

= Silent Hill ( video game ) =

Silent Hill is a survival horror video game for the PlayStation published by Konami and developed by Team Silent , a Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo group . The first installment in the Silent Hill series , the game was released in North America in January 1999 , and in Japan and Europe later that year . Silent Hill uses a third @-@ person view , with real @-@ time 3D environments . To mitigate limitations of the hardware , developers liberally used fog and darkness to muddle the graphics . Unlike earlier survival horror games that focused on protagonists with combat training , the player character of Silent Hill is an " everyman " .

The game follows Harry Mason as he searches for his missing adopted daughter in the eponymous fictional American town of Silent Hill ; stumbling upon a cult conducting a ritual to revive a deity it worships , he discovers her true origin . Five game endings are possible , depending on actions taken by the player , including one joke ending .

Silent Hill received positive reviews from critics on its release and was commercially successful . It is considered a defining title in the survival horror genre , moving away from B movie horror elements , toward a psychological style of horror emphasizing atmosphere . Various adaptations of Silent Hill have been released , including a 2001 visual novel , the 2006 feature film Silent Hill , and a 2009 reimagining of the game , titled Silent Hill : Shattered Memories . The game was followed by Silent Hill 2 in 2001 .

= = Gameplay = =

The objective of the player is to guide main protagonist and player character Harry Mason through a monster @-@ filled town as he searches for his lost daughter , Cheryl . Silent Hill 's gameplay consists of combat , exploration , and puzzle @-@ solving . The game uses a third @-@ person view , with the camera occasionally switching to other angles for dramatic effect , in pre @-@ scripted areas . This is a change from older survival horror games , which constantly shifted through a variety of camera angles . Because Silent Hill has no heads @-@ up display , the player must consult a separate menu to check Harry 's " health " . If a DualShock controller is used a heart beat rhythm can be felt signifying that the player is at low health .

Harry confronts monsters in each area with both melee weapons and firearms . An ordinary man , Harry cannot sustain many blows from enemies , and gasps for breath after sprinting . His inexperience in handling firearms means that his aim , and therefore the player 's targeting of enemies , is often unsteady . A portable radio collected early in the game alerts Harry to the presence of nearby creatures with bursts of static .

The player can locate and collect maps of each area , stylistically similar to tourist maps . Accessible from the menu and readable only when sufficient light is present , each map is marked with places of interest . Visibility is mostly low due to fog and darkness ; the latter is prevalent in the " Otherworld " . The player locates a pocket @-@ size flashlight early in the game , but the light beam illuminates only a few feet . Navigating through Silent Hill requires the player to find keys and solve puzzles .

= = Plot = =

Harry is driving to Silent Hill with his daughter Cheryl for a vacation . At the town 's edge , he swerves his car to avoid hitting a girl in the road ; as a result , he crashes the vehicle and loses consciousness . Waking up in town , he realizes that his daughter is missing , so he sets out to look for her in the town . He meets police officer Cybil Bennett , who works in a nearby town . Finding that the town is deserted and foggy , with snow falling out of season , Harry meets several other people in the monster @-@ filled town : Dahlia Gillespie , who gives him a charm , the " Flauros " ; Doctor Michael Kaufmann , director of Silent Hill 's Alchemilla Hospital ; and nurse Lisa Garland , who worked at Alchemilla . He also encounters a symbol throughout the town , which Dahlia claims will allow darkness to take over the town if it continues to multiply . Eventually , this darkness begins

taking over the town . According to Dahlia , the girl from the road is a demon responsible for the symbol 's duplication . She urges him to stop the demon , because if he does not , Cheryl will die . Harry soon finds himself attacked by Cybil , who is parasitized by a creature ; the player must choose whether to save her or not .

When the girl appears again , she is trapped by the Flauros . Dahlia reveals that she manipulated Harry into trapping it , since only he could approach it . It is a phantasm of her daughter Alessa , who possesses vast supernatural powers . Harry awakens in a logicless void known officially only as " nowhere " and encounters Lisa again , who realizes she is " the same as them " and begins transforming ; he flees , horrified . Her diary reveals that she nursed Alessa during a secret , forced hospitalization . Harry soon finds Dahlia along with the apparition of Cheryl and Alessa , charred . Seven years earlier , Dahlia had conducted a ritual that impregnated Alessa with the cult 's deity through immolation ; Alessa survived because her status as the deity 's " vessel " rendered her immortal . Alessa 's resistance to the ritual caused her soul to be bisected , preventing the birth . One half of her soul went to baby Cheryl , whom Harry and his wife had adopted . Dahlia then cast a spell that would draw it back to Alessa . Sensing Cheryl 's return , Alessa manifested the symbols in the town to prevent the birth . During the endings in which Cybil survives , Dahlia reveals these symbols to be repellent . With Alessa 's plan thwarted and her soul rejoined , the deity is revived and possesses her .

