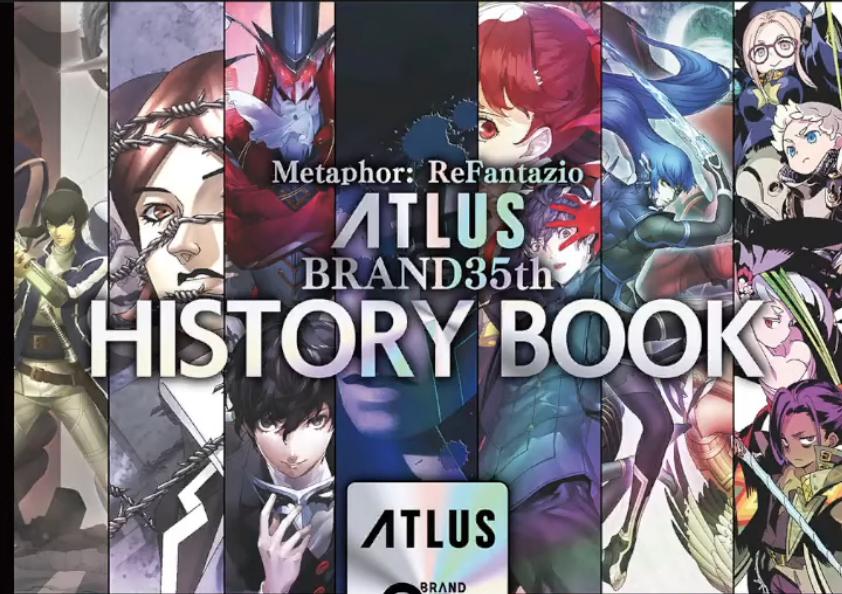


Metaphor: ReFantazio
ATLUS
BRAND35th
HISTORY BOOK



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Metaphor: ReFantazio

ATLUS BRAND35th HISTORY BOOK

Foreword

On 11/24/1989, Atlus made its publishing debut with the top-down, stage-based puzzle game *Kwirk*. With this inaugural title, the Atlus brand was born, and we celebrate its 35th anniversary in 2024. Though they surely vary for each person, the Atlus library conjures treasured memories for players everywhere.

They played *Shin Megami Tensei*, and suddenly, familiar Tokyo seemed that much more mystical.

They played *Power Instinct*, did a double take, and asked, "Why is this granny kicking everyone's butt?"

They played *Devil Summoner*, and learned of gods, demons, and mythologies from across the world.

Even now, many still have *Print Club* stickers in their wallets.

Etrian Odyssey showed players the charm of FM synthesis: for many, an art from before their time.

They got absorbed in *13 Sentinels* and thought, "So this is what it means to get sucked into a game."

And when they struggled to overcome life's walls, *Persona* reminded them to face themselves without fear.

Across all these Atlus games, a common feeling unites their players: the satisfaction of a one-of-a-kind thrill. People define Atlus and their games as having an "edge"—an appeal you can't find anywhere else. Maybe that's what it means to have the Atlus touch.

Atlus's history is one of trial and error in pursuit of the cutting edge. Atlus always has aimed, and always will aim, to sharpen that edge with every new title—and so uphold its legacy and identity of uniqueness as a developer.

Foreword by Denfaminico Gamer Editorial Department



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(ATLUS BRAND 35TH ANNIVERSARY)

HISTORY of ATLUS

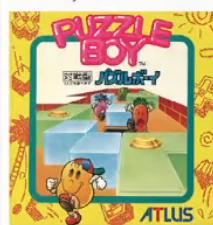
The Atlus brand's 35-year history began in 1989. What follows is a timeline of every Atlus brand title's Japanese release up through 2024. This timeline also includes titles that Atlus published but did not develop in-house. From 1995 to 2005, Atlus released at least ten titles each year, demonstrating the rapid growth of the industry during this period.



11/24/1989

Kwirk

Puzzle Boy



6/8/1990

Cosmo Tank

11/16/1990

Puzzle Boys[†]

12/14/1990
Pocket Stadium[†]

1/25/1991

Spud's Adventure

Totsugeki Bareishons

4/5/1991

Rockin' Kats

New York Nyankees

4/5/1991

QUIZ Marugoto: The World[†]

2/28/1992

Jantei Monogatari 2: Uchu Tantei Diban - Shutsudohen[†]

3/27/1992

QUIZ Marugoto: The World 2 - Time Machine ni Onegai![†]

3/27/1992

Wacky Races[†]

Chiki Chiki Machine Mo Race

*Port

4/24/1992

Jantei Monogatari 2: Uchu Tantei Diban - Kanketsuhon[†]

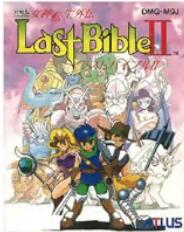


HISTORY of ATLUS

4/23/1993
Jantei Monogatari 3: Saver
Angels[†]

6/25/1993
GP-1

11/19/1993
Megami Tensei Gaiden:
Last Bible II[†]



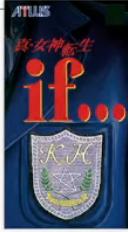
12/25/1993
Shin Megami Tensei[†]
*Port

3/18/1994
Shin Megami Tensei II[†]



10/14/1994
Power Instinct
Goketsuji Ichizoku

10/28/1994
Shin Megami
Tensei if...[†]



1/28/1994
Majin Tensei[†]

3/4/1994
Kabuki Rocks[†]

11/18/1994
Power Instinct[†]
Goketsuji Ichizoku
*Port

11/18/1994
GP-1: Part II
GP-1 RS



HISTORY of ATLUS

- 2/19/1995 Majin Tensei II: Spiral Nemesis[†]
- 3/4/1995 Another Bible[†]
- 3/4/1995 Last Bible III[†]
- 3/31/1995 Kyuyaku Megami Tensei[†]



- 12/15/1995 Mobile Light Force Gunbird
- 12/15/1995 Tetsudo-O '96 ~Ikuze Okuman Choja!!~[†]



>1995

- 7/14/1995 KAT'S RUN ~Zen Nihon K Car Senshuken~[†]
- 9/29/1995 Jack Bros.
Jack Brothers no Meiro de Hee-Ho!
- 10/20/1995 Goketsuji Ichizoku 2: Chotto Dake Saikyo Densetsu[†]
- 11/10/1995 High Velocity:
Mountain Racing Challenge
Toge KING: THE SPIRITS

- 12/25/1995 Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner[†]



- 2/16/1996 Pro Kishi Jinsei Simulation: Shogi no Hanamichi[†]
- 3/22/1996 My Best Friends ~St. Andrew Jogakuenhen~[†]
- 4/26/1996 Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner - Akuma Zensho[†]
- 4/26/1996 DonPachi[†]

>1996

- 11/1/1996 DigiCro: Digital Number Crossword[†]
- 11/15/1996 PriCla Daisakusen[†]
- 11/22/1996 Tengai[†]
Sengoku Blade

- 12/13/1996 Yusha: Heaven's Gate[†]
Heaven's Gate
- 12/20/1996 Galeoz[†]
- 12/27/1996 BLOODY BRIDE:
Imadoki no Vampire[†]

HISTORY of ATLUS

1/24/1997			11/13/1997			1/29/1998			6/11/1998	
Peak Performance	Toge MAX: Saisoku Drift Master		Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner: Soul Hackers†	Devil Summoner: Soul Hackers		Snow Break†			Hellnight	Dark Messiah
4/18/1997	Toge KING: THE SPIRITS 2†		Purikura Pocket 2: Kareshi Kaizo Daisakusen†			Final Round†			7/2/1998	Sol Divide
5/16/1997	Groove On Fight: Goketsuji Ichizoku 3†		12/11/1997	Princess Crown†		Kartia: The Word of Fate	Rebus		8/6/1998	Trap Gunner: Countdown to Oblivion
										Trap Gunner



8/7/1997	Minakata Hakudo Tojo†	12/12/1997	Snowboard Kids	4/23/1998	Toge MAX 2†
9/18/1997	DoDonPachi†	12/23/1997	Devil Summoner: Soul Hackers - Akuma Zensho Dainishu†	11/19/1998	ADVAN Racing†
9/25/1997	Tetsudo-O 2: Sekai Seifuku no Yabo!!†			12/17/1998	Thousand Arms
10/17/1997	Purikura Pocket: Fukanzen Josphiksei Manual†			12/18/1998	Purikura Pocket 3 ~Talent Debut Daisakusen~†
10/30/1997	RONDE -Rinbukyoku-†				

HISTORY of ATLUS

- 1/21/1999 **Snobow Kids Plus[†]**
- 2/19/1999 **Snowboard Kids 2**
Cho Snobow Kids
- 2/26/1999 **Hamster Paradise[†]**



- 6/24/1999 **Persona 2: Innocent Sin[†]**
Persona 2: Tsumi
- 9/10/1999 **Guruguru Garakutas[†]**



- 1/13/2000 **Toge MAX G†**
- 3/17/2000 **Hamster Paradise 2[†]**
- 4/20/2000 **Mecha Pockeler[†]**
- 4/20/2000 **Pockeler DX: Black[†]**
- 4/20/2000 **Pockeler DX: Pink[†]**

- 8/11/2000 **Tanimura Hitoshi Ryu Pachinko Koryaku Daisakusei: Don Quixote ga Iku[†]**
- 9/21/2000 **deSPIRIA[†]**
- 11/17/2000 **Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children - Aka no Sho[†]**
- 11/17/2000 **Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children - Kuro no Sho[†]**



- 3/19/1999 **Revelations: The Demon Slayer**
Megami Tensei Gaiden: Last Bible *Port
- 4/8/1999 **Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner: Soul Hackers[†]**
Devil Summoner: Soul Hackers *Port
- 4/16/1999 **Megami Tensei Gaiden: Last Bible II[†]**
*Port



- 10/28/1999 **Pockeler[†]**
- 11/25/1999 **Growlanser[†]**
- 11/25/1999 **Maken X**
- 4/20/2000 **Snow Pockeler[†]**
- 4/27/2000 **Primal Image: Vol. 1[†]**
- 6/29/2000 **Persona 2: Eternal Punishment**
Persona 2: Batsu



- 12/14/2000 **Kids Station: Guruguru Town Hanamaru-kun[†]**
- 12/14/2000 **Kids Station: Hello Kitty no Oshaberi Town[†]**
- 12/14/2000 **Happy! Happy!! Boarders[†]**
- 12/15/2000 **Hamster Paradise 3[†]**

- 2/22/2001 Eithéa[†]
- 3/21/2001 Super Dodge Ball Advance
Bakunetsu Dodge Ball Fighters.
- 5/31/2001 Shin Megami Tensei[†]
*Port
- 6/7/2001 Maken Shao: Demon Sword
Maken Shao 

