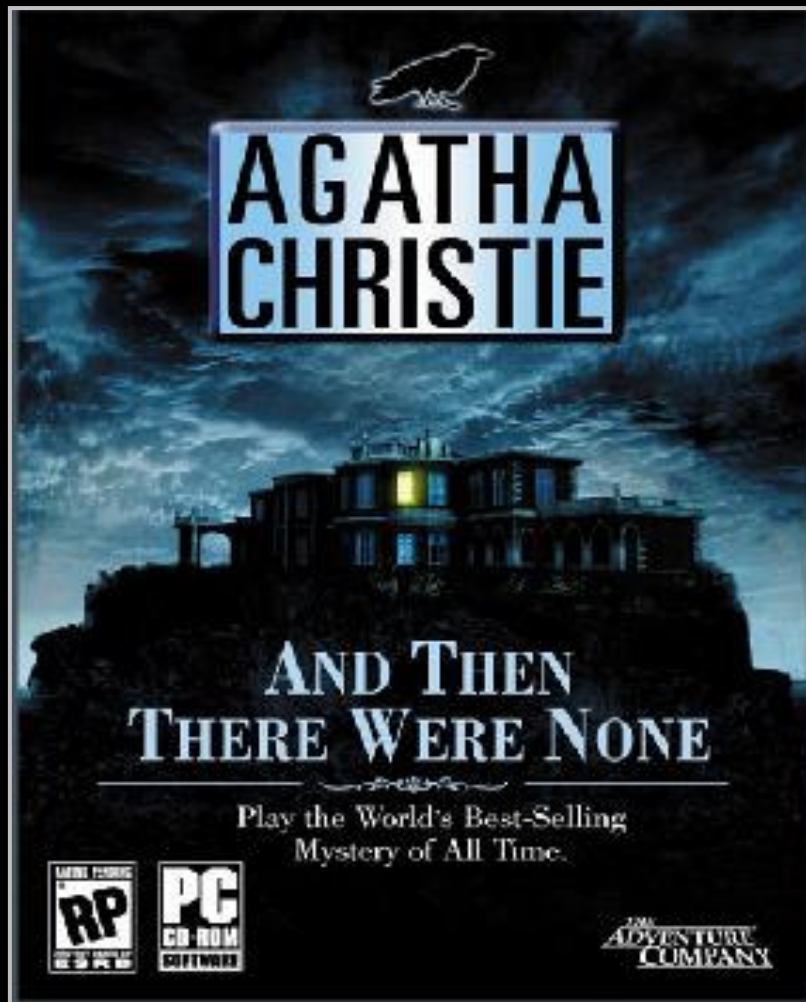


Adventure Lantern

Casting light into the gaming world...



Reviews:

Myst V: End of Ages
Need for Speed: Most Wanted
Guild Wars
Stolen

Previews:

Auto Assault
TimeShift

Delaware St. John Volume 2 Review & Walkthrough

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Editorial

Here at Adventure Lantern, this new year marks a special beginning. This is our first humble step on what we hope will be a long journey. Putting the finishing touches on our first issue and getting it ready for download takes me back to a simpler time.

The year is 1997. A group of students in their first year of high school decide to turn their greatest hobby into a small business. The ambitious group starts putting together a collection of video game reviews and walkthroughs. They hope to use the school's printing facilities to distribute a PC gaming magazine. After struggling for a few weeks, the project ends in complete and utter failure. Lacking the funds and perhaps the dedication to make the magazine a reality, the group abandons its efforts.

Eight years pass. The would-be editor of the high school gaming magazine and the other team members have gone their separate ways. Yet the editor still carries the desire to produce a gaming magazine. On an ordinary winter evening, he decides to try one more time. A small group of gamers from all over the world agree to join the endeavor. Adventure Lantern is born.

In the following pages, you will find the product of our efforts over the past month. With a small staff and very limited funds, we are proud to be able to bring you our first issue. We hope that you will enjoy reading about the games we have chosen to cover on this issue. It was our goal to reach across 2005 and bring you reviews of games launched throughout the year.

We hope to see you become a member of the Adventure Lantern community. As we begin this arduous journey, we are looking forward to meeting new friends and sharing our passion for gaming with the rest of the world. So hop on board and enjoy the ride.

Who can say what another cold winter evening might bring your way.

See you next month. We'll be waiting for your return...

-Ugur Sener

News

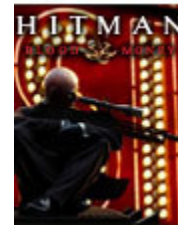
Written by Ugur Sener

The gaming world is starting the new year with many exciting new game announcements. We have selected a few of the recently announced titles to give you a preview of what 2006 might have in store for us.

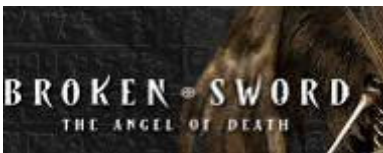


Eidos Interactive is starting the year with the release of a third-person shooter called 25 to Life. Scheduled for a January release on PC, Playstation 2, and Xbox, 25 to Life will put players in an urban setting in the role of the police or the gangsters. Eidos is also planning to release new installments on some of the company's long-running series. Designed as a first-person shooter, Commandos Strike Force

will mark a divergence from the Commandos series of tactical strategy games. The cool and charismatic Agent 47 will be back with his sniper rifle in Hitman: Blood Money. Finally, development is still continuing on Lara Croft's latest adventure in Tomb Raider: Legend.



After the bankruptcy of 3DO, Ubisoft had purchased the rights to the Might and Magic franchise. The first Ubisoft titles in the Might and Magic series are getting ready for 2006 releases. Heroes of Might and Magic V is expected to breathe new life into the highly successful turn-based strategy series. With its beautiful 3D graphics, 6 brand new campaigns, and renovated gameplay dynamics, Heroes V could be a great hit. Dark Messiah is another innovative Ubisoft game set in the Might and Magic universe. Marking a sharp divergence from the original Might and Magic series, Dark Messiah promises a darker tone and a new first-person fantasy combat experience.



Adventure gamers can rejoice with the announcement of a new installment in the Broken Sword series. There is currently very little information available about George Stobbart's newest adventure. However, anticipation is already building up for Broken Sword: The Angel of Death. The game might mark yet another successful chapter in the series. White Bird Productions has also announced a new adventure game called Aquarica. Scheduled for a 2006 release, Aquarica is currently a well-kept secret.

With all the exciting titles starting development and just as many almost ready for release, 2006 should be an exciting year for gamers. As the gaming industry grows and video games gain wider acceptance, here at Adventure Lantern we are looking forward to the new releases that will be coming our way each month.

Auto Assault - Preview

Written by Ugur Sener

Over the past few years, the massive multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG) have experienced tremendous growth and firmly established themselves as one of the mainstream gaming genres. Expected to be released during the second quarter of 2006, Auto Assault could be the next step in the genre's evolution. With its innovative design and extremely promising concept, Auto Assault can easily be a contender for the MMORPG throne.



Auto Assault thrusts players into a post-apocalyptic world. The planet is devastated, its remaining inhabitants divided into three factions. The humans have recently returned to the surface after spending years hiding in their underground sanctuaries. Regarding the other factions as little more than worthless scum, the humans now seek to carve themselves a place in the new world.



The Biomeks on the other hand survive in the new world by completely embracing technology. Able to thrive in the worst environmental conditions, the Biomeks are not about to share their world with the humans who so readily abandoned it.

The Mutants not only accept their evolution, but revel in it with religious fervor. To the Mutants, the remaining factions are misguided fools who cannot comprehend the truth. The three factions are locked in a seemingly endless conflict. Can any one of the factions triumph over the others and become the rulers of the battle-torn planet?



What immediately sets Auto Assault apart from other MMORPG's is the game's focus on vehicle combat. Combining traditional role-playing elements with vehicle combat, Auto Assault will give players the chance to customize a wide variety of vehicles ranging from motorbikes to tanks. Players will be able to develop their character's skills and abilities as they try to build their distinct war machines. The game will feature missions as well as player-versus-player arenas. Gamers will be able to participate in massive battles between the three factions.



Auto Assault is expected to feature a great deal of content, highly destructible environments, beautiful graphics, and an exciting, intense gaming experience. Auto Assault might introduce truly unique concepts into the MMORPG world and give fans of vehicle combat another reason to stay in front of the computer.

TimeShift - Preview

Written by Ugur Sener

Time travel and the ability to control the flow of time might be among the powers that will never grow old in video games. Numerous titles have incorporated time travel elements into their storylines, allowing players to manipulate objects in the past and observe the effects of the changes in the future. While the unforgettable classic Chrono Trigger made wonderful use of time travel elements to develop its intricate plot, the more recent Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time gave players the awesome power to rewind time. Now TimeShift is once again gives players the opportunity to manipulate the time stream.



Under development by Saber Interactive, TimeShift is a first-person shooter that promises not only a stylish futuristic world, but also an innovative gaming experience. Our adventure in TimeShift will begin when Colonel Michael Swift accepts an incredible offer. Equipped with a time travel device, the Colonel is charged with the task of traveling across time to test the inventions of the past. However, when the Colonel returns from his test mission, he arrives at a completely different world. In the Colonel's absence, the time stream has been completely altered. Now an outcast hunted by the tyrannical government, it is up to the Colonel to restore history.

TimeShift promises players incredible time control powers. As noted on the publisher Atari's Web site, players will be able to "slow, stop, and reverse the flow of time, affecting the world and enemies around them while moving freely through frozen worlds" (<http://www.atari.com/us/games/timeshift/pc>). However, the use of the time control powers will not be limited to combat. The game will also feature puzzles that will require the use of the Colonel's remarkable time control abilities.

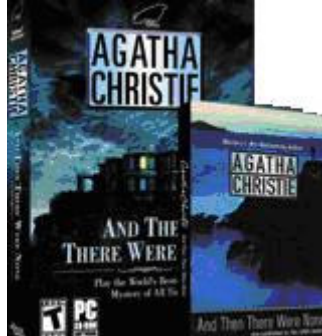


TimeShift could be a very rich gaming experience with an interesting plot and a large number of missions. Coupled with solid online gaming components, a wide range of weapons, and the ability to control the flow of time, TimeShift seems to have the makings of a solid first-person shooter. The game is currently scheduled for a spring 2006 release.



