

SLEEPY STATION

Issue #9

ONECHANBARA
ZOMBIE SLICING ACTION

**STEAM
NEXT FEST**
VAPORWARE DEMOS

TOP HOMEBREW
FOR THE OG GAMEBOY

RAD DUDE
GOES SHOPPING

FREE!
GONDOLA CARDS
COLOR POSTER



GRAVITY RUSH
REVIEWER RUSH



STRANDED II
PLAY GUIDE



ISSUE 09
\$4.99 US
\$6.99 CA

**THE WEBRING'S
VIDYA MAGAZINE**

#1

Foreword Flow

This issue ain't nothing to me, man.

The games I play can't be rated by ESRBitch.

Been playing vidya so long, they named the first game after my DONG.

Lil' edgy doll wants to play a game? I turn him into Jigsawed-off dick. Shove his foreskin trunk in my inventory for later.

Invented E3 babes, thank me now instead of later, cuz before that you had to stare at 70's pornstaches.

Fucking lootboxes getting me too much money. The IRS R on my S. Bring back Van Helsing, at least he don't play.

The opps tried to take away my CS:GO skins, so I flayed the motherfuckers.

It's play or flay and I'm out of quarters.

You come against me, you take the fall damage.

Try to poison me, I heal from that shit, cuz I smoked that shit this morning, shit.

Solo every dungeon except my sex dungeon. It's a free-for-all PvPvEvME.

My internet connection never cut out cuz I'm already in the game, cous. Hacking your game from the inside, beating you before you join the match, cuz you're no match for me.

Shorty wants to voicechat, she gets raped telepathically. Push-to-

suck my dick. Astral project deez nuts in your face.

I kill you in-game, you die in real life, I don't play.

They say I'm getting old in my age. They forget themselves. And I forget them.

I've been playing around so much, Jerry Springer can't take it.

Stacking crits and dragons, never stopped and never will.

You give me an Early Access game and I'll give you early access to your grave.

Played every game out there, made my own and modded bigger titties on Tifa.

Every time I join a match, the code breaks. The serb can't even handle me.

Hook myself up to a computer with a serial port, don't even need hands to make you choke.

THE WORMS!
THE WOOOOOOOOORMS!
ARMAGEDDON HAS COME
AND SO HAVE !!!!

Try to strike me down - I parry.

Try to snipe me - I parry.

Just try to cast Ultima, see what happens.

Parry the Platypussy, she squirtin billed mammals. She'll be monotrembling for eons.

Clit flare up like a weakspot on a boss.

Yellow lines all over my castle. Not for navigation, people piss themselves in fear when I blink.

Seed my torrent or I'll seed your asshole, you bitch.

We bootin' Delta Force off a 1998 warez CD.

Gamer cred so high I'm into inflation now. Deviant Art ain't nothing to me, man.

First person shooter. That's an order.

Every time I show up to a match, the chat fills up with "F"s. They know I'm coming.

Write my shitposts better than paid mortals. Writers guild disbanded.

I am the GM.

My XP bar don't move no more, I do it for the thrill.

They make Monster energy drink out of my sweat. I'm gamer juice, concentrated. No pulp, all game.

Want to see man-made horror beyond your comprehension? Comprehend me that Wiimote and a keg of moonshine, I'll show you why they call me "Vlad from the Trailer".

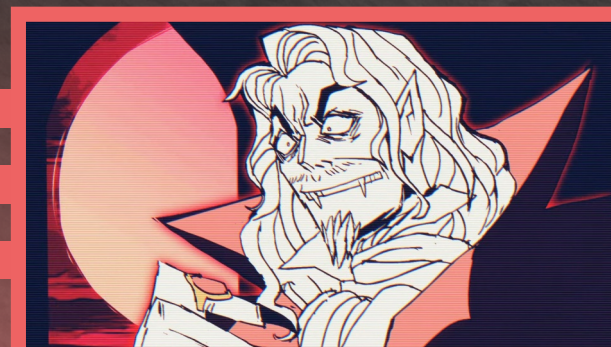
Beat my crew at Mario Party so hard, they have to be resurrected.

Cut my frag video down to the pixel, tightest shit since the black hole.

Read the mag and weep, you'll never ball as hard as me.

Table of Contents

Foreword	1
Table of Contents	2
Gravity Rush: Reviewer Rush	3
Anon's Arcade Action: Reset / Truck World	7
Steam Next Fest Demo Showcase	13
Stranded II Play Guide	17
OneChanbara ZII Chaos Review	23
Top Homebrew for Gameboy	27
Mods! Mods! Mods!	31
Color Poster	35
Rad Dude Comic	39
Gondola Cards	42



REVIEWER RUSH

ANON'S LATE NEWTONIAN INTROSPECTION



Preface

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Gravity Rush is a video-game series where you play as Kat, a young girl with amnesia in towns unknown to her with the ability to manipulate gravity around her thanks to her cosmic cat companion Dusty.

In it you use your powers to fight frightening dark creatures nicknamed Nevi, to help and befriend people, to make enemies, to discover new worlds, to recover memories of your past and to save the world.

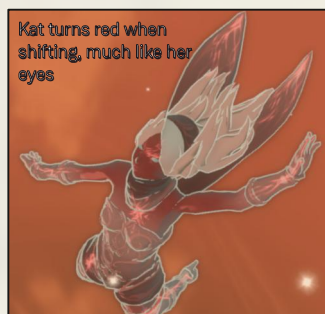


How Does It Play?

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It may appear like another third person game where you jump and move freely, but this changes shortly as you're introduced to the first Gravity Shifting mechanic: setting yourself in the air, aiming at a direction, then flying towards it.

Shifting's controls are affected by your handheld's/controller's gyroscope, subtly deepening the



Kat turns red when shifting, much like her eyes



The game's protagonist

It was developed by Project Siren, the people behind the horror games series Forbidden Siren.

Inspiration comes from french comics from Jean Giraud, manga and anime like Kamen Rider and Sailor Moon, games such as Crackdown, and even movies including Dr. Strangelove and Hancock.

It has collaborated with Everybody's Golf, Let it Die, NieR: Automata, Phantasy Star Online 2 and others.



immersion of your interactions.

You're also armed with karate kicking and dodging abilities, which can be fused with shifting.

Kat can also slide on surfaces, kick enemies mid-air, and pick up and hold items then throw them away. There's also special attacks to target multiple enemies.

Fighting up close is gratifying, though you may struggle tracking some far away enemies.

Many types of Nevi exist with different characteristics, some creepier than others. They're easy to deal alone, but are dangerous in

A Brief History

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- 2008 Keiichiro Toyama pitched Gravité, a title for the PlayStation 3 involving "gravity action".
- 2009 Initial concept is created in Maya 3DCG software with models re-used from Siren Blood Curse. SIE's president Shuhei Yoshida suggests targeting the PlayStation Vita.
- 2012 Gravity Rush is released, with 3 DLC packs later.
- 2015 A premier of Gravity Rush 2 is shown at Tokyo Game Show, scheduled to release in December.
- 2016 Gravity Rush Remastered is released on the PS4. Two episodes of Gravity Daze The Animation are delivered by Studio Khara.
- 2017 Gravity Rush 2 is launched with Raven's Choice expansion for free.
- 2018 Gravity Daze 2: Juuryoku-Teki Memai Tsumisoutan, a manga of the sequel's story is issued, drawn by artist Kutsugaeru. Sony shuts down the online features of Gravity Rush 2.
- 2020 Keiichiro Toyama leaves Project Siren/Team Gravity along with Kazunobu Sato and Junya Okura to form Bokeh Game Studio.
- 2022 A movie based on the first game is announced without further details.
- 2024 Pre-production clips of the same movie were revealed in Sony's Torchlight studio ads.



Early Gravité prototype



Studio Good

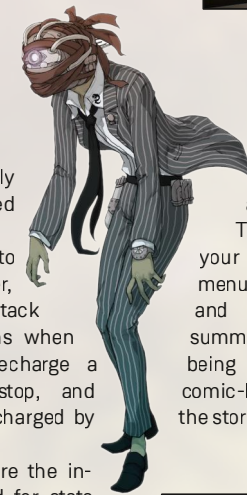
numbers, specially when they're armored or a stronger type.

You'll have to manage your power, health and special attack meters: Power drains when shifting and will recharge a while after you stop, and special attacks are charged by hitting enemies.

Precious Gems are the in-game currency used for stats



Precious Gems scattered around Heksville



Missions and Challenges

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To progress in the game you'll have to complete story missions. In them you're typically going to fly somewhere to battle Nevi and occasionally bosses, sometimes having to follow something, fly through obstacles or solve unique challenges.

The story is expositioned through interactive comic strips and cutscenes - some pre-rendered and others simpler, and dialog boxes.

Outside of these you are free to explore your surroundings and to interact with its people and creatures.

Available too are optional side missions that are more casual and comical in nature.

Finally, there's challenge missions where you complete an objective for a medal and a best time.



Language

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If you thought the characters were speaking French by error and tried to fix it, don't be fooled, for they're speaking the Gravity language.

Its words come from English and

romanized Japanese, with some of its characters removed and inverted, then converted to their own alphabet.

While its speech has been used to make songs about the meaningless of life, in reality it's not usable and it's only trying to sound French.



A storefront in Auldnoir

Tech

Backing the game is a heavily modified PhyreEngine: the original was made by Sony and it's free for use by PlayStation developers.

When the team finally got hold of the handheld, the graphics stack broke and had to be rewritten.

LODs and geometry culling were implemented to minimize frame time, the latter using a special node system to handle multiple

layers within a level.

Reference shaders were prepared in Maya then remade for the Vita's PowerVR GPU, making use of toon shading for characters and an HDR pipeline for the world.

On top post-processing effects are applied like fog, tone mapping and line drawing, these taking 25% of a frame's processing time.

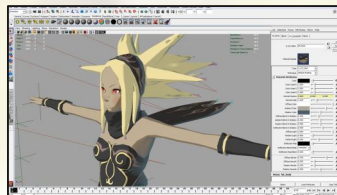
Forward kinematics were added to Kat late in development through the Havok physics

middleware, layered on top of the quaternion "magic" permitting the multi-axis movement.

Lua is used to script missions and the world, having asynchronous loading of assets and NPCs.

And because of the switch to the unstable-at-the-time Vita, development of the game itself occurred in Windows computers.

That's right, a PC port of Gravity Rush has existed for more than 10 years.



The World

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As you follow the falling apple from its tree in the beginning of your playthrough, you are presented to a foreign megalopolis called Hekseville. It is physically supported by an enormous tree root known as World Pillar, extending beyond the sky above and below.

The land is separated in four districts:

Auldnoir - the old town where you start, Pleajune - the "entertainment" and university district, Endestia - the industry central, and Vendecentre - the capital and thus the largest of them all.

The buildings and structures in them are influenced by English and French architectures.

You'll also visit other locations that lie on the other side of Gravity Storms: Rift Planes, made of fragments of Hekseville, other civilizations and even other dimensions.

Music

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orchestral piece for the game.

The unique and catchy symphonies heighten the atmosphere of this foreign world, being one of the causes making this game so memorable.

Providing melodies for the action is Kouhei Tanaka, known by works including Sakura Wars and One Piece.

Early on, the team was using Isao Tomita's Mighty Jack music as a placeholder. Later on Tanaka was suggested by the sound staff after being asked on who could compose a 1970's anime inspired



Kouhei Tanaka

PART TWO NEXT PAGE...

The Grand Finale To The Gravity Queen's Journey

ENDING DAZE?

And Now, How Does It Play?

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To begin, controls and camera function better than its predecessor, and targeting far away foes is sturdier than before.



The world is much densely packed, its towns' streets crowded with its many residents and full of details.

New challenge types exist like delivering newspapers and flyers around the town, or evading fans as you masquerade as someone famous.

Two new fighting styles are now included: these change your movement and attacks, deepening your shifting abilities, being upgradable through Precious Gems.

An item system was added where you can equip up to three talismans with stats modifiers,



which may be found in rift planes, crafted, or found in side quests.

More Nevi, human and machine foes are there to stop you.

