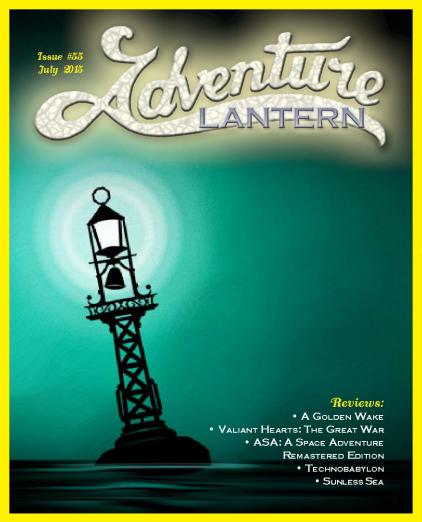




## Reviews:

- A Golden Wake
- Valiant Hearts: The Great War
  - ASA: A SPACE ADVENTURE
    - REMASTERED EDITION
      - Technobabylon
        - SUNLESS SEA



I first became aware of Dave Gilbert as a developer when we posted a review of his game The Shivah in October 2006. Erdalion, who was one of our most dedicated contributors at the time, had discovered the game and recognized it for the gem it was. The Shivah had come to life initially as a contest entry, a project to be completed in one month. The commercial version Erdalion reviewed represented a polished overhaul of the original transfer of the street and the stree

nal design. At the time, Erdalion praised the game's excellent story, inspired puzzles, and courage to explore themes not commonly encountered in an adventure game. The Shivah did not boast fancy graphics, but had tremendous indie charm that had a whole different kind of visual appeal to a seasoned adventurer. This was exactly the kind of game we wanted to be highlighted in Adventure Lantern. This was the kind of game we wanted to find while scouring the Web for budding adventures.

Fast forward nine years and Sarah Hambrick brings us a tour of Wadjet Eye Games. With Dave Gilbert at the helm and contributions from several remarkably gifted individuals, the studio boasts a number of extremely strong adventure titles. Yet despite the company's popularity and robust selection of games, the titles that make their way to Wadjet Eye continue to have a touch of that indie spirit that made The Shivah so special and so worth playing.

This month, starting at Wadjet Eye and ending at Failbetter Games, Sarah brings us an excellent tour of the indie scene. Jonathon jumps in with a look at A Space Advent

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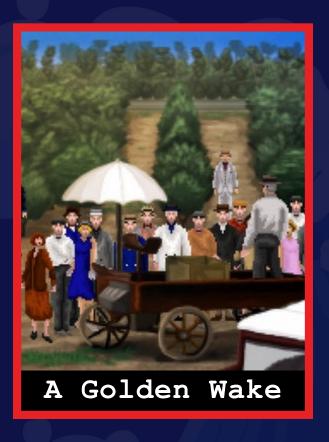
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Cover Image: Sunless Sea

ture from Simon Says: Watch! Play!. It's been at least five years since the last time I heard from Erdalion. Here's hoping he's still enjoying games somewhere. In the meantime, Sarah and Jonathon are here to bring that same spirit front and center on Adventure Lantern's pages. Many thanks for their hard work and giving me a delightful read this summer.

Until next time,

- Ugur Sener





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Conducted by Sarah Hambrick

# INTERVIEW WITH DAVE GILBERT ON WADJET EYE GAMES

With the recent release of *Technobabylon*, the Wadget Eye Games library continues to grow. As he continues to work on his next release *Shardlight*, the company's CCO Dave Gilbert kindly agreed to answer our questions about Wadget Eye's past, present, and future.

[Adventure Lantern]: Due to your growing and faithful fan base, have you ever considered starting a Kickstarter campaign for a game?

[Dave Gilbert]: I'm not sure how a Kickstarter would benefit me, in all honesty. I think Kickstarter is great for funding one specific game, but not very effective as a long-term business strategy. I'm in this for the long haul, so I'm more interested in being a stable business. I know how much my games cost, I know how much they usually sell, and I can continue to support my family and make more games. Why mess with something that works?



[AL]: With *Gemini Rue*, *Primordia*, and now *Technobabylon*, there is an obvious love for the sci-fi genre in your games. Could this love be traced back to earlier tiles such as *Beneath a Steel Sky*?