Agatha Christie: And Then There Were None

PC Review by Wendy Nellius



Time is running out! The guests are being systematically murdered one by one. Who is behind it all? You must determine who the killer is at once!.....Before you're the next victim.

Agatha Christie, often referred to as the “Queen of Crime”, is perhaps the most recognized mystery writer of all time. She penned her first novel in 1920 and over the course of a century and a half, managed to delight generations of fans with over 80 novels and short stories. With over 2 billion copies of her engaging mysteries published worldwide, one wonders why it took so long to bring her genius to light in an adventure game setting.



Enter ***Agatha Christie: And Then There Were None***

developed by AWE Games and published by Dreamcatcher Games. This is a classic 3rd person point and click adventure.

I was pleased to discover upon opening the game that the actual novel was included with the game giving us all a chance to enjoy the story twice in different media forms.....quite a nice touch.

The game loaded without any problems and can be played from the hard drive completely – no CD required.

Our story begins inside a train en route to Shiprock Island. It is here that we get our first insight into some of the main characters (or shall I say victims). Personalities are readily apparent from the beginning and assumptions as to their

character form in your mind immediately. It's true what they say about first impressions being the most important. While most of the characters arrive by train, two more arrive by car. Some rather shady behavior is observed along the way leading to more assumptions. All of this, and we haven't even arrived at our destination!



Finally, the guests arrive at a dock where you meet the character you are to assume the identity of for the rest of the game. Playing as Patrick Naracott, you have been hired to ferry the guests via your boat to a mansion on Shiprock Island at the request of a mysterious "Mr. Owen". Upon arrival at Shiprock Island, you have a brief

conversation with the butler and then proceed back down to the dock for the return trip home. What a shock to discover that your precious boat has been "scuttled"! In other words, someone has damaged your boat beyond repair leaving you stranded. Who would do such a thing? An immediate investigation is in order!

After some initial snooping around the mansion and a few conversations, you are drawn down to the kitchen as the other guests are situated in the dining room for dinner. As you eavesdrop through the door, you learn of a gruesome poem hanging above the fireplace --- "Ten Little Soldier Boys" which lists the deaths of each soldier boy one by one in a twisted nursery rhyme. A recording is placed on the gramophone and we get to hear the voice of "Mr. Owen" who proceeds to accuse each of the 10 guests of committing a heinous crime at some point in each of their lives. A scream rings out from another room. What's going on? You will soon learn that the words in the nursery rhyme are being brought to life as a punishment. Tempers flare, fingers are pointed and secrets are revealed. It's up to you to figure it all out before it's too late.



Navigation in ***Agatha Christie: And Then There Were None*** is pretty straightforward for an adventure game. You have the usual cursors for examining, walking, opening doors, and picking up items. Added to these were cursors for eavesdropping and peeping through keyholes for additional sneakiness. A double-click will allow you to run which you will be doing a lot of. Unfortunately there isn't an in-game map allowing you to jump from location to location so be prepared to flatfoot it manually. The insert provided in the game does provide 2 printed maps of the upstairs and downstairs. Keep them handy as you will need to refer to them often. The mansion has a plentitude of rooms connected by bathrooms and balconies which will provide multiple entryways when one direction is blocked. This game took me longer to play than it will for most of you. I was not blessed with a sense of direction in real life or animated. I spent a lot of time going in circles, missing short-cuts or just going the wrong direction altogether. But, that's just me.



With the exception of 1 or 2, hotspots are easily identified. However, I would have preferred that a hotspot disappear or at least change after you have completed whatever action was necessary. For example, in one instance the examine cursor remained unchanged giving no indication that you needed to use an item from your inventory in conjunction with it. It would change to

a "use" cursor only when the correct inventory item was hovered above it. Perhaps this was intended to "up" the difficulty factor. It also bothered me a bit that I could steal documents and other items from the guests' bedrooms, but I could never look in their suitcases as that would be improper. Why not? Come on....it is not really an investigation if I can't rifle through all their stuff, right? Ok, so maybe I'm just nosy. Certainly nothing wrong with that.

Puzzles are primarily inventory based and I found them to be leaning towards the easier side in the challenge department. You will not be mumbling to yourself and rocking back and forth, but you also will not breeze right through them without any thought involved. I found them to be quite enjoyable. You may not even realize you missed some puzzles the first time around. While these additional puzzles do not hinder your advancement through the game, they do provide some additional back story on the characters furthering your enjoyment

overall. So, in essence, you can play the game again and see if you can find what you missed the first time. Gotta love that!

Inventory can be accessed easily on the top left hand side of the screen with a backpack/satchel icon. A journal icon is provided on the top right hand side of the screen. I was impressed with the layout of the journal. Upon examination of any documents in your backpack/satchel, Naracott will automatically transcribe the information into his journal. The document will then disappear from your items inventory, The transcribed documents are accurately labeled and placed under tabs marked "Docs" or "Books" making them easy to find and review at a glance. There is a "Guests" tab documenting information gleaned through interviews and general observations by Naracott. The "General" tab covers any additional information.

The game's graphics are represented in 3D characters against a 2D background. I have heard grumblings that the graphics were not mind-blowing or setting new standards. I find myself thinking "Why must everything be mind-blowing?" In a

world where the PC's we play our games on are outdated the day after we purchase them, why can't we stay in the moment for a while and just enjoy them for what they are: still beautiful & still relevant. That being said, AWE games created an absorbing environment entirely complimentary to the storyline. The mansion is wonderfully detailed with lovely touches such as being



able to see rain and fog out numerous windows along with a reflection of lamps or other items inside. Flashes of lightning add to the tension level and further contribute to the dreary mood. Each room in the mansion is individually decorated with different furniture, wall coverings & lighting giving us a true glimpse into that era. Outdoor environments encompass lush greenery, winding paths, hidden passages, a haunting beach & daunting cliffs. An ever present rolling fog consumes the island. AWE's depiction of the rough seas surrounding the island is absolutely beautiful and seemingly real. The accompanying music (a haunting piano passage) also fits well, but can become a bit repetitious. This is easily corrected with an option to turn the music off as well as ambient effects such as shadows, animated water, fog or rain.

The character renderings could have used a bit more work. While they have been drawn well and fit quite nicely against each character's personality, they are a bit stiff at times and speech is not synchronized with the lip movements as well as I would have expected. And, there was one odd event where I could see one of the characters dead, but yet also alive at the same time which was a little disconcerting. However, this can be somewhat overlooked as the voice acting is outstanding. I find that in many adventures, at least one or more characters tend to be bit lacking. This is not the case in ***Agatha Christie: And Then There Were None***. AWE really took their time in ensuring this was done right. Kudos to them. From the "I'm more intelligent than all of you" Judge Wargrave to a



cold, self-righteous, holier-than-thou Emily Brent to a stately and proper butler named Rogers. Each personality had me changing my mind constantly as to who the real killer is.

Of course, if you read the book prior to playing the game, you may already have a preconceived notion as to who is the murderer. Some liberties were taken with the original story to add an element of

surprise. In fact, there are 4 possible different endings based solely upon your actions or lack thereof. In addition, upon completion you receive an added bonus feature which is a real treat.

I thoroughly enjoyed ***Agatha Christie: And Then There Were None*** despite the flaws. If you love a great "Whodunnit" with an engaging storyline, then this game will be a wonderful addition to your collection.

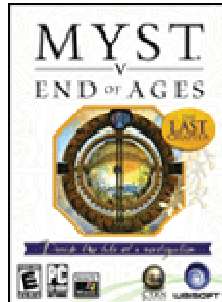
The final grade is 84/100.

Developer: AWE Games
Publisher: The Adventure Company
Platform: PC
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: Oct 2005
Grade: 95/100

Minimum System Requirements (PC):
 Windows 98/ME/2000/XP
 Pentium 3 800 MHz or higher
 256 MB or higher RAM
 CD/DVD: 16X
 32 MB or higher video card
 16-bit Soundblaster compatible

Myst V: End of Ages

PC Review by Suz



Myst V is the final chapter in the Myst series. It is a beautiful first person adventure created by Cyan that ties together the storyline of the previous chapters in the series. The game comes on a Mac/PC DVD or 3 CDs (PC only). It can also be downloaded from the Ubisoft website. Download times for high speed connections are stated as taking 2hr 47 min, and 3 days for dial-up. The game requires 4.5 GB of free hard drive space. The game loaded smoothly from the DVD and was very stable. I experienced no crashes or glitches.



The Beginning

The game begins in a room with a locked linking book to Myst. You cannot open the book, so start exploring. There are two characters in the game, Esher and Yeesha. They both give monologues that explain that the Tablet must be unlocked and D'ni saved. The tablet is the key to the servitude of the Bahro and the power of the D'ni. The tablet both controls the Bahro and makes them powerful. The Bahro made their appearance in URU and are the central focus of this game. As the game progresses you will learn more about them and their relationship with the D'ni.

The Ages

There are seven different ages that you will visit on your journey to unlock the tablet and learn about the Bahro. Each age has its own distinct appearance and feel. The graphics in each age are beautiful and in full 3-D. The variety between ages is dramatic, from a frozen world to a space station. I'm not quite sure how that age worked, it didn't seem to have any atmosphere, yet I could breath just fine. New in this game are the bubbles that contain the linking pedestal and slates. The bubbles show images on their surfaces of the ages with which they are linked. The images are always changing and are an amazing special effect.



The Characters

In one age you will collect pages from Yeesha's journal that will give insight into her life and her conflict on whether she is the Grower or it is fate that her life has taken this path. Esher also links in to provide information on the worlds, the D'ni and Bahro. His speeches often contain helpful information on solving the puzzles you are presented with. Each of these monologues gives you a better feel for Yeesha, Esher and the D'ni and what your ultimate decision must be.



The voice acting is uniformly excellent. In the English version Esher is performed by David Ogden Stiers (M*A*S*H, Lilo and Stitch, etc) and Rengin Altay returns as Yeesha.

