

sunzi coaches beginners in

S.T.A.L.K.E.R. - Shadow of Chernobyl

The PC.-game *S.T.A.L.K.E.R. - Shadow of Chernobyl* was developed by the Ukrainian company *GSC Game World*, and was published in 2007. The game won wide acclaim both for its graphics and for its innovative game concept, an "open world" game that brought together the First Person Shooter and the Role Playing-game in a package that sent players into an unnerving "Zone" set in the landscape around the nuclear power plant *Chernobyl*, which in 1986 saw the biggest industrial accident ever. The game moves many years forward in time, when mysterious "emissions" have transformed the Zone and brought forth "anomalies" of many kinds, and, in spite of military efforts, the Zone is populated by several groups of "stalkers", men that go into the forbidden zone for all kinds of reasons.

The history leading up to the gameplay in "Shadow of Chernobyl" is vividly described in the game *S.T.A.L.K.E.R. - Clear Sky*. If you have played none of the stalker games before, I will advise you to play *Clear Sky* first, but as for this advise and all other advises I will give in this "coaching", you can of course do what you like. I will coach you in the game *Clear Sky* [here](#).

TECHNICAL PREPARATIONS

Both the stalker games were initially published with a lot of technical *bugs*, so it is definitely not a good idea to play them straight "out of the box". As for the *Shadow of Chernobyl*, a *minimum requirement* is to install the last published *patch*, the 1.0005, that can be downloaded from [here](#)

To make the game more enjoyable, you should even install a "*mod*", a modification of the game. The general view among fans of the game is that the 1.0005 patch should have been followed by a "final patch" to rid the game of some surviving annoyances, so some of them made the mod "*Zone Reclamation Project*", ZRP. You can download the mod file from [here](#) (you will find the file download button named "Zone Reclamation Project 1.05 Test" in the menu to the left. The mod community just *loves* web pages with a lot of complicated files and messages...)

You may have heard about mods or tried some yourself, and simply don't want to dig into the game program with all kind of mysterious files. *Lucky for you, you don't have to!* Simply download and install a little program called "*Smart Mod Manager*", find it [here](#). With this you can install and activate your mods, and disable them again, whenever you want to. You can easily switch between different mods without feeling that you need the skills of a computer engineer. Just download the mod files and save them, and use the Smart Mod Manager to install them into the game. It can be done directly from .zip or .rar files. It is *not* difficult!

The ZRP mod can even be fine-tuned with a little help program that will find its way into your program files when you install the mod. It can be found here: Program Files\THQ\Shadow of Chernobyl\gamedata. It's called "*modifier.exe*". With this you can make your own choices for a lot of details. There's only two choices I really want you to do: in "Unique Weapons Stuff", go for "Unique weapons Don't Deteriorate" (*press "Apply" for each choice you make*), and in the "Trade and search screens", go for the ZRP 14x10x2, as this will spare you a *lot* of scrolling throughout the game.

If you *ever* feel that "Shadow of Chernobyl" is too soft and easy for you, you can install the "*Oblivion Lost*" mod. Find it [here](#). Many fans think this is like the "original" game before the developers got commercial afterthoughts (or something). Personally I found this mod a *little* difficult to play at first, but it sure sends you into an even more frightening world than

the "vanilla" game! Install it as described above. You can try it, and just disable it if you don't like it.

In this guide I will constantly remind you to make *manual, named saves*, through the gameplay. If you use different mods, remember to start the savenames with something like ZRP- or OL-, showing what mod you are saving from. The gamesaves will stay even if you disable the mod. I've searched all the programs and files mentioned here for viruses and malware, and found nothing.

When you have studied the gameplay options in the game itself, and of course you have the guts to go for *Veteran Difficulty*, it's time to play!

THE CORDON AREA

In the introductory video to the game, we see one man from a wrecked truck that had transported dead stalkers. Against all odds, he's still alive. He has a tattoo on his arm. It's you, *The Marked One*, with no memory of yourself, but with one mission written into your PDA: kill Strelak. The first person you meet is the trader *Sidorovich*. Do you trust this man? You can make a decision here and now: *you must cooperate with traders to fulfill your mission, and do jobs for them. But you will not abuse yourself by dragging weapons and stuff to them so they can sell it for twenty times as much!* They probably also sell weapons to all the scum that are trying to kill you. So in this guide we have one special rule: **We do not buy anything from traders, or sell anything to them!** The Zone will try to kill you, but it will also feed you and give you everything you need. You can of course trade a little with individual stalkers you meet on your way through the Zone. *And help them if they are in difficult situations, and they will be your friends.* But otherwise you seem to be in the Zone only for one reason, to kill this Strelak man. So concentrate on that.

Sidorovich will not give you any information about Strelak for free, that's for sure. He will send you on a mission straight away, and off you go. Talk to *Wolf*, the mentor for the rookies in the camp. He will give you some basic equipment. For Wolf as with all persons of some significance you meet, always talk with them. Ask about the situation, the place they are in, if they have some jobs for you. For you are still poorly equipped for the hazards in the Zone. Then go for your mission, to get a flash drive from a stalker who is in the hands of bandits. You should cooperate with other stalkers if you can!

