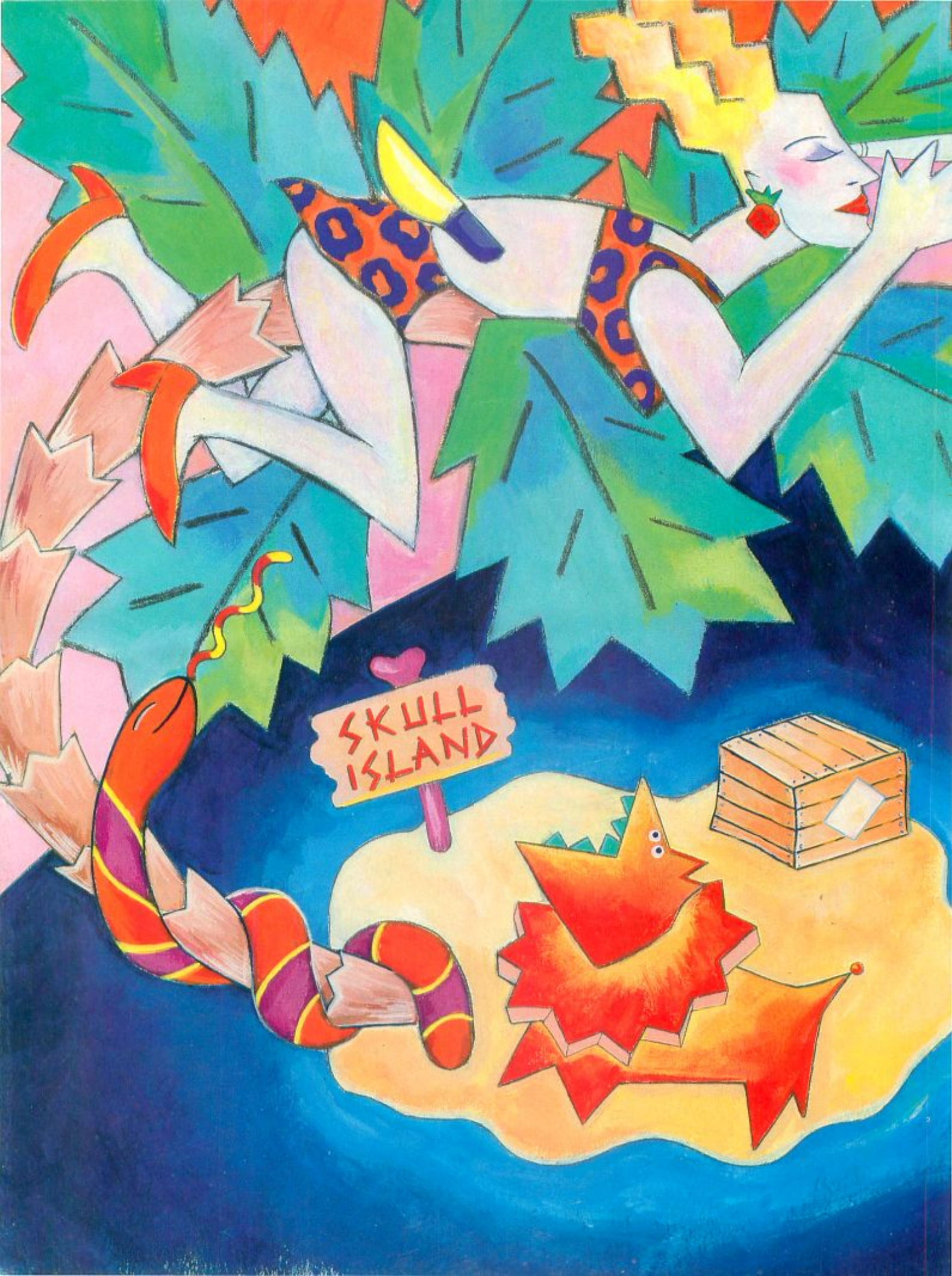






SKULL ISLAND

Mystified, you wake to find yourself half buried beneath the sands of a strange and vast island. Looking seaward, your eyes gaze upon the remains of your wrecked ship. As you struggle to recall the past events that brought you to this seemingly tropical paradise, your hazy memory pinpoints only a violent storm at sea and your attempts to keep your once-seaworthy vessel afloat.

Certain only that you are somewhere in the South Pacific, you climb to your feet, trying to get a bearing on your present location. Suddenly, your eyes fall upon a wooden board lying on the beach some yards away. As you approach it, you realize it is some kind of a sign. Brushing away the sand from the rotting wood, you reveal the words "Welcome to Skull Island."

