It’s the Year of the Big Game, and that’s a good thing

2023 has been packed with some of the biggest games in recent memory, and I’m totally fine with that. For the past little while, it feels like the gaming industry has been more interested in time-sucking live service behemoths, games that never end, rather than satisfying single-player titles. But this year, I’m instead feasting on a delicious platter of great games I can play on my own with a bunch of great courses I haven’t even touched yet.

a:hover]:text-gray-63 [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-bd dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63 dark:[&>a]:text-gray-bd dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray”>Image: Nintendo
But believe me when I say I’m not complaining.

Every one of those games has a self-contained story mode that I can finish on my own time, and we should be celebrating that. If I don’t finish some of the faction quests I’m working on in *Starfield*, they’ll be there next month. If I don’t get to those side quests in *Zelda*, maybe I will when I get the itch to explore Hyrule again. If I pick *Super Mario Bros. Wonder* over *Spider-Man 2*, I’ll be able to swing through New York as Peter Parker and Miles Morales when I get around to it.

Of the games I listed, only *Diablo IV* has a live service element to worry about (and that can be completely ignored if I just want to play the base campaign), so I won’t have to deal with FOMO over new updates or seasonal content that I miss because I’m still meandering my way through any of 2023’s huge titles. I even skipped finishing *Fortnite’s* battle pass

last season; I almost always get to 100 on those passes, but even I started to tire of completing yet another collection of seemingly endless challenges. (The new season looks great, but now that I've cut back a bit on *Fortnite*, I'm not as interested as I used to be.)

Massive single-player games present a different kind of all-consuming problem

Yes, 2023's massive single-player games present a different kind of all-consuming problem. When I can usually only play games for an hour or two a day if I'm lucky, how will I ever finish these sprawling epics? If I add any new games to the plate, that pushes anything else further down the list. And against my better instincts, I wouldn't be surprised if I get sucked into mastering *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe's* DLC courses; any time driving around Waluigi Stadium would probably be better spent exploring Faerûn in *Baldur's Gate 3*.

Even if I do end up with a lot of time in *Mario Kart* when 2023 draws to a close, I'm just fine with that. All the other games I've dabbled in this year will still be there, waiting for me to jump back in. The games I want to play but haven't will be around, too.

Besides, the best part of video games usually isn't beating them. The journey is what matters more than the final destination. That's what I took from *Starfield*, anyway.

https://www.theverge.com/2023/9/1/23846264/starfield-baldurs-gate-legend-of-zelda-year-video-game-2023