

= Tales of Hearts =

Tales of Hearts ( Japanese : ????????? , Hepburn : Teiruzu Obu H?tsu ) is a Japanese role @-@ playing game released for the Nintendo DS in Japan and the PlayStation Vita worldwide . It is the eleventh main entry in the Tales series , developed by Namco Tales Studio and published by Bandai Namco Games . The Japan @-@ exclusive DS version received two editions : the " Anime Edition , " featuring cutscenes by Production I.G , and the " CG Movie Edition , " featuring CGI cutscenes created by Shirogumi Ltd . A remake of the game , Tales of Hearts R ( ????????? ???? , Teiruzu Obu H?tsu ?ru ) , was released on the Vita in March 2013 and later released in western regions in November 2014 . Hearts R was also ported to iOS and released in Japan in October 2013 although it was pulled from the App Store on March 31 , 2016 , and therefore no longer available for download . Hearts R was developed by 7th Chord and includes staff from Bandai Namco Studios .

The game follows main protagonist Kor Meteor after he discovers a woman named Kohaku Hearts and her brother Hisui near his home town . When Kohaku is attacked by a mysterious antagonist named Incarose and infected by a monster called a xerom , Kor attempts to cure her using his Soma , an ancient weapon designed to fight xerom . In the process , he ends up shattering Kohaku 's Spiria , the essence of her heart and emotions , and scattering the pieces across the world . Together with Hisui , Kor sets off with Kohaku on a quest to restore her Spiria . Its characteristic genre name , a concept used extensively in the Tales series , is Kokoro to deau RPG ( ?????RPG ? , lit . " A Meeting Between Hearts RPG " ) . It represents the game 's central theme of people 's hearts uniting to overcome strife . For Hearts R , extra story scenes were created and the genre name was altered to Aratana kokoro to deau RPG ( ????????RPG ? , lit . " A New Meeting Between Hearts RPG " ) .

Hearts began production in the winter of 2006 , during the final development stages of the PlayStation 2 remake of Tales of Destiny . It was produced by Hideo Baba , the former brand manager for the series . Though the third title on the DS , it was the first portable title to be developed by Namco Tales Studio . The remake was mostly handled by different development staff , but the writer and character designer both returned to add new content . Both versions of the game have received strong sales and highly positive reviews in Japan , with the DS version selling 260 @,@ 000 units by 2009 . Reviews of the DS version have been positive overall , while western reviews of Hearts R have been mixed to positive .

= = Gameplay = =

Like previous entries in the Tales series , Tales of Hearts is an action role @-@ playing game . The game is split into two main areas : the field map and battlefield arenas triggered upon encountering an enemy . The battle arenas are fully rendered and played out in 2D . Characters are rendered outside pre @-@ rendered cutscenes as 2D character sprites against 3D backgrounds . For the original Nintendo DS version , the top screen shows the main visuals , while the bottom screen shows the navigation map and other functions . Battles are triggered by running into enemy sprites rather than appearing as random encounters . As with previous titles , Skits , extra conversations between characters , are available for the player to trigger .

The battle system is a variant on the Linear Motion Battle System ( LMBS ) from multiple Tales titles : an action @-@ based combat system similar to a fighting game : button commands instantly trigger various attacks and actions , and different attacks string together to form combos . The system used in Hearts is called the " Combination Aerial LMBS " . Up to three characters participate in battle , with one controlled by the player and the other two controlled via artificial intelligence . The two AI characters be assigned to perform different actions such as healing or attacking . The " Combination " element refers to a special gauge that fills up and can be used to perform special attacks with party members not assigned in battle . A second " Emotion " gauge determines how many moves a character can perform : the gauge fills while the character is blocking , and is depleted by performing actions . The lower the gauge is , the lower a character 's defenses are . Characters can employ special attacks called " Combination Blasters , " Hearts ' take on the series '

staple Mystic Artes ( " Hi @-@ Ougis " in the Japanese version ) . Defeated enemies drop items and materials that can be used to level up character abilities , with certain combinations of items yielding certain abilities and skills . Once enough skills have been learned , a character 's weapon can be upgraded via three separate skill trees , with the abilities and power of the character changing according to the choice of skills beforehand .

