

= The Legend of Zelda : Link 's Awakening =

The Legend of Zelda : Link 's Awakening , known as *Zelda no Densetsu : Yume o Miru Shima* (Japanese : ?????? ????? , lit . The Legend of Zelda : Dream Island) in Japan , is a 1993 action @-@ adventure video game developed by Nintendo Entertainment Analysis & Development and published by Nintendo for the Game Boy . It is the fourth installment in the The Legend of Zelda series , and the first for a handheld game console .

Link 's Awakening began as a port of the Super NES title *The Legend of Zelda : A Link to the Past* , developed after @-@ hours by Nintendo staff . It grew into an original project under the direction of Takashi Tezuka , with a story and script created by Yoshiaki Koizumi and Kensuke Tanabe . It is one of the few Zelda games not to take place in the land of Hyrule , and does not feature Princess Zelda or the Triforce relic . Instead , protagonist Link begins the game stranded on Koholint Island , a place guarded by a creature called the Wind Fish . Assuming the role of Link , the player fights monsters and solves puzzles while searching for eight musical instruments that will awaken the sleeping Wind Fish and allow him to escape from the island .

Link 's Awakening was critically and commercially successful . Critics praised the game 's depth and number of features ; complaints focused on its control scheme and monochrome graphics . An updated re @-@ release titled *The Legend of Zelda : Link 's Awakening DX* was released for the Game Boy Color in 1998 featuring color graphics , compatibility with the Game Boy Printer , and an exclusive color @-@ based dungeon . Together , the two versions of the game have sold more than six million units worldwide , and have appeared on multiple game publications ' lists of the best games of all time .

= = Plot = =

= = = Setting and characters = = =

Unlike most The Legend of Zelda titles , Link 's Awakening is set outside the kingdom of Hyrule . It omits locations and characters from previous games , aside from protagonist Link and a passing mention of Princess Zelda . Instead , the game takes place entirely on Koholint Island , an isolated landmass cut off from the rest of the world . The island , though small , contains a large number of secrets and interconnected pathways .

In Link 's Awakening , the player is given advice and directions by non @-@ player characters such as Ulrira , a shy old man who communicates with Link exclusively by telephone . The game contains cameo appearances by characters from other Nintendo titles , such as Wart , Yoshi , Kirby , Dr. Wright (renamed Mr. Write) from the Super NES version of *SimCity* , and the exiled prince Richard from *Kaeru no Tame ni Kane wa Naru* . Chomp , an enemy from the Mario series , was included after a programmer gave Link the ability to grab the creature and take it for a walk . Enemies from Super Mario Bros. such as Goombas also appear in underground side @-@ scrolling sections ; Link may land on top of them much as with Super Mario Bros. , or he can attack them in the usual way : both methods yield different bonuses . Director Takashi Tezuka said that the game 's " freewheeling " development made Link 's Awakening seem like a parody of The Legend of Zelda series . Certain characters in the game break the fourth wall ; for example , little children inform the player of game mechanics such as saving , but admit that they do not understand the advice they are giving .

= = = Plot = = =

After the events of *Oracle of Ages* and *Oracle of Seasons* , the hero Link travels abroad to train for further threats . A storm destroys his boat at sea , and he washes ashore on Koholint Island , where he is taken to the house of Tarin and his daughter Marin . She is fascinated by Link and the outside world , and tells Link wistfully that , if she were a seagull , she would leave and travel across the sea . After Link recovers his sword , a mysterious owl tells him that he must wake the Wind Fish ,

Koholint 's guardian , in order to return home . The Wind Fish lies dreaming in a giant egg on top of Mt . Tamaranch , and can only be awakened by the eight Instruments of the Sirens .

Link proceeds to explore a series of dungeons in order to recover the eight instruments . During his search for the sixth instrument , Link goes to the Ancient Ruins . There he finds a mural that details the reality of island : that it is merely a dream world created by the Wind Fish . After this revelation , the owl tells Link that this is only a rumor , and only the Wind Fish knows for certain whether it is true . Throughout Koholint Island , nightmare creatures attempt to obstruct Link 's quest for the instruments , as they wish to rule the Wind Fish 's dreamworld .

