

= The Last Remnant =

The Last Remnant (???????? , Rasuto Remunanto) is a role @-@ playing video game developed and published by Square Enix for the Xbox 360 . The game had a worldwide release on November 20 , 2008 , and was also released for Microsoft Windows in March 2009 , and received an international release through digital retailer Steam in April 2009 . A PlayStation 3 version was originally announced , but was never released . The game is set in a fictional world divided into multiple city @-@ states inhabited by four different species and whose past includes conflicts over " Remnants , " magical artifacts of varying forms . The player takes the role of Rush Sykes , a young man searching for his sister that becomes entangled in a secret war . It features a unique battle system in which the player command multiple groups , or " unions " , of characters rather than individual units .

The game was directed by Hiroshi Takai and was the first game developed by Square Enix to use the Unreal Engine 3 . It was intended by Square Enix president Yoichi Wada to " become a cornerstone for [their] worldwide strategy " . Art direction was overseen by chief artist Kimihiko Miyamae and art producer Yusuke Naora . The game 's soundtrack was composed by Tsuyoshi Sekito with assistance by Yasuhiro Yamanaka . It was later released as a three @-@ disc album . The design and dialogue of the game were created to appeal to international players as well as Japanese players , and the motion capture for the main characters , including the lip @-@ syncing , was done with Western , English @-@ speaking actors .

The game received a weak reception by reviewers , though it was better received by Japanese reviewers than by Western ones . A common complaint , especially in the original Xbox 360 release , was of graphical problems including low framerates and " texture pop @-@ in " where higher resolution textures would suddenly replace lower ones several seconds after a scene had started . Other issues included complaints about the game 's storyline and battle system , though these were not as universal . The Last Remnant received praise for its art direction and music .

= = Gameplay = =

The game is split between a world area , a battle area , and a world map . The player controls Rush Sykes , the protagonist , and moves him around the world screen within an area , with the camera floating behind and slightly above him . Within the world screen , the player may talk to NPCs , enter buildings and other areas , or exit to the map screen . The map screen allows instant travel between different cities and areas , or between different areas within a city . The battle screen is shown only during combat , and is a three @-@ dimensional area like the world screen with a setting reminiscent of the location the player is at in the world . There are no random encounters ; instead , the player enters a battle and separate battle screen when they touch an enemy on the main world screen . The player may choose to enter a battle with multiple enemies at once by activating a " time @-@ shift " system in which time slows down and they may run up to multiple enemies before commencing the battle .

The game features a battle system labeled by director Hiroshi Takai as a " turn @-@ based , command @-@ based system using symbol encounters . " During a battle , each enemy from the world screen is represented by a group , or " union " , of enemies ranging from one to five individual units ; similarly the player 's forces are composed of multiple unions of three to five units each . The skills of the units in the player 's unions , which include both story characters and hireable units that do not appear outside of battle , vary according to different parameters . One parameter is the " morale " bar , which is affected by the events in battle and can have positive or negative effects on the battle forces . Each unit can also learn different attacks , which are divided into categories such as blade attacks and healing magic . At the beginning of each turn the player selects from a group of choices what attack types each union will perform ; the player is unable to select the individual attack of each unit . Special attacks require " action points " , which continually accrue during each battle . The player selects at the beginning of each turn which enemy union each of their unions will attack . As the enemy makes their selections at the same time , it is possible for a union to be "

deadlocked " , or forced to fight a different union than the player or enemy had selected . When multiple unions are deadlocked onto the same enemy , some of the unions can flank the enemy or attack from the rear for extra damage .

In addition to battles , there are numerous quests which the player may undertake . Many of these quests take the player to an area immediately upon acceptance and return them once completed , while " guild quests " do not require acceptance and may be turned in by the player whenever the accomplishments listed in the quest are completed . Rush and the other units may equip many different weapons and items . Rush 's equipment can be upgraded to many different options , while other units request materials to upgrade their own equipment , which can be purchased at stores , acquired in battles , or found in the world area using a creature called Mr. Diggs . Mr. Diggs can be upgraded as well to find more or higher quality materials .

