



overthrow the oppressive regime that is stifling the city's flamboyance.

Sounds like the start of a perfectly adequate point and click adventure doesn't it? And it is. Only it isn't. You see, for the first time ever I think, Gremlin have produced a real-time point and click adventure. An adventure which you can simply wander around, look at stuff, pick things up and mess around with them almost as you would in real life. No more watching from a distance, clicking at a spot on the ground and watching your little character plod towards your chosen position. You still take time to reach your destinations but somehow it's much more pleasing when you're doing it yourself and seeing your progress through your own eyes. As you can doubtless tell from the screenshots, it's all done using a very Doom-like engine called True 3D. It's very fast, fairly smooth and the familiarity and detail of Neutropolis' cityscape and building interiors makes the experience somehow more visually stimulating than other adventures which present a series of superbly rendered scenes.

In fact I'll go further than that. I think *Normality* is a fairly important game in the PC family tree. *Doom* kicked it all off by finally

delivering what we'd wanted for years. An immersive game with graphics good enough to produce an atmosphere. *Normality* takes this and applies it to the adventure genre. Let's face it, pointy, clikky adventures are all very well, as are *Aloney-In-The-Darkey* adventures. But what we all want is the same level of puzzling and challenge that only an adventure game can provide... but in real time, through our own eyes, as if we're really there. And this is pretty much what *Normality* takes a stab at.

There are a few problems though. Firstly, and stupidly, the player interface is a bit crap. Moving around is fine but whenever you want to do anything a comedy voodoo doll appears on the screen and you point at various bits to carry out an action (click the hand to pick up,

Individuality is a crime. The people must display no signs of imagination or creativity. It may sound like another day on the GamesMaster team but this is actually the situation in Neutropolis, the city in *Normality* in which a young lad called Kent lives. Kent isn't normal. In fact he has, at times, rather too much personality. Complete arse or not, he is the hero of the game and his plan is to find some people sympathetic to his cause and



Normality

The hero's place of incarceration is actually Les's flat. The paint is peeling, the floors are filthy and a strange satanic stench emanates from the bath.



This odd voodoo doll serves as a control menu in the game.



the mouth to talk and so on). Why? Also, while the puzzles are logical and many present an adequate challenge they're not nearly as sophisticated or numerous as we've come to expect. Finally, don't expect any action. It may move like *Doom*, but it's an adventure, not a shoot-em-up or a hybrid of the two.

Normality is a stepping stone and a very good one. For the moment it provides an intriguing and original challenge (though not a very hefty one). Most importantly it whets your appetite for what will undoubtedly follow. With luck, in the not too distant future we'll get to play a

full-on 3D, complex adventure, complete with sections of mindless blasting action. Can't wait.



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Welcome To Neutropolis...

This town's a funny old place. Not funny ha ha, you realise. No, that's against the law. But it is very funny peculiar. Here are some of the locations you'll come across during your struggle for individuality.

Your apartment. A filthy poo-hole of a place. It's not actually your apartment but merely the place where the Norm Police have imprisoned you. Use the bird and the remote to fool the guards.



The Factory. Slumba Rest makes beds, but there's something not quite kosher about the place. Go to the toilet next to Tiddler's office and climb up through the grille in the ceiling.



The Den. That girl's your top mate. She tells you what missions to perform and who to go and rescue. She doesn't trust you at first so try showing her the note you have on you.



The Mall. To get into the TV station you need a rat (the one in your apartment's washing machine). Visit the food store in the mall to get some frozen food to break the washing machine open.



The TV Station. You need to play a videotape of a subversive rock singer over the airwaves. You have the security pass, but maybe you should mess it up with some old spilt baked beans (I dunno).



The Street. Later on in the game you will need to come back to the street to rescue Dai the window cleaner from a van. A couple of pipes would be handy. Pipes, right. Got it?



The outpost. You're nearing the latter part of your quest now. There's a prisoner on one of the floors of the outpost. Best use those scissors you found in your apartment, way back at the start of the game.



GM Tip

There are two beds in the Plush Rest factory. You're going to need to get the one on the right working. You'll find a battery just down the stairs. The other two objects you need, the receiver and the sender, can be found in Tiddler's office. Use the sender with the battery and the receiver on the bare wire coming from the bed.



Dai the window cleaner is actually a member of the resistance.



GUEST REVIEWER



ANDY DYER

A strange looking man. No not me, the knight.



GRAPHICS

85

High detail level and a pretty fast update but there is a little jerkiness.

SOUNDS

76

Crisp, clear music and sounds which unfortunately often drown out the speech.

GAMEPLAY

82

Logical puzzles and a well designed environment. Needs to be more complex though.

LIFESPAN

66

Not really big enough. There's not enough meaty adventuring to be done.

Pump up the puzzles, expand the world, tweak the interface and this would be the perfect adventure game. As it is it's a glimpse at the potential of gaming. **ANDY**

JUDGEMENT

83