

# SLEEPY STATION

Issue #5



**NO GAMES  
PART 3**

SO YOU WANNA HOST A  
**GAMENIGHT**

**BLOOD OMEN  
LEGACY  
OF  
KAIN  
REVIEW**

**FREE  
GONDOLA  
CARDS**



**MODS!  
MODS!  
MODS!**

**PROJECT  
ZERO**

MAIDEN OF BLACK WATER

# Happy Holidays, Homos!

Hoooooooooooo-eeeeey!

This one sure was a doosey to get off the ground.

Delays, reworks, delays, work, normalfaggotry, illness, degeneracy, delays... I've beaten almost 3 games in the time it took us to release "SS#5" (a new journalist record!). The fact that I tried to cleanse my computer of all things degenerate in the meantime, deleted every straight shota folder including any folder with an "SS" in its title as well didn't help either. Good thing I barely wrote jack shit at the time.

So is there a point to all this bitching? Not really. I guess I wanted to pour shit out on a page nobody reads anyway. While I'm at it, I may as well mistreat our hard working authors and contributors: GET OFF YOUR ASS AND FINISH YOUR PROJECTS! I don't care if it's not fun anymore, I want those .sla files on my desk before this conversation is finished!

Oh, oh, what's that? Hypocrite? Moi? I am the one paying the big bucks in this non-profit no-income volunteer project, so you best get your ass up and sit down. Now stand there and listen, you sit down and stand down, you little shit. Get up off of that thing and sit up, motherfucker. I said sit down and get up to sit and stand.

My complete creative bankruptcy aside, I would genuinely like to wish everybody a merry <\$holiday> and a happy new year. Unless you're a chink who can't even count right. Making this magazine can be a bit of a hassle sometimes, but it is a really fun creative outlet and I've noticed my writing has improved with time. Not just for this mag, but in real life situations too, especially when something needs to be explained to the most cro-magnon, neanderthal backwards retards I have to deal with on a daily basis ("...a common sign of level 3 autism is a false sense of cognitive superiority to those around the patient."<sup>1</sup>).

A big thank you to all contributors, every little page counts and we hope to get you hooked on this new digital drug as we are right now.



*This is my perfect geometry.*



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<sup>1</sup> "Autism research and military applications" by C.W. Chandler (1998)

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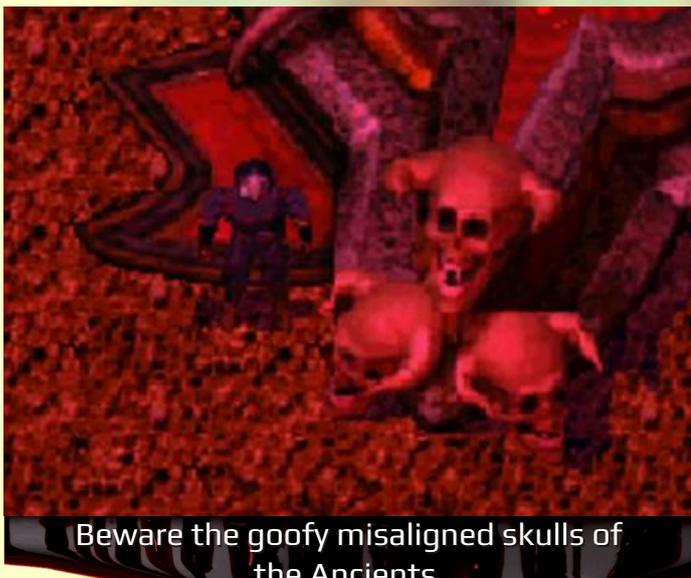


# BLOOD OMEN LEGACY OF KAIN



The Blood Omen series spans across multiple games on multiple systems and thousands of in-game years and somehow they're still stuck in the middle ages. Peasants with crossbows and all. I almost wish to see the series get a 2099 treatment with cyber-vampires and hacker-wizards. Oh wait, that's just Shadowrun.

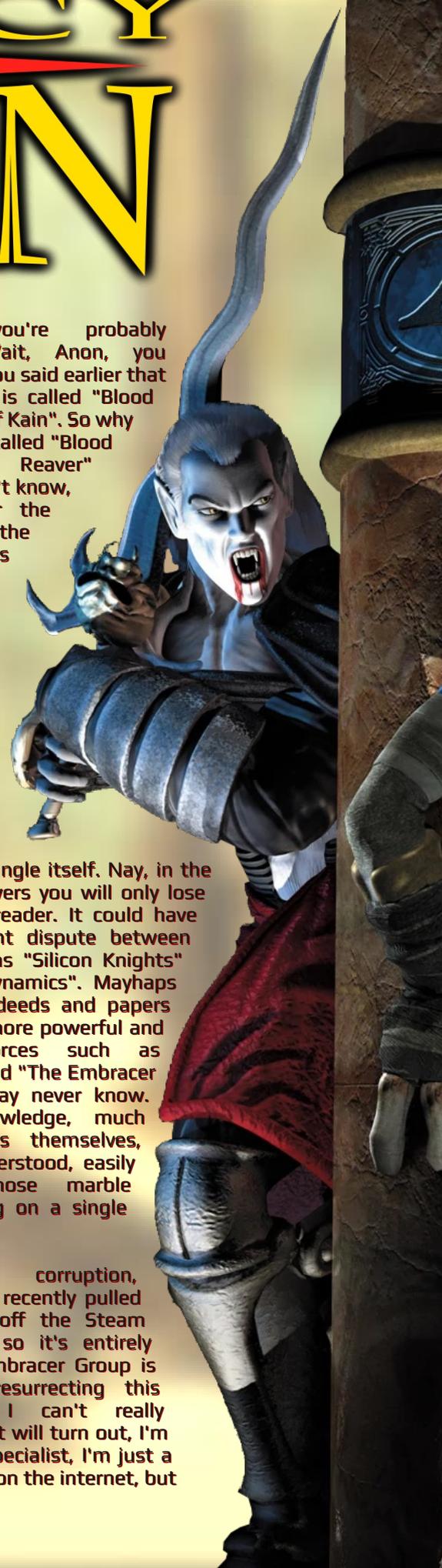
Anyway, the series has a sizable following and is generally regarded as pretty damn good vidya with really nice writing, courtesy of Amy Henning, which she considers her greatest achievement. Thankfully.



Beware the goofy misaligned skulls of the Ancients.

too, but you're probably wondering "Wait, Anon, you illiterate fuck, you said earlier that the first game is called "Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain". So why is this one not called "Blood Omen: Soul Reaver" instead?". I don't know, maybe it's for the same reason the next game is called just "Soul Reaver 2". And the one after that is called "Blood Omen 2". And then they capped it off with "Legacy of Kain: Defiance". It is not in the nature of this mystery to untangle itself. Nay, in the search for answers you will only lose yourself, little reader. It could have been an ancient dispute between the Shaper clans "Silicon Knights" and "Crystal Dynamics". Mayhaps 'tis a flow of deeds and papers betwixt much more powerful and malevolent forces such as "SquareEnix" and "The Embracer Group", one may never know. Forbidden knowledge, much like the pillars themselves, never truly understood, easily corruptible, those marble stones standing on a single "BlackRock"...

Speaking of corruption, SquareEnix has recently pulled "Soul Reaver" off the Steam Store shelves, so it's entirely possible the Embracer Group is planning on resurrecting this series. Now I can't really speculate how it will turn out, I'm not a market specialist, I'm just a random jackoff on the internet, but



## Aggregate review scores

Game	Metacritic
<i>Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain</i>	(PC) 82% <sup>[107][a]</sup> (PS) 83% <sup>[108][a]</sup>
<i>Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver</i>	(DC) 88% <sup>[109][a]</sup> (PC) 78% <sup>[110][a]</sup> (PS) 91/100 <sup>[111]</sup>
<i>Soul Reaver 2</i>	(PC) 77/100 <sup>[112]</sup> (PS2) 80/100 <sup>[113]</sup>
<i>Blood Omen 2</i>	(GC) 71/100 <sup>[114]</sup> (PC) 66/100 <sup>[115]</sup> (PS2) 67/100 <sup>[116]</sup> (Xbox) 76/100 <sup>[117]</sup>
<i>Legacy of Kain: Defiance</i>	(PC) 70/100 <sup>[118]</sup> (PS2) 75/100 <sup>[119]</sup> (Xbox) 74/100 <sup>[120]</sup>

I say thankfully because she's also responsible for the Uncharted series scripts 1 through 3. Uncharted 4 is to be blamed entirely on Josh Scherr and Niel Cuckman.

Most people are only familiar with the sequel "Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver" and that's a pretty fun game

considering THQ Nordic is synonymous with the Embracer Group, I'd say we're leaning more towards an "Odin Sphere Leifdrasir" outcome than a "Bioshock: Remastered".

Gee wiz, that was a whole lot of words hardly in relation to the game in question.

"Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain" is a (mostly) linear top-down Legend of Zelda rip-off with dungeons, health upgrades, spells and item management. You play as Kain, a freshly resurrected vampire, slain by one of the original evils of this world: gypsies. Ask any brit and they will confirm that nothing good has ever come out of those foken

pikeys. It is said that a gypsy will sooner sell his own mother than stop stealing caravans and anything else that isn't legally considered real estate. A gypsy does not procreate through regular means, it instead germinates within a cyst on a female's stomach and is then "birthed", so to say, onto a traditional carpet of welfare checks and similar social benefit papers. In spite of having absolutely no need for genitalia to procreate, a male gypsy will graft a local donkey's phallus onto his crotch in order to rape as many females outside of his tribe as possible.

So naturally, after being killed by a pack of gypsy vermin masquerading as humans, Kain enters a pact with a necromancer to be resurrected as a vampire just to slay his killers. But the necromancer has much bigger plans for our little vampire...

You walk around in 8 directions,



although it was likely planned to only be 4 considering how janky anything involving diagonals is. You got your sword and a Latin battlecry that somehow doesn't get annoying (Vae Victis, sucka!) and the entirety of the land of Nosgoth to pillage and destroy (read: purify). Your main objective is to purify the mythical Pillars of Nosgoth by killing their respective Guardians. Simple, right? Well things only get more complicated the more you play both from the story and gameplay perspective. You may have started with a single sword forged in the fires of Hell, but you also pick up different blades, brutal armors and spells.



Ohhhh the spells you employ are sure to satisfy even the most despicable of sorcerers. We're not talking about just your basic bitch fireballs and thunderbolts. We're talking boiling blood fast enough to instantly blow organs off your victims' skeleton, casting miniature black holes to turn people into self-servicing trash compactors, an acid bolt that not only melts a fucker, it melts anybody who dares to tread on the same ground as the original victim. There's time manipulation, there's mind control, there's remote blood sucking and express blood-sucking via Amazon Prime same-day delivery. There are also transformations, which allow you to animorph into your favorite fursona. Be it the classic bat, wolf and mist or the unconventional, the ungodly, the ... eugh ... the

gypsy [spit!]. The bat allows fast travel, the wolf allows faster travel and jumping, the mist allows you to follow in the steps of Jesus H. Christ (Praise His name) by walking on water. And it is far from the first Biblical reference in the game, the titular Kain was the first murderer in the Book of Genesis as well as Vampire: The Masquerade (colloquially known within Vatican as Bible II). In this essay, I will explore the intrinsic intersectionality between vampire-centered electronic entertainment and the Catholic faith as well as their impact on the queer and HIV-positive trans-entities. Turning into a gypsy makes mortals spit in your face instead of the regular holy water and wooden stakes. If you meet people who will deem you worthy of talking to, about a third of them will immediately begin talking about the gypsy question.



The gypsy solution.



Canonical ending, by the way.

Now there's only 3 ways to regain your health: sucking blood, picking up a blood bottle or using The Heart of Darkness card. Unless you use a mid-to-late game spell, you can only suck blood from a chained up prisoner or a stunned enemy. You stun enemies by beating them to within an inch of their lives or using the mace, but both methods are finicky. You see, it's easy to get lost in a sword combo and hit the attack button one too many times and kill an enemy instead of leaving him to your



The Heart of Darkness.

mercy. And the mace isn't much better either because you cannot kill anyone with it, only stun them. And if you hit them again while they're stunned, the enemy is back on their feet and kicking your ass with said feet. Blood bottles are rare and there is a finite amount of them scattered around the map. "The Heart of Darkness" card is going to be your most reliable way to refill health. It is used automatically upon getting killed to refill a bit of health, but if you use it manually, it refills about 40% more. Regardless of how careful you are, you will eat shit and you will listen to "The Heart of Darkness" a lot in the game.

