THE VIDEO GAME GENERATIONS NEWSLETTER

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Issue #17 – August 30, 2025

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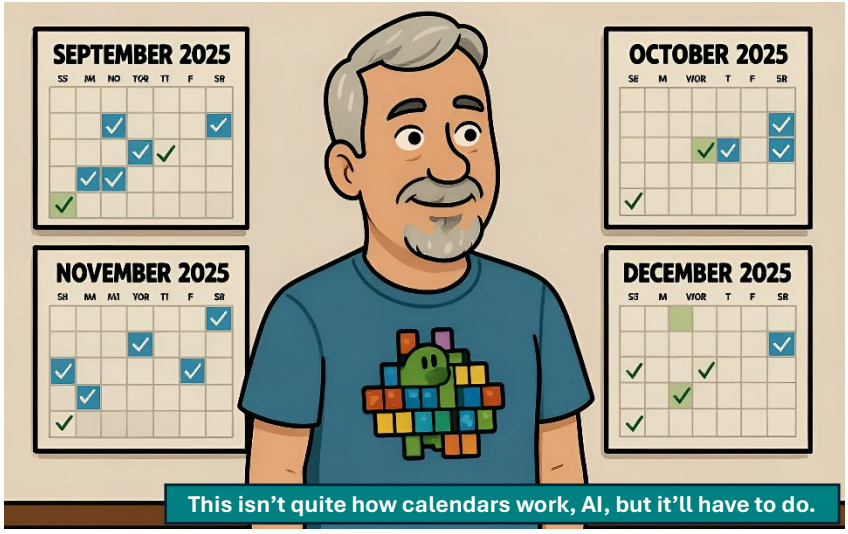
Loading Screen

This week, I don't have a feature themed around actors in games, the weirdest of games, schools in games, Portal-likes, or anything of that sort. It's just a low-key list of sixteen games set to release in the remainder of 2025 that I'm looking forward to.



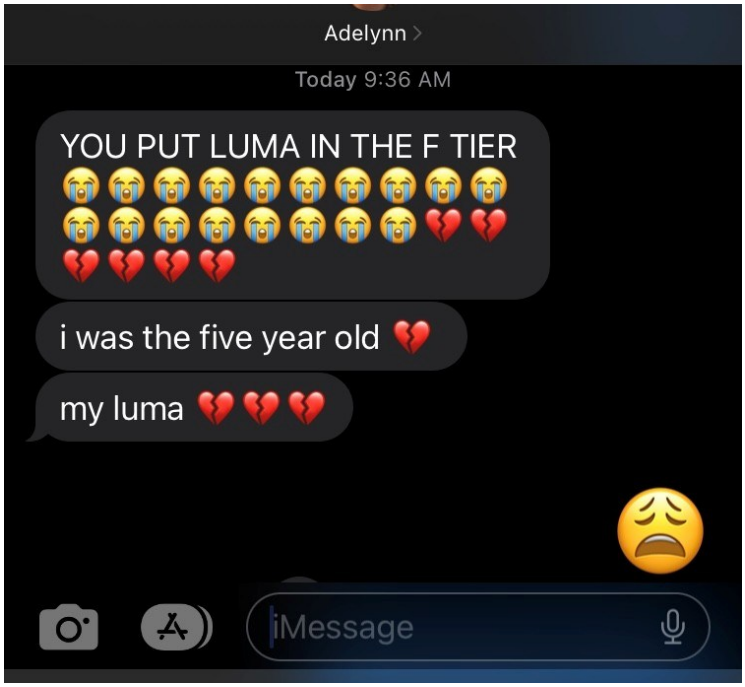
I've also been reflecting on why it's so difficult to disappoint me when it comes to games, and why it's tough for me to say a game is "bad" even if everybody else thinks so. I write about that on page 9 in a feature called *Do Today's Gamers Actually Like Games*, although (spoiler) there's no clear answer. It just takes a lot to sour me on a game (for example, I wasn't a big fan of *TellTale's Game of Thrones*). In keeping with that theme, this week's mini-reviews are eight games I enjoyed, but they scored in the 60s or lower on Metacritic.

Recent Events

Correction to Last Week's Feature

Last week, I ranked my top thirty "little guy" sidekicks and companions in video games. In doing so, I made a huge mistake and put the awesome helper star Luma from *Super Mario Galaxy 2* in the "F" tier. The correct placement should have been #1 in the "S" tier.

This may or may not have anything to do with a text message I received from my oldest child mere minutes after publishing the issue:



Also, happy birthday to her (now 20 years old) and sorry for this egregious and unforgivable mistake. I'll try to do better next time.

==========

Clair Obscur Is Meant to Be a Series

Filed under "duh, of course", Sandfall Interactive will make another *Clair Obscur* game. I guess the news here is that this is the name of the series, not the individual game. Will it be set in the same "world" though?

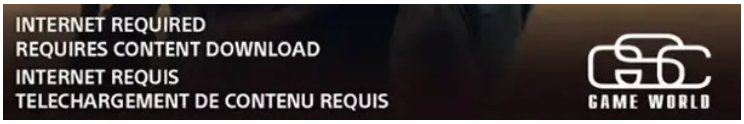
Source:
https://www.ign.com/articles/yes-another-clair-obscur-game-is-coming-expedition-33-is-one-of-the-stories-that-we-want-to-tell-in-this-franchise-teases-director

S.T.A.L.K.E.R. 2 Comes to PS5 on 11/20

When it launched into GamePass on Xbox, I played about half an hour of it. For whatever reason, I just couldn't get into it. I reached a point where I was supposed to do something with an electrified node (I forget the details), but I kept messing it up somehow. I just never went back to it. I feel like it *would* be my kind of game if I just gave it another chance.

