

## The Mysteries of Baroque

by William Brown

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Despite its success, a strange atmosphere of fear clings to the Devil's Lantern. The doormen are silent and stone-faced, the interiors are perpetually bathed in murky darkness. Even the audience, once the thrill and excitement of the performance die down, file out every evening in a strangely subdued silence, their expressions at once sated and ashamed. There is an air of horrid mystery about the Devil's Lantern, an atmosphere that sends a shiver down even your spine. You know something dark is afoot here. There is something evil about the Devil's Lantern, something that goes beyond the tawdry and unimaginative tableaux of depravity staged there every night. But how will you approach this situation?

- I will investigate the goings-on at the Devil's Lantern by making inquiries, using my powers of observation and knowledge of human nature.
- I will break in after hours to try to find something damning.
- I will attempt to place a curse upon the Devil's Lantern.

**Next**

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## About This Game

Mad science raised you from the dead! Pursue justice or vengeance, love or secrets, as you save or destroy the world with forbidden eldritch power.

*The Mysteries of Baroque* is a 200,000-word interactive Gothic horror novel by William Brown, where your choices control the story. It's entirely text-based—without graphics or sound effects—and fueled by the vast, unstoppable power of your imagination.

One dark and stormy night in a remote castle in the mountains, you awake anew, resurrected by the brilliant Dr. Holofernes. But even a mad scientist can't keep you alive forever. As the procedure reverses itself over time, you will begin to die again. You must fight to stay alive long enough hunt down your killers, avenge yourself, and protect the ones you love.

Operating out of the mysterious Grand Guignol Theater, your quest will take you through the darkest shadows of the city of Baroque, the City of Dreadful Night, from its vast subterranean slums to the opulent mansions of its jaded, debauched aristocracy. Will you lose yourself in the distractions of romance, assure your own survival through the Holofernes Procedure, or sacrifice everything to take your revenge?

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- Play as male, female, or non-binary; gay, straight, or ace.
  - Fight to reclaim your old life and identity – or make a new home for yourself in the Grand Guignol Theater
  - Trade your soul to a dark god in return for vengeance – or reject its help and fight alone.
  - Stalk your killers through the glittering demimonde, mansions, and the slums.
  - Learn the sanity-blasting secrets of the occult and risk your mind by unleashing them on your enemies.
  - Use the power of science to devise and build bizarre inventions: death rays, gliders, and hallucinogenic grenades.
  - Augment your regenerating body with clockwork technology like wings, a camera eye, or steel claws.
  - Uphold the forces of law and order, the revolutionary Worker's Council, or the enigmatic Vendetta faction in the battle for Baroque's soul.
  - Embark on dream quests and night visions to learn new skills and uncover ancestral memories.
  - Bring comfort and hope to the suffering citizens of Baroque, or drive them further into darkness in pursuit of vengeance.

You died betrayed. You died in pain. And your troubles are just beginning.

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Title: The Mysteries of Baroque  
Genre: Adventure, Indie, RPG  
Developer:  
Choice of Games  
Publisher:  
Choice of Games  
Release Date: 20 Sep, 2018

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English

"Secrets are my stock in trade. I might have knowledge that you need—but a girl has to earn a living. If you wish, and there is more you need to know, we can trade secrets. I deal in secrets of all kinds, both big and small. Of course, most often, telling a secret means breaking a promise, violating a trust—but nobody ever said secrets came cheap, did they?"

Do you wish to trade any of your hard-won secrets to this broker of mysteries?

- I will offer Mona knowledge of the secrets of the Esoteric Order of the Seven-Pointed Star.
- I will tell Mona the identity of the werewolf I discovered in Barrow.
- I will tell Mona the true story of Mr. Merritt's origins.
- I will tell Mona the facts about the goings-on backstage at the Devil's Lantern Playhouse.
- I will tell Mona about Chloe's condition.
- I will tell Mona the truth about my death and reanimation.
- I don't trust Mona and will not offer her any secrets.

Next

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Before he takes his leave, Rochus frowns. "I would like to ask you one last question," he says quietly. "You have returned from the dead. I'm aware that Dr. Holofernes had her own motives in reanimating you. Nevertheless, you are the recipient of a miracle. Just what is it that you wish to do with your second lease on life?"

- Obtain revenge on Vincent and his allies.
- Restore my name and identity.
- Gain the Terra Incognita fortune for myself.
- Protect the Grand Guignol Theater and my friends there.
- Learn all the secrets of Baroque.
- Do what I can to combat Baroque's darkness and suffering.
- Understand the nature of my new condition.
- Accumulate power.
- Simply survive.

