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Screenshot: Persona 5/AtlusIt is the conclusion of our ongoing game review for Persona 5. Contains spoilers for the entire game. Other entries can be read here. Video games struggle with length. All the media does, but on film you have a rough stadium: 90 minutes if you can hold things tight, three hours if you stretch or direct a Transformers movie. Records have sat for years between a spartan 30 and a leisurely 70 minutes, and TV shows have two rough lengths - an hour or half that. But games? Games can be several hours, from art games such as Journey to a campaign of shooters after thought. Many tend to hit the sweet spot from 10am-8pm, but we aduish attention to people who find ways to beat them quickly by speed or to beat them incredibly slowly, going back over and over again for years or even decades to perfect them. Role-playing games prioritize lengths as a kind of qualitative yardstick: 50 hours seems to be an unofficial bar to clean up, but some stretch on for multiples of it, especially if a player gets obsessed with fulfilling everything they have to offer. Persona games have been long as hell, but moreover, they have always done something with that run-time. It's not just their narrow, addictive nature and how these massive stories are broken into easily digestible but compulsively gameable snacks. It's the way they bury secrets and speak in their early moments that take place tens of hours later, or the way relationships that began about an hour 20 test about an hour on 60. The idea that Persona 5 would be 100 hours paraded long before its release as an uncorrupted positive. If previous Persona games could pack such love and craftsmanship into the 75s, wouldn't another 25 hours be even better? What could these writers and designers do with extra freedom? G/ O Media can get commissionScreenshot: Persona 5 / AtlusIt turns out: Not much. In a strange inversion from past games, the richest part of Persona 5 is its dungeons and demons, not the cast of characters we meet above ground or the caper we go to with them. Palaces in the back half of the game – especially the debauchery of the Eyes Wide Shut cruise ship and that last hallucinate journey through Memory – benefit from the laser-narrow aesthetics and nightmare absurdity of the new demonic designs, but after all these hours, the Persone 5 story doesn't add up much. His first big twist lands with thud – the idea that a traitor infiltrated the group was barely sown, and the fact that it was the most serious member possible didn't make detection any more influential. Every other plot point throughout the game was hammered into the player's head via a text thread, which marred conversations and chorus reprisals from each of the many party members. Story spins the wheels for hours time, including a fully disposable Haru bow, interlude rest and the most transparently formulated plot lines in the series, most of which introduce a one-note clash (around level three), followed by a predictable climax (around level seven) and happy resolution (around level nine). All those walls of text, so promising in the game's early going and so deflating as you realised the madness of their translation and localization, were a kind of room temperature morass by the end of the game. endless thicket of brambles cut before arriving at the next boss. That string of bosses, taking the last half-dozen hours of the game, is sublime, but I admit: If I didn't owe you this conclusion, I would never have passed to see them. That most of us don't finish most of the video games we play can be felt, from time to time, like a dirty secret, a source of shame. It is possible to calculate how many hours steam games you have not yet experienced, which, along with our terminology to complete - beating them - helps explain the media's problematic relationship with length. We conquer them; They owe us that. It took me a long time to feel good about saving games, just like it did with books, movies and TV shows. Hell, I'll drop the album after three songs if my ears hurt. If persona showed us anything, it's that our time on this Earth is limited, and we should spend it as best as possible. There are too many beautiful things to spend on art that doesn't tell us. So, yes, I'd bail on Persona 5. And I can tell you the exact point: Sae pushes you to confess, list your team members, and ask you to connect them to Phantom Thieves. I'd do the same. Fuck them! I was tired of this game, and I still haven't beaten Zelda or even played NieR: Automata. Plus, it's summer, baby. I've got shit to do. I might tell myself that one day I'll get back in the game, but maybe I called it a game. I honestly expected you to have more backbone, spitting Sae on you after you sold out all your teammates. Not this guy, Sae.there's not much room for branching stories in Persona games. They vary wildly in how they play, but this is based on which parts of the story you