



Oh lordy! The evil Dark Sol has kidnapped the Princess Jessa, and your dad, Mortdred, into the bargain! Unless Dark Sol receives the keys to the kingdom of Thornwood, those hostage-types will never be seen again. This might sound a bit nasty, but it's actually quite a stroke of luck for you, who, being a brave knight, can charge your own price for the Princess' safe return.

So pausing only to get toolled up at the village and track down a couple of pals to help, you set out towards Dark Sol's labyrinth to seek revenge and, hopefully, mega-spondoolicks.

What entails from here is a first-person perspective role-playing game, utilising a simple point-and-click menu system to issue commands. Combat is a matter of choosing whether to cast spells (if you can) or attack with a weapon, and hoping you don't get hit in return!

Can you rescue the Princess before Dark Sol is crowned king of Thornwood?



## MONSTROUS MALARKEY

Bone-wielding man apes are only one of the spooky creatures hindering your advancement through the labyrinth. Other unwholesome-looking monsters that bar your way include giant killer bees, dark jellies, slimy ooze, pit worms and cave slugs!



▲ This giant killer crustacean guards the key to the underworld, but one hit from him and it's nighty-night Mr Adventure.



Excuse my somewhat sudden appearance. My name is Dark Sol.

# SHINING AND THE D

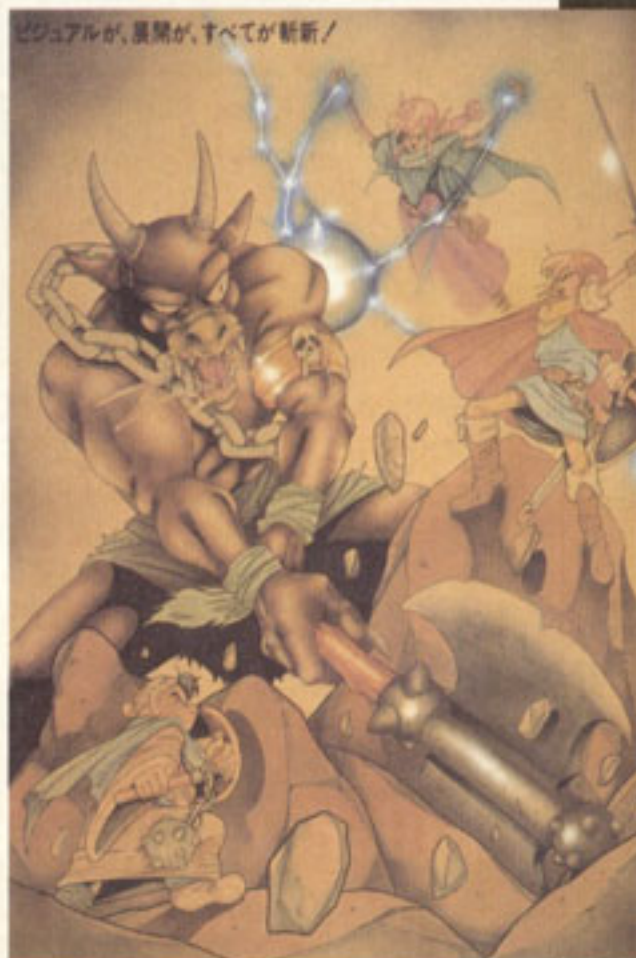


## SHOP-O-RAMA ANTICS

The shopping centre of the kingdom is the place to be for wealthy adventurers. Thornwood has a weapons shop (run by the dwarf from Golden Axe), an armourers which, not surprisingly, sells lots of spiffy armour, the alchemist, where many alchemically-related wonders are available, a shrine where you can save the game (?) and a tavern, where you can get... information. Shame it hasn't got anywhere for the locals to buy food - a marketing opportunity for McDonalds or Burger King, and no mistake!



The alchemist's is one of the more useful places to visit. This is where you can get your healing herbs, teleportation feathers, anti-poison plants and even seeds that, when eaten, reveal a map of your vicinity in the labyrinth! And they don't even give you a farty bottom!





You're above the ground on Level L.

▲ Partaking of a tasty Wisdom Seed gives you this lovely map showing your route through the labyrinth so far.



**JULIAN**

Okay, so I might not be the biggest role-playing fan in the World, but if one comes into the office that's a particularly good example of the genre or has enough interesting features, I'll most certainly play it. I thought that this fitted both the above categories when I first played it - the graphics are stunning, and the menu system and presentation is the best I've seen in a console RPG. However, there are a couple of flaws which marred my enjoyment. Firstly, the passive combat is too random - I'd prefer to have the chance to use my own skills to win a battle, rather than have the computer do it for me. And secondly, there's not enough variety or excitement. Fans of pure role-playing games might enjoy the action, but considering the game is £50.00, I'd strongly recommend you take a good look beforehand.

**COMMENT**

# SHINING IN THE DARKNESS



▼ Combat in *Shining in the Darkness* is worked out randomly. The skill and power of your character is weighed up against that of your opponent, and hits, misses and critical blows are generated for your edification and entertainment.

**COMMENT**



**RAD**

The moment you slap *Shining in the Darkness* into your Megadrive, you're in for a visual treat. The front-end of the game is more than impressive, with large and detailed sprites conversing with or attacking you. The sound isn't bad either, with a variety of tunes playing according to the situation (dramatic in combat, classical when in the King's court and so on), although the sound effects are pretty sparse. However, this quality doesn't quite extend to the gameplay. The exploration part is quite fun, but the combat system, however pretty the monsters, makes the going slow and detracts a lot of excitement from the game. Role-playing fans may enjoy this, but it still pales in comparison to the likes of *Sword of Vermillion*.

**REVIEW**



**BY: SEGA**

**PRICE: £49.99**

RELEASE DATE: NOW

GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

LIVES: 1

CONTINUES: VARIES

SKILL LEVELS: 1

RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD



**PRESENTATION 92%**

*Gorgeous intros, and a host of options, including text display speed!*

**GRAPHICS 84%**

*Brilliantly drawn sprites, although the backgrounds could do with more variety.*

**SOUND 78%**

*Decent tunes and average effects.*

**PLAYABILITY 69%**

*Fast and smooth controls spoilt by a monotonous combat system.*

**LASTABILITY 61%**

*Playable for a while, but the dull fighting and lack of variety ruins the lasting appeal.*

**OVERALL 69%**

*A reasonable, but pricey RPG with impressive graphics, let down by a combat system which soon becomes a chore.*