SKOAR!*

LIVE TO GAME

INSIDE

REEVU
Outriders

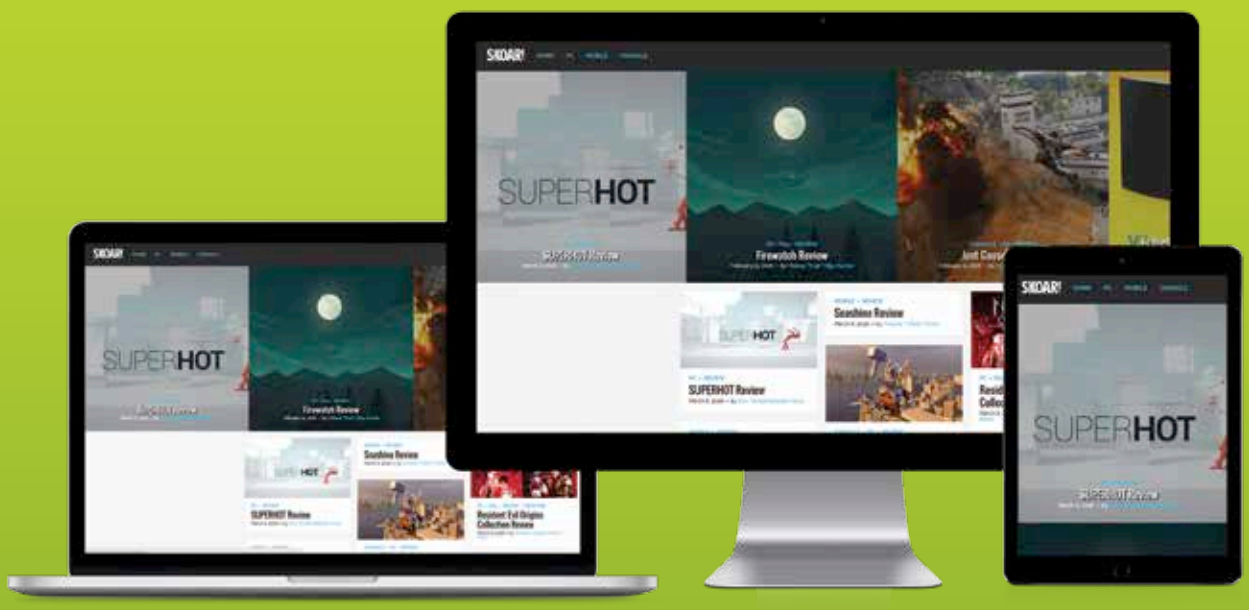
PHEACHUR
Apex Legends

TABLETOP REEVU
Wingspan

GAMES THAT MAKE YOU RAGEQUIT

The name of the game is pain





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ARE YOU TEAM APPLE OR EPIC?



Manish "Trigger-Happy" Rajesh
SKOAR! Overlord | feedback@skoar.in

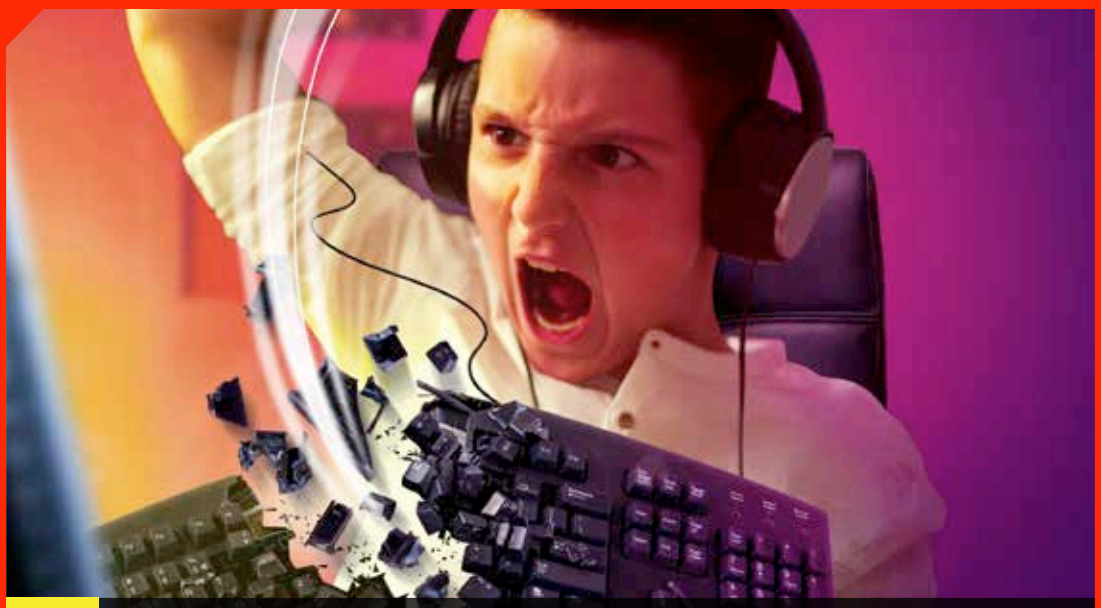
For those of you who don't know, Epic and Apple are currently going head-to-head in court. Sometime ago Epic decided that it would circumvent the App Store to make in-app purchases (like V-bucks) on Fortnite cheaper. By circumventing the App Store, Epic no longer needed to pay the mandatory 30% cut to Apple for every purchase made. Apple of course wasn't very happy with this, because Fortnite makes a substantial amount of money through its in-app purchases – $9 billion between 2019-20 if reports are to be believed! With the iPhone being Apple's platform and all that, they banned Fortnite from the platform, removing it from the App Store citing guideline violations which was to be expected.

While Google also did the same thing, you're still free to download the game via Epic's app. You have that freedom on Android. Apple on the other hand, you've only got the one option, the App Store. This didn't sit well with Epic, who promptly filed a lawsuit against Apple stating they have a monopolistic power in the market... which is kinda true.

Apple has a closed ecosystem. It's very strict about who or what it lets in, and their argument that it improves security is a valid one. Each and every app on the App Store has to go through an approval process before iOS users can access them. So yes, they control everything that goes on the platform. Epic's argument about it being a monopoly and anti-competitive is also true, and their goal here is to allow third party app stores to be available for iOS users. One could argue for both sides here, a closer and safer ecosystem or an open and vulnerable one. Apple is doing everything in its power to show that Epic's app has security flaws, and is picking at every little error it can find in Epic's desktop client. The involvement of several big-name game developers and publishers, and what are reportedly (unintentional) leaks of confidential documents are certainly making this a very interesting case to follow. So, whose side are you on? *

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SKOAR!*
LIVE TO GAME

OVERLORD
Manish "Trigger Happy" Rajesh

THE LORD'S VASSALS (WRITERS)
Dhriti "DeeDee" Datta,
Sameer "PsychoMantis" Mitha,
Aditya "SparklingPwnie" Madanapalle ,
Karthik Iyer

MILITARY COUNCIL (DESIGN)
Art-Director Warmaster: **Anil VK**
Lord General: **Baiju NV**

Cover Magic: **Anil VK**

THE LORD'S COURT (PRODUCTION)
Managing Jarl: **Rakesh Upadhyay**
Executive Dukes: **M P Singh, Mohd. Nadeem Ansari**

***Legal stuff we can't mess with**
MANAGEMENT
Editor: **Vikas Gupta**
Chief Editor: **Robert Sovereign-Smith**
Managing Editor Digit Geek &
Brand Head - Devworx: **Mithun Mohandas**

OFFICE
9.9 Group Pvt. Ltd.
205, Arjun Centre, B Wing, Station Road,
Govandi East, Mumbai - 400088
help@skoar.in
For any business-related enquiries, contact
business@skoar.in

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Editor: **Vikas Gupta**



What's New



SONY FACE LAWSUIT FOR LOCKING DIGITAL GAME SALES

The recent lawsuit Sony is facing could be pretty substantial. The proposed class action lawsuit alleges that Sony has a monopoly on digital PlayStation games. Simply put, there's no way to buy games digitally for the Sony playstation other than through their digital storefront, since they don't allow digital sales through third parties. According to the people behind the lawsuit, this allows sony to fully control the price of games, as compared to physical copies. Because of this, in some countries people end up paying "175% more" for games on the PlayStation store because of conversion rates. This however, is still only a proposed case, and we don't know if it will even end up going through. **http://dgit.in/sonysue**



PS3, VITA STORES TO REMAIN OPEN

Sony has announced that it'll be keeping the PS3 and PlayStation Vita digital storefronts open afterall. They had recently announced that they would be shutting their digital storefronts down, along with the PSP. While the PSP store will still be shutting down as planned, they've decided not to do the same for the PS3 and PS Vita. This in part had to do with the backlash they received from PS3 and PS Vita owners, which are a pretty sizable number of people. They went on record saying that they thought the plan to shutdown the digital storefronts for these consoles was the wrong decision, and the stores will remain operational "for the foreseeable future".
http://dgit.in/psopen



ASPYR STUDIO REPORTEDLY WORKING ON THE STAR WARS: KOTOR REMAKE

Port studio Aspyr Media is reportedly working on a Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic remake. This is the same company that has been porting the KOTOR games to mobile, and other Star Wars games to different consoles, like the PS4 and the Nintendo Switch. While the developer is known primarily for ports, this project has ended up becoming more of a remake instead, and they've worked on a lot of Star Wars games up until this point so they probably know what they're doing? There have been rumours of a KOTOR remake floating about for sometime now, however we knew for a fact that it wasn't happening at EA. This is exciting news, plus there are also rumours that there might be a movie in the works at Disney, also based on KOTOR.

http://dgit.in/kotrrmk



PS5 AVAILABLE FOR PRE-BOOKING FROM MAY 17

Good news for PlayStation 5 fans! It seems like the elusive console might be available for pre-order from May 17. A user in a WhatsApp group informed us about a Sony Authorised dealer that posted a banner on their website. The banner claims that the Sony PlayStation 5 will be available for pre-order from May 17, 12PM onwards. While we can see the disc edition banner there is a screenshot of the digital edition as well making the rounds on social media going up for preorder on the same date - May 17, 12PM. Do note that the disc edition is priced at Rs 49,990 and the digital edition is priced at Rs 39,990.

http://dgit.in/pbps5



THE DIVISION IS COMING TO MOBILE

Ubisoft has announced some major plans to expand the universe of it's Tom Clancy's The Division franchise. Among the many things the publishers announced, it noted that there would be a mobile version of the game launching sometime in the future. However, that's all Ubisoft revealed about the game. It noted that it will provide additional details about the mobile game at a later date. While nothing has been confirmed yet, one can speculate that the gameplay of the mobile version will not deviate too far from the one we see on PC and consoles. Just like what we saw with PUBG Mobile and Call of Duty: Mobile.

http://dgit.in/divmob



BATTLEGROUNDS MOBILE INDIA ANNOUNCED

Krafton Inc, the developers of PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds, aka PUBG has announced that PUBG Mobile India is no more. The game will now launch in the country as Battlegrounds Mobile India. The developers have already rebranded their official YouTube and Facebook pages and should update the official Twitter Page soon. The previous website of pubgmobile.in seems to have been taken offline as well, while battlegroundsmobileindia.com is now live. Interestingly, the developers seem to have purged all previous content from YouTube and Facebook, suggesting that this will be a completely fresh start from the game in India. The page only features one video right now, which shows the new logo.