For the PlayStation Vita remake , the gameplay takes place in 3D environments with fully rendered character models . Along with including a fourth AI @-@ controlled character in battle , Hearts R uses a redesigned battle system titled the Aerial Chase Linear Motion Battle System ( called " Arc Chase " in the Japanese version ) . The " chase link " mechanic enables a character to follow an enemy after knocking it into the air and continue a combo attack . By selecting an ally at the right moment , the player character can perform a Chase Cross attack , while holding down the attack button activates a finishing move . Multiple items found in chests scattered across the land can be used in battle ( such as curative items ) and for obstacles and objects in the field areas . Multiple elements from the series , including cooking healing recipes , are included . Random encounters with enemies on the field are also present . Characters level up using Soma Build Points ( SBP ) , with the " soma " being a character 's signature weapon and points causing the Soma to evolve , granting new abilities . SBPs are assigned to character stat values called Spir Parameters , which strengthen different character stats . Mystic Artes from the original game are carried over , along with new ones . Also added are Union Artes , special attacks unique to a particular character pairing . Characters can be assigned special accessories called " Combo Commands " : activated by a specific set of button presses , the accessory grants a character full access to all their Artes for a limited time .

== Plot ==

=== Setting ===

Tales of Hearts is set on the worlds of Organica and Minera ( known to Organicans as the " white moon " ) , with the events of the story mostly taking place on Organica . Two millennia before the present day , Minera was in a state of war with itself , and Organica 's inhabitants were used by the Minerans as a food source for organic weapons called xeroms . The xeroms were designed to attack Spirias , the crystalline essence of a person 's emotions , and either destroyed them or infected them with an ailment known as despir . Some Minerans who sympathized with the Organicans ' plight and wishes for peace provided them with weapons to fight off the xerom , called Soma . In the present day , after Minera was destroyed , the xerom continue to threaten the people of Minera and the people who bear Somas and fight the creatures are called Somatics . Other remnants of the Mineran civilization left on the planet include the airship fortress Mysticete , mostly known to the Organicans as the " Forest of Thorns " , and mechanoids , machines with synthetic Spirias who acted as guardians to important Minerans . During the events of Hearts , Organica is under the united rule of the Maximus Empire , which waged a war against the world 's other factions eighteen years before in a conflict called the " Unification War " .

=== Characters ===

Kor Meteor

A boy with a strong curiosity for the world , Kor lives on an isolated island with his grandfather Sydan . Encountering Kohaku and Hisui and venturing beyond his town for the first time , his grandfather is killed by Incarose . His attempt to save Kohaku from an attack of despir unwittingly causes her Spiria to shatter , prompting Kor to join Hisui and Kohaku in an effort to restore her . By the end of the game he has developed romantic feelings for Kohaku . His name is Shing Meteoryte ( ??? ? ?????? , Shingu Meteoraito ) in the original Japanese . His first name was based on the Japanese words " shin " ( ? ) and " gu " ( ? ) , which was intended to mean that he " is armed with a

heart . " His surname was taken from the English word " meteorite " . Kor is voiced by Tetsuya Kakiyama .

Kohaku Hearts ( コハク ハーツ , Kohaku H?tsu , Kohaku Hearts in Japanese )

A girl who travels the world with her brother searching for a Soma , guided on her quest by Lithia . Attacked by Incarose and infected by a xerom , Kor 's attempt to save her ends up shattering her Spiria , rendering her virtually emotionless . During the course of the game , she develops romantic feelings for Kor . Kohaku 's first name is the Japanese word for " amber " . Her name is alternately translated as " Amber Hearts " . Kohaku is voiced by Marina Inoue .

