

= Development of Mother 3 =

The two @-@ part and nine @-@ year development of Mother 3 , a role @-@ playing video game , took place between 1994 and 2006 with a three year gap in @-@ between , and spanned four consoles and multiple delays . Following the commercial success of its predecessor , Mother 2 ( EarthBound outside Japan ) , Mother series creator Shigesato Itoi was given the previous game 's development team . Inspired by Super Mario 64 , the team set out to create a 3D game that ultimately exceeded the capabilities of the platform and changed their console focus from the Super Famicom to the Nintendo 64 and its 64DD magneto @-@ optical drive expansion peripheral , for which it was expected to be a 1998 launch title . Upon the commercial failure of the 64DD , it was converted to the cartridge @-@ only format . Itoi thought of the game 's concept during Mother 2 's development and built a 12 @-@ chapter story with player @-@ characters that rotated between chapters . Having been a producer during Mother 2 , Itoi served as a scriptwriter during Mother 3 's development . A North American version was announced as EarthBound 64 , but did not materialize when the 60 percent @-@ complete Japanese release was cancelled in August 2000 in reprioritization leading up to Project Dolphin ( the code name of the GameCube ) . At the time , the game was estimated to need another two years of work .

After multiple years and failed petitions , Mother 3 was reannounced for the Game Boy Advance in 2003 within a Japanese television commercial for Mother 1 + 2 , a port of Mother and Mother 2 to the Advance . The game kept its original story and received a graphical overhaul in a pixelated style similar to Mother 2 . The game 's themes included human physiology , renewal , and fungibility on the morality spectrum . Its music was composed by Shogo Sakai , and retained the quirky style of series composers Keiichi Suzuki and Hirokazu Tanaka . Mother 3 was released on April 20 , 2006 in Japan , whereupon it became a bestseller . It has not been released outside Japan .

= = Nintendo 64 = =

Mother 3 was originally developed for the Super Famicom ( Super Nintendo Entertainment System ) beginning in 1994 . Shigeru Miyamoto , head of Nintendo Entertainment Analysis & Development and Mother 3 producer , said that Mother 3 was " a commercial decision " , since Mother 2 ( EarthBound outside Japan ) had sold well . By this point , Mother series creator Shigesato Itoi had worked on the series ' earlier games and Itoi Shigesato no Bass Tsuru No. 1 and was experienced at pitching video games , so Miyamoto provided a team willingly . The Mother 2 development team carried over to the new game 's development , though several people left and the team grew in size . They forewent the usual prototyping phase and went straight into development expecting to create something unprecedented . Itoi said he wanted to make the game like a Hollywood film . In September 1994 , he predicted that Mother 3 's development would end around 1996 with a release on Nintendo 's then @-@ upcoming console . The team was inspired by Super Mario 64 and felt that they too could creatively flourish by making a 3D world without restrictions . Their early technical specifications exceeded the capabilities and memory limits of the platform . About halfway through development , the team attempted to scale back its large scope and changed its development platform to the 64DD , a Nintendo 64 magneto @-@ optical drive expansion peripheral . At E3 in June 1997 , Miyamoto speculated that Mother 3 would be one of the four titles for the then @-@ expected 1998 launch of the Japan @-@ only peripheral , but the game was instead converted to a Nintendo 64 cartridge @-@ only format upon the commercial failure of the repeatedly delayed 64DD .

The EarthBound fan community anticipated a sequel , and a North American release of Mother 3 was announced as EarthBound 64 . Nintendo displayed a playable version of the game at their 1999 Space World trade show , where IGN described the development 's progress as " very far along " and half complete . In April 2000 , IGN estimated the game 's development as " safe to assume that the game is nearing its final stages of completion " . The game struggled to find a firm release date , and was expected to release in Japan before a North American version would be considered . At the time , the 64DD was only released in Japan . Nintendo chose not to show the game at the 2000

Electronic Entertainment Expo , though IGN expected to see a finished version of the game at Nintendo 's 2000 Space World . After a period of silence , Nintendo announced that the game would be a 256 megabit cartridge for the Nintendo 64 ( similar to Legend of Zelda : Ocarina of Time ) instead of a 64DD game . Mother producer Satoru Iwata cancelled the game altogether prior to the 2000 Space World , and Itoi announced the cancellation in late August 2000 .

