

= A Boy and His Blob : Trouble on Blobolonia =

A Boy and His Blob : Trouble on Blobolonia is a 1989 video game developed by Imagineering for the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) . The video game was published by Absolute Entertainment in North America and Europe and by Jaleco in Japan . A Boy and His Blob follows an unnamed , male protagonist and his shapeshifting blob friend on their adventure to save the planet of Blobolonia from the clutches of an evil emperor .

A Boy and His Blob is a platform @-@ puzzle game that puts the player in control of the boy ; its gameplay revolves around feeding his blob companion different flavored jelly beans to change its shape into various tools in order to overcome obstacles and traverse the game 's world . A Boy and His Blob was designed and programmed by David Crane . Licensed by Nintendo in the summer of 1989 , development began and was completed in an intense six @-@ week period . Crane has described the game 's overall concept of a boy accompanied by a morphing blob as unconventional and wanted to try his own hand at implementing useful tools for the player .

Critical reception for A Boy and His Blob has been largely mixed . Though most reviewers agreed the gameplay was original , some felt it was poorly executed . The game won the 1989 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) " Best of Show " and a 1990 Parents ' Choice Award . A Boy and His Blob was followed by a sequel on the Game Boy titled The Rescue of Princess Blobette . After two failed attempts to bring the series to Nintendo 's other handhelds over the years , a re @-@ imagining of Trouble on Blobolonia was developed by WayForward Technologies and released by Majesco on the Wii in 2009 . That same year , the original NES game was re @-@ released on the Wii Virtual Console service in North America and PAL regions .

= = Gameplay = =

A Boy and His Blob : Trouble on Blobolonia is a platform @-@ puzzle game . The plot involves a young boy and his alien blob friend on a quest to save the latter 's home planet of Blobolonia , which has been taken over by an evil emperor who only allows his subjects a diet of sweets . The boy and Blobert must traverse the subways and caves beneath the Earth and gain the necessary items before traveling to Blobolonia and defeating the emperor . They must evade dangerous obstacles like falling rocks , stalactites , and stalagmites , as well as deadly , snake enemies . A Boy and His Blob is not a side @-@ scrolling game , but rather presents the player with a series of single , interconnected screens . Despite being a platform game , the player @-@ controlled boy is limited to simply running left or right . The player cannot jump or swim , and if the boy falls too long of a distance , he will die on impact .

Though the player directly controls the boy , Blobert is controlled by the computer AI . The player must rely on the shapeshifting blob to cross gaps , reach higher platforms , and overcome the obstacles and enemies . Blobert can change into several different tools when the player feeds him flavored jelly beans . A licorice jelly bean , for instance , will change Blobert into a ladder , while an apple jelly bean will turn him into a jack . Whistling at Blobert causes him to change back to his original shape and continue following the boy . The player is encouraged to experiment with the jelly beans and their effects to navigate the puzzling game world . Scattered throughout Earth 's caverns are various treasures and diamonds that increase the player 's score and can be used to purchase vitamins at a drugstore located within the game world . Vitamins can be used in conjunction with a special " VitaBlaster " gun , which is in turn used on Blobolonia to complete certain tasks . Also found on the map are extra jelly beans and peppermints , which increase the player 's lives .

= = Development = =

A Boy and His Blob : Trouble on Blobolonia was developed by Imagineering , the in @-@ house developer of Absolute Entertainment . The game was chiefly designed and programmed by David Crane with help from his former Activision colleague Garry Kitchen . Kitchen was the president of the Activision spin @-@ off company Absolute , which began self @-@ publishing in 1988 ; Crane

joined Kitchen at Absolute around the same time . Crane described the concept of a boy accompanied by a shapeshifting blob as " an off @-@ the @-@ wall idea " . Crane stated that Blobert 's design was heavily influenced by the characters Gloop and Gleep from the Hanna @-@ Barbera cartoon The Herculoids . In terms of gameplay , Crane 's goal was to advance the adventure genre as he had done with the Atari 2600 game Pitfall ! . Since the release of the sequel Pitfall II : Lost Caverns , adventure games on the market had grown to include useful tools for players to collect and utilize in their environments . However , Crane found displayed tool inventories " not very elegant " and decided to implement tools in a different way . After coming up with the game 's premise , a wishlist of the blob 's object transformations was written and brainstormed with artists , who then converted them to computer graphics . Transformations were chosen based on how they would appear on screen due to the NES 's graphical resolution . According to Crane , objects such as the bridge and ladder were " a must " , but many ideas were scrapped because their nature would not be immediately obvious to the player . Puzzles that could be solved using the objects were created after the various shapes were finalized .

A total of 14 jellybean flavors were implemented in the game . To ease the game 's difficulty level , the flavors were named specifically as either puns or alliteration to help the player remember them . For instance , the punch @-@ flavored jelly bean transforms Blobert into a hole , a play on the term " hole punch " . A grape @-@ flavored bean listed in the game 's manual was only present in the version submitted to Nintendo . This flavor transformed the blob into a wall (" grape wall " , a pun of Great Wall of China) which would repel enemies . A Boy and His Blob proved to be " one of the most played games at Nintendo " once it was submitted to the company . In this earlier version , the player character could potentially become separated from the blob , thus making it impossible to proceed . A senior management member of Nintendo viewed this as a bug , so Crane substituted the grape bean for a ketchup @-@ flavored bean that would instead summon the blob to the boy 's location .