[DG]: Weirdly enough, it can be traced back to our use of pixel art! It's kind of become our «thing», and as we've done more and more pixel art games we've realized what works well and what doesn't. Pixel art adds a gritty texture to everything, and that works well with some art styles than others. Things like post apocalyptic landscapes, urban noir, and dystopian futures work really well with pixel art. So that's what we tend to do now.

[AL]: A Golden Wake is a bold departure from the other games in your catalog. What was it about the game that excited you to publish it?

[DG]: The thing I loved about *Golden Wake* is that it's so rooted in a specific time and place. All the puzzles, characters, and situations Alfie finds himself in were created with that in mind. A lot of work went into bringing the era of 1920s Miami to life, and it all shines through.

[AL]: Your games may look like the classic point and click titles of the 90's but they are so much smoother and don't contain some of the illogical puzzle elements. Are there some classic adventure games that you still enjoy today?

**[DG]:** Aside from the pixel art, which is used mostly for budget and time concerns, I consider all our games to be quite modern. Like many modern developers, I try to push immersion, interactivity and fun over puzzles. Getting stuck in a puzzle for days or weeks is rarely fun (and a moot point now that Google exists), so I don't worry about that so much.

As for classic adventures... I can play *Loom* over and over and never get sick of it.



[AL]: I feel that your games strive to propose ideas or teach as well as entertain. Is that deliberate?

[DG]: Very much so. I have the belief that you are driven to create for a reason. You have a message to get out, or you have a point to make. If you lose sight of that, then your creation becomes very superficial and hollow.

[AL]: Can you give us any hint of how production for *Shardlight* is coming along? It is exciting to see screenshots.

[DG]: Thanks! It's coming along. :) As always I hesitate to give a release date until we are 100% sure, but we are aiming for late Fall 2015.



[AL]: In games like *Gemini Rue* and *Primordia* there is obviously a lot of backstory and room to create lore. If you could go back and flesh out more background history would you and which game would get the treatment?

[DG]: Well, it wouldn't be up to me. For the games we publish (as opposed to the games we do in-house) we leave the IP rights to the developers. So we couldn't return to the worlds of *Gemini Rue* or *Primordia* without the



Josh Neurnberger or Wormwood's involvement. So far, neither of them have interest in doing a sequel. Should that change and they want to work with us again, we'd be all for it.

[AL]: Each game you develop or produce seems to take a step forward, whether in how the game looks or the interactions between characters. Does each new release become the favorite, or do you still see them all equally?

[DG]: It's an artist cliche that you cringe at your earlier work, and I am no exception. With each game I do, I get better. I make mistakes, I learn from them, and apply those lessons to the next game. It's very hard to look at, say, *The Blackwell Legacy* now. All I can see are the flaws and all the things I would now do differently. That said, it was the best game I could have made with the resources and experience I had at the time. So I still stand by it.



[AL]: Lastly, which game would you like to point to as Wadjet Eye's mascot game?

[DG]: Blackwell would be our mascot series for sure. The games are how we got our start, they provide the bulk of our income, and form the foundation of Wadjet Eye. They also garner the highest amount of enthusiasm from fans (there's a LOT of Blackwell fanart out there). We wouldn't be where we are without it.

[AL]: Thank you very much for your time.

[DG]: No problem .

Adventure Lantern thanks Mr. Gilbert for answering all of our questions. Over the years we have enjoyed watching Wadget Eye's library grow. We are looking forward to trying *Shardlight* when it becomes available. To find out more about Wadget Eye projects, please visit their site: www.wadjeteyegames.com.









Sarah Hambrick



Golden Wake feels more like a love letter to the 1920's then an actual game. You are Archie

Banks, a real estate agent that travels to Coral Gables, Florida to take part of the real estate boom. When Archie realizes that there is potentially more profit to be had with joining the local mafia, his loyalties change and the story becomes grittier and violent. The game looks like it came right out of the 90'sa classic point-and-click adventure. The colors are bright and vibrant, truly portraying Coral Gables in the 1920's. The soundtrack is wonderful, evoking the feeling of The Jazz Age. Our main protagonist is surrounded by a slew of non-fictional characters that influenced the goings on in Coral Gables and New York City. Like all Wadjet Eye titles, the

In my opinion, Wadjet Eye boasts very strong titles. Looking through their catalog of games, one sees great point and click adventures that explore the sci-fi genre, the dystopian society genre, and the supernatural genre. Then one comes to A Golden Wake which is unlike anything Wadjet Eye Games has ever before developed or published. It is hard to not notice the bold departure of themes and setting and compare with Wadjet Eye's previous titles. While I have mixed feelings about the game itself, there is no doubt that A Golden Wake achieves the goals it sets to accomplish.

