Pathways into Darkness

Pathways into Darkness is a first @-@ person adventure video game developed and published by Bungie Software Products Corporation in 1993 , exclusively for Apple Macintosh personal computers . Players assume the role of a Special Forces soldier who must stop a powerful , godlike being from awakening and destroying the world . Players solve puzzles and defeat enemies to unlock parts of a pyramid where the god sleeps ; the game 's ending changes depending on player actions .

Pathways began as a sequel to Bungie 's Minotaur : The Labyrinths of Crete , before the developers created an original story . Jason Jones programmed the game , while his friend Colin Brent developed the environments and creatures . The game features three @-@ dimensional texture mapped graphics and stereo sound on supported Macintosh models . Pathways was critically acclaimed and won a host of awards ; it was also Bungie 's first major commercial success and enabled the two @-@ man team of Jason Jones and Alex Seropian to move into a Chicago office and begin paying staff .

Gameplay

Pathways into Darkness is a first @-@ person shooter and adventure game . The game interface consists of four windows . The primary " World View " shows the player character 's first @-@ person perspective . Players move , dodge fire , and use weapons and items using the computer keyboard . The " Inventory " window displays items players have acquired . The " Message " window relates events and the in @-@ game time , and the " Player " window displays health and energy information . The in @-@ game clock runs constantly during gameplay , except when in conversation ; if the time progresses past the point at which the sleeping god wakes , the player loses the game .

In the game , players fight various monsters as they explore the pyramid 's halls and catacombs . Players may pick up weapons and ammunition left behind by others to supplement their arsenal . As additional levels are unlocked , new weapons become available , including machine guns and grenade launchers . Players can absorb a certain amount of damage , but once their health reaches zero , they must resume their progress at the last saved checkpoint . Resting in place replenishes health but saps game time and leaves the player open to attack . Scattered throughout the levels are other items players may use . Potions have different effects : rare blue potions , for example , rid the player character of poison and damage . Otherwise items provide points or cash ; every four points increases the player character 's maximum health by two units . Crystals can be used against enemies to freeze , burn , or otherwise harm them .

Through the use of the yellow crystal , players can converse with Previously Living Sentient Beings or " PLSBs " . Conversations provide players with puzzle information , strategies for defeating monsters , and story background . Rather than relying on a branching tree of conversation options , players type keywords into a dialogue box . When a certain keyword (typically found in a previous statement by the dead person in question) is entered , the dead person will give a response . The manual gives a starting point by mentioning that all dead people respond to " name " and " death " , by giving their name and describing how they died , respectively .

Plot

Pathways casts the player as a member of a US Army Special Forces team sent on a mission to the Yucatán Peninsula . On May 5 , 1994 , a diplomat from the alien Jjaro appeared to the President of the United States and informed him that on May 13 , an ancient godlike being sleeping beneath a pyramid would awaken and destroy the Earth . The only way to prevent this catastrophe is to prevent the god from awakening . The eight @-@ man Special Forces team carries a nuclear weapon , with the goal of entering the ancient pyramid , descending to the bottom level where the god sleeps , and activating the bomb to stun the god and bury it under tons of rock .

Before the game begins , the player character 's parachute fails to open . Awakening hours later , the character finds almost all his equipment inoperable . Reaching the pyramid on foot hours after the rest of the team entered the structure , the player must complete the team 's mission before the god awakens in five days . In the pyramid , the player finds bodies of squad @-@ mates , the remains of Spanish @-@ speaking treasure hunters , and fallen members of a Nazi expedition from the 1930s who were looking for a secret weapon but never returned . Additional plot elements can be revealed by speaking to these dead , enabled by an item attainable early in the game , the yellow crystal .

The game 's ending changes depending on whether the player has a radio beacon to call for extraction , and when the nuclear device is set to explode . Forgetting to set the bomb , or setting it to explode at any time past the awakening of the dreaming god , results in Earth 's destruction . The device 's detonation before the player reaches a minimum safe distance results in a pyrrhic victory . The most favorable endings are achieved by leaving the pyramid with a beacon for evacuation at least twenty game minutes before the device is set to go off ; if the game ends with enough time for the player to escape on foot , the player survives without a beacon .

