

= Wizards & Warriors =

Wizards & Warriors is a platforming video game developed by Rare Ltd. for the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) . It was published by Acclaim and released in North America in December 1987 and in Europe on January 7 , 1990 . It was also released in Japan by Jaleco on July 15 , 1988 , under the title Densetsu no Kishi Elrond (?????????) . In the game , players control Kuros , the " Knight Warrior of the Books of Excalibur " , as he sets out in the Kingdom of Elrond to defeat the evil wizard Malkil , who holds the princess captive in Castle IronSpire , located deep within Elrond 's forests . During the game , players make their way through forests , tunnels , and caves , battling hordes of enemies and collecting treasure , magical items , and additional weaponry to get past the obstacles and hazards that lie in their path . It was Rare 's second game released for the NES , after Slalom .

Wizards & Warriors was featured in early video gaming magazines such as Nintendo Fun Club News , Nintendo Power , and VideoGames & Computer Entertainment in 1988 and 1989 . The main characters Kuros and Malkil would make appearances in the animated series The Power Team (part of the TV video game reviewing show Video Power) and Captain N : The Game Master . The game would also be novelized for the Worlds of Power series of NES game adaptations , created by Seth Godin . It received general praise for its graphics , sound , difficulty , and arcade @-@ style gameplay . Criticisms include the presence of unlimited continues , which allow players to restart the game right where they previously left off while retaining all items that were collected before . Retro Gamer called Wizards & Warriors " a unique experience for NES gamers in 1987 , and technically well ahead of other games for the console at the time " . The game also spawned three sequels : Ironsword : Wizards & Warriors II , Wizards & Warriors III : Kuros : Visions of Power and Wizards & Warriors X : The Fortress of Fear .

= = Plot = =

Wizards & Warriors pits the story 's hero Kuros , the " Knight Warrior of the Books of Excalibur " , against the main antagonist , the evil wizard Malkil . He was considered one of the greatest wizards in the land , such that Merlin was one of his students . However , the aging Malkil has gone mad and has started using his magic for evil . As a result , Malkil has captured the princess and holds her prisoner in Castle IronSpire , deep within the forests of Elrond . The game 's protagonist , the brave knight Kuros , is summoned to venture through the forests of Elrond . He is armed with the legendary Brightsword , a sword that is powerful enough to beat demons , insects , undead , and the other creatures which have fallen under Malkil 's spell . With the sword , he ventures out through the forests of Elrond and the various caves and underground tunnels and to Castle IronSpire , where he must defeat Malkil and rescue the princess .

= = Gameplay = =

Wizards & Warriors is a platformer in which players control Kuros as he makes his way through the forests of Elrond to Castle IronSpire , where he must defeat Malkil and rescue the princess . After starting the game , the map is briefly shown for players to look at ; afterwards , gameplay starts . Starting in the Elrond forest , players must explore the trees ? both on top and inside ? to find items and to make it into the caves and tunnels . There , players start collecting the various magical items and treasure ; they must make their way through caves filled with ice as well as lava . Afterwards , players fight through a second set of forests before arriving at Castle IronSpire , in which the player must go over the castle in order to enter it . The castle consists of a series of mazes in which players must use keys to open doors and possibly find other damsels which can be rescued . At the end lies the final confrontation with the wizard Malkil .

Players use the control pad to move horizontally and to crouch . Kuros can attack enemies by using his Brightsword or with other weapons and magic . He can also attack enemies while in the air or while standing by simply holding the sword in position . The objective of the game is to collect the

various weapons and magic as well as the gems and treasure along the way ; players use these items to make it past the enemies and other obstacles and hazards . Players collect gems in order to " bribe " the creature who guards the entrance to the next level ; if players do not have enough gems , they cannot progress to the next level . At the end of each level is a boss creature which has been empowered by Malkil 's black magic . Bosses have an " Enemy 's Black Magic Power " meter which shows how difficult the boss is , how many hits are required to defeat it , and what type of weaponry needs to be used . Kuros has a life meter which decreases as time passes and when he sustains damage from enemies . Players loses a life when Kuros ' life meter runs out , but upon restarting they keep all the items they have obtained up to that point . The game ends when all three lives have been lost , but players have the choice to continue and restart at the level in which they lost their last life ; upon continuing , players keep all their items obtained up to that point , but their score goes back to zero . Along the way , players can replenish Kuros ' life meter by collecting pieces of meat scattered throughout the levels .

Along the way , players pick up many items which will help Kuros along his way . Acorns , torches , and treasure chests contain objects for players to collect . Chests are color @-@ coded and require a key of that matching color to open the chest ; the same color @-@ coded keys are used to open doors of matching colors . Some weapons and magic items are replaced once the player collects a new item , but others remain throughout the course of the game . Items include the following : " Boots of Force " which can kick open chests and doors ; magical potions which temporarily grant Kuros invulnerability , extra speed , or extra jumping ability ; gems to help bribe the end @-@ of @-@ level guardian ; a shield to protect from enemy attacks ; the " Potion of Levitation " which allows Kuros to float upwards ; the " Dagger of Throwing " and the " Battle Axe of Agor " which are thrown at enemies and return like a boomerang ; the " Feather of Feather Fall " which slows Kuros ' falling speed ; the " Wand of Wonder " and " Staff of Power " which shoot out balls of ice and fire , respectively ; the " Cloak of Darkness " which makes Kuros invisible to enemies ; the " Boots of Lava Walk " which allows Kuros to walk on the lava ; " Exploding Eggs " which destroys all on @-@ screen enemies ; " Alarm Clocks " which stops all enemies for a brief period ; knife and axe upgrades and an item simply called a " horn " (trumpet) which had many players confused as it appeared to be useless , its purpose was to reveal hidden doors to gem caves in some places . Other valuable treasures increase the player 's score and include coins , orbs , chalices , and entire hoards of treasure . Rescuing the damsels in the levels also increase the player 's score .

