

System(s) GameBoy Advance  
 Developer Nintendo

Publisher Nintendo  
 Online/Multi NA

Available Now (Japan)  
 ESRB Rating NA

GAME REVIEW

# MOTHER 3

Shigesato Itoi's gift to the world

words Dai Kohama

**"D**on't cry until the end." This was the slogan for the original Mother 1 -- the prequel to EarthBound on SNES -- and one virtually every Japanese of my generation remembers. Twelve years on from Mother 2, I was unable to comply with this rule. Over the course of Shigesato Itoi's Mother 3, I cried three times. Real tears, influenced by a tiny collection of pixels on a two-and-a-half-inch screen in front of me.

Mother 3 isn't a good game. It's a timeless masterpiece that completely exploded my expectations. As many of you probably know, M3 was slated to be released on the Nintendo 64DD, before that platform imploded and was finally cancelled in late 2000. I even remember the day -- August 22nd -- and I was absolutely crushed. To think that I'd never get to play a Mother 3...well, it was unthinkable.

But the gods smiled, and the game was remade on GameBoy Advance. It feels like it belongs here, in a simple, bold, primary-colored world, harkening back to the Famicom original. Don't be fooled by these screens -- this isn't a poorly-art-directed game. This is the way it's meant to be, and with good reason: It's Mother.

I could go on about this game for ten pages, but on half a page one has to pick

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and choose. The game itself is a standard RPG, but the battles are something very new. So new, and yet so simple, I found myself wondering aloud, "Why the heck hasn't anyone ever done this before?" The monsters' heartbeats are integrated into the battle music, and you must press buttons in rhythm with them to fight effectively, as in a beatmania-style music sim. This eliminates the humdrum "mash A" RPG convention and is actually quite fun, right up to the end of the game.

Obviously, what makes Mother 3 so great is its *truly* brilliant story. It's easy enough to bandy about such terms, but that's what this game's story really is -- sheer brilliance. I won't ruin it on the off chance Mother 3 should come out in America, but suffice to say it's packed with a good deal of tragedy, comedy, kindness, viciousness and everything in between. It's not just a great video game story...it's a great story, period. In particular, the feeling of catharsis Mother 3 provides is profound -- I am truly grateful that I, as a human being, was able to play this game.

It's a terrible shame Mother 3 isn't slated to be released in America as EarthBound 2. Americans deserve to play it. The remake

Mother 1 + 2 was also recently released on GBA, and I'd get on hands and knees to ask Nintendo to release these two products in English. If I, as one man, can make a case for the release, allow me to say this: To confirm my feelings about Mother 3, I loaded up my save data for another play.

I found myself breaking Shigesato Itoi's rule for the fourth time.

## Mother 3

SCORE 10

- + Story is profound brilliance, sound battles tons of fun
- The fact that we had to wait twelve years to play it



Humble visuals with huge impact.



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