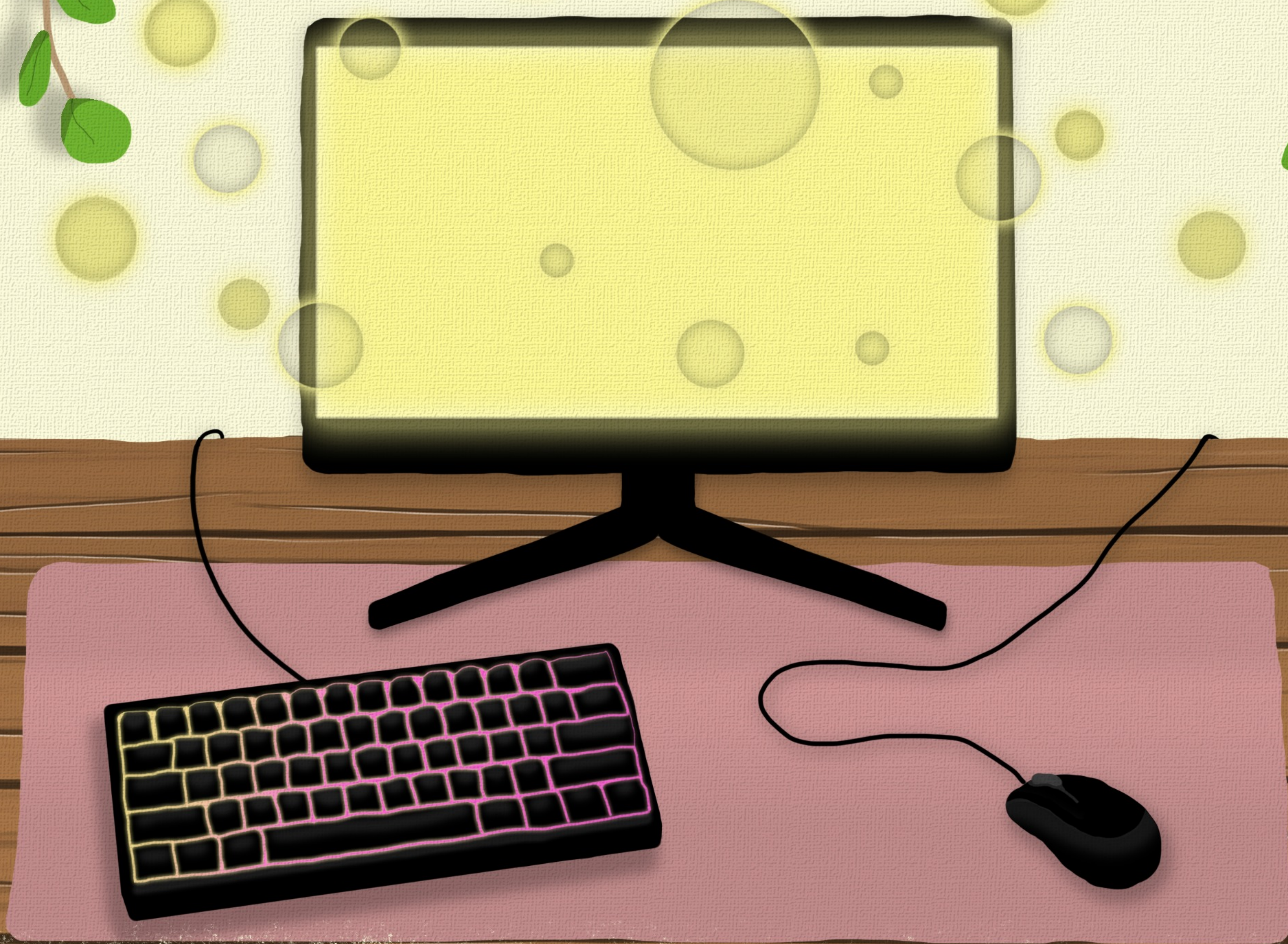


INDIE SHOWCASE

MAGAZINE EDITION



STEAM NEXT FEST
OCTOBER 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

ISSUE 00

CONTENTS



Page 1 | **Introduction**

Page 2-3 | **Highlights**

Page 4-5 | **Demo Games 1-4**
Game of Fourtune
The Pale Beyond
The Case of the Golden Idol
Diluvian Winds

