



SHADOW OF THE

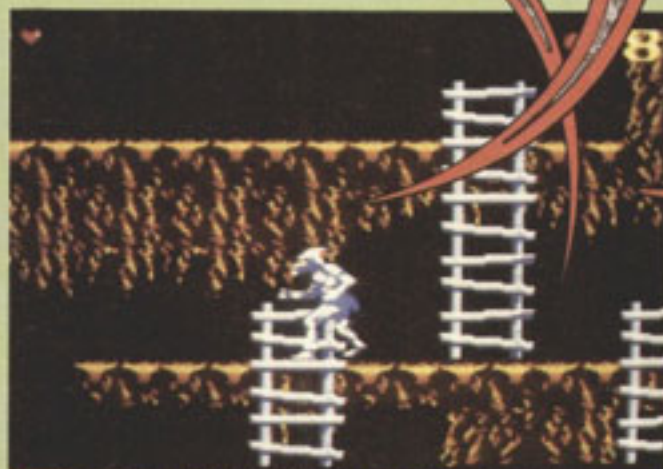


When you were a child, the mages of Maletoth and the Beast Lord kidnapped you and used their dark arts and perverted powers to warp your mind and body. You are now the Beast, a massively powerful, but yet rather grotesque creature whose aim in life involves carrying out the Beast Lord's evil bidding.

However, although your conscious mind may be drugged and altered, your dreams are still your own. One fateful day, you dream of your father's horrific death at the hands of the Beast Lord. Waking up, you realise the true sham that your life has become. Someone has to pay. Someone has to suffer. That someone is the Beast Lord.

The arcade action takes place over six stages of scrolling action (some levels only scroll horizontally whilst others offer four-way scrolling for higher exploration potential). Unfortunately, the Beast Lord's got wind of your revenge-related antics and has dispatched all 132 varieties of beasts under his power to search you out and have your monkey ass well and truly dusted.

But the path to the Beast Lord isn't just a case of cutting a swathe through the assembled masses. Each domain has its fair share of bizarre puzzles to solve in order to progress ever onwards to the final confrontation with the twisted Maletoth!

