



THE VIDEO GAME GENERATIONS NEWSLETTER

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Issue #45 – August 23, 2026

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Loading Screen

Finally, I've used one of my friend Bill's great topic suggestions by writing about several games that, as a gamer, I'm embarrassed to admit I haven't played.

This was opened up to the wider community on the three social media platforms I still use, and the few responses I got are included too. For fun, I've also come up with a checklist of games and series that seem like must-plays for any well-rounded gamer who wants to experience many of the best and most influential single-player games ever made.

Also: my thoughts on the #PSBlackout as it begins.



I should really be embarrassed to keep including these dumb AI-generated cartoon-me scenes. I couldn't even get it to do what I wanted (it flat-out refused) and so here's me pointing at a bone.

Recent Events

Grand Theft Auto VI Gets Leaked

I don't condone illegal activities, even if it's against companies making anti-consumer decisions and for underlying reasons I'd ordinarily align with.

That said, there's bitter irony in the fact that many people's #1 defense of *GTA VI* being a digital-only release (that it would prevent spoilers ahead of launch) is now seemingly moot. I don't think Rockstar or Take-Two ever *said* that. I think it was just a convenient excuse invented by the community.

It was always naïve to think preventing spoilers for a couple days prior to launch would have been a reason to skip a physical release when it's all going to be spoiled in the first couple days *after* launch anyway. Most gamers will have barely scratched the proverbial surface, but you can count on everything about the game surfacing quickly and showing up uninvited across every social media and video platform out there. I really don't know what people were thinking.

It's hard to keep up with what's happening now, but gameplay footage from questionable sources obtained in as-of-yet unknown ways has been leaked in what seems to be a very heavy-handed attempt to bully Rockstar and other developers/publishers into doing right by gamers with a true physical release.

This isn't going to work. If anything, it'll just make publishers even more anti-consumer.

Sources:

<https://www.pcgamer.com/games/grand-theft-auto/cyberleaks-still-at-it-another-gta-6-leak-shows-2-full-minutes-of-high-speed-driving-surprisingly-few-crashes/>

<https://www.videogameschronicle.com/news/gta-6-gameplay-allegedly-leaks-ahead-of-planned-netflix-reveal/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/paultassi/2026/08/21/the-gta-6-leaker-is-leaking-again-ending-rumors-of-being-caught/>

<https://variety.com/2026/gaming/news/gta-6-leaks-rockstar-subpoenas-microsoft-discord-1236840176/>

\$1000+ Next Gen Consoles are a Bad Idea

Love 'em or hate 'em, "industry analysts" manage to put into words the very things that seem like common sense to everybody else.

The latest example suggests that if PlayStation 6 and Xbox Project Helix launch with a price tag of \$1k or more, people are going to be far less likely to buy them at the pace we've seen in prior generations.



What the Ampere analyst gets wrong, at least from where I stand, is in regards to their suggestions for Sony and Xbox to improve their future console's chances; specifically, suggesting that a "more aggressive digital content" strategy could help. The lack of physical media (they won't include a disc drive if they're not making discs) is the deal-breaker for me, even more so than the price.

Source:

<https://www.videogameschronicle.com/news/launching-ps6-and-xbox-helix-at-1000-could-lead-to-a-nearly-40-drop-in-sales-over-five-years-analyst-warns/>

Kingdom Hearts 4 Releases in Late 2027

This is filler I suppose, but if you've been looking forward to the next mainline *Kingdom Hearts* game, director Tetsuya Nomura has promised that the game will release next year and won't be delayed. I just hope this means it's getting a physical release.

Source:

<https://www.videogameschronicle.com/news/that-is-not-happening-tetsuya-nomura-promises-players-kingdom-hearts-4-will-not-be-delayed/>

Ramblings on the PlayStation Blackout

In the weeks since PlayStation announced they would no longer be making game discs starting in January 2028 (games will release as digital downloads only), I've felt buried under an avalanche of conflicting opinions (many of them misguided and frustrating), calls for action, misinformation, and some scoffing from people who proudly proclaim they haven't bought a physical game in more than a decade as if that somehow negates the experiences of others or makes a non-issue out of what's objectively a bad move for the industry (and this hobby) at large.

Among the calls for action is an organized one-week boycott of PlayStation. It's being called the #PSBlackout:

For several years now, Sony Interactive Entertainment has continued to grow further apart from its fan base. Whether it's closing beloved studios like Bluepoint, pursuing a misguided live-service strategy, canceling fan events, leaving PS VR2 to die, or being completely out of touch with the franchises players want to see return, PlayStation has never felt more disconnected from its community.

Ending physical discs in 2028 feels like the last straw. We understand there is only so much SIE can control, but with the decisions that are within its control, the company continues to mismanage the strong position it inherited from the PS4 era.

There are so many issues with PlayStation right now that bringing back physical games would only be meeting players halfway. There is still much more SIE can do. We miss *Twisted Metal*, *SOCOM*, *Sly Cooper*, and *Resistance*. We miss PlayStation Experience. We miss Japan Studio.

With that, we are calling on PlayStation players to participate in an economic and gameplay blackout from Sunday, August 23, at 7:00 PM local time through Sunday, August 30, at 7:00 PM local time. Players can participate by turning off their consoles or logging out for seven days. We feel that this period gives publishers and developers minimal impact while still giving players a voice.

#PSBlackout

As I write this, 7:00 PM on August 23rd is a little over an hour away. I've been on the fence about this whole thing, though. I get the need to do something, *anything*, to send a message to Sony that a lot of us are *not okay* with this.

By my reasoning, Sony already got the message and they simply don't care. Everything they publicly post is met with an onslaught of #NoDiscNoBuy and various forms of backlash and mocking. They are committed to their vision of an all-digital future, and whether or not it comes with better protections and ownership rights, we at least know it doesn't include physical media.

With skewed numbers that make it look like physical games are far less popular than they are, even if we went with the most pessimistic split of 90% digital vs. 10% physical, that ten percent is ten million (10,000,000) people when their install base is a hundred million.

They are *already* willing to say goodbye to at least ten million customers. Even if this #PSBlackout could reach a critical mass of *every single one of us* participating, they are *already* prepared to lose us. I hate to be the guy who throws water on the fire, but this isn't going to accomplish anything aside from depriving those who participate of a week's worth of PlayStation gaming. It's not going to hurt Sony. It's not going to raise awareness, but the organizers seem to think it will by way of news stories covering the boycott and a continued online discussion about it all.

As the starting time approaches, I'm uncommitted and undecided. I could spend a week with older games, and probably would anyway if I hadn't just beaten *Onimusha: Dawn of Dreams*. The new *Plague Tale* comes out toward the end of the #PSBlackout and I've planned on playing it at launch for months. If I play a game on PS3, is that against the spirit of the boycott? Probably.

My stance on Sony's anti-consumer move hasn't changed. I continue to push back against idiots who confuse optional patches with mandatory downloads and who think if a game is too big to fit on one disc, they can't *possibly* include a second or third. There are plenty of physical games I don't already own, many older generations to collect for, and sales on digital games that make them an easier pill to swallow.

My boycott began when "key discs" became a thing. I already (mostly) avoid those. It'll continue into this all-digital future because I'm not going to suddenly begin paying \$75 or more (there's tax) for long-term digital rentals. It's only this – and millions more like me – that will affect anything.

The Gaming Roads Not Taken

Some time ago, I was talking with my friend Bill during his daughter's graduation party. We usually discuss games, and have preferences that tend to align more often than not. He had read through some issues of the VGGN and came up with several good topic ideas (with even more sent recently by email).

One of these ideas was:

"Games that, as a gamer, I'm embarrassed to say I haven't played."

I like this, because I can take it in several directions, even spinning it off into a look at the games on my backlog I'm most anxious to finally play, even if not everybody (or nobody) would consider them must-plays.

For the topic as written, he explained it as:

"Mainly, I mean all-time classics that all gamers should have some experience with, especially if the game is in a genre you like, and you're sure you'll love it when you finally play it."

With the prospect of an all-digital future – something I'm not at all on board with – the chance to remedy some glaring omissions is a silver lining. Sure, I could have been focusing on my backlog all along, but if I'm being forced into it by way of an all-digital future, so be it.

As an aside, and to be clear, I'm not against digital games. My digital libraries across various platforms number in the thousands, but they're almost all indies or bigger games that eventually went on sale. Digital is perfectly fine, but "all-digital" isn't for me.

Thinking this would make a good community topic, I put out a request for answers on Threads, Twitter (I hate calling it X, even though it does a disservice to what Twitter used to be when I don't), and BlueSky.

For space limitations, I wasn't always able to phrase it exactly like Bill did and still provide additional context, so some of the replies are more about backlog games in general instead of must-play games. My first requests got barely any responses, but a few more after I reposted it. As I write this, more replies have trickled in, so I'm going to save that part of this feature for later. I don't want to miss any, nor have to reformat an entire section later.

The Arbitrary Top 20

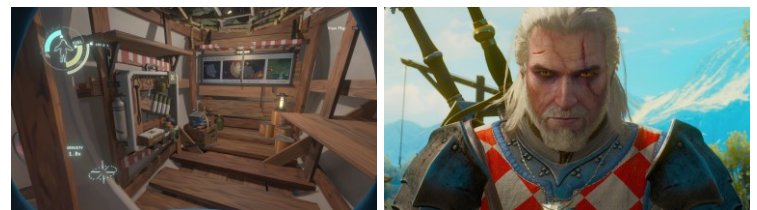
There was a time, a beautiful and innocent time, when you could do a Google search without getting a made-up AI-generated answer. I searched for this, thinking I'd find a curated list or some on-topic videos:

"The 20 most important games everybody should play"

There are results after the so-called "AI Overview" but they're not exactly what I'm after – they're the 20 greatest games of just the 21st century, the 20 best strategy games, personal top-20 lists, a video about 20 games from 2025 you should have played, and so on.

As you might expect, though, asking the exact same question a second time brings up a completely different set of 20 games. Asking again changes the results again (and even swaps out some categories with different ones), so this is kind of useless.

For the heck of it, I'm going to go through that original Google-generated list of 20 games.



From this list, there are only three games I never played at all and one more I only ever played a little, with maybe two of the four of them constituting an embarrassment to have never played.

Historical & Foundational Milestones

Super Mario Bros. (Played)

This seems like the de facto must-play game.

Tetris (Played)

Has anybody *not* played Tetris?

The Legend of Zelda (Not Played)

Until recently, this is probably the only mainline Zelda I *haven't* played. I've dabbled, but never stuck with it.

Minecraft (Not Played)

My kids loved it, but it just never appealed to me.

Halo: Combat Evolved (Played)

IMO, the series peaked with the first two games.

Narrative & Storytelling Masterpieces

The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt (Played)

I initially got the worst ending possible, though.

Red Dead Redemption 2 (Played)

I didn't love this as much as the first game, sadly.

Disco Elysium (Played)

This didn't hit for me the way it did most other people.

Mass Effect 2 (Played)

If you're going to play *ME2*, play them all, including *Andromeda*. *Mass Effect 2* is definitely a must-play.

BioShock (Played)

Again, play them all. That first game is an all-timer.

Design & Mechanical Innovations

Portal 2 (Played)

By all means, yes, this is a must-play masterpiece.

Dark Souls (Played)

Not everybody likes the *Souls* formula, but I did.

Grand Theft Auto V (Played)

If you're going to play just one GTA, it should be this.

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim (Played)

An epic and a classic, but it's a time commitment.

Resident Evil 4 (Played)

For a few years, original RE4 was my #1 game ever.

Indie & Creative Triumphs

Undertale (Played)

I played it after it had been hyped up for many years, which may be why I came away disappointed.

Terraria (Not Played)

Does this *really* fit the category, Google? I know it has fans and it's by all accounts a great game, but I'm not sure I'd *personally* put it on an all-time must-play list.

Factorio (Not Played)

I've only heard of this one in passing. I guess it's good.

Outer Wilds (Played)

It's one of the best games I've ever played, so it pains me when people try it and bounce off because they just didn't enjoy it. I love this game so much.

Baldur's Gate 3 (Played)

A modern classic. I'm not a super-fan the way some people are, but I had a great time playing through it.



My Embarrassments

Most of the games I'd personally consider a must-play for anybody who wants to appreciate gaming's rich decades-long history, I've already managed to play. Look for a checklist of those later in this issue, and see how you score.

I *have* to dig a little deeper to find examples that fit the topic: the ones that *should* be considered must-plays, but I never got around to them.

These are the games that, as a gamer, I'm embarrassed to say I haven't played.

Until recently, this might have included games in the *Legacy of Kain* series and the *Onimusha* series, but no longer. I finally played them. My mini-reviews for those appear later in this issue.

Minecraft and Fortnite

They're different games, but I include them together because I've had this (likely wrong) notion that they're just for kids. That's not the real reason I haven't played them, though.

In the case of *Minecraft*, it seems like a "forever" game that would cut into the time I have left for everything else. I'm also not a big fan of crafting and construction in games. I'm not *against* it; just, not normally my go-to.



