



## Letter from the Editor

Well, it's October 31, our self-imposed, completely arbitrary end of the 2005 Erin year that began, for no particular reason, on November 1, 2004. In the next couple of weeks we'll begin working on organizing the 2005 Erin awards, so keep an eye on the <http://erins.aifcommunity.org> web site. I think Erin Year 2005 has been a good year, both in terms of our organization in the AIF community and in the quality of games that were released this year. If there's one lingering regret, it is that so few games were entered in the CCAB Competition.

In the community, the biggest two developments were this newsletter and the AIF Community Portal. Unfortunately, the portal crashed and is still being rebuilt, so it almost certainly has lost some of its traction as the new de facto home of the community. I believe that once restored, its users will return. The newsletter has been a joint effort on many people's parts, and I want to take a moment thank everyone who has participated and kept up sustained effort over ten months. In particular, I'm grateful to Markaedw, our original Editor, for

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## This Month in AIF by BBen

The continued absence of the AIF Community Portal has slowed things down in AIF this month, but there is still activity and the reconstruction work on the Portal has reportedly begun. Activity surrounding *Fever Cabin* continued throughout the month as people competed to get the top score. In an interesting gimmick, GoddoG has offered a free custom mousepad to the first player who gets a full score, and as far as I know no-one has won it yet, so keep trying, people! In website-watch news, my own website is back after a period of absence. Hopefully it won't go down again.

This year's Erin awards will be coming up soon, organized

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## Interview with Rap by A. Ninny

This month we feature an interview that's a little different. We're talking to a significant community member who has never completed authoring an AIF game. Still, Rap's notoriously verbose soapboxing and consistent advise-giving to the community makes him an interesting interview subject. We're pleased that he agreed to sit down and talk with us.

**AN: Thanks for participating in this interview. I'd like to ask you first to tell us a little about yourself. Who are you, what brings you to AIF, and what makes you tick?**

**RAP:** I'm a post-adolescent perv who gets off from text. How did I find AIF? I've been a computer geek forever. In junior high, I got into Infocom games, cuz I'm a big puzzle guy.

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## Mission Statement

*Inside Erin* is written and published by people who enjoy AIF. It is done for fun, but we also have some goals that we seek to achieve through the newsletter:

1. To encourage the production of more quality AIF games by providing advice from game developers, and by offering constructive criticism that is specifically relevant to AIF.

2. To encourage activity and growth in the AIF community. We aim to generate a constant level of activity so that there aren't long periods in which people can lose interest in AIF.

3. To help document and organize the AIF community. This is done through reporting on games and events, as well as by helping to organize community-wide activities such as competitions and the yearly Erin Awards.

A friend & I bought *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* and (gasp!) turned on Lewd mode. I discovered newsgroups in college and one day accidentally found alt.sex.stories. Wow. I pretty quickly found that stories really turned me on. I partly didn't download pictures cuz they took too long on 2400 baud modems, and were almost never free. But mostly it was because I don't find pictures are exciting. Sure, I like 'em. But the fifth, sixth, and seventh pic of the same lady tend to start looking the same to me. And it seems like in a story, you have so much more latitude to show anything (even impossible things), to switch perspectives, add character thoughts, not to mention dialogue (dialogue in porn?!), tastes, and smells.

At some point I found a mention of *Moist*. Wow. *HI* came out right around then, and once I played it, I was truly hooked. I converted to the Church of NewKid, aka the church of AIF Voyeurs. Turns out that "> x amy" is infinitely more hot than reading a story about a guy who watches Amy. Certainly one thing that kept me hooked - other than the occasional release of a new well-written game - was AGX. The camaraderie was fun, and it was nice to know I wasn't the only perv in the world. In particular, I wasn't the only guy so perverted that I enjoyed talking about what makes an AIF game good even more than talking about sex. How meta is that?

**AN: You've been hanging around the AIF community for a very long time (at least since 1999, when your first posts appeared on AGX). What changes have you observed since you arrived that you feel are the most significant?**

**RAP:** The more things change, the more they stay the same. Adrift lets you make better games than AGT, but there's still more bad games than good. There are still too many people so eager to release *something* that they release mediocre games. I'm sad to see that - barring occasional flurries of posts - the number of posts discussing coding or writing seems to be even smaller than in the old days. On the other hand, it's nice to see more game releases; it means that if we get the percentage of average game level to increase, then we'll have lots of good games coming out. It's nice to see the community infrastructure growing, with the newsletter, forums, etc. That at least has a chance of improving game quality in the long term. Unfortunately, though, I'm not the best person to ask here, because I don't have as much time to follow AIF games *or* community as I used to, due to RL (Real Life).

**AN: Here's the million dollar question: You've been one of the most outspoken members of the community, holding forth at great length about many an AIF-related subject. You've answered AGX-posted questions on TADS programming. You've written a guide for authors on how to write AIF. Yet, you've never written one. Why not?**

**RAP:** Sigh. It turns out you need to be good at a whole lot of things to make a good game. Aside from coding and spelling, I'm good at coming up with basic ideas for scenes that turn into AIF. So I eventually took the plunge and spent several months, very part time, writing a sci-fi action-adventure/comedy (well, I thought it was funny) T&AIF called *Amazon Hotel*. I got to have some wonderful authoring experiences: seeing great ideas take shape; getting my code to compile; having characters come to life. I gradually learned that the main NPC and NHBFF [**AN: that's No-Holds-Barred Fuck Fest**] participant was just a decoy, and added lots of material for the chick I had a real crush on. But I ran into several problems (good lessons for younger fogies than me):

