



THE VIDEO GAME GENERATIONS NEWSLETTER

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Loading Screen

If you're reading this, you have my sincerest thanks. Reaching people who might find this interesting and entertaining is difficult when the only advertising I do is a single Threads/BlueSky/Twitter post when each issue is released.

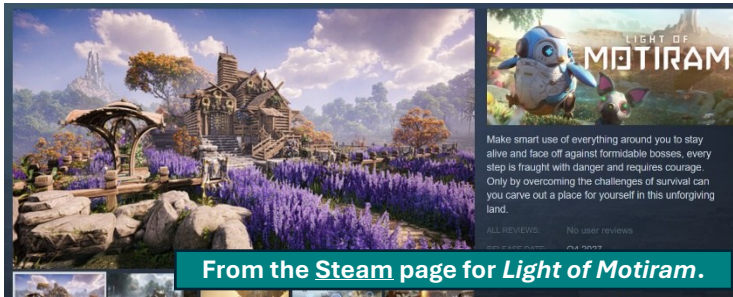
I just don't know whether I should promote it more or not. I don't want to become a pest, and some people are vehemently opposed to seeing AI-made artwork (even when used sparingly or to illustrate its shortcomings), but at the same time, I have a blast writing each issue, and I think it's entertaining.

But let's get going. This week, we go back to school!



Recent Events

Light of Motiram Makes Changes



From the [Steam](#) page for *Light of Motiram*.

Following up from something I mentioned in [issue #13](#), the makers of *Light of Motiram* (the game that prompted Sony to sue Tencent over its seemingly blatant rip-off of the *Horizon* series) have made a few changes to the game.

The changes seem superficial for now, with altered text and images appearing on the game's [Steam page](#). I'm no lawyer, but this seems like more of a move to buy time and downplay the similarities in response to the lawsuit, while they make more substantial changes to the game itself.

Without knowing the drama, anybody looking at that page now might be unlikely to make a connection between it and *Horizon* at all. For me, I'd probably see hints of a dozen other games (or none at all) in what they're currently marketing, before I saw any similarities to *Horizon* - and that's of course the point of it.

Source:

<https://gamerant.com/tencent-light-of-motiram-horizon-copy-changes-sony-lawsuit/>

FPS Classics *Heretic* and *Hexen* Return

I wasn't a big FPS guy back in the 90s. I've never played through these games, although I knew people who were big fans. But, with these remasters from the port wizards at Nightdive Studios now available on all modern platforms, maybe I should check them out.

Source:

<https://www.gamespot.com/articles/heretic-and-hexen-get-remastered-for-a-new-generation-to-experience/1100-6533795/>

Gamescom 2025 - Opening Night Live

Even though it's the biggest video game event each year, I've never paid much attention to it. I don't know why. Maybe it's because there was always a bigger spotlight on E3 here, and more recently, Summer Game Fest? Maybe it's because most of the announcements and news are things we already know about?

At any rate, it's that time of year again, and Geoff Keighley (again) hosts the big kick-off showcase "Opening Night Live", on Tuesday.

Everything confirmed (so far) seems to be stuff we already know about, like *Ghost of Yotei*, *Ninja Gaiden 4* and *The Outer Worlds 2*. I had fun predicting Summer Game Fest in an earlier issue, but I have no predictions for this.

With luck, there will be some fun news to include next week. If nothing else, I'm looking forward to whatever *Clair Obscur* music performance is in store for the show.

I'm linking IGN as a source, which I usually try to avoid because their pages are so cluttered with ads. It's especially difficult to browse IGN on my phone, but at least it's somewhat less of a chore on a PC screen.

Source:

<https://www.ign.com/articles/geoff-keighley-confirms-7-games-set-for-onl-on-tuesday-alongside-fallout-season-2-and-a-clair-obscur-expedition-33-music-performance>

Fallout Season 2

Something about *Fallout* Season 2 will also be at Opening Night Live; a new trailer, probably?



Source:

<https://x.com/thegameawards/status/1956026376663814624>

Let's Go Back to School

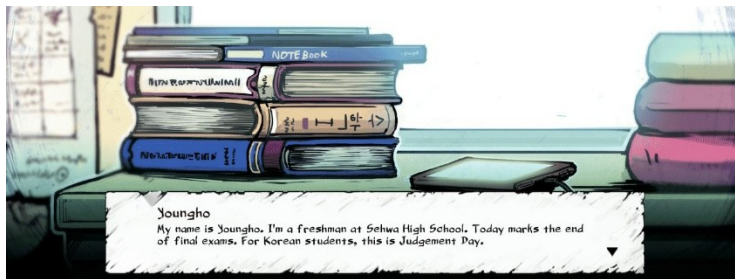
Greetings, students. My name is Mike, and I represent the Vocational Graduate Guidance Network (VGGN for short). Today, we're going to explore the pros and cons of several great options for your ongoing studies. These high schools, private schools, and military academies are accepting new students *now*.

You want to make the right choice, and we want you to make the right choice. Without further ado, let's take a look at these ten wonderful options for you to consider.

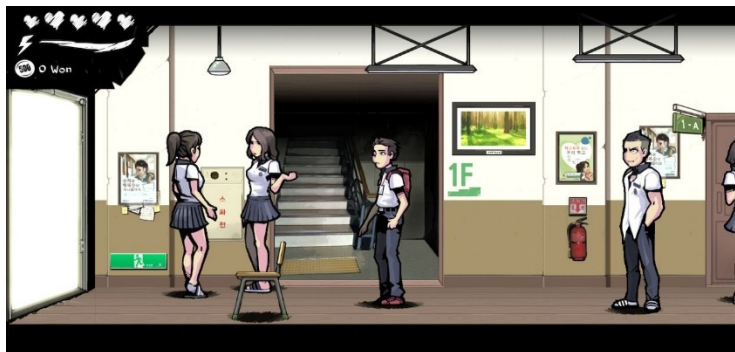
Sehwa High School

As seen in *The Coma: Recut*.

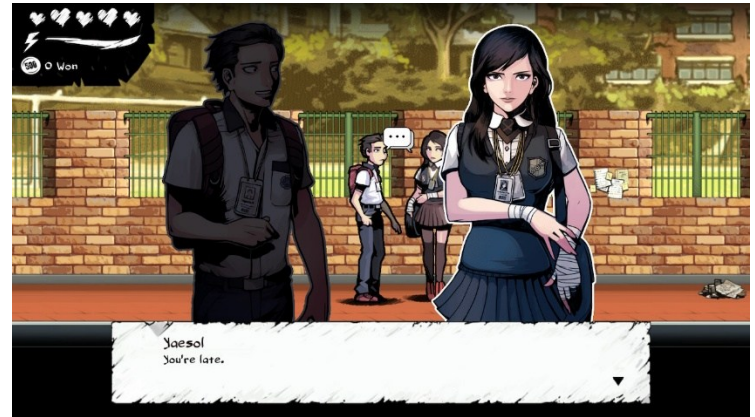
If you live in South Korea, let me recommend historic Sehwa High School. The students and staff are friendly, which can't be said about some of the other choices you'll see later.



