= Shadow the Hedgehog (video game) =

Shadow the Hedgehog (Japanese : ???? ? ? ? ?????? , Hepburn : Shad? za Hejjihoggu) is a 2005 third @-@ person shooter video game developed by Sega Studio USA , the former United States division of Sega 's Sonic Team , and published by Sega . The game is the first to feature Shadow the Hedgehog from Sega 's Sonic the Hedgehog series as the main character , and was revealed at the March 2005 Walk of Game event . Shadow the Hedgehog is the third developed by Sega Studio USA , and is the first Sonic game to be rated E10 + by the ESRB .

Following the trend of recent Sonic games such as Sonic Adventure and Sonic Heroes , Shadow the Hedgehog is a 3D platform game . Most levels have three possible missions ? " Hero , " " Dark , " or " Normal " ? that the player may choose to complete , while some have only " Hero " and " Dark " missions . The missions completed determine the game 's plot and subsequently playable levels , a feature referenced by the game 's tagline , " Hero or villain ? You decide . " The plot centers on the attempt of Shadow , a creation of Doctor Eggman 's grandfather , Professor Gerald Robotnik , to learn about his past while suffering from amnesia . To defeat enemies , Shadow can use various weapons and special attacks .

Shadow the Hedgehog was developed for the GameCube , PlayStation 2 and Xbox video game consoles . The game received polarizing reviews ; reviewers criticized its controls and " dark " theme , especially the addition of guns , and other weapons to traditional Sonic gameplay , but praised its replay value , while its level design was mixed .

= = Gameplay = =

Shadow the Hedgehog is a platform game that incorporates elements of action @-@ adventure gameplay . Like previous games in the Sonic series , basic gameplay involves running quickly , collecting rings , and destroying enemies . Shadow collects rings as a form of health ; when he is attacked by an enemy , ten of his rings bounce away from him in all directions . If he is hit by an enemy while not having any rings , he loses a life . Each level is completed by undertaking a mission , and each mission is labeled " Hero , " " Dark , " or " Normal . " The " Hero " missions involve completing tasks for the Sonic series ' heroic characters or on one occasion , Doctor Eggman and the " Dark " missions involve completing tasks for the Black Arms or Doctor Eggman . The " Normal " missions involve simply reaching the Chaos Emerald or goal at the end of the level . All enemies attack Shadow regardless of the mission chosen . The mission types selected affect the plot , the levels played , and the ending received out of ten possibilities . Each level features cutscenes that advance the story , and several levels also feature boss battles .

New gameplay features distinguish Shadow the Hedgehog from previous Sonic series games . For example , Shadow can use guns to combat enemies , adding an element of third @-@ person shooter gameplay . Parts of the scenery , such as traffic signs , can also be used as weapons . Another new feature is the ability to drive vehicles , such as motorcycles and alien aircraft . Although Shadow can outrun the game 's vehicles , the latter have unique capabilities , such as crushing enemies and traversing otherwise impassible acid @-@ covered areas .

As in most Sonic series games , the Chaos Emeralds play a major role ; they help Shadow remember his past and allow him to perform Chaos Control and Chaos Blast . Chaos Control allows Shadow to move more quickly in levels and slows time in boss battles , and Chaos Blast creates an explosion that destroys or severely damages all nearby enemies . Shadow can perform Chaos Control after the player fills the Hero Gauge by defeating Black Arms soldiers , and he can perform Chaos Blast after filling the Dark Gauge by defeating G.U.N. soldiers .

The game includes a two @-@ player mode that retains the single @-@ player mechanics but is set in one of three specially designed stages and uses a vertically split screen to separate each player 's view . Each player chooses one of the available characters ? Shadow , two metallic versions of him , and palette @-@ swapped variants of each . The combatants attack each other and steal each other 's rings until one is eliminated . Additionally , in single @-@ player mode , a second player may take control of Shadow 's sidekick character in some stages .

== Plot ==

=== Characters ===

Shadow the Hedgehog , the game 's titular protagonist , was created fifty years before the game 's events by Professor Gerald Robotnik in an orbital military research space station known as the ARK . Robotnik was trying to unlock the secrets of eternal life on the government 's orders and create the " Ultimate Life Form . " To that end , Robotnik designed Shadow to be able to harness the powers of the Chaos Emeralds . At the end of Sonic Adventure 2 , his first in @-@ game appearance , he was presumed dead , but he returned in Sonic Heroes with amnesia that persists into the events of Shadow the Hedgehog .

The Guardian Units of Nations (G.U.N.) is the military of Earth 's government , the United Federation , and it is directed by the G.U.N. Commander . When completing " Hero " missions , Shadow usually helps G.U.N. and heroic characters from the Sonic series , including Sonic , Tails , Knuckles , Amy , Rouge , Omega , Vector , Charmy and Espio . Their aim is to protect Earth from Eggman and the Black Arms aliens . In one " Hero " mission of Sky Troops , Shadow assists Eggman battle the Black Arms . Black Doom , the leader of the Black Arms , sends an extension of himself called " Doom 's Eye " to watch Shadow and help him complete missions . When completing " Dark " missions , Shadow helps either Black Doom or Eggman , each of who wants the Chaos Emeralds for himself .