http://dgit.in/bgmobind

LAUNCHES, DELAYS, GAMEPLAY

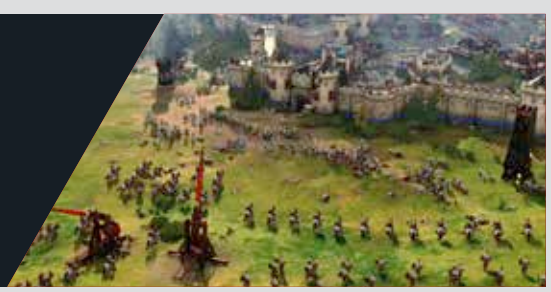
Deathloop – Delayed!

http://dgit.in/dld



Age of Empires 4 – Gameplay!

http://dgit.in/aoe4gp



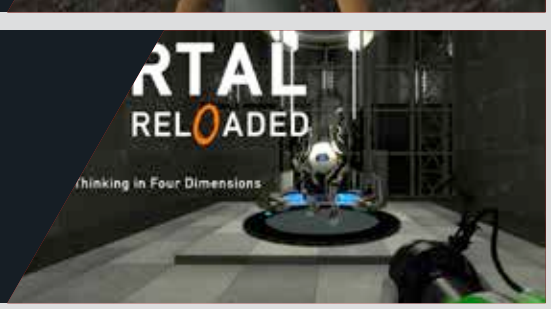
Play Tomb Raider on your browser!

http://dgit.in/openlara



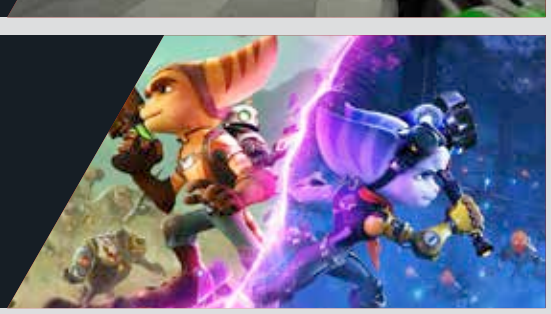
Portal Reloaded – Available now!

http://dgit.in/portrl



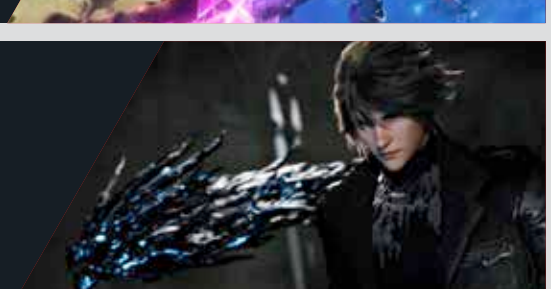
Ratchet & Clank: Rift Apart – Gameplay!

http://dgit.in/rncgp



Lost Soul Aside – Gameplay!

http://dgit.in/lsagp



UP AND COMING



HOOD: OUTLAWS & LEGENDS

Hood: Outlaws and Legends should already be out by the time you read this. This is a massively multiplayer action adventure RPG, with a lot of unique elements going for it. Let's see how they execute it.

Release date – May 10



MASS EFFECT LEGENDARY EDITION

The original Mass Effect trilogy from BioWare is beloved by all, and is arguably one of the best story-driven RPG franchises to date, assuming Andromeda never happened. The trilogy remaster drops this month.

Release date – May 14



BIOMUTANT

Biomutant is an upcoming high octane action adventure game with what looks like great combat with kung-fu elements as well. Paired with its unique character and world design this looks to be an interesting release.

Release date – May 25



A great rogue-lite game highlighting the features of the PS5



BY SAMEER "PSYCHOMANTIS" MITHA
FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Returnal is a rogue-lite game, meaning it has some of the elements of a roguelike game. Rogue-lites add some new features like carrying over abilities or making permanent changes to player abilities which will be carried forward with each run. If you love games like Hades or Control then you will definitely find appeal in what Returnal has to offer. For me, Returnal has been an adventure. I don't remember the last time I leapt off my seat to rejoice in a victorious boss battle or felt so immersed in a game thanks to the controller. Returnal is one of the first games to show us what the PS5 can do and it looks like it's just the tip of the iceberg.

STORY

The story of Returnal sounds straightforward when you start. But it's only when you progress far enough that the plot truly starts to unfold. You don the role of a Space Scout, Selene who has crash-landed on a hostile alien planet Atropos. You must explore the planet to "Locate the 'White Shadow' Broadcast. In the first minute of the game, you come across yourself lying dead on the ground and in the next 10 minutes you will face a foe who kills you in a matter of seconds and you awaken at the crash site once again. This live-die-repeat formula feels a lot like the movie Edge of Tomorrow.

Throughout your journey, you will find Scout Logs left behind by Selene probably from a previous run. It is these scout logs that not only give you a hint as to what's coming next but also highlight the mental state of the protagonist. Some of it feels contradictory to what the Selene you are playing feels and it is in these moments of Selene talking to herself that you understand some of the depth the story brings. For the first couple of hours, the story feels like a slow burn and that's ok as the game is helping you come to grips with its various mechanics and it's only once you've endured through the time loop a bunch of times that the story starts to unfold.

Once in a while, you will visit a house where the perspective changes to a first-person view and this is where you have some of the more intimate story moments.

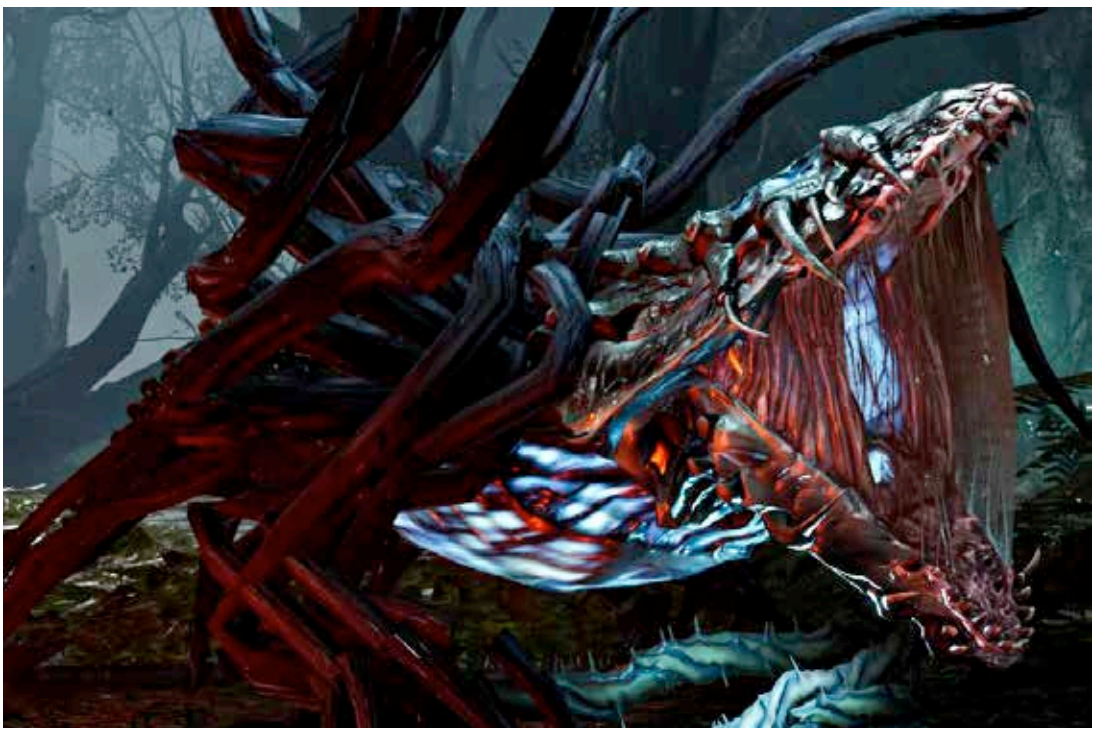
GAMEPLAY

Returnal is a third-person action game with a lot of frantic fast-paced gunplay, and before we get into the details of the gameplay, I'd like to highlight some of the features on the DualSense. Returnal really shows off the potential of the DualSense. From the opening cinematic where the ship is crashing, you can feel every rumble shift from one corner of the controller to the other. Even when you are in the first-person view and standing in the rain, you can feel the droplets fall on you thanks to the soft haptic feedback. Not to mention the different intensities you feel when jumping, dashing and taking damage.

The Adaptive Triggers on the DualSense feel like there is a new button on the controller. Half pull the L2 trigger to focus your aim and pull it completely to use the weapon's alt-fire. It's incredible how the halfway resistance is just tight enough for you to not pull it completely by accident in a heated battle.



If you have played Control, you will feel right at home with the action in Returnal. It is fast-paced with you dashing to avoid getting hit, using your melee weapon to attack at close range and more. You will acquire different abilities that you can use. Some are the standard health regeneration, while others let you disable turrets and some let you shoot projectiles from your suit every time you get shot. Even though there are a number of guns in the game you can only carry one at a time. You have the standard pistol, assault rifle, shotgun and even one



gun that shoots venom. Each weapon has its own alt-fire and these are not standard. So, each time you get a shotgun, for example, the alt-fire could be different. The alt-fire includes homing shots, sniper shots, blasts of energy, grenades and more. The weapons also come with different stats so you might want to choose one depending on your playstyle.

In addition to the weapons, there are Parasites that can be found throughout the game. These have both a positive and/or a negative effect. Some of them offer very useful abilities like regenerating health, the ability to use a key twice to open a door, reduce the cooldown time of your alt-fire and more. On the other hand, they could have negative effects as well like reducing your health every time you pick up an item,



increase the cooldown time of your alt-fire, reduce the melee damage effect and more. There are ways for you to remove a Parasite as well. Some of them will detach after their function is over while others will require you to kill a certain number of enemies or craft an item or open a locked gate, so on and so forth.

You also have Obolites that you collect when you kill enemies or find them lying around in the game. You can consider them to be the game's currency. Collecting Obolites lets you craft items like a health pack or interact with machines that increase your maximum health.

Developer Housemarque is known for frantic shooting in their games and Returnal is no different. Some of the combat encounters kept me on the edge of my seat.

Speaking of enemies, they are quite varied. You have the standard alien-like creatures that throw projectiles at you and get close for a melee attack. You have turrets. You also have flying enemies and enemies shaped like trees that shoot gunk on the ground that slows your movement. There are some larger flying enemies, a crab-like enemy with an indestructible shell and some larger enemies that remind me of the Marauder from Doom Eternal. There are some more enemies you encounter that I will not spoil here including the bosses in the game.



Speaking of the bosses once they are defeated, you don't have to face them again. In Hades, you had to face each boss again during each run. In Returnal, once the boss has been defeated, you don't need to encounter them again.

Returnal's rogue-lite structure ensures you don't face the same set of areas back-to-back in each run. These levels are procedurally generated until you need to hit a specific story beat in which case, you visit very specific areas.

Overall, the gameplay in Returnal is frantic, fun and most definitely enjoyable. However, I think the developers need to put in a little bit of effort to balance the loot on each run.



Some runs of mine were too easy as the loot I picked up gave me some truly invincible abilities. At other times I felt quite underpowered.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

Returnal runs in a dynamic 4K at 60FPS. Throughout my 20 odd hours with this game, I noticed the framerate dip twice. That's it. The game looks stunning with its dark and dingy forest to the vastly open red desert and other environments I would rather not spoil here. If you have a high-end TV with HDR then you will definitely enjoy this game. From the animation of creatures you encounter to the design of Selene herself, the game looks stunning.

