

AN ELECTRONIC NOVEL™

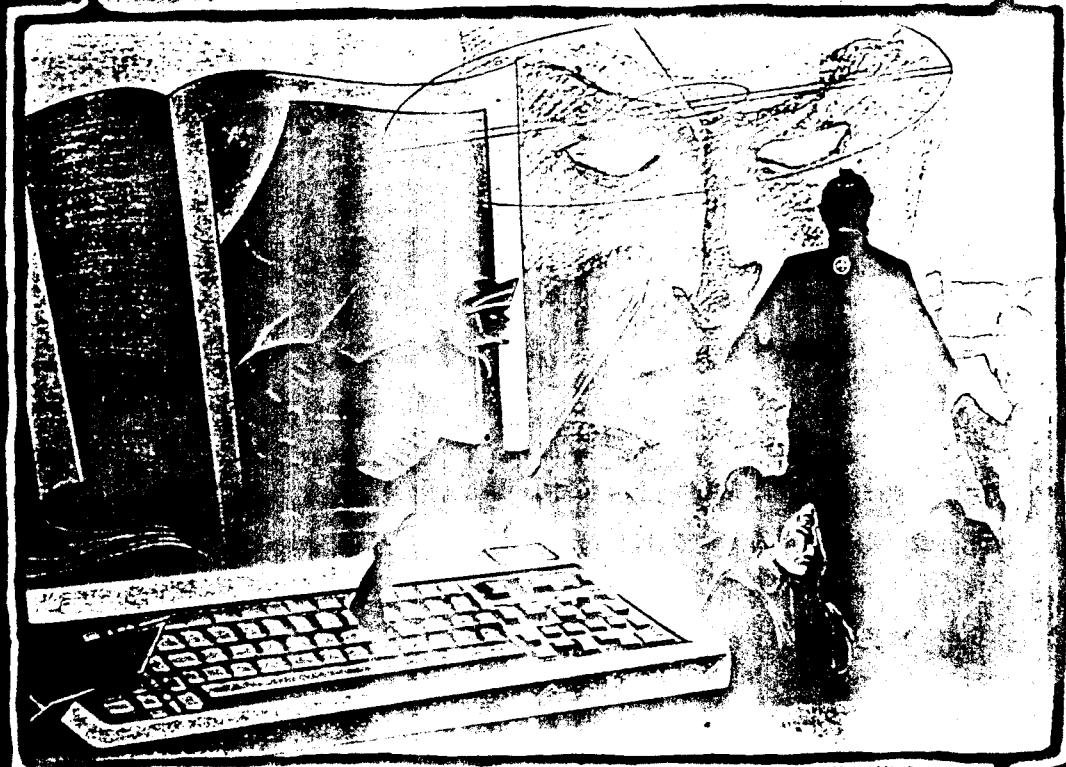


By James P. Cannon
David Bunch, William S. Burroughs, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025

A SYNAPSE & BRÖDERBUND PRODUCTION

BRIMSTONE

It is the Eve of All Hallows. Gawain, Knight of the Round Table, goes forth, summoned by Destiny. Across a moonlit plain, a shimmering castle seems to beckon. On its parapets, a breath of breeze stirs a banner. The knight nears the massive door, knowing nothing of what awaits him behind those walls. Soon Gawain will discover what is known to men only in legends—or nightmares. And so will you. As the underdemon, bat-monkey-man, reaches out his gnarled and furry hand to yours, you catch a glimpse of his wild eyes. They are dancing red with the flickering fire of BRIMSTONE.



What Is an Electronic Novel™?

An Electronic Novel™ picks up where the printed word leaves off. A dynamic fictional universe begins—with you in the center of the action.

You start each Electronic Novel™ by reading the first chapters of the story in this book, and then go directly to the action of your home computer. The interactive adventure unfolds on diskette, pulling you into an excitingly vivid, action-packed world. Your intuition and the choices you make determine what happens next, how the universe of the novel unfolds.

ATARI®

ELECTRONIC NOVEL™

REFERENCE CARD

Start-up Instructions

What You Need

An Atari 400/600XL/800/800XL/1200XL • At least 48K of memory • 2 disk drives • A monitor

Optional Equipment

One or more blank disks • An Atari printer • A 52K add-on RAM board • A Mosaic 64K add-on RAM board or Axion RAM-disk (for Atari 800) • A Happy modified disk drive for faster loading and responses

Starting the Electronic Novel

1. Be sure that your computer, disk drives, and monitor are plugged in.

2. Turn on the monitor and both disk drives.

•• NOTE •• Do not turn on your disk drive with a disk already in it. Do not insert or remove a disk until you are instructed to do so.

3. Insert the Electronic Novel program disks into the disk drives. The disk labeled D1 should be in drive 1 with the D1:Side 1 label toward the front of the drive, facing up. The disk labeled D2 should be in drive 2 with the D2:Side 1 label toward the front of the drive, facing up. Close the disk drive doors.

4. Turn on your computer. The novel will load and then begin automatically.

The Electronic Novel will ask you a simple but very important question when you begin (be sure to have your book handy).

When you reach a particular point in the novel, you will be prompted to flip both disks. Remove the disks and reinsert them into the same drives with the Side 2 labels facing up. Then press RETURN.