Four different endings are available depending on whether Harry saves Cybil or discovers a bottle of Aglaophotis at Kaufmann 's apartment , or both . Aglaophotis is a red liquid that is obtained from the refinement of a plant of the same name ; it can dispel demonic forces and grant protection against such forces to those who use the item . The " bad " ending occurs if neither is done ; Alessa electrocutes Dahlia and then attacks Harry , who ultimately defeats her . Cheryl 's voice thanks Harry for freeing her and Alessa vanishes . Harry collapses , and the game cuts to his corpse in the crashed car - suggesting that all that happened in the game was a delusion of Harry 's dying mind . The " bad + " ending finds Cybil alive and Kauffman missing ; after the echoing of Cheryl 's voice and Alessa 's disappearance , Cybil walks to Harry and convinces him to flee . The " good " ending finds Cybil dead , and Kaufmann shows up with the bottle of Aglaophotis which he then uses to force the deity out of Alessa ; Kaufmann is revealed to have secretly allied with Dahlia and enabled Alessa 's hospitalization . Feeling betrayed , he forces the deity out of Alessa , also causing her to vanish . After Harry defeats it , the deity disappears , and Alessa appears , who manifests a baby reincarnation of herself and Cheryl , gives it to Harry , enables their escape from the depths of " nowhere " and her nightmare , and then dies . In the " good + " ending , Harry escapes with Cybil and the baby . In both " good " endings , a transformed Lisa prevents Kaufmann from leaving and throws him into a pit . The joke ending sees an abduction of Harry by extraterrestrials .

= = Development = =

= = = Design = = =

Development of Silent Hill started in September 1996 . The game was created by Team Silent , a group of staff members within the Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo studio . The new owners of its parent company Konami sought to produce a game that would be successful in the United States . For this reason , a Hollywood @-@ like atmosphere was proposed for Silent Hill . The staff members that were assigned to the game 's development had failed at their previous projects . They intended to leave Konami , as they were not allowed to realize their own ideas , and were not compatible with the company 's other teams . According to composer Akira Yamaoka , the developers did not know how to proceed with the Silent Hill project , either . As the time passed , the personnel and management of Konami lost their faith in the game , and the members of Team Silent increasingly felt like outsiders . Despite the profit @-@ oriented approach of the parent company , however , the developers of Silent Hill had much artistic freedom because the game was still produced as in the era of lower @-@ budget 2D titles . Eventually , the development staff decided to

ignore the limits of Konami 's initial plan , and to make Silent Hill a game that would appeal to the emotions of players instead .

For this purpose , the team introduced a " fear of the unknown " as a psychological type of horror . The plot was made vague and occasionally contradictory to leave its true meaning in the dark , and to make players reflect upon unexplained parts . Director Keiichiro Toyama created the game 's scenario , while programmer Hiroyuki Owaku wrote the text for the riddles . Toyama did not have much experience of horror movies but was interested in UFOs , the occult and David Lynch movies which influenced the game 's development .

The localization company Latina International , which had previously worked on Final Fantasy VII , translated the script into English . The town of Silent Hill is an interpretation of a small American community as imagined by the Japanese team . It was based on Western literature and films , as well as on depictions of American towns in European and Russian culture . The game 's joke ending came out of a suggestion box created to find alternative reasons for the occurrences in Silent Hill .

Artist Takayoshi Sato corrected inconsistencies in the plot , and designed the game 's cast of characters . As a young employee , Sato was initially restricted to basic tasks such as font design and file sorting . He also created 3D demos and presentations , and taught older staff members the fundamentals of 3D modeling . However , he was not credited for this work as he did not have as much respect within Konami as older employees . Sato eventually approached the company 's higher @-@ ups with a short demo movie he had rendered , and threatened to withhold this technical knowledge from other staff members if he was not assigned to 3D work . As a consequence , his superior had to give in to his demand , and he was allowed to do character designs . Instead of relying on illustrations , Sato conceived the characters of Silent Hill while creating their computer @-@ generated models . He gave each their own distinctive characteristics , but made Harry almost completely neutral as he wanted to avoid forcing interpretations of the game on the players . Creating the skull shapes for the faces of the American cast was difficult because he had no Caucasian co @-@ workers to use for reference . Although Sato was largely responsible for the game 's cinematics and characters at this point , his superior still did not want to fully credit his work , and intended to assign a visual supervisor to him . To prevent this from happening , Sato volunteered to create the full @-@ motion videos of Silent Hill by himself . Over the course of two and a half years , he lived in the development team 's office , as he had to render the scenes with the approximately 150 Unix @-@ based computers of his coworkers after they left work at the end of a day .

