Adventure Lantern

Editorial

The first time I played Resident Evil 2 was at a friend's house. It was a cold and stormy day in Istanbul. With the lights dimmed and the rain pouring outside, we had the perfect setting for a horror game. This was my first exposure to the Resident Evil series. My friend booted up his PlayStation and launched the game. As the opening cinematic played, I was immediately engrossed. The gloomy setting, the dark and foreboding music, the struggle to survive with limited weapons and ammunition were all immediately appealing to me. In a few minutes, I was convinced that I had to go and buy my own copy of the game. I purchased the game on my way home that day.

A few weeks later, I was awake at 2AM trying to beat Resident Evil 2 for the fourth time. As it turned out, the game had tremendous replay value. The story unfolded differently based on which character you chose at the beginning. While the two protagonists, Leon Kennedy and Claire Redfield, explored the same areas, there were noticeable differences in terms of the puzzles and supporting characters they encountered. Furthermore, once you completed the game as Leon, you could go back and play as Claire to see a different ending. You could then switch the order, playing first as Claire and then as Leon to see two additional endings. As such, there was a good reason to play through the game four times. There were even some additional challenges that got unlocked depending on your performance in the main game. Overall, I considered Resident Evil 2 to be a great value for my money.

However, Resident Evil 2 was hardly the only game I played through multiple times. At the time, I did not need extra endings or branching stories to replay a game. I would routinely revisit my adventure games just to experience the story. In particular, games that had a detailed story and interesting locations, such as Atlantis: The Lost Tales, were frequent guests in my PC's CD-ROM drive. Similarly, I would run through role-playing games several times just to try out the different types of characters. In short, seeing the ending credits roll did not necessarily mean I was done with a game.

Over the years though, things started to change. These days it is exceedingly unlikely that I will play through a game more than once. For instance, I recently got around to playing Resident Evil 5. Even though I had a great time with the game and enjoyed the intense action, it is doubtful that I will sit down and beat it for a second time. This is partly due to the fact that Resident Evil 5 lacks the branching storyline offered by the second game in the series. However, even if a game features multiple protagonists, numerous dialog options, and alternative solutions to puzzles, I am unlikely to go back and beat it for a second time. The only exception is the occasional game I review for Adventure Lantern. If I am writing a review, I naturally feel obligated to explore every little corner of a game and be sure that I have seen everything. But if I am playing a game solely for entertainment purposes, I tend to put it away as soon as I finish it once. Along similar lines, I am far more inclined to stop playing a game as soon as I realize it doesn't appeal to me. Ten years ago, I would push through even the most awful game just so I could feel like I got my money's worth.

For all your questions and comments abotu the magazine, sent an e-mail to: ugur@adventurelantern.com

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The difference in my playing patterns is most likely due to having a limited amount of free time. If I can only spare a couple of hours for gaming each week, I'd rather play as many different games as possible and not linger on the ones I have already completed. Similarly, I'd rather not suffer through poorly constructed games if something else is available. It seems that over the years, I have come to value my time more than the amount I ended up paying for a particular game. I am curious if any of you readers had a similar experience over the years.

What got me reflecting on my overall approach to gaming was Jonathon's review of Process, which you will find in this month's issue of Adventure Lantern. As I find myself playing through games only once, here's a unique adventure offering that is built around repeated play to find the correct solution. It was great to find out about this gem of a game through Jonathon's article and contrast it to my experience in the past few years.

Until next time,
Ugur Sener

Besides the article on Process, the February 2012 edition of Adventure Lantern features reviews of Nostradamus and Eye of the Kraken from Jonathon. In addition, our long-time contributor Gnome returns with an article on Fate of the World. Most importantly, this issue marks the return of our news section. Due to recurring problems maintaining our monthly schedule, I had discontinued the news page in the July 2010 issue of AL. Now that we seem to be back on track and reliably publishing our PDFs on a monthly basis, Jonathon kindly brought back the news page. This month we have short summaries on a number of upcoming adventure releases along with an excellent roundup on AGS games. Many thanks to Jonathon and Gnome for their contributions to AL's February 2012 issue. Here's hoping you will find something to enjoy in this month's PDF.