= = Development and reception = =

Wizards & Warriors was developed by UK @-@ based video game company Rare for the Nintendo Entertainment System . It was released by Acclaim in North American in December 1987 ; it would later be released by the same company in Europe on January 7 , 1990 . It was released in Japan by Jaleco under the title Densetsu no Kishi Elrond on July 15 , 1988 . The game would be Rare 's second NES release , after Slalom . The game 's soundtrack was composed by video game composer David Wise .

Wizards & Warriors was reviewed in Nintendo Fun Club News ? the precursor to Nintendo Power ? in which a brief overview of the gameplay was given . The game would be featured again in Nintendo Power 's November ? December 1989 issue , where it was chosen as the best game to use with the NES Advantage controller , saying that the joystick would allow players to concentrate on other strategic gameplay elements . In 1989 , Wizards & Warriors was nominated by the magazine for " Best Graphics & Sound " and " Best Character " (Kuros) for its " Nintendo Power Awards ' 88 " , but it did not win in either category . It also received coverage in a 1989 issue of VideoGames & Computer Entertainment . The reviewer lauded the game 's challenge and need for problem solving ? more particular the need to use different items aside from the Brightsword in order to defeat some enemies and progress in the game , and the need to find hidden rooms where required items are located . However , he noted that the high level of difficulty is offset by the ability to continue at exactly the same spot in which the player left off . Overall , the reviewer praised Wizards & Warriors for its " excellent graphics and sound " , arcade @-@ style gameplay , and

overall challenge . German magazine Power Play praised the game 's good graphics , sound and extras , but criticized its " stale gameplay " .

In a retrospective of the entire Wizards & Warriors series , UK @-@ based magazine Retro Gamer gave a positive review of the first title , saying that " Kuros 's first adventure was a unique experience for NES gamers in 1987 , and technically well ahead of other games for the console at the time . " The review said that the game , while a platformer , placed much emphasis on finding treasure and items . The review said that most gamers found fault in relatively easy difficulty level , most symbolized by its unlimited continues in which players can continue at the point right where they left off . According to the retrospective , in 1988 , Rare showed Wizards & Warriors to Zippo Games , who was touring Rare and their NES library . Rare asked them to develop a sequel to the game , which would become Ironsword : Wizards & Warriors II . In another retrospective of Rare as part of the company 's 25th anniversary , GamePro looked back on the game , calling it " unique at the time " due to the unlimited amount of continues players received .

Wizards & Warriors has received scant coverage from modern video gaming websites . Video gaming website GamesRadar named the opening theme for the game as " Game music of the day " , noting that the theme " suggests , from the moment you turn on the game , that knights , wizards , goblins and who knows what else are about to collide in a battle so epic it 's destined for a Frazetta painting . " JC Fletcher from Joystiq called the game " a simple action @-@ platformer about a guy in thick armor who kicks open treasure chests in order to bribe knights " . He also notes the variety of good and bad items such as the " Staff of Power " which inflicts much damage to enemies and conversely the " Cloak of Darkness " , which he says " makes Kuros invisible to you but not to enemies " . He said that the game has an arcade feel , with unlimited continues , a high @-@ score list , name entry for high scores , and good music . Houston Press ' Jef Rouner lauded the game 's music and animation , and noted its high difficulty level , especially during boss battles . IGN listed Wizards & Warriors at # 56 on its " Top 100 NES Games " list , reviewer Sam Claiborn said that the game was inspired by Dungeons & Dragons @-@ type RPGs , but it went further in incorporating action platforming elements along with more traditional RPG elements . Columnist and comedy writer Seanbaby humorously criticized the game for items that did not work as intended , including the " Cloak of Darkness " and the " Boots of Lava Walk " .

= = Other media = =

Wizards & Warriors was ported as a standalone handheld game by Acclaim in September 1989 , as part of a series of handheld ports by the company which also included WWF WrestleMania Challenge , Knight Rider , 1943 : The Battle of Midway , and Rocky . Kuros and his nemesis Malkil were featured ? along with the title characters from Kwirk and BigFoot , Tyrone from Arch Rivals , and characters from NARC ? in the 1990 animated series The Power Team , part of the video game reviewing show Video Power . Malkil appeared in an episode of Captain N : The Game Master called " Nightmare on Mother Brain 's Street " where the world of the game was referred to as " Excalibur " and not Elrond .

Wizards & Warriors was one of the eight games that were novelized for the Worlds of Power series of NES game adaptations , published by Scholastic Corporation ; the novelization was written by the series ' creator Seth Godin , under the pseudonym " F. X. Nine " . The book was the only one in the series in which no effort was made to edit out the protagonist 's weapons on the cover . However , on the cover , Kuros ' loincloth was airbrushed on both sides in order to more completely conceal his underside ? which is more visible on the cover of the game itself . The novelization is about a boy named Matthew who is having trouble using his imagination for a creative writing class , when he accidentally brings his father 's knight figurine to life . He is then spirited away to the land of Elrond to help Kuros defeat Malkil . As with the other books in the series in which nobody actually " died " , all of the creatures that they killed were made from the lives of the people of Elrond , and whenever a creature was slain , a person was returned to their normal state . Further in the novel , the two save Kuros sister in the pink caves . While Matthew was invulnerable at the start of the mission , as the two drew closer to the evil wizard , he becomes more vulnerable to the attacks of Malkil 's

villains .