



Review: Dark Nights with Poe and Munro - An FMV Frightfest!



May 19, 2020 John Scott

D'Avekki Studios has made a name for themselves over the past few years. They're known as crafters and story-weavers of fantastic live action adventure games that really dive into the depths of humanity with a dash of supernatural strangeness. I fell in love with their 2017 psychological thriller *The Infectious Madness of Doctor Dekker*, and in 2018 they followed things up with *The Shapeshifting Detective*. Two characters from the latter title made a big enough splash, because now they're back with their own episodic adventure game in *Dark Nights with Poe and Munro*.

Those that played *The Shapeshifting Detective* are probably familiar with the dynamic duo of John "Poe" Pope, and Ellis Munro, as they each had their part to play in the previous title. But don't worry; you don't actually need to have played that game to jump into this one. Poe and Munro are the hosts of a local radio show called Radio August in their small town of, surprise, August. In this quaint, but spooky town, Radio August offers much to its listeners. There are call-in segments, and the developers do a nice job of making this feel like a real show you could listen to on the air.

Dark Nights with Poe and Munro is an episodic game, with six mini mysteries. Each one of these stories plunges the titular heroes into a rather creepy and macabre tale. It starts out simple enough like dealing with death threats from a potential stalker, but ramps up towards a possible werewolf attack, and eventually to demonic forces far beyond our understanding. One of the chapters is even a very clever look back at the aforementioned *Infectious Madness of Doctor Dekker* and mixes up the gameplay to become a combination of that game, and of *Dark Nights* in a way that works surprisingly

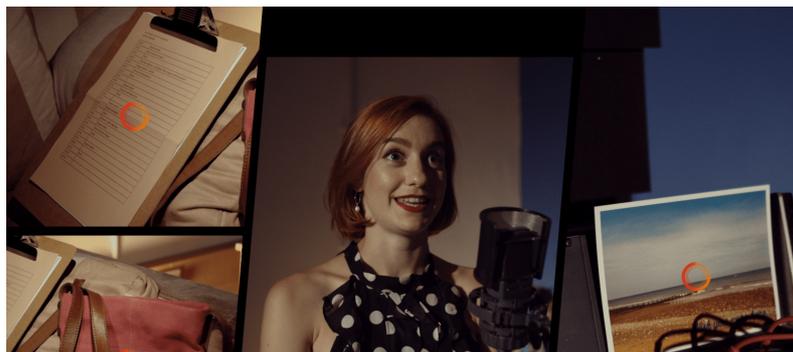
well.



The Doctor will see you now...

Speaking of gameplay, as a Full Motion Video (FMV) title, *Dark Nights with Poe and Munro* is mostly about taking in the visuals. This is a game with real actors putting on a performance with fantastic writing and amazing cinematography. But it wouldn't be much of a game without gameplay, right? At key moments in the story, choices will be presented to the player, often in the form of split screens showing off your options. *Dark Nights* encourages quick thinking by having these choices be on a timer, and if you get too sucked into watching the story unfold, you might find yourself scrambling to make your decision. As far as gameplay goes, it's quite a bit more simplistic than the developer's earlier titles, but still manages to work well for the type of story on offer here.

If I had any real criticisms, it's that I often felt like *Dark Nights with Poe and Munro* was a little unclear as to what my choices actually were. I understand that the point of these decisions is to make you think on your feet and pick options with your gut, but sometimes the choices are fairly vague, and I end up not doing what I want to do at all. For example, in the first episode there's a moment where the duo is startled by a knock at the door. Poe tells Munro to hide, but then the game immediately cuts to a decision where you choose Poe or Munro. I agreed with Poe and wanted Munro to hide, so I selected her. However, it turns out the choice I was making was who would be the one to open the door. So by not having any real indicator of what the choice I was making was actually supposed to be, I wound up choosing something that was literally the opposite of what I wanted to do.



Some choices are more obvious than others...

In most places, if players let the timer on a decision run out, *Dark*

Nights with Poe and Munro makes the choice completely at random, making it a rather tense version of flipping a coin. Of course, at some points you'll see there is only one choice, and it becomes a matter of whether or not you want to perform the action, or let the timer run out and let it pass. I'm personally a very big fan of when games like this acknowledge that refusing to decide does still count as making a choice, though I kind of wish there had been a couple more of these throughout the game. I also ran into a couple of scenes peppered throughout the game where the subtitles just stopped working. This usually happened after making a decision, and it threw me off a few times, so hopefully the game will be updated as soon as possible to fix this. One feature that I really like about *Dark Nights with Poe and Munro* is how easy it is to skip scenes that you've already viewed. This makes it much more accessible to players who want to see new content or try out different decisions when playing through the game for a second or third time.

