ZOMBIES

by Mike Edwards
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The evil cleric, Wistrik, has stolen the seven magical crowns of the middle kingdoms.

The kingdoms' rulers have offered fabulous treasures for their return. Many have set

out to get back the crowns, none have ever succeeded. Wistrik has placed one crown in

each of his seven dungeon strongholds where they are guarded by legions of ZOMBIES

(corpses animated by Wistrik's evil power and whose very touch can be fatal). As if

the ZOMBIES aren't enough, there are infestations of poisonous snakes, starving

giant spiders, and Wistrik's deadly "Orbs of Evil" . . .

Your task? To enter the dungeons and retrieve the seven crowns. But you best be wary! Each dungeon is protected by a magic spell causing weapons to vanish. How can Wistrik's defenses possibly be penetrated?

Fortunately, you have your own magic ability which will allow you to use some of Wistrik's own spells against him, but you must find them once in his dungeons. Also, you carry with you the "32 Talismans of Rhadamanthus". These little crosses when taken from their pouch and thrown on the ground cannot be crossed by anyone or anything.

The ruination of the seven middle kingdoms cannot be reversed until all of the crowns are returned. Can you sneak in and retrieve one? What about two? Can you get back all seven?

THE SEVEN DUNGEONS OF WISTRIK THE EVIL:
Cankaya Keep: An old underground prison, a perfect place for hiding a crown. Tartarus: According to legend, the stronghold where the ancient Titans were imprisoned. Ergazi Sheol: The burial chambers of the mystical Ergazi sect. Stygian Crypts: The underground passageways and chambers alongside of the river Styx. Erebian Vaults: The storage vaults for the long since plundered treasures of ancient King Erebius. A very difficult dungeon to penetrate. The Abyss: A vast, bottomless pit into which the fairest maidens were cast to placate various nether-gods. The Realm of the Impossible: Reality ends in this, Wistrik's most diabolical dungeon.

HOW TO LOAD:
1. Turn off your ATARI* computer.
2. Turn on your disk drive.
3. Wait for the busy light to turn off.
4. Insert your ZOMBIES disk and shut the drive door.
5. Turn on your ATARI* computer.
6. ZOMBIES will boot in by itself from there.
Leave the disk in the drive, so that high scores can be recorded.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR 1 and 2 PLAYER GAME:

ON-LINE INSTRUCTIONS:

- By pressing the space bar, a series of instruction panels are presented. The instruction panels are also displayed as part of the attract/demo sequence.

- If left alone, each panel is presented for a short time only (long enough to read the panel title).

- You can hold the panel to read it by pressing the space bar. When you release the space bar the panel changes. By tapping the space bar, you can quickly slip through the panels.

The following instructions detail the fine points of ZOMBIES. You can get to them later or refer to them if you have a problem getting started.

SELECTING DUNGEONS, NUMBER OF PLAYERS, DIFFICULTY LEVEL:

- Pressing the OPTION key changes the difficulty between easy and hard. In the hard version, hit points are lost twice as fast as in the easy version.
- Pressing the SELECT key changes between one and two player modes.
- Pressing START or your joystick trigger causes the dungeon selection screen to be presented.
- The selection arrow is moved by moving your joystick in any direction.
- When the arrow points to the desired dungeon, press START or your joystick trigger.
- If you are on the dungeon selection screen and need to return to the title screen (ie, to change mode or difficulty) press SELECT or OPTION.

MECHANICS OF PLAY:

Basic movement and hit-points:
- Your player is directed using your joystick.
- The movement is consistent with the form of perspective used: ie, towards and away movement is at an angle.
- The touch of any bad guy causes you to lose hit-points. When your hit points go below zero, you are dead.
- You start with 50 hit-points (60 in two player mode).
- If you get out of a dungeon with the crown, you receive a bonus of 20 hit-points. You then retain that hit-point total, and any spells you have to begin another dungeon.

- To leave a room, run to the edge of the screen, and *push* against the screen margin. In the two player mode, both players must *push* at the same time.
- You can't go back to a room that you've left until you have obtained the crown. The crown is always in the deepest room in the dungeon.
- In the two player game you can resurrect your dead partner by touch.
- Pressing the space bar during the course of the game will suspend the game. To resume, press the space bar again.

Crosses (the 32 Talismans of Rhadamanthus):

- Pressing your joystick trigger *while moving* drops a cross.
- Crosses cannot be stepped over by ANYONE. Hence when strategically placed, they give protection but can also trap you if you are not careful.
- Crosses dissolve after about four seconds and are then available for re-use.
- There are exactly 32 crosses available.

Scrolls and Spells:

- Most rooms in the dungeons contain scrolls which you should usually try to pick up.