Page 6-7 | **Demo Games 5-8**
The Entropy Centre
Dredge
Ship of Fools
Season: A letter to the future

Page 8 | **Demo Games 9-10**
Storyteller
Potionomics

Page 9 | **What's Next?**

The Steam Next Fest

Way back in December of 2019, the Steam Game Festival was born. It only lasted a couple of days and there were less than 15 games included. At the time for me, it was the coolest thing ever. 'What a good idea' I thought. Showcasing games to get them on peoples radars while giving us consumers an opportunity to try them out. It gave me serious PS1 demo disc vibes and I was immediatly on board. Since then, the festival has grown (and others have blossomed). Now, at one week long featuring hundreds upon hundreds of games, it is less about spotlighting a specific few games and more about providing a platform for many developers and publishers. For the gamers, Steam provides a pool, allowing anyone to dip their toes. What I like to do however, is dive in head first sporting fins, a snorkel and a pan, and scour for gold. It's usually there!

What is this magazine?

In this prototype I am going to highlight 10 of my favourite demos that I tried at the Steam Next Fest October 2022 Edition. I tend to lean more towards narrative and exploration in games as opposed to challenge and combat, so this list is created with that in mind. The tags I tend to expore the most are Adventure, Point and Click, Puzzle, Simulation, Management, and Visual Novel so expect to see a curated list leaning especially towards those.

Why?

Now that there are so many games taking part in these festivals , the pool I mentioned above can feel more like an ocean. It can be tough to know where to start. More and more creators and journalists are sharing their takes on the demos, so I thought I would try something a little different. Sometimes I will play a fantastic demo that I feel deserves so much more attention than it is getting and I want to shout about it from the rooftops, and that is one reason that I am making this magazine. Add in a dash of midnight inspiration and a sprinkle of personal challenge and here we are.