Plaion (the publisher) announced on Twitter that it's releasing November 20th for PS5. My first thought was to ask if it's getting a physical release, and whether it's actually all on disc:

They said yes, and so I immediately went online to Best Buy intending to put in my pre-order. Before I did, though, I noticed this bit of troubling text on the front case art:



This *always* means the full game is not, in fact, on the disc, right? I could see "internet required" if it was a multiplayer game (it's not), but the "requires content download" leaves little room for doubt. I don't like this trend. Sure, it's a shame too many games are buggier without a day-one patch, but to not have a full base version of the game on disc at all... you hate to see it.

My Most Anticipated Upcoming Releases

The rest of 2025 in gaming is finally in focus. We now know *Hollow Knight: Silksong* is imminent, and we know *Grand Theft Auto 6* has a release date set for *next* year. Many of my most anticipated games are vaguely set for 2026 as well (or even later).

When I envisioned a more low-key feature for this week, my plan was to write about *all* the upcoming games I'm excited for. My plan has changed, for a few reasons.

For one, I did something similar after Summer Game Fest, back in issue #6, when I ranked my top 20 SGF announcements. It seems unnecessary to go over it all again, especially since most of them aren't releasing in 2025.

For two, if I write about them all *now*, I'd have a similar problem later if I wanted to focus another future issue on upcoming releases.

For three, I had planned to focus on the announcements from Gamescom Opening Night Live, at least in part, which I wasn't able to write about last week. While there *are* quite a few games I'm interested in, very few would rank highly on my "most anticipated" list.

What I've decided to do instead is focus on just the games releasing the rest of this year, and just the ones I plan to play (where "plan to" is on a scale from "eventually" to "immediately").

For those of you who may be new to the newsletter and haven't followed my social media mini-reviews (or the VGG podcast way before that), this might serve as a peek into what kinds of games you can expect me to play and write about over the next few months.

These are games with a higher profile. I also mix things up by playing older games from my backlog and random indie games that get far less attention but look interesting to me, so this won't be *everything* I'll be playing; but it's a good start.

A Game Release Rant

I'm somebody who tries to avoid knowing too much about a game before playing it, but just revisiting trailers for these games to grab some screenshots reminds me that I must be part of a very tiny minority in that regard. All I need is a little bit. I don't want to see extended gameplay videos and full scenes from every part of a game before I've had a chance to play it myself.

Official trailers and marketing material pose enough of a problem, but the days leading up to the launch of any high-profile game tend to be a minefield of spoilers (not just about the story, but about what kind of experience the game provides), impossible to escape without avoiding social media and podcasts and the gaming internet in general. People with early access (reviewers, mainly) sure like to let you know they have a game, and everything they think about it, taking away all the mystery and discovery. Although many people see it as a red flag, I *like* when review embargoes are as close to the release date as possible.

Often, it doesn't matter though. I can't remember the last time I played a game of any note where I *didn't* go in with other people's opinions already floating around in my head. I guess I envy people who *don't* keep up with gaming news and podcasts. Sure, I post my mini-reviews and write my articles here, but it's usually days, weeks, sometimes months later, since I don't get games early and I don't have a whole team. It's just me.

So, while attempting to learn just enough to know I'm interested but not so much that I spoil the experience before even getting my hands on these games, these are some bigger releases for the rest of 2025 that I'm most excited for, and a bit about why I'm looking forward to them.

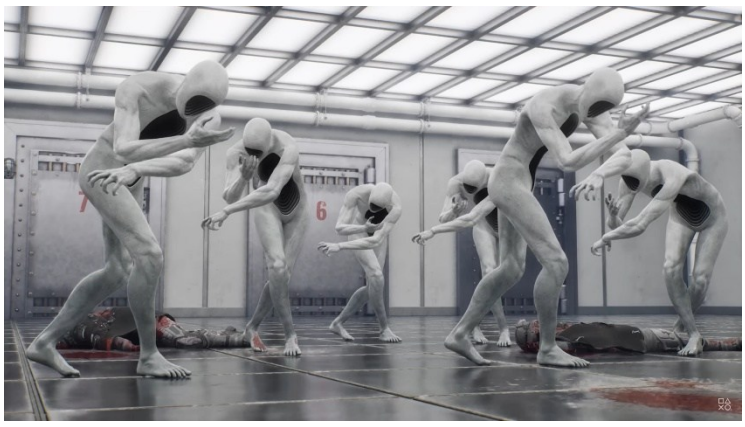
Hell is Us

Releasing: September 4th, 2025.
Day 1 Purchase? Yeah, I have it pre-ordered.
Prioritizing It? Yes, if at all possible.

When I can, I try to plan what I'm playing so that I'm ready to start certain games the day they release. That usually means not starting a big 100-hour RPG the week before one of my most anticipated releases, for instance. It gets tough when several games release on the same day or close to it, so I have to prioritize. Even games releasing a week or two apart can pose a problem if they're longer games.

That's what "prioritizing it" means, for each game I write about here. It's whether I plan to get to this game as soon as it releases or as soon as I'm done with my prior game (whichever comes first), or if it's one I'll get to during one of those later release gaps.

