

## = Silent Hill : Origins =

Silent Hill : Origins , known as Silent Hill : Zero ( Japanese : ??????? ? , Hepburn : Sairentohiru Zero ) in Japan , is a survival horror video game for the PlayStation Portable developed by Climax Studios . It was published by Konami Digital Entertainment worldwide in late 2007 , beginning in early November with the United Kingdom . A port for the PlayStation 2 was released worldwide in early 2008 , beginning in March with North America , and it is available on the PlayStation Network in Europe . The fifth installment in the Silent Hill series , Origins is a prequel to the first game ( 1999 ) . Set in the series ' eponymous , fictional American town , Origins follows trucker Travis Grady as he searches for information about a girl whom he rescued from a fire . Along the way , he unlocks his repressed childhood memories . Gameplay uses a third @-@ person perspective , and emphasizes combat , exploration , and puzzle @-@ solving , similar to the previous installments .

Origins was developed by the United Kingdom branch of Climax Studios , after it was transferred from the United States branch , who faced issues with the game engine and the vision of the game ; the script , monsters , and level design were redone , and aspects of Origins ' atmosphere and gameplay intentionally replicated those of the first Silent Hill game . Origins was generally positively reviewed , although some reviewers wrote that it followed the formula of the series too closely and failed to add anything new . Its PlayStation 2 port received a lower aggregate score , with criticism directed towards its visuals .

## = = Gameplay = =

The objective of Silent Hill : Origins is to guide player character Travis Grady as he searches the monster @-@ filled town of Silent Hill for information about a girl he rescues from a burning house . The game uses a third @-@ person perspective which it alternates with fixed camera angles . Following the gameplay formula of previous Silent Hill games , Origins primarily revolves around combat , exploration , and puzzle @-@ solving . Typical gameplay of Origins consists of alternating between reality and its darker and dilapidated counterpart , the " Other World " , to obtain keys and objects needed to solve a riddle . Travis carries a flashlight and indicates the direction of a nearby usable item , while his portable radio alerts the player to the presence of nearby monsters by emitting static . Often , actions performed in one dimension will affect the other ; for example , raising a prop on the stage in the theater results in a similar reaction in the Other World . Once solved , the riddle leads to an encounter with a boss , whose defeat unlocks a new area . Completion of the game results in unlocking special items or alternative outfits for Travis depending on various accomplishments .

For combat , in addition to using his fists ( the first Silent Hill game where unarmed combat is possible ) , Travis accumulates a range of weapons throughout the town : firearms , melee weapons , and one @-@ shot items usable in close combat ; the latter two are breakable . Although one @-@ shot items can be used to quickly kill some of the monsters encountered early on , Travis is vulnerable while performing this action to damage from quick enemies or those with long @-@ ranged attacks . Origins also introduces the " grapple " system , a quick time event activated when a monster grabs him . Should he escape , no damage is done to either him or the monster . The status of his " health " is indicated in the inventory , since the game does not feature a heads @-@ up display ; however , when his health is critical , the edges of the screen throb red , and his heartbeat is heard .

## = = Synopsis = =

## = = = Setting and characters = = =

A prequel to the first Silent Hill installment , Silent Hill : Origins takes place several years before the events of the first game . Origins is set in the eponymous , foggy , and rural small town located in

the northeastern United States . The town is characterized by the " Other World " , a supernatural location periodically encountered by the protagonists of the series . Most frequently assuming the form of the town , the Other World causes the characters to experience delusions and various symbols from their unconscious .

Origins introduces Travis Grady , a trucker with a troubled past who suffers from nightmares . Returning characters from the first installment are Alessa Gillespie , a young girl who possesses supernatural powers ; licensed practical nurse Lisa Garland , who has a drug addiction and dreams of being an actress instead of a nurse ; physician Michael Kaufmann , who supplies Lisa with illegal drugs ; and Alessa 's mother , Dahlia Gillespie , a member of the town 's cult which plans to bring its malevolent god into this world .

