

FABLE II

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OFFICIAL HANDS-ON

FABLE II

Read the definitive guide inside...

7
EXCLUSIVE
NEW
SCREENS!

GOOD OR
EVIL?



How will you play
through Fable II?



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INTERVIEW

PETER
MOLYNEUX

Why Lionhead's
main man loves
Fable II



FABLE II

Welcome

From the throbbing hive of activity that is Bowerstone marketplace to the dark, frightening pirate port of Bloodstone, the universe of Albion is a rich, intoxicating world to explore – a world full of secrets, of choices, of wonder. There's more than just a main quest and some side quests to enjoy. There's a rich simulation game to get involved in – can you buy all of the houses in the world? There's a social aspect – can you find a partner and successfully raise a family?

Can you do the right thing? Do you want to even? Can you even tell what the right thing to do is? See our Good vs Evil feature to see what we mean about choices.

This is the beauty of Fable II – your game experience will be so different to someone else's. It's a role-playing game and a life simulation; it's an economy simulator and a social experience – both in single-player and the Jump-in, Jump-out multiplayer. It's a game with real wit and thought put into every aspect – and one glance at the ingenious Achievement list proves that – and the time we've spent exploring Albion just makes us even more excited to sink our teeth into the final game.

Roll on October 24th, and the arrival of what's likely to be one of the most uniquely brilliant experiences you'll have on your 360 this year.

Enjoy the issue,

Chris Schilling

"Fable II is going to be so many different things to a great many people"

EXCLUSIVE SCREENSAVER

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Good vs Evil 03

Find out why the choices you make will change your entire Fable II experience...

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Essential tips, tricks & tactics to help you win big!

FABLE II



FEATURE

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL

Why morality is more than just Black & White

One of the most significant changes to Fable II is the whole morality system. No longer will your decisions be clear-cut choices between noble heroism or demonic nastiness – here you'll have to think about the consequences of your actions, and how they'll impact on your progress.

Take the early example of the star-crossed lovers – a prologue quest which sees a young couple declaring their love for each other, in true Romeo and Juliet style. The girl's interfering mother, concerned that her daughter is about to elope with this man she considers unworthy,

interrupts the tryst – at which point, the young man asks you to pass a letter onto his beloved. Yet ring the doorbell, and it's the mother who answers. If you hand the letter to her, are you helping a mother protect her daughter from trouble, or simply preventing the path of true love from running smoothly? Another scene might see you unlock a caged prisoner from his cell. You could either be freeing an unjustly enslaved peasant or releasing a thug on to the world of Albion – the fact that his captor drew a sword on you may have swayed your decision, but does that mean



CONTROL →



FABLE II

Fable II continued

he deserved to be let loose?

It's fascinating to see how this has developed from Fable's more simplistic approach – and there are other measures of your behaviour besides good and bad. There's also a meter for purity and corruption, and another which ranges from vicious cruelty to absolute kindness

Players who adopted a virtuous role in the first game may be tempted to inject a wicked streak into their play without it impacting too greatly on their hero status, while others will switch their brand of evil from malevolent to benevolent. Sure, you might have just killed someone's family, but you can always apologise afterwards.

The path you choose will still impact upon your character's appearance. The more evil you become, the less human you'll look – sprouting horns and facial disfigurements – while those who

fight for all that is good and right may just see a halo sprout above their avatar. And that's not all.

Depending on your actions, shopkeepers may refuse to serve you or adjust their prices accordingly. If you're the embodiment of evil, villagers will boo and hiss at you – or alternatively run away screaming – whereas a heroic avatar will frequently find himself surrounded by his adoring public. And you'll likely be more attractive to the local womenfolk as well.

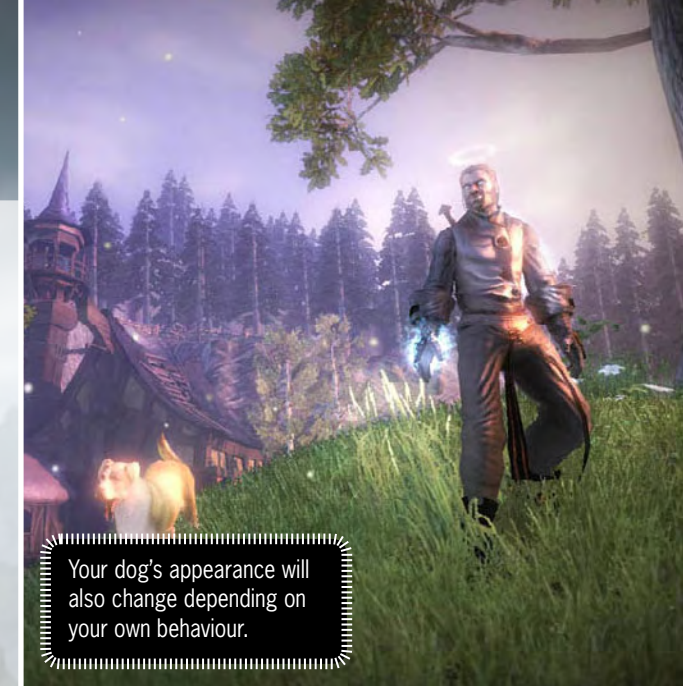
Your behaviour won't directly influence many of the game's story quests, but you'll find that certain side quests and other tasks only become available once you reach a certain level of goodness (or indeed, should you find yourself on the rocky road to the dark side).

