

# Game On

## BIO SHOCK INFINITE EDITION



# WELCOME

to another super special edition of GameOn Magazine, this time focusing on the BioShock franchise. With the upcoming release of BioShock Infinite we decided it was time to explore and celebrate this much loved franchise so all of us could recapture the feeling of blasting those crazy Splicers in time for the latest game.

In the mag, Chris Wakefield provides a detailed BioShock 2 retrospective, looking at the game and considering what it had to live up to in following such a successful first game. Duke Glen is also on board to talk about what he thinks made BioShock so unique, as well as providing some info about the memorable characters from the game.

We've also included some of our past content with our reviews of BioShock and BioShock 2, our original BioShock 2 preview and finally our substantive, hands-on preview of BioShock Infinite from our recent visit to the 2K offices.

As always, thank you for reading and we hope you enjoy this BioShock special.

Regards,

## The Editor

GameOn Magazine





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**W**e would also like to thank the guys and girls over at 2K games who have not only made this magazine possible, but made this game franchise a living, breathing entity. You've done an amazing job so far, we can't wait to get our hands on Bioshock Infinite!

# ABOUT 2K GAMES

2K was founded in 2005 and in a short time has cemented itself as a premier publisher of interactive entertainment on PC, consoles and mobile with a wide selection of games covering almost all genres from first person shooters and action games, to sports, strategy, role playing and everything inbetween.

2K is headquartered in Novato, California as a wholly owned label of Take-Two Interactive Software and has several development studios under its wing, including Firaxis Games, Irrational Games and a number of studios operating under the 2K name.

A mere two years after formation, 2K launched 2007 Game of the Year, BioShock, to mass critical and player acclaim. With a string of awards and an average critic score of 97%, BioShock position is cemented among the most critically acclaimed games of all time. With a game this popular, a sequel was almost assured, and sure enough in 2010 BioShock 2 was released to the approval of both critics and gamers alike.

This is far from the only succesful franchise under the 2K banner, with other hugely popular games and franchises such as Sid Meier's Civilization IV-V, Jade Empire, Mafia 2, Dungeon Siege II and The Darkness I-II, Bordelands 1-2 and XCOM: Enemy Unknown.

Now, three years later and BioShock is back, and it looks better than ever. Hands-on previews thus far have been glowing and we only have a matter of days to find out for ourselves if 2K can deliver the same kind of exciting, original content that first wowed us back in 2007. All signs are positive, so lets hope they can!



# ABOUT GAMEON

GameOn Networking Ltd was founded in 1997 with the aim of providing “lag free” gaming solutions for dedicated online gamers. Online connectivity in the late 90s was such that real-time gaming was beyond the reach of the average gamer, and so GameOn began hosting LAN parties throughout the UK. To date, GameOn has hosted almost 100 LAN parties.

In August 2008, GameOn began producing GameOn Magazine, an online PDF magazine covering all aspects of gaming including reviews, previews, news and articles. The dedicated magazine staff also provided coverage at high profile gaming events such as E3 and gamescom.

In February 2012, GameOn Magazine launched in ebook form on the Amazon Kindle marketplace in both the UK and US and has since developed from strength to strength. With the same quality coverage as always and dedicated writing and research staff the magazine has gained a loyal following and secured its position as one of the best selling gaming magazines on the Kindle store.

Later in 2012 GameOn launched the colour version of the magazine via Magzter store which is available on Android, iOS and Windows.

For more information, please visit [www.gameonmag.com](http://www.gameonmag.com)





# BIOSHOCK

## BIOSHOCK REVIEW

TAKING US BACK TO WHERE IT BEGAN

Platforms Available: PC, Xbox 360, PS3

Date: August, 2007

Genre: First-person shooter

Publisher: 2K Games

**B**ioshock was a game I was very intrigued with. Having bought a copy for the PC only to be plagued with technical problems, the minute I got a 360 it was the first game on my list.

The game plays like a successor to the System Shock series as a first person shooter with depth. The game begins when the plane you are in crash lands into the Atlantic, leaving you swimming to a mysterious lighthouse. Finding a strange sphere you descend into the underwater city

of Rapture. Built by a business giant, sick of society's meddling and morality, the city was designed to be a place for freedom and new discoveries not bound by normal rules and regulations. However, things went very wrong. New scientific advances were made, specifically creating "plasmids" and "tonics" which would change the genetic structure of a person, giving them new powers and abilities. Yet these changed people into murderous psychopaths, known as "Splicers" which now roam the silent





halls. It is here that the story progresses where you try to discover what exactly happened as well as simply survive.

Firstly, the game looks incredible. The graphics are really impressive, especially in 1080p on a good television. The art design for the game is excellent and the mood of the period is captured well, down to subtle art deco touches and broken gramophones still playing their tunes. The lighting and water effects are excellent and really help to make you become immersed in the game.

Sound is one of the game's strongest features. Realistic sound effects make the game more convincing and ambient sound really adds to a sinister and threatening atmosphere. Thankfully the voice acting of the game's characters is some of the best in any game, which is always crucial to one which is story driven. The key characters are voiced superbly, by some well known actors and at times the experience feels all too real. Even your enemies, the Splicers have distinct personalities and often scream out disturbing phrases when they attack you. More unsettling are the ones who just roam the halls mumbling quietly to themselves, cradling a gun as though it were a child.

Whilst the game's presentation is unquestionably impressive, how does the gameplay fare?

I am pleased to say that Bioshock offers an excellent first person system with a good selection of weapons and satisfying

gunplay. Each weapon has a variety of ammunition types which are generally split into armour-piercing, anti-personal and general. The combat feels meaty and different from the clinical effectiveness of Call of Duty.

Alongside the weapons, your character also gains access to the same genetic enhancements as his enemies. These range from paralyzing them with electricity, setting them on fire and even freezing them solid. These plasmids are effective and become an essential tool in facing off ever tougher opponents.

As well as offensive plasmids, you also can obtain tonics which are passive. These offer boosts to a wide range of different areas. Some give you more health from first aid kits, others improve your chances in the hacking mini-game to control turrets and security drones and one even gives you

