Written by Doug Norris
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The perfect boyfriend doesn't necessarily have to be an obsessive, moody, telepathic vampire with permanent bed-head. He could be a vastly proficient chain-whip wielding defender of holy virtue, and did we mention he comes with long-flowing locks and knowledge of light
and
dark magic?

Ladies, meet Gabriel Belmont, the strapping young hero of CASTLEVANIA: LORDS OF SHADOW (Mercury Stream, Kojima Productions, Konami).

Described as the "end of days," the story opens in mid-9th century amidst a battle between the Brotherhood of Light, a group of highly trained holy warriors protecting innocent earthly inhabitants from supernatural beasts, and the Lords of Shadow, a demonic force hell-bent on flooding the earth with bloodthirsty, evil monsters. Players walk in the shoes of Gabriel Belmont, a highly combat-adept member of the Brotherhood, as he seeks vengeance for his beloved Marie, brutally murdered at the hands of this devilish horde. Gabriel learns that Marie, along with any recently deceased, is trapped in Limbo, her spirit constrained through a spell cast by the Lords of Shadow. Through a series of spectral encounters, Marie guides Gabriel on his quest to break the spell and rid the world of the Shadow's malevolent stronghold.

If you can't tell from this brief plot description (believe me, I wish I could tell more, but there's too much risk of spoilers), the script has the depth and complexity Kojima Productions (Hideo Kojima, famed producer of the critically acclaimed METAL GEAR series) has now trademarked; and coupled with a powerful script, the solid voice-acting from t he cast really serves up a shining highpoint of the game. Gabriel (voiced by Robert Carlyle of TRAINSPOTTING and STARGATE UNIVERSE) and Marie (voiced by Natascha McElhone of RONIN and CALIFORNICATION) sound painfully believable as a couple torn by death. Sir Patrick Stewart (STAR TREK: TNG, X-MEN) provides the voice of Zobek, Gabriel's adopted mentor and partner in battle, and also narrates the game in between levels. And everyone's favorite Hogwarts tormentor, Jason Issacs shows up in a nefariously diabolical role highly befitting of his acting past (can't say the character – trying to be spoiler free).

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