Given that it's possible to kill anyone except the plot's key characters, you may find yourself missing out on a boatload of content if you're a little too trigger – or

sword-happy – although then again, your evil behaviour won't have gone unnoticed either, so certain nefarious individuals will be more likely to offer you work if you're behaving very badly indeed. It's actually possible that you'll be treated completely differently in two separate areas of Albion.

In Bowerstone you might be a bit of a legend, but in Bloodstone you may well be considered an easy target – a paragon of virtue on one side of the map, and a thieving, womanising drunk on the other. It's all up to you.

Yet despite all the extreme behavioural possibilities it's the subtle inbetweens that define Fable II's approach to role-playing – where you're not merely shunting your character from one path to the



Your dog's appearance will also change depending on your own behaviour.

other, but guiding them in a totally non-linear manner according to your own whims. In other words, your characters behave exactly how you want them to behave. And of Fable II's many innovations, perhaps that's the most revolutionary of the lot. ●



Your ugliness rating will soar if you're consistently evil.



If you look suitably demonic, then people will try to avoid you for the most part.

EXCLUSIVE SCREEN

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FABLE II

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EXCLUSIVE SCREEN

FABLE II

Publisher:
Microsoft Game Studios
Developer:
Lionhead
Heritage:
Black & White, Fable, The Movies
Link: www.lionhead.com
ETA: 24th October

Fable II

Spend some time down in Albion

Fable II is set some five hundred years after the original, with the world of Albion having evolved significantly in the intervening years. It's a neat metaphor for the game itself, which has improved an already superb original almost beyond recognition. If the first game suffered from technology limitations stymying Peter Molyneux's ambitious vision, then this current-gen sequel

finally sees the developer's imagination given free rein. It's telling that Lionhead is having trouble squeezing it onto a single DVD-9. You begin the game as a child – either male or female this time – trudging through the snow-covered backstreets of Bowerstone with your sibling, desperately trying to scrape together enough gold to buy a mysterious and powerful item



The snowy prologue doubles up as a tutorial, introducing players to the controls and themes of the game while weaving a compelling narrative.



ROLL OVER
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"It's improved an already superb original beyond recognition"



Paused



EXCLUSIVE SCREEN

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As an adult, you'll start out in this small settlement.

CONTROL →



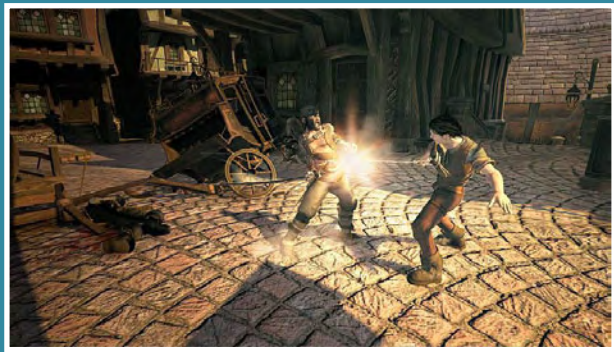


FABLE II

EXCLUSIVE SCREEN

Ideas Man

How Peter Molyneux's innovations set Fable II apart from other RPGs



Combat

Development

Story

Combat

Enter into battle, and you certainly won't be standing in line, taking turns trading blows with your enemies. Nor will you be wildly hacking away by stabbing at a single button (though the choice is there to do that if you want it). And you definitely won't be seeing numbers spouting from the top of your opponents' heads. Fable II offers a revolution in RPG combat that could well wind up influencing future titles, with its economy of button commands belying a surprisingly complex system which allows you to adjust from wielding axes to casting spells without any messing around. Indeed, the fluidity of the combat is such that you can do both simultaneously.

> Fable II continued

from a market stall, which leads to a tragic twist, before you fast-forward to adulthood and set out on a hero's quest relating to this incident. We can't say any more for fear of spoiling events, but suffice to say that Fable II, while offering plenty of whimsy throughout, can get really dark at times.

That's hardly surprising, really – Fable II offers light and shade in so many respects, from its myriad choices leading you on the path to either good or evil, while there's also a purity and corruption mechanic that tracks your behaviour in more subtle ways. In other words, you can

Feel free to deck your hero out in the most outrageous get-ups you can find – but don't be surprised when you get funny looks from non-player characters.

ROLL OVER
THE BIG PICTURE

play as the Albion equivalent of Han Solo – an undoubtedly heroic figure that still has a bit of a shady side.

And choosing to be a loveable rogue is just one of a great many approaches you can take. In



"Fable II is your game – it's a very personal experience"

essence, Fable II is your game – a very personal experience you can tailor to your own preferences, which means that no two games will play out identically.

MORAL MAJORITY
Your actions directly affect everything within Fable II, which means that no decision can be taken lightly – and Lionhead has thrown in a fair few moral quandaries to test your mettle when it comes down to the crunch. Do you free those prisoners, or leave them caged? Do you disobey orders to choose what you think is a more virtuous option? Morality doesn't just change your avatar's character, it changes their appearance, too. Stroll down the murky path to malevolence and your face and body will change



Use the Play and Stop controls to the left, or click here to see the enhanced version!

CONTROL →



FABLE II

> Fable II continued

accordingly, becoming less attractive and more fearsome to look at. And a puritanical hero will positively glow with the radiance that such noble deeds bring. You'll also change the world around you with your actions. Once you start raking in the cash, you'll be able to buy property, eventually amassing enough to pick out entire villages for purchase – whereupon you'll have the option to lease out your holdings, potentially for extortionate prices to line your wallet, and that will change the game's economic balance accordingly.

