

= Nights into Dreams ... =

Nights into Dreams ... (Japanese : ??? , Hepburn : Naitsu , stylised as NiGHTS into Dreams ...) is an action video game developed by Sonic Team and published by Sega for the Sega Saturn in 1996 . The story follows two teenagers , Claris and Elliot , who enter a dream world called Nightopia where all dreams take place . With the help of Nights , an exiled " Nightmaren " , they begin a journey to stop the evil ruler Wizeman from destroying Nightopia and consequently the real world . Gameplay is centred around Nights flying through Claris and Elliot 's dreams to gather enough energy to defeat Wizeman and save Nightopia . The game is presented in 3D and imposes time limits on every level , in which the player must accumulate enough points to proceed .

Development began soon after the release of Sonic & Knuckles in 1994 , although the concept originated during the development of Sonic the Hedgehog 2 (1992) . Development was led by Sonic Team veterans Yuji Naka , Naoto Ohshima , and Takashi Iizuka . Naka began the project with the main idea revolving around flight , and Ohshima designed the character Nights to resemble an angel that could fly like a bird . Ohshima designed Nights specifically as an androgynous character . The team conducted research on dreaming and REM sleep , and was influenced by the works and theories of psychoanalysts Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud . An analogue controller , known as the Saturn 3D controller , was designed alongside the game and was included with some retail copies sold .

Nights into Dreams ... received positive reviews upon release ; critics praised the graphics , gameplay , soundtrack , and atmosphere . It has been included on multiple lists as being the best Sega Saturn game of all time , as well as among the best games ever made . An abbreviated version of the game with a Christmas theme , titled Christmas Nights , was released in December 1996 . The game was ported to the PlayStation 2 in 2008 exclusively in Japan and a high @-@ definition version was released worldwide for PlayStation 3 , Xbox 360 , and Microsoft Windows in 2012 . A direct sequel , Nights : Journey of Dreams , was released for the Wii in 2007 .

= = Gameplay = =

Nights into Dreams ... is split into seven levels , referred to as " Dreams " . The levels are distributed equally between the two teenage characters : three are unique to Claris , three to Elliot , and each play through an identical final seventh level , " Twin Seeds " . Initially , only Claris ' Spring Valley and Elliot 's Splash Garden levels are available , and successful completion of one of these unlocks the next level in that character 's path . Previously completed stages may be revisited to improve the player 's high scores ; a grade between A and F will be given to the player upon completion , but a " C " grade in all the selected character 's levels must be achieved to unlock the relevant Twin Seeds stage for that character . Points are accumulated depending on how fast the player completes a level , and extra points are awarded when the player flies through rings .

Each level is split up into four " Mares " set in Nightopia and a boss fight which takes place in Nightmare . In each level , players initially control Claris or Elliot , who immediately have their Ideyas (spherical objects that contain emotions) of hope , growth , intelligence and purity stolen from them by Wizeman 's minions , leaving behind only their Ideya of courage . The goal of each Mare is to recover one of the stolen Ideya by collecting 20 blue chips and delivering them to the cage holding the Ideyas , which will overload and release the orb it holds . If the player walks around the landscape for too long , they will be pursued by a sentient alarm clock which will awaken the character and end the level if it comes into contact with the player . The majority of the gameplay centres on flying sequences , which are triggered by walking into the Ideya Palace near the start of each level so that the character merges with the imprisoned Nights . Once the flying sequence is initiated , the time limit will begin .

In the flying sections , the player controls Nights ' flight along a predetermined route through each Mare , resembling that of a 2D platformer . The player has only a limited period of time available before Nights falls to the ground and transforms back into Claris or Elliot , and each collision with an enemy subtracts five seconds from the time remaining . While flying , Nights can use a boost to

travel faster , as well as defeat certain reverie enemies scattered throughout the level . Grabbing onto certain enemies causes Nights to spin around , which will launch both Nights and the enemy in the direction the boost was initiated . Various acrobatic manoeuvres can be performed , including the " Paraloop " , whereby flying around in a complete circle and connecting the trail of stars left in Nights ' wake will cause any items within the loop to be attracted towards Nights . The game features a combo system known as " Linking " , whereby actions such as collecting items and flying through rings are worth more points when performed in quick succession . Power @-@ ups may be gained by flying through several predetermined rings , which will be indicated by a bonus barrel . The power @-@ ups include a speed boost , point multiplier and an air pocket .

