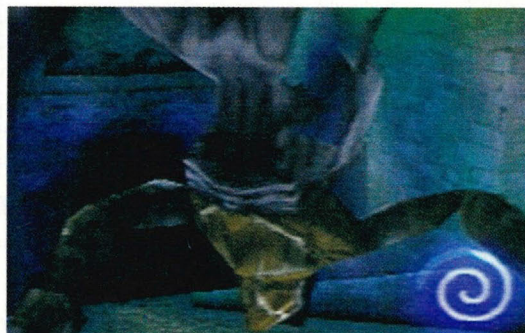


reviewed

Soul Reaver

Crypt raiding adventure that
suckles from Lara's breast



Look mum - no genitals! Raziel takes a dip without burning up, since he's "evolved"



Are you a vampire?

1. Do you look like this?

- Yes, but I'm going steady with Gaz, so that's acceptable.
- No way!
- I can't see myself in the mirror, so I don't know.

2. You are at a cheese and wine party. The host offers you a plate of dips. Do you...

- Go for those lovely cheese and pineapple on cocktail stick type things, their lovely
- refuse all food that contains animal products. Animals deserve our respect – man.
- Can't think. Too busy watching the blood pump through the host's neck.

It's a beautiful summers morning. You decide to go for a stroll round the park. Do you?

- Put on a tight pair of swimming trunks and run around the park chasing ducks.
- Have a game of football, smash a greenhouse and get chased by the Parky.
- Burst into flames the moment you open the door, your ashes blown to the four corners of the world – or at least as far as the off licence.

Conclusion

Mostly A's: Relax - Apart from a slight moustache problem there's nothing wrong with you.

Mostly B's: You are a beautiful person who is in perfect harmony with the planet. Well done.

Mostly C's: Sorry mate, you are in league with Satan and all his little followers. Things could be worse, you could be dating Gaz.

Who is Kane anyway?

Legacy of Kain is the prequel to Soul Reaver. Taking the role of Kain, After you are slaughtered by thieves a necromancer turns you into a vampire, allowing you to wreak vengeance on your assailants and feast on their blood. At the end of the game you were given a choice: destroy yourself and free your soul, or go with evil and become ruler of the planet. Soul Reaver assumes that you chose the dark path, making Kain Soul Reaver's nemesis. How cool is that?!

Let's cut the crap. Is Soul Reaver better than Tomb Raider? That's all you want to know. Comparisons are inevitable aren't they? I mean, both games are published by Eidos, both involve you running around strange 3D lands solving puzzles and killing evil doers. Just look at the screenshots for Christ's sakes. So is Soul Reaver a Lara belter? Well...

suck it and see

Soul Reaver is the story of Raziel, lieutenant in Kain's blood sucking army and a card-carrying vampire. Together, Kain and his vampire legions dominate the

Raziel's worldly body burns away like a hamster in a microwave, his soul in torment for the rest of time. Well, at least that's what was supposed to happen, if it weren't for the reincarnating powers of a spirit named the Elder. According to this

impressively in real time), whereby pillars shrivel and surfaces constrict, giving Raziel the opportunity to stroll between them unnoticed. Once he gets himself in a good position, he then re-materialise into the real world, and as every budding vampire hunter knows, there are many ways to dispatch a blood-sucker, and fortunately, Raziel knows them all.

scream, dracula, scream

You can have a straightforward punch-up, heave their stunned body over your head and chuck it on to a well-placed spike. Or how about smacking them into a ray of light and setting them on fire? Of course, there's the old push them into a pool of water trick, that really stings 'em. Then there's death by flaming torch, as Raziel stabs a parched body, standing back as it spontaneously combusts. Woomph!

But let's not forget the most personal way of dispatching a vampire. That old school favourite – a stake through the heart. Can't find any stakes? Pick up that spear and thrust it into an enemy's

'You can have a straightforward punch-up, heave their stunned body over your head and chuck it on to a well-placed spike'

planet, but Raziel, like Lucifer before him, makes one teensy-weensy mistake - he falls foul of the deadliest sin - Pride. He grows a pair of bat-like wings and dares to look more bad-ass than his master. Ooops!

Kain's punishment is the ultimate in vampire wrist-slaps. Forget your parking fines and your namby-pamby community service – try being chucked into a bottomless vortex of absolute pain. Ouch!

