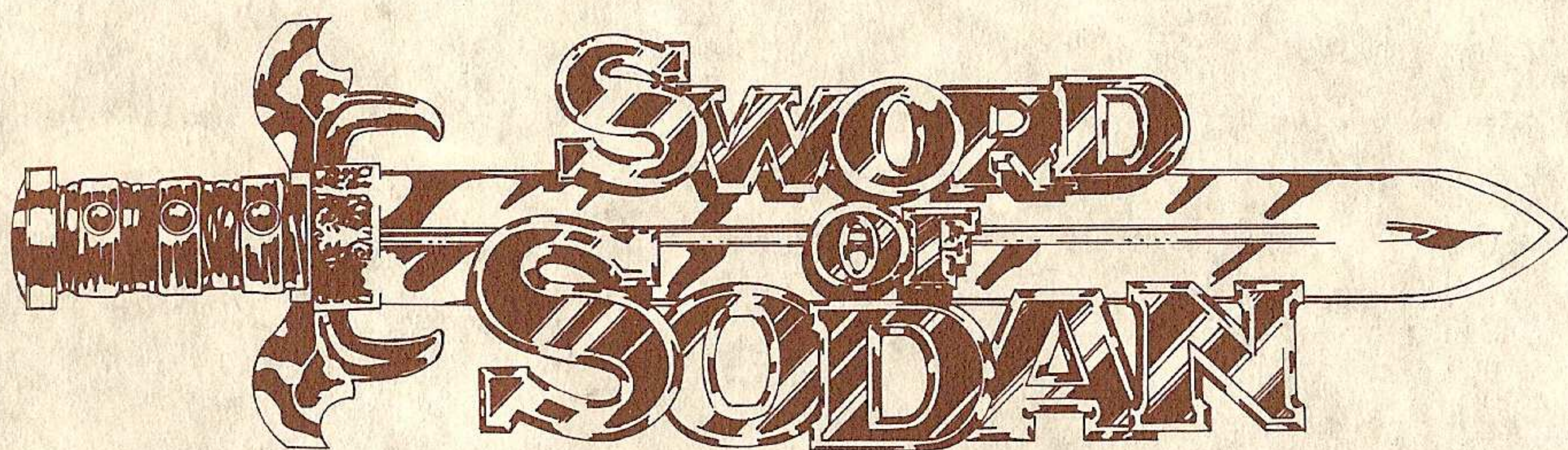


SWORD OF SODAN



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It was an age of dreams and a time of miracles. When jeweled cities rose like great forests from the dust and justice ruled the Northern Kingdoms. Still, as in all dreams, there came a time of awakening — and the people of the kingdom arose to a dawn of nightmares.

For in the east, Zoras the Necromancer, long since banished from the realms of man, sat in a tower made of human bones and parlayed with shadows. In the darkness, spirits of ancient power talked to Zoras in whispers, making pacts and sharing secrets. And in the time of harvest, as the first chill winds scattered the leaves of the trees, Zoras gathered their power and rode to the Northern Kingdoms.

And it came to pass that a time of darkness engulfed the land. From the shadows rose all manner of foul creatures, and the streets — once filled with happy people — now echoed the laughter of evil spirits. The armies of the court scattered, and Zoras the usurper slew the King with demon flame. So it was that Zoras took the throne — his manic laughter echoing thru the great halls of the castle while outside the citizens wailed in despair.

Unknown to Zoras, days before the slaughter, the King's two children were smuggled by night from the Kingdom and taken to a distant land. There they were raised in the way of the sword by an ancient warrior whose skill was the precursor of legend.

And in time there came word of a prophesy. The Witches of the Dire Marsh, three ancient crones who foresaw the future in the falling of dead leaves and the patterns of fires' light, foretold of a new dawn. A child brandishing an enchanted blade would return from beyond the mountains, they said, to avenge the father. A warrior who by strength of steel and edge of sword would shatter Zoras' reign of terror and return the light to the Northern Kingdoms.



The Lore of the Sword

Before the united cities rose from the forests of the north and peace enveloped the land, the greatest skill of all was the ability to wield the greatest of weapons — the sword. No possession was more cherished than a mighty broadsword, keen of edge and finely tempered.