Genre: adventure

**Developer: Grundislav Games Publisher: Wadjet Eye Games** Release date: October 9, 2014

Platforms: Microsoft Windows, Linux, Mac OSX

Website: www.wadjeteyegames.com/games/golden-wake/

voice acting is superb. A new feature contradictory to say but it took a long at the end of the game. You can either choose to be honest or a violent liar top.

shining aspects, but there are parts only see backsides, I felt it was done in of the game that could possibly have poor taste. Apart from the interesting been better developed. I felt that the mini-games, the puzzles are very story dragged a little bit; It may seem easy; For a veteran adventure gamer,

that I have never seen in a point-and-time for the story to get going, but click is the mini-games. These mini- once it started to get going, it was soon games change up the usual gameplay over. The story was set in a historical and make for a pleasant departure. context, so the developers had limits There is also multiple ways to have as to what they could do story wise. Archie interact with people, which will Another problem I had with the game ultimately determine how they view him were the sexual overtones that were portrayed later in the game. A villain has a realistic portrait of a nude woman who just wants to claw his way to the in his office. The protagonist is shown getting out of bed nude with a likewise A Golden Wake has some truly nude woman lying on the bed. While you

A 4 A

# RAVINE



beautiful decor. These few drawbacks kept this game from entering "great" territory.

Deciding on whether to recommend this game or not is difficult for me. I adore Wadjet Eye games and love most of their titles. The ones I don't love, I appreciate. I appreciate A Golden Wake. Overall, I am glad that I played it. It is definitely a departure from Wadjet Eye's other works and that's not necessarily a bad thing. The game looks good, sounds good, and has some interesting new ideas for a point and click. It also made me want to reread *The Great Gatsby*. For those who love the period of the 1920's, this is a game worth looking at.

they are insultingly easy. There are a limited amount of destinations to visit and you can only talk to the characters that will continue the story, which casts down all the other NPC's to nothing but





**BRIGHT MOMENTS** 

The look, sound, and characters of the game are faithful to the period known as The Jazz Age.

**FUMBLES IN THE DARK** 

The puzzles are a little too simple and the story takes too long to build any steam, leading to a not too memorable ending.

**VERDICT** 

This game will be appreciated by those who love the 1920's. Not the strongest of Wadjet Eye Games titles, but still worth a playthrough.



Sarah Hambrick

# VALIANT HEARTS: THE GREAT WAR

It seems only natural that since we are in the midst of the centennial anniversary of the war that was to end all wars, a game should be released. In the gaming world, it seems that almost every war has been covered. Sadly, little to no recognition has been given to the war that launched the world into the modern age and changed how we live today. Valiant Hearts proves to be one of the first games to give a great picture of the struggles of World War I as well as a satisfying gaming experience.



"

Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted;
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years contemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.
from For the Fallen by Laurence Binyon

Genre: puzzle, adventure

Developer: Ubisoft Montpellier

Publisher: Ubisoft

Release date: June 24, 2014

Platforms: Microsoft Windows, PlayStation 4, PlayStation 3, Xbox One, Xbox 360, iOS, Android

Website: valianthearts.ubi.com



n Valiant Hearts, we follow the stories of five heroes: Emile, a Frenchman; Hans, Emile's sonin-law who is deported from France because of his German origins; Freddie, an American who volunteers and fights alongside the French in his quest for revenge; Anna, a nurse searching for her father in Belgium; and Walt, a German first aid dog that comes across the path of each of these heroes and helps any way he can. While it may seem highly coincidental how these five individuals continually come across each other's paths, their backgrounds and motivations are very believable. The friendships that they build are genuine and felt by the

players. The motivations and emotions of the characters are so well portrayed



understood. Most conversations in this for the sake of having a puzzle. game are done by comic book bubbles and short distinct phrases that are is a narrator that tells the story. The spoken by the characters.

