

expect is an archetypal hackexisting license. By all means, it's an plenty of boxes to bash and treasure accurate description - which fails to see chests to loot which in turn contain the true fun that awaits... The story is indeed simplistic at best, but its undeniably classic\*Dungeons & Dragons-style world still makes it an enjoyable ride. The first task (as it is in system, yet the large range of products all D&D stories) is to curb the rat problem that plagues the rather voluptuous barmaid. Before you know it, you're lead to the nest of the Thieves' Guild (who said thieves weren't civil-minded?) that happens to run by another more power- satisfying. And then the Lightening ful group. This group is also under Long Sword +5 looks enticing as well and

major "twists" of the story.

purest sense; you make your way

through several dungeons that seem to

go further underground. On the way

you'll be attacked by typical D&D fantasy creatures ranging from kobolds to

bugbears to large gelatinous cubes. No,

really, these lumps of Jell-O will attempt

to maul you so it's better that you hack

mostly have to attack by hammering X

hit. From a first glance, all you control system for micro-managing Health and Mana items and magic only and-slash title based on an helps make it more enjoyable. There are valuable items and gold. You can pawn these items and use the gold to buy better weapons and armour from the local vendor. It's a simplified shop and your tight budgeting instincts make it an extremely fun mini-game. You'll be eyeing the Flaming Bastard Sword of Defence +3 for a while and when you finally get the money to buy it, it's quite

orders from someone higher up and the soon enough you'll fight against the mate and once again, you're bound by

number as well. It's a superficial mecha-

Now here comes the part that makes

turns this game from a solid, fun title

into an insanely addictive joy-ride: Co-

play Dark Alliance in Co-op mode, you

will have the time of your life! The fun

fold. While you cast magic at enemies

in between blocking (R1) and spell- from afar, your friend/sibling/relative op and I swear you will not regret your

genuine fulfillment and enjoyment.

hierarchy continues, constituting the hordes of darkness to get that little

them to bite-sized pieces quickly. This you get out of all those gameplay

isn't the deepest game in the world; you mechanics I mentioned increases fifty-

nature, the fighting is surprisingly up close. You can quietly open the door

This is a 'dungeon-hack' in the nism which ends up offering hours of

operative mode.

casting. Despite its incredibly simplistic can be hacking the enemies apart from time spent.

ARK Alliance is a true sleeper- addictive and very fun! The intuitive to a room and as the denizens of evil will show now since it's a 2001 title. The rush out, your partner takes out the welcoming party with his trusty bowwork; you rush in with your Flaming Bastard Sword to take out the rest. Teamwork has never been this exhilarating and rewarding. There's always a rush for the boxes and chest since, despite being a team effort, its still 'finder's keepers'. Mutiny can often be heavy in the air as the faster Elf gets all the goodies while the slower Dwarf grumpily takes down the bugbears. This leads to a bout of competitiveness that ratchets up the fun-factor even higher. Since you also level up at different rates, it's possible that you make even become more dependent on your stronger team-

his/her trust and skill with the blade.

What can-seem slightly frustrating at

first leads to real camaraderie and

sincere gratification. It won't be

uncommon to ask your richer compan-

real-world dealing and interaction

amazing game. Having your partner

scream words of encouragement as you

take the last slashes at the final boss

makes the whole game one emotional

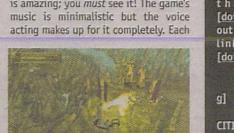
rollercoaster ride. Play the game in Co-

This game's a looker, though its age

Playing solo is nice, but when you presented with much fervour in this

levels have a gritty fantasy vibe and the character designs are great, though the pseudo-isometric perspective makes it difficult to see the smaller ones. The lighting effects are divine! But the best part is the water it has this strange, mercurial effect that's a joy to play around with. You can entertain yourself for hours as you run around in puddles and watch how realistically the waves form and interact with you, the edges and other waves.