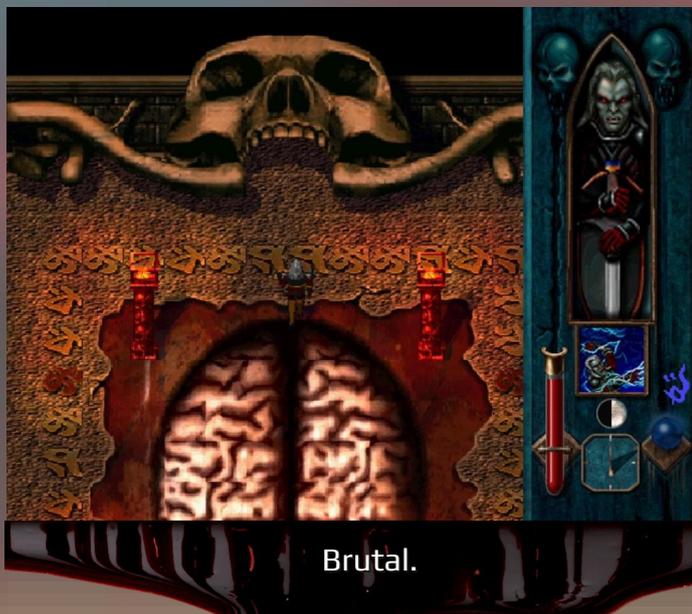
The game really isn't that difficult at all, but you run into these speed bumps every so often, especially when entering new areas with new monsters you haven't figured out yet. Some hit you like a truck, others deal barely any damage and only serve to annoy you. Any time you get hit, you're sent flying back like in Castlevania, only in this game you get no invincibility frames between hits, so if you're dealing with a lot of enemies at once, be ready to be treated like a back-alley pinball.



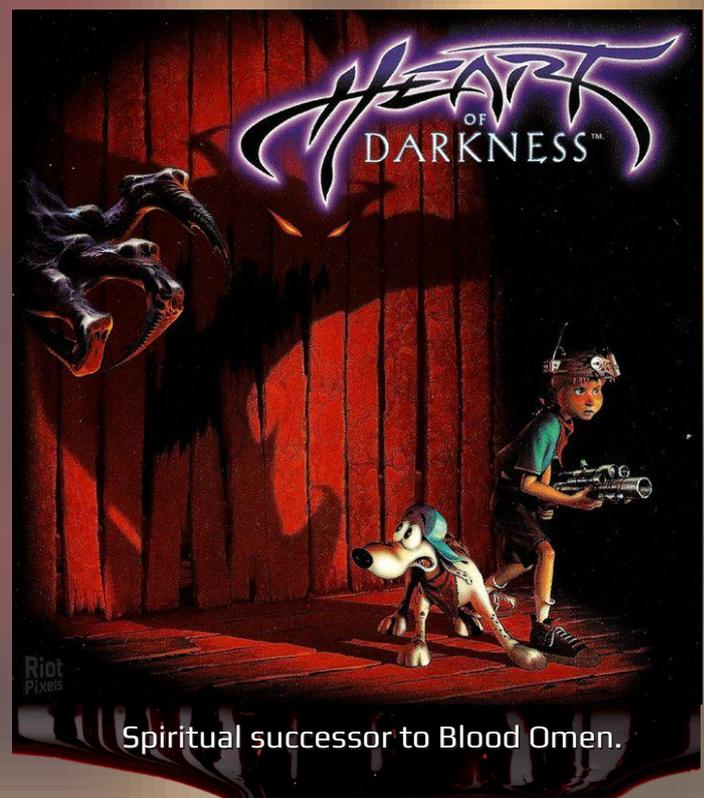
Interestingly, I thought that the theme of finite resources would play a bigger part in the story about a vampire, but it is only noticeable during gameplay. Any person that you kill stays dead. If you pillage a village, people won't respawn out of thin air, they're fucking dead. The best you can hope for is their ghosts, which move slower and hit less, but only bleed mana. The amount of blood bottles in the game world is finite, "The Heart of Darkness" cards are finite. You can, however, run into a shop that sells spell cards for your blood, so you can play the system into getting 99 Hearts and never look back.



The game's palette is nice and moody, but there's still plenty of colors to go around. It's not a pride parade, but not an endless cemetery either. Music's good too, I'm not musically inclined enough to be able to give you a more coherent or in-depth analysis of the CD quality beeps and boops, except that it fits. But what lifts it all as a classic is the aforementioned writing and great, great voicework. We have our main man Tony Jay reprising the role of everyone's favorite necromancer Mortanius and I don't know anyone else, but they're damn good as well. Kain's voiceactor (Simon Templeman) also voices random villagers, but as Kain he fucking nailed the smugness and ivory tower tone of a noble.



If you are going to play this on your own, I HIGHLY recommend you get yourself a PC version and patch it with fanpatches<sup>[1]</sup>. This gets rid of 2 main weaknesses which plagued the original Playstation release of this game: load times and swinging camera. Every screen transition, every time you open a map, every signpost and every voice line needs to be loaded, each one taking longer than the other and that shit gets pretty damn noticeable when you're going from house to house in a village. 1 second, 2 seconds, 10 seconds... God almighty it made me want to drop the game after emulating the first hour. Playing on PC, you still sacrifice a few things like the homely PSX fuzzyness as well as correct aspect ratio. I don't know why, but it looks like pixels are stretched vertically. But hey, you get to play at a decent pace without constant pauses and you won't go cross-eyed from GTA2 style camera.



>[1] [https://www.pcgamingwiki.com/wiki/Blood\\_Omen:\\_Legacy\\_of\\_Kain](https://www.pcgamingwiki.com/wiki/Blood_Omen:_Legacy_of_Kain)

# MODS MODS MODS MO

Mods are great at giving you a reason to play your favorite games for the umpteenth time. There is a clear distinction between mods, add-ons and romhacks, but I honestly don't give much of a shit and bundle them all under the umbrella term "mods". Either way they modify the base game, right? So you can finally replay Supra Mayro Broth, but this time around Mario can only jump half the height. Some are more akin to trainers and give you a control panel to fuck up your game. My ADD wouldn't have let me play Dragon's Dogma as much as I did without increasing player character's running speed 10 fold. DD2 better have horses or dragons for me to ride.

Some mods add whole new fan-made campaigns, complete with custom textures and awful voice-acting, some have the balls to charge money for that horseshit (I'm looking at you, "Hunt down the Freeman"), and some bloom into something beautiful of their own like "Team Fortress" or "MechWarrior: Living Legends".

I was hoping anons would submit their short-ish thoughts or coverages of mods they had experiences with. Noteworthy in any way, I don't think anybody wants to read about a Skyrim ReShade mod #6537. So feel free to drop a screenshot and a couple of words on something that peaked your interest.

For now I'll be covering a couple of mods for Diablo knock offs, namely Torchlight 2 and Grim Dawn. These two games take slightly different approaches to modding. While both come with mod tools packaged with the base game (TL2 with GUTS and GD with Grim Tools), they take a slightly different approach at implementing said mods. TL2 has a built-in mod manager with a hierarchy of mods in place and a 10 mod limit, so you can mix and match to your heart's content and deal with the results and corrupted saves afterwards. So try to keep a notepad entry for each new character where you dot down all the mods you used for



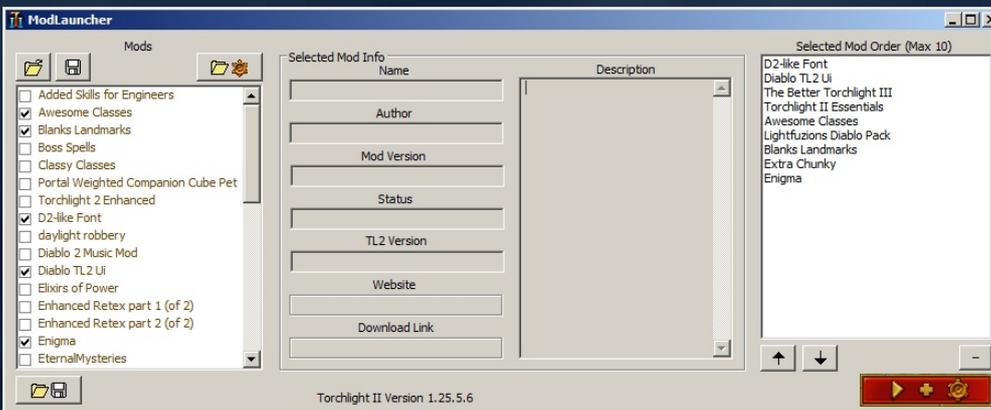
them, because it's really easy to get lost in your dozens and dozens of mods, half of which can be redundant. Now that the modding scene has calmed down, you might not even need that many mods at all since a lot of them come bundled together (and those bundles can and do include other bundles), at least on the Steam Workshop. Yep, I spent money on it. I also spent around 250 hours playing it. Same story with Grim Dawn, clocking in at cca 450 hours of autism tingling goodness.

I'm going to have a tough time listing all the mods I got for TL2, but I'll try to list the most significant changes, namely the classes, general improvements like extra locations found in the overworld maps, new items and access to more spells and pets. That last one isn't just a cosmetic skin, some of the more expensive skins (or rare drops) allow your pet to be transformed into an NPC or even bosses with their own move sets and spells. This can turn your pussy into a full blown fire elemental or a Manticore from Act II.

Rule of thumb:

If a class mod looks like shit OC donut steel, it's probably horribly unbalanced and will let you zoom through the game with a completely broken build. I've tried 3 of these classes: Preacher, Pirate and Dragon Princess. Can you guess which one was so

broken that I could beat the entire campaign in less than a day instead of binging for 3 like I usually do? Why yes, it's the one with terribly downscaled and pixelated anime icons for skills and class profiles! Most of the skills were broken and unfinished, some didn't have tier upgrades, some plain didn't work, others melted the entire screen while barely



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touching the mana pool. It's cathartic to say the least. During Act III I decided to check my DPS and started wailing on a target dummy. Then I stopped to write something down and looked up to see that my "% chance to trigger on attack" procs were proccing each other and the dummy was stuck in a perpetual cycle of pain. The other two classes worked as if they were made by Runic Games themselves, no complaints and nothing to write home about, really.

The extra spells, potions and their respective merchants made retracing the replay journey a little easier, especially when I discovered merchants would sometimes glitch out and sell VERY expensive Bonus EXP and loot potions (straight from an MMO) through their "Buyback" section, costing a fraction of their original selling price. Or maybe it was some mechanic I'm not aware of, who knows.



I wish there was a mod to fix the disaster that is Torchlight 3.

I'm gonna touch on "SYNERGIES 2.0" real quick without going in too deep, primarily because I haven't played it for years. Synergies is pretty much Torchlight 2 on steroids. Everything is bigger, faster and less predictable. It's not a very elegant mod, more like somebody opened

up the games control panel and turned every slider to max. Enemies are numerous, loot is abundant, champions are fucking lethal. Entering Act 2 felt like walking into a rave completely sober and getting your teeth kicked in by an overdosed crowd. Absolutely not recommended for your first playthrough, but if you're looking for a crazy anxiety-inducing sensory overload, go wild.

With Grim Dawn things are a bit simpler. It only supports one major mod to be played at a time (played through a "Custom Game" option) and you can add some minor tweaks directly into the game directory. In this case, the little mod is called Grim Internals, a very well known mod to most GD players. And not without merit either, some functions were so popular they were integrated into the base game, like automatic pickup and combination of components (basically socketable gems). This mod can also help you keep track of skill cooldowns, exp requirements and approximate time until you DING next, as well as damage dealt and received. Another really neat feature of this mod is the ability to define game speed. I find 1,20 to be just right for me because I often found GD movement sluggish. So that a very handy collection of tools.

But the big boy here is "Dawn of Masteries", a mod bundle that introduces not 1, not 2, but 46 NEW FUCKING CLASSES, a shit-ton of items and QoL improvements like expanded inventory space and total removal of partial components. To temper your expectations a bit, half of these classes are nearly direct ports from Titan Quest, Diablo 2 and Diablo 3. The others are an amalgamation of OC and likely ports from other games or maybe an integration of some tabletop class into the GD skill frame. Yes, you can drop bells on people with the Diablo 3 Monk.

