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Dark Nights with Poe and Munro (PC) Review

POSTED ON MAY 20, 2020 BY ROB PITT

Everyone has their most anticipated releases this year, some can't wait for The Last of Us Part II, others want Cyberpunk 2077 to hurry up, and Halo fans eagerly await Halo Infinite – for me, I've been looking forward to *Dark Nights with Poe and Munro* for what seems like a lifetime! Set within the mysterious town of August, this FMV cinematic adventure presents you with six self-contained stories starring our two quirky radio presenters who we first met in [The Shapeshifting Detective](#), the sequel to this game. Prior knowledge isn't required, but if you've played both [The Infectious Madness of Doctor Dekker](#) and [The Shapeshifting Detective](#), then you'll know what to expect as you tune in to Radio August...

The developer and publisher, **D'Avekki Studios**, seem to get better with each adventure they produce. Not only have they now created three video games, but they also filmed a live 'audience participation' version of [The Infectious Madness of Doctor Dekker](#) over on Twitch last year (which you can watch [HERE](#)), an event which was fun to watch and well planned – the actress, Bibi Lucille, did an amazing job with her improvisation. Video games aren't their only passion either, they've published a number of murder mystery party games, offering you all the tools to host your own 'whodunnit' experience. Who knows what they'll venture into next?

But, today I'm here to talk about Poe and Munro, two very unique characters who are how I'd imagine the British Mulder and Scully would be portrayed, inquisitive yet slightly eccentric...



Developer: D'Avekki Studios

Publisher: D'Avekki Studios

Release Date: 19th May 2020

Platform Reviewed on: PC

[Steam]

PC

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Yes, I guess we would...

Dark Nights with Poe and Munro is a collection of six self-contained stories, each one exploring a new adventure or series of events within our protagonists' lives. However, unlike most episodic titles these days, all six of these are available right now, just like how Netflix tends to release all or their



own shows at once rather than making you wait for the next episode. Each episode will take you around 30-40 minutes to work your way through yet you'll feel the need to replay each one numerous times as, just like any other great FMV game, there are numerous choices and pathways to explore, pathways which can dramatically change the episode you're playing.

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This title reminded me a lot of [The Complex](#), another FMV title which came out a few months back, due to the focus on giving you the chance to become the director and tell our impressionable protagonists what to do. Some of the choices you make may only change the way a character reacts or what dialogue they give based upon what you've chosen to do, yet others are more drastic and will change the actual events which take place and the direction the episode is going in.

This is a big step for the developer as their previous two games have been quite linear apart from the final conclusion. [Doctor Dekker](#) had you manually typing questions to the patients as you found out more about their conditions and ultimately worked out who killed the doctor – which was random each time you played it. [Shapeshifting](#) was a bit more dynamic, introducing hidden scenes and events based upon how you reacted to the people you met – again, with a random murderer as the conclusion. But, *Dark Nights with Poe and Munro* is more focused on the branching narrative, offering lots of micro and major choices which can lead to alternate endings as well as different content within the episode – thus making it less linear and much more open to replayability.

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Who should we talk to? Our time is limited!

Gameplay

For the most part, *Dark Nights with Poe and Munro* is an FMV cinematic adventure, you'll be watching the events play out in front of you as you pick

an action when presented with a choice. When the time comes to make a choice, you have word-less options appear on the screen either in the form of icons or a circle over things such as characters or objects. At first, I wasn't the biggest fan of this process as there's no text so you're not 100% sure what the outcome of the action will be if you pick it, but I eventually started to love it for the exact same reason – every choice was a mystery.

Certain episodes have more interaction than others, these are the ones which I enjoyed the most as I felt like I had more control over what was going on and how the story evolved. One such episode is about a child who has gone missing after school, the police won't do anything about it and poor Munro can't just sit around knowing there's a kid out there in need of help – well, that and the mysterious phone call they receive on the radio! Taking control of Detective Poe and Munro, you can pick who to talk to as you travel around August gathering clues. As such, each protagonist talks to different people at the same time, meaning multiple playthroughs is a must.

