

EDITORIAL

I've had a strained relationship with the concept of femininity growing up. Growing up, I thought that my awkward posture, big nose, acne, fuzzy legs, and sweaty brows somehow exiled me from the Fantastic Feminine Females Federation. In hindsight, my intense need to not be like "other girls" in my early teens definitely didn't help with feminine camaraderie.

Thankfully, my relationship with femininity has improved drastically over the years, but it took a lot of effort. I think the biggest step was understanding that the concept of "femininity" is exactly that. Just a concept. But as kids, when we thought of "tough girls," it probably involved rejecting anything that falls under the umbrella of femininity.

I'm in my twenties now and I have grown to fully love the fluidity of femininity and everything it entails. I even chose to write about this topic for this week's editorial because I'm consuming media created by women and it's helping me appreciate the women in my life even more. I am also thanking greater forces for pulling me out of the "pick-me" rings of Hell.

– Fatima Jahan Ena, Sub-editor, SHOUT



PLAYWATCH

GAMES



Plants vs. Zombies 2: It's about time we talk about it

SAIF SAMMI RAHAT

Plants vs. Zombies 2: It's About Time is the long-awaited sequel to PopCap's *Plants Vs. Zombies*. Though many players online might disagree, *Plants Vs. Zombies 2* outshines its prequel in many aspects. Introducing a multitude of new game mechanics, more levels and plants, bosses as well as a PvP arena.

Plants vs. Zombies 2, in comparison to its predecessor, is faster-paced. Other than having more levels, another aspect of the game that is an improvement from its predecessor is the lower number of plants obtained per world. *Plants vs. Zombies* gave the player a new plant after almost every level, making the process feel redundant. In contrast, *Plants vs. Zombies 2* makes the process feel rewarding.

As much of an improvement *Plants vs. Zombies 2* may be, it has its shortcomings. The biggest "fault" of the game is microtransactions. *Plants vs. Zombies 2*, being a free mobile game, needed a source of income to continue further development. So, they turned to microtransactions with the game putting a bunch of recurring plants behind a pay-wall which upset many players, making it seem like a "pay-to-win" game.

To elaborate further, take plant boosts as an example. The Zen Garden gives temporary boosts to plants and can also be boosted by spending gems. Now, boosts may not be a bad idea but they can get out of hand. By making the harder levels easier to beat, they have essentially gotten rid of the need to strategise.

However, the main reason for the decline in the game's popularity is the addition of the plant levelling system. It uses seed packets to level up plants,

ultimately making the game unbalanced with the weakest plants easily defeating the strong zombies. Players wishing to level up their plants can purchase a bunch of seed packets only to speed through hard levels without getting any real satisfaction after completing them. This feature also feeds into the pay-to-win aspect of the game.

In recent times, the community has developed mods – which can only be played on Android devices and emulators – for the game which aim to rectify the flaws of the game. The most popular mods are ECLISE, Reflourished, and Alternate Universe (Altverz).

Reflourished is a DLC-esque mod which enhances the vanilla experience. It gets rid of plant levelling while nerfing overpowered plants to introduce variety in strategy. Alongside that, Reflourished also expands each of the worlds while adding two whole new worlds.

For players looking for slower-paced gameplay, Altverz is the mod for them. Altverz completely alters the game, introducing all new levels, reworking plants, getting rid of plant levelling, and also reintroducing the 25 sun meta.

Plants vs. Zombies 2 even with all its balancing issues, is still a decent game. If these issues had not caused its downturn, it only would have been a matter of time before the game was left to sit and rust. These mods are keeping the community engaged, with Reflourished and Altverz having a crossover event this month, and are perfect for players looking to come back to playing the game.

Saif Sammi Rahat is currently listening to 'Chemtrails Over The Country Club' and refuses to listen to any other song. Do NOT recommend songs at facebook.com/saif.s.rahat

TITLE OF YOUR MIXTAPE



A

To The Blade
Everything Everything

Yellow cab
DPR LIVE

Northern Wind
City And Colour

Moonlight
Kali Uchis

B

Pursuit Of Happiness
Kid Cudi ft. MGMT

Time Machine
Ingrid Michaelson

Beatles
Firoze Jong

Rollin' (Air Raid Vehicle)
Limp Bizkit

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submissions within 500 words.