

Adventure Lantern

ISSUE #49
FEBRUARY 2014

REVIEWS:

- Atlantis Evolution
- The Inner World
- Memoria
- The Raven: Legacy of a Master Thief

During the past several months, the rest of the Adventure Lantern team and I have been counting down to an important milestone for our magazine. The issue you are currently reading is our 49th PDF. I am grateful to all of our past and present contributors for helping us create this content since 2006. I am equally thankful to our readers for offering their support along the way, staying with us even during times where updates on the site became sporadic. It has been a tremendously fulfilling journey. It is hard to believe that next month we will be publishing the 50th edition of the magazine. We made some plans to celebrate the occasion. However, I will refrain from spoiling any of those in this month's editorial.

As Adventure Lantern approaches a landmark, I find myself entering a period of transition as well. My journey through medical school, which started in August 2010, is ending. If all goes well, next July I will start working at a hospital as a resident and continue my training while being more actively involved in patient care. In the United States, finding a residency program involves sending applications to various institutions, going to interviews, and participating in the match. During the match process, students rank the residency programs. The programs in turn rank applicants. A computer program then compares the two sets of lists, trying to match applicants to programs. This year, the initial applications were due in September. Since then, I had the opportunity to visit a number of hospitals across the U.S. It has been a great way to visit many parts of the country and learn about different training programs. There were numerous positive experiences along the way and a great deal of stories to tell. With Adventure Lantern approaching its 50th issue, I wanted to use this month's editorial to share one of those personal stories. The details pertaining to the individuals I spoke with and the hospitals I visited are left vague on purpose. My only goal is to share what the past several months have been like while Adventure Lantern trucked along and prepared for an anniversary issue...

Having returned my rental car, I climbed aboard the shuttle that would take me to the terminal at Chicago's O'Hare airport. I had just completed an interview at one of the hospitals in Chicago. I was on my way to Minnesota for another interview, which was scheduled for the following morning. I was getting ready to call my wife and tell her what I thought about the hospital I had just visited, but I got a phone call from the airline first. My flight out of Chicago had been cancelled due to inclement weather. I hurried over to the terminal, trying to see if the airline could send me out on a different flight. There was one flight leaving for Minneapolis in three hours. I would have to drive the rest of the way to the hospital. Considering that the alternative was to give up my interview spot, I gladly took a seat on the Minneapolis flight.

It was almost midnight by the time the airplane landed in Minnesota. The last shuttle to my final destination had departed a few minutes ago. I walked over to the rental car agencies. Several of them had no cars available, but I eventually found something. All of their compact cars were taken, so they gave me a convertible Camaro instead. It was only my second time to be inside a sports car. I had never driven one before. I left the airport amused that I was behind the wheel of a convertible in winter weather. Finally arriving at my hotel after 1 am, I was certain the unusual rental car would be the highlight of the trip. I was wrong.

The interview day was fantastic. The faculty members and residents I encountered made a huge impression. I left the hospital feeling grateful for having had a chance to see it. I had a flight scheduled to leave that afternoon, taking me back to Chicago. Two of my fellow applicants were on the same flight, so I offered to give them a ride to the airport. Unfortunately, we arrived to find out that our flight had been cancelled due to ice rain in the Chicago area. The airline understandably did not want to risk landing on a slick runway.

I had to get back to Chicago to complete my second and final interview there. One of my fellow applicants lived in Chicago and was anxious to get home. The other applicant had a connecting flight in several hours. We discussed what we might be able to do. We could drive back to Minneapolis and look for a flight from that city, but there was a good chance that all flights to Chicago would get cancelled. I walked over to the rental car agencies, trying to figure out if I could find a car I could drive to Illinois instead. There were three other people there who were supposed to be on the same flight. I asked if they would be willing to share a rental with me and the other applicants. All three of them agreed. The rental company had a van available.

In a few minutes, I was inside a van with three people I had just met at the airport and two applicants I had met that morning. I had gone from driving a sports car in snow fields to renting a van with five strangers. The whole thing seemed so surreal it was hard to process. In the front was a couple on the way to visit their grandchildren. I was seated in the middle with a woman trying to get back to her children in Chicago. The other applicants were in the back of the van. It seemed more like the setup for a road trip movie or an adventure game than real life.

We spent the next six to seven hours traveling together. We were all on our phones a fair amount of the time, explaining to our loved ones what was happening. The people we called perhaps correctly questioned the wisdom of driving on icy roads and getting in a rental car with strangers. The road was indeed rather slick at times. We saw a handful of accidents along the

way. We also shared some stories. It was all somewhat formal, all of us a little guarded, strictly on a first name basis. The stories were told just as much to pass the time as they were to get to know one another. I'd love to know how strange our little group looked to the people at the restaurant we stopped for dinner. We went our separate ways at the end of the drive. No phone numbers and no last names were exchanged. However, as I walked away to find a car to drive to my hotel, I still felt bonded with the group. We had just shared a rather unique experience. I knew I would remember and tell this story often.

I once again arrived at the hotel after 1 am. The following day, I finished my final interview in Chicago and headed to the Midway airport. It was early in the afternoon. My flight was not leaving for another five hours. With thousands of people traveling for the holidays, Midway was exceptionally crowded. People were running from one end of the airport to the other, trying to make connections. Amidst the chaos, I found a table close to an outlet and passed the time writing thank you notes to the people who interviewed me and playing *Chains of Satinav* on my laptop. The past three days had certainly been fun and unique, but also rather draining. I was ready to get back home to my family. My wife told me bad weather was expected in our home town. I hoped there would be no further flight cancellations.

Several hours later, I finally got on the airplane that would take me back home. My intention was to close my eyes and take a nap. I found my seat, tucked away my suitcase and sat down. I was in the middle seat. A young woman was next to me by the window and the aisle seat was still empty. I told the other passenger I would move to the aisle seat if it remained empty so we could both have a little more room. She thanked me, briefly explaining that she had been on the road since 5 am in the morning. I in turn told her about my crazy adventure in the van with five strangers. Then we talked for the next two hours. I quickly realized I was sitting next to a highly driven and accomplished person. She had already achieved a great deal despite her young age and did not seem to have any intention of stopping. I told a few stories of my own, about being a parent, husband, medical student, and immigrant. On the surface, we had very little in common. We were from different countries and had different educational backgrounds. We were involved in very different professions. We did not even live in the same town. Yet we somehow made a rare and strong connection in a very short span of time.

Halfway through the flight, she asked me what my name was. I reached into my backpack to grab a copy of my resume. After thirteen years of living in a foreign country, I learned that people who do not speak Turkish have an easier time correctly pronouncing my name if they have a chance to see it written

first. Before I got the paper out and had a chance to respond, she told me her full name and then gave me a card with her phone number and e-mail. It was very humbling to be trusted with such personal information after such a brief encounter. By the end of the flight, I was very thankful for having had this chance encounter. We walked out of the airplane as friends. Though we may never meet again in person, we already exchanged a couple of e-mails, both willing to lend support for each other's journey, even if it's from a distance.

Yet again, it was late at night when I got my suitcase and made it to my car. My wife was right about the weather conditions. Everything was covered in ice, including my car. It seemed very appropriate that I should fight to get into my own car after having two unusual rentals during the past several days. It took twenty minutes of brute force to knock down enough of the ice to get into the passenger seat and find my ice scraper inside the glove box. Given their locations in Canada and Russia, my Adventure Lantern teammates may laugh when they read this, but I did not think it was possible for so much ice to accumulate on a car. Nevertheless, I eventually got in the driver's seat and made it home. It was great to finally be with my wife and children. The children were already asleep. My wife and I talked for a long time about the residency interviews and where we might end up next July.

I was exhausted and elated at the same time. It seemed unreal that I had so many memorable experiences in the span of a few days. There is no telling where we I will start working in a few months. We may stay in our current home or settle down in a new city. Though no matter what happens, I know I will remember these past months with a great deal of fondness. It has been quite an adventure to travel across the U.S. and visit hospitals. I will not soon forget the crazy trip from Minnesota to Illinois to Oklahoma and the remarkable people I met along the way.

As my family and I try to make important life decisions, Adventure Lantern keeps chugging along. Whether the issues are getting uploaded from Oklahoma or some other state next year, please know that the Lantern will always remain a priority for me. It is with enormous gratitude toward our team members and readers that I present you our 49th edition. There may be a lot of uncertainty in the upcoming months, but there is also a great deal of hope. As the site counts down to the 50th PDF and I wait to find out where I may have a chance to work, here's hoping you will find something to enjoy in these pages.

Until next time,

—Ugur Sener



Cover Image:
MEMORIA

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Return to Ringworld on ScummVM

Return to Ringworld is now playable on the latest builds of ScummVM, and undergoing testing.

“This is a direct sequel to the original Ringworld game.. after saving the puppeteer race from extermination and uncovering some powerful ancient technology on the first game, Quinn, Seeker of Vengeance and Miranda Rees find themselves searched for as fugitives by all three major species, so they plan to go to Ringworld to hide. But it turns that their ship has suffered problems. And fixing them and getting to Ringworld will only be the start of their problems.”