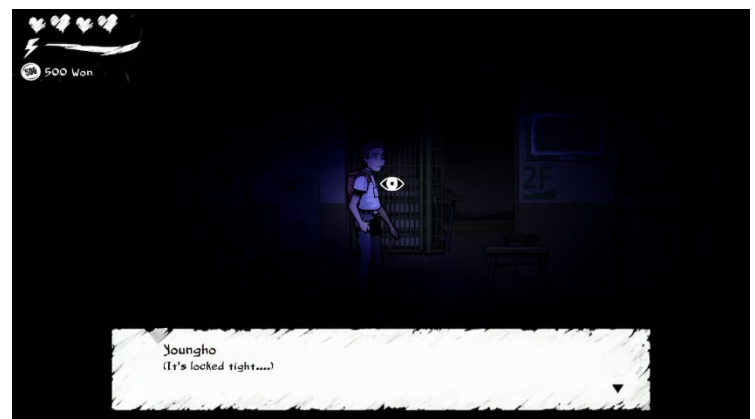
Okay, maybe not *all* the students are friendly, and maybe *one* teacher will become possessed and stalk you through a dark and twisted version of the school if you happen to fall asleep while taking your final exams, but that *rarely* happens.



Okay, maybe it happens often enough that they've given this alternate dimension a name (the "coma") but please don't let that deter you from considering Sehwa High School.



If you *do* get stuck in the "coma" and find yourself on the run from your terrifying homeroom teacher, rest assured that your skills in stealth and puzzle-solving won't go to waste. Deep pockets? Those will be critical as you pick up items to heal and help you survive these nightmarish encounters. Apply today or contact us directly for more information.



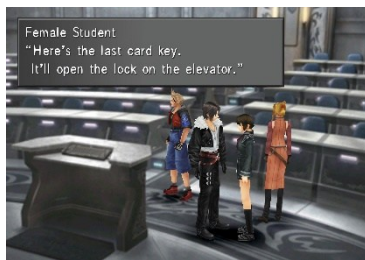
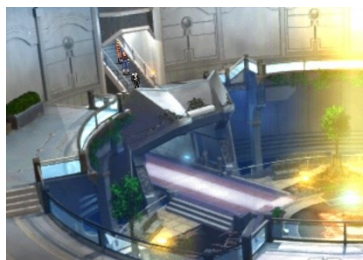
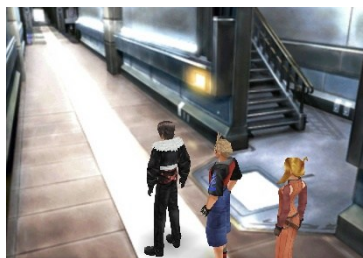
Balamb Garden

As seen in **Final Fantasy VIII Remastered**.

Have you ever dreamt of becoming a SeeD? These young men and women of the Island Continent are the best of the best. As a cadet, you will train to use GFs (Guardian Forces), which will allow you to summon godlike creatures and grind your enemies to dust.



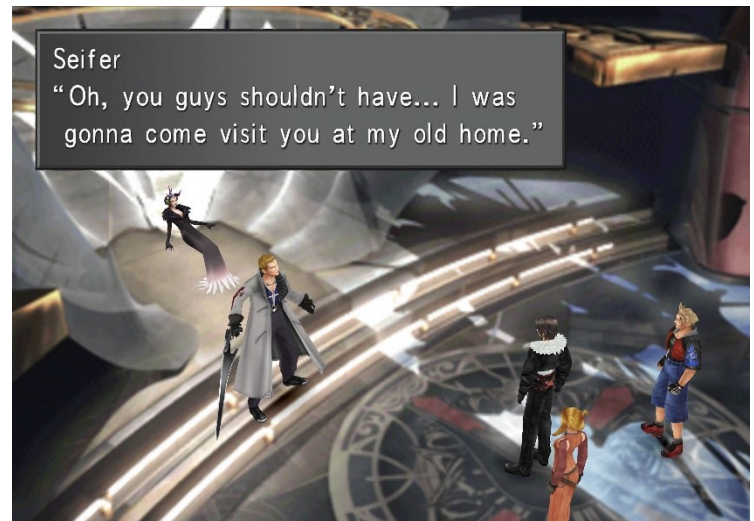
Visit and experience wonderful locations around campus with the friends you'll meet, and even hang out with an instructor!



You'll have plenty of opportunities to leave school and explore the island. If you survive the hostility of a rival cadet and become a SeeD, and study hard to finish your training, you might just be assigned to important missions that take you to the farthest reaches of this beautiful land.

In full disclosure, I should point out that the nation of Galbadia has of late become, how should I put this... a little conquest-y. This is mostly due to the influence of Edea, a sorceress with immense power and a penchant for world domination.

I say this not to scare you, but just to put it out there that you *might* end up having to confront her personally (with your friends, of course), and you *might* find that you have a personal past connection to her, but we don't need to go into that right now.



None of this should concern you or influence your decision, though. Even if you do get drawn into a quest to defend the world from an even bigger malevolent threat from the future, your training at Balamb Garden and the heroic missions you undertake following your graduation to full SeeD status will more than prepare you for what's to come.



Okay, it *might* require some grinding and a good deal of turn-based battling, but you'll get there. We at the VGGN are rooting for you. If you think Balamb Garden is the right fit for you, don't hesitate to enroll now!

Hope's Peak Academy

As seen in the *Danganronpa* series.

Technically, we represent Hope's Peak and the Ultimate Academy for Gifted Juveniles, but their features and qualities are largely the same. Well, one version of Hope's Peak is on an island. It might also exist only in virtual reality. For that matter, it's unclear if it exists at all, but I'm getting a little in the weeds here.



Are you the absolute *best* at anything?

To put it another way, are you an *ultimate*?

Some of their most famous students include Hiyoko Saionji (Ultimate Traditional Dancer), Chiaki Nanami (Ultimate Gamer), Kaito Momota (Ultimate Astronaut), Kirumi Tojo (Ultimate Maid), Sonia Nevermind (Ultimate Princess), Teruteru Hanamura (Ultimate Cook), Mikan Tsumiki (Ultimate Nurse), Celestia Ludenberg (Ultimate Gambler), Himiko Yumeno (Ultimate Magician), Sayaka Maizono (Ultimate Pop Sensation) and of course Kyoko Kirigiri (Ultimate Detective).



