

PRINNY 2: DAWN OF OPERATION PANTIES, DOOD!

SYSTEM: PSP
PUBLISHER: NIS

DEVELOPER: NIS
GENRE: PLATFORMER

ESRB RATING: T
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75



You are Not Special

In the *Disgaea* universe there is no weaker creature in the netherworld than the Prinny. As a final resting place for worthless human souls the Prinny's penguin-like body explodes when handled roughly. As servants to the bitchy demon lord Etna they are treated with such little regard Etna thinks nothing of sacrificing a thousand Prinnies to find her missing panties. This is the absurd premise to *Prinny 2: Dawn of Operation Panties, Dood!*

Like its predecessor the game delights in tormenting the player with timed levels, extremely precise platforming, a 1000 life limit and a *Contra*-style touch-anything-and-die mentality. Playing as the squad of unlucky souls players will have to bring their A-game if they're looking to beat every one of the game's malicious bosses.



As a follow-up to *Prinny: Can I Really Be the Hero?*, *Prinny 2* gets a lot right. Without losing charm this sequel manages to almost entirely replicate its predecessor without feeling stale. There are a few new additions, but overall the game is relatively unchanged.

Among the new additions is a newbie-friendly "Baby Mode" that offers each Prinny a 3-hit durability and adds extra blocks over gaps to help with some of the more demanding platforming sections. Of

course, there's no pride in beating such a difficult game with these concessions but for most it will be the only way to enjoy the experience.

It takes a special kind of masochist to enjoy a game like *Prinny 2*, but that's what makes it special. The inclusion of easier difficulty modes is great for those who don't want to deal with frustration, but it goes against what these games are all about.

It seems counter-intuitive to design a game to be intentionally impossible to beat and



then provide an easy way out. The new mode is optional of course and the game does ridicule the player by adding diapers to the interface, so it exists comfortably awkward in a game where it doesn't belong.

You are Not a Beautiful or Unique Snowflake

Visually, *Prinny 2* is deceptive. Its traditional chibi style animation makes it look so innocuous, masking the torture within. The bright colours and cutesy characters look great, but do nothing to convey the true nature of the game.

Likewise the ridiculous plot and dialog offer some lighthearted fare amidst the torturous gameplay. It's not laugh-out-loud material, but there are a few chuckle-worthy moments within the writing. Some might find the Prinny's voice and constant use of 'dood' annoying, but it's hard to imagine the character any other way.

Many will find the humour a little juvenile;

the game derives most of its jokes from the surrealist prop humor that plagues most games. Panties aside, it retains this oddness throughout that has a certain charm. It won't be for everyone, but the absurdness of the situations will put a smile on some faces.

The brass-heavy rock soundtrack is also fun and upbeat. At every turn artistically, the game is intent on tricking the player in to thinking it isn't a demonic torture device. If there's one thing the juxtaposition provides it's a taunting reminder that games are supposed to be fun, and you're likely not having any.

You are the Same Decaying Organic Matter as Everything Else

While playing *Prinny 2* is akin to willingly slamming your hand in a car door, there's an intense satisfaction that comes when you finally reach success. The game's complete disregard for the player's mental well-being only adds to the sensation of

beating it. Conquering a level of *Prinny 2* isn't just about completing a challenging set of obstacles; it's about developing an indomitable will to succeed.

There will be many times where the game just seems impossible to beat given the meager tools provided; the Prinny's butt-stomp and pathetic blades are not weapons of mass destruction. However, in the back of your mind sticks this notion that it has to be possible to beat the game and thus the internal warfare begins. Even seasoned players will question whether the game is even worth the effort and frustration, whether they should just give up and play something else.

It may seem like foolish to make a game intended to make the player want to give up, but there's something didactic about its design. By persevering through the game's seemingly insurmountable odds the player feels rewarded for their determination with a sense of self-worth, which is far more powerful than any high score.

Of course, the game can't leave it at that; every level comes with a letter grade commentary on your performance and beckons the insane to best it once again. Thus the cycle of self-doubt and determination repeats itself all over again, slowly tearing the player down and building them back up stronger than before.

If you're not willing to let your games slap you around, *Prinny 2* is not for you. Quitters also need not apply; playing *Prinny 2* without resolving to complete it will result in a crushing sense of defeat. This is a game for serious intenders only and should be ignored by all others, even with the new 'Baby Mode' difficulty.

As a sequel, *Prinny 2: Dawn of Operation Panties, Dood!* lives up to its legacy and fans of the previous game won't be disappointed. There may not be a whole lot new in the sequel, but the design of the first never really needed revision.

Prinny 2 is not a game for everyone. You have to be willing to accept that this game won't leave you with a sense of empowerment. On the contrary it will leave you feeling like a fool for even bothering with it. But there's satisfaction in overcoming it, and for those that are up to the challenge *Prinny 2: Dawn of Operation Panties, Dood!* is a very special game.