Hisui Hearts ( ヒスイ ハーツ , Hisui H?tsu )

Kohaku 's older brother . Because of the circumstances of their mother 's death , he is overprotective of his sister . He is initially distant and cold towards Kor because of the latter 's actions with Kohaku , but gradually comes around . Hisui 's first name is the Japanese word for " jade " . His name is alternately translated as " Jadeite Hearts " . Hisui is voiced by Masaya Matsukaze .

Ines Lorenzen ( イネス ローゼン , Inesu R?rentsu , Innes Lorenz in Japanese )

A woman who is the manager and sole employee of the transport shop " Wanderlust " . Possessed of superhuman strength , she initially accompanies the group to help sell her wares . Her surname is based on the mineral lorenzenite . Ines is voiced by Shizuka It? .

Beryl Benito ( ベリル ベニト , Beriru Benito )

A girl who ran away from her village to become a court painter , she is easily conned due to her inexperience of the world and prone to be nihilistic . Her name is directly drawn from both the eponymous gemstone and the mineral benitoite . Beryl is voiced by Saeko Chiba .

Kunzite ( クンザイト , Kuntsaito )

A guardian knight hidden from the public by those currently using him , he is an ancient machine constructed with functions that mimic and understand human emotions , giving him the equivalent of a heart . He was created as Richea 's guardian . His name is one of the names for spodumene . Kunzite is voiced by Hozumi G?da .

Chalcedony Akerman ( カルセドニー アークマン , Karusedonii Aakamu , Calcedny Arcome in Japanese )

The leader of the Crystal Knights , Chalcedony has been a skilled swordsman from childhood , and is initially antagonistic towards the protagonists . Originally a non @-@ player character ( NPC ) in Hearts , he is included as a playable character in Hearts R . Chalcedony is voiced by Hiroshi Kamiya .

Gall Gruner ( ガル グルナー , Garado Gurinasu , Galando Grinus in Japanese )

A veteran Somatic who joins Kor 's group in the hope of destroying the Xerom . He became a master after his wife and daughter were killed by Xerom , and becomes attached to Kohaku as she reminds him of his daughter . Initially cold and distant , he begins to show a lighter side while traveling with the group . Gall is voiced by Hideo Ishikawa .

== = Story = = =

Note : Aside from the addition of Gall and Chalcedony 's presence in the late section of the game , the plots of Hearts and Hearts R are the same .

Kor Meteor , a young man living on a remote island with his grandfather Sydan and being trained as a Somatic , encounters Kohaku and Hisui Hearts outside his village : they are fleeing from the female mechanoid Incarose and are seeking a Soma . After finding one on the island , the island is attacked by Incarose and a group of xerom . During the conflict , Sydan is fatally injured by Incarose and Kohaku is infected with despir . Despite his inexperience , Kor enters Kohaku to destroy the infection . While there , he encounters a Mineran called Lithia Spodumene , who has been using Kohaku as a host . Sensing a hostile presence inside Kor during an angry outburst from him , Lithia causes Kohaku 's Spiria to shatter : aside from one fragment , the pieces are scattered across the world . Feeling responsible , Kor chooses to go with Hisui to restore Kohaku 's Spiria . During their quest , they are joined by Somatic Gall , Ines , Beryl , Kunzite , and reluctantly Chalcedony : through their early encounters with him , they become involved in a conflict between the Maximus Empire 's

military and religious authorities . They are also opposed by Silver , the head of a rebel militant group who wants to use Mineran technology to topple the Empire and create a new world order . They eventually arrive at the fortress Mysticete , where they retrieve the final piece from Silver and are forced to kill him when he fuses with a xerom . It is then revealed that Kor holds the consciousness of Creed Graphite , a hostile Mineran and Incarose 's master , within him . Creed and Lithia , within their respective hosts , briefly do battle , but the effort on Lithia 's part breaks a seal containing their physical forms , allowing the two Minerans to return to them .

