adventure quest

ADVENTURE QUEST

Middle Earth is a tranquil and peaceful place. The problems with the Dark Lord Sauron are ancient history, and no dragon has been seen since the sack of Esgaroth.

The last elves sailed for the West centuries ago, after the rescue of their fellows from the dungeons below Colossal Cavern. Indeed nothing remotely interesting has happened for ages, and the ordinary folk lead peaceful, mundane and – for the most part – contented rural lives.

At least this **was** true until a year ago. First there was a complete crop–failure in the northern provinces due to a drought of unprecedented severity. This was followed by attacks by maddened wild animals on storehouses and outlying farms, with the result that people fled south in their thousands.

Then the troops sent north to keep order were ambushed and decimated by unseen enemies in a hundred coordinated attacks. And finally a vast army of orcs moved in.

There was total panic.

The combined armies of Middle Earth were mustered and marched north. As yet nothing has been heard from them but it is rumoured that they are beseiged near Amon Sul.

Then a messenger appeared at the gates of Minas Tirith. "My Lord AGALIAREPT calls on you to surrender. Even now His armies are sweeping towards you and He cannot be defeated in battle. If you surrender, you will be permitted the boon of death with dignity: otherwise it will be much worse when you are defeated. You will have one week to decide.".

The name AGALIAREPT is well known to the magicians in the city: it is that of a Demon Lord renounced for his ferocity and skill in battle – there is no doubt that He will be victorious and there seems to be no hope.

There seems to be only one option open to the King, and he takes it. The leader of the Wizards Guild is hauled before the throne and issued with an ultimatum. "We remember the favours bestowed on your guild over the years. Now is the time for you to repay them. You have one week to defeat the Demon Lord by magic. Fail and you will not live to see the fall of the city. That is all."

You are an apprentice magician (as are all members of the Wizards Guild under 60 years old), and have taken courses in the three M's (Meditation, Mysticism and Moneymaking) but not yet used a spell in earnest. Thus you are amazed to be called before the Wizard's High Council.

"The base of the Demon Lord's power has been discovered: He has taken up residence in the Dark Tower, on the far edge of the world. Even now the full council is preparing an assault on its defences."

"But there is a second way. Perhaps one person, acting alone, could find the four Stones-of-the-Elements and use them to enter the tower. Then, the Medallion-of-Life could perhaps enable you to defeat the Demon. There is little chance of success..... But will you do your duty and try?"

You mumble a reply and are rushed from the room. And as you leave you think that you hear the shouted order: "Next!"

Shortly afterwards you are dressed in travel clothes and stand before the tele portal. You step through and there is a sensation of rapid movement. As your vision clears you find that you stand at the end of a road, outside a small brick building. What next?

The Game

Adventure Quest is a full scale adventure game with 225 individually described locations. You will have to solve a very large number of problems on your journey to the Black Tower and (perhaps) victory.

To play Adventure Quest you simply enter English phrases to tell the computer what you want to go (e.g. MOVE NORTH, FILL THE BOTTLE or LOOK AROUND), and it acts as your eyes and ears to describe your surroundings.

In fact, Adventure Quest is amazingly easy to play – you don't need to be able to find the cursor keys blindfold or hammer the space-bar for hours. But it may take weeks to solve! Fortunately you can use the SAVE command to store the current state of the game and return to everyday life for a while, resuming play later.

How to Load and Start

Adventure Quest is a 32K program which uses much of the computer's memory. Everything needed is included on the cassette enclosed. (Use either side).

To use the game, hold down SHIFT and press the RUN/STOP key. Then play the cassette in your recorder, using either side, and Adventure Quest will load into memory and start automatically.

Loading will take several minutes, so don't worry if the computer seems to be doing nothing for quite a while as the cassette plays. Finally, when the game has started, rewind the cassette and return it to its case.

Instructions

Unlike our other games, Level 9 Adventures contain few instructions within the programs. We feel that this type of game is very easy to play and that the space is better used for more rooms and treasures etc.

The program asks you "What next?" whenever it expects you to enter another command. Simply type an English phrase to tell it what you want it to do and press ENTER. The program will then act on your request, ask you for the next command and so on..

Please ignore all of the keywords etc marked on and around the keys of your Spectrum (except for DELETE which works as usual). If you want to READ a scroll, for example, you should type READ in full. However you are allowed to abbreviate words to save typing. See on..

Now at this point, we must admit that the program does not really understand English (no program does, despite claims in press adverts) but it does know a large vocabulary of English words. Thus it can behave as if it knows the language by examining each entered phrase, picking out the words it knows and guessing the meaning from these. Words that it does not know are ignored.

In practice this works well and you should find it simple to state what you want to do. If the program does not understand, re-phrase your request.

Adventure Quest provides great freedom in possible input, but to help you get started a sample of possible instructions follows:

Word	Example	Meaning
east	move east	Move east, if possible
northwest	try northwest	Move northwest
into	walk into the cave	Move into the cave
take	take the medallion	Take something
drop	drop the ruby	Drop something carried
give	give food to unicorn	Give present
score	what's my score	How well am I doing?
inventory	inventory	What am I carrying?

