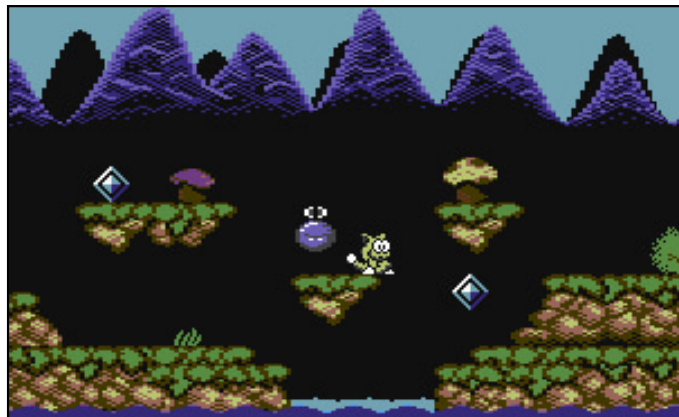


## IT'S MAGIC

Stardust, free, joystick

**T**om is a cat with a problem. His home is the magical Dream Islands—a colourful, picturesque, and blissfully peaceful place, until a gang of monsters arrived on its shores.

magical potions, robbing him of much of his power. If Tom can't reclaim the potions and rid the world of these creatures before his master returns, the Dream Islands could be lost forever.



• Tom contemplates the beauty of nature

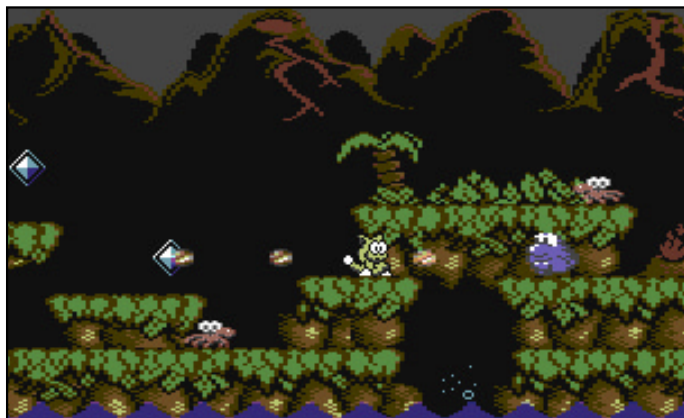
is to collect all the magical stars scattered around the platforms, which are well guarded by one or more enemies.

The second task concerns the stolen magical potions. You need to retrieve one from every level—but you can't tell whether a monster is carrying a potion until after you've killed it. Sometimes you get lucky, and find the magician's brew on one of the first fiends you kill... And sometimes you don't, and you end up having to exterminate every enemy to reveal the potion.

Tom isn't unarmed in his quest. The Master Magician managed to teach him a spell or two, so the fighting fur-ball can fire magical pellets at the invading hordes. Be warned, though—

some need several hits before they keel over.

Once Tom has collected all the stars and retrieved the potions, his quest is complete. Peace can reign once more in the Dream Islands, and our furry chum can have a quiet cat nap before solving the world's problems all over again.



• Clyde, erm, Tom gets spat at by a blue blob

Our feline friend is apprentice to the Master Magician, ruler of the Dream Islands. The Master has been called away on business, leaving his trusted trainee in charge—and it isn't long before the cat finds himself in deep water. He wakes one morning to find that his once-idyllic world has been overrun by a variety of fearsome fiends.

Not only have these creatures overrun the isles, they've also stolen the master's many

So the quest begins. What follows is classic 'run 'n' jump' action, set across colourful, sideways-scrolling, platform-based backdrops.

Tom must complete two objectives on each level. The first



**My initial impressions were that stealing graphics from other**

**games is wrong, no matter how you try and candy-coat it. Thankfully the gameplay is solid enough to overlook these suspected aesthetic infringements—at least in the short term. The 'run, jump and collect' action isn't original, but it's simple enough to get you playing for a few hours. After that repetition sets in, and small problems (such as the floaty main character, and unforgiving collision detection) become insurmountable. Pretty, but vacant.**



**The first thing that strikes you about It's Magic is the impressive graphics, although they do bear more than a passing resemblance to Thalamus's Creatures. The simple premise of the game also promises quick and addictive fun... But unfortunately, it's a promise that isn't kept. I have no gripe with simple run 'n' jump games, but they only really work if they're fast-paced, or have some depth. Neither of these descriptions applies here. The game moves along sedately, there is no variety in the shoot/jump/collect-the-goodies action, and it isn't long before boredom sets in. Despite these limitations, it's obvious that Stardust is a talented bunch of programmers and has the potential to produce something more enjoyable in future. As for It's Magic—it isn't bad, just painfully mediocre.**



**This is enjoyable, for a while. The Creatures-style backdrops and Giana Sisters gameplay kick things off nicely, as Tom learns to battle his way through three worlds of mutant beings. The action nosedives after a few levels though, because nothing much changes between them. It's not as though the task is hugely challenging, either—the end-of-level monsters are weedy, particularly if you manage to get behind them. Despite these faults, It's Magic is a reasonable platformer, but best kept for those days when thinking is the last thing you want to do.**



• Tom wishes he'd worn his thermal undies

### PRESENTATION 64%

No additional options, but an eye-catching title screen.

### GRAPHICS 90%

Nicely-drawn, smoothly-animated sprites, flawless scrolling, and neat animations.

### SOUND 72%

A catchy title tune, and fairly decent in-game effects.

### HOOKABILITY 91%

Immediately playable, and incredibly easy to get into...

### LASTABILITY 55%

...but the limited action soon begins to bore.

### OVERALL 62%

A technically superb platformer, marred by repetitive gameplay.

