



Welcome to Hell Sweet Hell

by Sajid Rizwan Matin

IMAGINE — put yourself in a situation where devilish beasts are roaming around freely, out to kill, the servants of Satan are out loose, trying to hunt you down so that they could slay you.

Imagine — you're stranded in an unknown world, enraptured by a blood thirsty necromancer, who covets for your death. He has set up a maze and trapped you inside along with his brawny band of fiendish creatures and the only way you can retain your existence is to fight your way out.

Imagine — you are a dis-senter, up against a fierce sorcerer. He has challenged you in a combat where there will be only one winner — you or him.

If you are thrilled in such thoughts, you don't need to imagine for it anymore. A better suggestion for you would be to load a game named 'Heretic' in your computer and experience the thrill of horror by simply switching on your computer.

'Heretic' is not the type of game where you walk around, aim and gun down the baddies, and not all the action maniacs would feel comfortable playing this game. To truly enjoy 'Heretic' you have to have the real taste for it, that is you must be one of those people who loves to watch genuine horror movies. Cowards or chickens wouldn't fit in, only the hardy nuts deserve to play such a game. Yellow is not the word, the name is 'Heretic' — a misnomer.

In heretic mighty sorcerer named D' Sparil has bewitched the world and have taken over everything. His powers are infinite and he has ordained everyone to worship him. He craves for blood and devotion for him, and you are the lone threat to him; you're a 'Heretic', you don't kneel before him, you contradict him, you protest his icon and that's just enough to incite his wrath. To get even with you, he has loosened his servants-ferocious monsters from hell. The game engine has been built by the one and only ID software and it's completed along with Raven Software.

'Heretic' has a very different approach than any other game. The environment contains a feeling of the ancient days, the days of magicians and warriors and dragons. The statues of pain-racked monsters and idolatrous creatures can be found scattered in every rooms and halls. The stone walls bare marks of aging with ugly and odd-looking symbols engraved in many places. Almost all of these symbols and pictures resemble creatures of the dark, worshipping their idol, bent on their knees. Surrounded by such ghastly ambiance, you'll

hear the famished screams of the hellish barbarians from around you. And when you start meeting them you'll probably loose the last bit of courage you had left in your stolen heart.

Birds from hell and horrid monsters will rise to get their teeth on you. The apprentices of the devil sorcerer will shoot at you their killer magic rings, the lean and tall fox faced beasts will fling death axes at you, giant beasts will throw fire balls, monkey tailed monsters will stab you and these are only a few of the monsters that you have to confront in the game.

At one time you'll come to face a large metallic monster skull, which can blow a whirlwind to you or fire lines of blue and red death balls at you.

There are also bigger bosses in each level. And to fight these horde of devils you'll be equipped with your basic stick, which can fire wand crystals and as you advance through the game you'll eventually find other fire arms that can fire ethereal arrows, claw orb, lesser runes flame orb and mace spheres. To fight the bigger monster the flame orb is the best weapon and in ordinary times ethereal cross bow would be better to use.

After going through level after level, traveling through 'City of the Damned' and 'Hell's Mow', you'll reach 'D' Sparil's Dome' — the final episode of the game. And this is where you meet the one you've been destined to, the one whose servants have been chasing you along the whole game, here you'll meet the high priest — D' Sparil himself, riding on the back of a serpent.

At this stage, the game takes fierce and thuggish turns. First you have to kill the demonic serpent in order to get D' Sparil down from its back. After the serpent is killed, D' Sparil emerges with a magic wand hovering above the ground. As he murmurs a death spell, he shoots deadly icy balls from his mace. He summons up other sorcerers to abet him and they appear from behind him. Whenever cornered, D' Sparil vanishes and takes position in another safe space. D' Sparil just seems to be invincible, nothing seems to enfeeble him.

But at the end he turns out to be a mortal and dies cursing the whole world and you. But just in case, if you find it too hard to beat him there's always some cheat codes which can make you the winner (a cowardly winner, however). (Talking about cheat codes — try typing cockadoodledo while in the game, and see what you turn into — a chicken!)



watched through a crucible by another minister of devil, screaming in rage and ranting in anger.

