

*Warning: Although "The Scorpion's Tale" is a warm and comfortable tavern of the mind with a nice cozy fire of vibrant images, our resident storyteller conjures up illuminating hints about games. If the gentle reader eschews hints, let him beware!*

**J**ust step right in and cool off. Pretty hot out there, now that the dog days of August are with us. Fred, however, is not with us this time. As usual, he's off at the annual Grues Convention in the Dark Room at Colossal Cave. This year, they're going to try and get up an expedition to go on a quest for the Globe of Eternal Darkness. Hey, I know where you can find that... out in space, which is pretty dark. Hmmm... kind of makes that a "space quest," doesn't it? Yes, it's time once again for another *Space Quest*. Time, in fact, is what this one is all about. Our buddy Roger Wilco, galactic hero extraordinaire and occasional janitor, will be burning up the time lines in this adventure.

You can expect some big changes on this *Space Quest*. The interface has been completely re-done, and is now much like that in *King's Quest V*. It's all point-and-click; no parser, no typing in from the keyboard. The "walk" command from *King's Quest V* has also been implemented (a good thing, too!). You can move Roger around the screen just by clicking where you want him to go, and he'll walk there, avoiding obstacles along the way. No more tedious maneuvering (for the most part).

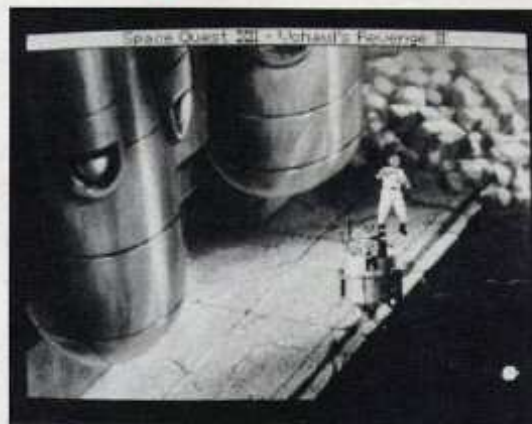
The graphics have also been upscaled, and are really pretty to look at. You'll want VGA and a fast machine to get the most out of the game. A sound card wouldn't hurt, either. The game also takes advantage of expanded memory if you have it (it worked very well with QEMM-386, my memory manager). Definitely, this is a high-end game (but you can send in your disks for exchange if you need the 16-color version; however, Sierra still recommends 10 Mhz speed or faster).

It's a good idea to save often while playing. There are many situations where a wrong move can bring the game (and Roger) to an untimely end. As a precaution, you should also keep a couple of save positions from different areas, in case you have to restore to pick up an item you missed the first time through.

So what's Roger up to this time? Actually, not much. All that running around space, saving the galaxy, rescuing people and whatnot, has sort of tired him



## Scorpion's Tale



out. The only thing he wants right now is a little vacation, where he can kick back, relax, and maybe brag a little about his accomplishments (okay, maybe brag a lot). So Roger's being a good little boy for a change, when a pair of Sequel Police march into the bar and ask him to step outside. Right there, you realize that his vacation is going to be put on hold for awhile... possibly a long while.

However, Roger has no choice (this part is all automatic), and out he strolls. What's going on? Well, it's a blast from the past, a moldy oldie... in fact, it's none other than... Vohaul! Yep, he's back from the almost-dead to plague our boy again.

Although it's more like the other way around. Roger has been rather a plague to Vohaul, who has decided to eliminate him once and for all, before going on to rule the universe. Take no chances, that's Vohaul's new philosophy.

However, before the Sequel Police can fry Roger, two mysterious strangers (no, not the Guys From Andromeda!) jump in and whisk him away. They open up a rip in time and shove him through it, and Roger's newest adventure really begins. It's a nasty place he finds himself in, though: Xenon, his home planet, but in pretty poor condition. Looks like a war had been fought here. Even worse, a glance up at the menu bar shows *Space Quest XII: Vohaul's Revenge 2*.

*Twelve?* The series is gonna go on that long? Now, that's frightening!

Never mind — Roger (and you) can worry about that later. Right now, he has to find a way out of this disaster area. There isn't much to work with, and the area is dangerous. A weirdo cyborg is wandering around and, if he catches up to Roger, it's all over. So when you see him, just go somewhere else and keep out of his way.

The most interesting thing is the building on the horizon (kind of reminded me of Darth Vader's helmet in a way). Naturally, our hero can't just walk up and knock on the front door (he probably wouldn't want to, even if he could). Getting in there requires a bit of work (this is an adventure game, after all!).

So Roger spends some time snooping around the streets and grabbing almost anything he can get his hot little hands on (almost, mind you; we don't want him to blow himself up). Then a little jaunt below (watch out for the acid!) followed by a short ride and — poof! Roger's in the big building.

Not that he should stay long. After all, the place is crawling with plenty of killer Sequel Police. Fortunately, one of those little time-hopper machines is sitting there, just begging to be used. Before pushing any buttons, however, Roger should take careful note of the symbols on the readout. Otherwise, it's going to be real hard to get back here again later.

Now, what should he push? As a matter of fact, any sequence at all. It won't



work the first time. Too bad, Roger. But don't let it get you down; anything you try the second time *will* work. Before long, our boy is on his way to *Space Quest X: Latex Babes of Estros!* (Hmm, are you sure you didn't end up in a *Leisure Suit Larry* game by accident?)

It's yet another weird place (Roger has a talent for ending up in them), full of rocky pinnacles and hungry giant birds ("roc"-a-bye Roger...). No sooner has he escaped from the nest, then he's captured by some rather (ahem) "healthy-looking" women. It's worse than it sounds, because one of them is *very* upset with our hero. Apparently, in a later *Space Quest* he sort of ran out on her, and now she wants revenge!