The player receives a grade based on their score at the end of each Mare , and an overall grade for the level after clearing all four Mares . Nights is then transported to Nightmare for a boss fight against one of Wizeman 's " Level Two " Nightmaren . Each boss fight has a time limit , and the game will end if the player runs out of time during the battle . Upon winning the boss fight , the player is awarded a score multiplier based on how quickly the boss was defeated , which is then applied to the score earned in the Nighttopia section to produce the player 's final score for that Dream . The game also features a multiplayer mode , which allows two players to battle each other by using a splitscreen . One player controls Nights , whereas the other controls the secondary antagonist , Realia . The winner is determined by the first player to defeat the other , which is accomplished by hitting the other player three times .

The game features an artificial life system known as " A @-@ Life " , which involves entities called Nighttopians and keeps track of their moods . It is possible to have them mate with other Nighttopians , which will result in creating hybrids known as " Superpians " . The more the game is played , the more inhabitants appear , and environmental features and aesthetics will consequently change . The A @-@ Life system features an evolving music engine , allowing tempo , pitch , and melody to alter depending on the state of Nighttopians within the level . The feature runs from the Sega Saturn 's internal clock , which will also alter features in the A @-@ Life system depending on the time .

= = Plot = =

= = = Setting = = =

Every night , all human dreams are played out in Nighttopia and Nightmare , the two parts of the dream world . In Nighttopia , distinct aspects of dreamers ' personalities are represented by luminous coloured spheres known as " Ideya " . The evil ruler of Nightmare , Wizeman the Wicked , is stealing this dream energy from sleeping visitors in order to gather power and take control of Nighttopia and eventually the real world . To achieve this , he creates five beings called " Nightmaren " : jester @-@ like , flight @-@ capable beings , which include Jackle , Clawz , Gulpo , Gillwing and Puffy as well as many minor maren . He also creates two " Level One " Nightmaren : Nights and Realia . However , Nights rebels against Wizeman 's plans , and is punished by being imprisoned inside an Ideya palace , a gazebo @-@ like container for dreamers ' Ideya .

= = = Synopsis = = =

One day , Elliot Edwards and Claris Sinclair , two teenagers from the city of Twin Seeds , go through failures . Elliot is a basketball player who enjoys a game with his friends . He is challenged by a group of older school students and suffers a humiliating defeat on the court . Claris is a talented singer and her ambition is to perform on stage . She auditions for a part in the events commemorating the centenary of the city of Twin Seeds . Standing in front of the judges , she is overcome by stage fright and does not perform well , which causes her to lose all hopes of getting the role . When they go to sleep that night , both Elliot and Claris suffer nightmares that replay the events . They escape into Nighttopia and find that they both possess the rare Red Ideya of Courage , the only type that Wizeman cannot steal .

Once in Nightopia , they discover and release Nights , who tells them about dreams and Wizeman and his plans ; the three begin a journey to stop Wizeman and restore peace to Nightopia . When they defeat Wizeman and Realta , peace is returned to Nightopia and the world of Nightmare is suppressed . The next day , back in Twin Seeds , a centenary ceremony begins . Elliot is seen walking through the parade until he has a vision of Nights looking at him through a hoarding . Realising that Claris is performing in a hall , Elliot runs through the crowd and sees Claris on stage in front of a large audience , singing well . The two look at each other , and are transitioned to a spring valley in Nightopia , which leaves ambiguity as to whether what they achieved was real or just a dream .

= = Development = =

Sonic Team developed the game in the United States , unlike their previous titles which had been developed in Japan . The concept for the game originated during the development of Sonic the Hedgehog 2 in 1992 , but actual development did not begin until after the release of Sonic & Knuckles in late 1994 . The programming of the game began in April 1995 and total development spanned a period of six months . The development team consisted of staff who worked on previous Sonic the Hedgehog titles : Yuji Naka (the former head of AM8) was selected to act as lead programmer and producer , while Naoto Ohshima and Takashi Iizuka undertook the roles of director and lead designer , respectively . According to Naka , the initial development team consisted of seven people at the start of production , and gradually grew to 20 people once more programmers started to arrive .

Sonic the Hedgehog creator and project director Ohshima created the character of Nights based on his inspirations from travelling around Europe and western Asia . He eventually came to the conclusion that the main character of the game should resemble an angel and fly like a bird . Naka originally intended to make Nights into Dreams ... a slow @-@ paced game , but as development progressed the gameplay pace gradually increased , in similar vein to Sonic the Hedgehog titles . The initial concept of the game featured the flying character in a rendered 2D sprite art , with side @-@ scrolling features similar to Sonic the Hedgehog . The team were at first hesitant to switch the game from 2D to 3D , as Naka was sceptical that appealing characters could be created with polygons , in contrast to traditional pixel art sprites , which Sonic Team 's designers found " more expressive " . According to Iizuka , the game design and story took two years to finalise .