The Game of Fourtune *BlackLockGames*

Release Date: Q1 2023

The Pale Beyond *Bellular Studios*

Release Date: 2022

The Case of the Golden Idol *Color Gray Games*

Release Date: 13th October 2022

Diluvian Winds *Alambik Studio*

Release Date: TBD

The Entropy Centre *Stubby Games*

Release Date: 3rd November 2022

DREDGE *Black Salt Games*

Release Date: 2023

Ship of Fools *Fika Productions*

Release Date: 22nd November 2022

SEASON: A Letter to the Future *Scavengers Studio*

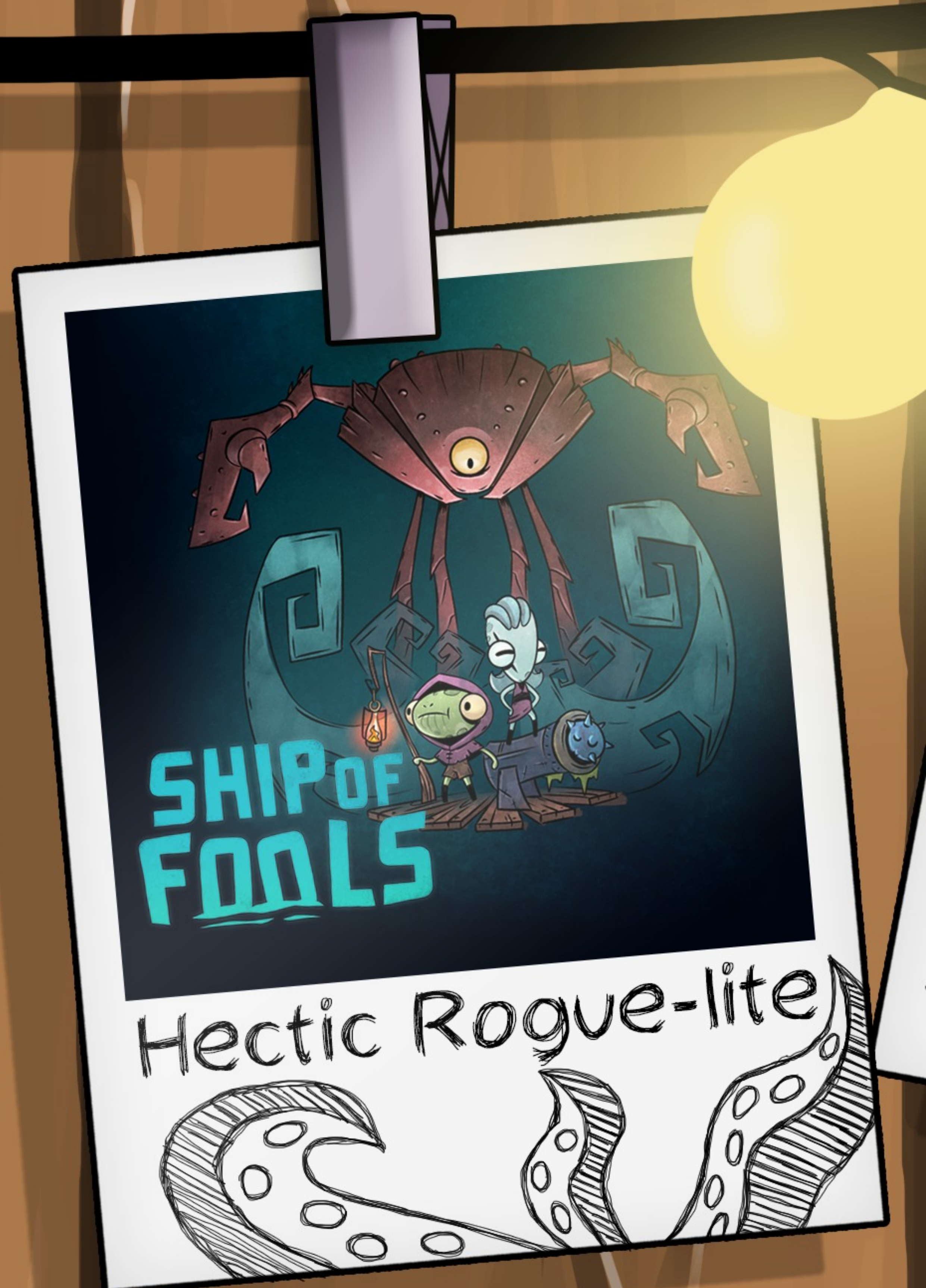
Release Date: Coming Soon

Storyteller *Daniel Benmergui*

Release Date: 23rd March 2023

Potionomics *Voracious Games*

Release Date: 17th October 2022





Fleeting Friend
Chill & Stress



Time
Mind-bending



More than fishing



Scrapbook
Simulator



Choice Puzzles
Cute and Funny



Colourful Characters
Potion making

The Game of Fourtune

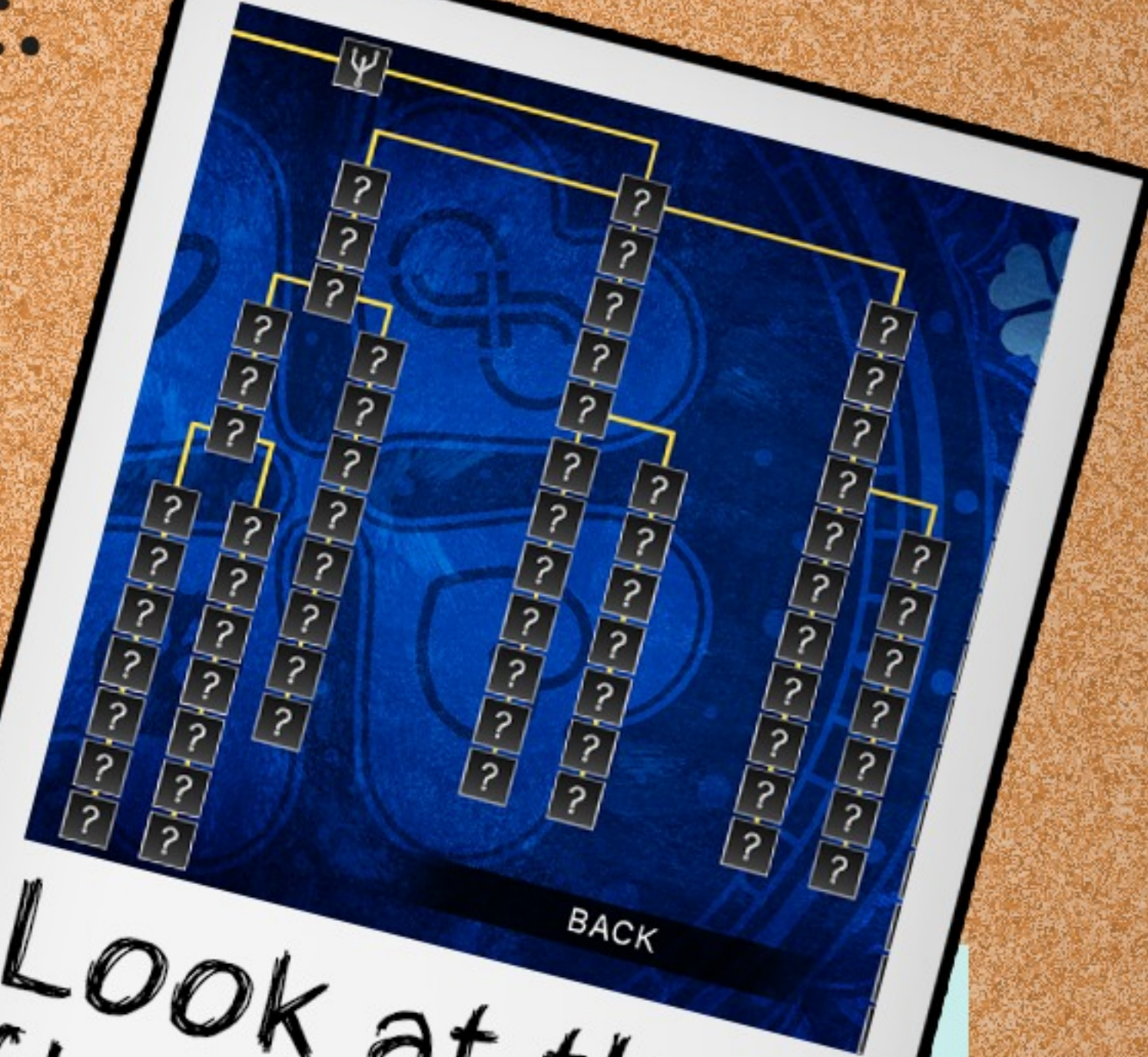
The Game of Fourtune is a death game visual novel. When I hear that, my mind immediatly jumps to the 'Zero Escape' series.



Definitily not a cult

While there are certain things that are reminiscent (ie. decision making and a flowchart) the game is fundamentally quite different. Tonally, the focus is on the characters and the mysteries. That sounds similar, except we are given a little more context about what we are doing up front, which makes the mysteries feel very different. This game doesn't contain the puzzle elements that some other Visual Novels do, but it feels better for it in my opinion. The games are clever and intense and my input of choices felt like enough, the writing does the rest. The hefty demo allows you to experience a huge chunk of the game. I played for 6 hours, reached an ending, and there was still more that I could do.

I highly recommend checking it out if this has piqued your interest!



Look at the flowchart



Prepare for some intensity

In The Pale Beyond, we join a voyage into the unknown in hopes

of finding a lost ship. Obstacles abound, it is up to us

to help manage our team in the

treacherous environment of this icy

expedition. The game presents you

with difficult decisions and I not only

had a fantastic time, but also an

immersive one. The balance of not just surviving but living - but not too much -

is a delicate one and is very fun to

navigate. Not to mention the drama,

mysteries and winning the peoples trust.

