

QUESTBUSTERS™

The Adventurer's Newsletter
February, 1986

Vol. III, # 2

Spellbreaker: Infocom's Toughest?

Did you waltz through *Wishbringer* and sail through *A Mind Forever Voyaging*? Or maybe you're one of the hard-core adventurers who passed them by completely because they didn't offer the mindgrinding challenges you finally solved in the *Zork* series? Then the final installment in the *Enchanter* trilogy was designed with you in mind. *Spellbreaker* is full of ingeniously constructed puzzles that are hard enough to reduce even Mr. Spock's logical mind to a pathetic pile of burned-out synapses.

It begins at a clamorous meeting in the Enchanters Guild Hall at Borphée, a meeting attended by guildmasters from across the land. They want to know why the magic spells of the enchanters are backfiring or simply not working at all. In a world founded on magic, this spells disaster for all. When Hooly of the Brewers Guild threatens that lately



the beer tastes like gruel have been bathing in it -- and that without proper magic there won't be any more Miller Time in the Great Underground Empire -- the gravity of the situation sinks in.

But before everyone rushes out to the bar to finish off the last keg, Ardis of the Poets Guild suddenly turns into a large orange newt, and the rest of the guildmasters are transformed into frogs, lizards and other creatures. Only you remain unscathed by the spell, only you can track down the shadowy figure that

ducks out the door as you scramble off the stage -- only you can stop the evil force that is interfering with the magic upon which your civilization's survival hinges.

If only you could get out of this place, which proves to be the first problem, one that reminded me of *Sorcerer's* first stage. Oh, you can bound right out the door, but traveling further than the courtyard will take more than putting one foot in front of the other. You might consult the spell book, which contains the frotz, gnusto, rezrov, and other familiar spells as well as some new ones. Jindak will detect the presence of magic, while blorple enables you to explore the mystic connections of an object; others turn up as soon as you get out of town. The unseen force that is eroding the power of magic in the Great Underground Empire affects even your spells. They may have odd side effects, forcing you to recast them several times until they finally work, or you learn they won't accomplish the desired effect.

A tip for anyone still trying to gain entry to the Governor's House outside the Guild Hall -- blorple the

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Moebius: The Orb of Celestial Harmony

Origin Systems has begun publishing role-playing games by independent designers and programmers (perhaps giving Lord British more free time to concentrate on *Ultima V*), and *Moebius* is one of the first. It was created by Greg Malone, who did the action game *Minit Man* for Penguin. That background is reflected in *Moebius*, where keyboard dexterity during the combat phase is even more crucial than your character's dexterity rating.

It's a single-character game set in the Oriental land of Khantun. You are a disciple of Moebius the Windwalker, a martial arts and Zen master. Moebius' mystic orb, which keeps the cosmic forces in balance, has been stolen by Kaimen, a renegade disciple. The result is an imbalanced environment, as earthquakes, heat waves and other disasters devastate Khantun. You must track down Kaimen and bring back the orb.

In addition to the customary character attributes of body, mind and dexterity, *Moebius* introduces karma, which affects your magical prowess and is determined by your interactions with the people of Khantun. After creating a character, you'll have to train in sword-fighting, karate and divination before embarking on the adventure. In the combat sequences your character faces another, each a good three inches tall and colorfully portrayed with crisp graphics on a white background.

DYNAMIC ANIMATION

Get set for some serious sword-flailing, for these are the most effectively animated battles yet seen in a role-playing game. Malone employed videotapes of actual kung fu fighters to precisely animate their kicks, punches and sword-thrusts. A circle of seven keys are used to select

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Best Adventures of '85

What were they? It's up to you to help decide. So let us know your choices for best games released in 1985 in the following categories: All-text Adventure, Graphic Adventure, Fantasy Role-Playing Game, Non-Fantasy Role-Playing Game. Also, name the most innovative game in each category, which may or may not be your choice as best game of that type. Two other categories: Best Music in an Adventure and Best Music in a Role-playing Game. Include your suggestion for the name of the QuestBusters™ award -- the Golden Parser, the Crowther, the Hack and Slay Award, etc. If your name is chosen you'll win a free adventure or role-playing game.

ADVENTURE HOTLINE

Mysteries Muscle In on Adventure Market

Disk drive detectives can count on a busy year. Telarium plans to do some adventures based on Agatha Christie's novels. No titles have been announced, though *Murder on the Orient Express* seems like a natural. If *Case of the Mandarin Murder* gets a thumbs up verdict from the audience, Telarium will continue the Perry Mason series.

One of Dick Francis' novels, *High Stakes*, will soon be rounding the far turn as an all-text game from Mindscape. You'll play the part of a wealthy English horse owner out to foil a plot to cheat you. (They're following up their first James Bond adventure, *A View to a Kill*, with *Goldfinger* for the Apple and IBM.)

