

Adventure Lantern



Featured Games:

Scratches Review & Walkthrough
CSI: 3 Dimensions of Murder Review

Reviews:

80 Days
Syberia II
Echo: Secrets of the Lost Cavern
Atlantis: The Lost Tales
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Stonewall Penitentiary
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The Forgotten Element

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Editorial

A direct flight between Istanbul and New York takes approximately eleven hours. For most people, this is a pretty miserable experience. You have about two feet of space, cannot get up easily, and there is not much to do even if you could. You've probably already seen the in-flight movie and don't care to watch it again. When you finally do get to your destination, you suffer from horrible jetlag. I on the other hand always have a great time on this flight that I have taken so many times. It is a chance to step away from the everyday stress and relax. The journey compels me to reflect on past events and consider where life is headed. The point I am trying to make is simple: opinions vary. What is torture to someone can be an utter delight to another.

The concept applies to video games as much as anything else. While it's just about a given that anyone who reads this magazine likes adventure games, there are a lot of gamers who don't enjoy them one bit. Of course there is nothing wrong with different players having different tastes. Yet putting down a game solely for being an adventure is not acceptable. It is tiring to find reviews that do nothing but declare adventure games dead.

Looking over the articles for our April issue, it seems the adventure genre has a rather steady pulse. With this issue, we are covering two newly released titles that arrived in stores during March. We have four adventure game previews for April and several more titles we can't wait to tell you about on our May issue. In the meantime we anxiously wait for a number of highly promising projects like Scavenger Hunter or Darkstar to become available. For a so-called dead genre, adventure gaming sure seems very lively.

In our continued efforts to support the adventure genre, I am proud to present you the largest issue of Adventure Lantern to date. We once again compiled a selection of new and old adventure game reviews along with a few samples from other genres. While Wendy, Suz, Gnome, Paul, and Fallen Angel are once again making their contributions, we are overjoyed to welcome four more reviewers to our team. Thaumaturge is joining us with reviews of Lighthouse and Gabriel Knight. Sudeep is delivering a review of Apprentice 2 and Cat's debut article is on Mercenaries. Papa is covering Cameron Files: Secret at Loch Ness. Finally, we have two special contributions from the much sought-after beta tester Len Green in our Guiding Beacon section. We hope you will enjoy the gaming material we were able to deliver this month.

-Ugur Sener

Hidden Rooms - Preview

Written by Ugur Sener

It was two years ago when Valentina completed her university education and started working for Era Nova. How promising working for the magazine had looked initially. The young journalist was going to investigate and write about paranormal phenomena. Filled with youthful enthusiasm, Valentina was so ambitious and sure of herself. She wanted so much to discover something truly extraordinary. She sought sensation and glory; she wanted to bring the world awe-inspiring tales of the supernatural.



For two years Valentina searched for that elusive grand story. Yet every incident she investigated was a disappointment. The events initially suspected to be abnormal always turned out to be coincidental. There was always some logical explanation. Each failure threatened to replace Valentina's enthusiasm with disillusionment. But all of that is about to change and the journalist is about to find out that sometimes dreams come true at a terrible price.

Hidden Rooms is the first project from Lullaby Studios. The company president Anatoly Krysov explains that the adventure will begin when Valentina arrives at Era Nova early one morning. The journalist is trying to find material for her articles before a meeting with her boss when she happens upon a rather curious letter. The letter speaks of the discovery of a hidden room in an otherwise ordinary building. The room is not on the blueprints. Nobody seems to know about its existence.



Yet Valentina can just feel that this time she is onto something. There is something very strange and decidedly unnatural about the room. As she is drawn ever deeper into the mystical world of the paranormal, Valentina realizes that she is in terrible danger. She has to fight against her fears and conquer her nightmares. She has to outsmart the murderer on her trail. Valentina's great discovery might cost the young journalist her life.

Designed as a traditional 3rd person point and click adventure game, Hidden Rooms promises a number of unique puzzles and a wide array of locations across seven different worlds. Krysov expresses that Hidden Rooms will be split into seven chapters and each chapter will take place in one of the interconnected micro-worlds. Each world will feature a different setting and create its own unique atmosphere. For instance, Krysov points out that the first chapter, called Hotel Metaphyzic, will feature a film noir style “with its unique methods of interaction with the audience.”



The game will feature a multitude of characters with distinct background stories and personalities. Character interaction can be expected to play a very important part in the game. Dialogues will reveal many of the story details. While specific information is not yet available about all the characters, Valentina will meet some “Demons of the World of Hidden Rooms”. She will also have to match wits with “Murderer”, who will be Valentina’s antagonist throughout the adventure. Krysov assures us that “each world is full of interesting characters with their own backgrounds, behaviors, appearances and philosophies.”



Valentina will have to rely on her journalist instincts and sharp wit to overcome the challenges and unlock the mystery that spans across the seven worlds. Players will have to overcome inventory-based puzzles along with additional types of logic puzzles. Hidden Rooms can be expected to feature the kinds of challenges that will satisfy fans of adventure games.

The screenshots, concept art, soundtrack samples, and the intriguing premise of the game indicate that Hidden Rooms could be a very strong adventure offering. The idea of exploring seven unique micro-worlds is highly appealing. Valentina’s adventure promises a good deal of intrigue, a healthy dose of suspense, and a great opportunity for exploration and discovery. While a definite release date has not been scheduled yet, development is expected to continue until the beginning of 2007. If you are looking a solid point and click adventure game, Hidden Rooms could easily prove to be worth the wait.

Kaptain Brawe (and a Spacekrew) - Preview

Written by Ugur Sener

Any mechanical engineering buff might be able to tell you how James Watt's remarkable improvements on early steam engine designs tremendously contributed to modern technology and the Industrial Revolution. But the upcoming episodic adventure game series called Kaptain Brawe would have us to consider an alternate history. What if the steam engine was never invented? What if James Watt instead developed a "Polar Ion Engine" that lead to astonishing advancements in technology and allowed mankind to reach space in the 18th century?



Named after its main character, the Kaptain Brawe series invites us to explore the stars in a stylish alternate universe. Our fearless hero Kaptain Brawe is a proud member the New Union Space Police. Comparable to the United Nations, the organization accepts members from all nations and strives to maintain peace and harmony across the galaxy. Yet Kaptain Brawe does not quite enjoy the same luxuries as the members of the organization from richer countries. Instead of an awe-inspiring spaceship stuffed with the latest high-tech gizmos, Brawe is stuck with hand-me-down equipment and a wooden robot. Thankfully, Brawe makes up for his lack of advanced technology with the curious wit and cunning bestowed upon the lead characters in adventure games.

The story begins while Brawe is on a regular patrol between Terra Nueva and Jama Spacea. Brawe and his navigator Ensign Kralek receive a distress signal.



Perhaps sensing that something is wrong, Kralek asks Brawe to request backup before blindly charging in to help. Yet Brawe knows that every moment might be crucial to the cargo ship sending the signal. Throwing caution to the wind and ignoring Kralek's pleas to call for backup, Brawe immediately heads towards the vessel. Unfortunately, Brawe's noble intentions turn out to be a terrible mistake.

Kaptain Brawe quickly finds out that he should have heeded Kralek's warnings. Before he even has time to fully comprehend what is going on, Brawe finds himself labeled as an outlaw and being chased by the police. In order to get himself out of the mess he unwittingly created, Brawe will have to embark on a long journey across space.



Split into a series of episodes, the game will feature cartoon-like graphics and traditional point-and-click game play mechanics. Judging from the screenshots currently available, players can expect beautifully-drawn detailed backgrounds reminiscent of the Monkey Island series and the first two Broken Sword games. The merging of 18th century furnishings with space-age technology gives Kaptain Brawe quite a distinct look.

The game is expected to feature a good number of inventory-based puzzles. Kaptain Brawe's faithful wooden companion Rowboat will graciously serve as the storage area for your inventory items. With the promise of a solid challenge, the developer informs us to be prepared to grab a pen and paper to work out some of the game's puzzles.

A demo version of the game is scheduled to be released during April 2006. The first episode is expected to be available several weeks after the demo is launched. The first chapter of Kaptain Brawe's adventure will be made available free of charge. However, players will have to purchase future episodes.

With the release of the demo fast approaching, the Kaptain Brawe series looks very promising. The game has a solid, original premise and traditional game play mechanics that should easily appeal to many adventure gamers. Especially considering that a single developer is behind the entire project, Kaptain Brawe could end up being quite a remarkable achievement. Based on the information currently available, the first episode definitely seems to be worth putting on the radar.



The Forgotten Element - Preview

Written by Ugur Sener



Far from the rest of civilization in the open waters of the sea, lies the Seahorse Island. This is a calm and peaceful place. Forgotten by time and change, nothing ever really seems to happen around the island. Its humble people go about their lives and enjoy the beautiful landscape that seems to be a true blessing. The denizens of Seahorse Island enjoy a unique sense of peace and serenity. Yet this dreamlike place may not remain as a safe haven much longer.

Something terrifying, something unnatural has come over Seahorse Island. The plants wither and die. Decay is spreading across the land. The crops do not grow despite the best care. The incessant rain cannot seem to bring nourishment to the plants. It seems as though life itself is abandoning the island. There is a growing sense of gloom. The beautiful landscape is turning into something horribly wrong and twisted. Seahorse Island is becoming a place of death.

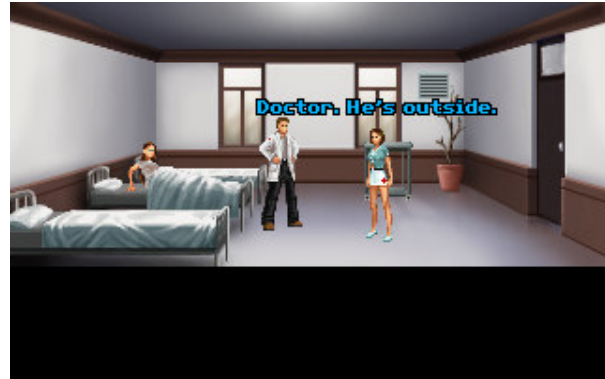
In the midst of the decay spreading across the island, a lone woman peacefully sleeps. Surrounded by the dying grass and the trees, Mia seems defiantly beautiful and almost deliberately full of life. The island doctor finds her in the woods and brings her to the local hospital. Dr. Carter has no idea who the mysterious woman is or how she might be related to the terrible events taking place on the island. But Mia might just be the key to unlocking the mystery behind the horrors threatening the entire island.



The game begins as Mia comes to her senses at the island's hospital. She is not quite sure who she is or how she got there. Her head filled with questions, Mia sets off on a journey to discover the truth and understand what is happening to the island. Along the way, she will challenge the islanders to change their belief

systems. She will be the driving force beckoning the prejudiced and close-minded denizens of Seahorse Island to embrace the changing world away from the timeless shores of the island. Perhaps through her unfaltering drive and dedication, she will save the island from the horrible decay and gloom. And if she is lucky, perhaps Mia will come to understand who she really is and why she came to the island in the first place.

The Forgotten Element is a traditional point-and-click adventure game currently being developed by the enigmatic duo Lemmy and Captain Binky. In the role of Mia, the game invites players to explore the diverse environments of the Seahorse Island. Between the island's woods, mountains, beaches, and some underwater locations, The Forgotten Element promises a wide array of locations for adventurers to explore.



As Lemmy and Captain Binky put it, “The Forgotten Element has been designed by two avid Monkey Island fans.” The game’s interface should be familiar to adventure gamers who have played through the Monkey Island series. The development team has implemented the “Lucasarts visual and interactive approach to telling the story.” The Forgotten Element is also presented in cartoon-like 2D graphics and a 320X200 resolution, staying true to many of the traditional adventure games of the 90’s. The game will have an overall serious tone, however players can expect plenty of good-natured humor and rather unique characters throughout the journey.

Interaction with non-player characters should play an important role in The Forgotten Element. So far, two of the game’s main characters have been revealed besides the player character Mia. Dr. Carter, the gentleman who finds Mia at the beginning of the game, will prove to be an important ally throughout the adventure. He will continually support Mia, even though he may not always believe her opinions as to what is happening to the island. Mr. Clancy on the



other is hand the well-traveled and highly trusted wise man of the Seashore Island. Quite opinionated and set in his ways, Mr. Clancy already has his own ideas as to what is happening to the island. It seems he will be more of an obstacle on Mia’s path than any of the other characters.

Lemmy and Captain Binky do promise a number of other colorful characters. The developers express that these non-player characters will “have their own story arcs and have an important part to play in the main story, as well as various sub-plots.”

The Forgotten Element is expected to feature a wide variety of puzzles. Adventure gamers can expect traditional inventory-based puzzles along with a number of dialogue-based challenges. The game will also feature puzzles demanding players to traverse dangerous environments. Some of the challenges will have a time limit. The developers explain that they are trying to find a good balance of different types of puzzles. They are also trying to avoid unnecessary pixel-hunting or overcrowded screens with too many hotspots.



The Forgotten Element is designed to have three separate acts. The first act of the game is scheduled for a 2006 release. All three acts of the game will be available for download from the official game site, which is currently gearing up for a launch. The developers express that their goal with The Forgotten Element is to contribute to the efforts “to rejuvenate the point-and-click genre.” They also intend to make the artwork, music, and other source materials that will go into the game publicly available so other independent developers can benefit from these assets.

Based on the preliminary information available, The Forgotten Element has the makings of a solid adventure game. Lemmy and Captain Binky might be intending to make all three acts of the game available free of charge, but between the interesting concept, intriguing environments, and colorful characters, The Forgotten Element could easily deliver the kind of gaming experience that can rival a commercially released adventure.



Stonewall Penitentiary - Preview

Written by Ugur Sener

As you climb onto your bed in your house, you can't help but wonder if things can possibly get any worse. How many days ago was it that you lost your job? It doesn't even matter any more. Time seems to lose its meaning when you have nothing to do. And now your wife is gone too. All alone in the house, perhaps you feel abandoned, desperate, and hopeless. As you slowly lay your head to rest, you stare at the ceiling and wonder. What else is left to go wrong? What more could happen to me to make things worse? But fate is far from being done playing with you...



When you open your eyes again, you find yourself in a strange room. You have no idea what this place is or how you were brought here. Your uneasiness grows as you discover your clothes have been taken and your hands are tied. You struggle with a horrifying feeling of entrapment. You immediately start looking for something that you can use to free yourself. Why were you brought here and why can't you remember it? Are there others trapped in this cryptic place? Is there anyone that can help you escape? The unknowns are almost maddening. You are only certain of one thing. Whoever brought you here, does not want you to leave. You can feel that something is terribly wrong and you are in grave danger. You are William Thane. And this could be the last six hours of your life.

Stonewall Penitentiary is the latest project from Christopher M. Brendel. This time



around, the creator of Lifestream and Shady Brook is challenging us to survive captivity in the hands of a psychotic killer. In the role of William Thane, players will be trapped in an abandoned prison with six other characters. You must survive the night and escape before all of the captives are murdered. But which one of the prisoners is really the killer? Whose clever disguise will you have to unveil? Is it the ambitious lawyer from

California or is it the Web designer Sonny? Can you really trust Gerard who is a full-time prison guard and perhaps the only captive who is knowledgeable about prisons? Is the high school student Jessie hiding something behind her innocent youthful façade? You cannot afford to believe what anybody says. You cannot afford to take anything at face value. You can only rely on careful observation and your wit to stay alive. Clues leading to the identity of the killer may be hidden anywhere around the prison. And if you do not find them fast enough, you will die along with the other captives. This will be a very long night that you will never forget.

Stonewall Penitentiary will be an adventure game with a heavy focus on the storyline. The script for the game has already been completed and currently stands at an impressive 93 pages. While the game will not impose a real time restriction on the players, the events in the story will take place over a course of six hours. The official game Web site notes that this short timeframe will dictate how the story will be presented. There might be



somewhat less character development in Stonewall Penitentiary than Brendel's previous games. However the experience will be much more intense and filled with unexpected twists that will keep players guessing until the end. A suspenseful atmosphere should capture you from the beginning of the game and propel you forward through the adventure.

Brendel informs us that "in addition to the game's main storyline, the prison itself has its own dark past." Players will be able to explore the prison and learn more about this history through a series of clues. Piecing together the information carefully hidden across Stonewall Penitentiary should paint a twisted yet



intriguing picture. Discovering the history behind the prison will be an optional aspect of Stonewall Penitentiary. However, Brendel assures us the history will give further depth to the core plot in unexpected ways. Having the detailed background may also make exploring the prison a much more immersive experience.

The game will be played from a first-person perspective and feature a

mouse-driven interface. Stonewall Penitentiary is currently expected to feature the familiar node-based panoramic style for navigation. However the core game engine is still in development and the end results are uncertain. As illustrated by the available screenshots, the graphics will be dramatically improved from Brendel's first two games. Game play will primarily focus on exploration and puzzle-solving as players look for important clues. Character interaction can be expected to play an important part in the game as well. Discovering the personalities of the other prisoners should prove to be particularly interesting given the game's premise. Stonewall Penitentiary will also feature a small number of short action sequences.



Adventure gamers can expect to find plenty of puzzles and creepy locations along with an eerie soundtrack. Brendel points out that the game will feature "inventory-based puzzles, manipulation puzzles, sound puzzles, and visual clue puzzles" along with several other kinds of challenges. While Brendel is refusing to openly comment on the subject, Stonewall Penitentiary might also feature two different endings, giving the game definite replay value. The story of the game might span only six hours, but it seems like players can expect Stonewall Penitentiary to keep them busy for quite some time. The game is currently scheduled for a 3rd quarter 2006 release. A demo of Stonewall Penitentiary will be made available on the official game Web site prior to the release.

Given its solid concept and intriguing characters, Stonewall Penitentiary could deliver a very entertaining adventure gaming experience. Players should enjoy the challenge of outsmarting and identifying the psychotic killer. Surviving the long night might put your nerves to test just as much as your observation and puzzle solving skills. If you are into suspenseful murder mysteries keep an eye out for this game.



Interview with Momentum AS on Culpa Innata

Conducted by Ugur Sener

Momentum AS is currently getting ready to finish development on their first project Culpa Innata. As the summer release is starting to get close, we interviewed the developers to find out additional information about their project. The Culpa Innata team graciously agreed to provide us detailed information on many aspects of the game giving us many reasons to expect the game with greater anticipation...



Adventure Lantern: *Can you tell us a little more about agent Phoenix's character? What is her personality like?*

Momentum AS: Phoenix Wallis is 27 years old, and a career security specialist. She is very intelligent, but also very reserved, compared to her contemporaries. Her approach to people is very direct. In a world where politically correct behavior is the pillar of social intercourse and the indisputable path to success, her manners offend many others. On the other hand, she is very good at observing people and events. Many times she uses her instincts to evaluate both, although the World Union System considers using instincts as an "unscientific method of investigation". Due to the incompatibility of her persona with expectations of the society, she prefers to keep quiet and reserved, in order to shield her shortcomings.

AL: *What does being an agent like Phoenix constitute? What would an ordinary day for her be like in the world of Culpa Innata?*

Momentum: Phoenix is a Global Peace Officer. Her duty is to catch criminals that violate the constitution of the World Union. But since the crime rate in the World Union is very low, and capital crimes are non-existent, her efforts are usually directed to Security Screening Interviews of immigration applicants. These people are citizens of the Rogue States who want to live in the World Union in search of a better life.

In *Culpa Innata*, Phoenix is commissioned to investigate the murder of a World Union citizen, who was killed in the Rogue State of Russia. This is an extraordinary case, since no World Union citizen has been murdered in recent memory. This case can also make or break her career.

After work, Phoenix usually meets her friend Sandra at the Café Rose and they exchange daily gossip or go shopping at the Pyramid.



AL: *What kinds of tools will the agent have to help with her investigation?*

Momentum: The most important tool that Phoenix uses for investigation is her Personal Assistant. The PA is a small communication device that every World Union citizen has. It is a tiny computer with a combination of camera, scanner, credit card, audio visual communication device, a database, and an access node for networks. As a Peace Officer, Phoenix's PA also enables her to use certain Global Peace and Security Network (GPSN) resources for her investigation.

Phoenix has an office PC, which has additional features not found on her PA, and let's not forget her personal "makeup kit", which is quite handy throughout the game.

AL: *What about the other characters in Culpa Innata? Can you discuss a few of the main characters?*

Momentum:

Dagmar Morssen

She is the head of the Immigration and Naturalization Center, and the peacekeeping Center in Adrianopolis, also the boss of Phoenix. She is extremely hardworking and dedicated to her job. Unlike most of her contemporaries, she is not very politically correct and often very harsh to her staff. Phoenix respects her very much. She thinks that although Dagmar is very harsh at times, this is because she is very good at what she does and expects the best from her staff.

Sandra Pescara

She is Phoenix's best friend. Sandra knows everybody in Adrianopolis and everybody knows her. As a Senior PR Specialist at ZAP Store (the fashion frontrunner), her job is to organize parties that the jet set of the city attend. She knows every piece of gossip in town, as well as all the latest shops and fashion trends. Sandra encourages Phoenix to be more involved in the nightlife and other pleasures of Adrianopolis, though Phoenix is stubbornly resistant to the idea. Sandra is intimate with a lot of men, which is pretty much the norm in the World Union.

Roger Arnett

He is a guru of image making. He provides consulting services not only in clothing and outer appearance, but also in mental training in order to become more successful in the success-hungry society of the World Union. Clients enter his office as "Wanna Be"s and leave as "the next big thing".

Julio Santa Dominguez

He is a Junior Peace Officer at GPSN. Julio is an extremely ambitious character, which is very important to be successful in the World Union. However, he lacks the IQ needed to complement his drive. He works with Phoenix to solve the murder case, though he is resentful that Phoenix is leading this important investigation.



AL: *Will character interaction be an important part of the game?*

Momentum: Character interaction is a crucial part of the gameplay. There are around 50 speaking characters, who will reveal backstory, facts about the game universe and leads to Phoenix's investigation. The dialogue is player controlled. Based upon in-game choices, Phoenix can get to the facts fast or take her time, depending on the approach and the relevancy of the questions.

AL: *Judging by the screenshots, Culpa Innata features quite interesting city scapes. Can you give us some more information about the environments featured in the game?*

Momentum: Culpa Innata takes place in an imaginary city, Adrianopolis, in Eastern Europe along the river Tizsa. Adrianopolis is a city that was designed

from scratch, following the terrible atrocities and destruction of a riot called Eastern Bloodbath. The remaining buildings of the old city center were covered with a huge glass pyramid, and the entire area was converted into a shopping mall. All residential buildings were designed so that everybody has a view of this Pyramid at the center of the city.



The Pyramid

It is the most extraordinary part of Adrianopolis, a huge glass structure, covering the entire old town area. It is a giant mall with all the shops that the residents of the city need, as well as the entertainment places. These include:

The Thing Store: The Mecca of consumerism, a paradise for those who enjoy spending money on absolutely unnecessary but totally fashionable “Things”. Cute and sexy shop assistants are ready to help with information about the available product lines.

ZAP Store: ZAP is a brand leader in clothing industry, and one of the frontrunners of the clothing fashion in the World Union. ZAP revolutionized the fashion industry by cutting the fashion seasons from a quarterly basis to a weekly basis. Their slogan is “ZAP Your Style”. It is one of Phoenix’s favorite stores.

The Stardust: It is a trendy nightclub where the affluent hang out.

GPSN offices

It is the headquarters of Global Peace and Security Network in Adrianopolis, placed in an ancient monastery building on the bank of the river Tisza, which is also the border between the World Union and the Rogue State of Russia. It is a combination of medieval architecture and modern technology. Phoenix’s office is in this building.

Metro System

Underground train network of the future. Superclean, supermodern, with fully automated trains that always arrive on time. It is so efficient that automobile sales have come to a halt in the city.

Business District

Full of modern buildings, it is the commercial center of the city, which thrives on border trade and immigration.



AL: *Can you describe the core game play mechanics? What will it be like to play Culpa Innata?*

Momentum: Culpa Innata brings together the best of both old and new-school adventure gaming. The game uses a real-time 3D game engine, yet uses an intuitive point and click interface that anyone can feel comfortable with. The game uses a combination of moving and fixed cameras. These are used to create a much greater cinematic effect than in 3D pre-rendered games.

As in any murder mystery, you'll have Phoenix visit various locations, interrogate people, look for clues, and solve puzzles. But Culpa Innata is not just about the mission; it's equally about the people, the world, and the belief system it's founded upon. Phoenix is not just a puppet avatar for you to control, but a fully-developed, complex character who evolves as the game progresses. And as the game features optional choices of dialogue and activities, you can decide for yourself how much of this aspect you want to experience. For people who want less talk, more action, there is always somewhere new to go or things to do. If you like to take your time, explore, and talk to everyone, there's plenty more to discover.

AL: *What kinds of puzzles can we expect?*

Momentum: There are all types of puzzles in Culpa Innata. Some are inventory-based, others are done by analysis through technology. There are also plenty of other logic puzzles throughout the game. One thing we're very conscious of is not having arbitrary puzzles thrown in just to pad the gameplay. All puzzles exist for a reason and integrate smoothly into the story.

Culpa Innata doesn't include any mazes, slider puzzles, or timed elements resulting in failure for a simple reason: No one likes those, and we don't either.

AL: *What is the projected international release date?*

Momentum: Release dates are too difficult to pin down. What we can say for the moment is that the game is currently in a completed alpha stage, and we're working hard to upgrade and get every aspect as good as it can be for gamers. Our gone gold date is now set for the first of June 13th. We're in negotiations with publishers, so hopefully before too long we'll have more concrete information about the release and availability of Culpa, world wide.



AL: *Is there any additional information you would like to provide about the game?*

Momentum: There's plenty, but of course we don't want to spoil the game. I'll just add that there is an intriguing subplot throughout the game. Although the World Union may tout itself as the perfect civilization, there are subversive elements that may have something different to say about it. It's fairly safe to say that their path will collide with Phoenix's investigation, which opens up a whole different story layer to draw the player deeper and deeper into the world of Culpa Innata.

AL: *Does Momentum have other projects on the horizon?*

Momentum: We certainly have projects in mind, but nothing we can reveal at this point. First things first – getting Culpa Innata from our hands into yours.

Adventure Lantern thanks Momentum AS for providing us extensive detailed information about their upcoming project, Culpa Innata. The game certainly looks promising with its intriguing complex plot and colorful characters. We might be in for a great adventure gaming ride this summer.

