

GAMING INSURRECTION

FOR GAMERS, BY GAMERS

YEAR 17

WWW.GAMINGINSURRECTION.COM |  TWITTER: @GAMINGINSURRECT

ISSUE 54

NO GENRE IS SAFE IN THIS
CREATURE FEATURE!

MONSTER MASH!

GI DELVES DEEP INTO UNKNOWN HORRORS!



from the editor

Thank goodness for the return of fall and all things spooky. With the cooler temperatures, GI is curling up with candles, fall scents and fun games about the denizens that go bump in the night.

This issue, coming right after Halloween, we're spotlighting our favorite monsters and creatures in video games. From succubae to vampires and zombies, our favorite uglies and sometimes pretties are highlighted along with their games of origin.

Also, of note, we have watched

Black Panther: Wakanda Forever and have reviewed it in the Strip as the property review this issue. It's been a long three years — and five years total since Chadwick Boseman passed away — but we were finally ready to move forward. See our thoughts on the sequel in The Strip section.

Here's to a fun spooky season and a most frightful Halloween. Enjoy the issue!



Lyndsey Beatty, editor-in-chief



LYNDSEY BEATTY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

LYNDSEY BEATTY is co-founder and editor-in-chief of GI. She enjoys binge watching TV with her husband, editing as part of the Uppercut Editions team and playing various retro video games. Lyndsey resides in Columbia, S.C., and is an senior accounting auditor for the state of South Carolina.

CONTACT:

lyndseyb@gaminginsurrection.com

GAMING INSURRECTION

Editor-in-Chief

Lyndsey Beatty

Facebook

Facebook.com/
GamingInsurrection

Editor-at-Large

Brandon Beatty

YouTube

User: GamingInsurrection

Website

www.gaminginsurrection.com

Twitter

@GamingInsurrect

GI REVIEW POLICY

Scale is from 1 to 5 as follows:

1 — **Broken.** Absolutely do not play this game. A broken mess from start to finish. Game is unplayable and irredeemable in all areas.

2 — **Substandard.** The game isn't for everyone. Some mechanics work; others need work. Overall design is questionable in some areas.

3 — **Average and meets expectations.** Mechanics work and it's a decent package overall. It's playable, and you'll come back to the game.

4 — **Above average.** Exceeds expectations. Overall, a great game worth keeping in a gamer's library. Presentation and mechanics all work as expected and add to or enhance the gaming experience.

5 — **Masterpiece.** Everyone should play this title at least once to experience what it has to offer.



BRANDON BEATTY
EDITOR-AT-LARGE

BRANDON BEATTY is editor-at-large for GI. Brandon writes reviews when the mood strikes him, produces the quarterly Otaku Corner column for The Strip and spends a significant amount of time watching anime and wandering around the world of Monster Hunter. Brandon resides in Columbia, S.C., and is a security specialist for the state of South Carolina.

CONTACT:

brandonb@gaminginsurrection.com



Clay Fighter Tournament Edition soundtrack is no clown

I have a certain fondness for the original ClayFighter. It came at a time when every fighting game in the market was trying to capitalize on the success of Mortal Kombat and make a name for themselves.

However, ClayFighter differentiated itself with weird stop-motion graphics, a lot of humor and a banger of a soundtrack. These are my favorite tracks from the fighter that didn't take itself seriously.

- 1. Fort Frosty (Bad Mr. Frosty's stage):** My favorite character, Bad Mr. Frosty is the analogy closest to Mortal Kombat as an obvious Sub-Zero rip-off. His stage is cool, too (see what I did there?). It sounds like a winter wonderland and looks like one, too. The flute here does all the work and makes it the standout track of all of the characters easily. And I promise you, I heard it a lot because I played with and beat the game a lot with Bad Mr. Frosty.
- 2. Circus Tent (Character Select):** The character select screen theme is a banger. Bouncy and fun, it invokes going to the fair and the circus as it should. It's playful and light, which doesn't at all go with the foreboding sense of doom that you get from the intro showing a clay-filled meteor striking an amusement park.
- 3. Opera House (Helga's stage):** The Valkyrie combatant is a fun character who reminds of Dictator of Street Fighter fame, and Sonya Blade and Sindel of



Mortal Kombat. Her stage, a play imitating Valkyrie, is appropriately epic and cool. The drums make this a ride like no other.

- 4. Haunted House (The Blob & Icky-**

bod Clay's stages): The Haunted House theme, which is shared by two locations, is spooky and fun. Campy horror is perfect for both characters, and the bass line here is killer.

- 5. Arena (Tiny's stage):** The resident strongman is a rough and tumble fighter who is analogous to Zangief of Street Fighter. The coliseum is a nicely animated stage with a cool guitar effect and synths thrown in for good measure. Whoever rocked out on that guitar in the studio must have had a good time that day because it shows in the riffs.
- 6. Big Hunk O' Burning Clay (Blue Suede Goo's stage):** The Elvis impersonator clay figure is in the building. This rockabilly homage is unique and a good representation of the genre, especially for a SNES game. The horns make the track standout. This stage and character were always a highlight for the late GI Mama and the track was particularly one of her favorites.

Lyndsey Beatty is editor-in-chief of Gaming Insurrection. She can be reached by email at lyndseyb@gaminginsurrection.com

Horror is fun and games with campy fiends

I love campy horror. I've been a fan of the not-seriously spooky for a long time, probably starting with my first viewing of The Addams Family live-action film in 1991. The creepy family appealed to me strongly and I've been happily darkly amused ever since.

It makes sense, then, that my video game tastes incorporate that dark leaning. I adore The Addams Family and Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt games and absolutely fell in love with Vampire/Darkstalkers

series. And if you couldn't tell, I am heavily into the macabre dealings of the Mortal Kombat series.

Spooky video games have always been there, but I tend to stay away

from the super serious straight up horror games. Apparently, as I've learned over the years, my undiagnosed ADHD says absolutely not. Too much anxiety about the potential realism of slasher and supernatural horror occurring are problems. So campy it is.

Also, I love fall and this time of year. October to late November is mild in temperatures and colorful in leaf offerings so I have a grand old time reveling in the winding down of the year.

This is the time that I grab a blanket and get involved in playing something goofy but spooky.

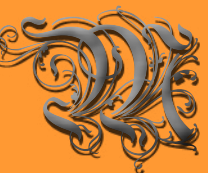


Lyndsey Beatty
CRY OF WAR

Lyndsey Beatty is editor-in-chief of Gaming Insurrection. She can be reached by email at lyndseyb@gaminginsurrection.com

GREAT MONSTER FEATURE

By Gaming Insurrection


 onsters have always been in our thoughts and our video games, apparently. The concept of things going bump in the night didn't just appear with a classic such as Castlevania for the NES. No, monsters in games have been a concept for a minute, as far back as the Atari 2600 and the heyday of arcades. And it's been a profitable concept, too. The horror genre — specifically survival horror genre — has always been deep in folks' pockets. Resident Evil, which is considered the progenitor of the genre, has sold 170 million units across eight main games and countless spinoffs. However, other genres, such as light gun shooters and action horror, have seen success also. Silent Hill has shipped 11.7 million units over 25 years, and the House of the Dead has enjoyed 2 million in total sales for a variety of modern consoles. The word horror invokes terror and thrills, and we're reminiscing about the games that give us the shakes and send shivers down our spines along with our favorite monsters that are the terrors of the night.

Meet Your Monsters



Vampires

5

The Creature



6



Demons

7



Others

11



Werewolves

8



Witches

9



Zombies

10



VAMPIRES



ABOUT VAMPIRES

Vampires are found in many cultures, most prominently in European tales of 18th century beings that were bloated and dark. The pale figure known today was not known until the early 19th century. Modern vampires are known to drink the blood of the living and create mischief in areas they were familiar with in life. They can induce thrall in their victims, and they can exhibit preternatural gifts such as pyrokinesis and telepathy. Their known weaknesses are crosses, stakes through the heart, sunlight, holy water and garlic.

Video game creatures: Demitri, Vampire/Darkstalkers series; Dracula, Castlevania series; Alucard, Castlevania series; Kain & Raziel, Legacy of Kain series



DEMITRI

Series: Vampire/Darkstalkers

Though an annoying incessant whiner who won't take the L that he deserved, Demitri is considered the co-lead of the Darkstalkers/Vampire series. He is the titular vampire after all. Demitri is powerful in that he can hang with the top tiers in the series if played correctly, but in later games he's overshadowed by far more powerful characters such as B.B. Hood and Q-Bee.



ALUCARD

Series: Castlevania

Alucard is interesting in that he constantly attempts to subvert his father — Dracula — at every turn. Alucard is the antihero we all deserve, especially after helming one of the best Castlevania entries ever: Castlevania: Symphony of the Night. He's also an assistant in the excellent Castlevania III.



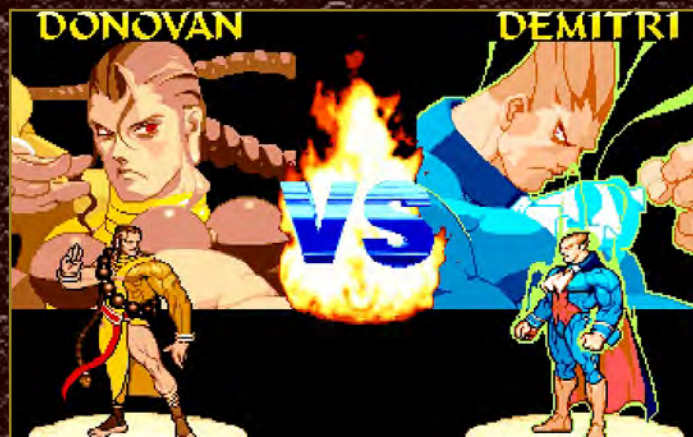
RAZIEL

Series: Legacy of Kain

Raziel captivated in his introductory game, Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver. Though the series has seen better days, Raziel was compelling in his quest to avenge his murder by the vampire leader Kain. The gameplay was superb, the voice acting great and the story drew us in. Raziel made this entry a must have in the heyday of the Dreamcast.



CASTLEVANIA: SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT



VAMPIRE HUNTER



LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER



FRANKENSTEIN



ABOUT FRANKENSTEIN

The monster, the creation of Dr. Victor Frankenstein, originated in Mary Shelley's 1818 classic *Frankenstein*; or, *The Modern Prometheus*. The creature is an amalgamation of human body parts put together to create a man. The creature has appeared in modern fiction and video games for many years.

Video game creatures: Victor von Gerdenheim, *Vampire/Darkstalkers* series; Frankenstein, *Castlevania* series; *Frankenstein's Monster*, *Mad World* (2010)

VICTOR VON GERDENHEIM

Series: Vampire/Darkstalkers

Victor is one of many representations of Mary Shelley's legendary Creature. Where he stands out is the fact that he's a playable character in a fighting game. He's strong and has a decent repertoire, but he hasn't been top tier in *Vampire* since the first game. If a revival ever comes to fruition, we'd love to see Victor as Frankenstein's Monster get his due and return to glory.

FRANKENSTEIN AND IGOR

Series: Castlevania

The dastardly duo known as Frankenstein and Igor lay waste to your health bars and your patience if you're not careful. Igor is the more pressing problem of the two, but do try to stay away from Frank as well. They're the start the second half of the boss run in the NES classic for a reason.



CASTLEVANIA (1986)



VAMPIRE



VAMPIRE

D DEMONS



ABOUT DEMONS

Mischievous imps from hell, demons are known to wreak havoc and make deals of ill repute in Judeo-Christian teachings. Demons were said to serve Lucifer, and they make bargains to those who wish to make a deal with the devil, so to speak.