Announcements



Dead Synchronicity Tomorrow Comes Today

An upcoming graphic adventure from Fictiorama Studios, Dead Synchronicity is a 2D point-and-click adventure. A terrible pandemic is ravaging the survivors of a string of natural disasters and the player will have to help Michael, a man with no past, recover his identity and decode the events that brought the world to the edge of collapse. Dead Synchronicity will be released in two installments, the first, Tomorrow comes Today, will be available for PC, Mac, and tablets in 2014.

Eidolon

Described as Proteus meets an exploration based survivor game, or by its developer as “a narrative exploration game set in a massive, post-human Western Washington.”

“You will be dropped into the dreary and mystical Western Washington circa 2400 c.e. with a bow, fishing rod, and little to guide your way. Awaiting you is a vast landscape filled with wildlife, edible plants, and the historical artefacts of our now-dead culture – journals, newspapers, zines, brochures, transcripts, and more. You must spend your fleeting moments moving through

this place, collecting what was left behind, and piecing together what happened to these people, both from a historical perspective and from a much more personal one.”

Look for a PC and Mac release sometime mid 2014.



Pathologic Remake

Ice-Pick Lodge has officially announced that they are working on a remake for their most ambitious, and well known game, Pathologic. Pathologic is the deeply flawed, cult classic, title that make Ice-Pick Lodge's reputation. No word on specifics of any kind, but they are claiming that they will need a lot of help from the community to pull it off.



Jason the Greek

Just barely passing its Kickstarter goal on December 15th, Jason The Greek: The Ladies of Lemnos is a point and click adventure set in Ancient Greece. It is designed as a new take on the old-school point and click adventure games.



Silence The Whispered World 2

It has just been announced that one of my favorite Daedalic Entertainment games, The Whispered World, is getting a sequel. Entitled Silence: The Whispered World 2, the sequel is scheduled for a late 2014 release

"With completely new 3D visuals, The Whispered World 2 will take players back to Silence, a world made of dreams. We accompany Noah, a teenager, who lost his little sister Renie in the hazardous real world and now hopes to find her again in Silence.

Apart from an emotionally investing yet humorous story, adventure-fans can look forward to a reunion with old friends and many new features."



Upcoming Releases

Detective Grimoire

This upcoming PC, Mac, Linux, AppStore and Android detective adventure has gotten a release date of January 2nd. Buying it on their website gets you all of these version for only \$7.

DETECTIVE GRIMOIRE



The 7th Guest 3 Interview

After this sequel was, unexpectedly, announced last month we have all been understandably quite excited and intrigued. Well AdventureGamers is here to answer our question, with a huge six page interview with David Wheeler of The 11th Hour fame.

"Though he's known as a pioneer of interactive storytelling to adventure fans of The 11th Hour, Tender Loving Care, and Point of View, writer and director David Wheeler has also been busy making AAA games such as Ghostbusters and Medal of Honor in recent years. Now the Kickstarter campaign for The 7th Guest 3: The Collector has finally brought back the old Trilobyte dream team of Wheeler and



Rob Landeros. The occasion gave us an excellent reason to chat with Wheeler about his lengthy career and his involvement with the new game. As we discovered, the man who may have helped

paved the way for companies like Quantic Dream and Telltale not only has a lot to look back on, but also a lot of ambitious plans for the future."



The 7th Guest 3: The Collector

This esteemed sequel did not quite kick it on Kickstarter, raising the impressive amount of \$121,000 but still failing to make its goal of \$435,000. This failure has not fazed Trilobyte in the slightest, and they are still shooting for their original goal, but reordering the format. Running a campaign from their own website, with similar rewards, they are now looking to raise a smaller amount to start off with, and create a first chapter to this adventure.

Obduction

The spiritual sequel to *Myst*, and Cyan's latest project, *Obduction* is fully funded, raising a total of \$1.3 million surpassing at least one stretch goal to add Oculus Rift support. The campaign continues on the official website through paypal, where they are still looking to add an additional world and mode.



The Dead Flowers Case

The team formerly of White Birds Productions, now called Mando Productions, has canceled their unsuccessful Kickstarter. But, they are not giving up, and will continue to work with Halleux on *The Dead Flowers Case*. Here's hoping that it will become a reality one day soon.



THE DEAD
FLOWERS
CASE

New Releases

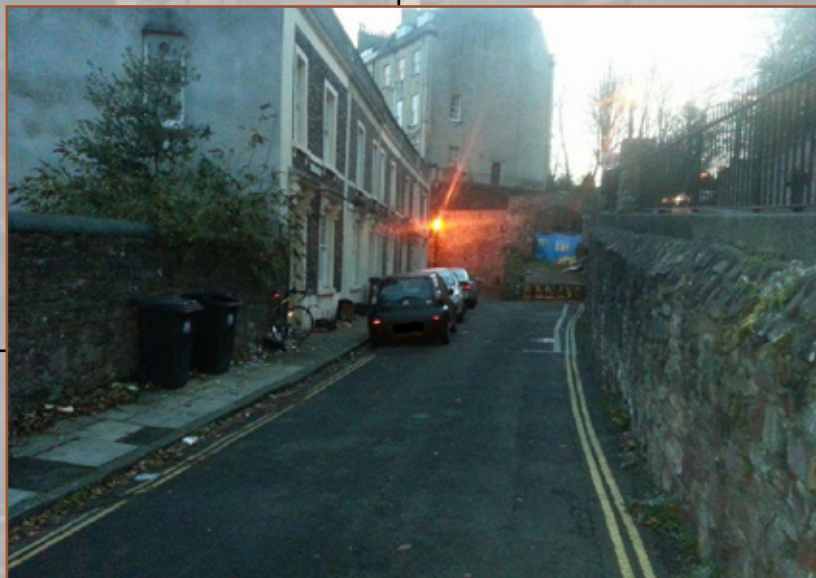


Gomo

Released earlier this month by Fishcow Studio and Daedalic Entertainment, Gomo is a point and click adventure with simplistic cartoony graphics and a charming plot.

You are facing south and want to get home safely

Someone on Imgur has created a text adventure style game with simple static images and links. I am not sure who created it, or even if it has a real name, but whatever you call it, it is an ingenious little game. With static images for a display, and links for choices like "go south", or "open door", the game plays exactly like a old text adventure.





Detective Case and the Clown Bot: Murder in the Hotel Lisbon

This retro adventure filled with mystery and humour (for Window, Mac, and Linux) was released early december, and will set you back \$10.

"A strange murder has occurred in the Hotel Lisbon, a man committed suicide with 14 stabs to the back while at the same time he peacefully drank his coffee. This case with contradictory facts was too complex for Policeman Garcia to solve, so he decided to hire the

only detective duo in town capable of solving it: the mythical Detective Case and the unmistakable Clown Bot.

Together, they will solve a network of love relations so complex and so intricate, that it would take at least 14 clairvoyants, 5 apocalyptic sect prophets who can predict the end of the world and 3 of those gypsies that can read the palm of your hand just to guess the final outcome."

Following Freeware: October 2013 Releases

AdventureGamers has released another list of freeware releases. Head on over to read the entire article.

"This month you can take on the role of a Komodo dragon hunting for food, or a dude that has suddenly found himself turned into a goldfish. Investigators can look into a horrible murder, check out reports of a lake monster eating the tourists, or pursue supernatural beings of a far more disturbing nature. Perhaps you'd like to take a journey into the dark past of a Victorian gentleman or attempt to fix a post-apocalyptic future with the power of melody. Alternatively, you could just hang around inside your head, though you may find the contents more disturbing than normal. All these await you in this month's round-up of releases from the freeware scene."



Dracula 5: The Blood Legacy

The direct sequel to Dracula 4, and possibly the final one in this story arc, Dracula 5 was just released by Microids.

**Updated Releases****Contrast**

AdventureGamers has posted an in-depth feature about the recently released Contrast, a noir puzzle-platformer video game developed by Compulsion Games.

**Al Emmo Enhanced**

The enhanced update to Al Emmo and the Lost Dutchman has been released with its new voice actor, improved cutscenes, and much more. Also, it is on Steam Greenlight, so should be making it onto Steam in the near future.

NEW FEATURES

- * New Al Emmo Voice actor
- * Improved 2D Cutscenes
- * Scoring system
- * Achievement system
- * Tooltip/hotspot label
- * Much more!





News From the Big Blue Cup



Time Stone (Stuart Lilford) - A short adventure game made with Adventure Game Studio. With wonderful low-res art, it hopes to help you find the enjoyment you found when playing those awesome classic adventure games of years past, such as Day of The Tentacle and Simon the Sorcerer.

Robot Psychiatrist (Scott Winnicott) - Step into the shoes of a Robot Psychiatrist.

Heatwave (Scavenger) - A short story set in the same world as Death Wore Endless Feathers. It takes place in a future California, where Dai Araiguma is playing a VR game in the middle of an abnormally tenacious heatwave.

