

= Lunar : The Silver Star =

Lunar : The Silver Star ( ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? , Runa Za Shirub? Sut? ) is a role @-@ playing video game developed by Game Arts and Studio Alex for the Sega / Mega @-@ CD , originally published by Game Arts and released in Japan in 1992 . After a successful release , the game was translated and localized by Working Designs for release in North America the following year .

Designed as a " different kind of RPG " , Lunar : The Silver Star made use of the up @-@ and @-@ coming CD @-@ ROM format by featuring high quality audio , full motion video , and voice acting to narrate a fantasy story set in a magical world . The game centers on the exploits of Alex , a young boy from a small town who dreams of one day becoming a great hero like his idol , Dragonmaster Dyne . When a childish adventure later turns to discovering an ancient dragon , Alex and his friends must journey across the world to gather the necessary power to become the next Dragonmaster , and save the world in the process .

Lunar : The Silver Star was critically and commercially successful , becoming the number one selling Mega @-@ CD title in Japan and the second highest @-@ selling Mega @-@ CD title of all time . As the first game in the Lunar series , it set the standard for other follow @-@ up titles including the direct sequel Lunar : Eternal Blue in 1994 . Since the game 's original release , three enhanced remakes have been produced for various systems : Lunar : Silver Star Story Complete in 1996 , Lunar Legend in 2002 , and Lunar : Silver Star Harmony in 2009 .

= = Gameplay = =

Lunar : The Silver Star is a traditional , top @-@ down role @-@ playing video game featuring two @-@ dimensional characters and environments . The player must navigate towns , fields , and harsh environments to complete story @-@ based objectives that move the plot forward , as well as interact with non @-@ player characters to expand the script and gain various rewards . Making use of the Sega CD 's disc hardware capabilities , short video and audio interludes accompany the game 's narrative , including full or quarter @-@ screen animated images and CD @-@ DA sound files . Players record their progress by saving to either the Sega CD 's internal RAM , or a separately purchased RAM cartridge that fit into the accompanying Mega Drive / Genesis .

While traveling in the game 's world , players randomly encounter enemy monsters that must be defeated or avoided to progress . Battle sequences utilize a turn @-@ based approach , with the player and enemies acting in accordance with their " speed " rating . The player issues commands to each controlled character in their party , which are then carried out in sequence until the battle ends . While on the battlefield , players may choose to move their characters to attack the enemy , retreat into a corner , stand their ground , or flee the battle entirely , with characters only able to strike enemies if they are close enough to their target or use a ranged attack . Nall , a supporting character not directly involved in combat , is present throughout the game to analyze enemies before battles begin , gauging their relative strength to the player 's group . Players may find weapons , equipment , and assorted items during gameplay that increase the effectiveness of characters in battle , such as causing more damage to opponents and increasing their stamina . Winning battles grant experience points that go towards making characters stronger and able to battle progressively more difficult enemies . Upon defeat , a player may choose to load a previous save file , or restart their game at an automatically saved checkpoint .

= = Plot = =

= = = Setting = = =

The game takes place in the fantasy land of Lunar , a small habitable world orbiting the massive , barren blue planet ( known as the Blue Star ) , forming a loose parallel between the game 's world and the Earth and its moon . Centuries before the start of the game , the Blue Star was rendered

unlivable by years of war .. The powerful and benevolent goddess Althina relocated humanity to the Silver Star , the world of Lunar , and entrusted four dragons to safeguard the elements of the new world . From this point on , those who would use the power of the dragons to serve the goddess and protect the world were known as " Dragonmasters " , and no such Dragonmaster was more revered than Dyne , a legendary hero who defended the goddess and succumbed to an unknown fate . The stories surrounding Dyne 's exploits would form the life model for a young boy named Alex , the game 's protagonist and central character , who also aspires to become a Dragonmaster himself . Many of the locations of Lunar : The Silver Star were given a deliberate " northern " feel to present an environment that was cooler than the settings of most role @-@ playing games , if only to allow the characters to wear more clothing . Many towns and locations were based on areas of Russia and Medieval Europe .

