

THE BLACK CAULDRON!!!!

THE BLACK CAULDRON, is loosely based on the Walt Disney movie of the same name and was written in conjunction with Disney's personal computer software staff. It's a 3-D game almost totally controlled by joystick, mouse, or various keys depending on your computer and personal choice. In my version, only one command, FAST (NORMAL and SLOW are options too), may be entered on the keyboard and everything else is done with the DO, USE, or LOOK commands using the mouse, joystick, number keypad, tab, and various function keys.

This is not as easy as it sounds as you must decide which item to "use" and must place your character in just the right place and al. However, it was thought that typed commands would be more difficult for children. If you are having trouble with an arcade sequence killing you by surprise, it may help to use the "slow" command to slow Taran down. To use an item in your inventory, press the appropriate buttons, and keys to see it on your screen, move the "highlight" to the item you want to use, and press again to return to the game screen.

Since I am a long-time adventure game player, I normally use north, east, etceteras, as directions. However, you may be newer at this than I am and up, right, and so forth, may be more comfortable. I've tried to make these directions clear; but if you get confused, just think of your screen as having a set of compass points on it with north is pointing up and it should be clearer. In addition, since you may be reading this mainly to help your child, I've tried to make it as clear and complete as possible.

You are Taran, assistant pig keeper and would-be adventurer. Your mission, as it evolves during the game, is to deliver the visionary pig, Hen Wen, to safety and destroy the evil cauldron. You begin outside the cottage of Dallben in Caer Allben in Prydain. If your computer has enough memory, type FAST on the keyboard and press the carriage return. (Try it. If you don't have enough memory, it won't work.) Then move Taran up to the door of the cottage and use the DO command to open the door and go in. Move over in front of Dallben and DO again. He'll tell you it's time to feed the pi so move up to the fire and DO to get the food cooking there. Go outside and east (right) to the pen. DO at the gate to open it, go in, highlight the pig food and USE it to feed Hen Wen. (There's corn in the shed too and you can use it to feed Hen Wen instead of the gruel.)

She will take off in a hurry so follow her back into the cottage. (Don't worry if she gets ahead of you, just keep going back to the cottage.) Move fairly close to Dallben and read about Hen Wen's vision and your mission. When Dallben gives you the rope, move to the upper right side of the room and DO to open the cupboard and take out everything in it. (If you keep on pressing the DO command you will end by closing the cupboard.) Leave the cottage (Hen Wen will follow) and move around to the bottom left side of the water trough right in front of the low place.

Highlight the water flask and then USE it. Move North and West (up and left) keeping close to the edge of the screen.

When you get to the tree with the hole in it, move right in front of it and DO.

You'll find a lute. It looks quicker and easier to move straight up the middle of the screen but the evil Horned King has sent his despicable gwythaints after Hen Wen; and the method for avoiding them (and almost all Sierra bad guys is to move to another screen FAST! So stay close to the edge of the monitor and move two screens up (north) to a briar patch as best you can. This is the first, and easiest, of a series of arcade sequences in this game. You want to move north but must, through trial and error, find a twisty path through the briars. This one's not hard. Just go around the rock to the west (left), north a little, east around a bush in front of you, and west around the back. (If you came in from the east from behind the tree, just go west until you can't go any further, north, and straight west.)

When you have successfully negotiated the briars and gone north to the next screen, you'll see a door to a underground house in front of you. Move up to it and DO. You open it and go inside. This is the home of the Fair Folk who will take care of Hen Wen for you. When Gwystyl has given you the new message from Dallben, the magic word, ad takes the pig to safety, move up and right to the cupboard at the back. DO and you'll get the cookies. Go back outside and you begin the next phase of the game.

Go straight east to the next screen. Wander around here for a bit, moving a screen or two if necessary, and you should see Gurgi, a little creature who's dirty but cute, and hungry. Give him the cookies (or the apple) and he'll be your friend for life. This isn't mandatory but you get points and it is part of one (not the best but still useful) of the solutions to the game. Go south (down) to the lake with the smooth stones. Cross over it in any way you like, just don't get too close to the waterfall. You can walk around or swim (You can also go as far east (right) as possible and north (up) from there, across the footbridge, etceteras) With the waterfall on your right, move across the bottom of the screen close to the rocks in the falls.

