

# The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings

Is that... Is that a wooden dildo?

This is not your grandpappy's idyllic fantasy universe. It's not filled with happy, tree-hugging hippies and hearty, mine-raping midgets who only have to deal with adversity once every thousand years when some drama queen in implausible, uncomfortable-looking armour (which also comes in black – for Enhanced Creepy Effect™) decides that those lazy hippies, filthy minedwellers and smelly humans just don't get him, so he builds an ominous tower (which optionally comes topped with needlessly sharp ornamental spires that serve no purpose other than to freak out the locals) with a giant eye on it that rockets everyone into a terrified frenzy, which inevitably leads to a hairy-footed short guy named Elijah Wood doing a crapton of walking before tossing some shiny trinket into something fiery and going home to wait another thousand years for the next pompous wanker to put on his blackest armour and prance about toasting unicorns and murdering bunnies. This is not that fantasy universe – and if that's what you expect from *The Witcher 2: Assassin's of Kings*, you're going to be sorely disappointed.

This is a rotting fantasy world,



## [ details ]

Platforms:

PC

Genre:

Role-playing game

Age restriction:

18+

DRM:

One-time Internet activation required

Multiplayer:

Local: None

Online: None

Developer:

CD Projekt RED

Website:

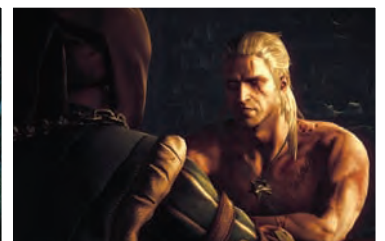
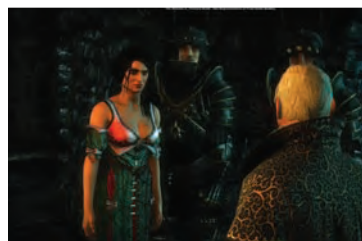
[www.en.thewitcher.com](http://www.en.thewitcher.com)

Publisher:

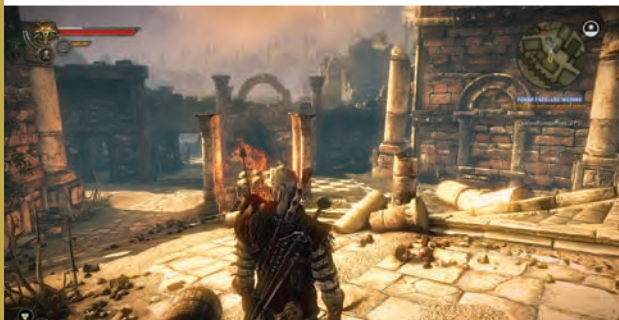
Namco Bandai

Distributor:

Megarom Interactive



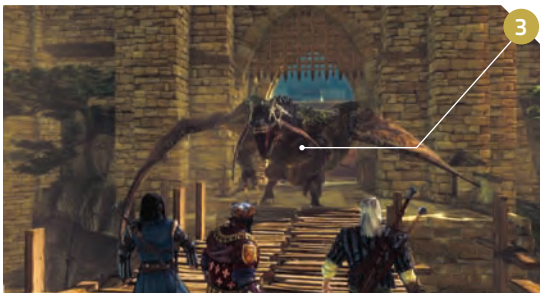
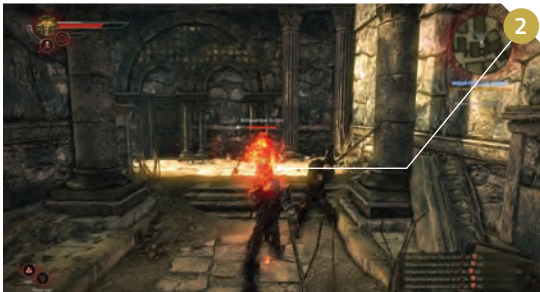
An exam?



where adversity is faced daily. It's a world where humans have risen to power by virtue of the sheer numbers produced by humanity's uninhibited breeding. Humans hatefully persecute the elder races (i.e. elves, dwarves and the like) at every turn. Rape is considered acceptable, so long as you don't get caught. Just walking down the street turns into a game of chance: survival by dice roll. Racism, drugs, prostitution, slavery, avarice and other unsavoury practices reign supreme. From the lowest serf to the kings themselves, each of *The Witcher 2's* boundlessly interesting characters is a bastard in their own right. Almost everyone you meet is as likely to slit your throat as they are to offer a helpful hand. It's grimy, it's dangerous and it feels completely, worryingly believable. Once again, you're thrust into these warped fantasy environs as Geralt of Rivia, Witcher and monster slayer. Geralt's no stranger to persecution, being a sort of fantasy X-Man, a mutant granted superhuman abilities via the power of magic and torturous training. Few people see Geralt as being human – and in a world such as this, that leaves you with very few friends, even less of whom are trustworthy.

