

Quest for Glory 5: Dragon Fire

Sierra Returns to Glory With One of Gaming's Oldest RPG Franchises

The original QUEST FOR GLORY was an immensely popular role-playing game. It had stats and spells, but it also combined classic Sierra adventure-game elements with intense combat. After the success of the first title, the series grew to encompass three more games, set in various fantasy locales based on the Middle East, Africa, and Transylvania. While the quests, monsters, and environments changed from game to game, the main character and a few nonplayer characters did not. Moreover, an overarching plot was weaved into each game, meaning that a continuity was achieved that compelled you to play each successive title. It's been a long four years, but, at last, the final game in the series is about to debut: QUEST FOR GLORY 5: DRAGON FIRE.



IN HONOR OF THIEVES There aren't levels in DRAGON FIRE, but, rather, skills that you advance through with frequent use. As a thief, you could practice pickpocketing on this dummy.

A Mediterranean Holiday

You reprise your role as the hero (always nameless), and have ventured to the land of Silmaria, a Mediterranean-type environment.



EN GARDE Combat now occurs in the game world, rather than on a separate screen. Before, combat was a little jarring, but now it is seamlessly integrated.

The kingdom has just lost its ruler to assassination, and monsters prowl the land whilst a great black dragon looms over the horizon. Lori Cole, the designer of all previous QUEST games, is hinting that this could be the finale of the series, so the story will tie up all loose ends, and gamers will finish the game with a feeling of completion.

Many of the previous games' NPCs will return for this encore, including Rakeesh the liontaur from QUESTS 2 and 3, Katrina the vampire from QUEST 4, and Erasmus, the wizard who taught you spells in QUEST 1. However, as a new game, QUEST 5 will thrust you into a whole new environment with its own share of brand-new faces. As with other QUEST FOR



GLORY games, Cole promises to deliver characters with personality, as well as plenty of humor and even romance in the story.

Stats and Skills

Like previous QUEST games, you'll be able to choose from three classes: wizard, warrior, and thief. You will be able to import your characters from previous games. DRAGON FIRE isn't level-based, but skill-based. You have standard attributes, such as strength and intelligence, as in other games, and a variety of skills. You'll have a different set of skills depending on your class, such as pickpocketing for thieves, spellcasting for wizards, and defense for warriors. You can increase your skills through normal use or practice. For example, in the Thieves Guild, you can practice pickpocketing on the dummy and advance your skill level. If you fight constantly, your weapon skill will automatically increase. Continual spellcasting will also improve your spell skills.

The game does change depending on your class, as you'll have to defeat major enemies according to your skill set (through trickery, spells, or combat). As far as spells, there are



LIGHTS OUT As in previous games, time will pass, so you can adventure during both day and night. Some actions, especially thievery, can be performed only at night.

quite a few, including fireball, levitation, lightning ball, open doors, protection, and flight.

To Be King

In the tradition of the series, there will be several subplots to play through before the final showdown with evil. After the king has been assassinated, you and two other heroes come forward to compete for the right to take the crown in the Rites of Rulership. These Rites will take you through the game's various quests and subplots. You'll have to stem the invasion of a neighboring kingdom, battle the monsters in the beleaguered kingdom, thwart an army of undead from the dark realm of Hades, defeat a monstrous Hydra, and discover the sunken city of Atlantis. Ultimately, though, the dark hand that has guided all these evil forces will throw its last menace at you: the black dragon, Fire.

The biggest change in the series, apart from the much updated graphics and beautiful pre-rendered environments, is the combat. It is no longer played in a separate screen that draws

you out of the game world. Now, combat occurs in the adventuring environment in realtime.

The other big change is the inclusion of multiplayer support. You can actually play through the whole game with up to two other characters. Presumably, each of you will play as one of the three contestants in the Rites of Rulership. There will be support for modem or LAN play.

