

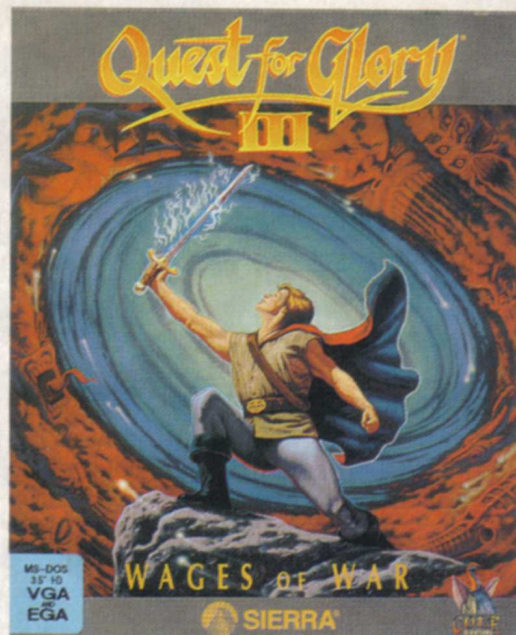
The Wages of War

Quest For Glory III



by Jeff James

In the original *Quest for Glory*, Lori and Corey Cole proved that a hybrid adventure/role-playing game could be successful. In *Quest for Glory III*, the husband and wife design duo challenge our assumptions about culture in the same way they challenged our beliefs about game design. Gamers are likely to discover enlightenment in "Darkest" Africa when they boot *Quest for Glory III: Wages of War*.



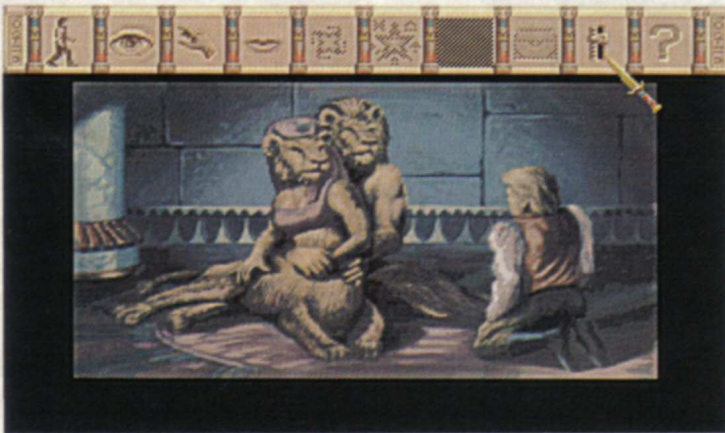
TITLE:	Quest for Glory III
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	\$59.99
PROTECTION:	Documentation Look-up
DESIGNERS:	Lori & Corey Cole
PUBLISHER:	Sierra Oakhurst, CA

In *Quest for Glory II (QG2)*, players were introduced to Rakeesh the Liontaur (a leonine variation on the traditional centaur) and Uhura the Simbani tribeswoman. The player adventured with them in the city of Shapeir and its sinister sister city, Raseir. In *Quest for Glory III: Wages of War (QG3)*, the homeland of these characters is the land darkened by the threat of war, so the player is soon whisked off to the land of Tarna by way of a magical portal. Upon arrival in the city of Tarna, the player learns that evil is indeed afoot. A hidden power — presumably the demon released as the result of the demise of Ad Avis in the thrilling finale to *QG2* — seems to be trying to get the Liontaurs, Simbani and the jungle-dwelling leopardmen to go to war. The player arrives on the scene and assumes the role of a fantasy role-playing secretary of state, shuttling between the involved tribes as a peaceful mediator and trying to bring peace to the region.

QG3 takes Lori and Corey Cole's popular adventure series to new heights with an exotic fantasy setting littered with difficult obstacles and malevolent monsters. Gamers can bring along their favorite adventurers from the first two games in the series or start anew with one of three characters: fighter, magic-user or thief.

