

## = Secret of Mana =

Secret of Mana , originally released in Japan as Seiken Densetsu 2 ( セイケン伝説2 , lit . " Legend of the Sacred Sword 2 " ) , is a 1993 action role @-@ playing game developed and published by Square ( now Square Enix ) for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System . It is the sequel to the 1991 game Seiken Densetsu , released in North America as Final Fantasy Adventure and in Europe as Mystic Quest , and it was the first Seiken Densetsu title to be marketed as part of the Mana series rather than the Final Fantasy series . Set in a high fantasy universe , the game follows three heroes as they attempt to prevent an empire from conquering the world with the power of an ancient flying fortress .

Rather than using a turn @-@ based battle system like contemporaneous role @-@ playing games , Secret of Mana features real @-@ time battles . The game has a unique Ring Command menu system , which pauses the action and allows the player to make decisions in the middle of battle . An innovative cooperative multiplayer system allows a second or third player to drop in and out of the game at any time . Secret of Mana was directed and designed by Koichi Ishii , programmed primarily by Nasir Gebelli , and produced by veteran Square designer Hiromichi Tanaka .

The game received considerable acclaim for its brightly colored graphics , expansive plot , Ring Command menu system , and innovative real @-@ time battle system . Critics also praised the soundtrack by Hiroki Kikuta and the customizable artificial intelligence ( AI ) settings for computer @-@ controlled allies . The original version was re @-@ released for the Wii 's Virtual Console in 2008 and the Wii U 's Virtual Console in 2013 . The game was ported to mobile phones in Japan in 2009 , and an enhanced port of the game was released for iOS in 2010 and Android in 2014 .

## = = Gameplay = =

Like many other role @-@ playing games of the 16 @-@ bit era , Secret of Mana displays a top @-@ down perspective , in which the player characters navigate the terrain and fight off hostile creatures . The game features three such characters : the hero , the girl , and the sprite , named Randi , Primm , and Popoi outside the initial North American release . The player can choose to control each of the characters at any time ; whichever character is currently selected , the other two companions are controlled via artificial intelligence . The game may be played simultaneously by up to three players , made possible by the Super Multitap accessory for the Super NES console . The Virtual Console version of the game supports three @-@ player gameplay via additional GameCube controllers or Classic Controllers .

Each character possesses individual strengths and weaknesses . The hero , while unable to use magic , masters weapons at a quicker rate ; the girl is a healer , able to cast restorative and support spells ; and the sprite casts offensive magic to damage and impair enemies . Upon collecting enough experience points in battle , each character increases in level and improves in areas such as strength and evasion . The trio can rest in towns , where they can regain hit points or purchase restorative items and equipment . Options such as changing equipment , casting spells , or checking status are performed by cycling through the game 's Ring Commands , a circular menu which hovers over the currently controlled party member . The game is momentarily paused whenever the Ring Commands appear .

Combat takes place in real @-@ time . Located at the bottom of the screen is a gauge that determines the amount of damage done to an enemy when attacking . Swinging a weapon causes the gauge to empty and then quickly recharge , allowing that character to attack at full strength . The party wields eight different types of weaponry : sword , spear , bow , axe , boomerang , glove , whip , and javelin . All weapons can be upgraded eight times , and repeated use of a weapon increases its skill level to a maximum of eight , unlocking a new special attack with each level . Weapons are upgraded with Weapon Orbs , which are found in dungeons or earned by defeating certain bosses . The player takes each Orb to a blacksmith , located in most towns , who uses it to reforge one weapon .

In order to learn magic , the party must rescue spirits known as Elementals . The eight Elementals

represent different elements ? such as water , earth , and life ? and each provides the player with specific spells . Magic has skill levels similar to weapons , but each magic spell costs magic points to cast .

