



For those who were unable to solve the original adventure before the sequel was released, Scorpio offers her walk-through of the original Space Quest.

Spring is in the air, the time when a young grue's fancy turns to. . . . hmmm, well, maybe we'd better not go into that (this part of the year, I have to keep a close eye on Fred, but don't let it worry you. . . he's really harmless! Really!). Anyway, the nights are still a bit chilly, so draw your chair up close to the fire, and we'll take a look at an out-of-this-world excursion tour.

Space Quest sends players on a journey to track down and destroy the Star Generator so that it cannot be used by the Sariens, evil alien invaders. The game has 3-D graphics, and both joystick and keyboard input. It is also a very linear adventure: adventurers move along from location to location, solving all puzzles in one area before moving on to the next. Once a person has left a location, there is no going back, so it's very important to solve all the puzzles and pick up all the necessary objects, before going on to the next step.

Frequent saving of the game is a necessity. Not only are there many ways of dying quickly, but portions of the adventure are semi-arcade in style and will probably take players several tries to get through them. Fortunately, the save disk allows up to 26 positions, and the save itself is very fast (restoring, however, is another matter, which we'll come to later).

Play begins on the starship Arcada, which has just been boarded by the Sariens, in search of the Star Generator. As the lowly janitor, who would rather nap than mop, you manage to sleep through most of the action. This is probably a good thing, too, as the Sariens have killed just about everyone else on board the vessel.

Thus, the first task is to get off the ship, which will soon blow up, leaving behind no evidence of the Sariens' nefarious handiwork. This is easier said than done, because the place is crawling with the aliens, any of whom will shoot you dead on sight. Since you have no weapons of your own, it is best to remain out of sight if you possibly can. The Sariens' shooting is both fast and accurate.

Expect to do a lot of restoring as

and no one is there at the time, you could easily miss something essential to completing the quest.

Once you're sure you have everything there is to be found, it's time to leave the doomed Arcada via the escape pod. This will take you to the planet Kerona, where you survive (just barely) a crash-landing in the desert. Be certain to look around here carefully before moving on.

As to where you should move on to, a little trial and error should show you which direction is the only safe one. This brings you to a rocky area, where sooner or later a nasty Sarien spider droid will appear. Guess who it's looking for?

You'll have to deal with the Spider before going any further. Unfortunately, you still have no weapons. Perhaps, however, Mother Nature will provide for you, if you can find the right spot. This is one of the arcade-type sequences, so be sure to save the game before you do anything.

Once the spider is disposed of, you can continue on your merry way, until you find yourself in a series of caves. The first one isn't much, but the second one has a live geyser and a grate in the floor. I wouldn't get too close to that grate if I were you.

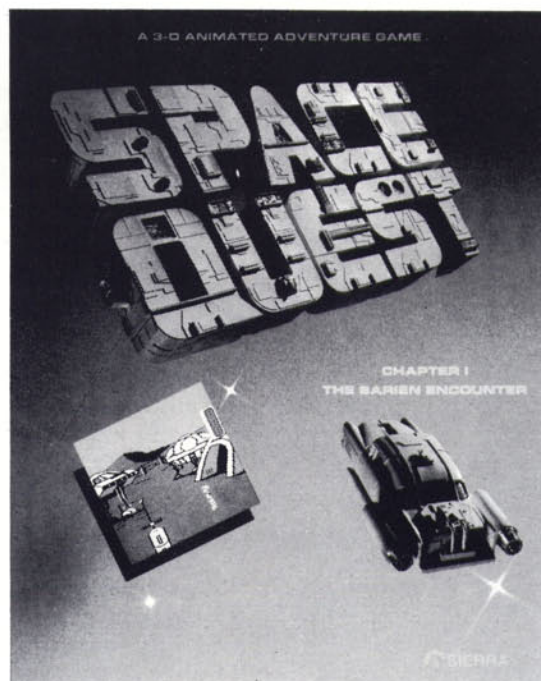
As you look around, you notice that there doesn't seem to be any other way out of this cave. Of course, looks can be deceiving. There's probably an exit somewhere, but most likely it will require a little action on your part before you can see it.

The next cave is a bit nasty. The pool is pretty, but deadly. However, the real trick here is finding the exit. You have to position yourself just right, and this may take several tries. Keep at it, though, and you should be able to get out.

