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concept of order. When Marika shattered the Elden Ring and disappeared, her demigod children began fighting over pieces of the Ring in an event called The Shattering. Each demigod has a shard of the Ring called a Great Rune, which corrupts them with power. In the game, the player character is a Tarnished, one of a group of exiles from the Lands Between who are summoned back after the Shattering. The player must traverse the realm to repair the Elden Ring and become the Elden Lord. Plot Early in their journey to repair the Elden Ring, the player-character Tarnished encounters a maiden named Melina. Because the Tarnished is maidenless, Melina offers to act as their maiden, granting them the ability to turn runes into strength and giving the Tarnished a steed named Torrent. In exchange, Melina requires the Tarnished to take her to the Erdtree, the home of the Elden Ring. Melina later takes the Tarnished to the Roundtable Hold, a gathering place for other Tarnished seeking to repair the Elden Ring. The Hold's benefactor the Two Fingers instructs the Tarnished to collect the Great Runes and bring them to the Erdtree, where they can be used to repair the Elden Ring. The Tarnished travels into the Lands Between, investigating its locales and defeating the demigods. After recovering at least two Great Runes, the Two Fingers allows them to battle Morgott the Grace-Given, the demigod guarding the Erdtree. The Tarnished defeats Morgott but finds a wall of thorns blocking the Erdtree's interior. Melina arrives and advises the Tarnished to find the Flame of Ruin, which they can use to ignite the Erdtree and destroy the thorns. The Tarnished is free to travel towards the Flame of Ruin or search for a way to harness the equally powerful Frenzied Flame. If upon obtaining the Flame of Ruin the Tarnished did not gain the power of the Frenzied Flame, Melina takes the Flame of Ruin and sacrifices herself to set alight the Erdtree. If the Tarnished gained the power of the Frenzied Flame, Melina abandons the Tarnished, forcing them to use the Frenzied Flame to set alight the Erdtree. While the Erdtree burns, the Tarnished is transported to the ruined city Farum Azula. After defeating Maliketh the Black Blade and using his Rune of Death to fuel the fire, the Tarnished is returned to the foot of the scorched Erdtree. Inside, they fight Radagon, Queen Marika's consort possessing her body, and the tree's guardian the Elden Beast. After both are vanquished, the Tarnished gains access to Marika's shattered corpse, which contains the remains of the Elden Ring. Depending on the Tarnished's actions during the game, six different endings can be achieved; these include the Tarnished becoming the Elden Lord, the Elden Ring being destroyed by Ranni the Witch, and the Tarnished using the Frenzied Flame to destroy the Lands Between.

Development and release Elden Ring was directed by Hidetaka Miyazaki (top) with worldbuilding provided by fantasy writer George R. R. Martin (bottom). FromSoftware's Dark Souls series of games is noted for its high level of difficulty.[23][24] Director Hidetaka Miyazaki wanted to create an open world game, intending Elden Ring as a mechanical evolution of Dark Souls. Elden Ring was designed to have a more-expansive environment than the narrow dungeons of FromSoftware's previous games; Miyazaki hoped the grander scale would add freedom and depth to exploration. FromSoftware approached American author George R. R. Martin, creator of the fantasy-novel series *A Song of Ice and Fire*, to provide worldbuilding for Elden Ring. Miyazaki, who is a fan of Martin's work, hoped Martin's contributions would produce a more-accessible narrative than those the studio's earlier games.[25][26][27] Miyazaki remained lead writer for the game's main storyline but gave Martin creative freedom to write about events that occurred before the main narrative. Miyazaki compared the process to using a "dungeon master's handbook in a tabletop [role-playing game]".[28][27] As with many of FromSoftware's previous games, the story was designed to be poorly explained; the developers wanted players to interpret the story for themselves via flavor text and optional discussions with non-player characters (NPCs). Miyazaki said he enjoyed writing NPCs with more detail, believing they are more compelling than those in his earlier works.[27][29] In an interview with IGN, Miyazaki said he chose to give Martin control over the backstory because of the restrictions FromSoftware's method of storytelling placed on writers. He noted FromSoftware did not want a linear or story-focused game, and by giving Martin oversight of a backstory with which the player is not directly involved, he could allow Martin to freely design his contributions.