it is a side scroller with puzzles and mini and any reading. Having a mattergame scenarios spread throughout the of-fact narrator makes the game feel game. These two aspects seem to be the only thing reminding the player that scenario, there are pop ups that inform this is a game. These puzzles serve to help bring missions to successful inspired the in game events. The pop

that they do not have converse to be conclusions and do not feel thrown in

Throughout the entire game, there narrator serves to take the place of the The gameplay is fairly simplistic since spoken dialogue between characters like a documentary. As you play each you about the historical events that







to the effects the war had on civilian lives. This is a great part of the game, making it entertaining and educational take on entire armies by themselves, at the same time. Honestly, who really remembers being taught anything about a conflict that is much bigger than The Great War in school?

because of the emotional attachment giant machine. While they do a lot,

ups cover everything from battles that will develop. Unlike most war games in which the protagonist is the only competent character and can our five protagonists are thrown into them, and outside of their personal It is hard to criticize Valiant Hearts story arcs, they are just cogs in a

they are shown to help other soldiers accomplish their duty, not do it for them. The protagonists go through being wounded, watching comrades die, suffering as POW's, and watching their hometowns be destroyed. There are also the subjects or desertion, mutiny, and treason. I have played games that have brought me to tears. This game was a sobering experience that was beyond tears.

Technically, the game is put together very well. The look of Valiant Hearts is unique in that it looks like a comic book.

# RAVINE

most brutal war conditions. The first mini game chase sequences. gas attacks, trench warfare, and the

While the look may seem somewhat music is very appropriately used, from it with the heart that this game does. childish, it does not change the fact being contemplative, to exciting during that mature content is being dealt with. a charge, to showcasing the popular World War One contained some of the classical music of the day during the mind a conflict that changed the world

This game was entertaining, sobering, controversial decisions that resulted and educational. While there are other in the unnecessary deaths of millions games being released that deal with are all looked at in this game. The The Great War, none of them approach

Valiant Hearts is more than a game. It is an interactive memorial that brings to and yet today gets so little recognition. Valiant Hearts should not be missed by anyone.



Jonathon Wisnoski



Envisioned as part of a larger Black Cube series, ASA: A Space Adventure is a slideshow point and click adventure inspired by classic greats such as Myst and 2001: A Space Odyssey. Initially released on January 7, 2013, and recently rereleased in a Remastered Edition on the 4th of March, 2015. The Remastered Edition brings re-rendered graphics at nearly twice the original resolution and the addition of hotspot indicators to get rid of the pixel hunting so common in the initial release.

eveloped and published by the French indie studio Simon Says: Watch! Play!, owned and headed by Simon Mesnard, ASA was their first

game, but they have been busy in the time since. Since its initial release we have had the, now canceled, The Black Tower, a Final Fantasy 7 inspired RPG, start development. Which would of been set in the same universe and had a related storyline. And finally, Catyph, a somewhat direct sequel to ASA, and another slideshow point and click adventure. Catyph has already been a 2015 release.

screenshots and trailers that look like they could be from a current AAA game, and gameplay that is firmly rooted in the past. While the inspiration of Myst and Riven are obvious, the game feels even older with a storyline closer to the **Genre:** adventure

**Developer: Simon Says: Watch! Play! Publisher: Simon Says: Watch! Play!** 

Release date: January 7, 2013; March 4, 2015 (RE) **Platforms: Microsoft Windows, Mac OSX, Linux** 

Website: www.aspaceadventure.fr

such, ASA is unique, while it has many of the same elements of Myst, Myst-like does not even come close to describing it correctly.

Lonely and thoughtful is the best way I know to describe ASA. A nameless astronaut working in outer space spots a mysterious black cube. Leaping from the satellite on which he is working and greenlit on Steam and is scheduled for cutting his connection to the satellite, he reaches for and embraces this ASA is sort of a contradiction. With mysterious object. After this opening cinematic, you awake on a teleportation room in a strange spaceship holding a large black cube. An unidentified man in a space suit comes in and takes the cube from you at gunpoint. And this is where your game begins, on the ever

golden age of early science fiction. As mysterious and very empty spaceship locations.

> The puzzles of ASA are its best feature and simultaneously immensely enjoyable and very challenging. They are also one area where ASA shows its classic side. It expects and demands



the use of a notepad, which you will with everything except a maze. One be updating and using extensively. while, which was my favourite part of the entire game. Much of the rest of the game is spent decoding mysterious alien machinery, as you explore the Arc.

