In Silksong, spite is my motivation to keep playing

In the depths of The Marrow, the second major area of *Silksong*, there's a particularly nasty midboss. I eventually beat him, but my reward wasn't a new ability, item, or a bench where I could rest and save my progress. All I got was pain, suffering, and death. In *Silksong*, the only way out is through, but the "through" is a tunnel lined with spikes that occasionally spew gouts of flame.

I should have given up right then and there, but I have not abandoned *Silksong* the same way I do other unfun games. For the life of me, I couldn't figure out why I didn't just put *Silksong* down and chalk it up as another "not for me" game the way *Hollow Knight* just wasn't for me. I enjoy Metroidvanias a great deal — *Prince of Persia: The Lost Crown* was one of my favorite games of last year. And for *Silksong*, I wanted to try Team Cherry's work again and see if it would finally click. It has, and it's because of the community (and a *lot* of spite).

I came to *Hollow Knight* late, long after the buzz about it had left my social media circle. With *Silksong*, I'm playing it at the same time as everyone else. My social media feed is full of people who love the game much more than I do, posting tips, commiserating about its moments of bullshit (hello, lantern fruit pogo platforming), and gushing over the adorable Sherma.

When I post lamenting the game's bullshit, I get excited messages from my friends giving me advice on what I should do next. It's like we're all doing our own personal let's plays together while being in each other's chats. It feels good. I am not alone in my misery, and better yet, I've got friends to help. For *Silksong* it's worked in such a way that's kept me

playing longer than I would have if I were going this alone.

This kind of collective, collaborative gaming experience has also taught me a new trick: taking a break. I've never been the kind of gamer that stops playing when I can't overcome an obstacle. I either do something else in the game or keep running at my problem until I figure it out. Now, when I feel myself getting even the slightest bit mad because I was so close (or I *thought* I was so close) to surmounting a challenge, I turn off the game and come back later. It's so silly that, once again, the "touch grass" people are right, but the strategy has gotten me through some of the game's most egregious moments. (If the vendor Shakra wants to leave her post in Greymoor because of something I did, that's fine. But taking her bench with her that's in a room *right before a brutal combat gauntlet* is a unique and dastardly flavor of *Silksong* bullshit.)

And when I overcome that bullshit, I get this incredible frisson of thrill. When I easily beat a boss in fewer tries than I'm used to, I feel godly. I'm actually quite tickled to hear Team Cherry is working to nerf some of the early bosses, because those were fine. (It's the damn pogo platforming!)

I'm pretty sure I'm going to finish *Silksong* and whatever I feel at the end of that journey will be more like relief than joy. *Silksong* has shown me I don't need to feel "happiness" or "joy" to continue playing a game. I just want to feel something — even if that something is pure spite.

https://www.theverge.com/games/777653/silksong-impressions-team-cherry-metroidvania-sherma-is-cool