=== Story ===

At the beginning , Shadow suffers from amnesia . Other than after the events of Sonic Heroes that took place three months prior , Shadow remembers only two things : his name and " that gruesome image " of his attempt to escape the space station ARK with his creator 's granddaughter Maria . He remembers her death by gunshot from soldiers of the military group G.U.N. Having gone through a room filled with androids that look like him in the events of Sonic Heroes , Shadow wonders if he too is an android . The game begins with Shadow reminiscing outside the city of Westopolis when the alien race Black Arms drop out of the sky and invade the city . One Black Arms alien , Doom 's Eye , approaches Shadow , and the Black Arms leader Black Doom tells Shadow of an old agreement Shadow made : to bring Black Doom the Chaos Emeralds . Stunned that Black Doom knew his name , Shadow searches for the Chaos Emeralds to learn about his past .

The game progresses through the Westopolis level and five more levels from the different paths Shadow may take . As missions are completed , Shadow learns more about his past and regains memories . He can choose to help Eggman or the Black Arms (Dark) , to help G.U.N. and the series ' heroic characters (Hero) , or to help neither and keep the Chaos Emeralds for himself (Normal) . The missions completed determine which one of ten possible endings will be seen after Shadow collects all the Chaos Emeralds and defeats one of the game 's final bosses . The possible ending events range from planning to defeat the Black Arms to planning to destroy the planet .

Completing all ten endings unlocks the game 's true ending in which Black Doom uses Chaos Control , enhanced by the power of all seven Chaos Emeralds , to bring the Black Comet to the Earth 's surface . Black Doom explains that the Black Arms intend to use humans as an energy source , and the Black Comet begins to release a nerve gas into the Earth 's atmosphere that causes total paralysis in those who inhale it . Shadow then confronts Black Doom after the " Last Way " level , where he discovers that Professor Gerald Robotnik created the ARK 's Eclipse Cannon weapon to destroy the Black Comet . During their confrontation , Black Doom reveals that Shadow was created using Black Doom 's blood , and Black Doom then attempts to control Shadow through mind control but fails . This prompts Black Doom to transform into Devil Doom . In response , Shadow uses the Chaos Emeralds to transform into Super Shadow and defeats Black Doom . Shadow then transports the Black Comet into outer space using Chaos Control and obliterates it

using the ARK 's Eclipse Cannon . His friends are elated , as are people at G.U.N. headquarters . Shadow is then shown in the ARK 's control room holding up a photograph of Maria and Gerald . He tosses the photograph aside , declaring " Goodbye forever ... Shadow the Hedgehog , " and leaves the room .

= = Development = =

 Shadow the Hedgehog was developed by Sega Studio USA , the now @-@ defunct United States division of Sega 's Sonic Team , and published by Sega . Sega first revealed the game and its tagline (" Hero or villain ? You decide . ") at the March 8 , 2005 inauguration of Sonic the Hedgehog into the Walk of Game . Sega formally announced development of the game for the Nintendo GameCube , PlayStation 2 , and Xbox video game consoles on March 23 , 2005 . The same year , Sega released the game in North America on November 15 , in Europe on November 18 , and in Japan on December 15 .
 Sonic Team 's Takashi Iizuka , who had worked on the Sonic the Hedgehog series since 1993 , targeted a younger audience with previous Sonic games and wanted to target an older audience with Shadow the Hedgehog . The game 's development team wanted to make a game featuring Shadow to resolve plot mysteries that began with the character 's introduction in Sonic Adventure 2 . The team felt that Shadow 's design ? inspired by films such as Underworld , Constantine , and the Terminator series ? would make the story darker and allow for elements , such as vehicles and weapons , otherwise considered inappropriate for a Sonic game . Sonic Team 's Yuji Naka stated in an interview with GameSpy that he wanted to use Shadow as the game 's main character due to his popularity among fans and being the best fit for a " gun action " game . The game features several CG @-@ animated cutscenes produced by Blur Studio . The game also contains profanities , including instances of damn and hell spoken by Shadow and other characters such as Espio , the G.U.N. Commander , Knuckles , and Sonic . Profanity and the use of guns , both firsts for the Sonic series , generated some pre @-@ release controversy . The ESRB assigned the game a rating of E10 + for " fantasy violence " and " mild language . "
 The game is the first in the series to use the 4Kids cast from Sonic X following the death of Doctor Eggman 's previous voice actor , Deem Bristow . This cast continued to be used until late 2010 when all cast members except for Mike Pollock were replaced before the release of Sonic Free Riders .

= = = Music = = =

= = = = Lost and Found = = = =

 Lost and Found : Shadow the Hedgehog Vocal Trax is a video game soundtrack album released on CD on February 22 , 2006 . The album contains seven vocal songs from the game , one of which is a remix rather than the original .