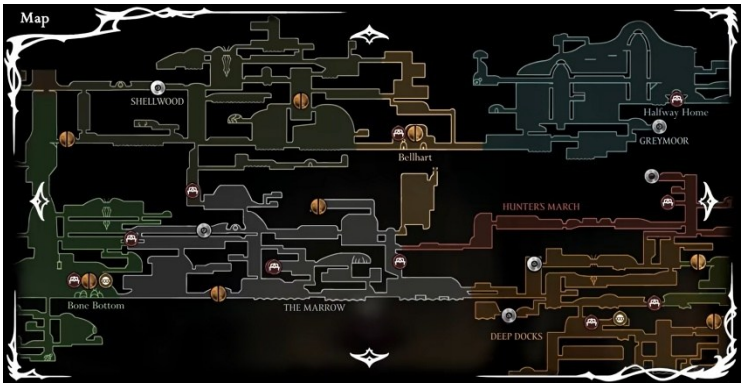
Hell is Us was in the latter category until I just got a refresher on it now. This looks like exactly my kind of game; a third person action adventure with a weird vibe and nothing at all generic about it; and it's only a week away.



Hollow Knight - Silksong

Releasing: September 4th, 2025.
Day 1 Purchase? Undecided. Probably not.
Prioritizing It? That's not my current plan.

Other games have been scrambling to get out of the way of this *Hollow Knight* sequel, now that we know it's just around the corner. I'm sure it's going to be fantastic (the original game was), but unless *Hell is Us* gets delayed in its final week, I'm not prioritizing *Silksong*. I need to be in the mood for a big, difficult Metroidvania. Plans can change, but right now, I'll be happy to buy and play it later.



Cronos - The New Dawn

Releasing: September 5th, 2025.
Day 1 Purchase? Yes, I pre-ordered it.
Prioritizing It? No, but I wish I could.

I haven't played a *bad* Bloober Team game. Even ones the cool kids might call "mid" were games I enjoyed. Their *Silent Hill 2* remake propelled them to another level, though. If this wasn't releasing the day after *Hell is Us*, or in an already-packed September, I might prioritize it. As it stands, I hope to get to it at least in October, the "spooky" month.

Borderlands 4

Releasing: September 12th, 2025.
Day 1 Purchase? Yes, it's pre-ordered.
Prioritizing It? Most likely, yes.

Aside from a couple very brief attempts with co-op, I've played the whole mainline *Borderlands* series in solo single-player. My hope is that this doesn't lean too much into the co-op, but as long as it sticks to the prior formula, I should be OK.

This is another game where there is way too much already out there about it, in the form of official deep dive gameplay trailers, character reveals, and more. Luckily, I'm less worried about getting the experience of the game spoiled, given that I expect it to be very much like the prior games I already played.

Dying Light - The Beast

Releasing: September 19th, 2025.
Day 1 Purchase? No, it's digital only.
Prioritizing It? No, not planning to.

I liked *Dying Light* and its sequel, *Stay Human* well enough, but this one has been on the lower end of my hype scale.

As far as I can tell, it's only releasing digitally. I wouldn't write off the chance at a physical release, but full price several months later after it's already "old" would be a shame.

Its lineage goes back to *Dead Island* and its sequels, which I *loved*. Different developer now, but *Dead Island 2* from 2023 was in my top 5 that year, if not top 3; fantastic game.

Silent Hill f

Releasing: September 25th, 2025.
Day 1 Purchase? Yes, I pre-ordered it.
Prioritizing It? I'd like to, but we'll see.

My theory was always that the "f" stands for "five" as in *Silent Hill 5*. Sure, there have been quite a few unnumbered entries in the series, but my hope was that this would be Konami taking the series back to numbered entries.

That doesn't seem to be what's happening, but we got the *SH2* remake, we're getting this, we're getting a full remake of the first game, and we're getting whatever *Silent Hill: Townfall* is. It *does* seem like Silent Hill is back. There's even a third movie in the works, although I never even watched the second one.

Ghost of Yotei

Releasing: October 2nd, 2025.
Day 1 Purchase? Probably not.
Prioritizing It? Probably not.

The most likely scenario for *Ghost of Yōtei* is that it'll be critically acclaimed, a contender for GOTY, and the FOMO will get to me. That aside, I haven't been hyped for this game *at all*, despite loving *Ghost of Tsushima* and knowing that this game looks fantastic.

Maybe it's just a matter of not being in the mood for *another* open world game set in historical Japan; seems silly, I know. I do plan to play it. I just don't know if it'll be at launch.

Little Nightmares III

Releasing: October 10th, 2025.
Day 1 Purchase? Yes, it's pre-ordered.
Prioritizing It? No, I may still be catching up.

The first two games were great. I especially enjoyed the weird little twist introduced in one of the chapters in the expansion for the original game. It's kind of hard to believe this third game is really coming out this year. It seems like it's been delayed repeatedly.

If Supermassive Games sticks to the style of the earlier Tarsier Studios games, we're in for a weird, atmospheric 2.5D side-scrolling puzzle adventure in the vein of *Limbo* and *Inside*. The trailer I've seen gives me hope.

Keeper

Releasing: October 17th, 2025.
Day 1 Purchase? No, but maybe GamePass.
Prioritizing It? Possibly. It might fit into a gap.

Okay, *Keeper* (from Double Fine) may not fit everybody's definition of a "big release" or a "high profile game" but hear me out. It's from Double Fine. That's all I really need to know.

It isn't getting a physical release (boo) and it's not releasing on PlayStation (boo, but DF is owned by Microsoft now and I guess they're still keeping *some* of their stuff exclusive), but I have a few more GamePass Ultimate codes I can redeem. I usually try to play several Xbox games at once when I do, although that didn't work so well earlier this year when I only managed to get through *South of Midnight* on my one-month code. Part of that is because writing the newsletter means I'm gaming less.

Ninja Gaiden 4

Releasing: October 21st, 2025.
Day 1 Purchase? No, I'm probably waiting.
Prioritizing It? No, unless I play on GamePass.