Video game creatures:

Dante, Devil May Cry series; Blackheart/Mephisto, Marvel Versus series; Firebrand/Red Arremer, Ghost 'n Goblins series; Morrigan Aensland, Vampire/Darkstalkers series; Prinny, Disgaea series



BLACKHEART

Series: Marvel vs. Capcom

The prince of hell is a feared top-tier character in Marvel vs. Capcom 2 for two reasons: Inferno, his anti-air assist; and Heart of Darkness. Both track, and Inferno can be canceled and comboed into Heart of Darkness easily. Most folks don't play Blackheart on point but rather use his assist to trap and chip. You used to see a lot of Blackheart in top-tier play, and he's still useful in the modern-day scene with new tech discovered in recent years.

DANTE SPARDA

Series: Devil May Cry

Dante has been keeping it stylish since the early 2000s with the excellent first entry of Devil May Cry. Some of his later entries have been hit or miss (Devil May Cry 2, no; Devil May Cry 3, yes), but with a fantastic anime adaptation and well-received outings in other Capcom offerings, Dante has won a place in our likable demons list.

JEDAH DOHMA

Series: Darkstalkers/Vampire

The Vampire Savior himself makes his appearance on our list of highlighted monsters. Jedah immediately set himself apart from the pack with a dazzling appearance as the titular savior of Makai and the human realm in our beloved Vampire Savior. He's not top tier but he looks cool, and he's fun to play. We want to find out if Jedah was successful in his plans, but we'd need more Vampire for that, and it will never happen.



MARVEL VS. CAPCOM 2: NEW AGE OF HEROES

DEVIL MAY CRY 3

VAMPIRE SAVIOR



WEREWOLVES



ABOUT WEREWOLVES

Wolves, beings with the countenance of men during the day and howling vicious dogs by night, have long been featured in fiction. These lycanthropic beasts are said to originate from the Middle Ages period where an individual would be afflicted through a bite or curse that would forcibly transform them into a werewolf under a full moon. Once the moon disappeared, the individual would return to normal. Their known weaknesses include silver nitrate or silver bullets.

Video game creatures:
Jon Talbain, Vampire/
Darkstalkers series; Sa-
brewulf, Killer Instinct
series; Resurrected Roman
Centurion, Altered Beast
(1988)

SABREWULF

Series: Killer Instinct

Konrad von Sabrewulf has always grabbed our attention. The first Killer Instinct had the werewolf front and center, and he was fun to play. It also helps that his stage theme is gorgeous and one of our favorites on the soundtrack. He can do good damage and his back-story in the Ultratech tournament is one of intrigue.

GALLON/JOHN TALBAIN

Series: Darkstalkers/Vampire

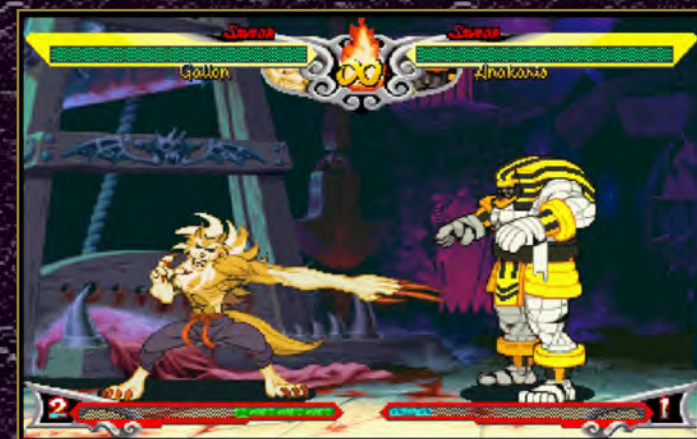
Jon Talbain is upper-mid tier in Vampire Hunter and top tier in Vampire Savior, and he's a cool character. He's got flash and speed, and he can keep up with the fast-paced play required in high-level Vampire. And, to boot, he shares similarities with our favorite pirate mage Ruby Heart through his Beast Cannon and her Schwarzielle.



KILLER INSTINCT (1994)



VAMPIRE



VAMPIRE SAVIOR



WITCHES



ABOUT WITCHES

Witches are known as some of the most powerful beings in known monster mythology and folklore. A female conjurer — known as a witch — or male conjurer, known as a warlock, can use magic, potions and spells alongside familiars to accomplish feats of the supernatural. Said to commune with Satan, witches and warlocks have untold power over other beings. Witches have existed in spoken and written parlance since classical antiquity or ancient Rome.

Video game creatures:
Bayonetta and Jean, Bayonetta series; Yoko Belnades, Castlevania series; Gruntilda, Banjo-Kazooie series; Tessa, Red Earth; Rinoa Heartilly, Final Fantasy series; Midna, The Legend of Zelda series

BAYONETTA

Series: Bayonetta

Bayonetta is very cool. We love the aesthetic of the witch who uses her hair as a weapon and looks smashing in glasses. She's similar in nature to Dante of Devil May Cry, which is apropos because they come from the mind of the same creator, the legendary Hideki Kamiya. Bayonetta's gameplay is lovely and she's a terror in Smash Bros., which is one of the better crossovers that series has seen.

TESSA

Series: Red Earth/Warizard

Tessa is weird and the Red Earth/Warizard series is just as weird, but she's an interesting witch. Her gameplay is literally magical and takes some getting used to, but once you get the hang of her, she's not bad at all. She's the soul reason to play the series, pun intended.



SUPER SMASH BROS. ULTIMATE



BAYONETTA



RED EARTH

Z

ZOMBIES



LORD RAPTOR/ZABEL ZAROCK

Series: Darkstalkers/Vampire

The zombie rocker is a notorious character, mostly because he's a mass murderer who killed some of his fans and himself as a sacrifice to Ozomu at his final concert in Vampire lore. He's top tier in the final game in the series, and his speed and move priority are the reasons why.

WITCH (ZOMBIE TYPE)

Series: Left 4 Dead

She is easily one of the most outright dangerous zombies in the survival horror FPS. The Witch is known to be startled easily, relentlessly hunt and quickly tear players to shreds. The Witch is to be always feared and taken seriously.



ABOUT ZOMBIES

Zombies are commonly known as the living dead. Usually through the use of magic to reanimate the dead, corpses will rise from their graves and do the bidding of those who raised them from their eternal slumber. The word zombie was first used in 1819 but originally referred to the Haitian practice of reanimating corpses through the practice of Voodoo. Modern implements of zombies use scientific or biological means such as viruses — man made or naturally occurring — or fungi.

Video game creatures: *Zombies*, *Resident Evil* series, *House of the Dead* series; Lord Raptor, Vampire/Darkstalkers series



VAMPIRE



HOUSE OF THE DEAD



RESIDENT EVIL 2



OTHER MONSTERS



OTHER MONSTERS

Other monsters well-known in folklore and fiction include mermen, ghosts, succubi and mummies. A variety of these creatures are spread out in video games, but you can find the best variety in games such as Castlevania and the Vampire/Darkstalkers series. There is a rogue's gallery of fiends in both games' boss fights beyond those already mentioned here. See our top picks later in this issue's Retro Game Corner.



SUCCUBUS: MORRIGAN

Series: Darkstalkers/Vampire

You knew Morrigan was going to make the list of our favorite video game monsters. As the female face of GI's favorite neglected fighting game series Vampire/Darkstalkers and modern Capcom fighting games, Morrigan has grown on us since the early days of Vampire. She may not have advanced in her wardrobe since the series debut but know that she remains as interesting as ever. We'd love to see her in a modern setting.

MUMMY: ANAKARIS

Series: Darkstalkers/Vampire

The pharaoh has been around since the first Vampire game hit the scene in 1994 and he's here to stay. He's quirky yet cool, especially if you have an interest in mummies and ancient Egyptian practices.

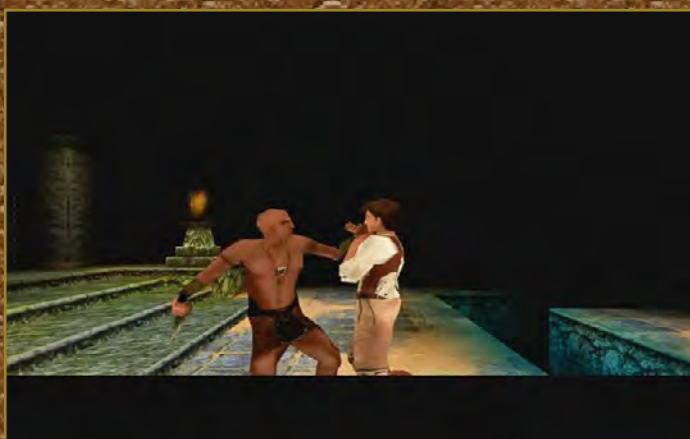
MERMAN: RIKUO

Series: Darkstalkers/Vampire

The merman with the plan to save his clan, Aulbath/Rikuo is a favorite and a top-tier choice in quite a few of the Vampire series entries. He's interesting visually and has a lot going for him in terms of backstory. The king of mermen and his lot are a good interpretation of the Creature from the Black Lagoon.



VAMPIRE



THE MUMMY



VAMPIRE



SNOWBALL ICE MICROPHONE

The Snowball Ice Microphone has been on our radar for a long time. We originally bought this microphone in February 2016 and reviewed it in Issue 33 (January 2017) and loved it. Alas, after eight years, it was time for a new microphone. We went with what we've come to love and recently re-purchased it.

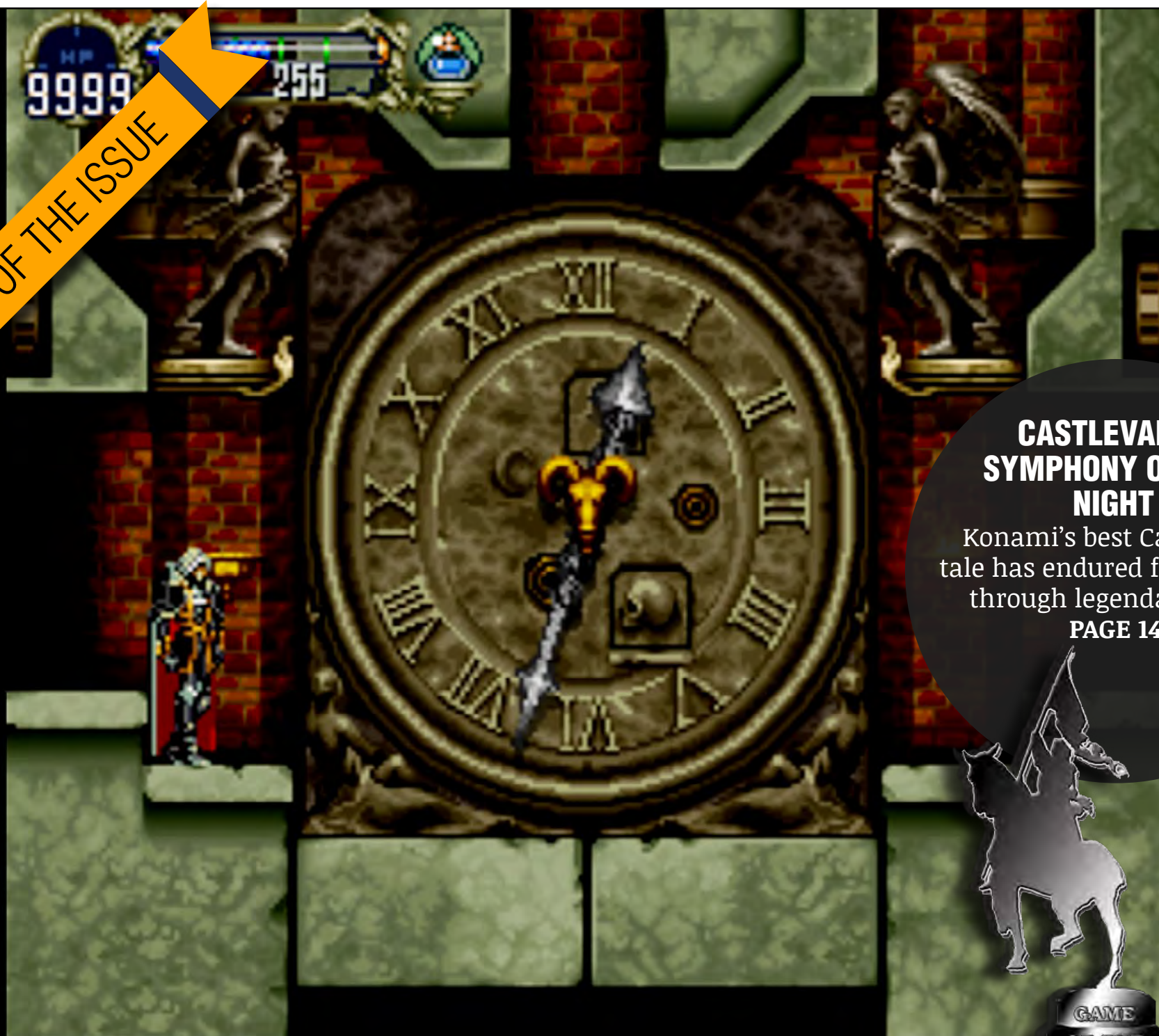
Logitech bought the Snowball brand and all its components in 2018, approximately one year after our purchase. We're cool with Logitech accessories, so this didn't deter our purchase once again. Be aware that the Blue brand was initially retired in 2023, but the Snowball is still sold under Logitech's G brand if you're thinking of buying.