Troubleshooting Checklist

If your Electronic Novel did not load properly, answer each of these questions:

1. Are your computer, disk drives, and monitor plugged in and the cables firmly connected?
2. Do you have any cartridges in the cartridge slot? If so, remove them.
3. Do you have any serial devices (a modem, a printer, an Atari 850 interface, etc.) besides your disk drives connected to your computer? If so, disconnect them and repeat the loading instructions. If you want, you can reconnect a printer after loading.
4. Are the program disks inserted properly with the D1:Side 1 and D2:Side 1 labels toward the fronts of the drives, facing up?
5. Are the disk drive doors completely closed?
6. Does your computer have at least 48K of memory?
7. Can you detect any physical damage to the disk?

If these questions do not reveal the problem, repeat the loading instructions in sequence.

Making a Backup Copy

You can make spare copies of your Electronic Novel program disks. Copies are good to have in case your originals are lost or damaged. To make a copy, follow these steps:

1. Start with four blank disks. Your Electronic Novel is stored on four labeled sides of the two program disks. You must copy each of the four sides onto a different blank disk. You don't have to format the blanks before you use them; the copy program will format them for you. You should remove any write-protect tabs from the blanks, however.
2. With your computer off, insert the first Electronic Novel program disk into drive 1 with the D1:Side 2 label toward the front of the drive; insert one of the blank disks into drive 2.
3. Turn on the computer. In a moment the SYNCOPY title screen will appear. The question in the box will ask you to identify the destination drive. Press the right cursor key (→) to select drive 2. Then press RETURN.
4. When the backup program asks you to choose the density, press RETURN to choose single density. Drive 1 will spin and SYNCOPY will begin reading sectors. In a few moments drive 2 will spin, formatting the blank disk and then writing sectors.
5. When the copy is finished, the title screen will display again. You can repeat the process, using D1:Side 1, D2:Side 1, and D2:Side 2 with the other three blank disks. Do not try to copy onto both sides of a blank disk.

Special Features

Saving and Resuming

BOOKMARK

Perhaps you've made progress in an Electronic Novel and you'd like to pick up next time where you left off. To do so, you will need a blank disk. Don't try to bookmark or write files to your program disk.

The bookmark disk you use to save your current position should first be formatted using Atari DOS. Consult your Atari User's Manual for the correct formatting procedure. If your blank disk

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The bookmark disk you use to save your current position should first be formatted using Atari DOS. Consult your Atari User's Manual for the correct formatting procedure. If your blank disk has a write-protect tab, be sure to remove it before formatting. After you have formatted your bookmark disk, do not use it for anything except storing versions of Electronic Novels. Any other files written to it will be destroyed by the bookmark process.

Some Electronic Novels are designed so that you cannot always save your position. Usually, though, to bookmark your novel, follow these steps:

From inside the novel, type **BOOKMARK** and press RETURN. Do not insert your formatted bookmark disk until you are prompted to do so.

• NOTE • If you make a mistake and you want to stop the bookmark process, type **A** to abort.

Next you will see this message at the bottom of your screen:

Type a version number (1-8).

Type a number from 1 through 8. Give each saved version of the novel a different number. After you have saved 8 versions and you use it again, you will replace the original bookmarked version. 1. Note the number you give each saved version of the novel. You will need to use the last number with the RESUME NOVEL command to pick up where you left off.

Next you will see this message at the bottom of your screen:

Bookmark drive 1, 2, 3 or 4?

Type the number of the drive in which you want to have your bookmark disk.

After you have typed a drive number, you will see this message:

Insert bookmark disk. Press RETURN.

Insert the bookmark disk into the drive you specified in Step 3 and close the disk drive door. Then press RETURN.

Depending upon your position in the novel, the bookmark process will ask you to insert a particular side of the program disk. Follow the messages at the bottom of your screen. When the bookmark process is complete, the novel will begin again where you left off.

RESUME NOVEL

To reopen a version of a novel you saved with the BOOKMARK command, follow these steps:

1. From inside the novel, type RESUME NOVEL and press RETURN.

•• NOTE •• You can use the RESUME NOVEL command only after you have answered the question the novel asks during loading.

2. Next you will see this message:

Type a version number (1-8).

Type the number of the version you want to resume.

3. Next you will see this message at the bottom of your screen:

Bookmark drive 1, 2, 3 or 4?

Type the number of the drive in which you want to have your bookmark disk.

4. After you have typed a version number, you will see this message:

Insert bookmark disk. Press RETURN.

Insert the bookmark disk into the drive you specified in Step 3 and close the disk drive door. Then press RETURN.

Depending upon your position in the novel, you will be prompted to insert a particular side of the program disk. Follow the messages at the bottom of your screen. When the resuming process is complete, the novel will begin again from the point at which you typed the BOOKMARK command.

Printing

PRINTER ON

If you have a printer connected to your computer, you can use this command to create a printed record of the novel. Follow these steps:

1. Be sure your printer is turned on and cabled correctly to your computer. Do not use the PRINTER ON command unless you do have a printer. It will cause the novel to run erratically and you'll probably have to start over.

2. Follow steps 1 through 4 under *Starting the Electronic Novel* on this reference card.

•• NOTE •• You can use the PRINTER ON command only after you have answered the question the novel asks during loading.