- 10/11/2001 Kids Station: Hello Kitty no Oshaberi ABC[†]
- 10/11/2001 Road Rage 3
Toge 3
- 11/15/2001 Kids Station: Kuma no Pooh-san - Mori no Nakama to 1-2-3[†]
- 11/15/2001 Kids Station: Mickey to Nakamatachi - Kazusobi Iroiro[†]

- 2/7/2002 Disney's Winnie the Pooh: Kindergarten
Kids Station: Kuma no Pooh-san - Mori no Kyoshitsu
- 2/7/2002 My Disney Kitchen
Kids Station: Mickey & Minnie no Magical Kitchen
- 3/20/2002 Shin Megami Tensei II[†]
*Port

- 11/15/2002 DemiKids: Light Version
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children - Hikari no Sho
- 11/15/2002 DemiKids: Dark Version
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children - Yami no Sho
- 12/5/2002 Shin Megami Tensei NINE[†]

2001

- 7/26/2001 Growlanser II[†]
- 7/27/2001 Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children - Shiro no Sho[†]
- 9/28/2001 Hamster Paradise 4[†]

- 12/6/2001 Disney's Winnie the Pooh: Preschool
Kids Station: Kuma no Pooh-san - Mori no Tomodachi
- 12/6/2001 Growlanser III[†]

- 3/28/2002 Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children - Kuro no Sho / Aka no Sho[†]
*Port
- 7/19/2002 Hamster Paradise Advanchu[†]
- 11/14/2002 Kids Station: Plarail Tetsudo Monoshiri Hyakka[†]
- 11/14/2002 Kids Station: Ugoku Tomica Zukan[†]

- 12/12/2002 Toge R[†]
- 12/12/2002 Nijiyo Dodge Ball: Otometachi no Seishun[†]
- 12/26/2002 Shin Megami Tensei if...[†]
*Port

HISTORY of ATLUS

HISTORY of ATLAS

- 2/20/2003 **Shin Megami Tensei III: NOCTURNE[†]**
- 3/28/2003 **Shin Megami Tensei[†]**
*Port
- 5/15/2003 **2003-nen Kaimaku: Ganbare Kyukai - Iwayuru Pro Yakyu Desu Ne[†]**
- 7/11/2003 **Hamster Paradise: Pure Heart[†]**

2003

- 7/25/2003 **Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children - Puzzle de Call![†]**
- 9/12/2003 **Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children - Hono no Sho[†]**
- 9/12/2003 **Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children - Kori no Sho[†]**



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- 2/29/2004 **Shin Megami Tensei: Nocturne**
Shin Megami Tensei III: NOCTURNE - Maniac
- 2/19/2004 **Gunbird: Special Edition**
Gunbird 1 & 2
- 3/5/2004 **River City Ransom EX**
Downtown Nekketsu Monogatari ex
- 3/5/2004 **Double Dragon Advance**

2004

- 7/15/2004 **Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga**
DIGITAL DEVIL SAGA: Avatar Tuner



- 8/5/2004 **Battle B-Daman**
B-Legend! Battle Bidaman ~Moero! Bidama!!~

- 9/16/2004 **Kowloon High-School Chronicle[†]**
Kuron Yoma Gakuenki



- 10/28/2004 **Stella Deus: The Gate of Eternity**
Stella Deus



- 12/2/2004 **NEW Jinsei Game[†]**
- 12/16/2004 **Duel Masters 3[†]**

>2005

- 6/16/2005 **Trauma Center: Under the Knife**
Choshitto: Caduceus



- 11/3/2005 **Miracle! Panzo**
7-tsu no Hoshi no Uchu Kaizoku[†]

- 11/24/2005 **SBK: Snowboard Kids**
Snowboard Kids: Party

- 12/22/2005 **Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner**[†]
*Port

> HISTORY of **ATLUS**

<

- 8/4/2005 **Battle B-Daman: Fire Spirits!**
B-Legend! Battle Bidaman - Fire Spirits!

- 8/25/2005 **Kunio-kun Nekketsu Collection 1**[†]

- 9/22/2005 **Princess Crown**[†]
*Port

- 10/27/2005 **Kunio-kun Nekketsu Collection 2**[†]

- 2/16/2006 **Kunio-kun Nekketsu Collection 3**[†]
- 3/2/2006 **Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner - Raidou Kuzunoha vs. the Soulless Army**
Devil Summoner:
Kuzunoha Raidou Tai Choriki Heidan



>2006

- 9/28/2006 **Kuron Yoma Gakuenki re:charge**[†]

- 12/2/2006 **Trauma Center: Second Opinion**
Caduceus Z: 2-tsu no Choshitto



HISTORY of ATLUS

The image is a collage of various Atlus game art pieces and promotional images, arranged in a grid-like structure. It includes characters from Etrian Odyssey, Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3 FES, Odin Sphere, Growlanser VI: Precarious World, Trauma Center: New Blood, Etrian Odyssey II: Heroes of Lagaard, Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 4, Trauma Center: Under the Knife 2, and Devil Summoner 2 - Raidou Kuzunoha vs. King Abaddon.

2007

- 1/18/2007 **Etrian Odyssey**
Sekaiju no Meikyu
- 4/19/2007 **Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3 FES**
Persona 3: Fes
- 5/17/2007 **Odin Sphere**
- 6/21/2007 **Growlanser VI: Precarious World[†]**

2008

- 1/17/2008 **Trauma Center: New Blood**
Caduceus: NEW BLOOD
- 2/21/2008 **Etrian Odyssey II: Heroes of Lagaard**
Sekaiju no Meikyu II: Sho-O no Seihai
- 7/10/2008 **Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 4**
Persona 4
- 8/7/2008 **Trauma Center: Under the Knife 2**
Kyukyu Kyumei: Caduceus 2
- 10/23/2008 **Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner 2 - Raidou Kuzunoha vs. King Abaddon**
Devil Summoner:
Kuzunoha Raidou Tai Abaddon-O

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1/15/2009

**Shin Megami Tensei:
Devil Survivor**

Megami Ibunroku Devil Survivor

4/29/2009

Shin Megami Tensei: PersonaPersona
*Port

11/1/2009

**Shin Megami Tensei:
Persona 3 Portable**

Persona 3: Portable

4/1/2010

**Etrian Odyssey III:
The Drowned City**

Sekaiju no Meikyu III: Seikai no Raihousha

**HISTORY of
ATLUS**

4/22/2010

Knights in the Nightmare

5/27/2010

Blaze Union[†]

6/17/2010

Trauma Team

HOSPITAL: 6-nin no Ishi

>2009**>2010**5/14/2009
Growlanser[†]
*Port10/8/2009
**Shin Megami Tensei:
Strange Journey**11/12/2009
Hexyz Force12/3/2009
**Yggdra Unison
~Seiken Buyuden~[†]**4/22/2010
**Tokyo Monoharashi:
Karasunomori Gakuen Kitan[†]**11/3/2010
Radiant HistoriaZ X
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- 2/17/2011 Catherine
- 4/14/2011 Persona 2: Innocent Sin
Persona 2: Tsumi
*Port



- 7/21/2011 Nora to Toki no Kobo: Kiri no Mori no Majo†
- 7/28/2011 Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Survivor 2
Devil Survivor 2

2011

- 5/19/2011 Gungnir
Gungnir -Maso no Gunshin to Eiyu Senso-
- 6/23/2011 Gloria Union†

- 8/18/2011 Growlanser: Wayfarer of Time
Growlanser IV: Over Reloaded
- 9/1/2011 Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Survivor Overclocked
Devil Survivor: Overclocked

HISTORY of ATLUS



- 6/14/2012 Persona 4 Golden
Persona 4: The Golden
- 7/5/2012 Etrian Odyssey IV: Legends of the Titan
Sekaiju no Meikyū IV: Densho no Kyojin
- 8/30/2012 Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner: Soul Hackers
Devil Summoner: Soul Hackers
*Port



5/23/2013

Shin Megami Tensei IV



6/27/2013

Etrian Odyssey Untold:
The Millennium Girl

Shin Sekaiju no Meikyu: Millennium no Shojo

2013

7/25/2013

Dragon's Crown



6/5/2014

Persona Q:
Shadow of the Labyrinth



11/27/2014

Etrian Odyssey 2 Untold:
The Fafnir Knight

Shin Sekaiju no Meikyu 2: Fafnir no Kishi

2014

8/28/2014

Persona 4 Arena Ultimax

Persona 4: The Ultimax Ultra Suplex Hold



HISTORY of
ATLUS

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1/29/2015

Shin Megami Tensei:
Devil Survivor 2 Record Breaker
Devil Survivor 2: Break Record

2015



3/5/2015

Etrian Mystery Dungeon
Sekaiju to Fushigi no Dungeon

6/25/2015

Persona 4: Dancing All Night



HISTORY of
ATLUS

1/14/2016

Odin Sphere Leifthrasir



2/10/2016

Shin Megami Tensei IV:
Apocalypse
Shin Megami Tensei IV: FINAL

2016

8/4/2016

Etrian Odyssey V:
Beyond the Myth

Sekaiju no Meikyu V: Nagaki Shinwa no Hate

9/15/2016

Persona 5



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**HISTORY of
ATLUS**

2017

- 6/29/2017 Radiant Historia: Perfect Chronology
- 8/31/2017 Sekaiju to Fushigi no Dungeon 2[†]
- 10/26/2017 Shin Megami Tensei: Strange Journey Redux

2018

- 2/8/2018 Dragon's Crown Pro
- 5/24/2018 Persona 3: Dancing in Moonlight
- 5/24/2018 Persona 5: Dancing in Starlight
- 8/2/2018 Etrian Odyssey Nexus
- 11/29/2018 Persona Q2: New Cinema Labyrinth



2/14/2019

Catherine: Full Body

10/31/2019

Persona 5 Royal
Persona 5: The Royal

2/20/2020

Persona 5 Strikers

Persona 5 Scramble: The Phantom Strikers



7/2/2020

Catherine: Full Body
*Port**>2019**

11/28/2019

13 Sentinels: Aegis Rim
Jusen Kihei Boeiken

6/14/2020

Persona 4 GoldenPersona 4: The Golden
*Port

10/29/2020

Shin Megami Tensei III Nocturne HD Remaster**HISTORY of
ATLUS**

HISTORY of ATLUS



2021

- 11/11/2021 **Shin Megami Tensei V**


2022

- 3/17/2022 **Persona 4 Arena Ultimax**
Persona 4: The Ultimax Ultra Suplex Hold
*Port

- 4/14/2022 **13 Sentinels: Aegis Rim**
Jusan Kihei Boeiken
*Port

- 10/21/2022 **Persona 5 Royal**
Persona 5: The Royal
*Port


8/25/2022 **Soul Hackers 2**

Soul Hackers 2

8/25/2022

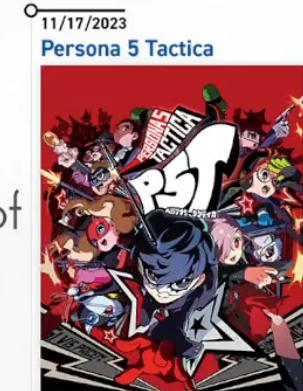
Soul Hackers 2



2023

- 1/19/2023
Persona 4 Golden
Persona 4: The Golden
*Port

HISTORY of
ATLUS



- 6/1/2023
Etrian Odyssey Origins Collection
Sekaiju no Meikyu I/II/III HD REMASTER

2024

- 3/8/2024
Unicorn Overlord
- 6/14/2024
Shin Megami Tensei V: Vengeance



- 2/2/2024
Persona 3 Reload



SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI SERIES



In the early 1990s, the RPG genre was synonymous with sword-and-sorcery fantasy. Then, *Shin Megami Tensei* appeared on the scene with a modern, realistic setting and allies with ideologies that could clash with the protagonist's. Black-and-white morality was the standard for RPGs, and the first *SMT* game bucked that trend with a gritty backdrop supporting a story that changed based on the player's choices. The series would go on to become one of Atlus' hallmark franchises.

