

= Thief II =

Thief II : The Metal Age is a 2000 stealth video game developed by Looking Glass Studios and published by Eidos Interactive . Like its predecessor Thief : The Dark Project , the game follows Garrett , a master thief who works in and around a steampunk metropolis called the City . The player assumes the role of Garrett as he unravels a conspiracy related to a new religious sect . Garrett takes on missions such as burglaries and frameups , while trying to avoid detection by guards and automated security .

Thief II was designed to build on the foundation of its predecessor . In response to feedback from players of Thief , the team placed a heavy focus on urban stealth in the sequel , and they minimized the use of monsters and maze @-@ like levels . The game was made with the third iteration of the Dark Engine , which had been used previously to develop Thief and System Shock 2 . Thief II was announced at the 1999 Electronic Entertainment Expo , as part of an extended contract between Looking Glass and Eidos to release games in the Thief series . Looking Glass neared bankruptcy as the game was developed , and the company was kept running by advances from Eidos .

Thief II received positive reviews from critics , and its initial sales were stronger than those of its predecessor . However , the game 's royalties were processed slowly , which compounded Looking Glass 's financial troubles . As a result , the company closed in May 2000 , with plans for Thief III cancelled . The third game in the series , entitled Thief : Deadly Shadows , was developed by Ion Storm and published by Eidos in 2004 . Thief 2X : Shadows of the Metal Age , a widely praised expansion mod for Thief II , was released in 2005 . In 2013 , Eidos Montreal announced a reboot of the series (Thief) , and it was released the following year .

= = Gameplay = =

Thief II is a stealth game that takes place from a first @-@ person perspective in a three @-@ dimensional (3D) graphical environment . The player seeks to complete mission objectives and to evade the notice of opponents such as guards . The player must minimize the visibility and audibility of the player character , Garrett , to escape detection . Players try to avoid lit areas and loud flooring in favor of shadows and quiet flooring . A light monitor on the heads @-@ up display (HUD) indicates the player character 's visibility . While it is possible for the player character to engage in direct combat , he is easily defeated .

The game 's 15 missions take place in large levels that can be confronted in multiple ways . Guards may be knocked out with a blackjack or killed with a bow or sword , and their fallen bodies may be picked up and hidden . In addition to human enemies , the game features security automatons and surveillance cameras . While completing objectives such as frameups and blackmail , the player steals valuables that may be used to purchase thieving gear between missions . The player 's main tools are specialized arrows , including water arrows to douse lights , moss arrows to dampen the player character 's footsteps and rope arrows to reach higher ground .

Thief II is designed to be played methodically , and the player plans ahead by scouting , reading the game 's map and observing patrol patterns . The player character has a zooming mechanical eye , which connects to throwable " Scouting Orb " cameras . One Scouting Orb may be deployed at a time ; when it lands , the player views the game world from its perspective until normal play is resumed . The player listens for noises , such as footsteps and humming , to determine the locations of enemies . On the highest of the game 's three difficulty levels , killing humans results in a game over , and in certain missions the player must not knock out any guards .

= = Plot = =

= = = Setting and characters = = =

Like its predecessor Thief : The Dark Project , Thief II is set in a steampunk metropolis called the

City , whose appearance resembles that of both medieval and Victorian era cities . Magic and steam technology exist side by side , and three factions ? the manipulative and enigmatic Keepers , the technology @-@ focused Hammerites and the " pagan " worshippers of the Pan @-@ like Trickster god ? are in operation . Thief II takes place one year after the first game , in the aftermath of the Trickster 's defeat and the failure of his plan to revert the world to a wild , primitive state . A schism in the Hammerite religion spawns the " Mechanist " sect , which fanatically values technological progress . The new inventions of the Mechanists are used by a resurgent police force to crack down on crime . The pagans are in disarray , and have been driven into the wilderness beyond the City . From there , they engage in guerrilla warfare against the Mechanists . The Keeper faction is dormant as the game begins .

