

# GAMING INSURRECTION

*FOR GAMERS, BY GAMERS*

YEAR 17

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ISSUE 51

# WE HAVE TRANSMISSION

***GI VISITS THE COLUMBIA  
BARCADE HAVEN***

SECOND IN A SERIES



# from the editor

**H**owdy folks, and happy new year! We've made it to year 23 at Gaming Insurrection by the time you read this, and it's shaping up to be a fun year with more retro game series to explore and give love to.

As of press time, GI's birthday has passed. We commonly acknowledge it around these parts as Jan. 1, 2002, which is the day that I and co-founder Marcus Barnes came up with the idea over the phone and hashed details. It's been a long road for GI, but it's been a rewarding one. It's a pet project of mine that started out to impress alongside my résumé and talk about gaming with my then-best friend. Now, it's a passion project I work on in my spare time throughout the year along with my husband (*Editor's note: For those playing along at home, this is my current husband who joined in 2009; see Issue 06 in our archives*). We've traveled a lot more for GI now that Covid is manageable, I'm comfortably out of school and working in my new field, and we're planning more trips in the coming year as time permits.

And, while we plan to travel outside of Columbia in the future, we're staying local for this issue. The wonderful Transmission popped up

on our radar sometime in 2023, and we took a deep dive into the small barcade in our beloved hometown. What we found were working Mortal Kombat II and Marvel vs. Capcom 2 machines and a healthy selection of brews and libations to sip on while dropping tokens not that far from the job or the house. We detail our findings and write an appropriate conclusion (in auditing parlance) in this go-round with GI. Also, to supplement our findings with supporting documentation, we are restarting the Arcadia Journal section that originally began in 2014. As we've traveled, we've found more barcades and places that love arcade games and we want to chronicle them here. Look out for a standalone section after this issue.

We hope to keep stumbling on arcades in the future. That can only mean a resurgence in arcades, which is always a good thing.

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.

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## 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** is editor-at-large for GI. Brandon writes reviews when the mood strikes him, produces the Otaku Corner column for The Strip and spends a significant amount of time watching new and old anime alike with his wife. Brandon resides in Columbia, S.C., and is a security specialist for the state of South Carolina.

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**BRANDON BEATTY**  
**EDITOR-AT-LARGE**



## Fighting game music tops my list of favorite genres

I'm a music aficionado. That much should be obvious by the column that I write for Gaming Insurrection and have written for more than 10 years. I love all forms of music, whether it's from what I know as a mainstream artist or some random instrumental from an indie artist. Taking up a large portion of my music collection is also video game music. And from that 50.1 GB of video game music, I have discerned that a lot of it is from fighting games, my favorite genre. These are some of my favorite tracks over the years from the pugilistic category of gaming.

### Capcom

Groove Select – Capcom vs. SNK 2: Millionaire Fighting 2001  
Crowded Street (Yun and Yang's Stage) — Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike  
Swing Your Body (Swamp Stage) — Marvel vs. Capcom 2  
Desert Stage — Marvel vs. Capcom 2  
Variable Cross — Marvel vs. Capcom  
Theme of Strider — Marvel vs. Capcom  
Wolverine's Theme — Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter  
Shining One (Theme of Sagat) — Street Fighter Alpha 3  
Battle at the Bath House (E. Honda's Stage) — Super Street Fighter II Turbo  
Theme of Gill – Street Fighter V: Championship Edition

### Midway/NetherRealm

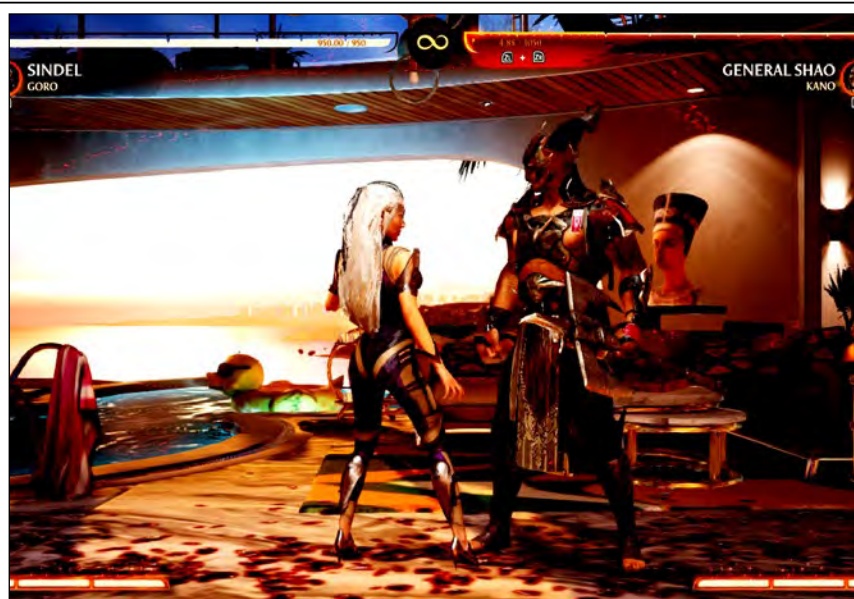
Shang Tsung's Throne Room — Mortal

### Kombat 1992

The Armory — Mortal Kombat II  
Soul Chamber — Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3  
The Bridge — Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3  
Goro's Lair — Mortal Kombat 4  
House of Pekara — Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance  
Pyramid of Argus — Mortal Kombat: Armageddon  
Shao Kahn's Throne Room — Mortal Kombat 9  
Lin Kuei Temple — Mortal Kombat XI  
Cage Mansion — Mortal Kombat One

### Namco

Character Select — Tekken Tag Tournament  
Unknown (arcade & console versions) — Tekken Tag Tournament  
Fear — Tekken 4  
The Finalizer — Tekken 5  
The Destined (Scenario Map) — Tekken 6  
Sacred Dark (Theme of Azazel) — Tekken 6  
Never Ending (Continue) — Tekken 6  
What You Will See (Jun/Unknown Theme) — Tekken Tag Tournament 2  
Tekstep Fountain — Tekken Tag Tournament 2



Solitude (Ending Credits) — Tekken 7

### Others

The entire Soulcalibur soundtrack  
Chasing Death — Soulcalibur II  
Evil Reborn — Soulcalibur II  
Babel Nose — Guilty Gear X  
Lord Drakkon's Throne Room — Power Rangers: Battle for the Grid  
Versailles Palace — Samurai Shodown 1993  
Vold Ignitio — Fighting Layer  
Adon's Theme — Street Fighter Alpha 2  
Justice High School Meeting Room — Rival Schools  
Revenger's Roost (Donovan's Theme Remix) — Vampire Chronicle

## Barcades are the new normal

We've touched on this before and we'll say it again: Barcades are seriously cool.

As an adult, I've spent my fair share of time drinking and playing video games. Don't worry kids, Auntie Mee-Maw has long been legally able to drink, even if I wasn't when I co-founded Gaming Insurrection some 22 years ago. The point is, my life and video games have evolved to the point where sometimes, a bar with arcade machines is all we have.

You see, arcades didn't always work like this.

Sure, adults were there, but alcoholic drinks were not involved. As a matter of fact, had they been, I wouldn't have been allowed in during arcades' heyday. By the time I was able to legally purchase alcohol in 2003, arcades were starting that long, slow decline that we now know as the rise of online gaming.

So now, when I see a barcade pop up, I jump on the chance to potentially bop someone in a fighting game or Galaga while drinking something with rum and Diet Coke in it.

We started our look at the evolution of arcades in Issue 47 with Super Abari in Charlotte, N.C., a sort of home away from home for GI. We're continuing this issue with a trip to local favorite Transmission Arcade. And once Asheville gets back in the groove after cleanup from Hurricane Helene, we'll jump there to see about the Asheville Retrocade. It feels great to say that jumping on the sticks never tasted so good.



Lyndsey Beatty  
CRY OF WAR

Lyndsey Beatty is editor-in-chief of Gaming Insurrection. She can be reached by email at [lyndseyb@gaminginsurrection.com](mailto:lyndseyb@gaminginsurrection.com)

# TRANSMISSION MODE

GI journeys to Columbia's  
hopping barcade



Words by Lyndsey Beatty | Photos by Lyndsey Beatty and Brandon Beatty

Arcades have had to evolve. It's a fact of life. With the advent of online gaming, arcades took a beating from which they have never fully recovered. But from the ashes of darkened social parlors has risen a new kind of arcade: Barcades. Gaming Insurrection is no stranger to these types of establishments. We've covered a northern favorite in Super Abari previously in Issue 47. And, yet, just as we begin to think it's a one-off concept, we're proven wrong. Enter local Columbia favorite Transmission Arcade. Located not far from GI, Transmission holds the promise of arcade gaming and a robust food and drink menu in a town where arcades, once healthy and thriving, have dried up and disappeared. And if you want to judge by our transmission this issue, a time was had in the far-off land of adult beverages and a small but nice selection of arcade games.

Join us as we transmit our adventures of a new Columbia arcade favorite.

## Inside

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# TRANSMISSION HOURS & INFO

## Location

1712 Main St.  
Columbia, SC 29201

**Email:** transmission  
arcade@gmail.com

**Phone:** 803-667-9140

## Social media

**Website:** www.  
transmissionarcade.  
com

**Facebook:** www.facebook.  
com/transmissionarcade

**Instagram:** www.  
instagram.com/  
transmissionarcade

## Hours of operation

Sunday: 10:30 a.m. -  
midnight

Monday - Tuesday: 4 p.m. -  
midnight

Wednesday - Friday:  
4 p.m. - 2 a.m.

Saturday: Noon - 2 a.m.

## Regular food menu hours

Monday - Saturday  
Sundays after 4 p.m.

Sunday Brunch  
Sunday 10:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Dine in  
All ages until 8 p.m.

Cheesesteak Monday  
4 p.m. - midnight

Tuesday  
4 p.m. - midnight

Wednesday - Friday  
4 p.m. - 2 a.m.

Saturday  
Noon - 2 a.m.

Carryout & Delivery

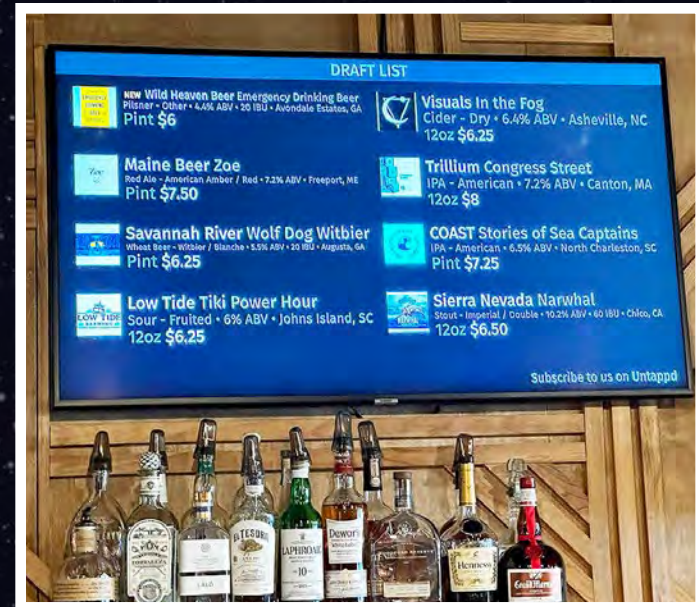
Sunday  
10:30 a.m. - 11 p.m.  
Brunch until 4 p.m.

