

# Adventure Lantern

November-December 2007

## Interviews:

Sinking Island with Benoit Sokal

## Reviews:

Darkness Within: In Pursuit of Loath Nolder

Sam & Max Episode 201: Ice Station Santa

Culpa Innata

Nancy Drew: Legend of Crystal Skull

Darkfall: Lights Out

Super Mario Galaxy

Ace Combat 6: Fires of Liberation

Ratchet & Clank Future: Tools of Destruction

Rogue Galaxy

## Articles:

Playing Old Games: Part 6 in a Series of Articles by Sir Dave

Featuring: 7th Guest

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Nancy Drew: The Final Scene

Need for Speed Carbon: PS2



# Editorial

In my experience, traveling through the Dallas Love Field Airport is relatively hassle-free. Getting a boarding pass from the ticket counter hardly takes more than a few moments. The line at the security checkpoint is typically very short. Once you enter the airport, you can conceivably make it to your gate in ten minutes; that is unless you are traveling on a Friday evening four days before Christmas.

Walking towards the Southwest Airlines counter, it was hard to miss the line stretching all the way across the lobby and outside one of the entrances. Standing at the end of the line, I was grateful to be more than two hours early for my flight. I took off my tie and put away my badge. It was going to be a long wait; I might as well get a little more comfortable.

Almost forty-five minutes later, I was finally close to the front of the line. While moving his suitcase, a young boy in front of me dropped a book. It was a copy of Gregory Maguire's Son of a Witch, the sequel to the author's famous novel called Wicked. Both books are based on L. Frank Baum's writings and offer revisionist looks at the world of Oz. Wicked tells the story of Elphaba, the girl who becomes the Wicked Witch of the West in The Wonderful Wizard of Oz. The sequel focuses on Liir, one of the supporting characters in Wicked.

As the boy leaned over to pick up his book, I overheard two passengers discussing it. The older one quietly asked about the novel. The younger one rolled her eyes and stated with unmistakable contempt that "It's probably one of *those* science fiction novels". She shrugged and added, "You know what I mean..." I really wanted to interject and demand what she did mean. Was this a well-formed opinion from somebody who has taken time to read several works of science fiction or fantasy to decide she was not interested in the genres? Or was it a completely uninformed dismissal of anything that might delve into the supernatural or mention aliens and spaceships?

The girl reminded me of many comparable comments I've heard over the years. Whether it's directed at the latest fantasy novel from Margaret Weis, the newest adventure game I found at the local store, or role-playing books lying around my desk, I've all too often heard the same prejudiced remarks. It's perfectly understandable that each individual cannot equally enjoy a given work of fiction. Nevertheless, there is something wrong with dismissing entire genres of novels or a form of entertainment solely based on a superficial analysis.

The Adventure Lantern staff has once again worked hard to bring you a new issue of our magazine. As usual, while the magazine is focused on adventure, you will find articles on a variety of genres. Even within the Adventurer's Ravine, you can catch our reviews on games with widely different styles, settings, and storylines. My humble suggestion is to browse through the magazine with an open mind. Who knows, maybe you'll discover something worth your attention.

A happy new year to all of our readers. Here's hoping it will bring you great new experiences.

- Ugur Sener

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# IN THE NEWS...

So, uhh, yes. It's the News. It is! Wish it were the Not the Eight O'Clock News show really, but it's not. Then again you are reading these few pages as adventure game fans and not as scholars of British humor, so you probably won't mind. Here goes...

-Gnome

## One for the Xbox 360 Crowd



Remember Fahrenheit (a.k.a. Indigo Prophecy in the US)? Remember it fondly? Excellent, for this highly innovative, emotionally effective and heavy on atmosphere adventure should already be available for download via Xbox Live. Expect to pay but a mere 1200 points. Don't remember it? Do yourselves a favor and discover the thing.

## Still Life Moves

Actually, it's not moving. It's instead getting a sequel that will sport the fancy name of Still Life 2 and will make sure you find out who the killer in the first game was while simultaneously dealing with a brand new one. Expect it to hit stores any-time now and hope it builds on the (many) strengths of the original.



## Christmas Quest I&II Re-Released



The Adventure Gamers staff, the same lot that run the site mind you, have touched-up their almost classic Christmas Quest: The Best Adventure Game Ever!, given it a sequel and released both siblings in the wild. You can download the games for free here:

[Adventure Gamers - CQ 1 & II](#)

## Bits of Sam & Max Series 2 Exposed



Assuming you've noticed how well received episode 201 has been, you'll be glad to know some sparse though interesting info regarding the following episodes has been made available. Mostly release dates and titles that is. Here's the lot:

**Episode 202:** Moai Better Blues, January 10 (GameTap) / January 11 (Worldwide)

**Episode 203:** Night of the Raving Dead, February 14 (GameTap) / February 15 (Worldwide)

**Episode 204:** Chariot of the Dogs, March 13 (GameTap) / March 14 (Worldwide)

**Episode 205:** ???, April 10 (GameTap) / April 11 (Worldwide)

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## TIG-Source IF Competition



The TIG Source, the most popular indie gaming blog this side of the universe and the only place where both Dereik Yu and Tim of Independent Gaming (<http://indygamer.blogspot.com/>) can be found, is hosting the aptly named Text the Halls i-f competition. Submit your interactive fiction (text adventure) piece till the 24<sup>th</sup> of December and be famous, or simply wait till after the 24<sup>th</sup> to download and play all the tasty entries. [TIG Source IF Competition](#)

## ADOC 2007 Happened



ADOC 2007, or -in a more meaningful manner- the Adventure Developers Online Conference took virtual place over at the Adventure Europe forums this very December.

Have a look and see what Autumn Moon, Anima, Pendulo Studios, Deck 13 and a dozen more developers had to say for themselves.: [ADOC 2007](#)

## Another ScummVM Update



Far too regular to be newsworthy, I know, but who would expect this amazing emulator would expand to offer full AGOS compatibility as it apparently just did? Oh, and in case you are wondering what this AGOS is, well, it's the engine used by such classic horror adventure/RPG hybrids as the Elvira games and Waxworks, as well as the engine used for more traditional point-and-clickers a la Simon the Sorcerer. Anyway. Go grab your free new ScummVM over at its lovely official site (<http://www.scummvm.org/>).

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## AG Reviewers Needed

We currently need the help of additional staff members to strengthen our archives with Adventure Game reviews and walkthroughs. Contributors are welcome to cover new or old games.

As part of the Adventure Lantern team, you will have a chance to work with a diverse group of people that contribute to our magazine from all over the world. With distinct backgrounds and gaming interests, the Adventure Lantern staff strives to bring you extensive gaming information with each issue of our magazine.

If you are interested in joining the Adventure Lantern team, please contact the Chief Editor at [wneilius@AdventureLantern.com](mailto:wneilius@AdventureLantern.com). In your e-mail, please tell us why you would like join our staff and what kinds of games you would be willing to cover. We also ask that you provide a sample of your writing. We will not post any articles submitted with your application on Adventure Lantern without your explicit permission.

## Sinking Island Interview with Benoit Sokal

By Danyboy (Mystery Manor) and Ugur Sener (Adventure Lantern)

Interview conducted by : Danyboy



### The Story:

An eccentric billionaire named Walter Jones has had an enormous Tower built upon a heavenly atoll, the Tower being more than 200 meters high and meant to be a luxury hotel for the Jet Set. This architectural madness is built entirely in the "art deco" style, which Jones particularly appreciates.

Before its official opening, ten people are reunited on the island, each one brought by different reasons and motives. It is at this moment that Walter Jones is found dead, lying next to his wheelchair.

An investigator, a specialist in complex cases, is sent to the scene. He will have to elucidate the crime and find out the guilty party. All 10 people have a motive for wanting the death of the construction magnate, but one is guilty.

During the 3 days that the investigation lasts, the tower, too heavy for its coral foundation, will slowly but surely sink into the ocean. With it, Walter Jones and the precious clues...

### Introduction:

I have been doing some research on the internet on how Mr. Sokal came to the place he is today - a well-respected and popular PC adventure game developer. It appears it's been quite a journey for him! At only twenty years old he began creating his favorite character, Inspector Canardo. A very atypical hero, Inspector Canardo is a duck who is disillusioned with everything in his animal world. This character became wildly popular, and his adventures were translated into ten languages. Mr. Sokal and Inspector Canardo were an important part of the great surge in the popularity of comics in Europe in the 1980's.

Mr. Sokal liked to push the limits of his creativity, and as computers made their way into the everyday world, they were a natural fit for him. After being one of the first creators to color his characters with the aid of the computer, he discovered 3D in 1996. After investing almost four years in its development, he launched the still popular Amerzone adventure game for the PC in 1999. There was no stopping him after that, and in 2002, he released the Adventure Game of the Year in the United States - Syberia 1. He also received awards for this amazing game in France. As I read in one on-line biography, Benoit Sokal is the very soul of Syberia. He was involved with every aspect of this game including design, graphics and dialogue.

In April 2004, the long awaited and much anticipated Syberia 2 was released. This adventure game did not disappoint fans hungry for the continued adventures of Kate Walker and her cohorts in the land of Syberia. The mysteries were solved, and this particular adventure ended - much too soon for many fans!

In April 2006, Benoît Sokal released Paradise. This game places players in the role of Ann Smith, a young woman suffering from amnesia, who is struggling to make her way home and to avoid the conflict surrounding her. To discover her true identity, she must escort a strange black leopard back to the land where it was born. The player follows Ann on her journey as she finds clues to her identity and unravels the truth behind her mysterious past.

How do you think your approach to designing video games has evolved over time?

In most aspects, I'm quicker than I used to be because I now have more experience. But at the same time I'm obliged to - and I want to - follow the evolution of the games and do even better. In any case, I remain, before anything else, a story teller.

In creating an adventure game, what are the elements that are most important to you? To which areas do you divert the bulk of your efforts?

First and foremost, always the story. It's because of the story that everything else falls into place. Even though I supervise and produce all the graphics work, the story is still my "signature" after all.

Can you describe the game's overall atmosphere?

It is a police investigation, therefore, the atmosphere is rather dark. You will encounter characters with no conscience for whom money is the only meaning in their lives. Graphically, the surroundings are twilight. A storm starts as soon as the hero arrives on the island, and the lighting is very important to the mood of the story.

Not a lot has been said about the story in Sinking Island. Is it possible for you at this point to share a few more details?

I wanted to recognize the basic rules of a classic police investigation. That is to say a story such as "Clue" where we investigate who was murdered, where, how and why. Of course, what I really enjoy as a scriptwriter is to blur the track of the real killer and to make the player believe the opposite of the truth.

Do you always stick with the story that you wrote or are you willing to consider changes after receiving suggestions from your team?

I'm always open to suggestions, but I never forget that the story is the heart of my profession and my "savoir faire". Let's just say it is a form of gentle dictatorship!

Who is Jack Norm, and what is his background?

Jack Norm is a private investigator who used to be a police officer. As many cops do, he had a tumultuous personal life. He is divorced with a daughter. He is a very quiet guy who will always prefer to use his brain instead of his brawn. However, if he is in a tight place, he can become a man of action.



Syberia 1, Syberia 2 and Paradise had a female as the main character. Is it different for you to approach a game with a man as a main character?

Yes, but in the case of a police investigation a man was more appropriate, without being discriminatory of course! And I didn't want all of my games to automatically have a woman as the main character.

How will the investigator become involved with the case?

He is called to the rescue by his old friend Reeves because Reeves has broken one of his legs and can't move around very well on Sagorah Island where the action takes place. At first Reeves thought the crime was a simple accident and that Norm will only have to make some simple observations.

What can you tell us about the people that arrive at the island just before the opening? Can you provide any details about their personalities and their motivations?

Not for now.... but little by little, some details will be revealed on our website.

# FEATURED INTERVIEW

Will interaction with the ten guests at the island play an important role in the game?

I'm not sure that I understand the question, but I would say yes, of course. Especially considering that the conversations with each of the individuals will make the investigation shape up.

From what I was able to read about him, it looked like our victim, Walter Jones, is a very dark and mysterious guy. Since he has already died, will we learn more about his personality during the gameplay?

He was a powerful multi-millionaire who built himself and his business with very unscrupulous business practices. Very often people like Walter Jones are very alone.

In Syberia, Oscar was Kate's sidekick; in Paradise, the leopard was Ana's sidekick. Will Jack Norm have his own sidekick in Sinking Island?

No.

We will have three days to solve the crime. Does this mean that parts of the game will be time sequenced? Will the gameplay be linear?

The game consists of an innovative principal of consecutive "mandates" that we need to solve to make the investigation go forward. As each "mandate" is solved, it triggers the opening of one or more other mandates that we can solve in the order we want. There is only one end to the story.

In Sinking Island, we already know that the game will take place on an island. Does that mean we will be in

the same surroundings and our locations will be more limited?

The game is split between exterior scenes, the hotel/tower which is gigantic.

In French the title of your next game is Île Noyée. In 1993 one of your comic books with Inspector Canardo was published under the same name. Any links between those two?

There is a small link. I kept the idea of the water raising or could it be the tower that is sinking.

In your games, the graphics and the scenery are always fantastic. One scene comes to my mind right now. Kate is walking in the woods along the river with snow falling on her. I almost felt the snow falling on my face while playing. Will we have some memorable scenes like that in Sinking Island?

I hope so. We worked very hard on the graphics. All the scenes are now animated - the waves breaking on the shore, the wind blowing in the coconut trees and the sand flying in the air.

All of your games have had such beautiful music. Who is doing the music in Sinking Island and what should we expect to hear this time?

We worked effectively with the Bande Annonce studio.

Will players have access to any special equipment to help with the recovery and analysis of the clues?

Yes, one of the key elements in the game is the PDA, but in this case it's called the PPA for Police Personal







What can you tell us about the differences between the PC and Nintendo DS adaptations of the Sinking Island? Are you planning to release the game on other platforms?

The interface has been optimized to stick with the Nintendo DS. We are also thinking about making a Wii version of the game.

What are some of the challenges players will be facing?

The challenge will be to find out who is guilty and how the crime has been committed. And to do that players will need to find some factual elements, analyze them, question the witnesses, compare the statements, take some pictures and take some finger prints.

What kind of puzzles are we going to be challenged with in Sinking Island?

A lot of gameplay puzzles which will be specific to the PPA.

The White Birds Web site informs us that the Sinking Island is intended to be the first game in a series. What can you tell us about the future phases of the project?

My desire is to make Jack Norm solve other crimes if it is possible once a year. I already have started working on the second one that will be called "Meurtre en scene."

Assistant. It's a tool that permits a lot of interplay.

Can you give us an overview of the game's interface? How will the players interact with the environment?

It's a mix between the simple point and click interface and the part that takes place on the PPA. The player will go from one type to another very often.

Any last comments you want to share with us before ending the interview?

I hope that adventure gamers will be positively surprised by "Sinking Island." We tried very hard to create an innovative game, and I hope that is what will happen.

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Mr. Sokal, thank you very much for the time you have spent answering our questions and letting us know a bit more about your game. Good luck with Sinking Island.

A special thank you to Alexandre Leroy and Sandrine Loegel from Micro Application. Thanks Draclvr, Ghostlady, Fairydmther, LadyK and all of those who helped me with this interview.

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# Playing Old Adventure Games

Part 6 in a series of articles  
by SirDave

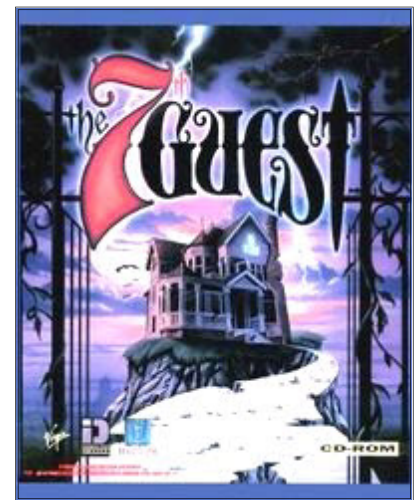
It is ironic that the adventure game that introduced the first multimedia adventure gaming experience, including the first 3D-simulated graphics and full motion video, not to mention the first release on cdrom, is also a game that appears to have been almost forgotten by many adventure gamers. It is a game that by itself was responsible for a marked increase in the sale of the first 'multimedia' computer systems equipped with cdroms in 1993, influenced the development of not only adventure games, but also action games that were to follow. By itself, it accounted for the dramatic rise of a company, and to some extent it's downfall, no more than six years after the game's release.

## A Brief History of Trilobyte and the Development of The 7<sup>th</sup> Guest

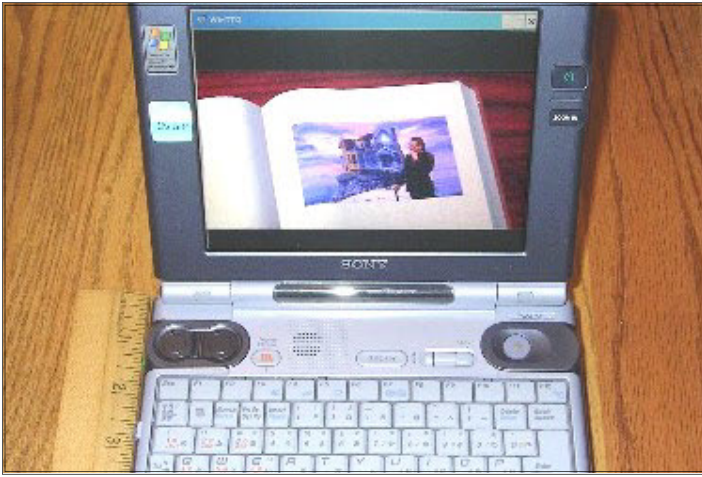
It is not an understatement to say that the combination of the game designer/graphic artist, Rob Landeros and lead programmer, Graeme Devine resulted in the same synergy of genius that characterized Rand and Robyn Miller of Cyan (developer's of the Myst series) and John Carmack and John Romero of id Software (developer's of the Doom/Quake franchise). Landeros and Devine, both new employees for the also new company, Virgin Mastertronic (later Virgin Interac-

tive), met in 1990 and were soon discussing the concept of a game using the new cdrom format when most other companies were more interested in introducing cdroms with encyclopedias and other text-oriented content. Virgin had purchased the rights to produce a version of the classic game Clue and proposed it to its development staff, but Landeros and Devine were not interested and instead developed the concept of a haunted house, puzzle-based game called Guest, apparently influenced by the then popular puzzle-based game, The Fool's Errand by Cliff Johnson (released in 1988).

In late 1990, 'Guest' was presented to Martin Alper of Virgin who quickly saw the potential for the game, but also worried about a counterproductive effect on other developing projects if the game was produced in-house. Thus, Devine and Landeros were 'fired' from Virgin, but at the same time received go-ahead funding to set up a subsidiary of Virgin that would become Trilobyte. The foundation for what would become the 7<sup>th</sup> Guest was laid during 1991. The recent introduction of the graphics development tool, 3D Studio, gave rise to the idea for 3D-rendered visuals. At first, it appeared that there would only be room for advanced graphics in black and white, but clever programming



eventually allowed for '256 colours' graphics, though that would mean that the game couldn't realistically be released on floppy disks (in addition to cdrom) which had been an original requirement of Virgin. A horror writer, Matt Costello, was hired to write the script and the popular game musician, The Fatman, was hired to produce the score. Considerable time was spent by Devine, Landeros and Costello designing the puzzles which had to work with the simple point & click interface. The main development of the game proceeded throughout 1992 with Graeme Devine fine-honing his new Groovie engine that, among other things, would pioneer the new concept of 'streaming' audio and video off the cdrom so that the large data files would not need to be stored on the still very limited hard disks.

