

Glory Be?

Sierra FX Delivers a Final Farewell for the Fans—But We Still Want More

by Elliott Chin

For some of you, HERO'S QUEST might be nothing more than a faint, fond memory. For many others, the name rings no bells and conjures no memories at all. If you are in the latter group, then you missed out on one of the true sleepers of the past decade.

HERO'S QUEST was an adventure/RPG hybrid from Sierra On-Line that came out under its QUEST lineup, which included the KING'S QUEST and SPACE QUEST series. It differed from the other two series by virtue of its role-playing system and tactical combat, while still accommodating many adventure game-style mechanics, such as puzzles and character interaction.

HERO'S QUEST became QUEST FOR GLORY, and the series went onto four titles, all following the

adventures of the main character, appropriately named "Hero." With the conclusion of QUEST FOR GLORY IV, Sierra decided to abandon the franchise, but vehement fan protest has brought the series back for one final game. While QUEST FOR GLORY V isn't likely to win over anyone new, it will serve as a fond farewell for all those longtime fans who want to guide Hero through one last adventure.

The King and I

QUEST FOR GLORY V:

DRAGON FIRE plays much like the other games in the series. It's amazing that I could remember how the old games played, since the last time I touched a QUEST FOR GLORY game was more than four years ago (an eon in computer game time). Still, playing QUEST V was like riding a bike—I picked it up immediately. As the real farewell to the series, Lori and Corey (designers on all the QUEST games) have rounded up all the old characters and transported

them to the land of Silmaria, so the gang's all here for the last hurrah. Among the many familiar faces are your liontaur friend Rakeesh, the mage Erasmus, the minotaur Toro, child-turned-brigand leader Elsa von Spielburg, the shadowy Bruno, the dark master Katrina, and the fairy Erana.

As the game opens, the land of Silmaria faces a series of disasters. The Dragon of Doom, a massive creature that destroyed Atlantis and was subsequently banished

swarming from a base in the islands to the west have captured the fishing villages surrounding Silmaria. The tritons who live in the submerged husk of Atlantis are at war with Silmaria as well. To top this all off, the King of Silmaria has been assassinated.

Of course, all this danger is like a beacon to our Hero, and the mage Erasmus and the liontaur Rakeesh arrange for Hero to be entered into the Rites of Rulership, which determine who should be crowned the next king of Silmaria. Five contestants vie for the crown, but you have another purpose aside from the obvious. While the others are busy with the Rites, you'll be tracking down the assassin.

The Rites of Rulership constitute the game's seven major quests. Aside from these main quests, there also side quests that don't have to be completed—however, they will give you special items, open new lines of dialogue with NPCs, and add to your score. The first two quests are very straightforward, but the later quests are less linear. In some ways, this is



CLASS REUNION QUEST FOR GLORY V is Hero's final adventure, and all his old friends, including the liontaur Rakeesh, are here to say farewell.

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD



APPEAL: QUEST FOR GLORY fans and old-school adventure/RPG gamers.

PROS: Good story; plenty of quests; continually updating dialogue and characters; corny humor.

CONS: Pixel-hunting gameplay; sometimes awkward combat; bugs; average graphics.

DIFFICULTY: Intermediate.

REQUIREMENTS: Pentium 166, Windows 95/98, 32MB RAM, 500MB hard-drive space, 6x CD-ROM drive, 1MB SVGA graphics card, mouse, sound card.

3D SUPPORT: 3Dfx Glide.

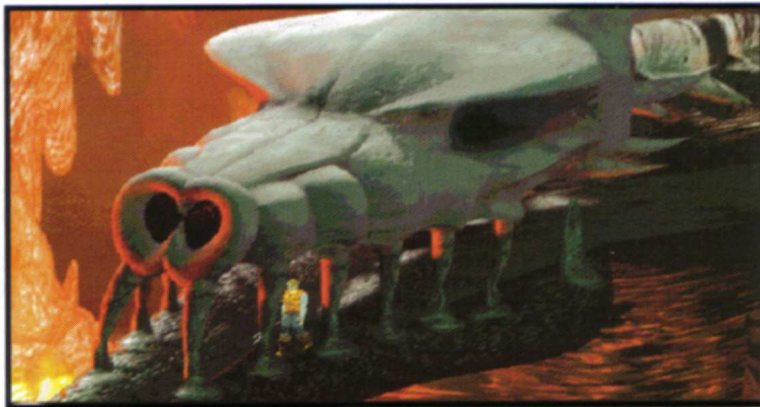
MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT: None.