[26] Some staff from *Game of Thrones*, a television series adaptation of *A Song of Ice and Fire*, assisted with the game's development.[30] Production of the game began in early 2017 following the release of *The Ringed City*, a piece of downloadable content (DLC) for *Dark Souls III*. Elden Ring was developed alongside *Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice*, which Miyazaki also directed. He said although the combat in Elden Ring has similarities to that in *Sekiro*, neither game directly inspired the mechanics of the other.[31] [32] FromSoftware simultaneously develop both games using a "co-director" structure in which each of the games had a staff member acting as director through its first stages of development. Miyazaki would then provide direction on the game's mechanics, art, and music.[26] The design team of Elden Ring concentrated on environmental scale, roleplaying, and storytelling as the main elements. Developers credited the scale with responsibility for creating a sense of diversity, and intended the roleplaying elements to allow for a variety of player-environment interactions. Increasing the game's scale required the creation of several explorable structures, which the team conjoined in the open world.[33] Miyazaki named *Shadow of the Colossus*, *The Elder Scrolls*, *The Witcher 3*, and *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* as design influences for Elden Ring. He credited the tabletop role-playing game *RuneQuest*, and the novels *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Eternal Champion* as inspirations for the game's story.[34][35] Tsukasa Saitoh, Shoji Miyazawa, Tai Tomisawa, Yuka Kitamura, and Yoshimi Kudo composed Elden Ring's original soundtrack.[36] Elden Ring was revealed during an Xbox games conference at E3 2019.[37][38] Some information about the game had previously been leaked online due to a vulnerability of the servers at Bandai Namco Entertainment.[39] Elden Ring was widely anticipated on announcement but no further material was released until a trailer was shown in June 2021.[40] Playtesting was facilitated by Bandai Namco, which in November 2021 initially released the game as a closed beta that players could sign up to test.[41] The game's full release was scheduled for January 21, 2022, but was postponed to February 25 the same year.[42][43] Elden Ring had performance issues at launch; players complained of an insufficient frame rate.[44][45] Bandai Namco addressed some of these problems through software patches and updates.[46][47] In February 2023, an expansion called *Shadow of the Erdtree* was announced for release at a later date.[48]

Reception ReceptionAggregate scoreAggregatorScoreMetacriticPC: 94/100[49]PS5: 96/100[50]XSXS: 96/100[51]Review scoresPublicationScoreDestructoid10/10[52]Easy Allies9.5/10[53]Famitsu39/40[54]Game Informer10/10[55]GameRevolution[56]GameSpot10/10[57]GamesRadar+[58]Hardcore Gamer5/5[59]IGN10/10[60]PC Gamer (US)90/100[61]PCGamesN10/10[62]Shacknews9/10[63]The Guardian[64]VG247[65]VideoGamer.com9/10[66] Critical reception Elden Ring received "universal acclaim" according to review aggregator website Metacritic.[49][50][51] On video-sharing platform Twitch, it drew nearly 900,000 viewers within 24 hours of release, making it the third-most-popular debut on the platform after *Lost Ark* and *Cyberpunk 2077*. [67] The game's open world setting received acclaim; reviewers praised the exploration mechanics. Tamoor Hussain of *GameSpot* praised the Lands Between as the most-expansive of FromSoftware's settings, calling exploration and discovery the game's main appeal.[68] Mitchell Saltzman of IGN lauded Elden Ring for rewarding exploration in every part of the map.[69] Simon Parkin of *The Guardian* called the game's environments "intriguing and inventive".[70] Some reviewers liked the open landscape's provision of opportunities to discover and try multiple challenges.[71][72] The game's exploration drew many favorable comparisons with *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*. [68][69][73] The game's environments were also praised for their artistic designs; reviewers positively rated their execution in an open setting and appreciated the designs of linear dungeons.[68][74][75] Similarly to many of FromSoftware's earlier games, Elden Ring's difficulty provoked much commentary; reviewers both praised and criticized its lack of easy modes.[76][77][78] Other reviewers

