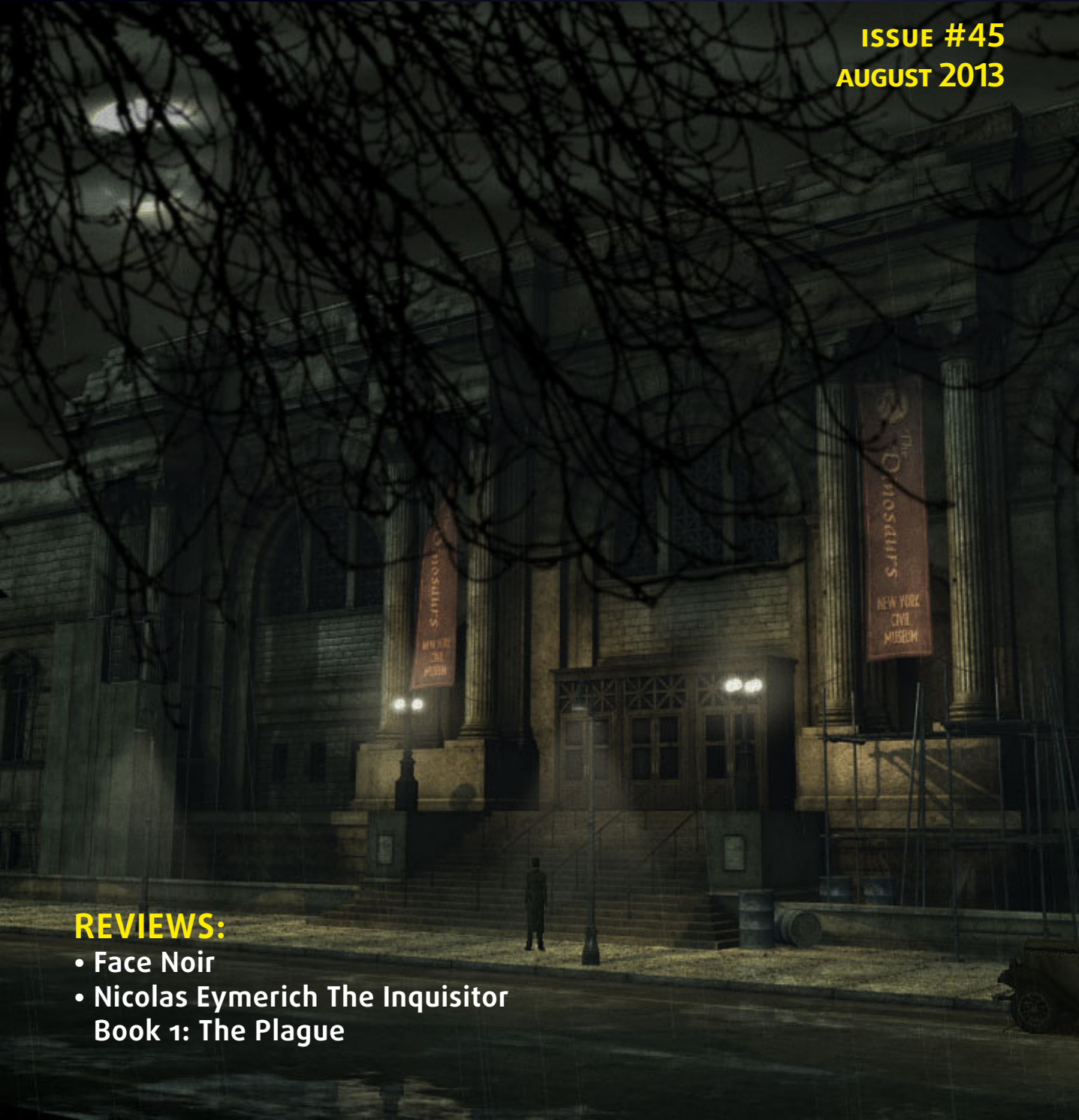


Adventure Lantern

ISSUE #45
AUGUST 2013

REVIEWS:

- Face Noir
- Nicolas Eymerich The Inquisitor
Book 1: The Plague



EDITORIAL

This month we are bringing you two reviews of new adventure games. I personally reviewed both the detective noir title *Face Noir*, the beginning of a series of adventure games; And *Nicolas Eymersch The Inquisitor - Book 1: The Plague*, an *Anuman Interactive* episodic release.

On the news front; Of the six featured new releases this month, *Gone Home* really stands out as something not to miss. It is a unique and intriguing game. We also got two news articles about *Syberia* as well as an announcement from *Anuman Interactive* that they have licensed all of *Agatha Christie's* work for a series of adventure game titles.

– Jonathon Wisnoski



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- *Nicolas Eymersch The Inquisitor Book 1: The Plague*

Cover Image:
FACE NOIR

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Agatha Christie

Anuman Interactive has just finalized a deal to use Agatha Christie's novels in their upcoming adventure game titles. Agatha Christie being one of the world's most famous crime/mystery writers, with literally hundreds of stories translated into dozens of languages, most well known to adventure game

fans for her Hercule Poirot series; Stayed tuned for imminent title announcements from them. This is exciting news, but at the same time, in my opinion, the last thing that this genre needs is one more Poirot adventure where your only objective is to talk to everyone (repeat 35 times).