Role playful

The game's Achievements are hugely inventive, and offer genuine replay value, as you won't be able to get them all on a single playthrough. The reason for this is that some will be quite tricky to achieve first time round if you've decided to follow a certain path. If you're determined to be good, then you might not get the Chicken Kicker Achievement, while those playing as an evil character may struggle to convince enough women to join them for the Swinger Achievement. Meanwhile, you'll earn small rewards for killing rabbits, getting villagers drunk and committing acts of public indecency. More sensible players will be pleased that the story quests generally offer more Gamerpoinsts, however. But if you want the full 1000 adding to your Gamerscore, you'll almost certainly have to play it two or three times.

BEEN CAUGHT STEALING

If you'd rather be even more devious in your moneymaking, you can steal from people. First you have to ensure that your character isn't being watched, and then attempt to grab the item in question by holding down the A button while a green bar encircles a small onscreen eyeball (representing whether or not you can be seen). Should the eyeball start to turn towards the front, you can immediately retract your hand and should hopefully get away with it. And if the circle manages to join up at the top, then you've pilfered the item successfully. Get spotted however, and you can expect your standing within the community to change – every single action affects how you're viewed by other people in the gameworld. You're instantly seen as a bit of a hero by the Bowerstone Gypsy Camp you start out in, as until you set out on your quest, no-one has ever left the camp before.

Elsewhere you might be viewed as a bit of a ladies' man if you spend your time wooing that area's busty maidens, and it pays to check your menus before you wander into a town you've not visited for a while, in case they remember the episode where you farted in the face of a small child and you suddenly remember that you're persona non grata. That's something you'll almost always be in misty pirate port

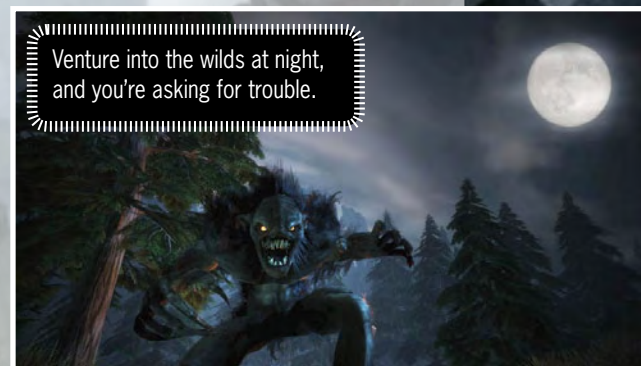
Bloodstone – a dark, imposing hamlet with residents who are more proficient at communicating with swords than with words. That said, the same place also offers dubious pleasures – like an overweight, scantily-clad male prostitute whose proposition may well be the least attractive offer you've ever had.

STAT ATTACK

There are reams and reams of stats to look at, many of which are hugely amusing, but all of which are relevant to the behaviour of non-player characters towards you. You might lose a bet which

“Every single action affects how you're viewed by other people in the gameworld”

Venture into the wilds at night, and you're asking for trouble.



ROLL OVER
THE BIG PICTURE

EXCLUSIVE SCREEN

One man and his dog – though it's helpful to have a partner to help you out during trickier parts.



FABLE II

> Fable II continued

results in your face being tattooed all over, but you can reduce your ugliness by wearing a mask – which means people are less likely to comment on how repulsive you are as you skulk past. Even the clothes you wear – while obviously affecting your armour points and similar statistics - can force people to see you in a different light. There's even a Master Chief armour set in the game should you wonder what a Victorian Halo might feel like.

TEAMWORK

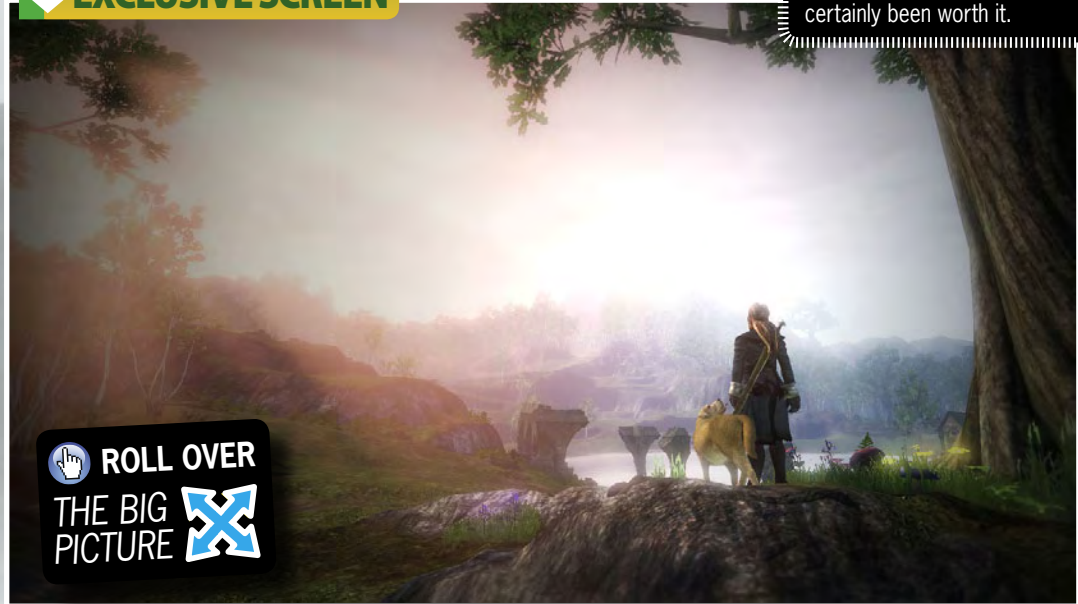
With such a variety between games,

it's little wonder that Fable II's co-operative mode is one of its most celebrated new features. If you're connected to Xbox LIVE, at any time you'll be able to see glowing purple orbs floating around Albion, representing your friends in their own versions of the gameworld.