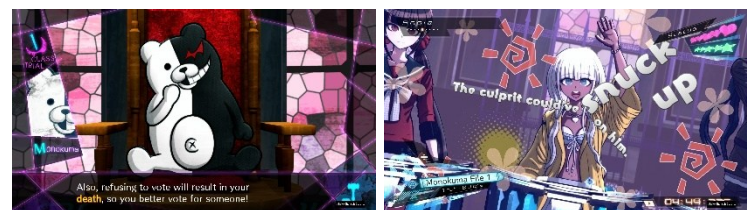
If the answer is a big resounding “NO”, don’t worry. You might join the ranks of Ultimate Lucky Students like Makoto Naegi and Nagito Komaeda, both admitted to Hope’s Peak by random chance in an enrollment lottery.



These schools have a strange fixation on including these students’ blood types on their report cards (a Japanese trend akin to Zodiac signs in categorizing personalities), and in the case of female students, their chest sizes, but I assure you, this is all normal.



The downside is minimal; very minimal. At worst, you must participate in a killing game administered by a psychotic robotic bear, masterminded by who knows who, and participate in class trials where the killer must be exposed and eliminated or else every other surviving student will be murdered instead. I assure you, though, it’s fine. It’s totally fine.



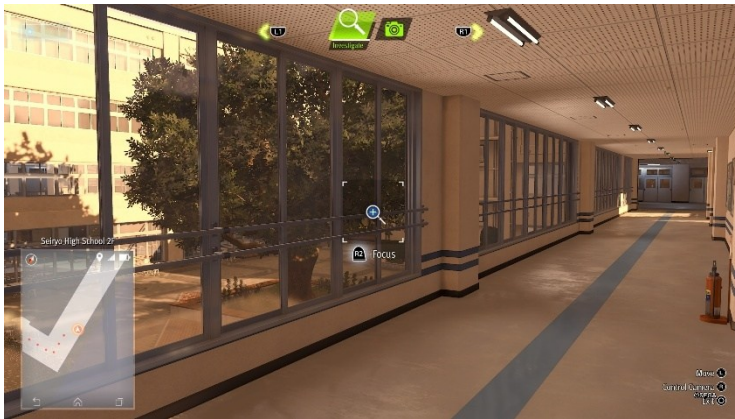
Seiryo High School

As seen in *Lost Judgment*.

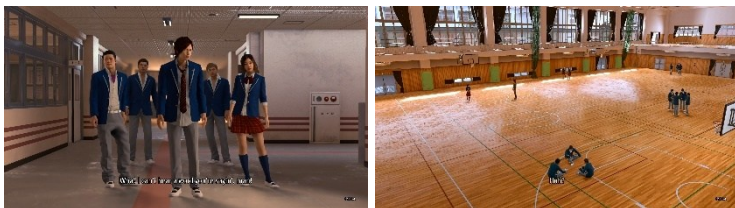
Situated in the urban Ijincho district of Yokohama, Japan, Seiryo High School may be a better (and safer) option for the majority of those seeking a change of scenery in their choice of high schools.



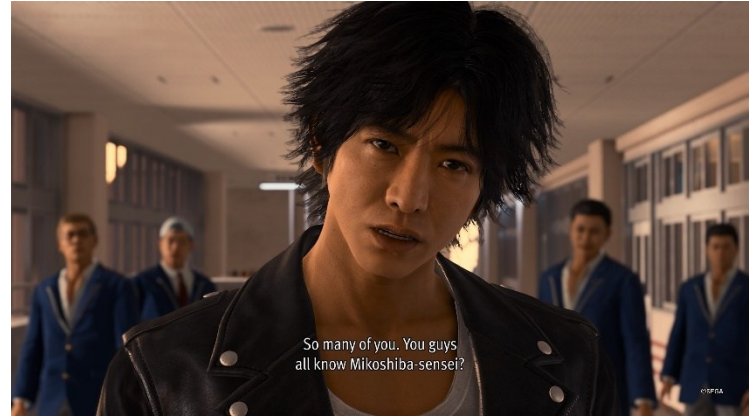
Here, you won't be dealing with all-powerful sorceresses, crazed maniacs, mechanical menaces, or possessed teachers looking to trap and skewer you in the school's darkened halls. Just look at this refreshing view!



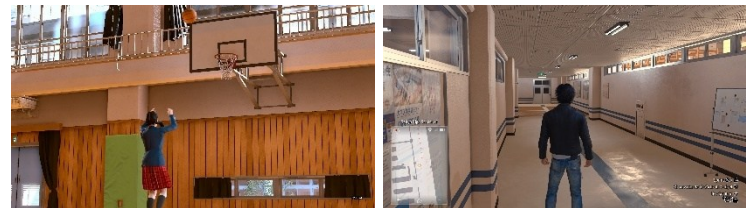
If you've ever heard about Seiryo High School, there's a good chance you've heard about its bullying epidemic that has gone unchecked for far too long. On that front, I'm pleased to share this exciting news.



The school's chairman has, in secret, hired famed local detective Takayuki Yagami to help root out the perpetrators and the underlying cause of this ongoing and pervasive issue.



Yagami-san is currently posing as a special consultant to the Mystery Research Club; a perfect way to blend in and appear less creepy than an older guy who isn't a teacher or otherwise part of the school's staff might otherwise. It's essential that he visits Seiryo regularly in the performance of his duties as a detective. You may also see him helping out members of the Dance and Robotics Clubs, among others, and I hear he plays a mean game of *Virtua Fighter 5* in the eSports club.



If you happen to see him running through the halls like a madman, hanging around for no apparent reason, or confronting rowdy students, just know he's doing it all for you.



Sakura High School

As seen in **13 Sentinels: Aegis Rim**.

This one is a treat. Have you ever wanted to go to high school in 1985? What if you could do that and travel to other times, such as 1945, 2025, 2065, and even 2105? Nobody is trying to kill you (at least not you in particular) and life there is pretty good. Sounds great, right?

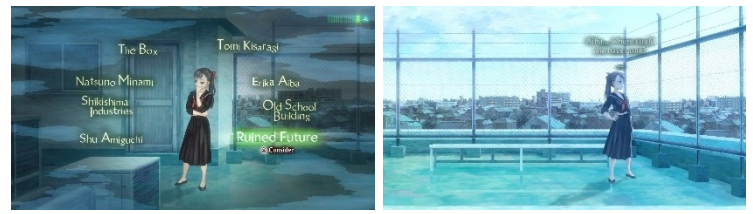


Now what if I told you the school and all the surrounding areas were decorated by the masterful artists at Vanillaware, known for their beautiful 2D artwork? Even better, right?



If you aren't yet convinced, let me tell you about the sentinels. These enormous mechs can only be summoned by special individuals. Teleporting into one does remove all your clothing, but trust me, it's for the best.

