

Arkista's Ring FAQ/Walkthrough

by BStephens

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ARKISTA'S RING FAQ v1.0

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** TABLE OF CONTENTS **

1. Introduction
2. Game Story
3. Controls
4. Gameplay
5. Items
6. Special Items
7. Enemy List
8. General Tips
9. Stage Info
10. Game Genie Codes

1. ** INTRODUCTION **

Welcome to my quaint little FAQ for the quaint little overhead action/adventure game titled Arkista's Ring, made by American Sammy Corp for the NES in 1989. I should mention I've only ever played this game twice but I wanted to write this to show some love for a charming yet unheralded titled that fans of this under represented genre on the NES are sure to enjoy.

The game is said to be Zelda-esque in many regards but other than the shape of the protagonist's ears, I don't find a whole lot in common with Nintendo's acclaimed epic. Arkista's Ring is actually the illegitimate child of the NES games Gauntlet and Hydlide (Gauntlet having way too much to drink of course). Gameplay is quite linear and has you working your way through a seemingly endless series of short stages, collecting items along the way. It's not a difficult game, but there's enough danger lurking about most areas to keep the player alert. Oh yes, and there are ninjas too. Did I mention the ninjas? Any game with an elf chick fighting against a horde of ninjas is worth a play in my book.

Please note that as the sole author of this original work, I need to grant

specific permission before any or all of this document can be reproduced in any shape or form, regardless of the purpose. My e-mail is blairlq at gmail.com and I welcome any and all questions or comments about this FAQ, especially suggestions about additions or corrections.

2. ** GAME STORY **

From the game's manual:

"Once upon a time, in the Elven Kingdom, there was a city called Arkista that was protected by a magical ring. Legend had it that the ring would provide peace and harmony throughout the land. Elves from all over came to Arkista to live near the ring and share in the happiness and prosperity. The elves also had two ancient treasures: The Wealth Amulet which provided fortune to the land, and the Elf Mirror which protected the elves from harm. Arkista became the high point of Elven civilization.

Meanwhile, in his Forbidden Castle, the evil Shogun raged and fussed. 'I will steal the Ring of Arkista and the Elven Treasures!' he screamed at his horde of wicked and vile creatures. 'I will plunge this land into darkness and despair!'

That night he hatched a dastardly plan to take the Ring and the Elven Treasures. Later, as the elves slept, the Shogun's nasty ninja carried out their master's bidding.

'The Ring is gone!' cried the elves the next morning, 'and so are our treasures!'

'Oh, whatever will become of us now?' wailed the elves. Without the Ring and the Treasures, Arkista began its slide into ruin. Birds refused to sing and the sky grew very dark. The evil Shogun's army of horrible creatures overran the countryside.

As the elves all huddled under their beds, the Elders agonized in the town hall.

Suddenly the doors of the town hall swung open and in came Christine, a courageous little elf. 'I will go and rescue the Ring!' she declared. The elders looked at each other and shook their heads. Christine set out on her quest anyway, armed with only a bow and arrow.

'Fear not, townsfolk, I will defeat the fiendish Shogun and return all he has stolen from us!' she solemnly vowed."

Yeah.

3. ** CONTROLS **

Directional pad: Moves Christine in any of 4 directions. She cannot move nor

fire her weapon diagonally.

B button: Stops action and lets you pick an item to use. Left and Right on the directional pad will select the item and the A button will use it. The B button cancels out of this and returns to the game.

A button: Fires an arrow (or a fire blast if the Fire Wand is activated) in the direction Christine is facing. You have an unlimited supply of ammunition.

SELECT button: Brings up a status screen showing various stats and all of your weapons and items. This only works between levels when the stage number is being shown and not during the stages themselves.

START button: Pauses the action and allows you to select an item just like the B button. It won't cancel out of this however. You'll need to use B.

4. ** GAMEPLAY **

The game is said to consist of 125 stages. It actually consists of 31 different stages that will repeat 4 consecutive times (with the enemies becoming tougher each time) for a total of 124 stages. I suppose stage 125 is just the end screen, or something. The goal in each stage is to make a key appear by defeating enemies and then going to the stage exit which is almost always behind a door or obstacle that requires the key to pass through. Each stage is basically a grid that's 16 squares from left to right and 24 squares up and down, so they're not large. They're often maze like however, and filled with monsters and obstacles that will slow you down.

Most of the challenge in Arkista's Ring stems from the fact you can't change the direction you face without also walking in your new direction. Enemies are smart enough to stay out of your line of fire as they move around and approach you, and if a fast moving enemy gets close enough you'll be damaged several times just trying to gain a little distance so you can shoot the thing.

