

The Order 1886, a game that impresses and frustrates in equal measure.

By Gerard Campbell

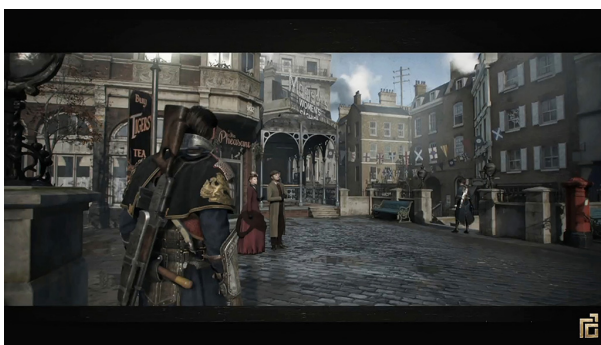
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The Order 1886 is the poster child for the PlayStation 4.

It's the game that you want to show off just how powerful Sony's current console is and the one to show your mates on your new 50-inch OLED TV.

The Order 1886 is also a game that impresses and frustrates in equal measure.

Set in London during a steam punk inspired era, The Order 1886 modernises the legend of King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table, giving players control of Sir Grayson Galahad, a senior Knight having to uncover a lycan (werewolf) threat that has pervaded London's politics.



The Order 1886 is a tightly scripted and cinematic game that is, without a doubt, the best looking game on the PlayStation 4. It has a story that I really got into and some truly amazing weapons – the M86 thermite rifle that fires a flammable powder into the air that can then be ignited by a grenade was a personal favourite – and the attention to detail

is incredible.

Developer Ready At Dawn have lavished The Order with some amazing visuals, with as much love applied to the game's character models as to its streets and environments. It's a sumptuous smorgasbord of graphical goodness. The visuals are also backed up by some of the best voice work I've heard in a game for a long time and a rousing orchestral score that suits the game perfectly.

Before the game was released, though, much was made of a YouTuber who posted a play through of the game claiming it could be completed in 5 hours or so. The Order 1886 has problems but length isn't one of them.



I'm guessing it took me around 8 hours or so and I don't have a problem with its length. It actually felt nice to be playing a game for a change that was focused on the narrative and not distracted by side missions and fetch quests.

One of the problems I had with the game was the over reliance on Quick Time Events, a design feature that isn't new to games and one I don't have a problem with, provided they're used sparingly. The Order 1886 is littered with QTEs from start to finish, even using them to pull levers or swing Galahad across a rooftop.



Transitions from cut scene to in-game are seamless but the game wrestles control from the player too many times in an effort to reinforce the movie-like experience. There were times when I was guiding Galahad towards his objective – one time I was guiding Galahad through a poorly lit hospital in Whitechapel – when suddenly a cut scene kicked in. It just broke the immersion for me.

The combat is satisfying enough, thanks to some great weapons, but I lost count how many times I put down the controller just to watch another cut scene.

But perhaps what is most galling is that the game's two main boss battles are QTEs where success is dependent on moving the right control stick in the right direction to avoid the werewolf's powerful attacks then slashing him with your knife.

A lot of the time I felt I was watching rather than participating in The Order 1886.

And I'd be lying if I said I wasn't frustrated at times playing The Order 1886, especially during a stealth section near the end of the game where cocking up the QTE button press to stealth kill patrolling guards results in an instakill. Eventually, I decided to forgo the stealthy knife kills and took down guards with my crossbow. It proved less frustrating.



Look, The Order 1886 isn't a bad game but it's an average game that relies on its sumptuous visuals too much and over does the Quick Time Events at the expense of game play. In its quest to create a movie-like experience the game's makers have lost sight of what gamers really want: compelling game play.

I'd suggest if you want to play The Order 1886 first try and borrow it from a friend or see if you can rent it from somewhere. With no replayability, \$120 is a lot to pay.

Let's hope the sequel – and I'm sure a sequel has already been green lit by Sony and besides, the game drops enough hints that there will be a sequel – focuses more on the game play and less on the cinematics, despite how gorgeous The Order 1886 is.

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