= Mother 3 =

Mother 3 is a 2006 role @-@ playing video game in the Mother series , developed by Brownie Brown and HAL Laboratory and published by Nintendo for the Game Boy Advance . The game , which is the final entry in the series , was directed by Nobuyuki Inoue , written by series creator Shigesato Itoi , and scored by composer Shogo Sakai . The story follows Lucas , a young boy with psychic abilities , as he attempts to prevent an invading army from destroying the world . The game 's themes include human physiology , renewal , moral fungibility , and dualisms such as nature and technology , and feudalism and capitalism .

The game 's development spanned twelve years and four consoles , beginning in 1994 for the Super Famicom console and then transitioning to the Nintendo 64 and its 64DD add @-@ on before being cancelled in 2000 . Mother 3 restarted development in 2003 for the Game Boy Advance and was finally released in Japan on April 20 , 2006 .

Mother 3 was a critical and commercial success upon release . Critics generally praised the game 's graphics , music , and story , but believed that the gameplay offered few innovations to the role @-@ playing genre . The game was never released outside Japan , though an unofficial English fan translation was released by the Starmen.net internet community in October 2008 . On December 17 , 2015 , the game was released for the Japanese Virtual Console on the Wii U.

= = Gameplay = =

Mother 3 is a single @-@ player role playing video game similar to previous games in the Mother series . The player controls a party of playable characters who explore the game 's two @-@ dimensional fictional world , primarily shown from a top @-@ down perspective . While navigating the overworld , the player may converse with non @-@ player characters , obtain items , or encounter enemies . Winning battles against enemies awards experience points to the party , which is required for leveling up . Leveling up a character permanently enhances its individual attributes such as maximum hit points (HP) , power points (PP) , offense , and defense . Weapons , armor , or accessories can be equipped on a character to increase certain attributes . The player can restore their characters ' HP and PP or heal various status ailments by visiting hot springs which are placed abundantly in the game world , and the player can save the game by talking to frogs . Currency is introduced in the later half of the game as Dragon Points (DP) , earned by winning battles and used to purchase items . The player can deposit or withdraw DP from frogs .

Mother 3 retains the turn @-@ based battle system featured in EarthBound . When the player comes into contact with an enemy in the overworld , the game transitions to a battle screen . Battles are viewed from a first @-@ person perspective , showing the enemies against a distorted , animated background . The player can assign each character in their party to perform an action , such as attacking an enemy or using items to restore HP or PP . Some characters can utilize psychic @-@ based abilities referred to as PSI , which includes stronger attacks and healing abilities , and require PP to execute . Like Earthbound , combat uses a " rolling health " system : when one of the player 's characters is injured , its HP will gradually " roll " down , similar to an odometer , rather than immediately decremented . This allows a mortally wounded character to perform actions like attacking or healing themselves , as long as the player acts quickly enough . If a character loses all HP , it will become unconscious and cannot participate unless revived by another character . The player loses a battle if all characters become unconscious ; the player will then be given the option to continue play from the nearest save point , but with half the DP on their person .

Combat in Mother 3 includes a unique musical combo system not seen in previous Mother games . When one of the player 's characters directly attacks an enemy with a weapon , they can repeatedly attack the enemy by pressing the button in time with the beat of the background music , with each enemy possessing a musical theme with different rhythms . Using this system , the player can attack the enemy up to sixteen times in a row . When the correct beat is not apparent , the player can put the enemy to sleep to isolate the beat from the music .