Cheesesteak Monday  
4 p.m. - 11 p.m.

Tuesday  
4 p.m. - 11 p.m.

Wednesday - Friday  
4 p.m. - 1 a.m.

Saturday  
Noon - 1 a.m.



# TRANSMISSION BEER MENU

## Draft List

Extra Hellos — Pilsner — Other  
Uncle Festbier Oktoberfest —  
Festbier  
Mercy Cloud Wheat Bear —  
American Pale Wheat  
Limoncello Sour Ale — Sour —  
Other  
Fall Harvest — Hard Ginger  
Beer  
Arnold Arboretum — IPA —  
New England

Wizard's Staff — IPA — Session  
The Night Before Gingerbread  
Stout — Stout — Imperial

## Bottles and Cans

Miller High Life  
Bud Light  
Miller Lite  
Narragansett Lager  
Michelob Ultra  
Modelo Especial  
Something Cold  
Gaelic Ale

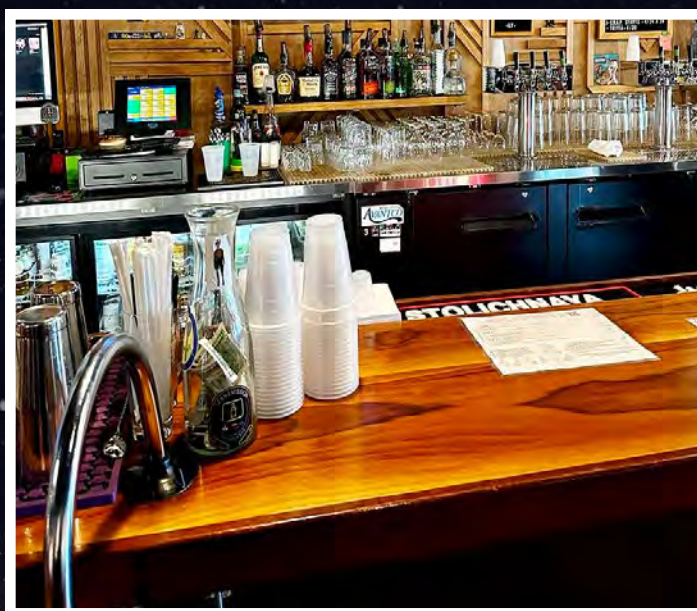
Allagash White  
Coors Banquet  
Guinness Draught  
Lazy Bird Brown Ale  
Coffee Lager  
Mango White Claw  
Black Cherry White Claw  
Happy Dad Grape Hard Seltzer  
High Noon Original Vodka  
Steigl-Radler Grapefruit  
Juiciness — Sycamore Brewing  
Light Hearted IPA  
Two Hearted IPA

Arcade Pale Ale  
Tropicália  
Sicillian Lemon  
Alien Hat — Watermelon Sour  
Ale  
Rainbow Sherbet  
Sour Guava Tangerine  
Black Widow Cider  
Dry Ridge Cider  
Triple Jam Cider  
Free Wave Hazy IPA  
American Gold (non-alcohol-  
ic)

Mocktail (tequila or bourbon)

## Cocktails

Punch You in the Eye  
Paper Boeing  
Ernest Goes Clubbing  
Falcon Punch  
Spaghetti  
Smoked Pineapple Margarita  
“Well, Just Outside of Denver”  
Phony Negroni (non-alcohol-  
ic)



# TRANSMISSION GAMES

## Pinball

Black Knight  
NBA Fastbreak  
Foo Fighters  
Star Wars  
Spanish Eyes  
Swords of Fury

The Avengers Infinity Quest  
The Simpsons Pinball Party  
The Munsters  
The Big Lebowski Pinball  
Wrestlemania Pinball

## Cabinet

Tapper  
Off Road  
Galaga  
Samurai Shodown II  
Enter the Gungeon: House of the Gundeard  
Mortal Kombat 1992

Big Buck Safari  
Marvel vs. Capcom 2: New Age of Heroes  
Metal Slug 2  
Puzzle Bobble 2  
Centipede  
Ms. Pac-Man

Dig Dug  
Cheers  
Crazy Taxi  
Neo-Geo multicade  
Ice Ball skeeball

# TECH GEEKS



## 14" LAPTOP - INTEL CELERON - 4GB MEMORY - 128GB EMMC

### Specs

**Screen size:** 14 inches

**Screen resolution:** 1366 x 768 (HD)

**Touch screen:** No

**Processor model:** Intel Celeron

**CPU base clock frequency:** 1.1 gigahertz

**Storage type:** eMMC

**Total storage capacity:** 128 gigabytes

**System memory (RAM):** 4 gigabytes

**Graphics:** Intel UHD Graphics

**Display connector(s):** 1 x HDMI 1.4

**Battery type:** Lithium-ion

**Price:** \$179.99

**Where to buy:** Best Buy

Both laptops are souped up Chrome-books, not powerful enough to replace your main laptop or desktop but powerful enough to handle a few things. I got them on sale in the summer, and they're just what we need to handle small computing tasks and writing and editing when we don't want to pull out the large laptop.



## ASUS - VIVOBOK 14" LAPTOP - INTEL CORE I3

### Specs

**Hard drive:** 128GB SSD

**Screen size:** 14 inches

**Screen resolution:** 1920 x 1080 (Full HD)

**Touch screen:** No

**Processor model:** Intel Celeron

**CPU base clock frequency:** 1.1 gigahertz

**Storage type:** eMMC

**Total storage capacity:** 64 gigabytes

**System memory (RAM):** 4 gigabytes

**Graphics:** Intel Iris Xe Graphics

**Display connector(s):** 1 x HDMI 1.4

**Battery life (up to):** 10 hours

**Battery type:** Lithium-ion

**2-in-1 design:** No

**Price:** \$219.99

**Where to buy:** Best Buy

# GAME OF THE ISSUE

## METROID DREAD

The latest in Samus Aran's saga simultaneously reaches back to the past and looks forward to the future of the series, **PAGE 10**



GAME  
OF THE  
ISSUE

## INSIDE



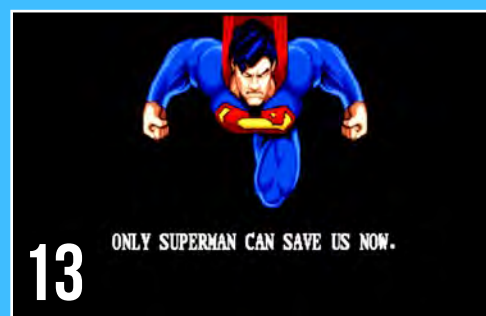
### 11 Ultra Street Fighter II

The sixth iteration of the legendary fighting game series doesn't really add anything new to its legacy but it is really fun to play.



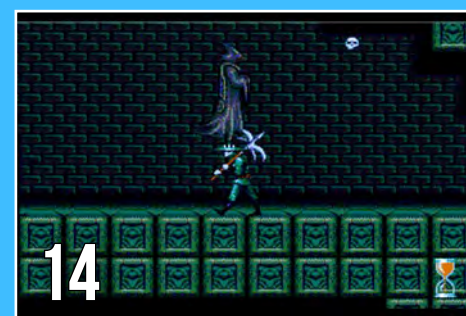
### 12 Dynamite Headdy

Treasure is known for being highly creative and Dynamite Headdy is all over the place. The question is: Is it any good though?



### 13 The Death and Return of Superman

The massive storyline arc with the Man of Steel and Doomsday received a video game adaptation and it's a real Kryptonian journey.



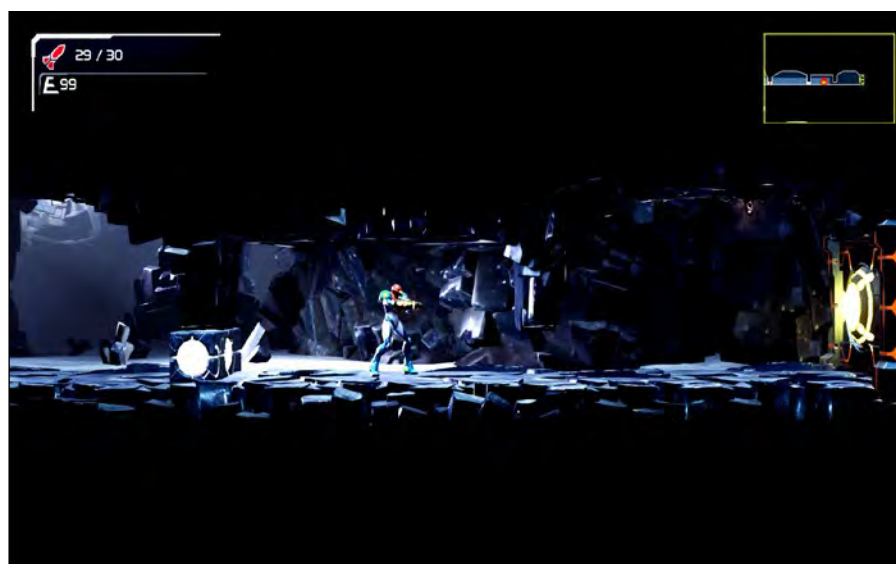
### 14 Chakan: The Forever Man

Ahead of its time, Chakan mixes a lot of elements but isn't quite ready for the big stage of gaming.

# METROID DREAD

Press A

©Nintendo



Developer: Nintendo, Release: 2021

## Metroid Dread a return to form for veteran series

That foreboding sense of ... dread. The anticipation of walking into an unknown room and possibly finding a secret. It's the stuff many old-school gamers and Metroid fans like me cut our teeth on growing up with Metroidvania games. The original Metroid set the tone, but Super Metroid is the house of cards that everything in the genre rests on. And Metroid Dread, while an admirable attempt to recreate that nostalgic feeling, is a few missiles short.

Don't misunderstand me: I love Metroid Dread. It's the return to form that we all expect of a Metroid game, and you can tell that within the first five minutes. The opening cinematic picks the story up after Fusion where Samus Aran, the baddest bounty hunter in the known universe, has simultaneously solved the X Parasite threat and ushered in galactic peace once again. Despite that, the Galactic Federation receives verified proof that the X are not extinct and sends EMMI (Extraterrestrial Multi-Form Mobile Identifiers) to the planet ZDR to investigate the mystery of why the X Parasite has reappeared. Soon after the EMMI land, all contact is lost with them. Ms. Aran is sent in to investigate their disappearance, and shortly after landing, finds herself in combat with a mysterious figure that resembles a Chozo. Given that the Chozo other than herself are also extinct, it's an even deeper mystery that Samus is determined to solve. The story is interesting, and I



By  
Lyndsey Beatty

was genuinely invested in learning about the EMMI and what they found on the planet. I was even more intrigued about the Chozo warrior because I'm well-versed in the lore of Metroid and anything that calls back to Super Metroid and Samus' origin story is going to have my attention. It also references Metroid Fusion, obviously, and parts of Metroid II: Samus Returns — which is the excellent remake of Metroid II: The Return of Samus. Leaning on the older story is a smart move because you're probably going to go back and play the older games and the remake, and you're going to buy into the story of the current game a little bit easier.