To save typing, words can be abbreviated (e.g. east to e and northeast to ne).

Three special commands are provided to control the program. These are:

Command	Meaning
quit	Stop playing the game, returning to BASIC. You have to answer a YES/NO question to check that you mean it, first.
save	You should start a cassette on RECORD before using SAVE. It doesn't take long.
restore	Restore (start) a previously saved game so that you can carry on with it. Rewind the cassette to just before the position where you SAVEd the game and start it on PLAY after typing RESTORE.

Scoring

You score points for getting nearer to the Black Tower and more for possessing any of the four Stones. There are bonusses for entering the Tower itself and, of course, for winning.

On the debit side, you lose points as time goes by, and lose more points if you manage to get yourself killed.

Hints

You are entitled to one free clue, and a SAE is enclosed so that you can send any one question to us at Level 9. We will try to reply by the next post. Don't use up the clue too soon – you may waste it on something that you'll work out yourself while the reply is in the post. Answers will be truthful, but if you try to find out too much (e.g. by asking "How do I win?") the reply may be very cryptic.

Almost everything in Adventure Quest has a purpose: if only to keep you trying to work out its purpose.

Use SAVE/RESTORE regularly. Adventure Quest involves a long journey and you don't want to have to start all over again if you get killed. SAVE the state of play when you get past a significant obstacle and you can start from there if you have a later accident.

Implementation

You may be wondering how Adventure Quest can be crammed into only 32K, after all typical adventures of this size have only a third as many rooms etc.

Adventure Quest is not written in ASSEMBLER or BASIC, either of these would have made it too big – and BASIC would also have been too slow. Instead it is written in a super-compact language known as 'A-CODE', which is specially designed for writing adventure games.

Similarly, the text messages output by the program have been compressed by a 'data compiler' to a fraction of their usual size. This also stops you peeking at the program to find out what might happen next!.

Together, these two means of size reduction – combined with tight coding – allow Adventure Quest to run in only 32K

Other Products

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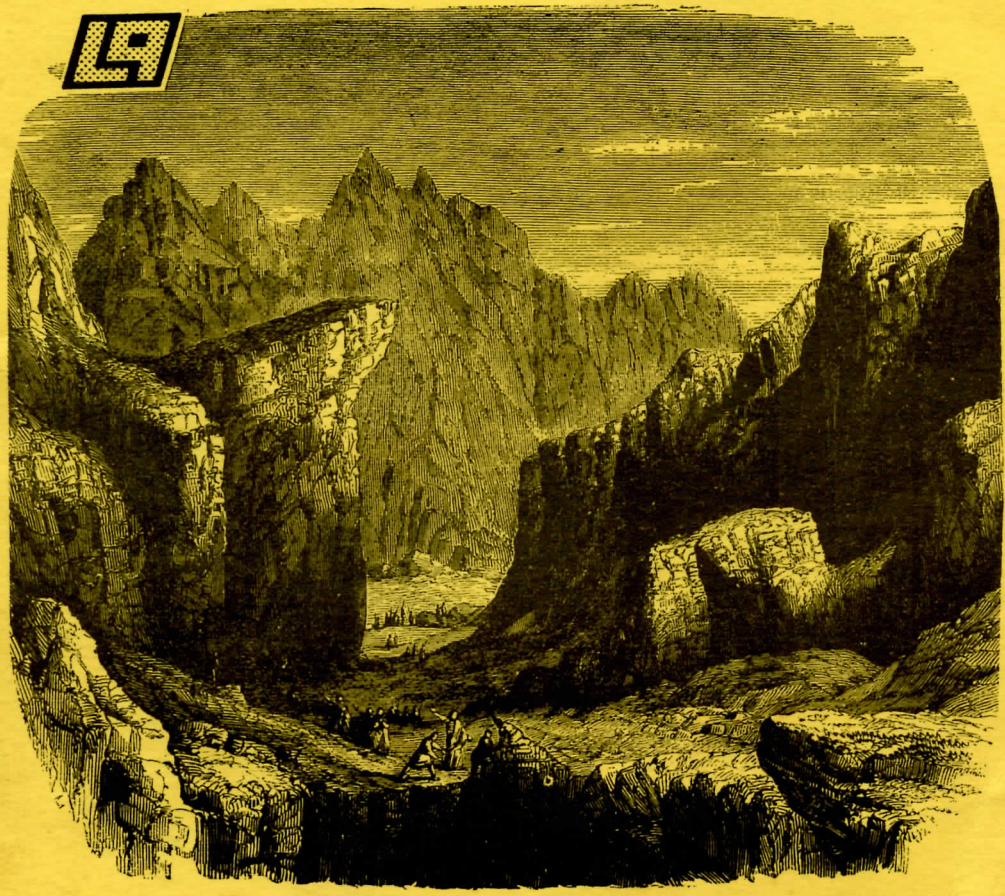
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