

# King's Quest VII: The Princeless Bride

IBM PC CD



by Zach Meston

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**T**here are three moments in my life that I will never forget: my first kiss (a one-minute lip lock given to me during a game of truth or dare); my first computer (a Texas Instruments 99/4-A with an amazing 16 K of memory); and my first encounter with *King's Quest*, on my then-girlfriend's IBM PC jr (the computer with the infamous Chiclet keyboard). I was blown away by the graphics—in 16 fabulous EGA colors—but I especially enjoyed the game play, which had these great things called "puzzles" that you solved by using items in a logical way. I'd never experienced anything like it before, and I've been hooked on graphic adventure games ever since.

That's why I'm so bummed that each successive *King's Quest* has had less-inspired puzzles and less-interesting storylines, with *King's Quest VII* being no excep-

tion. This latest ho-hum sequel centers around two characters introduced in *King's Quests II-VI*: Princess Rosella and her dear mum, Queen Valanice. As we watch the intro sequence unfold, Rosella and Valanice discuss marriage. (Rosella prizes her bachelorette status, while Valanice wants her to get hitched as soon as possible.) Tired of her mom's incessant whining, Rosella dives into a magical pool of water, and the over-protective Valanice dives in after her. Both women end up in the magical realm of Eldritch, where—as the game packaging states—they "plunge headlong into a magical adventure that will touch your heart." Excuse me while I puke.

The game is presented in six chapters that alternate between Rosella and Valanice as they explore Eldritch. The top two-thirds of the screen shows Rosella/Valanice and her current surroundings, while the bottom

T E C H N O X										
<b>Price:</b>	N/A									
<b>Available:</b>	Now									
<b>Genre:</b>	Adventure									
<b>Media:</b>	Compact Disc									
<b>Developer:</b>	Sierra On-Line									
<b>Publisher:</b>	Sierra On-Line									
	P.O. Box 3404									
	Salinas, CA 93912									
<b>Phone:</b>	800.757.7707									
<b>System</b>										
<b>Requirements:</b>	IBM PC 386 or Better									
	Super VGA Graphics Card									
	Windows 3.1									
	4 Megabytes RAM									
	5 Megabytes Free Hard									
	Disk Space									
<b>Contents:</b>	Disney-esque Animation, a									
	User-Friendly Interface and									
	a Sickly-Sweet Storyline									







third of the screen displays Rosella/Valanice's inventory and two icons—Examine, which lets you take a closer look at an object you're holding, and Controls, which shows your progress through the game and lets you tweak a few game options.

When you look at an object with the Examine icon, you can rotate it 360 degrees (but only on the horizontal axis). Several of KQ VII's puzzles involve manipulating an object while examining it. For example, early in the game you find a basket. By examining the basket and clicking on its lid, you open it.



By rotating the basket after you've opened it, you see a corn kernel inside.

The puzzles in KQ VII are moderately difficult, although a couple of them are excessively tough. There are multiple solutions to several puzzles, although the solutions generally get more linear as the game progresses. The game also gives you the option of starting at any of the six chapters, which

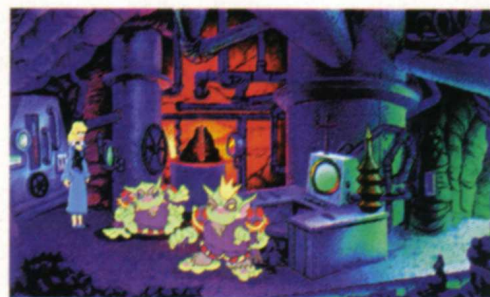
makes it easier to go back and try solving all the puzzles (but also lets the less-scrupulous player skip ahead).

KQ VII's sharp and colorful SVGA graphics are rather pleasant, although the animation

doesn't reach the animated film (i.e., Disney) standard Sierra seems to think it does, especially not when it pauses and jerks as the game accesses the CD. The disappointing intro and ending sequences are tiny AVI movies with monophonic sound, giving them the emotional impact of watching *The Lion King* on a Sony Watchman. The sound and music are very impressive—the voice acting is first-rate and the General MIDI music sets the mood nicely.

I'm a bit confused at the audience Sierra is shooting for with *King's Quest VII*. The storyline and animation seem to be aimed squarely at preteens, but the puzzles are too difficult for them to solve without oodles of parental assistance, and today's jaded-as-hell teenagers wouldn't be caught dead playing such a terminally adorable game. If KQ VII's cutesiness doesn't turn you off, it's a decent adventure—but if it does, save your dough for

*Phantasmagoria*, the horror game Sierra's been beaver away on for about a year now.



10	
9	GRAPHICS
8	MUSIC, SOUND EFFECTS
7	PLAYABILITY
6	\$ VALUE
5	
4	ORIGINALITY
3	
2	
1	
N/A	

#### Editors' Ratings

**JEREMY: 7** It's so sweet, it'll make your teeth hurt.

**RON: 7** Another desert maze in a Sierra.

**MIKE: 6** This game reminds me of those first-grade readers from the '70s.

**CHRIS: 5** Not for me!