



GAME REVIEW

ARKHAM KNIGHT

CONSOLES BREATHE
A SIGH OF RELIEF

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Platform: PS4, Xbox One, PC
Review Platform: PS4

Batman: Arkham Knight, the last instalment in the highly acclaimed Arkham series looks to give Batman a fitting farewell. But how does it compare to its illustrious predecessors? Read on to find out. The game is set in the entire Gotham City this time. A year after the events of Arkham City, Scarecrow has returned and he is planning to unleash his malice upon the city and its caped crusader. Joining him is the Arkham Knight, an unknown enemy who commands an entire army. The game focuses mostly on these two villains for the majority of the main missions, however, villains such as Two-Face and the Penguin are encountered throughout various side missions. The overall dark tone of the game makes it feel more like the story of a man whose will has been tested beyond anything instead of a testosterone injected fairy tale of a superhero pummeling through everything.

The game follows an RPG-esque quest system with multiple quests which can be triggered at any point of the game. However certain quests will not allow progression until a certain story mission has been accomplished. The content is varied and none of the missions feel like mundane fetch quests. However, they do involve you traversing large distances on foot or in the Batmobile. This might influence the player to lose track as Gotham City is teeming with stuff to do and when you're flying across the cityscapes you're bound to get distracted by a Riddler trophy or an enemy APC.

The Batmobile finally makes its debut in an Arkham game and what a debut it is. Initially, the Batmobile feels a bit sluggish but once you get used to the controls, you'll be zipping around Gotham like a pro. The Batmobile has a battle mode which turns it into a full-fledged tank. The tank battles are immensely fun and they provide a great challenge when various types of tanks converge on your position. Don't worry, Batman isn't breaking his

"no-kill" rule here as the enemy tanks are actually remote-controlled drones.

The "hold to activate" battle mode of the Batmobile is a bit disconcerting. Thankfully, this issue can be solved by going to the options and switching on "toggle mode".

The core gameplay of Batman is more or less the same with the addition of new enemy types, gadgets and takedown variations. Some stages involve Batman partnering up with his allies such as Catwoman or Nightwing. In these instances, a simple press of a button triggers a cinematic dual takedown followed a character switch. Arguably, these dual-play areas are the most fun in the game.

A special mention just HAS to be made for the graphics. I played on the PlayStation 4 version of the game and it looks phenomenal. From the rain drops trickling down Batman's armour to the colourful, neon-lit streets of Gotham, every detail is meticulously crafted. Those tech demos of Unreal Engine we used to drool over? Well finally, now, we are getting games which look like those demos.

Arkham Knight is not revolutionary in any way. It builds upon the successful formula and ends up with a game that is worthy of being called the best in the series. An enjoyable ride which will keep you on-edge the whole time.

Even though the PC version was possibly one of the worst ports of the year, the console version seems to be doing well.

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WORTH A REINSTALL
MAJESTY:
THE FANTASY
KINGDOM SIM

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● Initial Release: 2000 ● Developer: Cyberlore Studios ● Publisher: Microprose
● Recommended version: Majesty Gold HD Edition (by Paradox Interactive)

The Elder Scrolls, Dragon Age, The Witcher... excellent franchises that let you run around on epic quests in fantasy worlds. It's a fine concept, but what if you twisted it on itself? What if, instead of playing a thug in shining armour, you were the one hiring them?

Majesty: Fantasy Kingdom Sim puts you on the throne of the intentionally stereotypical kingdom of Ardania. With your Sean Connery-esque advisor by your side, you will play a series of quests where you will be tested against all manner of foes, ranging from the ratmen crawling out of the indestructible sewers that spring up as you expand your town all the way to the mighty (but exploitable) dragons. Build marketplaces, inns and watchtowers to protect them as your taxmen give you the money you need to hire the real attraction of the game: the heroes. Hired from various guilds and temples, these men and women are fully autonomous, and each class of hero has its own personality and preferred activity. Your rangers love to explore the fog of war, your rogues can generally be found robbing your own marketplaces (you can tax it back), while the elves partner with the rogues to establish tax-free dens of inequity that'll suck up your heroes' time and money. You can influence their behaviour by setting up bounties on certain targets, and areas to explore. Prodding your rangers into exploring a nearby area won't take much, and rogues are greedy enough to respond to most any reward (even against their own kingdom, if you're playing multiplayer). A big enough reward and your entire kingdom will scramble to deal with that towering Evil Castle of Doom... for better or worse.

The game's quests will throw huge challenges at you and often limit your hero options. It's up to you to build and hire as intelligently as possible, and try to get the desired behaviour out of your kingdom. (Often easier said than done: most heroes are great at handling

themselves, but your uber-powerful wizards melt like butter. Getting one past level one is a minigame in itself.) Even normally you cannot have every hero type at once.

The temple heroes refuse to fight alongside the followers of their rival gods. You must decide: the borderline OP paladins and surprisingly tough monks of Dauros, or Fervus' very entertaining cultists and Warriors of Discord? Defense or offence? Lunord or Helia? Which non-human race do you invite? Elves and dwarves detest one another, and no one wants to live near a gnome's hovel.

It's as frustrating and fun as a family, and the game's aesthetic is full of charm, humour and occasional pathos. The art is memorable and everything reads well, even today. Everyone's well-voiced and the unit banter is memorable, though Budget

Connery could shut up every now and then. Most impressive: every unit, every building, every selectable thing has flavour text. Every upgraded building has new flavour text. It's wonderful reading. As silly as Ardania is, someone clearly loved making it.

Paradox Interactive published a sequel to Majesty in 2009, before they became Midas Touched. It is terrible and you should avoid it. What you shouldn't avoid is Majesty Gold HD Edition, which 'supports' higher resolutions and Windows 8.1 (i.e. clicking buttons doesn't always work and the main menu freezes a lot, and 1920x1080 is unplayable.) Still, it mostly works, and it's your best option if you want to play Majesty on a modern machine.

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