I had fun from the opening cinematic to the credits. ASA is a romp through nostalgic gameplay, with an engaging classical scifi story, and graphics on par with modern games. Playing A Space Adventure, I felt more like I was playing an ancient text adventure, complete

aspect, that really adds to this is the Also the use of an alien language and amount of text. The journal entries and number system is superb and had me in environment notes and hints make up puzzling over my notepad for quite a a significant portion of the game, luckily

narration and being spread out around the game's play-lenght, prevent them from ever becoming a bore. And yet, while it is dripping in retro style and immensely challenging, it never felt unfair nor tedious. Which is not to say that that the game is without leaps in logic. There are certain areas where you are supposed to experiment and try different solutions, where the exact solution is not given to you. Tinkering with mysterious alien technology, without a manual, is part of the experience. I feel that ASA accomplishes exactly what it sets out to do, in perfect form, but it is not a game that will appeal to everyone.





# ADVENTURER'S



ith each new title, Wadjet Eye Games continues to raise the bar for the point-andclick genre. Technobabylon is a great blend of dystopian science fiction and detective story. With its thoughtprovoking story and themes, engaging characters, and its incredible use of pixelated graphics, Technobabylon proves that the point-and-click genre is alive, well, and growing artistically.

The story of Technobabylon is intriguing, and also told out of order keeps the player engaged and shows the incredible depth of the world that the game takes place in. While it falls in the realm of science fiction, I feel so distant future, considering how



from different points of view. This are a variety of themes and ideas that a number of social issues that are could provoke thoughtful discussion. As society advances, the importance of family, the increase in scientific power and how much license mankind should that the game takes place in the not take, and the dangers of embracing a virtual world while forsaking the quickly technology is advancing. Not responsibilities of the real world are all only is there a great story, but there examined. This is a game that tackles and Latha Sesame, a young woman

relevant today, as well as what could possibly be achieved in the future.

The characters of this game are well fleshed out and acted. In *Technobabylon*, we follow three main protagonists, Dr. Charles Regis, a genetic engineer with a past; Max Lao, his tech savvy partner;



# ADVENTURER'S



than face the harshness of reality. All the performances in this game are top for the gorgeous and gritty city. notch, with great writing throughout.

beautiful it is. Pixelated art never looked so good. The stunning backgrounds and

Finally, the star of the game is how long way from the obtuse puzzles and nonsensical solutions that they are known for. Technobabylon's puzzles feel see all the different outcomes. There

who would rather live in a virtual world gritty atmosphere really give the game more like continuing an investigation. depth. The techno music is a perfect fit While puzzles may take more thought, they are not difficult. There are also Point-and-click games have come a instances where there are multiple solutions to a puzzle or situation. This game should be replayed in order to



Technobabylon is a great and creative game that should not be missed by those who love science fiction and a great story. This game educates as well as entertains. I look forward to more from Technocrat Games, and can understand fully why Wadjet Eye would want to publish this game. Its great story, memorable characters, and stunning sights and sounds prove that the point-and-click genre is still worthy of attention and excitement.

## BRIGHT MOMENTS

The story and themes are very thought provoking, the cast of characters are memorable, and the game is beautiful to look at and listen to.

#### **FUMBLES IN THE DARK**

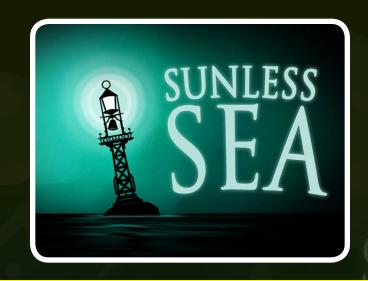
It is the opinion of this reviewer that this game achieves exactly what it wanted to.

### **VERDICT**

This is a great game that should not be missed.

Sarah Hambrick

# 



Nowadays I find myself enjoying indie games. The ideas are fresh, the stories are not cliche, and the overall gaming experience is enjoyable. The only sad moment is when the game ends. *Sunless Sea* proves to be a game that is almost endless, with its wealth of stories and quests that are available.

