

A Stroll Through Dream Land

As a platformer made in 1993, and as a sequel to the GameBoy's *Kirby's Dream Land*, *Kirby's Adventure*, released for the Nintendo Entertainment System, is a major step up from the simple side scrolling goomba-stomping playstyle of *Super Mario Bros*. With levels that scroll both vertically and horizontally, backwards and forwards, Kirby's level design takes an approach which feels like strolling down the street and interacting with the people you see, albeit those people want to kill you. The music plays into this aesthetic with the art style, which creates a sort of fantastical and relaxed feeling in the player as they go through most of the levels and in the level selection worlds. These worlds include various minigames which you can play for points, or to suck up a boss and obtain their powers using Kirby's copy ability. Those minigames are typically unlocked via finding hidden buttons in some of the levels, which encourage the player to go exploring. Mini bosses are oftentimes spliced in the middle of levels rather than at the ends, providing a surprise for the player leaving them less prepared, making the fights more memorable. Additionally, each world ends with a story related boss fight, where Kirby obtains a piece of the Star Rod, a magical rod which must be inserted in the Dream Spring to restore dreams to Dream Land. Although the story of the game is largely irrelevant while playing, it becomes much more in your face right before and after the final boss fight of the game.

Throughout *Kirby's Adventure*, I consistently found myself enjoying the game largely due to the character design of Kirby and his enemies, as well as the overall feel of the game. As you progress through *Kirby's Adventure*, the levels become more difficult, yet more rewarding. Eventually, you end up fighting Meta Knight, who throughout the game harassed Kirby by placing impromptu fights with many hard enemies. Once you defeat Meta Knight with his weapon of choice for your fight, a sword, he no longer hinders Kirby in any way. Additionally, the final non-boss level of the game makes a strong reference to the first game by being rendered in complete grayscale, except for Kirby himself, until the end screen. Also, this level does not include any copyable enemies, which were not present in *Kirby's Dream Land*. Finally, you fight King Dedede, who has the same abilities as Kirby, however he is much larger and can suck Kirby into himself for one of his attacks. After defeating Dedede, you get a cutscene where Kirby finally places the Star Rod on the Dream Spring with the King begging at his feet for him not to do this. Once the Star Rod is placed, the final fight of the game begins against an enemy who brings nightmares to Dream Land. In the first and only time in the game, you are helped by Dedede as he throws you towards the enemy in midair, and you are given a timed sequence where you see the scenery behind you as you fall through the clouds, maneuvering yourself and shooting stars at your enemy, who is shooting dark stars at you. Once you complete the first phase like this, you are then given a ground battle with the same enemy, typically above you, and he has a cloak of armor which protects him most of the time. This fight is challenging, non-conventional for the mechanics of the game, and overall, extremely satisfying to end your five-ish hours of gameplay with. Overall, *Kirby's Adventure* is a very fun experience, with many game mechanics to consistently keep the player engaged as they move through each level, and fight enemies in various ways based on the abilities you obtain.