For all your questions and comments abotu the magazine, sent an e-mail to: ugur@adventurelantern.com

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Adventurer's Ravine

  In Nostradamus you play Madeleine, Nostradamus's daughter. Nostradamus who is, of course, the most famous seer in all of history and a prolific creator and publisher of prophecies. As Madeleine you must investigate a string of deaths connected to one of her fathers prophecies.

Bandit's Cove

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Uncharted Waters

  Fate of the World is based on the scientific and political theories of Prof. Myles Allen, and does an incredible job in transforming an apparently complex set of ideas into a game.

A lot has happened in the world of adventure gaming this last month. I think it has to be the biggest month since the legendary days of LucasArts and Sierra. Seeing all of the terrific looking games under construction and recently released, the AGS Bake Sale, as well as all of the other adventure gaming news, I don't think that it is too soon to say that we are in a new adventure renaissance.

- Jonathon Wisnoski

ScummVM, An In-depth Look:
An incredibly in-depth historical guide to the amazing adventure game emulator ScummVM have been posted over at Ars Technica.

Inside Adventure Games:
A historical look at the genre has been posted over at the EuroGamer website.

AdventureX 2011, Post-Mortem:
Quite possibly the worlds first adventure game expo, AdventureX, took place last december. AdventureGamers.com has a kind-of post-mortem of the event posted over on their site.

Adventure Game Retrospective:
Ben "Yahtzee" Croshaw had created an adventure gaming retrospective in his usual style. You can view it over at Youtube.

New Releases

Metal Dead:
Released late last year, Metal Dead is a full length graphical adventure and the first in a planned series of comedic, heavy metal influenced, point and click adventure games. The game has a 2D third-person perspective with cartoon graphics and takes place during a zombie apocalypse.
(You can purchase and find out more infomation about Metal Dead on its homepage)
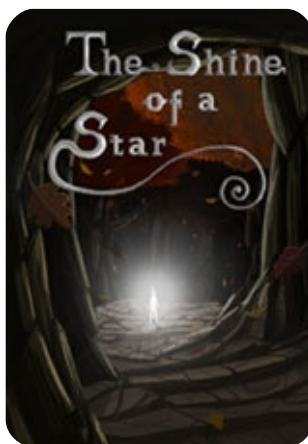
The Shine of a Star:
A classical point and click indie adventure in the style of Samorost. The game started as a small prototype in the Game Concept Challenge, and was chosen as one of the winners. It has since been developed into a full game by Forgotten Key and released for the budget price of just under $4. In the game, you play a fallen star trying to journey back up to his home in the sky.
(You can purchase The Shine of a Star at The Adventure Shop)

Space Quest(s):
Two new Space Quest fan games were released recently. Space Quest II: Vohaul's Revenge is a remake of the original, released as a freeware title; And Space Quest: Vohaul Strikes Back is a brand new adventure and sequel of sorts to the series.

Upcoming Releases

Deponia:
With a planned release of mid 2012, Deponia is the latest title from Daedalic Entertainment. Set on a world with the surface entirely covered with garbage and with floating cities for the upper class; You play Rufus, an ill-tempered surface dweller who formulates a plan to get into one of these cities when a privileged girl falls from the sky.
(You can visit the Deponia homepage for more information)

Adam's Venture 3: Revelations
Iceberg Interactive have committed to release the final installment in Vertigo's Adam's Venture series, Adam's Venture 3: Revelations, by March of this year. The Adam's Venture series is known for its detailed 3D worlds where you move and platform around like in an third-person action game but with the gameplay of a casual adventure.
(You can read the original statement and find out more about this upcoming release on Iceberg's site)

The Ballads of Reemus: When the Bed Bites
With pre-orders already available, The Ballads of Reemus is set to be released on the 27th of January. Based off of the freeware series The Several Journeys of Reemus, this game is a indie fantasy adventure with charming hand-drawn cartoon graphics. With a comical storyline, complete voice cast, loads of puzzles, and optional side quests this looks like one professional quality adventure.
(You can visit the The Ballads of Reemus: When the Bed Bites homepage for more information)

**Shadows on the Vatican
Act 1: Greed**
The English version of Shadows on the Vatican is available for pre-order of $7.49. Developed by the Italian indie group 10th Art Studios, Shadows on the Vatican is a casual adventure set in Rome following a ex-priest as he investigates some political and religious intrigue revolving around his friend.
(You can pre-order Shadows on the Vatican over at Zodiac)