1. The biggest, maybe most common mistake: I tried to write a big game. When you're overflowing with ideas, it's so much easier to add than delete. And every new author wants to introduce themselves to the world with a magnum opus. But really, better a little opus than no opus.
2. My erotic writing is REALLY bad. I come up with scenes that are super-hot but I'm completely incapable of transmitting them to the written word. And successful AIF collaborations are rare.
3. (A)IF is hard! I actually did manage to get a skeleton of a game together, where you can go from the opening scene to the ending NHBFF, meet all the NPCs, and do the right actions with all necessary objects. But then I realized the huge amount of work left to fill in: foreplay, extra dialogue and disavows, object descriptions, responses to failed actions and hints.... This stuff isn't as fun as creating the broad strokes of the game. Because of mistake #1, there was an AWFUL lot of this, at least if I wanted to create a quality game, which, sadly, I did. Oh, also debugging and testing, which some folks say is important.
4. RL. Need I say more?
5. I may get in trouble for this one. In weighing working on *Amazon Hotel* vs. other projects I got interested in, I eventually decided it would be nicer to create projects that I could put my real name on, and which could be enjoyed by a larger community. Does this make me a celebrity-seeker? Maybe. Reasons 1-4 were definitely bigger, but this did drain a

bit of the incentive to keep working on the hard stuff. Actually, I never really finished those other projects either. But that's probably more interesting to my therapist (or my boss) than the AIF community.

The lesson for aspiring authors: WRITE A SMALL FIRST GAME. (I think once you write that first little one, the later games can safely be bigger.) Also, be good at erotic writing, and make sure you have no life or other interests. I'm sure we can find a few folks out there like this, right? Well, either that, or be NewKid, who wrote a pretty big game for his first game, and it was still amazing. Bastard.

I wonder if we could start some kind of mentoring program where a published author volunteered to help a newbie get through rough spots, read drafts, etc. Sort of an official pre-alpha testing program. This would of course be lots of work for the published guy, and they might insult people by accepting only one applicant at a time. They might be able to prevent a lot of mistakes, though. I was getting some good advice from people while I was writing, but I wish one of them had told me (more loudly) to write LESS. Tragically, I actually wrote this myself in WAIF ("Writing AIF"), but didn't listen to my own advice.

**AN: Having never written (or at least completed) an AIF game, what do you think made you able to provide an AIF authorship guide?**

**RAP:** Sheer, unadulterated hubris? The fact that no-one could stop me from posting?

An awful lot of WAIF just compiled direct quotes from AGX discussions. Other things I wrote were taken from advice I'd seen on regular IF writing. In the end, though, a lot of what I wrote was just analyzing what I enjoyed in games I played. I wasn't giving that much advice on the writing *process* other than "Make sure you beta test!" which everyone knows, and I know as a coder, and Real Authors have said a million times anyway.

Mostly I did it because I get depressed by the amount of bad AIF out there. (And as you can see, once I published WAIF, no one released bad games anymore!) I'm not saying it's easy: I put in months of hard work and didn't come close to finishing a good game. But if people did put more work into the right pieces, NOT just more chicks per game, we could have twice as many good games coming out.

I probably could have made WAIF much shorter: "Be NewKid. If you can't be NewKid, then write games as much like his as possible." But I was being paid by the word. And I had my verbose reputation to keep up.

**AN: Do you see yourself as playing a particular role in the community?**

**RAP:** Gadfly? Guy who writes really long emails complaining about the lack of good AIF games? I used to discuss what made games good, but with RL getting busier the last few years, I've become almost entirely a consumer.

**AN: What types of AIF do you enjoy playing?**

**RAP:** Well, as I wrote in WAIF: good A, good I, good F.

Good A: Voyeurism. Diversity: interesting locations, interesting multi-scene buildup and foreplay, interesting emotions. For example, it would be amazing if someone could pull off "Sam and Diane" sex. For you young 'uns, I mean building sexual tension throughout a game by having two characters who fight a lot, only to jump in bed at the end. I hate to admit that, except with the best writers, I'm usually bored by the time I get to the actual sex. (Especially if I have to repeat commands 8 times due to the "realistic" arousal engines. If I wanted realistic, I'd maybe try to get out more and find a RL partner.) But the scenes I really remember are Amy's FAX machine in *GNA*, or the post office scene in *HI*. This is why I play AIF instead of downloading pictures.

Good I: NPCs who interact with other parts of the game - and not just by having sex with each other, though that can make for some good A. NPCs who aren't just "lock and key" - give her a necklace, she has sex with you. Good puzzles, which can at the same time add sexual content and anticipation.

Good F: well-written prose (and, OK, SSSs). Humor, non-boring room and object descriptions. Rotten spelling distracts me too much from the hot sex. Good plots. They don't have to be super-complex, but surely they can be deeper than "PC goes into a house with 8 rooms, 1 chick in each room, and boffs each chick". Actually, that COULD be the plot if you make it a *haunted* house, where each chick is very different, and some of them move around the house, and some aren't

technically breathing, and the player gradually learns that each NPC is stuck there because of the Curse of... well, you get my drift. The same plot could also become a murder mystery, a panty raid (but only if it's done really well and a good "Revenge of the Nerds" back story gets filled in), whatever.

One more point is overall atmosphere. As I've said many times on AGX, I'm looking for T&AIF. By which I mean AIF that plays kind of like a T&A softporn movie (except with a bit more porn). Not too dark or painful, everyone's basically having fun. But the sex is *everywhere*. The key here is not that every other turn is a sex scene, because that gets boring really fast. But I like the puzzles to be sex-related (Amy's FAX, *Moist's* statue). I like the *plots* to have sex in them, not just to have normal plots with unrelated SSSs thrown in. And I want to have plenty of foreplay scenes - without bothering to write 25 different variations on 3 different kinds of penetration. Would nobody else like a scene where an NPC teases the PC (knowingly or unknowingly, verbally or visually or physically), but the scene ends without either party experiencing multiple orgasms?