The game continues the story of Garrett (voiced by Stephen Russell) , the cynical master thief who defeated the Trickster . Pursuing Garrett is the new sheriff , Gorman Truart (voiced by Sam Babbitt) , who has imposed a zero tolerance policy on crime . Viktoria (voiced by Terri Brosius) , the former ally of the Trickster , eventually joins with Garrett to combat the Mechanists . The game 's primary antagonist is the founder of the Mechanists , Father Karras (also voiced by Russell) , a mentally unstable inventor who despises the natural world .

= = = Story = = =

The game begins as Garrett continues his life as a thief . However , he is ambushed while returning to his apartment after an early mission , and he determines that Truart , the local sheriff , is hunting him . Keepers take Garrett to hear a prophecy about the " Metal Age " , which he ignores . As Garrett leaves , one of the Keepers informs him that Truart had been hired to kill him , and he gives Garrett a letter that directs him to eavesdrop on a Mechanist meeting . There , Garrett overhears Truart and Father Karras discussing the conversion of street people into mindless " Servants " , who wear masks that emit a red vapor capable of reducing themselves and nearby humans to rust . Truart promises to provide Karras with twenty victims for the Servant project , not realizing that Karras is recording his words for use in blackmail . Garrett steals the recording from a safe deposit box , in order to coerce Truart into revealing his employer .

However , Garrett finds Truart murdered at his estate . Evidence at the crime scene leads him to spy on the police officer Lt. Mosley . Garrett sees Mosley deliver a suspicious letter , which is carried through a portal by a wounded pagan . Garrett enters the portal and finds himself outside the City , and he follows the pagan 's trail of blood to Viktoria , who persuades Garrett to join her against the Mechanists . On a lead from Viktoria , he infiltrates Karras ' office to learn about the " Cetus Project " , and inadvertently discovers that Karras is giving Servants to the City 's nobles . Garrett travels to a Mechanist base to find out more about the Cetus Project , which is revealed to be a submarine . In order to locate and kidnap a high @-@ ranking Mechanist named Brother Cavor , Garrett stows away in the vehicle .

After delivering Cavor to Viktoria , Garrett steals a Servant mask to learn about a Mechanist technology called a " Cultivator " . Meanwhile , Karras hides inside the Mechanist cathedral in preparation for his plan . Garrett and Viktoria learn that it is the Cultivators inside Servant masks which emit red vapor , or " rust gas " . Karras had provided Servants to nobles with gardens in order to set off an apocalyptic chain reaction . Viktoria plans to lure the Servants into the hermetically sealed Mechanist cathedral before Karras activates their masks , but Garrett believes this to be too dangerous and leaves . Viktoria goes to the cathedral alone and dies while filling it with plants , and Garrett completes her plan , killing Karras in the rust gas . Afterward , Garrett is approached by a Keeper who explains that Karras ' scheme and Viktoria 's death had been prophesied . Garrett demands to know the rest of the Keepers ' prophecies as the game ends .

= = Production = =

= = = Early development = = =

Looking Glass Studios began designing Thief II in January 1999 . The team 's goal was to build on the foundation of Thief : The Dark Project , a game that Thief II project director Steve Pearsall later said was an experiment . He explained that the team had played it safe by including certain " exploration ... or adventure oriented " missions with " jumping and climbing puzzles " in Thief , and that the new game was significantly more focused on stealth . Combat was given less prominence than in the original . Based on feedback from players and reviewers of Thief , the team decided to scale back the use of maze @-@ like levels and monsters such as zombies in favor of urban environments and human enemies . Pearsall stated that Thief 's monsters were negatively received because , unlike the game 's human enemies , they did not clearly indicate when they noticed the player . The team sought to remedy this problem by improving the audio cues given by non @-@ human enemies in the sequel .

