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1. Every once in a while, a graphically impressive CD game hits the shelves and suddenly becomes the new standard by which all other CD games are judged. 7th Guest was first, and was followed a couple of years later by Myst, which currently reigns supreme. It might not for much longer, though. The challenger to the throne is on its way from Software Toolworks, and it's called Dragon Lore.
2. No foolin' . . . this is one of the best, if not *the* best-looking game I've ever seen on any platform. I could probably drone on for 6 or 7 more captions about how cool it looks, **{FLIP}**but my editor says I also have to cater to the quiche-eating-chess-playing-nerd types who think gameplay is important. Just kidding . . . I think it's important too.
3. Not only does Software Toolworks expect Dragon Lore to surpass all other games of its type on the PC, they also hope to pioneer roleplaying on the 3DO home system. You can look for a 3DO version of Dragon Lore shortly after the PC version is released. The 3DO's graphic capabilities should allow for the same excellent visuals found on the PC. Good gameplay is the "guts" of a game, though, and seeing some guts would be a welcome change in the trend of most 3DO games thus far.
4. Does Dragon Lore have the balance that so many "could-have-beens" lacked? From what I've seen, the answer is a resounding "yes". Cashing in on the popular first-person perspective trend, Dragon Lore puts you in the shoes of Werner, a young man who finds out that he lives with an adopted family and **{FLIP}**sets out to discover his true past. Werner's hair **{for comic value, draw polygon box around his hair}**is something to behold . . . you'd think he could use it as a weapon!
5. Speaking of weapons, you won't find as much emphasis on bloody melee here as you would in most CRPGs. Dragon Lore is meant as more of an intuitive adventure with RPG elements included. The objective isn't to kill things and search them for treasure, it's to gain clues to your own mystery. In those uncommon moments where relief can only come via decapitating an enemy, however**{FLIP}**, you can use your trusty sword to wreak havoc. It's found early in the game.
6. Dragon Lore is graphical, and by that, I don't mean "it has good graphics". I mean that there's almost a complete and total absence of text. You may see a sentence or two on-screen when an NPC talks to you, but you can ignore it because Dragon Lore's digitized speech lets you listen to it instead. Notice I say "you *may* see . . ." . This is because most tasks that Werner must carry out can be accomplished in either a violent or intelligent manner. Depending on how you choose to solve something, **{FLIP}**a character you meet later in the game may have a different opinion of you. Generally, the more violent you become, the more difficult a time you'll have.
7. **{Note . . . I want a .FLI to go in here. I'm still waiting for it from Kevin Bachus. I'll keep you informed whether to use the screen shots I included or the .FLI}**If you don't already know, a typical CD can hold almost 700MB of data. Given that there are graphically excellent games out there that take up only 15 or 20MB on a hard disk, you'd wonder what could possibly take up **{FLIP}**enough space to warrant a CD-only format for a game. In a word: animation. **{FLIP}**Not only does Dragon Lore hit you with a full-motion introduction at the beginning, but it also contains multiple "transition" animations inside the game. You'll see these when you travel great distances between areas.
8. Is this sounding too good to be true? Well, for now, it is. Dragon Lore probably won't be released until early 1995. By that time, I hope everyone who's viewed to this preview has already placed an order for it. CD-ROM owners have complained of a lack of good, CD-only titles. Dragon Lore should quiet them . . . maybe for good.

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Summary

Dragon Lore is a graphical masterpiece of a game, and playing it is almost as fun as looking at it. While its first-person perspective is nothing new, Dragon Lore does feature innovative, easy-to-use inventory and combat systems which are meant to speed along gameplay and not bog down the gamer with arcane statistics. Can you help Werner find out who he really is? You' ll need to use both your head and your sword . . . in that order!

Also Try

Myst, 7th Guest, Lands of Lore

Game Specs

<i>OS</i>	
<i>Required</i>	CDROM, 4(?)MB RAM
<i>Graphics</i>	VGA
<i>Music</i>	100% Soundblaster-compatibles
<i>Digitized speech</i>	100% Soundblaster-compatibles
<i>Recommended</i>	2X CD ROM