**AN: Do you see any newer authors that compare favorably with old all-time favorites like NewKid and Scarlet Herring?**

**RAP:** For sure! There's this great guy called "nincompoop" or something [AN: **Honestly, I wasn't fishing for a compliment, but thanks**]. Chris Cole's a great writer: I appreciate his attempts to expand the genre, not just his super-hot writing (and cover art!) Also A. Bomire and others. I sadly haven't had the time to replay and explore the new games as much as I did in the old days, so I can't comment in depth (and I've written way too much already). But I think these newbies do lots of the things I've begged for above, in new and interesting ways, and they don't think you can ignore good IF writing simply by throwing in some hot babes. (What's that Simpson's episode? "The babies look unhappy." "Add more balls.") They write hot sex plots, lead-ins, and characters, not just good NHBFFs.

You can download Rap's article "Writing AIF" from the AIF Community site: <http://aifcommunity.org/resources/WAIF.zip>.

### **Letter from the Editor (Continued)**

starting us off. I also offer thanks to BBBen for planting the seed of the idea and providing our news every month; to A. Bomire for numerous well-written articles and interviews; to Grimm Sharlak for his game reviews; to Richard Gillingham for proofreading and articles; to -3-/Goddog for our comic strip; and to Darc Nite, our webmaster. I'm also grateful to all our interview subjects and those who have participated in "Erin Street" interviews. You all have made my job a lot easier and enabled me to keep this going.

While we had far fewer games this Erin Year than last (25 vs. 51), we still had some of amazingly high quality. Not only were they of high quality, several gave the envelope a substantial push in terms of features, stories and technical wherewithal. Here's what I'm talking about:

First-timer Moriarty started off our year in style with *The Reunion*. This was our first TADS 3 game since *Dear Brian* and really made fine use of that system's expanded capability in an extremely fun, hot game. Not only that, Moriarty included something surprisingly novel in AIF: well-written, lengthy pieces of stand-alone erotic fiction scattered about the game. We would very much welcome more works from this author.

*Tomorrow Never Comes* was our first truly first-rate adaptation of a film genre outside of *Star Trek*. It is an extremely successful AIF rendition of the James Bond formula and authors seeking to mimic movies or books, whether as a stand-alone or fanfic works, should certainly look to A. Bomire and *TNC* for how-to-do-it-right inspiration.

NewKid made a triumphant return after six years with *Ideal Pacific Coast University*. All I really need to say about this game is that it was worth the wait.

On the story front, the main event this year was David Whyld's ever-expanding gamebook (choose-your-own-adventure) series that includes *Choices*, *Decisions* and *Options*. These are well-written, interesting, worthy and fun additions to the AIF catalogue.

LoveLettersToLove released an expanded version of his one-room epic *Escape Pod*. This is notable primarily because LLTL includes more female NPC body parts than anyone else does, differentiates between similar verbs like 'kiss', 'lick' and 'suck' and even his minor body parts (elbows, for example) are more interactive in *Escape Pod* than the Big Three (tits, ass, pussy) parts

are in some other authors' games.

Finally, to match the end of the year to the beginning in terms of quality, GoddoG's astounding *Fever Cabin* appeared. Rap mentions something about NHBFF's in his interview this month. If you want to find out what a NHBFF really is, play *Fever Cabin*. GoddoG included a contest in *Fever Cabin* in which the first person to find all 777 points will win a prize. Do date, nobody has done it, which indicates just how deeply implemented and complicated this game really is. *The Orgone Convergence* next, G?

I don't want to begin to speculate on who will win Erins. I do know that there are numerous very strong contenders for most of the prizes and that should make this cycle of selection very exciting. I hope for a strong turnout when it comes to voting and urge everyone to participate.

### **This Month in AIF (Continued)**

through this very publication! Failing any game submissions after the time of writing this article, there will have been a total of 27 games for the 2005 Erin awards. This is dramatically down on last year's figures, when we had a massive 51 games – almost twice as many and the largest amount ever in a year. Actually, if we don't count the TADS port of *British Fox* and the Inform port of *Rachel Has a Bad Day* (and we may have good reason not to – we'll have to discuss this in the Erin nomination committee) then there are only 25 games!

One might have expected the trend to keep going upward as it has consistently in previous years. This year in fact we have been more organized than perhaps ever before – we have resuscitated the Erin awards, we have started this newsletter of course, we've seen the release of a large number of game reviews (largely through the newsletter) and we've gained the aifcommunity.org server and the AIF Community Portal. With all this improved community infrastructure now in place the question does present itself: why the sharp decline in game releases?

I can see a few explanations, and none of them actually suggest a problem in the community to me. The first reason is that a big chunk of last year's games were released in the mini-comp. Mini-comp games are small and easy to write, and mini-comps tend to attract quite a bit of interest from new writers. Instead we had the CCAB comp, which required a larger breed of game for entries and so only attracted three.

The second reason I would credit is that repeat authors have been less of a presence this year. Though several authors wrote more than one game, in previous years we have tended to have individual authors releasing large numbers of games. Since Vachon stopped making games, and with other frequent-release authors like Chris Cole, Sly Old Dog and even myself (last year I put out five games compared to just one this year) releasing much less by comparison with previous years, there is simply less of a 'repeat offender' presence.

The third reason is that while we have fewer games, it seems like people are putting the time in to make larger ones. It might be that we actually have a similar volume of content produced this year, but it's simply concentrated into fewer games. Take a look at a game like *IPCU*, or the massive orgy in *Escape Pod (extended edition)* and you'll see what I mean. What's more, the games are not just bigger, a number of them are games of a very high standard.

Basically what I'm getting at is that we might not have a swamp of smaller, weaker games this year to trudge through, but instead we have a small selection of large, good quality games. That's going to make this year's Erins at least as tough a field as last year's, and I suspect more so. No griping about reduced game releases then; this has been a good year!

