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THE AIF COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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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.

Welcome boys and girls to another installment of *Inside Erin*. The topics of AIF and this newsletter are constantly on my mind. Well, maybe not constantly, but I do think about them a lot. I know that when most of you think about AIF, your main thoughts are on the games as a way to kill some time and enjoy yourself for awhile.



A Letter From the Editor

Purple Dragon

I used to be like that. I discovered AIF right in the middle of the Chris Cole heyday. There were a lot of good games out there to be played, and I played a bunch. In fact, there are still a lot of good games out there, and even after all this time, there are a few games that I've never gotten around to playing at all. However, I find that I seldom play a game simply for the enjoyment of it any longer. Sometimes I'm beta testing the game, or if not I'm thinking that I should write a review of it, or that I should be working on one of my own, or on the newsletter, or yelling at the other staff members to get their stuff in on time, or -- well you get the idea. At some point AIF stopped being a way for me to spend a few pleasurable minutes, and became a job.

Now, you may reason that since it is a job I'm not getting paid for that, in spite of my complaints, it is something that I nevertheless enjoy, and you would be correct in your reasoning. I enjoy seeing new games come out, I enjoy playing the old games, and I enjoy putting the Newsletter together and putting it out there as a way to give something back to the community that has given me so much pleasure the last few years. If at times it feels like I am complaining overly much then I hope you will forgive me. It's true that I occasionally feel discouraged and set upon, and if you want to feel a bit sorry for me (or better yet offer to help) I appreciate it. However, don't shed any tears because, like I say, I really do love this stuff.

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Sorry this newsletter is so late this month; it's at least partially (if not entirely) my fault. I just haven't had my shit together over the holidays. Anyway, on with the news -- it will be short for this month as there was only one real thing of note to mention.



by
BBBen

That thing to mention was, of course, the Christmas Micro-comp set up by Purple Dragon. The rules of the comp were published previously (and as they contained rules outlining the basic concept of the games I won't go into detail here about what the games were about), but were quite restrictive and designed to keep the entries very small. Unfortunately the comp only garnered two entries; one from Purple Dragon and one from A. Bomire. That's certainly better than nothing and made a nice stocking stuffer for Christmas, so thanks very much to both of those guys. Anyway, happy new year! I resolve to get my articles in on time this year, and maybe even to finish bloody *Pervert Action: Crisis*.

New Games

Christmas Micro-comp entries released Dec 19th 2009:

- *Intimate Encounters*, by Purple Dragon, for Inform 7.
- *My Special Gift*, by A. Bomire, for TADS.

It is traditional at this time of year to spend the time looking back at all the achievements of the year, and this year the random collection of numbers means we can look at a whole ten years. Now, whilst I must admit I do enjoy others version of this, I'm not planning on doing it myself, mostly because I'm too lazy to compile everything.

It's a quiet time with nothing really new at the moment. The last half of the month it was as if everyone had something important to do...

This can be a little frustrating to new starters who see a vast array of riches, only to have to wait for the next big thing to arrive. It's not quite as bad as AIF, since RAGS tends to favour shorter games, but they still take time to complete and as authors get more ambitious and more skilled the delay can take longer. Not to mention the dreaded writers block and general real life stuff getting in the way. Okay so next time I'll do a review of the year.

Like I said the end of the year was a little quiet, but the start was quite bountiful. On the RAGS front we had Gunny1's Slippage, Mjrenutxx's Christmas Test and Usertemp01's The Fairies Cauldron. And on the rapidly ambitious Inform front we have Shrimpy's TG framework and Biron's Exercise in Futility.

Short and sweet I know, but I'm still getting over the celebration of 2010, so, as I'm sure everyone here has said, happy New Year and see you next month. ♦

This Month At

T Games Site



By Nandi Bear

The Admin of the Collective have decided that those authors needing a place to host their games, other than Rapidshare and the like that bring a lot of comments about that being a poor host, can now host their games on the Collective's server.

We created a sister site to the Collective at: games-collective.net. We will be accepting files from Collective members to host there, hoping to provide a better experience for our membership.

If you visit the new site, you will see a blank page as we do not plan to have an actual site located there. It's simply going to be a storage site so that the membership does not have to try and fit their games into the 8 MB limit of the Collective Gallery.

If you want more information on the process of hosting games on the Collective, please visit this link on the Collective: <http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=16691>

And onto the month of December!

