= Loved (video game) =

Loved is a browser @-@ based platform video game developed by Alexander Ocias , an Australian graphic designer and artist . Written in Adobe Flash , the game was built over the course of about half a year in Ocias ' spare time . Released online on 14 June 2010 onto various game hosting websites , it has garnered sizeable praise and scrutiny since its release , with critics finding the game to be thought @-@ provoking while having poor controls .

= = Gameplay = =

A narrator first asks players , " are you a man , or a woman ? " Players who select " man " are instead told they are a " girl " . Similarly , players who select " woman " are called a " boy " . Navigation is by arrow keys , which also control the ability to jump and duck . The narrator instructs players intermittently , sometimes to achieve goals but often to suggest actions that will kill the player character (such as falling into a pit full of spikes) . Players are sometimes , but not always , congratulated when following these instructions , while dissenting the narrator results in a barrage of insults . Both the player character and environment are in stark black and white , with a colourful motif appearing if the character disobeys the narrator 's instructions , or the visuals becoming more detailed but still in monochrome if the character decides to be compliant .

= = Development = =

Loved was built over the course of about half a year , transforming from the exploration genre to a mining- and building @-@ based adventure game before settling on the platform genre . Ocias worked on the game intermittently in his spare time , using his " bit of self @-@ taught programming knowledge " to code it . Although no libraries were used during development , Ocias expressed that he wished that he had during the end of production . Research was taken into achieving " certain little fiddly things , " Ocias explained , such as generating the text elements and instructing Flash to read his tile maps .
According to Ocias , the main themes of Loved were of dominance and power , but to provide a fuller answer would " defy the point of the game " . His intentions in making the game were to get people to think about the games they were playing ? a direction he found much of the video game industry shying away from . The confrontational aspect of the game was motivated by two aspects : primarily to use " the resource of emotions " invoked by its risk and reward mechanic ; and secondly to absorb the awareness of people online . Expanding upon his inspirations , Ocias cited individual games such as The Last Guardian and Deus Ex : Human Revolution , along with companies such as Thatgamecompany and Eidos Montreal , as showing " greater depth " to video games as well as experimentation and research . Ocias ultimately stated that while he dislikes " force @-@ feeding " players , he would try to take a different approach both mechanically and thematically for his next game .

= = Release and reception = =

Loved was published as freeware onto Newgrounds and Kongregate , as well as Ocias 's official website , on 14 June 2010 . Since its release , the game has received sizeable praise and scrutiny from players , with some responding reminiscently over it . Duncan Geere of Wired dubbed it " great high @-@ brow lunchtime gaming " that exploits the paradox of video games being supposedly a better medium than music and films , despite most gamers being compliant by design . Writing for Rock , Paper , Shotgun , Kieron Gillen called the atmosphere " genuinely oppressive " and the game 's cogitation between free will and control " really quite excellent " . A review in the Italian magazine Dude named it one of their top 16 favourite independent games .
In interviewing Ocias , Justin Kranzl of Gamasutra called the experience of playing the game challenging of the " assumptions people may hold about the respective weight of narrative and play

mechanics " . Kris Ligman of PopMatters called the controls frustrating and " only just playable " , but disregarded this as " all it needs in order to work " . Chris Priestman of Kill Screen found the game provoking of " gut reactions " and noted a sexual undercurrent throughout it . Referred to by Gillen , Michael Rose of IndieGames.com called the controls " a little wonky " , but concluded that it was " definitely worth giving a go " . Tim W. of the same website ranked the game second place of the top 10 browser platformers of 2010 . Rose later published in his book 250 Indie Games You Must Play that the game is worth playing twice to see the alternative endings based on the player 's decisions . Writing for the official website of G4 , Brittany Vincent called the game " especially curious " in its depiction of a dominant and submissive relationship and a " fantastic case " of the medium " pushing the margins of human emotion " .