Your character may now perform a emotes, causing people around you to react accordingly.

Kat's pipe house can be decorated with (cat) beds, curtains, floor mats and other kinds of furniture. Unfortunately unlocking most of them requires the now defunct online mode (or mods).



Other online-only features involve ghosts of other players within challenges and rewards such as emotes, outfits and props.

A new crucial gadget is given to you too: an instant camera.



Photography Rush

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With this new device, you can now take pictures of yourself, others and the world nearly everywhere, its use being a necessity in certain missions.



an in-game gallery and are stored in your system, allowing you to copy them to other devices if you want.

The camera may be used while shifting and is capable of zooming for an unfortunately limited range, to use an also-range-limited tripod and to set color filters if you're into that. Decorative props may also be spawned.

During my playthrough I've taken over 380 pictures with the camera and I think an Anon mentioned that he had double or triple the amount of that.

If you're like me, you're going to setup and take shots of Kat being goofy, cute, or even mean to citizens.

When it was still available, you could share your work with others, being an essential part of the online-focused treasure hunt where you and other players could help each other finding secret stashes in the world containing precious gems and Dusty Tokens.

Pictures taken are displayed in



The New World

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Like a deja vù, you fall again to a new location: Banga, a roaming settlement consisting of wooden huts inhabited by an ore mining tribe.

Eventually you and its settlers will travel to Jirga Para Lhao, a brand new flying city for you to explore and home to four novel locations: Lei Colmosna - with markets, a port and commercial buildings to visit, Lei Elgona - a

houseboat favela, Lei Havina - land of the elite and their mansions, and Avarash au Govena - where the military and oligarchy abide.

Their made-up written language is distinct, being grounded in a set of Asian type scripts.

The environments in this new city have taken inspiration from places around the world including South East Asia to Mexico.

Rift planes have returned as Mining Sites where you obtain Precious Gems and Artifact pieces, or battle any Nevi wandering within. New dimensions include a cactus world, a bubble world and ancient ruins.

Last but not least, a bigger and bursting Hekseville will be accessible at a later time.



Raven's Story

Freely available, this mission pack is set before the events of the sequel.

In it you play as the black and red haired girl assisted by her corvus partner and are tasked by higher beings to tie all the loose ends within the whole series.

You won't be able to free roam Hekseville



Raven surfing through light and darkness

though, as you're always in a mission state, making progression linear.

There will be sections where you control Raven as her younger self perusing through her memories in a dream-like dimension. These levels resemble platformers as you're forced to move through a labyrinth without powers while avoiding getting caught by its dwellers.

A new rift plane Illumina is part of your itinerary where you have to capture points in order to fight the bosses within.



Kouhei Tanaka returns to compose what he described to be a masterpiece.

The quantity of the music has practically doubled, Tanaka having stated that it took him three months to write it.

The orchestra got bigger too, making sounds intense and allowing a wider range of instruments to be played.

Nu Music

Banga's tribalistic theme is a good example of it.

This spectacular work is one of my favorites and has lit an interest in orchestral music in me.



2017 Toyama and Tanaka

Tech Version Two

Building upon previous work, PBR techniques are now used to some extent in shading while retaining some of the toon aspects of the visuals. For example, ambient occlusion uses thick black lines.

Geometry seems to



Notice the shadow's lines

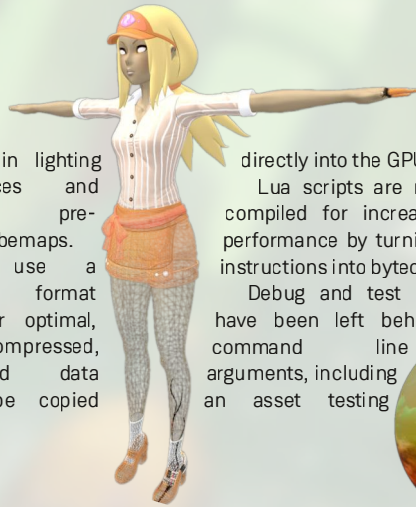
have baked-in lighting for surfaces and sometimes pre-generated cubemaps.

Models use a custom format designed for optimal, heavily compressed, pre-processed data ready to be copied

directly into the GPU.

Lua scripts are now compiled for increased performance by turning text instructions into bytecode.

Debug and test options have been left behind command line arguments, including an asset testing



menu and an "enter level" option.

Because of these arguments along with in-engine pre-rendered cutscenes and being there before, I suspect a development PC port of Gravity Rush 2 may already exist.

Closing Thoughts

You may have noticed by now that Gravity Rush is one of my most beloved series, with the second game being my favorite.

Funny enough, when I had gotten my hands on a PS4, I thought these games would have been filled with the current-day stupidity marked by the eighth generation, only to get so attached to it and finishing the first

game in the following 18 hours.

The gravity shifting mechanics and combat, the world and its characters, the great soundtracks, the stylization of the visuals...

The themes in it, the references to super-hero narratives, to economic disaster, to religions like Christianity, to fighting proto-

globalists and living in a dystopia (I'm mad that they never delivered a warning on those bots and gaslit Kat into registering)...

All condensed and combined into nearly a decade of work by people with the intent to create foremost an unique video-game resulting in this splendid adventure.



If you are to play them, I suggest you to do so slowly and enjoy them as if you were degustating them, more so the sequel.

At the time of writing this, PS4 emulation continues to progress, so I expect these games won't be



chained to its original hardware for too long, even if an used console is rather cheap now.

Since the core of Team Gravity left Sony, I doubt a third game will ever be made since it's a niche game and it wouldn't make sense anyway because of its ending.

As far as Toyama and Bokeh are concerned, they've recently



Toyama in 2024

shipped a horror action game named Slitherhead, with its body snatching having a little inspiration from Gravity Rush.

At last there's that movie that was supposedly in pre-production nearly a year ago. It will probably be mediocre at best, however this may mean that the games would come to PC in order to promote it.

As an Anon said: the people that like this game REALLY like it.

Perhaps after reading this you'll be inclined to trying it out too.



GRAVITY RUSH 2

ANON'S ARCADE ACTION

RESET @ BAR 145

Toledo, OH

RESET is in a little strip mall a few miles outside of downtown Toledo. In order to get into the arcade you must enter through the bar named "**BAR 145**", both are easily observed from the exterior. Parking is alright, I walked from the Target next door. At noon on a Saturday it appears the population in Toledo is perhaps not interested in going to the arcade, or perhaps it is this particular arcade that people have little interest in giving patronage.

PINBALL(WORKS):VIDYA(WORKS)

4(3):7(6)

QUALITY OF SELECTION

Generic, nothing stood out.

QUALITY OF HARDWARE

4 machines worked as intended. Galaga had a trackball as well as the expected joystick. 2 had faults with player 2: Moron Kombat 3 had no up movement for player 2, Maximum Force had zero usability for player 2. Donkey Kong was worn the fuck in, tap a direction and pipeguy will keep going in that direction until you either intentionally set the stick to the neutral position or choose a different direction. Simpsons Bowling was OoS. KISS pinball was OoS. I did not play Hydro Thunder, but it probably worked fine, I've never seen one not.

MONEY MACHINES

ATM wanted three fucking dollars and the nigger quarter machine only takes \$1s and \$5s, which is fine but its nigger behavior was on display when it shat out 17 quarters for my \$5. The bartender was maybe suspicious when I brought it up and she gave me the last of my quarters, though I hope she was assuaged when I gave her back a quarter after she handed me four instead of three.

CLIENTELE

There was NO ONE there when I went at noon. A couple people at the bar and in the bar restaurant. When I was leaving a couple of female teenagers came in to fuck around on some machine.





STAFF

Responsive, two wanted to know if we wanted a menu or a drink soon after arrival, which we didn't. Left us alone after that.

NON-PINBALL/ARCADE OPTIONS

2 UFOs, 1 skeeball, 2 shootin hoops blackie ball, one electromechanical bball kinda game that ate my fucking quarters and had one visibly jammed deep into a coin slot, 1 air hockey.

ATMOSPHERE

Kinda off-putting. Maybe it would be better later in the day/night with more people but being alone in there was kinda sterile in a weird way. It was comfortable to sit and write notes, though, so not entirely off-putting.

FOOD/DRINK

They had food and drink, I will not comment on pricing nor quality as I did not partake.

\$5 RULE

Yeah I spent the blasted five dollars but felt the trip was a waste. The only fun I had was playing the "iCade" multicade that was put in the Ms. Pacman cabinet. The Mario pinball machine, manufactured by the once mighty Gottlieb, sucked. The Babby Yeed and Friends pinball had 12 credits in it, probably left there by an unimpressed drunk from the night before. I didn't bother using many of those credits. Was ready to get out.

RATING - 3/10

I don't know what a 10/10 would be, but I do know this is more than one notch below the halfway-point. I ain't goin back.



ANON'S ARCADE ACTION

TRUCK WORLD

Hubbard, OH

The arcade at **TRUCK WORLD** is in a sort of miniature mall inside a truck stop off of I-80 on the border with PA. Parking is plenty and the arcade is effectively open 24/7 by nature of being in a 24/7 truck stop.

PINBALL(WORKS):VIDYA(WORKS)
2(2):15(7)

QUALITY OF SELECTION

Most of the games were sit-down style driving cabinets. Makes sense this being a truck stop. Of what was operable the selection was good, would have been much better if they were all operable, or at least a few more.

QUALITY OF HARDWARE

7/15 arcade machines were operable. San Francisco RUSH 2049 was operable, but 1 of the 2 cabinets had that fucky tracking thing with the screen which made it more difficult to use, but not so difficult that I'd lose to player 2 who was using the perfectly functional cabinet. The working Offroad Thunder was fully operational, up to and including the force feedback in the steering wheel, the other was fully OoS. Sky Target had a fucked flight stick. Moron Kombat II had response issues with the P1 joystick. Fuck those games. All lightgun

games were down. Virtua Fighter 2 was down. 2 SEGA 18 Wheeler machines were down. 1 of the 2 Solitaire games was down, the working one had a dark spot in the top left corner of the screen but still playable if you look hard enough. They had a couple (2) overpriced pinball machines. ACDC was \$.75 and Avatar was a fucking buck. I will assume Avatar worked fine since I saw a man playing it after we had finished. The ACDC machine looked clean, probably worked fine.

MONEY MACHINES

I did not use an ATM here, but the quarter machine was down so I went to the fuel desk to ask for quarters. Since she didn't have \$5 in her register we swapped a \$10 roll of quarters.

STAFF

They were nice and helpful. The bartender (first place I went looking for quarters) got to me fairly quickly considering how busy they were at 18:30 on a Saturday evening and directed me to the fuel desk to get



my necessary coin. The fuel desk lady was kind enough to look for 20 quarters in her register before having to resort to a \$10 exchange.

CLIENTELE

In the areas with games there was a mother with two sons, and a father with one son. All White, all right. Funny drunks in the bar (in a different part of the minimall) I walked into were all making fun of one another about football. One particular drunk said "No offense to you (pointing at me), but you (pointing to the guy I was standing next to) now have representation!" to which I said "Sorry but I'm not jewish" and a bunch of these old drunk truckers thought that was pretty funny.

ATMOSPHERE

It was relaxed and pleasant. The two families left not too long after we had gone in and started playing games and it was overall a relaxed place to be. Felt easy walking around, looking at, and talking about the games and place itself.

NON-PINBALL/ARCADE OPTIONS

There were 4 UFO machines, 1 skeeball, 2 BBall machines, one seemingly OoS soccer 1v1 machine that ate a fucking dollar, 2 quarter-pusher type scam machines.

FOOD/DRINK

Everything inside the minimall is less than 100 steps from the arcade, there's a diner that has fine breakfast, dinner, and supper. I can't complain about the quality. Pricing isn't too bad for what's typical in a truck

stop. Waffle House across the street is gonna be easier on the wallet for diner food. There's also a little hotdog focused place in the minimall, haven't tried that but smells alright and has good prices on dogs. The bar is a dive. The clientele are not the same as the people playing in the arcade, which is nice. I didn't drink so I won't comment on the prices but I will assume the selection is one where you don't want to order anything fancy like a niggeroni or a vieux carre.