The load times in the game deserve special attention too. When you die, the game plays out the opening crash animation but you can skip it. This means you can start the game after a death in a matter of seconds. Even when you fast travel, it takes no more than a few seconds.

Moving over to the sound, each gun in the game has its own unique thud and the screeching of the alien life forms can give you a chill. While the game shows off the 3D audio potential of the PS5 I found the surround sound experience to be good. While the background score in the game is sombre, it's the heat of the action and Selene's own audio logs that dominate the soundtrack and it suits the theme of the game perfectly. The action can get quite frantic, especially in the latter half of the



game and playing with a pair of head-phones, you can definitely identify the direction you are being attacked from, but I'm still waiting on some more "wow" 3D audio effects from PlayStation exclusives.

VERDICT

Like I said in the beginning, if you love games like Hades or Control then you will definitely enjoy what Housemarque has to offer with Returnal. Its rogue-lite formula mixed with an interesting Sci-fi story, and fast-paced combat will ensure you enjoy every time you live die repeat. If you love the rogue-lite formula then Returnal will keep you coming back for more. For the rest of you, who feel an asking price of ₹5,000 is high for the game, wait for a price drop before dipping your toes into a game that is extremely challenging but rewarding for those that endure. *

MOAR!

TESTED ON:
Tested on: PS5

DEVELOPER:
Housemarque

PUBLISHER:
Sony Interactive Entertainment

PLATFORMS:
PS5

PRICE:
₹4,999



A FUN LOOTER SHOOTER, ESPECIALLY FOR THE LONE WOLF

BY SAMEER "PSYCHOMANTIS" MITHA

FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Before we get into the details of Outriders, I must warn you that I am not a fan of the looter shooter genre. While I have enjoyed a few rounds of Destiny and The Division, these games have never immersed me for one single reason - if you don't have friends to play with, the game isn't fun. To my surprise, Outriders is a looter shooter that's a lot of fun when played alone and immense fun when played with friends. The

game has a good balance of combat, difficulty and some special abilities to spice up the gameplay.

STORY

Developer, People Can Fly, delivered a great tongue in cheek action flick story in Bulletstorm, but that isn't the case here. While there are moments of levity thrown into the mix, the story of Outriders is relatively serious. The earth is no longer inhabitable, and humanity is looking at the planet Enoch to rebuild civilisation.

As expected, things don't go according to plan. After a brief tutorial, you find yourself in cryosleep for 31 years. After awakening, you realise that not only are the humans fighting among themselves for resources, but there is a storm that transforms some people into the "Altered", giving them special abilities. Surprise, surprise, you are one of the Altered.



While it is difficult to take the overarching story seriously, the subplots and side missions intrigued me. There is one mission where you must investigate the mishaps in a mine only to find out that an ally is misusing the mine for his benefits. There is also one side mission where soldiers are vanishing and being forced into a cult. These subplots are exciting and have the potential to inject some humour into a story that tries to take itself too seriously.

GAMEPLAY

Outrider is a third-person cover-based shooter, but it encourages you to leave cover from time to time. It is a looter shooter best enjoyed with friends. However, you can enjoy the game alone. The game lets you choose from four classes - The Trickster, who can manipulate time and space; the Pyromancer, who can manipulate fire; the Devastator, who unleashes seismic attacks like an earthquake; and the Technomancer, who uses devices like turrets. I have been playing the game using the Pyromancer class.

On the DualSense controller, a player can equip three abilities at a time - one to each shoulder button, while the third ability is triggered by pressing both the shoulder buttons together. While the game offers cover-based shooting, it encourages you



to move around the battlefield and use your powers as often as possible. The cooldown for your capabilities is relatively quick, and you regenerate health when you use your abilities. There are no health packs to be found.

Each level is divided into areas where you take on a hoard of enemies, and each area has some strategic vantage point overlooking each cover space. The enemies thrown at you also vary. There are some who will run at you with melee weapons, other heavily armoured enemies with shotguns who will slowly come at you, some snipers, and a hoard of assault rifle-wielding

goons that will flank you from all possible angles. Needless to say, the action can get quite frantic.

Thanks to the mix of enemies, you cannot stay behind cover for too long, and that's the beauty and fun of Outriders. Shoot a few enemies, retreat to cover, flank an enemy, use some special abilities, move to the next cover spot; the action makes Gears of War feel like child's play. It's this frantic action that will keep you at the edge of your seat and is a lot more fun when playing online with friends.

The Pyromancer has many abilities such as setting enemies ablaze, absorbing enemy's health, freezing enemies in place using an 'Ash' ability, a blast that sets close-by enemies ablaze and more. The more you use your special abilities, the more chance you have of surviving an encounter.

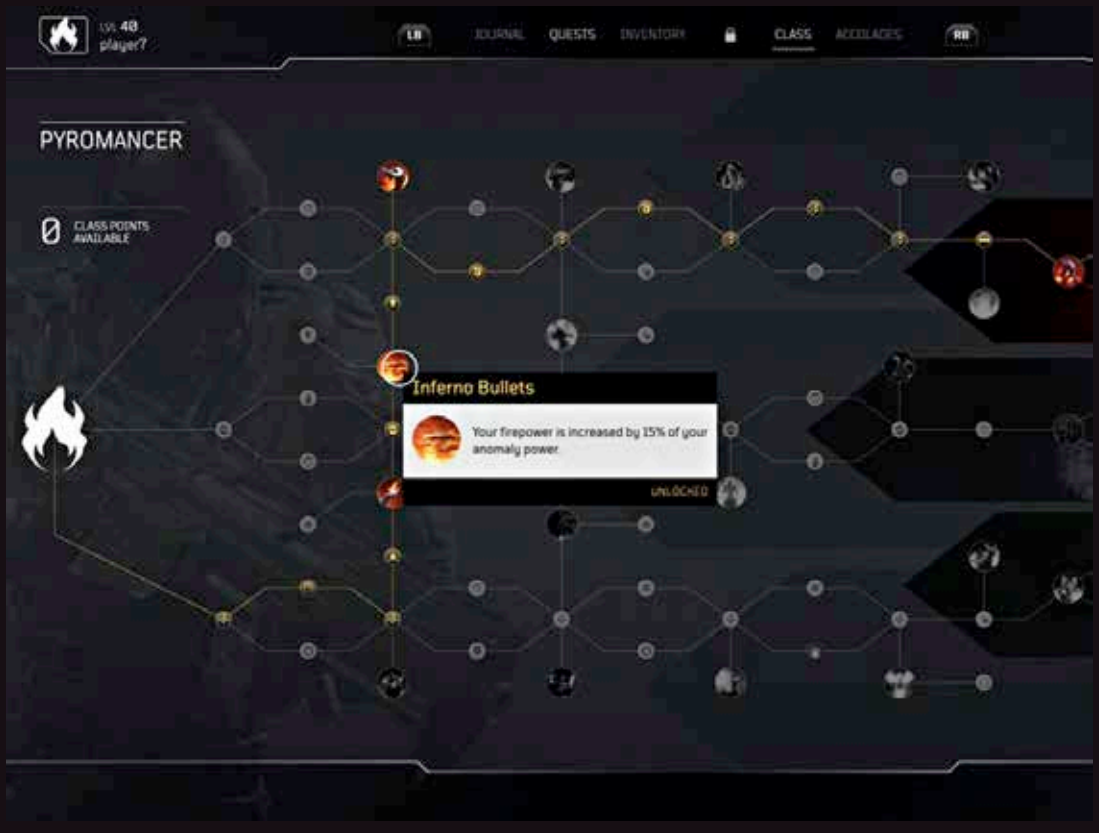


In addition to the diverse set of enemies, the game also throws some 'Altered' enemies at you with the same ability as you or one of the four classes mentioned above, adding a unique twist to the combat. You have a window of opportunity to stop them from making a special attack, and it's the fights with the altered enemies that serve as the heated boss battles in the game.

When it comes to weapons, you can carry two weapons with you in addition to a side-arm and, as with any looter shooter, can upgrade the stats of the weapons you collect. You can also

add some special buffs to the weapons giving you abilities like momentarily freezing an enemy in place, or setting them ablaze, or giving you some shield protection; the list is quite long. You can also customise the armour you collect and add these buffs to them as well.

As you progress through the game, you level up your character and increase the world tier. Think of the world tier as the difficulty of the game. The higher the world tier, the more challenging the enemies, the rarer the loot they drop. This encourages you to play at the highest world tier available. But if you feel a particular encounter is too tough for you, you can always reduce the world tier to reduce the difficulty and get past the challenge.



Overall, it's the gameplay more than anything else that kept me hooked and coming back for more. I am about 15 hours into the game, and the campaign's end is not yet in sight. I have, however, indulged myself in almost every side quest I have come across.

GRAPHICS

I played Outriders on a PS5, and the first thing to talk about is the load times. Once you've logged into the server, all loading happened in under 5 seconds which is excellent. While we are on the topic of servers, it was pretty tough to log in on the



launch weekend of the game, with the Outriders servers being down. However, since then, I have witnessed a handful of disconnections, and the game crashed on me just once. Why can't the game be played offline in single-player mode though?

Moving on, the game ran at 60 fps with some minor dips here and there. The game overall runs fluid, and 60 fps is much appreciated, especially during the frantic battles.



This comes at the cost of resolution, as you can make out some low-quality textures here and there. The characters' facial animation is nothing to write home about, but a lot of their armour and clothing look rich.

You can jump into the menu to take a close look at some of the guns, and their designs are unique.

Overall, Outriders is no Ghost of Tsushima. Still, you visit some rich, diverse environments, and the game delivers in the one space that matters - consistent frame rate during frantic battles.

SOUND

The voice acting is right out of a cheesy Hollywood flick and in line with what one would expect from the story. It's the sound effects of the explosions and guns that will hit your ears the most. In this respect, the sniper rifle has a nice loud thud to it, while the assault rifles have a consistent battering repetition one would expect. Even your unique altered abilities have good wiggle and swoop sounds when used. While the background score and voice acting aren't great, the game's overall sound design is sufficient to get you through the game. Besides, when playing with friends, you'll hear them screaming more than the sound of the game.



VERDICT

Outriders is a fun ride while it lasts. I wish I could test ride all the classes before settling on one, but that's one gripe in an otherwise fun game. Whether you are looking for a looter shooter solo experience or a night of social distancing gaming with friends online, Outriders has combat that's frantic enough to keep you at the edge of your seat, ensuring you feel like you achieved victory at the end of every battle rather than making you feel like it was delivered to you on a silver platter. Be it solo or with friends, that's the most important feeling. The story and music won't appeal to all, but you'll be hooked if you enjoy the gameplay. *

MOAR!

TESTED ON:
PS5

DEVELOPER:
People Can Fly

PUBLISHER:
Square Enix

PLATFORMS:
PS4, PS5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X/S, PC and Stadia.

PRICE:
₹3,999 for consoles, ₹2,999 for PC.



APEX LEGENDS MOBILE IS COMING

HERE'S WHAT WE WANT TO SEE IN THE GAME

BY KARTHIK IYER
FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Despite a list of problems, Apex Legends is one of the most popular battle royale games out there. Millions of active players enjoy this competitive battle royale with offbeat game modes and swanky cosmetics. The folks over at Respawn Entertainment have been trying to make it more accessible by bringing it to different platforms. Just a month after its release on Nintendo Switch, Apex Legends is now heading to mobile.

In a blog post, the devs announced Apex Legends Mobile. It's said to be a completely new version of the game designed specifically for mobile platforms. Much like the PC and the console version, Apex Legends on mobile will also be a competitive battle royale in which the players will be taking the role of specific characters with unique abilities.