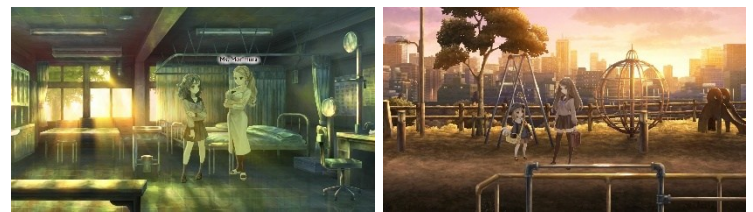
Why would you need a sentinel? Well, the city is sometimes invaded by enormous kaiju, and this is the only way to defend the city. These battles happen on a top-down map with a need for real-time tactical strategic thinking.



You won't be alone. There are thirteen of you, in fact, all with your own stories that unfold piece by piece, chapter by chapter, often in the order that interests you most. You'll meet new friends; maybe new enemies. Best of all, you'll be part of something big and important.



By now, you're probably expecting some shocking revelation that will make this choice an entirely unappealing one. For instance, in order to attend school here, you have to hide from vampires or narc on your friends. No, it's nothing like that, I assure you; just the kaiju.



Still, everything may not be as it seems, and then it may not be as *that* seems, and so on.



Blackwell Academy

As seen in *Life Is Strange*.

One of the most prestigious and worthwhile private high schools in the world is situated in picturesque Arcadia Bay, Oregon.



Blackwell Academy is known far and wide for its wonderful programs in arts and sciences. The photography class in particular is taught by an expert in the field, Mark Jefferson, who is totally somebody you will appreciate becoming acquainted with when you get to know more about him. He's known to put in extra one-on-one time with the best and brightest of students, so if the opportunity presents itself, don't miss out.



It's not unusual to hear an eclectic mix of indie folk and rock music as you settle into dorm life and make your way across campus to your next class. Remember, you're with the best of the best at Blackwell. Don't let a little thing like the recent murder of a student or cyber-bullying of another student get to you.

If by chance it does, now would be a good time to find out if you have any special skills. I don't mean the ability to paint a really great picture or do a mad kick-flip on your board. I mean something *really* useful, such as the ability to rewind time.



If you do possess such an ability, you're going to find it very useful in Arcadia Bay. Since local meteorologists may be unlikely to predict a catastrophic storm mere days away, your special talent will help keep you safe. Whether you use it to keep your best friend safe is up to you, but I trust you to make the right decision; I mean, if you had the power to rewind time, that is. That's silly, though, right?

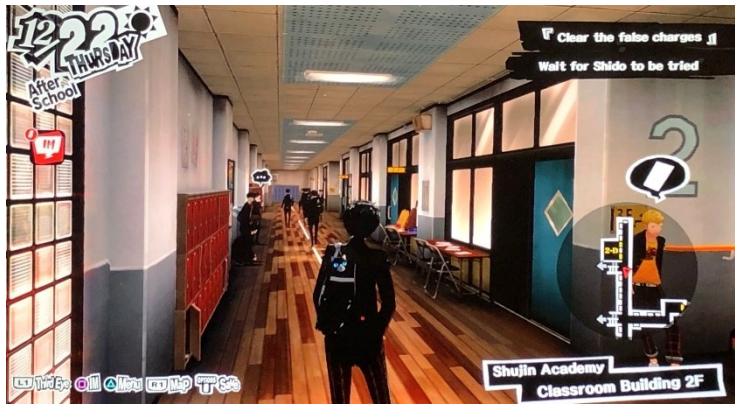


If I were you, though, I'd use it constantly. Say the wrong thing to a boy (or a girl)? Rewind! Don't like how that person reacted to what you just did? Do over! About to be cornered and killed by the same person who took the life of Rachel Amber, somebody who was very special to your reacquainted bestie Chloe? You guessed it. Hit that rewind button and make sure you live to rewind another day.

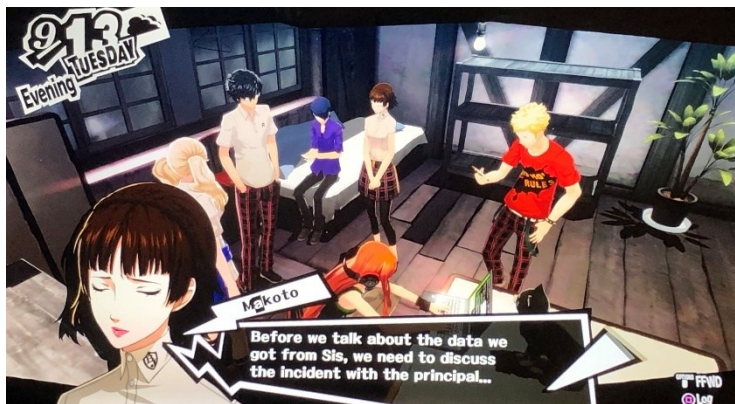
Shujin Academy

As seen in *Persona 5*.

In addition to Shujin Academy in Tokyo, VGGN also recommends St. Hermelin High School in Mikage-cho (as seen in *Persona 1*), Seven Sisters High School (*Persona 2*), Gekkoukan High School in Iwatodai (*Persona 3*), and Yasogami High School in Inaba (as seen in *Persona 4*). I'm far less familiar with the first two, but I can tell you many great reasons to consider any of the others.

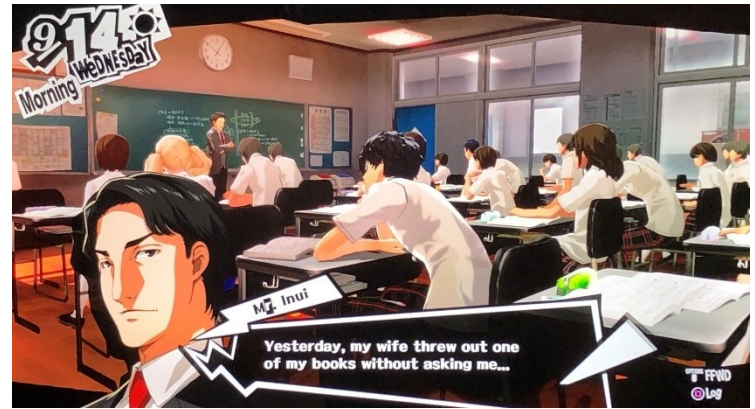


First of all, you won't meet better friends than the ones you'll meet at any of these schools. If you fall in with the right crowd, you may even discover a power within yourself, made stronger by your bonds with your friends and other close acquaintances.



What kind of hidden power, you may be wondering? Well, the power of the Persona, of course. With the help of demons (and believe me, the demon variety is staggering), you might be able to fight back against evil and even make your way into other worlds.

The teachers have a tendency to over-share, or in some cases become a little too close to their students, but it's all to be expected.



Of course, you'd rather know about these other worlds I mentioned, right? Whether it's the world of Tartarus that exists during the secret 25th hour of the day that nobody else is aware of, or a TV world manifested by the subconscious of certain individuals, or the mind palaces created by the twisted and demented desires of some of society's worst villains, you may be able to enter, explore, and do turn-based battle in these other worlds.



