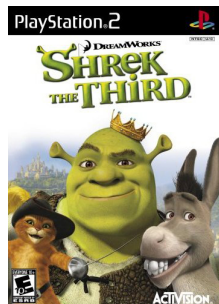


27 May 2007

By: Alexandru Stanescu, Editor, Gaming Reviews (Consoles)



[Shrek the Third](#)

If I kiss the game, will it turn into God of War?

Every fairy tale has a frog that needs a kiss from a beautiful princess in order to get back to his human self. [Shrek the Third](#), the game would need a major kiss from the gaming industry princess in order to go back to its original self: God of War. The latest installment in the Shrek series has a couple of elements taken from the acclaimed GOW game, but that's not its major flaw. Oh and guess what: I didn't like the movie! Sadly the game only makes the sour feeling grow as that's all I got from the movie: a bad taste in my mouth and the hope for a better sequel in the distant future. **Story**The gaming version of [Shrek the Third](#) keeps the same plot elements from the movie, plus a bit more stuff, added to fill in the gaps and give you some extra minutes of play. In case you didn't see the movie you're about to find out some major spoilers, so skip this part if you're the kind of person that hates to find out the plot of a movie before seeing it. While Shrek and Fiona were in their honeymoon, King Harold got sick and called the two lovers to his death bed. His last wishes involved the finding of a new ruler for the Kingdom of Far Far Away. Shrek would have been the logical option, but he turned down the offer immediately and found out that there's another relative that could be a rightful heir to the throne: Fiona's cousin, Arthur. As you might have guessed, it's the same Arthur you're thinking about, with Excalibur, Merlin, Lancelot and the rest of the elements of the beautiful medieval legend. So, Shrek, Donkey and Puss in Boots set on a journey to find Arthur (called Artie by his friends), while Fiona stays at home, ready to give birth to little baby ogres. In the meantime, Prince Charming gets sick of his failures in the acting business and gathers all the fairy tale villains getting ready to take over the kingdom of Far Far Away. Things get pretty simple and the plot is definitely one for the kids, as the merry gang led by Shrek finds Artie and brings him to Far Far Away. Charming, Captain Hook, Pinocchio's master and all the fairy tale villains you can imagine now control the kingdom and there's chaos and desperation everywhere. Obviously I'm not going to tell you how the story ends, as I have said too much already. Will Artie rule the kingdom as a true king? Will Shrek be a good father? Will Donkey stop being so agitated? You can only find the answers to these questions by playing the game and watching the movie. **Concept** Basically, Shrek the Third is a platforming game, with a bit of puzzle elements and the classic minigames that increase a title's lifespan. The game's difficulty can be set from the main menu, by selecting between easy, normal and hard. There's also a Charming difficulty setting, that's an unlockable one. You can either play the story mode, a collection of minigames, a multiplayer game or unlock some content from the Gift Shop. The Story Mode features 20 levels of action, puzzles, platforming and collecting various items. You'll get ratings at the end of each level showing you how many items you got, the fighting styles you used and a certain ranking that gives you enough credits to unlock new stuff from the Gift Shop. Shrek the Third will take the player to the Academy Grounds, or to the Evil Queen's Castle and you'll also pay a short visit to the Pirate Ship. You'll control Shrek, Donkey, Puss in Boots, Fiona, Arthur and Sleeping Beauty. If you're into minigames I suggest you play them all, as they're equally fun, sometimes even more fun than the story mode. Choose between a one or two player option before starting the minigames. The first one of them is called "Catacombs Leap" and it's all about platforming, dodging traps, while controlling Shrek in a couple of dangerous catacombs. The second minigame is called "Ships Ahoy" and it's a cannon shooting challenge that will require you to hit all the ships in your range in order to sink them. Another groovy minigame is the "Shooting Gallery" very much like the previously-mentioned one, except this time you'll be shooting tomatoes instead of cannonballs. If you got tired of controlling Shrek, there's the "Frog Herder" minigame, that

lets the player assume control of Puss in Boots. The cute animal voiced by Antonio Banderas will have to herd frogs, by pushing them to the ponds in due time. Last, but not least, there's the "Shrekleboard", the minigame I loved the most, some sort of curling wannabe. You have three attempts at shooting some sort of ball towards colored areas. Land on a square that's got "+25" written on it and you'll get 25 points. If you hit one of your own balls with another one and push the first one on the colored area it still counts and you get more points. Back to the main menu, there's also an option called Bonus Trailer, but it's only a commercial for the Bee game. If you got enough points from the Story Mode, it's time to spend them in the gift shop, unlocking new costumes for Shrek, Fiona or Donkey, or multiplayer maps, perhaps even new commentaries. Shrek the Third can be considered an original title, yet it borrows a lot from previous famous titles, like God of War, Crash Bandicoot and there's even a little something from The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess.

