

= Silent Hill 2 =

Silent Hill 2 is a survival horror video game published by Konami for the PlayStation 2 and developed by Team Silent, a production group within Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo. The game was released in September 2001 as the second installment in the Silent Hill series. An extended version of the game was published for Xbox in December of the same year, containing a short bonus scenario and other minor additions. It was later ported to the Microsoft Windows operating system in 2002. A remastered high @-@ definition version of the game was released for the PlayStation 3 and the Xbox 360 in 2012 as part of the Silent Hill HD Collection.

While set in the series' eponymous fictional American town, Silent Hill 2 is not a direct sequel to the first Silent Hill game. Instead, it centers on James Sunderland, who enters the town after receiving a letter written by his deceased wife, saying she is waiting for him in their "special place" in Silent Hill. Joined by Maria, who strongly resembles her, he searches for her and discovers the truth about her death. Additional material in re @-@ releases and ports included Born from a Wish, a sub @-@ scenario which focuses on Maria before she and James meet.

Silent Hill 2 uses a third @-@ person view and gameplay places a greater emphasis on finding items and solving riddles than combat. Psychological aspects such as the gradual disappearance of Mary's letter were added to the game. More humanoid than their counterparts in the preceding game, some of the monsters were designed as a reflection of James' subconscious. References to real world history, films and literary works can also be found in the game.

Silent Hill 2 received critical acclaim from critics. Within the month of its release in North America, Japan, and Europe, over one million copies were sold, with the greatest sales in North America. English @-@ language critics praised the atmosphere, graphics, story and monster designs of Silent Hill 2, but criticized the controls as difficult to use although much improved than its predecessor. Since its release, the game appeared on several critics' top lists for its story and use of metaphors, psychological horror and taboo topics as well as its soundtrack / sound design. It is now considered by many critics to be the greatest horror game of all time.

Due to the success of Silent Hill 2, a sequel titled Silent Hill 3 was released in 2003.

= = Gameplay = =

The objective of Silent Hill 2 is to guide the player character, James Sunderland, through the monster @-@ filled town of Silent Hill as he searches for his deceased wife. The game features a third @-@ person view, with various camera angles. The default control for Silent Hill 2 has James moving in the direction that he is facing when the player tilts the analog stick upwards. Silent Hill 2 does not use a heads @-@ up display; to check James' health, location, and items, the player must enter the pause @-@ game menu to review his status. Throughout the game, James collects maps, which can only be read if there is sufficient light or when his flashlight is on. He also updates relevant maps to reflect locked doors, clues, and obstructions, and writes down the content of all documents for future reference.

Much of the gameplay consists of navigating the town and finding keys or other items to bypass doors or other obstructions, with less focus on killing enemies. Occasionally puzzles will be presented, often with riddles left for the player to interpret. The difficulty levels of the enemies and the puzzles are determined independently by the player before starting the game. James keeps a radio with him, which alerts him to the presence of creatures by emitting static, allowing him to detect them even through the thick fog. He also tilts his head in the direction of a nearby item or monster. For combat, he finds three melee weapons and three firearms over the course of the game, with another two melee weapons unlocked during replays. "Health" restoratives and ammunition can be found throughout the game.

= = Plot = =

= = = Setting = = =

While not a direct sequel to the events and characters of the first Silent Hill game , Silent Hill 2 takes place in the series ' namesake town , located in the northeastern United States . Silent Hill 2 is set in another area of the town , and explores some of Silent Hill 's backstory . The town draws upon the psyche of its visitors and ultimately forms alternative versions of the town , which differ depending on the character . The concept behind the town was " a small , rural town in America " ; to make the setting more realistic , some buildings and rooms lack furnishings .

= = = Letter from Silent Heaven = = =

James Sunderland (Guy Cih) is the protagonist of the main scenario of Silent Hill 2 . He comes to the town after receiving a letter from his wife Mary (Monica Taylor Horgan) , who died of an illness three years before . While exploring the town , he encounters Maria (also Monica Taylor Horgan) , who strongly resembles Mary except for a different personality and clothing ; Angela Orosco (Donna Burke) , a teenage runaway on a search for her mother ; Eddie Dombrowski (David Schaufele) , another teenage runaway who was somehow brought to the town ; and Laura (Jacquelyn Brekenridge) , an eight @-@ year @-@ old who has met and befriended Mary .