The microphone is still quality gear; we still get crisp audio for input and it's still easy to plug and play. We've tested it with Adobe Premiere Pro, OBS and Audacity and got great results. And, best of all, it's not much more expensive than when we first purchased it. We've gotten proven results from the Snowball, and we'll return to the brand when it's time to purchase once again.

Price: \$40.00

Where to buy: Amazon, Logitech G brand website

GAME OF THE ISSUE



CASTLEVANIA: SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT

Konami's best Castlevania tale has endured for 25 years through legendary play,

PAGE 14



INSIDE



House of the Dead

Sega's premier on-the-rails shooter had its gory origins somewhere. Solid mechanics, zombies and a decent plot makes the original one of the best of the genre.



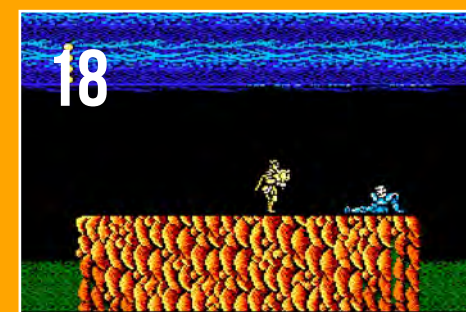
Bram Stoker's Dracula

The game adaptation of the 1992 film has some interesting mechanics but its bite leaves a lot to be desired overall.



Mary Shelley's Frankenstein

The travesty that is Frankenstein's monster can't compare with the muddled mess that is the SNES adaptation of Mary Shelley's famed Creature.



Frankenstein: The Monster Returns

Another version of Mary Shelley's famed Creature is not necessarily a bad thing. The Monster Returns with an OK spin on the tale of the monstrosity.



Developer: Konami, Release: 1997

Symphony of the Night plays a sweet song of woe

Legendary Castlevania saga is a killer king

I fully admit that I'm a little late for the Halloween party that is Castlevania: Symphony of the Night. I really stopped paying attention to the series after Super Castlevania IV, mostly because it's a hard series and I have a lot of love for that game and the original. I didn't need anymore Castlevania. But after coaxing from friends, making the MetroidVania connections and knowing its legendary status, here we are, and it's taken a bite out of me.

Symphony of the Night, in all its gothic horror, appeals to me on several levels. The story is familiar in that Alucard — son of Dracula and a supporting character in the third



By
Lyndsey Beatty

**SCORE:
5 OUT OF 5**

game — is attempting to stop his father once again. That familiarity is enough to get me going because it's all I need to know about what's going on. Sure, I'm kind of used to a



Belmont leading the way, but Symphony of the Night doesn't need to rely on that kind of tradition.

The tradition that it does lean on is gameplay. The combat and movement are excellent, and it feels second nature to move around. Keeping it simple but adding the RPG elements was a fantastic design choice. Most of the

new weapons are cool, and fighting enemies is a beautifully built song and dance. Best of all, there is an in-game map included. For a sprawling game requiring massive platforming, a map is required, and Symphony hits the mark by automatically including this.

Graphically, the game is gorgeous. Konami did something beautiful

here and Castlevania looks better than ever. The gothic details are something to behold and are eye-catching as well as pleasing to someone with a goth sensibility and yearning for video games. The soundtrack is just as beautiful, necessitating finding the soundtrack to add to the collection. There are familiar riffs (Vampire Killer makes a cameo) and new chords to strike that are masterpieces, which is expected of the legendary Konami sound.

Alas, while trying to think of anything wrong with it, I've concluded that Symphony of the Night is a well-executed masterpiece. It hits all the marks and pulls no punches in elegance, craftsmanship. It's telling that most Castlevania games later in the series use Symphony as the template on which they build. Symphony is a building crescendo of greatness, culminating in solid storytelling, gameplay and world-building.





© Sega Enterprises, Ltd., 1996, 1998

Developer: Sega, Release: 1998

Retro House of the Dead sets up shop for franchise

Ah, the progress that has been made. The on rails shooters genre has made strides in the last 27 years. Modern controls — including light guns available for the home market — have made playing a lot more enjoyable. And that has made the House of the Dead series — and especially the original game — a tad bit more tolerable.

House of the Dead starts off as most zombie horror games of the day did: A megalomaniacal weirdo is messing with bioterrorism unnecessarily and has created a mess. And by mess, I mean mutated, transformed humans with a taste for flesh. That's literally the plot of the game. There's something about a fiancée that needs saving and stopping this blight from spreading to the rest of humanity, but that's the basics. It's serviceable and really doesn't do much to affect the gameplay. You're killing zombies, boss zombies and most likely the end boss guy who created the problem. Clean it up and go on in future sequels to take on an even larger threat in the bad guy's boss because, of course, he has a boss.

Cleaning up the problem is the fun part here. The controls are your standard light gun shooter but they're fine. Aiming and shooting wasn't bad, though lining up my shot sometimes was not exactly sharp. There were a few times fighting some of the aerial bosses that the cursor just wasn't keeping up so I took cheap hits. As an arcade old head, I know that's the name of the game here: It's designed to be a quarter-muncher.



But by the time I get home, there should be a better understanding that this isn't going to fly. Thankfully, cheat codes exist so it's not a problem. But for arcade conditions sake, this really isn't cool.

Because this is a 1998 product we're talking about, I'm also not expecting the graphics to look like much. And they don't, beyond these zombies looking OK. Keep in mind that these graphics didn't really improve until well beyond the second game/Typing of the Dead, so you're going to be seeing them for a long time. The music fares about the same, too. They are decent enough for the late



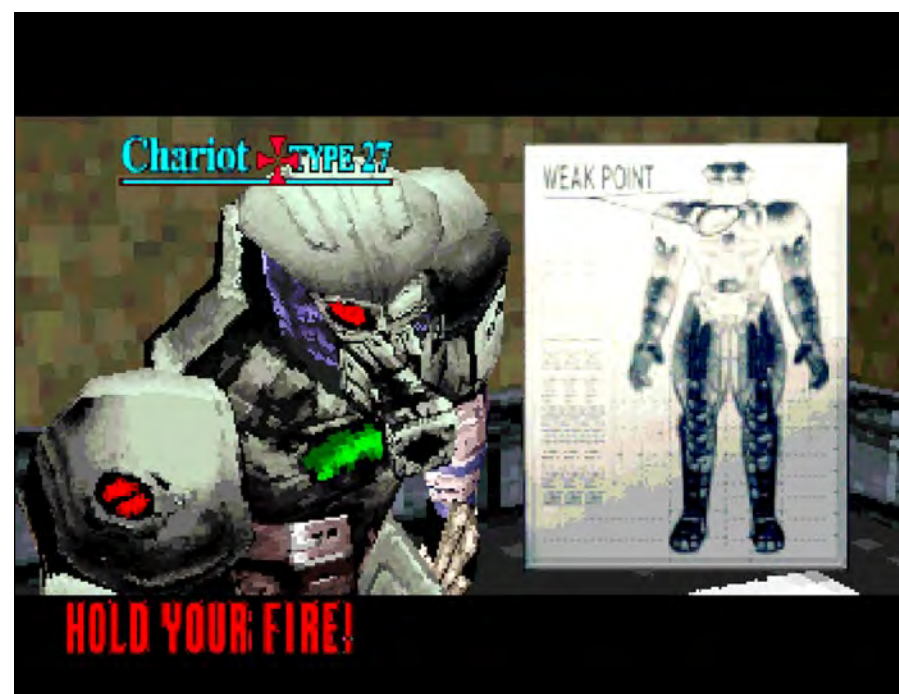
By
Lyndsey Beatty

**SCORE:
3 OUT OF 5**

'90s, and they work well in the confines of House of the Dead.

House of the Dead has made many improvements in the nearly 30 years since the original game. It didn't set the barn on fire then but it's a nice rail shooter if you're into zombie horror and like what the series has to offer. Personally, I'm more apt to play Typing of the Dead be-

fore House of the Dead, but that's because I prefer to be a keyboard sharpshooter these days. House of the Dead's reticle is set in the middle with the ability to go higher.





Developer: Psygnosis, Release: 1993

Bram Stoker's Dracula shows fangs with lazy underbite

What do Dracula, Sony and gaming consoles have in common? In 1993, Sony was one of the few multinational companies that had ownership of well-known Hollywood studios. Sony owned Tri-Star Pictures, which released the 1992 film Bram Stoker's Dracula, based on the legendary horror story. Sony, known as Sony Imagesoft at the time, had a strict hold on their movie business, which allowed them to develop games based off their releases on the box office front. Bram Stoker's Dracula is one of those examples that snuck onto the SNES.

Based on the movie, you play as Jonathan Harker who must rescue his fiancé Mina Murray from Dracula's clutches. Good old Dracula believes that Mina is a modern reincarnation of his previous love Elisabeta who was driven to suicide by Dracula's enemies while he fought against the Ottoman empire in 1462. Determined to have Mina by any means necessary, Dracula begins his battle against Harker with VERY high stakes involved.

The graphics of the game are standard 16-bit, but Sony gets credit for pairing details for each level with recognizable scenes from the film. Although the graphics made the game presentation campy, I thought the graphics stayed on task and did a serviceable job.

Controls to get Harker around are the usual fare for side scrollers on the SNES. An ambitious but underexplained mechanic is Harker's ability to use various weapons that he can pick up along the way



from Dr. Van Helsing, who shows up to help. The controls, while standard, aren't the best; they need some work. Precision jumping and slashing is hit or miss when I least need it to be.