What isn't a little easier, even on the easy difficulty level, is the combat. Listen, I'm a Super Metroid expert and I can even claim beating the original Metroid, but the first hour of Dread is hard. I got stuck on the second EMMI chase sequence and had to go watch a detailed demonstration

**SCORE:**  
**4.5 OUT 5**

of what to do because I just wasn't getting it. And, yes, I love this about Dread. Metroid, at its core, is about exploration, problem-solving and figuring out things by trial and error. I'm doing that in Dread, though my old-man reflexes and patience are getting in the way. But this is what I want out of my Metroid game to a point. The other side of this, however, is that I didn't care for the mad dash away from an all-powerful enemy in Metroid Fusion in 2002, and I don't particularly care for the mad dash away from an all-powerful enemy in Metroid Dread now. That frantic feeling of not knowing what to do in a sequence that means instant death constantly is not a good one, and I had hoped that it wouldn't return 20 years later, but here we are. I'll figure it out and learn to live with it, I guess, but it's not one of my favorite parts of the game.

One of the other things I do love about Dread is the atmosphere. The music hits the sweet spot of nostalgia and new with leitmotifs of Super and the original game mixed in, and the graphics are gorgeous. I've long been a fan of the music of Metroid, and this is just another masterpiece in the long history of the series. Also, Samus has never looked better. She's more fleshed out with modern graphics, but my favorite heroine is simply

stunning even in the stripped Power Suit. And while ZDR is no Zebes, it's a deliciously dark environment that invokes the best part of brooding moody dark planet that fits right in Metroid lore.

While I love a lot of Dread, there are some things that I don't quite love. First, as a veteran Metroid lover, I can't help but wonder why it took so long to get a side-scrolling version of Metroid again and why it followed Fusion after so many years. Dread is fantastic, but Fusion was not exactly Super, and Dread tries a little too hard to make Fusion work. I'd rather Dread had its own identity aside from the cleanup of Fusion's mess.

And while we're at it, Dread tries a little too hard to lean into Super's legacy. It's well-known that Super is our favorite game of all time. That is not a secret. However, unless you're going to give me a full modern remake of Super, don't tease me with something almost there.

Dread is a tease, a "what if we were to remake the greatest game of all time with modern controls" experiment. To quote the awful Ronin in Avengers: Endgame, don't give me hope. Don't give it to me halfway and then be like, naw, you know what? Let's just call it Metroid 5 and we'll revisit that

Super remake later. This technically isn't Dread's fault, because it's an excellent game and it's giving me, the Metroid fan who didn't want a first-person shooter Metroid, exactly what I've been asking for since Fusion. I'm not dinging Dread per se; I'm dinging Nintendo for being a tease and a terrible one at that.

Metroid Dread does almost everything right: The atmosphere is Metroid, the graphics are Metroid, the story is Metroid and the secrecy is Metroid. It's a must-play if you're into the series and even if you aren't, you still need to experience it just to see how the grand dame of Metroidvania does her thing and creates perfection. It's just that if you're walking into this thinking you're going to get Super Metroid levels of perfection, you're going to be disappointed. It's not Other M level of disappointment, but the layers of Super haunt the outcome. Then again, let's face it: Nothing is going to touch Super's level of nuance. And Dread is still fine for it. Dread nearly hits on every level, and it's the side-scrolling Metroid adventure we non-first-person shooter fans have been waiting for. It's just that you must be willing to look past the dreaded comparisons to Super Metroid to see its true finesse.

# ULTRA STREET FIGHTER II

## The Final Challengers

PRESS ANY BUTTON

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Developer: Capcom, Release: 2017

## The sixth time's the charm

As a Street Fighter fan of a certain age, I can remember the many jokes back in the day about Capcom never learning how to count to three. It wasn't a lie, though. Capcom couldn't count to three because they continued to make major revisions to Street Fighter II while other fighting game series were starting and making sequels. More than 30 years later, even after Capcom learned what *trés* meant in New Generation, Giant Attack and 3rd Strike, we're still returning to the SFII well and I don't know if this return trip with the buckets was worth it.

By now, we all know the story of Street Fighter II: A bunch of World Warriors get together and fight the megalomaniacal dictator/drug runner/supernatural enthusiast M. Bison. Someone among the based crew that is Ryu, Chun-Li and Guile got their revenge and faced him at the end of the second World Warrior Tournament until the ever-present Akuma showed up and promptly took Bison out with a well-placed Raging Demon. Except that given the story events of Street Fighter V: Championship Edition, this no longer holds true exactly (see Bison's resurrection in Street Fighter 6's DLC). Anyway, at the point of Ultra Street Fighter II: The Final Challengers, Bison is dead, on his way to hell with gasoline undergarments on for his various misdeeds. This has always been Street Fighter II's storyline in its basest form, and nothing notable has changed about it in Ultra.

The controls also are the same old Street Fighter II that's been played and rehashed to death during the past 35 years. It's the same shoryuken, hurricane kicks, and hadokens you're used to, and to Capcom's credit, that's the best thing they could have ever done. Don't fix what isn't broken and what generations have learned to cut their teeth on. That said, if you can play Super Turbo, you can play this because that's all this is in



By  
Lyndsey Beatty

terms of how to play Street Fighter II. And to mitigate the potential issues, buying a Pro Controller is a smart idea, but you already knew that if you bought this port because there is no way you're casually playing a port of a 35-year-old fighting game without knowing you need a decent controller.

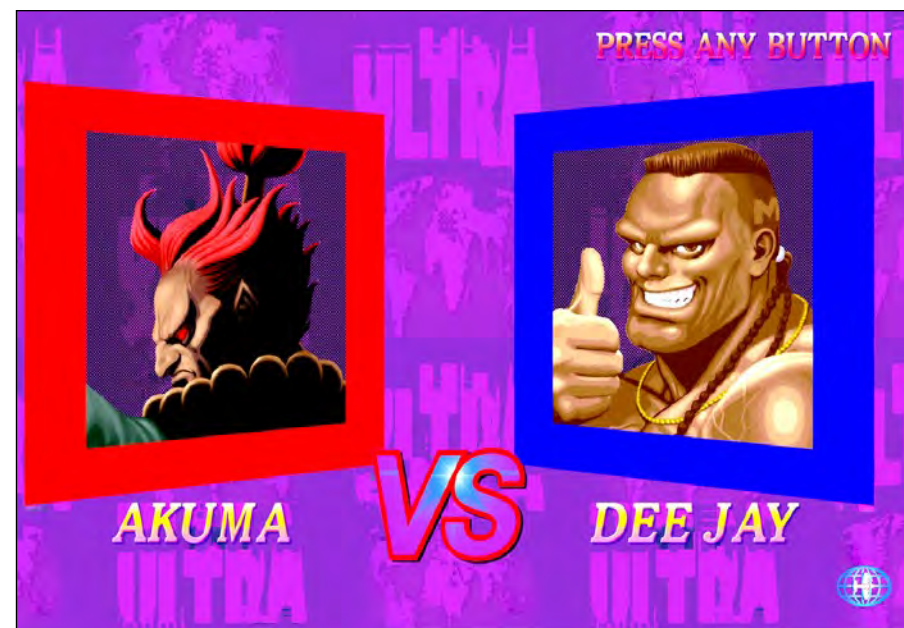
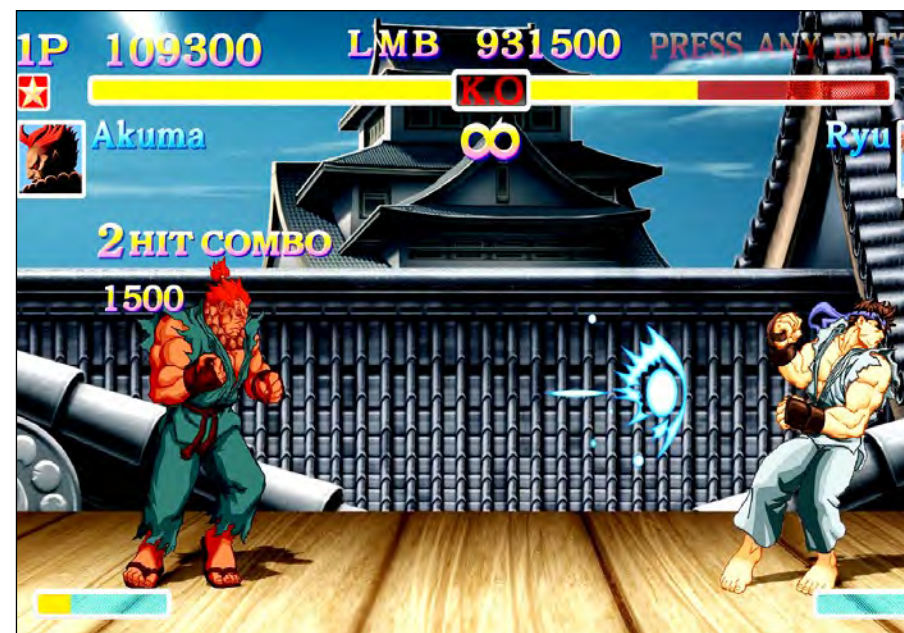
Now, the one thing that has changed is the graphics. Graphically, this is more in line with the weird Street Fighter II HD Remix that featured anime style graphics. It's kind of gorgeous but also kind of not. It feels a little like a rehash of that port and not too many people were clamoring for it outside of the fact that it was one of the few ports of Super Turbo released in the U.S. Some of the stages look great and benefit from the art style change and some of them just look rather meh. Also, one of the few things that mercifully stayed the same is the soundtrack. SFII has always had an excellent soundtrack and it, too, is untouched from the Super Turbo version.

The new additions to this are what's going to influence your decision to get this or pass. On the roster side of things are newcomers Evil Ryu and Violent Ken. Why, they aren't new you say? Exactly. They aren't new at all if you care about Capcom fighting lore. Evil Ryu is a mainstay evil version of the beloved Ryu who's been hanging around ever since Capcom USA forgot to ask if he was real or not

SCORE:  
2.5 OUT 5

in the heyday of Street Fighter Alpha 2. Violent Ken is a little deeper but not by much. If you played the weird SNK vs. Capcom Chaos — better known as SNK's attempt in the Capcom vs. SNK series — you'd recognize this version of Ken. He also kind of made a what-if appearance in Street Fighter Alpha 3 in the arcade story mode. While I get that they're a novelty and people love these characters for whatever reason, I'm not sure I understand why we needed another version of Street Fighter II to include them. Because for the folks playing along at home, this makes the sixth version of the game to be released as an official port. By the time this was released, Capcom was talking seriously and making a lot of noise about Street Fighter V, so this is unnecessary quite honestly. And throwing in the moribund and extra Way of the Hado mode does not justify the need for a wholly new version of this game.

