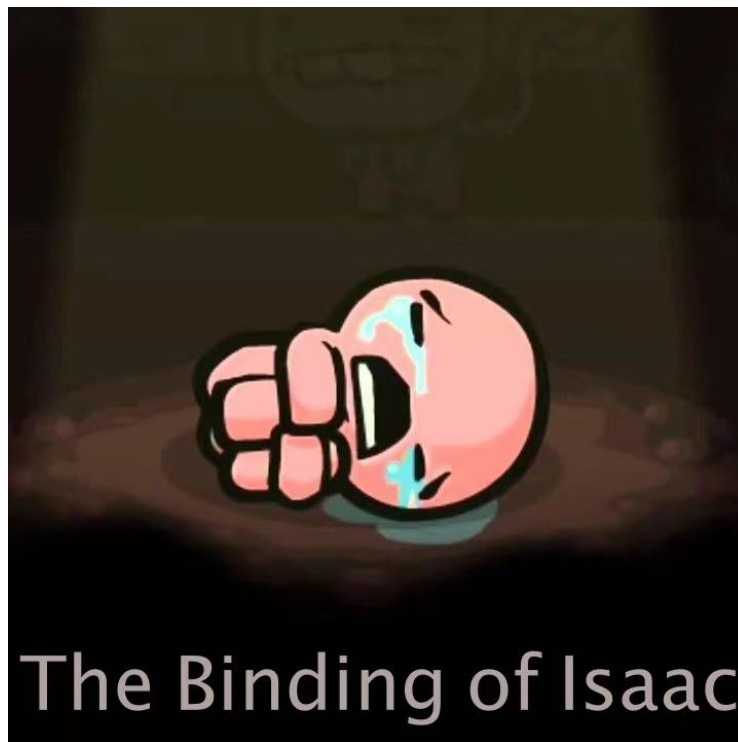


Today we will be talking about the Binding of Isaac. The Binding of Isaac is a roguelike game designed by Edmund McMillen Florian Himsl initially released in 2011. Roguelike games are a genre of rpg games that usually have procedurally generated dungeons, to different extents of turn based gameplay, and often pixelated graphics. Dungeons in this case would usually mean randomly generated stages that have different enemies and drops each time players enter them.



Roy:

Hi everyone and welcome to this episode of The longest Rainy Sunday. My name is Roy and I'm the producer for this episode.

Ryan:

I'm Ryan and I will be the assistant producer.

Wendy:

I'm Wendy and I will be the line editor for this episode. Let's start off with an overview of the game. What kind of game it is, it's story, and how it's played.

Ryan:

Binding of Isaac is a roguelike game designed by Edmund McMillen Florian Himsl initially released in 2011. Roguelike games are a genre of rpg games that usually have procedurally generated dungeons, to different extents of turn based gameplay, and often pixelated graphics. Dungeons in this case would usually mean randomly generated stages that have different enemies and drops each time players enter them.

Roy:

While playing through the story, players are able to unlock characters, items, and new levels through the dungeons we just explained. And due to the vast options for items, levels and different enemies, This game could be played through repeatedly each time with whole new experiences, outcomes, and endings.

Ryan:

Yep, and each ending reveals a little more about Isaac's internal turmoils as we see glimpses of his memories and imaginations. I thought this made

the game very interesting. Aside from looking forward to unlocking the different stories, I would also be able to try out different characters, items, and playstyle for each playthrough. It's almost like it's a whole new experience instead of simply a playthrough.

Wendy:

Now since the plot of the game is mentioned, let's introduce the background of the game a little. As some people probably already know, the title of the game is inspired by the Biblical story of The Binding of Isaac, and so is its plot. The game begins with Isaac's mother believing Isaac has become corrupted by sin. Doing her best to save her son, she decides to lock Isaac in his room and remove all that was "evil" in Isaac's life.