Scratches

PC Review by Ugur Sener

Driving to the Blackwood House, Michael Arthate is on his way to a new life. After a highly successful first novel, the author has chosen to move away from society and seek solitude. Alone in his new house, Michael wants to find that elusive great ending to his second book. But in his new Victorian Mansion, terrible secrets await. Michael is about to spend three days that will change him forever.



Things start going wrong as soon as Arthate arrives at his new house. The power is out and the electrician that is supposed to fix it is nowhere to be found. There are at least a dozen candelabras yet not a single candle. It is as though fates are actively conspiring against Michael. But there is something much deeper than a lack of electricity or dirty bathroom floors. From the moment you step inside the house, you will feel that something is not quite right. Diaries and news articles speak of terrible events. There is murder in the history of the Blackwood House. Carefully hidden behind locked doors, the mansion's twisted history is yearning to be uncovered.

If Scratches succeeds at one thing, it is to create a creepy and unnerving atmosphere. The eerie tunes of the soundtrack and the gloomy weather immediately create a very deliberate unsettling feeling as soon as the game begins. As you explore the house and start learning about the previous owners, the feeling of suspense grows. The clues spread throughout the house do a great job of gradually revealing the mansion's dark history. The game manages to keep you guessing and maintains the disturbing atmosphere throughout the adventure. Even after you watch the ending video, you might find yourself wondering as to what exactly went on at Blackwood House. Vital clues reveal many of the facts, but the picture feels intentionally incomplete. More than one explanation seems plausible and this only adds to the unsettling feeling so effectively conveyed by Scratches. You might find yourself thinking about the game long after the credits roll.



The game does have a couple of moments that will have most players jump back in their seats. But Scratches is not an endless array of cheap scares. You will not have hordes of zombies charging at you to tear your flesh apart. Apparitions will not sneak up to you and

objects will not be inexplicably moving across the floor. Players expecting Scratches to be constant scare fest from start to finish will be disappointed. Instead of relying on visual effects, Scratches works at a psychological level. You will be constantly wondering about the secrets of the mansion. As clues proper the story forward, your own theories about the events might immerse you into the game and not let go until you reach the end.



Scratches is played from a first-person perspective and features the node-based navigation system that is common to the genre. The mouse-driven controls are extremely simple and effectively get the job done. The graphics are fairly pleasant and display an obvious attention to detail. They also work well with the overall tone of the game. However, it is the music that really sets the mood in Scratches.

Especially during key moments of the game, the soundtrack is highly successful in creating a general feeling of uneasiness that makes you want to turn around and run as far as you can from the mansion grounds.

The puzzles in Scratches are nicely blended into the environment. Michael's challenges typically revolve around gaining access into the locked rooms of the house or various buildings located in the mansion grounds. A great portion of the house is immediately accessible at the beginning of the game. But, in order to discover important clues and understand the history of the mansion, Michael has to search every corner and keep his eyes open. The puzzles have quite logical solutions and the hotspots do not feel unfair. Players should not have too much trouble with the game's challenges if they carefully observe each area and make note of the items they can't immediately use as well as areas that are initially inaccessible. The game also has a built-in hint system that can prove to be useful.

One important and uncommon aspect of Scratches is the passage of time within the game. Michael's adventure spans three days and time moves forward as the author solves puzzles or finds important clues. While this system might initially seem a bit arbitrary, Scratches does factor the time of day into the story and uses it to give direction to Michael's actions.



It is worth noting that Michael has to revisit certain locations several times throughout the game. The progression is not completely linear in terms of how Michael will move from one section of the house to the next. Making a discovery in one room often gives the author a reason to return to a previously visited location in order to advance the story. Unfortunately, it may not always be clear

where Michael needs to go next. Overlooking a small clue can lead to some unnecessary wondering around the house. Thankfully, this does not seriously take away from the gaming experience and does not lead to unreasonable amounts of backtracking.



A somewhat greater concern is that players can all too easily get through the entire game without encountering all the details about the story.

While there is nothing wrong with a game that has an open ending and challenges you to think about all the different clues presented, some players could easily get through the game and not catch on elements that can change the interpretation of the events. To get the most out

of playing *Scratches*, adventurers would be advised to pay close attention to the details and carefully read all the documents they can find. There could even be good benefits to playing the game for a second time after completing it once. Going over some of the documents knowing the game's ending should put the clues in a different perspective.

The vast majority of *Scratches* takes place within the house. The architecture of the main building feels well-thought-out and appropriate. The game also features a number of other locations near the main building. The chapel, the crypt, and the greenhouse make nice additional areas to explore. Covering the mansion grounds and completing the game without the aid of a walkthrough should take in the order of nine to twelve hours. However, the game could have benefited from a few more locations and some more challenges for Michael to overcome.

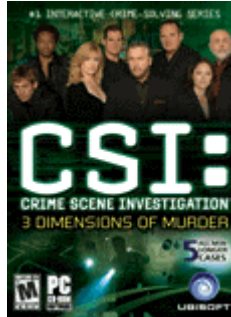
Scratches is most certainly a valiant and commendable first effort from Nucleosys, but it is not an excellent adventure game. The story is intriguing and the atmosphere is strong, but it still leaves something to be desired. A far greater degree of plot depth has been attained by many other adventure games. The ending challenges you to contemplate the possible explanations, yet it does not leave you completely satisfied. It seems as though there should have been a bit more to the mystery. The puzzles have been nicely integrated with the environment and do not hinder the flow of the adventure, but the game could have definitely benefited from some more challenges and more opportunity for exploration. *Scratches* is a good game, but it does not have the extra spark that would have taken it to the top level. However, if you are looking for a creepy adventure game with an intriguing storyline, the game is still an easy recommendation.

Developer: Nucleosys Digital Studio
Publisher: Got Game Entertainment
Platform: PC
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: March 2006
Grade: 82/100

Minimum System Requirements (PC):
 800 MHz Processor
 128 MB RAM
 16 MB Open GL Compatible Video Card
 24X CD-ROM Drive
 Sound Card

CSI: 3 Dimensions of Murder

PC Review by Wendy Nellius



What happens in Vegas...Stays in Vegas...How about murder?

CSI: 3 Dimensions of Murder is the 4th and latest in the series based upon the popular television series. This latest offering brings us back to the heart of “Sin City”. A new developer, Telltale Games, has been brought on board to bring us 5 new murder cases.

- An art dealer returns to his gallery after running an errand only to discover a client of lying in a pool of blood on the floor. No sign of her fiancé or the artist she was to meet. Is this a deal gone wrong or a crime of passion?
- As a brand new action shooter game is being launched at a game expo, the owner of the company is gunned down in the middle of the display. Could the competition be responsible?
- An empty apartment....massive amounts of blood. With no sign of a body, how can we be sure who the victim was? Was there a victim at all?
- A camper found dead in a remote site. No obvious signs of foul play. Evidence points to an unknown woman. Is it the camper’s wife? Or maybe he was having an affair?
- A body is found stuffed in a crate in a back alley. The deed wasn’t committed here. But, where? And, who would commit such a heinous crime?

Get ready for some fascinating cases with a ton of unexpected twists and turns in the storyline. This game will keep you guessing up until the very end.

It must be noted that this game contains Blood/Gore, Language, Sexual Themes, Use of Tobacco/Drugs and Violence earning its “M” for Mature rating. It is not recommended for anyone under the age of 17.

CSI is a first person point and click adventure. You are the newest detective to join the team. You’ll be greeted by Gil Grissom; head of the CSI Department. For each case, you will get a chance to work with a different member of the CSI

team. All the familiar faces are here: Catherine Willows, Nick Stokes, Warrick Brown, Sara Sidle and Greg Sanders.



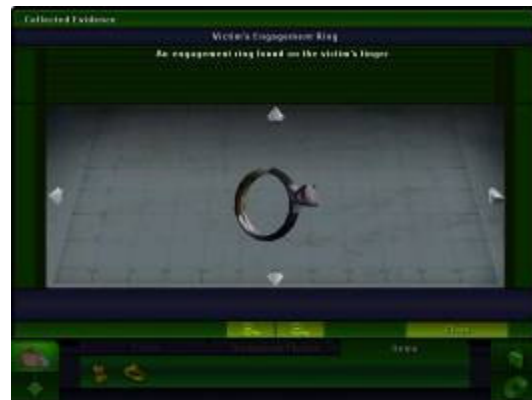
The game is presented on one CD. It is imperative that your system meets the minimum system requirements. The game relies heavily on 3D graphics and less than the minimum will just not work. My own system met the requirements, but for some reason I had trouble running the game. Upon scouring the forums, at this point I seem to be in the minority. It seems that the majority had no problems. For that reason, personal technical problems experienced will not

be in this review. I can only assume at this point that my own computer just didn't like this game for whatever the reason.

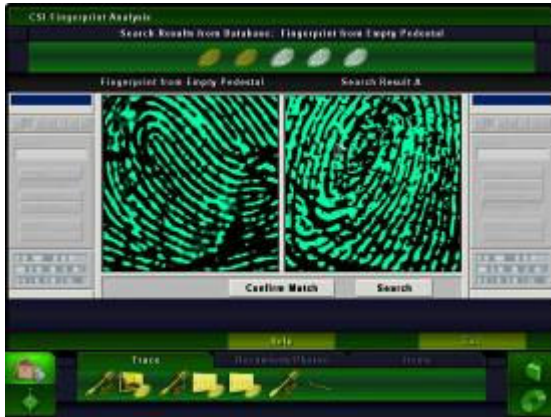
Before you begin the game, take a moment to check out the options at the main menu. The difficulty can be customized to 3 levels. Game assists can also be turned on or off according to the player's taste. Video can be adjusted to low, medium, or high for optimum performance. Tweaking the audio is also an option. A tutorial is available to get accustomed to the controls and tools.

Each case begins with a briefing from Grissom. The first case is fairly short, but the following four cases are longer than in previous CSI games. Locations can be accessed via the toolbar at the bottom of the screen. In fact, this toolbar is also used to view evidence, review your case file, and access the main menu.

As you examine each new location, you will search for hotspots. The cursor will change to a green arrow indicating an area to examine. When you are close enough to an item, the cursor will change to a toolbox if you are able to manipulate this item further. There are two categories of tools for you to use: Collection and Detection. Collection consists of tools such as latex gloves, tweezers, Mikrosil, adhesive tape, swabs and a camera. These are what you need to pick up your evidence while avoiding contamination. Heck, we've all seen those trials where contamination ruined the prosecutor's case. Detection tools consist of items like fingerprint powder, UV light, Luminol and a USB Data drive. One of the nicer improvements to CSI: 3 Dimensions of Murder is the 3D view of evidence items. Once you have collected an item, a screen will pop up allowing



you to rotate the item in all directions to search for addition evidence such as fingerprints, hair, or unknown substances.



Evidence can be analyzed in the Mobile Analysis Unit (lab on wheels) or the official lab. You will have access to a DNA Analysis Computer, Trace Evidence Computer (for fingerprints, shoeprints, and special searches), Chemical Analysis Computer, Comparison Microscope and an assembly table (used to assemble & disassemble items). Each piece of lab equipment is simple to use and involves dragging evidence to the appropriate

screen and clicking a button or two. However, it was a bit odd that you could search for information on a business card or for cell phone records using the Trace Analysis computer, but you could not look up the address for a person or location. You would have to request that information from Brass. If you have evidence tagging activated, the tag will have a red dot on it when you have done everything you can with it. There seemed to be one glitch in Case 2. There was one piece of alibi testimony that needed to run by Brass. For some reason, Jim Brass would never discuss this testimony despite multiple attempts and replays. Therefore it never got tagged so the assumption points to this for the shortage of 1 piece of evidence in the final statistics.

A case profile is also available from the tool bar. You can review the details on the victim or suspects. Also available for each suspect is an evidence trinity. This is a chart of sorts in the shape of a triangle. As evidence is collect linking a suspect to the victim, it is added to the trinity. The trinity is not necessary in solving the case, but it can help give you fresh ideas on what avenues may need additional follow-up. Periodically check the trinity while working on each case.



Besides the lab, two other locations are always standard: Brass and the morgue. All warrants must be obtained through Jim Brass; the Captain of the Homicide Division. Dr. Robbins at the morgue can give you the insight you need and provide you with animations simulating, for example, a bullet traveling through the body. It's just like on the TV show that inspired the CSI games.

The music and ambient sounds are classic CSI and stay true to the TV series. The whooshing sound is heard as you zoom in on a vital piece of evidence. If you are in a storefront, you can hear the world outside going by such as voices, cars, or dogs barking.

The 2D backgrounds are really done well and a lot of attention was paid to the details. For each location, you are contained to a single spot in the room. From that spot, arrows on the side of the screen will allow you to pan across each location. It would have been nice to be able to move around, but this technique has been consistent with the CSI series. So, who am I to argue?



The 3D character renderings were...umm...interesting. While the effort is recognized and commendable, there were elements that just seemed off. When in a close up view, the lips move and the eyes crinkle, but it just seemed as if you were interviewing robots in some animatronics museum. The facial movements just didn't connect with the vocal expression. Speaking of eyes, Dr. Robbins had the strangest looking eyes this reviewer has

seen in a long time. The cut scenes, however, were wonderful. The crime re-enactments and the animated coroner details were really quite fascinating. Now, keep in mind that it gets pretty graphic. So, these cut scenes weren't always a joy to watch. One particular animation at the start of the 5th case was downright gross. Gross? Yes. Could it actually happen in real life? Unfortunately, yes. You've had your warning.

Most of the voice acting was realistic and enjoyable. Of particular note was the contractor in case 4. For those of you not residing on the East Coast of the US, you may wonder if people actually sound like that. Certainly not all of us, but that voice has definitely been heard in the area. There were only a couple of characters that could have used a boost of energy (or acting classes).

Overall, this was a good effort by Telltale and Ubisoft. If you're a CSI fan and your computer is up for the task; be sure to check this game out. With Telltale on board, a bright future for the CSI series should be expected.

Developer: Telltale Games
Publisher: Ubisoft
Platform: PC
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: March 2006
Grade: 85/100

Minimum System Requirements (PC):
 Windows® 98/ME/2000/XP
 1 GHz Processor or better
 256 MB RAM (512 recommended)
 64 MB Video Card
 DirectX® 8.1 Compatible Soundcard
 CD-ROM Drive
 Hard Drive space of 1.4 GB

80 Days

PC Review by Suz

80 days is an adventure game that will, as promised, take you on a tour of the world. The main stops are in Cairo, Bombay, Yokohama, and San Francisco. The game begins in London with a conversation with your uncle. Your parents have arranged a marriage for you that must take place within 80 days. Your Uncle has gotten himself in some trouble with betting that Fogg's achievement of traveling around the world in 80 days can be beaten. Your uncle will finance your trip around the world which will get you out of the marriage and save your uncle's retirement money. Oh, and there are a few things for you to pick up along the way. Your uncle also needs proof that four major inventions belong to him. If you can't find the necessary proof then he will lose his title as Pulsativ inventor as well as his pension.



So you set off on your long journey. You can choose between three difficulty levels, tourist, globetrotter, or adventurer. In the tourist mode you can take your leisure as you complete your missions, there are no serious penalties for sleeping on the street and money is not an issue. In the harder modes, globetrotter and adventurer, money is more important, time is a definite issue, and sleeping in a bed is necessary. If you don't like timed puzzles try the tourist mode. It's the same basic game play without the stress.



Your character is moved through keyboard controls, the defaults are the WASD keys. Your inventory is accessed also through the keyboard. In the options menu you can set the keyboard configuration to suit your tastes if the defaults are uncomfortable. The mouse is used for view, turning, and using inventory items. You cannot get by solely using a mouse.

One big caveat is that the game automatically saves at completion of

missions. That is the only time it is possible to save your game. When you exit the game you lose any game play since the last save, which can be very frustrating.



While there is more action in this game than in a traditional adventure game, the action sequences are not too difficult. The only shooting you will do will be in an arcade with a potato gun. A bit of reflexes are helpful to ride the flying carpet at high speed through Cairo or the hot rod through the hills of San Francisco. You will also need to jump and sneak in a few missions. The one sneak mission in Yokohama is frustrating for many because you can't save your progress, you must

get through the whole thing without a mistake. If you are totally stuck at that point ask around the forums for a saved game. The game is totally linear so it shouldn't affect your game play.

The game is conducted as a series of missions. You must complete a mission to get the next one. The missions often consist of running around town and finding people. The map in the upper left of the screen has the location of the people or places you are looking for marked in red squares. This helps greatly in reducing mindless running around. As you work on your mission you will interact with many characters. The conversations are often humorous. The game itself has a very humorous bent. If looking back at the Village People and the Love Boat brings back laughs then the game will definitely amuse you. If not, then perhaps dressing a blimp in a kilt will. Yes, that is one of the missions.

The puzzles in the game are interesting. They aren't all easy, but with some thought and effort you can figure them out. They do make sense in the context of the game. If you're having problems with a puzzle, look around as you may have simply missed a clue.

There are some problems with the stability of the game. You should load the patch available at the Frogwares website before running the game. There are definitely some bugs that take away from the gaming



experience. For instance, while riding a monocycle I hit a curve and bounced up in the air. I ended up on a cloud without a ride and no way down. At that point a load to the previous save point was necessary. Another major bug is that certain objects disappear while you are using them, like the boat you're sailing. The game is also instable when switching to different programs using the alt/tab command on the keyboard.

80 Days requires a rather high level RAM. 512 MB is set as the minimum requirement. Even playing at a higher level of specifications, the game frequently hangs while it processes data. There are load times in between different parts of the game that take a while. This coupled with the set save points will be frustrating for some players. Adding in the keyboard controls, a few more gamers will not like the game. Additionally there is a certain level of repetitiveness to 80 Days. The missions can feel very similar to one another after awhile.

My conclusions are that 80 Days is a very fun and funny game that has some issues. If you want your gaming experience to be seamless or to only use a mouse, this is not the game for you. If you can see past these problems and appreciate the fun elements of 80 Days, it is a great game.

The final grade is 79/100.



Developer: Frogwares
Publisher: Trisynergy, Inc & dtp
Platform: PC
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: October 2005
Grade: 79/100

Minimum System Requirements (PC):
 Windows® 2000/XP only
 Pentium® I GHz
 512 MB RAM
 64 MB DirectX® 9 Compatible Video Card
 DirectX® 9 Compatible Soundcard
 8x CD-ROM Drive
 Keyboard, mouse, speakers

Echo: Secrets of the Lost Cavern

PC Review by Fallen Angel

Story:

Would you find it easy to forget all those things learned by mankind during the last 17.000 years and try to survive having very little to help you against the toughest challenges? How difficult would it be to start a fire only using your hands? How challenging would it be to manage to walk away in one piece after encountering a huge bear or a ferocious lion when you don't have a weapon at hand? How hard would it be to catch your food without any modern tools at your disposal? Does painting pictures in different colors without the proper accessories sound viable?



All those tasks that may seem impossible to you are a regular part of your character Arok's everyday life. And the reason is pretty simple: you live in the Paleolithic era, in 15000BC. You are called to embark on a journey using only the means that you would have if you lived so many millennia ago. Your adventure begins when Arok, a fifteen year-old Homo Sapiens actually, decides to abandon his group in search of a charismatic shaman named Klem. Having met the



shaman a few years ago, Arok is fascinated by Klem's paintings. Following the signs his mentor left behind, Arok sets off on an obscure path that is full of surprises. In order to reach the "Lost Cavern" and Klem, Arok must find his way through a labyrinth of caves, construct his own tools and weapons to hunt the beasts that threaten him, succeed in catching fish to satisfy his hunger, learn to paint and to listen to the spirits of the world.

During this adventure Arok will meet three other characters: Toar, a man that will offer Arok valuable advice and useful tools; Tika, Klem's daughter, an initiate to the art of painting, who will guide Arok to the "Lost Cavern" as soon as he proves himself worthy; and Lharik, a standoffish young man who will not allow Arok to enter the "Lost Cavern" if he doesn't successfully pass his little trial first. In the end, Arok will of course meet Klem himself, and they will together awaken the spirits of the world through a magical rite.

That is all you come across through your wanderings in the world of ECHO. In this prehistoric adventure, you will experience the challenge of places and circumstances lost in time. You will witness the revival of human habits thousands of years ago, and the magic that is hiding in the walls of the grottos.

Puzzles:

However, all the excitement that ECHO deprives you through its story is freely offered to you through its puzzles. This is a game that is strongly driven by its puzzles, even though Kheops chose not to reuse the system from their previous project Return to Mysterious Island, where players could assemble and disassemble various objects in the inventory. On the contrary, in ECHO you can't combine anything (obviously these guys like extremity!) in your inventory. Nonetheless, in several places of the game you will encounter hot spots where you will have to construct a tool, essentially combining two or more of your inventory items by using them on the same hotspot.



I have to mention that the quantity of the puzzles you will come across in this game is highly satisfying. Unlike the norm, where you have to search for hotspots in order to proceed with the adventure, ECHO guides you from one puzzle to another. Moreover, a very pleasant detail of the game is that despite the plethora of puzzles, not at a single point will you feel like it was added just to obstruct you or to lengthen the game. Right from the first moments you become aware that you have to follow a mysterious and well-hidden path that you could only find if you decipher the signs left by Klem.

As far as the quality of the puzzles is concerned, only one word comes to mind: ingenious! Kheops has managed to create many quite imaginative puzzles that at the same time are indissolubly related to the era and the environment of the game, in their every detail. As Arok you will have to (not that you don't want to of



course!) find ways of lighting fires to illuminate your way, paint frescos using self-made tools, and confront wild animals with your mind and not with your physical strength. You will have to figure out how to cross a lake, 'reform' frescos so that they'll show you the way, catch your food, and cook it using more self-made tools. You will narrate your own adventure using frescos and various items and play music in order to contact the spirits of the world.

ECHO has some puzzles which are fairly demanding. One of them is a broken tablet that you have to put back together in order to see its drawings. The drawings are then used as instructions to paint a fresco. Another one is a rather complicated puzzle that is nothing less than a kind of slider. It consists of 3*5 square pieces that you have to put back in their original place so that the picture will be revealed. To do so, you have to relatively move the square pieces in groups of four. What makes the solution of this puzzle quite difficult is that each

square piece can change two colors and shapes, increasing the number of possible combinations. I personally believe that this is by far the most challenging puzzle of ECHO. However, all the puzzles in the game, despite the difficulty of some of them, are based on logic and do not require any luck, trial and error procedures, or disturbed imagination in order to surpass them.

Graphics - Music:

ECHO's is played from a first-person perspective with full 360 degree rotation. The graphics and are characterized by intense colors that remain in your memory for quite some time. Even though the places you will visit are not many, they are all well-designed and impressive, pulling you in this prehistoric era in a remarkable way. There are few cinematic sequences in the game, but they all feel as though they were designed with care. The animated frescos you will come across are ingenious and designed in an attractive yet at the same time primitive way.



The music is proper for the environment of the game. However it is not exceptional in quality. The sound effects on the other hand give vivacity to the landscape and help immersing players into the game's world.

Conclusion:

ECHO is a rather short game with a substandard story and skin-deep characters. It represents, however, the Eden's land of puzzles and it offers you a very good opportunity to experience how people lived 17.000 years ago. In conclusion, ECHO is a worthy game although I could not recommend it to everyone. Those of you who prefer story driven adventures will not find much of interest in this game. However, those of you who like adventures to be rich in puzzles, in quantity as well as in quality, will love this game and should not miss it.

Let me put one final note here to mention that there is an encyclopedia in the game, from where you can learn a lot of interesting things about the people of the era, their art, and their tools. I truly believe that everyone should dedicate some extra time to ECHO just to read the information in the encyclopedia and learn a thing or two about our ancestors. ECHO is a fine game, that's for sure. But at the same time it is an excellent source of knowledge for the prehistoric era, our ancestors, and their habits.

Developer: Kheops Studio
Publisher: The Adventure Company
Platform: PC
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: July 2005
Grade: 88/100

Minimum System Requirements (PC):
 Windows 98 / ME / 2000 / XP
 Pentium III 800 MHz
 64 MB RAM
 64 MB DirectX Compatible 3D Graphics Card
 DirectX 7 Compatible Sound Card
 16X CD-ROM Drive

Atlantis: The Lost Tales

PC Review by Ugur Sener

It is lost in the vast waters of the ocean. It is hidden from those who would threaten its serene beauty. The ancient city of Atlantis is a peaceful and proud bastion of civilization. The white towers reaching into the sky and the beautiful palace of Queen Reah are home to many marvels. The island city lies in solitude, defying time itself. Yet under the gorgeous, soothing visage of Atlantis, darkness brews. A terrible conspiracy threatens not only the Atlanteans, but all of mankind.



The game begins as your character, Seth, arrives at the palace grounds. Flying across the skies in a mystical aircraft that seems to be operated solely by willpower, Seth lands at the palace courtyard. He is the newest member of the queen's companions. Among the most loyal subjects of the queen, the companions live to serve and protect Reah. Acceptance into the order alone is considered a great honor. Seth however, is destined to do far greater things than serving as a bodyguard. His quiet arrival at the palace is only the beginning of a great adventure.

Shortly after reporting to the headquarters of the Queen's Companions, Seth hears the terrible news. Reah has been captured and the assailants have left without a single trace. In the queen's absence, her consort Creon is the ruler of Atlantis. Strangely enough, Creon has specifically asked the companions not to interfere with the investigation of the queen's kidnapping. Seth and Agatha, the leader of the companions, are appalled by this demand and refuse to obey it.



Thus, the young hero Seth takes it upon himself to conduct the investigation on behalf of the companions.

The story in Atlantis – The Lost Tales begins with a very simple setup. Seth sets off to conduct what appears to be a simple investigation around the island. However, as he starts uncovering clues, the plot quickly thickens. Seth makes many

discoveries around Atlantis and eventually reveals a great conspiracy. He is forced to constantly keep his guard, question everything he hears, and find allies in the most unlikely places. The story gradually expands far beyond Atlantis and the missing queen. Seth's journey takes him all the way to the North Pole and Carbonek. At each new destination, Seth uncovers secrets about the origins of the Atlanteans and their incredible civilization.



The game beautifully merges the investigation with the much greater plot involving the origin of Atlantis and all of mankind. Each step of the long journey takes Seth deeper into the past. While never abandoning his quest to find the queen and put an end to the conspiracy, Seth finds the path to a deeper knowledge that changes him forever. Yet Seth does not find all of the answers. While core parts of the mystery are clearly explained throughout his adventure, certain details and the origins of a few characters are left to the imagination. This omission feels deliberate and can actually give the experience further depth for some players. Upon completing Atlantis, players may find themselves wondering about the true meaning of the mystical powers encountered and how civilization as we know it might have begun. Especially if for those who like mystical places and a sense of discovery, Atlantis is the kind of game you could play several times to experience the story and be immersed into the game's beautiful atmosphere.