In the case of *Fortnite*, I'm just not really into competitive multiplayer live-service games, and again, it seems like one that would cut into the time I have left for other games.

Final Fantasy 6

Over the years, I closed many of the *Final Fantasy*-shaped holes in my gaming resume (another silly term, but I'm not sure what else to call it), aside from the two multiplayer ones (FF11 and FF14) and the original 2D ones (except for FF1, which I did play, and a little of FF2 before getting sidetracked and giving up).

Of those few I haven't played, *FF6* is by far the one most people rank near the top of the list. It's another where I have no excuse. I have it on multiple platforms. I've just never been in the right mood to give it a go.



Planescape: Torment

With the PS4 remaster available, I can't even blame this one on not having my own PC anymore (just my work laptop, which I can't do gaming on). I've heard great things over the years, especially about its story and choices, but I just never got around to it... yet.



Splinter Cell (series)

I love a good stealth game, and these are often lauded as some of the best. In fact, you can barely discuss games that are long overdue for a comeback *without* somebody bringing up Sam Fisher.

I'm committed to doing a full mainline SC series run in the next few weeks or months.

The Legend of Zelda (original)

I mentioned earlier that I've played every other mainline *Zelda* game *but* this. I feel like it wouldn't take long if I was willing to use a guide when stuck, and with modern save states and whatnot. I don't know if this is really one to be embarrassed about, though. I suspect there are way fewer gamers who've played through it than those who haven't.



System Shock 2

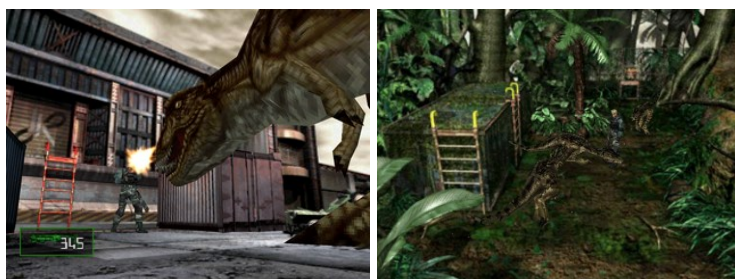
This may be as deep a cut as *Planescape* when it comes to games often talked about, but maybe slightly less obscure. If anything, I'm embarrassed to admit to Bill that I haven't played it yet, aside from the first few minutes on an older PC that wasn't even capable of running the game above single-digit frames.



The good news is, there's a Nightdive Studios remaster of *System Shock 2* on PS5, I already have it, and it's near the top of the must-play portion of my backlog.

Dino Crisis (series)

Waiting for Capcom to remaster these might be a quixotic, futile effort, but the thought of adapting my brain and motor skills back to the days of tank controls hasn't been appealing. It's a highly notable omission for me, but I was a late adopter of the PS1 and never kept up with releases when they were new.



Doom (original)

Okay, this is a cheat, because I *have* played the original *Doom*, but only the first level. The embarrassment here is that I never went past that, nor with *Quake*, nor with *Duke Nukem 3D*. I wasn't good at retro PC FPS games.

The Sims

Maybe I'm just not pulled towards open-ended games, or simulations in general. I do feel left out when people talk about the fun (and maybe sociopathic) times they had, like putting their sims in a swimming pool, then removing the exit ladder until they all drown, but not enough to give it a shot. I have a few of them on PS2, including something called *The Urbz: Sims in the City*; just never played them.

EarthBound / Mother 2

I'll get to it eventually. It inspired games like *Undertale*. It's one of those often-cited cult classics that seems to bring out an air of superiority for anybody who *can* say they've played it. I have it on WiiU and New 3DS digitally. You'd have to already own it, though, since those stores are shut down now. It was originally released for the Super Nintendo.

It's also available on Nintendo Switch with their online membership service. There's a third game in the series, *Mother 3*, and I don't think fans will ever stop bugging Nintendo to officially localize that one in English.



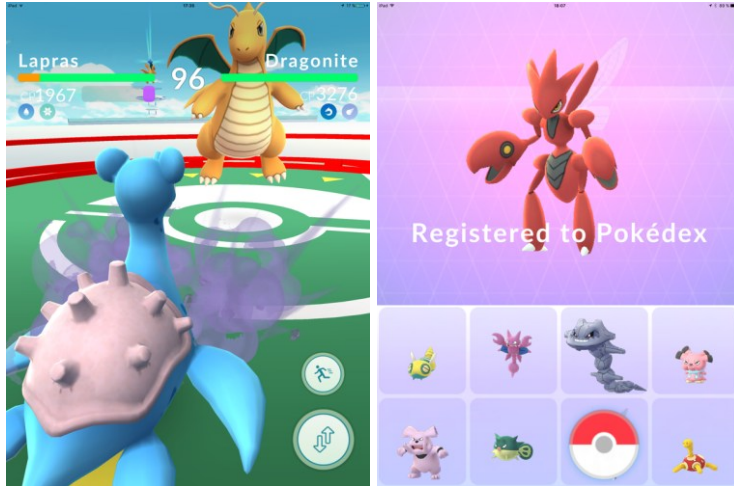
Banjo Kazooie and Banjo Tooie

As much as I love 3D mascot platformers, I've never played what's arguably two of the greatest ones (by most accounts) ever made. I plan to. I feel like I've played everything else *but* these – *Jak & Daxter*, *Mario 64*, *Yooka-Laylee*, *Conker's Bad Fur Day* finally, most of *Donkey Kong 64* and others – but never these.



Pokémon Go

I somehow never got into *Pokémon Go*. I don't know how much of that is just me not being much of a mobile phone gamer, and how much is me being a hermit who prefers not to visit random public places if I don't have to.



Fire Emblem (series)

I know I'd enjoy the heck out of these, but I've never been in the right mood to give them a shot. Tactical strategy RPGs aren't my *favorite* kind of RPG, but these are apparently really good. There's a new one coming out for Switch 2 (which, as of yet, I don't own) but I already own *Three Houses* (and many other older ones), so I have no excuse besides simply never being in the mood to start one.



The closest I came was *Tokyo Mirage Sessions #FE* (the Switch version) in which the "FE" means that a few *Fire Emblem* characters were included in a game that otherwise follows the *Shin Megami Tensei* formula. It wasn't really a *Fire Emblem* game.



Super Mario RPG

I'm on a Nintendo run, here, but another pretty important game I know I'd have loved at the time is *Super Mario RPG* for SNES. I had a friend that played it and it looked interesting, but I just never got around to it. There's a full Switch remake, which I own and my son even played and enjoyed, but I haven't gotten around to it either.

This one marks (I think) Mario's first outing in an RPG, paving the way for both the *Paper Mario* series and the *Mario & Luigi* series.



Pikmin

I've only ever played a few minutes of any *Pikmin* game. I just never got the appeal.

StarFox (series)

While *StarFox Adventures* is universally panned by fans, it's the only game in the series I ever played. It's one that my ex-wife sat and watched/helped with (we used to do a lot of that). We both enjoyed it a lot.

It's not really a *StarFox* game, though. It started life as *Dinosaur Planet* and is a GameCube action adventure with *StarFox* characters. The core space flight gameplay the series is known for just never appealed to me, but I do plan to play *StarFox 64* eventually.



Your Embarrassments

Most of my social media effort these days is put into [Threads](#). It's where my own posts see the most engagement, and where I find the most interesting gaming topics to take part in.

[X/Twitter](#) tends to be a swamp where it takes too much effort to find the good among all the horrible. BlueSky is almost always crickets. Does anybody actually use BlueSky?

I did, however, put out a similar request to all three, looking for the games other people never got around to for whatever reason.

X/Twitter



Chester Brown (@ChesterEugene)

1. Portal 2, didn't really love Portal 1. It was just okay to me. 2. WOW, I don't play MMOs. 3. Metroid Prime 2 and 3. Didn't love Metroid Prime. 4. Destiny. Was never a Bungie fan. After the Arbiter sections in Halo 2, I was kind of out. Liked some stuff in 3 and Reach though.

Oh, if it's games just sitting in my Library for a year or 5, that I haven't played yet, then it's probably Final Fantasy 7 Rebirth, Alan Wake 2, Hogwart's Legacy, Spider-Man 2, and Hitman 3.



DuncanR2N (@DuncanR2N)

I've never beat a Resident Evil or Tomb Raider game. Played, but never beat.

Never beat an Elder Scrolls game either

While I have beaten some Zelda games, I've not beaten Ocarina of Time, Wind Waker, Twilight Princess or Breath of the Wild which are always talked about.

Oh there's plenty I've never even touched

X-COM

Bayonetta

Lunar

Fallout (played a little of the very first one)

Kirby

Ninja Gaiden

Omimusha

Legacy of Kain

Pokémon

Shadow Hearts

There's a lot of series where I've played one game in the series and left the rest untouched as well



rishi (@RishiAlwani)

Final Fantasy 6.

FoundingPOTATO (@Deadpool5519)

I don't have a PlayStation, but I've always thought the Horizon and Spiderman games look cool. Splatoon is one I've just never decided to actually play, didn't ever really know what it was about.

Aidan (@Aid_Dom_)

Silent Hill, Metroid, Castlevania and can't think of any others right now but I'm sure there are more

Wile E. (@wildecoyote74)

The Last of Us, I nor II. ... I have multiple physical versions of them (Ellie Edition, etc.). I just tend to gravitate toward turn-based RPGs, action RPGs & strategy games. I have a backlog of RPGs already I'll never be able to play in my lifetime. Lol

Year of the Dad Gaming (@YOTDGaming)

Metroid. I've played the original but none of the others in the series.

BlueSky

Video Game Generations
@vggenerations.bsky.social

What's a game (or two, or three) you're embarrassed to admit you've never played? A game you think you'd enjoy, and other people love or even say is essential, but you just never got around to it, didn't own the console it was on, etc.? Some answers (if any) will appear in VGGN with a credit/link.

PavTheMooCow (@pavthemoocow.bsky.social)

I've never played a Zelda game. I do want to play Breath of the Wild though. I *have* played a bit of Pokemon, but an embarrassingly little amount.



Threads



vggenerations > Gaming Threads 07/24/26

What's a game (or two, or three) you're embarrassed to admit you've never played, and why? A game you think you'd enjoy, and other people love or even say is essential, but you just never got around to it, didn't own the console it was on, or whatever? Some selected answers (if I get any - my reach is very low) will appear in VGGN with a credit and link to your original reply here. 1/2

Adly Almanzo Adnan (@adlybadly)

Cue a year or 2 back I would have said ¹⁰⁰ Gears of War, Halo and Fable. Those were the BIG GUNS that nearly everyone played! But I never had an xbox! (it wasn't popular at all here in Asia vs Playstation) But lo behold, we now have it on PS5! Gears and Halo are out and Fable is incoming!

One game I'd like to add that I eventually did get to play but embarrassingly didn't enjoy it was Super Metroid. Embarrassing because I absolutely adore metroidvanias. 😊 Least I did totally play and loved SOTN!. 😊

zayedx2097 (@Zayedx2097)

Probably Eden ring this not my thing

Joseph Bellamy (@joseph__bellamy)

Most Western RPGs. I haven't played any Fallout, Mass Effect, Cyberpunk, Witcher, or Elder Scrolls.

Tales of Y'Vard Podcast (@talesofyvard)

Far Cry and God of War

The Essential Top 123

Now, I get to create a self-congratulatory list built specifically for me to obtain a perfect score. This is my own highly subjective list of games (or in some cases, franchises or even genres in general) that *all other gamers* should be embarrassed to have never played.

It's not to be taken too seriously. There are any number of reasons why it may not be practical or even possible to have played some of these. Maybe you aren't an old dude like me who's had more years to do it and was around when some of these were new. Maybe you never owned the console they're on, or you didn't even know the game existed.

It's just for fun. You get two scores for each entry in the list. Put an X or a checkmark in the first box if you've played at least a little of that game; if you tried it out for an hour or two or maybe longer (depending on the size of the game), but didn't stick with it. Put an X or checkmark in both boxes if you finished/beat the game, or got so close that you might as well have (for instance, I gave up at the final boss in *Perfect Dark*, but played the entire game otherwise).

At the end, count the games where you checked one box. This is your primary score – games you at least have some first-hand experience with.

Then, count the games where you checked both boxes. This is your secondary score – games you actually played to completion or nearly so.

For the purpose of this checklist, remakes and remasters count unless I specifically call out a version. Mentions of a platform also pertain to the version, but doesn't necessarily mean you played on that platform (for example, many NES and SNES games are available on Nintendo Switch Online now – those count).

I've tried not to be too obscure or esoteric with these selections, although some might seem like odd choices. Believe me, I could have gone way more into the proverbial weeds with personal picks like *Atomic Heart* and *Stellar Blade*.

