

GAME REVIEW

THE ROYAL FLUSH OF 3D FIGHTERS

ASIF AYON

Developer: Slocap
Publisher: Devolver Digital
Engine: Unreal Engine 4
Platforms: PC, PS4
Release Date: August 29, 2017

If you happen to visit Slocap's website you'll notice that there's nothing on it except for Absolver. The online melee action game that has created quite the buzz around the fighting game community is Slocap's first major project. And they nailed their influences to a tee without coming off as a rip-off by sticking to the ground rules for a good fighting game.

Once you get into Absolver, you'll quickly notice that the game resembles the look of an acrylic painting with visuals similar to Firewatch or The Witness. The visual aesthetics aren't the main draw of this game nor is the short single player campaign. It's the fighting system that makes the game feel unlike anything you've ever played.

A 3D Fighter at its core, Absolver takes notes from the infamous Souls series, The King of Fighters and For Honor. However there's a twist. You make your own combat deck. Absolver's ace in the hole is giving players the ability to make their own combos. This makes Absolver unique in comparison to all its predecessors, where you only had to memorise the list of



combos your opponents have in their depository. So ultimately it becomes a test of learning your opponent's moves as you fight them. It adds in a depth of intuitive learning unseen in most AAA fighting games.

Despite the short campaign lasting only 6-8 hours, it hosts some of the best AI put in place in a fighting game but not "uncheesable", no video game AI is unfortunately. The story sadly falls short in delivering, leaving a lot of backstory and lore elements up for interpretation. The campaign is important, however, for learning new moves and levelling up which you will need in order to grow as a

competitive player. You can also go through the campaign with friends and even be open to unsuspected intruders, all in the fashion of the Souls series albeit with the ability to play "Invite only" which will stop random players from "invading" you.

Absolver still feels like a beta test which is a good thing. It shows that the developers are open to change for the better. The developers have already stated that they'll add more game modes complementing the 1v1 duel system already in place with parts of the map greyed out as of today which means, more maps to follow too. Absolver has a lot

going for it in terms of a competitive game. It has a high skill ceiling and low skill floor on all accounts. It does not promote reactive play like Dark Souls nor is it about memorising combos like Mortal Kombat or Street Fighter. While the idea of making your own combat deck might make you feel uneasy at first, the game teaches you very easily how to do so and allows for customisation as you keep going forward. The scopes aren't infinite but they are seemingly endless.

Absolver does need to incentivise players with a ranking system to strengthen the games competitive base and for its own longevity. The net code has not shown signs of jitters yet with proper servers in place so all in all Slocap took the best from their influences and worked on the kinks that should have been in place in those games. If you're looking for a fresh and unique take on fighting games, Absolver is a must try. And if you're the rare Dark Souls veteran or a For Honor tryhard then it's perhaps finally time to move on to a fresher approach in the form of this wild card entry into the "Souls-like" formula.

Asif Ayon's favorite color is a particular shade of ash but he tells everyone that his favorite color is blue. The alliteration in his name bothers him a lot too. To inquire more about what else keeps him up at night, hit him up at asifayon@live.com

