

HBGAMES.org

The Ezine!

HBGAMES.org's Official E-zine!

Issue #27 May 2021

VIGNETTE CONTEST
PRE-PLANNING

PIONEER VALLEY

A QUICK INTRO TO PVGAMES RESOURCES



HBGAMES XEN EDITION REBUILDING HBGAMES - ABOUT TIME, TOO

WELCOME TO HBGAMES

For seventeen long years we have been providing top class support to amateur video game developers of all abilities. Specialising in RPG Maker but branching out into other engines and scratch-builds, we stand on the shoulders of giants who have gone on to work for some of the largest gaming and technology companies out there.

We are also a place to chill and to enjoy at your own pace and leisure. Our Discord server provides the opportunity to chat in a friendly environment with other developers. Our forums provide a more structured space for support and project topics, while our games manager and resources manager create an amazing opportunity to reach out to new players and users from around the world.

This issue we are going to be spotlighting the gloriously beautiful Pioneer Valley graphics while looking at how they can be applied to an RPG Maker project (though they can be used in any engine). We are also going to be introducing the new site which we have been building up - it's been twelve years in the planning at this point so we're so happy to finally get around to it!

We also have a cross-community contest planned, a quick game jam with defined limits.

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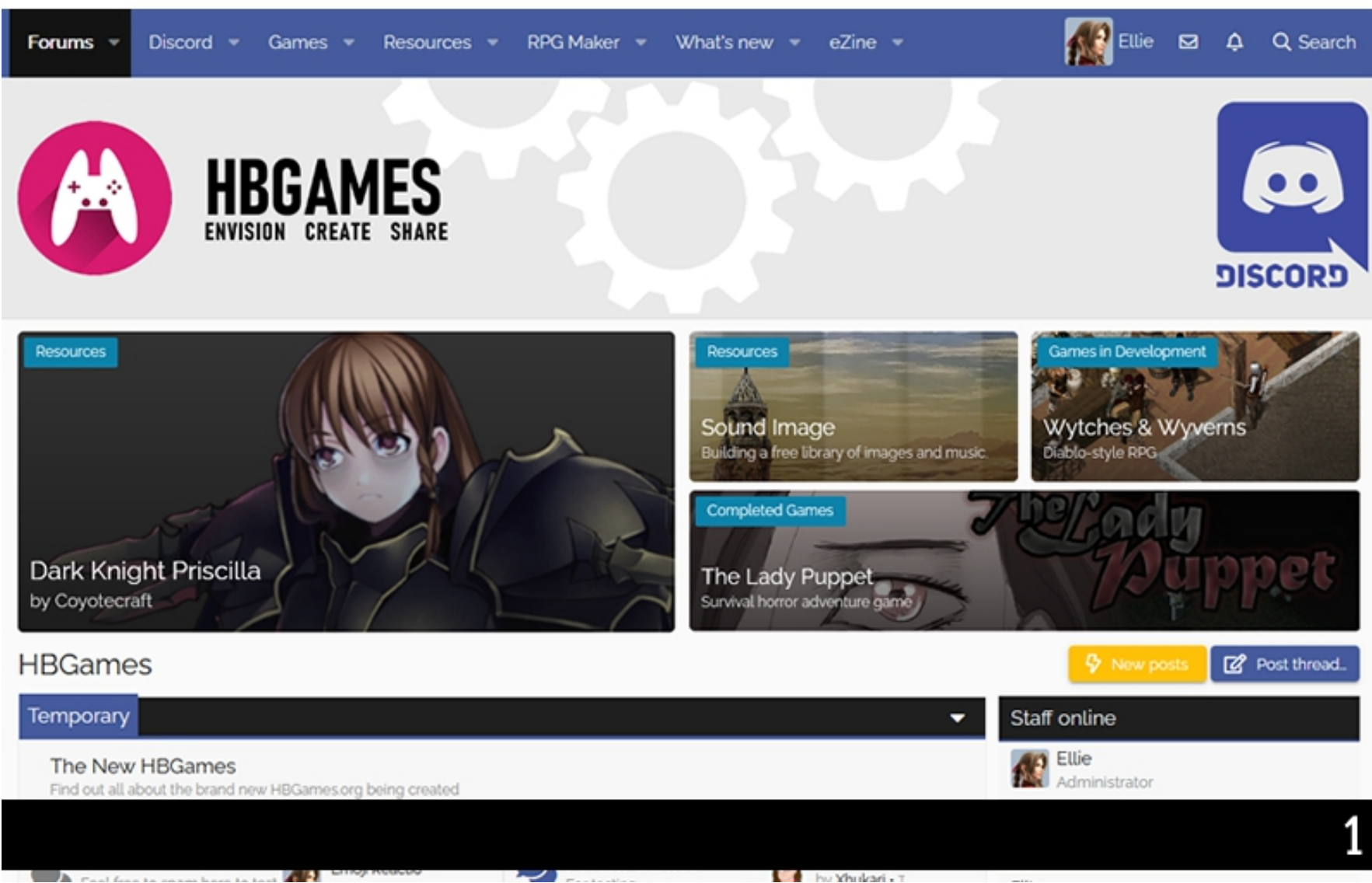