You start the game with only your bow and arrow, 5 units of health (not 4 as the manual states) which are represented by hearts, and 2 extra lives in reserve. You'll pick up all kinds of items throughout your quest by defeating monsters and walking up to the small bags they often leave behind. If a specific enemy (not enemy type) drops an item bag, then that enemy will always drop an item bag every time you're on that stage and you shoot it. The ones that don't drop item bags never will. The items you obtain are random, to an extent. You won't get any Ninja Stunners early in the game because the ninjas only appear toward the end of the loop. That item only appears between stages 23 and 30 and their corresponding stages on higher loops. It may be that some enemies won't drop specific items also. I get plenty of extra lives from those black and green goblins but never seem to get any from certain other monsters. Having only played the game twice I can't be very definite about any of this, and yet I still have one of the top 10 best Arkista's Ring FAQs in all the internet. Awesome.

To make the key in each stage appear, you need to defeat a particular enemy. Do so, and the key will appear in a black spot in the stage referred to as a well. Except in stage 31, the enemy that controls the key isn't in the stage initially but is instead one of the monsters that appear while you defeat the initial group of enemies. Destroying a monster (and then picking up its item

bag if it drops one) often triggers another enemy to appear in its place. After defeating a certain number of monsters which varies for each stage, the monster that triggers the key will appear. I've detailed in this FAQ the number of monsters you need to slay to make this special enemy show up, and where it shows up as well. Practical use of this knowledge is pretty limited since you'll mainly just be killing everything you see anyway, and picking up as many items as you can.

If you lose all your units of health, you'll lose a life, and restart on the same stage with the enemies you've slain still gone and your key still in hand if you've found it. If you lose all your lives, you'll have the option to continue (up to 9 times in a game) which will restart you on the stage you were at but with all enemies returned and obstacles back in place. You keep all of your items when continuing.

In some stages you'll find squares with holy crosses on them. These squares, or "temples", will restore your health in full if you touch them from the north or south. They only work once per stage, unless you continue. Some of these squares are solid while some are tiles that you walk over. The coffin in stage 21 works the same way as these temples.

Also, some stages have walls, trees, or obstacles that disappear when you touch them. They usually hide shortcuts that save a little bit of time and I mention in the stage info the ones I've come across, but there could be more to be found since I didn't really go out of my way checking every stage. Fake walls need to be pushed on from a particular direction to give way (north or south for some, east or west for others). In other words, pushing on a fake wall from the right that crumbles from above isn't going to do a thing. Fake obstacles outdoors disappear when you're adjacent and face toward them from any direction, which is how doors and other barriers work once you have a key.

There are levels with seemingly more than one exit. Only one will take you to the next stage while the others are fake. The real exit changes each time you play the game so I can't point out the real ones in the FAQ. Stepping on a fake exit will make it disappear and cause the enemy that triggered the stage key to reappear as well. There are other fake exits (2 in stage 5 come to mind) which don't spawn monsters and never work to exit the level.

After stage 31, things start looking familiar. As mentioned before, you'll be repeating the stages over again with the difficulty increased. Enemies move faster, and have more health. They don't increase in number though. Also, from the 2nd loop onward enemy projectiles will now travel through obstacles. The game runs through the initial 31 stages 3 more times for 4 loops in total before it ends, with each loop getting increasingly harder. Enemies that posed almost no threat at all become capable of damaging you relentlessly and get too quick to outrun.

And now, onto the various goodies you'll come across during battle.

5. ** ITEMS **

There are a wide variety of items available to aid you throughout your journey. A few of these items take effect as soon as you pick them up, and I'll start by listing those ones first. These 3 each have their own distinct sound effect when you pick up the item bag so that you know what you're receiving.

HEALTH BOOST - This restores 1 unit of health to Christine.

EXTRA LIFE - Adds 1 extra life to your reserve. You can have a maximum of 5.

POINT BONUS - Adds 2,000 points to your score. Also, picking up an item you don't have room to carry will instead become a 500 point bonus. That only happens when there's room in your inventory when the item bag appears but gets filled up by other item bags before you collect it. If your item slots are full when the bag appears, single use items seem to become health boosts instead.

And now, I'll list the single use items you store in your item slots. These 5 different items can be used when needed, then disappear.

