



The greatest remake ever?

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Developers: Bluepoint Games, SIE Japan Studio

Publisher: Sony Interactive Entertainment

Platform: PlayStation 4

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I never buy video games at launch but when the Shadow of the Colossus remake was released, I bought it without thinking twice. The original Shadow of the Colossus was the kind of experience I still have vivid memories of. It shaped the love I have for video games today, and ultimately set up unprecedented expectations I would have from the medium.

So with a title as endearing as Shadow of the Colossus, the responsibility of staying as faithful to the source material as possible was placed on Bluepoint Games. Bluepoint Games are the masters of remasters, with titles like the God of War Collection, Uncharted: The Nathan Drake Collection and Gravity Rush Remastered (just to name a few) already under their belt. Up until now, Bluepoint Games have only released these remasters on new consoles with some minor brush ups in textures and models. But with the Shadow of the Colossus remake, they reworked every polygon and every animation from the ground up. So it was to my surprise when it turned out to perform as well as it did on my PlayStation 4 while still evoking the same emotions and the similar heartaches it did, on my first time

playing through the game.

The premise of Shadow of the Colossus is simple. You have to go through The Forbidden Lands on the back of your horse in search of sixteen colossi, with the goal of bringing each of them down. The focal points of this game are the colossi themselves. Their animations, fur, A.I have all been so faithfully reworked, that they are sure to leave a lasting impact on both veterans and new comers. However, in between the main bosses and the hub area, there is nothing but vast open areas to explore. This is ultimately the factor which makes or breaks Shadow of the Colossus for gamers. We are accustomed to open world games being filled with endless side missions, NPCs (Non playable characters) and upgrade materials but Shadow of the Colossus foregoes most of that, except for some lizards to kill and some fruits to eat. And so, beyond the encounters you will have with the colossi, there lie few objectives within the vast stretch of The Forbidden Lands. The charm of Shadow of the Colossus lies in the fact that, Team Ico (original developers) did not rely on any of the new age gimmicks we find in today's open world titles. The atmosphere encompassing the entirety of the game does well for itself in engrossing you in its world. So with this remake, you are sure to find yourself exploring the lands for countless hours.

As of right now, you will not play a game as gorgeous as this one at 60 FPS on a console. Unlike the PlayStation 2 and 3 versions of Shadow of the Colossus, there

are no dips in frame rate at any point of the experience. To run a game this beautiful and this large, and that too at 60 FPS is a spectacle to behold. No stone was left unturned by Bluepoint Games, and each etching and marble looks radically enhanced compared to the original. And unlike the original, the draw distance for textures popping into screen has been vastly improved. So temples and pillars off in the distance all look spectacular from wherever they are viewed. The lighting and shadow effects have been improved immensely as well, adding a lot of depth to each scene of your play through. This effect can be felt especially when traversing through the various caverns and shrouded forests littered on routes to your colossi battles. And with the addition of foliage effects and enhanced ripple effects, the force of each blade of grass rustling to your each step is felt, and each swim captures the realistic interaction from one ripple to the next. Needless to say, this remake is a graphical masterpiece and the feelings of awe are very much similar to your first time playing through The Last of Us.

Apart from the graphical enhancements on display, the input lag present in the first two iterations of Shadow of the Colossus has been minimised immensely allowing for an intuitive experience. And the addition of per pixel motion blur also means that the weight of each action is more intense than it ever was. The game has been made significantly harder than the original and to address the concern of

newcomers, this game is challenging. Each colossus has to be tackled with a different approach. The A.I on the bosses has been reworked as well, allowing for much smoother tracking. The general tactic bosses uses in order to get you off of them, is to vigorously shake or frantically stomp around. That has been amped up in this remake so you will always feel like you're holding on for your dear life, figuratively of course.

If this game is still failing to found picturesque to you, then perhaps the new Photo Mode could sway you in the right direction. This new feature allows you to play the game with different filters and also lets you take gorgeous pictures of the game. While added on as a gimmick by Bluepoint Games, the Photo Mode can make the game look completely different and allow you fresher perspective on the game.

So beyond the new graphical fidelity and the tight controls, what else does Shadow of the Colossus offer? It is after all just a glorified boss rush simulator. But did you notice how I didn't share any details about the story? It's the story which keeps bringing me back to this masterpiece. And while the narrative hasn't changed one bit, I couldn't but feel obligated to buy this game yet again to experience what is perhaps, the best single player campaign made in the last thirteen years. If you've never played Shadow of the Colossus then the \$40 price tag is well worth it because this is an experience worth having.