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## [Silent Hill Origins](#)

*"Day after day, eyes that follow me"*

It's always Halloween in Konami land it seems, as the company's done it again, producing one of the best horror survival titles ever, with the aid of the developer Climax Studios. This time the scariest experience ever created lands on the PSP and delivers an authentic scare you won't forget soon. Remember the Blairwitch Project movie? [Silent Hill](#) surpasses it, becoming the most frightening piece of media available to the public. Forget about Resident Evil 4, Jericho, Undying, Alone in the Dark and any other former definition of horror games... Silent Hill Origins stays true to the legacy of its predecessors and the portable console is surely not an obstacle in the path of the title towards the blockbuster status. Once again, the arc of the storyline is complete as you find out new details about Alessa's sad history... Keep in mind that Origins includes a lot of references to the Silent Hill movie, so you'll have a slight advantage if you've watched it. **Story**You're Travis, a troubled truck driver who just happens to pass near the famous Silent Hill town and notices a burning house on the side of the road. As he enters it, the man finds a little burnt girl in the middle of a strange huge symbol drawn on the floor. Travis saves her from the burning house and collapses immediately after leaving the burning ruins of the building. After waking up in [Silent Hill](#), the man starts searching for the little girl and visits the local hospital, hoping that the girl is still alive. However, Travis finds out that she's dead, but he enters a strange world and ghost town that's constantly shifting from a real universe to a parallel one, filled with horrific creatures and creepy environments. For the Silent Hill movie fans, the girl you've saved is Alessa and it all makes sense, as the motion picture had shown what happened to the poor girl. Origins serves as a prequel for the first Silent Hill title and it can also be considered some sort of prequel to the movie. **Concept**Silent Hill Origins (and all other Silent Hill titles, for that matter) is an action game pertaining to the horror survival genre. In such titles you have to avoid getting killed, while dodging the lethal hits of zombies, ghosts, demons and other such gruesome creatures. In Origins, Travis has to solve puzzles as he progresses, running away from its demonic enemies or fighting them. The game features the classic nurse zombies, which you'll face specially when searching for Alessa at the local hospital. You'll surely recognize a couple of monsters you've fought in previous Silent Hill titles and at some point even the famous and fearsome Pyramid Head makes his appearance. The AI is impressive, but since I've played other SH titles before, it still doesn't manage to surprise me. However, boss fights are as difficult as ever, forcing you to watch the "Game Over" screen more than once while preparing to load the last save and get ready for another good walloping. Origins features impressive environments for a PSP and tons of rooms you can explore, rivaling the PS2 versions of Konami's titles. Travis can use a variety of weapons and even other items to fight zombie nurses or huge blobs of meat crawling on Silent Hill's streets. You'll be able to use alcohol bottles, portable TV sets, drip stands, crow bars, typewriters and basically all the items you collect to hit the zombies in the head. Most melee weapons are breakable and you'll only use a TV set once, smacking a zombie in the head with it. However, firearms are also present to save the day and the average handgun and shotgun are included, plus a raffle and a cool AK-style weapon. Too bad that you'll find plenty of ammo, but the recharging takes a while and the weapons don't have enough rooms for bullets. The puzzles included in the new Silent Hill title are basic, but still decent enough to make you run from one corner of a Sanitarium to the other, searching for keys, plastic organs, codes and other items that could help you solve various quests. The game features a status bar which can be seen when you enter the menu and once it gets red, you'll hear your accelerated heart beat signaling that your life is almost depleted. In case

