



## Review: TTY GFX ADVNTR (An Xbox Live Indie Game)

An old-school text-based RPG ... on the Xbox 360?

The average age of a gamer in the US is 34 years old, meaning there's plenty of y'all out there like me who remember playing text-based RPGs. If you don't know what one of those is, stop reading now (and wait for the Zork chapter of my new book to come out, which'll be sometime early next year). Go back to screaming at me in Call of Duty, or something.

For those of us old enough to remember the halcyon days of gaming back in the late 80's and early 90's, when arcades reigned supreme, consoles were trying to get there, and PC gaming was a totally separate creature unrecognizable from everything else going on ... those were the days of great text-based RPGs. If you were there with me back then, congratulations, you lived through something great.

So this brings us to TTY GFX ADVNTR, a creation of Levi D. Smith. Levi majored in computer science at Georgia Tech (thus his Twitter handle @GaTechGrad) and went on to get a masters in industrial engineering – he creates games in his spare time.



TTY GFX ADVNTR is a throwback to text-based RPGs of yore, games with limited graphics (or no graphics at all, in plenty of cases), and varying degrees of in-game instruction and character/plot backstory. TTY GFX ADVNTR provides no explanation whatsoever who your character is, no explanation whatsoever as to what you're supposed to do, and no explanation whatsoever regarding the in-game RPG mechanics. You go

figure it out! Old school indeed.

The very beginning of the game is challenging, as the enemies in the very first part of the game are a bit overpowered. This leads to many, many trips back and forth between this initial area and the town, where you can sleep at the inn to regain full health. Combat is rigid and quickly becomes mathematically predictable, which would drive any remaining 12-year-olds away, but for some strange reason, I felt compelled to keep going.

Here are all the weapons and armor you have to purchase in the game:

- Wooden Sword (160 gold)
- Steel Sword (320 gold)
- Mystic Sword (2000 gold)

- Leather Vest (180 gold)
- Chain Mail (360 gold)
- Steel Plate (1200 gold)

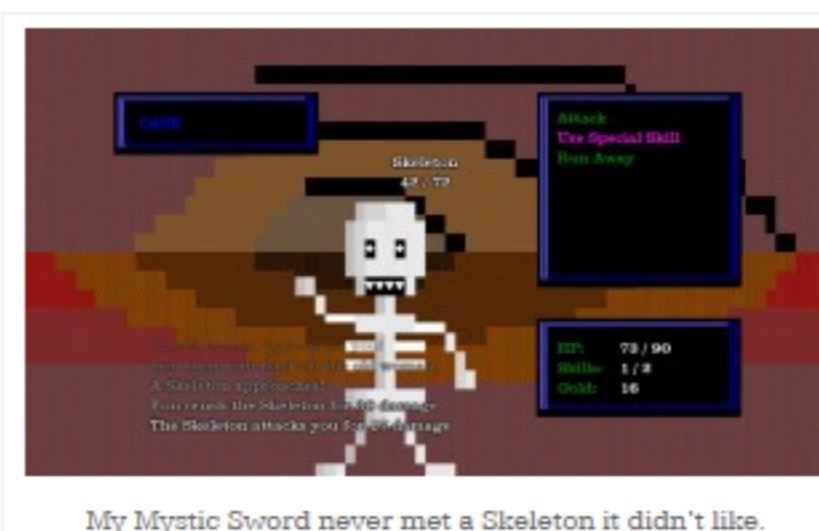
Yep, that's it. So you can probably guess what I did ... grinded all the way to get the Mystic Sword and Steel Plate even before leaving the first area.

I took nary a point of damage the entire rest of the way, until the final boss. This is also very, VERY old-school – any fans of Dragon Warrior / Dragon Quest, even the first Final Fantasy, or myriad text-based computer RPGs could attest to the grind-then-become-overpowered dynamics present in many older role-playing games.

Each new area that opens up requires a special item to be located in the previous area, and purchased using gold. So you fight monsters and enjoy some random encounters with either treasure or a mysterious old woman (who can either steal your gold or heal you, randomly) breaking up these battles.

All in all, there are 5 areas to open up and explore: the Meadows, Forest, Cave, Desert, and Castle, where the game's final boss resides.

The game has a level cap of 10, although there was no indication of this prior to me reaching it. Once again, old-school.



The music is the one A+ aspect of the game, fully capturing the DOS-era nostalgia the game was going for. The graphics are also spot-on for the look and feel the game was going for – this game wouldn't be out of place at all on an early 90's PC, as something you might download off a BBS.

The game is \$1 on Xbox Live Indie Games marketplace, and trust me, you've spent far worse money on games over your lifetime. This was actually a pretty fun trip down memory lane, and not a bad use of an hour of time and 100 pennies. I enjoyed myself with it and I'm sure others would as well.

The game could stand to have a bit more variance in the enemies themselves in each area, the algorithms driving damage given and received, and even with the mysterious old woman's interactions with your character. Also, the one thing the game is missing that many old-school games of this ilk had were Easter eggs – truly surprising secrets lurking in the deepest nether-regions of the game, where most people would fear to tread, that would reward the user for truly committing to the game.


All in all, I recommend TTY GFX ADVNTR for anybody 30 and up who wants something a little different on console, and who wouldn't mind taking a trip down memory lane to what RPGs used to be like, long before Fallout and Skyrim came along.

Bradley Metrock Posted on December 3, 2013 in Video Games 2 comments

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 **Levi D. Smith**  
December 4, 2013 at 1:00 am

Thanks for reviewing my game, and I'm glad that you liked it. There are some subtle Easter eggs in the game and references to other classic games. (Hint: The dragon may be familiar to those who are fans of classic game shows)

Reply

 **Bradley Metrock**  
December 4, 2013 at 3:23 pm

Happy to do it – thoroughly enjoyed it!

Reply

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