

Video Game Reviews: 'Street Fighter IV' makes its predecessors proud, 'Deadly Creatures'™

by *Jeb_Haught*

DEVELOPER: Capcom

PUBLISHER: Capcom

SYSTEM: Microsoft Xbox 360 (also on PS3)

PRICE: \$59.99

ESRB RATING: Teen

REVIEW RATING: 4 stars (out of 5)

"Street Fighter IV features gorgeous 3D characters and backgrounds as well as exciting new characters and maneuvers. Photo courtesy of Capcom. In "Deadly Creatures," players control a rugged Scorpion and a nimble Tarantula as they battle and evade a wide variety of real-life desert critters. Photo courtesy of Rainbow Studios. REVIEW SCORING SYSTEM

5 stars = Must Have

4 stars = Pretty Good

3 stars = Above Average

2 stars = Bargain Bin

1 star = Don't Bother RATINGS KEY

Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB)

E: Everyone

E10-plus: (Everyone 10 and older)

T: Teen (13 and older)

M: Mature (17 and older) Ask any old-school gamer what series propelled the fighting game genre into the spotlight, and the answer will inevitably be "Street Fighter." Although there have been countless titles in the series, Capcom's latest release, "Street Fighter IV," is the official sequel to the decade-old "Street Fighter 3" game. This new title features gorgeous 3D characters and backgrounds as well as exciting new characters and maneuvers, but oddly enough, the game play is still two-dimensional.

As a loyal fan of the Tekken and DOA series, I am disappointed that combat is limited to one horizontal plane. Sidestepping into the foreground and background to dodge and counterattack is a very effective strategy that greatly enhances game play variety. This ability will be missed, but its omission doesn't ruin the experience.

Sporting the classic six-button controller layout and 2-D game play, "Street Fighter IV" blends the game play of "Street Fighter 2" with the 3D visuals of "Street Fighter 3." New moves such as focus attacks and EX specials fuel certain maneuvers with additional power while super and ultra combos can end duels in an instant! In addition, super cancels let players interrupt their regular attacks to immediately perform a super

combo. These overwhelming moves replace the classic mega-combos found in previous titles.

"Street Fighter IV" offers pragmatic pugilists nearly everything they could want in the form of features and extras. Players can customize the controls, train with each character, participate in several offline modes, fight and gather medals online, and even adjust the onscreen HUD. I can't remember the last time a fighter offered so many handy features.

Many classic combatants such as Dhalsim and Chun-Li as well as new faces like Abel and Gouken join the cast of "Street Fighter IV." With over 24 characters at your fingertips, everyone is sure to find a character that fits their fighting style.

'Deadly Creatures' Short But Fun

DEVELOPER: Rainbow Studios

PUBLISHER: THQ

SYSTEM: Nintendo Wii

PRICE: \$49.99

ESRB RATING: Teen

REVIEW RATING: 4 stars (out of 5)

Rainbow Studios is renowned for crafting excellent off-road vehicular games, but their latest creation, "Deadly Creatures," focuses more on what's in the sand than what can traverse it. In this unusual title, players control a rugged scorpion and a nimble tarantula as they battle and evade a wide variety of real-life desert critters.

I wasn't expecting much of a plot for this game, but the, err, creepy storyline voiced by Billy Bob Thornton and Dennis Hopper keeps the adventure interesting. You see, both creatures are merely witnesses to a pair of callous humans as they search for a buried corpse. Players experience the story from the creatures' view, and not-so-subtle effects like the ground shaking from close footsteps and protruding skeletons add a welcome realistic touch. It's just too bad that the game is so short.

Both bugs can walk on walls and they also have similar attack moves, but the scorpion is more of a brawler while the tarantula is adept at dodging between strikes. Because every enemy can't be crushed with simple button mashing, players must vary their attacks if they want to survive the perilous adventure. Fortunately, it isn't difficult to earn new maneuvers, simply kill everything you encounter! When certain scores are reached, new moves, like the spin attack and venom sting, automatically become available.

Although the Wii sensor doesn't always recognize certain movements, I still think the control setup in this game makes excellent use of both the Wiimote and the Nunchuk. As a result, combat is fun and intuitive, but never overly difficult. It's even possible to shoot webs and perform devastating finishing moves with a few simple hand movements.

"Deadly Creatures" is a refreshingly fun title that is sure to please everyone but the most extreme entomophobes.

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