INTRODUCING HBGAMES XEN

Twelve long years ago, we restructured the staff, got some cracking developers on board, purchased a new forum software - Xenforo - and got into talks about changing the domain name. In the end we settled on HBGames, short for "Home Brewed Games".

For whatever reason, we never ended up switching. The RPG Maker world changed, and so did the Internet, and forums became dead spaces. What we didn't realise was that Xenforo would be the catalyst to a new style of forum, with expected functionality, in a new web 3.0 world. Like with Discord we were late to the leap and the forums dwindled as a result.

But here we are - Ellie has spent several gruelling days converting the database and testing out a new forum software. Thanks to some help from Styles Factory we have a new forum theme that is reminiscent of the previous theme by shadow but has its own identity. Using CMS systems from Xenforo we have all the functionality we always wanted.



GAME PAGES

HBGAMES XEN

It's long been our ambition to set up a games manager. You may recall how about five years ago we set one up, using the forums as a backbone, but it was incredibly convoluted and a little difficult to use.

The new Xenforo system came with a resources manager straight out of the box that is an automated version of what we had tried to create.

Uploading a Game

Our game manager is a link manager, not a file host, as we know that can be done by people with the expertise and space to do it right, making your downloads faster and more secure. To add a game visit the **Games** tab on the website, which will allow you to add your own game. Choose a category - Completed or In Development (if you have a playable demo it can go in either as before).

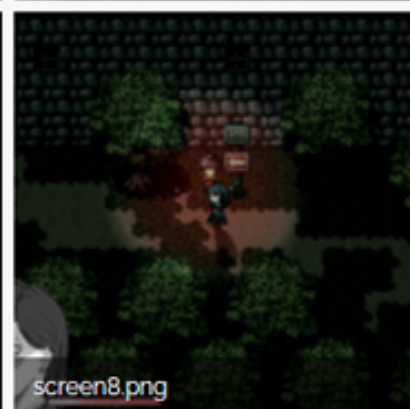
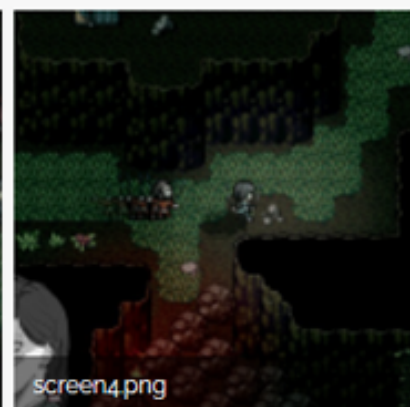
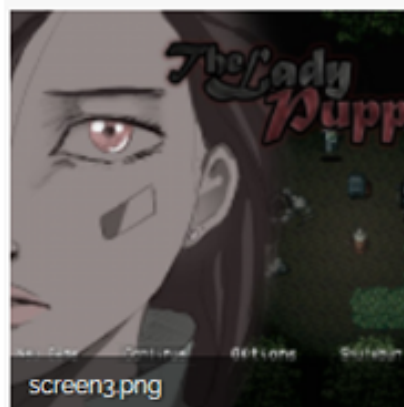
Reviews, Ratings and Reactions

Unlike our previous system we now have 5-star ratings, reviews and reactions. Even guests can react - it's great to get a little message telling you a random visitor likes your game.



We don't expect there to be an issue, however any unfair reviews can be dealt with if we need to. Remember constructive criticism rather than slating abuse is the way forward.

