The Price of Magik

Rummaging in the attic, you discover a wrinkled balloon with tiny white writing, too small to make out. Intrigued, you blow and the balloon swells like a red globe. Then it bursts.

As the echos fade, you re-open your eyes and look in astonishment upon a bleak landscape of mist and swamp. Writing glimmers in the darkness: "Welcome to the House of the Red Moon."

This is a game about magic. At the start you know absolutely nothing about its methods and powers, except that there are 18 spells to learn. To win, you must know everything.

INSTRUCTIONS

When the game pauses in the middle of printing text, read what is on the screen and press SHIFT, or another key, to continue.

The Price of Magik uses Level 9's new adventure system and understands commands like:

EAST	STAND UP
TAKE SHIELD	READ THE SCROLL
WEAR ARMOUR	PULL THE SWORD HILT
DROP THE RING	EAT SALT

EXAMINE ALL BUT THE CROSS, MANDRAKE AND CANDLE AND GO EAST.
EXAMINE THE BOOK AND PUT IT IN THE BAG.
OPEN THE DESK AND LOOK INSIDE IT.
GARGOYLE, GO NORTH AND KILL THE FERRYMAN.

The program copes with a wider range of English sentences than any other cassette-based game I've seen. It allows quite complex sentences, but you can usually use one or two word commands if you prefer. Its vocabulary is about one thousand words, many of which can be sensibly abbreviated (e.g. SOUTH to S and SOUTHEAST to SE). Here are some useful examples:

TAKE, GET, WEAR, DROP, the 8 main compass directions, IN, OUT, UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, CLIMB, LOOK, LISTEN, SAY, LOOK AT, EXAMINE, FILL, INSERT, OPEN, CLOSE, LIGHT, SCORE, QUIT, TAKE, DROP, EVERYTHING and IT (used with many verbs), SAVE and RESTORE, AGAIN (repeat previous command), INVENTORY (list what is carried), and WORDS and PICTURES (turn pictures off/on in a graphics version).

Some creatures can be "persuaded" to do what you want. There are many ways of giving commands, but the simplest is to just type the name of the creature, a comma, then what you want it to do. For example:

WEREWOLF, GO EAST, ATTACK ALL, TAKE ALL. GO WEST AND DROP ALL

It still pays to keep commands simple and experiment to find the best words to use. Good adventuring!

LENSLOK INSTRUCTIONS

Graphical versions of this game are protected by Lenslok. So, unless you've got the BBC micro version, you'll have to use Lenslok several times during the complete adventure.

- When you've made a little progress in the game, it will display a pattern like a big "H" and ask you to use the Lenslok provided.
- Place the unfolded Lenslok lengthwise on the screen, between the two vertical legs of the "H". Use the left and right cursor keys to adjust the width of the "H" to match the size of the Lenslok holder. (In other words, adjust the "H" until it is 10 cm across).
- Press the space bar. The screen will change to show a jumbled pattern.
- Fold the Lenslok and hold it against the screen. (You'll be able to read the words "TOP" and "THIS SIDE OUT" on the Lenslok).
- Line up the centre line of the Lenslok with the centre line of the pattern. Close one eye. Look at the pattern through the Lenslok and you should be able to make out the letters "OK".
- Press any key and the pattern will change to two vague letters of numbers. (Some are easier to read than others.)
- Type the two characters. (Upper and lower case are treated as different, so if you read ab, type ab and not AB.) If you get them right, that's it. You're through to the next stage of the game.

If you get them wrong, the program gives you two more chances with the same pattern. Three errors and you're back in the adventure, at the point just before the Lenslok check. Next time you try Lenslok, it will display a different pattern and you may have better luck. Keep trying!

LENSLOK HINTS

- Don't squint through the Lenslok: keep your head at least 30 cm away.
- Slightly moving the Lenslok, or your head, can make the characters more recognisable.
- If you have an anti-glare screen in front of the glass of your TV or monitor, use the Lenslok only partly folded so that its central part is the right distance from the pattern.

Lenslok is a trademark of ASAP Developments Ltd, 39 St. James's Place, London SW1A 1NS.

BACKGROUND

Long ago the moon was red and shone magic onto the Earth, but the sun steadily bleached it of all power.

While some magic remained, the surviving Magicians created the red moon crystal of Baskalos as a new source of magical power, and appointed the best of their number to watch over it. Under the care of a succession of wise guardians, the red moon crystal gained greatly in power so that magic worked for miles around. Then Myglar struck.

Myglar was a noble sorcerer when he was appointed guardian of the crystal, and he cared for it faithfully. But, as life passed him by, Myglar began to ponder on his own mortality. In short, he feared death too much. Driven by desperation, Myglar channelled the magic of the crystal into keeping himself alive, sucking at its power. The red moon is fading and with it the last magic in the world. That is why you have been summoned; to defeat Myglar and take his place as guardian, before it is too late.

COMBAT

You may want to fight some of the creatures in this adventure. Consider carrying a weapon and wearing armour first. Magic may help.

You can often break off combat by returning the way you came (just enter "go north" or whatever) but your enemy may be able to strike one last blow.

SCORING

There are no "treasures", as such, in the Price of Magik. The main aim of this game is to learn how to use magic, so you get points for learning and using spells. And for reaching a few inaccessible places.