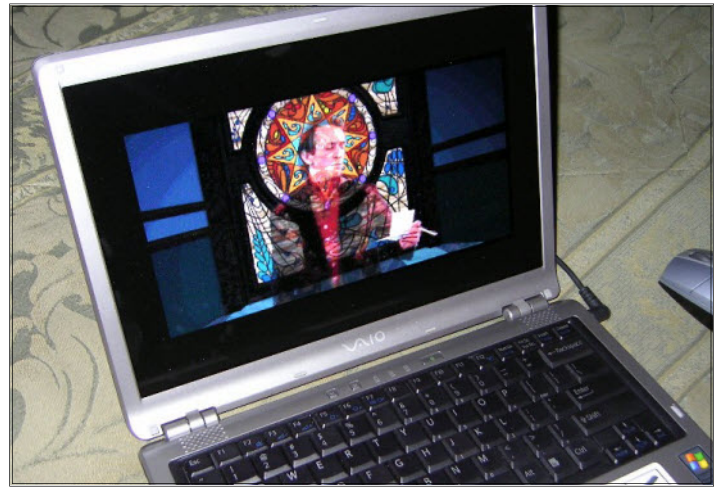


The 7<sup>th</sup> Guest (T7G) was finally released in April 1993 with an initial production run of 60,000 copies; they were snapped up overnight! The sales of computer systems in general, and cdrom drives in particular, soared as a result. The initial and subsequent sales of T7G were beyond anything Trilobyte or Virgin had ever imagined. Sales eventually exceeded 2 million copies and provided a cash flow that would continue almost unabated for at least three years. Unfortunately, that created a scenario that would be repeated during the heyday of computer gaming software production during the 1990s: The sales and financial success of the flagship product would allow the unbridled expenditure of funds on projects that were poorly planned, in some cases ill-conceived, and often lacking realistic business plans.

A sequel to T7G, The 11<sup>th</sup> Hour was well in the planning stages even before T7G was released. Unfortunately, the introduction of the game was bogged down by delays, not the least of which was the need to rewrite the game engine (in order to handle innovations in, and requirements of the graphics) and to re-render every last graphic when it became evident that 256-colour-

based graphics were not going to meet the demands of some of the video presentations. The intended March 1994 release date became November 1995. Adding insult on injury, The 11<sup>th</sup> Hour was released as a Dos game just after the release of Windows 95 with the result that the first buyers had all sorts of installation problems. A Windows version soon followed, but damage had already been done to the game's reputation and contributed to a loss in some profits though the game did go on to sell 1.7 million copies; not an insignificant number even in the heady days of the mid 1990s!

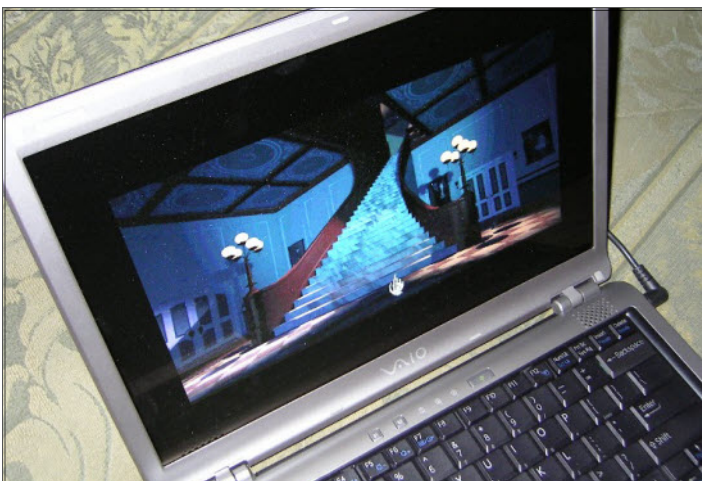
At the same time, flush with cash and T7G-based success, Trilobyte took on questionable projects such as the purchase of a software project, Dog Eat Dog, from Disney and the development of an interactive movie, Tender Loving Care, starring John Hurt. Disagreements developed between Landeros and Devine and increasingly, projects were not meeting deadlines



or staying within their budgets. All the while, money was flowing in from sales of The 7<sup>th</sup> Guest which from 1993 to 1995 continued to reap software awards! A planned third game in the T7G series never came to fruition, though a distantly-related game, Clandestiny, did. A humorous take on puzzles from T7G, The 11<sup>th</sup> Hour and Clandestiny was also released under the name, Uncle Henry's Playhouse, now somewhat of a collector's item because of its very limited release. Though several attempts were made to keep things going, the company that had started with so much promise in 1991 quietly turn off the lights February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1999. Interestingly, Graeme Devine joined id Software to work on the development of Quake 3, Arena.

## The 7<sup>th</sup> Guest, The Game

If you love puzzle-based adventure games and have not played The 7<sup>th</sup> Guest, then you are in for a special



experience. While the initial sales of T7G were likely based more on its then advanced multimedia experience, the continued sales over several years were due to the fact that it is a cleverly constructed game and fun to play. While it is true that the core of the game are the many puzzles of all various types, the game does have both a back story told in an opening video, and also an on-going story with periodic full-motion video sequences that further the plot and add interest to the puzzle-solving. For instance, when playing the game for the first time and finding yourself facing the staircase, turn around to face the coloured-glass door (with the octagon) and go towards it until the cursor changes to the joker-mask. Click on it to find out more about what you are supposed to do and why. Not only the storyline, but the funny and mildly adult-themed comments strewn throughout the game add to the enjoyment of it all; for instance, one woman's comment at the cake puzzle, 'I'll show you mine if you show me yours' and the scream 'Come Ba-a-ack!' that occurs when you click on the menu's Farewell selection.

The main character is the madman Henry Stauf (anagram of Faust) who down on his luck murders a woman for her purse and then after a vision in a dream takes to building dolls and toys which he sells for a profit. He then goes on to build a mansion to which he invites 6 guests who must solve various puzzles in order to make their dreams come true. There is, however, one more guest, the 7<sup>th</sup> guest, who Stauf says hasn't arrived while being elusive about who it is or what it all means. It is your job (as the character Ego) to solve the puzzles and figure it all out. There are various themes in the game that people have hypothesized about, not the least of which being the reason for the name Stauf (ie. the Faust connection). This has served to make the game all the more interesting. Like most puzzle-based games, some of the puzzles are fairly easy while others are very difficult. However, if you get stumped, Henry

has left a Book of Clues in the Library for you!

At any given time, anywhere from a few to several copies of T7G are usually available on Ebay and can be had for often under \$10 USD and sometimes under \$5 so there is no excuse to not get and play the game. Check some of the information that follows before making your purchase.



## The 7<sup>th</sup> Guest Release History (including the various patches)

There has been considerable confusion over the various versions of The 7<sup>th</sup> Guest, mainly due to several available patches and the release in April 1997 of a Windows version. In fact, the situation is not really that complicated. The first release (March 1993) appears to be version 1.22 and can be distinguished by the purple Disk One. Several patches were released between March and August of 1993: *tgpatch.zip* which updated v1.22 to v1.24, *t7gfix3.zip* which appears to be a combination of *t7gf3a.zip* and *t7gf3b.zip* which update several files and *T7G\_130.zip* which updates to v1.30 and not only appears to include all of the previous patches, but also was the last update to the Dos version. Published version 1.30 releases have a blue Disk One (a 'White Label' release is an example). In 1996, Trilobyte released 'beta' versions of a Windows 95 player in the form of *t7gwin.zip* and *t7gwinnv.zip* (the latter does not include an opening video) that allows the Dos version to work respectably well under Windows 95/98 (and, to some extent, Windows XP). In 1997 a Windows 95 version of T7G was released that apparently included the release version of the Windows player. However, the best news for Windows XP users is that in 2005 a clever T7G fan created a T7G installer, *T7Gsetup.exe*, that appears to have fixed most, if not all, glitches that





occurred with some WinXP installations using the previous 'beta' windows player.

## Installing The 7<sup>th</sup> Guest under Windows XP

Installing T7G under WinXP is not difficult and is remarkably reliable considering that the game was designed at least 8 years before the release of WinXP. It doesn't matter whether you have the original version or a later release; however, these instructions do not apply to the Windows 1997 version. Regarding versions available on places such as Ebay: Although, the good news is that T7G is very easy to find and purchase on Ebay, it can be very difficult to determine which version you are getting. For the most part, it doesn't really matter, except that you should know whether you're getting the 1997 Windows 95 version or not because it was not released for, or tested under WinXP and the instructions below will likely not work with it.

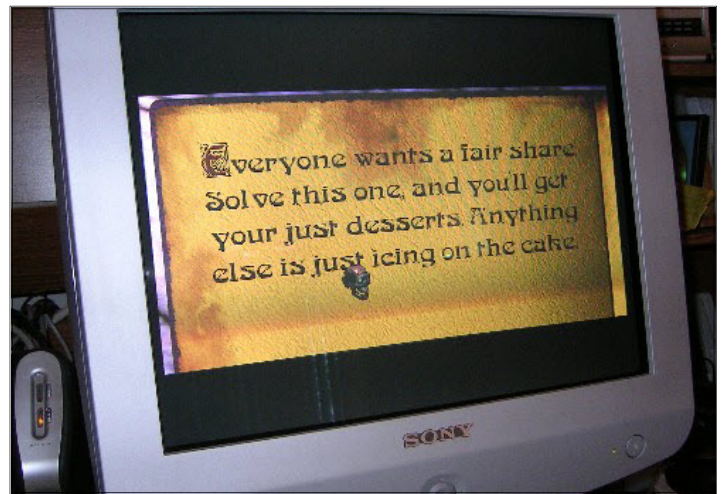
The Windows version does not come up for sale very often and, sometimes, what is described as being the Windows version, isn't! If the information given for the game is unclear, the best way to make sure is to email and ask the seller before the sale whether it specifically says Windows 95 on the front of the box or on the jewel case insert. It is important to note that the Windows version may not work as well on WinXP systems as installations using the fan-based *T7Gsetup.exe* specifically created for WinXP. I have not been able to determine whether the Windows version can be updated using *T7Gsetup.exe* and there is some doubt that it can since, apparently, other changes to T7G (such as changes to some of the puzzles) were also made for the Windows edition. So, in summary, when it comes to getting T7G from Ebay or elsewhere, installation on a WinXP system should work using the instructions below

whether the version is the initial 1.22 or the final 1.30. If it's the Windows 95 version, you're on your own! ☺. Be aware that on Ebay, the release date of T7G for sale is often given as being 1997 which may or may not be accurate. If it is accurate, the version is likely v1.30.

For those who have any of the versions of T7G other than the 1997 Windows 95 version, all you need to be up and running T7G in minutes under WinXP, are the patch *T7G\_130.zip* (if your version is earlier than v1.30) and the *T7Gsetup.exe* installer. (Incidentally, one way of confirming which version you already have is to click on the file, *V.exe*, in the T7G game directory. A Dos-style window will open and the version number will be given at the top.) Do not use the Install instructions that come with T7G. Instead, use *T7Gsetup* to do the install for you. T7G comes on 2 disks, Disk One is for playing the game; Disk Two is for installation only. To install, simply place Disk Two in your cdrom drive and run *T7Gsetup.exe* which will allow you to select a hard drive and directory for installation. The benefit of not using the original T7G Install is that you avoid having to go through the, now primitive, testing of things like cdrom drive speed and video board speed.

Having completed the main installation, now extract *T7G-130.exe* from the *T7G\_130.zip* file (do not bother with the *Install.bat* in the zip file). *T7G-130.exe* is a self-extracting file that, on clicking on it, expands to several files in the same immediate directory. The easiest way to use it is to place *T7G-130.exe* in a temporary directory and click on it there, then copy all the resulting files to the T7G game directory on your hard disk. Alternatively, you can simply copy *T7G-130.exe* to the T7G directory and expand it within that directory. However, be aware that the automatic file extraction is done through a temporary 'command/pseudo-dos' window and you will have to respond 'y' (for yes) to overwrite every file being replaced before exiting the window.

Note that you do not need to use *T7G-130.exe* if you are sure that you already have version 1.30. Also, be aware that *T7Gsetup.exe* at some points gives the impression that it is a full updater in addition to being an installer. However, it isn't as it doesn't add the files that *T7G-130.exe* updates. If you try to run the original version 1.22 without the *T7G-130* update (after installing with *T7Gsetup*), it will run, but the graphics will, from the get-go, be obviously distorted. For those interested in such things, *T7Gsetup.exe* appears to work its magic partly by bypassing the use of the Dos-based file, *Groovie.ini*, that contained information such as the sound board IRQ (interrupt) value and Port Address and instead, uses information provided by WinXP itself. This should prevent problems related to audio and video that did occur using WinXP with the Windows 95 'beta' player which tried to apply the use of the Dos-based *Groovie.ini*, sometimes unsuccessfully.



error message as reported by others on the internet. Luckily, the WinXP update in *T7Gsetup* cleared that up!

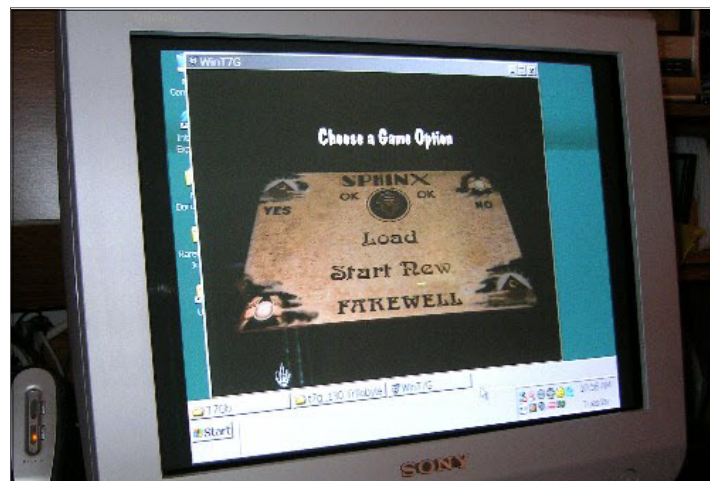
*T7Gsetup.exe* does not place an icon on the desktop so you will need to go into the T7G directory, find the file, *v32tng* (will likely have a joker-mask icon), rt-click on it and choose *Send-to -> Desktop (create shortcut)*. It is not necessary to customize the shortcut for further compatibility with Windows. That is all there is to it; you are ready to run The 7<sup>th</sup> Guest in all its glory!

## Troubleshooting and Other Information

Remember that Disk One must be in the drive before running T7G. Occasionally, on startup, the game may repeatedly ask for Disk One even though you have already placed it in the drive. I found that opening the disk-drive drawer and closing it once or twice did the trick. One would think that this is more likely due to a worn disk, but it happened with both my 13 year old original version and my newer version 1.30 (though always on my desktop computers and not my laptops).

Incidentally, for those who would like to run T7G under Windows 95/98, install the game as per the game instructions (using the T7G native Install), update to version 1.30 (if necessary) using the files from the self-extractor (*T7G-130.exe*), then update with the Windows 95 'beta' player *t7gwin* patch that you can download from the site given below. Interestingly enough, this worked well for me on two laptops running under WinXP before *T7Gsetup* became available. However, it did not work on my WinXP desktop computer which kept giving an 'unknown asset type-please restart'

After installing using *T7Gsetup*, if you don't change the video resolution, the game will play in a relatively small window (which may work just fine depending on the size of your screen). Alternatively, you can press ALT-ENTER to toggle between the window and full-screen mode. On the other hand, you can set your screen resolution to T7G's native 800x600 SVGA in which case ALT-ENTER does nothing. Be aware though that with the higher resolutions people tend to use these days, setting your resolution to 800x600 sometimes has a way of displaying your desktop icons in interesting configurations ☺.



T7G runs remarkably well under WinXP, but there may be occasional hiccups in the audio and/or video. These are usually brief and don't interfere with the enjoyment of the game. Some of these glitches may be helped by adjusting the audio or video acceleration. I haven't been able to confirm that since I haven't had any significant problems so far. Also, some people have reported that the game runs somewhat fast on their computers. I haven't run into this on 3 different computers, although all them do run at or under 2.2GHz.

The game opens with a rather extensive full-motion video to set up the T7G storyline after which you are presented with the Main Menu. Until you get used to it, the menu can be a little tricky. Just remember that the placement of the cursor on the menu is not correct until the 'skeleton hand' has changed to the 'Sphinx Pointer' which is the 'eye on the pyramid' cursor. So, for instance, say you are planning to quit the game and want to save-game: You must move the skeleton hand over a number (to select the save-game number) until it changes to the Sphinx Pointer, then click the left mouse button to make your selection. Next, you will enter a sequence of up to 13 letters to name your SaveGame. When you have completed the name, move the skeleton hand over to 'OK' in the upper left-hand corner until it turns into the Sphinx Pointer, then click.

**WARNING:** If you press the ESC key at any time during the game, no matter where you are or what you are doing, the game will unceremoniously dump you to your Desktop. You must correctly save your game and exit the game using the 'Farewell' option to make sure that your efforts have been saved and the game has not been corrupted. If you forget and press ESC, you will probably be okay though your game won't have

been saved and if you do so before having saved at least once since you first installed the game, you will have to sit through the entire opening video again. Some people have reported minor problems after having exited the game by pressing ESC. Whether the problems actually were due to the abrupt exit is hard to confirm. Also, be aware that while many games now allow you to press ESC to bypass some or all full-motion video sequences; T7G is not one of them. You will skip the FMV alright except that it will be in the form of a skip right back to your Desktop!

## Conclusion

I hope you will give The 7<sup>th</sup> Guest a try. In spite of its age, it holds up remarkably well by today's adventure game standards and if you are a true adventure gamer you will want to see the game that introduced us into the 'modern' adventure gaming age!

### Credit:

Some of the history of Trilobyte came from the excellent article by Geoff Keighley: Haunted Glory, The Rise and Fall of Trilobyte at: <http://www.gamespot.com/features/btg-tri/>

T7G was tested for this article using the Sony Vaio PCG-U1 (700mHz-5inch screen) mini-notebook, the more recent laptop, Sony's Vaio VGN-S460 (1.8GHz-13 inch screen) and a regular desktop computer (2.2GHz) using a Sony 19inch CRT monitor.

**T7G\_130.zip is available at:**

[http://dlh.net/cgi-bin/dlp.cgi?lang=eng&sys=pc&file=t7g\\_130.zip&ref=ps](http://dlh.net/cgi-bin/dlp.cgi?lang=eng&sys=pc&file=t7g_130.zip&ref=ps)

or

<http://files.filefront.com/t7g+130zip/905090/fileinfo.html>

**T7Gsetup is available at:**

<http://home.comcast.net/~t7g/T7Gsetup.exe>

**t7gwin.zip is available at:**

<http://dlh.net/cgi-bin/patdl.cgi?lang=eng&sys=pc&file=t7gwin.zip&ref=ps>

# DARKNESS WITHIN

## In Pursuit of Loath Nolder

By Thaumaturge



The story opens on an asylum, and as our viewpoint moves up the gargoyle-warded walls and into the institution itself, we hear the voice of the man into whose shoes we will step: police detective Howard Loreid. He describes how he came to be brought to this place, and his state since arriving. What he reveals does not bode well for our protagonist.