Send in the Clowns

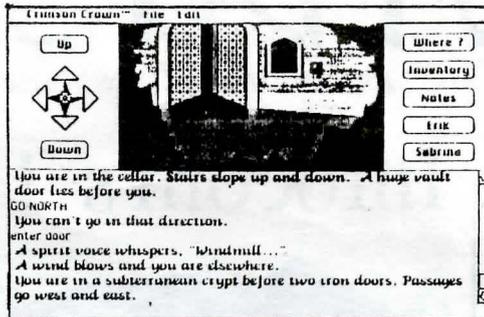
Infocom's next game will also be a mystery, *Ballyhoo*. As in *Suspect*, it has a contemporary setting and doesn't cast as a detective. Instead, you're just an ordinary citizen attending the circus for some fun. When a kidnapping goes down, you become involved in solving it. The standard level game is supposed to feature lots of circus jokes, apparently popular with Jeff O'Neill, the game's author. It's the first adventure from O'Neill, who has been programming at Infocom for a year-and-a-half.

New York on a Disk

What was I going to say? Wait, it's coming back to me now: Electronic Arts is readying its first all-text adventure, *Amnesia*. Based on a novel by science fiction author Thomas Disch, the story is about a man who loses his memory in New York City, and the entire city is supposedly programmed into the game. Wonder if that includes the Blarney Rose on 7th Avenue?

Quest for Renewals

Instead of sending renewal notices, we've begun printing the date of your subscription's expiration on the mailing label. Anyone who renews at least four months prior to their sub's expiration will receive 13 issues instead of the customary 12.



Crimson Crown for the Mac, Amiga & ST

Penguin's Macintosh adventures now differ dramatically from their first, *Transylvania*, as shown in this screen shot from *Crimson Crown*. Mac owners with 512K will appreciate another aspect of Robert Hardy's implementation: the graphics load into RAM when the program is booted, practically eliminating disk access throughout the game. Penguin's Mac adventures feature a scrollable text window for reviewing text. Programmed with Comprehend system, they also utilize a high-caliber, full-sentence parser. In the Atari ST and Amiga versions of *Crimson Crown*, the graphics exhibit sharper detail and more colors.

The Atari 800 conversion of the game is now scheduled for release in late February or early March. By then *Oo-topos* should also be out.

Return of Son of Sequel

Can't get enough of a good thing? Then you'll be glad to hear that Douglas Winston Woods is presently dreaming up and programming *Phantasie II* for Strategic Simulations. It should be out by March or April. Still no confirmation on rumors of a sequel to *Questron*.

Avalon Hill's *Telengard*, whose 50-level dungeon contains a record two million locations (try mapping that one, Rand McNally), says the sequel has been in the works for years and is lined up for later this year. Avalon Hill's next release will be a new role-playing game called *Dark Horn*.

The Winner!

Norman Stabin of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, won a copy of *Heart of Africa* in this month's contest. Next month's winner will be chosen at random from the sub list.

SPELLBREAKER

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strange white cube you find at your feet and move on to the *real* game-stoppers. The cube teleports you to a remote part of the GUE, where you'll encounter an ogre with a horrible sneeze, a hermit high on a hill, and a serpent so huge its body completely fills the circular hall in a crumbling temple. In each problem you must obtain a similar cube. Each cube, if blorpled under the right conditions, will zap you off to another location where a couple of other rooms and progressively tougher problems await. It's like *Hitchhiker's Guide* in this sense, with the cubes serving the same function as the Improbability Drive.

The puzzles are even more difficult than in *Hitchhiker*, the preceding games in this series and maybe even the *Zorks*. Most of them are interlocked as tightly as a wooden Chinese puzzle: you can't solve get past the ogre without an object obtained by getting the cube from the hut -- however, you don't use it on the ogre but to reach a distant location and solve a different problem, thusly obtaining an item that will help circumvent the Big Sneeze. Rarely is there an obvious connection, though some answers -- a hermit who says "it was perfect" when discussing his hut -- are in plain sight. I haven't seen puzzles so convolutedly dovetailed since *Zork II*. There are just enough spell scrolls and items lying around in plain sight to get you off to a good start and keep you motivated. At least one major mapping challenge is part of this package deal, an

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QuestBusters™

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Monster-Hunting in a Golf Cart: The Eidolon

by Ken St. André

More than 100 years ago, Dr. Josef Vincent Agon invented a strange device called the Eidolon, which took him into a sparsely populated domain of endless caverns. Eventually, it came back without him one day, and the Eidolon is now in your hands.

This latest effort from LucasFilms is probably the most bizarre of their games. Primarily an arcade game whose action consists of exploring a maze and blasting monsters, it has elements of the adventure, with puzzles to solve and things to learn as the game progresses. It's easy to play, all joystick-controlled. Piloting the Eidolon through the caves is an exciting activity. Luckily, a built-in force field protects you from the effects of crashing into the walls.

The caverns are illustrated with fractal geometry, the great innovation that Lucasfilms contributed to computer games in 1984. Fractals produce jagged lines that are marvelous for creating coastlines, mountain ranges or cave passages. Each cavern is unique, but one formula produces them all. You see a finely detailed, 3-D view of the cavern, whose walls seem to slowly move as you turn, not just flash past as in *Bard's Tale* or *Ultima's* mazes.

The manual indirectly hints that the long-range goal is to learn the fate of Dr. Agon and what lies beyond the 7th level, but never says so outright. To get past each of the seven levels, you must collect three magic jewels (each of which has its own bizarre guardian), then find the dragon, blow him up and go on to the next level. Energy balls of different colors and with various effects can be fired at the monsters. As you continue the quest, the caverns get larger and trickier, the creatures get a little tougher, and the dragons get ever weirder and more ferocious. The game's chief thrill is in seeing what strange new creatures will appear as you explore new levels.

