

Stardust @ Reloaded.org

STORY

Stardust is a freeware puzzle game made by James M. Burton in 2001.



Two people are lost in the *Stardust* universe. They have been separated from one another, and they must find each other again. You must guide them through the universe by jumping through various portals until they are reunited.

The *Stardust* universe is made up of matter which is controlled by the mind. There are various kinds of Stardust (some can help, and some can hinder you), and you must use these Stardust blocks to help you reach the next portal.

GAMEPLAY

You enter the level through a green portal, and you have to make your way to the blue portal to exit the level. This is a unique game, but it does get repetitive.

You can make your way to the exit by building 'blocks' of matter. These blocks can be used to bridge gaps, or to lift yourself up to higher areas. However, your path is often blocked by obstacles, and you have to find a way around the obstacles. Some blocks can be created or destroyed at will, but some are permanent and can't be destroyed. Many other obstacles appear later in the game which have strange effects.



You cannot die in this game, and that can be used to your advantage. You can build an escape route bit by bit. On the other hand, if you find yourself trapped with no way out, you can simply restart the level. *Stardust* is a hard game, and you will find yourself restarting a level several times - you will need a lot of patience here.

The controls themselves are quite simple. Walk left and right by using the arrow keys. Place a block next to you by pressing Space. Place a block diagonally below you (to fill a gap) by pressing Space and Down. Levitate by pressing Space and Up. The one you'll be using most often (I can assure you) is the Restart button - just press R.

Once you reach the exit, press Up to go through. Remember to keep a note of passwords.

GRAPHICS

The title screen is lovely. There are stars glowing as you move your cursor around. When you select a word, that word is surrounded by glowing stars. It's very impressive!



Unfortunately, the in-game graphics are not so good. Your character is well



animated, but there is often too much black 'background'. The blocks of Stardust are ... erm ... pretty, but this won't hold your interest for long. The whole thing just seems quite basic.

The graphics do their job, but there is very little variation between levels.

MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS

The game has nice 'spacey' music to start each level, and some nice sound effects as you create or destroy Stardust blocks.

Although the sound effects are nice, they are quite hollow. This reflects the loneliness of the Stardust universe you are exploring.

I did like the 'Bye Bye' sound you hear as you quit the game, and also the 'Wrong' if you type an incorrect password.

SUMMARY

The story is interesting - 2 people searching the universe to find each other again. The whole concept of creating and destroying blocks to reach the portals is intriguing - but somehow it just falls flat, mainly because the levels are very repetitive, and sometimes too hard.



Review by: **Frodo**



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