== Plot ==

The game takes place an unknown amount of years after the events of Mother 2 , Mother 3 's story is told in eight chapters , including a prologue . The game begins as the Pig Mask Army starts a forest fire and invades Tazmily Village , a small town in the Nowhere Islands . Flint ventures out to protect his friends and family (twin sons Lucas and Claus and wife Hinawa) . When Hinawa is found dead , Flint lashes out and is imprisoned . Claus sneaks Flint a tool to escape before disappearing . Flint sets out to find Claus . In chapter two , neophyte thief Duster breaks into a castle to find an egg that keeps the world 's secrets . He meets the princess Kumatora , but they are separated when a flood washes them out of the castle . In chapter three , Pig Mask leader Fassad orders the monkey player @-@ character , Salsa , through the desert . Salsa escapes to the forest and futilely fights the Pig Mask Army with Kumatora until Lucas saves them . Lucas and Flint protect the town while Kumatora and Salsa look for Duster . In chapter four , three years have passed , Tazmily has been modernized , and Lucas becomes the game 's main protagonist . Lucas learns psychic powers from a superpowered , Cross @-@ Dressing creature known as a Magypsy and recovers the amnesic Duster from life as a bandmate .

In chapter five , Lucas , Duster and Kumatora recover the egg , and meet a Masked Man . In chapter seven , separated from Duster and Kumatora , Lucas and his dog , Boney , learn about the seven Needles kept by seven Magypsies that quell a sleeping dragon underneath the earth . A prophecy foretold that a " chosen one " would come to pull the Needles and wake the dragon and determine the fate of the world . Racing the Masked Man in search of these Needles , Lucas battles through a laboratory of chimeras , reunites with Kumatora and Duster , and meets Mr. Saturn . In chapter eight , Pig King Master Porky , who returned from Mother 2 , invites Lucas and his cohorts to New Pork City , where Tazmily residents have relocated . Lucas learns that the islands are protected by the dragon , that the egg contains the destructive mindsets of the outside world , that Porky is after the needles and its subsequent power , and that both Porky 's Masked Man and Lucas have each pulled three of the seven Needles . Lucas and his cohorts fight Porky , and are able to defeat him . However , to protect himself , Porky seals himself within his absolutely safe capsule , which Lucas and his friends can not harm . However , Porky himself can not harm them , and is revealed to be unable to ever leave the capsule . Later , Lucas reunites with Flint . As they prepare to pull the final Needle , Lucas 's party is hurt by the Masked Man , who is revealed as Claus . A disembodied voice attempts to talk to Claus and Flint sacrifices himself in the battle . The boys fight and Claus tragically commits suicide , for the death of his and Lucas ' mother . Lucas pulls the final Needle which lead to destructions on the Nowhere Islands as a result of awakening the dragon and in the pitch black epilogue , the player is assured that the characters have survived . In the final frame , the Mother 3 logo is shown without its metal , as restored to nature .

== Development ==

Mother 3 began development in 1994 as a game for the Super Famicom with Shigeru Miyamoto and Satoru Iwata as producers . The team mostly consisted of members involved in the development of EarthBound . Inspired by the Nintendo 64 launch title Super Mario 64 , the development team transitioned from the Super Famicom to the newer console believing that they could also creatively flourish by making a 3D world without technical restrictions . However , their early specifications exceeded the capabilities and memory limits of the console ; halfway through development the team scaled back its large scope and changed the platform to the 64DD , a Nintendo 64 expansion peripheral that was later released only in Japan in 1999 . Mother 3 was expected to be a launch title for the peripheral , but development shifted back to the Nintendo 64 after the 64DD was considered a commercial failure . A demo of Mother 3 was showcased at the 1999 Nintendo Space World trade show . The game was expected to be released in North America under the title EarthBound 64 , and the game was also stated to be released on a 256 @-@ megabit cartridge , similar to The Legend of Zelda : Ocarina of Time . IGN reacted favorably to the demo and compared the multi @-@ character narrative to the Japan @-@ only Super Famicom RPG Live A

Live , and Famitsu readers ranked the game as one of their top ten most anticipated towards the end of 1999 .

