

# Adventure Lantern

## REVIEWS:

- Edna and Harvey:  
The Breakout
- Evoland
- 1953: KGB Unleashed

ISSUE #43  
JUNE 2013



# EDITORIAL

This month we are serving up another issue crammed with adventure gaming goodness. Among all the adventure gaming news, and the reviews, there are two things I want to highlight and add some information to.

The latest game in the classic *Dracula* series, *Dracula 4: Shadow of the Dragon*. This is the worst case of lying by I studio that I have ever seen, as an adventure game reviewer. All of the press releases, that I saw; All of game descriptions on the on store pages, even most of web, I saw a 5 star review of it; Are outright lies, both of omission and the normal variety. *Microids* lies to its customers, and additionally omits facts, which in this case constitutes another lie. And online stores, additionally are just parroting these lies to people who buy the game. All of these lies are tied to one fact that *Microids* is doing its damndest to hide, and I do not even see the truth revealed on many forums or reviews. But the fact remains, *Dracula 4: Shadow of the Dragon* is episodic. It is *Dracula 4*, part 1; It only introduces the plot that it promises, and does not even hint at a few of the plot points in the official story description. It is a three hour game, and if you want to experience the story that was promised to you when you paid \$20 for it, you are in for, probably, two more purchases when they release *Dracula 5* and *6*. The length and story progression in this episode played, at most, like 1/3 of a complete game. I urge everyone who bought this to return it to the retailer you bought it from, I think you have a very good case to get a full refund. Does anyone who bought the game and played it NOT feel ripped of and deceived?

I do not want to end on a sour note where the *Dracula* series is concern. Ignoring this latest debacle of a game, it has to be my alltime favourite game trilogy. In my opinion, it is a must play for all adventure enthusiasts. And for \$5 dollars you can get the entire first three games on a physical disk in a dvd enclosure on [Amazon](#). I personally reviewed all of these games last year in the lead up to Halloween, here are some links to the reviews: [Dracula Resurrection](#), [Dracula 2: The Last Sanctuary](#), [Dracula 3: The Path of the Dragon](#).

More on the bad news front is the closure of *Kheops Studios*, who in fact developed the last *Dracula* game (*Dracula 3*, that is). I go into great detail later in this issue about them, but I never mention my personal history with that studio. I played *Return to Mysterious Island* first, I cannot remember why or where I heard of it. But something about it reminded me of *Syberia*. The two adventures share a common voice actor; Both Kate Walker and Mina are voiced by Sharon Mann. And I think she did a wonderful job in both instances. That might be a significant reason why I love *RtMI*, but it is not the reason I like *Kheops* in general. *Kheops* produced some of the most unique, and most enjoyable games during the last 10 years. I am very relieved that I still have about half of them to playthrough.

– Jonathon Wisnoski

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Cover Image:  
**EDNA AND HARVEY:  
THE BREAKOUT**

**ADVENTURE LANTERN**  
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### The Indie Adventure Bundle

Bundle Stars.com has launched a new bundle for only ~\$3.00 called The Indie Adventure Bundle, which you would think that we could assume means it contains indie adventures. Strangely, half of the titles seem anything but indie, and I do not think that Captain Morgane nor Jack Orlando have been called such before this bundle. Still it is an amazing bundle, and in fact those two games are the reason I bought it and are recommending it, in the first place. In addition to these amazing games, the bundle also includes Shadows on the Vatican I as well as Reversion episode one and two.

## IndieGameStand

### Indie Game Stand

Since I do not think I have mentioned them before, I wanted to point out the great site [Indiegamestand.com](http://Indiegamestand.com). Every four days they offer up a new game for a truly PWYW price. The slider starts at 25 cents, but it is a minimal \$1 for a desura/Steam key, and for a little more they throw in some

extras. They have had some truly great games on the site so far, and it is by far the cheapest way to get individual games, and it is even cheaper on a per game basis compared to many bundles. So far they have featured the first two Cognition titles, as well as a few puzzlers that would appeal to most adventure fans.

### ScummVM 1.6.0

A new version of ScummVM has been released; And with it comes support for 6 games, among other updates. These games are: 3 Skulls of the Toltecs, Eye of the Beholder, Eye of the Beholder II: The Legend of Darkmoon, Hopkins FBI, Tony Tough and the Night of Roasted Moths, The Journeyman Project: Pegasus Prime.



### The Secret of Monkey Island: Insult Sword Fighting

The famous and witty insult sword fighting mini-game from The Secret of Monkey Island is now playable in your browser. The game, taken from both The Secret of Monkey Island and The Curse of Monkey Island has been ported to html4 by a wonderful individual.





### Kheops Studios, A Memorial

I just heard that Kheops Studios silently faded away last year. This is horrible news; In addition to them being my personal favourite studio of all time, I believe they were the most talented adventure game developer of their time. They operated right in the middle of the adventure game depression, and developed a great many games over that time; And just when things are looking up for the genre they go out of business. From what I can tell, they simply could not find any publishers, and their self publishing of their last game did not yield the necessary funds to continue operating, but there has been no official word on the matter.

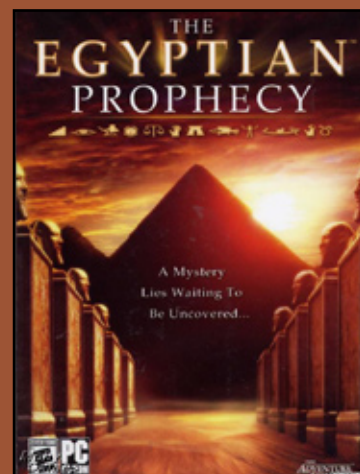
Kheops Studios was founded on September 2003 as a medium sized, 100% independent, adventure game studio. Based in Paris, France and founded and run by Stéphane Petit and Benoît Hozjan, both formerly of Cryo Interactive; Kheops Studio produced adventure games based on historical and literary sources as well as a puzzle adventure and an episodic hidden object game. The studio that effectively birthed Kheops, Cryo Interactive, is the studio that

developed the original RTS Dune, but more pertinently to us also the Atlantis series, the first two Dracula adventures, and whose last game was none other than Salamambo: Battle for Carthage; Among many others. Like Kheops Studios, Cryo Interactive was known for creating adventure games based on existing literary works and historical events; It was closed down in 2002, when it was absorbed by DreamCatcher Interactive. A subsidiary of DreamCatcher, and probably my favourite publisher, The Adventure Company published most of Kheops' games until it was dissolved. Microïds picked up the Cryo Interactive brands and IP in 2008, and used them as a publisher for Kheops for



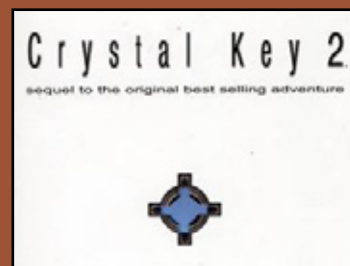
a small number of games. In addition to The Adventure Company and Microïds, Kheops did a small amount of self publishing, through their own web store, as well as using a few other companies. In 2011 they released their last game, and according to LinkedIn the last employees, the founders, left the company in January 2012, and currently all of Kheops' websites are closed down and unreachable.

Kheops Studios describes their own brand of adventure titles as "cultural entertainment", though "historical fiction" might be a more common name for their genre, and edutainment would not be too



### The Egyptian Prophecy (2004)

Praised for its cinematics and accurate portrayal of history, The Egyptian Prophecy (aka Egypt III: The Fate of Ramses) is set in ancient Egypt, in the 12th century BC, and is the very first game developed by Kheops Studios, and was published by The Adventure Company.



