Bard's Tale III: Thief of Fate

By Charles Don Hall

The latest installment of Interplay's hit fantasy series features many improvements, including new character classes and spells, a wider variety of puzzle types and the ability to use objects in order to solve some of them, the option to save the game while in a dungeon, and auto-mapping. Like its predecessors, *Thief of Fate* involves exploring a series of dungeons shown from a first-person perspective, where you must gain the experience and equipment necessary to survive the final confrontation. There are 84 different dungeon levels to explore—however, these are not the 21 x 21 square mazes of the earlier games. They vary widely in size, and some are as small as 5 x 5.

Thirteen character classes are available, including seven kinds of spellcasters. A party may contain up to seven members, and empty slots can be filled with friendly monsters who sometimes volunteer to team up with you; they may also be summoned with one of several spells. In addition to supporting characters from both previous games, the program also lets you import veterans from *Ultima III* and *IV* and the first three *Wizardry* scenarios.

Tarjan of the Apes

In *Bard's Tale I*, your party freed Skara Brae from the evil wizard Mangar. This seems to have had the unfortunate side effect of angering Mangar's master, Tarjan the Mad God, who has demolished the city and scattered the population.

As you can see, this is a somewhat revisionist history. *Bard's Tale* veterans will recall that Tarjan was not a god at all, but an insane wizard who was worshipped as one by an obscure sect. You had to fight him at one point in the first game, but he was a much easier opponent than Mangar. So it seems odd that Mangar would serve a god weaker than himself.

Anyway, in order to defeat Tarjan you must travel into the ruins of Skara Brae and find what's left of the Review Board. The Old Man there will send you on a series of quests. He also doles out level increases and teaches new spells. The first quest takes place in Skara Brae and serves as a "starter dungeon" to allow new characters to get up to speed. Later quests require the services of a Chronomancer, a new class of magic user available only to Mages who have learned seventh level spells in at least three of the other five classes.

Upon changing class, a new Chronomancer forgets *all* his spells but acquires a small selection of very powerful ones. Among these are the all-important spells that teleport the party to and from the seven parallel universes in which most of the game occurs.

A forest world, a frozen wasteland, a world whose monsters are all brightly colored—each universe has its own distinct personality. My favorite is Tarmitia, a very strange universe that intersects with Earth in places and is inhabited by Nazi stormtroopers, Roman Centurions and characters from *Wasteland*, another Interplay game released about the same time. A single quest (often finding a collection of magic relics) is associated with each universe.

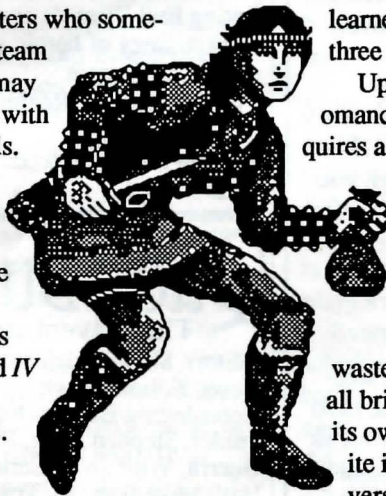| Type:	Fantasy Role-playing
Systems:	Apple (64K), C 64
Planned Conversions:	IBM

Mapping and Magic

The most noticeable new feature is auto-mapping: when you hit the escape key, a map pops up and shows the section of the dungeon you've already explored. Unfortunately, it isn't perfect…you can't tell whether you've explored a given square or just walked around it. In order to make sure you find everything, you still need to draw your own map on graph paper.

However, the auto-mapping feature greatly simplifies the exploration of dark areas and rooms with spinners. It also makes it easier to check your map when you suspect you've miscounted the number of squares in a room or hall.

There are over 100 spells. Several new ones have been added, and some of the least useful ones removed. The Geo-

Adventure Hotline

New Releases

Mindscape is distributing Lucasfilm Games' *Willow*, based on the latest adventure-fantasy film of George Lucas. It's described as a graphic adventure that lets you assume different roles as you progress through seven episodes. The IBM program needs 512K and supports CGA and EGA. It may be converted to other machines. Also from Lucasfilm but distributed by Activision, *Zach McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders* is a comedy thriller along the lines of *Maniac Mansion*. The C 64 game is first and will be followed by Apple and IBM. Mindscape showed a new Mac game called *Colony* at CES in June. *Citadel*, a Mac RPG they announced in January, is still up in the air. Epyx has an action adventure sequel called *Mission Impossible II*. It's for the C 64, ST and IBM, with plans for Apple 2, GS and Amiga this fall. Look for Electronic Arts' *Future Magic* (IBM) in August or September, but they decided not to publish *Magic Candle*.

Who Says Text is Dead?

Sir-Tech says the release of *The Mines of Qyntarr* is imminent, so it may be out by now. It's the first in their *Usurper* series of all-text adventures.

Conversions

Lucasfilm's IBM version of *Maniac Mansion*, an animated graphic adventure, supports EGA, VGA, MCGA and GAGA as well as Hercules and the Tandy. You get both disk formats in the same package. *Wasteland* for the C 64 uses 16 colors instead of the four seen in the Apple original. Despite a recent news item on this page, Sir-Tech's *Seven Spirits of Ra* is not being converted for the Apple. (It did, however, win a place in the summer "CES Innovations '88 Software Showcase," along with *Wizardry IV*.) An IBM *Reach for the Stars* is available from Electronic Arts. This is the enhanced "Third Edition," with new Advanced Rules and other features. You need 256K. It supports 16-color Tandy, CGA, Hercules, EGA, MCGA, VGA (but not GAGA). *RFTS* is not copy protected.

Quest for Wartow

When playing *Ultima V*, don't forget to track down QuestBusters' original Contributing Editor, Ron Wartow, who is currently living on a farm in New Magincia. To find him, Charles Don Hall says to travel to the small island near the center of the map, which is marked with a crescent moon symbol. Enter town and climb the fence into the first field on the right. Ron's usually here or in the house. Don't kill him, because he'll give you an important clue [get the clue, *then* kill him].

ACS Club Update

There are now 40 Amiga ACS adventures in that area of the library, and one for the IBM. Apple and C 64 games are also available for $5 each (Amiga and IBM are slightly higher), or you can trade one you've written for two in the library. For details on membership and the various libraries, write Ken St. André/ACS Club, 3421 E. Yale, Phoenix, AZ 85008.

Contest Winners

Chris Steinbeck won the *Keys* Contest this month. People who did the walkthrus also won the games of their choice.

Star Command Bugs

Due to a space bug, you may be told you've accomplished a mission after returning to the star base in versions 1.0 and 1.1 of SSI's IBM game even though you haven't. SSI says version 1.2 will correct it, and you'll be able to swap your old disk for the new version.

Walkthroughs Wanted

A couple of people are working up solutions for *Bard's Tale III*, but we still need several for *Wasteland* in order to cover as many of the multiple solutions as possible. Others for which we could use solutions: *Twilight's Ransom*, *Dungeon Master*, *Star Trek III* and *Star Command*.

Late but Alive...

We're running a week or so behind schedule due to the recent move, but should be on track again in August—which *should* arrive around the first of the month.

Ultima V: Looking for Lord British...

By Charles Don Hall

Peopled by many of the same characters and staged on the same map, the latest chapter of Lord British's immensely popular saga is closely related to *Ultima IV*. The geography has changed but slightly, and all the towns, shrines and dungeons are in identical locations. [However, several new towns were added, and the old ones were extensively remodeled inside. Some structures are also higher, offering more levels to explore, and you can now walk about on top of buildings.]

In *Ultima IV*, you traveled to Brittania and embarked on a quest to discover the Codex of Ultimate Wisdom. In order to find it, you had to gain the title of Avatar by becoming enlightened in eight Virtues. As *Ultima V* opens, you are summoned back by Shamino the Warrior and Iolo the Bard, two of your companions on earlier quests.

You learn Brittania has been peaceful for many years—until the discovery of the Underworld, a huge network of caves deep beneath the surface. Accompanied by a band of knights, Lord British decided to investigate this region. Monsters killed most of the knights, and Brittania's King was captured and is missing in action.

A Blackthorn in Your Side

Until Lord British returns, the government is run by his advisor, Blackthorn. Also an Avatar, Blackthorn is "helping" the other citizens become Avatars. For example, since two of the Avatar's Virtues are Honesty and Compassion, Blackthorn has decreed: "Thou shalt not lie, or thou shalt lose thy tongue" and "Thou shalt help those in need, or thou shalt suffer the same need." These and other laws are enforced by a body of officials called The Inquisition.