While any of these schools would make a fine choice if you're considering a move, my pick and recommendation remains Shujin Academy. From the sheer style of it, to the improvements you'll experience to everyday life, to the quality of the education you'll get, Shujin Academy has it all. You may even make friends with a talking cat. Cool, right?

There are even rumors of a group of Phantom Thieves out to steal the hearts of the truly wicked; a noble cause if ever there was one.

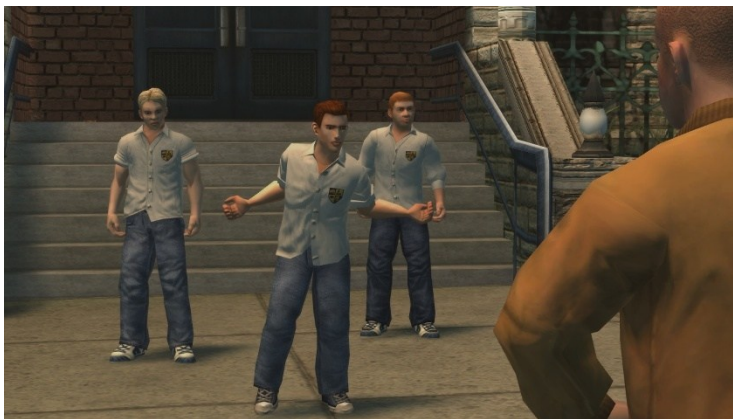
Bullworth Academy

As seen in **Bully: Scholarship Edition**.

I'll be honest. Enrolling at Bullworth is less about what you want, and more about what your parents or guardians want. As a boarding school for troubled students who have been rejected by or ejected from other more traditional schools, Bullworth Academy is often seen as a last resort.



The truly unlucky may experience harassment and bullying from the moment they arrive. I mean, literally, the moment you step through the front gate for the first time, there's a big chance you'll be accosted and chased by a group of kids intent on making your life as miserable as possible, starting with a series of taunts and even physical assault.



Get past that, though, and make it into the school, and you might be accosted by hall monitors for walking the wrong way. Get past that, and you may end up in a fist fight before even making it into your new dormitory.



Let me back up, though. I'm making this sound like a nightmare that no sane person would ever want to find themselves subjected to. While that *might* be true in a sense, this all comes with plenty of positives.



First of all, you'll enjoy your classes here. Well, probably. Each one is like a different mini-game. Who doesn't like mini-games?

There's a whole world outside Bullworth to explore. Run, ride your skateboard, or bike your way to many wonderful places, such as the carnival in Bullworth Vale or the beach.



More than anywhere else I've recommended (so far), you have the freedom to do what you want to do. Think of it like a sandbox. Take on side missions, or cause mischief with bombs and firecrackers, or get back at the bullies in any way you can. Start a collection. Go on a date. Your life at Bullworth Academy is yours.

Sure, this school is a little rough around the edges, but trust me, it was founded by some true Rockstars. It's overdue for a comeback!

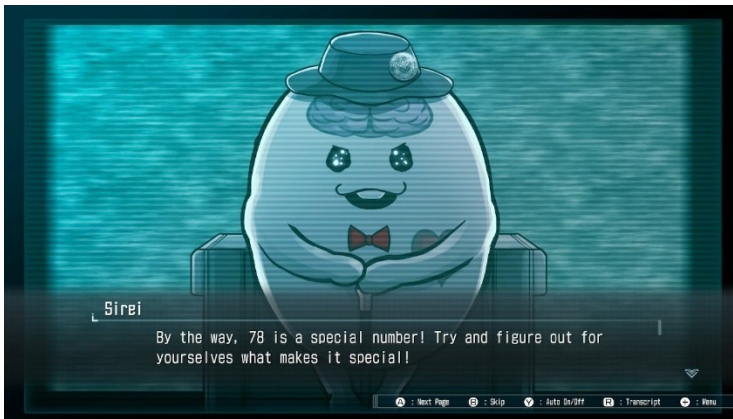
Last Defense Academy

As seen in *The Hundred Line*.

Let me introduce you to Last Defense Academy, founded by the same people who built Hope's Peak Academy (which you may remember from *Danganronpa*, which I described earlier in this pamphlet).



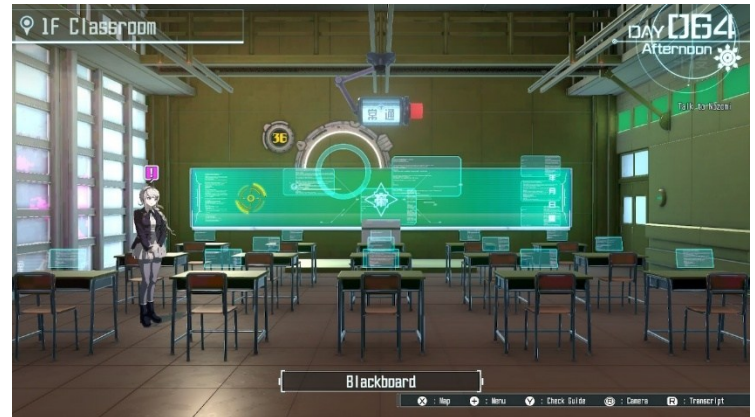
I know what you're thinking. There's going to be another evil little robot intent on making students murder each other and participate in tests of logic to solve each murder, right?



Wrong! Okay, well it depends on how things play out, but it won't be the robot's fault (he's mostly a good guy), and student-on-student murder is more insidious here (assuming it happens at all). If there's a killing game, maybe you're not killing *each other*.



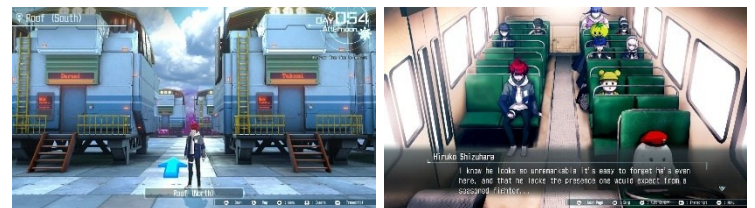
The thing about Last Defense Academy, and its sister campus Second To Last Defense Academy, is that you may not even need to enroll. You may just be enjoying your day under the dome of a city you can never leave, you're suddenly forced to fight weird little invaders using a super power you didn't know you had, and then *bam*, you wake up in class.



You also won't need to learn anything. It's not a school in the traditional sense. Instead, you're here to fight School Invaders, who are determined to breach the defenses and get to a huge secret contained within the school.



The less you know about this academy before participating, the better, but I will say this. History isn't always written in stone. Mistakes aren't always permanent, some journeys are their own reward even if ultimately unfruitful, and the comedy path is truly hysterical.



Hogwarts

School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

As seen in *Hogwarts Legacy*.