Now you will experience the character of Zone warfare. There are no rules! Your enemies will kill you if they in any way can, and they know their trade. You will probably find out that the pistol Wolf gave you is hardly more than you need against bandits that jump at you and fire against your head with shotguns, so before you go into battle, make your first *manual, named, save*. Press Esc on your keyboard and open the "Save games" interface. Type in something like "Backup", and save the file. Now you can use the quicksave key through the battle with the bandits. If you manage to quicksave half a second before a bandit shoots you from behind, you would have no alternative than to start the game from the beginning if you didn't have the "backup"-save. Let this save follow you at a safe but not too far distance through the rest of the game. And when you have finished playing through an area, make a special named save for that, like "Finished Cordon". The game allows only for one autosave, when you cross the border to another area, and one quicksave, that you will constantly make, like each time you have killed an enemy and have retreated to a safe position to reload your gun. These default saves will be overwritten all the time and only the last one will be available.



"I don't like them traders. They are liars. Take that Sidorovich...he's both a liar and he will rip you off. Try to do without them as far as you can."

Marked One,
private communication.



Would *you* trust this man?

Back to the fight: you will be hit, and you will see your red health bar shrinking. You are bleeding, and - in the end - you will die. We must prevent that, and you must use bandages or medkits to regain health. Food can also be used. If you think that this I should have done much better, reload your last quicksave and fight a little better, will you? (Use Esc and "Last save" to reload, as the reload key is known to be not absolutely trustworthy) There's no reason to fall for any dirty trick! Use your pistol and aim for the head! Don't stop shooting before the bad guy is dead. When the bandits are all gone, go and find the captured stalker with the flash drive. Talk to him, he will probably have a job for you too. And then thoroughly plunder the

whole place, every dead body, every building. Take everything and then sort out what you need. You need the best weapon of each type, all ammunition, and absolutely all medstuff and food. Weapons of low quality you can stuff into the backpack of some dead bandit, and they will go away together with the body after some time. If you leave weapons in the open, they will stay there like forever, and may actually slow down your PC's memory when you play the game. When you feel there is nothing more to do in this place, do the job for the stalker with the flash drive, meet some funny animals, clear up any situations you come into, and return to Sidorovich. After that, search the rookie camp for anything you can use! Search every house! Behind Wolf there is a ladder. See if you can get up on the roof of that house, and it should even be possible to jump over to the next building. I've heard there should be a protective suit somewhere, and it cannot be any worse than the leather jacket you are already wearing.

After this you probably have some jobs and missions to attend to, given you by Sidorovich and Wolf. Here is the place to tell you that *this is not a "walkthrough"*. I will not hold your hand, only give you a number of good advices and send you away. The longer you have played, the less I will tell you. The last stretch you will have to go all alone. That's your final test. I don't need to be there as there is no examination diploma to hang on the wall, only life or death.

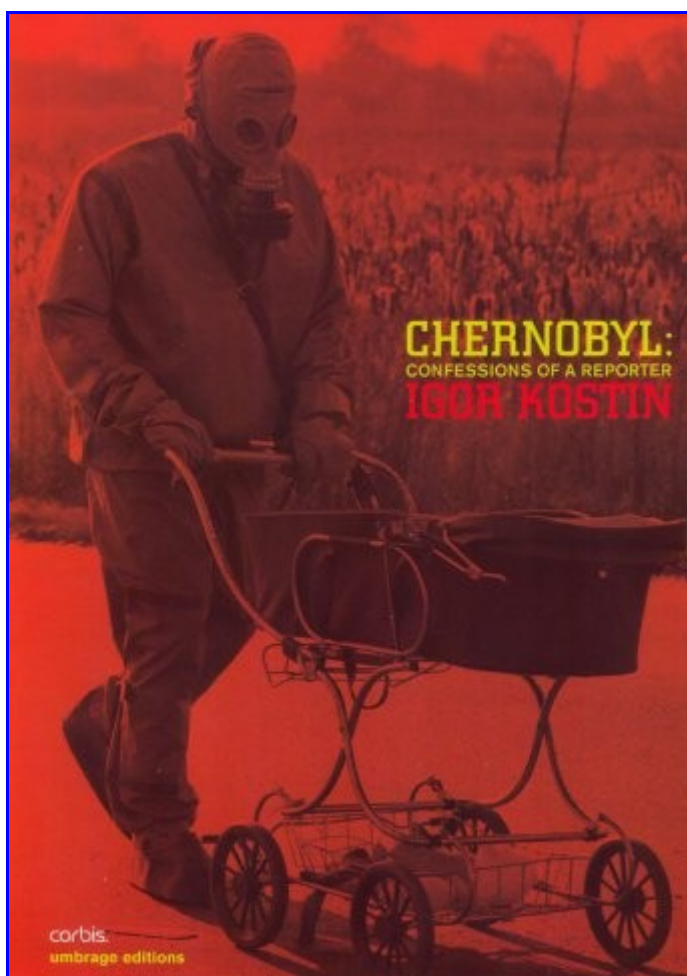
And now you must learn that you will get nowhere by rushing through the Zone like some cowboy. One step at a time! Be a good scout, study the terrain, plan your progress, and find some other alternative if one path seems to be too costly. If you take care not to walk into anomalies, and do what I have told you about saving your games, you can do the rest of the work that has to be done in the Cordon area on your own. Sidorovich will give you the info you need. By the way, you will meet some soldiers. You can try to fight them, but I think you will find it hard with the weapons you have. Better to find a way around them for now. (No, they will never be your friends! They are like the bandits in such matters.)