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Enjoyed the worldbuilding and liked it more than Affairs of the Court. It felt a little bit short and consequently the characters could have been better fleshed out, but overall, it was pleasant to read and see how your choices affect the outcomes. Also appreciated the literature references like Metamorphosis and Moloch.. I have to say this game got me hooked and had to replay it 2-3 times for get a real idea on how it works and this allowed me to enjoy the good parts (but also unfortunately feels the strict limits of the game). So with little spoilers as possible I will give you a brief exploit of what you will get from the prelude:

### The story

The story begins like a classic horror novel: In a dark stormy night a mad female doctor (I still can't spell her name right but love her character) revive a corpse from her collection of human oddities (Congratulations, you're the lucky one =) after the classic: "It's Alive!!!" scene she made clear whoever killed you made a mess of your corpse (not choice here on what you got: severed arm replaced with a new one, classic frankenstein's monster rod in your neck and scars all over your face that make Deadpool look like a model by comparison, only choice given to you here is what's your genre) obviously the story is set one year later after your death and aside the good looks you also got amnesia but succeed in putting enough together to remember a little of your past: That your parents died by a terrible plague, what was your previous occupation (This will determine your initial stats) and a name: Vincent this is your last Cousin and conveniently also the current heir of your family fortune. But as you are about to decide on what to do with your new life (VENGEANCE!!! \*thunder\*) the horror classics dictate the castle where you woke up is about to be stormed by an angry mob of drunken farmers who decided enough was enough and they are on the move to get rid of their mad neighbour, so here the first real choice of the game if you want to stick around and protect your Momma or go away undetected (either way this isn't the last time you see this lovely crazy character ;-).

Aside what's your choice you end up trying to reach your old city by foot and are stuck to travel only by night so your hideous face can't be seen and instigate another mob of superstitious farmers to try and kill the abomination (Starting a new life in the countryside is so hard) this way however you discover the limits of your new body: electricity seems to be the key stat here as you need to preserve it to stay alive and any abuse of it with actions of supernatural strength and speed will reduce it making your life span decrease, Personally I think is a good idea but not well implemented in the game as there is too few occasions you will use this yourself but the story essentially need it to progress ("blackout" seems to occur to you aside if you try to keep your Electricity level at 90% so personally I feel like the game cheat on me, I understand the need for the story but would have liked to have more situations where I have the need to do "special feats" and so convince me is a situation I couldn't avoid, not just force it on me like the game does).

Anyway with a quick "blackout" on your way and inability to stand in the open (for the way you look there's more probabilities that whoever find you put you under the ground than take you to the hospital) after some struggle you finally find a place to hide in a old Theatre attic. Here you have the lucky encounter with the eccentric but well mannered owner: Merrit (Another good character and with a good backstory that I will not spoil here). Merrit is a "misfit" and take at heart your condition so much to give you a home, a role to play in the theatre troupe (You could be an actor, a technician and many other roles how good you are depend on which stats you're good with) and essentially make you "the phantom" of the theatre by giving you the choice of a costume to use: This is really good idea by the author as it gives you the choice of your appearance and allow you to "personalize" your character (each "costume" is related to a stat and choosing it will increase it also it gives you a brief explanation of the character from the fictional play it come from). The general idea is good but unfortunately I have to refrain any future player enthusiasm as this idea isn't explored much than that (You will have many option to interact with 2 characters from the troupe as they are essentially some of the Romance options of the game but you don't have really many ways to feel the Theatre life: for example you couldn't be the guy nobody see around but still help the theatre out of his problems so your status as "the phantom" (\*who...\*) is more like the role of a passive troupe guy. (- guest: "who's the creep with the mask that work for you?" Merrit: "Oh that's just our new special effects expert mister Adam" , Player dressed all in black leather, face covered with Executioner hood and utensils in hand show himself and stay creepily silent. Merrit: "He is just like that all the time, ain't that right Adam?" Player dressed all in black leather and face covered with Executioner hood just nod. Merrit smile and joke by putting an hand on his shoulder and shake him: "Silly Mister Adam" \*everyone laugh\* -). This however only at the begin as you have many choices on how you want to help the theatre but after choosing one, that's it. There is many unique things you feel could do to improve the theatre but the main focus of the story remain your status of Undead and the need to find the truth behind your

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condition (what caused it and how resolve it). So from here the prologue end and many other situations take on (Personally I liked the game story but feel like the use of the stats isn't well implemented and that some of them are not essential). Ps. for more Theatre setting try another CoG title, "Broadway: 1849" no big twists but an Ok game.