3. After you have answered the question, type PRINTER ON and press RETURN. Whatever commands you type now, together with the Electronic Novel text responses, will both print and display on your monitor. To stop printing, use the PRINTER OFF command.

PRINTER OFF

To end a printing session, type PRINTER OFF and press RETURN. Printing will stop.

Using Special Keys

CONTROL-E or >

Holding down CONTROL and pressing E or pressing the > key will repeat the last line you typed and followed with a RETURN. The line will repeat on a new command line, but to enter it as a command, you must follow the repeated line with a new RETURN.

CONTROL-X or <

Holding down CONTROL and pressing X or pressing the < key will erase a line you just typed. However, you must press CONTROL-X or < before pressing RETURN on the line you want to erase. If you press CONTROL-X or < on a blank line, nothing will happen.

RIGHT CURSOR (→)

Pressing the right cursor key will repeat the characters on the last line you typed and followed with a return. The effect is similar to pressing CONTROL-E or >, except that pressing the right cursor key repeats the line one character at a time.

DELETE

Pressing the DELETE/BACKSPACE key allows you to back up and correct mistakes before you press RETURN. It deletes the character before the cursor and moves the cursor backward one space.

ESC

Pressing the ESC key allows you to stop the changing world of the novel. It performs the same function as the PAUSE NOVEL command. When you press ESC, this message will appear at the bottom of your screen:

Press any key to continue.

When you press a key, the action of the novel will resume.

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PART I

THE CONFESSION



FIRST OF ALL, I, Jeremy Diddler, confess. I stole the Albion Manuscript from a vault at the National Museum of Belmont, where it had lain unread for some centuries.

I was going crazy at the time. For three years I had labored on a thesis in Obtuse Triangular Philology, a field of sublinguistics. I was translating a volume in Nelch, *The Works of the Mystic St. Slog*. That's the thirteenth-century Slog, not the eighteenth-century Slog, for you Nelch Majors. I hated the stuff.

Still, I proceeded doggedly until I cracked. I had done 453 pages of a projected 1400, and I cracked. I began juggling six or seven hours a day, and, to occupy my mind, I took up reading mysteries, which I had formerly detested. I began, in short, to know the bliss that passes for happiness among the masses.

There was but one fly in my ointment—the half-mad Professor Volpes, who'd begun hounding me about academic standards. I had heard that Volpes had been batting my name around in faculty meetings as an example of ill-spent youth. It was he who suggested I visit the National Museum of Belmont, to immerse myself in the Slog Archives. He had assured the faculty that one glimpse of Slog in the original would cure my lethargy. Anything to get away from him, I thought, and packed my juggling equipment. Perhaps I would earn my living as a juggler in the streets of Belmontia. But once deplaned in the city, I felt the needle of guilt, and went to the museum.

I made my way to the Medieval Vault and was met there by a huge man, towering and broad-shouldered, hairless but for his bushy eyebrows which resembled nothing more than a pair of fuzzy caterpillars. He was a library clerk, by the name of Hodge. After forbidding me to read anything in the lower stacks, he led me to the Slog Archives. Seeing the books, my revulsion for the Nelch returned, and I could barely mask my disgust.

When Hodge had gone, I began to wonder about what he'd said—that no one could go to the lower stacks. His command seemed so prohibitive and so odd that I could not resist. I abandoned Slog and found the stairs.

Below all was dark, or so I'd thought until my eyes adjusted to the dimness. Then, indeed, I saw a light glowing in a distant alcove of the stacks. I crept forward—possessed, I suppose, by the daring of the mad—and discovered a candle burning on a low shelf, next to a red volume, the book that was to change my destiny.

I stood a moment, summoning my nerve. Then I picked up the book. Unmarked it was, and in a red leather binding. Inside

I recognized a treasure. It was the Albion Manuscript!

Many years before, at the knee of the ancient Skeet, I had learned of the existence of this manuscript. Here was *The Dream of Gawain*, a vivid and masterful tale by the jeweler of medieval storytellers, The Third Anonymous. A single manuscript of this work had survived the Peasants' Revolt Against Stories in the early thirteenth century, a small and dingy pocket edition owned by a traveling minstrel, some suggested, in which the works of the master were written in a crabbed and illegible hand.

The injustice of it! Six hundred ninety deathly boring manuscripts of St. Slog, and only one of The Third Anonymous. At the time, I had no thoughts of stealing it. Or perhaps the thought had just teased my mind because, as I suddenly heard the still, quick walk of a bureaucrat, I flinched guiltily and thrust the book into my pocket, where it fit perfectly.

It was Mr. Hodge. He glared down at me from beneath his stormy brows. "No one must be in the Lower Stacks," he said. "And furthermore, a candle in the library is strictly forbidden." I had forgotten, for the moment, about the fascist government of Belmont, agents of which had already ransacked my baggage at the airport. "I'm sorry," I said in my best Nelch accent. "I don't understand what is this word 'Stacks?'"

"Stacks are floors in a library," said Hodge. "Idiot," he added. He stared at me malevolently. "Leave," he said at last.

I was ushered by this lummock into the Belmontian sunlight. So shocked was I at this rough treatment that I neglected to mention my possession of the manuscript—and the only one in the world, too, oh my and how sorry I was!

Why such a treasured volume should be on an open shelf in an unlocked section of the museum, I never determined. Nor



did I find myself scrupulous enough to ask. The manuscript was mine!

