

## = The Elder Scrolls IV : Knights of the Nine =

The Elder Scrolls IV : Knights of the Nine is an expansion pack for the role @-@ playing video game The Elder Scrolls IV : Oblivion . Announced on October 17 , 2006 for release on November 21 , 2006 , the expansion was developed by Bethesda Game Studios , and published and released in North America by Bethesda Softworks ; in Europe , the game was co @-@ published with Ubisoft . The Microsoft Windows version is available either as a downloadable plug @-@ in from the company website or as part of the retail @-@ released Oblivion Downloadable Content Collection CD ? a release that also includes all previously released official downloadable content available for Oblivion . The Xbox 360 version is available via Xbox Live Marketplace , and the PlayStation 3 version of Oblivion includes Knights of the Nine in its packaged release .

Knights of the Nine centers on a faction of the same name , devoted to locating and preserving a set of " Crusaders ' Relics " . Once found , these relics must be used to defeat the sorcerer @-@ king Umaril , who seeks revenge on the Nine Divines . Knights of the Nine was generally well received in the gaming press . Although it made little change to the basic mechanics of Oblivion , it was judged by reviewers to be a brief but polished addition to the game 's main plot .

## = = Gameplay = =

Knights of the Nine is identical to the gameplay of Oblivion ; the basic design , maneuvers , and interfaces remain unchanged . As such , it is a fantasy @-@ based role @-@ playing adventure game . Players begin Oblivion by defining their character ; deciding on its skill set , specialization , physical features , and race . Knights of the Nine is an example of open @-@ ended @-@ style gameplay : the main quest may be delayed or completely ignored as the player explores the game world , follows side quests , interacts with NPCs , and develops a character according to their taste . Furthering the goal of open @-@ ended gameplay , Knights of the Nine , unlike Bethesda 's prior content packs for Oblivion , begins with no explicit prodding towards the newly introduced content ; players must seek out and find the game 's quest without external aid .

## = = Plot = =

Knights of the Nine 's quest begins as the player approaches the Chapel of Dibella in Anvil . The Chapel was recently abused ; everyone there has been killed in a dark ritual . The player proceeds to consult a prophet near the scene of the attack , who is preaching about it . The prophet reveals to the player that the one responsible for the attacks is Umaril , an ancient revenge @-@ seeking Ayleid sorcerer @-@ king , who has escaped from his prison in Oblivion to destroy Cyrodiil . Umaril can only be defeated by the prophesized Crusader , favoured by the gods , bearing the relics of Pelinal Whitestrake , the man who originally slew Umaril , and banished his spirit to Oblivion .

The player then makes a pilgrimage ( because the character may not use any artifacts of the Nine unless they have an infamy of 0 ) , and receives a vision from Pelinal Whitestrake , who reveals the location of his tomb , which is beneath the lake surrounding the Imperial City . Inside this tomb , the player discovers the Helm of Pelinal 's armor , as well as the corpse of Sir Amiel , one of the old Knights of the Nine . His diary reveals the location of their priory , which houses the Cuirass of Pelinal . Before the player can claim it though , he / she confronts eight spirits of the old Knights of the Nine , including Amiel , who had all given into corruption and been killed . They assist the player , who soon gathers all of Pelinal Whitestrake 's relics . During each leg of the quest to retrieve the relics , the player meets a priest , knight , or pilgrim of faith , each of whom pledge to aid the player , each representing one of the original eight divines . After a final blessing from the prophet , to represent the ninth divine , Talos , the player leads the knights against Umaril 's stronghold , defeating the Ayleid King , and then pursues Umaril 's spirit , destroying him utterly . The player then wakes up in the Priory , with the knights believing him / her dead . After realizing that the powers of the gods resurrected him , the player rejoins the knights .