3D Secret of Monkey Island Still

PC Gamers has a new article with a series of low polygon, 3D stills from video games. Included in the mix is a scene from The Secret of Monkey Island.



Beautiful Landscapes

Buzzfeed posted an article earlier this month titled "36 Beautiful Landscapes That Prove That Video Games Are Art". And while almost half of those landscapes seem to have come from Elder Scroll titles,

and there are even a few Halo ones, adventure games have not been excluded; Though we only get some of the mediocre ones from the Myst series, and one each from Journey and Dear Esther.



The 5 Best Android Adventure Games

GameWoof has posted an article showing off five of their favourite adventure games for Android. Included are: Broken Sword: Director's Cut, The Silent Age, Machinarium, Hero of Many, Yesterday.

Riding the Adventure Game Resurgence

IndieGames.com has a new article up about adventure games, and in particular Chandler and Gonzalez's upcoming commercial adventure game.



Interview With "Gnome" of Kyttaro Games

IndieGameNews has posed an interview with Gnome of Kyttaro Games and Gnomeslair. In it he talks about Droidscape: Basilica, Kyttaro Games, and himself.

GNOMES LAIR



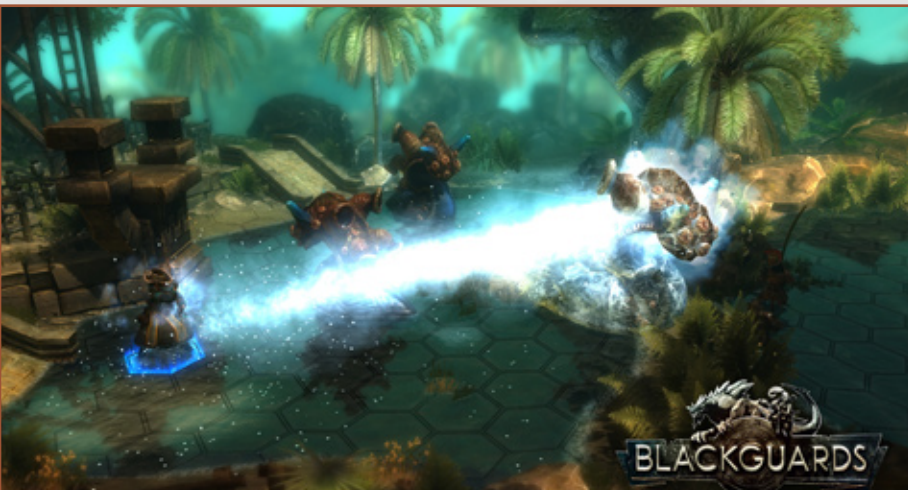
Announcements

Alum

"A point&click adventure game with a mature "RPGesque" storyline. An atmospheric quest of epic proportions!"

Alum is a retro style "atmospheric" point and click adventure which just succeeded in getting \$10K in funding on Kickstarter, with a \$10 pre-order tier. It has a planned release date of April



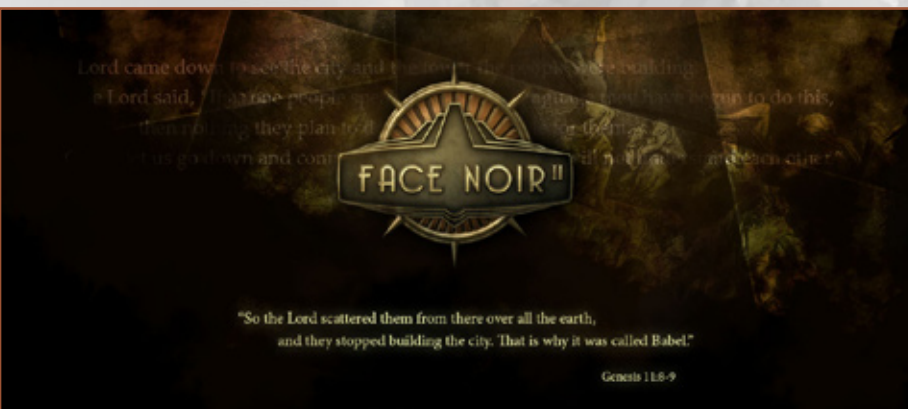


Blackguards

Set to release their "first" non adventure game, Daedalic Entertainment is both developing and publishing this turn-based RPG set in the world of The Dark Eye.

The following is a snippet from their description of this upcoming game: "Chapter by chapter you'll

encounter a story full of intrigue and surprising twists. Time and time again, the moral compass of the player will be tested. One does not beat Blackguards without getting their hands dirty. But when life and death are in the player's hands, how far will they go to reach their goals?"