I may never get good enough to finish all seven levels. Right now I'm stuck on level three, where the dragon is a real tough guy: large, insectoid, and faster than me. But I have learned a few things I can pass on without spoiling the game for you. (1) The caverns stay the same

but mapping them is hopeless. The twists and turns, when drawn on paper, don't join up the way they do in the caverns. (2) The creatures with their jewels are always in the same place in the cavern, but the creatures may change. Three right turns from the start may bring you to a shuttlefly the first time out, to a troll the next. (3) The red fireball will take care of things like greps, biter birds and trolls, but a more complex strategy is needed against dragons. (4) The only way to really lose the game is to run out of time. If the creatures drain all your energy and send you back to reality, the game ends and you learn your score. (My high score is 5,360 so far.)

Eidolon is state of the art programming for the Commodore and Atari XL, but I'm not exactly sure how to rate it for adventure gamers. There are puzzles to solve and things to learn, but the only way to proceed is through trial and error. The program is a kind of Pavlovian conditioning device. It punishes you by sending you back to the start and rewards you with ever stranger animated creatures. Still, there could be more variety. Three creatures, four types of fireballs and one dragon per level gets old after awhile.

Animation, theme music and ease-of-play are excellent, the pacing is very good, and there's a lot of satisfaction derived from conquering each new level. I would have like a more crowded game world, with something in the caverns besides monsters and balls of energy, and possibly the necessity or ability to step out of the Eidolon to take some other action, something that would raise the activity to more than monster-blasting in a golf cart. But then I haven't reached the deepest levels, and the manual suggests that something fantastic waits beyond the seventh level.

Recommendation: mixed. Buy it if the idea appeals to you. And if you're a fan of dragons, don't miss *Eidolon* -- they are outstanding.

Computer: Atari, C-64/128, Apple (64K required for all)

Conversions: Maybe Amiga

Skill Level: Intermediate

Price: \$27-\$36

Manufacturer: Epyx

Moebius

Continued from page 1

an attack; four others let you move back or forward. Each of the six kinds of sword assaults and six ways to land a karate blow, has a different effect. Head wounds are critical, body wounds good for slowing down the enemy. No orcs or dragons in this fantasy: the three enemy-types are sword-wielding palace guards, karate-kicking assassins and evil monks. Each has his own strengths and weaknesses, and you'll need to observe their moves and learn to anticipate their actions in order to defeat them. Animation speed is player-adjustable, but can't be changed in the middle of a battle.

After passing the combat tests, you'll have to train in divination. A yin-yang symbol tries to bounce out of its box as you hit the eight directional keys to keep it inside. This test helps familiarize players with the keys used for moving around once you hit Khantun, where you can travel in eight directions instead of the usual four. The skill is also necessary for invoking magic.

ON THE ROAD TO KHANTUN

When you're ready to roll, Moebius materializes in a digitized photo of a hooded, moustachioed monk and sends you forth into a land depicted from a birds-eye view. The quest commences in the Realm of Earth and proceeds through the planes of Air, Water and Fire. On the trip you'll travel across 26 terrain types that include bamboo forests, ocean, plains, forests and marsh. Animation shows rain falling, earthquakes shaking the ground, night darkening the screen until you can only see the square occupied by the figure representing your character. There are minimal sound effects, no music.

Big heads bob about the landscape, representing either the locals or the enemy (sometimes a tiger but more often a roaming assassin or guard). You might hurl shurikens, the Oriental version of a morningstar, to discourage the attacker. If he closes, the combat arena replaces the aerial view. You can flee the arena if things turn grim.

By choosing one of four commands from a pull-down menu you can

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UNIVERSE II: Do you want to go to the moon, Alice?

Call me wreckless, but I'm the kind of adventurer who leaps into a new role-playing game without reading a word of the documentation. After getting killed, robbed, and humiliated a half-dozen times by everything that moves, I limp back and read the manual to figure out where I went wrong. Not so with this game, whose 105-page manual demands at least a once-over before blasting off in an Agora-class space ship. So for once I actually read a manual.

It's not necessary to read the whole thing right away, just the first chapter for an overall view of the game system and the chapter on Flight. Other parts, devoted to areas such as Starports, Drydock, and Combat can be studied when you need them later on in the game. A page of playing tips is also on-hand. (And if you get stuck or want to help other starship troopers in distress, the manufacturer runs a bulletin board dedicated to the *Universe* series.)

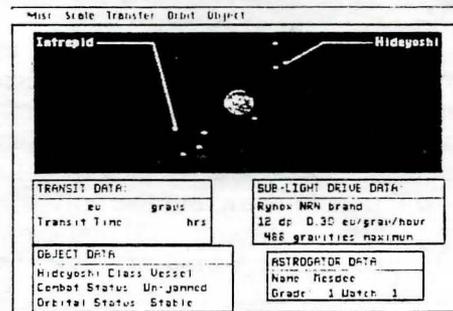
THE BOOSTER AMONG US

The scenario is set in a distant galaxy called the Local Group. This cluster of 20 stars and 47 planets was colonized by people from Earth after they found an alien artifact, the hyperdrive booster, that enabled their ships up to travel up to 1,000 light years at a time and colonize the Local Group. The only drawback was that it was a one-way trip. Capsules containing news and other gear arrived from Earth every month, but mysteriously ceased one day. Years later a second booster was found, this one in the Local Group, and it's now being studied with the hope of opening two-way communication with Earth.