### Crystal Key 2 (2004)

One of Kheops' games that does not fit the trend, and controversial because of this. It is a sci-fi adventure and Myst-like; A sequel to Earthlight's and The Adventure Company's most successful adventure yet. It is considered horrible by some, and a great/good Myst-like by others.

far off in some instances. Kheops shows us how entertaining some of the cultural cornerstones of our time can be, regardless of if they are adapting a Jules Verne novel or recreating a real historical setting. Many of their stories are not straight adaptations, but instead unofficial sequels or alternative stories; Sort of what-ifs. What if in Jules Verne's novel series, *A Trip to the Moon* and *Around It*, the space expedition actually succeeded and landed on the moon and found

an alien civilization? What if a modern day explorer found the Mysterious Island from the story of Captain Nemo? What if you were an European Homo Sapien in the Paleolithic period, or lived during and around Nostradamus? What would a sequel to *Treasure Island* look like? Kheops Studio developed games that answer all of these questions and more, as well as providing players with a real appreciation for these works and historical time periods.

Over and above the genre, many of their games share some defining characteristics. They all have good conventional graphics, in a first person panoramic point-of-view, and all seem to have at least one notably unique feature, tailored to that game's specific plot and setting. But the truly innovative and unique attribute that is included in many of their games is the increased use and complexity of inventory based puzzles, to such an extent as to push the genre

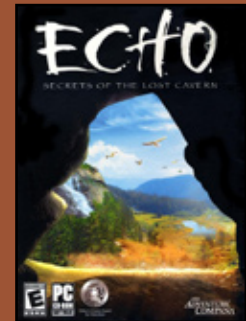


### Return to Mysterious Island (2005)

Probably Kheops' most successful and well known adventure title of all time, and the source of the inventory system and gameplay that Kheops is known for, *Return to Mysterious Island* is an unofficial sequel to Jules Verne's novel *The Mysterious Island*. In it the player returns to Mysterious Island, years after Captain Nemo's adventure there. In the game Mina gets trapped on the island and as she explores she finds the living spaces and technologies left behind by past inhabitants. The game also has a direct sequel developed by Kheops Studio, *Return to Mysterious Island 2: Mina's Fate*.

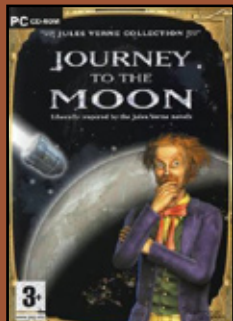
### ECHO: Secrets of the Lost Cavern (2005)

Set in the Paleolithic era, 15,000 BC, where you play a young Homo Sapien hunter. The game is about surviving and living in this time. Most of the game and all of its charm is from doing the mundane tasks of 17,000 years ago; Starting fires, fording rivers, defending yourself, and hunting for food, all without any modern conveniences. In many ways, *Echo* keeps the RtMI gameplay formula, but it is portrayed in a slightly different way.



### Voyage: Inspired by Jules Verne (2005)

*Voyage*, aka *Journey to the Moon*, is an adventure game inspired by the novels *From the Earth to the Moon* and *Around the Moon* by Jules Verne. Unlike the books the protagonist actually makes it to the moon's surface and finds life; Unfortunately, his two partners in adventure are killed during the journey and he does not remember how they came to die as he suffers from amnesia. The plot and challenges revolve around finding out what happened during the trip to the moon, exploring this alien civilization, and returning to earth. The gameplay is, more or less, the same style as RtMI.





to new heights in that area. This complexity appears in many ways in the games' puzzles. For example often there is a large number of items and your inventory is a huge multi-page interface, possibly even to such an extent as to require inventory management; Many of these items can be harvested from the same place, or different places, over and over again and you can have multiples of them in your inventory; Additionally, many puzzles allow multiple solutions,

aka different inventory items can be used to solve them. There is also an extensively used unique inventory item combining and taking-apart system, which allows very complex inventory manipulations, and puzzles that take place completely in the inventory screen.

Many of these puzzles are repeatable, or non-repeatable, mundane tasks, like creating a fire with some kind of combustible and a spark/fire/heat source. These

puzzles are the most intuitive in the industry, and surprisingly entertaining. There is a certain magic to a puzzle that is exactly what you would do in real-life. And the combining and taking-apart system that is standard in Kheops' games allow these inventory puzzles to be something really special and unique. These inventory puzzles are the backbone of most of Kheops' games, but the games also contain many great logic puzzles.

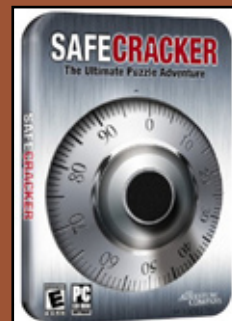


### **The Secrets of Da Vinci: The Forbidden Manuscript (2006)**

Another RtMI-like, in it a young apprentice scholar, Valdo, is exploring the late Leonardo's mansion. He is looking for a secret hidden manuscript of Leonardo's. Along the way Valdo will have to decipher messages and puzzles left behind by Leonardo and repair some of his inventions.

### **SafeCracker The Ultimate Puzzle Adventure (2006)**

Kheops Studios' one and only pure puzzle adventure, and a sort-of spiritual sequel to the 1997 game SafeCracker by Daydream Software and DreamCatcher. The basic premise is: you are in an eccentric millionaire's mansion and it is filled to the rafters with unique and challenging safes, and you must unlock them all. This lack of plot leaves lots of room for puzzles, and SafeCracker does not disappoint. It is full of interesting and diverse mind benders.



### **Destination: Treasure Island (2006)**

A sequel to Robert Louis Stevenson's 1883 Treasure Island novel. The gameplay is generally Kheops' normal affair, with logic puzzles and a strong emphasis on advanced inventory puzzles, But Destination throws in treasure hunting style riddles and even a knot-tying mini-game, to emphasise the game's sailing roots.

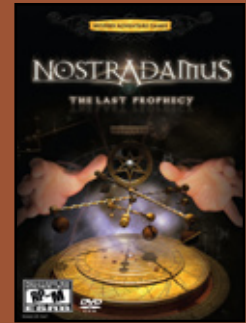


### Cleopatra a Queen's Destiny (2007)

Set in Alexandria around 50 BC, and with a story involving the infamous Cleopatra, of historic Egypt and the Roman Empire. Same RtMI interface.

### Nostradamus: The Last Prophecy (2007)

Set in 1566, you play Nostradamus' 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. As a woman you are not considered capable enough to conduct a murder investigation or a curse; So not only do you she have to investigate the deaths and put a stop to them, but also hide your real identity, as you masquerade as your 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; All wrapped up in Kheops' standard interface and inventory system.



### Dracula 3: The Path of the Dragon (2008)

It is the 1920s and Father Arno Moriani has been sent by the Vatican to investigate a recently deceased potential candidate for sainthood, in a small war scared village just outside of the ancient ruined castle of Vlad the Impaler. The investigation takes an unexpected turn when the body of the saint is found to have the "Mark of Dracula" on it; While the church has already decided that vampires do not exist, and are just a peasant superstition. What follows is his scientific investigation into strange blood disorders, vampire myths, and the strange happening surrounding the death of the potential saint, in this Kheops adventure with their standard interface and inventory.

### Return to Mysterious Island II: Mina's Fate (2009)

A sequel to Kheops most successful adventure, RtMI 2 put you back in control of Mina who never made it off the island in the original game. Continue to explore the island, with the same style of gameplay and interface as the original game.



### The Fall Trilogy: Separation, Reconstruction, Revelation (2009-2011)

An amalgam of the adventure and hidden-object genre's, this episodic series is the last produced by Kheops Studios and was produced exclusively by them. It is more for fans of casual adventures than anything else.