After collecting all eight instruments from the eight dungeons across Koholint , Link climbs to the top of Mt . Tamaranch and plays the Ballad of the Wind Fish . This breaks open the egg in which the Wind Fish sleeps ; Link enters and confronts the last evil being , a Nightmare that takes the form of Ganon and other enemies from Link 's past . Its final transformation is " Dethl " , a cyclopean , dual @-@ tentacled Shadow . After Link defeats Dethl , the owl reveals itself to be the Wind Fish 's guardian , and the Wind Fish explains that Koholint is all Link 's dream . When Link plays the Ballad of the Wind Fish again , he and the Wind Fish awaken ; Koholint Island and all its inhabitants slowly disappear . Link finds himself lying on driftwood in the middle of the ocean , with the Wind Fish flying overhead . If the player did not lose any lives during the game , Marin is shown flying after the ending credits finish - she is shown in the form of a winged woman when played in the original black and white format , while she takes the form of a seagull if played with color in the DX version .

= = Gameplay = =

Like most games in The Legend of Zelda series , Link 's Awakening is an action @-@ adventure game focused on exploration and combat . The majority of the game takes place from an overhead perspective . The player traverses the overworld of Koholint Island while fighting monsters and exploring underground dungeons . Dungeons steadily become larger and more difficult , and feature " Nightmare " boss characters that the player must defeat , taking different forms in each dungeon , and getting harder to defeat each time . Success earns the player heart containers , which increase the amount of damage the player character can survive ; when all of the player 's heart containers have been emptied , the game restarts at the last doorway entered by the character . Defeating a Nightmare also earns the player one of the eight instruments necessary to complete the game .

Link 's Awakening was the first overhead @-@ perspective Zelda game to allow Link to jump ; this enables sidescrolling sequences similar to those in the earlier Zelda II : The Adventure of Link . Players can expand their abilities with items , which are discovered in dungeons and through character interactions . Certain items grant access to previously inaccessible areas , and are needed to enter and complete dungeons . The player may steal items from the game 's shop , but doing so changes the player character 's name to " THIEF " for the rest of the game and causes the shopkeeper to knock out the character upon re @-@ entry of the shop .

In addition to the main quest , Link 's Awakening contains side @-@ missions and diversions . Collectible " secret seashells " are hidden throughout the game ; when twenty of these are found , the player can receive a powerful sword that fires energy beams when the player character is at full health , similarly to the sword in the original The Legend of Zelda . Link 's Awakening is the first Zelda game to include a trading sequence minigame : the player may give a certain item to a character , who in turn gives the player another item to trade with someone else . It is also the first game in the Zelda series in which the A and B buttons may be assigned to different items , which enables more varied puzzles and item combinations . Other series elements originating in Link 's Awakening include fishing , and learning special songs on an ocarina ; the latter mechanic is central to the next Zelda game released , Ocarina of Time .

= = Development = =

Link 's Awakening began as an unsanctioned side project ; programmer Kazuaki Morita created a Zelda @-@ like game with one of the first Game Boy development kits , and used it to experiment

with the platform 's capabilities . Other staff members of the Nintendo Entertainment Analysis and Development division joined him after @-@ hours , and worked on the game in what seemed to them like an " afterschool club " . The results of these experiments with the Game Boy started to look promising , and following the 1991 release of the Super NES video game The Legend of Zelda : A Link to the Past , director Takashi Tezuka asked permission to develop a handheld Zelda title ; he intended it to be a port of A Link to the Past , but it evolved into an original game . The majority of the team that had created A Link to the Past was reassembled to advance this new project . Altogether , it took them one and a half years to develop Link 's Awakening .

