

DOOMSDAY CASTLE

It is common knowledge that in the deepest recesses of time there existed a race of strange diminutive creatures often referred to as elves who had amazing magical powers. For some obscure reason these creatures took it upon themselves to cast magical rings and things in which they invested awesome powers. You'd have thought that they would have looked after these rings pretty well but oh no, the elves managed to lose them all at one time or another with the result that the entire Universe is strewn with the things, usually in the daftest of places; the craters of volcanoes, bottoms of swamps etc. All this has caused no end of trouble since although intended for doing good their power inevitably ends up in the hands of some evil so-and-so out to do no good at all.

Just for a change one day, obviously fed up with casting magic rings to lose, the elves collected 6 large stones in which they invested the power to influence the mind.

As a safeguard against misuse they introduced a destruct mechanism whereby if the stones are in close proximity in a confined space their combined power would be too great, causing a chain reaction and in seconds, total annihilation.

The elves, of course, lost the six stones and we find them some millions of years later turning up in the hands of the infinitely evil Scarthax ('infinitely evil' is perhaps a slight exaggeration but he really is a nasty piece of work and no other adjective seemed to fit as well!). Scarthax discovered the destruct mechanism and built Doomsday Castle to house them safely apart but close enough to use their power and radiate it throughout the cosmos to corrupt and bring every creature in the Universe within his influence.

Fortunately for us, there is an enormous waiting list of budding super-heroes all eager to do battle with the forces of evil (this is really quite surprising since the survival rate among new recruits is pitifully low). Of these super-heroes, Ziggy is a legend in his own lifetime, a super-hero to end all super-heroes and it is his role that you have the privilege of taking in this game. For those of you who have bought 'THE PYRAMID' Ziggy will need no further introduction. For those of you who haven't, I suggest you go out and buy it immediately and find out all about him.

Before revealing the details of the game it is worth giving you some information about the various creatures you will be doing battle with and the capability of your exploratory capsule.

URKS

Urks are perhaps the most unusual creatures in the entire Universe. They have the obscurest reproductive system of any creature yet catalogued in the Encyclopaedia Galactica which devotes a whole volume to the amazingly intricate mechanism. Unfortunately, due to its extreme complexity the process often goes wrong with the result that Urks take on some very peculiar forms and are highly unstable. Scarthax has recruited a whole army of Urks to defend Doomsday Castle. Due to their instability Urks are highly dangerous creatures as they will atomize on contact with foreign objects releasing a large burst of theta radiation. Consequently, Urks have a very restricted social life. You will meet Urks descending on you from the tops of both the Halls and the Passages.

GARTHROGS

Garthrogs are singularly unintelligent. Once told to do something they will continue to do it until some indeterminate time in the future when they will suddenly forget what it is they were supposed to be doing. Garthrogs tend to be taken advantage of and usually end up doing jobs that no one else could consider fit to do. It is a fact that whenever someone has had the misguided goodwill to give a Garthrog a task of some responsibility, it has forgotten the task at the very most inopportune moment. Garthrogs are therefore destined for a life of total servitude. This is really just as well since they are virtually indestructible and could reek havoc throughout the Universe did they have a mind to. They appear to have a continual smirk on their face which can turn to a frown should you upset them by shooting them or something, but this exceptional show of emotion doesn't last long and they soon get back on with the job in hand. Scarthax has positioned Garthrogs on lifts in each Hall and told them to shoot at any intruder. You will not be surprised to learn that the Garthrog's aim is rather poor and he is more likely to hit you by accident than by design.

GOOGLY BIRDS

Googly Birds are phenomenally nasty but very sleepy. Googly Birds in fact spend 99% of their extremely long life-span asleep and object very strongly to being woken up. Undisturbed, a Googly Bird has been known to nod off for over a thousand years. When an intruder is present in a Hall the Urks have the unenviable task of keeping the Googly Bird on the job by landing on top of its head and waking it up. Once awake, the Googly Bird takes off for a short fly, on the way up releasing a highly destructive thread which flies around the Hall at amazing speed bouncing off everything in sight. The thread is highly energised and will absorb a large amount of shield power. After his fly the Googly Bird settles down and immediately nods off again. You will soon realise that it is VERY important to prevent the Urks from waking up the Googly Bird.

NEUCLOIDS

Neucloids are among the most primitive of creatures, consisting of a nucleus and a surrounding nebulous radioactive plasma. Neucloids can only be destroyed by hitting the nucleus, requiring a very accurate aim. It is important to keep destroying the Neucloids as they are released to prevent them from building up in numbers. For creatures of their size Neucloids multiply at a startling rate, cell division taking place every microsecond. This amazing rate of development has evolved in response to their dramatically small life-expectancy. In short, Neucloids are the most persecuted entities in the Universe. For some reason other creatures, of whatever disposition, good, bad or indifferent, find it extremely satisfying to blow innocent Neucloids to smithereens. If Neucloids could feel emotion they would not be very happy.

ORPHACS

Orphacs are programmed robotic bodies which fly using a rotary mechanism and carry an energetic charge which is released on contact with any intruder in a Passage. The program, unfortunately for Scarthax, fortunately for you, was written by an Urk and consequently is rather simple. Once released, an Orphac will fly a continuous path, bouncing off any walls in its way until it meets an intruder.

