

Склад копиясты:Jvk1166z.esp/Original — Urbanculture

Some people might recall some momentary buzz caused a couple of years ago by a particularly odd Morrowind mod. The file name was jvk1166z.esp. It was never posted on any of the larger Elder Scrolls communities, usually just smaller boards and role-playing groups. I know in a few cases rather than being posted, it was sent via PM or email to a 'chosen few.' It was only up for a few days, to the best of my knowledge. It caused a buzz because it was a virus, or seemed to be. If you tried to load the game with the mod active, it would hang at the initial load screen for a full hour and then crash to the desktop. If you let it get that far, your install of Morrowind, along with any save files you had, would become completely corrupted. Nobody could figure out what the mod was trying to do, since it couldn't be opened in the Construction Set. Eventually, warnings were distributed not to use it if you found it, and things died down.

About a year later, in a mod board I used to frequent, someone popped up with the mod again. He said he was PMed by a lurker who deleted his account immediately after sending. He also said that the person advised him to try playing the mod through DOSbox. For some reason, this worked... sort of. The game was a bit laggy, and you couldn't get into Options, Load Game, the console, or really anything else, other than the game itself. The QuickSave and QuickLoad hotbuttons worked, but that was it. And the QuickSave file seemed to be just part of the game file, so you couldn't get at it anymore. Some speculated that the changed game used an older graphics renderer, making DOSbox necessary, but it didn't LOOK any different.

This part I can speak about from personal experience. When you start a new game in JVK (as the board came to call it), once you left the starting bit in the Census Office and came into the game proper, the first thing you notice is that the 'prophecy has been severed' box pops up. This is because every single NPC having to do with the main quest is dead, with the sole exception of Yagrum Bagarn, the last of the Dwemer. Their corpses never despawn, so you can go check on all of them. In effect, you begin in a world that is doomed to start with.

The second thing you notice is that you're losing health. It's only a bit, but it keeps happening, a little bit at a time. The longer you stay in one place, the quicker it seems to occur. If you let this health loss kill you, you'll find the cause: a figure we came to call the Assassin, because he seems to wear a retextured version of the Dark Brotherhood armor from Tribunal, even though the expansions don't work in JVK. It's all black, completely untextured, like he's just a hole in space. The way he moves... he gave me quite a start, the first time I saw him scuttling around my dead body. He crawls inhumanly on his hands and feet, his arms and legs splayed out like a spider. You'd usually only see him after death, crawling around and over your body just before the reload box popped up. Occasionally, you could catch a glimpse of him darting around a corner or crawling on a wall or ceiling. It made the game very difficult to play at night!

Other than that, the only noticeable difference is that at night, at random intervals, every NPC in the game will go outside for a few minutes. During this time, the only thing they will say when hailed is, "Watch the sky." Once they return to their normal behavior they act like normal, though.

After a while, a player on the board discovered a new NPC named Tieras, a male Dunmer in the temple at Ghostgate. Two things are notable about this NPC: first is his robe, a unique article of clothing that was lovingly rendered with twinkling stars all across it, looking like a torn-off chunk of the night sky. The second is that all of his dialogue, in addition to showing up in the dialogue box, is voiced. You can skip it if you wish, but it all sounds like it's in the default male Dunmer voice. Some people said that they thought the voice was "slightly" different, but it was a very, very good imitation.

I won't go into the details, but the questline he sends you on has to do with a dungeon referred to simply as 'The Citadel.' Up until this point, the quests were all of a fairly generic 'discover the secrets of the ancients' bent. The entrance to this dungeon is on a small island far to the west of Morrowind proper. I eventually discovered that if you used a Scroll of Icarian Flight at the westernmost point on the main landmass and jump directly west, you'd end up almost exactly at the island. Even though the dungeon is called The Citadel, it goes straight down. It dwarfs any other dungeon, both in size and difficulty. From a natural cave area you'll proceed down into an ancestral tomb looking area, then a Daedric ruin area, and then a Dwemer ruin area. I made it down to the Dwemer Ruins before I quit. The creatures here were strong enough that a level 20 character would have to take care, and since you can't use the console in JVK, level 20 took a while to get to. Since QuickSave and QuickLoad are your only options, it's all too easy to get yourself into an impossible situation too. I did, and I just didn't have the energy to start over.

