

How the Rat King Boss Fight Defines The Last of Us Part II Remastered

When I first loaded up The Last of Us Part II Remastered on my PlayStation 5, I knew I was in for a different kind of experience. The game had already made waves for its brutal storytelling and unflinching violence, but playing it in 4K HDR with all the visual enhancements felt like seeing Seattle through new eyes. The rain on the pavement, the grime in the abandoned buildings, the way light cut through the overgrowth - it all felt more present. I had completed the original release on the PS4 Pro, but this remaster pushed the tension further. And no sequence captures that tension better than the rat king boss fight.

That encounter is not just a spectacle. It is a test of everything the game teaches you across dozens of hours. It is a moment where the survival horror roots of the series come roaring back, and where the Grounded difficulty makes every decision feel like it could be your last. I have run this fight many times, chasing a no damage run on Grounded, and I can tell you that the difference between surviving and thriving is razor thin. The boss arena itself is a cramped, flooded space inside the Aquarium, and the design forces you to think in three dimensions. You cannot just hide in a corner and wait. The Rat King boss moves with a sickening speed, and its tendrils can reach you from angles you did not expect.



The Atmosphere and the Arena

One of the first things I noticed when I entered the boss arena was the lighting. The 4K HDR presentation in The Last of Us Part II Remastered makes the darkness feel deeper and the flashes of light more punishing. The water on the floor reflects the dim emergency lights, and the creature itself seems to absorb light. That is not just a visual trick. It affects how you aim. In HDR10, the contrast is so wide that you can lose track of the Rat King boss in the shadows if you are not careful. I have had runs where I missed a dodge simply because I could not see the tell.

The Aquarium setting is not random. Naughty Dog chose that location because it is a dead end. You have nowhere to run. The exit is blocked, the water is rising, and the only way out is through the monster. That claustrophobia is central to the encounter. It is the same feeling that Ellie Williams and Abby Anderson must have felt in the story, but here it is distilled into a gameplay challenge. The Rat King boss is a mutated amalgamation of infected bodies, a literal pile of flesh and rage that represents the culmination of the infection in Seattle. It is not just a monster. It is a symbol of the chaos that the Firefly and WLF factions have been fighting over.

Grounded Difficulty and the No Damage Run

Playing on Grounded difficulty changes the [rat king boss fight](#) in ways that casual players might not appreciate. On lower difficulties, you can tank a hit or two. On Grounded, a single mistake can end the run. The Rat King boss has a chainsaw attached to one of its arms, and that chainsaw attack is a one-hit kill. I learned that the hard way. I was trying to bait the chainsaw swing and then dodge behind a pillar, but I mistimed it. The chainsaw caught me in the open, and Ellie was dead before I could even react. That is the kind of precision this fight demands.

A no damage run on Grounded requires perfect positioning and resource management. You cannot afford to use a medkit unless you are absolutely sure the Rat King boss is about to be stunned. You have to ration your ammo for the weak points. I found that the best strategy is to use the environment to create distance, then focus fire on the glowing nodules on the boss's body. When those nodules pop, the Rat King boss staggers, giving you a window to reposition or reload. But you have to be fast. The stagger window is short, and if you waste it, you will pay.



The collectibles in The Last of Us Part II Remastered add another layer to this. If you are going for all collectibles, you have to explore every corner of the Aquarium before the fight. That means finding the trading cards, the coins, the artifacts. And those collectibles are not just trinkets. They tell the story of the people who lived and died in Seattle. The Seraphite artifacts, the WLF propaganda, the Firefly notes - each piece fills in the world. But you have to balance that curiosity with survival. I have seen players get killed because they were too focused on a collectible and missed the Rat King boss charging at them.

The Emotional Weight of the Encounter

What makes the rat king boss fight memorable is not just the mechanics. It is the context. By the time you reach this point in the story, you have seen Ellie and Abby's paths cross in devastating ways. You have been to Jackson Hole and back. You have watched the Clicker function as both a tool and a curse. The Rat King boss is the physical manifestation of the infected threat that has been lurking in the background of the entire series. It is the nightmare that Joel warned about in the first game, now made flesh and blood.

I remember the first time I beat this fight on Grounded without taking damage. It took me over forty attempts. I had to learn the tells for every attack. The way the Rat King boss lifts the chainsaw before the downward swing. The pause before it lunges with its tendrils. The pattern of the exploding blisters on its body. It felt like I was learning a dance. And when I finally landed the last shot and the creature collapsed, I felt a sense of relief that few other games have given me. It was not just about completing a challenge. It was about mastering the system that Naughty Dog had built.

