Common Interview Answers
by Brad Keys, Lead Developer

What is Just Pretend?

Just Pretend is a top-down 3D roguelike game where you explore a new world each time you play. Players discover cool new items and secrets, and encounter special events and bosses. Players start in their Treehouse and their goal is to gain access to the castle where the final boss resides.

Where did the idea come from?

The idea of Just Pretend came to us after I had recently played through Zelda: A Link to the Past. I loved the mechanics and the world, but wished I could play it again with a fresh new world. A couple of us had also been played the roguelike game Spelunky quite a bit, and we really liked how it offered an alternate secret ending that was very challenging to complete. So from the start, Just Pretend was meant to be a sort of hybrid experience of Zelda gameplay with roguelike elements and alternate endings as a core feature.
Read more: http://justpretendgame.tumblr.com/post/139857704339/zeldas-influence-on-just-pretend

How is it different from other roguelikes?

One of the first design meetings we had was to go over our favourite popular roguelike games and determine what we like and dislike about them. We only wanted to make this game if we knew we were improving on aspects where roguelikes suffer the most. In a nutshell we believe our difficulty curve, open world exploration, progression, and multiplayer support is a great improvement over most other roguelike games.
Read more: http://justpretendgame.tumblr.com/post/130282107754/improving-the-genre

Why are you making Just Pretend?

We are making Just Pretend because it's an awesome game that we want to play that just doesn't exist. It's also giving our company Rebel Hippo the opportunity to transition from offering contract game development services, into supporting ourselves entirely off product sales so we can continue making awesome games like this. We decided on console/PC development because those platforms offer the gameplay experiences we are most passionate about. We do have a lot of experience with mobile game development, but it's not where we play games in our free time, and I think that says it all.

Tell me about the game world
The game world is randomly generated based on hand-crafted templates we designed, each time you play. The world is composed of several different environments. The prototype contains:
1) The Outskirts - sort of like a park on the edge of town
2) The Junkyard Desert - influenced by Mad Max, it's a traditional desert with many mechanical and industrial elements
3) The Spooky Forest - A creepy, swamp-like atmosphere where creatures are more camouflaged and the dead come back to life!
4) Space Mountain - A mountainous region with a futuristic sci-fi twist. Inspired by Halo, you'll encounter interesting technology and hints of alien life

Each environment has unique enemies, traps, events, and mini-bosses. Players start in their Treehouse, a sort of home base, which is always located in The Outskirts. They explore the world in order to find and defeat the main random challenge in each environment. Completing a challenge (mini-boss, skill-test, etc), will cause the entire world to mutate, increasing the difficulty or introducing a new playstyle. Once all the required challenges have been completed, the player can find and enter the castle to defeat the final boss. This is what we consider the classic way to beat the game. There will be many hidden alternate ways of encountering final bosses and beating the game.
Read more: http://justpretendgame.tumblr.com/post/138228477574/a-true-open-world-experience

Just Pretend's Story
The story is simple and not something we plan to elaborate on too much. You play as an imaginative kid who loves to draw pictures in their treehouse on the outskirts of town. One day an evil witch appears and steals the drawings, brings them to life, and uses them as an army to conquer the kid's world. The reclusive kid must now become the hero, getting their drawings back and defeating the evil witch.

About Rebel Hippo
Rebel Hippo is a small Canadian game studio founded by programmers Brad Keys and Matthew Miner. The company started off building a game analytics service called Lumos in 2011 but transitioned into game development in 2014 with the experimental mobile game Orbert. Afterwards Rebel Hippo began offering contract game development services and have done so ever since. In 2015 Just Pretend was conceived and the company had saved enough money to take the first steps in creating a prototype for it. Several past colleagues joined the team as contract workers to help create art and audio.
Read more: http://rebelhippo.com/about/

Team Experience
The Rebel Hippo team has all worked together at previous companies. Our collective experience ranges from mobile, AAA console, MMO on PC/Mac, and even VR development. Almost all of our development experience has been with the Unity game engine, the same engine we are using to develop Just Pretend.

Why Kickstarter?
Selling the game on Kickstarter allows us to raise the funding necessary for Just Pretend to go into full production. It also serves to prove there is market demand for this game, which enables us to raise additional funding through sources such as the Canada Media Fund, who has already helped fund the prototype. If we can get the funding needed for production, it will allow more team members to work full time on the game and greatly reduce our delivery date. Without the funding we'll have to keep doing contract work for other companies to save money and go down a much slower path of raising funds from other sources. The more we can raise through Kickstarter, the better the game will be. There are some great features we hope to include such as online co-op, sharing generated worlds with friends, daily challenges, and a day/night cycle.