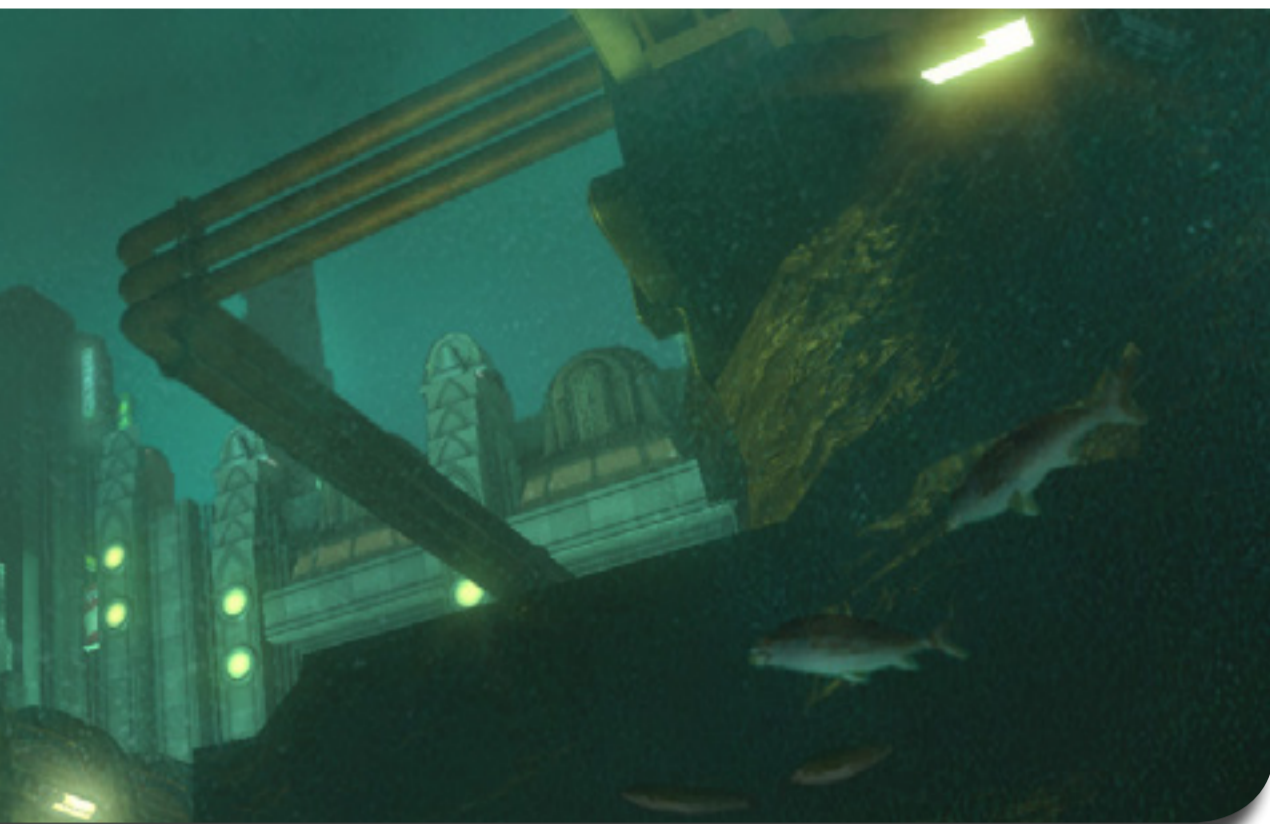


the ability to turn invisible when standing still. They fall into 4 categories, Plasmids, Engineering, Physical and Combat tonics.

As the game progresses you are forced to switch between these as you are limited to only 6 from each category which adds a tactical approach and allows you to take on situations in different ways. This adds a pleasant depth to the gameplay, though at times it is a little easy as there are plenty of places to swap your upgrades.







In order to purchase these upgrades you first have to acquire ADAM, a currency which is only available from Little Sisters. These small female children roam the corridors collecting ADAM from corpses but are protected by large diving suit wearing bodyguards called a Big Daddy. You must kill the Big Daddy (quite a feat), to be able to access the Little Sister, where you must then choose to either kill her (and receive maximum ADAM), or save her (and receive a smaller amount but have a clear conscience). This moral choice is a good addition and really elevates the game from other titles, as it ties in with the narrative very well.

I could criticize Bioshock for a number of small issues. The hacking mini-game is rather easy on a console, there is no inventory

screen, the map is confusing and so on. However, these criticisms are minor when you view the game as a whole.

I can't remember the last time a game gripped me so much with such a strong narrative, I literally sat and completed it in almost a single sitting. The game is mature, tackles interesting issues and isn't afraid to try to do things a little differently. Whilst it follows

most of the conventions of the genre, it brings enough new elements to make it fresh and interesting. Seldom is a game crafted with so much attention to detail and has an atmosphere as strong as Bioshock.

If you are a fan of FPS games and strong stories then Bioshock is unmissable. For everyone else: it is essential.

*Chris Wakefield*

## BIOSHOCK SCORED - 9/10





# SOMEWHERE BEYOND THE SEA

with gamers almost immediately

**W**ith the new BioShock game quite literally on the horizon, we at GameOn Magazine have decided to take this opportunity and look back on the big daddy and little sister that started this smash hit series. If you haven't already, skim back through the magazine and read the reviews for BioShock 1 and BioShock 2.

Back in 2007 when the original BioShock was released it was hailed as a success

thanks to its unique setting and original morality based storyline. Being a survival horror, first-person based shooter, it was one of the first games of its generation that introduced the concept of making the player feel real, thanks to the immersive storyline, superb voice acting, breathtaking surroundings and the background environment - to this day, even after numerous playthroughs, I find myself watching out for the whale swimming in

the sea as you run around the glass tunnels of Rapture. BioShock quickly became recognised as, not only one of the best games in recent years, but one of the best games of all time.

Along with the morality based





can choose a mixture of plasmids or the good old “shoot ‘em and boot ‘em” weapons are available which will suit the play styles of almost every player. Opportunities to combo your opponent with

storyline, the characters within BioShock have contributed towards its success; the Little Sisters, Big Daddy and Dr. Tenenbaum play ball against one side of your conscience whilst Atlas, Ryan and the Splicers are happily beating on the other. The emotional rollercoaster you experience during your gameplay ultimately leads to one of two potential endings, though without revealing any spoilers it can be safely said once you’ve seen one side of the story, you are almost immediately hitting the restart menu button to play it all again to see what the other holds for you.

As with all good games, the BioShock series offers a wide variety of fighting methods, as discussed in the reviews, you

a string of frost attacks before aiming a shotgun to their head is just one of the many destructive ways to take out splicers and other enemies. As well as the combative gameplay, players are placed up against motion sensing cameras that are attached to armed turrets, safes that contain goodies for the player but require some hacking to get into and vending machines so each playthrough can offer a unique experience depending on how you spend your time and ingame money.





With the huge success of its predecessor, 2K Games released BioShock 2 in 2010 with the same unique game style as the original but included an added extra - multiplayer. BioShock 2 is based within the same stunning location as BioShock; the city under the sea, Rapture. Only this time players take on the role of a Big Daddy in aim to discover where their Little Sister is within the city. During BioShock 2 it becomes clear quickly that 2K Games have continued to bring in the key elements of success, the great voice acting, surroundings and environment as the game quickly became as popular as the first.

Though BioShock 2 was greeted with huge success the multiplayer side of the game was seen as a failure, though the odd hardcore fans will continue to play their way through the ranks the majority of fans felt the multiplayer was unnecessary and simply an added extra which wasn't touched once the main story was played through. Downloadable content has been provided for BioShock 2 which has ranged from multiplayer maps, new characters and two unique single player additions. Though this new content only tickled players for a short period of time to return it did provide those within the multiplayer

environment new challenges thus seeing a brief burst in online matches again.

With the announcement of BioShock: Infinite due March 2013 fans will no doubt be counting down the hours before the new game is released. Infinite, unlike the previous two games will be taking players high into the skies of the world into an air-floating city known as Columbia, based around 1912 American Exceptionalism. Players will take on the role of a character known as Booker DeWitt. There will be the opportunity to bring your favourite combat styles to the table once again, this time with the chance to equip two weapons rather than just the one thus allowing for a much wider range of combat styles and killer combinations. Zipping through Columbia using roller-coaster style transport and in-air combat is just some of the exciting gameplay that publishers 2K Games have teased fans with during their game previews and it's safe to say they have our mouths watering.

Keep an eye out for the imminent review of BioShock: Infinite in future GameOn Magazines, if I manage to pull myself away that is...

*Steven Dawson*





# BIOSHOCK 2—SEA OF DREAMS PREVIEW

THIS WAS BACK WHEN IT WAS STILL CALLED SEA OF DREAMS

**G**ameOn have been lucky enough to see brand new footage of 2K's upcoming sequel to one of the most critically acclaimed games of recent years. Bioshock 2 is in development by 2K Marin and looks well on the way to completion. In the footage we saw there were some exciting new gameplay elements as well as glimpses of some of the locations that you'll be visiting.

2K are understandably keeping much of the plot secret but the set-up is torturously enticing. The story takes place a decade after the events of the first game with Rapture

having changed significantly. Instead of an outsider venturing into the depths of the underwater utopia gone bad, you play someone who was present from the very beginning: the original Big Daddy.

