



YOUR FIRST PROBLEM



Funnily enough, actually getting off the first screen in Dragon's Lair is a real test. Dirk is faced with a never-ending supply of bats to blast, as well as a bridge with many holes in it to successfully negotiate. But that's not all because the moat contains a nasty serpent-like creature just waiting to dust Dirk's monkey ass. Rather bizarrely, killing the moat creature actually opens the door and gives Dirk entry to the castle...



COIN-OP THRILLS

Dragon's Lair was originally a laser disk coin-op that appeared throughout arcades during 1984. It featured stunning animation sequences from the talented hands of ex-Disney artist, Don Bluth, and as you would expect, was something of a visual feast. However, the gameplay was extremely shallow, boiling down to being an exercise in pushing the joystick in the right direction at the right time.



COMMENT

Dragon's Lair is the gaming equivalent of a beautifully garnished cack sandwich. It looks absolutely delicious on the outside, but once you taste what's inside you feel rather ill. It looks and sounds impressive, with large, superbly animated graphics and some neat tunes. Once you play it, though, it's true vileness is swiftly revealed. It seems like a platform

**JULIAN** game at first, but it's not - it's a slow-paced multiple choice trial-and-error game where you have to solve each situation by using critically-timed presses of either the directional pad or the fire buttons. Dirk doesn't move fast enough to escape death if he makes one false move (he moves one slow pace at a time) so you have to remember every single correct step through the entire game and execute each one perfectly to succeed. Because you basically have to do exactly the same thing every time you play, it doesn't take long for this strict routine to become utterly, utterly tedious - especially since progress is made unbelievably frustrating due to the often illogical and stupid combination of moves required to succeed. After a couple of hours I was seething with annoyance and felt like smashing the cartridge to bits! I can see that the programmers have tried to capture the flavour of the 8 year old coin-op, but at the end of the day it's all been a completely futile and pointless exercise. Dragon's Lair was never recognised as being a playable game; it was merely a fairly fun semi-interactive cartoon experience whose novelty swiftly wore off. Why didn't the manufacturers make it into a platform game like the Gameboy version? At least that was fun and playable. This thing is simply the most dire console game yet seen in the MEAN MACHINES offices and should be avoided at all costs.



DRAGON LAIR



**DAGGER SKILLS**



Dirk isn't completely defenceless against the evil that lurks within the dragon's lair. His rucksack has mystical dimension-warping abilities, which make it possible for Dirk to keep an infinite supply of daggers at hand. These are pretty handy against bats and the like, but larger foes such as snakes require more than one hit to successfully dispatch.



**DRAGON'S LAIR**



**COMMENT**

Let me start by saying that I hate this game intensely. Not since the god-awful Shadowgate have I wanted to perform various violent acts to an inanimate object like a Nintendo cartridge. Dragon's Lair is a shambles. It's not the graphics. These are fine, with excellent sprites and some outstanding animation. The sound isn't great, but I've heard far worse issuing forth from the Nintendo.

**RICH**

No, what really makes me despise this game is the fact that it's so frustrating to play I was screaming within minutes. The first screen is a case in point. Dirk falls through one-inch holes in the floor (his feet are actually bigger than the holes!) and opens a castle door by shooting a creature in the castle moat (????). Once indoors, things get no better. Progress is almost always rewarded by instant death - getting further into the game is just a case of remembering EXACTLY what to do and when. One false move and Dirk's dead meat. Almost everything that makes me immediately dislike a game is here by the bucketload. In fact, I hated every minute I spent "playing" it.

**THE LIZARD KING COMETH**

The Lizard King is a bit of a dab hand at the old magic, and comes up with many tricks to fool the bumbling Dirk. His dirtiest trick is to make clones of himself and place them around his domain. Around ten direct hits with Dirk's sharp, dagger-like objects are required to kill these energy-draining duplicates.



**DRAGON'S LAIR**

**BY: MOTIVETIME**

**PRICE: £TBA**

RELEASE DATE: TBA

GAME DIFFICULTY: VERY HARD

LIVES: 5

CONTINUES: 0

SKILL LEVELS: 1

RESPONSIVENESS: VERY POOR



**PRESENTATION 45%**

*Very dull indeed in the presentation stakes and there's not much in the way of options either.*

**GRAPHICS 85%**

*Excellent sprites and pretty decent backdrops. The animation on Dirk is superb!*

**SOUND 64%**

**PLAYABILITY 21%**

*Urrrghhh! Instantly unplayable due to unresponsive controls and dodgy collision detection.*

**LASTABILITY 18%**

*Very difficult due to the unforgiving gameplay. The resulting frustration puts you off the game incredibly quickly.*

**OVERALL 21%**

*Looks great. Sounds neat. Plays like a nightmare. A game of pure frustration that should be avoided.*