Production of Thief II commenced in February . Looking Glass chose to compose the game 's team of " half the original designers and half new blood " , according to executive producer James Poole . The company tried to select people who meshed well both personally and creatively , in an attempt to guarantee a smooth development cycle . Adrenaline Vault editor @-@ in @-@ chief Emil Pagliarulo was hired as a junior designer , in part because of his positive review of Thief . Rich " zdim " Carlson and likka Keränen joined from Ion Storm 's Daikatana team , and Looking Glass contractor Terri Brosius was hired as a full @-@ time designer . One @-@ third of the team was female , which Pearsall believed contributed to a strong group dynamic . As was typical at Looking Glass , the Thief II team worked in a wall @-@ less space called a " pit " , which allowed them to converse easily . Describing the work environment at the time , writer Laura Baldwin noted that " conversations dash madly about the room , [and] when someone is demonstrating something interesting everyone gravitates over to look . "

During the first months of development , the team regularly gathered to watch films pertinent to Garrett 's character and to the game 's visual design , such as The Third Man , The Castle of Cagliostro , M and Metropolis . Pearsall said that the latter two films were Thief II 's " biggest aesthetic influences " , while the main inspiration for its plot was Umberto Eco 's novel The Name of the Rose . The team also drew influence from Fritz Leiber 's Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser . The game 's story was written in the three @-@ act structure : Garrett was intended to transition from his " cynical self " in the first act to a private investigator in the second , and to a character similar to James Bond in the third . The City 's technology and architecture were influenced by the appearance of Victorian London , and certain areas were given an Art Deco theme to provide " sort of a ' Batman ' feel " , in reference to the 1989 film . Lead artist Mark Lizotte captured over two @-@ thousand photographs during his vacation in Europe , and these were the basis for many of the game 's textures .

Thief II was built with the third iteration of the Dark Engine , which had been used previously for Thief and System Shock 2 . According to Pearsall , the Dark Engine had become " a very well understood development environment " , which made for an easier production process . Engine updates created for System Shock 2 , such as support for 16 @-@ bit color , were carried over to Thief II . The average character model in Thief II was given close to double the polygons of the average model in Thief , with much of the added detail focused on characters ' heads . This was an attempt to give the characters a " more organic " look . Certain artificial intelligence (AI) routines written into the Dark Engine , which allowed enemies to notice changes in the environment such as open doors , had not been used in Thief or in System Shock 2 but were implemented in Thief II . Weather effects such as fog and rain were added , and technology from Flight Unlimited III was used to generate the sky and clouds .

= = = Announcement and continued development = = =

Thief II was announced during the Electronic Entertainment Expo on May 13 , 1999 , as part of a contract between Looking Glass and Eidos Interactive to release four new games in the Thief series , beginning with Thief Gold . The deal had been signed on May 7 , roughly three months after Thief

II entered production . A tech demo of the game , which Bruce Geryk of Games Domain described as " about three rooms with some Mages " , was displayed on the show floor . The demo was used to showcase the updated Dark Engine , which featured support for colored lighting , higher polygon models and larger environments . The team revealed their intention to include more levels with human enemies , and announced a projected release date of spring 2000 . Plans to include a cooperative multiplayer mode were also detailed at the show . IGN 's Jason Bates noted that the Thief II display attracted " a bit of a buzz and a small crowd of dedicated onlookers " .

By July , the team had begun initial construction of the game 's levels . Thief II 's increased focus on stealth necessitated new level design concepts : the most stealth @-@ based missions in Thief had centered on urban burglary , but Pearsall explained that this " would get tired pretty fast " if repeated in every level . The team diversified Thief II by designing missions with such objectives as kidnapping , blackmail and eavesdropping . The first two levels were designed to seamlessly introduce new players to the core game mechanics , without a tutorial mission that might lose the interest of experienced players . When creating a mission , the team would often begin by deciding on the player 's objective , after which they would produce a rough level design . The mission would then undergo a peer review to determine if it should be added to the game . Each of the game 's levels was a team effort rather than the work of a single designer . Designer Randy Smith explained that , while Thief 's levels had been designed to fit a pre @-@ existing story , the Thief II team " tried to think of really good missions first " and then adjusted the plot to suit them . He noted that it was highly difficult to harmonize the two .