The game was developed using Silicon Graphics workstations for graphical designs and Sega Saturn emulators running on Hewlett @-@ Packard machines for programming . Iizuka said that there were problems during early stages of development because of a lack of games to use as reference ; the team consequently had to redesign the Spring Valley level numerous times and build " everything from scratch " . Because the Sonic Team offices did not include any sound @-@ proof studios , team members were forced to record vocal sound effects for the game at night . Naka revealed that every phrase in the game has a meaning ; for example " abayo " is Japanese slang for " goodbye " . Regarding the design of the 3D cutscenes , the team felt that the global market would be less resistant to a game featuring full 3D CGI in comparison to 2D anime . Norihiro Nishiyama , the designer of the in @-@ game movies , stated that the use of 3D cutscenes in the game was necessary as he felt the movies were a good method to show the different concepts of dreaming and waking up into reality . Naka said that the in @-@ game movies incorporate realism in order to make it more difficult for the player to disambiguate the boundary between dreams and reality .

At the end of development , Naka admitted that the cycle took longer than expected because of the team 's inexperience with Saturn hardware and uncertainty about utilising the full 560 megabyte space on the CD @-@ ROM . The team initially thought that the game would consume around 100 megabytes of data , and at one point considered releasing it on two separate discs . In a retrospective interview , Iizuka said that the most difficult part of development was finding a way of handling the " contradiction " of using 2D sidescroller controls in a fully 3D game . Naka also purposely limited the game 's flying mechanic to " invisible 2D tracks " because early beta testing revealed that the game was too difficult to play in full 3D .

Iizuka said that the game was inspired by various titles and characters from Japanese anime and Cirque du Soleil 's Mystère theatrical performance . The development team researched dream sequences and REM sleep , including the works of the psychoanalysts Carl Jung , Sigmund Freud and Friedrich Holtz . Iizuka analysed Jung 's theories of dream archetypes and spent a considerable amount of time studying dreams and theories associated with them . Naka said that the main protagonist , Nights , is reflective of Jung 's analytical " shadow " theory , whereas the two central characters , Claris and Elliot , were inspired by Jung 's animus and anima .

== Release ==

Nights into Dreams ... was introduced alongside an optional game controller , the Saturn 3D controller , which was included with some copies of the game . The gamepad features an analogue stick and analogue triggers which was designed specifically for the game , in order to make movement easier . During development , director Steven Spielberg visited the Sonic Team studio and became the first person outside the development team to play the game . Naka asked him to play with an experimental version of the Saturn 3D controller , and was jokingly referred to as the " Spielberg controller " throughout development . The controller was designed with the game specifically in mind ; the development team compared the success of the Nintendo 64 controller with Super Mario 64 (1996) , and realised that the default Saturn controller was more suited for arcade games in contrast to the gameplay of Nights into Dreams The game was marketed with an advertising budget of \$ 10 million , which included the use of television and print advertisements in the United States .

== Related games ==

== Christmas Nights ==

Christmas Nights (???????? , Kurisumasu Naitsu) , or Christmas NiGHTS into Dreams ... , is a Christmas @-@ themed two @-@ level game of Nights into Dreams ... that was released in December 1996 . It was introduced in Japan as part of a Christmas Sega Saturn bundle , whereas elsewhere it was given away with the purchase of certain Saturn games such as Daytona USA Championship Circuit Edition (1996) , and was also bundled in with issues of Sega Saturn Magazine and Next Generation Magazine . In the United Kingdom , Christmas Nights was not included with the Sega Saturn Magazine until December 1997 .

The story of Christmas Nights follows Elliot and Claris during the holiday season following their adventures with Nights . Though they both enjoy the Christmas season , they feel as if something is missing . Realising that the Christmas Star that usually sits at the top of the Twin Seeds Christmas tree is absent , the pair travel to Nightopia to find it . There , they reunite with Nights and re @-@ explore Spring Valley , which has now been decorated due to their dreams of the holiday season . The remainder of the story revolves around their attempts of defeating a revived Gillwing and retrieving the Christmas Star from his lair .

The Christmas Nights disc contains the full version of Claris ' Spring Valley dream level from Nights into Dreams ... , which allows both Claris and Elliot to play through the area . The game uses the Saturn 's internal clock to change elements of the game according to the date and time . During December , " Christmas Nights " mode is activated , resulting in further Christmas @-@ themed alterations , such as item boxes becoming Christmas presents , greenery becoming snow , Nightopians dressing in elf costumes , and Christmas trees replacing Ideya captures . During the " Winter Nights " period , the weather in Spring Valley will change according to the hour . Other cosmetic changes are visible on New Year 's Day , and loading the game on April Fool 's Day results in Reala replacing Nights as the playable character .