= = Plot = =

= = = Setting = = =

The game is set in a fictional world featuring a number of distinct humanoid races : the Mitras , human in appearance , the Yamas , strong fish @-@ like people , the Qsitis , small reptilians , and the Sovanis , feline people with four arms . The world itself is broken up into multiple city @-@ states , each with their own unique culture . The story of the game revolves around " Remnants " , mysterious and coveted ancient artifacts of varying shapes and sizes which possess magic powers and have been the cause of several wars throughout the game 's history . Each Remnant is " bound " to a specific person , who is the only one who can then use their power ; powerful Remnants that remain unbound for too long have the potential to cause a " collapse " and spawn monsters . As Remnants come in varying forms , all cities throughout the world have at least one that their ruler is bound to that assist to govern and bring peace to their assigned realm .

= = = Characters = = =

The protagonist is Rush Sykes , an 18 @-@ year @-@ old Mitra boy from a peaceful island . His 14 @-@ year @-@ old sister , Irina , is kidnapped at the start of the game , and finding her is Rush 's impetus for leaving the island . He meets and joins David Nassau , the 19 @-@ year @-@ old Mitra ruler of the city @-@ state of Athlum , and his four generals : the 41 @-@ year @-@ old Mitra Emma Honeywell , the 24 @-@ year @-@ old Yama Blocter , the 55 @-@ year @-@ old Qsiti Pagus and the 200 @-@ year @-@ old Sovani Torgal . These characters can be joined by more than a hundred of other characters , many of whom are found through quests , while others can be hired at guilds . Every character has their own name and skillset , though the main characters have special additional skills . The main villain is the Conqueror , a Mitra who during the course of the game attacks many city @-@ states of the world with his army . He is assisted in regard , first in secret and then openly , by Wilfred Hermeien , an adult Mitra who is both the leader of the city @-@ state of Nagapur with the ruling council of all of the city @-@ states and Wagram , a powerful Mitra sorcerer .

= = = Story = = =

The game opens with Rush running through a forest , trying to find his sister Irina , who the player later learns has been kidnapped . He comes across an army led by David opposing an army of monsters and at the battle 's conclusion rushes forward as he sees Emma in the crowd . After he generates a powerful shield with his Remnant pendant , he is interrogated by David and his generals , who decide to help him find Irina . When investigating a Remnant that is about to collapse , Rush and company come across Wagram and Irina , who escape . After chasing Wagram and Irina for several missions , the group attends the Congress meeting of the leaders of the city @-@ states

in Elysion , home to the Ark Remnant , which can transport users to the Sacred Lands . The city is also home to the Academy , a research institution devoted to studying Remnants and the place where Rush 's parents work . The Conqueror arrives at the Congress , binds the Ark and demands to be given a massive Remnant of the type that each city @-@ state has . After finding only Rush 's mother , the group learns that the Conqueror , with his demands rejected , has started a war and is marching his army with the support of the " God @-@ Emperor " , a 1000 @-@ year @-@ old legendary figure .

David decides to take the lead in opposing the Conqueror in hopes of earning independence for Athlum , which is currently a vassal state to the city of Celapaleis . The party succeeds in stopping the Conqueror 's army from attacking Celapaleis , but the Conqueror himself attacks Athlum in their absence . He kills Emma , who had remained behind to defend the city and takes the massive Remnant of Athlum , shrinking it to a normal @-@ sized sword . The party then returns to Elysion to rescue Irina from Wagram . Irina is revealed to have a special power , that of unbinding bound Remnants , and it was for this reason that she was kidnapped . They discover that Hermeien is trying to use the Conqueror and Wagram to spark distrust in the people for Remnants and the city @-@ states ' ability to control them , so that he can then use Irina and her power to prop himself up as supreme ruler . While the party are successful in retaking Irina and killing Hermeien , Wagram escapes while revealing that he and the Conqueror never planned to support Hermeien . Confronted by the Conqueror , Irina uses Nagapur 's Remnant to protect her brother , destroying half of the city in the process .