After arriving in Silent Hill , James decides to search a local park , where he meets Maria , who claims that she has never met or seen Mary and , as she is scared , he allows her to follow him . While looking for Laura inside a hospital , James and Maria are ambushed by the monster Pyramid Head , and Maria is killed by him just as James escapes ; He resumes his task of finding Mary , and chooses to search a local hotel , where he and Mary spent their vacation . On the way , James finds Maria alive and unharmed in a locked room . She claims ignorance to their previous encounter and discusses elements of James and Mary 's past that only Mary would know . James then sets off to find a way to release Maria from the room and eventually returns to find her dead again . Later on , he rescues Angela from a monster ; she confesses that her father used to sexually abuse her , and a newspaper clipping James can find implies she killed him in self @-@ defense before coming to Silent Hill . He also confronts Eddie , who admits to maiming a bully and killing a dog before fleeing to Silent Hill ; attacked by Eddie , James kills him in self @-@ defense . At this point it is revealed that in Eddie 's version of Silent Hill all the monsters experienced by James are experienced by Eddie as people laughing and taunting him to violence .

At the hotel , James locates a videotape which depicts him killing his dying wife . At this point in the game , the letter from Mary vanishes from the envelope . In another room , a final meeting with Angela sees her giving up on life as she is unable to cope with her trauma and guilt any longer . She walks into a fire and is not seen again . At this point it is revealed that in Angela 's version of Silent Hill the town is always on fire .

James later encounters two Pyramid Heads , along with an alive Maria , who is killed again . James realizes that Pyramid Head was created because he needed someone to punish him , and all of the monsters have been manifestations of James ' psyche . The envelope from Mary disappears and both Pyramid Heads commit suicide . James heads to the hotel 's rooftop ; depending on choices made by the player throughout the game , he encounters either Mary or Maria disguised as her .

Silent Hill 2 features six endings , all presented as equally possible ; Konami has kept their canonicity ambiguous . In " Leave " , James has one last meeting with Mary , reads her letter , and leaves the town with Laura . " In Water " sees James commit suicide by driving his car off a cliff . The " Maria " ending sees Mary as the woman on the rooftop , who has not forgiven James for killing her . After her defeat , James dismisses her as a hallucination and then leaves the town with an alive Maria , who briefly coughs , suggesting she will become sick just as Mary did , and the cycle will repeat . The other three endings are only available in replay games , including " Rebirth " , in which James plans to resurrect Mary using arcane objects collected throughout the game , and two joke endings : " Dog " , where James discovers that a dog has apparently been controlling all the events of the game , and " UFO " , where James is abducted by extraterrestrials with the help of the first game 's protagonist , Harry Mason .

= = = Born from a Wish = = =

Born from a Wish is a side @-@ story scenario in the special editions and re @-@ releases of the game in which the player takes control of Maria shortly before she and James meet at Silent Hill . After waking up in the town with a gun and contemplating suicide , she resolves to find someone . She eventually encounters a local mansion , where she hears the voice of its owner , Ernest Baldwin . Ernest refuses to let Maria into the room where he is and will only talk to her through its closed door . After Maria completes tasks for him , Ernest warns her about James , whom he describes as a " bad man " . After Maria opens the door to Ernest 's room and finds it empty , she leaves the mansion . At the conclusion of the scenario , Maria contemplates suicide , but ultimately resolves to find James .

= = Development = =

= = = Influences and design = = =

Development of Silent Hill 2 started in June 1999 , directly after the completion of its predecessor . The game was created by Team Silent , a production group within Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo . The story was conceived by CGI director Takayoshi Sato , who based it on Russian author Fyodor Dostoyevsky 's novel Crime and Punishment (1866) , with individual members of the team collaborating on the actual scenario . The main writing was done by Hiroyuki Owaku and Sato , the latter of which provided the dialog for the female characters . Silent Hill 2 's budget has been estimated at US \$ 7 ? 10 million by Sato , in contrast to the previous installment 's estimated one of US \$ 3 ? 5 million . The decision to produce a sequel to Silent Hill was partly a financial one , as it had been commercially successful , and partly a creative one , as the team had faced difficulties while working on the game . The team was given a small window to settle on a platform and could not gather information on the then @-@ unannounced GameCube and Xbox consoles , which led them to begin production of the game for the PlayStation 2 . Producer Akihiro Imamura stated that the decision was also influenced by " a wish from the business section that we move rapidly on the PS2 . You know , it is currently the market focus " . Imamura read all comments about the original game and kept them in mind when working on Silent Hill 2 . He estimated that a total of fifty people worked on the game : while the creative team from the first game remained , they had to bring in thirty people from Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo . Developed at the same time , the PlayStation 2 version of Silent Hill 2 and its Xbox port debuted at the March 2001 Tokyo Game Show to positive reaction .