Unfortunately, Blackthorn's laws aren't enforced against the Shadowlords, three terrible black wraiths who regularly visit the towns and make your life miserable whenever you run into them. By the way, some residents of Brittania don't consider Blackthorn a true Avatar, something you'll have to decide for yourself.

The goal is to track down and rescue Lord British. Along the way you'll explore Brittania, the Underworld and the Dungeons, interact with dozens of townspeople, collect a vast assortment of magic items and Words of Power, battle hordes of monsters, meditate at shrines, travel by horse and ship, and take harpsichord lessons. You must also recruit a maximum of six additional members for your party. This is a good number, since the eight required in *Ultima IV* was too many to keep track of.

You may play the game with an Avatar from *Ultima IV*, or create a fresh character by choosing Tarot-style cards whose pictures represent situations involving ethical decisions. There aren't as many classes, however, so an existing Avatar might be transformed a bit when imported into *V*.

Sunrise to Sunset

The biggest change in the game system is the addition of a day/night cycle. Outdoors, the main effect is that visibility decreases at night, when monsters appear more frequently. Indoors, however, it plays a major role.

Every character has an individual daily schedule. Jeremy, for instance, lives in a back room of Yew's local Inn. He awakes each morning about 9 AM, immediately walks out of the Inn and follows the sidewalk to the prison to visit his brother, incarcerated for heresy. An hour later he returns to the Inn and goes to work in the kitchen, where he putters around all day, presumably preparing food for the townspeople, who all stop in to eat sometime during the day. He gets off work at 10 PM and visits his brother again. Finally, he returns to his room and

> **Type:** Fantasy Role-playing
> **System:** Apple (64K); with IIe (128K), it supports Mockingboard, Pathport Midi Interface and Phasor sound boards. (These are also supported for the IIGS, but you need to get an upgraded disk or use the BASIC listing provided below.) GS owners can swap the four two-sided disk for a 3.5" version by late summer (for $10). This will also apply for the IBM.
> **Conversions Planned:** IBM (summer), C 64 & Amiga (fall), Mac (later)

sleeps till the next morning. [Detecting and taking advantage of various characters' schedules is an important element of solving certain puzzles.]

There's not a lot of nightlife in the towns, though some people keep strange hours: the keepers of the four lighthouses, for example, sleep through the day and work at night. Incidentally, standing near a lighthouse at sunset is an interesting experience. As the sun sets, visibility diminishes until you can see only a few squares in each direction. Suddenly a wedge-shaped beam of light flashes from the lighthouse. Since the light revolves, this wedge sweeps smoothly around the screen, briefly illuminating each tile.

You can save the game while inside a Dungeon, a feature that was not included in the first version of *Ultima IV* but retrofitted into later editions.

Vas Dat Swords and Sorcery?

Most of the 26 spells are carried over from *Ultima IV*, but now you have to learn Latin-style root words and combine them by pressing a key for each in order to cast a spell. Essentially, you will learn to speak a dash of Latin, but it's not as hard as it sounds. Mandrake root and other ingredients must also be obtained and mixed beforehand; the rarest ones may be purchased (at extortionate prices) if you have trouble finding them. The major difference in combat allows you to fire missile weapons diagonally as well as in the cardinal directions. Also, you can have one character search a body for weapons, etc., while the others continue fighting.

New Graphic Details

Countless graphic details are included: water splashes (you can hear it!) in waterfalls and fountains, and clocks tell time and chime the hour. The musically inclined will find harpsichords to play, and

Roberta Williams on the next King's Quest

QB: What does the term "interactive fiction" mean to you?

Williams: Well, if you take fiction in its literal terms, a story that's not true, and interactive means you can control it, communicate with it, alter it, you can get feedback from it—solve it—that's interactive fiction, that's an adventure. And that's the thing I like to do, tell stories. I just love that. I like to come up with stories and characters, and I'm really trying to do more to develop the characters' personalities, like you would in a traditional story. Before a few years ago, characters in a game were so flat, you know: "Here's a troll," and you deal with the troll. "Hit the troll" or whatever. He didn't have a personality, you would just kind of go through the game and meet these guys and whatever. So I'm trying to improve my storytelling style to give the characters and story more dimension, hopefully in a way that will draw people into it.

QB: How are you doing that in *King's Quest IV*?

Williams: A lot of it comes from how the characters are represented on-screen. In the past many of our characters have been very flat, not just in what they say but in how they are represented in terms of walking around…you know, they just kind of walk. But in *King's Quest IV* there will be a lot more movement, more animation and, as our animator likes to say, "body language"— more *realistic* movement that has to do with their personalities. We can almost get facial expressions using the new resolution…maybe not complete facial expressions, but at least enough so you'll know how the character feels. That's one way. Another is in the actual messages that I write: I'm using a lot more descriptive language for the characters and their feelings. Another way is in the use of sound effects and music to get certain feelings.

I think in a way that what we're doing is still being invented, and each time we do one of these it progresses and we learn new things. I'm sure that what we'll see five years from will be much more balanced, because we're still trying to learn how to develop characters and give them personality and make the story more interesting so it will draw the reader or viewer or whatever you want to call them into it, so they feel they're really part of the story. That's what I'm trying to do.

QB: What do you see for adventures five years from now?

Williams: A lot depends on the hardware, and a lot depends on our storytelling skills and the software tools we have available that, with the hardware, gives these characters life. But the thing that kind of gets in the way here is CDI, because we don't quite know what that's going to do. I know somewhere down the line I'll do something for CDI, but I consider it separate from this [computer adventure games]…I don't know if they'll try to integrate them, or one will fizzle out and the other succeed.

QB: What's the main difference?

Williams: With CDI, the game would be on a compact disc. You wouldn't use a computer at all. It would be a compact disc player attached to your TV set.

QB: Would you type in commands and so on?

Williams: There is supposed to be a keyboard you could get, but it will be very expensive and most people probably won't get one. The whole concept behind CDI is that it's for the average non-computer type person—there are still a lot of people who don't understand computers and don't want to have anything to do with them. But they can set their VCRs and run a camcorder. They can do *that*. So CDI is supposed to be for them.

You put in the compact disc and up on the screen, you'll see…well, it can be anything from motion pictures, digitized graphics and animation, whatever you want. And you'll hear computer sounds, or music just like what you'd hear on a Phil Collins album. When people talk, it would sound just like what you hear in movies or TV shows.

But it is interactive—sort of. You can do things to it, but it's real limited. The keyboard isn't really thought of as part of it. They're thinking in terms of a joystick or a pointer that you would use to point and click to say where you want to go, and then the characters would walk around, and that would look just like in movie. Kinda like *Black Cauldron*, where you click buttons. But you can use real pictures, we can even use real people if we want to. Or Disney-style animation, or anything you want.

QB: How far away is this?

Williams: It's happening now. We haven't actually decided anything yet, but I know that down the line it will occur. I'm just not sure how that fits in and how—or even if—it's going to work. So it will be more like movie-making at that point, with well-orchestrated music and people really talking—there will probably be no text at all. Instead of a message window popping up saying "You are in the forest," we'll have a narrator say it. When you talk to characters, they'll actually speak, and each will have his or her own voice. So when you ask me what's down the line five years from now, I don't really know.

QB: But we know what's down the line…

Williams: One year, *maybe* (laughs).

QB: Like the subtitle of *King's Quest IV*, maybe?

Williams: *The Perils of Rosella*, for lack of anything better. It was sort of based on *The Perils of Pauline*. *King's Quest IV* has a heroine, and that's semi-experimental. I know it will be just fine with the women and girls who play the game, but how it will go over with some of the men, I don't know.

QB: I understand Infocom got a good response to *Plundered Hearts*, which has a female character. Our reviewer (William Carte) said that after he got into the game, he forgot all about it and it didn't matter that his character was a woman.