Shortly, he finds himself strapped to a chair in the lady's underwater den, facing one of the most horrible, fiendish tortures ever devised. But wait: a nasty, ugly, ravenous sea slug pops up out of the water! The women take off, leaving Roger to an even worse fate!

Hurry, Roger! Get yourself free so you can defeat the monster! (it's a good idea to save the game as soon as possible

after being strapped in the chair, because there isn't much time to get things done in this sequence).

With the monster killed, the women return and proclaim Roger their hero. They're even willing to let bygones be bygones, and forget about torturing him to death (...generous of them). Now that they've made up, it's time to celebrate by going to... the mall!

No sooner said than done. Off they fly to the Galleria, where the women promptly forget about Roger as they rush off to the sales. No matter, Roger always did better on his own, anyway.

He has time for a leisurely exploration of various shops and stores (just don't go down the escalator because you-know-who's waiting below). Money's a concern, though. Roger doesn't have much in his pockets, and many things are a bit out of his price range. Maybe he could earn a few buckazoids at *Monolith Burger*?

This is a kind of arcade sequence. All Roger has to do is make up the burgers by putting lettuce, pickle, mayo, mustard, ketchup (ick, what a combination!)

and a bun top on each patty as it comes from the oven. He gets one buckazoid for each correct burger he makes.

It's easy at the start, as the burgers come along slowly. However, after a few they start coming faster and faster, to the point where Roger just can't keep up with them anymore. Too many rejects, and Roger is a reject himself (although he gets to keep the money he's already made). Fortunately, if you'd rather not go through this, you can "wimp out" by asking for the money without doing the burgers. You get some cash and a boot out of the burger joint (trying it both ways, I preferred getting the boot).

Roger also has a certain lady's ATM card, but using it is a problem. After all, he's not a lady. But I'm sure he can think of a way around that (hey, *Leisure Suit Larry* managed it!). Don't overlook the bargain bin at the software store. Not only are there some interesting spoofs of games (check 'em all out), there's a very necessary *Space Quest IV* Hint Book. (A crazy parody of all hint books, but it does contain some important info!)

Of course, there's also the obligatory Radio Shock (a Dandy company) with all sorts of electronic gadgets for sale. However, even if Roger has enough bucks, he'll have to wait for a while before he can find out what he needs from here.

Check out the arcade (possibly more than once). Umm, wait, what's that coming into view there? Looks like a time hopper. Looks like *Sequel Police* getting out of the time hopper. Looks like time for Roger to get out of here!

Now, if Roger could just figure a way to elude the cops, he might be able to make it back to the time machine and head along for other places. Too bad he can't fly... or can he?

When he does get to the time machine, where does he go next? Hey, didn't he read the *Space Quest IV* Hint Book? It ain't there *just* for laughs. Ulence Flats, of course. Does that name ring a bell? Like, maybe, from *Space Quest II* (and remember to note the symbols on the readout before leaving!)

Sure enough, that's the place. Look!, it has the same grubby old graphics as the first game did! (Wow, *deju vu!* Not to mention the fact that the graphics have come a *long* way since then!). In the bar is a trio of tough-looking customers, who sneer at our hero before tossing him out. Well, it's happened to him before (and probably will again).

Roger can handle it, though. He takes

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his own form of revenge on the louts and sneaks back into the bar after they've left (save before doing anything, in case you run into them again before you leave). Then a quick dash to the time machine and it's off to Xenon again.

Fortunately, on this visit, none of the Sequel Police are around (they must all be out looking for him). Now he can take a look at the mysterious locked door. Too bad he doesn't have the combination to open it. He's not gonna find one, either. Brute force (kind of) is the only thing that will work. Did you bring anything out of the sewers with you, hmmm?

Next comes the lasers and control pad. If Roger could just see how the lasers are set (cough, hack, wheeze), he might be able to do something about them. Like use the control pad to straighten them out. Unfortunately, the only method I could find here was trial and error; there doesn't seem to be any place in the game where the numbers are written. Save before you start, and restore if you don't get them right.

Now at this point, you have a choice. If you don't care much about getting a per-

fect score, you can go ahead and finish up the game right here. If you want all those points, then you have to go back to the mall and buy a computer plug (after getting a look at one of those little boxes on the walkways).

Whichever route you take, make sure to avoid the droid! Roger is dead meat if a droid catches him wandering around. We wouldn't want that to happen! So keep a screen ahead of it as you go up hill and down dale to see what's in this interesting place.

For instance, there's a computer room with some familiar stuff on the screen. I wonder what would happen if a few of those icons were flushed from the system? (Although I don't recommend flushing *Space Quest IV*, unless you save the game first!)

Then there's Roger, Jr. Yep, Roger has (or will have) a son (this time travel business can be confusing). There's only one problem... Vohaul's mind is in Junior's body, and Junior's mind is on the diskette that Vohaul/Junior just tossed over the side!

Uh oh! It's getting worse: Vohaul/Junior is about to fight with Roger!! Will our hero survive? Can he get his son back in one piece? Will a few explanations be made of everything that's been going on?

Gee, I sure hope so. It would be a real bummer if Roger got this far only to mess up at the big finale! (but hey, that's what save games are for!)

Whew! Well, enough of time travelling and zaniness for now. I see by the old invisible clock on the wall it's that (hehe) time again. Meanwhile, if you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways:

On Delphi: Visit the Game SIG (under the Groups and Clubs menu).

On GEnie: Stop by the Games Round-Table (type: Scorpia to reach Games RT).

By US Mail (enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you live in the United States): Scorpia, PO Box 338, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10028.

Until next time, happy adventuring! **CSW**

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