

EDITORIAL

A Ramadan under lockdown is not something I'll ever get used to. The lack of human interaction, the absence of communal iftars, the *taraweeh* at home and the general dearth of festivity during what is normally the most festive time of the year felt like a nightmare when it happened last year, and it still feels that way. What's worse is that if we don't maintain this lockdown, the same could happen to Eid this year! And I am not a man who's going to be okay with three consecutive Eids spent at home. It just doesn't sit right.

I do consider myself lucky in many ways, however. At least I am home with my family, in good-ish health. Thinking of those who have to live abroad without family, who are having to spend Ramadan truly alone, fills me with great sympathy.

And then there are people who have to observe Ramadan in financial distress, whose employers deny them their fair wages, who are denied their right to getting time off for iftar, or even their basic need of clean toilets. These are the people I feel truly sorry for, a feeling only surpassed by my disgust at the system that allows these problems to exist.

-- Azmin Azran, Sub-editor, SHOUT



PLAYWATCH

GAME REVIEW



From Hell and Back

FATIMA JAHAN ENA

Hades by Supergiant Games is a rogue-like RPG that takes the concept of games set in the Greek Underworld and completely reinvents it. The story follows Zagreus in his attempts to escape from the Underworld while gaining support from his relatives the Olympian gods, and some other well-known characters from the Greek mythos.

The mechanics of the game are quite simple as it is a hack-and-slash combat system using available weapons. The most prominent feature of the game would be its looping system. Since the objective of the game is to travel as far as you can, dying means that you must start the game from the very first checkpoint. Although it sounds incredibly frustrating (it is), the game takes the looping system and elevates it to a whole new level. The game expects you to fail multiple times. Beginning the game again allows the player to alter and improve Zagreus' abilities to ensure smoother sailing the next time you start.

The game also takes the inescapable aspect of the Underworld and uses it to its advantage. Each time you restart, the chambers leading up to the escape route changes. This means that it is quite difficult or even impossible to guess which chambers or variants of bosses will await you.

Apart from the abilities and the route-changing system, the game also introduces new characters, dialogues, story arcs, etc. each time the player restarts. This is the game's secret weapon in my opinion. Alongside the world-building, the character designs and voice-acting in the game are gorgeous. If you are a fan of Greek mythology like me, you will definitely enjoy the studio's audio-visual interpretation of each Greek god and their unique offerings. Furthermore, players also unlock story arcs if they happen to meet specific characters on Zagreus' journey.

Lastly, the music. The soundtrack composed by Darren Korb seems like a match made in heaven for the game. The music, which can be described as rock ballads for the Underworld, goes perfectly with the pacing of each chamber in the game. I have played the game for over fifty hours and I can personally vouch that the music does not get tiresome over time.

All in all, *Hades* is a masterfully created game that almost anyone can appreciate to some degree to another. If not for the actual gameplay, the music, art, visuals, and voice-acting are sure to garner praises from fans and non-fans alike.

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