If guest ratings become an issue we will disable the content.



Screenshots

Screenshots are added using the "attach a file" link, and appear below your game. You can also add images, videos and other media to your post itself, and use our bbcode markup to format your post as if it was a forum thread.

Discussion Threads

You still get a traditional forum thread and this is generated for you (or attached if you already had one).

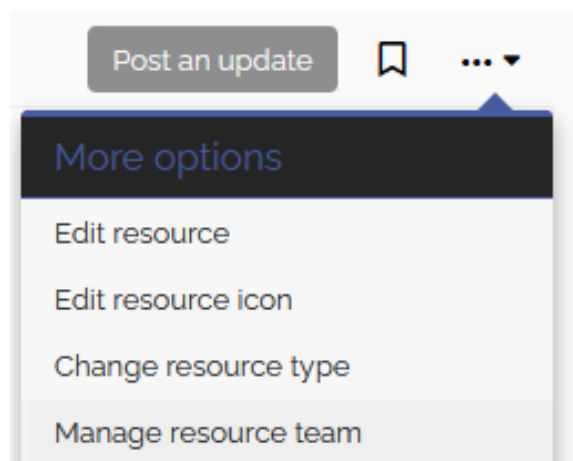
Links

You get three possible links: your download link, which should take you as directly to the file as you can get.

GAME PAGES

You also get the chance to add a link to your website, and a link to support if you provide it in your own defined space, for example a place to lodge support tickets or report bugs.

Teams



You can add up to ten people to form a team for your game, which gives them all access to manage your game page.

Updates

Adding an update creates an updates tab, and a post in your thread for others to discuss.

Version Control

If you update your game you can define a new version, letting people know your download has changed significantly. This creates a History tab telling you when it changed and letting you download old versions if you allow this.

Imgur Embeds

If you paste the url to an Imgur gif it will embed into your post allowing smaller animations.

Youtube Videos

Youtube videos may also be embedded, simply by pasting the url to the video on your game page. We highly recommend this to allow potential players a great view of the game before downloading.

Watch Games

You can "watch" a game, which will inform you when there are any updates. The site also tracks how many times your game is downloaded from us, providing you with vital feedback about how your game page is performing.

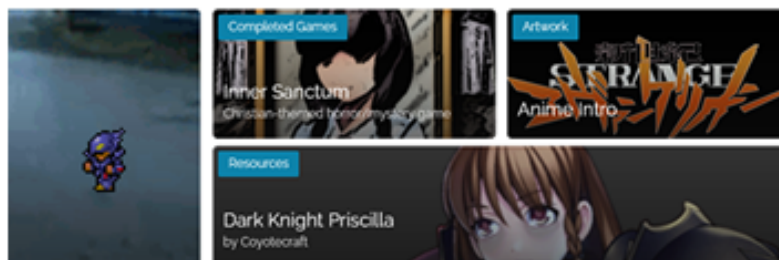


Game Icon

Your icon is how your game is displayed in the game pages list, and this should be circular like a modern icon. Unlike the previous editor we are not currently using the banners created beforehand although depending on popular demand these may be reinstated.

Featured Games

The best games will now feature on the homepage, in our new content widget!



RESOURCES

HBGAMES XEN

Resources and assets use the same system, and so you can now download graphics for use in your games.

	<p>Underground Oddities Xhukari · Today at 1:38 AM Things you find underground.</p>	<p>★★★★★ 0 ratings <input type="checkbox"/> Updated: Today at 1:38 AM</p>
	<p>Oven Ellie · Yesterday at 11:53 PM Oven variations for RMXF.</p>	<p>★★★★★ 0 ratings <input type="checkbox"/> Updated: Yesterday at 11:53 PM</p>
	<p>Maple Trees Ellie · Yesterday at 11:52 PM Tree variants for RMXF.</p>	<p>★★★★★ 0 ratings <input type="checkbox"/> Updated: Yesterday at 11:52 PM</p>

Resources ▾
RPG Maker ▾

- Character Art
- Character Sprites
- Battle Sprites
- Tilesets
- Environmental Art
- Animation and Effects
- Icons and UI

Using the new modular top menu navigation bar you can quickly access different resource categories, games pages, and other aspects of the community including the Discord server.



FORUMS

HBGAMES XEN

The forums have had a major reshuffle.