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What I enjoyed doing, as I told the developers I would, was annoying both protagonists as much as I could. However, I had no idea that both Poe and Munro could flip and turn from being 'normal' to rather psychotic without any warning, Poe gets rather dramatic and theatrical yet Munro is so much darker and intense than I ever realised. I think one of the funniest moments was in the final episode (which I won't spoil) – you can either listen to Poe or Munro and I obviously ignored Poe every single time, he was getting quite pissed off with me by the end!



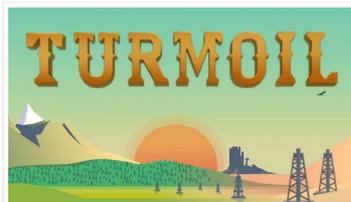
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Sure, why not!

The humour

I briefly touched on this above, *Dark Nights with Poe and Munro* is a humorous game. Sure, it has dark moments and a few parts which were quite serious, but the majority of the game was really, really funny. Each and every episode had me laughing out loud to myself as I played through them, usually at the rather comical banter between the two stars or their reactions to the events going on around them. I have to say, the conversation about whether Poe would run over a bunny or swerve and hit Munro was perfect in every way – I dare anyone to play that and not laugh!

I love the small references and nods towards other games and previous episodes as well. One thing which had me was the characters mugs – they have their names printed on them, Poe and Munro. However, after an event where Poe is mistaken for the famous author, his mug is changed to “(Not Edgar) Poe”. V. Funny.

The supporting cast all provided a great experience as well, each one perfect for the roles they were playing. The Librarian was really funny with her blunt and sarcastic attitude, Millicent (in the second episode) is just the right amount of ‘crazy’, the Hypnotist was perfectly over the top and dominant, and the lovely Aislinn De’Ath returns as the seductive guesthouse owner. My only criticism in regards to the supporting on-screen actors would be that I wished we had longer with them. Again though, this is where the beauty of the game comes in, we can see more by simply replaying the game and picking different options.

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One chapter sees the return of the infamous green leather sofa from [Doctor Dekker](#), along with music, cinematography, format, and even the same tone and atmosphere. This was great, I was smiling throughout (despite the rather

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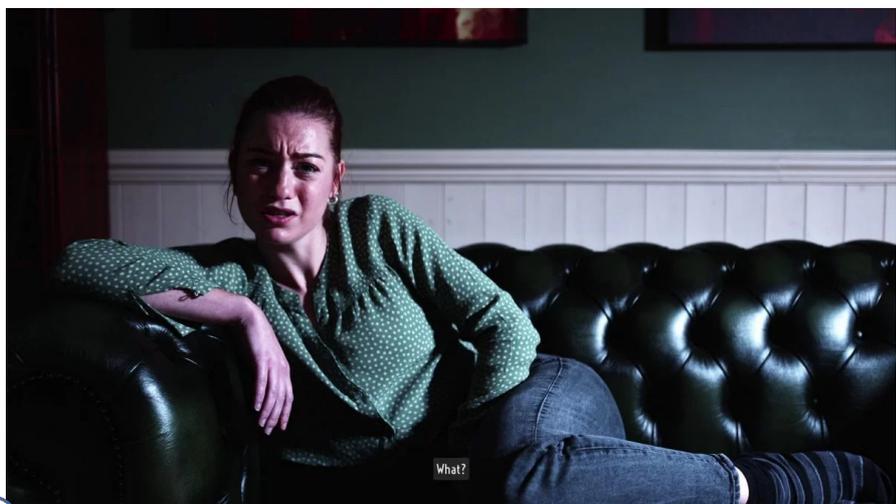
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morbid subject matter) as it brought back many memories of that awesome game and the brilliant live stream. Those who haven't played [The Infectious Madness of Doctor Dekker](#) may get a little confused with the shift in tone and mechanics, but those who have will absolutely love what Tim and Lynda have done with this episode!