Dear Esther: Official Trailer, Soundtrack, and Price
The Dear Esher remake got its first official trailer in mid January along with the news of their success at IGF, the launch of a Steam store page for the upcoming game, and the chosen price of $9.99. A little latter, they also announced the soundtrack they plan to use for Dear Esther.
(You can view this trailer, as well as the other announcements, over at the original post or head on over to the soundtrack announcement to hear some of the tracks)

The Inner World:
Set to be released next year in German with an English port to follow in 2013. The Inner World is an episodic indie graphical adventure inspired by the classic LucasArts adventures and similarly has 2D stylish hand-drawn cartoon graphics. The game takes place in the fantastical world of Asposia where you control Robert an accidental hero.
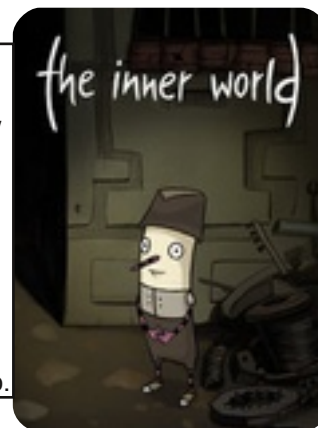
News from the Big Blue Cup

Pick of the Month - January: Egress - The Test of STS-417
Not really a surprise for this award, Egress is a fantastic game and by far the best in recent history (at least at the time of choosing). The first game released by Krams Design, it is a short freeware title with an unique feel. Most notably in its list of features is its hand-drawn graphics and multiple endings. Along with this news I am also happy to announce the somewhat belated release of the first and only official trailer.

AGS Bake Sale:
The long awaited, for charity, PWYW, AGS bundle called the AGS Bake Sale went live the 20th of January and runs until February 29th (plenty of time to pick up a copy for yourself). 100% of the proceeds goes to Child's Play, an organization that helps give sick children a chance to play video games; And while I personally cannot think of a less effective charity at least it is relevant, having to do with video games. The bundle is comprised of 14 unique games made in the AGS engine by notable AGSers and while a surprising number of these are not adventure games they all look interesting. (Head on over to the official AGS Bake Sale homepage to buy yourself a copy)

AGS Bake Sale Interviews:
In the lead up to, and a little afterward, the Bake Sale launch the AGS blog posted a series of interviews and articles on the bake sale games and developers.
The following is a list of these articles:
- Bake Sale #1: Zombie Attack
- Interview BakeSale: Technocrat
- Interview BakeSale: Ben304
- Interview BakeSale: Radiant
- Interview BakeSale: ShiverMeSideways
- Interview BakeSale: Grundislav
- Interview BakeSale: Ghost
- Interview BakeSale: Ponch
- Interview BakeSale: Richard Hofmeier
- Interview BakeSale: Tzachs Shabtay
- Interview BakeSale: Bill Garrett
- Interview BakeSale: Tenacious Stu

Blackwell Series Remakes Released on Steam
All four of the current entries in the Blackwell series have been released on steam in their newly revamped glory, both individually and in a bargain bundle. So there has never been a better time to pick them up.
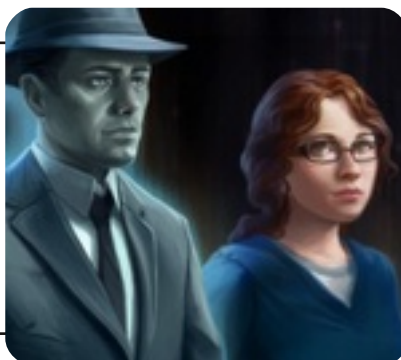
New Releases:

- **Anastronaut: The Moon Hopper** (Anas Abdin) - A commercial, fully voiced, sci-fi adventure.
- **RAM Ghost** [Bake Sale Demo] (Ghost) - A casual simulation where you build a house for your ghost and simulate its "life".
- **Living Nightmare: Freedom** (Domithan) - The third final game in the Living Nightmare series of horror themed adventure.
- **Ben Chandler: Paranormal Investigator!** [Bake Sale Demo] (Grundislav) - A comedy adventure featuring Ben304 as the main character.
- **9 Months In** [Bake Sale Demo] (tzachs) - A contemporary investigative adventure, in which you play a pregnant prisoner striving to prove her innocence.
- **Once Upon a Time in Keel** [MAGS] (spud) - A comedy adventure made for the MAGS competition.
- **AGS Quit Game Dialog: The Game** (FSi) - A sci-fi joke game where the objective is to quit the game, or not.
- **SQ-1 Decisions of the Elders, Chapter 1** (Leisure Suit Harry) - A prequel to the Space Quest series with Roger Wilco's father, Jerry, as the main character looking for his lost bride.
- **^_^** (Ben304) - A comedy fantasy adventure where you play as a werebunny searching for a cure.
- **Donna: Avenger of Blood** (Blaze Dzikowski) - An adventure game taking place in a Eastern Europe with deep financial difficulties and featuring a naked female protagonist, murderers, vengeance, and vampires.
- **Space Quest Incinerations** (Scorpio82) - A fan sequel to the legendary Space Quest, where you once again take control of Roger Wilco on his mission to save the galaxy.
- **Zombie Attack** [Bake Sale Demo] (ShiverMeSideways) - A top-down shoot 'em up.
- **Space Quest II VGA** (Infamous Adventures) - A fully remade version of the original Space Quest II.
- **The Dwarven Dagger of Blitz, Chapter 2** (Miguel) - Trevor Lostpick is back in this chapter where he finally gets his hands on the dagger in this fantasy adventure.
- **Indiana Jones and the Passage of Saints** (Screen 7) - A short Christmas extension to the upcoming Fountain of Youth game form Screen 7.
- **2 Dennis, 1 Bug** [MAGS] (icey games) - A Oceanspirit Dennis game, where he goes back in time to save himself.
- **Indiana Rodent: Raiders of the Lost Cheese** [Bake Sale Demo] (Crystal Shard) - A surprisingly huge and complex platforming game.
- **Maniac Mansion Mania Episode 40 - Trapped in the Cellar** (RayManiac) - A simple comedy game about freeing your friends from the cellar.
- **11-11-11** (Screen 7) - A short cinematic adventure game.
- **Space Quest: Vohaul Strikes Back** (Team VSB) - A sequel to the original series and has Roger Wilco leading a revolution, outwitting an army, all in his quest to defeat the mad scientist Vohaul.
- **Night and Day** [RON] (HandsFree) - Another Reality-on-the-Norm adventure, featuring disappearances and a mysterious advertisement.

Anastronaut: The Moon Hopper

Ben Chandler: Paranormal
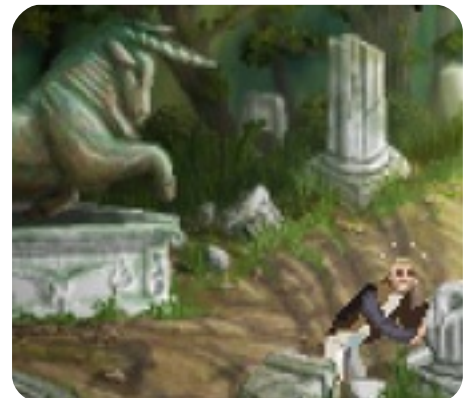
Indiana Jones and the Passage of Saints

Space Quest: Vohaul Strikes Back

Nostradamus: The Last Prophecy

Review by Jonathon Wisnoski

Nostradamus: The Last Prophecy is a 2007 adventure game from Kheops studios. It has great graphics, an interesting story line, and challenging puzzles. Unfortunately, it just did not hold the same magic as many of Kheops's other titles.

In Nostradamus, you play Madeleine, Nostradamus's daughter. Nostradamus who is, of course, the most famous seer in all of history and a prolific creator and publisher of prophecies. As Madeleine, you must investigate a string of deaths connected to one of her father's prophecies. It is 1566 and a series of unsolved deaths around Queen Mother Catherine de Medicis has lead her to believe she is cursed. Madeleine has been sent to investigate the crime, but the only problem is, as a woman, she is not considered capable enough to conduct the investigation. So not only does she have to investigate the deaths and put a stop to them but also hide her real identity, as she masquerades as her brother César.