Iwata clarified that the franchise was not abandoned but that the game would no longer be developed for the Nintendo 64 , and Miyamoto added that it was not due to project complications or development hell , but to resources needed for Project Dolphin ( the GameCube ) . Some of the artists had been on the project for over three years . They estimated the project to be about 60 percent complete at the time of cancellation ? the basics were complete and only programming was left . About 30 percent of the final product was completed . Itoi felt that it would have taken an additional two years to finish properly , and Iwata said that the game might have been finished by 2000 had the scope been reduced two years earlier . Miyamoto was involved in other work and spent little time on @-@ site with the project , and Iwata too was distracted by bankruptcy concerns at HAL Labs and was off @-@ site in 1999 due to circumstances that required travel . Iwata was also hospitalized during production for stress @-@ related reasons . The team intended to have the game finished by the end of 1999 and knew they had to reconsider their priorities when they missed the milestone . They said that the Mother 3 supervisors had wanted to cancel the project since 1999 , but later changed sides and said that cancellation would be wasteful . They discussed bringing the game to their forthcoming GameCube , which Miyamoto felt would have solved some of the Nintendo 64 's hardware issues . Miyamoto and Iwata also discussed releasing the game on the Game Boy Advance , but realized that it would take " just as much time " with 40 to 50 staff members to make such a game . In retrospect , Iwata wondered out loud in an interview why the game needed to be in 3D when Itoi 's " greatest talent lies in words " and thought that the energy poured into making a 3D game might have been a poor choice . He said he felt " genuinely ashamed " , and acknowledged that they were both " caught up in the 3D obsession and felt obligated " at the time . At the time of its cancellation , Itoi predicted that Mother 3 would remain a story that only the game 's staff would know , but Miyamoto was still interested in bringing the game to fruition .

= = = Design = = =

Itoi thought of the concept behind Mother 3 towards the end of Mother 2 's production . He called another person on the project to describe a " detective story where the city was the main character " . He thought of a hack , small @-@ time , womanizing private investigator who would become engrossed in a big murder case , and the story would unfold from a young female clerk at a flower shop who would slowly recall parts of a story consequential to the plot . Thus , the city would appear to grow . This idea of a " single place changing over time " was central to Mother 3 . He saw previous RPGs as " road movies " with little reason for the hero to backtrack to previous areas , and instead wanted the player to see the town gossip grow dynamically . Miyamoto and Itoi compared this type of progression to the story of Legend of Zelda : Majora 's Mask . The game was enough of a departure from the series that the development team questioned whether fans would consider it part of the series .

Itoi originally intended the game to have 12 chapters with varied game mechanics , e.g. , one with classic role @-@ playing game mechanics and another as just cutscenes . He conceptualized the process as designing 3D " puppets " that could then be easily moved around the " stage " . In actuality , each custom scene required special programming . The player @-@ character changed between each chapter ? a concept they first attempted in their previous game ? so as to see multiple characters grow . As development wore on , Itoi offered to compromise by replacing full chapters with sequences of still images and text . They cut the total chapters to seven or nine by the time it was canceled . Itoi described the story as " normal " for its first half , leading up to a " triple @-@ play twist " . One of the game 's themes was the reckless appearance and " uncomfortable beauty " of chimera ? multiple creatures fused into one ? which was the idea behind the metallic and

wooden Mother 3 logo . Itoi has said of his role in the Mother series that he wanted to be more of a team member and scriptwriter and less of a manager in Mother 3 's development . He saw himself as simultaneously making the game he wanted to play and setting traps for the player , and as making a game Nintendo could not .

The game was set to continue several hundred years after Mother 2 . The player @-@ character , Flint , was a cowboy in the vein of Clint Eastwood with two boys , Lucca and Klaus ( later becoming Lucas and Claus ) , and a dog , Boney . The game was to include over 10 playable characters and span 10 years in its story based around the Pig army , which attempts to use " primitive machinery ... to enslave mankind " . At the 1999 Space World , IGN sampled environments including a hovercraft in a desert canyon , a snake dungeon , a cutscene with a bullet train , a town with non @-@ player characters , and a mine cart scene , through themes including fantasy , the medieval , and science fiction . Physical contact with an enemy in the overworld triggered a turn @-@ based battle scene shown in the first @-@ person ( similar to EarthBound ) . The battles had psychedelic backgrounds and a circular menu that included a command to " get up " if the player was knocked down in a real @-@ time sequence . Attacks could be timed with the in @-@ game music for stronger effects . The developers also planned multiple routes for advancing through the game and unforeseen complications from minor actions , such as a monster finding food dropped in the forest . The game was set to include features such as synching the game 's time with the real time , but those features would not have worked without the 64DD . Mother 3 was set to run between 40 and 60 hours in length .

= = = Reception = = =

In their review of the Space World 1999 demo , IGN found the mine cart scene ? where Lucca and Klaus outrun a collapsing cave in a minecart ? to be its " most impressive " sequence . They added that it " might be one of the most impressive cutscenes on the N64 yet " . IGN felt that the controls were intuitive , the sound " well orchestrated and memorable " , the 3D game engine " strong " , and the battle system " confusing " . They wrote that the game would be highly original , but were not able to tell the degree to which the story or characters would interact . IGN compared the multi @-@ character aspect of the narrative to the Japan @-@ only Super Famicom RPG Live A Live . Famitsu readers ranked the game as one of their top ten most anticipated towards the end of 1999 .

