



LAUNCH

Game design legend Roberta Williams



steers adventure games

in yet another direction

Unmasking the Latest King's Quest Legend

By Eric Twelker

FOR MANY EXPERIENCED ADVENTURE GAME FANS, the name *King's Quest* is synonymous with the interactive storytelling experience. First introduced in 1984, the longest-lived series in computer game history has enveloped millions of fans throughout the years. Now eight installments later, series creator Roberta Williams continues evolving the story of Daventry and its array of mythical inhabitants. The result is one of the most exciting and innovative games of the year—*King's Quest: Mask of Eternity*.

Roam If You Want To...

As the *King's Quest* world has unfolded over the years, so too has its technology pushed past the limits of traditional adventure game design to deliver an ever-more interactive and innovative experience. *King's Quest: Mask of Eternity* makes no exception to the trend set over and over in years past. It provides an entirely new experience thanks to the go-anywhere, do anything 3D engine that allows the player to explore every corner of the world with unprecedented freedom.

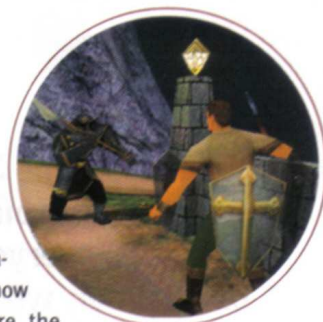
This unique playing environment promises to deliver adventure game enthusiasts into a new territory perfectly matched for the exploratory

nature of the genre. No longer limited to a flat, 2D plane with static, scrolling backgrounds, one now has the ability to fully explore the world. As Roberta Williams explains, "*Mask of Eternity* really offers the ultimate exploration experience. In adventure games of the past, you were so limited with the path you could choose—you could only see backdrop pictures of the environment of the designer's choosing. In *Mask*, you're not limited to the view of your surroundings; you can choose exactly where to go."

Similar to the free-roaming styles of *Mario 64* or a 3D first- or third-person action game, *Mask* allows the player to peek around any corner, push objects, open doors, wade into rivers and lakes and even interact—as in chat with or, if need be, fight—other characters wandering the world. You read that correctly. But *Mask of Eternity* is not a shoot-'em-up game. On the contrary, *Mask of Eternity's* rich, open environment allows you to live the unfolding story, even if you need to fight your way past evil characters to advance the story.

Roberta Williams explains the game's feel:

"I really enjoy the action elements in this game. I'm a classic adventure game player and admit that action games frustrate me. This is an adventure game for wannabe action gamers...it allows non-action gamers to feel like part of the club! Fighting and other action elements





THE DIMENSION OF DEATH: Connor discusses his unexpected destiny as an eternal champion with Azriel, Lord of the Dead.

Everyone has turned to stone... that is, everyone but Connor, who is somehow protected from the consequences by his piece of the golden Mask.



Strange Things Are Afoot in Daventry

in an adventure game do not transform the experience into a *Quake* or *Tomb Raider*-style game." For instance, Roberta adds, "In *King's Quest I* there was an underwater tunnel that the player had to swim through before running out of breath. That game was very action-oriented."

Walk through a few early segments of the game and along the way, you just might pick up a few tips for starting your journey in this vast virtual world.

In the opening scene, witness an astonishing event in a far-off, ethe-

real realm. On one of many islands in a sea of clouds, a robed priest-like character steps up to a glimmering golden Mask set atop an altar. With arms thrust upward, he summons a dark force. The skies darken and bolts of lightning converge on the divine Mask. With a powerful burst, the Mask explodes into pieces that fall to the world below.

In that faraway world, one of its most peaceful communities is moments away from experiencing a cataclysmic change of weather. The kingdom of Daventry is serene; farmers till their land, artisans practice their trade, and the great King Graham over-

sees the land's bountiful wealth. But in the palace, all is not well. Standing in front of his magic mirror with his courtiers, the king's foretelling object stirs and evinces the terrible celestial occurrence.

Meanwhile, in the village, a young townsman named Connor approaches the home of his girlfriend, Sarah. As they trade greetings, the sky darkens and a strong wind rushes across the land. Just then, a piece of the Mask falls from the heavens and lands at Connor's feet. He picks up the piece just as a supernatural storm sweeps across the land. It's over in a moment but unbelievable damage is done: Everyone has turned to stone...that is, everyone but Connor, who is somehow protected

from the consequences by his piece of the golden Mask.

Places to Go, Worlds to See

Standing alone, surrounded by an eerie calm with a strange bit of artifact in his grasp, you take control of Connor and lead his quest to restore Daventry and revive its inhabitants. With such a monumental task at hand, where does one begin?