Goldeneye 007 (N64 or re-release).....	☐ ☐	Any <i>Diablo</i> series game.....	☐ ☐
Any mainline <i>Pokémon</i>	☐ ☐	Any 2D <i>Ninja Gaiden</i> (NES/SNES era)	☐ ☐
Any <i>Uncharted</i> franchise game	☐ ☐	Any 3D <i>Ninja Gaiden</i> (Xbox or later)	☐ ☐
<i>Mass Effect</i> / <i>ME2</i> / <i>ME3</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐	Any 2D <i>Mega Man</i> (NES/SNES era)	☐ ☐
<i>Super Mario Bros.</i> (NES or re-release)	☐ ☐	<i>Mega Man Legends</i> / <i>MM Legends 2</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐
<i>Super Mario World</i> (SNES or re-release)	☐ ☐	Any version of <i>Tetris</i>	☐ ☐
<i>Super Mario 64</i> (N64 or re-release)	☐ ☐	Original <i>Perfect Dark</i> (N64 or re-release) ..	☐ ☐
<i>Super Mario Galaxy</i> / <i>Galaxy 2</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐	<i>Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay</i>	☐ ☐
<i>Portal</i> / <i>P2</i> / <i>Half-Life</i> / <i>HL2</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐	<i>Metal Gear Solid</i> / <i>MGS 2</i> / <i>MGS 3</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐
<i>Castlevania: Symphony of the Night</i>	☐ ☐	Any mainline <i>Assassin's Creed</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐
Any Other 2D <i>Castlevania</i> (NES / SNES / GBA / DS / etc.)	☐ ☐	Any <i>Bayonetta</i> series game	☐ ☐
<i>The Last of Us Part 1</i> / <i>TLOU Part 2</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐	Any <i>Ace Attorney</i> / Any <i>Life is Strange</i> ...	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐
<i>Xenoblade Chronicles 1</i> / <i>2</i> / <i>3</i> ..	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐	Any <i>Fable</i> series game (Xbox RPG series)	☐ ☐
<i>The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past</i>	☐ ☐	Any game in the <i>Borderlands</i> series.....	☐ ☐
<i>Ocarina of Time</i> / <i>Majora's Mask</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐	Any in the classic <i>Tomb Raider</i> series	☐ ☐
<i>Breath of the Wild</i> / <i>Tears of the Kingdom</i> ...	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐	Any in the modern <i>Tomb Raider</i> series	☐ ☐
Any of the first four <i>Silent Hill</i> games	☐ ☐	Any <i>Dead Space</i> / Any <i>Saints Row</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐
<i>Limbo</i> / <i>Inside</i> / <i>Journey</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐	Any game in the <i>Dragon Age</i> series	☐ ☐
<i>The Secret of Monkey Island</i> / <i>MI2</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐	Any game in the <i>Devil May Cry</i> series.....	☐ ☐
Any other 80s/90s point-and-click adv.	☐ ☐	Any mainline <i>Grand Theft Auto</i>	☐ ☐
Any text-based adventure (<i>Zork</i> , etc.).....	☐ ☐	Any <i>Batman: Arkham</i> series game	☐ ☐
<i>Dishonored</i> / <i>Dishonored 2</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐	Any mainline <i>Far Cry</i> or <i>Far Cry Primal</i>	☐ ☐
<i>Chrono Trigger</i> (SNES or re-release)	☐ ☐	<i>Suikoden</i> / <i>Suikoden II</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐
<i>Bioshock</i> / <i>Bioshock 2</i> / <i>Infinite</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐	<i>The Witness</i> / <i>Immortality</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐
<i>Metroid</i> (NES) / <i>Super Metroid</i> (SNES).....	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐	<i>Resident Evil</i> / <i>RE2</i> / <i>RE3</i> / <i>RE4</i> .	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐
<i>Metroid Prime</i> / <i>MP2</i> / <i>MP3</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐	Any other mainline <i>Resident Evil</i> game	☐ ☐
Any numbered <i>Final Fantasy</i> (not 11 or 14).....	☐ ☐	Any mainline <i>Call of Duty</i> game.....	☐ ☐
<i>Halo</i> / <i>Halo 2</i> / <i>Halo 3</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐	<i>Outer Wilds</i> (note: not <i>The Outer Worlds</i>).....	☐ ☐
<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i>	☐ ☐	<i>Gears of War</i> / <i>Gears 2</i> / <i>Gears 3</i> ...	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐
<i>Fallout 3</i> / <i>F:NV</i> / <i>Fallout 4</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐	Any in the 3D <i>Prince of Persia</i> series	☐ ☐
<i>Cyberpunk 2077</i> / <i>The Witcher 3</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐	<i>Steins;Gate</i> / <i>Nier: Automata</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐
Any game in the <i>Doom</i> series.....	☐ ☐	<p>If you marked neither box in a pair, you scored zero points for Primary and Secondary.</p> <p>If you only marked the first box in the pair (you played some of the game but didn't finish or come close) you scored 1 point for Primary only.</p> <p>If you marked both boxes in a pair (you played to completion, or was very close) you scored 1 point for Primary and 1 point for Secondary.</p> <p>Note that marking both boxes in a pair doesn't mean you get two points in a category. It just means you get one point in both categories.</p> <p>Primary Score: _____ (out of 123)</p> <p>Secondary Score: _____ (out of 123)</p>	
Any <i>Dark Souls</i> / <i>Bloodborne</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐		
<i>Clair Obscur: Expedition 33</i>	☐ ☐		
<i>Persona 3</i> / <i>P4</i> / <i>P5</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐		
<i>Deus Ex</i> / <i>Deus Ex: Invisible War</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐		
<i>Human Revolution</i> / <i>Mankind Divided</i> ...	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐		
<i>Jak & Daxter</i> / <i>Jak 2</i> / <i>Jak 3</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐		
Any in the <i>Ratchet & Clank</i> series.....	☐ ☐		
<i>Ico</i> / <i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐		
Any Greek-series <i>God of War</i> (1/2/3/etc.)	☐ ☐		
Any Norse-series <i>God of War</i> (2018/Ragnarok)	☐ ☐		
Any <i>Legacy of Kain</i> / Any <i>Onimusha</i> ...	☐ ☐ / ☐ ☐		
Any of the numbered <i>Kingdom Hearts</i>	☐ ☐		

Past Due – My Never-Ending Backlog

I'll save your sanity by not ranting again about Sony's decision to stop producing discs for PlayStation games starting in 2028. I said plenty about it in [issue #44](#) and again earlier.

It also stands to reason that PS6 will be digital-only, and I wonder if Xbox (and even Nintendo) will follow suit or see this as an opportunity to be the "good guy" with gamers like me and keep physical media as an option in the next console generation.

It could be argued that I'm a pessimist, but I do try to find the silver lining in bad situations. As the all-digital future leaves me behind, it gives me the perfect excuse to focus primarily on my backlog.

Between my physical game collection and my digital libraries across multiple platforms (assuming those digital games are still accessible in the future as stores and services begin to shut down), I have more than ten thousand games I already paid for.

I'm not sure what my current velocity is, but I seem to get through 40 to 60 games each year. Maybe it's more; doesn't matter. What matters is that I already have more games than I can ever play for the rest of my life.

I've been thinking a lot about that lately. In years past, I would rarely dip into that back catalogue. In fact, even new releases would quickly fall to the backlog if I didn't get to them quickly enough and moved on to the next hot new game. In the past few years alone, I've skipped some games I was anxious to play at the time, simply because there was so much new stuff coming out.

It's possible Sony is doing me a favor. I'll probably save money, because I won't be paying \$75 to \$85 for a digital download.

I'll certainly miss new AAA games, and there's likely to be several each year that I regret not being able to play (unless their competitors do keep supporting physical media), but as I said, this gives me the perfect excuse to finally play way more games from my backlog.

This year, even before the announcement, I've been doing a lot more of that. You'll find my mini-reviews of the *Legacy of Kain* series and the *Onimusha* series in this issue – games I've always wanted to play but just never got around to until recently.

I played through nearly every *James Bond 007* game this year. [Issue #44](#) is dedicated to that.

We'll see how long I can keep it up while still putting the occasional new release into my gaming rotation, but there are so many great games (and even just "good" or "might appeal to me given my tastes") I've never played.

Here are just a few of the games that have risen to the top of the my backlog recently. Most of these aren't must-plays; just games I have my eye on playing at some point soon.

Otogi and Otogi 2 (original Xbox)

These appear on the original Xbox. I don't know too much about them, other than that they look like *Onimusha* and *Devil May Cry* and *Ninja Gaiden*. I want to check them out.



Haunting Ground (PS2)

All I know about this one is it's a spooky game, it has gotten really expensive to buy, and I already have it in my collection. I played another game that fits the same definition a few years ago (*Rule of Rule*) and I have a few more in my collection (such as *Kuon*). This one, I'm hoping to get around to in October if circumstances permit, maybe for a second annual spooky month issue of VGGN.



Zeno Clash II (Xbox 360 or PS3)

The developer of this game, ACE Team, has a really bizarre style that sets their games apart. I enjoyed their cel-shaded *Souls-ish* game *Clash: Artifacts of Chaos* enough to play through their debut game *Zeno Clash* right after, a few years ago, but I got sidetracked before playing the sequel. It's on my list.



The first *Zeno Clash* was set in the same world as their later *Artifacts of Chaos*, but it was a very different game featuring unique first person melee combat. *Weird* doesn't even begin to describe it.

Once I'm in the mood for this kind of game and I find a good gap between others, I'd like to finally play through *Zeno Clash II*.

Splinter Cell (series)

I mentioned earlier that I'd like to play the *Splinter Cell* series of stealth games, of which there appear to be six mainline entries.

As I was opening and testing some Nintendo 3DS games this week (because I suddenly got worried about the "bit rot" issue from long periods of disuse – [look it up](#)), I saw part of the first opening mission of *Splinter Cell 3D*. It's apparently a remake/port of the original game. It seemed overly dark. If they're all like that, it's going to make screenshots difficult for my mini-reviews. I still want to play them, though. Maybe not that 3DS version. We'll see.

System Shock 2 (PS5 remaster)

I also mentioned earlier that I haven't played through *System Shock 2*, but it's been near the top of my play list for weeks.

Various New Releases (PS5)

Fortunately, quite a few games I'm interested in are getting physical releases in the next few weeks. As long as they aren't revealed to be key-discs (prompting me to cancel my pre-order), I've got these I'll be playing soon:

Onimusha: Way of the Sword

The main reason for my *Onimusha* marathon has been to prepare for this new game. It probably would have been fine to just jump into the new one. I can't imagine they've built it in a way that would be unfriendly to people who weren't around for the series on PS2, but if I hadn't done this, I probably wouldn't have it on my list at all.

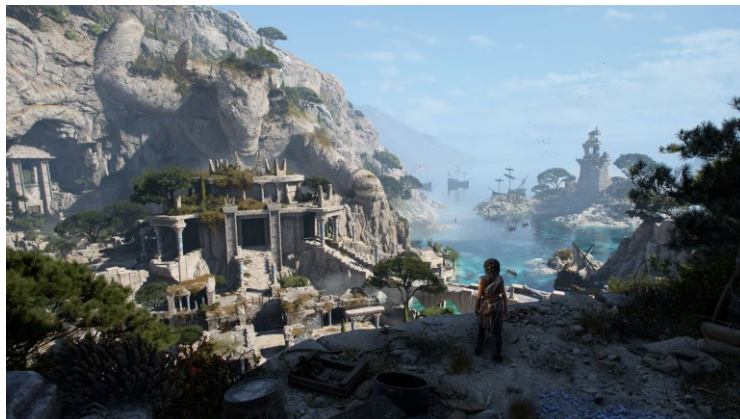


Control - Resonant

Super excited for this, and for the fact it's getting a physical release (even if it got delayed into October, while digital folks get it in September).

Resonance – A Plague Tale Legacy

This one is mere days away, as I write this. Those first two games were great. This seems to be more of a spin-off that goes in an even less reality-grounded direction, but I'm looking forward to playing it.



The Blood of DawnWalker

It looks to be a vampire RPG, and all signs point to it being a can't-miss fall release.

Marvel's Wolverine

This is going to sound stupid, but my only concern with this one is that it might be too well-polished and, well, safe. I felt that way about *Spider-Man 2* somehow – a great game that just didn't speak to me somehow. I can't put my finger on it, but the games I enjoy most these days are unexpected, or games overlooked (even panned) by other people, or older games that remind me of the days when developers were experimenting and learning and breaking new ground. Does that make sense at all?

I'm still playing this, of course.

I'll probably love it.

Silent Hill – Townfall

Here, I'm hoping for a return to form after my lukewarm opinions on last year's *Silent Hill f*. My concern here is the switch to a first-person perspective. Still, it worked for *Resident Evil*, so why not *Silent Hill*?

Primal (PS2)

This is one I've wanted to play for a long time. I don't know if it's good, or whether I'll like it, but it always looked interesting with the main character being pulled from the real world into some underworld/fantasy world.

