### *Prisoner of Ice* by I-Motion

Your name is Lieutennant Ryan of the U.S. Secret Service and your current assignment has landed you on the submarine Victoria on the eve of World War II. There have been rumors of an ancient threat discovered in the glaciers of the South Pole by the Nazis. And your job is simple: prevent the crates from landing into the hands of the Nazis. On board the Victoria are two frozen crates containing the ancient creatures when a Nazi Destroyer deploys death charges. The Victoria's hit! It's taking on water, and the Admiral has just been killed by one of the monsters in the crate. You're in charge and sinking fast! What you do now can change the course of the rest of the war.

Prisoner of Ice (POI) is a graphic adventure game quite similar to those produced by Sierra On-Line and LucasArts. It has the standard mouse-only interface and click-everywhere design. What makes POI stand out are the Hi-resolution graphics (640x480x256 VGA), smooth, realistic animation, and cool cut-scenes. The sound track consists of either CD music or MIDI music (depending on your preferences) and Digital sound effects. Throw in a decent story and you have a pretty good game.

POI's graphics range from decent to good (usually good). POI can be run in either 640x480 VGA or 320x200 VGA. (POI requires 8 Megs of RAM for Hi-Res gameplay.) Prisoner should only be played in 640x480--the graphics are sharp and beautiful. The game looks okay in 320x200, but everything appears fuzzy. 640x480 just looks so much better. Prisoner, like it's predecessors (Alone in the Dark 1-3), has realistic and smooth animated people. The characters have that wonderful, but the environment is 2D hand painted backgrounds. The two work well, but none of the backgrounds make you say, "Wow."

Prisoner of Ice suffers from a problem that some games have. None of the people have reflections in shiny floors, and they don't cast shadows. (Maybe everyone is a new form of vampire?) This wouldn't be so bad, but it's such an obvious problem that could have been easily fixed.

The music in POI is good--it's never annoying, and always fits the situation. The voice acting, however, isn't nearly as well done. While most of the characters have decent voices, some of them have fake accents, and some of the lines were done with the wrong emotion. Another problem is that the main character's voice is too quiet in some scenes and you can't hear him over the music while everyone else's voice is nice and loud.

An interesting (and undocumented) addition to PIO is the built in screen saver. If you're playing POI, and are called away to answer the phone or fix yourself a snack you don't have to worry about the game "burning into" your monitor (which isn't really a problem with today's monitors). POI will start playing cut-scenes from the game in random order. In one it's more of a music video than a cutscene, with the music synched to various game scenes--very cool. This is the second game I've encountered with a built-in screen saver and I hope that the trend continues. (The first was Full Throttle. See VrE issue 10 for a complete review)

I-Motion took an old idea from Zak McKracken (one of LucasArts first few games) and enclosed a "newspaper" filled with hints. Unfortunately, the hints in the paper are so blatantly obvious, (not to mention the fact that they give you the complete answer) that it's really not recommended reading until you're really, really stuck.

And that's a problem with Prisoner of Ice. The puzzles in POI are too easy. There are no red herrings, and as soon as you pick something up, chances are that it's used right away. The box-cover touts, "...70 plus hours of gameplay."--maybe for a beginner. Prisoner of Ice is a great introduction game for beginners, and is a decent challenge for intermediate gamers. But for the hard-core adventure gamer, this one's

good for a couple evenings.

       I-Motion has come up with better games in the past.  The graphics are alright, but not stunning.  (The best parts are the cut-scenes, which are excellent)  The voice acting is okay most of the time, but can be painful at times.  Prisoner of Ice is not the best game I-Motion has done, but it's worth looking at if your a beginning, or intermediate gamer.  For hard-core gamers who expect at least 100 hours of gameplay from a game, check out something else.

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| Ratings | | System Requirements |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Graphics | 82 | 486dx33 |
| Sound | 80 | 4MB Ram |
| Interface | 82 | 2x CD-Rom |
| Fun Factor | 80 | VGA |
| | | sound blaster compatible |
| Overall: | 81 | |