The game will obviously have some compromises in terms of the experience to make it a better fit on small screens but we hope it will be more polished, unlike the Nintendo Switch version. Apex Legends Mobile won't have cross-play with the other versions of the game but you can expect Respawn to keep the game updated with rich content specific to this platform.

As staunch fans of Apex Legends, we are personally thrilled to see how the game performs on mobile. A part of us wants Respawn to cut the delay and release it already but we also don't want a lacklustre experience for a game that has the potential to be the next big thing in the battle royale scene here in India.

As much as we like the game and we trust Respawn to put in the best work, we do have a few things on our wishlist for the mobile version. So here are a few things we hope to see on Apex Legends Mobile when it comes out -



Controller Support

If you have played Apex Legends on PC or console, then you probably already know that it's an insanely fast-paced shooter that has a lot going on at any given time. Unlike Fortnite and PUBG, the players here will also have to think about their abilities and come up with counter plays each time while engaging in a fight to become the Apex Champions. Having controls for that will make the experience that much better.

Yes, touchscreen players might have a hard time competing against the controller, so perhaps a different playlist for them? We know this seems like a lot to ask from a new game but Apex Legends is not an ordinary game on any scale either.



High Refresh Rate support

60 fps is the sweet spot for most shooter games but we personally want Apex Legends Mobile to come with support for a higher refresh rate. We have plenty of phones on the market that supports a high refresh rate and Apex Legends seems like a game that can take advantage of all the raw power. Let's hope we get a game that can now be added to our benchmarking list for testing new devices.

Mobile Exclusive content

Apex Legends has been thriving on PC and consoles due to the abundance of content that's put out by the team. We get a new game mode every month in addition to plenty of other stuff like a new legend, map changes, etc. every season. Good or bad, Apex Legends feels like a completely new game





with each update and we hope Apex Legends Mobile will also get the same treatment. In fact, it would be awesome to have mobile exclusive content so that we can look forward to playing it on our phones as opposed to locking in on the PC.

Experimental Features

As ambitious as it sounds, Apex Legends Mobile can also be used as a testing ground for some new features like 'kill cam', spectator mode, and more. Apex Legends is still far from being a perfect title on PC and consoles and it lacks a lot of fan-favourite features which we think can be tested on the mobile version first. It will again make a noteworthy case for the mobile version of the game that we would want to play over the PC version to check out these new features.



There are a lot of things we want to see in Apex Legends Mobile but it's better to keep our expectations in check. It's a completely new version of the game built specifically for the mobile platform, so we can't expect it to be flawless and have it all at the launch. Let's wait for some more announcements from Respawn to see the kind of gameplay we can expect to see from the game when it comes out. In case you are interested, then you can pre-register for the beta on the Play Store right now. *

GAMES THAT MAKE YOU RAGEQUIT

THE NAME OF THE GAME IS PAIN



BY MANISH "TRIGGER-HAPPY" RAJESH
FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

I went on in my last editorial about how games being easy was not a bad thing. It meant more people getting into gaming; gaming as a whole becoming more accessible. However, we in no way want to take away from all the hard games out there. The rage inducing games that make you want to throw your controller at the screen and snap your keyboard in half. We don't think that these are the only hard games out there, but what we have here are some of the hardest games that gaming has ever seen. Note that we've gone for games that are both good and hard, not games that are infuriatingly hard due to bad design or bugs and glitches. Without further ado, here are games that will make you RAGEQUIT.

DARK SOULS

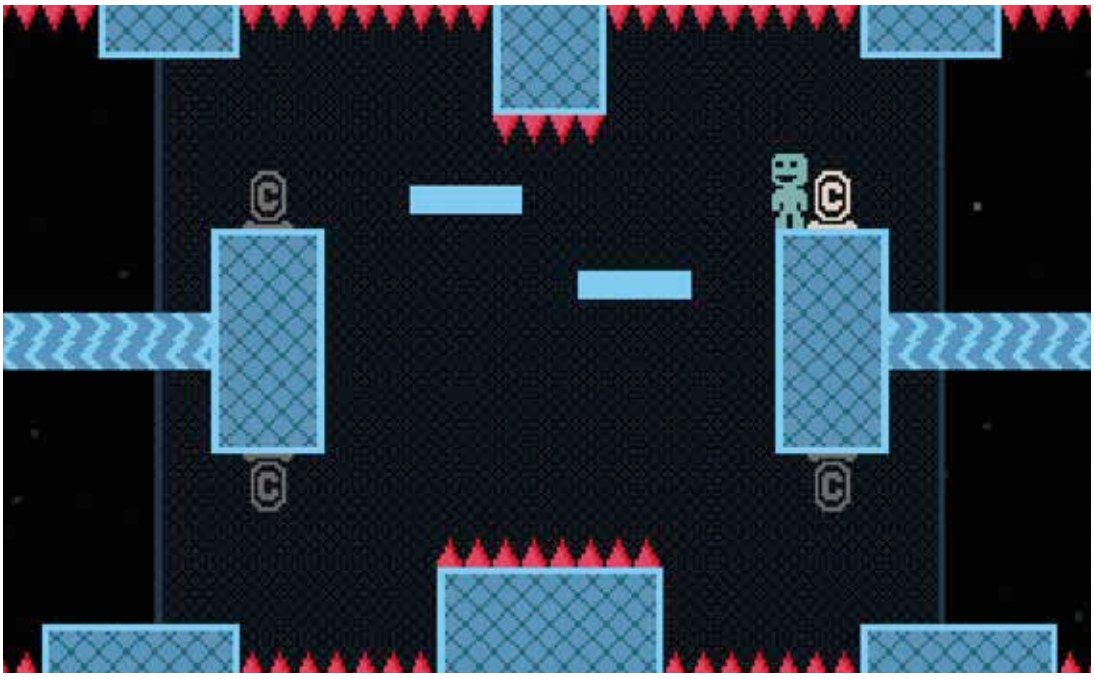
FromSoftware's Souls games are considered the standard or benchmark when it comes to games that are hard today. Sure, they're plenty difficult, but we can guarantee you that there are games in this here list that are much harder than any Souls-like game you've played. This includes games like Sekiro, Nioh, and even Bloodborne. Now, to be fair to the Souls series, they're a



very punishing series of games. You're constantly on your toes, there's a threat around every corner (there might not be, but you should just learn to assume so), and even the weakest of mobs can take you out if you're not careful. They're games that focus on skill and timing, and reward those who are patient and willing to read their opponents. Paired with some of the cleanest hitboxes we've seen in gaming, fantastic level design and boss fights, what we have here is something that's just short of unfair while still offering its own kind of masochistic fun.

VVVVVV

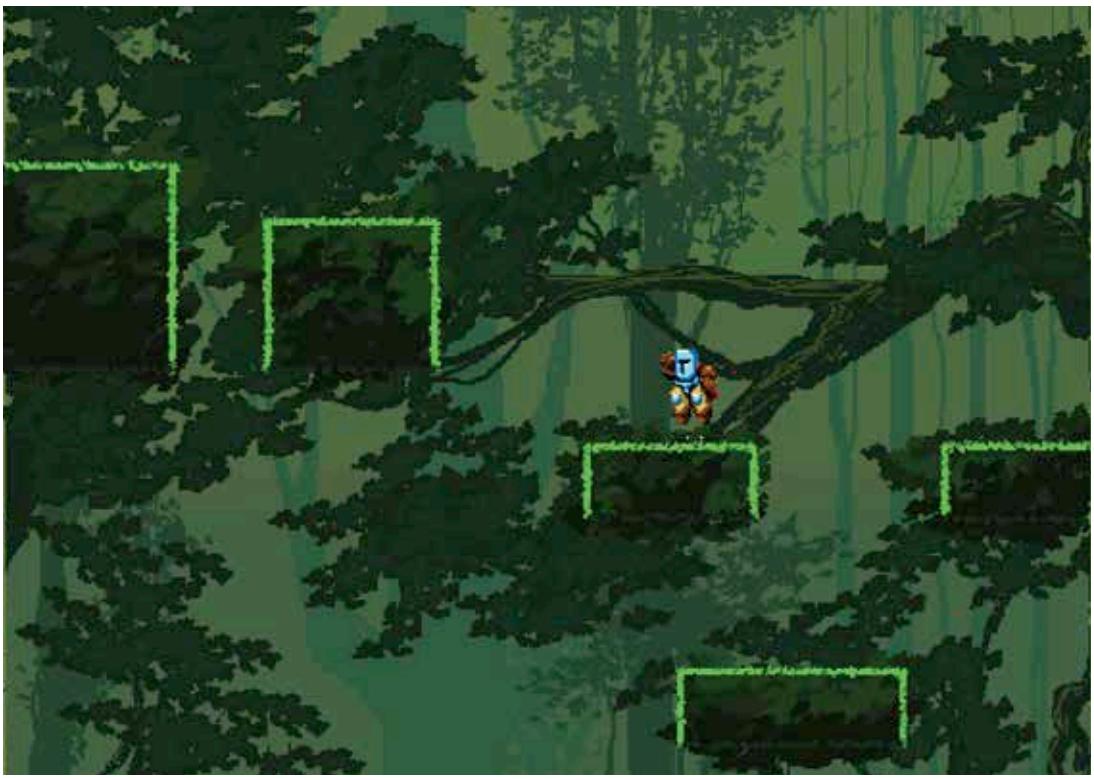
VVVVVV is a game where you take control of Captain Viridian and your job is to locate and recover your missing crew members. As with all games on this list, your journey ahead is wrought with dangerous obstacles, well, mainly spikes. A LOT of spikes. The reason VVVVVV is on this list is its gameplay



mechanic. There's no jumping, instead you flip the gravity, meaning pressing V will cause you to start "falling" upwards, and pressing V again will make you fall downwards again. This results in some infuriatingly mind-boggling levels that WILL see you die hundreds of times to see the end. A deserved spot on this list we say.

JUMP KING

With a simple story premise and simple to understand game mechanics, Jump King took Twitch by storm sometime ago, because despite its simplicity, it was deceptively difficult to



complete. All you needed to do was jump from one platform to another, slowly making your way to the top to save the "hot babe of legend". The jumps start off easy but eventually start becoming increasingly difficult with new obstacles showing up to make the jumping harder, be it slippery platforms or howling winds. Plus, you didn't know what was coming next as you got higher, meaning you might need to fall down after finding out what's above to make sure you land on the right platform next time. What's worse, one screw up and you might find yourself all the way at the bottom; and you see your face, heart, sanity, willpower and everything in between falling along with the character all the way to the bottom.