If I *do* redeem a code for a month of GamePass to play *Keeper*, maybe that'll be my time to play *Ninja Gaiden 4*. I still want to play *Doom: The Dark Ages*, *Avowed*, and the *ES4 Oblivion* remake. Not long after this, *The Outer Worlds 2* releases, so it might be good to make the most of GamePass. I stopped subscribing monthly a long time ago, but I picked up a few codes on sale to redeem.

Ordinarily I'd buy it on disc, but for a game that's lower on my "must play" list, $70 + tax seems like a bad decision. Value is of course subjective, but I can't imagine feeling like I missed out if I wait a few months for a sale, assuming I don't play it on GamePass first.

Tormented Souls 2

Releasing: October 23rd, 2025.
Day 1 Purchase? Yes, I pre-ordered it long ago.
Prioritizing It? Not necessarily. Maybe.

The first game was excellent (aside from the voice acting), and I've been looking forward to this sequel despite numerous delays. It's another that might not fit everybody's view of a big high-profile game, but it is to me.

The Outer Worlds 2

Releasing: October 29th, 2025.
Day 1 Purchase? No; see comments below.
Prioritizing It? I would like to, but we'll see.

I would pay $70 + tax to play this at launch if it was actually releasing physically. Technically it is, but it's one of those "requires internet" discs, meaning they aren't even putting a full 1.0 launch version on it. What's even the point of a physical disc when the publisher can't be bothered to include the entire game?

It's not something I fault developer Obsidian for, and this is still high on my anticipation list. I'll either wait for a huge price drop (my upper limit on digital and "fake" disks is about $20) or just play it with GamePass Ultimate.

Mina the Hollower

Releasing: October 31st, 2025.
Day 1 Purchase? I'm undecided.
Prioritizing It? Realistically, probably not.

This game looks fantastic. It's from Yacht Club games (they made *Shovel Knight*) and it looks set to be another retro-inspired masterpiece with an 8-bit aesthetic. If it's getting a physical release, it hasn't been officially announced. I might have to buy it digitally, even if it exceeds my usual $15 to $20 ceiling.

Call of Duty - Black Ops 7

Releasing: November 14th, 2025.
Day 1 Purchase? No.
Prioritizing It? Unlikely, but maybe.

Microsoft and Activision will do just fine with *Call of Duty* without my day-1 purchase. It's another that apparently won't have a base 1.0 version fully on disc (let's not normalize this), but another I can just play on GamePass.

Last year, I did that with *Black Ops 6* during my end-of-year holiday time off work, and the single-player campaign was incredible. I have no doubt I'll enjoy this year's game – it looks cool and trippy and over-the-top – but I also don't mind waiting a while before I do.

Octopath Traveler 0

Releasing: December 4th, 2025.
Day 1 Purchase? Not currently pre-ordered.
Prioritizing It? Highly unlikely.

Despite loving the original *Octopath Traveler*, I never got around to playing *OT2*, and that's despite universal praise, an 85 on Metacritic, and the fact that I already bought my copy.

Now, I'm looking forward to OT0 yet facing the realization that I *probably* won't play it at launch. Lately, I've caught myself being way less eager to start games (like epic RPGs) that I know will take weeks for me to finish.

Metroid Prime 4 - Beyond

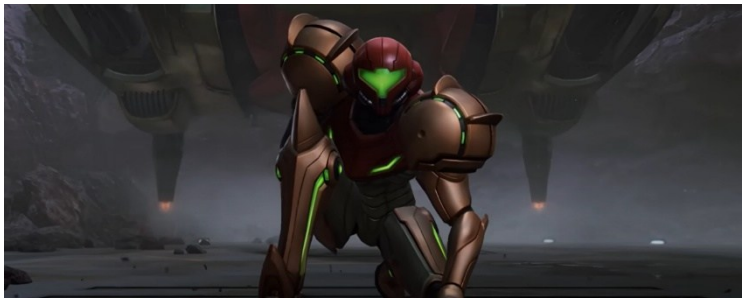
Releasing: Still in 2025, supposedly.
Day 1 Purchase? Absolutely.
Prioritizing It? Without a doubt.

I preordered *MP4* many years ago, on Amazon, back when they were doing 20% off game pre-orders for Prime members. Years later, they cancelled it. Or maybe I did. At this point, it doesn't seem to be up for pre-order anywhere I've looked.

If I was to wager one way or the other, I'd bet on it being delayed into 2026. There's rumor of a Nintendo Direct happening in September, and if it does, they *have* to give a release date then, right? If it's a no-show, that almost certainly means we aren't seeing it this year.

Still, Nintendo *has* been saying it's still on schedule for 2025, and they *haven't* been saying it's delayed, so we'll see. You never know with Nintendo. They could give us a new trailer and a firm release date for later this year at any time. It would make sense to see it at the rumored direct, though.

I don't (yet) own a Switch 2. The whole price hike on games (even if it wasn't as drastic and pervasive as it seemed initially) and the ridiculousness of "game key cards" plus my big backlog on the consoles I already own has kept my hype level pretty low. As long as *MP4* doesn't get *cancelled* for Switch 1, and as long as it's not reportedly a total disaster on the older hardware (okay, I guess sometimes knowing people's opinions in advance can be helpful), I plan to get it for my original Switch.



What We Don't Know

Aside from Metroid Prime 4, I didn't include anything with a nebulous "2025" release window. A big reason for that is because who the heck knows which of these (if any) will be delayed into next year.

For example, *Judas* (Ken Levine's next game; he's the guy behind *System Shock 2* and the *Bioshock* series) was supposed to be released this year. They just put up Dev Log about the game, but I don't see any reason to think it'll release this year.