Try to avoid getting killed!

APPENDIX: PERCEPTION AND REAL MAGIC

Human perception is very subjective, you can see what we expect to see rather than objective "reality". This is because the brain "fills in the gaps" in its information. E.g you see someone standing behind railings as a whole person, not a set of vertical slices, because the bits hidden by the railings are added back by your brain. Automatically.

In the light of day, this works well and mistakes are rare. But it's different in near darkness: there is much less data for the eye and brain to work with, more must be filled in, and mistakes happen.

A friend of mine, a very good driver, was travelling over the Mendips at night, last Christmas. The dazzling lights of a juggernaught made life a bit difficult, but the road was straight with catseyes to follow. Then my friend realised, with a shock, that the "catseyes" were actually a row of lights up the old West Horrington transmitter mast, miles away. Imagination had filled in a straight road "around" these: the real road bent away. I can think of many comparable experiences. Probably you can, too.

The occult is encountered by people who believe in mystery, in situations where the brain has little information to work with. A fleeting glimpse of something, a shadow in the dark, creaking floorboards and so on. "Filling in the gaps" produces what is expected, a ghost or an angel.

If a magician is dedicated in the pursuit of his art, learning and re-learning complex rituals and arcane knowledge, and if he weakens his body and mind by abstaining from food or sleep and meditating in the gloom, is it surprising when his magic "works"?

In the game, you become a "better" magician as your sanity declines. I suspect, after reading sub-literate books by many believers in the occult, that this is also true in real life.

It is the real price of magic.

IMPLEMENTATION

This is the second adventure game wholly designed and coded at Level 9 West, near the West Country resort of Weston-super-Mare. This is the home town of comedians John Cleese and Jeffrey Archer, where we can watch the sun setting over Heseltine's equivalent of Hacker's sausage: the Westland helicopter factory. The Price of Magik provides a thousand word vocabulary, the most advanced English I've ever seen in a cassette-based game, better than 50% text compression, type-ahead on all micros and multitasking so you need never wait while a picture draws. It also has shambling creatures that you can order about, just like the Cabinet.

Fortunately you can ignore all this and just play.

CREDITS

System Design:	Mike Austin	Cover Picture:	Godfrey Dowson
Implementation	Nick Austin	Cover Text:	Pete Austin
Original idea:	David Williamson	Production:	Simon Stable,
Game Design:	Pete Austin		A & M Litho
Implementation:	Mike Austin		Option A, etc.
Pictures:	James Horsler	Additional help:	John Austin
To your micro:	Nick Austin		Cora Austin
Cover Design:	Margaret Austin	Packed by:	Bernard Wise

LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

To load and start the game, put the tape in your recorder and follow the instructions below for your computer. The underlined text is what you type (remember to press RETURN or ENTER after each command you type).

AMSTRAD CPC464	Type RUN"".
AMSTRAD CPC664/6128	Type ITAPE then RUN"" and start the tape.
ATARI XL/XE	Press START and OPTION together while you switch on the ATARI, then start the tape and press RETURN.
BBC 32K	Type *TAPE then CHAIN"" and start the tape.
COMMODORE 64	Press SHIFT and RUN/STOP together, then start the tape. In general only 1 side will load.
MSX 64K	Type RUN "CAS:" and start the tape.
SPECTRUM 48K	Type LOAD"" and start the tape.
SPECTRUM 128K	Select 48K Mode, type LOAD"" and start the tape.

SAVING THE POSITION

While playing this adventure, you can save your position (the state of play) on tape. Start a blank tape on RECORD, type SAVE and press ENTER or RETURN. (If the tape doesn't move, press ENTER or RETURN again.) When the program asks you for your next command, stop the tape.

To return to a saved position, you must be playing the game. Type RESTORE and press ENTER or RETURN. If the game asks you if you're sure, reply YES followed by ENTER or RETURN again. Rewind the cassette on which the position was saved and start it on PLAY. (If the tape doesn't move, press ENTER or RETURN again.)

LOADING ADVICE

We test cassettes thoroughly and you shouldn't have any problem in loading this game. If you do have difficulties, though, the following may help:

1. Try the other side of the cassette.
2. Load another game from cassette, to check everything's connected.
3. Vary the volume and tone settings on the recorder if you can (fairly loud and fairly "high" should work best).
4. Clean and demagnatise the recorder (following the maker's instructions).
5. Can you try another recorder (or one of another type)?

GUARANTEE

We'll replace the cassette of this game if you return it to Level 9. If you have problems in the month after purchase, a replacement of the same type is free. Just return the original cassette and Lenslok and state when and where it was bought. Otherwise, please enclose £1 for a replacement cassette. Add £1 if outside the UK.

Please look after your Lenslok carefully. Replacement Lensloks cost 40% of the RRP of the game.

HINT REQUEST

Level 9 will provide a comprehensive hint sheet for THE PRICE OF MAGIK free of charge. To obtain it cut off this coupon and return it to Level 9. You must include *a large stamped envelope addressed to yourself* for the return of the hint sheet. Level 9 cannot enter into any correspondence or provide any information on the telephone in connection with solving this adventure.

ORDER FORM

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The Price of Magik	☐	(Atari version requires 64k)		

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