Game play

There are three different ways to navigate through the game. It's easy to switch from one mode to the other, so try them all and find what is best for you. The first is purely mouse driven, point and click, Classic mode. I found it nice for getting the right angle on the puzzles. The second mode of control is the Classic Plus mode. You point and click, but you can unlock the cursor with the right mouse button to look around at your surroundings. The third mode is the one I used the most. It is the advanced mode. You use the W, A, S, D keyboard keys for movement and the mouse to look around and interact with objects. I tended to get motion sicknesses from the Classic Mode, but had no problems with the advanced mode. I liked the feature in URU that you could switch from first person to third person perspectives.



You can save the game at any point with the camera. It will also allow you to add notes to the save slot. The game also automatically saves when you exit the game. Due to the stability of the game I didn't need to save often.

Puzzles

The puzzles have always been my favorite part of the Myst series. As expected the puzzles in Myst V require logic and observation as one would expect of a Myst game. There are none of the slider or math puzzles that some gamers dislike. However one of the main game elements, the slates, requires you to be able to use your mouse to draw freehand a symbol on to the slate. Some of you may have difficulty with that aspect of the game, especially if you draw as poorly as I do. Additionally there are minor timed elements to some of the puzzles. They don't prevent you from completing the puzzle, but you do waste time

resetting the time. While these timed elements do make a certain sense in the context of the story, I found them rather annoying.



Multiple Endings

After you have explored all of the ages to your heart's content, and the tablet is free, you have a decision to make that will result in which ending you watch. As Yeesha tells you at the beginning of the game, "Choose wisely in the end there is no second chance". Save the game at this point and so that you get that second chance and see where your decision leads.

Conclusion

Myst V- End of Ages is an excellent addition to the Myst family. The game is extremely stable, the graphics are gorgeous, and the voice acting is outstanding. I raised a few issues with some of the puzzles, but they are minor complaints that probably won't bother many gamers. If you like the Myst series or adventure games in general, you should try this one.

The final grade is 95/100.

Developer: Cyan Worlds
Publisher: Ubisoft
Platform: PC
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: Sept 2005
Grade: 95/100

Minimum System Requirements (PC):
 Windows 200/XP
 800 MHz Pentium®
 256 MB or higher RAM
 CD/DVD: 16X
 32 MB or higher video card
 Direct X 9.0 compliant sound card

Guild Wars

PC Review by Ugur Sener



The beautiful kingdom of Ascalon is in grave danger. The massive Charr invasion seems to be getting worse with each passing day. The beasts descend from the north in endless numbers. No matter how many of them are slain by the brave Ascalon soldiers, the Charr continue their relentless assault. The only thing protecting the human kingdom from complete and utter destruction is the Great Northern Wall. Behind the wall, the citizens of Ascalon seek solace. But in the troubled world of Tyria, safety is only a dream.

Just as promising new recruits complete their training and get ready to face the Charr on the other side of the wall, Ascalon is shattered. The Charr unleash incredibly powerful magic, bringing fire and destruction all over the human kingdom. The land is scorched and many people are instantly killed. The proud kingdom of Ascalon is left lying in ruins. The humans eventually manage to take back the Great Northern Wall from their enemy. However, two years after the firestorm known as the Searing, the lands are broken, the people locked in a desperate conflict. In this darkest hour, only true heroes can bring back hope and perhaps even restore the kingdom to its former glory.

ArenaNet's first game, Guild Wars is an absolute triumph. This online RPG not only delivers an amazing gaming experience, but also sets a new standard for its genre. Every aspect of Guild Wars feels professional and sophisticated. Guild Wars is the



kind of immersive game that will make you lose track of time and keep you coming back for more. Very few other titles can expect to match the lasting appeal and thrilling gameplay of Guild Wars.



In typical RPG fashion, your adventure in Guild Wars starts with character creation. The game allows players to choose from the available professions and configure their appearances. The six currently available professions include elementalists, mesmers, monks, necromancers, rangers, and warriors. Each profession has unique characteristics that make the gameplay significantly different and call for unique strategies. With their incredible

endurance, the warriors lead the charge, get up close to the enemy, and direct attacks toward themselves. Elementalists on the other hand have to stay back, avoid contact with the enemy and wreak havoc with their spells. Meanwhile, monks keep everybody alive with their healing skills.

Guild Wars also lets players acquire secondary professions. Players can select any of the five professions that remain after determining their primary ones. Thus, a total of 30 primary and secondary profession selections are currently possible in Guild Wars, giving players a number of different gameplay styles to explore. Since players might find some combinations more effective than others, the game is built to let players explore each of the available secondary professions before making the ultimate decision. For instance, players who start the game as rangers can go on an early quest that will let them try out two mesmer skills. If they do not like the ranger mesmer combination, they can go out on other quests to try out the remaining professions.

There are only two restrictions for the secondary profession. The players have to use armor that belongs to their primary professions. Each profession also has a unique attribute that is only available to those players who have the profession as primary. For instance, only elementalists can have the energy storage attribute that allows them to have a greater amount of magical energy than any other



type of character. Similarly, players that have mesmer as a primary profession can have fast casting, which reduces their overall spell casting time.



In addition to the large number of primary and secondary profession combinations, each profession has a diverse set of attributes players can freely explore. For instance, the elementalist attribute set constitutes of air magic, earth magic, energy storage, fire magic, and water magic. Developing your ability to cast under the different schools of magic improves the effectiveness of the corresponding spells.

Since fire magic has the most effective direct damage spells, having a high ranking in this attribute makes for an elementalist that can bring significant destructive power upon their enemies. On the other hand, there are a number of water magic skills that hinder the enemy's mobility. Thus, playing as an elementalist focused on water magic as opposed to fire magic can make for a significantly different experience. Similarly, necromancers have blood magic, curses, death magic, and soul reaping attributes. While blood magic can offer spells that inflict damage upon enemies while healing the player, curses diminish the combat effectiveness of enemies, and death magic can be used to raise enemies as undead creatures. A necromancer focused on each of these attributes will play with a different style.

Guild Wars does urge players to put the vast majority of their attribute points into one or two attributes. Upon gaining a new level or completing certain quests, players earn attribute points. While these points can be used to increase the effectiveness of certain attributes, each player can only gain a finite number throughout the course of the game. As such, it is not possible to distribute points across many attributes and expect



to be an effective character. Instead, players will benefit far more from focusing their character development. Fortunately, Guild Wars is extremely forgiving about character development decisions. At any time players are in a town, they can redistribute their attribute points. It is possible to remove points from one attribute and put them in another. This allows players to easily modify their characters and prevents them from getting stuck with a character development decision they might later regret.



The skill system lies at the heart of Guild Wars. Each profession has different skills associated with its attributes. For instance, skills like orison of healing or rebirth belong to the healing prayers attribute available to monks. On the other hand, spells like immolate, fireball, or meteor shower are grouped under the elemental fire magic. While there is no limit to the number of skills players can learn, they can only equip eight of them at any

given time. Depending on their strategy, players equip different skills which dictates their role in combat. A warrior wants to focus on sword mastery and tactics will acquire and equip different skills than a warrior who prefers axe mastery.

The selection of skills is perhaps the most important factor in determining the outcome of battles in Guild Wars. The game is designed to encourage players to come up with an effective skill configuration. Even a full eight-player party of highest level characters can be easily defeated if they do not have the right skills. In order to have a functional character in the game, players have to try out different skills and design a combination that best fits their strategy.

The acquisition of skills is fairly straightforward. Upon gaining a level or completing a mission, players earn a skill point. These points can be used to purchase new skills from trainers found in various towns. Guild Wars does not have different skill vendors for each profession. The generic trainer of the town will automatically only display the available skills your character can acquire and use. Characters can also acquire new skills by completing quests. While a lot of quests reward the players only in experience and valuable items, other quests teach players new skills. Thus, before buying a skill from a vendor, it is a good idea to make sure the same skill is not also available from a quest.

In Guild Wars, the story progresses through quests and missions. Assigned by non-player characters, quests constitute of small adventures that will challenge

the player to complete objectives like delivering an item or defeating a specific foe. Each quest is recorded in a log and can be completed at any time. On the other hand, missions take place in specifically designated areas. Players can gather at these areas, join mission teams and attempt to complete a series of objectives without letting the entire team die. The missions typically take longer than individual quests and move the story forward with cutscenes. The game currently features a large number of story missions as well as multitude of side quests. Furthermore, certain side quests are only available to specific professions. The



large number of story quests and missions available coupled with the massive size of Tyria, provides players with an incredible amount of content to keep them occupied. Going through the game by completing all of the story missions and a fair number of the side quests can easily take over 50 hours. Exploring every single area of the game would take a truly daunting amount of time.

Guild Wars includes many features that have been specifically designed to counter problems that are commonplace in other games of its genre. The first problem countered by the design of the game is kill-stealing. Earlier games featured shared player versus environment zones where it was possible for different groups of players to combat the same enemy. Thus, it was possible for one group to weaken the enemy while a second group landed the killing blow and stole the experience points. Guild Wars prevents this problem by creating private mission and quests zones for each group of players. Every time players leave a town in a group or on their own, a private area gets created. Within the confines of this area, the group is at liberty to fight enemies and attempt to complete objectives without getting bothered by other players. This structure not only prevents kill-stealing, but also allows mission and quest areas to be better customized to the experience level of the characters in the group.





