

THE INDIE ITCH: FOUR FREE BROWSER GAMES TO DESTRESS WITH

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Looking to kick back a little from your assignments? itch.io is a popular platform for game developers and artists to publish games, assets, music and comics. The best part is that it contains a huge library of completely free games that you can play in your browser right now!

Welcome to The Indie Itch, the biweekly column where I give readers my suggestions for free games on itch.io, ranging anywhere from cozy games to roguelikes, puzzles, RPGs and anything else you can think of. This week, I've chosen games that can help you relax from a stressful start to the semester, because it's always good to take a break.

First up, we have “Pre-rolled” from Red Sauce Games and Christophe, a casual roguelite originally made for Shovel Jam 2025 where you sell boxes of dice to people. This game combines strategy with the luck of the dice roll. You choose from several upgrades, paths and stickers to make dice boxes to fulfill your customer's stipulations and make as much money as possible. If you can't pay rent at any point in the path, your run is over. The visuals of the game are easy to understand and very charming, which I enjoyed a lot. While I found this game to be a little confusing at first, it quickly becomes very fun to get into as you encounter more types of dice and weirder customers.

Next, there's “Little Troubles in Spooky Town” by

Kenney, which was submitted to Girly Game Jam #4 this past August. This puzzle exploration game is both extremely adorable and very clever in its design. You play as a little ghost that wanders around Spooky Town to speak to the other ghost inhabitants, who all seem to have problems for you to solve. Some problems require specific skills or traits that you can equip after completing prerequisite tasks. Other times, you have to combine multiple skills at once. I found exploring the free-roam map to be fun and didn't find the puzzles to be too difficult, so definitely give this one a try if you want a whimsical and simple game to take your mind off assignments!

Then we've got “Where's My Red Ball?” from STUDIO



“Little Troubles in Spooky Town” by Kenney is an adorable Halloween themed puzzle game filled with classic indie game charm.
PHOTO COURTESY OF HANDLESBROS ON YOUTUBE



“Peggy's Post” by digitarium is filled with gorgeous art as you go through life managing a lighthouse with all of the responsibilities that come with it in an engaging and easily addictive format.
PHOTO COURTESY OF OBORO GNK ON YOUTUBE

PEPPERMILL, a charming point-and-click puzzle game where you go through stages to help a sad little cat find his ball and remember his past. Released only about a month ago, this title really feels like the gourmet version of a classic flash game. Despite how high quality it looks and feels to play, “Where's My Red Ball?” still maintains the heart of a point-and-click puzzle game. The art style is overwhelmingly cute, full of smooth animations and is made up of a simple color palette that really makes the visuals stand out. I felt joy learning more about the little cat and wanting to make him happy by finding his red ball in every stage. It may not be a

super complicated game, but it is very much so a worthwhile playing experience.

Finally, there's “Peggy's Post” by digitarium, originally made for the Ludum Dare 53 game jam. This game is very easy to get completely engrossed in; it's like “Papers, Please” but for a cozy post office in a lighthouse (and it's much less stressful.) You work at a desk collecting people's mail, sending it to the right location, managing your storage and trying to earn enough money to pay off the loan for your lighthouse. I found myself messing things up constantly on my first playthrough, but I felt compelled to get everything

right and follow the rules the more I played. The art style of the game is gorgeous and creates a relaxing atmosphere, even if your package-managing skills are the opposite of relaxing. The game also includes an endless mode to help you achieve the perfectly organized and functional post-office of your dreams.

While it's a good idea to step away for a bit when you're overwhelmed with classes, try not to spend all your free time playing these games like I've been doing this week. If you want more games before the next edition of The Indie Itch, explore the many offerings of itch.io for yourself!

