

= Silent Hill 4 =

Silent Hill 4 : The Room is a survival horror video game , the fourth installment in the Silent Hill series , published by Konami and developed by Team Silent , a production group within Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo . The game was released in Japan in June 2004 and in North America and Europe in September of the same year . Silent Hill 4 was released for the PlayStation 2 , Xbox and Microsoft Windows . Its soundtrack was released at the same time . In 2012 , it was released on the Japanese PlayStation Network .

Unlike the previous installments , which were set primarily in the town of Silent Hill , this game is set in the fictional town of South Ashfield , and follows Henry Townshend as he attempts to escape from his locked @-@ down apartment . During the course of the game , Henry explores a series of supernatural worlds and finds himself in conflict with an undead serial killer .

Silent Hill 4 features an altered gameplay style with third @-@ person navigation and plot elements taken from previous installments . Upon its release , the game received generally positive critical reaction , and its departure from the typical features of the series received a range of reactions .

= = Gameplay = =

The objective of Silent Hill 4 : The Room is to guide player character Henry Townshend as he seeks to escape from his apartment . Gameplay centers on the apartment , which is shown through a first @-@ person perspective and contains the only save point . The other areas of the game are reached through holes formed in the apartment . For the first half of the game , the room restores Henry 's " health " (a measure of the amount of damage that he can endure before ' dying ') ; in the second half of the game , however , the room becomes possessed by hauntings that drain his health .

In the main levels of the game the player uses the usual third @-@ person view of the Silent Hill series . The player has a limited item inventory which can be managed by leaving unneeded items in a chest in Henry 's room . Silent Hill 4 emphasizes combat during gameplay , with a near @-@ absence of complex puzzles in favor of simple item @-@ seeking tasks . Unlike previous games in the series , separate difficulty settings for combat and puzzles are not available , changing the combat difficulty also affects the difficulty of puzzles . In the second half of the game Henry is accompanied and helped in combat by his neighbor Eileen Galvin ; Eileen cannot die while she is with Henry , although as she takes damage she succumbs to possession . The damage Eileen takes in the game determines whether or not she dies during the final boss fight , directly affecting the ending achieved .

= = = Combat = = =

Combat in Silent Hill 4 follows the pattern set by the other games with a few key differences . The player has access to a variety of melee weapons but only two firearms . Certain melee weapons are breakable . Items which can be equipped such as talismans (which protect the player from damage from the hauntings in Henry 's room) will eventually break after a short period of use . Another key difference in the combat system is that melee attacks may be " charged " before they are used , inflicting a greater amount of damage to an opponent than a quick attack .

One of the most significant changes is the introduction of immortal ghosts of antagonist Walter Sullivan 's victims . The ghosts , which have the ability to hurt Henry , can be nullified by two items . These items can also exorcise the hauntings in Henry 's apartment . Ghosts can also be knocked down for a lengthy period of time with one of two special bullets or pinned permanently with a special sword .

= = Plot = =

== Characters ==

The protagonist and player character of Silent Hill 4 is Henry Townshend , a resident of the South Ashfield Heights Apartments building in the fictitious town of Ashfield . Henry is an " average " man who has been described by Konami as an introvert in his late 20s . For the most part Henry navigates the game 's world alone , although he eventually works with his neighbor Eileen Galvin . Henry also deals with the new supporting characters of Cynthia Velázquez , Andrew DeSalvo , Richard Braintree and Jasper Gein .

Silent Hill 4 : The Room incorporates two unseen , minor characters from previous installments : investigative journalist Joseph Schreiber and deceased serial killer Walter Sullivan . Joseph was first referenced in Silent Hill 3 with a magazine article he has written condemning the " Hope House " orphanage run by Silent Hill 's religious cult , which the game 's protagonist , Heather , can discover . In Silent Hill 2 , Walter is referenced in a newspaper article detailing his suicide in his jail cell after his murder of two children . Sullivan appears in two forms : an undead adult enemy and a neutral child supporting character . Walter 's previous victims play a small role in the game as enemies .

== Story ==

At the beginning of the game , Henry Townshend has been locked in his apartment in South Ashfield for five days with no means of communication and having recurring nightmares . Shortly afterwards , a hole appears in the wall of his bathroom , through which he enters alternate dimensions . His first destination is an abandoned subway station , where he meets Cynthia Velázquez , a woman convinced she is dreaming and who is soon killed by an unknown man . Awakening in his apartment , he hears confirmation on his radio that she is indeed dead in the real world . Similar events repeat with the next three people Henry finds : Jasper Gein ; Andrew DeSalvo , a former employee of an orphanage run by Silent Hill 's cult ; and Richard Braintree , a resident in Henry 's apartment complex . All the deaths bear similarities to the deceased serial killer Walter Sullivan 's modus operandi .

