

then you may want to pass on this game. There's a lot of blood, guts, and gore, just as in a slasher movie. True to the genre that made the real Elvira famous, you'll be submitted to the spectacle of severed heads, slashed necks, plucked eyes, and more.

This is a huge game that spans five floppy disks; a hard drive will make your life much easier. The game's size directly relates to the hours of puzzles, thrills, frightening encounters, and butchery you're sure to experience. If you can't handle the blood, then you're free

to do what any six-year-old would do: Turn your head. Don't turn away from the screen for too long, however, or you may not have a head to turn. (\$59.95, *Accolade*, 550 S. Winchester Blvd, Suite 200, San Jose, CA 95128, 408/985-1700. One megabyte required.)

should open. (If you go too far, you're teleported back to the start.) Keep at it; the key to the exit door can be found on this level.

By the way, one of the dead-end down stairways you've stumbled onto here is the famous back or "express" stairs to the bottom level. I figure delivery boys use it to carry meat to the dragon. (You need a key at the bottom, natch.)

Finally, Lawrence K. Schwendeman writes that he's stuck before a closed door bracketed by forcefields in The Coward's Way section of Level 6. The forcefields are flashing teleports, but they might as well be solid walls for the difficulty parties have in penetrating them. They are rigged so that you can step into them when they're off and past them before they come on again. It takes a lot of patience and practice, but you can get through.

• Kenneth Russell of New York City sent in six questions about *Shadow of the Beast II* (Psygnosis, \$59.99), echoing wailings and lamentations heard from others. Yes, that thin, grassy strip ahead to the right of the starting point (through the pygmy forest) is indeed the entrance to a tunnel—specifically a tunnel to the Crystal Caverns. It can be cleared using a time-honored arcade game technique (stomp on it until it breaks), but before you head downtown, you'll need an item that can be had from the green monster at the top of the stairs to the right.

Do destroy the large rock you'll find by the acid pool, but not by dropping it in the acid, as you need part of it. Instead, drop it on the far side of the pool, where it will break on a spike. What's left is the key to using that "broken" elevator.

The business with the sleeping demon and the caged monster in the pit is one of the toughest spots in the game. The key is to get into the pit without bothering the sleeper; it seems to be a matter of positioning on chain and beside the table. Then cream him, and while he's gathering his wits, hit the lower switch and jump back on the chain. (If the demon first hits the upper switch to raise the chain, you'll have to restart. The pit is inescapable, and the monster is ►

## POWERMONGER

By Peter Olafson

In *Populous*, you led a God's life. *PowerMonger*, Electronic Arts' astonishing sequel, brings you back down to earth. You're in the army now, not behind the clouds, and a vast, lively world is out there for the taking.

The difference is that you don't just influence your followers, as in the earlier game, but command them. Each of the 195 rectangular segments of territory is static—no volcano-making here—but the little animated people inhabiting it can be persuaded, intimidated, killed outright, and, once subdued, bossed around. . . at least as far as a full stomach will take them.

From a humble beginning with 15 soldiers in a lonely tower, you must gather an army, supplies, and lieutenants, devise and appropriate weapons, and—by guile and force—take control of two-thirds of each region's population. Naturally, that population doesn't simply cave in; by the time you come to the first sizable town, you may find your force considerably overmatched. Better to talk or barter, perhaps.

You carry out your actions with the mouse in a splendid three-dimensional landscape abutted on two sides by about 20 icons and on a third by shifty-eyed warriors representing you and your subcom-



Command your followers and conquer the rest.

manders. *Populous*'s broad, durable good looks have been replaced by greater detail and finesse. Sheep wander the hill-sides. Pigeons fly the skies. Seasons change, and communities follow the year's cycle. The command set is simple but flexible, as it is tailored to context. For even more control, you can choose among three levels of aggressiveness.

What's truly God-like in *PowerMonger* is your control over perspective and access to detailed information. You can rotate the landscape in both directions and scroll across it in eight; zoom in and out through seven levels of detail; and summon three topographical overlays. Clicking on the query icon and an object summons a staggering amount of detail. Every char-

acter has a history. Births are announced. When the little people die, their souls fly up to heaven, and you can click on them, too.

Wondrous and hypnotic as all this is, *PowerMonger* has a good-sized learning curve, and it's a good deal tougher than *Populous*. In that game, you were an eagle, soaring over your domain, darting down to make adjustments to the landscape, but always having time to ride the wind and take prideful stock of your creation. Rest on your laurels in *PowerMonger*, and you'll watch your followers walk away in droves.