At the start of the game , to reach a destination players must traverse an enemy @-@ infested countryside . Travel may be expedited with Cannon Travel Centers , where the party may be launched to faraway destinations via a giant cannon . Cannon Travel usually requires a fee , but is mandatory to visit other continents later on . Later , the party is given access to Flammie , a miniature dragon which is controlled by the player and able to fly freely across the world , represented by an overworld map . These sequences make use of the SNES 's Mode 7 capability to create a rotatable background , giving the illusion that the ground beneath Flammie is rendered in three dimensions . While riding Flammie , the player may access either the " rotated map " , which presents the world as a globe , or the " world map " , a two @-@ dimensional view of the overworld .

= = Plot = =

= = = Setting and characters = = =

The story takes place in a high fantasy world , which contains an ethereal energy source named " mana " . An ancient , technologically advanced civilization exploited mana to construct the " Mana Fortress " , a flying warship . This angered the world 's gods , who sent giant beasts to war with the civilization . The conflict was globally destructive and nearly exhausted all signs of mana in the world , until a hero used the power of the Mana Sword to destroy the fortress and the civilization . The world began to recover in peace . As the game opens , an empire seeks eight Mana Seeds , which when " unsealed " will restore mana to the world and allow the empire to restore the Mana Fortress .

The three main characters do not have names in the original SNES release , though their names appear in the manual of the Japanese release ; and their names were added into the game in the iOS port worldwide . In all versions , the player can choose to name the characters whatever they wish . The hero ( ???? , Randi ) , a young boy , is adopted by the Elder of Potos before the start of the game , after the boy 's mother disappears . The girl ( ??? , Primm ) is in love with a warrior named Dyluck , who was ordered by the king to attack Elinee 's Castle . Angered by the king 's actions and by her father 's attempt to arrange her marriage to a local nobleman , she leaves the castle to save Dyluck and to accompany the hero as well . The hero and the girl meet the sprite child ( ??? , Popoi ) at the Dwarf Village . The sprite makes a living by scamming people at a freak show held by dwarves . He does not remember anything about his past , so he joins the team to try to recover his memories .

= = = Story = = =

The game begins as three boys from the small Potos village disobey their Elder 's instructions and trespass into a local waterfall , where a treasure is said to be kept . One of the boys stumbles and falls into the lake , where he finds a rusty sword embedded in a stone . Guided by a disembodied voice , he pulls the sword free , inadvertently unleashing monsters in the surrounding countryside of the village . The villagers interpret the sword 's removal as a bad omen and banish the boy from Potos forever . A traveling knight named Jema recognizes the blade as the legendary Mana Sword and encourages the hero to re @-@ energize it by visiting the eight Mana Temples .

During his journey , the hero is joined by the girl and the sprite . Throughout their travels , the trio is pursued by the empire . The Emperor and his subordinates are being manipulated by Thanatos , an ancient sorcerer who hopes to create a " new , peaceful world " . Due to his own body 's deterioration , Thanatos is in need of a suitable body to possess . After placing the entire kingdom of Pandora under a trance , he abducts two candidates : Dyluck , now enslaved , and a young

Pandoran girl named Phanna ; he eventually chooses to possess Dyluck .

The Empire succeeds in unsealing all eight Mana Seeds . However , Thanatos betrays the Emperor and his henchmen , killing them and seizing control of the Mana Fortress for himself . The hero and his party journey to locate the Mana Tree , the focal point of the world 's life energy . Anticipating their arrival , Thanatos positions the Mana Fortress over the Tree and destroys it . The charred remains of the Tree speak to the heroes , explaining that a giant dragon called the Mana Beast will soon be summoned to combat the Fortress . However , the Beast has little control over its rage and will likely destroy the world as well . The Mana Tree also reveals that it was once the human wife of Serin , the original Mana Knight and the hero 's father . The voice heard at Potos ' waterfall was that of Serin 's ghost .

The trio flies to the Mana Fortress and confronts Thanatos , who is preparing to transfer his mind into Dyluck . With the last of his strength , Dyluck warns that Thanatos has sold his soul to the underworld and must not be allowed to have the Fortress . Dyluck kills himself , forcing Thanatos to revert to a skeletal lich form , which the party defeats . The Mana Beast finally flies in and attacks the Fortress . The hero expresses reluctance to kill the Beast , fearing that with the dispersal of Mana from the world , the sprite will vanish . With the sprite 's encouragement , he uses the fully energized Mana Sword to slay the Beast , causing it to explode and transform into snow . At the conclusion of the game , the hero is seen returning the Mana Sword to its place beneath the Potos waterfall .

