

Video Game Review: Addictive RPG Action of ‘Dungeon Siege III’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on June 30, 2011 - 4:06pm

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CHICAGO – I must admit to not being a huge RPG fan. Sure, I’ve played the big ones of the last few years and know my “Dragon Age” from my “Fable” from my “Final Fantasy,” but I often run into the same problems — a depth of customizable play that I just don’t care about. Some RPGs feature so many options and so many details that I get lost choosing which shield/sword combo to carry into battle or which spell loadout to take on the next quest. I understand why people get so deeply involved in such details but my time is limited enough that I can’t spend an hour picking my sorcerer’s outfit.

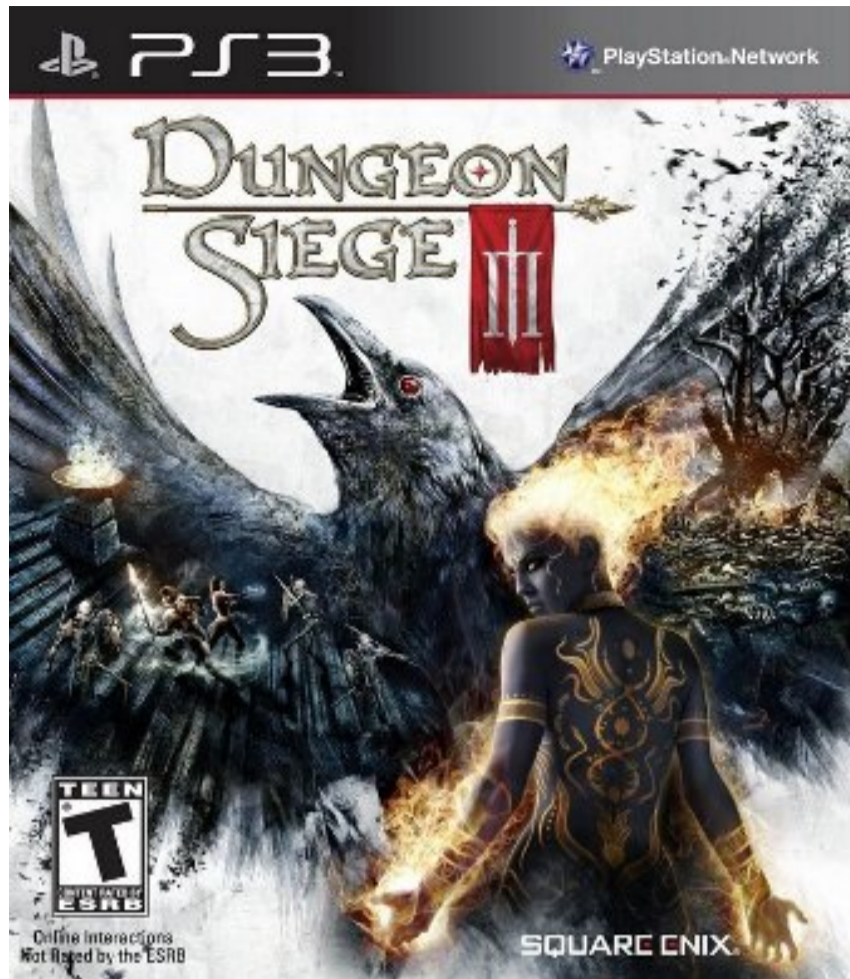


Due to the fact that RPGs aren’t my genre of choice, I often find the lesser-known ones to be completely disposable. If you love a genre, you can dig deep below the A-list games and often love what you find. If you don’t, the biggest titles of the year will usually suffice. When I heard that Obsidian, who recently released the disappointing “Fallout: New Vegas,” were bringing the “Dungeon Siege” franchise to the world of the consoles and it was being released by Square Enix during one of the most crowded gaming months of the year...let’s just say I wasn’t pumped up to play it. So no one is more surprised than I am that it’s been something of an obsession lately.



Dungeon Siege III
Photo credit: Square Enix

Despite its immense playability and the enjoyment I think anyone with the right attitude can have playing it, “Dungeon Siege III” is an undeniably flawed game. It’s weak in the graphics department, repetitive, and contains some annoying control and camera issues. And yet it’s surprisingly engaging, easy to play, and consistent. It’s the kind of game that will make no one’s top ten list at the end of the year and yet is still pretty damn enjoyable on its own terms. It’s a “lesser” RPG that could be one of your most-played games in the season.



Dungeon Siege III
Photo credit: Square Enix

But, wait, I haven't played the first two "Dungeon Siege" games. Will I be lost? Nope. Yes, if you're familiar with the franchise, you'll get a few more references and enjoy the game on a deeper level, but it's far from necessary to play through those before you get to this title. Here's what you need to know — bad times have befallen the land of Ehb. This game takes place 150 years after the last "DS" game and centers on the 10th Legion.

At the beginning of the game, these noble soldiers have been massacred by the evil Jeyne Kassynder and you must reunite the Legionnaires to stop her and bring justice back to the people. You start as one of the four central characters — Lucas Montbarron, Anjali, Reinhart Manx, and Katarina — but you eventually have the entire quartet in your party no matter where you start. And co-operative play is essential to the success of "Dungeon Siege III." You can only play with two party members at a time but choosing which two while also building up each in unique ways as they level up is part of the fun of the game. Of course, each character has different strengths as Lucas is a swordsman, Anjali is a fire-wielding Archon, Reinhart is a magician, and warrior Katarina wields traditional firepower. I started with Lucas and didn't regret the choice, relying heavily on Anjali to save my ass after she joined my party.

"Dungeon Siege III" is definitely an action RPG. You will spend a large chunk of time dodging and swinging your sword (or firing your weapon depending) at the same enemies over and over again. Choosing which special powers to use and when, dodging at the right time, even equipping the right weapons — combat is key to the gameplay of "Dungeon Siege III." To that end, some of the enemy A.I. and design disappoints. Many bad guys just charge at you and wait to be cut in half — strategy is not a strong suit of baddies in the land of Ehb — and some of the design is truly uninspired. Giant spiders? Really?



Dungeon Siege III
Photo credit: Square Enix

While the grinding of similar enemies can get repetitive, it's also somewhat addictive, especially as you get more and more powerful. Knowing that you have the right medieval loadout, the right party member, and the right special powers for the situation creates a fun action edge to the game that is often missing from RPGs. The combat is fast-paced enough and the various powers/abilities/proficiencies earned through leveling up keep it constantly fresh. And you can even play co-op, adding a great level of enjoyment to the combat.

As for graphics, they're arguably the biggest disappointment in "Dungeon Siege III." Most of the backgrounds and locations are repetitive and shallow. For example, when I got to the legendary city of Stonebridge, I expected a bustling town filled with activities for my party, but it's just another location of background characters and the same buildings over and over again. Little effort seems to have been put into the locations. If the world of Ehb felt more alive, the game really would have gone to another level.

"Dungeon Siege III" has obvious flaws to RPG fans or otherwise but it's playable and enjoyable enough that you're likely to keep coming back to Ehb. And it's the rare RPG that gets more interesting and more enjoyable as it goes along (most get weighed down by the weight of repetition). The story could be stronger and the visuals needed more love and care, but that doesn't matter when you pick up your sword and try to save your homeland. I have to go. There are giant spiders to kill.

'Dungeon Siege III' was released by Square Enix and developed by Obsidian Entertainment. It is rated T (Teen). The version reviewed was for the PS3, but the title is also available for the XBox 360 and PC. It was released on June 21st, 2011.



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