you don't want to access the menu all the time, red flashes appear on the screen as you hear your heart beating faster after taking some serious damage. **Gameplay** Since this is a horror game after all, the atmosphere must be kept frightening with the aid of various gameplay elements like that flashlight you carry, which can set on or off. Turn it off for a scarier experience and also remember that zombies can't see you if there's no light source coming from your chest pocket. Travis will be able to pass from the real world to the tainted alternate universe with the aid of mirrors, which can become useful in the long run, specially when they're used as shortcuts, helping you get from place to the other faster than just by running through endless corridors. Origins includes the classic map system we've used in every Silent Hill game till now, but you'll have to find the map of a certain area first. Puzzles, various items, mirrors and blocked roads are all marked on the map with red symbols, a feature that helps you a lot specially when you don't remember which door you checked in the sanitarium's basement. The enemies will respawn randomly, so you won't be able to predict where they'll attack you next time, but at least their number stays the same. Luckily there are some areas where zombies stay dead, after you kill them. Don't expect to only solve minor puzzles, like fitting small objects into bigger contraptions... They may be basic, but the way they change the environment around you is brilliant. For example, while strolling inside a huge deserted theater in Silent Hill, you'll have the chance of starting up its lighting system and change the main stage's props. Each prop you choose equals a different environment you can enter with the aid of a huge mirror. That's the purest Silent Hill enigma I've seen in years, taking me back to the days of the first titles. If I were to compare Origins to the past games pertaining to the series, the one that resembles it the most would have to be Silent Hill 2. The setting is basically the same, while the enemies and even bosses were borrowed from the title too. Too bad that Pyramid Head only makes a minor appearance as a very low-IQ boss, that's pretty easy to defeat. Oh and he doesn't even have that giant Pyramid thing on his head, yet. Silent Hill Origins only allows you to walk around certain areas of the town, in order to access places you must have visited in previous games. You'll battle red zombies and dolls at the local theater, which is a new setting, while the huge quadruped beasts from SH3 make a frightening appearance at the Motel. Entering the tainted universe won't only be used as an excuse to scare you or make you fight tougher enemies, but you'll also have to keep an eye on the way the locations are linked. You might have to walk all the way from the top of a building to its basement just to get a key that you'll use in the far far west wing of the same building, in its tainted version, on the third floor. Confused? So was I. That's why I checked out that map 1500 times while playing the game. It's not a lucky guess, as I could watch my play statistics at the end of the game. Depending on how well you do, you'll unlock various costumes or cool new items or weapons, that you'll start with the next time you decide to give Silent Hill Origins a spin. It took me about 5 hours to complete the game, which included tons of replays, as I forgot to save at times... This brings the entire package up to 7-8 hours at most, but true fans of the series will surely be looking for those cherished unlockables or future game references. **Video** I've seen static and VHS-style lines in Manhunt 2, but Origins managed to one-up the experience adding a little bit of blood and fear to it. Don't let the game's initial graphics fool you... you're not dealing with a title that features mediocre graphics. Some zombies may pass through walls, but you'll have to admit that it's cool to finally see a horror game where monsters stay on the floor after they're dead. Well, at least the huge ones do... The passage from the real world to the tainted one is top class, being done with the aid of mirrors, but you'll notice the difference between the two universes right away. While the architecture of a certain building stays the same, you'll only see the iron rusty remains of what used to be a sofa, a TV set, a car, a door and God knows what else. Messages are written in blood on one of the bathroom's floors and there's even an extremely familiar setting for the people who've watched Silent Hill the movie. Remember the toilet where Alessa wrapped the janitor up in barbed wire? It's here, but this time it's only a room where you get items and flush the toilet. The entire gaming experience seems to be increasing its dose of horror as you progress

and things get chaotic and hellish to say the least at the end of the game. You'll see real hell, face demons, run towards the depths of an unfamiliar Silent Hill, without a map and with Alessa before your eyes. I haven't slept well lately... Will you? **Sound**I'm keen on Silent Hill's OST even when I'm not playing Origins and I have to admit that I've played tons of games while listening to Akira Yamaoka's works. The man is a genius and he's more involved in Silent Hill than any other developer could be. Maybe I'm exaggerating, but on rare occasions I've felt so scared while listening to a tune and not playing a game. All of the sounds that the composer has put together, plus those zombie growls and cries will raise the hair on the back of your hand, making you a runner rather than a fighter. And then there's that main theme song... brilliant as ever, both in voice and instrumental works. Can Akira Yamaoka do better than this in Silent Hill V? **Conclusion**Silent Hill Origins is perfect, both for the series aficionado and the first time gamer, venturing in the sick and sad world of Alessa. I consider this game to be perfect, except for a couple of frustrating camera view issues and the bad bad bad choice of main character. Travis is probably the most boring and uninteresting protagonist of the entire series and he really tends to get annoying at some point, because he just doesn't express fear, joy, lust, sadness or other human emotions... He's just a puppet, controlled by your fingers and he blindly follows the storyline always trying to revive the past with the aid of flashbacks. His younger version is surely a sicker one, but also a more interesting character. How about a SH game featuring a little boy or girl, Konami? Till that time comes, I'll have to congratulate the producers for their masterpiece and continue waiting for Silent Hill V.