Shigesato Itoi announced in late August 2000 that Mother 3 was cancelled following a number of delays . Iwata and Miyamoto clarified in an interview that resources had been moved to the development of the GameCube , the next Nintendo console . Itoi stated that an additional two years would have been required to finish the game , which was 30 % complete at the time of cancellation . Iwata stated retrospectively that the focus on 3D graphics made the project overly complex . Miyamoto also stated that the Mother franchise was not abandoned and that he was still interested in bringing the game to fruition .

Mother 3 was later announced in 2003 to have restarted development for the Game Boy Advance handheld console in a Japanese commercial for Mother 1 + 2 . Itoi had earlier assumed that restarting the project was impossible but later decided to continue following encouragement from the Mother fanbase . Nintendo subsidiary Brownie Brown developed the game , with input from Itoi . While the graphics were changed from 3D to 2D , the game 's original story was not altered . Mother 3 was about 60 % complete by July 2004 , and was released on April 20 , 2006 , in Japan .

= = = Design = = =

Itoi thought of the concept behind Mother 3 towards the end of Mother 2 's production , 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 . Unlike previous RPGs , which he saw as " road movies " with little reason to revisit , he wanted the player to see the town gossip grow dynamically . It was enough of a departure from the series that the development team questioned whether fans would consider it part of the series . Itoi intended the game to have 12 chapters with various game mechanics and rotating player @-@ characters . He conceptualized the development as moving 3D puppets before realizing the degree of programming required . As development wore on , Itoi reduced the scope of the chapters until seven or nine were left . The " uncomfortable beauty " of chimera ? multiple creatures fused into one ? was central to the game and the idea behind the metallic and wooden Mother 3 logo . Itoi served less of a manager role and more as a team member and scriptwriter than in previous Mother development cycles . 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 .

Itoi chose to use the pixelated style of Mother 2 for the Game Boy Advance Mother 3 because he was uninterested in computer graphics trends . 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 game world as governed by a " might equals right ... macho " power struggle . The antagonist , Porky , was designed as a " symbol of humankind " , complementing Itoi 's view of evil on a fungible morality spectrum with " pranks " and " crimes " at its extremes . Itoi compared the way in which the characters realize their psychic powers with menstruation , and added that human physiology was " one of his themes " . 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 .

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 . Itoi 's Nintendo 64 version of the ending was darker , " dirtier " , and more upsetting , though the final version changed little in concept . Itoi attributed the change in tone to his own growth and the character composition of the new development team . Itoi later reflected on the ending 's lesson on the virtue of helping bad people . 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 .

= = = Music = = =

Shogo Sakai , a video game composer at HAL Laboratory whose previous works include music for Kirby Air Ride and Super Smash Bros. Melee , composed Mother 3 's soundtrack . Shigesato Itoi stated that Sakai was chosen for the role given his deep understanding of the game 's story and the EarthBound series in general , in addition to the fact that EarthBound composers Keiichi Suzuki and Hirokazu Tanaka were both unavailable . Sakai worked to make the music feel similar to previous entries in the series . The Mother 3 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 .

" Love Theme " , the main theme of Mother 3 , was composed late in the game 's development ; earlier in development Itoi intended to use the " Pigmask Army " theme as the main theme of the game . During creation of an important scene in the game , however , Sakai was asked to create a song that would have a greater impact than the Pigmask theme ; upon its creation it was chosen to be used as the main theme instead of the " Pigmask Army " song . Itoi claims that , given how quickly Sakai composed the song , that he had been " waiting for the order " to make a song like " Love Theme " . Itoi requested that " Love Theme " be playable on a piano with only one finger , as the " Eight Melodies " theme from Mother had gained popularity and been played in elementary schools due to its simplicity . The " OK desu ka ? " that plays after the player chooses the character 's name was recorded without Itoi 's knowledge by Hirokazu Tanaka more than a decade before the release of Mother 3 .

