

CENSORED



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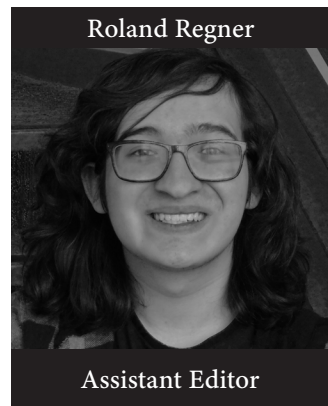
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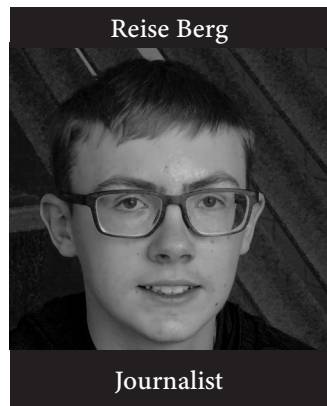
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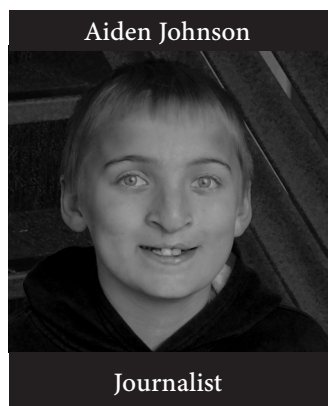
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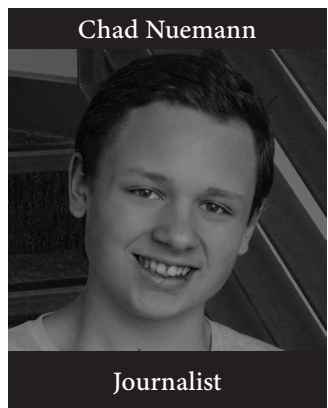
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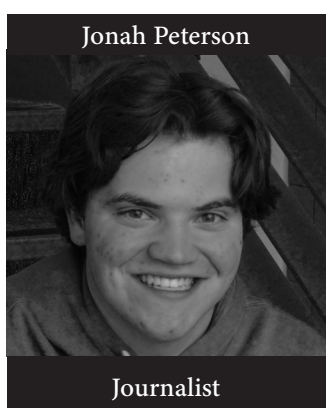
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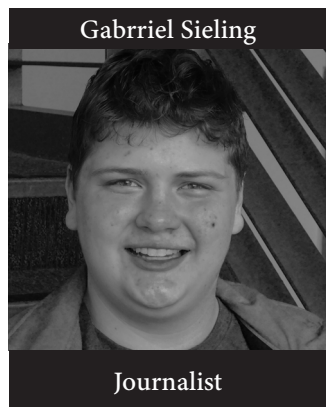
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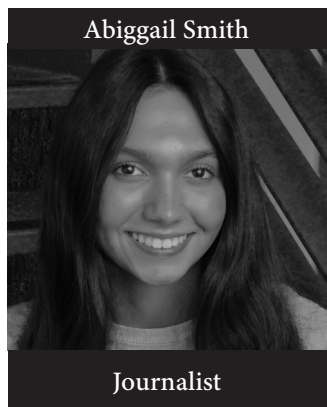
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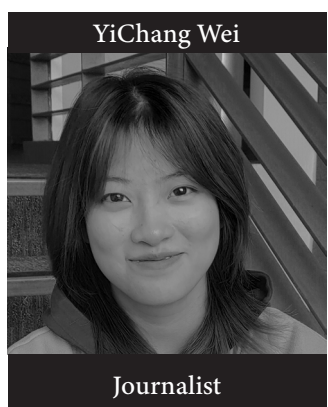
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MARCH 2024



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letter from the editor

It's been a long time since we at the Mustang Post released a magazine, let alone an article. But now we will have a STELLAR RETURN TO FORM. Probably.

Personally, I've been busy working on a new podcast in collaboration with Roland and Chad where we debate useless things like which food is better.

Plugging my own project aside, I should explain why this magazine is so late.

Podcasts!

Most of our staff have been working on podcasts that (hopefully) will be released soon but no guarantee! Our website has also been a bit bare with our last post being about the November magazine. This should change soon. After our upcoming magazine is released, we will start releasing blog posts for the articles again.

Have a great spring and thank you for reading our magazines!

Thank you,

Logan Jacobs



ARTIST *Spotlight*

Featuring Sheyenne High School's Student Artists



ABOUT THE ARTISTS & COMPETITIONS

My name is Reagan Koppelman. I'm a junior at Sheyenne High School.

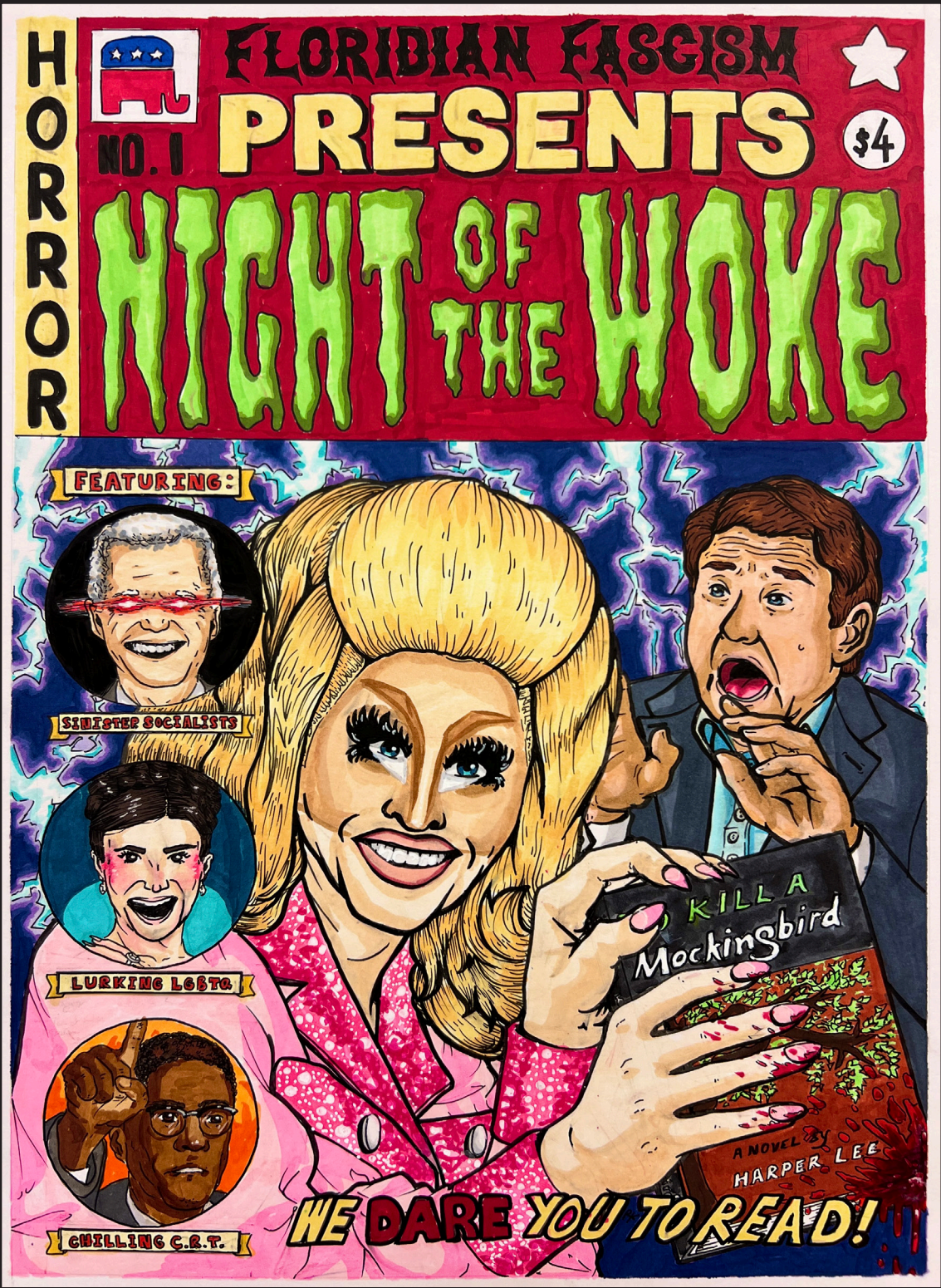
Most of my work are traditional and utilizes alcohol markers as my primary medium. However, I sometimes do primarily ink pieces as in [CENSORED] and have been shifting towards a focus in digital art as well.

Although much of my previous work has had little to no meaning aside from simply making art, this year I began a series of political or editorial cartoons which intended to criticize current politics specifically relating to American education.

