





Manual

RENT A HERO

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Manual

WWW.RENT-A-HERO.COM

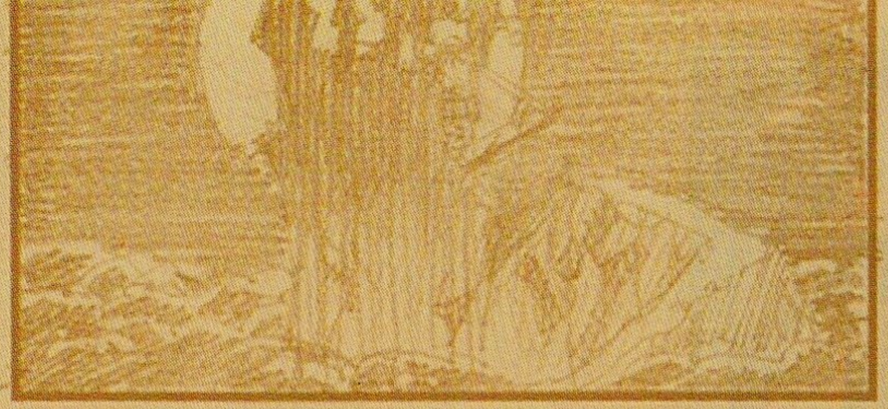
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THE STORY

A TIME FOR HEROES

THE STORY

RODRIGO, OUR HERO



RODRIGO, *avenger of the poor and protector of the helpless, returns from another successful mission"* – this headline is what our hero is hoping to read in a newspaper one fine day. Unfortunately, his daily life is somewhat different. He's trying to eke out a living by accepting mundane and boring jobs; the really great adventures that would bring him the glory and fame he longs for are unreachable for him.

RODRIGO, is a hero by profession. People rent heroes when faced with a problem they cannot solve themselves. Competition is strong, there are more than enough heroes for hire.

RODRIGO lives on Tol Andar, a Fantasy Island inhabited by many strange creatures. The inhabitants of this island have been utilising magical stones, so-called Gloomstones, for a very long time. These stones have different properties, they can shine, hover or become extremely hot. By making use of the stones' powers, the inhabitants have developed exceptional skills.

OUR HERO, Rodrigo, specialises in rescuing princesses – the lowest kind of job for heroes. He has only had second-rate jobs and is longing for the one big mission, which will not only improve his financial situation but also bring him fame.

RODRIGO is the kind of man with the potential to make a really great hero, given the chance. He's as sly as a fox and comes from a traditional family of heroes – his father, grandfather and even his great-grandfather were "Heroes for Hire". Hoewever, they all had one thing in common: they weren't very successful and even less famous. Rodrigo shows signs of keeping these old family traditions up but his parents died when he was very young so he always had to fend for himself - with a little help from his friends Louis and Sancho, and his dubious mentor Ranama.

RODRIGO'S DAYS (at least when he hasn't got a job to do, i.e. most of the time) are ruled by a certain repetitive pattern:

† He gets up when he wakes up (after all, being a hero IS a bit like being an artist).

† First trip to the office just to find out that he still doesn't have any jobs.

† Lunch at the nearby Inn, mostly with his friend Louis, to philosophise, rant and rave.

† The afternoons are spent on the maintenance of his Glider. Rodrigo makes a point of being near his office at all times, just in case a client needs his services.



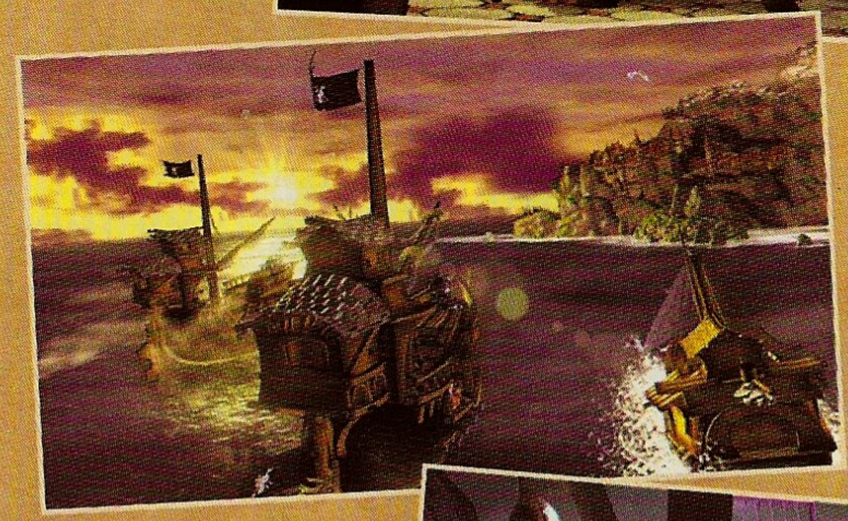
† He usually spends the evenings with friends in Sancho's Pub.

