# Luigi’s Mansion 3 is perfectly silly slapstick comedy

Most video game protagonists walk with purpose. Nathan Drake has a particular swagger as he strolls through ancient tombs, while Leon Kennedy holds himself with the confidence of a trained professional amid the horrors of a zombie infestation. Luigi isn’t like that. Mario’s bumbling brother is always slightly on edge, and that has never been more apparent than in *Luigi’s Mansion 3*, which launches today, October 31st, on the Nintendo Switch. Luigi shivers as he walks down dimly lit hallways and opens doors with no small amount of trepidation. When he runs, he moves so fast that his head trails behind, like in a Looney Tunes cartoon. He is not remotely brave — and that’s what makes the game so hilarious.

*Luigi’s Mansion 3* is part of a rare breed of slapstick comedy games, joining the likes of the ridiculous *Octodad*. Its humor doesn’t come from witty writing or great jokes; it’s enjoyable exclusively because it’s fun watching Luigi suffer. As the name implies, this is technically the third *Luigi’s Mansion* game, though it’s a standalone piece, not the conclusion to some grand trilogy. At the outset, Luigi and friends are traveling to a beautiful hotel to spend some vacation time, before — very quickly — everyone else is kidnapped by ghosts, and the building is transformed into a surprisingly charming haunted house. Naturally, his quest becomes to save his friends and set things back to normal.

The hotel is sort of like a family-friendly version of the *Resident Evil* mansion. It’s full of secret pathways and locked

doors, and each floor has a different theme; one is a greenhouse, for instance, while another has a Medieval Times vibe. In order to save his friends, Luigi has to contend with ghosts while finding elevator buttons that bring him to new floors, where he can continue to explore.

What makes the game so enjoyable is the physicality. In order to capture a ghost, you first have to flash it with light and then hold steady while it tries to escape the vacuum. Once you grab one by the tail, you can swing it around and smash up the room. It's incredibly satisfying, and the game's physics makes things even more fun. Pretty much every object you come in contact with can move; Luigi can bump into a table, rattling the carefully plated food on top, as well as use his vacuum to suck sheets off of a bed or curtains from a window. Sometimes this will uncover secrets; other times, it's just fun to make a mess.

The big addition to this game is a second, incredibly creepy character called Gooigi. It's basically what Luigi would be if he was made of green Jell-O. At any point, you can swap between the two — Luigi will go limp when you do, which is very unsettling — and each has different abilities. Gooigi can slip between metal gates and down drains, but it also dissolves instantly upon contact with water. Most of the puzzles involve switching back and forth between the two in some way.

Gooigi aside, much of the game is similar to its predecessor. What makes *Luigi's Mansion 3* different — and significantly more enjoyable — is the smaller details. It has a certain level of Nintendo polish that past entries were missing. That includes everything from the weighty feel of tossing a ghost into a wall to the subtle animations as Luigi is spooked by a rat or confronted with a wall of spikes. Much of the game's

charm and humor comes from these moments. The boss fights are a particular joy; when I was being chased by a piano that was haunted by the ghost of a dead composer, I couldn’t stop smiling.

There are some caveats. For example, the controls can be unwieldy and complex, and some of the puzzles are frustratingly obtuse. But there also aren’t many games like *Luigi’s Mansion 3*, which makes it worth checking out. Sure, there are plenty of titles that manage to make a gun feel weighty in your hands or add a sense of physicality to swinging an axe, but *Luigi’s Mansion 3* takes that idea in a different direction by putting the same level of care and detail into a game about a clumsy, terrified plumber.

Luigi’s Mansion 3 *is available now on the Nintendo Switch.*

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