



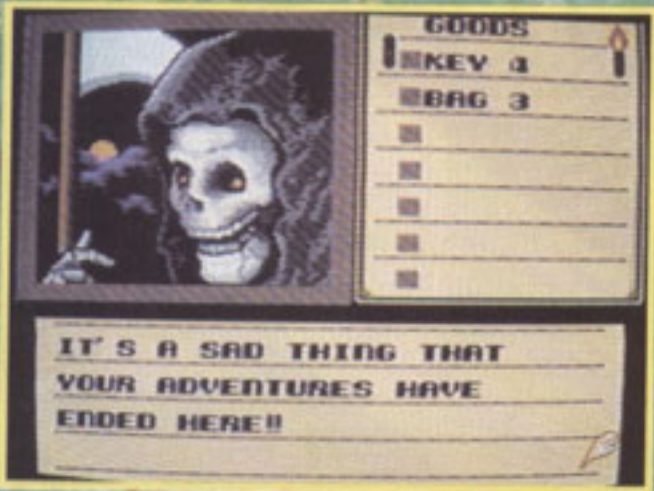
# SHADOWGATE

The evil Warlock Lord is up to no good again - and only you can stop him! Or at least that's the story the good Wizard Lakmir has told you. Lakmir used to be one of the most powerful wizards in the land, but one of their number spent many hours studying the Black Arts and one day found himself a magically superior, psychotic, deranged magic user. The forces of evil had claimed him for their own.

Lakmir's a tad on the worried side. The evil one has holed himself up in castle Shadowgate, working out some evil plan for universal domination. Mystical disturbances that only a wizard can understand lead Lakmir to believe that the Warlock Lord is attempting to raise the dreaded titan-like Behemoth (look that up in the dictionary) from the satanic abyss. As you can probably gather, such an evil combination would spell an end to the civilised world.

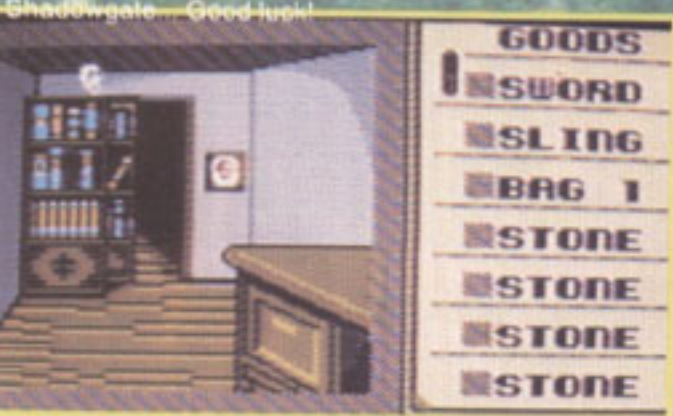
Wizard he may be but Lakmir is comparatively powerless against the likes of the Warlock Lord. This is where you come in, for legend tells of a brave knight descended from the kings who will seek out the Warlock Lord and put an end to his regime of terror. It's all up to you then, but Lakmir isn't asking you for your permission. One wave of his magic hands and you're standing in front of the gatehouse to castle Shadowgate... Good luck!

## SUDDEN DEATH PLAY-OFF



▲ Death lurks around every corner in this game. Will you freeze to death?

This window shows the graphical representation of your location. Clicking on specific exits and items gives you a description at the bottom of the screen.



## COMMENT



I don't mind RPGs or adventures if they're any good, but Shadowgate is just plain boring and very, very, very frustrating. It takes an age just to move the pointer anywhere! Also the interaction with the game is limited to the commands at the bottom of the screen, which makes some of the solutions to the puzzles rather obscure and a tad bizarre too, like opening a skull to find a key (????). Open doors?

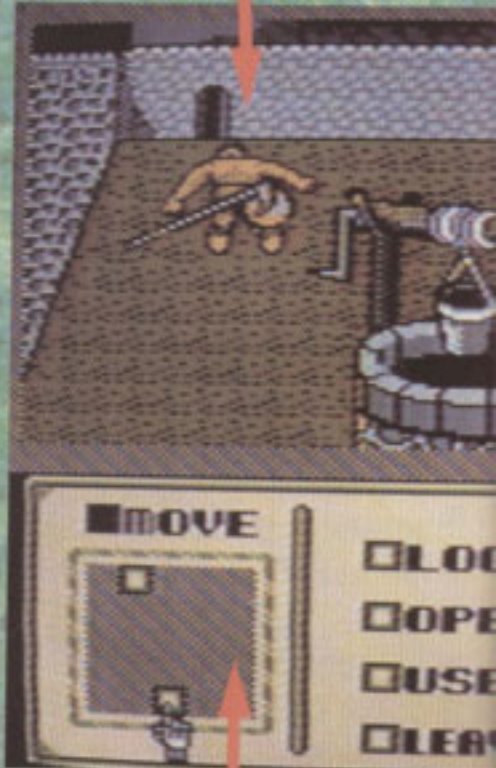
### RICH

Yes, I can see that. Opening a skull, I don't think so, somehow. The graphics and sound are pretty dull too - in fact some of the music is hopelessly out of tune! Also, the amount of times the player kicks the bucket in a sudden death situation makes frustration set in almost immediately. Deranged adventure buffs may get some satisfaction out of this product, but after a few minutes of play, and about seventeen different kinds of gross and hideous deaths I didn't want to touch the cart again.

