

I played the *Blades for Hire* demo – this gritty mercenary RPG surprised me in the best way

I love tactical RPGs, but let's be honest – lately, few of them manage to hold my attention beyond a single play session. When I first heard about *Blades for Hire*, I expected just another indie game with turn-based combat and a grim fantasy setting. Been there, done that, right? Well, then I played the demo... and let me tell you, this one has claws. And it digs in deep.

You're not the hero. You're the one trying to survive.

In *Blades for Hire*, you don't play as a destined chosen one. You're the leader of a struggling mercenary guild, just trying to get by in a brutal world. From the very first dialogues, the game hits you with tough choices. Help the villagers? Sure—but don't expect to get paid. Strong-arm a merchant for better terms? Go ahead—just don't be shocked if your team starts questioning your judgment.

Because here's the kicker: even your own mercenaries aren't always on your side. They have their own personalities, moral lines, and loyalties. Some will balk at intimidating the innocent. Others might walk away if they feel mistreated. This isn't just a strategy game—it's a survival story, and you're right in the middle of it.



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Combat that keeps you on your toes

At first glance, combat looks like your standard turn-based affair—top-down view, action points, and so on. But there's a clever twist: you don't directly control every move. Instead, your mercenaries act semi-autonomously, choosing targets based on preset tactics you assign. You can intervene, of course—but it feels more like commanding a squad than micromanaging every unit.

It's risky. And that's what makes it exciting. You start thinking more like a commander and less like a chess player. Which merc is reliable? Who will panic under pressure? Who's brave enough to finish the job even when the odds turn ugly?



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Gritty, grounded, and dripping with atmosphere

Visually, the game has a rough, raw aesthetic that perfectly matches its brutal world. The soundtrack is moody without being overbearing, and the writing hits that sweet spot between immersive and efficient. In the 30-minute demo, I saw just the beginning of the story—but I already felt invested in this desperate crew trying to carve out a living between warlords, bandits, and corrupt nobles.

The non-linear structure is a breath of fresh air. You pick contracts, manage resources, and make moral trade-offs. There's no hand-holding here—just hard choices, hard consequences, and a world that doesn't care if you play nice.



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It's just a demo... but I want more

The demo for *Blades for Hire* is now live on Steam as part of the **Steam Next Fest** (starting June 9). It offers a solid half-hour of gameplay—enough to feel the tone, learn the basics, and get completely hooked. During the event, the developers will also be hosting a **livestream**, showing off more advanced mechanics and answering community questions live.

Even better? You can now **sign up for beta testing** of the full game. After playing this demo, I didn't hesitate https://store.steampowered.com/app/3180000/Blades_For_Hire/

If you're into titles like *Battle Brothers*, *Heads Will Roll*, or if you enjoy the moral dilemmas of *This War of Mine*—*Blades for Hire* deserves your attention. Just remember: in this world, loyalty is bought, and death comes cheap.



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