Firstly, and most excitingly, Tabico has released her first game!

"The alpha release of the Tabico RAGS game is here! It's nowhere near "complete", as I was amusingly ambitious in my vision, and it's not particularly hard nor as polished as many other of the games listed here. But it does come with some pretty pictures. I wanted to share it now rather than wait for a nebulous "completion" that might never come. Plus you can help shoot some bugs. So. Gird and or grease your loins!"

Game is available at: <http://www.games-collective.net/Escape1.0.rag> or <http://www.games-collective.net/Escape1.0.zip>

And the discussion thread is at: <http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=16679>

COLLECTIVELY MADE...

This Month at the Collective...

By TeraS



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Well, we don't have that huge of an issue for you this month. With the holidays in progress, I just didn't feel like pressing people for content, and know that everyone is pretty busy with their own business (and rightly so). We have another issue of The Aphrodite Chronicles, a top 10 list and game review by A. Bomire, and, in addition to our normal 'this month' articles, BBBen wraps up the year with "This Year in AIF." Our game discussion for Moriarty's The Reunion was postponed until next month, so we will hopefully have that for you then.

The other thing I wanted to mention is that we have come to the end of the Erin year. Actually, since we skipped it last year, we have actually come to the end of two years since all games from 2008 and 2009 will be eligible. As in the past, we are going to set up a nominations committee to put together the list of nominations for the individual categories. We will then release those nominations and put out a call for the entire community to come out and vote. I'll have more about that next month.

Well, that's about it for this month. It's been a good year, and I hope that you have all had a good one. I'm looking forward to the next year with anticipation. As we enter it together, let me close this with a little phrase that I used to close a lot of my articles with. A cute little phrase that, in my opinion, because less cute every time I used it, which is why I stopped by the way. Work hard, have fun, and think dirty thoughts. ♦

Collective, continued from page 2

Orcha appeared and gave a small update on the progress of Demon Town:

"Development is still continuing, and I've made some decent progress on the human storylines, including adding the first actual endings (all "bad" at this point). Making progress on the alchemy system, though it hasn't been implemented yet. I'm also going back through the game, and fixing and tweaking a few things in the plot and the writing that don't fit into the ongoing storyline as well as I'd like. No major revisions to speak of, though people who've played before might notice a couple differences. Haven't made any progress on the other plotlines yet, and I'd like to do that before I upload an update. Ideally, I'd like to bring all the storylines to roughly the same point before I update again, and I can't give a timeline for when that is likely to happen."

You can follow this game here: <http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=14673>

Martix1807 appeared to talk about his game N.T.J.:

"Got MAJORLY caught up in just about every single project/essay/exam known to man (and a few alien species) ergo time is short. Unless i manage to find some time this coming holiday, i'm afraid i'm going to have to put NTJ on an indefinite break. Though, not as bad as those regular indefinite brakes. I will find some time for it eventually...just...not now."

NeoSilver also posted a short note on his game Doors Left Unopened that:

"It's coming along at a glacial rate, simply because I've gained a bit of writer's block with the story. I'm not happy with what I'd written, so I'm re-writing everything after the current end point. I'll take suggestions, if anyone's got some"

So, if you'd like to help, post in this thread:

<http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=16191>

Wintersmith commented on his game Sorcerer's Quest that:

"As I suspect several others around here were, I was hit with the Dragon Age: Origins productivity virus, and the Christmas preparation productivity virus. That being said, I did a bit of work on it this last week. Really, the rendering is the part that takes me forever. I have no natural talent there, so it's definitely slow going. I'm stepping on bugs and

expanding even now. The next release, likely out by next weekend (either on the 23rd, or the 26th) should include 2 new characters (one of whom is also a sorceress who knows more about the mysterious Viera and her captor), a couple of useful objects, a very minor transformation (age reduction), a second potential "bad ending," and a little more on the magic of sorcery. After that, I have planned to add an additional 2 demons, a few new characters, and an expansion down into the university section."

You can follow the progress of this game here: <http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=16469>

Benmbedlam posted a new version of his game Rough Landing 2!

"Some bug fixing (including a major game breaker) and text clean up. A new bonus sneak preview of RL3 different to each character for completing the game on Hard. The fourth gender transformation is now in place. Achievements have been added along with a clothing rating system which adds some new paths to completing the game. A few images have been swapped out due to wanting to have a consistent model for certain roles. Some more minor changes to add background detail and a few encounters have been rebalanced, namely the belly dancers."