### The World

The setting is a mix of stempunk elements and Lovecraft (I see in this more elements from Hellboy movies to be sincere). Personally the city "Baroque" and the mention of the Labyrinth reminded me a lot of Sigil the city from the RPG game Planescape Torment (at least the vibe I get in reading the story), there is two factions you could join, different cults you could learn about (but I never seen in my reads) and a lot of secrets to discover by choosing different "routes" in the story (essentially many things happen at the same time but you couldn't see all of them because your time is limited. From my perspective this make more easy the need to replay the game but also frustrate me as it restricted my possibilities with a mere excuse: You have limited time and can't see much of anything becuse you're essentially on a permanent "low battery" status and your life is slipping away. But some events like the encounter with the detective are forced on the player anyway (that for allow the player to meet at least one time all the factions in the game even if he could avoid it) what is interesting is to see the setting: corrupted parts of the city and the society of this gritty and inospitable world. Ps. it isn't an achievement but I consider it should be one if you could find\meet in your playthrough all of the crazy Immortals that live in the city XD.

### Finally:

I give it 7/10 and consider it a good story to read (gamewise could have been more developed and the "past" segment of the story is a little confused, the ending also feel rushed but for the rest is good material, sorry for the harsh critic ^^). For other titles with this similar flavor I suggest the hosted game: A Study in Steampunk: Choice by Gaslight (If after being a phantom of the opera in this one you want to try to play a Jack the ripper kinda guy ;-)) or CoG title: Trials of the Thief-Taker (this one less steampunk or occult but more 1800s "scroundel city" situations also with a unique "gang V companions" system). Normally I would write a negative review because once

again there is a stat-system integrated into this book.

I loathe these things and quite a few times they ruined my reading-experience.

Doesn't happen anymore though because I started editing my save-files and set everything to the max.

However the worldbuilding the author does is just so good.

Occult-Magic, steampunk-science, space-travel and all kinds of cool stuff got integrated into one big picture without colliding with each other, which is in my opinion no small feat.

So I'm going to simply recommend this game before I change my mind and start writing about how utter garbage these skill-systems are.

Edit: the ending was pretty abrupt and not really that

good but the way to get there was nice.. I liked the concept and the different branches, but a lot of the story feels more like exposition and it's really hard to bond with the characters as we hardly spend time with them. There's not a lot of time to truly connect and the romances have a "strangled by the red string" feel. That being said there's a lot of branches and different ways to do the story so you'll get your money's worth on the sale if you're okay with all the expositions and the sparing use of dialogue.

If you're looking for a character driven story that allows you to bond with said characters--which is what I'm personally into--you won't get much here.. Befriended a bug-man, fed a vampire, and fought a god. Excellent game.. I liked the concept and the different branches, but a lot of the story feels more like exposition and it's really hard to bond with the characters as we hardly spend time with them. There's not a lot of time to truly connect and the romances have a "strangled by the red string" feel. That being said there's a lot of branches and different ways to do the story so you'll get your money's worth on the sale if you're okay with all the expositions and the sparing use of dialogue.

If you're looking for a character driven story that allows you to bond with said characters--which is what I'm personally into--you won't get much here.. Aside from some pacing issues, the story is very engaging and immersive(also romance is A plus). The saga setting is very believable and attractive too. Recommended.



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I really enjoyed this game because of its gothic horror setting and how well written it was. However, I do agree with a previous reviewer AMWild that not enough time and attention was spent on the NPCs you encounter such that your relationships with them do not run very deep at all. Also I found some chapter transitions jarring. Just as I was settling in and getting immersed in the City, you're yanked away to encounter something really overblown (in my opinion). Maybe it's just my personal distaste for that particular story trope.

Anyway, this is one of the better Choice of Games titles. Go ahead, give it a whirl ;). I have to say this game got me hooked and had to replay it 2-3 times for get a real idea on how it works and this allowed me to enjoy the good parts (but also unfortunately feels the strict limits of the game). So with little spoilers as possible I will give you a brief exploit of what you will get from the prelude:

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The subject matter is somewhat broad and went in some unexpected directions, but I was honestly delighted with that. Truly my only complaint would be that Id have loved for it to be more detailed and indepth, specificaly where the other characters you interact with are concerned. This is definetly worth the read and I think showcases some real word craft.

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