Meanwhile back at the starport, two governments vie for power in the Local Group: the Federated Worlds and the United Democratic Planets. As the game begins, you're an undercover agent for the FW's Special Forces. Operating a small merchant vessel, you'll be called upon to perform covert missions while earning a living, organizing a crew, upgrading your ship's equipment with the 98 available parts, and exploring the planets first-hand to solve object-oriented puzzles. Revealed gradually as the game proceeds, the long-range goal centers

on the second booster.

Learning to keep the ship going is a gradual process, and that's what you'll do in the first few sessions. Each time you've mastered an activity, a new challenge arises and sends you wading through the book to learn something new. First on the agenda is developing a steady income, for you've got a crew to pay, new members to hire, and food and fuel to buy at the drydocks orbiting only a few of the planets. The crew-types consist of shuttle pilots, astrogators, marines, and engineers. Each is rated according to proficiency (up to level 20) and health. They're promoted a level



each year and can be sent to school for faster advancement.

You can earn credits by trading goods, hauling passengers from planet to planet, mining or space piracy. Each requires strategy, record-keeping and concentration. Hauling passengers is the easiest, since all you do is pack as many as will fit into your orbital shuttle (you can have up to three shuttles) and drop them off at their destination. The further they travel, the higher the fare. This often covers the cost of refueling with Ore IV.

The import/export business is trickier but more profitable. A display shows the products for sale, their price and sophistication level. The latter ranges from 24 to 99, and most goods can only be sold on a planet whose sophistication level is 1 to 10 points below that of the product's level. Jewelry and three other items may be sold on planets up to 10 points higher. And different products are outlawed on each planet. Five products are listed, linger on the screen for random lengths of time and are replaced by others. Prices on identical items vary, calling for patience if you want to get a good deal. You'll also have

to keep charts listing where you purchased and sold things to learn the most profitable goods to buy and where to sell them. Optimally, you will develop lucrative trade routes, picking up Myb Kuta Rose on Axia, selling it on Zeath and buying more goods for Grotto.

MINERS AND MISSILES

Mining is simple. You just buy an ore processor, hire a few miners, and drop them onto one of the myriad uninhabited planets that your resource scanner indicates holds a lot of one of the four types of ore. If they don't get killed in a sandstorm or earthquake, and you don't run out of fuel while in orbit over the planet, a few mining expeditions will net you enough to outfit your ship with more effective computers, ore processors, hyperdrives and other parts. You may even decide to shop for a new ship, with six models to choose from. The manual presents detailed data on damage points, efficiency and other specs for each part.

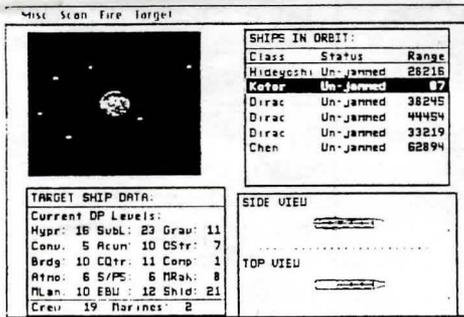
With the right arsenal of missiles and enough marines, space piracy becomes an exciting alternative. It takes time to determine the right combination of missile-types, each designed to damage a different part of the enemy ship. Then you can board it and seize the cargo, fuel and any money on-board. (Solid record-keeping as a trader pays off here, since you'll know where to get the best price for the hi-jacked goods.) If the crew and marines are still alive, you'll have to send in your marines. These are among the most visual sequences, as you guide the marines around a grid to fight the enemy and seize key parts of the ship. Marines play a similar role when you mine an inhabited planet, attacking the local defense stations and troops.

Simple graphics and animation portray your ship's position and that of other planets and space ships as you flit about the Local Group. By checking with the Vidcomm each time you orbit a planet, you'll read messages that tell of war erupting between the FW and UDP. This is also the way you get your orders about various missions, like Operation Shatter. These are simple puzzles that are presented as in an all-text adventure. Each time you enter a

starport, the parser-based phase of the game kicks in. You might encounter a character who can help, or get to tackle one of the puzzles that comprise the four secret missions.

At other times, a keyboard or mouse interface lets you make all decisions from pull-down menus. The only drawback here is inconsistency in the keyboard commands. In one menu control-v means vidcomm, in another it means check provisions, and in the main menu, it means save game and quit. Hit this one at the wrong time and you may inadvertently save your game in a bad situation -- which spelled disaster for this Space Cowboy on several occasions.

It's a three-disk game that accesses



the disks often and requires frequent swaps as you move between the menus. This is too slow on the Mac's feet-dragging drives unless you use a cache program set at 256K. It runs faster on other systems, some of which let you put the entire program in a RAM-disk or hard disk. Apple owners with the new Unidisk will get the best deal, since they can trade in their floppies for one disk that holds the whole program.

ON THE EDGE AGAIN

The most exciting moments in role-playing always occur when you're down to your last hit point but continue to slug it out, ultimately to win the fight and hobble off to the nearest temple or priest. That happened repeatedly in this game, as I ran out of fuel and was stranded over an alien planet -- and used my last few missiles to knock out an enemy Bowie-class vessel and steal his fuel. Or made it back to a drydock just in time to buy more provisions before the crew starved to death. There are also some surprising plot twists, especially regarding a certain Desmona, whom you meet early in the game.