You can download the game here: http://games-collective.net/Rough_Landing_2.04.rag

And discuss the game here: <http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=16144>

Dragoon93041 posted a short note on his game Slime Kingdom:

"I've got some more ideas but I've lost my initiative and it'll take a while to get it back. New premise: Humans have sent the Demon Lord back into hibernation and the monster girls have been defeated/captured/enslaved. It is up to you, the lonely slime, to rescue them. You'll get abilities as you rescue monster girls or you can just power your way through. Example: There's a guard that is hungry. You can either attack her directly or free a mimic and learn the 'transform' ability. Then you turn into an apple and defeat the guard instantly."

You can follow the progress in this thread: <http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=15851>

Dragontrainer posted an update to his game Jigsaw Town III!

You can find it here: http://rapidshare.com/files/328562848/JigsawTown_II_Revised_version_0.15.rar or http://www.4shared.com/file/185596892/b2aa782/JigsawTown_II_Revised_version_.html

And the discussion thread is here: <http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=13871>

Dr753 posted a new game called The Hammer. If you like Magic: The Gathering, this game will be of interest to you.

You can find the game here: http://games-collective.net/The_Hammer.rag

The discussion thread is here: <http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=16771>

And lastly, Weirdo posted a new game as well! He wrote:

"I'm working on a new MC game. I'm looking for anyone who would like to help give me a little feedback on the beta I'm working on polishing up (typos, spelling, flow, difficulty, etc) a little before a more general release in this forum."

You can find this game here: http://games-collective.net/etranz_chap1_beta_0.3.rag

And please help in the development of the game here:

<http://hypnopics-collective.net/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=16750>

Happy New Year from the Collective!! ♦

And so 2009 has passed, and we reflect upon the year in AIF. Without doubt the biggest game release was GoblinBoy's *School Dreams 3*. The game was big enough to suffice for several large game releases, and was very well made. The only downside to it might be that others may try to replicate this kind of work. Don't bother! You will fail! Attempt a more realistic project! Oh, why do I bother? Nobody's listening to me.

In terms of other game releases, we have more or less maintained the pattern of a small number of good quality games. It's less than we might have hoped for, but we certainly haven't seen a total collapse of AIF authorship. We even missed an issue of the newsletter this year, just because for the month of August none of us could think of anything to write about, there having been no game releases. Apart from *SD3* there was good work by a number of other authors; Raul released the substantial *Last Week Before the Wedding* and Rip_CPU released three good games, to name just two authors who have been working this year.

The mini-comp went okay; there were only six game releases, but that's not too bad. Two of Rip_CPU's games were in there, making him the third author to have submitted two games to a single mini-comp (after A. Bomire and GoblinBoy). GoblinBoy won the 2009 mini-comp, incidentally, continuing his dominance over AIF awards.

During the year some of us had a bit of fun with an "AIF Tropes" project over on AIFGames.com, modelled on what they do over at TV Tropes. Unfortunately this eventually ran out of steam (I think there were only three of us really doing much on there) but we did come up with some interesting ideas about the genre. The stuff is still up and can still be contributed to if you are interested.

The Erin Awards were called off in 2008 due to a lack of game releases, and the deadline for 2009 was extended to the end of the year, to simplify the process. This means that at the beginning of 2010 we now have all the games from 2008 and 2009 (and even the end of 2007) to consider for voting, but that is still not all that huge a number of games, and most of them are mini-comp entries. Hopefully we'll have a bigger haul this year.

One consistent theme throughout the year was the two separate attempts to generate more game releases by hosting extra competitions: the Threesome Comp (hosted by me with the deadline at the end of January) and the Christmas Micro-comp in December, hosted by Purple Dragon. Both comps failed to gain much support, with initial interest petering out by the time of the deadline. The Threesome Comp only received one entry (albeit a good one), which was personally disappointing as I went to a fair bit of effort over the rules to allow freedom for creativity and some hot threesome sex while still containing the project size to something quite manageable. The Christmas Micro-comp was a little more successful, but only because the host decided to enter as well. The lesson we can take from all this is probably just to keep the competitions down to the mini-comp, and try to get back to the basics. I still feel that if we just get a number of solid medium-sized releases we'll be able to build up some momentum in the community once again.

