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Shenmue II: Prima's Official Strategy Guide

Elizabeth Hollinger

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Elizabeth Hollinger : Shenmue II: Prima's Official Strategy Guide before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shenmue II: Prima's Official Strategy Guide:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Do you really need this guide?--a pro vs con breakdownBy KnyteOwlFor all who didn't know, "Dragon's Lair 3D: Return to The Lair" was a game which almost didn't make it to shelves. After getting bogged down with some difficulty finding a publisher, Ubi Soft rescued this title, and it made it to shelves after all, enjoying moderate success with a multi-platform launch. Undoubtedly, many casual fans and more experienced players who may sell or trade the game upon completing it may conclude that this game is simplistic enough that a strategy guide really isn't necessary. So why get this guide? This guide is certainly a helpful companion for the game that avid fans, and people who bought this game as a permanent addition to their collections will take interest in, but like the game its self, it does have some drawbacks that make deciding whether you need it, want it, or whether it's worth your money something of a tricky decision. So let's take a look at what it has to offer.As far as

guides go, this one is as thorough, and complete as one would expect a good guide to be, and it even has some supplemental material. Bestiary, item lists, heart container locations, treasure callouts (with tips on how to get them), walkthroughs, puzzle solutions, a run-down of all Dirk's weapons and attacks, a description of all the dragon essences and how best to use them, and full 3D maps are all included. Unfortunately, the maps are the guide's single biggest weakness. While the guide does provide an overhead map of the level at the beginning of each chapter, and they are large (a whole page), several of the maps for sub levels, or mini-games are quite small, and more importantly, ALL the maps are unannotated. This makes it very difficult to simply glance at the guide as you play instead of having to pause, and scour the guide for item locations, or tips in the text. While the maps are appreciated, and can still be useful, their small size limits their usefulness. How much (or if) this will matter to you depends on how you're playing the game. For treasure hunters trying to unlock the game's bonus modes (more on those later), this will be a bigger complaint. While the linear design of most of the rooms almost eliminates the need for a map, the guide could have been much more useful if treasure locations were simply pinpointed with annotations on the maps instead of only being called out in the text. Of greater concern is that there are also health, and mana bottles scattered about which are occasionally hidden in out of the way niches. These are called out in the text, but not shown on the maps. Many players will most likely be relying quite heavily on these by the second half of the game, and it would have been nice if the guide was more helpful by pinpointing them on the maps so you're not as likely to miss them. For those that are simply trying to beat the game, the inclusion of maps will be considered nice, but unnecessary. To me, this map issue qualifies as a significant oversight, but not necessarily a deal breaker since I still found the guide's walkthrough, and puzzle solutions helpful. And the walkthrough, along with it's supplemental materials do still provide plenty of incentive for fans to pick this guide up. Aside from the walkthrough, fans will appreciate the inclusion of a short history of Dragon's Lair, a comparison between the original and this remake revealing which original levels were used, and which ones weren't, profiles of the creators, and even a timeline revealing every entry in the franchise (unfortunately a couple of the sequels are so rare collectors will be hard pressed to ever find them), and that Dragon's Lair has been one of the most successful franchises in videogame history, and appeared on almost every gaming platform ever made. Aside from the maps, my only other major gripe with this guide is that while it tells you that collecting the treasure hidden in the levels opens new gameplay modes based on how much you found (there are four types, and 100 pieces total), it doesn't tell you what those modes are, or how much of the treasure you need to collect to unlock them. Unfortunately, the treasure requirement must be pretty high given that I've completed the game with a fair amount of treasure without having unlocked any additional modes. Also, there are at least two instances where the treasure is VERY difficult to get, and the guide offers only the most subtle of hints about how to get it. I'll have to ding it for that too. Most players would use a list of bonus modes, and the amount of treasure required for unlocking them to decide whether they're worth trying to unlock. Internet walkthroughs can't always be relied upon to reveal these elements, so most people buy retail guides for the sake of puzzle solutions, finding secrets, and unlocking bonus modes and content--sometimes even to the point of having the plot given away, being led by the hand, or having puzzles spelled right out--not to be given vague hints, then left to figure it out on your own. This information could easily have been included in a separate "secrets" section in the back of the book for those who don't want spoilers. To be fair, the guide does reveal the locations of the treasures (which is equally important because especially in the later levels, they could quite easily be missed otherwise), it just doesn't always provide tips on how to get it, but there are only a handful of such instances; when the treasure is cleverly hidden, or difficult to get (or both), it usually does offer tips on how to get it in a sidebar. Another minor drawback is that the bestiary is in the back of the book (insuring a lot of flipping back and forth, and keeping track of a bookmark), and while it does offer some general strategies about how to fight enemies, it doesn't really offer any insights, or special tips about how to defeat them more quickly or efficiently unless it's a boss. To be fair, this truly is a nitpicky complaint given that the bestiary probably won't see much use. Dirk only has two special attacks, and combat in this game is simplistic enough that all the author could really do is point out the enemy's key weaknesses, and tell you to get busy kicking butt anyway. The boss strategies on the other hand are sound and thorough, I just thought the guide could have offered a little more "inside baseball" sort of information. The screenshots are adequately large, bright, and clear, and generally do a good job giving you visual cues as to what you're supposed to be doing. Most strategy guides work best when you turn to them for a tip when you're stuck instead of expecting the author to lead you around by the hand, and the Dragon's Lair 3D guide seems to be written with that philosophy in mind as well, although treasure hunters, casual players and novices can certainly follow it to the letter if need be. The guide does contain some spoilers which might have been better placed in a separate "secrets" section, and some may argue that the best guides give away secrets without handing out plot spoilers, but in a game where the primary objective is so straightforward, is there really a point to it? All in all, though not without it's weaknesses, this guide remains a good companion for the game, covers all platforms the game is available for, almost completely insures that you won't get stuck, is in full color, well organized, and has all the comprehensiveness and extras we've come to expect from modern strategy guides. Aside from perhaps a poster, or some concept art, there isn't much you could ask for in a strategy guide that isn't included here, so I really don't want to give would-be buyers the impression this guide isn't helpful, or worth having. That said, deciding whether or not you want/need this guide will depend