Whatever the case, it's all done quite tastefully, no waifu



# MODS MODS MODS MODS MODS

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dragon princesses or demigods. Only man. Ranging from Mercenaries to escaped Aether test subjects. I played this with a friend and he picked a Terror Knight, an AoE melee class focused on life-steal and sacrificing his own HP pool for powerful crowd control and damaging spells. To complement his "in-your-face" play-style, I picked a ranged class called Outrider, focused on committing war crimes. It's phenomenal, we even came up with a backstory for our characters:

Two abhorrent warriors, one from a barbaric past, another from an unthinkable future, his tainted two-hander and her illegally modified rifle brought into this war by the temporal turmoil of Aetherial and Chthonian magics. A match made in hell. While he's jumping in the middle of the battlefield, shouting obscenities at his opponents, I would stand back, set up my white phosphorus mortar and liquid nitrogen grenades and



then unleash a hail of corrosive lead. One upgrade for that mortar I mentioned lets it drop a god damned nuke every 5 seconds. You think I'm overplaying this? There is a notable pre-impact whoosh sound effect before a deafening, screen-shaking explosion goes off, dealing massive damage EVERY 5 SECONDS. My friend and I had

to turn down in-game volume because we were both going deaf from my explosions. And we loved it. We even had a comic relief character in form of a shotgun summon. It's basically an invisible NPC running around with a visible shotgun and being a general disappointment, but I like it all the same (the apple doesn't fall far from the tree after all). It looks like something out of a Looney Tunes cartoon to be honest.

While there are now effectively 56 classes and 3080 potential combinations total (holy shit, talk about replay value) only a couple will synergize with any one class properly. I tried combining a Diablo 3 Monk with an OC donut steel teleporting aetherial agent, but my survivability was in the shitter, same as my damage output. Thank goodness respecting skills is a painless process in Grim Dawn. I do wish I could re-roll



my classes though. Still, I am very much looking forward to committing more war crimes with a good friend my side. And a rosary of acid grenades strapped to my belt.

## SHOTGUN RATING



The maximum amount of floating pet shotguns an Outrider could have at once.

Disclaimer: No, I have not played "Reign of Terror", the Diablo 2 conversion mod for Grim Dawn yet.

# MODS MODS MODS MO

# CHARGE — YOUR — NIGHT



# REVIEW

By Nate Higgers



## THE REAL STREETS OF RAGE 4?

The Takeover is a side scrolling beat 'em up developed by studio Pelikan13 and released in 2020 that is heavily inspired by (that rips off would be the right term) SEGA's Streets of Rage. Is this yet another indie piece of trash or is it actually good?



Axel Stone? (well, sort of) Neon signs? Music by Yuzo Koshiro? SoR fans will go nuts.

### STORY

The city of Steel Haven was always a crime-ridden shithole, but recently, criminal activity seems to have sensibly increased as all the criminal gangs apparently allied together and are now working under the same banner, taking over the whole city.



# THE TAKEOVER

### CHARACTERS

Three heroes are now standing up to the violence and bloodshed:

**ETHAN RIVERS:** who is none other than Axel Stone from Streets of Rage but with an orange t-shirt instead of a white one, changing his name on the occasion to avoid any copyright claims by SEGA.

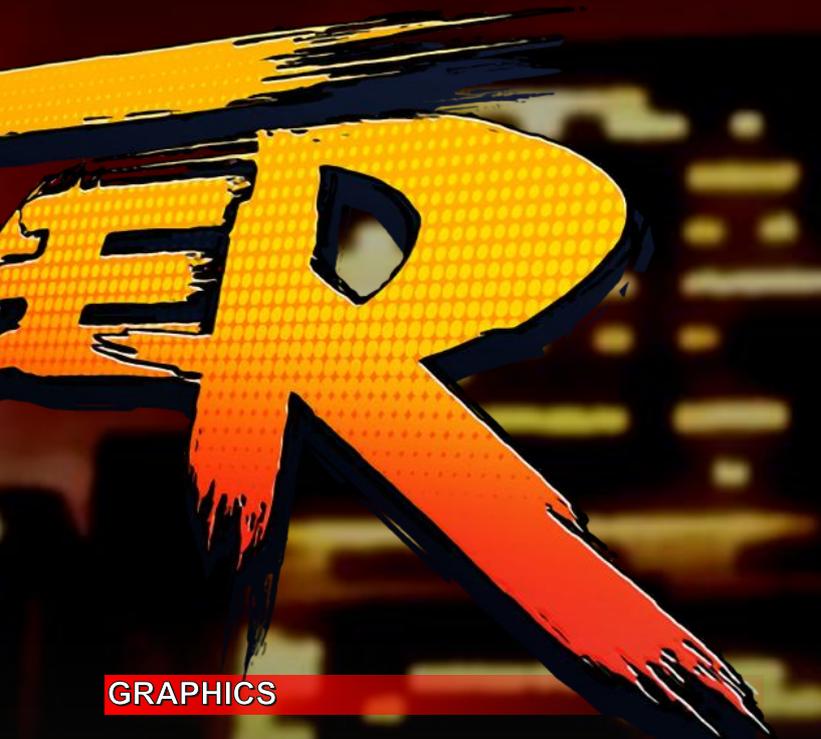
**MEGAN:** Hot chick who wears a sexy, skin tight biker suit that shows deep cleavage, high heels and leather jacket. She's also Ethan's girlfriend. Probably another reason Axel changed his name, he didn't want Blaze to know he was cheating on her all this time.

**CONNOR:** Ethan's brother in arms, he's the classic slow but strong big guy, think about Max from SoR2 but with a soldier gimmick instead of being a pro-wrestler.



Oh, and they also need to save Ethan and Megan's kidnapped adoptive daughter, by the way.

Once you complete the game there's also a dindu character to unlock with no ties to the other characters or the story. Disappointing, since another hot chick would have been a far better choice as unlockable character.



## GRAPHICS

The game runs at a smooth 60fps, it uses high quality pre-rendered sprites that at first glance might look like actual polygonal models, and great looking 3D backgrounds that react when a character hits the ground.

The enemies include kickboxers, hot punk chicks, SWAT-like soldiers, bikers, mohawk punks with their backs turned (clear tribute to Y.Signal) jacked sailors, and even monsters and robots.



Who the fuck drew this garbage?! Seriously, the idea of using a dynamic comic for the story cutscenes is good, but the drawings are shit.



The mandatory elevator section is required by law in side-scrolling beat 'em ups.

As for the stages, the game offers night streets lit by neon signs, a port, the sewers, a beach, the jungle, a dojo, and many more.

Every stage is animated and rich with details.

The game, generally speaking, looks gorgeous, but there are some characters that definitely needed a few more frames of animation.

On the other side, the game's comic style cutscenes look like absolute garbage, especially every time Megan shows up, as she looks like a Jewish tranny instead of the hot chick she's supposed to be.

## GAMEPLAY

The game features the usual punch and kick dedicated buttons that players can combine to perform combos and even juggle the opponents.

The jump button can be used to perform air attacks and avoid stage hazards. Getting close to the enemy gives you the ability to hold him and either perform grabs or throws based on the button you press next, very useful to be used on the toughest enemies who will block your hits.



The Bar stage is another obvious nod to SoR2

Like many old school beat 'em ups, there's also the special attack button that will drain your health if you abuse it.

Performing a sufficient amount of hits will charge the super meter that, once full, gives you the chance to unleash a powerful special attack that covers the whole screen. Unfortunately, this powerful attack (a missiles air strike) is the same for all the playable characters.

It would have been far cooler for every character to have their own unique ultra attack, but it is what it is.

Apart from punches, kicks, grabs and throws, each character has a unique firearm that can be used by holding the right trigger to aim and then pressing the kick button to fire.



The Japan-inspired stage is very cool: you go from a shrine garden surrounded by cherry trees to a dojo, and you fight sumo wrestlers and sexy ninja girls wielding katanas, very cool indeed.

These weapons have limited ammo, but you'll find more breaking the boxes, barrels and garbage bins you'll find on your way, alongside healing and score items. During the game, players will also find temporary weapons such as crowbars, katanas and disposable machine guns. To give the player a break from the repetitiveness of the fighting gameplay, the devs also added two special minigames. The first one has you driving a car while Connor shoots the bad guys' trucks with a gatling gun, jumping off ramps to avoid barricades.



The arcade style car minigame is a nice way to break the monotony of the usual beatings. Shoot the bad guys, don't hurt civilians. Complete it successfully and you'll get a 1UP

The second one takes you aboard a fighter jet to fire guided missiles and shoot down enemy flying units while dodging their attacks, in a gameplay similar to another SEGA classic; Space Harrier.



As with the car minigame, you will receive a 1UP if you complete it successfully. This one can also be played in Survival mode.

## MUSIC AND SOUND

The soundtrack is excellent, by none other than Yuzo Koshiro, legendary composer of the historic Streets of Rage saga, standing out among the various musicians who composed it.

How the PELIKAN13 studio even managed to hire him is a mystery.

Other sound effects are generally very good, giving the kicks and punches a satisfying sound as you unleash them on the thugs that stand in your way.



The jungle level offers a nice change of pace. In this level, you get a machine gun with infinite ammo to blast some disgusting creatures in an explosion of blood and gore. It's Streets of Rage meets House of the Dead

## OTHER GAME MODES

The Takeover doesn't offer much in terms of alternative game modes, there is a Survival Mode (self explanatory) which is fine, and Challenge Mode, that is nothing but the same levels of the Arcade Mode but with requirements to fulfill like use no specials, collect all the stars left by the enemies as you beat them, keep your health over 50% and stuff like that. Anything but fun, to be quite honest.





The godawful loading screen. Each stage should have had a different screen, something to act as a link between areas or to anticipate what is about to happen, could have made the wait less tedious. Anything but this crap.

## CONTENT

The game has 7 levels with 20 different locations, and can be beaten in more or less 2 hours of gameplay, which is quite a long time compared to other games of the same genre.

There are two endings, a bad one and a good one, obtainable based on your choice if you want to kill the final boss or spare her. (The final boss is a snu-snu big woman) In any case, both endings are uninteresting and fail to give another reason to replay the game by themselves, (partly due to the atrocious art style) but thankfully, the game is good enough to warrant some replayability anyway.



Whatever your decision is, you'll be rewarded with yet another ugly cutscene, so why should you care?! If only each option gave you a character to unlock...



## GAME INFO

**Title:** The Takeover  
**Developer:** Pelikan13  
**Publisher:** Dangen Entertainment  
**Release Date:** 2020  
**Platform:** PC, Switch, PS4

## CONCLUSION

If this game had better looking cutscenes, more unlockables, an individual story for every character, some additional game modes that were actually fun to play, a few more enemy types in the areas that needed it most, another hot girl to play as, and some more general polish here and there, we would be talking about something truly special, a new classic of the genre and an absolute masterpiece.

Whether these issues were caused by the poor budget or the studio's limited skills is unknown, but nonetheless, The Takeover is still a solid beat 'em up that is fun to play, nice to look at (minus the cutscenes) and with a banger of a soundtrack.

If you are a fan of SEGA's iconic beat 'em up, know that this is a far more legit "Streets of Rage 4" than that crappy, glorified flash fangame with tumblr characters, made by those DotEmu fuckers has any right to be. Highly recommended.

-Nate Higgers



### PROS

- + Gorgeous visuals
- + Solid and addictive gameplay
- + Satisfying sound effects
- + Great soundtrack
- + The arcade style minigames add some needed variety
- + It's Streets of Rage except for its name
- + Blood, violence and scantily clad hot chicks, fuck yeah!

### CONS

- The cutscenes' drawings look like shit
- A few levels lack enemy variety
- The only unlockable character is a boring dindu...
- ...instead of another hot girl
- No Online mode
- Has very little else to offer besides Arcade Mode

## FINAL SCORE

**8/10**

# JUST LIKE HOST GAEM (so you wanna host a gamenight)

You're gonna be home alone on a Friday night again? Tired of masturbating to anime girls? Why not play video games with your friends (or your "friends") instead?