## Announcements



### Armikrog.

I am not sure why this title's name ends with a period, but it does. It is being developed by Pencil Test Studios with an ongoing Kickstarter, that is doing well, and a Steam Greenlight campaign. Armikrog. is a brand new clay-animated point and click adventure game brought to you by the creators of the Neverhood and Earthworm Jim; And it's a spiritual successor to the Neverhood as it's being developed by the same core creative group.

As described by the developers themselves, Armikrog. tells the story of a space explorer named Tommynaut and his blind, alien, talking dog Beak-Beak, who crash land on a strange planet and find themselves trapped within the walls of a fantastic, mystical fortress called Armikrog. Players will need to solve an array of entertaining and mind-bending puzzles to help Tommynaut out of his predicament, and will quickly discover that the epic Armikrog is much more than simply a fortress from which they must escape.

### Harvest

Harvest is a 2D graphical adventure/visual novel compared to Snatcher and Phoenix Wright. It has a Kickstarter running until the 1st of July, where you can pre-order the game for \$20, as well as an ongoing Steam Greenlight campaign.

"In the future, a chemical war took place leaving 99% of the Earth's population unable to produce offspring. The remaining fertile humans are crucial to the survival of mankind, however they begin to disappear mysteriously. You will play as a detective in Detroit working to solve the case and help save the world from human extinction." - GondeFire Productions



which is not too much distant from classical adventure games."

The game is already out in Russian, and completely free. Its current Steam Greenlight campaign is running alongside the development of the English version, which will also be free.



### Mainland

"Mainland is a text adventure game about a traveller of a 19th century, who lives on a ship which entire crew died from plague. The game focuses on an original unconventional story and atmosphere rather than on hardcore puzzles, yet it does feature a gameplay



### The Forest

Recently Greenlit, "The Forest is an open world survival horror game currently in development for PC. Build, explore, survive in this terrifying first person survival horror simulator. Enter a living, breathing forest with changing weather patterns, plants that grow and die. Tides that roll in and out with the day/night cycle. Below ground explore a vast network of caves and underground lakes. Chop down trees to build a camp, or start a fire to keep warm. Scavenge food to keep yourself from starving. Find and plant seeds to grow food. Build a

small shelter or a large ocean side fortress. decorate your home with found items. Lay traps and defenses to keep a safe perimeter."

"Explore and build during the day. Defend your base at night. Craft weapons and tools. Bunker down during the evening or bring the fight directly to the enemy. Use stealth to evade enemies, or engage them directly with crude weapons built from sticks and stones. Defend yourself against a clan of genetic mutant enemies that have beliefs, families and morals and that appear almost human."

### NaissanceE

NaissanceE is a short first person exploration adventure taking place in a primitive mysterious structure, with a planned release date of latter this fall. It is set in a particularly interesting looking works with beautiful architecture on a colossal scale.



### Oknytt

Oknytt is described as "a point-and-click adventure game where the player takes the role of a small, seemingly insignificant creature, leading it through a dark world riddled with obstacles to help it find a place to belong. The game takes place in a Norse medieval world and contains a number of beings and areas inspired by Swedish folklore. Oknytt's gameplay is comprised of

classic point-and-click puzzle solving combined with the usage of four runes located at the bottom of the screen. These runes can be activated at any time to trigger various changes and events in the area around the protagonist."

I am rather divided on the graphics. They looks very stylish in general,

but there are hints of some unpolished areas as well as the whole thing being quite consistently dark.



# Oknytt

### Master Reboot

A psychological horror adventure set in the Soul Cloud and inspired by The Day of the Tentacle.

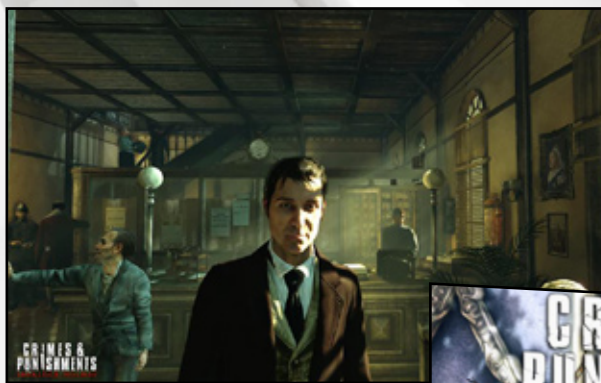
“Welcome to the Soul Cloud. Upload your soul to our dedicated servers and relax knowing that a part of you will live on for eternity. That favourite holiday, happy moments from your childhood, meeting that special someone for the first time. All these memories saved for your digital soul and your family to revisit again and again. The Soul Cloud - saving your past to secure your future.

In the not too distant future, the Soul Cloud has been invented, which is a giant server that holds the data of your soul and memories when you die. The Soul Cloud is filled with floating islands. Each island looks like a town, village or city filled with rooms, skyscrapers and houses that hold people’s memories. To house your Soul, a family member (or yourself before you die) purchases an island on the Soul Cloud where the server will generate living spaces that hold each and every memory from the deceased’s past, or just memories of their choosing.”



### Jacob Jones and the Bigfoot Mystery

The Greenlight page describes this game as: “Jacob Jones and the Bigfoot Mystery is a 3D point and click adventure, layered with brainteasing puzzles to test your mental ability. Use the mouse to navigate the world, interact with crazy characters, find hidden objects and interact with the many puzzles. It’s been likened to Professor Layton but this is a 3D adventure more



akin to Monkey Island, with a unique humorous story written by the Bafta nominated George poles and full voiceover from a cast of professional actors.”

And while it looks rather kiddish, it also looks rather fun. Apparently, the game is already out on iOS and VITA, and what they are working on now, for a second quarter of 2013 release, is a PC and MAC port/remake.



### Sherlock Holmes: Crimes and Punishments

Frogwares’ new Sherlock Holmes title has gotten its first set of screenshots released after its change in graphics engines to Epic’s Unreal Engine 3. In short, it looks quite good.





### Abducted

"Abducted is an action, adventure, mystery, horror game with a focus on a deep storyline, immersive gameplay as well as a mixture of classic adventure game and RPG-

lite mechanics. While all these elements may seem familiar they are combined with intense visceral combat, horrific death, and environmental puzzles, making Abducted a truly unique experience."

It is set to be a six episode adventure, with the first episode released in August 2013, and following episodes at two and a half month intervals. Right now the game is on Steam Greenlight as well as Kickstarter, and you can preorder the whole bunch for \$15.

### The St. Christopher's School Lockdown

Running a Kickstarter until July 11, this upcoming adventure is looking for \$14,000, with an \$8 Kickstarter. This point and click adventure game is set within a British private school and asks the question: "When a political protest turns violent, whose side will you take?". It will be in the form of seven episodes, and is heavily inspired by "recent events



in both the United Kingdom and in Chile, involving massive student demonstrations, rallies and riots."

### Ronnie

A one-person indie adventure, Ronnie is on Steam Greenlight. It is a first person horror adventure game based on demonic possession. The game is designed to "constantly leave you questioning your own sanity as you strive to regain your soul."

Honestly, the graphics look rather rough; But they still look pretty

### The Maker's Eden

Currently on Indiegogo and Steam Greenlight the game is set to be released in three parts, the first of which has a planned September release date. The Maker's Eden is described by its developers in the succeeding paragraphs.

The Maker's Eden is a first-person slideshow style point and click adventure game in a retro-futuristic noir inspired



setting, presented in the style of a motion comic. The focus is on story/narrative and you will learn about the world by talking to characters and examining your surroundings.