The story begins with the player assum-

ing the role of the hero who vanquished the evil wizard Ad Avis in *QG2*, thwarting the evil spellcaster's attempt to unleash the evil djinni, Iblis. While the passing of any evil magic-user should give



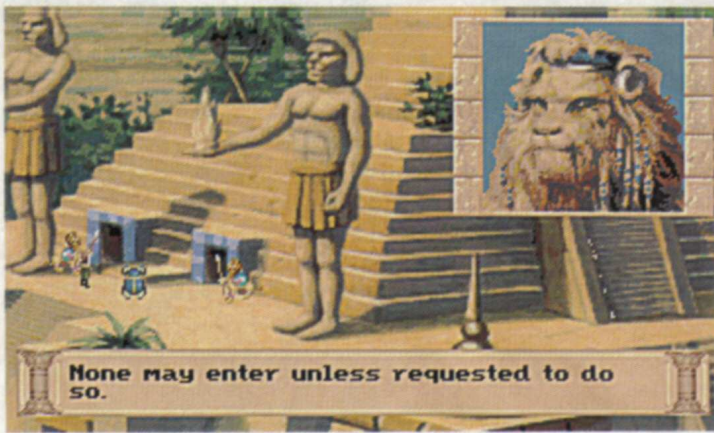
gamers ample cause to rejoice, it seems that the death of the evil wizard has released an even greater evil in the *Quest for Glory* gameworld. Specifically, a demon was released when Ad Avis met his death, and is believed to be the instigator of a war brewing in another part of the *Quest for Glory* gameworld.

Exotic New Landscape

While *QG1* was based loosely on a medieval European setting and *QG2* opted for an exotic Arabian tableau, *QG3* offers perhaps the most exotic and intriguing backdrop in the *Quest for Glory* series to date. *QG3* takes place on the sprawling continent of Fricana, a land patterned heavily after the real-world African continent. In this land, a humid tropical jungle skirts a large, sweltering savanna of grasslands. In the midst of the jungle are the crumbling ruins of a lost city, filled with dark, foreboding secrets of its own. The city of Tarna itself is a cosmopolitan center of activity, where a variety of fantasy and real-world cultures collide. Honor-bound Liontaurs mingle in the streets with Arabian shop keepers, while Simbani warriors, strongly patterned after traditional African Zulu, observe with watchful eyes. The world of *QG3* is a rich and alluring one; a world where Edgar Rice Burrough's Tarzan would feel right at home.

Indeed, *QG3*'s exotic treatment of different cultures proves itself to be one of the most enjoyable aspects of the game. Role-playing adventures have traditionally been centered around medieval European culture, using the same western batch of monsters (dragons and ogres), backdrops (castles and hamlets) and conflicts (dwarves vs. elves, orcs vs. everyone). I especially enjoyed *QG3*'s treatment of African culture, complete with a list of verbal greetings and other terms taken from actual Swahili. Non-European cultures such as the African tribal empires, Chinese dynasties and Japanese shogunates have been traditionally underrepresented in fantasy RPG's; this reviewer would like to encourage game developers to explore the rich, relatively untapped material for adventure gaming in these and other cultures. With *QG3* proving that a RPG based upon a non-European gaming world can be just as enjoyable and entertaining as one that is, one can hope that this tradition contin-

ues (I would love to see an RPG based upon the ancient Aztec civilization in South America).



Moving the character about this rich gameworld involves Sierra's tried and true point and click interface which displays all of the commands the player can use in the game. These controls can be perused by toggling through them with the right mouse button or accessing the pop-up control panel at the top of the game screen. Icons for looking, grabbing, checking inventory and accessing disk functions are all present.