Sato estimated the game 's budget at US \$ 3 ? 5 million . He said that the development team intended to make Silent Hill a masterpiece rather than a traditional sales @-@ oriented game , and that they opted for an engaging story , which would persist over time ? similar to successful literature . The game debuted at the 1998 Electronic Entertainment Expo in Atlanta , Georgia , United States , where the presentations of movies and in @-@ game scenes garnered applause from the audience . This favorable reception persuaded Konami to allot more personnel and public relation initiatives to the project . Konami later showcased Silent Hill at the European Computer Trade Show in London , and included a demo with its stealth game Metal Gear Solid in Japan .

The names and designs of some Silent Hill creatures and puzzles are based on books enjoyed by the character of Alessa , including The Lost World by Arthur Conan Doyle and Lewis Carroll 's Alice 's Adventures in Wonderland . The game contains several real @-@ life references , particularly in characters ' names . Cheryl Mason 's first name is based on actress Sheryl Lee 's first name , and Lisa Garland 's surname is taken from actress Judy Garland . " Michael Kaufmann " is a combination of Troma Studios producers Michael Herz 's and Lloyd Kaufmann 's first name and surname , respectively . Alessa 's original name was " Asia " , and Dahlia 's was " Daria " , based on the first names of actresses Asia Argento and Daria Nicolodi ? Argento 's mother . Harry 's name was originally " Humbert " , and Cheryl 's was " Dolores " , in reference to the protagonist and title character of Vladimir Nabokov 's novel Lolita . The American staff altered these names , as they considered them too uncommon . Fictitious religious items appearing in the game have used various religions as a basis : the evil spirit @-@ dispelling substance Aglaophotis , which is said to be made from a medicinal herb , is based on a herb of similar name and nature in the Kabbalah ( Jewish

mysticism ) ; the " Seal of Metatron " ' s name references the angel Metatron ; and the name of the " Flauros " ' was taken from the eponymous demon appearing in the Lemegeton , a book on magic said to have been compiled by writings of King Solomon . Certain items and doors in the " nowhere " dimension of the game were given names based on occult elements in order to symbolize magical traits of Dahlia . The names of these doors were taken from the names of the angels Ophiel , Hagith , Phaleg , and Bethor , who appear in a medieval book of black magic and are supposed to rule over planets . This motif of giving names that suggest planets was used to signify that " a deeper part of the realm of Alessa 's mind is being entered , " according to Owaku .

= = = Music = = =

The soundtrack for Silent Hill was composed by sound director Akira Yamaoka , who requested to join the development staff after the original musician had left . In addition to the music , he was in charge of tasks such as sound effect creation and audio mastering . Yamaoka did not watch game scenes , but created the music independently from its visuals . The style of his compositions was influenced by Twin Peaks composer Angelo Badalamenti . To differentiate Silent Hill from other games as much as possible , and to give it a cold and rusty feel , Yamaoka opted for industrial music . When he presented his musical pieces to the other staff members for the first time , they misinterpreted their sound as a game bug . Yamaoka had to explain that this noise was intended for the music , and the team only withdrew their initial objection after he elaborated on his reasons for choosing this style .

On March 5 , 1999 , the album Silent Hill Original Soundtracks was released in Japan . The 41st track on the CD , the ending theme " Esperándote " , was composed by Rika Muranaka . After Yamaoka had approached her to create a piece of music for the game , she suggested the use of bandoneóns , violins , and a Spanish @-@ speaking singer . It was decided to make the song a tango , and Muranaka composed the melody for the English lyrics she had conceived . When she arrived in Buenos Aires , Argentina , to record the translated Spanish lyrics with Argentine singer Vanesa Quiroz , Muranaka realized that the syllables did not match the melodic line any more , and she had to recompose it in five minutes .

On October 29 , 2013 , Perseverance Records released a " Best Of " album , which features 16 newly interpreted instrumental tracks composed by Akira Yamaoka and arranged and performed by Edgar Rothermich . The 17th track on the album is the ballad " I Want Love " performed by Romina Arena .

= = Release = =

Silent Hill had difficulty passing censors before it could be released outside Japan . The " Grey Child " monster went through two design changes for the North American release and four design changes for the European release , before it was finally approved by censors . Originally designed to resemble knife @-@ wielding , nude children , these monsters were deemed too graphic , particularly because the player would have been allowed to kill them . The North American version of the game features a faceless , grey , " somewhat larger " version of them with a " modified head " . In the European version of Silent Hill , the Grey Child monsters were replaced by " Mumbler " monsters , which appear later in the North American version . Near the end of the European version , however , Grey Child monsters can still be seen as transparent silhouettes that are similar to the " Larval Stalkers " .