SMT distinguished itself from its peers by featuring demons based on mythological figures and gods, as well as introducing innovative mechanics, like recruiting enemy demons and fusing demon allies together to create new ones, which influenced the RPG genre for years to come.



Make powerful allies out of demonic enemies

Negotiation with enemy demons can turn them into allies, who can then be fused together to create more powerful ones. These revolutionary systems overturned the conventional wisdom that enemies are merely opponents to be defeated for experience points, and presented a new framework for RPGs.



Shin Megami Tensei's new take on the RPG genre



SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI SERIES



KEYWORD 2

You can't have *Shin Megami Tensei* without Tokyo, but depicted is a different side of Tokyo than the glamorous metropolis it's known to be. Players visit devastated versions of real-life locations and navigate demon-infested dungeons. Tokyo's appearance and the disasters that befall it vary from game to game.



A devastated city overrun by demons, based on real-life locations in Tokyo



KEYWORD 3



Who will you save, and who will you abandon? Who will you slay, and who will you spare? These are the kinds of choices the SMT series forces you to make, and each one affects the protagonists' alignments. Adherence to any of the three alignments—Law, prioritizing order above all else; Chaos, rejecting all forms of rule; and Neutral, tying between the other two—affects how the stories play out. (These alignments go by different names in *Nocturne*.)

Law, Chaos, or Neutral...
Which path will you choose?



KEYWORD 4

A constantly evolving series



Though the first and second games in the series share a connected narrative, each game from the third entry onward has featured its own standalone story. The latest title, *Shin Megami Tensei V: Vengeance*, has added and expanded mechanics around combat, demon fusion, exploration, and more. It also contains two different stories for the player to choose from.





KEYWORD

RPGs about youth: living, learning, and growing

One of *Persona*'s defining features is its depiction of the world as seen through the eyes of its teenage protagonists living in modern-day Japan. These young characters unknowingly play the social roles they are given by their schools and families, however different those roles may be from their true selves. The games offer a glimpse at the underside of rose-tinted youth, following their characters' clumsy search for self and the maturation they reach in the process.



Ordinary days with extraordinary events



PERSONA
SERIES

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PERSONA SERIES

KEYWORD 2

"I am thou... Thou art I..." Persona—the other self

In the series, the term "Persona" refers to the materialized form of a character's other self latent within their heart. These Personas are named and designed after people and creatures of legend, both mythological and urban. By manifesting their Personas, the characters can utilize supernatural powers. *Persona 3* introduced Persona fusion—the combination of two or more Personas into a new one, by which the resulting Persona may inherit skills from the ones used to make it.

KEYWORD 3

Uniting story and system through bonds with others

"The strength of these Social Links will foster the growth of your Persona abilities." This was spoken by Igor—a character recurring as the host of the Velvet Room—explaining the discovery of self through connection with others as a source of power. As such, the potential of each protagonist's abilities is directly proportional to the strength of their bonds. Players' conscientious interactions with other characters allow them to not simply view the story, but actively participate in it. This use of the video game medium's interactive nature to elegantly unite narrative elements and system mechanics is an especially important aspect of the *Persona* series.

KEYWORD 4

Striking visuals and UI

These games are known for their eye-catching color schemes and unique user interfaces. For the menus of the latest release, *Persona 3 Reload*, the game's theme color of blue as well as visuals reminiscent of water and bubbles were used as prime motifs, representing the protagonist's deep psyche and the sense of diving into one's own heart when reflecting on their relationships. Designed down to the pixel, these menus are responsive and intuitive to navigate through, in addition to containing stunning aesthetics.

KEYWORD 5

Compelling soundtracks and spectacular character designs

The series visually and audibly stimulates its players through emotionally riveting soundtracks and distinct, captivating character designs, culminating in a truly immersive experience. This refined vision of the Persona universe goes beyond the realm of video games, spanning mediums such as manga, anime, novels, and theater adaptations, among others.

KEYWORD 1

"I am thou... Thou art I..." Persona—the other self

In the series, the term "Persona" refers to the materialized form of a character's other self latent within their heart. These Personas are named and designed after people and creatures of legend, both mythological and urban. By manifesting their Personas, the characters can utilize supernatural powers. *Persona 3* introduced Persona fusion—the combination of two or more Personas into a new one, by which the resulting Persona may inherit skills from the ones used to make it.

KEYWORD 3

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"The strength of these Social Links will foster the growth of your Persona abilities." This was spoken by Igor—a character recurring as the host of the Velvet Room—explaining the discovery of self through connection with others as a source of power. As such, the potential of each protagonist's abilities is directly proportional to the strength of their bonds. Players' conscientious interactions with other characters allow them to not simply view the story, but actively participate in it. This use of the video game medium's interactive nature to elegantly unite narrative elements and system mechanics is an especially important aspect of the *Persona* series.

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Devil Summoner tells intense stories with hard-boiled spirit

The *Devil Summoner* series keeps staple elements of *Shin Megami Tensei* like demon negotiation and fusion while adding hard-boiled and cyberpunk spins to its stories and world. The result is a more narrative-focused experience, as the player assumes the role of one of the titular Devil Summoners, commanding demons and solving crimes outside the public eye. Some entries feature real-time action, a departure from the traditional turn-based battles of *SMT*. Additionally, some titles feature a Loyalty mechanic, which affects how likely demon allies are to follow orders. This possibility of allies disobeying commands makes for a more layered combat experience.



DEVIL SUMMONER

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Z X

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-KEYWORD

Every Devil Summoner is equipped with a COMP: a computer installed with the Demon Summoning Program that's necessary for controlling demons. COMPs can take various forms, from brass knuckles to parasols to even instruments like electric guitars or saxophones. Particularly well known is the gun-shaped COMP, the GUMP.



The Devil Summoner's COMP, a device for controlling demons



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The Raidou Kuzunoha games' distinction from titles that came before



A new aesthetic for every entry

The latest entry in the series, *Soul Hackers 2*, features a futuristic setting with characters outfitted in a cyberpunk style unlike anything seen in previous titles. Ringo, the protagonist, has an unusual origin and equally unique way of perceiving the world. The story focuses on Devil Summoners dealing with regretful decisions, and the torture of ideological clashes that drive wedges between otherwise likeminded people.

KEYWORD 4

The *Raidou Kuzunoha* games take place in the fictional year of Taisho 20 and are particularly unique, even among other *Devil Summoner* titles, due to not only their setting, but their real-time battles. These entries also dig into the history of the Kuzunoha clan, which has appeared in and been alluded to across the series.



ERTRIAN ODYSSEY SERIES

How deep can you dive?
And how will you make it back?
A player-driven tale of life and death



In the 1980s, 3D dungeon crawling RPGs experienced a boom, and became a major part of PC gaming. The *Etrian Odyssey* series carries on this legacy, mixing in nostalgic elements like text-adventure style narration and FM synthesis music while putting its own spin on the genre. While there is a story, the games forgo lavish cutscenes and long dialogues, instead telling the tale through your own battles and adventures. Your party is highly customizable, with a wide variety of classes to fill specific roles.

The triumph of conquering dungeons in first-person perspective, mapped by your own hand, even captivated younger players. Through every encounter—whether a party wipeout at the hands of a deadly threat, or a narrow escape from death won by skill and quick thinking—the player's judgment and ingenuity is what drives this freeform tale of life and death, and it's this experience that makes *Etrian Odyssey* uniquely compelling.



Mix and match classes
to form your ideal party



The player forms a party of five adventurers, freely choosing from the available classes. Options include the Landsknecht, a close-quarters attacker; the Protector, a party's stalwart defender; the Medic, a healing specialist; and a wide variety of other possibilities. Each class has its own unique skillset, and the way you approach the dungeon changes based on your party makeup. Adventurers can be placed on either the front line or the back line—frontliners taking more damage, and backliners having to focus on ranged attacks. Understanding each class's potential and specialties is key to victory.



ETRIAN ODYSSEY SERIES

KEYWORD 2



Each title explores a new setting and a new mystery of Yggdrasil

Each game is based in a different city, and while their stories aren't directly connected, each land shares common traits. With each game, the mysteries of Yggdrasil—the world tree—slowly become clearer. Towns offer an inn to heal and save your game, a shop to buy and sell weapons and items, and a guild where you manage your party, among other facilities. Beyond dungeon dives, some games even let you sail the high seas or traverse a wider world.



Each class's unique skills define your battles and journeys



Each character gains skill points as they level up, which can be spent to learn new skills. Skills are the crux of adventuring, and some even aid you outside of battle. Allow a veteran explorer to retire, and you can create a new character in their place with bonus skill points and stats. And in *Etrian Odyssey IV: Legends of the Titan*, raising a character's level unlocks tiers of powerful skills only available to elite explorers.

KEYWORD 3



FOEs stalk the labyrinth: Enemies stronger than bosses

An unlucky encounter with one of these powerful enemies can lead to a swift death. Unlike the normal enemies in random encounters, FOEs can be seen on the map. Any FOE can make for a deadly threat, but each one patrols in specific patterns—careful observation can allow you to avoid combat entirely, or lure them out of the way. Battles with them are usually avoidable, but victory might net you a massive boost in experience points and valuable items.