THE EXPLORATORY CAPSULE

Your Capsule is manually operated with a computer override to prevent you hitting walls etc, should you lose concentration. The computer will also stop you doing silly things like flying into the Googly Bird while he's asleep! You have a mini-missile launcher with which you can destroy Urks, Neucloids, Orphacs and blast through doors. To protect yourself you have a state of the art defensive shield with which you can protect yourself against almost anything thrown at you. The shield is powered by Heliconium Crystals from which energy is drawn on every alien contact. When the Crystals are completely discharged you become totally vulnerable to attack and will very soon get splatted all over the screen. You enter Doomsday Castle with 1000 units of shield power and the current value is continuously updated on the bottom of the screen.

THE GAME

Doomsday Castle consists of a labyrinth of 25 Halls complexly connected by a total of 49 Passages. Each Hall has 4 exits or entrances which are secured by doors which can be either red or blue. All doors are red initially but are sealed blue once they have been passed through and are then totally impregnable. You can shoot the red doors out using your missile launcher and supercharging your missiles by an automatic blast of theta radiation at the precise moment of contact. After 16 door blasts your theta radiation supply will be discharged which is indicated by the Capsule colour changing from White to Yellow. You can recharge it by destroying Urks with missiles and absorbing their own theta radiation. You need to destroy 8 Urks to recharge which is indicated by the Capsule colour returning to White. Once a door has been shot through sufficiently your Capsule will be sucked out as soon as it passes within range and in line with the exit. Care must be taken if you don't want to leave immediately.

Each Hall contains an ante-chamber which may contain a Crystal or one of the six ancient stones. Access to an ante-chamber is by one of two doors which are identical to the four exit doors. Once a door has been shot out sufficiently the ante-chamber can be entered by moving into it and the Crystal or stone is picked up automatically.

The Crystals are made of Heliconium, the very source of power for your defensive shield and are therefore well worth collecting. The Crystals may be red, magenta, green or cyan giving you an extra 200, 300, 400 or 500 units of shield power respectively.

On leaving a Hall you will pass through a narrow corridor where you will be able to see your current status in the game before entering a larger Passage where you will face a battle for survival. Once you have entered the Passage the door closes permanently behind you. The Exit Door on the far side cannot be shot out but is timelocked and will open after a preset interval. Basically, you have to survive in the Passage losing as little of your precious Shield Power as possible. It is here that you meet the Neucloids and the Orphacs as well, of course, as the omnipresent Urks. On passing through the exit door you will enter directly into the next Hall where battle commences again.

As you will probably already appreciate, the number of possible routes through Doomsday Castle is mind-blowingly enormous, even to someone of Ziggy's amazing mental capacity and herein lies the crux of the game. Although the principal object is to score points by collecting stones, this will only be best achieved by means of many reconnaissance missions into the Castle gradually revealing the layout and interconnections. This will enable you to plan the optimum route to collect the stones and reach the Exit Hall.

The Exit Hall is distinctive in not having a Crystal or a stone in the ante-chamber. If you enter the ante-chamber while carrying all six stones they will be released and their presence together in this confined space will spark off a chain reaction which will destroy the stones and the Castle for eternity. You have just a few seconds to escape before the cataclysmic explosion. The Castle Exit Door is the top right door in the Exit Hall and when passed through at any time will result in the end of the game. (N.B. It's really not worth rushing for the Exit Door because you won't see the very colourful explosion, I'd hate you to miss it!)

The following four joystick options are available:

1. FULLER 2. KEMPSTON 3. CURSOR MAPPED 4. SINCLAIR

There are three keyboard options available and these are detailed on the opening page when the game starts. The selected option stays in force for the duration of the game.

The game can be held at any time by pressing "ENTER" on the keyboard. It can be restarted in the same way.

SCORING

Doomsday Castle combines features of both Arcade and Adventure games and consequently the scoring system is a little different to usual. Points are ONLY gained for collecting stones; 10,000 for the Blue, 20,000 for the Red, 30,000 for the Magenta, 40,000 for the Green, 50,000 for the Cyan, and 70,000 for the White. A bonus of 50,000 is awarded for completing the mission, saving the Universe, and emerging alive. All the time you spend in the Halls the points are ticking away so speed is important in achieving the highest possible score and planning the most efficient route will be the best way of saving time.

Each new high score in a game will be coded. Send your score and code to us and you may earn a place in our ranking list of the top 1000 scorers published every 6 months. You may send as many scores as you wish.

We hope you have many absorbing hours exploring and playing Doomsday Castle and enjoy meeting all the various Urks of which there are 50 in all to see. We can almost certainly guarantee that you will very soon develop an extreme dislike for the Googly Bird but please remember, it really only wants to be left alone to sleep!

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(They're the official words but really you guys, play the game and keep this game to yourself. By all means make a back-up copy for your own use but if a friend wants a copy tell him to go buy one himself - does he realise the amount of effort that goes into producing a game like this - does he realise that software houses can only afford to produce high quality games if the public is prepared to pay for them. Your co-operation will result in the standards continuing to increase as we can afford to put more time and effort into each game - anyway it's illegal and we might just send Ziggy around!)

DOOMSDAY CASTLE was designed and written by Bob Hamilton.

Many thanks are due to Darren Hamilton, Ian Hamilton, Jane Claricoates and Marion Butler for help with graphics and to Ann Scott for supplying much essential tea and testing.

Do not hesitate to send us your scores and codes printing your name and address in BLOCK CAPITALS please. You will receive the current newsletter of the Fantasy Micro Club by return post. Please quote your membership number if you already have one.

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