

The Worm in Paradise

The Worm in Paradise is Level 9's ninth adventure and concludes the Silicon Dreams Trilogy. It takes place on the planet Eden, 100 years after the time of Snowball and Return to Eden (though you don't need to have played either of these first).

You are a citizen of Enoch megapolis of Eden. Unfortunately, when the game starts, you can remember nothing more. It is most odd. Good Luck!

INSTRUCTIONS

When the game pauses in the middle of printing text, read what is on the screen and press SHIFT to continue. The Worm in Paradise uses Level 9's new adventure system and understands commands like:

EAST STAND UP
TAKE HELMET OPEN THE DOOR
WEAR IT PUSH RED BUTTON
DROP THE CARD EAT PIE
EXAMINE ALL BUT THE HELMET, DUMMY AND LEOTARD AND GO EAST.
TAKE PLUG AND PLUG HOLE.
STAND UP, SOUTH, E THEN EXAMINE TREE AND CLIMB IT.

The program copes with a wider range of English sentences than any other game we've seen. Instructions can be quite complex (see above) but, of course, you can still use one or two-word commands if you prefer.

The Worm in Paradise has a vocabulary of over one thousand words, many of which can be sensibly abbreviated (e.g. NORTH to N and NORTHEAST to NE). Here are some of the more useful ones:

TAKE, GET, WEAR, DROP, the 8 main compass directions, IN, OUT, UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, CLIMB, LOOK, LISTEN, LOOK AT, EXAMINE, FILL, INSERT, OPEN, CLOSE, LIGHT, SCORE, QUIT, TAKE, DROP, EVERYTHING or IT (used with many verbs), SAVE and RESTORE, AGAIN (repeat previous command), INVENTORY (list what is carried), and WORDS and PICTURES (turn pictures off/on in a graphics version).

Ordinary adventures use more words in descriptions than you can use in commands. For example, you might be "standing in a bed of bright flowers beside a stone wall" and try to examine the flowers. A typical response might be along the lines of "I don't understand". The Worm in Paradise does rather better, as you'll discover.

However, it still pays to keep commands simple and experiment to find the best words to use. Good adventuring!

SCORING

No one needs treasure in paradise, so you don't score points for collecting things as in many games. Indeed, hoarding is actually illegal.

Points are scored for finding out about the city of Enoch and for progress within it. And, should you get the chance to save the world, I suggest you make the attempt.

You lose points for being recycled.

EDEN

Eden is the only Earth-like planet of Eridani E (not Eridani A as wrongly stated in Snowball and Return to Eden). It is a most unusual world: habitable without terraforming and covered by strange, aggressive plants.

Human colonists arrived a hundred years ago and Eden now supports half a billion people. Most of them natives and some of them men. The population is distributed between a handful of domed cities, of which Enoch is the first and smallest.

There is no contact between humans and the native fauna, so rumours of aliens are rife. It is said that flying saucers are regularly seen and that intelligent moles live in deep tunnels. But no proof has ever been produced.

This game takes place during the reign of the third Kim, when Eden is run as a benevolent bureaucracy.

It is truly a paradise for the silent majority, with peace in our time, no crime, full employment (with a fifteen-hour week), good housing, more entertainment than anyone could watch etc. etc.

Of course, there's no way that anyone can challenge the system. But then, what right-thinking person would want to?

POLITICS

Governments can theoretically run at a profit, extorting no taxes from their citizens but getting income from such sources as fines for criminal offences and printing money (arguably a positive benefit in an expanding economy). This also involves tight controls on services and routine supervision of the citizens to catch trouble-makers.

The Government of Enoch is run without taxes. Note that the system is underpinned by millions of robot servants who not only work hard, but are immune from corruption.

ENOCH HEALTH SERVICE

Enoch hospitals make a profit, partly from the resale of body parts to ageing recipients and partly by charging for in-patient care. They also cut costs by:

- * Medicating the drinking water.
- * Making medical advice freely available via computer.
- * Minimising the time patients spend in hospital.
- * Rewards for being vaccinated and for reporting infectious people as a threat to public health. Disease spreaders would be fined.
- * Restricting mentally abnormal people while enabling them to do useful work if possible (they are the groups who do worst in Eden, as in many societies).

The result is the greatest good for the greatest number at the lowest price, but tough luck for the minority with expensive illnesses.

ENOCH POLICE

The Enoch Police Force also makes a profit. This entails:

- * Fines rather than imprisonment.
- * Rewards for informants. (How many expired tax disks would you see if the police paid a £10 reward for each one reported?)
- * Prosecution of wealthy people for a change. They can afford fines.
- * Summary justice where possible to cut court costs. The accused is assumed guilty but can opt for trial at the risk of greater penalty.
- * Extensive supervision, to detect crime efficiently.
- * Concealing crime, which increases police costs, is heavily penalised.
- * Replacement of remaining taxes by fines. (In 20th Century Britain, alcohol is taxed, while some narcotics attract a fine. Everything is fined on Eden.)

People are potentially immortal on Eden, provided they can replace body organs as these fail. Penniless criminals can easily raise the money to pay fines by cashing in their other assets...

WORK

Robots run the Eridani system, doing all the important work and most of the menial jobs. Whether humans are leisured aristocrats, or pets of the robots is difficult to tell.

Humans are obliged by law to do some work and this involves:

- * extensive "training" schemes;
- * many pen-pushing jobs;
- * fraternities control access to the few good jobs;
- * status is the main concern, not money.

MEANWHILE, IN SPACE

The space robots have finished stripping the Eridani E star system, mining every asteroid and hollowing every moon.

The probes sent out from Eden form an ever-expanding sphere, three hundred light years across. They have already found a dozen habitable planets and colonisation has started.

But the people of Eden have no part to play. Originally intended as a source for future colonists, their role is redundant. Machines have learnt how to build people on site (or, strictly speaking, to grow them from ova). Spanners maketh Man.

AFTERWORD

Machines evolved just as surely as any animal. They may not be able to reproduce unaided (nor can many forms of life) but they increase steadily in number and sophistication.

In perhaps ten thousand years, machines have evolved from flints and wooden sticks to videos and Golf Gti's. And evolution continues.

The Silicon Dream Trilogy postulates autonomous robots, each equipped with simple tools and a million blueprints. A robot would travel through space and select any convenient asteroid. There it would land and build with local materials, just like a human castaway.

But where Crusoe built a house, the robot would construct a small factory for tools and mining machinery. Then better tools, simple robots, better factories, better robots and eventually a production line for robots like the one that started it all. Lots of them.

Imagine trillions of robots, coasting through the Galaxy to colonise every solar system. This is the situation at the time of The Worm in Paradise.

Now let millenia go past. The galaxy could be colonised by inconceivably advanced robots. It seems almost inevitable.

Our galaxy is very big and billionia old. Our sun is a fairly ordinary star. Probably there are other intelligent beings out there, some more advanced than us. I wonder where, or who, their robot colonists are?

IMPLEMENTATION

The Worm in Paradise is the first game designed and coded at Level 9 West, somewhere in the Mendip Hills which rise from the Somerset Levels.

We have spent 12 month enhancing our adventure system with world-beating features for the coming years and the Worm in Paradise is the first game to use the new system.

Standard features include a 1000+ word vocabulary, the most advanced English ever understood by a cassette-based game, better than 50% text compression, type-ahead on all micros and multi-tasking so players need never wait while a picture draws.

Fortunately you can ignore all this and just play.

CREDITS

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