

= Kingdom Hearts 358 / 2 Days =

Kingdom Hearts 358 / 2 Days (?????? ??? 358 / 2 Days , Kingudamu H?tsu Sur? Faibu Eito Deizu ?b? Ts? , subtitle read as " Three Five Eight Days Over Two ") is an action role @-@ playing video game developed by h.a.n.d. and published by Square Enix for the Nintendo DS . It is the fifth installment in the best @-@ selling Kingdom Hearts series , and takes place near the end of Kingdom Hearts , continuing parallel to Kingdom Hearts : Chain of Memories . It is a prequel of Kingdom Hearts II . The game launched in Japan on May 30 , 2009 , in North America on September 29 , 2009 and in Europe on October 9 , 2009 . The story is told from the perspective of Roxas , following his daily life within Organization XIII and his relationship with fellow Organization members Axel and Xion .

Kingdom Hearts 358 / 2 Days was directed by Tetsuya Nomura and co @-@ directed by Tomohiro Hasegawa . Nomura decided to develop a game for the Nintendo DS , and once a system had been chosen , decided upon Roxas as the protagonist . The development team wanted to use gameplay similar to previous Kingdom Hearts games but could not due to the insufficient number of buttons the DS had . It features 3D graphics , and single- and multiplayer modes of play .

Following its release Kingdom Hearts 358 / 2 Days received generally positive response by publications for video games . While critics praised the gameplay and graphics they have also criticized the backtracking and its storyline . The game also achieved good sales worldwide while a soundtrack , light novels and manga series have also been released in Japan . The cinematics from the game have also been rendered in high definition and released within the Kingdom Hearts HD 1 @.@ 5 Remix collection .

= = Gameplay = =

358 / 2 Days features the action role @-@ playing game style of the previous games in the series . To accomplish this , the game makes minimal use of the system 's touch screen functionality , and it is possible to play and complete the game without using it at all . The game includes single player and multiplayer modes of play . The single player mode is story @-@ based , the player controls Roxas , who is accompanied by other Organization XIII members on daily missions to Disney worlds from the previous games . The two modes are linked in that character growth is shared between them .

358 / 2 Days features a new gameplay mechanic known as the panel system which involves the customization of the character 's levels , items , equipment , and abilities . For example , certain magic spells cannot be used if their corresponding panels aren 't equipped , but can be used consecutively if multiple are attached . Some panels also occupy multiple slots , but can be combined with other panels to form new or stronger abilities .

Limit Breaks , which previously featured in Square 's Final Fantasy series , can be activated during a battle once the character 's health drops below a certain level , indicated by a yellow health bar . Each character has their own unique abilities during Limit Breaks which allow a temporary boost to their normal abilities , whether it be increasing the attack strength or allowing multiple enemies to be attacked at once . The second stage of a Limit Break known as Final Limit is normally a different or powered @-@ up version of the first and begins at the point where the white line (starting at the high end of the yellow portion of the HP bar) meets top dead center .

= = = Multiplayer = = =

This is the first Kingdom Hearts game to feature cooperative multiplayer . The multiplayer gameplay is separate from the single player story and is mission @-@ based , including cooperative and competitive player battles . Up to four players can play as one of the fourteen members of Organization XIII , with each member having different weapons , skills , and stats . Sora , Donald , Goofy , King Mickey , and Riku are featured as secret characters in the multiplayer who are unlockable while playing through the main story . 358 / 2 Days ' multiplayer also features a chat

system for communication between players , but differs from PictoChat in that everyone can draw on the same screen . To prevent players missing out on multiplayer content , the games were developed so that the missions could be completed without the need to connect with other players , instead utilising AI @-@ controlled partners .

= = Plot = =

= = = Setting = = =

Like the other games in the series , the player progresses through a collection of various worlds , based on various locales from the Disney animated features canon : Agrabah from Aladdin ; the Beast 's Castle from Beauty and the Beast ; Olympus Coliseum from Hercules ; Halloween Town from The Nightmare Before Christmas ; Wonderland from Alice in Wonderland ; and Never Land from Peter Pan (featuring a string of islands new to the series rather than Captain Hook 's pirate ship and Big Ben from the first game) . The game also features worlds created specifically for the series by Square Enix . The most prominent world is The World That Never Was , which first appeared in the secret ending of Kingdom Hearts and serves as the game 's main hub , followed by Twilight Town , a frequently @-@ explored locale . Castle Oblivion and Destiny Islands also appear in cutscenes .