The game music is OK, but the problem is it's repetitive. If Sony owns the studio that released the movie and its music was perfect, why not use that same sound team

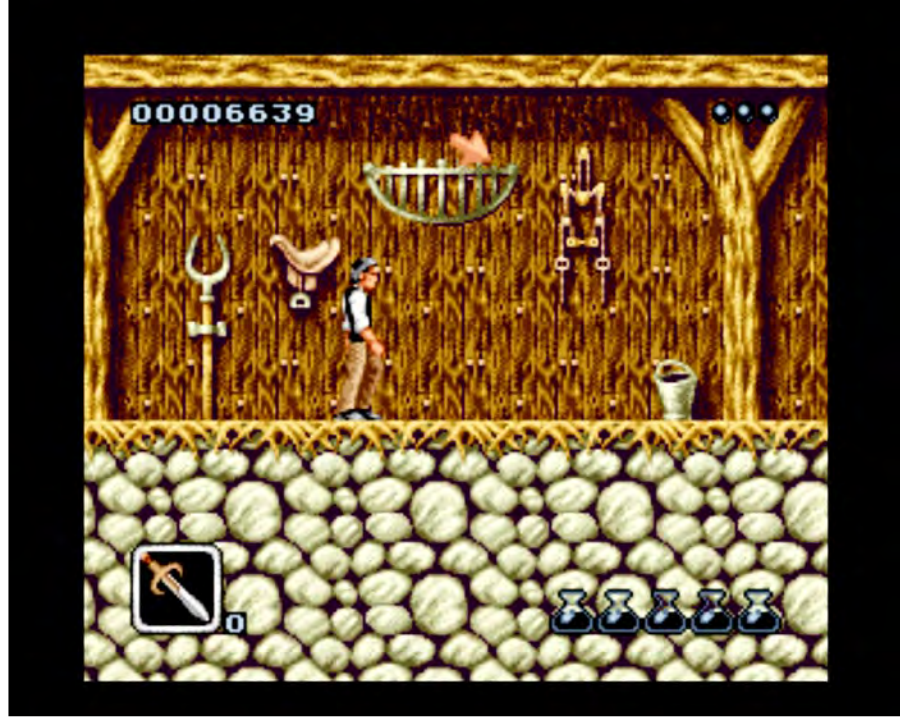
to work its magic for the game? This is not an immediate reason to avoid playing it, but Sony Imagesoft could have done more for the game, especially if it is based off a box office hit. My grievances



for this game are small but even the small details in its development can determine its success or failure. Sony did not give proper support in crucial areas of the game's development.

Bram Stoker's Dracula, despite lack of attention to detail in some areas, is a good game that pays tribute to the original work. The controls

could use some work, and the soundtrack could be better, but the game works as a decent tie-in to the movie adaptation. It's something you may be able to sink your teeth into.





Developer: Bits Studios, **Release:** 1994

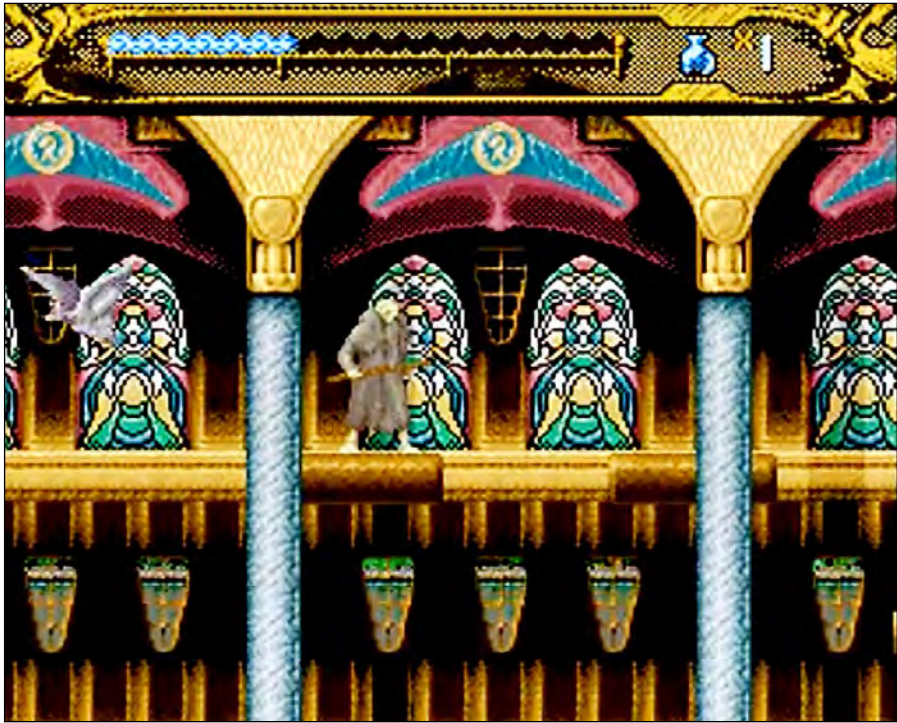
A Creature this pitiful should have shuffled off the mortal coil

Mary Shelley, in her gilded coffin of prose and man and madness, must have rolled over in her grave when this abomination based on her greatest work was released. As if the '90s didn't have enough terrible movie-to-game ties, along shambles the vitriolic cash grab that is Mary Shelley's Frankenstein.

The plot is tied directly to the 1994 movie directed by the inimitable Kenneth Branagh and starring the legendary Robert De Niro. Victor Frankenstein, a medical student, brings his creation to life through science. The Creature, which is soundly rejected as an abomination by society, wanders the Earth attempting to find Victor and exact revenge.

The original story is compelling. The video game version is not. As someone who read Frankenstein, Or the Modern Prometheus previously, I have exposure to the story and the characters. The game does nothing to tie the movie or the story to the game. You start the game as a being with no explanation of who you are or what you're supposed to be doing. The struggle is immediately and painfully obvious once you're dropped on the scene of a tired brown village. As I later learned, I start as the Creature, and I'm supposed to be fleeing the village. The villagers assume the Creature is a demon and are trying to kill him while he's on the way to find and kill Victor. That's the gist of the story, but I had to piece that together while watching other playthroughs. That was atrocious in 1994 and is still atrocious today.

Equally terrible are the gameplay and graphics, which go hand in hand. There is nothing redeeming about playing as the Creature. He animates terribly and plays just as terribly. He moves slowly through every motion and looks horrible while doing so. His shuffling gait starkly contrasts with his spry yet



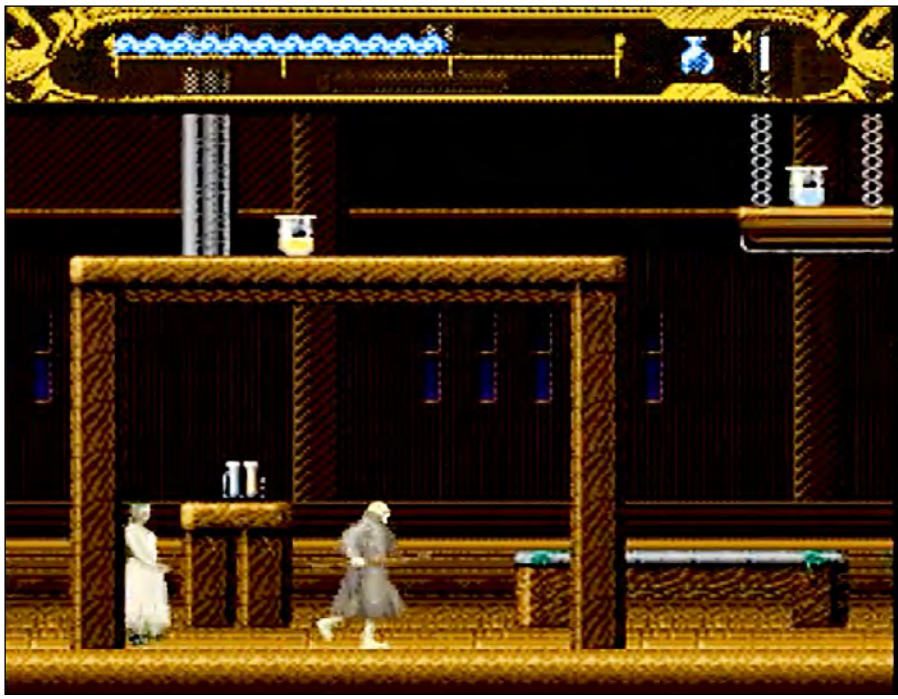
stale jumping, and his abilities to swing a weapon are subpar at best. Of special note, the platforming elements are absolutely garbage. Egregiously, there is no map to indicate previously visited areas or locations of interest. That's necessary if you're asking me to backtrack and solve hidden item puzzles in a large playfield. In an age where Super Metroid had been recently released, there is no excuse for this type of ludicrous oversight. Sure, this is a quick movie tie-in, but the least you can do as a developer is take notes from a master of the craft and at least halfway



By
Lyndsey Beatty

SCORE:
1.5 OUT OF 5

here, except for the soundtrack, that is worth bothering with and even then, that's questionable. Much like De Niro's choice to play the Creature, the biggest question of this whole travesty is why?



FRANKENSTEIN™

© BANDAI 1990

LICENSED BY NINTENDO
OF AMERICA INC.

Developer: TOSE, Release: 1991

The Creature bound to better fate with NES tome

The Monster Returns a good 8-bit adaptation

Ah, Frankenstein. This legendary horror monster has come a long way from the time his story was written by Mary Shelley. One of the most popular horror monsters of all time, Frankenstein moved from modern written adaptations to various movies, a cartoon version for a breakfast cereal and finally in video games such as Castlevania. During his video game tenure, Frankenstein has been the subject of a Bandai game in which he is the main villain, making a digital name for himself. Frankenstein: The Monster Returns for the NES was his big break.

In Frankenstein: The Monster Returns, in an unknown part of Europe the legendary monster has been resurrected thanks to lightning that struck his battered tombstone in an ancient cemetery. Fully restored, Franky and his band of minions attacked a nearby village, and he kidnaps Emily, the daughter of the village elder. With Emily and all the land in great peril, it is up to an unknown hero to answer the call to finally end Franky's reign of terror and make the land prosperous again.

The graphics of the game are typical of common 8-bit action-adventure games. Although I'll give Bandai credit for attempting to match various scenes to the original novel, certain sections made me think I was playing a jumbled



mix of Batman, the original TMNT, and Castlevania. Controls are also like Castlevania, which is welcome familiarity. However, this scheme can be problematic because precision is not abundant here. You will miss platforms and it's the fault of the control design, not you.