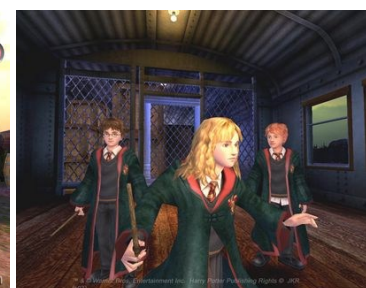
It's been in my collection forever, but I recently picked it up digitally on PS3 in light of the store closing in a few months.



Harry Potter (series – Xbox and Xbox 360)

These have never been on my radar despite owning them all. Metacritic scores would suggest they're not even worth it with a high point of 77 for *Chamber of Secrets* and a low point of 38 for *Deathly Hallows Part 1*, but this is the type of thing that might make a good VGGN feature, so I'm considering it.

If I'm going to do that, then maybe I'd want to consider the *Lego Harry Potter* series as well, with a remastered collection on PS4. I've already played *Hogwarts Legacy*. There's also a *Quidditch* game or two, but maybe I could skip those. I'm less committed to this idea than most of the other games on this list.



A Library Look

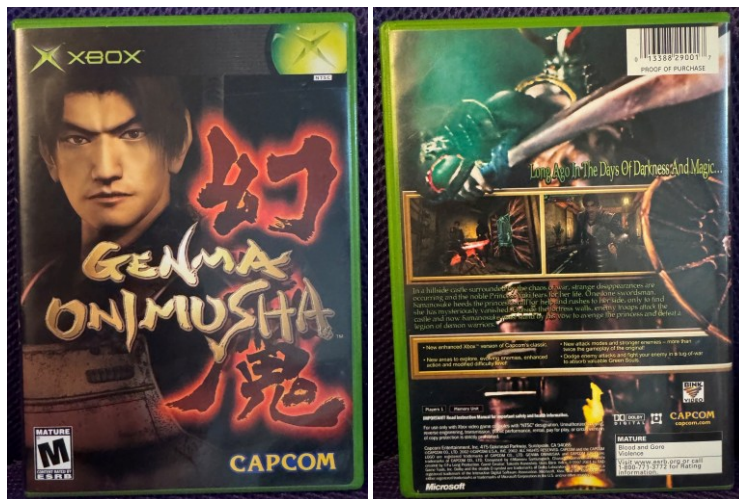
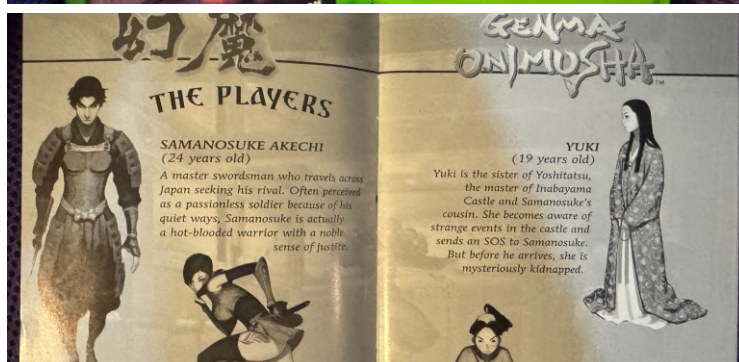
Until now, I've called this section *Collection Inspection*. It's the recurring feature where I pick a few games that are (usually) applicable to the issue's main topic, take them from my collection, and snap a few photos.

As I look more to my backlog, I want to think of it more as a library, not just a collection. These are games I could play, or should play, or may have already played, from my library.

Genma Onimusha

Platform: Xbox / **Edition:** Standard

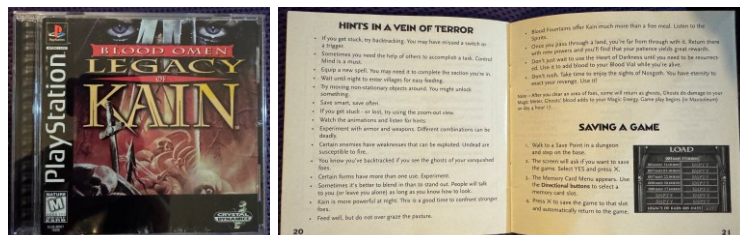
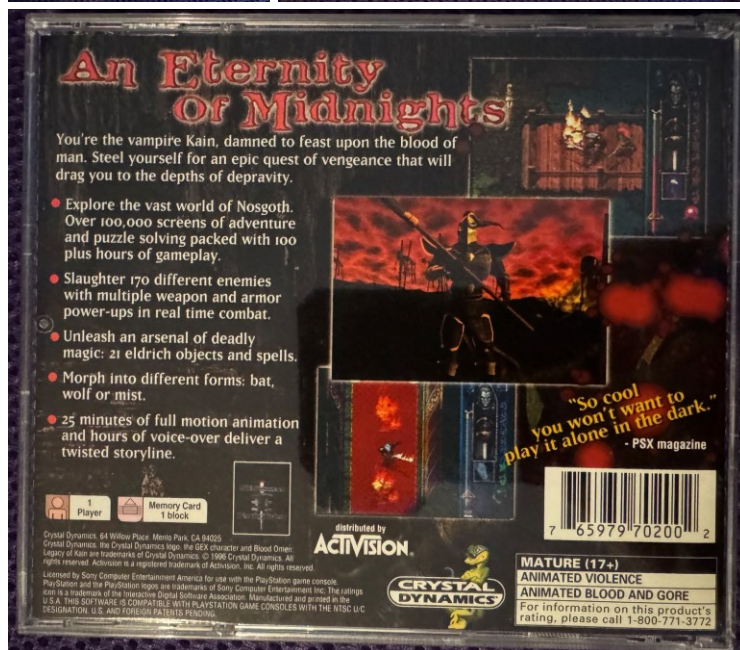
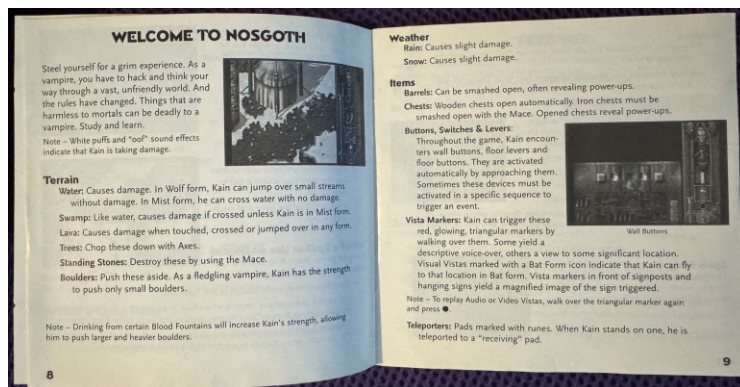
Comments: I gave this one a shot during my *Onimusha* series playthrough. Look for my brief thoughts in this issue's *Final Stage* wrap-up.



Blood Omen – Legacy of Kain

Platform: PlayStation 1 / **Edition:** Standard

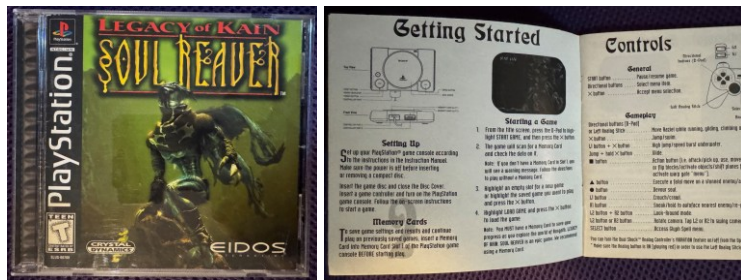
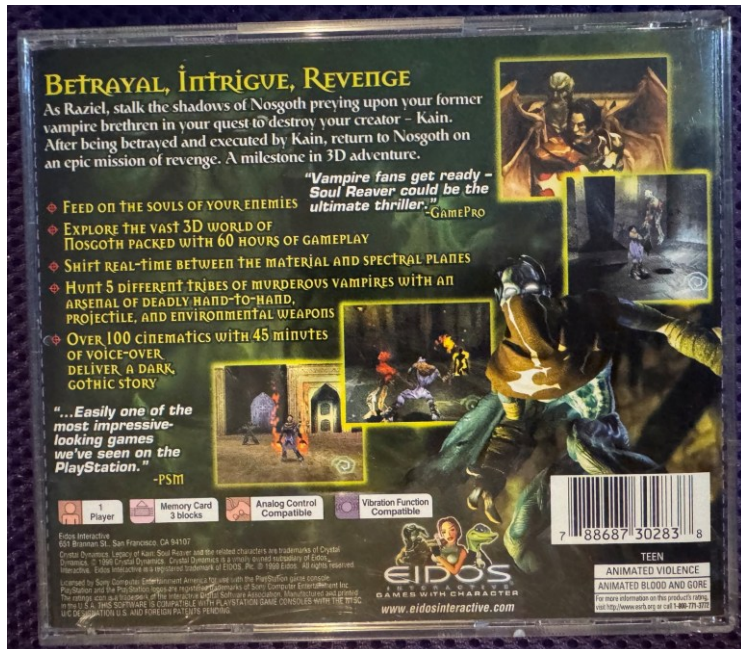
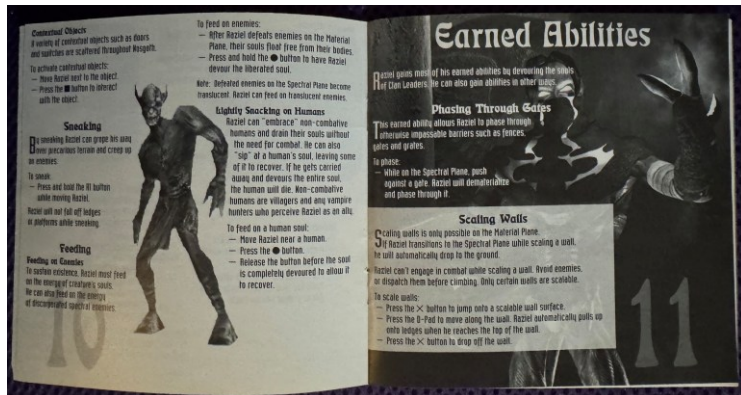
Comments: As with *Onimusha* (except for the third one, and I suspect it has something to do with digital rights for the likeness and voice of Jean Reno), the *Legacy of Kain* series has been brought forward to the modern age by way of remasters and/or ports. This first one looks and plays wildly different from the rest.



Legacy of Kain – Soul Reaver

Platform: PlayStation 1 / **Edition:** Standard

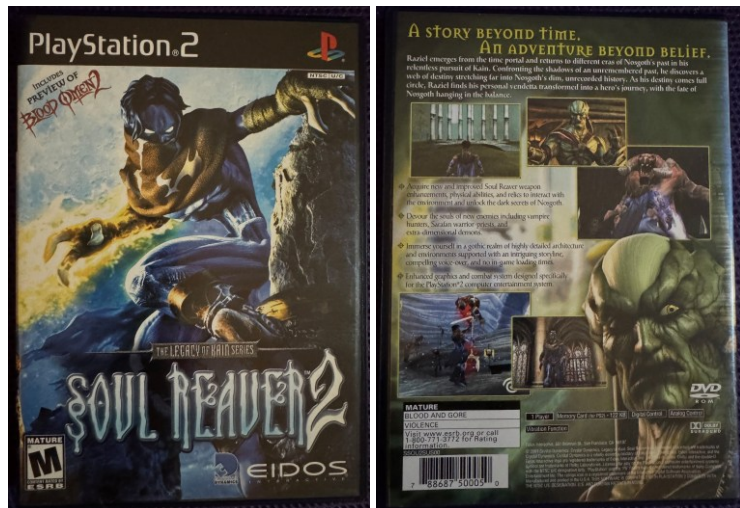
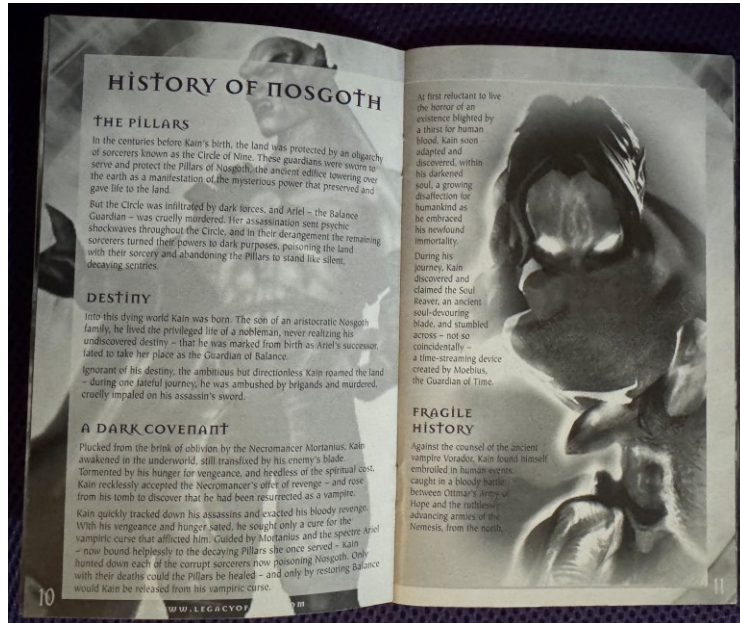
Comments: This and its PS2 sequel were remastered as a pair a year or two ago. The antihero of the original game (and the franchise's namesake) Kain becomes the antagonist as you take the role of Raziel. I have the *Soul Reaver 1 & 2 Collector's Edition* as well.