Atlantis is played from a first-person perspective. Players can stop at predefined locations and examine their surroundings. When players choose a new direction and move forward, the game uses animations to depict the movement. However, there are a few sections where movement animations do not exist and screens are navigated in a slideshow pattern.



The inventory is accessed with an easy right click on the mouse. Atlantis uses a simple, familiar mouse-driven interface that works well and does not take any chances.

Atlantis – The Lost Tales was originally released in 1997. At the time, the game's graphics were simply stunning. Nearly a decade after the first release, Atlantis still looks remarkably presentable and can easily

compete with much newer games. The many pleasant environments are depicted with a great degree of detail. Whether you are traveling through the forests of Carbonek, the frozen landscape of the Artic, or the secret passages of the palace, Atlantis manages to maintain visual appeal throughout the game.

Character interaction plays a fairly significant part in Atlantis – The Lost Tales. Throughout his journey, Seth will meet a number of interesting characters at various locations. Some of these characters are delightfully cryptic and will often leave you with uneasiness as to what their advice may have actually meant. Others are enemies pretending to be friends. The different personalities and the changing attitudes of the characters give them a certain degree of depth and serve as a constant reminder that things are not always as they seem.



From a graphical point of view, the character models are fairly nicely handled and the lip-synching is successfully implemented. However, it is worth noting that the character animations can become overly fast on modern, high-end computers, making it difficult to focus on the story and enjoy the experience. This problem does not exist in computers closer to the system requirements specified for the game.

The conversations are handled through a simple system of selecting predefined topics. Each topic is represented by a small picture. Upon selecting it, Seth typically asks a question and the other character responds. While this conversation structure seems highly intuitive and does work well enough during most of the game, it can cause a good deal of frustration during certain sequences. Atlantis features a few sections where Seth needs to talk his way out of a situation by making the right comments or asking the right questions. Since the questions or comments are represented by icons, there is no way to know what Seth will actually say before you select the topic. The icons do give some hints about where Seth might take the conversation and players usually have two or three chances to steer the conversation in the correct path. However, it is still all too possible to accidentally make mistakes and choose the wrong topics. It would have been much more helpful to see the actual words Seth is about to say before selecting a topic.



The game features a number of inventory-based puzzles and

healthy doze of logic puzzles. Starting with the initial palace area, the locations you will visit are laden with mysterious contraptions waiting for Seth to understand and unlock. With the exception of a few rather obscure clues, the challenges are generally reasonable and fair. However, the game's puzzles do have a couple of problems that can seriously detract from the experience.



First of all, Atlantis – The Lost Tales features a few too many ways in which players can lose the game. For instance, there are a number of moments where the player is asked to accept or decline an offer. Seth is always given only two options and selecting the wrong one results in immediately losing the game. The correct choice is not always obvious, so players are likely to choose the incorrect response at least once. Upon

making a mistake, the game does immediately start from a moment before the decision, which somewhat alleviates the impact of the problem. However, with only one right and one wrong answer and no alternative paths through the adventure, even making then decision in the first place becomes arbitrary.

The game does have a couple of sections where Seth needs to time his actions carefully to avoid being detected. Players will have to listen to the movements of the guards and observe their behaviors. While these sections are not particularly hard, failing them will once again result in Seth's untimely demise. Finally, Atlantis has a few moments where the player is given a very limited amount of time to choose the correct path or discover the solution to a puzzle. Responding incorrectly results in losing the game and starting a few screens before the timed sequence. Arguably, the timed sequences do make certain parts of the game more exciting. However, when you find yourself playing various sections over and over again to figure out the correct solution, the excitement can quickly turn into frustration. Thankfully the timed-sequences and the arbitrary decision-making affects only a small portion of the game and does not greatly take away from the experience.

The game also reuses a few of its puzzles, which can become rather tedious for some gamers. For instance, players are required to solve a puzzle to unlock the entrance to a secret passageway in the palace. This



puzzle needs to be solved at least twice before the game can be completed. It would have been nice to have Seth automatically solve the puzzle when players return to the area after initially figuring out the correct solution. Another example is a slider puzzle that is encountered three times in the game. While the puzzle features a different picture and is presented at a different location each time you encounter it, there is always the same number of tiles and their starting positions are always identical. Thus, players will be essentially solving the same puzzle three times with a different picture. Once again, the repetition of the puzzles is not a great problem and it is not encountered too often; however it could have been avoided altogether.

In the end, Atlantis – The Lost Tales is a very enjoyable game, but it does not live up to its full potential. The story is quite immersive and fascinating. Seth's journey cleverly builds from its humble beginnings into something deeper and more insightful. The environments are quite alluring and beautiful. The graphics depict truly pleasant landscapes, beckoning players to unlock the secrets of an ancient civilization. The mystical tunes of the game's soundtrack are



extremely fitting for the locations you will be exploring. The voice acting is generally nicely handled and there is most definitely enough content over the game's four CD's to keep adventurers busy for a while. However, an array of problems does hurt the game play experience. The issues with the puzzles and the conversation system might be too hard to overlook for some players. If you are looking for a lengthy adventure game with a solid story, interesting locations, and a myriad of puzzles, Atlantis – The Lost Tales is an easy recommendation despite the game's problems. However, players should go in with the understanding that Atlantis is not a perfect game.

Largely due to the intriguing story, pleasant atmosphere, and the fascinating locations, the final grade is 86/100.

Developer: Cryo Interactive
Publisher: Cryon Interactive*
Platform: PC
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: July 2005
Grade: 88/100

*The game is currently available through
 The Adventure Company

Minimum System Requirements:

Windows 95 / 98 / ME
 Pentium 200 MHz
 16 MB RAM
 2 MB Viideo Memory

Lighthouse: The Dark Being

PC Review by Thaumaturge

(Please note that this review is based on the 2.0 version of Lighthouse: The Dark Being. The original version of the game did not include some of the features noted, such as optional cursor highlighting)

The Oregon Coast, 1996. Yellow light beams from the lighthouse as the storm rumbles overhead. Suddenly the beam vanishes, usurped by a shower of electric blue that flares and crackles with energy, then settles into a steadily pulsing glow.



A writer moves to a remote house within sight of the lighthouse. He is hoping for the peace, seclusion and scenery to stir his imagination. In time he befriends the scientist, Professor Jeremiah Krick, who lives at the lighthouse with his baby daughter, Amanda. The author never suspects the danger in Professor Krick's experiments until he receives a panicked phone call from the professor, urging him to come to the lighthouse with all haste. Something horrible has happened...

Thus begins the story of a parallel world, a world once ravaged by technology used for profit without regard for nature, a world which clawed its way back to life and a philosophy of technology working with nature... A world in the power of the Dark Being, who has no compunctions, whose origins are unknown, and who has in the portal technology the pathway to a new world: ours.

Players are presented with a twofold quest: To rescue Professor Krick and his infant daughter, and to prevent the Dark Being from entering our world. In exploring the parallel world, to complete these objectives, players discover the tower of a genius inventor, a temple of ancient machinery, an island fortress, a wreck deep within the sea, and finally the volcanic lair of the Dark Being itself.

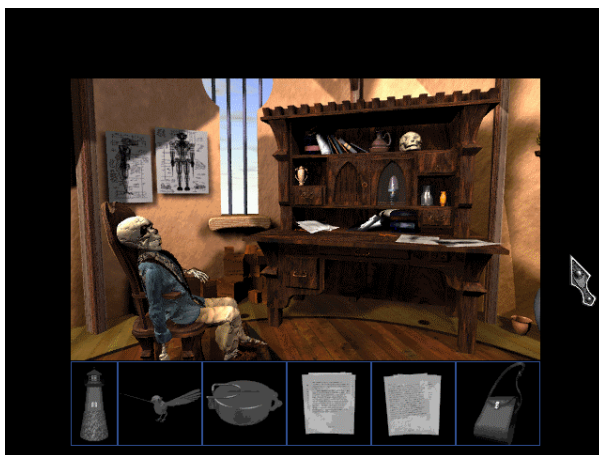
The story is fairly minimal, existing mainly to provide a reason and a goal for the player's exploration of the parallel world. The plot also has some noticeable holes. For instance, players at one point will discover a teleporter that can take them back to Oregon. No explanation is given as to why the Dark Being has not found and made use of this device, given the creature's apparent intelligence.

The acting on the part of the CGI characters is generally poor. The voice acting is not much better either (although the voice of the Professor narrating his lab notes is delivered slightly more effectively). A notable exception is found in Liryl, the lone guardian of the temple of ancient machines. Crippled and dependant on the temple's machinery, Liryl is a genuinely sympathetic character and better voiced than the others.



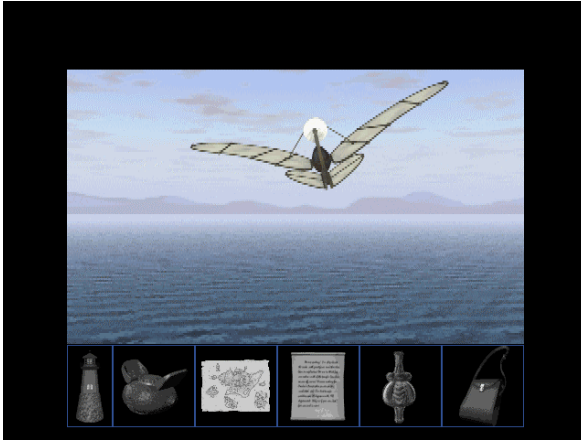
The game features only a few characters players can interact with. Moreover, the conversations with these characters are limited to a collection of brief monologues on their part in response to mouse clicks. As such, the deficiency in voice acting is not very often noticeable. Despite all the acting problems, I do feel that the story of the main character's arrival at the Oregon coast and befriending of Professor Krick would perhaps have been better portrayed as a CGI movie than in the form presented in the game, that of a written journal found near the beginning of the game.

The sound and the graphics manage to create a distinct atmosphere, even though it is not as immersive as it could have been. The game's atmosphere does, however, manage to evoke a world that is recognizably alien, yet also familiar in its themes, especially that of technology and exploitation of natural resources without regard to sustainability or consequences. This is a world much like ours – its people are human, technologically-oriented, and, for some reason that is never fully explained, and only remarked upon once, even speak fluent English. Thus, aside from the surface storyline, this parallel world also serves as a mirror and warning for our own.



This ecological theme is exemplified by the two inventors, Professor Jeremiah Krick and the inventor that he meets in the parallel world. Both are clearly brilliant men, who recognize each other's talents. They also see the outward signs of each other's concerns and, not knowing the causes, wonder whether the other is not mad. They serve as mirrors for each other, providing a Frankenstein-esque message about not seeing the dangerous effects of

one's work, perhaps by being too close to that work to see the greater effects, and hiding from the attention of outside observers.



The interface is simple and entirely point-and-click, driven by mouse movements and single clicks of the left mouse button. Movement is node-based; to move from a given point, one moves the cursor to the appropriate area of the screen, at which point the cursor will change into a directional arrow, and a single click will move or turn the character in that direction. However, in my opinion, these directional arrows are

sometimes poorly placed, appearing in unobvious or inconvenient places. In addition to this, there are no movement animations to segue between nodes (with the exception of the rail section towards the end of the game). The view simply switches from one image to the next. This deficiency makes movement around the game world more disjoint than it should be.

There are, however, a number of clips depicting certain actions, such as the use of inventory items, the operation of the various machines, and passage between the major locations of the parallel world. These are well-rendered and generally well-animated, and in some cases quite lovely. Strangely, while some of these can be skipped by a simple mouse click, others appear to be uninterruptible, a seemingly arbitrary inconsistency that can be frustrating at times.

Interaction with the world is similarly controlled by mouse movements and single left mouse button clicks or drags. This works considerably better than the directional arrows. Items and active areas are generally fairly easy to spot, even though there are a few that are difficult to see. The inventory is simple and clear, with large, informative icons. Clicking on an item selects it, the cursor changing to a copy of that item's inventory icon. That item can then be used by clicking on an active area, although I found this to be occasionally complicated by directional arrows appearing in inconvenient places.



One exception to this system, albeit still effective, is item combination and examination. When an item is the basis for an item combination, has another item that can be parted from it, or can

be used on itself, clicking on it will cause an inset to appear in one corner of the screen containing a detailed view of the object, typically rotating. In this inset the object can be viewed and interacted with - in some cases a part of the item can be separated from the parent to produce a new inventory item, in others the item can be combined with another, and sometimes the item has an intrinsic use. Item combination is achieved by clicking on the first item so that it appears in the inset, then selecting the second item from the inventory, and finally clicking on the part of the inset view on which the second item should be used.

In some cases items that appear in insets can also be used on active regions of the world. In this case, simply click on the item in the inventory a second time. The inset will disappear and the cursor will take the form of the item selected.

While the interaction system is in general good, there is one flaw: by default there is no indication that the cursor is over an active region or a collectable item. The in-game menu does offer the option to enable cursor highlighting, but this highlighting is, in my opinion, not obvious enough – the contrast between the lit (indicating that the cursor is over something of interest) and the default state is not great enough. The inclusion of color in the lit cursor, or at least a greater contrast, might have improved this greatly and made this a much more useful feature. In addition to this, the lit cursor is sometimes subject to a glitch which leaves it lit when taking an item. This can be rectified by moving the mouse onto another active region and then off of it, or to a directional arrow and back again. Nevertheless, such a glitch should not be present in a final release.

The puzzles are nicely thought-out and are generally appropriate to the location. Most are fair and quite interesting, but some of them are difficult. A few of the puzzles do seem to be a little obscure, with their logic or goal not clearly apparent, and these can at times be frustrating. Furthermore, there are some cases in which one can fail the puzzle for unobvious reasons. The safe puzzle is a good example of this problem. One can seemingly enter the correct combination without the safe unlocking if the values are not entered in just the right way.



The game does include a built-in help system in the main menu. This operates on the basis of the screen at which the player left the game, providing pre-defined hints for that screen. While at times useful (for instance in providing the method to clear the tumblers in the safe puzzle), this help is not sensitive to the state of that screen, and thus the same help will appear for a given screen

regardless of the state of any puzzles to which it might refer. For example, the puzzle box is a series of logic puzzles which can be found early in the game. When looking at the puzzle box, the hint provided pertains primarily to a particular puzzle in the sequence, regardless of which puzzle the player is working on at the time. Furthermore, I found that the hints often pertained to a step or puzzle other than the one with which I was having trouble at the time.



The majority of the puzzles are inventory-based, involving the use of the many strange and interesting artifacts that are to be found in the parallel world, as well as a few that are found on our side of the portal. A number of the inventory puzzles have more than one solution, and while I have found one item that can be left behind irretrievably, another item can be found later in the game to replace it. Similarly the exact path that the player takes between

locations is not entirely linear. While the first three locations are predetermined, the overall path is up to the player. In addition to this, solving every puzzle is not necessary to finish the game. While there is only one main ending (barring a few endings in which the player loses), the exact details do differ depending on what the player does in the final scene.

Worth noting amongst the inventory puzzles are those that involve the assembly or repair of the various machines that are to be found strewn all along this quest. Many of these are fairly simple, such as opening a device and replacing a single part, while others are more complex, but all are interesting to some degree, and make for an engaging form of puzzle.

Only one slider puzzle is present, although it is possible to bypass it, and there are two small mazes. One of these mazes is slightly complicated by the fact that available directions are not always easy to determine, but since there are few possible ways to move in this case this is not an overwhelming problem. It is, however, possible to exit this maze not having found the item that is sought, not realizing that the item held by the submersible is in fact an intermediate item.



Note-taking is by and large unnecessary, although there are a few numbers and symbols that would be wise to jot down.

It is possible for the player to perform an action that results in the loss of the game. In one of these sequences the player is allowed to try again, seemingly indefinitely, without reloading a saved game, while in others a failure movie is presented, and the player is returned to the main menu.

The graphics are good for the time, and the locations show a good degree of imagination. Especially the machines found throughout the journey are well designed, if perhaps a little too similar to our technology. However, taken too far, the alien aspect could have made the operation and purpose of these machines too obscure. The balance struck in this game, while not perfect, is not bad either.

In summary, Lighthouse: The Dark Being is a game of puzzles. A solid dose of puzzles is the main strength of this game, providing interest and enjoyment and a good challenge. Lighthouse is a fun game, but lacks considerably in the areas of story and acting, and, to a lesser degree, atmosphere.

Final Score: 72/100



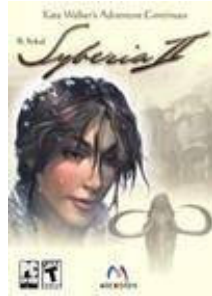
Developer: Sierra On-Line
Publisher: Sierra On-Line
Platform: PC
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: 1997
Grade: 72/100

Minimum System Requirements (PC):

MS-DOS 5.0+
 486DX/2-66
 12 MB RAM (Windows 95)
 8 MB RAM (Windows 3.1x / DOS)
 SVGA 640 x 480 x 256 Colours
 Windows Compatible Sound Card
 (Windows)
 2x CD-ROM Drive
 Keyboard, mouse, speakers

Syberia II

PC Review by Wendy Nellius



Released in 2004 by Microïds, Syberia II was the highly anticipated continuation of the wondrous tale that took our breath away in Syberia. Benoit Sokal has crafted the second half of the story with even more twists and turns to capture our imagination once more.



When we last saw Kate Walker, we were in Aralbad where she finally located the elusive and quirky Hans Voralberg. As the true and living heir to the Voralberg estate and factory, Kate gets Hans to sign the paperwork that will seal the deal to the sale of the Voralberg factory. After learning so much about Hans on the way, Kate is stuck in a moment of indecision. She sees in Hans his undying dream of the existence of mammoths in

Syberia. This could be her last chance to continue this journey of a lifetime. What would she be leaving behind? Having discovered he committed the ultimate betrayal, Kate's relationship with her fiancé is over. Her job is run by those who only care about business, not people. What should Kate do? At the very last moment, we see Kate running to catch the departing automaton train and confirming her decision.

If it's been a while since you the last time you played Syberia, never fear. Microïds graciously included a "Syberia Recap" right at the main menu to catch you up to speed. Syberia II comes packaged with 2 CD's. The game loads quite easily and is technically sound.

The game begins with a cut scene of shadowy figures in a far away law office. They have been trying desperately to locate



Kate. They have gone as far as hiring a private investigator to tail her who, unfortunately for them, always remains a few steps behind. Right now, Kate is on the train with Hans in route to the ultimate destination; Syberia. Oscar, our trusty automaton, is manning the helm as usual. So, does the addition of Hans to the team lessen Kate's workload? No, of course it doesn't. Kate still has to handle everything. As with Syberia, the journey is never a straight shot. There will be multiple stopovers filled with multiple problems which are enough to keep any gamer sufficiently busy.



Romansburg: A small working town below the train tracks. Curiously, a Colonel who mans the train station also wields control over a locked gate to the town below. The gate is meant to keep the undesirables (basically the whole town) from ever mingling with those who reside above. The town also provides the gateway to an isolated monastery high up on the mountain. Much to Kate's dismay, these monks aren't a very welcoming group of men.

Wilderness & Tundra: Two equally beautiful locations filled with peril. Blistering cold weather, monumental snow drifts and unending amounts of snowfall await Kate. There are quite a few interesting surprises in both locations. Kate will need to utilize a ton of brain power here to escape from these two winter wonderlands. And, it's very cool to see Kate's footprints in the snow behind her which gently fade away as the continuing snow fills them in.



Youkal Village: A vast network of caves created underground within the confines of the icy tundra. The Youkals are a highly spiritual people shrouded in mystery and legend who followed the migration of the mammoth to the most north region eons ago. The Youkals are believed to have domesticated the mammoth which would seem to be an impossible task. As they are the key to Hans' dream, Kate will have to open her

mind to this ancient culture and be prepared for anything.

And, of course there is the final destination of Syberia. Or is there? You'll have to play the game to see if Hans' dream comes true.

Kate meets quite a few unusual characters. The most adorable addition is the Youki. A Youki is an animal that is related to both seals and dogs. It certainly looks like a combination of the two. The Youki's sole motivation is food. He ("he" being an assumption) is such a funny animal and should evoke some smiles. But, with any good Benoit Sokal story, there must be a villain. Therefore, we have the dubious introduction of Ivan and Igor Bourgoff into the story. Their very appearance brings up memories of about 20 Disney movies. We have the tall brother (Igor) who is not exceptionally bright and we have the short, rather dumpy brother (Ivan) who is the nasty brains of the operations. The encounters with the contemptuous Ivan are numerous and most unpleasant. He truly becomes Kate's arch nemesis and will annoy her to no end.



There are a multitude of other NPC's to interact with. As with Syberia, lengthy dialog is a vital part of the game. The voice acting is outstanding and even better than the first game. Although the accents are still sporadic, the ones that are incorporated into the characters are appropriate. The dialog trees have been modified for Syberia II. Now, once a topic has been fully covered, it disappears from the conversation notepad. This discourages repeated conversations. Although this was a great improvement, some of the dialog trees were a bit odd even when systematically using the order provided.

At times, Kate ends up regurgitating the same information using different wording which is totally unnecessary and a bit annoying.

Getting around is quite simple. Locations exits are clearly marked. Cursors are pretty standard for an adventure game. Inventory can be readily accessed during game play with a right click of the mouse. Double clicking will induce Kate to run. As with the first game, this is a welcome feature as there is a lot of ground to cover by foot. There is no in-game map to transfer you to another location quickly. Rushing is not an option. But then again, you may not want to rush in the first place. Microids flexed their beauty muscles again and brought us

surroundings that are so lush and rich with detail. Each location is a sight to behold. You will want to behold, behold, behold. Beauty like this will be remembered. The cinematography can be covered in one word: WOW! Microids has done it again. The option to view cinematic scenes is still included in the menu and is worth viewing a second time (or third, fourth etc...). The soundtrack could rival any Hollywood movie.

The puzzles have increased a bit in difficulty. While Kate is still running around fetching items in order to get the train on its way, she also gets to flex a little more brain power. Of course, fixing Hans' numerous automaton creations is a given. But, Kate has some new challenges like figuring out geographical coordinates transmitted from a plane crash site. There are quite a few puzzles involving deciphering ancient symbols in order to determine placement of items. You can also add in the challenge of dealing with some of the local wildlife. The improvements are a welcome upgrade.

The ending of the story is quite emotional and may spark a tear in your eye. But, it will have to be played in order to know if this is a tear of happiness or of sadness. This reviewer will never tell. Overall, Syberia II is an enchanting story brought to completion (although you may wish there was more). Syberia can easily be enjoyed by the novice and seasoned gamer alike. Even if you're not into games heavy in dialog, the beauty alone is worth the purchase.



Final grade: 96/100

Developer: Microids
Publisher: Microids
Platform: PC
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: 2004
Grade: 96/100

Minimum System Requirements (PC):
 Windows® 98/ME/2000/XP
 Pentium® III 350 MHz
 64 MB RAM
 16 MB Video Card
 DirectX® 7 Compatible Soundcard
 CD-ROM Drive

Apprentice II: The Knight's Move

PC Review by Sudeep Pasricha

Not long after I started playing Apprentice II: The Knight's Move, memories came flooding back of the good old days of adventure gaming. These were the days when big name companies like LucasArts and Sierra would release one stellar adventure game after another, to the constant delight of avid adventure game fanatics like me. Remember the Monkey Island, Discworld, Simon the Sorcerer and Space Quest series? I would stay up all night trying to figure out ways to get my hands on the elusive elixir, or thwart a bunch of pirates, cursing under my breath as I inevitably found myself stuck somewhere, yet loving every minute of it. Apprentice II: The Knight's Move is a game that will take you back to that gentle era when adventure games actually flew off the shelves of stores and anybody who'd talk about the "demise" of adventure gaming would have been instantly branded a loony, and promptly tied to a pole and pelted with orange peels. Before you break your beloved piggy bank, it is my delightful duty to inform you that the game is an amateur freeware adventure – yes, you really don't have to pay anyone a dime to play this game.



Developed as a labor of love by the fine folks at Herculean Effort Productions using the AGS system, Apprentice II was, not surprisingly, preceded by Apprentice I. In the first installment of the series, you play as a young wizard's apprentice who, by a cruel twist of fate, just so happens to be named 'Pib'. The story in Apprentice I involves our fearless protagonist Pib venturing forth to collect ingredients for his first magic spell ... and that about sums it up

really. Apprentice I is indeed a very short game, with low-res 2D cartoony graphics and a standard point-and-click interface. But this freeware adventure still manages to score points for being charming, witty and a fun distraction if you have an hour or two to kill (longer if you get stuck somewhere of course).

Apprentice II: The Knight's Move is longer and more difficult than the first game. It has more quests, locations, characters and puzzles. The game starts out with Pib, who's still an apprentice wizard, falling out of his bed and waking up from a nightmare. In the nightmare, an oversized knight attempts to convince Pib that his destiny is to become a knight, and not a wizard. Now becoming a knight would not be cause for alarm for most. But take one look at Pib and you'll realize why he might not be cut out to meet the physical demands of knighthood. Unfortunately, all is not well in the magical land of Willowbean, and the nightmare

might just come true. The evil knight Lord Ironcrow, is leading the kingdom to war and is eager to recruit soldiers into his army. So eager in fact, that he is burning down people's houses to make them homeless, since the homeless are required by law to be drafted in times of war. Pib unfortunately happens to be an eligible candidate for the draft. Some clever negotiating on his master's part gets him a temporary reprieve, but it is clear that if Pib is to escape the draft, he must become a wizard. His master agrees to consider making him a wizard if he can complete three tasks which, as it turns out, are not all that straightforward. But then again, what else do you expect from an adventure game?



To complete these tasks, which involve driving stubborn rats out of a bakery, winning money at the centaur races, and creating a magical golem, you will need to go on numerous side quests and interact with a plethora of characters scattered around different locales in Willowbean. The puzzles in Apprentice II are mostly inventory-based, where you'll interact with characters and your environment to collect stuff and combine/use it in various ingenious ways. Be warned though that you will face a menacing feature in this game, which has plagued plenty of adventure games of yore and harassed unsuspecting gamers to no end: the dreaded pixel hunting puzzles. Yes, it does make the game more challenging, but at the same time I was yanking my hair out trying to figure out



which pixel on the screen I had neglected to move my mouse over while searching for an item. Thankfully, such scenarios are few and far between, and by and large, the game won't stump you for too long at any given time. The puzzles are not too hard if you've been playing adventure games for a while, but if you're fairly new to the genre, be ready to be befuddled for several hours while you try to beat this game.