And that caps off the fifth year of our little newsletter. It doesn't feel like that long at all, but I guess we've at least proven that we could make it work, and I'm proud of the five years of (mostly) good work we've achieved here. ♦

Dear Mortal Men and Women,

In my last letter I began to relate the tale of Alan, a suburban man in his early forties who I decided to send, without his advance knowledge, into an alternate parallel universe for one day - an alternate reality in which real life very closely resembles adult interactive fiction. In this universe people go around having sex with one another, without any guilt or social repercussion, as a routine form of entertainment. Alan is a midlife crisis candidate, a bored government functionary who lusts for a more interesting existence, as well as after some women he regularly encounters. As he experienced his day in AIF Universe, his parallel AIF self would replace him.



I made the switch in the middle of the night, when both versions of Alan, and his family members, were all asleep. The changes to his environment was trivial, so upon waking to visit the bathroom before returning to bed he noticed nothing. But the change to his waking routine was not trivial at all. Normally, the radio alarm switches on and his wife whacks it to trigger the snooze, and they both return to sleep for ten more minutes before going downstairs to drink a cup of coffee together

So he was very surprised indeed when he was awoken not by the alarm, but by his wife Tanya snuggling warmly up against his back, reaching around him and feeling for his cock, which quickly sprung to life. His eyes flicked open and he turned his head to look back at her, but it was too dark to see. He squinted, trying to see the clock, but without his glasses it was no use. He laid his head back down and enjoyed what she was doing, hoping against hope that she wouldn't roll back over and return to sleep - or worse still, actually be fondling him in her sleep.

"Mmm, honey," Tanya whispered, "you're ready, like always. I love that." She deftly fished his erection out of his boxers and stroked it, feeling its hardness in her fingers, making him moan softly. Tugging gently on his cock she guided him to roll onto his back, and she sat down on top of him, straddling his thighs, her hands still wrapped around his penis. He reached up to caress her and was surprised again to feel her naked skin. Tanya always wears at least a top and sometimes pajama bottoms to sleep in, but she'd dispensed with all that already. Alan ran his hands up her thighs to her sides and cupped her breasts, brushing his thumbs over her nipples, causing her to gasp.

Alan felt Tanya pivot herself forward so that her pussy rested on the side of his cock, which was pressed into his belly. She rocked forward and back, her lips split apart by his cock, spreading her juices along his length. "You're so big it feels like I'm sitting on a log," she moaned, "that feels amazing." She fell forward onto him and kissed him hard, all the while gyrating herself, fucking the shaft of his cock.

At that moment the alarm did go off, a shrill radio ad for Viagra jarring them harshly out of their reverie. Tanya reached over and slapped it off. "Drat," she said, "I thought we had more time to play. Now we'll just have to finish up quickly." He heard a grin in her voice as she asked, "so, it's Husband's Choice today. How do you want me?"

Alan goggled in disbelief. His wife hadn't been this playful or interested in sex for the sheer pleasure of it since they'd gotten engaged. He felt like asking 'who are you and what have you done with Tanya?' but that would obviously be looking a giant gift horse in the mouth. So instead, feeling very tentative, he said, "um... from behind?"

"Absolutely, sir. And would you like that with the light on or off? I know you like to watch from that position."

'She does?' thought Alan to himself? 'How does she know that?' But again, he decided to chalk it up to the common knowledge that men are turned on by visual stimuli. "How about light on," he said.

"Good choice." He felt her weight leave his body (with one last thrilling back-and-forth gyration of her crotch against him for good measure) and a moment later the bedside light came on its lowest setting, filling the familiar room with gentle illumination. He looked at her. She certainly looked like Tanya, though with an unmistakably saucier look on her face than he could recall seeing on her in ages. It reminded him of the look he gave her after their first date, when, over dessert at a restaurant, she told him in no uncertain terms that she wanted him to suck on her breasts (the memory of that moment occasionally makes him feel the victim of a bait-and-switch). But at this moment that look was back and it excited him tremendously.

Tanya turned around on the bed, crawling in a circle, until her ass was aimed back at him. She parted her knees to about her shoulders' width, exposing her pussy, then rocked back and forth at him in invitation. She curved her back down, making her ass rise in the air, showing her need. Alan stared at her ass for a moment, admiring its broad expanses of creamy, curvy flesh. He'd always loved her ass, concentrating whenever they had sex on the way it felt in his hands. Then he sprung into action, kneeling up behind her, holding his cock in one hand and her hip in the other. He pressed his cock into her crack and rested it there, feeling himself compressed between her cheeks while she gyrated back at him, positively cooing in desire.