The group escape Mysticete with Lithia , who explains that in an effort to stop the warring on Minera , Creed , Lithia and her sister Fluora created Gardenia , a xerom capable of remotely absorbing Spirias . Though intended to quell violent thoughts in the population , Gardenia went berserk when activated and absorbed every Spiria on Minera , calcifying the planet . Fluora used herself to seal Gardenia away , and when Creed attempted to free Fluora , Lithia interfered , causing both to be separated from their physical forms : since then , they have been living in Organican hosts and battling each other for two millennia . Creed , who still believes the Minerans are alive within Gardenia , intends to undo Fluora 's work and rebuilding Minera at the cost of Organica and its people . In the aftermath , Kohaku and Kor find out how Lithia and Creed ended up inside them : eighteen years before , Creed and Lithia were respectively in the bodies of Zirconia , then @-@ ruler of the Maximus Empire , and Lola Hearts , Kohaku 's mother . Lola faced Zirconia with a group of Somatics that included Sydan and Kor 's mother Kardia , who was then carrying him . During their final battle , Lola 's Spiria was shattered , forcing Lithia to transfer herself into the unborn Kohaku 's Spiria , and Creed was forced to abandon his host , leaving Zirconia emotionally scarred . Creed attempted to possess Kardia 's child , but with help from the unborn Kor , she succeeded in sealing Creed away with Kor 's help at the cost of her Spiria . Though Kor is initially disheartened by these revelations , Kohaku helps bring him round .

With Creed controlling Mysticete and xerom attacking people across the planet , the group , along with Peridot and Pyrox , manage to unite the disputing factions of the Maximus Empire . With the world now united against the xerom , they set off to find the means of turning Chalcedony 's wing @-@ based Soma into an airship for their use . In gathering the final component inside an active volcano , Incarose attacks them and the group are forced to leave Peridot and Pyrox to die . After this , Lithia is shown to be dying , as her Spiria is in a severely weakened condition , but she resolves to live until her mission is complete . During their first assault on Mysticete , the group are repelled and end up on Minera . Finding their way to a transport tower that can take them to Gardenia , they have a final confrontation with Incarose , who is defeated and forced to provide the power for their journey at the cost of her life . Reaching Gardenia , the two are unable to prevent Creed from freeing Fluora and activating Gardenia . Gardenia instantly absorbs Fluora , and Creed fuses with it in an attempt to gain control over it . When he is defeated , Kor and Kohaku , together with his friends and the still @-@ living Mineran Spirias , destroy Gardenia , then escape as Creed dies with Gardenia . After learning that the Minerans have a chance of being reborn , Kunzite saves the dying Lithia by sealing her inside his Spiria and entering a comatose state . After this , the rest of the group return to Kor 's home village , where Kor and Kohaku confirm their love for each other .

= = Development = =

Hearts began development in the winter of 2006 , while debugging was being performed on the PlayStation 2 remake of Tales of Destiny , though active development did not begin until spring the following year . The production was headed by Hideo Baba , producing his first original Tales game , and the development team was made up of members from both " Team Symphonia " ( the team behind 3D entries in the series ) and " Team Destiny " ( responsible for 2D titles ) . Multiple development assets were borrowed from the Destiny remake for use in Hearts . The earliest form of the game was as a DS remake of Destiny . The game 's characteristic genre name , a recurring feature of the series in Japan , was Kokoro to deau RPG ( ??????RPG ? , lit . " A Meeting Between Hearts RPG " ) , which represented the core theme of people 's hearts meeting and uniting to overcome difficulties in their lives . The characters were designed by regular Tales series designer

Mutsumi Inomata . Inomata worked on the designs while she was also working on character designs for Tales of Innocence , and found it hard working on both titles at once . The characters ' names were inspired by various ores and gemstones . More conventional names were repeatedly suggested and rejected .

