Star Wars : Dark Forces

Star Wars : Dark Forces is a first @-@ person shooter video game developed and published by LucasArts . It was released in 1995 for DOS and Apple Macintosh , and in 1996 for the PlayStation . The storyline is set in the Star Wars fictional universe and follows the character Kyle Katarn , a mercenary working on behalf of the Rebel Alliance . He discovers the Empire 's " Dark Trooper Project " , which involves the development of a series of powerful new battle droids and power @-@ armored stormtroopers .

Dark Forces uses the Jedi game engine , which was developed specifically for the game . The engine adds gameplay features to the first @-@ person shooter genre which were uncommon at the time of release , including level designs with multiple floors and the ability to look up and down .

Critics gave very favorable reviews to the DOS and Macintosh versions of Dark Forces , which were praised for the level design and technological advances . The PlayStation version was criticized for having poor graphics and slow frame rates , reducing playability . A sequel to Dark Forces , Star Wars Jedi Knight : Dark Forces II , followed in 1997 .

Gameplay

Dark Forces is a first @-@ person shooter (FPS) . The player controls Kyle Katarn from a first @-@ person perspective , with a focus on combat against various creatures and characters from the Star Wars universe , although the game also includes environmental puzzles and hazards . Dark Forces follows a central storyline outlined in mission briefings and cutscenes . Each mission includes specific objectives which are related to the story . The missions take place in a variety of environments across the Star Wars universe , including a Star Destroyer interior , Jabba the Hutt 's space yacht , and the planet Coruscant , where the player must infiltrate a computer vault .

Dark Forces ' gameplay expands on the FPS standards set by Doom in 1993 , and features gameplay elements that are now common in the FPS genre . These include the ability to look up and down , duck , and jump . A variety of power @-@ ups are made available to the player , including health , shields , weapons and ammunition . The game also features several non @-@ combat items to aid the player . The head lamp illuminates the area in front of the player , but will reveal the player 's position to enemies in dark rooms . Ice cleats provide traction in icy areas , and an air mask protects the player from areas with toxic atmosphere . Many inventory items are powered by batteries (separate from weapon ammunition types) which can be found around the levels .

For combat , the player may use fists , explosive land mines and thermal detonators , as well as blasters and other ranged weapons . Gameplay leans towards ranged combat , although some enemies have melee attacks such as punching , biting , and using axes . All player weapons except the fist require ammunition , which can be collected in power @-@ ups . Many weapons also offer an alternate fire mode . The player has health and shields which are damaged by enemy attacks and some environmental hazards , and may be replenished through power @-@ ups .

In addition to combat , Dark Forces provides physical obstacles for the character , such as jumping from ledges or traversing across flowing rivers , and includes multi @-@ step puzzles such as mazes controlled by switches .

Plot

The storyline in Dark Forces follows Kyle Katarn (voiced by Nick Jameson) , a mercenary employed by the Rebel Alliance . Before the game begins , Katarn was a student learning the skills required to follow in his father 's career of agricultural mechanics . While he was studying at an academy , he was told by officials that Rebels had killed his parents . The pain from this caused him to enlist in the Imperial army .

Subsequently , Katarn met Jan Ors (Julie Eccles) , a Rebel working undercover as a double agent in the Empire . Ors uncovered the real information about Katarn 's parents ' death ; that the Empire

was behind it . The Empire eventually discovered that Ors was working for the Rebels and she was taken prisoner . Katarn helped her escape , thus ending his career with the Empire . He soon became a mercenary and , due to his hatred of the Empire for killing his parents , he began to take on jobs from the Rebel Alliance . Dark Forces begins with Katarn being recruited by the Rebel Alliance to recover the plans to the Death Star , a heavily armed space station capable of destroying an entire planet . The Alliance use the plans to find a weakness in and subsequently destroy the Death Star .

One year later , the Alliance hires Katarn again , this time to investigate an assault on one of their bases by a new type of Imperial soldier . His investigation reveals the Imperial Dark Trooper project , led by General Rom Mohc (Jack Angel) . His mission to stop the project takes him to the sewers of Anoat City , where he captures Moff Rebus , an Imperial weapons specialist who developed the Dark Trooper weapon . Rebus ' interrogation leads Katarn to a weapons research facility in the mountains of Fest and the Gromas mines where minerals are extracted for the Dark Troopers .

After learning of Crix Madine 's (a former Imperial Commander , who had defected to the Alliance) capture and imminent execution , Kyle proceeds to a high security detention center on Orinackra to rescue him . Madine provides the Rebel Alliance with information about the smuggling of Dark Trooper materials , leading Katarn to investigate the Ramsees Hed docking port on Cal @-@ Seti . He then destroys a robotics facility on the icy planet Anteevy , the second stage of the Dark Trooper production line . After being captured by Jabba the Hutt and having to escape his ship , Katarn infiltrates a computer vault on Coruscant which reveals the location of the Ergo fuel station , the final stage in the smuggling route . He masquerades as a smuggler , gaining access to the Super Star Destroyer Executor , which brings him finally to the Arc Hammer starship , the headquarters of General Mohc 's Dark Trooper project , where he successfully destroys the operation and kills Mohc .

= = Development = =

Development of Dark Forces was led by Daron Stinnett . The programming was led by Ray Gresko , and the graphics and storyline by Justin Chin . Production began in September 1993 , at a time when the first @-@ person shooter genre was very popular . The idea of creating a first @-@ person shooter in the Star Wars universe was inspired by fan mods of Doom which had levels set on the Death Star . The developers of Dark Forces wanted to adapt the FPS format into an adventure game . To do this they introduced puzzles and strategy , along with a Star Wars plot . Originally Luke Skywalker was intended to be the main character in the game , however the developers realized that this would add constraints to gameplay and storyline . Instead a new character , Kyle Katarn , was created .