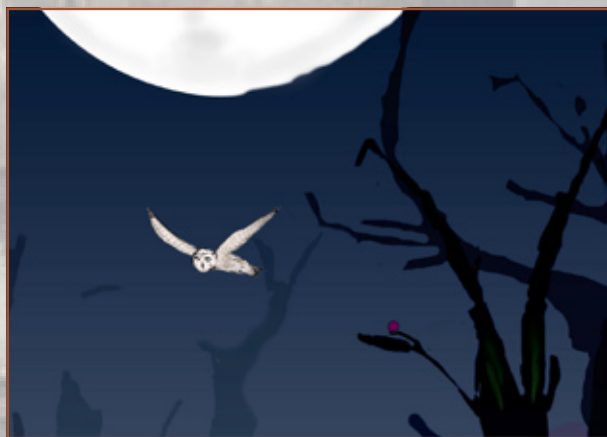
Magic Owl (Emont) - A game of exploration and musical interaction. There are no goals or points to win; fly around and the space will interact visually and musically, generating a soundtrack as you play. The game is intended to be a relaxing and peaceful experience of discovery. Made for the MAGS competition in November 2013, with the theme "night time".

DSM: Are We Alone? (Slasher) - Dare you slip into the spacesuit of NASA astronaut John Dibble and find the answer to the burning question: "Are we alone?". Something evil lurks in the darkness of twisted spaces.

Pick of the Month: Time Stone

If you could turn back time, what would you do differently? You are Elle, a young and naive wizard's apprentice on your way for your routine potions lesson. As you arrive to bask in the glory of your teacher's infinite knowledge, the last thing you expect is for your trusty mentor to be overcome and kidnapped by none other than an evil warlock! Worse still, you end up locked up in his house yourself! Well, kind of. By use of your intuition, and with the help of a boisterous dragon, you must find a way to rescue your tutor and discover the mystique of the Time Stone in this modern day throw-back adventure, reminiscent of 90's adventure gaming's heyday. The fate of the world is in your hands. -

(Chosen and description written by
Sunny Penguin)



DSM: Are we alone?
(Slasher)



Heatwave
(Scavenger)

Magic Owl
(Emont)



CHRISTOPHER BISCHOFF

Conducted by Ugur Sener

John Maracheck boarded the spaceship Groomlake with the promise of a better life for his wife and daughter. He was supposed to travel in stasis. He was supposed to open his eyes to a new life. This was a journey to lead him and his family to happiness. Unfortunately for John, Cayne Corporation had other plans.

Groomlake was no ordinary spacecraft. Owned by Cayne Corporation, the ship was home to illegal research. Experiments that involved human subjects... Experiments that separated John from his family...

Awakening from stasis, John opened his eyes to pain and misery. His wife and daughter were nowhere to be found. Groomlake appeared to be abandoned, in a decaying orbit above Neptune. What happened to the ship while he was in stasis? Where were John's wife and daughter? Could they still be somewhere inside the massive spacecraft? John would have to search the ship for clues.

He had no time to lose. He had to unlock the ship's mysteries before the spacecraft disappeared among Neptune's gas clouds. Groomlake and its horrors beckoned.

STASIS is a highly promising science-fiction horror adventure game from *The Brotherhood Games*. Christopher Bischoff's brainchild, *STASIS* puts players in the role of John Maracheck as he searches the spaceship Groomlake for his wife and daughter. With its classic 2D isometric graphics, gripping atmosphere, and intriguing story *STASIS* promises to be a very compelling adventure offering.

Mr. Bischoff has already spent a substantial amount of time

working on the project. In order to continue the development efforts on a full-time basis, he launched a [Kickstarter campaign](#) to finance the game in November 2013. The fundraiser was a tremendous success, with the project reaching its initial target three days before the end of the campaign. At the time this article was originally published, there were only 34 hours left on the Kickstarter campaign, with the project about to reach its second stretch goal.

As the campaign draws to a close and development on *STASIS* is about to begin in earnest, Mr. Bischoff kindly agreed to answer our questions about the project.

[Adventure Lantern]: Congratulations on successfully completing your Kickstarter project and getting *STASIS* funded. How does it feel to get the financial support you needed for the project?

[Christopher Bischoff]: It's overwhelming to be honest! I always knew that *STASIS* was a special project, but I wasn't certain how other people would react when experiencing the game. When the first reactions started to come through, it was a massive weight off my shoulders - seeing other people play the game and enjoy the experience. The world of *STASIS* was so personal to me for such a long time, that I felt protective over it. Seeing the game out in the world was unsettling but ultimately very rewarding.

[AL]: Can you tell us a little about your experiences with *STASIS* prior to the Kickstarter campaign?

[Christopher]: It has been a three year long journey to get to this point. Afternoons, weekends, and holidays. Every movie I watched, TV series, book, comic... all them have had an influence on the game in some form. *STASIS* has been as much a part of my life as my professional career, if not even more so.

It has been a refuge when the stresses of life take over and served as a reminder of my love of art.

[AL]: What was the inspiration behind *STASIS*?

[Christopher]: A melting pot of more than two decade's worth of sci-fi. The sense of exploration that you had during that first act of *Alien*...the emotions felt when the *Event Horizon* bursts through the clouds... that is what I'm really trying to evoke in *STASIS*.

[AL]: What can you tell us about the game's story?

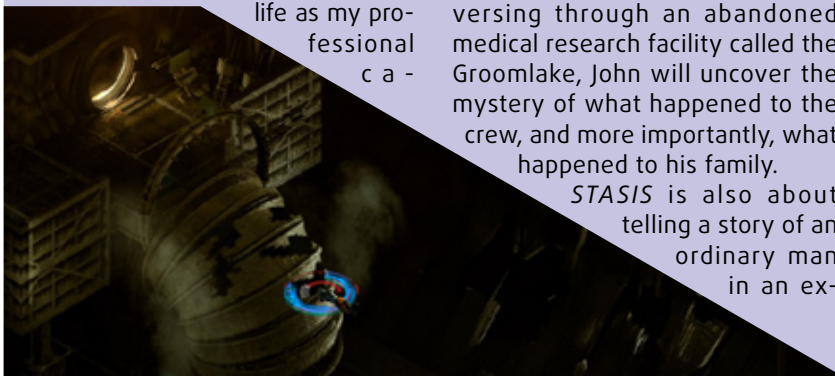
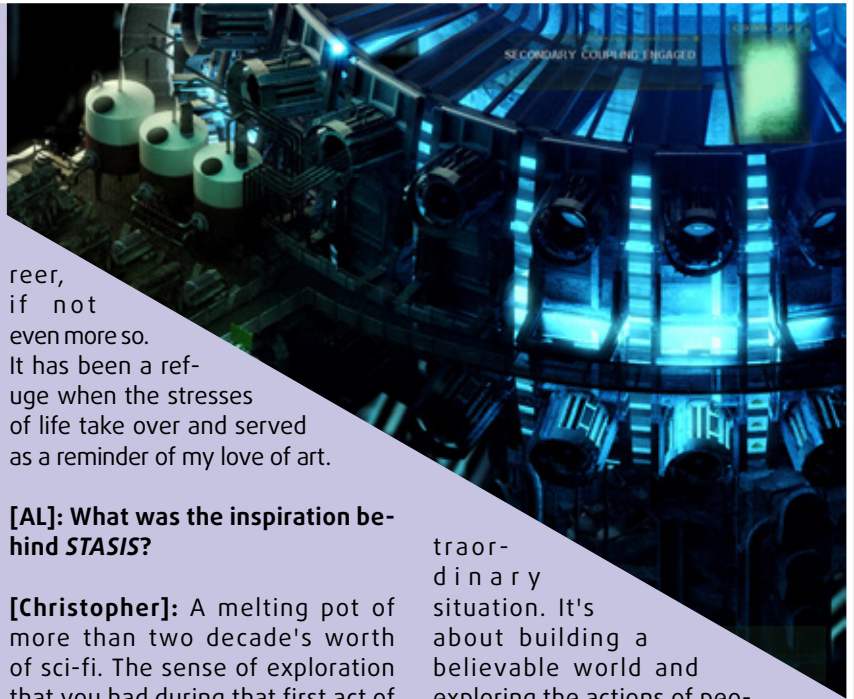
[Christopher]: The story follows a man's journey into the depths of human depravity, as he tries to find his wife and daughter. Traversing through an abandoned medical research facility called the Groomlake, John will uncover the mystery of what happened to the crew, and more importantly, what happened to his family.

STASIS is also about telling a story of an ordinary man in an extraordinary situation. It's about building a believable world and exploring the actions of people in that world.

[AL]: What about the protagonist John Maracheck? What can you tell us about his personality?

[Christopher]: John is a normal man. He can't rewire a bomb or hack into a computer system. His resulting actions are from desperation - a desperation born out of the need to find his family and protect them at all costs. The three members of the Maracheck family share a special bond with each other - a backstory that will be told as the game progresses. They are reliant on each other and always have been, in more ways than one. John is you and me. He is your father or your brother.

[AL]: What kinds of environments can players expect to explore?





[Christopher]: I've been very careful about what people have seen of the game, because I want to keep exploration of the ship new and exciting. As you move through the areas you'll see variations and several new directions of familiar tropes. I don't want to give away too much... half the fun in an adventure game is in the discovery.

[AL]: How would you describe the game's atmosphere?

[Christopher]: Thick and dense. The game is heavily inspired by *Alien*, with



the idea being to bring across that tense feeling of danger throughout the experience. The current sound design is inspired by older sci-fi films, making the game feel almost 'retro-futuristic'. All of the technology is an off-shoot of something being developed in our current world, giving the game a feeling of being grounded in reality.

[AL]: What kind of puzzles can we expect to encounter?