considered Elden Ring the most-accessible Souls game, saying the player can choose to avoid difficult threats and return with more experience.[71][72][73] The combat of Elden Ring was praised for offering options for fighting enemies while keeping the game challenging.[72][74][79] Torrent and fast travel were well-received features, with reviewers citing them as large improvements towards making the game easier to explore.[71][72][80] The placing of checkpoints was praised as helpful to the game's approachability.[81][79][82] Some reviewers criticized a number of the game's menu and accessibility systems.[83][84] Reviewers complained about the poor performance of the Windows version; framerate issues were commonly mentioned.[80][85] Reviewers noted the story of Elden Ring lacks Martin's writing style. Kyle Orland of Ars Technica said the game's storytelling is "characteristically sparse and cryptic", and differs from the expectations of Martin's fans.[75] Chris Carter of Destructoid called the story "low key" but said it is better-told than those of previous FromSoftware games.[79] Aoife Wilson of Eurogamer said George R. R. Martin's heavy inclusion in the marketing was "baffling" when his contributions to the overall narrative were unclear.[71] Mitchell Saltzman did not mind the lack of Martin's style, saying the side-stories rather than any grand, overarching plot kept him "enthralled".[69] Sales Elden Ring sold 13.4 million copies worldwide by the end of March 2022,[86] and 20 million by February 2023.[87] It was the best-selling game in several regions between February and March 2022,[88][89] and is the fastest-selling Bandai Namco game of all time.[90][91] It was the second-best-selling game of 2022 in the US after Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II,[92] the third-best-selling in Europe,[93] and the tenth-best-selling in Japan at retail.[94] Awards Elden Ring winning Game of the Year at the 23rd Game Developers Choice Awards Elden Ring won many awards and accolades. It was listed as the 2022's Game of the Year by several publications, including Ars Technica,[95] Destructoid,[96] EGM,[97] Eurogamer,[98] Game Informer,[99] GamesRadar+,[100] GameSpot,[101] IGN,[102] PC Gamer,[103] and Polygon.[104] Accolades received by Elden Ring Award Date Category Result Ref. British Academy Games Awards March 30, 2023 Best Game Nominated [105][106] Artistic Achievement Nominated Game Design Nominated Multiplayer Won Music Nominated Original Property Won Technical Achievement Nominated EE Game of the Year Nominated D.I.C.E. Awards February 24, 2023 Game of the Year Won [107][108] Role-Playing Game of the Year Won Outstanding Achievement in Animation Nominated Outstanding Achievement in Game Design Won Outstanding Achievement in Game Direction Won Outstanding Achievement in Story Nominated Outstanding Technical Achievement Won Dragon Awards September 5, 2022 Best Science Fiction or Fantasy PC / Console Game Won [109] Famitsu Dengeki Game Awards March 18, 2023 Game of the Year Won [110] Best Graphics Won Best RPG Nominated Best Rookie Game Nominated Game Audio Network Guild Awards March 23, 2023 Best Main Theme Nominated [111] [112] The Game Awards December 10, 2020 Most Anticipated Game Won [113] December 9, 2021 Most Anticipated Game Won [114] December 8, 2022 Game of the Year Won [115][116] Best Game Direction Won Best Narrative Nominated Best Art Direction Won Best Score and Music Nominated Best Audio Design Nominated Best Role Playing Game Won Players' Voice Nominated Game Developers Choice Awards March 22, 2023 Game of the Year Won [117] [118] Best Audio Nominated Best Design Won Innovation Award Nominated Best Technology Nominated Best Visual Art Won Gamescom August 27, 2021 Best of Gamescom Won [119] Most Wanted Won Best Microsoft Xbox Game Nominated Best PC Game Nominated Best Sony PlayStation Game Won Best Action Adventure Game Won Best Role Playing Game Won Golden Joystick Awards November 24, 2020 Most Wanted Game Nominated [120] November 23, 2021 Most Wanted Game Won [121] November 22, 2022 Ultimate Game of the Year Won [122] PlayStation Game of the Year Nominated Best Visual Design Won Best Multiplayer Game Won Critics' Choice Award Won Golden Trailer Awards October 6, 2022 Best Video Game Trailer ("Ming Na Wen") Nominated [123] [124] Japan Game Awards September 15, 2022 Grand Award Won [125] Award for Excellence Won MTV Millennial Awards July 10, 2022 Gamer Obsession Nominated [126] Nebula Awards May 15, 2023 Best Game Writing Won [127] New York Game Awards January 17, 2023 Big Apple Award for Best Game of the Year Won [128] Herman Melville Award for Best Writing in a Game Nominated Statue of Liberty Award for Best World Won Tin Pan Alley Award for Best Music in a Game Nominated The Steam Awards January 3, 2023 Game of the Year Won [129] Best Game You Suck At Won The Streamer Awards March 11, 2023 Stream Game of the Year Won [130] References ^ Sawyer, Will; Franey, Joel (April 8, 2022). 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