If you have played the game "Clear Sky" before, you will have noticed it, but anyway: - the Zone has changed! It's a gloomier scene than before all around. Sunsets are still pretty most places, but the last, large emissions in *Clear Sky* have obviously done it's evil work. There are anomalies all around. There are still artifacts to be found, actually lots of them, but they have fallen in value and somehow does not seem to have had time to mature. Most of them have lost most of their power. Stalkers collect parts of dead mutants to sell! Scientists claim to study them, and a group of stalkers you will meet want to *eat* some such parts ...to celebrate Bob Marleys birthday! The factions of stalkers have fallen apart. You will only find small groups trying to live up to the glory of the past. And the old guild of mechanics, who would be able to repair your weapons and protective gear, they are no more. Instead the mafia traders have found out that there's more money to be made by

selling weapons to stalkers over and over again as they degrade very quickly. The bandits have lost all belief in humanity, and cannot be befriended. There's no weed smoking any more either. Everyone are going for the bottle now, and that's a bad sign. The Strelok character may have had something to do with this dire development. Maybe that's why he should die.

THE GARBAGES

So, you survived the Cordon. And now you think you are some kind of hero? Maybe, what do I know. Anyway, Sidorovich has sent you to steal *some documents from a military camp*. That's something! Does he want you to live at all? But doing this kind of jobs is your only chance to get to the Strelok fellow, so he leaves you without a choice. In the Garbages area you will find several big heaps of radioactive waste from the Chernobyl power plant and it's surrounding, and a vehicle churchyard. It's all been there since 1986. And there is an old train station of some sort too.



Now I think you have played this game long enough to digest some facts from the real world. The "garbage area" is for real, scattered all around in the Zone around Chernobyl. There are about 1500 such waste dumps around there, most dug down, some not. The largest vehicle churchyard stretches for 10 kilometres or more. Thousands and thousands of vehicles of all sorts, from mopeds to large numbers of helicopters, tanks and military trucks. Metal absorbs radiation very well! Tens of thousands of "liquidators" worked to clean up after the Chernobyl meltdown and to safeguard the burned down reactor and build the sarcophagus that covers it today. Most of them, sick or dead, have disappeared into the deep shadows of history and they will probably never be heard from again. One refused to be silent, the photojournalist Igor Kostin. If there is one book about Chernobyl you should really read, it's his "Chernobyl - Confessions of a Reporter". Amazon will sell you one. It's mostly pictures. And some text. Buy it, study it. It will

prevent you from coming with any flippant remarks about Chernobyl. Ever. And "stalkers"? Some peaceful people have moved back to the outer parts of the Zone, to live there and till the earth and do some hunting, simple peasants who love the place they were born. It's probably the most quiet place on earth, and the wildlife is fantastic too, with so few people around. But most of the vehicles in their graveyards are today thoroughly plundered for any parts that can be sold. Some people from the outside have been there... makes one wonder where all those motors are and where their radiation is emitted.

OK. On your way to try to steal military documents, you will meet several stalkers in distress, first on the vehicle churchyard, and then in the train station. The first group you can actually ignore and come back to later. That's your choice. The other you have to help, as their leader have some necessary info for you. If he dies, just inspect his body and you will get what you need anyway. But then again, why should he die? You are there!. You are going to help a guy called *Mole* in the neighbouring *Agroprom* area. He knows how to get to Strelok's old hiding place! But Mole, you see, he is in military captivity. So you must fight again, and save Mole. That's some assignment, but I believe you can do it. Only learn a little about weapons first.

Through the game, the *Viper* submachine gun can be trusted to get you out of so many dangerous situations. You will also find the russian assault rifles pretty good. But somewhere around you will find two "*unique weapons*". You will probably find one *silenced Viper*, and you will also find one *fast-firing assault rifle* somewhere. *Hold on to these weapons!* If you have done what I told you in the beginning, to make "unique weapons" not deteriorating, these will serve you very well for most of the game. The game strives for "realism", but when it comes to weapons, it's more realistic than real life! Normal weapons in the game will be broken down *very fast* by use, they will jam endlessly, and you will be killed when trying to make them function decently. Therefore it's not really "cheating" to have a couple of guns that can actually fire some thousand rounds without being suicidal to use.