From there we are sent back to the beginning, to guide the man in the asylum down the path to that end.

We find ourselves in a dim, brown hallway, with a flickering light overhead and strange images marking the walls, accompanied by an eerie piano theme. The doors to either side seem to be locked, all save one. As for that one... well, that would be spoiling the surprise...

And these are but the first steps, a prologue. The story truly begins, I would say, with Howard being assigned to the case of the fugitive private detective, Loath Nolder, a man for whose intellect Howard holds a great admiration, but who is now suspected of a murder connected to Mr. Nolder's most recent case.

He will uncover dark secrets, and a group set on a goal that, while obscure (not to mention occult) very much appears sinister. His sleep will be plagued by vivid visions. He will see things in waking life that will

lead him to doubt his sanity, and truly terrify him. Things that will, at the end, lead him to the place from which we first heard him speak: the Wellsmoth Mental Institution.

Is he mad, or are these horrors real?

And in the face of such waking nightmares, might insanity be seen as a mercy?

Howard Loreid might think so.

It is a storyline quite clearly influenced by the works of Lovecraft (and indeed, the story is framed at either end by quotes attributed to that author). It is a story of dark and ancient powers, that wait perniciously in the shadows, of secret gatherings by those who would call on such powers, and of the madness that awaits those mere mortals who dare to look open-eyed into the fring-

Developer: Zoetrope Interactive  
 Publisher: Lighthouse Int.  
 Platform: PC  
 Genre: Adventure (Horror)  
 Release Date: November 2007



es of reality. I even see a parallel in the name of the place in which the game takes place: "Wellsmoth" sounds rather similar to "Innsmouth", the name of a fictional town in H. P. Lovecraft's work. It is not, however (that I noticed, at least), a direct usage of his work, but rather an original concept in the vein of Lovecraft.

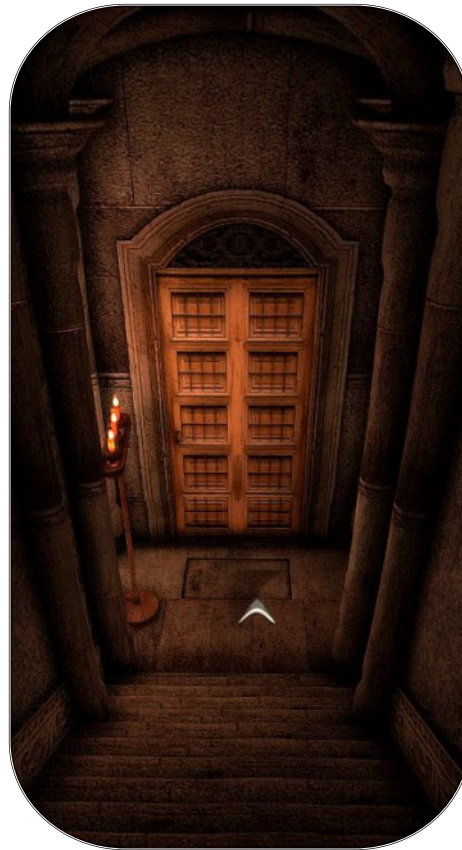
It is also a story that has been very well-constructed and directed, and has good pacing (although it can be a little slow in places). Additionally, the fear and tension generated by the plot is enhanced by the personal involvement of the main character in the preternatural events in which he finds himself. Howard is by no means a passive, external observer and investigator in these events, as he discovers to his horror – in fact, the more that he delves, the deeper he finds himself, and the worse things become for him.

The conclusion to those events is very fitting, and very much in line with the Lovecraftian themes and perspective. I will admit that, when first watching the concluding cinematic, I found myself a little unsatisfied by the questions left unanswered but, in retrospect, it seems to be more true to the style of the story and its themes than would, I suspect, a more expository ending.

Alas, some of the written word found within the game is a little overwrought – specifically, there is a tendency towards the over- and liberal re- use of adjectives, which can seem a little heavy-handed in some cases. It may, of course, be the style of the characters showing through, but the problem seemed to me to be a little too widespread – especially given that there is a fair bit of writing to be found within the game (although I will note that it is not required that players read *all* of the writing to be found). Thankfully, I found this to be a rather minor issue, only decreasing my enjoy-

ment minimally.

This is a good thing, as one of the primary forms of puzzle encountered in this game – and one of my favorites – is the "research" puzzle. These puzzles involve searching through documents (brief ones for the most part, don't worry!) for "clues" - that is, short words or phrases that are significant to the advancement of the plot – which are



uncovered by underlining them with a pen-shaped cursor, and then clicking on a "think" icon. Depending on the current difficulty settings, the number of discovered clues and the total number of standard clues may be displayed at the top-left of the screen.

In addition to the standard clues, at least some documents have hidden clues to be found (perhaps all do – I'm afraid that I didn't uncover all of the hidden clues to be found in the game). If the current difficulty settings include "Clue Counters" being visible, the discovery of the first hid-

den clue in a given document will cause a count of the number of hidden clues found and the total available in the current document to appear just below the standard clue count. These hidden clues can help one to uncover more of the mystery, as well as provide the protagonist with advantage at later points in the story.

These research puzzles can be very interesting to solve, and add greatly to the impression of investigation, and, more specifically, to actually taking part in the investigation rather than merely knowing that the character is investigating. Furthermore, the solution of these puzzles adds to the feeling of progression, most probably as a result of highlighting some of what has been learned from the document, providing new "thoughts" in "Howard's mind" (see below), and at times opening up new directions and new areas to be explored.

It is perhaps worth noting that clues are not always available in a given document from the moment that the document is discovered – in some cases they become relevant only later in the story, and it may be only then that their clues may be found.

As with many types of puzzles, repeated difficulty in uncovering a particular clue or set of clues can lead to frustration, and the application of a brute-force approach to clue-discovery. Luckily, one may underscore a number of lines before clicking on the "think" button (although there is a maximum to the number of underlinings allowed before the "think" button is pressed), and still uncover important clues – this may be less satisfying than spotting the clue and underlining only it, but it can help to resolve a frustrating sticking-point.

Darkness Within has another interesting element, which adds both an unusual form of inventory and another

er form of puzzle: "Howard's mind". This is presented in a large panel, split vertically into two. The left-hand panel lists things that Howard has taken note of – mental notes, essentially – in list form, and sorted for the most part by location. Additionally, dialogs that Howard has heard or taken part in and hints taken are available for recall here. The right side is itself split, with a set of six small panels atop, and a description panel below.

The six panels are combination bins: one can take mental notes or dialogs from the left-hand side, or inventory items from above "Howard's mind", and place them into the panels, to be combined (should the combination be appropriate) on a click of the "think/combine" button, just below the panels. When the elements combined are items from Howard's mental list, the result (if any) may be another such item. Inventory items may also be combined here in the standard adventure game manner to produce a new or changed object.

As with the research puzzles already mentioned, the solution of the puzzles based on combinations found in Howard's mind can be quite rewarding to solve, and again add, in my opinion, to the feel of taking part in an investigation. Unfortunately, this form of item combination suffers from a classic pitfall of the system: there are a number of connections that make sense (to me, at least),



but which do not seem to be valid combinations, and this can be a little frustrating.

As has already been suggested, Howard also carries with him a more traditional adventure game inventory, in which are stored the items that Howard acquires on his path. Naturally, this leads to some inventory-based puzzles, although the focus seems to be the investigative puzzles (and fittingly so, I believe).

One nice inventory feature is the ability to view items in a separate panel. A not uncommon feature in an adventure game, you may say, but it is less common (in my experience, at least) for this view to be three-dimensional, allowing one to rotate and zoom the object being viewed – in order to search for clues hidden on the object.

The inventory panel also holds the button that opens Howard's mind (so to speak).

Finally, there are a few logic puzzles to be found, which are generally quite interesting and enjoyable, have simple-to-grasp controls, and are attractively presented – and, thankfully, I found not one that I was required to solve more than once.

Overall, the puzzles encountered are fair, interesting and enjoyable. I did find myself stuck at times, but generally because I had missed a clue somewhere, or neglected to revisit a particular location, as I recall. Interacting with the game is quite simple, and can be accomplished for the most part with nothing more than the mouse – only exiting to the menu seems to require a key-press (the save game system even provides numerical save game names,





should one not wish to type a saved game name).

The game is built around a system of nodes – set positions that the player can occupy. At each node – save for particular fixed views – one can turn on the spot and look in all directions (albeit limited a little in the vertical) by moving the mouse in the direction in which Howard should turn.

In any node there may be a number of locations in which actions may be performed – exits to other nodes, objects that may be taken or manipulated and elements of interest that may be inspected more closely, for example. These regions are indicated (in all but a few minor cases) by a change of cursor, the particular cursor indicating (broadly) what form of interaction is being indicated: movement, examination, acquisition (as well some forms of manipulation, such as pushing or pulling), interaction (such as operating a mechanism) and “backing away”, which essentially “closes” a view (for example closing a drawer, or returning from a close-up view to the node from which it was accessed). When an inventory item has been selected for use in the world, that item’s icon is used as the cursor, “throbbing” when held over a region in which an inventory item may be used. Lastly, as has already been mentioned, when underlining

clues a pen cursor becomes available.

The inventory (and via its panel, Howard’s mind) is accessed by a right mouse button click – although there are brief sections of the game (such as the first scene) in which the inventory is not available, and right mouse button clicks are answered only with a warning tone.

Within the inventory, certain items themselves can be right-clicked upon. Doing so brings up an interaction interface for them – texts, for example, typically open into a reading interface, which allows one to page through the text (if it has multiple pages), or underline clues (if allowed), while the cell phone opens up an interface from which one can have Howard make telephone calls, whether using Howard’s small contact list or by entering a number of interest.

Graphically, *Darkness Within* is, for the most part, beautiful. The visuals in this game have been modeled with impressive attention to detail, from the arrangement of the environments down to the fine design-work on individual items, and with a quality that I find rather admirable. This is a feat which might be in part a result of the use of largely pre-rendered graphics (which should allow for more complex environments than would be likely with settings

rendered in real-time), combined with some rather effective special effects (such as light bloom) that add life to the scenery.

Each area is populated realistically with miscellaneous items, and arranged in a degree of disarray that suits the location. Papers, boxes and a variety of other items are strewn about a half-renovated house, notes and equipment lie scattered haphazardly over workbenches, and candles provide solemn, numinous light to ancient passageways (although I do wonder who might have lit these lights ahead of Howard...). Blankets on beds are wrinkled, seeming as though used, pictures hang in frames on the walls, and various ornaments and books are found on shelves and mantels.

The textures too are often wonderful, from the peeling paint, rough textures and drab colors of a low-rent building to the dark, vaporous, rough-walled halls of an underground crypt. The materials look right: metals shine convincingly, while stone is duller and rougher of texture, for example. Everything has a slightly weathered, antique feel – the degree, of course, depending on the area in question.

This detail-work even extends to the finer features of individual objects: lamps decorated with attractive patterns and colors, a mirror frame lavishly edged, knot-work designs on



stone tombs, or the small marks and discolorations on various objects that give the impression of their having seen use and time.

There are occasions on which Howard will direct his vision himself – looking around in panic after a nightmare, for example, or looking briefly about a new area. The “camera-work” used here is very good – Howard’s gaze moves in a convincing manner. Additionally, when the player moves between nodes or acts on a part of the environment, the camera orients towards it; another little touch that enhances the sense of being in the shoes of the protagonist, as opposed to watching from the outside.

A variety of effects add to the effectiveness of the graphics. The sense of motion between nodes is reinforced by the last view of the previous node expanding as it fades out, giving a slight impression of forward motion. Light blooms from sources of illumination as one turns to face them. Fear is depicted by a blur emanating from the center of the screen, leaving streaks radiating outwards – an effect not heavy enough to obscure much of importance, but which I found to contribute to a sense of panic. Topping it off is a grainy filter that produces images

that seem more natural than they would without. These effects are not over-used or too heavy, but rather appropriate and in good degree.

There are only three situations in which a fault can be found with the graphics.

The first two are fire and water (when viewed at close range, at least). Both unfortunately look a little too simple to the eye. The former, rendered using the game’s particle system, might have benefited from a little more attention (such as in employing more complex particle shapes); the latter, at least, is seen seldom enough to be a serious problem.

The third problem area is in the field of human beings. The models appear to have overly-square shoulders and faces that seem a little heavily-ridged, and their movements seem a little unnatural. It is thus perhaps somewhat advantageous that human characters are rarely encountered, and when they are met, are often obscured to some degree by darkness.

Acoustically, *Darkness Within* is similarly impressive. The music and ambient sounds are appropriate (both in style and effect) to their place and to the mood of the scene

– most commonly being understated, eerie and lovely. The (seemingly) simple piano piece that plays in the opening hallway scene, for example, is particularly creepy, and helps to set the mood for this otherwise un-introduced sequence. The ambient sounds too can be quite effective. As with the music, I have an example: a particular house, old, empty and half-renovated, and the creepy house-sounds that aptly haunt it.

This quality is not lacking in the game’s sound effects, either. Whether it be Howard’s panicked breathing, the soft rustle of paper, the ringtone of Howard’s cell phone, or just the gentle, slightly hypnotic ticking of a clock, the sounds to be heard are overall accurate and clear. When Howard moves to a new node his footsteps are often heard, their sound reflecting well the material underfoot, and opened doors produce creaks and clicks that seem to fit their sources well.

This quality, combined with good positioning in their environment (although not always perfect) and the already-mentioned ambient sounds and music, very much enhanced the sense of reality in this game.

The voice acting, I am glad to say, is actually not bad. In fact, I found the voice of Howard specifically to be



very engaging, and thought it a pity that not all of his thoughts are voiced. Another well-spoken piece of voice acting is given for the Lovecraft quotes that frame the story. They are given in a voice that is calm, slightly low in tone, but not overacted, and are rather fitting to the lines.

On the down side, I did find the voices to be sometimes a little soft amidst their accompanying noises.

Between the graphics, sound and music, Darkness Within managed to build a very effective atmosphere. This is a world that often feels worn and lived-in (in those more "human" places, that is...), and slightly old-fashioned (the game is set in 2011, but shows little advancement in technology over the modern day – this is, however, perhaps appropriate for the feel of the game, and didn't feel anachronistic).

One might think that a (relatively) static viewpoint might not be terribly immersive. In this case, it is not true at all. Between the freedom of viewing direction, the convincing effects (both visual and auditory, and including a flashlight whose illumination bends quite appropriately about the scenery over which it is drawn) and the wonderfully creepy atmosphere, I found myself effectively immersed.

The whole serves to immerse one in Howard's world, enhancing the impression of reality, leaving one at times almost feeling as though those walls might be touched or the pages of a book flipped through, their texture richly felt by fingertip.

Finally, Darkness Within provides a good range of difficulty options, starting with a basic selection from three levels of difficulty when starting the game, and then providing in-game the possibility of further customization via the game menu's "Difficulty Options" section.

One such option that is perhaps worth mentioning is that of hints.

Hint provision can be set to one of three states: "Always", "On" and "Off". "Always" provides hints whenever they are available, "On" has the game wait for a period before offering a hint (intending that they only be made available when the player is stuck), and "Off", of course, offers no hints.

Having an built-in hint system of this sort is good and I am quite fond of the options provided. While not all the hints were terribly useful (with exceptions, as I recall), they are nevertheless a welcome feature.

Before I conclude, I would like to mention a few technical problems that were encountered. The most serious of these was a quite noticeable delay when moving between nodes during a large portion of the game, combined with a temporary slowness of response immediately afterwards. There was also a greater delay when returning from the game menu to the game itself. These speed issues may, however, have been related to my having selected graphical settings perhaps a little higher than my system was up to handling – although if so, the degree seems to me to be disproportionate.

Speed issues aside, I also noticed (albeit only once each) a cursor glitch, a minor graphical glitch, and a bug which caused the underlining of a particular hidden clue to increment the hidden clue counter repeatedly, even taking the count above the stated number of hidden clues. Of these, only the cursor glitch was a problem, and that was readily enough solved (although I'm afraid that I forget as I write this how I achieved that).

To conclude, Darkness Within: In Pursuit of Loath Nolder is an excel-

lent game. The graphics are often beautiful, and all three of graphics, sound and music are excellent. The story is interesting and well-told, and all together produce a creepy atmosphere and an immersive experience, and one that I thoroughly enjoyed.

What problems I did encounter were well-outweighed in my estimation by the positive aspects of this game, and therefore are not enough for me to withhold my endorsement. If you like psychological horror, Lovecraftian stories, and investigation holds appeal for you, then this is a game that I very much recommend.

In the end, the game leaves us with the question of how much of what Howard sees and hears is in fact real – or, given the game's opening quote, how separated reality and insanity truly are. Perhaps it is the sane who truly do not see reality.

If I may offer a little parting advice: Wait until the dead of night, when all others nearby are asleep. Turn off the lights, listen through a good set of headphones, and travel with Howard Loreid through the darkness...

At least one of you may see the light again.



**Minimum System Requirements:**  
 Windows 2000, XP, Vista  
 1 GHz processor  
 256 MB RAM (512 for Vista)  
 128 MB DirectX 9.0 video card  
 4X CD-Rom or PC DVD-Rom  
 1GB Hard Disk Space  
 Mouse, Keyboard and Speakers

**SAM & MAX EPISODE 201**

**Ice  
Station  
Santa**

By Gnome



*Funny.* Yes, *funny.* Quite a precise yet not overly complicated way of describing the first episode of the second season of those appropriately seasonal Sam & Max episodes, that is stylistically in stark contrast to the rest of this sentence. *Polished,* too. “*Point-and-click episodic adventure game*” wouldn’t be far from the truth either and does spring to mind, but I guess you already knew that, didn’t you. Then again, I got this feeling the funny and polished

bits didn’t come as much of a surprise either, as this is the 7<sup>th</sup> Sam & Max game released during the last 11 or so months. You’ve sort of come to expect these things. As for being seasonal, festive even, well, episode 201 isn’t called Ice Station Santa for nothing you know...

role as the spearhead of the adventure invasion in the dull lands of mainstream gaming. First of all, you’ve got the beefy and fun tutorial to ease new players into the genre. Then you’ve got a great and rather innovative hint/difficulty selection system delivered via Max, a couple decent arcade-y distractions in the guise of a driving and a boxing bit, brilliantly cinematic art direction, great graphics, great music, a satisfyingly self-contained bizarre story, a plot twist, the return of the Whack-A-Rat mini-game, a ridiculously reasonable price tag and the fact that Max is still the President of the good ol’ US of A.