Instead of being the lumbering armoured behemoths of the first game, you are much faster, more agile and most importantly:



very powerful. The prototype Big Daddy has access to vicious weapons including the Rivet Gun and the Drill. In the gameplay we saw, Splicers were shredded with flying bolts and rather nastily dispatched at the sharp end of the aforementioned borer. This Big Daddy means business and nothing will stand in the way of him and his Little Sister.



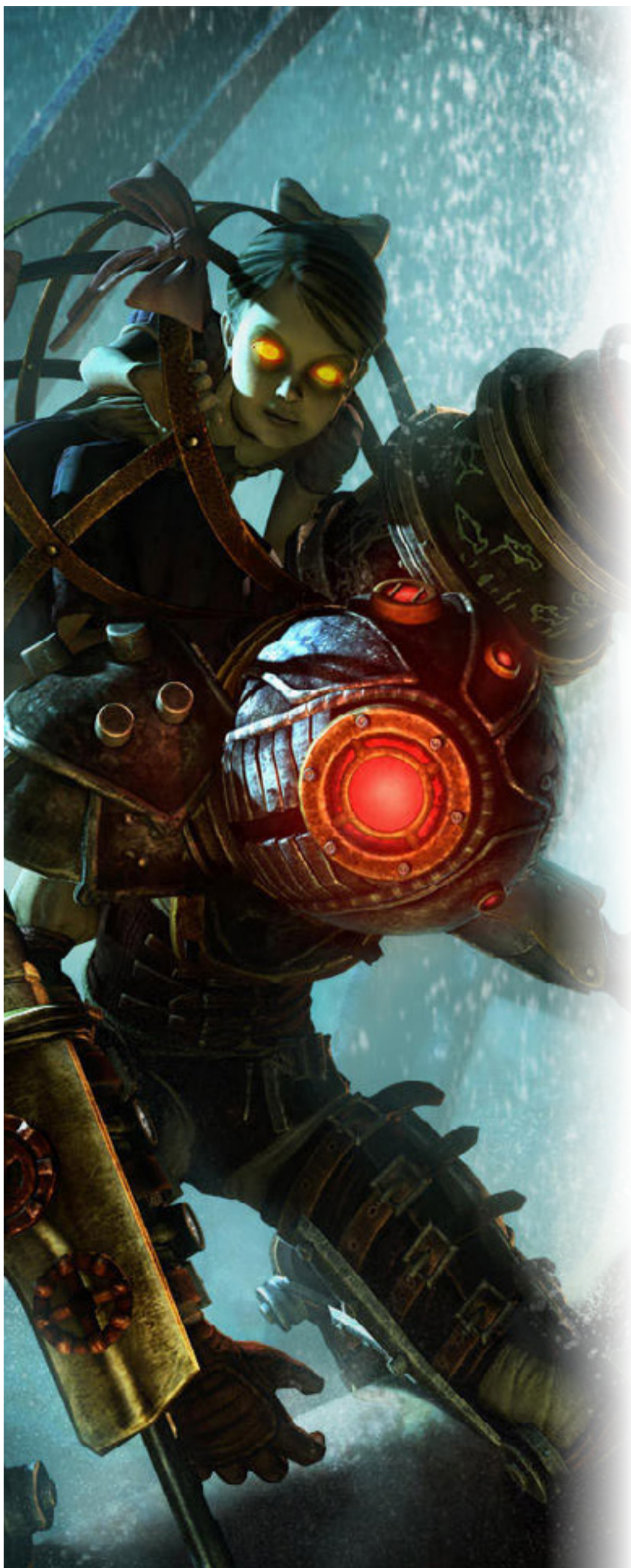
Thankfully, being a prototype, the Big Daddy can use Plasmids which have developed much further than those in Bioshock. Upgrading plasmids has much more of an impact and in the footage, Incinerate returns and its upgraded version now acts as a stream of napalm, igniting anything it touches. Other plasmids set to return are Winter Blast, Electro Bolt and the Cyclone Trap and

it is now possible to combine them to increase their effectiveness. This means that the Cyclone Trap can be charged to burn people as they are flung up into the air, which is sadistically satisfying.

Rapture is still very much Rapture and ADAM is more important than ever. As a Big Daddy you can act as a Little Sister's bodyguard, escorting her around areas as she extracts the valuable substance from corpses. You'll have to protect her from Splicers and when she has collected enough make the decision to harvest her, or to set her free.



However, your actions in Rapture will not go unnoticed and the footage GameOn were shown featured your nemesis, The Big Sister. Wearing a suit similar to the Big Daddies



but made from other materials the Big Sister is an incredibly nimble and agile person who was once a Little Sister. Angry at the changes in Rapture she is now trying to return it to how it once was and this means that the two of you will inevitably clash. It seems that any Little Sisters you are protecting as the prototype Big Daddy will warn you if the Big Sister is approaching and give you a little time to prepare for the fight.

This sounds like an interesting mechanic as you can be hunted through the levels. It seems there will be a mixture of new and old areas, with the familiar having changed since they were last seen a decade before. One of the new areas seems to be Fontaine Futuristics, signs for which featured prominently in the content we watched. How the story will proceed isn't known at the moment, but let's hope it is a complex and twisting narrative similar to the original.

One of the biggest surprises of the demonstration was the announcement of multiplayer content for Bioshock 2. The multiplayer element acts as a prequel to the events of the original Bioshock and is being developed by Digital Extremes, who have a lot of experience in the field.

The narrative behind this prequel is that the player takes the role





of a character employed by Sinclair Solutions to test out combat plasmids and tonics to help them in their war profiteering during the civil war raging before the events of the original. When you sign into Bioshock 2: Fall of Rapture you enter an apartment which acts as a hub in which you choose your plasmids, tonics and weapons. Once you are happy with your load out you then enter a Bathysphere and choose the map you want to fight on as well as the game mode.

There will be three different modes available including standard deathmatch, team deathmatch and an as yet undisclosed third game type. The map we saw played took place in the Kashmir Restaurant familiar to players of the original. Plasmids form a key weapon weakening players whilst you work on them with conventional guns. The Electro Bolt plasmid followed by a few shots does a lot of damage, but Incinerate and Winter Blast also burn and slow opponents respectively. The weapons varied and characters start off with a pistol and shotgun but more can be acquired.

The environment plays a big part in Fall of Rapture as players can hack turrets to help them as well as vending machines to give them more EVE and ammunition. One of the most interesting elements is that during multiplayer it is possible to

acquire a random pick up which will transform someone into a Big Daddy. These players have access to powerful weapons and armour and require a lot to take down, usually requiring turrets and several individuals attacking them.

Character customisation is also important and as you play more matches you level up giving you access to more plasmids, tonics and weapons. When GameOn asked Digital Extremes about balance issues they stressed the quality of the match making system and that it would be difficult to find yourself in a server with players far above your character's level.

Bioshock 2 is looking incredibly polished already with an innovative multiplayer mode utilizing the series' plasmids and tonics sitting alongside an atmospheric single player experience. With a release date of October 30th in Europe, Bioshock 2 will definitely be one of the hottest games of the year.