The game 's sound team was composed of Kemal Amarasingham , Damin Djawadi and audio director Eric Brosius . According to Brosius , each member of the audio department did " everything " , without clear demarcations between roles . Like Thief , Thief II features a sound engine that simulates propagation in real @-@ time . To achieve this effect , each level 's geometry was input both to the level editor and to a " separate [sound] database " , which mapped how sound would realistically propagate based on " the physical room characteristics [... and] how all the different rooms and areas are connected together " . For example , noise travels freely through an open door but is blocked when the door is closed . The team used the new " occlusion " feature in EAX 2 @.@ 0 to make Thief II 's sound environment more realistic and to allow the player to listen through doors . The game features more sound effects , music and speech than the original Thief . Thief II 's score , as with that of its predecessor , was designed to " blur ambient [sound] and music " together . However , Brosius later stated that , while Thief 's soundtrack is composed of " simple and hypnotic " loops only a few seconds in length , Thief II features longer and " more thoughtfully " constructed pieces . He believed that this method had positive aspects , but that it resulted in a less immersive audio environment .

Artist Dan Thron returned to create the game 's cutscenes , with assistance from Jennifer Hrabota @-@ Lesser . Thron later called Hrabota @-@ Lesser " one of the greatest artists I 've ever seen " . The cutscenes , which Computer Games Magazine called " unique " , feature multiple layers of artwork and footage of live actors filmed against a green screen . These components were combined and animated in Adobe After Effects . The technique had been developed for the original Thief , as an evolution of designer Ken Levine 's suggestion to use motion comic cutscenes . David Lynch 's films Eraserhead and The Elephant Man were important influences on their style .

= = = Final months = = =

By October 1999 , the team had cut the game 's multiplayer feature . Pearsall explained that Looking Glass did not " have the resources to do a new kind of multiplayer and ship a finely tuned single @-@ player game " . Plans were announced in January 2000 to release a multiplayer @-@ only Thief game shortly after the completion of Thief II . As Thief II 's development continued , Looking Glass experienced extreme financial troubles . The company 's Marc LeBlanc later said that " Eidos was writing a check every week to cover our burn rate " during the last months of the project . The game 's final cost was roughly \$ 2 @.@ 5 million . According to company head Paul Neurath , Eidos informed Looking Glass that " it was not an option " for Thief II to miss its release date , and

that there would be " dire consequences if [we] missed by even a day " . An anonymous Looking Glass staffer later told Salon.com that Eidos " told us basically to ship [Thief II] by their fiscal quarter or die " .

By January , Pearsall confirmed that the game had reached beta , and that most of the team 's energy was being spent " tuning , polishing , and fixing bugs " . He noted in early February that Thief II had been produced almost entirely on schedule . The company slipped behind near the end of the project and entered crunch time to make up the loss . On February 24 , Thief II producer Michael McHale announced that the game had reached " feature freeze " , and that the team was in " super crunch mode " . Numerous game testers from Eidos joined the project . However , McHale said that the team was energized and that " spirits [were] high " . Certain employees slept in the office and avoided bathing so that the game could reach its March deadline . LeBlanc later stated his belief that the game was rushed , and that its quality suffered as a result . Nevertheless , the team met their goal , and the game was released on March 23 , 2000 . Eidos expedited the company 's payment for completing the game .

