

## **Wonderland: Secret Worlds**

Do you remember the early days of video games, before there was a save function or progress checkpoints sprinkled throughout the levels, when every death meant you had to thread your way back through seemingly endless mazes or swamps or puzzles, and you ended up playing until you were so tired that your eyelids made loud crunching sounds whenever you blinked because you just had to get a little... bit... further? Don't you miss those days?

If so, you'll get a real kick out of Wonderland: Secret Worlds. The graphics are adorable and cutting-edge (for 1996), and even when you're tearing your hair out because the perspective problems mean that you can't see some of the puzzles through the trees, you'll look past it because you just want to get that one... last... coin...

Your ability to withstand frustration is pretty much the single deciding factor for whether you'll love Wonderland or want to chuck your computer out the window. The game mechanics all work very well, and the simple keyboard controls are pretty tight throughout. You won't be frustrated because imprecise controls landed you in the middle of the ocean when you were aiming for the shore; you'll be frustrated because you forgot about one of the cannons and walked right into its deadly path. There isn't a lot of hand-holding here: Wonderland is a classic puzzle game that will explain the controls – once – and clarify each new mechanism as it occurs, but how you put it together to reach the solution is on you. And there's only one right way to do it, so if you push a vital block into a corner and can't maneuver it into the right place – tough luck, bucko, you're starting the level over. Enjoy it while it lasts: many other forms of nostalgia are not quite as pleasant.

**Category:** Three Stars

**Tags:** adventure, puzzle, keyboard, nostalgia