

GAME REVIEW

Zombie game bloody good fun - 'Stubbs' horror-movie plot sends players on a campy romp through undead uprising

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Sure, you've killed thousands of zombies in any number of games. But have you ever tried staggering a mile in their bloodstained shoes?

Stubbs the Zombie in Rebel Without a Pulse gives you that opportunity.

Made to look like a sendup of a '50s B horror movie, Stubbs is a traveling salesman who returns from the dead to terrorize the ultra-modern town of Punchbowl, Pa. As he eats the brains of the residents, they become zombies and follow their new leader. Panic ensues and, eventually, the army is called in to put down the zombie uprising.

While it might sound mindless, the game actually has a plot, which will become obvious pretty quickly. Oh, and did we mention that it's a love story? Kind of a creepy one?

If you're disturbed by the idea that the main character gnaws people's brains, wait until you see the graphic bloodletting that accompanies that act. Every time Stubbs or another zombie eats someone's brain, torrents of blood shoot out along with chunks of gray matter. It doesn't take a mad scientist to see why the game received an M for mature rating.

Generally, zombies don't have a lot of weapons at their disposal. That's not the case in this game. Stubbs is kind of the MacGyver of zombies. He can neutralize his foes by using large clouds of flatulence. He can use his rotting intestines as grenades (something like a sticky bomb). He can pull off his head and use it like a bowling ball. And he can detach an arm and send it out to possess one of the living. This is especially useful once the army arrives, allowing you to turn the soldiers on each other.

Most of the humor is crude (as it says on the warning label on the box), but some of it is amusing. The game shoots for campy and hits the mark sometimes.

The game's soundtrack is packed with '50s standards covered by an eclectic mix of artists. Death Cab for Cutie does Earth Angel, Cake does Strangers in the Night, and The Flaming Lips perform If I Only Had a Brain. Cute.

The action is based on the game engine that helped make Halo an instant hit.

There's also an option to add a second player to double-team the living.

I have to say, the amount of blood bothered me at first. But if you can get past that, Stubbs is a romp that will hold your interest for hours.

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- Caption: PhotoStubbs the Zombie
- Memo: STUBBS THE ZOMBIE IN REBEL WITHOUT A PULSE

System: Xbox

Suggested price: \$49.95

Number of players: 1 or 2

Rated: M for mature

Who should buy it: Fans of the undead

Score: B

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