Silent Hill 2 shared the same atmosphere of psychological horror as the first Silent Hill game . As the developers already had a rough sense of the game 's environment , they focused on the game 's plot first , in contrast to the process of the first game . The hardware of the PlayStation 2 allowed the developers to create improved fog and shadow special effects ; for example , as a monster approaches the player character , its shadow cast on the wall by the flashlight grows . When dealing with the camera angles of the game , the team struggled with a balance between those that stayed true to the creative vision and those that did not hamper gameplay . Psychological elements , such as the gradual disappearance of Mary 's letter and symbolic holes , were incorporated into the game . The team wanted Silent Hill 2 's protagonist to " reflect [the] evil , " against which the protagonist of the first game battles .

For the art style of the game , the team drew on a variety of influences : the work of film directors David Cronenberg , David Fincher , David Lynch and Alfred Hitchcock , along with films similar to the 1990 psychological thriller / horror film Jacob 's Ladder and painters such as Francis Bacon , Rembrandt and Andrew Wyeth . Early in the project , they studied the 1996 video game Tomb Raider 's creation of 3D environments . Other influences on the game included the 1992 survival horror video game Alone in the Dark , the first Silent Hill game , and the Japanese comic Whirr by

Morohashi . When working on the character designs , Sato and his team sketched human faces and various expressions . To gain a better sense of the characters ' facial structures , they drew the characters ' profiles from various angles , before creating wire @-@ frame models , each consisting of six thousand polygons ; they then completed the model with textures . Data for the character animation was taken through motion capture , and using Softimage , they animated the characters . Masahiro Ito designed the monsters of Silent Hill 2 ; " soured flesh " was the concept behind their appearance . The monsters were also to incorporate " an element of humanity . " For the most part , the monsters reflect the subconscious of the protagonist ; for example , the monster Pyramid Head was based on the executioners of the town 's fictional history and is intended to be a punisher for James . Two exceptions to this theme are the " Abstract Daddy " , a reflection of the subconscious and memories of Angela , and the " Creepers " , which are also seen in the first game .

Silent Hill 2 also incorporates some references to real @-@ life events . In the original scenario , the developers designed Maria and James with double personalities : Maria 's other personality was " Mary " , a reference to Mary Jane Kelly , Jack the Ripper 's last victim , while James ' was " Joseph " , a reference to one of the Jack the Ripper suspects . Eddie Dombrowski 's name was taken from actor Eddie Murphy back during the beginning phases of production when Eddie was originally designed with a pleasantly optimistic personality . The name of Angela Orosco was derived from Angela Bennett , the name of the protagonist in the 1995 film The Net , and Laura 's from the 1970 novel No Language But a Cry by Richard D 'Ambrosio . The developers satirized guns in American society by allowing James to find a handgun in a shopping cart . There are also indications that the layout of Silent Hill has been based on the town of San Bruno , California , to a certain extent .

The story touches upon many mature themes and taboo subjects , including morality , grief , abuse (physical , sexual , etc .) suicide , mental illness and mental health , death , trauma , rape , guilt , existentialism , bullying , domestic violence , incest , loneliness , body image , murder , substance abuse , pain and suffering , loss of loved ones , relationship issues , euthanasia , self @-@ loathing , sexuality , etc .

