A B-movie is typically one designated by poor production value, cheesy acting, and a poor (or sometimes non-existent) story. When things align just right, B-movies can be very enjoyable, provided you can look past their shortcomings. GoozerNation member Brock takes a look at the possibility of a "B-game."

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Games, being an interactive medium, don't enjoy the same forgiveness as movies when it comes to the concept of "so bad it's good." Bad games typically lean more towards "so bad it's broken." The acting and story issues can be forgivable, but whereas a lack of production value can even be charming in a movie, if a game's graphics and controls are poor the frustration outweighs any potential enjoyment. I actually have my doubts about the possibility of a B-game that meets the same requirements as a B-movie. Gaming, by its nature, is about the interaction of the storyteller (the gamer) with the game world, and if that interaction is compromised then the game will not be enjoyable, regardless of the other issues that can be forgiven. I recently had experiences with what I consider a B-movie-game, and its far inferior cousin: the B-game.

MindJack was a game that caught my attention with its interesting approach to the cover shooter. The hype preceeding its release was right up my alley: a fast-paced 3rd-person shooter with unique characters and weapons, and a mechanic allowing the player to possess the minds of enemies and civilians. In actual practice, the game is a nigh unplayable mess. MindJack is a truly, objectively terrible game. Its level design is basically the blandest ever, and the controls make every encounter with every enemy a chore. The mind control works only occasionally, and there are precious few in-game hints communicating any useful information.

The story is practically absent, with the opening cinematic showing a confusing series of events leading up to a rather cool action sequence in which the player is not invited to participate, so there. When the controls are handed over to the player, it's an awkward slog with no hint of the action-hero abilities displayed by the dude in the cutscene.

MindJack is a B-game of the lowest order. The visuals are atrocious, the story is laughable, and the controls are unforgivably wretched. There is no guilty pleasure to be had here; only hair-pulling frustration.

I have had an entirely different experience with another game with seemingly low production values and a somewhat lacking story: Earth Defense Force: Insect Armageddon.

The B-movie aspects of this game only contributes to its charm. The voice acting is so sparse as to be almost non-existent, and the story can be adequately summed up with the following haiku: "Shoot giant insects / Then shoot giant aliens / Repeat the process."

But the important distinction is the execution. The cities and buildings are somewhat plain-looking, but the insects are rendered disgustingly well, and the detail on the player-controlled mechs is downright beautiful. The variety in character classes and depth of weapons available create a fantastic experience, held together by intuitive and very enjoyable controls.

An enjoyable B-game might not be possible, but I'm more than happy with my B-movie-game.

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