CURE POTION - This handy item instantly brings Christine to full health when used. When your health becomes zero there is actually a brief period of time while a sound effect plays before you fall over and lose a life. This window gives you an opportunity to use a potion and save yourself, so these cure potions are essentially extra lives and quite valuable.

FIRE WAND - This item when used lets you shoot powerful balls of flame instead of arrows until you exit the stage you're currently on. Fire is stronger than your most powerful arrows and if you haven't fully upgraded your arrows yet the difference is enormous. If you lose a life or even if you continue you'll still keep this ability. Unlike arrows the fireballs will travel through any obstacle, letting you destroy enemies before they get anywhere near you. If the fireball destroys an enemy the fireball keeps going, capable of inflicting whatever damage the first enemy didn't absorb. Enemy types immune to arrow damage are also immune to fireballs however. The fireballs disappear at the edge of the screen (not the stage).

THUNDER WAND - This item damages every enemy that's currently wandering the stage when you use it. It's strong enough to instantly dispatch a lot of different enemy types during the first loop through the game, but gets less and less effective as enemies become stronger.

HOLY STICK - This item will damage all undead or unholy type enemies. Its range is the entire stage like the Thunder Wand, and it packs more of a punch. The drawback is that it only affects certain enemy types whereas the Thunder Wand will damage or destroy anything. These two items become your only options if you wish to destroy an enemy type that arrows pass through.

NINJA STUNNER - This item when used will temporarily immobilize any ninjas in the stage, making them easy to defeat. They'll kneel down in this state and walking right through them won't harm you. It's a very handy item in a few of the later stages as some of the ninjas get quite dangerous. It doesn't work on the Shogun or any other enemy in the game except ninja.

6. ** SPECIAL ITEMS **

Some item bags contain equipment that permanently improves your character. These items and their effects are listed below.

ARMOUR - Each piece of armour you obtain increases your maximum health points by 1. They get pictured beside the hearts you started your quest with. You can pick up (in order) leather armour, a shield, a gauntlet, a helmet, and a mantle for a maximum of 10 health points when all armour is found.

ITEM SLOT - You have space to hold 4 single use items in your inventory when you begin your quest. Some item bags will add 1 to this amount until you've reached the maximum carrying capacity of 7.

BOW/ARROW UPGRADES - You can improve both your bow and your arrows, separately, as you play through the game and pick up item bags. Bow upgrades improve the range of your shot and arrow upgrades improve the strength. There are 8 types for each and the progression is as follows:

Short -> Cross -> Middle -> Long -> Giant -> Great -> Elf -> Ultimate

The manual neglects to mention the Great Bow, and doesn't mention any of the arrows either. The short bow you start with shoots arrows a distance of 5 squares. When you pick up the Ultimate Bow your shooting distance will be 8 squares. Check the status screen by pressing SELECT between stages to see what bow/arrow you currently have, as there's no indication at the bottom of the screen among your other items.

WEALTH AMULET - One of the ancient treasures stolen from Arkista, this amulet will add 100 points to your score for every square you move. Score is pretty meaningless in this game and made even more meaningless when you can walk around indefinitely and watch the points pile up, but it's still a neat little item. It's very rare, and it's not impossible to play through all 124 stages without ever coming across it. The first time I played through this game I didn't find it, and I finished with something around 1,060,000 points. In my 2nd playthrough I found the amulet between stages 25 and 30 and without going out of my way to take any extra steps I finished with about 2,400,000 points.

ELF MIRROR - Another one of Arkista's stolen treasures, this item is just as difficult to find as the Wealth Amulet. This awesome mirror prevents you from taking damage from any enemy projectiles, including the Shogun's lightning blasts.

ARKISTA'S RING - The titular artifact and objective of your quest. The ring is dropped by Shogun the first time you defeat him in stage 31, and is the only item in the game you can't acquire randomly by defeating generic creatures. Once you possess this item, you'll recover 1 unit of health for every 10 squares you move. This item proves invaluable enduring the higher loops when enemies are their fiercest. Note that the amulet and ring track full steps taken only. You can reverse your direction at any point during your movement, and this makes it hard to regain health (or increase your score) by walking back and forth a short line. Walking a tight 272 square is a better way to recover health while staying in the same general spot.

7. ** ENEMY LIST **

For the sake of hammering out this FAQ quickly I wasn't originally going to include any monster info, but like the grinch who stole Christmas, I've had a

change of heart. Quality matters, or whatever. I'll just group the enemies together that have the same description to keep this as short as possible. The only real difference between them is their sprite.

