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```

What is ASCII? American Standard Code for Information Interchange. This is a set of 128 characters (letters and numbers) used in computing. Before computers had graphic capabilities, programmers would make games using these characters. Let's take a step back in time and explore **Interactive Fiction** (IF).

One of the earliest kinds of computer games, IF is a type of interactive story, usually puzzle-driven, where the reader types commands to control characters and interact with a fictional world. The story then gives textual feedback based on what commands are typed. IF comes in any kind of genre you can think of and a single story can take between 4 minutes and 4 days to complete!

What to Know Before Getting Started

- IF is purely text based, so don't expect to see any fancy graphics. The story is read and the player types commands.
- Just about everything can be interacted with. Pay close attention to descriptions of locations and the objects found in them.
- Since most IF titles are puzzle-based, be prepared to think. Look carefully for clues that will help you progress through the story.
- Your character can die. If this happens, be sure to try typing "undo," which will, well... undo your last fatal move.
- Exploration is encouraged so don't be afraid to try new things and commands.



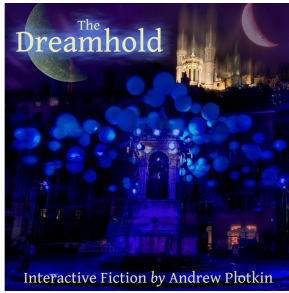
Photo Credit: John Morton

Play Interactive Fiction online
now at <http://ifdb.tads.org>

Controlling the story. Although some IF may contain different controls, most will follow the below conventions. Usage examples are provided (a complete cheat sheet is located on the back of this page).

- north, east, southwest, etc. (abbreviated "n," "e," "sw," etc.): Directional commands will move your character from room to room. It may be useful to keep graph paper handy to draw a map.
- look (abbreviated "l"): Using "look" by itself will provide a simple description of the room you are in. Using "look" with a specific object will give you a description of that object ("look door" or "l door").
- examine (abbreviated "x"): Examining an object will give you a detailed description of it. For example, examining a book may cause you to notice a letter hiding in the pages ("examine book" or "x book").

Where to Play



- iFiction: <http://www.ifiction.org>
- The Interactive Fiction Database: <http://ifdb.tads.org>

Those new to IF should start by playing the Dreamhold by Andrew Plotkin, Photopia by Adam Cadre, or Lost Pig by Admiral Jota.

How to Play: Interacting with the Story

You just started up a game and now you're staring at *text* and a *blinking cursor* and you *don't know what to do!*

Don't panic kids—

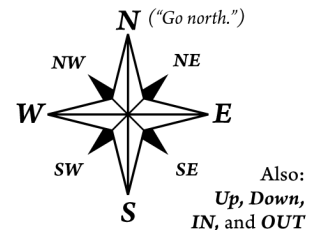
Crazy Uncle Zarf is here to help you get started...

These commands are very common:

EXAMINE it	PUSH it
TAKE it	PULL it
DROP it	TURN it
OPEN it	FEEL it
PUT it IN something	
PUT it ON something	

When in doubt, examine more.

{ Does the game intro suggest ABOUT, INFO, HELP? Try them first! }



You are standing in an open field west of a white house, with a boarded front door. There is a small mailbox here.

Try opening!

You can try all sorts of commands on the things you see.

Try the commands that make sense! Doors are for opening; buttons are for pushing; pie is for eating. (Mmm, pie.)

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If you meet a person, these should work:

TALK TO name
ASK name ABOUT something
TELL name ABOUT something
GIVE something TO name
SHOW something TO name

Each game has slightly different commands, but they all look pretty much like these.

You could also try:

EAT it	CLIMB it
DRINK it	WAVE it
FILL it	WEAR it
SMELL it	TAKE it OFF
LISTEN TO it	TURN it ON
BREAK it	DIG IN it
BURN it	ENTER it
LOOK UNDER it	SEARCH it
UNLOCK it WITH something	

Or even:

LISTEN	JUMP
SLEEP	PRAY
WAKE UP	CURSE
UNDO ⁺	SING

⁺Take back one move — handy!

“What if I only want to type one or two letters?”

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N/E/S/W/NE/SE/NW/SW: GO in the indicated compass direction.

L: LOOK around to see what is nearby.

X: EXAMINE a thing in more detail.

I: take INVENTORY of what you possess.

Z: WAIT a turn without doing anything.

G: do the same thing AGAIN

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A service of the People's Republic of Interactive Fiction:

<http://pr-if.org>