While there are a massive number of enemies in each privately created zone, the enemies do not automatically respawn a few minutes after they are killed as they do in other games. In order to fight the same group of enemies again, players have to at least leave the area and come back. Similarly, quests and missions award experience to an individual player only once. It is possible to help other players complete the quest or mission

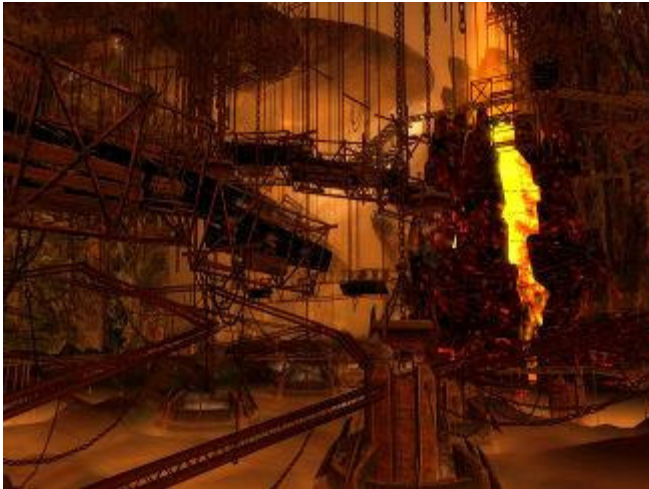
once you finished it. However, players cannot keep playing the same mission over and over again and expect to gain experience each time. The experience award at the end is only granted once. Furthermore, as characters gain levels, the amount of experience gained from lower level enemies diminishes and ultimately reaches zero. The players are required to move forward into other areas of the game, they cannot stay at the earlier locations indefinitely to gain experience.

Guild Wars also effectively deals with the item sharing problem that is common in other online role-playing games. When enemy creatures are killed, they often drop valuable items or gold to be claimed by the players. These items and money is the primary way for players to accumulate wealth that can be used to buy new equipment for their characters. In other games, one traditional problem was that the items could be picked up by any player. Thus, certain players could rush in and accumulate unfair amounts of items, leaving the other players with no loot. Guild Ward responds to this problem by assigning each item dropped to a specific player. The assignment may not always be fair, some players may occasionally get more valuable items than others. However, over the course of a number of missions and quests, each player should have the opportunity to accumulate their fair share of items. Any cash dropped by the enemies is automatically shared by the party when any of the players picks it up.



Guild Wars eliminates excessive travel times that are a tremendous burden in other online RPG's by allowing players to instantly travel between key areas. Each

mission site or town in the game automatically gets labeled in the player's map. Once they have visited a given key location for the first time, players have the ability to instantly travel to that same location by using the map. Players do not have to pay for special spells, wait for transportation vehicles, or run across large distances. Players still have to run between the towns and the location of their quest objectives. They may also have to discover new towns on their own if they are not automatically taken to them upon completing a story mission. However, the ability to instantly travel between visited areas is a tremendous timesaver and dramatically improves the gaming experience.



The game is very forgiving against the death of player characters. In past games, players would lose experience and be required to find their bodies upon respawning to retrieve their items. In Guild Wars, players only get a temporary death penalty when they die. The death penalty reduced the maximum health and energy levels of player characters. If a single character dies and another character is

able to raise him or her, the only negative effect is the temporary death penalty. If the entire party dies on a quest, the group is automatically resurrected at a designated area and will most likely have to do some amount of traveling before being able to attempt the objective again. The maximum death penalty is 60% and it wears off as players kill enemies. However, occasionally the quest will become too hard to complete with a high death penalty and players will have to temporarily return to a town to get rid of it. Upon entering a safe player zone, the penalty is automatically removed. If the entire party dies on a mission, they have to start over. While this might be highly irritating if it happens towards the end of a mission, it does make the story portions of the game more challenging and prevents players from beating the story with little effort.

Guild Wars allows players to travel in groups of up to eight characters. However, players do not have this ability at the beginning of the game. The initial maximum group size is only two characters. Progressing through the game, the allowance gradually increases after key events. The increased allowance does have a noticeable impact on the game and challenges players to put together an effective group. A diverse set of professions is required to make sure the group can overcome different kinds of challenges. Unfortunately, one problem with online RPG's is that the right character types to create a group are not always available. In order to eliminate the time players can spend waiting for certain character types to enter a town, Guild Wars allows players to add henchmen into their

teams. The AI-controlled henchmen are typically no match for human players. However, they do make fair substitutes when a specific type of player character is not available.



As implied by the game's name, Guild Wars allows large groups of players to unite under more permanent groups known as guilds. It is possible for guilds to have capes and Guild Halls. The capes appear on the backs of the members, allowing them to proudly display a symbol of their membership. Guild Halls serve as meeting areas exclusively available for the members of a given guild. The guilds can help players make friends and meet

other like-minded players. The members can also participate in competitions between guilds. Joining a guild does not permanently bind players. Members can still adventure with other players, join a different guild, or even create their own guilds.

The player-versus-player aspects of Guild Wars are detailed enough to make a complete game of their own. A number of major towns in the game offer access to arenas. Upon entering an arena, players can join a group of adventurers to participate in an event against a different group. Guild Wars offers a number of different events ranging from a simple battle to kill the opponent characters to capture-the-flag style contents. The game allows guilds to face off against each other in tournament style. Performing successfully in competitions increases the ranking of the guild. The game also has a recently implemented feature that allows all players to watch guild competitions as an observer.



Participation in player-versus-player portions of the game is completely optional. However, players do have the ability to create player-versus-player only characters. Using this feature, players can create a high level character using all

of the skills they have unlocked through the regular game and get direct access to player-versus-player action.

It is worth mentioning that the incredible gameplay experience offered by Guild Wars comes without any monthly fees. Once purchasing the game at its full retail price, you will be able to enjoy it without making additional payments every month as required by many other games in the genre. Instead of the monthly fees, ArenaNet will release expansion packs to add additional content to this already richly detailed game.



The first expansion pack has already been announced for release in 2006. Among other things, this expansion will introduce the new assassin profession.



Guild Wars features a truly remarkable degree of gameplay depth and astonishing lasting value. This is the kind of game you could play exclusively for months without getting bored. The graphics are gorgeous depicting not only detailed character models, but also a diverse set of beautiful locations. The sound effects and music are pleasant. The available professions and skills make for wonderfully diverse gameplay mechanics. The story portions of the game compel the players to get through all of the missions. The player-versus-player areas are greatly engaging. Overall, Guild Wars is a game that does everything right. It has everything that makes up an excellent gaming experience. Among hundreds of mediocre games, Guild Wars is set aside by truly exceptional quality. Anyone with an interest in online RPG's can expect to find a lot to enjoy in Guild Wars.

Upon completing the story missions with your first character, you will likely find yourself waiting for an expansion pack or wanting to go through the entire experience with a different profession just to try out a different style to play the game.

This flawless game more than deserves a 98/100.

<p>Developer: ArenaNet Publisher: NCSoft Platform: PC Genre: MMORPG Release Date: April 2005 Grade: 98/100</p>	<p>Minimum System Requirements: Windows® XP/2000/ME/98 Intel Pentium® III 800 Mhz or equivalent 256 MB RAM CD-ROM Drive 2 GB Available HDD Space 32MB or higher video card 16-bit Sound Card Internet connection</p>
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Stolen

PC Review by Neetie



A cross between Tomb Raider™ and Thief™, Stolen is set to be a classic! The basic premise for the game is stunning in its simplicity, yet breath-taking in its ability to deliver continuous game play to the end of the final sequence.



You play Anya Romanov who, according to the blurb on the box, “is one of the greatest thieves alive.” Your newest mission is to steal a fabulous jewel from the local museum, but part way through it becomes clear that something else is going on, something that Anya can’t help but become mixed up in (well, there would be no story otherwise, would there?) The voice in your ear, guiding you through the pitfalls and traps of Forge City is Louis Palmer, war veteran and

communications expert, lately guide and confidante.

If you like the genre you will love Stolen; if you prefer a “shoot ‘em up” then this is probably not for you, silence is vital and shooting guards only draws attention to you, something no self-respecting thief wants, right?

Between travelling through a seemingly labyrinthine environment and alternately hiding from or sabotaging the museum security staff, all manner of puzzles will test your ingenuity as well as your patience. Safe-cracking, lock-picking and computer-hacking abound with only the sometimes odd camera angles detracting from game play.



The ‘real-time volumetric shadows’ mean you can hide from cameras or guards who are standing only a few feet from you. This and the ability to scale some seemingly vertical walls, soon becomes an intrinsic part of your psyche as you stalk through the

various locations using Anya's many gadgets to circumvent the local security systems.



The graphics are very smooth, avoiding that 'blocky' appearance of only a short while ago whilst not sacrificing anything in the storyline. Game play can be difficult though, as those odd camera angles can play havoc with a well timed manoeuvre, though it beats some rivals by having a 'persistence of movement' feature, (for the uninitiated this means that, if you are holding a key to move Anya forwards when the camera angle changes, you can keep holding that key and she will continue to move forwards until you release the key or she hits an obstacle... very handy!)

Though ideally suited to the Pentium 4 this will play easily on Pentium 3 (1Ghz) or equivalent. It is a realistic stealth-based game, set in almost cinematic locations. The pace changes from one moment to the next, sometimes you are scamming for every second, other times you can just 'hang around' and catch your breath...

I have loved playing this game, the in-game training of the first short section is enough to set you up for the whole game, finesse comes with practice and there is no doubt the situations get more difficult as you progress through the story. I know I keep mentioning game play, but here it comes again – I get so tired of playing games that are so lacking in innovation you can leave them for months and not miss them! Stolen is not like that, it gripped me from the start and I abandoned family, house and work until it had been completed! Game play like that does not come along too often, and it needs to be grabbed and held onto when it does!



All in all an excellent game, and one that I, at least, expect to see on game store shelves for a long time to come. I thoroughly recommend this title to any serious gamer.

Developer: Blue 52
Publisher: Hip Games
Platform: PC; Playstation 2; Xbox
Genre: Stealth Action
Release Date: April 2005

Minimum System Requirements:
 Windows 98/ME/2000/XP
 Pentium 1 GHz
 64 MB RAM (Win 98/ME)
 128 MB RAM (Win 2K, XP)
 GeForce 2 equivalent video card
 900MB free space

Need for Speed: Most Wanted

PC Review by Berent Dagtas



Over the years, the Need for Speed series have been a wonderful way of satisfying our desire to drive fancy cars. The first games in the series featured incredible sports cars racing across highways and racetracks. Over time however, the series has evolved. Now the Need for Speed series features more regular cars and puts an emphasis on urban environments and the story. While I still find myself longing for a nice Ferrari in the later NFS games, the latest instalment features nice changes. It is great to see an increased diversity in the available cars. While Need for Speed Underground was dominated by Japanese cars, Need for Speed: Most Wanted has cars from many countries. The player's job is to win all the races and purchase the best cars.