- Scrolls award you with one of the following:
  - Added hit-points (5 in one-player; 10 in two-player).
  - A magic spell (which is added to your list of spells in the lower left hand corner of the screen). Magic spells are shared in the two player game.

- There are three kinds of spells:
  - Freeze: the bad guys can't move.
  - Confuse: the bad guys can't chase you.
  - Protect: the bad guys can't hurt you.

- Spells are cast by the following mechanism:
  - Stop moving. *Stand still.*
  - Press the trigger (listen for the "ready to cast" buzz).
  - While still pressing the trigger, move the joystick:
    - Left for confuse
    - Up for freeze
    - Right for protect
    - Down for your last obtained spell (useful in a panic situation).

- Spells last about four seconds.

- The duration of each spell is accompanied by its own distinctive sound. The name of the spell cast is displayed in the lower left portion of the screen.

  - Attempts to cast a spell that you don't have results in

a "burping" sound. *This allows you to practice the timing of spell casting even when you don't have a spell.*

RATING AND HIGH SCORE SAVE:

- Points are added to your rating score each time you pass from one room to another. The number of points added is equal to your hit points (for two players, the higher player's hit points).

- Scores can be saved to the disk. *NOTE: Your ZOMBIES disk must be in the drive to accomplish the high score save feature.* If you wish to save high scores, do not put a write protect tab on your ZOMBIES disk.

- Four high scores are maintained: one for each difficulty in both the one and two player game.

- If you surpass the high score, you are invited to fill in your name and the date. Note, pressing the % key displays a crown. This allows you to record the number of crowns retrieved if you want too.

- The four high scores are displayed on a screen that appears at the end of the instructions.

- You can reset any of the four high scores back to zero as follows: Go to the title screen; select the combination of difficulty and one/two-player that you want reset; press control-R.

TECHNICAL DETAILS:

If you are familiar with ATARI* capabilities and architecture you may find the following of interest:

- The playfield graphics are 3 dimensional (oblique projection).

- The playfield is built up from 4-color characters (antic mode 4) that are actually drawn on the screen in antic mode E.

- The protagonists are players 2 and 3. The antagonists are made up from players 0, 1, and the missiles. "Snip" techniques are used to allow multiple incarnations of the antagonist player/missiles.

- The protagonists and antagonists are animated using 4-phase and 6-phase animation with four postures each.

- When the protagonists leave each room, the playfield scrolls to a new room. The program scrolls in all four directions.

- Player movement is consistent with the oblique view (ie, towards and away movement is oblique).

NOTES FROM THE AUTHOR ON THE DESIGN OF ZOMBIES.

As a game progresses from the initial concept to a finished product, it, of course, goes through many changes. The funny thing is that ZOMBIES started out as a game somewhat akin to football. But throughout this process of evolution I had some specific design concepts in mind.

The most important concept was that the game could be played against the computer by one player or by two players playing simultaneously as a partnership. There has always been a lack of cooperative two player games. I enjoy playing games with my 7 year old son but we don't like to compete against each other and we don't like taking turns against the computer. ZOMBIES has worked out well in this regard. In the two player game both players must exercise teamwork to be able to survive and a strong player matched with a weaker player can work well together (with the stronger player being able to help out the weaker player).

I also wanted to get away from "shoot 'em ups" and to use objects to block the protagonists rather than eliminate them. The concept of dropping crosses as a means of fending off the bad guys was a natural, straight from the late-night monster movies. Implementing this turned out to be quite difficult. The playfield was designed to be built up of "antic-mode-4" characters. But how then do you superimpose the little crosses? The answer? Emulate antic-mode-4 using antic-mode-E!

I'm a real fan of Dungeons and Dragons (and now I have to say: "a trademark of TSR, Inc."). So it is not unusual that the motif of the game turned out to be what it is. And the concept of hit-points is a natural for the "death mechanism". I have always objected to having multiple lives in a game (after all, we're not cats). I'm happy to report that in ZOMBIES, when you're dead, you're dead. Well almost; there is the fun feature of resurrecting your dead partner in the two player game.

I have always gotten tired of games that have only a few screens. But I've always enjoyed adventure games where a new room lay just around the corner. That's why in ZOMBIES I built seven different dungeons with a total of 74 rooms. The most fun to build was the 7th dungeon, "The Realm of the Impossible". Someone (I can't remember who) commented on how neat an M. C. Escher drawing would look in ZOMBIES graphics. That was the best idea I'd heard all month. Hence dungeon 7 contains "Escher-like" mindbenders.

I hope you have as much fun playing ZOMBIES as I had putting it together.

Mike Edwards

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