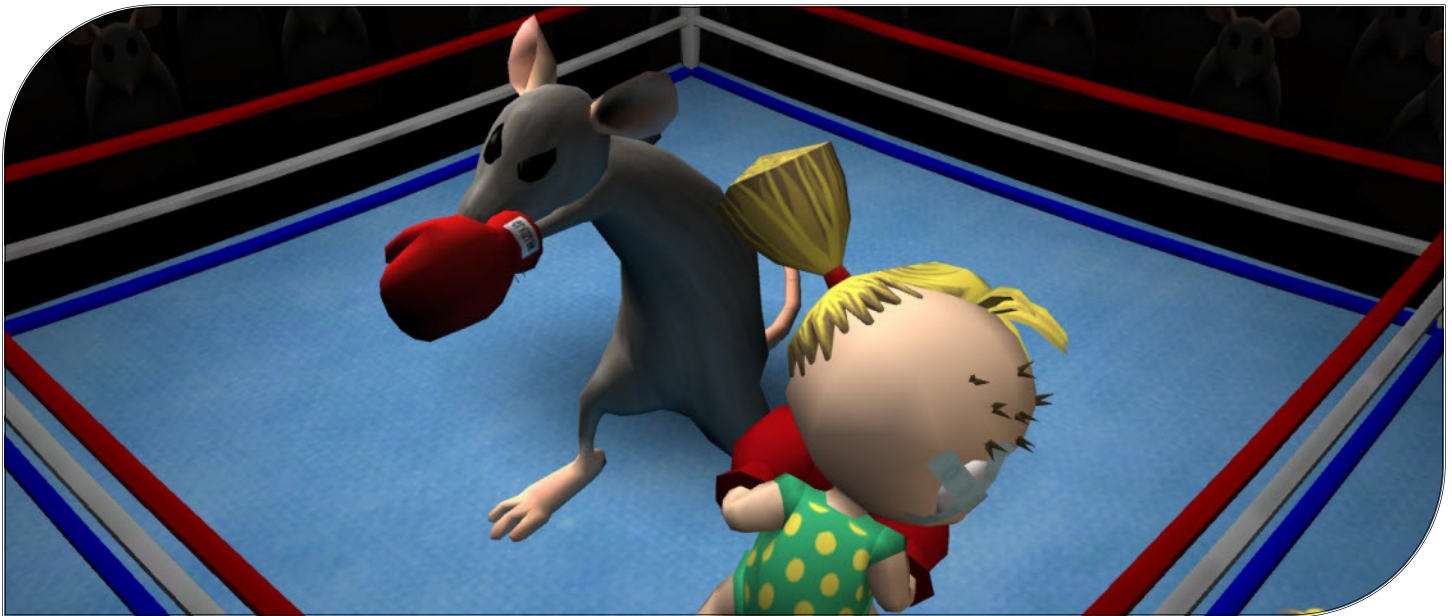


Actually, it is called Ice Station Santa mainly because a) Ice Station Santa does indeed feature as a brand new in-game locale b) Santa is in the game and c) the name makes sense for a game released just a bit before the lucrative Christmas period. Happily, the disgusting, overly sweet tone of Christmas has been left behind too, meaning this is a game that can be easily enjoyed by us not particularly festive misanthropes. There even are a few decent, excellent (by video game standards) and quite anarchic, Xmas related gags too!

Besides being funny enough to prove that the well-oiled humor machine that is Telltale is still running properly, Ice Station Santa does also quite a few things to evolve the series and cement the company’s

Returning fans and veteran adventurers, on the other hand, will be

Developer: Telltale Games  
 Publisher: Telltale / GameTap  
 Platform: PC  
 Genre: Adventure  
 Release Date: November 2007



thrilled to notice that they haven't been ignored either. Well, not yet at least, though I do feel quite safe with Telltale's lads and lasses. They are no Lucasarts, you know. Anyway, Ice Station Santa retains the series' trademark imaginative yet not particularly taxing puzzles, razor sharp writing, surreal situations and Lucasarts-style gameplay. What's more, you –yes, you, dear adventurer- will probably also notice that the game does indeed feel a bit longer, more elaborate, slightly more difficult and all around heftier. Every character from series 1 makes a welcome comeback and a select few silly new ones have been introduced. Oh and finally, Stinky's Dinner has now opened its doors providing some interesting culinary solutions served by a brand new, apparently resident, character, while the whole neighborhood has been rearranged in the oddest of ways. Every old location has been heavily redone, giving old settings new character and importantly old characters have been slightly tampered with too, providing with some lovely inside jokes.

So, in a nutshell and making sure the review's length keeps with the game's, you shouldn't really think about this no matter what you thought of/did with the previous

Sam & Max offerings. It an absolute must play. Download episode 201 safe in the knowledge that the show just isn't getting old. It's instead improving in every technical way imaginable, while happily retaining puzzles and writing of the highest quality.

Oh, and the credits sequence was simply brilliant.



**Minimum System Requirements:**  
 Windows XP , Vista  
 1.5 GHz processor  
 256 MB RAM  
 32 MB 3D-Accelerated Video Card  
 Mouse, Keyboard and Speakers

# GULPA INNATA

By Wendy Nellius



## What's your world vision?

In what appears to be the middle of the solar system, a man is giving a lecture to children about the dangers facing Earth. The future is 3000 AD and the earth's atmosphere is heating up beyond what was expected. The planet is dying....burning up from the sun. An incredible and seemingly impossible feat of science will be necessary to save Earth. Hmm.....sound familiar? Global warming?

The scene quickly switches to graduation day at the Immigration Academy of the New World Order. A rousing and downright creepy commencement speech is taking place spouting that the most selfish, determined, strongest, intelligent and wealthy shall inherit the world. It ends with chanting of those same mantras. My initial thoughts are "Freaky Cult Central".

## Adrianopolis - 2047 A.D.

The World Union was created as a way of bringing together only the best people that the world has to offer...a kind of un-natural selection. The World Union promises an environment that is crime-free, religion-free, technologically superior and offers great prosperity to those who seek it providing their worth meets the World Union standards. A citizen's status in the Union is determined by their worth (credibility) and they are assigned numbers (Human

Development Index) designating such based upon their knowledge, education, work experience, health status, future worth and accumulated wealth. Increasing one's HDI will also increase their status in the Union. All countries which are not part of the World Union are considered to be Rogue States. Those wishing to immigrate to the World Union must endure vigorous training (brain-washing?...sorry...couldn't help myself) in the Immigration Academy which is where our story begins.

You will be playing as Phoenix, an officer with the Global Peace and Security Network (GPSN). The GPSN is in charge of maintaining law & order in the Union and is housed in the same building as the Immigration Academy. Gameplay begins in Phoenix's office. A quick check around the office and Phoenix realizes her PA (Personal Assistant) is missing. But, there's no time

Developer: **Momentum**  
 Publisher: **Strategy First**  
 Platform: **PC**  
 Genre: **Adventure**  
 Release Date: **October 2007**



to look for it just yet. An urgent request comes in from Chief Dagmar Morssen. Phoenix heads over to the office only to learn that a World Union citizen has been murdered in one of the Rogue states. As a Senior Officer, Phoenix has been chosen to lead the investigation from the Adrianopolis side. While another officer, Julio (a backstabbing little weasel) has been assigned to help her, don't expect much more than sarcastic emails from him. Her first task is to locate her PA and then it's off to the heart of Adrianopolis to solve the case.

Culpa Innata is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person adventure that comes complete on 1 DVD-Rom. It did seem to take quite a long time for the initial installation to begin loading. But, the rest of the installation went quickly and the game is able to be played without use of the DVD in the drive. Gotta love that. Initially, I tried running the game on my laptop, but not having a independent graphics card had the graphics looking extremely choppy. So, it's important that your computer meets the minimum system requirements. I ended up playing on my desktop with no problem.

If you're going to play Culpa Innata, you better like chatting it up with the NPC's because you will be doing a hell of a lot of it. This game has a lot of dialog. Interviewing civilians and suspects is Phoenix's primary mode of investigation. What is perhaps the most impressive and something we haven't seen in quite a while is



the amount of dialog choices presented. And, these choices actually make a difference in the game. When presented with a citizen to interview, you will have options available as to which questions to ask. Ask the correct one and maybe you'll finish with this witness in only two interview sessions. Pick the wrong one and you may end up interviewing this person many, many times. Tactics that I thought would be appropriate to the interviewee apparently weren't. And, there are many levels in the dialog trees. So, you technically could make a good decision on the first level and

screw it up on the next one. I personally can attest to the multiple interviews as I always seemed to go the wrong direction. I guess that's why I'm playing a game instead of joining the police force. Another factor to add into the mix is the amount of time you can spend interviewing a citizen. A peace officer can not infringe excessively on a citizen's time, so even if you haven't finished, Phoenix will end the interview and have to return on another day. Each citizen that you interview has important information to share. This information can lead you to another citizen or open up a new location to explore. But, again, the line of questioning you take will make a difference.

Another part of the game where choosing correctly is essential is during the security interviews. It is Phoenix's job to question Novices (those immigrants who have completed the academy training) and either approve or deny citizenship in the World Union. Phoenix is armed with her questions and a computer that will analyze the interviewee's responses similar to that of a lie detector machine. I found myself doing a lot of pondering during this game. For example, after I approved someone for citizenship that I most certainly did not like, I went back and replayed the interview a few times until I found what I was looking for.....a most definite reason NOT to approve. I found something my initial line of questioning had not revealed, nor my 2<sup>nd</sup> line



either. Seeing as how I am playing as Phoenix, a security interview essentially is being conducted by a person who is insufficiently trained to do so. How often does that happen in the world we live in? I'm sure too many to count.

Phoenix may not be the most experienced officer; in fact she seems to be quite naïve on multiple matters. Having been raised entirely in the World Union, she tends not to understand slang phrases or certain concepts such as marriage or relationships in general. This is a slight hindrance in her investigative skills. But, this is not her fault. The raising of a child is done completely by the World Union, not the parents. So, she would only learn what is taught to her as acceptable in the Union. Towards the end of the game, you can see Phoenix beginning to question certain aspects of the world union in a subtle way, effectively portraying her dedication as an officer and her attempt to adhere strictly to the rules, but also showing the emerging signs of someone who is not meant to blindly follow.

Not everything in the World Union is about investigating the case at hand. There is a hint of SIMS blended in the game as well. You can go to Phoenix's apartment at any time and watch a little television. While Phoenix is automatically dressed in her uniform during the day, you can choose what she will wear for eve-



ning excursions. And, there are the evening chat sessions with Phoenix's best friend Sandra. I could have done without those. Honestly, it seemed like she wanted to meet every night for a while and no option to decline. I was wondering if she had other friends she could hang out with. Sandra has a limited scope of conversation ranging from sex to derogatory comments about immigrants to sex again. In fact, sex (accepted in the Union in only the casual form) tends to be a regular focus throughout the Union and pops up even in the interviewing process. You won't see anything, but you sure will hear about it a lot.

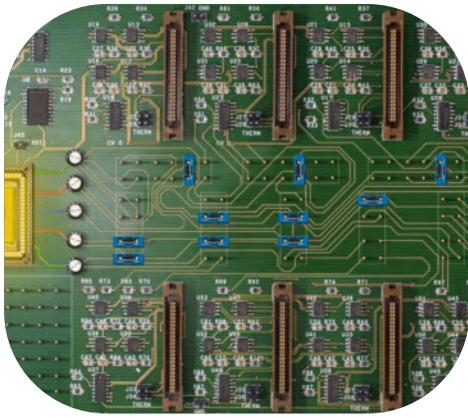
Culpa Innata is almost completely non-linear. You can leap to any available location using the map loaded on Phoenix's PA.....that is, once you've found it. It's one of the initial tasks in the game. As you

progress through the game, more locations are added.

Although the game is non-linear, timing is important. You move through the game based upon real-time. Phoenix will only do so much during the workday before she decides it's time to go home. You won't have any choice as to when she quits for the day so it is essential to plan your route using the map to maximize time. Obviously, jumping back and forth between more distant points on the map will take up more time. Some locations such as the Business District or The Pyramid allow Phoenix to walk up and down the streets as there are clues hidden everywhere. Other locations confine you to a specific office or room.

When moving around within rooms or out on the street, directional arrows are provided to help you navigate your surroundings. However, the directional arrows could be a bit confusing at times and did not always send you where you think you should be going. Camera angles had a lot to do with this and could be a little disorienting as to which direction you were currently facing. But, once you've worked an area for a while, you get used to the quirks and should not have a problem. This area should, however, be refined a bit in the future. A question mark





denotes items in the environment that can be examined. If they can be further manipulated, a magnifying glass will replace the question mark.

The PA (which is always attached to your ear) is your biggest resource. In the game, Phoenix will view her PA as a holographic image appearing before her. She interacts with her PA via voice commands. You, as the player, will see the PA as a blue, tabbed screen. The PA houses Phoenix's contact list for calls, her inventory of collected items, a diary where she details her progress and game controls where you can save, load, exit, or adjust volumes/graphic quality. Inventory items can be further manipulated within the inventory screen. The inventory interface is by no means my favorite only because you must make multiple clicks in order to use an item: right click to access inventory, left click to select an item and left click on gear icon to activate it for use. If you choose wrong, you must repeat these steps all over again. Not a deal breaker by any means...just not the best.

*Momentum* has spent a great deal of effort on their patented facial animation technology. Well, this was money and time well spent. A couple of times, it looked as though the characters would pop right off the screen. Gorgeous....simply gorgeous. And, you'll deal with all types of characters in this game:

the ditz, the flake, the moron, the rudeness personified, and the shady. Here and there, they'll throw in somebody normal to mix it up a bit. Some will downright frustrate you and you'll wish you could pop them in the head just once....or twice (ok, maybe a full fledged virtual beating for those special few like the ditz at The Thing Store or that witch who gave Phoenix a hideous makeover at Roger Arnett's salon). The voices for Phoenix and Chief Morssen are really great and have the right inflections to make them believable. Roger Arnett and his annoying assistant were done equally as well whether you liked the voices or not.. A lesser



quality is noticeable primarily when foreign accents are attempted for some of the NPCs. Sometimes it's just a less natural inflection or pauses placed incorrectly that are apparent. Since the game is heavy on dialog, this may be a turn-off for some. For me personally, it was only minor as Phoenix has the overall majority of the dialog and I thoroughly enjoyed the conversations and the dialog format.

While the background environments don't match up to the stellar facial animation quality, they are fun and quite fascinating. There is a blend of old and new elements together in one environment. For example, the GPSN offices are housed in what looks like an old stone castle/monestary but the technology inside speaks of the future. There

are pod like elevators, PA's affixed to every ear, a more futuristic looking subway system and every outdoor area is much cleaner. There are no flying cars or anything like that. But, this would be cliché. It is a much more realistic representation of jumping ahead 30 years. The landscape has been maintained....just updated. And, *Momentum* gives you lots of places to go and lots of things to examine within the environments. Not all are useful, but add to the gaming experience.

Puzzles are a mixture of dialog, logical and inventory. By far, the most numerous puzzles center around the dialog and piecing together small bits of information gleaned from interviews. But, you'll also have all kinds of codes to figure out; a lot of which must be worked through on the computer. You'll get to reconstruct video and images. You'll also get a mental workout with a certain fuse puzzle. There are doors to unlock and a killer circuit puzzle. When's the last time you had to figure out a Rubik's Cube? Hope you remember, because you'll be doing it again. All in all, a nice diverse set of puzzles all can enjoy.

Since *Culpa Innata* can be quite a long game (depending on your interviewing skills), it's equally important to have a storyline that can maintain the player's interest. *Momentum* does an outstanding job on this. They don't dump the story on you all





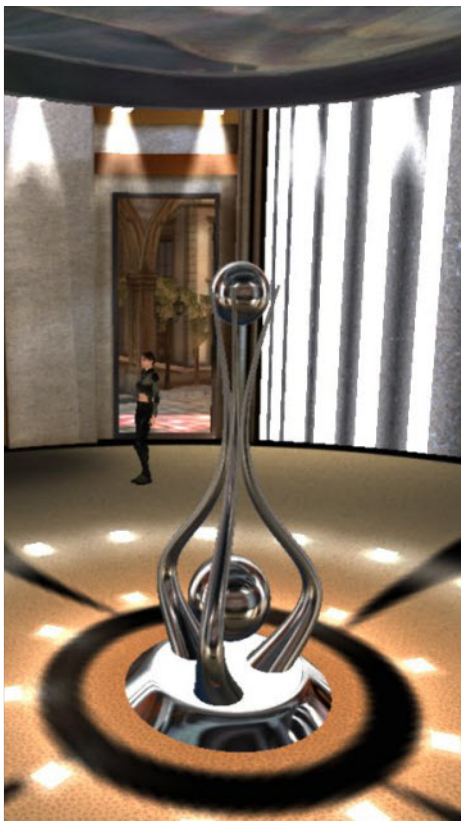
at once in big, enjoyment-sucking clumps. They feed it to you bit by bit in small doses throughout the entire game. They lead you along through multiple twist and turns. I don't want to spoil anything so I'll just say that there are a lot of layers to the story, it takes you in some surprising directions. And, it's not all serious. There are some funny bits in there as well such as the "Al

Bundy" shoe salesman, the "Thing Store" that sells (can it be???) things or just the crazy characters and amusing quips. Job Well Done!!

Now, for the negative. Shortly after releasing the game, *Momentum* released a patch in order to fix some bugs and crashes players were experiencing. I did play with the patch installed, but unfortunately, still experienced a few problems here and there. The worst was a crash after a tedious video reconstruction puzzle. I would place the last piece, see a crucial piece of evidence and bam.....crash to desktop. It occurred over and over and I was about to give up. But, I decided to see if visiting another location and then returning to the puzzle would fix it. It did and I was able to continue.....but a little unhappy about that bit; having to do the puzzle from the beginning each time it crashed. I also got stuck next to one of the "things" at the thing store. Just couldn't seem to move Phoenix at all. Of course, I hadn't saved in quite a bit (my bad) so I had to replay and avoid being near that "thing" again. The final glitch was getting stuck on stage at the Stardust club. That one was resolved with pure clicking perseverance. While these problems were sporadic,

they do still exist within the game, patch or not.

Now, how do I determine a fair grade? This is difficult. Due to the story, puzzles, non-linear gameplay and dialog choices, *Culpa Innata* is hands-down my favorite game this year and I'd love to give it a solid A. Re-playability is a big factor as well. I know that there are a ton of things I missed because of my choices. I can see playing this game multiple times to see what changes. While having acknowledged issues that might bother other gamers, the only issues that really had any negative affect for me were the crashes/bugs and a slight irritation with the interface. However, bugs/crashes are my personal pet peeve. But, because the positives heavily outweigh the negatives, I have decided to still give the game a solid B. My hope is that another patch will be released to fix these issues as this is not a game to be missed. It is truly an experience we haven't had in a long time. So, my suggestion is to absolutely get this game. Just be diligent about saving your games and you should be good to go.



**Minimum System Requirements:**  
 Windows 2000, XP, Vista  
 Intel Pentium III 8000 Mhz, AMD  
 Ahtalon XP1600+  
 512 MB System RAM  
 128 MB DirectX 9.0 Video Card  
 3.5 GB Hard Drive Space  
 DVD-ROM

# Nancy Drew

## Legend of the Crystal Skull

By Wendy Nellius

If there's one thing you can count on nowadays, it's Her Interactive releasing two Nancy Drew games a year, proving their reliability and giving ND fans a "sure thing" and something to look forward to each year. The seventeenth in the series, Legend of the Crystal Skull has Nancy flying off to New Orleans for some of that Creole magic the town is known for. And, as an added bonus, Bess is along for the ride. This will be the first ND game in which Bess is present in-person instead of just available via phone.