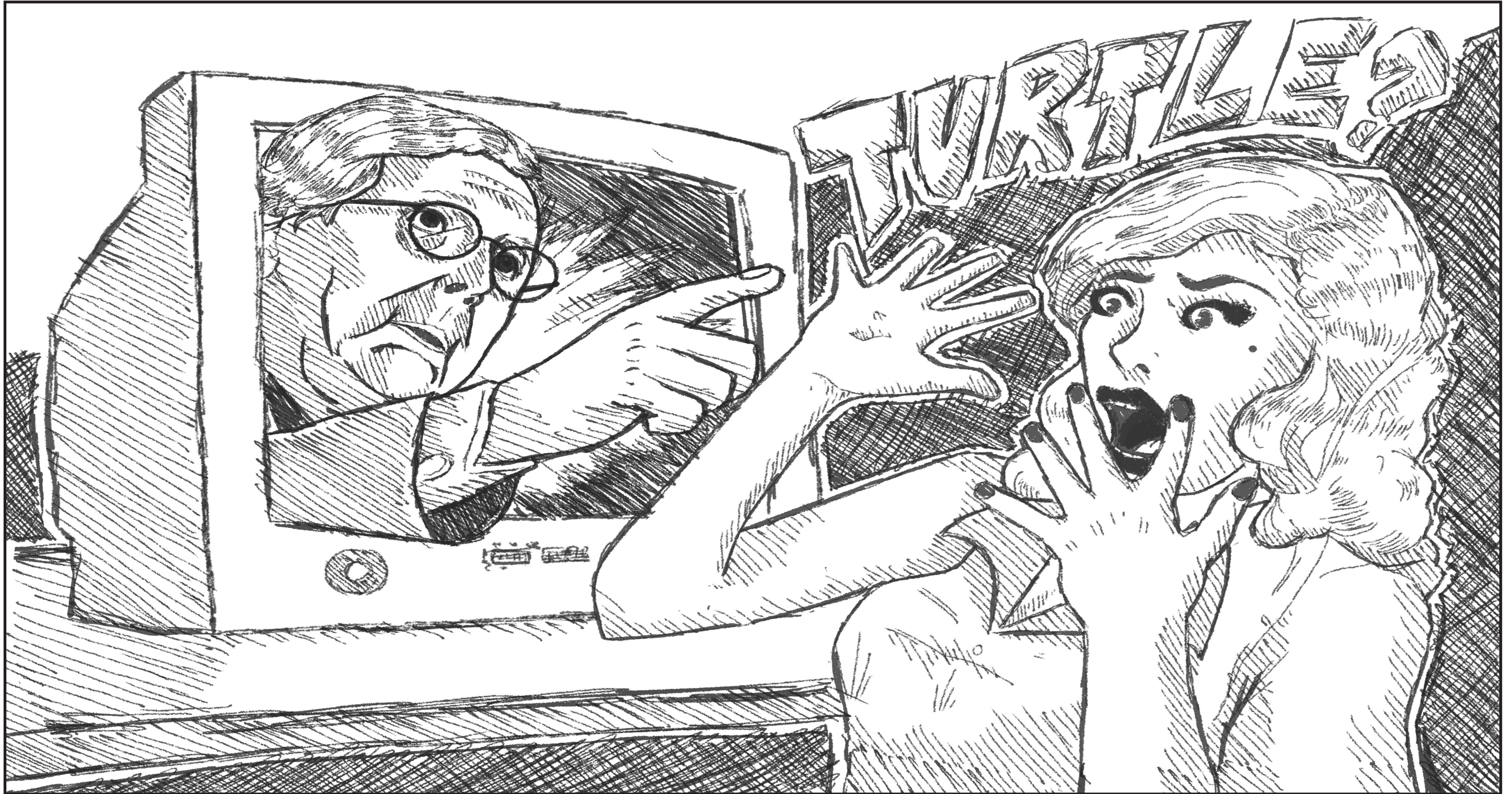
Reagan Koppelman



[CENSORED]
alcohol markers, paint pens and fine liners



Night of the Woke
alcohol markers, paint pens and fine liners



Turtle
Digital Art, Adobe Fresco

Steam Deck LCD VS Steam Deck OLED

By Chad Neumann

For those who don't know what a Steam Deck (SD for short) is, it's essentially a portable gaming PC in a similar form factor to a Nintendo Switch (without the joy-cons). It's the most popular Gaming PC handheld on the market currently. It was launched in February of 2022.

Something to note though is that the SD does not use Windows 11 or 10 but instead relies on its own version of Linux called "SteamOS". That means that some games may not be able to play on the steam deck If the game needs Windows to run, although Valve

does try to fix this with some games using a compatibility layer called "Proton" that allows for some Windows games to run on the SD.

Now with all that information out of the way, let us begin this comparison!

There are two versions of SDs. Both perform the same. That's because Valve did not change how powerful they are.

Although Valve did change how fast the ram is from 5500 MTS to 6400 MTS. This won't make a big difference, but it

makes the frame rates more stable. So that means less stuttering in games.

However, what did change was the screen. Even though the resolution is the same at being 1200 x 800p, it's now an OLED display! Not only that but it's a full HDR display too. That means that colors are going to look super vibrant and viewing angles are going to be much improved.

With HDR enabled games, you can expect 1,000 nits of brightness (600 nits on regular SDR mode). And it runs at 90 Hz



Steam Deck OLED



STEAM DECK

Steam Deck Logo



Steam Deck LCD

compared to 60 Hz (if the game can run that fast of course)

Now even though the name change might suggest that only the screen got changed, Valve decided to go even further with improvements and has improved almost every single aspect of the SD.

The battery has gotten a significantly large boost with Valve claiming 50% more battery life than the SD LCD. That's due to a mix of improvements like a slightly bigger battery but there is also a smaller APU due to being 6nm instead of

7nm. That means that the APU is more battery efficient and runs cooler. Not only that but the screen itself is more battery efficient since it's an OLED screen.

The storage has increased on the SD OLED. Before the max amount of storage on the original SD you could buy was 512 GB. But now that has increased to 1TB of storage. And now the minimum storage OLED model you can buy is the 512GB version. You can always increase the storage by putting in an SD card into it or by installing an SSD.

Network and Bluetooth performance has gotten much better too.

Before the old SD had WIFI 5 so games were slow to download. But now the new OLED model has WIFI 6E compatibility which will allow much faster game downloads if you have higher internet speeds.

Bluetooth now has its own antenna on the SD OLED so that makes your connection much more stable and allows you to connect more controllers to it.

Valve has stated that the SD OLED also runs cooler and quieter

because of its improved fans and better heat sink management in it. Also, since the APU is smaller, it does not run as hot which makes the SD even quieter.

The screen size has slightly increased from a 7in screen to a 7.4in screen. The trackpads have gotten a slight upgrade too with them being more responsive than before. Valve also states that the haptics have improved.

The weight of the system has gotten 30 grams lighter, so it won't be as uncomfortable on your wrists if you are



Steam Deck LCD Case

playing games for a longer time,

The screen's polling rate has gotten a slight bump too now being 180Hz polling rate. This means that the touch screen should be more accurate and more responsive and overall feel much better to use especially when typing using the screen.

The thumb sticks have seen an improvement with newer and better textures so your thumbs should stick better to it. The good thing

about the OLED model is that it's the same size as the older model. That means that old cases that you have should be able to fit on the OLED SD with no trouble.

What comes inside the box has also changed. The charging cable is now 2.5 meters compared to the old 1.5-meter charging cable. So, if you like to play with your steam deck while it's charging, you should have a better time using it.

With the new battery,

it charges faster. Valve claims that it can charge from 20% battery to 80% battery in 45 minutes.

The case that the 1TB version comes in has gotten some interesting changes to it. The new case now has another case inside of its liner. It's a case in a case! The case inside of the bigger case is a low profile design to fit inside of a backpack better than the bigger case it's in.

Repairability has gotten better with Valve now using Torx screws

Valve have made slight improvements to the speakers with better bass and a fuller sound, although reviewers have stated that the sound has not changed that much. Nonetheless its stil a welcomed change.

And do you want to know the best part about all of this? The price is staying mostly the same as the previous models it's replacing! The base 512GB SD OLED is \$549 while the older LCD version was \$529, and the 1TB SD OLED is \$649 which is the same

price as the old SD tier. So, these two new models will be replacing the old 64GB and the 512 GB models which means that those older models will be getting discontinued.

So, is the SD OLED worth the upgrade? Well, if you already own a SD, it's probably not worth the upgrade unless you really hated the screen on the original model and wanted more storage.

But if you have lately thought about getting a

Steam Deck and don't already own one, these new upgrades are worth considering.

Also keep in mind that the 256GB LCD Steam Deck is still going to be on sale but now for the same price as the 64GB model was at \$399 so if you cannot afford the other SD OLED, you can get this model. It will also be the new cheapest model of the Steam deck now.

There are also some alternatives to the Steam Deck such as the ASUS

ROG Ally and Lenovo Legion Go.

So if you do not like or don't want the Steam Deck and want to use a Windows based handheld instead of the Steam Deck, then maybe looking into those alternatives is a good idea.

But what do you think about the Steam Deck OLED? Do you think that these upgrades are good, or do you think that Valve should have done something diffrent?

Steam Deck OLED Slim Case



The Science Behind the Scare

By Addison McCroskey

Horror movies. You love 'em or you hate 'em.

Additionally, when watching a horror film, there is control over both the situation and the viewing experience. Unlike the real world, people can press pause when a situation in a film becomes too dire to handle. So, this gives those who do enjoy horror a sense of relief and comfort within their fear. That is, knowing that at any given moment they could turn it off.

This can help maintain healthy anxiety levels and promote healthy coping strategies. Sometimes viewing movies such as these can function as a distraction from other emotions besides fear. Even so, being fearful of a movie does not necessarily make watching it unenjoyable.

Psychological Horror's Target Audience

Most types of horror can be scary, but psychological horror specifically tends to hook analytical audiences, and provide a sense of curiosity and hunger to identify the plot and characters' utmost intentions. Horror entertainment such as this can satisfy our constant investigation of the human psyche, and how we relate it to ourselves.

Many people (myself included) are fascinated by what human nature is truly capable of. Research indicates that those who appreciate this genre of horror tend to question mental phenomena, and how mental health can affect the body's functions. Studies show that those who seek out this specific genre of horror tend to wield more investigative and inquisitive traits.

When it comes to horror films, there is a large spectrum of movies to select from depending on what you're in the mood for. For some, psychological horror is a thrilling experience. Realistically, sensation seekers tend to enjoy the new and intense experiences that come with lack of control in the film. On the other hand, individuals who are of a more empathetic nature tend to enjoy these movies less. This divide makes fight-or-flight experiences

easier for some than others.

