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**'Alien: Isolation', the ultimate survival horror game**  
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By John Powell - G4 Canada

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As a die-hard horror fan, it is not often that a video game will actually creep me out or successfully jump scare the life out of me. The only game in recent memory that was able to achieve that was Resident Evil 2 on the Nintendo 64.

Playing late at night with the lights dimmed and headphones on, I ran into that infamous Licker which drops down from the ceiling as you are scoping out the abandoned police station. My reaction? I am not ashamed to say, I absolutely freaked out. I jerked backwards in my seat, tore the headphones off my head and dropped my controller to the floor as I fumbled for the light switch.



Since then, although I have been surprised here and there by a game, I have never had such an extreme physical reaction until... 'Alien: Isolation'.

The original classic 1979 sci-fi horror film starring Tom Skerritt and Sigourney Weaver wasn't really the creature feature some people assume it to be. It was an atmospheric haunted house film with the crew of the Nostromo bumbling around gloomy hallways and corridors as the Xenomorph alien lurked in the shadows. 'Alien: Isolation' flawlessly captures that feeling of impending dread, too perfectly perhaps.

'Isolation' takes place 15 years after the events of 'Alien'. Amanda, the daughter of Ellen Ripley, is still searching for her missing mother. When news that the Nostromo's flight recorder has been located aboard a space station, Amanda joins a team tasked with retrieving it.

What awaits Amanda aboard the Sevastopol Station is the stuff of nightmares in more ways than one. Not only have the residents of the space station turned on one another in a Mad Max like free-for-all but the really, really creepy worker androids have revolted targeting the humans they are programmed to serve. If that wasn't enough, an unstoppable Xenomorph alien is on the prowl snacking on humans.

All in all, it makes the catastrophe that hit the Nostromo look like a children's birthday party.

'Isolation' is the ultimate stealth survival horror game and as such is also the definitive gaming test of patience and perseverance. It will certainly not be everyone's Corellian rum. You will spend the majority of your gameplay experience crouched and creeping around so as not to draw the attention of the Xenomorph or any of the other enemies as you solve puzzles and complete missions.

Mostly, 'Isolation' is a slow and methodical crawl along cramped air vents and flickering hallways. Although you can run, it is ill-advised to do so as more times than not, it will end in your untimely death. Some will welcome the nerve-racking thrill of relentlessly being pursued by a cunning predator while others will probably see their frustration levels max out sooner rather than later.

To assist Amanda in regularly outsmarting and sporadically eliminating her enemies, there is some help on the station. Guns, stun batons and industrial-sized wrenches can get the job done but ammo, energy to power some of the weapons are in short supply so they have to be used sparingly.

Scattered about the Sevastopol Station are also blueprints and the components to craft grenades of all kinds, EMP bombs and health packs. There are also a multitude of lockers, metal supply boxes, ventilation shafts and other places to hide.

One of the draws of 'Isolation' is taking cover in a locker and holding your breath as you watch the Xenomorph lumber by inches away from you and then wondering when it is safe to come out from hiding.

Creeeeepy.

Naturally, it wouldn't be an 'Alien' game without the trademark motion tracker, which Amanda does find early on in the adventure. While it is a great help in avoiding being grotesquely dispatched, it also heightens your anxiety and sometimes, its insistent pinging can rouse its attention of the Xenomorph if you are not careful.



The Xenomorph itself is an uncompromising tracker. At times, too much so. The truth is, I have never, ever died so much in a video game than I have in 'Alien: Isolation'. The Xenomorph's uncanny stalking ability will either fire you up, making you even more determined to press on and eventually defeat it or will have you furiously pressing the Power or Eject button.

The other negatives are that some of the save points are quite a fair distance from one another, there is some back-tracking to be done and the game itself drags out longer than it should have.

There is no two ways about it. Just like 'The Walking Dead' adventure games or 'The Thief' titles, you are either going to hate 'Alien:

Isolation', tolerate it in small doses because of its gameplay or you are going to love it for putting you on the edge of your seat and replicating the claustrophobic tone of the original movie like no game has ever done.

Horror fans like myself, who enjoy sadistically trying to scare the living crap out of themselves, who turn off the lights, put on those headphones hoping to get their adrenaline pumping, will appreciate the thrills and chills of 'Alien: Isolation'.



**Alien: Isolation**  
**Format:** *Xbox One*  
**Publisher:** *Sega*  
**Developer:** *The Creative Assembly*  
**ESRB Rating:** *M for Mature*

**Official Site:** <http://www.alienisolation.com/>

**Rating:** *8 / 10*

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