

= Haunting Ground =

Haunting Ground , known in Japan as Demento (????) , is a survival horror video game developed and published by Capcom for the PlayStation 2 in 2005 . The story follows Fiona Belli , a young girl who wakes up in the dungeon of a castle after being involved in a car accident . She quickly befriends Hewie , a White Shepherd roaming the castle . With his aid , Fiona seeks to escape the castle and unravel the mysteries of it and its inhabitants . The game shares many similarities with Capcom 's earlier survival horror title Clock Tower 3 , and has been described as a spiritual successor to the Clock Tower series . The player controls Fiona as they explore the environment , evade and hide from enemy pursuers , and occasionally fight against the castle 's inhabitants . Hewie is a central part to the gameplay , and accompanies Fiona throughout the game . He can be given orders to explore the environment , attack enemies , and otherwise aid in Fiona 's survival .

Haunting Ground was first revealed in September 2004 . Capcom added the dog mechanic during development thinking retailers and players alike would not enjoy a survival horror title with a lone female protagonist . The game was released in April of next year garnering mixed to average reviews . The graphics and presentation were praised , as well as the sexual overtones which were described as " disturbing " and " off @-@ putting . " Hewie was credited for giving the game a unique feel . However , the story was found to be cliché , and some of the gameplay was noted as predictable and dated . Haunting Ground was re @-@ released digitally in Japan for the PlayStation 3 in 2015 .

= = Gameplay = =

Haunting Ground is a survival horror game with similar gameplay elements to Clock Tower 3 . The player controls Fiona Belli directly and gives commands to her canine companion , Hewie . Fiona can run and perform a backstep maneuver , both of which reduce stamina . She can also crouch down to hide from enemy pursuers . Fiona can kick and tackle enemies as well , but tackling also reduces stamina . Losing too much stamina will result in Fiona becoming exhausted , causing her movements to slow down or possibly stop altogether . Exhaustion can be revived with certain items or with time . Fiona can interact with the environment by checking items , opening doors , and climbing ladders . The player can utilize hiding spots to evade pursuers . Other areas act as retaliation points that allow Fiona to use her environment to counterattack against her enemy , although some of these locations can only be used once .

Commanding Hewie is an integral part of Haunting Ground 's gameplay . At the beginning of the game , he won 't be completely friendly and obey all of Fiona 's commands . The player will have to build a friendship and gain his trust in order to survive the game . Hewie can be told to sniff out items , check suspicious areas or items , attack an enemy , or called back to Fiona 's side . The player can praise Hewie by petting and feeding him , both which can heal his vitality . Likewise , he can be scolded when he won 't listen to commands . He can be told to " stand ready " before attacking , which will increase his attack power .

Enemies can hear footsteps and other sounds . When Fiona is in a dangerous situation , she may fall into a panic . During panic mode , visibility gets worse , the menu can 't be opened , and she will begin running on her own , tripping and falling into walls . Panic mode will elapse after some time , or certain items can be used to calm her down . If Fiona sustains a significant amount of damage , she will slow down and become unable to backstep . If she receives too much damage she can die . Damage heals with time or items can be used to bring her vitality back to normal . While some items are used to heal Fiona and Hewie , others are used to damage enemies . Some can be thrown while others are set like traps for the enemy to walk over . Some items are found by searching while others can be crafted in refining rooms .

= = Plot = =

Fiona Belli is an 18 @-@ year @-@ old girl who recently moved to college . While visiting her

parents , she is involved in a car accident , and awakens in a cage in the dungeon of a castle . Her memories of the incident are hazy . Noting that the cage that keeps her prisoner has been left unlocked , she steps out , but is startled by a large , fierce animal that runs past her . She quickly begins searching for answers and a way out of the castle . Soon , she befriends the animal that initially frightened her , a White Shepherd named Hewie . As Fiona begins to unravel the mystery in which she finds herself , she learns that she is the carrier of the Azoth , which , for unknown reasons , is sought after by Riccardo , the castle 's keeper .

The first enemy Fiona encounters is Debilitas , a large , mentally disabled groundskeeper who thinks of Fiona as one of his dolls . Fiona then makes contact with a mysterious man named Lorenzo , who seems to want to help her escape . He tells her that to do so , she needs a staff from the chapel . However , upon taking the staff , Debilitas corners Fiona and Hewie , forcing a confrontation . After eliminating Debilitas , Fiona soon finds her next enemy , Daniella , the icy maid . Daniella covets Fiona 's ability to smell , taste , touch , feel , and " experience pleasure . " She is especially jealous that Fiona can create life (via a fertile womb) . Daniella is defeated when she is impaled with a shard of broken glass from a ceiling window .

The third villain is Riccardo , who wields a flintlock pistol . For the majority of the game , Riccardo keeps his face hidden under a hood . Upon revealing himself however , Fiona is shocked to see her dead father 's face . Riccardo reveals that he and her father , Ugo , are clones . He murdered Ugo in the car accident as revenge for leaving the castle and marrying Fiona 's mother . He plans to use Fiona (by means of her womb and use of her Azoth) to bring about his own rebirth , so that he may live forever . As they fight atop a water tower , Hewie rescues Fiona by attacking Riccardo , causing him to fall from the summit .

