

# Video Game Review: Amazing ‘Assassin’s Creed: Brotherhood’ Delivers

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 1, 2010 - 10:19am

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CHICAGO – “Assassin’s Creed: Brotherhood” is all about power — taking it, keeping it, using it. Expanding on the world and gameplay of the first two “Assassin’s Creed” games, “Brotherhood” is another creative smash for Ubisoft and should easily be one of the highest-selling titles of the holiday season. A few minor glitches hold it back from perfection, but it’s damn close.



When “Assassin’s Creed: Brotherhood” was announced it was initially unclear what purpose the title would perform. Was this technically “Assassin’s Creed III”? Was it a spin-off franchise? Or merely a way for the developers of one of the most popular pair of games in the last few years to jump on the multiplayer bandwagon? The title combined with initial reports about the game quickly answered that last question but perhaps the biggest surprise regarding “AC: Brotherhood” is how much it’s not just one thing. Yes, players could come to this title purely for the multiplayer (the way a lot of people do for “Call of Duty: Black Ops”) and have a blast with one of the best-designed online experiences of the year, but there’s also an incredibly deep and complex single-player campaign to accompany it.



Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood  
Photo credit: Ubisoft

“Assassin’s Creed: Brotherhood” mostly takes place in Rome as deadly assassin Ezio works with his fellow revolutionaries to take down the Borgia Empire that has ruined the city. The game employs much of the same storytelling structure as the first two games as you’re actually playing Desmond, a modern guy plugged into a “Matrix”-esque machine known as the Animus and reliving the memories of Ezio. You’ll actually play part of the game “Uncharted”-style as Desmond and his team explore the modern ruins of the locations that dominate the bulk of the game’s storytelling. Don’t worry if you can’t follow the Animus/Desmond/Ezio aspect of the storytelling, as it’s primarily just a structure that allows for “sequences” and “memories” instead of “levels.”







Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood  
 Photo credit: Ubisoft

After a deadly assault destroys your home and sends Ezio Auditore underground in the opening scenes of "Brotherhood," you find yourself in Rome. Just like the last game, one of the first things you'll want to do is get the lay of the land. As you climb Viewpoints and synchronize your map while jumping from building to building, you'll be instantly blown away by the design of Rome. There's the Pantheon and the Coliseum, next to broken aqueducts and stables longing for repair. It's one of the most remarkably-designed worlds in gaming history — huge without ever feeling repetitive; gorgeous while also seeming functional.

The first thing you're going to want to do in Rome is take down the hand of the empire that has been crushing it. Areas of the city are controlled by the Borgia and each area has a captain and a tower. Assassinate the captain, burn down the tower, and bring the city back to life neighborhood by neighborhood. When an area has been cleansed of evil, you can buy and renovate stables, blacksmiths, doctors, landmarks, aqueducts, etc. It's a game function that's constantly changing the already-mesmerizing world of the title. One day, a street will be filled with beggars and after you've done your part it will be filled with bustling patrons.

And as you renovate businesses, you will receive a portion of their profits. The game basically makes you the Godfather of Rome. Of course, with great power comes great responsibility, and the story eventually pushes you not only to be the inspiration of the people of Rome, who will sometimes fight alongside you, but to manage a team of assassins.



Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood  
 Photo credit: Ubisoft

As the story progresses, the game becomes deeper and deeper, opening up various side missions like assassination contracts, thief assignments, etc. to accompany the main plot of the story, which admittedly is not as expansive as the last title. "Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood" is one of those rare games that can provide something a little different each time depending on your mood. Feel like a little stealth action? Pick up the controller and take on a few contracts. Want to sightsee? There are probably a few viewpoints left to synchronize. It's such a beautiful game that you could spend an amazing amount of time merely riding around town seeing the sights.

The storytelling is clearly a strength of "Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood" but what about the actual gameplay? The combat has been improved and the animations regarding different weapon choices can be stunning, but the mechanics of the title can still frustrate. There were way too many times when I died in combat for reasons that I felt were way beyond my control — a camera angle that kept my enemy out of view, a target lock-on system that seems erratic, etc. When the combat feels fluid, it's beautiful and fun to play and it's definitely a title where timing is key but I found it much more difficult to master than it should have been. There's also still some haphazard camera work in terms of jumping from small platform to small platform in that your target better be right in front of you or you're going off to either side when you jump. You would think Ezio would be smart enough to grab the column in front of him instead of jumping to the right. As long as we're on the negative, there were also a few times where denizens of Rome appeared to come out of or be stuck in buildings — minor graphics glitches in one of the best-looking games of all time.

Once you come to terms with the fact that the combat will be occasionally frustrating, there's little to complain about with “Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood.” It's a visually-stunning game that features an addictive storytelling dynamic, great voice work, a beautiful score, and stunning depth of play. It will keep you busy for hours.

But wasn't the game intended to bring multiplayer-lovers into the “Assassin's Creed” fold? Yes and it's awesome. Imagine a world of assassins where you are not only the killer but the target. You roam the streets, looking for your contract (which is another player), knowing that someone could be looking for you as well. If the player that you're after spots you, they'll be warned and try to escape. Chasing, hiding, flanking, killing — the multiplayer portion of “Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood” is fantastic. And the amazing upgrade system, which features perks, weapons, character skins, and even more game modes makes it all the more addictive.

Whenever a franchise avoids the next number in the series (i.e., “Assassin's Creed III”), there's reason to be concerned that the release won't be as accomplished as the “main games” in the series. No one likes the spin-off as much as the original, right? Nothing could be further from the truth regarding “Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood,” a game that features many elements that are even more impressive than “Assassin's Creed II.” This is no spin-off. It's one of the best games of the year.

*‘Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood’ was released by Ubisoft and developed by Ubisoft Montreal. It is rated M (Mature). The version reviewed was for the Xbox 360, but the title is also available for the PS3 and PC. It was released on November 16th, 2010.*



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