THE MALEVOLENT GUIDE

"You and I are symbiotes. To the same extent that a weapon is nothing without the appropriate wielder, you and I are nothing without each other…"

-The Armour of Malevolence

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I - FOREWORD

I was reminded by my co-developer, Arilita, that it was on the 8th of September 2007 when I first created the Malevolent.esp, though I had been talking about making it (to varying degrees of seriousness) since early 2007, meaning that Malevolent has essentially been in development for over a year. Compared to other MODs (in particular Total Conversions) that may not seem like much, but when you look at Malevolent for what it is –a "non-standard" quest MOD developed by a team of 2- the fact that it has endured this long and eventually come into fruition is genuinely surprising, even to me.

The original idea was inspired by a few sources: The Scorpius/Harvey and John Crighton relationship from the TV series Farscape; The Devil's Armour "Kahldris" and his relationship with Baron Glass from "The Devil's Armour" (by John Marco); and a few other psychological rivalries from non-mainstream media.

Originally, Malevolent was going to be a MOD specifically aimed at Evil players, however as development progressed (slowly, I might add), I began to feel that it simply wasn't "right." To write well, and to craft an absorbing story, all the elements in the equation need to come together in perfect harmony, but writing Malevolent for a purely evil-orientated approach simply didn't suit. It eventually dawned on me that the problem was because the MOD lacked REAL conflict… the sort of conflict seen between Scorpis/Harvey and John Crighton. The sort of conflict in which good men (and women) find themselves forced or manipulated into doing bad things. The sort of conflict in which the battle takes place within the echoing confines of the individuals mind, hence making it a battle for more than mere survival, or the safety of a race, or any other such trivial matters. It would be a battle for the sanity of the individual.

And so we have **Malevolent**. Here, even evil players will find themselves battling their own mind, though for different reasons (and with different enemies, and results) than a good player will. Here we have something unseen in Oblivion, and something

that will not be duplicated any time soon. Here we have the last of the non-mainstream orientated Oblivion quest MODs, which began with Ruined-Tail's Tale, progressed to The Butcher of Armindale, the Legacy, Tears of the Fiend, Redemption, and now finally Malevolent. Though a sequel to this MOD will likely eventuate (as Malevolent is the first half of the complete story) it will not be a whole new MOD, but merely a conclusive expansion to this one.

This is Simyaz and Arilita's last "hurrah", here's hoping that it's a good one. Here's also hoping that you think so as well.

II - WALKTHROUGH

How To Use This Walkthrough:

Malevolent is a highly complex quest MOD, with multiple paths of progression through the story, and numerous unique encounters that only specific paths will ever experience. As such, you cannot simply read through this walkthrough in the same way that you would for a more linear quest MOD.

It is for this reason that the path-specific parts of the Malevolent Walkthrough have been separated into uniquely coloured sections as follows:

GREY *denotes story-elements that are related to path choices, but are inherently* ***neutra****l and can hence be read and worked off regardless of whether you are focusing on a Good,* ***Neutral*** *or Evil path.*

BLUE *denotes story-elements that are specifically related to* ***good*** *path choices and elements, and hence should probably only be read by players attempting to complete the* ***goo****d path through the game.*

RED *denotes story-elements that are specifically related to* ***evil*** *path choices and elements, and hence should probably only be read by players attempting to complete the* ***evil*** *path through the game.*

GREEN *denotes Plot Important Articles. It is* ***not*** *necessary that you read these sections in order to complete the MOD, as they are merely included to help to highlight elements of the story that might be missed by the casual observer.*

When reading through this Walkthrough, progress through it as you would a traditional step-by-step Walkthrough until you come to a coloured section. If you want to avoid spoilers associated with path-specific content for paths that you have not tried, only read the coloured section that corresponds with your path through the story.

PROLOGUE: Military Build-Up East of Skingrad

The Black Horse Courier Article:

You will find a Black Horse Courier article detailing the "Military Build-Up East of Skingrad" adjacent to almost all of the "Grey Fox Wanted" posters around Imperial City. The easiest ones to locate are on the entrances and exits in the Arena District. Upon reading the posters you will receive a new quest to investigate the Military Build-Up.

Plot Important Article #1: *Read the Black Horse Courier article carefully, there are important plot points delivered here which will become important later on.*

Activating the quest will now give you a quest marker East of Skingrad. Fast travel to the nearest travel marker (or Skingrad itself, if you haven't explored the surrounding area), and travel to the Military encampment at the quest marker.

The Necromancer:

Upon approaching the Marker you will find a Necromancer giving a speech to a few of the townspeople. Listen to his speech, and after it is finished you will be approached by a guard who will explain to you what is going on. In order to establish the specific details of the plot, I would suggest asking as many questions as possible, and maybe even talking to the townspeople who had been listening to the speech.

A quest update will advise you that the Necromancer will be able to lead you to the Lich's tower, and thus to the Military Build-Up that you are seeking.

At this point you have 3 options:

- You can choose to simply follow the Necromancer as he slowly makes his way to the tower. If you talk to him and "threaten" him (tell him you are going to work for the Imperial Army) he will increase his pace (read: run) to get to the tower.
- You can choose to kill the Necromancer (if you taunt him twice about joining the Imperial Army he will attack you) and follow the general directions given my the guard to the Military Build-Up (east of Skingrad.)
- Or you can talk to the necromancer and convince him that you want to serve the New God whose message he has been preaching. At this point he will escort you to the tower.

The Necromancer will exit the city and mount his horse. There is a horse that you can take nearby. Follow him as he makes his way towards the tower, assisting him in dealing with any monsters that he comes across en route.

Eventually he will be waylaid by two guards as he approaches the tower, and subsequently killed. Regardless, he has served his purpose and led you where you wanted to go.

Plot Important Article #2: If you loot the Necromancer's corpse you will find an interesting note that seems to indicate that it was not, in fact, the Lich who had ordered him to go to Skingrad and speak of the New God, but rather someone else who wanted it to *appear* as if he was operating on the Lich's orders.

The Military Build-Up:

Travel through the Military encampment until you find Captain Maelin and his Lieutenant near the entrance to the tower.

If you haven't finished the Oblivion Main Quest, you won't be able to convince Maelin to let you assist with the attack (Refer to the MALEVOLENT Guide Troubleshooting Section for a method to bypass this condition if you want to play the quest anyway.)

Speak to Maelin, gain all the information you need from him and accept his request to assist. You will watch a brief scripted sequence where a Sapper (Military Engineer) will destroy the door blocking the entrance to the tower, after which you can now make your way into the Lich's tower with the Lieutenant following you.

The Lich's Tower:

On the first floor you need to search the corpse to your immediate right to take an Obsidian key. Use this key to open the hatch and progress up to the second level.

On the second level you will be attacked by a relatively low level Imp. Kill the imp (the Lieutenant will help) and search it's corpse to find the second key (Charcoal key). Use this key to open up the hatch and progress to the top level.

Once on the top level you won't have to wait long before your controls are disabled and tower collapses, killing the Lieutenant in the process. Travel back through the toppled tower via each of the hatches you came through originally and you will eventually emerge into the outside world, with the Lich's tower now lying on the ground.

Soon after emerging, Maelin will approach you and engage you in conversation. He now wants you to accompany him as you support the rest of his soldiers that are attacking the Lich in his underground lair.

Travel back to where the base of the tower had previously sat, and enter the now exposed hatch into the underground catacombs.

The Lich's Lair – Level 1:

The lair itself is almost pitch black, so you will need a Torch to find your way through the tunnels. Speak to Maelin if you need a Torch, he apparently has an endless supply.

Travel down the tunnels until you reach a T-intersection. Turn left and head up the stairs until you arrive in a small blood-smeared room. Use the book on the table at the far end of the room and you will hear an incantation, after which a Clannfear will be summoned. Kill the Clannfear and Use the book again. This time a Daedroth will be summoned. Kill the Daedroth and Use the book a third and final time.

After the incantation a Dremora will be summoned, and will start a conversation with you. He will recite a poem which will be crucial for navigating the next level of the Lich's Lair. Be forewarned, he will only recite it once, so pay attention. Once that is done he will leave, and you can continue.

Travel back down the corridor to the T-Intersection and travel down the stairs to the door at the end of the corridor. Use the door to travel down to the 2nd Level of the Lair.