You'll be able to walk up to one and immediately invite them into your game – though first you'll need to negotiate a fee. Because once that second player is in your world, they're able to affect it just as you can. Before this partnership can begin, however, you need to negotiate – the second player effectively becomes a

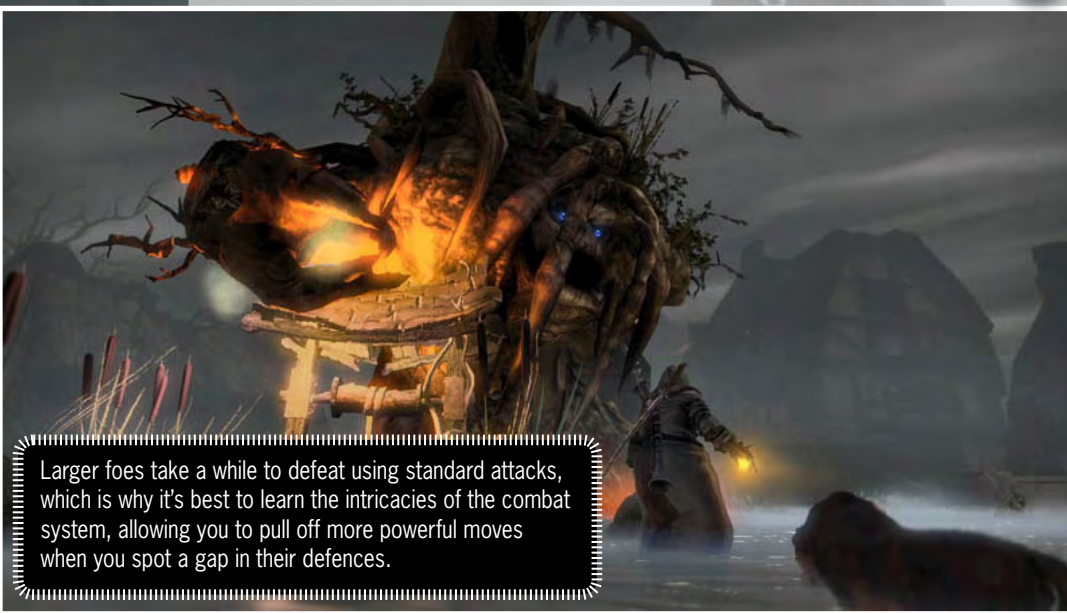


EXCLUSIVE SCREEN



ROLL OVER
 THE BIG PICTURE

Molyneux admits the game's exceptional lighting effects have been tricky to pull off, but the hard work has certainly been worth it.



Larger foes take a while to defeat using standard attacks, which is why it's best to learn the intricacies of the combat system, allowing you to pull off more powerful moves when you spot a gap in their defences.



Roll over screen for annotations

FABLE II

> Fable II continued

henchman to your protagonist, and you can specify the percentage amount of experience and loot they gain while in your version of Albion. And once your time together is over, the second player can leap back into their own game, with more experience and money to put to good use. It's an innovative idea that works terrifically well – neither of you will be able to wander too far, with the camera zooming out but keeping both players onscreen, essentially putting a set of reins on player two to stop them misbehaving. One of the key pleasures of co-operative mode is seeing how your friend's version of Albion has developed differently from your own. The number of choices available throughout means that two disparate approaches can lead to Albions that are worlds apart, almost to the stage where it feels

like two different games.

Fable II's world is huge, but it eschews the streaming approach to loading of other free-roaming games to load individual large areas separately. This enables each section of Albion to have much more detail, with non-player characters milling around market areas, and you have some way of interacting with all of them, be it talking to more significant figures, or merely gesturing towards a passer-by using the 'expression wheel' (activated simply by squeezing the right bumper). Indeed you can even express yourself during the game's cutscenes, which offer further interactivity at specific points, where a press of the left trigger focuses the camera on objects of interest.

There's so much to interact with it's unreal. Every single residence – be it a caravan, a house or a huge castle – that you're able to enter can also be purchased. You'll be able to set up small market stalls, choose the price you want to sell your wares at, and let them earn money for you in your absence. You'll even be able to profit from not playing the game thanks to the real-time gold-earning mechanic. Though you can't just wait months and gain an instant fortune – the game will reduce the amount you earn after a certain time, scaling the drop accordingly based on how long you've been away.

The combat is both accessible and flexible with much more depth than your average button-masher.



“There's so much to interact with it's unreal”

FIGHT CLUB

Of course more money means better weapons – all the better for those quests where you face off against fierce opponents in the game's vastly-improved combat sequences.

The 'carrot, not stick' approach to game design is very much in evidence here, in that casual players can get through most encounters by mashing the X button for repeated melee attacks, but those who use timed presses, holds and



Use the Play and Stop controls to the left, or click here to see the enhanced version!



FABLE II

> Fable II continued

different moves will be rewarded with more experience. You're not punished for sticking with the same approach, but it's definitely worthwhile mixing it up. Flourishes are still there, except this time you get a more cinematic camera angle to show off your best Errol Flynn impression, and you'll get more orbs for finishing floored opponents off.

