

= Mother (video game) =

Mother (Japanese : ??? , MOTHER) , later released outside Japan as EarthBound Beginnings , is a role @-@ playing video game developed by Ape and published by Nintendo for the Famicom . The game is modeled on the gameplay of the Dragon Quest series , but is set in the late 20th century United States , unlike its fantasy genre contemporaries . Mother follows the young Ninten as he uses his great @-@ grandfather 's studies on psychic powers to fight hostile , formerly inanimate objects and other enemies . The game uses random encounters to enter a menu @-@ based , first @-@ person perspective battle system . It is the first game in the Mother series and was followed by two sequels , EarthBound in 1994 and Mother 3 in 2006 .

The game 's writer and director , Shigesato Itoi , pitched the game concept to Shigeru Miyamoto while visiting Nintendo 's headquarters for other business . Though Miyamoto denied the proposal at first , he eventually gave Itoi a development team . The game was released in Japan on July 27 , 1989 . A North American version was localized into English , but was abandoned as commercially nonviable . A copy of this prototype was later found and circulated on the Internet under the unofficial , fan @-@ created title EarthBound Zero . The game was eventually released worldwide under the name EarthBound Beginnings for the Wii U Virtual Console on June 14 , 2015 .

Reviewers noted the game 's similarities with the Dragon Quest series and its simultaneous parody of the genre 's tropes . They considered the game 's sequel , EarthBound , very similar and a better overall implementation of Mother 's gameplay ideas . Critics also noted the game 's high level of difficulty and issues of balance . Mother sold 150 @,@ 000 copies and received a " Silver Hall of Fame " score from Japanese reviewer Weekly Famitsu . Jeremy Parish of 1UP.com wrote that Mother importantly generated interest in video game emulation and the historical preservation of unreleased games . The game was later rereleased in Japan on the single @-@ cartridge compilation Mother 1 + 2 for the Game Boy Advance in 2003 .

= = Gameplay = =

Mother is a single @-@ player , role @-@ playing video game set in a " slightly offbeat " , late 20th century United States as interpreted by Japanese author Shigesato Itoi . The game eschews traits of its Japanese role @-@ playing game contemporaries : it is not set within the fantasy genre and only enters science fiction for its final sequence . The player fights in warehouses and laboratories instead of in standard dungeons . Instead of swords , assault weapons , and magic , the player uses baseball bats , toy guns , and psychic abilities . The game 's protagonist , Ninten , is about 12 years old .

Like the Dragon Quest series , Mother uses a random encounter combat system . The player explores the overworld from a top @-@ down perspective and occasionally enters a first @-@ person perspective battle sequence where the player chooses attack options from a series of menus . On their turn , the player selects between options to fight , guard , check enemy attributes , run away , use items , or use offensive , defensive , or healing psychic powers . The player can also set the battle on autopilot with the " auto " option . Critical hits register with the series ' signature " SMAAAASH " text and sound .

The player can press a button to have Ninten " check " or " talk " with nearby people , animals , and objects . The game shares similarities with its sequel , EarthBound : there is a game save option through using a phone to call Ninten 's father , an option to store items with Ninten 's sister at home , and an automated teller machine for banking money . The members of Ninten 's party are all visible on the overworld screen at once , and are analogous to EarthBound 's party members in style and function . Mother 's world map does not keep locations separate , and instead connects all areas (akin to the Pokémon series games) . The game 's story begins as Ninten discovers a music box and receives the journal of his great @-@ grandfather , who studied psychic powers nearly a century earlier . Ninten is attacked by household items , and ventures outside to find a crazy world with hostile everyday objects and other odd events .

= = Plot = =

Mother begins with the story of a young , married , American couple who mysteriously vanish from their small , rural town . Two years later , the husband , George , returned as mysteriously as he vanished , and began a strange study in complete seclusion . His wife , Maria , was never heard from again . Years later , in the late 1980s , a young American boy named Ninten is attacked at home in a paranormal event . His father explains that Ninten 's great @-@ grandfather studied psychic powers , and asks Ninten to investigate a crisis occurring across the world , the work of an invading alien race . After finishing a few tasks , Ninten is warped to the world of Magicant , where the land 's ruler , Queen Mary , asks Ninten to find her song , the Eight Melodies , and play them for her . Ninten returns to Earth and befriends a young boy , Lloyd , who is being teased at an elementary school . The two travel to the town of Snowman to deliver a lost hat to Ana , a young girl with psychic powers . Ana tells Ninten she saw him in a dream , and joins the party in hopes of finding her missing mother .