CELESTE

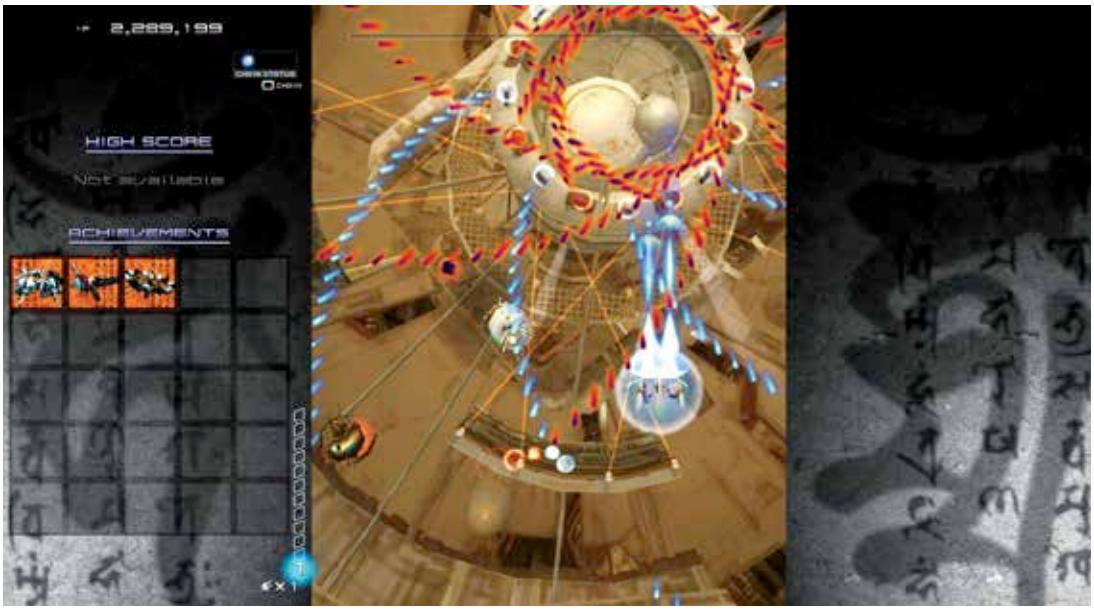
Celeste is a 2D puzzle platformer that requires precise and



controlled platforming. The game features some very tight controls and increasingly challenging levels. While the game is plenty challenging on its own, once you finish it, you'll unlock the B-side, which is even harder, after which you can unlock the C-side, which is harder still to the point of being impossible! The game requires you to pull off maneuvers with damn near perfection in order to progress, failing which will send you right back to the start of the puzzle for another round of executing the same move. It's an addictive and unforgiving cycle.

IKARUGA

Ikaruga is a fantastic arcade shooter. We're talking more like Galaga or Space Invaders here, and not an FPS. There are few games that truly define the bullet hell genre, and Ikaruga is one of them. In addition to being an extremely polished and well-made game, it's also devilishly difficult, all because of the flaw-



less implementation of one simple mechanic. Color switching. Enemy projectiles in the game are either black or white. Your ship's polarity can be switched between black and white, with black being able to absorb black projectiles and vice versa. The same mechanic works when dealing damage to enemies as well. Just the addition of one other thing to keep your mind on when the screen is swarming with bullets ups the challenge to a whole new level.

DEVIL MAY CRY 3: DANTE'S AWAKENING

The Devil May Cry franchise has always been known for being challenging from the get go, however when Devil May Cry 3: Dante's Awakening dropped, it was almost impossible to com-



plete without cheating or being a literal gamer god. It was so difficult in fact, that the game had to be re-released with the difficulty toned down. The normal difficulty was a hellish ordeal, and the game quickly garnered a reputation for being one of the most difficult games you could get your hands on. Enemies took forever to die, and you had to be perfect in your combat execution; even a small misstep would mean a do-over.

NINJA GAIDEN

Ninja Gaiden is one of those games that's infamous for being difficult twice over. Let us explain. The game was first released as an 8-bit, 2D side-scroller for the NES in 1988. It was painfully difficult then, with all the checkmarks to make the game as much of a pain for players as possible. Difficult platforming sections, wave after wave of enemies, complex and difficult boss fights. You'd think that would make anyone hate the game,



but it was so good you kept playing anyway (and hating ourselves for it), because we're all masochists that way. But if that wasn't enough, Ninja Gaiden was remade and re-released in 2004 for the PS2 and Xbox, this time with a spankin' new 3D makeover, and a whole new world of pain. Enemies in the game were incredibly fast, and the bosses (if you ever reached them) required superhuman reflexes. As it turns out, you needed actual ninja-like reflexes to beat even the first level. This version of Ninja Gaiden was re-released with an easier 'Ninja Dog' mode so that people could actually make it past level 1.

CONTRA

This is a game that needs no introduction; everyone knows the Konami code by heart at this point, even if they don't remember the game it was used in. Contra is a 2D side scroller with some platforming elements, plenty of power pickups and wave



after wave of enemies being thrown at you. The boss fights are incredibly hard, and each one forces you to employ new tactics. The most unforgiving part about the whole thing was that you only needed to get hit once to die and you only had a total of three lives. Of course, inputting the Konami code gave you 30 lives, but for some boss fights, even that wasn't enough unless you knew exactly what you're doing.

SUPER MEAT BOY

Indie darling Super Meat Boy is credited with being one of the games that put the spotlight on indie games. This was an unforgiving twitch platformer; it had none of the frills or features that normally come with 2D side-scrolling platformers, it was all just pure skill combined with extremely tight and responsive controls. You go into this game expecting to die, a



lot. And you'll look damn cool doing it as you keep going splat on every other sharp and pointy surface the game throws at you. Every level will put your skills (and your sanity) to the test. Despite its difficulty, Super Meat Boy is so addictive you can't decide whether to hold on to the controller for just one more try or throw it at the screen.

MIKE TYSON'S PUNCH-OUT!!

The NES classic, Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!! is one of those games that makes its way onto every one of these 'most diffi-



cult games ever' lists. And it does so for the exact same reason, or should we say, exact same level, every time. The final fight against Iron Mike himself. Punch-Out!! has incredibly simple mechanics, when it comes down to it, it's all about timing and reading the opponents moves. With Iron Mike, the difficulty spike blindsides you with a surprise right hook from outta nowhere. Even knowing exactly how to deal with him isn't enough, because pulling it off is no easy feat.

SUPER MARIO MAKER 2

Super Mario Maker 2 is unique because the game consists of player-made levels. The game is notorious for having some



incredibly difficult levels, levels which at a glance would seem impossible to complete. Here's the thing though, in order to publish a level, the creator has to have successfully completed the level themselves. So you know for a fact that the devilishly difficult level you're failing to complete for the umteenth time can indeed be finished successfully. Then you see some random guy on YouTube just breeze through the level in no time and set all kinds of records. *sigh*

GETTING OVER IT WITH BENNETT FODDY

Just the name Getting Over It implies that you're probably not going to be getting over anything anytime soon. Which is exact-



ly what happens in Getting Over It with Bennett Foddy. In addition to being infuriatingly difficult thanks to the way the controls work, we've got Bennett Foddy in the background dropping words of wisdom on us, which for some reason only infuriates us more and causes us to fudge up more. The most annoying part about the game is how screwing up the further you progress ends up sending you farther behind, closer to the beginning, forcing you to go through everything all over again.

F-ZERO GX

F-Zero GX for the GameCube has a reputation for being one of the hardest racing games to ever see the light of day. This was a game that required you to memorise the racecourse in order to successfully finish the race without getting rekt. If your goal was actually winning the race, well, you're going to need to put in the hours to master said race course and commit every twist and turn to memory. The game's story mode was notoriously



unforgiving with plenty of difficulty spikes, with most players failing to progress beyond even the second race in the story.

GHOST 'N GOBLINS

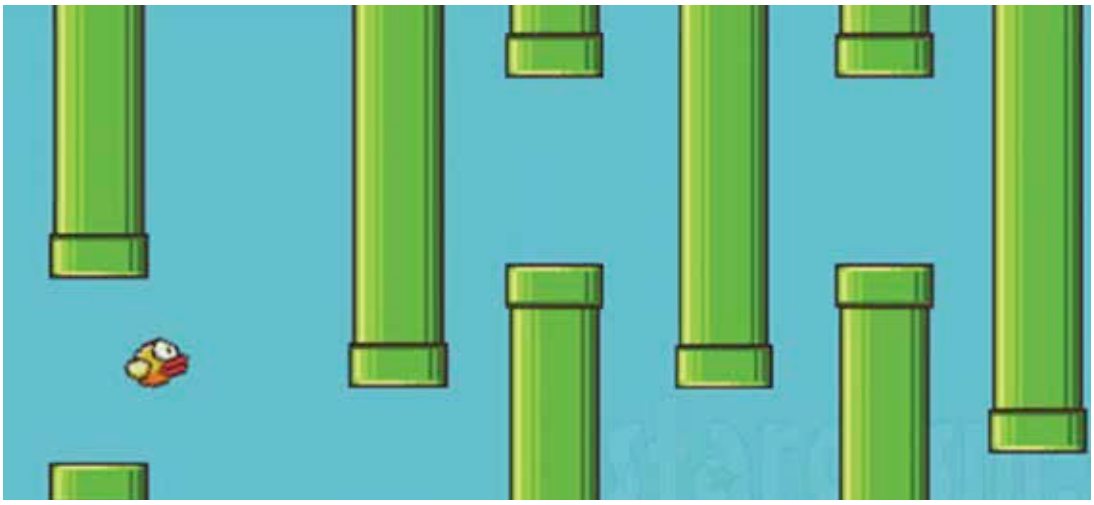
1985's Ghosts 'N Goblins was one of those games that threw the worst kind of curveball at you. Why the worst? Well, in addition to being an extremely hard 2D side scroller that also attacks you psychologically with its tricks and taunts, it makes you do it all over again in what can only be called the worst kind



of "Your princess is in another castle". That's right, once you actually managed to struggle and beat the game, you would find out that you need to beat the game all over again to unlock the real ending. What's more, it's even harder the second time around! Like everything on this list, all it took was one misstep for your very fragile character to hit the dirt.

FLAPPY BIRD

Not too many people have fond memories of Flappy Bird, especially the developer we're guessing. The dev was upset



enough to actually pull the game from both Google and Apple's app stores. All of this doesn't change the fact that it was an extremely addictive game. It was incredibly simple, and the only controls you needed to worry about was tapping; navigate your flappy bird through the sky without hitting any of the pipes. Simple enough, right? Wrong! Timing was essential, and being off by even a fraction of a second meant flying right into a pipe and starting all over again. Just thinking about it makes us want to throw our phones, even though they're completely innocent.

BATTLETOADS

1991's Battletoads is an easy contender for the hardest game of all time. Makes sense; every single level in this god forsaken game was a new challenge for you to pull your hair out over.