= = Development = =

Secret of Mana was directed and designed by Koichi Ishii , the creator of the game 's Game Boy predecessor , Final Fantasy Adventure . He has stated that he feels Secret of Mana is more " his game " than other projects he has worked on , such as the Final Fantasy series . The game was programmed primarily by Nasir Gebelli and produced by veteran Square designer Hiromichi Tanaka . The team hoped to build on the foundation of Final Fantasy Adventure , and they included several modified elements from that game and from other popular Square titles in Secret of Mana . In addition to having better graphics and sound quality than its predecessor , the attack power gauge was changed to be more engaging , and the weapon leveling system replaced Final Fantasy Adventure 's system of leveling up the speed of the attack gauge . The party system also received an upgrade from the first Mana game : instead of temporary companions who could not be upgraded , party members became permanent protagonists and could be controlled by other players . The multiplayer component was not a part of the original design , but was added when the developers realized that they could easily make all three characters human @-@ controlled .

The real @-@ time battle system used in Secret of Mana has been described by its creators as an extension of the battle system used in the first three flagship Final Fantasy titles . The system for experience points and leveling up was taken from Final Fantasy III . According to Tanaka , the game 's battle system features mechanics that had first been considered for Final Fantasy IV . Similarly , unused features in Secret of Mana were appropriated by the Chrono Trigger team , which like Final Fantasy IV was in production at the time .

Secret of Mana was originally planned to be a launch title for the SNES @-@ CD add @-@ on . After the contract between Nintendo and Sony to produce the add @-@ on failed , and Sony repurposed its work on the SNES @-@ CD into the competing PlayStation console , Square Enix adapted the game for the SNES cartridge format . The game had to be altered to fit the storage space of a SNES game cartridge , which is much smaller than that of a CD @-@ ROM . The developers initially resisted continuing the project without the CD add @-@ on , believing that too much of the game would have to be cut , but they were overruled by company management . As a result of the hardware change , several features had to be cut from the game , and some completed work needed to be redone . Most major of these removals was the option to take multiple routes through the game that led to several possible endings , in contrast to the linear journey in the final product . The plot that remained was different than the original conception , and Tanaka has said that the original story had a much darker tone . Ishii has estimated that up to forty percent of the

planned game was dropped to meet the space limitations , and critics have suggested that the hardware change led to technical problems when too much happens at once in the game . In 2006 , Level magazine claimed that Secret of Mana 's rocky development was Square 's main inspiration to move their games , such as the Final Fantasy series , from Nintendo consoles to Sony consoles in 1996 .

The English translation for Secret of Mana was completed in only 30 days , mere weeks after the Japanese release , and the North American localization was initially advertised as Final Fantasy Adventure 2 . Critics have suggested that the translation was done hastily so that the game could be released in North America for the 1993 holiday season . According to translator Ted Woolsey , a large portion of the game 's script was cut out in the English localization due to space limitations . To display text on the main gameplay screen , the English translation uses a fixed @-@ width font , which limits the amount of space available to display text . Woolsey was unhappy that he had to trim conversations to their bare essentials and that he had so little time for translation , commenting that it " nearly killed me " . The script was difficult to translate as it was presented to Woolsey in disordered groups of text , like " shuffling a novel " . Other localizations were done in German and French . The Japanese release only named the three protagonists in the manual , while Western versions omitted the characters ' names until the enhanced port on the iOS .

