

Video Game Review: Congested, Glitchy ‘Blades of Time’ Not Worth Playing

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 2, 2012 - 9:53am

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CHICAGO – Gaijin Entertainment is a gaming company known for their car racing games and flight simulators. With releases like “Adrenaline,” “Anarchy: Rush Hour,” “Apache: Air Assault,” and “Death Track: Resurrection,” it was interesting when they brought out “X-Blades” (a hack and slash adventure game) back in 2009. Now, three years later, Gaijin is back with a spiritual sequel to “X-Blades” called “Blades of Time;” a confused and convoluted adventure that will make you wish Gaijin had stuck to cars and planes.



In “Blades of Time” you play as Ayumi, a sword slashing, treasure hunting, bad ass chick that is stuck on a mysterious island. Apparently full of treasures that Ayumi is dying to find, the island is also inhabited by strange and dangerous creatures that do not welcome Ayumi’s presence. Luckily, Ayumi is good with a blade...and a gun for that matter. Not only can Ayumi find precious treasures on her journey, but the island also holds many secrets and powers that she can discover and use to her advantage. While dangerous, this island could make Ayumi the most powerful treasure hunter around.

This is, essentially, the entire story. I wish I could explain more of the minor details, but the plot and story arches are so convoluted, it is nearly impossible. The game makers were clearly not worried about this aspect of the game, as they felt the action and special abilities would be enough to draw gamers in and keep them interested. Bold strategy, let’s see how it works out for them...ew, not good.



Blades of Time
Photo credit: Konami

“Blades of Time” is a hack and slash adventure game that becomes an extraordinarily long and repetitive journey. Fighting tons of the same enemies with basically the same attacks that are commanded by button smashing the same two buttons results in a rather lackluster and boring experience. The game tries to spice things up with some interesting abilities, but they are all glitchy and were seemingly rushed into the game.



Blades of Time
Photo credit: Konami

The ability that the game is marketed with and is the major departure from other hack and slash games is the Time Rewind ability. Established as a way to go back in time in the game and play out something you have already gone through before, the Time Rewind function strives to be something great, but fails at being a success. Instead of transporting you back in time to an earlier part of the game and having you replay a certain area, the game includes a clone of yourself that originally ran through the game. Think "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban," except you aren't punished for running into or playing alongside your clone. The clone can be used to distract enemies and comes in handy for giant hordes you must face and for puzzle solving in the game.

The problem with this ability comes in the consistency of it. Often times, the glitchy ability will not work properly. Old clones won't show up or go where they are intended to go. Not only is this frustrating to deal with, but it causes more problems for the game than solutions. When you are expecting the clones to do a specific task and prepare for this in your fight, it is incredibly disheartening to fail because the clones glitched out. There is almost a certainty that you will die at some point because of the failure of this ability. With a polished version of the Time Rewind function, it would come as an asset to this game, however, it ends up being a frustrating mess that I wish hadn't been included at all.



Blades of Time
Photo credit: Konami

The world of the game is sometimes nice to look at, but it is usually too dark or congested to notice. The map is filled to the brim with environmental pieces like trees, plants, rocks, and other structures, and it is often difficult to get a good feel of an area or see your character with everything that takes up the screen. The other difficulty with the presentation comes when you are switching weapons. Blades work with third person cameras, but when switching to a gun, the camera goes into a combination of a first and third person. You don't look down the barrel of the gun, but you are zoomed in where you cannot even see Ayumi. The problems make the campaign a drag to get through, and a game that you would never come back to because of its beauty and visuals.

The controls for the game, outside of being basically the same two buttons over and over, are also a bit troublesome. There were several moments in the game when I controlled Ayumi a certain way, but she didn't react or delayed. Again, in the flow of a game this can become a pain. When you are expecting an attack to play out a certain way, but the game doesn't react to your commands, it is the fault of the game that punishes the player. You may end up dying a few times just from this problem, which alone is enough to recommend not wasting your money on this game.



Outside of the campaign, there is a multiplayer mode called “Outbreak” in which you fight other gamers online. While this is a nice inclusion, the maps of the multiplayer are once again congested and not pleasant to play in, and the game tends to lag a bit within this mode (at least much more than other online multiplayer experiences). There is also an offline mode with A.I. characters instead of the other gamers you play in multiplayer, but this mode suffers from the same problems as the “Outbreak” mode.

All in all, “Blades of Time” is a failed attempt by Gaijin. The constant glitching and troubles with the game make it more frustrating than fun. Even if you took out the imperfect Time Rewind (the only major separation the game has from any other hack and slash adventure), you would still be left with a faulty, ugly, and inconsistent game. While the game does deserve some credit for striving to be something better, it is ruined by poor execution. A director may set out to make a brilliant and innovative movie, but we can only judge the end result. “Blades of Time” is not worth your money, and frankly, not worth your time either. The game will not only have you smashing buttons, but also smashing your controller against the ground in frustration. Save your time, because “Blades” doesn't deserve it.

“Blades of Time” was developed by Gaijin Entertainment and published by Konami. The version played for this review was on the Xbox 360, but the game is also available on the PS3 and PC. It is rated M for Mature.



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