= = Release = =

Mother 3 was released in Japan on April 20 , 2006 , where it became a bestseller . Prior to its release , the game was in the " top five most wanted games " of Famitsu and at the top of the Japanese preordered game charts . At one point leading up to its release , the game 's " Love Theme " would play as music on hold for the Japan Post . A limited edition Deluxe Box Set was produced with a special edition Game Boy Micro and Franklin Badge pin . The game was marketed in Japan with a television commercial that has Japanese actress K? Shibasaki on the verge of tears as she explains her feelings about Mother 3 . Itoi has said that her performance was unscripted .

= = = Fan translation = = =

Mother 3 did not receive an official release outside Japan . On October 17 , 2008 , Starmen.net released a fan translation patch that , when applied on a copy of the Mother 3 ROM image , translates all the game 's text into English . Reid Young , co @-@ founder of Starmen.net , stated that when they realized Nintendo was not going to localize Mother 3 , they decided to undertake the task , for themselves and for fans of the game . The translation team consisted of around a dozen individuals , including project lead Clyde " Tomato " Mandelin , a professional Japanese @-@ to @-@ English translator . The project took two years and thousands of work @-@ hours to complete ; it was estimated that the theoretical freelance cost of the translation was $ 30 @,@ 000 .

The project included translating , writing , and revising about 1 @,@ 000 pages of the game script in addition to extensive ROM hacking and testing to ensure that the game properly and correctly displays the translated text . The translation included minor deviations from the original , such as localization of place @-@ names and puns . Few dramatic changes were made , but some characters and locations were renamed . For example , the character " Yokuba " , loosely derived from yokub? (?? , " greed ") , was renamed " Fassad " , loosely derived from the French word façade and , incidentally , the Arabic word fas?d (???? , " corruption ") . The ROM hacking entailed assembly @-@ level changes to the game code to support features such as variable width fonts .

The team reported that " the highest levels " of Nintendo of America knew about their project , though they did not intervene . The localization team planned to end the project if Nintendo were to

make an announcement about the future of the game . They acknowledged that the legality of the localization was unclear since the final translation required use of an emulator . The localization patch was downloaded over 100 @,@ 000 times in the first week following its release . Along with the translation , the team announced the Mother 3 Handbook , an English player 's guide for the game that had been in development since June 2008 . Wired reported the full @-@ color , 200 @-@ page player 's guide to be akin to a professional strategy guide , with quality " on par with ... Prima Games and BradyGames " . The Verge cited the two @-@ year fan translation of Mother 3 as proof of the fan base 's dedication , and Jenni Lada of TechnologyTell called it " undoubtably one of the best known fan translations in existence " , with active retranslations into other languages .