Psychological horror explores the anxieties and vulnerability behind the human brain and how flawed thinking can occur when not in the correct state of mind. For example, an unsuspecting woman being chased down a dark corridor may instead of exiting the building back herself into a dead end, ultimately leading to her demise. This can cause the audience to subconsciously root for the woman, yet again relating back to the ideology of empathy and paranoia.

Elements of Psychological Horror

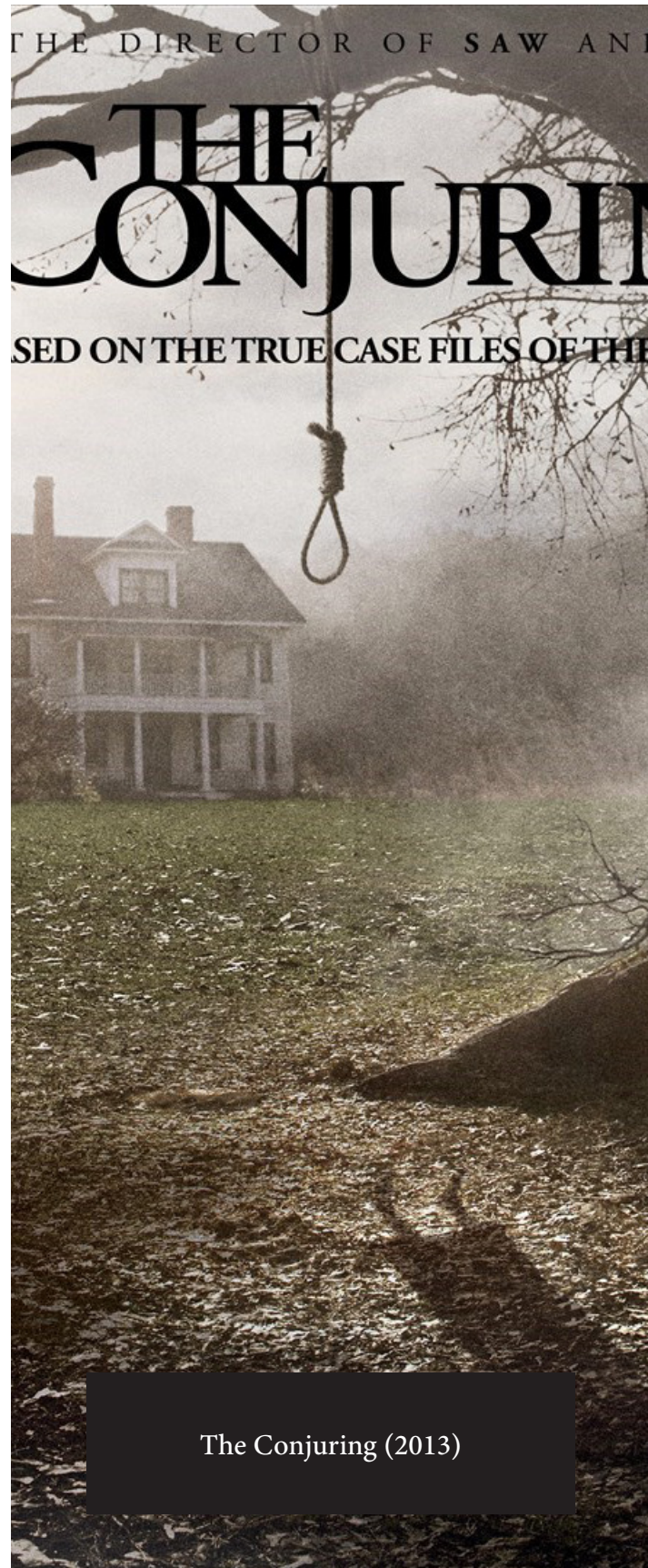
Some additional topics in psychological horror include madness, anxiety, self-doubt, and emotional turmoil. Supposing you put too much thought into the storyline of any other horror, you might find that the plot itself is made of glass. Psychological horror plots on the other hand are often less identifiable.

Some of the most frequently used tropes in psychological horror are a deteriorating mental state, loss of control, or newfound hallucination. These are typically driven by emotional manipulation or when tragedy strikes.

On the topic of tragedy, some writers construct films solely based off true events or events that could take place, in an attempt to scare the audience further. Nonetheless, an audience may not always be aware that the film is based on a true event because of its severity. This can be an adaptation, realistic fiction or even an extension of a real event. Some prime examples of this may include *The Conjuring* (2013), *The Exorcist* (1973), *Jaws* (1975) and *Poltergeist* (1982) to name a few.

While the film industry has had a lengthy run of high caliber horror cinematography, a person must admit that the recent decline of quality within these movies has been devastating.... Will these motion pictures ever return to their previous state of perfection? Or will they soon develop backwards with a more refined and modern touch?

Anatomy of Horror Movies



The Conjuring (2013)

Subjectivity of Horror

Horror is subjective, meaning certain types of horror may appeal to some but not others. There are several factors that can influence a person's tolerance towards distinct types of horror films: from gore to possession, slow-burning mystery to full-on slasher.

Another way horror films may appeal to an audience is by using diverse types of media and special effects within the film. This may include CGI, makeup, prosthetics, gore, and many others.

Although some films have limited budgeting, mechanical effects are not necessarily the most blood-curdling aspect of an excellent quality horror film. Each film holds its own story.

Furthermore, there are crucial moments of suspense that can tie a scene together if done correctly. These small thought-provoking details can make or break important scenes.

Some prime examples of this are in *Madhouse* (2004), when the Psychiatric intern Clark Stevens (Joshua Leonard) completes his descent into madness. His co-worker turned lover Lisa, (Jordan Ladd) had not yet realised this until after he had already begun killing those around him. In a turn of events, when Clark has Lisa cornered on the deadliest floor of the building, she pleads for him to spare her and for his affection once more. Clark is stunned,



Silence of The Lambs (1991)

and sent into a state of shock. Lisa manages to unarm him and escape.

As well as in *Silence Of The Lambs* (1991) when Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster) enters the grim and hideous home of Buffalo Bill. (Ted Levine) It is in this house which Clarice must find a beaten woman being held hostage. To her surprise, the entirety of the home is pitch black and covered in filth. The complete darkness combine with the disturbing surroundings is enough to petrify Mrs Starling.

Key Elements of Horror

A few key elements that make these films memorable are the use of dramatic irony, growing tension, and a steady turning point or change of morality. Regardless of what you are shaken by it is undeniable that a good amount of suspense in a film is desirable.

On a different note, some horror films stray from the everyday: exposition, climax, and resolution type storyline. This may include completely different plot elements in many different orders.

But where do jump scares come into play? Most of the time they don't. They're far too easy. A broad number of jump scares end up being dragged along in a scene making it blatantly obvious of what is to come. Knowing when to use them is what makes them truly effective.



Halloween (1978)

An Intro Into Cozy Games

By Logan Jacobs

The idea of a “cozy game” is one that is relatively recent for most. Despite not being defined anywhere, people can often tell what games can be described as cozy and which ones can’t be by simply viewing the trailer. Although for some that may be new to gaming it’s harder to get into the genre, simply by misjudging certain games. So, to get a newcomer adjusted here are three of the best cozy games.

The first cozy game is *Stardew Valley*, an iconic indie game from the developer Concerned Ape. *Stardew Valley* was first released in 2016 but has been consistently updated and improved since then. *Stardew Valley* follows the player as a brand-new farmer that has just inherited their recently passed grandfather’s farm attached to the small town, *Stardew Valley*. In it, the player gets to repair the town to its former glory while venturing into the world of farming.

However, that isn’t all that’s offered in *Stardew Valley*, mining, adventuring, and fighting enemies can be found for all playstyles to enjoy. Arguably that is *Stardew Valley*’s main appeal, its adaptability to any playstyle, making it a perfect cozy game.

The next cozy game comes from a classic cozy franchise: *Animal Crossing: New Horizons*. *New Horizons* strays far away from the traditional *animal crossing* formula of coming into a new town and building up the infrastructure. Instead, *New Horizons* makes the player design and build a town to their liking. This combined with *Animal Crossings* typical formula of limiting the amount of story progression is allowed per day forcing players to be creative with how they spend their time, makes *Animal Crossing: New Horizons* a great cozy game that is bound to last for weeks.

The last cozy game is a relatively smaller one, *Peglin*. *Peglin*, at first glance, may not fit in with some people’s narrow view of cozy games. This is because *Peglin* tackles the difficult challenge of improving on *Peggle*, the iconic puzzle game. To do that, *Peglin* adds in many elements from a variety of different games and the roguelike genre. Although *Peglin* puts its own spin on everything, making it just unique enough that if you’ve played the games it takes from it still feels fresh. The replayability that is found in the roguelike genre is implemented very well into *Peglin*, letting every run be completely different. *Peglin* takes many chances with its gameplay and unlike *Stardew Valley* or *Animal Crossing* it does in an incredibly unique way while still making the game super cozy.

VR Battles: Quest 2 VS Quest 3

By Chad Neumann

VR headsets have come a long way since the first Oculus Rift, so if you're looking to upgrade or taking your first dive into VR-MR, you may want to look at the new Meta Quest 3.

If you're new, well, firstly, VR means Virtual Reality whereas MR means Mixed Reality. Mostly everyone is familiar with VR, but MR perhaps a bit less. Mixed reality is where the virtual world overlaps the real world around the user.

With that out of the way, let's take a look at the Meta Quest 3 (Q3) released on October 10th, 2023.

For those of you looking to upgrade, your first question should be, Is it worth it? For those of you getting into VR for the first time, is the Q3's \$250 to \$400 price increase worth it over the Q2?

Let's start off with a comparison of power.