Larger orbs are reserved for the best combatants, and the colours correspond to which techniques were used in battle – blue orbs for melee combat, red for magic, and yellow for ranged attacks, with green

representing all-round experience. Each of these orbs can be 'spent' on new powers and techniques within the three main abilities of strength, skill and will. So you might buy 'brutal styles' to become more barbaric, or purchase 'chain attacks' if you prefer to string moves together rather than adopting the bludgeoning approach. You might opt for the sniper technique (which allows you to aim more accurately, zooming the action to a tight over-the-shoulder view) or any one of a number of spells, all of which have five different levels of power, and all of which can be focused around your character for area attacks –



Bloodstone is swarming with pirates, and it's a good idea to be prepared for a fight or three.



The Hollowmen make for nasty opponents, especially when there's a group of them. There's a neat Achievement should you slay one in a very specific manner, however...

"There's even a Master Chief armour set"

ROLL OVER
THE BIG PICTURE

affecting any enemy wandering within range, or more powerful ranged attacks, which deal damage to single enemies (or more if your aim's particularly good). The skills screen shows you brief but incredibly useful video overviews of the item you're saving up for, so there's no buying blind. You'll also be able to beef up your character's more basic abilities – examples include physique (which increases your attack power) and toughness, which gives you a longer life bar. At any point if you want to undo your progress towards a specific skill,

you can – while it will cost you some experience to change approach, there's nothing stopping you from switching sword-fighting abilities for spells if you find a magician's role more appealing.

DOG FIGHT

You're not the only one who gets stuck in during skirmishes, either. Your character is joined by a dog – whom you rescue as a child from a Bowerstone bully – who will savage any foes foolish enough to fall over.

Your pooch acts as a constant companion throughout the game – and you'll be able to pamper



FABLE II

> Fable II continued

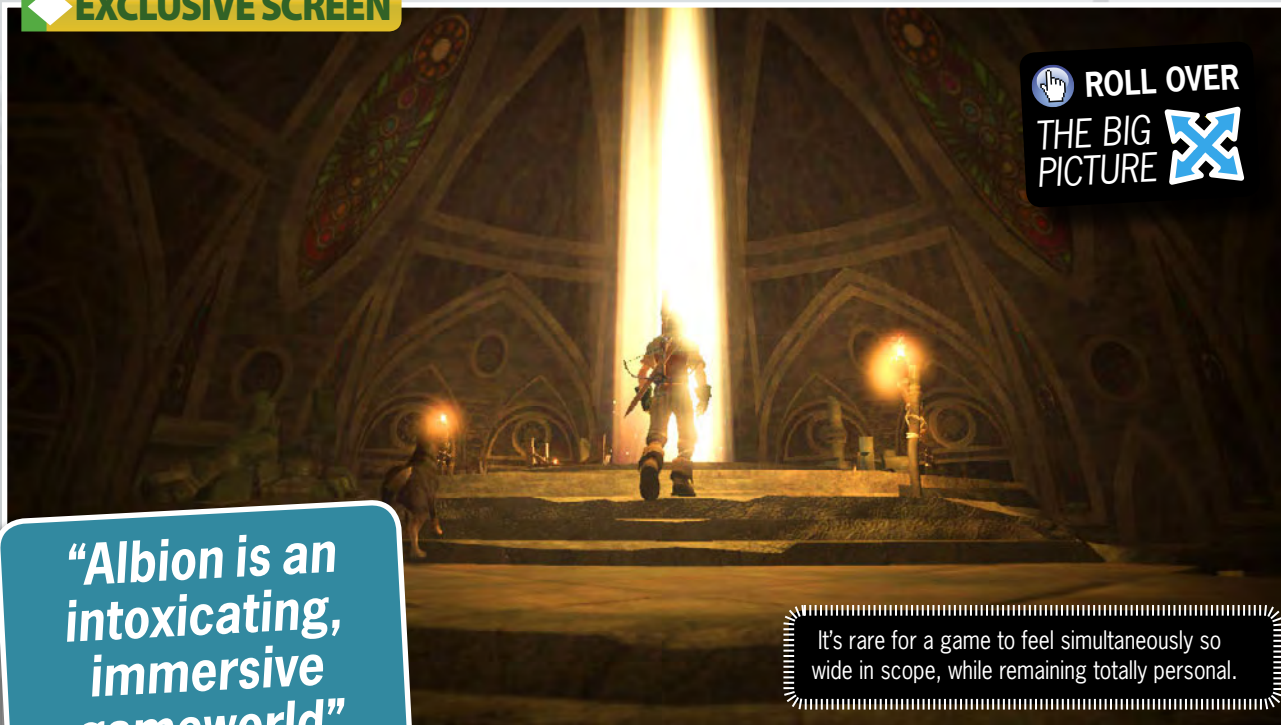


There's a refreshingly British feel to Fable, especially in its slightly bawdy sense of humour.

him to your heart's desire. Though overpraising and frequent treats will turn your canine chum into a lazy, spoilt mutt. Like your own character, your dog can be levelled up – rated from one to five stars at how useful he is in combat, or how effectively he can sniff out treasure.