In a 2007 interview , Iizuka stated that the Christmas @-@ themed add @-@ on Christmas Nights was conceptualised in order to increase the sales of Saturn consoles . Development of Christmas

Nights began in July 1996 and took " three to four " months to complete , according to Naka . The disc features several unlockable bonuses such as being able to play the game 's soundtrack . Further extra modes allow players to observe the status of the A @-@ life system , experiment with the game 's music mixer , time attack one Mare , or play the demo stage as Sega 's mascot Sonic the Hedgehog . In the minigame Sonic the Hedgehog : Into Dreams , Sonic may only play through the stage of Spring Valley on foot , and must defeat the boss : an inflatable Dr. Robotnik . The music is a remixed version of " Final Fever " , the final boss battle music from the Japanese and European version of Sonic CD (1993) . The Christmas Nights content is playable in the HD version after the game has been cleared once .

= = = Sequel = = =

A game with the working title " Air Nights " was prototyped for the Saturn and began development for the Dreamcast , and in an August 1999 interview Yuji Naka confirmed that a sequel was in development ; by December 2000 , however , the project had been cancelled . Naka expressed reluctance to develop a sequel , but subsequently noted that he was interested in using Nights into Dreams ... as a licence " to reinforce Sega 's identity " . Aside from a handheld electronic game released by Tiger Electronics and small minigames featured in several Sega titles , no full sequel was released for a Sega console .

On 1 April 2007 , a sequel called Nights : Journey of Dreams was officially announced for the Wii . The game was first previewed on Spanish publication Maxi Consolas , after the release of short reveals from the Official Nintendo Magazine and Game Reactor . The sequel is a Wii exclusive , making use of the Wii Remote . The gameplay involves the use of various masks , and features a multiplayer mode for two players in addition to Nintendo Wi @-@ Fi Connection online functions . The game was developed by Sega Studio USA , with Iizuka , one of the designers of the original game , serving as producer . It was released in Japan and the United States in December 2007 , and in Europe and Australia on 18 January 2008 .

In 2010 , Iizuka commented that he would be interested in making a third Nights into Dreams ... game , should the management of Sega decide to commission one .

= = Reception = =

The game received positive reviews upon release . It holds an average score of 89 % at GameRankings , based on an aggregate of nine reviews . In Japan , Nights into Dreams ... was the best @-@ selling game for the Sega Saturn and the 21st @-@ highest @-@ selling game during 1996 .

The graphics and flight mechanics were the most praised aspects of the game . Tom Guise from Computer and Video Games heralded the game 's flight system and freedom as captivating , while stating that Nights into Dreams ... is the " perfect evolution " of a Sonic game . GamePro said flying using the analogue joystick " is a breeze " and that the gameplay is fun , enjoyable , and impressive . Entertainment Weekly said its " graceful acrobatic stunts " offer " a more compelling sensation of soaring than most flight simulators " . Edge praised the game 's analogue controller and called the levels " well @-@ designed and graphically unrivalled " , but the reviewer expressed disappointment in the limited level count compared to Super Mario 64 , and suggested that Nights seemed to prioritise technical achievements and Saturn selling points over gameplay with as clear a focus as Sonic . Martin Robinson from Eurogamer opined that the flight mechanics were a " giddy thrill " , in contrast to Sonic games . Colin Ferris from Game Revolution praised the graphics and speed of the game as breathtaking and awe @-@ inspiring , concluding that it offered the best qualities of the fifth @-@ generation machines . GameFan praised the combination of " lush graphics , amazing music , and totally unique gameplay " . Next Generation criticised the fast tempo of the game , saying that the only disappointing aspect was the way " it all rushes by so fast " . However , the magazine praised the two @-@ player mode and the innovative method of grading the player once they completed a level .

Levi Buchanan from IGN believed that the console " was not built to handle Nights " due to the game occasionally clipping and warping , though he admitted that the graphics were " pretty darn good " . A reviewer from Mean Machines Sega praised the game 's vibrant colours and detailed textures , and described its animation as being " fluid as water " . The reviewer also noted occasional pop @-@ in and glitching during the game . Sam Hickman from the British Sega Saturn Magazine praised the visuals and colour scheme as rich in both texture and detail , while suggesting that Nights into Dreams ... is one of the most captivating games on the Saturn . Next Generation similarly commended the game 's visuals , stating that they were " beyond a doubt " the most fluid and satisfying for any game on any system . Upon release , the Japanese Sega Saturn Magazine opined that the game would have a significant impact on the video game industry , particularly that in the action game genre . The reviewer also stated that the game felt better through the use of the analogue pad , in contrast to the conventional controller , and also praised the light and smooth feeling the analogue pad portrayed during gameplay .