[Christopher]: I've tried to keep the puzzles as logical

situations may be a little 'heavy handed'. He is a 'hit the lock with a wrench' kind of guy.

The puzzles in the world reflect that, with the world design being grounded in the real world. Doors are open from keypads and sliding puzzles. In other words, the obstacles I've placed aren't in there for the sake of putting in a puzzle.

[AL]: How did players respond to the alpha demo for the game?

[Christopher]: Very well! The Alpha got universal

praise for the atmosphere and the way the story was presented to the player.

[AL]: Now that the Kickstarter is wrapping up, what is your next step on the project?

as possible, ensuring that they make sense in the world. As John is a normal man, his approaches to getting through

[Christopher]: Scheduling for the next few months is important, to ensure that certain milestones are hit. I will be spending time planning how to move forward. From

there, I'll be working on *STASIS* in a more condensed and focused manner. I really can't wait!

[AL]: How are you planning to use the Kickstarter funding?

[Christopher]: The funding will be used for physical rewards, as well as for external contractors, animation or sound libraries and most importantly, will allow me to move into production of *STASIS* full time.

[AL]: Are you going to accept contributions from other sources such as Paypal now that the initial campaign is over?

[Christopher]: The Paypal donation system is already live and we plan to run it throughout the duration of the game's production.

[AL]: Are the incentives offered through the campaign going to be available for Paypal contributions?

[Christopher]: The incentives are currently available through the Paypal contributions. The Paypal pledge page will be updated with any changes.

[AL]: When can we expect to play *STASIS*?

[Christopher]: If all things go according to plan, we're hoping for this time next year.

Adventure Lantern thanks *Mr. Bischoff* for taking the time to answer our questions. Based on the information *Mr. Bischoff* provided along with the materials available through the *STASIS* [Kickstarter](#) and the game's [Web site](#), *STASIS* is shaping up to be an extremely promising adventure game. From the dark and foreboding science fiction setting to the compelling protagonist out to save his family, *STASIS* has the makings of an exciting horror adventure. With three years of work already put into the project, it is clear that *STASIS* is also a labor of love.

Thanks to the successful

Kickstarter campaign, players will hopefully have a chance to play the game in one year. Here's hoping the remaining development effort goes smoothly, If *STASIS* can deliver on its premise, adventurers may be in for a truly rare treat. ●

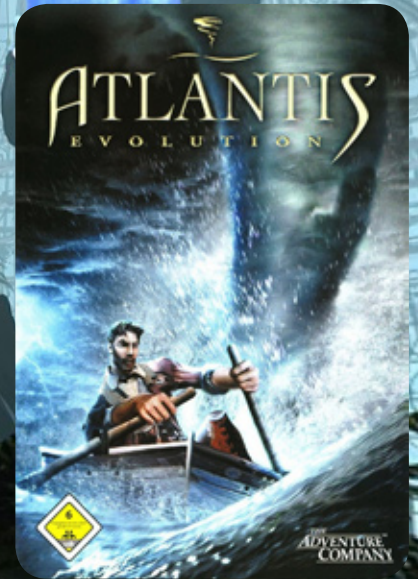
Disclaimer: While I personally donated to the project, Adventure Lantern has no financial interest in *STASIS* or *Mr. Bischoff's* company *The Brotherhood Games*. This interview was solely posted to increase awareness about the game and the fundraising effort.



Atlantis Evolution



Genre: adventure Developer: Atlantis Interactive Entertainment
Publisher: The Adventure Company Release date: October 15, 2004
Platform: Windows Website: www.atlantisevolution.com



In *Atlantis Evolution*, we finally get back to Atlantis, if not physically then at least in spirit, as we continue the story of the Atlanteans from where we left off in *The Lost Tales*. Released in 2004, *Atlantis Evolution* is the fourth *Atlantis* title, and the first one developed by *Atlantis Interactive Entertainment*, the studio that formed after *Cryo Interactive* went bankrupt.

Review by Jonathon Wisnoski

In *Atlantis: The Lost Tales*, the very first title in the series, we were left with the islands of Atlantis destroyed, sunken to the bottom of the ocean after the eruption of a massive volcano. In *Beyond Atlantis*, the second title, we followed the original protagonist's ancestors, and finally were given a conclusion to the dark force that was unleashed in the first game. Now, in this fourth



iteration, we get to see what the Atlanteans got up to; Where are they living now, what have they been doing, and how many escaped the destruction of their homeland? This story is probably the best aspect of the entire game, and in quite long, involved, and complex; Just like the first game's story, and is similarly one whole linear story, not the patchwork style used in *Atlantis* two and three. The story takes place thousands of years after the events of the first game, but you spend quite a bit of time learning about events that took place during the time of the first game, and what happened inbetween then and now. It is now the early 20th century, and during a storm at sea you, a young photographer, are sucked through a whirlpool, and deposited into some inner-world, below the sea. You quickly learn that that you have arrived on New Atlantis, the home to a large group of Atlanteans, who moved there to escape the catastrophe that that occurred at the end of

the first game. These Atlanteans live in total subservience to their gods, who demand complete, unthinking, submission, and constant toil. On your quest to get home you meet up with the original natives of this place, and eventually attempt to free the Atlanteans of their tyrannical gods.

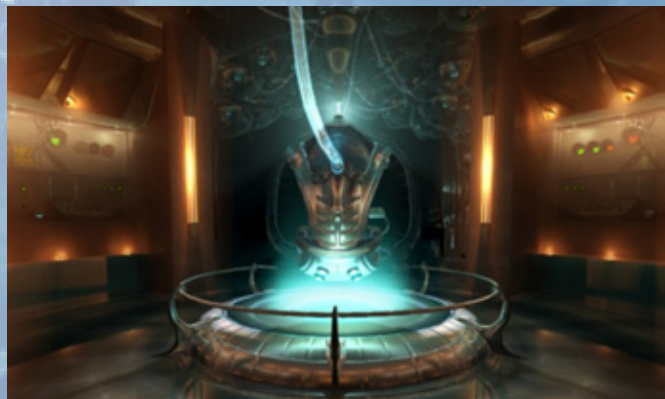
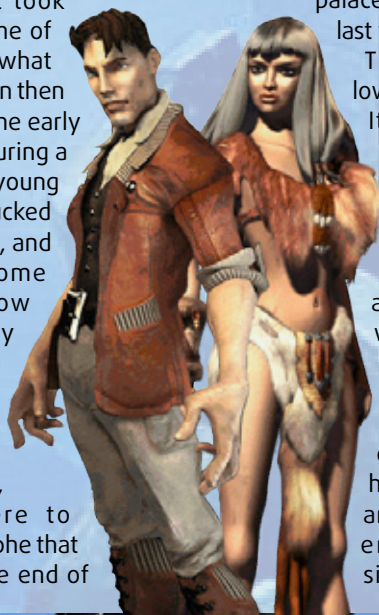
The game is separated into two main very distinct and incongruous areas. The gameplay, graphics, and pretty much everything else changes quite drastically between these two areas. We have New Atlantis proper, and the much more polished floating palace of the Gods in that last third of the game.

The voice acting is a low point for this story; It goes from pretty bad to absolutely abysmal. We are talking guards who sound like sixteen year old boys, and a protagonist's voice whose only emotion is a roguish, joking, aloof dislike, for everything and everyone, no matter how inappropriate and incongruous that emotion is to the situation. And I also



cannot say anything special about the game's soundtrack.

The graphics are really a mixed bag. The game does make it clear that it can do great looking graphics; Graphics that, while possibly not the series best, do not betray the series legacy of amazing graphical achievement. At the same time the game makes it clear that designing good looking scenes is just too much work, with hundreds of samey, boring, ugly environments. In fact, about eighty percent of the game is jungle paths, that all use the exact same plants in a confusing, busy, mess. The game does has great graphics, but overall they are a tiny percentage of the game. A lot of the graphics do not even share





You ARE an Outsider! The Gods are mighty Zanat, his sister Enna, his son Cosmo and Enna's twin daughters, Kama and Sama. Grovel before their power!



it. There are a few times near the start of the game where you are running from guards through these jungle paths, and the gameplay here is strange and horrible. The only way these segments are even made possible is that you get to keep the items you find when you are caught. You cannot beat these segments without getting caught many times, and each time plays pretty much the same as you incrementally get more items and map out the correct route. When not navigating mazes you are stuck with many trial and error based puzzles, horrible minigames, and generally illogical puzzles. The gameplay does pick up quite a lot

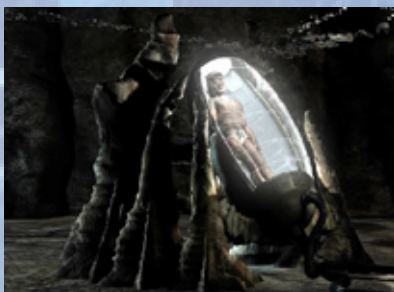
a similar style. You start out in an incredibly realistic style rusty metal ship that looks like it comes straight out of a horror film, only to be thrown five minutes later into the cartoon styled world of New Atlantis, filled with jungle paths.