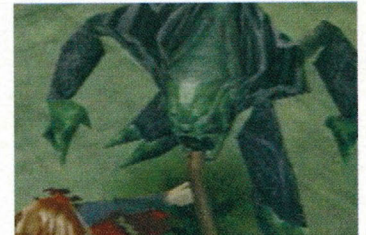
Cosmic guardian, Kain has been messing with the circle of life, the ways of the world and the birds and the bees. The Elder is pissed off because it's his job to sort these souls out. No souls, no job and an eternity claiming benefit. Sod that, he'd rather give Raziel the power to kick Kain's soul back to Hell!

soul provider

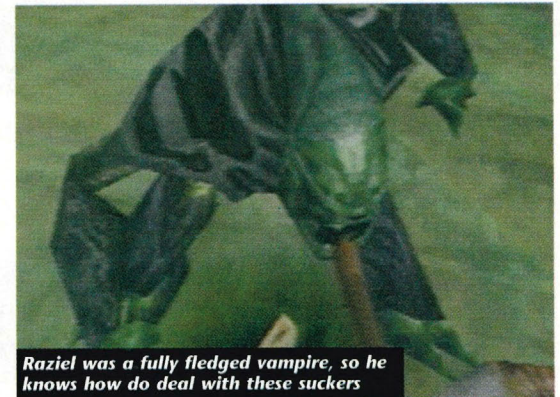
Raziel is the only creature who can exist in both the spirit and material dimensions. This nifty trick gives our hero one mighty advantage over his garlic fearing foes. Faced by a phalanx of vampires, he can shift into the spirit world (the world morphing very



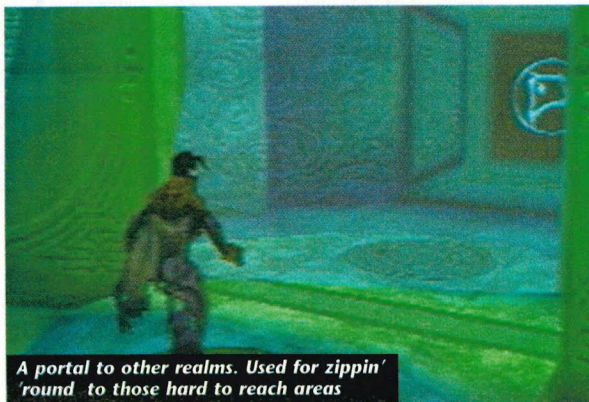
What is that slurpy-slurp sound? Must be that boiler playing up again



Over there, A mutated vampire giving Frenchies to corpses. Urgh!



Raziel was a fully fledged vampire, so he knows how do deal with these suckers



A portal to other realms. Used for zippin' round to those hard to reach areas



Thank God for gothic architecture. Try doing this cool trick in an Igloo



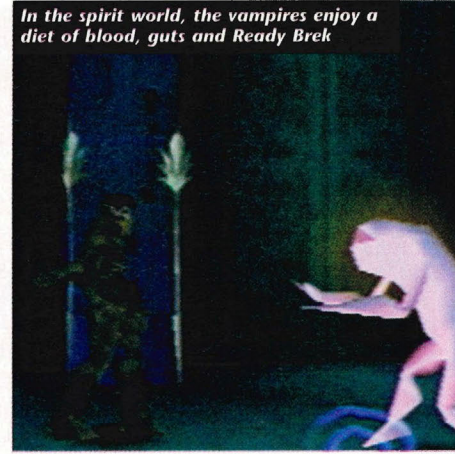
Vampires just hate these relay races. Come on, PICK UP THE DAMN TORCH!



This is the chasm he was cast into. He's back now, for truth, justice and souls!



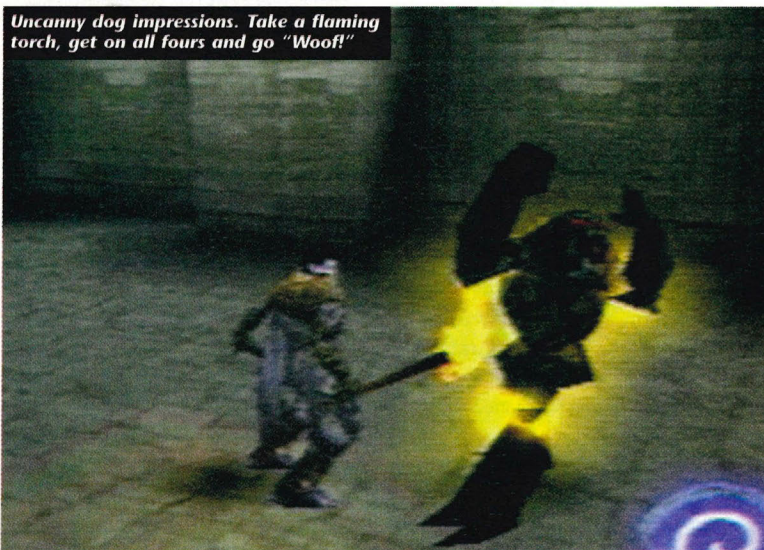
Great, he's unarmed - Right, bend over you red-eyed freak!