Henry finds scraps of the diary of his apartment 's former occupant , journalist Joseph Schreiber , who was investigating Walter 's murder spree . Walter is an orphan who has been led to believe his biological mother was in Henry 's apartment , where he had been found abandoned after birth . To " purify " the apartment , Walter , now in an undead state , is attempting to complete a ritual , which requires twenty @-@ one murders to be committed . Midway through the game , a child manifestation of Walter interrupts the murder of the intended twentieth victim , Eileen Galvin , and she joins Henry trying to find Joseph . At the same time , supernatural occurrences begin to manifest in Henry 's apartment . The two eventually find Joseph 's ghost , who tells them that their only escape is to kill Walter and reveals that Henry is the intended twenty @-@ first victim .

Shortly after Henry acquires Walter 's umbilical cord , an item required to kill him , Eileen leaves Henry and returns to his apartment , either hoping to stop Walter from completing the ritual or under Walter 's possession . He finds her with Walter , possessed and about to walk into a deathtrap , and a fight between the two men ensues . There are four possible endings , determined by whether or not Eileen survived the fight and on the condition of Henry 's apartment . The " 21 Sacraments " ending sees Walter and his child manifestation in his apartment , while the radio reveals that Henry and Eileen have died , along with the superintendent Frank Sunderland and several others . In " Eileen 's Death , " Henry awakens in his apartment , and learns from his radio that Eileen has died , to his sorrow . In " Mother , " Henry escapes from his apartment building , and brings flowers to Eileen , who plans to return to the apartment building . His apartment , meanwhile , has become completely possessed . " Escape " begins similarly to the " Mother " ending , but Eileen resolves to find a new place to live , and his apartment is not shown to be possessed . There is no UFO " joke ending " , a staple of the series .

== Development ==

Development of the fourth Silent Hill game by Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo 's development group Team Silent began shortly after the release of Silent Hill 2 and alongside Silent Hill 3 , with the intentions of creating a new style of game that would take the series in a different direction than the previous games . Despite what has been popularized around the Internet , Silent Hill 4 was always meant to be connected to Silent Hill and not an unrelated separate horror game that later became a Silent Hill title , although different gameplay mechanics and change were intended . News of the game 's development was made public by October 2003 , and official announcements by Konami followed at Gamers ' Day 2004 . The game was produced by the series ' recurring sound designer and composer Akira Yamaoka . Its working title , prior to its incorporation into the rest of the series , was simply Room 302 .

The main concept behind the new game structure was to take the idea of " the room " as " the safest part of your world " and make it a danger zone . The first @-@ person perspective was included in this area of the game to give the room 's navigation a personal and claustrophobic feel . The producers nonetheless retained the classic third @-@ person perspective in all other areas to accommodate the increased emphasis on action and combat . The developers re @-@ used locations already explored in the first half of the game to show the changes undergone by each character introduced in the locations .

It was noted that the game , like previous titles in the series , refers to the film Jacob 's Ladder (1990) and that the protagonist Henry Townshend shares a likeness to actor Peter Krause . The architecture of the apartment and the addition of the hole is comparable to a similar non @-@ Euclidean space in author Mark Z. Danielewski 's novel House of Leaves (2000) . Other nods includes the novel Rosemary 's Baby (1967) , American television series Twin Peaks (1990 ? 1991) , and American horror author Stephen King . The creators of the game have acknowledged writer Ryū Murakami 's book Coin Locker Babies (1980) as an inspiration for the game 's premise .

= = Music = =

The soundtrack for Silent Hill 4 : The Room was released alongside the game in 2004 , composed by Akira Yamaoka with vocals by Mary Elizabeth McGlynn and Joe Romersa . The Japanese version featured a second disk containing music by series composer Akira Yamaoka played along to the reading of traditional Japanese stories . The American version contained 13 exclusive tracks and remixes .

A remix of the song " Your Rain " from the game 's soundtrack was used on Konami 's Dance Dance Revolution EXTREME . Several tracks from the game were also featured in the Silent Hill Experience promotional UMD .