Some of the names I used below are slightly different than in the manual. All flying enemies pass over walls and obstacles. No item bags are ever dropped when defeating scorpions, worms, beetles, crawlers, wolves, bats, pixies, gargoyles, skeleton knights, blobs, anemones, jellies, vampires, or harpies.

SCORPION, ZOMBIE, WORM, MINOTAUR, BEETLE, CRAWLER

- moves in 4 directions
- 100 points

GOBLIN

- moves in 4 directions
- can attack with projectiles that travel 6 spaces
- 100 points

POISON WEED, GIANT SQUID, JELLY

- stationary
- can attack with projectiles that travel 6 spaces
- 200 points

WOLF

- moves in 4 directions
- 200 points

WIZARD, FLYING ORC, FLAMING SKULL

- flies around the stage in diagonal lines, ricocheting off the edges
- 400 points

BAT, PIXIE, GARGOYLE

- flies in a wavey "S" motion toward you
- 500 points

SKELETON, SKELETON KNIGHT

- moves in 4 directions
- vulnerable to the Holy Stick
- 300 points

BLOB, ANEMONE

- stationary
- can attack with projectiles that travel 6 spaces
- 300 points

ARMOURED SKELETON, REGENERATING SKELETON

- moves in 4 directions
- the killing blow from an arrow will only immobilize it temporarily
- vulnerable to the Holy Stick
- 600 points

AMOEBA, WILL-O-WISP, SHADOW

- occasionally moves 1 square in 4 directions
- invulnerable to arrows. vulnerable to the Holy Stick
- 2,000 points

FLAME MONSTER, CYCLOPS

- moves up and down a straight path, turning around at an obstacle
- will immediately turn to face you when behind it

- attacks with projectiles that travel indefinitely when facing you
- 1,000 points

MANTICORE, VAMPIRE

- moves up and down a straight path, turning around at an obstacle
- will immediately turn to face you when behind it
- attacks with projectiles that travel indefinitely when facing you
- 5,000 points

HARPY

- flies in a wavey "S" motion toward you
- 400 points

REGENERATING ZOMBIE

- moves in 4 directions
- the killing blow from an arrow will only immobilize it temporarily
- vulnerable to the Holy Stick
- 800 points

OGRE

- moves in 4 directions
- larger than other enemies and can be hit when firing from one row above them
- removes 2 units of health on contact
- 1,500 points

NINJA

- moves in 4 directions
- removes 2 units of health on contact
- 500 points

STAR NINJA

- moves in 4 directions
- can attack with projectiles that travel indefinitely
- removes 2 units of health on contact
- 800 points

JUMPING STAR NINJA

- moves in 4 directions, and can leap over walls
- can attack with projectiles that travel indefinitely
- removes 2 units of health on contact
- 2,000 points

MASTER NINJA

- moves in 4 directions, and can leap over walls
- can attack with projectiles that travel indefinitely
- held by ninja stunners about half as long as other ninjas
- removes 2 units of health on contact
- 3,000 points

JUMPING NINJA

- moves in 4 directions, and can leap over walls
- removes 2 units of health on contact
- 1,000 points

SHOGUN

- moves in 4 directions
- can attack with projectiles that travel indefinitely
- removes 2 units of health on contact
- 10,000 points

8. ** GENERAL TIPS **

Keeping one item spot free in your inventory will allow you to continue picking up items you may want while weeding out the less valuable stuff. It appears that single use items you would've have collected are instead health boosts if your inventory is full when the item bag appears. Something to keep in mind if you're having trouble keeping your health up and you don't have the ring yet.

Stock a few ninja stunners as you start to collect them from level 23 on. They help immensely in surviving a couple of the later stages (level 30 comes to mind) and are more valuable than even cure potions if you have to choose. Potions are very handy too in the later part of the loop. Fire wands will help but you don't need more than one or two since one will do you for the entire level. Thunder wands are not very useful at all in the later stages, and holy sticks are useless altogether since no monster it can hurt appears after level 23 for the rest of the loop.

Try to deal with enemies one at a time whenever possible. If several enemies swarm you at the same time you'll take a lot of damage very quickly because they'll strike you in unison. Monsters that move in 4 directions will kinda do their own thing if you're not around but then chase you as you get close. A good way to deal with an enemy chasing you is to run the other way, turning around to get a quick shot off and immediately turning around again to keep moving away from it. By doing this, you can fire arrows at the monster without taking a full step toward it (and losing a lot of distance) since your character can reverse direction even mid step.

Don't be too stingy using your items if it can save you taking damage. They get replaced quickly enough. Also try to get in the habit of using cure potions when ALL your health is gone to maximize their benefit.