The Lich's Lair – Level 2:

This level is a miniature maze which can be solved by utilising the poem recited to you by the Dremora. Every time you change rooms in this maze there is a chance that you may encounter a monster of some sort (usually a skeleton or a ghost) so be prepared for a fight.

To solve the puzzle, you need to follow the directions contained within the poem. This can be done as follows:

Travel North Twice "…From the intensity of its brightness, it is twice to the North that I run…"
"Wait" by the Tree "…I rest by the tree to catch my breath…"
Travel South Once "…Before travelling south…"
Travel West Once "…and then setting sun-ward at my behest."

If at any point you choose the wrong door or head in the wrong direction (remember to use your in-game compass) you can leave the maze by using the West Door.

Once you use the Northern door after having followed all of the directions you will exit the maze into the 3rd Level of the Lair.

The Lich's Lair – Level 3:

The first section of this level is also almost entirely black. Use your Torch and remember you can always acquire another from Maelin if necessary.

Part way down the corridor the tunnel behind you will collapse, blocking the exit from this path. You now have no choice but to continue forwards.

Head down the tunnel until you come to a locked door. Try using the door. At this point Maelin will try and start a conversation with you (you may have to speak to him to begin it.) You will watch a sequence in which the soldiers sent to fight the Lich are slaughtered, and Maelin will task you with finding some way to get through the door and defeat the Lich.

Head towards the other locked door near your position. After a few seconds you will see a "flash" sequence of the Armour residing within the room in which the Armour will speak to you. That door is now unlocked. Go into that chamber and attempt to open the next door (which is also locked.) Once again you will see a "flash" sequence and the Armour will speak to you again, before unlocking the second door. Go

through the door and attempt to pick up the Armour. Once again the Armour will speak. You can now wear the Armour of Malevolence. Upon adorning it for the first time, the Armour will speak again, and you will be prompted to speak to Maelin. **Once the Armour has been adorned, it cannot be removed until the conclusion of the quest.**

Maelin will initiate the conversation with you, after which the two of you can now enter the Lich's antechamber and fight the Lich directly. Part way through the battle several Skeletons will join in the fight. Once you have killed the Lich your vision will glow blurry and the Armour will speak to you again, after which you will be teleported to the Armour's Realm.

The Armour's Realm – 1st Visit:

Explore the Armour's realm. Periodically he will quote poetry to you (quoting the first 4 stanzas of "The Spider and the Fly" poem.) When he has finished quoting he will emerge from one of the locked doors and speak to you directly.

This whole sequence is scripted and there is very little you can do. When the conversation is over you will be returned to the real world.

Plot Important Article #3: *Take note of the 2 different portraits hanging on the walls in the Armour's Realm. What they contain will become very important before long.*

The End of the Military Build-Up:

Upon first arriving back in the Lich's antechamber you will receive a quest update noting that Maelin has vanished.

As the path back to the surface is blocked, use the door in the Lich's antechamber from which Maelin's Soldiers and the Skeletons emerged. This will take you back to the first corridor on the 1st Level of the Lair. Turn left and head back to the entrance. Continue back to the surface to emerge into the light of day (or night).

After returning the Military encampment you will receive an update pointing out the strange fact that the Soldiers and Maelin have all vanished, leaving the camp deserted. This will conclude the "Military Build-Up East of Skingrad" quest and start a new quest entitled "Malevolent."

Plot Important Article #4: *Take note of the fact that Captain Maelin and the Government Soldiers have all vanished without a trace. Surely Maelin would have investigated your sudden disappearance earlier, and the Soldiers should have packed away all of their equipment and taken it with them before leaving.*

PART I: Malevolent

The Armour's Realm – 2nd Visit:

5 minutes after the “Military Build-Up East of Skingrad” quest concludes, the Armour will speak to you again and you will be ported back to his realm.

You can find the Armour in the main dining hall. He will want to speak to you and will lead you through a door into a “tavern-like” section of his realm. For the meantime talking to the various patrons will reveal little information.

Follow the Armour until he seats himself at a table, then engage him in conversation. This is your opportunity to learn about the Armour’s motivations, intentions and personality. You can also ask the Armour various personal questions.

Your responses to some of the Armour’s questions will affect your relationship with the Armour. If the Armour dislikes you he will penalise you by weakening the stat bonuses on the Armour itself (or even cause negative effects to impair your abilities.) Bare in mind, however, that even though going against the Armour’s wishes may make some parts more difficult, complying with all of his wishes will limit your path of progression through the MOD. Be careful what Dialogue options you choose.

When you have finished the Armour will provide you with your next objective –to travel to a Blacksmith in Anvil- and will part ways. **From this point on you will have a new spell “Malevolent Symbiosis” which will allow you to travel to and leave the Armour’s Realm. While in the Realm you cannot be hurt, you can store items in the chest near your bed, and can rest safely. Furthermore, at certain points in the quest you will be required to return to the Armour’s Realm to continue the story. When in the Armour’s Realm you can only travel back to the Real World from the main chamber (where you arrive in the Armour’s Realm.)** You can choose to leave the Armour’s Realm at this point and travel to Anvil, or you can speak to the Bartender who will have some additional information for you.

Good Path Important Choices: *Speaking to the Bartender is crucial to achieving the “good” (and potentially the neutral) path through the story. Developing a friendship with her will give you the ability to oppose the Armour later on, should you so desire it. Additionally, you can learn additional information from her about the Armour which is relevant to story integrity.*

When you have done everything you want to do in the Armour’s Realm. Head back to the main chamber and use “Malevolent Symbiosis” to travel back to the real world. Select the “Malevolent” Quest (to activate the next quest marker) and make your way to Anvil Castle.

Anvil Castle – The Blacksmith:

The Blacksmith you are seeking is in Castle Anvil. If you don’t know the location you can simply follow the quest marker.

The Blacksmith in question is the “Masterwork Blacksmith” and is only in charge of the shop after the normal Blacksmith goes to bed. You can travel into the back room of the Smithy to speak with him if you aren’t worried about being seen, or you can wait until post-midnight and speak to him privately.

You can ask the "Masterwork Blacksmith" a few questions about the Armour, but when you ask who commissioned it the Armour will appear in the real world (as a transparent "figment of your imagination) and demand that you kill the Blacksmith.

You can choose to comply with the Armour (and kill the Blacksmith) or you can choose to resist him. If you choose to comply, you simply have to kill him to end this part of the quest. If you choose to resist you will be transported to the Armour's "Prison" realm and forced to watch as the Armour turns you into a puppet and cuts down the Blacksmith, after which you will be returned to the Real World. Though this choice will have no visible effects (the Blacksmith dies either way), it is important in deciding whether you are going to side with the Armour (embrace symbiosis) or resist him.

Evil Path Important Choices: *If you have opted to kill the Blacksmith, you can simply attack him outright, but to do so you run the risk of drawing the attention of a passing guard. Alternatively, you can talk to the Blacksmith and convince him to submit to your blade without a fight by threatening his family. A much more subtle –if morally questionable- option.*

When the Blacksmith lies dead, you will receive a quest update advising you to return to the Armour's Realm and determine what he wants you to do next. Use Malevolent Symbiosis to return to the Armour's Realm again.

The Armour's Realm – 3rd Visit:

Head straight for the tavern section of the Armour's Realm, where you will discover that the Armour is not present. Speak to the Bartender to learn what the Armour wants you to do next – travel to Bruma and speak with an Enchanter there.

Evil Path Important Choices: *Evil Players aiming who have complied with the Armour's instructions to kill the Blacksmith will be approached by a semblance Allecia Ehothorn (a regular in the Fiend Saga) who will express her concerns over your desire for symbiosis. This sequence is essentially a warning pertaining to the fact that you are following the evil path. Nothing that you say here changes anything else in-game.*

Good Path Important Choices: *Players aiming to achieve the "Good" path through the story can continue to develop their friendship with the Bartender. Ensure that you engage in all possible lines of dialogue with her, and encourage her to embrace independence of the Armour.*

Once you have finished speaking the Bartender, return to the Real World (Malevolent Symbiosis from the main chamber in the Armour's Realm) and travel to Bruma.

Bruma City – The Enchanter:

Follow the Quest Marker to find the Enchanter's house. Enter the house and speak to him.

Once again you will be able to ask several questions about The Armour, but when you try and ask about who commissioned the Armour, he will appear and interrupt the conversation. Once again he demands that you kill the Enchanter (for "knowing too much"), and once again you can choose to comply or to resist.