It won't be all fun and games. Nancy has promised Ned that she will check in on a certain Henry Bolet when she arrives. Henry's Great-Uncle has just passed away and he's at his Uncle's estate for a couple



of weeks to tie up loose ends. It's not as if Ned is really friends with Henry (not many people are), but Ned has some compassion for him, and that's all Nancy needs to know.

So, upon arrival in New Orleans, Nancy immediately heads over to the estate to get this favor out of the way so she can get down to having fun. A knock on the door, to no answer, and Nancy steps inside only to be accosted by a skeleton dressed in a fancy suit. He throws some kind of powder in her face and she's knocked out. Seriously, if things like this happened to me everywhere I went, I'd never leave the house again.

Nancy's determination to find the identity of the skeleton man and a never-ending rainstorm keeps her at the estate and leads to some fascinating revelations about Henry's uncle and his connections to a mysterious artifact. And, off we go...

As with all the Nancy Drew PC games, Legend of the Crystal Skull

is a 1<sup>st</sup> person adventure coming complete on two CDs. Oddly enough, while the CDs are listed as Install/Play CDs, I was able to play the game on my laptop without the use of a Play CD. I assumed you would need one, but upon switching over to another game, I realized that I did not have the CD in and was able to play the game just fine. As with "The White Wolf of Icicle Creek", the game installs a launch program called "Nancy Drew Central". This allows you to launch any of the ND games you currently have installed from one screen. It also links you up to HerInteractive for support or to purchase other games. It's not my favorite feature. While the concept

**Developer:** Her Interactive  
**Publisher:** Her Interactive  
**Platform:** PC  
**Genre:** Adventure  
**Release Date:** October 2007



is good, I personally like to make my own choices as to what I'm linked to. Moving on.

The game begins in Nancy's bedroom at home. You have the option to look back at old cases for a trip down memory lane, read about the mechanics of the game, learn about the current case or click on the plane ticket to start the game immediately. Once you click on the plane ticket, you will be given the choice of playing as a Junior or Senior Detective. The Junior mode will be slightly easier, offering more hints and also giving you a checklist that will help decide a direction when unsure of what to do next.

The interface is your basic ND point-and-click with directional arrows to lead the way. The classic magnifying glass to examine and the hand

to pick-up/interact are also included. You will get to interact with the environment playing as Nancy and alternatively as Bess. Switching back and forth is accomplished by using the cell phone to call one another.

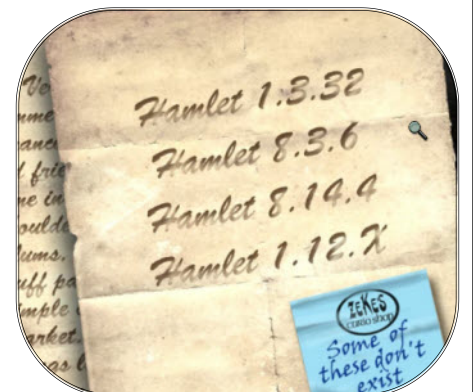
At the bottom of the game screen is where you'll find Nancy's inventory (represented by a backpack), her journal, cell phone and task list. Although, if you're playing in Senior mode, there won't be anything available on the checklist. You can load, save or quit the game or change the game's settings from this location as well. Options for settings include voice, effects and music volume, turning on/off closed-captioning, changing the color of the bottom border and adjusting your screen size. As simply as placing an "X" in a box, you can adjust the screen size for CRT or LCD monitors or run

the game in a smaller window.

The game is graphically pleasing and it is obvious HerInteractive takes strides to improve with each game while still keeping the flavor of the original games. For example, the characters' faces get more detailed with each game and in this game, the bodies are much more natural looking than in previous games. But, as with the very first ND game, the characters maintain their positions in their environments throughout the game. Henry Bolet is seated at a desk through the entire game while another character (Renee) maintains her station out on the back porch. Even if a character is missing from a scene, they will re-appear later in the same exact spot. While it would be nice to see some movement, this seems to be a ND style that has prevailed throughout the series.

The 2D backgrounds are crisp, clear and shrouded in darkness for the most part. When you begin the game, a message pops up suggesting that you play with all the lights out to maximize your experience. Nancy spends most of her time exploring the secrets hidden within the estate, the surrounding garden and the cemetery for which Bruno Bolet (the great-uncle) was a caretaker. A nice touch on the graphical side is seeing the silhouette of Nancy and her shadow as she walks through the cemetery. Bess' exploration is limited to a local café and an eclectic

Surname	Buried	Remains
Hanna	January 14, 1973	Crowing Crypts
Dirtgreaser	January 18, 1973	Sorrow Park
Barnchaser	February 24, 1973	Slumber Garden
Evelyn	February 26, 1973	Slumber Garden
Gwendolyn	March 6, 1973	Sleeping Meadows
Justine	March 17, 1973	Forty Winks Mausoleum
Eula	April 8, 1973	Forty Winks Mausoleum
Pia	April 18, 1973	Crowing Crypts
Alberta	April 21, 1973	Writing Roots Mausoleum
LaLette	April 29, 1973	Crowing Crypts
Lalange	June 9, 1973	Forty Winks Mausoleum
Laetitia	June 13, 1973	Crowing Crypts
Zoe	August 14, 1973	Sorrow Park
Kimberleigh	August 29, 1973	Slumber Garden



tic little shop. As stated before, it is a rainstorm that keeps Nancy from traveling back to her hotel. And, rain is what you'll see and hear throughout the game. In fact, you may get a little sick of all the rain. While it does help convey a specific mood, you'll be begging for a bit of sunshine (and silence) a few hours into gameplay.

In addition to the CONSTANT sound of rainfall, there are other ambient sounds that add to the gaming experience. This is another element that HerInteractive really takes the time to get right. Different doors each have their own distinct sound. Turning pages of a book have that slide & flip sound. Footsteps sound differently on each type of walking surface. The sounds of the local bug population add their own voices to the outdoor chorus. Good job done here.



While you do get a chance to talk to other characters, it's pretty limited. More time is spent on puzzles than anything else. I actually had considerable fun with the puzzles this time around and there were a lot of them. Most of the puzzles involve deciphering cryptic messages and codes. One that I think was most enjoyable was reading a cryptic clue and trying to find a person's name out of a huge list that best fit that clue. Once you found one name, you had to go and visit their grave/crypt and get another clue. One particularly frustrating puzzle involved a game similar to skeeball. Guess my aim stinks so this one took me quite a while.

Only one puzzle seemed a little like a menial chore only because you had to do it multiple times and it got harder and faster with each subsequent visit. But, the tasks in Crystal Skull are nothing compared with previous titles like White Wolf where you had to cook breakfast, lunch and dinner every single day at a specific time. Thanks Goodness!!! You're also not bound by a clock in this game so you're not as restricted. You can die in this game, but the 2<sup>nd</sup> chance option (or 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> etc) is available.

On a side note, there was a particu

lar scavenger hunt in the game where you have to locate mushrooms. Ok, all I'm saying is that the mushroom skeeved me out.

While we still haven't gotten back to the original snooping and obsessive questions of the original Nancy Drew, this latest installment had enough puzzles of variety to make the game fun and thoroughly interesting. The story was good and made sense. Overall, Crystal Skill is a solid Nancy Drew game. Even if you're not a Nancy Drew fan, the puzzles are fun and make this a title worth exploring.



**Minimum System Requirements:**  
 Windows XP , Vista  
 1 GHz Pentium III processor  
 128 MB RAM  
 1 GB Hard Drive Space  
 32 MB DirectX 9.0 Video  
 24x CD-ROM Drive  
 Mouse, Keyboard and Speakers

# Darkfall: Lights Out

By La Primavera



*Dark Fall: The Journal*, a 1st-person point and click adventure game created essentially by one man, Jonathan Boakes, is the better of the two games he and his company have introduced to date. [The second game is *Dark Fall II: Lights Out*, which was already reviewed by Adventure Lantern and can be viewed in our online archive]

As far as I know, this game entered the consciousness of adventure gamers through word-of-mouth via the Internet, was subsequently picked up by the Adventure Company and went on to become a very popular and successful game which

has been translated into 5 languages.

So what is this game all about?

### Ghosts and ghostbusters...

"If there's something strange in your neighborhood...  
Who you gonna call?  
Ghostbusters!

"If there's something weird and it don't look good

Who you gonna call?  
Ghostbusters!"

All right, it's sooo 1980's (am I the only one here who is old enough to sort of remember hearing this song?), but I couldn't help singing. *Dark Fall: The Journal* is indeed about ghosts and ghostbusters.

**Place:** Dowerton in Dorsetshire, England.

**Date:** Unknown.

### Time of day:

Night. A very dark night.

Your brother left a message on your answering machine, begging you to come to Dowerton right away. He is an architect working on a restoration project there. He sounded afraid...mortally afraid. There was something weird going on in that small town – eerie noises, strange visions, and town's residents disappearing. Two college kids, the ghostbusters, arrived to study these paranormal phenoms. They have disappeared as well. As he was leaving you the message, he heard someone, or something, knocking on his door. "I have to answer the door", he said, and then horrible noises ensued as if he was being devoured by a monster. The phone message ends abruptly. You take the last train of the evening and speed through the night to Dowerton.

---Fade To Black---

**Developer:** Jonathan Boakes  
(XXV Productions)  
**Publisher:** Adventure Company  
**Platform:** PC  
**Genre:** Adventure  
**Release Date:** June 2002





enthusiasm of the player. You may want to take meticulous notes, because just about all the clues you can collect will be needed to solve the puzzles: graffiti in the toilet, ink blot on the hotel's front desk, a passage in a book or a take-out menu on the wall.

And that, actually, is one of my few complaints about this game: too meticulous. This is not a fast-paced action-packed game by nature, and you can spend eternity wandering and exploring. However, when every single piece of information you can observe and glean counts toward solving the mystery, information gathering becomes too tedious and no longer fun. You want some breathing room. You should be able to miss certain items, things, events, books, and still figure out the puzzles.

When you come to, you find yourself in a dark tunnel. A boy is talking to you, but you can't see him. He tells you to look around. You are at the Downton train station, and you are looking at the train platforms and the station hotel ahead. In the dead of night, both look as if they've been abandoned for quite some time. The boy tells you they were not always like that, and asks you to please help.

Will you help? What are you going to do? Or, what can you do?

**Non-Linear.....Almost**

After the initial cut scene and the encounter with the boy, the game is pretty much non-linear. I liked this aspect of the game the best.

The boy (voice in the tunnel) prompts you to go forward and step on the platform. If you try to proceed toward the station hotel, he will tell you not to go there yet and suggests

it would be a good idea to have a bit of light first. So you are required to somehow turn on the light for the whole station complex before exploring the place. Once that's accomplished, you are free to go anywhere, anytime, and in any order. There is no puzzle that has to be solved within a finite time period. You won't get killed by anyone, or anything. As far as I have observed, there is no event that has to be triggered by something else. You cannot get into certain rooms without the keys, but you are totally free to find those keys at any point in the game.

**Puzzles need meticulous attention.**

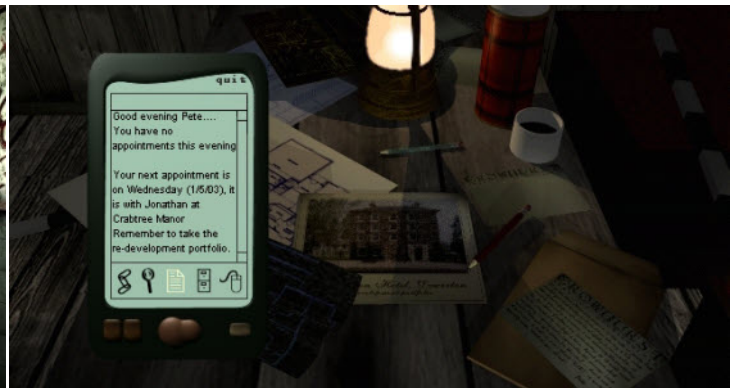
The puzzles in the game are logical and well-integrated within the context of the game. To solve the puzzles, you investigate, collect items, and read displays, journals and books. Unlike the sequel, reading is not excessive so it won't kill the

I've come to a conclusion that the ending in an adventure game is often anticlimactic rather than a culmination of all the work and excitement. This game is no exception. However, you do have the satisfaction that what you did made some kind of difference.

**Pixel-hunting made worse by fixed angle.**

Pixel hunting is at a minimum in this game (unlike the sequel), but when it occurs it is extremely frustrating. It happens in the room of the young ghostbusters. There are several things that need to be done in this room, and one of them is to pick up a special goggle that allows the





wearer to see the paranormal. It's in the darkest corner of the room, and worse, you can't get to it easily because of the navigation method.

The navigation elements of this game are simple. Turn left, turn right, or move forward. You view the scenes from a pre-determined angle. When there is a hot spot, the cursor's shape changes. You do not have the luxury of panning the scene freely. To find this pesky goggle, I finally had to consult a walkthrough. I still couldn't locate it, because the hot spot only appears from one specific angle even if you are right on top of where the goggle is hidden.

I don't see any logical reason why this item was so hidden. It should have been placed on the desk, or somewhere in plain sight. Why do I feel this way? Because, the trick is to figure out what to use it for, and not endlessly click the darkness to find where the damn thing is. The goggle appears again in the sequel, again hidden in the dark, and again found only from a specific angle. Unlike the sequel, however, this is about the only one bad pixel hunting experience in the game.

**Low-rez graphics, but (surprise!) it looks good.**

The game uses low resolution of 640 x 480 which is a bit surprising considering the game was released in 2002. However, since the presentation of the game is a static

(slideshow style), it is sufficient in conveying the eerie, spooky scenes. As you can see in the screen captures, they are not grainy. Besides, considering the game takes place entirely at night, you don't need to see things crisp and clear anyway.

The sound effects are limited to ambient sounds. There is no music in the background, which can drive you crazy. A lot of people commented how scary it was to play this game, especially during the night. The first time I played, I couldn't care less. I was intent on exploring the hotel rooms and solving the puzzles. When I played this time around to write this review and pick good screenshots, I was occasionally startled at the harsh whispering, distant singing, and strange noises. As I was going through the game past midnight, I did glance over my shoulder once or twice.

You can turn the subtitles on and off by pressing the F1 key. By default, the subtitles are off. About the only place you would need the subtitles on is the initial tunnel scene where a boy with a heavy Cockney British accent speaks to you. I couldn't understand a single thing he said when I played the game the first time. But even if you don't understand the boy, nothing critical is missed and you can still proceed with the game.

The game comes on one CD and installs completely on your computer's hard disk. You do not

need the game disk to play. Lack of fancy graphics means it is very stable.

**The very first attempt turns out to be better than second.**

Compared to the sequel, the first Dark Fall has a more coherent story, varied though not diverse puzzles, no excessive reading or frustrating pixel-hunting (only one bad one), and a more satisfying game ending. Even though the resolution is only VGA, the graphics are more than adequate to create a dark, mysterious atmosphere. The game is very well put together. The only complaint left is that the game is too short.

My score is 78. It may not be a "must-have" adventure game, but if you do purchase, it is well worth your time. Play at night, with sound volume up.



**Minimum System Requirements:**  
 Windows 95, 98, ME, 2000, XP  
 233 Mhz or higher processor  
 32 MB RAM (64 Recommended)  
 SVGA Graphics Card or better with 32-bit Color (at 640 x 480)  
 24X CD-Rom  
 Mouse, Keyboard and Speakers

# SUPER MARIO GALAXY

By Nuggy



It has been awhile since Nintendo really showed us just how superb they are at creating innovative games. Sure, gamers can now purchase the Wii but let's face it, though it is a system that has massive amounts of potential, with all the Mario Parties, Wii-Fits/Sports and Brain Academies that constantly bombard it's library, there hasn't been a title that matches the system's ability to redefine the gaming experience, as Nintendo was once known for so long ago. With that said, when Super Mario Galaxy was revealed many gamers remained skeptical thanks to Mario Sunshine's gimmicky shortcomings and severe lack of ground-breaking material. But unlike squirting things with a silly water gun, this time, Mario has gone where no fat Italian plumber has gone before, outer space. And it's not just water physics Nintendo EAD Tokyo decided to incorporate into this title; now perspective and gravity take on a unique role in an adventure that not only shatters everything that the revolutionary Super Mario 64 was, but also what Platform gaming is all about... period. Wii owners, your prayers have been answered.

## STRUCTURE (STORY, GAME-PLAY, CONTROLS,) 8/10

The game starts out predictably in the Mushroom Kingdom where all the Toads celebrate the passing of

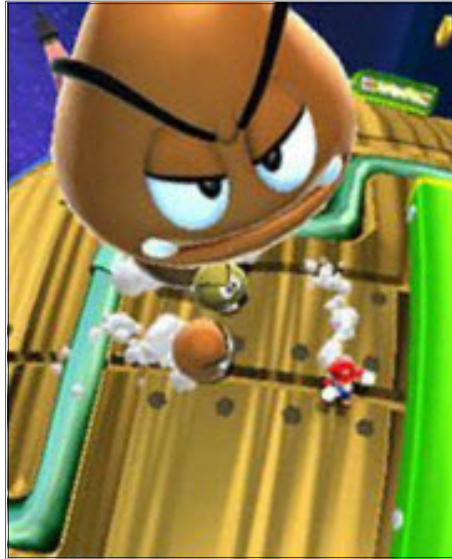
a comet, enabling gamers to toy around with most of Mario's classic punch and kick attacks. Immediately they'll notice Mario's fluid controls through the nun-chuck joystick before Bowser terrorizes the Mushroom Kingdom and snatches the helpless Princess using a powerful UFO (reminiscent of Independence Day), and pulling it into space. And just as Mario is about to make the type of rescue attempt he is known for, he's blasted by MagiKoopas into deep space... and that's when the game becomes a little intimidating. Mario wakes up on a small planet where he finds a "luma"; some star-shaped bean-bag looking critter that prompts Players to chase him all over the planet and get used to the feel of running around on a sphere. Since gamers are used to playing Platform games where characters jump on solid, rectangular objects, the somewhat abrupt change in perspectives can be very daunting. The joystick has to be alternated in a way that suits the player's intended direction, so there will be times where instead of pushing up to make Mario run forwards, players will have to press down, or left, or

right. This is actually the threshold point of the game, where gamers decide whether or not Galaxy is worthy of investing time. But once Mario is jettisoned from his first Launch Star via shaking of the Wii-mote and straight towards the first objective, there's a strong chance those initial perceptions will change for the better.

This game is all about the sheer volume of meticulous level structure and a hefty percentage of Super Mario Galaxy involves players having to think about their current perspective and how to shift it in order to achieve success; the results can be mind-boggling but the amount of multi-tasking involved makes for an incredibly enjoyable experience. There are times when Mario has to

Developer: Nintendo  
 Publisher: Nintendo  
 Platform: Wii  
 Genre: Action-Platform  
 Release Date: Nov 2007

fight Goombas upside-down while on a shrinking platform and other times where gravity forces him to run along walls in order to guide bombs into caged launch-stars. Using blue Pull Stars with the use of the Wii-mote, Players can guide Mario through space, passing obstacles, racing enemies, and opening puzzles, all while simultaneously ensuring he doesn't fall into a black hole. Even smaller missions prompt Players to race Doppelganger Mario, roll on top of a ball containing a star by tilting the Wii-mote or even swim on top of a manta-ray, all of which help vary gameplay.