\$5 RULE

Having already had a lot more fun than in Toledo at RESET, I pulled the change from my pocket to see I had \$2.50 left (!!) which was a nice sight. Blew through the rest on skeeball, getting screwed by that soccer machine (that did look fun), and the Solitaire machine.

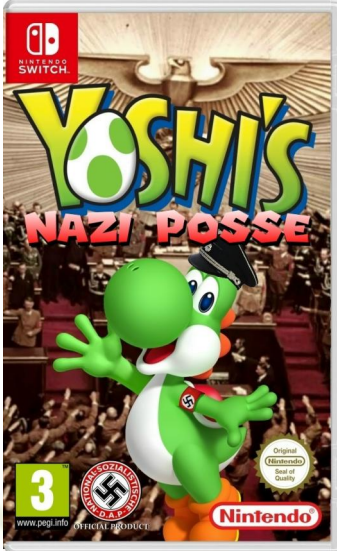
RATING - 4/10

This would be higher if the selection was at least half operable. I can't in good conscious rate it at a 5/10 or higher with this many down cabinets. Get yer shit a runnin and this'll be a fine highway stop arcade for the traveling sleepy anon. If they had more of their cabinets working I would have liked to stay and spend some quarters on those, in particular CarnEvil, SEGA's 18 Wheeler racing, and Virtua Fighter 2. Next time I have cause to stop by here I will definitely come back in to see if anything is fixed, and at least to get some racing in on what is working. Good atmosphere, a couple of fun games, some food in the same building, and a bar for some real fights after you lose your quarters to some 8 year old.



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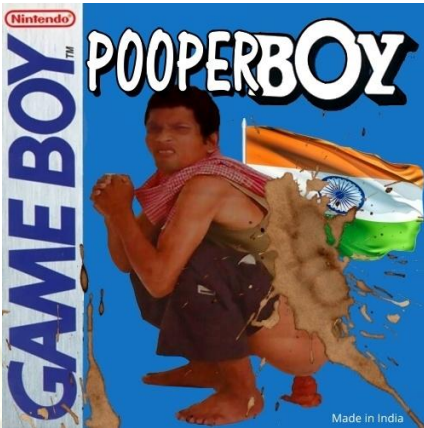
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Nintendo DS

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PARENTAL ADVISORY
Not suitable for children!



GameScam

power to the crooks



N E X T

F E S T

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AT 10 AM PACIFIC

Live gameplay recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3uWg4UnAf0>

Another one was way behind us. At the rate we make the issues come out, we're actually being outpaced by Steam Next Fests, so this one is going to be a combination of 2 Next Fests. When was the second one? I don't remember. Which games did I play? Can't recall. How much alcohol was consumed? Our lawyers advised us to say that no liver was (fatally) harmed during the making of this article.

I have to be honest, the pickings were as slim as Alabamy cheerleaders, so it's no wonder I had to do a "Buy one, get one free" this year.



Balatro Blackjack rip-off. More mechanics, less soul. All the colors are a bit washed out, and I should have spent more time with it to completely understand the mechanics, but I couldn't bring myself to do so. It's the same shtick as Balatro: card game with random chance to get modified cards, later on you seem to get a hand of extra cards to use on top of whatever you pull out of your deck. Ehhh, I'll pass. And I really liked Balatro.

Dungeons & Degenerate Gamblers

Developer:
Purple Moss Collectors

Very fun, arcadey Twisted Metal set in an open desert (and tundra later), scarp enemies to gain parts. Neat music. Excellent car chase feeling. Lots of video filters, so you can look your best. Different car bodies come with different stats, but more importantly: different weapon slots. For example, a beetle will only hold a single 360° weapon on the roof, while a truck can have a gun on each side and one in the back, but each only covers a 180° firing angle. So the ideal strategy is to keep enemies behind you for maximum damage output



GOOD SHIT, NIGGA



FUMES

Developer:
FUMES team



I AM CAPTAIN PLANET!

A game about a gay hippie nigger crying about birds made by a gay hippie nigger. Good enough action centered around taking out your enemies as fast as possible using their weapons and the environment, completely nullified by awful story and characters. Looks like it's trying to emulate XIII. At least I got a catchphrase from streaming this: "The trailer looked good though...".

Serves me right for judging a book by its cover. Another case of a solid game concept being ruined by focusing on the narrative. Just like "Hardspace: Shipbreaker".

I Am Your Beast

Developer:
Strange Scaffold

Assault Android Cactus, but red and edgy.

Fast, furious and hard as hell. I liked the demo well enough to buy the full version, but the second level has already filtered me. Weapons and equipment can be unlocked by performing certain feats like not breaking a combo for the whole level or reflecting a certain amount of enemy projectiles with your melee attack. Said equipment affects your damage output, firerate, heavy attack patterns, dash charges, melee behavior and other misc. aspects of gameplay. There are plenty of weapon combinations to choose from, but like I said - basically locked behind achievements. You can still grind and use your scored points to unlock them instead, but that's a lot of grinding. The whole "glitch hell" aesthetic is done very well, but I did have to modify the font in accessibility options because of how much it blended in with the rest of UI. Despite being utter garbage at it, I will absolutely recommend this game to fellow twin-stick twitcher aficionados.



KILL KNIGHT

Developer:
PlaySide

GOOD
SHIT,
NIGGA



Preaty gewd, positioning is key, supposed to come out at the end of 2024.

Sure, it's not a real Metal Slug, but it's a hell of a lot better than whatever the fuck "Metal Slug Defense" was supposed to be. Plays similarly to "Into the Breach" where every little action can have detrimental consequences to you and/or the enemy units. Lots of synchronicities depending on which unit action you perform next to or in line with certain units, so positioning is very important when you commit to an action. While the playing field is rendered in very nice pixel art, most of the UI is rendered in HD, so a clash of styles might put some people off. Overall, it's pretty good.

Metal Slug Tactics

Developer:
Leikir Studio

Modern DOS shovel-self-ware, ridiculous, but still fun. Result of BigMode gamejam.

Pick a rad rider, choose a wicked weapon and slide down some slopes. Completely off the wall action, you can do tricks and shit, bullets are the size of household animals and snow ninjas are endless. Has the spirit of old shovelware games from back in the day you could download for free. I mean you can still download games for free if you know where to look, but you know what I'm talking about. Like something you'd find on Miniclip or a similar site hosting Java games. Goofy ass game that embraces the silly. Don't take it too seriously and you'll get lost in the carnage yourself.



Red Snow

Developer:
Dolphin Studio



"Unto the Breach" with taticool wizards. Made by the same studio as "Gunpoint". Story dialogue choices don't matter and are poorly written. Reeks of Reddit. Gameplay revolves around solving a puzzle in the form of a tactical breach. Early levels offer 1, maybe 2 possible solutions, I would imagine later levels allow for a wider arsenal and in turn more solutions. The mix of Wizards and Taticool shit works well, so long as characters keep their traps shut. I have to thank god for the lack of voice acting, hearing these cringe lines would have prevented me from finishing this demo. The pre-cognition mechanic isn't explained too well, you can see the effects of your actions 5 seconds into the future, but which action will reach further than that are unclear at best. If you're into puzzles, grab it.

Tactical Breach Wizards

Developer:
Suspicious
Developments Inc..

Stiff, "Curse of the Dead Gods" wanna be, lots of "okay" voiceacting in the form of sports commentary, but the commentary in and of itself is annoying and distracting. Unlike its rixel older brother, this is a fully 3D sequel. Movement feels like you're wading through thick mud. Before starting a run, you can mix and match different elemental spells with varying debuffs. To be honest, I never really got into the original even though it ticked all the boxes to qualify as my next dopamine farm / time waster, but something didn't click. It's not clicking with me personally this time either. It feels like they're trying to emulate "Curse of the Dead Gods", but it's not going well for them.



Wizard of Legend II

Developer:
Dead Mage



Alien Syndrome-like twinstick shooter. Very quiet, no music and barely any ambient sounds. VERY repetitive, reminds me of Alien Syndrome games. Sound balance can be all out of whack once you start firing on quickly respawning enemies and sound effects stack, peaking volume levels. And I do mean quickly, these things are neverending. There's a diablo item drop system, so you'll be going through tons of trash after each

mission. Some enemies have dedicated "I will commit friendly fire" attacks, but they aren't enough to keep the game from feeling repetitive (walking 5 steps forward, triggering a 50 enemy spawn, taking 10 steps back and repeat).

Combat Complex

Developer: Spherical Horse Studios

"Hades" with 1-4 player co-op and "Curse of the Dead Gods" art style set in the King Arthur mythos. Something to hold you over until "Hades II" comes out. Hard to master at first until you unlock a character/weapon/spell combo that works for you. Played with a friend, both found the cute redhead monk grill with the staff to be the best. Collect perma currency during runs to upgrade individual weapons and collective abilities like extra starting health or dashes. It really is just a cheaper version of Hades, with god favors and everything, but it's still fun to play, provided you're willing to put up with very short winding up attack animations from enemies. You will die a lot at the start, keep that in mind and keep grinding. By far my favorite game of this year's demo batch.



SWORN

Developer: Windwork Games

GOOD
SHIT,
NIGGA



Made by Newgrounds lad(s), Binding of Isaac meets Resident Evil. Character design suggests it was drawn by a lesbian (mostly female cast that looks like they were from that Steven "Total Gem Death" Universe cartoon). Cramped spaces, slow movement and unsatisfying combat. Isometric pixel graphics make it difficult to judge where you are in relation to other objects, especially while jumping. Guns are wildly

inaccurate, shotguns hit a new low where you can be standing right in front of an object or enemy and all the pellets would miss. The range is already pathetic, but the spread is what kills it. Items modify your character behavior, secondary weapons can be picked up too, but with limited ammo and pathetic ammo refills (+8 bullets for a minigun). Just for completion's sake, I went and played the flash version on Newgrounds. It's identical.

Dead Estate

Developer: Milkbar Lads

STRANDED II



PLAY GUIDE

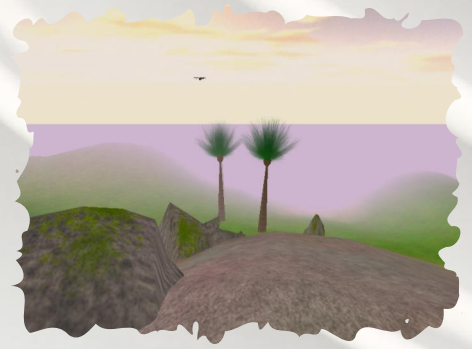
One day I was randomly browsing the Internet Archive, looking through a collection of classic PC games, when one of the thumbnails caught my eye. The thumbnail showed a small tropical island in the middle of a vast blue ocean, with vibrantly colored trees and bushes in a low poly 3D environment. The caption read **Stranded II**. It looked comfy, and comfy it was.

Stranded II is an indie game developed by a krautdev called Peter Schauss. But unlike most indie games, **Stranded II** is a well polished title with fleshed out gameplay and a fun story to boot, all in less than **15 megabytes** (!) filled with enough content to keep you entertained for several days straight. The only problem is that some game mechanics and story elements are not explained, so you might find yourself scratching your head quite often... But don't worry, I got you covered. This will be a gentle introduction to **Stranded II** with just enough info to get you started.

PROLOGUE

Your character is a wealthy britbong with a heavy accent and an attitude problem. You've just bought a brand new yacht and are overcome with excitement, so you decide to go cruising at sea, all alone... Soon you find yourself caught in a storm and rapidly drifting off course. To make matters worse, your yacht gets struck by lightning and catches fire, then explodes into a thousand pieces.

Thrown overboard, you manage to reach an island and wash ashore, but you have no idea where you are. There's water surrounding you as far as the eye can see, but no ships in sight. You have nothing on you save for your clothes, and your only companion is the wilderness... Will you survive and find your way back home? Or will you succumb to the unforgiving environment and die?



