

AN UNDERWHELMING AFFAIR

NONY KHONDAKER

Beyond: Two Souls

Developer: Quantic Dream

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment

Platforms: PlayStation 3, PlayStation 4

Release Dates : October 8, 2013(PS3) ;

November 24, 2015(PS4)

Besides being a Quantic Dream game, *Beyond: Two Souls* had gained spotlight by bringing in two A-list Hollywood actors, Ellen Page and Willem Dafoe to provide their likenesses, voices and motion captures to the game. Initially released for the PS3, the game got a PS4 port in late 2015.

Beyond: Two Souls tells the story of Jodie Holmes (Caroline Wolfson/Ellen Page), a girl with paranormal abilities. She has a psychic connection with an entity named Aiden from another dimension, the Infraworld. With the help of Aiden, Jodie can explore a small area around her without having to move, telepathically interact with objects and possess other people to make them do her bidding. Born an orphan, she grows up with her foster parents until she starts showing her abilities publicly. Her foster parents then send her off to Nathan Dawkins (Willem Dafoe), a scientist for the U.S. Department of Paranormal Activities. Later, she is recruited by the CIA as an agent.

From a visual perspective, *BTS* is fantastic. Despite being a three-year old game, the graphics feel up-to-date. The game also features some of the best facial animations I've ever seen in a game; topped off with brilliant voice acting by

the cast. Although the gameplay is essentially the same as *Heavy Rain*, it is much more detailed and a definite improvement.

However, the plot of *BTS* is a huge disappointment. The storyline is devoid of any mystery, drama or intensity. The game adopts a non-linear storytelling technique that only hurt the game instead of helping it. None of the sub-plots ever flourish completely as a result of the flawed story-telling. The pacing of the story is totally off. Depending on the in-game choices you make, the same chapter can show drastic variation in terms of gameplay length. While this may be realistic, it is simply unfair to gamers with a certain set of choices. The chapters are not evenly distributed either – since some chapters take five minutes to complete while others take around an hour. The longest chapter in the game had no significance to the story, making it the weakest part of the game.

The storyline is also riddled with plot holes and deus ex machinas. The most frustrating part, in my opinion, has to be the fact that the choices made in the game do not affect the ending strongly enough.

To sum up, *Beyond: Two Souls* is a waste of the talents of its brilliant cast. If you have high expectations about this game, you are most certainly in for a disappointment.

Nony Khondaker is an introvert with immense passion for tech and music. Feel free to send your constructive feedback at nonykhondaker@live.com or follow him on twitter.com/NonyKhondaker



SHOULD VIDEO GAMES BE AN OLYMPIC SPORT?

FARDEEN ZAREEF

eSports has taken the world by storm. Over the past decade, it's been the rising phenomenon amongst all forms of sports. Competition finals these days see sold out arenas as people watch gamers fight it out for ultimate glory, with millions of others streaming the events live. In an interview conducted by BBC in December 2014, Rob Pardo (lead designer of *Starcraft: Brood War*), stated that eSports should be considered as an olympic sport.

While eSports does have a massive following with millions of participants, it has often come to question whether or not it deserves a spot amongst the sports that take place in the most coveted sports competition in history. One of the most significant points regarding why eSports deserves a shot is the fact that the participants need to have a very competitive skillset and decisions have to be made on-the-go. Most gamers have lightning quick reflexes and during team games, constantly communicate with their team-mates while making their plays, similar to many team sports like basketball and football. eSports can be considered as a 'mind sport' like chess where the participants' thinking power comes into play but with eSports, imagination is a key too. Sometimes, risks are needed to be taken in order to win matches. With the wonders that are being done in technology every year, video games can actually be massively appealing for the crowds as shown by the gatherings that take place during tournaments like the Evolution Championship Series and The International etc. One of the standout statistics that support the notion for eSports is the way it has been handled. With measures such as anti-doping policies, eSports are being taken place like actual sports events with professional gamers getting recognition similar to professional athletes. Another fact is that the costs of eSports

is very less when compared to sports like golf, basketball etc. The basketball stadium that was made for the London olympics was expensive and when that is taken into consideration, an eSports competition can be basically held anywhere.

But the drawbacks regarding eSports being an olympic sport are massive. One of the factors that come into play is the lack of physical attributes that are required while playing. While the brain has to be used and gamers need to have extremely quick reflexes with their thumbs working like bullets, there isn't much of the body that is being used during eSports and even if it is recognized as an olympic sport, it's just another case that will be presented to the IOC and similar to the fate of chess, much won't be done about it. Till this date, the IOC has not welcomed chess in the Olympic Games.

Then, there is the cultural dispute. There are massive groups of people who dislike video games and have been protesting it since time immemorial. Making it into an olympic sport would be the nail in the coffin for major outrages. While the eSports community is extremely strong, the anti-videogame society is pretty decent too when it comes to numbers.

With the facts being considered, I personally believe that it's about time eSports are taken into the Olympics. The costs are less, the crowds are massive. People in home and in the stadiums would be highly engrossed in the proceedings. The modern generation can take an even bigger interest in the games. And with the budget of the Olympics, wonders can be done if eSports become an olympic sport. Only time will tell.

Fardeen Zareef is in a war with carbohydrates but his love of Doritos overwhelms him. He also does not know how to use Twitter and loves to game. E-mail him your love/hate at fzareef666@gmail.com