As we reach our final destination on this tour of prestigious campuses, I can't help but think I've saved the best for last.



Tucked away secretly in the highlands of Scotland, Hogwarts is a much-revered educational institution that has taught the age-old ways of witchcraft and wizardry for around a thousand years. If you're accepted, it's a great honor.



Professor Fig: It is, indeed. None of the faculty has ever heard of anyone being admitted to Hogwarts so late.

As downsides go, there are few. Chief among them is that muggles are not allowed. Only those with an aptitude and proven ability for magic are aware the school exists, much less would be accepted as a student. Often, many generations of a wizarding family are alumni.

I can't say what might happen in the future, such as the appearance of a truly evil force (let's call him "Voldemort" if we're naming things, but I suspect you're not supposed to) and a chosen one to defeat him (let's call him "Harry" which is as good a name as any). If such things were to happen, that would be at least a hundred years from now.



As with Bullworth Academy, you're free to explore in and around the campus of Hogwarts, which includes the nearby town of Hogsmeade, whether on foot or flying atop your trusty broomstick.



The region extends much farther, though, with plenty of exciting places to discover and quests to complete. It's truly a magical place.

If you're so inclined, you can even dabble in unforgivable curses, although you'd have to be a real Slytherin to go down that road. If you're more inclined toward house Gryffindor, Ravenclaw, or Hufflepuff, the sorting hat will make sure you end up where you want to be.

If by chance you can tap into ancient magic, you might be just the student they've been looking for, making your destiny an important one; a "chosen one" in your own right.

If you're able to attend Hogwarts, you absolutely should. It's a fantastic place to be, and an experience that will shape the wizard or witch you might become.

Back to School Wrap-up

So, have any of the schools I've presented today caught your eye? If not, here are a few other choices excluded from the main list.

San Romero High School

As seen in *Lollipop Chainsaw*.

This one is very much worth a look, although you might need to lug around the severed head of your significant other as you fend off a zombie invasion as violently as you can.

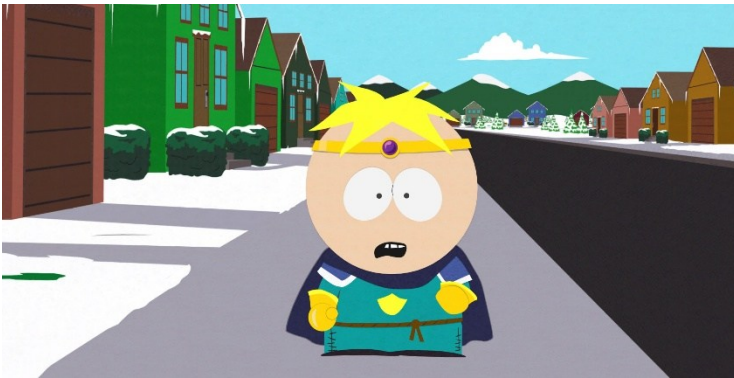
I didn't include San Romero because most of your time will be spent at places well beyond the school. It's important for sure, but you won't be attending any classes there.

South Park Elementary

As seen in *South Park: The Stick of Truth*.

This one is a great choice, but it's off-topic.

First, it's an elementary school. Second, the school itself is less important than South Park (at least in this context), and so it was omitted from the list. The town is overrun by little know-it-all brats playing dress-up as wizards and trolls (then later, as superheroes).



Jedi Academy on Yavin 4

As seen in *Star Wars Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy*.

I hear it's a good school, if you have the midichlorians for it. I've never been there.

Tokyo Denki University

As seen in *Steins;Gate Elite*.

If you're looking for secondary education, which wasn't the focus of this pamphlet, you may find Tokyo Denki University a good choice. Further, it's a real place. I mean, uh, these have all been real places, but this one is somehow extra extra real, if you get my drift.

Also, you'd likely find that it plays only a small role in your day-to-day life, so it was skipped.

Whispering Rock Psychic Summer Camp

As seen in *Psychonauts*.

Although for all intents and purposes it's very school-like, technically it's a summer camp. You'll need to be gifted with psychic abilities to enroll at Whispering Rock.



Officers Academy of Garreg Mach Monastery

As seen in *Fire Emblem: Three Houses*.

While this academy is reportedly fantastic, I have no experience with it myself. Sorry.

Rose Garden Orphanage

As seen in *Rule of Rose*.

School-adjacent, I suppose, but it's off topic.

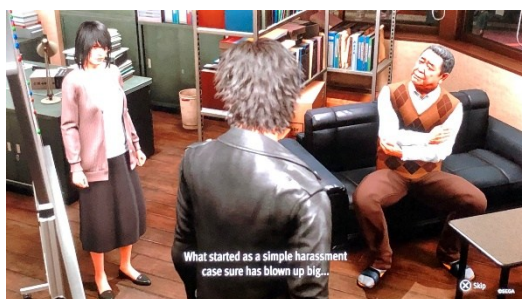
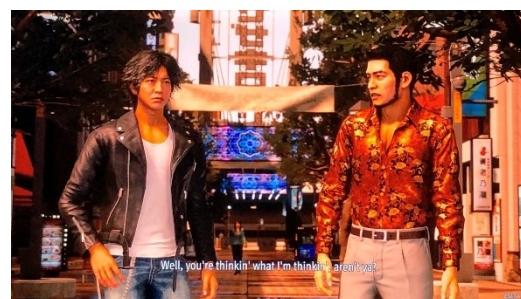
Sehwa High School

Seen in *White Day: A Labyrinth Named School*.

You may be thinking "wait, my friend, you already recommended Sehwa High School!"

I did! But this is a different one, and one I lack the experience with to recommend myself. I hear it's a frightening place to be, though.

Mini-Review: Lost Judgment



The original *Judgment* stood out to me possibly because it was the first Yakuza-series game (well, spin-off game) that I played. After *Yakuza: Like a Dragon* and now *Lost Judgment*, I'm no less impressed, but it's starting to make sense how these are getting cranked out so quickly.

There's plenty of asset reuse, from the two small open world cities present here, to the street thugs themselves, to the arcade and mini-games that add so much extra optional content.

What's impressive, though, is the scope and content of the story, and the original characters. *Lost Judgment* has its share of goofiness but there's heart and a message to a story that centers on the problem of school bullying (and the long-term effects) as Yagami goes undercover and finds an even larger conspiracy.

I really liked it.

Played on console: PS5.

Originally posted: 10/08/2021.

Mini-Review: Final Fantasy 8 Remastered



Why does this game get a bad rap? Sure, it took a few hours for it to grab me, but when it did, I was all in.