AGROPROM

(Make a named save now, please.)

There's always something going on in the Agroprom area. It's a complex of two abandoned research facilities, with an underground connecting them. And there's of course both regular stalkers and the bandit kind, always at war with each other. And there's a fair contingent of soldiers, some mutants and a lot of anomaly-infected spots. There's a lot of artifacts too.

You may ask *why you should collect artifacts at all*. After all, you are not allowed to buy anything from traders, so why should you care about artifacts, as they are only good for one thing, to sell for money. Be patient. *Three traders* will send you to catch artifacts, as jobs that is, so you can do it without breaking our golden rule. If you can deliver all the artifacts they want on the same visit, or at least within the same day, they will give you a special protection suit.



Mole and the hole - welcome to the underground.

Even those suits you don't need, you will find nice to have in your wardrobe. And there are a few artifacts that have *only positive characteristics*, they *emit no radiation*. *You will collect those and guard them well!* I will explain more about this later, but it has to do with the fact that your protection suits degrade very quickly, and it will be like walking naked around in the Zone if you cannot do anything about this.

So, you fight your way through military soldiers, and you save Mole. He will direct you to the underground entrance, but do not feel much for following you down. Down there somewhere is Strelok's old hiding place, there are sweet creatures from someone's fantasy and there are more soldiers. That is, after you have fought your way past some angry bandits. A lot to do. Remember this: try to fight from behind some cover and always

try to have some place to retreat to at least a couple of meters behind, so you can load, take care of your health and quicksave your game. Take care of yourself for a while now.

So, you met the *Controller* down there? Ugly bastards, they are! And now you are in the middle of a place filled with soldiers everywhere. I'm so glad I'm not there! But you are there, to steal some military documents. So kill some militarys! I hope you found the fast-firing assault rifle down in the underground, and a brand new protection suit too, with *night vision* and everything. For you did inspect Strelok's hiding place properly? If not, it's possible to go back and do a better job of it. But steal those papers.

Stealing military papers always upsets the army guys a lot. One thing was getting in, but how to get out? You can hear helicopters and that means more soldiers. There's nothing to be won by running up against as many soldiers as possible. When the documents are safe in your hand, try to go for the roof of the building, to see if that gives you any possibility to sneak out of the place. What can I say, you have practically finished your first visit to the former socialist agricultural research facility Agroprom! Congratulations!

ROSTOK

Welcome to the Duty-controlled part of the city *Rostok*. There's some discipline here, as I'm sure you have been told. First find *barkeep* in his *100 Rad bar*. Let this bar be your head-quarter. Here's a safebox for your surplus equipment, there are a lot of good fellows to chat with, and there's barkeep himself. He will allways have some jobs for you. But first and foremost, of course, he will send you for a new mission.

It's time to sort out your life a little. You are treated like a mercenary, a gun for hire. From the jobs the traders send you to, it's obvious that they want you to do a lot of dirty work. Whatever way they give it to you, they expect you to *wipe out competition*. They seem to hate "independent" traders, and in the way they cooperate among themselves, you can take it that they are heads of the Zone mafia. They are also very well connected both in the paramilitary factions around here, and in the Army too. Or so I have heard.. So you have to make some choices if you do not want to end up as a lowlife, killing for money without blinking an eye. One thing is the well armed stalkers who go for their guns the moment



HalfLife gamers be warned! Your hero, this Freeman, was found dead as a rookie in the Zone!

they are discovered in some dirty dealing and feel danger. Something very different is an unarmed person pleading for his life. Make some choices.

Regular jobs have time limits. In the un-mod'ed game, you have one day from you get the job to the moment you are back to be rewarded for it. In the ZRP-mod 3 days is default (you can change it with the "modifier.exe"). But time limits there are. It's different with the main missions. They are not time limited, and that means you have a lot of time to prepare and to explore before you go for them. First you can go find yourself a *scope* for that fine rapid-firing rifle of your's. Find the gate to the lawless part of Rostok, the *wild*



Take time to chat with the guys in the bar.

territory. And go get your scope. Remember to collect all ammo, and go no further than the first building with any people in it, as that will trigger a lot of shit we want to save for another day. Did you meet *Wolf* when you came back from the Wild Territory? What's he doing here?