The interface in Apprentice II is a standard mouse-driven point-and-click affair. The magical wand that serves as the pointer glows red when you pass it over an interactive hotspot. Right clicking on the hotspot cycles through different actions you can perform ('Look at', 'Use', 'Take', 'Talk to') and a left click performs the action. When it is not hovering over a hotspot, the wand is in the default 'Walk to' mode and can be used to move Pib around the screen. The inventory is conveniently located at the bottom of the screen, and pops up when you move the mouse there. Move the mouse to the top of the screen and a simple Save/Load/Quit menu appears. I liked this simple and intuitive arrangement, which lets you get on with the game without unnecessary clutter.

While the graphics in Apprentice II are certainly nowhere near the high quality stuff we've come to expect from recent commercial offerings, they're certainly quite good for a freeware adventure. The 2D cartoony style reminds one of classic LucasArts games like Day of the Tentacle and Sam n Max Hit the Road. The backgrounds are beautifully rendered, and the environments are colorful and sufficiently detailed. The different locales you will pass through in the game are typically buzzing with activity, with characters on the screen defaulting to their 'idle animation' when you're not interacting with them. You will encounter several memorable characters during your quest, each with their own distinct quirks and mannerisms presented through some witty dialogue and unique character animations. Overall, the look of the game gives it a nice "retro" vibe, which adds to the experience. The music in the game is also quite catchy. Sadly, there are no character voiceovers, which would have added another dimension to the gameplay. The developers did release a patch to add voices to the original Apprentice game some time after it was first released, but seeing that Apprentice II has been out for quite some time, don't get your hopes up too high.

Conclusion

In the end, it doesn't matter if you're a veteran or an adventure game newbie – this game will have you chuckling at the funny dialogues and absurdly comical encounters between different characters. Apprentice II: The Knight's Move is a wonderful game which coasts along to the finish line on the strength of its engaging storyline, strong character development, and side-splitting monologues (and dialogues). The graphics and music give the game an 'old school' look and feel, which I also enjoyed immensely. Sure, the game will be challenging at times, but you'll figure it out eventually, and then look back and wonder what took you so long. The best thing about this game is that it's absolutely free. All the more reason for you to download and play it right away! But before you do, I recommend you play Apprentice I if you haven't done so already. Part of the charm of playing Apprentice II is the recurring characters and references to the events in the earlier game, which will not only add to the fun, but also have you looking forward to the next installment in the series. Yes, Apprentice III: Checkmate will (hopefully) come out sometime this year, and if the first two games in the series are any indication, this game will certainly rock!



To download the Apprentice games, head over to the Herculean Effort website at <http://herculeaneffort.adventuredevelopers.com>

Developer: Herculean Effort Productions
Publisher: Herculean Effort Productions
Platform: PC
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: August 2004
Grade: 85/100

Minimum System Requirements (PC):
 Windows 95, 98, ME, 2000, or XP
 32 MB RAM
 About 68 megabytes of hard disk space
 DirectX 5 or above

The Cameron Files: Secret at Loch Ness

PC Review by Papa

Are you a fan of detective fiction from the 1930s? How about Nessie, the fabled but elusive monster in Loch Ness? Does the sound of bagpipes stir you to read Robert Burns and start talking with a wee burr? Or perhaps you just enjoy an entertaining hour or two with a colorful adventure game. If any of these shoes fit, you might enjoy playing an older adventure game from Dreamcatcher and Wanadoo called *The Cameron Files: Secret at Loch Ness*.



The story opens in Chicago, with hardboiled private eye Alan P. Cameron reminiscing about his recent case in Scotland. Balding red-headed Cameron is an unlikely comic hero, a hybrid of Darren McGavin in his *Nightstalker* days and Guy Noir of *Prairie Home Companion*. The episode begins with his being summoned to the home of a family friend in Scotland to help resolve some mysterious events. As circumstances happen in games like this, the home is a large estate and castle on the shore of Loch Ness. As you might imagine in any story about an ancient castle, there are many secrets to discover, as well as hidden passages, family jewels, and even mystical objects. Some of the more original devices involve fingerprinting techniques and primitive fax machines to communicate with Scotland Yard.

As soon as he arrives, Cameron learns that his host, Lord McFarley, has vanished. Cameron's first objective will be to find his father's old friend. Our hero encounters both supernatural and natural forces as he investigates the strange events at Devil's Ridge Manor. He carries a flask of whiskey (Scotch, of course) as a "tool" in his inventory, and handles supernatural events with the same forced fearlessness that Darren McGavin popularized in the television series. In fact, Cameron even physically resembles McGavin! The supporting cast includes



an old aunt, a young fiery niece, a kilt-clad retainer, a whiskey distiller, the vanished host, a maid, and an Indian man. There is even a family ghost (called a "banshee" in the game) and, of course, the fabled "Nessie" herself, who unfortunately only has a small role to play. In general, the story line and characters are engaging enough to maintain player interest and curiosity for most of the game.

All of the voices are somewhat believable. They thankfully have mild Scottish burrs so that American players can understand the dialogue. The animation may

not be as good as more recent games, but it was considered excellent when the game appeared in 2002. Faces and sets are rendered in a cartoon style rather than an attempt at photographic realism. The music and sound effects are excellent, even by modern standards. Old castles on windy moors simply sound scary, and this game uses those kinds of sounds nicely to enhance the game play mood. In combination with bagpipe airs and distant bird calls, most of the sound effects were enjoyable. Options to adjust the game settings are almost non-existent, leaving players to use their computer volume controls instead. There are eight saved game slots, which appear as dated image panels, and each saved game can be overwritten if desired. Since there are so few occasions which lead to Cameron's death or some other dead-end, you will probably not need to use all of the slots unless you are playing the game simultaneously with other people.



The Cameron Files: Secret at Loch Ness is a first-person linear adventure game with scattered third-person cut scenes to bridge important transitions in the storyline. This is a standard structural device in many current games and the developers use it fairly well in Loch Ness. The movement paths of the hero are usually angular and predictable, sometimes making it seem awkward and tiresome to do simple things like walking across a room. If you ignore the nice images and colors of the Scottish interior and exterior scenes, you could almost plot Cameron's every move with straight lines and right angles. After visiting the same area several times, you learn to take two right turns followed by four clicks to the left and so on, merely to go out the door. I found myself wishing for shortcut icons that would move Cameron along a bit more quickly.

As with many older adventure games, Cameron's item inventory is kept in a container (a "wallet") and can be accessed at any time by a single click. Some items can be combined when necessary, and hints will leave little doubt when and which items are to be used.

A running log (Cameron's "diary") is updated each time a significant piece of the puzzle has been discovered. The diary will also provide suggestions and hints for subsequent linear choices. For example, Cameron will have written something like "Must investigate the pier!" in the log, so the rare player who is wondering what to do next will get a push in the right direction.



There is also a map of the exterior locations which Cameron locates early in the game. The map can be used to move quickly from one known distant spot to another. One of the more annoying movement elements is the sudden locking of the

front door without any plot reason. This construction device was used by the designers to keep Cameron inside the castle until necessary linear steps are completed. While it simplifies and controls the overall linear progress toward the ending, it detracts from the complexity of the various puzzles and adds a little tedium by forcing the player to backtrack too often into visited areas looking for whatever is needed to open the front door.



The pixel-hunting aspects of *Secret at Loch Ness* are usually very straightforward and obvious, with occasional surprises and cleverly concealed clues. Because many parts of the game are so predictable, the player can get lulled into complacency and suddenly realize that he or she has overlooked an obvious item by not noticing a camouflaged door or drawer. On these frustrating occasions, impatience can drive even a good game player to one of the many excellent walkthroughs available in the Internet. But most of the clues and items can be found with very little effort and imagination, and the attractive artwork and original Scottish music maintains your interest while hunting down the more elusive hotspots.

The best puzzles in the *Secret of Loch Ness* are some involving runic characters and several mazes, particularly a timed underwater sequence and a concluding "twisty-turny" location which made me remember old text-based adventure games from my youthful programming days. In both these mazes, Cameron's movements become more complex with more directions and angles, and clever art work adds to the confusion and deliberate misdirection. If you like mazes, you should enjoy these two puzzles.

The ending of the *Secret of Loch Ness* seemed a bit contrived and melodramatic to me, but it did not really detract that much from the overall gaming experience. I was more annoyed by the tedious movement patterns than by anything related to the story or the plot. In terms of playability, this is an easy "E-Rated" game for older children to play, with a little supervision and guidance. There are a few scenes which some parents might consider questionable for young children, but certainly nothing worse than they see every day on prime time television. Older, more experienced gamers will be able to run through *Secret of Loch Ness* quickly, perhaps in several hours, and will enjoy most of the diversion. I doubt, though, that many of you will want to replay it. Once will be enough.

Developer: Wanadoo & Galilea Multimedia
Publisher: DreamCatcher Interactive
Platform: PC
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: 2002
Grade: 80/100

Minimum System Requirements (PC):
 Windows® 95/98/ME/XP
 Intel Pentium® 166 MHz
 32 MB RAM
 4X CD-ROM Drive
 DirectX® 8.0 Compatible Video Card
 DirectX® 8.0 Compatible Sound Card

Space Quest IV: Roger Wilco and the Time Rippers

PC Review by Gnome



1991. 15 years ago. The members of the rock band Nirvana are starting their mainstream career and people are still gaming on Amigas. Sierra On-Line is probably the most powerful game publisher for the PC, and the graphic adventure genre reigns supreme. First-person shooters and RTS games haven't even been imagined. A 256-color VGA card is considered cutting-edge. Playing a game in any resolution over 320x200 is preposterous. Sierra releases Space Quest IV. Fast forward to 2006, where I, a lowly gnome, get to review said game. But what's the point, I hear you ask?

No particular point to be honest. I simply wanted to look back at one of the first adventures I ever played. See if it retains its charm. Provide you with the sweet and fuzzy nostalgia feeling every retro review tends to evoke. Perhaps even teach our younger readers a small history lesson. The fact, of course, that Space Quest IV was the last Space Quest game to be designed by the 'Two Guys from Andromeda' (Mark Crowe and Scott Murphy), the first Space Quest to feature VGA graphics and the first Sierra adventure with scrolling screens in it, did help me a bit in selecting it.

Space Quest IV: Roger Wilco and the Time Rippers (hence SQ4), as its title subtly suggests, is all about time travel. Roger Wilco the space janitor, occasional world-saving hero, and Space Quest frontman, travels from the lush 256 color VGA landscapes of Space Quest IV, to the 16 color EGA Space Quest I, while having fun at a few more eras (Space Quests X and XII). In a pretty cute twist of gaming design logic, you don't get to actually play in Space Quest IV, but simply experience it through amazing (for the time)



hand-drawn cut-scenes. The plot is simple: fight an old enemy, save your son, avoid one of the dozens of possible and fully animated deaths and save the galaxy. It's as simple – and almost clichéd – as that.



Well, maybe not so clichéd after all. You do have to accomplish standard superhero goals, but there is a twist. You see, Roger Wilco right after saving the two game designers known as the 'Two Guys from Andromeda' (in Space Quest III), and while vacationing through the Galaxy's space bars, gets attacked by the aptly named Sequel Police, who are

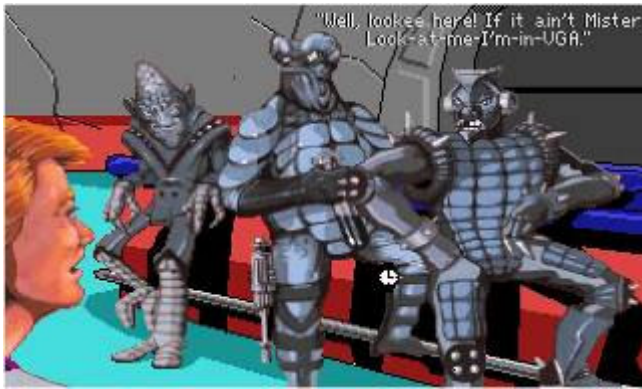
apparently operating under the commands of arch-enemy Sludge Vohaul. Roger's yet unborn son comes to the rescue, transports him to Space Quest XII, where Roger promptly hands control over to the player, who must now save the Galaxy. Not a groundbreaking story, but nice nonetheless.

This, of course, is no serious game. From the moment you look at the cover of the game's box (which in typical 90s fashion includes lots of diskettes, a manual, a Sierra catalog, and the amazingly funny Space Piston Magazine) you'll get the silly attitude that prevails throughout SQ4. The game pokes fun at Sierra, Space Quest games, adventure games in general, Star Wars, sci-fi movies, contemporary society, life, universe, fish (not) and apparently the player. Most of the jokes and one-liners actually work, thus crowning SQ4 the funniest (non-text) adventure of the early nineties, if for whatever criminal reason we choose to ignore Monkey Island. Or Day of the Tentacle. Ok, to be frank, SQ4 isn't the funniest game ever. Big deal! Its humor is much better than Larry Laffer, Broken Sword, or Quake-Doom humor.

SQ4 is polished too. The production values of Space Quest IV are, even by today's standards, impressive. There are buckets of animation, lots of detailed screens, full and rather funny descriptions for everything you could wish to click on, a great soundtrack, an optional shoot-em-up styled mini-game (Ms. Astro Chicken), an irritating hamburger making sequence, lush animated sequences, easter eggs, cameo appearances and enough Star Wars jokes to bore you to death. All this in the



shortest Space Quest game in the series, as you shouldn't need more than a few hours to reach the (almost touching) finale, but only using a walkthrough. Or some sort of invincibility cheat.



Try to finish SQ4 without any external help and you will lose your precious time, your precious temper or even both, for this is a bloody difficult game. Unfairly and excruciatingly so. Hint book sales were after-all a major income source for Sierra during the long forgotten era of the early nineties, when the Web was just a Swiss scientist's thought and

walkthroughs hard to find. Timed sequences, arcade bits, a variety of frequent and unexpected deaths, mazes, dead ends, obscure riddles and every twisted anti-player trick the designers could conjure is there, to make your life miserable, and your adventuring quest a descent to paranoia. On the plus side this is an adventure game with a point system, meaning that even if you manage to reach the end, you should probably replay it in order to achieve full-points glory. Talk about value for money. Hah. Those were the days.

Today, where walkthroughs and porn are readily available on the web, SQ4 is still good fun. Graphics and music have aged well, the interface is one of the first point-and-click ones (just don't hope for hotspots), the story is still great, and the puzzles tough as always.

Download DOSbox and VDMSound and experience this classic in Windows XP. It will be worth it. And as Sierra put it: 'It's not just an adventure, it's a convoluted mass of obstacles only the designers could ever hope to unravel. This 10 pound box of fun is sure to confound even the most dedicated computer game masochist'.



Developer: Sierra On-Line
Publisher: Sierra On-Line
Platform: PC; Amiga; Macintosh
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: 1991
Grade: 85/100

Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers

PC Review by Thaumaturge

New Orleans, July of 1993. The days are muggy, yet a chill may still run down your spine should you read the daily newspaper. A series of grisly murders are being committed. Yet despite their brazen public setting, somehow there seems to be no eyewitnesses. Each victim is left gorily bereft of their heart, and about them are scattered what seem to be the remains of the trappings of a voodoo ritual. There are no suspects.



In the French Quarter of that same city lives Gabriel Knight, unsuccessful author and proprietor of an even less successful bookshop – St. George's Books – run with the help of Grace Nakimura, taking a break after getting her Master's degree in History and Classics.

In the Voodoo Murders, as the newspapers title the horrific killings, Gabriel sees an opportunity. His close friend, Detective Mosely, has been assigned to the case, and has agreed to give Knight inside information, with which Gabriel plans to craft his new, Voodoo-based horror novel.

What begins as research for a novel, however, slowly becomes something far greater, darker, and deeper. Gabriel Knight will find himself the focus of a story weaving murder, magic, love, desire, and an ancient duty together. As he searches for the truth, Gabriel finds that his family has a deep connection to the Voodoo Murders. The nightmares that plague his sleep have been passed from father to son as a history and symbol of betrayal and duty. It is a to right a terrible wrong from the past.



The story, while slow at the outset, is certainly very good. Even the slow beginnings do not hurt the game play experience as they feel like a natural part of the plot progression. The author, Jane Jensen, draws the player in at the beginning with the Voodoo Murders and Gabriel's research, slowly establishing Gabriel's family history and the hints that something deeper is at work than

what the newspapers are reporting. In time, these two threads are found to be intertwined. Linked by an encounter, the story tells a meeting and twining of fates and powers centuries past, yet whose effects have not diminished with time.

The story is strengthened by the use of real places and research, giving the game a greater sense of realism and bringing it closer to the world in which we live, heightening the dramatic and horrific impact of each turn.



This is a game with emotional impact, with moments tense, frightening, dramatic, sad, and touching. The characters are believable, and the important ones are given some depth beyond simple “villain” or “hero” roles. This is not an easy story for its main characters: love, desire, duty, and betrayal bind them together and drive them into conflict.

However, Sins of the Fathers does not have a uniformly serious tone. The dialogue is peppered with humor, predominantly towards the beginning, and especially between Gabriel and Grace -a relationship which adds a lot to the story, being both humorously acid and affectionate, as well as being important to the narrative. The dynamics between Gabriel and Grace help to hold player interest during the early parts of the game. In addition the relationship between the two characters adds a little depth to their dialogues, elevating them above pure doom and gloom without falling prey to the trap of making the subject matter trivial.

Much of the depth in the narrative is due to Gabriel's personality, which, although at times a little overdone, is convincing. He is not a conventional hero – his



motive in investigating the murders is to find material for his book. In his personal life he commits to no-one, sleeping with women for a night and avoiding their calls afterwards. He has lived his life giving little regard to others (with the exception of his grandmother, who raised him).

The journey of this game, however, will give him reasons to care and to fight, both new ones and ones that he perhaps hadn't realized that he had. We see

Gabriel Knight goes from a man who uses people and strives for little to one who is willing to risk his life for others. He is a well-realized character, and both interesting and engaging to control.

Dialogue is frequent and important to the story progression and puzzles. It drives the plot, detailing the background, the characters, and their situation. Given its importance in the game, it is a good thing that the dialogue is solid. However the sheer volume of the conversations does at times become a little tedious.

Thankfully, this is not common, and most characters have something interesting to say on a number of topics. Through their dialogue - the way that they speak, what they will say, their attitudes and reactions – the individuality of each character is increased.



The voice acting for the dialogue is generally good, although there are a few parts and lines that are a little overdone. The worst of these is probably the narrator, whose accent is thick enough to slightly impede understanding at times. Once again, this issue detracts little from the gaming experience.

In almost all cases in which Gabriel talks to or questions someone in-depth (i.e. beyond small talk or a simple request), dialogues are presented in a separate interrogation screen. This screen has only three elements: the list of topics to pursue in the center, and portraits of Gabriel and the person to whom he is talking at the top left and bottom right respectively. These portraits are excellent and well-animated, looking beautiful and helping to humanize the characters beyond the effect of their sprites.

A number of the puzzles are dialogue-driven, involving Gabriel talking to a certain character or characters about specific matters in order to gain important knowledge, an item, or a new topic to pursue. These are, however, not very difficult. It is impossible to end a conversation without first covering the plot-dependent topics, and in most cases there is no danger in asking on any topic available. There is one case in which selecting a plot-point topic in a conversation results in the end of that conversation, without the opportunity to resume it, but in this case none of the other options are



truly required, although they do add details to the overall picture.

The majority of the puzzles are inventory-driven, requiring Gabriel to discover the correct item to use with the correct object or person, sometimes in the correct place, to prevail in a particular situation. Most of these are fairly straightforward, although in a few cases the items are small, difficult to spot, or not obvious. The puzzles are generally fair and logical. Players paying attention to the conversations and the people and places around themselves should be able to get past them without too many problems.

Interestingly, there are a few points at which the players seem intentionally left unsure as to how to proceed, just as Gabriel himself might be. In these cases revisiting the various available areas will sometimes reveal an opportunity to progress, or an important event to stumble upon. I feel that this, while potentially bringing a minor stall to the flow of the game, is an interesting device that improves the realism of the story.

There are a few points where the player can die, especially in the dangerous finale. For this reason, it is advisable to save the game often – at least one dangerous situation could easily take players by surprise – and certainly before any clearly dangerous situation.



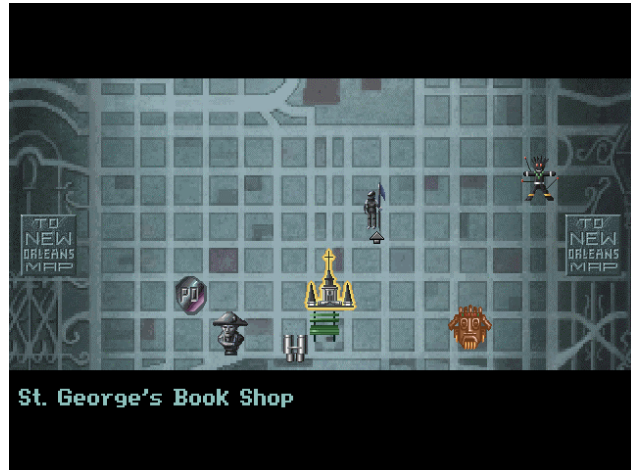
The game is divided into days, each day separated by a short scene set looking down on Gabriel's street by night. As the new day starts it is announced in red, and two lines from a poem appear at the bottom of the screen. These lines tell the story of the corresponding day in a brief verse. The entire poem tells the story of the game. The poem fits and adds to the dark atmosphere of the night scene during which it is delivered. It is an

inspired addition – and an attentive player may find a hint or two in these lines. In addition, the brief night scenes at times add a little extra insight into the relationship between three of the main characters.

While the days end once Gabriel has completed certain important tasks, the player does not need to make all of the connections present in a given day to successfully complete it. On the other hand, each completed puzzle or new discovery adds to a score, in keeping with the style of other Sierra games of the time, displayed along with the maximum on the icon bar at the top of the screen. While the game will not allow the player to progress if he has missed an essential task or discovery, it is possible to leave behind lesser tasks, resulting in a lower

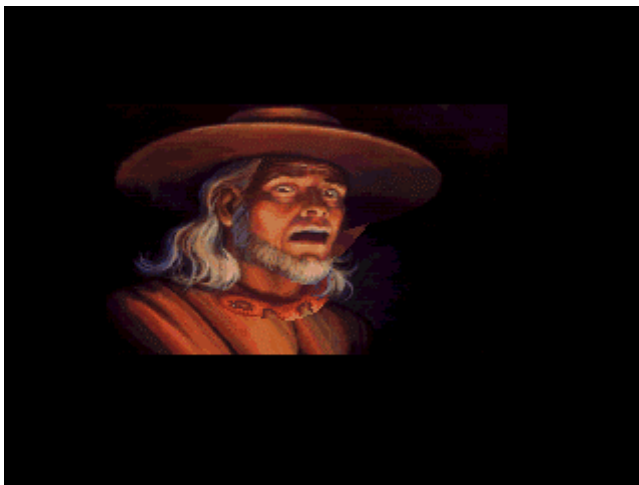
score. In my point of view this is not a negative element at all, but rather one which increases the challenge of gaining the full score.

The interface is simple, and based entirely on mouse interaction (barring the use of the keyboard to name savegames). The mouse has eight available cursors, each indicating a particular action: look at, walk to, use, take, move item, open, question, and talk to. The last of those is generally used for minor conversation, as well as a few occasions when a full questioning would not be appropriate. The eight cursors can be selected from the icon bar at the top of the screen, as well as by cycling through them via clicks of the right mouse button. Performing the action designated by a cursor is enacted by clicking the left mouse button. When an item from the inventory is selected, the cursor takes on the form of that item, and clicking while this cursor is selected allows the player to attempt to use that item.



A useful addition to the interface is the tape recorder, which allows the player to revisit conversations held with other characters. Each dialogue is broken down into sections which are played back in sequence by pressing the “play” button on the tape recorder, and which present along with a textual transcript of the spoken words. The player can skip back and forth between sections using “fast forward” and “rewind” buttons.

While many of the non-interactive scenes are handled in-game, such as the night scenes described above, others are portrayed using short movies. Of these



movies, some of the most striking are the ones that are designed to resemble the format and style of a graphic novel. These sequences provide some of the most emotive and expressive moments of the game, using dramatic images and some of the game's better voice acting.

The graphics in general are very good, given the limitations of a 256-color palette. The

backgrounds in particular are at times excellent, surpassed only by the conversation portraits and again by the cut-scene movies mentioned above. The character sprites, however, are less impressive. They are limited by the low resolution, and the sprite animations are a little jerky, making them less convincing than they could be.

Similarly, the music is very good indeed, at times both stirring and emotive. The themes are generally appropriate to the scene and setting, adding well to the atmosphere, especially towards the end. This is not always the case, however – there are a few cases in which the music doesn't perfectly fit the scene, but these are the exception rather than the rule.

One last point of note is that Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers is of decent length. It is certainly not a short game, but it does not draw out for too long either. Instead, it has enough content to fill the duration of the game, which should be long enough to satisfy all but the most demanding of players



In conclusion, Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers is an excellent game. It is a great deal of fun, with excellent cut-scenes and backdrops, and stirring music. The writing is very good, providing excellent characterization and a strong story. The game does have a few minor problems, but their importance diminish in the face of the many strengths of Gabriel Knight.

Final score: 90/100

<p>Developer: Sierra Studios Publisher: Sierra Studios Platform: PC Genre: Adventure Release Date: 1993 Grade: 90/100</p>	<p>Minimum System Requirements (PC): DOS 5.0+, Win 3.1 or higher 486/33 or higher 8 MB RAM 20MB Hard Drive Space 256 Colour SVGA (640x480x256) Windows Compatible Sound Card with DAC 2x CD-ROM Drive Keyboard, mouse, speakers</p>
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Nancy Drew #2: Stay Tuned for Danger

PC Review by Sweetpea (a.k.a. Gill Sandiford)

Her Interactive is the developer behind the long-running Nancy Drew series of detective games for the PC. Along with many other awards, the company has won the "Parents' Choice Gold Award" numerous times for good reason. This series is a real successful achievement in the detective adventure genre of games.



In Stay Tuned for Danger, Nancy Drew, the detective the series are named after, is invited to New York to stay at her aunt's house with the famous soap opera star Mattie Jensen. Miss Jensen's co-star Rick is getting death threats and other warnings. As Nancy, it is your job to unravel the web of deceit behind the scenes of a daytime TV drama!