= = Reception = =

 Mother 3 sold around 200 @,@ 000 copies in its first week of sales in Japan . It was one of Japan 's top 20 bestselling games for the first half of 2006 , and received a " Platinum Hall of Fame " score of 35 / 40 from Japanese reviewer Weekly Famitsu . It ended the year with over 368 @,@ 000 copies sold , the 36th highest of the year in Japan . Jenni Lada of TechnologyTell called it the " perfect " Game Boy Advance role @-@ playing game . Reviewers praised its story (even though the game was only available in Japanese) and graphics , and lamented its 1990s role @-@ playing game mechanics . Critics also complimented its music .
 Famitsu 's reviewers noted the level of detail from the game 's direction , accessibility and wit of the story , unconventional art style , and conventional game mechanics . They considered the timed battles to be both useful and difficult . Eurogamer 's Simon Parkin detailed the 12 @-@ year development , the series ' legacy as both " one of Japan 's most beloved " and the video game cognoscenti 's " sacred cow " , and the endurance of its fan community . He was impressed by the quality of the fan translation , and described Itoi as a " storyteller " who chose the Japanese role @-@ playing game medium to tell his story . Parkin noted how the " excellent " script unfurled from a " straightforward tale " into " breadth and depth of quality that few titles many times its budget achieve " with " affecting scenes " and " unexpected impact " . He compared the chapter approach with the method of Dragon Quest IV . Parkin wrote that the script allowed for the somewhat " heavy @-@ handed " juxtaposition of " nature and technology , feudalism and capitalism , individuals and community " , and that what he first considers a name customization " trick " becomes useful later in the game . NGC Magazine 's Mark Green wrote that the game felt like Mother 2 @.@ 5 in its look and feel , which he did not consider negative , albeit somewhat antiquated . Lada of TechnologyTell said Mother 3 was surprisingly " darker " than its forbears .
 Eurogamer 's Parkin wrote that the " childlike " and " unusually Western " graphics were similar to EarthBound 's in " flat pastel textures devoid of shading " as juxtaposed with background art that " fizzes with life and character " . He described the cutscenes ' animations as " bespoke " , rare for 16 @-@ bit role @-@ playing games , and of greater dramatic impact . RPGamer 's Jordan Jackson wrote that the visuals are typical of the series and fit the game 's mood , and the website 's Mike Moehnke criticized the inventory limits carried over from the previous game . Green of NGC said the game mechanics were " depressingly basic " against more advanced role @-@ playing games . Eurogamer 's Parkin felt that the role @-@ playing game elements were less interesting and added that Mother 3 had few standout selling points other than its attention to detail and " only systemic innovation " : the rhythm @-@ based battle system . Kotaku 's Richard Eisenbeis praised the system , and GameSpot 's Greg Kasavin compared it with that of the Mario & Luigi series . Jackson wrote that the music was " just as catchy as previous games " despite being " almost completely new " . Moehnke agreed , calling it " nothing less than stunning " . He noted overtones of Wagner and Chuck Berry . Jackson said that the game was somewhat easier than the rest of the series and somewhat shorter , at about 30 hours in length . Both RPGamer reviewers noted that Mother 3 has few penalties for death . Jackson reflected that while the game is humorous and grows in enjoyment , it has some somber moments as well . Eisenbeis of Kotaku cited " the importance of mothers " as a key theme about which the game revolves , which he preferred to the mid @-@ game " slapstick insanity " and final plot twist . Parkin wrote that the game was filled with " memorable moments " ,

including a character who criticizes the player " for not giggling at puns " , frogs with progressively silly costumes that save the game , a " reconstructed mecha caribou " battle , a bad haiku , and the " campfire scene " , and that while the game 's simpleness could have lent towards " raw stupidity " , instead it was " elegant in its simplicity " .

= = Legacy = =

Multiple critics wrote that Mother 3 was one of the best role @-@ playing games for the Game Boy Advance . GamePro 's Jeremy Signor listed it among his " best unreleased Japanese role @-@ playing games " for its script and attention to detail . Video game journalist Tim Rogers posited that Mother 3 was " the closest games have yet come to literature " .

The 2008 fighting game Super Smash Bros. Brawl features Mother 3 protagonist Lucas as a playable character alongside Ness , a perennial Smash Bros. series character and the protagonist of EarthBound (Mother 2) . Their move sets are similar , both based on psychic powers . Official Nintendo Magazine 's Thomas East thought that both characters should be dropped from future Smash Bros. games , adding that Lucas was too similar to Ness . Both characters returned in the sequel , Super Smash Bros. for Nintendo 3DS and Wii U , where Ness is in the main game and Lucas is available as downloadable content .

Nintendo is often criticized for Mother 3 's lack of an international release . IGN referred to the Mother series as " neglected " in regards to EarthBound being (at the time) the only game to be released outside Japan . Bob Mackey of 1UP.com wrote of Mother 3 that " no other game in the history of time garnered such a rabid demand for translation , " and Chris Plante of UGO Networks wrote that the lack of an official Mother 3 English localization was one of 2008 's " worst heartbreaks " . Frank Caron of Ars Technica said that the fan translation 's " massive undertaking ... stands as a massive success " and that " one cannot even begin to fathom why Nintendo wouldn 't see fit to release the game in the West . "

Itoi has stated that he does not have any plans to create a fourth Mother title .