Now what I'm telling you is based on what those few who went further reported. Past the Dwemer Ruins you find yourself in a level like the Dwemer Ruins, but darker. Rather than the usual bronze, all the surfaces, including those of the creatures, are black. The sounds of machinery are loud here, and grow louder still, randomly. There's also steam or fog everywhere, limiting your vision to about ten in-game feet or so. If you can make it through all this, you will reach a hall that those who found it called it the Portrait Room.

Копипаста

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Like the fire in torches or other effects from early 3D games, this room has picture frames that always face directly at you, no matter how you look at them. The images in the frames were always randomly chosen images from your My Pictures folder. On the board, the ones who got there had some fun posting screenshots of the Portrait Room with various pictures in the frames (Usually porn, of course). At the end of the hall was a locked door. After admitting defeat and returning to Tieras, everyone just found him saying, "Watch the sky," in his gravelly voice. What's more, nobody else in the game would say ANYTHING. There was just a completely blank dialogue box with no options at all. They wouldn't even rattle off the usual canned audible greetings. The only exception was at night; whenever they'd go out for a few minutes, they'd still repeat it. "Watch the sky." At this point, one of the players - a friend of mine from the board - noticed (and the few others who got this far agreed) that the night sky was no longer the usual night sky of Tamriel; it had changed to a depiction of a real night sky. And it moved.

From this point on, everything is based on what this one person reported. Eventually, he got himself kicked from the board, but I kept in contact with him for as long as he responded. According to him, based on the constellations and planets, the sky started around February 2005. If you died, loaded, or went back into the Citadel, it would start over. When the usual day sky graphics took over, the movement would be suspended until the stars appeared again. In the space of a single night, everything would move about two months worth. Since the timescale of JVK was more or less that of the standard game, that meant that a bit less than an hour was equal to a 24-hour period.

He became convinced that the door would open based on some kind of celestial event. Of course, waiting for that meant leaving the game running. Of course, THAT meant that the game couldn't be left unattended, thanks to our old friend, the Assassin. My friend decided he'd hang out for a whole day, just to see if anything happened. That would be about a year's worth of movement. Here's the post he made at the end of this experiment: "I loaded in Seyda neen, where it all starts. It wasn't too bad, just had to check in now and then to move around and heal to make sure I wasn't dying. But check it out! 24 hours exactly in, and the Assassin learned a new trick! HE SCREAMS!!!! I was reading and all of a sudden, this crazy loud shriek just about makes me crap myself. It's like something out of a horror movie! I look up, and there he is, just crouched down right in front of me. Of course, the second I moved my character, he ran off. When I went back down to the Portrait Room, the door was still locked. Damn it, damn it, damn it!" A bit later, he came to the decision that he needed to wait three days - three years. The PM advising us to try DOSbox showed up in February of 2008 was his reasoning, anyway.

"After the first shriek, the Assassin stops hitting you out of nowhere. Now he'll shriek, and if you don't move for a few seconds after that he hits you. I think whoever made the mod was trying to help. At night, I've got my headphones on and I was just kind of dozing off...when he wakes me up with a shriek; I jiggle the mouse, and I'm good!"

That post was two days in, from his laptop. Once it was over...

"FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK! FUUUUUUUUUUCK! So FUCKING done. So, I wait, the three days, right, and right after the FUCKING Assassin made me jiggle the mouse, he shrieks again. So, I look, and everyone in town is outside. They're all saying, "Watch the sky." I don't see anything, though. But then the game starts getting dark... like REALLY dark. I turn up the brightness all the way on my monitor, and I can still barely see. I can see other people in the game, little figures running around in the distance, just running back and forth. If I try to get close, they run off. Now, I was trying to sleep, so the lights are off, and this is kind of creepy. I don't want to get up to turn on my light because I don't want to miss anything, but NOTHING fucking happens. Eventually I go back to The Citadel... it's still dark, and I gotta swim, and the whole time I can see all these guys swimming all around me, just barely there. I make it to the Citadel, and its normal light inside, and I get worried. Sure enough, the Portrait Door is STILL FUCKING CLOSED. I go outside and it's ALL STARTING OVER. So that's it. I'm fucking going to bed, and I'm fucking done. The end." After that, two things happen. First, another of the people who got to the Portrait Room claimed that the Assassin was showing up in his regular Morrowind game. (Quick explanation. If you reinstalled Morrowind to a different folder, you could have a normal Morrowind install along with JVK.) He himself chalked it up to an overactive imagination at first, but he reported a couple of really big scares with the black figure crawling right at him, or seeing it waiting for him just around a corner before scuttling off. Another of those who reached the Portrait Room started a regular Morrowind game, but never saw him for sure; it was just a couple of 'maybes', late at night, and always at a distance.