Enemy projectiles sometimes behave funny because they won't scroll with the rest of the screen when you're walking north or south. Because of this they appear to speed up, slow down, or suddenly move on a diagonal as the screen scrolls. Be careful not to get hit if you're without the mirror.

The ninjas in later stages can sometimes jump over walls to chase you. They may end up jumping around indefinitely depending on where you're standing, letting you get rid of them without risk of damage since they can't harm you while they do this. For an example, when stage 30 starts walk immediately left 1 step and up 5 steps so that you're lined up with the row of stairways. The 2 ninjas that appear will hop around defenseless, letting you blast them with a fire wand until the others come at you from above. Anyway, this trick is quite useful for dealing with the master ninjas that sometimes appear on this stage when you walk over a fake exit.

If you get the key in a level but then need to continue before getting to the exit, the key will disappear from your inventory and reappear in the key well once you dispatch the appropriate monster. You won't need to recollect the key however. If you had it before continuing, the game still acts as if you have it and lets you go through doors etc. This bug can save you some time and trouble battling monsters. Speaking of bugs, I made a cyclops walk through a closed door in stage 27 while the screen was scrolling. I haven't been able to duplicate it though.

9. ** STAGE INFO

~LEVEL 1~

Enemy Count: 4 scorpions, 3 goblins, 2 poison weeds

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 4 monsters. A goblin appears in top centre of stage, 4 steps south of exit.

Notes: For the first few levels the exit is at the top centre of the stage. The miniature tree maze on the east side has a tree that disappears directly above where the poison weed appears. This makes it a little easier to kill the weed and take its item bag.

~LEVEL 2~

Enemy Count: 4 goblins, 2 poison weeds, 2 wolves

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 3 monsters. A goblin appears in upper left corner of stage.

Notes: Another easy, straightforward level. Collect all the item bags you can from monsters in the early part of the game so that hopefully your character gets a lot tougher before the stages do.

~LEVEL 3~

Enemy Count: 1 goblin, 1 poison weed, 10 wolves, 1 wizard

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 8 monsters. A poison weed appears right on top of well in top centre of stage.

Notes: These wolves get very fast in higher loops. The best way to deal with them is to hang around the starting point that's shielded by trees (leaving only briefly to lure the wolves if you need to) and shoot them from there.

~LEVEL 4~

Enemy Count: 7 goblins, 3 wizards

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 5 monsters. A wizard appears on exit stairs near top of stage and flies around.

Notes: The black spots on the ground here will cost you 1 unit of health if you walk over them. I forgot to mention these in the gameplay section I typed up above. Get a handle on how the wizards here move because a few other enemies later on move the same way, and watch out for axes thrown by the goblins.

~LEVEL 5~

Enemy Count: 9 zombies, 2 bats

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 6 monsters. A zombie appears directly below healing temple in lower left area.

Notes: The zombies unique to this level aren't hurt by the holy stick. The first of many indoor or underground levels you'll play through is also the first appearance of a healing temple square. It's at the bottom left of the stage and restores all your health one time during the stage when you touch it. Use it to make sure your health is full before you exit here, although you might need it sooner. This is also the first time you'll encounter bats, which fly in a tricky wave pattern in your direction. You sort of have to time your shots to deal with these effectively. You'll find what appears to be 3 different exits to this level but only the one closest to the top (slightly left of centre) exits the stage while the others simply disappear. The piece of wall 1 space up and 1 space right of this exit will disappear if you push on it from above, creating a bit of a shortcut.

~LEVEL 6~

Enemy Count: 10 skeletons, 4 blobs

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 9 monsters. A skeleton appears in bottom left part of stage.

Notes: More corridors designed to drag the stage out a bit. There are 2 fake walls in the lower left area here to allow easier access to a few of the monsters. The blobs can shoot at you.

~LEVEL 7~

Enemy Count: 9 worms, 1 armoured skeleton, 3 giant squids

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 8 monsters. A worm appears in upper right part of stage.

Notes: Shoot the worms before they have a chance to get annoying. The skeleton here is the only one of its type with a sword and shield, but he's more or less identical to the regenerating skeletons you meet later on. He'll leave an item bag if you destroy it with a thunder wand or holy stick. So will the two giant squids in the closed rooms.

~LEVEL 8~

Enemy Count: 9 giant squids, 4 flying orcs

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 8 monsters. A flying orc appears in upper right area and flies around.