= = Reception = =

Thief II debuted high on the bestsellers list for computer games , and its initial sales were better than those of its commercially successful predecessor . In the United States , the game sold roughly 67 @, @ 000 copies and earned \$ 2 @. @ 37 million by the end of 2000 . It received positive reviews from critics , with an aggregate score of 89 @. @ 14 % on GameRankings . Computer Gaming World 's Thomas L. McDonald wrote that " everything in Thief II is bigger , sharper , better , and more effective " than in its predecessor . He enjoyed its story and called its levels " vast and intricate " , with " astonishingly complex and often beautiful " architecture ; but he found the game 's graphics to be somewhat lackluster . McDonald summarized Thief II as a unique " gamer 's game " . Jim Preston of PC Gamer US considered the game to be " more focused and polished than the original " , and he praised the removal of " zombie battles " . While he faulted its graphics , he summarized it as " one hell of a good game " .

Jasen Torres of GameFan wrote , " If you liked Thief , you 'll love Thief 2 : The Metal Age ; it 's more of the stuff that made Thief great , with less of the annoying stuff " . He applauded the removal of " zombie killer " missions and believed the game 's sound to be " superior to any other game " . He considered its story to be " good " but " nothing great " and its graphics to be " decent " ; but he commented that the game was " really all about the gameplay " , which he praised as " quite compelling and fun " . Benjamin E. Sones of Computer Games Magazine considered the game 's story to be " quite good " , but he faulted Looking Glass for failing to detail the events of the first game for new players . He wrote that Thief II 's graphics were passable but that its sound design was " phenomenal " . Sones praised its missions as " very well crafted " , and noted that they gave the impression of being in " a living , breathing world . " He summarized , " It may not be perfect , but Thief 2 has got it where it counts " .

Charles Harold of The New York Times called the game a " refreshing alternative to games that glorify violence " . He found its story to be " slight " , but he lauded its world as " amazingly alive " and its AI as a " remarkable impersonation of real intelligence " . Writing for GamePro , Barry Brenesal commented that Thief II " provides a solid gaming experience " but " doesn 't startle like its predecessor " . He wrote that its missions featured a " great deal of variety " , and he praised their " ability to casually suggest a much larger world " , but he complained that they were linear . He considered the game 's writing to be " among the best in the business " . While Brenesal enjoyed the game 's textures and lighting , he noted the low detail of the game 's human models , whose animations he found to be " arthritic " . PC Zone 's Paul Presley wrote that the game 's levels were larger but easier than those of Thief , and he considered their objectives to be somewhat linear . He found Thief II 's graphics to be dated and wrote that its lack of real @-@ time lighting " tends to give each environment a sort of ' false ' quality " . However , he believed that the game " still has enough atmosphere to immerse you " , and he praised its sound design . Presley considered the game to be a straightforward rehash of its predecessor , and he finished , " A more clear @-@ cut case of

sequel @-@ itis there has never been . "

= = Post @-@ release = =

While Thief II performed well commercially , Looking Glass was not set to receive royalties for several months . The company had struggled financially since the commercial failures of its self @-@ published games Terra Nova : Strike Force Centauri and British Open Championship Golf . Looking Glass 's Flight Unlimited III had flopped at retail , and the development of Jane 's Attack Squadron had gone over budget and fallen behind schedule . A deal to co @-@ develop the stealth game Deep Cover with Irrational Games had recently collapsed . According to Looking Glass 's Tim Stellmach , the delay in Thief II royalties " faced [us] with the prospect of running out of money . " Looking Glass management signed a deal in which Eidos Interactive would acquire the company , but Eidos fell into a sudden financial crisis , in part because of the failure of Ion Storm 's \$ 40 million game Daikatana . These factors led to the closure of Looking Glass on May 24 , 2000 , with the planned Thief II successors Thief II Gold and Thief III cancelled .