Roy:

These "sins", in the eyes of Isaac's mother, could be toys or any other things that Isaac loved which distracts him from studying the Bible. Isaac's mother would take those away, and give him books to read in return. This is shown in the game through the collectable items, many of which references Isaac's toys and books. For example, items like "the gamekid" and "robobaby" were likely toys that were taken away from Isaac, while other items like "Book of Revelations" is probably a book given to Isaac by his mother.

Ryan:

and under these circumstances, Isaac starts to develop illusions of monsters surrounding him, all inspired by daily items used by his mother to abuse him, as well as names and events that appeared in the Bible.

Roy:

While talking about this somewhat uncomfortable family story, I would also like to mention the background music of this game, which felt very dark and haunting. To me, the dark and eerie groove of the game soundtrack perfectly fitted the overall vibe and visuals of the gameplay. Throughout the soundtrack, there were elements from the 8-bit, 80s game machine music, as well as church choirs and pipe organs, which captures the overall tone of this game.

Ryan:

And since music is mentioned, I will go into some of the visuals of the game. The game takes place in the basement of Isaac's home, and through his exploration into finding a way out of the place, he finds and needs to defeat the different dungeons monsters in them we introduced earlier. I'm not sure how appropriate this description is, I'll just say that most enemies look like some sort of naked meatballs. Aside from the basic meatballs, there are also monsters such as spiders or fat persons that are like the meatballs being connected together. The dungeon rooms are pretty standard basement/dungeon looking. There are only dim light

sources and there are often weird looking alters that exist for players to interact with.

Roy:

In my opinion the visual elements in this game are dark yet unique. As Ryan mentioned, the monsters and overall background for the game is pretty dark and weird, but at times, the developer of the game adds in cute and cartoonish characters to form a unique visual effect. For example, one of the weakest monsters in the game are those white worms that crawl in the basement floor. These worms usually have cute smiley faces when they are alone but open their mouth full of teeth when they see Isaac entering the room.

Wendy:

So along with the backstory and visuals, although we did not go too deep into describing them, the game is actually known to be quite dark in some of those aspects along with some of its religious references or implications.

Roy:

So the comment I made about the visuals of the game earlier, I think that kind of visual design implies both sides of Isaac's inner world. On one side, Isaac is still a child and perceives the world to be a fairytale, but on the other side, the conservative environment around him and the domestic abuse he is potentially receiving makes him develop dark illusions and fear towards objects around him.

Ryan:

Yeah, and all these you guys were mentioning has made the game quite controversial during release. Possible abuse Isaac is going through and some implications in the game about its relationship with religion really makes people think about their own views on religion and domestic education. I think these are all things that made the game a classic that it still is to this day.

Wendy:

That's an interesting part to consider. Now aside from these, many aspects of games are also present in this game. One of the key elements I want to discuss for this game is telescoping. Players have the main goal of clearing the final boss in mind, but before then must first decide what character and item combination you want to play through, which dungeon you need to look for to obtain these items, and of course how to beat each dungeon working with what you have. With the infinite endings and such diverse itemization that this game provides, players can simply keep replaying it without feeling fatigue from repetitiveness.

Ryan:

And I think this is exactly what a lot of players are looking for in many games. After playing through the story of some games, although having greatly enjoyed it and wanting to play more of it, there's often no more

content or new playstyle to look forward to. Binding of Isaac in does not have this problem, like mentioned earlier, every playthrough will be different and have something for players to look forward to.

Roy:

Right, coming from my own experience, I have played this game for many hours throughout middle school, and there was no way of stopping it. And I often find myself coming back to this game during the pandemic.

Wendy:

Yep, this makes it a perfect game to play and enjoy during our long rainy afternoons in the pandemic, stuck home, sitting in front of the computer screen. People might be inclined to, like many other players in the world, to play this game where you can control different characters, try out different items and playstyle against the different enemies in the game.

Roy:

The Binding of Isaac is a game that provides deep thinking about the role of family in education and reflections of the current society. That's it for the final week's episode on the binding of isaac. Thank you for listening!

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—THE END—