The gameplay is bad. A big percentage of the game is navigating jungle mazes, and there

are two of three major separate major segments of the game where you do this. You spend hours just navigating similarly looking, sprawling mazes, and you do it over and over again. And you are supposed to find small items just laying on the ground at random locations in some instances, while you are at



Yes. Probably a runaway. Well, is that it? Run away, have you?



in the last third or quarter of the game, and this segment is quite good, but it cannot make up for the majority of the game.

Atlantis Evolution plays like it is two separate games mashed together; With a different graphical style, different gameplay, and a completely different level of polish. The first section of the game, which takes up about two thirds of the game's length, has cartoony graphics with lots of trial and error sequences and mazes. This is in complete contrast to the last third of the game where you have more detailed realistic graphics, and decent logic and inventory puzzles. The majority of the game, the first section, is just

not very well done on every level. The game's final local does turn this completely around, producing a completely different experience that does not fail impress. The question is, how to rate this dichotomy. You are rewarded for

slogging through the beginning of the game with a very substantial and enjoyable segment, so there is a great game in *Atlantis Evolution*, but it takes far more work than it should to get to it. ●

BRIGHT MOMENTS:

How the story get back on track with the Atlanteans.

FUMBLES IN THE DARK:

Atlantis Evolution possibly set a record for the number of maze segments in a single game.

VERDICT:

The great elements are overshadowed by all the bad.



The Inner World



iOS



Genre: adventure Developer: Studio Fizbin

Publishers: Headup Games/Merge Games

Release date: September 27, 2013 Platforms: Windows, Mac. Expected: iOS, Linux

Website: www.theinnerworld.de



The easiest way to describe *The Inner World* is as a typical *Daedalic Entertainment* title. With beautiful hand-drawn graphics, and a charming child themed story. The only problem with this description is that the game is not made by *Daedalic Entertainment*, nor did they publish it. *The Inner World* is the first major release of the german company *Studio Fizbin*, and was released on September 27, with the publishers *Headup Games* and *Merge Games*.



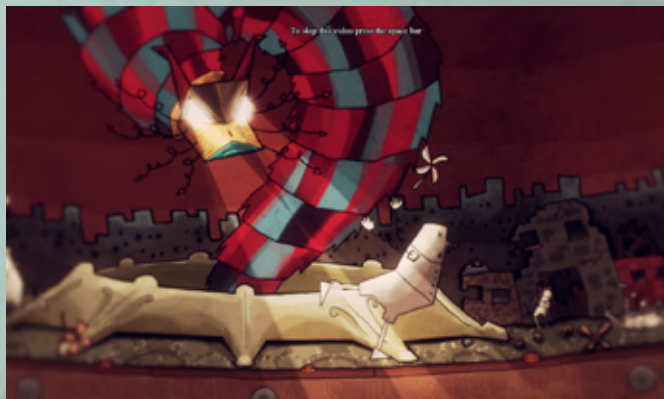
Review by Jonathon Wisnoski

You play a simple, charming, childlike protagonist, called Robert. Set in a world called Asposia, a world turned inside out. The story radiates a children's tale theme, but is actually mildly mature in some

areas. The Asposian's live in a large spherical hollow surrounded by dirt, and filled with wind from its three windwells. This holy wind powers and lights the entire world, but this wind is dying out and becoming scarce. It is when the end of this world seems inevitable that our tale starts. Robert is a simple, young

Asposian and novice to Abbott Conroy. He has lived in the single remaining active windwell palace all his life, never leaving the palace grounds. But one day a pigeon steals Conroy's amulet and Robert chases it down a trash chute.

Overall this story is very charming, and enjoyably, but it has some





specific issues that did cut into my enjoyment. The English voice acting is very hit and miss, with the actors sounding like they are reading lines in some instances. Other times,

the story just doesn't quite fit, and feels contrived. One strange awkward area is how they portray Robert. Is he the stupidest person in all of Asposia, is he simply naive,

or is he an expert puzzle solver and adventurer? I am not quite sure that the game ever makes up its mind. Overall, I really like the idea of the story, but it is not implemented all that well; So it ends up simply decent, in my opinion.



The Inner World has charming, illustrated, hand-drawn graphics; Graphics that would look perfectly in-place in a children's book. I really like this style, it just looks fantastic. Unfortunately, the other parts of the presentation do not quite live up to the graphics. Everything is voiced, but these English voices often leave much to be desired; And while there are many great moments, there are also at least a few where they are downright bad. The soundtrack is, if not great, still very good, and compliments the game well.



What can I say about the gameplay? Well, it is well designed and very traditional. In addition to loads of dialogue, we have a large and diverse inventory, and the occasional logic puzzle. There are loads of great, medium difficulty, puzzles to be had. But the developers have made sure that everyone, no matter their adventure proficiency, can enjoy *The Inner World*. The game has the

most complete, and user friendly, list of hints and tips. With a UHS style, *The Inner World* will walk you through any and all puzzles, no matter how big or small. It starts with general hints and tips, and progresses on to direct walkthroughs if you require more, all without penalizing the player.

The Inner World is a game I always wanted to love, ever since I first saw pre-release trailers and

screenshots. And I cannot say that playing the game disappointed, it is every bit as charming in person as it looked. But I cannot ignore its problems, it is far from a perfect game. These problems do distract from the experience, but never become overly serious; And there is far far more to like about *The Inner World*, than there is to dislike. ●



BRIGHT MOMENTS:

The great hand illustrated, children's book style, graphics.

FUMBLES IN THE DARK:

The voice overs, and elements of the story.

VERDICT:

A good game but with a few problems areas.



The Inner World



Genre: adventure Developer: Studio Fizbin

Publishers: Headup Games/Merge Games

Release date: September 27, 2013 Platforms: Windows, Mac. Expected: iOS, Linux

Website: www.theinnerworld.de



The Inner World started life as a student project at the *Filmkademie Baden-Württemberg's Institute of Animation* in 2010. How a group of young, talented people managed to produce a commercially viable adventure game from a one-room office is probably a tale worth telling. However, having found a niche in the highly competitive adventure game market, does *The Inner World*, with its highly stylized graphics and complex storyline, deliver what it promised?

Review by Rob Hamilton

The world of Asposia exists against all the laws of physics. Surrounded by endless soil, it is contained inside a hollow space ventilated by wind fountains; unfortunately, these fountains are running dry and angry wind gods, the Basylians, are

wreaking havoc on the long-suffering citizens of Asposia by turning all who stand in their way to stone.

If that sounds slightly more convoluted than you might expect from a debut adventure game wait until you meet young Robert.

Robert, who has a flute for a nose, but covers it with a striped sheath to appear normal, is apprentice

court musician to Asposia's saviour and erstwhile ruler, Abbot Conway, who appears to control the last functioning wind fountain. Unworldly, naïve Robert is also Abbot Conway's adopted son, and he has never ventured beyond the confines of the Abbot's stronghold; he remains blissfully unaware of the catastrophic events unfolding in the outside world.



All that, however, is about to change.

In through the window flies a hyperactive pigeon, who, thanks to Robert's misplaced trust, makes off with a glowing pendant belonging to Abbot Conway. Unnerved by his adopted father's exasperation, the young apprentice bravely flings himself down a garbage chute in pursuit of the thieving bird and emerges into a litter strewn back alley in downtown Asposia.

Unable to find a way back to the safety of his adopted home Robert sets out on a quest to uncover the mystery of the wind gods. Along the way, he will meet several weird and whacky characters; some will offer assistance, others will attempt to hinder him and one particular character, the mysterious Laura, will educate him - not, it has to be said, with any great success - in the complexities of human relationships; and she will attempt this while trying to locate her missing father.



Several of the supporting cast remain in the memory long after the game is completed. The shady garbage man (he's selling it, not collecting it) resembles the Pied Piper from Grimm's fairy tales and adds a touch of menace to the proceedings. Then there's Gorf and Gorfelina, a pair of hybrid entities who you would definitely not want to hug, although they do assist Robert and Laura to make significant progress.

There are a couple of wind monks (don't ask), a barmaid who tries to educate Robert in the more mildly erotic ways of the world (a

waste of time), and a guy called Steve, who like Janus in Roman mythology is depicted as having two faces; one looking to the past, one looking to the future.

Details like the above indicate the two possible ways to play this game. The first way is to blast through the five chapters in what should take less than five hours using the inventory based combine the items method to solve the puzzles, none of which was particularly taxing, except the final fish/Basylian puzzle that had me completely and utterly stumped. The second and most satisfying





way to play this game is to watch for witticisms, allusions and hidden meanings that the writers' have woven into the narrative – and there are many, not least of which is the underlying motif which anchors the whole storyline. Respect the planet upon which we live; we only have the one.

If you look hard enough, a darker theme also emerges; the misuse of power within a totalitarian state and the emotional impact that has on the suppressed population. As the storyline develops, even the inexperienced Robert begins to appreciate that particular truism.

And you thought this was just an adventure game.

Fortunately, the interface holds no surprises. The main menu has play, settings, credits and quit, with German or English icons for choice of language. The inventory appears at the bottom of the page and in this particular game, almost every item combines with another to create something obvious. Hotspots have the usual magnifying glass for looking and hand for picking things up. Pressing the space bar reveals the possible exits and all the hotspots on the screen. A comprehensive hint system is also available



and offers six or more hints per problem. It is impossible to be stuck anywhere in this game as the hints range from try this to here's the solution, dummkopf.