## Choose a Game, Dipshit

Pick a game people will actually want to play. You should also pick a game that supports a decent number of players - 12 or more, preferably 16-32. 4 (like for a console game over netplay) can work but expect whining and make sure anyone can host their own room using the emulator instead of waiting for one of the 4 player slots to fill. Fortunately any emulator with netplay worth hosting lets you do this easily.



Don't pick a game that requires players to forward a specific port, because anyone sane will be using a VPN. Don't pick a game that isn't open source and doesn't run well in Wine, because windowsniggers don't deserve nice things. If a game requires signup, make sure it doesn't ban VPNs or require an NSA-hosted email address. These constraints favor arena FPS games and mods thereof, but it's your game and I'm not going to tell you it's bad without hearing about it. IP hopping shitters will tell you it's bad and you should feel bad no matter what it is, because

they are niggerbrained oxygen thieves that need to be strangled through their computer monitors. Ignore them.

Previously successful options include:

- Sonic Robo Blast 2 Kart
- Unreal Tournament ('99 and 2004)
- Doom (use Zandronum and pile on the shitpost mods)
- Team Fortress 2 Vintage (ignore the metafagging and make sure to turn off all the cancerous shit the devs have added since 2015)
- Star Wars Battlefront II (use SWBFSpY for functional online play)
- MechWarrior: Living Legend
- NeoTokyo

## Hosting and You

Running game servers from your home connection can cause problems, especially if you're a burger with shitty cable internet. If you're doing other shit (torrents, streaming) or hosting through a VPN for opsec reasons, the jitter can cause players to lag out, especially if your game's netcode isn't the best. Avoid these problems by getting a VPS. Rent from a provider that bills by the hour, unless you're going to use it as a seedbox or something. If they have an especially generous free trial you may not have to pay at all. This does mean putting your name on the server (unless their free trial doesn't require signing up for a recurring payment) which carries a very small risk if an employee of the VPS provider decides to take time out of xer busy day to fuck with you. If this worries you, choose a provider that accepts crypto and look up a local seller you can get \$100ish in Monero from, which will pay for many weekends of VPS hosting plus donations to any number of projects you depend on.

There are tons of tutorials for setting up Linux on a VPS without getting owned instantly, use them. Every game is different and community forums will be your greatest ally. East Coast USA is the best location to rent your VPS from because it provides good ping for most of the US as well as western Europe, followed by midwest US, Eastern Europe and the Benelux countries.



If all of this is too complicated for you, you can choose to netplay a console game or hijack someone else's dedicated server. Console netplay uses public relay servers so anyone can pick up and play a game, but requires non-zero effort to host more than one copy of the same game, so expect a lot of whining from lazy fuckers. Using an existing server requires no effort other than pirating the game and finding one with the settings you want, but you're at the mercy of the actual server hosts to not get banhammered for daring to have fun and you can't adjust the game settings. Still, either of these is preferable to not hosting at all.

## Setting Up

For the love of all that is holy TEST YOUR FUCKING GAME FIRST. Don't be the guy who walks in dick swinging only to get laughed at because your totally awesome game doesn't fucking work. If you have actual friends who can playtest with you then that's great, but at least set up your game and try to get two clean installs of your game on two different machines and two different IPs to connect. You may not catch bandwidth or resources issues this way, but at least you can say you did your best.

Build your client package. Ideally this will be a zip file you can just extract and play, or a series of zip files for an emulator + game. Pay special attention to cracks in Wine, it's bad at the DLL injection that some cracks rely on.

**pictured: typical fag posting a thread without testing**

revEmu usually works but can require permissions hacks to not crash. Don't even bother with anything using TINServer, it's a fucking disaster area that requires using a real, live, bannable Steam account to work outside of a LAN. Anything else use a search engine and do your research. Even Reddit can come up with a workable solution through sheer numbers, let them do the hard work for you. ProtonDB is a good resource to figure out if a game is just broken or will run in Wine with some winetricks fuckery. After you've tested your game, create a plan for randoms to install and connect and TEST THAT PLAN. It should be as easy as you can make it or else everyone is just going to do boring responsible shit for their weekend instead of playing your game.

Configure your server, if needed. Resist the urge to flip all the switches: start with simplest version of the game you can get away with. Once people get invested and learn your game's quirks you can start mixing things up. Don't be surprised if you have to reconfigure on the fly as people drop in and out; games with map/mode voting make this much easier since the players will do it for you. Consider making your server public; more population is better and bullying normalfags is always hilarious, but you run the risk of natives making the game unplayable because they massively outskill you.



## The Big Day

Make your thread at least 3 days in advance, and target a weekend or holiday; people have plans they can't just drop to fuck around online these days. No matter what your game is or how necessary you think it is, set a time for everyone to meet; if you don't do this people will try to connect at random times and then quit because nobody else is on. Consider having two times, one in the evening of EST and one earlier in the day for eurofags.

Make sure you have time to play the game, especially at the meeting time. This shouldn't be necessary to say but apparently it is. Listen to people playing and give them gameplay advice. Remember, you are going to be the game expert in 90% of cases. It's your responsibility to help people git gud so everyone can have fun. Report and ignore whiners. Record your play and post highlights in the thread for great OC, and to bully "hurf durf dead site" niggers. But most importantly, HAVE FUN.





**PARENTS!**

Do you think your children are safe?  
Gaming (gambling!) corporations are trying to hook the impressionable youths directly into their worst gangster paradise matrix and exploit their untapped IQ potential for unregulated and non-unionized bitcoin mining operations!



**P.arents &  
H.omeowners  
A.gainst  
G.ame  
S.tations**



Contact us on this webzone: [www.lemonparty.org](http://www.lemonparty.org)

**Can YOU trust this Mario man?**

# REVIEW

by Jill Kews

# PROJECT ZERO

## MAIDEN OF BLACK WATER



The Project Zero series, known simply as "Zero" in Japan and as "Fatal Frame" in the US, (couldn't they just give it a single title and use that worldwide!?) is a sadly overlooked survival horror series that is often undeservedly overshadowed by more famous names like Silent Hill and Resident Evil, certainly not because this series was in any way less deserving of consideration, if anything, out of the three, Project Zero is the only one to stay somewhat consistent in both quality and its identity, unlike the other two. But as we know, mainstream success and recognition means jackshit.

When the last game, Project Zero IV, was released for the Wii only in Japan, many thought that Koei Tecmo was going to quietly kill the series for good.

This thankfully was not the case, in part due to Nintendo showing more faith in the series than Tecmo itself, in fact, in 2014 Nintendo funded and co-developed this new entry in the series as a WiiU exclusive.

In 2021, the game got a re-release as a remaster for all the major platforms, including Switch (reviewed version) PS4, PS5, XBOXone, Series X and PC, unfortunately as a digital-only title, remarking once again Tecmo's lack of faith in this series.

### STORY

The story takes place on Mount Hikami, a place once worshiped by the local villagers, who thought that this sacred place's water housed the souls of the dead, therefore luring suicidal people who wished to die a "proper" death, believing that their souls would go back from where they came from.

Because of this reason, Mt.Hikami was also known as "the mountain of death". A group of shrine maidens living in this mountain used to perform a series of rituals to keep its water pure, and prevent the Shadowspring's black water to overflow and taint it.

This until a man, who was rejected by a maiden, got crazy and slaughtered them all, causing the black water to corrupt the souls of the dead who since infest the region as malevolent entities.



The haunted mount Hikami. Once a tourist attraction, is now devoid of life.

## CHARACTERS

None of the characters in this game really shine in personality, but maybe for a horror game this is not a bad thing, in fact, they appear more relatable to the player, as common people who find themselves dealing with otherworldly, scary situations.

The only out of the ordinary thing they all have in common is the "Shadow Reading" ability, meaning the ability to see people's memories and past experiences by merely touching them, or even the last moments of the dead ones with the help of a token that belonged to them.



HISOKA KUROSAWA

A descendant of one of the shrine maidens who fled mount Hikami, Hisoka inherited the Shadow Reading ability that made her popular with people looking for her help to find missing people. One day she was approached by an old woman who asked for her help in finding a missing relative, a young girl named Akari Narumi.

Hisoka finds her standing on the edge of a cliff near Mt. Hikami, but before she could reach her, the young girl jumped to her death, leaving Hisoka traumatized and blaming herself for what happened. She later finds Yuri in the same situation, but this time manages to save her and allowed her to stay at her place where the two of them became close.



YURI KOZUKATA

The main playable character..

Yuri got the ability to "see things other people can't" since witnessing her own parents' death.

This gift caused her to feel different around the others, to the point that she limited her interaction with the outside world and felt isolated as an outcast because of that.

After attempting suicide by jumping off a cliff at the sunset of Mt. Hikami, she was saved by Hisoka Kurosawa, who now lets her stay as a helper in her antiques shop, teaching her how to use her abilities and the camera obscura. She's pretty cute.



REN HOJO

A writer and the only male playable character.

Ren is the direct descendant of occultist, philosopher, and folklorist Dr. Kunihiko Asou, the creator of the camera obscura himself.

He lives near Mt. Hikami with his assistant Rui

After finding a lock of hair in his studio that caused him to have nightmares about a cruel ritual, and being fascinated by a post-mortem picture of a beautiful woman dressed in bridal clothes, he heads to Mt. Hikami to investigate.



RUI KAGAMIYA

Ren's assistant.

What at first glance might look like an effeminate whimpy faggot, is actually a tomboy who dresses like a boy only to put Ren at ease, as his recurring nightmares caused him anxiety when around women.

She starts developing romantic feelings towards Ren and secretly wants him to bang her senseless and knock her up.



MIU HINASAKI

The third playable character and daughter of Miku Hinasaki, the protagonist of the first Project Zero.

Miu was raised by a foster mother since her real mother disappeared when she was only three years old.

Growing up, she dreamed of becoming an actress, but so far she only managed to find a job as a gravure model for some pervert who lusts over her.

Miu is a "shadowborn", the offspring of a living parent and a dead one.

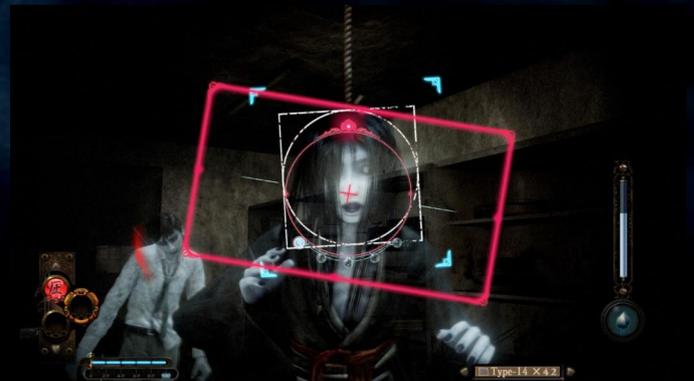
Her mother Miku was able to meet her deceased brother Mafuyu at the Abyss of Horizon, where she "perpetrated the forbidden in the dream with the dead, and after she awoke she had conceived" meaning that Miku got banged by her own brother from the otherworld and got pregnant by him for real.

Miu heads to Mt.Hikami to look for her mother, who was last spotted there.

The game is a third person survival horror that switches to a first person perspective once you equip your "Camera Obscura" a special camera able to catch ghosts on picture and even deal damage to them as it does.

The timing and angle are very important to deal a good amount of damage to the ghosts, as the shots taken up close to their weak point will deal a bigger amount of damage, even more so if you take the shot right when the spectral foe is about to attack you.

In that case, if your timing is right, you will trigger the "fatal frame" that will allow you to shot a number of photos in rapid succession, severely hurting the enemy.



As you take the shots, the ghosts will lose fragments, get five of them on camera and your shots will knock them back with extra damage.

Once the ghost is defeated, you can use your shadow reading ability to glance the the soul's final memories by touching the spirit before its disappearance, at that point, a brief cutscene that is very reminiscent of the infamous cursed VHS from the movie "Ringu" will start to play, showing you how that person died and turned into a ghost, very cool stuff.



The cutscenes showing the spirits' last moments use an old VHS grainy look in black and white that is very effective at giving them a disturbing tone. Each one of them is a little horror masterpiece.

As you defeat the ghosts, you'll be rewarded with points that can be used to upgrade your camera obscura (to increase its power, make its charging time faster etc.) buy health items, new costumes or tape for your camera before the start of each chapter.

New to this game is the wet mechanic, which, when you get wet, makes you more vulnerable to ghost attacks and makes their appearance more frequent, but also makes your attacks more powerful.