Four months later , the player learns that the council city @-@ states are now trying to find Remnants all around the world to use to fight the Conqueror , who is in turn binding and transforming the Remnants of the city @-@ states , even those that are already bound . Rush and Irina 's parents , once found , reveal that their research at the academy had been to create tablets that can transform Remnants and it is through one of these that Wagram stole that the Conqueror is able to do so . When the party travels to the God @-@ Emperor 's city , Undelwalt , to try to determine why he is supporting the Conqueror , they find Wagram , who tells them that the Conqueror is a Remnant himself . Wagram and the God @-@ Emperor are supporting him in his quest to destroy the people of the world , who are misusing Remnants and destroying the balance of the world .

The group heads to Elysion , which is under attack by the Conqueror 's forces . The Conqueror ascends the Ark and binds it so that no one can follow him ; after defeating his army , the protagonists find a second Ark , even though no duplicate Remnants have ever been found . After defeating Wagram , the party chases the Conqueror through the Sacred Lands , which are revealed to be the birthplace of Remnants and confronts him . He informs them that he is trying to release Remnants from the control of man and that the task was originally supposed to be Rush 's , as he is also a Remnant . He believes that their purpose is to take back the Remnants from the world that in his opinion is misusing them for warfare and destruction and allow them in turn to destroy the people of the world . Rush disagrees and instead destroys the source of the Remnants , sacrificing himself . The game ends with all of the Remnants disappearing around the world , but after the credits , Rush is heard talking with the Conqueror , saying : " I 'm going back . They 're waiting for me . "

= = Development = =

The Last Remnant was created by developers who had previously worked on games in the SaGa and Final Fantasy series . It was directed by Hiroshi Takai and produced by Nobuyuki Ueda . The game was written by Masato Yagi and Miwa Shoda whose work was based on a scenario concept by executive producer Akitoshi Kawazu . Kimihiko Miyamae was the chief artist , while Yusuke Naora served as both art producer and character designer . The game was the first game by Square Enix to use the Unreal Engine 3 . Because they used a licensed engine rather than making their own , the production time it took to see graphical resources onscreen was cut significantly , allowing the team to begin illustrating and experimenting at an early stage . The decision to use a licensed engine , rather than develop their own as was traditional at Square Enix , was made due to

concerns in the company of the rising production costs of making a game , and the direct development time savings possible from using an existing engine . Over a year after the game was released , on February 17 , 2010 , Square @-@ Enix 's chief technology officer Julien Merceron claimed in an interview that most of the game 's perceived technical shortcomings were caused by a decision to use the Unreal Engine to try to replace having as many skilled programmers as would be used otherwise .

The development team planned to distinguish The Last Remnant from the Final Fantasy series and other role @-@ playing games through its focus on the battle system . The art direction of the game was focused on making all of the characters stand out on the battlefield , and in making the Remnants stand out in the world screens . The cities were designed to not look very fantastical , so as to make the Remnants more prominent , and were designed early on in the development process to give the impression that the people of the city were living both literally and figuratively under the power of the gigantic Remnants . The game marked several firsts for Square Enix , as it was their first game to be released on the same day in both Japan and internationally , as well as the first to use motion captures of Western actors . This resulted in the characters ' lips speaking English synced to the spoken dialogue , rather than Japanese . The game had always been intended to be released simultaneously worldwide and was to be targeted to players worldwide , which impacted the character design and art direction . The design and dialogue were created to appeal to international players as well as Japanese players , rather than being focused on the norms of the Japanese video game market alone .

The Last Remnant was announced at a press conference at Shinjuku , Tokyo on May 10 , 2007 . It was shown as a playable demo at the Tokyo Game Show in September 2008 . It was then released on the Xbox 360 on November 20 , 2008 , and released in late March 2009 for PC . The PC version of the game featured numerous improvements and changes from the original , including the integration of the downloadable content from the 360 version into the main game , enhanced graphical settings , a " Turbo Mode " that increases battle speed , and a New Game Plus option that allows the player to start a new game with the gold and unique items from their first play @-@ through . Though originally announced to be released on the PlayStation 3 at the same time as the Xbox 360 , no PlayStation version of the game has been released . Square Enix has not commented on why , though director Hiroshi Takai has said that he found developing for the 360 " a lot easier " than for the PlayStation 3 . The PlayStation 3 version has remained with a " to be determined " release date on Square Enix 's official Japanese website .