Scarcely daring to admit my good fortune to myself, I returned to my lodging, a cheerless businessman's garret in the city's Noe Valley area. Night had fallen, and I latched the door behind me in the dark. When I flipped the light switch, I was instantly chagrined. No electricity. Determined to see my prize despite the darkness, I stumbled to the bed and opened the book.

No one shall believe me when I say this, but in the interests of Truth I shall say so nonetheless—some light, a dull green light, rose from the crabbed letters on those ancient pages. At first I thought it some reflection, or the product of my electrified imagination, but no. All night I sat in the green glow of the open manuscript. I read the work, beginning to end, bathed until dawn in that emerald radiance.



IN THE MORNING, it was again a plain red volume on the sideboard. Within its unassuming red binding was Gawain, Knight of the Round Table, outwitting and outfighting all the Legions of the Underworld. There was the divine emanation Enitharmon, she of the many guises, and there was the riddling morlock, Blake. Reading the manuscript, I had discovered the mystic motto, key to the land of Ulro.

All thought of giving up this exquisite book had fled from me, so possessed was I of the spirit of the adventure. I had become the possessor of the Albion Manuscript, and would defend it with the boldness and wit of Sir Gawain himself.

Lifting its red weight, I conceived a plan. I wrapped the



manuscript in an old copy of the Wall Street Journal and caught a cab to the Pickwick Stage terminal. I checked the book at the Parcel Room and mailed the stub to an old friend, James Paul, at his business address, Synapse Software, USA.

Returning to my hotel, I was confronted in the lobby by five bullying Cro-Magnons, including Hodge, the "librarian." We saw each other in the same instant. I ran.

It was no use, of course. The people of Belmont are notorious in their belief of the guilt of the accused, and I was sorely accused—my pursuers fired shots in the air as we raced through the streets of the capital. Suddenly, an elderly man, a farmer evidently, jumped into my path. He stood his ground and brandished a staff, of all things. In my surprise, I hesitated, and my hesitation was all that my pursuers needed. I was tackled from behind and caught.



THIS WAS ALL I knew until yesterday. The intervening months in this drab cell have left me only with the sense of how the daylight waxes and wanes in the single air slot, high above my head. Then yesterday, I heard chains rattle outside my door, and my stingy and card-cheating jailer, T. Edward Fum by name, gave me the letter.

A group of computer programmers in California had taken up my case. My old friend Jim had retrieved the manuscript from the Pickwick, and had shown it to what he called "the boywonders at my workplace." All, indeed, felt inspired to help me out of my unjust imprisonment, in exchange for something called "the Software Rights to BRIMSTONE." I agreed readily, and now await word from them as to how they plan to get me out of this place.



Still, my captors have insisted that I confess to the theft of the manuscript before any procedures to release me may be undertaken. These Belmontian apes mean business. Hence this confession. I did it. I'm guilty. Now may I leave?

Cordially,

Jeremy Diddler

Jeremy Diddler

PART II

DOCUMENTS

An Explanatory Note By James Paul



WAS A SCHOOL chum of Jeremy Diddler's, back at Lambeth Tech. I was, at any rate, as far as Diddler was concerned. To be honest, I never really cared for the man, but finding myself too polite to tease him about his massive girth, as some of the other boys did, I became his friend by default. Since then he has sent me copies of his work—papers on some medieval saint, which I found useful chiefly for entertaining my friends. When I received a hat check stub and a note from Diddler last January, I thought he had sent me another one of those stodgy essays.

But no. Here was an odd, old-fashioned stub, upon which was written, "Articles left more than thirty days shall become the property of the State." I might have discarded the stub, except for Diddler's note, which was more hysterical than usual, and my

own plans, which included a trip to Belmont. I was, at that time, a writer of travel articles.

Diddler's note said only that I should guard the stub with my life, and that he would get in touch with me. Well, I heard nothing from him. Winter went to spring, and I left for Belmont, where I planned to take notes on the seacoast in the province of Oothoon. Once in Belmontia, I was to go by bus to Oothoon. As luck would have it, the government had declared a Day of Calisthenics, and all transportation had come to a halt. I was sitting in the waiting area of the Pickwick Stage Lines, enduring the delay, when something about the name Pickwick pricked my memory.

The stub! I still had it in my wallet. Sure enough, it was the same place. A marvelous coincidence, to be sure. Chuckling to myself, I crossed to the parcel desk and handed the stub to the clerk, a huge, hairless man with bushy eyebrows. He read it, looked at me suspiciously, and brought forth a package wrapped in newspaper. I tipped him liberally—not the usual custom in Belmont—and took the package back to my seat.

It was a red book, the story of a knight from the days of old, who has a dream about the Underworld. I could hardly make heads or tails of it. It was written in such horrible handwriting that I assumed Diddler must have scribbled it himself. I stuffed the book into my luggage and waited. Finally the squat-thrusting crowds in the streets were dismissed and the bus departed. Oothoon was drab, despite the sea, so that after a week I decided not to write the article after all, and went home to California.

I threw a party on my return and invited several friends from my occasional place of employment, a software company. I wrote reader-directed tours of the world for them. You know the kind: "Go East. East of you is the glorious Taj Mahal." And to entertain

the party, I brought out Diddler's book.