Your story begins inside a stasis pod, and you have no knowledge of who or what you are. You have been given no memories, so for all it seems, you are nobody... but why are people after you, and why do they want you dead? Can't give away too much without spoiling, but there's a deep layer of socio-political commentary surrounding your personal story.

decent at times, and who knows how they will improved as the game draws closer to release.

## Upcoming Releases



### The Witness

There has been a bunch of small updates since I last talked about The Witness, under development by the creator of Braid, here; Island snapshots, posters, and trees. They are all looking significantly more polished visually.

### Ether One

Ether One, the upcoming indie adventure by the new studio White Paper Games, has been Greenlit on Steam. Currently the release estimate is for summer 2013, and looks very interesting. You play a Restorer, who travels the minds of mentally ill humans to restructure their broken memories. This world is hand-painted where "science-fiction meets English coastline"



### Moebius

This full length adventure by Jane Jensen, and the first by her studio Pinkerton Road, has gotten its first trailer.

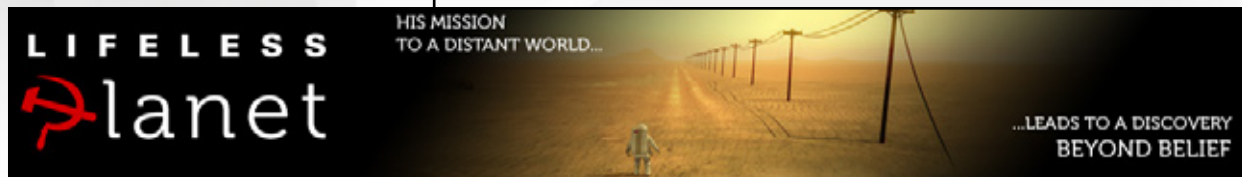
### Lifeless Planet

This one man project, successfully funded through Kickstarter last year, just released a new trailer. The single developer had this to say about his upcoming title:

"My goal with Lifeless Planet is to build a game that puts the adventure back into "action-adventure." I grew up loving games like Out of this World, The Dig, and ICO, and I want to create a gaming experience in the spirit of these true

action-adventure games. Don't get me wrong: 3D is good. Platforming is good. But I love games that combine great graphics with great stories."

"While seeking life on a distant planet, a skeptical astronaut discovers an abandoned Russian laboratory. He suspects his mission is a hoax until a mysterious young woman saves him from a strange and deadly phenomenon."





### Gone Home

AdventureGamers.com has a preview of *Gone Home* written about some advance demo copy. This is the upcoming indie gem being developed by The Fullbright Company, that still does not have a release date more

specific than later this year, about exploring an abandoned house. There is loads of details in this two page preview, and most of it I, at least, have not never heard before.

Most importantly, the setting is not a long abandoned mysterious and unknown house, but your family's house, that you left not more than a year ago. You are a young girl just returning from a one year backpacking trip to Europe, and much of the story is . You need to figure out what has happened in the interim by exploring this empty house.

This leads to two interesting ideas and gameplay concepts. First off, as the author states: "Katie being part of the missing family gives the player implicit permission to do those socially unacceptable things we typically do in adventure games, like rifling through dresser drawers, pocketing items that don't belong to us, and reading other characters' diaries." And it made puzzles a somewhat bad fit. This is your house, you know it, and every door is not guarded by a puzzles, and most doors are not locked. There are apparently no traditional puzzles and it is all exploration.

### Nicolas Eymerich, The Inquisitor

Nicolas Eymerich, *Inquisitor* is an episodic adventure game which puts you in the shoes of Nicalas Eymerich a, real-life, historical Ital-

ian inquisitor, and the main character in Valerio Evangelisti's unrelated science fiction series. In production these last three years, the first episode of Nicalas Eymerich, *Inquisitor*, Book I: *The Plague*, is scheduled for



release on July 2nd.

### AR-K

After a failed kickstarter back in 2012 *Gato Salvaje* did not give up, and was completely willing to continue development. Well they



have met with more success since then and have both a Greenlight campaign ongoing, and a successful kickstarter campaign that raised \$100K. You can still purchase these same pledges direct from the developers website, starting at \$20 for the quadrilogy, or try out the first episode for free.

The following is developers description:

"AR-K is an homage to the classic point-and-click story game with an updated twist. Dialogue and puzzles are the catalysts that move you through the world of the AR-K, an apparent utopia

floating in space, filled with mystery, humor, and suspense.

You control Alicia, an ex-cop turned journalism student who wakes up following a one-night stand with a terrible hangover and a lot of questions. How much did she drink? Did she really take that guy home with her? What was his name again? And what, exactly, is the Golden Sphere, the mysterious object that seems the source of all Alicia's woes? And what was that guy's name again?"

Look for episode 2 to be release next month.



## New Releases



### Cognition Episode 3: The Oracle

The third installment of Cognition, Episode 3: The Oracle, has been released, with the fourth and final being scheduled for late 2013.

When a trail of clues—and bodies—lead Erica to the luxurious Enthron Towers, her post-cognitive powers leave her unable to escape the dark betrayals in its past. The shocking truth about the Oracle's identity is revealed, along with the killer's connection to Erica's own tragic past. No longer sure who she can trust, if anyone, Erica is determined to find the truth, no matter what the cost.

### Syberia iOS Part 1

Big Fish Games has just released the first in a planned trilogy of games which will serve as a port of *Syberia* over to the iOS devices, iPhone and iPad. And what is more, it is completely free. It looks to me like a 1-to-1 translation that uses the exact same graphical assets and gameplay.

Since *Syberia* has always been a little on the easy side; And it is my opinion that it looks better on a screen that doesn't have a huge resolution, like modern PCs; I think this translation has everything going for it to be a fantastic, and quite possibly a better, experience than the PC version. This first part, as you might suppose, apparently comprises the first section of the game; The small remote French village Valadilene.



### Nancy Drew: Ghost of Thornton Hall

Her Interactive has released (on May 14th) another Nancy Drew title called *Nancy Drew: Ghost of Thornton Hall*. Adventure Gamers.com gave it a 3.5, calling it a solid game with fun puzzles. Read the official story teaser from Her Interactive below.

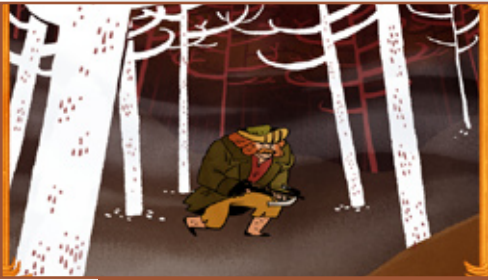
Jessalyn Thornton's fateful sleepover at the abandoned Thornton estate was supposed to be a pre-wedding celebration, but the fun ended when she disappeared. While her family searches for clues, others refuse to speak about the estate's dark past. Did something supernatural happen to Jessalyn, or is someone in Thornton Hall holding something besides family secrets?



### Jack Haunt: Old Haunting Grounds

A point and click pulp mystery adventure where you play a dead private eye. Your goal is to find your remains in the house where you died and investigate the house's dark past. Visit this adventure's hand-drawn locations for over six hours, for only \$5.





### The Yawhg

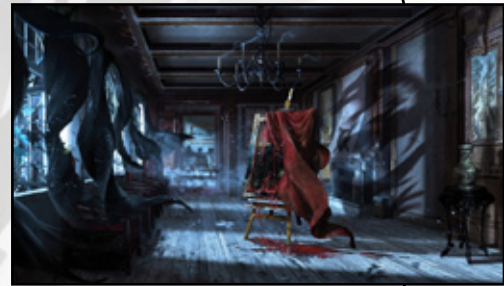
A one-to-four player choose-your-own-(text)-adventure, with a randomized story and great looking visuals. I first became aware of it through Christine Love's blog; The author of Digital: A Love Story and Analogue: A Hate Story, among others; Who never recommends anything, so I thought I had to check it out.