When you're near a flatish rock that sticks up rather high in the water, highlight the magic word and USE it. The rock will drop. Be careful here and step on the rock going slightly up to the next flat area but not really straight up. The graphics aren't right here and it looks like you're walking on thin air but if it's dark, you're in the right place. Keep going east and there you are in the Land of the Fair Folk being challenged by King Eiddileg! A bit battered for falling down the hole but none the worse for wear. DO to tell him who you are, highlight and USE the lute to give it to him as a token, and he'll give you some flying dust. Highlight and USE the dust, fly out, USE the magic word to lower the rock again and return to the ground. Go North two screens to the bridge. If you go into the stream

and LOOK at the bridge from the side you'll see a food wallet. DO to get it and you'll never run out of food although I never had any problem using just the bread and the apple.

Now you're ready to tackle the castle. Go West three screens to a frightening forest that has a tree with a dagger holding up a "no trespassing" sign. Move to the tree in a sort of NNE direction and DO to get the dagger. Now go North to the next screen by going between the two black trees at the top ("The rapids are turbulent and treacherous. This is not a good place to dive in.") and West to the Base of Eagle Mountains.

You are confronted with a large number of rocks which make up another maze, quite a bit more difficult this time. Make some notes for yourself so you'll know how to do this. You have to come back down this way and do it all over again later. Start navigating the maze from slightly up on the right. (Specifically, where you came in from the east (right).) Move in (west) and north a bit, west, northeast, west, north, west in a bit of a loop and back around east-northeast (east on a slight north angle), and, finally, north up the rocks somewhat to the right (east) of the center of your screen. After you've gotten into the maze the main rocks you are concerned with are the big one in the center and slightly to the right of your screen (around to the right and across the back) and the large pointed ones in the top half to the left (around the left and across the back).

This may take quite a bit of adjusting and some work since all I could give you was a general idea of where it goes. Keep working and look for openings. Much depends on just how you approached a specific area. Look for "V" shapes in the rocks for extra clues. However, they ARE there, and at least you are unlikely to die in the maze. You'll end up right in front of a barren tree which is a new screen.

Save a LOT in this area!! You'll need those saves! This stuff is tricky and the flying dust won't work. Move up close to the tree, highlight the ROPE in your inventory, and USE it. It should attach to the tree and head on up to the top corner of your screen. If it doesn't, move a bit and keep trying. Remember which way it went! You'll need to know that to get back down. Use the DO command to start climbing the rope. If possible, I strongly recommend you use the keyboard here. The rope is set at a precise northeast (or northwest) angle and you can easily fall off using the joystick or mouse. Don't forget to save. I recommend one at the bottom before you start the climb and another at the top. One helpful thing is you'll be walking into a cliff at the top and so you don't have to worry about making certain he's stopped before getting to the next screen.

Now that you're here, cross to the other side of the ledge and move Taran into the wall until his fingertips "clutch the tiny crevices in the rock face," move him across and down to the next ledge down. SAVE! Walk around the ledge and climb again. Up this time and away from the side your rope is on. If your rope is on the left, (it went right) move until his

feet just clear the long ledge one level up from the rope and then drop down. If your rope is on the right, you'll need to move all the way up into the ledges on the top (but not so far that you fall off) before coming back down or you won't be able to get him onto the ledge no matter what it says on your screen. (At least in my version.)

SAVE! Now, walk around the long ledge being careful not to fall off the front OR the back. Climb again until you can land on the final ledge at the side of your screen over the rope. Be careful! It is possible to fall off the side if you're too close to the edge of the screen and you'll need to adjust a bit to make it work. The left screen here is a little strange. One time I was close to the left side of the top ledge and automatically dropped off, without being in the right place and leaving an odd red piece behind which wasn't really there. Also the topmost climb (into the overhanging rocks) looks all wrong. However, it doesn't matter. SAVE! Go to the next screen.