Notes: One of my favourite stages since it's quick, easy, and full of item bags. I've found the elf mirror in this stage both times. Don't run around too much until you take care of the flying orcs.

~LEVEL 9~

Enemy Count: 11 scorpions, 2 amoebas

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 8 monsters. A scorpion appears in upper centre of stage beside a volcano.

Notes: Again, easy. Once you have the key, you'll have to find a path through fake mountains to the exit stairs. It begins from the lower centre of the mountain range. The 2 amoebas here will leave item bags but I tend not to bother destroying them. If you choose to, make your way to the exit first before using your attack item, then double back for the other bag. You'll be

able to grab both this way.

~LEVEL 10~

Enemy Count: 2 bats, 8 skeletons, 1 jelly, 1 will-o-wisp

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 7 monsters. A skeleton appears in lower left part of stage.

Notes: A couple more bats here, and a will-o-wisp near the exit. Nothing too exciting. The skeletons behind the doors leave item bags for you, sorta like trick-or-treating on Halloween.

~LEVEL 11~

Enemy Count: 12 goblins, 3 flame monsters

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 10 monsters. A goblin appears in lower middle part of stage.

Notes: You need the key to get past the odd looking tree, and need to fight a small army of goblins for the key. Be wary of thrown axes. Just use a thunder wand if you're at risk of losing a life. Grab the item bags from the flame monsters before moving on. They can't hurt you if you're to the left or right of them.

~LEVEL 12~

Enemy Count: 8 minotaurs, 3 pixies

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 6 monsters. A minotaur appears in lower left corner of stage.

Notes: Get rid of the pixies as soon as you can and this is a short, easy stage. It's also the only stage you'll encounter these purple minotaur beasts.

~LEVEL 13~

Enemy Count: 7 pixies, 4 shadows

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 6 monsters. A pixie appears in top middle part of stage and flies toward you.

Notes: Get used to enemies attacking you in this wavy pattern the pixies use if you haven't got enough practice from those bats yet. You haven't seen the last of it. Wiping out the shadows with a wand or stick will net you a couple of item bags. Get the key first though since one of them is behind the door.

~LEVEL 14~

Enemy Count: 11 beetles, 1 jelly, 3 regenerating skeletons

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 10 monsters. A jelly appears in corridor lower centre of stage.

Notes: I think I had some beetles and/or skeletons chasing me around the outer corridor here in the higher loops the first time I played this game. Anyway, take your time with the beetles if you need to. You have a temple here to restore your health before you exit. The skeletons can be immobilized for a few moments with your arrows, letting you walk over them harmlessly, but you'll

need a holy stick or thunder wand to destroy them outright (and the thunder wand doesn't work very well in the other loops). The jelly here that triggers the key uses a different palette than the one we saw in stage 10. White with a little red whereas the other one was purple with a little white.

~LEVEL 15~

Enemy Count: 5 flying orcs, 2 shadows, 2 skeleton knights, 1 manticore

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 5 monsters. A manticore boss appears in centre of stage.

Notes: Carefully deal with the flying orcs to start, and shoot the skeleton knights while you're at it. Wait until the manticore is as far away from you as possible before lining yourself up with it and unloading some arrows. It will fire at you while it approaches so be ready to move out of the way (and then get back to where you were if you have time to get a few more shots in). A black pit blocks the doorway so you're taking at least 1 unit of damage after defeating this boss. Collect item bags from the shadows if you wish. Note that using a fire ward and shooting down at the manticore from the very top of the stage defeats him extremely fast. His projectiles can't touch you there.

~LEVEL 16~

Enemy Count: 10 goblins, 2 harpies

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 7 monsters. A goblin appears in upper right area of stage.

Notes: Find the odd looking trees to make your way through this level. Be mindful of thrown axes from the goblins.

~LEVEL 17~

Enemy Count: 3 amoebas, 7 harpies

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 5 monsters. A harpy appears in upper part of stage, 2 down and 2 left from well.

Notes: You may want to stay near the bottom here while the harpies advance on you so that you can move left and right while you dispatch them. Whatever works for you. A fake tree will disappear here between the area with the key well and the pathway to the exit on the left, providing a bit of a shortcut. Unless you have holy sticks falling out of your pockets don't bother with the amoebas. They're better spent on stage 18, 20, 22, or 23. Don't save any past level 23 however.

~LEVEL 18~

Enemy Count: 7 blobs, 3 regenerating zombies

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 5 monsters. A blob appears right below the door near top of stage.