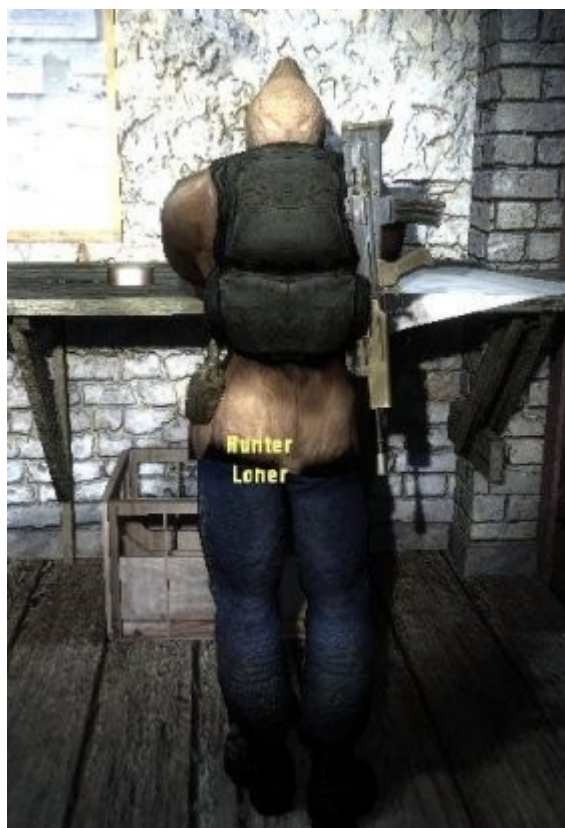
You can also go to *Arnie* and test your fighting skills. Only remember to place *all* your stuff in the safebox before you agree to what he has in mind. If not it will all mysteriously disappear. Arnie is not to be trusted that way.

DARK VALLEY

(A named save here, maybe?)

Barkeep has talked you into going for a place called *Laboratory X18* in *Dark Valley*. If you have played *Clear Sky*, you remember that Dark Valley is a peaceful place with a regular coffeshop where you could relax with a joint and generally have a good time, at least after you cleaned up a little there. This belongs to the past. You have hardly crossed the border before you come upon a brutal Duty soldier interrogating a wounded bandit about his whereabouts. The Duty doesn't even ask if you want to help him, just order you to follow him, to set up an ambush to free one of his pals. You can let him go his own way if you want. Or you can follow him. After all, he is heading for the same place as you, some factory buildings in which lives a bandit leader called *Borov*. Borov has worked his way up in the world, as he is a former bandit barkeeper. And Borov has a key in his pocket. You need that key to get into Lab X18! I leave these choices to you. There are two ways to get into Borov's nest. Either sneak in through the sewers or shoot your way in through the main entrance. I trust you brought both your rifle and your Viper, and all your ammo too.

Whatever way of entering Borov's place you use, there are dozens of bandits trying to stop you. Remember to collect all their ammo as they will have to die by your hand, most of them. Explore the buildings thoroughly! There is a store-room somewhere with a lot of things you can use, and in the cellar is a captive Duty soldier that needs to be released. He takes off at once, and it's kind'a fun to see if he survives any remnant bandits. About safeboxes: - there are a great number of green safeboxes around. You can safely put your stuff in them if you have more than you can carry, and come back for it later. If you hide things out in the open, travelling stalkers are capable of picking up what they think they



Have some fun with Hunter (the guy with the "family rifle"). Drop a loaded NATO rifle at his feet, and he will drop the family rifle immediately to pick up the better gun. "Find" it for him once more, he will drop the NATO rifle, have second thoughts, and drop the family rifle again. The same can be done with the guy who want you to find his Duty "storming Obokan". Stalkers in the game are capable of picking up better weapons than they have if they are loaded.

Below: *Brome* in one of his very few sober moments, when he has discovered that I have tricked him out of the "Storming Obokan" that was supposed to be his ticket into the Duty gang. Again.



need.

When you have the key from Borov, go for an old factory down the road (use your *PDA map* all the time. Also make *another named save* here.) More bandits! Sooner or later you will dive down into the underground. You remember the underground in Agroprom? That was nothing! Here you will find several kind of anomalies, some mutated animals and it's not that easy to find your way at all. It's really no place for man to be. But without choice, you will no doubt find codes to open doors, you will find the documents you are sent for, and of course you will find out that *the flying fire ghost* protecting the documents must be *shot!* If you didn't, you would not be alive, would you? I'm down in the rookie camp with Sidorovich just now, trying, in vain I'm sorry to say, to talk him into giving me one very advanced rifle he has in his possession. But I'm feeling for you! I guess you were just a little surprised by all the soldiers when you came up from the underground? We saw them march up from here, but we could not stop them. Sidorovich has promised to give you a call when you come through the gate down to Cordon. Don't let him wait for too long, he's building up some strange, reddish colour in his face by now. (Even if you will find out by yourself, just to spare you a trip: - this gate *only works one way*. You cannot use it to go up to Dark Valley again.)

Going for
YANTAR



Have you noticed that there are some *choices* to be taken? Or don't you care about killing an unarmed man who pleads for his life? Sit down by a campfire, listen to the music, and meditate a little about this. "Know yourself", the Greek philosophers of olden days said. Maybe it's time to make an effort...

(Named *save* again? Oh yes!)

