

## GAME REVIEWS

# Much-anticipated game lacks plot

By Dalton Carver  
Staff reporter

Unless you've been living on the dark side of the moon, you may have heard of a video game by the name of "Halo." If you're in-touch with the gaming universe, you may also know about Bungie, the company who originally designed the popular science fiction series.

After finding success with the "Halo" franchise, Bungie looked towards the stars once more to start a new independent project known as "Destiny." Already knowing what they did well with Halo, Bungie packed their new project chock-full of ambitious ideas. Many of these goals hit their mark, but some feel too bare-boned to actually be enjoyable.

"Halo" has always been known for its main character, Master Chief, and the compelling story of Earth fighting for its survival against conquering aliens. The plot was always complicated, but it was full-bodied and interesting to follow.

Bungie let this focus on storytelling slip with "Destiny," as the campaign fails to make an impact. Cutscenes and dialogue fail to explain what's going on in the universe, and to really find out, you have to read Grimoire cards earned through play time. This requires you to visit Bungie's website or to download the free "Destiny" companion app.

Although the campaign is directionless and bare, the gameplay is slick and satisfying. If you've ever played "Halo" or "Call of Duty," it's not difficult to get the hang of "Destiny." Bungie is obviously experienced with the first-person-shooter aspect, so they tried something new by implementing role-playing and massively multiplayer elements into "Destiny."

The Tower, one of the last human bastions on Earth, also doubles as a multiplayer hub. Here you can make purchases of weapons, armor and spacecraft, all while fellow players do the same. The experience is cool at first, but it would be better if players could

interact more with each other. The Tower also gets smaller and less exciting each time you visit, which is a lot. Hopefully, an expansion is in "Destiny's" future.

Continuing on multiplayer, you can team up with friends or other players online to take on campaign or mission challenges, known as strikes. These difficult challenges could be compared to raids in massively multiplayer games such as "World of Warcraft." Combine teamwork with the good gameplay and this is where "Destiny" shines. You're free to shoot, run, levitate, fly and collect rewards to your heart's content. As a bonus, all of these actions look and feel great. Graphics appear nicely, even if you're not playing on a next generation console such as the Xbox One or PS4.

When you get bored with teaming up with other people, competitive multiplayer allows you to take the fight to each other. However, the Crucible lacks the depth and addictive nature that "Call of Duty" employs to attract so many multiplayer gamers. Overall, em-

barking on missions and strikes is more entertaining and rewarding.

Bungie's attempt at role-playing is well-thought, but poorly executed. You can choose between three classes, including the hunter, warlock or titan. If you're an experienced RPG gamer, the titan can be considered a warrior, the hunter a rogue and the warlock a mage. However, the only real difference between the classes is the super-charged powers they're able to use. Almost every other attribute is shared or utilized between all classes. No matter which character class you choose, you'll be pulling triggers more than anything else.

Once you choose your class, you'll level up your character like you would in any other RPG. Once you reach level 20, improving your character becomes more difficult. You're forced to locate and earn specific pieces of armor that increase your experience intake, which can be confusing and tedious. It isn't like any other leveling system used in other games, so it may be perplexing at first. While finding these armor pieces

help, it's going to take a lot more time and effort to reach any level beyond the first 20.

Make no mistake, "Destiny" is a first-person-shooter, despite all the subgenres included. There are multitudes of guns and armor, varying from common to rare. At this stage in Destiny's life, guns are more important than the class you choose, one of the main reasons why the RPG elements seem unimportant.

Bungie is to be applauded for trying to make something unique, and they really are on to something. However, most elements just lack structure and filling to fit together well and with purpose. With more time and support, which Bungie is adamant about, "Destiny" could become great, rather than just good. Considering Bungie's creativity and quality of work, expect Destiny to not just reach for the stars, but to grab them.

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## 'Destiny' repeats itself, loses players' interest

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With more than \$500 million spent on game design and advertising, it should be nearly impossible for the even moderately active gamer to have not heard of "Destiny." For those few and far between, "Destiny" is the gaming collaborative between two of the largest game developers, Activision and Bungie, with hopes at developing a true next-generation gaming block buster.

"Destiny's" plot seems interesting enough. "Destiny" is fixed in a mythic, open, science-fiction type setting. The plot is familiar with science fiction genres. Humans have been gifted the technology of intergalactic travel. This distant future, post-apoca-

lyptic world has been destroyed by an enigmatic force simply referred to as "The Darkness".

The game really starts at this point, where your mission (if you choose to accept, young padawan) is to defend the last colony of "Guardians" from enemy extraterrestrials.

This translates as extermination. Take out the dark forces of the universe in order for the "Light of Man" to shine its ever glowing flame of righteousness.

I was intrigued. I popped the disc in and started my campaign. The game was rather captivating for the first few missions. And then I did it again. And again. And again. And by this point, I was so bored with the same, repetitive seek-and-destroy format

that I could hardly stand the jaw-dropping graphics or hyper-realistic level design.

This game has all the promise of a next-gen super hit, except that it's ironically unimaginative and dull. Perfect graphics, excellent mechanics and, assuredly, a ton of money spent on its massive-multiplayer online format makes this game not without promise.

Unfortunately, "Destiny" poorly utilizes its technical superiority. All the bad guys were similar. The missions were snoozeville. Take strike missions, for instance. You gather with a team called a firefight and work your way to get to the mega-boss baddie. On paper, this sounds integrative. However, it lacked any true men-

tal competency. Bang-bang. Pew-pew. Next level.

One of the most unusual features of "Destiny" was its online *only* feature. That is, high-speed internet is required to play any aspect of the game. For most Americans, I would assume this not to be much of a problem. But here on campus, it's no secret that the Wi-Fi sucks. I found that peak Wi-Fi hours slowed down and even kicked me off the server more than once. This, to say the least, irritated me.

When I actually had good internet (a gamer's most revered excuse), I found the multiplayer feature of this game to be "Destiny's" saving grace. The Crucible, as this feature is called, exploited the gorgeous mapping and free-roaming space that wasn't proper-

ly utilized in the story mode. All the customization features shined as I used my online-doppelganger (he was a warlock, mind you) to pwn noobs mercilessly.

"Destiny" is an empty shell, a house built on sturdy foundations but with crappy IKEA furniture. The future of "Destiny" is not doomed, though. A sequel(s) are in process. If "Destiny" can work an engaging story to match its masterfully crafted mechanics in a sequel, the potential for greatness may be unparalleled. For now, the question plaguing gamers like myself still lingers. Is the future nigh?

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