† Long after midnight, our hero returns home to put down his weary head after an exhausting day.

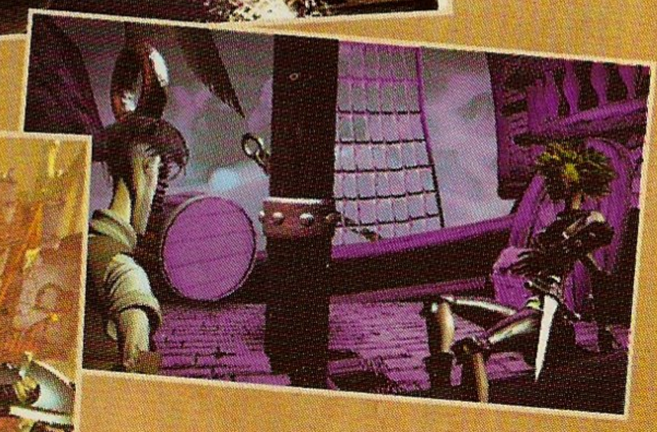
Waiting alone will not bring fame and fortune. It takes great deeds to enter the hall of fame. At the moment, the future doesn't look too bright for Rodrigo, so he's quite happy about increasing attacks by the otherwise fairly harmless pirates...



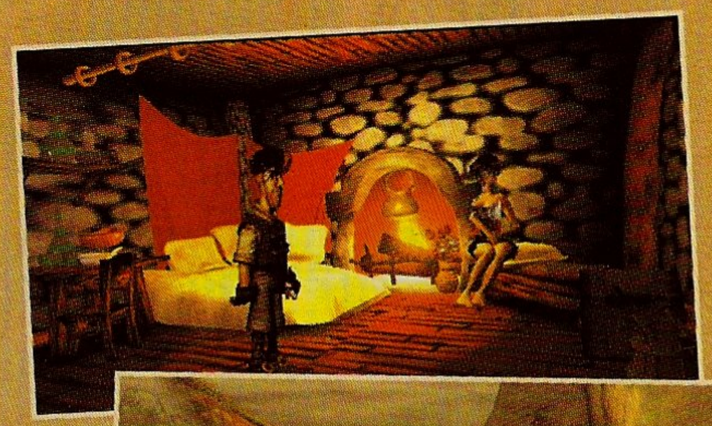








HARDWARE









HOTLINE:

Do you have any questions or problems or need some help? Visit our Internet Hotline:

HTTP://WWW.NEO.AT

Here you'll find information as on Rent-A-Hero, Tips & Tricks and Patches and Updates to download.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Rent-A-Hero can be run on any 100% Windows 95/98 compatible PC with a P133 Processor (or higher), Windows 95/98, a minimum of 16MB RAM, 2MB video card, 6x CD-ROM drive and DirectX 6.0-compatible hardware.

RECOMMENDED HARDWARE

Pentium II 300, 64MB RAM, 8x SCSI CD-ROM drive, 4MB video card.



INSTALLATION

Insert CD # 1 into your CD-ROM drive. If Plug & Play is activated, the installation programme will start automatically. Otherwise, click on the Icon My Computer and then on your CD-ROM drive. If the installation process still fails to start, click on the "Rent-A-Hero" Icon (Rent-A-Hero.exe). Follow the on-screen instructions.

START GAME

Rent-A-Hero is an adventure game. You control Rodrigo and help him to succeed in a number of adventures.

Follow the story closely and pay attention to everything you see and hear. Just give anything a try, you can't make mistakes. Also, you cannot end up in a "Dead Lock".

Don't worry about dangers, Rodrigo cannot die in this game.

Game Controls



Game Controls

To move Rodrigo, click on the point you want him to go to with the cursor (mouse arrow). If possible, Rodrigo will then move there.

If you move the cursor over an area that will cause Rodrigo to leave a scenario, the mouse cursor changes into a directiotional arrow.

If you move the cursor over an area that will cause Rodrigo to Look at or Use an object or a person, it changes into a cross.

