



LESLIE MIZELL

# King's Quest VI



## HEIR TODAY, GONE TOMORROW

**I**t was obvious from the finale of *King's Quest V* that Sierra's next game in the series would involve Prince Alexander and his love-at-first-sight maiden, Princess Cassima. But the course of true love ne'er runs smooth — especially for the reigning family of Daventry.

In *King's Quest VI: Heir Today, Gone Tomorrow*, designed by Roberta Williams and Jane Jensen, Alex's ship has crashed onto the shores of the Isle of the Crown, one of the islands that makes up the mystic Land of the Green Isles. Although he has reached his destination, the land ruled by Cassima's family, Alex has lost everything but a single coin and the signet ring that identifies him as royalty.

Naturally, his first



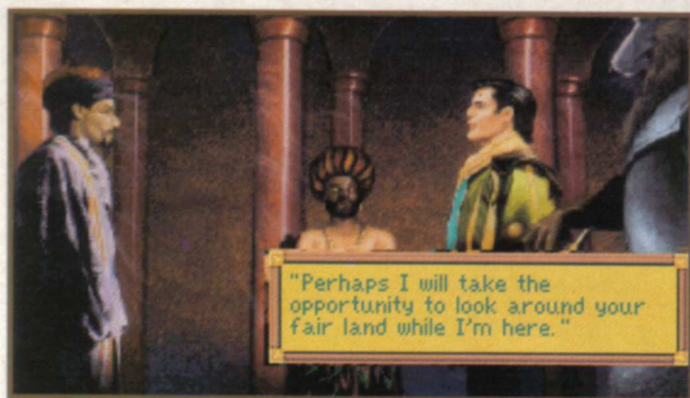
thought is to be reunited with his beloved. But a visit to the castle brings bad news — Cassima's parents have died, Cassima no longer leaves her room, and the vizier (who has

taken control of the throne) plans to marry her himself!

*King's Quest VI* is a huge game, twice as big as *King's Quest V* — and twice as much fun, too. There's much less of the "save character A on screen 2, then character A saves you on screen 3" bartering that was common in the fifth installment. For the most part, Alex gets himself out of his own scrapes in *KQ6*, giving the player more to do.

Once he obtains a magical map, Alex can zap back and forth among the islands, gathering items for spells or solving a couple of involved sub-quests. *KQ6* was designed so that only half of the game's puzzles need to be solved in order to reach the finale, so the adventure is as accessible for beginners as it is for experi-





On the Isle of the Crown, Alex squares off with the vizier right off the bat. No self-respecting prince would let the woman he loves marry another.



The genie periodically pops up in different formations. You'll recognize him because his eyes sparkle like gold.



Is Princess Cassima in her tower room mourning her parents? Or is she a prisoner?



Alex must trade his only item of value for a magic map that allows him to travel freely. Reclaim his signet ring as soon as you can.

The Isle of Wonder is home for creatures not usually found this side of the looking glass. The trolls have extra-sharp senses; you must keep each one from finding out you're human.



enced players. Sierra's icon-based interface, introduced in KQ5, works better in this game as well.

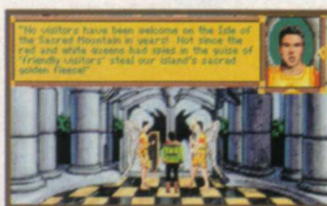
Beginning with the two-minute (more than six megabytes) opening cartoon, designed by Stanley Liu of *Batman Returns* fame, the graphics in KQ6 are terrific. The characters aren't particularly detailed, which boosts the speed of the action, but there are occasional digitized closeups of the major characters. Even better than the graphics is the soundtrack — two full hours of music that truly heightens the game atmosphere. All in all, if KQ6 is anything to go by, the adventures involving Daventry's royal family are in no danger of losing steam.



The garden has delightful surprises — as long as you don't talk to that bad-tempered tomato. Play a tune for the wall flowers so you can reach Hole-in-the-Wall.



The Isle of the Beast has some bad-tempered residents of its own. To get the swamp ooze you need for one of your spells, urge Bump-on-the-Log and Stick-in-the-Mud fight.



The guards aren't used to visitors — as is obvious from their friendly greeting.



A ride to the Netherworld is yours if you cast the right spell.



The Isle of Mists may be your final resting place if you don't cast a spell worthy of the Druids' respect.

It's not easy to visit the Isle of the Sacred Mountain. Use your guidebook to solve the riddles, and your mountain goat-like balance to keep from plunging to your death.





### The Minotaur's Lair



One of your sub-quests is to rescue Lady Celeste from the half-man, half-bull Minotaur.



*It's helpful to keep save several games as you explore the trap-laden maze. Search for useful items as well, such as the coins on this dead man's eyes.*



*When you hear the Minotaur in the next room, use Hole-in-the-Wall to spy on him.*



*Will you send the Minotaur to a fiery death? Or will he send you?*



### Beauty and the Beast



Beautiful girl. Mean stepmother. Garden of roses. Three guesses as to which fairy tale you must help resolve.