I had just waxed the car...

The story begins as you arrive at Rockport. You will meet a mysterious woman called Mia, and receive a briefing about the city. Before you have a chance to get your bearings, you'll find yourself racing all over the city. After a few days your luck will run out. Upon losing your fancy BMW M3 to Razor and his gang, you will have to rely on Mia's help to take your revenge. It is up to you to crush the 15 members of the gang, become the number one racer in town, and reclaim your car.



Hey pal, the cops are chasing us!

Reminiscent of NFS: Hot Pursuit, with their high-tech cars, the cops will be out to catch you as you race through the streets of Rockport. If you exceed the speed limit or otherwise drive dangerously, the police will start chasing your car. Your radar will show you the direction of the police car nearest to your vehicle. The ability to successfully

avoid the police cars plays a crucial part in NFS: Most Wanted. In fact, there is a game mode dedicated entirely to the chase aspects of NFS: Most Wanted. Your “bounty”



level goes up as you avoid capture and get additional police cars to chase you. In fact, you will need a specific bounty level and racing experience before you can challenge one of the members of the gang.

One of the best aspects of NFS: Most Wanted is to mess with the police cars that are chasing your vehicle. For instance, driving

your car into a water tower or gas station might cause the structure to collapse. If a police car is closely following you, it might get caught under the debris, instantly turning from a high-tech vehicle into a useless piece of junk. Of course once you have a large number of cars on your tail, little tricks like this are not enough and you'll really have to step on the gas pedal. When the chase really gets intense, there is no need to be tentative or cautious about your driving. While the police cars and the other cars are easily destroyed, your vehicle is nearly impervious to damage. For instance, you can survive several flips in the air and driving straight into a wall at 150 miles per hour with cracked window and a few scratches on the car. You can also avoid the cops by hiding in quiet corners. Thankfully, the numerous positive aspects of NFS: Most Wanted more than make up for its lack of realism.

Among the best features of NFS: Most Wanted is the new racing system. In NFS: Underground 2, it could take a long time to actually get to the available races displayed on the map. In NFS: Most Wanted, you can return to the Safe House after each race and select a different one using a simple menu. The streets that serve as the race tracks have been



modeled very nicely. It is autumn and leaves are blowing all over the city. The relaxing atmosphere can make you want to drive your Corvette to the seaside and enjoy a drink while watching the sunset. Of course the beautiful graphics and all the details demand a powerful system to run the game. Even players who were able to run NFS: Underground 2 in high resolution might find themselves in need of a video card upgrade before they can truly enjoy the detailed graphics in NFS: Most Wanted.

You can hear the sound of my engine two blocks away!

As you run between race tracks with a rush of adrenalin, you will occasionally make stops at the Car Lot and the Shop. The NFS: Underground games a number of different stores to modify features like your vehicles color or buy accessories. NFS: Most Wanted eliminates this unnecessary hassle by combining all the car modification stores under one roof. You can make all enhancements to your car from a single store. However, the accessories you can buy for your vehicle are more limited than the NFS:

Underground games. The modifications consist of three levels. You unlock various upgrades as you win races. It is worth mentioning that different cars with the same modifications have comparable performance. Thus, there is little incentive to buy the most expensive cars when you can get the same results from a regular car. Of course if you just like the idea of driving a Lamborghini better than a regular car, that's a different story.



NFS: Most Wanted does provide ways for you to get new cars without purchasing them. When you defeat members of the gang, you are given the option to select 2 of 6 secret prizes. Three of these prizes are accessory upgrades. One of them is an out of jail free card and another is a cash award. The last prize is the gang member's car. Getting a \$60,000 car for free certainly feels nice.

Most Wanted also features appearance points for your cars. In order to increase the appearance rating, you can decorate your car with fancy rims, spoilers, and stickers. However, just like the performance modifications, there is a reduced number of appearance upgrades you can purchase. For instance, you can no longer put neon lights underneath your car. A little more variety in appearance upgrades could have made the game more enjoyable.

EA certainly deserves credit for the music featured in NFS: Most Wanted. Quite a number of players could be found on online forums looking for the songs featured in the Underground games. The rap and rock tunes featured in Most Wanted feature the same level of quality. It is also worth noting that the vehicle sound effects are great. Each different model seems to have a distinct sound. After driving a specific vehicle for an extended period of time, you might find yourself able to recognize your car just by its sound. The whistling sounds coming from the engine when you get the turbo speed upgrade are especially thrilling.

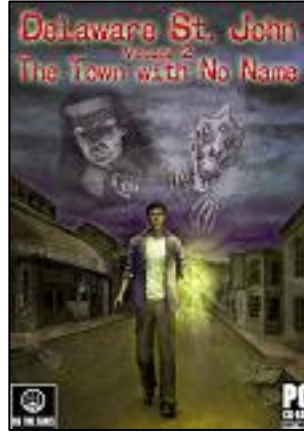
Conclusion

EA Games shows rare degree of progressive success with the NFS series. Each game in the series has been full of innovations that give it a distinct appeal. Without a doubt, NFS: Most Wanted is the best racing game currently available in the market. If you are into racing and fancy cars, there is definitely a game you will enjoy.

<p>Developer: Electronic Arts Publisher: Electronic Arts Platform: PC; Playstation 2; GameCube; Xbox Genre: Racing Release Date: Nov 2005</p>	<p>Minimum System Requirements: 1.4 GHz or faster processor 256 MB RAM or higher 32 MB or higher video card 8X CD/DVD drive 3 GB of hard disk space</p>
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Delaware St. John Volume 2: The Town with No Name

PC Review by Wendy Nellius



In the second of a planned series of 10 volumes by Big Time Games, we meet up with Delaware St. John again as he plunges into his next journey of the unknown.

First, let's take a step back to Volume 1: The Curse of Midnight

Manor...Delaware St. John is an unusual young man with a flair for investigation and a soul that calls those from beyond. From the time Delaware was a young boy, messages from beyond the grave have plagued him in his sleep; strange voices he couldn't control or understand. It wasn't until he was older that he knew his purpose. He had to find the source of the voices and provide them with the help they needed; whatever that may be.



A chance meeting had Delaware joining forces with Kelly Bradford, the owner of a bookstore downtown and a paranormal investigator on the side. What a pairing! Kelly is Delaware's constant companion through the wonders of a voice imagery communicator, VIC for short. Delaware can speak to Kelly or send her photos and recordings for instant analysis.

We last saw Delaware at Midnight Manor, an ill-fated resort built in 1892 by Bernard Amand. Plagued by 4 unexplained deaths, the manor was shut down. Unbeknownst to Delaware, more deaths have occurred since the closing of the manor; some quite recent. Undeterred by ghostly close-encounters and a stalking by a paranormal being (The Hunter), Delaware used his keen senses, psychic abilities and detective skills to piece together the horrors that occurred in

the manor; ultimately releasing the souls of those poor, unfortunate victims and destroying The Hunter.

Now, let's flash forward to Volume 2: The Town with No Name.....We meet back up with Delaware as he contemplates the events at Midnight Manor. Why does he have these visions? Is this fate? Why was he chosen for this task? Will he finally be at peace?



In an attempt to give his mind a rest, Delaware helps Kelly clean out the back room of her bookstore. An old atlas falls open at Delaware's feet. Examination of the map brings more strange voices and an outline of a town or settlement on the page where none was before. Some quick research by Kelly proves fruitless as no town exists anywhere near that location.

Delaware is compelled to visit the location and is shocked to find the existence of a town where none should be. The town is deserted, but gives all indications that the desertion was not voluntary. All references to the town name such as street & building signs have been defaced. An overwhelming feeling that something horrible has occurred here hovers over Delaware as he stands on the main street in town with just a flashlight to guide him. Well, we certainly won't encounter the hunter again. We destroyed him last time. Or will we? Let the investigation begin.

One thing that will become readily apparent as you begin the game is that the credits roll before any game play. You will not be able to hit escape and hurry them along. Most of us pop in a game and want to begin immediately. How many of us have actually watched the credits that play at the end of game? Slim to none? So, considering that fact, I can understand the reasoning behind it. All that hard work is worthy of recognition.



You play Delaware in this 1st person point and click mystery. Navigation is quite easy with green arrows giving you clear direction. Although when being chased, the ease of those green arrows just may slip out of your grasp. Cursors for examining and picking items up are clearly visible. There is no cursor for conversation, but this is not necessary. If conversation is allowed, the dialogue will automatically pop up on the screen. Dialogue trees are limited for Delaware, but the details he receives from those conversations are extremely important as you receive clues on what course of action to take next. A tutorial is provided at the main menu and is quite helpful in getting comfortable with the navigation and also with the use of VIC.

The 2D environments are almost as though you are looking at individual paintings. They are beautifully done in muted colors shadowed by darkness. Delaware's flashlight provides the single hint of light slashed across each scene. Peeling paint/wallpaper, rust and decay add realism. What is most impressive is the feeling of utter desolation conveyed throughout the game. I remember a one time driving home at 3am and thinking how eerie my own town seemed. Not a soul on the road, houses and businesses were dark and everything was so silent. It was downright creepy. That is the same feeling you will experience as Delaware walks down the main street or inside one of the buildings. Every once in a while a noise will come from the opposite direction in the form of a low growl, a giggle, or the slight creak of a board. All these effects are designed to give you a feeling of paranoia. Are you being watched? Is something or someone going to jump out at you?



In addition to the ambient sounds, the suspenseful musical score plays with your subconscious. Tapping out an almost atonal melody alternating between the lowest and highest registers on the piano creates a constant underlying feeling of tension. The organ composition conjures up memories of a different era. Perhaps the most effective use of music occurs during the chase scene. The rhythmic thumping of bass piano notes immediately alerts you to the presence of the Hunter. You know the Hunter is coming for you and that you must get to a safe room fast. Your pulse will definitely race here. Where is the safe room???? Which way do you go???? The choice of music for the chase scene is reminiscent of the classic Jaws theme played when the great white was on the hunt. You could recognize it immediately every time. The same is conveyed here. Well done!