The game plays very much like a murder mystery with you examining crime scenes, bodies, and evidence with your ever handy investigation kit, or talking to witnesses and suspects. The main difference from other murder mysteries is the setting. Nostradamus is set in medieval times and as such the player is not taking finger prints or analyzing evidence in a laboratory, instead the player will often be taking astrology readings of people and making alchemy potions.

There are some things that I did not like about the game. For one, the entire game takes place in a small village that only includes two buildings you can enter, a castle and Nostradamus' estate. This causes a lot of backtracking and reduces the number of interesting places in the game to only a few (and this did not appear to allow more work to be put into the included areas). Additionally, a few astrology puzzles seem to require a working knowledge of astrology to even attempt to complete without a walkthrough. These issues, combined with a general lack of polish really brings down what could have been a great game.

Nostradamus: The Last Prophecy is a solid Kheopian adventure with a few unique aspects but overall one of their worst titles. It simply does not contain the amount of polish expected from them. Not that it is by any means bad, more average then anything else.

Nostradamus: The Last Prophecy   PC Adventure
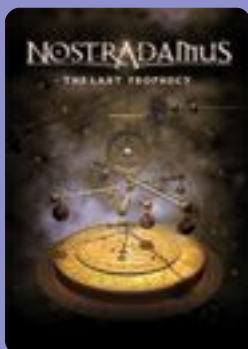
Bright moments:
The graphics, as always, are very good and add a lot of enjoyment to the experience.

Fumbles in the dark:
Some of the puzzles seemed to require a working knowledge of astrology to complete without a walkthrough.

Verdict:
Another solid adventure from Kheops Studios.

★★★☆☆

Developer: Kheops Studios
Publisher: Kheops Studio, *et al.*
Release Date: November 2007

System Requirements:
- OS: Windows 98SE or newer
- CPU: 800 MHz
- Video Card: 64 MB
- DirectX: 9.0
- Hard Drive: 1.6 GB

Eye of the Kraken

Review by Jonathon Wisnoski

Originally released as a commercial product in 2002 by the small independent development company Absurdus, Eye of the Kraken is a point and click graphical adventure with a third-person, top-down, perspective. It has since be released for free and had a sequel released in 2006. Currently, another, final, sequel to the trilogy is on the way.

Eye of the Kraken takes place entirely aboard the ship Glutomax, on its journey towards Hyade Island; And is full of interesting original, historical, literary, and mythological characters. The Eye of the Kraken has been stolen and you, Abdullah, an Ottoman ambassador, have been charged with finding it and revealing the thief, one of your fellow passengers. This Eye is a sacred relic of the Cthulhu style Kraken cult and a key element to awakening the Great Kraken, something that must be avoided at all costs.

It is a game built around absurdities. Every aspect of the game is purposely designed to be humorously absurd, from the dialogue and characters to the puzzles. With cockroaches on steroid, rehydrated minotaurs, finding books within bowls of shrimp, powering machines with sausage, and much more, Eye of the Kraken is definitely absurd. A good question is, is this a good thing? Many games manage to be absurd while trying to be serious. Absurdity is the downfall of many a game, and it seems like more of a cop-out than an actual design choice. But regardless of all of this, in this game it works. Even with my particular dislike of absurdity, it is still a decent world that has its nice moments. And it does abide by its own deranged rules. Everything is always consistent and in fact the puzzles make quite a lot of sense, even if they do follow the same absurd kind of logic as the rest of the game.

The reason I picked up Eye of the Kraken to begin with was its top-down graphics, similar to Sanitarium and The Longest Journey. While the graphics get no where near as beautiful as those seen in either of these games they are moderately detailed and create a convincing world.

The gameplay is in the classic detective style. Every time unit (in this case morning, afternoon, and evening of any given day) you have a set stage and a set of objectives to accomplish, without a logic puzzle in sight. Basically, talk to everyone again, look for new items and figure out what you have to accomplish. A few tasks are more lenient in terms of when you do them, but the majority can only be done at one time. It is a more inventory-heavy fare than I have seen in the past. In fact you are constantly carrying a huge number of items that only propagate as you progress. So many items in fact that it prevents the 'try every item with every game world object' approach, not that anyone should be reduced to that, at any time in this game. But if you do try to use an item with something that it is not meant for, you could be in store for some interesting narration, as more than a few items can be used to comedic effect.