#### = = = Characters = = =

The characters of Lunar : The Silver Star were designed by anime and manga artist Toshiyuki Kubooka . The main characters include Alex and his companions , each of which have their own reasons for joining his quest :

Alex - a 15 @-@ year @-@ old boy from a small town with dreams of becoming an adventurer . Alex is a silent protagonist , typical for a Japanese RPG he never speaks in the game .

Nall - a small , winged creature resembling a white cat who has been with him since birth .

Luna - Alex 's childhood friend and love interest who has the unique ability to heal with music .

Ramus - son of the town mayor who dreams of one day opening his own shop , and begins Alex 's adventuring career by having him fetch a priceless diamond from a dragon 's cave .

Nash - a junior premier of the floating city of Vane , often prone to rash decisions and occasionally despair .

Mia - another junior premier of Vane , though much more reserved than Nash .

Kyle - a headstrong and womanizing bandit .

Jessica - a tomboyish daughter of a famous hero who is training to be a priestess .

Major supporting characters include the three surviving members of the Four Heroes , a legendary band of adventurers who aided Dragonmaster Dyne in protecting the Goddess Althina years before the game 's story , whose ranks include :

" Deadly " Mel D 'Alkirk , father of Jessica and mayor of the bustling city of Meribia .

Lemia Ausa , mother of Mia and head of Vane .

Ghaleon , powerful sorcerer and teacher of Nash who becomes the primary antagonist after assuming his alter ego , the Magic Emperor .

The party is aided by :

Laike , a powerful swordsman and expert adventurer who acts as a mentor to Alex and is later revealed to be Dragonmaster Dyne after losing his powers .

Tempest and Fresca , plains @-@ dwelling fighters who have their own reasons for helping Alex and his group .

Many of the character 's original Japanese names were altered for the game 's North American release , such as Killy to Kyle , Faigy to Quark , Temzin to Tempest , and Pilya to Fresca ; Mel 's original epithet , " Hell " Mel , was changed to " Deadly " for censorship reasons . A witch named Xenobia serves as a secondary antagonist and Ghaleon 's right hand servant .

#### = = = Story = = =

Much of the plot of Lunar : The Silver Star was written by novelist Kei Shigema , and involves a world of high fantasy and with emphasis on folklore and legend . The game begins in the small mountain town of Burg , where a young Alex frequently visits the monument to the fallen hero Dyne , his idol . At the behest of Ramus , eager son of the town mayor , Ramus and Alex embark on their first real adventure , with Alex 's adopted sister Luna and their talking flying pet Nall , to the mysterious Dragon 's Cave in search of a valuable diamond . Making their way through the cavern ,

the group meets Quark , an aged dragon who senses great potential in Alex , and urges him to complete the trials of other dragons to become the next Dragonmaster , champion of the Goddess Althena , and protector of the world . Quark shows an interest in Luna as well , remarking that she has a familiar aura about her . Obtaining the diamond from Quark , Ramus finds he cannot sell it in Burg , and must travel to the major trade city of Meribia to claim his fortune . The group then makes their way to Saith , a small port town to the south , where Luna leaves the group to stay with Alex 's family .

Across the ocean , Alex , Nall , and Ramus enter Meribia , where they meet one of the legendary Four Heroes , Mel . Attempting to sell his diamond , Ramus is swindled by a jewel dealer who flees into the sewers . After reclaiming it , Ramus slyly bargains the owner 's life for his entire shop , and leaves the group to pursue his dream of becoming rich . Alex and Nash depart for the city of Vane where they meet Mia , daughter of the city 's ruler and Nash 's love interest , who informs them of Ghaleon , head of the guild and former great hero who fought with Dyne years ago . Seemingly intrigued by Alex 's quest , Ghaleon sends Alex on a mission to investigate the appearance of a false Dragonmaster in a faraway town . Upon arrival , Alex meets Jessica , daughter of Mel and aspiring priestess , who helps him locate the imposter before returning to Vane . Pleased with his success , Ghaleon accompanies Alex back to his hometown to meet Quark and discuss Alex 's future , when he suddenly attacks , revealing himself as the Magic Emperor and seemingly kills Quark in a fit of rage . Citing the loss of his friend Dyne , who died protecting the Goddess , Ghaleon swears revenge on both she and her dragons and departs after kidnapping Luna . Distraught , Alex and Nall return to Meribia to find it under attack by a band of monsters under Ghaleon 's command . Regrouping with Jessica , the group fights back a wave of invaders before witnessing Mel turn to stone from a dark spell of Xenobia , Ghaleon 's top general . Wanting revenge , Jessica accompanies Alex to Vane , also under siege , and assists Nash and Mia with a similar invasion before they too join the group .