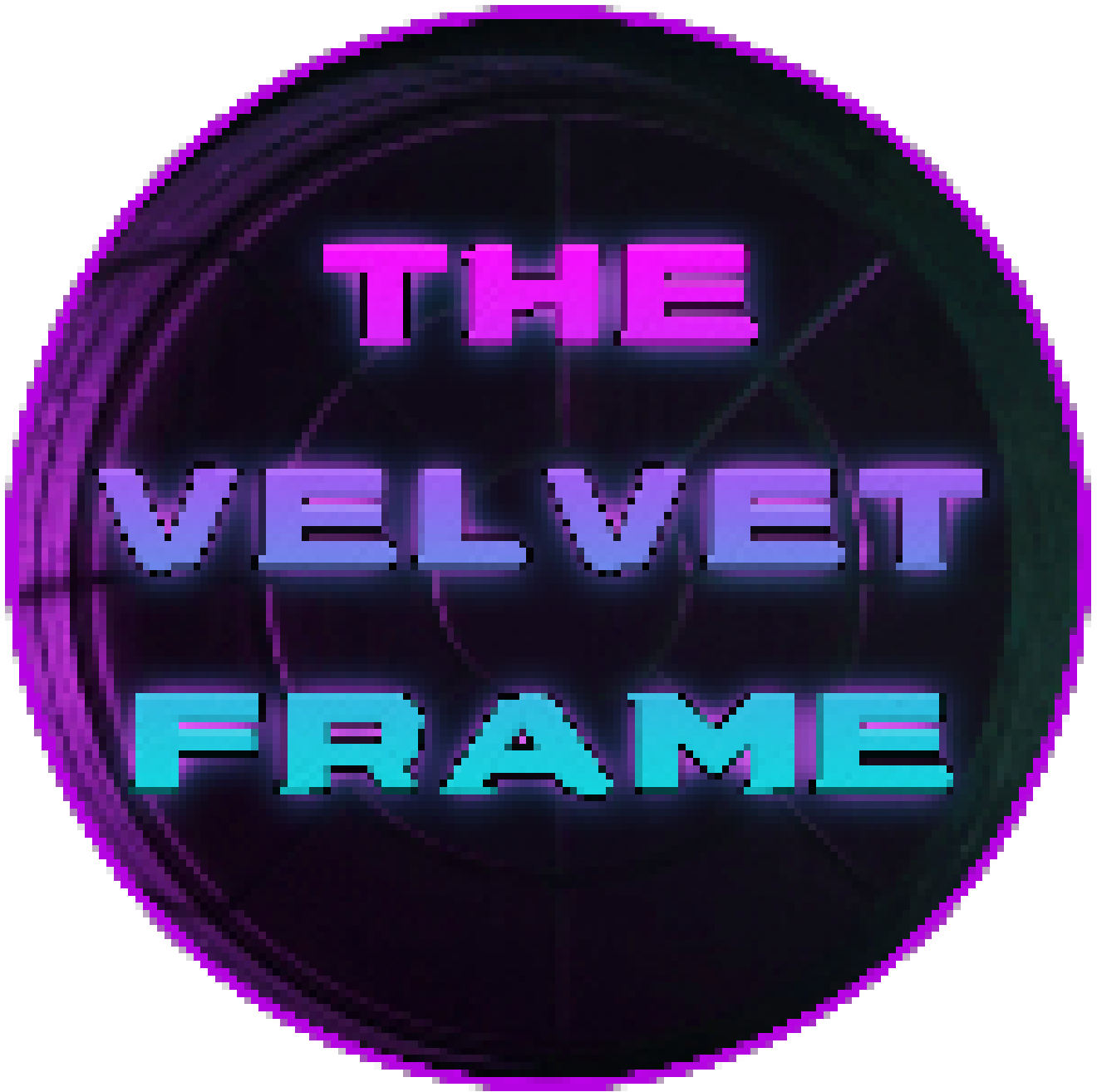
The PlayStation 5 hardware makes this fight feel even more visceral. The haptic feedback from the DualSense controller lets you feel the impact of each chainsaw swing. The adaptive triggers add resistance when you are pulling back a bowstring. The 3D audio lets you hear the Rat King boss moving in the water before you see it. These details matter. They pull you deeper into the moment.

Practical Tips for the Fight

If you are attempting this encounter on Grounded difficulty, there are a few things I have learned that might help. First, ignore the Rat King boss for the first few seconds. Use that time to scan the arena for supplies. There is usually a health kit and some ammo behind the central pillar. Second, do not stay in one spot for more than a few seconds. The Rat King boss will adapt. It will start throwing projectiles if you camp behind cover. Third, save your explosive arrows for the second phase. The first phase is mostly about shooting the glowing weak points with regular ammo. The second phase adds more tendrils and faster movement, and that is when explosives shine.

Another tip: listen for the audio cues. The Rat King boss makes a specific wet, gurgling sound right before it charges. When you hear that, start moving sideways. Do not run backward. The charge has a long reach, and running backward just delays the inevitable. A lateral dodge will put you out of its path. And always keep an eye on the water level. The fight takes place in a flooded room, and the water can hide the Rat King boss's approach if you are not paying attention.

The collectibles in this area are not easy to get. One is tucked behind a collapsed shelf near the entrance. Another is on a high ledge that you can only reach by jumping from a broken stairwell. If you are going for the full set, you might need to do a separate run just for exploration. That is what I did. I focused on the rat king boss fight for the no damage run, then came back on a different save to grab the collectibles. It made the process less frustrating.



Why This Fight Matters

The rat king boss fight is more than a boss battle. It is a statement from Naughty Dog about what survival horror can be. It is not just about jump scares or gore. It is about pressure. It is about using every tool in your inventory, every lesson from the previous encounters, and every

ounce of patience you have. The Grounded difficulty does not just make enemies hit harder. It changes the rules. You have to respect the Rat King boss in a way that you do not on lower settings.

I have seen speedrunners and challenge runners debate the best approach to this fight for hours. Some argue that the chainsaw is the most dangerous attack. Others say it is the grab attack that comes from the tendrils. I think the real danger is the arena itself. The water slows you down. The pillars can block your shots at the worst moment. The Rat King boss can corner you, and once you are cornered, you are dead. That is why movement is more important than aim in this fight. You can miss every shot and still win if you stay alive long enough. But you cannot miss a dodge and survive.

In the end, this encounter sums up everything The Last of Us Part II Remastered is about. It is brutal. It is unfair. It is beautiful. And it asks you to be better than you were before. Whether you are playing for the story or for the challenge, the rat king boss fight will leave a mark on you. It certainly did on me.