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VALLEY VARIATIONS

Andrew Bain

We always intended that The Valley should be an ongoing project, software-wise. This month, we present one man's view of the game and its variations.

I recently programmed your real-time Adventure game, 'The Valley', into my Sharp MZ-80K, and discovered one or two possible deficiencies in the program as published. It is, for instance, possible to leave a Temple or Lair having failed to 'come up with the goods', and then to re-enter immediately to find the thing sought. Having announced your presence there, I should imagine that any self-respecting Lord of Evil would cause it to vanish, rather than allow you back for a second visit!

Another point is that the code for the 'Circle of Evil' causes an increase(!) in combat strength. To a hardened adventurer like me, that goes very much against the grain, as does the lack of a dramatic ending. When the hero returns to the Safe Castle with the Helm, the program just says, 'Wilt thou leave the valley?', as it has done several times before. What it needs is some great (albeit visual) fanfare, that you have finally made it.

So, I have made some amendments to the original source which I would like to pass on to fellow players. And, since nothing happens in Adventures without some reasonable explanation, I have concocted a little scenario of my own to explain the changes.



It is now several months since I, Alarian, returned to the Valley and discovered it once again under the spell of Vounim, Prince of Darkness. Since then, I have seen many brave young Tybolleans ride out against Him. Some have returned to be refreshed and revitalised, all of them wide-eyed at the magical and mystical things they have seen, full of tales of battles fought and monsters slain. Then, snatching only a quick respite, they return eagerly to the fray. Although several of them returned more than once to the sanctuary of the Castle, few have succeeded in the quest.

In all this time though, I have not been idle. Apart from protecting those who ride for me, by my persuasive oration, I have won over the Sprites that inhabit the Marsh grasses around the Temples of Y'Nagioth to our cause. They now watch over my apprentices as they ride by, protecting them from the surrounding Evil. And I, myself am striving daily to perfect a spell of Banishment to assist my trainees in their quest.

Vounim has, however, been busy too! He cannot have failed to notice the stream of people riding out of this Castle against Him, and has sought to kill many of them by a spell of Vanishment. This he cast several times, causing a Temple or Lair to vanish with my followers inside. I can cast a holding spell against this, but it only lasts long enough to allow the endangered person to escape from the building. I cannot manage better than this, as my power is greatly diminished and I fear that the recent effects of Vounim's 'Circles of Evil' demonstrate this only too well. Where once in these Black Magic Rings I was able to turn a Psychic loss into a gain in Combat Strength, I am no longer able to do it and these 'Circles of Evil' sap both Strength and Psi alike.

While this may serve to make their task more difficult, I submit that it still does not render it im-

possible. And with the Marsh Sprites to watch over my novices, I am able to concentrate my dwindling powers where they are most needed: in guiding those who make it through the Swamps into the more sinister regions of the Black Tower, and even into the very Lair of Vounim, the Evil One himself. With that working for us, who can doubt that we must eventually win.

Program Changes

The inclusion of the following line turns the 'Tufts' in the Swamps into a form of 'Safe Ground'. This allows novices to find their feet before they enter the rigours of the first major stage of the game:

```
2205 IF PK=45 THEN DF=5:GOTO 2250
```

Amending line 12210 to read as follows, causes the Temple or Lair to vanish as soon as the player exits:

```
12210 IF Q1=104 THEN M=MW:W=M:PRINT  
      "[HOM]";D2$;R2$;"[3 CD][2 CR]  
      [SPC]";REM ** WIPE LAIR ON EXIT
```

In my version, I have included an array of Rating Classification texts, which are loaded from DATA at the start, and I have also amended the 'EGO' code such that line 45030 becomes:

```
45030 PRINT "Your Rank Is ";RT$(RT)
```

Including the next block of code causes the program to produce a rather dramatic ending, if you return to a Safe Castle with the Helm:

```
48015 IF T(2)=1 THEN DF=50:GOSUB  
      36000:GOSUB 45000:GOSUB 49000  
49000 REM ** DRAMATIC ENDING  
49010 PRINT "[CLS]I, the Wizard  
      Alarian, pay tribute to [CD]"  
49020 PRINT "the skill of ";J$;" the  
      ";P$  
49030 PRINT "[CD]Thou hast returned  
      the Helm of Evanna[CD]"  
49040 PRINT "to its rightful place in  
      her castle.[CD]"  
49050 PRINT "[3 SPC]By this act, thou  
      hast defeated[CD]"  
49060 PRINT "[9 SPC]Vounim, The Evil  
      One[CD]"  
49070 PRINT "[SPC]and ensured the  
      safety of The Valley[CD]"  
49080 PRINT "[11 SPC]F O R E V E R !  
      [2 CD]"  
49090 GC$=J$+"[SPC]"+RT$(RT)  
49100 PRINT SPC(INT((38-LEN(GC$))/2))  
      ;GC$;"[2 CD]":END
```

The next line may be added as an extra option:

```
49085 PRINT "[4 SPC]I salute you, and  
      proclaim you[CD]"
```

