS3, XONE, X360

PUBLISHED BY:
Square Enix

PRICE:
20€

DEVELOPED BY:
Dontnod Interactive

TESTED ON:
PS4

RATING 8.5

✓ An emotional experience

✓ Decisions truly affect the story

✓ Atmosphere and the soundtrack

✗ The plot develops in an uneven tempo

✗ The way in which characters speak and write is very unconvincing at times

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:
OS: Windows 7
CPU: Intel/AMD Dualcore 3GHz
GPU: GeForce GTX 260 or Radeon HD 4890
RAM: 2 GB
HDD: 3 GB