A Boy and His Blob was officially licensed by Nintendo in the summer of 1989 . Though standard NES games took six to eight months to develop , Imagineering completed A Boy and His Blob in a mere six weeks . Crane himself rented a room in a flophouse near his office and put in several 16- to 20 @-@ hour days of the work on the project . After going without sleep for 48 hours in its last two days of earnest development , Crane flew to the CES in Chicago for trade demonstrations , then spent nights at his hotel fixing bugs . The game was released just prior to Christmas in 1989 as Absolute 's first game on the NES . Crane recalled the development process for Absolute 's early games to be enjoyable , but explained that " under the rule of Nintendo , the publishing side of the game business was really tough " , emphasizing how frequently game publishers went out of business in those years . The team was originally in talks with a writer @-@ producer of the Transformers animated features to simultaneously launch the A Boy and His Blob video game with a tie @-@ in toy and a film . However , the plans never came to fruition due to deadlines and difficulty in dividing production resources three ways between a game , toy , and movie . When A Boy and His Blob was released in Japan by Jaleco in November 1990 , it was retitled Fushigi na Blobby : Blobania no Kiki (?????????? ?????????? , lit . " Mysterious Blobby : The Crisis of Blobania ") .

= = Reception = =

Critical reception for A Boy and His Blob : Trouble on Blobolonia has been mixed . Many reviews published during the game 's original release positively regarded the game 's premise of a boy advancing by using a blob companion as a tool @-@ set . Staff for the magazines Mean Machines and Dragon and Edward J. Simrad of the The Milwaukee Journal all remarked the game as having fun , challenging gameplay and being a creative and original idea . The two reviewers of Mean Machines gave praise to the graphical quality of A Boy and His Blob , commenting , " Some of the backdrops are digitized and superbly coloured . The boy moves smoothly [and] realistically and the Blob himself is a masterpiece of animation . " Simrad , who labeled the game as updated version of Crane 's previous work Pitfall ! , was not as impressed by the graphics , claiming that the programmer always preferred to use the available memory for the size of the maze .

The four reviewers of Electronic Gaming Monthly found A Boy and His Blob to be strictly average due to its few enemies and a lack of scrolling screens . Although they made similar , positive comments about its unique gameplay formula , one of the writers felt it " never fully realizes its potential " . This opinion was echoed by Lucas M. Thomas of IGN , who gave a more negative review of the game . " While the idea behind A Boy and His Blob was certainly unique , even praiseworthy , " he explained , " the execution of the concept didn 't exactly make for a very fun game . " Thomas faulted the game 's controls ; its vast , empty environments ; and a limited number of essential jelly beans to advance , leaving the player with " just the core gameplay gimmick of the blob 's different transformations " . 1UP.com contributor Jeremy Parish predicted that the game 's potentially frustrating , trial @-@ and @-@ error mechanics could subside once the player is over the learning curve and masters the limited toolset and simple interface .

As reported by Stuart Hunt of Retro Gamer , " A Boy and His Blob proved to be a phenomenal success for Absolute Entertainment , going on to become one of the company 's biggest hits and exceeding all the team 's expectations . " The game won " Best of Show " award for its debut at the 1989 CES . The advocacy group Parents ' Choice Foundation awarded A Boy and His Blob with a Parents ' Choice Award in 1990 for " portraying ' Positive human values ' , ' High quality software ' , ' Intelligent design ' , and the ' Ability to hold the player 's interest ' . " Designer David Crane was particularly proud of the latter honor , which he appreciated both before and after becoming a parent himself .

= = Legacy = =

Since the original release of the game , A Boy and His Blob : Trouble on Blobolonia has received miscellaneous recognition from the media . In 2005 , University of Houston newspaper columnist Jason Poland attributed the inspiration of game 's premise , in which a young boy befriends an outerspace being , to the central theme found in a slew of 1980s films including E.T. the Extra @-@ Terrestrial and The Last Starfighter . The writer found this especially true for the former of the two features , in which the earthling protagonist supplies his alien cohort with candy . " Although free from any Jelly Belly product placement , " Poland explained , " A Boy and His Blob encompasses plot devices from every ' 80s buddy sci @-@ fi film and acts as an end cap to the entire film genre . " The website GamesRadar noted A Boy and His Blob as a milestone in gaming for having the first recognizable instance of an AI @-@ controlled partner . Despite giving it such a low review score , IGN listed A Boy and His Blob as the 74th @-@ best game on the NES , owing its inclusion to creative gameplay mechanics and a healthy mixture of action @-@ adventure and platforming .

A sequel to A Boy and His Blob was released for the Game Boy under the name The Rescue of Princess Blobette . The game once again follows the title characters as they attempt to save a princess jailed within a castle tower . Majesco bought the rights to A Boy and His Blob after Absolute 's closure . A Game Boy Advance incarnation of the series titled A Boy and His Blob : Jelly 's Cosmic Adventure was announced by Majesco in 2001 . The game was ultimately cancelled . Majesco announced another sequel in 2005 as being in development for the Nintendo DS by Skyworks Technologies , a company formed by Crane and Kitchen in 1995 . The game 's story was to take place six years after the conclusion of the NES release . It was to feature 3D models , between 15 and 20 differently colored jelly beans , 15 levels , and a DS touchscreen feature for managing jelly bean inventory . However , Majesco 's financial troubles delayed the game 's release indefinitely .

A Wii re @-@ imagining of A Boy and His Blob : Trouble on Blobolonia simply titled A Boy and His Blob was developed by WayForward Technologies and published by Majesco in 2009 . Crane was not involved in the new game 's creation . That same year , A Boy and His Blob : Trouble on Blobolonia was re @-@ released on the Wii Virtual Console service in both North America and PAL regions . Another new title in the series was listed at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in 2010 as being in development for the Nintendo 3DS . WayForward later issued a statement that the listing was a mistake and that no new A Boy and His Blob was in production .