Don't get me wrong, I love Street Fighter II. It was instrumental and paved the way for my favorite genre of video games. I've played every version of SFII at this point and every spinoff of it, too. But when it comes to these highly unnecessary retreads of the same game that Capcom won't let loose, I have a problem. As much as I have come to love the franchise in my later years, I can't stand that Capcom beats the SFII horse to death while ignoring their other viable fighting game franchises such as Rival Schools/Project Justice and Vampire/Darkstalkers. We get it, Street Fighter II is extremely popular. But Capcom has released enough versions of it to last a lifetime and this version is not needed. Capcom really needs to let this be the final challenge for sure.



# A slight head ache

In the 16-bit era, the Genesis was the first shot fired in a decade's war against Nintendo for the attention of teenage gamers and the cold hard cash of gamers' parents. While Sega had Sonic as a mascot to counter Nintendo's Mario, there were many unique characters Sega had in their stable ready to battle with Nintendo if Sonic needed to take a break. One of those characters was Headdy, and his debut game Dynamite Headdy was his big break.

Dynamite Headdy tells the story of Headdy, a star puppet in the Treasure Theatre Show. Headdy's loved by everyone except his rival, Trouble Bruin, who believes he should get top billing. In addition to reducing Headdy's popularity, Trouble is a hench bearcat for the evil Dark Demon whose goal is world domination by converting other puppets to his growing army of mindless minions. With innocent puppets and the future of the theatre in jeopardy, it's up to Headdy to stop Dark Demon and Trouble's nefarious plans.

I'll admit the graphics are like a children's puppet show but they are presented in a way that's colorful and engaging. Treasure did an excellent job with the presentation, keeping the story of the game simple. I did, however, dislike how Treasure played with promoting the game and placed ads for their other products front and center as I played through the first stage. It was super tacky and didn't really help the game in any way.

The controls are slightly simple thanks to the options screen allowing you to configure a control scheme. However, the constant switching heads and keeping up with what button does what invoked anger within me many times. In theory it looks simple, but the execution is off. It's a lot to remember once you get going and drags down the platforming.

The music in the game is OK, having its energetic and forbearing doom moments but it's generic enough to get by. I did feel though, sometimes with Dynamite Headdy, that the composers were pressured to outdo Super Mario World to see which game could have the cutest game music instead of keeping focus on how the music could be paired properly with each stage.

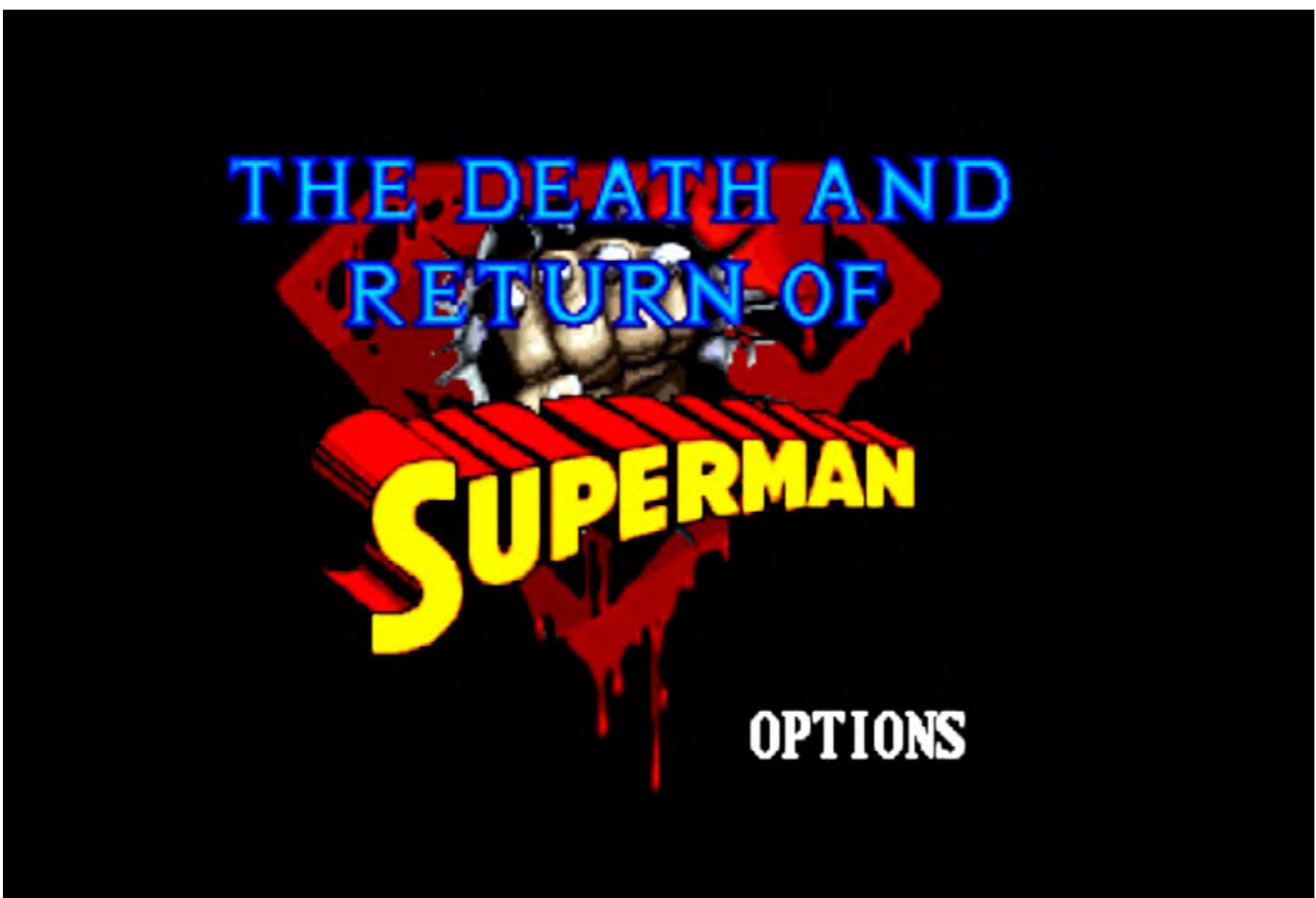
One of the more nonsensical and cringe-worthy moments that stuck out to me was naming each stage after well-known movies and pop culture series. Toyz in the Hood, Stair Wars, Far Trek and Terminate Her Too were named after the movies Boyz in the Hood, Star Wars, Star Trek, and Terminator 2. Don't get me wrong, I understood that Treasure was trying to seize the moment but should have found other ways to accomplish the task because it came off as goofy and grating, not cute.



**SCORE:**  
**3 OUT 5**

Dynamite Headdy is an interesting and highly original game that takes chances and sometimes succeeds and sometimes falls flat. The originality was obviously a selling point because Dynamite Headdy's legacy endures on main consoles and Steam. There are some neat concepts here, but sometimes it needs to get out of its own head.





Developer: Blizzard Entertainment, Release: 1994

# Middling return spells doomsday for Superman

## Death and Return of Superman arc dropped in 1994

Superman has never been among my favorite superheroes. First, I'm a Marvel girl at heart and I generally don't care for most DC characters. Second, if there was a DC superhero that I love, it's going to be Batman. No prep time and by himself. So, it stands to reason that I don't care for most DC games outside of Batman properties. And so, it continues with The Death and Return of Superman.

Death and Return of Superman follows the plot of the comics well. Superman fights his ultimate nemesis in Doomsday, and he dies in the battle. Shortly after, four other Supermen (Superboy, Cyborg Superman, Eradicator and Steel) show up to claim their rightful place as the Man of Steel. The problem is, however, these guys are not Superman, and it shows. Coast City is annihilated, and it turns out that Cyborg Superman is responsible for the carnage. The other Supermen, including the real Superman himself, return to stop the cyborg menace. If you're familiar with the comics arc, this is basically what happened there. It's nothing super complicated and there are no additions or changes for the game. I appreciated it as someone who doesn't follow Superman that closely because it allowed me to learn something new about a well-known superhero and encouraged me to learn about the comics' version of the story simultaneously.

Rampaging through the streets of Metropolis to stop crime and



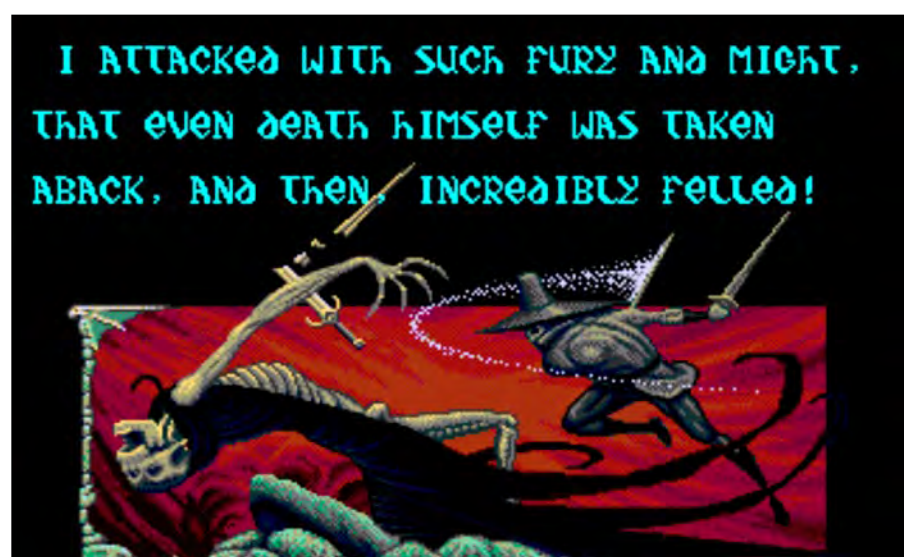
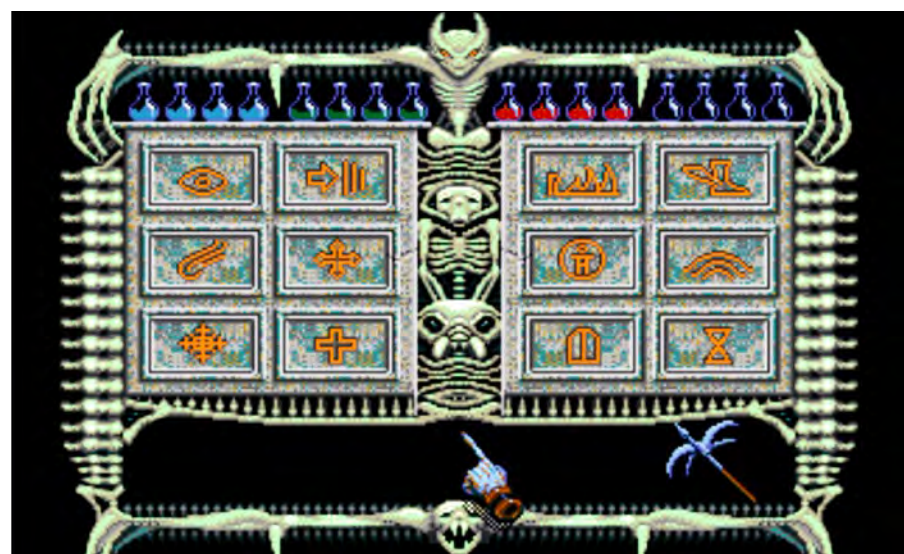
**SCORE:**  
**2 OUT 5**

Cyborg Superman is a no-frills affair as well. There is absolutely nothing noteworthy or special about the environments and the presentation. Nothing stands out, though the character models and designs look nice. The sprites are nicely drawn and rather large, so they will catch your eye. However, nothing else will. The backgrounds are just there, static and unchanging, and nothing looks particularly interesting. The music is the same. The intro theme is kind of a toe-tapper but nothing about this is going to make you search it out online to add to the collection.