Tezuka recalled that the early free @-@ form development of Link 's Awakening resulted in the game 's " unrestrained " contents , such as the unauthorized cameo appearances of characters from the Mario and Kirby series . A Link to the Past script writer Kensuke Tanabe joined the team early on , and came up with the basis of the story . Tezuka sought to make Link 's Awakening a spin @-@ off , and gave Tanabe instructions to omit common series elements such as Princess Zelda , the Triforce relic , and the setting Hyrule . As a consequence , Tanabe proposed his game world idea of an island with an egg on top of a mountain .

Later on , Yoshiaki Koizumi , who had previously helped with the plot of A Link to the Past , was brought into the team . Koizumi was responsible for the main story of Link 's Awakening , provided the idea of the island in a dream , and conceived the interactions with the villagers . Link 's Awakening was described by series producer Eiji Aonuma as the first Zelda game with a proper plot , which he attributed to Koizumi 's romanticism . Tezuka intended the game 's world to have a similar feeling to the American television series Twin Peaks , which , like Link 's Awakening , features characters in a small town . He suggested that the characters of Link 's Awakening be written as " suspicious types " , akin to those in Twin Peaks ? a theme which carried over into later Zelda titles . Tanabe created these " odd " characters ; he was placed in charge of the subevents of the story , and wrote almost all of the character dialog , with the exception of the owl 's and the Wind Fish 's lines . Tanabe implemented a previous idea of the world ending when a massive egg breaks on top of a mountain ; this idea was originally meant for A Link to the Past . Tanabe really wanted to see this idea in a game and was able to implement it in Link 's Awakening as the basic concept .

Masanao Arimoto and Shigefumi Hino designed the game 's characters , while Yoichi Kotabe served as illustrator . Save for the opening and the ending , all pictures in the game were drawn by Arimoto . Yasahisa Yamamura designed the dungeons , which included the conception of rooms and routes , as well as the placement of enemies . Shigeru Miyamoto , who served as the producer of Link 's Awakening , did not provide creative input to the staff members . However , he participated as game tester , and his opinions greatly influenced the latter half of the development .

The music for Link 's Awakening was composed by Minako Hamano and Kozue Ishikawa , for whom it was their first game project . Kazumi Totaka was responsible for the sound programming and all sound effects . As with most Zelda games , Link 's Awakening includes the recurring overworld music ; the Game Boy arrangement of this theme , titled " Field " , was created by Ishikawa . The staff credits theme , " Yume o Miru Shima e " was later arranged for orchestra by Yuka Tsujiyoko , and performed at the Orchestral Game Music Concert 3 in 1993 . Super Smash Bros. Brawl includes a remix of the game 's " Tal Tal Heights " theme .

In an interview about the evolution of the Zelda series , Aonuma called Link 's Awakening the " quintessential isometric Zelda game " . At another time , he stated that , had the game not come after A Link to the Past , Ocarina of Time would have been very different . Several elements from Link 's Awakening were re @-@ used in later Zelda titles ; for example , programmer Morita created a fishing minigame that reappeared in Ocarina of Time , among others . Tanabe implemented a trading sequence ; Tezuka compared it to the Japanese Straw Millionaire folktale , in which someone trades up from a piece of straw to something of greater value . This concept also appeared in most sequels .

== Releases ==

To support the North American release of Link 's Awakening , Nintendo sponsored a crosscountry

train competition called the Zelda Whistle Stop Tour . The event , which lasted three days , allowed select players to test Link 's Awakening in a timed race to complete the game . The event was meant not only to showcase the game , but also the Game Boy 's superior battery life and portability , the latter of which was critical to the accessibility of a portable Zelda title . The company @-@ owned magazine Nintendo Power published a guide to the game 's first three areas in its July 1993 issue .