Williams: That's what I figured. It bothered me when I first started designing this one. We call our main character "Ego." In every game it's Ego, and that refers to the character we're writing around: we just say "Ego does this, Ego does that." So we've always called Ego "he" or him. But all of a sudden I've got a girl "Ego," and it was real strange at first. I had a real hard time calling Ego a "her" (laughs). "Her? She? She does this? She does that?" I've been working with this for a *long* time, about eight months [this interview took place in January], and now it's just fine. It's even natural. The only thing that's kinda strange is that I have a lot of deaths in my games: my characters always die from falling or being thrown into a cauldron or something. And I always like to have them die in a funny way. But I had a hard time having her die, especially in a funny way. It didn't seem right. I don't know why. I guess it's because she's a girl, and you don't think a girl should be treated that way (laughs). But I got used to that too, until there was one death I had to deal with last week that I was real uncomfortable with. Was it throwing her in the cauldron? I'm not sure, but it was some death that seem particularly unfeminine, not right.

QB: Trampled by stampeding ogres?

Williams: Oh, she gets dragged off by her braids, lots of deaths. And girls die differently. I discovered a lot of these things, like the way she falls, which has to be different from the way a guy falls. It's been an experience. And I think that men will find it fun and different, because it's from a different point of view.

QB: Are any of the puzzles based on the character's sex?

Williams: No, not really. Because that would be going too far. And personally, I think basically people are people and (laughs) there are only a couple of things that only men or women can do, when you come right down to it. So I think that whether you can solve this or that has nothing to do with being a man or woman. Except well, I'll take that back a little bit. I have gone away from...my characters don't really use weapons.

When I first started writing adventures, my characters just used weapons a little. More and more it has moved away from that, toward using your brain to solve the problem, using your wits or logic or whatever. And Rosella absolutely does *not* use weapons. So in that way she's very non-violent.

QB: No killing trolls in this one?

Williams: I take that back. You do kill something—but you do it in a very *nice* way. Unintentional, really. You accidentally kill somebody.

QB: And what's the story all about?

Williams: Since so much of the fun is in the act of discovery, I'd rather not go into the story other than what's in the catalog [as Rosella, you must solve multiple quests, the long-range goal being to find an enchanted fruit that will save your father, the King]. But I can tell you about some of the new features. The resolution of the graphics will be doubled to 320 x 200. We never had this before because we try to make our games available for as many different computers as possible.

For something to run on both an Apple and an Amiga, we've had to use graphics that were really stretching that Apple—but were not stretching the capabilities of the Amiga. We're moving away from that. We're doing two versions of *King's Quest IV*, one in the old style of graphics for the Apple, PCjr and maybe the Tandy 1000, I'm not sure. And we're doing another one for the higher resolution computers. So we'll be upgrading our graphics and making them a little more computer-specific than in the past.

With double the resolution, you won't have so much of that choppiness you see in the lower resolution. Like the staircase effect in the diagonal lines. You still have a little bit of that in the double resolution, but it's much, much smoother. And the pixels are smaller, so we can get more detail in the face.

I went out and got two very good computer artists to work on this game. One is concentrating just on the backgrounds, and the other is concentrating on animation. Before, we used the same artists. And it kind of bothered me at first to use

two different ones, because I felt the animation was so much a part of the background, that how could two separate artists make sure it was all integrated? But it's worked out, since the person doing the animation thinks only about that—so the animation is fantastic, and we've got a lot of it. The same with the guy doing the background. He doesn't have to worry about the animation, so he can spend a lot more time on detail in the background. I act as intermediary between them, making sure that the art is integrated properly.

QB: Did either one work on previous *King's Quests*?

Williams: No. In fact, they're brand new to our company. I did endeavor to make the artistic style as similar as possible, because it has to look and feel like a *King's Quest*. Using different artists concerns me a lot, but when we actually started doing it, working with the artists, it was strange; I saw how much I affect how the pictures turn out, how the graphics are so much a representation of how *I* feel and how I think it should look, as opposed to the artist. So they came out remarkably similar. And it's hard to explain, but it just turned out that way. The feeling of the game, its theme, how it plays, is the same.

QB: How big is the game?

Williams: A little bigger, but not much. I go by rooms, and a room to me is a screen, where you're at. We just started calling them rooms, I don't know why. *King's Quest I* had about 80 rooms. The second game had 92. *King's Quest III* had about 104, and *King's Quest IV* has about 95. But it actually has more because we have night scenes in the game. It's a timed game that takes place over a 24-hour period, so you roam around during the day and eventually it turns to night. So the graphics for each room were redrawn for the night scenes, and you'll come across different characters at night. It's spookier.

In fact, I want to do a ghost story next. I'm not doing *King's Quest V* next. I have to let people know I can do something else, expand my horizons. You get yourself stuck in a niche. It's been a year-and-a-half since *King's Quest III*, and I deliberately held back from putting one out this past Christmas because then...it's like "here's another one, and another one." You've got to give it time in between, otherwise you hurt it.

Conversion Castle

Amiga & IBM
Moebius

Proving that more memory and increased processor power make for a great conversion, the Amiga *Moebius* far surpasses the original game in ease of use and presentation. If you missed the original Apple review (*QB* February, 1986), this is Oriental-style role-playing with arcade-style combat sequences. Your goal is to retrieve the Orb of Celestial Harmony from a renegade monk by traveling through the realms of Earth, Air, Fire and Water. Each is a separate scenario that loads only when the previous one has been completed.

With the mouse, you don't have to touch the keyboard at all except to enter your character's name. Couple this with an icon interface and you've got a hit game on your hands. All commands are displayed as icons on a scroll in the lower half of the screen. By clicking on them, you either execute the command or access a sub-menu (as is the case with the Magic command).

Those who prefer may still use single keystrokes for all commands. The numeric pad can be used to move and choose combat options—it's easier to use than the keys. Still, the smoothness of the mouse control eliminates having to memorize the action related to each key on the pad.

Graphics are simply beautiful—clean and functional. From the moving eyes of the characters on the screen to the details in the terrain (which even shows vegetation falling as you cut it down) to the digitization of Moebius (whose face appears intermittently throughout your quest), the artistic talent resident in the Amiga graphics chip was put to good use. Particularly when you choose the Map option, which makes the different terrain and structure elements of the *Moebius* universe easier to distinguish than in the eight-bit versions.

Swordfighting and kung fu bouts were totally revamped for the Amiga, making combat sequences less tedious than in the original game. All the offensive movements have their own icons, and the opponents' animation is well-done. Also, the background now takes on the characteristics of the terrain in which the battle takes place on the map.

Another new feature lets you switch between bare hands and sword by clicking on your character as well as an icon, and special icons indicate how much food and water you have left—a useful addition, since these supplies are so quickly depleted.

Finally, a Ways of Play command lets you save and restore, turn sound and music on or off (they aren't too impressive, anyway), set the game's pace and toggle AutoChop (a new feature that automatically cuts vegetation for you if your sword is wielded). This translation of *Moebius* brought a new dimension to an already unique role-playing game, rather than just adding new graphics to a duplicate of the original's game system.
Russ Ceccola

The IBM version (256K minimum) looks equally good but does not support the mouse. However, it has custom graphics for a dozen computer/board configurations, from Hercules to Tandy—which gets 16 colors only if you have more than 256K—to Systems 2/25 and 30, and four sets for EGA, one that boasts 64 colors. It automatically picks the best one for your system, but you can choose another if you prefer. Disk access is incredibly slow unless you use the option that creates a "fast disk," which strips all the graphics except those for your computer from the scenario disk. This cuts access time to a comfortable 6-10 seconds. You can also move the unprotected scenario disk to a hard drive for even faster access.
Origin Systems, $59.95

Stephen King

Apple IIGS
Roadwar 2000

One of the best conversions I've ever seen, *Roadwar* leaves the starting line with a beautiful opening screen depicting total world destruction, accompanied by a musical score that sounds as if it were created with one of the GS music programs such as *Music Construction Set*. Then the game commences, and superb graphics become the focus of attention.

Colors are vivid, from the green fields to the blue waters. There is even spot animation in the lakes, where blue waves ripple the water. From the roadways and terrain features to the icons that illustrate oil towers, towns and other elements, the detail is immaculate.

Your goal is two-fold: in an America ravaged by nuclear war and other disasters, you must take over enough cities (by defeating the cults, gangs and other grouping running them) to qualify for the long-range mission of tracking down eight scientists and returning them to a government lab. This entails developing the attributes of your vehicles (represented by icons shown from an aerial view) as well as your gangmembers (described in text reports only).

Mouse, keyboard or a combination may be used to give orders. You click the mouse on the map to move your car, and it's also your means of choosing options from pull-down menus. The left side of the screen shows the battlefield, while the right is devoted to statistics such as vehicles, people, food, medicine, tires and so on. There is even a warning when you're low on food or fuel.

