

= Kain ( Legacy of Kain ) =

Kain is a fictional character , and the main protagonist and title character of the Legacy of Kain video game series . First introduced in Blood Omen : Legacy of Kain in 1996 , he was created by Denis Dyack and Silicon Knights , and has appeared in all subsequent Legacy of Kain games under the direction of developer Crystal Dynamics . Between games , he serves as either the central playable character , or as an antagonist , but in all his depictions he has consistently been described as an antihero .

Drawing inspiration from the morally @-@ ambiguous character of William Munny from Clint Eastwood 's 1992 film Unforgiven , Silicon Knights conceived Kain as a nobleman murdered and revived as a vampire to take revenge on his assassins . He gradually embraces his new existence , and learns of his birthright to maintain balance in Nosgoth ( the fictional setting of the series ) . Crystal Dynamics later portrayed Kain as an Oedipus @-@ like figure , seeking to thwart the fate determined for him before his birth .

Beyond his role in the series , Kain has also featured in tie @-@ in comics , and in Crystal Dynamics ' Lara Croft and the Guardian of Light . In all of his voiced appearances , he has been played by actor Simon Templeman . He has been favorably received by video game critics and enthusiasts , with praise attributed to his antagonistic role in Legacy of Kain : Soul Reaver , and his status as a strong example of a memorable , nuanced antihero in the medium .

= = Concept and creation = =

Kain 's character was originally conceived circa 1993 by Silicon Knights ' president , Denis Dyack , as the protagonist of The Pillars of Nosgoth , an initial video game concept for what would become 1996 's Blood Omen : Legacy of Kain . He was modeled in part on William Munny , the protagonist of Clint Eastwood 's 1992 Western film , Unforgiven . The developers set out to craft an antihero to suit " a game where the player is put in the position where everyone believes you are evil " , feeling that the industry required a story addressing issues of moral ambiguity and wondering how players would react when " everyone in the world was your enemy ( including yourself ) [ ... ] where you had to kill innocents to survive [ and ] you are the ultimate pawn " . Other influences which helped to define Kain 's character arc included The Wheel of Time , Necroscope , and cover art from The Pillars of the Earth . In comparison to Count Dracula , Dyack commented in an interview that he believed Kain would " kick his ass " in a fight . He and writer Ken McCulloch considered Simon Templeman 's voiceover for the character superlative , despite initial apprehensions that the actors they had hired might not be able to convey the game 's complicated dialogue .

After a legal dispute with Silicon Knights , Blood Omen publisher Crystal Dynamics obtained the rights to the Legacy of Kain intellectual property , with Amy Hennig directing Kain 's characterization for the sequel , 1999 's Legacy of Kain : Soul Reaver . In this game , which built upon the Blood Omen ending in which he damns the world , Kain adopted the role of antagonist , with new character Raziel serving as the lead . Hennig justified this choice , believing that it would prove interesting to see what his decision had engendered after a few millennia . She emphasized , though , that she did not consider him a monster or mustache @-@ twirling villain , remarking that " in many ways , he 's a more complex and sympathetic character than Raziel himself " . Sources which helped to formulate his role in the plot ranged from Biblical lore to Eastern myth and mysticism .

In interviews preceding the release of 2001 's Soul Reaver 2 , Hennig said that Crystal Dynamics had a huge investment in Kain as a character . His portrayal in this game extrapolated further from Blood Omen 's story , and was influenced by Joseph Campbell 's ideals . No longer acting as a pure villain , Kain was intended to function as a " steadfast character " , coming to the story from a position of knowledge in contrast to Raziel 's relative ignorance . Hennig expressed that , by Soul Reaver 2 , her personal perception of Kain 's character had changed over the years , and that she now considered him a somewhat more attractive and interesting individual than Raziel due to his complexity . She dubbed him a tragic hero , " screwed by his own character flaws " , and argued that

this hamartia added to his depth . Since joining Naughty Dog , when asked whether Raziel or Kain is closest to her heart , Hennig has said that while Raziel is a sympathetic protagonist , she probably prefers Kain as a character .

For 2002 's Blood Omen 2 , developed by a different team within Crystal Dynamics , Kain returned as the playable protagonist . The development staff chose to focus on his rise to power as a younger vampire , combining aspects of his Blood Omen and Soul Reaver incarnations . He was marketed as a more powerful and ruthless character than traditional video game heroes , with lead designer Mike Ellis inviting comparison to Final Fantasy VI 's Kefka Palazzo and Revolver Ocelot of the Metal Gear series . Design issues , raised by the wealth of abilities and equipment he accumulated in Blood Omen , prompted the team to add to his backstory and convincingly deprive him of these powers . Producer Sam Newman described him as " a very unique character " who " doesn 't fit to the generic character molds you find in many other games , books and movies [ ... ] not good , he 's not necessarily evil -- Kain does as Kain believes " .