Upon release , Dark Forces was commonly called a " Doom clone , " but the game makes significant expansions upon the gameplay features present in Doom . New gameplay mechanisms that were not common at the time of release include the ability to look up and down , duck , jump , and swim . The use of multiple floor levels is another technical advance in the first @-@ person shooter genre . To produce these new features , the developers wrote a game engine from scratch . The Jedi game engine can create gameplay and graphical elements such as fully 3D objects , atmospheric effects such as fog and haze , animated textures and shading . Stinnett indicated that the developers wanted these elements to be part of an " active environment , " and features were included to create this : " ships come and go at the flight decks , rivers sweep along , platforms and conveyor belts move and much of the machinery functions . "

The Dark Troopers in Dark Forces were created specifically for the game by Justin Chin and Paul Mica . Chin notes that they were designed as a more advanced enemy when compared to standard stormtroopers : " Instead of just beefing up the stormtroopers , I designed them to be more efficient . I wanted something more terrifying and more omnipotent . " Three designs for the Dark Troopers were produced for Dark Forces . Lucasfilm licensing department initially rejected two of the designs for looking too much out of character , so Chin produced new designs which were ultimately approved . The development team collaborated with staff at Skywalker Ranch for the sounds , music

, and costumes used in the cutscenes .

Dark Forces was ported from DOS to Apple Macintosh . This presented several challenges for the developers . LucasArts requested the game to be produced for both DOS and Macintosh with the same system requirements , specifically the random @-@ access memory (RAM) . The Mac OS runs a graphical user interface which uses up RAM while DOS does not , meaning the Macintosh version has less RAM available for Dark Forces to use . Aaron Giles , who was the Macintosh programmer for Dark Forces , explained that to resolve this problem the memory had to be managed more efficiently .

Although set in the Star Wars universe , lead artist and author Justin Chin " invented " new weapons for the game , such as the Bryar pistol and Packered mortar gun , which were named after his personal favorites , such as composer Gavin Bryars and 1950s Packard automobiles , respectively .

= = = Music = = =

Music for Star Wars : Dark Forces was mostly original works composed by Clint Bajakian , though they are based on cues from John Williams ' original Star Wars works through the utilization of the iMUSE system to create interactive music . The game also features full speech and sound effects in stereo .

= = Release = =

Dark Forces became LucasArts ' highest sell @-@ in with more than 300 @,@ 000 copies accounted for at launch . The game went on to sell 952 @,@ 000 copies over the next five years , to become the eleventh highest selling game from 1993 to 1999 . Dark Forces achieved a strong following on the internet , and custom levels and maps were created for the game .

The popularity of characters from Dark Forces resulted in LucasArts licensing toys based on the game . Hasbro produced Kyle Katarn and Dark Trooper toys , which are among the Star Wars expanded universe items to be turned into action figures . The Dark Troopers were also included in books and comics . William C. Dietz 's novelizations of the Dark Forces storyline were adapted to full @-@ cast audio dramatizations .

LucasArts extended Dark Forces with Star Wars Jedi Knight : Dark Forces II in 1997 , and later two more sequels . The Jedi Knight series continues the story of Kyle Katarn and has been praised for its quality as a whole .

In September 2009 , Dark Forces was re @-@ released as a downloadable version on Valve Corporation 's Steam network for Windows XP , 2000 and Vista . The game is available to purchase individually or as part of a package including all of the games in the Jedi Knight series .

On April 29 , 2010 , the game was made available on the PlayStation Network as a " PSone Classic " .

= = Reception = =

The DOS and Macintosh versions of Star Wars : Dark Forces were well received , with the DOS version holding an aggregate score on GameRankings of 77 % . Publications compared Dark Forces to Doom , a significant video game in the first @-@ person shooter genre at the time , but also indicated that Dark Forces improved upon Doom 's features . Criticisms tended to focus on the game being too short , as well as lacking a multiplayer feature .

Steven Kent of The Seattle Times believes that the general aspects of the game appeal to most computer gamers , not just Star Wars fans . Kent argued that the Star Wars setting is a high point for the game , saying that the level designs recreate the Star Wars style well : " Though most of the Dark Forces sets are original to the game , they were created in the ' Star Wars ' spirit . "

Dark Forces ' gameplay has been described as " challenging " and has generally received praise . Ron Dulin , reviewing the game for GameSpot , highlights the implementation of puzzles within

levels : " The levels are diverse and ingenious , with plenty of creative obstacles standing between you and your goal . While they can be occasionally frustrating , Dark Forces ' diverse gameplay requirements make this title more mentally challenging than your average key hunt . " The graphics and sound were both praised as helping to immerse the player in the environment .

 The PlayStation version of Dark Forces received less positive reviews than the DOS and Macintosh versions . It holds an aggregate score on GameRankings of 59 @.@ 57 % . Directly comparing the PlayStation version with the DOS / Mac version , GameSpot wrote " Though the speed of the Playstation allows for smooth movement , Dark Forces boasts a horrendously choppy frame rate . " IGN made a similar point ; " Unlike the PC and Mac versions , PlayStation Dark Forces is grainier than a loaf of bread . Close up , everything is blocky and pixelated , but even from far away the walls and textures look like big , chunky blocks . Even worse than the graphics , though , is the frame rate . Or lack thereof . The choppy motion takes so much away from the enjoyment of actually playing the game . " Alex Constantides of Computer and Video Games offers the same view , saying that the game is " visually dated . "