What this indicates is another sequel of the game, and thanks again to ID and Raven Software that they really came up with the second episode of 'Heretic', the name of the game is 'Heretic: Beyond Heretic'.

Those who enjoyed playing 'Heretic' would adore 'Hexen'. In 'Hexen' the fight is against another sorcerer from the dark

age. In 'Hexen' the devil is Korax. By his unbound power he has created a world of puzzles and meshes. As usual you have been put into this realm to stand against the devil sorcerer and battle to survive.

'Hexen' can be played in three characters, a fighter, a cleric or a mage. The fighter has the most speed and strength but no magic. The cleric has an average of speed, strength and magic. Though the mage has very little strength and speed, he has got the most magic. The fighter starts off the game fighting with his bare hands, the cleric starts with a club, and the mage starts with his wand crystal which is the only one that can shoot.

Eventually, every character gets weapons as they play through each level. However, the fourth weapon of the cleric is the best among all the weapons. It shoots off ghost balls and each ball contains several ghosts. The atmosphere of 'Hexen' is even dreadful than that of

other world. Just to give a little taste of the game I'll describe how to play one of the levels. Unlike 'Heretic', 'Hexen' is not divided into episodes but into levels, and there are thirty one of them. And again a group of four to six levels makes a world. After playing the first three levels you'll enter a teleporter which would take you to a world of Seven Portals.

You'll find yourself on a tower room, a portrait of Korax on the wall will speak to you, he'll say, 'My servants can smell your blood human'. Then the wall in front of you will disappear and a lift will take you on the ground. There you'll find seven golden gates tightly locked, and in these level the puzzle is to open all these gates.

A switch will open one of the seven gates and inside you'll find an ethereal portal. By traveling through it you'll reach

'The Guardian of Fire'. There you will have to search for some hidden switches and turn them

other world. Sudden surprises will come to you very frequently as you enter rooms or activate switches, maybe the walls will start crushing on you or the floors will crack and divide.

In other world the puzzles are solved by collecting gem planets, clock gears and placing them in appropriate places. As you advance through each world the puzzle gets more difficult and needs more keys to solve. All these world are swarmed by deadly beasts like two headed animals, fire dragons, Sagittarius shaped beasts, ice devils, disciple of Korax, ghosts and so on. Each world has big bosses and at the end of the thirty first level the final boss appears. The final boss is probably Korax himself. However, whoever it is, it looks horrible and is hell of a tough creature.

A switch will open one of the seven gates and inside you'll find an ethereal portal. By traveling through it you'll reach 'The Guardian of Fire'. There you will have to search for some hidden switches and turn them

If you're very lucky you'll probably make it to this level. But to defeat the boss... well you must take the cheater's path, or else it's impossible to kill the boss. I'll tell you the two cheat codes you need at this stage but please don't play the entire game as a cheater, it really degrades the fun. The cheat codes are — Satan: makes you invincible; NRA: all weapons and magic maxed.

The ending of the game is extraordinary, it leaves a sense of enigma in the mind. After defeating the boss you'll read:

'With a scream of agony you are wrenched from this world into another. Every part of your body wreathed in mystic fire. When your vision clears, you find yourself standing in a great hall, filled with ghostly echoes and menacing shadows. In the distance you can see a raised dais, and upon it the only source of light in this world.'

This can only be the chaos sphere, the source of Korax's power. With this you can create worlds... or destroy them. By rights of battle and conquest it is yours, and with trembling hands you reach to grasp it. Perhaps now a new player will join the cosmic game of power. Like the pawn who is promoted to queen, suddenly the very reaches of the board seem to be within your grasp.'

Then another picture appears; you're placed at the middle of a chess board, and a large red skinny hand of the devil is making a move on the board, pushing a hellish creature to face you. And then you'll read:

'But there are other players mightier than you, and who can know their next moves?'

And who knows if there wouldn't be another sequel of the game.