### **New Games for October 2005**

*Archie's Birthday - Chapter One: Reggie's Gift* — by Purple Dragon, released 29 October, 2005. The game takes place in the world of "Archie" comic books and includes many of the characters from that popular series. In this game you play Reggie Mantle, Archie's egotistical rival. You're on a quest to get some video footage to give to Archie and end up getting a bit more than you bargained for.

## **IFReviews.org: an Interview with RootShell by A. Ninny**

A post appeared on AGX recently inviting everyone to participate in a new IF reviews project. This project, entitled IFReviews.org, was the brainchild of RootShell, an IF enthusiast who posted a request for input on the idea nearly a year ago. After a two-week flurry of discussion about the idea (see <http://tinyurl.com/9x72f>), which found most participants enthusiastically supportive, RootShell disappeared and began work. The new <http://www.IFReviews.org> site, currently in a Beta state, is now up for review (if not use). I found it quite interesting that RootShell decided to include the complete catalog of AIF games and request participants submit reviews of our games as well. I had a conversation with RootShell about his project, and he has a lot to say about the genesis of the idea and where he sees it going. Here's my interview with him.

**AN: Why did you decide there was a need for a web site solely devoted to IF reviews?**

**RootShell:** Well, I got this idea after a small thread in R.G.I-F, namely "Where to post reviews?" (dated Nov 13 2004, 10:58 am) begun by Bob\_Woodward. Bob was asking where to post his own reviews of competition games. This got me thinking about where they all could be placed, and after a few internet searches I came to the conclusion that despite finding several reviews for the comp games, they were scattered all over the internet, and they used several different rating systems.

So I launched the idea of having all reviews together at an ifcomp.org website (but nothing came of it). This got me thinking about some of the free web space that I had in my own web hosting, so I started trying to implement a database structure that would allow me to do what was asked easily, and in fact it was quite easy to create.

So I now have a new personal web project... IFReviews.org!

**AN: What is your future role with regards to the site (once it is past its beta phase) and what improvements or added features do you hope to put in place before and after it is 'live'?**

**RootShell:** First of all the beta phase will end when the 2005 IFComp ends, meaning the 'live' phase will start from there.

My future role in the site will be basically related to maintenance of the database and the information it contains. Special attention will also be given to reviews content (there are ways to ban reviewers should there be a need to do so).

I will leave it up to the IF community to feed reliable information into the database, and I will help them by providing the necessary web space to do so, but also by trying to explain any problems/doubts they might have about the use of the site.

When it comes to what improvements or added features, let me say that the IFReviews.org site is not yet even close to what I initially had in mind; there are still a lot of features planned that aren't yet implemented (which will be added sequentially to make sure that everything works perfectly), some of which I can already mention:

- The possibility of you adding your reviews straight away, but making them only visible to others after a given date.

- Some games which are associated with ongoing competitions can have reviews added to the site but they will only be visible after the competition ending date (to prevent discussion of games while they are being voted).

- There will be some IFReviews.org awards, like "Game of the Year", "IFReviewer of the Year" and also "Game Author of the Year", wherein reviewers rate other reviewers, games and authors all year and at the end of the year, the highest rated reviewer will have an award associated with his username in every page his name appears.

**AN: There are dozens of sites hosting hundreds, if not thousands of reviews of IF games. Would you like to see them all transferred to this site? What mechanism do you think is needed to make that happen?**

**RootShell:** While there are dozens of sites hosting thousands of reviews of IF games, it's hard to find, in a single one, several reviews of the same game. This is where IFReviews.org enters: not to steal anyone's hard work/credit but to gather them all under a single room for everyone to access freely!

I have no intention, and never had, to import any review from other websites to IFReviews.org or for that matter to make any money out of it. I never had any plan to create a mechanism to import information from other websites into the IFReviews.org database; all the information there was inserted manually by me in months of hard work, and some of it can, and probably will, be wrong.

IFReviews.org was designed to make sure that everything contained there was/is inserted manually by someone who decided to share it with the rest of the IF community, meaning that the reviews' authors are free to also have them shown in other sites or magazines.

The initial plan was to contact several known reviewers to ask them if they will allow me to add them and their reviews to IFReviews.org, but that led to the conclusion that some emails would bounce back and that some reviewers might, in fact be unreachable. Instead I decided to leave it up to the current reviewers to register freely at the site, enter their own reviews for which they are fully credited.

Of course I would be very proud if every possible review could be available at IFReviews.org, that would prove that all my hard work was worth it, and that people appreciate it.

This project, like any other community project, can and will only grow if the community actively supports it! And I sincerely don't see any way/reason why it shouldn't. Let wait and see if time proves me wrong.

**AN: Did you have any qualms about including AIF games and authors on the lists? Why or why not?**

**RootShell:** This is a very important issue you bring up, and I hope that I explain myself correctly to avoid any misinterpretations.

As an individual I have no problem with adult IF, nor do I have with any other adult content (games/movies or anything else for that matter).

But, as everyone knows, the IF community is divided when it comes to this issue. There are those who play/create AIF actively (and even organize competitions), but there are also those that simply reject it completely, and only play/create (and also organize competitions for) IF games.

IFReviews.org will not take any side on this matter. All the AIF games present in the database are there from the beginning, side by side with IF games, and I don't plan to remove them.

Since there could be some concern about making adult content available to anyone, I added an 'adult filter' to every game, meaning that every adult game will have an 'adult marking' associated with it, which I think is a reasonable solution to this problem. When the reviewer tries, for the first time, to access an review of an game already marked as being 'adult', he will be presented with a clear option to either: a) block this and all AIF reviews or b) treat all AIF reviews as any other review. The filter (which will be on by default) is a message that will appear PRIOR to the user seeing any 'adult' review. If he chooses to bypass the filter, he will go on and see the review, otherwise he will return to where he came from.