If you comply, you merely need to kill the Enchanter to receive the next quest update. If you choose to resist what happens next is ultimately determined by your "friendship" with the Bartender in the Armour's Realm.

***IF** you haven't developed a Friendship with the Bartender you will once again be forced to watch as the Armour takes control of your body and cuts down the Enchanter. After which you will be returned to the real world.*

Bruma City – The Escape:

Maelin will initiate a conversation with you and will accuse you of killing the Enchanter and the Blacksmith. You can try and convince him of your innocence but not matter what you say he will try and arrest you, leaving you with only one choice: flee.

Exit the house (just run past Maelin and his guards) and make your way through Bruma, avoiding combating any of the aggressive guards and simply running past them. The actual path you need to take through the city is a bit of a maze –as some sections are blocked off by military barricades-, but your ultimate objective is to leave via the lower East gate.

When you exit the city you will receive a quest update advising you to return to the Armour's Realm to find out what to do next.

Good Path Important Choices: *If you have developed the Friendship at least somewhat, you will find that the prison door in the Armour's Realm is opened by a "Mysterious Stranger" and you can leave the cell.*

After leaving the cell you will see the Armour running towards the door that had previously taken you to the Tavern. Follow him, and you will find yourself in a different part of the realm.

You need to prepared for a tough fight. In the room at the base of the stairs you will find 5 duplicates of the Armour, all encased in stone. Periodically 1-2 of these statues will come to life, and will fight you for 15-45 seconds at a time before returning to stone. The objective is to score 16 hits on the original Armour statue (he will initially be in the middle of the room) while he is "active" (not encased in stone).

This can be tough for a melee character, while it is relatively easy for an archer of a caster. I recommend getting the "active" statues to chase you away from the main area, and fighting them in one of the side corridors or up the stairs until they turn back into statues. Then return to the main room, and get the next set of active statues to chase you to a different part of the realm. This will allow you to fight the statues 1 or 2 at a time, without worrying about others returning to life and attacking you while your back is turned.

You can also tell how much damage you have done by watching the pictures around the room. For every successful hit on the original version of the Armour, one of the 16 pictures will shatter and fall.

Once you have dealt enough damage all of the statues will fall dead, and within a few seconds you will be returned to the real world. The Enchanter –who will assume you are still under the influence of the Armour will attack you, and you will be forced to defend yourself.

When he is dead you will be greeted by Captain Maelin and 2 of his guards who will enter the Enchanters home.

Plot Important Article #5: *Maybe it is merely coincidence, but isn't it a bit strange that it just* happens *to be Maelin who is tasked with capturing you? And surely the Government wouldn't have assigned an entire regiment of soldiers to deal with one person –albeit, the Champion of Cyrodiil.*

The Armour's Realm – 4th Visit:

Once again make your way to the tavern and speak with the Bartender to learn of the Armour's next task. You now need to track down a Paladin by the name of Pellew (yet another reoccurring character in the Fiend saga) at his Manor estate in the Jerall mountains.

Good Path Important Choices: *This is the final plot-pivotal conversation opportunity with the Bartender, in which your objective is to help her break free of the Armour's constraints. If your objective is to achieve the "good" ending, ensure that you pursue all dialogue opportunities with the Bartender.*

Evil Path Important Choices: *If you have continued to comply with the Armour's wishes, Cleon, the Butcher of Armindale (another regular character in the Fiend saga) will stop you from leaving and issue you a final warning about the path you have chosen to pursue. At this point you can refuse his offer of an alliance against the Armour (and thus continue the Evil path) or you can accept it (which puts you on the Nuetral path.)*

When you have done all that you want to do here, return to the Real World.

The Pellew Manor:

With the Malevolent quest selected you will see the quest marker (and map marker) for the Pellew Manor in the Jerall Mountains. As you will have finished the Oblivion Main Quest by now you will have the Cloud Ruler Temple mapmarker. I'd suggest fast travelling there and then making your way up the mountain to the Pellew Manor.

Once you have arrived at the Manor you can either lockpick the door to gain entrance, or find the "spare key" under a mossy rock near the front steps (a reoccurring theme throughout the Fiend saga.)

Travel up the stairs to the second floor where you will find Horatio, the Paladin's apprentice. Speak to him to learn a great deal about the Armour and it's construction. When you ask about who commissioned it the Armour you will learn from Horatio that that question is a trigger word that essentially labels anyone you ask it as an enemy to the Armour. Alas, the damage is done and the Armour will appear and order you to kill the apprentice.

This is the final instance of choice pertaining to your path through the MOD. You can follow the Armour's instructions and kill Horatio –thus sealing your fate to the Armour and his proposal of symbiosis- or you can resist and once again battle against the Armour.

***IF** you haven't developed a Friendship with the Bartender, or accepted Cleon (the Butcher) as an ally, you will once again be forced to watch as the Armour takes control of your body and cuts down the Apprentice, after which you will be returned to the real world. You have now confirmed that you will follow the Neutral/Preservation path through the MOD.*

Evil Path Important Choices: *If you agree to kill Horatio the Apprentice, you can also opt to try and extract a bit more information out of him. Talk to him, and –if you have the stomach for it- torture him until he reveals to you the exact location of the Pellew Family Crypt. This will allow you to bypass the "map reading" section (see the next part of the MOD) and travel directly to the Crypt.*

Good Path Important Choices: *If you have developed a friendship with the Bartender, or alternatively have accepted Cleon's proposal to serve as allies, one of them (Cleon or the Bartender) will unlock the door to your cell and allow you to combat the Armour.*

Follow the Armour through the door that leads to the Tavern and you will find yourself in yet another part of the Realm. In the room at the base of the stairs you will find 4 damaged columns arrayed around a wooden cage, in which the original copy of the Armour resides. In 2 of the 3 side passages you will find "statue" forms of the Armour.

After a time you will be attacked by one of the statues that has come to life. These statues are impervious to damage and so cannot be killed by conventional means. Every 60 seconds the Original copy of the Armour (inside the cage) will throw a fireball at you. You will know when the fireball is about to be cast as the Original Armour will speak an incantation and perform a casting animation. If you are standing near one of the four columns when the fireball hits, the column will collapse and bring down a portion of the roof with it. If all four columns are destroyed, the roof will collapse and kill you instantly.

Your objective, therefore, is to topple sections of the room into the duplicates of the Armour that are attacking you. You can accomplish this by ensuring the Armour stays close to you during the build up to the impending fireball. One particularly effective technique is to simply run around the column, keeping the Armour on the opposite side. When the first statue has been killed the second one will attack. Repeat the process until both statues are dead, after which the Original Armour will attack you.

20 hits is all it takes to defeat the Original Armour. When he lies dead you will be returned to the real world to find that –just for once- the Armour's intended victim is still alive.

If you killed the Apprentice (or were forced to watch as the Armour killed him) you will find a key upon his corpse which leads to the Manor basement.

If, however, you managed to resist the Armour and keep the Apprentice alive, he will initiate a conversation with you and propose that the two of you travel to find his Master (the Paladin Edward Pellew) who is travelling to the Pellew family crypt. He will give you the key and tell you to collect the map from the basement while he prepares his travel equipment.

The door leading to the basement is under the staircase, near the entrance to the Manor. Use the key and travel down to the basement.

The actual map that you are seeking is a rolled up piece of parchment on the table at the far end of the room. If you want you can collect the parchment and leave; however there are several other important items in the room which you may want to examine.

Plot Important Article #6: *Pellew's Journal can be found on the table (near the map to the Pellew Family Crypt. Reading the journal gives you some insight into the Paladin himself, but also reveals another important fact: Lucius Maelin (Captain Maelin) is Pellew's other apprentice.*

Plot Important Article #7: *Also on the table you will find a very old edition of the Black Horse Courier detailing the rise in fame of Lucius Maelin, describing him as an Aspiring Champion of Cyrodiil and soon-to-be Champion. It also outlines some of the unorthodox techniques he uses to achieve his desired goal.*

Plot Important Article #8: *There are three pictures around the room which show Maelin at various stages of his development and rise as an Aspiring Champion. They also further elaborate his relationship with his Master, Paladin Edward Pellew.*

Plot Important Article #9: *On the table you will find a copy of the book: "The Butcher of Armindale," with the words "Property of Lucius" on the inside of the cover. You may also recall that there were a "Personality" of The Butcher himself residing within the Armour's dream world. Furthermore, Cleon, Allecia and the Bartender all mention the fact that the Butcher of Armindale played a pivotal role in the Armour's development.*

After taking the map to the Pellew Family Crypt you will hear Maelin's voice, and his threat to burn the building to the ground if you don't surrender.