TEENAGE AWARENESS GROUP
Celebrates The Silver Jubilee
of Independence

Essay Competition

Bengali and English Medium students from class 8 to 12 may participate in this competition. Our selected honourable judges will decide the best 3 essays and prestigious prizes will be awarded to the winners. The winners will have their essays published in The Daily Star.

The title of the essay is:

71: What I Know About It

1. About the essay: Your essay should begin with a brief analysis of the factors that led to the Liberation movement and focus in the successive stages on the major events of the war that culminated in the independence of Bangladesh. The theme of the conclusion should be 'Expectations of 71 and Reality'.

2. Word Limit: 1400 Words (Max).

3. Judgement: Grading will be entirely on the quality and the substance of the essay. The judges' decisions regarding the competition are final.

4. Overall: The essay should be more informative than political.

5. Deadline: Send your essays by 25th Dec. '96 to

TAG Essay Competition

c/o The Daily Star

House # 11, Road # 3

Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205.

Please mention Your name, your address, your telephone no (if possible), and the name of your school.

Parents are requested to help their children as much as possible.

TAG SPECIAL

About the Essay Competition

Yes! This is your opportunity to tell us how much you know about our glorious Liberation War. Already, people around the country are celebrating the 25th Anniversary of our Independence, and TAG, for the same purpose, has organised this competition. We are certainly looking forward to your participating in our programme.

Before I mention the essence of and divulge some hints about this competition, let me first tell you who we are. TAG is run by students who work in collaboration with local schools and dailies to create awareness among the teenagers about their common concern. Our main motto is: 'Learn more about Bangladesh'.

No doubt, the Independence from Pakistan is the proudest of all our achievements. And it is imperative on our part to know about it thoroughly. We believe that your involvement in this particular competition will inspire you to read books and talk to the people who saw this war, and thus broaden your knowledge of our Independence.

Hints About the Essay:

* If your exams are over, start right away you have enough time to read books on our Independence or talk to people you think could provide you with information.

* Unlike other competitions, we have asked your parents to assist you in this matter. Since today's teenagers are unfortunate not to have seen the Liberation war, we think that if your parents tell you some stories about the war, you will not only be inspired but also confident to write the essay.

* Please read the instructions carefully. Only students from class eight to twelve can participate in this competition. Under no circumstances should your essay exceed more than 1400 words. And remember, we are looking for an informative essay and not a political one.

* Your essay should be written in eligible handwriting (you may send us a computer generated copy).

* Although the essay should be written in English, Bengali Medium students should not feel that they are at a disadvantaged position. We are not interested in your stylistic approach. An essay with simple structures but with coherent ideas and full of information, will be valued more than an essay with many poly syllable words but little substance.

* Send your essay by the stipulated time to The Daily Star Office. Once the essays are checked by our honourable judges, in a special occasion we will award each winners attractive prizes, as well as a certificate and a crest.

* Finally, we wish you Good Luck!

If you wish to know about the judges who will check your essays, you can read about them in a special issue of TAG which will be printed in the Teens and Twenties, sometime in mid-December.

— By Romel, with Muna, Zaki, Raihan, Zareen, Shaila, Mustasin and other TAG members.

Want to join Tag? Simply write to us!

Address for correspondence:

TAG

c/o The Daily Star

House #11, Road #3

Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205

HERO

by Farhana Yusuf

H E lives in all our hearts
Seems a part of our lives.
Our debts are burdened
He is the hero who, forever in our minds, thrives.
When the ruthless war cruelly snatched lives
When confusion and disorder plagued the minds
When gunshots and cannon balls disrupted and destroyed.
The hero, risked fought and sacrificed in the bloody tides.
Life goes on drearily under the pangs of realities
The post was but yesterday, a vivid recollection.
Memories of losses, kinship and victory fill the souls of those who
Had seen the hero join in the brotherhood and was against injustice.

History will forever cry out in remembrance
The names of all those men.
Who had united, fronted and gave so much and who
Like the hero willingly gave up his life.