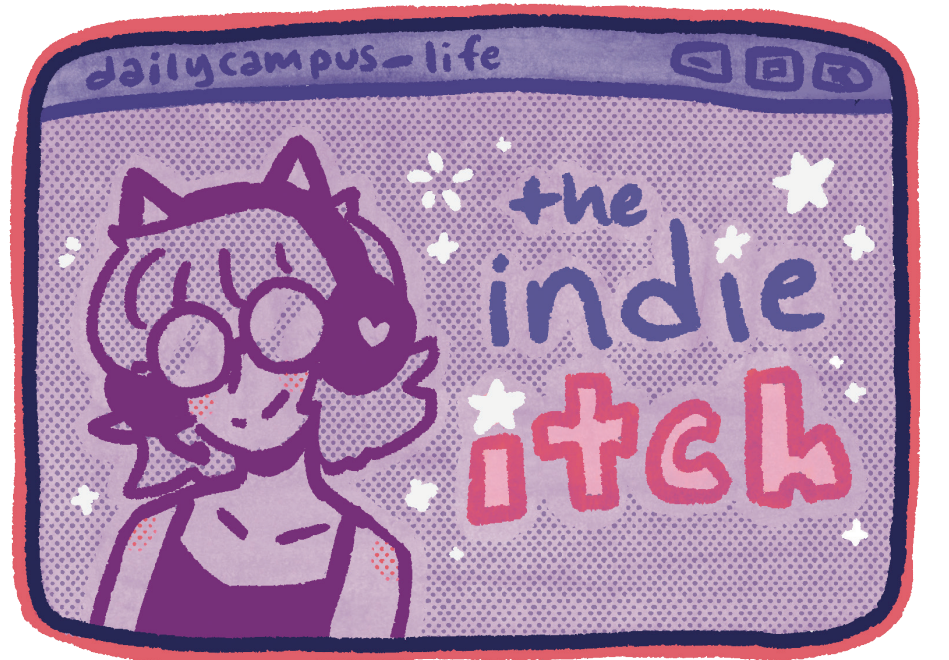


PHOTO BY COLBI LORANGER, ASSOCIATE ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Coyote vs. Hollywood



ILLUSTRATION BY ESHITHA RAO, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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If you grew up watching 1970s reruns of “The Road Runner Show,” you have borne witness to Wile E. Coyote's decades of products — explosions, falling anvils and faulty gadgets and gizmos. In “Coyote vs. Acme,” he finally takes them to court.

Ironically, the film's central joke became strangely literal before audiences even had the chance to see it.

In November 2023, Warner Bros. abandoned the complete live-action/animation hybrid film in favor of a \$30 to 40 million tax write-off, rather than spending additional money marketing and

distributing the film. This decision did not delay the film or push it onto streaming platforms; it simply scrapped it and the work of animators, voice actors and the countless other people who worked on the film.

For cast and crew who were previously under the impression that their work would soon be rolled out in theaters across the nation, the news was a shock. A “funeral screening” was held on the Warner Bros. lot for a sendoff, knowing the movie may never be publicly released.

Will Forte — who plays Coyote's attorney in the film — assumed Warner Bros. had seen something wrong with the film that he and the rest of the cast could not. “It was everything I wished the

movie could have been and more,” Forte said to the Associated Press. “It was so special, which made it so frustrating and so devastating.”

The response to the movie being shelved spread beyond its production. Fans rallied for its release online using #ReleaseCoyoteVsAcme, and some even protested in person.

“I would open my phone one day and see someone dressed in a Wile E. Coyote costume outside of the studio protesting with a sign in the rain,” director Dave Green said. Eric Bauza, the voice of multiple Looney Tunes characters, pushed the hashtag publicly and spoke about it at the 2024 Annie Awards (sporting his signature Daffy Duck

voice). The campaign was important not just because of the film, but because it was about if a finished creative work could vanish simply because it made financial sense to a corporation.

Eventually Warner Bros. relented and allowed the filmmakers to seek a different distributor. In March 2025, independent distributor Ketchup Entertainment acquired the worldwide rights to the movie for \$50 million — and nearly three years after its initial cancellation, Coyote vs. Acme landed in theaters Aug. 28.

The release has not made the film an instant blockbuster, and its financial future remains uncertain against the scale of modern studio releases. Despite this and its journey to the-

aters, audiences gave the movie an A grade from CinemaScore during its opening weekend, with critics and viewers giving it stellar scores on Rotten Tomatoes. For a film that was initially treated as disposable enough to never see the light of day, that reception means something.

However, “Coyote's” release has not erased the barriers that kept the film from theaters. “Batgirl”, “Scoob! Holiday Haunt” and other completed Warner Bros. projects written off around the same timeframe remain unreleased. Animation workers in today's world still face an industry riddled with corporate layoffs, consolidation and studios opting for AI as a cheap alternative to human labor. But one

rescued movie can represent the rejection of these trends.

The journey of “Coyote vs. Acme” should serve as a reminder that a film's value cannot be measured only by its potential to become the next billion-dollar franchise. It represents years of work from animators, writers, artists and actors who deserve to have that work seen. The victory here is that audiences can now judge the movie themselves; rather than accepting a studio's accounting decision as a sentence.

“There will be nothing able to take away that want from creators. As long as we keep creating, there will be a movie business,” Green said.

For once, the Coyote has not fallen off the cliff.



Warner Bros. studio produces media as a billion dollar company. They recently cancelled a remake of “The Road Runner Show” to gain a tax write-off.
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