

## **Staple Foods** by Adam Stammer

With only the clothes on your back and an oddly large beanstalk behind you, you must venture into this castle in search of someone who might help you understand who you are and why you're in a castle in the clouds.

Controls are described at the menu. Your goal is to find someone who can help you. Perhaps the owner of the castle can. You're only choice is to climb higher until you find them. The journey won't be without it's obstacles though.

**Stairs:** Until you find what you're looking for, your only hope is to continue climbing. Each floor has a set of stairs that will take you to the next.

**Pylons:** Don't touch these mystical structures, or you might find yourself beyond hope of repair.

**Mechanical Guards:** Pacing back and forth for eternity, these soulless constructs won't let anything stop them from walking, least of all you. Stay out of their way.

**Pressure Plates:** Magic seems to protect some of the stairs, and these pressure plates seem to be the key. Of course you can't weight the plate yourself and climb the stairs at the same time, so you'll have to find something else to take your place.

**Ghosts:** Wandering about aimlessly, these tortured souls linger without peace. They might not be able to see you, but they can hurt you all the same. Stay away.

With additional development and design, additional mechanics would be nice, and perhaps re-skinning the above mechanics to better match the theme. The end of the game alludes to future story ideas, but not to the mechanics related to them.

Development Notes: The tutorials were quite succinct, which is always appreciated, and PuzzleScript was a clear example of how far video game development has come. As module3 covered, video games really started within 'hacker' groups and it was no small feat to bring them mainstream. Even once video game playing became common, game development/design took a long time to catch up, and still isn't quite what one could consider mainstream. I'm not saying anyone is going to make a AAA title with PuzzleScript, but it does provide on of many options to expose people without programming skills to video game development. I especially wonder what effect such things will have on young students. Had someone introduced me to PuzzleScript back in the day, I'm sure I would've leapt for it. The closest thing to that I even used was Scratch, which was not only for too simple at the time, but also terribly boring. Video games have been many peoples' introduction and motivation to programming, including my own, and I wonder if things like PuzzleScript will make that more common in the years to come.

My background in programming certainly helped me get through the tutorial and further modify it to my theme, though it was clearly designed for ease of use. My biggest issue was the during tutorial 3 when the background objects used to turn the guard around didn't exist. By the time I realized tutorial 3.ADD was about adding those objects, I had already added them myself, so I wouldn't really consider an issue. It was also interesting comparing the syntax of PuzzleScript to common programming languages. I found myself thinking about how the language was interpreted.

The limitations of the system were also a fun challenge. Working with only 25 pixels per object made my texture design a lot more tedious, and the game didn't always behave consistently while debugging. Considering the ease of use, and how much was already done for me, I certainly can't complain. I was still able to focus on the design, rather than the implementation.

I'm not sure how I arrived at the theme of Jack and the Beanstalk, but once I had the thought I went with it. I have far too many other things to do right now, but I wouldn't at all be upset to flesh the design out more and continue the game development.