The Legacy of Kain Series – Soul Reaver 2

Platform: PlayStation 2 / **Edition:** Standard

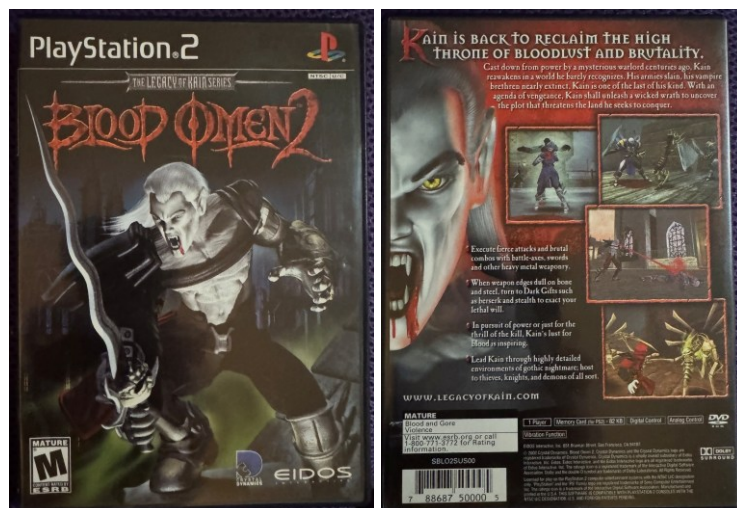
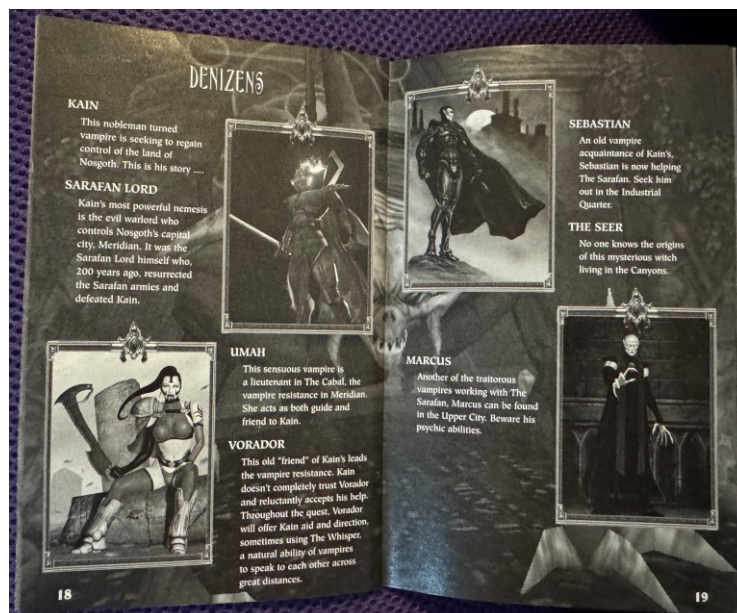
Comments: I forgot to mention it, but all the games in this issue's *Library Look* (the feature formerly known as *Collection Inspection*) also appear as mini-reviews later in this issue. I did a series play-through of both *The Legacy of Kain* and *Onimusha* and had a blast.



The Legacy of Kain Series – Blood Omen 2

Platform: PlayStation 2 / **Edition:** Standard

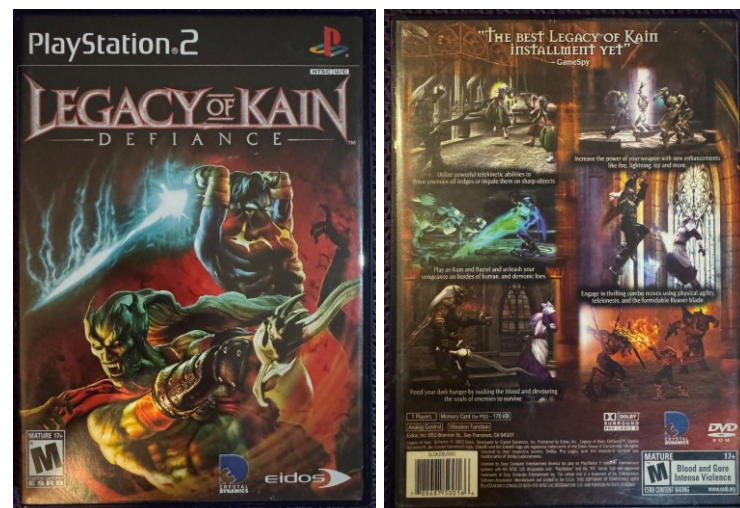
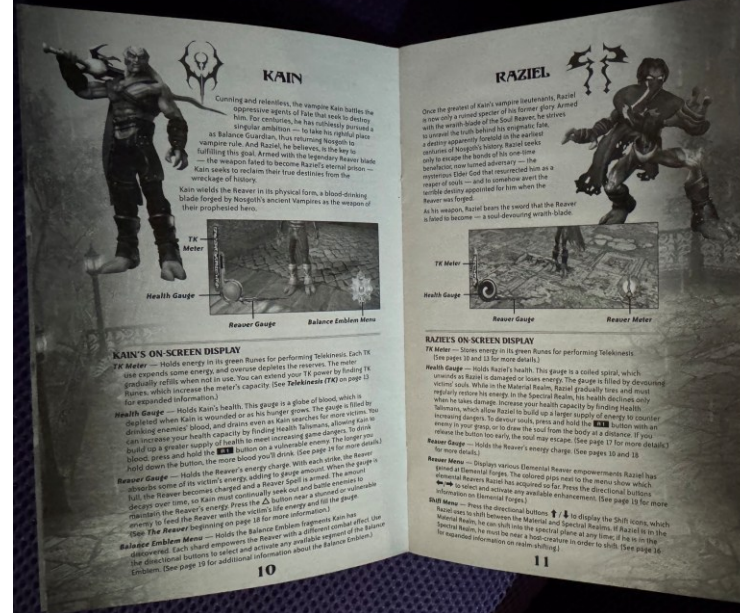
Comments: That wacky immortal vampire Kain is up to his old antics again in... okay, no, the series is all but devoid of humor, with a dark centuries-long storyline that's well worth experiencing.



Legacy of Kain – Defiance

Platform: PlayStation 2 / **Edition:** Standard

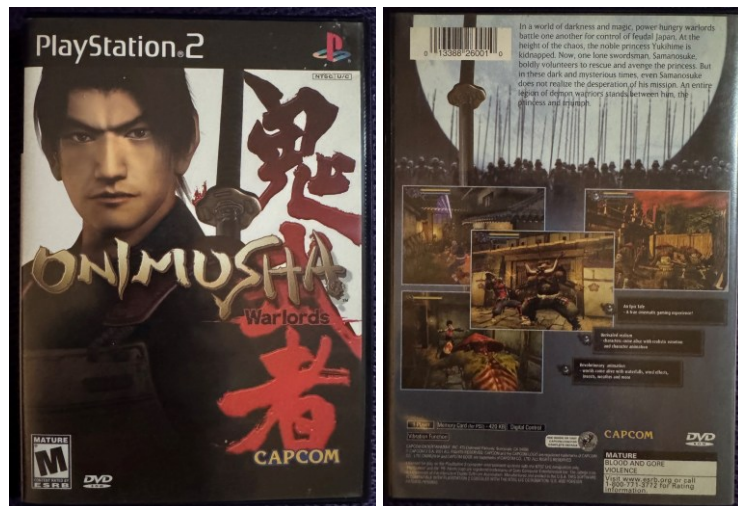
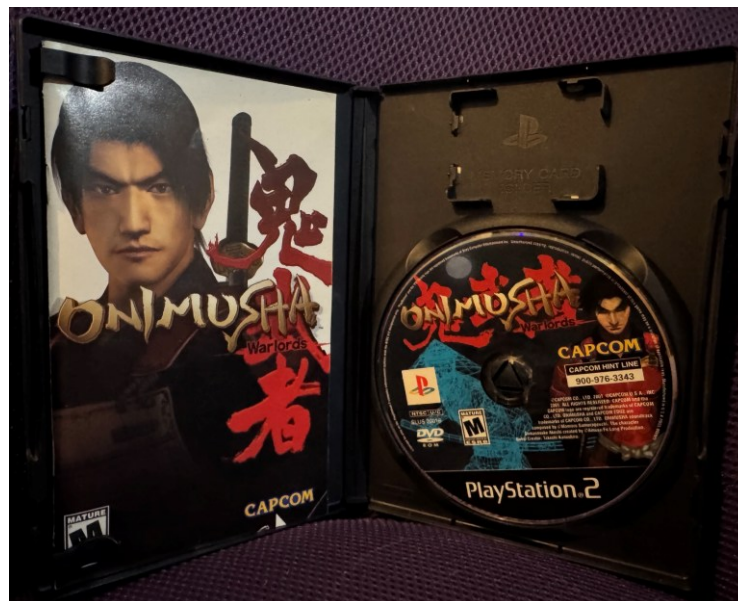
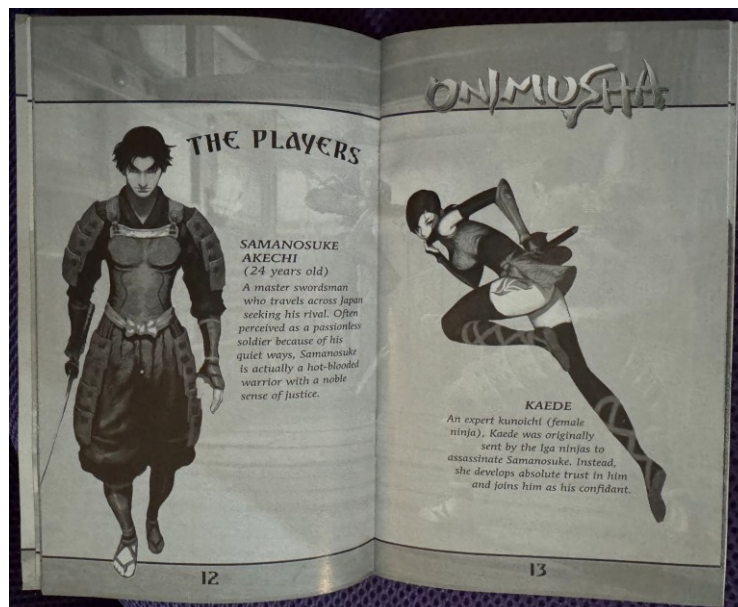
Comments: This and *Blood Omen 2* were also released on the original Xbox. I have those in my library as well, but I opted not to include them since they're practically identical except for the green case.