Leave the basement and return to the first floor of the Manor where you will find that the building has been set alight. This sequence is quite cinematic to watch, but not essential. When you are done watching the building burn to the ground, head upstairs and Use the door. The second floor will collapse and the entire section will be consumed in smoke. If you managed to keep the Apprentice alive during the earlier

confrontation with the Armour, he is dead now. Enter the room and search around in the smoke until you find a "trap door". Use the trap door to exit the burning Manor, where you will receive a quest update advising you to travel to Skingrad in order to make your way to the Pellew Family Crypt..

The Route to the Crypt:

If you tortured Horatio to learn the location of the Crypt, you can travel directly there by simply heading to the mapmarker. If not, you'll have to do it he hard way.

Follow the instructions contained on the map you took from the Pellew Manor, using "3rd Person View" if necessary in order to more accurately count your steps. The step-counting does not need to be precise, and is merely an estimate.

The specific instructions provided by the map are as follows:

1. Leave Skingrad by the East Gate.

2. Cross the Bridge and travel under the archway.

3. Travel 40 paces North East until you come to a rock overlooking the road.

4. Head due North until you come to the road.

5. Travel East 25 paces until you come to the North entrance to the graveyard.

6. Make your way 100 paces North East, you will find yourself in a small gully on the side of the mountain.

7. Head due North until you reach the crypt.

The Pellew Family Crypt – 1st Floor:

Evil Path Important Choices: *Upon entering the Crypt you watch a brief scene where the Armour mentions that something is very wrong. He doesn't specify what, but he is moderately incoherent and no where near as articulate as usual. This is the first warning sign of the impending uprising in the Armour's Realm.*

After the conversation you will be prompted to venture into the Armour's Realm to try and determine what is going on. Use Malevolent Symbiosis to enter the Armour's Realm.

Upon arrival you will note that the normal "entryway" that you port into is blocked by a door. Opening the door reveals that you are entrapped in a cage, with one of the Aspects you saw previously in the Tavern watching you. Look around the area you have arrived in and you will see an escape hatch. Enter the hatch and continue down the hallways until you come to a large room with Cleon, the Butcher of Armindale standing at the centre.

Speak to Cleon, who will explain his reasons for bringing you to this place, and reveal to you the true power of the Butcher of Armindale: his pet Demon. After this he will attack you.

The fight is essentially a puzzle. Cleon and his Demon constantly heal one another when they are in close proximity to one another, so the key to defeating them lies in separating them. Around the room you will see three cells, each occupied by one of the other Aspects of the Armour's Realm. Pulling the levers adjacent to their cells unlocks the cell door (but does not open or close the door.) After freeing each of the Aspects they will attempt to flee, do not waste your time fighting them. Two of the cells are connected by a series of tunnels. Draw Cleon and his Demon into these tunnels, and deal as much damage to Cleon as possible until he is knocked unconscious. After this, lead the Demon back into the main part of the room, and close and lock both the doors, essentially trapping Cleon inside the cells.

Now lead the Demon back up the stairs to where you entered this part of the Armour's Realm, and slaughter the hapless beast. Once it is dead, Cleon will flee from the area and you will have won the battle. Return to Real World and continue your descent into the Pellew Family Crypt.

As you travel along the first floor of the Crypt you will come to a locked door and "summoning star" at the end of a corridor, with 6 rooms (3 on each side) leading off from the adjacent section of the corridor. Inside each of these rooms you will find a pressure plate.

Your objective here is to press the 6 pressure plates in the correct sequence in order to open the locked door. If you press one of the plates out of order you will hear a "warning bell" sound. Using the summoning star will show you a brief image of which pressure plate (and its surrounding room) you need to use next in the sequence.

There are 2 ways you can solve this puzzle:

You can choose to simply complete the process by trial and error (might take a while).

Or, you can use the Summoning Star to tell you which pressure plates to press. As all of the rooms look alike you will need some way to separate the different rooms. The easiest way to do this is to drop a different piece of equipment near each pressure plate (for example, Breastplate in room 1, Greaves in room 2, Helmet in room 3, etc). That way, each time you Use the Summing Star you will be able to determine which room it is showing you.

When all 6 pressure plates have been pressed in the correct order, a high pitch bell will sound and the door at the end of the corridor will open. Travel through the now open doorway and Use the door at the far end of the corridor to descend to the 2nd floor of the Pellew Family Crypt.

The Pellew Family Crypt – 2nd Floor:

This floor is inhabited by a number of monsters (8 Skeleton warriors, 4 Skeleton Archers and 2 Ghosts) so be on your guard.

The layout for this level is fairly straightforward as most of the time there is only one route to take. As your travel you will come across a series of bridges hanging out "over the void". Falling off these bridges and into the void will result in an immediate death.

Travel along the bridge system until you come to a locked door. To your left (as you face the door) you will find a hole in the wall. Make your way through the tunnels until you come to a hole in the floor. Drop down the hole into the lower section of the tunnels.

Following the corridors leads to a series of interlocked "rooms" separated by a series of rocky columns. This area is populated by several skeletons. At the far end of this chamber the passage continues. Use the door at the far end to descend to the 3rd floor of the Pellew Family Crypt.

The Pellew Family Crypt – 3rd Floor:

Follow the tunnels as they head downwards. You will eventually come to a drop-off at which point the route vanishes. Jump down the hole and you will fall into the "Inner Crypt Chamber", sustaining some damage in the process. If you don't have the Hit Points to survive the fall, you can mitigate some of the damage by jumping from rock to rock down the hole into the Inner Crypt Chamber, and from there jumping down the hole into the Chamber itself.

Soon after landing you will be approached by the Armour who wants to have a heart to heart discussion with you. Regardless of your dialogue choices here, the Armour will attempt to appease you by upgrading the "abilities bonuses" of the Armour to the highest stage. After which he will offer to watch over your physical presence if you would like to rest whilst waiting for the Paladin.

Evil Path Important Choices: *After the conversation ends, if you have allied yourself with the Armour he will speak to you again, warning of the uprising of the other personalities (aspects) within his Realm. Part way through the conversation he will disappear to be replaced by Allecia the Fiend, then Cleon the Butcher, and finally the Bartender from the Armour's Realm. Before all of the personalities vanish. This is symbolic of the Armour losing complete control of his realm, and indicates your new objective if you plan to aid the Armour.*

You can use this opportunity to explore the Inner Crypt (A knowledge of its geography will come in handy later on), and when you are ready to continue the MOD, use Malevolent Symbiosis to travel back to the Armour's Realm.

The Armour's Realm – 5th Visit:

Once arriving in the Armour's Realm, what happens next will ultimately depend on whether you have followed the "good", "evil" or "Nuetral" path through the MOD.

Good: You must have completed all the conversations with the Bartender (‘Tender) to the point where you can choose to enlist her help in the fight against the Armour.

Evil: You must NOT have resisted the Armour at all, nor agreed to side with Cleon and Allecia when they propose an alliance against the Armour.

Neutral: Anything except the above two requirements.

Neutral Path Important Choices: *If you are following the Neutral path you will enter the Armour’s Realm and will notice no changes whatsoever (both the Evil and Good paths receive a slightly altered version of the Realm here). Simply wait for a period of time greater than 2 hours in the Armour’s Realm, and return to the real world whenever ready to continue the story.*

Good Path Important Choices: *You will see the word “’Tender” written on the ground in blood just in front of where you arrive, and you will receive a quest update prompting you to investigate.*

Make your way to the door which leads to the “Tavern” within the Armour’s Realm. Use the door and enter the Tavern. On the far side of the balcony you will see Allecia and Cleon guarding the entrance to a locked door. Speaking to each of them will reveal that ‘Tender has been taken by the Armour and imprisoned as he knew all along of ‘Tender and the Player’s treachery. You will also learn that she is being guarded by the other personalities in the realm.

At this point you can choose to rescue ‘Tender, or you can simply return to the real world and continue the quest (this will essentially set you on the Nuetral path.)

