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Friday, 24 June 2011

A couple of hours in to the continuing (mis)adventures of bike courier-cum-reluctant super mutant Cole MacGrath, you are granted your first 'Ionic' power. Up until this point you'd be forgiven for thinking this follow-up to 2009's Sony exclusive was just a prettier retread of the original formula. Open-world setting? Check. Story missions interspersed with side quests? Check. Black and white morality system in place with absolutely zero grey area? Double check! But the moment you stand in the middle of a busy street packed with pedestrians and vehicles and unleash your new power you'll have a stupid grin slapped on your face and be thinking to yourself "This is gonna be fun!"

Developer Sucker Punch introduced us to their new IP with the aforementioned deliveryman waking up, dazed, confused but largely unscathed at ground zero of a huge explosion that tore apart a large section of Empire City (Sucker Punch's take on NY). The source of this devastation was a package he was delivering that contained a macguffin known as the Ray Sphere, a device that can enhance the electrical impulses in a human body. Imbued with electrical superpowers, Cole sets off to discover the what, why and where of the device and, in doing so, uncovers a conspiracy deeper than he could have imagined.

InFAMOUS 2 continues almost exactly where the first game left off. After a brief recap of key events that played out in the original (which it is almost mandatory to have finished) you are thrown in to a spectacular (scripted) battle with the prophesized Beast, a 400ft molten lava monstrosity, as it lays waste to Empire City. Needless to say, you get your ass handed to you and, with new character NSA Agent Kuo and original tubby buddy sidekick Zeke in tow, you

hightail it down south to New Marais (read New Orleans) to recuperate and figure out how to defeat this ‘destroyer of worlds’.

The trouble with a lot of ‘sandbox’ games these days is a tendency to veer off the central narrative at any available opportunity with a myriad of side-quests, collectables and other non-story related missions. This can cause a loss of interest in the game as a whole as you end up chasing that final hidden package in the hopes of attaining the 100% completion stat. The beauty of the inFAMOUS games is that almost everything you do feeds back in to the main story and you never lose track of what you need to do next. Even the collectables give back-story or enhance your character’s abilities. And there’s a lot going on this time round. The Beast is your main worry, as you are constantly updated with it’s location in relation to yours throughout the course of the game, but there is also a Militia group to deal with and a mysterious plague that is slowly taking over the inhabitants of your new home town. Punctuated with hand-drawn cut scenes, this is comic book territory through and through.

Gameplay, on the whole, is a delight. You start the story bereft of all but your most basic powers, but this is enough to get you back in the swing of things as you start grinding and gliding your way around New Marais. Climbing is still a single button-mashing affair and you really do wish notes had been taken from the parkour elements of Assassin’s Creed or Unchart ed 2 , but this is a minor gripe and there are so many ways to traverse the expansive map you’ll quickly forget about it. As you obtain new and upgraded powers you are actively encouraged to mix things up in combat and, before you know it, you’ll be thunderdropping, force pushing and rocket launching your way to glory. Even melee has been enhanced with your new toy, The Amp. Although close-quarters combat can be hampered by an indecisive camera it’s still hugely satisfying, and hurling a militia member face first into the tarmac never gets old.

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8 out of 10

InFAMOUS 2 is out now on PS3{jcomments on}