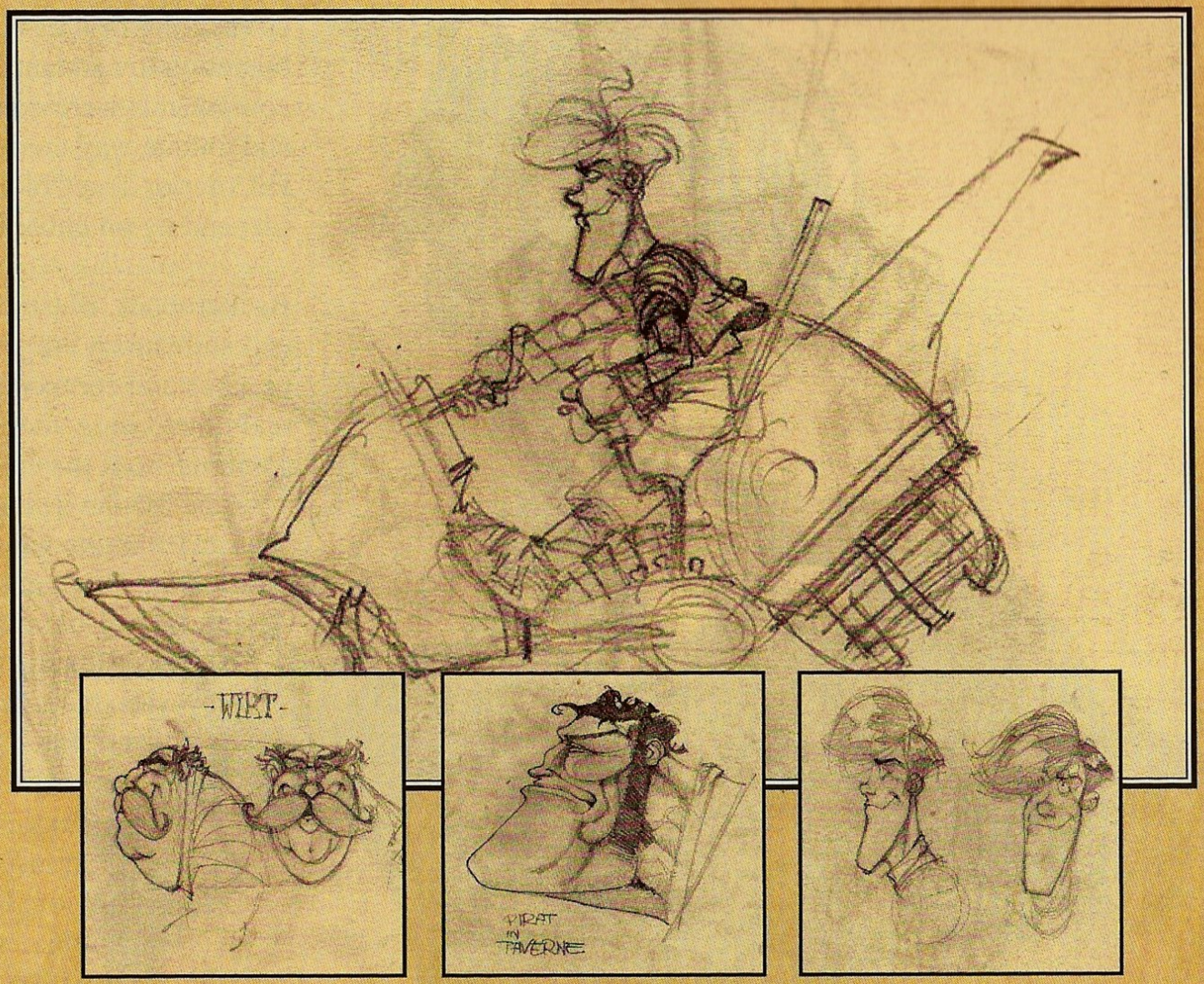
At the bottom of the screen you see all the items Rodrigo has collected in the course of the game. To Take or Use an item, just click on it with the left mouse button (LMB). Rodrigo will automatically act accordingly.
Example: If you find a shovel on the floor and click on it, it will be included in the Inventory. Click on the shovel again and Rodrigo uses it, provided the situation allows it (e.g. Rodrigo can dig a hole).

THE GAME

THE GAME

In 113 scenes on 37 different sets, Rent-A-Hero offers a previously unsurpassed level of game depth in movie quality. Apart from many non-interactive characters, you'll meet 37 interesting creatures in the world of Tol Andar and its neighbour islands.

