THE ACHING™

User's Guide



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THE ACHING™

by the Lobdegg

User's Guide

Dedicated to my high school programming teacher, Mrs. Navidi,
without whom my career in computers would not have been possible.

The Aching

This project began as an entry in Michael Klamerus's biannual DOS Games Jam on Itch.io. There is a very clear inspiration taken from Sierra On-Line's AGI engine and the games it brought to life throughout the 1980s.

I've always been a massive fan of the parser-driven adventure game genre, both text and graphical, and wanted to try my hand at making one from the ground up myself. The adventure game genre of the 1980s has always been one of the most impressive and poignant genres for digital entertainment. I feel, in many cases, that it has aged the best out of the massive plethora of titles in the medium.

Maybe I'm just odd.

So I began a long and painful process developing an engine of my own written and compiled entirely in Borland Turbo C++ 1.0 that sought to recreate the spirit of those games from my childhood. "Borrowing" from so many talented programmers far smarter than I, I managed to cobble together something I have grown quite fond of.

The Aching is intended as the first installment in a six-part series of AGI-inspired projects, each with their own stories, worlds, and play styles. I hope you enjoy this game and its prospective siblings!

the Lobdegg
5 April 2023

The World of Azra

Far away in the vast infinite exists a world unlike yours
A world of dangers
A world of monsters
A world called Azra

This world is dominated by a feudal society of beasts and creatures, most divided into **"Houses"** that are governed—insofar as they *are* governed—by a council comprised of the most powerful houses.

The purpose of this council was to prevent the extinction of this world's peoples by their own bloodthirsty and sadistic proclivities.

That, *and* to appease the **Scarlet Lady** and her **Red Court.**

She is the closest this world gets to a goddess. Incredibly powerful, disturbingly insightful, and with a twisted love offered to all of her "children".

Most would rather keep what distance they can muster between their own affairs and her attention.

For those who seek her out she can be a wealth of life, comfort, and safety...but these gifts come at a price.

Those who join her court, her acolytes, are rarely seen again—and when they are seen, are never the same as they were before.

Singing with one voice
One will

Her will

Gameplay

You wake up finding yourself in a dank, dark cave with no memory of who you are or where you came from. All that lies before you is a small silver locket and a patch of wall painted red. Beyond these cavern walls are a menagerie of malicious monsters, carnivorous carnations, and precarious precipices. Watch your step...

In *The Aching,* you interact with the environment by moving your character with the arrow keys and typing what you want your character to do. To access the game's menu, press the Escape key.

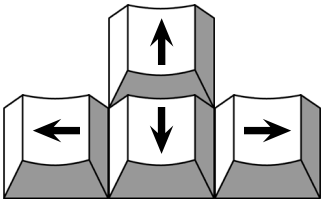
Any time you enter a new screen, it's a good idea to type "look" or "look around" to get a sense of your environment. It can be especially helpful to "look at" specific things in the environment in order to find paths and solve puzzles.

Exploring Your Surroundings

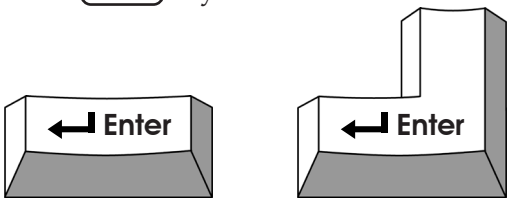
If you find yourself at a standstill, try exploring any doors or looking at objects around you, as solutions to puzzles will not always be in the area immediately around the puzzle.

Controls

Use the arrow keys to move your character around the screen:

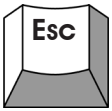


To interact with the world, type in what you want your character to do and press the **Enter** key.

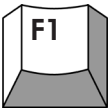


You will only be able to type commands when the ">" prompt is visible at the bottom of the screen. *(There are sequences in the story during which the prompt is not available; this is an intentional part of the game experience.)*

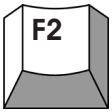
Function Keys



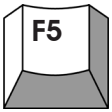
Summon/ dismiss system menu



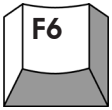
Show version info
Press Enter *to dismiss.*



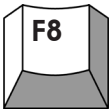
Restart
This will immediately send you to the starting point of the game.



Save
Opens the "save game" menu. There are 10 save slots; you can give them descriptive names.



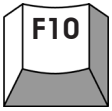
Load
Opens the "load game" menu.



Show inventory
Press Enter *to dismiss.*



Show verb list
Press Enter *to dismiss.*



Quit
Presents a questionnaire asking if you wish to quit the game.

You can also type "**restart**", "**load**", "**save**", "**quit**", and "**inventory**" to execute those commands.

Acceptable Verbs

The Aching has a finite number of words that it understands. The verbs you will need are listed here. Explore your surroundings to find clues about relevant nouns.

ask
break
close
drink
enter
examine
exit
get
give
go
flip
hello
hi
look
no
offer
open
pick
poke
press
push
quit
read
rest
search
show
sleep
stop
take
talk
thank
thanks
throw
toss
touch
use
yes

About Hadrosaurus Software

In eons past the Earth was dominated by mighty animals now known as dinosaurs. Thought to have gone extinct 65 million years ago, they have, in fact, been living amongst the younger species to this day. What do such wondrous beasts do these days?

Why, they make exciting computer entertainment software of course!

Hadrosaurus Software, named for the noblest of dinosaurs, is a team of such clever creatures churning out only the most delightful computer game experiences, with millions of years of experience to work from.

* * *

Founded in 2022 by Clarissa Toney and Tamsin Mugg, Hadrosaurus Software is an independent, author-focused, five-person-strong game studio. Our passion lies in telling stories and creating worlds.

The Aching, released on April 5, 2023, is our first published title.

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To learn more about Hadrosaurus Software and all the exciting things on the horizon, visit us at **www.hadrosaurus.net**.



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