Time to see the doctor...



You chose poorly/wisely?!?



At the end of each episode, you're presented with a snapshot of your playthrough, a list of the choices you made and what everyone else who has played the game also decided to pick. This reminded me a lot of the classic telltale games, letting you know if you've gone with the same options everyone else has or if you've been a rebel and gone down your own path. What I found interesting is that it only shows the results based on the narrative you saw, if you'd picked a different option, the story may have altered and you'd be seeing a different set of results – remember, this game isn't linear.

I was playing the game both pre and post-launch and I thought it was quite funny that a lot of the decisions were 50/50 (or near enough). For me, this only further built up my anticipation to instantly jump back in and pick different options in order to see what changed and what new information we found out.

One thing you'll notice as you play is that some episodes won't make sense – or at least they didn't to me. This is because multiple playthroughs and different choices are required in order to see, experience, and understand everything that's going on. In one episode there was no conclusion, a crime was committed at the end involving our protagonists and that's it – no explanation as to why someone stole what they did and what they were going to do with the information we gave them. However, I imagine that replaying the episode and picking different things will expose more exposition to us – it did in the episodes I replayed yesterday.

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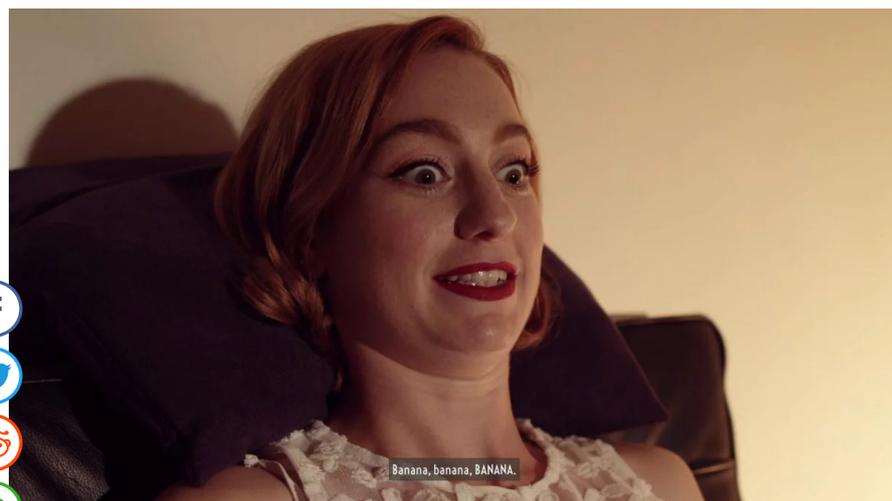
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My one issue with this format was the lack of any sort of continuity between episodes. As they are all independent, what happens in one doesn't appear to come up in a later one unless it's a mandatory plot point. I would have loved it if our choices bled into the subsequent episodes but I imagine that would have added many, many more branches and recorded footage.

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Banana!



The overall quality and technical aspects

I have to once again mention how great the actors are, D'Avekki Studios always seem to hire the perfect cast for their productions as everyone plays a very realistic and memorable persona. Klemens Koehring and Leah Cunard (Poe and Munro) return as the perfect companions, the banter they have with one another and the way they interact creates a believable 'relationship' and two very likeable characters. Everyone else was above the quality I'd expect from an indie-developed FMV game, even the guest vocals were great to listen to (although it did annoy Poe!).

I liked that the developers branched out and filmed in various new locations, including outside in the forest, as the last few games were limited to just a few settings due to the nature of the narratives.