After finding most of the Melodies , Ninten is harassed at a karaoke bar by Teddy , the boss of a local gang . Teddy surrenders after losing to Ninten in a duel , and joins Ninten 's party with the intent to avenge the deaths of his parents , who were killed at Holy Loly Mountain . Lloyd stays behind . In a cottage at the base of Holy Loly Mountain , Ana pulls Ninten aside and asks him to be with her always . The two dance and profess their mutual love . When about to leave , the party is attacked by a powerful robot that knocks out the entire party . Lloyd arrives with a tank and destroys the robot , but accidentally attacks the party and critically wounds Teddy , so Lloyd rejoins the party . They take a boat out on Holy Loly Lake and a whirlpool pulls them into an underwater laboratory where they find a robot who claims to have been built by George to protect Ninten . When the laboratory floods , they leave for the mountain and the robot helps them ascend . On the way , they find a cave with human prisoners including Ana 's mother . They need to defeat the Mother Ship to free the prisoners . Another robot attacks at the summit , and George 's robot is sacrificed in the struggle . Ninten learns the final melody at the mountain 's summit . The party is warped to Magicant , where Ninten sings the Eight Melodies to Queen Mary . She recalls the rest of the song and reminisces about an alien named Gyi yg that she loved as her own child . Queen Mary reveals that she is George 's wife , Maria , and vanishes . Magicant , a mirage created by her conscience , vanishes with her .

The party is warped back to the top of Holy Loly Mountain , where the party discovers George 's grave . Large rocks block the entrance to a cave inside Holy Loly Mountain , but are cleared by the power of Maria 's conscience . The party encounters the Mother Ship and a fluid @-@ filled tank that contains Gyi yg . The alien expresses its gratefulness to Ninten 's family for raising it , but explains that George stole vital information from its people that could have been used to betray them , and proceeds to accuse Ninten of interfering with their plans . Gyi yg offers to save Ninten alone if he boards the Mother Ship . When Ninten declines , Gyi yg attempts to put Ninten to sleep . The party begins to sing the Eight Melodies while Gyi yg tries to quiet the party through an attack . When the party finishes the lullaby , Gyi yg is overcome with emotion at the thought of Maria 's motherly love . Gyi yg says they will meet again and flies off in the Mother Ship . The game ends with Ninten , Ana , and Lloyd facing the player as the credits roll behind them .

= = Development = =

Mother was developed by Ape and published by Nintendo . While visiting Nintendo for other work , copywriter Shigesato Itoi pitched his idea for a role @-@ playing game set in contemporary times to the company 's Shigeru Miyamoto . He thought the setting would be unique for its incongruence with role @-@ playing genre norms , as daily life lacked the pretense for magic powers and they could not simply give the child characters firearms as weapons . Itoi 's project proposal suggested how the natural limitations could be circumvented . Miyamoto met with him and praised the idea , though he was not sure whether Itoi " could pull it off " . As an advertiser , Itoi was used to concept proposals preceding the staffing process , but Miyamoto explained that video game concepts needed people

who signed on to " make " the product . Itoi was overcome with " powerlessness " .

Miyamoto was also hesitant to work with Itoi at a time when companies were pushing major celebrity product endorsements , as Itoi 's involvement would be for such a game . When the two met next , Miyamoto brought the documentation from a text adventure game and told Itoi that he would have to write similar documentation himself . Miyamoto said that he knew from his own experience that the game would only be as good as the effort Itoi invested , and that he knew Itoi could not invest the appropriate time with his full @-@ time job . Itoi restated his interest and reduced his workload , so Miyamoto assembled a development team . Upon assessing for compatibility , they began production in Ichikawa , Chiba . Itoi had said earlier that he wanted his work environment to feel like an extracurricular club consisting of volunteers and working out of an apartment , which Miyamoto tried to accommodate . Itoi wrote the game 's script and commuted from Tokyo , a process he found " exhausting " . Even with asking Itoi to prioritize the development process , Miyamoto received criticism of acquiescing to celebrity and of hiring a copywriter not up for the task . Miyamoto said that his decision to pursue the project was based on his confidence in Itoi . Mother was released in Japan on July 27 , 1989 for the Famicom (known as the Nintendo Entertainment System outside Japan) .

= = = English @-@ language release = = =

The game was scheduled for localization into the English language for a North American release as Earth Bound , but was abandoned when the team chose to localize Mother 2 instead . Critics noted in retrospect that the game 's release would have been a waste of money if launched as planned alongside the acclaimed Final Fantasy III on an outdated console in a " niche " genre . Years later , a version of the completed , original Mother localization was found and uploaded to the Internet , where it unofficially became known as EarthBound Zero . The unreleased localization featured tweaks to the original Japanese version . On June 14 , 2015 , before the Nintendo World Championships , Nintendo released the much @-@ awaited official English version of Mother , with the title EarthBound Beginnings , on the Wii U Virtual Console in North America and Europe .