= = = Music = = =

The score for Secret of Mana was composed by Hiroki Kikuta . Kenji Ito , who had composed the soundtrack for Final Fantasy Adventure , was originally slated for the project . He was replaced with Kikuta when Ito was forced to drop Secret of Mana due to other demands on his time , such as the soundtrack to Romancing SaGa . It was Kikuta 's first video game score . Encountering difficulties in dealing with the hardware limitations of the SNES , Kikuta tried to express in the music two " contrasting styles " to create an original score which would be neither pop music nor standard game music . Kikuta worked on the music mostly by himself , spending nearly 24 hours a day in his office , alternating between composing and editing to create a soundtrack that would be , according to him , " immersive " and " three @-@ dimensional " . Rather than having sound engineers create the samples of instruments like most game music composers of the time , Kikuta made his own samples that matched the hardware capabilities of the SNES . These custom samples allowed him to know exactly how each piece would sound on the system 's hardware , so he did not have to worry about differences between the original composition and the SNES . Kikuta said in 2001 that he considered the score for Secret of Mana his favorite creation .

The soundtrack 's music includes both " ominous " and " light @-@ hearted " tracks , and is noted for its use of bells and " dark , solemn pianos " . Kikuta 's compositions for the game were partly inspired by natural landscapes , as well as music from Bali . Hardware limitations made the title screen to the game slowly fade in , and Kikuta designed the title track to the game , " Fear of the Heavens " , to sync up with the screen . At that time , composers rarely tried to match a game 's music to its visuals . Kikuta also started the track off with a " whale noise " , rather than a traditional " ping " , in order to try to " more deeply connect " the player with the game from the moment it started up . Getting the sound to work with the memory limitations of the SNES was a difficult technical challenge .

The 1993 soundtrack album Secret of Mana Original Soundtrack , first released as Seiken Densetsu 2 Original Sound Version in Japan , collects 44 tracks of music from Secret of Mana . Aside from its packaging and localized song titles , the English release is identical to the Japanese original . Secret of Mana was one of the first Japanese games to inspire a localized soundtrack release in North America . An album of arranged music from Secret of Mana and its sequel Seiken Densetsu 3 was produced in 1993 as Secret of Mana + . The music in the album was all composed and arranged by Kikuta . Secret of Mana + contains a single track , titled " Secret of Mana " , that incorporates themes from the music of both Secret of Mana and Seiken Densetsu 3 , which was still under development at the time . The style of the album has been described by critics as " experimental " , using " strange sounds " such as waterfalls , bird calls , cell phone sounds , and "

typing " sounds . The music has also been described by critics as covering many different musical styles , such as " Debussian impressionist styles , his own heavy electronic and synth ideas , and even ideas of popular musicians " . The latest album of music from the game is a 2012 arranged album titled Secret of Mana Genesis / Seiken Densetsu 2 Arrange Album . The 16 tracks are upgraded versions of the original SNES tracks , and Kikuta said in the liner notes for the album that they are " how he wanted the music to sound when he wrote it " , without the limitations of the SNES hardware . Critics such as Patrick Gann of RPGFan , however , have noted that the differences are minor .

== Re @-@ releases ==

In 1999 Square announced they would be porting Secret of Mana to Bandai 's handheld system WonderSwan Color as one of nine planned games for the system . No such port was ever released . A mobile phone port of Secret of Mana was released on October 26 , 2009 . A port of the game for iOS was revealed at E3 2010 , and released on Apple 's App Store on December 21 , 2010 . The port fixed several bugs , and the English script was both edited and retranslated from the original Japanese . The enhanced port from the iOS version was released on Android devices in 2014 .

== Reception and legacy ==

As of February 2004 , Secret of Mana had shipped 1 @.@ 83 million copies worldwide , with 1 @.@ 5 million of those copies being shipped in Japan and 330 @,@ 000 abroad . The initial shipment of games in Japan sold out within days of the release date . Edge noted in November 1993 that the game was " the most widely covered game of the year in Japan " , with a high number of sales , but was released in North America " completely un @-@ hyped and mostly unheard of " . Nevertheless , Secret of Mana was the second best @-@ selling Super NES game on Babbage 's North American chart in October 1993 , behind only Mortal Kombat .

