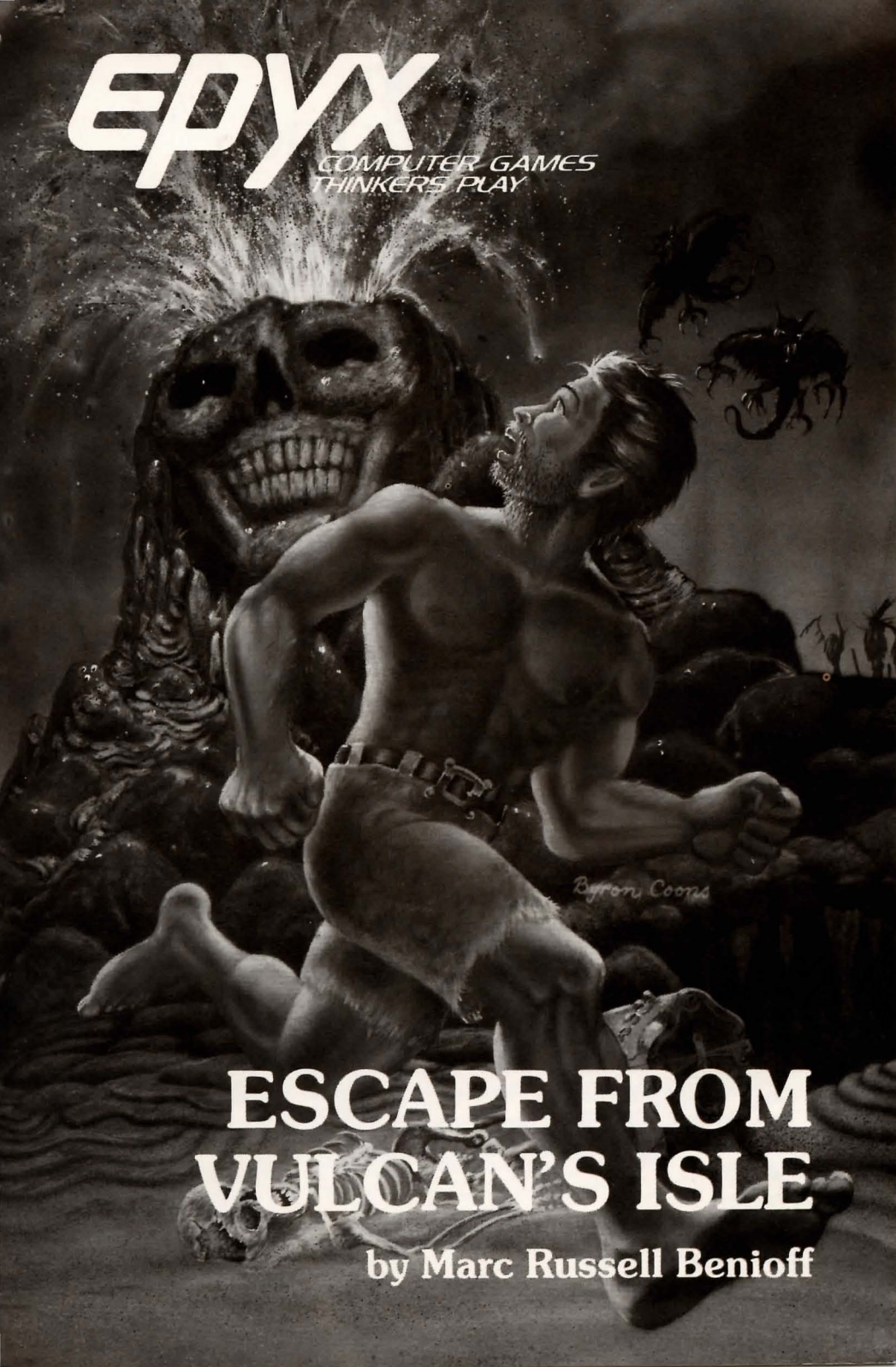


EPYX

COMPUTER GAMES
THINKERS PLAY



ESCAPE FROM VULCAN'S ISLE

by Marc Russell Benioff



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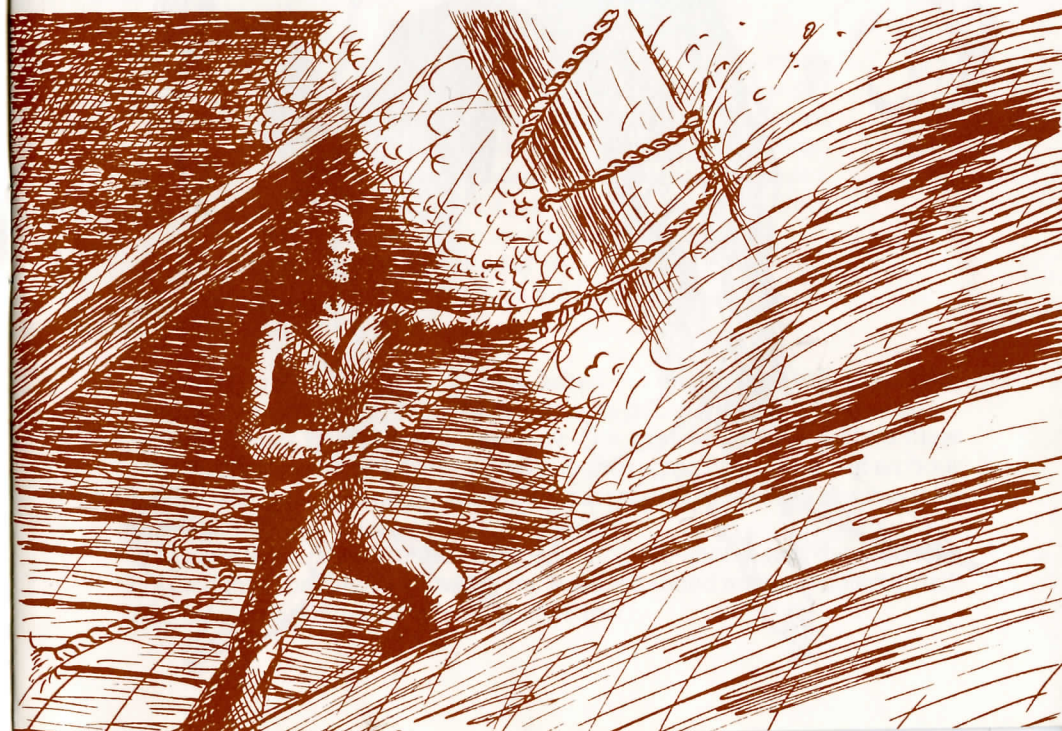
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SHIPWRECKED . . .

*"I don't expect no bloomin' tears;
The only thing I ask
Is something for a monument
In the way of a whiskey flask."
—THE GHOST STORY by Max Brand,
Adventure Magazine, 1934*

The first thing that I heard was a faint growl, far off in the distance. I raised my head. Tried to open my eyes. The light was intense! Not more than twelve inches away from my nose, a monster stared at me.

My vision cleared. The monster was only a tiny sand crab who quickly scuttled away. I was lying on a warm, sand beach . . . empty of people or any signs of human inhabitants . . . barren except for rocks, driftwood or seaweed scattered here and there. Overhead, the tropical sun . . . a hot, ball of fire. Behind me, the sea . . . a cool, blue-green rolling blanket, occupied only by distant whitecaps.

Suddenly, the sand trembled, gave an eerie sigh. Was that a warning?

In front of me, about two hundred yards away, started a lush jungle. Behind it, green hills rose up to become rocky pinnacles. And behind everything, a black conical mountain towered over the landscape. A thin whisper of smoke drifted lazily from its crown.

The sand shuddered again. Holy mother, that volcano's active! WILL IT BLOW UP BEFORE I CAN ESCAPE?

"VANCOUVER! VANCOUVER! This is it . . ."

With those words—tinged with excitement rather than panic, hearers said—David Johnston, geologist for the United States Geological Survey, announced the end of calm and the start of cataclysm. Thirty-year-old blonde-bearded David was stationed at a USGS camp called Coldwater II, six miles from Mount St. Helen, to monitor eruptions.