KEYWORD 4



TRAUMA CENTER SERIES

The *Trauma Center* games cast the player as a surgeon of a fictional hospital, working to save patients' lives across tense operations and a medical drama story: treating illnesses and wounds with modern medical tools and procedures. Each game is designed to make full use of hardware features such as touch screens, motion sensors, and pointing to create a wholly new genre of "surgical action" gameplay that puts you in



The *Trauma Center* games blazed

KEYWORD 1

The games' unique style of action and innovative interface let you switch your approach on the fly. With a variety of tools—scissors, medical drains, needles, and more—you can stitch lacerations, remove tumors, and even perform complex procedures like organ transplants and treating compound fractures. Precision and speed are key, just as they are for any good surgeon.

White-knuckle surgical action
brought to life through intuitive controls



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Jump

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ATLUS GAMES & MEDIA HISTORY BOOK

N Up Off

P Window

KEYWORD 2

カドウケウス

NEW BLOOD



Defy mankind's
greatest enemy: disease

CHART

Time Limit 05:00:00

Condition
左下部肋骨の骨折と脾臓の損傷。
腹腔内に出血あり。骨折の整形処置、脾損傷と出血への対処が必要。

Name: シルビア・W
Height: 168 cm
Weight: 55 kg
Status:

VITAL 10 - VITAL WARNING

Time Limit 03:26:89 Score 940

:て…摘出…お願いします…。
:拍助下での処置です…気をつけて…!
FORCES - ピンセット

Z X
← →

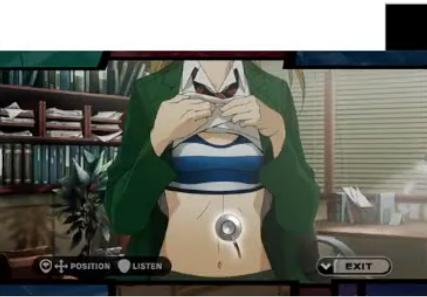
Up Off

Trauma Center Series

KEYWORD 3

No medical degree required

The *Trauma Center* series strikes a balance between realistic medicine and entertainment. For example, it would be hard to gauge test results' numbers as "normal" without medical knowledge, but by comparing them with a healthy person's data, you can find the differences and make a life-saving diagnosis.



Stitching together fiction and reality



KEYWORD 4

The surgery gameplay puts you in charge of a number of different operations, all requiring different tools. While abiding by a certain degree of realism, the protagonists can also use special powers known as the Healing Touch. For instance, the first game's protagonist, Derek Stiles, can slow down time while performing surgery, and Naomi Kimishima, a protagonist from the second title, can stabilize a patient's vitals with almost every move. The games strike a delicate balance between fiction and reality, featuring futuristic elements like an all-purpose antibiotic gel to better serve the gameplay.

The fifth title in the series, *Trauma Team*, takes place two years after *Trauma Center: Second Opinion*, despite having a different name. The game features six protagonists: all doctors with their own stories. As players progress, previously-unconnected stories become intertwined. The story is conveyed through a series-first presentation: comic-book style animated scenes. A wide range of medical fields—traditional surgery, plastic surgery, crime scene investigation, internal medicine, diagnosis, and first aid—blends with point-and-click elements to make the story all the more gripping.

KEYWORD 5

Stylish animations bring the story to life



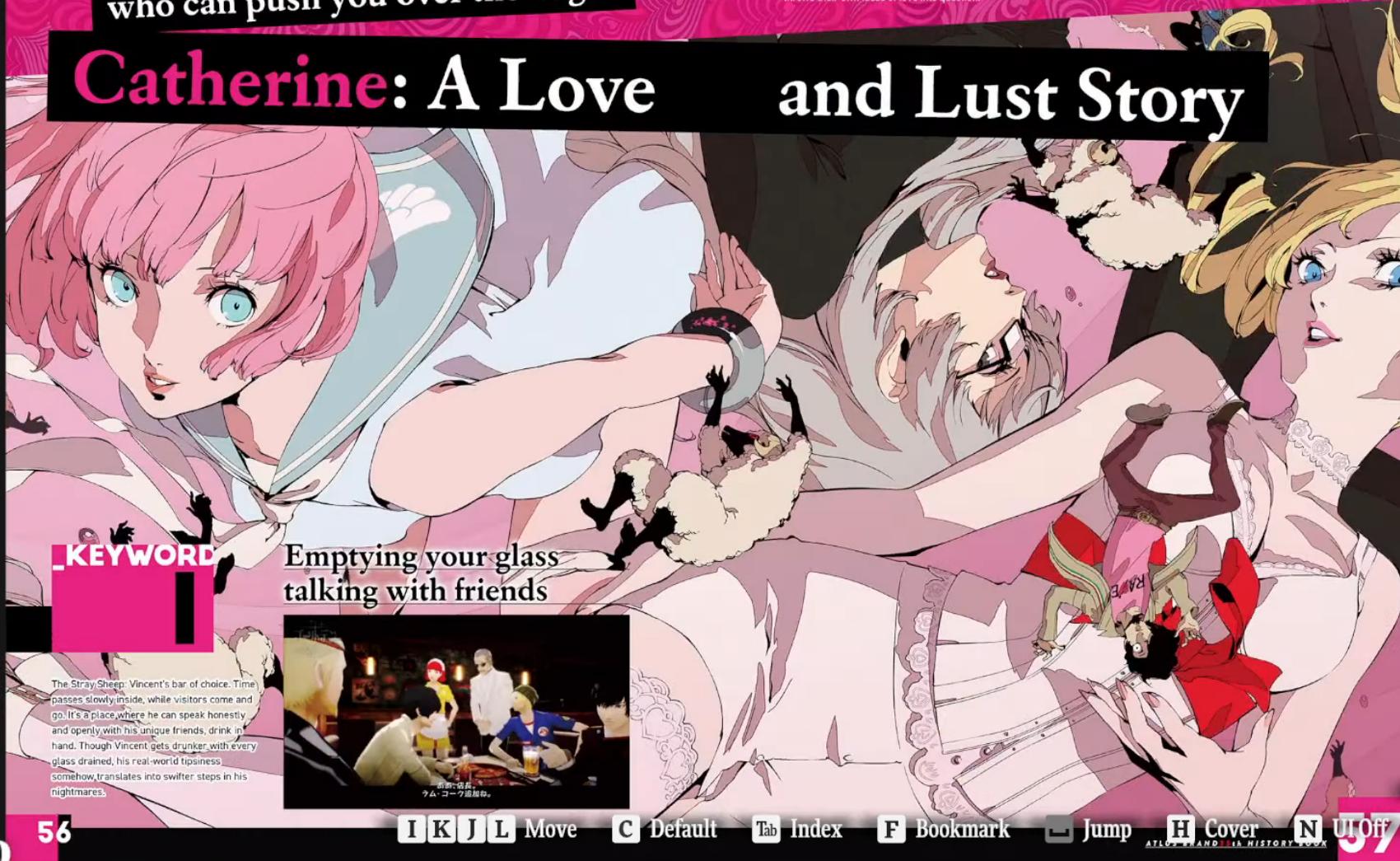
CATHERINE

Looking for a lover

who can push you over the edge?

Catherine explores romance between adults, as well as the values of the protagonist Vincent as he bounces between Catherine's familiar and new. Players are challenged to navigate adult romantic relationships, in which there is no one correct answer. Vincent is a man plagued by nightmares—and if he can't force himself to wake up, he'll die. The story follows his trials across reality and his dreams. By day, he agonizes over the women in his life. By night, he is haunted by the terrors of his mind. Freedom or order? Or another option altogether? The gaming medium means choices and consequences are up to the player... even if it throws their own ideas of love into question.

Catherine: A Love and Lust Story



CATHERINE



CATHERINE

A gorgeous stranger Vincent met at the bar he frequents. Mischievous, exciting, and uninhibited, but with a possessive streak. After a one-night stand between her and Vincent, she keeps coming back to him night after night.



Vincent's girlfriend. Manager at a medium-sized clothing company. Once Vincent's high school classmate, the two started dating after reuniting five years ago. She's got marriage on her mind, but Vincent's hesitation is starting to wear on her.

KATHERINE



_KEYWORD

2

The love triangle and horrific nightmares push Vincent to his limit, and meeting the amnesiac Rin only twists his relationships further. Cornered in every sense, Vincent is forced to confront what it is he truly wants. His choices may push him towards freedom, order, or even a third route...



Freedom? Order?
Or something else?

RIN

Introduced in *Catherine: Full Body*. A third Catherine who stands apart from Vincent's romantic struggles, and a source of relief and comfort for him. There's something almost otherworldly about her: an air of mystery only deepened by her amnesia.



_KEYWORD

3



GAME OVER= LOVE IS OVER

In the gameplay, set in Vincent's nightmares, he must climb upwards while his footing crumbles beneath his feet. A boss lies in wait at the end of each stage, and the aim is to reach the door or lever at the top of each floor. However, if Vincent falls, gets crushed, or gets struck by a monster, he's dead... which means for him, love is over.

Z X
← →

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Dragon Quest Creator Yuji Horii Why Do RPGs

In celebration of the 35th anniversary of the Atlus brand, this is a special interview between *Dragon Quest* creator Yuji Horii and director of the *Persona* series and *Metaphor: ReFantazio* Katsura Hashino. In this meeting of industry veterans, they reflect on the titles that make up their legacies, and the power of RPGs as a genre.

Dragon Quest: A story told through dialogue

—Among all gaming genres, RPGs in particular often have a great impact on players because of their ability to immerse the player in a story. Horii-san, what did you find most captivating about RPGs? What drew you in?

Horii: I used to draw manga, and for a long time, my dream was actually to become a professional manga artist. At some point along the way, though, I was introduced to computers. I found them fun—especially the way they could respond to your inputs—and I thought, “Wouldn’t it be fun to use this interactivity to tell a story?” It was around that time that I also stumbled across adventure games and RPGs, and I realized, “Hey, I can do this.” The first game I made was *The Portopia Serial Murder Case*¹, and that was essentially where my career really began.

Hashino: When you decided to make a murder mystery adventure game, what were your goals for it?

Horii: I’ve always liked drama. At the time, there were already games like *Mystery House*² and such, right? But instead of simply solving a puzzle, I thought it’d be fun to play a game where the drama arises from a big, compelling story beat. And no part of *The Portopia Serial Murder Case* exemplifies that more than the finale, where you realize who the murderer

is—I really pulled out all the stops there (laughs).
—(Laughs). Why did you decide to incorporate elements of drama and characterization within your adventure games?