This will not hide the names of the games from listings and from the front page of the site - it will merely block access to the reviews of AIF games.

This is very important... All AIF games/authors/reviewers are eligible to win IFReviews.org awards, given they get voted by other reviewers.

One final note:

I would like to thank *Inside Erin* for giving me this opportunity to promote the IFReviews.org website but also to "speak" to all the AIF community (and the IF community in general, which I'm sure are also reading this).

I hope that everyone involved with IF (in any way) realizes all that is done trying to promote IF deserves to be taken seriously and supported!

I give you another tool to promote IF. Please use it wisely!

We at *Inside Erin* wish RootShell and IFReviews.org all the best and add our urgings to everyone to make heavy use of this site.

## **Gamism and Simulationism in the SSS by BBBen**

This article addresses issues of “gamism” and “simulationism” as I interpret them. These terms were applied to AIF by Johnny Freebase and he also included a third element called “dramatism” that I won’t be discussing in this article (see J. Freebase’s article “Gamism, Dramatism, and Simulationism”, available on alt.games.xtrek). Basically, these are described as different approaches to game design, with simulationists being focussed on making the game a sort of sex-sim (with *One Girl* perhaps the archetype example) and gamists being focused more on game elements like puzzles to introduce challenge. In respect to the SSS (or “steamy sex scene” – the interactive sex scenes with commands like “rub tits” that are so common in AIF), I believe that both gamism and simulationism are important elements to consider.

There are a few things that some authors do in their steamy sex scenes to increase the ‘game’ element. The first is the arousal system, which basically entails that an NPC will require a certain level of arousal before you can do certain things with him/her. Arousal is usually raised by foreplay, and orgasms can lower the arousal level requiring a character to build it up again after the NPC has reached a climax. The erection level of male characters is often important too, and some fluffing might be required to get the man ready for action again after an orgasm.

Arousal systems are both gamist and simulationist, in that they give the player a problem to solve during sex, and they also attempt to enhance the realism of an SSS in many cases, though whether it is always necessary to rub a girl’s breasts twelve times before she will let you lick her pussy is debatable.

A more simple version of the same idea is to simply require one action before another in an SSS. You might have to do certain acts of foreplay on a girl before she will do things to you, for instance, but after that you are relatively free to do what you want. This system is appropriate in some cases where it makes sense for a player to have to loosen a girl up or some such, but it should probably be used sparingly because it can make an SSS very linear and as such take away much of the strength of the SSS. Without interactivity, AIF is just AF, or in other words erotica, and hence could just be written in text without being programmed into a game.

Arousal systems have been a bit less fashionable since ADRIFT became so popular, even though arousal systems can be made to work within ADRIFT. They could potentially limit the freedom of the writer by requiring even more structure than the standard commands, but I suspect that they have become less common simply because ADRIFT authors have to figure out how to make something work that is not inherent in the platform.

Simulationism in the SSS is basically the attempt to make the SSS more interactive than it already is – to make it more realistic in terms of what goes on and to make the options available to the player more comprehensive. *One Girl* is probably the iconic simulationist SSS game, in which the girl doesn’t even have a name, but you can do all sorts of things with her. Simulationism isn’t totally about interactivity but I think the main attraction of simulationism is the idea of being able to do *anything* you want in a sex scene.

This is an appealing idea and although it is obviously impractical to take it to the extreme, increasing simulationism can have some very impressive results. It can however lead to some serious work load problems for the writer and I suspect there are a lot of aborted ‘ultimate simulation games’ sitting on author’s hard drives (I have one myself). I still maintain a fantasy of the whole community coming together to create a “Design Your Own Girl” game, but I have a lot of fantasies.

The fundamental balancing act is to try to get players involved in a sex scene without frustrating them. If you are too restrictive and progress is too linear or too complicated then it may bore players, but on the other hand players may find it dull if everything is handed to them on a platter. When developing an SSS, play a few games and see if you think an arousal system or linear elements are enjoyable for you, then decide whether or not to use them. It’s a question of challenge vs. freedom, both with the ultimate goal of providing a fulfilling, satisfying SSS.

## AIF Scuttlebutt by A. Ninny

Hey, Kids! We're back with another edition of AIF Scuttlebutt. I'm here again to report on who is working on what in the world of AIF.

To start with, I wrote to a few prominent AIF authors and here's what they had to say about their current projects:

Though he's put his projects on hold for the next few months, I did learn that **NewKid** is back working on *Wrath*, a project he first introduced in a preview version several years ago. He estimates there's a 90% chance he'll finish the game, which is great news. A couple other ideas he's tossing about are a third game in the *Ideal...* game series, making it a trilogy, and another game loosely based on *Pulp Fiction*.

**Lucilla Frost** is back at work on her next game, a prequel to *British Fox and the Celebrity Abductions*. She hopes to be in testing around the end of the year, so we all wish her luck and much spare time and energy to devote to the project.

I also wrote to **One-Eyed Jack** (I hear a raucous woohoo!! – but hold your enthusiasm), but he didn't respond to my request to know what he's up to. Sorry, no news on that front. Similarly, **Chris Cole**, who in my May Scuttlebutt article was reportedly nearing completion on a *Gamma Gals* sequel now reports having too little time to work on AIF at all. Hopefully, that turns around sometime soon.

A few people responded with an affirmative to my recent Yahoo group posting about their projects. **Wotan-Anubis** says he has a few short games in the works; **A. Bomire** has been talking about his upcoming "Super Friends"-themed game for some time and is hopefully still working to get it into beta, **David Whyld** has the fourth entry in his Gamebook series due soon and **Grimm Sharlak** promises to complete the conclusion to *Of Masters and Mistresses* at some point, as well.