= = Release and reception = =

Silent Hill 4 : The Room was first released in Japan on June 17 , 2004 . The game was shipped for its subsequent North American and European releases on September 7 , with pre @-@ ordering customers receiving the soundtrack for free with the game in the former market . The game , alongside its two PS2 predecessors , was rereleased in 2006 as part of The Silent Hill Collection European boxset , as a tie @-@ in with the release of the Silent Hill film , and again in 2009 . Microsoft has confirmed that their Xbox 360 console is backward compatible with the game 's Xbox port .

The previews of Silent Hill 4 : The Room provided at E3 2004 led IGN to name it the best PlayStation 2 adventure game in show . Upon its release in 2004 the game also attracted the attention of mainstream news outlets CNN , the BBC and The Times . Silent Hill 4 topped game sales charts in Japan during a video game sales slump , but dropped to tenth place one week later . Official statements by Konami referred to sales of the game in North America as " favorable . "

Review aggregator Metacritic shows an average score rating of 76 out of 100 for both the PS2 and Xbox versions , indicating " generally favorable reviews " . Marc Saltzman of CNN wrote : " Unlike Hollywood horror movies that often get worse with each new sequel (" Friday the 13th Part VIII :

Jason Takes Manhattan , " for example) , Konami 's scary Silent Hill series gets better -- and creepier -- with age . " Video game magazine Game Informer praised Silent Hill 4 : The Room , stating that its " disarming voyeurism , bizarre camera angles , and exceptionally well @-@ placed tension is what the series has been trying to do all along , but The Room is the first entry to do it right . " According to a reviewer for Edge magazine , " [I] ook at it one way , and it 's a choking journey with unprecedented attention to unease and psychological horror , a game framed with unparalleled sophistication . From another angle , it 's just a clunky PSone throwback , with all the design wit of a dodo . " The New York Times found it completely lacking in " true terror . "

The plot of the game was generally well received by reviewers , who praised it as horrifying , compelling , and " dark " . 1UP.com praised the titular room as constantly maintaining a sense of unease for the player . Game Revolution enjoyed the relatively normal appearance of the environment outside Henry 's room at the game 's beginning , writing : " Are these strange otherworlds real , or are they just the nightmares of some lunatic shut @-@ in who chained up his own door ? It effectively blurs the line between reality and delusion , leading to a singularly creepy game . " In contrast , IGN 's Douglass C. Perry felt that the familiarity of the story as compared with the other Silent Hill storylines detracted from its horror appeal , although he cared about its characters more than in previous games . Critics were , for the most part , pleased with the voice acting in the game , although it did receive criticism for the characters ' calmness . Nevertheless , producer and composer Akira Yamaoka said that the characters were , to him , " a little weak . "

The graphics of the game environments were praised as detailed . According to Bethany Massimilla of GameSpot , " The game looks its best in corroded , bloody , gritty environments , like the damp , steel halls of the water prison or the subterranean subway layers that , at one point in the game , are walled in living , moving flesh . " The character and monster designs received praise as well @-@ done . Reviewers generally commended the audio as contributing to the horror of the game , although 1UP wrote that it was sub @-@ par for the series .

The gameplay 's departures from that of previous installments in the series drew a range of reactions . GameZone enjoyed the changes , writing that they were needed to keep the series fresh . The decision to place the only save point and storage area for items in the titular room , with no option to discard unwanted items , was generally criticised , with reviewers finding it inconvenient to have to return there . The puzzles had mixed reactions . Kristan Reed of Eurogamer expressed disappointment with the degree to which the game had been geared as a combat game with an absence of standard Silent Hill puzzles , while GameSpy 's Bryn Williams worried that the puzzles ' obscurity and " non @-@ lateral " nature might discourage more casual players . IGN disliked the replacement of logic @-@ based puzzles in favour of obtaining various items , and was also displeased by the lack of boss fights . Another source of criticism was the repetition of the first four environments during the second half of the game .

Metacritic shows a lower average rating of 67 out of 100 for the PC version , indicating " mixed or average reviews " . IGN 's Perry complained about " the blurriest textures we 've seen in years and some serious graphical glitches " and " extremely low mouse sensitivity " inhibiting gameplay . GameSpot 's review praised the graphics as having " been optimized well for the PC " but acknowledging " keyboard and mouse controls just don 't fare that well in an environment of constantly shifting perspective views that can make navigation frustrating . "