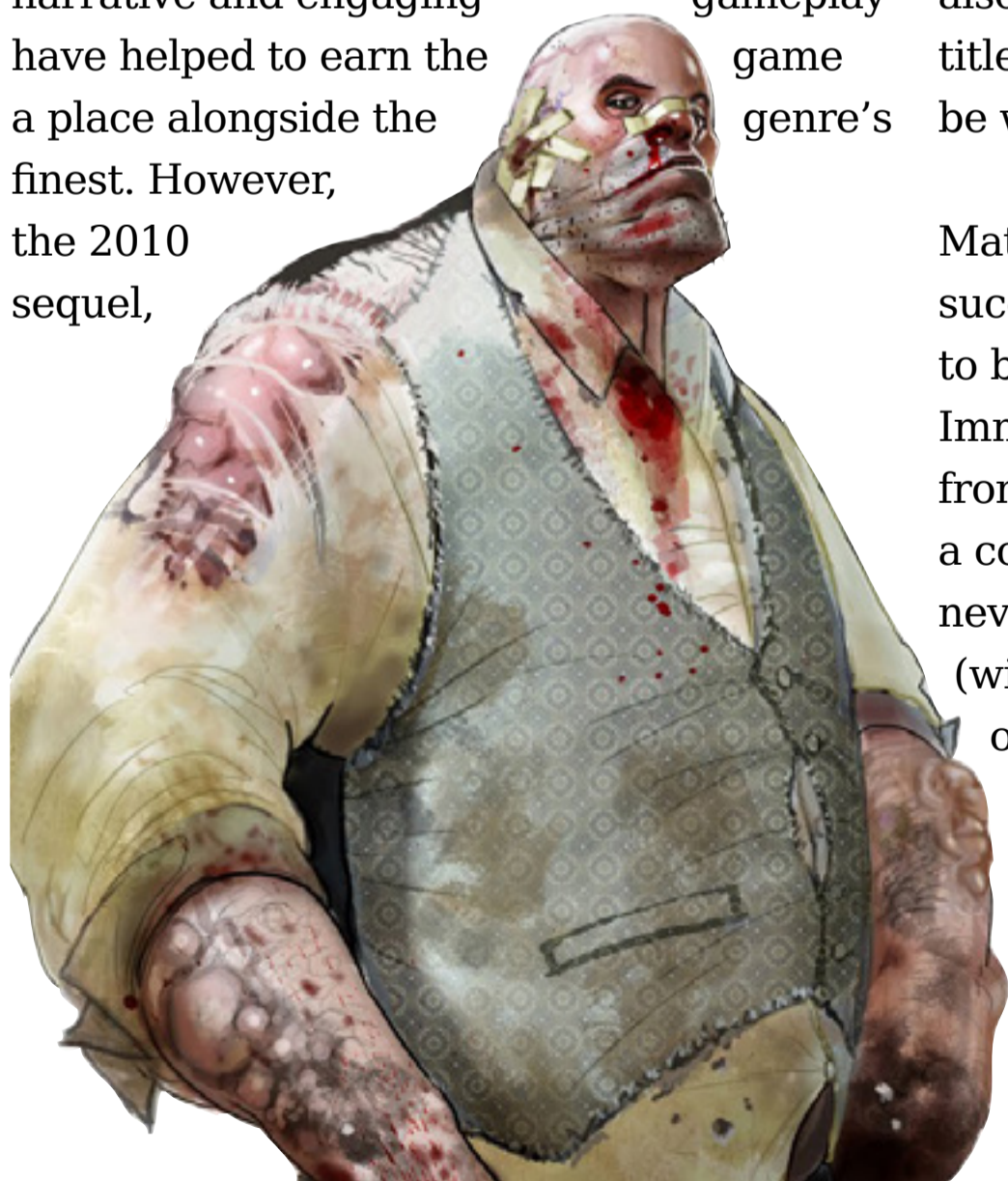
*Chris Wakefield*



# BIOSHOCK 2 RETROSPECTIVE

BioShock 2, has failed to find the

**B**ioShock remains one of the greatest gaming experiences of recent times. The beautifully realised and utterly unique setting, cleverly constructed and intelligent narrative and engaging gameplay have helped to earn the a place alongside the finest. However, the 2010 sequel,



same appreciation and popularity its ground-breaking predecessor has enjoyed since its launch. While the game certainly had limitations it was also another striking and intelligent title that deserves much more than to be written off as an inferior follow-up.

Matching the critical and commercial success of BioShock was always going to be an incredibly difficult challenge. Immediately the shock and awe stemming from the game's originality was lost and a continuation of the first title's story was never really an option. So, when 2K Marin (with some help from other studios) took on development there were very high expectations for the project. This meant that BioShock 2 had to be ambitious and it was this very aspiration that led to one of its weakest aspects.

Undoubtedly the biggest and most enduring criticism of BioShock 2 is

the multiplayer aspect which proved to be far weaker than the story and ultimately largely superfluous. Dating to the beginning of the “all titles must accommodate multiplayer” design ethos that continues to plague gaming, this sequel was one of the first to cram in a series of unnecessary deathmatch modes.

While this was by no means a terrible example of multiplayer, in fact it was developed by veterans Digital Extremes, the studio behind Unreal, it felt out of place in a game whose predecessor had placed such a premium on story and characterisation. Replacing these key elements with a vague spin-off backstory and cosmetic changes were not wise decisions. Despite new maps, game modes and other multiplayer downloadable content nothing could prevent this mode from dwindling leaving a series of empty servers that brought to mind Rapture’s deserted corridors.

However, we aren’t here to dwell on the failures of BioShock 2 especially when it does so much, so well. Granted, the underwater city of Rapture had lost some of its mystery and allure but it was such an intricately detailed location that there were still countless directions the development team could expand upon and explore. Under the careful creative direction of Jordan Thomas, the man responsible for the



incredible Fort Frolic portion of the original, BioShock 2 worked hard to free itself from the shadow of its Big Daddy.

Choosing to set the narrative ten years after the original game gave a

sense of greater freedom and allowed the events of the past to have changed and shaped Rapture. This also gave a sense of resonance to the actions of the first game, creating a connection but also moving Rapture in a new direction. The story itself was deep, often moving and suitably rich as you played a prototype Big Daddy searching for his Little Sister after being manipulated into suicide.

With Andrew Ryan returning in the many



audio diaries strewn throughout the locations, BioShock 2 had managed to preserve one of the series' most iconic and powerful creations. Supplementing him with some other meeker, more forgettable characters initially seems disappointing, that is until you begin to get to understand and know your nemesis: Sofia Lamb. In many ways an opposite to Ryan, Lamb is a calculating and truly terrifying villain in a subtle, understated performance that can be deeply unsettling. With a similarly

twisting story, it is constantly gripping and compelling as you find yourself drawn deeper into the sinister world of The Cult of Lamb.