= = = Music = = =

The game 's soundtrack was composed by Keiichi Suzuki and Hirokazu Tanaka . Tanaka was a video game composer working for Nintendo who had previously composed for games such as Super Mario Land and Metroid , while Suzuki was a composer and musician for bands of many different genres . The NES was only able to play three notes at a time , which Suzuki has noted greatly limited what he was able to produce , as he could not create some of the sounds he wanted .

An eleven @-@ track album of songs inspired by the game 's soundtrack was recorded in Tokyo , London , and Bath and released by CBS / Sony Records on August 21 , 1989 . The album contained mostly vocal arrangements in English and was likened by RPGFan reviewer Patrick Gann to compositions by the Beatles and for children 's television shows . He found the lyrics " cheesy and trite " but appreciated the " simple statements " in " Eight Melodies " and the " quirky and wonderful " " Magicant " . Only the last song on the album is in chiptune . Gann ultimately recommended the 2004 remastered release over this version . The game 's soundtrack contains several tracks later used in subsequent series games .

= = Reception and legacy = =

Mother received a " Silver Hall of Fame " score of 31 / 40 from Japanese reviewer Weekly Famitsu . Reviewers noted the game 's similarities with the Dragon Quest series and its simultaneous " parody " of the genre 's tropes . They thought the game 's sequel , EarthBound , to be very similar and a better implementation of Mother 's gameplay ideas . Critics also noted the game 's high difficulty level and balance issues . Mother sold 150 @, @ 000 copies .

Jeremy Parish of USgamer described the game as a mild @-@ mannered parody (" between satire

and pastiche ") of the role @-@ playing game genre , specifically the Dragon Quest series . He noted that Mother , like many Japanese role @-@ playing games , emulated the Dragon Quest style : the windowed interface , first @-@ person perspective in combat , and graphics , but differed in its contemporary setting and non @-@ fantasy story . Parish commented that Atlus 's 1987 Digital Devil Story : Megami Tensei was similarly set in the modern day , though it devolved into science fiction and fantasy in ways Mother did not . He added that the game has " a sense of wonder and magic realism ... in the context of childhood imagination " as Ninten can feel more like someone " pretending " to be a Dragon Quest @-@ style hero than a hero in his own right . Parish said this makes the player wonder which game events are real and which are Ninten 's imagination . Parish cited Itoi 's interest in entering the games industry to make a " satirical " role @-@ playing game as proof of the genre 's swift five @-@ year rise to widespread popularity in Japan .

Cassandra Ramos of RPGamer praised the game 's graphics and music , and considered it among the console 's best , with " rich , ... nicely detailed " visuals , Peanuts @-@ style characters , and " simple but effective " audio . In contrast , she found the battle sequences aesthetically " pretty bland " and , otherwise , the game 's " least interesting " aspect . Overall , she found Mother " surprisingly complex ... for its time " , and considered its story superior to (but less " wacky " than) its sequel . She especially recommended the game for EarthBound fans .

Parish credited Itoi for the game 's vision and compared his ability and literary interests with American author Garrison Keillor . Parish felt that Itoi 's pedigree as a writer and copywriter was well suited for the space @-@ limited , 8 @-@ bit role @-@ playing game medium , which privileged Mother ahead of other games written by non @-@ writers . USgamer 's Parish noted how the game 's non @-@ player characters would " contemplate the profound and trivial " instead of reciting the active plot . He added that the game 's lack of an official North American release has bolstered the reputation and revere of its immediate sequel .

While Parish said Mother 's script was " as sharp as EarthBound 's " , he felt that the original 's game mechanics did not meet the same level of quality . Mother lacked the " rolling HP counter " and non @-@ random encounters for which later entries in the series were known . Parish also found the game 's balance to be uneven , as the statistical character attributes and level of difficulty scaled incorrectly with the game 's progression . Rose Colored Gaming , a company that made custom reproductions of the NES cartridge , noted that the Japanese release 's was more challenging than the unreleased English localization . RPGamer 's Ramos similarly found balance issues , with a high amount of battles , difficult enemies , reliance on grinding , and some oversized levels . Parish wrote earlier for 1UP.com that in comparison to EarthBound , Mother is " worse in just about every way " , a clone where its sequel was " a satirical deconstruction of RPGs " . He wrote that the game 's historical significance is not for its actual game but for the interest it generated in video game emulation and the preservation of unreleased games .

Mother was rereleased in Japan as the single @-@ cartridge Mother 1 + 2 for the Game Boy Advance in 2003 . This version uses the extended ending of the unreleased English prototype , but is only presented in Japanese . Starmen.net hosted a Mother 25th Anniversary Fanfest in 2014 with a livestream of the game and plans for a remixed soundtrack . Later that year , fans released a 25th Anniversary Edition ROM hack that updated the game 's graphics , script , and gameplay balance .