

• A memorial to the mighty Fae heroes of the past...one day I'll have a statue, too!

# EVERQUEST II: ECHOES OF FAYDWER

God-fearing Elf-lovers, rejoice!

PUBLISHER: Sony Online Entertainment DEVELOPER: Sony Online Entertainment GENRE: MMORPG AVAILABILITY: Retail, E-tail ([everquest2.station.sony.com](http://everquest2.station.sony.com)) ESRB RATING: Teen  
 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: 1GHz CPU, 512MB RAM, 10GB hard drive space, EverQuest II MULTIPLAYER: Massively so VERSION REVIEWED: Retail Box

## REVIEW

EverQuest II's previous two expansions added significant amounts of content to SOE's flagship MMORPG—but both were largely aimed at high-level players. *Echoes of Faydwer* breaks this trend, offering plenty of content for everyone. It's also the best EQ2 expansion to date.



• The city of Old Kelethin offers plenty of new quests for beginning players, including a Fae-specific quest to find "your calling."



• Queen Antonia might be hidden in her castle, but the Fae Queen Amrie is there for all who would seek an audience with her...providing she has no other pressing matters.

*EOF* comes loaded with new features: The continent of Faydwer (which should be strikingly familiar to EQ1 players) hosts over 20 zones, enough quests to progress from level 1 to 70 (without even peeking at the rest of the EQ2 world), and a new playable race (the Fae—see sidebar for details). Secondary trade skills get expanded, too, with new transmutation and tinkering professions that provide more ways to rake in the gold. And in terms of bells and whistles, cloaks (a long-requested feature) can further customize your character's stats and appearance—in addition to looking cool, these items allow guilds to show off some customizable colors and heraldry.

### FAMILIAR PLACES FOREVER CHANGED

EQ1 players will discover some pretty sweeping changes to the continent of Faydwer. The Dwarven city of Kaladim now teems with vicious Kobolds, Crushbone and its Orcish denizens rally against a new foe, and places like Castle Mistmoore and the Butcherblock Mountains help fill in part of the 500-year gap between EQ1 and EQ2. It's pretty nostalgic to come back to Faydwer...and its inclusion is a nice nod to longtime EQ players.

Another equally nice nod: The gods, absent since the Shattering (a cataclysmic event that occurred prior to EQ2), return in *EOF*. Players can choose to devote themselves to a deity within their faction, which opens up new quests and powers that differ with each god. "Miracles" and "Blessings" can be purchased through Favor, itself earned as a reward for sacrificing items or

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## THESE WINGS ARE MADE FOR GLIDING

As far as *EOF*'s new Fae species is concerned, appearances count for quite a lot: These cute little winged buggers are the most customizable of EQ2's races. The aforementioned appendages offer more than just a cool new look, though; they allow characters to glide from great heights. This may not sound like much at first...but one (often fatal) misstep suffered while playing as any other race will make you appreciate a nice pair of wings.

completing certain quests. Becoming a follower of Tunare, for instance, grants Blessings that increase the potency of healing spells and offer strong attacks against evil creatures. Miracles and Blessings are quite powerful, balanced by short effect durations, long recast times, and high Favor cost. The whole system feels well implemented and adds a welcome new facet to EQ2's gameplay.

The mother lode of content does beget a few annoyances—like vague quest descriptions and the fact that the engine *still* runs sluggishly, even on high-end systems—but it doesn't detract too much from the overall experience. *Echoes of Faydwer* is a no-brainer purchase for EQ2 vets, and newcomers will find it a handy starting point. If following expansions meet the high standard this sets, the EQ2 community is in store for a great future. • Allan Kaspar

### VERDICT

Over 20 new zones; interesting new mechanics and playable race.

Several vague quest descriptions; engine still runs sluggishly on low-end PCs.

8/10

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