In 1998 , to promote the launch of the Game Boy Color , Nintendo re @-@ released Link 's Awakening as The Legend of Zelda : Link 's Awakening DX . It features fully colorized graphics and is backward compatible with the original Game Boy . Link 's Awakening DX contains a new optional dungeon , with unique enemies and puzzles based on color (due to this the dungeon cannot be accessed on the earlier non @-@ color Game Boy models) . After completing the dungeon , the player may choose to receive either a red or blue tunic , which increase attack and defense , respectively . The DX version also allows players to take screenshots ; after the player visits a camera shop , its owner will appear in certain locations throughout the game . A total of twelve screenshots can be taken , which may be viewed at the shop , or printed with the Game Boy Printer accessory . For Link 's Awakening DX , Tezuka returned as project supervisor , with Yoshinori Tsuchiyama as the new director . Nobuo Matsumiya collaborated with Tsuchiyama on applying changes to the original script ; for example , hint messages were added to the boss battles . For the new dungeon , Yuichi Ozaki created a musical piece based on Kondo 's dungeon theme from the original The Legend of Zelda .

In 2010 , Nintendo announced that the DX version would be re @-@ released on the Virtual Console of the Nintendo 3DS , and became available June 2011 . In July 2013 , Link 's Awakening DX was offered as one of several Virtual Console games which " elite status " members of the North America Club Nintendo could redeem as a free gift .

= = Reception = =

Link 's Awakening was critically acclaimed by critics , and holds an average score of 90 % on aggregate site Game Rankings . In a retrospective article , Electronic Gaming Monthly writer Jeremy Parish called Link 's Awakening the " best Game Boy game ever , an adventure so engrossing and epic that we can even forgive the whole thing for being one of those ' It 's all a dream ! ' fakeouts " . Game Informer 's Ben Reeves called it the third best Game Boy game and called it influential . The Washington Post 's Chip Carter declared that Nintendo had created a " legend that fits in the palm of your hand " , and praised its portability and depth . An J?kiri of ITMedia echoed similar comments . A writer for the Mainichi Shimbun enjoyed the game 's music and story . Multiple sources touted it as an excellent portable adventure for those without the time for more sophisticated games .

Complaints about the game included its monochrome graphics ; certain critics believed that they made it difficult to discern the screen 's contents , and wished that the game was in color . Critic William Burrill dismissed the game 's visuals as " Dim Boy graphics [that are] nothing to write home about " . Both Carter and The Ottawa Citizen 's Bill Provick found the two @-@ button control scheme awkward , as they needed to switch items on almost every screen . The Vancouver Sun 's Katherine Monk called the dialogue " stilted " , but considered the rest of the game to be " ever @-@ surprising " .

Link 's Awakening DX also received positive reviews ; based on ten media outlets , it holds an average score of 92 % on Game Rankings . IGN 's Adam Cleveland awarded the game a perfect score , and noted that " throughout the color @-@ enhanced version of Zelda DX , it can easily be inferred that Nintendo has reworked its magic to fit new standards " , by adding new content while keeping the original game intact . Cameron Davis of GameSpot applauded the game 's camera support and attention to detail in coloration and style , while reviewers for the Courier Mail believed that the camera added gameplay depth and allowed players to show off trophies . The Daily Telegraph 's Samantha Amjadali wrote that the addition of color made the game easier by reducing deaths caused by indistinct graphics . Total Games noted that the new content added little to the game , but found it addictive to play nonetheless .

Link 's Awakening sold well , and helped boost Game Boy sales 13 percent in 1993 ? making it one of Nintendo 's most profitable years in North America up to that time . The game remained on bestseller lists for more than 90 months after release , and went on to sell 3 @. @ 83 million units by 2004 . The DX version sold another 2 @. @ 22 million units .

The game won several awards , including those in the Game Boy categories for Graphics and Sound , Challenge , Theme and Fun , Play Control , and Best Overall in the reader @-@ chosen 1993 Nintendo Power Awards . It was awarded Best Game Boy Game of 1993 by Electronic Gaming Monthly . Nintendo Power later named it the fifty @-@ sixth best Nintendo game , and , in August 2008 , listed the DX version as the second best Game Boy or Game Boy Color game . IGN 's readers ranked it as the 40th best game of all time , while the staff placed it at 78th ; the staff believed that , " while handheld spin @-@ offs are generally considered the low point for game franchises , Link 's Awakening proves that they can offer just as rich a gameplay experience as their console counterparts " . The game took 42nd place on the Guinness World Records ' 2009 list of the top 50 most important and influential video games of all time .