Despite being the third Tales title on the Nintendo DS after Tales of the Tempest and Innocence , it was the first to be produced by Namco Tales Studio , and thus it was an unusual experience for the development team . According to director Naoto Miyadera , one of the most difficult aspects was creating a suitable interface and fitting the game 's content on the limited hardware , which required a trial @-@ and @-@ error programming process . During the early phases , the team considered ways of using the DS touch screen during battles , but this was eventually scrapped and the final game made little to no use of the feature . Production I.G created the anime cutscenes , while Shirogumi Ltd created CGI cutscenes for a separate edition of the game . The CGI cutscenes were worked on by a three @-@ person team , including company director Manabu Koike : the three worked closely with the development team to make sure the cutscenes fit properly into the game , and that they did justice to Inomata 's character designs despite the different animation style . One issue they had was lip @-@ synching dialog to the CGI character models . The main reason behind the creation of CGI cutscenes was that the team wanted to try something new , attempting to sell two versions of the games . Hearts was released as two separate game editions : the " Anime Edition " , featuring the cutscenes by Production I.G , and " CG Movie Edition " , using the Shirogumi cutscenes . After release , it was determined that the CGI cutscenes were less popular with fans . Speaking to Siliconera after the game 's release , Baba said that it was the Tales game he most wanted western players to try out , due to its story and technical achievements .

== = Hearts R == =

Hearts R was primarily developed by Japan @-@ based developer 7th Chord , with staff from in @-@ house development studio Bandai Namco Studios helping with development . The game was a complete remake of Hearts , featuring full voice acting for the main scenario , new playable characters , 3D graphics and over ten new anime cutscenes created by Production I.G. in addition to the " Anime Edition " cutscenes already present . Due to the poor reception of the " CG Edition " by the fanbase , it was decided not to use CGI cutscenes again . It was given an altered genre name : Aratana kokoro to deau RPG ( ????????RPG ? , lit . " A New Meeting Between Hearts RPG " ) . The staff of the game also had differences : Hironori Naoi replaced Kazuhisa Oomi as director , while Takashi Yota ( also known under the alias " Ryuji Odate " ) and Mika Murakita produced the game in place of Baba . Inomata returned as character designer .

The concept behind Hearts R was to leave the base story and theme intact while building on and improving it , using the development of Innocence R as a template . It was developed alongside Innocence R , and many staff overlapped on the projects . Naoi joined the team in early 2012 , after finishing work on Tales of the Heroes : Twin Brave , and was the principle developer for the new combat system . In the middle of development , the " Chase Link " system was added based on a similar gameplay mechanic from Innocence R. Naoki Yamamoto , the scenario writer for Hearts , returned to co @-@ write the extra story content with Keishi Maeda . For the rebuilt battle system , the team were asked by Baba to create a sense of speed when compared with the original . Along with the gameplay and story additions , two new playable characters were introduced : Chalcedony and new character Gall Gruner . Chalcedony , originally an antagonist in Hearts , was included in the playable cast to fully explore the character 's relationship with Kor . Gall was originally conceived as a woman , but at a suggestion from Murakita for a mature leader figure for the group , Gall was changed to a man . Inomata 's design was based on a picture of Yota wearing sunglasses . The narrative connection to Innocence R was initially unplanned , but positive fan reception prompted the team to add it in .

== = Audio == =

Heart 's soundtrack was composed by veteran Tales composer Motoi Sakuraba , Hiroshi Tamura and Shinji Tamura ( as Hibiki Aoyama ) . The official soundtrack album , Tales of Hearts Original Soundtrack , was published by BMG Japan on two compact discs on December 10 , 2008 . In addition to the original soundtrack , a special disc of selected arranged tracks titled Tales of Hearts CG Movie Edition Visual & Original Soundtrack DVD was released alongside the " CG Movie Edition " of the game . Reviews of the soundtrack have been mixed . RPGFan 's Patrick Gann both called it the best soundtrack of the three Nintendo DS Tales games and a weaker soundtrack than the console @-@ based Tales games . Max Nevill of Game @-@ OST was also mixed , feeling that the album was too much like previous Tales scores by Sakuraba . Some tracks did please him , but he noted that some might not find them to their taste . The music featured in Hearts R was re @-@ arranged and added to by Kazuhiro Nakamura and Sakuraba .