== Music ==

The music for the game was composed by Tsuyoshi Sekito , with assistance from Yasuhiro Yamanaka , who composed 10 of the 97 total tracks and co @-@ composed 2 . Prior to The Last Remnant , Sekito had spent the previous decade primarily arranging the work of other composers for remakes and re @-@ releases of various Square Enix games such as the Final Fantasy series and the Mana series . The soundtrack features the heavy use of orchestral elements , arranged for orchestration by Natsumi Kameoka , and guitar playing by Sekito . The orchestrated pieces were played by musicians from several different orchestras , rather than by a single group . Unlike most role @-@ playing games , the battle music was designed by Sekito to switch between three songs depending on how well the player was doing in the battle . A soundtrack album was released on December 10 , 2008 , through Sony Music Distribution . It contains 97 tracks across three discs , and has a total length of 3 : 10 : 21 .

== Reception ==

Square Enix reported that the game had sold 580 @,@ 000 copies , including both PC and Xbox 360 versions , by March 31 , 2009 , which was less than two weeks after the game was first released on PC . By January 2016 , the PC version of the game had sold over 800 @,@ 000 copies , according to Steam Spy . The Last Remnant received a largely mixed reception . It received a

more positive reception in Japan than elsewhere , something which the developers credit to different styles of reviewing between cultures . They also felt that the Japanese reviewers scored the game too high . It received a 38 / 40 from Famitsu magazine ; the review praises the battle system for its unique , massive @-@ scale battles reminiscent of Romancing SaGa but refined to a wholly new class ; however , they criticized the learning curve as well , the length of battles , and the inability to choose specific skills for individual units . Famitsu later gave the game their 2008 " Rookie Title Grand @-@ Prize " award .

A common complaint from reviewers was graphical issues . IGN stated in its review of the Xbox 360 version that the game suffered from extreme technical problems , while GameTrailers named the " persistent graphical issues " as one of the Xbox 360 version 's weakest points . GameSpot , IGN , and 1UP.com cited in their Xbox 360 version reviews abysmal frame @-@ rate problems and awful " texture pop @-@ in " , where the textures were displayed as low resolution for several seconds before being replaced with higher @-@ resolution ones , as some of its main failings . However , all three review sites gave a higher score for the PC version , citing drastically improved graphical performance , but still with texture pop @-@ in and slow loading times when moving between areas and when entering or exiting a battle as well as unskippable cut scenes . Other issues raised by reviewers included " cluttered screens and annoying ' quests ' " noted by GamePro , " over the top " and stereotypical characters opined by Game Informer , a poor and generic story according to IGN and 1UP , and long loading screens and cutscenes which were criticisms brought by G4 , 1UP , and the Australian Official Xbox Magazine .

Another common complaint among reviewers was the battle system , which were described as " repetitive " by GamePro , frustrating by IGN in their Xbox review , and " boring " and the worst part of the game by 1UP . G4 also criticized the battle system , saying that the game played itself . This criticism was not universal , as GameTrailers cited its " unique battle system " as providing " a lot to enjoy " , IGN called it " the most interesting part of The Last Remnant " in their PC review , and GameSpot called it " intriguing " and especially fun in the larger @-@ scale battles . The game 's visual style was praised across many reviews , such as those by GameTrailers , 1UP , and GamePro , who described the style as " an innovative ' East @-@ meets @-@ West ' " , while GameSpot called it a " distinctive fantasy world " that is " beautifully constructed " . The music was also a source of praise , and was noted as such in the IGN reviews and the GameSpot reviews , which called it an " excellent symphonic soundtrack " with terrific melodies . GameSpot , in their review , also praised the game 's story as " epic " , in contrast to many of the other reviews , though they noted that Rush wasn 't " the most interesting leading man " and preferred when the story focused on the Conqueror .