In terms of performance, the game ran perfectly on the potato I have under my TV (i3, 4GB RAM, Intel HD GPU) and bloody marvellously on my gaming pc (i7, 16GB RAM, GTX 780Ti). Basically, on my main PC, it was hitting over 2,000 fps, which is mental. Thankfully, there are a few options to limit the framerate so you don't get screen-tearing. You can limit the fps to 60, 30, 20, or the more cinematic 25fps – the options screen doesn't actually tell you this, as it's labelled as 1, 2 and 3, but those are the limits respectively (25 has its own option).

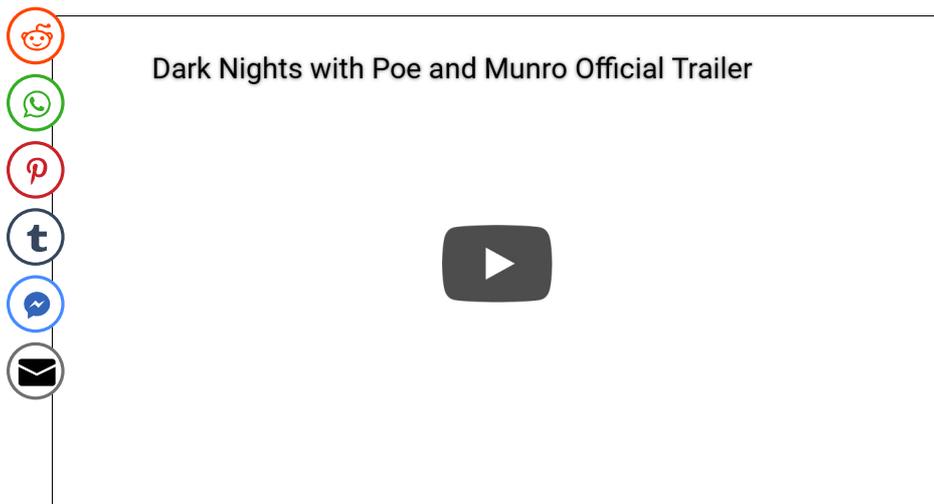
Finally, if you're looking to play the game on stream then you can disable the choice timers. Usually, you'll have a few seconds to make a choice but that's pointless if streaming as the option will be gone by the time your viewers see them on the screen. So, turning this on will simply pause the game so you can discuss the next step with everyone before making a decision – which is great.

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On a side note, the music further enhances the overall experience, right from the moment the title screen appears. Just seeing slowly moving noir-style images of Poe and Munro, or the gorgeous colourful liquid patterns, whilst listening to the slow, calm, mysterious theme is very relaxing and perfectly sets the mood of the game. I personally hope the soundtrack is available at

 ome point.

 **Official Trailer**



Final Conclusion

As the third game in the DDU (Doctor Dekker Universe), *Dark Nights with Poe and Munro* was an original and creative FMV cinematic adventure I won't forget. The episodic nature, which is presented as a TV show complete with title and credits, fits the experience perfectly, providing six self-contained stories of mystery and suspense. The music, dramatic camera work, humorous yet well-written narrative, and brilliant acting all combine into such a fantastic and enjoyable series of stories which I'm sure to replay numerous times.

If you're a fan of FMV adventure games, either cinematic like [The Complex](#) or interactive like [The Infectious Madness of Doctor Dekker](#), you need to go and buy *Dark Nights with Poe and Munro*. The game even has full controller support if you prefer that and can't wait for the console release later

this year (hopefully).

Full Cast List

A copy of the game was kindly provided for review purposes

Dark Nights with Poe and Munro £9.99



FINAL SCORE

9.0/10



THE GOOD:



- Six self-contained stories, each with many branches via choices and interactions



- Very funny dialogue encased within a mysterious narrative, all acted out perfectly and emotionally by the actors



- The music creates the perfect atmosphere for the experience



- The overall quality is very high



- Contains nods and references to previous games in the genre



THE BAD:

- As each story is self-contained, choices don't follow through into the other episodes (just like most TV shows)

- The supporting actors don't seem to stick around for long, I would have liked the episodes to be a little longer and feature them more



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