Face Noir II

No word on when, or if there will be any additional sequels (at least that I have heard), but hopefully

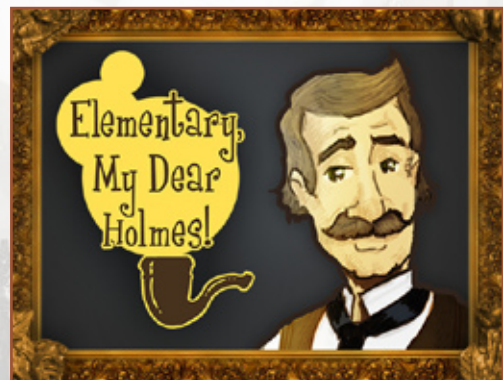
Face Noir will do good enough to warrant a sequel, which I hope is already in development, because it deserves a sequel.

Dracula 5

The Blood Legacy

Dracula 5: The Blood Legacy

Microids reveals the first details about Dracula 5: The Blood Legacy. Particularly, that it is slated for a 4th quarter of 2013 release.



Elementary, My Dear Holmes!

This parody Sherlock Holmes is set to break through their Kick-starter goal with many days yet left in their campaign. Looking to raise \$50K, and with a \$15, all platforms, pre-order, Elementary is described as "a point-and-click adventure game starring legendary sidekick John Watson on an epic quest to prove that Sherlock Holmes is just a jerk."

Heaven's Hope

A full length point and click adventure in 2.5D, telling the tale of the fall and rise of the angel candidate Tarel. Experience an original setting and story set in a beautiful hand-drawn world, with many quaint characters. With side quests, and puzzles with multiple solutions, Heaven's Hope offers alternative endings, and at least some replayability.



Shades of Sanity

A 3D "Spiritual Successor" to Sanitarium is being made by former members of Dreamforge. They are running a Kickstarter campaign until the 27th of September, and are looking for \$200K, with a \$15 (early bird) preorder tier.

"Shades of Sanity is a psychological horror game that we strive to make it memorable in atmosphere, story, gameplay, and graphics. It is a puzzle/adventure game with limited action sequences. The environment is fully 3D with real time lighting and effects."



The Perils of Man

The Perils of Man promises to reboot the classic graphic adventure game come Q4 2013 for iOS, and has just released a debut trailer to give you a taste of the game.

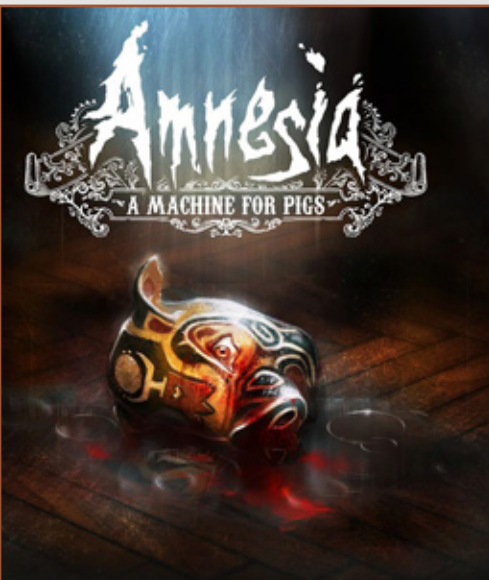
"Imagine getting a glimpse into the

secret clockwork of the universe. Imagine a machine that can crack the code of destiny and give you the power to tinker with fate. Imagine discovering that for generations your family has concealed this power from the outside world. Ana Eberling may only be a teenager, but she is about to confront the biggest ques-

tions of life as she tries to solve the mystery of her father Max Eberling, a rogue scientist who vanished when she was just a little girl."

THE
PERILS
of
MAN

Upcoming Releases



Amnesia: A Machine For Pigs

Out September 10th, Amnesia 2 is currently available for pre-order with a 20% off discount. A copy will cost you \$16 at any one of the many online retailers which are currently selling it: Desura, GameFly, Gamer's Gate, GOG, Humble Store, MacGame-Store, and Steam (according to its homepage).



Kinky Island

Kinky Island now has a simple short tech demo with no narrative, released for a "release something" initiative.

Heroes: The History of Sierra

Just Adventure had an interview with the folks being the Heroes: The History of Sierra documentary. Their Kickstarter has since failed miserably, for the second time, but



they still plan on producing said documentary.



NaisanceE

NaisanceE, the first person exploration game, has gotten its first preview and interview, both in French. There are pictures, fortunately, but it is readable if you put it through a translator.

Precinct

Funding this spiritual sequel to Police Quest through Kickstarter did not work out so well, even with some fantastic looking concept art, and unique gameplay ideas. So instead they are trying to raise money through their website.



Syberia 3

Some initial sketches for Syberia 3 have been release, and they look pretty awesome.

