

REVIEW

SUPER NES

1
PLAYER

8
MEG

RPG
GAME



© 1991, 1992 Nintendo

PRICE: £45
BY: NINTENDO

RELEASE

NOVEMBER

CONTROL

1 JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY

MEDIUM/HARD

CONTINUES

UNLIMITED

SKILL LEVELS

1

RESPONSIVENESS

EXCELLENT

1ST DAY SCORE

1 PENDANT

ORIGIN

Third in the popular adventure series, parts 1 & 2 available on the NES.

ZELDA

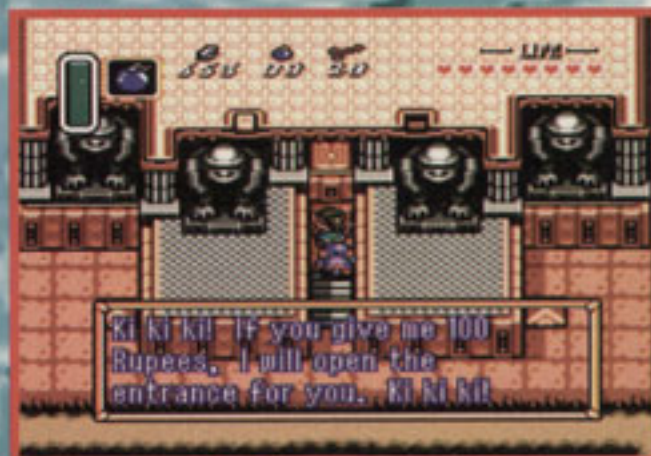
THE
MEAN
MACHINES
ARCHIVE

It's dark. You are tucked up in bed and drifting into sleep. The only sound outside is the rain falling on the log roof of your forest cabin, and in the gloom you can hear the comforting noise of your father Link moving around. But then, almost inaudibly, comes a faint cry. A girl's voice, distant but earnest - a cry for help.

So begins *Zelda 3*, a truly epic adventure. Without giving too much away, I can tell you that the strange voice is the distress call of the princess *Zelda*, who is being held captive by the evil sorcerer, *Agahnim*, in the palace that used to be home of her father, *King Hylas*. The days when he was the benign ruler of the kingdom of *Hyrule* are long since gone, and there are mounting fears that *Agahnim* plans to bring some calamity upon the land. Even now, people are looking with dread to the old legends of the land of the Golden power, which unleashed evil upon *Hyrule* before it was sealed by the seven wise elders. Could *Agahnim* be foolish enough to join the two worlds?

Until now there has been nothing to stop him. He has the country in an iron grip, the palace guards are under his complete control and roam the provinces of *Hyrule*, looking for dissenters. The only possible threat to his power might come from the descendants of the wise elders, but it comes as no surprise to learn of their disappearance, one by one, finishing with the last - princess *Zelda*.

So, with *Zelda* disposed of, as everyone believes she is, the populace is in deep despair, but powerless to act. All seems lost. But you heard *Zelda* that night. She's not yet dead. And if anyone is in a position to save *Hyrule*, it's you. The quest won't be easy. Vast tracts of woodland, arid deserts and mountain ranges must be explored. Answers lie underground in caves and hideouts, and in the vast fortresses of evil that lie unexplored. Even then you may not have all the powers you need to complete your quest - and other worlds await.



▲ Link surveys the Dark Palace - inside is the Story Teller, who helps you with your quest.

BOSS 1: ARMOS KINGS



▲ The first boss you have to face guards the green pendant which lies in the eastern palace. In fact it's not one but six armour-clad knights, skilled in the art of formation-dancing combat. To defeat them figure out their predictable attack patterns and pick them off one by one with arrows.



▲ Pay Zora 500 rupees for something special!



▲ Link arrives in the Watergate Dungeon and does battle with the evil Arrghus. Use the Hook Shot to pull off Arrgi - small parasites that float around Arrghus. Attack the main meanie with your sword when all the Arrgi have been destroyed.