### Dracula 4: The Shadow of the Dragon

The fourth entry in the classic Dracula adventure series was released on June 19th. This is the series that includes the 1999 and 2000 Dracula: Resurrection and Dracula 2: The Last Sanctuary, as well as Dracula 3: The Path of the Dragon. And while The Last Sanctuary ended the story arc that began in Resurrection, while The Last Sanctuary was stand alone with an open ending, allowing future entries, if not with the same protagonist. The story of The Shadow of the Dragon follows Ellen Cross, an art restorer, across Europe on the trail of Dracula himself, and if it has any ties to any of the previous games, I have yet to hear about it.

I am a huge fan of the Dracula series of adventure games, and am very excited about this latest addition. That being said, beyond previous entries in this series being amazing games, Microïds has given me no reason to suspect the same will be true for that title. I found that the screenshots looked OK but (at least for me) are moderately disappointing and worrying;



The trailers show graphics that do not stand up to the previous titles in this illustrious series as well, but I am still tentatively optimistic.

And Microïds has already announced that they are working on a future title for the series, at this very moment. One would assume that this title they speak of is Dracula 5, but they have revealed anything yet.

Having now played Dracula 4: The Shadow of the Dragon I have far more details on it. Dracula 4 is an episodic adventure with about two-to-three hours of gameplay and which costs \$20 on a number of digital platforms. The sequel, Dracula 5 is in the works, and will continue the story of Dracula 4, though Dracula 4: part 2 would be a better name for it.

### Pandora: Purge of Pride

Out now on Desura, and with a Greenlight campaign ongoing, Pandora is a first person puzzle game set in Victorian England based around the story of Pandora's Box. It features a unique hand-drawn art style and custom designed puzzles.

As you recapture the Seven Deadly Sins in the titular box you will gain further powers to solve puzzles.

It started life as a student project that has turned into a full blown commercial adventure after a Kickstarter campaign raised six grand.



## Updated Releases

### The Journey Down

It is over now, but on the 23rd of June the musical talent behind The Journey Down put together an eleven piece band to perform a live rendition of the game's critically acclaimed soundtrack. This live performance was performed in Brighton, UK, but also live-streamed on justjamit.com.



### My Ex-Boyfriend the Space Tyrant

One of the few already released game on Steam Greenlight, My Ex-Boyfriend the Space Tyrant is a gay-themed point and click adventure. By gay-themed they appear to mean a comedy/romance adventure where all the characters are scantily clad buff men. The full game, is already purchasable for Windows, Mac, and Linux for the price of \$22, and a demo if you want to try it before you buy it. Also, We are told that it is a "full length" adventure, so hopefully the content justifies such a large price.



### The Five Cores



### The Five Cores Enhanced Edition?

The Five Cores is a Myst-like, released in late 2012 to OK reviews, I reviewed it myself and it is obviously a game that is lacking polish, but has some great features and a lot of heart. It is back on Steam Greenlight for another go, and there is a new patch that fixed some of the bugs, an enhanced Edition has even been hinted at as well.

On May 25 Neebla Games announced the imminent development of an Enhanced Edition that would improve and add to the story development, with cinematics and books, graphics, and much more. And will be free for all original purchasers. This announcement has since disappeared off of the Neebla Games webpage, without any explanation that I am aware of.





## News From the Big Blue Cup



**Journey (John Freier)** - A quick adventure game made completely on a bus, while developer was being driven to and from work.

**Mutagen (bwintz)** - In this game you play different "mutagens", some creatures created by humans. Follow your way through the game to find the reason why humans created you and live a touching story.

**The Pubicle (Billy Peden)** - As a safety inspector at a Weapons and Tech manufacturing company, every day for Steve Cumin may be his last. With a bioengineered monster on the loose and a homicidal weapons tester making a mess trying to stop it, this particular day is no different. Can you make it out of the U.S. Annihilation building without soiling yourself?

**House of de Sade (slasher)** - De Sade's Children's Home had been closed down after police found murdered children there a year before. The staff of the Children's Home were all sentenced to the electric chair. Since then children are going missing from the grounds of de Sade's. You, Ernest Penrose P.I., sense a need to investigate de Sade's Children's Home in search of the missing children.

**The Can (springthoughts)** - The game invites you to take on the role of a robot abandoned by his human owner. It is half psychological study, half usual point-and-click adventure-style action.

**Adventures of Max Fax 1 (Alexander Kucherenko)** - A cartoon, comedy, point and click adventure. Spend a day and a night as Max Fax in this adventure with colorful cartoon graphics and animation, music, sound effects.

**Gold of the Red Dragon (Scarab117)** - Meet Mongoose Fitch. Loveable peasant and wizard's nephew. There is nothing Mongoose loves more than the princess of the realm, so when the king offers her hand in marriage, our hero must set off on an adventure to become a suitable candidate.

**Coderbattle: Quest for the Whole Game (Freidenker01)** - First AGS Project by this developer. You play as an intern who is asked to create a computer game, without any knowledge of game development.

**The Search for Oceanspirit Dennis (OneDollar)** - Ray has been tasked with tracking down the legendary Oceanspirit Dennis. Word has it he's in the very next city. A comedic storyline, classic point'n'click adventuring, mini-games, a ton of art and animation and an unlockable director's commentary and medal system for performing special actions.

**Adventure Island (elentgirl)** - A light hearted homage to 'point-and-click' adventure games. In the sand of Adventure Island you will find the footprints of games such as Myst, Atlantis, Black Mirror, Syberia, Monkey Island, The Journeyman Project, and many more. Assist a seasoned adventurer, Annie Player, who is tasked to find missing scientists sent to survey a newly discovered island. Soon Annie realizes that this is no normal island...

**Marshmallows Of Everlasting Realms (Luke Calder) [DEMO]** - Help Puff Daddy cross the river to avenge the Marshmallow people from the Fass Cazz.

**Deep Hope (Cleanic)** - Made for MAGS May 2013: Underwater, Deep Hope is a very short game with more than one ending. Help Alex in his quest for the most unbelievable solution. To the bottom of the sea. What exactly dwells down there?

### Pick of the Month: June - The Bum

Help a homeless bum and his talking sock to get revenge for a destroyed ball. The crazy story, brilliant old-school graphics and puzzles will immediately take you to the golden age of adventure gaming.