Horii: I’d have to say that’s because I liked stories, as a then-aspiring manga artist. I had a natural inclination to telling stories, and I thought it’d be compelling to have the plot unfold through Boss’s interactions with other characters. That line of thinking carried over to *Dragon Quest* (hereafter *DQ*) too, which is why all of its story is framed through dialogue. *DQ* is a story fundamentally told through the townspeople’s dialogue, with hardly any narration. In that way, the story is told in their words. It was a fun approach.

Hashino: Manga protagonists have their own personality and will, which is where their personal goals come from. On the other hand, the *DQ* hero is traditionally completely silent. Did you struggle when it came to writing a protagonist for a game?

Horii: Not at all. Even though the protagonist is less a character and more of a symbol, the player imagines their own reactions to the plot, and plays while empathizing with the protagonist character as a stand-in for themselves, right? Though as graphics improve and get more realistic these days, it looks a little sillier if the protagonist just stands there with no reaction (laughs). On the other hand, giving them too distinct a reaction might make the player think, “This isn’t me

Yuji Horii hereafter Horii

Game designer and author, famously known as the father of the *Dragon Quest* series. Following his efforts and artistry through the hit series *Dragon Quest*, his work as a game designer gave the title new weight across the entire industry.



Metaphor Director Katsura Hashino Captivate Us?

—I really pulled out all the stops there (laughs).
—(Laughs). Why did you decide to incorporate elements of drama and characterization within your adventure games?

Hashino: It’s true that game graphics are constantly evolving, and many characters’ proportions have become less stylized and more realistic. Horii-san, what do you think about these improvements in hardware?

Horii: I think it’s amazing, to put it simply (laughs). Earlier, I got a sneak peek at *Metaphor: ReFantazio* (hereafter *Metaphor*), and that city I saw was incredible. It really made me think, “Wow, this is what we’re capable of now!” To me, it’s fantastic that we can enter a world like that.

Narrative paths through the worlds of DQ

Hashino: When I first played *DQ* as a kid, I really felt that excitement of adventure from each of the towns. I remember wondering at the time if the people who made the game liked traveling, but you told me before that you don’t go out on trips at all (laughs). It made me wonder what you based the towns of *DQ* off of.

Horii: I don’t mind traveling, but I can’t say I feel any deep inspiration when I do visit somewhere. On the other hand, I often feel deeply moved when traveling through a game world. I guess that speaks to how much I like getting

immersed in narratives.

Hashino: I’ve found that the dialogue of the common townspeople in *DQ* is well thought out in terms of lining up with what the player would be thinking about in a given situation. It felt consistent—like you anticipated what kind of emotions would stir when talking to them, and created the game with that in mind. I’m somewhat surprised to hear that it’s the story you’re most drawn to, though—I thought you’d say you put more thought into the gameplay elements than the narrative elements when making games.

Horii: A traditional narrative gives direction—a path to walk. But *DQ* was made focused on the “lands” that path ran through. The towns, the people—they existed and spoke as inhabitants of those lands. The story was in the journey across those lands. Sometimes story events would even change these lands drastically, and their people’s dialogue would change to match. To tell the truth, I put a lot more thought into the dialogue of the common townsfolk than I did for the story-relevant dialogue. If I’d ignored the dialogue for characters that didn’t progress the plot, or villagers who didn’t have some grand, dramatic role to play, then not only would that town lack identity, the narrative at large would have no reality to it.

(Continues on next page)

¹ *The Portopia Serial Murder Case*: An adventure game published by Enix in 1983, created by Yuji Horii. A masterpiece that drew inspiration from mystery novels, its shocking plot twist climax is still discussed today. The identity of the true culprit is, for many reasons, famous.

² *Mystery House*: An adventure game published in 1980. Until this point, adventure games were mostly rendered through text alone, but this title is regarded as the first to use text and visuals together.

Katsura Hashino hereafter Hashino

Game creator under Atlus. Director and producer of *Metaphor: ReFantazio*. Achieved international critical acclaim with his direction and production of *Persona 3*, *Persona 4*, and *Persona 5*.



It's less about aiming for a certain atmosphere and more a question of what would take players by surprise. (Horii)

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Metaphor and the theme of anxiety

—Does each individual townsperson's dialogue really affect the polish of the game that much?

Horii: I'd say so. But as game environments become more realistic, that comes with its own issues. The first *DQ* towns only had populations of twenty to thirty people. It didn't take much for me to write all their dialogue, nor for players to read it. Now that towns feel more realistic, you need dozens upon dozens of townsfolk. Make them all talk, and it's not only a demand for the writers, but for the players who have to read it, too. Like we saw in *Metaphor* earlier, I think it's a good idea to split them up into some who talk and some who don't. That way, towns have life to them while still maintaining the integrity of the game.

Hashino: Well, when it comes to NPC lines, this is actually all we can do. We're really just creating the illusion of realism, with little touches like textual onomatopoeia adding to the immersion (laughs).

—While *DQ*'s plots have a fairy tale or mythological aura to them, Hashino-san's titles feel more like modern L-novels (personal and grounded in reality). I'd like to ask more about these differences. Horii-san, what inspired you to write *DQ* using that kind of atmosphere?

Horii: It's less about aiming for a certain atmosphere and more a question of what would take players by surprise, or what would be fun to include. I didn't really think in terms of "I want to convey this idea," but instead began by thinking of specific events. You know, coming up with fun scenes. That's my creative starting point. For example: say you're staying at an inn, but everyone's vanished by morning. I think a lot about scenes like that, since I'm a fan of pranks. That was also my trick for hiding the culprit in *The Portopia Serial Murder Case*. My first thought was who would make for a surprising culprit, and then the rest of the story grew from there.

Hashino: I tend not to work in as many little surprises into my games as you'd see in *DQ*, but I like to aim for a steady buildup throughout the game toward an unexpected, heavy choice at the end of the story. I strive to shake players up and get them to react like, "What? Is this really happening?"

Horii: Hashino-san, you like to think of themes and overarching messages, don't you? I've heard that *Metaphor* is themed around the idea of anxiety.

...Hopefully, maybe some players will realize something deeper and more personal. (Hashino)

Hashino: Well, everyone grapples with anxiety to some extent, right? There are books that discuss how anxiety comes from having to face unknowns—from a lack of experience. Facing that anxiety allows you to learn and move forward, but if you only ever hesitate and avoid it, nothing will change. Thinking deeper about it, this idea hit me that **feeling anxious over something is an opportunity to move forward**. With this connection between anxiety and progress as my theme, I thought I could make an accessible story that could resonate with anyone across the world.

Horii: You've got a point there. Anxiety itself might be the scariest thing of all for us. After all, our anxiety over what-ifs tends to be far scarier than what actually happens. But even when your fears actually come to pass, I think humans are surprisingly good at making things work out anyway.

Hashino: Back in the Showa period, your boss could suddenly dump all their work onto you, forcing you into these "do or die" situations... And sometimes people could actually rise to the occasion (laughs). Now, however, you can't really get that sort of experience—or maybe it's that society's shifted so that you can't ask people to do the impossible. Either way, it feels like there aren't many people who'd make me push my limits anymore.

—Hashino-san, your works are often thematically-driven or message-driven. Why focus on these broader themes?

Hashino: If I don't put a theme into words, then sometimes the team effort of creation doesn't go as well as it could. I'm responsible for the broader plot, but I don't necessarily write the whole script, so I have to state my intended themes and messages for the team... It can be a pretty embarrassing process, personally speaking (laughs). But deeper meanings like these don't necessarily influence players' buying decisions, so I'd say they're free to enjoy whatever aspects of it they want. I try to find a good balance where anyone can enjoy my games at face value, and hopefully, maybe some players will realize something deeper and more personal. However, *Metaphor* already implies a hidden symbolism in the name. Basically, I felt that putting "Metaphor" in the title outright would help me to lay it all out there. I wanted to title it something that makes people think, "C'mon, you can't just call it *Metaphor* yourself!"—something so lame that it ends up cool (laughs).

(Continues on next page)





Horii-san's mature approach to games

Hashino: I was getting at it before, but for me, making a game ultimately starts with a unifying theme. In the beginning, I'm always mulling over questions like, "What message should I go with?" or "What should I do about the theme?" You could probably consider that the difference between my and Horii-san's approach to game design... but despite what Horii-san had mentioned about relying on intuition and surprises, there's definitely a warmth and optimism in *DQ*. While each game has its own fable or fairy-tale sense to it, they always manage to grab the heart. I always saw a certain maturity to that approach.

Horii: A theme inevitably arises, doesn't it? While you're in the process of writing, you start to pick up a sense of what the story's really about. But my approach to theming is usually pretty indirect, so I try to insert it very casually.

Hashino: I think that's amazing. It's an approach I'd like to learn from.

—I feel like in every *DQ* title, there's always a highlight moment the player is meant to savor, such as the marriage in *Dragon Quest V: Hand of the Heavenly Bride* [hereafter *DQV*]. **Horii:** For *DQV*, my initial idea was having three generations of a family defeat the demon lord. I wanted players to go through the feelings of being a child and growing into an adult. For instance, the towns you visit as an adult are a little smaller than those you went to as a child. Like how in real life, when you visit your old school and see the actual size of the schoolyard, you might think, "Was it always this small?" I

wanted to invoke that kind of nostalgia, to think about the change in emotions from adolescence to adulthood.

Hashino: That's exactly what I felt when playing *DQV*. But... even though I'm hearing about your "secrets to game design," I still feel like I don't understand (laughs).

Horii: No, that was just an idea that cropped up at the time. The same goes for *Dragon Quest IV: Chapters of the Chosen* [hereafter *DQIV*], once *Dragon Quest III: The Seeds of Salvation* [hereafter *DQIII*] became a hit. When I thought about the series' next step, I figured I'd break the game down into chapters. To show that the party members all had their own lives, I dug into their characterizations. Put another way, *DQIV* is when I first decided that I'd use DQ to develop characters. They're crucial in manga, so I figured: why not make it the same for games? I think people remember characters like Alena and Kiryl more than they do the plot. I felt that if I made the characters vivid enough, then the story would fall into place.

What gives RPGs their power?

Hashino: The overall structure of *DQIV*, and especially its finale, made it seem like it was all perfectly in the palm of your hand, Horii-san. I can clearly feel your influence in wanting to evoke a certain feeling for the players. Putting aside something as weighty as a full-blown "theme," I sensed that there was a consistent aim in wanting players to feel a certain way at the game's end. I imagined that perhaps you wanted to express how role-playing lets you experience a



The very first line I wrote was where the king calls out to the protagonist using the player's entered name. (Horii)

game world as something distinct from manga or novels. You said earlier that an RPG's value lies in its escapism, which lets you experience a completely different world as a personal journey. Is there any part of that you're more particular about?