= = = Audio = = =

Akira Yamaoka composed the music of Silent Hill 2 . At his home , Yamaoka took three days to write the music for " Theme of Laura " , the main theme of Silent Hill 2 , by combining " a sad melody " and " a strong beat " , although he does not consider a melody to be the " most important " element of a music piece . He wanted to evoke emotion from the player with the music . Silent Hill 2 makes extensive use of sound effects ranging from screams to footsteps on broken glass . In charge of the game 's fifty sound effects , Yamaoka wanted to surprise the player with different sounds and create an unsettling environment . He also incorporated occasional silence , commenting that " selecting moments of silence is another way of producing sound . "

Konami published Silent Hill 2 Original Soundtrack in Japan on October 3 , 2001 . Eight tracks (" Theme of Laura " , " Null Moon " , " Love Psalm " , " True " , " Promise " , " Fermata in Mystic Air " , " Laura Plays the Piano " and " Overdose Delusion ") appeared in the 2006 PlayStation Portable release The Silent Hill Experience . At the 2006 Play ! A Video Game Symphony concert in Chicago , Illinois , Yamaoka performed music from the series with a full @-@ size orchestra ; among the pieces performed was " Theme of Laura " .

= = Release = =

Silent Hill 2 was first released for the PlayStation 2 in North America on September 24 , 2001 , in Japan on September 27 , 2001 , and in Europe on November 23 , 2001 . The original European edition also included a second disc : a " Making @-@ of " DVD video featuring trailers , an artwork gallery and a documentary on the title 's development .

= = = Extended Version = = =

An extended version of the game was published for Xbox in North America on December 20 , 2001 , Japan on February 22 , 2002 , and Europe on October 14 , 2002 . Each region had a different subtitle for the game : Saigo no Uta (？？？ , lit . " Poem of the Last Moment ") in Japan , Restless Dreams in North America , and Inner Fears in Europe . This edition contained the short bonus scenario , Born from a Wish and other minor enhancements . This revised version was ported back to the PlayStation 2 and subtitled Director 's Cut in Europe , but did not get a subtitle in North America , and was just released under the " Greatest Hits " banner . Creature Labs ported this edition to Windows , which Konami released in December 2002 . Added features in the PC version include the ability to quicksave and watch trailers for Silent Hill 3 .

In 2006 , Konami re @-@ released the extended version of Silent Hill 2 with its indirect PS2 sequels , Silent Hill 3 and Silent Hill 4 : The Room , in a bundle entitled The Silent Hill Collection in Europe and Japan in 2006 . Silent Hill HD Collection , a compilation of remastered high @-@ definition editions of Silent Hill 2 and 3 , was released for the PlayStation 3 and the Xbox 360 on March 20 , 2012 ; it also contains new voice actors for the characters of both games , along with the option in Silent Hill 2 to listen to the original ones , but was notable for multiple bugs and technical issues upon launch which were barely ironed out following the release of online patches .

= = Reception = =

Silent Hill 2 was positively received , selling over one million copies in the month of its release in North America , Japan and Europe , with the most units sold in North America . Rating aggregation site Game Rankings shows an average rating of 85 @. @ 82 % for the PS2 version , 82 @. @ 40 % for the Xbox version , and 71 @. @ 30 % for the PC version . Rating aggregation site Metacritic shows an average rating of 89 out of 100 for the PS2 version , 84 out of 100 for the Xbox version , and 70 out of 100 for the PC version .

Silent Hill 2 has received praise from video game journalists at the time of its release and in retrospect . Andy Greenwald of Spin magazine praised it as a frightening , though " restrained " game . Jon Thompson of Allgame stated : " Silent Hill 2 feels a bit rushed , and although it might not live up to the dizzying horror of the first game , it packs enough of its own punch to make it a worthy sequel . " IGN 's Doug Perry wrote : " It 's frightening , deep , clever , and tries to improve the genre , if just a little , and in the end , that 's all I really want in a survival horror game . " Joe Fielder of GameSpot concluded , " Silent Hill 2 is a much prettier , somewhat smarter but less @-@ compelling game than the original . " In Replay : The History of Video Games (2010) , Tristian Donovan described Silent Hill 2 as the " high point " of the series . In a retrospective article on the survival horror genre , IGN writer Jim Sterling praised the game 's plot as " one of the finest examples of narrative construction in gaming to this day . " In another retrospective article on survival horror , fellow IGN writer Travis Fahs credited the game as a factor in the " short @-@ lived period of renewed interest in horror games . " Online game critic for the Escapist Magazine Ben " Yahtzee " Croshaw lists this game as among his top 5 favourite games of all time , praising the game for thick and unsettling atmosphere creating tension and fear for players . In his review of the game he commented , " Silent Hill 2 is the game I replay every now and again to remind myself that for all the shiny brown , quick @-@ time event , RPG element space marines , gaming is still worth defending , " and that , " It 's a fascinating voyage of pain and despair that leaves you emotionally drained and satisfied . "

