Another Code: Recollection brings cult classic mystery games to the Switch

For a while there, the Nintendo DS was *the* place to go for mystery games. Leading the way were the courtroom antics of the *Ace Attorney* series and the puzzle book detective stories in *Professor Layton*. But helping round out the space was a small studio called Cing that has since shut down, which released a pair of excellent mysteries for the DS with *Hotel Dusk: Room 215* and *Trace Memory* (known outside of North America as *Another Code*). They've since become cult classics, and now the latter is getting a second chance with a remastered edition for the Switch that keeps all the good parts (namely the story), while sprucing things up for modern players.

The new release — called *Another Code: Recollection* — is actually a bundle of two different games. There's *Another Code* for the DS as well as its sequel, *A Journey into Lost Memories*, which came out on the Wii but was never officially released in North America. So, for a number of fans of the original game — like me, for example — this is their first chance to experience the complete story. Both are visual novels with a hefty dose of puzzles, filled with intricately locked doors and complicated machines that would make the architect behind the *Resident Evil* mansion proud.

The *Another Code* series stars a girl named Ashley who grew up thinking that her dad died when she was young. Then, out of the blue, just a few days before her 14th birthday, she gets an invitation from her dad to meet on the ominously named

Blood Edward Island. Once there, Ashley meets an amnesiac ghost named D — who only she can see — and the two set about exploring the island to uncover all kinds of secrets together; Ashley learns the truth about her parents, while D uncovers his long-lost memories. Also, there's a machine that can delete and edit memories from someone's mind. Basically, it's packed with mysteries to uncover. The sequel picks up two years later, with Ashley once again meeting up with her dad, this time for a camping trip in the woods, which brings about even more secrets.

Interestingly, the remaster doesn't separate the games. You don't pick one or the other from the main menu. Instead, once you wrap up the original *Another Code*, things just roll right into the next game, making the story feel very cohesive.

That's far from the only change in this package, though. While the excellent story remains the same, as do — as far as I can tell — most of the puzzles, pretty much everything else has been overhauled. There's voice acting, fully 3D spaces to explore, slick anime-style visuals, and dynamic cutscenes that frame conversations like a constantly shifting motion comic. Also, now, the strange gadget that Ashley carries around looks like a Switch instead of a DS. It all looks and sounds great (and again, it makes the two games feel like a more cohesive package), and there are also some quality-of-life tweaks that make the experience a little smoother.

First, there's an escalating hint system. It's optional, but when you turn it on, you can get hints for puzzles that start out very basic but get increasingly detailed if you choose. It basically allows you to choose your own level of difficulty on the fly. Similarly, it's pretty easy to miss things in the game, so there's an option that lets you turn on a directional arrow that always points you toward your next objective. I found both of these tools very useful during my playthrough; at the very least, the directional arrow kept me from seeking out a walkthrough on a few occasions.

Much like last year, 2024 is shaping up to be filled with remakes and rereleases; already, there's *The Last of Us Part II Remastered* coming out this week and a revamped *Persona 3* launching in February. In the case of *Another Code*, at least, it's the ideal kind of remaster: taking games that were launched a few generations ago (and, in some cases, only in select regions) and making them much more accessible while also giving them a fresh coat of paint. *Recollection* doesn't mess with the part of the series people loved but brings everything else up to modern standards. It's a remaster so good I can't help but wonder: when is *Hotel Dusk* coming to the Switch?

Another Code: Recollection *launches on the Nintendo Switch on January 19th.*

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