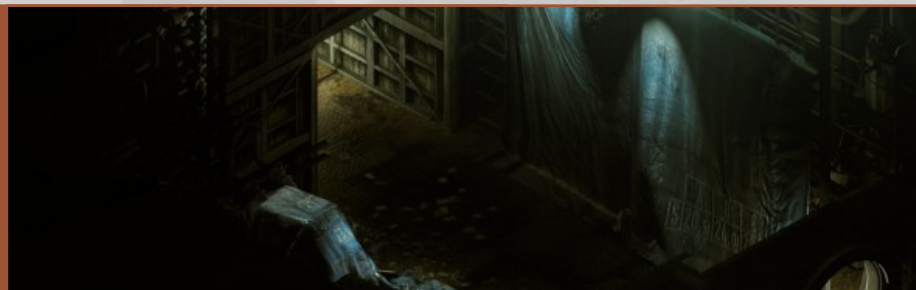


The Wolf Among Us

Based on Bill Willingham's Fables comic book series, The Wolf Among Us is Tell-Tales latest episodic adventure. It got a teaser trailer this last month, its very first.

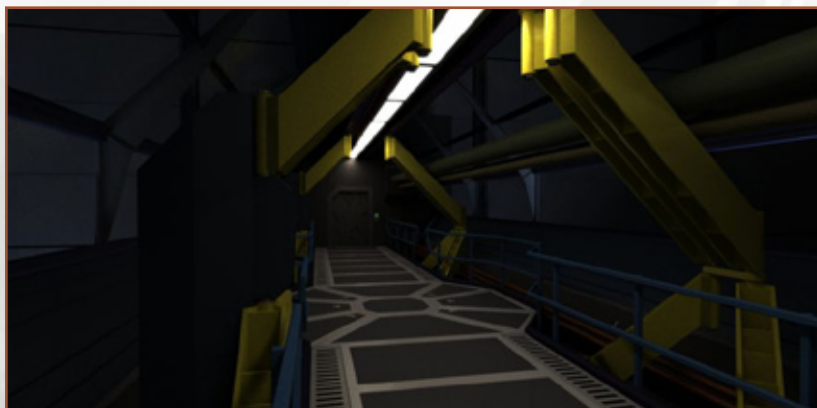
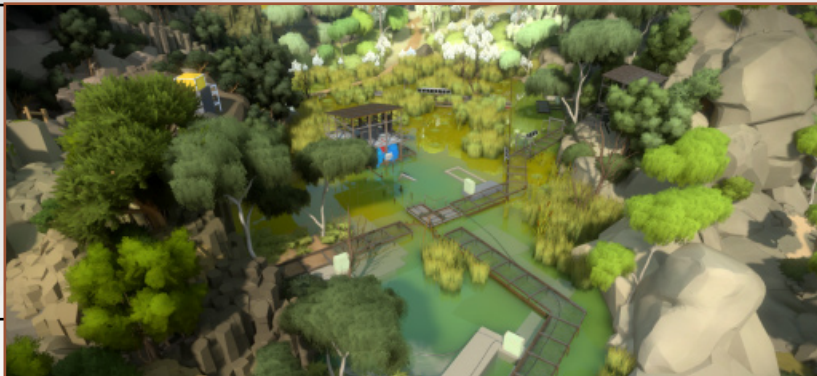
Stasis

It has been awhile since we have heard from the adventure game "that puts you in control of John Maracheck, a man searching for his family in a seemingly abandoned research facility". It reminds me somewhat Sanitarium, but honestly I have no idea what it will feel like when we actually get to play it. This update blog post shows off a few updates, a published preview, and most of all just reminds us that Stasis still exists and is being worked on continually.



The Witness

I post too much about The Witness, but Braid's former developer keeps himself a well maintained and updated blog. This time around he brings up some very exciting screenshots that are again some of the best he was released to date.



Prominence

The upcoming adventure game, that I can only guess will be released imminently, has just gotten a demo version preview by AdventureGamers.com, in which they gave it a glowing recommendation.

New Releases

Shelter

Shelter is going to be released on the 28th of August, so should already be released when this issue is out, but even now you can pre-purchase the game. There is a delightful preview article of the game over at IGN.



Brothers: A Tale of Two Sons

Released earlier this month for XBLA and coming soon on Steam and PSN, Brothers is an adventure game, that received a very good score in a recent AdventureGamers review. The official sites describes the game as: "Guide two brothers on an epic fairy tale journey from visionary Swedish film director, Josef Fares and top-tier developer Starbreeze Studios. Control both brothers at once as you experience co-op play in single player mode, like never before. Solve puzzles, explore the varied locations and fight boss battles, controlling one brother with each thumb stick."



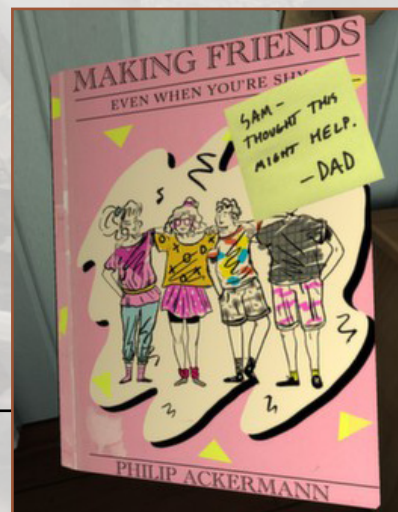
Gone Home

Gone Home has been released on Steam for PC, Mac OSX, and Linux for \$20.