So far, my Scuttlebutt record isn't that great. On April 30, I reported on ten potential new games, of which only two have since appeared. Let's hope I have more luck this month, and that those eight missing games are still being worked on.

If you're working on something and want it mentioned here (or if you think I know about it and want it concealed), write me at [aifsubmissions@gmail.com](mailto:aifsubmissions@gmail.com).

## Game Reviews

### *Rachel's Bad Day*

#### **Review by Grimm Sharlak (Review of Inform port)**

**Game Info:** *Rachel's Bad Day* (or *Rachel Has a Bad Day*)  
Original released March 8, 2005; Inform port released August 21, 2005

**Author:** Sly Old Dog (original), Roger Pepitone (port)

**Platform:** Inform

**Size:** 195K zipped

**Content:** m/f, f/f, m/m/f, s&m, underage

**Game Type:** PF

**Length:** Medium

**Reviewed:** October 2005

**Extras:** None

#### **Basic Plot:**

Rachel goes to work one day and decides to commit a little industrial espionage for her scumbag boyfriend. This in turn leads her to meeting (and having to deal with) some very shady characters. All in all, she has a very bad day indeed.

#### **Overall Thoughts:**

Are you a persistent gamer? That's the main question you need to ask before tackling *RBD*. While there are fewer bugs in the Inform version than in the original, the game can still be quite frustrating and vague at points, especially at first. Simply due to poor programming, many players

can get stuck in the very first room. You can't leave without wearing clean clothes, but the wardrobe is empty, and despite the fact that you **need** your mobile phone to play the game properly, it's inside an invisible cabinet. And don't even get me started on the "change" command. But hey, I'm a reviewer – I plugged away and finally managed to get out onto the street. From here the game improved substantially, as while some things were still frustrating, I found no more invisible objects, and made substantial progress quickly. Unfortunately, I found the game's theme personally unpleasant. Whether it's your cup of tea or not, I found the fact that 95% of the sex in the game is forced on Rachel rather than consensual (and the one time it is consensual is when she's getting paid for it) and is quite a turn off. It's important for your enjoyment of the game that you know about this facet of the story.

### **Puzzles/Gameplay:**

Hey, this is an AIF game, and as such nine times out of ten sex is the solution. While some of the puzzles are poorly implemented (for example, to sneak an object out of an area, you have to stick it somewhere uncomfortable, but the command to do so only becomes available after you've been caught and degraded a first time, so even if you know what to do to avoid this, you still have to go through it each time), and there's a lot of trial and error involved, especially in the last section of the game.

This last section is the game's largest puzzle, and takes place in an interview-type situation. It's certainly unique, and if you've paid attention to the story you should manage to get through it okay, but in some cases you're being asked about innocuous characters who came along, abused Rachel, and left. Since that's all you learn about these characters, the interview scene becomes a load/save extravaganza, especially when I finally reached the end and realized I had missed one simple step and had to reload to a spot quite a while back.

### **Sex:**

The sex, for the most part, is written well. Sex scenes aren't exactly lengthy, but what's there is decently written. The problem for me was a lack of interactivity and the aforementioned subject matter. Controlling Rachel in these scenes can be quite frustrating, especially when the only way to progress is to either do as you're told or suffer in silence. Not to mention the redundant "girl has sex forced on her, but still somehow starts to enjoy it" cliché prevalent in this game. But as stated earlier, if that's your thing, this game is for you – if you find it deplorable, steer clear.

### **Technical:**

Roger Pepitone has done a decent job of porting the game over from *ADRIFT*, and getting rid of quite a few game-killing bugs. For example, I could play the game from beginning to end, saving whenever I liked, without anything crashing or errors appearing. There are still some spelling errors and awkward phrasing, but it's a lot better than the original.

However, there are still technical problems, such as the invisible objects in the first room, the change command (rather than the more common "strip" or removing single items of clothing) and some guess-the-verb problems at parts. The game can be quite frustrating, but not to the point of giving up. A bit of patience and persistence will see you through.

### **Intangibles:**

Everybody's an asshole. That seems to be the message of *RBD*. Everyone's a sexual deviant, including the main character. Rachel is groped, raped and spat on throughout this game, sometimes going along willingly but most times not, and all for this mission she's on for her boyfriend, who we never meet, hence making her dedication hard to follow. Not to mention the inconsistency of character prevalent in the game – despite being filmed for a porno earlier in the game and then partaking in public sex, a character later threatens to blackmail Rachel with film of her activities. Yeah. And while I don't want to spoil the game, I found the ending terrible. It left me feeling, well, dirty, for taking part in these characters' world, and controlling Rachel, who turns out to be quite the bitch herself.

### **Final Thoughts:**

While the port to Inform has resolved some of the bugs from *Rachel's Bad Day*, its poor writing and distasteful subject matter remain. Say what you will about games being released without proper testing and bug fixes, but even if this game ran perfectly I still couldn't recommend it. I'm not saying that AIF can't deal with the darker side of sex, but playing a game where you walk a character from one forced sexual encounter to the next where none of the characters have any

saving morals or any real explanation for their motivations, it's just exploitative and distasteful. Hardly what I'd call a good time.

**Rating: D**

## **Review by A. Bomire (Review of original ADRIFT version)**

### **Overall Thoughts**

First of all, this review is based upon the original game released by Sly Dog, not the later port of the game to Inform. I've actually never played the latter, and many of the problems pointed out in this review may have been resolved in that version.

Sly Dog has written a lot of games, and all of them are about forcing women into having sex through one means or another: using drugs, blackmail, even rape. This game is no different, although it does take the viewpoint of the woman. This isn't a hardcore rape game, though, as the protagonist has a secret fetish for being forced into sex.

Another thing Sly Dog is known for is creating games with odd commands, also known as "guess the verb". Although this game isn't as bad as some of his previous games (he comes right out and tells you what a lot of the commands are within the text of the game), be prepared to be stuck at several points.

