

INSTRUCTION SHEET



The Story

The villagers were quite proud of their ossuary. Centuries of custom and practice dictated that at the end of their lives, the people of this village, like all the other villages and towns in the land, would inter their dead in grand, underground vaults built for the purpose. At special times, like birthdays and holidays, the living would descend into the ossuary to visit and make offerings to their ancestors.

But things have been a bit different recently. Every age has its social ills, and today was no different. Though magic had often been used in medicine, religion and war, a new breed of sorcerers made it less welcome. A craze for necromancy took hold in the towns, and many young sorcerers developed an addiction for communicating with, and even raising, the dead. Senior

practitioners of the magic arts needed a good reason to disturb the sleep of the dead, but their younger colleagues were often caught doing it for the sheer fun of it.

This had to stop, and in a short time the more irresponsible students of magic were banished from the towns and the colleges in disgrace. Did this stop them? Of course not. Off they went into the country to find other places to practice their dark arts, and what better place to raise the dead than in the vast burial chambers built across the land?

And so, periodically, along with the wolves, the goblins and the occasional dragon, villagers now have necromancers to put up with too. While the necromancers are happy to confine their activities to the underground chambers, making pets out of wild creatures and friends out of the dead, the intrusion of spirits and animated corpses adds nothing to the dignity of the funerals and other ceremonies the villagers are still trying to hold in their grand, centuries-old cemeteries. They want it stopped. The villagers want their **Ossuary** back.

The Game

Ossuary is an adventure game for the Sinclair ZX Spectrum. You play the hero who has agreed to rid the ossuary of its unwanted visitor, the necromancer. You must fight your way through the twenty-four levels of enchanted creatures, animated bodies and summoned spirits with which the necromancer has filled his adopted domain. And on reaching the final level, you must defeat the necromancer himself. Your prize is all the gold you can carry. And being an adventurer, you can carry a lot.

Every game is different. The layout of the dungeon is generated each time you play. While things get more difficult the further down you go, the manner in which this happens varies from one game to another. In some games you encounter spirits early on, while in other games it may take longer, but

the very animals themselves become more vicious. Sometimes you will encounter a great variety of creatures on a single level, while at other times the enemies seem to come in waves, one kind succeeding another.

Your character will also be different each time you play. Attack strength, defensive skill and intelligence are all randomly set at the beginning of the game, though every hero whose role you take on will be of a similar overall ability. In some games you might have a strong character suited to physical attacks; in others a physically weaker character might be better suited to magic; in some games the abilities are finely balanced and you need to see how your character develops in order to decide how best to deal with the various enemies.

In the manner of dungeon hack games everywhere, there are objects to be found on the way which will help you in your quest. Some things sustain your health, there are weapons and shields to be found, magic wands and amulets may come in useful if you have the ability to use them, and there are incantation scrolls to keep evil spirits at bay. But with all this, your chances are still slim: all these things were left by previous, failed adventurers, who now add to the numbers of the wandering dead.

Running the Game

Ossuary will run on any ZX Spectrum, including the 16K model. It runs on 128K models up to and including the 128K +3, though games may be saved to cassette only.

The game is incompatible with some peripherals that reserve areas of your Spectrum's memory for themselves. You will need to unplug these before playing **Ossuary**. If you have an Interface 1, you will need to reset your machine before loading the game.

Finally, the game can be played with the keyboard or with a Kempston compatible joystick.

To load the game from cassette, type the command

LOAD ""

(by pressing J, then SYMBOL-SHIFT P twice), and press ENTER, and then press PLAY on your cassette deck. On a 128K machine with a start-up menu you can select "Loader" instead. **Ossuary** takes just over a minute and a half to load.

Once the game is loaded, you are asked to press K to use the keys, or J to use a Kempston compatible joystick. If you opt to use the keys, they are:

A - FIRE
S - UP
X - DOWN
N - LEFT
M - RIGHT

How to Play

The interface for **Ossuary** is very simple to pick up. You see the dungeon from the top down, in the form of a level plan. The four directional keys move your hero around the map. You only see part of the current dungeon level at a time; the view is kept centred on your hero as you move around. You might notice that enemies move only when you do. **Ossuary** is a turn-based game, in which careful thought is more important than fast reactions.

To attack creatures, simply move so as to push into them. There is no specific "attack" command, nor is there ranged combat in the game. This much exploration and attacking can be done with the direction keys only, but the FIRE button gives access to more of the game's features. To start playing the game properly, let's look at the screen in a bit more detail.



The screen is split into four parts. The least important part is the bottom: this is purely there for decoration. The part you will be looking at most is in the middle: this is the map view on which you move around. The red bar underneath the map is the message bar. It is used to show brief messages, and to show the menu.

To the left are your hero's statistics. These are his strengths, and the additions to his natural abilities which are affected by the things he is currently holding. At the bottom of this panel is the amount of gold collected, which functions as a score in the game.

On the right is the inventory, the items your hero has collected and holds in his hands or in his bag. You'll need to understand this and the statistics panel to play the game effectively, but first let's look at the menu.

Using the Menu

The FIRE control activates the menu. Don't just tap it, hold it down. The current option will appear on the menu bar, and releasing FIRE will select it. Pressing LEFT and RIGHT while holding FIRE will allow you to select the other options that are available to you. The game will normally try to select the most appropriate option when you first press FIRE, so for instance, when standing at an item you can pick up, PICK UP ITEM is the default option. This means that much of the time you can take the most appropriate action at any given time just by

pressing and releasing FIRE. The menu options are:

WAIT A MOMENT...
VIEW INVENTORY
PICK UP ITEM
DESCEND STAIRS
SAVE THIS GAME
LOAD IN GAME
START NEW GAME
CANCEL MENU

If no appropriate action suggests itself, the default option will be VIEW INVENTORY.