If you're hungry or thirsty, this is a good place to take care of it. Highlight WATER (not the flask) or BREAD (or the apple or food wallet if you like) and then USE it. This screen is surprisingly small and it may look as if you'll fall off the edge if you go north (up) but you won't. So, go north to the next screen and you'll be confronted with another ledge-style path to the castle. Carefully take your way to the castle following the graphics (the keyboard may help you here although you can do it with the joystick without much trouble if you're careful) and go north to the castle and the moat filled with alligators. (Another good place for a save.)

There are two ways to get in the castle. You can leap into the moat when the alligators move apart, swim to the wall, DO, climb it, cut the vines at the window in the top left corner, and go in. However, I'm an adventure game player, not an arcader, and after navigating the maze, climbing the rope and the wall, and navigating the walkway, I chose the easier route. Go west to the side of the castle and you'll see a drawbridge which is most likely closed. If so, go east again and come back. Keep moving back and forth between the two screens and eventually the drawbridge will be open and the King's henchman will be there with a cart.

For some odd reason, I often found it helpful to use the magic word near the alligators but this didn't always work and is certainly not necessary. In any case, as soon as you see the cart move around behind it and DO. You'll jump in the back, the henchman won't see you, and you'll end up inside the castle. As soon as he leaves, DO out of the cart and go north through the archway to the wine cellar.

If you started this walkthru in the middle and Hen Wen has already been caught, you need to go north, west, up the stairs, east, and through the door to the East onto the balcony overlooking the Horned King's Throne Room. You should see Hen Wen and can jump off, grab her to break the spell, and take off with her. You can throw her off the parapet, or go across the drawbridge or down into the dungeons letting her go out

through the hole in the burial chamber either with or without Eilonwy. However, I have been playing Sierra games for too many years to have allowed her to be captured so I have not tried any of these methods and am not sure what happens after that except that you need to DO at the pig tracks near the waterfall to jump from rock to rock in order to get to the King of the Fair Folk.

If Hen Wen is already safe you have some options on how to get to the dungeons. You can go there directly from the wine casks, or go north, west, down the stairs, south, turn the figure on the wall, and climb down the ladder. If you get caught right away, rattle the cup at the cell door to open up a passage, and don't forget to grab your stuff from the closet through the left door at the back in the area north of the wine. Personally I went directly down the garbage chute.

In the wine cellar there are six huge wine casks, three on each side of the door. Between the first and second to the right of the door (counting from the center) is a garbage chute you can't see. Go between them, wiggle around a bit, and you'll fall down the chute landing two floors down, a bit dizzy but no big problem. Here is Eilonwy and her magic bauble imprisoned by the Horned King. Go west twice (go north first if you were captured or west, north if you went down the stairs) and you'll see a wall where five of the stones reach onto the floor from the wall. Move up in front of them (a LOOK may be useful here) and DO until you have removed them one-by-one. Go through the hole into the burial chamber and you'll see a stone coffin with a "glint of metal" on the top.

The magic bauble will find an exit to the north-northwest and Eilonwy will follow it out of the castle. (If you have Hen Wen, she can follow them too.) Since you can't follow her, move up close to the coffin and DO. Now you have a magic sword! Go south twice and east. You'll see a "hideous gargoyle" on the wall next to a ladder. Stand in front of the gargoyle and DO to open a trap door in the ceiling (not necessary if you used the stairs), then move in front of the ladder and highlight the sword in your inventory. Be prepared to move quickly because you MUST NOT be caught with the sword or the game is over. I found it easier to use the function keys here instead of a joystick or mouse because it required only one button so it was faster. SAVE!

Okay, now go up the ladder, move closer to the center of the screen and go North. The henchman is guarding the cell and the dungeon so he appears here incredibly often; and he must be close to you or you'll miss him with the sword. When he gets fairly close USE it. Yup. It's a magic sword all right. (Also typically Sierra non-violent.) He's momentarily stunned but not permanently out of commission. Moving fast DO to get the keys on the right wall and go back south to avoid the henchman. Go back to the center of the screen and go north again continuing to move quickly.