Silent Hill was released for the PlayStation in North America on January 31 , 1999 ; in Japan on March 4 , 1999 ; and in Europe on August 1 , 1999 . It was included in the Japanese Silent Hill Complete Set in 2006 . On March 19 , 2009 , Silent Hill became available for download from the European PlayStation Network store of the PlayStation 3 and the PlayStation Portable . Two days later , the game was removed due to " unforeseen circumstances " . On September 10 , 2009 , Silent Hill was released on the North American PlayStation Network . On October 26 , 2011 it was re @-@ released on the European PlayStation Network .

= = Adaptations = =

A radically altered version of Silent Hill was released for the Game Boy Advance . Titled Play Novel : Silent Hill and released only in Japan in 2001 , it is a gamebook @-@ style visual novel . It contains a retelling of Silent Hill 's story through text @-@ based gameplay , with the player occasionally confronted with questions concerning what direction to take the character , as well as the puzzles , which are a major part of Silent Hill 's gameplay . After completing the game once , the player has the option of playing as Cybil in a second scenario , with a third made available for download once the second scenario has been completed . When the game was exhibited , Western critics were unimpressed , and criticized the lack of any soundtrack as severely detracting from the " horror " factor of the game .

A film adaptation , also titled Silent Hill , was released on April 21 , 2006 . The film , directed by Christophe Gans , was based largely but loosely on the game , incorporating elements from Silent Hill 2 , 3 , and 4 . Gans replaced Harry Mason with a female main protagonist , Rose Da Silva , because he felt Harry had many qualities typically perceived as feminine . When designing the film 's visual elements , Gans was influenced by fellow directors Michael Mann , David Lynch , and David Cronenberg . The film 's soundtrack includes music composed by Yamaoka . Although critical reaction was mostly negative , the film was a financial success and was praised by fans , especially for its visuals .

A " reimagining " of Silent Hill , titled Silent Hill : Shattered Memories , was developed by Climax Studios and published by Konami Digital Entertainment . The game was released on December 8 , 2009 , for the Wii and on January 19 , 2010 , for the PlayStation 2 and the PlayStation Portable , to mostly positive reviews . Although it retains the premise of a man 's search for his missing daughter , Shattered Memories branches off into a different plot with altered characters . It features psychological profiling which alters various in @-@ game elements depending on the player 's response to questions in therapy , lacks the combat of Silent Hill , and replaces the " Otherworld " with a series of chase sequences through an alternate frozen version of the town .

= = Reception = =

Silent Hill received generally positive reviews , gaining an 86 / 100 and 84 @.@ 99 percent aggregate at ratings websites Metacritic and GameRankings , respectively . The game sold over two million copies , which gained Silent Hill a place in the American PlayStation Greatest Hits budget releases .

Silent Hill has been compared to the Resident Evil series of survival horror video games . Bobba Fatt of GamePro labeled Silent Hill a " shameless but slick Resident Evil clone " . Others felt that Silent Hill was Konami 's answer to the Resident Evil series in that , while they noted a similarity , Silent Hill utilized a different form of horror to induce fear , attempting to form a disturbing atmosphere for the player , in contrast to the visceral scares and action @-@ oriented approach of Resident Evil . Adding to the atmosphere was the audio , which was well @-@ received ; Billy Matjiunis of TVG described the ambient music as " engrossing " ; a reviewer for Game Revolution also praised the audio , commenting that the sound and music " will set you on edge " . Less well @-@ received was the voice acting which , although some reviewers remarked it was better than that found in the Resident Evil series , was found poor overall by reviewers , and accompanied by pauses between lines that served to spoil the atmosphere .

Reviewers noted that Silent Hill used real @-@ time 3D environments , in contrast to the pre @-@ rendered environments found in Resident Evil . Fog and darkness were heavily used to disguise the limitations of the hardware . Along with the grainy textures ? also from hardware limitations ? most reviewers felt that these factors actually worked in the game 's favor ; Francesca Reyes of IGN described it as " adding to the atmosphere of dilapidation and decay " . In using 3D environments , however , controls became an issue , and in " tougher " areas , maneuverability became " an exercise in frustration " .

The game's popularity as the first in the series was further recognized long after its release ; a list of the best PS games of all time by IGN in 2000 listed it as the 14th @-@ best PS game , while a 2005 article by GameSpy detailing the best PS games listed Silent Hill as the 15th @-@ best game produced for the console . A GameTrailers video feature in 2006 ranked Silent Hill as number one in its list of the top ten scariest games of all time . In 2005 , the game was credited for moving the survival horror genre away from B movie horror elements to the psychological style seen in art house or Japanese horror films , due to the game's emphasis on a disturbing atmosphere rather than visceral horror . In November 2012 , Time named it one of the 100 greatest video games of all time .