= = Game Boy Advance = =

Three years later , in 2003 , a Japanese Mother 1 + 2 television commercial included a slide that announced a future release of Mother 3 . While working on the compilation that would port Mother and Mother 2 to the Game Boy Advance , Itoi predicted further pressure to release Mother 3 and decided , based on encouragement and the game 's fans , to release the game . Itoi had earlier assumed that restarting the project was impossible , and felt that his final effort to finish the game to be more like a " prayer " than like " vengeance " . Other than the graphical changes required for a release on the Advance , the game was to keep its original story . Brownie Brown staff assisted in the game 's development , and Itoi worked with them on individual pacing issues .

Itoi chose to use the pixelated style of Mother 2 for Mother 3 because he was uninterested in computer graphics trends . He felt that it was only coincidentally related to the resurgence of interest in retrogaming . The series ' games were written in the hiragana alphabet instead of in kanji ( Chinese characters ) so as to remain accessible to young children . Itoi described the world as governed by " might equals right " and its power struggle as " macho " . The antagonist , Porky , was designed as a " symbol of humankind " . Itoi associated the game 's view of evil to the " fun and games " on the spectrum of " pranks " to " crimes " , and likened its tone to the lyrics of the song " Reunion " by Kazuko Matsuo , where the subject falls in love with someone the world finds evil . Itoi compared how the characters come to realize their psychic powers with menstruation , and added that human physiology was " one of his themes " . As such , players sweat when learning an ability , based on Itoi 's belief of how physical struggle facilitates growth . He also included characters like

the Magypsies and Duster ( who has a bad leg ) to show the value of having friends with different qualities . Some environments were added to serve specific purposes . For example , Osohe Castle was meant to show the scale of time and Tantane Island was designed to reflect the player 's worst nightmares as similar to Mother 2 's " hallucinatory city " , Moonside . Another of his themes was the duality of the seriousness and lightheartedness of games , which is why he added a serious death scene to the first chapter . Other parts of the game referenced media such as Kiki 's Delivery Service .

Itoi wrote the game 's ending while overseas in Saipan before Mother 3 was cancelled . His Nintendo 64 version was darker , " dirtier " , and more upsetting , though the final version changed little in concept . The Nintendo 64 version was to be more vague and left to the player 's imagination through its sparse dialogue . Itoi attributed the change in tone to his own growth and the character composition of the new development team . He said that he had not been changed by fans . Itoi always planned for the two brothers to fight each other , though he did not write the ending until after production had already begun , a process he compared with Hayao Miyazaki 's . Itoi processed each line individually as he wrote the final scene , and later reflected on its moral content that bad people sometimes need even more help than the good people . He said that the one line that makes him most emotional is , " You must be tired . " Itoi felt that the ending 's renewal theme reflected his worldview of appreciating our time on Earth in light of the planet 's inevitable end . Much of the rest of the script was written after @-@ hours at a local hotel where they would continue their work .

The game was about 60 percent finished by July 2004 and was set for a late 2005 release in Japan . The game was released on April 20 , 2006 in Japan for the Game Boy Advance , whereupon it became a bestseller . A limited edition Deluxe Box Set was produced with a special edition Game Boy Micro and Franklin Badge pin . It did not receive a North American release on the basis that it would not sell well . Digital Trends wrote that the game 's emphasis on " magical transgender gurus " might have also affected the decision .

= = = Music = = =

All of the game 's music was composed by Shogo Sakai . Itoi saw Sakai as competing with Mother 2 composer Keiichi Suzuki for his fans . Itoi had to choose a composer from the development team who understood the series and could work full @-@ time on the project , including other development duties . Thus , he could not choose Suzuki , who was outside the project , or Hirokazu Tanaka , who had become the president of Creatures . Sakai also understood the game 's story intimately and named the Magypsies after musical terms . He worked to make the music feel similar to previous entries in the series .

There are 250 tracks in the game 's sound player . Itoi did not have a favorite of Sakai 's work . He noted that the final track , " Love Theme " , was added towards the end of the development cycle . While the ending was incomplete , Itoi planned to use the Pigmask theme , but they decided to add a new song to better reflect their intentions in December 2005 . The game 's soundtrack was released on compact disc on November 2 , 2006 . Kyle Miller of RPGFan wrote that the game retained the quirkiness of the previous soundtracks in the series despite the change in composers . He found the second half of the album , which included reinterpreted " classics " from the series , to be its strongest .