In the spirit world, the vampires enjoy a diet of blood, guts and Ready Brek



Watching young, fit vampires' talents on a greased pole is great fun



Uncanny dog impressions. Take a flaming torch, get on all fours and go "Woof!"

worm-ridden gut. That really pisses them off, especially when you hoist them into the air and listen to them scream their little black lungs out. Killing the un-dead

and attack him from two different directions. Stake one to death and the other will bottle out and try and leg it, making his death the sweeter as you chase

Soul Reaver's enemy intelligence is spot on, going beyond the standard "hunt and kill" and entering the realm of "you cunning bastards!"

has never been so sadistic, yet ever so crowd pleasing.

The animation is the finest; super smooth and faster than (dare it be said) any of the Tomb Raider series. If Raziel grasps hold of a ledge, he'll effortlessly kick against the wall and leap onto the platform, just like a demonic anti-hero should. Lara, on the other hand, lollops around performing fancy tricks designed to get perverts wet, while shooting animals and nicking family heirlooms. Some people think she's real.

reaving so soon?

Soul Reaver's enemy intelligence is spot on, going beyond the standard "hunt and kill" and entering the realm of "you cunning bastards!" Should Raz come across two demonic forms, they will try

him around like the Angel of death you are. Lara, on the other hand, likes to kill endangered white tigers with a grenade launcher. I don't think her Daddy ever really loved her.

All the action takes place in one huge gothic arena. There are no levels here, everything streams off the CD - keeping the blood flowing without any respite. Not that it's all about slaying. Oh no, "ere be puzzles." The unholy conundrums vary from simple lever pulling, to monster splashing spiky whirlwind puzzlers that are brain fryingly complex in a Hellraiser gory fashion. There's nothing here that we haven't seen in Resident Evil or that Tomb Raider game, but they've seldom been implemented so smartly.

Soul Reaver sticks you with a bag of spells that would send Mystic Meg into

The misunderstood vampires

SLUAGH
Renown for their passionate kissing style

SKINNER
Prefers AB Negative blood

RONIN
Originally mutated from "Gym Teacher" DNA

ALUKA
Can't find a woman who understands him

EARS
Huge erogenous zones

Come out, come out where ever you are. I've stopped all that impaling nonsense



paralytic fits. These take the form of "Glymps" that can be picked up throughout the game's sprawling catacombs. The effects vary from the Shift Glyph, which allows Raziel to switch between planes at any time, to the Force Glyph, which sends a ball of light distorting energy towards an opponent – throwing them across the room like a drop-kicked rag-doll. Nice! It's especially satisfying if you manage to smack a vampire into a camp fire. Mmmn, anyone for some vampire frepe? Lara, on the other hand, can't cast anything, but she can bob around in a variety of vehicles, rob tombs and bring species to the point of extinction. Nice tits too!

fallen angel

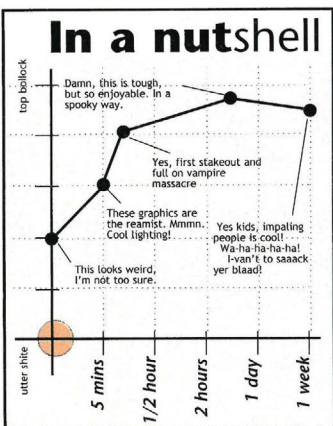
As Raziel gets used to his new form, extra tricks become available. He can phase through locked gates, scale walls like a demonic monkey and even swim (again with a gorgeously animated stroke). However, swimming in water will initially destroy his material body, sending him back to the spiritual plane. But once he has developed sufficiently, he'll be able to flick around pools like an altogether more attractive Sharon Davies.

His wings, although burnt to buggery, can be used to glide around or ride thermal air currents to other platforms. At one stage, Raziel will be able to run around an opponent and snare them in a band of energy, stunning

vampires and squeezing humans to death. This trick can also be used to rotate objects such as a machine's gears or alter the orientation of a sundial. Lara? Well, she tries to impress her followers by performing the occasional handstand.

Soul Reaver is a mammoth game. You can complete it again and again, finding more ways of skewering the nasties and more secrets to improve your abilities. If you're sick of Lara, this is the game to sink your teeth into. But is it better than Tomb Raider? It's got better graphics, more in-depth characters and more interaction with your enemies. But is it better than Tomb Raider? It's got a main character that develops and grows as you progress and a more involving storyline. But... is... it... BETTER! No, not quite.

Will



The Verdict	Out now £39.99	memory card • two players
	<p>Graphics ★★★★★</p> <p>Sound ★★★★★</p> <p>Gameplay ★★★★★</p> <p>Lastability ★★★</p>	Published by Eidos
<p>Soul Reaver combines a fantastic storyline with state-of-the-art graphics to give the world a horrific adventure that goes for your throat and just won't let go. A great game that deserves your cash.</p>		

Alternatively: Legacy of Kain - BMG Interactive ★★★★★