

Review: Tales of the Abyss

WARNING: May cure the common cold and a MUST have for true RPG fans!

I had a cold. Rented Tales of the Abyss to keep me occupied while I sat around feeling sorry for myself. Got home, popped a few Tylenol, chugged a bottle of bucklies and started playing.

The game starts off slow. You have to sit through the usual, this is the "X" button, located here and it swings your sword. I got through that portion and passed out. (In retrospect the tutorial was only one minute long, must have just been the cold medication.)

Upon coming out of my coma the next day I decided to try the game again. I'm glad I did, it turned out to be one of the best RPG's I have ever played!

It has a mix of everything. For those looking for a fun, simple storyline with lots of interesting characters, you've found it! For more advanced RPG gamers, they have incorporated a strategic battle system that involves combining characters attacks and magic Fonons. (And for those of you who hate all that complicated nonsense you can just hack and slash your way through the battle field by pressing "X" to chop and the "O" button to use magic.)

Speaking of battle fields, traveling is made easy in this game. You run around the map as enemies appear sporadically but you chose wheather to run around them or fight them. Gone are the days of that annoying timer followed by some cheesy music followed by the screen fading into battle.

The characters are incredibly well detailed (you can thank Kosuke Fujishima's character designs for that). Almost all of their speeches are voiced over (so sick people with colds don't have to suffer reading). For the portions that you do have to read, the speech bubbles are big and the words are efficiently used.

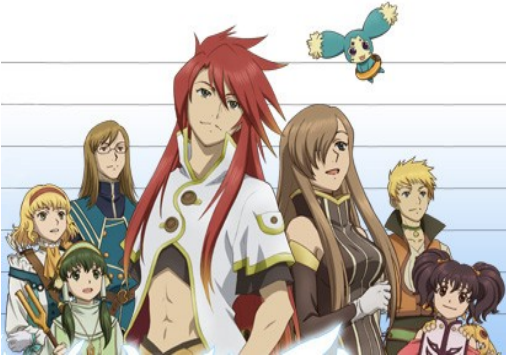
There are tons of amazing anime cutscenes throughout the game that help add to the experience. The cutscenes are vivid, charming and always engaging.

The storyline is great, the characters are comical, dramatic and you find yourself liking (or disliking them) very quickly. It has just the right mix of action, love interests and lighthearted comedy all rolled into one. If you can sit through the occasional rant's about Fonon's, hyper-resonances and seventh Fonons, you're sure to love the game.

So five days later I was healthy and had millions of dollars in late fee's accumulated. I went back to the store deciding the buy the game. Waiting in line, some random guy shouted out "yo, that's an awesome game guy! I liked it better than FF12!" Now while I wouldn't go quite that far (FF is a great game,) I wont argue it was definitely well worth the fifty three dollars Canadian I paid. It was even worth having to listen to random guy

tell me how he was the ultimate gaming god of our universe. I left when the discussion turned to his not so extravagant sex life.

So there you have it anime fans, Tales of the Abyss, the cure for the common cold, the key to forging new friendships, and a heck of a lot of fun! Money well spent!



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