Price: \$49.95
Publisher: Sierra FX
Oakhurst, CA
(800) 757-7707

www.sierrafx.com



JUST GIMME A HINT The interface needs improvement. It's almost impossible to find the crane operating panel on this platform. A cursor that distinguished between active and nonactive items would have helped.



A HELLÚVA TRIP Although the gameworld is actually pretty small, your quests will take you to several fantastic locations, including Hades.

good. You are left to think up solutions on your own, and to find your own way of arriving at those solutions. Some quests are clever, but others will leave you wandering around the gameworld, lost and frustrated. The middle game, especially, feels too much like an adventure game in which you have to poke and prod at every single pixel, looking for certain items.

She's Funny... and Funny-looking

While the plot, dialogue, and character interaction is very good, the graphics just aren't up to par. There is no 3D acceleration for Hero (who is polygonal), which makes him look blocky close-up. Some of the prerendered

backgrounds look nice, but others are too grainy for you to discern smaller objects on the screen (a problem when hunting for small items).

The humor and style of the previous QUEST games comes through wholly intact in this final chapter. QUEST FOR GLORY has always had a juvenile sense of humor with bad jokes and sexual innuendo. It's something that longtime fans have come to expect from the series, so I didn't mind it. However, were I not a fan of the series, I don't know if I would appreciate the game's humor. Some of the voice-acting was good, but other voices were strained and annoying (Cerberus is especially terrible). The music was good, with some excellent tracks and event-specific music.

Two of my biggest complaints about the game are the combat and the lack of a zoom feature. If

you are caught in a battle at the end of the map, you and your target are barely large enough to click on. (This is exacerbated by the Shrink spell.)

The interface makes the problem even worse. There's no distinguishing between "hot" items and useless

ones—a nightmare when you're trying to find a specific item or panel (like the crane operation panel on Science Island). The cursor should light up when you pass over items you can pick up, locations of interest, or enemies and characters.

Real Role-playing

I do like that the game plays differently depending on which character you choose. Each class has a few extra quests and abilities, and solutions to certain puzzles and combat differ depending on your character's abilities. This accentuates the role-playing aspect of the game and increases the potential for replay, if you can stomach some of the game's faults.

Overall, QUEST FOR GLORY is a pretty good game, but much of what fueled my desire to play the game was nostalgia. The game plays very much like what I remembered, but with added stories and the chance to revisit old acquaintances. That's what I wanted. However, gamers unused to QUEST FOR GLORY might be put off by the less-than-stellar graphics and "old-school" gameplay.

Call Orkin

Gamers also might not want to put up with the bugs in

QUEST FOR GLORY V. I ran into a few, and people on the forums have complained about several others. Some bugs prevent the completion of certain side quests, while others will dump you out to the desktop. The promised multiplayer support is absent, as well, although a patch is supposed to enable it in the future.

I really enjoyed the first 10 hours of QUEST FOR GLORY V, but as the game wore on, I became more frustrated by the pacing of the game and the pixel-hunting. A better interface, a quest log that showed you what you had to do, and better handling of combat would have alleviated some of my concerns. The ending was a letdown.



WHERE'S MY TELEPHOTO? Combat suffers from a static camera that doesn't allow you to zoom in to facilitate combat.

As the final farewell to our Hero, this game should have at least included an epilogue of some sort that let you know what happened to Hero and all his companions. As it was, once I finished the game, I felt very disappointed. As a fan of the series, I want another game—one that fixes the problems and bugs of this one. Let's hope Sierra can be convinced to make another "farewell" to the series so that we can retire Hero with no regrets. **CGW**

Elliott Chin is previews editor at GameSpot and he left Computer Gaming World because he heard we were implementing author bios. Still, he continues to write reviews for us.



THE FIRE NEXT TIME This is the Dragon of Doom, and unless you complete all your quests, it could raze Silmaria just as it did to Atlantis centuries ago.