*The Oracle tells you of a girl you must rescue, a troubled soul you must save.*



*The Beast doesn't hold much hope that you can find a woman who would marry him in his present form. But if you tell his story to a soft-hearted girl — and bring her a floral token — she'll go with you willingly.*



## To Hell and Back Again



*Without the answer to a riddle, you can't pass through this gate. The answer, like the others in the game, is either in the guidebook or on a slip of paper you've found in the game.*



*In the Netherworld, you learn your suspicions were correct — Cassima's parents did not die a natural death!*



*You can force a tear from the Lord of Death by showing him the pain and misery he's caused. It's all written on his face.*



*You must pay for your passage over the River Styx. If you didn't pick up the coins in the labyrinth, you'd better hope you saved a game back there.*



With time running out, you must get into the castle as fast as possible. If the guards won't let you through, make your own doorway.



*Are you too late? Surely Cassima wouldn't marry another if she were in her right mind — or body.*





# ROBERTA WILLIAMS —

## THE IMAGINATION BEHIND THE *Quest*

Since King Graham first donned his adventurer's hat in 1984, Sierra On-Line has sold more than 1.5 million copies of the *King's Quest* games. A standard for graphic adventures, the KQ series relies on strategy instead of action and, as series creator Roberta Williams says, "old-fashioned values of heroism and truth."

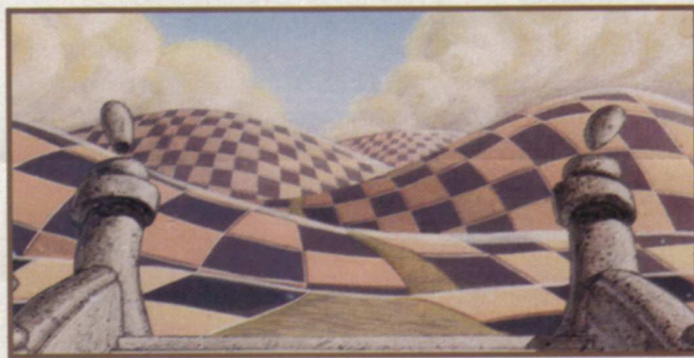
The earliest KQ adventures were filled with allusions to favorite fairy tales. But by the fourth adventure, Williams was running out of widely recognizable stories. Since then she's added themes ranging from classical mythology to *The Wizard of Oz*. There's a lot of *Alice in Wonderland* evident in KQ6.

But with KQVI, Williams' greatest excitement isn't over storyline — it's with the technological advances used in the game. "There's the 3-D rendered cartoon — and the cartoon in the floppy version isn't half the length of the cartoon in the CD version. This game also has scaling characters, characters that size themselves as they go back into the picture. And we video-captured characters in full costume for the closeups."

Williams points out that *King's Quest 5* is a more linear game than her latest. She wanted KQ6 to have more paths, but she didn't want to

create easy and hard modes. "I wanted to see how we could make a game adjust itself to a beginning, intermediate, or advanced player. The best way seemed to be to think of an easiest path through the game, one that just gets you to the

not on design. In my opinion, the best way to learn it properly is side by side. Overall it was a positive experience, and it was very good for the series because Jane brought in some new ideas. She learned a lot, too, and can take what she's



end. But if you're a person who pushes and probes, then there are puzzles for you to access. It's up to you.

"*King's Quest VI* can be a relatively hard game because there's a lot of extra stuff to do or see for subplots, and extra points and extra places to go and extra puzzles to solve. It takes twice as long to play as *King's Quest V*."

Another significant change in KQ6 is that it's the first game in the series not designed exclusively by Williams. "I took on a co-designer for a couple of reasons: I wanted to train Jane [Jane Jensen, the co-designer of *EcoQuest: The Search for Cetus*] because I didn't want Sierra to be dependent on me. Someone else needs to know how to do a 'proper' adventure game. We're all doing a good job from a technology standpoint, but

learned to help create her new games."

Williams and Jensen designed KQ6 under the icon-based interface introduced in *King's Quest 5*. Some gamers miss the humor and player control that were so much a part of the earlier text-parser interface, while others appreciate the ease of the icon interface, where it's not as easy to overlook clues.

"The old interface was a real pain from a design standpoint," Williams says. "We got yelled at because it didn't have enough words. It was actually my idea to change over to the icon interface because we felt the international market was going to be — and is — important. We had tried to take our text-interface games over to Japanese and French. The expense was extraordinary, and they just didn't translate right.

"We're also going more into the mass-consumer market. For example, *King's Quest V* will be available on Sega CD. Those types of machines are sold more to families who wouldn't think of getting a computer — they just want a really neat game machine. You can't design games that require keyboards if they're going to be played on machines that don't have them. I honestly believe that if we hadn't gone over to the icon interface, if we hadn't bit the bullet and done it, Sierra adventures would die — they'd still be OK now, but in the next year or the year after that...."

However, an even greater change for traditional Sierra adventures is coming in the shape of the CD-ROM. Williams believes that in the next few years there will be a wide variety of CD-ROM-only games. As a matter of fact, she's developing one with her latest project, *Scary Tales*, a "serious horror game."

But what about *King's Quest VII*? "We've done a *King's Quest* every two years, and that's worked out really well," Williams says. "If you do a series every year, people will grow tired of it, but if you wait for three years, people will have forgotten about it. *King's Quest VII* is loosely floating around in my head. I'm thinking about a Rosella adventure, but I might consider Valanice — although to be honest, I don't see her as a character going out and solving adventures, maybe because she's a mom."

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