The most treasured blades were born in the forge of Brespar, a master swordmaker unmatched in the art of the steel. From the farthest reaches of the lands, great warriors came seeking his talents. And until the First Day of the Cold Death, none were turned away.

On that day, all the fires of the land burned cold and none could be rekindled. Risen spirits of the nether world had extinguished the flames of life and the last breaths of many were seen in the frigid air.

Hundreds rode to challenge the spirits in combat, but none returned. Even the steel of Brespar was impotent when wielded against the spirits of the mist. Hope soon became a distant memory.

One day, a man and his son appeared at the icy hearth of the old swordmaker and told of a place where the gods had opened the earth - and where rocks that seemed to flow from the ground shone orange with the heat of the sun. "There you could forge another sword," he told the sickly man, "a sword like none before it."

The journey of the three was arduous, but spurred by the importance of the moment, Brespar was able to hold on to the threads of life. And he drew on his years of experience and created a final masterpiece, a sword able to cut granite as easily as the fog of the dawn.

Leaving his son with a peasant couple, the man took up the sword and rode into the night sky. And when he met the first night thing in combat it succumbed to the enchanted blade. But the spirits were plentiful, spread throughout the land, and the years slowly passed until Sodor's singlehanded odyssey sent the final spirit back to the underworld.

Once again, fires burned and the people were safe. But the heart of Sodor was cold. He had no idea of the fate of his only son and the years had left him unable to stand the rigors of a search of the land.

In anguish, he thrust the sword to the heavens and vowed, "You gave me this sword, the Sword of Sodor, to protect the people of the north, but you have taken my son. Unless wielded by a member of the house of Dan, its blade will never again see the light of day."

Lordan - King of the North



Lordan had few memories of the tall, steel-eyed man who had left him as a youth in the care of a childless peasant couple. But he remembered that he felt safe with the gentle giant — unafraid of the dark and ready to challenge the shadows.

The people Lordan met in the towns and villages of the north did not share his fearless nature. The past had not been kind and memories of the spirits of the mist left them cowering and apprehensive, unable to envision a future of peace and happiness.

So Lordan began to travel the land, encouraging the people to look forward and deny the vestiges of the past. He organized an army and started the building of the first of the great cities. The children began to laugh again and soon the tables of the people were piled high with the fruits of their labor.

And in return, the citizens built him a great castle, the Castle Craggamoore, and crowned him King. As the years passed his reputation as a great and benevolent ruler grew. And the castle became a symbol of the peace and prosperity of the united Northern Kingdoms.

Zoras the Necromancer



Zoras was an old one, well-versed in the incantations of the black arts. He lived to rule over the people of the north — people he despised for their simple lives of contentment.

Zoras had almost succeeded in his quest a generation before. He had summoned the spirits of the dead and painted a picture of icy fear throughout the land. But for one great warrior, Sodan, he would have ruled.

He retired to his tower of human bones and studied the ancient parchments of his ancestors. He experimented with spells and uncovered hidden secrets of centuries ago.

And soon he was able to conjure even more abominable creatures from the depths of the earth and raise the worst of people's nightmares and give them life. And they answered his call to bring pain and sorrow to the meek.

Now his destiny had been fulfilled. He sat on the throne of Lordan and the people grovelled at his feet.

Children of the Throne



Brodan and his sister Shardan were born on the same day to Lordan and his Queen. They lived an idyllic life of youth, pampered by the people and enjoying the castle's great halls and courtyards as a splendid playground. As twins, Brodan and Shardan shared the same



hopes, the same dreams and the same bright outlook for tomorrow.

But the peaceful existence of the castle was soon to change. The King was brought word of a new scourge upon the land. From every direction demons, evil mutants and creatures beyond the imagination were marching toward the castle, leaving a path of death and destruction in their wake.

One night the children listened at the door of the court chambers and for the first time felt the chill of fear touch their spines. "I want the children taken across the Cthol Mountains to the farthest corner of the land," they heard the King exclaim. "for I fear the end is near. It is said a swordsman of legend dwells there. Perhaps he can protect my loved ones."