You'll even be able to teach him tricks – shops will sell you items like a ball which you can throw for him to fetch, thus further building your relationship. He'll bark to alert you during certain situations – often it'll be a treasure chest that he's found, but sometimes it will be a warning that enemies are nearby. He's also responsible for guiding you away from the breadcrumb trail – the glowing path the game provides to help guide you to the next point of interest on each quest. It never gets to the point where you're led by the nose – instead the trail is there to

EXCLUSIVE SCREEN



ROLL OVER
 THE BIG PICTURE

“Albion is an intoxicating, immersive gameworld”

It's rare for a game to feel simultaneously so wide in scope, while remaining totally personal.

prevent players becoming lost – and is a massive help when you've followed your dog and can't find your way back. Should you follow the path fairly religiously, it will glow much brighter than for those who prefer to wander off the beaten track. And if you prefer to be without it completely, you'll always have the option to turn it off.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

The game's main story quest runs to

around twelve hours, but most players will take much, much longer to finish the game, simply because Albion's such an intoxicating, immersive gameworld that you'll want to spend more time there. And you're actively encouraged to go down the road less travelled as your dog will bark to indicate items of interest, and some of the game's best secrets won't be found on the breadcrumb trail. Indeed, Molyneux predicts that the average player will only have reached two-thirds of the potential character development,

with a host of levels remaining for more hardcore challenges, like the tricky demon doors where you'll face off against multiple strong enemies.

And if you're tired of traditional adventuring, then you can always spend time in the local inn, swilling ale until your view becomes blurry (with sound effects subtly changing in your inebriated state). Indeed, if you're more into sex than violence, then you'll be able to partake in orgies – though as with the first game, the screen will fade to black while engaging in coitus.





FABLE II

> Fable II continued



The art style remains the same, but the many areas of Albion couldn't look more different.

"It's rare that a game makes you feel so empowered"

Even here the choices remain – you can use a condom to prevent potentially debilitating sexually transmitted diseases, while if you wish to sow your wild oats you'll be able to get women pregnant should you go without a sheath. There's even an Achievement for 'taking part in an orgy, responsibly'.

JOB'S WORTH

Talking of responsibility, you'll be able to earn money by taking on a job, such as crafting swords for the

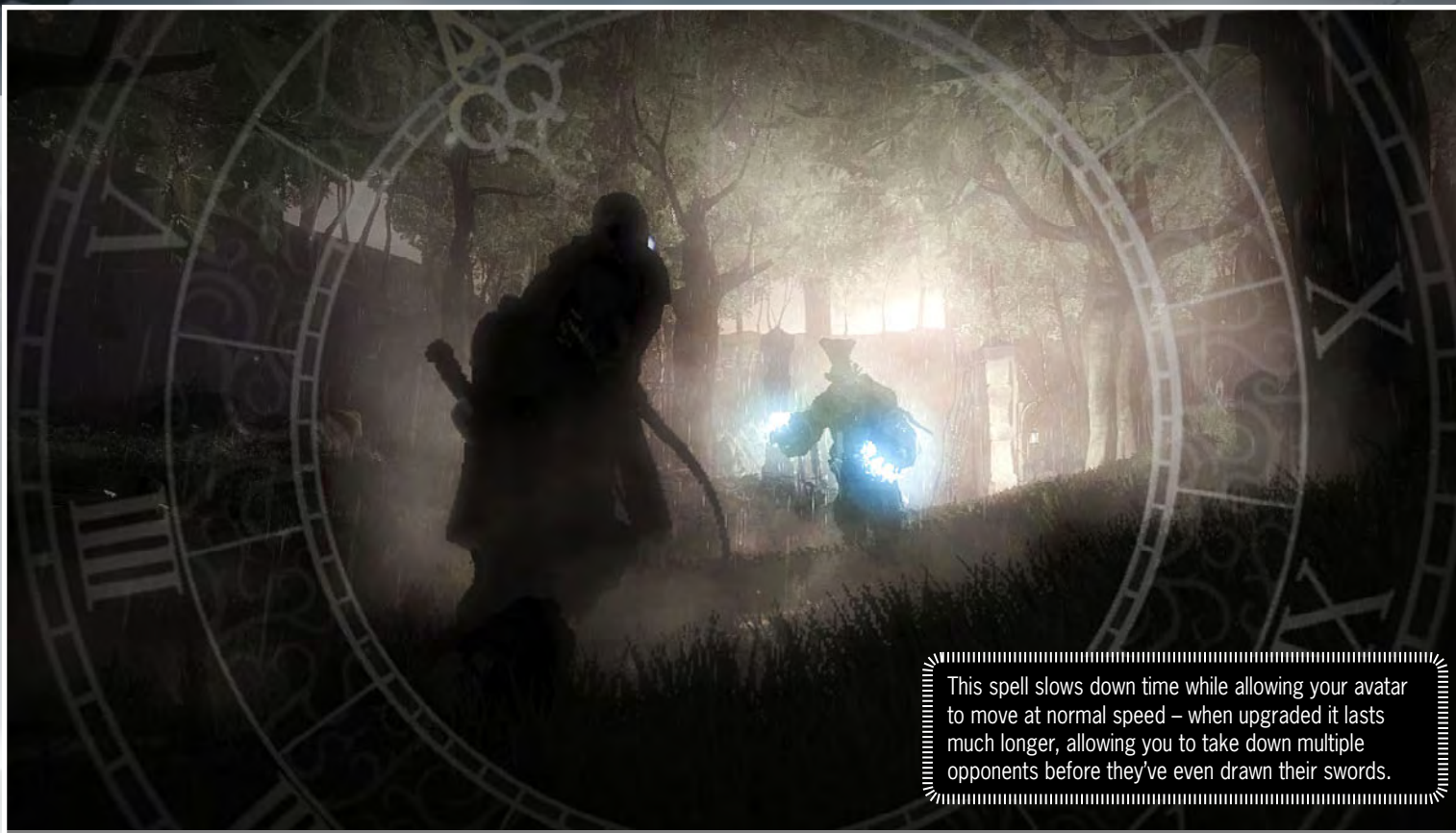
local blacksmith. This particular role takes on the form of a timing-based minigame, as you attempt to swipe the hammer at the correct time by pressing the A button as a marker reaches the green area of an arc. This gets progressively smaller and the marker moves much more quickly after a while – making for an entertaining challenge which you can return to whenever you want to make a bit more money, the honest way.