FINDING YOUR BALANCE

The game starts with a first person view into a beach on a tropical island. Your vision is a little hazy, but it'll clear up in a moment. You'll find a screen has popped up with some text; that's the main character's diary and where you'll be getting most of the game hints. The first diary entry explains what the bars at the top of the screen are for, as well as how to collect/combine/destroy items. More diary entries will be written later on as you play the game, each new entry automatically appearing on screen so you can read it.

On the left side of the screen are are some buttons. There's "**Character**" which contains your stats, skills, and a "**Sleep**" button in the lower right corner. There's "**Rucksack**" which is your inventory, then there's "**Diary**" which you've just read. There are also "**Load**" and "**Save**" buttons, I suggest you use them and save your game often. You have unlimited slots so save as many times as you like. Now hit **[Esc]** to resume the game.

THINKING STRATEGICALLY

Before you start playing, you should know that your Rucksack has limited capacity. You're not only bound by how **many** items you have, you're also bound by how **heavy** each item is. Don't pick up items that you have no immediate use for, especially heavy ones such as stones or wooden logs, as you will be forced to drop them at some point. Dropped items remain on the map only for the duration of the day and may disappear when you sleep, so keep important items on you when you go to bed, until you build a proper storage space.

Now the first step is finding food and water, as the bars at the top will fill up quite fast. The beach is littered with crabs and sea turtles which you can kill for food, but they won't be enough to sustain you. Explore the island for other animals and plants, as well as a source of fresh water. You can kill as many animals as you want, they will all respawn in a day or two as long as you don't destroy their nests. Plants are a different story since they don't grow back on their own, but don't worry about that right now.

Your bare hands will only get you so far, so it's a good idea to craft some tools as well as proper shelter to sleep in. This brings us to...

ENTERING THE STONE AGE

Stranded II has an extensive crafting system that is crucial for game progression, however a lot of its recipes are left for the player to figure out, usually through trial and error. Some items are only useful after you use them once, some have to be combined with other items, and some need to be placed in freshwater or fire. I should also mention that crafting certain items unlocks the ability to craft new items, sometimes with recipes that you've used before.

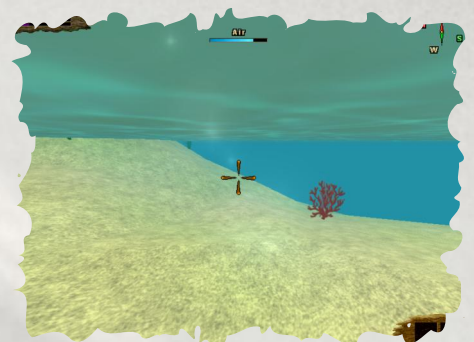
To help you get started I'll list the most important items in the game, along with the recipes to make them:

THE HAMMER

This recipe is quite obvious if you have played Minecraft or similar survival games. The hammer is what you use to build structures such as shelters and storage boxes, plus it can be combined with one or more items in the inventory to produce new items. Making a hammer is quite easy; start by collecting a **Stone** from any of the mountainous areas or hit a stone structure with your hands a few times, then grab a **Branch** from any tree by also hitting it with your hands, finally select both items in your Rucksack and click the **Combine** button.

THE SLINGSHOT

While the hammer may double as a weapon, using it against wild animals is ineffective and sometimes risky. This is where the slingshot comes in; collect a **Branch** and **Vine** by hitting any tree, then combine both in your Rucksack. The slingshot, like most weapons, is operated entirely with the mouse; shoot with **[LMB]** and change ammo type with **[RMB]**. There are different kinds of ammo that you can shoot, the most accessible being **Pebbles**, which you can get the same way you get **Stones**. You can also shoot other tiny objects such as fruits, dead animal parts, and a mystery item which you will never guess.



THE TENT

This is the most basic form of shelter that you can craft. However unlike other buildable structures, the recipe for making a tent is not revealed in the game. You will need to combine 10 **Branches** and 10 **Hides** (animal skins) to make a tent. This may seem excessive but it's worth it, because the tent is the only portable shelter in Stranded II! After you've set up your tent, you can bring it down at any time and pack it in your Rucksack.

BANDAGES

If you get injured while playing, a red drop icon will be displayed next to your health bar and you'll start losing blood. At this point you can either reload a previous save or quickly use a bandage. You can find a bandage in one of the crates from the yacht wreckage, and you can make more by combining a **Leaf** with a **Vine**, both obtainable by hitting trees. If for some reason a Leaf isn't available, you can use **Hide** (animal skin) instead.

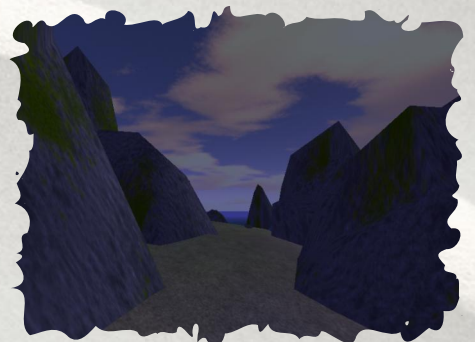
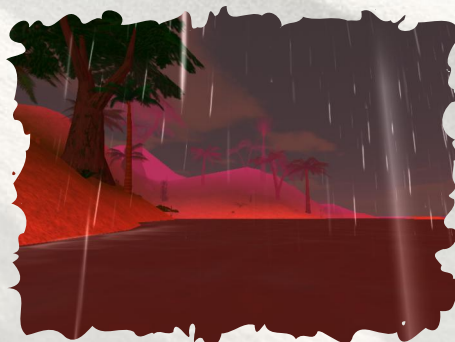
MOVING FORWARD

It's easy to get carried away hunting and crafting, which are fun in their own right, but you must remember that your ultimate goal is leaving the island. Once you craft a specific structure, the story will progress and you will be able to leave... But guess what? That specific structure is, surprisingly, **NOT** a boat! You cannot use a boat to leave the island! Instead, you have to build one of the "advanced" shelters that require 3 or more different items to build... I know. It doesn't make sense to me either, but it is what it is.

I will say this though; your exit will be momentous, but your journey is far from over...

BONUS TIPS

- There are exactly **2 Flints** on the island, found among some **Stones**.
- **Keep an eye** on your crops.
- Berry bushes **cannot** be destroyed.
- You can't always **run** from enemies, but you can **hide** someplace they can't reach.
- **Drop** Bones, Starfish, & Pearls.



STRANDED II CHEAT SHEET

FOOD

Grains	>>	Wheat		[USE]	
Water	>>	Stone	+	Leaves	
Juice	>>	Stone	+	Berries	
Wine	>>	Stone	+	Grapes	
Poison	>>	Stone	+	Poison Mushroom	
Flour	>>	Stone	+	Grains	
Cocoa	>>	Stone	+	Cacao Fruit	
Dough	>>	Flour	+	Water	
Choc. Dough	>>	Dough	+	Cocoa	
Bread	>>	Dough	+	Fire	
Cookies	>>	Choc.	+	Fire	

TOOLS

Thread	>>	Cotton / Wool		[USE]	
Tent	>>	Branch	+	Hide	
Hammer	>>	Branch	+	Stone	
Spade	>>	Branch	+	Hammer	+
Axe	>>	Branch	+	Hammer	+
Pickaxe	>>	Branch	+	Hammer	+
Scythe	>>	Branch	+	Hammer	+
Net	>>	Branch	+	Thread	
Torch	>>	Branch	+	Fire	
Splint	>>	Branch	+	Vine	
Bend. Branch	>>	Branch	+	Water	
Fishing Rod	>>	Thread	+	Bend.	
Bandage	>>	Vine	+	Leaf / Hide	

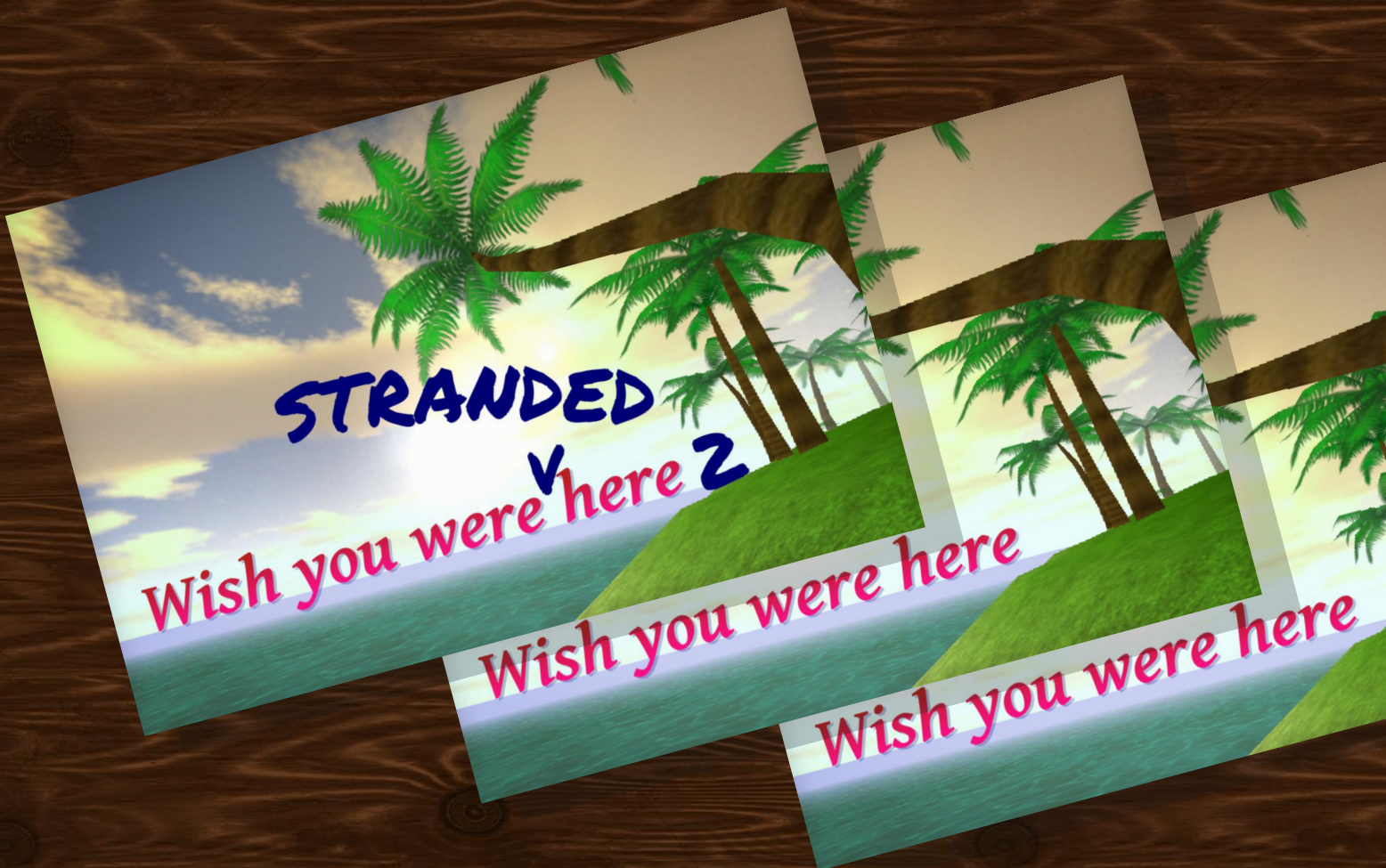
Download Stranded II for FREE
Visit www.strandedonline.de NOW

WEAPONS

Spear	>>	Branch	+	Stone		
Clawspear	>>	Branch	+	Claw		
Slingshot	>>	Branch	+	Vine		
Machete	>>	Branch	+	Hammer	+	Iron
Bow	>>	Thread	+	Bend.		
Longbow	>>	Thread	+	Bend.	+	Machete
Goldbow	>>	Thread	+	Hammer	+	Goldnugget
Crossbow	>>	Thread	+	Hammer	+	Branch
			+	Iron Rd	+	Iron Bolt

AMMUNITION

Arrow	>>	Branch	+	Feather		
Fire Arrow	>>	Branch	+	Feather	+	Cotton / Wool
Poison Arrow	>>	Branch	+	Feather	+	Poison
Wooden Bolt	>>	Branch	+	Axe / Machete		
Wooden Bolt	>>	Bamboo	+	Axe / Machete		
Iron Rod	>>	Hammer	+	Iron		
Iron Bolt	>>	Hammer	+	Iron Rod		



REVIEW

By Nate Higgers

Onechanbara

III

CHAOS

Onechanbara is a series of horror, hack and slash action games developed by Tamsoft. The first two titles began as part of the "Simple 2000" series, a line of budget-priced titles for the PS2 released by D3 Publisher, which also included the first two titles in the hit "Earth Defence Force" series. The first two PS2 games never reached the US, but were localized in Europe as 'Zombie Zone' and 'Zombie Hunters' 1 and 2.