The innovative character animation technique provides new dramatic nuances. The facial expressions and posture or body language of game characters' communicate more content than is possible in games that use spoken or written language only.





How Rent-A-Hero was made

The Rent A Hero Game Engine is based on a combination of 2D and 3D techniques. The technical term used by experts is 2.5D. To offer the player the highest possible visual quality as well as ensuring fast, easy and user-friendly operation the advantages of both components were combined in a new and unique way enabling 640x480 HiColor or TrueColor Modes (depending on chosen setting).

Backgrounds, illustration elements and animations are pre-calculated as pictures and composed/combined in real time. Using additional information resulting from the calculation process, a virtual 3D-environment is created. Thus, each scene gains an additional dimension, which not only provides a visual effect but also facilitates the control of the characters. The player can "enter" the visible space.

Another feature of the Game Engine is the use of Transparency Information. Every picture element is saved along with a transparency mask. This technique is commonly known as "Alpha Blending" it allows the depiction of semi-transparent elements like glass, smoke, rain, fire, etc., but at the same time it also ensures that the edges of picture elements look smooth (Antialiasing). This way, the visual appearance of the entire scene is greatly enhanced and comes across as a unified whole. Special lighting effects create additional ambience. Depending on the positioning of objects, lighting in different colours and shadowing in different tones can be used to emphasise them.

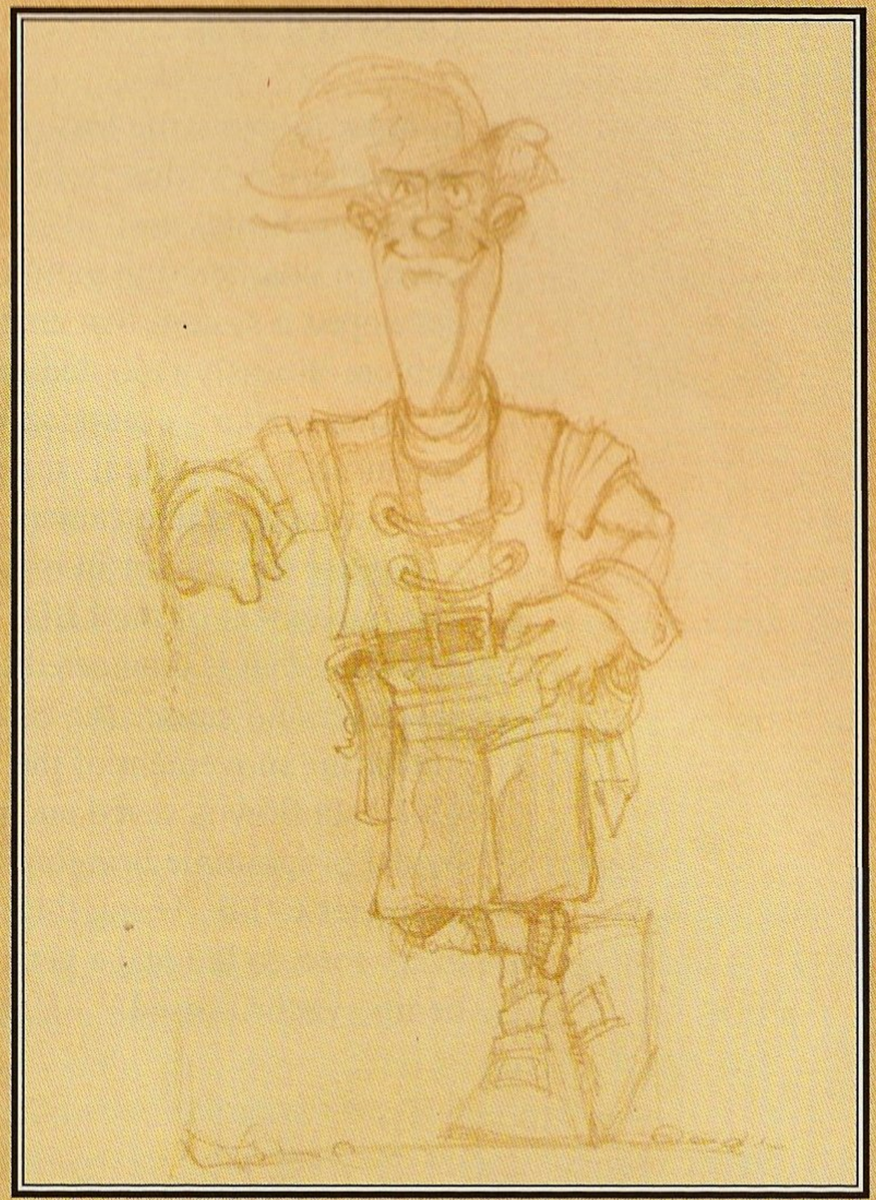
A great deal of care went into the creation of sound effects and music. SFX and spoken language are allocated their special position in 3D space to create spatial perception.