Electronic Gaming Monthly magazine 's reviewers heavily praised the graphics , music , and multiplayer gameplay , saying that it had " some of the best music I 've ever heard from a cartridge " . They hoped that other companies would take the game 's lead in adding multiplayer modes to role @-@ playing games . Diehard GameFan 's review of the game named the multiplayer as the game 's best component , with reviewer Kelly Rickards saying that while the graphics were nice , the multiplayer " made the game " . GamePro 's review praised the graphics , plot , " first @-@ rate gameplay " and " positively massive " world " dwarfing even Zelda " , while stating the gameplay and multiplayer were " rough around the edges " , concluding it to be " one of the finest action / RPGs " on the SNES . Nintendo Power called it an " enthralling epic " , praising the " wide variety of sites and terrain , " music , " Beautiful graphics and great depth of play " but criticizing the " unnecessarily long " sword powering @-@ up and " awkward " item selection method .

Secret of Mana was awarded Game of the Month in December 1993 and Best Role @-@ Playing Game of 1993 by Electronic Gaming Monthly . In its annual Megawards , GameFan awarded it Best Action / RPG ( SNES ) . GamePro gave it the award for Role @-@ Playing Game of the Year , ahead of Lufia and Shadowrun as runners @-@ up .

Edge 's review said that Secret of Mana was better than contemporary role @-@ playing games Ys I & II , The Legend of Zelda : A Link to the Past , and Landstalker : The Treasures of King Nole . The review stated that Secret of Mana " includes some of the best game design and features ever seen : simultaneous threeplayer action , the best combat system ever designed , the best player interface ever designed , a superb control system , and yes , some of the most engrossing and rewarding gameplay yet " . They concluded that the game was one of the best action RPGs or adventure games . Game designer Sandy Petersen reviewed the game in Dragon , and described the game as much like Zelda but with conventional role @-@ playing game features . He predicted that the game would be regarded as a classic . Peterson concluded that Secret of Mana was one of the best SNES role @-@ playing games and that it was " a much larger game than Zelda , with many more types of monsters , character options , and fortresses to explore " . Nintendo Magazine System ( now Official

Nintendo Magazine ) also compared it favorably with A Link to the Past ; reviewer Paul stated that " even the magnificence of Zelda III seems stale in comparison to the incredible features found within this refreshing , exhilarating adventure " while Tim stated that it " comes the closest yet " to surpassing Zelda , concluding that Secret of Mana was " one of the greatest graphical RPGs in the history of the world " .

In 2008 , Lucas Thomas of IGN reviewed the Virtual Console port of Secret of Mana and stated that it was considered one of the best video games ever made . Eurogamer 's Dan Whitehead also recommended the port , describing it as " essential " and as the formative game of the Mana series . The iOS port of the game was praised by Nadia Oxford of Slide to Play for its improved graphics and computer @-@ controlled characters . She also praised the quality of the touch controls relative to other role @-@ playing game phone versions , though she disliked that the multiplayer mode had been removed .

In 2014 , Edge magazine described Secret of Mana as " one of the high points of the 16bit era " . A writer for the magazine noted that , 20 years after Secret of Mana 's release , its reputation as a SNES action RPG had been surpassed only by that of The Legend of Zelda : A Link to the Past . Review aggregator site GameRankings lists the game as the 13th @-@ highest rated SNES game . In 1996 , Super Play ranked Secret of Mana eighth on its list of the best 100 SNES games of all time . It took 42nd place on Nintendo Power magazine 's 2006 " Top 200 Nintendo Games of All Time " list , and the magazine called it the 86th best game on a Nintendo system . IGN 's " Top 100 Games " list ranked the game at number 48 in 2005 , number 49 in 2006 , and number 79 in 2007 . In 2006 , Famitsu 's " All Time Top 100 " audience poll ranked it number 97 . Secret of Mana was an influential game in its time , and its influence continued into the 2010s . Elements such as its ring menu system , described by Edge as " oft @-@ mimicked " , were borrowed by later games such as The Temple of Elemental Evil . Its cooperative multiplayer gameplay has been mentioned as an influence on Dungeon Siege III .