

# Tales doesn't Monkey around

Telltale Games revives an old fan favourite while adding sweet 3D graphics



## gamereview

### Tales of Monkey Island, Chapters One and Two

Published by Telltale Games  
Developed by Telltale Games  
Now available on PC at [www.telltalegames.com](http://www.telltalegames.com)

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Online Editor

It's been nearly a decade since the golden age of point-and-click adventure games. Titles like *Maniac Mansion*, *Full Throttle*, and *Loom* were once commonplace: games which eschewed video-card-pushing special effects in favour of engaging storylines and brain-busting puzzles.

One of the most popular franchises of the era was the *Monkey Island* series, chronicling wannabe pirate Guybrush Threepwood's quest to seek Mighty Piratehood, defeat the Ghost Zombie Demon Pirate LeChuck, and win the heart of Elaine Marley, Governor of the Tri-Island Area. With witty dialogue, plots which satirized both pop culture and pirate culture, and professional-grade voice acting in the later installments, *Monkey Island* was a fan favourite.

But tastes changed in PC gaming once the 2000s rolled around: first-person shooters became dominant once improved graphics cards made 3D available to the masses. Adventure gaming went into decline, and

LucasArts — creators of the *Monkey Island* franchise — put the series to bed in favour of creating more *Star Wars* games. Until now, that is.

Earlier this summer, LucasArts licensed *Monkey Island* to Telltale Games — a company dedicated to the revival of the adventure gaming genre, with games such as *Sam & Max Save The World* and *Strong Bad's Cool Game for Attractive People* — and thus, *Tales of Monkey Island* was born.

An episodic game split into five chapters, *Tales* picks up the series after a fictional *Monkey Island 5*, in which the intrepid Guybrush has finally amassed the items required for a voodoo spell to defeat the nefarious LeChuck once and for all. The game is fully rendered in 3D, a first for the *Monkey* series. A brief tutorial takes place during the first act of the game to get players accustomed with the new interface. Gameplay is a combination of classic point-and-click for object selection, with the option of dragging the mouse or using the keyboard for moving Guybrush around.

Despite the fancy graphics and new controls, however, *Tales* stays true to its roots in terms of story and overall gameplay. The dialogue is as punchy as ever, the episodic plot provides a nice twist on the usual *Monkey Island* formula, and the characters remain mostly unchanged from how they were ten years ago. Guybrush, despite his newfound Mighty Pirate status, is still the same semi-hero, who emerges victorious despite himself,

that gamers have grown to know and love.

Of course, this isn't to say that the fancy graphics aren't worth mentioning; the *Monkey Island* world looks better than ever rendered into 3D, and Telltale's animation is a leap beyond the usual stiffness that three-dimensional characters tend to have. Characters in *Tales* aren't just lip-synched, they're emotion-synched — and it's beautiful. The game's music contains a mix of themes from previous games in the series, along with all-new leitmotifs for the new additions to the game's cast of characters.

*Tales of Monkey Island* isn't perfect, naturally. The game's episodic structure, while innovative, means that players have to wait a month between each new installment (though the second episode provides a recap for those who've forgotten the events of the first). The puzzles also seem significantly easier than those from the earlier *Monkey* games; again, the episodic system limits Telltale's ability to write larger overarching puzzles without losing players along the way.

But these are merely minor nitpicks. On the whole, *Tales of Monkey Island*, at least in its first two chapters, is worthy of the series' name and fame. Even if you haven't played any of the original games, this new installment is still worth a try; and if you've played the original games, you've probably bought *Tales* already, and (like me) eagerly await the game's third chapter.

stated MTV Senior VP of Production Chris Linn. "This gives a chance to work with a whole new group of people and explore subjects that aren't already explored on our network." Translation: "This gives us the opportunity to make even lazier bullshit that can fail miserably without affecting our bottom line. We're excited to work with more cost-efficient shame black holes than pregnant 16 year olds and Paris Hilton's Best Fucking Friends."

These selections include such insufferable focus-grouped pap as *My Super Psycho Sweet 16*, a horror film taking place in a roller rink, *Turn The Beat Around*, yet another competitive dance movie, and *Made*, where a band geek is helped by a cheerleader so she can Bring It On with the real squad. But hey, that

last one features the daughter of Donna Summer, who I've heard is the kids' favourite these days.

If that isn't enough to make you jump into the shallow end of a Tila-Tequila-shaped pool, MTV's plan is to release one of these shots of love (oh, I'm sorry: *television events*) every quarter. It's strange; it's almost as if the channel is gradually starting to lose its tight focus on music.

JONN KMECH

*Flop Culture* is a semi-regular feature in which Gateway pop culture pundits shake their literary fists at ridiculous events or celebrities deserving of bitch-slaps in print.

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## FLOP CULTURE

MTV, will your genius never cease? What else can explain the entertainment channel's grandiose plan to rejuvenate their MTV Films brand and make everyone shout "I want my MTV the fuck away from me" than with TV movies, the single cheapest and ultimately pointless endeavours in the history of moving pictures?

Variety reported Wednesday that the studio is planning three new direct-to-TV films to act as "backdoor pilots" for shows: "You can take bigger creative risks with a TV movie as a one-off,"