Perhaps one of the finest improvements is in combat. No more endless list of casualties scrolls up the screen. Instead, a box appears and immediately shows the number of enemy casualties; then another one informs you of your own casualties. Casualties are broken down into numbers for each rank: Armsmasters, Dragoons, etc. The boxes quickly flash on the screen until one side wins the battle.

You hear sound effects during special events, such as when attacking the enemy or finding a supply of fuel. These sounds vary according to the nature of the action, contributing to the overall experience.

The game offers three speeds, so you can choose slow until familiar with the interface, then move up to medium or fast. It comes on an unprotected 3.5" disk. Unlike SSI's conversions for the ST, no password protection is hidden in the manual. Hopefully the GS community will show SSI their trust is well placed. (For a more detailed review of the original (Apple) game, see the October, 1986 *QB*.)
SSI, $49.95

William E. Carte

Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I.

By Steven Payne

Now that even Infocom has succumbed to "graphic" temptations, you might suppose that traditional all-text adventures are finally headed for the last roundup. But then along comes First Row Software with *Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I.*, a new entry resembling nothing else so much as…one of the classic Infocom adventures! Go figure….

Actually, the reasons for the resemblance are not hard to fathom. Authors Michael and Muffy Berlyn are the same team that brought us *Suspended* and *Cutthroats*, as well as *Oo-topos*, *Cyborg* and others. People who played *Cyborg* won't be surprised to learn that once again you are connected up to a computer, which affects what you experience during the game. This time around you begin as an unsuspecting college student headed off to physics class with Dr. Dumont, whom you find showing the Marx Brothers' *Duck Soup* to an empty classroom. Excited by your arrival, Dumont shows you his latest project in particle physics: a contraption called L.E.T.S. P.A.R.T.I. (Laboratory Experiment and Theoretical Study Using Particle Accelerator and Reality Translation Integrator), which links the university's cyclotron to an Artificial Intelligence computer and a human subject hooked up inside a black shell.

Particle X, White Courtesy Phone

This setup's purpose, Dumont explains, is to view the elusive particle "X," whose millisecond lifespan is too brief for the usual methods of observation. By loading metaphors of what is happening in the cyclotron into the brain of a human "subonaut" and monitoring the subject's thought processes, P.A.R.T.I. will learn to observe sub-atomic events on its own, and the subject can return to the ordinary world.

But while trying the shell on for size, you accidently close the lid and become the human "subonaut" yourself. Now your adventure really begins! You find yourself projected into an environment that is strangely familiar yet disturbingly different. You first "wake up" seemingly at home in bed, yet your furniture turns out to be two-dimensional paintings on the wall. After looking around, you head west out of the house (don't forget to dress!) and step into a computer-induced world of crazy images consisting of equal parts physics, Zen and the Marx Brothers. The basic geography is laid out like the spokes of a wheel, with a lab at the hub and different mini-adventures branching off from there at each of the eight compass points (so simple that no mapping is really necessary).

From the lab you should head immediately north to the "School of Thought," where you meet Professor Parti, sit down at your desk and learn what you must do to escape from this strange "dream." Your objective is to find five keys scattered throughout the game, which (when inserted and turned in the desktop) entitle you to a diploma from the school; clues for your quest are given in a set of five Zen koans (e.g., "What is the sound of one duck quacking?") to which you can refer back at any point.

Meet the Marx Brothers

So off you go to look for the keys. But before you leave the School of Thought, you should first check out some of the other classrooms, where you will find Dr. Chaos Cohen (i.e., Groucho) presiding over a philosophy class, Dr. Gravity (Chico) giving instruction in metaphysics, and Lorenzo "Buck" Way (Harpo) teaching Zen meditation. Each of these Marx-ists has an item you will need (and two of them together will help you get the third). From there on you can solve the puzzles in virtually any order, since most of the subsequent mini-adventures are more or less self-contained. Along the way you will learn at least a little about light, heat, astronomy, tachyons, etc., but the education is relatively painless and requires no advanced knowledge of physics.

Once you've found all five keys and graduated, you can grab up some of additional items needed to "snooze" your way back to reality, head for home and wake up where you started, happy in the knowledge that you have finished the game, achieved a major scientific breakthrough and certainly increased your chances of an A from the good doctor. Throughout the story, *Dr. Dumont* displays a quirky, whimsical sense of humor, with a fair number of surprises.

The parser seems very sophisticated, though once in a great while you get odd feedback (such as "what do you mean, the chair, the chair, the lower seats or the seat?" in response to the command "type 'chair'"). You can save up to four games and restore one directly at any time by simply typing "restore" and the number of the saved game. On the Macintosh, these are easily accessible from a pull-down menu, though if you're not careful you may click on "save" when you mean "restore," thus writing over the saved position you really want. (There is also a peculiar 0 point font option in the style menu, which doesn't seem to do anything; I thought at first that it might be a "super-duper-brief" mode, or a "maximum difficulty" setting for die-hard adventurers who want to try finishing the game without even being able to read the text!)

The game is not too difficult, though some solutions seem a tad arbitrary. For example, why are flying glass shards stopped by a blanket and not a pillow? Yet I was able to solve most of the puzzles before realizing that some on-line hints were available by "meditating" on the proper objects with the proper equipment. My main complaint is that the game seemed a bit too small and was over too soon; I'm not sure I ever fully grasped the logical connections between its parts or the significance of some its images.

The packaging is basic and unimaginative. Its worst feature is the Player's Manual, which gives you no clue about what to do with the Zen-inspired features of the game—and is full of typographical errors. It ought to be redone, and soon! **Conclusions:** *Dr. Dumont* is a well-constructed and most enjoyable all-text adventure. Thanks to the Berlyns for helping to keep a venerable tradition alive and healthy!

Type:	Text Adventure
Systems:	IBM, IBM System 2, Mac (128K)

Skill Level: Novice/Intermediate
Protection: In Manual
Price: $39.95
Company: First Row

Walkthrus: Space Quest II & Dream Zone

By David Heidt

This solution starts at the crash site on the planet, since the first part is pretty much automated. Words to be typed in appear in **boldface**; other orders are conducted via stick, mouse or keyboard.

Crash Site and Deep Forest
Walk to hovercraft. **Look in hovercraft. Push button.** Walk to guard. **Tfbsdi hvbse. Hfu lfzdbse.** N. E. Walk to creature. **Untie rope.** W. W. **Get spore.** N. Move through roots maze without touching them. **Get berries.** Return to clearing.

Clearing
E. W. (Upper Passage) When aerial attack occurs, hide behind bush and wait for enemy to leave. Walk to mailbox. **Qvu gpsn jo nbjmcpy. Get whistle.** E.

Woods and the Cave
E. (Upper Passage) **Svc cfssjft on vojgpsn.** E. Walk to deep spot (center-right, towards top; you'll be swimming). **Ipme csfbui.** D. W. U (into cave). **Get gem.** Enter pool. **Ipme csfbui.** E. U. E. E. Climb tree. E. E. (You get caught in snare.) Wait till you pass out. **Wait.**

The Oaf's Camp
Talk to oaf (twice). Wait for him to move beside cage door. **Throw tqpsf at oaf. Get key. Unlock cage. Open door. Get rope.** N. W. W. (Stay close to bottom of screen to avoid getting shot.) [Save] Climb on log. **Tie rope to log. Climb rope.**

as you swing toward left side. W. Enter darkness. **Hold gem.** W. (You will fall.)

Bottom of Chasm
Get gem. Follow pink guys (S). **Listen to chief. Say the word.** [Save] Enter hole.

The Maze
Put hfn in npvui. Follow map to exit the maze, avoiding part marked "Avoid." E. N (take right exit). E. (Stay in water.) **Cmpx xijtumf.** Wait for beast. Get out of water when beast is at opposite side of screen. **Throw qvaamf at beast.** Walk to hole in rock. **Get rock.**

Base of Tower
If you have the keycard: Sneak under platform (hide behind bushes, etc., when guard goes right after stopping). **Throw rock.** (If you didn't get keycard earlier: **Throw spdl at guard with supporter.** Walk to guard. **Tfbsdi hvbse. Hfu lfzdbse.**) Walk to elevator. Take elevator to top of pad.