Then again, maybe you won't be too thrilled at reaching the cave beyond, as some laser beams are blocking your path. You won't be able to move or climb around them, and you certainly can't jump over them. Still, there is a way to deal with this

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SPACE QUEST



by Scorpio

you move your animated figure around the ship, finding out where things are and how to work them. Remember to look at everything, not only now, but later on, as there are no text descriptions in the game. Careful attention to the graphics will often mean the difference between life and death. Take everything that isn't nailed down, since all the objects have a purpose.

In this portion of the adventure, there is one location where you will have to wait awhile for someone to show up. There are no indications of this in the game. If you happen to walk through the particular room

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walking off the end of the current screen), the program goes to disk to get the next room, and this is very slow. Combined with having to move the figure from one end of the screen to the other, playing the game can at times seem a very drawn-out procedure. In the 16-bit versions this may not be a problem, but Apple owners will need some patience.

The arcade sequences depend more on timing than anything else. Still, one error in any of them will force a restore, and this drags out the game. Probably the most tedious of them is crossing the desert in the skimmer. Movement of the vehicle (at least on the Apple) is slow and a bit jerky. Many of the boulders can be avoided without moving at all, but you will have to do some dodging around, and it's likely the skimmer will take a few hits before you reach your destination.

Why designers want to put things like this in an adventure game is a mystery. Typically, adventure games are mental puzzles which require thought and reflection, not hand-eye coordination. There are plenty of games on the market for those who want fast action and dexterity exercises. These don't really belong in an adventure game.

Another mystery is the slot machine. It is the only way to acquire the money needed to buy the spaceship and the droid. However, all you do is place bets and wait to see what comes up. As the results appear to be totally random, it can take quite awhile before you have the money you need. There really ought to have been another way of obtaining the necessary cash, besides the slots.

While the adventure comes on four double-sided disks (Apple), most of the space seems to be given over to the graphics, since there are really only four major locations in the game: the interior of the Arcada, the Keronian desert, the town, and the interior of the Sarien ship. Each of these, in turn, has a number of

areas within it, but not very many. Therefore, mapping, at least, is no problem. The game just seems larger, because of the full-width screen and the necessity for moving a character figure across it.

The game works with one or two drives. On a two-drive system, you can put your save disk in the second one, which is very handy. Saving, as noted earlier, is quick, although the restores, which require loading in of screens, are slow.

There are pre-defined commands for the number keys, such as saving and restoring games, repeating a just-given command, and so forth. If you want to restore a game after meeting an untimely end, you must use the number key for the restore, as the program will not accept any other keyboard input. The ESCape key functions as a game pause, which can be helpful in some situations.

The manual is thin. It contains only some background information on

the plot and a few hints on playing the game. A separate command card is included with instructions for your particular computer, along with a list of the special command keys and what they do. While this is not a lot of information, it's more than sufficient to get you started and see you through the adventure.

Overall, Space Quest is a middle-of-the-road game. While it's not likely to stump veteran adventurers for long, novice and intermediate players will probably find it challenging enough, as long as they don't mind having arcade sequences in the adventure.

Well, I see by the old invisible clock on the wall it's that time again. If you need help with an adventure game, see the bottom of my other column in this issue (check the table of contents) for information on how to get in touch with me. Until next time, happy adventuring!

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Do Arcade Sequences Have a Place in Adventure Games?

An Editorial Comment

by Scorpia

Why some designers feel the need to put arcade sequences in adventure games is a mystery. Typically, adventure games are mental puzzles which require thought and reflection, not hand-eye coordination. There are plenty of games on the market for those who want fast action and dexterity exercises. These do not really belong in an adventure game.

Of course, this is nothing new. A few games over the years have had some action parts to them, but fortunately, only a few. Generally, these arcade sequences add nothing to the game but frustration. One of the more notorious was the lava-jumping in an old adventure called *Mask Of The Sun*. It was necessary to hop onto a rock that popped up and down in the lava. This was the only means of getting across. Failure meant restoring the game and with only one chance to get onto the rock, that usually meant a lot of restoring.

Things like this do nothing to advance the game, they merely slow progress down by placing unnecessary obstacles in the player's path. Having to unravel the puzzles in an adventure is usually quite enough for most people. They do not need the aggravation of live-action sequences on top of that.

There is nothing wrong with arcade action in the proper place, a game that features arcade as the main action. Sticking it into the middle of an adventure game (any adventure game) only makes for an irritating intrusion that most adventure players can do without.