Legacy of Kain : Defiance , released in 2003 , returned to the aged , elder Kain from Soul Reaver and Soul Reaver 2 , now controllable alongside Raziel . The prospect of making this incarnation of Kain playable left the development team " very excited " , and was agreed upon very early in pre @-@ production . Recognizing that he is " the most important character in the series " , designer Kyle Mannerberg named several parallels and influences concerning his development up to that point , citing Neo and John Murdoch ( the protagonists of The Matrix and Dark City respectively ) , the archetypal Fisher King of Arthurian legend , the story of Oedipus , and Gnostic myth as inspirations ( with both latter sources being reaffirmed as strong influences by Hennig in a later interview ) . The spells he obtains over the course of his levels were intended to pay homage to the original Blood Omen .

= = Characteristics = =

Kain 's appearance undergoes " pretty dramatic changes " throughout the games as he ages , but core personality attributes cited by Defiance 's developers include his intelligence and cynicism , arrogance and regality , and his defiant nature . In the series ' fictional universe , he is described as the guardian of balance , a being responsible for preserving the health and integrity of Nosgoth ( the games ' setting ) , but left incapable of realizing this duty due to spiritual corruption he inherited at birth .

The character 's transformation into a vampire , and the visceral nature this trait lends the series , was derived from William Shakespeare 's classical models : " for the drunken commoners in the front rows he would insert dirty jokes to keep them entertained but for the aristocracy in the balconies he would write very cerebral metaphors " . According to Silicon Knights , the gore and vampirism in Blood Omen served as their " dirty jokes " , supplemented by a complex story .

As the story progresses , Kain evolves from a directionless young nobleman , to a lithe and devious vampire , to a " craggy " figure . As a playable character , he frequently narrates his thoughts through the dramatic device of soliloquy . In Blood Omen and Defiance , his battle cry and catchphrase is Vae victis , a Latin phrase attributed to Brennus meaning " woe to the conquered " .

= = Appearances = =

= = = Debut = = =

In Blood Omen : Legacy of Kain , Kain is introduced as a young human noble . In the game 's prologue , he is murdered by assassins , and resurrected as a vampire by Mortanius , a necromancer . He is promised both vengeance and a cure to his vampirism if he can restore the nine Pillars of Nosgoth , edifices whose state dictates the vitality of the world ; the nine guardians who symbiotically represent the Pillars were corrupted prior to his birth , and must be killed before the land can recover . During his quest , he meets the ancient vampire Vorador , who influences him

to forsake his former humanity and accept his vampirism , and discovers the Soul Reaver , a legendary soul @-@ devouring sword . Using the Reaver , he tries to alter the course of Nosgoth 's history to prevent the Nemesis ? a tyrant king ? from coming to power . Tricked by Moebius , the guardian of time , Kain succeeds in destroying the Nemesis , but the temporal paradox this triggers results in a new timeline in which vampires have been hunted to extinction ; Kain is left the last surviving vampire in Nosgoth . After systematically tracking down and killing most of the guardians , he confronts Mortanius ? revealed as the guardian of death , and the orchestrator of Kain 's assassination ? and realizes that he himself is the final guardian , and that the cure to his curse entails his own destruction . Faced with the obligation of self @-@ sacrifice ? thereby restoring the world , but ensuring the annihilation of the vampire race ? or the alternative of destroying the Pillars to rule over the world in its miasmatic state , Kain opts for the latter choice , embracing vampirism as a blessing as the Pillars collapse .

= = = Soul Reaver games = = =

Legacy of Kain : Soul Reaver features Kain as the main antagonist and a recurring boss character , narratively following him centuries after his decision . Since the first game , Kain has revived the vampire race , and has become the despotic ruler of the land . When the game 's protagonist , his lieutenant Raziel , surpasses Kain , Raziel is executed for his transgression . Resurrected by The Elder God , Raziel returns to destroy his former brethren and Kain , and eventually confronts Kain at the ruins of the Pillars . Kain attacks Raziel with the Soul Reaver , but the blade shatters when it strikes him , and Kain escapes , strangely satisfied . Raziel discovers , to his horror , that Kain created him and his other lieutenants from the corpses of the Sarafan , an ancient order of vampire hunters . He fights Kain a second time in Moebius 's abandoned time machine , the Chronoplast , where Kain explains the nature of free will and rationalizes his actions . Narrowly escaping , Kain activates the Chronoplast and travels into the past , with Raziel pursuing him as the game ends .

In Soul Reaver 2 , Kain acts as a non @-@ player character encountered by Raziel in several cutscenes . As the game 's plot progresses , his agenda and motives become clearer . He seeks a third option to the dilemma prescribed for him at the end of Blood Omen , hoping to both restore Nosgoth and return the Pillars to vampire control . Having viewed the timestream , he learned that history is predestined , and seeks to change his fate by triggering more temporal paradoxes , an objective which demanded Raziel 's temporary destruction . It is revealed that Raziel is destined to be consumed by the Soul Reaver , thus becoming the soul @-@ devouring entity trapped within the weapon . With Raziel 's help , Kain is able to defy history and prevent his own pre @-@ ordained death , and , in return , he saves Raziel from being consumed by the Reaver at the story 's climax . However , this alteration putatively changes history for the worse , leading into the events of Blood Omen 2 and Legacy of Kain : Defiance .

