Today

AdventureX is a yearly conference for narrative games. This year (for obvious reasons) there was no conference. Instead, the organizers had the idea of a **game jam**.

In case you don't know, a game jam is something like a sprint in the developer world. It's a defined time slot (of usually two weeks) in which you have to complete a playable game.

The AdvXJam obviously requires games to be in the narrative genre (like visual novel, point and click adventure, etc.) and featured a topic: „Good Times".

But let's turn the clocks back to start of Covid-19.

April

There are a lot of game jams actually – usually organized over the game platforms **itch.io** or **gamejolt** and **Discord**. One specific, quite known jam in the narrative game genre is the AdventureJam.

I've always had an eye on the indie adventure developer scene and always wanted to release a narrative game myself, but could never really follow it through.

So I thought, maybe I needed a team of fellow artists and together we could actually make a game.

That's why this year I dipped my toes in the jam scene and joined the AdventureJam – as a voice actor (I'm a **hobbyist voice actor** since I joined the cast of **the Carol Reed series**).

And it was so much fun and I learned a lot.

After it was done I thought, that I really like to make my own game for the jam with a team. I remembered an old **short story** I wrote around twenty five years ago back in school and
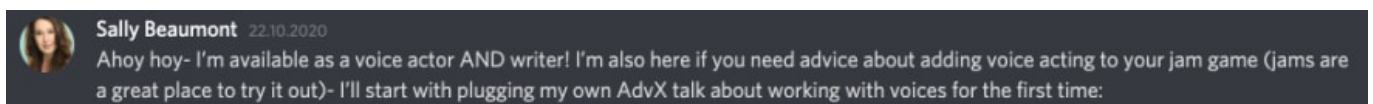
thought that this story might have potential for a game.

I started to write a game design document, but again lost the interest in it…

November

So AdvXJam came and, again, I offered voice acting services.

And then I saw **Sally Beaumonts post**:

And I thought, that I could ask Sally if she'd be up to turn my old short story into a game.

Well, she was.

The team

So I had Sally on board who also took over voice casting, because she's a professional voice artist.

Then I saw, that **Rikard Peterson** was offering his services as a musician and found his music to match perfectly a specific scene in the story and asked him if he'd like to join the team and produce the music for the game and we instantly clicked.

And then I had another member for the team: My son wanted to join as well and draw the characters for the game!

The last one joining the team was **Cade Conkle** who supported us with awesome sound effects.

The rest

Well, if you know narrative games, you know, that writing, music and sound aren't the only disciplines required for such a game.

So the rest would be: background art, animations and programming.

And as I couldn't find an artist, I was the last one who had this on his shoulders.

Art

I thankfully have some of the genes of my father, who can really draw awesome pictures, so I could draw the background images with some exercise.

Animation was a completely different thing. I *hate* doing hand drawn animations. I'm simply not patient enough to draw sixteen similar images that form an animation.

However, I had some prior background in **Blender** (which basically means, that I got to know how to navigate and handle it) and together with **the cutout animation tools plugin** my son could draw static images of my characters, that I could explode into cut out parts and animate them with Blender's awesome skeletal animation features.

Yay! Easy Walkcycles!

Programming

Four days before the deadline we had nearly all assets ready and I thought that I just needed to wrap it all together in a game engine. And after that we'd had plenty of time to beta test and optimize.

Narrator: Boy, was he wrong!

I have some prior experience in the wonderful game engine **Godot** so I had no real problems

creating a framework that can run the type of game we made. But actually bringing all assets in, implementing the works of the awesome voice actors we had and making the game interactive was *A. Lot. Of. Work*

Long story short: I didn't made it to the deadline.

Thankfully, the guys over at the AdvXJam allowed entries past the deadline so after four more hours, I got everything working (well, kinda) and added the game to the jam.

Wrapping it up

Today I can announce that after final touches and bugfixes I can finally release my first, official game:

„The Letter"

An atmospheric narrative game about a pensioner's existential crisis in a dystopian future.

Check it out on **itch**

I'm so happy to have achieved that. I learned so much and got to know so many awesome people on the way and am forever grateful for their help and support.

That's definitely not the end. I will try to get other games done. The next Adventure Jam is just around the corner and maybe, mayyybe Corona might be over soon so that Adventure X will actually take place next year or 2022 and I can finally meet all this wonderful people.

*Originally published to **dev.to***