Sidorovich will send you and the documents back to barkeep in Rostok. Obviously barkeep is higher up in the mafia hierarchy than he is. Something puzzling you? Oh yes! Maybe you found a *Monolith* protection suit in the lab in Dark Valley. How can that be? The lab was manned by *scientists*, and you have heard that the Monoliths are bad guys from the centre of the Zone, totally freaked out and brainwashed maniacs. This is one of the strange things you will discover in the Zone. Nothing is exactly what it seems to be, or what people tell you. And Wolf was gone from the rookie camp. A guy called Fanatic tells that he took off with some dynamite...

When in relative safety in Rostok again, barkeep is still not satisfied. You see, there's still another lab somewhere, in a place called *Yantar*. Such a romantic name! Maybe you should bring a guitar if you have any, and sing serenades to the full moon after you arrive. Or maybe you are better equipped with all the hardware you can carry. Guess we go for the last choice, and a pump action shotgun will come in handy.

To come to Yantar, you have to pass through the Wild Territory. You have already cleared part of the way from sniping baddies, but there are more. Mercenaries with modern and very effective weapons will fire at you, and you will come upon a bunch of scientists who really need some help. One of them is on his way to Yantar, so of course it is a very good idea to help him. It's not easy, as his fighting tactics are close to suicidal. But of course you will manage, after half a dozen attempts or so. See how great it is to have a *backup save* to start these attempts from? You just make sure to make one of those the moment you get the distress call from the scientists.

Yantar is not the romantic place you hoped for. It's a foggy marsh with a lot of zombies around! *Professor Sakharov* lives with a male companion in a mobile lab (*some* helicopter they needed to move that lab!). He is seldom outdoors, or else he could not possibly be

unaware of the large complex of buildings near by. That's where you are heading for. But first you have to do some preparatory work. Sakharov will tell you that you need some protective helmet to survive in your mission. And off you go again, with the scientist you have already saved once. He is very brave now, a regular hothead, and not much afraid of the zombies. Very silly of him, and he needs your help (can't anyone in this godforsaken zone help themselves for once??) I trust you to manage, and I really trust you to ask Sakharov if he has any jobs for you, even if there is only one you just have to do, to get some info from a stiff by a crashed helicopter. In addition he will tell you that he needs some special protection suit. Go for that one. Just do it! Ignore for now his wishes for snorkfeet and such. You can do that much later.

You have *two* missions in the lab Sakharov sends you to. One is for yourself: to find out more about Strelok, and one is for barkeep. This is *Laboratory X16*, by the way. This lab isn't that bad. You have to shoot your way to it and through it. On your way, you shall explore the surroundings all the way. You will find a dead soldier some distance before you go down into the underground, and he has a mighty fine protection suit. *Use it*. You will also find a rare artifact somewhere in the building where the entrance to the underground is. And you will find a lot of *snorks*, some of them of a particularly wild kind, and of course more zombies. Finally you will find one big room with a lot of stairs and platforms and you will be told that you will soon die. Just then you *will* make a backup-save! When progressing up the structure, there are several *handles to be turned*. You must turn them *all*. And you will find the *main* handle and turn that too. *Now you have shut down the machinery that turns stalkers in the area into zombies*. A real friend of the human race, you are! You can live on that feeling for a while, but now you must find a dead stalker with some info about Strelok. He too has a very special protection suit, which must be the one Sakharov wants. And you must find your way out of the lab. Remember to explore! There are so many protection suits, so many artifacts and so much valuable ammo in and around this lab, that you cannot carry it all. Why not find a nice place and drop what you cannot carry? You will certainly visit Sakharov on later occasions, and then you can go up to the lab and explore more and pick up your stuff. Make sure to take the two "unique" protection suits though. Aall "unique" objects are marked with a green arrow in your inventory, they all have some special characteristics that set them apart from others of the same kind.

When you come down to Sakharov again, make sure to tell him that you have found his unique suit. How happy he will be! And he will give you ...what *is* this .. a green treehuggerish like thing? Not at all. It is a protection suit made for the bodyguards of scientists. It protects very well against environmental hazards, and it is combined with a fairly good bullet protection suit. It's actually one of the best allround protection suits in the Zone! From now on use it as your main suit, even if some hardened stalkers may laugh at you. *Duty* have a good suit, but it is also heavier. Of course "Exoskeletons" are excellent,



"What are you here? Are you deaf?"

If it's boring for you there in Yantar, look forward to meet this asshole when you are back in Rostok. The Duty head honcho, the General himself.

but you can't run in them, and that is not tolerable in combat, and even less when you have long distances to travel. Altogether there are more than *fifty* protection suits to be found, won or bartered in the game, so it should never be necessary to be without protection. I leave to yourself if you want to stay longer in Yantar and run errands for Sakharov, or if you will return to Rostok and the warm, cosy bar.

THE MILITARY WAREHOUSES

Down in Rostok again, barkeep will tell you that the inner regions of the Zone is protected by some machinery called *the Brain Scorcher*. He will also tell you a lot of other fairytales if you ask him politely. Listen to his rantings and believe it if you will. He is raving mad, the fellow, and want you to go and *close down the Brain Scorcher*. Please him and say of course I will, Master Barkeep. Anything you want!