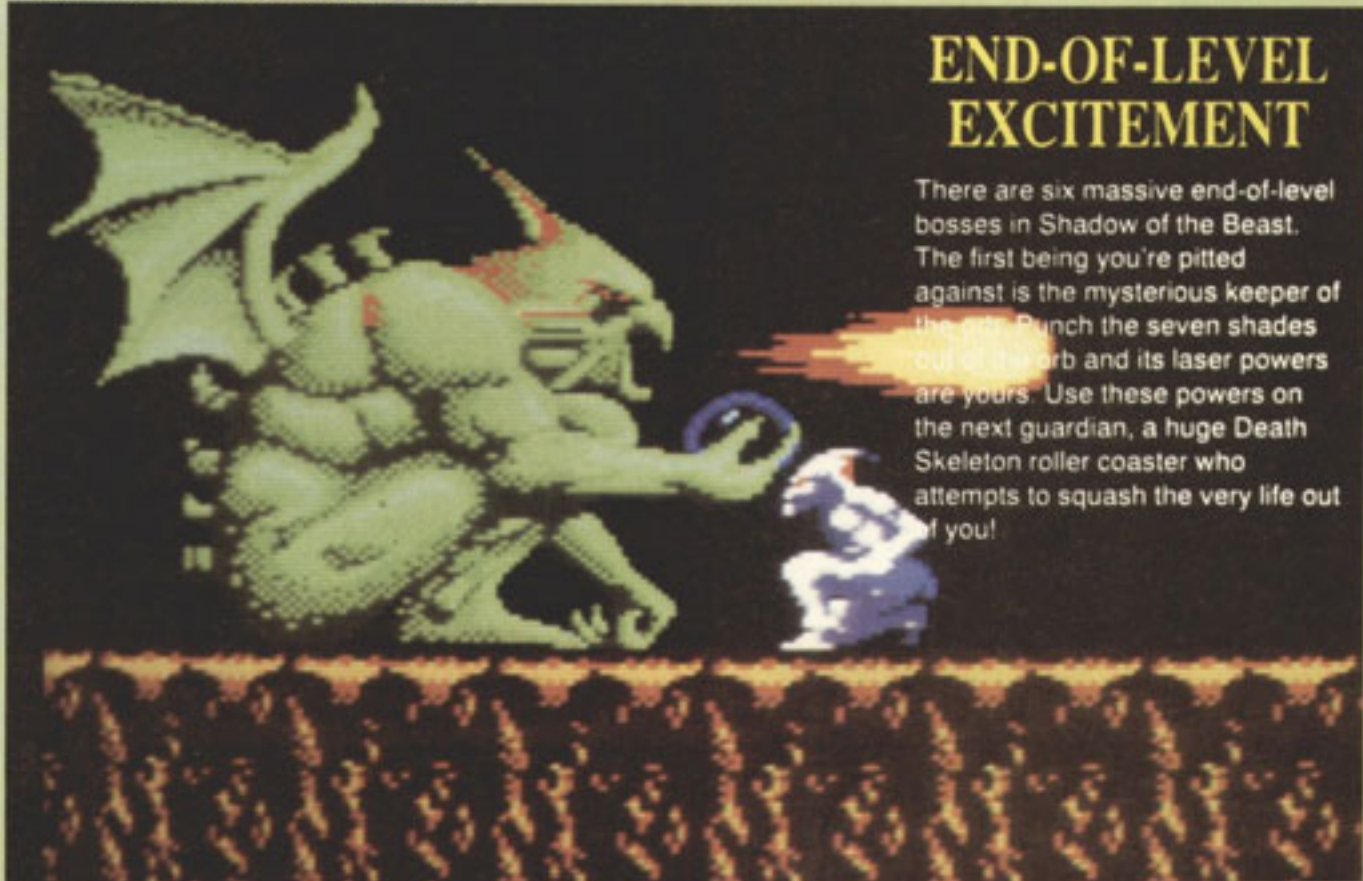


▲ Levels and ladders confront the Beast.



END-OF-LEVEL EXCITEMENT

There are six massive end-of-level bosses in Shadow of the Beast. The first being you're pitted against is the mysterious keeper of the orb. Punch the seven shades out of the orb and its laser powers are yours. Use these powers on the next guardian, a huge Death Skeleton roller coaster who attempts to squash the very life out of you!





OBJECTS AND EFFECTS

The biggest difference between this and the Amiga version is the inclusion of far more objects throughout the game. Look out for various keys (guess what they do), magical wands and rings - and a couple of very nasty items!



POTIONS R US

There are ten potions in the game, each identified by the colour of the liquid inside the flask. Some potions are beneficial (the red and green potions increase energy), others decrease power or even kill you! Look out for the orange and purple potions. They significantly boost your jumping abilities.



▲ *Beast versus Death Skeleton!*

COMMENT



With the benefit of some gameplay tweaks, *Shadow of the Beast* has translated surprisingly well to the Master System. It's not a fast-action game as I first thought; instead it's more of an exploration game with the onus more on puzzle-solving than beat 'em up arcade skills. The graphics are excellent, the sound is good and the gameplay is addictive, but

JULIAN

there are a couple of things really did annoy me. First, the nature of some of the traps is highly irritating; the potion that kills you and the book that sends you back to the start instantly spring to mind. There's no skill in avoiding them - you have to select them to learn what they do - and once you've done that you'll never touch them again. So what's the point of having them except to wind you up and make you annoyed? And secondly, the control method. Using up on the control pad makes life unnecessarily difficult, and it's easy to accidentally jump in the heat of the battle and lose a load of energy. It's a shame these points are present, because they take the edge off an otherwise highly enjoyable and entertaining game.



REVIEW

COMMENT



RICH

Shadow of the Beast is a real achievement for the 8-bit Sega Master System. Technically, Tecmagik have done it again with a graphical tour-de-force that should have you astounded. The first level, with its superlative parallax scrolling, is great, and the sprites are excellent. This quality remains high throughout the game and this makes the compulsion to see the next level even stronger. Tecmagik have even improved on the Amiga game by adding more objects to play around with. There are now all manner of potions to try out and plenty of strange items to handle. The game's very large too and all six levels should be really difficult to conquer. There are a couple of points I think could have made the game even better. For one, the control method takes quite a while to master. Pushing up on the pad instead of pressing a button to jump can cause some very frustrating deaths. Instead, the button accesses the object select window. I'm pretty sure that in the heat of the action, you'd rather the jump option was more immediately responsive than the object window. It's a shame Tecmagik didn't improve the limited Beast combat either. There are still only two attack moves - the punch and flying kick. Also, foes are still dispatched with just one hit. Some more intensive combat with a few more weapons and attack moves would have added greatly to the basic gameplay. These gripes apart, those who thought the Amiga Beast game was ace should check this superior version out.



LEVELS OF DOOM

There are six large levels to see in Shadow of the Beast. You start off in the Mountains and Forests level with all its 13 parallax layers of scrolling. Your first stop is the Underground Caverns - accessed by the use of a hollowed-out tree trunk. Conquer this and you end up in the magical well, which leads back up to the Mountains and Forests level. Later levels include the terror of the Beast Lord's Castle, the horror of the subterranean World and the eerie Graveyard...

MOUNTAINS AND FORESTS



SUBTERRANEAN WORLD



UNDERGROUND CAVERNS



BY: TECMAGIK

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: TBA

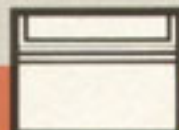
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

LIVES: 3

CONTINUES: NONE

SKILL LEVELS: 1

RESPONSIVENESS: OKAY



PRESENTATION 85%

Brilliantly presented, with an excellent intro sequence and a decent end-game effect.

GRAPHICS 81%

Very good indeed, with super-smooth scrolling, well defined backdrops and varied sprites.

SOUND 80%

The Amiga version's tunes are faithfully translated, although they may start to grate after a while.

PLAYABILITY 80%

The action is quite addictive, although the control method can be very annoying at times.

LASTABILITY 76%

Six big levels to explore and conquer, with many taxing puzzles to sort out before the game is finally complete.

OVERALL 80%

A few minor quibbles, but otherwise a respectable, if occasionally annoying arcade adventure.