Aside from managing to produce an engaging and

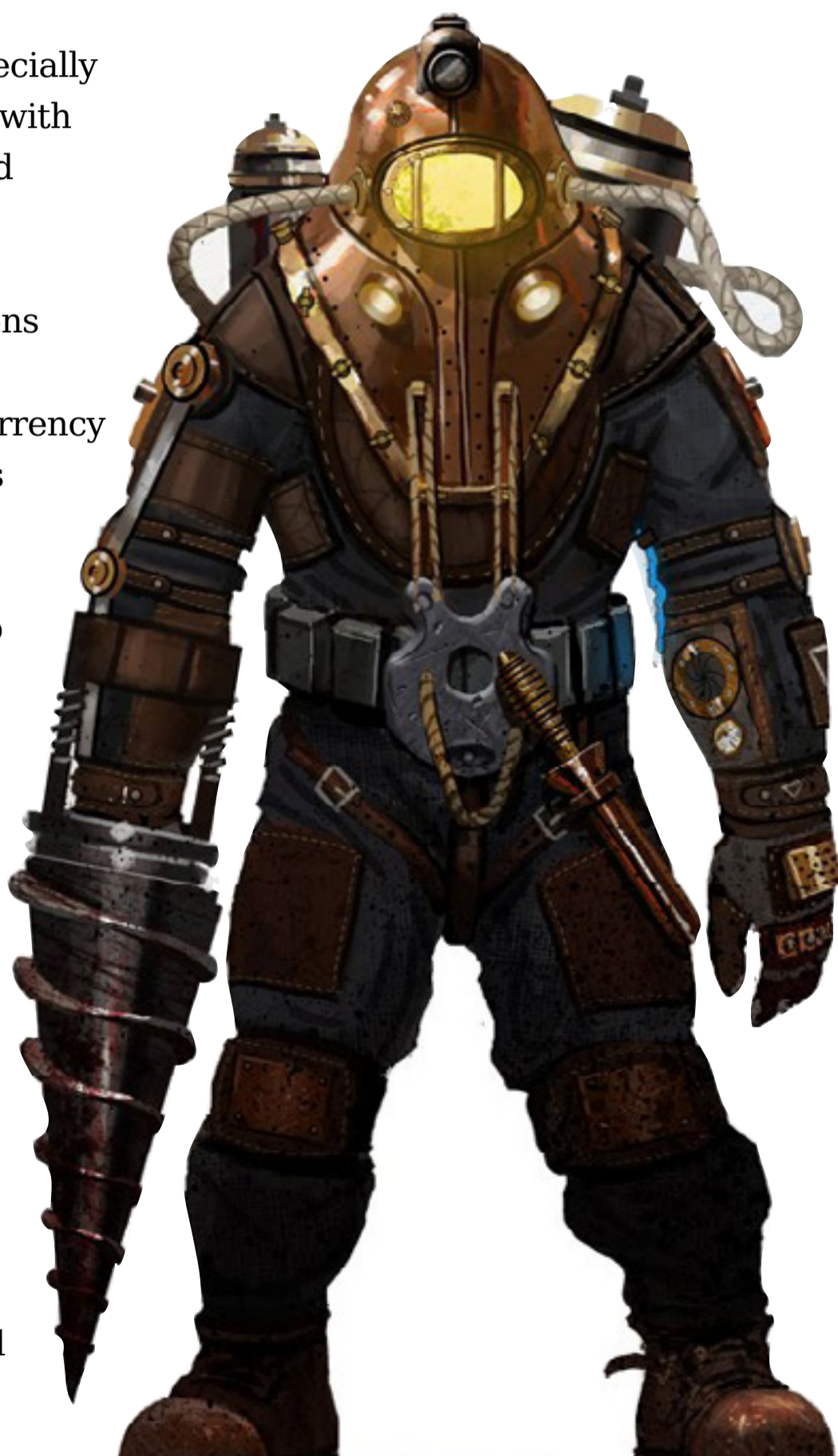


haunting story, that in many ways can rival BioShock, there were many important and necessary gameplay tweaks to help deliver a more rounded and diverse experience. BioShock 2 had an excellent formula to build upon, but by placing the player in the shoes of the iconic Big Daddy 2K Marin opened up a host of new possibilities. A relatively minor change, allowing weapons and plasmids to be wielded together had a monumental impact on gameplay allowing for more fluid combat and versatility. This was something especially important in a game where battles with Rapture's deranged inhabitants and creations were tougher and longer.

One of the most memorable additions in BioShock 2 was the inclusion of "Gathering". ADAM, the genetic currency of Rapture was still as important as ever, but instead of harvesting or saving Little Sisters and acquiring it immediately, you now had to help them collect it. While escort-type missions are typically responsible for groans of disappointment amongst gamers, the Gathers were pulse-pounding, sweaty palmed moments of real tension.

Taking some time to prepare the area around a promising corpse, Little Sister clinging to your back, was tactical and stressful. Hacking nearby turrets and security to side with you, planting trip wires and collecting explosives were essential and would often turn the tide of the oncoming battle in your favour.

Then setting down your small companion and watching her completely vulnerable, utterly dependant on your protection was an eerie and strangely sinister experience. The surge of genuine emotion you could feel as you turned upon hearing her cry out to see a horribly deformed Splicer looming over her wielding a bloody pipe was not only surprising but a testament to creating involving gameplay.





Once a Gather was completed you still had the option of saving or harvesting (read: killing) a Little Sister, a decision which had lost little of its impact from the original. The Gathers were such strong gameplay elements that they even received their own downloadable content, The Protector Trials, which was an entertaining and relatively robust offering. However, the Gathers had a darker side to them and completing them would always offer a dangerous risk: the possibility of a Big Sister attack.

The Big Sister is one of the prominent enemies of BioShock 2, a nimble, female

variant of the Big Daddy. After dealing with a set number of Little Sisters their bigger, deadlier and faster sibling would appear prompting a brutal test of your abilities. The shriek that heralded their imminent arrival and the sound of metal dragging along metal can still strike fear into your heart. The precious seconds you have to prepare also help make each confrontation feel epic, threatening and barely survivable. It was inspired game design and helped to keep the experience fresh, providing a new twist to Rapture's enemies.

Other smaller changes helped to streamline



It would also be a crime not to mention the brilliant add-on, *Minerva's Den*, that brought another gripping chapter to Rapture's history. Released with little fanfare or publicity, this remains

and improve the experience. Hacking was simplified and now avoided breaking up the action with a pop-up mini-game. The research function was developed and expanded, challenging you to use varied combat attacks over a period of time rather than during a single image. The pacing was also modified and there were some beautiful moments as you walked across the ocean floor outside the city. These quiet moments were poignant and allowed for some nice reflective periods away from the blood and death of the city.

There were plenty of impressive set-pieces scattered throughout *BioShock 2*. Whether it is the deeply creepy sequence from the perspective of a Little Sister to an epic final battle, this was a game that constantly challenged the player. Garry Schyman's score is a staggering achievement too which goes a long way to building the strong, watery atmosphere that Rapture evokes. Technically too, *BioShock 2* excels from the visual appearance to the level design.

one of the best single player pieces of downloadable content released. With a very emotional story, it is a touching exploration of technology and humanity and truly deserved to garner more recognition. With a new weapon and Big Daddy type included, if you have yet to play it and own *BioShock 2* it comes highly recommended.

It is an enormous shame that *BioShock 2* failed to receive the acclaim of its predecessor with many ignoring it as a retread of the original lacking creativity and ideas. It is simply not the case and deserves to be revisited and cherished as the complex and rewarding experience that it is. Deciding to move the action away from the underwater halls of Rapture and to the sky-borne streets of Columbia in the forthcoming *BioShock Infinite* seems to be a wise move. This radical overhaul will help to avoid comparisons with *BioShock* and hopefully allow it to escape the same sad fate of the overlooked *BioShock 2*.

*Chris Wakefiel*



# BIOSHOCK 2 REVIEW

THE SEQUEL TO THE HIT OF 2007

Platforms Available: PC, Xbox 360, PS3

Date: February, 2010

Genre: First-person shooter

Publisher: 2K Games

**B**ioshock, one of the few game titles that can have me grinning like a Cheshire cat as I think back to the first time I set my eyes upon Rapture, rescued a little sister and yelped in fear at the noise of the Big Daddy's drill. Since the

teaser ending of Bioshock 1 fans have been waiting eagerly for the release of the sequel to this epic underwater title and finally after many trailers, screenshots and highly amusing You Tube clips of the 'Uber Limited Edition' they have finally released, Bioshock 2 and boy have we been rewarded for our patience.

The game starts with setting the scene based in 1960s Rapture, a city built under-the-ocean by the magnificent Andrew Ryan. If you don't recognise this name I highly recommend you play through

the first Bioshock as Bioshock 2 refers a great deal back to its big sister in the sense of character names and the back story of Rapture itself. Offering new plasmids, weaponry and an alternative view on the Rapture story, Bioshock 2 also comes with a new





feature; multiplayer mode, something I will cover later in this review.

Following the opening sequence you take in your first breath, as a Big Daddy. Yep, that's right, Bioshock 2 you are all about the metal slugging, drill wielding maniac who those cute little girls call 'Daddy'. The story is based upon your experience as one of these submarine knights who must rescue the Little Sisters, but as with the previous Bioshock something in your bones is telling you that there is something not quite right about the whole thing and the Sherlock Holmes magnifying glass and hat comes out as you keep your eyes and ears wary of any hints towards what the secret might be.