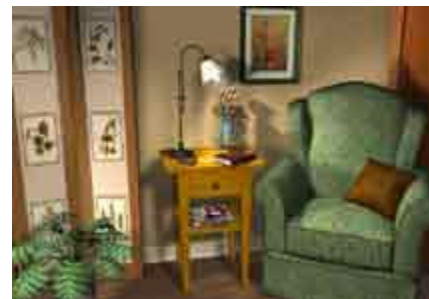


Is Mattie Jensen really the hot screen star she thinks she is? Could it be that behind that beautiful exterior lies a heart of pure venom just waiting for the right moment to strike out with her jealous revenge? Is Rick just a gorgeous dumb heart-throb or do his still waters run deeper and more polluted than you first think? Do you get a

strange feeling every time you talk to Millie in the prop room, who is on such a power trip that she sets you a quiz before you can enter her domain? Then there are the studio bosses who make rare appearances but who also have their motives for this murderous scenario. Whatever your initial suspicions are, hold onto them as you proceed further and deeper into the soap opera world and its studios.

During the game you will visit the studios of WWB, sign up with an agent, answer puzzling questions, and disarm a bomb while you are at it! To keep an eye on the time, you have a pocket watch on screen. Since some actions have to be performed either during daytime or nighttime, you are also provided a surprising way to turn night to day and vice versa. There is always the option of calling your pals on the phone for any hints required throughout the adventure, which is common for this whole series of games.

The Nancy Drew series also has an ingenious second chance option in the main menu, which, should you blow yourself up whilst disarming a bomb, per chance, kicks in automatically, giving you another chance to get it right. They



provide over 30 save game slots for those players wishing to utilize that many, but this is down to personal preference and strategy. There are some great puzzles throughout this adventure, playing with sound machines, maneuvering levers and the all important and seemingly obligatory timed section at the climax of the game.



Stay Tuned for Danger is played from a first-person perspective and features a mouse-driven interface. The game gives players the ability to choose aptitude or "spy levels". You can play as junior, senior, or master detective. If the junior detective level is chosen, game play and puzzles will be aimed at a junior developmental level and

degree of experience. The game gets more challenging as you ascend the ranks through to master. This option also means you have more opportunity and reason to replay the game, improving your strategies, rank, and experience as you progress.

Being honest, I wasn't really taken with the first game in this series. However, persevering through and getting to number 13, I have really begun to appreciate the Nancy Drew series and the types of puzzles and storylines they offer. I am now a big fan of the series and will no doubt be replaying several of the games, testing my stamina and skills at different levels.

There is a fabulous array of characters that you will meet over and over again in various Nancy Drew games. Stay Tuned for Danger offers many diverse locations to check out and a good range of puzzles to boot. The only downside I can find worth mentioning, however small, was that there are so many irrelevant doors! Perhaps I am just too curious, or downright nosy, but I wanted to investigate them all.



So all things considered, if you are after a point-and-click adventurer who appreciates some deciphering, investigating, and puzzle solving, Nancy Drew is your gal.

Developer: Her Interactive
Publisher: Her Interactive
Platform: PC
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: 1999
Grade: 79/100

Minimum System Requirements (PC):
 Windows® 95/98/ME/XP
 166 MHz Pentium® Processor
 16 MB RAM
 8 X CD-ROM Drive
 135 MB Hard Disk Space
 16-bit Color Graphics Video Card
 DirectX Compatible

Nancy Drew #3: Message in a Haunted Mansion

PC Review by Sweetpea (a.k.a. Gill Sandiford)

Message in a Haunted Mansion is the third installment in the series of Nancy Drew games developed by Her Interactive. Like the other titles in the series, Message in a Haunted Mansion is a first-person point-and-click adventure game based around detective skills and mysterious situations with related puzzles.



This time around, as super sleuth Nancy Drew, you are invited to investigate a series of mysterious accidents during the renovations in a spooky old Victorian mansion house in San Fransisco. Rose Green has put her everything into buying the decrepit multi-storey mansion, with thoughts of turning it back into the money-spinning bed and breakfast it was years ago. Somehow you have been enlisted to help and whilst matching parquet floor tiles and playing old instruments, you happen upon clues to the mystery of the accidents that have been plaguing the refurbishments. The other enlistees have their motives, as does Rose, but which one, if any, are behind the mysterious happenings in the house?



Could Charlie the handy man be handier in darker circles than we are led to believe, or is he just a nice guy with no closet skeletons? Or do we suspect that Abby? Our supposedly psychic friend definitely has something more than tarot cards up her mysterious sleeve. Surely Lois could not be the unsuspecting legal type and be hiding

only innocent pranks in his briefcase? Who knows for sure, except Nancy, as she wings her way through creepy corridors and hidden sectors in her relentless quest to detect the mystery and crime that is bound to be loitering in a dusty corner somewhere in the mansion.

With 2 aptitude levels, you can play the game as either a junior or senior detective, dependant upon your age or degree of experience. If junior level is chosen, you can access hints from your best friends via the telephone either in your room or on your person. The choice of difficulty also means you can replay the game under a different difficulty setting, either improving your strategy and memory or just enjoying the atmosphere and puzzles all over again.

The storyline in this particular game has a Chinese theme. The atmosphere is great and only gently spooky. Even those with delicate nerves that want to pook around in a good



mystery can enjoy Message in a Haunted Mansion without fear. There are several characters to interact with or glean for clues and plenty of rooms take in.



We are forewarned on the box that not all our suspects always tell the truth, so use your sleuthing powers of deduction to decipher the answers given and choose carefully which questions to ask. If you do not exercise caution, you may end up giving too much away to the culprit!

Time passes quite quickly throughout the game, so keep an eye on your pocket-watch, situated permanently on the left of your screen. Time can be changed by using the alarm clock in your bedroom and this is handy for times of trouble or if you feel at a loss. Check out everything, click, snoop, delve, spy, and question. The answers are there, you just have to find them. Listen attentively to the sound effects and leave no ornate panel untouched.

The mansion will soon become familiar to you, which is helpful for any timed segments. These segments are a finale characteristic of nearly all the Nancy Drew series, but if you do not like a rush, or pressure in your game, all is not lost. The timed games are not too hectic and you can take advantage of the second chance option that let's you try them as many times as you like.



The game comes on one disk, so no CD swapping will be required. Just like the second volume in the series, there are over 30 save game slots. The characters and graphics are 3D, with 360 degree interactive environments. Attention to details such as lip-synch is nicely done. With the promise of 20 hours of game play, you're in for a treat. No technical issues or glitches were found, so don your tweed and enjoy another game from the award winning Nancy Drew series.

Developer: Her Interactive
Publisher: Her Interactive
Platform: PC
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: 2000
Grade: 71/100

Minimum System Requirements (PC):

Windows® 95/98/ME/XP
 166 MHz Pentium® Processor
 16 MB RAM
 8 X CD-ROM Drive
 150 MB Hard Disk Space
 16-bit Color Graphics Video Card

Nancy Drew #4: Treasure in the Royal Tower

PC Review by Sweetpea (a.k.a. Gill Sandiford)

Nancy Drew is looking forward to a well earned skiing holiday at the Wisconsin Wickford Castle resort. The resort is owned by Christi Lane, a good friend of Nancy's father. It is the perfect choice for a relaxing break. What could possibly go wrong?



When you get to Wickford Castle, you find yourself quickly snowed in at the ski resort with time on your hands and a nose for a story. You are soon called upon to expose the legendary secret of the Castle resort. Just like Jessica Fletcher, wherever Nancy goes, mystery isn't far behind.

As you wander around the place you will stumble upon detours, dead-ended corridors, concealed rooms, and an odd bunch of characters, all of which add to the mystery and danger that hint at the castle's secret history. Whilst poking around and asking questions, it doesn't take long for you to realize that someone else is hot on the trail too and is desperate to beat you to the secrets of the castle.

We talk to Dexter Egan, who seems to manage the hotel reception and fix up any items in need of repair, unless he can get you to do it for him! He has an unusual air about him and your suspicions are aired further into the game. Then there is Jaques, the ski instructor, who is occupied with his own issues. We find that he is not quite who he is cracked up to be. Could the suspicious and nosy Lisa, a co-



guest and reporter, be seen as a threat to the case? Is she behind the mysterious occurrences? Does she know more than she has let on and is she really who she claims to be? Professor Hotchkiss is all too strange to be completely innocent, could she have knowledge worth imparting? Her timekeeping is certainly bizarre enough to raise at least some curiosity. The game presents many motives and paths to follow, but which is the correct one to choose?

Take in the scenery and enjoy the set up of the castle resort and its grounds, since there is so much to see and discover. Question your suspects carefully and

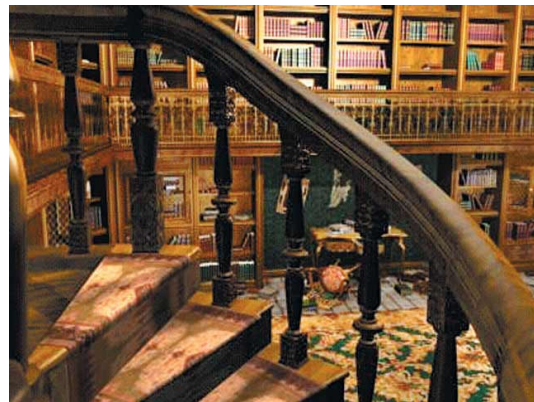
bear in mind that they can mislead you intentionally. Stay focused and take notes as you immerse yourself in another great mystery brought to you by Her Interactive.



This is a really enjoyable mystery that has you working machinery, learning history, and solving baffling puzzles, not to mention having a good old rummage through everyone's belongings in the search for pointers and clues. Your life will be in danger several times over while having to trek through snow in sub-zero temperatures. You will also have a chance to meet an interesting acquaintance who keeps rather unusual hours.

Treasure in the Royal tower is a point-and-click style adventure that has many attractions for the fans of no-pressure, no-fight mystery adventure games. It can be played at your own set pace and has over 30 save game slots available for use. There's the characteristic second chance option in case you make a wrong decision, which enables you to start again at the beginning of that segment without having to start again from your last save game. This can prevent some severe frustration as well as saving valuable time.

The puzzles consist of a variety of simple match-up games, logic maneuver puzzles, and research via books around the resort to connect clues and decipher the whereabouts of the hidden tower and the secrets held within. Glean hints from your suspects and follow up every clue, for everyone seems to have a motive and holds a secret in their past or present.



If I were you, I'd grab my thermos and make haste to play as Nancy Drew in this fab adventure from the award winning series. You can't go wrong with a game that features a diverse set of characters, great graphics, over twenty hours of interactive game play, and event great attention to details like lip syncing.

Developer: Her Interactive
Publisher: Her Interactive
Platform: PC
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: 2001
Grade: 79/100

Minimum System Requirements (PC):
 Windows® 95/98/ME/XP
 166 MHz Pentium® Processor
 16 MB RAM
 8 X CD-ROM Drive
 16-bit Color Graphics Video Card
 16-bit Sound Card

Evil Dead: Regeneration

PC Review by Ugur Sener

Twenty five years ago, before he had anything to do with the blockbuster Spider-Man movies, Sam Raimi directed a low-budget and zombie-filled b-movie called The Evil Dead. Starring Bruce Campbell as the chainsaw-wielding, wise-cracking zombie slayer with an attitude, the movie became incredibly successful. The original movie inspired two sequels in 1987 and 1993. Today the trilogy stands as a cult classic with a devout fan following. For playing the part of Ash Williams in the Evil Dead trilogy, Bruce Campbell is often hailed as “The King of B-Movies”.



The basic premise of Evil Dead is centered on a book called the Necronomicon Ex Mortis, or the Book of the Dead. Written with blood on human flesh, the book contains incantations with the power to awaken terrible evil. Naturally, reading the book causes no end of trouble in the movies. Ash’s own right hand becomes infected with the evil, requiring our hero to cut it off. While this might be a disadvantage for ordinary people, it can hardly stop the valiant Ash. The tough guy attaches a chainsaw where his hand used to be and proceeds to slaughtering miscellaneous zombies, or deadites to use the proper term in the Evil Dead universe.

Maintaining the spirit of the original movies, Evil Dead Regeneration gives action gamers a chance to take on the role of Ash to stop a brand new undead infestation. Ash is at an asylum at the beginning of the game. Unbeknownst to our hero, Vladimir Reinhard, the head doctor at the asylum, has been conducting vile experiments with the Necronomicon. Yet Reinhard lacks the knowledge to truly understand the inner workings of the book. Things go horribly wrong and it is naturally up to Ash to save the day.



Ash starts the game with nothing but a simple pistol. Thankfully, it won’t be long before he finds his trusty chainsaw and double-barreled shotgun. Wielding the boomstick and the chainsaw, Ash is quite a deadly adversary. He never runs out of ammunition and he is fully capable of taking on a dozen deadites without breaking a sweat. In Evil Dead Regeneration, most of the game play

consists of defeating one roomful of undead creatures after another. You will encounter many incarnations of the generic deadite. However, the game does have a couple of features that provide diversity and keep the action interesting.



Upon completing the first level after the tutorial, Ash unwillingly teams up with a dwarf half-deadite. Ash's sidekick Sam is a victim of Reinhard's early experiments. The half-deadite has learned many of the Necronomicon's secrets during these experiments. His understanding of the evil incantations will be instrumental in Ash's quest to stop Reinhard. While the experiments have disfigured Sam, they have also given him a very unique talent. Sam cannot be permanently killed. When he is hurt in combat, his life energy automatically regenerates. If he receives enough damage to

be slain, he comes back to life in just a few seconds. The game makes great use of this dynamic. Throughout the adventure, there will be a number of places Ash cannot access alone. Sometimes the path is blocked and Sam has to somehow die in a horrible way to open it. At other times, there is only a small opening Ash cannot pass through. Sam has to crawl in first and figure out a way to help Ash follow. Sam also helps in battle by tackling a few enemies on his own. More importantly, Ash can literally kick Sam into enemies, which results in the half-deadite grappling the opponent. While the monster is struggling with Sam, he or she is left defenseless against Ash's attacks.

Ash's ability to wield two weapons at the same time makes for interesting game play reminiscent of Dante fighting with his guns and sword in the Devil May Cry series. The hero can keep enemies at bay with his powerful shotgun and stay outside of their reach by quickly moving around the battlefield. Alternately, he can just as easily engage in melee combat with his effective chainsaw attacks. Ash has a number of combos that involve pressing the two attack buttons in different sequences. While the basic attacks are more than enough to get through the game, the combos allow Ash to really bring pain to the deadites.

Ash also manufactures a number of different weapons during the course of his journey that diversify the basic combat. At key points during the game, Ash runs into remarkably useless looking piles of junk. Yet the ever-talented hero manages to put together remarkable equipment using these piles. Besides his regular shotgun,



pistol, and chainsaw, Ash makes a small rocket launcher, a devastating harpoon gun, and a flame thrower. The harpoon gun in particular is extremely useful. Ash can use it to pull enemies close to him, which makes it easy to fight opponents attacking you from rooftops. And putting a shotgun bullet into zombies getting yanked towards you at top speed is a highly effective method of undead cleansing.

While Evil Dead Regeneration is an action game at its core and combat makes up the majority of game play time, some amount of exploration and basic puzzle solving is required. Players will often have to take a careful look at their surroundings to determine how to access certain areas. The parts of the game where you control Sam will especially put your path finding skills to test. There are a handful of boss fights that will require some thinking to figure out how you can overcome the challenge. The solutions will often be immediately obvious, however Evil Dead Regeneration certainly benefits from having more to the game than an endless slaughter of deadites.



Unfortunately, the game does suffer from a series of technical problems that seriously hinder the experience. Playing through the PC version of the game, you are almost assured to take at least one unsolicited trip back to your desktop with a nasty error message on your screen. Sometimes the game will seem to load successfully only to have you realize that the controls are locked, leaving you unable to move. With Ash stuck in place, you will have no choice but to reset the game. And a personal favorite, once after loading the game during the final boss



fight, Ash was completely impervious to damage, making what is supposed to be the last big challenge of the game a complete joke! On top of these three huge glaring problems encountered on the PC version, the game has a few minor clipping issues. Finally, on rare occasions the harpoon gun seems to have problems getting to the enemies it should be able to reach. None of the technical problems occur very often. However, there is still a solid chance that you will encounter each of them during the short game. The game should have been released in a much more stable state.

Evil Dead Regeneration also suffers from a degree of repetitiveness in level design. Ash's journey involves finding and sealing a series of portals that open up when Reinhard unleashes the power of the Necronomicon. Blocking the way

to each of these portals is a special creature Ash cannot defeat by normal means. Instead, he has to find three spirits and feed them to the creature. The spirits are trapped inside eggs Ash will have to locate. Once the egg is destroyed, Sam has to absorb the spirit that was trapped within. Ash then has to watch over Sam as he rushes back to the gatekeeper creature. The sequence ends as Ash kicks Sam into the creature's mouth to feed it. Upon repeating the process three times, the creature falls asleep. Sam and Ash can literally walk through the creature at this point to get to the portal. Now in a game based on the Evil Dead movies, there is nothing wrong with how ridiculous and downright silly all of this sounds. It is over-the-top in a way that is very fitting for the Evil Dead setting. However, having to essentially repeat the same process of feeding different gatekeepers numerous times throughout the game does begin to get old before reaching the end. Similarly, the parts of the game where you control Sam could have used a little more diversity in terms of the challenges. Even the initially hilarious moments where Sam dies in a cut scene recur a few too many times. Even though the levels have different settings and slightly different challenges, a little more diversity in the way players have to go through them would have been welcome.

Evil Dead Regeneration delivers a solid action gaming experience that will easily appeal to the fans of the movies. The game very effectively captures and recreates the essence of the movies. Evil Dead Regeneration is full of excellent Bruce Campbell one-liners that will make the fans smile. The interaction between Ash and Sam throughout the game is very amusing and the voice work is excellent. Even gamers who have never seen the movies might appreciate over-the-top action. The graphics may not be the most fabulous you have seen, but they do get the job done. However, considerable technical problems take away from the experience. And even though the game is short, some of the repetitive elements might make you happy when it is finally over. If you are looking for an opportunity to slaughter a horde of zombies and like the Evil Dead setting, consider giving Evil Dead Regeneration a try. Just make sure you go in expecting to run into some issues.



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Developer: Cranky Pants Games
Publisher: THQ
Platform: PC; PS2; Xbox
Genre: Action
Release Date: September 2005
Grade: 76/100

Minimum System Requirements (PC):
 Windows® 98/2000/ME/XP
 Intel Pentium® III 800 MHz
 256 MB RAM
 32 MB GeForce 2 Video Card
 2 GB Free Hard Drive Space
 4X CD-ROM Ddrive
 DirectX 9.0c Compatible Sound Card

XIII

Xbox Review by H. Paul Haigh

"As we acquire more knowledge, things do not become more comprehensible but more mysterious."
 ~ Albert Schweitzer

In a word, AWESOME! But that's been said before, so let me embellish a bit. Based on a Belgian comic series, XIII is a first person shooter that uses cell-shaded graphics giving the game a well-rendered comic-book appearance and feel. You even see sound words like "Rata-tat-tat", "Bam", "Boom" and the "Click" of enemy soldiers' feet patrolling nearby. Some might say, "this is just another first-person shooter..." but having played quite a few games in this genre, I found XIII to be more enjoyable than most. "Why is it so great?" That is, of course, the ever burning question. There is so much good to say, it is hard to choose where to start.



First, and foremost is the cell-shaded graphics, giving the game a comic book appearance. Relatively rare in the gaming world, this concept can be hard to describe. The images appear drawn and colored, many scenes are boxed and inset upon one another like you would find in the funny pages of your local periodical. The end result is that you feel as though you are playing this game from within the realm of a comic book. However, you quickly find yourself breaking away from the two-dimensional confines of a printed page, and leaping into a three-dimensional comic saga with a spectacular storyline.



Second, I have to comment on the story itself. Your character awakens without knowing who he is or what he's done, stricken with amnesia. Whatever he did in his former life, it must have been significant; because the whole world is instantly hell-bent on killing him. The instant sense of fear and paranoia creates a narrative hook that reels you into the game from the moment it begins. Slowly, the scenario unfolds, revealing a plot as deep and mysterious as the code name of your character, XIII. Each stage or level draws you into the next, and when you think you have it all figured out - or the game is almost done - you get another surprise; and many more hours of game play follow.

The only bad thing I can say about the game is the lack of replay value. A game like this would never leave my shelf if it had a random level generator. Playing head-to-head with other gamers through multiplayer was fun, but only for a brief

time. There was nothing new or amazing that set this game apart from other first-person shooters that feature multiplayer options.

Next, are the unique aspects of this game - rare or unheard of in other FPS titles. A novel feature is the ability to pick up a variety of every-day objects and turn them into both melee and missile weapons. Drink bottles, ashtrays, candy dishes, brooms and all manner of mundane items strewn about the landscape can be employed with deadly force. This feature comes to be very handy when ammo is running low.

Without a doubt, one of the most amazing features of the game is the comic-strip headshot. Careful aim with a throwing knife or a silent but deadly zoomed crossbow bolt to the head produced instant gratification, as the impact sequence was displayed in three consecutive inset still shots. Bam-bam-bam! Even the sound effects are riveting. Walk up to your slain opponent, and you'll even find the shaft of the crossbow bolt sticking out, right where you hit him (or her). Gruesome, yes, a little, but done with class - and less gory than you might expect from the description. Perhaps this was a result of the cell-shading, but the blood seemed less graphic in this game than others.



Lastly, there are a handful of skills you learn (or should I say remember) as your amnesia slowly clears. The use of stealth is a must in this game, as is lock picking. Along the way, you also remember how adept you are with using two weapons at the same time. Although firing two weapons can be a bit wasteful when it comes to ammo, it can be useful effectively against a crowd.

XIII was a pleasant respite from the constant barrage of repetitive FPS games on the market today. It was quick and easy to learn, and experimenting with the many weapons was pleasant. (The bazooka in particular rocks in XIII, but then again, doesn't the bazooka always rock in these games?) XIII manages to escape the restrictive confines of its genre and explode onto the XBOX with profound impact. You **MUST** play this game. Buy it, trade for it, or steal it --- whatever it takes, but get this game and play it **TODAY**.

Key moment of the game: Swinging from the church bell picking off white-hood wearing bad guys with the trusty silent-but-deadly scoped crossbow.

<p>Developer: Ubisoft Publisher: Ubisoft Platform: PC; PS2; Xbox; GameCube Genre: FPS Release Date: November 2003 Grade: 90/100</p>	<p>Minimum System Requirements (PC): Windows® 98/2000/ME/XP Intel Pentium® III 700 MHz 128 MB RAM 120 MB Hard Disk Space 32 MB Video Card</p>
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Pariah

PC Review by Ugur Sener

If there is one thing any video game should provide, it is entertainment. By telling a good story, challenging players intellectually, offering solid game play mechanics, or featuring good level design any game should be expected to deliver an enjoyable experience. Unfortunately, between its bland environments, lack of a concrete plotline, and some poorly implemented game play elements, Pariah ultimately fails to satisfy players as an entertaining first-person shooter experience.



The game begins on board an aircraft with a rather unique cargo. Dr. Jack Mason is overseeing the delivery of a quarantined patient in cryogenic sleep. The ship is attacked and forced to crash land on the vast open fields that is the world of Pariah. Only Dr. Mason, the patient Karina, and one other crew member survive the crash. Waking from her cryogenic sleep, Karina runs off and disappears. As a band of thugs approach the crash site, it is up to the good doctor to find Karina and complete the mission.



Players will quickly find out that randomly disappearing is quite a hobby for Karina. Too many times in the game you will locate her, talk to her for a moment, only to have her captured or take off in some new random direction. There is some interesting background story about a terrible war engulfing all of mankind. Very early in the game, Dr. Mason gets infected by the virus Karina is carrying, which puts an interesting spin on the mission. The exact nature of

the disease is intriguing and the game does have a fairly nice plot twist towards the end. Yet Pariah simply does not mold these individual elements into a concrete and coherent plot.

Players are never provided as much information as they should know about their mission. Objectives are not always clear. Sometimes you will not know quite why Mason has to infiltrate a certain location until you actually do it. The background history is never properly explained. The cut scenes that are supposed to propel

the story onward seem forced and incomplete. It seems as though the developers tried very hard to come up with ways to put Karina and Mason together to advance the plot but make sure they were separated during the actual levels. You'll know there are the makings of a decent plot in Pariah. Yet it is neither communicated effectively nor implemented successfully to work with a first-person shooter game.



The majority of the levels in Pariah are outdoors and cover considerably large amounts of terrain. The beautiful graphics do make these environments pleasing to the eye. However, the open areas often feel all too empty and lacking in diversity. Jack does occasionally have to find some kind of switch to open a door or deactivate a security system, but for the most part he will be moving along a linear path and gunning down miscellaneous nameless

enemies on the way. Some of Pariah's levels simply lack creativity and degenerate into tedious chores. It feels as though some sections of the game were included with the sole purpose of adding game play time.

To Pariah's credit, the game does have a handful of strong moments. During two levels of the game, Jack has to infiltrate a prison compound while a riot is in progress. Sneaking around the raging battle without drawing too much fire on Jack is greatly entertaining. The two boss fights towards the end of the game make a nice break from the regular action. The gunfights do occasionally become quite engaging and pleasantly challenging. But the brief spurts of excitement hardly make up for the inordinate amounts of tedium. By the time you complete the game, you will most likely be very glad that Pariah is over and the game was not any longer.

The health level system in Pariah will be familiar to Halo players. Dr. Mason's current health level is indicated by squares that appear on the upper left side of the screen. Each time Jack is hit, a portion of the health in one of the boxes is diminished. If Jack manages to stay away from the action and not take any more damage for a few seconds, the lost health is automatically regenerated. However, if the doctor takes enough hits to completely empty one of the boxes, he



has to use a healing tool to recover the lost health. The healing tool takes a few seconds to use and Jack will be drowsy for a brief moment after injecting a dose. Thus it is somewhat difficult to use the tool in the heat of battle.



Pariah features an array of guns that will be familiar to fans of first-person shooters. There is the standard machine gun, the modernized equivalent of a shotgun, and the obligatory grenade and rocket launchers. While the weapons themselves may not be exceptionally unique, the game implements a great upgrade system that gives Pariah a distinct touch. Dr. Mason will find weapon energy cores distributed across the game's 18 levels. These energy cores can be used on weapons to make

them more powerful and give them additional abilities. For instance, the first upgrade on the machine gun increases the rate of fire while the second one reduced recoil. The grenade launcher can be upgraded to enable remote detonation whereas the rocket launcher can be enhanced to fire heat seeking missiles. Perhaps the most useful upgrades are the ones available for the healing tool. The second and third upgrades permanently increase Jack's maximum health level, which is tremendously helpful throughout the game. Players will have to come up with a strategy and choose what weapons they want to upgrade carefully to become more effective in combat. The weapon energy core system is one of the best features of Pariah.