The game spanned across multiple genres, meaning the methods of torture were constantly kept fresh so you never got a moment's rest. One single misstep and it's game over, now while that's true for most games on this list, for some reason this one just hit differently. If you're one of the few who have actually completed the game, congrats. We hate you. :) *

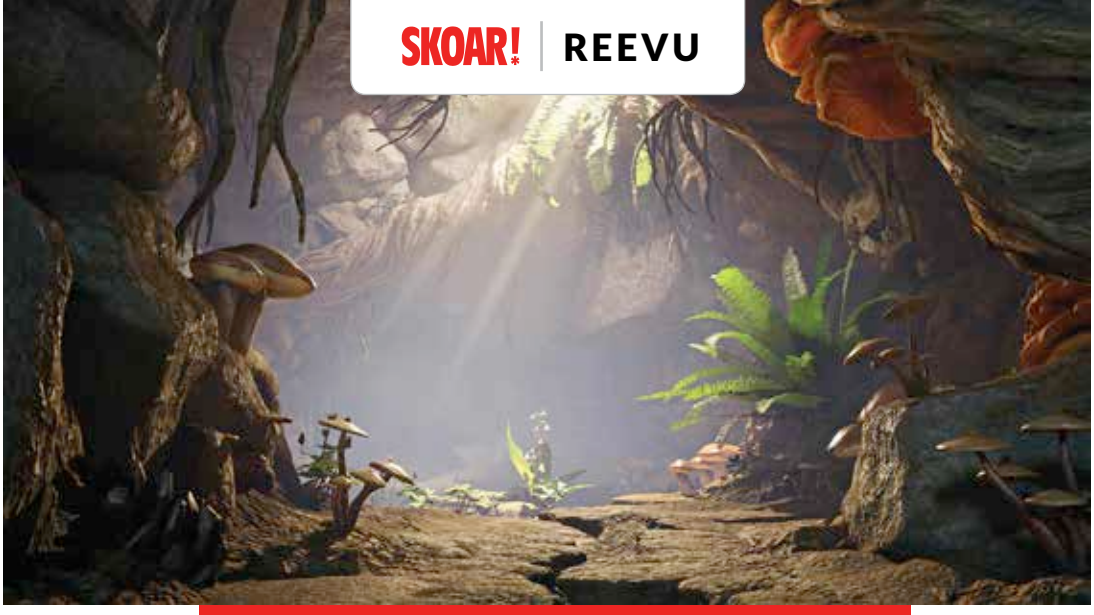


A two-player 3D platformer like no other

BY MANISH "TRIGGER-HAPPY" RAJESH

FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Hazelight Studios' It Takes Two is a wonderful co-op game, dare we say, one of the best we've had the joy of playing in recent times. This is a two-player co-op game that well, needs a pair to be played. There's no way around that, because it takes two to play this game. Don't say you weren't warned, it's in the name! If you can get over the hurdle of finding a buddy to play with, definitely give this a whirl. To find out exactly why you should give this a whirl, read on!





STORY

To be honest, the story didn't resonate too much with us. Not to say the story is bad or anything like that. Anywho, in the game, players take control of either Cody or May. The two have a daughter named Rose, and from the moment you start the game, it becomes evident that Cody and May don't get along. It doesn't come as a surprise when we find out they're getting a divorce. When they break the news to Rose, she runs off to a 'book of love' she purchased online and wishes that they wouldn't separate and become close again. The Book of Love, written by one Dr. Hakim, must have been magic or something because the next thing you know, Cody and May have been transformed into little toy doll versions of themselves. These happen to be the very same dolls that their daughter made of them. The book itself is also alive now – seemingly possessed by Dr. Hakim – and is basically reciting notes from itself in order to "fix" their relationship. To return themselves back to normal and see their daughter again, Cody and May are going to have to work together. Of course, Dr. Hakim is trying his best to put as many obstacles in their way for them to "overcome".





We see how this could be a charming and heartfelt story, but like we said earlier, it didn't quite resonate with us. However, whatever you feel about the story, what you can't deny is the game's excellent co-op gameplay.

GAMEPLAY

We haven't had this much fun playing two player co-op since Portal 2. Dare we say, it might even be more fun than that. It Takes Two is packed to the brim with all kinds of content for co-op gameplay, from mini-games, to puzzles, to platforming sections and even crazy fun boss fights, just to name a few things off of the top of our heads. All of these aspects need coordination in order to succeed, there's no way forward without it. Communication with your partner is key, otherwise this is going to be one tough – and loong – ride.

There's so much variety between the different worlds, there's never a dull moment. Each new world you're introduced to has a new gameplay mechanic that's relevant to that area. For instance, in one of the earlier levels of the game, you're introduced to a fan mechanic. These either blow or suck you in,





and you have to coordinate with each other to switch them around in order to progress. You're then required to use that same mechanic in various creative ways throughout that world; at no point does it ever start to feel repetitive. There are various parts of It Takes Two which are competitive as well; a little friendly competition between you and your partner. It's a nice break from the focus and co-ordination that's otherwise required to progress through the game.

The controls for It Takes Two are a tried and tested formula. Spacebar for jump, twice for double jump. Shift to dash, E to interact with objects and caps lock to toggle sprint. The game also offers local co-op if you've got a controller hooked up to your PC. Thankfully, you only need to have purchased one copy in order to play with a friend online thanks to the Friend Pass Initiative. All your partner needs to do is download the game via the Friend Pass, and you can invite them to play the whole game with you.

GRAPHICS AND AUDIO

It Takes Two features graphics that are very similar to the





Disney movie Coraline, if you're familiar with that. Cody and May look like clay-mation, if it were happening real smooth and at 60fps. The environments are teeming with life if you stop to notice, there's some serious attention to detail here, and you'd be surprised how much of it you can interact with that isn't relevant to actually progressing through the level. So take your time.

Music is fitting, the voice acting is great. It can get a bit repetitive sometimes as you use the same mechanic, but that really didn't bother us too much because we were so busy actually enjoying the game.

VERDICT

It Takes Two is easily one of the best co-op experiences you can get your hands on right now. Plus it's one of the few that are story-driven as well. Like we mentioned above, the story may not have resonated with us, but it's still a good story nevertheless. This is easily one for the co-op hall of fame; find a friend and play it now! *

MOAR!

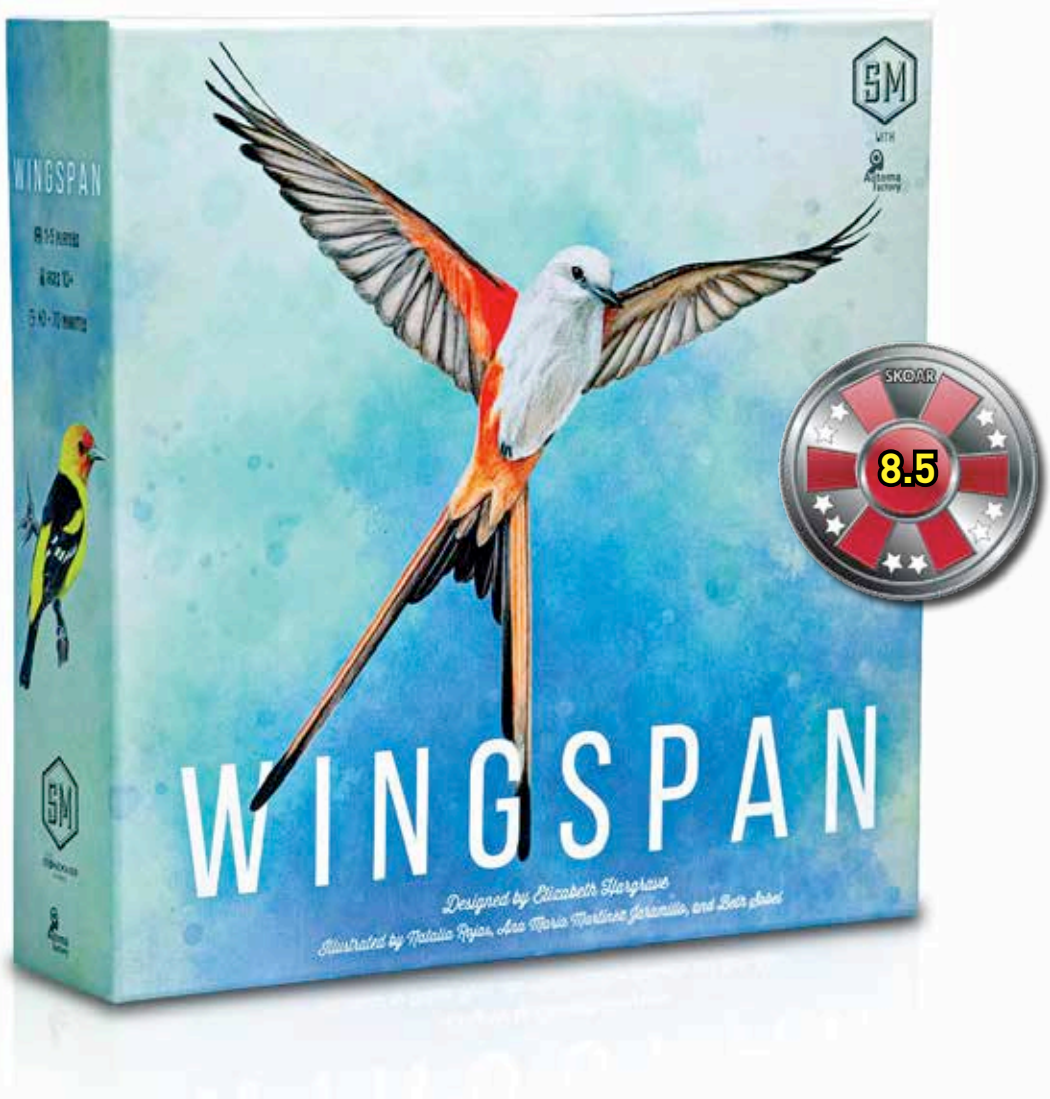
DEVELOPER:
Hazelight Studios

PUBLISHER:
Electronic Arts

PLATFORMS:
PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X and Series S, Microsoft Windows

PLAYED ON:
Microsoft Windows (Origin)

PRICE:
INR 2,499



MAKE THE BIRDS WORK FOR YOU!

BY ADITYA "SPARKLINGPWNIE" MADANAPALLE
FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

This is the board game that won the Kennerspiel des Jahres in 2019, the top award for board games and translates to "connoisseur/expert game of the year". In a market saturated with games about European expansionism (Azul, Carcassonne, Puerto Rico, 7 Wonders, Catan), this is a decidedly woke game about nature and the environment. The gameplay involves building up an ecosystem by crafting chain reactions, or cascades. You get to draft and use a beautiful deck of birds, and you get to learn about their habitats, the food they eat, the type of nests they lay, how many eggs they lay in each nest, and of course, their wingspans. All of these





combined with their special powers, all help build up your eco-system, or "engine". In September 2020, Wingspan released a version on Steam. The birds on the cards are animated, has recordings of the calls of the actual birds, and when you pick a bird a "fun fact" about the bird is read out, typically something that makes the creature unique or interesting.

GAMEPLAY

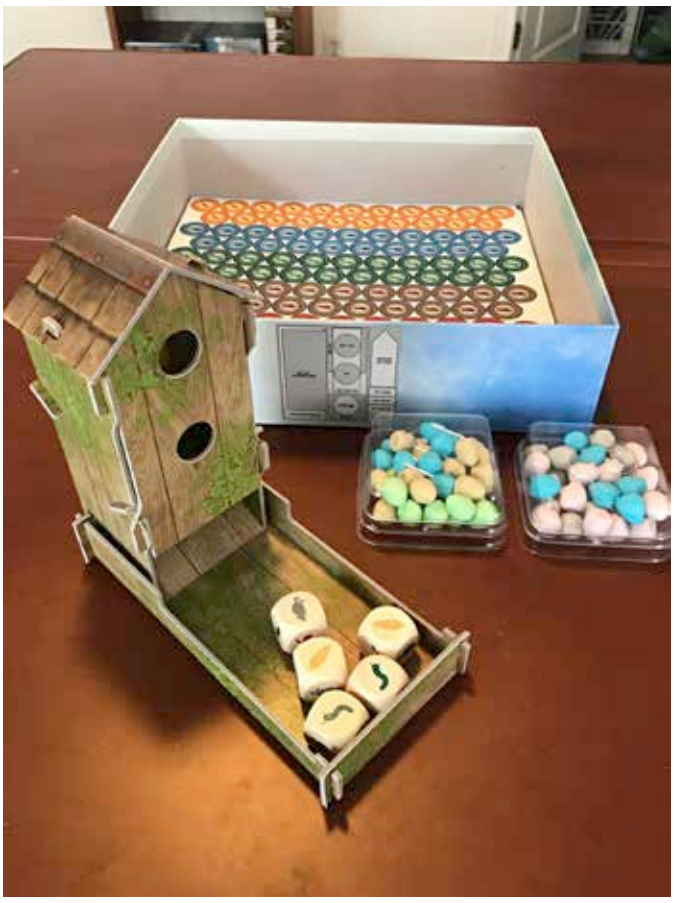
You have to draft birds first. Normally you get a selection of birds to start with, and you need to consider a few things. The most important thing are the powers or abilities of the birds. There are many kinds of powers, most work at that turn, some





allow you to tuck cards or stack food providing extra points, some work between turns, and some may benefit others as well, so be careful of the cards that you pick! The really great thing here is that the birds you pick and the way you build your engine affects the other engines and the birds they play. It is not so much competition as it is cooperation here though, so apart from the birds with the pink cards you can safely keep your nose in your own board and not worry about what others are doing so much, except to just compare the number of birds in play.

