

# Zombie apocalypse alive and well in "The Walking Dead" game

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"This game series adapts to the choices you make. The story is tailored by how you play."

That's how it starts: a reminder that it's a game all about choice, and those choices definitely matter. "The Walking Dead" is an episodic video game developed by Telltale Games and is nothing short of a masterpiece. It is without a doubt the best zombie video game that doesn't feature zombies as its main hook.

While it shares the name with the award winning show by AMC, it is actually based on Robert Kirkman's Eisner-Award winning comic book series. The game is considered canonical to the comic book series and explains a few key characters' back stories. If you're coming in from the show and not the comics, don't be surprised if some of your favorite characters are not present.

The game starts at the beginning of the zombie apocalypse near Atlanta. Zombies exist but they are still far and few between; just one zombie presents a huge problem for the characters. However, this series isn't about the zombies, it is about the characters. Every episode is about two hours play time and the characters are well fleshed out, become fast friends or enemies. Characters are well justified even if they are present for only a few minutes they always add unique elements to the story.

The mechanics of the game feel a little clunky in the first 10 minutes but you quickly get use to it. The game is more difficult than it should be without a UI as the points you can click on are not where they naturally should be. The camera is very cinematic and all the information isn't always provided about the area and caution should be observed. This makes the game very intense at times this is beneficial to the game, because zombies can be around any corner, or hidden in any crevice.

"The Walking Dead, Episode 1: A New Day," released April 24, sets a good pace for the story and mechanics for the rest of the epi-

sodes. It may not be as impactful as the rest of the episodes, but it is not short of unique moral choices and has an interesting look at the start of apocalypse. The moral choices that are provided are not about right and wrong, it's about a choice between two terrible things and how it affects others. Humans quickly become the greatest enemy, choosing to trust someone can lead to the safety of others or death, and no one is safe.

Although the first episode takes place at the start of the apocalypse, this is not the case for the rest of the episode; there is a time jump of about three to four months. This is where "Episode 2: Starved For Help" released June 27 comes in with a jolting start. Issues like zombies in the first game are now easily rectified, but other stuff like rationing supplies becomes the main concern. There are a few really powerful moments at the start of the second episode that really set the tone for what is to come. It is definitely a unique look at survival, a constant struggle where small things like crackers can mean the difference between life, death, and loyalty.

"Episode 3: Long Road Ahead," released Aug. 29, is the darkest of middle chapter 3, but it is also the best chapter. While a lot of terrible things happen, resolution and new beginnings is what the chapter is all about. The choices made in the past two episodes affect the story more than ever and really immerses the player in the game and forces them to reflect on their decisions so far. It is a nice reminder that the apocalypse is not all fun and games

"Episode 4: Around Every Corner," released Oct. 9 is nothing but build up for the finale, "Episode 5: No Time Left" that will be released this month.

At this point the characters are extremely well developed and protection is the key; coming across new people is frightening, since murder is common place. Supplies are hard to come across and are more valuable than gold. The remaining survivors tend to be insane and highly aggressive towards anyone in this new zombie infested world. All these things make a fantastic dynamic to have to dance around when it comes to the concern of the group's safety.

Zombie lovers, preparers for the apocalypse, horror junkies,

connoisseur of stories, and gamers will all love "The Walking Dead." It is definitely worth the time, effort, and emotions to play all the way through. It has a reasonable price tag of \$25 for a season pass which gets you all five episodes. Alternatively in December they will release a retail version for both the Xbox 360 and Playstation 3 for \$30. I did the review for the PC version of the game but it is also available on Xbox Live Marketplace, Playstation Network, Mac and iOS with an experience that should not be missed.

★★★★★  
5 OUT OF 5 STARS



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		• <b>Barefoot in the Park:</b> Osterman Theatre Niemeyer Center, CCC, Oregon City 7:30 p.m. \$10 Adult, \$8 students, youth, seniors		• <b>Soul Vaccination:</b> Jimmy Mak's, Portland 8 p.m., \$12				