The controls aren't anything special, either. They're just standard beat-'em-up controls. There are your standard attacks, a throw, a fireball sometimes, and an ultimate screen-clearing attack that requires energy. While the payoff is the same for all the Supermen, the attack animation is different. It's kind of cool to see what each character is capable of but it's by no means anything exciting.

And, as is the problem with most beat-'em-ups like this one, you're going to run into quarter-muncher syndrome. The hits are always unfair, especially with multiple enemies on the screen, and health isn't exactly plentiful. The bosses particularly are bad about this, and it's infuriating to no end that you can't get clean hits against them without taking a brutal beating.

At the end of the day, Death and Return of Superman goes about as well as you'd expect: You fight Doomsday, you play as pretenders to the throne, and you resurrect to stop a greater threat. It's not terrible but it isn't great, either. Given that we know how this ended in the comics, is there really a need to play through a middling game that doesn't do anything special with the Superman name? No. Let this death cycle play out and remain in its grave, respectfully.



**Developer:** Extended Play Productions, **Release:** 1992

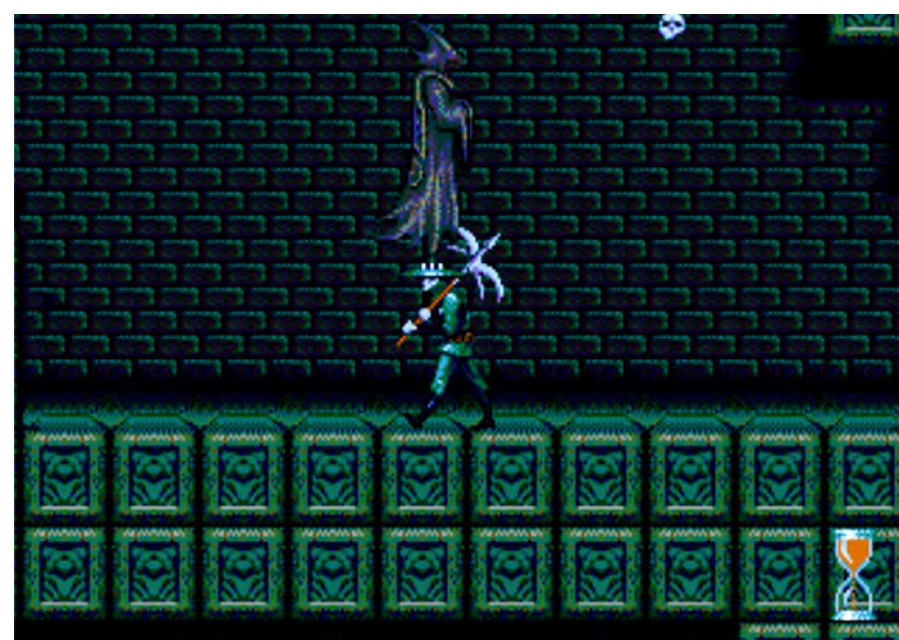
# A forever mediocre mess

Mix of RPG and magic can't save Chakan from terrible fate

As Sega and Nintendo fought for more territory in the final arc of the 16-bit era, Sega tried to stick with new original properties in unrealized genres. I recently was reintroduced to Chakan: The Forever Man, a game with a cool original theme that didn't grow to the potential that developer Extended Play Productions envisioned. I would even dare say that with its dark theme, it could have been the Genesis' answer to Castlevania, which later appeared on Genesis. However, dark and spooky doesn't equal great.

Based on Robert Kraus' comic book series, Chakan is what happens when the supernatural meets a legendary swordsman. You take on the role of Chakan, a legendary swordsman with blade and spell skills who boasts he can defeat Death without any problems. As a result, Death challenges Chakan to a duel to the death stating if Chakan wins, death will grant him eternal life. The battle ended with Chakan victorious and Death, keeping his promise with a sinister twist: While Chakan won eternal life, he is now tasked with eliminating all evils of the underworld. With the heavy burden of everlasting life upon him, Chakan must embark on a righteous requiem to earn eternal rest.

The graphics in Chakan are the usual fanfare for 16-bit systems. The theme of supernatural battle would be a meaningful change for a Genesis game that could have been expanded on, but the graphics placed the game at an unfair disad-



By  
**Brandon Beatty**

**SCORE:**  
**2 OUT 5**

vantage because they are so bland and boring. Despite the handicap placed on the graphics, the music sticks to the game's theme of fighting demons and perfectly pairs the music to each stage.

Controlling Chakan is easy but can be customized. Chakan has a special spin attack like Sonic the Hedgehog and can use fire and other elemental attacks using alchemy potions. My problem with the controls is obviously immediately: the Genesis controller has too many functions. Everything

from movement to weapons and alchemy is time-consuming and a test of my patience.

While it's a neat concept game, Chakan isn't great at all. The many problems really start with the lack of hindsight to hire Kraus to consult on game development. This would have allowed more insight into the character. It's also frustrating that Chakan's time limit prevented me from locating his special weapons. Also, the various symbols representing alchemy were confusing. Trying to determine which symbol matched the element Chakan would need to fight multiple enemies was a chore.

Chakan: The Forever Man is sadly a game with a great concept that was decades ahead of its time. While I give Extended Play Productions credit for trying to introduce a different concept, the pressure to help Sega defeat their competitor blinded Chakan's potential. More time should have been used toward the game's development and introduction of Chakan as an anti-hero. Kraus will continue Chakan's quest for a peaceful death but, for now, he deserves a well-earned rest.

# WELCOME to RETRO GAME CORNER



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.

## ARCADIA JOURNAL

Gaming Insurrection discovers places for arcade play



**Transmission Arcade**

**Address:** 1712 Main St., Columbia, SC 29201

**Website:** <https://www.transmission-arcade.com>

**Phone:** (803) 667-9140



**Super Abari**

**Address:** 1015 Seigle Ave., Charlotte, NC 28205

**Website:** <https://superabarigamebar.com/>

**Phone:** (704) 271-1252



**Radioactive Pinball Arcade**

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

**Website:** <https://radioactivepinball-arcade.com>

**Phone:** (803) 373-1717



**Player1UP Rock Hill**

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

**Website:** [www.facebook.com/player1uprh](http://www.facebook.com/player1uprh)

**Phone:** (803) 327-6407



**Lost Ark – Arcadia Manor**

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

**Website:** [www.lostarkvideogames.com/arcadiamanor](http://www.lostarkvideogames.com/arcadiamanor)

**Phone:** (336) 422-6342

# SONG SPOTLIGHT

By Lyndsey Beatty



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



**Artist:** Juliet Roberts  
**Difficulty:** 2/4/5  
**Chosen difficulty:** Heavy  
**BPM:** 122

The not-terrible cover of the Donna Summer disco hit is a fun distraction in early DDR. It's a bit of a slow burn, never getting faster than 122 BPM, so it's advisable to use a Speed Mod if you're playing it in a later mix. The difficulty is not high, so use this as a breather on Heavy or to wind down. Note that the song doesn't appear in any mixes between 4th Mix Plus and X3 vs 2nd Mix, so Speed Mods won't be available unless you're playing Stepmania.

**Suggested Speed Mod:** x3



**Artist:** DE-SIRE  
**Difficulty:** 3/6/8  
**Chosen difficulty:** Heavy  
**BPM:** 49-196

Healing Vision is one of my favorite songs. It has an interesting melody and the stepchart makes perfect sense. The steps aren't hard, and it's super speedy so you aren't forced to use a Speed Mod. The steps match the melody and never the singer so don't worry about learning the vocalizations. In hindsight, this is an origin song that leads to greater things (Healing Vision ~Angelic Mix ~) and is an excellent starter song to prepare you for the Cata level of madness that follows mastering 8-footers.

**Suggested Speed Mod:** x2



**Artist:** SySF feat. Anna  
**Difficulty:** 8 (Oni only)  
**Chosen difficulty:** Oni  
**BPM:** 140

One of the many versions of early DDR favorite Look to the Sky, Trance Mix is an Oni difficulty stepchart remix that sticks solely to Challenge steps. It does provide some nuanced challenge for the stepper looking to get into the higher difficulties, but it shouldn't be anything too hard to deal with. It features a lot of Freeze steps so be prepared to constantly hold steps. It's not slow but it isn't blazing speed either, so use a x2 Speed Mod at most to speed things up.

**Suggested Speed Mod:** x2

## UPCOMING SONGS

BRILLIANT 2U

LOVE AGAIN TONIGHT (FOR MELISSA MIX)

RAIN OF SORROW

dance dance revolution spotlight

1st mix

2nd mix

3rd mix

4th mix

5th mix

6th mix

7th mix

Extreme

SuperNova

SuperNova 2

LIGHT 楽 STANDARD 標準 HEAVY 激 CHALLENGE 鬼

## Castlevania (NES version)



### What is Castlevania?

The story of Castlevania follows vampire hunter Simon Belmont in his journey to defeat Dracula and his minions in Transylvania in 1691. Simon's ancestor, Christopher Belmont, previously defeated Dracula in 1591, and Dracula's sudden reappearance 100 years later means he was not fully destroyed.



### Weapons of War

Simon utilizes several weapons in addition to his iconic whip Vampire Killer. He can employ holy water, an ax, a dagger, cross/boomerang as well as a stopwatch to take out enemies or slow them down. These sub-weapons require the use of hearts, which are collected throughout stages by defeating enemies or whipping candles. Simon's whip and all weapons excluding the stopwatch can be upgraded with double or triple shots.



### Boss Mode

Dracula is the main boss, and his minions are based on other famous horror creatures: Medusa, Mummy Bros., Death (Grim Reaper), Frankenstein's monster, and a phantom bat. Each boss is super powerful and will require a lot of damage to shut them down. Grabbing the glowing orb once the creatures are defeated allows Simon to move on.