The music is appropriately chilling and horror themed. However, sometimes it tries to do too much. Unfortunately, this is a weak spot because the music will try its best to outdo



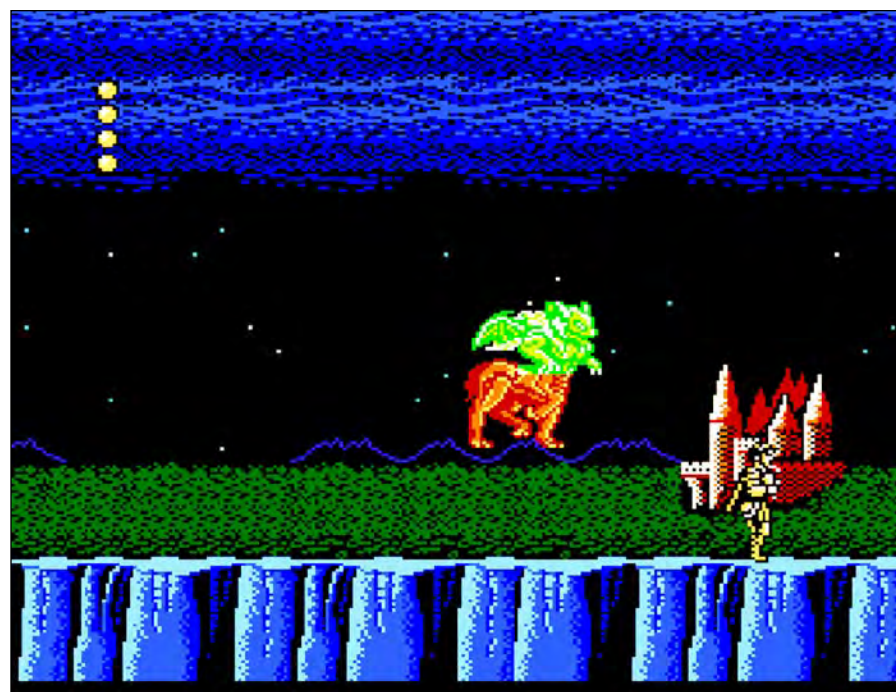
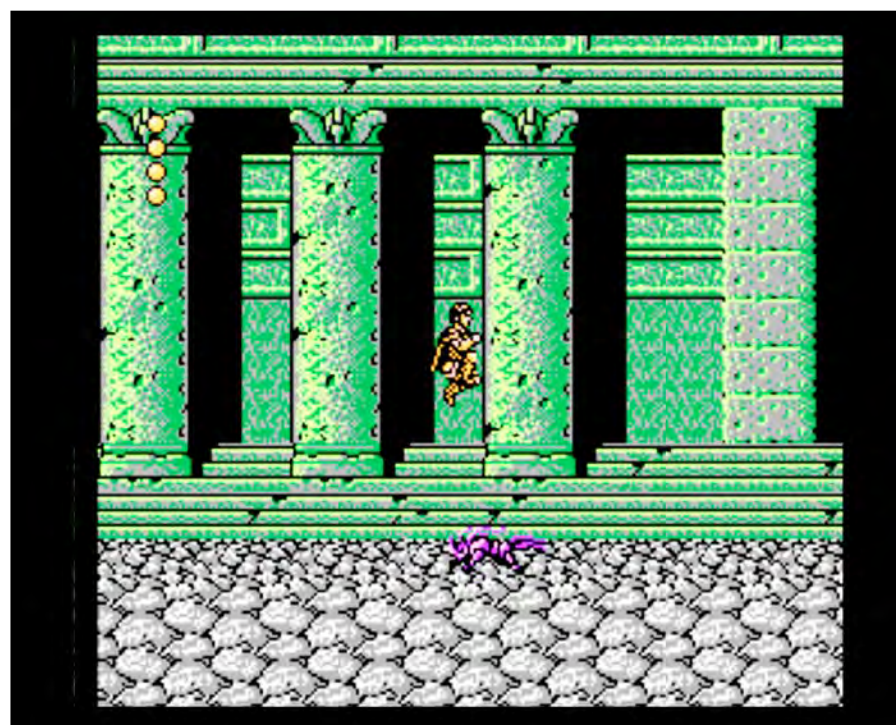
By
Brandon Beatty

SCORE:
3 OUT OF 5

Frankenstein. Franky's misadventure, while not quite as good as Castlevania, is still able to scare up a good time.

Castlevania, and it's nowhere near that level of audio masterpiece.

Frankenstein: The Monster Returns is a campy B-movie game that gave an iconic monster a chance to shine. Frankenstein would be second place to Castlevania since no other Universal monsters got their own game and managed to outshine Castlevania and



WELCOME to RETRO GAME CORNER

MASTERS OF MAYHEM



Mr. X

Series: Resident Evil (Capcom)

Why We Love Them: His design is boss. Also, anytime someone can add a mod to your debut game that references a popular song whenever you appear that has nothing to do with you and it fits perfectly, you are a boss.



Kirin

Series: Monster Hunter (Capcom)

Why We Love Them: Thunderhorse™, as Kirin is known around GI, is a favorite target. However, we love the magical equine because he's fantastic and beautiful. It takes a lot to fell this beast and with good reason: Nothing that majestic should be able to die that easily.



Morrigan

Series: Vampire/Darkstalkers

Why We Love Them: You're going to see a lot of Morrigan in this issue. That's because she's been a favorite character at GI for a long time. If she's in a game we're playing, you can almost be assured that she's part of our roster. And we'd love to love her even more with a new Vampire game.



Victor

Series: Vampire/Darkstalkers

Why We Love Them: The allegory to Frankenstein's Monster in the Vampire series is just cool to look at. Victor looks cool and his moves are cool, too. We love the character of Frankenstein's Monster quite a bit, and Victor takes the cake with his exaggerated style.



Raziel

Series: Legacy of Kain

Why We Love Them: Our goth hearts clamored for more when we got a hold of Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver and we learned about Raziel. The lieutenant to Nosgoth tyrant Kain is an interesting character to start with, but learning his back story and his future in subsequent games was a stunning journey we weren't prepared for. Raziel's undead vampire design is sublime.



Dracula

Series: Castlevania

Why We Love Them: Dracula's design has always been something to behold. But with the advent of improved graphics, his look in the later Castlevania games is gorgeous. He looks elegant despite his murderous cursed tendencies, and it's easy to see why he was feared in the Castlevania universe for so long when you consider that he employed the darkest creatures in the known video game universe such as Medusa Heads, Frankenstein and Igor, the Mummy Bros., and even Death itself.

SONG SPOTLIGHT

By Lyndsey Beatty



Don't forget to download our DDR glossary of terms!



It's Raining Men (Almighty Mix)
Artist: Geri Halliwell
Difficulty: 2/5/7
Chosen difficulty: Heavy
BPM: 136

It's Raining Men (Almighty Mix) is a staple of the golden years of DDR. It first appeared on the legendary Max 2 soundtrack and it's a decent remix of the Weather Girls' classic ode to men. Don't be fooled by the seemingly low difficulty. There are some tricky spots involving Freeze arrows and jumps that require attention. It isn't super fast and follows Geri Halliwell's lyrics most of the time so this should be easy to follow and not too tiring.

Suggested Speed Mod: x2



Justify My Love
Artist: Tess
Difficulty: 2/5/9
Chosen difficulty: Heavy
BPM: 140

Justify My Love is, like It's Raining Men, a staple of the DDR golden years. It's different, however, because it's much harder. There are triplets throughout the song mixed with complex offbeat runs that will tire you. Justify My Love is a 9-footer for a reason, and it's mostly because of those triplet runs. There really isn't room to stop and catch your breath, so prepare for the long haul before you get started. Memorizing the song and Tess' singing will immediately help tackle some of the hardest parts.

Suggested Speed Mod: x2



20, November (single mix)
Artist: DJ nagureo
Difficulty: 3/4/7
Chosen difficulty: Heavy
BPM: 130

The horns are the most interesting part of 20, November and are what you should be paying attention to when trying to step this. As a Beatmania IIDX crossover, it's like that version of the song, but the step additions add a tiring dimension to the Heavy chart. Try to conserve energy and speed it up to spread out the triplets if you're playing on a later mix.

Suggested Speed Mod: x2

dance dance
 revolution
 spotlight

1st mix	2nd mix
3rd mix	4th mix
5th mix	6th mix
7th mix	Extreme
SuperNova	
SuperNova 2	

LIGHT STANDARD HEAVY CHALLENGE

UPCOMING SONGS

DAM DARIRAM

ABSOLUTE

DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION



In the beginning

Animal Crossing or Dobutsu no Mori/Animal Forest was originally released in 2001 in Japan for the Nintendo 64. It was later localized, enhanced and released as Animal Crossing in North America for the GameCube in 2002. The life simulator has appeared in some form for every modern Nintendo console and mobile phones since.



Tools of the trade

Animal Crossing avatars use a variety of tools outdoors in their town. Shovels are used to dig up unscanned fossils, daily golden spots, bury items, flowers and trees. Fishing rods are used to catch fish for selling or donating to the town museum. Nets are used to catch bugs for sale or donation. Axes are used to chop down trees. There are base tools and golden tools, which are obtained once certain conditions are met: The golden shovel can be obtained by burying a regular shovel in a golden spot. The golden net and golden rod are obtained by catching every bug and fish in the game, respectively. The golden ax is obtained by achieving and maintaining a perfect town for about two weeks.



Peaceful strategy

Feng Shui is used in the game to increase luck and wealth. All items that can be placed in a house have a color associated with them. By placing them in the design grid in the appropriate locations, you can increase the chance for rare items and more Bells.

Orange in North: Better luck in money and items
Green in South: Better luck in money and items
Yellow in West: Better luck in money
Red in East: Better luck in items



Taking ownership

From the moment you move into town, you will own a home in the center acre. Tom Nook builds and improves upon your home, charging an increasing fee for every improvement. You will first develop a large main floor, then a basement or upstairs, whichever you choose first. The final loan installment is 798,000 Bells, and when it's paid in full, you receive a golden statue in your likeness at the train station.



Developing relationships

Communication is key in Animal Crossing. From writing letters to the various animal townies to visiting other towns, communication is important for succeeding in your town. The animal villagers will write letters to your avatar and attach gifts from time to time. Talking to them will also yield gifts. An easy way to get some of the rarer items such as the playable NES games, however, is to speak to Tom Nook and give him Universal Codes. A Universal Code generator, which was developed in the mid-2000s, will give out codes for any item in the game and can easily be found online.

Real time fun

Animal Crossing runs in real time, set by the internal clock of the GameCube. A full playthrough of Animal Crossing is set to run until December 31, 2030. The game will not allow a boot after that date and the internal clock will have to be reset. Time travel can be achieved by changing the date and time, but it is discouraged because it can create ill effects.



MORTAL KOMBAT MOBILE

Credit: Murdoink @ Mortal Kombat Warehouse for all background and logo art and renders/www.mortalkombatwarehouse.com

LYNDSEY BEATTY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Welcome to a small tournament called Mortal Kombat ...

Hello all, I'm a longtime Mortal Kombat enthusiast who dived headlong into the world of MK Mobile in 2018. This new section delves into the intricacies of character card collection, fusions and team creation for towers.

Look for information on the basics to get you started and how to conquer the 100-level Shao Kahn's Tower to help you when you're ready to take on the challenging themed towers.



MK MOBILE STATISTICS

- **Number of cards owned:** 178
- **Total number of cards (as of press time):** 182
- **Percentage owned:** 97.8%

Cards missing (as of press time)

- Klassic Skarlet
- American Treasure Homelander
- Klassic Kabal
- Nightmare Ghostface

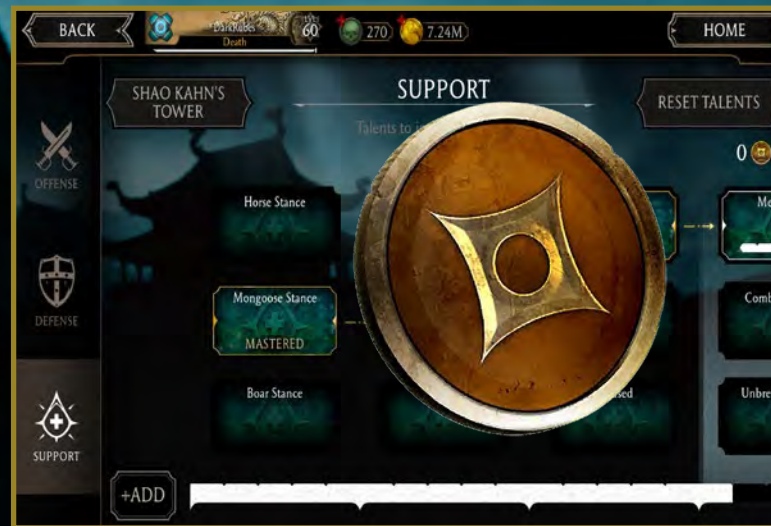


Shao Kahn's Tower

A challenging 100-story tower that rewards Koins, Souls, Spirit Fragments and Talent Tree Points. Sometimes with unique conditions to overcome, the matches will test your strategy skills and ability to form teams suited to the challenge.