Consequently, the game can get rather labor-intensive. I'd have liked an option to assign a portion of the army to perform automated or semi-auto-



mated supply duty. Power-Monger is far too much fun to spend it rummaging around barns hunting up tomorrow's

breakfast. (\$49.95, *Electronic Arts*, 1820 Gateway Dr., San Mateo, CA 94404, 415/571-7171. No special requirements.)

## AWESOME

By Rob Lawrence

Never have I encountered a game so aptly named as *Awesome*. The graphics are awesome, the animation is awesome, and the music is—you guessed it! A typically impressive *Psygnosis* masterpiece, this game truly lives up to its title.

A three-disk odyssey, *Awesome* was developed alongside *Shadow of the Beast* and *Beast II*, and many of the trademarks of that famed duo are apparent in this game as well. The differences here are the space-age setting and the

story, which, unlike the action, is fairly simple. In a nutshell, your job is to do some serious planet hopping to obtain money and fuel for your escape from a galaxy that's about to become toast. As you journey between worlds, you'll have to ward off suicidal pirate craft, smash asteroids, vaporize space serpents, and then deal with the hordes that await you on the surface of each planet.

You have a top-down perspective in most of the space sequences, except that it's a ▶

practically invincible.)

No single password will take you past the dragon head guarding the gate to Barloom. Like some other in-game instructions, this one varies from game to game. You should get the right password by freeing Ishram's guest. He's sacked out, and you'll need to give him a nudge.

The jug you'll find in the Karamoon Oasis will prove useful as a mickey a bit later, after you're captured. (Yes, captured.) The proprietor will utter banalities about characters in the game, but he never told me anything I didn't already know. Yes, it does look as though there's more to the right side of the inn, but if so, it's nothing crucial to the completion of the game.

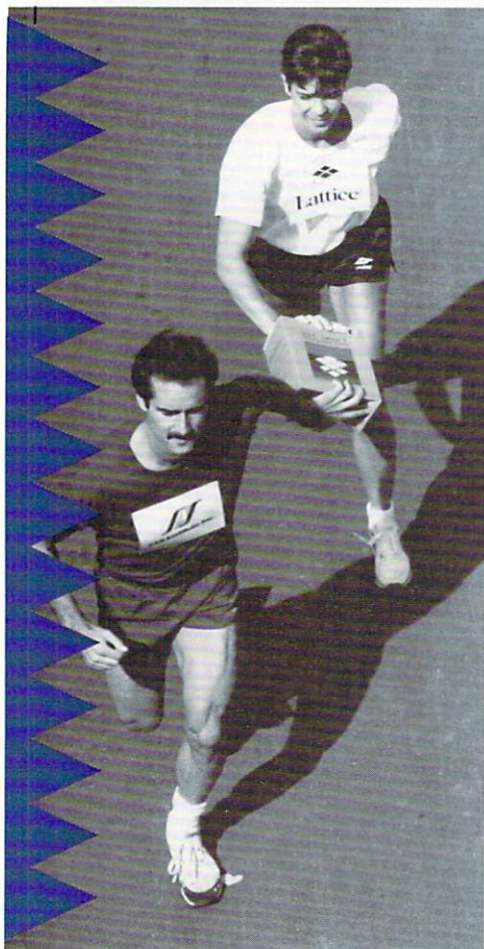
On the other hand, the old man is a critical element in your quest to defeat Zelek. You'll find his ring nearby after you escape your cell in the goblin realm. To help you, he also needs an item you should get from Barloom after killing Ishram.

• James Scott of Beverly Hills, Califor-

nia, is also fishing for a hint to help *Leisure Suit Larry* get across the piranha-infested river on Nontoonyt Island. I suspect it's a matter of "vine"-tuning. You'll need to start near the big gray rock, and instruct Larry to swing on a vine. Once he's up, have him swing on the next vine, and so on. Oh, and don't forget to tell him to let go when he reaches the near shore.

• Errata: Back in the November '90 issue, I had tipster Graham Kinsey suggesting a 200 mph jump speed on "The Ski Jump" track in *Stunt Track Racer* (MicroProse, \$39.95). In fact, he was referring to "The Big Ramp" track. Anyway, the tip is also good for The Ski Jump, and try around 170 mph for the shorter jumps on the other side of The Big Ramp.

If you need help with a game before then, you can reach me at 12 W. 104th St., Apt. 3E, New York, NY 10025, or via E-mail as P.OLAFSON on GEnie and as Peteroo on PLink. Send a self-addressed stamped envelope for a personal reply. ■



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