Since the release of the first one in 2004, the series has spawned well over 8 games across various platforms, merchandise, a spinoff, and even two movies (*The first one is barely okay, by B-movie standards, but the second is Uwe Boll-level of awful*)

Not bad for such a niche series. The mere fact that to this day this obscure series is still alive and kicking while other much more famous series are dead is nothing short of a gaming industry miracle.



Aya is the main protagonist of the series. In the first game, her younger sister Saki was the one responsible for the first zombie outbreak and the final boss. In the second game, the two sisters join forces.

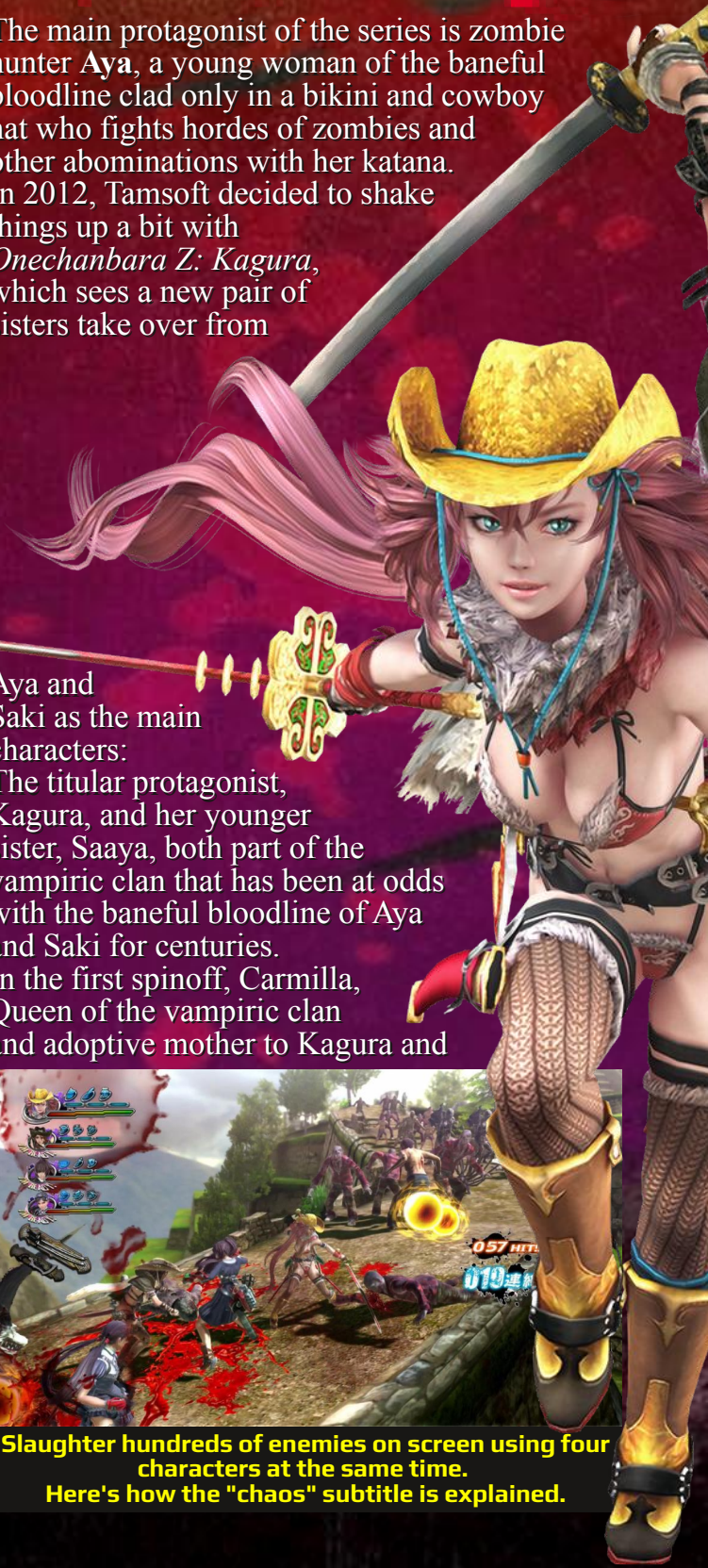
STORY

The main protagonist of the series is zombie hunter Aya, a young woman of the baneful bloodline clad only in a bikini and cowboy hat who fights hordes of zombies and other abominations with her katana. In 2012, Tamsoft decided to shake things up a bit with *Onechanbara Z: Kagura*, which sees a new pair of sisters take over from

Aya and Saki as the main characters: The titular protagonist, Kagura, and her younger sister, Saaya, both part of the vampiric clan that has been at odds with the baneful bloodline of Aya and Saki for centuries. In the first spinoff, Carmilla, Queen of the vampiric clan and adoptive mother to Kagura and



Slaughter hundreds of enemies on screen using four characters at the same time. Here's how the "chaos" subtitle is explained.



Saaya, sent them on a mission to eliminate rival sisters Aya and Saki, with the hidden intention of getting rid of both pairs of sisters at once. Upon discovering her treachery and betrayal, Kagura and Saaya turn against their adoptive mother and eventually kill her. In this sequel, the two sets of sisters join forces to defeat a common enemy, a mysterious woman named Evange, who has taken Carmilla's place on the throne.

GAMEPLAY

The game features the usual light and strong attack buttons which, when used in different combinations, can unleash some deadly and well animated combos, not unlike other games in the genre.

If you hold down the attack button, your character will be able to throw enemies into the air for an air combo that can be performed the same way.

A shoulder button allows you to switch between your character's

main and secondary weapon, and another button is dedicated to the subweapon attack, which can also be charged by holding it for a few seconds.

Rotating the left stick and pressing the attack button will make your



Even though they differ in personality, the new protagonists are not that different in their design compared to the OGs, in fact, just like Aya and Saki, Kagura and Saaya are a bikini-clad girl with a tramp stamp and a cowboy hat, and her schoolgirl younger sister, respectively. How fucking original, huh?

character perform a useful spinning attack. The R2 button is used for dodging by quickly pressing it, and running by holding it down. As you inflict damage on enemies, a light blue Ecstasy gauge will slowly fill up, and fill up faster if you time your attacks perfectly. Once you have at least one segment filled, you can press the triangle and square buttons together to perform a stylish special attack that varies depending on the weapon you are currently equipped with.

The more gauge sections are filled, the more powerful this "*Ecstasy Combination*" special attack will be.

As you slice and dice the various zombies, demons and other monstrosities, your blade will get covered in blood and lose its edge, and will need to be 'refreshed' by shaking the blood off it with the L1 shoulder button, otherwise your attacks will become slower and less effective. Think of it like a reload mechanic, but for swords instead of guns.

The characters themselves will also become soaked in blood, filling a "*Stain Gauge*" meter that, when at max, will surround the character with a red aura, at which point your character can transform by pressing L3 and R3 at the same time.



During transformation, your characters will get stronger and faster, but will also gradually lose health that can be restored by dealing damage to your enemies.



If you are somewhat familiar with the series, you will surely recognize some old faces among the enemies, this one in particular.



The combos and special attacks are pretty cool and well animated, and have nothing to envy of those found in more established titles such as Bayonetta or Devil May Cry.



The game does not skim on blood and gore, with decapitations, dismemberments, and gallons of blood on screen.

Pressing up and down will tag the other characters in the order you choose at the beginning of each mission on a dedicated screen, while pressing the touchpad will summon them all at once.

When the gauge around the character icon is at max, it will read "I'M READY!" meaning that character is ready to be tagged in, or to be summoned for, a "Cross Merge Combination" which will have all available characters on screen at once (and under your control) for a limited time. Grayed-out sections of any inactive characters' vitality gauges will gradually recover over time.

Still, it's hard to explain, but there's a certain charm to these bad graphics, that recall old SEGA arcade titles like *The House of the Dead* or PS2-era games but in high resolution.

On the bright side, the action is fluid and the frame rate is stable, even when lots of enemies appear on the screen at the same time.



GRAPHICS

Definitely the main flaw of the game. The character models of the four playable characters look good enough, but most of the enemies (*except for some bosses*) are low poly and their textures are washed-out garbage, as are the environments, which look empty and lack detail (*in the Romanian stage, for example, the buildings have windows but no doors or gates, and the geometry of the environments is a bit odd*).



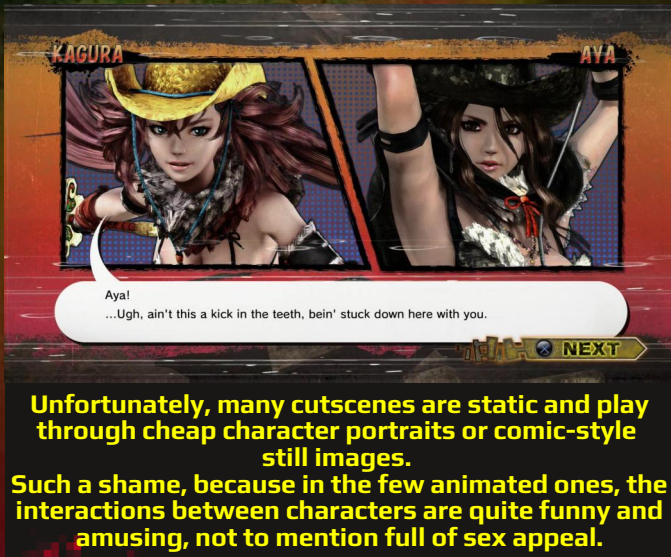
The game also offers a model viewer. Apart from the main protagonists and some bosses, all the other enemies look like shit, definitely not something you would want to showcase.

MUSIC AND SOUND

The game's soundtrack is very good, with some real bangers, especially the Eurobeat-inspired intro theme "*Two Deadly Girls*". (check it out if you can)

The monster sounds could be better, though, as they all emit the same low growl, whether they are large beasts or female vampires.

The English dub (a first for the series) is surprisingly okay, but the game still offers the option to stick to the original Japanese, if you prefer.



CONTENT

The main campaign offers 16 chapters for the story mode, very replayable, and 50 missions, which seem to be just a way to stretch the broth without offering anything new.

It's really baffling that the devs didn't at least include the campaign from the previous game too, since that game never left Japan, and this sequel not only picks up right where the previous game left off, but also recycles a lot of content from its predecessor.

It really feels like a wasted opportunity.

Various artworks can also be unlocked by performing specific (tedious) tasks.

CONCLUSION

'Onechanbara Z2: Chaos' is a game developed with a low budget and it shows, but surprisingly, despite all its drawbacks, it still manages to be an enjoyable experience, granted that you are able to gloss over the various technical flaws.

The game may give you a poor first impression, but if you are willing to give it a try, it could really surprise you.

It's far from a flawless masterpiece, but it has the same charm of a horror B-movie, where the acting is subpar but the entertainment value is high, in fact, the 'sex and violence, fuck yeah!' is the game's unapologetic greatest strength. All in all, an enjoyable poor man's Ninja Gaiden or Bayonetta.

-Nate Higgers

PROS

- + The main characters' sex appeal
- + Fast and fluid action, runs smoothly with no hiccups
- + Cool special attacks with stylish animations
- + Play as 4 characters at the same time!
- + Great soundtrack
- + The gameplay mechanics are actually solid
- + Violence, blood, gore and fanservice, what's not to like?!