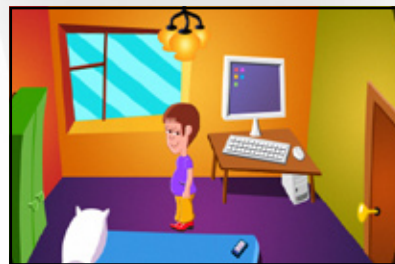
(Chosen by **cat**)



DEAD BOSS QUIT



**House of de Sade**  
(slasher)



**Adventures of Max Fax 1**  
(Alexander Kucherenko)



**Mutagen**  
(bwintz)



**Journey** (John Freier)



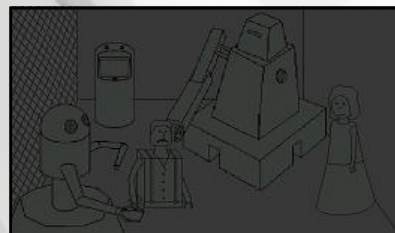
**Coderbattle: Quest for the Whole Game**  
(Freidenker01)



**Gold of the Red Dragon**  
(Scarab117)



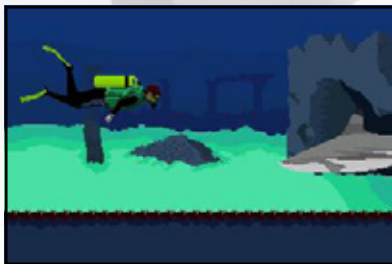
**Adventure Island** (elentgirl)



**The Can** (springthoughts)



**The Search for Oceanspirit Dennis**  
(OneDollar)



**Deep Hope**  
(Cleanic)



**The Pubic**  
(Billy Peden)



# Edna & Harvey The Breakout



Genre: adventure Developer: Daedalic Entertainment  
Publisher: Lace Mamba Global Release date: February 8, 2011  
Platforms: Windows, iPad Website: <http://edna.daedalic.de/index.php>

First released in 2008 as a German university project and the very first game out of what has now turned into an internationally renowned adventure game developer and publisher; It has since received an English translation and release in 2011 and an iPad port in late 2012. Originally, *The Breakout* received many terrific reviews in its native German, but did not make quite the same impression overseas, with many reviewers stating a bad translation as one major factor.

## Review by Jonathon Wisnoski

**T**he graphics of *Edna & Harvey* are extremely rough. They are something that look thrown together in *Paint* quite quickly. But they are consistent, and extensive. I think everyone will necessarily find these graphics vary subpar at first, but their simple charm eventually won me over, and I quite like them. One obviously subpar feature is the



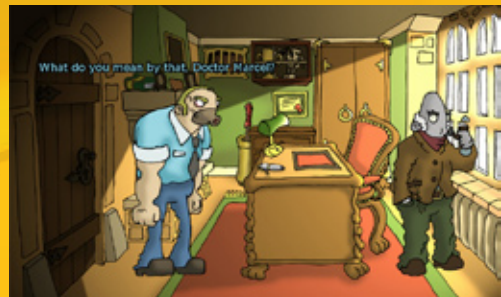




animation; There is quite a lot of animation that is simply incredibly jerky; Too jerky to even understand what they are supposed to represent in some cases.

The only feature of *The Breakout* that I absolutely hate are the controls. They are based on the old fashioned multiple verb button style gameplay (like *The Secret of Monkey Island*), in

this case: walk, pickup, talk, and use. This extra complexity is simply never used in an advantageous manner, and it is implemented inconsistently. These controls just slow everything down, making a simple action take three or more clicks instead of what should've been one; They are simply the worse controls I have ever encountered. Additionally, the loading times are terrible, and the game files themselves come in at around an astounding 4,000MB; Though it is worth mentioning that there are a few rips floating around the internet that will save you a lot of time and bandwidth, specifically



one that through lossless compression brings the game down to 400MB without leaving anything else or changing the game in the slightest.

The game is set in a massive, open, game world. Most of which takes place in a truly huge, six floor asylum and accompanying grounds, which opens up more and more as you progress through the game. You zig-zag throughout this expansive building throughout most of the game; And still have a cemetery and companion large church, and house (each with around ten rooms); as well as a significant road system to explore after you finally escape. All in all, you get a world comprised of well





over one hundred individual and complex locations.

The story and characters of *Edna & Harvey* are quite unique, very enjoyable, and simply funny and twisted. You are a young woman locked in a padded room in an asylum run by Dr. Marcel, and this is your attempt to breakout alongside your blue terry-cloth stuffed rabbit Harvey. Harvey is capable of speech and of tempomorphing Edna into the past to learn specific skills at specific times. Quite quickly you realize that your father went away for the murder of Dr. Marcel's son, but you believe that he is innocent and that Dr. Marcel is both fixated on torturing you and destroying

your memories, as well a hiding a dark secret connected to his son's death and your father's innocence. To accomplish this breakout you will meet many esoteric and downright crazy individuals along the way; Some will be obstacles you will have to overcome, and others will help you on your quest. The story, I guess, is mature, with death, murder, and insanity, but also just a lot of silliness.

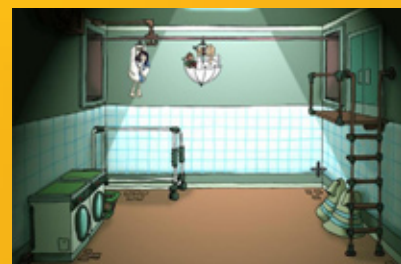
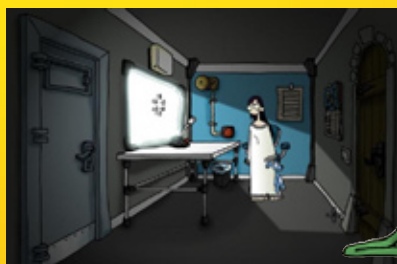
This story is told through loads of voiced dialogue, and while I have read opinions about how it was a bad translation of just tiring dialogue, I did not find it so; Particularly with the large amount of talented voice acting. One



strange addition is that you can use Harvey on all objects, and he will respond with some dialogue. You do not really ever have to use him outside of tempomorphing which only happens twice, but every time I did use him I got quite extensive and unique dialogue, and it seemed quite funny; Which makes me think there might be quite a bit of extra dialogue in the game, for those interested in taking the time to go through it all. Even without counting any of this extra dialogue you have hours and hours of it to listen to, and some pretty large dialogue trees to click through. While it is all well written in my opinion, it is also nice that







they provided an easy and quick way to skip scenes and dialogue, as there simply is so much of it.

The gameplay of *Edna & Harvey* is quite extensive, but not that diverse. There are loads and loads of item puzzles, but the game sticks to just this type singularly. Not that it ever gets boring, there is a wide range of unique object puzzles of every difficulty level, and quite a lot of them are very enjoyable. Some of them are too abstruse, but in general they are quite good. The gameworld, like I

mentioned before, is quite extensive and open; And the gameplay takes advantage of this to allow you to complete most of the puzzles in any order. Some things that you will not need to complete, or even have a reason to do so, can be done far in advance or in any order you choose; Depending on what particular puzzle arc you happen to be focusing on, or just because you happen upon a challenge and solve it. Including the dialogue you are looking at ten to twenty hours for a playthrough,

though it is possible to rush through it in six to eight hours.

*The Breakout* is truly a great game, with interesting challenges and a terrific story; Beautifully conceived and delightfully realised. A lot of games advertise themselves as styled after the classical adventures of *The Secret of Monkey Island* era; *Edna & Harvey: The Breakout* comes a whole lot closer than most, in my opinion, to this high pedestal. ●



**BRIGHT MOMENTS:**

Its delightful, charming, and darkly twisted story.

**FUMBLES IN THE DARK:**

The controls are the worst I have ever encountered.

**VERDICT:**

A great classically styled adventure.