The final enemy is Lorenzo , who seemed to be an ally , but who now menaces Fiona in several different forms . Fiona first meets him as an old , crippled man . He tells Fiona that Riccardo was always the problem child , and that he created both Riccardo and Ugo in an attempt to find a body with an Azoth which he could use to gain immortality . Ugo had the Azoth , but left the castle to marry Ayla . Now with Riccardo dead , Lorenzo believes that Fiona is his , so he can take the Azoth she inherited from her father . He chases after Fiona , but she is able to crush him in a rock press . However , she soon encounters a resurrected , youthful Lorenzo ; the life energy he acquired from Riccardo 's body has allowed him mastery over his own aging process . With the help of Hewie , Fiona causes Lorenzo to fall into a pit of lava . At this point , the castle begins to shake and collapse , and Lorenzo returns as a flaming skeleton . He chases Fiona as she heads for the exit , and attempts to block her escape , but as they reach the door , he finally dies , and Fiona and Hewie eventually leave the castle .

= = Development and release = =

Capcom began development knowing they wanted to make a survival horror game with a lead female character . Believing that the female lead would not bode well with retailers and players alike , they added in a dog partner that could attack enemies . After this change , they further designed the gameplay around this partner mechanic . On September 24 , 2004 , Capcom debuted *Haunting Ground* under its Japanese name *Demento* at the Tokyo Game Show after launching a teaser page on their official website two days prior . While the text was in Japanese only , the English translation of the teaser page read : " One person awakes / Continuation of a nightmare / An unknown place / Fraught with insanity . " Capcom released the game in Japan on April 21 , 2005 , in Europe and Australia on April 29 , 2005 , and in North America on May 10 , 2005 . Critics have described the game as a spiritual successor to the *Clock Tower* series , although it has never been officially declared as such .

In July 2012 , *Haunting Ground* appeared to be slated for a PlayStation 3 re @-@ release as a " PS2 Classic " , having been rated by the ESRB with Sony Computer Entertainment named as the publisher . On April 21 , 2015 , it was re @-@ released for the PlayStation 3 via the PlayStation Store exclusively in Japan .

= = Reception = =

Haunting Ground received " average " reviews according to video game review aggregator Metacritic . The game 's sexuality was noted as a positive point by critics . IGN wrote , " Haunting Ground 's combination of high @-@ end presentation , disturbing sexuality , and psychological mindjobbing makes it one of the most interesting games of the last couple of months , " and selected it as the " Game of the Month " for May 2005 . They described it as an " interesting horror experience " that would appeal to " old @-@ school adventure fans " , although they found weakness in the narrative , calling it " clichéd " storytelling . GameSetWatch also felt the sexuality of the game was a positive ; " Disparaging Haunting Ground for its copious objectification of women is a facile task , and so is discrediting its storytelling for the gratuitous exposure . Easy , easy , to fetishize a horny maid , a half @-@ naked young blonde in dire straits and at the mercy of grasping , perverted men . But it 's precisely that off @-@ putting sexuality that makes Daniella terrifying , that makes Fiona 's circumstances so explicitly repugnant , that sharpens Haunting Ground 's fear factor to a knife in the gut . "

1UP.com praised the graphics , character models and environments , arguing that the game featured " some of the most detailed , lavish 3D environments Capcom has ever produced . " They did however feel the game was dated compared to the newly released Resident Evil 4 , stating it " isn 't without merit , it 's just that the merits are buried deep in an occasionally thrilling , mostly ' been there , done that ' game of indistinct origin . " GamePro stated that " despite a few fresh ideas , Haunting Ground is no classic . The thin story relies too often on cliché and titillation , the villains aren 't terribly frightening , and the gameplay becomes too predictable too quickly . Ultimately , this is Resident Evil Lite with a dog . " Despite this , they praised the cinematic presentation and found the visuals as " stark but appealing . " GameSpot noted that Hewie , despite being well @-@ trained , occasionally did not obey orders , adding realism to the game . They found the relationship between Fiona and Hewie and its gameplay mechanics give Haunting Ground " its own special place in the horror genre " . They believed the gameplay to have flaws , " but if you 're a big horror fan and don 't mind something different , Haunting Ground is worth a look . " Other critics also praised the use of Hewie . Just Adventure called him " adorable " and " an asset of the utmost value , " whilst 1UP.com named him " one of the best @-@ implemented efforts " of a dog in video gaming .

In a retrospective analysis , Kill Screen 's Zach Budgor compared Haunting Ground 's " psychological landscape " to Dario Argento 's 1977 film *Suspiria* . He commended the game for making symbolic choices in its design , over more literal and sensible choices , creating a dreamlike atmosphere . The game 's grotesque expressionism was also highlighted . Budgor found that removing the player 's control at critical points highlights Fiona 's subjectivity , with the sounds and images expressing ideas of " violation , transgression , and bodily autonomy . " He also found the drive for the enemies to kill Fiona creates a continuous tension , as its unclear nature lends to an uncomfortable confusion for both Fiona and the player .