Those words were his last.

*—From the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC,
January 1981*

I stood up . . . stretched . . . joints ached . . . muscles felt stiff. Last night, hard to remember . . . wild storm . . . ship pitching every which way . . . gigantic waves breaking over the bow. The captain and the second mate took to the lifeboat and disappeared into the raging fury about half an hour before. Wanted me to go with them. Told them that I'd take my chances with the ship.

I was lashing myself to the mast, just tying the knot, when the schooner crashed into something. Instantly my head exploded as some object struck me. Couldn't remember anything after that.

NOTHING CAN describe the confusion of thought which I felt when I sunk into the water; for though I swam very well, yet I could not deliver myself from the waves so as to draw breath, till that wave having driven me, or rather carried me, a vast way towards shore, and having spent itself went back, and left me upon the land almost dry, but half dead with the water I took in.

—ROBINSON CRUSOE by Daniel Defoe,
pub. 1719

Looked up and down the beach. No captain, second mate, or any wreckage. Took a deep breath. Thank god, I survived!

Studied the scene before me . . . the dense jungle, capped by tall palms . . . the miles of hills . . . the black volcano. Nothing: not a trace of a campfire, village or any other signs of humans.

Oh, there was life out there! Plenty of life! Could hear the weird squawks of exotic, tropical birds . . . detect the rustle of leaves and stealthy movement in the thicket along the beach.