Horii: When I began work on the original *DQ*, the very first line I wrote was where the king calls out to the protagonist using the player's entered name, thinking that it would really draw the player in. Until then, they'd been watching other characters' stories unfold on their screen, but then this king could call out their own name. I imagined kids getting a real shock out of that, and getting immersed in the game from there. The *DQ* style, where the player exists as the protagonist, traces its roots back to that one line.

Hashino: For my games, I always want to make sure that the game's protagonist isn't just some stranger. Protagonists of manga and movies alike are all essentially strangers to us. Sure, there are moments where we can empathize, but at the end of the day, they're still someone apart from us. After all's said and done, we ourselves don't change afterwards, do we?

If we're talking about the strengths of RPGs, I'd say it's the fact that the protagonists can be us ourselves, not just separate people. That being the case, I end up wanting some thematic takeaway in the game—something players can only get from the game world, and take home with them.

Sometimes my friends in the industry tell me that they don't think that far, though...

Horii: Well, I think it's a great thing to care about. People finding meaning in a game is a joyful thing. I'd be incredibly happy if someone felt changed, even just a little, after playing one of my games. There are a lot of self-improvement books out there, you know, which a lot of people read. Me, I don't think they're all that bad either (laughs). I think if people approach life like they would a game, with the attitude that they'll definitely triumph in the end, then it doesn't end up as tough as it would be. Hard times are like bosses in a game. If they think, "All right, now how am I gonna take this down?" then they might actually find it easier to handle. And then when you do take down the boss, it helps build confidence.

(Continues on next page)

From modernity to fantasy: challenging the fantasy genre with *Metaphor*

—Hashino-san, you've been mostly involved with contemporary dramatic settings until now. What made you decide to do a fantasy story with *Metaphor*?

Hashino: Well, at the start, I didn't form a team with the idea of making a fantasy game, but because I wanted to try a new genre of RPG. I asked the team what they wanted to make, and they agreed on a fantasy game. When I asked them why they wanted to make a fantasy game, surprisingly, no one could give a direct answer. I kept getting vague responses like, "I've always liked fantasy," or "I grew up on *DQ* and *Final Fantasy* [hereafter *FF*]," without any specific reasoning behind it. It was then that I grew curious about why everyone was so drawn to fantasy, and a bud of curiosity was planted.

Horii: Isn't it because there's a sense that anything can exist and anything can happen? If the setting was a realistic town that actually existed, people might be thrown off, thinking, "Nothing like that would ever happen here," no? But with fantasy, you can more easily accept strange happenings because it's fantasy.

Hashino: Stories about reincarnating into an alternate world have really become a staple in recent years, where a modern person finds they've been blown into another world where they're overpowered and unrivaled... Of course, I know it's a little more complex than that, but personally I find the concept

a little unrelated or lacking, sometimes. It's a fantastical kind of story rooted in the world and logic of a video game, but after you've watched it, you're on your own. I think there's something lonely about that. But that might be a relatively *Atlas* way of thinking, considering we've long defied fantasy (laughs).

—Hashino-san, when you were making the *Persona* series, did you ever aim to deliberately distinguish it from fantasy RPGs like *DQ*?

Hashino: No, it never crossed my mind to purposefully make something opposite from *DQ* and *FF* as games. There are many *Atlas* fans who like modern dramas, so we're mostly focused on stories grounded in reality. Really, I think my aim was to make works that defied the idea that a story has to be totally divorced from our reality to be fun—an effort to say, "Don't rule out the imagination of people in our reality that bring those worlds to life." That said, though, one moment at the end of *DQ* really influenced me personally: where the Dragonlord states, "If you want to be my ally, I'll give you half of the world, [Hero's name]." How to describe it...? I thought it was a cool touch. Maybe it was another of your efforts to insert the unexpected, Horii-san, but I never even imagined a bad ending could be possible. I feel like you wrote that line not to say, "Player, you failed!" but more like, "That's just how it goes sometimes."

Horii: That's right. Though I also just wanted him to say whatever would most catch the player off guard (laughs).

Hashino: I felt there was a real elegance to *DQ*'s approach. You didn't have to try to pick the correct option. You were given choices, and a story would play out depending on what you chose. Maybe that was just one of your many surprise tricks up your sleeve, but it had a profound impact on me (laughs).

Horii: *DQ*'s philosophy is to not get too lost in the minutiae. This way, we leave a lot of room for the player's own imagination, and I think that could be for the better.

—About the line that you found inspiring, Hashino-san, was it because of how it presented the choice? You mentioned

finding it elegant—I'd like to hear more about that.

Hashino: It feels like a perfect embodiment of Horii-san's whimsicality. Nothing is forced on the player. And it's delivered with this nonchalance, like "Don't you want to see what would happen?" I just find that sense of "It's all a game, even at the very end" rather sophisticated. Horii-san, was there a reason that you put in such a crafty choice for the players?

Horii: Well, I figured if I approached it normally, it'd be kind of boring (laughs). If, after all that struggle and effort you put in, the last boss suddenly says to you, "I'll give you half of the world," I think anyone would think, "Uh, what?"

Hashino: There's that notion of freedom there, which tracks with that free-spiritedness of yours, Horii-san. I feel that same captivating sense of human whimsy in *DQ*, too. And I think that's what makes playing *DQ* comforting. That lack of pushiness is truly a good thing. On the other hand, end up pushing my themes on the player quite a bit, but I hope that doing so allows the players to draw their own conclusions from their experience.

Horii: You know, I played quite a lot of the very first *Megami Tensei* title when it was released. So much so that I ended up finding some minor bugs (laughs). I also played *Persona* 5, and I thought the recreation of the city was quite amazing. To set the game in modern-day Tokyo, with trains coming and going... I remember it even gave me hope for the future of the medium, considering that kind of thing would have been impossible for games of the past.

Hashino: Thank you. Though what about you, Horii-san? Have you ever considered making a modern-setting RPG?

Horii: Even if I wanted to do one at the time, the hardware capabilities weren't there yet. Back then, it wasn't possible to portray things so realistically.

Hashino: I'd love to see what kind of contemporary drama you'd write, Horii-san. While not a contemporary piece, I also really loved *Chrono Trigger*³, which was quite a different world from *DQ*. Actually, when we were getting started on *Metaphor*, we pulled out *Chrono Trigger* and got all excited over it, talking about how great the pacing and dungeon designs were (laughs).

Horii: For *Chrono Trigger*, we went on a staff retreat to decide what we'd do for the last boss, actually. We ended up agreeing on making the boss someone small, but tough. From there, we decided the era you'd fight in, as well as the story... And that's how the game was made.

—After *DQ* paved the way for the RPG genre in Japan, RPGs developed further as a form, with titles like *Persona* and *Megami Tensei* exploring new possibilities. Horii-san, what do you think about the evolution of RPGs as you've seen them?

Horii: I think it's quite fun to see the variety in all these RPGs. But speaking personally, I saw *FF* as a rival for the longest time. I had plenty of opinions on the series, like that they had too much dialogue, but when *Final Fantasy X* had voiced characters and I saw how polished it was with their voiced dialogue, I was deeply impressed, thinking, "Wow, we've come this far!" while also feeling like "Ugh, they got me." Another would be *The Legend of Zelda*, which continues to surprise me every time.

Hashino: Really? I'm surprised that you'd find competition in *FF*.

Horii: People often described *DQ* and *FF* as rivals, after all. But in the end, Square and Enix ended up merging (laughs). I didn't know about the merger before it happened, so when I first heard, I was pretty shocked, like "Huh? Really?" After all that time as rivals, we ended up as allies instead (laughs).

(Continues on next page)

³ *Chrono Trigger*: An RPG published by Square in 1995. Spearheaded by the "Dream Team," with story design by Yuji Horii, character design by Akihiko Yamaoka, and produced by Hironobu Sakaguchi, the title is a renowned masterpiece that has passed into the annals of RPG history.

Yuji Horii / Katsura Hashino
Why Do RPGs Captivate Us?



I saw *Final Fantasy* as a rival, but we ended up merging and becoming allies instead. (Horii)

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I grew curious about why everyone was so drawn to fantasy. (Hashino)

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(ATLUS 35th ANNIVERSARY)

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE & ILLUSTRATION

Distinguished figures from various industries have kindly offered congratulatory messages. In celebration of 35 years, 35 notes have been compiled here. Starting on page 88, you can find artistic contributions from well-known illustrators.

*Messages are listed in Japanese alphabetical order by contributor's surname.

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Message

01

Jiro Ishii

President/Game Designer/Story Planner/Scriptwriter, Storytelling

Congratulations to Atlus on your 35th anniversary. From what I've seen, it's been a good 35 years of capturing the dark side of the world through entertainment, as you've extended the soul of your unique masterpiece *Megami Tensei* to *Persona*, and I'm sure there's plenty more ahead, too. I've long admired how you've been able to carve out a special place for yourself, so please continue leading the way.

Message

02

Akira Ishida

Voice Actor

A hearty congratulations on reaching the momentous milestone of 35 years. I feel incredibly fortunate to have been involved with *Persona 3*. It's been a distinct honor to have been part of a work so beloved by fans across its numerous versions and adaptations. I have nothing but gratitude for everyone who played a part in creating them. When I think back to the start of *Persona 3*, I recall thinking that even though I'd been asked to play the protagonist—who didn't have many lines other than calling out tons of Persona names—I secretly felt that Phosphos seemed more like the main character. I also remember being ecstatic, but bewildered, when the CD dramatization came out because the protagonist had actual lines. Those experiences gave me what I needed for the reboot years later. I'm sure that everyone who had a hand in *Persona 3* in any way also has a wealth of experiences and feelings about it themselves. Please keep on making fantastic works that strike the heart.

ATLUS BRAND HISTORY BOOK

Message

03

Daisuke Ishiwatari

CCO/GUILTY GEAR Series General Director, Arc System Works

A big congratulations to Atlus on your 35th anniversary! Over the years, you've become a driving force in the industry, and I have immense admiration for the successes of all the classic works you've produced.

I was personally greatly influenced by Atlus back when I was in school. You probably get this a lot, but I thought your works really had a profound sense of style. No matter the era, you've always forged new trails over the usual paths, and I'm constantly inspired by your innovative creations. I particularly remember *Joutei Monogatari 2* and *3* being 99% rich settings with strangely high-quality visuals for a game about playing mahjong, and 1% really long load times, all of which obliterated my schoolboy mind.

I look forward to seeing what splendid, captivating, creative works you'll put out next, and I sincerely wish you continued success and happiness.