Back in the days of RMXP.org we had 34 top-level forums cluttering up the homepage. We have managed to cut this down to just six rows.

All content is still there, though some boards have been archived and others have been merged together.

Game Discussion Threads don't necessarily need to be here, but they have been left just to further highlight game activity.

New Functionality

We now have the ability to paste Imgur and Youtube links in our posts automatically embedding the content. We also have a fully WYSIWYG editor, and other functions expected of any modern forum.

Trophies

A premade trophy system replaces our points system, though we have not tailored this too much yet. It will also be used to distribute contest prize trophies.

Support

All of our support and requests forums have been turned into Stack Overflow style question-answer boards, giving so much functionality and control over your topics.

The screenshot shows the forum interface with the following categories and data:

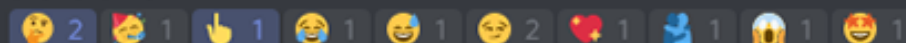
- Community Center**
 - HBGames News & Announcements: 8,239 Threads, 194,803 Messages. Latest post: Vignette Contest Planning D by Xhukari • Today at 1:30 PM
 - General Discussion: Latest post: Discord Quot by Spoo • Tod
 - Introduce Yourself!: Latest post: Oh sweet this by Remi_Cha
- Game Making General**
 - Game Making: Discuss making video games and get support from our members. 4,998 Threads, 83,025 Messages. Latest post: What are you working on? iG by Elle • Monday at 4:52 PM
 - RPG Maker: Support boards for Enterbrain's RPG Maker series. 18,751 Threads, 127,842 Messages. Latest post: DoubleX RMMV Preloaded R by DoubleX • Apr 20, 2021
 - Artwork and Creativity: Share and comment on all kinds of artwork. 5,393 Threads, 67,392 Messages. Latest post: The sketch thread! by Remi_Cha • Monday at 9:1
- Game Discussion Threads**
 - Completed Games Discussion Threads: Latest post: Fantasy Star by dimonhe
 - In Development Discussion Threads: Latest post: Wytches & W by Elle • Thur

Reactions

You now have the ability to "like" content, and also to react using an emoji. We are going to replace these with Twemoji, which are what Discord uses, and you can suggest which ones we use by reacting to this message in the #information channel.

Forum Emoji Reactions

React to this post with your suggestions for emojis we might want on the forums.



What is the point?

For years we had a rule that the only replies to content allowed were constructive criticism, and that "I like this" or "good job" were shied upon. That's sensible for a Web 1.0 forum, but not for the modern world. Sometimes it's nice to just have some positivity in the form of "x likes your post", or a thumbs up on your resources.

ELLIE'S FRANKENSPRITES

In order to populate the Resources manager for testing, Ellie's Battlers have been added. These are all frankensprites of RPG Maker MV battlers, chopping bits up, repositioning and recolouring them, and reimagining certain bosses as new entities. Free for use in any MV game.

Ellie's Versions

*Before
- Pink
punk*



PIONEER VALLEY



There are few game content creators out there as prolific as Jesse from PVGames. His packs are ubiquitous, versatile and suit a huge variety of games, including content for modern, world war and fantasy titles. It's no secret that I am a huge fan.

Not only is it some of the only content available on the net in its genre - Diablo II style 2.5D graphics - but it also contains many of the materials you need to make your *own* complimentary pieces.



His early works, the Medieval range, are available on the RPG Maker Web store and also in the Humble Bundle from time to time. This makes them amazingly inexpensive for what you get - packs are around \$20 and even less when discounted. They constantly appear in the Steam Sale. For your power user, the 2.5D graphics are available via Patreon, where the price increases sharply but still does not get you anywhere *near* the industry standard for the sheer amount of assets gained here.

While the two aren't *technically* compatible, I use both sets together for the variety of alignments - I am not much of a fan of games where everything is isometric or stuck to axis - and I tend to throw in stock imagery from Pixabay, or my own work and edits, such as the beach scene seen above.