Although the German translation to English is quite accomplished, there are a couple of problems. In some cut scenes, the characters read the contents of signboards and speak in English, but the signs, clearly written in German, jump off the screen and break the dramatic flow of the scene.

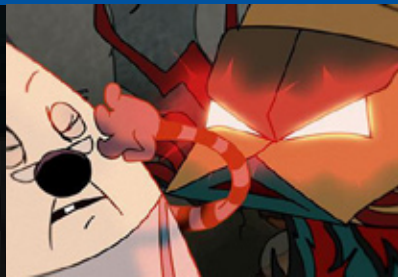
If I have any criticism of this game, it has to be the copious amounts of dialogue that you have to negotiate in order to make any progress at all. Sometimes you know exactly what you have to do but you can't do it until you've had a ten-minute back and forth conversation with a character. Even though I enjoyed the story and the character interaction, speaking to them simply became a chore after a while. Unfortunately, there's no way around it, but there has to be a better way than this.

While moaning heartily about the reams of dialogue flooding the screen, I have to say that I found the graphics enthralling. According to the developers, the screens are, and I quote, '...eye-pleasing backgrounds in non-stereoscopic handmade 2D – against all modern trends.'

I have no idea what that quote means, but the primitive cartoon style adopted by the developers just works – it is eye-pleasing – and it will still look good in ten years' time because it won't age. Watching Robert mince around the screen like a flat piece of cardboard sounds ridiculous, but in the context of the game, it's perfect.

The developers also describe the game as 'screamingly funny'. No. It isn't. It's humorous in parts, and Laura's caustic wit will make you smile, but I didn't find myself falling off the chair while stifling screams of laughter. The only time I've found anything screamingly funny was while watching 'The Life of Brian', and as I hit the floor for the first time, I thought; I might as well stay down here.

There was also a slight problem with the voice acting in this game.



Nothing to do with the actors they were perfectly competent, even if Robert's nasal whine did grate somewhat towards the end. No, it was more of a technical problem when the subtitles failed to match the spoken word or the character's lips moved and nothing emerged. Although it was a rare occurrence, it always happened at a crucial 'what did he just say' moment.

For the purposes of this review, I should have listened to the soundtrack. I was only two minutes into the game before the droning, whining dirge plonking away in the background became so irritating that I had to - and thankfully there

was a button to press - switch it off and leave it off until Robert and Laura stepped up and saved Asponia, or didn't, depending on how you feel about spoilers.

At the beginning of this review, I asked if *The Inner World*, having found its niche in the adventure game market, delivered what it promised. The answer is a resounding yes. For a debut game, it is astonishingly accomplished. Yes, there were a few minor problems. A little too much dialogue, some illogical puzzles (one cracker right at the end that is logically barking mad and unsolvable by any reasonable

standard of gaming) and a few translation problems between the English and the German.

On the plus side, although a relatively short game, coming in at around six hours maximum playing time, it has a diverse cast list of well-rounded characters (I never got around to mentioning the tumble mouse or the fire beetles) and a complex storyline that rewards inquisitiveness. As an overall gaming experience, I would have no hesitation in recommending *The Inner World*. Although only available for the PC and Mac at this time, versions for IOS and android versions are in the pipeline. ●



BRIGHT MOMENTS:

Listening to Laura's caustic wit.

FUMBLES IN THE DARK:

A couple of puzzles are completely illogical.

VERDICT:

A competent, diverse and entertaining game. Rewards a more considered approach to the complex narrative.



Memoria



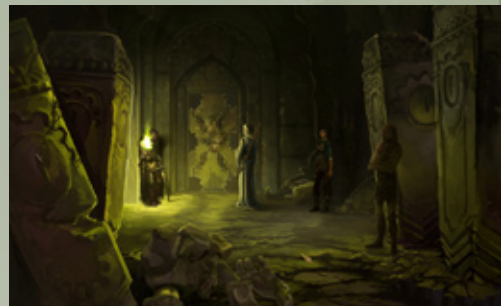
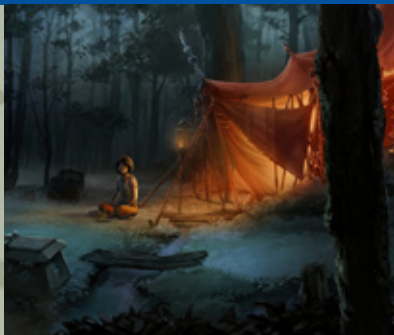
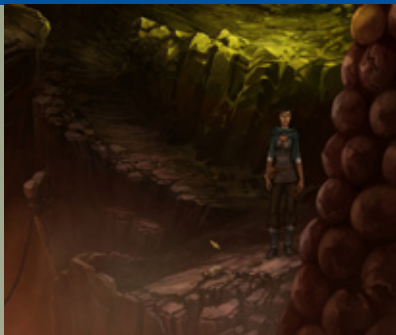
Genre: adventure Developer: Daedalic Entertainment

Publishers: Deep Silver/Daedalic Entertainment Release date: August, 2013

Platform: Windows, Mac Website: www.daedalic.de/en/game/memoria



Geron entered the clearing with a heavy heart. He was a seasoned adventurer, the hero of Andergast. Yet he lacked the power to help his love Nuri, who was trapped in the form of a raven. Geron was searching through the woods, clinging on to a final hope. Somewhere in the forest was a traveling merchant named Fahi. It was said that this merchant was no ordinary man. He had the ability to transform man and beast from one form to another. Perhaps the mysterious merchant could be Geron and Nuri's salvation.



Review by Ugur Sener

The hero of *Andergast* finally found the tent. Fahi confirmed that he could indeed help the young man. In exchange, the merchant asked Geron to help him answer a riddle. Fahi and his daughter had been plagued by recurring dreams about a princess that lived 450 years ago. Princess Sadja of Fassar had once journeyed into the tomb of a great mage on the eve of a grand battle against a mighty demon army. Sadja was traveling with a group of heroes to retrieve the mask of Malakkar, an item of great power. Legends said the mask could alter the course of any battle. It could undo what was once broken. Sadja wanted to bring back the mask and help defeat the

demon army. She did not join the other heroes out of kindness or compassion. Above all, she wanted to be recognized as a hero. She wanted to be remembered.

Yet Geron had never heard of the princess until that night. Why would she enter Fahi's dreams centuries after she went searching for the mask? What was the riddle Fahi so desperately wanted to answer? Geron listened as the merchant told Sadja's tale. Only in solving the merchant's riddle could he hope to save Nuri.

Memoria is a point-and-click adventure game from *Daedalic Entertainment*. The game takes players to the setting of the German pen-and-paper RPG called *The Dark Eye* as you explore Geron and Sadja's stories. Despite a few minor shortcomings, *Memoria* delivers a

very satisfying adventure with an engaging and haunting storyline in a fascinating fantasy setting.

It is worth noting that *Memoria* is a sequel to *Daedalic's Chains of Satinav*. The game continues where *Chains of Satinav* left off, with Geron trying to find a way to transform Nuri back to her true form. However, it is not necessary to be familiar with *The Dark Eye* role-playing setting or the original game to enjoy the sequel. While Geron and a few other characters from *Chains of Satinav* make an appearance in *Memoria*, they have fairly limited roles. The core adventure revolves around Princess Sadja. Geron's quest to transform Nuri only provides an entry point and a framework around which Sadja's story can be told.

The game begins as Geron arrives at Fahi's tent and listens to the beginning





of handling herself amidst her fellow self-righteous adventurers that take her for little more than a dainty princess. It is only toward the end of the adventure that players finally understand why it is so important to Sadjá that she is remembered. Considering the fact that players are told from very early in the game that no one knows about the princess in Geron's time makes her tale all the more tragic and compelling. I found myself genuinely interested in finding out what happened to Sadjá and rooting for her to succeed.

Controlling Geron is also enjoyable. It is very difficult to dislike the kind and caring young man trying to save his loved one. However, the hero of *Andergast* does not get as much character development as the princess. His quest to save Nuri may be the starting point and one of the ultimate goals of the adventure, but the game would probably work just as well with any other hero seeking Fahi with a similar request. Fans of the first game should not go in expecting the next detailed chapter in Geron's life. *Memoria* is Sadjá's story through and through.

While it is not necessary to be familiar with *The Dark Eye* role-playing game to enjoy *Memoria*, it is worth mentioning that the game uses the fantasy setting very effectively.

Do not expect a vibrant world full of magic and wonder.

of Sadjá's tale. From that point, players alternate between controlling Geron and Sadjá. Geron's portion of the game is initially centered on his predicament with Nuri. However, as the game progresses, the focus shifts almost entirely toward uncovering what happened to Sadjá 450 years ago. Overall, the game handles the transitions between the two protagonists very well. The two storylines flow into each other effectively, maintaining tension and urging players to keep playing.

It helps that Geron and Sadjá have such different goals. While Geron is acting selflessly to save a loved one, it seems Sadjá is only worried about achieving fame and fortune. Both characters are very resourceful and resilient, but the mild-mannered nature of Geron contrasts nicely with the sheer willfulness of Sadjá.

