

Inspirational indie games



STORY BY WILLIAM FARRIS
DESIGN EDITOR AND AD MANAGER



On its official steam page, A Hat In Time describes itself as a “cute as heck action platformer,” and that’s pretty much exactly what it is. A Hat In Time is the long-awaited, adorable, interesting and overall fun game from Gears For Breakfast studios; it brings classic platforming collectathon action to the modern generation.

When I say long-awaited I mean it. This game was a long time coming kickstarted years ago and developed over a long period of time. Before its release, A Hat In Time formed a devoted fan base and received

glowing reviews when it finally arrived.

All of those great reviews are due in part to the fact that A Hat In Time knows exactly what it wants to be — a short game with simple mechanics and fun diverse gameplay. Throw in a cute story line with comedic writing and an amazing soundtrack made with the help of Grant Kirkhope of Banjo-Kazooie fame and you’ve got a recipe for success.

So, if you couldn’t already tell, I love this game. I really do like it a lot. It’s an absolute blast to play from start to finish and has the perfect difficulty balance

to make it challenging to succeed but never frustrating to fail. Yeah, the game is a bit buggy at times but honestly I wouldn’t have any other way as it’s just charming and enjoyable. Not to mention its one of the first games in a while to make me honestly laugh. The writing is as witty as it is comedically dry and can leave your sides hurting from some of the absurd situations they dream up with the voice actors absolutely nailing it.

Everyone who voiced for this game gets way into their parts and all of the deliveries are perfect for the scenes and characters they portray. One of my favorites has to be the Snatcher from chapter three, who has such an over the top energetic performance that I can’t help but break out into a smile. The Snatcher is actually voiced by Youngtown, a YouTube personality who does a lot of music and gaming content.

The rest of the cast nails it too, from the bumbling speech patterns of the Mafia in chapter one, to the over-enthusiastic Welsh accent on the conductor from chapter two; it’s hard not to fall in



love with the adorable menagerie of cartoon characters.

How short the game is also doesn’t detract from the diversity in its levels. Each world has its own theme and design that sets it apart from the rest of the game. The amount of collectables and tasks to do also means you’ll have plenty to do even after beating the game.

So, is it one of my favorite games of all time? Maybe not, although it’s a wonderful little game that will make you feel like a kid again and help cleanse your palette of all the other high-end complex triple A releases out there. If you someone who wants something fun and new or pines for the glory days of classic platformers then pick up a copy of A Hat In Time. If you’re not one of those people, pick it up anyway — seriously just buy this game. Give these people your money, they so definitely deserve it.

Top: Poster and image from A Hat In Time official artwork.
Bottom: The Stanley Parable poster from official game.



STORY BY JARED PREBLE
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THE STANLEY PARABLE

The Stanley Parable is without a doubt one of the most unorthodox indie gaming experiences I’ve ever had the pleasure of enduring. Running on the same source engine that powers Valve classics such as the Half-Life series, Counterstrike and Team Fortress 2, The Stanley Parable is a bizarre yet rewarding ride from beginning to any one of the numerous endings this game offers.

You play a day in the life of Stanley, a pencil pushing desk jockey that relishes spending half his waking life in his cubicle. On this particular day, Stanley steps out of his office to find that all his coworkers have disappeared. You take over our mundane protagonist as you are directed throughout the office by The Narrator (Kevan Brighting.) The game toys with your perception of free will and uses

The Narrator to vocalize it.

Early on in the game you encounter a pair of doors—The Narrator directs you to the door on the left and it’s at that point that you are offered the choice to defy him and choose the path on your own accord. Should you choose the door on the right The Narrator will begin to question your defiance and simultaneously urge you to get back on track with the story, as a defense mechanism for your attempt to shatter the reality he has tried so desperately to paint.

Depending on how compliant you are you will receive a multitude of reactions from The Narrator. It’s this very aspect of The Stanley Parable that sets it apart

from other indie games.

Equipped with approximately eighteen different endings, several of them being challenging to achieve, The Stanley Parable is a very straightforward game. There’s no skill trees, no character progression, no combat, not even a sprint mechanic, just Stanley and the pleasant British voice in his head that dictates his every move. The game relies heavily on your ability as a player to make decisions and builds around every choice you make. Offering heaps of replayability, The Stanley Parable is a great game to share with friends and family alike. If you’re looking for an amusing game that rewards exploration, look no further.