Dispatch looks interesting. It seems to be part resource management sim (with superheroes as the resource), part visual novel, and part TellTale-style adventure game (which makes sense, given that Ad Hoc Studio is made up of former TellTale folks). It's still set for 2025, but without a firm release date.

The Eternal Life of Goldman looks fun, and I've had it pre-ordered for what feels like forever. It's supposed to be out later this year.

Routine also looks interesting. It looks to be a sci-fi horror game coming out "this year" unless it's delayed. I don't know much else.

I never get excited about a new Pokémon, but *Z-A does* have a release date (October 16th) and is sure to be highly anticipated by others.

I've heard positive things about *Battlefield 6*. I only ever played *Battlefield 1* (not the first game; it was whichever entry they actually put the number "1" after the title). I wouldn't say it's on my personal must-play list though.

I should play the first *The Wolf Among Us* before the sequel, but I probably have plenty of time. It has a release window of "this year" but that seems unlikely to me.

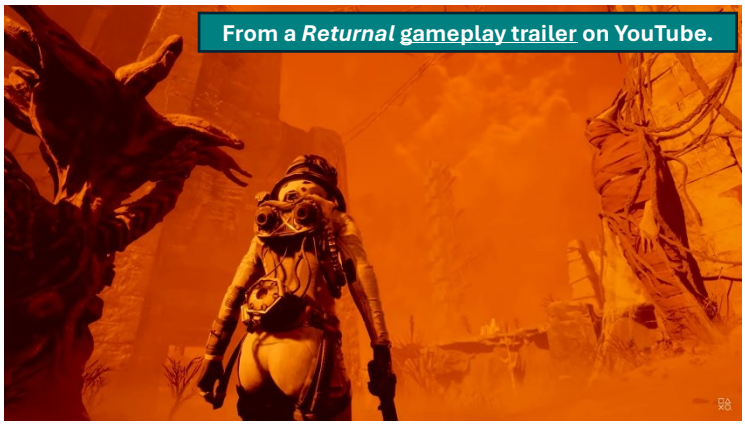
There's a third *Styx* game (*Blades of Greed*), slated for Fall 2025. I never even finished the first game (despite liking it) because I kept reloading whenever I'd get spotted.

Do Today's Gamers Actually Like Games?

I thought about calling this segment *Is There Something Wrong with Me*, because I often find a big disconnect between my enjoyment of games and popular opinions around them.

This isn't the first time I've written about this. Back in issue #2 I wrote about toxicity and flippant negativity when it comes to video game discussions (*Room Enough for Everything*), often from a very vocal and somewhat militant minority that want people to think a boogeyman called "woke" is ruining the games industry. In issue #6 I wrote about the growing trend of pile-on negativity, where grifters focus on games (often before they're even released) looking for flaws to pick apart for clout and clicks (*We Demand Perfection*).

Usually, I like (or even love) games that most other gamers consider bad. Less often, a very popular and well-loved game just doesn't click for me. I can usually recognize it as a good (or great) game, but something just keeps me from putting it on the pedestal that other people do. At the risk of convincing you that there *is* something wrong with me, examples include *Undertale*, *Returnal*, and *Zelda: Breath of the Wild*.



From a *Returnal* gameplay trailer on YouTube.

I'm not out there making fun of those games, though. I don't post memes and crack jokes every time they're mentioned on social media. It would be foolish to call them bad games, because they aren't. They just didn't click *for me*. Yet there's a mob mentality when it comes to the reputation of games. To some people, if an influencer says a game is bad, it simply is.

I don't think it works for dissenting opinions and outliers, hence the mob mentality. If I did have a big audience (I don't) and a wide reach (I don't), it's still unlikely anybody would put much stock in me saying *Breath of the Wild* wouldn't make my top 100 games of all time. It's true, but that's not a popular opinion.

For gamers who keep up with podcasts, videos on YouTube, news, and especially social media, a picture is painted without ever playing most of these games. If I asked such a gamer to put each of these games into two buckets labeled "good" and "bad", I can almost guarantee I know what they'd do, whether they've played them all or not.

(1) *Ghost of Tsushima*, (2) *MindsEye*, (3) *Baldur's Gate 3*, (4) *Lord of the Rings: Gollum*, (5) *Resident Evil 4*, (6) *Forspoken*.

Unless you're me, you'd probably end up with each bucket containing three games, back and forth between "good" (odd numbers) and "bad" (even numbers). You can do that purely on each game's reputation alone and probably feel very confident that you're right.

Aside from *Gollum*, which I haven't played, I enjoyed them all. I recognize the differences in these games, but I would rarely put *any* game into the "bad" bucket. *MindsEye* had some problems, sure, but the way it's maligned and mocked by pretty much everybody is bizarre to me. It was fun, it ran fine after an early patch (at least on PS5 Pro), and it's a game with a linear mission structure (much the way *Mafia: The Old Country* is) with an open world serving only to get you from place to place. Calling it an "empty open world game" is disingenuous and misleading.

To me, an even wilder take is that *Forspoken* was bad. I loved that game; and it's not like I just woke up from a coma and started playing games for the first time since the 1980s, with no basis for comparison and no concept of what video games should be now. Why is it, then, that I can (usually) see the good in games and enjoy the games that everybody else insists are bad?

Maybe I'm just lucky, and with luck, maybe I'll never become so jaded and disinterested that I'm unable to just play for fun and enjoy these games.

Mini-Review: Forspoken

PS5 Metacritic Score: **64/100**

***C**yberpunk 2077*. *Days Gone*. *Mass Effect: Andromeda*. *Biomutant*. Every once in a while, the collective internet decides to clown on, or disregard as worthless, a game that, IMO, should have been a huge hit.

