Moonlight Madness (video game)

Moonlight Madness is a video game for the ZX Spectrum home computer , published in 1986 by Bubble Bus Software . It is an arcade adventure game in which players control a boy scout . The object of the game is to unlock a safe within a mansion to obtain pills for the mansion 's owner , a mad scientist , who has collapsed . This requires the player to traverse the mansion 's rooms while avoiding hazards such as dangerous house servants and fatal falls .

The game was developed by John F. Cain , who had previously created Booty , a popular budget game . Moonlight Madness was criticized for its price on release , £ 7 @.@ 95 in the UK , as well its technical issues . The game 's graphics , gameplay and sound were negatively rated by critics , though some reviewers were more positive over these different aspects of the game .

Gameplay

Players must guide a boy scout through a 43 @-@ room mansion in order to obtain 16 keys and a combination before running out of time . These unlock a safe containing the pills needed to save the mansion owner 's life . It is necessary to jump onto platforms and evade enemies in order to progress . At the start of the game the player has three lives ; a life is lost should the boy scout fall too far or come into contact with one of the mansion 's servants or traps . Rooms contain doors that can be entered to move around the mansion , as well as push buttons and hazards . Pressing buttons can result in lifts being activated , platforms appearing or in an enemy appearing . One of the mansion 's rooms is a corridor of eight doors with a large pair of eyes above them ; this room acts as a maze . A tune is played continuously during play , but can be toggled on or off .

Plot

The player character , a boy scout , has approached a mansion looking for work during Bob a Job week . The door is answered by an old man wearing horn @-@ rimmed glasses ? the owner of the mansion . The man , a mad scientist , expresses surprise that the boy has managed to get past the guards and booby traps in the mansion 's grounds . As the boy scout explains the reason for his visit , the scientist collapses , asking for his pills . At this point the game begins . The player must gather the 16 keys needed to unlock the safe and retrieve the scientist 's pills before he passes away . During play the boy scout must negotiate the mansion 's rooms , avoiding hazards and the mansion 's staff , who have been told to protect the inventions within the mansion , using lethal force if necessary . The staff are unaware of the boy scout 's purpose and will attack him should they come into contact .

Development and release

The game was created by John F. Cain , who had previously developed the successful budget game Booty for Firebird Software . By this point Cain had also developed several titles for Rabbit Software , such as Potty Painter . Moonlight Madness was published by Bubble Bus in the United Kingdom and Spain in 1986 ; the original price was £ 7 @.@ 95 in the United Kingdom . Moonlight Madness was re @-@ released on budget software labels ; Blue Ribbon Software in the United Kingdom , Zafi Chip and Z Cobra in Spain . Blue Ribbon Software was a label belonging to CDS Microsystems , both of the Spanish budget labels belonged to Zafiro Software Division . The game was published on the covertape of the February 1991 issue of Your Sinclair magazine . The covertape also featured Marsport , Ninja Hamster and Wizard 's Lair .

Reception

Moonlight Madness received negative and mediocre ratings from reviewers , who either criticized the game overall or different aspects of it . Direct comparisons with Booty feature in many reviews .

The game 's price was in particular a common complaint among reviewers , who stated that it should have been a budget @-@ priced title . One reviewer stated that it would have been better received as a budget title , another stated " Like Booty , Moonlight Madness would be all right at budget price " . Your Sinclair 's reviewer began their piece by stating " Hmmm , don 't like the title Moonlight Madness much , howzabout Daylight Robbery . Catchy , ain 't it ? " Computer Gamer 's reviewer stated " Had it been released on a budget label , Moonlight Madness would have been fair value for money . As it is , it is grossly overpriced . "

Reviewers highlighted technical issues in the game . The eight door maze room was thought to be a bug , a software error , by two people at ZX Computing magazine . Because the game contains no reset feature they reloaded the game from cassette in order to continue playing . The player character 's movements were criticised for being jerky and prone to stopping at infrequent intervals . One of Crash magazine 's staff stated that the boy scout 's movement to the left was quick ; " as if there 's a force ten gale blowing to the left . " They added " When any attempt is made to move right , all the moving characters on the screen slow right down . " In @-@ game objects are removed from view when either the player character or one of the mansion staff move in front of them . When the player redefines the game 's keyboard controls , allowing them to choose which keys move the boy scout during play , the pause key and music toggle key are not included . As a result it is possible to double @-@ up movement controls with these two functions , effectively causing the game to pause and unpause or for the music to toggle constantly as the player moves in that direction .

Reviewers ' opinions on the graphics and gameplay were largely negative , while opinion 's on the title 's music varied . The background music was described as " ... the only thing that is remotely interesting about this appallingly tedious game ... " by Popular Computing Weekly 's reviewer . He followed this by stating " At first it sounds all right , if a little monotonous , then it begins to grate the nerves . After a while it begins to take on all the appeal of the Chinese water torture . " Crash magazine 's three reviewers were more positive about the music , stating " The sound is fairly well done ... " , " The title screen plays a nice tune ... " and " ... the game 's drawing point is the sound ... " The game 's graphics were described as " fairly crude " , " unattractive " and " ... none too exciting , consisting of colourful but flickery characters . " One reviewer stated " The graphics are large and colourful but there is a lot of character clash ... " Overall impressions of Moonlight Madness were negative . Crash magazine 's reviewers compared the game unfavourably to Booty . One expressed disappointment because of Bubble Bus ' history of releasing " great arcade / adventures " . Your Sinclair 's reviewer stated " Maybe Bubble Bus had a touch of Moonlight Madness when it picked this one for its new release . " The reviewer from ZX Computing stated " Keeping to the boy scout theme , be prepared before you buy this one . "