Gameplay In the Story Mode, good old Shrek will interact with the surrounding objects, in the normal ways that platforming games usually allow you to. You'll break boxes and barrels, open chests, pull levers and destroy walls. In case you're feeling lost (if ever) you can check out the current level's objectives by pressing the Start button. The playable characters have two standard attacks: a light and a heavy one. You can also press and hold the circle button for an extra strong attack, parry with R1 and as you might have guessed, use the X button to jump. The left analog stick will help you move around, while the right one is used to zoom in and out up to 3X. Throughout the game, you'll be collecting fairy dust, available after defeating an enemy or once a box is broken. This dust will fill a meter on the upper left side of the screen, that, once it's charged grants you a special attack. Aside from the fairy dust, there are also tons of coins to collect, that can be used in the Gift Shop to purchase unlockables. The AI is pretty bad and since button mashing becomes a routine in Shrek the Third, disposing of your foes is just a matter of seconds. The traps are pretty interesting though, and they come in all shapes and sizes, from the spikes that come out of the ground to the moving platforms that can kill you by tumbling down. You'll also activate doors by jumping on various platforms and we've seen and played this many years ago in Crash Bandicoot. Fiona uses karate moves like she did in the movie, perhaps even better, especially because of the comments of the narrator that accompany her moves. Shrek and Co. will face pirates, enchanted trees, witches, gargoyles and many other critters we've read about in fairy tales. When these enemies are stunned you can press the triangle button and perform a special attack, like those neat stabs that were present in God of War. Once the special attack meter is filled you can press the R1 and L1 buttons in order to unleash a very powerful attack that will practically clear the screen and dispose of the surrounding foes. Shrek uses the "Ogre Power" as an attack – an ogre scream and bullet-time movements, while Fiona uses a flying kick attack and bullet-time too. Puss in Boots use the "Cute Puss" attack and Sleeping Beauty can make the opponents attack one another by using the special "Swoon Attack". Once again "borrowing" elements from God of War, Shrek the Third features a consecutive blows concept that shows you a ranking for the moves you perform in a hurry without getting hurt. Hit the enemy ten times consecutively and you get an excellent ranking. All this combat may seem exciting, but believe me, it's not, mostly because it's the same action done over and over again throughout the game's 20 levels. Shrek and his allies can replenish health by eating all sorts of food bonuses, but you'll never die in this game, even if you're playing on the Hard difficulty mode. I, for one enjoying playing with Puss in Boots, because he's a flexible character, he wields a sword, has an attitude and he's the only one who can do a double jump. **Video** Visually the game looks cartoonish and fairly good, but it's nothing even close to impressive. If you want quality, try the next-gen versions of this game, since the Playstation 2 has reached its limits years ago (unless you count the graphical wonder called God of War 2). The characters will leave traces of dust behind and their shadow looks decent, but they're all kind of stiff and seem floating in the environment. Shrek the Third is clearly a game for the kids, with colorful graphics, shiny objects and characters and lots and lots of fairy dust. The cutscenes will be

as good as the movie itself and watching them can be extremely entertaining, sometimes better than watching the movie. **Sound**All the original voices were used in the game, as it's got the movie's license, which is used pretty wisely. Donkey is the heart and soul of the adventure, Shrek is an ... ogre, the narrator creates a great storytelling atmosphere and Charming is... pathetic as usual. Other than that, the soundtrack is brilliant, featuring the original songs, plus a few more to get you in the groove. You'll hear a lot of growls, smashes, meows and the usual sounds one can hear in a typical Shrek fight. **Multiplayer** The multiplayer game is clearly designed for the kids and it's a competitive mode that allows two players to toy with cannons in an attempt to destroy castles and towers. Choose Shrek, Fiona, Captain Hook or one of the other characters, select a castle or fortress and the game type. Also you'll need to select the number of rounds (1, 3 or 5) and the number of tower targets (from one to ten). Aside from the standard multiplayer option, there are the minigames that can host two player games, providing lots of hours of fun and childish entertainment. **Conclusion**Like the movie, Shrek the Third, the game is not exactly what we wanted, but it manages to put the forgiving smile on our faces, especially when we realize that this is a media product designed for the kids. However, we can't help noticing that the previous Shrek installments and movies were more witty, fun and... original. This is becoming some sort of trend, so we'll soon start avoiding the titles that appear at the same time with the movies. We've seen what happened to Ghost Rider, Spider-Man 3, Fantastic Four, The Hulk and many other titles. Let's hope that the just released Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End (movie and game) won't share Shrek the Third's fate.