



Abzû Developed and Published by Giant Squid

Reviewed by Zoe



Science Fiction/Fantasy/Adventure

Give a summary without spoilers!

Abzû is a beautiful, detailed and moving game about the oceans. In it, you play a diver who (without need of oxygen) swims through an apparently ancient and magical ocean looking for something you cannot name. This game has no narration or text at all, and this makes the story fairly vague, but you can feel it. Accompanied by an incredible soundtrack by the (in my opinion) master Austin Wintory, this game reveals the side of the ocean that is playful, deep, wondrous, ancient and sacred. As she moves through ancient ruins, your diver begins to put together through uncovering murals and diving deeper that whoever put her there did not always have the best intentions and grows a new respect for the ancient great white shark. You can also put the game into aquarium mode, and simply watch fish swim across your screen while the game identifies them and gives you their latin name. It's fascinating to watch their behavior!

What drew you to this game?

I was drawn by the beauty of the graphics, the music, and the story. The fact that the names of the songs are half-inspired by the scientific names of fish and half-inspired by an ancient sumerian creation myth-poem doesn't hurt. I cannot stress enough how beautiful, serene and calming this game is. The social commentary is also staggeringly impactful. Also, the scene with the whales, accompanied by the song Balaenoptera Musculus (scientific name for the blue whale) makes me burst into tears and blows my mind every time I watch it. Whales are staggeringly large and incredibly magnificent.

Did it remind you of something that you've previously played?

Many have called it a copy of That Game Company's highly successful Journey, which had a similar plot and method of delivery for said plot; this has been blamed on the fact that many of the developers who worked on Journey moved to create the company Giant Squid. Abzû is not the same game, however, as it lacks player interaction, leaving you alone with the fish. It also pushes a different agenda than Journey; while Journey focuses on the effects of war on civilization, Abzû centers the sacredness of the environment, specifically the oceans, and the importance of fighting for and exploring it. These games also share the same incredible composer, Austin Wintory. His soundtracks are so unique, and this is no exception.

To whom would you recommend this game?

I would recommend this game to anyone who loves the oceans and the creatures that live within them. This game is educational, it is beautiful, it is kind of spiritual- it is certainly not your average video game. Like Journey, it is an experience, the kind that you must have for yourself. It is a short game, as well, so I would recommend it to a player who wants something short, powerful, and beautiful, with little violence or difficulty. It is not a hard game to play, unless you, like I, struggle to listen to this music and look at these creatures without crying out of sheer beauty. It's emotionally difficult, let's put it that way.

Overall, did you like it and would you recommend it to others?

If I haven't made it abundantly clear already, I love this game so much. I play it again every so often and it always makes me feel the same spectacular way, and I listen to the songs all the time. I would absolutely recommend it.

Anything else that you would like to add to this review? What made you choose it? Did you like the cover? Was it recommended to you? Did you find it at the library?

I found it through being a fan of That Game Company's Journey and Austin Wintory (who composed the soundtrack).