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Message

04

Tomomi Isomura

Voice Actor

After getting completely sucked into the corrupt universe of the early *Shin Megami Tensei* games, I turned into an annoying kid who'd always be like, "Games need to have a unique flair, like Atlus's do!" Your games have always helped relieve my stress when I'd get worried, and gave me the strength to go on when times would get rough. Given all I've learned from you outside of just book smarts, I think Atlus can unquestionably be considered a teacher of the heart. And now you've been teaching for 35 years, which is just so amazing! It was truly an incredible honor to emcece an Atlus program and to achieve a long-held goal of mine to be cast in one of your titles! I hope you always stay in my life and continue to inspire me! I'd love to meet a kindred spirit who's like, "Atlus games are my life!" They've totally changed how I think! "My wallet's a lot lighter now!"

Message

06

Gen Urobuchi

Novelist/Scriptwriter, NITROPLUS Co., Ltd.

I absolutely love *Makai X*—its story about a world on the brink of destruction; its vagabond, inhuman creatures searching for a way to live; its characters filled with personality; its incredible design, so relentless that it couldn't be released overseas with some of its original visuals... I love it all! Then there's the narrative points—refusing to be used as a tool; forces of both good and evil being made into enemies; having to face off against the final boss, Mr. Meteor, after he was the only one to show any sympathy... I can't get enough! I remember hearing in an interview with the developers around the time of its release that it was ushering in the tenth year of Atlus... And now it's been 25 years since then? How?!

Message

05

Lyn Inaizumi

Singer

Congratulations on your 35th anniversary, Atlus. I thought about what it is that's made you so loved throughout the world for so long, and I came to the conclusion that it's because you always put *people* at the core of what you do.

It's been an honor to be even a small part of that. I hope to see you share many more great games with the world.

Message

07

Nobuhiko Okamoto

Voice Actor

Congratulations on 35 years. I think of Atlus as a household name for anyone old enough to play games. I'm grateful that I've been able to be as involved as a voice actor as much as I have been. Appearing in *PERSONA -trinity soul-* was a major highlight in my voice acting career. Working on it was pretty nerve-racking, but I deeply value everything I learned from the other actors I worked with and what we made together. More recently, I also had the honor of working on *Unicorn Overland*. I sincerely hope I get more opportunities to be a part of your games.

Message

08

Kazuma Kamachi

Author

Congratulations on 35 years, Atlus. Though I admittedly haven't been keeping up with your releases in real time, I set aside time to enjoy your titles now and again. Fusing demons and finishing a gigantic tree's map really makes me think about how powerfully unique your titles are—how seamlessly tied together the in-game universe is with its story, characters, and even mechanics. That's what playing games is all about, huh? At any rate, I look forward to your new titles and the new ways they show me how to have fun!

Message

10

Akitoshi Kawazu

SaGa General Director, Square Enix Co., Ltd.

It began with *Megami Tensei*. This game and its uber-difficult gameplay, alongside its story based on rich mythologies, hit me in a way that regular RPGs—which I'd gotten tired of—hadn't. My mindset for making *FF2* and *SaGa* was to avoid taking the easy, generic route, and it was highly moving to see a game out there that had taken the same outlook in its creation. As an *Aegis* fan, I'm eager to see where *Shin Megami Tensei* and *Persona* head next. While I hope that they don't lose that video game quality by leaving out those devastatingly tough boss fights, as a fan, I don't think it's all that bad to see the series moving towards a new age either. Having said that, allow me to give you a word of congratulations: Happy 35th anniversary.

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Message

09

George Kamitani

President, Vanillaware Ltd.

Congratulations on 35 years, Atlus! Hard to believe that milestone's already here... My first brush with you was back in 1996. When the developer for *Princess Crown* went bankrupt, you picked it up, and I started as an Atlus employee. *Print Club* was all the rage back then. When I think about the fortunate 28 years since, from then to *Unicorn Overload*, I can't help but feel deeply moved. I'll always be rooting for you, Atlus, since you'd go so far as to pick up dying projects like *Princess Crown*... (Sure brings back memories...) After *Princess Crown* was released, I got let go immediately since Atlus Kansai closed right after the new year...)

Message

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Reki Kawahara

Novelist



中学生の時に『デジタル・デビル物語 女神転生』をプレイ。その後『メガミ』『ペルソナ』関シリーズを今日に至るまで楽しんでいます。
そして気づけば自分が、デジタル世界で遊ぶ者たちの「アーティスト」になってしまったのです。
私の創作活動の最高となっているあらためた作品を
生み出して下さったことに心から感謝します。
改めて、35周年おめでとうございます。

Akemi Nakajima's forever my fav hero! Can't get enough of his sideburns...^o^

(Happy 35th anniversary, Atlus!)

When I played *Digital Devil Story: Megami Tensei* in middle school, I got totally addicted to its universe... Since then, I've been a fan of both SMT and the Persona series, and enjoyed every release. Before I knew it, I myself had started writing novels about fighting alongside demons in a digital world. I'm grateful from the bottom of my heart for the numerous works you've produced, which gave me my own beginning as a creator. Again, congratulations on 35 years. I look forward to your newest title, *Metaphor: Refinazion!*

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Message

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Yuya Kimura

PSO2 NEW GENESIS Series Producer, Sega Corporation

When I was in elementary school, before I'd heard of Atlus or *MegaTen*, I learned about *Shin Megami Tensei* from a magazine article and felt a strong connection to it, so I begged my parents for an early Christmas present and ran off on release day to buy a copy from a local JUSCO. I got hooked and started doing my own research on demons and myths, and even ended up getting good grades in history class because of it. As a member of the industry myself, I have nothing but respect for Atlus for continuing to produce this greatly influential series, so happy 35th anniversary! "Kongo tomo yoroshiku"!

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Message

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Ami Koshimizu

Voice Actor

Congratulations on your 35th anniversary and thank you for making games that have excited and delighted me since I was a child. In middle school, I poured as much time as I could into demon fusion. And as a voice actor, I've made appearances in many of your titles, starting with Yukiko in *Persona 4*! I'm a fan of Atlus for both the games that offer the classic Atlus experience and the ones that bring something new to the table. My favorite demons are Peallaidh and gentleman demons with the crazy speech pattern!

Message

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Kazutaka Kodaka

Director/Scriptwriter, Too Kyo Games

Atlus, congratulations on your 35th anniversary! And congratulations on releasing *Metaphor: ReFantazio*! I grew to love Atlus's games as a player, sold them as a game shop employee, and now I have the honor of working in the same industry. I loved how different *Raiden*, *Kosloda High School Chronicle*, and *Makai X* were from the norm. But I have to say, I especially can't forget the shock I felt from *Persona 3*. It was like a sucker-punch from a fastball disguised as a curveball. I'm hoping *Metaphor: ReFantazio* will shock me like that too. I'm a huge fan of Atlus! And if you're reading this, then you're probably a huge fan of Atlus too, right? Then, as a fellow fan, how about buying Too Kyo Games video games? Think of it as a way to celebrate this 35th anniversary!

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Hiroyuki Kobayashi

President/Producer, GPTRACK50 Inc.

Congratulations to Atlus on your 35th anniversary! I still vividly remember playing the original *Megami Tensei*. And I'm thrilled that Hashino-san's long-awaited new title, *Metaphor: ReFantazio*, is finally out! I fondly remember commenting in support of it when it was announced. GPTRACK50 is working hard on a new game too!

GPTRACK50

Message

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Toshihiro Kondo

President, Nihon Falcom Corporation

Congratulations on the 35-year anniversary! My first experience with Atlus was the original *Megami Tensei*. I wasn't sure what to make of the combination of fantastical demons and cyberpunk setting at first, but I eventually warmed up to it. I think it's great that its unique world has garnered global acclaim, and that it has practically become its own genre. Our games are often regarded as more traditional, so I've always admired Atlus for staking a claim on the complete opposite side of the spectrum. And now, Atlus's own take on traditional RPGs with its new title, *Metaphor ReFantazio*, is overflowing with Atlus flair, so it's already diverging from the traditional and I'm very excited to play it. I wish you more success going forward.

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Message

17

Yosuke Saito

Member of the Board/Executive Officer/Executive Producer, Square Enix Co., Ltd.

I think I'm in a different timeline from the one I was in just a few moments ago.

The Atlus I know turned 35 in 2021... And yet, I just received an email requesting that I provide a message celebrating Atlus's 35th anniversary...

Well, it's fine. I'll congratulate you from the bottom of my heart as many times as needed...

A sincere congratulations on your 35-year anniversary. "Kongo tomo yoroshiku"...

If memory serves, Atlus acquired Square Enix eighteen years ago, but I wonder what happened in this timeline. Let me look it up...

*2024 marks 35 years since the Atlus brand published its first game, *Megami Tensei II: The Alteration*, in 1989.

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Message

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Masahiro Sakurai

Game Director, Sora Ltd.

Congratulations to Atlus on your 35th anniversary...? Wait, I thought I played the original *Megami Tensei* longer ago than that, but it seems that was before Atlus had become what it is today. I see.

It's hard to tell how old it is since its recent titles feel so modern. But I guess a lot can happen over 35 years...

I actually had my own industry debut around the same time. About 34 years ago? Well, regardless, let's both keep at it!

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Message

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Tomokazu Sugita

Voice Actor

Congratulations on 35 years. "Kongo tomo yoroshiku"... I'll give the short version, because if I went on as long as I wanted, I might never stop. Law and chaos, light and dark. If we've come to the present by maintaining a balance in our hearts, then the same will hold for the future. O, that I could gaze upon this beautiful scene forever.

Message

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Keiichiro Toyama

CEO/Creative Director, Boksh Game Studio Inc.

Happy 35th anniversary! I've always thought of Atlus as a group of creators that handles Japanese sensibilities with care. I'm not talking about a shallow depiction of our culture—your games realistically portray the true spirit of the Japanese people. Because of that, I used to think on some level that they would never be fully understood by players from other countries. But they've garnered devoted fans who offer passionate support the world over, and they continue to grow their audience. I think that's extremely cool, and I'm admittedly jealous. Personally, I'd love to play another game like *Catherine* that's both cute and daringly ambitious!

Message

22

Tappei Nagatsuki

Author

Congratulations to Atlus on your 35th anniversary! Countless people have had their brains fried by the overwhelming and unforgiving worldviews of *Persona*, *Megami Tensei*, and *Etrian Odyssey*, and I'm one of them! Experiencing art that isn't my own is simultaneously frustrating, stimulating, and unbelievably exciting. And every time, you put it all out there without hesitation... I love it! As both a fan and a creator, I look forward to more unforgiving, brain-frying, and provocative experiences! I hope to celebrate your 40th anniversary too, and then your 50th!