### **Puzzles/Game Play**

As I mentioned previously, this game has plenty of "guess the verb" puzzles. Even though Sly Dog tells you straight out what some of the solutions are, you still have to figure out when to use them. For example, you might be told that Rachel has to do something, and when you type that command you get a message of "Rachel doesn't know what she should do". However, at a later point in the game when you issue the command it works as it should. These sorts of things can be annoying.

The game is very linear, with Sly Dog leading Rachel down a very specific path to the conclusion. There is rarely a chance to go back to previous scenes, which means you run the risk of leaving behind something important. Fortunately, Sly Dog lets you know right up front exactly what Rachel is supposed to do (in the game's introduction), and what items you are supposed to carry with you everywhere. This takes a little of the guesswork out of the game, and even spoils some of the ending (nothing like knowing right up front how the game is going to play out to spoil some of the surprises), but it is helpful in that you may not reach a point where what you need has been left locked away in a previous encounter.

### **Technical**

As pointed out previously, there are some oddly worded commands and illogical sequences in the game. For example, in the beginning Rachel is naked. She needs to get dressed, so she opens her wardrobe. However, even though the wardrobe is described as containing her clothes - there aren't any clothes in the wardrobe. You need to "guess" to use the command "dress" to suddenly appear in your clothing. And once you're dressed, you can no longer get undressed. This sort of thing happens a lot in the game, so be sure to save often to make sure you don't miss something.

Except - whoops! There is a huge glaring bug in the game. Once you proceed past a certain point, you can no longer save! That's right, you can't save. And this point happens pretty early in the game, so if you mess up and want to go back you have to go *way* back to start over. Even though Sly Dog points this out, this is still a tremendously huge bug, and in my opinion the game shouldn't have been released with this still in it. If nothing else, Sly Dog could have asked for some assistance from the helpful authors of our community.

All of this overshadows the normal sprinkling of misspellings and grammar errors, but those should be mentioned as well.

### **Sex**

The sex in this game is decent, if a bit slanted towards non-consensual, almost-rape encounters. Rachel is often forced to have sex to convince someone to do something or escape a situation. This is not something I usually enjoy either in my erotic fiction or games I play, but different players have different tastes. The fact that Rachel secretly enjoys it actually makes it more distasteful to me, but then again that may just be me.

## Intangibles

I had to scrounge through the archives at AIF Archive to look up some of the messages about this game, because I remember it sparking off a bit of controversy. In fact, it prompted an article in the AIF Newsletter from David Whyld. Once I found the posts, it all came flooding back. The posters were basically sitting on one or the other side of the fence regarding whether this game should have been released. The main point was that Sly Dog has released a lot of games, all of them buggy. Most people felt this game had its problems, but that it wasn't nearly as bad as some people made out. Others felt that enough was enough - one or two buggy games from an author can be excused but that game after game was not acceptable. I actually support both sides: this game does indeed have its problems, but it really isn't as bad as its detractors make it out to be. The one place where I do agree with them, however, is in the "you cannot save past this point" bug. This is unacceptable, and should have been resolved before release.

## Final Thought

Yet another buggy, "guess the verb" game by an author who should know better by now. The game overall is not badly written with a decent plot, but the technical problems drag it down.

**Rating:** C-

## *Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Sex*, a review by A. Bomire

<b>Game Info:</b>	<i>Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Sex</i> released 1/16/05
<b>Author:</b>	Captain Cranky Pants
<b>Platform:</b>	Adrift 4.0
<b>Size:</b>	270KB
<b>Content:</b>	m/f, f/f, voyeurism, rape
<b>Type:</b>	T&AIF (Sex romp)
<b>Length:</b>	Short
<b>Reviewed:</b>	October 2005

## Basic Plot

This game is based upon Tecmo's Dead or Alive series, and specifically takes its name from the Xbox game "Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball". Don't worry if you've never heard of, or played the game as knowledge of the game isn't necessary.

You play a worker at an island resort where a volleyball tournament is taking place. Apparently the volleyball tournament is limited to girls who spent most of their previous time in various forms of competitive combat. You've come across a series of codewords that can be used to disable or slow down the reaction times of the various girls, and have decided to use that knowledge to your advantage in fighting and then having sex with the various girls.

## Overall Thoughts

Not being much of an Xbox player, or a big fan of Tecmo's games, I had never encountered the girls in this game. That didn't affect my game play at all, and I doubt being familiar with the games would have helped either. My feeling is that the game has little to do with the normal plot or game play of the Dead or Alive series of games.

The game is a first effort for the author, Captain Cranky Pants. And, it both feels and plays like that. There is very little effort at creating a real game in the traditional sense; it is more a series of sexual interactions strung together in a common setting. The author gives due warning to this in his "read me", stating that the game is more for players looking for sexual interaction instead of puzzles.

## Puzzles/Game Play

As stated above, there are only one or two puzzles in the game, and even those are simple. Since a couple of them do use non-standard (i.e., "guess the verb") wording, the author has politely provided a walkthrough with his "read me". For the rest of the encounters, the game play is very straight-forward.

## Technical

There aren't any real game-stopping problems with the game, but the game is sprinkled with many other technical errors. The spelling and grammatical errors sprinkle almost every scene. There are many scenes where the text of the encounter runs counter to the description of the girls. For example, the encounter text may state that the girl removes an item of clothing but her description when you examine her still has her completely dressed. Or, it may state that the girl even leaves, but she will still be there when you "look". These technical glitches are distracting, but they don't really interfere with completing the game.

## Sex

The one saving grace of the game is the sex scenes. There are quite a few of the scenes which are well done, even hot. Be warned, though, that all of the scenes follow or are part of some sort of fight scene. This may be a turn off, especially a couple of the scenes which more-or-less amount to raping the girl either as part of or following a fight. In all of the scenes, the girl ends up enjoying the encounter, but still this is a little off-putting.