If you would like a 'Yes, Your Grace' like

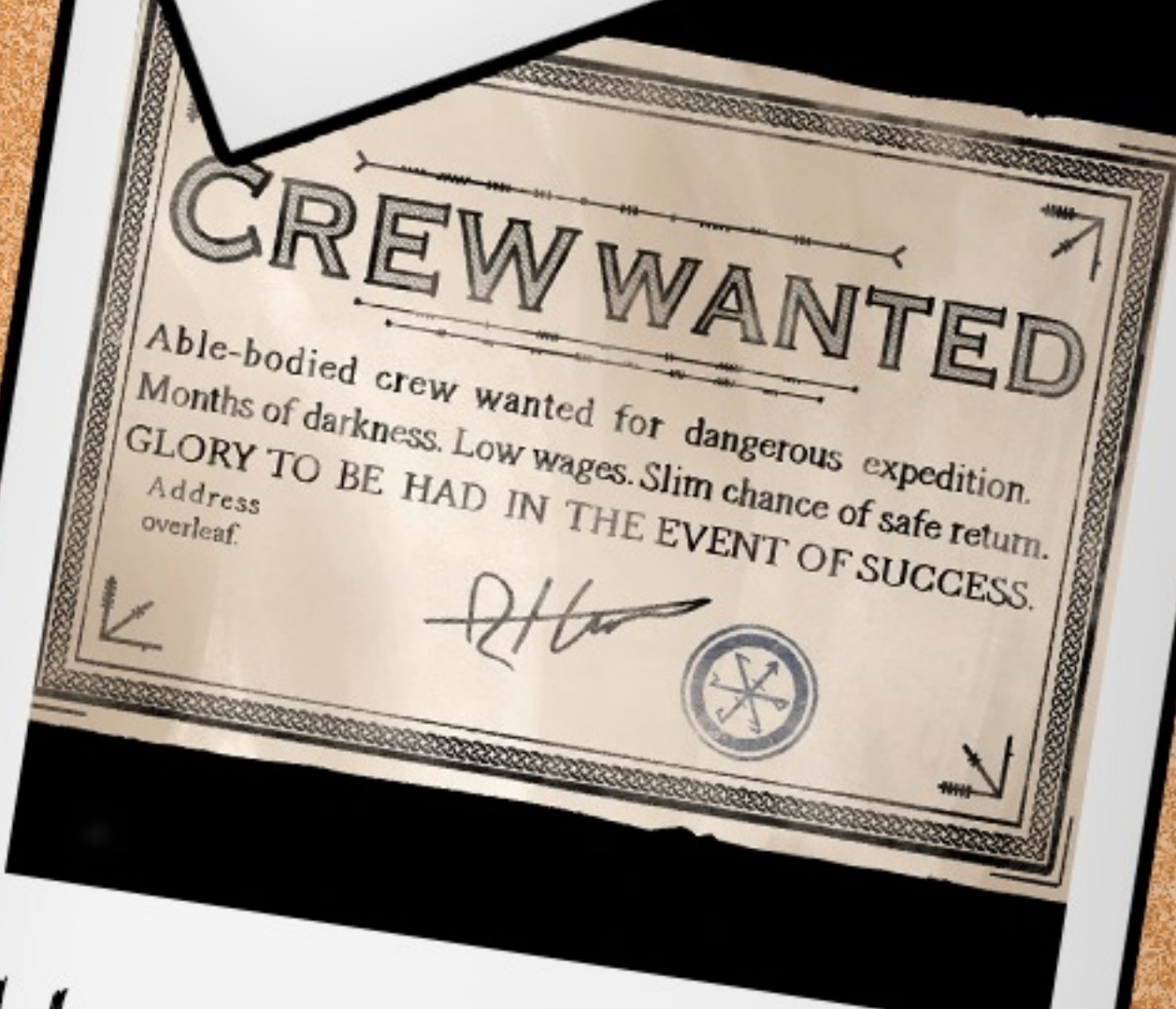
adventure on the open seas, this game could be for you.



Look at this excellent boi



I found me!



How could anyone not take this offer

The Case of the Golden Idol

The Case of the Golden Idol isn't your typical murder mystery game. Explore different scenarios, collecting clues and piecing them together in order to get the full picture of what is going on. Feeling classic and modern at the same time, you must use your deduction skills to decide whether things are as they seem. With some lovely pixel art and lively scenes, you will certainly never be bored. You need to not only use what you see, but your logical brain in order to make conclusions. I cannot wait to play the full game.



The mysterious Golden Idol



It was a long day



#Hot



Another day another dawn

Diluvian Winds



Everyone needs to chip in to keep the camp running



Cook different meals for different perks

Diluvian Winds is a game where the fleeting friends we make have a huge impact on keeping our place up and running. This is a game of juggling resources, where each period of time throughout the day presents opportunities to improve our shelter or the mood and skills of the animal friends within. Or not, depending on your management skills! Every species that graces your camp has different skills to bring to the table, and if we look after them then they will look after us. The style of the base building - the 2d block style placement - among other things reminded me of 'Spiritfarer', although the play is very different. This is not a real time strategy game which allows for lots of breathing room and chill, but you do have to be careful

with your decisions each day lest a spiral may befall you. I managed to win the demo but my base was extremely minimal, I immediately wanted to start again be more efficient and see how much better I could do.