The game 's theme song , " Eien no Ashita " ( ????? , " Eternal Tomorrow " ) , was written and performed by Japanese rock band Deen , who had previously performed the theme song for the original version of Destiny . The single reached 6th place in the Oricon charts during its first week of release and remained in the charts for eight weeks . Both Gann and Nevill praised the song and the multiple versions found in the soundtrack : Nevill called it " a charismatic and emotional rock ballad " , while Gann referred to it as " a great opening single " .

= = Release = =

In order to compete against Square Enix 's PlayStation Portable exclusive Dissidia Final Fantasy , which was releasing on the same day as Hearts , the company heavily promoted the game at several events and offered multiple pre @-@ order bonuses for buyers . The original version of Hearts has not been released in the west , and a fan translation for this version was released in 2009 . Hearts R came as both a standard edition and a special edition titled " Linked Edition " , which included a Vita and accessories themed after the game . First print copies of Hearts R gave access to a special downloadable game called Tales of Hearts R : Infinite Evolve . Rendered in the same graphic style as Hearts , it is a game separate from the main story with an exponentially increasing difficulty level . At release , DLC outfits for the characters were created themed around " idol " , " school " , " maid " and " butler " . Another set was based around protagonists from previous Tales games . Hearts R was also ported to and released on iOS mobile devices in October 2013 exclusively in Japan .

= = = Vita version = = =

Speculation about the existence of Hearts R started back in early 2012 . The game was first teased during the credits of Innocence R , with both a post @-@ credits message saying " To be continued to next Re @-@ imagination " , and artwork in certain dungeons featuring scenes and characters from both Hearts and Tempest . This caused speculation as to whether the next remake was Tempest , Hearts or both . Hearts R was officially announced in Weekly Sh?nen Jump in October 2012 .

The localization of the title was originally unplanned , but during heavy promotion of the Tales series in Europe and North America alongside the domestic release of Innocence R and Hearts R , there were multiple requests from the western fanbase to bring the titles west : as Hearts R was the most recent title , it was chosen for localization . The localization was officially announced in April 2014 . Unlike previous localizations , the game remained with Japanese voice acting , but with subtitles in multiple languages . This decision was influenced both by limited space on the Vita cartridge and fan requests for the original Japanese voice track . The North American physical release was exclusive to video game retail line GameStop . It also received a digital release on PlayStation Store . For its European release , a special day @-@ one " Soma Linked Edition " was created : it featured three costumes from Tales of Vesperia . The edition also included a code to enter a competition for five autographed Japanese Collector 's Editions of Hearts R , which would include a special congratulatory video from Baba and a personalized case featuring the winner 's

name . Pre @-@ order downloadable content in the form of character costumes was also created . The costume DLC was also made available in North America from selected stores . The stores also had a limited digital release of the game alongside the physical release . Hearts R is compatible with the PlayStation TV .

= = = Media adaptations = = =

Hearts R received a manga adaptation of the same name . The manga was eventually collected into a single volume and released under the title Tales of Hearts R Comic Anthology ( ??? ? ? ? ? R ????????? , Teiruzu Obu H?tsu R Komikku Ansoroj? ) on 25 June 2013 . An official strategy guide , Tales of Hearts R Official Complete Guide ( ??? ? ? ? ? R ????????? , Teiruzu Obu H?tsu R K?shiki Konpur?to Gaido ) , was released on 14 March 2013 . Five audio dramas based on Hearts were produced after the release of the official soundtrack , released under the general name of Tales of Hearts Drama CD ( ??? ? ? ? ? , Teiruzu Obu H?tsu Dorama CD ) .