Realizing they must make Alex a Dragonmaster to confront Ghaleon and save Luna , the team heads to the border town of Nanza to enlist Kyle , Jessica 's boyfriend , in letting them cross into foreign land . After traveling to a town of inventors , the group obtains a floating device that leads them to the lair of the Red Dragon , who is seemingly destroyed by Ghaleon just before they arrive . The dragon 's spirit grants Alex her power before disappearing , and the group departs for the Blue Dragon 's cave behind a musical town . Again , the dragon is defeated before their arrival , and the team must travel to the distant and barren Frontier to seek the final trial . The party finds the black dragon , which attacks the team in a mad rage induced by Ghaleon but is defeated . With the final dragon 's blessing , Alex and his companions approach the construction site of Ghaleon 's mobile mechanical castle , the Grindery , but are unable to stop its advance before it destroys Vane using the power of Luna , who is revealed to be the human form of the Goddess Althena and who is under the Magic Emperor 's control . After obtaining Althena 's Sword and learning the truth about Luna , the party attacks the Grindery defeats both Xenobia and the Magic Emperor . Knowing what he must do to bring Luna back , Alex climbs the path to Luna , who , as Althena , continuously blasts him with lightning ; he plays his harp as he advances , and hearing their song allows Luna 's personality to return . She awakens in Alex 's arms , surrounded by their friends .

= = Development = =

Lunar : The Silver Star was developed by Game Arts in an attempt to create a role @-@ playing game that would both primarily focus on animation and storytelling . The team turned to scenario writer and novelist Kei Shigema to craft a story that would break away from " hum @-@ drum ' model " games that " had stories , but had no story @-@ telling " . Using the Sega CD 's video playback capabilities , animator and artist Toshiyuki Kubooka oversaw the planning of several video sequences that would be coupled with voice @-@ overs to better tell the story of the Lunar world . Settling on an overall fantasy approach as opposed to the popular role @-@ playing alternative of science fiction , the team wanted to explore the mythos and history of a fictional world that would gradually reveal itself to the player over time . Having mostly developed side @-@ scrollers and

scrolling shooters for the Mega Drive and PC Engine , Game Arts formed its subsidiary company , Studio Alex , named for the main character of this title , to oversee most of the game 's development . Due to time constraints , nearly one @-@ third of the Lunar project was scrapped by the game 's release .

Lunar 's English version was handled by Working Designs , a small California @-@ based publisher who had previously localized smaller games for the TurboGrafx @-@ 16 and TurboDuo . Their biggest project yet , the team , headed by company vice president and chief writer Victor Ireland , took to the project seriously , often collaborating with the original Japanese team themselves . New gameplay elements were often added at Ireland 's request , including new sequences such as playing Alex 's harp to awaken Luna near the end of the game . Working Designs also put extra effort into the game 's packaging , giving the instruction booklet embossed lettering , and having seven separate stamps , each with different artwork , produced for the front of the game discs to increase collection value .

The English script was nearly four megabytes in size , yet Working Designs completed the translation in only eight weeks after a marathon programming session . During translation , the developers did find time to inject some of their own humor in to the game 's text , dropping in sentences such as Have you ever tried swimming in lemon jello ? , and numerous light @-@ hearted pop culture references not seen in the original version , including allusions to American commercials , celebrities , colloquialisms , products , and role @-@ playing game clichés .

= = Audio = =

The music for Lunar : The Silver Star was composed by Noriyuki Iwadare , Hiroshi Fujioka , Isao Mizoguchi , and Yoshiaki Kubodera , who utilized the Sega CD 's sound capabilities to create CD @-@ quality CD @-@ DA . The game features the opening theme " Lunar " , performed by Mayumi Sudou in the original Japanese version . The untitled English version is a slightly arranged piece performed by vocalist Shiya Almeda which features new lyrics by Victor Ireland , who intended the song to sound less " lovey @-@ dovie " with a greater " sense of urgency " .