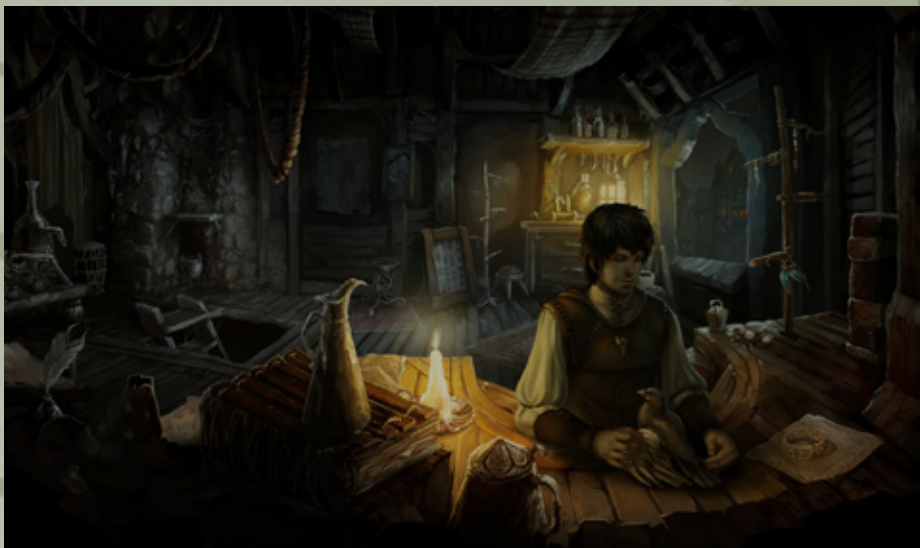
At first, the ambitious princess may seem like a character that is difficult to like. However, her ingenuity and drive to succeed are rather admirable. She is perfectly capable





Instead, *Memoria* weaves a dark and gloomy setting. There is plenty of magic, but there is also a great deal of tragedy. From the onset, players know Sadja was not successful at being remembered. Nobody in Geron's time seems to know anything about her. To make matters worse, Sadja's world is being threatened by a demon army waiting to descent on all mankind. Geron is not in much better shape either. He has to hide the fact that Nuri is a talking raven while desperately trying to find a way to transform her. However, there is a deeper feeling of sorrow that goes beyond the storylines surrounding the two protagonists. Despite the occasional attempt at humor, between the gloomy environments and the haunting soundtrack, there is a sense of sadness that permeates through the game. Even the greatest victory seems to come with a crushing defeat.

Visually, *Memoria* delivers the stunning backgrounds that are essentially *Daedalic's* trademark. Each environment is depicted with a great deal of detail. Whether you are going through the woods, exploring Geron's

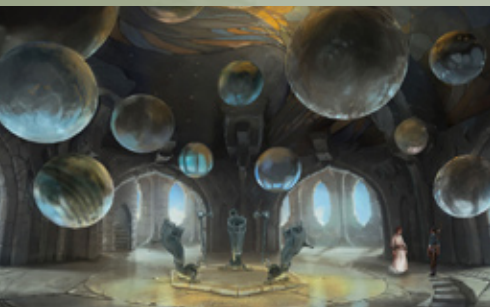


village, or uncovering the mysteries of a flying fortress, the backgrounds remain gorgeous. The art team captures the humble nature of the village and the grandeur of the fortress with equal effectiveness. The character models are also nicely handled. I particularly appreciated the fact that neither Geron nor Sadja have an over-the-top fantasy hero appearance. Their fairly ordinary appearance makes it easier to relate to both Sadja and Geron. It is nice to have a game that distinguishes itself with its

story and gameplay rather than the lead female character's lack of clothing.

The only issue I had with the visuals regarded the movement and speech animations. On occasion, especially when characters were shown walking from one location to the next, the animation was rather choppy, lacking the level of detail that would make the movements seem fluid and natural. Similarly, in the English version of the game I played, the lip syncing seemed





to be off. There were times when the English voice-acting also left something to be desired. Some of the conversation seemed inappropriately flat as though the actors were merely repeating the lines to memorize them rather than actually portraying a character. Fortunately, these animation and voice-acting problems did not substantially take away from the experience and could not overshadow the beautiful environments available to explore and engaging story to uncover.

In terms of controls, *Memoria* is played from a third-person perspective and has a very simple point-and-click interface. You use the left click to interact with objects or other characters and the right click to examine them.

The inventory is accessible at

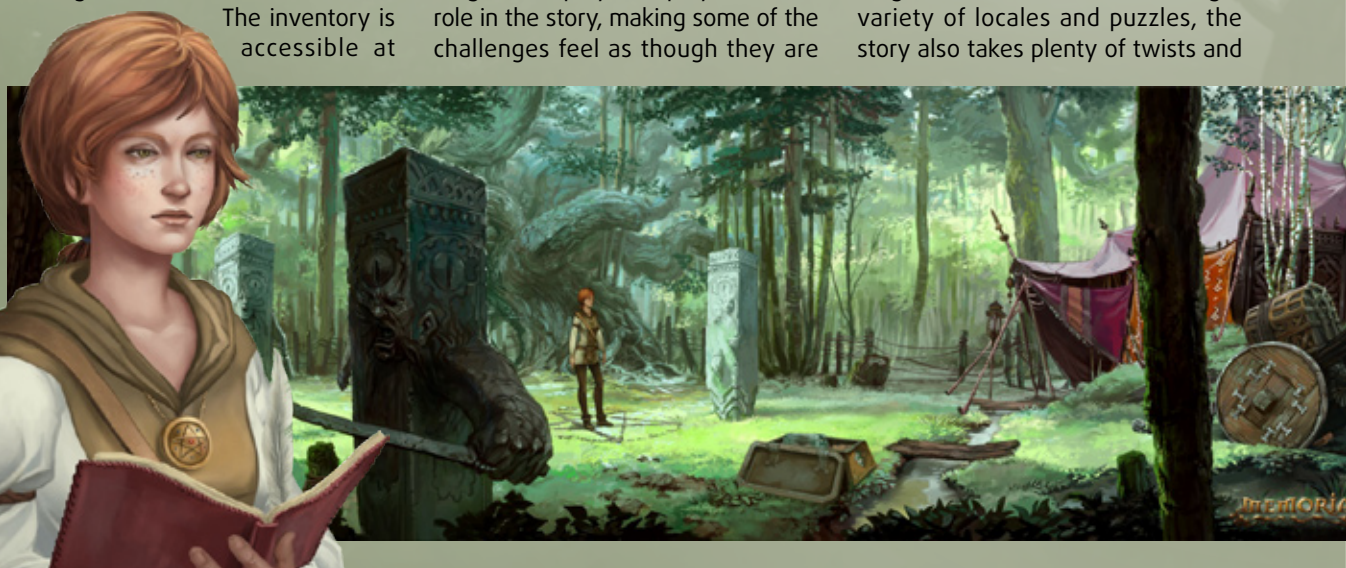
the bottom of the screen where you can combine items or select one to use on an object in the environment. The space bar can be used to highlight all the hotspots and exits on a given screen.

For the most part, the puzzles are inventory-based. There is a nice variety of puzzles to keep players occupied. Since players are generally confined to relatively small areas throughout the adventure, these inventory-based challenges are very doable. Experienced adventurers can expect to get through the game without any assistance from a guide. If you are stuck, the game does offer a hint system that does not provide any direct solutions, but nudges players in the right direction by explaining what you should be trying to achieve.

While the majority of the inventory-based challenges do not exactly break new ground, what stands out about the puzzles in *Memoria* is the ability to use magic. Both Geron and Sadja gain access to a small number of spells through the adventure. These spells are occasionally used in very entertaining ways, making for a few fairly novel puzzles. The magic at display also plays a crucial role in the story, making some of the challenges feel as though they are

natural extensions of the storyline rather than arbitrary barriers that keep you from progressing with the story. One notable exception is the maze encountered during the middle portion of the game. I found it to be needlessly convoluted and insignificant to the overall story. While I was too stubborn to use it, if you take more than a few minutes to navigate the maze, the game does provide the option to skip it entirely. Fortunately, the labyrinth was one of many puzzles and did not significantly detract from the overall experience.

In terms of its length, *Memoria* is very satisfying. It took me around fifteen hours to complete the adventure. While it would be possible to breeze through it much faster with a guide, the entertaining selection of inventory puzzles are well worth the time it will take to solve on your own. The game also covered a great deal of territory during those fifteen hours. Geron's portion is primarily centered on his village, but Sadja travels to a wide variety of locations from the ancient tomb encountered at the beginning of the game to a magical fortress. Besides offering a variety of locales and puzzles, the story also takes plenty of twists and





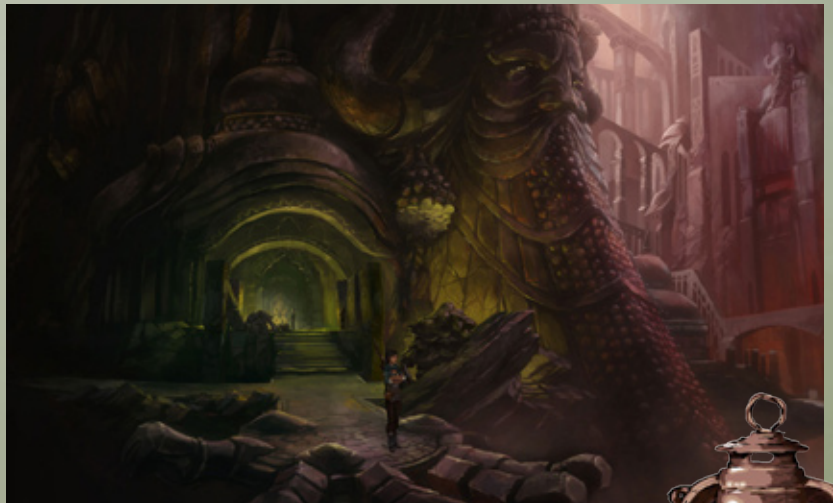
turns to maintain your interest. There are some portions that can feel a little tedious, but on the whole, each place was worth exploring and the game was successful at urging me to keep playing and reach the conclusion.