Alan pulled back and lined himself up, rubbed the tip of his cock a couple of times over the lips of Tanya's vagina, then, watching closely as his shaft disappeared, pushed easily into her. She was extremely wet, and they groaned in unison as her body easily accommodated his entire length, greedily gobbling him until his pelvis mashed up against her cheeks. He successfully fought down the feeling that he would come instantly by closing his eyes and holding completely still, mind-over-mattering himself to withstand the sudden onslaught of sensation. Through the tightly-stretched skin of his cock he could feel every movement of her body, every tensing and releasing of her interior muscles. He suddenly decided he'd love to stay here, just like this, all day, with his beautiful naked wife, slowly making love, then wildly fucking, then wrapping themselves up in one another. Why couldn't every morning be like this?

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Come fly
with me!

Ms Big

Photo by A. Bomire

TAC, continued from page 6

Of course, he realized that even this special morning had an expiration on it, and the moment when they'd have to get up and get ready for work was quickly approaching. Alan gripped Tanya's hips and began slowly thrusting. She moaned, a deeply guttural moan that mingled with his own as he was flooded with pleasure. He gradually increased the pace, fucking her in deep strokes, pulling all the way out so that only the tip of his cock touched her before shoving himself back in all the way to the hilt. They tried hard to keep from getting carried away in the noises they made; their kids were only one room away, but it was difficult. As Tanya started approaching her orgasm her breath quickened and her moans became higher pitched. She reached under herself to finger her clit, buzzing herself to climax with her fingertips as Alan fucked her wildly from behind, exploding inside her with a suddenness and intensity that surprised him and almost made him on top of her, flattening her onto her belly on the bed, with her ass still pressed up hard against him.

They didn't feel the need to speak of their tryst for the rest of that morning, but kept exchanging conspiratorial looks over breakfast that made their children suspicious, until Tanya whispered into Alan's ear as he left for the day, "Thanks for the fuck, honey. More where that came from tonight. Enjoy your day!"

And Alan did very much enjoy the rest of his day, which I will tell you about over the next several months. But for now this seems a good place to leave him.

Until we meet again, I wish you all wonderful love.

Aphrodite

Each month we will be bringing you a new top ten list. You should not for a minute believe that the following represents the newsletter's official view on the matter (we don't have one). Rather, this is one person's personal list of favorite games. Speaking from personal experience, it's hard to narrow the list down to ten games, and even harder to rate them in order so you should probably consider any game on any list to be well worth playing. If you don't agree with something, then by all means feel free to write up your own list and send it in. I'll be more than happy to print it.

This month's list is by A. Bomire

When my illustrious editor, Purple Dragon, asked me to put together a "Top 10" list of my favorite games, I at first thought: Well, this will be an easy month! Then I went back and looked at all of the games that have been released - ever. If you haven't looked, there are a lot of them. A lot of very good games. So, I started going through them to put together my list. My list may be different from others, but not for the reasons you may think. My list of top 10 games isn't necessarily the games that I play the most. Instead, they are the games that I enjoyed the most.

Another oddity about my list is that most of the games are older. This reflects the fact that I beta-test a lot of games. If you haven't done beta-testing, it is a lot of fun. I enjoy helping prospective (and established) authors with their games, and do so quite often. But, in the act of beta-testing I might play the game 10, 20 or 30 times. Sometimes more for really big games. And while I've tested some really good games, beta-testing can sometimes take the enjoyment out of playing the full game.

With that said, here are my top 10 games, in no particular order:

Generic New York Apartment Building by NewKid (aka "GNA")

This is the first AIF game I ever played. As such, you could say that it spoiled me. After all, it had pictures and sounds (almost unheard of when it was released), it included all of my favorite TV characters located in one place, and gave me the opportunity to interact with them. When you couple that with NewKid's writing skills and puzzle designs - well, how could you go wrong? I say you can't.



The characters and situations are a bit dated now. (Who remembers *Becker*?) Some of the inside jokes may not pass on to younger AIF players, but the game itself stands up very well. It is still a fun game to play, and still brings a little smile to me whenever I fire it up and hear that >bing< of the elevator.

