

## SECRET OF VULCAN FURY

Interplay Productions  
(949) 553-6655  
www.interplay.com  
Company ETA: Q3 '99  
CGW's ETA: Q4 '99

Interplay has pushed this title back to fall 1999, but that's probably a good thing. Rushing SECRET OF VULCAN FURY out half-baked would have done no good, and after the nightmare that was STAR TREK PINBALL, Interplay owes the Trekker audience a good game.

And this game has serious potential. SECRET OF VULCAN FURY is a classic *Trek* tale, penned by D.C. Fontana (one of the series' original writers) and features voiceovers by the entire original cast. The story centers around the murder of a

Romulan ambassador on Vulcan, which plunges the crew of the *Enterprise* into the mystery surrounding the original separation of the Romulan and Vulcan races.

We've loved what we've seen of this game so far. The realistic 3D graphics have to be seen to be believed. Now Interplay just has to finish the dang thing.

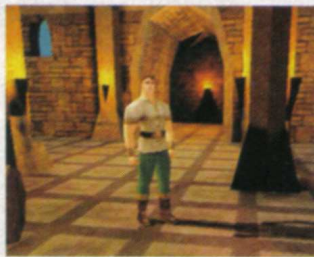
## KING'S QUEST: MASK OF ETERNITY

Sierra Studios  
(425) 649-9800  
www.sierrastudios.com  
Company ETA: Q3 '98  
CGW's ETA: Q4 '98.

**K**ING'S QUEST: MASK OF ETERNITY is another foray by Sierra into the brave new world of 3D adventure games. Again, Sierra is taking an estab-

lished franchise and completely revamping it—and, in this case, the changes are even more radical. With the series' longtime designer Roberta Williams again at the helm, MASK OF ETERNITY is being billed this time as an action/adventure—meaning that manual dexterity and combat will play a factor, in addition to the now-standard adventure game puzzle-solving.

Those with an open mind will soon discover, however, that this is, in fact, a KING'S QUEST game, faithful to the spirit of the 14-year-old series. Once again, Williams



has penned a high-fantasy, adventure tale set in the kingdom of Daventry. This time, some kind of destructive magical force has turned the inhabitants to stone, and it's up to Connor—the one person spared—to find out what's going on.

A beautiful new 3D engine, a strong plot, and Williams' good instincts for what makes a game work should put this one over. It's a gamble, to be sure, but, at this point, the genre could certainly use some fresh ideas.



## GOOD & EVIL

Cavedog Entertainment  
(425) 486-9258  
www.cavedog.com  
Company ETA: Q4 '99  
CGW's ETA: Q4 '99

**H**onestly, we don't know much about this one yet, but the very fact that it exists was reason enough for us to rejoice. Why? Because it's the first adventure game in a long time from Ron Gilbert, the legendary designer behind LucasArts' MONKEY ISLAND 1 and 2 games, and the man also behind Humongous, whose kids' adventure games (the PUTT-PUTT, PAJAMA SAM, and FREDDI FISH series) rank among the best in the business—for gamers of any age.

Gilbert's new game is being billed as an adventure/RPG/strategy title, with a top-down perspective. What we saw (a pirate town, a clown town, and a medieval setting) was cartoony in the classic LucasArts vein—and that's about all we have to say. Yet, we're still optimistic. After all, Gilbert's record is spotless.

## IN THE WORKS

**N**ormally, this space would be reserved for all the other exciting adventure games now in development. The only problem is, there hardly are any in development right now. As was the case with RPGs a few years ago, the adventure game genre is floundering right now, and the prognosis—except for the games on this list—is not so good. So just exactly why is this once-important genre wheezing along, trying to catch the action, strategy, and even role-playing titles as they leave it in the dust? The answer, as is usually the case, is money.

Adventure games are incredibly expensive to make, but publishers are simply not seeing the kind of sales they've now come to expect from the **DIABLO**-style blockbuster hits in other genres. Even last year's most acclaimed titles—**BLADE RUNNER**, **CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND**, and **ZORK GRAND INQUISITOR**—didn't begin to approach the sales of a **QUAKE**, or, for that matter, **AGE OF EMPIRES**. (We're leaving **MYST** and **RIVEN** out of the discussion. Regardless of your opinion of those games, they're really pop-culture anomalies.)

Why? Maybe the slow-paced, lengthy nature of these games doesn't appeal to

today's quick-fix crowd. Maybe they simply require way too much of a time investment, even for people who like this kind of game. And maybe they're victims of technology—unable to compete with the visceral eye-candy available in almost every other genre.

In any event, something had to give—and it did. Adventure game development has dried up in a big way, and those still nobly pursuing the cause are doing what they can to expand the genre's horizons to reach a bigger—and younger—audience. We wish them the best. Next year, we don't want to have to write such a depressing lament.