It's easier to complete this sequence if you can whack the henchman about a third of the way up the screen. This allows you time to do what you need to do before he wakes up and he's still far enough away so it takes him a bit of extra time to reach you. USE the SWORD on the henchman again, immediately highlight the KEYS, go straight up to the door in front of you, USE the keys to open it, and go through it. Move up to Ffleuddur Fflam and DO. You'll introduce yourself and untie him. He'll give you his harp and take off.

Highlight the sword again and go south through the door, west through the next door, up the first stairs, east (don't forget to grab your stuff out of the closet if you were captured), and then south twice to the drawbridge area. (You can also go up the stairs, west twice to the parapet, and DO to jump off or back out the way you came in if you climbed the wall. However, the parapet method, at least, doesn't give you the 13 points you get by using the drawbridge. Again, I never climbed the walls so I can't tell you about that method.)

The henchman appear here often; and I found that it was almost always possible to move fast enough to change screens to avoid him instead of taking the chance of missing him with the sword. Move up close to the drawbridge mechanism (you will need to be either directly in front or slightly south (down) from it) and USE the sword. The sword has MORE magic powers! It easily cuts the chain and the drawbridge is now permanently open.

You'll need a save here and you can decide whether you want it on disk 1 (inside castle) or disk 2 (outside). Go out the door, across the drawbridge (again, the keyboard helps as it's VERY narrow and straight east/west), and back to the rock wall. Now you know why I told you to remember which side your rope was on because if you go the wrong way from the castle you won't be able to get down.

Climb back down the cliff and the rope the same way you got up but don't untie the rope because you'll be needing it again. Navigate back through the rocks, exit south, and go south to the swamp. It will say there's a swamp to the southwest and if you LOOK it will tell you it might be possible to cross it here. From here you can try jumping on the rocks in the swamp if you like but it's a lot easier to use the flying dust. (If you went west out of the rock maze, just go south twice and fly west from the northeast corner of Morva Marsh. With the dust it's okay either way.) Highlight the dust, USE it, and go south (or W) past the beach (It's light and yellowish in my version.), and south to the witches house, USE it again to land, and start walking again. Move to the door, DO to open it, and go inside. There'll be a chest here so move up close directly in front of it and DO to open it.

Oops! It seems that the witches like to turn people into frogs and they aren't too pleased with your activities! DO to tell them who you are but that isn't enough so highlight the sword and USE it to trade. (Make SURE

to tell them who you are first or you'll be sorry.) Great, that's what they wanted and you all go outside automatically. Move up to the cauldron and LOOK then move to the witches and DO. (Be careful not to use DO too close to the cauldron or you'll jump in it and the game will be over.) Wonderful.

These "ladies" are real "sweethearts." You get more snide remarks and a gwythaint comes by, grabs the cauldron, and carries it off to the castle. "sigh" Time to return to the castle. Fly back across the marsh, land where you can, go back to the rock maze, and return to the castle using the exact same route as before except the drawbridge is open this time. NOTE: If the drawbridge is closed when you return to the castle, you can get in the same way you did before or try another one of the listed methods.

Getting caught is not recommended this time so head for the garbage chute between the wine casks. Go south, highlight the Magic Mirror, then east to the King's Secret Burial Chamber where he's preparing to resurrect his evil army. USE the mirror when he comes a bit closer to you. He sees his true self and that much evil is too much even for him. He jumps into the cauldron destroying both I and himself forever. Hooray!!

At this point the game is automatic except for pushing the button when there's too much text. The destruction of the cauldron shakes the castle to its foundations and throws you into the moat where you grab a passing log and hold on tight. When you get to more peaceful parts you'll see the cauldron floating in the stream and get out of the water. The witches will arrive and start offering you things to give them back the cauldron. Don't do anything and they will eventually offer you the sword, which you'll get automatically.

If you like, you can press the button to look at the Status Screen and see your full 230 points. Your friends Eilonwy, Gurgi, and Iwduur will appear and all four of you will head off into the distance with Dallben waving good-bye.

CONGRATULATIONS!! YOU'RE A REAL HERO NOW!