The second is that my friend started getting really abusive and short-tempered on the board, though he stopped talking about JVK entirely. It got so bad that he was soon kicked off. I didn't hear anything from him for a couple of weeks after that, so I sent him an email. This was part of his reply: "I know I shouldn't, but with classes out I've got some time, so I started JVK up again. It's almost 2011... and I think I've got the sleep madness! But stuff is happening! It's still dark... once it gets dark, it never gets any lighter. It stays like that. The people moved a few months ago... everyone in Seyda neen just went to that little bandit cave and moved in. They killed the bandits inside, and now they're just standing around inside. They don't say anything anymore; they don't do anything when you click on them. I quicksaved and killed one, and he just stood there until he died without fighting back! And it's like that everywhere. You have to walk, since the quick travel people are all in caves now, too, but all the cities and towns are just deserted; all the people are in caves and tombs. Everyone in Vivec is down in the sewers. I'm going to Ghostgate next... I want to see if Tieras is still there. I'll tell you what he says when I get there!"

I replied and said I wanted to see what he said too, and waited a day. When I didn't get a reply, I mailed him

again, and a couple of hours later he sent back: "Sorry, I totally forgot. So it's 2014 now... since it's always night, the stars are always moving. The whole screen is dark, but you can still see the brightest stars moving around. Tieras was gone... everyone in Ghostgate was gone. I don't know where they went. They're not in any of the nearby caves. But there's new stuff... people still don't say anything, but their eyes are bleeding. it's so dark that even with a light spell you have to get right up against them to see, but there they are, little dark streaks coming down from their eyes. I think I gotta be getting close. I know this is stupid, and there's no way the pay off is going to be worth it, but I just want to be able to say I stuck it out!"

I got that one during the day. Later that night, I got a follow-up email: "Some of the planets aren't moving right. It's pissing me off... if this keeps up, I won't be able to keep track anymore. It's almost 2015 now, I think. Fuck. You know, I just now noticed that there aren't any monsters anymore, either. I'm completely alone outside now. The main quest people's' bodies are still lying around, though. I went to check on them.

I don't need headphones anymore, so I just leave them off. When he shrieks, it's like he's screaming right into my ear. I think I even kind of anticipate it. He's around a lot more now, a lot closer. He's different from the other people who started showing up, remember? They keep running around, just where I can barely see them. I have to admit, it's kind of creepy at night. Sometimes, when I go to the bathroom or whatever, I swear I can see something out of the corner of my eye. I'm keeping all the lights on now."

I sent him a letter, jokingly telling him to get some real sleep, and left it at that. Two mornings later, I found this in my email. It was the last thing I got from him. After this, he stopped responding completely: "I just got up from a fucked up dream, I think. The Assassin shrieked at me, and when I opened my eyes, he was right there, crouching over me. His arms and legs were longer, more like a spider's. I tried to push him away, but when I touched him my hands just went inside and I couldn't get them loose again, like he was made of tar or something.

Then I woke up, I thought. he was gone, but when I looked at the monitor I wasn't where I was. I was in the Corprusarium, with Yagrum. For once, the light was okay, and I could see him all bloated on those mechanical spider legs. I sat down at the computer and he started talking to me. Not in a box, but really talking to me, in Tieras' voice. He knew things about me. He told me things that I never told anyone, some things I totally forgot about. He told me that almost nobody had made it this far, and that the door would open up soon. I just had to hang on a little while longer. He said I'd know when it was time. He said I might be the first one to see what was inside.

And then I woke up for real, but I was at the computer. I still wasn't where I was. I'm swimming out to The Citadel Island. And I can hear this tapping. It's at my window. It's over on the left, so I'm sending you this, because I left my laptop by my bed, to the right. Just a little *taptaptaptap*... like he's knocking his finger against the glass. I might still be dreaming now. So, I guess that's the end of the story. I know there's a few other stories floating around about the mod, but this is the only I know as true, as far as it goes. I deleted my JVK copy of the game pretty much right after I gave up, but I'd like to get the mod again, if anyone still has a copy of the file. I'd like to see some of this for myself.