



GALAHAD

The traditional eighteenth birthday party tends to involve a lot of noise, booze, and general debauchery. Princess Lucanna's birthday bash was faithfully following this formula until Thanatos, an evil dragon, arrived on the scene. Thanatos had been imprisoned a thousand years ago, and after his escape he vowed to take his revenge. So before you can say, "It's rare to come across such an original plot", Lucanna is whisked away to Thanatos' lair. The



only hope for the princess is Galahad, a young guard in her service. The king has given him the duty of finding her and rescuing the Kingdom from eternal darkness.

Megadrive owners are in for quite a journey, as Galahad traverses three increasingly deadly worlds, each infested with assorted mutants, traps, and tricky puzzles. Galahad begins his journey carrying only his trusty sword for assistance. It soon becomes obvious, what with the ensuing bloodshed, that the brave knight needs special armour and weapons. Fortunately, Galahad has the chance to rob coins from dead enemies and go on a spending spree in one of the many shops that cross his path.

On each level Galahad is given a task that involves finding an object, and on occasions defeating a boss in the process. Once our metal clad chum has managed this, he has to find the portal to make it through to the next level. So down the list of those party pints and unsheath that chopper! Between the bother and the booze, Galahad's looking at a pretty heavy hang over!

AR-SE-NAL! AR-SE-NAL!

As well as armour to improve on there are plenty of weapons for Galahad to get his mitts on. Like the armour the strength of these weapons vary. Galahad starts with a short training sword capable of inflicting one hit point to enemies. This does okay for the first few levels, but as enemies get tougher, Galahad's weapons need to do the same. The dagger and long sword give one and two damage points respectively. The Tempest blade inflicts two hit points and increases Galahad's speed and jumping abilities. The lion blade is the strongest sword damaging your enemies to the tune of five points. Besides swords there are rune bombs and a suicide weapon which delivers 20 hit points to any enemy on screen in exchange for one of Galahad's lives. Like the armour, the best weapons are the most expensive.





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WINDOW SHOPPING

The equipment that Galahad sets off with is rather feeble and while it does its job satisfactorily on the first few levels, it starts to become obvious that his weapons and armour are outclassed. Fortunately for Galahad there are shops situated at various points throughout the game. Here he has the chance to improve his equipment. The downer is that he has to pay for the privilege. The only way to get hold of ready cash is to slice open chests and knock off enemies. Feel free to go after cash with the ferocity of Gordon Gekko, but don't die in the process because this halves the number of coins in your wallet.

CHARGE IT UP!

The eagle-eyed amongst you may have noticed that there is a bar across the bottom of the screen. This is the energy indicator bar and it comes into action when using certain weapons. Before the Lion blade and the Suicide weapon can be activated, this bar needs a full charge. This is done by holding down the fire button, and then releasing it to engage the weapon. Increasing the power of the Tempest blade is optional, but on some stages in the game it proves essential.



▲ Lots of fun up trees involving a big chest and a long snake (!).



▶ Galahad comes face to face with Tyson, a particularly aggressive guard dog, and fires up his blade.



COMMENT



RICH

I haven't played the Amiga version of Galahad so I can't comment on whether or not it's a good conversion. What I can say is that it's the most absorbing arcade adventure I've played for quite a while. It sort of reminds me of Shadow of the Beast with its excellent graphics (yes, I do think they are actually quite smart, contrary to what Rob thinks), but the gameplay has been radically improved, with a greater choice of direction and more interesting puzzles. However, it does have its faults. There are some situations where you seem doomed to lose energy no matter what you do. Also, a lot of the backgrounds seem to do you harm even where you least expect it. For example, just touching the back of a snake loses you energy (and there was me thinking that only a serpent's fangs could poison you!). Other than that though, Galahad is a large, addictive arcade adventure well worth taking a look at.

SAFE FROM HARM

Any knight could tell you that it's pretty damn important to wear armour before rushing off into battle. The initial strength of Galahad's armour depends on the game's difficulty setting. In normal mode he starts with blue armour, allowing him to sustain three hit points. Purple is the weakest armour which is capable of taking one hit only. Then comes green with two damage points. Silver armour enables Galahad to sustain four hits and gold armour five. The strongest armour is black, and Galahad can handle six attacks wearing this. Quite naturally, the better the armour, the higher the cost.



◀ This black armour is the strongest that money



COMMENT



ROB

I didn't know quite what to make of this game when I first played it. I wasn't overly impressed with the graphics, which lack the detail of other EA games. The sprites'

cardboard movements meant the animation failed to raise any eyebrows either. As far as platform games go this doesn't come close to Robocod. But then, Galahad isn't a standard platform game anyway. It makes up for lack of visuals with some very involved gameplay. Having to buy weapons and armour gave the game a challenge beyond the set task, and it meant I had to take educated risks concerning what to buy, and whether to go hunting for more sponduliks. Galahad actually plays quite well - the controls are responsive and it is easy to direct jumps and attacks. Now and then the collision detection causes a frown but not enough to really affect the gameplay. Galahad would make a pretty dull game, but it saves itself by replacing the unoriginality in the platform action with some diverting and involved challenges. Not an EA classic, but entertaining all the same.

THROUGH THE PORTAL

When Galahad has accomplished the task set for him at the beginning of the level he has to find his way to the teleport in order to make it to the next level. The teleport doesn't become operational until Galahad has completed the task set. It is often worth hunting down the teleport first, because this saves time searching later on, when Galahad's power is likely to be low.



▲ Bessy the horse brings Galahad's barrels of finest ale.



BY: EA

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE DATE: AUGUST

GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

LIVES: 1

CONTINUES: 1

SKILL LEVELS: 1

RESPONSIVENESS: OK



PRESENTATION 91%

Nice intro sequence. Loads of options like difficulty settings and pad configurations.

GRAPHICS 86%

On the whole, decent enough, with smooth scrolling, great sprites and good backdrops.

SOUND 90%

Some excellent 808 State-esque tunes, although not wholly appropriate. The sound effects aren't bad either.

PLAYABILITY 84%

The controls are pretty smooth and response is fine, but there is some dodgy collision detection on occasions.

LASTABILITY 90%

There are 22 levels, making for months of tough, addictive play.

OVERALL 86%

An excellent arcade adventure, marred only by a slight lack of originality.