It's not the only task which requires

a bit of rhythm – should you fancy yourself as a street entertainer, you'll be able to attract crowds with a bit of Cossack Dancing, which employs a similar mechanic. Once again, this changes your position within the community, and may even cause the town minstrel to write a tune about you. Indeed, you'll be able to visit this songsmith regularly throughout, whereupon he'll base his words on whichever actions you've performed during your adventure. And should you tire of this minstrel's

wailings, you can always just kill him.

With so much to see and do, Fable II runs the risk of becoming seriously unfocused, but the fact that every choice of yours has some kind of consequence – however minor – means that everything in the game holds some significance. It's rare that a game makes you feel quite so important, so empowered, and it's a feeling we're sure most of you will want to share when Fable II makes its debut, exclusively to Xbox 360, on October 24th. ●



This spell slows down time while allowing your avatar to move at normal speed – when upgraded it lasts much longer, allowing you to take down multiple opponents before they've even drawn their swords.



CONTROL →



FABLE II



PETER MOLYNEUX

The head of Lionhead Studios and the man behind Fable and Fable II, *Peter Molyneux*, takes time out to talk us through his latest creation...

You've said that you have plenty of ideas for Fable III, IV and V. Given the time gap (500 years) and the technology advancement (invention of gunpowder) between Fable and Fable II, does this mean that we'll be seeing tactical nukes by Fable IV?

The reason I said that is I wanted people to understand that we weren't making it up as we went along. Each one of the story parts in Fable I and Fable II was thought about way back when we first came up with the idea of Fable. I always

wanted Fable I to be about the Guild, the Age of Heroes and magic and how important that was in the world - kind of a little how Europe was a thousand years ago, the time of King Arthur and Merlin. That was all a part of our culture, and suddenly that just disappeared.

That's why we skipped forward 500 years in Fable II, because we wanted to say "Right, you aren't part of this family of Heroes anymore, you're more on your own." The Heroes aren't around any more. People have lost faith in them." That's why we had such a time gap, but I don't think you'll be flying around in jet planes in Fable 3.



FABLE II

> Fable II continued

The inclusion of gunpowder is an interesting idea. It's not something you normally see in fantasy RPGs. What was the thinking here?

The style guide for Fable 1 was Sleepy Hollow, the Tim Burton film. The style guide of Fable II is Brotherhood of the Wolf, where it's a highwayman era, and there's a criminal element but they live alongside the rich element and it felt

wrong for there to be bows and arrows there. It's not like a sub machine gun. At best you're holding a repeater, which allows you to fire six shots before reloading and it tends to be a little bit slow.

You've never been heavily into doing sequels to your games before. What made you want to return to Fable?

I've not done a lot of sequels in my



time, but it did seem like when we started Fable that this was something that could go on. Also I thought that there were some things that went wrong with Fable 1 that really needed to be addressed.

Some of those were stupid things like giving you practically everything you'd need within an hour of playing.

Other things were more complex, like how awful the sneaking was. I thought the story was OK, but I didn't walk away from the story thinking "that was cool". So there was plenty to innovate around, plus the fact that we had some really interesting ideas around the dog and combat and drama. And I have to say and it's a bit of a strange thing to say, but I think I've learnt more about games design doing Fable II than any other game

One change from Fable to Fable

II is the inclusion of more "named" voice talent, Stephen Fry and others. What do you think bringing in those types of actors can add to a story driven game like Fable II?

Familiarity pays dividends, because it means people trust those people more. You go "Isn't that Stephen Fry? I liked him in that programme. He's a top bloke." So I don't have to do as much work as a designer to characterise him [laughs], so that's the first thing. The next thing is the actors in Fable II are fantastic because they are professional and they know what they are doing.

I have to admit, and I think some of these voices stayed in,

"I don't want people to play Fable II twice."



FABLE II



The fairer sex? Not necessarily. This time you can play as a female character, and even get pregnant, with all the physical changes that entails.

> Fable II continued

that there were a couple of voices in Fable 1 who were checkout girls at Tesco's [laughs]. You can't compare.

Did you find fitting Fable II onto one DVD or any of the Xbox 360's hardware restricting, or was it just far more liberating than the original Xbox?

Well, I'm sure I should tell you that the Xbox was wonderfully easy and we have everything we want, but of course being a developer, it doesn't matter what you give me we will fill it up to the very maximum. Not only is Fable II this vast open ended world, there's an enormous amount of AI going on. There's the AI of the dog, the economy of the world, there's characters that travel with you, there's the ability to bring in co-op players, there's all the LIVE stuff: we are pushing every aspect of the 360.

Can you tell us a little bit about the good and evil choices?

Well, it's pretty hard to describe that. In Fable 1 it was easy. I could just say you get horns or you get a halo, but in Fable II it goes a lot deeper than that. Yes, you can look more noble and light, or darker and with horns, but that's just the visual aspect. It's not just about what you

look like. It's the way the world treats you, the way people in the game treat you, the way your family treats you, the way your dog reacts... there's a list a mile long of things that changes because of your choices. It's not just about good and evil any more. It's how much are you willing to sacrifice.

