

PASSPORT TO ADVENTURE

KING'S QUEST

Sierra/IBM/128K Disk

Don't be fooled by the unimaginative title. *King's Quest* is a major breakthrough in action-adventure games. The quest itself is clean-cut and simple — an excellent primer for the novice adventurer — but its combination of keyboard-input and joystick-operated on-screen character movement blows everything away, even coin-op action contests such as *Crossbow*. You've never seen anything like *King's Quest* before on any system — it's a positive revelation on the PCjr!

The action begins with the on-screen player surrogate finding himself outside the walls of a gorgeous, high-turreted castle. The sky is a majestic bright blue, and the multi-colored

the gamer than types in: "open door", and, *voilà!* trumpets sound as the twin oak doors swing inward, revealing the castle's interior.

Returning to the joystick, the adventurer steps down the corridor, past beautifully woven tapestries and suits of armor, to an audience with the King (using cinematic techniques, designer Roberta Williams depicts this scrolling progression through more than one point of view). His Majesty then spits out the details of the quest with very little prompting.

Accepting the task ahead, the adventurer doffs his cap and bows with a flourish (check it out, he really *does!*) and heads back outside to explore the beautiful countryside in search of the King's desire.

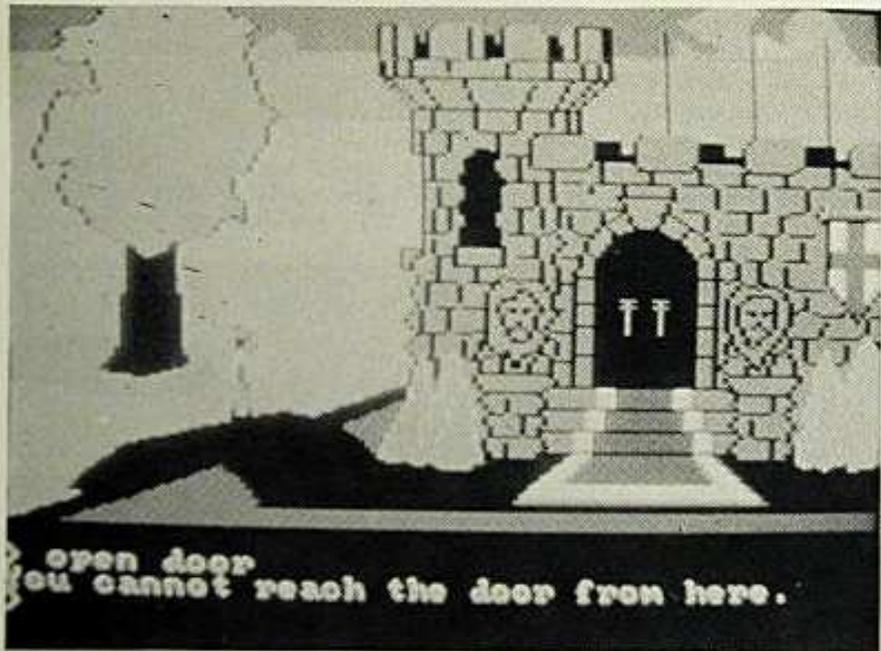
Players get to move through a wide

against such creatures is simply to pay them off, so keep both eyes open for bribe-worthy treasure) and troll bridges. Roberta has given us a panorama for future adventure games to draw upon, taking our breath away at times with the elegant beauty of her work.

The software package includes a cardboard overlay (folded, so it never fits quite right) that can be placed over the keyboard — the old keypad-style board, anyway. We've received no word as of press time as to whether the overlay fits the restyled keyboard. Though most of the characters are unchanged, this nonetheless comes in very handy for specific orders that will be given with some frequency. For example, when the player jumps into the water, it's possible to type in: "swim", but it's a lot less uncertain to simply jab the "swim" key — especially in turbulent water, where the sarcastic narrator is likely to inform you that "apparently, you've forgotten how to swim. Thanks for playing *King's Quest*." That last sentence is the program's way of informing a luckless voyager that your character is now playing a harp or shoveling brimstone.

Again, as a pure adventure it would hardly be worth a second glance. But in simplifying the puzzle-solving and *Zork*-like elements and, instead, overwhelming the player with lush graphics and joystick control over the hero, the vistas of adventure gaming suddenly open to a whole new audience.

(Bill Kunkel)



KING'S QUEST (SIERRA)

pennants high above the stone barricades flutter regally in the breeze.

Now, using a joystick, the hero is moved (very carefully) over a wooden bridge and then west along the side of a crocodile-infested moat. Crossing the drawbridge and reaching the door,

variety of still and semi-animated sequences, with each of the hero's movements under the gamer's direct control. We get lakes, rapids, mountains, green fields, squalid huts — even ogres (you're more lover than fighter in this contest, and the best results