LOCATION GUIDE

- 1: LOST WOODS
- 2: SPECTACLE ROCK
- 3: DEATH MOUNTAIN
- 4: EASTERN PALACE
- 5: LAKE HYLIA
- 6: SWAMP RUINS
- 7: DESERT OF MYSTERY
- 8: KAKARIKO VILLAGE



▲ An encounter with the Helmasaur king. Crivensl

Zelda has two worlds, but you can only access the Dark world when you're well into the game. The first kingdom is your own - Hyrule, a square-shaped sort of country bounded by rocks. You live in the forest in the centre. To the north is the brooding palace of King Agahnim. To the west, the peaceful village of Kakariko, where one of the elders is reputed to live. You should find help there, but be warned, not everybody is on your side.

A major feature of Hyrule is the massive lake Hylia in the south-east. Rivers to it cover the whole land, and being able to travel on it would be a bonus. Caves are dotted round the shore, and although no-one ever sails on it now, there are reports of an island at its centre.

Further out, are those mysterious places known to exist by the inhabitants of Hyrule, but shunned because they are infested by Agahnim's cohorts and present a deadly threat to the traveller. To the north-east are the Death mountains, too steep to be attempted from the outside. Tumbling from these crags are the waterfalls of Zora and the waterfall of wishing, which gullible souls like to believe grant your dreams.

However, places of even greater danger than these exist. The vast desert of mystery to the south surrounds the huge sandstone palace, abandoned for centuries, all its treasures sealed underground. In the east lies another massive palace hidden in a labyrinth of walkways lined with stone sentinels.

The lost woods lie in the north-west, which are given a wide berth by the villagers of Kakariko because of their gloomy aspect and the strange cries that emanate from within their depths. But lore has it that the powerful Master Sword is hidden there, an essential weapon in your quest. Finally, dwarfing everything else, is the Mountain Tower of the north, the site of the ancient gate between the Light and Dark worlds.

MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR

COMMENT



GUS

The bottom line is...Zelda is excellent. I have to say that before I go on to enthuse about countless other things, so that the message stays clear: buy it and you won't regret it. What you will have is a game of enormous depth, excitement, even humour, but most of all quality. It's the quality of design and implementation that is most striking about Zelda. The graphics are stunningly designed to appear 3-dimensional with brilliant colouring and the animation is wonderfully detailed: just witness lever-pulling or combat. Sound is not just superb but atmospherically arranged to suit the phase the game is currently in. Putting all the technical wizardry aside, Zelda most impresses me as a brilliantly thought out adventure. The puzzles are ingenious and challenging but never too obscure, and the feeling is that progress is always possible. Solving the problem of getting the Moon Pearl or finding secret passages in the Desert Palace is so satisfying. But there's still masses of combat action to be had, and you'll have a tough time against some very serious bosses. This is one of the few games that rewards exploration, and there's loads below the exterior still waiting to be discovered (by me!). You don't feel herded into a fixed agenda, and the unlimited continues prevent frustration setting in. As I said at the top - buy Zelda 3. I defy you not to enjoy it.

REVIEW



▲ Meet the Old Man of the Mountain. Escort him to safety to earn the Magic Mirror!



You can tromp around the world of Zelda and not notice things that are right under your nose. Look a little more carefully and you might wonder what's behind that cracked wall there, perhaps you might be able to blast your way through. What's under these boulders? Is there any way to lift them and find out? You may find it profitable to mow someone's lawn. Things that seemed useless before begin to make sense when you warp back to them later. The whole place is choc-full of secrets and rewards!

Also, you're bound to get stuck. Perhaps at a dead end with nothing but a huge statue. Or how on earth do you reach those ladders that start so high up? After all, you can't float on air, ah, but you can float on water...

How To Control



L NOT USED

Y USE ITEM

B USE SWORD

X GO TO MAP

A ACTIONS (LIFT, PULL, TALK, RUN etc.)

R NOT USED

S SELECT BUTTON: SAVE POSITION

S START BUTTON: INVENTORY

How To Play

Zelda is an arcade adventure that will test both your action and strategic skills. You have to explore the vast land of Hyrule in search of items and information to help you complete the quest and defeat Agahnim. It's up to you to discover how to use these items by trial and error, or by talking to someone who may know more. First on the agenda is a means with which to protect yourself, because the place is crawling with Agahnim's guards. Various weapons, some magical can be found, but they are all useless unless you learn the art of combat. Your life-force isn't infinite, so finding a way to maintain and extend it is necessary. But first, you should find the origin of Zelda's plaintive cry.