= = = = Original Soundtrack = = = =

 Another soundtrack , Shadow the Hedgehog : Original Soundtrax , was also released on February 22 , 2006 . It contains both vocal and instrumental tracks from the game .

= = Reception = =

 Shadow the Hedgehog received generally unfavorable reviews from critics . Aggregating review websites GameRankings and Metacritic gave the GameCube version 53 @.@ 10 % and 51 / 100 , the Xbox version 52 @.@ 15 % and 49 / 100 and the PlayStation 2 version 49 @.@ 27 % and 45 / 100 . However , it was voted the best game of 2005 in the Official Jetix Magazine Reader Awards

and named the " Best Platformer " of 2005 by Nintendo Power readers (receiving more votes than the staff 's choice , Sonic Rush) . It was also a commercial success : Sega Sammy 's 2006 financial report recorded sales of 1 @.@ 59 million units . The game was later released as a part of three budget lines : Greatest Hits and Platinum Range for the PlayStation 2 (representing sales of at least 400 @,@ 000 in North America and Europe , respectively) and Player 's Choice for the GameCube (250 @,@ 000 in North America) .

Critics derided the game 's unwelcome sense of maturity for a Sonic series game , especially the addition of guns and other weapons . Game Informer staff writer Matt Helgeson said , " not only is this new ' adult ' interpretation of Sonic painfully dumb , it ? s also ill @-@ advised and almost feels like a betrayal to longtime fans . " Eurogamer staff writer Tom Bramwell felt that " the game 's other selling point ? its darker edge ? [is] not really meant for us . " G4 's X @-@ Play and GameSpy staff writer Patrick Klepek thought similarly . In contrast , Nintendo Power staff writer Steve Thomason rated the game 8 @.@ 0 out of 10 , stating , " this darker take on the Sonic universe succeeds for the most part , giving the series a bit of an edge without going overboard on violence . " In addition , Official Xbox Magazine reassured readers , " Don 't worry , Shadow the Hedgehog isn 't half as ' urban ' or quite as ' gangsta ' as it first seems . " Hegelson panned the game 's " laughable " plot , saying it " makes no sense " , while noting that various Sonic conventions undermined its attempts to be " mature " or " edgy " .

Reviewers also criticized the game 's controls , especially Shadow 's homing attack causing unexpected character deaths . Game Informer 's Matt Helgeson complained that the attack " frequently sends you careening off into nothingness , resulting in cheap death after cheap death . " Nintendo Power , X @-@ Play , Eurogamer , Official Xbox Magazine , and GameSpy agreed . Other complaints focused on the mechanics of weapons and vehicles . Greg Mueller of GameSpot felt that the guns were nearly useless because of a lack of a target lock or manual aim , combined with an ineffective auto @-@ aim . IGN staff writer Matt Casamassina , 1UP.com staff writer Greg Sewart , Game Informer , X @-@ Play , GameSpy , and London 's The Times also criticized the mechanics of Shadow 's weapons , vehicles , and other aspects of the game 's controls . However , Thomason claimed that " blasting Shadow 's foes with the wide variety of weapons at his disposal is just plain fun . "

The level design received mixed comments . Mueller called some of them " extremely frustrating " . Helgeson stated that the fast @-@ paced " levels are poorly designed " , and Andrew Reiner , who wrote a second @-@ opinion review for Game Informer , called the level design " disastrous " . Official Xbox Magazine was more mixed , balancing the possibility of getting lost in the large levels with the likely appeal of these stages to 3D Sonic gamers , particularly those who had enjoyed Sonic Heroes . GameTrailers found that " the levels are either dark and urban , or bright and psychedelic . Either way , they fit in well to the Sonic universe . They are loaded with speed ramps , loops and an assortment of other boosts that rocket Shadow like a pinball . " Bettenhausen included " the classic run @-@ like @-@ hell roller coaster design philosophy " of some stages in his limited praise . Casamassina deplored the " stupid level design " , adding that " Just because they dazzled players six years ago does not mean that Sonic Team can copy and paste exactly the same loops and spins into each new franchise iteration and expect everyone to be happy with the outcome . " GameSpy observed that " the areas are much less open than in previous Sonic games , but the level designers haven 't taken advantage of the constraints . " Nintendo Power singled out the difficulty of the missions that require the player to locate objects .

However , critics praised the game 's replay value , applauding the many possible paths that a player may take through the game . GameTrailers stated , " this choose @-@ your @-@ own @-@ adventure style gives the game replay value that many platformers lack . " The Melbourne , Australia , publication Herald Sun , Nintendo Power , and Official Xbox Magazine thought similarly . GameSpot praised the variety of alternate endings , but concluded that " the gameplay isn 't fun enough to warrant playing the game through multiple times . " Bettenhausen thought that the morality system felt artificial , although he conceded that it did extend the game 's replay value .