"Gone Home is an interactive exploration simulator. Interrogate every detail of a seemingly normal house to discover the story of the people who live there. Open any

drawer and door. Pick up objects and examine them to discover clues. Uncover the events of one family's lives by investigating what they've left behind."

An in-depth analysis of it (as well as some nice screenshots) and the "mansion genre" is also available over at the Radiator Blog.

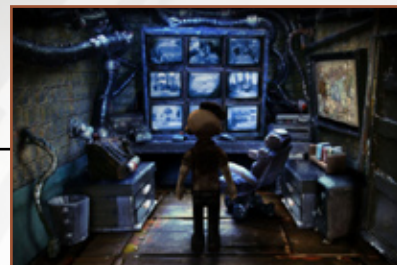




The Dream Machine: Chapter 4

The point and click adventure game made out of clay and cardboard is as it again with the release of Chapter 4. "The Dream Machine: Chapter 4 finds Victor with two dreams purged of the machine's presence. He must now enter the dreams of his neighbors.

But how can he gain access to their apartments and how does he get the neighbors to fall asleep on command?"



Hate Plus

Release August 19, this sequel to Analogue, and third in the series, is available on Steam for \$10. Taking place over the course of three days, Hate Plus is a direct sequel of Analogue, but will have you digging even further into the past logs of the generation ship, trying to figure out what went wrong.



Layton Brothers: Mystery Room

AdventureGamers.com have done a review article on the recently released iOS Layton Brothers: Mystery Room adventure. They gave it four stars and called it a "addictive, quirky and refreshing mystery adventure."



Updated Releases

Amerzone

Amerzone: The Explorer's Legacy has been released onto the iPod, iPhone, and iPad; And is available for free.



Chaos on Deponia

Chaos on Deponia, the second Deponia title, has been released onto Mac OS X.



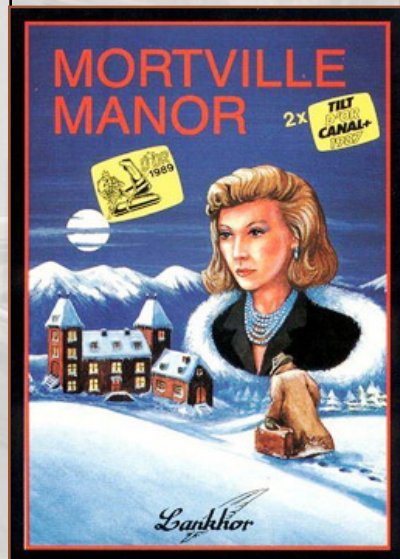
Syberia 1-2

Microïds has just announced that

Syberia 1 and 2 are in development for PS3 and Xbox360. You would imagine that they would want to target the next generation consoles as well (as well as maybe a PC re-released with higher res graphics), this late in the game, but however this turns out, it is a good day for Syberia fans.

Mortville Manor

The DOS version of this 1987 adventure game has been added to ScummVM.



Cognition: An Erica Reed Thriller

A bunch of already released Cognition episodes have been ported to new systems, including: episode 2



to iPad and episodes 1-3 to the Mac App Store.



News From the Big Blue Cup



Crankosaurus Prime and the Blue Crystal Pursuit (MiteWisacreLives!) - Go on a rampage with Crankosaurus Prime! Set out on a puzzle-adventure to save the crystals you've sworn to protect. The Greedy Oil Tycoon, the Meddling Archaeologist, and the Evil Mad Scientist must be stopped.

Cross Stitch Casper (Daniel Batliner) - The homely embroidered graphics are in contrast to the bleak home of main protagonist. You play as little Casper. But you're not him. You're just observing the world he's living in and the struggles he has to endure. How will he manage to get through his daily life's struggles? The only person sympathizing with him seems to be his grandmother, but how much can an old woman do?

The Rebirth/The Reaper (Francisco Gonzalez/Ben Chandler) - Originally made for the OROW 8 Competition, these are two mini-vignettes which form part of a greater whole. The Rebirth: A government official and his assistant have an unusual day at the office. The Reaper: A mechanic and his friend do some bird-watching.

Jack Trekker: Somewhere in Egypt (Sunny Penguin Games) - Help Jack Trekker, a egomaniac ladies' man and stereotypical adventurer, escape the tomb of the Three Sisters with the legendary Dildontus relic! With suggestive dialogue and a terrible influence. Originally created for the eighth One Room One Week AGS competition 2013.

Ancient Aliens: The Roots of Time (Miguel) - Follow the adventures of a Chicago trumpet player on a quest for an ancient technology that can change the world!

Nauticell (Rich Pires) - Stranded at sea, your only hope of survival is a cell phone... with a dying battery!

