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VIRTUAL DOMAINS

SaGa Frontier 2
System: Playstation
Genre: Role-Playing Game
Developer: Squaresoft

Squaresoft is well known for its cutting-edge role-playing games (RPGs). But every now and then they don't live up to their reputation when they release a mediocre game like SaGa Frontier 2.

SaGa Frontier 2 begins with two main characters and goes through several generations of characters. The first character, Gustave XIII, is a royal descendant who is banished for his lack of magical abilities. The second character, Will Knights, is a novice artifact-digger who is investigating the death of his father.

The graphics are the best thing about this game. All the backgrounds are beautifully watercolored and blend well with the characters. This game represents 2-D RPGs which are rapidly becoming extinct.

SaGa Frontier 2 is Squaresoft's attempt to win back all the gamers they lost with the first SaGa Frontier — it kept all the good points of the first game and threw out the bad points. In theory, this is a good idea. Unfortunately, they jumped from one extreme to the other. Gamers complained

that the first game was too non-linear and had no direction or storyline. SaGa Frontier 2, on the

other hand, constricts the player with its intense linear and confusing storyline. The player has no freedom to explore and is forced to jump from one scenario right into another.

This game has many small problems that detract from the fun of the game. One such problem is the scarcity of money. Unlike in other RPGs, not every monster carries a wallet, which actually makes sense. But so many monsters have no money that the player cannot afford to buy anything or repair his weapons. Repairing weapons is another problem because weapons break easily and often. So when the player finds an ultra-cool mega weapon, he may not use it for fear of breaking it. SaGa Frontier 2 is a decent RPG, but lacks any truly memorable gameplay or plot to make it stand out. (Grade: C)



GABBY RUENES/THE BATTALION

— Gabby Ruenes

Fear Effect
System: Playstation
Genre: Adventure
Developer: Kronos Digital Entertainment

Made in part by the people who broke new ground with the Tomb Raider games, Fear Effect is the latest addition to the ever-so-popular 3-D horror/adventure genre.

Set in Shang Xi, land of the undead and home of the convoluted plot line, this game revolves around finding the missing daughter of a wealthy Chinese businessman.

However, trying to find the missing girl leads the player into a world of blade-wielding ninjas, zombies and other assorted supernatural goodies, proving once more that you can't keep a good corpse down.

One of the more refreshing aspects of Fear Effect is that the player takes the role of all three members of a mercenary team at some point in the game.

The characters have differ-

ent weapons and styles, making the game more interesting and breaking the monotony of the typical one-character game.

The game play is easy to pick up, and the graphics are polygon-based, creating a more cartoon-like look than games like Resident Evil.

Still, the look of the game is appropriate and what it lacks in detail it makes up for in its intricate and adrenaline-pumping story scenes.

This game never fails to entertain with its entertaining "dying sequences" and level-transition scenes that look like something straight out of a John Woo movie.

Fear Effect is, overall, a good game that is challenging, but not so much that the player gets stuck in the same level for an eternity trying to figure out what to do next.

The most frustrating part of this game is trying to decipher the story, but as long as players get the gist of it, they are destined for a zombie-blasting good time. (Grade: B+)

— Ruben DeLuna



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

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