If you chose to have ‘Tender recruit the “other personalities within the Armour’s Realm” you will be able to enlist Cleon and Allecia’s help in the rescue. If they agree to help you, they will operate as companions (temporarily) in the upcoming fight against the Armour and his minions.

Enter the door behind Allecia and Cleon and make your way through the labyrinth of tunnels. En route you will be attacked by the “Meek” personality (fights as a beggar).

As you continue downwards you will enter a prison region, which will trigger an ambush. The Enchantress and the Scholar personalities will emerge from their cells and attack you, fighting as a Mage and a Healer respectively. When they are dead the second set of cell doors will open and you be attacked by the Courageous and the Archmage (warrior and Mage). Upon killing the Archmage, search her corpse to find the “Cell Door key” which will open ‘Tender’s cell door.

Continue along the corridor and you will enter a new area of the prison in which ‘Tender resides in the last cell on the left. Unlock the door with the key taken from the Archmage’s corpse, enter the cell and talk to ‘Tender.

Part way through the conversation you will have the opportunity to get her to prove that she is free of the Armour’s restraints by touching her. If you do, the Armour’s Realm will change from the “colourless void” to a normal, coloured prison (looking

akin to the real world.) This is symbolic of the fact that her sway over the Whole is now equal to that of the Armour himself (also noted by the fact that only the Armour and 'Tender remain to fight over the Whole, with all other personalities being destroyed in the previous encounter.)

Leave the cell and travel back towards the entrance to this realm. On the way back 'Tender will speak to you again and will return the Realm to its "colourless void" state so as to avoid betraying the success of your prison-break attempt to the Armour.

When you are nearing the entrance you will come across another "semblance" of the Armour. It will attack you as you get close, but with 'Tender's help it's a pretty easy fight. As you attempt to leave, Tender will speak to you again, and after the conversation will vanish.

Head back to the main Antechamber of the Armour's Realm and use Malevolent Symbiosis to return to the real world.

Evil Path Important Choices: *You will see the words "'The Armour" written on the ground in blood just in front of where you arrive, and you will receive a quest update prompting you to investigate.*

Make your way to the door which leads to the "Tavern" within the Armour's Realm. Use the door and enter the Tavern. On the far side of the Tavern is a door which was previously locked, marked with another "blood message."

Enter the door and make your way through the labyrinth of tunnels. En route you will be attacked by the "Meek" personality (fights as a beggar).

As you continue downwards you will enter a prison region, which will trigger an ambush. The Enchantress and the Scholar personalities will emerge from their cells and attack you, fighting as a Mage and a Healer respectively. When they are dead the second set of cell doors will open and you be attacked by the Courageous and the Archmage (warrior and Mage). Upon killing the Archmage, search her corpse to find the "Cell Door key" which will open the Armour's cell door.

Continue along the corridor and you will enter a new area of the prison in which the Armour resides inside the second prison cell on the right. Unlock the door with the key taken from the Archmage's corpse, enter the cell and talk to the Armour.

Part way through the conversation the Armour will announce that the walls that separate you and he are crumbling, and a sequence will play out where the Armour's Realm will change from the "colourless void" to a normal, coloured prison (looking akin to the real world.) This is symbolic of the fact that the physical presence (the Armour of Malevolence itself) is no longer integral to the Armour's relationship with you, and he is essentially setting up a presence within your own mind.

Leave the cell and travel back towards the entrance to this realm. On the way back the Armour will speak to you again and will return the Realm to its "colourless void" state so as to conserve energy to be used in the upcoming battle against the treacherous personalities and the Paladin. The Armour will also grant you a new

version of the Armour of Malevolence with much better stats than any previous version.

When you are nearing the entrance you will come across Allecia the Fiend and Cleon the Butcher of Armindale, two of the three ringleaders of the coup against the Armour. They will attack you as you get close, but with the Armour's help it's a pretty easy fight. As you attempt to leave, the Armour will speak to you again, and after the conversation will vanish.

Head back to the main Antechamber of the Armour's Realm and use Malevolent Symbiosis to return to the real world.

The Pellew Family Crypt – Encounter With the Paladin

Upon returning to the real world you will find that the crypt has been defiled by the Armour in your absence, with the rotting remains of Pellew's family strewn around the place. Edward Pellew the Paladin will arrive soon after and confront you directly.

During the course of the conversation, you can either challenge the Paladin to gain control of the Hammer he bears, or can try and convince him to simply give you the Hammer. Good players can persuade Pellew that they are in control of themselves and will use the Hammer to destroy the Armour, where as evil players can lie to the Paladin to convince him of the same thing.

Alternatively, if you challenge Pellew or fail to convince him of your good intentions, he will fight you. When he lies dead you can take them Hammer from his cold dead fingers.

At this point you have a choice. You can choose to destroy the Hammer (evil path) or you can use the Hammer to destroy the Armour (Neutral and Good path.)

Evil Path Important Choices: *If you decide to destroy the Hammer and seal yourself to the Armour forevermore, you are required to cast it into a "bottomless pit" in the vicinity of the Crypt. If you explore the area you will find three doors that lead to a small alcove. In this alcove you will find the pit itself. Being careful not to fall into the pit (which would result in instant death), simply "drop" the Hammer into the pit to destroy it.*

A quest update will note the fact that it is strange that the Armour has remained silent despite the fact that the two of you are now bonded for all eternity. Return to the main chamber and approach the raised section at the centre where the coffins are located to trigger the next section of the story.

Neutral Path Important Choices: *If you decide to use the Hammer to destroy the Armour, use Malevolent Symbiosis to enter the Armour's Realm. Equip the Hammer and approach the prison door, which will explode, leaving you free to enter the Armour's Antechamber.*

If you haven't won any of the "resistance" battles, you will be forced to play them out now before you can confront the Armour (you will be teleported to the first of the

battles when you attempt to use the door to enter the Armour's Antechamber.) See **Good Path Important Choices** *under* **Bruma City – The Escape** *for a description on how this battle plays out and how to succeed. When you have won this battle you will be returned to the prison part of the Armour's Realm, ready to enter the Armour's Antechamber.*

When the prison door opens, enter the main antechamber of the Armour's Realm. The Armour himself will emerge, speak to you briefly, and then attack. During the attack he will be joined by two duplicates of the Armour, one of which is an archer and the other a mage. The prime version of the Armour will be a warrior. With the Hammer you can "instant-kill" any of the Armour's duplicates (but not the prime Armour himself), which will soon be resurrected in one of the adjacent alcoves.

The objective here is simply to survive long enough for the Armour's Realm to turn "real", this takes approximately 4 minutes real time, during which all you need to do is evade the Armour and avoid damage. This can be achieved by exploiting the terrain and the NPC AI pathfinding. Every 15 seconds (or so) a part of the Realm will change from "grey" to "real", and the Armour will become less and less "real" (more see-through, like the other Aspects you have come across) until at last he is almost invisible, and the Realm is entirely "real." At this point the Armour will move to the centre of the Antechamber, and promptly combust, destroyed for all eternity.

Approximately 15 seconds after the Armour is destroyed you will be returned to the Real World, and the story will continue.

Good Path Important Choices: *If you decide to use the Hammer to destroy the Armour, use Malevolent Symbiosis to enter the Armour's Realm.*

Soon after arriving, you will be approached by 'Tender who will outline how the fight is to proceed. Rather than combating the Armour directly you merely need to stay alive long enough for 'Tender to force the Armour out of your mind. She will give you a moment to prepare yourself, and when you are ready speak to her again to begin the final battle.

Depending on what form of help you chose in one of 'Tender's earlier conversations, she may or may night fight at your side directly. If you requested her help in the final battle, you will have her as an ally for the duration.

When the prison door opens, enter the main antechamber of the Armour's Realm. The Armour himself will emerge, speak to you briefly, and then attack. During the attack he will be joined by two duplicates of the Armour, one of which is an archer and the other a mage. The prime version of the Armour will be a warrior. With the Hammer you can "instant-kill" any of the Armour's duplicates (but not the prime Armour himself), which will soon be resurrected in one of the adjacent alcoves.