= = = Sequels = = =

The Thief series had been planned as a trilogy , and work on Thief III was " in a fairly advanced stage " when Looking Glass closed , according to PC Zone 's Keith Pullin . Randy Smith and Terri Brosius were appointed as lead designers , and they developed the game 's concept over several months . In an open letter published after the company 's bankruptcy , Smith wrote that the third game would have taken place in an " open @-@ ended , self @-@ directed city " , and that its plot would have centered on the Keepers . Brosius suggested that Thief III would have seen Garrett " accept [ing] that there are consequences to his actions " , and that he would likely have become " ready to give , rather than always take . " The player would have uncovered the game 's story gradually , while exploring a free @-@ roam environment . Serious plans had been made to include co @-@ operative multiplayer , and a new engine , Siege , had been in production . When Looking Glass closed , its assets were liquidated and the Thief intellectual property was sold at auction . This raised doubts that the Thief trilogy would be completed , a situation that Salon.com writer Wagner James Au compared to Lucasfilm closing after the release of The Empire Strikes Back . However , following rumors , Eidos announced on August 9 , 2000 that it had purchased the rights to Thief .

Development of Thief III was delegated to the Warren Spector @-@ supervised Ion Storm Austin , which had recently completed Deus Ex . According to Spector , Thief III would have been given to Core Design or Crystal Dynamics had he not accepted it . The game was announced for Windows and the PlayStation 2 . On August 10 , Spector commented that Ion Storm 's first goal was to assemble a core team , composed in part of former Looking Glass employees , to design and plot the game . Thief II team members Randy Smith , Lulu Lamer , Emil Pagliarulo and Terri Brosius were hired to begin the project . On August 16 , Ion Storm announced its hires , and stated that concept work on Thief III would begin in September . The team planned to " wrap up [the] loose ends " of the series , and they built directly upon the Thief III concept work done at Looking Glass . Thief III was eventually renamed Thief : Deadly Shadows , and it was released for Windows and the Xbox on May 25 , 2004 .

In May 2009 , after several months of rumors , a fourth game in the Thief series was announced by Deus Ex : Human Revolution developer Eidos Montreal . It was unveiled in the April 2013 issue of Game Informer . The game , entitled Thief , is a reboot of the Thief series ; and it does not feature the Hammerites , pagans or Keepers . Its plot follows Garrett (voiced by Romano Orzari in place of Stephen Russell) in the aftermath of an accident that leaves his protégé , Erin , missing . Garrett has amnesia after this incident , and the City is beset by a plague called the Gloom . The game was released for Windows and the Xbox 360 , PlayStation 3 , Xbox One and PlayStation 4 in February 2014 .

= = = Fan expansion = = =

Soon after the bankruptcy of Looking Glass , a fan group called the Dark Engineering Guild began developing an expansion mod to Thief II , entitled Thief 2X : Shadows of the Metal Age . Initially , they hoped to fill the void left by the cancellation of Thief III , but they continued to work on the mod after the announcement and release of Thief : Deadly Shadows . Released in 2005 after five years in development , the mod follows Zaya , a young woman who is robbed while visiting the City and who then seeks revenge . She is mentored by a pagan hermit named Malak , who trains her as a thief but who has ulterior motives . The team designed Zaya to be physically capable and to have a " middle @-@ eastern / north @-@ african look " , but made an effort to avoid similarities to Mulan . Chronologically , the story starts near the end of Thief and ends in the middle of Thief II , thereby depicting the rise of Gorman Truart and the early days of the Mechanists . Thief 2X features 13 missions , with new animated cutscenes and roughly 3 @, @ 000 new lines of recorded dialogue .

The mod was praised by critics and by the Thief fan community . Brett Todd of PC Gamer US awarded it " Mod of the Month " and wrote , " It doesn 't quite have the mysterious allure of the original games , but it 's awfully close " . A writer for Jolt Online Gaming praised the mod 's visuals and considered its missions to be " incredibly well designed " . While the writer commented that Thief 2X did not perfectly follow the series ' tone and that its voice acting was " not the best " , they finished by saying that fans of the Thief series had " no excuse not to play T2X . " PC Gamer UK 's Kieron Gillen wrote that he had expected the mod to be cancelled , given that the " web is full of [...] five @-@ percent finished masterworks from people who aimed far , far too high . " After Thief 2X 's release , he lauded it as the best Thief fan work , and as " one of the most impressive achievements of any fan community for any game . "