It was evening, of course, and I had dimmed the lights to enhance the party atmosphere. I was stunned, when I opened the book, to notice a green radiance rising from the pages. My friends, long accustomed to special effects, were only mildly impressed. But as we began to examine the manuscript in detail, we found not the drivel I had expected from Jeremy Diddler, but true adventure! Strong and stately prose! The decadent glory of the Underworld!

Suddenly, William, one of the computer prodigies, suggested a computer analysis of the curious structure of the manuscript. The party was forgotten as we all packed into our cars and raced to Synapse. The programmers had detected what I could not have seen in the text—that its ornate structure could be penetrated by the wonders of electronics. They were consumed with their task. The book lay open, lighting the room with its green glow, as we huddled around a keyboard, whipping our huge mainframe to exhaustion. We worked all night, and all night for many nights thereafter, creating what we called *BRIMSTONE*.

I kept expecting Diddler to appear, demanding his book, but months went by and he failed to show. The programming team, utterly spent, finally finished their work, and our natural impulse was to present *BRIMSTONE* to the world. But certain legal niceties demanded that we contact Diddler.

I wrote to the government of Belmont. Naturally there was no response. On a hunch I called the Belmontian Liberation Front, who maintained a suite of offices on San Francisco's Montgomery Block. Indeed, they had heard of Diddler. He was in prison, in Belmont. On what charge? I asked. The secretary simply snickered. "There are no charges in Belmont," she said. "Everyone is already

guilty.”

I had a letter smuggled in to him. In it we requested the rights to *BRIMSTONE*. Of course, none of us showed the least interest in profiting on the project— we simply wished to abide by the letter of the law. Naturally I did not have the leisure or the space to explain everything to Diddler, and, to tell the truth, I doubted that he would understand.

Just today I have received from the local consulate a confession, signed by Jeremy Diddler, and long-winded as usual. Letters of support for Diddler's release may be directed to the Jeremy Diddler Defense Committee, Belmontian Consulate, 1170 Guerrero Street, San Francisco, California 94110.

We have endeavored, herein, to present the manuscript in all its original glory and have added features to aid the contemporary reader. Phrases in strange and ancient tongues, including Nelch, may be translated by a simple command. And through the modern miracle of integrated chips, the reader may venture into the Underworld with Gawain the Bold himself.

What small danger may be involved in exploring the world of *BRIMSTONE* is, of course, more than offset by the splendor of the story itself. We have done our best, though no mere junkpile of circuits and cables could have captured the splendor of the Albion Manuscript. And considering that, we have arranged with the royal family of the kingdom of Nales to place the manuscript on permanent display in the Palace at Richmond, so that its beauty may again be available to the masses. Know, however, as you “boot up” the disk herein, that we have done all that is humanly possible to bring to you the experience of *BRIMSTONE, The Dream of Gawain*.

Notes by Ernest Volpes, M.A., Ph.D., L.Gk., B.T.Z.



I HAVE BEEN REQUESTED by Synapse Software to supply certain historical details which may ease the reader's transition into the underworld realm of Ulro. I have decided that the best way to proceed may be to provide a Directory, listing the more distinguished inhabitants of that place, and giving relevant historical detail.



A Directory of Ulro

Sir Gawain (b. Inglethorp, 1297-1343): A minor knight of the Round Table, best known for his compassion and his gullibility. On All Saints Day in 1317, Gawain startled the court by declaring that he had experienced a dream vision. Sir Galahad had made many such declarations, but no one had ever expected Gawain to declare such a thing. The court poet, who is now known as the Third Anonymous, was summoned, and Gawain dictated his dream in detail. This much we know from the record. Legend has it that Gawain set out, soon after, on his Great Quest, instructed by the vision he had experienced in his sleep. The Quest of the Garter is so commonly known that any recapitulation seems superfluous in this directory.

Enitharmon: An emanation, reported in several guises in The Dream of Gawain. She appears as a demanding and willful spirit-guide, given to riddles and other inexplicable utterances. In her guise as a young woman, she plays a central role in The Quest of the Garter (see Gawain). As an emanation, Enitharmon proceeds through history, sometimes known as The System Voice (see Master Adam).



Fum: A bat-eared gargoyle (Skeet suggests that Fum is the proto-gargoyle, but Nelch literature includes others of his kind.) Before his inclusion on the west wall of the *Cathedrale de Notre-Dame*, Fum was a minor figure in folk songs of the Late Middle Dark Ages, "Fum and the Fairy Ring" being the best known. After 1317, Fum appears regularly as a character in political satire, representing the Wandering Spirit of Uproar. In *The Dream of Gawain*, Fum is an underdemon, slave to the Powers That Be in Ulro, a role which may have conditioned his later behavior.

Lord Hodge: An overdemon. Hodge is a type, that is, he appears in every epoch and age, ready always to forbid and prohibit, to boss and order about. In *The Dream of Gawain*, he appears as a large hairless demon, complete with scimitar, who guards the First Gate of Ulro. In other guises, he appears as a project manager, an executive director, a company president, even as a librarian.



