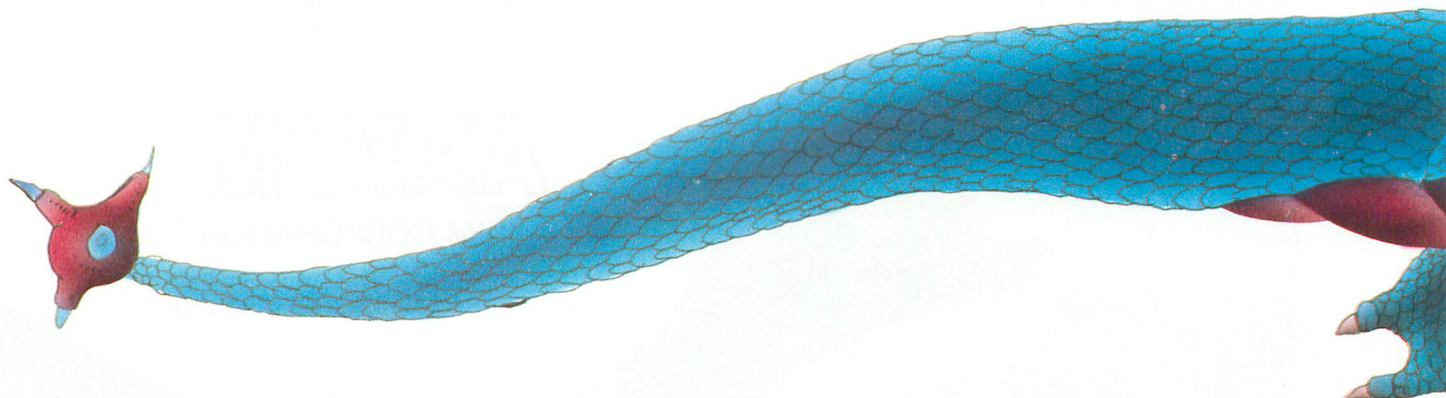


This isn't "how" to play Adventures. There seem to be articles ad nauseum on making maps, picking up and dropping items, and so forth. However, there are very few articles on the "why" of Adventuring. (I suspect that those who play haven't quite figured it out for themselves —)

So, here's why we are fond of Adventuring.

Participate in fa **Adventu**



antasy

ring

by DAVE and SANDY SMALL



April 15. Tax time.

Not again! But true, Uncle Sam will be digging into my pockets again. A pile of multi-colored forms lie in front of me, to be filled out on pain of . . . auditing or something worse.

This is adventure? This is excitement?

Highway 183 in Austin, Texas; traffic stacked up in front of me for miles. Smog is filtering in through the air conditioning, with ten more miles until my turnoff.

You call this an adventure?

At the office, it's politics as usual. Did my co-worker really report me in late to my boss? The secretary smiles her cold, professional smile at me as I answer the summons to his office. Maybe I'll get fired.

This is a life? It sure isn't what they promised me when I was young. Back then there were fairy tales and giants and fairy godmothers. But this present unpleasantness does appear to be *reality*. Is this how I'm going to spend my next fifty years?

You have got to be kidding. I am interested in other things. I am going to go battle evil monsters with a magic sword. I am going to rescue fair maidens from their clutches. And I'm going to find loot beyond my wildest dreams, and experience running my hands through chests full of gold coins. That's *my* world, the world I grew up with, the world I wanted, and the world I can't seem to have.

At most, I see only flashes of danger in my everyday life. Possibly a pickup truck will blindside me on the way to work. But in the world I want, danger and the appreciation of life are an everyday thing. Why, to rescue that maiden I'll put it all on the line, every ounce of sinew and wit I possess. There's this troll, see, that weighs four

hundred pounds, that guards the entrance to the Great Underground Empire. I'll have to get by him, and the toll for doing so is a life — and should my swordmanship fail me, it'll be mine.

Now if the kind of life I was talking about before appeals to you, if you're into taxes, traffic, and politics, you can forget Adventures. They are not for you. You do not need to escape a reality that is tiresome beyond description. You are probably happy as a clam.

But if you are like me — if you would rather drop you job, car, and co-workers in a second, and try your luck at some real living — then have I got a deal for you. It's simple — a computer adventure.

A computer is a powerful, if simple, machine. It can be instructed to do a number of things, such as payroll checks or word processing. In all of these functions the computer is a powerful tool.

So let's instruct it to maintain a programmed reality, for us to enter. We, as the programmers, control that reality, and once we enter it, must abide by its rules. In the computer's universe, any-

† Gold, silver, and gems are to be found by the handful.

† Strange forces control your destiny.