Ghost hunting aside, the game also offers a good amount of exploration to balance things out.



Thanks to your shadow reading ability and a token, the spirits' traces will guide you to your objective

During your survey of Mt. Hikami and nearby locations, you will find lost documents that will shed some light on the mysteries surrounding this place, like the shrine maidens' ancient rituals, the dark water, and the fate of the people who were "spirited away" and went missing.

Your camera obscura will also be useful to materialize notes and objects from the otherworld to the world of the living, like keys, that will allow you to continue your dark journey.



When you are about to take an item, a ghost hand may grab your arm and drain a bit of health. While this can spook you the first few times, it will get annoying fast.

"JUST LET ME TAKE THAT SHIT! FUCK!"

## GRAPHICS

The game's graphics are generally pretty nice, with the character models being the best part of it.

Tecmo confirms itself to be second to none when it is about making good looking female characters; if series like Ninja Gaiden and especially Dead Or Alive are quite famous for their attractive ladies, this title is not inferior in that regard.



All the female characters feature jiggle physics and their clothing get wet and semitransparent with water, similar to DOA5

The ghosts' design is also excellent, in typical Japanese horror fashion, and will manage to startle and creep you out when you least expect them. The environments are spooky enough, but they also suffer from a certain lack of detail that makes you wonder if that is due to hardware limitations or because the devs didn't put enough effort.



The water, supposedly the game's key element, is poorly done, just a semitransparent texture that doesn't react to your movements in it, nor does it reflect light as it should, especially in the dark where it should be more reflective instead of see-through

The game runs at 30fps with some annoying drops and stuttering here and there, that is unforgivable since the original WiiU version while only 720p (the remaster runs at 1080p) ran smoother than this poor excuse of a "remaster", supposed to be superior.

## CONTENT

The game is divided in 16 chapters, called "drops", and takes more or less 15 hours to complete.

It doesn't offer a lot of variety regarding the places to explore, (you can tell it was made with a tight budget) it is mainly set between Mt.Hikami and Kurosawa's antiques shop, even though the devs deserve credit for cleverly using the plot to justify this frequent back and forth.



All ghosts' design and the Project Zero series as a whole, are clearly inspired by Japanese horror classics such as "Ringu", "Ju-On" and "Dark Water".

## MUSIC AND SOUND

The sound design in this game is hit and miss.

The subtle, unsettling music and especially the creepy ghost sounds are great and add a lot to the eerie atmosphere that the game is going for. On the other side, some sound effects like the characters' steps are awful and sound the same regardless if you are cautiously walking or running at full speed, no matter the surface you are walking on, you will always hear the muffled sound of someone stepping on a turd.

The same applies when you are moving in the water, regardless if you are walking on a puddle or you are immersed up to your waist. This is a big problem for a genre like horror where things like sound and light effects are fundamental to it.



The protagonists use Kurosawa's shop as a shelter, then go back to Mt. Hikami to investigate, look for someone, or because they are being called back there by the spirits.

It needs to be said that the devs also did a nice job at giving something new to the player (either a new type of ghost or a new explorable area that was previously inaccessible) right before the game starts feeling repetitive, so despite lacking variety overall, it surprisingly manages to not feel stale.

There are multiple endings for each character to see, good and bad, two for Yuri, two for Miu and four for Ren, adding some replay value, but must be said that you could just replay the last chapter to watch them all, without having to replay the whole game from the start.



Devs didn't even bother adding any echo effect when you are inside an empty building or a cave. Crazy how they overlooked something like that, this is a horror game after all.

The english voice acting is pretty bad, all the lines sound flat and emotionless, so stick with the original japanese voices if you don't want to hear a bored american VA lazily reading from a script.



Boo!

## UNLOCKABLES

In terms of unlockables, there are some costumes that can be unlocked using the game's points, but unfortunately, the skimpy bikinis of the original Japanese version got removed.

This happened because companies like Koei Tecmo still listen to a few localization retards that maliciously lie to these companies that everyone in the west is either a prude or a faggot and that skimpy outfits will hurt the game's sales, which couldn't be further from the truth, especially since they were optional and nobody was forced to use them.



They took this from us, they'll pay for it!  
\\(>\_<)//  
I mean, just look at that (T\_T)

The remaster of the game got some new costumes instead, like two "bikini" costumes for Yuri and Miu that are actually a shirt that shows a bikini underneath when it gets wet, and an actual swimsuit for Miu.

These new costumes, while still nice and quite sexy, do not make up for the removal of the original skimpy costumes, but they should just have been added on top of those.



Apart from being sexy, these new "bikini" costumes also manage to make the characters look more vulnerable, which, in a horror game, is always a plus.



Well, maybe these new costumes are just as goo...



...Never mind.

In one cutscene, there is a flashback of Miu working as a gravure model where she was supposed to be wearing a skimpy white bikini and a scarf, but now she's just wearing her standard outfit instead, (not even her new pink swimsuit) so that flashback doesn't even make sense anymore.

Devs also missed the opportunity to give Rui too a swimsuit as an alternate costume, maybe alongside some other feminine outfit to unlock once the game reveals that she is a girl.

That sure would have been nice.

Costumes aside, there's very little else to unlock, like some accessories, a new difficulty, and elements for the newly added photo mode.

It would have been cool to have stuff like artwork and sketches as well, but Tecmo went greedy and paywalled that stuff behind the "Digital Deluxe" edition, that adds a digital artbook of the first three titles of the series plus this one, and a series of costumes from previous games for each playable character.



## EXTRA

After the main story is over, a new side story starring none other than Ayane from Ninja Gaiden and Dead Or Alive will be available to play.

This side story sees the purple haired kunoichi looking for a missing girl named Tsumugi whose ties with Ayane are not specified (A friend? a girl from the Mugen Tenshin clan?)

During the first cutscene we'll see how Ayane's ninja abilities will be completely useless against the ghosts infesting Mt. Hikami, so after her first encounter with these new foes ends with a defeat (that looked almost like an attempt to gang rape her) and following retreat, the kunoichi will need to seek an alternative way to deal with them.

The camera obscura?

Unfortunately not.



"Huh? What's this?"  
Even Ayane is confused.

The "Spirit Stone Flashlight", a lame magic wand/flashlight hybrid, that somehow is also able to take pictures. Wouldn't have been better to just give Ayane a camera obscura like the rest at this point?

Not only it would have made much more sense, but the gameplay in her section would have benefited a whole lot from it, making her extra chapters much more enjoyable to play.

This special flashlight, unlike the camera obscura, can only briefly stun the ghosts, so the gameplay offered here, in a half-assed attempt to give the player a different type of experience, is very limited, and feels like a huge downgrade from the main story.

It basically consists in follow the trail, stun the ghosts, walk past them, cutscene, end of the chapter.

And that's about it.



While the spirit stone flashlight is dumb, the purple thread and special tattoos to hide Ayane from the ghosts are actually pretty neat ideas to make her feel different from the other characters.

All of Ayane's four chapters can be completed in a few minutes each, and are not even remotely as enjoyable as the main story, nor they offer anything new in terms of enemies or places to explore.

Once the novelty of seeing Ayane crossing over the Project Zero series wears off, you'll be bummed by how lazily developed her side story was.



When the cutscenes are more interesting than the playable parts the gameplay has a problem

The only good thing about this very short extra is Ayane looking smoking hot as she wears a leather corset that squeezes and barely contains her huge boobs, and a pair of tight, low-waisted leather pants that show off her thong and part of her ass crack.



Ayane has never looked any hotter than this.  
Definitely her best look, hands down.

## CONCLUSION

Despite its flaws, Project Zero: Maiden of Black Water is a game still worthy of recommendation, as the engaging story, good looking female characters, solid gameplay and haunting atmosphere, is able to make up for the flaws that hold the game from reaching its full potential. Not the best game in the series, but still leagues better than the kind of garbage that nowadays gets passed as "survival horror", and most of modern games in general.

So give it a chance, especially if you are an old school survival horror fan.

-Jill Kews



### PROS

- + Solid gameplay
- + Nice graphics
- + Haunting Atmosphere
- + Great character design
- + Engaging story
- + Hot female characters
- + Multiple Endings
- + Unlockable costumes
- + Decent replay value
- + Hachishaku-sama (PO...PO...Po...pO...po...)

### CONS

- Poorly optimized
- The skimpy outfits of the original JP version got removed
- Frame rate drops despite being a 30fps title
- You'll often revisit the same places over and over
- Poorly done water despite being the game's key element
- Some sound effects lack impact or are outright missing
- Ayane's side story gameplay is utterly disappointing

Ayane is about to get a bukkake of ectoplasm. Notice the hand groping her left boob lol

The biggest problem here, is that the developers tried too hard to make her gameplay different instead of thinking about how to make it enjoyable first.

If the devs focused more on putting some meat in Ayane's first foray into the world of Project Zero, by giving her exclusive areas to explore, and new enemies to face, leaving her gameplay the same as the main story, which is fine as it is, then we would be talking about it differently.

Still, we must remember this is just a little extra and shouldn't be considered too much when judging the game as a whole.

Seeing Ayane in Project Zero is still cool though



### GAME INFO

**Title:** Project Zero: Maiden of Black Water  
**Developer:** Tecmo  
**Publisher:** Koei Tecmo  
**Release Date:** 2014 (Original) 2022 (Remaster)  
**Platform:** WiiU (OG) Switch,PS4,PS5,XBOX1,SX,PC (Remaster)

### FINAL SCORE

**7.5/10**

# Passive synergy twin-stick top-down half-hour survivor-likes

**M**odern technology allows us to achieve incredible things: analyze surrounding data to predict outcomes to the point of near-precognition (a sort of... spider-sense), generate hentai on the level of "Porn Factory", and render hundreds of actors on screen at once. Of course this is nothing new, "Serious Sam" and some "Doom" wads have been doing just that for decades. But they didn't have Twitch to boost their popularity like "Vampire Survivors" does. Now I don't know how this game came to be, nor who made it and really, I don't give a fuck. Believe it or not, I'm not even a journalist. All I know is I thought it looked neat, I was drunk at the time and said to myself "Hey, it's only a couple of bucks, what's the worst that can happen?". Moral of the story, kids: Don't drink and drive, don't drink and text, and most definitely don't drink and buy. What's that, Lassie? Stop drinking altogether? Nah, I gotta get through this life somehow and I'll numb the monotony and pain with the only class 4 narcotic I can reliably get my hands on.

**T**hese games may as well be classified as a narcotic too, considering how addictive they are. Oh how we love to see pointless numbers grow. We may not have a clear grasp on our own lives, but god damn, our threads are doing iron-man numbers! Grab the power-up, increase your movement speed by 0,54%, lengthen the projectile life by 1,5 milliseconds, optimize your entire build in order to up your secondary passive's DoT output frequency by half a Hz, THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS when you only allow minor adjustments!

**A**bout the half-hour goal: I don't know whether it's a blessing or a curse on "Vampire Survivors" devs' part, but who knows how much more addictive this game could have been if it was rationed to you in bite-sized chunks. Well, some people thought the same thing and made their own "vampire survivors" game, with blackjack and hookers. The results are a mixed bag and I took on this grueling task of sampling each and every knock-off or "totally original OC donut steel" game that totally had the same idea, but they couldn't release it earlier because... reasons.

**T**hat's not really fair of me, I don't know if anybody came out and said something to that effect, I'm just pulling shit out of my ass based on how trends worked in the past (oooooh, how you like that callback to three paragraphs ago?). It might just be true, it happened with nuDoom. But enough hyperbole and mageneral malarkey, let's get into this new subgenre that will definitely have the most cancerous name like "Castlevariables" or "Vampire-likes" or "Half-Hour Horde Killers".





- It's probably the first one of its kind, I'm not an investigative journalist and I'm not about to conduct an extensive search into which game really started the fad or which one thought of doing it first.

- Blatantly rips off Castlevania sprites and themes, including characters (Dracula, Belmont, Sifa, Alucard ...), weapons (whip, arching axe, boomerang cross, holy water ...), wall chickens and light sources being destroyed for pick-ups.

- It's quite ugly to look at because of rotating, squished and uneven pixels all over the place. Still images may look fine enough, but trust me, it looks horrendous in motion.