Top of Tower
Move behind shuttle. **Open door. Push power button. Set dial to WBD. Push thruster button. Pull throttle.** Wait till you leave the atmosphere. **Set dial to IBD. Push throttle.** Wait for Vohaul to contact you. **Wait** to enter Fortress.

Dock
(If a waxer approaches at any time in the Fortress, turn around, leave the level and return.) Wait to land. E. **Enter elevator. Look. Push three.** Wait. **Exit elevator.** E. (3). **Push button. Enter closet. Look. Get plunger. Get out.** E (3). Enter elevator. **Push four.**

Level Four
W (2). **Push button. Enter closet. Look. Get cutter. Leave closet.** W. Go to door on left. **Push button.** N. Walk to third stall. **Open door.** Enter stall. **Get toilet paper.** Exit stall. S. W (3). Enter elevator. **Push five.**

Level Five
E (3). **Push button. Enter closet. Look. Get basket. Get overalls. Get lighter. Put paper in basket.** W (3). Enter elevator. **Push one.** W. S.

South Tube and the Wallbots
Walk down stairs. W. (Barrier appears.) E. (Barrier appears.) Wait till floor opens three-quarters of the way, revealing acid pit, then **stick qmvohfs to barrier.** Wait for floor to close. **Let go. Drop basket. Cvso qbqfs** (must be in basket). Wait for sprinklers to start. E. E.

Vohaul's Chamber
Climb stairs. (You get zapped.) **Dvu hmbtt.** Walk to vent. Enter vent. **Push button.** Exit vent. W. Walk to switch. **Pull switch. Type fombshf.** E. Enter glass. **Tfbsdi Vohaul. Look at screen. Type TITS** (aborts salesman launch). Return to normal view.

Glass Tube
Look at box. Open box. Wear nbtl. E. S. W (2). **Type "push button"** but don't press enter yet. W. Move to button and press enter. E. (Robot will follow.) E (5). (Robot stops following.) Return to shuttle tube. **Get in pod. Push button. Wait**

Pod
Look. Walk to chamber. **Open chamber. Get in chamber.**

Key to Objects on Map
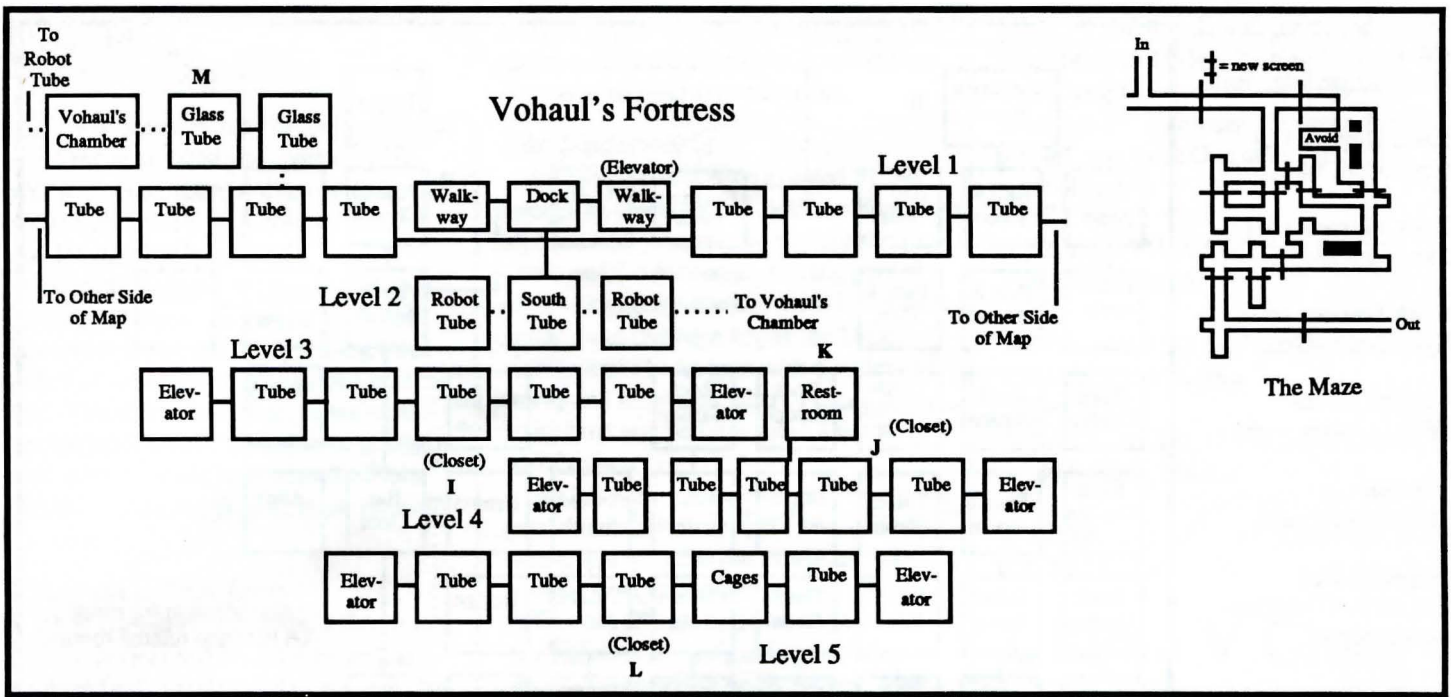A : keycard   B : creature and rope
C : spore   D : berries
E : mailbox & whistle   F : gem
G : key & rope   H : chief
I : plunger   J : glass cutter
K : toilet paper   L : basket, overalls & lighter
M : mask
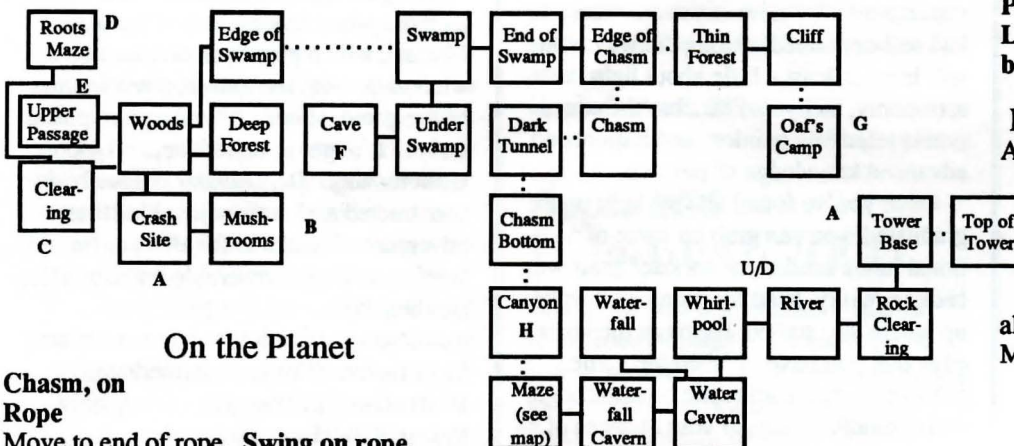
On the Planet

Chasm, on Rope
Move to end of rope. **Swing on rope.** When you have good momentum, **Let go**

Vohaul's Fortress

To Robot Tube

| Vohaul's Chamber | **M** Glass Tube | Glass Tube |

| Tube | Tube | Tube | Tube | Walk-way | Dock | Walk-way (Elevator) | Tube | Tube | Tube **Level 1** | Tube |

To Other Side of Map

Level 2 | Robot Tube | South Tube | Robot Tube | ...... To Vohaul's Chamber |

To Other Side of Map

Level 3

| Elev-ator | Tube | Tube | Tube | Tube | Tube | Elev-ator | Rest-room **K** |

(Closet) I

Level 4

| Elev-ator | Tube | Tube | Tube | Tube | Tube | Elev-ator | **J** (Closet) |

(Closet) L   **Level 5**

| Elev-ator | Tube | Tube | Tube | Cages | Tube | Elev-ator |

The Maze

In ✝ = new screen
Avoid
Out

Dream Zone

By J. Douglas Wellington

In two scenes (the thief & the demon), the parser occasionally won't recognize a command the first few times. Just keep trying. *The four lifts (elevators) go to floors 1-4. On each floor are ten rooms, from L-A and R-A to L-E and R-E. They aren't on the map, but necessary directions are provided. Lift N also has a basement, seen in the lower right corner of the map.

Bedroom
Open dresser. Get all. Wear pajamas.

Bathroom
Get all. Use toothbrush.