A twinge ran through my gut. Been on hundreds of different islands in the thirty or so years that I've bummed around the South Seas. Visited many, many weird ports of call; but, somehow—somehow, this place was stranger than any of them!

*Fifteen men on The Dead Man's Chest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the devil had done for the rest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!
—Old Sea Chanty*

Then the beach started shaking, like it had St. Vitus Dance, nearly knocking me off my feet. Followed by a deep, ugly roar, coming from the center of the mountain. I glanced up, just in time to see a huge cloud of dirty grey ash and smoke burst out of the volcano.

Braced myself . . . expecting the worst. The cloud climbed miles high and spread out over the island. Slowly it dissipated into a bilious green haze, turning the sun into a dim orange ball. Gradually, the gushing cloud became a whisper of smoke and there was an uncanny silence.

The birds stopped singing. Nor could I hear the wind blowing through the palm trees. A hush fell over the landscape. The world stopped and was waiting . . .

Frozen in place, I stared hard at the volcano's crown . . . choked on the pungent odor of sulfur and the rain of dirty ash. The longer I stared, the more it appeared to me that just below the rim of the volcano was a crudely formed, colossal skull.



Not sure why. Maybe it was the way the sun shone through the murk, casting funny shadows. Maybe some forgotten race had managed, somehow, to transform the mountain top into a gigantic sacrificial shrine. Or, maybe it was a fantastic joke by Mother Nature, the product of a thousand years of vomiting out the depths of Hades: but, it sure looked like a skull head to me.

Two huge cave openings formed sightless eye sockets on either side. Just below, in the middle, a craggy protrusion fashioned the bony base of a nose. And beneath, sharply pointed ridges of black rock spread out like monstrous teeth.

Most horrifying of all, it seemed to be grinning. Demonically smirking at me, chuckling at my unfortunate fate . . . shipwrecked and cast upon this godforsaken shore.

"Damn you," I thought. "You can't laugh at me, you heathen devil!"

Anger swelled in my chest. I raised my fist and started to yell, "DAMN YOU—I'M NOT BEATEN . . . I'LL GET OFF THIS ISLAND!" when suddenly the beach shook again, the mountain rumbled once more, and a fresh cloud of smoke and ash, twice the size of the previous eruption, blasted forth.

Satan had read my mind! Beaten me to the punch! HOLY MOTHER, WHAT SORT OF UNGODLY HELL HOLE WAS I IN?

And as he, who with panting breath has escaped from the deep sea to the shore, turns to the dangerous water and gazes. —Canto I

*Unless, before then, the prayer assist me which rises from a heart that lives in grace: what avails the other, which is not heard in heaven? —Canto IV
—From DANTE'S INFERNO*

I shook my head to clear the cobwebs—break the spell. No time to stand around and gawk. That damn thing could blow me and the whole island to kingdom come, while I'm just standing here.

Started running north along the beach looking for a path through the jungle. Gotta keep movin'. Find somethin' to get me out of this place.

As I ran I got that strange sensation . . . the one you get along the back of your neck, when you sense that someone or something's watching you. Animal? Native? My crewmates? Naw, couldn't be them . . . they'd yell the instant they recognized me.

Although most of my attention, as I ran, was toward the jungle immediately to my left, I couldn't help glancing, every now and then, back over my shoulder. It was during one of those brief looks that I saw it. That face! Red-rimmed eyes, yellow fangs, tufts of black-grey hair jutting out . . . peering at me between two giant palm leaves.

It was half-human, half-beast . . . the most gruesome, unholy apparition that I've ever witnessed! I ran faster.

GOOD GOD, WHAT WAS STALKING ME?

I could have imagined I was already dead and in another world. The dark hut, these grotesque dim figures, just flecked here and there by a glimmer of light, and all of them swaying in unison and chanting:

"Not to go on all-Fours; that is the Law. Are we not Men?"

"Not suck up Drink; that is the Law. Are we not Men?"

"Not to eat Flesh or Fish; that is the Law. Are we not Men?"

"Not to claw Bark of Trees; that is the Law. Are we not Men?"

"Not to chase other Men; that is the Law. Are we not Men?"

—THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU by H.G. Wells.



HOW TO PLAY ESCAPE FROM VULCAN'S ISLE

Ever walk along a stretch of empty beach, when there was no one else around, and imagined that you were marooned on an uncharted island?

You did! WOW . . . think of the dangers you faced . . . cannibals, ferocious beasts, hostile environment, and hazardous challenges!

Imagine searching for lost treasures, exploring jungles, pagan tombs and subterranean caverns! But, how were you going to get off that deserted island before you either starved to death or were killed by the vicious inhabitants?

If you like adventure, intrigue, and danger, first read these instructions, then TURN ON YOUR COMPUTER.