You have now built up some solid cred in the town of Rostok. Finally you are allowed into *the Duty head-quarter*. Go there and have a talk with a militaristic asshole general. There are no limits to what he wants you to do. *The Dutys are in war with another paramilitary faction, the Freedoms, who are situated in a place with some former military warehouses, hence the name of that area.* Now may be the right time to go there. In fact, you could have gone to the Military Warehouses for a scout trip before you ran away for Yantar, but I try to make this guide as simple as possible for you.



So, this is what freedom looks like...

To shut off the Brain Scorcher is not all that tempting, even if it has to be done eventually. But you are not on a time limit, and there's so much fun to do! But first you must learn a little about your *standing with the two warring factions*. They can be *neutral*, and they will have their names in *yellow* when you talk to them, or aim at them with your rifle. Do the faction some favors, and they will with time be your *friends*. Friends are marked *green*. If you do them any damage, like killing one of their members, they will move down one notch, from

green to yellow. And now you must take care, for the next move is from yellow to *red*. Red is *enemy*, and enemies shoot on sight. It's no good situation to be enemy with the Duty! You can work your way up from yellow to green again, though, even if some close comrades of soldiers you have killed may stay yellow. And in this way you must balance your way between the jobs the Dutys and the Freedoms will give you. So make sure to be green with the Dutys, and go for the Military Warehouses.

Freedom, such a nice word! Most gamers like the freedom of choice, often because they don't want their parents, spouses or employers to interfere with them playing games all the time. But remember that nothing is necessarily just what it seem to be. The Freedom faction and their demanding chief are not that great friends of peace. But at least they do some benevolent work, like keeping the number of mutants down. That counts for something. But now I will stop talking for a while. I'm sure you can find all kind of jobs and adventures to take your mind off that Brain Scorcher for many days to come. The Military Warehouses and the conflict between Duty and Freedom is such a complicated matter that I don't remember half of it anyway. And neither will I spoil your fun. But I will give you a straw to cling to if you find it all too difficult to kill some particular stalker without being shot

by all members of a faction: if you place a couple of the red, explosive barrels next to a person and then shoot the barrels, they will blow up and, with some luck, kill that stalker. This will be written off as an accident...

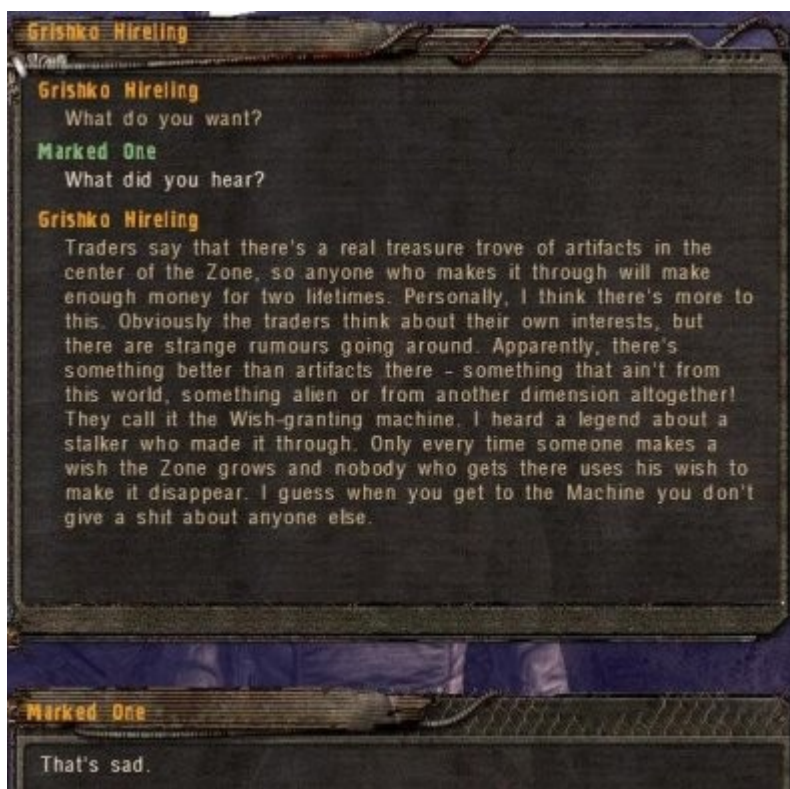
THE BRAIN SCORCHER

So, you are back? Did you remember to make the necessary named saves when struggling with the hopeless demands of the Dutys and the Freedoms? I hope so, for now, after so much hesitations, you are going for the Brain Scorcher. You are probably bored and want some real action. First of all: you need a good assault rifle and a lot of ammo. I guess you have found a Vintar sniper rifle, and you shall bring that too. And lots of antirad and medstuff, for you will be operating closer to the centre of the Zone, and radiation will be heavy. The road up to the lab with the Brain Scorcher, that is *Laboratorium X19*, is long and dangerous.