If you are looking for traditional encounters, you will be disappointed. The various body parts aren't implemented and neither is any interaction with them. Captain Cranky Pants has limited the encounters to responding to a specific set of commands, and only those commands will work. (Again, those commands are outlined in the provided "read me".) It does mean that you don't have to worry about which sexual command to use first (ex. Do I rub her tits before her ass?), but players looking for a less controlled encounter may be disappointed.

## Final Thoughts

As I mentioned at the top of this review, this game is a first effort by the author, Captain Cranky Pants, and it feels that way. While the many of the sexual encounters are well written, it is really offset by the other problems that this game has. And while I enjoy a good sex romp as much as the next guy, this game's almost complete lack of puzzles left me with a somewhat unsatisfied feeling.

**Rating: D+**

## *Escape Pod (Expanded Edition), a review by A. Ninny*

<b>Game Info:</b>	<i>Escape Pod (Expanded Edition)</i> , released May 7, 2005
<b>Author:</b>	LoveLettersToLove
<b>Platform:</b>	ADRIFT 3.9
<b>Size:</b>	737 KB
<b>Content:</b>	m/f, m/f/f
<b>Game Type:</b>	T&AIF, Sci Fi
<b>Length:</b>	Short
<b>Reviewed:</b>	October 2005
<b>Extras:</b>	None

## Basic Plot:

You are a male crew member on a space station that has recently come under attack, and you were forced to evacuate. You and two female crew members are adrift in space in a disabled escape pod with nothing to do except .. um .. exercise.

## Overall Thoughts:

I previously wrote a review of the mini-comp version of this game, a review in which I spent some time criticizing it for going beyond the scope of the competition (the spirit of the comp, anyway – the game did technically follow the rules). Obviously, now that there's no comp-set limits, LL2L could and did expand the scope further, in this case by adding an NPC. I question this decision. Why expand the game only by one NPC but not really add any additional story, motivation, exploration or puzzles? Obviously, the reason is that LL2L had some alternative sexual characterization he wanted to explore. The new female character has a much different personality than does the first one, and the sex scenes do benefit with quite a bit of interest because of the addition.

The game is still well written, and it has a vast amount of background information. Each of the characters will give you their life story if you ask them, and really, the stories do remain mostly consistent with the way they engage the PC in sex. Still, despite being interesting to read, in the end, you can't really do anything with the stuff you learn about Hensley and Verrin and so it's all mostly irrelevant. If the game would continue beyond the escape pod scene, you could probably do a lot of heroic adventuring with the Hensley character in particular.

### **Puzzles/Gameplay:**

There are no real puzzles in this game – what you have more of are a sequence of sexual preliminaries that must be fulfilled before the real sex can start. The presumed objective, that of fixing the escape pod so that you can hope to survive being lost in outer space, can surprisingly be ignored – that's not what this game is about.

### **Sex:**

Once it gets going, the sex in *Escape Pod* is amazingly interactive. LL2L spent a great deal of time implementing tons of body parts (you can interact with the NPCs' elbows, hands, knees, toes, etc), and numerous extra verbs (he differentiates 'kiss', 'suck', and 'lick' for example). It's extremely well written and hot, and takes advantage of the zero-gravity environment in some very creative ways. The hyper-detailed sex amplifies the feeling that all the extra background in the rest of the game is just that: extra, and the game could very easily be nothing but sex.

### **Technical:**

I found one major bug that seemed to cause the game to be unplayable, in which one character never warmed up no matter what I tried. When I restarted and tried again using the walkthrough, this problem disappeared. Other than that, there are a few minor bugs and misspellings but nothing too distracting. Mostly, the game worked surprisingly well, especially considering how many varieties of sex commands were responded to.

### **Final Thoughts:**

My personal reaction is that the expanded game is a letdown when compared to the original. The story is more irrelevant than it was before; LL2L should have put in the effort to broaden it and made more reason for these characters to have been in this particular escape pod together, and more reason to add the second NPC. The game has great 'A', minimal 'I' and pretty much no 'F'. It wastes very good sex writing and a promising effort at making characters, and I think this author just needs to put it all together with a real story and more interactive content.

### **Rating: C**



This is Erin! comic strip #5. All previous strips can be viewed on the AIFNewsletter web site. Don't miss them!

### AIF Wants You

If you can write game reviews, articles, cartoons, opinion pieces, humorous essays, or endless blather, we want you. Contact the Editor for suggested content or just write what you want and send it to us.

The newsletter is also interested in publishing your erotic short fiction. Send it to the Editor for review and inclusion in the next issue.

### Staff

**Editor** A Ninny is an AIF player, author of two AIF games and frequent beta-tester. His *Parlour* received an Erin for Best "One Night Stand" game in 2004.

**Web Master** Darc Nite is a newcomer to the AIF scene. He is an avid gamer who heard the call for help with the AIF Newsletter.

**Staff Writers** A Bomire is the author of several TADS AIF games, including *Dexter Dixon: In Search of the Prussian Pussy*, *Tomorrow Never Comes* and *The Backlot*. His games have won numerous awards and Erin nominations.

BBBen is an AIF author. He has released six games, including the *Crossworlds* series and *Normville High* which won A. Bomire's 2004 mini-comp. Debbie, his popular character in the *Crossworlds* series won the 2004 Erin award for best female non-player character

Grimm Sharlak is the author of two AIF games: *Breakout* and *Of Masters and Mistresses: Abduction*.

Richard Gillingham writes with a British accent. He does our proofreading and hopefully his column will appear regularly.

### Submitting your work to "Inside Erin"

Please direct all comments, articles, reviews, discussion and art to the Editor, A. Ninny, at aifsubmissions@gmail.com.