Master Adam (1212?-1321?): Squire master of Camelot during the High Period. Master Adam was responsible for the training and development of most of the great knights of the Round Table, including Sirs Lancelot, Galahad, Percival, Bedivere, and Gawain. Though he was most skilled at the martial arts, Master Adam was a learned man in many disciplines. It was he, for instance, who refined Bedivere's lute technique. Much beloved during his own time, he too appears in literature of later periods. In *The Tale* (Albion B210), Adam may have had the role of *The System Voice*, but since no manuscripts remain, this is mere conjecture. Many of the Master Adam Tales were spared in the general catastrophe known as the Peasants' Revolt Against Stories.

Blake: A master magician, noted in the earliest texts as Black, who by dint of his contradictory nature occupies a garden paradise in Ulro. Not to be confused, of course, with the eighteenth-century engraver.



The White Apes of Ulro: Some of the last remnants of the Ambrosian apes, the few survivors of the Onslaughts of Har. Two colonies of Ambrosians are extant: one, *The Defeated of Har*, flee forever through the wastelands of Ulro, still in panic from the Ultimate Onslaught. The Defeated appear in *The Tale* (Albion B210). The other group, *The Victors of Har*, live in obscure tranquility on their remote island. Despite their huge and fearsome appearance, the Ambrosian apes were noted for their refined culture, which made them the favorites of the nobility of Europe. In a noted passage, the Medieval diarist Guillaume recalls his surprise at hearing an Ambrosian converse with the court in perfect French.

The Green Knight: Bercilak de Hautdesert (1297-1343), a Knight of the North, sworn enemy to King Arthur and lifelong opponent to Sir Gawain. Hautdesert's origins are obscure—one source claims him to be the offspring of Morgan Le Fay and Merlin the Sage. If so, his distant claim to the throne of England would go far to explain his enmity to Arthur (but see Guillaume's 'Missive to Bertrand,' in which he states that H. is actually Gawain's twin brother!).

Hautdesert's shocking Headless Challenge to Camelot on New Year's Eve, 1319, incited the well-known Quest of the Garter. He was the antagonist in a number of Gawain's other quests, both historical and legendary, including *The Voyage to Har* and the disastrous Quest of the Green Globe, which ended in the apparent deaths of both Hautdesert and Gawain. In *The Tale* (Albion B210), *The Green Knight* appears in Gawain's dream as a premonitory figure and as the Ultimate Guardian of Ulro.

In conclusion, I wish to thank James Paul for the opportunity to introduce this story—he is a dear man and a generous one. I am only too happy to shed what light I can on the mysteries of Ulro. However, I want it made known that my name shall not appear in any publication alongside that of Jeremy Diddler, whom I forebore as a slothful graduate student and who betrayed the trust of a great university by frittering away his study time.

I understand that he is presently incarcerated, and that he spends his time playing cards with his jailer. Far be it from me to criticize a man upon whom fate has fallen so heavily, and yet I cannot help but note my speech to the faculty of 1983, in which I wisely predicted the downfall of Diddler and all sluggards of his kind.

