

## GAME REVIEW



# A Potential Masterpiece

NUREN IFTEKHAR

Piranha Bytes' new release, Elex, manages to disappoint but at the same time engross the players over an unforgettable experience. In spite of all the shortcomings, it manages to be one of the most immersive experiences one can ask for.

Before starting off, it is to be noted that Elex has one of the most interesting settings in a game world that I have seen in a long time. Imagine the world of Skyrim where you're equipped with a steel sword and a wooden shield. Now imagine the sci-fi setting of Mass Effect in the very same world where there's a guy shooting a plasma rifle at you from afar. Now take all that and throw in the outlaws and misfits from Mad Max whose only rule is that there is no rule. Now top it all off with a Jetpack. Elex consists of all those elements put together in a seamless way that doesn't make anything look out of place. This might be the biggest pull of Elex. The world is so beautifully crafted, that you will find yourself trudging through the shortcomings just to know more about it.

Much like the Fallout titles of the old,

Elex focuses largely on factions. There are three in particular. And your gameplay experience will vary upon which faction you decide to side with. If you like the medieval setting then there's the Berserker clan for you — a side that renounces science and fights to free the world of the corruption of "Elex". Basically, a faction all about magic, bows and swords. If you're more of a sci-fi person, you have the Clerics. A cold and calculated faction that worships science and progress. Perhaps the strongest faction in the game, being in a cleric armor wielding their plasma weapons is a different kind of experience. Then there are the Outlaws, the bandits of the West whose only purpose is to loot and plunder and live without rules. Side with them if you want to live out your "Cowboy Bebop" fantasy.

Exploration is perhaps the best aspect of Elex. Vertical exploration through the use of Jetpack adds to the experience tremendously. Running through the ruins of an old tarnished world where danger lies at every corner is a treat. The world is unforgiving at first. Even the most basic of the enemies will seem like a challenge.

However as you slowly make progress, you will feel the difference significantly as the enemies don't scale with your level unlike Skyrim. This also works as a drawback for some. It takes a massive amount of time to be remotely ready for most of the fights. Progression is far slower than any other popular open world RPGs. It's hard to say anything about the story without going into spoiler category. But one thing is to be mentioned. The choices you make in Elex actually matter unlike most current titles. Your decisions can lead to a civil war among a faction or dictate the fate of the land or anything in between.

It's because of the all these pros of this game, it feels so very disappointing at times. Elex truly has the potential to become a classic, but it is so far away from it. The animations are visibly clunky. The combat had the potential to be decent but it does not make use of most of its features. You can stagger your opponent but can't use a special attack to follow up. You can build up combos to make a special attack but that damage is not substantial to be worth of an effort. Most enemies feel like tanks and the fights get tedious.

The AI is laughably stupid as they keep getting stuck in most of the terrain. The world, as beautiful as it is, feels empty at times and lacks a good incentive to explore.

Elex has the potential to be one of the best open-world RPGs to date, but it doesn't fulfill that potential. The game is a clunky experience riddled with bugs and disappointment. That being said, a sense of exploration, an engaging game world, multiple ways of finishing a quest, and choices that actually matter kept me immersed in the game in spite of all its flaws. Elex is highly recommended for anyone who likes RPGs that don't hold your hand and prioritise story and world building over an engaging combat and flashy graphics. If that is not the case then you should rather hold out for something else.

*Nuren Iftekhar is your local stray cat in disguise; he interacts with people for food and hates bright light. He got Hufflepuff 3 times straight in Pottermore so no walking around that one. Send him obscure memes at n.iftekhar18@gmail.com*