Brother's Room
Give brother money. Open chest. Get gun.

Bedroom
Sleep.

Path by Gate
Use toothbrush.

Room S4R-E
Give officer tboexjdi. E. N (5). D. D. S. E.

Room S2L-A
Shoot officer. Get 16D-970. W. N. D. N. E. U (2). E (4). S.

Room E3R-D
Give officer 17D-16B. N. W (4). D. E (2). N.

Room E2L-B
Give officer 16D-970. S. W (2). U (2). E (3). N.

Room E4L-C
Give officer 11X-16B. Give officer 51M-970. S. W (3). D (3). W. S. U (2). S (4). W.

Room S3R-D
Get rock. Give officer 43A-81G. Steal 69B-12C. Shoot officer. E. N (4). U. S (2). E.

Room S4L-B
Talk to officer about 22Z-131. W. N (2). D (2). S. W.

Room S2R-A
Give officer 22Z-13I. E. N. D. N. Exit. S. E.

Alley
Give Fox Form 69B-12C. W (2).

Crowd
Say Drinks are on the house'

Bar Door
Dbno.

Romper Room
Use tpbq.

Crowd.
Fohbhf hjsm.

Secular Church
Get wafer.

Pulpit
Nbssz hjsm. Ljtt xjgf. S. S. S. U.

On the House
Buy keys.

Alley
Cvz mpbo.

Bar Door
Show Bonzo ID. S. Drop ID.

Bar
Talk to twins about gum. Give bartender wafer. Use keys. W. Exit.

Terminal
Buy tickets.

Games
Tufbm teddy. Tufbm tokens.

Carnival
Give kids tokens.

Big Top
Buy ticket.

Freaks
Give Hairy candy. Give Grajunk gum.

Bar
Get jacket.

Sword Smith
Give smith jacket. S (2). Swim. Enter.

Cave
Give Jacque keg. Exit.

Rock Garden (L)
Give Sushi sjdf.

Rock Garden (M)
Shoot thief.

Rock Garden (N)
Ejh hbsefo. Get all.

Throne Room
Give Emperor rock.

Servant
Give servant vase.

Imperial Bed
Get rock. Give Princess teddy.

Dock
Fish. (Must have worms.)

Alley
Give shark tuna.

Bar John
Talk to John about ubtl. Exit.

Airship
Give Captain hmpcf. Say ready. N. Jump W.

Drunk
Hit drunk. Get wine. Kvnq.

Tower
Give Rambone upojd. U.

Key Tower
Swap spdl with key. D. D. S. Say ready.

Deamon Door
Use sword. Throw xjof. Use the key. Use qmvohfs. Use the key.

Bedroom
E. N.

Brother's Room
Give brother gun.

See page 14 for code.

Map boxes:

Brother's Room — B
Bedroom — Hall & Room — Hall & Stairs
Deamon Door — Gate
Pulpit
Secular Church — E — *Lift N
Bathroom A — Path & Door — Path & Gate
Town Square — D.O.I Foyer — *Lift E
*Lift S

Rock Garden — Rock Garden — Rock Garden N — Rock Garden — Rock Garden
F
On the House — U/D

Rock Garden M — Palace Room — Palace Room — Imperial Bed — Rock Garden — Sword Smith — Crowd — Bar Door — Alley — G

Rock Garden — Palace Room — Palace Room — Throne Room — Colonnade — Palace Lawn — Bridge

Rock Garden — Servant — Palace Room — Palace Lounge — Rock Garden — Dock O — Bar John — Bar — J

Rock Garden L — Rock Garden — Rock Garden — Rock Garden — Rock Garden — Under Water — Dressing Room — JAM Software

Key Tower — U/D — Cave — Big Top K — Freaks — Gang

Tower — Castle Wing — Carnival — Ferris Wheel
P — Drunk — Pit — Castle Wing

Games I — Carnival

Castle Door — Terminal — H — *Lift NB
Air-ship — Air-ship — D — Crowd
C
Romper Room

* See solution for notes on lifts and related rooms.

A-P: Objects. See key in solution.

Key to Objects Shown on Map

A: toothbrush and plunger
B: gun and brother
C: soap   D: girl and receipt
E: wager   F: keys
G: loan   H: tickets
I: teddy bear and tokens
J: jacket and gum
K: Jacque   L: Sushi
M: Thief   N: worms

O: tuna   P: wine

Ultima V

Bards will play a lullaby before starting to patrol the area when your party camps out. A dozen different musical compositions were created for the game and are heard at specific locations.

Depending on the season, the fields in farming communities will be empty or filled with crops, and fruit-bearing trees wither to stumps if a Shadowlord is in the area. Coastlines in earlier games were blocky, with water tiles adjacent to land tiles; now there are half-water/half-land tiles that produce a jagged, more realistic coastline.

Living on a Thin Line

As in *Ultima IV*, the game's theme is Ethics. In *IV*, Lord British (the author—Richard Garriott—not the King) was content to simply show guidelines for ethical behavior. Here the treatment is more subtle, dealing with the fine line between Good and Evil and how hard it can be to tell them apart.

In the game's most memorable scene, your party is captured by the forces of Evil. Manacled to the wall, you watch helplessly as a fiend fastens one of your companions to a torture device. The villain then turns to you and asks for a piece of information, threatening to kill your friend unless you talk. You've already learned that something terrible will happen if the villains obtain this information, so: do you tell him, or do you watch your friend die?

In another scene, you have a chance to infiltrate an evil secret society. Unconvinced that you're on their side, they ask you to prove yourself by committing an evil act. Do you reject them, or go along in hopes of acquiring information that will lead you to Lord British?

Overall, the game is much easier than *Ultima IV*. Because every character has a complex daily schedule, there apparently wasn't enough disk space for as many characters. This means fewer clues and fewer things to learn (by typing in words to talk to people as in *IV*).

The early part of *IV* was devoted to learning the locations, runes and mantras for the eight Shrines. In *V*, the locations are marked on the cloth map that comes with the game, and the runes are ignored completely. Only the mantras must be learned in the early stages of play. Moongates are still used for getting around but are easier to figure out this time.

The Underworld

I was somewhat disappointed by the later parts of the game. After obtaining all the clues, you have to explore the Dungeons and Underworld. Having played *IV*, I was already familiar with Brittania's surface and had high hopes the Underworld would be an area with a variety of towns and fortresses where I could spend some time and perhaps solve a whole new set of quests.

As it turned out, there is only one town (with one inhabitant) in the entire Underworld, and it's possible to win the game without going anywhere near it. Even though it's as vast as the surface world, this region is a boring collection of caverns and connecting passageways, with only a half-dozen new monsters. Even worse, characters will tell you the exact location of all the artifacts you need to get from the Underworld. Basically, you go through the Dungeon as fast as possible, trying to find the exit to the Underworld on the lowest level. From there you follow the directions to the artifact you seek, snatch it, run back to the Dungeon and pop to the surface.

Conclusions: Actually, the only flaw is that this sequel isn't as good as *Ultima IV* (the best game ever written on the Apple). Though the plot's scope was reduced to make room for additional graphic details, the game is still good for a hundred hours or so of entertainment, more for less experienced players. You should run out and get it right now. [It is not necessary to have played *Ultima IV*, but you'll have an easier time with many aspects of *V* if you have done so.]

Skill Level: Advanced
Protection: Program
Price: $59.95
Company: Origin Systems

(A previous version of this review originally appeared in the journal of the Apple PI user group of Washington, D.C.)

BASIC LISTING FOR IIGS & SOUND BOARDS

To correct problems with sound boards on the GS, first initialize a bootable disk. Type in this listing and save it. To run *Ultima V*, boot disk with patch and run it. Then boot up *Ultima V* using PR # 6. Don't use the reset key or it will undo sound patch. (You can also get a free upgraded disk from Origin by sending in your old one.)

```
1 REM ULTIMA 5 MUSIC PATCH
FOR APPLE IIGS

2 FOR I=768 TO 802:READ A:POKE
I,A:NEXT:CALL 76 8

3 DATA  24,251,194,48,244,11,0,162,3,
35,34,0,0,225,244,4,0

4 DATA  244,0,0,244,0,3,162,3,16,34,0,0,
225,56,251,226,48,96
```

Ultima V Clues

To **save money** when buying information in pubs, don't save your character after doing so. Just bring in another one. Buy a Ring of Recovery for your Wizard as soon as possible. Some **words of power:** Deceit—Gbmmby; Covetous—Avidus; Despise—Vilis; Hytloth—Jhobwvt; Wrong—Nbmvn; Shame—Jogbnb; Destard—Jopqjb. **To pass Shadowlords** without being seen, cast Sfm Uzn. You can also **defeat them** with Mystic Arms. **Password for the resistance** is Ebxo.