Ideal New England Prep School by NewKid (aka “Ideal High” or “HI”)

After playing GNA, I of course scoured the web looking for anything else written by NewKid. And I quickly came across *Ideal New England High School*. And if I was impressed by GNA, I was almost completely blown away by Ideal High. (So much so that I included a scene from this game in one of my own games, *The Backlot*.) It is a large game, one of the few that required me to create a map to remember where everything is. And it has a very large cast. It has since been bypassed in both size and number of characters, but it still remains memorable to me for both of these qualities.

But beyond this, the best part of this game is the masterful way that NewKid teases the player, leading him step by step to the final encounter with Miss Wynn. NewKid has written other games with female leads who slowly tease the player (the already mentioned *Generic New York Apartment Building* and the sequel to this game, *Ideal Pacific Coast University*), but none come close to the way that he handles Miss Wynn. From the introductory tease in the beginning where the player encounters her in her tight jogging suit, to the slow striptease as he photographs her in her home and finally the big encounter in her house - it all builds in a way that I haven't found in any other game. And that completely ignores the other characters in the game, all of whom are fully fleshed out as well.

NewKid has been described as one of the “founding fathers” of modern AIF, and if you want to see him at the peak of his writing prowess - then play this game.

Moist by Scarlett Herring

What can I say about this game that hasn't been said by others? It is the one game that you'll find at or near the top of *everyone's* list of favorite games. (And if it isn't on yours, shame on you!) It's not that it is the hottest game ever written - there are much better sexually described scenes in other games. It isn't that the puzzles are so intriguing - there are much better puzzles out there as well. Nor is it the interactivity of the girls, or the replayability. What is it, then, that has so many people ranting and raving over this game? It's that you so rarely find a game which has all of the elements so well knitted together: funny scenes, hot scenes, good puzzles, interesting characters, replayability, interactivity, things hidden in the corners...I could go on and on.

I think part of it is that this game was such a ground-breaking game in the world of AIF. Its replay value lay not in multiple paths like games such as *Cruise* or *School Dreams 3*, but in the fact that most players wouldn't find all of its possibilities in just one play through. It is one of those games that you can play over and over, and still find something you missed. *Moist* has its problems (Scarlett Herring described it as “truly awful” in places), but there's no denying the profound impact this game had upon all other games that came after it.

Perhaps part of this game's popularity with folks is nostalgia, but there is no denying it is a fun game to play.

Emy Discovers Life by MKJ

This is the oldest game on my list, and written in the dreaded AGT authoring language. This means that nobody but us oldsters have probably played this game, or will play it in the future due to AGT's trouble with modern computers. If so, then you are missing out. Like many of the games on my list, this game is by no means the hottest. Its draw has to do with its uniqueness. It is written from the point of view of a young school girl who is discovering sex and at the same time fighting against her own moral dilemma over her feelings. As a girl with a fairly strict religious upbringing, she knows in her heart that what she is doing is supposed to be wrong, but she can't seem to help herself as she explores her burgeoning sexuality.

This game, like others on my list, was unique at the time of its writing. Instead of being written with a wham-bam-thank-you-ma'am mentality, it dared to explore the true conflicting emotions of a young girl at war with herself. I'm not a young girl, and don't really know if this is an accurate representation, but it seems more accurate than most other games when Emy finds herself both drawn to and slightly shocked by her attraction to her neighbor Sam, and her friend Jen. As an AGT game, it has its drawbacks, but for sheer character writing it is one of the better games out there. Find yourself a copy of Gargoyle, and then play this game. You'll thank me later.

Rogue Cop by Choices

There are a few “dark” AIF games out there, but I believe that *Rogue Cop* was one of the first (if not the first). The game starts out with the player as a cop, standing over two freshly killed corpses, and a house full of witnesses/suspects. From there it proceeds to the player “interrogating” the mostly female cast, if interrogation consists of lots of hot, sweaty bodies pressed against each other. That’s not the way they do it on “Law and Order”!

I liked this game because of the way that the story is revealed as you play along (I’m not going to spoil it for you). As you interact with the characters, you find more and more about the relationship between the family, the corpse and the other characters in the game. It isn’t a super intriguing, bite-your-nails who-dunnit, but it is still an interesting story-line. And the characters are well written, if slightly odd.

Peril in the Skies by Adam Hendine

Adam Hendine is an AIF author whose candle burned bright but brief. He only stuck around for a year or so in the AIF community, but produced three really well received games. Of them all, *Peril in the Skies* is my favorite. This game is hands-down the most fun game I’ve ever played. It is brilliantly written, with truly cinematic scenes. And all without any graphics or sounds. The picture of Dr Hades’ ship and his imposing Automatroopers stands out as clearly in my mind now as it did when I first encountered them. This game is another that I included when I created my own game, *The Backlot*.