The graphics and atmosphere of Silent Hill 2 received praise from reviewers , who highlighted the smooth transitions from computer @-@ generated (CG) to in @-@ game cutscenes and the sense of claustrophobia caused by the fog . On the other hand , Thompson felt that the grainy image effects and dense fog hid the details of the environment , while Fielder wrote that the exterior environments " rarely push the PlayStation 2 's graphical capabilities " . Character animation was considered realistic by reviewers , though James ' animation in the CG sometimes appeared " marionette " -like , according to Perry . The voice acting received mixed responses from reviewers divided over whether it was well done with an improved script , or hampered by the script . Reviewers enjoyed the monster designs , although some found the monsters less frightening due to

the abundance of ammunition , and easily avoided . Reviewers found the camera , though improved , still difficult when battling monsters which hung from the ceiling ? concerns echoed by reviewers of the PC version . The soundtrack and sound effects were considered by reviewers to be effective in creating suspense , though Thompson considered them sometimes " a bit forced and contrived " . The puzzles were generally seen as not overly challenging by reviewers , though Thompson found them generally easy and GameSpy 's David Hodgeson wrote that they were sometimes illogical . Less well @-@ received was the combat , criticized for its lack of challenge and easily defeated monsters and bosses .

Reactions to the Xbox port were also positive . Reviewers have written that the PlayStation 2 and Xbox versions were mostly similar , except for the Born from a Wish side @-@ scenario found on the Xbox version . Eurogamer 's Kristan Reed called Born from a Wish " more like a demo than anything " , while Fielder described it as " a commendable extra " . Both felt that it could be completed in around an hour and did not add much to the game . The PC port , in contrast , received mixed reaction . Allen Rausch of GameSpy considered the PC port overall to be " [a] fantastic translation of Konami 's stylish and scary survival @-@ horror game " . IGN 's Ivan Sulic advised against playing the game with the keyboard , and rated the game " Great " . Conversely , Ron Dulin , another reviewer for GameSpot , wrote : " Not even the game 's foggy atmosphere is thick enough to hide Silent Hill 2 's problems . "

The Silent Hill HD Collection received an average score of 70 / 100 from Metacritic for the PlayStation 3 release and 69 / 100 for the Xbox 360 release , indicating " mixed or average reviews " . According to Play , " Technically the collection is lacking , but there 's no denying the quality of the games . " The Official PlayStation Magazine stated : " As an exercise in Playstation fear , it doesn 't come any purer than this . " Conversely , GameTrailers expressed disappointment with the collection , writing : " The inconsistent presentation , compromises to the original developer 's vision , and lack of any interesting bonus features make this compilation 's \$ 40 price even more unnerving than its games . " The new voice acting drew a range of reactions , from praise as a general improvement over the originals , to mixed results . Several reviewers commented on the absence of other Silent Hill games , such as Silent Hill 4 : The Room and Silent Hill : Origins . Glitches and issues with the lip @-@ synching were also noted .

Silent Hill 2 is today considered by many to be the greatest horror game of all time due to its story and use of metaphors , psychological horror , and taboo topics . It ranked 1st on X @-@ Play 's list of the scariest games of all time in 2006 . IGN listed it as one of the five best horror video games created after 2000 in 2009 , and one of the 12 greatest PlayStation 2 games of all time . Additionally , in 2010 , IGN ranked it as 54th in its top 100 PS2 games ; in a retrospective by GamePro , it was the 26th best game for the PS2 . In 2008 , GamesRadar placed it on its list of the 15 best " videogame stories " ever , describing it as " a punishing tale not easily matched " . In 2009 , Wired News listed it as the 11th most influential game of the decade for its emphasis on psychological horror and exploration of taboo topics such as incest and domestic abuse , rather than gore . In 2012 , a top video games of all @-@ time list by G4 television network ranked the game at the 85th place . That same year , the game 's narrative was ranked at 1st place on GamesRadar 's list of " The Best Videogame Stories Ever " . More recently , Silent Hill 2 was listed as number two top horror game of all time in the October 2014 issue of Game Informer , and number 8 on GameTrailers 's " Top Ten Twos " list of the best second games on franchises , in 2015 .