

review: **The Legend of Kyrandia**

Reviewed by Sandy Kettenhofen

Type: Fantasy Adventure; Role-Playing Game

Publisher: Virgin Games (800/VIR-IN07)

Retail Price: \$59.99

Mail Order:

\$39.00

Requires: System 6.0.7 or later, 12" or larger color monitor, 8-bit video (256 color), HD floppy drive, 10 MB hard drive space.

Protection: None

In days of old when Knights were bold, every castle had a simple-minded little character whose sole purpose in life was to entertain. He was, of course, the Court Jester. In "FABLES & FIENDS, The Legend of Kyrandia," Malcolm, Court Jester of Kyrandia, has no intention of maintaining this historical precedent.

Malcolm has become obsessed with power and magic. So obsessed, in fact, that he has been imprisoned to prevent him from invoking the magical abilities of the "Kyragem," the enormous jewel that contains the combined magic of the entire realm. Until recently, the Kyragem has maintained peace and harmony in Kyrandia; however, as the story begins, Malcolm succeeds in breaking out of his prison and embarks on a mission to destroy Kyrandia. Malcolm intends to make extensive use of the Kyragem, but not in its historically peaceful manner.

Word of Malcolm's escape reaches Brandon, the Royal Prince. Brandon has been raised in the woods by his grandfather, and for his own safety Brandon has never been told that he is, in fact, the Prince. Once Malcolm escapes, Brandon has to stop him from fulfilling his demonic mission by reaching and repairing the Kyragem. This is the journey that Brandon takes through the forests of Kyrandia.

The plot of the story and the method by which Brandon can repair the Kyragem is revealed during his travels. He is helped by Brynn, a lovely seeress at the temple. It is she who sends

him off in the right direction and aids him in obtaining a magical amulet, which possesses powers that Brandon will be able to use to his advantage during his journey.

Wanted: Good Pair of Walking Shoes. There are several different selections provided via the menu bar: large or small screen view, enhanced musical background, sound effects, and — most importantly — the speed at which Brandon walks through the game. After the first series of forest scenes it is recommended that you select the fastest pace possible. You will be doing a lot of walking and it will save an enormous amount of time to accomplish this as quickly as possible.

Most of the game can be traversed without need for mapping, with the exception of the cave sequence where mapping becomes very important. You will need to keep track of specific caves that have “firebushes.” These firebushes provide light that is necessary to explore the caverns. If the firebush burns out or a cave is entered without any light, Brandon meets with a very untimely demise.

anted: Large Size Backpack. There are items scattered all over the landscape that Brandon will need to obtain. Gems are especially plentiful. You will find them lying around on the ground and hanging from the trees. As objects are discovered they can be placed in Brandon’s inventory. Unfortunately, this inventory space is entirely too limited. There are many items employed throughout the game and since there are few clues as to what exactly will be needed, you almost immediately run out of room trying to carry everything, just in case.

Practically Clueless. There are many puzzles, unfortunately, there are few real clues to let you know what is required to solve these puzzles. The puzzles themselves are almost “simplistic” so it appears that to create a feeling of challenge some of them can only be derived by sheer guesswork. The characters that Brandon encounters are very helpful when it comes to sending him in the right direction, but the solution to the puzzles is not achieved by analyzing clues, it is pretty much strictly trial and error that will bring about the necessary results. All veterans to RPGs (role playing games) know that it is wise to save the game as you proceed, and Legend is no exception. It is recommended that in addition to using the Save function, you will probably find it to your advantage to use the Save As function too. If you find that you are not in possession of a necessary inventory item you

will then be able to revert back to a game at a point where you can pick it up. There are areas that, once reached, you cannot go back again.

Honey, just pull over and ask for directions. One of the innovations in this game shows up when attempting to travel between scenes. You can tell if the chosen direction is accessible by the look of the cursor. If you can travel between scenes in the chosen direction, the cursor becomes an arrow pointing in the direction of travel. If you are not allowed to leave the scene in a certain direction, the cursor becomes a circle with a diagonal line through it, indicating that it is a no go. This nice touch saves a lot of time and frustration.

Nice Little Story. The Legend of Kyrandia is a good adventure. Although the puzzles are not overtly challenging, there is much to recommend this game. The scenery is delightful, although the forest scenes that make up the majority of the landscape can get very repetitive by the end of the game. There are some really beautiful scenes and some sequences of "metamorphosis" that are quite impressive. The graphic animation is quite clear and detailed in the smaller screen version, however, the large screen viewing creates some blurring and more of a "jagged" appearance. The special effects are very well done and the actions of the characters are quite lifelike. There is quite a bit of humorous dialog, and the characters have a definite and consistent personalities. It is an enjoyable adventure, and with the combination of good plot, humor, excellent scenery, and some remarkable special effects, it makes for a gaming experience that can be enjoyed by the entire family.

Pros:

- Good story
- Great scenery and special effects
- Choice of speed for movement and dialog
- Lifelike movement for characters
- Little need for mapping

Cons:

- Clueless (seemingly randomized) puzzles
- Some may find puzzles too simplistic
- Some repetitive scenery
- Too much time spent walking
- Not enough room in Prince's inventory