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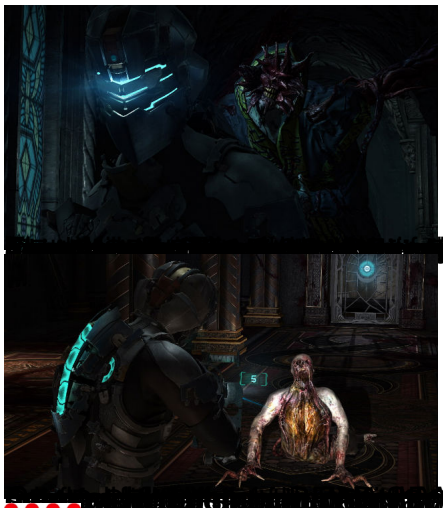
DEAD SPACE 2 plants us three years later, as Isaac wakes up in a hospital amidst an interplanetary pit-stop mining city known as “The Sprawl,” thrusting players into one of the most hellacious first fifteen minutes of a game ever to appear on consoles.

Running for your life through a nightmare-infested hospital and watching former patients, doctors, staff – pretty much everyone - transform into necromorphs (intensely amped-up bloodthirsty space zombies) is only the tip of this horrific tale, as the 14 chapters that stretch over a good 12-15 hour play-through squeeze in just enough horror to not cause prolonged flashbacks in gamers. Seriously, this game could come with a Surgeon General's Warning for the toll it takes on players' cardiac health. Even though a few chapters in may cause you to feel a little desensitized to the Visceral brand of horror and violence, only about 40% of the “scare moments” will give you the predictable “Gotcha” feeling, while another 40% will make you jump and leave tingly hairs on your neck.  The other 20% will make you change your pants.

Though the game's scenery has transformed from a claustrophobic, seemingly abandoned spaceship to a more open, once-bustling city of the future, the game itself hasn't undergone such a drastic change that fans lose the familiarity. If anything, DEAD SPACE 2 brings about a series of subtle improvements that do nothing but enhance the game's overall impact. Gone are the near-indecipherable 3-D maps and the errand boy fetch quests from the original DEAD SPACE. Isaac Clarke has become his own man, trudging through piles of blood and meat to find safety, answers, and solutions. He also has a voice, which presents a much more personal connection for players, as opposed to the first installment's grunting and breathing. Mechanically, he moves a little quicker and looser, giving players both a better chance at dodging necromorph attacks and aiming weapons to execute precise dismemberment, both crucial to survival. Each mission or objective sets out with a definitive cause and result, all chained together and working congruently with a story rich enough for the annals of sci-fi classics. New additions to the game include a few variations on the base-model necromorph, a javelin gun capable of harpooning necros and pinning them to surfaces, and the ability to freely move about in zero-G atmosphere.  The zero-G elements can truly test gamers' dexterity and spatial thinking, but provide a gorgeously designed alternative to the run-and-gun battles or the edge-of-your-seat buildups.



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