Matches are in increments of three before a refresh is needed to continue. We also will approach this Tower as the warmup to the various Normal and Fatal towers that appear to get you prepped for the real thing.

Individual tower match guides, team formation and strategy will be discussed.



Team synergy

The best team is the prepared team. You can't put together a good squad without knowing the ins and outs of the three characters that will compose it.

We aim to understand and explain the different official team categories and other teams that we have used in the different areas of the game.



Kharacter spotlight

Who you have fighting on your side is important, and character analysis helps you stay victorious in Mortal Kombat Mobile.

We're going to look at all available characters, their strengths and weaknesses with rankings for each. We will also spotlight team synergy; who you work with can determine if you're working at all.

MORTAL KOMBAT MOBILE

Credit: Murdoink @ Mortal Kombat Warehouse for all background and logo art and renders/www.mortalkombatwarehouse.com

KHARACTER SPOTLIGHT

THIS ISSUE:

- Ace of Knaves Joker
- Demolition Sonya Blade
- Kano (Prime)



Ace of Knaves Joker

Class: Diamond
Tier: 3

The Joker is a unique and weird character in the Diamond class. His passive has extra effects depending on which deck you choose, and all of them are useful in their own way. By far, the Grinning deck is the best of the bunch. Pair him with other heavy hitters to take advantage of this and his Nomad class status.



Demolition Sonya Blade

Class: Gold
Tier: 2

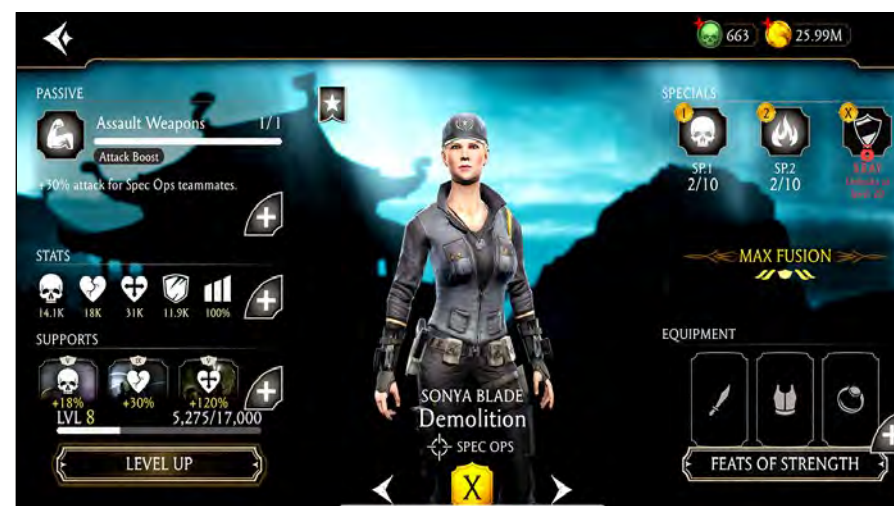
Demolition Sonya Blade is a mid-tier option for the Gold class. She doesn't offer much beyond her plus-30 percent attack for Spec Ops teammates, which limits her to those choices to be effective. She's not terrible but she isn't the best version of the character and other Gold characters offer more.



Kano (Prime)

Class: Silver
Tier: 2

Kano (Prime) is dependent upon other characters to get the work done. He offers a plus-30 percent attack boost when his opponent is below 40 percent health, but you shouldn't rely on that when Kenshi (Prime) exists. Use Kano (Prime) only when you absolutely must.



TIER RANKINGS

Tier 1: Garbage tier. This tier is for cards that don't do a lot of damage or contribute with their passives, even with add-ons from Shao Kahn's Tower or gear. Use these only if you absolutely are required. These mostly consist of the bronze and silver characters, except for Kenshi Prime.

Tier 2: Slight useful. Their passives either contribute or a special move is useful in service of another card. They can be made to be somewhat useful with gear and add-ons and higher fusions, but they struggle to be useful even with

the best gear.

Tier 3: A solid mid-level card. These cards are useful in passives and special moves. They can hold their own on point and win matches.

Tier 4: An above-average card. These are highly useful and can be used in any of the Challenge Towers (Shirai Ryu, Lin Kuei, etc.) and are more than capable of holding down a roster spot and surviving against high-level cards if their close in level. These cards have

excellent special moves and do a lot of damage quickly.

Tier 5: The top echelon of cards. These cards are the best in the game and their special moves and passives have game-breaking potential. They are the cards that you buy packs for and try to build up for Challenge Towers and will potentially make it to the 170 and higher levels of a tower at even a low fusion. They are most diamonds but there are a few gold cards in the mix.

Credit: Murdoink @ Mortal Kombat Warehouse for all background and logo art and renders/www.mortalkombatwarehouse.com



SHAO KAHN'S TOWER GUIDE

THIS ISSUE:

- Match 46: Unblockable
- Match 47: No conditions
- Match 48: Regeneration



Match 46: Dark Raiden, Level 50/Ninjitsu Scorpion, Level 50/ Vengeful Shinnok, Level 50

Conditions: Unblockable

This match features the condition Unblockable, which means the AI's special attacks are unblockable. Be aware that Dark Raiden and Ninjitsu Scorpion are going to take advantage of that often. Dark Raiden is also a problem because of his passive, which causes DOTs to heal him. Get rid of him quickly and then focus on Ninjitsu Scorpion. They are the two biggest threats here, and the damage they cause can rise quickly.

Team choice: Anyone Gold or Diamond, Fusion V or higher



Match 47: Dark Lord Kotal Kahn, Level 45/Klassic Kano, Level 45/Tactical Sonya Blade, Level 45

Conditions: None

Klassic Kano is the only real threat here. Dark Lord Kotal Kahn is not great, and Tactical Sonya Blade isn't the best version of the character. This battle should be easy, especially because there aren't any conditions.

Team choice: Anyone Gold or Diamond, Fusion VI or higher



Match 48: Possessed Kenshi, Level 46/Stunt Double Johnny Cage, Level 46/Thunder God Raiden, Level 46

Conditions: Regeneration

Thunder God Raiden and Possessed Kenshi are the problems here although Stunt Double Johnny Cage can also be troublesome if given enough time. Thunder God Raiden particularly can cause a lot of damage just by tagging in and out. Mitigate that through the Talent Tree and try to knock him out last without too much damage from the others.

Team choice: Anyone Gold or Diamond, Fusion VI or higher



Credit: Murdoink @ Mortal Kombat Warehouse for all background and logo art and renders/www.mortalkombatwarehouse.com



THIS ISSUE:

- **Klassic Movie analysis**

Klassic Movie Raiden: Defenders of the Earth Realm, winners of the tournament and their brave descendants receive +50% Basic Attack damage boost, and those who defeated the evil sorcerer Shang Tsung and saved the Earth Realm receive +10% Power generation.



Klassic Movie Johnny Cage: Johnny gets a little faster with each Klassic Movie teammate.



Klassic Movie Sonya Blade: While Sonya Blade Klassic Movie is alive, Raiden teammate applies Blind on Special Attack 1. If Sonya Blade Klassic Movie is teamed with any Johnny Cage, and he is alive, then she gains Shield after performing Leg Takedown Hit with Amplify.


FILTERS ACTIVE

VIEW



CHARACTERS



EQUIPMENT



KAMEO



SUPPORT

1

Team: Classic Movie

Members: Classic Movie Raiden, Johnny Cage, Sonya Blade

General trait: N/A



WORKING WITH TALENT POINTS

Courtesy of TestYourMight.com

Earning Talent Points

There is only one source of earning talent points: SHAO KAHN'S TOWER. Before you play the tower for the first time, you are given two talent points to start. The tower has 100 battles with increasing difficulty, and you are rewarded one talent point for winning each battle.

However, you are limited to playing three matches each day by default. However, you can play more than three matches by spending 50 souls to refresh the limit, and this can be done twice in a 24-hour period, which increases your limit to nine matches a day if you decide to spend souls to progress at a much faster rate.

Investing Talent Points

On completing Shao Kahn's Tower, you are rewarded with a total of 102 talent points which you can spend any way you like. There are two areas of the talent tree in each category where talent points can be invested, unlocking skill tiers and buying skills and their upgrades.

There are seven skill tiers in each category and there are a total of 20 skills to choose from. The first six tiers have three skills each to choose from and the seventh tier has two skills. The first tier is unlocked by default, and you are allowed to invest in one of the three available skills. To unlock the subsequent tiers, you are required to buy a skill in the current tier that is accessible to you and then spend five Talent Points. This is done by clicking the Add button at the bottom left of the tree. You are given a choice of spending one, three or five Talent Points towards unlocking the next tier. Selecting the five-point option will automatically unlock the next tier.

Additionally, skills can also be upgraded as well to increase the effect beyond what the skill provides at default. There are five upgrade levels and each upgrade costs one Talent Point, so a skill costs five Talent Points to master. To have a 100 percent complete tree in a category, you have to buy and master seven skills and also unlock six tiers in the process. This will cost a total of 65 Talent Points. To have 100 percent completion in all three categories, the cost is 195 Talent Points.

Choosing your skills and upgrades

This is the most crucial part of the whole talent tree system, and it requires careful planning of knowing what skills to invest in. This requires a thorough understanding of your own play style, the kind of characters you use and knowing which skills from the list will bring the most benefit to the majority of the cards you use more often in Faction Wars.

You cannot purchase more than one skill in a tier per category at a given time, so you are only allowed to choose seven out of the 20 skills in a category. The fact that you only have 102 Talent Points to spend means that it is possible to master seven skills only in one of the three categories.

After having a look at all of the available kills across all three categories, investing of Talent Points more on the DEFENSE and SUPPORT categories is highly recommended.

SPLATTERHOUSE

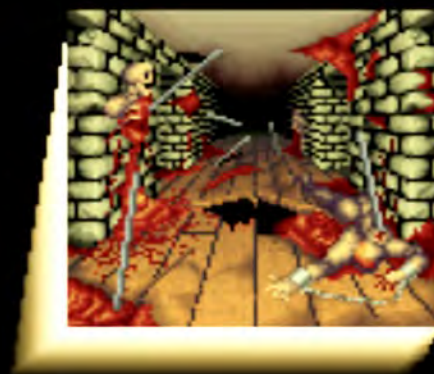
PUSH ONE
PLAYER START BUTTON

© 1988 NAMCO LTD.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

namco

CREDIT 1

STAGE II



Mediocrity can't be masked in arcade gore fest Splatterhouse

Mediocrity in a mask. That is the boiled-down experience that is perennial arcade terror dome Splatterhouse. There is so much to distill from the game and yet, nothing is satisfying or enjoyable about the trip to slasher lane.

Splatterhouse ran at a time when Jason Voorhees had already crawled and maimed his way through the landscape. So, it should come as no surprise when you see the iconic hockey mask dredged up to invoke old-school terror. The problem with this is if you aren't into Friday the 13th at all, you will immediately ask why some dude has on the mask and why Friday the 13th is being ripped off. The answer is because of inspiration. Right. It seems they weren't inspired



enough to come up with a better idea than ripping off Friday the 13th and JoJo's Bizarre Adventure in one fell swoop.