As this is in the 1st person perspective, sightings of Delaware himself are scarce. Occasionally he will appear in a mirror. At a couple points during the chase, you will view the game through the eyes of the Hunter. You get a brief glimpse of Delaware as he is being hunted. However, there are plenty of spirits/ghosts to keep you occupied. Your flashlight will dim right before a spirit appears. Some are there to help you, some to be helped and some just want you gone. The only disappointment here is that their lips do not move when they speak. But, this is just a minor note.

If you're dead set on mind bending individual puzzles, then this may not be the game for you. There are a combination of non-inventory puzzles and inventory based puzzles in volume 2 but they are quite easy to solve. You will spend more time figuring out how to enter locations and where to go next. The beauty of this game is in the storyline. That's where investigation is the key. Each encounter

with a spirit provides another clue to your next step. Diaries and letters found throughout the location provide even more clues. Careful attention is needed here. If you miss one of these details, you could spend a lot of time wandering around aimlessly.

Each volume comes complete with 2 stories. Solving the mystery of the first story will unlock the horrors of the second story. The stories blend together effortlessly and each volume provides additional insight --- a little piece to the puzzle of Delaware St. John himself. You can also log on to the website (www.delawarestjohn.com) and read the full version of each prologue.



So, if you're into engaging story based mystery thrillers, then Delaware St. John Volume 2: The Town With No Name is a must have. As each volume builds on the events of the last one, I would also suggest playing Volume 1: The Curse Of Midnight Manor also although it is not required.

Final Grade: 89/100 based upon the story and creation of atmosphere

<p>Developer: Big Time Games Publisher: Big Time Games Platform: PC Genre: Adventure Release Date: Dec 2005 Grade: 89/100</p>	<p>Minimum System Requirements: Windows 98/ME/2000/XP Pentium 600 or better processor 256 MB or higher RAM 16x CD/DVD SVGA Graphics Card Sound Card</p>
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Second Sight

GameCube Review by Ugur Sener



Imagine you had the ability to harness the full potential of the human mind. To channel conscious thought into pure energy, bending the physical world to your whim. With a simple gesture of your hand objects soar through the air. Physical harm means nothing; you can regenerate your material body with the supreme power of your mind. You can give others serenity, take away their worries, make them tell you their deepest secrets, or stand in front of them while they are utterly certain you don't even exist. You are a psychic and there is nothing that can stop you.



The ceiling lights are flashing past as you come to your senses. This must be some sort of a hospital. Two men escort you to a doctor. They seem to think you are very dangerous killer. Confused and helpless, you have no choice but to succumb to the sedatives. Hours later you wake up with no recollection of who and where you are. Deeply wounded and barely clinging onto life, you have to release yourself from this prison and find some answers. In utter

shock, you discover that you can activate the switch that can unlock your room without even touching it. Wandering through the corridors you realize you can move objects around at will. Perhaps there was a good reason to keep you locked up at the hospital. A quick glance at the tag on your wrist reminds you of your name: John Vattic. But how did you get here? Are you really a psychotic killer? In the murkiness of your memory an incredible power is yearning for release and within that power, lies the truth.

Developed by the team behind the highly successful TimeSplitters series, Second Sight is a third person stealth action game. Second Sight tells the story of the troubled John Vattic. After opening his eyes in a hospital with little recollection of who or what he is, John has to go against seemingly

insurmountable odds to discover the truth. The game tells its story on two separate threads. As the John Vattic in present day, you will be constantly on the run and fighting for your survival. At the same time, through flashbacks to a military operation conducted six months ago, you will help John remember how



the current events were set in motion. As John regains more and more of his memories, your investigation in the present day will deepen and reveal an intricate conspiracy. Second Sight truly has an impressive plot that skillfully unfolds as you proceed through the missions. As you help John stay alive, the game is likely to keep you guessing right until the very end. Second Sight has the kind of plot that drives you forward and compels you to complete the game to uncover the mystery.

Thanks to the successful implementation of a diverse set of psychic powers, the gameplay in Second Sight can be greatly entertaining. Just like characters in many other stealth action games, John is capable of hiding behind walls, sneaking around, and handling firearms. The game has a solid gun combat system with a particularly easy interface for targeting on the console version. However, John's psionic powers not only sets Second Sight apart from other games in the genre, but also makes for very unique gameplay mechanics. After all, if who needs to duck behind a corner or use a gun when you can turn yourself invisible or use telekinesis to choke your enemies to death instead?



John gains his psionic powers at key points in the game. Players will be immediately able to try out the basic telekinesis. John has the ability to move certain small objects. Besides helping him get past certain obstacles, John can use his telekinetic powers to flung objects at his opponents. Later, he gets the ability to target humans with his telekinetic powers, making him immensely more dangerous. John can also heal himself or others with his psionic energy, making him very hard to defeat as long as you can catch a moment to recover health between waves of enemies. Other powers include the ability to possess or charm the enemies. The possession skill allows you to take complete control of an enemy soldier and wreak massive damage without the risk of bodily harm.

Activating charm renders you invisible to the enemy. All psionic abilities in Second Sight consume John's psychic energy. Fortunately, the psychic energy does recharge at a rapid rate and does not take away from the usefulness of John's powers.



After getting past the introduction missions, players will frequently encounter situations where there is more than one way to make progress. Many times it is possible to sneak past an area without being seen by anybody. However, stealthily taking out enemies one by one with telekinesis or just charging in with your guns blazing might be just as viable options. The ability to approach situations with many different strategies does bring some amount of replay value to Second Sight, despite the game's linear plot.

The graphics in Second Sight will be instantly familiar to gamers who have played the TimeSplitters series. From character modeling to the environments, the charming TimeSplitters tone has been maintained in Second Sight. While the game does not feature jaw-dropping visuals, the stylish character animations do give it a pleasant look. Similarly, while none of them are truly exceptional, the voice acting, music, and sound effects in Second Sight do a fair job of setting the game's mood.



Unfortunately, Second Sight is not without its share of problems. In certain areas, Second Sight does not let the player change the camera angle. This can unnecessarily increase the difficulty of sneaking around as you will have a hard time observing the patrol patterns of the guards. Even on screens where the player can adjust the camera, telekinetically controlling objects can become a little difficult. There might be a few cases where John will end up taking damage

while you struggle to adjust the camera to get a better view of your enemy and target them properly with telekinesis. However, these technical problems are not too severe and do not take away too much from the gameplay experience.

Another issue is Second Sight's length. While the game tells an excellent story, it could have definitely stood being longer. It is possible to complete Second Sight in a first attempt in less than ten hours. While the game is great at urging the players to carry on and unlock the mystery, it seems like there should have been more to John's adventure.



Second Sight has elements that make up an excellent action adventure game. Despite the game's problems, the compelling story and innovative gameplay can keep many players interested. Especially after getting the hang of utilizing John's psychic powers, players can have a lot of fun sneaking around the game's locations or harassing the soldiers with the possession skill. Especially the fans of psychological thrillers those with an interest in psionics should consider giving

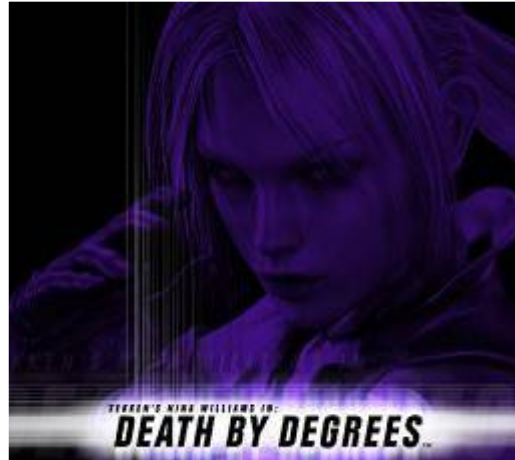
Second Sight a try. Codemasters has created a solid concept with Second Sight. Hopefully, John Vattic will be back with another adventure to test his remarkable talents.

The final grade is 87/100.

Developer: Free Radical
Publisher: Codemasters
Platform: PC; Playstation 2; GameCube; Xbox
Genre: Action Adventure
Release Date: February 2005
Grade: 87/100

Death by Degrees

PS2 Review by Ugur Sener



Most fans of fighting games will be familiar with the Tekken name. Namco has continually delivered extremely popular and successful games with the Tekken series. The series not only consistently delivered innovative and addictive gameplay, but also a number of distinct and memorable characters. Over the course of ten years, the Tekken quality has not faltered or disappointed the series fans.

Fewer fighting game enthusiasts might be also familiar with the occasional spin-offs based on popular fighting games. The Mortal Kombat series attempted to bring character depth to Sub-Zero with Mortal Kombar Mythologies. While the action adventure featuring the charismatic ninja was not groundbreaking, it was still received with a good degree of enthusiasm. Unfortunately, a similar attempt in Mortal Kombat: Special Forces failed miserably, resulting in terrible gaming experience. Other fighting game series have also seen spin-offs based on various characters, however the results have typically been less than impressive.

Death by Degrees marks Namco's entry into the marginally successful subgenre of fighting game spin-offs. Featuring one of the popular Tekken characters, Death by Degrees delivers an entertaining action adventure with uncommon gameplay mechanics and a fairly interesting story. While the game is enjoyable, it falls short of delivering the kind of gaming experience and quality typical of the Tekken series.

Nina Williams is the star of the show in Death by Degrees. The beautiful MI6 agent begins her adventure at a fighting tournament on board a cruise ship. Nina is in the tournament as part of a joint operation between MI6 and CIA. The British and American intelligence agencies are investigating a secret weapon. The mission starts our fairly simple. Two agents are expected to go through the ship

and look for evidence as Nina participates in the tournament. With any luck, the agents are expected to get all the information needed without having to rely on their assassin companion.



Unfortunately, just as Nina catches a moment to relax after winning the tournament, trouble strikes. The agents have been detected and both of them are in grave danger. It is up to Nina to single-handedly defeat an endless horde of guards, survive against impossible odds, unleash her deadly combos, and look good doing all of it.