The old Q2's Processor was a Snapdragon XR2 chip. The Q3 on the other hand uses a much more powerful XR2 Gen 2 chip that's 2.5 times more powerful than the Q2 chip. Not only that but it now has 8GB of RAM compared to the 6GB of RAM on the Q2.

One of the big differ-

ences between the two is that the Q3 has what the VR industry calls "Pancake Lenses" while the Q2 uses "Fresnel lenses". Pancake Lenses are much clearer compared to the older Fresnel Lenses and have a bigger sweet point.

In case you don't know what a sweet point is, it's where your eyes look on the lens and where it's the clearest, usually the middle. The Q3 screen has also gotten a significant resolution jump too with it being 2064 x 2208 pixels compared to the Q2's resolution of 1832 x 1920 pixels. The refresh rate is still the same as Q2 at

120Hz.

The cameras on the Q3 have had a huge upgrade to them with the passthrough cameras having full color now. Passthrough means that you can exit out of virtual reality and see the real world. It also has slightly better hand tracking. The Q2 has a black and white grainy passthrough. The Q3 also has an "Active Depth Sensor" to map out your room in 3D which is something the Q2 lacks. This is used for Mixed Reality (MR) games and apps that support it.

The controllers on the Q3 no longer have

the tracking rings that the Q2 had and most other Inside Out Tracking controllers have. Instead, it has Infrared (IR) LEDs in the front of the controllers under the plastic to track them.

The Q3 is 40% slimmer than the Q2 which means that it will be much slimmer than the Q2. But even though it's slimmer, it's not lighter. In fact, it's heavier at 513G compared to the 503G of the Q2. Since the Q3 is slimmer it will feel a little bit better to wear on your head compared to the Q2.

The Q3 also has more storage, having a max amount of 512GB of storage. The Q2 has a max amount of 256GB.

The Q3 has a rated max battery life of 2.9

hours while the Q2 has a rated max battery life of 2-3 hours. But these are just their rated battery life and on the Q3 while doing MR you're going to realistically get around 1.5 to 2 hours. So, the Q3 battery is not much better than the Q2. Now one of the big, advertised parts of the Q3 is the fact that it has good MR. The mix of the much better cameras along with the Active Depth Sensor allows a good mixed reality experience. The Q2 on the other hand does not fare so well with MR since it only had black and white grainy cameras with no depth.

The Q3 has an IPD slider wheel to adjust the spacing between the lenses which is better than the Q2 because the Q2 only had 3 options

for the IPD. So, the Q3 has more flexibility when it comes to the IPD. The screens should be clearer for more people because of the better lens adjustment flexibility you get.

One very cool new feature is that the Q3 now has upper body tracking using the camera's facing outward. It can now track your shoulders and arms. This does not mean that it can track your legs like full body tracking. Only your upper body unless you count the fact that the headset uses AI to estimate the position of your legs.

Now let's get into the similarities. It's still only available in one color: White. And it's still made from plastic. The screens on both are still LCD

displays and their designs are similar besides the Q3 being slimmer and the cameras being in different positions.

Their prices are very different from each other with the Q3 being much more expensive. The Q2 costs \$249.99 dollars for the 128GB model while the Q3 128GB model is \$499. The Q3 512GB model is \$649 and the Q2 256GB is \$299.99. As we can see here the prices are vastly different.

So, should you upgrade to the Q3 from the Q2? Well, if you're willing to spend \$499 on the Q3 and care about the new MR stuff then it's a decent upgrade! But if you are more on the budget side then it would probably be best to keep your Q2.

Meta Quest



LET THE TIERLIST BEGIN!

The main tierlist consists of the remaining seven Gungeoneers available to play without needing Hegemony Credits. Each following tier will include an in-game chest that represents the character's ranking. The Gungeoneers at the bottom of the list are not terrible choices, a run cannot be instantly doomed because of a character choice. Each Gungeoneer can find and equip themselves with an arsenal capable of beating any trial with ease. The following Gungeoneers are simply less effective than others because of their mechanics and playstyles landing them at the bottom of the list.

#7

The Convict

The Convict is one of the four starting Gungeoneers and has the appearance of a blonde woman wearing a bright orange prison jumpsuit. Her alternate costume changes their appearance to have most of her hair shaven off, some dark paint above her eyes, and a purple punk outfit adorned with spikes. Her alternate starting gun is an orange pistol that shoots laser spheres instead of bullets.

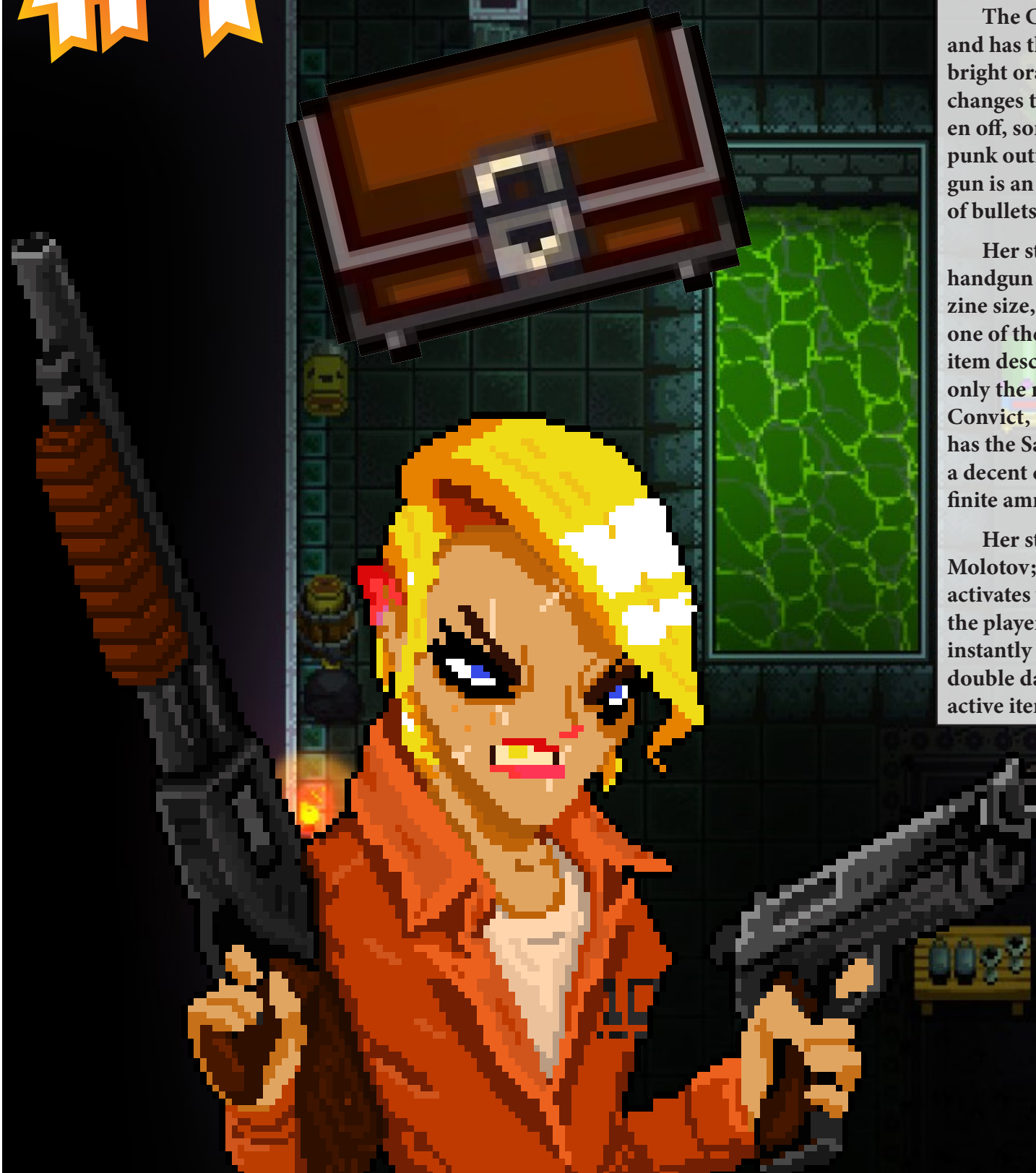
Her starting weapon is the Budget Revolver: a small handgun that fires inaccurate shots, has a small magazine size, and has to reload constantly. This weapon is one of the worst infinite ammo starter guns; even its item description says, “the Budget Revolver is used by only the most desperate Gungeoneers.” Luckily for the Convict, this isn’t her only starting weapon. She also has the Sawed-Off: a very short-range shotgun that has a decent clip size, fires four bullets at a time, and has a finite ammo pool.

Her starting items are the Enraging Photo and the Molotov; the Enraging Photo is a passive item that activates when the Convict takes damage, it causes the player to enter an enraged state for our seconds, instantly reloading their held weapon and granting double damage for the duration. The Molotov is an active item that when used lights a large area in front

of the player on fire, causing most enemies that cross over it to take fire damage over time. It has infinite uses but needs to be recharged by dealing damage after it is used.

The Convict has a respectable number of starting items, but those said items are not only mediocre, but also dangerous to use. Every part of her starting equipment encourages a dangerous playstyle, with only one item giving a reasonable payoff. The Budget Revolver is purposely a poor weapon; it is weak to encourage the player to use the slightly more powerful Sawed-Off instead.