= = = Characters = = =

The game revolves around Roxas , who was first featured at the beginning of Kingdom Hearts II . Roxas is the Nobody of Sora , the series ' protagonist , born when Sora 's body vanished as he briefly lost his heart and became a Heartless , and joining Organization XIII , a group of powerful Nobodies who serve as the antagonists of Kingdom Hearts : Chain of Memories and Kingdom Hearts II . Like Sora , Roxas has the power to wield the Keyblade , a weapon normally used for battling darkness . The other members of Organization XIII play a prominent role as well , particularly Axel , Roxas 's best friend who debuted in Chain of Memories . The game also introduces a new member : Xion , a girl who resembles Sora 's friend Kairi and , like Roxas , can wield the Keyblade .

Other characters who are featured include Naminé , a girl with the power to manipulate memories ; DiZ , an enigmatic man wrapped in bandages ; Riku , Sora 's best friend ; and King Mickey , Riku 's ally and ruler of Disney Castle . Sora , the main character of the previous games , is featured prominently in the plot , along with his allies Donald Duck and Goofy , though they appear infrequently in the form of several flashbacks and memory @-@ induced scenarios . Also appearing are Pete , a persistent villain who first appears in Kingdom Hearts II , and Hayner , Pence , and Olette , a trio of friends living in Twilight Town who also debuted in Kingdom Hearts II . As with the other games in the series , each Disney world features several characters who appear in the films their worlds are based on ; on the other hand , no Final Fantasy characters are featured apart from a Moogles managing a shop for the Organization .

= = = Story = = =

Xemnas , leader of Organization XIII , finds the newly @-@ born Roxas in Twilight Town and recruits him as its thirteenth member . Unlike other Nobodies , Roxas lacks memories of his original self , but develops a personality of his own as time passes . Each day , Roxas is sent on missions to other worlds , either alone or accompanied by a fellow member , to destroy vast quantities of Heartless with his Keyblade and release stolen hearts , which furthers the Organization 's goal of creating Kingdom Hearts and becoming complete beings . Roxas is placed under the mentorship of fellow member Axel , whom he becomes close friends with . One day , Axel is stationed at Castle Oblivion along with a group of other members , leaving Roxas to be partnered with a girl named

Xion , the Organization 's 14th member inducted shortly after Roxas . Roxas and Xion bond over their similarities , including Xion 's ability to wield a Keyblade and lack of memories of her past . Some time later , Roxas falls into a coma caused by the alteration of Sora 's memories , and does not revive until several weeks later , when Axel returns from Castle Oblivion as the only survivor of the group .

Over time , Xion develops a friendship with Roxas and Axel , eating sea @-@ salt ice cream with them after missions at the Twilight Town clock tower . Xion soon falls into a coma after failing to eliminate Riku ; like Roxas , she has visions of Sora after waking . In time , Xion questions her own existence , distancing herself from Roxas and Axel to find out about herself . She eventually discovers that she is a replica created by Xemnas from Sora 's memories of Kairi as a fail @-@ safe for Roxas , and that her existence prevents Sora 's memory from being completely restored . Xion is torn between staying with her friends and merging with Sora as per Riku 's advice , but ultimately decides to escape from the Organization after she begins siphoning Roxas ' strength . Understanding her situation , Axel allows Xion to escape , but loses Roxas ' trust . Upon learning Xion 's identity from Xemnas , Roxas begins to question his own identity and defects from the Organization in search of answers , leaving Axel dejected .

At Twilight Town , Roxas confronts Xion , whom Xemnas has altered to perform her initial purpose of absorbing Roxas and becoming Sora . After being defeated , Xion requests Roxas to stop Xemnas 's plan before dissipating and merging with Sora , causing everyone 's memories of her to gradually vanish . Back at the World That Never Was , Riku attempts to capture Roxas for DiZ . When Roxas overpowers him , Riku releases the suppressed darkness in his heart , giving him the power necessary to subdue Roxas , but also giving him the physical form of Xehanort 's Heartless Ansem , who resides in his heart . Following Roxas ' defeat and capture , DiZ inserts him into a virtual simulation of Twilight Town without any of his memories of the Organization so that Roxas may eventually merge with Sora and complete the restoration of his memories .