The reasons vary, from latching on to specific instances of dialogue or facial animations, to the severity of glitches (*CP2077* should have been next-gen only) to the social media echo chamber of "well, I heard it was bad, so I'm going to mock it every time I see it mentioned."

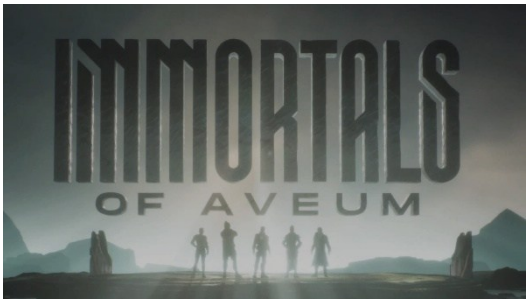
Such is the case with *Forspoken*, a game I just finished and absolutely loved. Much of what the critics took as negatives, I found to be positives.

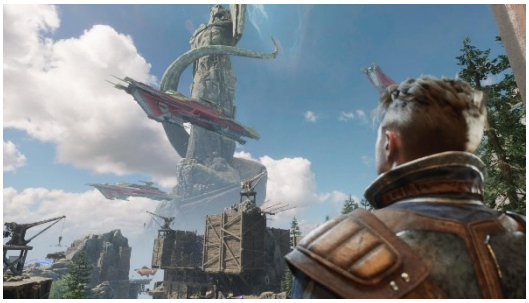
The parkour and combat variety, especially late-game, is **chef's kiss** superb. Great story, though the twists were predictable.

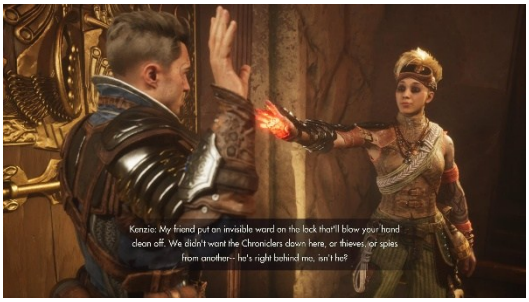
It might have been better received if it wasn't $70?

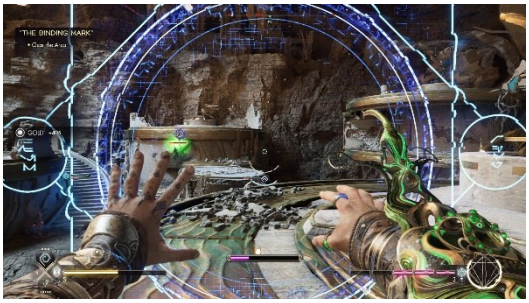
Played on console: PS5.
Originally posted: 02/08/2023.

Mini-Review: Immortals of Aveum









PS5 Metacritic Score: **69/100**

I appreciate great world-building in games. Even with no guarantee of a sequel (that I'm aware of), *Immortals of Aveum* has an expansive in-game history that feels epic and complete; a world built on magic, a never-ending war, and the people who live there.

Gameplay-wise, it has a lot of what I like. At the core is a fast first-person shooter with magic that you reload like guns, but without the need to find ammo.

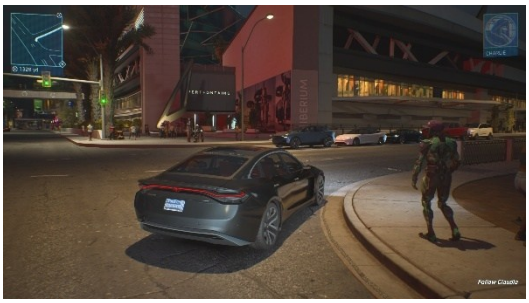
There's platforming, books/letters to find for added lore, some environmental puzzles (mostly optional, for when you really want to find and collect all upgrades), a cast of well-written characters (great characters, in fact), an ability upgrade system, world design that feels linear in missions but becomes Metroidvania-like when revisited, a good story, and an all-around fun time. I loved it.

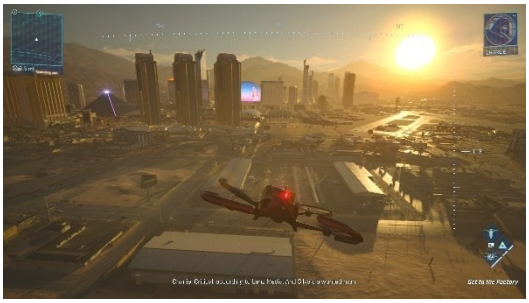
Played on console: PS5.
Originally posted: 08/28/2023.

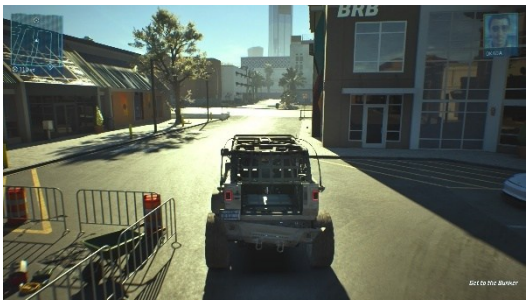
Addendum:

This was a great game. I know my appreciation for other games among this week's mini-reviews is super subjective, but this and *Forspoken* are legitimately good games that are very underrated. The studios behind both games were senselessly shuttered after their poor sales; IMO, a tragedy.

Mini-Review: MindsEye







PS5 Metacritic Score: **28/100**

When I think of broken games, I think of way worse than this. It's not a boring open world failure either, because it's not an open world game. It's a linear mission-based shooter where they managed to include a fully working city; a feat most linear games don't even attempt, let alone accomplish on this scale.