Next, it is necessary to look at the type of food that has fallen in the food tray, you need to pick them up and spend them to place the birds. You have to spend the food tokens to get the bird cards, so be sure that the cards picked can be purchased with the food tokens kept. You can spend corn to draft a bird that needs a worm, but you need to spend the worm to



put the bird into play. Keep an eye out on the round goal, which may be birds with a particular type of nest, or birds in a particular habitat. After drafting the birds, you get a goal card, which is your own personal bonus that applies for the entire duration of the game. You need to focus on round goals, personal goals, and gaining the most points during every turn. While you are unlikely to run out of eggs, it is good to keep a look out for at least one of those cards with five or seven eggs that give you "egg security", and not have to worry about running out of birds that can lay eggs. It is necessary for example, to make sure that the first bird you pick can lay two eggs, because that is the number you can lay if you activate the ground habitat without any cards in it.

The game consists of 4 rounds with eight turns each. At each turn, you can activate one of the three habitats for an action associated with that habitat, for example draft a card in the water habitat, lay eggs in the ground habitat, or forage food in the forest habitat. Alternatively, you can put a card into play into any of the habitats. The more cards you have in play at a habitat, the more benefits you get for the action associated with that habitat, for example, you can get more food, lay more eggs, or draft more birds. The more birds you put in play, the more points you get. To place birds, you need to lay eggs on birds, some birds can lay only one or two eggs,







but a few can hold larger clutches. The cycle is essentially draft birds, gather food, play birds, lay eggs and repeat.

The main thing here is the turn order and managing the resources. Note that every time you choose a particular turn, all the powers of all the birds in that habitat are triggered in sequence. There are a lot of birds with a lot of powers, and it is hard to keep track of what other players are doing and anticipate their next moves. The wide variety of the powers in play means that players can capitalise on an opportunity and entirely change the course of their game. In fact, it is all about letting the ecosystem evolve, adapting and taking advantage of whatever conditions present themselves, and making each action increasingly powerful by triggering chain reactions in the powers of the birds.





VERDICT

The board game is one of the best there is, and we would really like to see more engine building titles with deep strategy in the market. Like most of the modern games, it does have a lot of components to keep track of, and stacking unlimited food tokens as well as tucking of cards can make the board a bit messy towards the end of the game. This is not a party game, but accommodates up to five players which is at the right sweet spot. Unlike many other titles, the game is as fun with two to five people, with the experience or type of game not changing much. That is you do not need a different strategy for three player games and five player games, like you do in 7 Wonders or Puerto Rico. This is a highly recommended title for your shelf, if nothing else then just for the beautiful deck of hand drawn birds. There seems to be a series of expansions planned, perhaps focusing on the birds from each continent. The Euro-

pean and Oceania expansions are already out. Ignoring all thematic aspects about environmentalism and how cool the birds are, this is just a really fun and nail biting game to play, and you end up getting the birds to work for you, so you end up feeling like the bourgeoisie.

The Steam version is just a spectacular engine building strategy game on its own, perfectly playable even if you are not that much interested in board games. It is a relaxing experience, with calming gentle music, and you are practically ushered through all the steps through clear on-screen instructions. It is like an interactive slideshow where you participate by choosing the birds that you want to build into your ecosystem, making it increasingly powerful. The bird calls and the fun facts really add to the experience, and so do the charming animations on the birds. This is one of those cases where 2D animations with stretching, pulling and deforming is really well done, because the form factor of birds lends itself to that kind of animation. There is an AI that lets you play with as many AI players as you need, with plenty of options for fine tuning how difficult they each are. There is also Automa, a virtual electromechanical bird powered by meatspace silicon, that is just a tiny little spitfire, matching you move for move and keeping you on your toes throughout the game, no matter what your skill level is. The game is popular enough to have steady matchmaking, and there is a helpful and kind community over at Discord as well, with a focus on getting people together for games. The Steam version is also highly recommended, and we'd just say get both. *

MOAR!

PLAYERS:
2-5 players

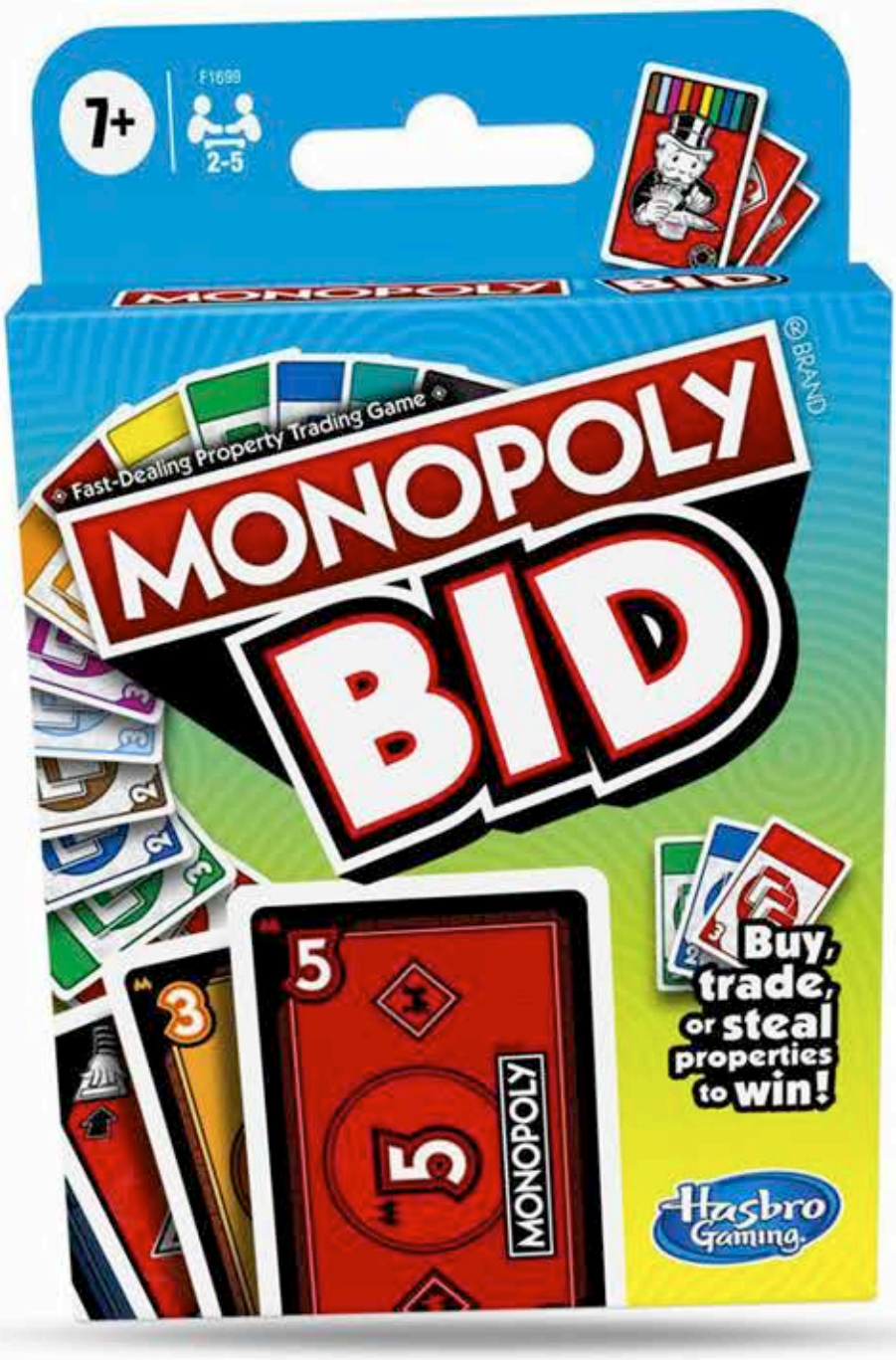
AGE GROUP:
10+

PUBLISHER:
Stonemaier Games

PLAYING TIME:
30-90 mins

BOARD GAME PRICE:
5,599

STEAM PRICE:
529



MONOPOLY BID

FAST AND SIMPLE FUN

BY ADITYA “SPARKLINGPWNIE” MADANAPALLE

FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN



Monopoly Bid is yet another card game interpretation of Monopoly, but is a different game from Monopoly deal. Each of the players have to use the cards in their hand to bid for property cards, in an effort to collect three sets of property cards. In each round, players have to make the choice of using up too much money for a particular card, or saving up for better opportunities further down the pile. An auctioning title with Monopoly seems like a natural fit, so let us take a look at how it plays.





MOAR!

PLAYERS
2-5

AGE GROUP
7 and up

PUBLISHER
Hasbro

PLAYING TIME
15-45 minutes

PRICE
₹299

SETUP AND GAMEPLAY

The cards with the red back are money or action cards, while the cards with the blue backs are property cards. In the box, there are three times as many red cards as blue cards, so the property cards are stacked together with the red cards. The setup and gameplay is pretty straightforward. The property cards form one auction pile, the action and money cards together form another draw pile, and the third is a discard pile. All players are given five red cards each, and the game begins. In each round, all players draw a card from the red pile, play as many action cards as they want, and once everyone is done, the top card from the blue pile is auctioned. Players secretly bid for the card. The players are supposed to get all excited and countdown to each bid, but who are we kidding, that ain't happening. People are gonna try and slip in cards till its time to show your bids. The bids are revealed once

everyone has placed their money, and the top bidder gets the card, discarding the money, while the rest get to keep their money for the next auction

The first player to collect three sets of properties wins. Just like Monopoly Deal, there are larger and smaller property sets, and the entire value of the property is derived from what people are willing to spend for it. There is no penalty for accumulating too many cards. The action cards are Nope! for denying another player an action, stealing any single property, the wild card itself that can be placed into any property set, and draw 2, which allows you to pick up two cards in exchange for the action card that you just played. Now the thing is that the wild card cannot be moved around between incomplete sets, like it is possible in Monopoly Deal, but it is totally possible to steal an action card, so if you have a steal in hand, as well as a block, it is possible to let your wild card be stolen just so you can finish another set and win the game. This title is very easy to understand, and the rules are much simpler than Monopoly Deal.



VERDICT

This is another winner! If it has a problem, then it is that the game is really simple, but the title makes up for it by being really fun. The property cards have been reduced to just colours and number of cards in a set, which is indicated by an icon. There are no names for the properties, which is one of the main things about the Monopoly experience, but just like other Monopoly titles geared towards a particular experience, such as Monopoly Speed, the game sheds all the non essentials. The auction takes place in a single round, and there are no bidding wars, so this is not really a game that is fun because of the process auctioning, such as High Society.