Since *Mask* whisks the player into a 3D virtual world, getting a handle on Connor's physical controls is an important first step. Don't get frightened off by prospects of learning *Quake*- or *Tomb Raider*-style moves, though. The navigation system in *Mask* is much simpler than in those types of games.

Use the arrow keys to control Connor's general direction of travel. Configurable keyboard buttons control his jump and "Use" actions. Many actions, including opening doors and picking up items, can be performed by simply clicking the cursor on the item. The mouse key lets you rotate the camera, covering any direction. In this way, *Mask* combines the most intuitive of action and adventure game controls.

A handy pop-up help screen guides you through actions in the early segment of the game, ensuring that within minutes you'll master Connor's standing and running jumps—even Connor's impressive back flip! Down the line, you'll want to remember that Connor can also push objects as well, a skill useful for positioning blocks, crates and



AVENGING ANGEL: Connor encounters the lovely Sylph on his journey through the Dimension of Death.



THE FROZEN REACHES: A perpetual snowstorm covers this land; home of the frost demons and frigid lakes.



THE BARREN REGION: This volcanically active region is inhabited by a plethora of "hot-headed" creatures, including the infamous Basilisk.

hay bales that act as stepladders for access to high ledges and just-out-of-reach objects.

Interestingly, this seemingly wholly original form of "real-time" adventure navigation isn't quite a first. Says Roberta, "Sierra's first adventure games, including *King's Quest I*, were the first in the industry to show the player's character on the screen. At the time, we had to invent a system of controlling the character using the arrow keys to get him or her around the world in real-time. In many ways, *Mask* is modeling its navigation system after the very foundation of the game series."

First Things First: Get Your Bearings

With the controls mastered, it's time to begin Connor's quest. As the game begins, you, as Connor, stand face to now-stone face with Sarah. A raven drops onto her shoulder and an ominous silence covers the land. But where to begin in such a vast world? Roberta offers an important tip: "The very first thing players notice is a raven that has landed on Sarah's shoulder. Shoo it away. The bird leads you to a perfect starting point."

Magic Maps: The Only Way to Fly

Following the raven along a southerly path takes you to the edge of a lake. A stone figure stands at the shore. As Connor nears and

the raven stoops on a stump next to the figure, the character miraculously calls out, "Come closer, my lad!" You've found the wizard, mostly encased in stone, but with upper torso intact. Just before the evil scourge spread across the land, the wizard explains, he cast a countering spell that left him slightly immune to entombment in stone. The wizard offers insight into the recent events: The Mask of Eternity was destroyed by an evil entity that has taken up quarters in the sacred sanctity of the Mask that represents truth, light, and order. Now, chaos reigns and mayhem is spread across the land. Connor, the wizard reveals, has been chosen to find the four other pieces of the mask, return them to the sanctuary, and defeat the evil being.

The wizard passes along a magic map that aids in Connor's travels. It acts as an ancient global positioning satellite map, of sorts. As you travel, the blank map fills in your path and reveals roads and buildings you've discovered. One of the map's coolest features (not yet featured on modern-day GPS systems!) is a teleport button. Each world has one teleportation location that, after you discover the key to enabling the feature, allows you to instantly move between realms. You can bet your legs will thank you for it!

Roam Around the World

With map in hand, you can easily find your way around. As you

The Good, the Bad, and the Deadly

The Friendlies



Unicorn Once a strong, beautiful creature, it's now a hornless, ugly beast. Only Connor can help restore its beauty by retrieving the unicorn's horn from the baneful swamp witch.



The Prophet Tree This wise, old tree in the Swamp realm is a prophet-par-excellence. It is willing to offer stunning insights into Connor's quest—for a price, of course.



Wizard The kindly wizard of Daventry will offer you a magic map at the beginning of your quest—take it. And don't forget to visit him often as you travel through Daventry.

The Baddies



Zombies Found in several of the lands, zombies quickly push up out of the ground near Connor when he gets close. Destroying these stubborn creatures can prove difficult. It's best to battle them from a distance!



Weepers A mysterious entity, the weeper is the soul of the yet-to-be-judged. In the midst of the world's chaos, these dwellers of the Dimension of Death are now wanderers in search of life energy.

explore, investigate the various dwellings for useful items. Don't forget to check upstairs, in alcoves and on tables. Remember, this game isn't like the 2D adventure gaming style of finding objects. You must physically explore—not just sweep the cursor over the screen in search of hot spots—to search for items!

