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Pokemon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Darkness - DS

Will this bring any new magic?

by Hannah Gosh published on 15 August 2008

The Pokemon Mystery Dungeon series has been around since the days of the SNES but can the latest version for the Nintendo DS bring any new magic, or should you just grow up and move on?

The standard yet successful Mystery Dungeon formula has undergone very little change from the last instalment, but that hasn't made Explorers of Darkness any less enjoyable to play. This is still a game that will entice you in whether you're a first timer or a fanboy.

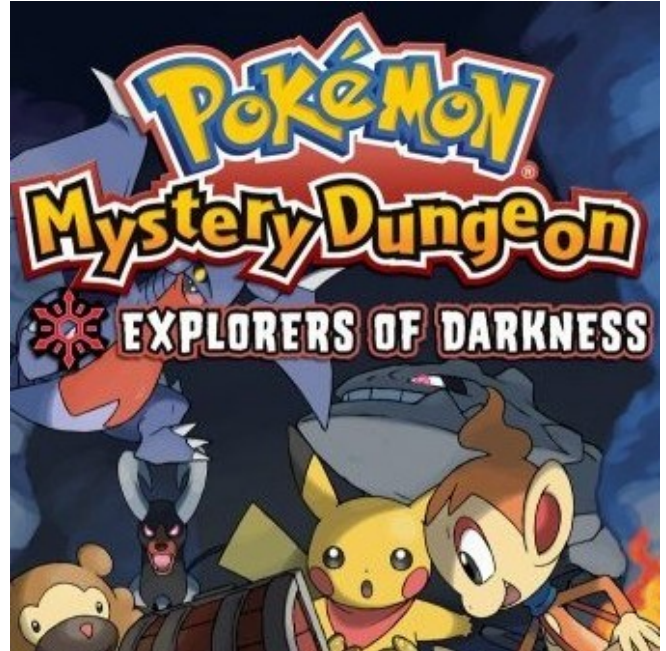
The game kicks off with a series of questions about your personality; the idea being that your assigned Pokemon is closely matched to your character.

It sounds like a great idea, however that "great idea" soon leads to disappointment when you find that you're closely matched to and therefore lumbered with Pika-Pika-Pikachu.

As there's no option of switching characters without having to go through the rigmarole of resetting and manually going through the personality test once again it's a trial and error affair that can soon get tedious.

In terms of building your Pokemon army there doesn't seem to be much in the way of structure or strategy - occasionally a random enemy will ask if they can join your team but that's about it.

Most of the items and moves in Pokemon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Darkness of are in keeping with the traditional Pokemon; as are your character's strengths and weaknesses in terms of type (e.g., water-based Pokemon are most effective against fire-based Pokemon) and those who've played other Pokemon titles will be happily at home with the controls and battle



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mechanisms.

In terms of navigation, Nintendo have seemingly disregarded the DS's famed touchscreen functionality, with 90% of the game play facilitated by using the Button and d-pad combo instead of the stylus.

Admittedly the game controls are great, it's just a shame that the novelty value of the touchpad is lost almost entirely. Why couldn't we have wind moves performed by blowing into the mic for example?

VERDICT

In short it would appear that Nintendo are still shamelessly cashing in on the franchise, this time with not one but two versions of their latest offering.

Explorers of Darkness, the follow on to Explorers of Time is good fun and infectiously addictive; however I'd suggest sticking with your Mystery Dungeon predecessor unless you play Pokemon for its storyline, something I am guessing you don't.

At a glance

What is it?

More Pokemon

Good

Some cute cutscenes and highly-addictive game play

Bad

You're at the mercy of what the computer decides in terms of which character you play

Verdict

More of the same but as the saying goes "if it ain't broke don't fix itÖ"

Price £25

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10