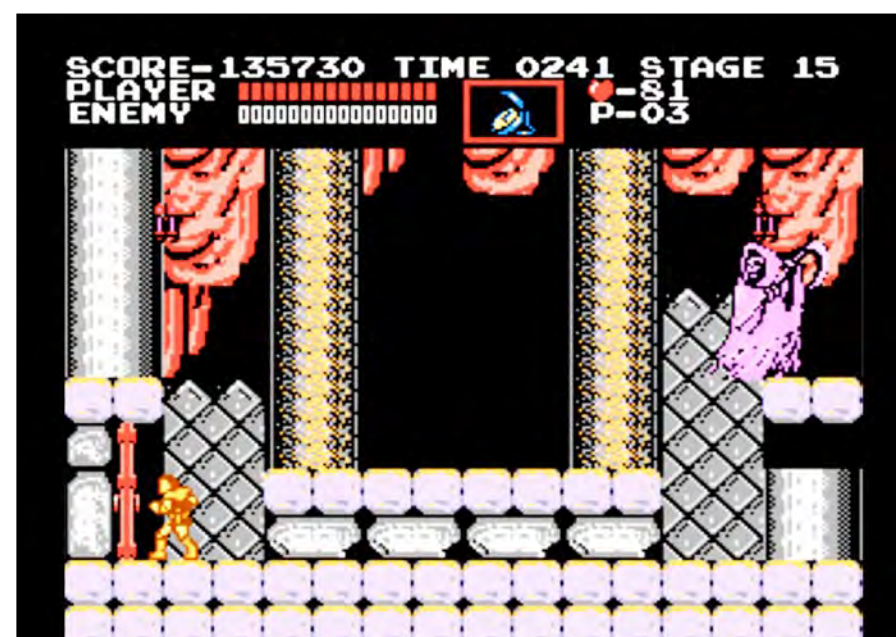
### Secrets galore

Food and money bags are hidden throughout the stages, and it's easy to miss them if you don't know where to look. Whip anything that looks out of place, especially lone bricks and randomly placed walls. And sometimes just standing still in a certain spot will reveal secrets also. Consult the NES Game Atlas for those bountiful spots.



### Retelling the tale

Castlevania has been remade several times over the years since its original 1987 release. Super Castlevania IV for the Super Nintendo and Castlevania Chronicles for the PlayStation One in 2001 are the most well-known versions.



# 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:** 173
- **Total number of cards (as of press time):** 175
- **Percentage owned:** 98.9%

### Cards missing (as of press time)

- Klassic Movie Sonya Blade
- Tormented Soul Spawn

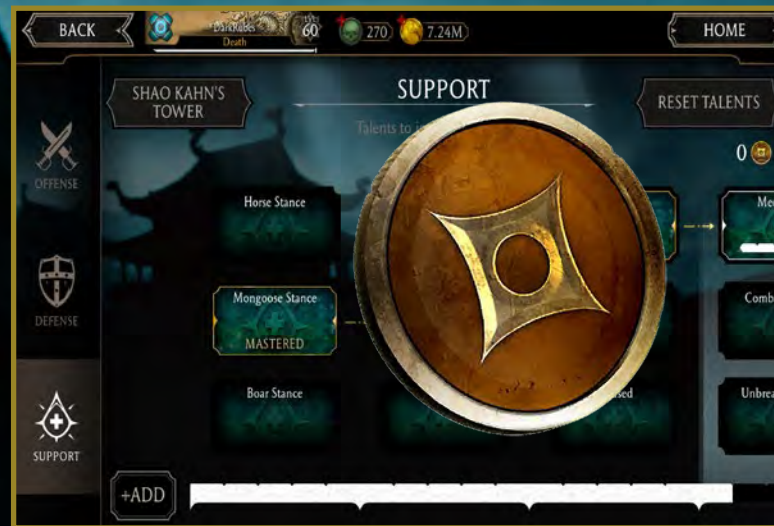


## Shao Kahn's Tower

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.



## Character 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

## CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT

### THIS ISSUE:

- Circle of Shadow Sub-Zero
- Tigrar Fury Goro
- Trooper



### Circle of Shadow Sub-Zero Tier: 2

Circle of Shadow Sub-Zero isn't that great as a character, let alone as a Diamond tier character. His passive is highly dependent on other Circle of Shadow teammates being used, and what he does offer other Netherrealm characters can offer with more upside. He's also not even the best Circle of Shadow character or in the top five. There are better choices in the team and better versions of Sub-Zero to choose from.



### Tigrar Fury Goro Tier: 3

Tigrar Fury isn't the best version of Goro but he's not terrible either. He provides the possibility of fire DOT, and his teammates benefit from this chance also when they tag in. It's useful against non-bosses, and with the right folks surrounding him, the chance of fire DOT increases. Anytime you can do more damage with Goro, the better.



### Trooper Tier: 2

While Trooper isn't the best Bronze character, she packs a punch and does the job admirably when you're stuck using her. She's a situational character: She provides +5% attack to Spec Ops characters specifically. Because you aren't going to use her outside of a character challenge or a situation that calls for Bronze characters, you won't get the most use out of her passive. However, she's still powerful enough to compete with Shirai Ryu and Lin Kuei and service her Spec Ops teammates.



## 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.



## SHAO KAHN'S TOWER GUIDE

**THIS ISSUE:**

- Match 37: No conditions
- Match 38: Dark Magic (Outworld)
- Match 39: No conditions



### Match 37: Hat Trick Kung Lao, Level 44/Thunder God Raiden, Level 44/Cryomancer Sub-Zero, Level 44

**Conditions: None**

This match isn't hard. The character to be most worried about here is Thunder God Raiden, who tags in and does 25 percent damage as part of his passive. There are ways to lessen that damage, but it will hurt. Hat Trick Kung Lao is a good Gold character who can stack damage quickly, but he's not as much as a threat as Raiden. Cryomancer Sub-Zero is not that much of a threat, either.

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



### Match 38: Swarm Queen D'Vorah, Level 46/Dark Raiden, Level 46/Noxious Reptile, Level 46

**Conditions: Dark Magic (Outworld characters are immune to DOT)**

This match is another where Dark Raiden has time to shine. He's healed by Dark Magic so keeping him there along with two other Outworld characters will neutralize the conditions of the match. Bring your strongest two Outworld characters and make quick work of the opposing Outworld team.

**Team choice:** Anyone Gold or Diamond from Outworld class and Dark Raiden, Fusion V or higher



### Match 39: Possessed Kenshi, Level 48/Elder God, Level 48/Klassic Scorpion, Level 48

**Conditions: None**

This match is like Match 37 in that it's nothing hard or special. Elder God Kenshi is the better Kenshi of the two on the team, and Klassic Scorpion is prone to high damage with his Special 1. Possessed Kenshi isn't really a threat compared with his teammates. Focus on getting rid of Elder God Kenshi and Klassic Scorpion, and Possessed Kenshi will fall quickly.

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



## TEAM SYNERGY

**THIS ISSUE:**

- Ronin team analysis

# RONIN



**Team:** Ronin

**Members:** Ronin Kitana, Ronin Kenshi, Ronin Takeda

**General trait:** Ronin characters do 10% more damage vs. Kold War characters



**Kenshi – Ronin:** +30% attack vs. Martial Artists for every Ronin character on their team.



**Kitana – Ronin:** +30% attack vs. Out-world for every Ronin Character on their team.



**Takeda – Ronin:** +30% attack for each Ronin teammate vs. Spec Ops. All Ronin characters gain 30% critical damage for each Ronin character on team.

## ANALYSIS

While the individual members aren't special, collectively they cover a lot of bases. Each member adds a damage buff against almost all of the other classes in the game, barring Netherrealm, Elder God and Nomad. These are significant because doing more damage is always a good thing. Their general trait also is helpful against strong characters like Kold War Sonya, and when combined with the contribution from Takeda (+30% attack for each Ronin teammate vs. Spec Ops), brings the team in league with some of the better teams in the game that have passed them by over time.



## 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.

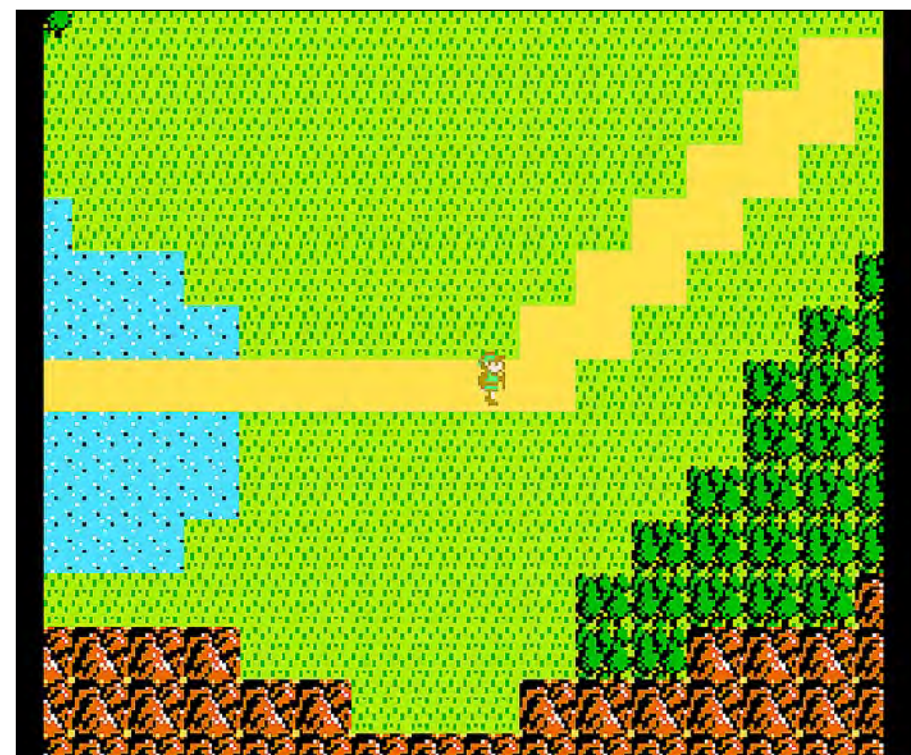
Additionally, skills can also be upgraded as well to increase the effect beyond what the skill provides at default. There are five upgrade levels and each upgrade costs one Talent Point, so a skill costs five Talent Points to master. To have a 100 percent complete tree in a category, you have to buy 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.



# This is a legend that should never have been told

**S**equels aren't always a bad thing. Look at Terminator 2, Super Smash Bros. Melee or The Godfather Part II. They exemplify the excellence that comes in part deux. However, there are some properties that royally muck up the second go-round, and The Legend of Zelda, of all properties, was not immune.