HIDDEN WONDERS



▲ Sprinkle your magic powder here to wake a little purple winged demon. Annoyed at this sudden awakening he shoots at you, unwittingly doubling your magic power.

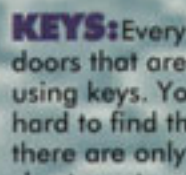
GOING UNDERGROUND

A lot of the quests in Zelda lead you into labyrinthine dungeons. You could easily get lost in the maze of corridors and walkways, but remember that there are four essential items, common to all dungeons, that you always have to find. They are:

MAP: This is contained in a chest somewhere in the dungeon. It allows you to see all doors - even hidden ones - and reveals rooms you haven't already explored. An important item to find.



COMPASS: The compass marks the location of the dungeon boss as a skull on your map, saving time when you have accumulated everything you need to do battle. Make sure you explore the dungeon thoroughly, though.



KEYS: Every dungeon has some doors that are only accessible by using keys. You have to search hard to find them all, because there are only just enough. Try chests, pots or even enemies to get them.



BIG KEY: This special key unlocks particular doors or chests with large keyholes. It is also a priority item because these locks are usually the vital ones to be unlocked.

BOSS 2: LANMOLAS



▼ Watch out for the Lanmolol! These sand worms regularly surface, causing many problems for Link.



▲ Boss 2 is a tougher challenge. These three monstrous sandworms guard the red pendant jealously. The sandy floor of the desert palace allows them to erupt from under your feet and then disappear as quickly. As they come up they spew rocks in all directions. Since their heads are the only vulnerable part of their bodies, multiple hits there will yield results.

▲ Collecting these hearts is essential to prolonging Link's life-span. These help replenish our hero's energy bar and are found inside the likes of bushes and pots!



▲ Link needs to collect three Pendants of Power in order to pull the Master Sword from its sacred resting place in the Lost Woods.



▲ The net is used to capture the likes of fairies and bees!



▲ Charging at some trees causes them to drop precious gifts.



You won't get taken seriously in Hyrule unless you arm yourself with some decent kit. Naturally, the best monsters are going to nab the best gear, so you might have to fight a gruesome beast to get some of the smarter arms available later in the game. However, here's a rundown of some of the tasty death-dealing doobries up for grabs:



SWORD: Four varieties for you to find - sharp, very sharp, extremely sharp and ooyah! Link, your father, has taught you the secret family technique of devastating swordsmanship.

Hold down the B-button to power up your sword for a mega swipe.



BOOMERANG: Useful, and found early on. These shots stun a lot of baddies and they always come back to you!



BOW: You need to find arrows to make this any use, but they are freely available. Pretty devastating to most foes.



BOMBS: As well as maiming just about everything that moves, these are very handy for opening secret doors.



BOOTS: Strange to think of them being offensive weapons, but these are better than steel-capped docs. Hold the A-button down when wearing them for a charging attack.



ICE WAND: Use this to fire a blast of chilly air in the direction of any bad guy, and it should be frozen, to be disposed of at your leisure.



HAMMER: Not available in the Light World, the hammer will drive in stakes or smash creatures resistant to other weapons.



HOOK SHOT: A brilliant Batman-type hook that will pull baddies in to get swiped, or pull you across a yawning gap.



FIRE WAND: Like ice, but instead fires a blast of fire into unfortunate enemies. Effective.



MAGIC MEDALLION: The ultimate in multi magi-sticity, just raise the medallion to summon the powers of the air, who will promptly paralyse any evil creatures.

TAKE UP ARMS

REVIEW



▲ In the upstairs chamber of the Gargoyle's Domain throw a bomb into the centre of the floor where it is weak to let sunshine into the murky palace.

LONG-TERM INTEREST

HIGH					
GOOD					
FAIR					
LOW					
	HOUR	DAY	WEEK	MONTH	YEAR

COMMENT



JAZ

It's always difficult thinking of things to say about games which are virtually perfect. Zelda is a case in point - its visual appeal will be utterly apparent from the screenshots. Its scale and epicness have already been discussed. What impressed me most though was the tremendous degree of thought which has gone into the controls. There's an absolute stack of objects to manipulate, people to talk to and actions to perform, and every last one is logically and friendly managed. Considering that Zelda such an enormous game, it's nothing short of miraculous that such a small amount of game time is spent wandering around waiting for things to happen. The next sub-quest is always explained clearly enough to give a good idea where in the massive map to head next without giving away too much. Anyone with the slightest inclination to investigate the role playing adventure genre should grab this one with both hands, and anyone who lacks that inclination needs their brains testing.