THE ENTROPY CENTRE



The obvious comparison to The Entropy Centre is 'Portal'. A first person puzzle game using a super science device in order to solve puzzles in a facility, all the while being accompanied by an AI voice. What I think is important, is to recognise the differences. In the demo we are dealing with a time manipulation device, which opens up the possibilities for a whole different array of puzzles that have the scope to get very complex. My favourite thing though, is the world building.

There is a really interesting reason that we are doing what we are doing and I want to know more!



DREDGE

While I love games that allow catching and collecting things, I severely dislike fishing in real life so I almost didn't play this demo. What I discovered is that I love almost everything about the gameplay. By day you set out on your boat, catching fish and arranging your Tetris style inventory to maximise your space. By evening you return to town, sell your fish, upgrade your boat, and decide whether you dare venture out at night. Between the variety of equipment you want to build up to fish in different waters, catching them all, the side quests and the story, there is plenty to do.



SHIP OF FOOLS

Ship of Fools is a hectic rogue-lite in which you set sail into the wild seas ahead. While the game is made to be played co-operatively, I played solo and still had a very enjoyable time. On your voyage you will be managing your cannons, your ship and your harpoons. Fighting enemies is a lot of the gameplay and you can maneuver your cannons as you need, hopefully picking up interesting ammo as you go. To start with you can only carry three items on board so you have to choose wisely, because as you move onto the next encounter you will lose anything that isn't nailed down. It is a fun balance of preparation and on-the-fly decisions as you build your ship to survive whatever monstrosities lie ahead.



Get Wrecked... get it?



It's all in the soup.



Todd speaks for us all

SEASON

A letter from the past

This demo was clearly marked as only a showcase of certain elements of the game. We begin playing as Estelle, documenting her journey through her fictional hometown as she is about to leave for the first time. What I didn't realise, was that a core feature of this game was going to be creating a scrap book. You are encouraged to explore and take audio recordings and photographs, in order to capture moments and decorate your book.

The game is very pretty which allowed for many photos and presents the story of a town that is fearful of the outside world. We finish up by taking a ride on our bike, which made really nice use of the haptic triggers on my DualSense. Overall, A very chill experience.