All my troubles begin and end, however, with the shoddy controls and mechanics. Controlling the main character, Rick, is hard

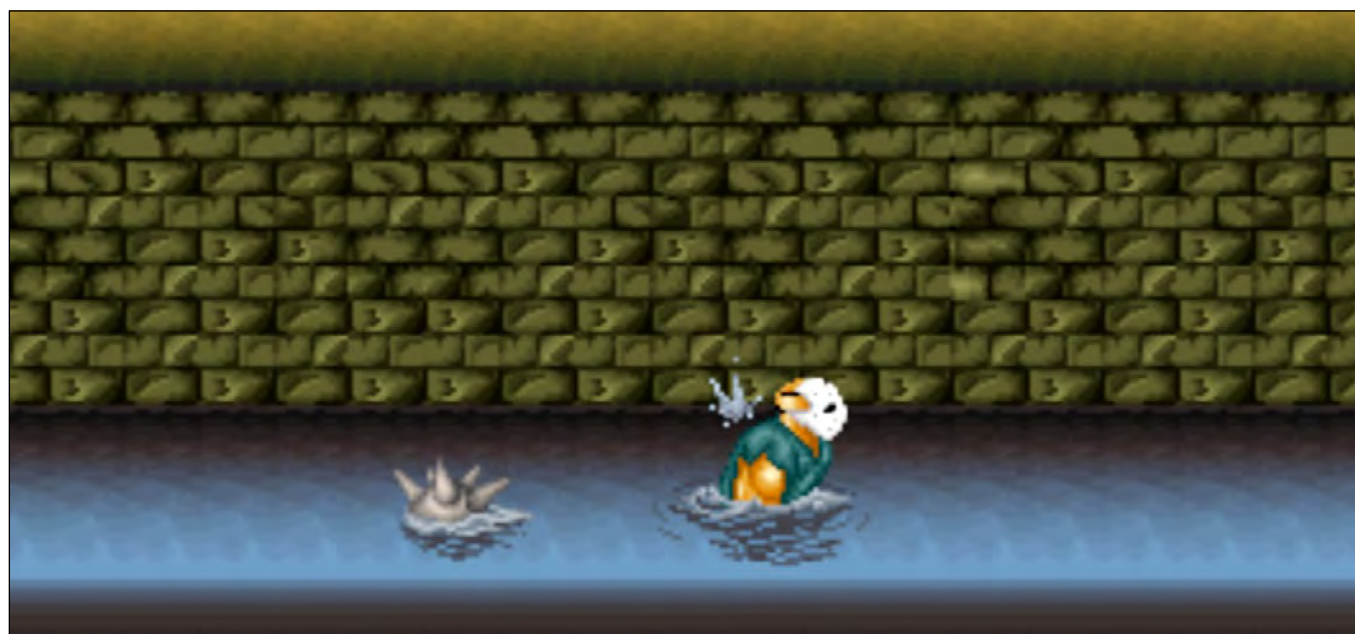
and a chore. Jumping is a chore, fighting monsters is a chore, picking up items is a chore. Existing in this game thanks to the miasma that chases Rick in the game is a chore. Everything about this is a chore. I get it, it's designed to be a quarter stealer, but this is just highway robbery at this point. Matters are not helped by the fact that the aesthetic elements and lack of presentation beyond shock value are beyond bland. The shock value doesn't even rank that high, especially if you're hardened through the whip crack of Mortal Kombat's riding crop.

I'm old enough to remember being dumb enough to spend my hard-earned allowance trying to play this earnestly at Red Wing Rollerway in Columbia, S.C., on several heady Saturday mornings. While I was

trying to master roller skating, there were video games to be had and Splatterhouse was just ... there. Existing, terribly.

And that's where we are now as an adult with the audacity to have taste. I'm returning to the game 36 years later with more critical thinking skills and no desire to expose myself to the stone mask, uh, hockey mask, uh, Hell Mask or Rick's vain attempts to save his girlfriend and then restart the final quest repeatedly. There is absolutely nothing here that is compelling or hasn't been done better in other places. Run from Splatterhouse like you're getting away from the relentless miasma.

Lyndsey Beatty is editor-in-chief of Gaming Insurrection. She can be reached by email at lyndseyb@gaminginsurrection.com





By Lyndsey Beatty | Gaming Insurrection

We've been traveling around North and South Carolina searching for barcades and arcades for many years. In our travels we've found quite a few close to home and literally at home. While we have and will chronicle these findings more in depth in the future, we're going to restart the Arcadia Journal section in the meantime. Here's what we've found so far.



Transmission Arcade

Address: 1712 Main St., Columbia, SC 29201

Website: <https://www.transmissionarcade.com>
Phone: (803) 667-9140

Hours

Sunday: 10:30 a.m. to midnight
 Monday – Tues-

day: 4 p.m. - midnight
 Wednesday – Friday: 4 p.m. - 2 a.m.
 Saturday: Noon - 2 a.m.



Super Abari

Address: 1015 Seigle Ave., Charlotte, NC 28205

Website: <https://superabarigamebar.com/>
Phone: (704) 271-1252

Hours

Mon - Fri: 5 p.m. – 2 a.m.
 Sat - Sun: Noon –

2 a.m.

Note: 21+ establishment. All ages are welcome Saturday and Sunday from noon to 6 p.m.



Radioactive Pinball Arcade

Address: 113 Laurens St. Southwest, Suite 103, Aiken, SC 29801

Website: <https://radioactivepinballarcade.com>
Phone: (803) 373-1717

Hours

Monday & Tuesday:
 By appointment
 Wednesday &

Thursday: 3 p.m. – 9 p.m.
 Friday: 3 p.m. – 10 p.m.
 Saturday: Noon – 10 p.m.
 Sunday: Noon – 6 p.m.



Player1UP Rock Hill

Address: 140 E. Main St., Rock Hill, SC 29730

Website: www.facebook.com/player1uprh
Phone: (803) 327-6407

Hours

Sunday: Noon – midnight
 Monday: Closed
 Tuesday: 4 p.m. – midnight

Wednesday: 4 p.m. – midnight
 Thursday: 4 p.m. – 2 a.m.
 Friday: 4 p.m. – 2 a.m.
 Saturday: Noon – 2 a.m.



Lost Ark – Arcadia Manor

Address: 1701-A Spring Garden St., Greensboro, NC 27403

Website: www.lostarkvideogames.com/arcadiamanor
Phone: (336) 422-6342

Hours

Monday – Wednesday:

Closed
 Thursday & Friday: 3 p.m. – midnight
 Saturday: 1 p.m. – midnight
 Sunday: 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.

On tap this issue:

STRIP TALK
Diversity in media matters to many

PROPERTY REVIEW
We make the return sorrowful trip to Wakanda finally

MARVEL HIGHLIGHT
Everything you wanted to know about Dormammu

OTAKU CORNER
We tackle Episodes 3 & 4 of Devil May Cry's anime

ANIME LOUNGE
Tomo-chan is a Girl is a nice rom com

TOP 5
We love on our favorite monsters

View this content at www.gaminginsurrection.com/TheStrip

PROPERTY REVIEW

Black Panther: Wakanda Forever

Marvel Studios, 2022



Photos courtesy of IMDB.com

New chapters arise from ashes of grief in Wakanda

Grief is a wonderful thing. Despite knowing the stages intimately, we are sometimes still in the throes some days. As it were when Black Panther's sequel, *Wakanda Forever*, arrived, we were not in the later part of the journey. Our titular king, Chadwick Boseman, had been lost two years earlier and we were not in the headspace to take on new endeavors. And glimpsing the scenes of white and pomp with trepidation signaled that we were not going to see this any time soon. And we didn't.

But years passed. We've made our peace with the loss of Boseman, and we emerged from the cocoon to witness the aftermath. We were not disappointed.

Wakanda Forever is a most dangerous game. From the opening scenes, chaos is supreme. But the chaos is expected. The sequel had the arduous task of telling the story of the loss of Boseman and his avatar T'Challa and it handles it most gracefully. You know it's coming and that you need to look away and, yet you can't look away. The outpouring of grief is so surreal and yet real, raw and visceral. The funeral scenes are so delicate that when it hits you in the face hard with the fact that T'Challa is gone, you're already numb to the impact. We grieved the character when Boseman passed away because we already knew he would die also, but this hit in different way years later.

That visceral and raw emotion comes to play in several ways later. Queen Ramonda, played by the always exquisite Angela Bassett, shows how to lead a nation with quiet fury and resentment that must be watched to be believed. Shuri, as portrayed by the excellent Letitia Wright, has matured but still

HOW WE GRADE

We score the properties in three categories: Casting (or voice acting in cases of animated), plot and similarities to its source material. Each category receives points out of the maximum of 10 per category and 30 overall. The percentage is the final score.

waits to step up. However, with the introduction of Namor — handled by the excellent Tenoch Huerta Mejía — Shuri must step up quickly. Shuri obviously is the focus this go around; it's nice to see the character grow and lead. Danai Gurira is fantastic as Okoye as always, Winston Duke is still a scene stealer as M'Baku, Lupita Nyong'o is exceptional as Nakia and Dominique Thorne is a bright, fun and welcome addition as Riri Williams/Ironheart.

Wakanda Forever, while just as fun as the original, does have some issues. It's not as good as the first, which is to be expected. There isn't much that could top the original movie, and while *Wakanda Forever* tries, it doesn't quite make the mark. Some of the CGI is not great, and some scenes meander just a little bit too much. And, while it respectfully carries on Boseman's legacy very well — the opening Marvel logo intro dedication is phenomenal — it overall plays like a sorrowful song of more than two hours that constantly reminds you that T'Challa and Boseman are gone. It's a bombardment of grief so strong that it makes watching *Wakanda Forever* more than once an

See WAKANDA, PAGE 31



Lyndsey Beatty
STRIP TALK

Seeing similar faces should be the standard

Listen, representation matters. I don't know how many times I can stress this in *Gaming Insurrection* and elsewhere, but it's a big deal for someone of color to see folks who look like them in media and entertainment. Whether it's DC or Marvel or big budget action flicks or comedies or romance, I want to see people who look like me doing normal stuff that every other group gets to do.

That brings me to *Black Panther*. Yes, it's a comic book flick. But when I tell y'all it was magical to see folks of my hue (one played by a man from my neck of the woods in South Carolina) be geniuses who were changing the world for good. And then along came the sequel, *Wakanda Forever*, which features more Black folks doing magical things at a genius level and it's like Christmas came early once again. And even better, the sequel introduced Riri Williams to the MCU. Ms. Williams immediately caught my attention even though I was already intimately familiar with the character through *Marvel Puzzle Quest*. I was in awe.

Riri Williams, step to the front. Beautiful, Black and gifted, you deserve to be seen as worthy. You, of brilliant mind and dazzling personality, give light and impact everything around you. And I love to see it because in a fictional world of geniuses who figured out how to synthesize an herb and basically cure cancer, created AI systems and quantum realm travel, one of them is a Chicago girl with skin the color of the Earth.

And while I'm here for it all, there are some who are not. "Why does Ironheart have to be Black?" Why not? "Her character is terrible." Why? And there it is. Whew, the dog whistle keeps getting louder every time I ask why. There are no good reasons for her not to be Black, and all this did was expose the latent racism just simmering underneath. Because call it what it is: Racism and prejudice. You can't fathom that a woman of color is smart

See IRONHEART, PAGE 31



Devil May Cry Ep. 3 & 4 ratchet action, manipulation

Welcome back to another edition of Otaku Corner! As GI gets ready for Hollow's Eve '25, I thought that this would be the perfect time to return to Netflix's animated adaptation of "Devil May Cry," which was developed by Adi Shakar. I have previously covered episodes 1 and 2, which ended with an explosive bang leading to future episodes. Episodes 3 and 4 pick up with an unknown conspiracy between humans and the underworld brewing and both sides having plans for Dante and his half of the necklace.