= = Development = =

Pathways was Bungie 's fourth title (and third commercial title) after their previous game , Minotaur : The Labyrinths of Crete , sold around 2 @,@ 500 copies . In the summer of 1992 , Jones was living in dorms at the University of Chicago when he saw Wolfenstein 3D , a shooter game with three @-@ dimensional (3D) graphics . Inspired , Jones created a rough 3D @-@ graphics engine for the Mac that simulated walls with trapezoids and rectangles . Originally , Bungie intended Pathways to be a straightforward 3D version of Minotaur , but they quickly found that the top @-@ down perspective of their previous game did not mesh with the 3D presentation . An additional consideration was that the developers wanted to create a game that did not rely on then @-@ rare networks and modems , an issue in marketing Minotaur . The rest of 1992 was spent tweaking the graphics engine .

Work on the game 's storyline and levels began in January 1993 . Jones recalled that starting from cliché plots they moved towards " very interesting and unique but extremely difficult to understand stories " . One of the more complicated stories cast the player as one of a group of Roman soldiers who discovered a mountain spring that extended their lives . Every seven years one soldier would be picked to descend into the caves and bring back more water . If the leader died , a new one would be selected to undertake the journey to ensure their survival . " It was a very interesting plot since your quest wasn 't necessarily virtuous , it didn 't involve doing good things or saving the world , " Jones said . " It was just you were chosen , more or less against your will , to become the next leader of this freak cult of immortals . " The final plot occupied a middle ground between the simple and complex stories , because the developers did not want to force players to become deeply involved in the story .

While Bungie founder Alex Seropian handled the business aspect of Bungie and produced the game 's box art and promotional material , Jones programmed the game , wrote the story line , and contributed to the game 's manual . Whereas Jones had single @-@ handedly coded Minotaur , the small staff for Pathways was due to lack of money for a large team . To speed implementation , Jones built a level editor for the game that allowed him to add objects , monsters and walls to the levels . The game 's levels and mazes span 40 million scaled square feet . Jones ' friend , Colin Brent , did much of the art and creature design , reducing Jones ' workload and , in the programmer 's opinion , improving the art . Each monster was drawn by hand in different states such as stationary , moving , attacking , and dying . They were then scanned into the computer and added to the game ; if there were problems , they were redrawn . Once the final drawings were complete , the images were colorized in 24 @-@ bit color using Adobe Photoshop . Despite the game 's advanced graphics , Pathways was designed to work on any Macintosh model ; it was one of 30 applications that ran natively on Apple 's PowerMacs on launch day .

By July 1993 the game was behind schedule ; only the above @-@ ground portions of the pyramid

were complete . Jones put in eighteen @-@ hour days for the month leading up to the MacWorld Expo where the game was to be sold ; he finished the game in a relatively bug @-@ free state just before the Expo , and Bungie had 500 shrinkwrapped copies of the game available for sale at MacWorld .

= = Reception = =

Pathways was a critical success . Inside Mac Games reviewer Jon Blum wrote in 1993 that Pathways was " one of the best Macintosh games I 've ever played " . Computer Gaming World described Pathways as " a dungeon crawl , pure and simple " . While describing the game before obtaining a gun as " tedious " and criticizing the small number of save points per level , the magazine praised the " simple , elegant and easy to use " user interface and " excellent " graphics and sound . Computer Gaming World concluded that while " somewhat weak on actual game play " , Pathways was " a job worthy of a strong recommendation " . Macworld 's Steven Levy commented that the gameplay and graphics were extremely smooth . He singled out the creatures for specific praise , likening them to " something that might have come from a brain @-@ merge of Tim Burton , Anne Rice and Hieronymus Bosch " instead of simple line drawings . Complaints and criticisms of the game included the difficulty level ; Blum found some segments too difficult and that it was possible to spend hours playing before realizing that the player had made an irreversible mistake . Jones admitted that the game was harder than he intended . The title received several awards , including Inside Mac Games ' " Adventure Game of the Year " , Macworld 's " Best Role @-@ Playing Game " , and was listed on the MacUser 100 .
Pathways sold more copies than expected , making it Bungie 's first commercial success . It was the third bestselling Macintosh title of the first half of 1994 after Myst and Sim City 2000 , with projected seven @-@ figure sales for the year . The game made Bungie enough money that the company was able to move from Seropian 's apartment to a dedicated office in Chicago 's South Side . At their new location , the Bungie team expanded and began work on another first @-@ person shooter , Marathon . Interviewed by Inside Mac Games , Jones said that he did not believe that there would ever be a sequel to Pathways . " There 's a lot of reasons for that , one of them being that I tend to dislike sequels , " he said , " A lot of cool things have happened with the rendering technology since Pathways shipped , and it suggests some different products which don 't really fit into the Pathways world . "