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Hollow Knight Review

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Hollow Knight is a stunningly hand-drawn 2D platformer that exemplifies the popular Metroidvania style of game. You explore an atmospheric underground world wrought with perilous danger. Made by South Australian developers Team Cherry, the game was a successful Kickstarter project that was also released on Steam late February this year. *Hollow Knight* does well to remind you that you're only a hop, skip, and a jump away from mortal doom.

Hollow Knight is a beautifully rendered game with life brimming in every corner. From the subtle environmental dangers of the world to its charming creatures, there is truly never a dull moment. Once you set off exploring it's no secret that the bleak, insectoid world of Hallownest, has seen better days. The game literally drops you into its dark and dingy depths without much introduction. You play as the titular character of the game, a mysterious warrior creature, armed with an old nail and the ability to jump. You'll soon encounter the many bug-like inhabitants of Hallownest, who always seem to be in some kind of bind. These characters within the game will ultimately pull at your heart-strings. They're delightful and adorable, making each encounter with them an endearing one. Even the game's fast travel feature overflows with personality, as you ride on the back of an eager stag beetle who takes you to certain areas you've unlocked.



Hollow Knight embodies the many quintessential aspects of any Metroidvania. You'll have to explore aimlessly and gain certain skills or items in order to progress to the next instance of your map. Needless to say, navigating the in-game world can be tricky. Unfortunately, in some regards, it's unnecessarily tricky. You begin each level without a map, and without word or warning, you'll have a chance encounter with



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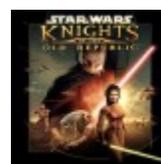
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a cartographer who will let you purchase one. This map is essentially rendered useless when your character itself is not present on it. To have this 'special feature' the game makes you purchase a charm with the game's currency of geo, so you can see your character on the map. On top of this, your map won't even update areas you've ventured through unless you spend even more geo and purchase a quill. There are too many purchasable features like this, the fact that you have to continuously grind for money to buy features that should already be present doesn't leave a great impression.

The game's platforming mechanics are intuitive and utilised with ease. You'll obviously be jumping around constantly to steer through obstacles or dodge enemies. As you progress, you'll be granted with more powerful skills. You'll be able to cast nifty spells and enhance your acrobatic abilities, along with upgrading your characters current default gear.

To say that *Hollow Knight* is a challenging game would be an understatement. Expect to die often and a lot, seething with immense frustration each time it happens. The consequences of death are all the more unforgiving. Expect to lose all that precious geo you've gathered, along with the game returning you all the way to your very last save point, which are few and far between.



There are many different types of enemies that dwell in each new unlocked zone, posing brand new threats and hardships. To top it all off, you'll always feel as though the environment is working against you. The game employs some devious level design where you'll have to solve each platform puzzle to successfully move on. After annoyingly succumbing to death a few dozen times, you'll eventually



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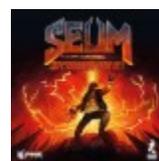
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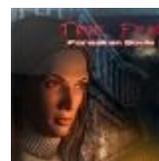
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overcome that obstacle that seemed impossible. The exact same can be said about each of the new areas you'll uncover. Each level will become incrementally more difficult than before, forcing you to utilise your new-found skills. There is a great sense of accomplishment upon figuring out what the game is asking of you. You'll backtrack a lot upon gaining those new abilities that enable you to achieve certain tasks that you couldn't before. Once you achieve this, the game becomes an increasingly rewarding experience.

The game's attention to detail is truly encapsulating. Each new level is vastly different from the last. From dark, gloomy ruins to lush overgrown forests, you begin to genuinely feel the need to want to explore every inch of this lively world. This attention to subtleties isn't purely environmental either, it extends to even the various foes present within the game. Each enemy feels unique in their own right and can be separately appreciated for their different attack styles, appearance, and skills.

Hollow Knight does many things well but falls short when it comes to some questionable choices. In-game money is used far too much when it comes to unlocking features, making the game feel like too much of a grind, which adds more unnecessary irritation. Fortunately For *Hollow Knight*, the good greatly outweighs the bad. Overall, it's loveable characters and magnificent illustrative environment deems it a captivating affair, if only for a few short bursts at a time.



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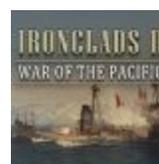
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Sunita Osborne

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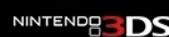
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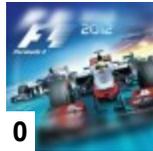


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