The enemy AI on the other hand does not fare quite as well. Your opponents will either charge at you directly or stand still while shooting from behind cover. They never show any degree of true organization and only pose a threat when they rush at you in large numbers. Throughout the majority of the game, Jack can just rely on taking out enemies from a distance.

The enemies are also great at killing off one another. Especially the opponents with rocket launchers will frequently misfire, killing themselves as well as nearby allies. The opponents with grenade launchers are not much better either. The enemies are also incapable of noticing a grenade landing right next to them. They will not make an attempt to move away and happily accept being blown into pieces.



During a few parts of the game, Dr. Mason will be required to operate vehicles. This is yet another feature of the game that is badly implemented. While the regular controls are quite smooth and do not have any problems, the vehicles handle terribly and prove to be a great nuisance. It is difficult to aim with the guns mounted on the vehicles and they are destroyed all too easily. Your odds might actually be better if you just let Dr. Mason proceed on foot rather than driving anything.

In the end, Pariah simply does not deliver enough of an entertaining and engaging gaming experience. The graphics are great, the game is very stable, the weapon upgrades are a nice touch, and the action does occasionally get interesting. But none of these features are enough to make up for the glaring problems with the storyline and the tedious levels. The game does not manage to create the kind of atmosphere that will drive you forward and make you want to keep playing until you reach the end. Pariah tries to accomplish a great deal, but ultimately falls short of the mark. The game can only be recommended to fervent first-person shooter fans that are in serious need of new content.

The final grade is 69/100.



Developer: Digital Extremes
Publisher: Groove Games
Platform: PC; Xbox
Genre: FPS
Release Date: May 2005
Grade: 69/100

Minimum System Requirements (PC):
 Windows® 98/2000/ME/XP
 Intel Pentium® 1.4 GHz
 256 MB RAM
 2.5 GB Hard Disk Space
 Direct X 8.x Compatible 32 MB Video Card
 Direct X 8.x Compatible Sound Card
 4X CD ROM Drive

Mercenaries: Playground of Destruction

PS2 Review by Cat

Overview:

Mercenaries is set in the near future and inspired by actual events. You take on the role of one of three mercenaries that work for a company called Executive Operations (ExOps). The first one is Chris Jacobs, who has been with the company for five years. The next one is Jennifer Mui, who has been with ExOps for seven years running. Mattias Nilsson, the third mercenary, is new to the job, but no one doubts his skills. Upon choosing a mercenary, you proceed to blast the heck out of everything you run across from a third person perspective.



After choosing your Merc, you're put right into the game, on your way to Korea. Following a rough landing in your armored car, you drive off towards enemy blockades, heading for the Allies base. When you reach the destination, you are given a mission to catch one of the 'cards'. There are 52 men on the most wanted list. With the list modeled after a deck of cards, you start to find the wanted criminals in each set, suit by suit, making your way up to the aces. The ultimate goal might be to 'catch them all', but there are no yellow rodents running around, piping up, "Pika, pika!"

Now, the most appealing thing about Mercenaries is that you don't necessarily have to do *anything*. You can just run around for hours on end, shooting up North Koreans with their own guns, running them down with their own cars, and blowing things up with whatever explosives you happen to find, whether it be grenades or the nifty C4 bombs. (Which explode rather nicely.) The environments are massive, there's much to explore and all kinds of bonuses to find, hidden behind rocks, buildings, or even restricted territory.



If you want to do missions, there are four factions you can play under. Keep in mind, that these factions hardly ever work with each other. In fact under the covers they often try to undermine the efforts one another. They even occasionally engage in open conflict. There's the Allies, your basic military do-gooders. There's the Chinese, a respectable, powerful army, but they are not trustworthy. They will happily blame

things on you to clear their own names. South Korea, the third faction, is busy fighting its Northern half, and is desperate to heal its broken country. And the final faction is the Russian Mob. Whether or not it is ethical to work for them is beside the point. Cash is cash, isn't it? You're a Merc, after all.



The factions and the missions are not all there is to the game. In Mercenaries, if you can see it, you can hijack it, drive it, crash it, and blow it up. There are cars, jeeps, trucks, tanks and helicopters. There is also a multitude of guns you can choose. The selection of guns includes sub-machineguns, automatic rifles, shotguns, silenced weapons, sniper rifles, and explosives such as grenades, C4, and RPG's ("Rocket" Propelled Grenades). They're just lying around in

enemy camps, waiting for *you*. Of course the North Koreans didn't expect you to sneak up and grab that RPG while they weren't looking... And, once you get on the Mafia's good side, they'll give you access to their website, and you can just order the weapons. They even deliver promptly.

Everything is at a whim. The environments are also non-scripted, so it's up to you how you want to get things done. Explosives? Recon? Call in an air-strike, wipe them all out? It's all up to you, your reputation and morals... and your thickening wad of cash.

Graphics:

The graphics are rather appealing. The character models are very slick. As far as vehicles are concerned, there's a lot of attention to detail, and they are very accurate.

Texturing on everything is good and believable. The weather effects add a nice touch to the game. For instance, you take a nice stroll on the countryside, and then things get a little bit dark. A flash of lightning, boom of thunder, it starts to rain. Afterwards, it may be foggy. My favorite effect though is explosions. Nothing satisfies me more than making things go boom, start fires everywhere and get debris landing all over the place. **[Editorial Note:** Our readers would be well advised to stay away from the highly disturbed author of this



review. Adventure Lantern will not be accountable for any damages you might sustain from spontaneous explosions if you do not heed our warning.] When buildings explode, from a distance they fall down and collapse rather believably.

Overall, Mercenaries gets high marks for keeping the graphics where they don't burn ones eyes after staring at them for hours, while still keeping the rest of the game full and exciting.

Sound:

Maybe it's just me, but I love it when things go "BOOM" [**Editorial note:** Please refer to the warning earlier in this review]. And that sound effect is pretty accurate, down to the car coming down from 50 ft in the air, landing on the ground and bouncing a few times before settling. There are tons of sound effects, from gun fire to things breaking and falling, all sorts of aircraft noises, bombs dropping, exploding, people shouting out in different languages. And, of course, the often amusing quips and quotes from your Merc, like that time when I ran out of ammo... Jenn clearly made a face in her annoyance at being shot at (at least in my imagination) and said, "I can throw my shoe at him, if you want."



The music sets the scene so well that, sometimes I had to stop myself and listen for it. Tracks zip from ambient noise to combat music in the midst of gun fire. Different music is used for different situations, carefully orchestrated to set the mood. The menu music, though I will say well done, gets repetitive, and if I leave my couch for a time, I always make sure to turn down the audio for a while.



Conclusion:

Mercenaries is a very addictive game and it is not hard to get hooked on it very quickly. I've found it to be a very enjoyable experience for any kind of player, hardcore or casual. Aside from a few minor things with some of the physics, it's an overall good game.

Developer: Pandemic
Publisher: Lucas Arts
Platform: PS2; Xbox
Genre: Action
Release Date: January 2005
Grade: 95/100

Fantastic Four

PC Review by Ugur Sener

It all starts as an innocent space expedition. The ingenious scientist Reed Richards assembles a team to study cosmic radiation at a space station. Funded by Victor Von Doom, the mission is expected to provide extensive research data, leading to a better understanding of cosmic energy. Yet in a comic book universe, things hardly ever go as planned. The team is exposed to excessive amounts of cosmic radiation. The energy changes Richards and his teammates, evolving their DNA into something more than human. Upon returning to earth, Reed and his friends realize that they possess incredible powers. They unite as a team of super heroes and become the Fantastic Four. Victor Von Doom on the other hand, chooses a much darker path, eventually turning into Fantastic Four's arch nemesis Dr. Doom.



Activision brings us the obligatory video game inspired by the Fantastic Four movie that hit the theaters in the summer of 2005. Loosely following the story of the movie, the game offers players a chance to control all four members of the super hero team through a series of straightforward action-heavy levels. Unfortunately, as it is presented in the game, the story is lacking in coherence and fails to immerse players into the world of Fantastic Four. In order to easily follow the core storyline, players are just about expected to have seen the movie.



The video game adaptation does take some understandable liberties with the movie's storyline. Certain sections are expanded to include more fights and challenges for the team. The members of Fantastic Four also travel to a series of different locations and face a host of villains from the comic books.

This provides additional content for the game. Fans of the comic books that created the Fantastic Four might appreciate seeing these classic villains. Unfortunately, the vast majority of them are not given any kind of personality in the game. All too often they seem like common thugs with fancy names,

oversized health bars, and miscellaneous super powers. The game could have made much better use of the vast amount of source material provided by the many issues of Fantastic Four published by Marvel Comics.



In classic beat-'em-up style, the game play primarily consists of clearing one room full of bad guys after another. Each character is equipped with a light attack and a heavy attack. Combos can be executed by pressing the light and heavy attack buttons in various sequences. The team members also have cosmic attacks.

However, the use of these special moves depletes your character's available energy. Lost energy or life points are regained by absorbing the blue and green orbs released by smashing objects or defeating enemies. Progressing through the game, players will earn points. These points can be used to upgrade the attacks available to each team member or unlock bonus materials such as interviews, biographies, or comic book covers.

Fantastic Four spans over a relatively few number of levels divided into smaller sections. The game does require some minor exploration. Players will encounter a few very simple puzzles and a small number of jumping sequences. Each character has a unique kind of mini-game encountered several times throughout the levels. Reed's mini-game involves hacking into various computer systems by solving simple puzzles. Sue, Johnny, and Ben have simpler mini-games involving rapidly tapping buttons or revolving the analog stick on the console version of the game. The mini-games and the puzzles serve as a nice break from the constant action. Fantastic Four's entertaining boss battles and the frequent mini-bosses spread throughout the levels also go a long way towards keeping the game from becoming monotonous.

All four of the characters are not always available to control. The vast majority of the levels have to be completed by one or two members of the team. Payers do not get to choose which characters participate in a given level. However, when more than one team member is present, the game does allow players to switch characters. In fact, during some parts of the game, you will have to switch characters to overcome various challenges in the correct sequence. It is also possible to play Fantastic Four in a cooperative mode with another player.



Each member of the team has different combos and cosmic attacks making use of their individual super powers. Reed Richards or Mr. Fantastic has the ability to reshape and tremendously stretch his body. Thus, his attacks typically involve Reed turning his hands into a hammer or huge fist. He can get to enemies that are outside Sue or Ben's reach. As implied by her codename, The Invisible Woman, Susan Storm has the ability to turn herself invisible and sneak up to enemies or get past alarm systems. She can also move objects with her telekinetic powers, create protective energy shields, or release powerful bursts energy to wreak havoc on her enemies. Susan's brother Johnny Storm can literally set himself on fire, becoming the Human Torch. In this state, Johnny can fly, create fireballs, or conjure walls of flame. The powerhouse of the team, Ben Grimm possesses an incredible amount of raw strength. Able to tear through walls and rip his enemies into pieces, Ben's skin is a thick layer of rock, making him nearly impervious to damage.



While it is certainly nice to have access to a wide variety distinct super powers and special attacks, the team members do not feel all that different to control. The basic light and heavy attack combos will help you get past most situations. While these attacks might visually look different for each character, they essentially serve the same purpose. Even the super powered cosmic attacks carry very noticeable similarities. Each team member can essentially launch an attack to inflict heavy damage on a single enemy or knock back a group of enemies. The unique nature of each character's super powers does not factor into actual game play as much as it could. For instance, when you can just as easily charge head on and punch your enemies into the ground, there is little use in turning Sue invisible and sneaking behind your adversaries for a stealth attack. When Johnny can effectively take out his opponents with his punches and kicks,

it is not necessary to have him stand back and send out fireballs. The special powers certainly do help in some situations, but the game should have given players more creative opportunities to use those powers to overcome unique challenges.

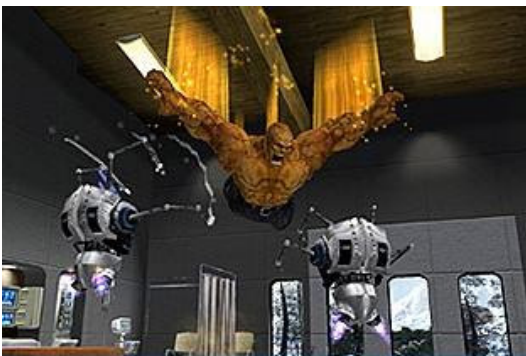
A number of technical



problems do hurt the game play experience in Fantastic Four. The hit detection does not always seem to be as accurate as it should be. Enemies occasionally clip through walls or get stuck at corners. The turn angles for the characters are too wide and the controls do not feel very smooth. There is some choppiness in certain character animations. The game occasionally takes a noticeable delay to register that you have pressed a button to interact with a hotspot. The graphics are not exactly top notch either. Finally, when more than one character is available in a level, the AI controlled characters will occasionally get in your way, forcing you to jump over them. While none of these technical issues are individually large enough to diminish the entertainment value of the game, collectively they significantly take away from the experience.

Overall, Fantastic Four feels like just another half-baked attempt at making a game based on a movie. The story fails to capture the spirit of the film or the comics. The game does not allow players to explore the full potential of each character and offer enough diversity in the implementation of their super powers. Minor technical glitches become frustrating as you proceed through the levels. It is hard to recommend Fantastic Four to anyone except for those who especially enjoy the comic books or the movie. Given all its problems, the relatively short game is much better suited for a rental than a purchase. There are countless other games out there that will make a better addition to your game collection than Fantastic Four.

The final grade is 65/100.

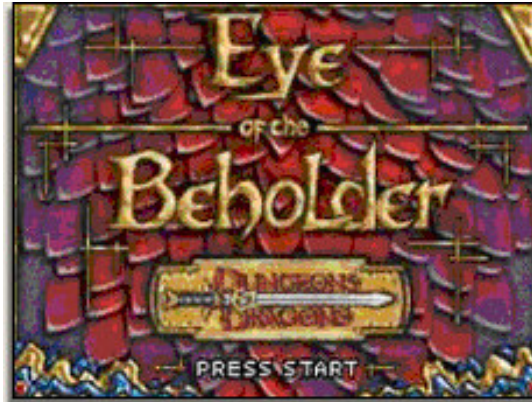


Developer: Activision
Publisher: Activision
Platform: PC; PS2; GameCube; Xbox
Genre: Action
Release Date: July 2005
Grade: 65/100

Minimum System Requirements (PC):
 Windows® 98/2000/ME/XP
 Intel Pentium® III 800 MHz
 256 MB RAM
 3.5 GB Hard Disk Space
 Direct X 9.0c Compatible 32 MB Video Card
 Direct X 9.0c Compatible Sound Card
 4X CD ROM Drive

Dungeons & Dragons: Eye of the Beholder

GBA Review by H. Paul Haigh



*"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Based on D&D's Forgotten Realms setting, Eye of the Beholder for Game Boy Advance can keep you busy for hours, days, weeks, and in my case, months. Using a first-person perspective, you command a party of adventurers through a massive multi-leveled labyrinth. Your hearty crew has hundreds of traps to uncover, puzzles to solve, secret passages to find, and monsters to defeat.

As with all spelunking adventures, the constant treasure trove of new items, armor, and weapons, will keep you constantly upgrading your equipment and swapping items between members of your party. Inventory control is simple and easy to navigate, which is important since you do so much of it. Equipping, un-equipping, and swapping items from one party member to another is also a breeze.

A handy feature is the ability to change the order in which your group walks or stands in combat; like putting the spell casters in the back and the fighters up front, for instance. Combatants are numerous and they will catch you unaware, so be ready for unexpected battles around corners, down corridors, in ambush locations, and wide-open caverns.

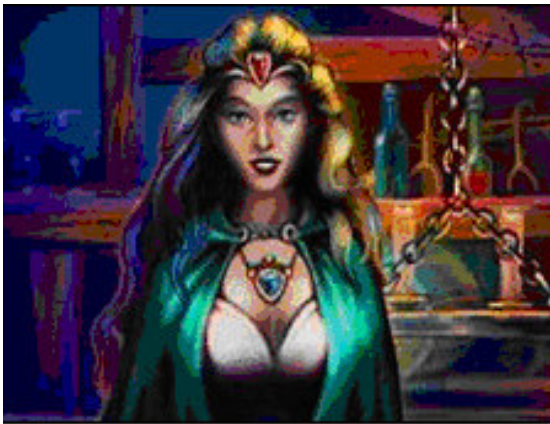


The realistic Dungeons & Dragons 3rd Edition rules and game mechanics outweigh the limited graphic appeal. The mazes of the dungeon are navigated in first person perspective. The turn-based

strategic battles are waged from an isometric overhead view. Strategy will play a huge part in each battle, from start to end. Just like the classic D&D PC games of old, you move your characters one at a time, firing ranged weapons, spells, using potions, scrolls, and magic items – or moving in close for a melee.

Be ready for a long and very difficult adventure. Secret passages are numerous and sometimes impossible to find without luck. Instead of logic or reason, finding these hidden passages often requires the trial-and-error approach. Walk into solid walls and eventually you'll walk straight through one - as if it were an illusion. This gets rather tedious and frustrating.

All in all, this game conforms to the traditional role-playing adventure style, and the classic D&D ruleset. For the die-hard strategist, and D&D enthusiast, this game will make a hearty addition to your gaming repertoire. If you're looking for a quick and simple RPG however, move on, because this baby takes a long time, and a patient person to master.



I must slide this selection into the buy cheap or used category. Rental won't work – because it takes too long to play and complete this game. Buy it in a bargain bin, used, or trade for it online. This way you have plenty of time to enjoy the depth and strategy.

Key moment of the game: Big nasty spiders sneaking up behind me, catching my spell casters out of position. My first lightening bolt went “wild” and nearly killed my entire party.

Final Score: 77 out of 100

Developer: Pronto Games
Publisher: Atari
Platform: GBA
Genre: RPG
Release Date: November 2002
Grade: 77/100

Marble Blast Ultra

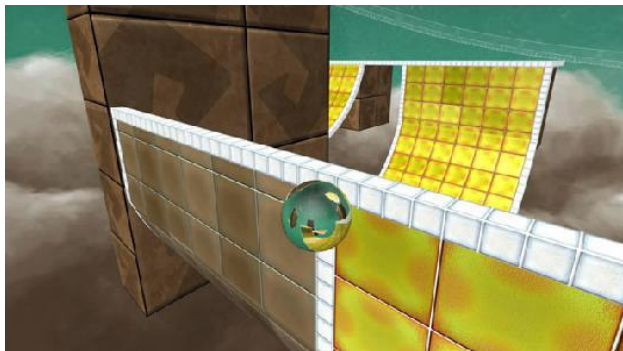
Xbox 360 Review by Ugur Sener

You bring the marble charging down the hill and barely reduce your speed enough to take the sharp turn. As the marble almost flies off the edge, your teeth are clenched and your palms are sweating. There is not a second to lose. You have to get to the exit! You tumble across the platform until you get to the next obstacle.



The surface is covered with ice. To make things worse, there are gaps along the platform. You hold the controller ever tighter and slowly navigate. As your fingers leave a permanent imprint on the controller, you reach the exit a full five seconds under the par time. With a triumphant grin on your face, you know it is time to do it all over again in the next level!

Garage Games brings Marble Blast series to the Xbox 360 platform with Marble Blast Ultra. The game is built around an incredibly simple core concept. Your primary objective in each level is to roll your marble from the starting point to the exit, sometimes collecting gems along the way. Yet between the various obstacles you will encounter, large number of single-player levels, and a solid multiplayer component, the game can easily become rather addictive. Marble Blast Ultra is the kind of game you can sit down to play for five minutes and wonder where the past few hours went when you finally stop.



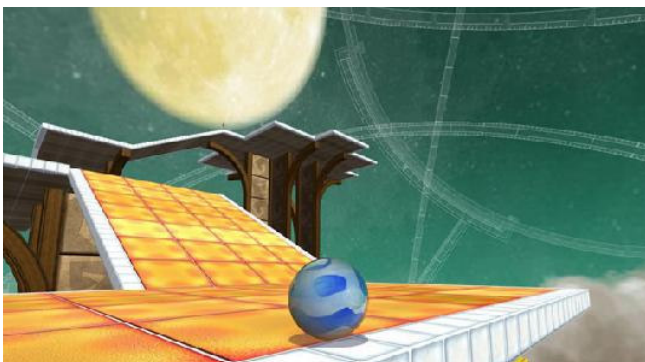
The control structure in Marble Blast Ultra is relatively simple. You move the marble with the left analog stick. The right analog stick is used to adjust the camera. You can use the jump button to help your marble go over platforms. When your marble is charged up, you can also release an energy blast to jump higher. A few different

types of power-ups, such as the super jump or the super speed, are available at each level and can be used with the touch of a button. Getting accustomed to the basic controls should be fairly simple. However, gaining mastery of all the mechanics associated with controlling your marble will take a while. You will have to experiment with the behavior of the marble at different speeds, on different surfaces, or soaring through the air.

The game offers an impressive 60 single-player levels. It is possible to simply play through each level and get to the exit. But the real challenge comes from competing against the par time set for each level. The levels are divided into three different categories. The 20 beginner levels are extremely easy and for the most part intended to teach you how to play the game. The intermediate levels are remarkably more challenging, but most players should still be able to get past them under the par time after a few tries. The advanced levels on the other hand can be extremely difficult and will likely have you pulling your hair. They have many tough jumps, narrow platforms, and infuriating obstacles to put your dexterity to test. You might occasionally find yourself filled with strange desires to smash your controller through your TV or stomp on your newly purchased Xbox 360.



The types of challenges in Marble Blast Ultra include varying surfaces, gravity modifiers, narrow platforms, and jumping sequences. Icy surfaces make the marble's behavior quite erratic and can demand a great degree of control. Fans along the walls blow strong currents of air to knock you off the edge. Gravity modifiers disorient you as you have to adjust to moving on what was the side wall a second ago. Sometimes you will have to charge down a hill at top speed to fly halfway across the level while carefully adjusting your landing. At other times you have to keep your marble almost completely still as you adjust for the perfect angle to jump to a nearby ledge. The game will also have you occasionally looking all around maze-like levels to find carefully hidden gems in faraway corners. Overall, there is a good diversity to the game play as you proceed through the various levels.



Unfortunately, the diversity in the layout of the levels does not expand to the actual coloring and tile sets available. Even though the actual challenges are different, the similar look of each level does begin to make them feel rather bland as you proceed through the game. Marble Blast Ultra could have greatly benefited

from several different environment styles. Implementation of different themes, a larger number of tile types, and perhaps richer backgrounds could have enriched the gaming experience. While the levels in Marble Blast Ultra do look fairly

pleasant, they lack the extra spark and stylish diversity that would have given the game a better atmosphere.

A second problem that can occasionally take away from the gaming experience is the camera. The camera does a fairly good job of following the marble for the most part. However, there are certain areas where players will be rather limited in the adjustments they can make and it becomes rather difficult to get a good view. There are also times where you will either need to make a quick adjustment to the camera or change the direction you are pushing the analog stick because the game changes the perspective from which you are viewing the action. Trying to make these kinds of adjustments, you will occasionally make mistakes and end up having to replay the section. Thankfully, the camera problems are not too frequent to seriously detract from the overall experience.



Overall, Marble Blast Ultra makes for an entertaining arcade game. It can be played in short bursts since completing any given level does not take a great deal of time. Yet the addictive game play can end up keeping you in front of the TV. There is enough content to make the game last for a long time. Players can also engage in the multiplayer components of the game and compete against others through Xbox Live. The game does lack the kind of atmosphere and style that would have taken it to the next level and made it a truly great experience. But there definitely is fun to be had in traversing the 60 levels with your bold and fearless marble. As technology advances with each passing day, titles like Marble Blast Ultra prove there is still plenty of room for classic arcade gaming.

The final grade is 76/100

Developer: Garage Games
Publisher: Garage Games
Platform: Xbox 360
Genre: Arcade
Release Date: January 2006
Grade: 76/100

Scratches - Walkthrough

Written by Len Green

Foreword

- {A} This walkthrough describes ALL the actions which you must take in order to succeed, together with some (though not all) which are not essential to completing the game. However, please don't use this walkthrough unless you absolutely have to. Some aspects which are not absolutely imperative have been omitted. A lot of these are interesting and provide much of the background story to the game, and particularly to the apparently genuine deserted English mansion.
- {B} "Warning" : If you simply take this walkthrough in your hand and follow exactly what to do and what not to do, you can probably finish the game very quickly. This however would completely defeat its whole purpose!
- {C} The walkthrough definitely does not do ANY justice to "Scratches"! The most important aspect is the spooky scary narrative. I have deliberately refrained from giving away ANY of the actual story. In addition, a great part of the fascination of the game is wandering around through the different locations in and around this old-world decaying Blackwood Manor.
- {D} Suggested Advice:
So as not to gratuitously spoil the game by seeing unnecessary hints, you can pinpoint the 'area' needed to a great degree through looking only at the date, day and time where you are stuck!
Also, instead of scanning the whole walkthrough, I recommend using a "Find" command-option, and inserting a relevant key word to greatly reduce the superfluous hints!
- {E} This is a first-person game and much of the intricacy and pleasure lies in browsing around ... and as aforementioned there is a lot of that. I personally frequently 'got lost' looking for some location or object (even occasionally inside the mansion itself!), and sometimes after finding it, lost my way again on returning.
Due to the above fact I have frequently (but not always) given exact 'direction-instructions' in this walkthrough e.g. "Go forward twice", "Swing a little to the right", etc.
Often, where exploring is not too difficult (but sometimes not all that easy either), the player will only be told where to go, but not exactly how to get there, or even how to move around when actually there!
- {F} On entering every new location, it is pretty well essential to browse around and DO as much as allowable in every one. However, the walkthrough never tells you explicitly to do this ... it assumes you will ALWAYS automatically explore and expedite, and so it simply says ... "Look around the study", etc.
- {G} You should NOT have to follow the identical order of accessing locations as described in this walkthrough. Some locations of course will not be available or accessible until you have completed certain previous tasks, and so a particular order is sometimes obligatory. Other than this, you are free to visit (&/or revisit) as you wish !
- {H} Although the game is very spooky and sometimes scary, there are absolutely no action sequences, and you never get killed. There is no overt violence and absolutely no so called 'bad language' or 'adult material'.
It is all first-person and mouse driven point & click. There are full English subtitles for ALL speech, and a veritable abundance of texts for all hints and comments.