Let's start with the fact that Adventure of Link is terrible in almost every way as compared to the original Legend of Zelda. Aside from the soundtrack, which was once again composed by the master Koji Kondo, the game is riddled with weird deviations from the wildly successful formula of the first game. The change from the overhead view to side scrolling view is a mistake, the



magic system is needlessly complicated and controlling Link is a chore. While the graphics are slightly nicer than the original, they aren't necessarily better. Link looks weirdly

drawn and animates so stiffly you'd think he was cardboard. And his movement is trash. Trying to take out enemies causes so much anxiety. It's akin to trying to jump in Donkey Kong and somehow failing worse. And though the RPG elements are a welcome addition to spice up the gameplay, they aren't implemented well. That's probably because of the fact that it's an early NES game and Final Fantasy was just coming into being. There was no other RPG series to steal from, so improvise terribly it is.

I promise that this isn't the Zelda bias that I'm known for. There are others who love Zelda as a whole who will not play this particular entry. That's because this is a mockery of what they love. Thankfully, Smash

Bros. has redeemed Adventure of Link from the pile of foolishness that it is, and later Zelda isn't nearly as bad. Adventure of Link is a mishmash of ideas that mostly don't pay off for the series. Zelda does adventure and action-combat well. Role-playing is not its strong suit, and it's immediately evident with the hodgepodge of ideas thrown against the wall with Adventure of Link. Let Zelda stay asleep with this one and remember Adventure of Link only as the fever dream that it is.

*Lyndsey Beatty is editor-in-chief of Gaming Insurrection. She can be reached by email at [lyndseyb@gaminginsurrection.com](mailto:lyndseyb@gaminginsurrection.com)*

On tap this issue:

**STRIP TALK**  
Captain America  
T-shirts always  
welcome at GI

**PROPERTY REVIEW**  
Shang-Chi a new  
bright Marvel star

**MARVEL  
HIGHLIGHT**  
Everything you  
wanted to know  
about Deadpool

**OTAKU CORNER**  
Lupin the 3rd:  
Goodbye Partner  
is a fun romp

**ANIME LOUNGE**  
Cowboy Bebop  
starts strongly

**TOP 5**  
Our list of the top  
Marvel Puzzle  
Quest characters

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## PROPERTY REVIEW

**Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings**  
Marvel Studios, 2020



Photo courtesy of IMDB.com

## Shang-Chi rings in new standard

**P**erfectly imperfect. That's what Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings represents. Yes, it's formulaic and yes, it's a by-the-numbers origin story at a time when Marvel needed to continue swinging for the fences in the MCU. But it's a not bad by any means formula-driven origin story, and it's exciting and beautiful to watch.

Shang-Chi comes into the MCU at the point when all the main fighting is well and done and no one knows what the next threat is going to be. The Avengers Initiative is in rest and recovery mode after the Battle of Earth with Thanos in 2023, Tony Stark is dead and most of the squad is occupied elsewhere. The remaining guardians are folks like Wong and Dr. Strange, who keep an eye on threats and work to find other like-minded individuals to join the Avengers. Shang-Chi has been living another life away from this hoopla but his father, better known as the real Mandarin, is bound and determined to drag him back in. It's obvious that Shang-Chi will join the Avengers at some point, and that's not a problem because going into this it should be apparent that it's the direction the story should go. So, in this case it's the journey that's more important, and it's a good one.

Simu Liu, whose star is rightfully shining, is fantastic as Shang-Chi. He brings depth to a character who starts out the reluctant hero raised in abusive trauma to a strong hero ready to make the moves he needs to help and save lives. Awkwafina, who is normally not the funniest, is a boon here as Katy, Shang-Chi's sidekick and voice of reason. She's funny here and the softening

### 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.

of the story, which desperately needs it given the themes of child abuse and death. Liu and Awkwafina have great chemistry, and it's a joy to see them onscreen together constantly. Liu also has great chemistry with Meng'er Zhang, who plays his sister Xialing. That bond is essential to what the film is about: Family and the bonds that strengthen or weaken it.

And then we get to the brightest stars of the show: Tony Leung and Michelle Yeoh. Leung is an absolute silent scene-stealer as Wenwu, Shang-Chi's father and the ancient but current wielder of the Ten Rings. He speaks, he acts and then the impact hits and it's strong. Wenwu is a man of action, devoted to his family but also a man of cruelty and retribution. There are so many layers to Wenwu that contradict each other and yet, he's surprisingly simple. He loves, yet he kills, sometimes in the same breath. But with Leung's deft touch, you sympathize with Wenwu, which is the mark of an excellent character and actor. Michelle Yeoh is exactly what we need from her: The voice of

See **SHANG-CHI**, PAGE 26



Lyndsey Beatty  
**STRIP TALK**

## You can never have too many Cap T-shirts

**I**t really began with Captain America: The Winter Soldier.

It was 2014 and my favorite Marvel movie had just been released in theaters when I found a Captain America shield shirt at Old Navy. Old Navy, my first retailer credit card in 2003, has long been my go-to when it comes to pop culture T-shirts, and the Cap shirt — that portrayer and longtime object of my immense affection Christopher Robert Jamal “Mr. Marvel” Evans III has rocked — called out to me. So, I bought one for myself. But, as luck would have it, my purchase was eyed hungrily. My then-boyfriend, Mr. Brandon, thought he should get in on the Cap action as well, because who doesn't love a cute Captain America shirt when you behave most of the time like a real-life variant of the Star-Spangled Man with a Plan?

So, off we went to acquire another shirt for the boyfriend. For those keeping track, there were now two Cap shirts in the Hicks-Beatty household. And then years pass, and our story takes a turn. We move in together and get engaged in 2015. At some point, after living together for at least three years, we decided we wanted to wear our shirts together for an event and we realized that his shirt is missing. Mine was just fine because I tended to do the laundry and put up my clothes as soon as the load finished. Mr. Brandon did not. It's one of those things you just come to learn and love about your favorite person, but I digress.

The point is, one of the Cap shirts is missing and we couldn't find it. We tore up the house looking for it, but we didn't find it. It's as if the shirt disappeared off the face of the Earth. My million other Marvel shirts? Cool. They're accounted for. My TMNT shirt, Mario shirts, Nine Inch Nails, Super Metroid and circa 2004 Linkin Park shirts? Just fine and folded neatly in the usual place. My work shirts that I never wear out in the street? Unwrinkled and ready to wear at a moment's

See **CAP SHIRTS**, PAGE 26



## Lupin the 3rd: Goodbye Partner steals hearts

In a previous issue of GI, I reviewed Black Lagoon, a manga series about the Lagoon Company, a group that specializes in delivering questionable goods if you don't mind a little chaos along the way. In this issue, I'm focusing on the originator of the gang of thieves, Lupin the 3rd. Ever since his manga debut in 1967, Lupin along with his crew Jigen, Goemon, Fujiko and his archnemesis/comedic foil Inspector Zenigata have been traveling the world for the next big score while indirectly fighting nefarious forces. Their latest animated adventure was released a few months back, and I was able to enjoy Lupin the 3rd: Goodbye Partner.

In this latest adventure, Zenigata is accused by INTERPOL of being an accomplice in Lupin's recent heist. To prove his critics wrong and clear Zenigata's name, Lupin announces that he will be stealing the Time Crystal, a special diamond that can power a quantum supercomputer that allows its user to obtain absolute power. Meanwhile, a British pianist with ties to Jigen's past is kidnapped, forcing a chain of events that could spell global chaos. Once again, it's up to Lupin and company to stop a pending crisis while at the same time attempt a successful heist that could pay off for them.

As a fan of Lupin, I have enjoyed the series ever since its appearance on Adult Swim in 2003. While the animation was done in a '60s style, the dubs focused on current pop culture making Lupin a noteworthy old-school classic. After Lupin was introduced to English-speaking audiences, various anime companies obtained licenses from TMS Entertainment to dub episodes and movies in other languages, which expanded Lupin's adventures beyond its manga stories. TMS continued using this same formula in Lupin Part 6 where he and his cohorts partnered with a computer hacker to rip-off a tech genius/criminal with a grudge against him.

I appreciated that the characters kept up with modern advances such as the internet and social media, but did not slow down on the action sequences. As the story goes on, the main villain reveals himself to be a formidable foe for Lupin. However, in the end, our favorite master thief comes up on top, proving that he's the greatest thief of all time.

I also like that director Jun Kawagoe and writers Furi Kosaka and Takehiko Hata used actual organizations such as INTERPOL and NATO to sell the chaos of the main villain's brief victory over the U.S. government or anyone else who could oppose him. Kosaka and Hata also gave nods to former CIA agent Edward Snowden and former presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

TMS Entertainment USA and Bang Zoom! Entertainment delivered without fail in the English dub. Laura Stahl's English adaption and Yuki Uraka's translation were excellent, ensuring that while current events were included, the elements that make Lupin the 3rd were not sacrificed. TMS and Bang Zoom were wise to keep Tony Oliver, Michelle Ruff, Richard Epcar, and



Lex Lang as Lupin, Fujiko, Jigen and Goemon, and Doug Erholtz as Zenigata. Armen Taylor's role as villain Roy Forest sold the character's maniacal ambitions without being overboard.

I also give Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry kudos for supporting the English dub through their JLOD subsidy grant, which allowed Lupin fans stateside and elsewhere to enjoy the latest adventures of anime's master thief. The English dub was temporary available on TMS' official YouTube channel but can be streamed for free on Tubi and can be brought on Amazon, YouTube TV, and Apple TV Plus.

Lupin the 3rd: Goodbye Partner is a fresh and vivid chapter in anime's notorious and comedic thief's latest adventures. While GI doesn't advise readers to commit theft, if you want a masterclass in anime thievery, Lupin the 3rd is the go-to authority.

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**Series:** Cowboy Bebop

**Episodes:** 1-13

**Editor's note:** This content previously appeared in Issue 40.

**Premise:** By 2071, space travel is possible, and colonization is thriving in the stars. However, with advancement comes crime and there are folks who make a living off that. Bounty hunter Spike, former lawman Jet, amnesiac con woman Faye and genius hacker Ed (and puppy Ein) work together to survive and collect bounties in the new Wild West of the space frontier.

**Is it worth watching?:** Yes. This is one of the best anime of all time, easily. The animation, the story, the soundtrack — all of it combines to make the GOAT of anime.

**Breakout character:** Faye Valentine. The amnesiac con artist is so layered that 20-plus years after the fact, we're still trying to understand all that is there. As you learn her backstory and why her personality is the way it is, you begin to understand the tragedy that is Cowboy Bebop's environment in 2071.

**Where it's going?:** Spike gets torn up in his first battle with Vicious and he comes back to nurse his wounds and ego. We're going to learn the backstories of everyone and get the conclusion of Spike and Vicious' battle.