The objective here is simply to survive long enough for the Armour's Realm to turn "real" (as it did when you freed 'Tender from her prison), this takes approximately 4 minutes real time, during which all you need to do is evade the Armour and avoid damage. This can be achieved by exploiting the terrain and the NPC AI pathfinding, or by using 'Tender (if she is helping you in the fight) to draw the Armour's attention

away from you. Every 15 seconds (or so) a part of the Realm will change from "grey" to "real", and the Armour will become less and less "real" (more see-through, like the other Aspects you have come across) until at last he is almost invisible, and the Realm is entirely "real." At this point the Armour will move to the centre of the Antechamber, and promptly combust, destroyed for all eternity.

'Tender will emerge from one of the adjacent rooms (or will simply stand still if she was helping you in the fight.) Speak to her for the final conversation with her. What dialogue options you choose here ultimately don't matter. When the conversation is finished, you will be teleported back to the real world after about 15 seconds, and the quest will continue.

The Pellew Family Crypt – Encounter With Lucius Maelin

At this point, you will be surrounded by guards, and Lucius Maelin himself will make an appearance. It seems that he has been tracking you since he destroyed the Pellew estate and has prepared an ambush for you.

You will promptly be attacked by four sword-bearing guards, and three archers. Use the environment (in particular the stairs and many ledges) to promptly dispatch them, and return to the middle point of the room.

Maelin will speak to you again, and engage you in conversation in which he outlines the big twist of the story… He was responsible for the crafting of the Armour of Malevolence, and engineered everything to ensure you would wear the Armour and subsequently be party to the murder of the Blacksmith, the Enchanter, the Apprentice and numerous guards. He did all of this to have you declared a criminal and stripped of your title as Champion of Cyrodiil, so that he –an Aspiring Champion- could take the title that he believes he has earned. During this conversation you will also see a brief videoclip which shows flashbacks to the various evidences that demonstrated Maelin's treachery that you might or might not have noticed earlier.

Evil Path Important Choices: *Towards the end of the conversation, Maelin will use the REAL Hammer (the one he gave to Pellew was a fake, apparently) to destroy the Armour of Malevolence that you wear, breaking your symbiosis and destroying the Armour.*

At the end of the conversation, Maelin will taunt you about all of the evidence that is stacking up against you, and will advise you that he is leaving to head an inquiry into your crimes, in which the Council in Imperial City will decide what to do with you. After this he will make his escape.

Pursue him through the now unlocked doors on the ground floor, and back through the two upper levels of the Pellew Family Crypt.

The Pellew Family Crypt – The Finale

As you attempt to leave the Pellew Family Crypt the Armour will suddenly appear before you and engage you in conversation.

It seems that he has been occupying a part of your mind for so long that your mind has gotten used to him being there, and has created an Aspect of the Armour to fill the now vacant part of your mind. In short, rather than being a separate entity to you, he is now a part of you as Allecia, Cleon, the Bartender and the other Aspects were a part of the original Armour.

He will advise you that for the meantime he is too weak to have any power of you, but warns you that he is still with you, and you will be together for a very long time.

Thus, Maelin has escaped, your reputation is still tarnished by three murders (though the Council hasn't yet met to remove your title and declare you a fugitive), and the Armour has taken up a permanent residence in your mind… Things didn't go quite as well as expected, huh?

Thus, Malevolent ends on a cliffhanger. Fortunately the events that have transpired will not interfere with your continued questing in Oblivion, and for the meantime you will have to wait until the 2nd half of Malevolent to have your revenge.

III – REOCCURRING CHARACTERS

What follows are some of the major reoccurring characters from the **Fiend Saga** who make appearances in Malevolent. I have opted to include these details about their history and personas so that those of you who have not played Ruined-Tail's Tale or Tears of the Fiend will be able to familiarise yourself with the characters who played important roles in the events that have transpired.

Cleon the Butcher:

Also known as: *"The Butcher of Armindale" or "General Cleon"*
First appearance: *The Butcher of Armindale*
Primary appearance: *Tears of the Fiend*
Other appearances: *Tears of the Fiend (The Legacy, The Butcher of Armindale, Redemption, Tears of the Fiend) and Malevolent.*
Personality traits: *Cleon, the Butcher of Armindale, is a former general in an army sponsored by a now forgotten city in Tamriel. He is a warrior by nature, renowned for his beastial fighting style and unparalleled tactical prowess.*

Born the only son to an impoverished family of farmers, Cleon became a Soldier in order to escape the simple lifestyle his family has ultimately condemned him to. He promptly rose through the ranks (with the help of an unnamed source, whispering all manner of malevolent desires in his ear), and eventually gained the rank of General. His abilities to second-guess his opponents (ostensibly by being able to empathise with their situation, and thus anticipate their thoughts and relative strategy) left him in charge of a besieging army as it laid waste to a number of cities in Tamriel. During one of these sieges –an attack on the city of Armindale- the monster that had begun to consume Cleon since he first rejected his families' principles finally took control, and

he ordered every single occupant of the city slaughtered in order to prevent a possible uprising, thus earning him his now famous moniker: "The Butcher of Armindale."

Cleon himself is arrogant, self-obsessed, patronising and holds very little value in the other beings on Tamriel. Yet his desire to immortalise himself throughout the pages of history (born of a fear of being forgotten), as well as a deep-seated fear of the Beast that lurks within him betray his humanity. From time to time his malevolent façade will fail and he will open up, revealing his inner secrets for but a fraction of a second before returning to his normal, aggressive state of mind.

Allecia Ehothorn:

Also known as: *"The Fiend" or "Qurroll"*
First appearance: *The Legacy*
Primary appearance: *Tears of the Fiend*
Other appearances: *Tears of the Fiend (The Legacy, The Butcher of Armindale, Redemption, Tears of the Fiend) and Malevolent.*
Personality traits: *Allecia Ehothorn (real name: Qurroll) is a Fiend from one of the Planes of Oblivion who uses the appearance of an Imperial Female to aid her travels through Tamriel. She is also a talented magic user; however her true prowess lies in her skills at manipulation, coercion and deceit.*

Throughout decades of existence on Tamriel she has survived all manner of Demon Hunts (often led by the infamous Fallen Paladin Edward Pellew) by pulling the strings of those around her in such a manner so as to better serve her needs. She is not above lying or double-crossing even her most dependable allies in order to ensure her own survival, and her inherent beauty and skill at manipulating the spoken word leaves all but the most steadfast individuals susceptible to her charms, and thus her treachery.

Yet despite her tendency to embrace the evil aspects of her nature, Allecia secretly harbours very mortal-like traits of loneliness and hopelessness. She knows the monster that she is, and despises herself for it, ultimately remaining unable to break free of her instinct to betray all others to ensure her own survival. She longs to be free of the constraints her lineage has bestowed upon her, and hopes to find some way to facilitate this

Edward Pellew:

Also known as: *"The Paladin" or "The Half-Celestial*
First appearance: *The Legacy*
Primary appearance: *The Legacy*
Other appearances: *Malevolent and Tears of the Fiend (The Legacy, The Butcher of Armindale, Redemption, Tears of the Fiend).*
Personality traits: *Edward Pellew was blessed (or perhaps cursed) with mixed-race parentage, with one of his parents being Human and the other a Demi-God. Though the specific details of his lineage remain unknown along with his early years and his*

exact age (some speculate he has lived for more than a century) the later portion of his life has become something of a legend.

A Paladin by trade, Edward Pellew used the limited powers granted by his Half-Celestial nature to destroy Demons, Fiends and other such minions of Oblivion. He earned some measure of fame during his quests (and was thus immortalised in a number of fairy tales and children's books, in particular: "Edward Pellew and Other Children's Stories"), but his true claim to face came from his relentless pursuit of the Fiend Qurroll and her lover. Along with the help of Maris the Hunter, the two of them spend decades tracking the two Fiends, during which time Pellew's own beliefs were called into question, and his wife and two sons died impoverished and neglected by his mindless pursuit. Regarded by some as a "Fallen Paladin" due to his pretence for using questionable tactics in order to achieve the "greater good", Pellew's advanced age has only fuelled his desire to prove himself by stamping out evil wherever he sees it.

In recent events, he has temporarily put aside his enmity towards Allecia Ehothorn, and has returned to his estate in the Jerall Mountains to continue training his two apprentices. Yet despite his apparent change of heart, Pellew conceals a very tormented soul and will –if necessary- resort to whatever tactics he considered appropriate in order to serve the "better good."