The player interface is based on a very simple "Point And Click" method. All actions can be triggered by using the left or right mouse button, so even beginners should find the game user-friendly and simple to control.

As a result of colour and gamma corrections of scenario objects, camera panning isn't interrupted, as the actual movements are very subtle.
This technique demands a high level of post-production work on each scene but it also creates the atmosphere of "interactive film" and avoids long interim non-interactive film sequences.

Graphics

The graphics were created on Silicon Graphics Workstations using the software products "Alias Power Animator" and "Maya". Special emphasis was put on the expressive modelling of the characters. A special technique was developed for the faces. Imagine a face as a landscape of hills and valleys.
The graphic artist starts by creating a basic skull model, which is then covered with a type of "hills-and-valley map". To change the facial expression, i.e. to activate facial and mouth movements, a morphing programme is used. For the animation of body, a skeleton is built, which is then animated like a puppet on a string. To achieve realistic movement, movements are filmed with a video camera and then used as a pattern. Then, a pre-built model is combined with the skeleton and calculated as a picture sequence. Specially designed conversion programmes implement picture and 3D information into the game.





Lip Synchronisation

In order to avoid the loss of atmosphere resulting from the lack of lip synchronisation in close-ups often en-countered in games, we have developed a system that enables us to dub pre-vio-usly recorded sentences. A "news reader", equipped with an ingenious LED system, sits in front of a computer and a camera is used to digitise him or her in real time. The movement of the LEDs creates a data flow that is connected to the game character and causes the character to mirror the movement of the speaker. This data flow is saved and processed by the programme bringing the character to life. Using this system, every foreign language version can be lip-synchro-nised.

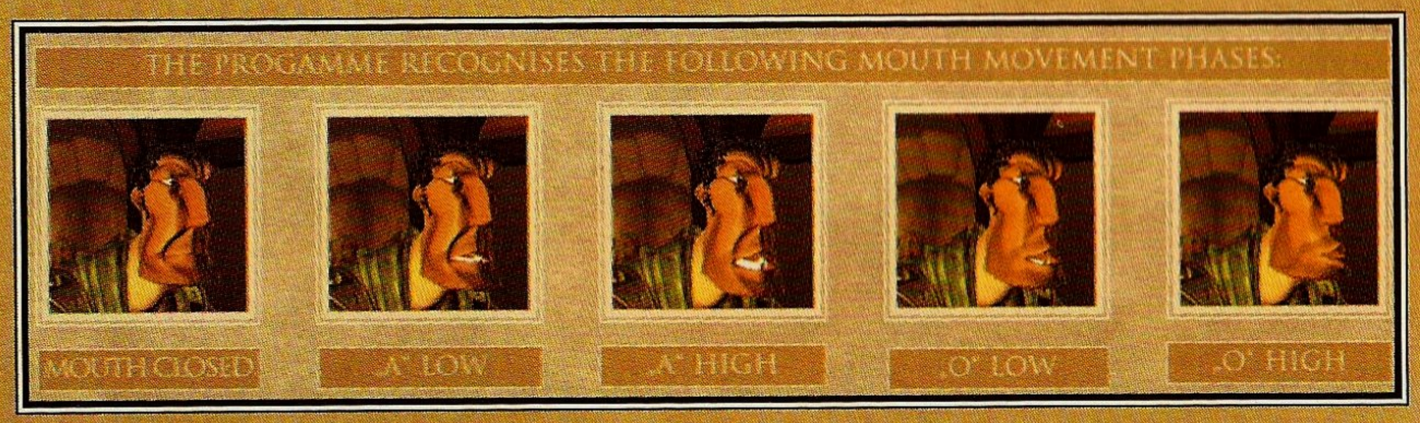
Sound Effects and Music

In order to create a real movie atmosphere, music and sound effects have to reach the same standard as the animations, the technology used to create the game and the contents. The music, very reminiscent of a movie soundtrack, was composed in such a way to enable individual tracks to be combined and superimposed to match the feel and flow of the action. Background music really remains in the "background" and highly exciting scenes are accompanied by matching music. It was a long, painstakingly intense conceptual process aided by Werner Hink, Leader of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.