It wouldn't surprise me if it was scaled back from its higher ambitions for time and budget reasons, but what's here is fun, worthwhile, and complete.

What few complaints I had on performance were mostly addressed in a patch, but 30FPS is *not* the end of the world, ya'll. I'm not saying it's great, but it meets my definition of good.

I enjoyed it, even with a few flaws and absent features. Most people who tried it say they didn't, but the hate it gets is overblown and undeserved.

Played on console: PS5 Pro.
Originally posted: 06/15/2025.

Addendum:

This game has the biggest disparity between popular opinion and my own opinion. It's so off-kilter, in fact, that I must cede to the notion that maybe I really am wrong about it. All I know is it ran fine, I didn't see the broken mess that other people saw, and I enjoyed it quite a bit.

Mini-Review: Biomutant

PS4 Metacritic Score: **64/100**

An open world post-apocalyptic action RPG where humans are gone and cute, furry animals have evolved (or mutated).

The worst I can say is that the narration style gets old really fast (it makes all conversations awkward; I went into settings and set it to be a lot less frequent while exploring) and narration of NPC dialogue is thick with cheesy wordplay, but the narrator himself does great. Sounds like *LittleBigPlanet* (but isn't).

The combat has no hard lock-on, which feels off at first. Otherwise, I absolutely adored and enjoyed this game.

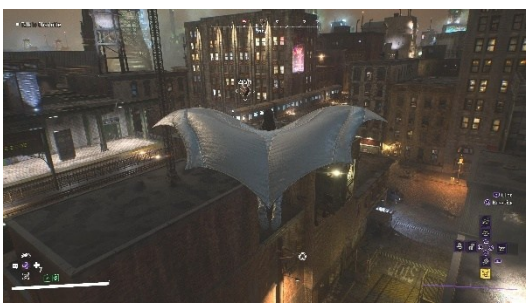
I've heard reviewers heap on types of criticism that I just don't get. It *is* unique despite its familiar or repetitive parts, and it *does* have an identity of its own.

The world is fun and colorful. Amazing for such a small dev team; or any team!

It's what I wanted and expected.

PS4 game played on PS5.
Originally posted: 05/31/2021.

Mini-Review: Gotham Knights



PS5 Metacritic Score: **67/100**

Partway through, I realized that as a big fan of the *Batman Arkham* games, I had to let go of any hope that *Gotham Knights* would serve as a successor to them. Doing that - thinking of it as just a fun open-world crime fighting game - I enjoyed it way more than at first.

Playing alone, you can choose which masked crusader you want to be (switchable any time at the base); the gruff brute (Jason Todd as Red Hood), the sexy nerd (Barbara Gordon as Batgirl), the heroic jock (Dick Grayson as Nightwing), or whatever Robin is (Tim Drake).

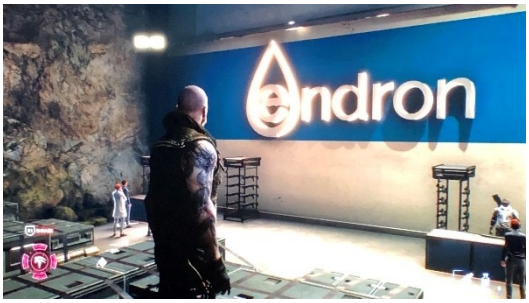
Negatives include no 60FPS mode, almost none of the big-name *Batman* villains, and late-game enemy types that are more frustrating than fun.

It shines best during the linear story and side missions, but still never rises to *Arkham* heights.

But, it *was* worth playing.

Played on console: PS5.
Originally posted: 11/28/2021.

Mini-Review: Werewolf - Earthblood



Full title:
Werewolf: The Apocalypse: Earthblood

Score on Metacritic: **54/100**

It's not the disaster some mainstream reviews would have you believe, but it's certainly no must-play either. It's billed as an RPG, but it's more of a third-person action game (ex: *Devil May Cry*) with some RPG elements.

It's pretty fun, although a bit one-note when it comes to the missions. There are a few simple side quests and some basic exploration, but in general you infiltrate military-style bases in each mission. Stealth isn't great.

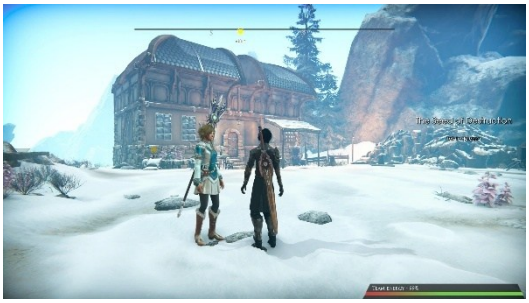
Combat is fun but lacks that visceral feel you get in better games. Maybe it's the lack of rumble/haptics? The story is interesting.

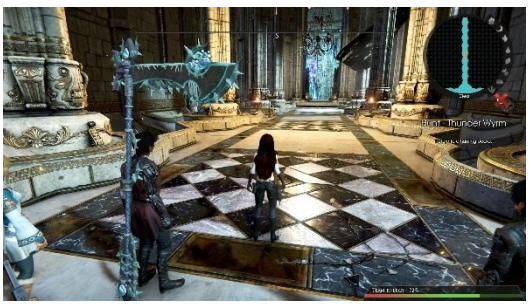
Switching between man and wolf is fast, although your third form (werewolf) is saved for combat only.

I enjoyed it. It's not bad by any means; just not something that's going to "wow" most folks.

Played on console: PS5.
Originally posted: 02/13/2021.