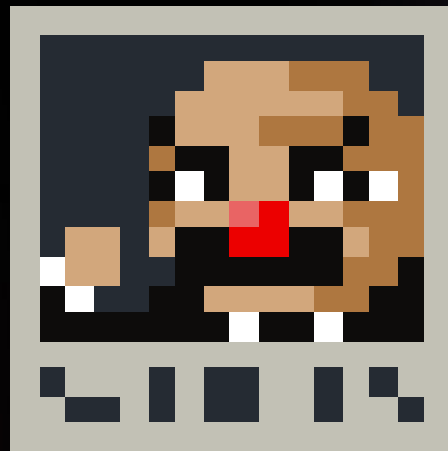
The Sawed-Off has many problems. It is only effective on first-floor enemies that it can one-shot, it becomes nearly useless on later floors as enemies have increased health, and leads to unnecessary player damage as they must be absurdly close to be effective. With a small ammo pool, it can hardly deal with the first floor before being emptied, forcing the use of her Budget Revolver; both of which are terrible against bosses. The Sawed-Off is straight up garbage. It isn’t effective against regular enemies or bosses, it puts the player in more danger than it puts enemies in, and it becomes completely obsolete when another weapon is obtained or when not on the first floor.



The Convict



The Convict's
Alternate Costume



Enraging Photo

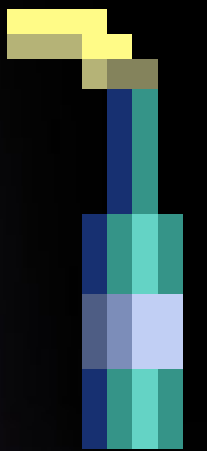
On the brighter side, the Convict's items are better than her weapons, but not by much.

The Molotov is a decent item that deals good damage to stronger enemies, but it can damage the user and it's cooldown is too long. This causes the player to hold onto it's charge rather than frequently using it. Most Gungeoneers can only hold one active item, so the Molotov can and should be quickly be exchanged for another item.

Finally, the Enraging Photo; while the buff granted is powerful, it has two fatal flaws. The activation method and it's duration. Taking damage isn't bad for an experienced player but is terrible for a beginner who will likely die quickly (thanks for nothing Sawed-Off) due to the difficulty of recovering lost health. Even for an expert, the loss of too much health can be problematic as finding health can often be left up to chance. In standard rooms it has little use, if damaged the player can quickly clear the current wave of enemies, but the effect runs out long

before another wave spawns or before they can make it to the next room. It is more effective in boss fights allowing the Convict to deal lots of damage, but taking damage in a boss fight, either purposefully or unintentionally, prevents the player from obtaining the powerful item given when defeating a boss without taking damage, those being the Master Rounds which grant a permanent extra heart container.

In conclusion, the Convict has too many items that get replaced quickly and that encourage a "risk vs reward" playstyle, which is ineffective for a roguelike that gives minimal healing methods and is quite risky for only a miniscule reward which is why I consider them to be the worst Gungeoneer in the game. However, each Gungeoneer still has strength in the right hands and are all capable of the same feats. This list is simply my opinion on the strength of these characters compared to one another; so, to all the Convict fans out there please do not throw a molotov cocktail at me. Thanks.



Molotov



Budget Revolver

Sawed-Off

Alternate Budget Revolver

#6

The Cultist

The Cultist is a Gungeoner who is only available in Co-op games as player two. They have the appearance of a figure wearing a pink robe which completely conceals them except for their bright yellow eyes. Their alternate costume swaps out their robe for a large apple costume. Their alternate starting gun is a worm that fires smaller worms, which matches their apple costume.

Their starting weapon is the Dart Gun: a toy gun that fires foam darts that do decent damage, has long range, and has decent accuracy. Their weapon is adequate, and it reveals that the Cultist is just some kid messing around with toys in the Gungeon.

Their starting items are the Friendship Cookie and Number 2; the Friendship Cookie is an active item that revives fallen allies in Co-op and respawns them with three full hearts, but it's only a one-time use item. Number 2 is a passive item that boosts the Cultist's speed and damage by a decent amount when they are alive and Player one is not.

The Cultist's starting equipment doesn't seem bad, but unfortunately there are hidden downsides not related to their equipment. The differences added in Co-op play are the main problems.

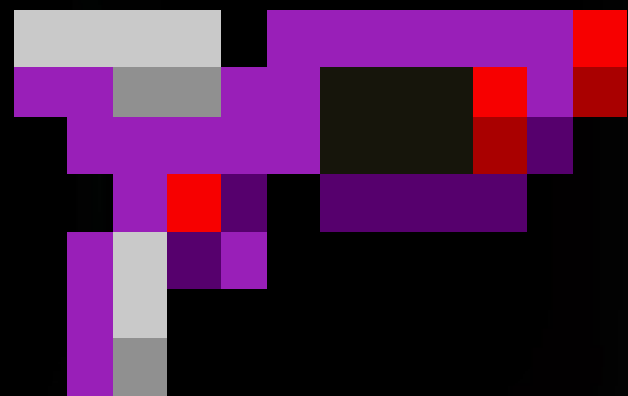


The Cultist



The Cultist's Alternate Costume

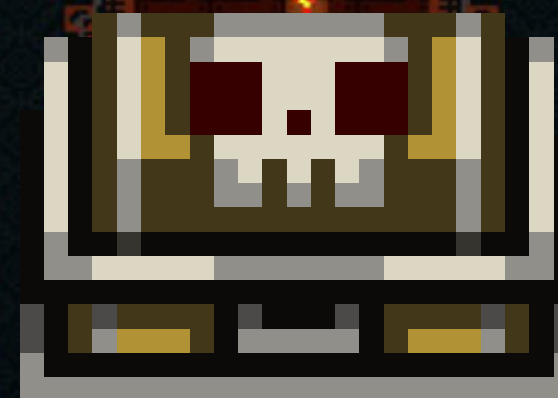
*This is the best alternate costume out of all the characters, it's incredible.



Dart Gun



Dart Gun Alternate



Revival Chest



Friendship Cookie

Number 2

While in Co-op all enemies have 40% more health, all weapons, items, and pickups need to be shared between players, when a player runs out of health they become a ghost that can only perform a weak defensive ability, and when there is a ghost all chests become revival chests that bring ghosts back to full health but can no longer give equipment. Using chests for revives means the players have much less weapons and items overall, especially since they need to split them between each other. On the other hand, because there are two players they can deal twice as much damage to enemies. This makes things somewhat balanced out damage wise, but still negatively skewed items and weapons wise.

The Dart Gun is a relatively weak starting weapon, but still is better than others, and the Friendship Cookie is a good active item as having both players alive negates many of the downsides that come with Co-op. While the effects of Number 2 sounds good, it's activation conditions are too

strict and stat boosts are less potent than they seem. It gives a 41% damage boost but enemies in Co-op have 40% more health, meaning the buff only removes the extra health enemies gain leaving it with only the speed increase. Having the effect activated is not great because it means your teammate is down, it's just a boost that helps if your ally messes up frequently. Both players living is more powerful than the buff given, and the effect only works if the Cultist is the survivor; if they fall first then the other player receives none of the buffs and has no counter to the enemy's increased health.

To summarize, the Cultist's starting kit is decent overall, but their item that seems the most powerful is rarely active and can only negate a few of the weighty problems that cooperative multiplayer creates. Although they aren't the best, I do enjoy the cooperative style of play they add as well as their apple cosmetics making them fun to play occasionally with a friend.

CHECKPOINT



This checkpoint in the tierlist represents the division between below average characters and good characters.

The following Gungeoneers are much more effective fighters; they have abilities that benefit them in the initial stages of the game that can still provide some help in the later parts of a run. Although some of them come with their own unique challenges, these next characters are all solid choices that can contend with the higher tier characters.

The next two Gungeoneers are very close to one another in terms of strength. An argument could be made to swap placements for the next two Gungeoneers due to their similarities, but I personally prefer reliability over potentially slightly better performance which leads us to the 5th placed Gungeoneer on the list.

#5

The Robot

The Robot is an unlockable Gungeoner that has the appearance of a small machine with an old computer monitor functioning as their head. It displays keyboard symbols like 1, 0, and] as it's face and their torso has a small compartment. Their alternate costume gives them the appearance of a metallic skeleton with glowing red eyes. Their alternate starting gun is a small skull that fires bones which matches their alternate skin.

Their starting weapon is the Robot's Right Hand: a small weapon with an exceptionally large clip size, excellent accuracy, and decent range. The Robot's Right Hand is the best *standard starting weapon by a wide margin and the most powerful tool in the Robot's arsenal; also, according to the game most robots are left-handed. It has one extra mechanic, every time the

player picks up the Junk item, they gain a permanent 5% damage boost. Junk is found when breaking a chest and is usually worthless, but as the Robot, Junk gives a small yet additive boost.

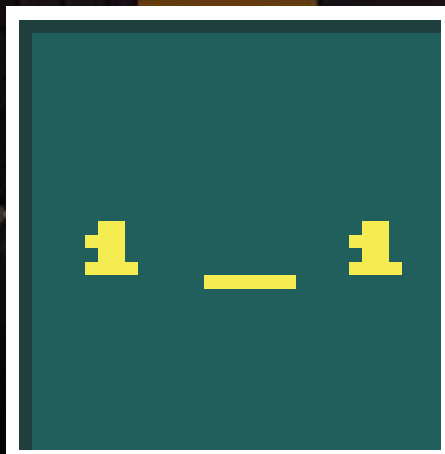
Their starting items are Battery Bullets and Coolant Leak; Battery Bullets are a passive item that electrifies all bullets fired increasing accuracy for all weapons, adding a chance to deal additional damage, causes bullets to electrify water, and grants immunity to electrified water. The effect that Battery Bullets apply to water is related to their other item, Coolant Leak. It is an active item that creates a stream of water that can wash away fire or poison and can be electrified to damage enemies that walk over it. The Coolant Leak has infinite uses but needs to be recharged by dealing damage after use, like the Convict's Molotov.