Reviewers also praised the game 's soundtrack and audio effects . Paul Davies from Computer and Video Games cited the game as having " the best music ever " ; in the same review , Tom Guise attributed the music to creating a hypnotically magical atmosphere . Ferris stated that the music and sound effects were that of a dream world , and asserted that they were fitting for a game like Nights into Dreams IGN 's Buchanan praised the game 's soundtrack , stating that each stage 's soundtrack is " quite good " and that the sound effects " fit in perfectly with the dream universe " .

= = Legacy = =

Since its release , Nights into Dreams ... has appeared on several best game of all time lists . In a January 2000 poll by Computer and Video Games , readers placed the game 15th on their " 100 Greatest Games " list , directly behind Super Mario 64 . IGN ranked the game as the 94th best game of all time in their " Top 100 Games " list in 2007 , and in 2008 , Levi Buchanan ranked it fourth in his list of the top 10 Sega Saturn games . Next Generation Magazine ranked the game 25th in its list of the " 100 Greatest Games of All @-@ Time " in their September 1996 issue . 1UP ranked the game third in its " Top Ten Cult Classics " list . In 2014 , GamesRadar listed Nights into Dreams ... as the best Sega Saturn game of all time , stating that the game " tapped into a new kind of platform gameplay for its era " .

= = = Remakes = = =

Sega released a remake of Nights into Dreams ... for the PlayStation 2 exclusively in Japan on 21 February 2008 . It includes 16 : 9 wide screen support , an illustration gallery and features the ability to play the game in classic Saturn graphics . The game was also featured in a bundle named the Nightopia Dream Pack , which includes a reprint of a picture book that was released in Japan alongside the original Saturn game . A Nights into Dreams ... handheld electronic game was released by Tiger Electronics in 1997 , and a port of it was later released for Tiger 's unsuccessful R @-@ Zone console .

A high definition remaster of the PlayStation 2 version was released for PlayStation Network on 2 October 2012 and for Xbox Live Arcade on 5 October 2012 . A Microsoft Windows version was released via Steam on 17 December 2012 . This version of the game introduces online high score leaderboards and includes the option to play either with enhanced graphics or with the original Saturn version 's graphics . The HD version also includes Christmas Nights and the original game 's two player versus mode , but the Sonic the Hedgehog level of Christmas Nights was removed .

= = = In other media = = =

Claris and Eliot make a cameo appearance in Sonic Team 's Burning Rangers (1998) , with both Claris and Eliot sending the Rangers emails thanking them for their help . Nights into Dreams ... -themed pinball areas feature in Sonic Adventure (1998) and Sonic Pinball Party (2003) , with

soundtrack being featured in the latter game . The PlayStation 2 titles EyeToy : Play (2003) and Sega SuperStars (2004) both feature minigames based on Nights into Dreams ... , in which Nights is controlled using the player 's body . Nights is also an unlockable character in Sonic Riders (2006) and Sonic Riders : Zero Gravity (2008) .

A minigame version of Nights into Dreams ... is playable through utilising the Nintendo GameCube ? Game Boy Advance link cable connectivity with Phantasy Star Online Episode I & II (2000) and Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg (2003) . Following a successful fan campaign by a Nights into Dreams ... fansite , the character Nights was integrated into Sonic & Sega All @-@ Stars Racing (2010) as a traffic guard . Nights and Reala also appear as playable characters in Sega Superstars Tennis (2008) and Sonic & All @-@ Stars Racing Transformed (2012) , the latter of which also features a Nights into Dreams ... -themed racetrack . The limited Deadly Six edition of Sonic Lost World (2013) features a Nights into Dreams ... -inspired stage , named " Nightmare Zone " , as downloadable content .

= = = Comics = = =

In February 1998 , Archie Comics adapted Nights into Dreams ... into a three @-@ issue comic book miniseries to test whether or not a Nights comic would sell well in North America . The first miniseries was loosely based on the game , with Nights being specifically identified as a male despite the character 's androgynous design . The company later released a second three @-@ issue miniseries , continuing the story of the first , but the series did not gain enough sales to warrant an ongoing series . The series would later be added to a list of guest franchises featured in Archie Comics ' Worlds Unite crossover between its Sonic the Hedgehog and Mega Man titles .