= = Development = =

Prior to any announcement regarding Knights of the Nine , Bethesda had pursued a somewhat novel plan to distribute downloadable content through micropayments , priced from US \$ 0 @.@ 99 to US \$ 2 @.@ 99 , instead of the more common practice of releasing expansion packs . The program was initially met with criticism by customers due to its alleged low value , but later releases ? at a reduced price , and with more content ? proved more popular . The releases , in addition to stirring controversy , raised questions regarding Bethesda 's future content release plans , and as to whether expansion pack releases were necessary at all . In August 2006 , one Bethesda employee wrote in a post to Bethesda 's The Elder Scrolls forums that the company had " no plans to make an expansion for Oblivion " . Further questions were raised by a product listing found on game retailer GameStop 's website September 11 , 2006 , listing a Knights of the White Stallion Expansion Pack for Oblivion . The game had a listed shipping date of November 21 , 2006 . The title was kept on the website only briefly ? removed after gaming news site GameSpot sent Bethesda a request for comment on the product .

Knights of the Nine began its life as a supposedly " exclusive " quest for the PlayStation 3 release of The Elder Scrolls IV : Oblivion . Along with the confirmation of the PlayStation 3 release on October 9 , 2006 , some gaming news websites reported that the release would contain " a huge , exclusive quest " focusing on " a new faction , The Knights of the Nine " . Some reports prefixed " allegedly " onto statements that the release would be exclusive . Suggestions of exclusivity , in any case , did not last long : an October 17 , 2006 Bethesda press release announced that Knights of the Nine content was also scheduled for PC and Xbox 360 releases , eliciting commentary from Joystiq remarking on " how finicky " the word ' exclusive ' had come to be , and Kotaku remarking on how " Oblivion 's PlayStation 3 content didn 't stay exclusive for long ... or at all " . Other sites saw no incongruence in the announcement : GameSpot assumed that Knights of the Nine was simply the earlier Knights of the White Stallion by a different name , and 1UP.com had anticipated the move ever since an IGN interview with Oblivion 's executive producer Todd Howard , where Howard had described Bethesda 's general aim " to have all our content available across all platforms " ; the final announcement served only to confirm their suspicions .

The October 17 press release set November 21 , 2006 as the North American distribution date for the Xbox 360 and PC versions of Knights of the Nine . The European release for the Xbox 360 and PC was set two days later , on November 23 . The European release was co @-@ published by Bethesda and Ubisoft . On November 9 , 2006 , Bethesda clarified earlier statements regarding PC releases , declaring that , although the boxed retail PC edition of Knights of the Nine was set for release on November 21 , the PC release downloadable from the company website wouldn 't be available until December 4 . This caused some consumer complaints , for although the Xbox 360 release was available on the Xbox Live Marketplace for 800 Microsoft Points ( the equivalent of US \$ 10 @.@ 00 , or GB £ 6 @.@ 80 ) , for the time being , PC owners had only the US \$ 19 @.@ 99 boxed retail edition of the game . The increased price of the PC 's boxed retail release ( The Elder Scrolls IV : Knights of Nine Oblivion Downloadable Content Collection ) resulted from its inclusion of Oblivion 's other previously released downloadable content . Such content was not included in either the downloadable PC release , the Xbox Marketplace download , or the PlayStation 3 edition of Oblivion . The downloadable release was ultimately issued on December 6 at the price of US \$ 9 @.@ 99 . According to IGN Entertainment 's GamerMetrics , a service based on compiled visitor activity information on IGN 's website , the pack was the fourth most anticipated release of its release week , following Tom Clancy 's Rainbow Six : Vegas , Superman Returns and College Hoops 2K7 .

= = Reception = =

Knights of the Nine was generally well received in the gaming press . Metacritic , an aggregate review site , scored the PC version of the game with an 81 out of 100 , and the Xbox 360 version of the game with an 86 out of 100 . GameSpot recommended the game for its value ; although it made

few improvements over the basic Oblivion experience , Knights of the Nine provides " a good day or two 's worth of questing for a low price " . Similar comments followed from GamePro , who found that the " polish " and " affordable price " of the pack excused the fact that the pack 's content " doesn 't really change [ Oblivion 's ] gameplay " .

Eurogamer praised the game for its memorable plot and new , unique content . They concluded that if " more of the same is what you 're after , you can 't really argue with what Bethesda 's served up for its hardcore fans . " The review encouraged caution nonetheless : for if consumers were to fully accept individually priced content releases , Bethesda might just begin charging for all its quests .