Episode 3 Begins with a flash back of Mary and her parents narrowly escaping a demon attack in the New York City subway, leading her father to take matters in his own hands after being ridiculed by police and his fellow academics. In the present day, Dante and Enzo are being held by DARKCOM units and are taken to DARKCOM's headquarters for further questioning. As Dante is being questioned by Barnes, the White Rabbit and his enforcers arrive, ambushing the DARKCOM convoy and turning the freeway into a battle royale with nothing but destruction as a result. Elsewhere, Anders is revealed as the double agent for the White Rabbit and takes Dante's amulet while Dr. Fisher is analyzing it. Anders states the reason for his betrayal to DARKCOM: If he gives the amulet to the White Rabbit, his family would not be harmed.

While DARKCOM forces battle with Echidna, Cavaliere, Plasma, Agni and Rudra, the White Rabbit finds Anders and Fisher, takes the amulet from Anders and joins them thinking that it's all that would be needed to open Sparta's seal on the underworld. Fisher tells the White Rabbit that something else would be needed to break the seal and attempts to kill the Rabbit by using a grenade. The Rabbit deflects the grenade, killing Fisher and sparing Anders' life. The Rabbit adds more mayhem by capturing Enzo while Dante attempts to help the DARKCOM team and pursues the Rabbit. Unfortunately, Dante's neck bomb, implanted by Lady goes off, allowing the Rabbit to capture Dante and continue with his plans uninterrupted.

Episode 4 picks up with Lady's team regrouped picking up the Rabbit's trail leading to his hideout which houses other demons who are unaware of his true plans. While Lady and her team investigate, Dante and Enzo along with Baines and his staff are held hostage on Air Force 2 by Agni and Rudra. Baines continue his attempts to lure Dante into working for him but is interrupted by the Rabbit who continues to state to Dante that he has a lineage to Sparta, condemning him for betraying demons. Dante still doubts his connection to Sparta, forcing the Rabbit to have Agni and Rudra kill the other hostages to trigger Dante.

Meanwhile, Lady and her team — backed up by other DARKCOM agents — storm the Rabbit's hideout only to fall into a deadly trap of which Lady is the only survivor. While being pursued by Echidna Cavaliere and Plasma, Lady fights their attempts to capture her but is temporarily sheltered by an innocent demon family who are fearful of the Rabbit's retaliation. Lady sur-



vives and evades the Rabbit's forces until she reaches the command center and faces Plasma who posed as a DARKCOM agent. At the same time, Dante unknowingly activates his "Devil Trigger" and battles Agni in a mile-high battle of which he is victorious. Rudra, shocked at the loss of his brother, ends the episode by blowing up Air Force 2, sending Dante and everyone to a questionable climax.

Episodes 3 and 4 were absolute fire. With these two episodes, we got a short but insightful story about Lady's childhood in how she dreamt of going after forces of evil that turned into an obsession at times when she joined DARKCOM. I also appreciated that these two episodes briefly explained DMC3 without going into too much detail. Of note, Shakar and Capcom did throw in Easter eggs such as the familiar design of the DARKCOM uniforms that are a nod to Captain Commando and an awesome Mega Man bobble head that was in the DARKCOM vehicle. I also liked how Shakar paid homage to the martial arts action film "The Raid" in episode 4. The voice cast continues to earn their pay in each episode, especially Taylor Scout-Compton who gave Lady much growth develop-

See DEVIL MAY CRY, PAGE 31



Series: Tomo-chan is a Girl!

Episodes: 1-13

Premise: Junichiro (Jun) Kubota and Tomo Aizawa are childhood best friends who hang out together and walk to and from school every day. Tomo is a tomboy who fell in love with Jun but feels there is no hope of him ever returning her feelings because he regards her as a brother. Slowly, they come to terms with growing up and what it means to find love.



Is it worth watching?: Yes. This is a wonderful romantic comedy like the greats of yore such as KareKano and Lovely Complex. The love story is great and a slow burn that builds at the perfect pace, and the comedy is done well also. We laughed out loud at several points, and the writing was funny and impactful.

Breakout character: Tomo is the best of the bunch. We love the growth and development of her character and watching her mature. There are bumps in the road for her, but it's handled well.

Where it's going?: The show ended with the 13th episode so the ride's over. But it was a nice ride with fun characters.

MARVEL CHARACTER HIGHLIGHT

(All information courtesy of the Marvel Database and Wikipedia)

Name: Dormammu

Alias: The Dread One, Dread Dormammu, Eater of Souls, He-Who-Waits, Lord of Darkness, Lord of Chaos, Lord of the Dark Dimension, Keeper of the Mindless Ones

Affiliation: Hell Lords, Lords of the Splinter Realms, Lords of the Netherworlds

Special abilities: Sorcery over the Flames of the Faltine, banishment, superhuman strength, astral projection, matter transmutations, inter-dimensional teleportation/transportation, high-speed flight, transformation, elemental control, summoning, time travel, invulnerability, size alteration, intangibility, immortality, regenerative healing factor, energy projection, psionics, power bestowal, reality warping, resurrection, super genius intellect, master martial artist

Background: Born of the cosmos as the older twin son of the Faltine being known as Sinifer, Dormammu and his sister Umar gained matter to themselves and created permanent bodies. The twins then caused the death of Sinifer and were exiled. While in exile, they found the Dark Dimension and eventually took it over. Umar eventually went mad after having her daughter Clea (future wife of Dr. Strange), and Dormammu took over as sole ruler of the dimension. He has since

tangled with Dr. Strange, the Avengers and Odin of Asgard.

Relationships: Sinifer, parent; Umar, twin sibling; Clea, niece; Donna, niece; Satannish, son; Doyle Dormammu, son; Dr. Stephen Strange, Sorcerer Supreme of Earth, nephew-in-law

First Versus appearance: Marvel vs. Capcom 3: Fate of Two Worlds

Appearances in other media:

Television: Spider-Woman (animated), Spider-Man: The Animated Series, The Super Hero Squad Show, Ultimate Spider-Man, Avengers Assemble, Hulk and the Agents of S.M.A.S.H., Marvel Disk Wars: The Avengers

Film: Doctor Strange: The Sorcerer Supreme (animated), Doctor Strange (live-action)

Video games: Marvel vs. Capcom 3: Fate of Two Worlds, Ultimate Marvel vs. Capcom 3, Marvel Super Hero Squad Online, Marvel: Avengers Alliance (non-playable), Marvel Heroes, LEGO Marvel Super Heroes, LEGO Marvel's Avengers, Marvel: Future Fight, Marvel Contest of Champions, Marvel vs. Capcom: Infinite, Marvel Powers United VR (non-playable), LEGO Marvel Super Heroes 2, Marvel Ultimate Alliance 3: The Black Order, Marvel Dimension of Heroes, Marvel Future Revolution, Marvel Strike Force



TOP 5 ON THE STRIP — FAVE MONSTER EDITION



Frankenstein & Igor – Castlevania

The gruesome twosome is all over this issue and with good reason: They are one of the earliest hard boss battles in video games. Facing them as the fourth boss in the 1986 classic Castlevania is no easy feat. And chances are it's not even Frankenstein who will take you out; it's most likely the imp Igor doing the most damage.



Medusa Head – Castlevania

Like Frank and Igor, Medusa Heads are going to be a pain to deal with. First appearing in stage 4-5 of the game, these tactical nightmares are primarily meant to spell your doom by screwing you over when you attempt to jump caverns. They somehow manage to be worse than the boss Medusa. Avoid them at all costs and learn their floating pattern.



Giga Bowser – Super Smash Bros.

Bowser, on his own, is bad enough in most Mario games. But adding in a penchant for getting large and in charge makes him even more dangerous. The worst version of Giga Bowser comes in the form of Super Smash Bros. Melee Event Battle #51. You're going to be stuck on the battle for a long time without some skills.



Pyramid Head – Silent Hill

Pyramid Head needs no introduction. He has a pyramid on his head and walks around with a large blade ready to kill you at a moment's notice. The general idea is to avoid him whenever you see him, which is sound advice. We once saw a great cosplay of the character at an anime convention many years ago, and we took our own advice.



Mr. X – Resident Evil 2

Mr. X is a Tyrant type who walks around relentlessly trying to kill S.T.A.R.S. characters. How do we know? Because it's all he ever talks about. And don't let anyone tell you differently: The mod created for the PC version of Resident Evil 2 Remake that inserts the DMX song 'X Gon' Give it to Ya when he appears is absolutely fire.



Wakanda Forever sets tone of grief

WAKANDA, from PAGE 28

arduous task that we do not want to do.

Wakanda Forever is a good movie. Not a great movie, a good one. And it's a testament to the prowess of director Ryan Coogler that we could see this movie three

years after its release and still feel its impact. We await our return to Wakanda when the grief is not as heavy.

HOW WE GRADE

We score the properties in three categories: Casting (or voice acting in cases of animated), plot and similarities to its source material.

Each category receives points out of the maximum of 10 per category and 30 overall. The percentage is the final score.

Like the comics: 8

Acting: 10

Story: 7

Total: 25/30 or 8.3

Black talent undeniable truth in media

IRONHEART, from PAGE 28

enough to be on the same level as Tony Stark. You can't understand how and why there's a show that focuses on a gifted young Black girl and what that would do for other young Black children. It doesn't affect you directly, so you can't

understand the need and the attention placed on the Disney Plus show or the character in general. And to be honest, we've noticed it isn't just Ms. Williams that gets dismissed.

Welp, that's all fine and well, but she's here. And judging by the hype and the deliverables for the show, I'm going to point out that

the dismissal and diminishment didn't work. She's still dope despite protestations to the contrary. Soldier on, Ms. Williams.

Lyndsey Beatty is editor-in-chief of Gaming Insurrection. She can be reached by email at lyndseyb@gaminginsurrection.com

Devil May Cry set to have second season

DEVIL MAY CRY, from PAGE 29

ment.

The downsides were few but upsetting. I could not understand why DARKCOM's top scientist was killed off in the third episode and why Lady's team of bad asses were wiped in the middle of the fourth episode. Those events had me screaming internally trying to figure out what purpose did Shakar believe these actions served. I know each team member would face their demise sooner or later, but Shakar's actions only serve to waste people's time in watching DMC. Fortunately, other elements

I'm hoping more care and less reckless writing comes in the later episodes.

in both episodes negated this small but absolute death sentence for the series. I'm hoping more care and less reckless writing comes in the later episodes.

DMC episodes 3 and 4 were great and retained my interest. As of GI press time, Netflix released a trailer for Season 2 that will drop next year with some major changes and include a battle that DMC's fans wanted and will get. Rest

assured, fellow demon hunters, GI will review these episodes because we're eagerly awaiting them just as other fans are. Until then, we'll be keeping it stylish.

Brandon Beatty is editor-at-large of Gaming Insurrection. He can be reached by email at brandonb@gaminginsurrection.com

FOR GAMERS

BY GAMERS

GI is on Twitter!
@GamingInsurrect

Like us on Facebook
GamingInsurrection

dance

revolution

spotlight

1st mix

2nd mix

3rd mix

4th mix

5th mix

6th mix

7th mix

Extreme

SuperNova

SuperNova 2

LIGHT

STANDARD

HEAVY

CHALLENGE

MORTAL KOMBAT MAYHEM

THE GAMING INSURRECTION HUB FOR ALL THINGS MK

60

55

50

45

40

35

30

25

20

15

The

Borderlands Experience

60

55

50

45

40

35

30

25

20

15