Loneliness

by Rubaiyat Khan

L ONELINESS is something clam.
It is to some, a light restless shadow.
But to some, a peaceful glittering spring.
Which washes away the debris.
Of silver pebbles.
To some, it is a brown robin,
Soaring in an endless blue sky.
Travelling, in a magical world
Of one's own.
Loneliness to me.
Is another person.
One who listens, never disagrees.
Is a faithful loving shadow.
Who never deserts.

Life Afire

MY young friend Romel became very inquisitive whether I was obsessed with death. Well, I said, not quite but I surely am tired of the sort of life I have been living. Then with a blushing mysterious smile, he tried to become very particular about my Laksmi, for, as he is a good soul, and would have been more than mere glad to see if he knew somebody like Laksmi really existed in my life. I said; 'Oh yes, she very much exists and will be existing hereafter.'

Well, selfishness being the part of life, I can tell you about a deadly time, when my closest friends were involved with underworld politics in north-eastern Bangladesh. There were two of them became devoted to left politics in the early part of '80s. They were ordered by the comrade-in-chief to run an 'operation' in which my friend did not find any logic — justice, in other words — and they refused to do what warrior-like people were asking. At a certain point, my friend and his partner realised the lethal message, the impending danger, from the organisation — both of them would be exterminated and their lives were in a sort of 'indulging' danger. They did not panic, but planned how to get away from death which was also a story of kismet for my friend. But the bottomline was both shocking and happiness for my friend, because his partners, older than he, decided to be the bull's eye and let my friend escape by the help of a likely comrade.

Every time I try to tell this story of my friend to Laksmi, she tries to cut me off from her affection; but she is the one who laughs at life and tells me: 'Little do you know.' And exactly at that moment, she appears to be Helenic both in beauty and character.

Whenever I endeavour to measure life with the yardstick of 'hope' Laksmi always reminds me the lines from TS Eliot: 'I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope/ For hope would be hope for the wrong thing: wait without love/ For love would be love for the wrong thing: there is yet faith/ But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.' Although 'love' has already become a dull word to her — and along with her, to many women in the world — yet I will, say, I 'do'. Why? I feel my only reply is and will be: 'Because it is. She, because it is.'

— EK

A Finer Fabrication of Mankind

by Rumana Tasmin Khan

I T has been ages since the collapse of the Egyptian, Indus, Mesopotamian and Inca civilisations, to give way to what there is today. In their times, each of those civilisations may not have had any link with one another. But the present circumstances point to a contribution of each civilization that ever ruled on Earth's face. In fact, it is the evolution human beings went through in those days that have fabricated today's mankind. Perhaps, we humans were created in the way so as to use our minds to manipulate our future. And that is why we hope for a better future, a finer fabrication of ourselves.

From the fossils recovered from Earth's crest, the first true man Homo Babilis came to the planet five million years ago. The fossils supply evidence that these were members of the first species that had well developed brains (they had foreheads), used tools made out of stone (the effect of walking on two feet and having the hands free). Discussing in terms of physical features and genetic and other biological characteristics, the Homo Sapiens, who came to Earth 3200 BC and 1527 AD again it was seen that the ancient Egyptian civilization and the Inca empire based their existence on cereal production and control of irrigation. In 3000

BC, the civilisations that flourished by the basins of rivers Indus, builders of the cities Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, developed in similar manners. Weaving, pottery and metal work were practiced side by side with the use of sides and ploughs. The quest to quench the thirst for knowledge came after that time. The development of fields like mathematics, science, architecture, art, literature, philosophy, astronomy, medicine, botany — all came during different stages. The ancient Egypt, again, was much developed in various studies such as mathematics, astronomy and medicine. The Romans of 30 BC possessed sufficient knowledge in art, architecture and law. The Aztecs completely destroyed themselves by mid 14th century. The Inca Empire had a civil war when the empire was divided between the two sons of Huayna Capac. The ancient Egyptian and Mayan civilisations were caught in between many such wars. And the inhabitants of the Easter Islands perished due to the warlike interference of other cultures.