Ruined-Tail:

Also known as: *"Ruin" or "The Argonian"*
First appearance: *Ruined-Tail's Tale*
Primary appearance: *Ruined-Tail's Tale*
Other appearances: *Tears of the Fiend (The Legacy, The Butcher of Armindale, Redemption, Tears of the Fiend) and Malevolent.*
Personality traits: *Ruined-Tail is a somewhat naive Argonian who –despite his pretence to being opinionated- is actually quite susceptible to the influence of others. He had a tendency to become quite attached to certain individuals, almost to the point of becoming obsessed, and his timid, open-to-suggestion nature means that his own beliefs more often than not echo those of the individual to which he has embedded himself. Fiercely loyal, somewhat self-depreciative and ever a dreamer, Ruin constantly finds himself conflicted by what he sees in the world around him, which seems to conflict with his views of right and wrong –however influenced they may have been.*

Hatched and raised within the secretive ShadowScale sect of Assassins, Ruin –despite being a highly skilled Battle Mage- found himself consistently at odds with the authority that commanded the ShadowScales. His growing dissatisfaction born of the Sect's devotion to the Dark Father, and the many hypocrisies and injustices associated with such blind, brainwashed belief as the ShadowScales received as hatchlings. He chose to leave the ShadowScales and travel Tamriel on his own, hoping to find someone who could provide him the tutelage necessary to survive as a free citizen in the realms.

Yet for Ruin, survival is no longer enough. As his ability to separate dreams from reality begins to deteriorate, his hopes and desires take priority of rationality and survival. He longs to find his dreams, though he will admit to any who asks that he is not entirely sure what they are.

IV – AUTHOR'S COMMENTS

*"I'm ashamed to admit it, but I do place a lot of value in how my **r**esponders find the overall experience of my MODs. Some individ**u**als lack the open-m**i**ndedness or desire to embrace a story-orientated MOD, and criticise my works unjustly; others voice ge**n**uine criticism and issues which I take on board and p**l**ay an influential role in the design, focus and scope of my next Modding project; and the remaining -smaller-group enjoy the MODs for prec**i**sely what they are: story-orientated, character dr**i**ven pseudo-psychological qu**e**sts in the style of RPG**s** of old.*

*Knowing this, my concerns over **Malevolent** -which I personally see as a very risky move from a popularity/reception perspective-, draw mostly from the primary criticism I anticipate receiving for it. I see **Malevolent** as a vital step in the course of my Modding cycle (students of horror literature will recognise my reference to the various "cycles" in which H. P. Lovecraft wrote different aspects of his Cthulhu Mythos, Lovecraft being my primary influence in Tears of the Fiend and **Malevolent**), and I genuinely believe that this MOD will make or break me due to the vast quantities of effort involved in the creation of what may very well be a dismal failure from a critical acclaim perspective. But I will wait and watch, and prepare myself for any impending criticism born of the "audience alienating" nature of the MOD.*

Thus, knowing that I can expect criticism over certain design choices I made for this MOD, I will address the more obvious of these issues here.

***The Player's Role within Malevolent** - Ultimately, for large portions of this MOD the Player is a pawn as far as control of the story goes. Whenever the player does have complete freedom of choice, most of the player's actions are in the manner of responding to the actions of the antagonist, rather than taking any real preventative or pre-emptive actions. Ultimately, this is integral to the story, and I think it is necessary to make the player feel powerless for a large portion of the story, so as to emphasise the changing nature of power as the story evolves, and the pivotal characters change. Regardless of its necessity, and the fact I refuse to change it for the sake of making it more commercially viable (from a Modding popularity perspective), I will readily admit that I am ultimately alienating a large portion of my audience by choosing to follow the course, and am ready to accept criticism focusing on this topic en masse.*

***The Cliffhanger Ending** - Without spoiling anything, I will admit that the ending is a bit of a cliffhanger. The primary story that is the focus of **Malevolent** is concluded before the end, but the under riding story is not concluded, by design. The reasoning behind this is threefold: The development time behind complex quest MODs like **Malevolent** is simply enormous, especially considering that the vast majority of work is done by me alone; the "uncertain" nature of the MOD's impending response, and*

*the fact the fact that if no one likes or wants to play **Malevolent**, I'm certainly not going to double my workload by doubling its length; And finally, there is the hectic Real Life schedule of both my self and Arilita, which is increasing in intensity on a near weekly basis, meaning that finding time to MOD is getting harder and harder. Thus, *I* alone made the decision to end the MOD where it ends, and use the reception to **Malevolent** to determine whether or not I follow up on it with the second half of the overall story.*

***The Overall Length** - Though the length of the MOD will change depending on the path taken through it (in terms of shortest to longest average play time; the Neutral/Preservation path, followed by the Evil/Symbiosis path, and finally the Good/Resistance path), the MOD in it's entirety is undisputedly shorter than Tears of the Fiend. This stems mostly from the fact that there are essentially 2.5 stories featured (Good, Evil, and Neutral -which is a derivative of both paths), as well as the unparalleled complexity of the locations and scripts, the small development team, and the fact that **Malevolent** is only half of the full story (to the same extent that The Legacy and The Butcher of Armindale were 2 halves of the full story, which culminated as one MOD in Tears of the Fiend.) I'd say there is still at least 10 hours of play time on average for a first run-through of the MOD (which is still longer than the average first run-through play time of Knights of the Nine and the Vanilla Oblivion Main Quest). The fact of the matter is that, short of introducing useless padding or 'errand-boy" quests (which would be out of context with the "story-orientated" nature of the MOD) **Malevolent** as it stands doesn't **need** or **want** to be any longer.*

*At the end of the day, Malevolent is as it has to be. And though it is merely a MOD, and not even an overly large MOD in terms of raw content, the amount of planning and work that has gone into its development is near impossible to fathom short of opening up the **Malevolent**.esp in the Oblivion Construction Set and having a look at the internal workings for yourself. There is nothing like **Malevolent** in the Oblivion Modding world, and nor will there be again."*

-Paul 'Simyaz' Thomson
Sydney, Australia

V – TECHNICAL TROUBLESHOOTING

QUESTION: I haven't finished the Oblivion Main Quest, but I want to play Malevolent. Is there some way I can bypass the requirement to have finished the Main Quest and just play the MOD?

ANSWER: Yes you can, but be forewarned: Malevolent is a difficult MOD in every sense of the word, and many of the story elements (in fact, MOST of the story elements) assume that you have finished the Main Quest.

However, if you still want to force the MOD to start, simply do the following (NOTE: these instructions assume that Malevolent is either the ONLY MOD that you are running, or that it is at the top of your MOD load order):

1. When in-game (and before speaking to Captain Maelin for the first time) bring down the console by pressing ~
2. Type: “set ZZMALEVOLENT.ForceMalevolentStart to 1” (obviously without the “ “)
3. Press ENTER and enjoy the MOD.

QUESTION: The dialogue isn't staying on the screen long enough for me to read it, what's going on?

ANSWER: The "silent.mp3s" are used to force each line of dialogue to stay on screen for 8 seconds. If they aren't installed correctly, the dialogue will flick by too fast to read.

The Voice files (Silent.mp3s) need to be placed in the following directory:

"Oblivion\Data\Sound\Voice\Malevolent.esp\<Race name>\<Gender>\"

It is also a known issue that foreign language versions of Oblivion need to have the dialogue files renamed due to the fact that the directory structure is different to the English version of the game.

For instance, these applies to Spanish Oblivion needs:

Argonian->Argoniano
Breton->Bret n
Imperial->Imperial (no change)
High Elf->Alto Elfo
Redguard-> Guarda rojo
Nord->N rdico

QUESTION: How come I don't hear any voiced dialogue?

ANSWER: About ¼ of all the lines of dialogue in Malevolent are voice acted, so if you aren’t hearing ANY voiced dialogue at all, something is definitely wrong. The most likely problem is that the voice files are installed to the wrong directory. You can determine if this is the case when you speak to Captain Maelin (the first Malevolent-related NPC you will come across), as all of his opening lines of dialogue are voice acted. If you hear nothing at all (and the captions only stay on screen for about 2 seconds), it means that the voice files are installed to the wrong directory.

Look at the answer to the question above for help on how to manually install the voice files.

QUESTION: What is with the voice files that don't have any sound?

ANSWER: They are "silent.mp3s" and are used to force the dialogue text to stay on screen for a specific amount of time, in the case of Malevolent, it is for approximately 8 seconds.

QUESTION: Oblivion crashes to the desktop whilst in-game. What's the problem?