The game play itself is all based in first person shooter mode, with the plasmids upon one hand and your weaponry swung across your other, you are given clear tips and instructions on how to wield each to your advantage, although it can take a bit of getting used to quickly stunning an enemy with an electrical bolt before bonking them on the noggin with your drill. The weapons available to you are collected at specific stages of the game, often including some challenge to achieve them first. There are upgrade stores where you can increase their fire speed, damage or prevent overheating but these are spread widely across the game so choose wisely when upgrading as often it's best to upgrade your favourite weapon first, leaving the least used 'til the final stages.

Plasmids work in the same manner, ranging from electric bolts to telekinesis

and incineration - just be sure not to blow off wind near yourself whilst using this one otherwise you may find you set your behind on fire. The EVE is still the source of energy to use your plasmids, much like a can of Red Bull to you or I, it's highly sought after by everything in the game - enough to die for it which many a splicer has found on occasion. The plasmids are available to upgrade through select

machines in the game, but again, they are widely spread throughout the levels so be wary of splashing out on one specific plasmid as you will use these for constantly changing occasions unlike the weapons.

Although nothing has changed in regards to the use of EVE you will find yourself becoming frustrated by the short amount of EVE hypos and first aid kits you can carry around with you at any one time. However, as with Bioshock 1 you are given the option to spend the ADAM





your ears twitch as to where the noise came from and your palms sweat rivers. The Big Sister is twice as mean, noisy and angry as the Big Daddys; designed

you collect on increasing the size of your health and EVE bar. This won't often be enough though when you come face to face with the newest enemy of the Rapture gang - the Big Sister.

No matter how many trailers of gameplay you watch before you begin Bioshock 2, the moment you hear that screech of a Big Sister your heart starts pumping faster,

to take you down by any means necessary, this includes their own use of plasmids, unique needle piercing weapons and if it happens upon a splicer mid-fight, well I will let you see that experience for yourself, but I assure you - it's not pretty!

As the story develops and you meet your first splicer, Little Sister and Big Sister you



will also begin to meet more of the metal clad enemies held within the Rapture walls. The Big Daddys have not left since their appearance in the original Bioshock but there is two new versions known simply as Alpha and Rumbler, these both appear often throughout the game, with the Alpha version playing a large part in the storyline as you continue through to your watery destiny. Each with their unique skills and abilities as well as the 'perfect' method of killing them, you will find yourself gaining more confidence with each you kill but the first time is always the worst. Although there is no particular advice to offer, remembering the wide range of plasmids you have available and your nearest Gene Bank will help you along the way.

Speaking of new enemies Bioshock 2 has gained a whole new gameplay this series with the introduction of the multiplayer. Now, I will be the first to admit that I am not a fan of FPS multiplayer, mostly

due to my lack of experience and skill when it comes to being quick enough off the mark, but I have found the Bioshock 2 multiplayer is designed for everyone to enjoy. The character selection is limited to a set number each with their own different style, from a deranged house wife in a dress and apron; to a goggle wearing psychotic doctor.

Once your character is selected you are given the opportunity to add a mask, choose their melee weapon - my personal favourite being the frying pan, as well as arranging their weapons and plasmids, although the down side to this is there are only 2 slots for each when you first start out. The games themselves are split into your standard multiplayer style selections of; Free for All, Capture the Flag (or Little Sister in this game), Territory holding and Last Man Standing. These can be played either in a team or as a single person, the game hosting from 2 up to 10 players with







the option to play specifically with your friends or in an open match. If you play as an open match you join as the lowest rank, number 1; you earn yourself points by killing enemies, researching their corpses, getting an assist on a kill, capturing the territory or little sister and many others. Once the match ends these points go towards your score which allows you to level in rank. Number 2, offering upgrades to your weapons, increasing your damage and adding a plasmid slot, I did not play long enough on the multiplayer to discover the top rank but I did find myself up against a rank 9 whose shots would tear a hole through my chest even if he looked at me.

This was the main negative issue I found with the multiplayer, there are no matches for each rank, so if you are just starting out you find yourself dying quickly to the hands of rank 5+ players, often leading to you spending most of your time dead than alive. There is the opportunity to grab the rare spawning Big Daddy suit that will appear once in each game, if you are lucky

to be standing next to it as it spawns prepare yourself for mayhem as you one shot enemies, have constant use of ammo and EVE and the fun jump-stomp-on-head ability. In all, the multiplayer has an excellent design idea and the plan was clear for what the developers wanted it to offer

players, but for someone who finds the graveyard being the new hang out spot it's something I will leave to the professionals.

As I reach over to grab my water suit helmet and shotgun, I find myself thinking that Bioshock 2 has everything a gamer wants; excellent graphics, fantastic sound and music (you may find yourself chilling out to your grandparents vinyl following an hour in Rapture), enemies that will offer even the most experienced gamer a challenge in the hard mode setting. As well as the multiplayer which although does have its flaws can be a great deal of fun when playing with friends who know to go easy on you. Bioshock 2 can safely say that it does live up to the expectations of its Big Sister.

*Steven Dawson*

## BIOSHOCK 2 SCORED - 9/10



## A BIT ABOUT THE CHARACTERS

There were many unique and memorable moments in BioShock. But more specifically here, I'm going to be talking about the enemies (and friends) in the game.

Obviously, the most memorable enemy would have to be the Big Daddy. The optional, big brutes of Rapture that protect the Little Sisters. Their attitude towards you is neutral until you show aggression towards them or their Little Sister. Then they charge towards you with it's drill and commence to pound your face into the floor.

The Splicers are basically your default opponent. But one in particular stands out. The Houndini Splicers are quite a unique enemy. The teleporting, fireball shooting menaces that interrupted your progress considerably.

Something fun I liked is that not everything in Rapture is out to kill you. Well it is, but occasionally you will find two rival Splicers attacking each other, or a group of Splicers attacking a Big Daddy, attempting to get to the Little Sister