Mini-Review: Edge of Eternity





PS5 Metacritic Score: **60/100**

It's a big third-person turn-based RPG with "active time" meters from developer Midgar Studio.

At the risk of giving a back-handed compliment, it's *Final Fantasy* without the big budget. There's some jank. There are bugs, but nothing (for me) that totally broke immersion or ruined the experience.

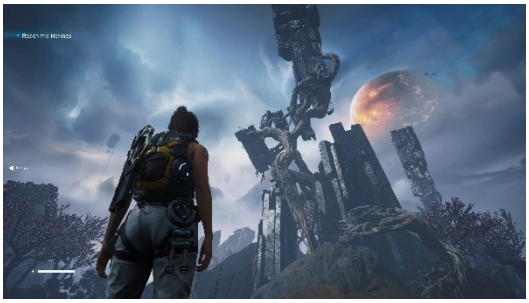
In fact, it's just the kind of highly ambitious but flawed game I'm drawn to. I spent 80+ hours on this journey. It could have been half that if skipping side quests and playing on a difficulty lower than Nightmare, but I really wanted that platinum trophy.

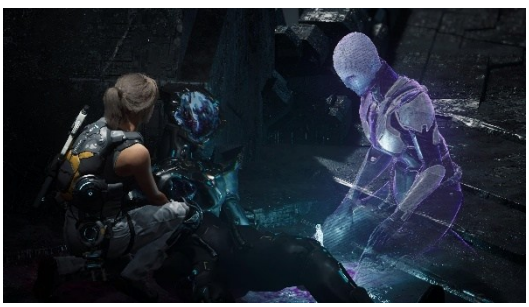
The last boss was the only truly punishing part, but extra grinding (not much needed until then) got me through it eventually.

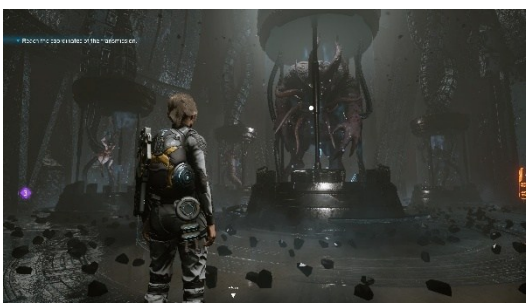
All this to say I really enjoyed *Edge of Eternity*. It's far from perfect, but it hit all the right notes for me.

Played on console: PS5.
Originally posted: 10/02/2024.

Mini-Review: Scars Above







PS5 Metacritic Score: **64/100**

I was going to start by saying this is a pretty good budget-priced game at $40, but Amazon (at the moment) has it discounted at just $30 already. It's barely a month old. I feel like it should be getting more attention.

Sure, it sits somewhere in that double-A space; not a big-budget epic but way more than you might get from a much smaller indie.

It takes a bit from *Dark Souls*, but only to the extent that checkpoints (in this case, monoliths) respawn enemies. You don't lose "experience" and the upgrade system is about unlocking skills and weapons, not investing in any stats.

There's melee, but it's not necessary in light of all the cool elemental guns. Fun bosses, although not a lot of enemy variety.

The sci-fi story is kind of generic, but I liked it.

This is what I wanted *Returnal* to be.

Played on console: PS5.
Originally posted: 03/24/2023.

The Final Stage

As often happens, I forgot at least one good example when writing last week's feature. This time, it's Enki in *Flintlock: The Siege of Dawn* when I ranked my favorite "little guy" sidekicks and companions. I'm not going to spend any time figuring out where on the list he might have ranked, but he should have been there.

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Hotel Barcelona

Releasing: September 26th, 2025.
Day 1 Purchase? Oh, heck yes.
Prioritizing It? Maybe, but maybe not.

One other game I'm interested in checking out that didn't make my list of most anticipated games coming out over the next four months is *Hotel Barcelona*. In part, it's because I totally forgot this game existed until after I already completed that feature.

It's described as "a blood-soaked 2.5D slasher action game" on its Steam page. It's also a collaboration between two of the most unique and unhinged Japanese developers out there, Suda51 (*Killer7*, *No More Heroes*, *Lollipop Chainsaw*, *Killer is Dead*) and Swery65 (*Deadly Premonition*, *The Good Life, Spy Fiction*).

What's more, it's getting a physical release, and it costs just $30. There is no way possible I'm missing out on this one. The only thing detracting at all from my hype is that it's apparently a roguelike (or "rogue-lite" maybe, which is a term that somehow rubs me the wrong way). I'm still on board to check it out, but that's a bummer.

I don't think some podcasters realize how much sway they probably have when talking about games to their audience. In a *Kinda Funny Games Daily* episode, the Thursday before *Lost Soul Aside* was released on 8/29, Blessing Jr. was telling co-host Mike about the hour he spent playing a pre-release copy he'd just been sent. He didn't like it at all and may not play any more of it.

The chat/feedback that resulted from that was interesting, with some people saying an hour isn't enough (depending on the game) and others defending the idea that a game should grab you and let you know if it's something you might enjoy at least within that first hour.

I don't know. On one hand, publishers send out codes so people *will* talk about their game before release. In fact, that's much of the point of news shows like KFGD anyway. On the other, I wouldn't be surprised if that one brief discussion was enough to kill the hype for this game for quite a few viewers and listeners.

Contrary to my "I don't want to know anything" stance, I've been checking Metacritic for this game. I already bought it, and I plan to play it, but it wouldn't surprise me if it's yet another game the masses will hate (even if that's just due to the popular opinion echo chamber) but that I'll play and find something worthwhile and enjoyable.

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In next week's issue, I plan to write some sort of feature about my favorite licensed IP games.

End Credits

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