There's a physics lesson on waves right there kids! But trust me, the water is amazing; you must see it! The game's music is minimalistic but the voice



character is very well voice-acted and it's joy to hear them speak their lines. There are plenty of cameos with John-Rhys Davies (Gimli of LOTR fame) voicing the dwarves while Cam Clarke (Liquid Snake from MGS) plays a meek, "I'm-



ion to buy you a weapon you need and so-scared-I-WILL-piss-in-my-pants" then you can return the favour later; it's priest.

Here's a pretty good game that you'll enjoy by yourself. When you play with a friend, it becomes a surprisingly emotional journey that's a pure blast. Oh and a word of advice: 'Ball Lightening'. Remember that phrase and you'll thank me later!

Comments, suggestions, flames and hate mail can all be directed to: baka.ero.sennin@gmail.com

The links below are also available in niloywrites.blogspot.com for your conve-nience. And those who are interested in comics might want to keep an eye on my other site <u>BDcomics.blogspot.com</u>. And here's a little treat for those who've been following the Rockstar INXS: Marty Casey's "TREES" [doiop.com/MartyTREES]
Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy e-

Many of you guys who've downloaded the mind-numbingly awesome Hitch-hiker's guide to the galaxy audio-books emailed me requesting the books. Here's the link to the books: [doiop.com/HHbook]. Also, if you missed out last week's Sites Unseen, here's the link to the audio books again: [doiop.com/BDcomicsHitchhicker]

KEEP OFF THE INTERNET!!!

The Internet Is Unambiguous Evil!
CITIZENS UNITED NEGATING TECHNOLOGY FOR LIFE AND PEOPLE'S SAFETY urges you to turn this evil thing off. How to STOP your family from getting onto the nternet: Kill the mouse! Remove its balls! Jokes aside, this is one of the several

new "parody" sites Rockstar launched to accompany its upcoming PSP title: GTA Liberty City Stories. In this site, the infa-mous Jack Thompson guy and stupid egotistical narrow minded people who campaign against the oh-so-negative consequences of the modern media (the net, games and all) are thoroughly ridiculed (BEFORE THE INTERNET, WE HAD \*NO\* PROBLEMS.) Take a look at the site, read the testimonials, have a good laugh. Here's an article on this from Eurogamer.net: [doiop.com/EGarticle]

To say that Mark Ferem has an unusual photographic hobby is a bit of an under-statement. Mark believes that "the restroom wall is the last great medium for self-expression." To prove it, he travels the country and documents the graffiti he encounters on bathroom walls. From the purely artistic to the ridiculously sublime, Latrinalia showcases the gems of Mark's collection. Sometimes the messages are designed to amuse, sometimes the scrawl-ing reek of frustration, but most of the time they're fascinating, right down to the most bitterly ironic ones.
Abandoned

Uryevich has a penchant for exploring abandoned Soviet building projects. And

he's not afraid to pen the occasional

Whack yourself creatively [creativethink.com]

[abandoned.ru]

structures.

ask me how to crack this game. Travelling Russian photographer

Early Google [doiop.com/EarlyGoogle]
This is how Google started back at
1997. It's nice to see how much they've brooding verse, either: "Footprint of civilization. Cement, metal, and dust not

cherished idea. Then you're free to look for new ones. What part of your idea are you in love with? What would happen if you kissed

[ragdollsoft.com/ragdollmasters.htm

This game is simply awesome. By

adding smooth rag doll physics into a 2D fighting environment, it creates an amazing gameplay experience. There are also

bullet time effects in this. It'll take some time to get used to this, but when you do,

you'll never want to turn back. Just don't

it goodbye?" Rag-doll Masters

Student Beats Microsoft Legally By

This story is 6 months old, but is very Fortunately, his pictures are way better than his poetry; he fills this haunting gallery with beautiful images of ugly entertaining. David Zamos is a student who found himself in a very strange pre-dicament when he tried to resell two unopened copies of MS Software on eBay. Then the predictable happened; Zamos was sued by Microsoft, claiming (and I kid you not), that Zamos' sale on eBay cost Have you ever felt uninspired? Creatively worn out? Simply stuck, with nowhere to turn? Roger von Oech offers a Microsoft hundreds of thousands of dollars in "irreparable damage." They demanded that Zamos hand over his eBay profits website that can help. When you need a "creative whack", visit Creative Think. This site provides hints, inspirations and (\$143.50) and also pay for Microsoft's

legal expenses.