PART III

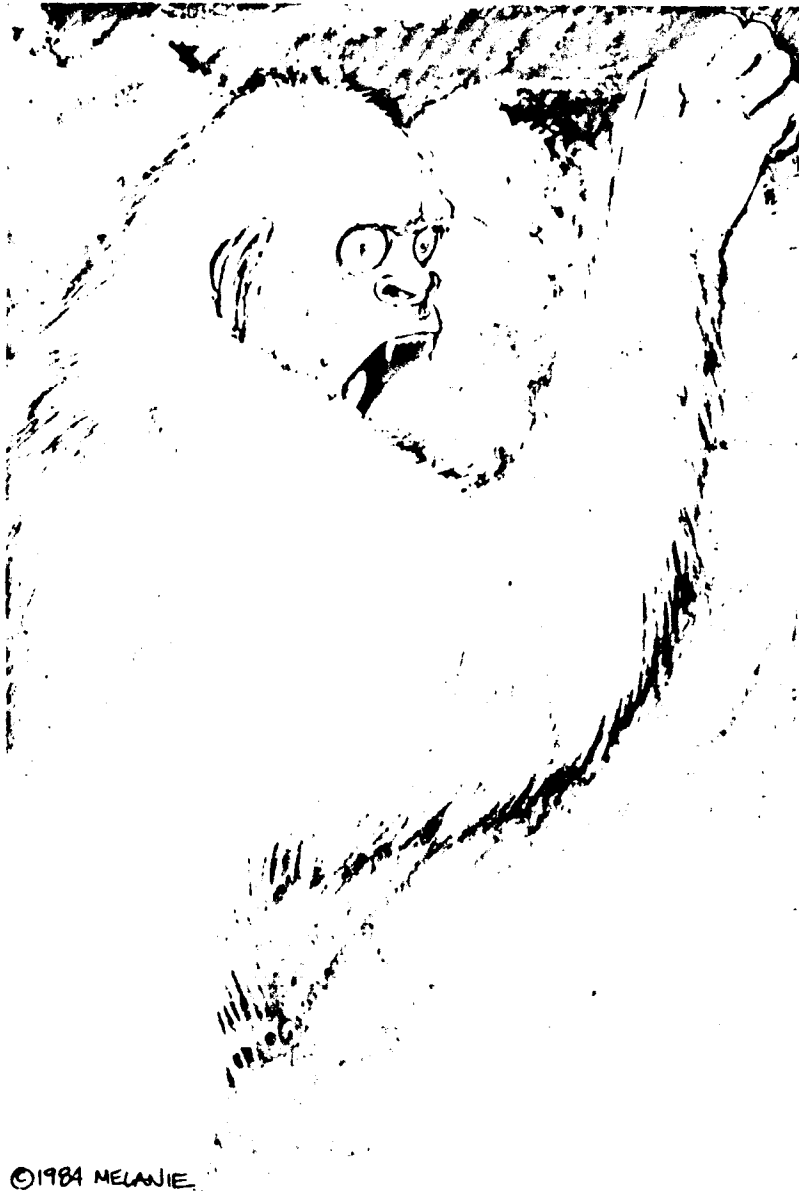
A WARNING FROM THE
PROGRAMMER GENERAL



word of caution, before the reader proceeds to the disk. Certain self-generated innovations have appeared in *BRIMSTONE* since its completion. No one at Synapse, for instance, can explain the appearance of the huge spider-like creature sighted in *The Realm of the Guardians*. Likewise, the *Maze of the Fury*, simple enough when we tested it for public consumption, seems to have grown more fiendish since it was programmed.

When tested on adventure game enthusiasts in a double-blind experiment, the subjects showed only a small increase in chortling behavior. Anecdotal reports from human users, however, showed some rather dramatic changes in attitude, not to mention lifestyle.

Ms. Carol Quick, for example, wife of a cardboard container designer from Lodi, Illinois, wrote to the Programmers' Commission to complain about *BRIMSTONE*'s effect on her husband Harry:



"Please help me! My husband barricaded himself in our host's study and refused to come out. All we can see is some green light in the crack under the door. Harry won't speak to us, but once in a while he shouts, 'It is I, Gawain the Bold!'"

Contacted by phone, Mr. Quick simply stated that he was in Ulro, that he was climbing the stairs into the flames of the Furygate, and that he hoped he had the token of love in the proper hand. At that moment the connection began to crackle, and Ms. Quick could only report hearing Harry cry out, "The flames are" In the next second the line went dead.

Prompted by this complaint, we at the Programmer General's Office have recently begun to draw up guidelines prohibiting Nests of Eels, panic-stricken Troupes of White Apes, Giant Orchids, and Seas of Flame in Software Products. At this point in time, however, there is little more that we in government can do to bring BRIMSTONE within Maximum Daily Brainload (MDB). Therefore, in order to avoid unpleasanties and legal entanglements, the Programmer General has devised this simple safeguard:

THE READER IS REQUESTED TO LOOK AWAY FROM THE SCREEN EVERY HALF-HOUR, FOCUS ON SOME DISTANT, REAL OBJECT AND SAY, "THIS IS ONLY A STORY," SEVERAL TIMES.

This simple procedure—together with more extreme measures to be taken in the event of uncontrollable fright—is outlined in our pamphlet, entitled "Gathering Your Wits: a Self-Help Manual,"

available for \$150.00, plus handling, from the Office of the Programmer General.

Donations to BUBBLES, Bystanders Upset By *BRIMSTONE*-like Electronic Software, may be made to Ms. Carol Quick, care of the Harry Quick Memorial Software Control League in Lodi, Illinois. Ms. Quick will star in a made-for-TV movie about the incident, "Harry Was My Husband, BUBBLES Is My Cause," to be broadcast this fall.

ADVENTURER'S DIARY



THE UNIVERSE IN an Electronic Novel is constantly changing. Sometimes things happen too fast for the human mind. You may need some time to consider and some space to take notes, make maps, and otherwise plan your strategy. You may use these pages for that purpose.

How to Talk to BRIMSTONE

YOU ENTER THE world of BRIMSTONE by typing on your computer keyboard. You can type whenever text appears on the screen and you are ready to respond. Whatever you type directs the knight in his activities. Your decisions and your dialogue with characters will determine how the novel unfolds.

BRIMSTONE responds to a wide variety of commands. Some common ones are explained below, but you'll discover others as you begin play. In fact, Electronic Novels™ recognize a vocabulary of over 1200 words. Many synonyms of commands are possible. For example, "get" works as well as "take," and "toss" is a synonym for "throw." For ease of typing, some commands can be abbreviated. You can also type commands in either upper or lower case. When you are finished typing a command, press the RETURN key.

You can also take a greater part in the action by prompting the knight to talk to characters. A note on how to use dialogue follows the discussion of commands.

The universe of BRIMSTONE is constantly transforming itself. Even if you do nothing, characters will enter and leave, voices may be heard in the Underworld, and time will pass.

Occasionally, the text being displayed will be longer than your screen. Instead of "scrolling" information out of sight faster than you can read it, BRIMSTONE will pause and instruct you to **Press any key to continue**. When you press a key, the rest of the text will display on your screen.

COMMANDS

AGAIN Repeats your last command, just as though you had typed it again. After this command, you must still press RETURN.

BOOKMARK Retains your progress in the novel by making a copy of your current position on a formatted diskette. Later you can resume the novel from that point with the **RESUME NOVEL** command. See the Special Features section of the computer reference card packaged with your novel diskette for details.

CLOSE (object) Tries to close the object you specify.

DROP (object) Frees Gawain of an object he picked up along the way.

EXAMINE or **EX (object)** Checks the characteristics of an object--works like **LOOK**.

FOLLOW or **FOL (person)** Allows the knight to follow a character who is going his own way.

