



Explore this gorgeous post-apocalyptic world filled with robot beasts.

#### THE POINT OF THE SPEAR

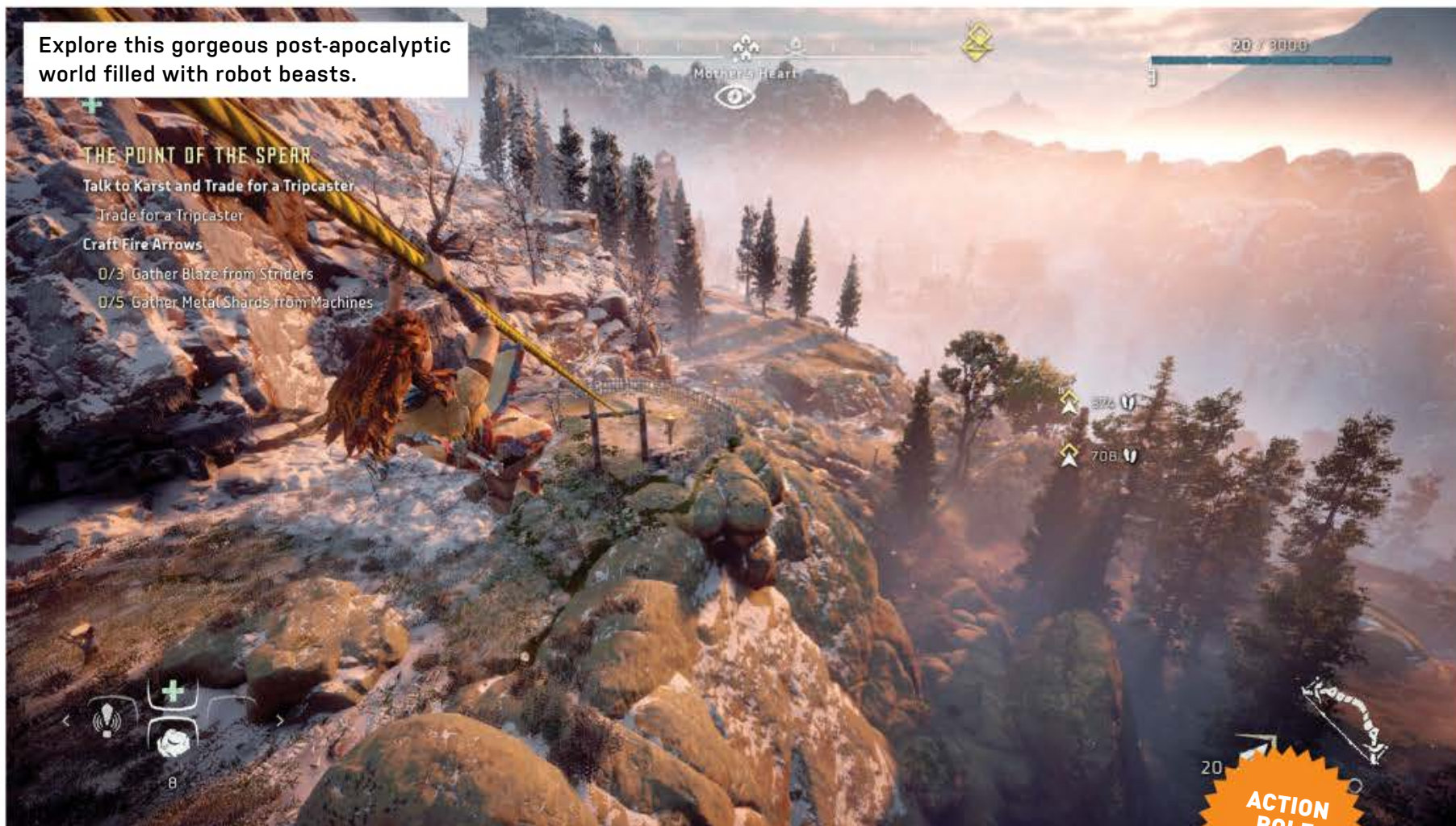
Talk to Karst and Trade for a Tripcaster

Trade for a Tripcaster

Craft Fire Arrows

0/3 Gather Blaze from Striders

0/5 Gather Metal Shards from Machines



ACTION  
ROLE  
PLAYING

# Horizon Zero Dawn Complete Edition

Oh give me a home, where the robo-buffalo roam...

**MANY OF THE GAMES** that come to *Maximum PC* have issues, and we're usually fairly kind about them, as we are often told there will be a day-one patch to fix the problems. So what's *Horizon Zero Dawn's* excuse? It's a three-year-old game originally made for the AMD-powered PS4, and didn't have a holiday or multi-system release window to hit. How was it released in this state when *Death Stranding*, which runs on the same engine, was such a strong port?

You see, it's a bit crashy. The PC port of *HZD* has many things to recommend it, but stability isn't one of them, returning us to the desktop about 50 percent of the time with no noticeable trigger event. And despite the wealth of graphics options, obtaining a smooth frame rate can be difficult too. Hopefully, this will all be fixed by the time you read this, but it represents the game around its launch. It's a shame, as when *HZD* is good, it's very good.

More of a stealth-action-adventure in the mold of later *Assassin's Creeds*, *HZD* casts you as Aloy, a female outcast who is easily as boring as any male game protagonist we've seen recently.

She works and trains hard to rejoin the tribe that cast her out, and is sent out into a far-future post-apocalyptic world populated by robots in the form of grazing herds, stalking predators, and dinosaur-like giants. The robots gain power from eating biomass, and act very much like the animals they outwardly resemble.

From the leather and feathers of the primitive tribe to the sleek cybernetics of the robots, it's a gorgeous world: Sunrises fill the world with glorious reds and oranges; weather effects ripple across the lands; swaying foliage glows at night so you know where the hiding places are.

The story stays on the right side of cliché, never going for the obvious—wholesome tribe overrun by nasty modern machines—instead weaving a narrative that constantly ups the stakes.

It's the machines that deserve the most accolades, though. When you first take out a velociraptor-like (*Jurassic Park* version) Watcher it makes you feel powerful. When you use a Strider as a mount you feel fast. And when you climb a Tallneck, thundering footsteps audible long before you see it, you feel like a king.

Human characters, outside of settlements, tend to appear in *Far Cry*-esque base-clearing missions, which don't play to Aloy's strengths. In single combat with a mighty machine she shines, but when stealth goes awry you quickly reach for the reload button.

*HZD* is a deep game that's hugely welcome on PC after three years on PS4. Despite its performance issues at launch, this is the best version of the game, bundled with its expansion. Aloy's story takes her to unexpected places, and this highly imaginative world is one that needs to be explored. **-IAN EVENDEN**

VERDICT

8

**Horizon Zero Dawn Complete Edition**

**+** **PURE** Expansive world; exciting combat; can look excellent.

**-** **CORRUPTED** Poor performance and stability at launch.

**RECOMMENDED SPECS** CPU, i7 4770K / Ryzen 5 1500X. RAM, 16GB. GPU, GTX 1060 (6GB) / RX 580 (8GB).

\$50, [www.guerrilla-games.com](http://www.guerrilla-games.com), T-rated





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