- Was (and probably still is) popular on Twitch for some time. Hence the knock-offs. I only saw one of my coworkers browse Twitch and it had its own sizable section, but not as big as "Pools, Hot Tubs, & Beaches". Yes, that's a real twitch category and yes, it is as pathetic as it sounds. No matter how thirsty you are, don't drink the water. There's chlorine in it.

- There are no aimed skills available, all power-ups are passives. Knives are the only ones that can be considered "aimed" because they fire in the same direction you're moving.

- Synergies between items are very specific, you can't really mix and match to your heart's content. You need to follow recipes in order to "evolve" offensive items by upgrading each offensive item to their respective maximum level, picking up a correct passive and then opening a chest dropped by killing an elite enemy.

- You'll spend a lot of time walking around like an idiot until you realize there are specific spots on a seemingly looping map that spawn items

- Loads of secrets, probably made for youtuber "ZOMG HIDDEN ENDING" audience. I'm not a big fan of either the games or these youtube channels, so that's a negative for me. I guess this is what happens when we kept spreading rumors about cutting tires on that truck in order to get Mew. And to think all we needed was an Abra and some good timing in Lavender Town ...



- It looks and plays a lot like a flash game. Not saying that's a bad thing, most of McMillen's games started out in Flash (Bidding of Isaac, Gish, Meatboy ...). But I am feeling a bit odd having to fork over cash for something that used to be freely available on Miniclip or Newgrounds. At least you know it won't be difficult to pirate.

- We've already covered it once in our Steam Demos article a couple of issues back, so shovel through that extensive catalog!

- You get 6 weapon slots, all fire on their own automatically with individual cooldowns, sideeffects and damage. Finding the balance between weapons, perks and your character is what makes up the meat and brotatos of this game. There's plenty of each, so replayability will likely be quite high.



- Often promoted as a game made by a married couple. Straight, living somewhere in Europe.

- It is unfortunately VERY bare-bones, it barely has an arsenal. Last I checked it only had 2 weapons.

- Power-ups feel insignificant so it takes a lot of time for you to figure out if your build is fucked.

- The entire game is sectioned into 5 levels called "stages of grief", each comes packed with 2 servers (just a spongy turret that looks like a building) and the same 6 bosses randomized between levels. No final boss, no story, no resolution, nothing.

- I spent a total of 3 hours with the game, completing 2-4 runs and don't feel like going back unless they update it significantly.





- This is the only one/two I found to be made in 3D, it looks quite nice, actually. Colors pop out, spells and enemies are easy to read (except for some elites, they tend to blend into the regular horde).

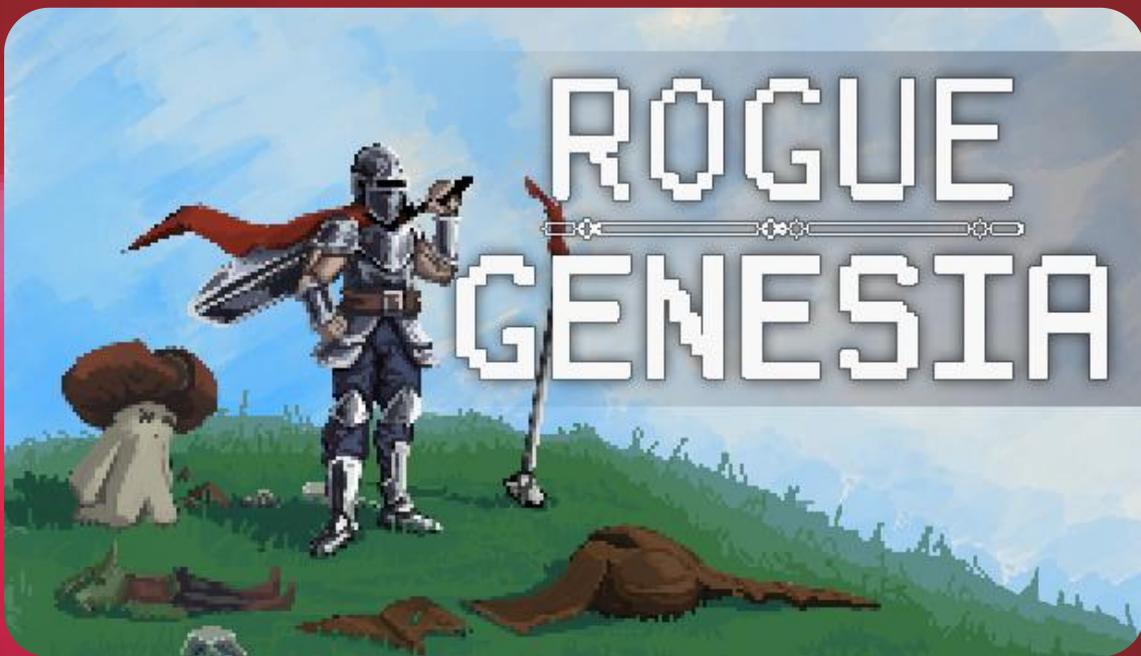
- Soulstone Survivors plays like all the other passive survivors, while Rogue Soulstone is pretty much the same game converted into a 3rd person shooter with emphasis on aimed skills. Some spells work differently and it can get confusing how exactly they're supposed to work. The ice projectile caused me to encounter a lot of frustrating situations.



- Rogue Soulstone is also more prone to slowdowns, if you're running an unoptimized build, the enemy numbers will keep growing and they WILL slow your machine down to single digit framerates.

- Both demos came packaged with only one boss, so that's boring, but hey, it's a demo.





- I've heard people praise this game's looks and I'll have to put our dealers in touch because mine are obviously holding out on me. The game is ugly as sin and not very readable. The clashing between pixel art and glowing post-processing effects is jarring to say the least.

- Reducing all graphical options to LOW actually makes the game look better, however it does not get rid of post-processing effects entirely.

- Reminds me of Path of Octagon or whatever that Square Enix jrpg with 8 playable characters was. Only because it's the only one done with the same style and is still uglier. At least there are no smooth pixels, so I can't make the "Lookin' Good" jokes about it.

- Instead of a giant room and a single countdown. the game is divided into sections with smaller time and/or kill requirements. We've seen this in other rogue-lites such as Inscription or Slay the Spire

- Very weak and unsatisfying weapons, my only drive to keep playing was trying to get a fun build going. Which I failed to do.

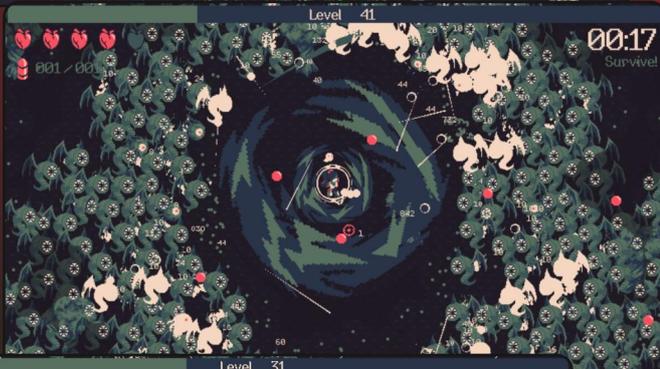
- A lot of very similar upgrades (+0,2% firing speed, 0,1 second shorter cooldowns between shots), flat upgrades, percentage-based, different rarities ... All unsatisfying, all difficult to keep track of. Even the pause menu doesn't help because it doesn't scale the upgrade cards you've picked, so you can only guess as to what each one of them says.





- This one is by far my favorite, probably because it plays the least like every other game on this list and instead plays more like a regular twin-stick shooter, the patrician's choice of game genre.

- It's the only game on this list with dedicated buttons to switch between automatic and manual aiming (automatic will aim at the closest enemy) and automatic reloads (your weapon will still reload automatically when your magazine is empty). Reloading can get a little iffy when you pick skills that refill some of your ammo under certain conditions, but it's best to just let it do its job.



- Plenty of characters and weapons, perks could use more variety (which they do with updates, v0.9.0 came out recently and addressed this very issue), but the game is still in early access, like pretty much every other game on this list.

- Filled with fun weapons, synergies, play modes and waifu bait if you're into that sort of thing.

- Little pro-tip: projectile speed affects range as well, so it's essential for grenade launcher runs. Though I must say, the new character can spend almost the entire game immune to damage, so it synchronizes with the grenade launcher to the point of being broken.



- Friendly skulls are hard to tell apart from enemies, but that's an issue with only one character and that's pretty much the only issue I have with the entire game.

- There exist mods which add color to the game, so I'm looking forward to trying those out and making my eyes bleed.



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SWORD

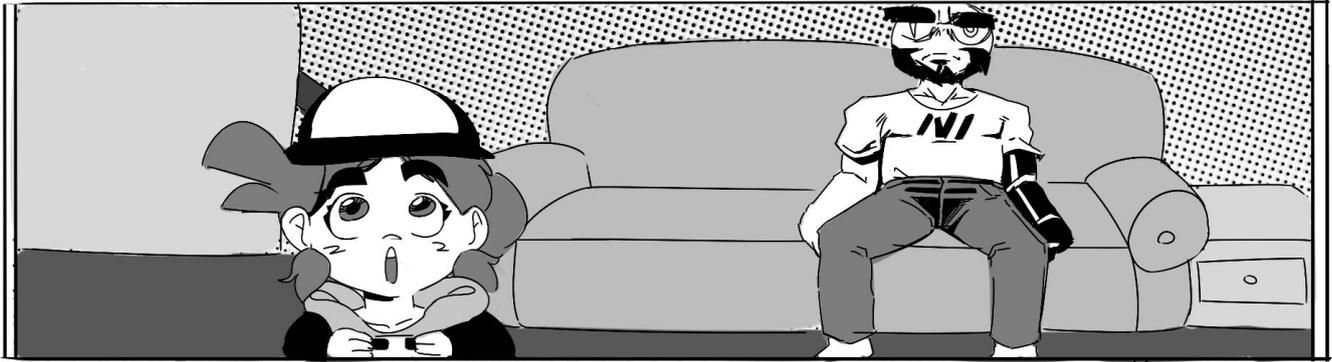
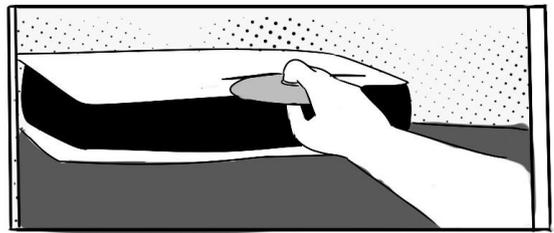
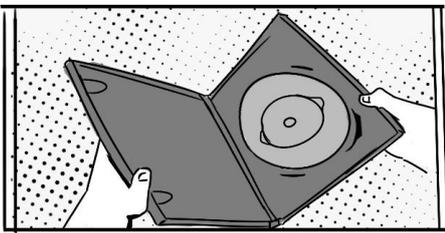
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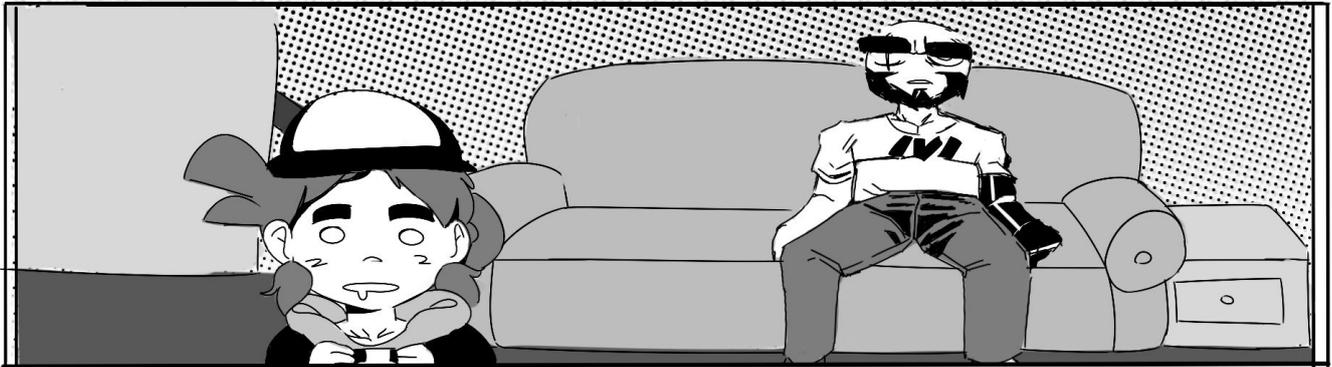