GET (object) Tries to pick up the object you specify. Produces the same effect as **TAKE**.

GIVE (object) TO (person) Giving objects to characters can be risky, innocuous, or crucial. You can also use this form: **GIVE (person) (object)**.

HIT (object or person) WITH (object) This and commands like it exercise the knight's aggressive tendencies.

INVENTORY or **INV** Tells you which objects Gawain has collected and is currently carrying.

LOOK or **L** Shows you a snapshot of the current surroundings.

LOOK (direction) Describes what lies in a particular direction from Gawain's position.

LOOK AT (object) Describes the features of an object--works like **EXAMINE**.

NORTH and others Allows the knight to move in the direction you specify. You can also abbreviate directions (N, S, E, W, etc.). **GO TO (object)** and **WALK (direction)** produce the same result.

OPEN (object) Tries to open the object you specify.

PAUSE NOVEL Halts the changing world of the novel as long as you wish. You can resume the action by pressing any key. To stop the novel in a faster way, see the Special Features section of the computer reference card packaged with your diskette.

PRINTER OFF Stops the printing of **BRIMSTONE** begun with the **PRINTER ON** command. See the reference card packaged with your diskette for details.

PRINTER ON Creates a printed record of your progress through **BRIMSTONE**. See the reference card packaged with your novel diskette for further information.

PROGRESS or **PR** Reports on achievements of importance in the Underworld.

PUT (object) IN (object) Tries to merge objects. The results may be important or pointless.

QUIT NOVEL Ends your session of **BRIMSTONE** without saving your current position.

RESTART NOVEL Begins **BRIMSTONE** again from the start.

RESUME NOVEL Reopens the novel from the point at which you typed the **BOOKMARK** command. For specific instructions, see the computer reference card packaged with your diskette.

SHOW (object) TO (person) Displays an object to a character. You may receive an interesting reaction.

TAKE or **T** (object) Allows Gawain to collect objects which seem interesting or useful. You can take one thing or several at a time.

TIME FASTER Speeds up the changing world of the Electronic Novel™. This command does not change the speed at which your commands are responded to by the novel. It increases the rate at which characters and elements of the novel's physical world enter the scene, pop up, or fly by. Typing this command repeatedly will speed up the universe a little each time. To slow down the changing world, type **TIME SLOWER**.

TIME SLOWER The opposite of **TIME FASTER**. Typing **TIME SLOWER** repeatedly will slow down the changing universe of the Electronic Novel™ by degrees.

TRANSLATE (phrase or object) Since **BRIMSTONE** is a medieval dream vision, you may occasionally come across a phrase in an ancient or foreign tongue. This command asks the knight to render the obscure words into English. You may complete the command with the phrase or the object on which you find it. Example: **TRANSLATE DOOR**.

TURN (object) Gives the object a quick twist.

BRIMSTONE will recognize many other commands; feel free to experiment. Some interesting examples might be:

put sword in sheath

get the coin and give it to fum

run master adam through with your sword

show the handkerchief to blake

read the label on the golden apple

spit on the ice

ask enith for help

DIALOGUE

Electronic Novels™ allow you to talk to characters and creatures. You can ask them questions, order them to do your bidding, or tell them to do things with objects or to other characters. They will respond in their own unique ways. The **FORM** you use for this kind of dialogue is important. Here are two examples:

adam, "where is blake?"

fum, "get the pen and give it to me"

Notice that it is not necessary to capitalize or to use periods at the ends of sentences. When you are finished typing a line of dialogue, be sure to press **RETURN**.

To relieve you of some typing, dialogue also has a shorter form. You may omit the comma following the name of the character you're addressing. The second quotation mark may be omitted also. Example:

Instead of

fum, "come here"

you may type

fum "come here

Some other examples of **BRIMSTONE** dialogue might be:

fat man "give me a drink

orchid "what about the words?

blake "how can i enter the fury?

enitharmon "what do you want?

If you have just spoken to a character, BRIMSTONE will assume that whatever you speak aloud next will be directed at that character, unless you have moved away or you address someone else.

TIME AND SPACE

Many of the characters in BRIMSTONE move around of their own volition. When you talk to a character in your area, he will answer you in his special way. If he happens to move to the next room, he won't brush you off; he will still answer. However, if the character moves far away from your position, he'll no longer be able to hear you. Examples:

(Fat man in your area)

fat man "what's your crime?

"I had an overdue library book," said the fat man, "but the demons hereabouts accuse me of gluttony."

(Fat man in the next room)

fat man "who are you?

"My name is Jeremy Diddler," the fat man replied.

(Fat man far away)

fat man "what do i do now?

The knight's voice would not reach over so great a distance.

Engaging characters in conversation allows you to enter the world of BRIMSTONE completely. But remember, when you talk to an Electronic Novel™, anything can happen.

PERIOD

By typing several periods (. . .) and pressing RETURN, you can watch the universe unfold over several time intervals. This is an advanced strategic tactic you may find useful.

RETURN KEY

Press RETURN whenever you are finished typing a command. If you press RETURN without typing any command, the world of the novel will still continue to change all around you. When you press only RETURN, time will pass and the universe will turn, together with whatever else may be happening at the time: characters entering the vicinity, conversations beginning, etc. As in life, the universe of the Electronic Novel™ is constantly unfolding.