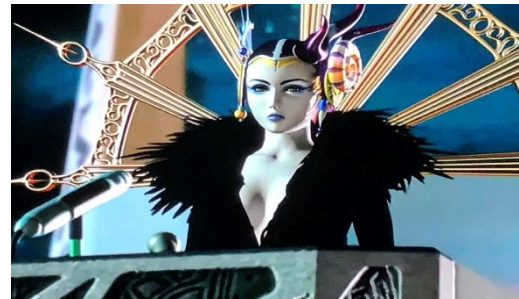
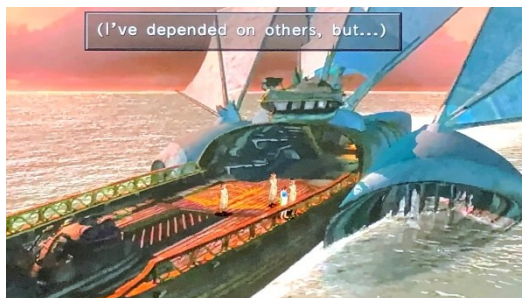
I admit, all three of the remastered version's built-in assists helped (aka cheats) - 3X game speed, no random battles, and HP/limit boost in battles. They can be turned on or off with L3 and R3; a benefit of playing this version.

Characters and animated elements get the higher-def treatment against the original pre-rendered backgrounds that look blurry now by comparison. It's jarring at first, but I got used to it.

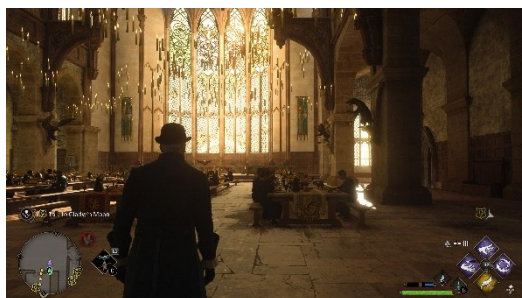
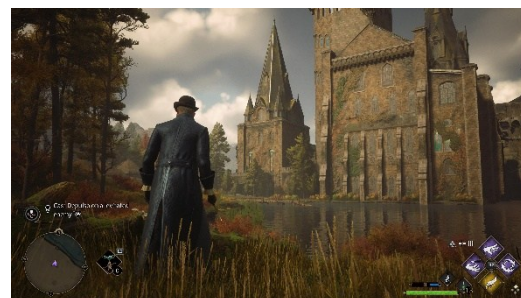
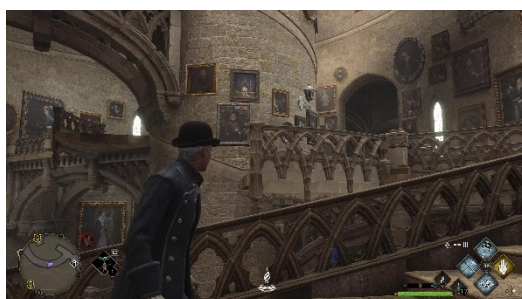
The art direction for all the pre-rendered stuff (cut-scenes, backgrounds) is still fantastic after all these years. It's a shame I never played it on PS1 (although it was my ex's favorite game).

Really cool story too; more sci-fi than I expected. An RPG classic.

*Played on console: PS4.
Originally posted: 10/24/2020.*



Mini-Review: Hogwarts Legacy



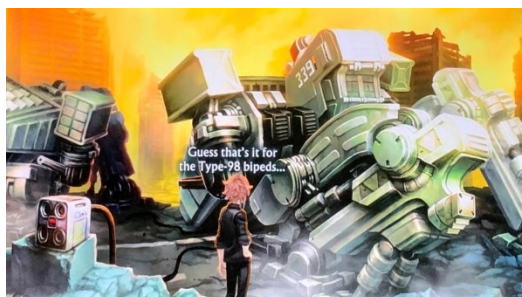
I've never been a super-fan (and I only ever read the first book), but the *Harry Potter* and *Fantastic Beasts* movies were a fun peek into a world of wizards and magic.

Hogwarts Legacy was leaked years ago as an "unannounced *Harry Potter* RPG" and I'm happy to report that it was worth the wait. The older tie-in games have their fans too (never got around to playing those), but this tells a story set a hundred (maybe more) years prior and it's about as good as I'd hoped for capturing Hogwarts, the interesting professors and the hero's journey of a new student becoming (excuse the cliché) the "chosen one".

It does lack the close-knit ensemble cast (you're mostly a loner with friends relegated to side-quests), but the magic, exploration, combat and sense of adventure help it shine. I enjoyed it!

Played on console: PS5.
Originally posted: 03/05/2023.

Mini-Review: 13 Sentinels – Aegis Rim



Vanillaware's hybrid of strategy RPG + visual novel + adventure game may have one (or two) too many twists to its mind-bending sci-fi story, but I enjoyed every moment.

It's great from the start, despite the strategy part being kind of confusing at first and the story being hard to follow and keep track of initially. With 13 protagonists, the stories weave together piece by piece in non-linear ways, but it all comes together.

Character flowcharts and story recap lists help. It didn't take long before it became the only game I wanted to play, setting aside a couple others while focusing on this.

I even ended up enjoying the strategy/RPG mech battles, especially after leveling up and getting the hang of it.

It's a unique game, but with that signature Vanillaware art style.

*Played on console: PS5.
Originally posted: 05/18/2021.*

Big Companies Are Not Your Friend

It's been too long since I've gone on an unhinged rant, but today's events have left me frazzled to the point where I just need to vent.

I had just finished lunch and headed upstairs to see if I could finish *Between Horizons*, a cool little indie game I've been playing for a few days (see my mini-review on [BlueSky](#)).

Rather than being able to hop back into the game on PS5, I was greeted by a bit of a delay and then a message stating that I couldn't "use this content" because I was "using it on another console" – a complete fabrication with no basis in reality.

It isn't the first time this has happened, but it's rare. This time, I was especially peeved because I intended to finish the game before moving on to the new *Mafia*. I decided to figure out how to contact PlayStation support.

I might as well have beaten my head against a wall for the next two hours, for all the good that did me. I did this on my phone (and at 53, I probably needed my glasses to avoid the excessive typos in my chat). The first tech was nameless; just "PlayStation Support".

I explained the problem as best I could but he or she or they kept wanting me to set the PS5 as my primary console. I explained (again, as best I could) that I shouldn't *have* to do that and in fact I *wouldn't* do that because my son's PS5 is set as primary so he can play my library of games too (something that wouldn't be possible otherwise). The way it works, and this person seemed oblivious to it, is that any user on the primary PS5 can play my games, and I can play them myself on any other console as long as it's on my own account.

