

Why You Should Revisit the World of Arkham Asylum

As of today, *Batman Arkham Asylum* is 15 years old. It's certainly worth revisiting the world of Arkham. Rocksteady Studios did know what they were doing when they developed one of the most detailed Batman stories into a gorgeous game.

After all, it revolutionized the comic book videogames by earning Game of the Year award back in 2010, but to actually know what made this game so special that Rocksteady Studios decided to make 3 more installments in the same universe, continue reading this review on one of the best stealth games ever made.

Voice Actors

The voice acting may not be on top of your priorities when you decide whether you want to play a game or not, but in this case, *Batman Arkham Asylum* can win you over for its stellar cast.

If you're an old fan of the *Batman: The Animated Series*, then you'll be happy to know that Mark Hamill (The Joker), Kevin Conroy (Batman), and Arleen Sorkin (Harley Quinn), reprise their iconic roles in the game.

So, if you're not fond of the growling quality of Batman's voice we're used to hearing in movies, the clear, intimidating voice of Conroy will make your experience better. Hamill, as always, does a great job voicing the joker and their performances pull you into the game's storyline seamlessly.

If you have played that game already, then you already know that the in-game loudspeakers are a key element in receiving information in the game. So whether the joker is taunting you, or telling you of his whereabouts, this form of voice acting will add to the eerie quality of the gameplay, especially since you are roaming a dark asylum filled with lunatics and supervillains on the loose. This system is intriguing, however, and will keep you up on the edge of your seat while navigating the island using your map.

Plot

The game starts with Batman escorting the Joker into Arkham Asylum after attacking Gotham City Hall and getting arrested. Batman suspects that there is a ploy behind the Joker's actions, believing that he let himself get arrested so he could enter Arkham Asylum, where most of his cronies are imprisoned there.

Batman's suspicions turn out to be correct as the Joker breaks loose and soon enough, the whole asylum, if not the whole island, is under his control. Batman then struggles to fight off the patients that the joker set free, saving doctors and officers while tracking the joker at the same time. You'll see other villains like Zsasz, Killer Croc, Poison Ivy, and Scarecrow who all take part in Batman's journey in the asylum.

Stealth and Combat Combination

As the Dark Knight, you're bound to use stealth to achieve your goals. Predator mode will come in handy when you try to avoid getting into a fight with a dozen Joker's men. Also, there is an array of methods to choose from to take down enemies silently.

For example, you can hang them from a gargoyle, which is classic Batman takedown, glide behind your target and knock him out, or simply walk behind him and render him unconscious; however, sometimes, the game doesn't leave you any other option but to go straight into combat with 10 men at the same time. Batman's combat skills are more than enough to finish them off.

Despite the simplicity of the four combat buttons, you will have to perform different combos to knock out the more evasive enemies. Batman will also be equipped with gadgets that will help him take down his targets, like the batclaw, the explosive gel, batarangs, and sonic batarangs, that can be useful whether you're going for stealth or combat mode.

Either way, there is no designated route that you can choose when taking down enemies. Instead, the game gives you the chance to get creative in the open environment.

Gameplay

Gameplay is divided into three parts, the exploration of the labyrinthian asylum, combat and stealth modes, and the gliding you'll perform to reach new locations or your objectives.

As you explore the asylum, you will encounter multiple Riddler challenges and patient interviews that provide insight into characters like Harley Quinn and reveal the asylum's darker secrets. There is also the spirit of Arkham story that you can unlock and listen to with detective mode.

The game is rich with references to other characters and villains who don't appear in this installment. For example, an icy area hints at Mr. Freeze's presence, though he doesn't make an appearance until the sequel. Similarly, you'll see Clayface but can choose not to release him from his cell.

Characters

Heroes are scarce in this game, and villains rule Arkham island with the Joker at the forefront of their schemes. He is supported by a well-developed cast of characters. Harley Quinn's backstory is revealed through patient interviews, showing her transformation from a psychiatrist to a criminal.

The Joker, Killer Croc, and other antagonists are portrayed with depth, making them memorable foes.

Horror Tone

Some players would argue that this game is genuinely scary, as it has its moments of psychological horror set within the confines of the asylum.

Some of these moments include Batman venturing into Scarecrow's world, who forces Batman to face his fears in a dimension where Scarecrow looms as a giant monster. These sequences are both terrifying and fascinating, leaving a lasting impression. The asylum's unsettling atmosphere—filled with unpredictable madmen—adds to the game's horror elements.

If you loved the comic books more than the movie adaptations, then this game is certainly for you. The world is depicted as bleak and dark in Arkham with flashy neon colors that break the dullness of the world, perfectly capturing the essence of Batman's world.

There are some issues with the game, like poor lip synchronization, and repetitive boss fight mechanics, but when you overlook these errors, the truth remains that *Batman Arkham Asylum* is one of the best comic book games ever made.