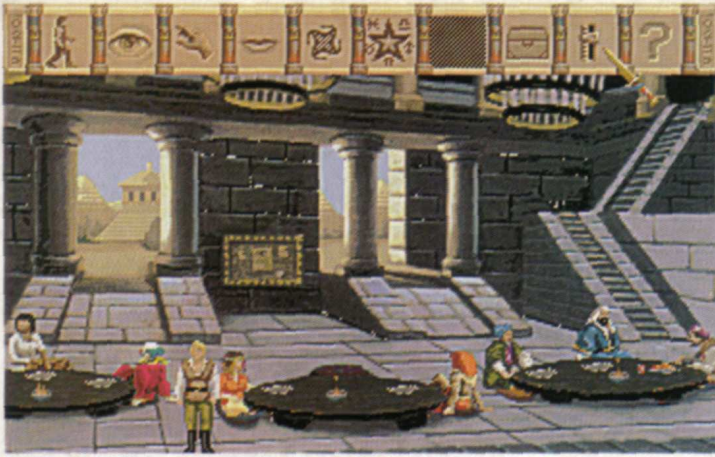
Three aspects of the interface have been modified considerably in *QG3*. First, the speech icon has been given additional flexibility. Conversation with non-player characters in earlier Sierra titles (such as *King's Quest V*) were frustratingly one sided — often little more than dead-end dialogues where the only control the player had over what was being said was how fast it could be read off the screen. Clicking the "talk" icon on a character in the game now brings up a menu of topics. Speaking about some topics may bring up other topics of discussion, allowing the player to modify the course of discussion to some degree. While a far cry from a full-blown text parser, *QG3*'s expanded dialogue is definitely a step in the right direction.

The second modification is the special action bar, which contains all of the specialized commands particular to the *Quest for Glory* series. This menu allows the player to access special character actions, such as sleeping, character information, fleeing combat and sneaking up on an opponent.

Finally, *QG3* offers a specialized menu of combat actions. Closer in appearance to an embossed tablet than a menu, it is divided into three areas corresponding to three types of combat options. Tailored individually for the Fighter, Thief and Magic-user classes, these combat menus make navigating the pseudo-arcade combat sequences an exercise in point and click simplicity.

QG3's sumptuous hand-painted graphics make the exotic backdrop of Tarna spring to life. Most of the art-





work excels at presenting the world of *QG3* in a grand scale, with towering pyramids, sphinx-like statues and thick green jungles all rendered in 256-color VGA. Adding to the visual display, *QG3* sports a sound track with a broad scope of styles, ranging from driving passages filled with jungle drums to sprightly Persian bazaar music, reminiscent of snake charmers and spice sellers.

Blemishes on the Landscape

As polished a product as *QG3* is, a few blemishes need to be mentioned. Traveling across the open savanna seems to be more difficult than it should be, with monsters attacking the player's character from all quarters. True, the character can opt to flee, and *QG3* offers three levels of playing difficulty to dial down the difficulty of the arcade sequences, but regardless of the difficulty level, combat seems to occur more often than necessary. I also encountered a few minor bugs regarding conversation with some



NPC's. During a nighttime encounter with Arnie Saknoosen — a gregarious, diamond-hunting aardvark — the game ghosted out all of the action icons, preventing me from leaving the area.

Visions on the Horizon

Minor program foibles aside, *QG3* is yet another excellent product from the creative characters at **Sierra**. With every new release in the *Quest for Glory* series, designers Lori and Corey Cole have been steadily improving the line, offering gamers an exciting mixture of hard-core fantasy role-playing and traditional graphic adventure games. *QG3* is far and away the most satisfying and entertaining game yet in the series. With such a commendable tradition, we can hardly contain our expectations for *Quest for Glory IV: Shadows of Darkness*. It will be tough to surpass the expectations generated from the excellence already found in *Quest for Glory III: Wages of War*. **CGW**

PORTINIUM[®]

Compete with up to 99 players in either of two low-cost versions of the P.B.M. game of PORTINIUM. Players compete in a single age on the planet Glacieria with one character, one capital city and four divisions. Fierce battles are common as players pursue victory across more than 6500 map sectors.

ALSO AVAILABLE: PORTINIUM and PORTINIUM II. Play on four time-travel levels with the original version or the new, 3-week, 10-unit format. Time-travel, mini-games, player espionage units and indigenous cities are available in larger versions. No hidden costs.

PORTINIUM HI or LO-TECH
\$5.00 per turn (4-wk turnaround)

Remember to state game version when ordering.

LIFETIME \$25.00 setup fee includes; 198-page Hi-Gloss Player's Guide, start-up packet, free start-up turn, plus one free turn and subscription to game newsletter.

Write or call for free brochure

ENCHANTED HORIZONS[®]

P.O. Box 9897 Spokane, WA 99209-9897 (509) 325-6941

Circle Reader Service #76