Genre: roguelike

Developer: Failbetter Games
Publisher: Failbetter Games
Release date: February 6, 2015

Platforms: Microsoft Windows, Mac OSX Website: www.failbettergames.com/sunless



s a successful Kickstarter project, Sunless Sea proves to have a loyal fanbase, due to the overall uniqueness of the game. The player begins with a nameless sea captain and must create a past for him or her. The profession and past one picks will determine your stats and what officer you have on your ship to start. An ambition must then be chosen. You can choose to find your father's bones (this is the closest to a main game storyline as you can get in this game), amass enough wealth to retire comfortably with your family, or collect enough sea stories to write your memoirs. You also receive your first ship, which can carry a limited amount of cargo, a gun, a searchlight, and your engine. As you get more money you can upgrade your ship and buy improved equipment for it. With your captain brimming with ambition and loyal crew awaiting your orders, you are ready to explore!

Setting out from Fallen London can seem daunting, since there is darkness everywhere, including your map. With the occasional lighthouse, lightship, or buoy to help light your way, you never quite know what is waiting for you. The more you explore, the more will appear on your map. One has to keep in mind how much food and supplies are on board for the return back to

Fallen London, otherwise your crew might be your next meal. Along with keeping your ship well provisioned, you are responsible for the well being and sanity of your crew. Note, eating your crew does not help either of these. As you sail, there are two meters that allow you to see the hunger and terror levels of your crew. Terror can increase if there is not enough light shining the way, the ship is not in familiar territory, or homewaters are a long ways away. Too much terror can lead your crew to mutiny or suicide. It is easy to stay close to the homewaters, but the real

joy of this game is braving the darkness and discovering new ports and creatures.

With each new port comes new quests, characters, and profits. There are many colorful characters to meet, and some of them can be hired as officers. Each officer you have improves your stats. There is more than one option for each of the officer positions (Navigator, Gunnery Officer, Engineer, Cook, and Surgeon) and they each have different abilities. There are also the sidequests of your officers, which will improve your relations with them and in turn, help you and your crewman. While one has a main ambition, there are so many quests and stories to discover, that it is impossible to accomplish it all with one captain. For most players, their first captain will succumb to insanity, starvation, or mutiny. However, a captain's death is only the beginning of an almost neverending legacy.

After a captain dies, you get to choose a legacy. You may be the captain's rival, correspondent, shipmate, protege', or direct descendant. With each legacy comes different advantages. You may inherit a ship, a map, an officer, a gun, or amazing wealth. With your inheritance you are ready to create





a new captain and take the experience and knowledge you have gained from previous captains and explore again. One thing that is constant is that the Unterzee is always changing. Islands may not be in the same place as they were with the previous captain.

The music is definitely a star of the game. It enhances the atmosphere of loneliness, adventure, and terror. The music also conjures to mind all the romantic ideals that come with seafaring. This is a unique soundtrack that could be enjoyed apart from the game, possibly while reading 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea or Moby Dick.

The look of this game is simplistic yet sublime at the same time. The game is

presented in 2D, yet it is unlike any other 2D title I have seen. Most of the game is your lonely boat traveling over the dark waters of the Unterzee, discovering its beautiful and dark ports. Cut scenes are replaced by what could be a page out of a Choose Your Own Adventure book.

While the uniqueness of Sunless Sea is one of its strengths, it is also one of its potential stumbling blocks for many modern gamers. In a market where AAA graphics are almost expected, Sunless Sea's simple and sublime graphics may be too minimalistic for gamers to appreciate. Since there are no cutscenes or voice overs, Sunless Sea consists of lots of reading. One could almost say this is an interactive novel, with many many subplots. If this idea does not agree with you, then this is not the game for you. Sunless Sea is a game that expects you to die a lot. The more you die, the more you learn, and the better you will do overall. While this does relieve the sting that comes from dying, some may not like the idea of constantly starting over and over to gain headway.



While Sunless Sea has elements of a roguelike game, I feel that it is more along the lines of an adventure RPG. It's numerous quests and stories will keep the player coming back for more. The look and music of Sunless Sea are unique and unlike anything else I have seen recently. This is a game that will either be loved or hated. For this reviewer, I look forward to many more hours exploring Fallen London and navigating the Unterzee.

**BRIGHT MOMENTS** 

The wealth of quests and stories ensure a lot of replayability; And the look and music achieve the feeling of this being a personal story of danger, loneliness, terror, and sometimes, triumph.

**FUMBLES IN THE DARK** 

This game may be too unique and simplistic for modern gamers to enjoy.

**VERDICT** 

This is a game geared for those who love a great story more than AAA graphics.



