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Ryan Beehler
06214776

Review of Brigandine: The Legend of Forsena

By: Ryan Beehler

Introduction

Brigandine: The Legend of Forsena is a strategy/rpg Playstation 1 game by Atlus and goes for about \$30 on EBay due to its rarity. A controversial game which has had many mixed reviews: IGN:3/10, GameSpot:6/10, IGN Readers:7.3/10 GameSpot Readers:8.4/10 and I rate it a solid 8/10. I believe it is similar to the game of Risk, you either hate it or you love it.

Summary

The story goes like this...

There once was a land called Forsena, where the country of Almekia was ruled by a good king. The king was supported by the strongest knight in the land, Zemeckis. Zemeckis became corrupted by a magical being Bulnoil who thirsted for more power. Therefore, Zemeckis killed the king and claimed the title of emperor thrusting the continent in to chaos.

The King had a son, Prince Lance that survived and was taken in by a nearby country ruled by King Cole. King Cole believed in the prince and made him the ruler of his country and renamed it "New Almekia" in his honor. Prince Lance vowed to defeat Zemeckis and restore Almekia to its former glory. Due to the upheaval in the Land of Forsena several other countries believe that they should unite the lands under their rule.

In the West lies New Almekia, ruled by the young Prince Lance with King Cole as his advisor. The prince has fire magic and though he starts out physically weak, he has fast growth and will become very strong the more battles he participates in. He is supported by very powerful knights and monsters and quickly forms an alliance with King Cai located to the south.

The center of Forsena is controlled by Emperor Zemeckis, who is very strong with high level magic and a powerful ranged attack. His knights are very strong in both physical and magical skills.

In the North is Norgard, which is ruled by Vaynard, a strong warrior with ice/water magic. This is the nation with the physically strongest knights though weak in magic.

In the East lies Leonia, ruled by Queen Lyonesse who is strong in holy magic such as healing. This nation has knights and creatures strong in holy magic, though lacks knights with physical strength.

In the Southeast lies Iscalio, ruled by the crazy Tyrant Dryst. This country consists of evil knights with high physical strength. Iscalio is perhaps the weakest of all of the warring countries with only a few strong knights. Dryst can become a powerful Super Tyrant given the chance.

Lastly, in the Southwest lies Caerleon, ruled by the Wise King Cai who is a very powerful magic user. Caerleon is allied with New Almekia and is the nation with the strongest magic users.

The player can be any of the rulers, except Zemeckis, each with their unique knights. The goal is to takeover Forsena by occupying all of the cities. Up to three Knights can attack an adjacent city defended by up to three Knights. Each knight can control a certain number of monsters to fight for them. These monsters can be summoned with Mana produced by occupied cities.

There are fourteen class types for your knights and nineteen monster types. Knights and monsters gain experience by performing magic or attacking opponents in battle. This experience translates into level increases with stat bonuses. A major upgrade can be performed on levels ten and twenty and all units have a max level of 30.

Knights, monsters, and magic each have zero to three element orbs associated with them. Opposite elements do more damage and same elements do less damage. The elements are:

- Black and White
- Blue and Red
- Green
- None

Game play is divided into two distinct phases:

- *Planning Phase* is where the player can summon monsters, manage and move armies, and send knights on quests where they can find items or gain stats. This phase

takes place on an overhead view of Forsena with cities connected by roads.

- *Battle Phase* is where armies can attack or defend a city. Cities can only be attacked by knights who occupied an adjacent city during the *Planning Phase*. After committing to a battle plan, then individual battles will take place on a topographical map divided into hexagons. Knights and monsters are controlled in a turn-based fashion with knights at higher levels going earlier.

Brigandine has hand drawn anime style artwork with orchestral music and no verbal speech.

Review

Brigandine has great replayability since you can play 6 different rulers with unique abilities and storyline. Each time you play you can develop your knights and monsters to suit your mood. The attack strategy is very important and the AI does not always act in the same manner each round. Compared to similar strategy rpgs, Brigandine is short, taking around 10 hours to complete. Brigandine is unique in requiring such a short time to complete and is the only rpg style rewarding game filling that niche, which is why I enjoy it. There is very little commitment required, unlike similar games like Disgaea, which require 100+ hours to complete. Both games have their own niche, which is why I play both games.

The artwork is fairly poor, with static cut-scenes and text conversations and the repeating orchestral music is mind numbing. I tend to listen to other music since the in-game music is not necessary to play the game and it can give you a headache after listening to for a couple of hours.

Several forums I have visited have posts from diehard fans that love this game and really want Atlus to rerelease Brigandine with expanded play and updated artwork since the strategy and player growth system is so great. I have personally played this game 30+ times and each time is very rewarding. You can start out at low levels and be at high levels with strong units to beat the game in 10 hours then go to bed. Then pick up this game again in 6 months after finishing FFX or some other RPG while waiting for the next great game to come out for the PS2.

Summary

If you like strategy RPGs, then Brigandine is a good game to test drive. The graphics don't compete with what we are used to since 2000 and the music isn't so good, but the turn

based strategy is great; so great in fact that it gets an 8/10 instead of a 2/10. If only Atlus would update the graphics and add some more units; similar to the re-release of Final Fantasy 1(NES) in Final Fantasy Origins(PS1) where Square Soft changed the artwork but kept the same engine that was in the original NES version.

Screen Shots



Start of game choosing a ruler and country.



Planning phase



Special conversation at start of game with Lyonesse and "special friend" Kiloph of Leonia.

Vaynard Lv18 Lord <Norgard>
 HP 637/637 STR 93 ATK 266
 MP 304/304 INT 82 DEF 135
 RunePow 332 AGI 79 MOV 4-6
 RuneArea 5 (Armored Type)

Exp. 15317 Next Level 1678

Action	Hex
Caladbolg	1
Wolf Fang	1
Magic(3)	

Item



X Next End

Details of Lord Vaynard of Norgard. Mid-high level with high HP, decent MP, main character level RunePow and RuneArea, and good ATK.



Lyonesse Lv. 3 Queen
 Hp 358/358 Mp 362/362
 Ht. ±0% Ex. +15%

Battle scene with Leonia VS. Norgard. Lyonesse is the main character for Leonia and Vaynard is the main character for Norgard in the top left corner.



Giant attacking a Griffin.



Salamander (Lvl 20+ Dragon) performing special move - Grand Flame.