*The Witcher 2's* narrative begins in the middle of a war, with very little

explanation as to why you're fighting under the banner of Temeria's King Foltest. It's not long before everything becomes mightily complicated for Geralt and by the time the lengthy prologue chapter ends, you'll be so immersed in the narrative that you'll have forgotten that you started this game without the faintest idea as to what the hell is going on. While the story isn't particularly original, it's utterly captivating from start to finish, filled with intrigue and surprises. Sadly, one of the game's problems arises early, stemming from a lack of information on its gameplay mechanics. Other than a few tutorial textboxes that pop up to explain the basic controls and provide other (mostly useless) info, you're left stumbling around in the dark when it comes to the game's more advanced intricacies. It makes the opening hours frustratingly tough as you attempt to work out how the game expects you to play it. It's Vizima's outskirts all over again, because I imagine few players will ever progress beyond this point, most of them having an epic ragequit at some point in the prologue, high-pitched screams of "OMG I've died seventy times in the last three minutes" emanating from their frustrated faceholes. Not helping matters is the often clumsy and sluggish melee combat system, the



**/1/** As in the original game, you can take on monster hunting contracts that'll get you a tidy reward. You'll first have to acquire information on the monster you're hunting by buying and reading in-game books about them.

**/2/** Your magic spells are called Signs – one of Geralt's three specialisations. The other two are swordsmanship and alchemy. All three can be improved in the extensive character progression screen. This is the Igni Sign in action.

**/3/** *The Witcher 2* is easily one of the most cinematic RPGs out there. Some of the set pieces are absolutely astoni-OMG DRAGON.

**/4/** A moment of sensual tenderness unfolds. So much sensuality, so much tenderness.

timing of which takes some getting used to. It's easy to see what the developers intended for the melee combat, but their execution is a little off. Nevertheless, when the combat system works as it's supposed to and Geralt becomes a graceful, deadly blur of flesh, blood and steel darting from foe to foe, it's awesome to behold. Thankfully, you've also got access to traps, bombs, throwing daggers and a few magic spells, somewhat offsetting the melee problems.

It's a pity that so few people will limp through the taxing opening hours, because once the game opens up it's a truly enthralling RPG. It's a shorter, more focussed experience than the original, but it's much tighter and irrefutably more impressive because of it. Half as long, twice as bright and all that. As with the original game, the way *The Witcher 2* deals with player choice is remarkable. All too often in RPGs, player choice is a throwaway concept tacked onto the feature list, with immediate consequences that can be comfortably reset by the player with a click of the load button. Here the true, far-reaching consequences of your choices often only reveal themselves *hours* after the choice is made. On top of that, you're often left feeling like a total bunghole no matter what choice you made. It's delightfully harsh, although many people won't be able to stomach a game that so fervently desires to make the player confront the

power of their actions. It's a game that doesn't care about your feelings, doesn't want to hold your hand when you're crossing a busy street, instead forcing you to acknowledge that even the most seemingly innocuous choices can punch your heart straight out of your chest with an unforeseen price. For this supreme lack of candy-coating, *The Witcher 2* should be applauded.

The world's characters are interesting, to say the least. You're constantly being lied to, often being strung along, each character's motivation a complete mystery until their sword is at your throat. Add in distractions like arm wrestling and dice poker, together with a generous number of side quests and a worthwhile crafting/alchemy system, and you've got a world that it's easy to lose countless hours to. Just reading the in-game journal can engulf enough of your time that people might start worrying about your sanity. The game's sights, sounds and incidental details further envelop you in this continually immersive world – particularly the visuals, which no screenshot can do justice. It's the type of game that justifies a PC upgrade, because it deserves to be played with everything turned up to 11. There's so much more to say, but evil word limits prevent it. Simply put, *The Witcher 2's* gritty, mature brilliance is absolutely worth getting lost in. **NAG**

**Barkskin**

**/ PLUS /** Incredibly immersive / Brilliant narrative / Meaningful moral choices / Outstanding visuals  
**/ MINUS /** Clumsy combat system / Inconsistent difficulty

THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST, MOST IMMERSIVE RPGS EVER CREATED. ALSO – BOOBS LOL.

**91**

# NAG



## PS Vita

We play with Sony's new toy

## Reviews

- L.A. Noire
- The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings
- Duke Nukem Forever
- Brink
- + More!



# BATTLEFIELD

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Two words, Hands-on multiplayer! Or is that three words?

JULY 2011 SOUTH AFRICA R42.00



If your DVD is missing we are really sorry. The truth is the DVD had to be redone this month after the burner was formatted. This has nothing to do with your particular DVD being missing - that's just bad luck, which is why we're sorry.