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Visions of mana guide

Visions Of Mana: A Comprehensive Guide Visions of Mana is an upcoming action RPG developed by Ouka Studios and published by Square Enix for PS4, PS5, Windows, and Xbox Series X/S. It's the fifth mainline title in the Mana series, and the story follows Val, a young swordsman, as he travels with his companions to revive the flow of Mana in the world. Gameplay combines action-based battles and exploration, with elemental abilities used in both situations. The game's development began in 2020, making it the first mainline Mana game since Dawn of Mana in 2006. The staff includes multiple series veterans, including Koichi Ishii, who supervised monster designs. Upon release, journalists praised the characters, combat system, and world design but had mixed reactions to the story, which was seen as unoriginal. Players take on the role of Val, a Soul Guard escorting a group to the Mana Tree, with up to three party members playable while navigating different areas of the world. During exploration, players can freely explore between town locations and dungeon areas, using save points activated during exploration for fast travel. Outdoor environments have collectibles and treasure chests, some of which are hidden behind platforming puzzles that can only be unlocked after acquiring the power of the game's eight Elementals. In addition to main quests, players can complete side quests given by non-playable characters, which may involve finding an item or person or defeating a designated enemy. Combat is action-based and triggered upon encountering enemies wandering the environment, with players able to assume control of any member of a three-person party, each with their own unique skills and weapons. Character abilities in combat are unlocked using Element Points earned in combat within the Elemental Plot, which unlocks new moves and element-specific character classes. These classes are unlocked over the course of the game as Elementals ally with the party. The game Visions of Mana has a complex battle system that varies depending on the character assigned to an Elemental.[1][2][4][5] Players can exploit enemy weaknesses using specific items or elemental attacks, and bonuses may be awarded for completing battles efficiently and taking minimal damage.[3] Towns in the game feature vendors selling equipment, weapons, and other items.[4] while characters can equip Ability Seeds that alter their abilities and attributes.[7] During combat, characters can accumulate a Class Strike Gauge to unleash powerful class-specific abilities.[2][5] The story takes place in the fantasy world of Qi'Diel, where various species coexist under the influence of the Mana Tree, an incarnation of the Goddess of Mana.[3][8][9] The game follows two protagonists, Hinna and Val, who are part of a pilgrimage to restore the flow of Mana. They are joined by other companions, including Morley, Careena, Palamena, and Julei, each with their own unique abilities and backgrounds.[10][11] The story also features several antagonists, including the Benevodons, eight elemental monsters from the distant past.[9][12] A prologue shows Eoren and Lysa attempting to escape the Earth Village, but they fail and Lysa is petrified. Later in the game, Hinna is chosen as the Alm of Fire, and she and Val are joined by other Alms, including Careena and Palamena.[13] Along the way, they meet Eoren, who tells them about the legend of the Mana Sword wielded by the Goddess's chosen hero. However, Eoren eventually betrays Hinna and Val, using her corestone to awaken the Mana Sword and release Daelophos from his stone prison.[14] The Mana Sword's power is unleashed as Daelophos reclaims his lost strength, killing Eoren and Lysa in the process. As a result, Val becomes the Alm of Light and embarks on a quest to learn Daelophos's goals. The group meets with Khoda, the spirit of the first Soul Guard, who shares ancient visions that reveal the fragmented realms of Fa'Diel were merged into Qi'Diel during a war, unleashing the Benevodons. Daelophos became the Goddess's champion and sealed them away, but his desire for revenge against humanity led him to attempt to kill her. However, Khoda sacrificed himself to seal Daelophos away, and the Alms' sacrifices sustained the sleeping Goddess. The party defeats the eight Benevodons, re-awakening their will to improve the world. They then confront Daelophos, who breaks the Mana Sword before leaving for the Sanctuary. The group pursues and defeats him by the Tree of Mana, with Val striking the final blow. With Daelophos defeated, the Goddess is awakened, and she promises that those who aided in her return will reunite in new lives. Val uses the Mana Sword's power to wish for a world where Alms are no longer needed. The movie ends with visions of Mana flowing freely through the world as Alms help with reconstruction. In a post-credits scene, Val passes away, but reunites with Hinna as the Goddess of Mana in a post-game