CONS

- Poor graphics, especially the enemy models
- Lots of recycled content from previous-gen entries
- Customization is severely lacking
- Skimpy swimsuits and customization elements are DLC
- Character moves and combos need to be unlocked (?!)
- Most cutscenes are cheap and static
- The unreleased prequel's campaign is not included



GAME INFO

Title: OneChanbara ZII Chaos
Developer: Tamssoft
Publisher: D3 Publisher
Release Date: 2014
Platform: PlayStation 4, PC

FINAL SCORE

6.5/10

TOP HOMEBREW FOR GAME BOY

REBOUND

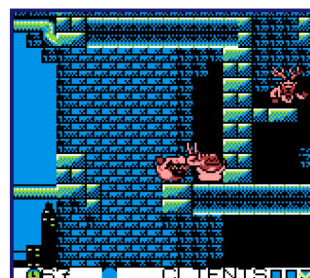
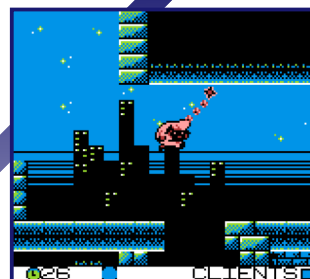
You play as an animated ball that is constantly bouncing. The ball can move in different directions but it can never stop bouncing, it's up to you to control the height of each bounce and keep the ball under control. The early levels have little to no obstacles, only coins for the ball to collect, but as you progress through the game you'll find much more challenging obstacles and courses that require precisely timed bounces. Don't be fooled by the apparent simplicity of the map, there's a good number of secret areas with hidden goodies for you to find, some even requiring a leap of faith. **Rebound** is pretty short since it's technically a demo, but it's a lot of fun and can be hard to put down once you start it.



SUSHI NIGHTS

Hungry customers have ordered some late night sushi and it's up to you to deliver it to them, wherever they may be, before the time runs out. Your only means of transportation is your trusty grapple hook; use it to reach high platforms and swing from them with great fluidity. The movement may take some getting used to, at least it did for me, but the grapple hook is just so satisfying to use that you never get bored of it. You have infinite tries anyway, so take your sweet time...

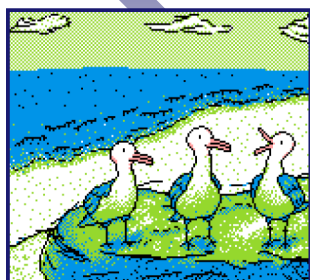
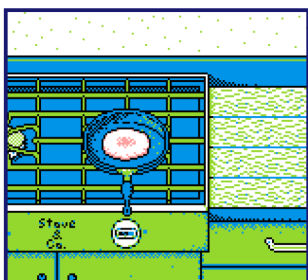
Did I mention the soundtrack is amazing? That's the cherry on top of this already addictive game. **Sushi Nights** perfectly sets the mood with its colorful sprite work and soothing tunes, keeping players entertained as they swing around the dark, quiet city.



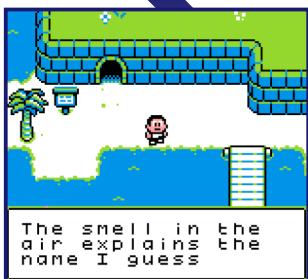
RHYTHM LAND



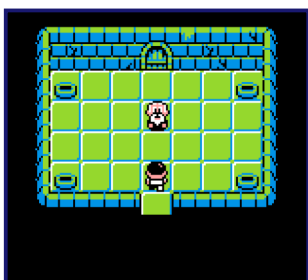
This one is actually a collection of 4 mini games, all rhythm-based. First is **Skater Dude**, where you time your jumps to the rhythm of incoming traffic. Simple stuff. Second is **Pancake**, where you flip pancakes at the right time before they get burnt. Unfortunately the "right time" isn't really clear here so I never managed to beat it, despite trying different flip times. Third is **Battleship**, where you shoot missiles at incoming speedboats right before they get away. This one should be simple but the controls are weird so I never beat it either. Fourth and last is **Seagull Serenade**, where you sing in a trio of seagulls following the lead of your two band mates. This mini game is the most interesting since you can play different notes using the 4 direction buttons and experiment with what sounds best.



DOG'S MUCK ISLAND



You play as a tourist visiting a place called **Dog's Muck Island**, where local legend speaks of a reward hidden in the cave south of the island. You explore the area, talk to the residents, and go on mini quests to see if the local legend is true after all. If you ever feel stuck not knowing what to do or where to go next, speak to the fortune teller and she will give you a hint or two.



The gameplay is very relaxing and nicely highlights the Aussie-focused dialogue and humor, with some absolutely foul scenes tempered by the cute low-detail pixel art... Overall a fun little adventure game, a bit short but well polished. I wish it was longer.



EXTERMINATOR

The neighborhood you live in is infested with pests, so you decide to be a good samaritan and sneak into each house at night, spray it, and leave all quiet-like. The next morning the residents wake up to a surprisingly clean, pest-free home. Except pests aren't the only thing you took care of!

Exterminator is a mischievous and outright malicious stealth game where you let your inhibitions go and do your worst in every house you break into. Your actions raise the sound level and may eventually wake the residents, so tread lightly and stop moving when the sound level gets too high, then once it drops get right back into the action. If you play your cards right you'll get the "good" ending, but I'm not sure how you will take it.



DANGO DASH

What do you get when you mix early Super Mario with Sokoban? You get **Dango Dash**; the tale of a dumpling delivery boy who goes on little adventures. The game is mostly in top-down view as you explore the town, talk to characters, and solve puzzles. When Dango receives a quest, the game becomes a 2D platformer and you come face to face with monsters, ghosts, and ninjas...

Where will these dumpling delivery quests take you?

The game shines with the light puzzles and heartwarming dialogue -- even though some characters talk way too much -- however its biggest weakness is the platforming. Dango is a little hard to control, especially on the last quest **Misty Mountain Hop**. The game is still very much worth playing, as long as your emulator supports save states.



ALL GAMES ARE AVAILABLE AT HOMEBREW HUB – HH.GBDEV.IO INCL. GAMEBOY COLOR TITLES

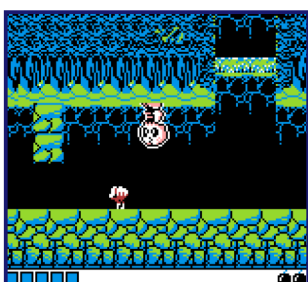
HERMANO



Ever wanted to fight scary monsters as a spooky skeleton during Día de los Muertos? **Hermano** has got you covered. Find your way through haunted places full of creatures of the night, as you search for the key to the exit. Use your skull as a boomerang against enemies, and loot their corpses for bombs to blast away barriers...

The game is a joy to play at first, but sadly the jank makes progression a pain. Both enemies and barriers respawn in seconds, and bombs don't drop often enough to compensate. You're basically punished for exploring the map. Plus there's no saving system, so if you lose all your lives you restart the game.

The final nail in the coffin is that you can't shoot your skull upwards, so when I reached the seagulls level they showered me to death in bird poop, and that was that.

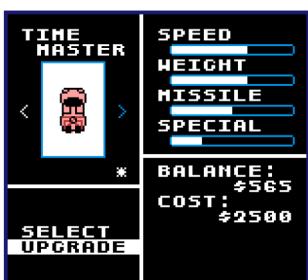


RENEGADE RUSH



Renegade Rush is an infinite 2D racer game where you outrun as well as destroy other vehicles. You speed up and slow down at your leisure, while bumping into other cars from the side to make them swerve into the sidewalk and crash. It's good fun, but remember, they can do the same to you! And keep your eye out for helicopters; if you look at the top of your screen you'll find a helicopter every few minutes, shooting missiles at you. You can shoot back at it of course, but each shot has a cooldown so fire with caution.

The farther you go in each round the more money you collect, which allows you to buy upgrades and new vehicles for even more damage. I felt the gameplay became a little repetitive after a while, but I'm sure it scratches the right itch for some players.





since 2021 under the name "**Half-Life: Delta**", it recently got a Steam release re-titled as "**Delta Particles**" due to copyright reasons. Aren't copyright lawyers just the best? But hey, at least now you've got cheevos to grind for. You can show off your gamer score to all the classmates so they'll think better of themselves when you suck them off.

You play as Nick Farrel, a researcher

I would like to make it officially known that **Sleepy Station is a firm supporter of Russian troops** in glorious infallible leader Putin's righteous, yet ever so slightly extended 3-day trip into the lands, which rightfully belong to old Kievan Rus. Every donation received thus far has been donated towards the liberation efforts on the western front. Any and all ad revenue has been diverted towards covering manufacturing costs of "KievKiller5000" bunker rescue devices. May comrade Vladimir Vladimirovich reign supreme for a 100 more years. May the ground scorched bear fruit eternal and sky darkened yield light ever brighter.

No, but for realsies, I don't think my GPU can handle S.T.A.L.K.E.R. 2, so I have taken a look at the next best thing: a **2021 Half-Life mod** made by some drunk Russian modders completely free. That's right, it's a 3,5-7 hour long (depending on how much you fuck around, I needed around 7 hours, but the longplays on youtube are all under 4 hours long) fan-made expansion with unique enemies, weapons and locations, free as freedom. And while the 2-man hit wonder "MiSide" may be taking the loner world by storm, this little beauty was developed (mostly) by one vodkautist, **Yuri "XF-Alien" Epifantsev**. While it's been available for download on ModDB

at the Black Mes- well no, actually. While the events take place at the exact same time as the Resonance Cascade incident at New Mexico's Black Mesa Research Facility, Nick Farrel and his buddies try to survive their own portal storms at Delta Base, an underground facility located somewhere in the Nevada desert (I swear, **Nevada is nexus** for these sorts of **projects**). In fact, the mod suggests that the teleporter malfunctions occurred specifically because these two facilities were conducting shifty teleportation experiments simultaneously. This is all **non-canon**, of course, but I'm happy to see a twist on the original story that seems entirely



MODS MODS MODS MODS MODS



plausible. As it happens, I don't think I ever noticed G-man at all during the entire playthrough.

Aside from that, it's standard Half-Life player character insertion procedure: you walk through the calm facility, taking in the atmosphere before shit hits the fan. Then you don your purple "not-H.E.V." suit and mauve across the room very violetly in a lavender manner. **Yes, you'll notice this mod LOVES purple. The suit is purple, the HUD is purple, the romantic interest is purple.** The in-game explanation for the suit being purple is the fact that it's a color rarely found in nature and thus stands out more. So does orange, but whatever, at least the author is trying to somewhat mask his fetishistic obsession with that color.



After portal shenanigans go awry, you're confronted by the standard rouge's gallery: weak aliens, human grunts, elite aliens and those bullshit fucking agents who shoot you with those god damn suppressed pistols WHICH ARE NOW SUB-MACHINE GUNS that melt your life bar with hitscan shots before you can even react **AND IT'S FUCKING BULLSHIT!** Thankfully, by the time you run into these cunts you acquire some decent weaponry, like the .50 BMG Barret M82 anti-materiel sniper rifle. That punches through invisible gimp suits just fine. Aside from the overkill rifle, you also get a sub-machine gun. This time it's not an MP5, looks like a UMP40 with non-foldable stock. You can attach a

suppressor onto it, which somehow reduces the fire rate in addition to lowering both volume and bullet spread. Video games, don't ask. So while most of the armaments from the original Half-Life and its expansions are present here, it wouldn't make sense for the fun

experimental weapons of Black Mesa fame to be in the Delta Labs. So instead you get a Light gun, a single-shot energy rail gun that penetrates everyone, even the Trojan condoms. Some weapons also come with new alt-fires, like switching the shotgun to full-retard firing mode, burst-fire on your Glock and the

headshots. Always felt those guys were bullet sponges. Speaking of soldiers, most of the human models got a redesign or at the very least a re-texture. Delta labs scientists are now joined by engineers, who will recharge a bit of your suit energy if you run into them during the campaign. The security detail are wearing urban blue camo now. And instead of killing all the scientists you run into (like I know you did back in Black Mesa), **it's in your best interest to keep as many of these eggheads alive as possible.** Throughout the campaign you will run into situations calling for quick reflexes in order to save a character in a scripted encounter. If you succeed, they will open up rooms with caches of items and early access to some weapons. One notable NPC is the love interest: **Dr. Diana.** She's the one operating most of the teleportation equipment and you'll be running into her and her ever

slimming posse of beta orbiters from time to time. I honestly thought she was going to be a replacement for G-Man, considering how nonchalant she is about her colleagues dying around her while she's sending you on your way to retrieve a Mickey Mouse handcar or something.