Death by Degrees opens with a brief tutorial sequence featuring Nina in a bikini. Besides making absolutely sure players get to see Nina in the least amount of clothing possible without giving the game an adult rating, the tutorial alone is enough to show how Death by Degrees diverges from most other action adventure games. Death by Degrees is designed to support combating multiple opponents at the same time. Instead of utilizing the buttons traditionally reserved for attacking, the game requires players to use the right analog stick. Attacks can be initiated by tapping the right analog stick in the direction of the enemy. Thus, Nina can quickly redirect her attacks and fend off multiple enemies. Unfortunately, getting used to the uncommon control structure can prove to be challenging. Players might initially find themselves accidentally hitting various buttons on the controller to attack instead of using the analog stick.

Nina is equipped with numerous deadly combos to help her in combat. As she defeats her opponents, Nina will earn skill points. These skill points can be used to purchase additional combos. Players can use the combos to easily penetrate enemy defenses and land devastating blows. Nina can also equip melee or ranged weapons, adding further diversity to her attacks. With a pair of swords or an automatic pistol, Nina can become a deadly adversary. However, for the most part, bothering with the different weapons and combos is optional. Nina's basic attacks are sufficient to easily get through overcome most obstacles.



While the attack combos and additional weapons may largely go unused as you get through Death by Degrees, Nina's special attack is immensely helpful. When Nina has enough energy, she can initiate a Critical Strike. When you attack an opponent with Critical Strike, the game switches to an x-ray view. You can see

target areas of the opponent's body glowing red. Upon focusing on one of these areas, you can execute the attack by tapping the analog stick. If the attack is successful, the game proceeds to showing Nina actually land the blow and inflict devastating damage on the target area. While the animations show bones shattering, do not be surprised to see the opponents stand up in a few seconds and continue fighting. It is probably safe to assume that the animations simply provide a very graphic illustration of where the opponent will be hurt rather than depicting what actually happens.



While fighting most certainly takes up a great portion of the game, Death by Degrees is not an endless barrage of senseless combat. The game also features sections and a fair number of puzzles. In typical action adventure game fashion, Nina will be running around a confined area looking for various items that will allow her to proceed to the next segment. Death by Degrees does feature many long

corridors and empty rooms you might find yourself going through multiple times as you try to complete objectives. While the exploration and puzzle solving in Death by Degrees can be a bit tedious at times, on the whole it remains entertaining enough to keep players wanting to move forward. Especially as the story begins to unfold and you start finding out about Nina's past, you might find yourself invariably drawn to Death by Degrees to see the ending of Nina's adventure.

Despite its attempts to create an immersive, innovative gaming experience, Death by Degrees suffers from a series of problems that can turn away many players. First of all, the average load time and frequency in Death by Degrees is almost unacceptable. The game has to load every time Nina goes from one small segment to another. While it is perfectly understandable that only a certain amount of data can be kept in memory at any given time, the lengthy load times truly detract from the gaming experience. Especially given the fact that you will end up visiting certain areas three or four times, it is very annoying to watch the load screen numerous times after only playing for a few seconds. Even the inventory and map menus take a long time to load. Since the players are frequently required to access these menus, the extended make the game less entertaining.





The combat system that is at the heart of the game also leaves something to be desired. The unusual controls already add a learning curve to the game. In addition, the more complicated combos can be very difficult to execute and may still not bring enough variety to the gameplay. While the inclusion of melee and ranged weapons is great, Nina's incredibly effective punches and kicks

makes them look like an afterthought. Overall, the combat system can wind up feeling repetitive, if not a bit overly ambitious. Death by Degrees might have benefited from a more traditional approach.

Death by Degrees is certainly not a bad action adventure game. Longer than the average game in its genre, Death by Degrees offers a decent story that can drive players to finish the game. Despite its problems, the combat system can be entertaining as it does allow Nina to engage multiple enemies with finesse. The Critical Strike system not only adds color to the game, but particularly suits the assassin main character. However, Death by Degrees is not the kind of game that can be recommended to every gamer. Many players can be easily frustrated with the long load times and gameplay mechanics that can become highly repetitive. If you are a fan of Nina from the Tekken series or if you are an action adventure gamer looking for something different, Death by Degrees might be worth a shot. But do not go in expecting to find a stellar game.

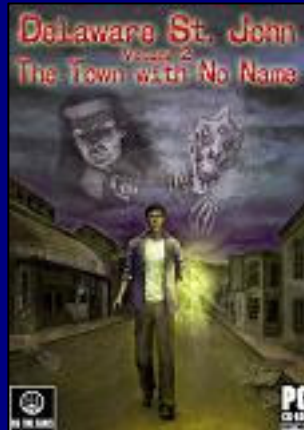


The final grade is 78/100.

Developer: Namco
Publisher: Namco
Platform: Playstation 2
Genre: Action Adventure
Release Date: April 2005
Grade: 78/100

Delaware St. John, Volume 2: The Town with No Name

PC Walkthrough by Wendy Nellius



The main menu offers a detailed tutorial on all of the game controls including VIC which is used to communicate with Kelly. Play the tutorial first before starting the game.

The main menu can be accessed by pressing the light green square in the center of VIC or by pressing ESC.

Story 1: The Big Story

Main Street

Delaware communicates with Kelly upon arriving at a ghost town that's not supposed to exist according to maps. Move forward on the main street. (you will hear growling and feel as though you are being followed). Turn left and right and examine the various buildings. You will find they are all locked.

Examine the doors to the movie theatre. The doors are all locked. Examine the ticket booth. A skeleton ghost in a theatre employee uniform will appear and leave a ticket. Take the ticket.

Continue down to the end of the street until you are blocked by an oil tanker. Turn right and examine the dumpster outside the diner. Open the dumpster and take the broken umbrella. Turn left twice and head straight to the alley.

Look up and examine the fire escape. Delaware comments that if the ladder was a bit lower, he'd be able to pull it down. Use the broken umbrella on the fire escape. Climb the fire escape & open the window. Enter the window.

Movie Theatre

Upon entry to the room, take a look around. You are in the office Charles Epps, the theater owner. Turn to the left and examine the desk. Examine the top drawer and read a termination notice of employee "Josh Martin" written by

Charles. Examine the clock on the wall. Delaware will comment that the clock has stopped at 1:15. Try to leave the room and see the ghost of Charles Epps ranting and raving about kids being rotten these days. Kelly will immediately contact you through VIC.

After speaking to Kelly, leave the room. The door immediately across is locked. Turn left and proceed around the corner. Try to enter the next door on the right. The door is also locked. When you look back, the door will be open. Try to enter the door again and it will slam in your face. You will hear the voice of Charles Epps again ranting at an employee.

Turn around and go back toward the first room you came out of. Go to the last door on the right. Enter the staircase. Turn left and try to open the white service room door. It's locked. You will hear crying.



Turn right, go forward and Kelly will interrupt and tell you the history of the town. You learn of Epps family (a preacher, his wife and children, Helena & Charles) who founded the location as a commune and how it was taken over by another group. You'll also hear from Simon about the metaphysical reasons that the town does not show up on any map.

Head to the right and you will be in the concession area. Turn right and see cut-scene between the ghosts of two teenagers planning to meet for a date later. Examine the refrigerator. See the note left for Josh by Barbara about how to open the cash register. Another note is below this with the following: C-1, K-B, K-D, C-1

Examine the cash register. There is a crank lever on the side of the cash register and 3 key switches marked with A, B & D. Refer back to the note on the refrigerator. C stands for Crank, K stands for Key. To open the cash register, follow this order: Crank, B Key, D Key & Crank again. The cash register will open revealing a key to the service room. Take the key. Turn the opposite direction. Examine the clock --stopped at 1:15 also.

Turn left and go straight once. Go to the white utility door. Use the key from the cash register to open the door. Enter the utility room. Hear a noise of someone banging 3 times. Go forward and see 2 lockers. Open the locker on the right. It's empty. Exit out and the ghost of Jenny will appear. You have the option of 2 different questions. Different combinations will not affect game play. You will basically get the same result. Open the locker on the left. Take the rubber glove. Exit the room.



Proceed straight ahead to the staircase which leads to the balcony. At the top of the stairs will be the men's bathroom. Enter the bathroom and go to the 2nd stall. Open the door and examine the toilet. There is a key in the water, but the water is filthy. Use the rubber glove to retrieve the key. Exit the bathroom and turn left. Go to the next door (women's bathroom). Use the key you just found to open the door. Examine the sink on the left. Take the Edith May's Theater employee ID card. Exit the bathroom and turn left.

Go straight and turn left. Go toward the double doors. You will meet another theater employee who tells you the balcony is off limits.

Head back downstairs and in the direction of the video game at the other end of the room. Proceed to the double doors. The doors are locked. Use the employee badge on the doors. Enter the bottom level of the theater. Charles will appear and announce that the show is to begin. Go to the front of the theater. Turn right and try to open exit door. The door is locked. Try to exit the theater and hear the audience laughing.



You are contacted through VIC by Simon. He tells you the town's name is Winter Haven and also about 2 teens that were reported missing from the town: Josh and Jenny. The teens were last seen by Charles Epps.

Go back to the double doors upstairs. You will speak to the theater employee again and she will allow you into the balcony if you can help her finish a crossword puzzle. Examine the podium to the right of the doors.

1 Across: When you don't want to be recognized: costume – Enter c,s,t,u,m only

2 Down: Unsubstantiated gossip: rumor – enter r,m,r only

You're now allowed onto the balcony. Enter the balcony. Turn left. Examine the seat and take the quarter. Go forward and meet the ghost of Sister Helena. She tells you of a great cleansing. You have 2 options for dialogue. Either is fine. Helena tells you of undesirables who took over the town and that they have been dealt with and that you are next. You will hear the growl of the hunter. This is the start of a chase sequence. You must get to Mr. Epps office.

These are the fastest directions: ↑ ↗ ↑ → ↑ ↖ ↖ ↖ ↓ →

Upon arrival at Mr. Epps office, you will be contacted by Kelly. Kelly tells you that she was receiving the same feedback as when Delaware was being chased by the Hunter at Morrisville Manor (volume 1).