A Punk with Wheels (Scab) - A point and click game. It's a parody of the 80's punk culture. The protagonist is Cody and he will lead you in a funny story in a drama universe. Help him to investigate what he did last night, meet a lot of weird original characters in a black humour story. Enjoy!

Christopher Columbus is an Idiot - Act 1 (Kurt Kalata) - In an attempt to flee the country of Spain from his debts, Columbus swindles the Queen into granting him three boats to discover the new worlds. Finding and repairing the boats are, of course, up to him. Themes of colonialism and religion are explored, but it all takes the back seat to stripper librarians, beaver uprisings, nude time gypsies etc.

Educating Adventures of Girl and Rabbit (L&S and Projectoholic) - A girl meets a rabbit called Bunny in a forest. He kindly teaches her all sorts of interesting and important things. What does she learn from it all? Who does she become? It remains to be seen.

Sinking (wham) - In Sinking the player takes on the near-impossible task of escaping with a stolen submarine, while your pursuers attempt to sink you. Avoid obstacles, patch leaks and ensure your crew stays alive, all within a very strict time limit.

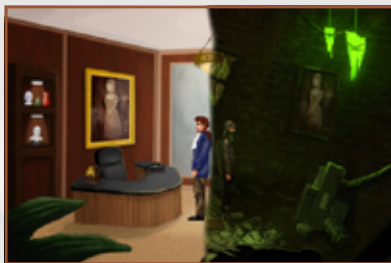
Mysteries of Peak Valley: Case 2 The White Lady (Sunny Penguin Games) - It's been a year since the Boulyn incident and a prestigious case lures Zack back to Peak Valley. Arriving at Burnom manor, allegedly haunted by a woman dressed all in white, Zack must use his psychic medium talents to finally unravel the legend of the White Lady.

Morphine (Rich Pires) - Anders has a recurring dream of a locked door bound by chains. His mind is hiding a dark secret...and he must discover it. Morphine is an innovative, psychological noir adventure game where players influence the main character's lucid dreams by controlling his sleep cycle.

Pick of the Month: July - Cross Stitch Casper

Certainly one of the most unique AGS games ever made, Cross Stitch Casper does not only convince with its graphic style, but also its touching story. You will soon start to see past the rough pixel and get immersed into a sad and deep world with believable characters.

(Chosen by **cat**)



The Rebirth/The Reaper
(Gonzalez/Chandler)



**Educating Adventures of
Girl and Rabbit**
(L&S and Projectoholic)



A Punk with Wheels
(Scab)



Christopher Columbus is an Idiot
(Kurt Kalata)

Captain Disaster in: The Dark Side of the Moon

The latest Captain Disaster adventure is out, and playable. "With innumerable references to classic adventure games, science fiction and of course Pink Floyd, Captain Disaster in "The Dark Side of the Moon" is a light-hearted point and click adventure game which will exercise both your grey matter and funny bone. It's the first full adventure game to feature the Captain Disaster character - two more (commercial) games are in development, and hopefully many more to come in the future."



Ancient Aliens: Roots of Time
(Miguel)



**Jack Trekker:
Somewhere in Egypt**
(Sunny Penguin Games)



Nauticell
(Rich Pires)



Face Noir



Genre: adventure Developer: Mad Orange Publisher: Phoenix Online Studios

Release date: July 18, 2013 Platform: Windows

Website: http://www.madorange.it/games/face_noir/index.php?lang=en



Face Noir is a new adventure game, and the first attempt by *Phoenix Online Studios*, the indie developer, as a publisher. *Phoenix Online Studios*, being the three year old studio of talented *King's Quest* fans. The developer is called *Mad Orange*, and *Face Noir* is their first released game, though its members are obviously talented and experienced, based on this latest work. *Face Noir* is an original and authentic detective story, with a swinging jazz soundtrack, set in the 1930s in New York, during the height of the depression.





Review by Jonathon Wisnoski

The story of *Face Noir* revolves around the classic detective noir story of a cynical detective, down on his luck, being accused/framed for murder, and having to prove his innocence; All while dodging both criminal killers as well as corrupt and dutiful law enforcement. You play this detective, and ex-cop, Jack Del Nero, who is framed for his ex-partner's murder; A murder revolving around a young girl. The story also revolves around the concept of destiny. Throughout the game, the protagonist occasionally

has dreams/visions of the man he is accused of murdering. As you progress in the story, you get to play further and further back into the events that lead up to the murder, playing as the future victim. But the vast majority of your time is spent playing Jack Del Nero, as he conducts a pretty standard, almost stereotypical, investigation; At least if not for these dreams. These dreams prove to be prophetic, in more ways than one, as the story spirals into the occult/mystical near the end; Leaving us with nothing resolved and more questions than ever, with promises that the story will continue in *Face Noir II*,

as all the major characters travel to Damascus, Syria. The biggest question I have now, is how the detective noir theme will survive in the Middle East; As Jack Del Nero out of depression era New York, and in a magic filled Middle East, is like a fish out of water.

