

review: **Prince of Destruction**

by Bruce Strange

Type: Adventure/Role-playing

Publisher: Andrew Barry, Tonio Loewald, & Pamina Loewald

Shareware Fee: \$25.00 Single Player, \$40.00 Multiplayer (800/354-3001)

Requires: 16/256 color Macintosh, System 7, 3 MB RAM

Protection: None

ou stand ready. Your Starmetal Blade is an extension of your arm and Roland's armor makes you sound like the tin-man every time you move. But you are face to face with Sir Cumference and he's laughing at your pot helm comparing it to a something you find in a chamber. He strikes first, but you parry, lunge, and connect. Soon Sir Cumference lies face down in a circle of blood. You search his corpse and take his Damascus blade, clearly inferior to yours.

Prince of Destruction is the first adventure using the Multi-player Animated Role-playing System (MARS) fantasy engine created by Andrew Barry, Pamina Loewald, and Tonio Loewald all from Australia. Prince of Destruction is fat binary, so it is compatible with both the original Macintosh and Power Macintoshes. POD makes use of both Sound Manager 3.0 and the new Speech Manager.

Your mission, free Nestaria from the tyranny of Grishnakh, the Prince of Destruction, and put on the throne his sister Imria. Along the way you meet goblins, knights, peasants, centaurs, and more. Different areas of Nestaria are connected by a series of teleporters, but the teleporters are not completely functional. A part of your mission is to retrieve the orb which controls the machine which controls these teleporters. Sounds complicated? It's not really. It just requires making hamburger out of a few goblins.

found the game to be extremely enjoyable and non-politically correct which adds to the fun. The graphics are excellent and the attention to detail is evident. From the scattered daisies in the grass to the worn paths in front of doorways where traffic is high enough to keep the grass from recovering. Also, when a character walks under a tree, the character walks under the tree. The tree obscures your vision of the character, because you are looking down upon him or her. Fortunately, the authors did not carry the theme to buildings so you can see through the roof into the rooms.

Prince of Destruction is a multi-player game. With the multi-user version you can set up the game to work as a server for up to four players. You can choose from four different characters: Nanoc a male fighter, Silly a male elf, Thysa a female thief, and Ada a female wizard.

Each character has their weaknesses and strengths. I found that Nanoc is the best player for single play. He can wield any weapon and wear any armor. Both the range and aim of his missile weapon, his axe, are his major weaknesses. The worst for the single player is Ada. She can wield no weapons nor wear any armor.

There are several areas to explore in Nestaria. Towns and communities are sprinkled throughout Nestaria. The towns and communities have anywhere from one building to several, usually guarded so you have to vanquish the guards before exploring the structures.

A forest with a hidden entrance covers part of Nestaria. The authors hint that you should take notice of anything unusual. They mean it. To find the hidden entrance to the forest you must "search" for it. The key is searching in the right place. In other words when you see a worn path that leads nowhere it probably means something. . .

here is an underground complex that traverses under Nestaria and surfaces in several different places. Many of the buildings have a cellar that connects with the complex. Many different monsters inhabit the underground caverns so be careful.

You communicate with other characters through balloons. Most characters seem to recognize key words like "name," "job," "place," and "hello." While other characters respond to others. Talking to characters accomplishes more than testing out Apple's new Speech Manager. Some character conversations lead to clues which help to accomplish your mission. The authors state that the game is more fun if you talk to the characters in complete sentences. If you want to cut to the chase, single words don't seem to offend anyone but goblins, and they're sword fodder anyway.

The Myrdale fortress contains a magic book. When you read the book, you magically gain another level. In the demo version, though the book reappears after you leave the room. You can get an unlimited number of these books, but in the demo you are limited to only five levels.

Prince of Destruction is a true innovation in role-playing games. The authors describe the game as a mixture of Gauntlet and a role-playing game. The games similarity to Gauntlet is the viewpoint and the way your character moves and attacks. The innovation is that it works. The arcade action keeps the game exciting while at the same time you can interact

with other characters while you wander around following your own agenda.