Mario will always be positioned in the center, appearing much smaller in comparison to the world around him. So, the camera itself will be neither helpful nor obtrusive. Long-time veterans will find the lack of camera usage a little awkward but the absence of a frustrating camera is certainly an improvement over Galaxy's predecessors. Overall, though the game does feel shorter than Mario 64, Galaxy trumps it with its abundance of imaginative, even nostalgic gameplay elements and fascinating ingenuity.

**PRESENTATION: (GRAPHICS, SOUND, PLAY DESIGN): 9/10**

A personal favorite of mine is on a rocky planet full of Thwomps that are spaced out upon a spherical maze of very thin paths and moving platforms. Even the enjoyable boss battles go from ridiculously easy to almost epic, especially when fighting Bowser in his SM64-inspired stages, though the levels themselves will often prove more of a challenge. The only issue here is that some star missions have little to do with the general story and can seem nothing more than an excuse to nab a star. Since when have surfing penguins become universally acceptable, especially when there is no surfing against them...in space? Though the same can be said about 64 and Sunshine, at this point in the Mario franchise it would've been nice to see a stronger connection between achieving some stars and the overall story. But that would involve a stronger story altogether

now wouldn't it? Bowser steals Peach and in order to save her, Mario has to collect a mass abundance of stars. We've played this game twice before haven't we?

And let's not forget those classic Nintendo power-ups. Players will recognize Bee and Boo Mario, using them to traverse otherwise unreachable paths. Galaxy also brings back Fire Mario to be used temporarily alongside Ice Mario's ability to skate on water. The power-ups that falter in control however are Spring Mario, which takes some getting used to since jumping becomes default and attacking a bit harder to manipulate, and Flight Mario, though his costume becomes cooler, altering flight in full 360 degrees can be a pain.

Then there's the camera, which depends solely on the gamer. With the way the camera is usually fixed,

Though graphically, the Wii usually seems to crank out GameCube-esque effects, Super Mario Galaxy blatantly ignores the status-quo and becomes a visual feast. Particle instances are abundant and animations on character models are slick, adhering to cartoony squash-stretch and gravity, while landscapes and backgrounds are bright and admiring. The cotton-candy cloud and smoke effects are plentiful and are enhanced brilliantly from smooth oscillating water animations. Even Bowser's hair flows wildly and (dare I say it?) awesomely in accordance to wind and secondary motion. Some facial animations are lacking however. While Mario has advanced to some kind of Folgers's-commercial gesture after star-retrieval, Peach and Rosalina oddly look like mannequins. It doesn't help that the cast is constrained to one-



letter words, quips and other garbled speech either. This is expected of Nintendo, but not necessarily favored either. A better attempt at voice-acting would have been greatly appreciated. However, music is another story. Just about every track has a sort of addictive hero theme to it as Galaxy throws out the jazzy beats of older Mario titles and successfully experiments with a more orchestral overtone. The result is what feels like an actual adventure taking place. As in older titles, the music distills a feeling of good times while searching for a Princess; Galaxy's music invokes a sort of urgency and ostentatious atmosphere to the quest of saving "the special one". It's like players absolutely *must* save the Princess or else Bowser will do awful, awful things to her (like run up her phone minutes while she watches). The orchestrated music makes for addicting arrangements to older Mario melodies and players might find themselves scouring the internet in search of downloadable themes for "Good Egg Galaxy" and "Battlerock".

Galaxy plays a lot like Super Mario 64, where Mario is tasked with collecting 120 stars; though only 60 are required to complete the game. The main lobby is actually an observatory/space-ship run by different-colored lumas and their enigmatic mother Rosalina (who for some

reason, looks a lot like Princess Peach... except strangely hot). Once Mario gains enough stars, he can open up a variety of domes that lead to different solar systems. Each system contains over four galaxies, each with its own abundance of stars so gamers can choose which galaxy they can launch to (Nintendo does not get points for accurate astrology knowledge however). It's kind of like choosing which mission to select in the worlds of 64 and Sunshine; the more stars gamers get, the more places they get to discover. Good on Nintendo for referencing the past and appealing to the long call of fans wishing for the return of Mario 64 elements. Bad on the Nintendo for exactly the same reason. Though playability is in no way hindered in this respect, more experienced players will no doubt brush off galaxy as a 64 space romp. By encompassing 64, Sunshine and Galaxy together, gamers would have collected about 361 stars by now. Galaxy may amp up the formula to insane proportions but hopefully by Mario's next full 360 adventure, there will be another way to saving the Princess than copious item collection. Heads up Nintendo, at some point sticking to formula will get old!

**In A Nutshell (Opinions, Possible Improvements, Total Review)**

Oh snap, son (yeah I said it). That's

what this game is, an amazing succession to Super Mario 64 and I feel like a total fool for almost not picking it up in the first place. At first, players may be put off by the seemingly wacky controls and somewhat unoriginal design (it is Mario 64 in space after all). But within the next few hours, the game establishes itself as an innovative and enjoyable take on platform games, especially when a second player buzzes in to grab star-bits alongside the first player. Though veterans will find the general lack of camera control off-putting as well as the somewhat derivative and purposeless attempts at achieving stars, the game has enough appeal and wonder for future platform games to take notes from. And while it would have been nice if Galaxy had not borrowed so much from Mario 64, a true sequel to the Power Star predecessor has been what fans have been clamoring for. Now, they have their wish and more. Just don't let your girlfriend play Bee Mario... you'll never get the controller back. Well done EAD Tokyo, well done.



<b>Gameplay:</b>	<b>80/100</b>	Gravity, perspective take a new role in platform gaming. The variety of (sometimes pointless) star collection yields hours and hours of playtime; especially when collecting all 121 stars. Camera may pose a problem since it's largely absent when you think you might need it. You're basically playing a really awesome update to Mario 64.
<b>Controls:</b>	<b>80/100</b>	"Be prepared for a few hours of practice. Shifting camera angles will cause gamers to become a little frustrated at first. Stick with it, it takes getting used to. After awhile, controlling Mario will feel like controlling butter... or something smooth-like.
<b>Graphics:</b>	<b>90/100</b>	Wow. Nintendo's art style truly shines in this title from fantastic water reflections to very fluid character models. Some bland facial models though, especially during close-ups.
<b>Sound</b>	<b>90/100</b>	Okay, bubbled voices are a bit Nintendo 64 but the music is very reminiscent of a Narnia tale.
<b>Overall:</b>	<b>90/100</b>	<i>Does things normal platform-adventures dream of doing. Own!</i>

# ACE COMBAT 6 Fires of Liberation

By Vhayste



Enter the latest installment of the highly successful Ace Combat series. Ace Combat 6 delivers adrenaline pumping action and new features not found in the previous Ace Combat titles.

The plot is basically similar to the other titles. A country is explicitly



attacked by another country that is run by a superior military regime. During the course of the following missions, the struggling country gets back to its feet and retaliates against the invader.

AC6 puts players in the shoes of a pilot known only as Garuda 1 (callsign Talisman). With the help of wingman Garuda 2 (Shamrock), they are able to turn the tides of battle with their actions.

### =Operations=

One of the new features of the game is the DOS (Dynamic Operations System). Most of the missions in AC6 are comprised of several operations or individual battles, which players need to complete a certain quota of these operations/battles in order to accomplish the whole mission.

### =Allied Support=

In the player's HUD, the new AS (Allied Support) Gauge has been added. This gauge fills up when the player and his allies destroy targets.

Once the gauge has gained at least one bar, players can request for Al-

lied Cover and Allied Attack commands. These are similar to wingman cover and attack commands but on a larger scale.

Allied units from completed operations can be called for support as well, leading to more effective attack runs.

### =Wingman=

A feature first introduced in Ace Combat 5, the player's wingman can be ordered to attack or cover him/her. Players can't choose when the wingman uses his SP weapons. This is just a small letdown, especially when your team is caught in a tight web of enemy fighters and your wingman just goes around chasing enemies in an attempt to shoot them down with conventional missiles. Either way, having a wingman takes a bit of the load off the player's shoulders.

**Developer:** Namco Bandai  
**Publisher:** Project Aces  
**Platform:** XBOX 360  
**Genre:** Flight Action  
**Release Date:** Oct 2007



=Frontline Resupply=



=Weapons Payload=

This is another great addition to the game. In some missions, there are operations that will require players to defend or capture airbases/runways. When cleared, players will be allowed to use the runway for immediate re-supply, re-arming and repairs. Players are vulnerable from enemy fire while landing or taking off so they will need to clear the skies or order an allied cover while doing an emergency landing.

The game also features return lines in all missions. Return lines are available in other AC versions but only on select missions.

=Secrets=

Players will still have the chance to unlock medals, assault records, aircraft colors and, of course, achievements.

=Planes=

The game has only a small lineup of modern and efficient aircraft. The old favorites such as the ADF-01 Falken and X-02 Wyvern are not featured in the game. Instead, a new fictional aircraft CFA-44 Nosferatu is included, and will be the most powerful aircraft in the game.

One noticeable change in the game is the increased missile and SP weapon payload on all aircraft. This is due to the lengthy missions and multiple operations.

=ESM=

ESM (Electromagnetic Support Measures) is one of the new features in the game. Certain facilities and planes provide an ESM field where allied units within range have enhanced missile tracking and protection. Keep in mind that enemy forces use this support feature too.



<b>Graphics:</b>	<b>90/100</b>	Semi-Realistic environment and aircraft.....not to mention awesome CG and mid-battle scenes
<b>Sound:</b>	<b>90/100</b>	A great musical score provides the much needed theme for fast paced gameplay.
<b>Controls:</b>	<b>80/100</b>	Controls respond beautifully and the tutorials are very helpful in assisting new players.
<b>Playability:</b>	<b>80/100</b>	Game mechanics are easy to grasp. Learning curve is around an hour or so.
<b>Replay Value:</b>	<b>70/100</b>	After less than 30 hours or so, players can successfully complete all secrets. Other than online gaming, non-XBL players may stop playing the game after completing all the extras.

# RATCHET & CLANK FUTURE: TOOLS OF DESTRUCTION

By Nuggy



The Ratchet & Clank series has enjoyed much acclaim throughout the gaming community as a welcome alternative to the Jak & Daxter franchise for those hoping for more of a focus on shooting and great character dialogue implemented within a platforming escapade. Now, the series has come to the PlayStation 3 and is also one of Adventure Lantern's premiere PS3 reviews. Carrying a hefty Sony price tag, this new quest with the Lombax and his robotic buddy is both amazing and disappointing.

## Gameplay

You begin your adventure with Ratchet and Clank answering a distress call from the bumbling self-proclaimed superhero, Captain Qwark. It seems that the miniature Emperor Tachyon has a score to settle with Ratchet; the last of a species that is believed to have obliterated Tacheyon's race. Having purchased an entire army to help in his goal to

take over the galaxy, Players use Ratchet (with Clank assisting) to wield any type of destructive, whimsical, and downright weird weapons they have in their arsenal to stop the diminutive menace. Players shoot missiles, toss grenades, launch tornados via SIAXIS (PS3 motion control), and even fire disco balls that cause their foes to dance uncontrollably, creating a variety of enjoyable ways to take on opponents. However, after the first few hours of exploring the weapons, gameplay itself becomes very predictable. Even though the ability to level up weapons is a welcome change to the platforming genre, it quickly becomes all too easy to empty the battlefield of enemies. In fact, before 50% of the game is completed, some weapons will have been already customized to their maximum level, capable of destroying foes with one hit. For those looking for a challenge, you can opt to temporarily avoid purchasing Ratchet's battle armor which increases defense.

Though the game offers a challenge mode after its initial completion which offers gamers a higher degree of difficulty, there's not much else to the formula afterward. Even boss battles are lacking, unmemorable and again, relatively simple. Unfortunately, the game itself is about 10-15 hours long, (that's about a week and a half of playtime kiddies) with the more interesting parts of the game resting in the beginning and the end.

It also doesn't help that Tools of Destruction's story isn't exactly stable either. It switches (almost idioti-

Developer: Insomniac Games  
 Publisher: Sony Entertainment  
 Platform: PS3  
 Genre: Action  
 Release Date: October 2007





cally so) from fighting Tachyon's forces to blasting apart robotic space pirates. Sometimes Players will ask themselves "Why am I fighting pirates again?" Other distracting elements include infiltrating pirate hideouts in an underused and ultimately useless swashbuckling disguise, and an annoying mini-game forcing players to stop shooting things and tilt a box in order to guide an electronic marble into a socket; the future of opening doors should not include Milton-Bradley, people! It probably would've been better for the Insomniacs to spend more time meshing the space pirate storyline with Tachyon's invasions (how about Tachyon just uses the pirates instead?). Level design is an unpleasing factor in this category simply because the environments themselves are so underused due to the *incredibly* linear storyline. Simply put, you run and shoot everything, stopping only to unlock and jump upon but a few platforms before you get to the next level. Even the space-flight levels are a let-down. Although gorgeous, they are devoid of creativity at best. Certain levels can seem huge and highly detailed, but in the end they are basically the same as other levels preceding them. The game hides behind hilarious character design in order to stick to its "Shoot, Run/Jump, Shoot" formula. While the jokes often work, the game is just too predictable, though I will admit, I did not see the cliffhanger ending coming. Some may not favor the ending, but it may prove to be a

critical moment for the franchise.

**Sound**

Any nerd can identify Tidus from Final Fantasy X voicing Ratchet (and I am that nerd!) but strong voice acting is what drives Tools of Destruction. Though some of Captain Qwark's lines become a bit forced after a while, the voice acting as a whole is incredibly solid (hearing Clank's little Zoni helpers yell "YAY" is just adorable). There are instances when the Gadgetron Company will alert players of new specifications for an upgraded weapon while another character will give advice during in-game missions. Though this is a small programming issue, overlapping voices can cause confusion as to what the next goal is.

Unfortunately, the soundtrack itself is very average and by no means

foot-tapping, especially when glitches kick in and erase environmental ambience and music altogether. These brief instances don't occur until later in the game. However, it is a little weird at certain points when Players are used to hearing the sound of ships landing and instead hear general silence. The music itself could've lent itself to stronger tones and only truly becomes memorable when briefly paying tribute to the Pirates of the Caribbean movies. While it is not recommended that all of Insomniac's budget goes into their soundtrack, the Ratchet & Clank storyline is growing and so should its musical overtones.

**Graphics**

To date, "Ratchet & Clank Future" is by far the best looking PS3 game. From the opening sequence, gamers will be enamored just how many polygon and texture effects the





**In A Nutshell**

Tools of Destruction is the first RC game I've played and I must say, I'm quite impressed. I'm a sucker for zany, yet deep characters and this platformer-meets-shooter provides an interesting mix of such, though I'm upset at the overall uselessness of Talwyn and her robot bodyguards. However, the game shunts itself from being greater than it is because of its heavy reliance on quirky, yet ridiculously powerful weapons and its crooked and unfocused storyline. It was cool battling Tachyon's forces but those occurrences become few, paving the way for newer bad guys which would have worked better, if the story wasn't so straightforward. This zig-zagging hurts the game's progression since it sort of tells the gamer, "It doesn't matter who you're fighting, just shoot it" and leaves actual thinking directed at switching to more effective weapons. There are mini-games such as dancing in a pirate-guise and driving around in some sort of mechanical ball, but they are short, time-wasting and rarely enjoyable. Sadly, gamers might buy Ratchet & Clank Future just to fill a collection and the game is honestly better than that... it's just not exactly unique.



game can crank out at once with hardly any slowdown. Loading times are short but present, blanketed under space-flight transitions to other levels. It would've been cool if different loading screens were created instead of the same warp-drive during every blast-off. Level designs are lush and beautiful but water effects are strangely unrealistic, providing no real wave oscillations. It's strange how Super Mario Sunshine, a game of the previous gaming generation (and a title I bear a strong personal hatred for), can still produce superior water effects. It wouldn't be too much of a problem if falling into water wasn't the primary method of dying. But, since Players will most likely drown or fall into small platform gaps more often than they'll get shot, some realism

would've been appreciated, considering that the game as a whole is just so entertaining to look at it. Personally, I believe the space-flight missions are the most visually gratifying (albeit lacking any real depth), but there are times when transition effects are lazily programmed. Flying inside giant asteroid caverns and through sun prominences looks incredible, but when traveling through a black hole and entering event horizons, special effects seem to pop of out nowhere. Tools of Destruction is extremely heavy on the visuals so these are small issues and do not take away from the game. But, they are noticeable and could use improvement. Oh well, there is always that inevitable sequel (or even that possible Jak & Dexter crossover).

<b>Graphics:</b>	<b>70/100</b>	Soft textures and somewhat saturated art style create a overall beautiful game. Character animations are fluid and never robotic. Water effects are flat and disappointing and some space-flight suffer from random effects.
<b>Sound:</b>	<b>80/100</b>	"Stunderwear!" Great comedic appeal in voices but music is hardly noticeable. Sound effects and music sometimes glitch and remain silent until a scene switches.
<b>Gameplay:</b>	<b>90/100</b>	More shooter than platformer which would not be a bad thing if it posed a challenge. Mini-games and space-flights are not as fun and can be very distracting. The game has variety but tends not to use it.
<b>Overall:</b>	<b>82/100</b>	Ultimately generic, but good nonetheless.

# Rogue Galaxy

By Vhayste

One of the most promising games ever to land the PS2 this year is a cel-shaded, space themed game by the name of Rouge Galaxy. Although the title may seem to be a bit normal, once you start the game, you will be taken into a galaxy where humans and other aliens live together and spaceships are just your normal means of transport. Sounds like Star Wars? Maybe, but as you look deeper into the game, you will discover that it has its own story to tell.

The game revolves around a young man living on a desert planet enslaved by occupying troops whose dream is to travel in space. One fateful day, a massive beast/monster invades the town. On his way to stop the beast, he meets a mysterious yet powerful man. Events start to unfold including two crew members of an infamous space pirate mistaking him for a well-known bounty hunter. And so the adventure begins...

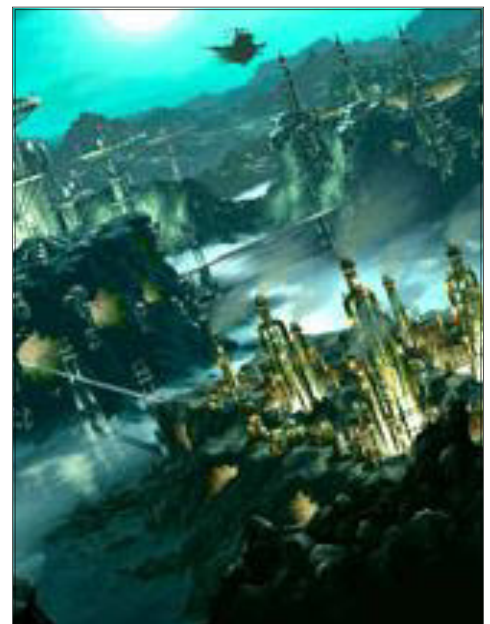
Maybe the introduction of the game is just too basic to attract attention but once played, anyone will appreciate the beautifully rendered cel-shaded environment, characters (which can give some players the impression that they are "playing" an animated movie), and the whole plot that drives the story into motion.