Fable 1 was about kill this person, save that person. Fable II is more about making you think "well, what is the good thing to do here?" There's a tiny one in childhood, for example, where there's this girl who wants to elope... you've got to give this love

"We are pushing every aspect of the 360"

letter either to her to allow her to elope or to her mother to stop her. Now which is the good one there? Is it good to give it to the parent who is worried about their child, or should love be allowed to find a course? I think there are lots of times in the game like that where you will be asking yourself what is the right thing to do, and I like that.

We also measure purity and corruption – how you approach things, whether you overcharge for

items and cruelty and kindness. Now you might think being kind is being good, but no it's not. I'll give you a real life example. To my son every night I'm cruel to him because I make him go to bed, but I know that if I don't he'll get up cranky. I want people to finish Fable II and say "OK, I now know a little bit more about myself."

Are there ramifications in the world – if you're good you can only do one quest and if you're evil, there's a different one?

You're talking about branching. Yes, we do do branching. Sometimes the world branches. To give you an example from childhood. If you do a quest one way, the whole region changes. So there's not just good quests and evil quests, but entirely different regions with different people. I know Fable 1 was a game that a lot of people played twice, but because there is an element of drama missing second time around, it wasn't such a good game second time around. The funny thing is, I actually don't want people to play Fable II twice. I know that sounds very odd, but I've designed this game to be played once – in this unique way. A lot of the world works as a simulation, so people can continue to play and enjoy beyond the story. ●



FEATURE

Fable II Pub Games



Win money and items today!

Available on Xbox LIVE Arcade now for a mere 800 points, Fable II Pub Games allows you to win money and items for use in Fable II itself. So we've put together these tips and tricks which should hopefully ensure that your avatar is nicely in the black by the time October rolls around.



GENERAL TIPS

It pays to spend time unlocking the better tables, even if you end up having to borrow a fair bit in the meantime. The higher-limit tables offer a better chance of getting your money back, because wins are far bigger. Sure, if you risk a lot of money then you could well lose big too, but a few lucky hands should leave you in a healthy position. It's knowing when to quit that's the key!

Alternatively, you should try to enter the tournament – not only because you stand the chance of winning items that are unique to Pub Games – yes, some items aren't available anywhere in Albion – but also because chances are that you'll get out more than you put in. That's because money is added by the house to each game – so even if you don't win outright, there's a chance of making a tidy profit by the time you're out. Not only that, but you'll get a cash sum for finishing in the top five.

You're not forced to merge your Pub Games character with your Fable avatar – so if you end up down

on your luck, then simply keep the two separate. That way you can start out with a completely clean slate.



FORTUNE'S TOWER

This is almost certainly the best game to play to win most, as it's the most strategic of the three. Make sure you choose a deck with the lowest number of Number cards (56 rather than 70), as it increases the ratio of Hero cards to Number cards and therefore your odds marginally.

"Fortune's Tower is the best game to play to win"



It's often a good idea to cash out when the Gate Card is gone, to avoid risking a loss, particularly if you've bet big. Remember the Gate card is not a Get out of Jail free card – while it does offer some security, it can still cause a burn.

Don't risk all on doubles – you'll be in profit quite early, and it's sometimes tempting to go for broke for a big win, inevitably ending up in failure. Sometimes it's better to cash out on a small profit, while letting the NPCs risk all and lose.

It's tempting during tournaments especially to try and get your money back, leading to more risky play, but to win, you don't need to have more than you started with – just make sure you have more than your competitors. Keep an eye on their totals and bet accordingly.



CONTROL →



FABLE II

> Fable II continued

If you're way behind you'll have to try the odd risky bet, but if you're roughly even then play it safe – cash out as soon as you feel comfortable. Occasionally, the opponents will risk all for a jackpot and miss out.

If you make it to the final stage of a tournament, you're going to win something, so you can afford to take more chances. As long as you get to the final stage once in three, which is quite achievable, you'll be in profit even on ranking fifth on the top table. Finish higher and those odds increase further. When you have the money, play the high rollers' tables outside the tournament to win big.



KEYSTONE

Again, the odds are better at the higher-limit tables, and particularly in tournaments. Stick to the later tables once they're unlocked and you're more likely to profit. Remember to check the odds by pressing the left trigger, to remind yourself of the chances that each of your bets has of winning.

In the tournaments, it often pays to place low-odds, high-reward bets – as an example, put the arch bets on 3 and 18, then bet on all the individual triples, and finally the triple square. Keep doing this and you'll

lose a number of rounds, but when you win, you'll scoop a huge amount. Revert to safer bets (like 10 and 11 on the arch, and 4-9 and 12-17 squares for the inner bets) and you'll likely finish on top, or at least in the first three.

Don't bet against yourself. In other words, if you bet on a single number, make sure other bets correspond, so it's the same shape, colour, number range. Betting against yourself might mean you win something back, but overall it makes no sense as some of your bets have to lose.



SPINNERBOX

Again, it pays to play for a while, even if you're losing money.



Unlocking the later games is the secret to success, as the higher-limit games offer better odds once more.

Don't go looking for any specific tactics, as there's no way to affect your results at all. There's literally no way of influencing what will happen,

so just keep tapping A and hoping for the best.

From experience, the Cow and Corset spinnerbox (with the maximum bet of 250) seems to pay out slightly better than the others.



IN-GAME EFFECTS

Apart from the items you may or may not have won, your Fable II game can be affected by your performance in Pub Games, should you choose to merge your gambler with your Fable II avatar. Any debt you accrue will be outstanding with the Pub Games Masters which you can find within Albion's many public houses. Should you happen to owe too much money, you'll be considered a criminal, and will have to pay a fine or even do some community service! ●



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