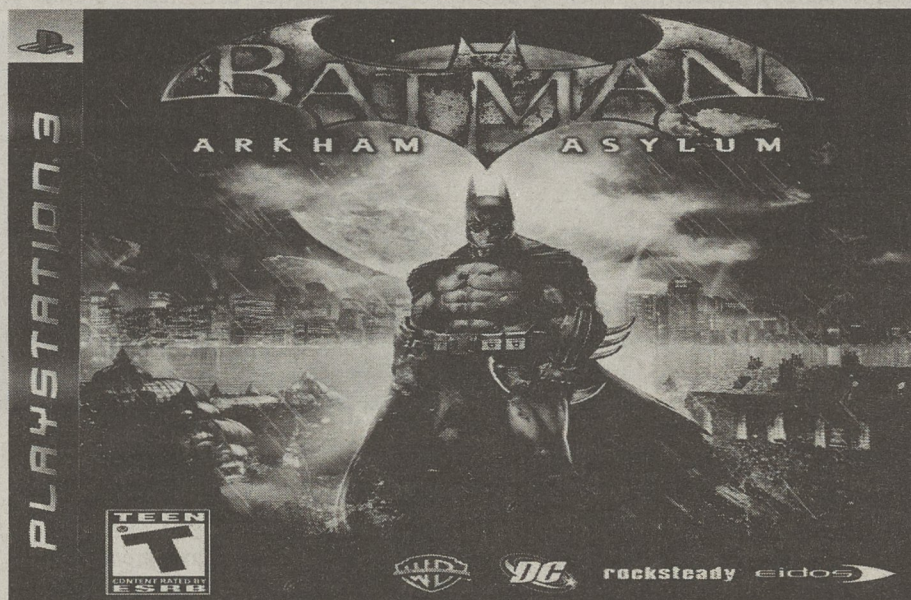


Batman: Arkham Asylum Review by Adam Eisentrout



When a game starts out as slowly as *Batman Arkham Asylum*, one starts to worry if the game will pick up in pace or not. While *Arkham Asylum* only takes just a few minutes until you're truly feeling like the dark knight himself, it's a tad bit disappointing that only a few hours into the game you'll be hitting the credits faster than a fan boy's complaints on an internet forum. Luckily those hours alone are worth a play through as *Arkham Asylum* is the best comic book game to date though it almost wins the title by default. Comic book game adaptations, much like video game movie adaptations, have been universally atrocious with a few exceptions. The creators of *Arkham Asylum* seem to have taken note of past comic book games mistakes and delivered a quite standard but thoroughly

enjoyable game.

The game begins as Batman delivers the Joker back to Arkham Asylum. When both arrive, the Asylum is taken over by the Joker with the help of Harley Quinn (the Joker's love pet). Both release prisoners as well as several other villains including Killer Croc, Poison Ivy, and Scarecrow. Truth be told, there is barely a story in *Arkham Asylum* and what is there is barely enough for gamers who enjoy a great story with their game play. It doesn't help that the writing borders on average to remarkably stupid. Voice acting is hit or miss, with a few terrible NPC's and even Batman sounding a bit off. The true star of *Arkham Asylum* is Mark Hamill as the Joker who has mastered the voice of an evil, funny, crazy, and scary madman.

Arkham Asylum's story and writing may leave a lot to be desired but its gameplay keeps the game from falling apart. The core game play element that the developers of *Arkham Asylum* have finally succeeded at, is giving players the closest feeling of actually being Batman. From the tight controls to the excellent gadgets, *Arkham Asylum* plays like every past Batman game should have. The combat system deserves praise alone for being visceral and straying away from monotonous. Incorporating a great mix of stealth and action sequences, the game plays best when it gives the player a challenge and lets players complete the task in their own way. The game plays at its worse when you are not doing such sequences but much more linear tasks that gamers have already played a dozen times over. Fetch quests, backtracking, repetitive enemies, and cliché boss fights hurt the game from truly rising above a

rather familiar and slightly forgettable gaming experience. Even worse the game's short length does not give the title enough time to truly come together, which leaves players with a sense of dissatisfaction. The game offers various side-quests as well as a challenge mode to try cope with the short story mode. The extra game modes are geared toward those compelled to discover every nook and cranny of the game and offer little else. The game developers have announced downloadable content which seems hopeful though it might just be quick grasp at gamers' wallets.

Batman Arkham Asylum is a good effort at creating a totally playable and enjoyable comic book game. For comic book fans, lovers of Batman, or just those looking for a breezy and decent comic book game, *Batman Arkham Asylum* is worth a look. **B-**