I enjoyed this game because of the rich environment. You actually get the feeling that you are part of the story - dropped into the middle of Jack Darcy’s adventures as he battles the minions of Dr Hades and the Cult of Sebek. It is one of those games that I play not for the sex (which is well done and hot) but for its story, and its style greatly influenced my own games when I started writing.

Encounter 1: Tim’s Mom by Chris Cole

Chris Cole established himself early in his career as an author both prolific and talented. About midway during his most productive time, he switched from writing full games to smaller games which he termed his “Encounter” series. They are games in the tradition of “A Night With Troi” and traditional mini-comp entries. Of all of his games, my favorite has to be *Encounter 1: Tim’s Mom*. In fact, Chris and I later went on to reprise the game in a much fuller adventure entitled *Pool Party*.

Rochelle, the titular mother, is different from most AIF characters. She’s older, with grey in her hair and a non-perfect body. In other words, she is what you’d expect to find as the mother of a teenage son. And that is exactly her appeal. She is more real than the big boobed animated sex dolls you may find in other “older woman” fantasies, but still very hot. And like some of my other top games, Chris doesn’t just jump into sex with her - there is a period of slow build-up. Of course, it being such a short game the build-up isn’t *that* slow, but at least it isn’t “I mowed your lawn! Let’s have sex!” I found this game to be an enjoyable experience, and one I often turn to when I just want a quick, fun game to play.

Sam Shooter 1: Graduation Day by One-Eyed Jack

Some authors tell good stories, leading the player from scene to scene with carefully crafted plots. And then there’s One-Eyed Jack. This game is the first in the wonderfully wacky “Sam Shooter” series. Nothing is off limits in OEJ’s stories, yet his characters are such oddballs that you can’t help but laugh at their outrageous antics: the ditzy girl who thinks Sam (who she has met before) is her doctor; the girl who won’t stop talking about her dead boyfriend even as Sam is having sex with her; the high-school teacher who is *really* into literature - these are just a few of the characters you’ll meet.

Playing this game is a lot like watching *Bill and Ted’s Excellent Adventure* - you simply turn off the logical part of your mind and enjoy the game as it unfolds. Sam is described by One-Eyed Jack as “the personification of the id”, and when you play the game you can enjoy doing all those things that you simply can’t do in real life. No matter how you describe it - it’s just plain fun.

Dear Brian by Choices, with Chris Cole

Two authors already on my list of favorites joined forces in this game to create a really innovative game. This is the first I’d played where the player changes perspective - not from character to character (that was *ST-Voy The Body Snatcher*), but by gender. Choices created a game where the player can play as himself, or his female alter-ego - experiencing sex from either perspective. It was an interesting game to play to see how Choices pulled it off, and also well written with the help of Chris Cole in the writing of the character Rhonda.

Like my other games on this list, this one is simply fun to play. You'll get a bit of a laugh at the revenge you get on your friend, and enjoy finding all of the hidden items in the game.

To Cage a Magpie by Lucilla Frost

I've been a fan of comic books and super heroes most of my life. I'm not as big of a fan now as I was earlier, but I still enjoy a good super hero story. And in my opinion no one in the AIF genre does quite as good a job at writing the super heroine as Lucilla Frost. While this game isn't as story-driven as Lucilla's "British Fox and the Celebrity Abductions", it still has an interesting story behind it. And I find Magpie a very fun character to play. I've known plenty of smokers, and while none of them are quite as driven as Magpie, I certainly smile at the familiar "drop everything for a smoke break" mentality. Plus, they say that the two most popular super powers most people wish they had are flying and invisibility - and with Magpie you get to role-play both!

This game has some really good puzzles in it, while not being a brain strainer. It is fun to see just what Magpie can get away with, while at the same time exploring some of the background characters from Lucilla's much larger British Fox game. This is another fun game that is great for a quick play. ♦

Hell in Highwater

A Review by A. Bomire

Game Info:	Hell in Highwater
Author:	J. Arthur
Platform:	TADS 2
Size:	1.3MB
Content:	m/f
Game Type:	Fantasy Puzzle Fest
Length:	Long
Extras:	2004 Erin for "Best Story"



Basic Plot

You play the role of Caradoc, a gambler who has gambled away his soul to the demon Vrix and now is on a quest to win it back. The quest takes you all through the city of Highwater and along the river that winds through it, meeting all sorts of people from simple barmen to priests and even vampires, not to mention the demon who starts it all. The quest is long and hard, and filled with puzzles and adventures.

