

■ Video game review

# Slay a colossus, raise a dead woman, enjoy the sights

*'Shadow of the Colossus' is a fun-filled adventure that takes place in a beautifully fashioned digital universe*

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PULSE REPORTER

Sony's "Shadow of the Colossus" looks as good, and often better, than every screenshot ever captured on the back of a video game case, and it avoids the time consuming boredom that too often bogs down games these days. The environments are of such quality that gamers will find themselves spending time exploring them for the fun of it. "Shadow of the Colossus" replaces the hoards of enemies that other adventure games offer with 16 intricate and entertaining boss battles.

"Shadow of the Colossus" delivers fun in its purest form; it is an excellently crafted experience that must be played.

The game keeps it simple. At the start, the game finds a young, nameless adventurer (call him Nico) in a temple asking

Dormin, a mysterious being, to raise a fallen woman. Dormin says he will raise the woman if Nico slays the 16 colossi that are scattered about the surrounding land. Armed with only his sword and bow, Nico sets off on his horse, Agro, to slay the colossi.

There are essentially only two

parts to its game play: getting to each colossus and killing it.

After a quick glance at the game's manual, or a play through the in-game tutorial, players will have learned everything they need to know to take down the colossi. The game's controls are intuitive and fairly easy to learn.

In many action and adventure games, traveling isn't fun. It is a necessary evil that gets the character from one fight scene to the next. Traveling through the vast and gorgeous

world of "Shadow" on Agro is a real treat. Agro is masterfully animated and fun to control. Each of the game's picturesque landscapes, from its sweeping plains to its dark forests, are beautifully detailed and fun to explore.

Travel is great, but the battles are amazing.

The size of the game's colossi

ranges from the size of a bus to the size of skyscrapers. Each colossus has a similar statue-like quality and has at least one weak spot. Through the course of the game's battles, players will need to figure out where the colossus' weak spots are and how they are going to reach those

weak spots.

The action sequences in "Shadow of the Colossus" parallel those found in the best movies. Nico clammers up colossi holding on for his life as the giant bucks in an effort to get him off; players will cringe as they pray that their grip will hold long enough for one last stab. Each colossus presents a unique challenge, some are fast others are slow, some swim, some walk and some fly. Battles are exhilarating and are worth playing multiple times. Once Nico kills a colossus he finds himself transported to Dormin's temple where he is given his next target.

Find it, kill it. Repeat 16 times. That's

how "Shadow of the Colossus" plays out. But despite its simple premise, "Shadow" rarely feels stale. Each battle will leave players looking forward to the next.

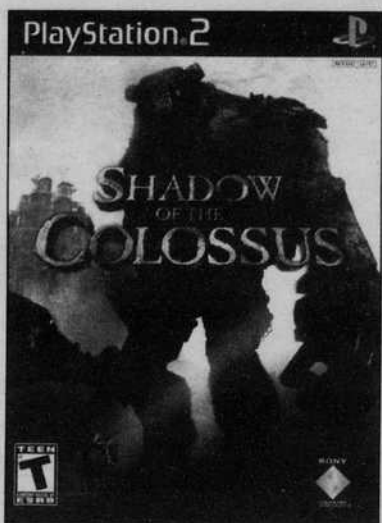
It's hard to believe that the PlayStation 2 can render such detailed environments and stunning bosses. Stylewise, the game does nicely with its earthy, subdued color palate and detailed environments. The game has a slower framerate, but runs smoothly and consistently in all but a few situations. The colossi are beautiful creatures that imitate animals, monsters and other icons. Their size is astonishing.

The game's atmosphere is

unparalleled, and there is a haunting sense of solitude throughout. As gamers explore the land they will note that it is virtually untouched by humans; there are a few ruins but no sign of other people. The score beautifully complements the game play.

If you own a PS2, you have to play "Shadow of the Colossus." The first time through will last anywhere between six to 12 hours, and subsequent plays will take quite a bit less time. It's a game worth owning because, like any good movie, you'll want to experience it more than once. Simply put, it's a work of art.

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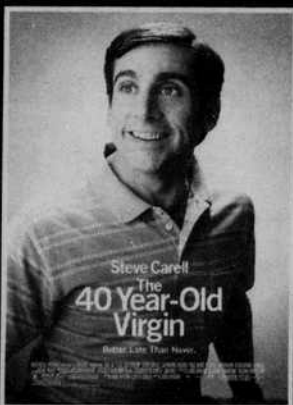
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