The franchise soars without iconic hero

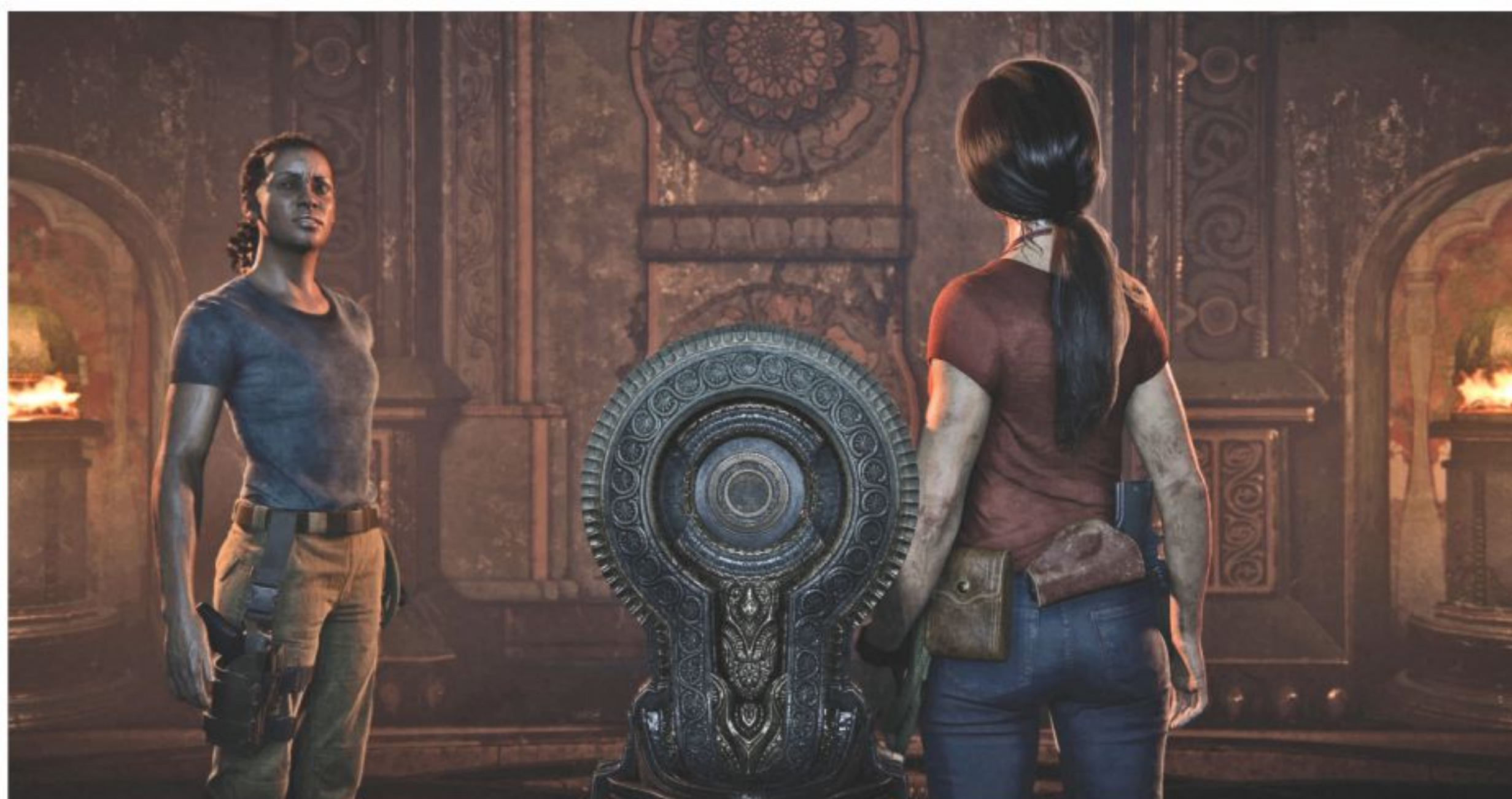
Initially planned as a DLC for Uncharted 4, Uncharted: The Lost Legacy was announced as a standalone entry in the series in December, 2016 at the PlayStation Experience. While the prospect of getting a new Uncharted title so quickly was very titillating, the decision to not include the series' regular protagonist Nathan Drake created divisive opinions among gamers. However, as always, it is not okay to judge a book by its cover.

NONY KHONDAKER

Developer: Naughty Dog LLC
Publisher: Sony Interactive Entertainment
Platform: PlayStation 4
Release Date: August 22, 2017

The Lost Legacy is set after the events of Uncharted 4. Chloe Frazer is looking for an ancient Indian artifact known as Ganesh's Tusk which her father had spent a significant time of his life pursuing. Chloe hires Nadine Ross to help her on the quest. Upon arriving in India, they come to know that Asav, the leader of a rebel army, is also looking for the artifact and he is much more well-equipped than they are. The rest of the game deals with Chloe and Nadine going up against Asav and laying their hands on Ganesh's Tusk.

The game is visually similar to Uncharted 4, which is not a bad thing at all. You can expect the same level of graphical fidelity and life-like animations from The Lost Legacy that you saw in Uncharted 4. In fact, The Lost Legacy has much more diverse and detailed fauna than UC4 did. You can often see monkeys jumping from tree to tree or families of



elephants bonding with each other. The Indian setting of the game gave me some major Uncharted 2 feels. The sound design is fantastic as usual and if the audio settings are tweaked properly, the immersion reaches a whole new level.

I was very unhappy with the uneven pacing of UC4's plot. The Lost Legacy, on the contrary, does a far better job in that department. What's even more surprising is that I did not miss Nathan Drake. Not

one bit. Nathan Drake's light-hearted personality has been nicely channeled into Chloe Frazer making her even more likable. Nadine, on the other hand, is a no-nonsense girl and together, they complement each other really well. Some of the puzzles in the game were very creative and equally as difficult and frustrating. The gameplay of The Lost Legacy focuses much more on stealth than the previous entries in the series.

Thankfully, it does not shove the stealthy gameplay down the gamers' throats since it is still possible to beat the game without being stealthy.

The Lost Legacy is not without its faults, though. Asav, despite being the sole antagonist of the game, is very poorly developed. He has very few dialogues and they are neither memorable nor do they provide any insight into the psyche of the character. His motivations are very unclear as well. Even though I struggled to pass the shooting galleries and the puzzle sections, it took me barely six hours to beat the game. For \$40, I don't think I am wrong to expect a little more content.

Uncharted 4 was a satisfying conclusion to Nathan Drake's story and I didn't think I needed another Uncharted game. The Lost Legacy, however, is good enough to prove me wrong and get me hyped about the series once again!

Nony Khondaker is an introvert who complements his non-existent social life with video games, Netflix and a whole lot of ice-cream. Send him memes and cat videos to cheer him up at fb.com/NonyKhondaker