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NOTE: Screen shots and information presented in this article are based on a pre-release version of Redjack: Revenge of the Brethren and are subject to change before final release. This article is not a review.

Most people are familiar with the classic game Pirates. As a pirate, you traveled around the Caribbean trying to accumulate a fortune and improve your reputation. Pirates offered an exciting blend of action, adventure, and strategy. I spent many hours playing this game and enjoying life as a swashbuckling pirate. Pirate-themed games have been almost totally scarce since Pirates was popular. But now, pirates are coming back in a big way. Cyberflix, who last took us for a ride on the Titanic, will be taking us on another wild ride this fall in their pirate adventure game Redjack: Revenge of the Brethren.

umple Beginnings

The plot centers around the adventures of a young man named Nick Dove who is your alter-ego in the game. The game starts with Nick living in his small fishing village dreaming of another life as a suave and bloodthirsty pirate. Nick realizes he is destined for bigger and better things so he leaves his fishing village and sets off with a band of pirates for the new world. What follows is an epic adventure that takes Nick to exotic and dangerous locations such as Cartagena, Blackbeard's Fortress, and even the legendary Redjack Island. Nick will cross paths with a wide variety of characters in his adventures ranging from eccentric shopkeepers and beautiful socialites to Janizary assassins, voodoo priestesses, and even Blackbeard himself!

Many Challenges Await

Gameplay in Redjack mostly involves either solving puzzles, completing mini-quests, or arcade-like sequences. Most attempts to put arcade sequences in adventure games have failed in the past. This is not the case with Redjack. The swordfighting sequences, which are smooth and responsive, are presented in a first-person 3D view, much like Marathon. Timing and quick reflexes are critical here, but there are some situations where quick thinking can get you out of these sequences alive. For example, when fighting a skeleton warrior I realized I could use something that was present in the immediate surrounding area to help me win the confrontation. My quick thinking came in handy because it seemed impossible to defeat the skeleton in an outright swordfight since the skeleton would "re-animate" when I struck it down. Innovative puzzles are the backbone of any great adventure game and Redjack is a shining example of this. There are some really creative puzzles here that are both challenging and fun to solve. One puzzle involves placing colored gems in the correct sequence on two columns which each have five holes. Since there are two columns and each column has to be activated simultaneously you must use one of the crewmembers to help Nick. There are three colored gems for each column (red, green, and blue) and both Nick and the crewmember must stand on the platform in front of each column. Each colored gem has a different value, like green equals one. So each time Nick uses his green gem on one of the holes on his column his crewmember will move either one hole up or down on the platform in front of the other column. Since you also control the crewmember in this sequence you may also move Nick up or down by placing or removing the crewmember's gems on the other column. The idea here is to match a pattern that you discover a little earlier in the game. It sounds complicated, but that particular puzzle is nothing more than a rather innovative new twist on a simple, and frequently used, puzzle concept. As for the mini-quests, they usually involve retrieving something for somebody in order to get something in exchange. For example, at one point in the game Nick must somehow find a way to get a drunken sailor named Lyle out of jail. Lyle belongs to a ship that will take Nick to Redjack Island if this task can be accomplished. These kind of mini-quests add yet another dimension to the already varied gameplay.

Characters that have Character

Conversations are handled in much the same way they were in Titanic and other adventure games such as Gabriel Knight 2. Upon initiating a conversation with another character the view zooms in on that character. You are then presented with a choice of questions with which you may ask in any order. Certain questions may lead to a new set of questions and so forth. These characters are not brainless either because they will remember your decisions and act accordingly. Unlike Titanic, which used digitized images of people to represent the characters, Redjack features nineteen characters and they are all fully rendered in 3D. These 3D rendered characters are also much more animated than those found in Titanic. Everything from their hand gestures to their facial expressions are all very realistic. Even more amazing is the fact that the spoken dialog is in sync with their lip movement.

Getting Around

As with Titanic, the interface in Redjack is elegant and simple to use. The arrow keys (or A, W, and D keys) represent your legs and are used in traversing the enormous ship. The mouse represents your hands and is used to open or activate items. The bottom left corner of the screen contains a chest which serves as your inventory. A simple click on the chest opens it to reveal the items in your possession. To access the control panel while playing Redjack you simply hit the space bar.

[Technically Dreamy](#)

Redjack has taken the DreamFactory engine to yet another level. DreamFactory is CyberFlix's proprietary programming environment which allows players to explore their surroundings in a detailed 3D environment in fluid 360-degree movements. The actual movement or steps is along set paths and is quite fluid. The biggest change in DreamFactory is the addition of a technology called "spherical nodes". This technology allows you to look in any direction while in the 3D environments. When the cursor becomes a "hand" you may hold down the mouse button and move the mouse to change your point of view. You may look up, down, left, and right in any combination. Using a combination of mouse button, control, and shift keys you may zoom in and out for a closer look at any object. This is much like Quicktime VR and really adds a whole new dimension to the game. The game supports 16 or 24 bit color and it really shows. The full-screen graphics, particularly in the beautiful cutscenes, are fantastic. The amount of detail is incredible and is especially evident when zooming in on objects. Redjack employs an original soundtrack and ambient sound effects in 3D stereo. The music is appropriate for each setting. The sound in the game is realistic right down to the sound of distant chatter on a city street. The spoken dialogue is clear and easy to understand. All of these improvements aren't without a price because Redjack will require a good amount of horsepower to run. The preview version of the game requires a 100 MHz or faster processor, 16MB of RAM (10MB available), a 16 or 24 bit color monitor, and a four speed or faster CD-ROM drive.

[Get Ready to Set Sail](#)

Redjack: Revenge of the Brethren is an exciting adventure game that takes Cyberflix's DreamFactory engine to a whole new level. The variety of puzzles, smooth arcade sequences, and incredibly detailed environments make this game a pleasure to play. The beautiful 3D rendered characters are worth the price of admission by themselves. If you have ever dreamed of being a pirate you will get your chance when Cyberflix releases Redjack: Revenge of the Brethren this fall.