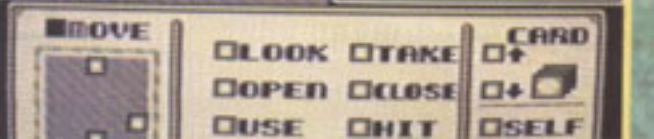
Shadowgate uses every trick in the book to send the player off to an early death! One of the dirtiest must be the look-out point on the balcony of castle Shadowgate. Look at it, touch it, or even breathe on it and the whole balcony drops off, sending the player to oblivion! There are also a staple diet of ghouls, trolls (and caged mutated animals in the lab) ready to send you off to Hades if you make just one false move! Frustrating, huh? In fact, every single room seems to be able to butcher you in some bizarre fashion, so for example, don't TAKE the book in the library if you mean to OPEN it, because you die!

## A TORCH IN THE HAND

As the game progresses, the player is endowed with mystical magical spells which come in handy when faced with some of the puzzles in the game. At one point, progress is halted by a very vicious troll-type. Worry not though, for one utterance of the HUMANA spell makes the player invisible, and the quest can continue proper!



This small window shows all of the exits in your present location. Simply click on MOVE and choose an exit! A description of the exit is also available





▲ Oh dear, looks like you've bought the farm (again!).



▲ Watch out for the gargoyles - they'll kill you in a minute!



**JULIAN**

Another very irritating factor is that during the game there's never any warning of impending death - you're just dumped out of the game in seconds if you make one wrong move. And since it's very easy to make a simple mistake and die, you have to keep saving the game every ten seconds, which gets very tedious. Even the biggest adventure fans will find this a frustrating bore.

Aaaaaaaaaggh! I hate this game. It's so-o-o-o frustrating I want to smash it up and then set all the pieces aight. "Playing" it involves struggling to solve puzzles that are made completely obscure by the hopelessly crap commands menu. Making progress even more annoying is the ultra-slow cursor, which moves like a slow-motion crippled slug in a sea of molasses.

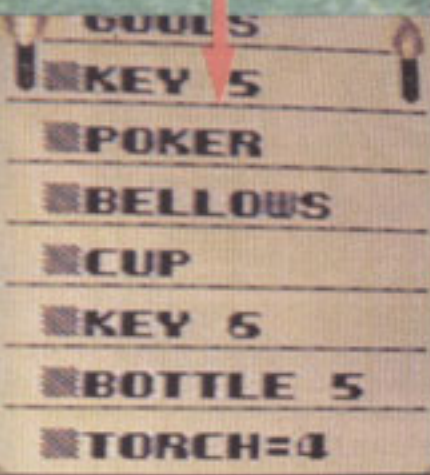
## THIS SPELLS TROUBLE



Using the torches is the key to staying alive once you're inside the walls of castle Shadowgate, because should your torch be snuffed out, "you suddenly trip over something! Smash! You fall face first on the floor!" and die! You don't even have the chance to ignite another one. Unfair? You bet!

The top two icons in this window enable you to cycle through the items window, looking through the masses of items you own. SELF enables you do things with yourself (like look at yourself), whilst SAVE enables you to save your game in one of three battery-backed positions!

The goods window shows which items you are carrying. Manipulating your items is achieved by using the command window in junction with this.



This command window is the main method of interacting with the game. Just click on a command and then an object (which can be either in the graphics or the items window) and you're away!



BY: KEMCO

PRICE: £34.95

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER  
GAME DIFFICULTY: DIFFICULT  
LIVES: 1  
CONTINUES: INFINITE  
SKILL LEVELS: 1  
RESPONSIVENESS: SLUGGISH



PRESENTATION 48%

*Pretty boring title sequence - and that's it.*

GRAPHICS 49%

*The relatively small graphics window is okay but the visuals don't stretch the graphical abilities of the machine one jot.*

SOUND 31%

*Some pretty grotesque, out-of-tune music that will have you reaching for the volume knob within nano-seconds.*

PLAYABILITY 29%

*Sluggish control method, highly illogical puzzle solutions and plenty of instant death situations make this incredibly frustrating.*

LASTABILITY 37%

*A big castle to explore and loads of puzzles to solve if you're willing to persevere, which is very doubtful considering the frustration level.*

OVERALL 26%

*A hideous attempt at producing an NES adventure that grossly offends rather than entertains.*