ANSWER: There could be any number of possible reasons for this, but some of the more common ones are:

- Oblivion is not patched to 1.2
- Malevolent is not at the top of the MOD load order.
- You are running a MOD that conflicts with Malevolent - *Try temporarily disabling all MODs except Malevolent and seeing if that works. If it does, try adding back in each of the MODs one at a time until you find the one which conflicts.*
- Your computer does not have the necessary performance to run Malevolent – *Bare in mind, many of the scripts in Malevolent are amongst the most complex ever written for Oblivion, and they **do** tend to cause system slowdown in some instances.*
- God doesn't like you – *Sometimes such things are out of our control. If you have met all the above criteria and are still having problems, try E-mailing or messaging Arilita or myself and we will see what we can do to troubleshoot your problem.*

QUESTION: Whenever I enable the Malevolent.esp file, Oblivion crashes at the main title screen. Is the MOD bugged?

ANSWER: No, it's not bugged, this problem happens when you have Knights of the Nine installed. The solution is to change the load order of the MODs, placing KotN either before or after Malevolent.esp (the opposite to however you had it set up before.)

QUESTION: Some of the scripted sequences (like the fire at the Pellew manor) seem to run really slow. What's going on?

ANSWER: Script cycling is your problem. The Oblivion Engine slows the number of times that it cycles through a script (reads the script from top to bottom) as more scripts (in other words, more MODs) are added, or if it determines that the computer system is starting to suffer slowdown. Normally, it should cycle once per second (or very close to it), but as the script cycling starts to decrease it can drop as low as once every 3-4 seconds, meaning that fast-paced sequences (like the fire at the Pellew manor) start to look ridiculously slow. There is no fix for this problem.

QUESTION: When I speak to MOD-related NPCs in certain locations they just say "I HAVE NO GREETING" or just make ordinary "idle" conversation with me. Why is this?

ANSWER: There are two reasons that this commonly occurs. First of all, MOD conflicts often result in this problem in dialogue-intensive MODs (I have no ideas.) For the purpose of testing I'd suggest disabling all MODs except for Malevolent, and testing to see if the problem still occurs with the other MODs disabled.

QUESTION: Some of the NPC's pathing is quite buggy. How can this be fixed?

ANSWER: As NPC pathing relies on the pathnodes within Oblivion to move, it can't really be fixed. I've endeavoured to include enough correctly placed pathnodes to avoid problems, but at the end of the day it comes down to the AI pathhunting to determine whether or not it encounters problems.

QUESTION: My game won't save and results in really strange video errors at certain points in the quest.

ANSWER: In order for this MOD to work you **NEED** to ensure that you have updated Oblivion to 1.1 or above. If you are running 1.0 (or its' many unpatched derivatives) you will encounter this problem. If you have this problem, and have only just noticed you have yet to patch it, acquire the patch from http://elderscrolls.com/downloads/updates_patches.htm, and load up a save **BEFORE** you start Malevolent.

QUESTION: Does this MOD work with Shivering Isles?

ANSWER: Technically yes. Theoretically speaking it should work OK, but I wouldn't suggest trying to do any of the SI-related quests whilst wearing the Armour of Malevolence.

QUESTION: I'm having a strange bug that hasn't been covered in the README so far. What should I do?

ANSWER: First of all, DISABLE any MODs you are running and load up a save BEFORE the bug occurs. Try running Malevolent from there and see if the bug repeats itself. If it DOES, then I suggest you send me an E-mail at Simyaz@bigpond.com OR drop by the Malevolent threads on elderscrolls.com/forums (just do a search for Simyaz to find my thread) so that Arilita or myself can try and resolve the problem.

VI – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CREDITS:

Malevolent Development Team:

Simyaz
Real Name: *Paul Thomson*
Location: *Australia*
Previous Works: *The Wake of Murder (Baldur's Gate 2, Defunct); Ruined-Tail's Tale (Oblivion); Tears of the Fiend (The Legacy, The Butcher of Armindale, Redemption) - (Oblivion).*
Project Roles: *Project Leader/Creator, Writer (Dialogue, Quest, In-Game Books, References, Source Material), Lead Scripter/Programmer, Mapper/Level Designer, Sound Editing, Secondary 2D Artist, Secondary 3D Artist/Modeller, Voice Actor (Lieutenant, The Blacksmith, The Apprentice).*

Arilita
Real Name:
Location: Russia
Previous Works: *Ruined-Tail's Tale (Oblivion); Tears of the Fiend (The Legacy, The Butcher of Armindale, Redemption) - (Oblivion).*
Project Roles: *Secondary Scripter/Programmer, Lead 2D Artist, Lead 3D Artist, Voice Actor (The Bartender).*

Malevolent Voice-Acting Team:

Persian Paladin
Location: *United Kingdom*
Previous Works: *Ruined-Tail's Tale - Voice of Shade (Oblivion); The Butcher of Armindale - Voice of Kashaan the Book Dealer and the Conspirator (Oblivion).*
Project Roles: *Voice Actor (The Armour of Malevolence, Captain Lucius Maelin, Edward Pellew the Paladin).*

Zlob
Location: *Russia*
Project Roles: *Voice Actor (Cleon, the Butcher of Armindale).*

Malevolent Secondary Play-Testing Team:

Wizard of Thay
Location: *United Kingdom*
Previous Works: *Ruined-Tail's Tale – Playtester; The Butcher of Armindale – Playtester; The Legacy – Playtester; Tears of the Fiend – Playtester.*
Project Roles: *Playtester*

Ravenholme CP42
Location: *Scotland*
Project Roles: *Playtester*

Miscellaneous Credits:

There are a few miscellaneous individuals that deserve credit for elements of their works that were "borrowed" for this MOD:

- **John Milton** – Quotes were taken from many of his works.
- **H.P. LoveCraft** – Quotes were taken from many of his works. (Not to mention that Lovecraft is my greatest inspiration as a writer and a Modder.)
- William Shakespeare – Quotes were taken (and paraphrased) from many of his works.
- **Dream Theater** – The song "Ministry of Lost Souls" from the album "Systematic Chaos" was used in the Malevolent Trailer and promotional material.
- **Liam "Scrag Vicious"** – The poem "Black Days" was paraphrased in this MOD.
- **Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth** – Various altered sound files were used.
- **Baldur's Gate 2: Shadows of Amn** – Various altered sound and music files were used.
- **Dune 2000** – Various altered music files were used.
- **Riven: The Sequel to Myst** – Various altered music files were used.
- **The Spirit Carries On (3rd party Piano Solo)** - Originally composed by Jordan Ruddess of Dream Theater. This particular composition was found in untagged MP3 form online and looks to have been ripped from a live video (or remote recording.) Many thanks to whoever it is that is playing.

CONTACT POINTS:

E-mail: Simyaz@Bigpond.com
MSN Messenger: Simyaz@Hotmail.com
AIM: Simyaz0

For technical assistance, or to post comments about this MOD, my main threads can be found on Elderscrolls.com/forums (just search for "Simyaz" to find my various MOD threads). I also regularly check the relevant MOD Threats at www.tesnexus.com

OTHER MODS BY SIMYAZ & ARILITA:

Tears of the Fiend – http://www.tesnexus.com/downloads/file.php?id=11598





Ruined-Tail's Tale – http://www.tesnexus.com/downloads/file.php?id=3027





EDITING, USING AND DISTRIBUTING:

I really don't care where or how you distribute Malevolent, provided that you don't change the attached Malevolent ReadMe and the Malevolent Guide, and you don't take undue credit for the MOD's creation and development. Feel free to use my script and NPCs all you want, but PLEASE don't plagiarise my story/dialogue. Obviously I can't do anything to stop you, but seriously, there can be no justifiable reason to steal my writing. Basically, as long as you aren't going to publish any changes to this MOD (By posting it online or distributing it in any way) I don't care what changes you make.

If you want to translate any of my MODs into another language with the intent on using it for something other than personal use (distributing) be sure to contact me at Simyaz@Bigpond.com first for permission, and the relative conditions associated with the translation.

MALEVOLENT is Copyright © 2007 Paul 'Simyaz' Thomson

I would also like to put forward a special thanks to my co-developer Arilita, She has been working with me on my MODs for over year and a half now, and without her

tireless assistance, motivation and dedication, none of my more recent MODs (Tears of the Fiend or Malevolent) would ever have seen the light of day. Thank you.