Notes: 2 regenerating zombies here to start the level, with another one appearing eventually also. These guys get very fast on higher loops, and care must be taken.

~LEVEL 19~

Enemy Count: 4 skeletons, 5 blobs

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 4 monsters. A skeleton appears in upper part of stage, 1 square right of coffin obstacle.

Notes: Easy stage here, but I like to use a fire ward to save myself some time walking all over the place. If you use a fire wand, head up the left side of the level and wipe out the 4 blobs arranged in a square to the right, then shoot the skeleton that appears beside the coffin. The key will appear just above you and you can go through the door there. Otherwise, just walk around clearing out enemies and make your way back for the key afterward. The coffins are simply obstacles that make you take the long way around, and disappear like doors once you have the key. The 2 coffins here the only things in this game with crosses on them that don't restore your health.

~LEVEL 20~

Enemy Count: 3 regenerating skeletons, 7 flaming skulls

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 5 monsters. A flaming skull appears in upper right corner on entrance stairs and flies around.

Notes: These purple skull things are no different than the flying orcs and shouldn't give you much trouble. I tend to stay in the top right corner, moving either along the top or down the right side until I clear away a bunch of them. You can just shoot the regenerating skeletons and move on while they're collapsed.

~LEVEL 21~

Enemy Count: 10 bats, 1 vampire

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 6 monsters. A vampire boss appears in centre of stage, 1 square right of coffin.

Notes: Get rid of the bats when you have the open area around you at the bottom of the stage. The vampire moves and attacks the same way as the manticore and has about the same health too or a little less (12 shots with your ultimate arrows defeat either creature on loop 2... 14 arrows for loop 3). The coffin here works as a healing temple, allowing you to exit the stage at full health and also letting you be a little careless with the vampire for the sake of saving time.

~LEVEL 22~

Enemy Count: 7 bats (plus up to 7 more from fake exits), 3 will-o-wisps

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 6 monsters. A bat appears in upper right corner of stage and flies toward you.

Notes: In this manly pink level you'll need to deal with a swarm of bats in some tight corridors, and you have some will-o-wisps making you take the long way around unless you use an item to get rid of them. The exit is randomly picked from one of the 8 stairways you see here, and the others simply disappear and trigger a bat in the top right of the stage when you touch them. You might as well try the 2 possible exits adjacent to each other on the right side of the screen first, since they're pretty easy to get to, and if they don't work there's a fake wall here just below them to get you into the corridor to the left.

~LEVEL 23~

Enemy Count: 10 blobs, 3 regenerating zombies

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 8 monsters. A blob appears near middle of stage, slightly low and slightly to the right.

Notes: A few blobs here to exterminate. Pretty simple stuff, but the levels won't be nearly so easy soon. A fake wall in the lower centre area saves you going up and down that long pathway on the left side of the stage.

~LEVEL 24~

Enemy Count: 8 crawlers, 4 ogres, 1 ninja (plus up to 8 more from fake exits)

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 9 monsters. A ninja appears in upper part of stage toward the right. Defeating ogres count as 1.5 enemies in regard to making other enemies appear.

Notes: The large ogres actually get quite fast on the higher loops, and take a lot of hits. The hallways below lead to 9 different exits of which the real one is randomly picked from. One stairway you can get to right away but unlike stage 30 I doubt it'll exit the level for you if you don't have the key (and it won't generate a ninja either which all of these exits normally do after the key is collected). The red ninja that generates the key here is pretty fast but can't take much punishment, so try to get rid of him as he approaches and before he's right up on you. Both the ninja and the ogres will take away 2 units of health on contact.

~LEVEL 25~

Enemy Count: 7 ninjas, 1 gargoyle

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 3 monsters. A gargoyle appears in upper centre of stage 3 spaces below door and flies toward you.

Notes: Defeat as many of the ninjas as you can while they approach. A thunder wand will probably do the trick here on loop 1. Keep moving while you shoot the rest of them. I like to think that if the stages had names they would've called this one the executive bathroom.

~LEVEL 26~

Enemy Count: 7 worms, 4 giant squids, 1 mantichore

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 7 monsters. A mantichore appears at top of stage between well and door.

Notes: The last outdoor stage in the loop. Find the blocks that are fake to reveal the way to the castle.

~LEVEL 27~

Enemy Count: 7 amoebas, 2 star ninjas, 3 jumping star ninjas, 5 cyclopes

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 12 monsters. A cyclops appears on very right side of stage, 3 steps above well.

