



Siren

Q&A with Keiichiro Toyama, Director and Creator

Q. How would you describe this game?

A. Siren is a uniquely atmospheric survival horror game.

Q. Give us some background to the game

A. A terrible force has taken hold in the Japanese village of Hanyuda. The surrounding sea has turned the colour of blood and slowly but surely the village's inhabitants are changing, becoming vile creatures, fuelled by evil.

This is the story of three days in a living nightmare. Seen through the eyes of ten characters, each embroiled in their own personal fight for survival, Siren immerses the gamer in a claustrophobic world of fear, mystery and suspense. During these three days chronology is irrelevant - episodes do not take place in sequence and the only way to understand what has happened is to witness the horrors that unfold before all ten individuals. Characters can steal the viewpoint of others in their surroundings, foreseeing danger and predicting enemies' actions. But in a world of unspeakable evil and horrific visions, this extraordinary observational power could be more of a curse than a blessing.

Q. What new dynamics/unique concepts are you bringing to PS2 gamers in Siren they won't have seen before?

A. The mystery-filled world seems close to all cultures but is brought to life by the Japanese inspired characters.

The game takes the form of short scenarios with leading characters that change one after another, it is the bringing of these separate elements together that leads you to the heart of the story.

You can play with the 'site-jack' system which gives a wide game perspective by allowing the player the ability to steal images and sounds of colleagues and zombies, to find the direction where they would be attacked or to reveal the place to hide etc.

Q. What's the most frightening element of the game?

A. To see the direct danger approaching by 'sight-jacking'.

Also the desperate fear where there is absolutely no means of survival, where humans become the living dead one after another, giving you no hope but to think that it is your turn next to become the living dead yourself.

Q. What weapons are available in Siren?

A. The weapons can be categorized mainly into hit-attack weapon, pistol, and rifle. Included in the hit-attack weapons, there are "weapons" such as a wrench, a knife, a crowbar, a hammer, an umbrella, etc. which are various tools that may be found in our everyday life.

When you have the rifle, you will peek in through the scope and aim & shoot just like a sniper.

Q. Musical and visual treatments are very important to establish atmosphere in horror games how have you approached this in Siren?

A. There is a clear distinction between a typical horror sound and the sound field of this game mainly of ambient music. Original music with a mixture of indigenous culture and foreign religion has been used.

The atmosphere and surroundings are damp and humid with rain, fog and dew - something very unique to Japanese culture and the use of darkness and light gives the player a feeling of immense fear and claustrophobia.

We did lots of sampling of textures for the deserted village, we also used actors and models who were captured for the game.

Q. Are you influenced by any other media (books, films, comics etc) when making games. If so, which ones?

A. I was influenced by Japanese novels and comics, and they meet with the dynamism of 80's horror movies. And also by nostalgic episodes like urban legends and mysterious incidents that happened for real. The horror story was based on Lovecraft's novel : ***'s mythology system.

Q. Was there anything you left out of Siren because it was just too scary?

A. No. I included all the scary elements that I could think of.