Go back to the theater balcony again. A message will appear on the screen – “Knock, Knock, Knock”.

Go back upstairs to Mr. Epps’s office. Go to the other end of the hallway to the storage room. The door is locked. Move your mouse higher on the door and you will get a fist icon. Click with the fist icon 3 times as shown on the movie screen. Enter the room. Go forward once and then left. Josh will appear. Again, pick whichever dialogue choice you like better. Josh will tell you he needs to hear from Jenny.



Go back downstairs to the Utility room where you first met Jenny. Talk to Jenny. Click the record button on “Vic” to record a message for Josh.

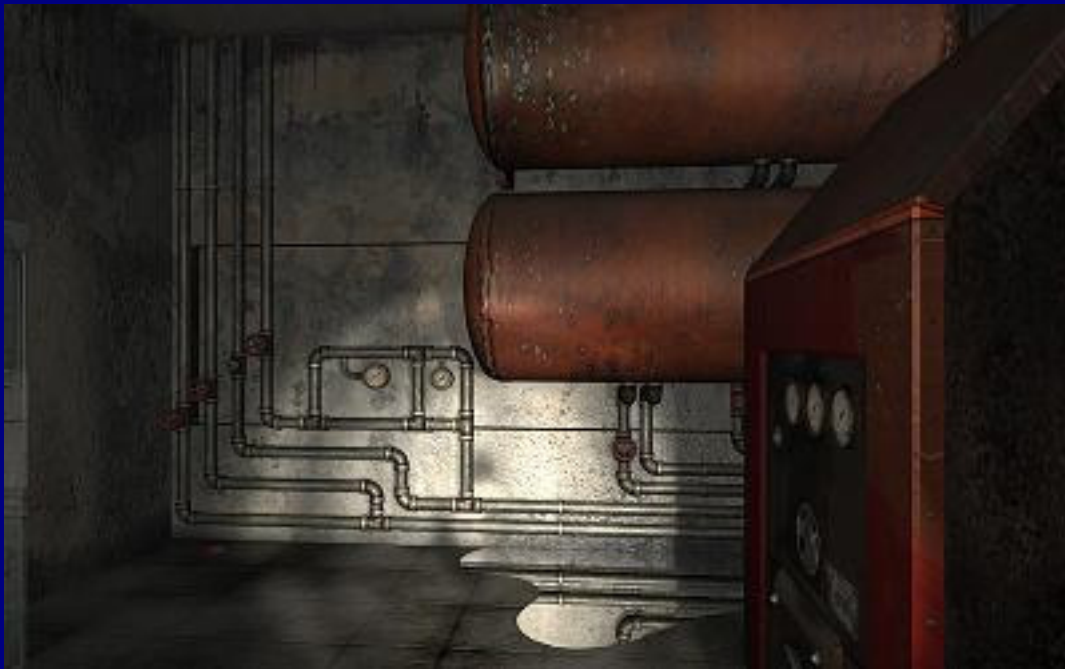
Go back upstairs to the room where Josh was located. Delaware will automatically play the taped recording for Josh. Josh asks you to find out where their dead bodies are located in the theater. Turn right 2 times and see Josh leave through an alternate door. Follow him through the door. Examine the desk. Examine all the drawers to find a screwdriver. Exit out and examine the projector. Take the shovel which is to the right of the projector. Go back downstairs. Go to the double doors of the theater downstairs.

Turn right and examine the video game. Use your quarter on the video game. Examine the screen to start the game. You must shoot the animal with the highest point values. If there is multiples of an animal, the animal with the highest total on the screen should be chosen. The correct sequence is: rabbit, deer, deer, rabbit, deer, rabbit, skunk, deer, rabbit, skunk. You win and receive a map of the theater seats with an x marking the spot. Examine the "X".

Turn left and enter the double doors. Go straight until you get to the movie screen. Examine underneath the screen. Examine the wood paneling. Use the screwdriver to open the door. Enter the room and see Charles Epps with the shovel standing over a grave. He will accuse you of trespassing and ask for a movie ticket to prove you're not. Give him the movie ticket from your inventory. After some rambling, Charles leaves. Go to the grave and use your shovel to dig up the bodies. Examine the bodies. Exit the room and you will be greeted by Josh and Jenny who thank you but tell you to go to the emergency exit. Go to the emergency exit and meet the balcony employee again. She will tell you that she saw the murders that day and that you're needed elsewhere. Go out the exit and straight through the alley. You will arrive at an Orphanage that you seem to have a memory of.

Story 2: Home of the Damned

Enter through the front doors of the orphanage. The door will slam behind you and you will hear laughter.



Turn left and then go straight. Continue straight to room 104. Enter the room. Turn right and examine the letter on the desk. Take the key which is to the left of

the letter. Turn right 2 times and examine the chest of drawers. Open the bottom drawer and examine the journal. Close the drawer and exit. Turn left and meet Sister Helena again. Exit the room and Kelly will contact you. Hear about 4 orphans who turned up missing.

Go forward once, turn left and go forward again. Go to the end of the hallway. Turn left and enter the kitchen.

Turn right 2 times and examine the phone. Pick up the phone and listen. Hang up. Exit and examine the cabinet to the right of the open door. Open the drawer and take the batteries. Exit the kitchen.



Go back out to the main hall. Turn left and go forward twice. Turn right and go up the stairs. Go straight once and turn left. Go straight and turn right. Use the key on the double doors. Enter, go straight and right.

Meet Tommy. He needs help coloring. Turn right once and examine the paper on the table. You need five crayons. Exit and turn left. Examine where Tommy was sitting. Take the green crayon. Exit and turn right twice. Examine the sink. Take the blue crayon. Exit and turn right twice. Examine the easel. Take the yellow crayon. Exit and turn right. Examine bookshelf on left wall. Take the orange crayon. Exit and go straight once. Turn left and examine bookshelf. Take red crayon. Examine the bulletin board. Read the note on how to color. Go back to the drawing. Color the drawing in the following order: Green, blue, red, yellow, orange. Complete the drawing and Tommy will show you a map marked with an X. Exit the room. Go back downstairs.

Go to room 105. The door is locked. Use your fist to break it open. Enter and examine the diary under the bed.

Read the diary of Sister Grace who came to the orphanage to investigate the deaths of four children. Learn of late night visits by a stranger. Also read about Nancy, a little girl who was afraid of the dark.

Exit and proceed to the third floor. Go to room 310. Examine the broken door and take it. Exit the room and go to the 2nd floor. Find the hole in the floor next to room 210. Use the door on the hole. Cross over the door and enter the doorway on the right. Turn right twice and examine the cabinet. Open cabinet and meet Nancy. She needs batteries for her lantern. Use the batteries from inventory on the lantern. As you exit the room, you will hear footsteps above you and a door slam.

Proceed to the 3rd floor. Go forward, left and right. Open the double doors. Enter, go forward and turn left. Examine the books on the table. Meet Tommy again. You will have 2 dialogue choices. Either question is fine. Help Tommy reorganize the books. Children's books go on the left. Adult books go on the right. It should look like this:

Left:	Right:
The Safety Book For Kids	Punishment Made Easy
A Kid's Guide to Churning Your Own Butter	Inherent Evil, The Novel
Let's Count to 11	Schizophrenia & You
Let's Talk About the Alphabet	Get Rich Yesterday
My First Book of Diseases	Global Warming, Why Should You Care
	It was the Maid, A Murder Mystery
	Spells, Occult and Rituals

After completing the sorting, examine the Spells, Occult and Rituals book again. Kelly will contact you again.

Discuss the hunter and the destroyer. Learn you need to find a ritual room in the orphanage.

Exit the room. See someone moving around downstairs. Go downstairs to the hallway starting with room 104. Turn right and walk down the hallway. Someone will call out your name. When you turn around, you will see a shadow outside room 102. Enter room 102. Examine the pillow on the bed. Read the letter from Sister Grace to Sister Hazel. Learn that you lived in the orphanage and that you were the intended victim in the cleansing. Take a photo of the letter. Talk to Kelly. There is static and Helena interrupts. You are in danger and need to find the secret room fast. Exit the room and head toward the kitchen. Hear someone cough.

Enter the kitchen and go to the back of the pantry. Meet Kirsty. Ask any of the questions. Learn that Helena caught her smoking and punished her by burning her and killing her with a shovel. The hunter will show up and another chase

scene will happen. You will need to follow Kirsty. Follow her to the first room which will be locked. Kristy will then have you follow her to room 311. You will Ashley who knows the location of the secret room. Ashley wants you to retrieve his toy dinosaur from Helena's room before he will show you.

Go downstairs to room 104. Examine the bed. Take the dinosaur from the side of the bed. Go back to room 311 and give Ashley the dinosaur. He will lead you to the bathroom across from the kitchen. Enter the bathroom and turn left. Examine the boat picture on the wall. Examine the mantle. Examine the spell sheet. Take a photo of the spell sheet. Talk to Kelly and find out that you need to burn the spell right where it is. You will need matches. Who do you know that smokes? Go find Kristy in the pantry of the kitchen. The phone will ring. Pick it up if you want. Talk to Kristy and get the matches from under the bag of flour.

Return to the kitchen and the phone rings. Pick it up and hear Kelly on the line. Hang up and go to the bathroom. Use the matches on the spell sheet. Exit the room and Helena greets you with an axe. Make a run for the door. You will not be able to leave. The hunter, Helena and Charles are blocking your way. The children will appear and use their own chant to get rid of them.

Hear from Kelly and Simon. Hear that the destroyer's main purpose is to get rid of the protector. Is Delaware the protector? Perhaps we'll find out in the next installment. Delaware will ask Kelly to help him find his parents. GAME OVER

Developer: Big Time Games
Publisher: Big Time Games
Platform: PC
Genre: Adventure
Release Date: Dec 2005

Minimum System Requirements:
Windows 98/ME/2000/XP
Pentium 600 or better processor
256 MB or higher RAM
16x CD/DVD
SVGA Graphics Card
Sound Card