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WELCOME

Open-world zombie banquet *Days Gone* was announced in 2016, but I can take a guess at when its first pitch meeting occurred: some time in 2013, when *Sons of Anarchy* and *The Walking Dead* were beginning to peak on telly, and undead disaster flick *World War Z* first appeared in cinemas. After all, *Days Gone* borrows unabashedly from all three: there are the tattooed bikers of *Sons* over here; the post-apocalyptic drama of *TWD* over there, and the heaving mountains of gnashing zombies – or 'Freakers' in *Days Gone* parlance – teetering about in the middle. This isn't to say that creative swiping is necessarily a bad thing – all art is built on the foundation of what's come before – but when the elements of your game look as nakedly familiar as they do here, it's probably not a good sign. If you're going to create a Frankenstein's monster from bits of pop culture, then you need to at least find imaginative ways to hide the joins. *Days Gone* is the equivalent of taking, say, the body of Superintendent Ted Hastings from *Line of Duty*, grafting on the head of Daenerys Targaryen from *Game of Thrones*, and maybe replacing the right arm with that cannon Megatron had in *Transformers* – three cultural items mashed together in a way that's recognisable, but doesn't necessarily make a convincing whole.

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