Overall Thoughts

This game plays much more like a traditional IF game than your typical "See girl, screw girl" AIF game. Yes, there is sex in this game, but there is a much greater concentration on the story of Caradoc and his quest to save his soul. And it is a good story too, as evidenced by the fact that the game won a 2004 AIF Award ("Erin") for "Best Story". The characters you meet are all interesting, and the dialogue is written with just the right amount of humor. And, there are multiple endings to the game, allowing for good replay value.

Puzzles/Game Play

I have read many posts from players saying that they steer clear of traditional IF because they just don't like puzzles for puzzles sake. In that case, let me warn you: this game is all about the puzzles. There are timed puzzles, where the player has a set number of turns to solve a specific problem. There are "treasure hunt" puzzles where the player has to find an item (or group of items) and get them to a person or place. There are logic puzzles where the player has to figure out what items are necessary and use or combine them to solve a problem. And the items and objects are scattered around so that, for example, the bucket of water you find here is actually used way over there. Fortunately, J. Arthur allows the player to travel back and forth (or, I should say, up and down in the case of the river) to both collect and transport objects. But, and here is where it gets tricky, the player isn't a one-man moving truck. He can only carry so much at one time, and that limit is much, much lower than the number of items to be found in the game. Fortunately, there is a convenient place to dump all of your stuff so that it is more-or-less at hand when you need it.

Speaking of “way over there”, this game is big. I mean really big. As you travel up and down the river, you come to new villages and locations, each with their own map. Most of them are small enough that each one isn’t that unwieldy, but put them all together and you have a very big map. Players may want to take the time to draw it out.

Sex

This game has sex in it (obviously, or it wouldn’t be reviewed here!), but as I mentioned in the last section it is really about the puzzles. The sex is good, don’t get me wrong, and J. Arthur does a good job of creating individual women who aren’t just interchangeable sex toys. But the sex is more lukewarm than hot. Oh, there are some decent scenes, but overall this game isn’t going to (and didn’t) win any awards for the sex scenes.

Technical

Overall the game appears technically sound. There were a few typos and grammatical errors, which in some cases may have just been the author’s way of representing a character’s particular speech pattern. I only noticed one odd effect when asking a character to strip during a sex scene. She did, but there was no description of it. It didn’t have any ultimate effect upon game play, but it still was a bug. In a game of this size, with this many characters and interactions, that is practically “bug free”!

Final Thoughts

This game is a somewhat of a sleeper in the AIF community, perhaps because it plays so much more like an IF game than a typical AIF game. However, it was nominated for seven 2004 AIF Awards, including: Best PC, Best NPC, Best Story, Best Atmosphere and Best Puzzles. Despite this, you hardly ever hear anything about it. I’ll admit, the number of puzzles in the game, and the not-quite-steamy sex scenes may discourage some players from taking a look at this game. If so, then you are missing something. It is really well written with a terrific story filled with memorable characters. Get out there, grab a walkthrough, and give this game a try.

Rating: B+

If you can write game reviews, articles, 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.

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Editor:

Purple Dragon has written several AIF games including *Archie's Birthday - Chapter 1: Reggie's Gift*, *A Dream Come True*, and *Time in the Dark*. He has received one Erin award and been nominated for several others.

Staff:

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. He was the co-recipient of the Badman Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006.

A Ninny is an AIF player, author of four AIF games and frequent beta-tester. His *Parlour* received an Erin for Best "One Night Stand" game in 2004 and his most recent game, *HORSE* walked away with three Erins at the 2007 awards show.

BBBen is an author of a number of Adrift AIF games. His games have received numerous Erin awards and nominations and first place in A. Bomire's 2004 mini-comp. He was also the recipient of the 2007 Badman Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award.

Bitterfrost is a longtime IF/AIF player working on his first (and last) game, *How I Got Syphilix*.

Dudeman has released one game and is working on a second. He has also released an impressive Inform 7 sex extension to help make it easier for others to write games of their own.

Knight Errant is an AIF player who has released two games and is currently working on a couple of others.

'trix has released one game, *Casting*, which was written in Inform 6, and is sporadically working on another in TADS 3.