WHO ARE YOU?

Hyrule has a weird host of characters who may be able to help or hinder you along the way. That means you have to approach some with caution, but let's face it - you won't get that far without a little help from your friends. Here's a little casting list of the major players and their roles:

PRINCESS ZELDA: She's a spunky little lass whose main job is to give you guidance on your quest with her telepathic messages. She's one of the daughters of the Seven Wise Elders, so saving her is imperative. Unfortunately she has the annoying habit of being captured on a regular basis.

KING AGAHNIM: The slightly less than friendly ruler hellbent upon your destruction. He conducts his operations from his castle tower, and apparently his magic renders him invulnerable to physical harm. Boo!

SAHASRAHLA: The wisest of the village elders, who has gone into hiding from Agahnim. If anyone can tell you about the folklore of Hyrule, it's him. He also has great psychic and magical power. 'Rah!

THE PIPER: A curious sort of fellow who hangs out with his woodland pals in the forests near Kakariko. He's a bit of a recluse, and it's part of your job to find out where the hell he gets to. You can hear him playing from a distance, and he is pretty handy on the flute.

THE FORTUNE-TELLERS: Have you ever wanted guidance for the future? If so you probably gave your money to some old crone who ripped you off. Happily the clairvoyants of Hyrule are rather more helpful with their advice - like where to head for next!

KIKI: Not a man but a monkey! However, Kiki is a very handy monkey to have at a particular time. He lets you into places with his simian antics.



▲ By the time you reach this gross-out maggot monster you have reached the Mountain Tower and attained some nifty skills, but he's the hardest to beat so far. He spirals around a raised platform on the tower's highest level ready to knock you over the edge to the floor below. To add to your predicament, only his tail takes any damage, so aim there. Watch out for the backward momentum though!

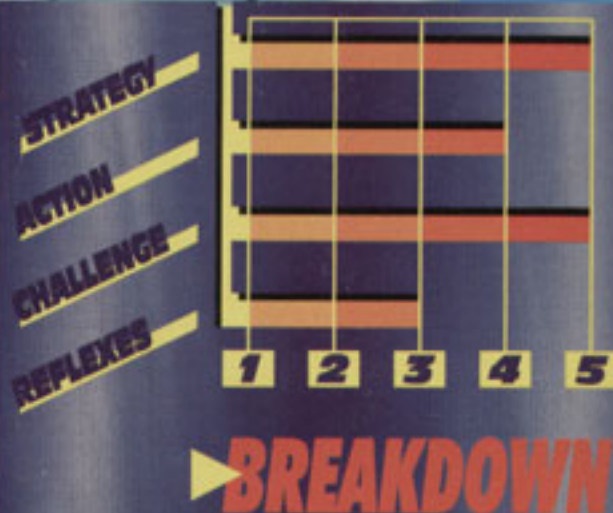


▲ Pressing START brings up the inventory window, which displays all your belongings.



▲ This barrier can only be breached with the Master Sword.

RATINGS



PRESENTATION

▲ There's an engaging intro, clever in-game prompting and an invaluable hints book.
▼ The restart points sometimes require you to retrace a bit of ground.

93

GRAPHICS

▲ Stupendous backdrops and excellent animation throughout.
▼ Very little to fault - perhaps it's a bit too colourful at times!

96

SOUND

▲ A soundtrack to match the action with tons of tunes and innumerable effects.
▼ Of course you'll want the sound on - but a mute option never goes amiss.

95

LASTABILITY

▲ This game is absolutely massive! 12 major quests and dozens of missions will take weeks or months to complete - and you will want to.
▼ Little point playing it after you've finished it.

95

PLAYABILITY

▲ Gripping from the word go, Zelda develops perfectly to match your growing skills.
▼ Wandering monsters are sometimes an annoying distraction from the quests.

94

OVERALL

The best adventure you can get for any console. It's the bees knees, it's the cat's whiskers. It's the donkey's armpits - it's Zelda 3.

96