

Choosing a Game

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Hanging out in the Third West (3W) lounge of Next House day after day can be compared to a language immersion program—but for games instead. As I write this, there is a game of Settlers of Catan going on, a bridge table being set up, the new Metroid Prime 3: Corruption being played on the Nintendo Wii, a smallish-sized Starcraft: Broodwar LAN party going on, and a couple people playing old games on the ZSNES emulator. Bridge is new, Starcraft is common, and Monopoly is banned. For more information see Kenny or Sharat.

With such a rich source of game knowledge to tap, it is only natural I utilize it. Approaching the various 3W'ers and honorary 3W'ers in search of a game to play was much fun. Suggestions ranged from the must-play entire Zelda series (with emphasis on Ocarina of Time), to the new Bioshock, to Oblivion, to Starcraft, to Starcraft, to Starcraft. MMORPG's are secret habits that are cautiously sidestepped when mentioned—in very much the same manner other college students might act at the mention of illegal drugs. That said, there are some key words that 3W uses to bring up the more common games of the lounge: “sssssstarcraft,” “ssssettlers,” “sssssmash,” “ssssssettlers,” and so on. Going through the list another day, I arrived at one that I was actually quite interested in last semester—“talessssssssss,” or Tales of Symphonia. Two 3W'ers, Joe and Sharat, own the game and were raving about how I should play it once I mentioned it. They even let me borrow their copy of the game.

There are several reasons why Tales of Symphonia appealed to me, the most valid of which was the innovative battle system. Most reviews commend this battle system, IGN's “Minute Views” which are known for their short and concise reviews, even states that the real-

time combat system utilized is the games' strongest element. The review also mentions that there is about 75 hours of game play. My less valid reason... or just straight out ulterior motive is that I've been trying to get my girlfriend to play video games with me, and CMS.600 along with the multiplayer capability of Tales of Symphonia helps me further this goal. I figure she'll like the cartooney cell-shaded graphics and storyline orientated gameplay—which was the problem with the MMORPG's we tried. (Our forays into video games include Gunbound, Ragnarok, and Starcraft which was a complete fiasco.). Regarding the storyline, though many reviews laud it as cliché, the one female review I found by Jae-Ha Kim from the *Chicago Sun-Times* applauded the storyline, characters and gameplay all. She even called the Llyod (the main character) and his buddies anime cute, which is a huge plus. So far, I've been following wikiHow's “How to Get your Girlfriend to Play Video Games” how-to manual, and its been working somewhat, but we haven't spent any substantial time together on one game yet—so I'm hoping Tales of Symphonia might be that one anime-cute game that will get her hooked.

Asides from my ulterior motive, the RPG genre is familiar to me and I've been dying to try a newer RPG (though granted Tales of Symphonia isn't that new). What I have played are much older RPG's like Chrono Trigger, and Super Mario RPG. Come to think of it, I haven't played any RPG game since the SNES console except Final Fantasy VII. I hope to play Tales of Symphonia with a critical eye and notice how it distinguishes itself from the likes of more traditional turn-based RPGs, and how it incorporates multiplayer aspect that is very uncommon for RPGs. I hope to achieve a new perspective when playing a new game—not one that detracts from the experience of playing the game itself, but one that will notice the small details that truly make each game unique.

After finishing the game, I plan on watching Tales of Symphonia: The Animation,

and seeing how well the story is tied off or continued. Unfortunately, not all the OVA's have been released yet, and Wikipedia's article on it says the last one will be released in December. Anyways, I've just borrowed a Gamecube, three controllers, the game, a memory card, and s-video cable so I better get going at it!

Works Cited

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