# MARVEL CHARACTER HIGHLIGHT

**Name:** Deadpool  
**Alias:** Wade Wilson, Merc with a Mouth, Ninja Spider-Man, Deady-Pool

**Affiliation:** Avengers Unity Division, X-Force, War Avengers, Get Some Press, Hydra’s Avengers, Magneto’s super-villain group, Red Hulk’s Thunderbolts, Deadpool Corps, S.H.I.E.L.D., Code Red, Initiative operative, Six Pack, Agency X, One World Church, Heroes for Hire, Secret Defenders, Frightful Four, Last Men, Team Deadpool, Weapon X, Department K, U.S. Army Special Forces

**Special abilities:** Regenerative healing factor (based on Wolverine), superhuman strength, speed, stamina, agility, reflexes and durability, master martial artist, master assassin, expert marksmanship

**Background:** Wade Wilson grew up with a mysterious past. At some point, after age 19, he joined the U.S. Army Special Forces and then Department K in Canada where he took on clandestine missions. While with Department K, he discovered he had 34 inoperable cancerous tumors and was secretly treated with experimental drugs that gave him a healing factor but scarred his entire body. He has since romanced Death and Black Widow, joined forces with Wolverine, Cable and Taskmaster and broken the fourth wall on many occasions.

**Relationships:** Vanessa Carlyle (Copycat), girlfriend; numerous ex-wives

**First Versus appearance:** Marvel vs. Capcom 3

**Appearances in other media:**  
**Television:** X-Men: The Animated Series, Marvel Anime: X-Men, Ultimate Spider-Man, Marvel Disk Wars: The Avengers, Marvel Future Avengers, LEGO Marvel Avengers: Mission Demolition, Marvel Superheroes: What —?!, How Deadpool Spent Halloween

**Film:** Hulk vs. Wolverine, X-Men Origins: Wolverine, Deadpool, Deadpool: No Good Deed, Deadpool 2, Deadpool & Wolverine, Deadpool and Korg React

**Video games:** X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse, Marvel: Ultimate Alliance, Marvel Trading Card Game, X-Men Origins: Wolverine, Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2, Marvel Pinball, Pinball FX2, Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions, Marvel vs. Capcom3: Fate of Two Worlds, Ultimate Marvel vs. Capcom 3, Marvel Super Hero Squad Online, Marvel: Avengers Alliance, Marvel War of Heroes, Marvel Heroes, LEGO Marvel Super Heroes, Marvel Puzzle Quest, Marvel Contest of Champions, Disk Wars Avengers: Ultimate Heroes, Marvel: Future Fighter, X-Men: Battle of the Atom, Pinball FX3, Deadpool Pinball, Marvel Power United VR, Marvel Strike Force, Marvel Ultimate Alliance 3: The Black Order, Marvel Snap, Marvel Super War, Marvel Realm of Champions, Marvel Future Revolution, Marvel’s Midnight Suns, Deadpool Virtual Pinball



## TOP 5 ON THE STRIP — MPQ BEST EDITION



**Shang-Chi (Origin)**  
Pound for pound, Shang-Chi is the best offensive character in the game. With River of Blows going and someone to give him continuous red and purple AP (Valkyrie or Agent May are top choices), Shang-Chi hits like a truck and self-heals easily. By himself, he can easily take down entire Shield Level 10 node teams before he’s at Champion level. Prioritize championing him as soon as you get him. He’s worth the resources and time invested immediately.



**Thor (Mighty Thor)**  
With auto abilities that immediately benefit her team and great synergy with other top-tier characters, Mighty Thor is a top choice to champion quickly. All her abilities work well with other top tiers, and she’s powerful once built up. Plus, she can tank with the best of them. And, when she is paired with Polaris, arguably the best all-around character in the game, she is unstoppable.



**Polaris (Lorna Dane)**  
Polaris is quite possibly the best character in the game. Her best move — Electromagnetic Resonance — can and will overwhelm the toughest teams in the game. And given her synergy with nearly every other character in the game — she is known for being part of several winfinite teams and is a fixture in PvE — she is the 4-star character that you champion first and ascend first.



**Aunt May (Golden Oldie)**  
Deceptively strong offensively, Aunt May’s 5-star version is on par with Shang-Chi in terms of damage. Her red ability, Cosmic Wrath, hits hard for little cost. Pairing her with damage-boosting partners such as 3-star or 5-star Emma Frost or 5-star Agatha Harkness is a sure win because Aunt May will do all the damage possible.



**Okoye (Warrior General)**  
A classic powerhouse 5-star character, Okoye is best suited as a tank to let her abilities shine. With her in front, she maintains Team Up AP. For every point, she increases friendly ability damage by 1,471 points. This means everyone starts hitting like Shang-Chi. She also can truly self-heal. Pairing her with someone who boosts damage further while letting her lead helps her move into the upper echelons of the best character in the game conversation.



Photos courtesy of IMDB.com

# Shang-Chi an excellent starting point to Phase 5

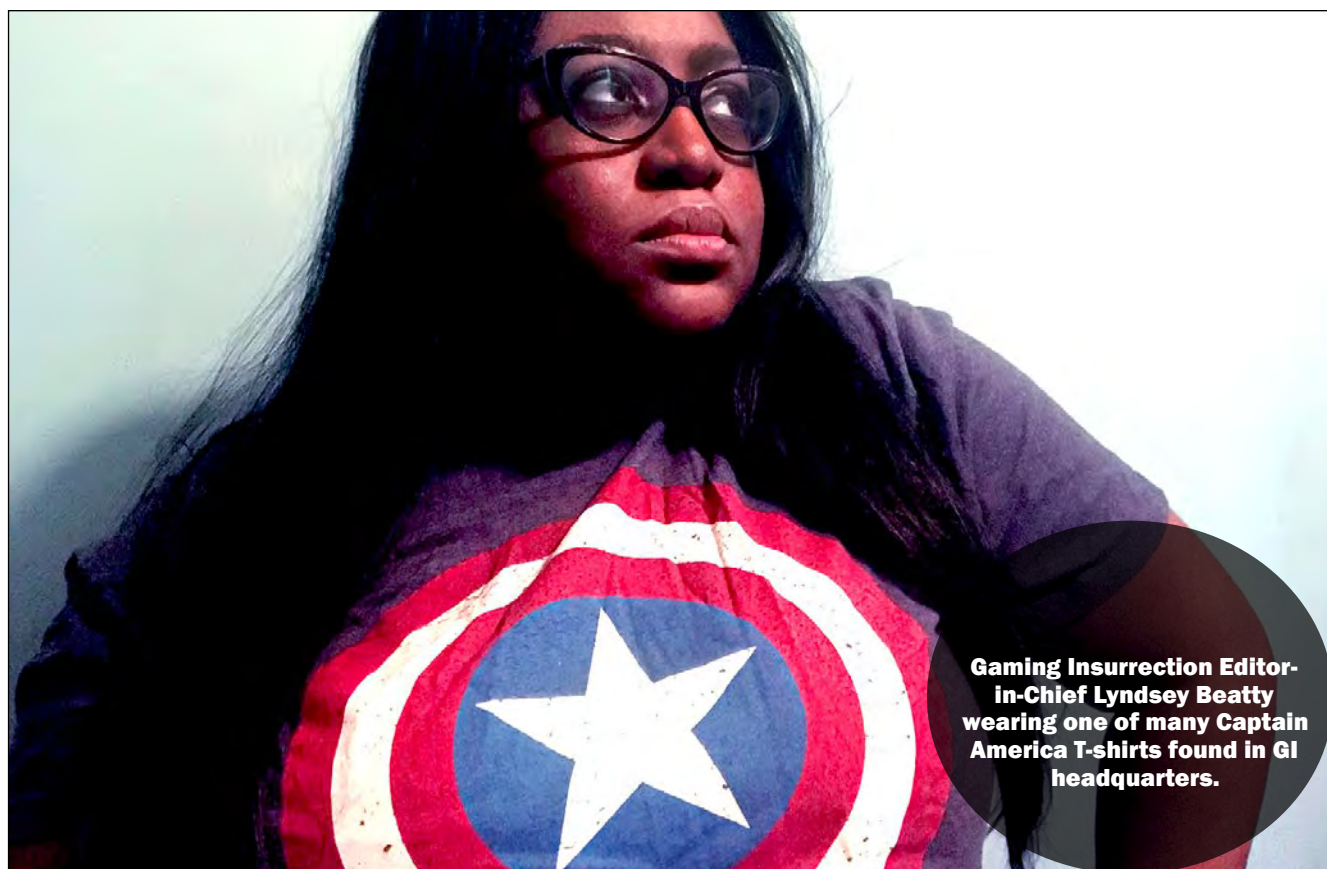
SHANG-CHI, from PAGE 23

reason and the voice of strength. Yeoh's character is gentle, yet firm and strong and is what the film needs to bring everything together in the right balance. She is the bridge between the gap for Shang-Chi's maternal and paternal lines and the glue that holds everything together right as it falls apart.

Shang-Chi isn't a masterpiece, but with breathtaking action and a solid cast, this is a must-watch

in the MCU origin story lineup of its future heroes. Throw in some recognizable cameos in the obligatory post-credit scene and Shang-Chi does a great job of getting us acquainted with a newly recruited Avenger and setting the scene for a new class of heroes to pick up the mantle of saving the MCU. Welcome aboard, Shang-Chi.

**Like the comics: 9**  
**Acting: 8**  
**Story: 8**  
**Total: 25/30 or 8.3**



Gaming Insurrection Editor-in-Chief Lyndsey Beatty wearing one of many Captain America T-shirts found in GI headquarters.

# Cap is fashionable, valuable at GI

CAP SHIRTS, from PAGE 23

notice. So, it's just the Cap shirt and his shirt only, specifically. We gave up at this point. We figured there was no way that shirt was ever going to be found, so we went to Old Navy and bought the same shirt for the third time. And now everyone has a Captain America shirt again and everyone is happy. Right? Right, or maybe not.

So, about two months ago, this ever-cleaning editor/wife took inventory of the shirts in the house and decided to do some Fall cleaning. I instructed Mr. Brandon to clean in his shirt drawers while I worked on mine. I'm sure at this point you can see where this is going. In the middle of cleaning, I hear a yelp and then "Babe, you're never going to believe what I just found."

Y'all, it was the long-missing second Cap shirt.

The shirt that had been missing for at least six years was finally located. Apparently, the shirt had fallen out of the back of the drawer and wasn't visible when Mr. Brandon was cleaning during any of the previous six years of searching.

Color me not shocked but annoyed for several reasons. First, that means we now have three Captain America shirts in the house. There are only two living people here and while I absolutely adore Cap, I don't need three shirts. And, second, these shenanigans tell me that someone wasn't looking all that hard when we were tearing up the house trying to find the shirt. I'm annoyed because what exactly were we doing all this time?

And, to add insult to injury, because my husband is my best friend and we share a lot of things, guess who is trying to claim ALL the Cap shirts now? Yes, after losing a shirt and gaining it back, my erstwhile fellow Cap-loving spouse has attempted to commandeer MY Cap shirt as his own, which would give him three Cap shirts. Absolutely not. As the main Cap stan and the resident Marvel doctoral degree holder in this Beatty branch, I will not allow my prized Cap shirt to be stolen from my grasp. I love my husband, but he will never take my Cap shirt. No matter how much he may try, he's not taking my shield.

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dance dance revolution spotlight

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

LIGHT 楽 STANDARD 踊 HEAVY 激 CHALLENGE 鬼