Eye of the Kraken is a hard game to rate. I think it is the kind of game that is likely to generate a lot of both criticism and praise. In fact, of the two reviews of the game I read, the game's music was considered both the best and worst element respectively. I think I stand somewhere in the middle. I don't think that there is anything special here, but I also don't think that Absurdus made any mistakes either. And there were a few elements that I liked quite a lot, like the hilarious banter between the NPCs.

Eye of the Kraken   PC Adventure

Bright moments:
The funny banter between the NPCs.

Fumbles in the dark:
The absurd nature of the game is not for everyone.

Verdict:
An interesting adventure game that some people will love and others will hate.

★★★☆☆

Developer: Absurdus
Publisher: Absurdus
Release Date: August 7, 2002

System Requirements:
- OS: Windows 95 or newer
- CPU: Pentium 350 MHz
- RAM: 64 MB
- DirectX: 8 or newer
- Hard Drive: 200 MB

Process

Review by Jonathon Wisnoski

Process is a completely free, short, graphical adventure with some very interesting mechanics and a unique feel. It was created by a group of independent Russian developers who call themselves TrainYard, some of whom have previously worked on Outcry, a graphical adventure with a similar feel.

The game tells of a catastrophic disaster, where the subway train you are on jumps the tracks at full speed. Process takes place during the 24 minutes before this crash and while the ending is always the same, this is the story of how you got there, the process if you will. Uniquely, the game runs in real time and as soon as you start a new game you have 24 minutes until it ends, no matter what you have accomplished. You will not accomplish everything your first time through. While it is a short game it does have some deviously ambiguous puzzles and even if you know what you are doing you do not have all that much time to accomplish it. But if you do accomplish everything in record time, the real time aspect is fudged a little allowing the game to end potentially sooner then 24 minutes.

This story is told very minimalistically with absolutely no explanation or narration and really no words at all, even inside of the game world. Often you are solving puzzles and activating switches without even having an idea of what you are doing or what you are affecting in-game. What the game does focus on is pure atmosphere, and it does this spectacularly. The silence speaks volumes and the atmosphere permeates the entire train. It is a main part of what makes the game so terrific. The game takes minimal explanation to an extreme, let alone the story being completely impenetrable there is one puzzle in particular that is incredibly hard to figure out. In fact, just figuring out

that you are trying to solve a puzzle, what the display is, and what the inputs are can require both intuition and a lot of experimentation.

Process has a fantastic minimalistic soundtrack, with gloomy atmospheric tracks that are a mix of ambient sounds and traditional music. The graphics and interface are similarly impressive, with a full, first person, 3D view and node based movement. The point and click interface is minimalistic and very usable, with a standard interactive cursor and inventory system. But the impressive part of the presentation is definitely the graphics. They are high definition, grungy, dark (with fantastic lighting effects), and with hints of steampunk.

The puzzles are a mixture of ordinary inventory and ambiguous logic. These logic puzzles are all about figuring out how they operate, what the inputs are and what they do. But it is not just the puzzle workings that are ambiguous but also their purpose. In all instances, you are unlikely to know what you doing or even what you are affecting in-game.

Process is a game heavy on atmosphere. If you like atmospheric games and the simple joy of exploring a unique world then this is a game for you. The second I booted it up, I knew I had something special. Experimenting with the puzzles and finally reaching something new is just very satisfying and enjoyable. Throughout this whole experience, there have been two words that really seemed to resonate with this game; Two words that I think are, in their own way, better at describing this game then entire other paragraphs of words and they are: weird and awesome.

With a game that explains so little, there is a lot of room for explanations and a walkthrough to even be able to figure out when you are done. unfortunately, none of these existed before I played through Process (see The Indie Elitist for a hint-through), at least in English. Fortunately for me, being as I am not all that great at working without either of these, most of the game is completely readable as code and still images in the installation folder. The following paragraph is the summary of my analysis of these files and the game in general; I suggest you skip it until you have finished playing the game (It will not even make sense without this experience).

There are more then a few things that you do in the game without any clue of what you are actually doing and while I cannot shed light on all of these there are a few main ones that I have been able to figure out. Opening the door to the back of the train, for one, requires two actions, both of which making little sense without any explanation. It turns out that, you are actually trying to direct steam towards the back door to unlock it. Later, in this back compartment, you must solve another puzzle involving three columns of lights. Most people may not even figure out what accomplishing this unlocks. It allows the emergency braking system to be turned on, and what you are doing is balancing the brake pressure. Another, thing I can tell you is that there are two ending cinematics. The normal one, and then a different one for when you have accomplished everything there is to accomplish, aka you have rebooted the train.