The Lunar : The Silver Star Original Soundtrack was released exclusively in Japan by Toshiba @-@ EMI Records on April 22 , 1992 , two months before the actual release of the game . The album features full versions of the Japanese opening and ending themes , as well as karaoke arrangements . Most of the game 's background themes are presented as multi @-@ song medleys rather than separate tracks . Although an official North American version was never released , many of the songs present on the album were featured as special arrangements on the bonus soundtrack found in the Lunar : Silver Star Story Complete collector 's edition , including the English opening theme .

= = = Voice = = =

Both the Japanese and English adaptations of Lunar : The Silver Star contain roughly fifteen minutes of spoken dialogue from a number of prominent voice actors . Though the game has a number of main and supporting characters , only five are actually voiced during specific story sequences . The Japanese version features Kikuko Inoue as both Alex and Luna , Rei Sakuma as Nall , K?ichi Kitamura as the white dragon Quark , and Rokur? Naya as Ghaleon . The English version comprised mostly new talent and associates of Working Designs ' staff , such as a young Ashley Parker Angel as Alex , Rhonda Gibson as Luna , Jackie Powers as Nall , Hal Delahousse as Quark , and John Truitt as Ghaleon . While the entire Japanese cast was replaced for the game 's remake on the PlayStation , all of the original English cast would return to reprise their roles .

= = Reception = =

Lunar : The Silver Star was well received in Japan , selling an estimated 100 @,@ 000 copies , its entire production run , in its first year after release , nearly as much as the Mega CD itself . It is

considered the Mega @-@ CD 's first hit game , which Sega credits solely for pushing the system 's sales in that region . The game remains the best @-@ selling Sega CD title of all time in Japan , and second highest selling worldwide behind Sonic the Hedgehog CD . Readers of Japanese magazine Megadrive Beep voted it the number one Mega Drive role @-@ playing game for 17 straight months before being trumped by Shining Force II .

The English version released the following year met with a similar response , with Skid of GameFan magazine calling it " far and away the best RPG I have ever played in English " , praising the game 's graphics , sound , and story as " well conceived and executed " . The magazine 's editors would later name it as the greatest role @-@ playing game of 1993 . GamePro similarly reviewed it as " not just the best Sega CD RPG ever , but one of the best on any Sega system " , giving particular merit to the game 's translation . Game Players described it as a " solid RPG , and well worth your time " but found fault in the game 's small character graphics that " look like every other RPG " and the virtually non @-@ existent replay value . Electronic Gaming Monthly had five reviewers , Ed , Dano , Al , Sushi @-@ X , and Mike , give the game scores of 9 , 8 , 7 , 7 , and 7 , respectively , ranging from " worthy " to " virtually flawless " ratings . The magazine commended the game 's background music soundtrack but described its battle sequences as " a bit dull . " EGM 's 1999 Video Game Buyer 's Guide listed four of these scores , 9 , 8 , 7 , and 7 , averaging out to 7 @.@ 75 out of 10 overall , and described the game as " one of the best RPGs ever . "

As the number one selling Sega CD title in Japan , the game sold nearly as many copies as the system itself , and remains the second highest @-@ selling Mega @-@ CD title of all time . Mega placed the game at # 8 in their top Mega CD games of all time . In 2006 , Lunar ranked 113th in EGM and 1UP.com 's list of the greatest " videogames of their time , " celebrating the games that were considered the best during their original release . Retro Gamer included The Silver Star among top ten Mega CD games , noting its " astounding soundtrack " and " fantastic " localization .

= = Legacy = =

As the first game in the Lunar series , The Silver Star established many of the themes and characters that would be seen in later installments . The game was followed by Lunar : Eternal Blue in 1994 , a direct sequel that takes place one thousand years in The Silver Star 's future , and contains many references to the original title . Other follow @-@ ups , including Lunar : Walking School in 1996 and Lunar : Dragon Song in 2005 would act as the game 's prequels , taking place many hundred years before the game 's story .

= = = Remakes = = =

Lunar : The Silver Star has been re @-@ made several times by different developers and publishers for a number of consoles between 1996 and 2009 . These games feature graphic and sound enhancements as well as an expanded script .