For those who missed Ultima IV, the **mantras** are: Honesty—Bin; Compassion—Nv; Valor—Sb; Justice—Cfi; Sacrifice—Dbi; Honor—Tvnn; Spirituality—Pn; Humility—Mvn. You can find **five skull keys** in a tree in the northwest corner of Njopd, and Shenstone will sell you five more for 100 gold. The spell Jo Fy Qps will also open locked doors. Ask Sven in Buccaneer's Den abou the Glass Sword; you need a grappler to reach it.

The spell Sfm Yfo Cfu turns opponents into giant rats. The ingredients are spider silk, ash, mandrake and nightshade. **Mandrake** is found in the swamp on the Bloody Plain or the Fens of the Dead at midnight. **Nightshade** can be gathered in the most heavily forested part of Spiritwood at midnight.

Contributed by Brian Riggs, Randy Laughlin and Fred Johnson

(See page 14 for code & more clues.)

Twilight's Ransom

By Stephen King

As Ron Mulligan, a young graphic artist at a prominent Liberty City advertising agency, you're anticipating tonight's date with your new paramour, the lovely Maria Chavez, a recent immigrant from El Salvador. You've known her for only a few months but are hopelessly lost in love.

When you arrive, however, Maria's apartment door is hanging open and all the rooms have been ransacked. You know something is wrong, because her purse is still there. Even if there had been a strike by the housekeeper's union, she'd never have left the building without her purse!

Then the phone rings. A gruff-sounding individual says he kidnapped Maria and will kill her unless you give him what he wants by morning. You've never considered yourself particularly brave, but are so enamored of this young lady that you have no choice except to search high and low until you find the kidnapper, what he wants and how to rescue her. You'd better hurry though: you have only twelve hours to complete your mission.

Does this spy story, with all its intrigue and mystery, sound exciting? Well, could be ... could be. Unfortunately, the game is not nearly as interesting as it's premise.

Type:	Illustrated Text Adventure
System:	IBM (128K) & Tandy 1000; two 5.25" inch disks, one 3.5" disk in same package

This is the City

Unlike most adventures, *Twilight's Ransom* consists mainly of a collection of blind alleys and red herrings. Liberty City is huge, and mapping plays an unusually large part of the game because it's laid out like a real city: in square blocks with streets and intersections, bridges and businesses and residential areas.

The action takes place at night, when most businesses are closed. Almost all the ones that are open serve merely as decoration. I found a garage where a mechanic was working on my red Ford Escort, a theater where I could watch a movie, an arcade full of video games to play, and several restaurants and nightclubs. Other than scenery, there was little else at these places. Likewise, most of the city streets are merely decorative. Brimming with prose descriptions of various places and people, *Twilight's Ransom* borders on long-windedness.

In various parts of town, I met an array of hookers and winos, pushers and muggers. By giving one of the winos a dollar, I obtained a can of Mace. But because the parser didn't seem to understand me, I was never able to use it. The manual says the word SPRAY is in the vocabulary; in the few places I tried to SPRAY MACE, however, the parser didn't understand me.

The parser seems to be a cross between Infocom's and the old Scott Adams parser. It has most of Infocom's advanced features. It understands multi-word and compound multi-sentence inputs, has a limited understanding of the pronouns HIM, HER and IT and will even allow you to TAKE ALL. It is generally a very capable parser, one of the best I've seen.

However...

...it falls short in the vocabulary department, for it's very rigid about what it accepts from the player as valid input. The many synonyms and alternatives that give an Infocom adventure that polished feel are missing. For example, if want to go inside a building you can't say ENTER or GO INTO it. You *must* use the compass direction. I spent nearly three minutes trying to get into Maria's apartment the first time I played the game before finally typing U to walk UP the stairs.

Also, the playfield seems very large and complex, but the ways you can manipulate it are few. Remember the can of Mace? Well, I can't imagine such a complex item that's so obviously useful to your character without a way to use it. I feel confident that there is some way to make use of it, but how? I would be sorely disappointed to find out this is automatically used when you come across a situation where it is helpful.

And the theater. In an Infocom game, buying a ticket to see the movie would reward you with several screens of text describing the movie and your surrounding environment. It may be totally irrelevant to the game, but at least you have that feeling of depth and substance. Here you just get a quick paragraph saying little more than you went in and came out.

Let there be Sight

Some scenes are illustrated with high-resolution, static pictures. This device has been used successfully in novels for years, but often seems to fall flat in adventure games. One reason is that the hardware is seldom capable of displaying a picture that can do justice to what you can come up with in your imagination. The artwork in this game makes good use of the severely limited CGA graphic standard, but I couldn't help thinking "Is this really necessary?" every time a picture was displayed.

The autopicture option automatically displays the graphics whenever you reach a screen with a picture. This sounded neat, but after trying it the first time, I never used it again because of the distracting way the picture was displayed. When I was halfway through a paragraph, the page would suddenly blank out and the picture would appear. After I had seen the graphic, I could press the return key to bring back the text—but my concentration had already been broken by then.

I preferred to wait until the text told me there were graphics for a given scene and then type PICTURE when I was ready to view it. Unfortunately, once I had engaged the autopicture feature I found no way to turn it off except by rebooting. I did like the nifty way the pictures fade off the screen when I was ready to move on.

Another thing I found annoying about the graphics department was the way text is displayed. The screen is blue matte with a white outline, but for some rea-

Bard's Tale III

Continued from page 1

mancer spellcaster class is new, available only to Fighters (which includes Paladins, Monks, Hunters and Bards) and endows you with some of the game's most powerful combat spells. (A Fighter can change class only after finding a special location in one of the parallel universes.)

The vividly colored and detailed graphics are noticeably improved. Spot animation was enhanced for more realistic animation, and Todd Camasta's art really stands out. There is also a stronger emphasis on the story itself, achieved with scrolling passages of Mike Stackpole's evocative prose.

Thief Wanted: Apply Within

As the title suggests, you'll need a Rogue (Thief) to complete the game. Since Rogues were the most useless characters in the first two games, it's only fair that they have their day in the sun. They have been made more powerful with the "Hide in the Shadows" combat option. By hiding several times in succession, a Rogue any advance up to 90′ from the party and wind up behind all the attacking monsters.

A Rogue who attacks from this position has a good chance of making a critical hit. This is a good way to deal with distant monsters that refuse to advance, since missile weapons are weak and hard to come by. (Over 500 different kinds of monsters lie in wait for you in the Dungeons.)

A new type of puzzle has been added. Previously, you could pass through a door by simply possessing the correct key. Now, however, you must explicitly (U)se the key. Example: Early in the game, you see a doorway blocked by a huge stone disk. Inscribed on the disk is a picture of an oak tree with a circle supported by its topmost branches. Below the disk is an acorn-shaped hole. After several hours of thought, master adventurers will get the idea of using the acorn they found earlier.

Using an acorn in most places will cause a character to eat it. But in this location, the program assumes you want to put the acorn in the hole. After several more hours of thought, master adventurers will realize it usually takes at least a year or two for an acorn to grow into a

mighty oak, and that's why nothing happens right away. Perhaps the puzzle is more complex than it first appears.

By the way, this is the first *Bard's Tale* in which you can create female characters. Surprisingly, the sex of a character has no effect on the game [as it does in some situations in *Wasteland*], only on the appearance of his or her picture. In particular, male and female characters get the same benefits from any given piece of armor. This contradicts the pictures in the status window, which imply that women's armor provides less protection than men's, especially in the leg area. (It's possible that this distracts the monsters so they can't aim as well.)

Gripes and Complaints

The manual needs a lot of work. It's chockful of false and contradictory statements, particularly regarding the qualifications for changing from one spellcaster class to another. Be prepared to do a lot of experimentation.

Game balance is another source of problems. I started with new characters rather than importing existing ones from previous games, and discovered the starter dungeon was too small: after I had mapped it and found the Evil Priest, my party was still too weak to defeat him. They had to spend a few days wandering around a level I had already explored, killing monsters for more experience points.