A great amount of emphasis was obvious put on the soundtrack. You cannot play *Face Noir* without being hit by the strength and appropriateness of this amazing jazz soundtrack; With its swinging melody that catches the setting so perfectly. The game is also fully voiced, with a moderate sized cast of talented individuals; In particular,

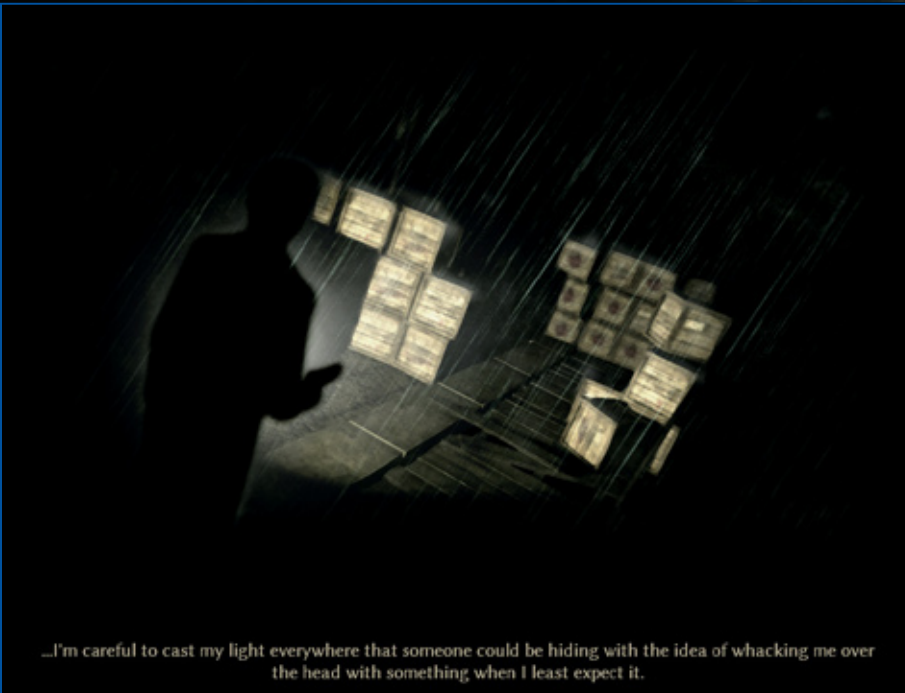
I think that the main protagonist is superbly done. There is a little bit of corny dialogue, and the chinese sidekick is a little overdone, and stereotypical, but he is also charmingly reminiscent of classic films set in the same period. A similar effort was put into the the superb graphics and the interface; They are completely professionally done, and pleasure to look at. The game is in third-person (2.5D) perspective, with fixed camera angles for every scene, and up close headshots in conversations.

The gameplay does a very good job of complementing the story, but does nothing particularly amazing. It is all good, solid, gameplay, well rooted in the story. Most of the gameplay is standard inventory puzzles and navigation dialogue trees. There are a few logic puzzles as well, but the game tries to stick to realistic puzzles. Which is not to say that there are no



unique gameplay elements; Included are a number of detective style, very unique, gameplay puzzles. There are a number of upclose screens, in the game, where the hotspot indicator is disabled. In these, you do

everything from searching for clues, to manipulating controls and objects in a one-to-one fashion. These are great, most of them are nothing special, but they are my favourite part of the gameplay. Additionally,





The Police Department of Hoboken.

in conversations you occasionally have to connect two pieces of information you have collected during your investigation, to advance the conversation; Overall, these puzzles are way too easy, but they fit the style and setting great. There are also quite

a few lock picking mini-games, but I never really got how to play them, and luckily you can skip them.

Face Noir is a terrific point and click adventure, with a great detective story, made with the Wintermute Engine. It is a very down to earth title, with

realistic and subdued puzzles that are designed primarily to complement its story. You can pick up a copy for \$20, which should last you about eight to ten hours. ●



BRIGHT MOMENTS:

The wonderful graphical, and audio presentation.

FUMBLES IN THE DARK:

The lock picking puzzles.

VERDICT:

A great solid detective noir title.



Nicolas Eymerich

The Inquisitor

Book I: The Plague



Genre: adventure Developer: TIconBLU

Publishers: Microids/Anuman Release date: July 9, 2013

Platforms: Windows, Mac OS X, iOS, Android (coming soon)

Website: <http://www.eymerich.it/>



Nicolas Eymerich was a 14th century Roman Catholic church official, who was born and lived in Spain. He led the Inquisition as the Inquisitor General from 1357, on and off, till his death in 1399. This is in the lands presently called eastern Spain and southern Italy, then referred to as the monarchy of the Crown of Aragon. In this role he is said to have brutally and effectively pursued heretics, blasphemers, demons, witches and sorcerers; Inspiring and revolutionizing the practice of religious persecution. For example, his "liberal" interpretation of a Church directive allowed him and future Inquisitors to get around the limit of a single torture session per suspect. But most enduring and important was his authorship of the Directorium Inquisitorum; The de facto handbook of procedure for the inquisition until the seventeenth century, and general knowledge compendium of witchcraft and sorcery.