1. GETTING STARTED

SHIPWRECKED on an uncharted island, you're being attacked by winged demons . . . threatened by an explosive volcano, AND HUNTED BY FLESH-EATING MONSTERS!

Begin the game by plugging a joystick into Port #1. Then follow the Game Loading Instructions enclosed with this game. Answer the prompts as they appear. When the main program displays, you will see yourself as a tiny figure surrounded by a black background representing the island bordered by a blue ocean.

You move by pushing your joystick in the direction you wish to travel. The island has different sections and levels. Follow the Game Loading Instructions when you come to and wish to enter a new section or level.

HELPFUL HINT: The first time you explore the island, it might be helpful to draw a rough map of each section or level, before going to the next. It will save you time if you return to that particular area.

If you attempt to enter the ocean the computer will respond with, "YOU CANNOT SWIM!!," and reject you.

As you explore the island you will discover treasures and certain magic objects. Collect all that you can find. You collect them by positioning your figure immediately adjacent to the treasure or object. The computer will tell you what you have found.

The treasures are gold pieces. They will increase your power and your ability to fight off the monsters. The magic objects are items that you need to collect in order to enter and pass safely through certain sections or levels.

HELPFUL HINT: Rumor has it that an old sailor, named Alcemnon, once lived on the island. Alcemnon kept a diary. That diary might help you escape.

Where did Alcemnon hide the diary? Possibly deep in one of the caves. Before you can explore them you will need something to help you search their darkness. You may wish to start in the Forgotten Village.

2. YOUR OBJECTIVE

ESCAPE FROM THE ISLAND BEFORE YOU EITHER STARVE TO DEATH OR ARE SLAIN BY ONE OF THE GRUESOME INHABITANTS!

Your first objective is to stay alive until you can find some way to rescue yourself. Collecting gold pieces builds your strength and power.

Your second objective is to find Alcemnon's diary. Reading it will tell you where to search for the other magic objects you need in order to find your way to safety.

3. WHAT TO AVOID

As you explore the island, you will meet and have to overcome many nasty menaces, such as the HARRISES, the SATYRS, the GIANT MED FLIES, the GUARDS, and the WINGED DEMONS.

First, try to avoid allowing one of the monsters to kill you. These unpleasant surprises are a constant threat. They tend to hang around the main passageways and entrances or exits along your trail. They will attack you every chance that they get. You have one advantage—the computer warns you every time one is near.

When one attacks, you have the option of either doing battle or fleeing. If you flee, you will suddenly find yourself back where you started from at the beginning of the game.

The Good News is that you escape with your life and keep all the power, gold, objects that you have collected up to that point in the game. The Bad News is that you will have to retrace your steps in order to get back to the place where the monster caught you.

If you choose to fight the monster, follow the computer's instructions. They are self-explanatory. The computer calculates your power versus the monsters' and determines the winner. If you're slain, you will be given the option of "Reincarnation." Choose it, and you will be back at the start of the game. But you are starting new and lose all the gold, power, and objects that you collected before you were slain.

HELPFUL HINT: During the early stages of the game, while your power is low, it might be prudent to avoid battle with any of the monsters altogether. Your chances of winning are less at that time.

Also, try to avoid walking through the mountains, and walls. You can't! The computer sounds, "BANG!" and prints out, "OUCH!!!" Then you will have to back up, in order to continue your journey.

4. KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR STATUS

Every so often, the computer will display your status: the length of time that you've been playing in days, and your power. The longer you stay alive and the more treasure you collect the greater your power.

Any time you press **I** on the computer keyboard, the computer will display your Inventory: the objects and gold that you've collected, your power, and the length of time that you've survived.

Any time that you wish to stop playing, but wish to continue the present game at a later time, type **S** on the keyboard. The computer will save your game in a special file. You then will be able to continue your game again at the point where you left it. But, be warned: when you use this save feature it also erases any old game previously stored in that special file.

5. ADDITIONAL HINTS —KEYBOARD COMMANDS

In addition to **A** for Attack, **F** for Flee, **Y** for Yes, and **N** for No, when you are prompted to answer, there are four more keyboard commands for you to use.

To see your Inventory, at any time, press **I**. To Save Game, at any time, press **S**. If you have found Alcemnon's Diary and wish to read it again type **R**. But, if you type **R** without having the diary, nothing will happen.

The final keyboard command is **T**. When you reach the Forgotten Village, if you position your figure directly over one of the huts and press **T**, the screen will display a list of items that you may purchase.

Choose wisely. Think carefully about what items will most help you in your dangerous odyssey. It will take exceptional courage and ingenuity to solve the mystery and return to civilization.

GOOD LUCK on your adventure! You will need it to ESCAPE FROM VULCAN'S ISLE!

Command Table

A	Attack
F	Flee
I	Inventory
N	No
R	Read diary (you must find it first)
S	Save game
T	Trade gold for items (in Forgotten Village)
Y	Yes