The sound design takes all possible problems into consideration, e.g. if a player stays in one scenario for an hour, volume and frequency of track repetition are automatically decreased.

Even the co-ordination of tracks was based on basic rules of cinematography; the game music is slightly muted in the area between 1500 and 2500 Hertz, as these frequencies determine the ability to understand the human voice. Likewise, the frequencies of sound effects are altered to match the music levels to complete the overall impression.

Rent-A-Hero supports Stereo and 3D Soundcards.



DirectX Installation

In order to play "Rent A Hero", a version of DirectX 6.0 must be installed on your computer. During the installation of "Rent A Hero" you'll be prompted to install DirectX 6.0 if you haven't done it yet. Microsoft DirectX is an application, which enables other applications to access your system hardware. NOTE: Once DirectX has been installed, it cannot simply be deinstalled.

DirectX 6.0 Installation

During the installation of DirectX 6.0, you might be prompted to insert your Windows 95 CD-ROM. This happens if not all files necessary for running DirectX were installed during the installation process of your Windows 95 Operating system. The files necessary for running DirectX are located in the D:\Win95 directory (if D: is your CD-ROM drive). CD-ROM drive letters may vary depending on systems, so make sure you use the correct letter. Note: If the Windows 95/Windows 98 CAB files are saved on your hard disk, please state the correct path name to start the installation process.

Make a Note of your Original System Configuration

Note: We recommend that you write down your sound and graphics hardware before installing DirectX. Follow the instructions below:

- Right-Click on the My Computer Icon.
- Click on Properties.
- Now click on Device Manager.
- Check the information stated under Display Adapters, Sound, Video and Game Controllers and write down your hardware settings just in case you have to reset changes manually.

Changing System Components

If you change your system's graphics or sound card make sure DirectX is installed again so the appropriate drivers will be added. Follow the instructions below:

- Click on Install DirectX 6.0 in your RAH-Start Menu.
- Click on OK when the Installer prompts you to restart your system.

Note: Some programmes geared towards earlier versions of DirectX might not function correctly with this new version!

DirectX Drivers

We recommend the use of the included DirectX 6.0 driver, unless a more recent version is available or you encounter hardware-connected problems after installation. This rule is always valid unless explicitly stated in the documentation of your hardware. This may be the case for graphic cards.

DirectX Effects on Graphic Drivers

After the installation of DirectX some graphics applications might have been deactivated, e.g. Diamond Multimedia InControl Applications, STB Vision95, or Creative Labs Graphics Control Applications. You will not be able to access them via the task bar and the graphics settings will have been reset to Windows 95/Windows 98 default options. Furthermore, DirectX might suggest you keep your graphics card drivers and the appropriate applications as they are connected to your screen settings and changes might have adverse effects on your system.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT



THQ INTERNATIONAL – HELPLINE/TECH SUPPORT CONTACT NUMBER

If you need to contact the THQ Technical Support Department, please telephone **07071 223 388** (Monday to Friday 9.00am to 6.00pm.)

Before calling the Technical/Customer Support line please ensure that you have the following information prepared:
1. A detailed description of the problem
2. Details of your machine´s configuration including the Processor, Memory, Sound Card and Video Card.

Alternatively, Technical/Customer Support email enquiries can be answered via the Internet:
eurtechsupport@thq.com
eurtechsupport@thq.com

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Head of Development
Christoph Soukup

Programming
Edgar Hofer
Peter Melchart

Art Director
Michael Sormann

Digital Artist
Ulrich Radhuber

Digital Art Assistants
Oliver Thiele
David Weinmann
Christoph Soukup
Hannes Seifert
Edgar Hofer

Music
Hannes Seifert
With additional support from
Werner Hink, Leader of the Vienna
Philharmonic Orchestra

Sound FX
Hannes Seifert
Peter Melchart

Screenplay
Hannes Seifert

Based on a story by
Hannes Seifert
Kaweh Kazemi

Instructions
Niki Laber

Production PrePrint
Josch

Design (Printed Materials)
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Thaddäus Zech

Vocals „In A Land"
Nana Walzer

Vocals „Love Is Breaking The Night"
Annalene Rahbari

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Notes

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