Onimusha – Warlords

Platform: PlayStation 2 / **Edition:** Standard

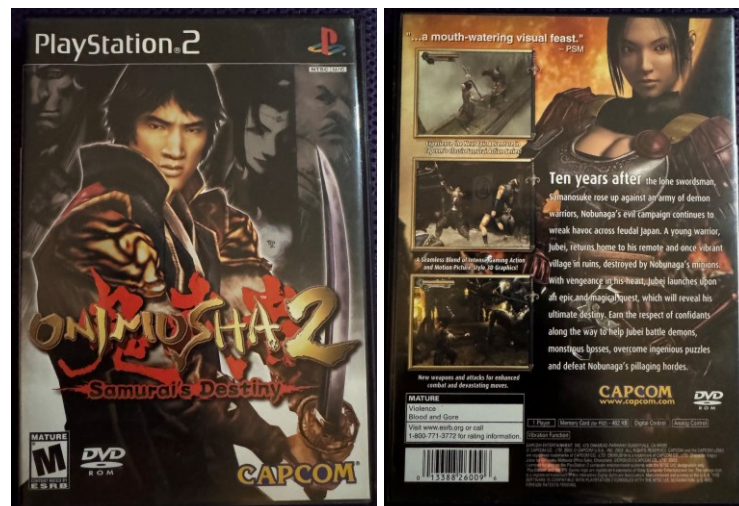
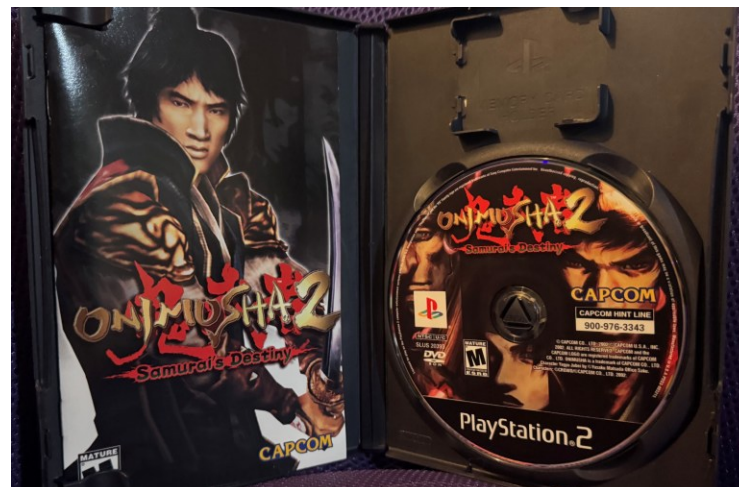
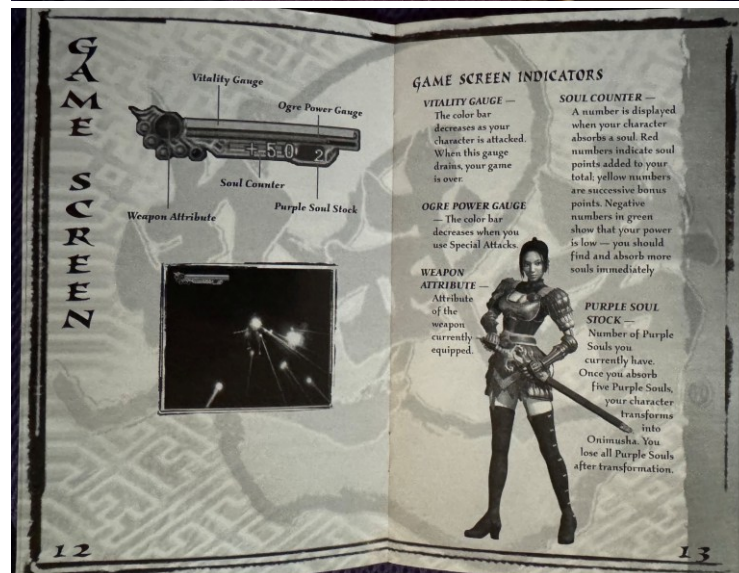
Comments: As much as I love collecting (or adding to my library), it's always nice when classics like this get a remaster, especially when they rework the control scheme so you're not stuck with tank controls.



Onimusha 2 – Samurai's Destiny

Platform: PlayStation 2 / **Edition:** Standard

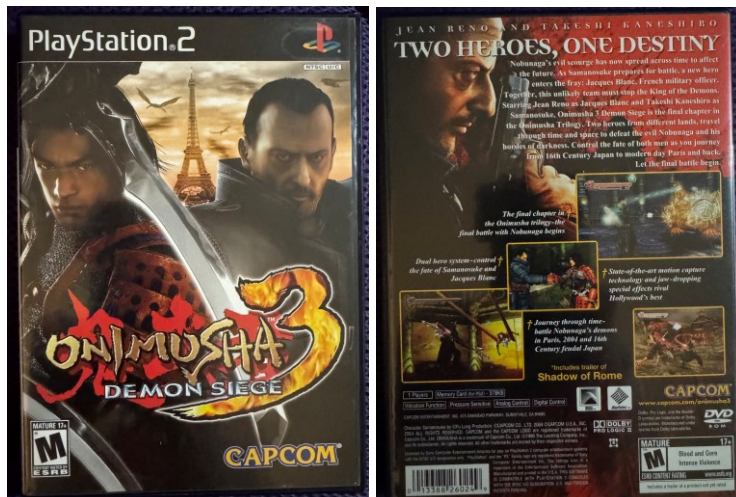
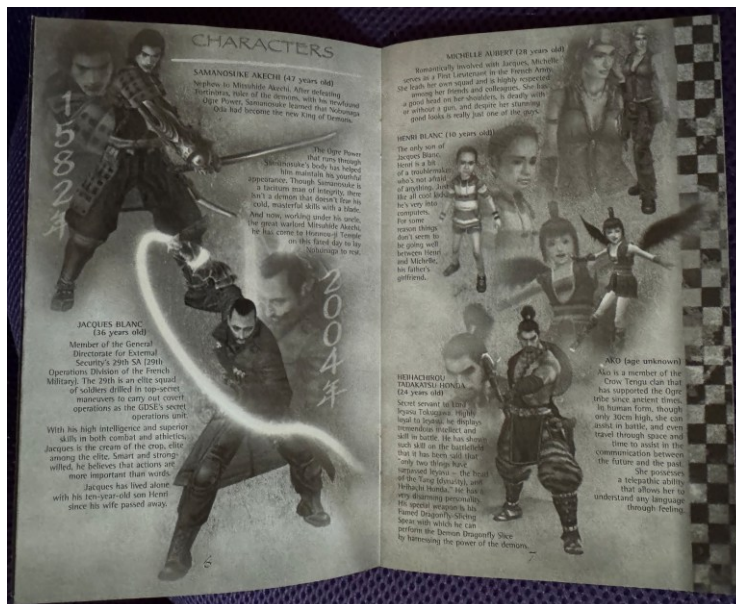
Comments: It's tough to choose between this or Onimusha 3 for best in the series, but if going strictly by the original releases (this one got a remaster), then Onimusha 3 probably takes it for its real-time scenes (no longer pre-rendered) and its modern 3D movement (not strictly tank controls, although it still utilizes fixed and cinematic camera angles). I played the remaster instead, though, and it's very good.



Onimusha 3 – Demon Siege

Platform: PlayStation 2 / **Edition:** Standard

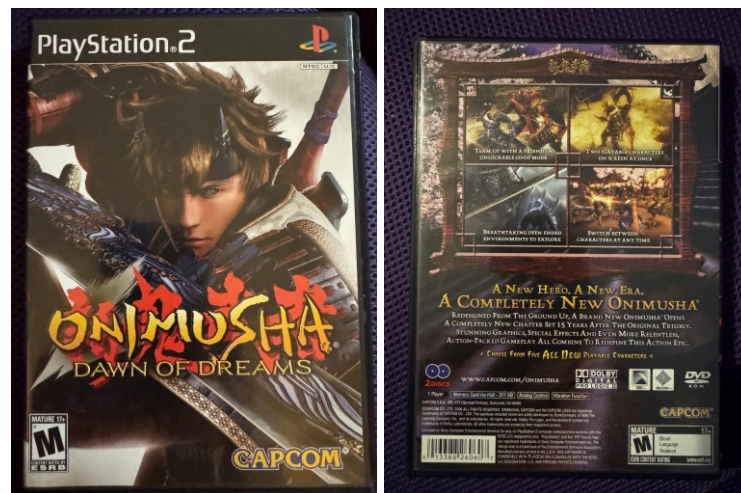
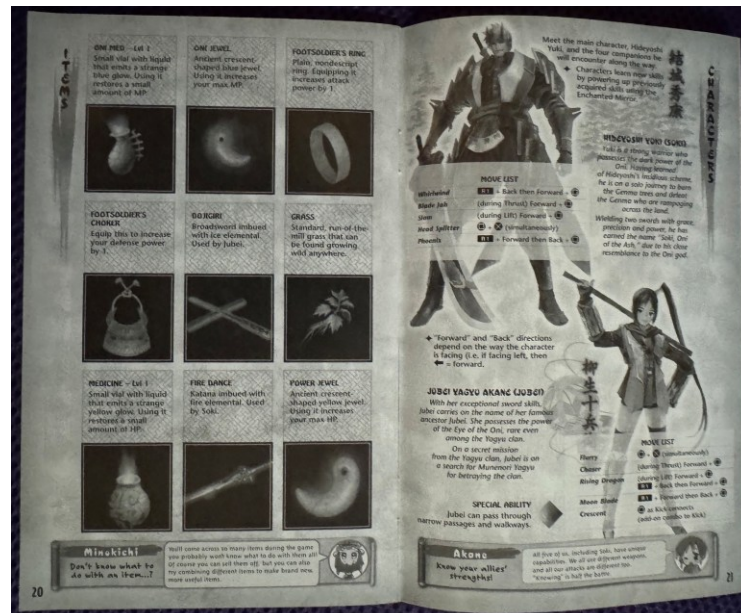
Comments: If over-the-top monsters and action set pieces weren't enough in *Onimusha 2*, the folks at Capcom upped the ante by introducing time travel and a split narrative between original series protagonist Samanosuke and newcomer Jacques (played in part by French actor Jean Reno).



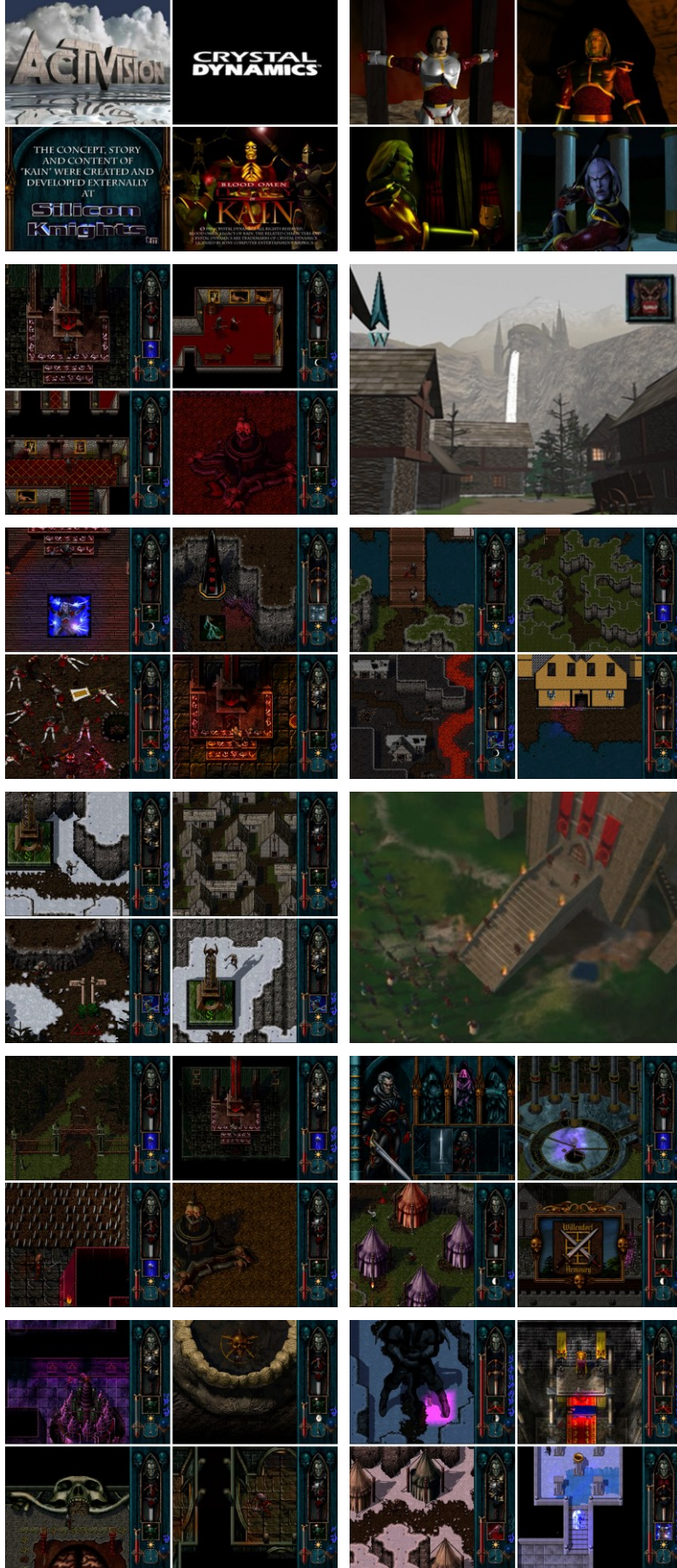
Onimusha – Dawn of Dreams

Platform: PlayStation 2 / **Edition:** Standard

Comments: Back in my day, bigger games simply came on multiple discs; none of this “it’s too big to fit” nonsense that the anti-disc chuds like to use when they’re out there defending their favorite multi-billion dollar corporation’s anti-consumer practices.



Mini-Review: Blood Omen – Legacy of Kain



My journey begins!

This first game is the only top-down isometric 2D pixel game in the series. Graphically, It reminds me a lot of *Suikoden* and *Dink Smallwood*, but a lot darker.

Some of the later games in the series have recent HD remasters, but not the two *Blood Omens* (nothing announced).

