

PALACE OF SHADOWS

by Christos Stogiannopoulos,
based on an idea by Depresiv

INTRODUCTION

I live in a palace of infinite passages and infinite halls. My footsteps have led me through its peaceful splendor so many times that there is no secluded niche, no carved gateway or sculpted pillar that I am not intimately familiar with. I have lived so long in its cool, comforting darkness that memories of the sun-crowned blue sky and the open sea seem faraway and indistinct, as the fleeting recollections of a dream.

Yet I have always pined for the company of my fellow men, and the unbroken silence echoing through the palace is a heavy burden weighing down on my soul. Often I wake up at night with an awful feeling of loss for the companionship that is being denied me; and then I wander the halls of my palace restlessly, unaffected by its wondrous beauty, seeking solace where none is to be found.

When guests enter my palace, as they sometimes do, I sense them wherever they are, and seek them out. Yet men have always feared me and despised me, condemning me in their minds for crimes that were not my own. Many meet my friendship with violence, while most would die rather than befriend me, victims of their own prejudice. And so my loneliness quickly reasserts itself, and I am left with no one but my shadow on the walls, a mute companion that mocks my every movement.

Finally, one day, I retreated into the inner rooms of the palace, and shut the great gate behind me, not knowing if it could ever be re-opened. I decided to live out the remainder of my life in utter seclusion, never to see a living being again.

Yet today, a joyous sensation has overcome me. He has entered my palace, a hero whose heart is free of fear and petty violence. I can feel his presence. He has come to deliver me from this wretched existence. I must open the gate for him before he leaves my palace of shadows forever!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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INSTALLING AND RUNNING THE GAME

The game is written in Java and requires that the JRE (Java Runtime Environment) version 1.4 or later is installed on your machine.

Extract the game's zip file to your hard drive. The game's folder contains two versions of the game, the html version and the console version. To play the game with html presentation, double-click the "play_html.jar" file. To play in a console, you will need to double-click the "play_console.bat" file.

If you are not using Windows and/or are having trouble running the game, you can execute it from the command-line. Navigate to the game's folder and enter "java -jar play_console.jar" to play the console version, or "java -jar play_html.jar" to play the html version.

The game creates two (small) temporary files in the folder where you unzipped it, so you should execute it from a writable medium (e.g. from your hard disk and not a CD). If you play the game from a read-only medium, you will not be able to use the commands RESTART and UNDO, but the game will otherwise function normally.

ABOUT THE GAME

Palace of Shadows was written as an entry to the 2005 2K Classic Text Adventure Competition.

The Java source code, which implements a mini virtual machine with state-persistency mechanism, full sentence parser and html user interface, is 2884 bytes long (the console version is 2623 bytes long).

The game file is 8181 bytes long in its compressed state, and contains 11 kilobytes of text, about 4 kilobytes of bytecode and about 2 kilobytes of other game data.

PLAYING THE GAME

Palace of Shadows is a text adventure, also known as interactive fiction. It is an interactive story where you play the part of the main character. You tell the game what action you wish your character to perform by entering commands in English. The game will then describe the results of your action, and how it has affected the game world. In this way the story progresses and unfolds.

If you have not played interactive fiction before, you should visit one of the sites below (or any of the numerous sites about interactive fiction available on the web) for a more detailed introduction to the medium:

<http://www.ifcomp.org/comp05/if.html>

<http://www.brasslantern.org/beginners/>

Read the sections below for details on the specific features of Palace of Shadows.

STANDARD VERBS

This is a list of the most common verbs you may use while you play. Many other verbs and synonyms are supported.

- GO <direction> (or just <direction>)
- ENTER <sub-location>
- LOOK (or L)
- EXAMINE (or X) <item>
- TAKE <item>
- DROP <item>
- INVENTORY (or I)
- LOOK IN <container-item>
- PUT <item> IN <container-item>
- OPEN <item>
- CLOSE <item>
- WAIT (or Z)

OTHER USEFUL COMMANDS

- SAVE : Save your position to disk. You will be prompted for a filename.
- RESTORE : Restore a saved position from disk. You will be prompted for a filename.
- RESTART : Restart the game.
- UNDO : Undo last command.
- OOPS <word> : Correct misspelled word from last command.
- AGAIN (or G) : Repeat last command.
- VERBOSE : Activate verbose mode. In this mode, you always see an area's full description when you enter it.
- TERSE : Activate terse mode. In this mode, you see an area's full description only the first time you enter it.
- SMALL / NORMAL / LARGE : Set the font size (only in the html version of the game).

PARSER TIPS

- You may use the ALL keyword to perform an action on all suitable, available items (e.g. "TAKE ALL", "PUT ALL IN THE BAG").
- You may use multiple items in a command, separated by a comma or AND (e.g. "EXAMINE KEY, WAND AND SWORD").
- You may use IT, HIM and HER to refer to previously used items (e.g. "GET SWORD", then "EXAMINE IT").
- You may enter multiple commands in a single sentence, separated by a full stop ("."), semicolon (";") or THEN (e.g. "GET THE SWORD. EXAMINE IT THEN PUT IT IN THE BAG").

KNOWN PROBLEMS (HTML VERSION)

There are two known problems with the html version of the game. They are both rare and should not affect your gaming experience.

- 1) The game may sometimes crash immediately after you start it. If the display is blank and/or typing in commands does nothing, just close the game and restart it.
- 2) After typing in a command and hitting enter, the output is sometimes not drawn correctly (blank display or garbled or duplicate text). Just hit enter again to refresh the display and it will be fine.

CONTACT ME

If you have any comments, suggestions or questions about the game feel free to contact me at cstogian@yahoo.gr , I'll be happy to hear from you.