But have I not forgot one thing?

Oh yes. Your green treehugger suit must be worn thin by now? What a pity! And nobody to repair it either, now that you really need it. Do you remember what I told you about *artifacts*? That there are some that must be collected, whatever you do? How many *Battery* artifacts do you have, the most usual one, the one that protects against regular electricity? If you have at least four, you are safe. Even better if you have five. You shall fasten all these artifacts to your belt, at least four of them, and try them out in the most brutal electric anomalies you know of, as you are protected more than one hundred percent. To the right after some walk into the Wild Territory there are some nice ones, quite close to where a gang of bandits use to hide behind a couple of train wagons. Spend some time in the middle of these anomalies. Electric anomalies are producing some artifacts that greatly helps with your stamina, and you may find one of those when you are doing this weird experiment. They are produced after midnight some special days. You will find them very useful later on, as they can help you run uninterruptibly through the Zone. With a couple of those in your belt, and a Battery or two to neutralize their negative characteristics, you are as fast as the bus!

After some minutes in the anomaly, can you see something strange with the bar showing the present protective quality of your suit? Yes! It's moving! This is undoubtedly *rather witchcraft than science*, but it is one secret of the Zone I didn't discover by myself even after being in the Zone for a very long time. Just thought you might like a little help. By using artifacts, there is no place in the Zone you cannot go! I will say no more about this. I might very well have said too much. I heard about this in a long conversation I once had with professor Sakharov. He's a specialist on artifacts, you know, and has even written a



Haven't you heard about the *Wish Granter* somewhere? That must really be something to meet...

highbrow book about them.

Now I am very tempted to let you go for the Brain Scorcher on your own. Yes I will. Only one good word before you go: when confronted by an enemy much stronger than yourself, it's very important thing to find a place where you can defend yourself and where you cannot be surrounded. Let the enemy come to this place. Do not run into the open, where you surely will die. That's it, and I'm certain that *Sun Zi*, the Chinese sage of many centuries ago, who still have a lot to tell military people, and politicians too, would agree with me in this.

PRIPIYAT - AND THE WISH GRANTER

So you're back? And the Brain Scorcher is down and everyone is happy and going for the centre of the Zone and the riches they have heard about. One party of brave stalkers are waiting for you there in *Pripiyat*, a town where power plant employees and their families used to live, a total of 47.000 of people. As usual in a maingame mission, they will *wait* for you to come, for years if necessary. If you are ready, you go. If you need to prepare some, do that first.

I have not told you about all the *smaller* missions in the game. They were for you to discover on your own. I hope you have talked to *Guide* and that you have been in Strelok's hiding place in Agroprom a second time and that you have met *Doc*. Now *you know who Strelok is*. From what you have picked up of information, you maybe have some feeling as to why he must die. But that is not yet.

Pripiyat is hell on earth after the emissions described in the end of the game Clear Sky. There are numerous anomalies, there are lots of fanatical Monoliths. You have something to do, that is if you have talked to Doc. You shall search *a stash in a hotel*, and for your own benefit you shall search other stashes too. You shall give the Monoliths a lesson they will never forget and loot their head-quarter in Pripiyat for a lot of very good artifacts. If you use your head, you may even find a *Gauss gun* somewhere in Pripiyat. It's of no big use, but the boys at 100Rad bar will certainly be impressed and pay for your drinks for months to come.



The healing has begun! Artifact witchcraft heals you and your protection suit.

When you have finished your raid in Pripiyat, you can go for your destiny and meet the Wish Granter in the nuclear power plant. Make wise choices and don't waste your time when there. Don't care about killing everybody, because you have no time and no need for that. Focus!

But *wait!* Are you in such a hurry to leave the life in the Zone and life itself? You see, when you leave Pripiyat for the power plant, *there is no way back*. So you can go now, or you can go back to the Military Warehouses and the rest of the open part of the Zone and come back for that Wish Granter and everything they have told you about later. *You can make a named save when you feel that there is no more to do in Pripiyat now, and from this save you can go back in the game and play more even if you are so bent on seeing the Wish Granter right away*. You should know that there will always be a life going on in the

Zone. The longer you stay there, the more puzzling things you will experience. You can revisit all places you have been to, and find out more about the Zone. You will see people go nuts and you will see mutants multiply and take over in places. You will probably have stalkers come into Rostok to kill you because you have hurt some of their comrades, and you will always find something to do.



I will not follow you to the Wish Granter and see you die. I have told you what you need to go that far, and what I have not told you, you have learned yourself. You are a stalker now, and must take care of yourself. I'm too old for that place anyway, and there are so many rookies that are in need of some coaching.

Good luck, stalker, and good hunting.

Sun Zi says: "Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril"



If you want to know more about the Chinese strategist *Sun Zi*, please read "*Sun Tzu - The Art of War*", translated and with an introduction by *Samuel B. Griffith*, Oxford University Press, 1963. There are lots of editions of this text, but this is a good one.

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