Review by Jonathon Wisnoski

This is the character you play as in *The Inquisitor* episodic graphical adventure, and his life, and the times he lived in, inspire the setting and events of the game. Published by *Microids/Anuman*, developed by a first time studio, and released in July, 2013; *Book I: The Plague* is the introductory chapter of this four part series. In this first part a retired Nicolas Eymerich is called by the current Inquisitor General to investigate an obscure village, where a friend of yours has disappeared. But something seems off about the assignment, and the monastery, so you will do a little poking around first. This investigation will reveal something beyond heresy. It is an interesting concept, to be sure. But ultimately falls flat on its face with the implementation.

The interface has all the features you normally look for, but is horribly implemented. The game is obviously made in Unity, which is not bad in and of itself, but they could have used a professional custom starting menu. For some reason the default resolution is 640x480 windowed. Why; The game is basically unplayable in



this miniscule square. Also, another related but more common problem, what is the native resolution? We are never told, and making a choice without knowing when you are just stretching the graphics, is just stupid. The game contains a hotspot indicator, and everything is pretty easy to find, as well as

a hint button (does the next step for you), a fully interactive map, and a journal. The game uses a verb coin style interface, but really only uses "observe" and "interact". One interesting feature is the text interface; You can completely interact with the world using this text interface, which is interesting and



the main feature in the audio version, for the blind. I used it a few times, but I am not sure how well it works.

The game is just full of bad design choices, and incredibly rough content. While I played through half of the game without too much trouble from the narrator, at one point he started telling me the next objective over and over again, he just would not stop talking. And then, a little later, somehow the game got tripped into audio mode and he was explaining how to use the interface over and over again, in a voice that drowned out everything else; It made the game basically unplayable, and this continued to the end of the game. At one point the controls switched from "click to pick up", to "drag and drop" without warning; The camera angles are horrible, throughout the entire game; And the description text for a lot of the objects could of been a lot better.

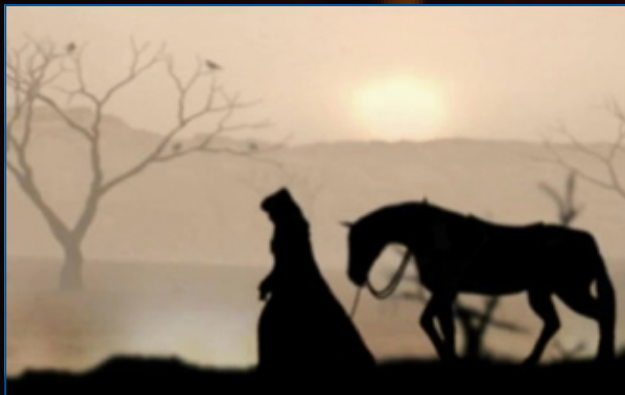
The graphics of *The Inquisitor* are described as 2.75D, allowing a 3D "pictorial and illustrative" look. Unfortunately, for *Book 1* this just translates to horrible static camera angles, in an ugly 3D world. And the rest of the presentation does not fare any better. The voice acting is bad, and one of the character's



head model is laughably horrible. And since you must have multiple conversations with this characters, totalling a significant amount of time, you have to conclude that this game was just released unfinished.

Surprisingly, the gameplay of this first chapter takes a lot of elements from casual titles; And there are a lot of hidden object style puzzles. This starts off with asking you to find a half dozen gems scattered around a room, which

far later have to be used in specific niches, without any hint as to which goes where. This continues with many puzzles that ask you to click a number of hotspots in a specific, unknown and unknowable, order. Sometimes it is not even obvious that a specific order is necessary; For example, there is a "puzzle" near the end of the game where you must investigate a corpse's hotspots in a specific order. A lot of these puzzles require the use of the





“hint feature”, that completes the next step for you. Unfortunately, this feature is often needed a lot in succession, and there is a cooldown period; Which is particularly annoying when doing anything inbetween will reset the puzzle. The rest of the gameplay, over 50%, takes the form of inventory puzzles. Which are similarly bad, boring, poorly designed, and just allround rubbish.

Originally, there were supposed to be three game modes: adventure, interactive novel, and audiogame (blind accessible); And while this is still advertised on the main site, only the adventure mode made it into the main game. You can buy the audiogame version (with all the graphics taken out) for a substantially increased price

separately, but the interactive novel portion seems not to have made the cut. But as promised, there are easter eggs, secrets, and a scoring system.

The Inquisitor, Book 1: The Plague is a poorly designed game that seems

to have been released unfinished. It has a bad story, bad gameplay, and poor graphics. It has a decent length of approximately 4-6 hours, but a rather steep price of \$20. ●

BRIGHT MOMENTS:

The historical story concept.

FUMBLES IN THE DARK:

That guy’s head model, and the general unfinished state of the game.

VERDICT:

A horrible game with serious flaws, and no redeeming attributes.



Adventure Lantern