Returning to your starting point, Connor can step around Sarah's stone pose and into her dwelling, where he can explore and search for clues or helpful items. A stew is brewing by the fireplace. Take a sip and you'll gain several health points. On a bookcase, you'll find an elixir filled with a magical potion. This is the potion of shield, a

The wizard passes along a magic map that aids in Connor's travels. It acts as an ancient global positioning satellite map, of sorts.





The key to survival and success is the ability to solve problems as if it's the real world.



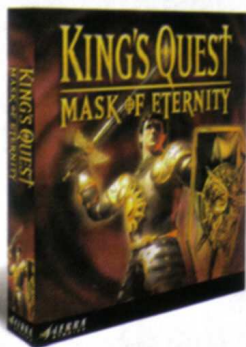
A New Way To Puzzle

Connor must face a variety of brain-twisting tests that, if successful, reaffirm his destiny as the "Chosen One."

As a prophetic and wise old tree tells Connor, "Strength and righteousness grow stronger by being tried."

Just as player control and exploration take on new forms in 3D-adventure gaming, so too are the puzzles entirely unique. When faced with a dilemma, one must take a look at the surroundings and available tools. The key to survival and success is the ability to solve problems as if it's the real world.

An example of *Mask's* 3D-adventure puzzles is found just down the road from Connor's house. A water-wheel sits on the edge of a lake-feeding stream. The churning water-wheel turns a grindstone inside the building. Entering the wheelhouse, Connor spots a rope and hook, the perfect tools for climbing cliffs and building walls. Problem is, the only access to the loft is in the path of the ominously spinning grindstone. Jump up on the grindstone table when it is spinning and you'll turn into human cornmeal. Stop the stone's orbit and the rope and hook are yours. Stopping the stone requires a bit of ingenuity. See that tree leaning precariously over the stream? Wouldn't it be just grand if you could find an ax, do your best Johnny Appleseed impersonation and land it in the path of the water-wheel? Enough said. Search the town for an ax and make it happen!



KING'S QUEST: MASK OF ETERNITY

www.sierrastudios.com

Developer	Sierra Studios
Format	WIN95 CD
Rating	Pending
Price	\$49.95
Order #	70090
Phone	1.800.757.7707

possible saving grace in a time of head-to-head combat. Other useful items Connor comes across include healing crystals, gold coins (for purchasing items from traders), and health-improving mushrooms.

Leaving the house, the next best stop is your own abode. It's located just north of Sarah's home and here you can retrieve a very important weapon—your trusty dagger. You don't want to leave home without it; the creatures of the darkness now have free reign over the land and won't hesitate to attack.



THE SWAMP: Now under the control of the swamp witch, this once lush region has been transformed into a murky mire.

A Beast's Burden

Meeting intriguing characters is a mainstay of Roberta Williams' adventure games. In some cases, these characters need help solving a dilemma. Others offer assistance in return for a favor. Whatever the circumstance may be, don't turn your back on these folks; offering a helping hand just may bring you a step closer to restoring peace to the world.

Up the hill from the wizard, Connor discovers a strangely familiar, yet nearly unrecognizable beast in need of help—one of many characters with peculiar circumstances Connor comes across. The beast reveals that it was a once-beautiful unicorn. In the chaos, a swamp witch stole its horn and transformed it into an ugly beast. The unicorn begs for Connor's help: Find the swamp witch and retrieve the horn that will restore it to its former glory. Before departing, the unicorn offers a helpful clue—the road to castle Daventry is blocked by a landslide, but a secret entrance can be found in a cave behind the waterfall. Inside, you'll find an important clue that will lead you to another world. With secrets like that, help the unicorn any chance you get.

As you journey beyond Daventry, you'll visit strange otherworldly realms filled with unimaginable characters, brain-twisting puzzle tests and incredible challenges. At the end of this unfolding tale, the most important question will be answered: Have you the strength

and courage to reinstate the Mask of Eternity and restore Truth, Light, and Order to your world?

When not writing professionally, Eric Twelker spends most of his time impersonating screensaver superstar Johnny Castaway on the island of Maui.

ROBERTA KNOWS MASK

Who better to offer a helping hand in your quest than Roberta Williams herself?

"Use the help menus in the beginning of the game...this feature familiarizes you with the navigation techniques and commands that you'll use throughout the game."

"Save your game often...in a 3D environment, it's easy to fall down cliffs or have an accident!"

"Don't try to solve the puzzles right away...explore the world and get a feel for your surroundings."

"Always keep your eyes open for subtle clues...if you see something that looks different, click on it. You may discover something new and helpful."

"Constantly upgrade to the best weapons and armor possible...you'll need greater weapon damage and armor protection as the game progresses!"