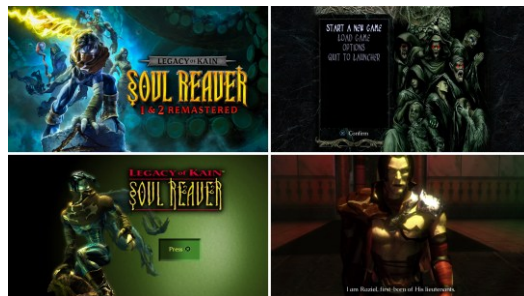
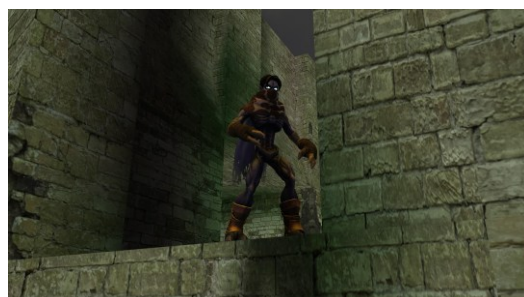
Playing the original is totally viable since it's available on PS4/PS5 digitally and includes patched-in trophy support, save states, and a rewind system (seemingly standard for PS1 and PS2 classics on these consoles via emulation).

It's an action game with abilities, upgrades, lots of secrets, but not really an RPG. I ended up abusing the rewind feature, making it far easier than it might have been otherwise.

I enjoyed this. This is a series I never got around to, until now.

*PlayStation 1 Classic played digitally on PS5 Pro.
Originally posted to social media on 05/08/2026.*

Mini-Review: Soul Reaver Remastered



My journey in Nosgoth continues. No longer an isometric (top-down) pixel art action game as in Kain's first outing, new character Raziel's debut is in a 3D world of connected levels. It reminded me a lot of how the world of *Shadowman* was designed.

Soul Reaver has platforming, lots of puzzles to solve as you make progress through its dungeons, and a reality-shifting mechanic that bends the world in interesting ways and lends itself to the puzzles.

The original PS1 graphics can be toggled on/off with R3, although you're still getting updated UI and subtitles, and it's still 60 FPS.

Character models get the biggest bump in fidelity.

Each boss fight is a gimmick puzzle. I looked up hints for two (one required a mechanic I didn't know I could do).

Atmospheric and fun!

Played on console: PS5 Pro.
Originally posted: 05/12/2026.

Mini-Review: Soul Reaver 2 Remastered



The *Legacy of Kain* story takes some twists here, and I'm starting to see why the series has developed a dedicated following.

This remaster does very little to improve on the original graphics (which can be turned on or off instantly), and at times doesn't appear to up-rez anything at all aside from specific world elements and the characters themselves.

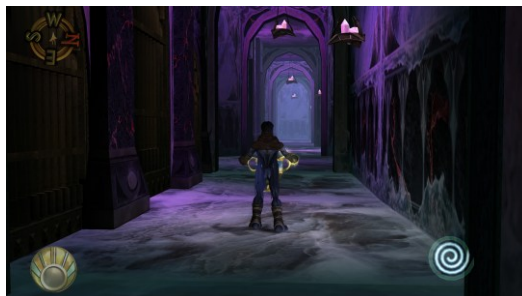
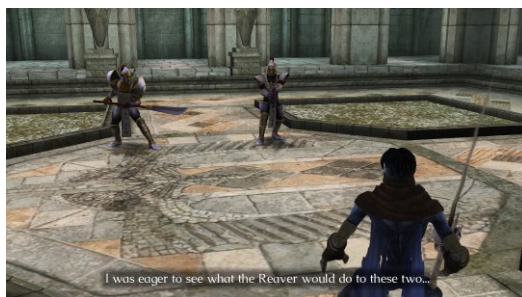
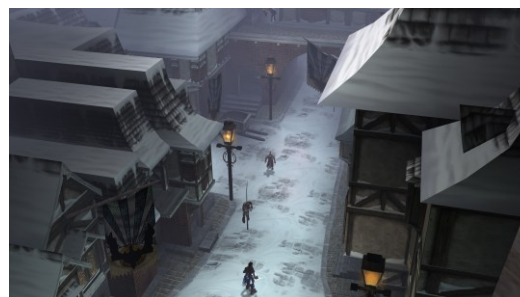
The combat somehow felt worse than *SR1*. When the only benefit to fighting is recovering health (not experience or upgrades or item drops), it starts making sense to just avoid combat to avoid losing health to begin with.

It's also lacking the puzzle-boss fights, which I missed.

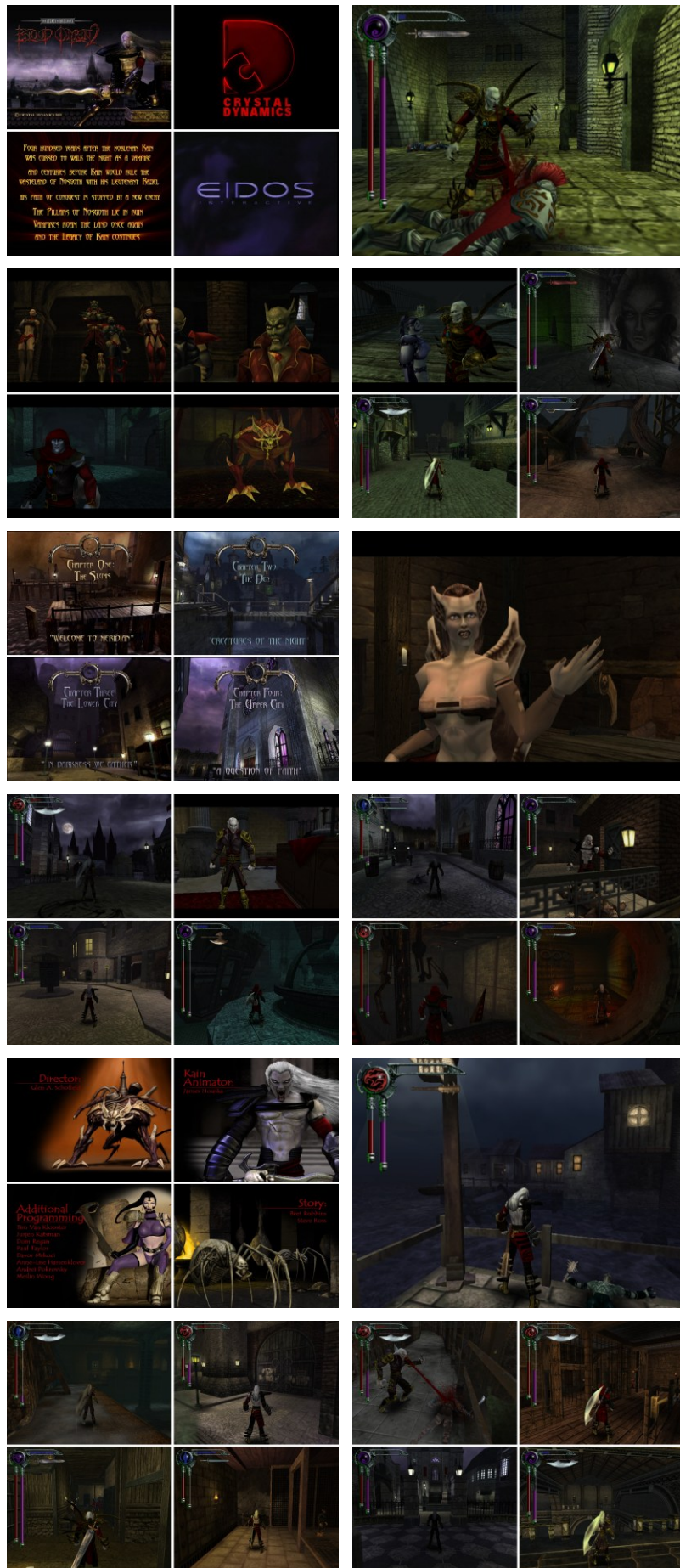
There are still some puzzle/dungeon sections (and good ones), but overall, it felt a little weaker than *SR1*.

Great story, though.

*Played on console: PS5 Pro.
Originally posted: 05/16/2026.*



Mini-Rev: Legacy of Kain – Blood Omen 2



Even though it does nothing to advance the overarching storyline involving time travel and cheating fate, and even though it's a linear series of 11 chapters rather than an interconnected world you explore through linear progression, and even though I wasn't a big fan of the *Mega Man Legends*-like tank controls (but like *MML*, the camera always faces forward so it's not hard to adapt), this might be my favorite in the series so far.

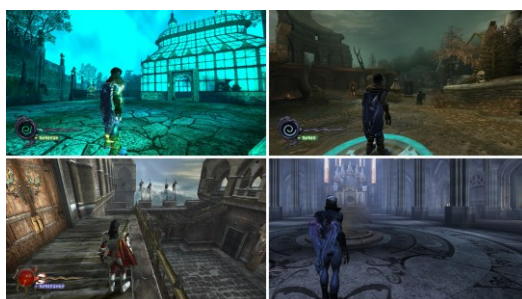
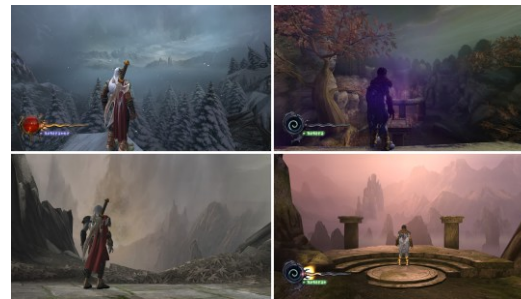
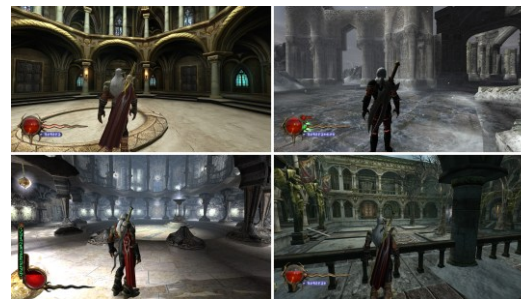
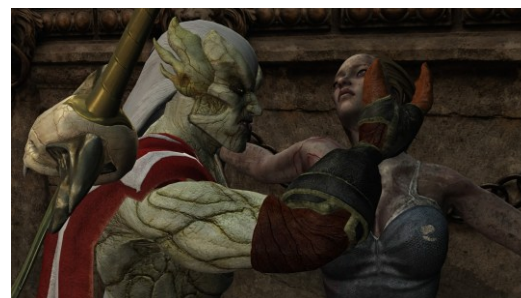
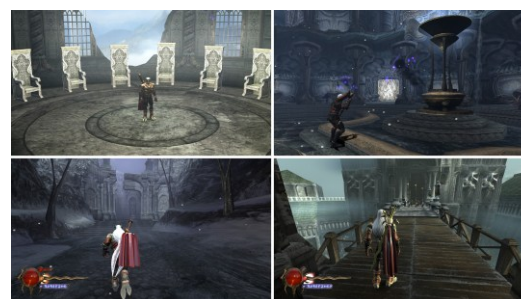
One more to go, unless you count the recently-released side-scroller, *Ascendance*.

With powers that let you sneak in mist, jump long distances, and use telekinesis and mind control, I hoped it would go even more immersive sim than it does.

Health upgrades actually gave me a reason to fight every enemy (and NPC). Fewer puzzles, but still a great game.

*PlayStation 2 Classic played digitally on PS5 Pro.
Originally posted to social media on 05/24/2026.*

Mini-Review: LoK - Defiance Remastered



As with the *Soul Reaver 1* & 2 remasters, it's seemingly the same game (not a remake - it's the original geometry, level design, everything) with a fresh coat of paint, but with several quality of life enhancements that make me wonder if I would have struggled playing the original PS2 version (also available on PS4/PS5).

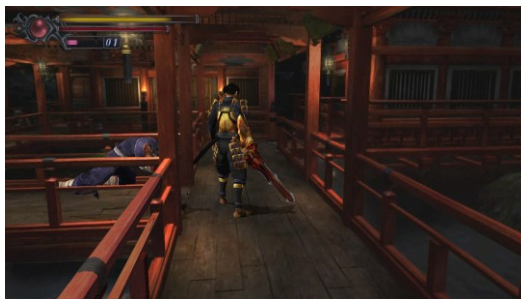
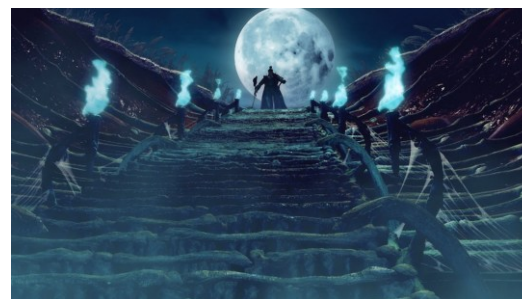
New lighting and effects help boost the new visuals (can switch them on/off separately) but it also has a modern third-person camera to replace the OG *God of War*-style fixed cinematic camera (can be toggled on/off too).

Perhaps the biggest game-changer might be "foresight" in which holding L2 points you toward your next objective.

Anyway, it's a great game, and a great end cap for the series. I loved my time in Nosgoth. I highly recommend them all.

*Played on console: PS5 Pro.
Originally posted: 05/25/2026.*

Mini-Review: Onimusha - Warlords



This is the remastered version for PS4, not the original PS2 version.

My backlog is full of games and franchises that I just never got around to, like *Onimusha*. I begin my 4-game series run (a 5th coming soon) with the first game's remaster, now with 3D controls (or tank controls as an option, for those who want the authentic experience).

