

FABLE II

Mediadesign 3: Gamedesign

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The Story

Fable 2 is an exclusive action role play game for the Xbox 360, released in 2008. The Game takes place in the land Albion, which reminds on the European medieval times. The protagonist of the game is Sparrow, who comes from a poor background. At the beginning of the game, when Sparrow is just a young boy, his sister gets killed by the Lord Lucien. After his sisters death the story skips about ten years until Sparrow has become an young adult and starts his journey to reach his final goal: revenge his sister's death.

The game is a lot about improving skills and facilities. During the game the player can collect experience points when you are fighting enemies. It's recommended to use those experience points to improve different kind of skills continuously to be able to defeat harder enemies.

To move on in the game's story, the game is divided into several different quests, that has to be solved. Most of the time the player can choose between several quests to reach the next level, so it is not necessary to finish everyone. If there is an active quest or the player needs to reach a specific place, there is always a golden line on the ground guiding the player to find the right path.

Almost in the beginning you learn that you can become good or evil by the choices you make. Weather you choose to help the drunk man or his wife, smash the interior at the pub or help the pub owner. Every choice you make effects your character and hes/ shes appearance. As you play the game you are getting older and older. Your hair grows and the clothes gets warn out. This also affects your reputation and how people interact with you. During the game the character can change rapidly, when accomplishing an appropriate quest of the opposite side.

Pace of the game

The pace of the game is very slow in the beginning, for example you have to listen to the story where Lucien kills your sister and that your goal is to revenge him. Throughout the game you have to talk to a lot of people and sometimes you have to listen to all of it and sometimes you can skip the conversation by pressing a button. The pace of the game even slows down more with menus and loading screens. The menus are not hard to navigate in but it is annoying when you have to pause the game and pick items from it. After a while we felt that the game became a bit faster mainly because you had to fight more and that the action increased. There is also a running function that makes you run a bit faster but sometimes you have to follow or wait for people in different quests.

The game can be played a bit faster if you ignore the dog or if you ignore talking to people and just focusing on getting the quest done. The dog finds treasures and dig spots that often shows to be pretty useless since you can buy them in shops as well.

Goals and actions performed during the game

The main goal of the game is to revenge the sisters death and defeat Lucien, who killed her and threw both out from the castle to die in the streets. On the way to defeat Lucien there are other minor goals in form of different tasks which are not necessary to do to reach the main goal. They are handed to the player by people we meet on our journey. The tasks could be a travel to a certain location and bringing back items which someone is looking for or helping others to fulfill their task safely by guarding them. Other obstacles on the way are killing minor bosses or bandits. You want to train the dog so that he is in good health as well, so that the dog easily can track treasures and show a crowd some tricks which might help you in different tasks.

You can walk or run around exploring different environments and locations. As the game proceeds you begin to collect money and gain experience by finding treasures and items along the way. You use resources to upgrade your skills, buying weapons, armour and equipment. During the game you can get different kinds of work to earn money (like woodcutting and bar tending) or accepting different quests (like fighting villains), this will help your character developing his skills.

The game is partially built on fighting enemies and for this you are assigned different ways to attack an enemy. You can chose between different kinds of weapons depending on what type of attack you want. There are close-range weapons like a sword or a hammer, long-distance weapon like a crossbow or a gun and you can also do magic which can be useful for both close-range and long-distance attacks. You can continuously upgrade your weapons during the game.

If you get wounded during a fight you can heal yourself with a healing potion or by eating some food. A bit different side-affect when you have eaten too much fat food is that you put on so much weight that you turn fat. You buy items like food or healing potions from different traders and shops but you can also find some hidden ones during your quests and explorations. Another thing that heals your character is to let him rest in a bed somewhere like a room at one of the guesthouses.

Fable 2 has a wide variety of characters to interact with. Some are a vital part of the game story helping you to progress in the game, some are just plain citizens passing by and some are traders offering their services or goods. All characters have a certain glow around them to give away if they are good (lilac) or bad (red) so that you can get a few seconds to prepare before a fight. The player can actively choose how to approach all characters by selecting different scenarios from one of the game menus, as an example you can choose to flirt with someone and by gaining more and more consent from them eventually get them to fall in love with you.

Rewards for reaching goals

There are plenty of rewards throughout the game. There are rewards for killing enemies, finding treasures, digging where your dog wants you to dig, discount in shops for being friendly and finishing quests. When you kill the enemies that you meet on your way through the game you can collect experience points that they drop which you use to build up your strength, speed and other abilities. You can also buy different skills with them. If you give gifts or are being friendly to people along the way you can get gifts from them. If you are friendly towards salesmen and shop owners you will get a discount if you buy items. This can give you benefits during the game. For example when you are buying food/weapons/clothing, if the salesman is in love with you, you get a discount, or when you have trespassed a family's bed and are in trouble, a gift can make the family like you again. A well known name and a good reputation can also give you benefits.

Compared to other games

You can interact with other characters and give them presents, flirt, make an ugly face or dance a victory dance to name a few of the social things you can do. This is similar to the game The Sims. When you interact with someone else and you are choosing what to do, it appears in the same way, in form of a big circle of choices around your character's head. If the other characters are impressed by what you have done they react positively and a plus sign or a heart following how many percent they enjoyed the thing you just did is shown above their head. If they did not like it they will get minus signs or sad faces above their head. (Red for positive and blue for negative).



Fig 1, Socializing in Fable II.



Fig 2, Socializing in The Sims

Summary

Due to the slow pace, long conversations and easy tasks we experienced a very slow start in the beginning of the game. It didn't catch us directly and sometimes we experienced that it lost track and we started wondering where it was going. Even though our involvement increased when the action began, we still thought it was too easy and the restrictions in possible moves (it feels unnatural not to be able to jump when wanted) was very annoying. On the other hand, the slow start plus the trails and barking dog is pedagogic and well designed for new inexperienced gamers.

But because of the different sub goals and the choice to be good or bad the game can be played in different ways. We tried to explore all our options and socialize a lot and therefore the pace slowed down but as mentioned before, if you just pass them all running the game will probably take a different turn.