

Walt Disney meets the Sierra On-Line Design Team...

In an industry filled with products that thrill gamers with growling demons shooting fireballs, popular Hollywood personalities characterized as hellish fiends and images found only in the worst of nightmares, it seems story book fantasy would have no place.

Don't tell that to Roberta Williams, however. Her King's Quest series has sold over 1 million copies for Sierra since the original release in 1984, making it the best-selling computer adventure game ever. If that isn't evidence enough that her

become the best-selling interactive adventure game author in the world. Could she have foreseen the extent of her success in a genre she may very well have created? In 1980, her Mystery House was the first adventure game to combine text with

where this first creation might be headed, Big Blue certainly did. IBM marketed it for their PCjr, itself a nascent phenomenon that would change the way people around the world would work and play.

Electronic entertainment has always been and will always be a victim of the hardware it is run on. There have never been a shortage of ideas as the imagination of man is virtually limitless. The only obstacle is the way those ideas can be translated and shared with others.

The seeds of the King's Quest world had been planted and they would flourish over the course of the next decade. Roberta's zeal to stay true to the world in all of her adventures and to still make each adventure fresh and new has been consistent. What has changed from one episode to the next are the graphics.



The mystic and ancient desert is where the Queen will start.



In the underground volcanic crystal caverns live the trolls.

series should continue to be popular for some time to come, the consistent box office smashes from Disney should be.

Each year they churn out one animated classic after another, and each year they rank among the top at the cinema and in video cassette sales. *Time Magazine* placed *The Lion King* at number seven in their The Best of Cinema of 1994 list. King's Quest VII is in good company. Since the animations and artwork are comparable to such movies, it captures the charm and appeal that has attracted such huge audiences to them.

A Chisel Strikes a Piece of Stone

Not surprisingly, according to Sierra, Roberta Williams has

graphics. Like an artist with a new medium to work in, a well-worn hammer and chisel struck an undiscovered piece of stone. The result of the carving was King's Quest I. If she had not the foresight to see



Not only is Princess Rosella being forced to marry the king of the Trolls, but she has also been changed into one.

The storyline and action play like a Don Bluth movie: all the look and feel of a Disney movie, but none of the heart.

**COMPUTER
GAME
REVIEW**



Queen Valanice will visit some very enchanted places filled with all different kinds of peculiar creatures.

Some Walls Fall Down

CD-ROM technology has given game developers the means to unlock barriers that have restrained their imaginations in the past. The designers and artists of King's Quest VII have not hesitated to take

Some New, Some Old

Fans of the King's Quest series know that besides state-of-the-art visuals, sounds and music they can be guaranteed a good adventure game at the heart of it all. KQ VII is no exception. The methods might

shows the items your character is carrying. To examine that item, you just click on it to pick it up and drag it over to the eye next to the window. This allows you to see the object in three dimensions and rotate it.

The rotating feature is not just a trivial cosmetic feature. It will sometimes serve a purpose. Some objects, such as a basket or a bowl will contain something else that you will need. The problem might be that you can't see it. Therefore, you must spin it around until your line of sight lets you see the one object inside the other. Then you can pick it up and it will be available in your inventory.

Also, at times just clicking on the item will perform some necessary action. For example, you might find a closed chest or other container with a lid. To open it to see what's inside, just click on it.

The Controls Icon, which is the

The beauty and enchantment of the world made me want to continue just so I could see the next part. . .

advantage of this new technology. Initial impressions will undoubtedly be formed by the no less than spectacular graphics and animations. For a career already credited with so many firsts, the latest Roberta Williams creation has brought feature-film quality to her adventure game series and to computer gaming before anyone else. With artwork that looks like a Disney Studios production, King's Quest VII should not disappoint its fans and should bring new members to the adventure gaming fold.

On the audio end, the cast of about 60 different characters are endowed with voicemanship that can only add to the charm of the already charming world that they live in. A fully orchestrated soundtrack with over 100 melodies and original compositions will delight players to the same extent as from a feature-film.

be similar to what has appeared in the past but with a few new additions or modifications.

As before, the cursor changes shape when it passes over a particular hot spot with a necessary object or location of interest. There is an inventory window across the bottom portion of the screen that

one that looks like a polished stone, has a number of functions. You can look to see which chapter you are currently playing in and how far along in the overall game you've progressed.

Something that might seem unfamiliar though is the scroller slide. This control can be toggled on or off



Some trolls will help Rosella, others just want a date.