From this you can see how to pick up items, and to descend the stairs to the next level. You can, by the way, go downstairs leaving monsters and objects behind, but trying to rush headlong down to the last level without fighting or collecting anything is a recipe for failure.

The WAIT A MOMENT... option makes the hero stand still while allowing the other creatures to move; useful if you want to wait for an enemy to come to you or move out of the way. CANCEL MENU lets you release the FIRE control without any side effect, in case you pressed it by mistake.

The SAVE, LOAD and START options act in a similar manner: when prompted to press FIRE, pressing a movement control will cancel.

The only option left to discuss is the VIEW INVENTORY option.

Your Inventory

The panel on the right of the screen shows the items you are currently carrying with you. The top two items are separate; these are the things you are holding in your hands, or *wielding* as the game puts it. The other items are in your bag, not currently being used but available for you at any time you need them. Usually you would wield a weapon and some armour or a protective amulet.

When you select the option VIEW INVENTORY from the main



menu, a purple cursor appears in this panel. The action in the game is suspended, and your movement controls instead move the cursor around your inventory. The message bar identifies the currently selected item. Pressing FIRE when viewing the inventory brings up another menu:

CLOSE INVENTORY
WIELD ITEM
PUT ITEM AWAY
CONSUME ITEM
DISCARD ITEM

The CLOSE INVENTORY option returns you to the game without any other effect, allowing you to move around again. All the other options, when used successfully, cause time to pass as with the WAIT A MOMENT... option on the main menu.

WIELD ITEM will put the currently selected item into your hand. The cursor needs to be on an item in your bag, and one hand needs to be empty. *Ossuary* doesn't care whether your hero is left- or right-handed, so it doesn't matter which hand your weapon is in.

PUT ITEM AWAY will return a wielded item to your bag, and is only useful when selecting an item in your hand.

CONSUME ITEM, useful only for apples and potions, causes you to eat or drink the currently selected item. You can do this directly from the bag; you do not need to be wielding the item.

DISCARD ITEM drops the currently selected item on the ground. This cannot be done where there is already an item on the ground where the hero stands, and you cannot drop items down the stairs!

Understanding Your Hero

Your hero is described by the statistics panel on the left of the screen. The four statistics are *Attack* *Strength*,



identified by the blue fist, *Defence Skill* shown by the yellow blocking hand, *Intelligence* shown by the green quill, and *Health* shown by the red heart.

The first three statistics are generated randomly at the start of the game. Under each is a *modifier*, preceded by a + sign. This shows how much that statistic has been augmented by objects the hero is wielding. Weapons modify the attack strength, shields modify defence skill, and magical items modify intelligence.

The fourth statistic, health, is calculated by adding together the other three. This calculates a maximum; health is depleted by enemy attacks, but can be restored to this maximum. The current health level is above the bar, the maximum is below.

Items and their Effects

The following items are available at various points in the game:



Gold. The purse of gold contains 20 gold pieces. The casket of gold contains 50 gold pieces. These are added straight to your gold total when you pick them up; they don't take up any

space in your inventory and have no other use apart from score.



A nice apple. These refreshing snacks restore four hit points to your health when you eat them. They will not increase your health beyond its maximum limit. They are more common than potions.



A magic potion. Potions restore your health to its maximum. If you have only slight injuries, it is better to eat an apple than to waste a

potion which could be used to restore a greater amount of health.

Weapons. These add to your attack strength when you wield them. The *dagger* adds +2 points, the *broadsword* adds +4, and



the *battle axe* adds +6. It is possible to wield two weapons for added effect, like the sword and the axe for +10, but it is only advisable if you have a high natural defence skill.



Shields. When wielded, a shield will add to your hero's natural defence skill. The *wooden shield* adds +2, and the *iron shield* adds +4. It is possible to wield them both, but is not recommended as your hero is more effective when carrying a weapon.



A magic wand. This has two effects when wielded. Firstly, a +2 modifier is added to intelligence. Secondly, all attacks are magical, and use the modified intelligence rather than physical attack strength.



A magic amulet. This needs to be wielded to be useful. Wielding it has two effects. Firstly, a +2 modifier is added to intelligence.

Secondly, all defence is magical, and uses the modified intelligence rather than physical defence skill. The amulet is often combined with the wand to give a +4 intelligence modifier, as this combined modifier affects both attack and defence.



A banish spell. When wielded in place of a weapon, this spell can banish a spectre or daemon. Chances of success are a little under 50%. There is a small chance that the spell will crumble to dust on failure, so it is advisable to carry a few spells. As spectres and daemons are immune to physical attacks, the banish spell is the most effective way to deal with them for heroes without good magical abilities.

The Enemies



Bats. These giant bats have little attack power but their agility gives them good defence skill. They are also the only non-humanoid enemies that can pick up and carry objects. Still, they are

the easiest creatures in the game to beat.



Other creatures. Other enemies from the animal kingdom become progressively more difficult to beat: the *vermin* are giant rats, *arachnids* are giant spiders with a nasty bite, and *serpents* have a scaly hide which gives them great defensive ability. These creatures cannot carry items, but are often found guarding them.



Corpses. There are two kinds: *cadavers*, whose decomposing forms are still dangerous foes, and *skeletons* whose bleached bones are all that remains of these centuries-old warriors. Both of these enemies can carry items with them.



Spirits. These are also of two kinds: *spectres* and *daemons*. Neither can be hurt with physical weapons, though shields might be useful against their attacks. Spectres are often found guarding valuable items, while daemons are able to pick things up and carry them.



The Necromancer. This is the ultimate enemy, as strong as any daemon, he sits in his lair awaiting your arrival. Only the strongest hero will make it to face him, let alone defeat him.

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