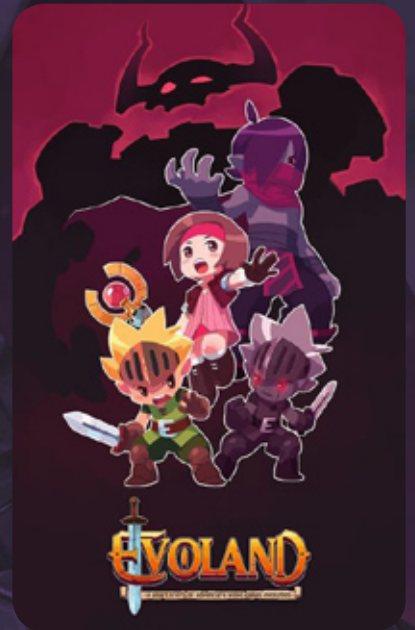
# Evoland



Genre: action-adventure/RPG Developer/publisher: Shiro Games

Release date: April 4, 2013 Platforms: Windows, Mac

Website: <http://evoland.shirogames.com/>

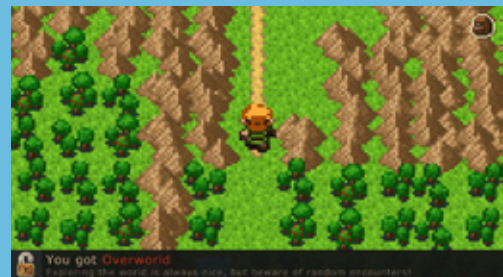
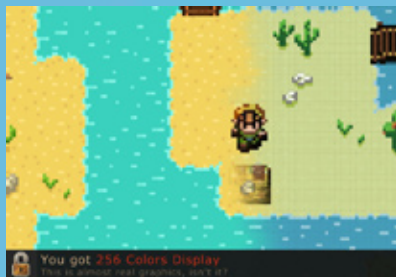
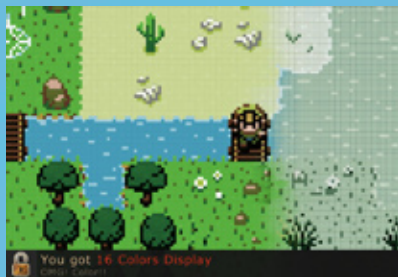


*Evoland* is supposed to be a nostalgic tribute to classic action/adventure/RPGs like *Zelda* and *Final Fantasy*. The gimmick, here, is that the game progressively "evolves" from the historic roots of video games up to something more modern. The gameplay begins at its most basic, with visuals reminiscent of the original GameBoy; as you play, you unlock extra mechanics (like background music, health meters, save points, etc) and watch as the graphics steadily upgrade themselves to that of the early GameCube. It's an intriguing premise that does manage to kindle nostalgic memories of fonder times, but is the game itself any good?

## Review by Nick Burgener

Unfortunately, the full game experience doesn't quite deliver on the great potential of the premise. We've all replayed some of our favorite games hoping to relive childhood passions, but the problem with *Evoland* is that it merely reminds us of other games, without offering much substance of its own. That's good for jogging fond memories (which is without a doubt





fairly low-hanging fruit), but the experience rarely transcends simple nostalgia. It's basically like the game is trying to stand solely on references without having its own unique stamp to tie everything together. Don't get me wrong -- the "evolution" gimmick is very unique, but that's not enough to carry the weight of a \$10 game.

The main issue with *Evoland* is that the bulk of its gameplay feels rudimentary and rote. Taking its main influences from *Zelda* and *Final Fantasy*, different sections of the game alternate between *Zelda*-style top-down dungeon crawling with real-time combat and *FF*-style world map navigation with turn-based combat. These gameplay styles capture the basic feel of each game but ultimately feel like lame, underwhelming imitations that just don't come close to capturing the magic of playing an actual *Zelda* or *Final Fantasy* game. The turn-based combat, for instance,

follows the "active time" system where you wait for a gauge to fill up before selecting an action, but there's literally no depth to the combat system besides selecting "attack" until you win, which makes these portions of the game pretty boring.

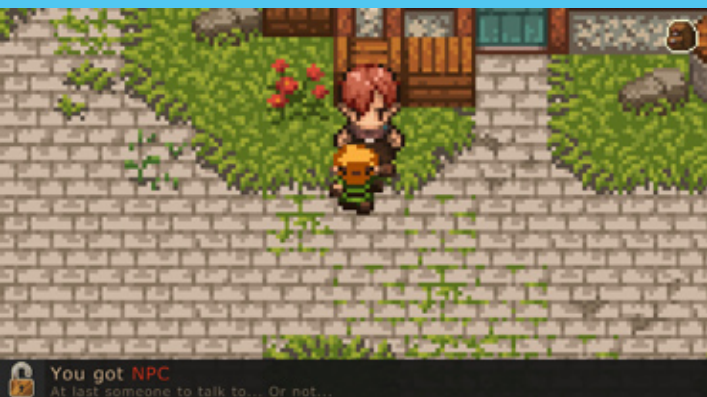
There's one sizeable portion of the game, for example, where it turns into a *Diablo*-style hack n' slasher, with enemies coming at you in swarms and dropping piles of gold and random loot. It looks like *Diablo*, but it doesn't implement the gameplay mechanics in a wholesome way. Dropped loot is automatically equipped, and there's only one item to be found for each equipment slot, so you don't get the satisfaction of managing your inventory and playing with different types of gear -- the stuff that made playing *Diablo* actually fun. As it is in *Evoland*, you just mash the attack button over and over again until you reach the boss. The loot itself doesn't

even provide worthwhile bonuses to your character; it's just there to parody or make reference to other games and mechanics in the flavor text. And at that stage in the game, all the gold you collect is basically worthless, too.

Furthermore, mechanics don't carry over from one game "type" to another. When you're in the *Final Fantasy* random-encounter, turn-based combat sections, you earn experience points towards leveling up -- but these stats become completely irrelevant once you enter a *Zelda* section. Weapons and items you unlock in the *Zelda* section (like bombs or the bow and arrow) can't be used in conjunction with *Final Fantasy*'s turn-based combat or in the *Diablo* hack n' slasher combat. The effect is to make each section of the game feel somewhat fleeting and trivial, because there's barely any continuity between them. The game comes off feeling like a bunch

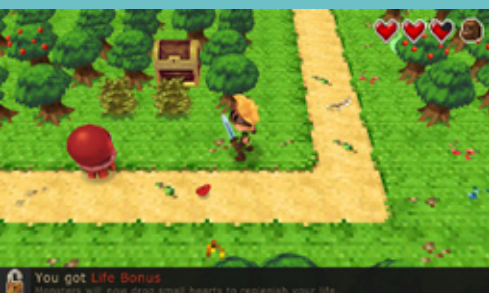
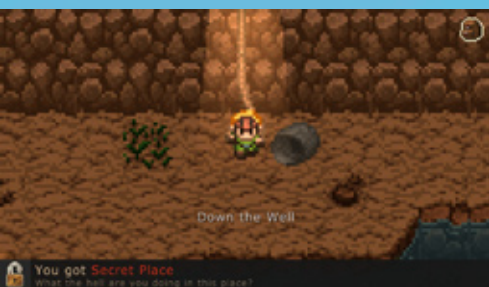






of random ideas mashed together without any glue to hold it together.

The first half of the game lacks any real form of imperative, because it doesn't give you any kind of set-up,



story, or goals. The early gameplay basically just amounts to wandering to the next available space and opening treasure chests along the way, which introduce the new gameplay mechanics and upgrade the aesthetics as you go. There's no incentive to keep going, except to see what new thing will be introduced with the next treasure chest. As neat as it is to see the game progressively build itself up from basically nothing, I feel like the experience could've been more enjoyable if the game had a little something more going on.

The actual "story" doesn't really begin until the game's finished establishing all of its most essential building blocks (roughly 1-2 hours into the experience), but the story isn't enough to rustle anyone's interest. Like the gameplay, it feels rudimentary and rote; it's there out of necessity, not because there was an actual story that wanted to be told. While exploring the world map, you rescue a young girl who then takes you to her village. Once there, you learn that the town's been devastated by an evil villain, whom you must stop. From there, you have to go to two different dungeons to collect two halves of an amulet to gain access to a tower to fight the boss. It's incredibly

basic, and since the characters have no personality it's hard to actually care about what's going on. It's just going through the motions.