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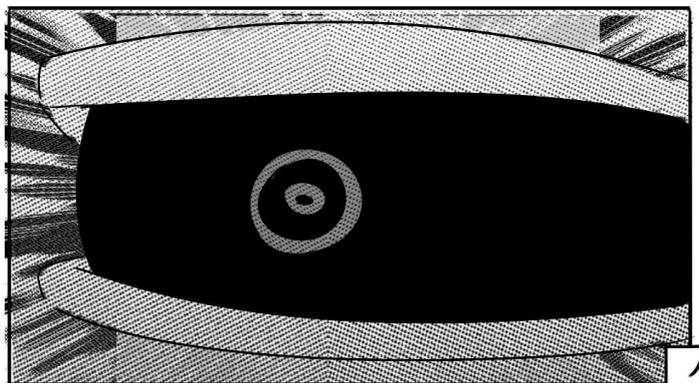
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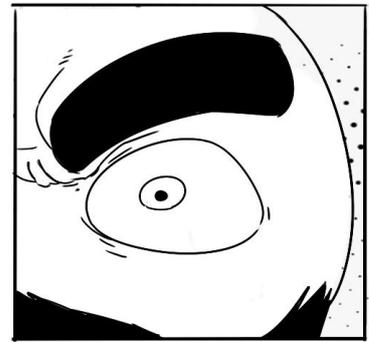
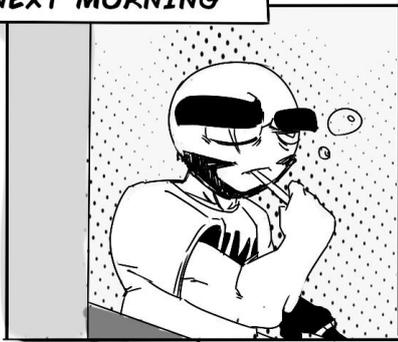
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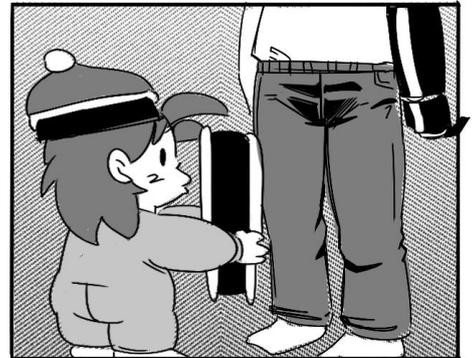
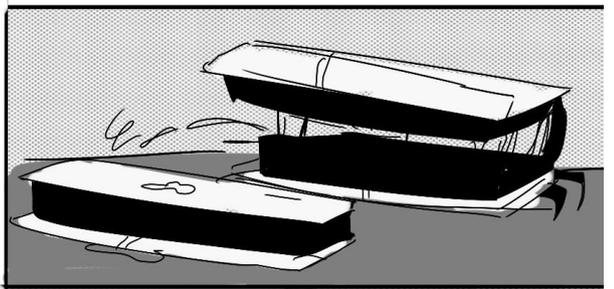
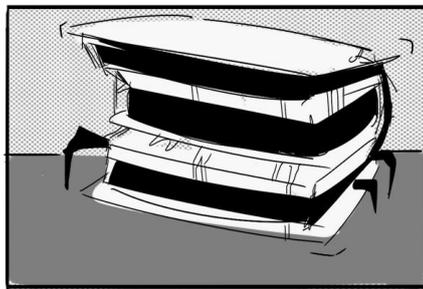
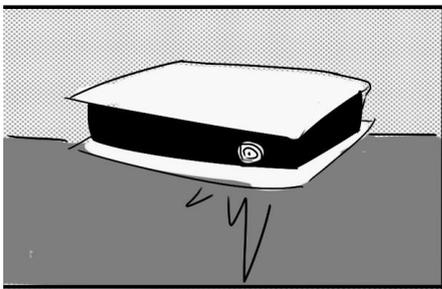
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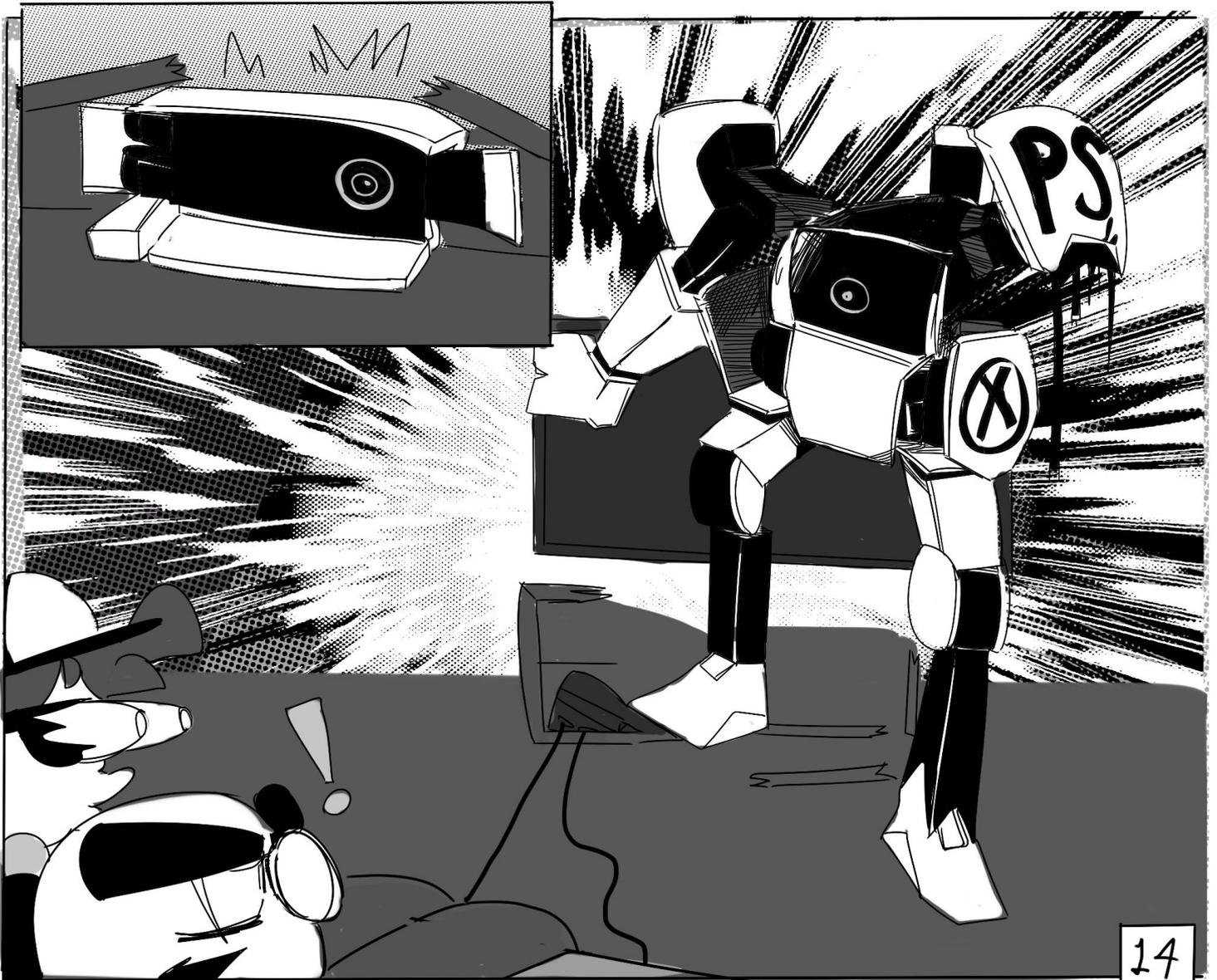
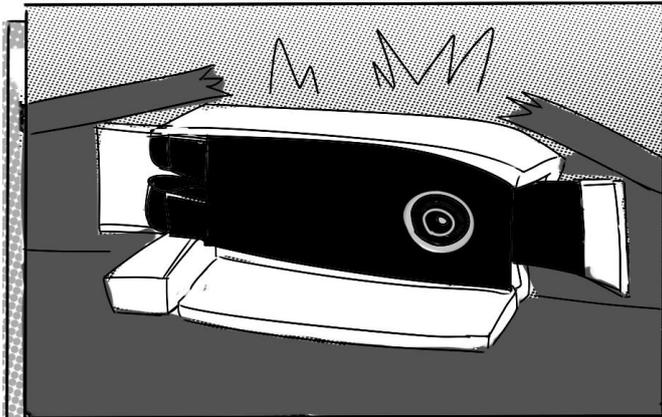
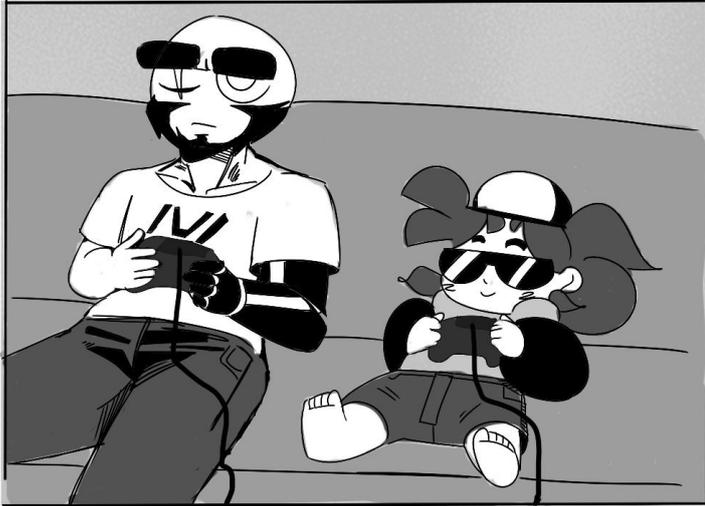
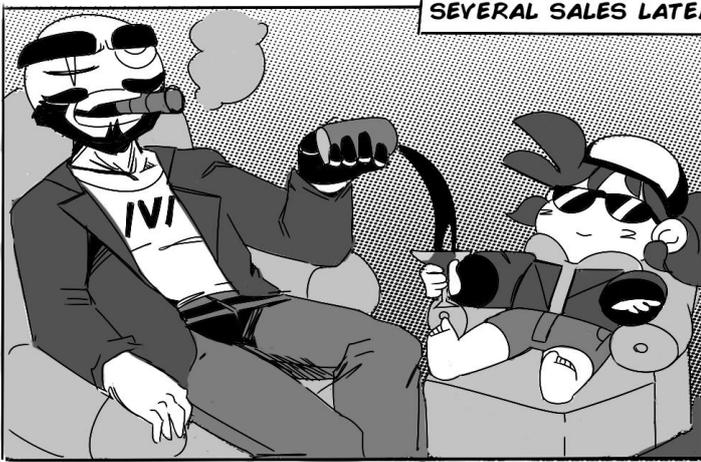