And when I finally killed the Priest, I was shocked to see everyone in my party instantly raised from about level 15 directly to level 40 characters. Spellcasters became 11th level ArchMages, and my Monk started doing 2,000 points of damage every round. There are probably even better ways of getting characters up to speed. [See *Keys*.]

The dungeons have fewer "special" areas than in previous games in the series. *Bard's Tale II* probably had too many specials, so you ran a good risk of missing one and getting stuck. Reducing the number was a step in the right direction, but I think the designers went too far...it's sort of irritating to spend the evening mapping every single square of a huge level, only to learn that the only useful location is the staircase down. This happens quite often.

Overall, the game has an "unfinished"

Bard's Tale III

A really great bug in the Apple version allows you to **advance characters incredibly fast**: After finishing the starter dungeon, visit the Old Man in the Review Board, who awards you a 600,000 experience point bonus (enough to raise the party one or two levels). Go outside, drop a monster from the party, cast a spell to summon another one and reenter the Review Board—everyone gets another 600,000 points. You can do this all day (and night). **Lanatir's Blood:** The answer to this riddle is DBMB. In **Shadow Canyon:** The PHDO spell works in but one place: the wall east of 12S, 8E. At **Valarian's Tomb:** Use Utmpuib't Ifbsu, then the Water of Life. Wait there about 20 moves. After the explosion, you should see a new door. To defeat the **Gray Wizards:** Cast MVDL and SFTU each round. Once the party's luck is so high the Wizards' spells no longer damage them, advance and slay. To deal with Cyanis, cast SFTU to cure his insanity. He'll give you a useful item. To get a **Rainbow Rose:** Kill the Sbjocpx Esbhpo and use a dbouffo to get some cmppe. Use the dbouffo on the barren rosebush near the city to make it bloom.

Charles Don Hall

To get a Geomancer, travel to Ljoftujb and get the left key from the Cbssbdlt and the right key from the Qsjwbuf Rvbrufst, both reached by dungeon passages). Find trapdoor in xpsltipq, use right key 18 times, turn left key 15 times. Go down through portal and transport north to 5N, 4W to go down. Now go to 4S, 12W and swim to the new area here. Go north and west until you find the door leading south. Inside you'll find Umbrech. Say you want to work out a deal, then go south until you meet him again. He'll change you into a Geomancer. The Hammer of Wrath and Ferofists Helm are also in this room.

Chris Steinbeck

Guild of Thieves

In the castle, do everything you can on the first trip so you don't have to come back: rub the horseshoe, catch flies in kbn, cfu on rats, catch fish, put all treasures in night safe (doesn't matter which

one) and get cage. Don't open the **sachet in the cauldron** until you get all ingredients: fzf, ibfsu, cfssjft, toblf tljo, and Cbspo't dvcf. Bars in the **Junction Chamber** aren't *that* strong. At **Circular Chamber**, go south, then east and untie rope ladder, which enables you to exit Claustrophobic Chamber through Waterfall to the south. **To open sarcophagus** and get the fzf, you need gjohfscpof of the tlfmfupo. **In boathouse:** go SE, get die, SE, NE, get die, SE, SW, get die, NW, SW, get die, NE, then roll dice (you must have rubbed the horseshoe). **When fairy comes**, choose gjwf each time. Look at map of place you got the dice, then put dice in their respective color-coded slots. The case will magically open, and you'll get a die to use after you make it through the bank vault.

Randy Laughlin

Ultima V

Useful items: a horse (just wish at wishing well in Paws); grapple for mountain climbing (Lord Njdibfm in Fnqbui Bccfz); a spyglass (Lord Tfhhbmmjpo). **Moongates:** when not open, search their location for a Moonstone. The Moongate will appear wherever you put the stone.

Phillip Raino

For unlimited arrows, equip one man with a Magic Bow and another with a regular Bow. When last arrow is shot, that man drops Bow but the other one remains equipped. Fire other one's Bow and arrows go to 99. Then first man can reequip and start firing again.

Robert Dawson

To destroy Shadowlords, you need their names and the Shards of their anti-virtues. Go to castles they oppose, stand before Eternal Flame and yell appropriate name. When the Shadowlord appears and reaches into the Flame, use the Shard to destroy him. **Names:** Gbvmjofj (Gbmtfippe), Optgfoups (Dpxbsejdf) and Btubspui (Ibusfe). When they're all wiped out, go to their fortress (southwest of Bloody Plains) and get the Sceptre. You will also need to use a dbsqfu to avoid the traps.

Cyril Chong

Potions: Yellow — Ifbm. Green — Qpjtpo. Black — Jowjtjcjmjuz. Blue — Bxblfo. Orange — Tmffq. Purple — Turn you into a Sbu. White — Tipsu Cvstu of Mjhiu.

Toby Jackson

2400 A. D.

To get a Plasma Rifle: buy a High Voltage Oscillator, find a Multiplier Tube and trade for an Energy Regulator. Keep going to Wes in the Underground until he gives you a broken Plasma Rifle. Take it and the three parts to Hugo, who will fix it for 550 credits.

Grant Kushida

Wasteland

To find **Ugly's Hideout**, go to corner of Hell's Highway and Hubcap Street and enter black spot between two buildings. Smash through glass and attack. Before Ugly's room, **open safe with numbers** tattooed on Hewey, Dewey and Louie. Behind desk in Officer's Room, a passage leads to basement cellars: rescue Ace, who can **fix the jeep** if you find an engine. **In Las Vegas**, enter southeast part of town and visit building on left side of Maryland and Tropicana. Revive the bum for useful information.

Tom Curtis

To **defeat the Scorpitron** in Vegas, disband and catch it in crossfire with LAWs and RPGs. After one man is strong enough, leave him outside (on the surface map) when you send the rest into a dangerous place like the sewer. When their hit points run low, the man outside can pass time quickly to restore hit points. Though not mentioned in the manual, the Apple version **supports two drives:** just press 2 and it reads the second drive.

Frank Evangelista

The Code: count one letter back—RC = QB.

Bard's Tale III

feel to it…there are no fatal flaws, but both the game and the manual would probably have been much better if they had gone through another round of playtesting.

Musical Miscellanea

In keeping with my tradition of working references to *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* into as many reviews as possible, I must point out that one of the Bard's songs is called "Sir Robin's Tune," which of course was sung in the movie. One of the verses went: "When danger reared its ugly head, he bravely turned away and fled. Brave, brave, brave, brave Sir Robin." I used this song often in the last dungeon, where some of the monsters have nearly 10,000 hit points.

Conclusions: This game is somewhere between *Bard's Tale I* and *II* in difficulty. It has a few tricky puzzles, but none of the ten-part riddles and spinner-infested dark chambers of *II*. By way of comparison, I finished *III* in three weeks of intensive play. I played *II* for two months and got about halfway through before giving up in disgust. In playability it's comparable to

I. While it suffers from some problems with game balance, *Thief of Fate* also has a variety of new features that increase the entertainment value. It's a good game, but not a spectacular one. I give it an eight out of ten.

Skill Level: Intermediate
Protection: None
Price: $49.95
Company: Interplay/Electronic Arts.

Twilight's Ransom

son they used the gray text with black background that you usually get at the DOS level. I could not understand why they left the jagged edged look, which would have been so easy to correct.

Twilight's Ransom also offers speech synthesis if you have an Aicom speech synthesis board. I don't have one, so I can't say how often speech is a factor or how realistically it is reproduced. I do find it an intriguing option, though. The package contains a few items described in the game text, including a pen, an ad flyer about Liberty City and a small piece of paper with some cryptic notations.

With 512K you can load the whole

game into RAM. CGA is needed to see the pictures, but with a monochrome board you can play it as an all-text game. The larger color palettes of EGA, VGA and TGA are not supported. The program isn't protected, so the game easily transfers to a hard drive by using the COPY *.* command. There is a rather long introductory sequence, but a thoughtful option allows the player to skip it after having seen it once.

Conclusions: *Twilight's Ransom* has the feel of a potentially great game that wasn't beta-tested by a large enough group. Still, it is a valiant attempt for a first offering of this type from a fledgling company.

Paragon has to have guts to put out a predominantly text game at a time when even Infocom finds the market waning. But I think it would have been far more interesting if the background area had been fleshed out. The whole time I was playing I had the idea I was exploring an unfinished movie set.

Skill Level: Intermediate
Protection: In Packaging
Price: $34.95
Company: Paragon/Electronic Arts

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