Now I've played practically every

role-playing game on *this* planet, and *Universe II* is my all-time favorite, the one I'd choose if I were stranded on a desert island that had electricity and a computer. It has virtually no graphics, animation or sound effects, but the multiplicity of activities, the finely balanced system, and the unique way the story is presented, kept dragging me back for weeks, when I knew I should be writing this review instead.

As a reviewer, I play everything but rarely get to complete anything because there's always a new game lurking on the shelf, calling "Shay, over here" -- but this one I finished in about three weeks. My only complaint is that there aren't enough missions to perform. As a result, I spent the last two years of game time (about two hours) just rocketing back and forth across space to kill time and reach the end game. It was worth the effort, but I felt like I was doing busy work for two hours, not playing a game. It's still my favorite, good for at least 50, probably 100+ hours of interstellar entertainment.

Computer: IBM PC, XT, AT, jr and compatibles, Zenith Z-100 (256K and Color Graphics Adapter or EGA); Macintosh (512K); Apple (128K, 80-column card, two drives); Atari 260ST, 260STD, 520ST. Two drives recommended for all.

Conversions: Maybe Amiga

Skill Level: Advanced

Price: \$69.95

Manufacturer: Omnitrend, POB 3, W. Simsbury, CT 06092

Moebius

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communicate with the people. A woman may give you a torch, an old man might tell you where to find something of value. Food and water are your first priorities, otherwise you'll soon be training another character. When someone speaks, or you discover something, a single line of explanatory text appears below the graphics. You may also listen for sounds of people in distress, approaching guards and other things that go bump in middle of the bamboo forests.

In these forests you'll often have to hack a path with your sword, which dulls quickly unless sharpened with a whetstone. You will also spy dozens of corpses crucified on bamboo

crosses by Kaimen and his henchmen. And stumble upon huge walls of white stone, some of which prove to be temples. Kaimen has imprisoned the good monks, installing the evil ones in their temples. Part of the quest consists of rescuing the former and exterminating the latter. Fireballs may be hurled at the monks when first encountered in a temple, where your sword is useless. Restore a good monk to his temple and you'll earn a suitable reward.

A CHARMING MAGIC SYSTEM

The good monks play a vital part in this game's magic system, which encompasses prayers and charms. In order to cast one of the five magic spells, such as Speak with the Dead, Waterwalk and Cure Sickness, you have to fast, then pray. But you can't pray successfully without invoking the proper mantra, which the good monks will divulge if you restore them to a temple. A monk will also bless any charms you find. There are six charms, which empower you to teleport, walk through walls and perform other practical feats. For each you'll also need the right component, things such as panda hair and tiger teeth. Each is found in the form of an artifact; in order to divine the nature of the charm, you must rely on reflexes and timing to keep that bouncing yin-yang inside the box as you learned to do in the training session.

Until you acquire the magic spell for healing, keep stocked up on body and mind elixirs to restore their respective attributes after prolonged battles or an exhausting round of spellcasting. These and other objects may be hidden in chests or other places, which frequently turn out to be booby-trapped. As you progress, Moebius pops in occasionally to boost your attributes.

There are no mazes and little need for mapping, for *Moebius* features auto-mapping. Consult the memory map to check your progress, and a blinking dot shows your current position and the ground you've thus far covered. You'll also find a building map that shows a blueprint of their outlines and locations, and a population lens revealing the whereabouts of Khantun's people.

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KEYS TO THE KINGDOMS

SPELLBREAKER

To get up the Hill: use $\uparrow \square \oplus \uparrow \downarrow \otimes$ spell from $\otimes \square \otimes \uparrow \oplus \oplus$ in $\oplus \otimes \square \otimes \oplus$ room. But don't go up hill till you've got $\uparrow \otimes \oplus \otimes \otimes$ spell from the $\oplus \downarrow \uparrow \oplus \otimes \square \oplus \oplus$

To get cube in Hut: $\uparrow \otimes \oplus \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes$

To get past the Ogre: inside the hut, blorple the cube to reach the $\oplus \downarrow \downarrow \oplus \oplus$ Room. South to Meadow, drop cube, $\uparrow \square \oplus \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes$ (don't $\uparrow \otimes \oplus \otimes \square \oplus \oplus \oplus \oplus$). Blorple to Packed Earth and $\otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes \oplus$ $\otimes \square \otimes \downarrow$ in cave. $\oplus \oplus \oplus \downarrow \otimes$ it and you've got it made. (Has anyone found a use for $\oplus \oplus \otimes \otimes \oplus \oplus$?)

CRIMSON CROWN

Riddle beneath the stump: $\otimes \square \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes \square \otimes \otimes \otimes$
If you've made it to the vampyre's castle only to lose all your inventory and get hopelessly stuck in the pit, Duane Zumwalt says to say " $\oplus \otimes \oplus \oplus \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes$, $\otimes \oplus \square \oplus \oplus \otimes \square \otimes$."