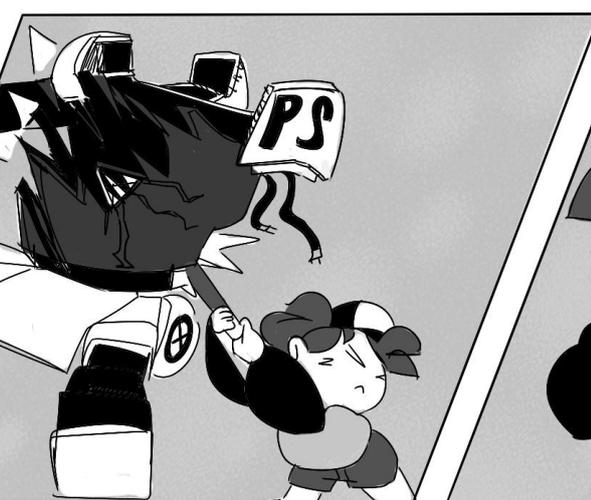
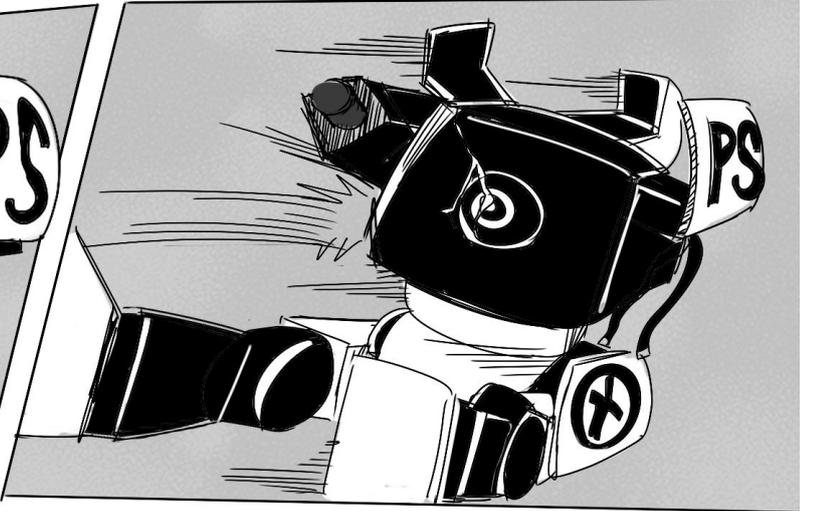
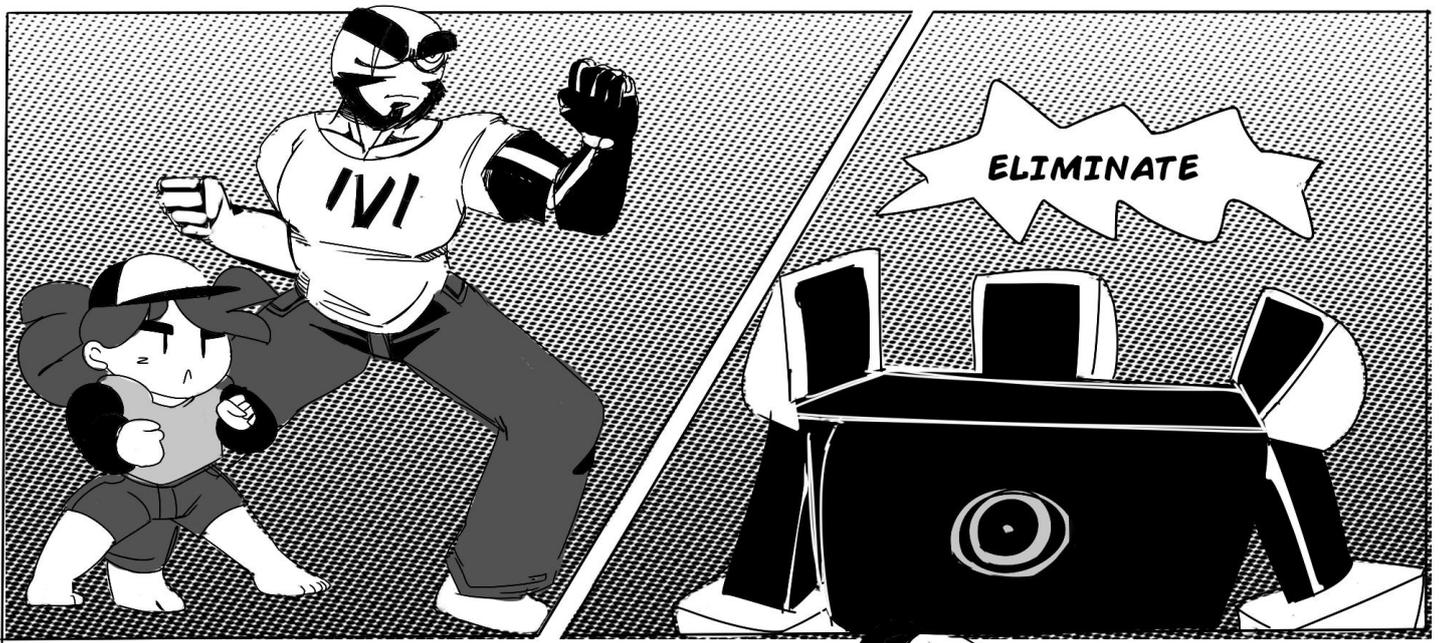
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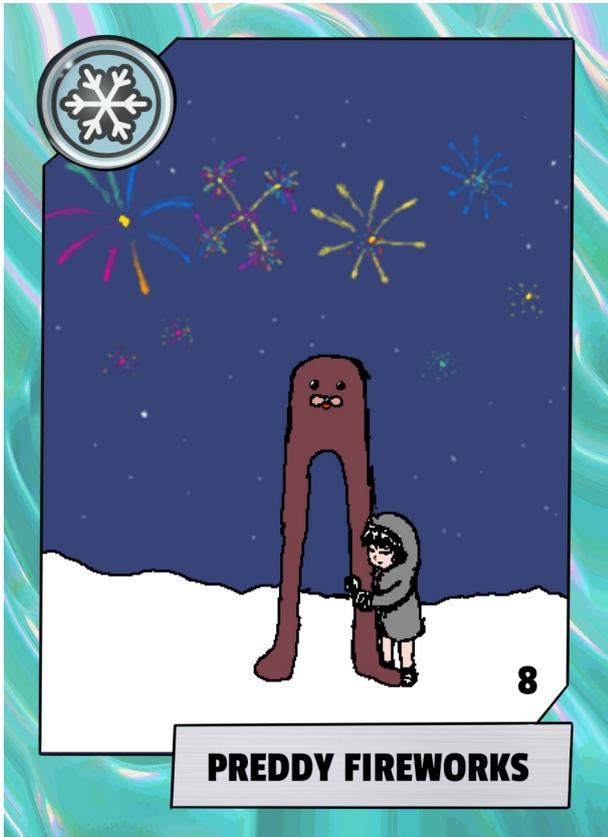
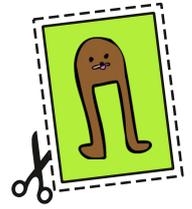


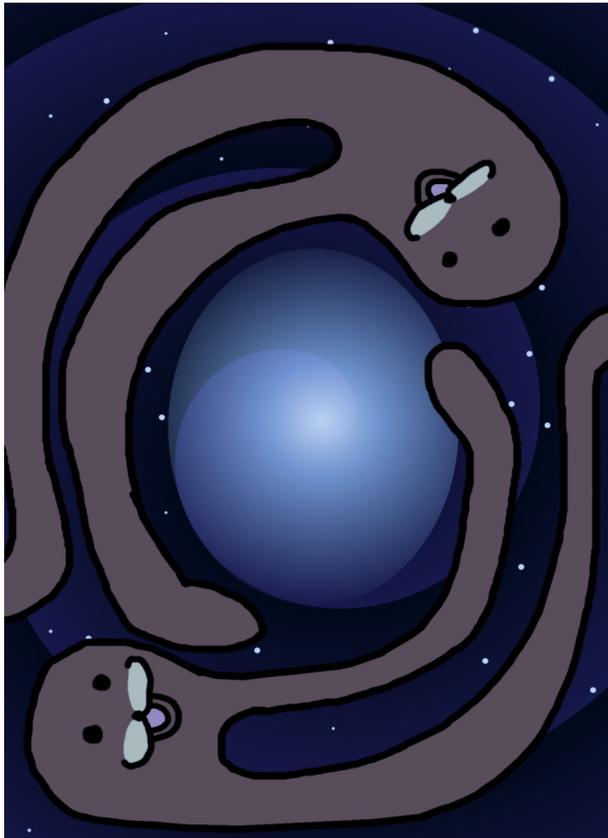
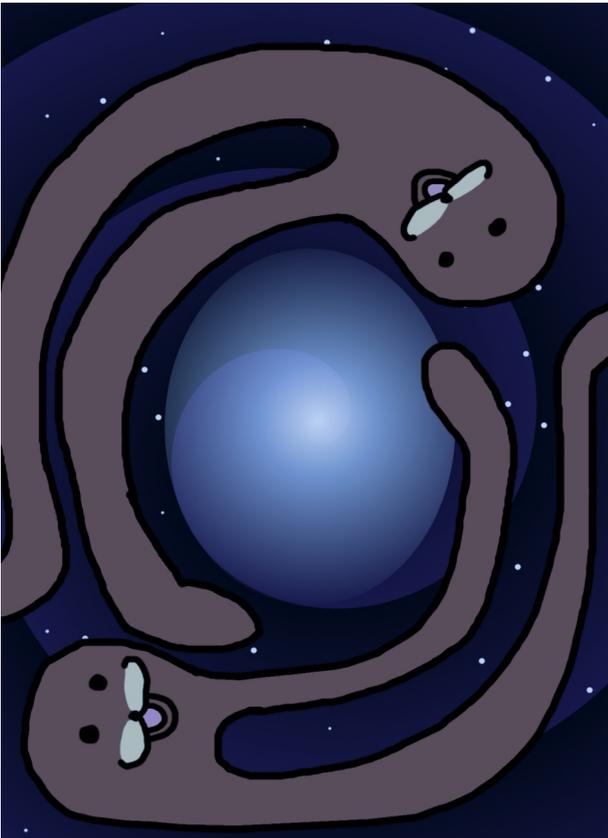
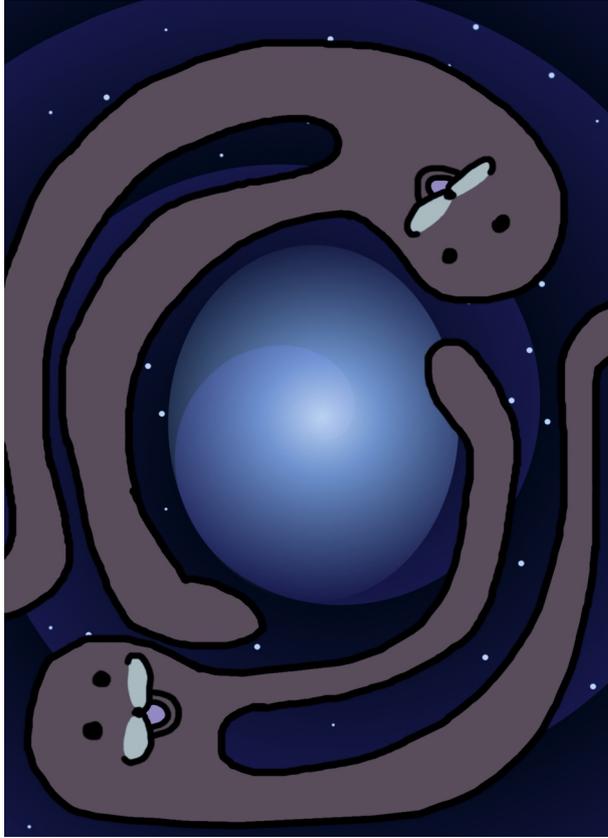
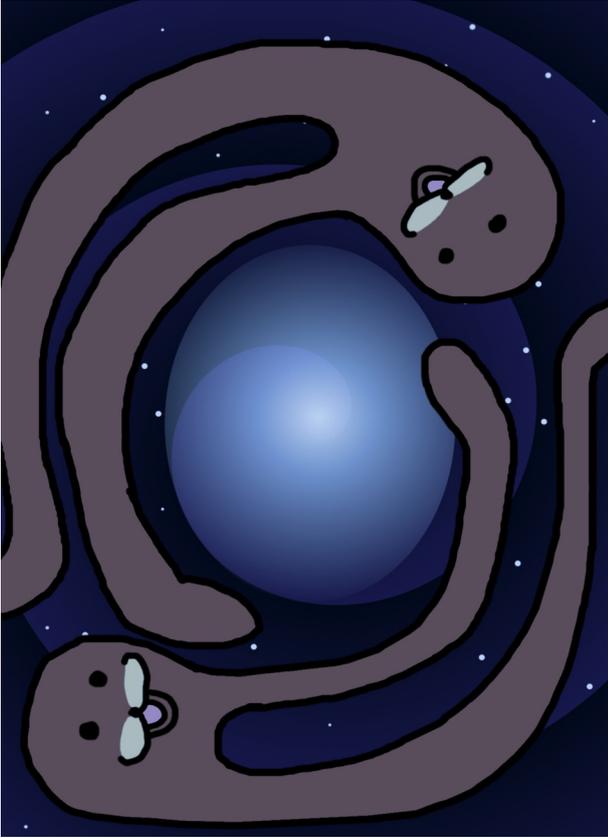
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