= = Reception = =

= = = Nintendo DS = = =

Bandai Namco had high expectations for Hearts , preparing shipments of 400 @,@ 000 units , based on previous high sales they had for Innocence . During its week of release , Hearts reached fourth place in Famitsu 's sales charts and fifth place in Dengeki 's . It sold 137 @,@ 000 units in its week of release , more than Innocence in a similar period : the " Anime Edition " accounted for 122 @,@ 000 units , while the " CG Movie " edition sold 15 @,@ 000 . According to Famitsu , Hearts sold a slightly higher 140 @,@ 000 units in its first week . By the end of the year , both versions of the game together had sold 176 @,@ 526 units , placing # 72 in Famitsu 's list of 2008 's 100 best @-@ selling titles . As of 2009 , the game has sold 260 @,@ 000 units .

Famitsu gave the game 33 / 40 points from four reviewers . They praised the battles as being " plain fun " , there being " a ton of volume to the story " and both the anime and CG cutscenes . Their main criticism was that there was little difference between the two versions besides the cutscenes . Japanese gaming site Game Watch Impress was greatly positive about most aspects , saying it would fully satisfy fans of the series despite some elements falling below expectations for the series . Andrew Barker of RPGFan , reviewing an imported version of the " Anime Edition " of Hearts , was highly positive : he praised the story for straying from the normal course of a Tales narrative , called the graphics " outstanding " , the music " excellent " , and was generally positive about the battle system and graphic presentation . It was also awarded the site 's " Editor 's Choice " award .

= = = PlayStation Vita = = =

Hearts R also did well commercially in Japan , selling 55 @,@ 258 copies in its first week , outselling previous Vita Tales title Innocence R. The title sold 75 @,@ 049 units by June that year , ranking among Japan 's fifty top @-@ selling games of that year . Famitsu ranked Hearts R a little higher than the original , giving it 34 / 40 : they cited the battles as being " more exciting " than in Hearts , and generally praised the additions to the story . They also praised the graphical overhaul , calling it " a true Tales at the core . " Dengeki PlayStation also praised the game , with the four reviewers giving it scores of 80 , 85 , 90 and 93 . Praise went to the fully voiced main scenario , the new playable characters and aspects of the battle system . The main criticisms were " flat " graphics and other elements of the battle system such as the lack of character support and companion AI .

Western reviews of the title have been mixed to positive : review aggregate sites GameRankings and Metacritic gave it scores of 76 @.@ 77 % and 77 / 100 based on 22 and 23 critic reviews respectively . The gameplay was a general point of praise . RPGFan 's John McCarroll said that its various elements " tie together to provide a cohesive battle experience that 's quite enjoyable "

despite him finding it inferior to *Tales of Graces* , and *Destructoid* 's Kyle MacGregor said that the experience " can be quite fun " . *Hardcore Gamer* 's Adam Beck said that the combat " works perfectly on the handheld system " , while Kimberley Wallace of *Game Informer* said that the pace and various features " help keep [ the battles ] exciting . " Andrew Fitch of *Electronic Gaming Monthly* was more mixed about the gameplay , citing the combat as a less smooth experience compared to previous *Tales* titles and being annoyed at the reintroduction of random encounters , a feature not present in the original *Hearts* .

The story received a generally mixed response . Beck found the characters to be a mixed assortment , being particularly unimpressed with Kohaku 's condition through most of the game and stating that her awkward romance with Kor " almost feels forced " . Wallace referred to the storyline as " cheesy and campy " , stating that it didn 't impress her despite it not being taken very seriously . McCarrol was unimpressed by the story or the cast , while MacGregor cited the story as " a slow @-@ burn " , though commenting that the cast succeeded in seeming like real people rather than character archetypes . In contrast with the other reviewers , Fitch generally enjoyed the story , calling it one of the stronger casts and narratives of recent *Tales* titles . The localization received some criticism over discrepancies between the English text and Japanese dialogue , with Fitch describing it as " written with an ultimately canceled English dub in mind " , and McCarrol citing the renaming of some characters despite the presence of the original Japanese as a downside . MacGregor , while not minding the setup , was concerned that the lack of an English option would cause controversy . Todd Ciolek of *Anime News Network* listed the game as the second most overlooked title from 2014 , stating that its release mediums and close proximity to the release of *Tales of Xillia 2* hampered its notability .