Your pulse quickens as you realize the meaning behind these words. In legend, many attempted to sail to Skull Island to discover the magic it possessed, but no man ever returned from his adventure.

The sounds of the jungle surround you. Destiny calls. You set out to escape Skull Island—or die trying.

B Y J O H N P A T U T O



The Game

Skull Island is a text-adventure game that offers a lot more than just a little challenge. Time was taken in writing and developing this software so that it would have great detail and enough excitement for hours of enjoyment. Two years of programming, problem solving, testing and retesting were spent to create *Skull Island* and to ensure that all who played the game would find it as exciting as possible.

On the outside, *Skull Island* may appear to be an ordinary text-adventure game, but what the inside holds sets it apart from all others. Incorporated into this game are musical tunes and sound effects, along with deliberate background coloring to aid you in your adventure through the vast areas of Skull Island. This, along with an exciting character set and compelling scenario, will show you why *Skull Island* is a game that will not soon be forgotten.

Typing it In

Listing 1 is the main game program. Simply type it as it appears, making certain that all the lines are correct. (Use BASIC Editor II, found elsewhere in this issue, to check

your work.) Because of the use of some control characters, you should be very careful to enter them in correctly. One misplaced control character will adversely affect the execution of the program, and it may very well make the game unsolvable. Once you have completed typing Listing 1, save it to disk under the filename D:SKULL.1, but do not run it yet.

Now type Listing 2. As you can see, Listing 2 contains many DATA lines. These lines contain the heart of *Skull Island*. Again, if anything is mistyped, chances are you will not be able to run *Skull Island* successfully.

After typing in Listing 2, save it to disk under the filename D:SKULL.2, then run it. It will prompt you to have the disk with SKULL.1 ready. Once you have it in place, hit Return, and in a few moments it will create two files (D:STRING1 and D:STRING2). You can now run D:SKULL.1 and play the game.

In future play, you need not use D:SKULL.2 again. Simply make sure that D:SKULL.1, D:STRING1 and D:STRING2 are all on the same disk.

Game Play

Skull Island is an adventure game in which you must enter commands to solve riddles and problems in order to win. The program recognizes a variety of words in a standard two-word verb-noun sentence. It also has an array of single-word commands for movement and other special tasks. I'll have more on that later.

When entering in a two-word command, such as GET WOOD or READ PAPER, you need to type only the first three letters of each word (i.e. GET WOO and REA PAP) for quicker input. Of course, spelling out the en-

tire word will not adversely affect the program in any way. One small hint here: If you need to use GO TO, type it as one word (GOTO).

Along with the two-word commands are single-letter commands for special tasks. These are 'N'orth, 'S'outh, 'E'ast, 'W'est, 'D'own, 'I'nventory, 'H'elp, 'Q'uit, 'X' Present Score, 'Y' Change to Atari Character Set and 'Z' Change to Skull Island Set.

The object of the game is to wander around the island searching for a way to escape. You will find many objects scattered around the island that may prove useful in your escape. There is something unusual about Skull Island, and that is the great wall that surrounds it, making it almost impossible to leave. Yet legend has it that there are magical ways of lowering the wall in certain sections of the island. It is up to you to discover the secret.

You can carry up to six objects at once; simply hitting "I" will give you an updated list of your inventory. Of course, you can drop any object at any time, but be careful; some things are worth hanging on to.

The Help command is unique. In other adventures, when you ask for help you are usually given a clue or hint as to what to do next. In *Skull Island* you are given a musical tune. It is up to you to decipher what this tune is trying to tell you. There is, however, another way of receiving help: Each time you enter a new section of the island, you are told which directions you can travel in (i.e. north, west, ...?). You will notice the "?" When you see this, the location you are in may or may not be special in some way. Again, it is up to you to discover the meaning behind each question mark.

Also, whenever you see a new object or enter another section, be sure you *examine* everything. If you do not, you may find yourself hopelessly wandering throughout the island.

Finally, *Skull Island* keeps track of your score and number of moves. You are allowed a maximum of 300 moves, and your highest possible score is 285. To view your score and number of turns at any time, enter the "X" command. If you are curious, the smallest number of moves possible to solve this adventure is 82.

Good luck!

John Patuto is currently studying computer science and communications at William Paterson College in Wayne, New Jersey. His current projects include a series of business programs for the Atari 130XE, an 8-bit Star Trek simulator, and somewhere down the line, the sequel to *Skull Island*. ■