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Message

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Kazuhiko Torishima

Manga Editor

To me, Atlus is defined by games created by the Hashino/Soejima tag team. They have a bite to them, portraying the modern world in a fun yet slightly twisted way. Entertainment for adults is more cynical than children's entertainment—we love to enjoy contemporary society while smirking at it. Now, I wonder how many hours I'll sink in this time...

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Message

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Daisuke Namikawa

Voice Actor

Atlus! 35 years! Congratulations! Thank you for all the work you've given me on *Persona 4*. I remember that *Persona 5* was taking a while to finish, and meanwhile, I was going all around Japan doing events to promote *4*... I hate to say it, but I wondered if I was just buying time for development on *5* to end, haha!

But because of that time, the game and the others who worked on it became very important to me! Thank you! I hope you continue making games that bring joy to the world!

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Message

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Kazuya Niino

Game Director/Producer, TYPE-MOON studio 88

Congratulations to Atlus on their 35th anniversary! Atlus is a special company I've always taken note of, both as a gamer and as a developer. Atlus games like *Ginga Densetsu*, *Dungeon Explorer*, and *Megami Tensei* had a distinctive, gloomy "scen" to them that turned the impressionable young Niino into a complete subculture junkie (for better or worse). Later, they gave me the opportunity to plan the *Etrian Odyssey* series, which was fundamental in establishing my own style as a game developer. Looking back on it, how do I say this... Atlus really had an enormous impact on my life. More than fifteen years have passed since the release of the first *Etrian Odyssey*, and I think I've grown a little. This isn't my way of repaying you for helping raise me or anything, but I do think it'd be great to work on an "*Etrian Odyssey* ver. 2.0" together! ...What do you say?

Message

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Katsuhiro Harada

Executive Game Director/Chief Producer, Bandai Namco Studios Inc.

Happy 35th Anniversary! This is supposed to be Sakura-san..... Atlus-san, please unban me...

Congratulations on 35 years of Atlus. I decided to draw Sakura-san from the *Persona* series, since I felt an affinity with her as a fellow glasses character (although they're sunglasses in my case). Thinking on it, our relationship goes all the way back to when Namco published *Digital Devil Story Megami Tensei*. Back in 1987, I was still a student and hadn't joined Namco yet, but I remember getting pretty hooked on it as a player. While it feels like I've only made trouble for you recently, I'm looking forward to us working together.



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Message

25

Natsuki Hanae

Voice Actor

Happy 35th anniversary! You've produced all kinds of wonderful products over your long history, and I'm very appreciative of the impact they've had both on my personal and professional lives.

And now, in a product that commemorates their 35th anniversary, I have the honor of voicing the protagonist, for which I'm very grateful.

I hope you continue to make incredible, fascinating games that are full of the Atlus touch. As an actor, and even more so as a player, I'm looking forward to it!

Message

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Jun Fukuyama

Voice Actor

Congratulations to Atlus on their 35th anniversary!

A year after my voice acting debut, I played the role of Phunhaba on a *Persona* drama CD (though I think I was just credited as Male Student). I had no way of knowing that 18 years later, I would have the opportunity to voice Joker, the protagonist of *Persona 5*, but as I'm writing this now, I'm having stupid thoughts like "What do you have to fuse with Phunhaba to get Joker?" lol

If I start talking about fond memories, I'll be here all day, so I just wanted to commemorate my first brush with Atlus and where I am now. I hope you'll keep making products that make fans all over the world gasp in admiration—even 40, 50 years from now and beyond!!!

Message

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Jin Fujisawa

President, storynote, Inc.

"Moving away from *Persona* and creating a new, original title."

As someone who made a similar decision to move away from series-based works, I felt like I understood the weight behind Hashino-san's decision that day. It's been quite a long time, hasn't it? Ever since, every now and then I'd wonder what Hashino-san was up to. And now, the day has finally arrived. I met with Hashino-san after the game mastered up and was relieved to see him looking refreshed. I plan to thoroughly enjoy all the time and effort you poured into this game.

Congratulations on the release of *Metaphor: ReFantazia!*

Message

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Neki Matsuzawa (Chiaki Matsuzawa)

Announcer

Atlas, congratulations on your 35th anniversary. When I played *Revelations: Persona* in middle school, it taught me the strength to face my own weakness. Time passed, and when I played more of the *Megami Tensei* series as an adult—in particular, *Digital Devil Saga*—I integrated them into my very being to apply what I had learned to real life, almost as if they'd surpassed the boundary of mere games and had become a system that was installed into my life. I think my first job with Atlas was when I was asked to be a pinch hitter for Noriko Shoji on a *Persona* show. Since then, I got more and more opportunities to work together, and I love who I am now in no small part to Atlas, both personally and professionally. When I was empty, you gave me a personality. Thank you. I suspect a lot of players feel the same way that I do, and now the long-awaited *Metaphor* is out. I can't wait to see how this one will be engraved into all of our lives. I will continue to make everything Atlas creates, in the gap between dream and reality, my lifeblood. I look forward to seeing what the future holds.

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Message

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Yuji Horii

Dragon Quest Game Designer

Congratulations to Atlas on their 35th anniversary. It's hard to believe how long it's been since I first played *Megami Tensei*. Since then, you've put out tons of fascinating games in the *Megami Tensei* and *Persona* series. Oh, now that I think about it, *Print Club* was produced by Atlas, too. *Metaphor: ReFantazia* looks very interesting as well, and I'm looking forward to seeing what further leaps and bounds the future holds!

Message

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Hiroshi Matsuyama

President/CEO, CyberConnect2 Co., Ltd.

I think this happened around the time we were making *Jack//G.U.*, so like 2006 or 2008.

The *Persona* team came to visit our office, all the way down in Fukuoka, as a company trip. Back then it was still only a team of about 25 people.

More than fifteen years have passed, but I'm personally still on good terms with Wada-san and Kanada-san.

We'll play analog games together, do escape rooms, murder mystery games, airsoft, etc.

We've never had the opportunity to work together in a professional capacity, but I hope you'll continue to be my friends.

35 years! You have my sincere congratulations.

Message

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Mafia Kajita

Persona Stalker Club

Big congratulations to Atlus on their 35th anniversary!

Thinking back on it, my first big success as a game writer was back when I was still a trade school student hoping to break into the game industry. I was hooked on *Persona 3* at the time, so I wrote a review of it that ended up winning an award in a peer-review contest.

And in a strange twist of fate, my first job was to write an article about *Shin Megami Tensei*. I put a lot of effort into that if I do say so myself, and it paid off—the piece was quite well received. That got my foot in the door, and I got steady writing commissions after that.

Although at the time, never in my wildest dreams did I imagine I'd one day be the MC for official Atlus shows and events...

It's kind of funny how Atlus has always been there at these important junctures in my life, and I can't help but feel a bit like this string of events is more than coincidence—like destiny pulled us together.

From the bottom of my heart, I can't wait to see what sorts of works will color our lives—not only mine, but all the fans' as well—beyond this 35-year anniversary!

Message

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Akiko Yajima

Voice Actor

To: Atlus Co., Ltd.

Happy 35th anniversary! I'm Akiko Yajima, and I played the role of Maya Amano in *Persona 2: Innocent Sin* and *Persona 2: Eternal Punishment*. I still remember how excited I was when I was introduced to *Persona 2* and Maya. At a glance she seemed like this cool, competent 23-year-old, but then she'd say stuff like "Let's grab our asses and run!" and she'd be kind of a ditzy sometimes—I always had a great time with her. I was surprised and charmed by how sensitive she was on the inside, and I could relate to how her catchphrase of "Think positive, guys!" was actually a way of trying to psyche herself up. She's strong-willed when she needs to protect someone, but when she's alone, she gets caught up in her own thoughts and easily depressed. It makes me think about how everyone has their own masks and personalities they wear, and even when we're going about our daily lives, we "summon our Personas" to deal with things. I'm sure I'll continue to live my life searching for what I want to do, what I can do, and how I want to play the role of myself—what personality I want to define myself. It makes me just as excited as the game itself does.♡

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ATLUS BRAND 35TH HISTORY BOOK

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Message

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Ryo Mizuno

Author

A sincere congratulations to Atlus on their 35th anniversary. The very first *Megami Tensei* was released just around the time when I started to focus on writing in earnest. I recall spending a lot of my time in those days exploring vast dungeons and collecting all sorts of curious demon allies. The unique world and story were extremely inspiring, and it's one of my favorite games of all time. These past few years, I've been waiting with bated breath for the release of your new title, *Metaphor Refinazio*. I can't wait to find out how the director—Mr. Hashino—and character designer—Mr. Soejima—reinterpreted the fantasy genre.

Message

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Yoko Taro

President/Game Creator, SUKKORO

Er, what was that? A message to congratulate Atlus on their 35th anniversary? Uh, right. Well, as I've said before, the game industry is a hell where we all try to steal scraps of a tiny pie from each other. So when Atlus is doing their thing, that obviously means less pie for me. I've tried all sorts of methods to interfere with them, but unfortunately I was unable to hinder Atlus's growth. So I figured my last resort could be blowing up their office. But I never expected that all their employees would... Oh god... Urp... (vomits) I'm so sorry... Detective? Huh? Detective? C'mon, you're drooling. Man, that's creepy... When you stop blinking like that, you look like a corpse... This is no time for jokes... Seriously... Cut it out...



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Bkub Okawa

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92 Taro Minoboshi

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Kei Mochizuki

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Afterword

It's been roughly 66 years since the dawn of video games. For more than half of that time, Atlus has been bringing their own gaming visions to life.

As our technology evolved, so too did our games. With the boom of home consoles, we entered an era where anyone could play whenever they pleased. Amidst all the new studios created then, and the yet-higher number of games released, the release of *Shin Megami Tensei* in October of 1992 put Atlus on the map of home console game developers. Ever since, they've been publishing titles overflowing with originality—and more than a little bit of edge—and so solidified their place in gaming history.

On the other hand, until the early 2000s, Atlus's games felt a little too edgy. One might have heard opinions that Atlus games, while interesting, didn't have what it took to sell. And then, in the year 2006, *Persona 3* hit the shelves. Everything from the theme color to the comprehensive approach to UI left a big impression, and it not only won over existing fans, but welcomed in a whole new audience. Its triumphs built the Atlus brand image that has continued to this day.

Metaphor: ReFantazio represents both a new challenge for the Atlus brand, and a culmination of all their past endeavors. We've included this book with the game so you can judge that for yourself. Our dearest hope is that by reflecting on the Atlus brand's 35-year journey, and learning about the making of an epoch, you will come to understand the intent of *Metaphor: ReFantazio*, and the ambition and legacy that went into its making.



Metaphor: ReFantazio

ATLUS BRAND35th HISTORY BOOK

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