The main thing is that the rules are really simple, and even total newbs can just get going in a new game without the rules



having to be explained. Each game is short, people can leave and join any time (even in the middle of the game, not a problem), people can team up to play together, and decks can be clubbed together to accommodate larger parties. The game is as much fun to play between two people as well. It is not too differentiated from the Monopoly Deal experience, and people might prefer more challenging games. However, this is just the perfect game to wind up or wind down a gaming session, or for those wanting to try out something new. The game is flexible enough to accomodate house rules, just like Uno or Monopoly Deal, so there is a lot of replayability value. *

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MONOPOLY DEAL HINDI

JUST SAY YES

BY ADITYA "SPARKLINGPWNIE" MADANAPALLE

FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Monopoly Deal is the card game version of Monopoly, where players have to collect properties in the same colour by spending money and using action cards. It is easy to play, any number of people can play the game by just adding two decks together, each round lasts about fifteen to twenty minutes, and it is getting increasingly popular. There are already many variants of Monopoly Deal, including the American Edition, the Millionaire Edition and the India Edition. In the original, there are city cards, money cards and action cards, in two decks in a set. There are also rule cards that give players instructions on how to play the game. In the





MOAR!

PLAYERS
2-5

AGE GROUP
8 and up

PUBLISHER
Hasbro

PLAYING TIME
15-45 minutes

PRICE
₹299

original, the cities used are the international cities in the original base Monopoly board game, and all the information on the cards are in English. Now Hasbro has come out with a Hindi version of the title, that allows a lot of native language speakers to enjoy this card game. The title was released as a response to the Prime Minister's call to the toys and games industry of producing more games locally. Monopoly Deal Hindi is just the latest of a large number of indigenised and locally produced titles by Hasbro, and is not even the first indigenised version of Monopoly Deal, which was Monopoly Deal India, a version of the Monopoly Deal game with Indian cities. Monopoly Deal India definitely improves the experience and makes playing Monopoly Deal more fun, because each of the cities are familiar, and people may have reasons to like or dislike par-

ticular cities beyond the cold logic of the game. Let us see if Monopoly Deal Hindi improves that experience further.

SETUP AND GAMEPLAY

The setup is pretty simple, and just involves dealing seven cards to each of the players. On their turn, players have to place their money cards or property cards in neat tiles in front of them. The cards in the pile are "drafted" while the cards in hand are hidden from other players. Cash owed on action cards or during a turn is played either through the money, or through the cash cards. The game is all about keeping your cards close to your chest, building up those same colour sets, and at the same time making sure that you have enough liquidity to pay off the cash owed for rents and birthday parties. Just like many auctioning titles, players get no change for their transactions, so it pays to collect those small value currency cards. Now Monopoly Deal makes for a far more fun and lively experience than Monopoly, allows any number of players to participate, and does not have a long and drawn out phase towards the end. Its a frenetic race to build a complete property, and once players have a basic understanding of the game, it is possible to come up with house rules for additional variety, for example the winning condition being an increased number of sets, at least one set without a wild card, or having a certain amount of money in addition to a completed set. At a very fundamental level, without the indigenisation, this is a really good title.

VERDICT

Monopoly Deal Hindi uses the same card size as the original Monopoly Deal (but not the Monopoly Deal India Edition,







which has bigger cards).The sets are theoretically compatible, which means you can shuffle up two decks together and play for six or seven people, but there is some conflict in the colours of the cities. Monopoly Deal Hindi uses a different colour palette for the cities, and this might be frustrating for matching with the wild cards, which is already problematic for this game anyway, especially under dim lighting conditions. The cities used on the cards are Indian, just like Monopoly Deal India, but the specific cards and their colours are different. For example, Shimla is light blue in the Hindi edition but orange in the India edition. As such we would not recommend mixing this deck with the other Monopoly Deal titles.

As far as the indigenisation is concerned, the language used is only half hindi with the remaining being english words transliterated into hindi, so an action card or a house are called the same things, and not karyapatta or ghar. On the other hand, the rent card is called the kiraya card, so still, these make it easy for anyone who can read the script to get familiar with the terminology of the game, which is very much a part of the Monopoly Deal experience. The action cards in particular bring in an entirely new experience, one that is unique to India, and allows local players to use common phrases as part of the game. So the “Just say no”, “Double the Rent” and “It’s your birthday!” all have catchy local phrases that are fun to say out loud like “bas mana kare”.

The numerals used are Roman and not Devanagari, but this again should not be too much of a problem. The main thing is that all the rules on the cards are easy to understand, the instructions are clear, and any party can get going with just what is in the box without having to look up a YouTube video on how to play. If you are looking out for a card game to play in Hindi, then this is an easy recommendation. *

mobile madness

YOU HAVE TO TRY THESE GAMES OUT ON YOUR SMARTPHONE!

BY TEAM SKOAR!

Cookie Run: Kingdom



Cookie Run: Kingdom is the next title from the creators of Cookie Run: OverBreak, featuring the same cute baked creatures. This time around it's cookies vs cake, and we're team cookie.

Like the name suggests, you've got to build up your kingdom, not an unfamiliar concept when it comes to mobile games. There are two aspects to Cookie Run: Kingdom's gameplay, the base building, and the battles. Collect resources, create more buildings, and assign the roles to the stray cookies lying around. There's quite a bit of content to explore here.



The fighting itself is also pretty standard, you've got a squad that you can level up and upgrade and there's even equipment which you need to improve. Different cookies have different powers and you need to figure out when best to use them. Of course, there's also the good old 'auto' button if you don't really want to do anything. However, there are moments where the game prompts you to take action, encouraging you to pay attention to what's happening. There's a lot happening in the game, too much even at times, making it difficult to keep track of everything. The game's graphics are great, its got bright and vibrant 2D graphics with cute animations and plenty of cutscenes to compliment the game's backstory. Overall, a fun base builder with MMO elements and combat that's a great time sink.

Slashy Camp



Slashy Camp is an endless runner where you control a psychopath, inspired by one of several slasher horror movies. The controls are easy; simply swipe to move on an endless grid, hacking up all the victims that come along the way. Swiping into a helpless victim dispatches them, however, there are other ways to do so. Simply moving up next them scares them off. You can use this to scare them into traps, like fire, spikes or water. This will net you more points, but be warned you can die to these traps as well. You'll often come across weapons on the grid as well, picking these up will prompt a mini-game on your next kill, which will net you a lot more points. The longer you go on without dying, the more xp you'll get when you do die. This can be used to unlock new weapons and psychopaths. Thanks to the periodically generated nature of the game, no two runs are the same, but the game can get incredibly repetitive after a while of playing it.



Boom karts



The latest game from developer Fingersoft is a multiplayer PVP karting game, Boom Karts. Each of the karts in Boom Karts have different abilities or gadgets, to help your chances of winning. As you progress through the game, you can unlock and upgrade your kart's components. The game has an easy enough learning curve, and has surprisingly tight controls. While the basic skills required are easy, the game forces you to learn new skills and develop new play styles to excel. This makes every race more unique, as opposed to other racing titles on the platform. There are plenty of kart customisations for those who are into that, you can also customise your avatars. You can customise your kart's components, boost and upgrade parts and mix and match to get the stats you want. The game has cartoony 3D graphics that match the overall theme of the game, plus, the level designs are decent. The UI isn't too overly cluttered either.



Night of the Full Moon



Night of the Full Moon from developer Giant Games is a Little Red Riding Hood spin-off, where the main character is Little Red Riding Hood herself. This is a roguelite deck-builder with RPG elements that developer Giant Games has pulled off pretty well. Little Red Riding Hood is not a defenseless little child here, she can be a knight, or a witch, a nun, or even a soul hunter, depending on how you choose to play the game. You need to pay to unlock some classes though. The class you pick affects the overall difficulty of the game, and there's a new game plus of sorts where things get more challenging when you play the game a second time around. Little Red's grandmother is missing, and she has to embark on a mission to find her in the Black Forest. The Black Forest doesn't make things any easier, being filled to brim with enemies who want to kill her.



Coming to the gameplay, you've got a deck of cards which you will use to dispose of enemies. You will build your deck as you progress through the game. While progress starts off fast and easy, eventually it becomes fairly challenging. Like with any card-based game, there's both strategy and the luck of the draw involved. With each chapter you have a list of enemies you need to defeat followed by key bosses. These actions unlock bits and pieces of the story until you eventually reach the ending, which is different based on the choices you've been making throughout the game. The game also has RPG elements, Little Red will level up upon earning exp, which in turn will unlock more cards. You can upgrade existing abilities or find new ones, however there's plenty of grind involved in these elements.

The game's visuals are great, and the character designs are full of personality, the attention to detail is on-display for all to see. Overall Night of the Full Moon is a fun game with plenty of replayability, great graphics and a decent story to boot.

Biphase

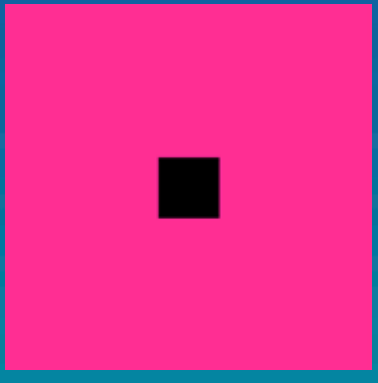


Biphase is a unique 2D platformer developed by several college students hailing from different universities. When playing the game, users will find themselves donning the role of a person with bipolar disorder, attempting to discover and explore an abstract red and black world.



Each level features a series of controllable platforms and routes leading up to the end point in that particular level. The catch is that these platforms constantly switch between two states, changing the entire course of the level. The controls are, however, simple, with a left slider that allows the player to move horizontally and a right button that makes the player jump and trigger the shift between the two different 'states'. As you progress through challenging level after another, new mechanisms will be introduced, adding an added layer of difficulty. The visual design, music, and minimalism is stunning, and it is an absorbing experience as a whole.

Pink



Pink is the latest puzzler from developer Bart Bonte and follows his previous colour titles, yellow, red, black, blue and green. The goal of the game is to turn the entire screen pink. There are a total of 50 levels in the game, with the challenge ramping up as you progress through the levels. The levels themselves are also pretty unique, however there's a set of level types that are constantly cycled through, so levels within the set are unique, and each time they come around again they're a more challenging version. Some of the levels aren't even puzzles, but simply require you to do an activity to turn the entire screen pink, like dragging and dropping something or simply tapping the screen. If you're having trouble with a level at any point, there's a light bulb icon that pops up on the top to give you a hint for watching an ad. We didn't encounter any ads otherwise. Overall, a fun puzzler to kill time, also fairly short.



Picnic Penguin



Picnic Penguin is a puzzle game, which features a colourful pixel art style, but don't be fooled, the game is pretty challenging. The goal of Picnic Penguin is simple, you need to push around different sized blocks and different types of foods to get them all into the picnic basket.

Levels start off easy, but as is the case with most puzzle games, they start ramping up in challenge. You need to think carefully before every move, there's no way to undo a move once it's made. The only way to fix things is to start over from the very beginning of the puzzle. Moving the penguin itself doesn't count as a move on the top counter, however, moving any of the blocks or food items will count as a move. There's an additional layer of challenge; you sometimes need to leave the grid in order to move certain blocks from the outside of the grid. When you leave the area of the grid there are enemies who will chase you, the game resets if they catch you. There are different types of blocks that need to be kept in mind, with some blocks being heavier and harder to move, while others are lighter. As you progress through the levels you'll encounter more different types of blocks that add to the challenge.



Overall, Picnic Penguin is a challenging puzzler, and definitely worth picking up for people who enjoy puzzle games. *

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