Haptic Feedback



A Scrapbook within A Scrapbook



A game about moments

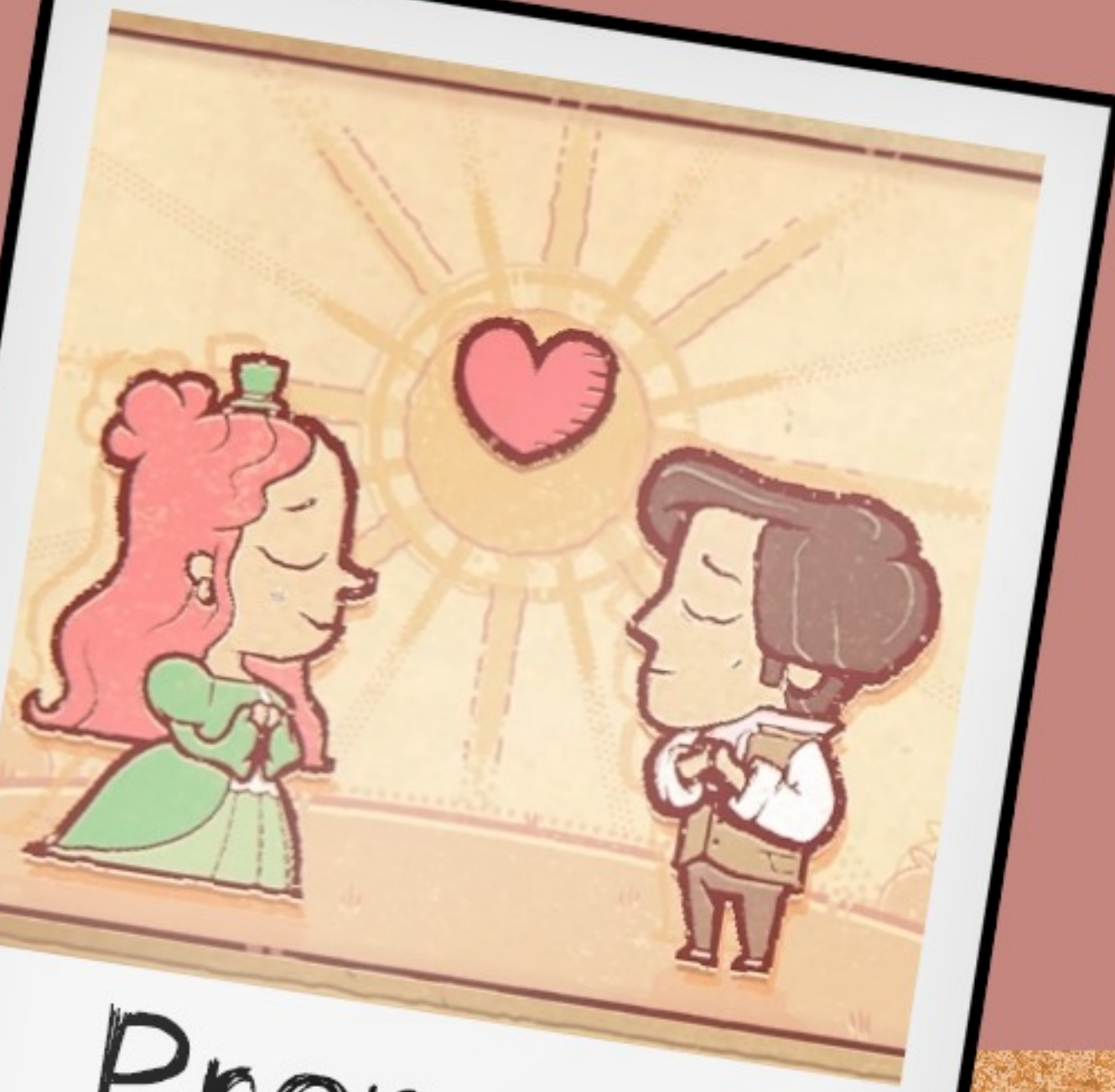
Storyteller

In Storyteller you are assisting in completing the stories on the page in front of you. It is your job to place different characters, scenarios and actions in order to tell a story that fits with the prompt. What is especially fun about this game is that different combinations lead to a different stories, even the very wrong ones. I had just as much fun finding all of the incorrect answers as I did finding something that worked. The drag and drop system works really well, the illustrations are charming and I was very sad when I ended the demo as I just wanted more.

Potionomics

I am not a huge deck building fan but I had to add Potionomics to my list, not only for the impact that it had but because I'm not sure there is anything else out there like it. It is colourful, bold and confident.

We play as Sylvia who has just inherited her uncles potion shop. However, this is no ordinary management game. In order to run this shop, you need to source ingredients to create potions in a crafting minigame. You then need to sharpen up your negotiations skills in order to sell them at a profit. This is the deck building part. Finally, you can get to know a cast of weird and wonderful characters who may teach you a trick or two. I think this could be a good entry point for people who are curious about the genre, but only if you are into the rest of the package too.



Prompt -
'Heartbreak'



Oh no..



Nailed it.



A relatable
expression



I may have dated
a walrus man



THE DRAMA

What's Next?

So.. What's next? The truth is, I don't really know! This magazine was a bit of an experiment. I wanted to see whether I could do it, but also whether anyone would be interested in it. That is yet to be seen, so I would say, if you have enjoyed this format and would like to see more, please reach out by any means below. I originally had grand plans of monthly magazines showcasing game service games (Game Pass, PS Plus etc) with some reviews, a monthly release calendar, Indie spotlights and other content. While I now realise that was a tad ambitious, feedback really helps me shape what I am going to do so. Realistically, at the very least I should be covering future festivals on my blog, and I have a weekly Indie Showcase series on YouTube.

Thank you to indie devs for the work that goes into creating these games, thank you to Steam for hosting these festivals, thank you to my members for making this possible, and thanks to you for taking the time to look at my project! You can find all of the games featured on Steam, if you would like to support them you can Wishlist and buy them there. Some of the demos are still available between festivals too!



Thank you!



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