

Tyranny: Bastard's Wound DLC

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Subjective QA Feedback

Before getting into the actual feedback itself, it must be said that nobody in our team is a fan of this niched RPG genre. So while we might sound a bit harsh, bear in mind a lot of the critique has nothing to do with quality, but is more a matter of taste. Another thing worth noting is that because we were only to review the DLC and none of us has played the game before, we had little time to learn the core gameplay and get a good sense of the plot. Lastly, as the DLC often overlaps the base game in content, a lot of the feedback will unavoidably hit the wrong target (meaning the base game itself and not the DLC).

Story and Narrative

The team was really impressed with the amount of content the writers have provided the game. The dialogue felt informative and was for the most part well written. But the massive amount of text also felt overwhelming, especially combined with all the gameplay mechanics you have to learn. It was hard to remember all the different factions and places, on top of characters and their abilities.

For one tester, the story grew on them as they played. There are so many subplots and NPCs with their own backstories, all combined into a world which actually feels living. The many dialogue options add to the replayability of the game.

One tester admitted they don't like to be the bad guy, but would also like to give credit for this unique story set-up, a thought shared with another tester. One tester would have preferred if one of the factions (Disfavored or Scarlet Chorus) was more "good" and the other one more "evil". While this isn't what the game intends to do, they didn't feel any real motivation to side with either faction. Repeatedly having to make choices which favoured one faction over the other felt messy and pointless, as they all lead to the same endings anyway. Had it made more of a difference whether you killed people left and right (giving you advantage in battle) versus diplomacy (giving you advantage in dialogues), the choice between factions would have been more interesting.

The dark setting didn't leave much room for humour, but the writers still managed to include some without making it feel out of place. The harsh insults (often with sexual overtones) shared between the various characters gave us many good laughs.

Graphics

Most of the team didn't have much to say about the graphics from a subjective point of view (which means they are good), though we did report quite a few graphical bugs. A few testers didn't like the perspective of the game, stating it made it too abstract to attach the player to the story and hard to distinguish the different characters from each other. A solution for the latter would be perhaps different symbols or colours for the characters. One tester was pleased with the overall graphics and praised the animations of the battle, not only for their looks but also that they added to the usability by being easy to see and distinguish.

One tester had a mixed opinion on the graphics. They saw the art direction and lack of consistency

as the biggest problem, with the soft, colourful cutscenes and portrait art not fitting with the gritty and dark environmental backgrounds and character models. It seemed like a lack of communication between the 2D and 3D art teams. Quality wise, the tester found most of the assets good looking, except for the cutscenes. However, another tester found the cutscene art quite beautiful, so the team is not in one mind about this.

Another issue was the game taking place in an iron age setting, which made no sense when looking at the extremely advanced architecture present in the game, for example Vendrien's Well.

Sound

Only one tester commented on the music, and they didn't like it. While they thought it suits the game as a whole, they believed that it didn't fit the specific scenes where it was played. It would've probably been better to have different music for different types of scenery and mood.

The testers generally felt the voice actors did a good job. One thought they overacted a bit, while another thought they weren't too dramatic. The lack of consistency in having some dialogues with voice-overs and some without, and no clear distinction between them, was jarring to some testers.

UI

We had some good and negative feedback to give about the UI. One positive note was how informative the game is, for instance in allowing the player to use the combat log to see when certain attacks or weapons were ineffective. Another is that you can right click on names in dialogues and moves in battle to get extra information, which is really helpful.

On the negative side, one tester commented it was quite confusing to find out which spells were going to be cast next when in combat. Only the spells that were currently being cast were clear. It would be nice to have some sort of indicator of which spells are coming up next.

The submaps were unclear because you had to click around to find for example Lethian's Crossing (which is only visible after you click on Sunset Spire) if you didn't remember where it was.

Gameplay

A few testers mentioned the complexity of the gameplay. Some thought there was an unbearable amount of features to get into, while others could manage it after a while, though feeling as if the complexity was there for just for the sake of it. For example, you pick up countless weapons and armours during the game, but a thorough comparison of each never showed any real benefit in equipping something else. Either way, there is a lot of replayability thanks to the lot of content and customization available.

One feature we felt was illogical was reputation giving you skills in battle. For example, why would you learn how to frighten your enemies when Critically Hitting them just because you did some favors for the Unbroken? Is someone in the Unbroken teaching you this skill? If you want to tie gameplay to narrative this way, it should be made more clear.

One tester commented that they did not really enjoy the way that pathfinding worked inconsistently a lot of the time. NPCs would run around and pick different routes for the same destinations, which didn't make a lot of sense.

Most testers criticised the battles, of which one said they felt slow and stilted. The auto-pause function was a big problem. A few thought it ruined the flow of the combat, but unfortunately didn't know that you can turn it off. (Again, please bear in mind that we just jumped into the DLC, and not everyone went through all the base game tutorials.) One tester, after trying a few auto-pause options, finally figured out what fit their playstyle best and started to enjoy the battles. They really didn't like that auto-pause interrupted voice-overs though, and thought they should play out completely.

Summary and Conclusion

Though we have leveled a lot of criticism at the game, on the whole we feel that Tyranny is a solid title. The fact that no one in the team is particularly fond of this type of game is an unhappy coincidence.

The Bastard's Wound DLC succeeds in what it sets out to do. It gives the overall experience of the base game more meat on the bones, explaining what happens to people when they become refugees, bringing more back story to PCs and manages to integrate itself into the main game without feeling like an afterthought.

Tyranny: Bastard's Wound has a lot of quality in all areas, so our subjective verdict is that it's a good game worthy of a purchase for fans of the genre, but that newcomers may want to pick up a title that is easier to get into.