

Ature



An action adventure for the Atari 2600.

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Story

Myriads of years passed since man first set foot on the moon. Terrible wars raged, and great ecological problems arose. Much was destroyed, and the face of the Earth itself was changed. Finally, tired of the endless troubles, the people of the world united to build a durable era of cooperation, peace and prosperity. Technology developed as never before, and mankind traveled to the stars and spread throughout the galaxy.

However, even this golden age of technology came to an end somehow. Contact with the other worlds was lost. The advanced technology and the great cities were abandoned, and mankind's numbers dwindled as they reverted to a more primitive lifestyle.

Yet, when it looked like mankind was doomed to disappear, a mysterious event turned the tide yet again. The Great Tree sprang from the earth, bringing life and protection to all of mankind. Its seeds spread throughout the continents, bringing forth the Twenty Lesser Trees.

The Numen, the power that flowed from these trees gave mankind new, Mysterious Powers that allowed them to heal and recover themselves and the land. Still, there are those who would abuse this power for their own selfish goals... That is why, everywhere a tree appeared, Protectors rose up to keep the Trees safe.

The year is 2600 after the Sprouting of the Tree. In the land of Ature, enclosed by impenetrable tall mountains, dense forests, and the sea, one of the Numen Trees had been guarded closely by the Gemma family.

You are Signe, the youngest in the line of the Gemma. Your father, Dyon, trained you in the arts of sword fighting, and when you reached 20 years of age, you were handed the Mystic Medallion, sign that henceforth you would be the Protector of the Tree.

Ature was well separated from the outside world, and had been peaceful for the last millennium. You enjoyed life, together with your beloved, and it seemed like all that training had been for naught. Little did you know that you would soon be called to the task!

At the horizon, a black ship landed on shore, carrying queen Ikaza to Ature. She claimed to be on a mission of trade, and she seemed fair, so you did not have any second thoughts, even though you felt some fear at the unusual looks of her servants.

The queen was welcomed with a great party that went on until late at night, in which you and your beloved also participated, until, drowsy, you returned home. Alas! Little did you know it was all deception! During the feast, Ikaza's servants found out the location of the Numen Tree. As you were sleeping, she captured your beloved, went to the Tree, blocked it's access with a curse, and started to drain the Tree's powers.

The results were disastrous. The curse on the Tree was so powerful, that that lay of the land of Ature itself was changed, and the people and animals were turned to stone. Only you, protected by the Mystic Medallion were spared.

Outraged at this, the Queen sent her servants, now revealed to be nothing more than foul monsters, to hunt you down. These foul monsters can be defeated with your sword, but will be reborn due to the curse, the moment you leave the area they are patrolling.

Fortunately, there are some places in Ature where Ikaza and her dark servants cannot go, as they are protected by ancient blessings.

However, the situation is dire, Signe! Your beloved was abducted. Your friends and family have been petrified! Who knows what more evil Ikaza will do with her new-found powers. You must find a way to reach Ikaza and defeat her!

You have heard rumors of the three leaves of the Tree, well hidden, which together would allow to break any curse. It's also rumored that there is a Numen Shield and a Numen Armour that can protect you from that dark power.

Furthermore, you did not receive any education in the use of Numen's Mysterious Powers. Perhaps you will find a Mystery Book along the way which teaches you how to use these powers. However, will all that be enough to defeat Ikaza? If only you had a weapon that could counter the power of the Numen tree...

How to Play

In this game, you will control Signe on her adventure in the land of Ature. The image below shows a typical game screen.

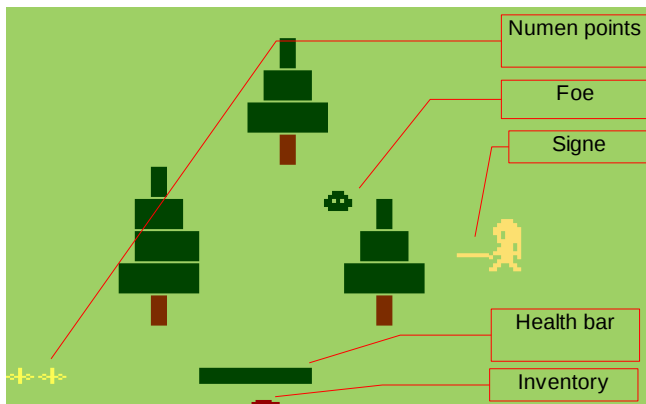


Illustration 1: A typical game screen.