pretty heavily on your skill level, whether you're treasure hunting, how much of a Dragon's Lair fan you are, and whether or not you intend to keep the game. Although this game isn't especially difficult, there are several areas where it does get tricky, and young or casual players could get stuck. I consider myself a fairly experienced gamer, and still encountered a few puzzles I got hung up on which I was grateful for having this guide to help me through. This guide is also loooong out of print, and an exceedingly rare find even in second hand outlets. Despite a few shortcomings, this is a 'must have' item for Dragon's Lair fans who bought this game as a permanent addition to their collection, and would want a 'complete' Dragon's Lair 3D package. It's the only retail guide available for the game, and reasonably priced here on . I give it a strong, but guarded recommendation.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Good guide overallBy AMMHaving trouble with Shenmue II for XBOX or deciding to play through it again to see the things you may have missed the first time around? If this is the case, I'd recommend this strategy guide. It does a good job of detailing the various events and side-quests that may not be immediately obvious when you play through the game yourself. Where this guide loses points is that it does not compare to the phenomenal Prima guide that was published for the previous game in the series (Shenmue 1 for the Sega Dreamcast). That guide was ultra detailed, packed with photos and bios for EVERY single character. While Shenmue II is a much larger game, for whatever reason there are only character bios for the main characters, no photos of the special items, and some pretty sparse details as far as fighting moves and how to beat some of the tougher bosses are concerned. While this may not be a big deal for gamers who just want to finish the game, many Shenmue fans will be turned off as this is a VERY deep series with many complex plot developments and interesting characters. While it isn't the guide I had initially hoped for, I would still recommend it as the authors do a good job of breaking the game down chapter by chapter and also offer some helpful strategies that will help you maximize the money you earn in the game and so on. Seeing how this is the only guide for Shenmue II, there really is no other choice.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Justice done!By Video Game HistoryShenmue is the pinnacle of gaming. Support so that part 3 may come out someday!

Help Ryo continue the quest he began in Shenmue! Detailed maps of every area Walkthrough of every vast locale that Ryo visits Complete moves and combat list with hit points and damage info for Free Combat mode All item locations Solutions to all puzzles Killer minigame strategies