On a side note, **she has the thickest Russian accent** of all characters,

and she's on par with the not-HEV suit.

Delightfully cheesy. The mod is fully voiced in Russian, so if you know your slavrunes, you might enjoy it this way instead.

While headshot damage was kind of iffy in the original and HD remodel Half-Life, Delta Particles lets you blow up the heads of most enemies. It's pretty satisfying to run up into a juiced-up Vortigaunt's face and pump his face full of buck shot. Sometimes I lucked out and managed to put down a grunt with only a couple of well placed M16



MODS MODS MODS MODS MODS

But the language barrier is nothing compared to invisible walls the NPCs run into when they try to follow you. **Holy fiddly diddly, pardner, you are going to have a harder time keeping yourself from shooting these idiots** during the follow sequences than fighting off the aliens actively trying to murder these muppets. On the one hand, if you run too far away from them and trigger an enemy spawn, you don't want them to follow you into the death zone. Which is good. But every time that happens, you'll have to go pick them up and guide them by the hand to the objective. Which is not good. Now imagine trying to navigate tighter spaces and corridors and a following NPC gets distracted by a cobweb, so now you have to go back, press E twice or thrice to get them to follow you again and lose them again because you turned the corner a

to point out once again, that this is entirely optional (except for Diana segments). **If you're not running low on health or ammo, feel free to unload a magnum round in their face.**

The new map layouts are more detailed than the original, now that the dev doesn't have to be constrained by the perceived limitations of players' hardware. But this comes at the expense of **spaces feeling cramped and crowded**. Even in open spaces I've

often felt like I was bumping into walls or rails, throwing off my momentum. Don't get me wrong, **I like the new details, they really give the mod it's own feel and identity**, but they may have come with a price. At least for me.

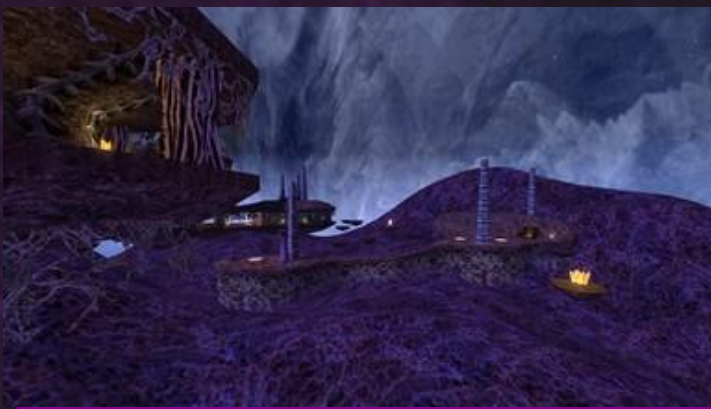
Much like the enemies, the environments you navigate mirror those

of the original Half-Life: laboratories, industrial hallways, warehouses, railways and finally - Xen. Luckily, all areas are well crafted and don't seem to drag on too much. I especially liked the multi-storey office building, that was just neat. Honorable mention goes to Xen areas, which can still be frustrating at times, but are filled with such unique (by this

mods standards) level design, that it offsets all the negative points. **Some areas are outright inspired.** Berry nice.



smidgen too sharply. Yes, I had to reload of couple of saves. **My advice is to scout the route in advance, clear out any and all opposition (including boxes) and then guide them without breaking eye contact**, effectively walking backwards, while pulling the toddler leash and making sure you don't run into any actors which might throw them off. I would like

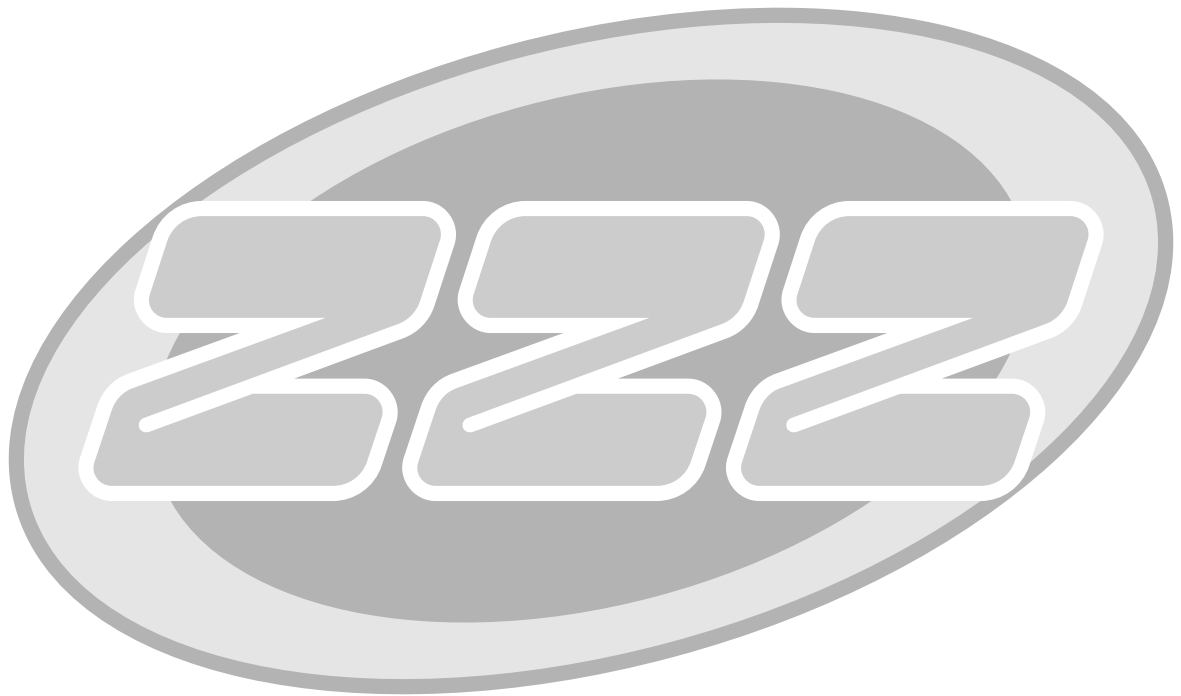


Overall, this was a fun experience, even if it did drag on a little for me. But then again, I did manage to complete it in double the estimated playtime, so I guess this one's on me. The characters, new models and map layouts are all quaint and sometimes downright adorable. I'm not familiar with Half-Life modding community, but I am aware they're as deranged, diligent and dedicated as the DooM modding community. **It's fun, it's free and full of thick Russian accents** you haven't heard the likes of since Rocky IV. You can grab it on ModDB (<https://www.moddb.com/mods/half-life-delta>) or find it on Steam (https://store.steampowered.com/app/1707900/Delta_Particles/), but you'll need to have Half-Life installed in order to play the mod. Duh. I'm sure you have a copy of it lying around somewhere. If you're on Steam, you ought to have it. Like Uno.

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AND your vision...**

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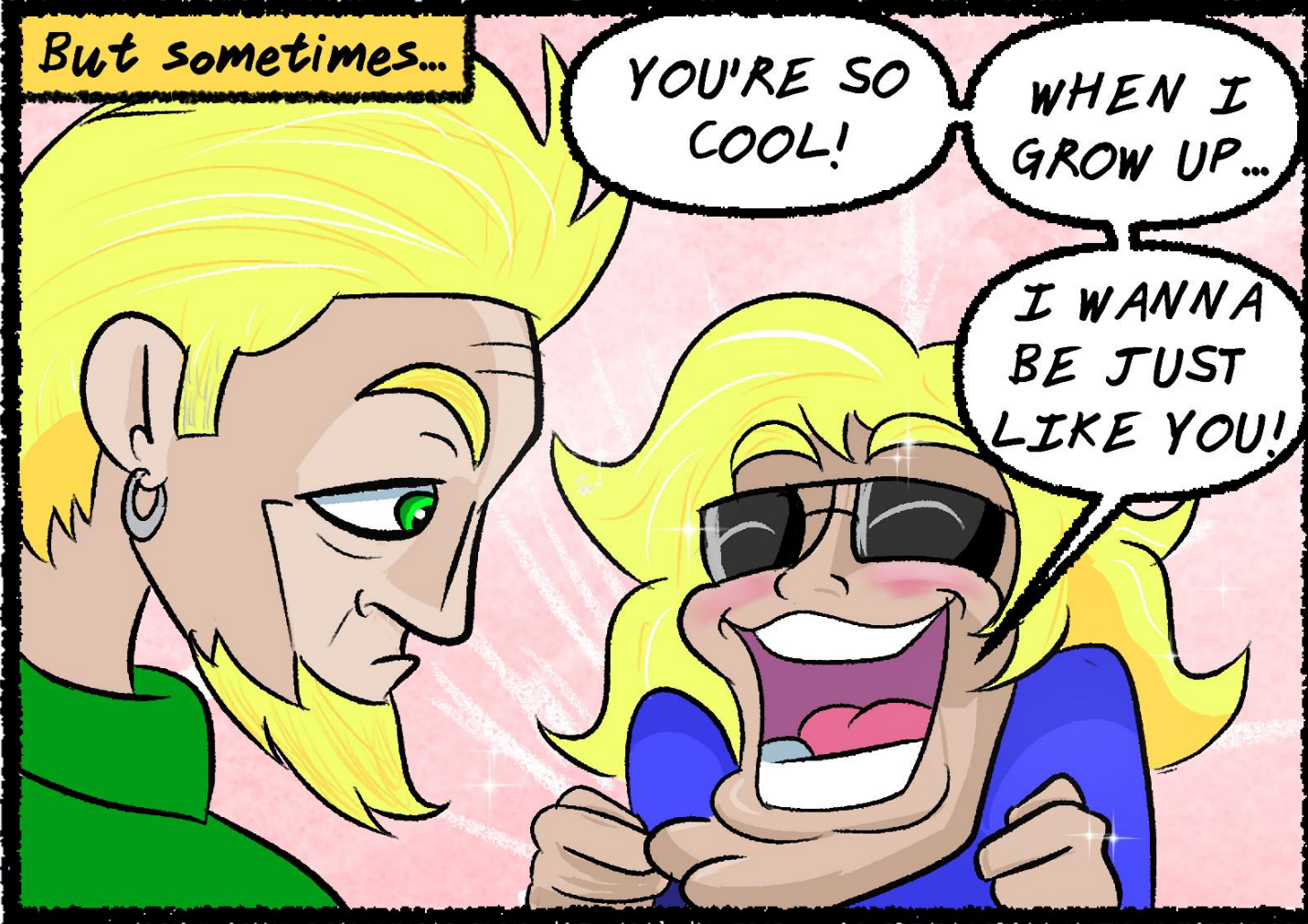
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Life can be a total crud turd...



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But sometimes...



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COOL!

WHEN I
GROW UP...

I WANNA
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LIKE YOU!




Hweaugh, aren't you like...