= = = Plot = = =

Driving past Silent Hill as a shortcut , Travis swerves his truck to avoid hitting a spirit manifestation of Alessa . While following the spirit manifestation , he stumbles upon a burning house and rescues the real Alessa , who was immolated in a ritual to impregnate her with the cult 's god . Losing consciousness outside the house , he awakens in the town and resolves to learn if she survived . During his journey , Travis unlocks his repressed childhood memories and defeats monstrous forms of his parents : his mother had been committed to a local mental institution after attempting to kill him , and his father had killed himself , unable to live with the guilt of having his wife condemned . Additionally , Travis kills the Butcher , a monster that has been slaughtering other monsters .

Travis continues following Alessa 's spirit manifestation , which refuses to speak to him , and gradually collects pieces of an unknown pyramid @-@ shaped object ; after collecting all of the pieces , he assembles them to form the Flauros , an artifact which contains a trapped demon and can be used to amplify thought . Alessa 's spirit manifestation uses the completed Flauros to increase her powers and free herself from Dahlia 's spell , which had inhibited her abilities . Dahlia reveals that the cult plans to use Alessa to give birth to its god , before leaving to take part in the ritual . Travis heads to the cult 's ritual grounds , and sees members of the cult , including Kaufmann , surrounding Alessa 's burned body . Incapacitated by Kaufmann , Travis defeats and imprisons the demon within the Flauros in a dream @-@ like state .

Three endings are available . In the " Good " ending , Alessa uses the Flauros to manifest a baby with half of her soul , stopping the ritual , and her spirit manifestation carries the baby to the outskirts of the town , seeing Travis off as he returns to his truck and cheerfully drives away from Silent Hill . Dialogue follows to reveal that the protagonist of the first game , Harry Mason , and his wife find and adopt the baby , naming her Cheryl , while Dahlia and Kaufmann plan to cast a spell to draw the other half of Alessa 's soul back to the town , setting the events of the first Silent Hill game in motion . In the " Bad " ending , Travis awakens strapped to a gurney and is injected with an unknown substance : he starts convulsing and has a series of visions in which he kills two people and his form is briefly replaced by that of the Butcher . The joke ending sees Travis leave with a grey alien and a dog in an unidentified flying object .

= = Development = =

At E3 2006 , Origins was announced as in development by Climax Studios , instead of by Konami 's Team Silent who had developed previous installments . The first previews of the game featured a departure from the third @-@ person view typical of the series to a Resident Evil 4 @-@ style camera angle , and an emphasis on action and combat to a greater degree than the previous installments in the series . In the previews , Travis had six weapons , divided equally between melee weapons and firearms . Additional changes included a laser sight for his pistol and an option for the player to barricade areas . At the time , the game was expected to be released in late 2006 .

Issues with the game 's engine and " a confused high @-@ level vision for the game " led the game 's production to be transferred from the team in the United States to another studio in the United Kingdom , to ensure the final product would be " a tighter , more focused game that will provide fans

with the experience they want ... a Silent Hill experience " ; the release date was also pushed forward from winter 2006 to Q3 / Q4 2007 . The version of Origins that the United Kingdom development team received was intended to be a dark comedy inspired by the American television series Scrubs . Konami allowed the team to change the game , provided that the changes were done within the same budget and time frame ; Origins 's script , level design , and monsters were redone within a week by Sam Barlow . For Origins , the developers intentionally replicated aspects of gameplay and atmosphere from the first installment ; for example , the monsters behave more aggressively than those in previous installments , as a throwback to the first game . Later previews showed that the game had changed significantly and contained gameplay more in line with that found in the previous titles in the series . The changes were well received by video game journalists . On August 19 , 2007 , a demo of the game was leaked to internet download sites ; Climax promptly denied they were the source of the leaked content .

Origins was released for the PlayStation Portable ( PSP ) on November 6 , 2007 in North America , on November 16 , 2007 in Europe , on November 29 , 2007 in Australia , and on December 6 , 2007 in Japan . The Japanese release carried the alternate title Silent Hill Zero . On January 22 , 2008 , Konami officially confirmed that a PlayStation 2 ( PS2 ) port was in development . The PS2 port was released in North America on March 5 , 2008 , while the United Kingdom and Australian releases followed on May 16 , 2008 , and May 23 , 2008 , respectively . It became available on the PlayStation Network for Europe on April 28 , 2014 .

