

# 'Dishonored' game a whorl of cunning and combat

October 9 2012

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Star Wars actress Carrie Fisher is seen in Los Angeles in August. Fisher provides the voice for a character in 'Dishonored', the new game by Bethesda Softworks release in the US on Tuesday where cunning was as crucial as combat prowess.

The publisher behind videogame hit "Skyrim" on Tuesday immersed players in the plague-ridden world of "Dishonored," where cunning was as crucial as combat prowess.

Bethesda Softworks defied the trend to play it safe with sequels to blockbuster franchises and enlisted Arkane Studios to craft a captivating new title in which outwitting adversaries can trump besting them in battle.

Swashbucklers can slash and shoot their ways to victory, but violent tactics darken the city and increased chaos on the streets changes how

the story goes.

"The player can play the [game](#) in the way he really wants," said lead programmer Sylvain Praloix. "He can play the entire game without killing anybody or be a wild beast and attack everybody."

"Dishonored" was deemed a game-of-the-year contender by the time fans gathered at midnight launch parties for Tuesday's North America release.

Players take on the role of Corvo, the bodyguard of a caring empress desperate to save her city from the plague. Her master spy has another agenda, and the empress is killed, with Corvo framed for the crime.

Corvo becomes a supernatural assassin, using wits, weapons and powers such as controlling wind and conducting rats to unravel the plot and exact revenge.

"You can be very surgical in how you move into an environment and how you deal with an assassination target," said creative co-director Harvey Smith.

"I feel like we may have made the first assassination game where you don't really have to kill anybody."

The open design of the fictional city leaves strategies to players, allowing options such as sneaking over buildings, creeping through tunnels, swimming underwater or wiping out everyone in the way.

"Everything that the player wants to do, he should be able to do," lead level designer Christophe Carrier said of thinking that went into the game.

"If you see a door, it should open. If you see a roof you should be able to climb on it."

To provide voices for game characters, Arkane enlisted an all-star cast that includes Academy Award winner Susan Sarandon; Carrie Fisher from the original "Star Wars" films, and Brad Dourif of the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy.

"Having such talented actors voice Dishonored's compelling cast of characters adds a rich, powerful element to the game," said Arkane president Raphael Colantonio.

"We want to draw people into this virtual world and make it feel real."

Versions of "Dishonored" are tailored for play on Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 consoles as well as for personal computers powered by Windows software.

It will be available in Australia on Thursday and Europe a day later.

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Citation: 'Dishonored' game a whorl of cunning and combat (2012, October 9) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-10-dishonored-game-whorl-cunning-combat.html>

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