Process   PC Adventure

Bright moments:
There is just so much to love about Process, but most of all it is made special by its real time aspect.

Fumbles in the dark:
The ambiguousness of one puzzle in particular can easily cause players to become stuck.

Verdict:
A completely unique, "weird and awesome", game.

★★★★☆

Developer: TrainYard
Publisher: TrainYard
Release Date: December 10, 2010

System Requirements:
• OS: Windows XP or newer
• Video: 3D-graphics card with 128 MB, OpenGL 2.0 support

Fate of the World: Tipping Point

Review by Gnome (originally apeared on [Gnome's Blog](#))

Fate of the World: Tipping Point is a unique, deeply political, scientific and thus truly rare beast. It also is an indie game that plays a lot like a card game and is tasking you, the player, with saving the world. Well, humanity to be precise, as I'm pretty sure that the world will do just fine without us. Shockingly though, saving humanity does not involve fighting aliens with ridiculously sized guns or destroying hordes of zombies while exposing nefarious conspiracies. No. This time around it involves tackling real societal problems and their environmental and political consequences in a frighteningly realistic manner.

Fate of the World is after all based on the scientific and political theories of Prof. Myles Allen, and does an incredible job in transforming an apparently complex set of ideas into a game; not that I'm aware of the good professor's theory mind, but I've been exposed to quite a few similar ones. For example, The EU's official environmental policies spring to mind: environmentalism mixed with moderate free market doctrines and capitalist developmental ideas...

the problem is that such a profoundly political game cannot simply be judged as a mere piece of entertainment software. It should and will have to face political and scientific criticism and -happily- what with me being a geographer, there are a ton of things I disagree with. Now, I could tire both you and myself by providing an extensive critique, but I will simply stick to my key problems: a) the game seems to ignore the political importance of the masses, b) it considers capitalism as a natural and unchangeable socioeconomic reality, c) it fails to see such facts as the strong relationship of services and production and d) it is incredibly deterministic.

Now, this doesn't mean that the game isn't good or that it doesn't base itself on a sound scientific base. It's just that I couldn't help but notice a few things I strongly disagree with; Mainly that generally irritating bourgeois, supposedly technocratic school of thought. It does make quite a few decent and generally accepted points though and I can't help but admit that some of the game's ideological problems might be attributed to the fact that turning a theory into something enjoyable, let alone playable, is very difficult indeed. But I really don't want to sound negative. Really. Fate of the World: Tipping Point is a great, deviously educational, rich and incredibly thought-provoking game.

It's an astoundingly simple to play strategy game that manages to be both deep and educational. Let me give you an example of play: you have to make sure that the living standards of Africa rise, while its carbon emissions fall; you thus buy agents for northern and southern Africa (each agent allows one card to be played in the region he/she is stationed); you buy and play an equal number of cards to your agents (cards are usually certain policies); you click the end turn button and hope for the best. Sadly Africa gets destroyed. Well, the first few times you tackle its problems at least.

Playing, you see, is easy and the mechanics straightforward. Understanding the consequences of your choices is another matter entirely and this is what makes the game such a brilliant offering. You could help industry, but damage the environment and them wages. You could go for supposedly eco-friendly fuel and somehow kill off the panda. You could educate people only to have them revolt (which does make a lot of sense) and so on and so forth.

Fate of the World: Tipping Point   PC Adventure

Bright moments:
The uniquely political and educational nature of the game.

Fumbles in the dark:
It is very deterministic with hollow and one sided politics.

Verdict:
Despite some political shortcoming only a few will notice, this is an excellent strategy game, that can indeed educate on certain environmental truths. Definitely worth your time.

★★★★☆

Developer: Red Redemption
Publisher: Red Redemption
Release Date: February 28, 2011

System Requirements:
- OS: Windows XP, OS X 10.6 or newer
- CPU: 2.33 GHz Intel or better
- RAM: 2-3 GB
- Video: 512 MB
- Hard Drive: 1 GB