= = = Blood Omen 2 and Defiance = = =

Blood Omen 2 pursues a younger Kain during his early conquests of Nosgoth , in the altered timeline triggered by the changes to Raziel 's destiny at the end of Soul Reaver 2 . Legacy of Kain : Defiance takes place in the same altered timeline , periodically switching between the characters of the elder Kain and Raziel from Soul Reaver 2 , with both acting as playable protagonists . Over the course of the game , Moebius manipulates Kain into believing he is a champion prophesied to fight against and destroy Raziel , culminating in a final battle between the two characters which Raziel wins . It is discovered that The Elder God is malevolent , and he and Moebius ? his servant ? had conspired against Kain from the outset of the series , considering vampires an abomination . Kain , after being presumed dead , returns , and reconciles with Raziel , who willingly enters the Soul Reaver . As he does so , he uses his powers to cleanse Kain of the corruption he inherited at birth as a Pillar guardian . Armed with the ancient sword once again , Kain is able to see and battle The Elder God for the first time , but is unable to destroy him . The story ends as he looks out at the Nosgoth landscape ; though uncertain that he can ever restore the world , he contemplates Raziel 's

sacrifice and the " first bitter taste " of hope it has given him .

= = Cultural impact = =

= = = Merchandise and promotion = = =

Several action figures and figurines of Kain have been created by Blue Box Interactive and the National Entertainment Collectibles Association in partnership with Eidos . He featured extensively in marketing for the Legacy of Kain series , including a \$ 1 million advertising campaign for Soul Reaver . Beyond the games , he also appeared in Top Cow 's promotional comics for Soul Reaver and Defiance , and was included alongside Raziel as a playable character in downloadable content for 2010 's Lara Croft and the Guardian of Light .

= = = Reception = = =

Opinion on Kain 's character has been largely positive in critical reviews of the Legacy of Kain games . Praise has frequently been directed towards Simon Templeman 's voice acting , with IGN , Game Revolution and Adrenaline Vault citing Kain 's soliloquies as " both gruesome and entertaining " , " the best part [ of the game 's audio ] " and " one of the best stints of voice acting ever recorded " respectively in their assessments of his debut in the original Blood Omen . For Blood Omen 2 , although critics expressed disappointment with the game itself , they praised Kain 's character nevertheless ; GameSpot 's Greg Kasavin branded him " a very intriguing protagonist " and " as memorable of a main character as they come " , while IGN 's Douglass C. Perry felt he was " incredibly likeable " , and " in a very true sense [ ... ] a great videogame character " . GameZone 's Michael Knutson opined that he was a " wicked cool character " , and Game Revolution 's Johnny Liu named him a " great anti @-@ hero " . Kasavin again praised him in a review for Defiance , writing that " it 's rare enough to find a truly memorable main character in a game , let alone two " , and that the game 's ensemble cast " [ to some extent superseded ] the problems in the gameplay " . Ian Dransfield of Play has stated that " we totally and completely fell in love with [ Kain ] " and highlighted him as a " character who [ needs ] to be revived " .

Kain has also appeared in contention on several lists comparing video game characters , both critical and user @-@ decided . A 2000 GameSpot readers ' choice poll to determine the top ten video game villains ranked him at # 10 , and the same site 's 2010 All @-@ Time Greatest Game Villain contest included him as one of 64 candidates . He featured in IGN 's 2005 Battle of the Badasses , surviving to the " Elite Eight " stage before being eliminated . A 2008 IGN Reader 's Choice poll determined that he ranked among ten heroes most desired to appear in a Soulcalibur game , and he appeared in an IGN list of gaming 's most notorious anti @-@ heroes , sharing both honors with Raziel . He ranked as # 34 in IGN 's top 100 videogame villains list , was showcased as # 2 on a 1UP.com list of the top five videogame characters named Kain / Kane , and ranked as # 4 on the latter site 's list of top ten vampires . GameDaily ranked him as # 17 out of their top 25 anti @-@ heroes , and GamingBolt listed him as one of " 35 Characters We Want To See In Sony 's Super Smash Bros " . Joystick Division included him as # 2 on their list of the top ten best vampires in video @-@ game history , while Diehard GameFAN named him # 8 on theirs . GamesRadar praised Kain 's role as an antagonist , putting him in their 2013 list of the best villains in video game history at # 59 , but noted that he " lives in more of a grey area than most of the villains on this list . "

Some reviewers were less enthusiastic about aspects of the character , with IGN 's Perry commenting that his Soul Reaver 2 dialogue was haughty and " overwritten " , and Ivan Sulic considering his Blood Omen 2 incarnation " nothing more than an arrogant jerk with little to latch on to and care about " while expressing preference for Raziel . Also relating to Blood Omen 2 , IGN 's Aaron Boulding regarded his pompous nature as his " one personality trait " , and considered it comedic , while Matt Casamassina felt Kain was " cool " , but decried his visual design as "

flamboyant to the point of being comical " .