



Game Review: Blade & Soul

By Mike aka Snippet

Pros: Environment, combat, dungeon finder, costumes and weapon skins, and the ability to play solo.

Cons: Crafting, lack of content, some class imbalance, and bots.

Here is my mini review of the game Blade and Soul (BnS). BnS is a martial-arts, action, MMO based in a gorgeous Asian themed environment. If you are a player who puts emphasis on how the world looks to keep you sticking around you will not be disappointed. Most of your time spent in BnS will be outdoors, questing or doing PvP. Dungeons are primarily underground in caves with the two current “raids” being on the waterfront docks. NCSOFT will not let you down in the aesthetics department.

This brings me to the costumes and weapon skins of BnS. Costume collectors rejoice! There is a large amount of ways to customize your toons. Each weapon type can be skinned over with at least fifteen different looks. Although you cannot make a sword look like an axe or a bangle look like a staff, what you have to choose from in each weapon type covers almost any taste from realistic to futuristic. They also can be matched to certain costume sets. Costumes come from many places. You have faction costumes that initiate PvP with the opposing faction of the costume or uniform you don't. These are available from vendors or grinding mobs with a specific uniform on. There are costume sets which come from the wheels of fate which you win tokens for by defeating world bosses. These mini games have a chance at dropping costume pieces, weapon chests, and soul shield sets. Some costumes are from random dungeon drops off the final bosses in select dungeons. Possibly from the chest you are rewarded for completing those same dungeons. Lastly, you can purchase costumes through the in game cash shop. Even though you cannot dye costumes in this game, there is more than enough to find a favorite or two.

Next up is crafting. The crafting system in BnS is a let-down for me. You don't craft things yourself in this game. You join crafting and gathering guilds and pay them to craft for you. Coming from games like Rift or ArcheAge where crafting was fun and somewhat meaningful, this system just seems like an afterthought. Something the developers put in place to say Blade and Soul does have crafting in it. Sure you gather the materials to give to the guilds to make what you want; actually, you pay the gathering guild to do it for you. There just isn't the depth or variety to make it feel like crafting is worthwhile. This is one of the things which cause me to feel there is a lack of content.

Once you hit max level the PvE side of BnS starts to wane. You are left to do your dailies to make gold and grind for better soul shields but that is really all you have. Of course there is arena and open world PvP but in other games you could make crafting a whole other component of time spent in game, and in most cases crafted something that left you a feeling of accomplishment.

Finally, my favorite part of Blade and Soul: Combat. The combat of BnS is fast, fun, and challenging. This is not a tab target game. You must be facing your opponent and max combat



range is 16m. It is easy to lose targets and just as easy to evade foes. There are lots of combos to practice and learn to maximize damage to just flat out wreck people. If you've played Tera or Wildstar and enjoyed that style of combat, BnS is very similar. Most classes have a good assortment of iFrames and utility skills versus outright offensive skills. So dodging boss mechanics and getting out of CC is pretty reliable. There is some imbalance in that Summoners pets are rather strong. So a 1v1 against a Summoner is practically a 1v2. Regardless, combat is a lot of fun in BnS and keeps me looking to improve my skill.

Overall I think Blade and Soul is worth a look. It's free to play and isn't a game you need to devote your life to just to keep up. Have fun , collect costumes, do achievements, or whatever you feel like messing around with. One last thing I'm going to mention is bots. I feel like every time I log in my block list doubles. They are a pain but don't seem to be affecting anything except the sale of gold. If you want a game to break up the monotony of what you're playing now, make a toon on the Master Hong server and look for myself Snippit, Jahlon, or DarkGen to join up with Paradox in Blade and Soul.



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