King's Quest VII The Princess Bride By Sierra On-Line

P.O. Box 3404
Salinas, CA 93912
(800) 743-7725

Orders: (800) 757-7707

AVERAGE SCORE:

86

Requirements

386+, Windows 3.1, SVGA,
4MB RAM, 1xCD-ROM

Controller

Mouse

Hard Drive Space

5 MB

Number of Players

One Player

Available For

PC and compatibles

Designed By

Sierra On-Line

Distributed By

Sierra On-Line

Street Price

\$49.99

**COMPUTER
GAME
REVIEW**

REVIEWS

After playing it for. . .two hours. . .my head unceremoniously slammed into the keyboard (no exaggeration).

Originality

64

Playability

80

Visuals

91

Audio

86

Manual

34

It's astonishing to see how the problem of flash over substance can even infect the world of graphic adventures. While I have never liked the King's Quest series (or graphic adventures at all, for that matter), there are problems here that go beyond my dislike of solving puzzles with inventory items. The animations are beautiful, to be sure, but they're also annoying after a while and very, very slow on less than optimal systems. Very little back story is provided for newcomers, stranding them with characters they know little about. The storyline and action play like a Don Bluth movie: all the look and feel of a Disney movie, but none of the heart. The designers also chose to go with the 'one click does it all' philosophy of interfaces, reducing many puzzles to random clicking. The credits reveal that Roberta Williams had less to do with the game than the hype would have you believe. Come back, Roberta; your series is fading away.

- Kevin

Originality

50

Playability

75

Visuals

90

Audio

89

Manual

85

King's Quest VII, for me, could be boiled down to one word: dull. The graphics are pretty, the sound is decent, the interface is easy to work with, but the game simply could not capture my attention. After playing it for about 30 minutes, my eyes started to glaze over; two hours into it, my head unceremoniously slammed into the keyboard (no exaggeration). My biggest problem with the interface is that there's no way to change the speed at which the characters walk, and so you're forced to sit through screen after screen of sauntering slowness. While I've been saying for some time now that Sierra's adventure game engine needed an overhaul, simply porting it to Windows and tinkering with the interface constitutes only a tuneup. In its favor, the game's puzzles are good, and the animation is only slightly below Disney quality. The fact that you get to play both of the main characters adds some originality to the game.

- Ted

Originality

78

Playability

88

Visuals

97

Audio

94

Manual

78

I can't help but to feel that I have to put my disposition toward graphic adventures aside and view KQVII as objectively as possible. The game interface is basically the same as the other King's Quest games with a few minor differences. I do like graphic adventures, it's just that when you see so many that play exactly the same way you really appreciate innovations in the genre. KQVII really doesn't have any. Just by looking at these pictures you will know if you will enjoy playing this. I did enjoy playing. The beauty and enchantment of the world made me want to continue just so I could see the next part and meet more of the wonderful characters in it. The music and voicemanship are as good a quality as the visuals. If you really like witnessing advancements in A/V technology in computer gaming, KQVII is pushing well out in front. I also liked playing two different characters for the variety. For KQ fans, this is probably the best one yet.

- Tasos

if you prefer. Unlike previous King's Quest games, this allows you to scroll over to the next screen instead of walking over to it. Therefore, the scroller slide lets you move the screen left or right to investigate a wider vicinity than just what is on the current screen. The only catch is that you are limited in how far you can scroll the screen, since your character must always be on the screen somewhere.

Furthermore, a new twist for this episode of King's Quest is that you will be alternating between Princess Rosella and her mother Queen Valanice.



To get around this town freely, she will have to make friends.

In Chapter One, you will controlling the Queen, in Chapter Two you will be following the exploits of Princess Rosella, switching back to the Queen again for Chapter Three.

Their adventure begins when Princess Rosella had been lured into a magic pool and the enchant-



The stag's companion has been turned into a tree.

ed world beyond it. The Queen witnessed this and jumped after her and now searches for her daughter.

In the enchanted Realm of Eldritch you will find some fantastic creatures such as talking stags, friendly trolls, a magnificent crystal dragon and many others. But Eldritch is in the darkest peril. The evil enchantress Malicia is plotting to destroy the Realm, forcing Rosella and Valanice to battle her for the survival of the entire world.

This epic story takes you through a series of magical regions; a mystic and ancient desert, the volcanic crystal caverns of the Trolls, a delightfully spooky land of surprises, among others.

As Rosella searches for the beautiful land of Etheria, Land in the Clouds, Valanice searches for her daughter, and both become caught up in the adventure of their lives, taking you along for the ride as well.



Many of the creatures are breathtakingly beautiful.