

Advent Rising

Written by Doc_Brown
Friday, 03 August 2007 18:00



Developer: GlyphX Inc.

Publisher: [Majesco Entertainment](#)

[Official Site](#) and [Trailer](#)

ESRB Teen (Blood, Mild Language, Violence)

PEGI 12+ (Game contains depictions of violence, bad language)

Some of the links in this review lead to external sites that do not belong and are not maintained by The Foxhole. The Foxhole staff is not responsible for the content of these sites or the way their owners deal with privacy. These links are here for informational purpose only.

A Drop of Time

Advent Rising is one of several high profile games I can think of (oh look, [here's](#) another!) that, failing to live up to expectations, resulted in the demise of a planned trilogy. The more I think about it, the odder that sounds to me. Why is it that publishers will support developers that settle for mediocrity, but are downright merciless to those that, in aspiring for more, stumble? Is it so inconceivable to think that the developers could learn from their mistakes and follow up with a sequel that truly deserves the hype?



Last Man Standing

Mankind is a myth. Beings of supposedly divine power, they are sought after by virtually every alien civilization in the intergalactic community. And none search harder than the N’Kul—or, as they prefer to be called, the more benevolent-sounding Seekers. Surprising, then, that first contact comes through the serene Aurelians instead. More surprising still is the message they bear: the Seekers are not what they claim. They are coming to destroy you. You have two days, at most.

Players control Gideon Wyeth, copilot for the historic first contact mission alongside his brother Ethan. When the Seekers arrive earlier than expected, Gideon heads back to the space station Luriem, locates his fiancée Olivia, and takes an escape pod to the surface of the planet Edumea. His journey will prove to be a costly one. He can only save Ethan or Olivia, not both, and Edumea itself is wiped out shortly thereafter when the Seekers hurl asteroids into it.

The rest of the game follows Gideon’s efforts to aid the Aurelians, helping overthrow their supposedly “friendly” occupation by the Seekers. With their backing, he can then reveal the

Advent Rising

Written by Doc_Brown
Friday, 03 August 2007 18:00

Seekers' treachery to the galactic senate. Advent Rising's story is well aided by an inspiring musical score and cutscenes with action movie aspirations, but suffers some due to the pithy dialogue (courtesy of famed sci-fi author Orson Scott Card) that undermines the gravity of the species' situation. Seeing as humanity is now practically extinct, the fate of mankind is never given much consideration.



The Powers That Be

The first thing you'll notice about Advent Rising is its appearance. The developers chose to go with a look akin to that of comic books, with a brighter palette and somewhat exaggerated characters. It may not be to your tastes, but in this day and age the decision to go in a different direction should be applauded. I must also admit to being a big fan of the design of the game's main enemies, the Seekers. Six-limbed, they're normally seen walking on four legs, but they can also rear up, biped-like, to simply tower over the player.

Admittedly, Advent Rising derives a lot of its design choices from [Halo](#)—perhaps too much. You can dual wield weapons, throw grenades, and engage in melee combat, as well as drive a few vehicles. Unlike Halo, however, the vehicles are the game's weakest link. The Scythe is nowhere near as fun as the Warthog, nor does the Seeker tank really compete with anything the Covenant has to offer. The weapons don't feel very balanced, either, many overlapping in function and difficult to distinguish between.

Indeed, I would have appreciated if the designers pulled back a little with all the features they tried to put into the game. There is an aiming system known as flick targeting (using the scroll button to cycle through enemies), secondary modes on all the weapons, and a separate button for dodging. My advice is to simplify as much as you can. Turn on auto-targeting and quick dodging (double tapping a direction to dodge), and the control scheme won't be nearly as cumbersome.

Still, the game does do some things right in this regard. The Aurelians help unlock your hidden potential, opening up magical powers that come to dominate gameplay. Virtually everything you do levels up with use, from weapons and powers to dodging and melee attacks. At the start of the game, for instance, Gideon can only throw a few punches and do a short hop aside. By the end, he's cartwheeling and performing neck-snapping fatalities on any Seeker stupid enough to get too close.



Advent Rising

Written by Doc_Brown
Friday, 03 August 2007 18:00

Buggers, sir, and lots of ‘em!

When the Seekers set themselves to a task, they don't pull any punches. You'll face off against scores of them, and the gameplay is accordingly hectic. Their AI is serviceable, though it relies more on numbers than cunning. At times, they'll do something clever—like tackle you by springing into and then off of a wall—but then again I've also seen them fail to leap across chasms, one after the other plummeting to their doom. Personally? I'd have preferred fewer, more intelligent enemies.

Given a few more months of playtesting, they probably could have ironed out such kinks. And it's true what you've heard: the game is buggy, more so than your average title. As a story aficionado, the most troubling problems for me naturally concerned the cutscenes—the bulk play fine, even though they may stutter occasionally, but several are virtually unwatchable. Your mileage will vary. Is it a game breaker? I don't believe so, no, but it all depends on what you're willing to put up with.

And that's largely true of the game as a whole—it just feels *messy*. I found myself playing through not because I was terribly enjoying myself, but just because I wanted to see how it all turned out. They've thrown in everything here but the kitchen sink, and accordingly none of it feels terribly polished or refined. This is a game, after all, so gameplay comes first. If I can hop on YouTube and watch all of the cutscenes, what point is there in bothering to play it if I'm not really having fun?



Conclusion

Advent Rising is a prime example of a game that overreached itself. It seems as though the developers tried to do it all—emulating the enormously successful Halo, seeking credibility through the involvement of a noted author, and presenting itself like a big budget movie. Accordingly, the game feels overstuffed, with so much content crammed in that it's bursting at the seams. It's a shame the developers weren't given more time on it, or a chance at redemption with the sequel. C'est la vie.

Game Rated

6/10