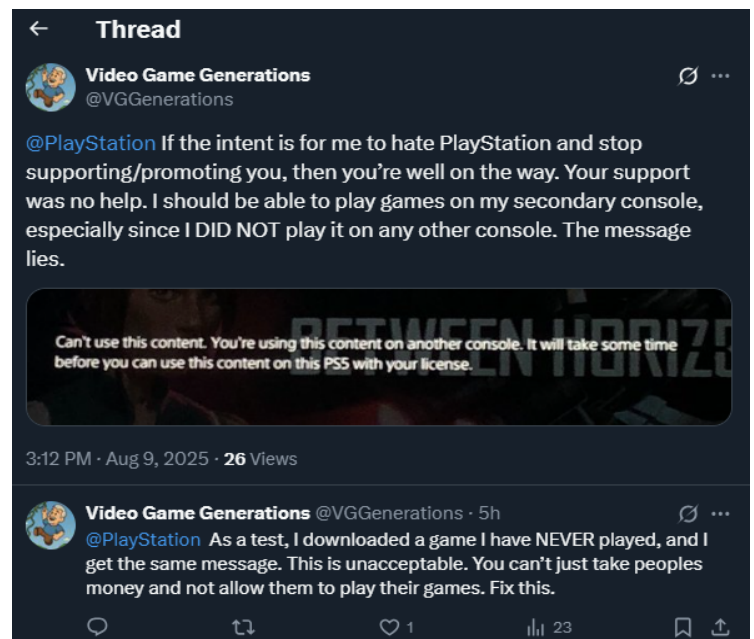
They continued missing the point that I had NOT played this game on another console.

The first person basically said they weren't going to help me if I wasn't going to set it as my primary console, and "hung up" the chat.

I started a second chat with yet another "PlayStation Support" person, explained my frustration and disappointment, but was treated to more of the same. He/she/they continued to miss the point that my console should not be telling me I had played this game on a different console, because in fact, I hadn't. Just to rule out the possibility, I checked with my son (he's not here this weekend), and he hadn't done it. Even so, that should *not* have prevented me from playing my own games.

We went around and around like this, with this person insisting I needed to make this my primary PS5, completely ignoring the point that I had not played the game elsewhere.

This one rudely disconnected as well, unable to understand or acknowledge the issue, let alone help. In my frustration, I posted an angry couple of messages to PlayStation on Twitter, although I don't expect a response. Days later, I still have not received one; as expected.



Big Companies Continued

This just further cements my disdain and distrust for digital game ecosystems. Platform holders and publishers are doing everything they can to complicate or even prevent game ownership for their customers. It isn't just PlayStation. It seems they all want in on the consumer-unfriendly action these days.

For years, Ubisoft and WB have been putting out incomplete disks that require the internet to download and install the full game. I don't mean the game needs an update or a patch to fix a few bugs and run better. I mean the disk literally does not contain the full game at all. When servers shut down in the future, these discs become worthless silver coasters.

Microsoft has been doing something similar lately with Xbox Series X releases on disk. It's just a download trigger, not the game.

For Nintendo's part, they've given a name to it. It's called "Game Key Cards" and third-party publishers are jumping on it as if it's the best thing since gaming was invented. As with those fake Xbox disks, these "key cards" not only become worthless without internet to install the game (and in the future when those services shut down), but you also gain the inconvenience and lack of security (you can lose or damage them) which completely voids the few benefits that digital games offer.

As I was reminded of today, dealing with big companies when issues arise is an exercise in pain and frustration. They simply don't care.

Last year, I was blocked from leaving game reviews on Amazon.com. I suspect it was the result of faulty AI moderation, but I have no idea, and nobody would help or tell me anything. At least my run-in with PlayStation support today was only a couple hours of their mind-numbing incompetence.

With Amazon, I tried for weeks to resolve the issue. I had started to see a disturbing pattern where they were rejecting my reviews on the basis of "violating their policies". When I asked *what* policy in particular, they would simply point me to a lengthy page of dos and don'ts, none of which I had actually violated.

The closest I came to an answer was a single response telling me that my screenshots for *Slitterhead* included scenes of graphic violence. First, no, they did not. Second, their official product page has a screenshot that actually *is* graphically violent. It wasn't just *Slitterhead*, though. I had to submit my reviews for *Indiana Jones and the Great Circle* and *Hellblade 2* multiple times before they appeared. After the first time (for each), I wasn't even getting a rejection – they were just silently deleted in the background.

Bear in mind, these are the same reviews and the same screenshots I include when I post them as mini-reviews on social media. They're the same mini-reviews I've been including in this newsletter. You can even see my *Slitterhead* review on [page 16 of issue #14](#). Nothing about that review violates any of their policies, yet after repeated attempts, I'm just as in the dark as I ever was.

Losing my ability to post product reviews was bad enough, but they removed every one of the dozens of reviews I had written over the past decade-plus. It was senseless, and none of my many attempts to get answers or get the problem resolved have worked. At some point, I gave up from frustration and began taking my business to Best Buy instead.

1 We apologize but Amazon has noticed some unusual reviewing activity on this account. As a result, all reviews submitted by this account have been removed and this account will no longer be able to contribute reviews and other content on Amazon. If you would like to learn more, please see our [community guidelines](#). To contact us about this decision, please email community-help@amazon.com.

Apologize, my butt. If you were truly sorry, Amazon, you'd fix your mistake, reinstate all my prior reviews, and remove this block.

The Final Stage

Catherine: Full Body

In last week's feature about the weirdest games I've played, I regret that I completely forgot about *Catherine*, the weird block-pushing puzzle game from Atlus. The story follows Vincent Brooks as he's tempted by another woman (Catherine) even though he's in a committed relation (with Katherine).

He ends up in an increasingly difficult nightmare where he's climbing a tower of blocks in his boxers with sheep's horns growing from his head. In the *Full Body* expanded and remastered version (which I only briefly played to get these screenshots), there's a third woman (Rin, or Qatherine), which would seem like a major change to the game I originally played. It was already weird enough when I played it on Xbox 360.

Had I remembered this game, I would have needed to rearrange things for the list, or even just included a few more (like *Choo-Choo Charles*, which I played recently). At some point, though, every game is a little weird and it becomes ridiculous to include them all. Still, this was a big and regrettable omission.



Weird-o-Meter: 80%

I always have fun putting each issue of VGGN together, and this week I decided to amuse myself by pitching each school like a recruiter might. My rant about the frustration of dealing with big companies was less fun, but hey, it's good to balance things out, right?

On the August 8th episode of *Kinda Funny Games Daily*, Blessing and Mike went on a tangent about "little guys" in video games; in particular, sidekicks and companions. There was some discussion on whether Mimir in the newer *God of War* duology counts as a "little guy" or a full-grown man.



Left to right: Clank, BB Lou, Dexter, BD-1, and Diddy Kong.

This seems like as good a topic as any for a VGGN feature, so I'm tentatively planning to make my own sidekicks tier list. Who will end up in the D or F tiers, and who will be S-tier? I don't know, but as usual, I may try to limit it to just the sidekicks from games I've played.

For that matter, I don't know if it will *just* be sidekicks (or if other kinds of companions will be on-topic), and just "little guys" or what. I'm still workshopping it in my head.

End Credits

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