ULTIMA IV

- Most important thing at start is to buy a $\oplus \square \otimes \oplus \oplus \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes$ in Vesper or Buccaneer's Den (\$900, item \otimes).
- To camp without fear of ambush, board a ship, sail out to sea, exit and hole up. You can also quit and save like this.
- Concentrate on getting eight runes first. Avoid dungeons until you have at least 400-500 hit points. Even then, avoid altar rooms on eighth levels.
- The white stone is by the $\otimes \oplus \otimes \otimes$ in the mountains. Use the $\oplus \otimes \otimes \otimes \downarrow \downarrow \otimes \otimes$ (by the $\otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes \downarrow \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes \oplus \oplus \oplus$) to reach it.
- For compassion, don't kill the $\otimes \downarrow \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes$ monsters; give all your $\otimes \downarrow \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes$ to every $\otimes \square \otimes \otimes \otimes \oplus$ you see.
- To get past the Cove of Pirates, use the $\otimes \oplus \otimes \otimes \otimes \otimes$. This may take several tries, so have a saved game close to this point.
- End game: After the Pirates, proceed to the mouth of the abyss, which has a spiral of lava around it. Be sure you have eight characters, partial avatarhood in all eight virtues, the three-part key, high levels, lots of dispell, cure, heal and sleep spells, and kill, tremor and jinx if you have the reagents. Also be sure you know the pure axiom, the word, and all the virtues. Don't enter the abyss without all these or you'll just be wasting your time.

(These tips are from Aaron Chou, who offers to help with other points of the game. See his ad in Duffy.)

Anyone who wants to share clues, solutions or strategy on new adventures and role-playing games, please send them to Keys, c/o QB.

THE CODE

\otimes	A	\otimes	B	\otimes	C	\otimes	D	\otimes	E	\otimes	F	\otimes	G	\otimes	H	\otimes	I	\otimes	J
\otimes	K	\otimes	L	\otimes	M	\otimes	N	\otimes	O	\otimes	P	\otimes	Q	\otimes	R	\otimes	S	\otimes	T
\otimes	U	\otimes	V	\otimes	W	\otimes	X	\otimes	Y	\otimes	Z	\otimes		\otimes		\otimes		\otimes	

Waiting for Duffy

Duffy's out right now, but send in a brief ad if you're stuck, stuck, stuck.

Ultima 4: Where is the mandrake (exact location)? What is the pure axiom? What happened to humility? I can't find a city or dungeon of humility to join me. Also need help on Suspect, Nine Princes in Amber, Perry Mason and very end of Dragonworld. I can help with most Infocom games, Amazon, Ultima 1-4 and Lucifer's Realm. Please send SASE. Aaron Chou, 7032 Stratford Rd., Woodbury, MN 55125.

Need help in Ultima 3 and Hacker. Can help with Questron and Enchanter. Chris A. Raudonis, 45 Pelham Rd., Hudson, NH 03051.

Spellbreaker: How do you get cube in giant bird's nest? Will gladly pay for hints. Have solved and can help anyone with Ultima 2, 3 and 4, Enchanter, Sorcerer, Zork 1,2,3, Hitchhiker's, Mask of Sun, Serpent's Star, Deadline, Suspect, Planetfall and some of Spellbreaker - free! Send SASE to Michael Kim, 10425 NE 124th St., Kirkland, WA 98034.

Stone of Sisyphus: How do you get past dogs in the kennel? In Asylum, I need all the help I can get - will pay for complete solutions to either game. Brian Smith, 3035 Montego, Plano, TX 75023.

Stuck in The Mist: How do I start the truck? In Questron, Mesron wants to see me; how do I go about meeting him in castle? Can help anyone with Mindwheel, Tracer, Sanction, Amazon,

Mindshadow, Dragonworld. Call or write Karen M. Lee, 444 Bridgton Rd., Westbrook, ME 04092. (207) 797-7985.

Can help on Enchanter, Zork and Original Adventure for \$5 + map. Need clue on Ice Maze in New Adventure. David Aultfather, 13209 Dossau Rd., Austin, TX 78753.

Ripper: Have found clue under blood and had Holmes decipher both messages; identified all parties but dwarf; climbed ladder (to no avail); put all items in study; tried to close stuck closet door. Now what? Does anyone know words so I can reach fireplace to find secret passage? J. Swienty, 7951 Saloma Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91402.

Free hints for many new games: Mindwheel, Mindshadow, Critical Mass, Lucifer's Realm, etc. Need help on Masquerade and Rama. T. Walsh, 116 Homestead Cr., London, Ontario, Canada N6G 2E8.

Amazon: Need all the help I can get. Will pay for answers. Can help on Planetfall, Deadline, Seastalker, Cuttthroats and Serpent's Star. J. Lema, 431 Alphabet St., Holbrook, NY 11741,

Amazon: how do you get across bridge? Sundog: where do you buy the ground scanner? Can help with Quest, Mask of Sun, Zork I. William Hall, 1110 44th St., Sacramento, CA 95819.

Questron: Will pay \$7 for accurate maps of Mantor's Mountain. S. Gelegan, 1876 Idlewood Circle, Hanford, CA 93230.



SWAP SHOP

Got a houseful of old adventures? Trade 'em off with a free ad.

APPLE

To trade: all four Ultimas, Hitchhiker's Guide, Zorks, Transylvania, Deadline, Starcross and more. Looking for ACS, Questron, Crimson Crown, Sorcerer and others. Write first: Paul Berland, 4430 N. Francisco, Chicago, IL 60625.