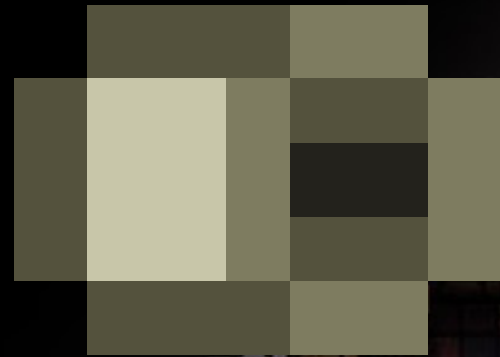
The Robot



The Robot's Alternate Costume



*One other starting weapon is better, but it functions very differently than all other starting weapons.



Robot's Right Hand



Robot's Right Hand Alternate



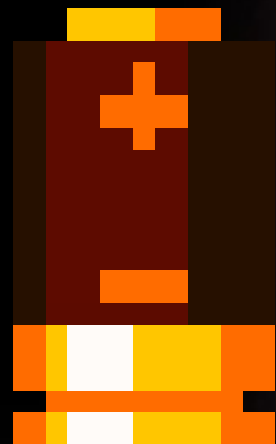
Armor



Junk



Coolant Leak



Battery Bullets

The Robot has an excellent starting kit with a strong weapon that is effective for a long time, a passive item with multiple useful effects that is always active, and an active item that is easily replaced, yet still powerful early on in combination with their passive item. This sounds great, so why is the Robot ranked so low? The reason for the Robot's placement is because of how their health works.

The Robot has no health. Instead, the Robot has armor: armor is similar to health but is much less common, more expensive in shops, and causes an effect that destroys enemy bullets in a large area when receiving damage. Armor isn't necessarily bad, but the fact the Robot only has armor makes them a far more difficult character for all players. The Robot cannot use health pickups in any way, and most item drops are health pickups which become useless. Similarly, every item in the game that effects the player's max health or ability to heal loses that function; if that is the item's main purpose, then the Robot only gets five to ten *shells or nothing, making many items nearly useless for the Robot. As armor is harder to replace than health, every piece lost is more impactful than losing health as it is much less likely to be recovered; this makes the Robot much worse at recovering from bad situations.

This is their main and most prominent weakness, but they also have other minor weaknesses as well. Breaking chests for Junk is not guaranteed, instead of giving Junk it could give a random item, a heart pickup that can't be used, or it could just explode, potentially damaging the player. Destroying chests prevents them from being opened for equipment; if players rely too heavily on the boost Junk provides, they will be left with a rather barren arsenal which is problematic as well as less fun than having lots of loot. Finally, the Coolant Leak is easily replaced by other active items, but it still has the advantage of being able to recharge quickly and creating an obstacle that the player doesn't have to avoid.

Considering this, the Robot has strong tools that can be useful for an entire run which attempt to, but don't fully, compensate for his abnormal health mechanics which makes them a more complex and challenging character. The Robot was designed to be a glass cannon character, which means they're intended to be more difficult, but also more fun to try and adapt to their "just don't get hit lol" style of gameplay they bring to the table.

*Shells are in-game currency.

#4



The Marine

The Marine is one of the four starting Gungeoneers and has the appearance of a man in a blue, sci-fi suit of armor with a large helmet that has an orange visor. Without armor, his helmet is removed showing that he has short black hair and is missing an eye. His alternate costume changes his outfit into a medieval suit of armor that has a green surcoat with a yellow emblem on it. His alternate starting gun is a yellow and light blue pistol that fires blue energy spheres.

His starting weapon is the Marine Sidearm: a large yellow pistol with a good clip size, decent range, good accuracy, and quick reload time. This weapon is remarkably similar to the Robot's Right Hand, but slightly worse, making it the second-best standard starting weapon. It's simple effectiveness makes it a powerful part of the Marine's kit.

His starting items are Military Training, Supply Drop, and one piece of armor; Military Training is a passive item that decreases reload times by a decent amount, increases accuracy, and lowers charge time on weapons that are charged to fire. Interestingly, Military Training is the only item in the game that lowers charge time, making it a unique effect. Supply Drop is an active item that summons an ammo refill for one weapon when used, but it can only be used once. The Marine gets an extra hit-point of armor at the start of the game thanks to his helmet.



The Marine



The Marine's
Alternate Costume



Marine Sidarm

The Marine is quite the simple Gungeoneer, and he is meant to be just that; a standard character with a powerful weapon, a permanent and decent boost to multiple stats, a free ammo refill whenever needed, and slightly more survivability at the start of a game. He doesn't have anything outstanding, but he does have reliability, ease of access, and simplicity which makes him an excellent choice for beginners. The only problem with the Marine is that he doesn't bring anything new to the table, which isn't necessarily a bad thing; he just has good obtainable effects, like reload speed, rather than unique effects, like having armor instead of health.

In conclusion, the Marine is a simple Gungeoneer with no flaws, but they lack the change in game-play and additional effectiveness other characters have. For new players the Marine will be the best choice with his base strengths; however, if you are an experienced player you will likely use other characters more to take advantage of their more interesting abilities.



Marine Sidarm Alternate



Military Training



Supply Drop



Armor

#3



The Hunter

The Hunter is one of the four starting Gungeoneers and has the appearance of a woman with long purple hair wearing a bright yellow robe. Her alternate costume changes her robe into a wolf styled garment that now goes over her head and obscures her eyes while stationary. Her alternate starting weapon is a polished silver revolver with a red barrel that fires pink energy spheres.

Her starting weapon is the Rusty Side-arm: an old pistol that has a small clip size, low accuracy, and decent range. This starting weapon isn't particularly good, and shares similarities with the Convict's Budget Revolver. Luckily for the Hunter, this isn't her only starting weapon. She also has the Crossbow: it fires single, high power, high velocity arrows that can one-shot most enemies through the first and second floor, and two-shot some of the sturdier enemies on the first floor as well. The Crossbow

also has a quick reload time, a good ammo capacity, and has full effectiveness at all ranges, making it a great weapon in rooms as well as in early boss fights.

Her starting item is the Dog: a tennis ball that summons Junior II. Every room cleared gives him a chance to find pickups including hearts, keys, ammo, maps, etc. When near a disguised mimic he barks to alert the player, and you can PET the DOG; the Enter the Gungeon Wiki states, "While there is no mechanical advantage in doing so, it's recommended that you pet the dog frequently, because he is a very good boy."

The Hunter has less equipment than most other Gungeoneers, yet what she has is powerful and can make certain difficult parts of the game much easier to deal with along with giving a decent and permanent boost to finding pickups.



The Hunter



Junior II



The Hunter's Alternate Costume



Rusty Sidearm

The Rusty Sidearm, although mediocre, is a highly effective secondary to the Crossbow; it works well at long-range and the Rusty Sidearm can be quickly unloaded on close-range enemies. It can also be used in less dangerous situations to avoid ammo waste on the Crossbow. Another way to save ammo is to alternate between the two weapons when fighting enemies that take more than one Crossbow arrow to defeat.

The Crossbow is an incredible weapon to begin a run with. It doesn't do anything particularly outstanding; it's simply a powerful weapon that excels in the early game. It's ability to one-shot enemies early on makes the game MUCH easier for beginners and helps them to better understand the game's mechanics. For seasoned players it acts as a powerful and guaranteed weapon for the first boss, other Gungeoneers have to rely on their starting weapon or whatever equipment they find for the first boss fight. Essentially the Crossbow is a strong, ammo efficient, and easy to use weapon that works great on early floors as well as their boss fights.

Even with all these strengths the Dog is just as, if not more, versatile than the Crossbow. Junior II has a 5% chance to find item pickups for every room cleared. There are about twenty rooms per floor, so combined with the regular 20% the pickup spawn chance becomes 25%; according to this, about twenty-five pickups drop per run. Of course, since it's a chance the pickup spawns, the amount found can fluctuate. You could get lucky or unlucky for more or less drops respectively, but overall the Dog increases the total pickups collected by a decent amount. Part of the Dog's utility comes from the



Crossbow



The Hunter petting Junior II



Dog





Rusty Sidearm Alternate

usefulness that pickups have. Hearts and armor keep the player alive for longer, keys help to get new weapons and items, and ammo allows weapons to be used for longer; pickups are the lifeblood of a good run, especially hearts for beginners and keys for experienced players.

Junior II has even more helpful effects, although these are typically less useful. When near a disguised mimic Junior II barks; mimics can waste keys and damage the player if opened, and they are powerful enemies that can be found anywhere. Mimics have telltale signs that they aren't real chests, but those signs can be subtle or hard to notice for beginners. Having Junior II bark at them saves newer players from being tricked by mimics, allowing them to avoid their attack and be prepared to fight them. Defeating a mimic still grants the equipment that would've come from the chest, letting the player save a key if they defeat the mimic without attempting to unlock it. Unfortunately, the Dog cannot bark at certain other mimic enemies, such as pedestal mimics. Finally, petting Junior II is a fun option they added to the game. All Gungeoneers can find the Dog item after certain criteria are met, and nearly all of them have a unique and happy expression while petting him, how wholesome. :)


Overall, the Hunter is an excellent choice for beginners as well as for experts because of her early combat advantage, more common pickups, and dog companion because that's just fun. You can't go wrong picking the Hunter, every part of her kit is strong and useful for long periods of time making her one of the best Gungeoneers.

FINAL CHECKPOINT



The final two Gungeoneers are up next, and their high placement mainly comes from their equipment being unlike the other's items and weapons. Most Gungeoneers prior to this point had weapons or items that were useful at the very beginning of the game, but eventually become impractical or get replaced such as the Marine Sidearm or Coolant Leak; the final Gungeoneers' equipment has full effectiveness throughout the entirety of a run.

These characters, especially #1, can be incredibly powerful in the hands of a player that fully understands their mechanics. It's time to round off this tierlist starting with the second strongest Gungeoneer.