The most interesting aspect of the game's evolution gimmick is that it makes you appreciate features and mechanics that we've come to expect and now take for granted. Playing the early portions of the game, I was reminded of how primitive combat was in the original *Legend of Zelda* and *Link's Awakening*, when you could only move in four directions along the square grid patterns. Once I'd unlocked free movement -- the ability to move off the grid -- combat became so much more feasible. Likewise, in the beginning you reach a game over screen after taking a single hit from an enemy -- something typical of early *Nintendo* games -- and so it was an immense pleasure finally to have a health meter once I'd unlocked it.







The other particularly neat spot with the evolving graphics comes when you get the ability to time-travel. Time-traveling between past and present was a big mechanic of *Ocarina of Time*, but what's unique about time-traveling in *Evoland* is that you travel between gaming eras. You end up switching back and forth between full 3D visuals and classic 2D graphics, and use the differences between the two eras to solve puzzles and navigate throughout the world. That's a pretty cool mechanic, but unfortunately like the rest of the game's elements, once you're through with that particular area, the time-traveling mechanic never comes back.

The game isn't very long, either, which makes it a little harder to justify the asking price. It took me four hours to beat the game with a 92% completion rate. The completion rate is sort of like *Metroid*, based on how many hidden stars and trading cards you acquired, but that's the only replay value the game has -- backtracking through a dozen areas you've already cleared searching for bomb spots you saw and passed a long time ago, but didn't have access to bombs at the time. Before facing the final boss I went around looking for new areas, but just didn't have the willpower (or the desire) to go for 100% completion. Of course, the four hour length is a bit of a blessing, because with how crude most of the

gameplay is, the game might have gotten stale and tedious and worn out its welcome if it were much longer.

The bottom line for *Evoland* is that it's an interesting idea, but it doesn't reach its full potential. Nostalgia is a powerful thing, and the similarities and references to beloved titles like *Zelda* and *Final Fantasy* may be enough to make the game enjoyable for some gamers, but I feel like *Evoland* needs to transcend the nostalgic references and do something unique and worthwhile on its own in order for it to be considered a truly great game. It's a quality product that deserves praise for the effort that went into it, but I just didn't have as much fun with it as I thought possible for such a wonderful gimmick. ●



### BRIGHT MOMENTS:

The central evolution gimmick is great, and the *Zelda* dungeons are pretty fun as well.

### FUMBLES IN THE DARK:

Most of the gameplay feels rudimentary, and the story is almost non-existent.

### VERDICT:

A decently enjoyable game that never quite goes above or beyond the games it's referencing.



# 1953: KGB Unleashed



Genre: adventure Developer: Phantomery Interactive Publisher: UIG, CP Digital  
Release date: July 6, 2012 Platform: Windows  
Website: [http://www.phantomery.ru/index\\_en.html#projects](http://www.phantomery.ru/index_en.html#projects)

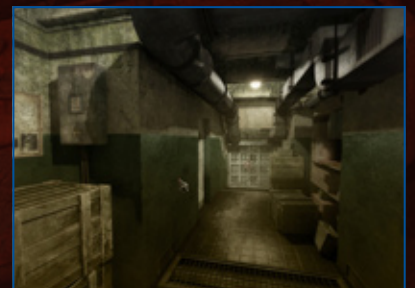


Developed by *Phantomery Interactive* and first released in early 2010 in Russian, *Phobos: 1953* has finally been released to English audiences. *Phantomery Interactive* first became known for *Outcry*, a graphical first-person adventure with a unique graphical style, which was released in 2008. *Phobos: 1953*, or *1953: KGB Unleashed* for its English release, follows *Outcry* with stylistically similar graphics, story, and gameplay; You could tell that it is made by the same company, even if you were not told, but it is at the same time a very different game. *Phobos* is a rather small game, made to take a moderate length because of difficult puzzles and abundant reading; But the storyline is extremely short, and the content is very limited. There are only a handful of puzzles (and I can count the number of major memorable ones on a single hand), alongside very minimal story progression and a limited number of locations.

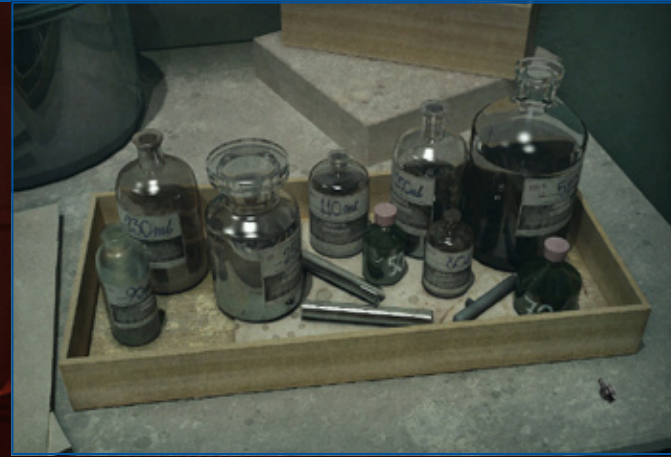
## Review by Jonathon Wisnoski

**Y**ou wake up in an abandoned facility beneath cold-war era Soviet Moscow. Everything is dark and lit only with the few red emergency lights. You are an electrician working for the Ministry of State Security, but have no idea

what is going on or what happened. As you explore progressively more of this facility you learn that it was a paranormal KGB research facility, where they conducted dangerous psychic and paranormal tests on human subjects. As you explore this research bunker you unravel more and more of this facility's dark past, and travel into darker and







creepier locations. This story is told mostly through numerous reports and other writings, with the cutscenes used to set the mood more than to divulge information. Overall, the game tries, and succeeds, in keeping a deep atmosphere of mystery; And expertly it interweaves just enough information and answers, without giving too much away. The game ends very abruptly, but at the same time satisfactorily; It is a very intriguing and enjoyable, while leaving just enough shrouded in mystery.

The gameplay meshes object puzzles with logic. Overall, I thought that these puzzles were enjoyable, but they had me reaching for a walkthrough on at least a few occasions. At least once, when I consulted a walkthrough, the solution turned out to be something that I really do not think I ever would have guessed. Not so much that the

hints were not there, for this particular puzzle, but that the solution did not really seem to mesh with the gameworld and story. So they are tricky, and sometimes frustrating, but even when you give up and consult a walkthrough they are still enjoyable. There is not a single puzzle that I just hated, and which lessened the experience, and many, if not all, of them add to the experience.

One thing I liked is how open some of the puzzles are. The hints for some of the puzzles are not always distinguishable from background information and it is not always obvious where or what your next obstacle is. Most of the puzzles are not just here as a locked door, or a machine that is not working; They feel slightly more natural to the environment and story, and less linear than some in the genre.

The graphics are good; Not terrific or overly beautiful, but they fit the

style of the game very well. They are hard to describe, being generally realistic, but with some very slight, understated stylistic elements. In some places it is a very dark game, and particularly in the beginning the game can be simply impossible without the correct brightness setting. One other technical issue to watch out for is an optional graphical filter/effect, which is off by default and for good reason, as it makes reading some of the text very difficult.

KGB Unleashed is an interesting little adventure, that in my opinion is worth experiencing. The game mixes decent graphics, decent gameplay, and a decent story, all with slightly unique elements, to create a good adventure. Expect around 6-8 hours for a single playthrough. ●



**BRIGHT MOMENTS:**

The mysterious atmosphere and story.

**FUMBLES IN THE DARK:**

The abrupt ending.

**VERDICT:**

A decent short adventure title.





# Adventure Lantern