\$20 each: Mystery House, Empire of Overmind, Cyborg, Invasion Orion, Legacy of Llylgamyn. \$15 each: Mask of the Sun, Creature Venture, set of paddles, Interactive Fiction. Time Zone, \$50. Will trade for or buy Questron, Timeship, SunDog, Phantasie, Swiss Family Robinson. Originals only, with docs. Write first to Gayle Ann Stanford, 3281 Foxgate Dr., Memphis, TN 38115.

Will trade original copy of Gemstone Warrior or Sword of Kadash for original of Ring Quest. Write first. Bob Reitz, 218 N. Fourth St., Sunbury, PA 17801.

Trade or sell: Mask of the Sun or Serpent's Star, \$30. Coveted Mirror, Suspended or Wizard and Princess, \$20. Oo-topos (text version), \$24. Transylvania or Xyphus, \$22. Escape from Rungistan, \$25. Eamon master w/utilities & a new adventure, \$5; five fully packed adventure game disks for \$25. S. Freeman, Knott Rte, Big Springs, TX 79720.

Will trade games and utilities. Send list of your programs. Also will sell solution to Zork I for \$2.50. Jon Champlin, Moffat Rd., Nelsonville, NY 10516.

\$20 each: Amazon, Deadline, Cutthroats, Hitchhiker's Guide, Rendezvous with Rama, Zork I and II. \$18 each: Blade of Blackpoole, Gruds in Space, Murder by the Dozen. \$15: Wizard and the Princess. All original with docs, packaging. Call or write Karen M. Lee, 444 Bridgton Rd., Westbrook, ME 04092. (207) 797-7985.

Ultima II with box, maps and manuals for \$30. Can help anyone with Ultima II or III. Michael Gathers, 1419 Heathwood Dr., Houston, TX 77077.

Interested in trading all types of adventures and FRPs. Send list of what you have to trade and games you want. Ba Ha, 1101 Laveta Terrace # 24, Los Angeles, CA 90026.

Trade or sell: Rendezvous with Rama and Dragonworld with packaging and docs, \$15 each. Want Moebius, Spellbreaker, Bard's Tale. Must be originals with docs and boxes. Aaron Chou, 7032 Stratford Rd., Woodbury, MN 55125.

Seek all types of adventures, originals only. Send list and prices, include SASE for list of my items for sale. Jim Davis, 4221 Third Ave., San Diego, CA 92103.

30+ games, including Wizardry, Zork III, and Legacy of Llylgamyn. All original, 50-60% off retail. For list, write to Tony Ard, 4207 Cypress St.,

Tillamook, OR 97141.

For sale or trade: Quest and Murder by the Dozen, \$20 each. Both original disks with manual; Quest has hint book. Will trade for Ultima III, Fahrenheit 451, Ring Quest, Mindshadow, Witness, Transylvania, Wishbringer, Sherwood Forest. Write first. W. Hall, 1110 44th St., Sacramento, CA 95819.

Planetfall, Deadline, Serpent's Star, Cutthroats and Seastalker. Will sell or trade, have hint books for all but last. Want any Infocom or Telarium, Mask of the Sun, Time Zone or Adventure. Write first. John Lema, 431 Alphabet St., Holbrook, NY 11741.

Will trade complete copies of Sorcerer or Gruds in Space for same of Fahrenheit 451, Shadowkeep, Dragonworld, ACS, Robots of Dawn or Timeship. Mark Fujimoto, 1646 Komo Mai Dr., Pearl City, HI 96782.

Will trade first 12 Infocom games, all three Wizardrys, Ultima II and more. Send list of what you want and I'll try to fill order. Thomas Blake, 3002 Pendell Lane, Ft. Smith, Arkansas 72901.

Will trade originals of Zork I, Enchanter and Starcross, with docs but no box. Can also trade Infocom maps and hint books for these. Want originals of Sorcerer, SunDog, Hitchhiker's Guide, Infidel, Cutthroats, Coveted Mirror. Philip R. Christensen, Academy for Educational Development, 1255 23rd St. NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20037.

COMMODORE 64/128 Wanted: Adventure Construction Set games. Send ACS game and blank disk, get 2 adventures and membership in ACS Fanclub. Also, 2 ACS games for sale, \$5 each: Tunnels & Trolls, based on FRP by Ken St. André, and Dreamworld, based on H.P. Lovecraft's Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath. For \$4 each, Barsoom Construction Set or Middle Earth Construction Set, using ACS. Or join club for \$1 and get latest newsletter; \$1 each for updates. Ken St. André, (authorized ACS Fanclub leader), 3421 E. Yale, Phoenix, AZ 85008.

For sale or trade: Deadline, Zork I, Hulk, Mask of the Sun, Amazon, Indiana Jones, Transylvania, Dragonworld. Joel Wright, 2341 Charbonneau, Waco, TX 76710.

Want Serpent's Star, Infidel, Sorcerer, Blade of Blackpoole, Gruds in Space, Planetfall and Cutthroats. To sell or trade, I have Amazon, Dragonworld, Tracer Sanction, Starcross, Suspended, Deadline, Mask of the Sun and all Zorks. Tim Fox, 734 Strobel N.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504.

Twenty programs for sale. Write for free list. Frank Lee Linne, POB 45, La Vernia, TX 78121.