- {I} Some items in inventory can be used one upon another.
As far as I am aware, if any item X can be combined with item Y, then the reverse is always true ... i.e. item Y can always be used on item X instead!
- {J} As in most games, it is easy to make a wrong or redundant move! So it is advisable to save frequently.
There are 10 save-slots. If you like, you can save batches of up to 10 'permanently' (zipping if you like) before overwriting ... for the next batch of 10.

Walkthrough

Day - 1 (Saturday, October 12th)

Watch all the introductory scenes

Saturday 9 am

Walk forwards to the front door of the mansion
 Try opening the front door. You can't it's locked
 Take the key from inventory, and use it on the keyhole
 Open the front door and enter the mansion
 Start looking around the reception hall
 The telephone starts ringing. Answer it
 Talk to Jerry
 Enter the living room
 Look around the living room
 Read the diary on the table
 Enter the study
 Look around the study
 Look at the desk
 Read the diary on the desk
 Open the 2nd drawer down on the left side
 Take the empty envelope
 Close the drawer
 Open the 3rd drawer down on the left side
 Take the tool for boring holes (an awl)
 Close the drawer
 Enter the dining room
 Look around the dining room
 Exit the dining room and into the small hallway
 Go up the back stairs (2 flights ... from the ground floor to the 1st floor)
 Go 1 step forward and then swing to the right
 Walk the length of the 1st floor lower hallway

Enter the guest room ... "I quickly realized that this had to be my room."
Look around the guest room
Look in the waste paper basket
Read the single hand written page there
Look at the doctor's medical bag
Open the doctor's medical bag
Take the stethoscope
From inventory, take Michael's (heavy) suitcase and place it on the corner table
Open the suitcase and examine all the contents
Look at the calling card belonging to Jerry (P. Carter)
Take the pen
Look at the scribble on the scratch pad
Look at the book ... "Vanishing Town" by Michael Arthate
See the book's frontispiece
Look at the 4 page letter from Jerry to Michael
Take the matchbook (with only a few matches)
Close the suitcase
From inventory, take the typewriter case and place it on the desk
Open the typewriter case
Take out the papers in the case ... they appear on the desk
Take out the typewriter ... it also goes onto the desk
Close the typewriter case
Place the typewriter case on the floor (beneath the table)
Look at the typewriter
Attempt to write something ... Michael prefers to continue exploring
Read the page already typed

Saturday 10 am

Exit the guest room
Walk along the 1st floor lower hallway
Enter the room on your left ... it is the master bedroom
Look around the master bedroom
Exit the master bedroom
Enter the room opposite ... it is the African gallery
Look around the African gallery
Exit the African gallery
Walk to the other end of the lower hallway
Enter the room with the stained glass panel ... it is the 1st floor bathroom
Look at the built-in cabinet below the sink
Open the 3rd drawer down (the bottom long drawer, in the middle)

Take the relatively clean rag
 Exit the bathroom
 Walk back along the length of the 1st floor lower hallway
 Go downstairs to the ground floor again
 Go to the reception hall
 Phone Jerry
 Keep phoning him until he repeats the phrase "If you don't mind, I have work to do"
 Press the light switch in the main hall (or anywhere else)
 The light doesn't go on ... there is no electric power
 Press the light switch again to make sure ... still no electricity
 Phone Jerry and inform him about the electricity and learn that he has ordered an electrician

Saturday 11 am

Phone Barbara and talk to her
 Continue phoning her until Michael says "Ah ... never mind"
 Go to the front door and open it
 Exit the mansion
 Walk down the length of the garden to the main gates ... no electrician
 Look at the mailbox
 Open the mailbox
 Read the letter from the electrician (take it ... although it doesn't appear in inventory)
 Close the mailbox

Saturday 12 pm

Look at the boot of the car ... which "I hoped I would never need to open."
 Open the car door and enter the car
 Look at the car's starter
 Open the glove compartment
 Take the car key
 Close the glove compartment
 Get the car key from inventory, and put it into the car's starter
 Start the car ... Michael decides not to travel anywhere at present
 Return to the mansion and enter
 Phone Jerry and tell him that you missed the electrician

The following depends upon what actions you performed (and didn't perform) previously, and hence may be somewhat different ... but this should not affect anything!

Phone Jerry again and obtain 2 blue ('unusual') captions at the bottom of the screen ... the top blue caption reads "I wondered about the previous inhabitants..." and the bottom blue caption reads "I asked about that safe"

Click on the top blue caption and Jerry mentions a murder committed there in May 1963, etc.
 Phone Jerry yet again ... "I found a safe box in a room upstairs."

Walk to the back of the mansion
 Look around the small hallway ... notice the African jars
 Open the door to the kitchen
 Look around the kitchen ... notice the key holder without any keys, and the table beneath it
 Look at the one kitchen wall where there are 2 doors very close together
 Open the right door. You can't ... "The door to what I assumed was the basement was locked."
 Open the left door ... the maid's (servant's) room
 Look around the maid's room
 Take the topmost paper (with markings on it) from those lying on the desk
 Open the right drawer
 Take the pencil
 Look at the photograph (near the left corner and half hidden)
 Close the right drawer
 Open the door with the 6 rectangular glass panels
 Look around that room ... the maid's bathroom which was once apparently used as a dark room
 Open the tap ... "Apparently, the water wasn't running."
 Exit the bathroom/dark room
 Exit the maid's room
 Exit the kitchen
 Open the curtains in the small hallway
 Look into the African jars
 Take the key from inside one of the jars
 Return to the kitchen
 Using the key from inventory, open the door to the basement
 Go down the stairs
 Look all around the basement
 Open the fuse box
 Check the 2 fuses and the 2 old fashioned double-pole switches ... they seem OK
 Exit the basement
 Exit the kitchen
 Return to the front reception hall
 Phone Jerry to tell him that the fuses seem all right ... "Make sure you find some candles before it's too dark."
 Phone Jerry again to tell him that he hasn't yet found any candles ... "Well... keep looking!"

Saturday 2 pm

In inventory, look at the paper ... it "had several markings on it."
 In inventory, use the pencil on the sheet of paper with markings ... "I managed to reveal what appeared to be a letter in Italian."

Phone Barbara and ask her if she can translate an Italian letter ... "Yes! Mail it!"

In inventory, put the letter into the empty envelope

In inventory, use the pen on the envelope to write the correct address

Exit the front door

Walk down the length of the garden towards the main gates

Look at the mailbox

Open the mailbox

From inventory, take the (Italian) letter and post it to Barbara

Close the mailbox

Saturday 3 pm

Return to the front door of the mansion

Open the front door and enter

Phone Jerry ... he tells Michael to keep on looking for candles

Walk to the back of the mansion

Enter the kitchen

Notice the back door with a colored glass panels and to the right of it a cupboard with crockery on top

Open the cupboard

Open the bottom drawer

Take the kitchen knife

Close the bottom drawer

Open the top drawer --- it's empty ... apparently it was once used to hold candles

Close the top drawer

Exit the kitchen

Go to the dining room

Look at the is a nice piece of furniture (with a candelabra on top of it and also a painting of a house and flowers)

Open the drawer there ... "Tablecloths, napkins... etc."

Go up to the 2nd floor :- Go up the stairs ... (if necessary) along the first floor lower hallway to the bathroom door ... turn right ... go up the stairs from the 1st floor to the 2nd [top] floor ...

You are in the upper hallway

Swing left

Walk forwards and notice the wooden ladder-stairs (brown steps)

Climb up the stairs and see the door to the attic

Enter the attic

Open the trunk to look for candles ... none there

Take the old fashioned lamp

Look through the pile of assorted photos, papers, etc., which were underneath the lamp on the left side of the trunk

Look through the pile of assorted photos, papers, etc., on the right side of the trunk

Look at the pile of newspapers

Read the caption at the bottom of the screen “I looked for any worthwhile news in May, 1963...”

Click on this [blue](#) ('unusual') caption at the bottom of the screen

Read the “Journal” of Tuesday, 25th May, 1963

Saturday 4 pm

Leave the newspapers

Whilst you're in the attic, open the music box

Click on the object inside the box

Click on the key

Close the box

Exit the attic

Return down to the 2nd floor, then down to the 1st floor, and finally down to the ground floor

Go to the reception hall

Phone Jerry ... no candles anywhere in the house. Jerry suggests buying some ... “Calm down! Drive to town before it gets dark.”

Saturday 6 pm

Exit the front door

Walk down the length of the garden towards the main gates

Enter the car

The key is in the starter (ignition) ... turn it on

The engine turns over once only, and the red warning light comes on: “The car would not start! It was only then that I realized I had left the lights on...” ... “The car battery was dead.’

Exit the car

Return to the front door of the mansion

Open the front door and enter

Phone Jerry ... He can't do anything at present

Saturday 7 pm

Look around the lower hallway just a little ... “It was getting late. Perhaps it was now a good time to go to sleep.”

Go up the stairs from the ground floor to the 1st floor

Walk to the end of the lower hallway

Enter the guest room ... “I was getting very tired”

Lie down on the bed and go to sleep

Day - 2 (Sunday)

Michael has a nightmare

He hears banging noises

[[During his nightmare, Michael is ONLY 'allowed' to move as follows:]]

(In this nightmare) he can only walk to the door of the guest room

Then open the guest room door and leave the room

Then he can only walk along the lower hallway and open the double doors into the African gallery

In the place where the display cabinet stood there is now (in Michael's nightmare) a boarded up door and a hammer on the floor

All you can do is to look at the hammer ... and

Pick up the hammer (it's only a 'dream-hammer' and not real, and hence it doesn't go into inventory)

The nightmare ends and Michael is back in the guest bedroom

Sunday 12 am

Michael wakes up from his nightmare, "I was awakened from my strange dream by some odd noises reverberating around the room"

Move around the guest room just a little ... 'The scratching was starting to make me feel very nervous...'

Walk towards the fireplace in the guest room ... "The noises seemed to grow louder as I approached the fireplace."

Look at the fireplace

From inventory use the stethoscope on the fireplace and move it around

Yes! Michael can now hear the noises coming from the fireplace "but I still couldn't determine their source."

Leave the fireplace

Go to the guest room door

Exit the guest room

[[Since Michael is now awake, he can move around freely ... although it's midnight]]

Go down the main staircase from the 1st floor to the ground floor

Enter the living room

Examine the fireplace there

From inventory use the stethoscope on the fireplace

Conclusion :- About those noises ... "I concluded they had to be coming from below"

Sunday 1 am

Go to the kitchen

Open the door to the basement ... you can't; it is very late at night and the basement would be pitch black since there is no electric power and you wouldn't see a thing ... "I couldn't go down there without some light."

From inventory, use the old fashioned lamp on the basement door. Impossible! ... "The lamp didn't have any oil in it."

Return upstairs from the ground floor to the 1st floor and walk to the end of the lower hallway

Re-enter the guest room ... "Just as they had begun out of nowhere, the scratching noises stopped"

Lie down on the bed and go to sleep (properly!)

Sunday, October 13th

Sunday 9 am

Wake up next morning ... a fierce storm is raging; very heavy rain, thunder and lightning. Michael abandons hope of getting the power fixed

Return downstairs and go to the reception hall

The phone is ringing

Talk to Jerry about the terrible weather making it impossible for him to drive

Michael informs Jerry that "I happened to hear some odd sounds last night. Kind of... 'scratching' noises down in the basement."

Go up to the 1st floor

Enter the main bedroom

Swing to the right, go 1 step forward, and swing to the right again

Look at the painting of the very tall woman in red ...

Click on the orb in her hand revealing a safe with a rotary dial combination lock

Click on the dial ... "I didn't know the combination and safe-cracking certainly isn't my expertise."

Return downstairs to the reception hall

Phone Jerry ... ask and receive the combination of the safe

Return to the 1st floor

Enter the main bedroom

Again look at the painting of the tall woman in red

Click on the orb and once again view the safe

Click on the combination-dial

The dial rotates automatically back and forth to the correct combination, (presumably:- 03 2 11) and the safe opens

View the contractor's tender for work to be done on Blackwood Manor

See the key inside the open safe

Take the blue key

Go up the stairs from the 1st floor to the upper hallway in the 2nd (top) floor ... as previously.

Swing round to your left and go to the single door

Open the door. You can't since ... "The door seemed to be stuck..."

Swing to the right, go forwards twice, and swing to the left ... you are facing another single door (close to and 'behind' the wooden stairs you visited previously)

Open the door. You can't ... "The door was locked but I could see a key on the other side through the keyhole."

Observe the bottom of the door ... "There was quite a bit of light coming from below the door."

Look to the left of that door ... there is a tin on the floor with a newspaper underneath it

Take the newspaper

From inventory, take the newspaper and slide it under the door

In inventory take the boring tool (an awl) and poke the keyhole of the door

Inside that room, the key falls onto the newspaper

Pull the newspaper back ... but the key does not slide out from the gap under the door; it gets 'caught' ... " the key had gotten stuck behind the door. Whoever said that dumb technique worked?"

The keyhole is now 'clear'

From inventory, use the blue key on the keyhole ... the door opens and you are in the "room with paintings"

Sunday 10 am

Look at the stool in the room and on it a hammer

Take the hammer

There is a table in the room covered with painting materials and accessories ...

Look at the desk in close up

Look at the blueprint on the left side of the table

Click on it ... "It was a schematic blue print of the ground floor of the house."

Using the magnifying glass, examine each of the rooms (and their descriptions) on the ground floor

Click on the top left corner of the blueprint

Look at all the rooms (and their descriptions) on the first floor

To the left of the main bedroom is a 'mysterious' room ... "That was odd, I didn't remember seeing that room."

Take another look at it ... "I had to find some way to get into that room..."

Click again on the top left corner of the blueprint

Look at the rooms (and their descriptions) on the second (top) floor

Near the middle of the table is an empty drinking glass holding 3 pencils; to the right of it is a key (not too easily visible!)

Pick up the silver key

Beneath the key was a round gray-white object ... "It was the lid of a can"

Pick up the lid

There is a large bizarre painting of a man with his mouth wide open, with one door to the left of it and another to the right ... Open the door on the right

Enter the "room in construction"

Climb the ladder twice

Notice that "A large rope was hanging from a railing above"

From inventory, take the knife and cut the rope

Climb down the ladder

Look for the remaining coil of rope on the floor [[swing right round ... move once forwards, facing the door ... then swing back again facing the ladder ... move back a little (if necessary) ... the rope is now easily visible on the floor]]

Pick up the rope

Climb the ladder 3 times to get to the very top ... "Several dusty cans were resting on the shelf, one of them in particular was more dusty than the rest."

Examine the rectangular can ... "A very dirty can."

From inventory, take the rag "a quick cleaning revealed that it was a can of oil."

Look at the can "There appeared to be oil in that can."

From inventory, take the boring tool (an awl) and use it on the can ... "I managed to pierce a hole in the can..."

From inventory, drag the old fashioned lamp onto the can of oil ... it tips and "I poured some oil inside the lamp"" ; but it was limited by the very small amount of oil there!

To the right of the can of oil look at a small oil can

Take the oil can

Climb down the ladder again

Exit the room ... not via the door you entered through, but through the door onto the upper hallway (i.e. the door which was originally stuck on the other [entrance] side!)

Turn right around and go to the very end of the upper hallway

Climb up ONE flight only of the stone spiral staircase

Notice a window on the left

Open the window

Look out ... and see the roof(s) of the mansion (and very heavy rain)

Climb up the second (final) flight of stairs to the tower

Look around the tower and see another window

Open that window

Again look out ... and see a nice verdant view of tree tops (and extremely heavy rain)

Look at the walls ... "There was a large crack in one of the walls in the tower"

From inventory, use the hammer on the crack in the wall ... "The wall had a wider crack now" (You can see light coming through from outside)

Look at the old rusty lamp above the crack

From inventory, tie the rope to the rusty lamp

Click the bottom of the rope ... it goes through the enlarged crack ... "The rope was hanging from the hole in the wall"

Return to the lower window and open it (if not already left open)

Look through the open window and see a small portion of the rope at the top right corner of the window (not too noticeable!)

Click on this piece of rope ... and the rope now hangs vertically straight downwards near the middle of the open part of the window

Michael ponders the situation ... obsessed with the 'mystery room', even though endangering his life ... "I decided that climbing down through the window was the only way to get inside the mysterious room..."

Sunday 11 am

Climb down the rope (in 2 or 3 stages)

Enter the window into the mystery room

Explore the room ... it was apparently a nursery

Look at the chest of drawers

Open the top drawer

Examine the birth certificate ... note ALL the details, dates, etc.

Close the drawer

Sunday 1 pm

Exit the nursery window

Return up the rope and back to the tower (again in 2 or 3 stages)

Enter the window back into the tower

Go down the stone spiral staircase to the upper hallway

Climb up the wooden ladder-stairs again

Enter the attic

Look at the newspapers

Grab a newspaper

There is now an additional blue caption at the bottom of the screen

"I checked if there was anything of interest in August, 1961..."

Read the newspaper ... Michael has serious and sinister doubts about past events in the Blackwood Mansion

Sunday 2 pm

Return down to the 2nd floor and then down to the 1st floor

Walk along the lower hallway

Enter the African Gallery

Walk to the display case and examine it ... "A pair of huge carved tusks were occupying a corner of the gallery."

There is a horizontal bar about a quarter way up the case. Pull the bar ... "It wouldn't move..."

Look at the bottom of the display case ... it "seemed to have some kind of panel"

Remove the panel ... no luck; "It was firmly stuck in place."

From inventory, use the knife to prize off the panel

Look just behind where the panel had been ... it "had been concealing a couple of wheels."

From inventory, use the oilcan to oil BOTH of the two wheels (one at each end)

Again pull the bar on the display case

The display case swivels away from the wall

Sunday 3 pm

Now that the display case has been moved, go to the wall behind it. "The door was heavily barred..." ... nailed up with wooden planks

"There was no way I could remove those boards with my bare hands."

From inventory, use the hammer to remove the boards

Open the mysterious hidden door

Enter the room. Impossible! ... "The room was too dark to see anything."

In inventory, use the matches to light the old fashioned lamp

From inventory, use the old fashioned lamp on the dark opening. You can now see inside in the flickering lamp light.

Sunday 4 pm

In the middle of the storeroom inspect "An odd looking African mask"

There appear to be several bamboo poles covering the window of the store room. Move them away ... "Now that there was enough light, I extinguished the lamp to save the oil."

Look at and read the 3 pages of notes

Look at and read the 3-page letter to Christopher from James

Exit the storeroom

Exit the African Gallery

Walk along the lower hallway

Enter the guest room

Look at the typewriter

Click on it to insert a sheet of paper

Click on it again to type out a page of Michael's novel

Extract the typewritten page

Look at the page ... read it if you like!

Sunday 5 pm

Exit the guest room

Go downstairs to the main hall

Phone Jerry and tell him about your suspicions ... "James Blackwood was into some very weird stuff... and possibly dangerous."

Sunday 6 pm

Michael is feeling "unusually tired" from all "the events of this day" ... "A good time to go to bed..."

Return from the ground floor up to the 1st floor

Enter the guest room

Lie down on the bed and go to sleep

Day - 3 (Monday)**Monday 12 am**

Michael wakes up at midnight ... "Something didn't feel right...!"

Exit the guest room

Enter the African Gallery

Enter the storeroom ... the Mask is no longer there

Exit the storeroom ... see what happens

You are automatically transported back to the guest room! ... "Once again, I was awakened during a bizarre dream by those scratching noises..."

Go to the fireplace and look at it

From inventory, use the stethoscope on the fireplace ... "I had to find out their source..."

Exit the guest room

Go down from the 1st floor to the ground floor

Enter the kitchen

Open the basement door

Enter the basement. ... Impossible! "The room was too dark to see anything."

In inventory, use the matches to light the old fashioned lamp

From inventory, use the old fashioned lamp on the dark opening to the basement ... it lights up but the old fashioned lamp is flickering (maybe its oil is running out?)

Enter the basement

Open the furnace

Walk into the (unlit!) furnace itself

Move forward another 4 times ... see what happens

Exit the furnace

Proceed (OUT of the furnace) 3 times ... complete darkness! Then continue twice more.

Monday 1 am

Go forward one last time to finally exit the furnace

Exit the basement ... "Finally, the last drop of oil inside the lamp had been consumed."

Exit the kitchen

Go up from the ground floor to the 1st floor

Enter the guest room

Lie down on the bed and go to sleep (properly!)

Monday, October 14th

Monday 9 am

Wake up! It is now the 3rd day. The storm is over ... there is no rain, thunder or lightning, and it is light outside

Exit the guest room ... "It was incredibly cold inside the house now."

Go down from the 1st floor to the ground floor ... "I seriously considered warming up the place"

Exit the front door ... No go! "..... it would be better to do something about the cold atmosphere before leaving the house."

Enter the living room

Examine the fireplace ... "I decided it was a good time to make use of that wood"

From inventory, use the matches to light the fire ... "The wood was now burning nicely in the fireplace"

Monday 10 am

Exit the front door (again) ... Not yet! "I decided to tell Jerry about my experience during the previous night before leaving the house"

Phone Jerry and tell him as much as you know about the bizarre situation

Exit the front door ... finally

General instructions for traveling to the garage, greenhouse, and chapel.

(Instructions for traveling to the crypt, since somewhat different, are described later!).

[[The easiest and least confusing way to outline the above is to start the description from just inside the mansion ... even though it is not actuallv

necessary to enter the mansion in order to travel to these locations.]]

**** From just inside the mansion exit the front door*

**** Click on the fountain*

To the garage :-

Go forward and left

Turn left

Go forward twice to the garage

To the greenhouse :-

Swing a little to the right and notice a path

Click twice on the path

Swing to the right

*There is a fork*** in the paths here (the origin of the fork is actually just below the bottom of the screen and hence can't be seen properly!)*

Click the left branch of the fork

Move forward 3 times to arrive at the greenhouse

To the chapel :-

*From the abovementioned fork****

Click the right branch of the fork

Move forward 3 times to arrive at the chapel

Go to the garage (see the directions/instructions above)

Inspect the door handles ... "A hefty lock was preventing my entry to the garage."

Open the padlock ... "There was no way I could open it with my bare hands..."

From inventory, take the silver key and open the padlock

Open the garage door and enter

Look around the garage ((you may want to operate the pedals of the old bicycle and watch its wheel-dynamo light up the bike's headlamp?!))

Move over to the corner ... there is a corner work table there

Take the sturdy crowbar (on the floor, leaning against the right end of the work table)

Look closely at the tool box on the work table

Take a screwdriver

Take the pair of pliers

Leave the tool box

Exit the garage

Go to the greenhouse (see the directions/instructions above)

Enter the greenhouse. You can't! ... "The door to the greenhouse was stuck " probably due to rust

From inventory, take the oil can ... "I poured some oil onto the hinges of the door

..... "

Open the greenhouse door and enter

Walk forward ... "An imposing but dead tree adorned the center of the greenhouse"

Walk to the right and skirt the pedestal with the large tree

Swing to the left

Climb the stairs to the upper floor

Go forward, swing to the right, go forward again, and again swing to the right

Look at the corner work table

Open the drawer on the left

Read the 2 pages of notes dated February 7th

Close the drawer

Open the drawer on the right

Take the shears "tailored for trimming plants"

Close the drawer on the right

Examine the plant ... "The plant on the top of the table was strangely attractive"

From inventory, use the shears on the plant ... "I took a few leaves with me."

Leave the table

Walk round the upper floor walkway in an anti-clockwise direction

Take the spade ... "There was a shovel in the planter but it was stuck in the soil."

Look at the large hose lying on the walkway (you must approach it from the 'correct direction' otherwise it will not react!)

Grasp the upper free end ... it embedded itself in the soil, near to the shovel

Grab the lower free end ... it is now looped over the railing and stretches down to the ground floor below

Go downstairs

Swing to the right of the tree pedestal

Look at the tap ... and notice the end of the hose

Examine the tap ... "Apparently, the water wasn't running."

Leave the tap (and hose)

Exit the greenhouse

Go forward 5 times, swing to the left, and again go forward twice

Enter the mansion

Go to the kitchen

Enter the basement

Look around the basement walls and see a wheel on one of the large pipes

Examine the wheel more closely ... "Try as I might, the valve was stuck and wouldn't budge." ... "I couldn't move the valve with my bare hands."

From inventory, take your crowbar and insert it into the spokes of the wheel-valve

Try to lever the wheel open ... no go!!
From inventory, take the hammer and bang the wheel (with the crowbar still in it)
... the wheel turns
"I retrieved the crowbar as it could be needed elsewhere."
Exit the basement
Exit the kitchen
Return to the front door
Exit the front door
Return to the greenhouse (see the directions/instructions above)
Enter the greenhouse door
Go to the tap again
Turn it on ... the water is running now
Click on the end of the hose ... it attaches itself to the tap
Go up the stairs
Go to the shovel ... the water has softened the soil and the shovel has now been loosened
Grab the shovel
Go downstairs again
You probably noticed a glittering spot near to the tree pedestal and opposite the greenhouse door ... approach and examine it
Notice that "There was some kind of shiny object beneath the grating."
Look at it more closely
Try to grab the shiny object
"Whatever it was there was no way I could reach it."
Go to the tap
Examine the tap again
Disconnect the hose
Turn the water on (it is quite likely to be running already!) ... maybe it will flush out the shiny object??
Look at the location of the shiny object. No! It's still there ... maybe one of the drainage channels is blocked
Go to the overturned large pot with a bush ... "A huge pot containing a bush had fallen, blocking the drain"
From inventory, take the shears and clip the bush ... "I removed a few branches and leaves, clearing that corner of the drain."
Look at the location of the shiny object. It has now gone ... where to??
Exit the greenhouse
Go forward twice (as though you were going back to the mansion)
Swing round a little to the right and go forward twice again
Look at the pool in front of the large tree

Examine the pool ... see the shiny object
 Pick it up ... it's a small key

Monday 11 am

Return to the mansion (you may find it easier to return to the greenhouse first, although this is far from essential)

Enter the mansion

Go to the study

Look at the desk ... and particularly at the drawer on the right

Open the drawer. You can't ... "It was locked."

From inventory, use the small key to open the locked drawer

Read the 3-page letter to Catherine from Christopher

Look at the closed box in detail

It has a 5 figure combination lock on it. Unless and until you know the combination of this lock you can't open it ... so leave it for the moment!