To read about how Zamos single other tips to help "whack" you back into a productive mode whenever you feel cre-atively challenged. Each time you visit, handedly won his case without hiring outside counsel, check out this article [doiop.com/BeatsMS] and this page you'll be met with a different suggestionthe tips load randomly. Here's an example of one of von Oech's tips: doiop.com/BeatsMS2].

The photo with this Sites Unseen is "Don't Fall in Love with Ideas: If you fall in love with an idea, you won't see the merits taken by Rajiv Ashrafi of BDgamer.ne

of alternative approaches and will proba-bly miss an opportunity or two. One of life's



## CAST

Mercury - **John Clees:** Felix - **John Hurt** 

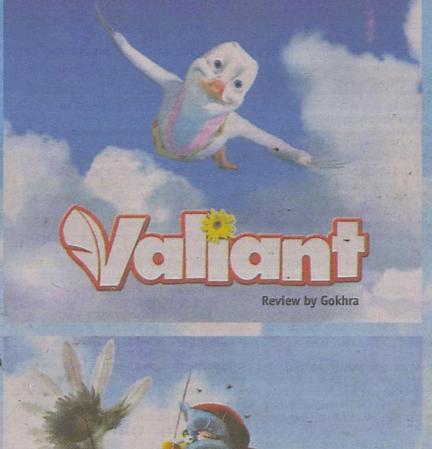
debut film 'Valiant' is about the cooked."

everything to hell back then? Sure but to send instructions about which Williams' vocal talents. This is one of the civilian populated area was to be bombed characters in the movie that is mercilessly people of the military type underutilized. Cowardly Bugsy delivers used carrier pigeons to send the coded the best laughs of the movie but he's messages. If only they had MSN messen- ultimately a one-note character. Some-

In a thrilling opening sequence, members of the Royal Homing Pigeon Service (RHPS) flap furiously to deliver vital intel for the war effort. Like death from above, enemy hawk General Von Talon (voiced by Tim Curry) swoops down to thwart them.

Ewan McGregor voices the title character, a diminutive wood pigeon whose heart is bigger than his wingspan. But the RHPS is desperate for recruits. In the ANGUARD Animation's is a new words of one commander: "If we don't name in this industry and their find some more birds fast, our goose is

dangerous missions of carrier Despite his size, Valiant signs on for pigeons during World War II. Pigeons you service with Bugsy (Ricky Gervais), a say? Weren't they using planes to bomb bathing-averse bird who fills the manic buddy role usually reserved for Robin





The laughs come in fast and easy. There's the Rocky-esque training session where the small bird does some weightlifting with a barbell made out of two apples stuck at the ends of a stick. There is all the requisite potty humor and charm.

tunately condensed.

The verdict:

action packed sequences allowing us little time to bond with his cast and emotionally attach the characters.

This movie is made with the intention of making it half the cost of other movies and finishing it in half the time. The corner- and cost-cutting shows. While the overall production design doesn't suffer, goofy pratfalls that may have been tried it also isn't as highly stylized as competimany times before but still hold their tor films. Also the story could used some fine-tuning.

The movie also teaches valuable There's a scene where Mercury, a lessons in friendship, loyalty, teamwork captured pigeon of war is taken off to and above all believing in yourself. The provide us with a view of Von Talon's base. kids will love it and so will the wizened Not much else. Another character called old world weary boring grownups. It's Rollo who is a wild-eyed, pyromaniac perhaps the first animated kids' film that mouse belonging to the The French Resiscan claim to be "based on a true story." tance is one that is criminally underutilized.

Firstly for a new company the anima- But despite all the gripping and tion is quite top notch although not along complaining of being a general wizened the finely polished lines of Pixar's "The old world weary boring grownup it's a Incredibles" or Blue Sky's "Ice Age". With damn good movie.