Level 5 did a great job with the musical scores in the game itself. Ambient sounds match the actual location where the characters are traveling. Not to mention that there is almost NO loading time when checking out locations. The areas to explore are wide but the game helps users by having a quickview map and a mini map located on the game-play screen itself. Characters interact with one another during battle or while traveling. The voice acting is so perfect that each of the characters have distinct personalities of their own.

One great addition to the game is the active battle system. Players can give commands to their AI controlled comrades. Although Jaster (the main character) can not be swapped out of the party, players can choose who will be the active character he/she can control during battles. One good thing about this game also is that you will be able to see the changes in character weapons and outfits each time you change their equipment.

players with too many enemies while they are exploring the dungeons. Let us just say that the intervals between fights are normal. Also, battles are fast and "real time" so making decisions quickly can help a lot to win battles. Your comrades will occasionally give suggestions about the items and skills they want to use. You will be given a few seconds of time to decide whether you will allow them to execute their suggested actions. Properly using this good combat interaction between the par-



Battles in RG are random but not to the extent that it will bore or frustrate

**Developer:** Level-5 Inc.  
**Publisher:** Sony Ent.  
**Platform:** PS2  
**Genre:** Real-Time RPG  
**Release Date:** Jan 2007  
 (U.S.)



The cel-shaded graphics used in the game are smooth and detailed. Even cutscenes such as this can attest to the game's presentation.

ty members is crucial to surviving the battles.

Hacking and slashing your way to victory is not always the best choice. There are certain battles where you need a specific weapon or attack which will be the most effective in bringing the enemy down. Some tactics include destroying enemy shields using a charge attack, or hitting a specific weak spot on the enemy's body. Such battles happen every now and then in the world of RG.

Skills here are called "Revelations". Revelations can be mastered by putting the required item in the Revelation flow chart of the character. Every character has unique charts and players may need to choose

carefully to whom they bequest those rare items to first.

The game is filled with extra in-game features that add enjoyment to the actual gameplay. Some extras, such as raising Insectrons and battling them out (Mushiking Style) in a coliseum take the stress off a hard, typical, space pirate day. Being a notorious space pirate also means that there is competition. This comes in the form of a race against rank and popularity. Players will start in the 100<sup>th</sup> Rank (Not bad, since there could be thousands of hunters out there) and must fight their way up by slaying a required number of beasts and exchanging them for points. Bigger, badder and more dangerous targets called "Quarries" score the highest. They

are considered as the "Most Wanted" beasts of all time.

Other great features of the game include a good item creation system. You can synthesize weapons (you need your trusted mutated toad to do that.....honestly) to form more powerful ones or just create new items from blueprints in the game's FACTORY menu. Not to mention that completing certain tasks (such as getting all items, blueprints or ranking 1<sup>st</sup> in Insectron tournament) will give you access to even more goodies.

The story is pretty much linear and there are no time restrictions, so players are given more than enough time to do what they need to before proceeding with the story. This is especially true after gaining free access to travel across the planets.

Overall, the game promises hours and hours of a great experience. This game has the makings of being one of the greatest titles ever to be released this year.



<b>Graphics:</b>	<b>90/100</b>	Great cel-shaded graphics; smooth and vividly colored
<b>Sound:</b>	<b>90/100</b>	The voice acting is superb and sound is magnificent
<b>Controls:</b>	<b>80/100</b>	Controls are easy and user friendly.
<b>Playability:</b>	<b>80/100</b>	All players can get accustomed to the inviting world of RG; navigation is a breeze
<b>Replay Value:</b>	<b>70/100</b>	Features a secret dungeon and a few post game goodies.

# Nancy Drew: The Final Scene

By Southern Belle



## Day One

- When the cut scene is over, open the door and enter the Men's Dressing Room.
- Start looking around and the phone on the desk will ring. Answer it.
- Back away from the phone and it will ring again. Answer it.
- Talk with Brady Armstrong. Avoid telling him about searching the building until the end of the conversation because he will leave.
- Go left to the clothes. Push them aside and see a door. You can't use it yet. Push the clothes back and back away from them.
- Continue to the left until you see the wardrobe. Approach it, open it and take the magic wand from the top shelf.
- Back away from the wardrobe, close the door, back away again and go left.
- Go left toward the makeup table.
- Approach the sink and look at the picture above it.
- Click on the picture to find a handle. Pull it.
- Back away from the sink and look at the makeup table. Click on the drawer to find it is locked.
- From the makeup table, go back to the clothes. Click on them.
- Enter the passageway and continue until you find a door. Open it.
- Enter the room to find Simone. Exhaust all conversation then exit through the regular door.
- While you are facing the wall, turn right and go through the door.
- Turn left and go through the double door.
- Once you are on the balcony, look down and pick up the quarter on the floor.
- Exit the balcony, turn left, and go all the way down the hall, turn left, go through the curtains and into the front lobby.

- Once you are in the lobby, turn around and talk with Nicholas Falcone. Exhaust all conversation.
- After you talk with Nicholas, turn around and enter the ticket booth.
- Look on the wall above the phone to learn the number for the police.
- Call the police. The number is 555-1422. It is a local call.
- After the conversation is over, exit the ticket booth and go up the stairs on your left.
- Turn right, going passed the double doors, to the door to the projection room.
- Enter the projection room, turn left and exhaust all conversation with Joseph.
- Exit the projection room and go back downstairs to talk with Nicholas.
- Back away from Nicholas, turn right and go through the curtains. Go all the way down the hall and go through the door in front of you.
- Turn left and go down the hall to enter the Women's Dressing Room.
- Talk with Simone.
- When the conversation is over, exit the room and move toward the crate. Look down.
- Back away from the crate and go right.
- Go all the way to the wall where the Men's Dressing Room door is located. Look at the ropes there. Click on the rope three times to untie it. Click on it four more times to hear a "clunk".
- Go back to the crate and attach it to the hook.
- Go back to the rope and click on it six times to raise the crate and tie it off. Click three more



times to secure the rope.

- Return to the crate and open the trap door in the floor.
- Descend the stairs and turn right. Continue turning right until you are look at the wall under the stairs. Move toward the wall and look at the panel in the wall.
- Number the blocks from left to right, 1 through 5. Starting with the fourth block, turn it until it is a spade. Turn the first block to show a spade, then the second one, the third one and finally the fifth one.
- When the door opens, look at the top of the box. Clicking on the tiles when the magnifying glass is red around the edges will enable you to pick up a tile. Putting your cursor in the corner to get a circle arrow will allow them to be rotated. Use the right button on the mouse. The picture will look like this when you have finished
- Look at the box to see that there are gears missing.

- Close the box and back away from the puzzle.
- Turn around and go through the gate. Go upstairs.
- Once you are through the trap door, turn around and move toward the fire extinguisher on the wall on the right.
- Go through the red curtain to the right of the fire extinguisher.
- Go down the stairs and turn right.
- Go up the center aisle and take the pink gum on the chair with the wand.
- Continue to the back of the theater, turn left and enter the lobby.
- Go passed the refreshment stand to the game to your right by the red curtain.
- Look closely at the game. For Junior Detectives, use the arrows on the right and move the note in the lower left corner in the following order – up, up, right, right, up, up, up, right, down, down, right, right, right, right, up, left, up and right. For Senior Detectives, use the arrows on the right and move the note in the upper left corner in the following order – down, down, right, up, right, down, right, right, right, down, right, up, right, up, left, up and right.
- Take the gear and put it into your inventory.
- Back away from the game and go up the stairs on the left. Enter the balcony through the doors at the top of the left stairs.
- Go down the balcony stairs and look at the railing.
- Look down over the edge of the railing and use the wand to pick up the gear.
- Exit the balcony and go down into the basement to the puzzle under the stairs with the missing gears.
- Click on the door, open the box and use the gears on the pins. Click on the wheel on the right. Take the key.
- Read the agreement by clicking on the second and then the third page.
- Back away from the agreement, close the drawer and the lid. Back away from the puzzle.
- Turn around and then turn left. Continue to the other end of the basement.
- Look closely at the Monty game. Click on the play button. When the cut scene is over, click the play button again. This puzzle is random. Continue playing until you find the ace of spades.
- Take the flash paper. You can't take the instructions.
- Back away from the game, go upstairs and talk with Nicholas at the refreshment stand.
- Go to the projection room and talk with Joseph.
- Go backstage to the Men's Dressing Room and talk with Brady.
- When the conversation with Brady is over, go to the Women's Dressing Room and talk with Simone.
- Return to the lobby and talk with Nicholas again.
- When he leaves, look at the brochure in the center stack to learn the telephone number for the County Administration. Look at the brochure on the right with the red fist to see that Nicholas is the founder and president.
- Back up into the center of the lobby.
- Go to the projection room.
- Save your game here. The following conversations are long and cannot be repeated. This is the only way to hear them more than once.
- When the conversation is over, go to the ticket booth and call the County Administration at 555-3309. Call the police at 555-1422.
- Exit the ticket booth.

## Day Two

- Move forward and read the card attached to the funeral wreath.
- Back away from the funeral wreath and go to the projection room to talk with Joseph.

- Before you open the door read the poster.
- When the conversation with Joseph is over, go downstairs and talk with Nicholas.
- Go to the Women's Dressing Room and talk with Simone.
- Go to the Men's Dressing Room, turn left and approach the table to the left of the lamp. Look at the book Brady was reading.
- Exit the Men's Dressing Room and go talk with Nicholas.
- When the conversation is over, enter the ticket booth and look at the note to the right of the telephone. Call Eustacia Andropov at 1-813-555-3247.
- After you call Mrs. Andropov, call the Library of Congress at 1-202-555-5000.
- Exit the ticket booth and go talk with Brady in the Men's Dressing Room.
- Go to the Women's Dressing Room and talk with Simone.
- Go out to the lobby and hear the press conference in progress.
- Go back to the Women's Dressing Room and approach the makeup table. Open the drawer and take a bobby pin. Close the drawer and back away.
- Look in her purse to find her PDA, a camera, business cards and a receipt for a funeral wreath. Look closely at the camera and use the red button to turn it on. Cycle through the pictures using the plus key. Pick up the PDA on the left side of her purse. Look at the business cards and at the far right, a receipt for a funeral wreath. To access her PDA, touch the center (5) and all four corners. Do this in no particular order. Press the top button on the right to read through her calendar. Click the second button from the top to read her email.
- Back away from the purse and close it. Exit the Women's Dressing Room and go to the Men's Dressing Room.
- Enter the Men's Dressing Room and look closely at the drawer in the makeup table. Use the bobby pin to open the drawer and read the State Technician's Guide.
- Exit the Men's Dressing Room and go to the projection room. Go into the corner where Joseph is usually standing. Look closely at the top of the blue machine and pick up the yellow paper under the crossword puzzle.
- Back away from Joseph's area and turn right. Look closely at the control panel with the red light.
- To turn on the power, enter the code 121192 on the keypad. Back away from the keypad and look at the red buttons just above it. Press the left and right fader buttons. Click on the sliding red switches on the left of the fader buttons until they are both at the bottom. Press the button marked magnets. Raise the fader switches one click each. Press the button marked trap doors and finally press the toggle switch on the right.
- Exit the projection room and go to the lobby. Go into the theater and go up on the stage. Enter a cage by clicking on it twice.
- Look down to see a ladder and go down the ladder.
- Look for a peephole just to the right of the left ladder. Look for a hot spot just above what appears to be a broken fixture.
- Search the floor for a hot spot at the right end of the room. Click on it and open the trap door. Go down the stairs. Turn left at the foot of the stairs and find a slider puzzle. Try it. It is stuck.
- Turn around and follow the hallway to the other end. Look closely at the yellow up and down arrows. Press the round red button underneath them.
- Move onto the lift and press the up button.
- Click on the trap door at the top of the ladder. Talk with Joseph and he gives you some lubricant.
- Press the down button and go back to the slider puzzle.
- Use the lubricant on the slider puzzle.
- The object is to move the rabbit from the right side of the screen to the left side. The following is a screen shot of the slider puzzle just before the rabbit moves to the left.





- Enter the room and approach the posters on the far wall. Look at the pizza box and shoe on the floor.
- Turn right and look at the chest under another poster. Open the chest and take the rubber gloves in the lower right corner. Back away, close the chest and back away again.
- Turn around and look closely at the bookcase. The second, third and fourth books from the right end are all hot, but they are all the same volumes.
- Exit the room using the casket-like doorway.
- Go to the now electrified gate and use the rubber gloves to touch the keypad. The code is a random number. The number for this game was 514798263. Press a key. If the buzzer sounds, it was the wrong key. Continue pressing keys until all the keys have been pressed and stay down.
- Go upstairs.
- After you talk with Brady, go to the ticket booth and call the police.
- When the conversation with the sergeant is over, go to the projection room and talk with Joseph. When the conversation with Joseph is over, exit the room.

### Day Three

- Read the newspaper.
- Look at the note from Joseph to the left of the phone you have been using to make calls.
- Go to the projection room and talk with Joseph.
- When the conversation is over, go through the red curtain under the left stairwell and go talk with Simone.
- Exit the Women's Dressing Room and go talk with Brady in the Men's Dressing Room.
- When the conversation with Brady is over, go talk with Nicholas in the lobby.
- After you have exhausted all conversation with Nicholas, return to the Men's Dressing Room and take a pencil out of the briefcase next to the telephone.
- Exit the Men's Dressing Room and go upstairs to the projection room.
- Enter the projection room and look closely at the table on the right with the red cola can. Pick up the slide. Read the instruction book that is found on the left side of the table. Use your pencil to darken the impression left by a key.

- Go downstairs to make a key like the one pictured here. Save your game before you put a quarter in the machine.



- The key machine is under the left stairwell. Press S, I, V and O.
- Go back up to the projection room. Turn right and approach the cabinet. Open the cabinet and take the projector bulb from the box in front of the Acme box. Do not touch the Acme box.
- Back away from the cabinet and go to the projector.
- Use the key you made to open the projector.
- Click on the bulb in the projector to remove it. Put the new bulb in the projector.
- This is a timed sequence. The time is very short. Pick up the slide in the lower left corner. Close the projector door. Back away from the projector twice. Turn right and move forward to the cabinet twice to hide in it. Do not touch the Acme box. Once the room has been searched it is safe to come out of the cabinet.
- Go back to the projector and move toward the windows. Move to the window on the left in front of the projector and insert the slide you found in the camera.
- Back away twice and flip the switch to turn the projector on.
- Turn the focus knob.
- Look under the table and click on the cassette player. Click on play. Push the player back under the table by clicking on the speaker section of the player. Take the focus knob. To the left of the player is another black box. Pull it out. Once you have looked at it, push it back under the table. Put your cursor at the top of the screen to get an up arrow and come out from under the table.
- Put the focus knob back on the projector and turn it three times.
- Move forward to the window to look at the diagram.
- Back away from the window and exhaust all conversation with Joseph.

The following sequence is timed. You will have plenty of time if you know what to do. Don't forget about the Second Chance option in the game. It may come in handy for you.

- Click on the outlet on the right side of the door. Flip the switch. Close the outlet.
- Back away from the outlet and turn right. Go up the ladder and forward to the door to find it locked.

- Turn around and go toward the ladder you used to come up. Look on the left wall to find a safe. The little key you got from the puzzle under the stairs in the basement will open it. Look inside at the two documents on the floor of the safe. Take all the keys.
- Back away from the safe, turn around and go back to the locked door. The key for this door is different every time. Pick up the first key in your inventory and click on the door. If the door does not open, don't try to put the key down, just click on the next key in your inventory. Continue this until the door opens.
- Enter the room and see Maya on the left. Continue into the room and look out the window at the marquee.
- Back away, turn around and go left. Continue toward the power box on the wall.
- Once Joseph interrupts you, continue the conversation until he says that he never meant for it to turn out like this.
- Click on the flash paper in your inventory and then click on Joseph.
- Once Joseph leaves, go to the power box and click on the switch to turn the power on to the marquee.

**END GAME**





**MUSCLES** --- Muscles are known for their monstrous engines and dominating presence. Considered the pride of American racing, muscle cars are built with speed and acceleration in mind. Most popular muscles are classics that are heavily tuned, further living up to their reputation. The downside is that when controlling muscles, you need to countersteer a lot, especially when entering corners. The weight of the car makes the weight shifting too unstable, which can make you lose control if not careful.

PRICE: AVERAGE  
 TOP SPEED: AVERAGE  
 ACCELERATION: GREAT  
 HANDLING: POOR



**EXOTICS** --- When speaking of Exotics cars, the first thing that enters our minds would be those flat, wide and futuristic looking designs capable of bursting out of your eyesight. Well, what I think about exotics are that these are the rich kids' toys. Exotics excel in almost everything, making them basically the best cars around....that's if you have the cash...

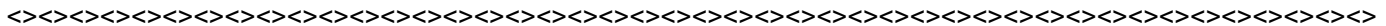
PRICE: HIGH  
 TOP SPEED: GREAT  
 ACCELERATION: GREAT  
 HANDLING: GREAT

After deciding what to keep, Neville will join you as your first crew member. Watch the following scenes and you will be in your first pursuit of the game. Just evade them and the real game begins.

**CREW MEMBER**

-----  
 Neville (Blocker/Fixer)  
 -----

Race Bonus: Zone Heat doesn't increase.  
 Career Bonus: Extra \$200 per win.  
 Acquired: At the beginning of the game.



**DOWNTOWN PALMONT**



For now you will only have access in Mason District. As you win races and earn reputation, more districts will be available for the taking. Just like what I mentioned in the Career Tips section above, try to win races that unlock performance parts. Here are the lists of races (in no particular order of availability) in Downtown Palmont.

Acquire and conquer a districts in Downtown and you will have another crew member.

**Billings District**  
**(Unlocks: Brakes - Tier 1 Pro Package)**

1. Lookout Point (Canyon Drift)  
 Length: 2.2 M  
 Unlocks: Flame Vinyls
2. Mason Street (Sprint )  
 Length: 4.4 M  
 Unlocks: Turbo - Tier 1 Street Package
3. Mason Fountain (Speed trap)  
 Length: 3.2  
 Unlocks: Nitrous & Tires - Tier 1 Pro Package

**Mason District**  
**(Unlocks: Transmission - Tier 1 Street Package)**

1. Park Drive (Speedtrap)  
 Length: 2.7 M  
 Unlocks: Nitrous and Tires - Tier 1 Street Package
2. Main Street (Circuit )  
 Length: 3.9 M  
 Unlocks: Brakes - Tier 1 Street Package
3. Lincoln Boulevard (Sprint)  
 Length: 3.0 M  
 Unlocks: Body Kits- Package 1

**Kings Park**  
**(Unlocks: Engine - Tier 1 Pro Package)**

1. Kings Park (Drift)  
 Length: 2.7 M  
 Unlocks: Suspension - Tier 1 Pro Package
2. Devil's Creek Pass (Canyon Sprint)  
 Length: 2.5 M  
 Unlocks: Nitrous - Tier 1 Racing Package
3. Garden Boulevard (Circuit)  
 Length: 4.8 M  
 Unlocks: Transmission - Tier 1 Pro Package

**Old Quarter**  
**(Unlocks: Mitsubishi Eclipse GT)**

1. Gold Valley Run (Sprint)  
 Length: 3.4 M  
 Unlocks: Roof Scoops
2. Knight Street (Checkpoint)  
 Length: 4.2 M  
 Unlocks: Hoods- Package 1
3. Boss Race vs. Kenji  
 Race Type: Circuit, 2 laps; Canyon Duel  
 Unlocks: Turbo - Tier 1 Pro Package

**Historic Chinatown**  
**(Unlocks: Engine - Tier 1 Street Package)**

1. Silk Road (Circuit )  
 Length: 4.8 M  
 Unlocks: Spoilers- Package 1
2. Kimei Temple (Drift)  
 Length: 2.7 M  
 Unlocks: Wheels- Package 1
3. Chinatown Tram (Sprint)  
 Length: 5.0 M  
 Unlocks: Suspension - Tier 1 Street Package

**CREW MEMBER**  
 -----

Sal (Scout/Fabricator)  
 -----

Race Bonus: Winning races detracts attention from the police.  
 Career Bonus: Unlock Autosculpt bodykits, hoods, and roof scoops.  
 Acquired: After you acquire a couple sections of Downtown.