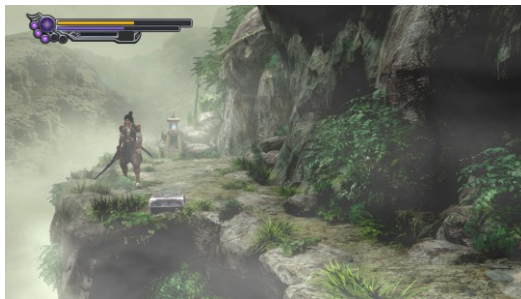
I didn't know much about this game, so I was surprised that it's very much of a classic *Resident Evil* style, in its fixed camera perspectives that shift drastically as you navigate through areas and rooms, its pre-rendered backgrounds and the puzzle/key/explore aspect.

I have a soft spot for this classic style of PS1/PS2 era game, although the trade-off with 3D controls is that you sometimes run the wrong direction when scenes shift.

Anyway, I loved this. It's small in scope but big in atmosphere and impact.

*Played on console: PS5 Pro.
Originally posted: 07/29/2026.*

Mini-Rev: Onimusha 2 – Samurai's Destiny



This is the remastered version for PS4, not the original PS2 version.

Different heroes, including the main protagonist Jubei (instead of Samanosuke), but the same third-person action with fixed camera angles.

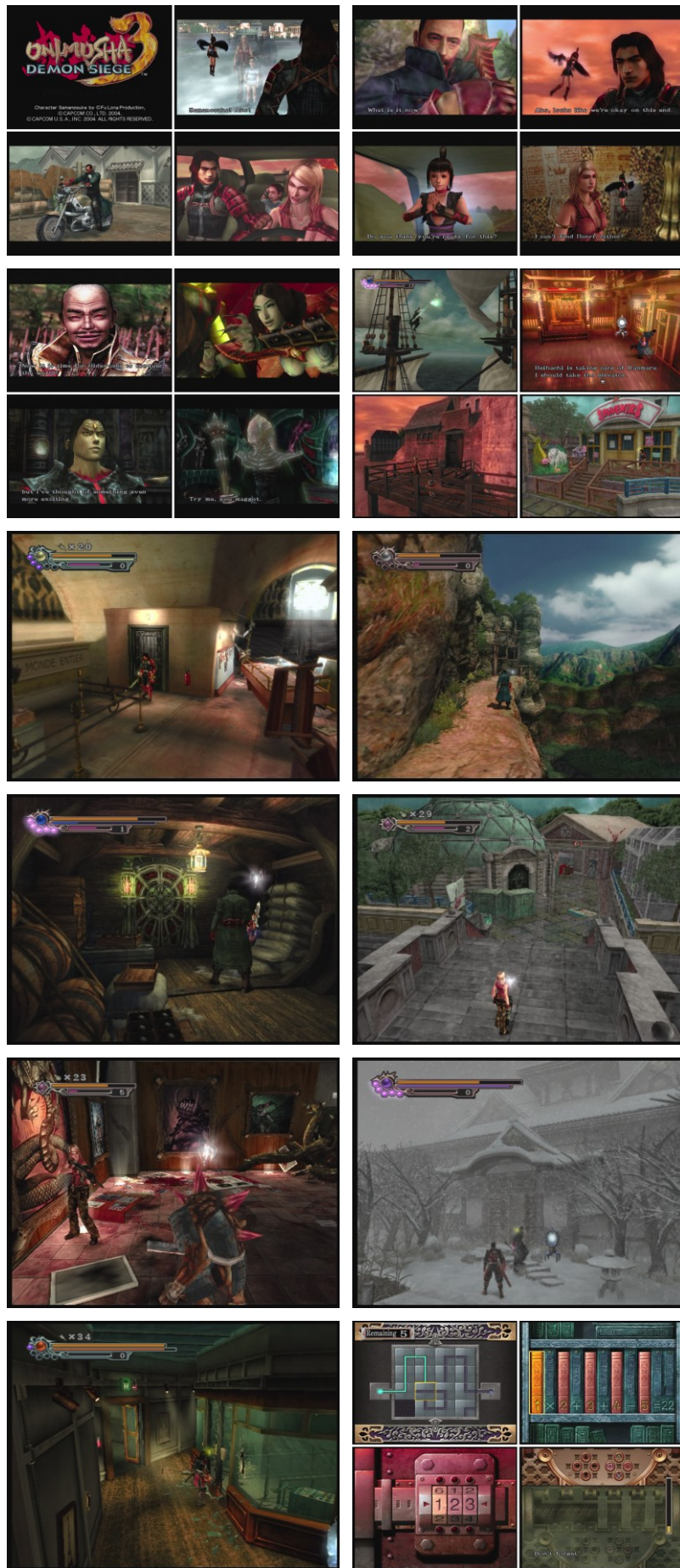
Whether a product of this remaster or improvements to the original I'm not sure, but there's less of a stark contrast between the upscaled, remastered assets (characters, enemies, interactable objects) and the pre-rendered backgrounds now.

We revisit one of the same areas featured in the first game, but there's more variety to the other areas you visit as Jubei and friends, new weird monster enemies, more bizarre and over-the-top bosses, mechanical technology, flying machines, bonus modes, and a branching narrative structure (there's an entire plot map) I didn't realize was a thing until afterwards.

So far, I'm loving the Onimusha series.

*Played on console: PS5 Pro.
Originally posted: 08/02/2026.*

Mini-Review: Onimusha 3 – Demon Siege



Capcom hasn't remastered the third game in the main trilogy yet, but the PS2 version holds up great.

French actor Jean Reno joins the cast of heroes this time, but only with a few spoken lines in French at the beginning and the end before we get a less-interesting English voice-over for most of the game.

The writers decided to take things in an entirely new direction by not only bringing back main character Samanosuke from the 1st game (where's Kaede, though?), but by introducing time travel and a split narrative where Reno's character Jacques is whisked to the past Terminator-style to battle beside a past version of Samanosuke while the "real" Samanosuke takes the fight to modern-day Paris (2004).

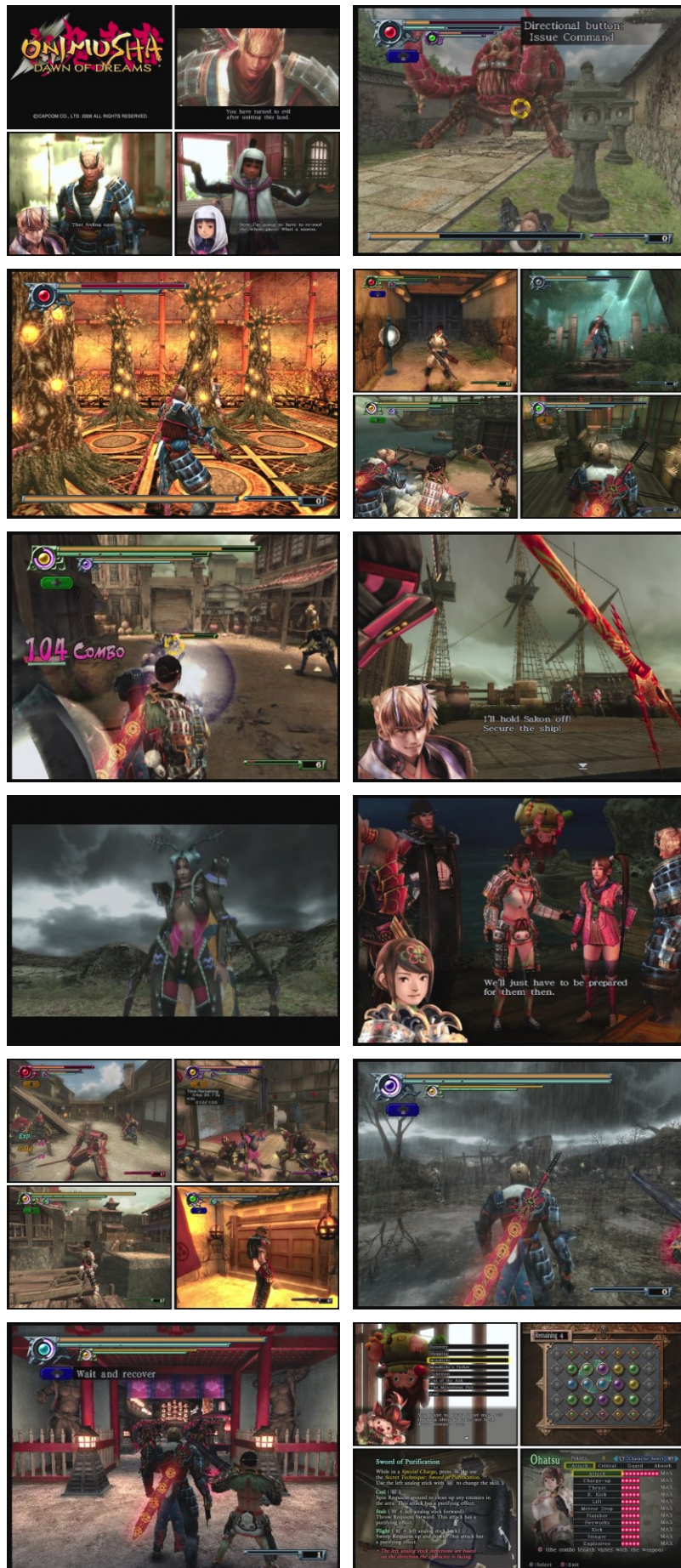
Great combat, a fun upgrade system, cool characters, and a wild plot.

I loved it. It might be my favorite in the series so far.

Played on console: PlayStation 2.

Originally posted to social media on 08/07/2026.

Mini-Review: Onimusha – Dawn of Dreams



While I was playing this, Capcom released it as a PS2 classic (digital only, but it's only \$10) on PS4 and PS5 for anybody interested in checking out the last mainline *Onimusha* before next month's *Way of the Sword* releases.

As to the game on PS2, it seemed to have just enough input lag to annoy me early on. I was playing with a wireless controller, though. Otherwise, it feels mostly modern and responsive.

It's significantly different from the prior games, while keeping the same action combat and soul orb absorption mechanics.

It's a series of missions with multiple characters, more emphasis on RPG elements (leveling up skills and weapons), a different style of storytelling, and two discs that make it way bigger than the prior games.

I liked it, but less than the main trilogy. It's definitely worth playing, but I feel like maybe the series peaked with *Onimusha 3*.

Played on console: PlayStation 2.

Originally posted to social media on 08/23/2026.

The Final Stage

Tank Controls

After finishing the main trilogy, I wanted to play through the original Xbox version of *Onimusha* since it supposedly has some new gameplay mechanics, new or remixed areas, and a whole new type of power-up orb.

I forgot that the first game (the first two games, I think) only featured tank controls, because I played the remastered versions.

It's been a while since I've played with tank controls. If you weren't around before dual stick controls became a thing, you may only be familiar with modern 3D control schemes, where you simply aim the left stick in the direction you want your character to move, and they move that way. The right stick controls the camera. It makes perfect sense now, but this wasn't always the standard.

Tank controls were from an era where you had just one thumbstick, or in the case of the original PS1 at launch, no thumbstick at all (just a D-pad).

Moving the camera wasn't even a thing unless it was mapped to the triggers (which did happen for some games – or the face buttons for some PSP games).

Many games, like *Dino Crisis*, *Resident Evil*, and even into the PS2 generation with *Onimusha* (I guess I just named a bunch of Capcom franchises), used fixed angles and even pre-rendered scenes where you'd use left/right to turn your character (like a tank) and forward/backward to move them in whatever direction they were facing.

It's tough to play games with tank controls after you're spoiled on modern 3D controls. I've done it, but I don't like it.

In the case of *Genma Onimusha* (the Xbox version), I just wasn't in the mood for the brain-breaking mental adjustment it takes to acclimate to that kind of character movement, so I decided pretty quickly that it wasn't a *different enough* version to justify the effort. Incidentally, it's also why I've never gotten around to *Dino Crisis*. Well, that and my optimism that someday Capcom will put out remasters like they did with *Onimusha*.



Next Issue

Maybe it won't be the next issue, but I have an idea to write about games presented entirely (or almost entirely) in black & white (or at least some form of monochrome). Original GameBoy games come to mind, but there have been a surprising number of newer B&W games over the past ten to fifteen years. Anyway, it's an idea I'm mulling over.

End Credits

The VGGN controller logo with multiple "X" buttons, the cover title text, the "cartoon me" on the cover page, and some occasional other artwork was made using <https://openart.ai>. You'll probably know it if you see it.

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Images of the physical games in the *Collection Inspection* feature are photos I took of games in my own collection and weren't sourced from the internet. Apologies for reflections and bad framing. I'm not a pro.

Screenshots used in my video game mini-reviews and some screenshots used in other articles or features that weren't already attributed to a different source were captured by me in-game and are used here in what I believe is "fair use".

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