

A day in the life of a gamepad

WASIQUE HASAN

Dawn arrives with first light—no wait it's the middle of the day, what gives? The answer is soon revealed as I realise I was at the bottom of a pile of dirty laundry. Banished to the corner, never to be seen again until the hour of need arrives, my suspicions prove to be true as I am swiftly plugged into the computer. It's time to get ready for the ordeal all over again.

A sigh of relief escapes when I see that the game to be played is Far Cry 5. As far as effort goes, this is one of the more comfortable games to play through. Driving around or walking is good stretching practice for my left analogue stick. Wanton shooting with the large assortment of firearms (or a good ol' shovel) ensures the right analogue isn't left out of the party either. All good things must come to an end, however, and soon the open world seems too open for my master to handle.

While a different game is being searched for, I stretch my circuits and try to remember why I was discarded so unceremoniously the last time. I've almost pieced together the whole story when the doorbell rings.

Oh no.

Was it today?

Game night is here, and my master's friends waltz in. Stealing myself



for the mess I'm about to be in, I spy the first torture device: Mortal Kombat X. Now the game itself isn't that bad. It's quite fun to be used for some ridiculous, over-the-top-violent fatalities. If only breaking bones was that easy in real life.

All these "MLG" players can do, however, is button mash. Emphasis on mash. The characters flail around the place like scarecrows having seizures while a tornado rages. Yes, it really is that bad. I wonder whether it's possi-

ble to get injured from this. If gamers can get Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSI's), then my overly-mashed buttons definitely could.

Once everyone has had their fill of gore, there is an expectant air. A lack of eyes doesn't stop me from knowing that everyone is licking their lips. The tension in the air is palpable as FIFA is started up. Friendship goes out the window as the primitive urge to dominate your fellow man takes over. Winning is the only thing that matters,

and I can't afford any slip-ups. That means no input lag, no sticky buttons, and definitely no running out of batteries.

From the moment kick-off occurs, I am lightning in a controller-shaped bottle. I have never performed as well as this, nor will I ever. My analogue sticks form a deadly pair—almost guiding my master's thumbs. Together we elude charging defenders, sell the dummy to the goalkeeper and deposit the ball in the goal, where it has made a second home.

After some blissful performances, however, I lose the magic touch. Gone is the fluidity, replaced by the clunkiness of a potbellied sloth. The scorecard suddenly reads the long way around, and before I realise what is happening, there's a deafening roar. Soon I find myself flying through the air, landing painfully on a pile of dirty laundry.

Now I remember what happened the previous time. I burrow myself deeper into the filth in shame. I can't even be sure if the tears are ones of sadness or just an unfortunate side effect of the ungodly stench. If only my master would take a shower. If only.

With a heart of ash and a PC of potato, Wasique Hasan could use some help. Send loss memes to cheer him up at fb.com/hasique.wasan

Are you not entertained?

GAME REVIEW

RUMMAN R KALAM

Domina is a gladiatorial management sim where you train and house a bunch of gladiators to fight for you in The Pits or the Colosseum. That's pretty much it. Oh and your gladiators have permadeath of course, so don't get attached to the 650HP Thraex that's going to die to a 400HP Murillo.

The atmosphere of the game is quite different from what you'd expect. While your average Joe might've gone for the Roman chic, the developer DolphinBarn went for a gory, pixel art design that drives home the game's disposable roguelite mechanics and the sheer amount of blood. The soundtrack, though, is the best part about the game. When your gladiator enters the arena and postures, the music just pumps you up like you're absolutely sure your tiny pixel fighter will bring you glory. Big ups to Bignic for one of the best soundtracks I have ever heard in a game. Even if you don't play the game,



check out the tracks "Boom (Jason) (Or Walking out of hell one step at a time)", and "Spartacus".

The gameplay is more or less Football Manager for gladiators. You train their stats, pick one of the three classes and throw them into the arena. Once you're in, I'd advise you to leave the fighting to the AI. The controls are absolutely horse tosh and you'll be dead before you know it. If it's a 3v3

or a mob fight, pick the weakest gladiator and keep him away from the fight. That way, he can gain stats but not get injured or killed. Speaking of stats, the game lets you hire different trainers and workers to improve your ludus and gladiators. It's a nice touch that gives you more control of your game. However, this is not a game for those who are looking to get into the thick of things and slice their way

through to victory. At its core, Domina is a management game and your expectations should be similar, especially considering the price tag. For a \$6 game, it punches way above its weight. You can get a solid 20 to 30 hours of fun.

In between fights, you'll often find yourself just sitting back and staring at the resource stats to make sure you don't run out. This is quite possibly the worst part about the game. Good management sims always ensure that you have something to do during the downtimes or at least have a speed setting. Domina just makes you sit and stare, maybe yawn. These moments aren't that frequent to jar your experience but it is still kinda annoying in 2018.

To sum it up, Domina is a great game to have on your laptop if you're the sort to travel a lot and need something to waste some time. Honestly, this should have been a mobile game. There's still time to port it, DolphinBarn!