**BOSS: KENJI**  
CONTROLLING CREW: BUSHIDO  
CAR: RX-7



Once you have conquered all districts, Kenji will challenge you. This will be a 2 lap circuit race and a canyon duel. Now, if you are able to beat the challenge series that unlocks the Nissan 240 SX (Collector's Edition only), then this battle will be easy as pie.

For Tuners, you will be probably be using the RX-8. Remember, a fully upgraded RX-8 is no match or will have difficulty racing against the RX-7. This is where tuning makes a difference. Kenji's specialty is technical courses. His car hugs the corners like a breeze, not to mention that the RX-7 accelerates like crazy when exiting turns. With proper driving, you will always have a 2-3 second lead against Kenji with that setup. Buying a new car is also a good option but not a good deal money-wise.

The circuit race is full of tight corners and there are certain points where Kenji excels. As much as possible, DO NOT LET HIM TAKE THE LEAD. He will always try to overtake you from the inside. If he is shouldering you, nudge him on the wall. He will slow down. When taking corners, don't stray too much in the outside while turning. If he is just behind you, he will not let that opportunity pass. Take note of the shortcuts as well. He will always take those shortcuts if possible.

The canyon duel can be challenging as well. Tuners are the perfect machines for technical racing. Too powerful machines can make you lose control. If you are confident about your driving, you can always attempt to overtake him. Otherwise, just keep as close as possible to the guy. Fully upgraded Exotics should be okay, so no special notes about it. Muscle users should save this battle for last. Muscles suffer for their weight, making them hard to control while maintaining high speed corners. Countersteering will always do the trick but it requires practice. Just remember the pointers I mentioned above and you should do fine.

Yumi will contact you after the race. Just follow the GPS to meet her and she will be available for hiring.

**CREW MEMBER**

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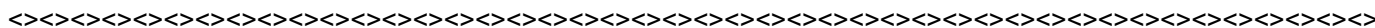
Yumi (Scout/Mechanic)

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Race Bonus: 25% boost to nitrous.

Career Bonus: 10% discount on parts.

Acquired: After you defeat Kenji of Crew BUSHIDO



**KEMPTON**



Again, same general rule. Prioritize winning the easy races you can tackle and also the ones unlocking the performance parts. For tuners, after trampling over Bushido and taking over the Downtown, Kempton and Fortuna should be both accessible. I suggest conquering Kempton first since after defeating Angie, you will get to hire Sampson. His career bonus is very useful (+10% cash for winning races), specially if you want to make the most profit in your career. Refer to the race list above to know what to take first. At this time also, I suggest winning some races in Fortuna that unlocks greater performance packages.

**The Projects**  
(Unlocks: Ford Mustang GT)

1. Foundry Road (Speedtrap)  
Length: 2.7 M  
Unlocks: Exhaust Tips
2. Dover Street (Circuit)  
Length: 7.0 M  
Unlocks: Chrome Paint
3. Waterfront Road (Sprint)  
Length: 2.7 M  
Unlocks: Spoilers- Package 2

**Morgan Beach**  
(UNLOCKS: Volkswagon Golf R32)

1. Morgan Beach Offramp (Checkpoint)  
Length: 2.7 M  
Unlocks: Stripe Vinyls
2. Beachfront (Circuit)  
Length: 5.0 M  
Unlocks: Nitrous and Tires - Tier 2 Street Package
3. Dover and Lepus (Sprint)  
Length: 3.4 M  
Unlocks: Metallic Paint

**Kempton Holdings**  
(UNLOCKS: Vauxhall Monaro VXR)

1. Petersburg Dam (Sprint)  
Length: 3.7 M  
Unlocks: Wheels- Package 2
2. Stonewall Tunnel (Speedtrap)  
Length: 2.3 M  
Unlocks: Brakes - Tier 2 Street Package
3. Boss Race vs. Angie  
Race Type: Circuit, 2 laps; Canyon Duel  
Unlocks: Dodge Charger R/T

**Eskuri Plaza**  
(Unlocks: Suspension - Tier 2 Pro Package)

1. Eskuri Way (Speedtrap)  
Length: 2.3 M  
Unlocks: Candy Paint
2. Knife's Edge (Drift)  
Length: 2.4 M  
Unlocks: Hoods- Package 3
3. Eskuri Plaza (Checkpoint)  
Length: 5.5 M  
Unlocks: Transmission - Tier 2 Street Package

**Newport Industrial Park**  
(Unlocks: Engine - Tier 2 Street Package)

1. Devil's Creek Pass (Drift)  
Length: 2.3 M  
Unlocks: Iridescent Paint
2. Newport Trainyard (Speedtrap)  
Length: 3.4 M  
Unlocks: Nitrous - Tier 2 Racing Package
3. Mission Street (Sprint)  
Length: 3.5 M  
Unlocks: Wheels- Package 4

As usual, make yourself known to Angie and she will challenge you.





**BOSS: ANGIE**  
CONTROLLING CREW: 21st STREET CREW  
CAR: Dodge Charger R/T



Again, the circuit race is a 2 lap race. Muscles are monsters of speed and in straight paths; they can outdistance you with ease. Hence, Angie's chosen course is a closed circuit with no or little tight turns and plenty of smooth, straight paths. That is where her Charger rules. She can catch up, and easily leave you behind unless you are careful. Oh and another thing; Muscles maybe monsters but a hard crash can disable them for a good few seconds.

Okay this time, set your car's performance for HIGH SPEED. Tuners have good acceleration by default so this is no problem. The real challenge here probably will be keeping your lead. For some corners, Angie will slow down which opens the opportunity to overtake her. Tuners will have a struggle keeping up once she has the lead, especially in straight lines. During these part of the course, BURN ALL YOUR NITROUS to maintain the lead. There are also some shortcuts in the course so if you have the opportunity, take them.

The canyon is where you will have a sure, easy win. Muscles SUCK in canyon races. Angie will ALWAYS slow down considerably when entering corners. IF you are using a tuner or exotic car, overtaking her will be easy.

Try getting her pink slip. If not, its up to you to race again. After the race, Sampson will offer his service. Meet up with him and hire him. Okay, we are done now with this territory, lets head up with the next round.

**CREW MEMBER**

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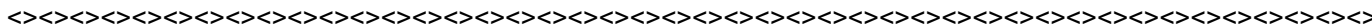
Sampson (Blocker/Fixer)

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Race Bonus: Extra 10% cash per win.

Career Bonus: Your zones get less attention from the police.

Acquired: After you beat Angie of 21st Street



**FORTUNA**



You probably have conquered a few good districts or races here on Fortuna already. Same rules apply; if you already maxed out your T1 or T2 ride, then you just need to win races until Wolf notices you. Refer to the list of races below to give you some idea on what races to tackle first.

**South Fortuna**  
(Unlocks: Lotus Elise)

1. York Road (Sprint)  
Length: 3.8 M  
Unlocks: Window Tint
2. Rabinowitz Drive (Checkpoint)  
Length: 5.2 M  
Unlocks: Hoods- Package 2
3. Ocean View (Circuit)  
Length: 6.9 M  
Unlocks: Suspension - Tier 2 Street Package

**Fortuna Heights**  
(UNLOCKS: Renault Clio v6)

1. Condo Row (Circuit)  
Length: 6.9 M  
Unlocks: Body Kits- Package 2
2. Agostini Avenue (Sprint)  
Length: 4.4 M  
Unlocks: Turbo - Tier 2 Street Package
3. Hills Borough Parkway (Checkpoint)  
Length: 7.9 M  
Unlocks: Tribal Vinyls

**Hills Borough**  
(Unlocks: Porsche Cayman S)

1. North Bellezza (Sprint)  
Length: 3.7 M  
Unlocks: Wheels- Package 3
2. Lofty Heights Downhill (Sprint)  
Length: 3.3 M  
Unlocks: Body Vinyls- Package 1
3. Lofty Heights Downhill (Drift)  
Length: 2.9 M  
Unlocks: Body Vinyls- Package 2

**Palmont University**  
(Unlocks: Transmission - Tier 2 Pro Package)

1. University Avenue (Checkpoint)  
Length: 4.7 M  
Unlocks: Matte Paint
2. City Courthouse (Drift)  
Length: 3.0 M  
Unlocks: Spoilers- Package 3
3. University Way (Circuit)  
Length: 4.6 M  
Unlocks: Body Kits - Package 4

**Ocean View**  
(Unlocks: Brakes - Tier 2 Pro Package)

1. Million Dollar Drive (Speedtrap)  
Length: 4.6 M  
Unlocks: Nitrous and Tires - Tier 2 Pro Package
2. Verona Tunnel (Sprint)  
Length: 3.3 M  
Unlocks: Body Kits- Package 3
3. Boss Race vs. Wolf  
Race Type: Circuit, 2 laps; Canyon Duel  
Unlocks: Ashton Martin DB9



**BOSS: WOLF**  
 CONTROLLING CREW: T.F.K  
 CAR: Aston Martin DB9



The two lap race is both a combination of tight turns and straight, hi-speed roadways. There are a LOT of deciding shortcuts here that really makes a difference. As much as possible, try to take them all. It is okay to restart races in case you lost; Wolf loves to take those shortcuts so unless you are really a good driver with a great car, well you can take the generic route and still win. Otherwise, use the pursuit breakers and shortcuts as necessary.

The canyon will be easy as well as long as you know the technique. If you notice, rival racers always slow down during entry and speed off when exiting. With tuners, you can be more aggressive. Hard brake and turn, you can navigate a sharp corner. Staying 'inside' during a smooth turn can also increase your chances to overtake the opponent, not to mention that you can use their cars as "railings" and trade paint while maintaining your speed and lead. If you have a really souped up ride, then Wolf is like a puppy.

Again, try to get his PINK SLIP for collection's sake; otherwise just make your selections and proceed with the story.

Colin will notify you about his willingness to join your crew. Meet him up and you will receive another call for Darius. Go to the place and watch the scenes. You will have Nikki as a new crew member as well.

### CREW MEMBERS

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Colin (Drafter/Fabricator)

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Race Bonus: Larger Area for drafting.

Career Bonus: Unlocks Autosculpt wheels, spoilers, exhausts, and chop tops.

Acquired: After you beat Wolf of Crew TFK

Nikki (Drafter/Mechanic)

-----

Race Bonus: 50% boost to speedbreaker and nitrous.

Career Bonus: 10% discount on car purchases.

Acquired: Before you take on Stacked Deck; after a scene with Darius

**SILVERTON**

As the last territory in the game, this area holds the really good racers and good races. Just stick with your good ol ride, finish some checkpoints to earn some cash. For the hardest races, you need to have a powerful T3 car to ride so decide carefully what you will buy. I seriously tackled the game with pure TUNER cars only and it was hard keeping up with those exotic maniacs in Silverton. But I still kicked their ass anyways.

So, back in the subject, win races to open up new areas; just win two races at a time in a single district to conquer it and unlock a goody. Good T2 rides can still keep up with these races so stick with em until you find yourself being left in the dust. Try getting the Racing Packages instead of installing Street Packages then just upgrade to Racing Packages.

**Canmor Downs**  
(UNLOCKS: Nissan Skyline GT-R 34)

1. Blackwell Road (Checkpoint)  
Length: 5.8 M  
Unlocks: Chevrolet Corvette Z06
2. Deadfall Junction (Canyon Duel)  
Length: 4.4 M  
Unlocks: Lamborghini Murcielago
3. Canmor Road (Speedtrap)  
Length: 4.0 M  
Unlocks: Turbo - Tier 3 Pro Package

**Neon Mile**  
(Unlocks: Toyota Supra)

1. The Neon Mile (Checkpoint)  
Length: 5.1 M  
Unlocks: Transmission - Tier 3 Street Package
2. Olympic Boulevard (Speedtrap)  
Length: 3.8 M  
Unlocks: Nitrous and Tires - Tier 3 Pro Package
3. Desperation Ridge  
Boss Race vs Angie, Kenji and Wolf  
Race Type: Canyon Sprint, Sprint  
Length: 4.6 M  
Unlocks: Brakes and Suspension - Pro Package

Boss Race vs Darius  
Race Type: Circuit 2 laps, Canyon Duel

**Infinity Park**  
(Unlocks: Ford GT)

1. Journeyman's Bane (Canyon Duel)  
Length: 3.3 M  
Unlocks: Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution IX MR
2. Eagle Drive (Sprint)  
Length: 3.5 M  
Unlocks: Engine - Tier 3 Pro Package
3. Gray Street (Checkpoint)  
Length: 4.3 M  
Unlocks: Brakes and Suspension - Tier 3 Racing Package

**Starlight Strip**  
(Unlocks: Subaru Impreza WRX-STI)

1. Troy (Checkpoint)  
Length: 4.5 M  
Unlocks: Engine - Tier 3 Street Package
2. North Broadway (Circuit)  
Length: 4.4 M  
Unlocks: Plymouth Hemi 'Cuda
3. Silverton Way (Sprint)  
Length: 4.3 M  
Unlocks: Turbo - Tier 3 Street Package

**Shady Pine**  
(Unlocks: Dodge Viper SRT/10)

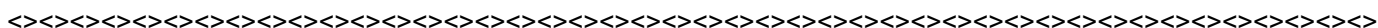
1. Bowen Avenue (Speedtrap)  
Length: 3.5 M  
Unlocks: Lamborghini Gallardo
2. Paradise Hotel (Circuit)  
Length: 6.4 M  
Unlocks: Nitrous and Tires - Tier 3 Racing Package
3. Spade Street (Sprint)  
Length: 3.3 M  
Unlocks: Turbo - Tier 3 Racing Package

**Diamond Hills**  
(Unlocks: Nissan 350Z)

1. Starlight Street (Sprint)  
Length: 4.2 M  
Unlocks: Transmission - Tier 3 Pro Package
2. Deadfall Junction (Canyon Sprint)  
Length: 4.5 M  
Unlocks: Nitrous and Tires - Tier 3 Street Package
3. Savannah Street (Circuit)  
Length: 6.6 M  
Unlocks: Brakes and Suspension - Tier 3 Street Package

**Silverton Refinery**  
(Unlocks: Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren)

1. Journeyman's Bane (Drift)  
Length: 2.9 M  
Unlocks: Transmission - Tier 3 Racing Package
2. Brooks Street (Circuit)  
Length: 7.3 M  
Unlocks: Engine - Tier 3 Racing Package
3. Desperation Ridge (Canyon Duel)  
Length: 4.5 M  
Unlocks: Dodge Challenger Concept



Alright, the last battles will be long so make sure you choose the most powerful car you can get and tune it properly. I prefer finishing all the other races first before battling the last races...

This will be a 3-1 battle. You against Kenji, Wolf and Angie.



**BOSS: KENJI**  
CAR: MITSUBISHI LANCER EVO IX MR  
**BOSS: ANGIE**  
CAR: DODGE CHALLENGE CONCEPT  
**BOSS: WOLF**  
CAR: LAMBORGHINI MURCIELAGO


**BOSS: DARIUS**  
CONTROLLING CREW: STACKED DECK  
CAR: AUDI R8

- Basically their tactics are still the same. Angie loves burning rubber whenever she has the chance, Kenji hugs corners beautifully and Wolf always looks for and takes shortcuts.
- First battle is a Canyon Sprint. Try to get ahead of the fellas by burning some Nitrous during launch. Hold your lead by taking the corners smoothly. If you managed to reach this part of the game, I am confident that you can take care of yourself. This track is not that long so just don't let WOLF take the lead. He poses the greatest threat here....
- Next, is a long sprint in the city. There are some shortcuts here and rest assured that Wolf will take them. Now, if you managed to keep the lead without any problems during the canyon sprint, then you should be able to handle this race without any issues. Now, try to use the Pursuit Breakers to your advantage. Disabling them for a good few seconds is enough to secure your win.

#### ***Now the real battle against Darius starts...***

- After some brief showoff, you will need to win a 2 lap circuit race. There will be shortcuts and believe me, his Audi handles the corners beautifully and it really streaks on straight paths. Darius will take shortcuts occasionally but taking them for your own advantage doesn't sound wrong either. Just drive fast and safe. Nudging him against the wall or railing during a turn is a very effective way to keep him from overtaking you. This is just a short race so make sure you maintain your lead.

#### ***Alright, the last battle.***

- A canyon duel in one of the most unfriendliest canyon track in the game. Just great. Overtaking Darius is still possible but this race is where the car and the driver needs to be really good. There will be a lot of turns and absolutely no Nitrous. All of your car's parts will be put to the extreme test and your skills as well. It took me several attempts to win this race using my Evolution IX but it took just a few moments using any fully tuned T3 exotics. There is always an opportunity to overtake him during corners since his INSIDE is always open.
- 
- One advance overtaking strategy is to stay close to him and when he slows down and turns, just release pedal (don't brake), allow your car use his car as a railing to steer in the corner's inside lane, then accelerate.
  - Another way is to tail him as much as possible (similar to drafting) then when he slows down to enter a corner, speed in, turn, then speed out.
  - Just hold your lead for a good 10 seconds after overtaking him and you win. If you managed to follow him all the way through the finish line and it is your turn to be pursued, stay FOCUSED on the road and not on how to lose him immediately. All racers are very good racers so just concentrate on maintaining a good distance as much as possible.

#### ***"There is always somebody faster than you out there"....***

- That will Darius' last words after getting smoked by you. Watch the next scenes, and congratulations for finishing the game. You can save your progress. After that, you can finish the remaining challenge series events or perform the other rewards cards tasks.
- Or... if you want to start a new game, and want to retain your hard-earned rewards or unlockables, sell all your cars except one. Then get busted intentionally till your last car gets impounded permanently. This will result to a Game Over and you can start a new game using a different car class while retaining what you have done already.

*Our next magazine will be the January/February 2008 issue. Wow, 2008 sure came quickly. Along with the magazine, we have a lot of work ahead of us in getting our AL website updated.*

*We want to thank everyone for taking the time to read our magazine. We truly do appreciate it. Really....we mean it!*

*The entire team at Adventure Lantern would like to wish everyone a safe and happy New Year!*

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