QUEST 5 still needs to be polished; game speed is fairly slow now, but Sierra does plan to optimize the game. Also, while we've played a little of the game, we still haven't seen the full quests, Rites, and NPCs. However, if Sierra can implement these elements as well as they did in previous QUEST games, all the while polishing the game's speed and look, DRAGON FIRE should not disappoint. As the probable last entry in the QUEST FOR GLORY line, you'll meet old friends and finally make your way to the promised land of Silmaria. With an improved, integrated combat engine; a variety of locales to visit; and numerous quests and monsters to surmount, QUEST FOR GLORY 5 could prove to be the best of the series. —Elliott Chin



SPLASH The Queen of Atlantis is only one of the various creatures you'll meet.



SUNKEN TREASURE Here is a look at the Atlantis environment in DRAGON FIRE. The environments are beautiful scenes that will be populated with 3D objects.



The Five Greatest Computer Role-Playing Games of All Time

If you had to name the five greatest computer role-playing games of all time, you would probably pick the ones we've selected (or other entries in the same series). We've provided the complete games for these five RPGs on this month's CG-ROM. Play them for yourself and see if you don't agree with our reasons.

ULTIMA IV

When Richard Garriott decided to put virtue in *ULTIMA IV*, he wasn't satisfied with preaching a static morality. He wanted, from character-creation onward, to confront the gamer with moral dilemmas, challenging choices, and a powerful story. With the concept of avatarhood, Garriott succeeded in doing what many other role-playing games had failed to do: Cause gamers to think about real life in new and different ways.

WASTELAND

With a story by Mike Stackpole (of *BattleTech* and *X-Wing* novel fame) and maps by Liz Danforth, Ken St. Andre, and others, *WASTELAND* emerged as an epic game of postapocalyptic combat, mystery, and puzzles. For the first time,

gamers found that they couldn't necessarily count on nonplayer characters to share ammunition, take the point, or perform dangerous deeds in order to save the rest of the party. Other nice touches included Danforth's infamous "rabid dog" scenario, in which you were forced to pay the consequences of your deed.

BETRAYAL AT KRONDOR

This game wasn't special just because it brought Raymond E. Feist's *Midkemia* to life on the computer screen, although that might have been enough. It was the first adventure game to try to give you a 3D first-person feel (even though some of the characters look like paper dolls pasted onto the environment). It also offered a very fresh and new magical interface that worked wonderfully and fit the *Midkemia* milieu perfectly. All in all, a great game with solid balance and lots of surprises.

MIGHT AND MAGIC

The first game in a hugely successful series, *MIGHT AND MAGIC* redefined the term *epic*. It had the largest map of any fantasy RPG up to that time and featured the most upscale documentation for

its era. Most of all, it had great pacing as you maneuvered through intricate mazes in breathless suspense, a tremendous amount of hack-'n'-slash combat, a wide sampling of magical spells, and a simple, yet charming story. The graphics have improved over the years and its progeny, *MIGHT AND MAGIC VI*, promises to offer another fresh perspective with its 3D graphics and architectural styles, but there's something special about the original. It's tough, but worth it.

WIZARDRY VI

To many gamers, the *WIZARDRY* series as a whole could fill any list of the Top Five RPGs of All Time. It was the first maze-view dungeon crawl and offered deep and challenging role-play at a time when many computer games were merely stickman versions of *HACK*, a mainframe hack-'n'-slash game. *WIZARDRY VI* stands high as the first game in the series to blend fantasy and sci-fi into its realms and the first *WIZARDRY* game to offer full-screen color. Some gamers would argue that *WIZARDRY IV* is the best, given its diabolical puzzles and the opportunity you have to play the villain, but we chose *WIZARDRY VI* as the most accessible *WIZARDRY* yet available. ☞



An early screenshot from *WIZARDRY VIII*, which Sir-Tech is promising for a late '98 release.

Crystal Ball

Gazing further into the future, your RPG soothsayer sees a number of promising titles on the horizon. We predict that about the time you read this, you'll be hearing an announcement about *DIABLO 2*—though Blizzard won't confirm this as we go to press.

Last month's E3 roundup reported that Sir-Tech was working on *WIZARDRY VIII*. While this is still true, we have since learned that it will be a fall 1998 release—at best.

Finally, rumors abound about *ULTIMA IX*. Lord British and his minions at Origin all promise that this is still going to happen, but the immense difficulty of developing *ULTIMA ONLINE* has pushed the single-player game back to the point where no one is talking dates at all.