

= King Arthur & the Knights of Justice ( video game ) =

King Arthur & the Knights of Justice is an action @-@ adventure game developed by Manley & Associates and published by Enix for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System in May 1995 . Based on the cartoon series of the same title , which was loosely inspired by the Arthurian legend , the game was released in North America exclusively .

The player takes on the role of a team of American football players who are transported to Medieval England and given the mission to save King Arthur and destroy the evil sorceress Morgana and her army . The game was the first Enix title developed by an American company , and was inspired by The Legend of Zelda series and various written works . It was received with reviews ranging from mediocre to extremely poor .

= = Gameplay = =

The game is a standard action @-@ adventure game , played from a top @-@ down perspective . The player takes on the role of Arthur King and is accompanied by two Knights of Justice controlled by the game console . The player battles enemies using a regular sword swing or a special attack , and can block high and low attacks .

Twelve Knights are available from the start ( including Arthur King ) , each with his own weapon , personality and statistics for life force , defense , strength and speed . Each boss of the game has a specific weakness against one of the Knights . Changing party members is done by visiting the Round Table room in Camelot . Each character has a life meter , and Arthur also has a power meter . Various items must be collected to complete quests and objectives , while some can be used to restore a character 's life meter .

An overworld map feature allows the player to directly access locations already visited once . The game has no saving feature but allows accessing various points of the storyline with a system of passwords .

= = Plot = =

The events of the game are set in a fictional version of Britain in the 5th century . The evil sorceress Morgana has magically imprisoned King Arthur and the Knights of the Round in the Cave of Glass beneath her castle , past Hadrian 's Wall . At Camelot , the King 's wizard Merlin uses a crystal ball and locates a brave team of " warriors " in the future , led by Arthur King and dubbed " The Knights " . They are actually American football players , though Merlin interprets their names as a sign of fate . He summons them back in time , and the Lady of the Table transforms them into " Knights of Justice " . Merlin asks them to break the seal on King Arthur and the Knights of the Round by gathering the twelve Keys of Truth .

The party retrieves the Excalibur sword from the Lady of the Lake , proving their worth by claiming the Pendragon Shield from a young dragon at Shield Heights . They assist Erek , the deposed ruler of Tintagel Castle , and recover the first Key of Truth in the castle . They make their way into the village of Welton , which is under a mind control spell , and recover the second Key of Truth at Gruesome Keep . After breaking the spell on Welton and crossing the Blinder 's Way , they claim the third Key of Truth at Castle Sanguine .

During the event , a Warlord infiltrates Camelot and poisons Squire Everett . The party collects an antidote in the Swamp of Zagar and saves the Squire . They then claim the fourth Key of Truth in Stone Keep . They rescue the son of the Gnome King to obtain the fifth Key of Truth , and collect four Elemental Keys to unlock access to Castle Vilor and the sixth Key of Truth . The party finds the seventh and eighth Keys of Truth in Crownhorn village and the Cape of Death , respectively . The ninth and tenth Keys are found in Blackroot Keep and the Dark Citadel while searching for the missing pieces of the Staff of Rhiothamus , which can break open a path in Hadrian 's Wall .

Using the Staff , the party goes past Hadrian 's Wall and into the Dark Forest , where the eleventh Key of Truth is found . In a cemetery , they stumble upon a statue of Morgana , which fires a magic

beam that kills the two Knights in the party . Arthur travels to the Town of the Dead by himself then to the Plain of the Dead and retrieves his two dead Knights . They reach Morgana 's castle , Stone Gardens , and defeat Morgana in her dragon form , thus obtaining the last Key of Truth . In the game 's ending sequence , the party members are congratulated by the real , freed King Arthur , and Merlin uses Stonehenge to send them back to their era .

= = Development = =

King Arthur & the Knights of Justice was the first Enix game developed by an American company : Manley & Associates in Issaquah , Washington . Roughly two dozen people worked on the game , though not all at the same time . It was initially planned for a 16 @-@ megabit cartridge , but four additional megabits were eventually added to expand the game . Development spanned about two years .

In addition to the original cartoon series , the developers gathered ideas from several sources for inspiration , including The Legend of Zelda action @-@ adventure game series , and books such as T. H. White 's The Book of Merlyn and fables from Medieval poet Marie de France . They noted that the hardest part of development was coming up with puzzles for each of the regions , as they had to be " fun and challenging , but not repetitive " . While they tried to maintain a balance between action and puzzles , they noted that they focused more on the puzzle aspect of the game . Favorite parts of the game for the developers include the dragon battles , the boss Blackwing and Morgana 's Warlords .

= = Reception = =

The title received generally negative reviews . Video game magazines Nintendo Power and Electronic Gaming Monthly gave the title a score of 2 @.@ 68 out of 5 and 5 @.@ 62 out of 10 respectively , while the website Allgame rated it 3 out of 5 stars . Freelance critic Robert Schmitz gave the title a score of 0 @.@ 5 out of 11 , calling it " awful " and explaining the game is almost " better left unsaid " . Schmitz blamed Enix 's decision to base the game on a little @-@ known cartoon series , a comment echoed by both the Video Game Bible .

Milligan called the game a " staggeringly ill @-@ conceived game " and likened it to a " succession of fetch quests " . Electronic Gaming Monthly felt the graphics lack vibrant colors , but that the music was " alright " . Allan Milligan , in a review for the Gaming Intelligence Agency , judged the graphics and audio both mediocre , the character designs " terrible " , the plot generic and the puzzles not challenging . Moreover , he noted that it is impossible for the player to know in advance which Knight is best suited for which boss .

Concerning the gameplay , Milligan criticized the fact that all enemies on a screen must be defeated to progress through some passages , and the possibility for characters and enemies to be hidden from the player 's view behind large objects . The unintuitive angle made by Arthur 's sword when attacking and the Knights ' artificial intelligence were also denounced as poorly conceived , as were the lack of animation when a character or enemy is hit . While Milligan noted no major glitches or bugs in the game , Schmitz felt the testers rushed their job . The game seemed " unfinished and underdeveloped " for the Video Game Bible , as well as by Milligan , who called the packaging " nice " and the manual readable , wondering why " thinking human beings " would ever agree to make a game " this unambitious and dull " .