Under cover of a cloudy night sky, the children were taken from the castle. In the weeks that followed they learned of the death of their parents and the reign of Zoras, and cried until their eyes were dry of tears. And although unsaid, the siblings knew the course of their destiny had been forever changed.

Months later the children were left at the entrance of a humble dwelling far into the virgin forests of the outer kingdom. The lone inhabitant, a bitter, white-haired old man, answered their pleas and reluctantly shared his meager table fare. And he was told of the trouble at the castle and the incredible journey that brought the young ones to his door.

And when the children told of Lordan, the old man was overcome. He was listening to the fate of his only son, and his grandchildren were telling the tale. And his countenance visibly changed as he said, "I am but an old man, unable to avenge the death of my son. But I will raise you in the ways of the sword, and one day you will return to the great castle and slay the harbinger of doom."

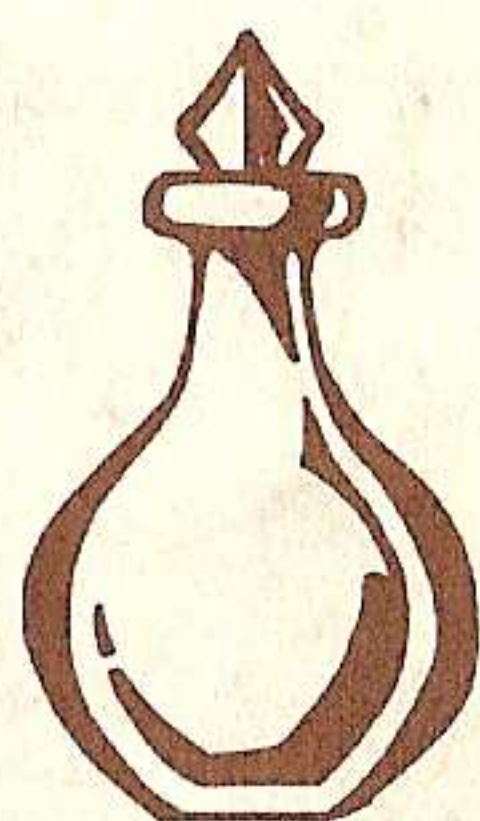
And when that day came the old man displayed the Sword of Sodan. "You have both learned your lessons well, but there is only one sword that can slay the necromancer. Which of you will take up the blade in vengeance and show it the light of day?"

Wielding the Sword

Now that you possess the Sword of Sodan, you can begin your quest to avenge the death of your father and free the cities of the Northern Kingdoms from the tyrannical rule of Zoras. The road you must travel is fraught with danger. You will encounter giant warriors, deadly pitfalls and mysterious creatures of the underworld.

If you can defeat them, you will reach the chambers of Zoras. There you will face the most difficult challenge of your life. It is not a place for the weak of heart.

King Lordan knew that someday a warrior would attempt to defeat Zoras. Before his death, the King mandated the court wizard to develop potions that would aid a rescuer. The wizard hid his magic in the corridors and courtyards of Castle Craggamoore. As you battle your way through the castle, look for these potions and be aware of their value in your journey (See the control insert for specific keyboard commands). The potions are stored in one of two bottles, either metallic or sand-colored. The potion in each bottle performs one of two different functions.



Contains either a potion to provide extra life or increased hit strength with the sword.



Contains either a Magic Zapper, which kills the enemy closest to you, or a Power Shield, which protects you for 30 seconds.

Zoras has defended the castle well. Every level demands new strategies and tactics to complete. While some levels place a premium on swordsmanship, others demand perfect timing or the ability to perform the one task that spells success. Proceed with caution, for death comes quickly to the unaware.

Credits

*Movement and Magic by Soren Gronbech,
Programmer*

*Illusions and Illustrations by
Torben Bakager Larsen, Artist*

*Conjury and Compositions by Julian Lefay,
Musician and Magician*

*Executive Producer and Executor, Rick Ross,
President*

Cover Art by Dorian Vallejo

Storyline by Robert P. Hires

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