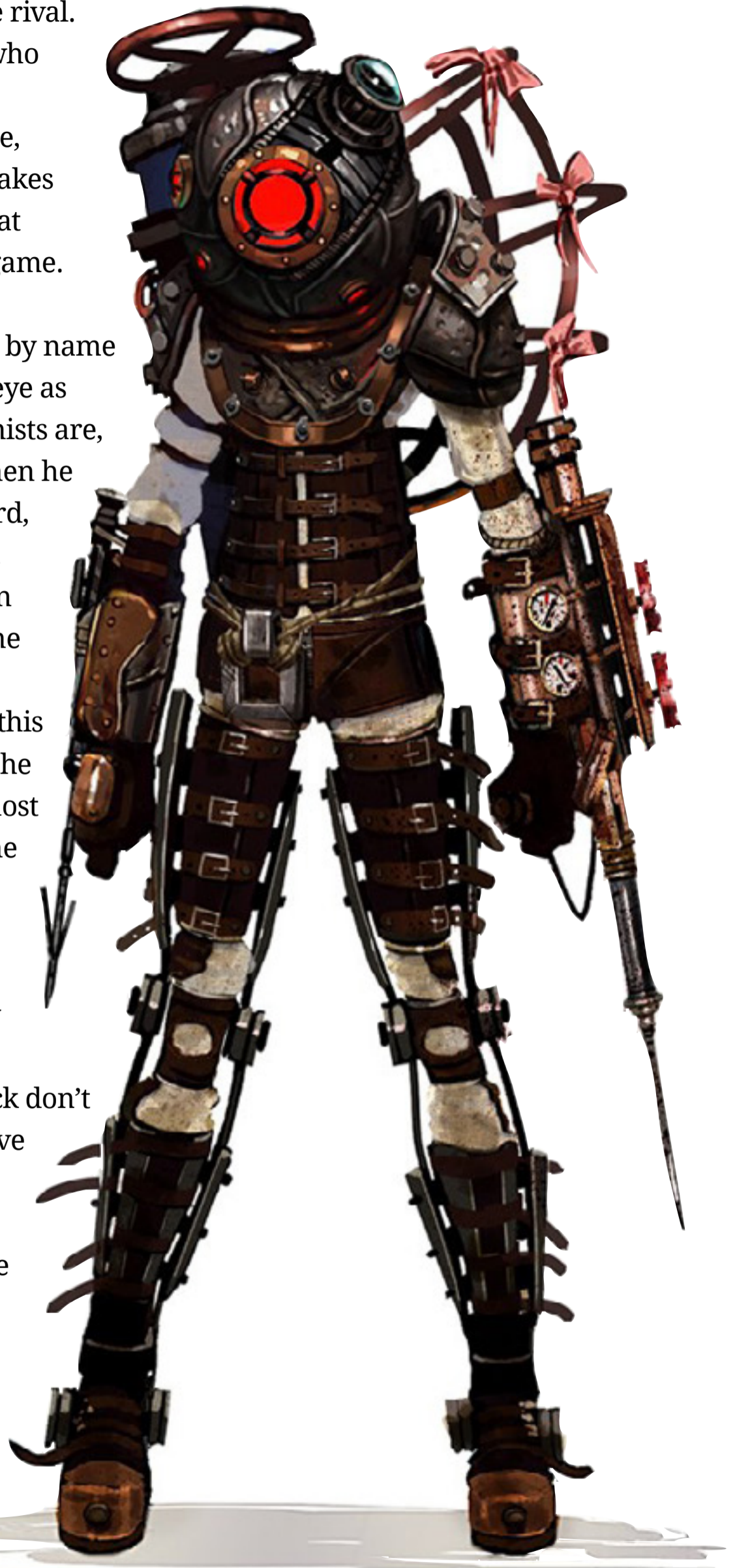


Atlas. \*Spoilers for BioShock follow\* The friend then turned out to be your true rival. Controlling you to kill Andrew Ryan who was actually a good man. Then Atlas, which turned out to be Frank Fontaine, could take over all of Rapture. This makes him a good character with motives that made a very good antagonist for the game.

The character you play as, only called by name briefly once in the intro for the keen eye as 'Jack', is, as most video game protagonists are, a mute. Besides some cries of pain when he is attacked/killed, he doesn't say a word, but at least he has a name, and a face. But these can only be seen with a keen eye. Personally, it depends on the game if a game character should be mute. Games like Magicka are very good in this sense, even making jokes about how the character being mute got them into most the problems the character faces in the first place. And let's not forget games where you have chat options (like Mass Effect) but when you select one the person you're talking to magically knows what you mean, without any words. Thankfully Splicers in BioShock don't like talking very much so we don't have much a problem here, move along.

Overall the characters in BioShock are all memorable ones, to the common Thug Splicer to the sneaky Atlas and the sick Little Sisters. Let's just hope BioShock Infinite can carry this on.

*Duke Glen*



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# WHY IS BIOSHOCK SO UNIQUE

When BioShock was released back in 2007, there had not been much else like it. But what made Bioshock so unique?

Basically BioShock's main 'uniqueness' came in many forms. From the ADAM, to the Big Daddies and the Little Sisters. The Big Daddies being the big, optional brutes protecting the Little Sisters as they extract ADAM from the many corpses in Rapture. But, the big thing which separated BioShock from most other shooters was, of course, being in an underwater city!



I'm joking, of course. It was the plasmids. The ability to electrocute someone, then set them on fire, then freeze them and watch them explode as a turret begins to shoot him never got old. Or you could just hypnotise them and watch the horde of 9 enemies coming towards you all attack each other. Or the ultimate weapon of making a Big Daddy mistake you for its Little Sister and mush anyone to a stain on the carpet who intends to do you any harm.

The ADAM was also a nice touch to the game as well. Using the ADAM you got from either

rescuing or killing the Little Sisters. You can buy Plasmids. Plasmids can be offensive ones such as the Electro Bolt or Incendiary, or physical upgrades for your character such as less damage, camouflage and more ADAM from Little Sisters. These really did enhance the overall experience of BioShock.

The story line was also something very unique \*Spoilers for BioShock Follow\*. With having your mind controlled by Atlas with the phrase 'would you kindly', and told by Ryan by making you kill him. And to finish it off, the whole plot twist at the end. Overall the BioShock story was something that was unique even nowadays.

Overall, there was many things that made Bioshock unique. Form its storyline, to its Plasmids, to the Big Daddies and Little Sisters. The new landscape of a underwater city. All these make BioShock a fun and unique experience

*Duke Glen*





# BIOSHOCK INFINITE PREVIEW

but be warned that there may be

Platforms Available: PC, Xbox 360, PS3

Date: March, 2013

Genre: First-person shooter

Publisher: 2K Games

**B**ioShock Infinite has remained one of our most eagerly awaited games since its announcement way back in 2010. However, the last time we saw the game over a year ago we were a little anxious about how different this entry was from the original. After spending almost four hours with the title this week, it is safe to say that any worries we had have been safely put aside. In order to avoid revealing too much, we won't discuss any major plot details or events

some minor spoilers present.

Irrational Games have released the opening few minutes of the game in the form of a trailer to whet player's appetites and it is certainly an impressive beginning. Taking on the role of disgraced former Pinkerton agent Booker DeWitt, you are given the job of finding and rescuing a mysterious girl last seen on the floating city of Columbia. Arriving at a mysterious





Rapture. As Booker arrived on the streets of the city, the brilliant sunlight shone down on the cobbles as groups of cheerful people enjoyed the weather. It was a more low-key beginning

lighthouse in the middle of the ocean, it wasn't long before the plot thickened and Booker found himself among the clouds.

The start of *BioShock Infinite* is especially strong and draws heavily on the beginning of the original game. There are a variety of subtle references that capture the same spirit while cleverly subverting them, from the isolated lighthouse in the middle of the ocean to the very first moment you catch a glimpse of Columbia. It is a very evocative start that creates a different atmosphere from the other entries into the series, while retaining a similar focus on philosophical themes and ideologies. This was perfectly illustrated very early on as we found ourselves inside a gloomy, candle-filled church populated with white-robed worshippers.

Playing on an Xbox 360, we were impressed by the visuals, which are very distinctive. Their brightness and vibrancy is a million miles away from the dark, oppressive and watery corridors of

than *BioShock*, exploring the city where nothing initially seemed amiss.

Moving through the crowds, it became clear that a celebration was underway as children waved flags and played together. Flags and banners were prominently displayed marking the anniversary of Columbia seceding from the United States. It was a jovial atmosphere with people reclining on deck chairs and picnic blankets while a barbershop quartet sang from a nearby floating barge. These residents were members of "The Founders", a group responsible for running Columbia.

Underneath these happy scenes there was a vague feeling of unease that was difficult to categorise and it didn't take long for the beautiful veneer to be chipped away. The Founders are a fiercely nationalistic group obsessed with keeping the city free from immigrants and those they consider impure. The themes of xenophobia and racism pervaded our playthrough, with racial segregation in place and disturbing



propaganda posters “decorating” the walls. It was the mature and carefully employed handling of these subjects that made playing BioShock Infinite a really rich experience.

After an altercation, which we are hesitant to explain in greater detail, Booker found himself attacked by The Founders and Columbia’s law enforcement. Here we had the opportunity to test out the title’s combat and it felt more developed than in BioShock. One of our biggest concerns was how hectic and complicated the shooting mechanics would be, especially after the manic trailers that have been recently unveiled. Thankfully, it is remarkably smooth, intuitive and carefully introduced.

Unlike previous BioShock titles, Booker can now only carry two weapons at a time which are selected using the right bumper. Over the course of the playthrough we encountered pistols, shotguns, carbines and sniper rifles. The latter gun played an important part in our shootouts as the areas have vastly increased in size and scale from those in Rapture. Gaining a height advantage and using long-range combat was very effective against some of the



a series of rotating blades, and was easily accessible with the press of a button. After enemies had received a significant amount of damage they could be executed with

ranged enemies, including turrets and those equipped with rocket launchers.