Notes: The ninjas here can throw projectiles at you, and a few of them leap over walls to find you. Better to remain stationary in most cases and let them

move into your line of fire. If you can play around with the jumping ones a bit and figure out how to bait them into jumping all over the place trying to get at you, you'll be better off for it. Don't waste ninja stunners here if you have any, they'll be put to much better use in the next few levels. Try to keep at least a couple on hand for level 30 if you don't know what you're up against there yet.

~LEVEL 28~

Enemy Count: 4 gargoyles, 8 star ninjas, 1 master ninja

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 8 monsters. A master ninja appears in upper part of stage, 1 square left of well.

Notes: Take your time with the gargoyles and the star ninjas, and make your way up. When the white ninja appears, you have a problem if you can't make him simply jump around without attacking you. This is a master ninja which are jumping star ninjas with a whole lot more health. They're also held by ninja stunners for around half the time (a little over 5 seconds for master ninjas and an extra 5 seconds on top of that for other ninja types). You can't really outrun them so do your best to inflict as much damage as you can as fast as you can. Having him run at you down a hall gives you a nice head start. Anyway, there are 4 fake walls in the upper left corner of this stage (that need to be pushed on from above) which cut through a couple layers of that spiral.

~LEVEL 29~

Enemy Count: 8 ogres, 5 jumping ninjas, 1 master ninja

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 12 monsters. An ogre appears 1 square above door in lower right area. Defeating ogres count as 1.5 enemies in regard to making other enemies appear.

Notes: The 6th and last ninja here looks the same as the others, but it's a master ninja. Defeat it as fast as you can. A temple is in the lower right part of this stage, so you can head that way while firing at the master ninja every so often if you can't simply out race it in damage by slugging it out. A fire wand helps here, too. As with other stages, moving along the very edges of the stage makes it a little easier for enemies to corner you, so avoid that if you can. Get all the item bags you can from the ogres.

~LEVEL 30~

Enemy Count: 11 jumping star ninjas, 3 master ninjas (plus up to 7 more from fake exits)

Key Triggering Enemy: Defeat 8 monsters. A master ninja appears in upper centre area.

Notes: Boss music plays here because it's the hardest stage in the game. Hopefully you've got some ninja stunners or at least some potions handy. Also, definitely use a fire wand if you have one. The darker brown looking ninjas are the master ninjas. Target the weaker green ones first since you can get rid of them faster and also collect item bags to help you survive. If a brownish one is in your way shielding the others you may want to change your position or use a ninja stunner. Hammer away at the master ninjas while the stunner is in effect, and above all else don't let more than 1 ninja hit you from up close at the same time. You'll die pretty fast. The exit here is in one of 8 different spots - only 2 of which you need the key for. You can try your luck if you want by heading up the right side of the stage as soon as it begins and going for

the stairway around the corner in the dead end 8 or 9 spaces up. If it ends up being the correct exit this becomes by far the shortest stage in the game.

~LEVEL 31~

Enemy Count: 1 shogun

Key Triggering Enemy: Shogun.

Notes: Last stage in the loop. This battle isn't hard as long as you don't let him get too close. If he gets right up on you you're in for a lot of hurt. If you have a fire wand left over, use it for the range and extra damage. The elf mirror makes this battle quicker and easier but don't worry if you haven't found it yet. Anyway, he'll move about the room, tossing out a throwing star or a lightning blast here and there. Line up on the other side of the screen 1 or 2 squares off from his position and face him, letting him have it when he walks into your line of fire. He'll come after you at this point, so be sure to run off before he gets too close. Both his projectiles do 1 unit of damage like all others in the game. Once he's taken care of he'll drop an item bag which on loop 1 will have Arkista's Ring inside. The bag will disappear before long like any other, so grab it right away. Heal, exit the stage, and watch the castle crumble to dust, ensuring no survivors (except for the guys who rebuild everything for the next loop).

10. ** GAME GENIE CODES **

Just a few codes here to spice things up for those who like to use a Game Genie. I don't use one myself but I won't think any less of you for trying these :). These are Galoob's official GG codes for Arkista's Ring.

PAKETILA - 1 life

TAKETILA - 6 lives

PAKETILE - 9 lives

SZULXKVK - infinite lives

ZAKATIIA - start with fewer hearts

PAKATIIE - start with more hearts

LAEPYSYA - less damage from powerful monsters

GZOPTIST - infinite energy

IPUAGSLA - 20 continues

TAUAGSLA - 5 continues

Well, that's about all I can think of that's worth sticking in this FAQ. Thank you kindly for reading, now go and enjoy some old school gaming.

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