#2



The Pilot

The Pilot is one of the four starting Gungeoneers and has the appearance of a man with red pompadour styled hair, a green button up shirt, and a black vest. His alternate costume swaps his main outfit out for a dark red parka with a fluffy collar and gives him a light green visor. His alternate starting weapon is a golden version of his starting gun that fires yellow energy projectiles.

His starting weapon is the Rouge Special: a sci-fi blaster that is dark blue and fires green blasts of energy. It has decent clip size but slow reload time, short range, and high spread; it's even worse than the Budget Revolver (which is honestly impressive) and is the worst starting gun in the game. Luckily for the Pilot, he has multiple items that have powerful effects.

His starting items are Disarming Personality, Hidden Compartment, and Trusty Lockpicks. Disarming Personality is a passive item that gives the Pilot a

15% discount when purchasing anything from shops. Hidden Compartment is a passive item that allows the player to hold two active items at once and increases the maximum ammo capacity of all guns by 10%. Both effects are amazing, and the fact that they are both crammed into one item is great. Finally, Trusty Lockpicks is an active item that has a 50% chance of opening any lock; if it fails then the lock becomes broken and can no longer be opened in any way. It has infinite uses, can recharge very quickly, and works very well with the Hidden Compartment's increased active item holding.

The Pilot is a toss-up Gungeoneer for many. His weak starting weapon is often what turns players away, but after overcoming the challenging Rouge Special the Pilot becomes a force to be reckoned with thanks to his many high value utility items.



The Pilot



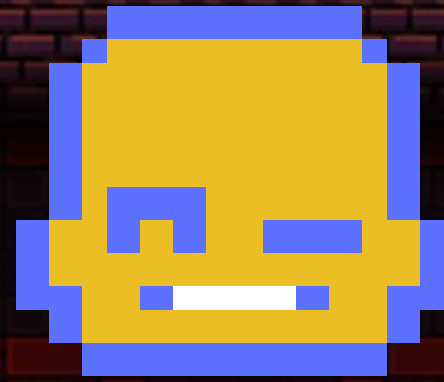
The Pilot's
Alternate Costume

The Rouge Special is a garbage gun. That's the unfortunate truth, but its weakness is quickly negated in the same way that powerful infinite ammo guns are ineffective. Starting weapons are replaced early on regardless of strength; powerful infinite ammo guns like the Marine Sidearm will likely only be used on the first floor. When other weapons are available they should be used because they are very often stronger than any starting gun. As well as this, ammo and ammo saving items are common enough to make *running out completely an uncommon problem. Strong infinite ammo guns are useful for longer, but eventually become seldom used in every run making them much less powerful overall. The Rouge Special is the only weak link in the Pilot's kit and its minor detriment is nothing compared to the benefits of his items.

His first item is Disarming Personality; the discount given isn't incredible by any means, but the amount of money it saves overall per run is substantial. Shells are limited resources collected when completing rooms. Players earn more money on later floors, but shop prices increase on later floors as well, even more than the extra shells received. Disarming Personality helps

negate these price increases late game and allows for cheaper purchases early game enabling more purchases to be made per run. Think back to the Dog, it gave useful pickups but it was left up to chance whether you would get anything or if it was of any use. Shops on the other hand are available on nearly every floor and contain a large assortment of pickups, items, and weapons for purchase. The player can choose what they need for their current situation rather than leaving it up to chance. Shops are powerful, and Disarming Personality allows the player to take further advantage of the strength they provide.

Next up, Trusty Lockpicks. They are a luck-based item, and many dislike it for this reason. Despite this, it has great usefulness and versatility especially at the beginning of runs. Their main use should be on low value chests or while low on keys. Imagine this scenario, the floor is fully completed and there's one chest remaining, but the player has zero keys. The average Gungeoneer can only break the chest and move on; however, the Pilot can attempt to open the chest. If it unlocks then the chest's contents are free, if it breaks the lock then they're left in the same situation as other Gungeoneers. The



Disarming Personality



Trusty Lockpicks



Hidden Compartment

two outcomes for the Pilot are either nothing gained nothing lost or a free chest. This scenario and others happen frequently as keys can be uncommon, especially on the first floor. Two guaranteed chests per floor, locked doors, and extra chests can appear which all require keys to be unlocked. Chests essential for maintaining runs as they are the main way to acquire weapons and items, so the more the player can open the stronger they become. The Trusty Lockpicks simply allow the player to reap more of the powerful benefits, like chests, that keys provide at almost any time.

Finally, Hidden Compartment: the ability to carry two active items increases their longevity and allows the use of active items with differing purposes. Items like Coolant Leak are designed for use in combat while Trusty Lockpicks are for use outside of combat. Normally players could only pick one item if presented with both types, but the Pilot can take advantage of both. Another problem with active items is their frequency of appearing. If the player has an item and they find another then one must be left behind, wasting one of the limited items given per run. The Pilot can hold two active items without worrying about leaving one

behind or having to decide which is better. The second benefit is that all weapons have 10% more maximum ammo. **Every weapon can be used longer before running out of ammo and all ammo pickups are 10% more effective. Running out of ammo for a powerful weapon in combat can compromise your game by causing preventable damage and panic. Being unable to find ammo pickups can leave weapons worthless for extended periods of time, but the Pilot's ability to make ammo last longer and be more effective can prevent these situations. The fact that it allows the player to more easily avoid running out of ammo along with its ability to improve ALL obtained weapons, as well as allowing two active items to be held makes it an incredibly powerful boost to begin a run with.

To Recap, the Pilot is an exceptionally strong Gungeoneer, albeit more difficult for beginners, thanks to his wide array of utility items that provide impactful effects throughout the entirety of a run. If the player takes the time to make it past his daunting, yet not terrible, starting weapon and understands how to make use of his Trusty Lockpicks properly, they can truly be a force to be reckoned with.



Rouge Special



Rouge Special Alternate

*Running out of ammo on all weapons.
**Every weapon besides the few that have less than 10 ammo.

The Bullet

The Bullet is an unlockable Gungeoneer that has the appearance of a Bullet Kin enemy wearing a red cape. They have two alternate costumes; his alternate costume turns him into a large pink rabbit with a puffy tail and buck teeth. His bonus alternate costume, which is only available in the physical versions of the game on Nintendo Switch and PlayStation 4, changes his appearance to a Red Shotgun Kin enemy wearing a red cape. Their alternate starting weapon makes them use a large and sharp carrot that matches their pink rabbit costume.

Their starting weapon is Blasphemy: a large sword with a copper cross-guard, pommel, and leather grip. When swung it creates a crescent shaped slash in front of the player which deals damage and destroys enemy bullets; additionally, while at full health it fires a long range and piercing rainbow-colored sword beam when swung. It does not have a clip and never needs to be reloaded, but if reloaded can knock back enemies and destroy bullets. Blasphemy is the only infinite ammo starter weapon that can be unlocked and found by other Gungeoneers, this is because it's FAR more powerful than any other starting weapon and is the key component to the Bullet's strength.

Their starting item is Live Ammo: a passive item that makes the player immune to enemy contact damage as well as increasing the damage done by dodge rolling: a Gungeoneer's main technique for avoiding bullets.

The Bullet is the strongest Gungeoneer, no buts about it. It takes quite some time to unlock them, so despite being a difficult character for beginners most newcomers will not be able to play as them until they become much more familiar with the game. For experienced players, it only takes a few runs to understand how to play the Bullet properly.

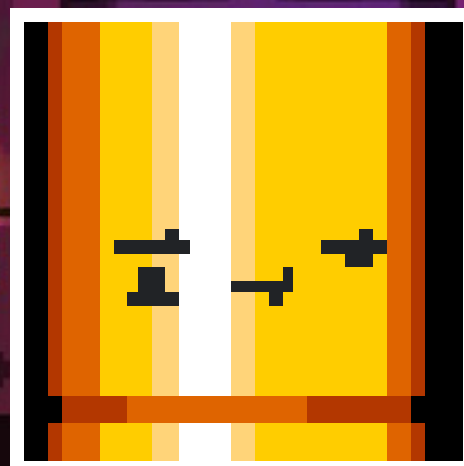


The Bullet's
Alternate Costume



The Bullet

The Bullet's
Physical Edition
Exclusive Costume



Before addressing Blasphemy, let's look at their passive item Live Ammo: while simple, it's very effective at keeping the Bullet safe. Seven enemies only use contact damage to attack, twelve enemies have other abilities but mainly rely on contact damage, three bosses attack frequently through contact, and nearly every enemy can deal contact damage but don't specifically use it. All these attacks are unable to damage the Bullet; the protection it provides is great. As well as this, Blasphemy encourages the player to be close to their target, further increasing Live Ammo's usefulness. It also increases the player's dodge roll damage which is not very useful; they're unsafe and weak attacks that should be only used on incredibly weak enemies, but the Bullet can use them safely on slightly stronger enemies.

"Strong infinite ammo guns are useful for longer, but eventually become seldom used in every run making them much less effective overall." Remember that? WELL, FORGET IT BECAUSE BLASPHEMY DOESN'T LISTEN TO THE RULES. This "gun" can be (and should be) used for an entire run. The amount of protection it gives is so immense that even though its damage becomes less reliable as runs go on, it should still be used because it makes the Bullet nearly untouchable. Being able to destroy bullets is a rare perk only few weapons have, but the amount of space cleared by one swing of Blasphemy is on par with the strongest and rarest of similarly functioning weapons. It's honestly ridiculous just how safe the Bullet can play while still dealing considerable damage.

Dangerous enemies become a joke, bosses can be beaten without breaking a sweat, and this is only the first of the three uses that make Blasphemy overpowered!