scenario. A new mainline title, Visions of Mana, was produced after years of fan demand, with series producer Masaru Oyamada working to revive the series and gauge player interest. Visions of Mana's development focused on enhancing player freedom and exploration. Early testing incorporated elemental spirit powers, which were chosen for their fun factor. The team considered multiplayer but dropped it due to progression concerns. Character designs came from Haccan, while monster designs were the work of Airi Yoshioka. Series creator Koichi Ishii revisited classic monster redesigns, including the dog mount Pikul. Visual design aimed to capture the diverse identities within the Mana series, incorporating elements from previous titles. The soundtrack was co-composed by Hiroki Kikuta, Tsuyoshi Sekito, and Ryo Yamazaki, with each contributing unique styles. The game's title, Visions of Mana, was revealed during Square Enix's 30th anniversary livestream and officially unveiled at The Game Awards in December 2023. It was suggested by the localization team to incorporate both Japanese and Western name conventions, as well as reference different character viewpoints in the story. The "V" letter coincidentally references the roman numeral five. The game's release included a demo released on July 30, 2024, which gave players bonus weapons in the full release if they had save data from the demo. Visions of Mana was launched for PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Windows, and Xbox Series X/S on August 29. However, it was reported that Ouka Studio, the game's developer, was being closed down by its parent company NetEase due to a scaling back by Chinese companies investing in Japanese game development. Reception of Visions of Mana was mixed among critics, with Metacritic scores ranging from 75 to 87%. In Japan, the game sold over 40,000 copies on PS5 and PS4 in its debut week. Criticisms included heavy exposition, conventional story approach, and a lack of bold ideas. However, many reviewers praised the game's combat system, customization options, environmental puzzle elements, and character cast. Reviewers praised the game's art design, calling it "true works of art" and comparing it to old storybooks. The environment was also highly praised, with many reviewers describing it as some of the best available in video games. The soundtrack was commended for its ability to reinforce the story's emotional moments. However, critics were not impressed with the game's combat system, citing input delay and difficulty. Some reviewers noted minor graphical issues, but overall, they seemed to enjoy the game's action-RPG elements. Not all reviewers shared this enthusiasm, however - one critic panned the music and voice acting, while another praised the game's art and world design but was less impressed with its combat mechanics. The reviews highlighted both positive and negative aspects of the game, suggesting that opinions on Visions of Mana are divided among critics. **Introduction** The Visions of Mana game series has been around for over two decades, and its latest installment is now available. The game was first announced in 2023, and since then, there have been several interviews with the developers, highlighting their vision for the game. **Game Development** According to an interview with Masaru Oyamada, the series' producer, the development team aimed to create a game that would appeal to both old and new fans of the series. They wanted to bring back the action RPG roots of the original Mana games while introducing new features. The game was developed in collaboration with NetEase and Studio Camellia, two hybrid studios known for their high-speed and hands-on development process. This allowed them to create a game that is both fast-paced and engaging. **Gameplay** Visions of Mana will not feature co-operative multiplayer mode, despite the series' history of having it. The gameplay will focus on exploration, combat, and character customization. The game's story follows Manah, who must navigate through various realms to reach the Mana Tree. Along the way, she meets new characters, such as Val, Hina, and other spirits. **Music** The game's soundtrack features a total of 100 tracks, all composed by renowned musicians such as Yūki Takada, Tsuneyoshi Saito, and Masaharu Iwata. The soundtrack will be released on September 11th, in CD format. Overall, Visions of Mana promises to deliver an engaging experience for fans of the series and newcomers alike, with its rich storyline, fast-paced gameplay, and catchy soundtrack. Various sources, including Eurogamer and GamesRadar+, reported on Visions of Mana's release in August 2024. The game received reviews from Metacritic for both PS5 and PC, with some outlets also covering its sales performance in Japan. An article by Famitsu magazine detailed the game's development history, citing reports that Ouka Studios was set to close, just days after Visions of Mana's release.

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