= = Development = =

358 / 2 Days was developed by h.a.n.d. with Square Enix employees overseeing the process . The game was directed by Tetsuya Nomura and co @-@ directed by Tomohiro Hasegawa . In 2007 , Nomura mentioned he wanted to do a spin @-@ off Kingdom Hearts game on a mobile platform and wanted the game to play slightly different from the other titles already in the series . 358 / 2 Days was announced alongside Kingdom Hearts Birth by Sleep and Kingdom Hearts coded at the Tokyo Game Show on September 20 , 2007 , where a trailer was shown in a photo @-@ prohibited theater . New trailers were shown and a playable demo was available at the 2008 Jump Festa in December 2007 and the DK?3713 Private party in August 2008 . Both single player and multiplayer demos were featured . Xion was also shown in the new trailer and in the multiplayer demo .

The Nintendo DS was chosen as the system before design work on the game had begun . Roxas was chosen as the game 's protagonist as the staff thought that having a main character besides Sora would help to introduce gamers to the series ' first Nintendo DS title . The staff thought that Roxas ' role as a member of Organization XIII would be a suitable theme for the plot . This idea was furthered during the development of Kingdom Hearts II , where the staff wanted to focus on what influenced Roxas to leave the Organization , which resulted in the creation of Xion 's character who was connected with Roxas ' origins . The development team wanted to have gameplay similar to previous Kingdom Hearts titles , but stated the number of buttons on the Nintendo DS was a problem . Some of the DS 's functions , like the stylus , are not used in order to retain the similar gameplay from previous titles . Roxas seeing Sora 's memories is incorporated throughout the game and has different types of gameplay for each world . The game 's logo uses warm colors as a reference to the sunset in Twilight Town . The meaning behind the title , " 358 / 2 Days " was left unexplained by Nomura during the promotion of the game . Upon completion , the player discerns that it references the story of Xion and Roxas , and their 358 days as members of Organization XIII .

Though Birth by Sleep was the first of the three new games to begin development , 358 / 2 Days

was released before it . The game was slated for a release at the end of 2008 , but Square Enix pushed the date to February 2009 . Once again the game was delayed for Japanese release until May 30 , 2009 . A release in North American territories was announced on December 2 , 2008 . The official English trailer for the title was shown at Nintendo 's press conference at E3 2009 , confirming a release date of September 29 , 2009 for North America and October 9 , 2009 for Europe .

= = Reception = =

The game 's current average score is 75 on Metacritic , and 76 @. @ 74 % on GameRankings . Prior to the game 's release , Nintendo Power 's Chris Hoffman and Steve Thomason referred to the game as highly anticipated , and considered it one of the better titles displayed at the 2008 Tokyo Game Show . The game was met with a range of reviews , ranging from mediocre to positive , where most of the focus was on the game 's graphics and storyline .

The graphics of the game were heavily praised by many reviewers , with Hoffman and Thomason going as far as to call them among the best on the system , and complimented the familiar feel of the gameplay and its transition between the PlayStation home consoles and the portable Nintendo ones . Game Informer gave the game an 8 out of 10 , praising the graphics for excellent production values and the journey of the camera controls from the PlayStation Analog Stick to the DS shoulder buttons . The Japanese gaming magazine Famitsu gave the game 9 / 9 / 9 / 9 (36 / 40) and praised the graphical quality of the game saying they were at a level which had not been seen on a DS before , further complimenting the gameplay mechanics and missions . They were also particularly impressed with the new panel system which allows the player to customize their fighting techniques as well as the ability to customize the characters from the Organization . Unlike many other reviewers , they praised the story as " strongly captivating . " The Australian video game talk show Good Game 's two reviewers gave the game a 7 / 10 and 7 @. @ 5 / 10 , grateful that the game didn't force the use of the stylus , especially when it came to battle .

The RPGFan reviewer gave the game an 81 out of 100 , praising the visual and aural quality , however they expressed disappointment at the recycling of most of the music from Kingdom Hearts and Kingdom Hearts II . Kevin VanOrd of GameSpot was complimentary of the single @-@ player mode , commenting specifically that the artificial intelligence @-@ controlled Organization XIII members were helpful and competent . He also praised the multiplayer mode 's gameplay , calling it " fun " and citing the ease of using magic spells and items .