The sword beam fired by Blasphemy is an incredibly useful feature of the weapon. Without this projectile it would be restricted to close-quarters combat, which would make it only a defensive tool rather than the jack-of-all-trades weapon that it is. Its ability to pierce multiple targets as well as long range allows the Bullet to attack groups of enemies safely from any distance. Finally, the beam and the slash of the weapon can individually damage enemies meaning that at close range both attacks land, dealing double damage. There's a potential weakness to this feature however; if the Bullet is not at full hearts, then Blasphemy cannot fire its projectile. This appears to be a major weakness, especially because without the beam Blasphemy is much weaker, but there is an easy workaround to this downside. Armor protects the player's normal health; damage received removes the armor instead of hearts, preventing the Bullet from losing their ability when damaged. Alongside armor, Blasphemy itself greatly helps to avoid losing health because of its incredibly strong defensive abilities. Essentially, the potential to lose part of Blasphemy's strength is easily avoided and is hardly an issue, leaving only a powerful feature that gives Blasphemy more damage and some much-needed range.

The final feature Blasphemy has is Guard Flashing. Guard flashing is a technique that damages every enemy in a room

regardless of distance or cover. Performing this ability requires the Bullet to attack facing away from an enemy, double-tap reload, then quickly face them; it's difficult to execute, but when practiced and perfected it becomes an incredible tool in the Bullet's arsenal. Other weapons that function similarly to guard flashing are less effective and are limited by their maximum ammo unlike Blasphemy. There's not much else to say about guard flashing; it's an extremely powerful attack that's a part of an already ridiculously strong weapon given to the player automatically just for playing the Bullet.

All in all, the Bullet is overpowered. Their weapon gives them incredible defense, range, and area control that can't be matched by any other Gungeoneer's abilities.



Live Ammo



Blasphemy



Blasphemy Alternate

FINAL THOUGHTS

Even if a Gungeoner is considered weaker than others they still have great merit in many ways. Each character has unique cosmetics, different styles of gameplay, and interesting lore; every character is worth playing even if they aren't "overpowered". Enter the Gungeon encourages it's players to try different Gungeoners and understand their differing playstyles so that they might find their preferred Gun-

geoner. Regardless of character choice, the Gungeon holds countless hours of enjoyment as well as ridiculous amounts of details and information to learn, making it one of my personal favorite games of all time (if you couldn't already tell from this lengthy article). If this game interests you in any capacity, I highly recommend you give it a shot; and if you do, you'd best be prepared to Enter the Gungeon.



Demon Slayer Demands: Nezuko Character Analysis

by Parker Braun

When his family is lost, a demon slayer travels the known realms in hopes of defeating a demon lord and avenging his sister's transformation into a demon. This is Demon Slayer, and his sister is Nezuko.

Nezuko Kamado is calm, smart, and kind. Sometimes she can be even a little aggressive.

After her family's murder, Nezuko was transformed into a demon by the demon lord and was nearly killed herself by a demon slayer.

In a twist of fate, she was accepted into the demon slayer corps to fight even the most powerful demons.

Unlike other demons, she attempts to retain her humanity by refusing to eat human flesh and helps Tanjiro, her brother, whenever he is in danger to the point of risking her own life.

Physically, she is a girl with bright pink eyes, dark brown hair with red tips, a pink kimono, and a bamboo muzzle over her mouth, which keeps her from biting others.

Nezuko saves her brother's life countless times and protects any human.

Ultimately, Nezuko is a conflicted character battling with her inner demon and her desire to be human. This adds a sense of conflict and tension to the series overall where the viewer roots for her to retain her humanity and elevate to the position of hero by the end

of the series.

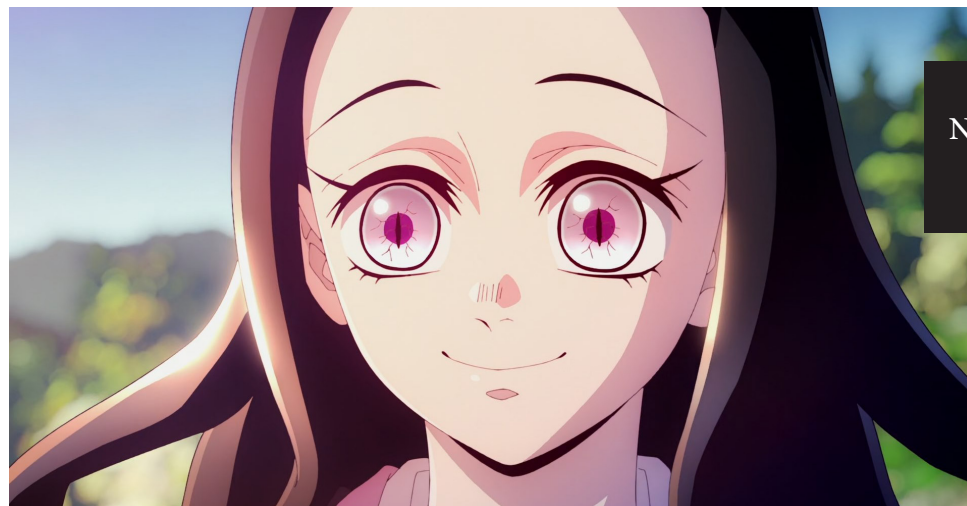
However, this series is not yet over. There's plenty to come where Nezuko and her brother will battle the forces of evil.

Where will these new adventures lead her? No one really knows, but to be sure there'll be plenty of falls from grace and rises toward purity in this character's conflicted and tumultuous life.

Truly, Nezuko is key to this series' success because without her, her brother's role in the series would be empty, separated from the tragedy of her affliction that would no longer exist.

Therefore, tragedy, sadness, conflict, and their love are really what drive this series' future and capture the imagination of its fanbase.

Nezuko Kamado struggles with anger yet is retrained by her trademark muzzle.



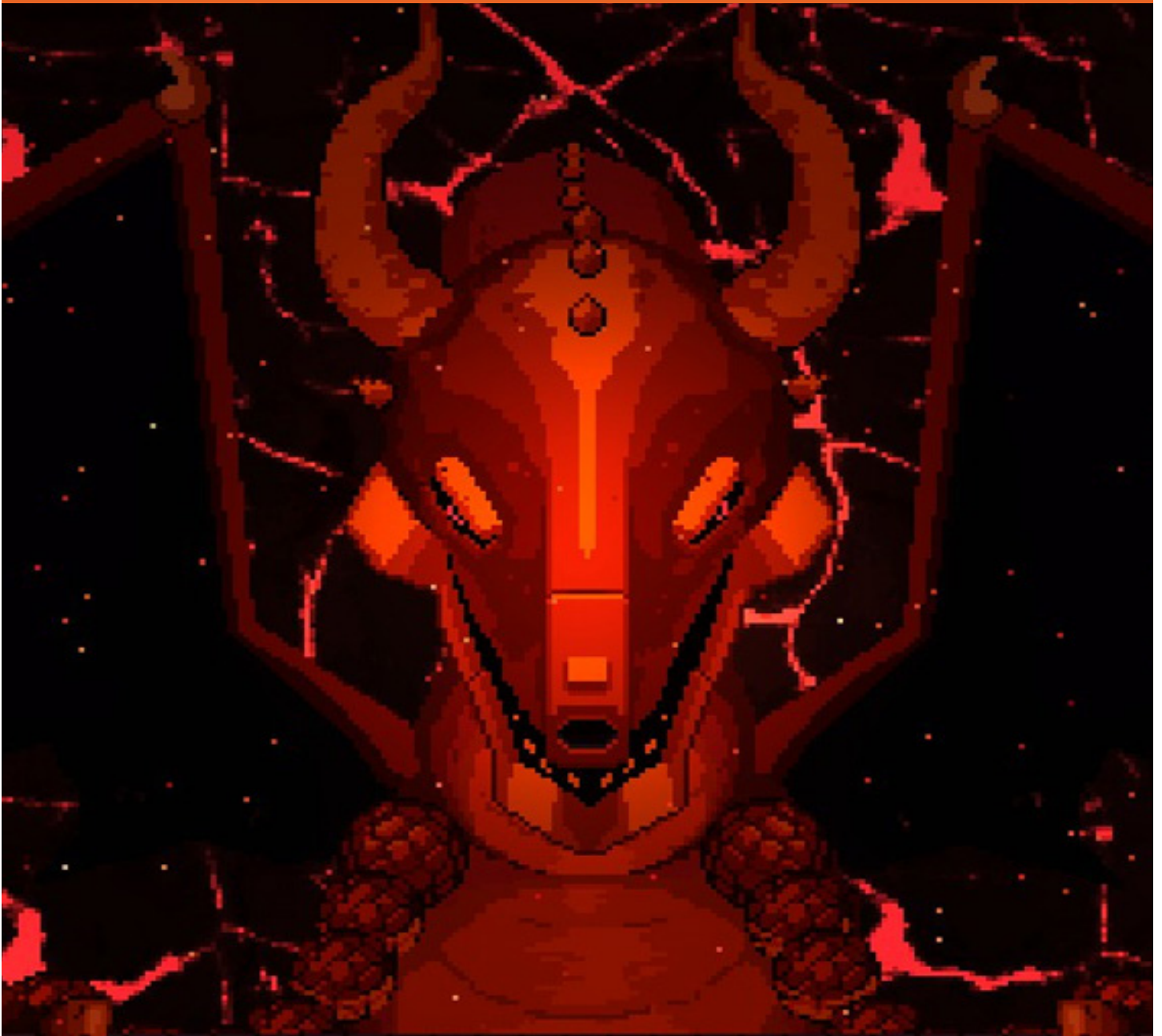
Nezuko Kamado has a brief moment of happiness.



Tanjiro Kamado, Nezuko's brother.

THE MUSTANG

P O S T



***ROLAND REGNER
FINALLY FINISHES
HIS TIER LIST!***