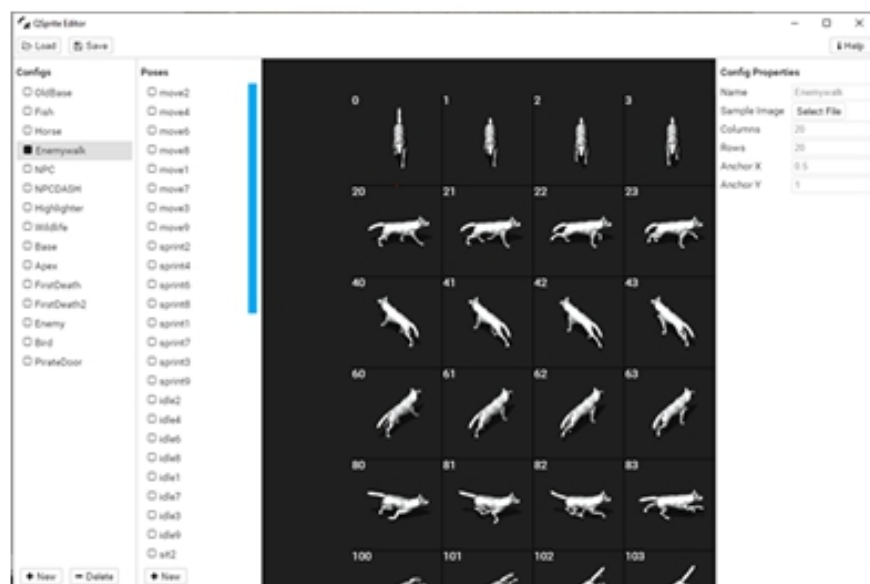


My port scene seen overleaf did not take a lot of time to set up at all. The diamond path textures are actually from the RPG Maker XP RTP, the buildings from PVGames Medieval, the ship from the High Seas pack and the water again is stock imagery from Pixabay.

For some types of scene a lot can be gained by just blending textures into one another, for example mud on brick roads, though this can look blurry and smudgy when used too often. I think the trick is to transition between different textures, of which PVGames provides plenty.



As seen above the main bonus of PVGames' materials is the sheer amount of character animation available. There are half a thousand frames of animation, allowing so many different scenes to be played out. Even duplicating the same character, as seen above, isn't a problem as there are so many frames to choose from.



QSprite, QMovement, and other Quixos plugins are used to manage the sprite sheets within our games. The free software, QSpriteEditor, allows us to set up these sprite sheets with ease. Again, as with PVGames, the sheer amount of content we are getting here - for free - is incredible, turning RPG Maker MV into a much more powerful engine.

One thing I have found lacking is the amount of wildlife, though I have countered this by including some of the better parts of the RPG Maker XP RTP.



These small inconsequential bits of animation seem insignificant but they really bring a woodland map to life.

Another change I make is to use the 2.5D graphics to create interiors for the Medieval maps. As an example, here are the collapsed walls of my inn, showing the life that PVGames graphics provide to a scene.

Were I to enter, this is the sort of content I imagine being prime for the Vignette contest. Characters all with a story to tell, and something happening around every corner.

As a little easter egg, look who's pulling pints for a living!

PVGames have a Discord where you can chat to the developer there and then, and also hash out ideas with other users of this wondrous asset source. They can be found on Steam, RPG Maker Web, and Humble Bundle.



ONE TO WATCH























We are all super impressed by the incredible pixel art shared on our Discord from new members **ZaZ** and **Missandev**, from their amateur game making project **Tears of Magic**.



NEW GAMES

In order to test the new games manager we have begun transferring games from the old system to the new. While these games are not "new", they are what have been added so far. More will be processed each day.