= = = Audio = = =

Released as Silent Hill Zero Original Soundtracks , the musical score of Origins was composed by Akira Yamaoka , who had created the music of previous games in the series , and released in Japan on January 25 , 2008 , by Konami Music Entertainment , Inc . As Origins is a prequel , Yamaoka wished to imbue its music with the atmosphere of the first installment . Mary Elizabeth McGlynn provided vocals for four tracks , for which Joe Romersa wrote the lyrics . All three had previously worked together on the music of the fourth installment of the series ( 2004 ) .

= = Reception = =

Most reviews for Silent Hill : Origins were positive ; its original release on the PSP received a Metacritic aggregate score of 78 out of 100 . GameDaily wrote that Origins " impressively brings all the elements we love about the Silent Hill franchise to a portable format that works wonderfully . " Shane Bettenhausen of 1UP.com concluded , " Sure , it 's predictable , conventional , and a little bit short , not to mention ill @-@ suited for brief pick @-@ up @-@ and @-@ play sessions on the bus , but we 're encouraged to see developers making an original , console @-@ quality experience for PSP . " According to Kristan Reed of Eurogamer , " No doubt mindful of remaining faithful to the series ' legacy , Climax pays such close attention to the ingredients of the first three Silent Hill games that it 's basically an unapologetic homage to them . " While stating that Origins would appeal to fans for its story that adds to the series ' mythos , Game Informer added , " Unfortunately , the game has fallen into something like a rut in most other areas and less fanatical gamers won 't be as forgiving of its faults . "

The storyline was met with generally mixed feelings from reviewers . According to Kevin VanOrd of GameSpot , the premise was unoriginal and unsuspenseful , detracting from Travis ' appeal as a protagonist , although he felt that the game provided new material for fans to analyze . PALGN 's Mat Keller wrote that the Origins ' " blatantly obvious " subtext failed to affect the player , in contrast to the subtext of previous installments . 1UP.com stated that while Origins suffered from heavy foreshadowing and predictable plot twists and character development , it added to the backstory of the series . Conversely , Wesley Yin @-@ Poole of VideoGamer.com described the storyline as " engrossing " .

Critics felt that the visual style was similar to those of the previous Silent Hill installments . Enjoying the visuals , Jeff Haynes of IGN wrote : " From the cluttered and junk strewn locations to the rusty ,

chaos filled doppelgangers of the alternate dimensions , everything feels like it 's been stripped from one of the other titles and shrunk down to the handheld . " Reviewers praised the graphics , the monster designs , the detailed environments , and atmosphere . However , some reviewers wrote that the character models could have been more detailed .

Gameplay drew a variety of reactions from " immersive " and " intriguing " , to formulaic . The puzzles were generally considered by critics as challenging and well @-@ done . The duration of the game was considered short , and reviewers criticized the spacing of the save points and absence of checkpoints . The game 's adherence to the formula of the Silent Hill series also drew criticism ; the opening comment of GameSpot 's review remarked that " this old fog needs to learn some new tricks " , and further detailed that the game provided " an entirely conventional adventure that relies on eight @-@ year @-@ old franchise hallmarks at the expense of anything truly new . " Some camera issues were noted , especially in tight corridors . Reviewers wrote that Origins had a greater emphasis on combat than previous installments , although reaction to the combat was generally negative . Some reviewers felt that the player was encouraged to avoid combat , due to a variety of gameplay factors , including the breakable melee weapons . On the other hand , GameSpy 's David Chapman stated that the readily available weapons made Travis too powerful . The inclusion of quick time events was not well received by reviewers , who felt that it added nothing appealing to the game . Additionally , the soundtrack was frequently praised as frightening , and a part of the game 's appeal . The PlayStation Official Magazine UK wrote : " Despite its small @-@ screen setting , Origins even manages a few genuine scares , mostly thanks to the first @-@ rate sound : this should only be played through headphones . "

The PS2 port was not as well received by reviewers , with a lower aggregate score of 70 out of 100 , indicating " mixed or average reviews " . The graphics of the port were considered by reviewers to be not as good as the PSP release and other installments in the series for the PS2 . Conversely , a reviewer for GameZone wrote that despite some technical issues with the graphics , the visuals of the port sufficed . Other issues with the port commented on by critics include the lack of manual camera control , the absence of a mini @-@ map or overall map for the more challenging areas , and no new bonus material for the port .