Write for list of over 20 games for trade or sale. All with boxes and manual, some have maps and answers. Very cheap! Send SASE to Andrew Bundschuh, 635 E. Comstock, Glendora, CA 91740.

Numerous games to trade or sell. Send \$2 and SASE for list. G.M. Shearer, 1500 Iceplant Rd., Suite 7F, North Versailles, PA 15137.

20 games for sale or trade, \$8-\$30 each. Also interested in buying your adventures. Shaun McIntyre, 45 Chapple Dr., Glace Bay, N.S., Canada, B1A 4C3.

Questron, Telengard, Sword of Fargoal, Aztec, Death in the Caribbean: \$10 each. Dan Antolec, 5204 Midmoor Rd., Monona, WI 53176.

Looking for Seastalker, King's Quest II and other NEW adventures. I have 40+ adventures to trade with you. Chris Raudonis, 45 Pelham Rd., Hudson, NH 03051.

CP/M

Looking for Infocom games for CP/M 8" disk. David Aultfather, 13209 Dossau Rd., Austin, TX 78753.

IBM & Quest-alikes

Will trade Ultima II and III, complete with docs. Also Zork I and King's Quest. Want any good adventures. Write or call (not collect) before sending game. Thane K. Sherrington, RR # 2, Port Hood, Nova Scotia, Canada B0E 2W0. (902) 787-3387.

To trade: Seven Cities of Gold, King's Quest I and II, Transylvania, Pinball Construction, By Fire and Sword, Ultima II and III, Wizardry, Gato, Zork I, Archon, Mindshadow, Murder on the Zinderneuf. Robert Reid, 404 Shelley Place, Goldsboro, NC 27530.

Spellbreaker

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adventure vacation you'll never forget, because it may go on for months. (Even one of Infocom's crack gamma-testers wasn't able to get all 600 points.)

Along the way to attaining the highest score ever in an Infocom game, you'll trek to remote corners of Zork's unexplored regions, to the Flathead Mountains and the nest of a

giant roc, to the unfathomable Water Room, to the inscrutable Octagon Room and finally into slippery planes of reality unimagined by mortals until Lebling envisioned them. Lebling's lyrical prose invokes a sense of wonder and charm that distinguishes this as his best writing since *Starcross*. Occasional events may elicit a smile, but don't expect the zany humor of Steve Meretzky's *Sorcerer*, the initial game of this series. This one has its own distinct personality -- and its own distinct personalities, with more characters to meet than in the previous games in the *Enchanter* series.

SPELLCASTING, SPELLCHECKING

Did you ever consider that an adventure game's parser acts first as a spelling checker? Misspell a word and the parser will reprimand you as coldly as the severest fifth grade English teacher and then make you retype the entire command. Introduced in *A Mind Forever Voyaging*, Infocom's "oops" feature reduces the amount of retyping. Just say "oops" and follow it with the correctly spelled word; the parser will put the correction in your previous command and re-execute it. The vocabulary can be extended by adding your own words, a first for an adventure. This is done by carving words on a cube with a special tool called a burin. (I scratched "xyzy" on mine, but it didn't teleport me back to the wellhouse.)

Adventuring is like mountain-climbing: plenty of ways to get killed, more than one way to the top, wondrous discoveries on each leg of the journey, and an unparalleled sense of accomplishment when you reach the summit. If you're one of those jaded adventurers who thinks you've climbed every mountain, think again -- you'll need the practice to reach the peak in *Spellbreaker*, the Mount Everest of adventure.

Computer: All Personal Computers, including Amiga and ST
Skill Level: Master Adventurers Only

Saves: Eight (unlimited on Macintosh)

Price: Atari \$44.95; ST and others, \$49.95

Manufacturer: Infocom

Moebius

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Another shows where to find cisterns, where you can fill up on water and restore hit points. The manual also has general maps.

On the program disk you can save up to seven characters and a game in progress for each. But once a character has died and been reincarnated three times by Moebius, the game ends and you've got to start all over (the "born again but not eternally saved" syndrome). But at least you get an extra life for each monk restored to a temple, and can make a back-up by copying the scenario disk. Commodore owners in particular will appreciate the fact that you can restart the current game at its last saved position without having to quit and reload the program. The entire landscape of each realm loads into RAM, so the disk only accessed for the combat phase and character or object interaction. Also, the program is optimized to play faster on 128K computers. It has extended replay value because the location and contents of the vial and chests is randomized for a new game.

Dealing effectively with the people is as important as dealing out death to the enemy, something *Moebius* shares with *Ultima IV*. It's well-balanced, the clues and tools are fairly distributed, has a few logical puzzles to figure out, and the magic system is less complex than most. The all-keyboard interface and pull-down menus were thoughtfully designed and smoothly implemented. Though the combat phase is initially intimidating it's not really hard. The trick, I've learned from Ron Wartow, is to use the low kick. I made it through the Earth Realm solely by punching that comma key. I also found the high kick effective against evil monks. Another tip is to divine artifacts while in a cistern, where you can immediately restore the mental energy expended during divination. An engaging and unique fantasy, *Moebius* will keep most people busy for 50+ hours of orb-seeking fun.

Conversions: C-64/128

Skill Level: Intermediate

Saves: One per character

Price: \$59.95

Manufacturer: Origin Systems