† Wizards often cast spells to aid or foil your quest.

Finally, and most importantly, there is a purpose, a set goal. Unlike our reality, which resembles a badly programmed adventure, this new computerized reality gives you a sense of purpose, something great to accomplish. In this universe you can leave your mark on the world. Just for instance, have *you* ever written your name on the rainbow in the sky in this reality? Not many of us leave a mark on the world any more, do we?

You might call all of this "escapist" or "fantasy". True, guilty as charged. But I, and others like myself, need this escape, back to our kind of reality. For us this everyday life is a strange world with strange rules, where our most basic and human needs cannot be satisfied. But in our "escapist" and "fantasy" world, these needs can be. For instance, we can accomplish something with our lives. We can find great treasure, become kings. In a computerized adventure, there are no limits, no discrimination of any sort

*In a computerized adventure, there are
no limits, no discrimination of any sort
except the sort imposed by your own wits
and daring.*

thing goes, and we must be cautious.

Then in this computer universe, we can live as we want to live, and escape the day-to-day realities of life in a universe we were not quite meant for.

Here's some of the more "common" features of some of the computer universes:

† Magic works.

† Unicorns positively abound.

† Trolls are evil and quite deadly.

except the sort imposed by your own wits and daring. You can go as far as you dare to go.

And that is what adventuring is all about. It is about filling the needs we all have in a society increasingly unable to let us fill them.

If you want to come with me to a place and a time where there is a Right and a Wrong . . . if you want to be in a place where there is treasure and

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danger . . . then you are a perfect candidate for a computer adventure.

If you are a beginning adventurer, you may be afraid to try your first game. Don't be. It is all quite easy, once you get past the basic step of submerging yourself into this new reality. Live, breathe, think the new reality, and you will go far. The computer will describe to you the situation that your alter-ego, inside the computer, is in. It will tell you of your surroundings and anything else it thinks you should know. Remember, in this universe, the computer is the sole arbitrator of life and death. Here's an example:

"It is dawn. You are lying in a field of green grass, cool to the touch. It is warm, though, and you do not feel chilled. Beside you lies a blade, shimmering as though it is only partly of this universe, and partly of Magic's domain.

In the distance lies a mountain range. You can barely discern the entrance to the dreaded Cave of Unknown Death."

Hot damn! I'm buckling on that sword and going to see what the cave is all about! See you there!

So you type in,

"Get Sword and go to the cave."

This tells the computer what you would like your alter-ego to do.

"After some day's journey, you are before the Cave's entrance. It is dark and forbidding. A skeleton lies here, apparently the remains of a previous adventurer. Near the skeleton lies a torch and matches."

Fine — don't want to stumble around in the dark.

"Get matches and torch. Light the torch. Enter the cave."

The computer has the alter-ego do this. The results:

"In the distance your torchlight reveals a slender princess, chained to a well. An ogre lurks nearby; apparently it is planning to have the princess for dinner. Many bones lay nearby. As the ogre sees you, it picks up a gigantic mace and strides toward you, bellowing. Your sword has begun to glow, and upon it, fiery letters spell out, 'Thyswand — death to the foul.'"

Time to get that sword out of its sheath, wouldn't you say?

You would perhaps like the names of some really superior adventures? Here are some of the best:

1. ZORK I, II, III. (Play in successive order). This is the best adventure

quite powerful (if you let it recharge between casting spells). I have a lamp, an Elvish sword "of great antiquity", and my wits. Tonight I'm going to do battle and match wits with the Dungeonmaster himself.

Care to join me?



If you feel the need, as do I, to go out and slay a dragon or two . . . then by all means try an adventure.

game that I know of.

2. Original Adventure. This is the computer program that started adventuring; it is the first, and still a very good, adventure.

3. StarCross. Can you survive an outer-space encounter with an alien spaceship?

4. Deadline. Here is your chance to play detective. Solve the murder of poor Mr. Robner . . . and don't get killed yourself.

5. Scott Adam's Adventures 1-12. Twelve great adventures, packed with imagination and a great deal of fun to play. If you are a beginner these are particularly good, as they help you on your way.

6. On-Line Systems "High-Res" Adventures. These are adventures with a new twist — a storybook-like picture at each event. I personally believe that "The Wizard and the Princess" is the best.

Well, that's about it. Which reality you exist in is now a matter of choice; you are not stuck here, you know. If you feel the need, as I do, to go out and slay a dragon or two, instead of finding your thrills with a few more itemized deductions, then by all means try an adventure. It just might scratch an itch — an itch for quest, true adventure — that you may have forgotten you have.

Tonight I'm off to Zork III. I have the wizard's wand, you see, which is