The ending itself was also rather fulfilling. While the game could have done a better job of developing the two characters who ultimately become Geron and Sadjja's antagonists, the core storylines involving the two protagonists receive satisfactory conclusions. The final segment very nicely explains Sadjja's fate. While the game provides the setup for a sequel, if *Daedalic* chose to never develop another game in *The Dark Eye* setting, for me, the conclusion provided in *Memoria* would be sufficient.

In the end, *Memoria* is a complex game about power, ambition, time, and above all love. It may feature a talking raven and a flying fortress, but do not mistake *Memoria* for a lighthearted fantasy game. It is very much intended for an adult audience. There are some minor issues regarding animations and the voice-acting and a few of the puzzles can become a little tedious. The gloomy atmosphere will not appeal to everyone either. However, when viewed as a whole, *Memoria* is a very solid adventure game and

represents a significant achievement for *Daedalic*. With its engaging storyline, large number of locations to explore, plethora of puzzles to solve, and very effectively realized fantasy setting, *Memoria* is an easy

recommendation to just about any adventure gamer. Consider taking a look even if you haven't had a chance to play *Chains of Satinav*. Sadjja's haunting story alone is worth the price of admission. ●



BRIGHT MOMENTS:

Uncovering Sadjja's tragic tale.

FUMBLES IN THE DARK:

Some of the character animations and voice-acting could be better.

VERDICT:

A beautiful haunting adventure that makes great use of its fantasy setting.



The Raven

Legacy of a Master Thief



Genre: adventure Developer: King Art Games Publishers: Nordic Games/The Adventure Company
Release date: July-September, 2013 Platforms: Windows, Mac, Linux, PlayStation 3, Xbox 360
Website: raven-game.com/

Released as three separate chapters, each one month apart, from July to September of 2013; But sold together, currently for around \$25. *The Raven* was developed by *King Art Games*, and published by *Nordic Games*, under their *The Adventure Company* label. I have to say, I like the pricing, I have come to expect episodic adventures to just be a way to charge two to three times more for a videogame, this is not the case here, and even if it is slightly on the expensive side, it is also slightly on the long side.



Hub, "The Raven's Heir"



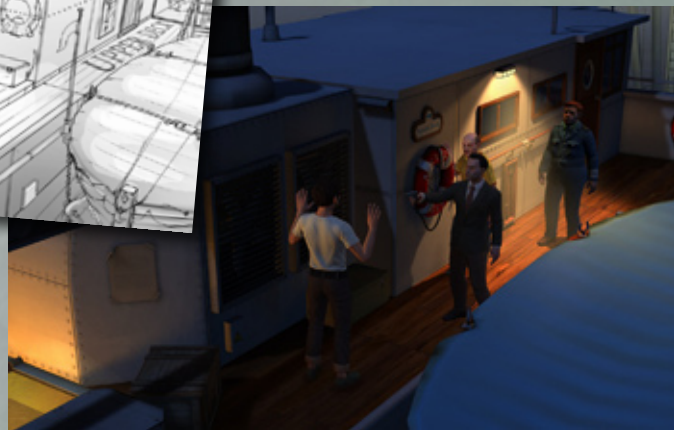
Calm down, I'm a copper. We're on the same side!

Review by Jonathon Wisnoski

The *Raven: Legacy of a Master Thief* is made-up of *Chapter One: The Eye of the Sphinx*, released July 23rd, and spanning around 6-8 hours of gameplay; And *Chapters Two and Three, Ancestry of Lies* (released August 27th) and *A Murder of Ravens* (released September 24th) respectively, each a little over three hours long. I have to wonder why they chose this format; Ninety percent of the story, and over half of the gameplay is concentrated in only the first chapter itself, and this is where most of the enjoyable elements are as

well. If the game was going to be episodic, it also would have made more sense to separate the first chapter into two, as it is twice as long as the others and contains two distinct areas. But this is not what I would of done; Two thirds of the second chapter and all of the last episode take place parallel to the story of the main game; They are unnecessary additions to the story. Specifically, you play straight through the entire story, with the main character, in chapter one and the first third of chapter two; Then you play as two,

hitherto, minor characters, which give you a parallel perspective on the story. Personally, I thought that the only really great part of the game was the main story, and that the parallel arcs could of been completely removed; Personally, I think the game content would have fit better in an (eight hour) main-game plus two (three hour) expansion DLC paradigm, than what they used. As it stands, I am rather annoying in how the final two chapters were so small, while adding almost nothing to the story; And the gameplay does not fare much better, the final chapters are fine, but the first chapter contains loads more charm and polish.





Good morning, Ms. Miller!

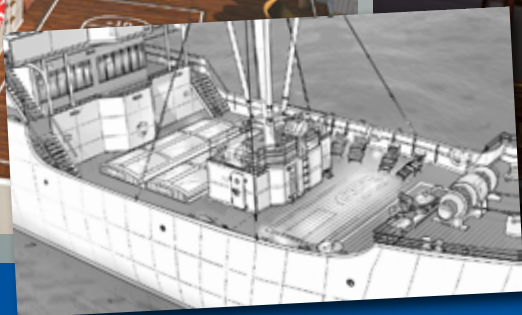
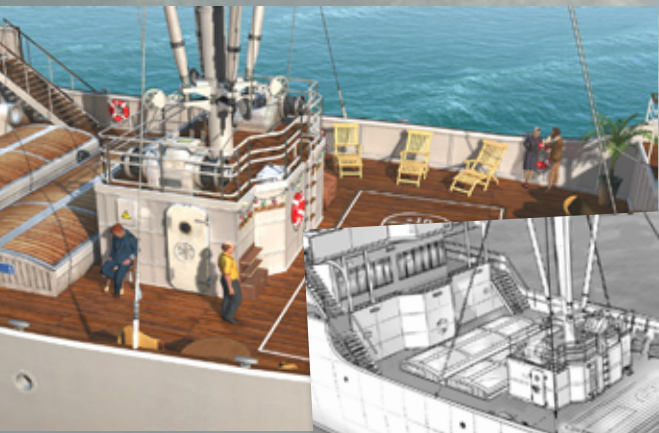


The Raven is set in mid nineteenth-hundreds Europe, first traveling on the Orient Express from Sweden through the Alps, then sailing aboard the a cruise ship from Venice to Cairo. *The Raven* is a legendary gentleman thief who pulled off many spectacular and flawless burglaries; Four years ago he was supposedly killed, but now one of the Eyes of the Sphinx has been stolen, and a raven feather left at the scene. You primarily play Constable Anton Jakob Zellner, on his mission to protect

the remaining eye, which is on a journey to an Egyptian museum. During this adventure, there is a constant and mostly unchanging cast of characters, allowing a classic, ongoing, who-done-it style mystery. It is also, quite obviously, a homage to *Agatha Christie*, with the game even including a characterization of her as a major non-playable character.

The gameplay, particularly the first chapter of it, is very enjoyable, well polished, and even a little innovative.

The majority of the gameplay is inventory puzzles, and you will be finding, using, and combining items the entire game. There is also a moderate amount of dialogue, but most of this is kept away from the dry "where were you at the time of the murder" alibi checking, and instead a lot of it is character backstory, and more general questions/conversation. What I really liked is the optional content, not only are there dialogues you can miss if you do not talk to people at specific times, but



Such an attempt would fail here - the display case is bolted to the floor and weighs several hundred kilograms.



there is at least two instances where some gameplay is optional. There is a little problem with the navigation, as the game uses both interactive areas as well as the occasional "stand in a particular spot to change the view"; The first of these works great, but the second was not done particularly well, and it is strange that it was even used at all.

The Raven is professionally put together. With a great orchestral score; Outstanding voicework, for all the characters and dialogue; And fantastic, detailed, illustrated graphics, alongside dynamic and exciting cutscenes. The engine gets a little weird and overzealous with slightly reflective

surfaces, but other than that I have absolutely no complaints.

The Raven: Legacy of a Master Thief falls slightly short of being an amazing game. It does pretty much everything right, and is polished and quite good in all categories. I love the

story, the presentation and gameplay is fantastic, but the story sort of drags after the first chapter, and everything else goes downhill with it. Still, even at its worst, it is pretty good, and I highly recommend it. ●



BRIGHT MOMENTS:

The optional content really made the first chapter feel innovative.

FUMBLES IN THE DARK:

The last two chapters of the trilogy are just far less polished.

VERDICT:

A great, thrilling, mystery adventure.



Adventure Lantern