The controls and overall story were of particular criticism by the reviewers , with VanOrd stating that the on @-@ screen character ended up in one of the game field 's corners often . RPGamer was highly critical of these facts , as it handed the game a 2 @. @ 5 / 5 score and reviewer Alex Reimer concluded , " ... many fans of the series may be turned off by the lackluster controls and odd story directions taken with this portable spin @-@ off . " The Official Nintendo Magazine gave the game a mediocre score of 69 % praising the graphics and gameplay , they were critical however of the constant backtracking and confusing plot . Good Game 's reviewers stated that while the plot was confusing , and made little sense for players new to the series , it still drew you in and filled in the gaps of the storyline for continuing players of the series . They surmised that the repetition of worlds and missions , and overall lack of variety , combined with lengthy storytelling really hurt the gamer experience .

Kingdom Hearts 358 / 2 Days was the top @-@ selling game during May 2009 in Japan at 291 @, @ 000 copies , even though it was released during the final week of the month . The following week , it was again the top @-@ selling game in the region at 106 @, @ 000 copies . By August 2009 , the game sold 490 @, @ 000 copies in the region . It was also one of the most reserved games for the DS . By the end of 2009 , the game sold a total of 571 @, @ 981 copies in Japan alone making it the twelfth best @-@ selling game in Japan of 2009 . NPD Group sales data shows the game has sold over 360 @, @ 000 copies in North America as of October 2009 . In November 2009 , Square Enix announced the game had sold 1 @. @ 22 million units worldwide . The game was nominated for 7 awards in the Nintendo 2009 Power awards : Nintendo DS Game of the Year , Best Sound / Voice Acting , Best Adventure Game , Best Nintendo DS Graphics , Best New

Character (Xion) , Best Story / Writing , and Overall Game of the Year . On February 16 , 2010 it was announced that 358 / 2 Days won all seven of the awards that it was nominated for in the reader 's vote .

= = Versions and merchandise = =

A special Kingdom Hearts 358 / 2 Days @-@ themed edition of the Nintendo DSi was released alongside the game when it launched in Japan . An Ultimania guidebook of the game was released by Square on June 25 , 2009 . Kingdom Hearts 358 / 2 Days was re @-@ released as part of the " Kingdom Hearts 10th Anniversary Box " package made in commemoration of the franchise 's 10th anniversary on March 29 , 2012 alongside Kingdom Hearts Re : coded and the debuting Kingdom Hearts 3D : Dream Drop Distance . The musical themes introduced in Kingdom Hearts 358 / 2 Days were included in a CD that collected tracks from Kingdom Hearts Birth by Sleep , Kingdom Hearts Re : coded and 358 / 2 Days released on February 2 , 2012 .

= = = Manga and light novels = = =

Square Enix published a series of light novels based on the title written by Tomoko Kanemaki and illustrated by Shiro Amano . The first volume , The 14th , was released on July 30 , 2009 and the second , Go to the Sea , on January 28 , 2010 , and the third and last volume , Xion @-@ Seven Days , in May 2010 . A manga adaptation by Amano was serialized in Square 's Monthly Sh?nen Gangan from August 2009 to August 2012 . A total of five tank?bon volumes were released between June 22 , 2010 , and April 21 , 2012 .

= = = HD 1 @.@ 5 Remix = = =

In September 2012 , Square Enix announced Kingdom Hearts HD 1 @.@ 5 Remix a compilation for the PlayStation 3 to include both Kingdom Hearts Final Mix and Re : Chain of Memories in high definition and trophy support . Additionally , the collection includes HD cinematic scenes from Kingdom Hearts 358 / 2 Days . The idea of a full remake , like Kingdom Hearts Re : Chain of Memories , was considered for Kingdom Hearts 358 / 2 Days . However , it was later scrapped in favor of an almost 3 hour long cinematic retelling of the game . New voice work was done for 358 / 2 Days and the HD collection has " 70 % of the main plot . " It was released in Japan on March 14 , 2013 , in North America on September 10 , 2013 , in Australia on September 12 , 2013 and on September 13 , 2013 in Europe .