In the center of the screen, you will see Signe, and a top-down view of her surrounding area, and any foes or items that are in that area. On the bottom of the screen is your Health bar. On the bottom left left are your Numen points available. Below the Health bar, the inventory of the items in Signe's possession are displayed.

To move Signe around, press the joystick in that direction. Walls and other obstacles will block her path. When Signe reaches the edge of the screen, and her path is not blocked by a wall, she will move to the next area in that direction.

To make Signe swing her sword, press the joystick button. She can

keep her sword sticking out by keeping the joystick button pressed. Signe will automatically retract her sword when she hits a foe. Some foes take several hits before they are defeated.

Every time Signe defeats a foe, she becomes a bit more experienced. If you keep on building experience like this, she will slowly become stronger. The maximum size of her health bar will increase, as will her available Numen points. She will also become stronger, and be able to defeat her foes with less hits.

Sometimes, when Signe defeats a foe, an item will be dropped. To pick up an item, make Signe walk over it. But don't let Signe touch any of her foes, they will hurt her!



Healing Heart
Heals Signe's Health.



Siven Sign
Restores Signe's Numen Points.



Switch
Opens up a path if struck.

Table 1: Some of the items you may find.

Whenever Signe gets hurt, her Health bar is drained. When her Health bar is depleted, Signe is defeated and the game will be over! Fortunately, due to the mysterious powers of the Mystic Medallion, you can escape death by pressing the reset button. She'll be revived in front of your house, a bit weakened from the ordeal.

Sometimes, you will find strange devices that change when Signe hits them. These are switches that open secret doors and reveal hidden pathways. If you can't seem to proceed, look for a switch.

One switch can affect several places at the same time. So after hitting a switch, be sure to return to any suspicious-looking places you visited before.

Likewise, when Signe defeats a powerful foe, the curse on Ature may weaken somewhat, and places that had been changed by it may revert. Like this, the road ahead that was blocked before may become opened to you.

To win the game, Signe must defeat Queen Ikaza and save her beloved. However, the path to Ikaza is blocked by a dark curse, that is immune to normal swords. You must collect three Numen Leaves to gain the power to break the curse. Until that time, stay well away from it, for its touch is lethal!

If you can find the Numen Shield, enemy projectiles will not harm Signe anymore. The Numen Armour will reduce damage that Signe suffers by half. It is also rumored that there is a powerful Numen Sword that will double the damage Signe can do.

There are also rumors of Numen books that teach Signe Mysterious Powers. It is rumored that the Book of Life can fully recover Signe from the brink of death as long as she has Numen points left. Every use of the Life Book will cost one Numen point.

Furthermore, there is the legendary Book of Striking, which teaches how to strike a foe at a distance... If you can find it, you will need to switch the left difficulty switch to A to activate it, and switch the left difficulty switch back to B to disable it. Every use of the Book of Striking will cost one Numen point, so be careful how you use it.

Signe's Health can be healed by picking up small and big Healing Hearts. To replenish her Numen points, look for the small or big Siven Signs. Signe's Health and Numen Points will also be restored when she becomes stronger through gaining experience.

Many dangers and secrets await Signe on her quest, however, with persistence, you will be successful! Good luck to you!

Map

Ature holds many riddles and mysteries, so this map should help you out in finding your way. However, this map does not show any secret areas. These are for you to discover yourself!



Illustration 2: Map of Ature.

The following places of interest are indicated on the map:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Ruby Mountains | 7. River | 13. Enemy Camp |
| 2. Dark Cave | 8. Castle | 14. Beach Hut. |
| 3. Waterfall | 9. Cursed Forest | 15. Sea Shrine |
| 4. Cemetery | 10. Sealed Temple | 16. Your Home |
| 5. Forest of the Tree | 11. Rye Fields | 17. Ikaza's Black Ship |
| 6. Village | 12. Ancient Tower | 18. Sandy Beach. |

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