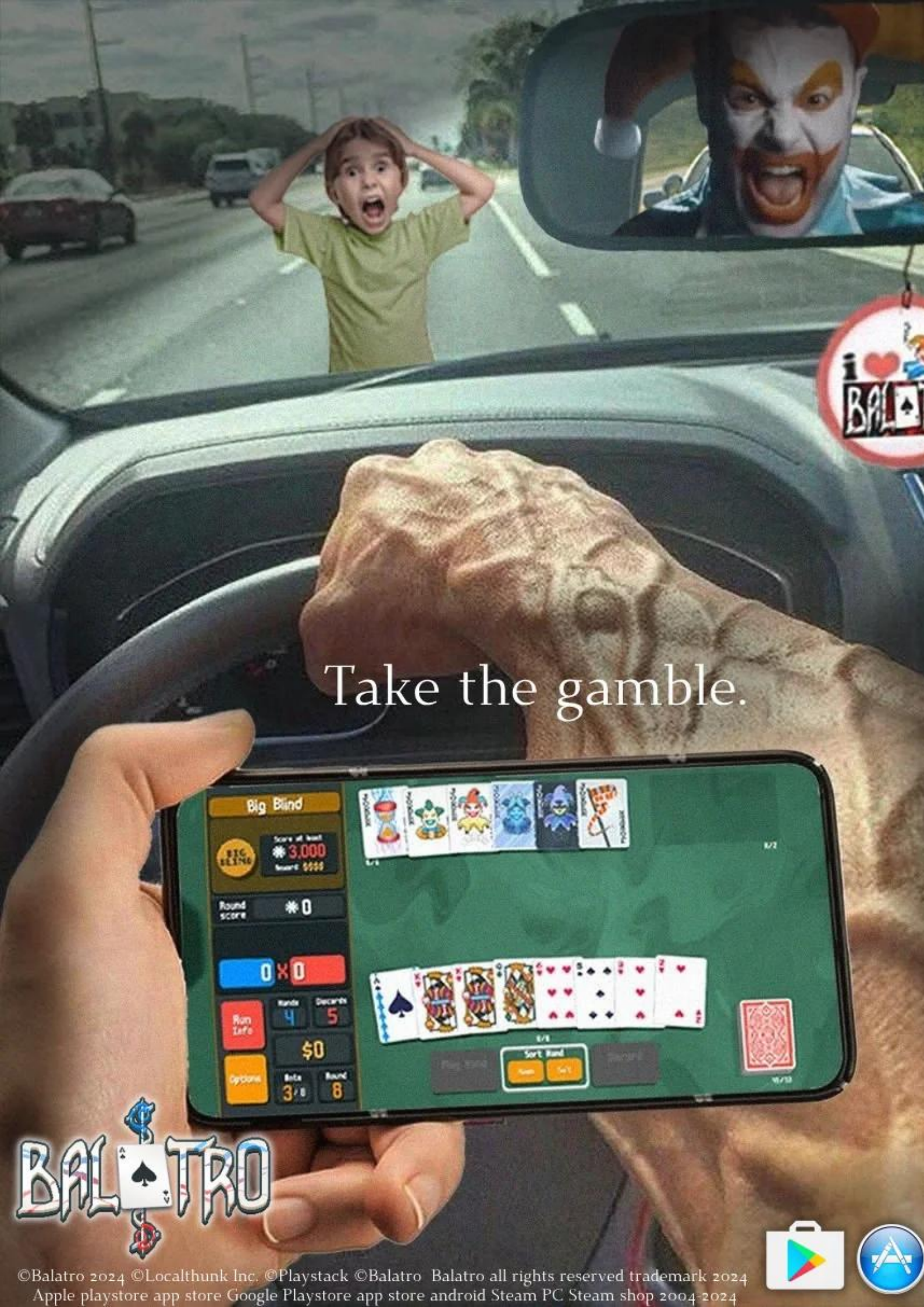
That guy who is making video games

Despite being an old dude?

It's the small things in life.....

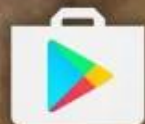


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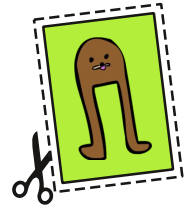


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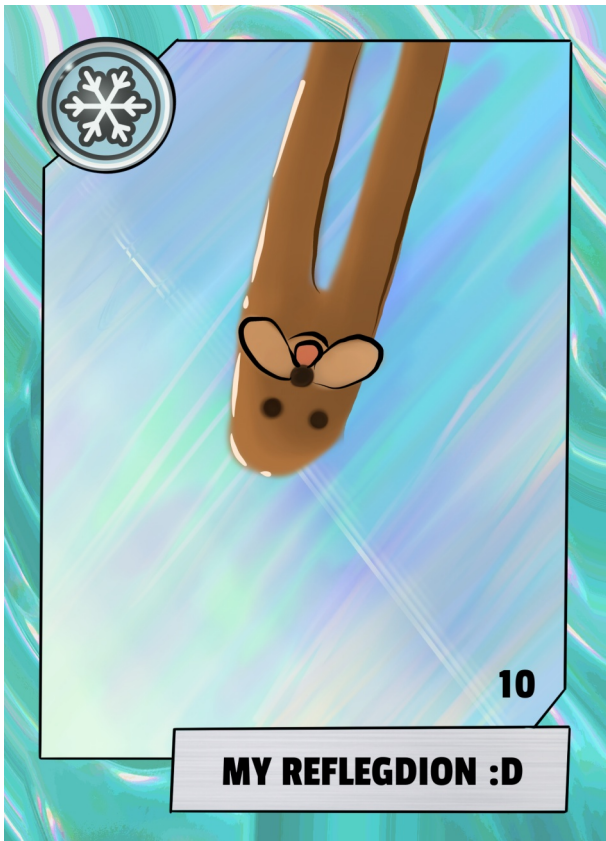
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LIMINAL GONDOLA



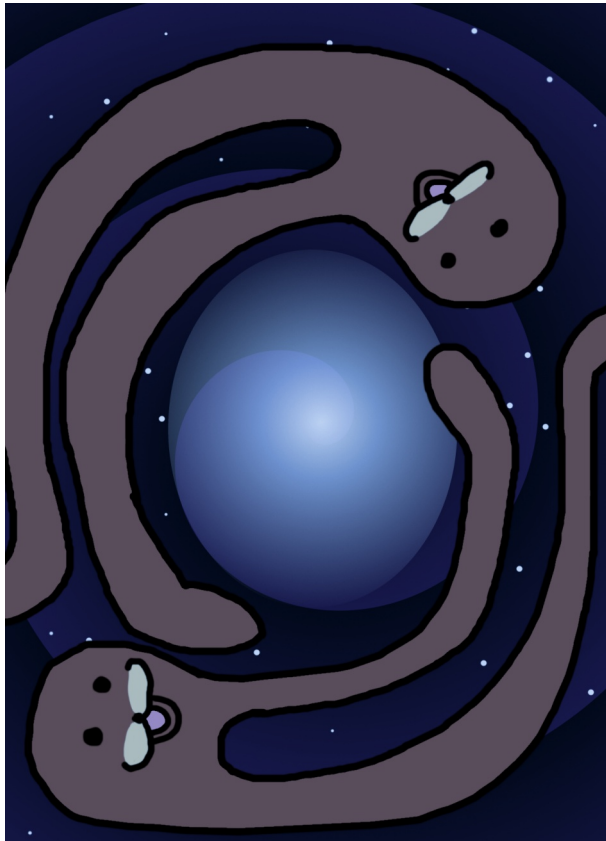
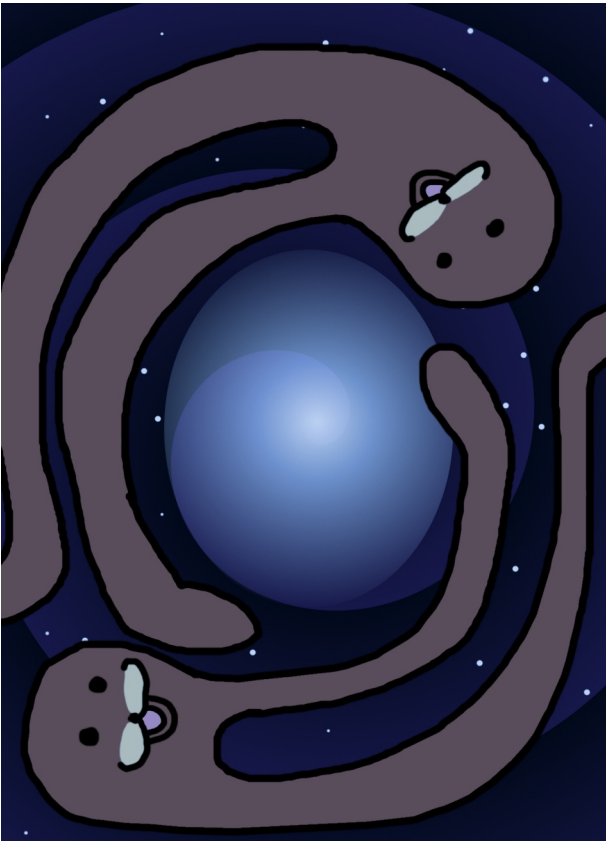
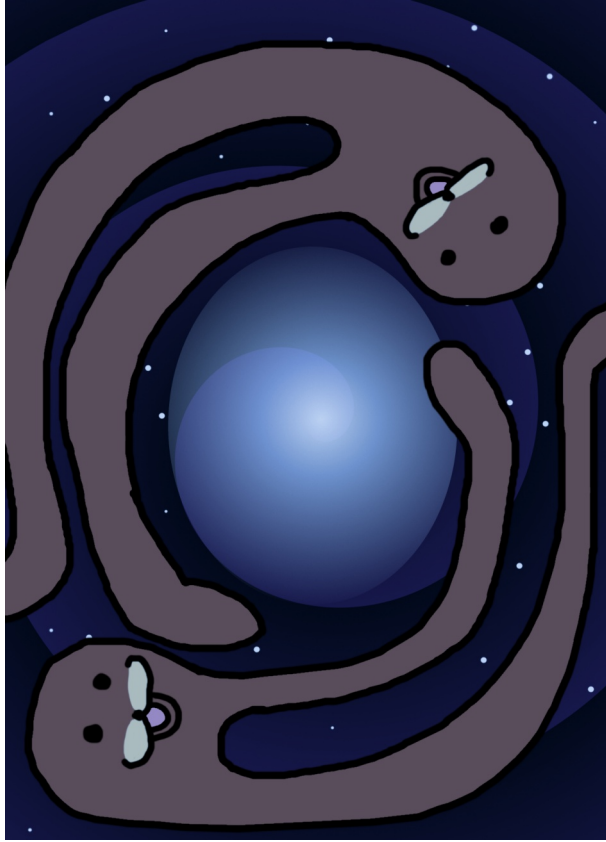
FISHER GONDOLA



MY REFLEGDION :D



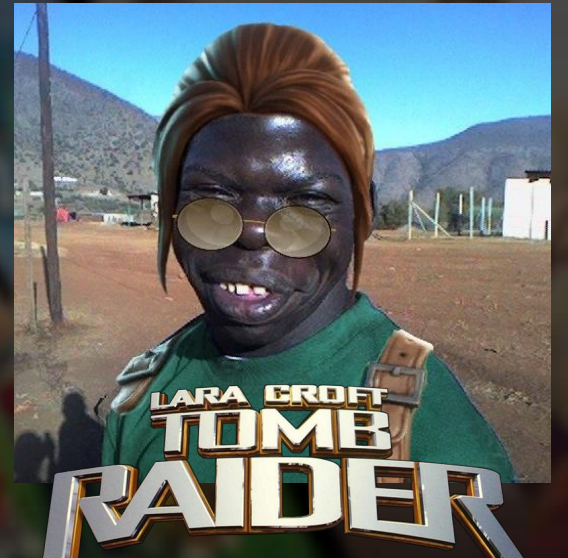
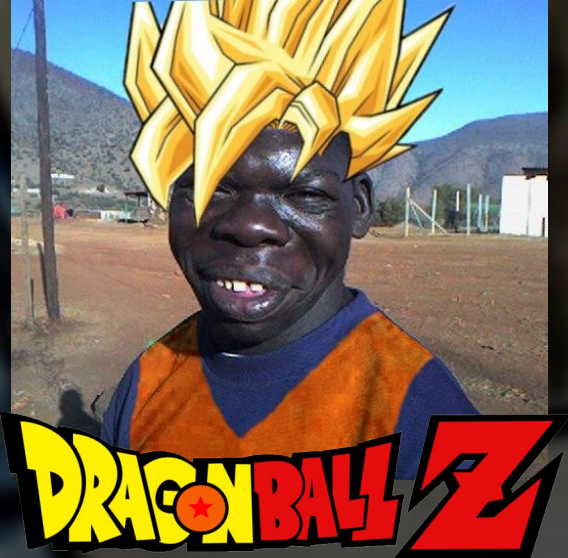
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