

# Trine 2



Questing through fire and water, exploring the supernatural in a glorious world, **Alex Cox** feels as if he's in a fairytale. Lock up your beanstalks.

## In brief...

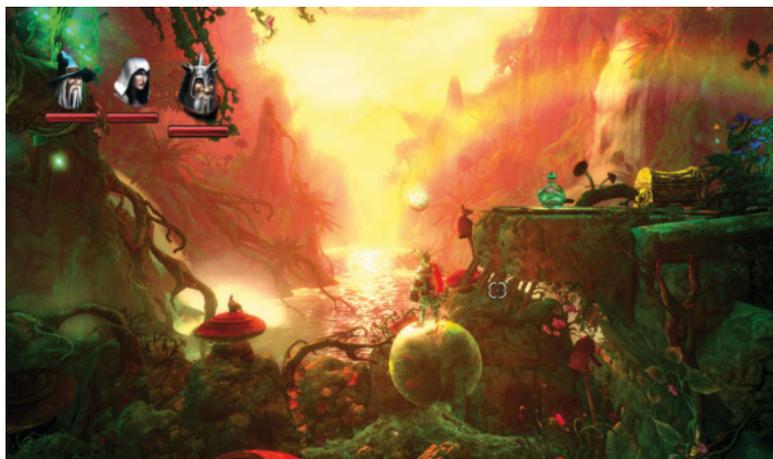
» A puzzle platformer with multiple protagonists who can be switched between at will. See also: *Free Vikings*, *Gobliins* (via ScummVM)

**W**hat's better than toting a sword and shield or hurling a massive hammer? Why, waving around a grappling hook, of course, and pinging things with a bow and arrow. Duh. Better than that? Levitating objects with your mind, and conjuring fancy metallic cubes and planks out of thin air. Each has its use, sure, but that's the hierarchy and we're sticking to it.

In the original *Trine*, a side-scrolling platformer just like this sequel, that league table stood fast. You could take on the role of the Knight, Thief or Wizard, and join forces with a local chum or two, but it'd end in a punch-up as you each battled for control of the Wizard, by far the coolest character of the trio. In the sequel, such battles have been negated: there's heavy support for online multiplayer, for a start, so you

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won't necessarily be able to elbow the controller out of your team-mates' fists. And, er, you can all be the same character if you like. The sport has truly been spoiled. Everyone will still be the Wizard, though. Even in single-player mode, where you're able to switch between the characters at will, the wizard is the most powerful of the three.



» The Thief becomes slightly more useful once she's upgraded; taking on a dragon at close range isn't recommended.

He's no good when it comes to whacking the pesky goblins that plague your progress, but he can – if suitably upgraded – pick them up and dump them into spiky pits. It just seems that many puzzles, for which there are often several plausible solutions, can be most easily solved via the Wizard's set of super-cool powers.

It's not about careering through the levels with reckless abandon, you see. Upgrading your initially fragile party requires that you collect as many glowing orbs as possible, each of which will require a bit of advanced manoeuvring. You might need to climb up high, jump from a just-too-low platform, or tip the orb off of a high

shelf. You might need to route water in a particular way to grow a plant or fill a crevasse. You might just need to break something. You can do most of this with the Wizard, and what you can't you'll do with the Knight – the poor Thief doesn't really get a look in, unless serving as a long-range attacker or solving puzzles designed specifically for her talents. Her grappling hook attaches to a disappointingly low number of objects.

## You and whose army?

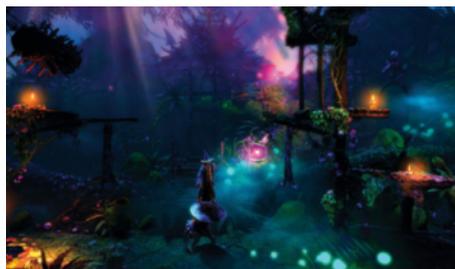
Don't get the idea that you can just blunder through, either. There's a challenge here. Your party is feeble in terms of health – a few knocks to the Wizard will see him crumble, and while the armour-clad, shield-wielding Knight is a tougher cookie, he's defeated easily if swarmed. Logic applies not only to the solution of a puzzle, but to the avoidance of death in the process. The first few levels are kind, but the difficulty – and your frequency of returning to the last checkpoint – increases fast. Solving puzzles with an incomplete party is tougher but usually possible, although if you've somehow made your forward progress impassable even hopping back a short way to get a complete party won't prevent you from having to restart the whole level. Every action has a consequence. Visually, *Trine 2* is redolent of the games released during the early days of discrete graphics

