

y Don Henson

Civilization was lost. Mankind knew nothing but war. The dark times lasted hundreds of years. Finally, out of the ashes, man pulled together; the nation of Naridor was formed." While that is hardly a foreign sounding beginning to a computer adventure game, Derrat Sorcerum is quite a different quality and concept from most of the fantasy adventures that are available. It is developed from the third person concept and therefore gives a movie perspective to the player. The quality of the artwork is exceptional. I am sure there is some influence from MYST, but there is a definite originality going on here as well. You see yourself moving around from the third person point of view. This was true of MYST and all of the currently popular blood and guts shoot 'em ups like Marathon and Doom derivatives.

The game starts with you seeing a young apprentice mage bound and locked in a cell. This is the test for him to move from Apprentice to Journeyman, by escaping from the bonds and then the cell. This is your character Corin. It isn't too hard to get loose from the bonds and a simple "unlock" spell opens the door, but instead of a senior wizard there to bestow your new status, the Crimson Tower has only the bodies of your recent friends and teachers. There are also signs of magic and other destruction in whatever happened here to the powers that a short time ago ran the tower and trained mages. Oh yes, there is a soldier chasing you with a dagger.

Corin looks around the tower and collects all that might be useful to him in his quest to find out what happened and where any of the remaining wizards may be. So as you explore and find a way to get out of the tower, you are challenged with many interesting problems. This is just the beginning as the outside world seems to be an even trickier place for young wizard trainees.

Good Looking

Ben Spees' art is as nice outside as it is inside and once the player gets over the impact of the art, there are many things to accomplish on your quest to find Voraz and eliminate his influence on the land of Naridor. Knadatorn, the capitol city, is well into the game but not a place that has a lot of use for the banned magic arts. In fact, they don't seem all that friendly to even allowing Corin to enter the city. It is well policed in an effort to rid the world of magic practitioners.

Derrat Sorcerum is an impressive undertaking by a fairly new young company, Mixed Metaphor Software, LLC. There is a great sense of quality art and use of technology such as blue/green screens to merge this art with images of living characters. The character of Corin (you) is the main one seen in the game, and he is not of the photo quality of a movie, but apparently manipulated to some degree to match the style and flavor of the background art.

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The main problem with Derrat Sorcerum is it needs to be beta tested a bit more thoroughly and hopefully the mainly cosmetic anomalies would have been caught and corrected. The game was developed in Macromedia Director and I have played other less ambitious undertakings using this development environment. They too had some problems that one doesn't always expect with the otherwise nice, slick presentation. These include things like "Save Games" that won't open the program by double clicking on the saved game icon. The sound control in the game changes that of your Mac and leaves it that way. There are also some basic problems with how the game runs in several ways, that seem due to this approach as well. I must say that some very old and big game companies in the PC world of game publishing don't get too focused on this point of game functionality when producing them for Macs, but this isn't an excuse not to do so.

A very playable, beautifully rendered first game from a promising and talented group.

Pros

- Great graphics and production values, especially from such a small young company.
- Well done story line, even if not all that unique.
- Nice original music.

Cons

- Needed to debug the program a bit more.
- Sound control leaves your Mac where it set it after quitting the game.
- End of game a bit less clean and clear.

Publisher Info

Hopkins Technology, LLC

421 Hazel Lane

Hopkins, MN 55343-7116

(612) 931-9376 FAX (612) 931-9377

Order Line: 1-800-397-9211 This is currently the only place to get the game.

<http://www.mixedmetaphor.com>