The idea behind *Dark Nights with Poe and Munro* definitely rests in doing multiple playthroughs, so sooner rather than later you're bound to figure out which choices do what, and use that information to plan things out a little better on your next run. As far as I could tell, there doesn't seem to be any way to mess up so badly you have to go back and do everything again, but a couple of choices may result in cycling footage. The episodes themselves are about the length of an episode of television, so you'll get through the whole game in just a few hours. But like I said, I was eager to replay things just to see how much I could change by picking a different option. And at the end of each chapter, *Dark Nights with Poe and Munro* shows you all of the decisions you made, what the other options were, and also what percentage of people picked each option. It was definitely interesting seeing if the choice I made was the majority go-to, or if I'd taken a more controversial approach to my decision making.



How will you get our duo out of this one?

The biggest highlight of *Dark Nights with Poe and Munro* is without a doubt, the actors. Klemens Koehring and Leah Cunard as the titular Poe and Munro absolutely make this game. They have some of the best on-screen chemistry I've ever seen, especially in a video game. Every episode has a relatively small number of other characters, many of whom are only in the game for one or two scenes. All of the actors in this title do a great job, but there aren't many actual

characters with a lot of screen time outside of the two radio hosts, so it's really great that Leah and Klemens can carry the story as well as they do. The romantic, personal and professional partnership of these two makes for a gripping narrative, and their performances only enhance that even further.

Dark Nights with Poe and Munro is a short, but sweet, FMV thrill ride. The adventures these characters get thrust into are compelling, and might even leave the player with an uneasy feeling in the pit of their stomach. You may wonder how much was real or how much was truly influenced by the supernatural. D'Avekki has knocked it out of the park again with their creepy stories and fantastic casting choices. Poe and Munro are amazing together. I'd love to watch an actual show of these two, or at least keep my hopes up for *Dark Nights with Poe and Munro Season 2*.

John reviewed [Dark Nights with Poe and Munro](#) on Steam with a code provided by the developer.

Dark Nights with Poe and Munro /

An FMV Frightfest!

Dark Nights with Poe and Munro is a wonderfully creepy episodic adventure. The intricate writing, fantastic acting, and well crafted scenery makes this a title you won't soon forget.

JOHN RECOMMENDS

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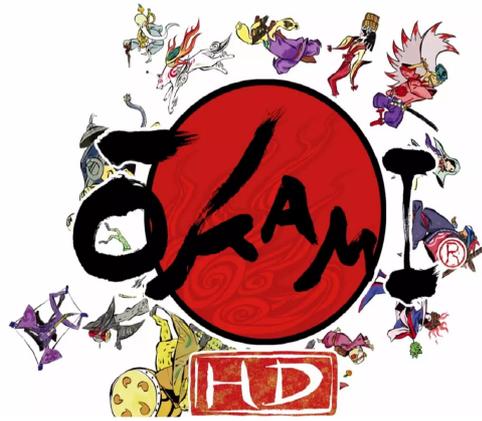


About John Scott

A traveling content creator who has done webcomics, YouTube videos, and game reviews. John has lived in Hawaii, Japan, and China. He loves Megami Tensei, Ace Attorney, Pokemon, and Indie games.

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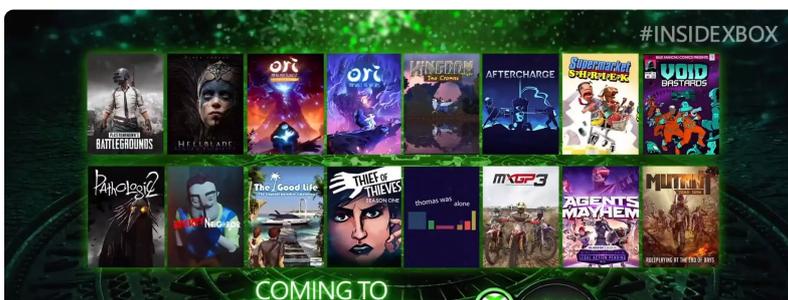
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