Key to mobility was the Sky Hook, a device acquired early on that allows you to use Columbia's Skyline, a form of aerial transport. The hook was magnetized, which gave us the ability to jump to special attachments or the rail itself. While it looks complicated, it was very simple to do and quickly was adopted into our combat repertoire. We also had access to a "Skyline Strike" which let us slam into enemies from above and it could also knock them off buildings, sending them plummeting to their doom.

The Sky Hook also doubled as a nasty melee weapon, as it comprised

the hook, initiating a violent and grisly kill animation. It was rather visceral but did fit in with the dark and violent tone of the game. Unlike in BioShock, the Sky Hook did not have to be equipped separately (à la the wrench) and could be used at any time. This was especially useful when being rushed by opponents and bought us extra time to reload or re-equip.

In BioShock Infinite some changes have been made to special abilities, with





Plasmids being replaced with “Vigors”. These unusual shaped bottles hold different powers and we got to play with a variety of them, including Devil’s Kiss, the spiritual successor to BioShock’s Incinerate! Plasmid. This fireball-spewing ability was gruesomely imbued when Booker first drank from its bottle, horribly burning his hands with melted skin falling off the bones. Fortunately no permanent damage was incurred, but it was a pretty surprising and shocking scene. Each Vigor you initially drink from had a special animation that gave you an idea of what it could do.

In combat two separate Vigors could be equipped at a time and swapping them was straightforward, although changing Vigors could seemingly only be done when bottles were encountered in the game world. Each one we equipped had two functions: by tapping the left shoulder button you initiate a burst of the power whereas holding down the button deployed a trap that was activated when enemies were in range. The Murder of Crows Vigor sends a vicious flock of birds that will peck and claw at foes, but deploying a nest trap is a very useful strategy. If our health was too



low we would drop a trap, blocking anyone from following us, allowing us to reload and heal then get back into the action.

Combining Vigors was immensely satisfying and where BioShock Infinite really managed to make its gameplay stand out. Using the Possession ability was very satisfying, turning enemies into temporary allies. This Vigor could even be

extended to machines and turrets, which are very valuable companions in the more hectic encounters. One of our favourites was using the Bucking Bronco (a Vigor that hurls enemies into the sky) before swapping to Devil's Kiss and blasting them out of the air with a fireball. It was quite disturbing seeing their immolated bodies dropping from the air as nothing but a charred skeleton. Mixing up combat



proved very enjoyable and nothing seemed quite as overpowered as the shock-shotgun combination from BioShock.

Vigors are powered by collecting “Salts” that can be purchased from vending machines, found in the environment or looted from enemy bodies. It also appeared that they are upgradable by buying expensive boosts from specialist vendors: one such option was to make every victim of The Murder of Crows have their body become a fresh trap. These upgrades were sadly too pricey for us to

access in the playthrough, but will likely have an impact later on in the game.

Bioshock Infinite also makes changes to constant ability boosts (the Gene Tonics from BioShock and its sequel) and they now come in the form of “Gear”. The rather vague title refers to items of what can best be described as clothing imbued with super powers. You are able to wear four pieces at a time, one from each slot (such as hats, waistcoats and breeches). While the idea is rather bizarre they are invaluable and cater for different playing



any damage he is subjected to is initially negated by the shield but if it is diminished his health starts to suffer. Health is regained by collecting health kits or edible foods and Booker could not carry healing items with it in the

styles and can prove invaluable. Midway through our playthrough we stumbled upon a top hat that allowed us to set enemies on fire. The more we thought about it, the less it seemed to make sense but at the same time anyone we touched burst into flames, which is undoubtedly a fair trade-off.

Health has also received something of an adjustment from previous instalments. Early on Booker receives a potion that generates a shield around him. Typically,

portion of the game we played. It is one of the more disappointing new additions and felt like an inclusion entirely influenced by the trend towards regenerating health from most other mainstream games. While most other aspects of BioShock Infinite seemed to hark back to older gaming traditions, this felt jarringly out of sync.

One of the final major gameplay elements introduced is “Infusions”: rare potions that can provide a permanent benefit



in three areas. When collected we were faced with a choice of upgrading Booker's health, shield or the quantity of Salts he could carry. Once the choice was made it could not be undone and seemed that over the course of the game it would be possible to maximise all these traits by discovering 30 Infusions. It is worth noting that we encountered a number of side quests, such as recovering a key to unlock an ornate chest. They immediately felt at home in the game universe and task you with carefully exploring each area to gain extra benefits.

So, our experience of the gameplay was overwhelmingly positive and the atmosphere and story can easily match that. BioShock Infinite drew us in almost immediately with a richly detailed and carefully realised world. The background for the story and various people in Columbia is told via a combination of Voxophones (the equivalent of audio diaries) and Kinetoscopes. The latter are black and white silent film boxes that provide an insight into The Founders and their enigmatic leader Father Comstock. Their inclusion is very well judged and both the voice actors and writing are excellent. Perhaps one of the real highlights of BioShock Infinite is its ability to change moods in an instant. What can be a lovely, even beautiful,





entered into a large chamber containing a room full of black-hooded men, eerily reminiscent of white supremacist movements. It wasn't long before we were forced to fight for our

scene of family happiness and contended society can suddenly transform into something much, much darker before you realise it. Even large battles can be soon replaced with some creepy and disturbing tension. One of the standout moments for us was entering a building that was home to the Fraternal Order of the Raven. These sinister individuals worship the presidential assassin John Wilkes Booth and vilify Lincoln as a slave-loving demon.

Moving through the dark corridors, with shadows everywhere, and seeing shockingly racist statements and enormous paintings of their leader was deeply eerie. Moving further, flocks of crows flitted along the corridors to a chorus of horrible caws. We then

lives and is an excellent illustration of why the game's atmosphere is so effective.

Booker eventually meets up with Elizabeth, the woman he has been sent to find and the two accompany one another. We do not want to spoil the details but the circumstance of their first encounter is impressive and a stand-out set piece that had us sweaty-palmed with excitement. Initially the prospect of us having to "babysit" an NPC filled us with dread, but Irrational Games have avoided that





trap entirely. The characterisation of Elizabeth, especially in terms of her voice acting and very subtle body language means you warm to her quickly.

The writing between Booker and Elizabeth is also surprisingly deep and touching and the bond the two of you soon deepens, especially when you come to rely on her skills and abilities. During combat she can provide you with ammunition and health that she will recover from the battlefield. In one of the particularly violent encounters we found ourselves in, we were facing death but at a critical moment Elizabeth was there to throw a medical kit to us that she had just picked up. It felt oddly personal and a different type of relationship with an NPC.

Elizabeth is not an ordinary woman however and has some unusual abilities, including the power to initiate "Tears". These rifts, seemingly in space and time, can only be activated at certain points and are a type of wish fulfilment. The tears can lead to some interesting gameplay options too, as in certain areas Elizabeth can, if

you so choose, bring in certain objects from a different plane. In our playthrough there were moments when she plucked out crates of ammunition, objects we were able to Skyline to and even a turret to support us. It was a very fulfilling sequence of gameplay that blended together Vigors, weapons and her abilities.

There is so much more we want to describe and detail, but we want to keep as much of the story as under wraps as possible. Spending an afternoon with BioShock Infinite was a nothing short of a joy and its gameplay, atmosphere and story all combined to create an experience that managed to live up to our very high expectations: something that is no mean feat. It is an incredible and at times emotional ride and one which looks set to be one of the most discussed games of 2013: and it is not even February. It already feels like it will be a long two months to wait until the game launches on March 26th. Columbia cannot come soon enough.

*Chris Wakefield*



**SEE YOU IN THE SKIES**