 <p>Dark Eternal II 0.8 Zenogias · Today at 1:17 PM Dark Eternal II v0.8 includes four complete chapters. 25 hours of total gameplay.</p>	 <p>Phantasy Star... Twenty years past 3.0 dimonihell · Today at 11:40 AM Sequel created in RPG Maker.</p>
 <p>Tears of Revenge 2021-05-01 kory_toombs · Today at 1:10 PM Keung and Jian are out for for blood.</p>	 <p>Inner Sanctum 2021-04-27 Starmage · Tuesday at 11:08 PM A Christian-themed horror/mystery game.</p>
 <p>Grimorum 2021-05-01 Red-Cube · Today at 1:06 PM A dark and sinister story about a cop trying to do what's right, no matter what.</p>	 <p>Polaris 03 1.0 sriden · Tuesday at 11:01 PM A scifi adventure puzzle game</p>
 <p>Sojourner 2021-05-01 michaelsquirrel · Today at 1:02 PM A Retro RPG Inspired by Mother 3 and Dragon Quest</p>	 <p>Born Under the Rain 2021-04-27 LockeZ · Tuesday at 10:58 PM Traverse a winding pyramid and other beautifully designed but dangerous areas.</p>
 <p>A Maiden's Ballad 2021-05-01 Starmage · Today at 12:59 PM RMN Theme Roullette entry.</p>	 <p>Perceiving Shapes 2021-04-27 Starmage · Tuesday at 10:55 PM HAWKTOBER Horrors of the Cosmos Game Jam entry</p>
 <p>Tall Tales of Fall 2021-05-01 Starmage · Today at 12:28 PM Season of Fall entry.</p>	 <p>:eternity 1.0 BerryHBGm200 · Tuesday at 10:49 PM A puzzling journey through the depths of the boundless dream.</p>
 <p>Chronicles of Tsufanubra 2021-05-01 EphiamOricuna · Today at 12:19 PM Celes, the chosen Savior of mankind, must embark on an arduous journey.</p>	 <p>Rave Heart 1.0 Starmage · Tuesday at 10:39 PM Journey into the galaxy of Xerxes and enter a galactic feud.</p>
 <p>Elf's Diary 2021-05-01 Starmage · Today at 12:14 PM A Short, simple and fun 2 hour long game</p>	 <p>Drekirokr - Dusk of the Dragon Early Access orochii · Sunday at 8:37 PM Sci-fi fantasy post-apocalyptic somewhat-adventure!</p>
 <p>Whimsical Misadventures of Cinderella 2021-05-01 Starmage · Today at 12:10 PM Twisted Fairytale.</p>	 <p>The Lady Puppet 1.2 OldPat · Sunday at 8:36 PM A 2D Survival Horror Adventure game with emphasis on atmosphere and exploration</p>
 <p>Final Fantasy vs Dog 2021-05-01 LordBlueRouge · Today at 11:46 AM A silly tech demo.</p>	 <p>Steamed Hams 1 LordBlueRouge · Sunday at 5:24 PM ...but it's RPG Maker 2003</p>



Obligatory art from Remilia



JULIA STEIN / @APOGEEDWELL



Art by Julia Stein (Perihelion) / @Apogeedwell, as seen in our Discord

The HBGames.org Vignette Contest

We are currently hashing our ideas for our next contest, which will be for creating an animated vignette. In game making terms what we are after is a single scene, self contained, that does not pan or switch maps. The scene should portray a story, which could be done in a variety of ways - animation, sound, text - and it should be *pretty*.

This is intended to be a big, far reaching contest, and if we have enough entrants the intention is to have a few categories, to cater for different abilities and access. For example one category might be strictly RTP only, while another might allow full parallax mapping using PVGames or other graphics.

Prizes

Prizes will have a cash value, and could include Steam wishlist purchasing. Another cute idea is that you win a framed print of your vignette to keep.

Timeframe

I am not currently sure what timeframe we should be going for - though this will not be a *very* long competition. The intention is for this to be a contest for those who can't commit to a much larger gamejam. Of course that means finding the right time to launch.

We would like you to use the thread in our forums to discuss the contest, or hash out ideas on our Discord. We'd also very much like to hear of your interest!

Boundaries

There will be a strict map size which must be adhered to, as the idea is to showcase each game alongside one another for contrast and compare. This has not as of yet been decided on.

What engine can I use?

At the moment any engine is suitable, as long as the map size can be limited (this could be done by using black sscreen edges for engines such as RPG Maker 2000).



The NFG Days

A recurring theme on the Discord is the NFG days - particularly being the time period after Ccoa left .org and before Despain was banned. A lot of the content from back then is *highly questionable*, verging on cringeworthy (who am I kidding, it is all cringe).

It was, however, a fun exciting time, and made us who we are today...

I would like to point out, in our defence, that this was all a very, very, very long time ago, and I would like to think we have matured in these past thirteen years...

Again, who am I kidding.



If you've lost an issue of HBGames.org the eZine, you're an idiot, because it's digital content. Download all issues now, if you dare!

Also guys, please just like, ignore HybridA.



Discord is swiftly becoming the hive of our activity, and it's really picking up since the site relaunch.

New channels include one for gaming, including board games, video games, and tabletop gaming - see some glorious Black Templar pics and a worrying amount of Warhammer codices...