## Features at a glance



### Strength in numbers

Teaming up with a friend or two will mean you can tackle different parts of a moving environment at the same time...



### Complementary skills

...or use each other's skills to your advantage. The Knight isn't just a clubber – he's a stepping stone, too.

cards, only with greater fidelity. It is absolutely dripping in coloured lighting, to an almost sickening extent, and while Frozenbyte has admittedly executed the organic technicolour world in a very attractive way, it was a little garish for our discerning palate. We can't fault their rendering, though; the long levels are anything but static, making great use of the syrupy but satisfying physics engine throughout – and they're packed with unexpected twists, turns and traps. This flexibility means *Trine 2* stands up to replaying, if only to grab that final orb tucked away in a seemingly inaccessible position, dig up one of the hidden chests containing bonus artwork, or find an alternative solution to a previous puzzle.

## Hail to the Thief

OK, time to relent a little: let's show the Thief a little love by way of an example of the latter. There's a puzzle near the end of the second level, where you must water a plant to continue. But the running water is some feet away from the bud, and it absorbs into the ground. With the Wizard, it's relatively easy to stack up a few items and redirect the water so that it flows to the proper spot. With the Knight, you can point your shield at the stream and deflect it.

But the same puzzle is also solvable with the Thief's more limited skillset; attach yourself to the bottom of the log spouting the water, and swing on your grappling hook, kicking drips of water towards the seedling. You'll be swinging back and forth for about five minutes, but eventually you'll disperse enough to coax the plant – a cabbage – into blooming. Where it subsequently



› The lighting effects conjure up everything from bright and sparkly to dank and gloomy.

distracts a giant snail from blocking your path. Yes. This wasn't what Frozenbyte intended – our solutions to conundrums, we feel, rarely were – but if you're stuck for a way past a puzzle there's a hint system in place. Through and through, from the lazy snail to the Cthulu-inspired cavern, from each tiny puzzle to the enormous bosses, *Trine 2*

flair to proceedings, as they do during gameplay as well as cut scenes. Whether you'll find yourself involved in the storyline or just wincing at the tweeness of it all is going to be a personal thing; we fell into the latter camp more often than not.

Perhaps *Trine 2*'s looseness and reliance on personal creativity lets it down a little. It doesn't feel as satisfying in progression as solid puzzlers, which offer a single route or a definite mechanic. The reward for using your ingenuity to overcome an obstacle is either an easy romp forward, or a return to complete bafflement. You'll make the characters yours through the levelling scheme, and the puzzle solutions yours in the same way, but we found *Trine 2* to be marginally lacking as both a puzzler and a platformer. As a game, though? As a solid whole? Excellent. It's a title every gamer should play, just so they can say they did – and it's one of the best indie games on Linux. As long as you're the Wizard. **LXF**

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is wacky and charming – a true fairytale of a game. The music and sound are set perfectly, and the voice acting – decent enough for an indie title – gives its protagonists a way of adding fantasy



› The action can, at times, get rather heated. Try to avoid being cornered by goblins if you can.

LINUX  
FORMAT
Verdict

**Trine 2**  
**Developer:** Frozenbyte  
**Web:** [www.frozenbyte.com](http://www.frozenbyte.com)  
**Price:** \$14.99 (approximately £9.70)

<b>Gameplay</b>	9/10
<b>Graphics</b>	10/10
<b>Longevity</b>	9/10
<b>Value for money</b>	10/10

› Whimsical, wacky and wonderful, *Trine 2* is a delight. It even stands replaying, so it'll last you a long time.

Rating 9/10