Leave the box and close the drawer

Exit the study

Walk up from the ground floor to the 1st floor

Enter the master bedroom

Look at the round mirror on the bedside table

Click a few times on the round mirror and watch it swivel up and down

From inventory, use the screwdriver to remove the round mirror from its framework

Take just the mirror itself

Exit the master bedroom

Go downstairs and into the kitchen

Walk to the crypt

General instructions for traveling to the crypt.

[[The easiest and least confusing way to outline the above is to start the description from inside the kitchen of the mansion ... even though it is not actually necessary to enter the mansion in order to travel to that location.]]

Exit the back door

Go forward

Swing to the right until you are at the beginning of the ornate covered walkway

Go forward twice

Towards the left side of the screen go forward

Swing left a little (between 2 banks of brown earth)

Go forward 3 times

Go forward to the crypt

* * * * *

Enter the crypt. Impossible! ... "A thick wire was tied between both handles"
This makes it impossible to manipulate with bare hands

From inventory use the pliers on the wire

Open the crypt door and enter

Go forward

Look at and open the lower coffin ... "A corpse in advanced stages of decomposition was inside the coffin..."

Close the coffin

Look at and open the upper coffin ... "Curiously enough, this coffin was completely empty"

Look at the plaques beneath these 2 coffins ... James T. Blackwood and Catherine Blackwood

Examine the plaques ... "According to the plaques, both Mr. and Mrs. Blackwood had died the same year"

On the floor immediately below Catherine's plaque is an ordinary rock

Pick it up

Look upwards ... the "Large windows in the dome above barely allowed sunlight to enter the crypt"

From inventory, throw the stone at the window in the dome (N.B. If you are not in the right position you cannot do this... you need to be close to the door of the crypt) ... "I hurled the stone at the window but sadly, it missed it and bounced off the ceiling, flying out of sight"

Look at your inventory ... indeed, the rock is no longer there

Go down the steps to the floor below

Examine everything there

Look at the tiny coffin ... could it be a baby ... "the dead child of James Blackwood."?

Open this little coffin ... No! Enough sights of decaying bodies

Look at the plaque beneath the very small coffin ... it's too dark "to make out what the plaque read."

In the corner notice the stone which had finished up there

Pick it up

Go upstairs again

Look at your inventory ... the rock is back there again

From inventory, again throw the rock at the window (N.B. If you are not in the right position you cannot do this... you need to be close to the door of the crypt) ... this time the glass smashes into very small shards ... letting in more light

Go downstairs again

There is a little more light now

Look again at the plaque beneath the small coffin ... it's still too dark to read it

Return upstairs

In inventory, attach the piece of wire to the mirror (or vice versa)

From inventory, fix the mirror with the wire to the candle holder which is to the right of the door of the crypt ... the bright sunlight light is now reflected downstairs

Go downstairs again

Look at the plaque underneath the baby's coffin ... "The inscription was too eroded, but it seemed the name began with the letter 'R'"

Return upstairs

Exit the crypt

Swing just a little to the right

Go forward 5 times

Swing to the right

Go forward along the ornate covered walkway

Walk up the steps to the back door of the mansion

Enter the back door of the mansion

Go right through the kitchen

Go up from the ground floor to the 1st floor, up again to the 2nd floor Go up the stone steps towards the tower (as previously)

Go up ONE flight only

Stop at the open window (if not left opened, then open it), look out onto the rooftops, and see the rope still hanging down

Climb down the rope 4 times

Enter the window of the nursery

Look at the 6 bricks scattered on the floor beside the wheelbarrow

The 4 bricks on the left side spell out the letters 'O'; 'B'; 'I'; 'N';

This would appear to be the last 4 letters of the baby's name ... i.e. "(R)obin"

Note the numbers on the tops of the blocks ... 6 (or 9), 0, 9 (or 6), 7

Leave those blocks and examine the blocks inside the wheelbarrow ... Remember the first letter of the child's name? ... "R"!

Indeed, the 2nd block from the left on the 3rd row down (partly hidden by the handle of a toy) IS the letter "R", and its number is 5

Leave the blocks and the wheelbarrow

Exit the nursery through the window, climb back up the rope, and enter the window to the tower (as previously)

Go down from the tower to the 2nd floor, and then to the 1st floor, and then down to the ground floor

Enter the study

Look at the desk and open the drawer on the right side

Click on the box and look at the combination

Assume that the combination IS the numbers associated with the name of the child ... i.e. the numbers associated with the word "Robin"

To enter the combination, position the 'forefinger-icon' onto each of the 5 tumbler-wheels in succession and keep clicking to rotate them. View the incrementing combination number for that tumbler-wheel at the bottom of the screen

As deduced from the blocks in the nursery, the correct combination to enter from left to right is ... 5; 9; 0; 9; 7 (but either or both of the "9"s could be upside down ... i.e. not a "9" but a "6")

When you arrange the final correct number, the view of the combination suddenly automatically changes to a view of the box

Monday 12 pm

Click on the combination lock and the box opens

[[To 'deal' with this box carry out the following steps :-]]

Notice a 'gate' in the middle, and a small block at each end

Click once on the gate in the middle

Click on the block on the left side

Click twice more on the gate in the middle

Click on the block on the right side

Click on the bottom of the box itself ... it opens

Take the heavily adorned key

Leave the box

Exit the study

Exit the mansion

Go to the chapel (see the directions/instructions above)

Enter the chapel. You cannot enter! ... "The massive double doors leading to the interior of the chapel were locked."

Open the door ... they are locked

From inventory, use the heavily adorned key to open the chapel door and enter

Look around the chapel

Walk up the spiral staircase

Look at the cabinet

Open the cabinet

Open the fairly small drawer

Take the bible inside the drawer

Open the bible

Click 4 times on the pages ... and reveal a heavy nail

Take the nail

Close the bible

Close the drawer

Close the cabinet
 Go down the stairs
 Go forward towards the mottled red carpet and the statue at the end of the chapel
 Swing to the right
 Go forward to the 3 chairs
 Swing round to the left
 Look at the ring on the gray-white (large tiled) floor ... "It was some kind of small metal ring..."
 Go forward
 Swing right, and look at the top of the "large wooden statue of Christ"
 Look at the board behind the head of the statue ... "I've always wondered INRI means..."
 Look down at the very bottom of the statue ... there is a noticeable hole in the feet
 From inventory take the heavy nail and insert it into the hole
 Look again behind the head of the statue ... "Something was curiously different about the INRI sign now."
 Deal with the sign ... No! "I couldn't reach it!"
 Return to the ring in the floor
 From inventory, use the crowbar to pull the small metal ring. See what happens to the floor ... Interesting, eh?
 Return to the INRI sign behind the head of the statue
 From inventory, use the crowbar on the sign. WOW! ... observe the surprising effect on the statue

Monday 1 pm

Go to and look at the floor... observe the square opened area
 Enter the square opened area ... down a ladder and into a secret room
 Look around the secret room even though it is almost completely dark Observe a candlestick ... "It was nearly impossible to discern anything in the secret room, but that seemed to be... a candle."
 From inventory, use the 2 remaining matches to light the candle. ... it is very bright (but understandably flickers somewhat)
 Examine the wooden table in one corner of the room
 Take the piece of wood on the table ... "The branch was very odd looking."
 Look at the 2 sets of papers on the table
 Read the top set ... a 3-page letter dated march 26th from Christopher to James
 Read the bottom set ... 6+ pages of notes about the African tribe Dhalmaar, and instructions for exorcising the cursed evil vicious god, etc.
 MAKING THE AMULET (to be used on/against the malevolent mask) :- "Two main elements were required to perform the exorcising of this evil and they had to be strictly related to each other; one representing the "victim" and the other representing the "victimizer."" These 2 elements have to

be mixed with a rare medicinal plant native to the region Then they must be blended together
Finally the resulting substance must be inserted as a holder into the branch of a particular tree It is on this item that a mysterious blessing was performed”
..... “It should be noted that all elements have to be organic”

Go to the ladder and exit the secret room

Exit the chapel

Return to the mansion

Enter the front door

Phone Jerry. Talk to him about the worrying and maybe serious apprehensions concerning the previous owner of the house ... but “James Blackwood passed away on June, 1963.”

Walk from the ground floor to the 1st floor, up to the 2nd floor, up the wooden stairs, to the attic (as previously)

Look at the newspapers

A 3rd line has been added (below the previous 2 captions) to the sentences in blue at the bottom of the screen ... “I went through the news during June, 1963...”

Click on this line to continue (as previously)

Read the accusations made by Mrs. Eva MARIANI (former maid of the Blackwood family)

Note the written scrawl at the end of the newspaper article ... “BAILEY 01665 65217”

Return down to the 2nd floor, then down to the 1st floor, and finally down to the ground floor

Go to the main hall

Access the phone and click on the third (blue) line down ... “I dialed another number...”

Phone Bailey ... 01665 65217

Have a long conversation with Mr. William Bailey, the former police chief of Rothbury, regarding the Blackwood’s subject. Mention James and Catherine Blackwood, Eva Mariani, Dr. Christopher Milton, etc.

Monday 2 pm

Phone Jerry ... explain the situation to him. He warns Michael of potential dangers if he remains in the house!

Exit the mansion

Walk all the way down the garden towards the gates

Open the post box

Look inside and see the envelope

Open and read the 3-page letter dated April 28th. 1963 from Eva Mariani (former maid of the family) to her mother ... translated from the Italian and mailed by Barbara!

Return to the mansion

Open the front door and enter

Go to the kitchen, and then through it to the maid's room
 Go to the bedside table close to the top of the bed
 Look underneath the table
 Notice a small floorboard (a bit different from the others)
 Open the floor board
 Examine the photograph hidden inside
 Exit the maid's room
 Exit the kitchen
 Walk through the ground floor to the front main hall
 Phone Jerry. He warns Christopher again ... "I've been thinking about what you told me..."
 Exit the front door
 Again walk the length of the garden to the front gates
 Go to the post box
 Open the post box
 Look at the 'scroll' (lying partly on top of the letter observed earlier ... and still there!)
 Read the notice of eviction dated Oct. 12. 1976

Monday 3 pm

Go to the boot of the car and open it
 Take the discharged battery
 Walk to the garage (see the directions/instructions above)
 Open the door of the garage and enter
 Look at the bicycle ... "There was an old and dusty bicycle in the garage. It seemed to have some sort of device attached to it."
 Look at the 'object' pressing on the rear wheel of the bike ... "I realized that the device had to be a dynamo"
 Operate the pedals of the bike, thereby rotating the shaft of the dynamo and generating a current of electricity ... See the headlamp light up
 "A small crate was sitting near the bicycle." ... From inventory, place the discharged battery onto the crate
 Try to operate the pedals of the bike again, but this doesn't work ... "Having the cables connected first was probably a good idea..."
 If you look carefully, there are electric wires going from the dynamo to the headlamp (these are rather difficult to see!)
 Look at the dynamo
 Use the dynamo ... i.e. attach the wires from the dynamo to the battery (these are also rather difficult to see!)
 Operate the pedals again ... Generating a small current of electricity which partially charges up the battery (note that the headlamp no longer lights up since its leads are now disconnected!)

Take the battery (now with "a small charge")
 Leave the bicycle
 Exit the garage
 Return to the car
 Open the boot of the car
 Replace the (charged) battery to "the spot where the car's battery was..."
 Enter the car
 Operate the ignition key ... But Michael's conscience won't let him leave until he has dealt with the strange occurrences at Blackwood Manor

Monday 4 pm

Return towards the house
 Start walking towards the chapel and go to the previously mentioned fork*** (see the directions/instructions above)
 Click once only on the right fork (the one that leads to the chapel)
 Very carefully swing just a tiny bit to the left and observe the shadow of the tower on the ground (it is not too easy to see this due to the relative lack of contrast ... it is just immediately to the left of the path to the chapel and VERY close to that path!)
 From inventory take the shovel. If you dig anywhere near this shadow but not EXACTLY ON IT you will simply get the statement "The soil in this area of the garden was devoid of life!"
 However, from inventory, take the shovel and dig in the ground at the very top of the shadow of the tower (You must ensure that the mid-point of the shovel is on the top of the aforementioned shadow. If it is NOT, then you'll just dig an empty hole in the ground, and may have to repeat 2 or 3 times!)
 Uncover the "dead body of Catherine Blackwood in this improvised tomb."
 Look at her poor skeleton. Something is wrong with her teeth; they jut out "at disturbing angles..."
 Try to remove one of her teeth ... "I tried to pull out a tooth without success."
 From inventory, take the pliers and extract one of her teeth

Monday 5 pm

Use the shovel which is stuck upright in the ground to fill in the earth back into Catherine's crude grave ... "I quietly left, burying Mrs. Blackwood back to her dead, cold dreams..."
 Return to the mansion
 Open the door and enter
 Go up from the ground floor to the first floor
 Enter the African Gallery
 Look at the black statue with no head
 Observe it closely ... "something that looked like a lion's claw was firmly attached to a necklace."

Take the lion's claw
Exit the African Gallery
Return downstairs from the 1st floor to the ground floor
Enter the kitchen
Look at the table ... on it is "a nice, rustic, old-fashioned grinder."
Open the grinder
From inventory take "the tooth that I shamelessly took from the cadaver of Catherine Blackwood", and place it into the grinder
Close the grinder
Turn the handle
Open the drawer at the bottom of the grinder
Take "the remains of the tooth I ground..."
Close the drawer
Open the grinder again
From inventory take the lion's claw, and place it into the grinder
Close the grinder
Turn the handle
Open the drawer at the bottom of the grinder
Take "the remains of the claw I took from the gallery..."
Close the drawer
In inventory, look at the 2 'remains (dusts)' and mix them together
In inventory, put the 2 'remains (dusts)' onto the 'African plant leaves' ... "the leaves were now mixed with dust from a tooth and a lion's claw"
Exit the kitchen
Go upstairs from the ground floor to the 1st floor, and again up from the 1st floor to the 2nd floor
Walk a little way along the upper hallway, and on the right see 2 doors close together
Face these 2 doors
Open the door on the right ... it is the 2nd (upper) floor bathroom (under construction)
Look at the bricks in the right corner ... "just a pile of old bricks"
Examine the bricks nearer to the toilet
See the small metal rod
Pick up the small metal rod
Go through the connecting door to the left of the stained glass window
Look around the workroom
Look closely at the (primus) stove on the bench
Note that one of the 3 metal supports is missing.
From inventory, fix the metal rod into the stove

From inventory, fix the lid of a can onto the 3 supports ... this 'completes' the stove

Put the mixture (of leaves and 2 types of dust) onto the top of the stove

From inventory, take the (single) remaining match and light the stove ... you obtain a 'stone' ... "it was almost organic."

Take the resulting stone ...

In inventory, use the branch as a holder for the stone. "I attached the stone to the branch" making an amulet ... "The amulet was complete now."

Exit the workroom into the upper hallway

Descend from the 2nd floor to the 1st floor

Go to the African gallery

Enter the storeroom

From inventory take the amulet and use it on the mask ... in order to exorcise its demons !!!

Exit the storeroom

Exit the African Gallery

Go down from the 1st floor to the ground floor

Go to the living room. OUCH ... "I heard those horrible noises again. They just wouldn't... stop..."

Examine the living room fireplace ... the wood has been moved exposing a grating

Open the grating

Enter the opening

Go down into a "forbidden zone" ... a hidden passage!

Look all around the hidden passage ... there is nothing much that can be done there

However there is a heavy door there ... go to it

Open the heavy door and enter "the lair"

Continue forward twice.

Look at and examine the 'black opening' (which is apparently the other side of the basement's oven) ... "Several bricks had been removed from this wall, resulting in a large hole."

Look around the lair and examine the various items there ... In particular examine the teddy bear

Return to the large hole

In close-up , click on this black opening

WATCH THE SINISTER PROCEEDINGS, AND OBSERVE THE END SCENES OF THE GAME ...

ENJOY :~))

Addendum

This may seem like an Easter Egg but it is not. It is a small addition to the game itself which adds some minor details ... but it is not essential to finishing the game:

((You can perform the following any time, but only after 9 am on Day-3, Monday Oct 14th))

If you have not already done so look very carefully at the General Contractors' renovation statement inside the safe, in the master bedroom

Did you notice the telephone number at the bottom?

It is from the National Bank of Northumberland ... contact number (01912) 94144

Go to the main hall (it's wise to save here, since otherwise you can't participate in all of the branching options!)

Use the phone and go to "I dialed another number..."

Phone the National Bank of Northumberland ... i.e. phone number (01912) 94144 ... "Good day, the National Bank of Northumberland. Robert Blake speaking."

There are two options in blue at the bottom of the screen as follows:-

"I asked about Dr. Christopher Milton..."

(Reload your save-game)

"I asked about James Blackwood..."

Follow all the various branching options (not elaborated here ... in order to avoid disclosing some items of the narrative)

Space Quest IV: Roger Wilco and the Time Rippers

Written by Gnome

Now, before we start my dears, you should know some things. First of all, only use this walkthrough (or any other walkthrough for that matter) in case of repeated deaths or if you get really-really stuck. Second, Space Quest IV is a difficult game, in which you get to die often, so save often. Third, the Taste and Smell icons aren't necessary for the completion of the game, but it's worth trying them out and reading responses, that will put a smile on your face. Finally, have in mind that SQ4 can get quite absurd. For example you start playing in:

Space Quest XII: Vohaul's Revenge II

The Streets of Xenon

You are on Xenon. It's dangerous. Watch out for the zombie and the droid. Avoid them at all costs for they will kill you. If of course you have saved your game you could try approaching the zombie in order to see something like this:



Anyway. From the starting screen go east. You'll see a rope. Take it, and move two screens to the west. There is a rather futuristic vehicle. Look at it and open the glove box, where you'll find a nice laptop computer. Take it. Now hide in the left part of the screen, so that even you can't see Roger (Roger who? Roger Wilco, your virtual persona), and use the rope on the ground. Wait. A pink rabbit should appear and head straight for your little trap. Wait until the rabbit steps on the rope and then click the hand-cursor on him. The rabbit should now appear in your inventory. Look at it. You'll see its back and a battery. Take the battery and use it for the laptop.



Go north and examine (using the hand-cursor) the broken armored vehicle. You'll see a piece of unstable ordnance. Take it. Good, now put it back or get killed later on (you've still got +5 points).

Underground

Time to go two screens east and lift the grate, thus entering a mysterious underground office. On the desk you'll find a jar you should pick up, and a button you'd rather push. On your left you can see a door. A rather big one. Open it, select the jar as your active inventory item, save and enter the first maze of the game. Go north, west, west and south. Some green slime should start oozing and following you. Wait till it gets close and use the jar on it. Quickly go south and climb the stair (using the hand-cursor). You'll see the landing of the Sequel Police. Swiftly click with the hand-cursor on the ground and move two screens east. Enter the spaceship and fly to Vohaul's Base.

Vohaul's Base

Right after Roger exits the spaceship go west. A Timebuster 2000 SUX time-machine should appear. Time for a time-machine joyride. When the two Sequel coppers start their silly argument, quickly enter the Timebuster 2000. Get over the copy protection question (you are on your own here) and prepare to fly through time. Before you do anything else, take a note of the symbols that already appear on the Timebuster's screen. These are the code for returning to Space Quest XII. Now enter six symbols. Any symbols. Nothing, huh? Ok give it another try, but this time note the symbols down, as these are you code for Space Quest X.

Space Quest X: Latex Babes of Estros

Exit the Timebuster and go west. You'll see an ominous shadow of an ominous bird. Follow it by going east to the screen you landed your Timebuster and then go south. The aforementioned bird will now grab you and take you for a nice visit to its nest.

The Nest

Don't be afraid, you will soon have company. A dead Sequel Policeman. Search him and find a piece of paper in a rather bad condition. Enter your inventory screen and click the hand-cursor on the paper. See those symbols? They are the second part of another time-machine code, so write them down. Leave the nest via a small hole on its lower part and a bit to the right. Prepare for a long and quite interesting cinematic sequence, after which Roger will find himself in the Latex Babes Hideout.

Latex Babes Hideout

Save. When the tentacles touch Roger's legs push the red button that's next to his right hand. After you get up, grab a tank (they are to the right of Roger) and throw it in the mouth of the beast. Good. Time for another cinematic.



Galaxy Galleria Mall

The girls leave Roger alone and drop their ATM Card. Grab it. Go to the Software Shop. Approach the crowd, talk to them and learn that the Two Guys from Andromeda are attending a signing. Ignore them and go to the Big and Tall shop. Enter it, talk to the robotic shopkeeper, get a new suit and pay (use the buckazoid on the shopkeeper). Go back to the now empty Software Shop. Enter it and take a look at Roger's left. There is a bargain bin. Have a look at the hilarious games present (such as 'Boom' and 'It Came for Dessert'), and find the Space Quest IV Hintbook at the bottom of the pile. Click on it, select 'price' and 'keep', pay the alien and exit the shop. Go to Monolith Burger.



Enter Monolith and ask the Boss (apparently a pig) for a job. Play the silly and quite difficult mini-game only if you are looking for a perfect score, or just get the money. No matter what you do, you'll end being kicked out of Monolith along with a half-smoked cigar. Proceed to the entrance of the Galaxy Galleria Mall and pick up said cigar.

Time to get naughty. Talk to the robot-saleswoman at Sack's Dress Shop and end up in drag. Pay the robot and take advantage of your new look. Enter the ATM Card in the ATM next to the Software Shop, select the Clear House option and earn 2001 buckazoids. Get straight by re-entering Sack's (the room where you first changed your clothes), where you'll change back to your original clothes. In typical male fashion read the Space Quest IV Hint Book. In the fourth page you will find three more time-machine symbols, that along with the three symbols from the dead SP officer give you a new code (the symbols from the Hint Book are the first part of the code). In the seventh page you'll find a number (69-65-84-76-69). Write it down, save your game and proceed to the Arcade.

The Sequel Police Chace

Enter the Arcade from the door towards the left side of the screen, have a look around and try your luck at the Ms. Astro Chicken video game. Keep on walking to the other corridor of the Arcade. Save. A Sequel Police Timebuster appears. Exit the Arcade, move east and quickly proceed to the Skate-O-Rama. Now comes the tough and very action oriented part. It's better to use the cursor keys. Move up to the Skate-O-Rama Dome, then to the west, and quickly down. Avoid getting shot, and avoid the skaters. It's difficult, but you should manage it with a try or two. Proceed to the Arcade and enter the SP Timebuster. Enter the Hint Book – dead policeman code, and go back in time.

Space Quest I: The Sarien Encounter

Look at the graphics. So eighties. Pah! Exit the Timebuster and go south. Enter the bar, talk to the monochromatic guys at the bar and get kicked-out. It's revenge time. Click the hand-cursor on the bikes outside the Bar. Save.



Roger will automatically run away and hide. When the bikers pass him by, try to walk back to the Bar. Whenever you get a warning prepare to face one of the bikers. Just click the mouse when they approach you, so you can jump and avoid them. Eventually you'll make it to the Bar, enter it, talk to the barman, take the matches from the bar and go back to your time-machine (avoid any bikers on your way by timely clicking your mouse button). Enter the time-machine and give the Space Quest XII code.

Space Quest XII: Vhaoul's recengePACE QUEST XII: Vohaul's Revenge II

Exit the Timebuster and move two screens to the east. See the impressive and rather locked door? Good. Destroy the locking mechanism, by throwing the green slime you've got in your nice jar on the door. Open the door and enter a dangerous, booby-trapped corridor. Don't move anymore. Open your inventory. Use the matches on the cigar. Use the cigar, and see the quite deadly laser beams. Look on Roger's left and see a nice panel. Use it. The panel is the way to rotate the laser beams (clockwise). Enter the following numbers: 336, 032, 112 and walk without fear to the end of the corridor. Save. Exit the corridor.

The Maze

This is the most difficult part of the game. Your goal is two screens to the west. Avoid the two droids and get there. Easier said than done, but there are a couple of things you could try. The

easy way is to retreat to the corridor when you see a droid and then go two screens west. The complicated way requires that you take a hard look at the computer terminals scattered around the maze. A convenient one should be the terminal at the first screen after the corridor. Look at it. See what kind of an adapter it needs. Go back to Space Quest X, to the Radio Shock and buy the appropriate one. Come back. Plug the adapter to the laptop and the laptop to the terminal. See the helpful map? Good. Hope it helps you.

The Finale

Assuming you have managed to move through those two screens to the west, Roger should now be standing in the central computer room. Looks like a Giger design, doesn't it? Doesn't matter, as all you have to do is open the door by using the code you found in the Hint Book (69-65-84-76-69). Enter the room that appears. You should now be looking at an interface like this.



Grab the droid icon and throw it in the toilet. Do the same thing with the brain icon. Save, the countdown begins. Leave the room and go to the screen right outside the corridor with the laser beams. Now go north-west-down the stairs on the left-west-into the elevator-north-east-north. Approach your son and fight him. Use the cursor keys (up) to push him. After a few tries he'll get immobilized in the beam. Click the hand-cursor on the stairs. When Roger returns use the disk on the weird-device-drive, select BEAM UPLOAD, DISK UPLOAD, select ROGER JR. by using the arrows, BEAM DOWNLOAD. You've won. Watch the ending sequence. It's almost touching.

A Final Note...

Shortly after releasing the March issue of Adventure Lantern, a few of our readers independently suggested that the magazine should feature closing remarks. Never one to turn down an opportunity to do more writing, I was all too happy to add this section to the magazine, starting with the April 2006 issue.

This month, the Adventure Lantern team has once again reviewed a series of new and old games. While we certainly enjoyed embarking on brand new journeys with the recent releases, I found myself preparing for the release of our April issue with a distinct feeling of nostalgia. While new technologies and new titles continue arriving each month, revisiting certain old games has hardly lost its appeal.

With Adventure Lantern's May issue, we hope to bring you reviews of Crime Stories and Keepsake along with some other recent adventure games. Yet we will also continue to look back and talk about the games we manage to find in the depths of our closets. We hope that you will join us for another tour of the gaming world next month.

While we start working on the May issue, remember to check out our Delaware St. John contest on the Adventure Lantern homepage. By answering a few trivia questions, you can enter the contest for a chance to win a copy of the Delaware St. John Mystery Pack, which includes the first two volumes in the series. The contest will be running until April 9th at 11:59 p.m. U.S. Central time.

We also started running role-playing games on the Adventure Lantern forums. We are inviting all our readers to participate in our forum games as players or game administrators. There is definitely room for veteran gamers as well as newcomers with a casual interest in role-playing. We are hoping that forum gaming will make Adventure Lantern a more lively and interactive community.

Tune in next month for more gaming content as we deliver a fresh batch of reviews and previews. We are already excited about the games we will be covering.

- Ugur Sener