choose to see, not what you do in them. In Persona 5, this bad ending — like another, later opportunity to take advantage, in which they agree with Igor and damned humanity with a kind of spiritual captivity — is treated as just an alternate end, making it easier to reload before the branching path, and proceed to what the game calls its true ending. Structured in this way, you can see all the conclusions, but it's a little facile. What I really deserved was a picture of mine. I was brainstorming in the interrogation room after 75 hours or so of effort. What I truly wanted was not the happy ending I got; I would be pleased with the closure of humanity, securing my own glory and returning to collecting corok seeds. I enjoy these good bad endings. Katarina – the predecessor of this game and better, in many ways – had a total of eight finishes. I ended up with some milquetoast shrugging positive, but some of his other conclusions are legendary, including one masterpiece of all time where you go to hell and ask Satan if you can marry his daughter. In the second, you get rich and go live in space, apropos of nothing. It's a bloody end—and Catherine made you stick to it. One of my favorite bad endings is at Bloodborne, a game I loved, but I played as cheaply as possible. Defying its impeccable combat design, I spiced up all my levels by grinding in glitchy, soon-to-be patched places, and sprinted, walking in hand, from checkpoint to checkpoint. I called for help before each boss, then hid behind them while they were doing work, probably eating snacks while I did it. And so, when the last head of the game offered a chance to quit, asking me to kneel before him as he got out of his wheelchair and used gothic scythe to end my suffering in the middle of a moon-lit field of poppies - I took it. This was a role-playing game after all, and my role in Bloodborne was a coward. Leaving the game is fine, even more so when the game itself offers you a chance. The whole point of this media is interactivity, so why not own the decision when and how to bail? When the game deserves more than that, or gives you something back, by all means, move to hundreds of hours. (I still have some questionnaires on the map in Novigrad that nag me.) But if not, relieve yourself of the burden of even thinking about finishing the game. Stop games often, and cheerfully. Leave Persona 5, too, unless you want to see every one of her dungeons and bosses. His final stretch is hopelessly overcooked, pulling his game-long sledgehammer-subtle theme of corruption and reforming society into an elaborate metaphor about society's complacency - the real enemy is not corruption, but conformity that allows it. Deliberately closed masses are similar to endless Catherine sheepdogs, although, instead of the deeply specific gonzo conclusions that the game comes to, the true ending of Persona 5 ends with insisting on the co-existence, the idea that literally everything in our world is just a product of our perception. This is a popular enough idea today, and its most innotious form is the philosophy of wishing yourself a rich Secret and its most dangerous form choose your own reality of alternative facts and Trumpism. Persona 5 is not equipped to deal with these issues and Try. My philosophy is disgusting, but Persona 5 treats both of them lightly, almost with the confectionery note that things end as the gang drives around the glistening beach. Is any of it real? Does any of it matter? Screenshot: Persona 5/AtlusMany artworks over the past few decades have ended with this specific bit of ambiguity, with the nature of the real world taking place in sway - think of the rotating peak in Inception, or those shattering final moments of The Lobster, or even the soprano family's conclusion. But Persona 5 treats this not as thinking about the inner state, as they did, but as a fundamental truth, a fundamental principle of reality unlocked —how else? Ryuji even muses that this ability is the true nature of aesthetics: not the pursuit of beauty, but the ability to reform the world as we wish on the basis of our whims, dissealing corruption by believing in a world without it. As a tool to fight corruption, I prefer journalism, history, science and organized dissent. Persona 5 is a featherweight and should not touch any of those in its action, but it should also not be concluded in its last, true moments that none of them matter compared to the power of positive thinking. Featherweight should not be 100 hours. For all the beauty and brilliance of the game, it's twice as long as it should be, a pompous sense of inflation that can't come close to being fulfilled. I'd rather bleed out in the interrogation room a few tens of hours earlier. Persona 5Developer: P StudioPublisher: AtlusPlatforms: PlayStation 3, PlayStation 4Reviewed at: PlayStation 4Price: \$60Rating: MPurchase Persona 5 here, which helps support the A.V. Club. Club.

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