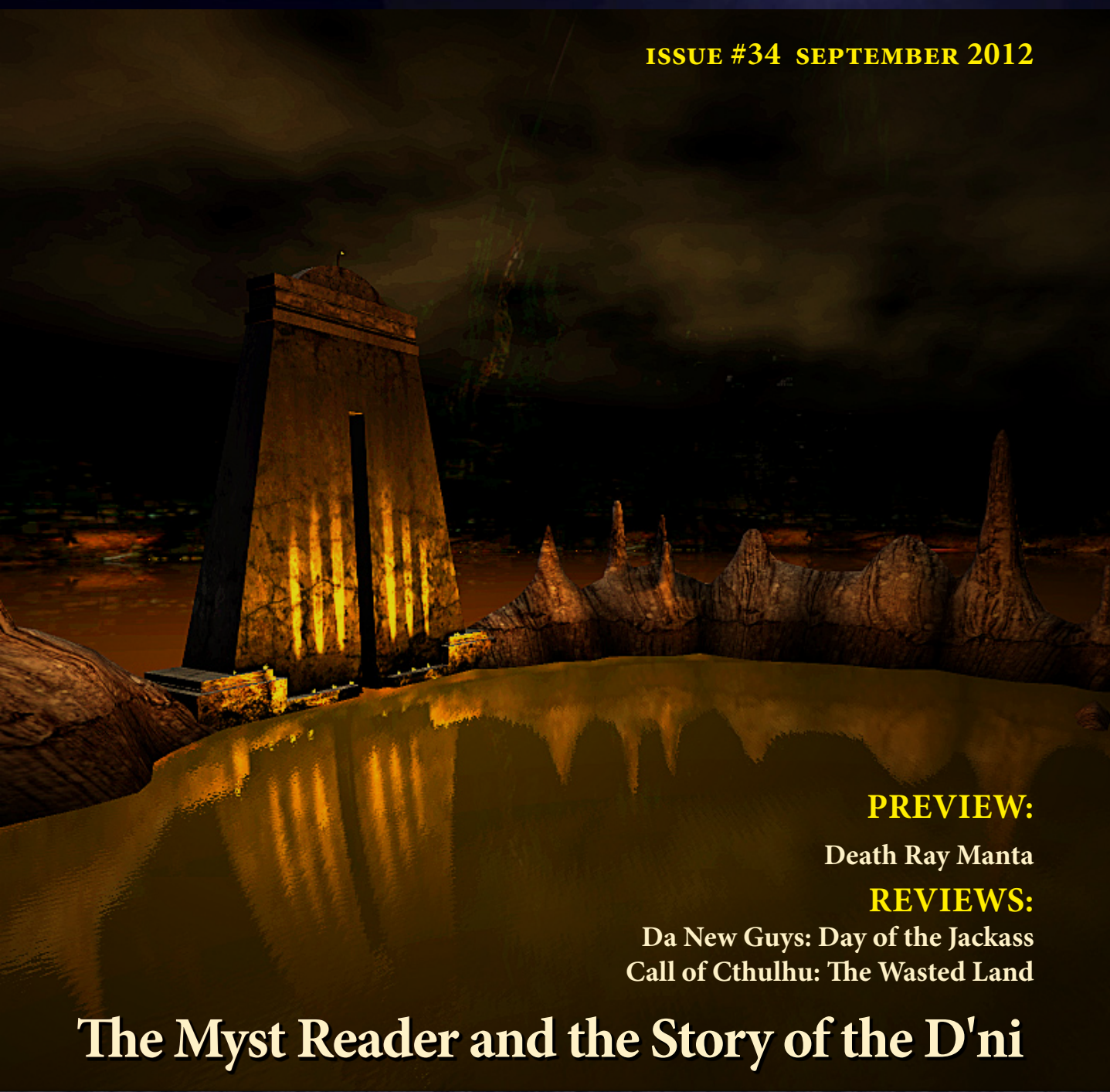


# Adventure Lantern

ISSUE #34 SEPTEMBER 2012



## **PREVIEW:**

Death Ray Manta

## **REVIEWS:**

Da New Guys: Day of the Jackass  
Call of Cthulhu: The Wasted Land

# The Myst Reader and the Story of the D'ni

# EDITORIAL

I have no idea when we will get to publish this September issue, but it has come together quite well. This month we have a preview of *DRM*, a game premiering in the Bundle in a Box; Two articles from Gnome's blog, *Da New Guys* and *Call of Cthulhu: The Wasted Land*; As well as the start of the *Myst* series I talked about last month. Other than the news section, which is as big as ever, The *Myst* article is the only real substantial content. Which is not to put the other articles down, but they are extremely short.

This *Myst* article, at seven pages with images in its finished form, is certainly the biggest article I ever wrote for *Adventure Lantern* and the biggest writing project I have taken on thus far; There is a lot of information to be taken in if you want to be even semi *Myst* literate. In this article I review, talk about, and explain the story behind the enigmatic 1993 hit adventure game and its many sequels, prequels, and adaptations; As well as paying particular attention to and officially reviewing the book trilogy, that was made alongside the game series. This article, if I may say so myself, came together very well and I hope it will be a pleasure to read; But possibly even better than my writing was Constantin's compilation of the article, with expert use of images and background.

For the next article in this *Myst* series, which will be coming soon if not next month, I plan on tackling *Myst* and its remakes along with discussing in detail the gameplay and other features of *Myst*; What makes *Myst* *Myst*, and what exactly is a *Myst*-like.

– Jonathon Wisnoski



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Cover Image:  
**MYST ONLINE: URU LIVE**

**ADVENTURE LANTERN**  
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We have had another amazing month for adventure games. In particular it has been a very good month for AGS games with the increased activity coming out of Screen 7. Steam Greenlight has also been a happy surprise, with a lot of adventure games coming to light through this service. Additionally, crowd-funding continues to make many adventure games possible, though many others continue development regardless of success or failure of funding.

Screen 7 has been very active this month with and has announced, finished, and updated a load of games. Under their direction Summerbatch, a pay what you want bundle with many AGS adventures, launched last month. It is filled with well known authors and a bunch of great looking games. In addition to the they are also working on the commercial projects *Kinky Island*, *The Cat Lady*, and *A night at Camp Ravenwood*; As well as the freeware *The Visitor 2*. Last month, we also got the final *Ben Jordan* case, a bunch of MAGS entries, a few other assorted games and demos, and the very promising looking *Troll Song*.

Steam Greenlight has been an unexpected blessing for the genre. I am not sure if it has inspired any developers or just been a good showcase for some of them; Either way I have enjoyed many of the concepts and finished products that I first heard about through their service. It not only highlighted more than a few great looking games, but has been fair with ranking the games. Most notably is the already released *The Five Cores*, a *Myst*-like (a trait shared with a fair amount of other Greenlight games), and *Asylum* (which has been doing very well with in the rankings).

– Jonathon Wisnoski

**Note:** we had a bunch of technical problems with the hyperlinks this month, so none are included in this news section.

## DEEP SPACE

### Bundle in a Box: Deep Space

The second Bundle in a Box has launched with eight games. *Space Giraffe*, *Death Ray Manta* (exclusive), *The Wreckless*, *Dark Scavenger*, and *Armalyte*, for any price. And for anyone who beats the average (around \$5): *Sol: Exodus*, *Miner Wars Arena*, *RobotRiot*, and *Armalyte Extras*. There is also a bunch of extras that unlock as more bundles are sold, a charity which gets a portion of all sales, and a Indie Dev. Grant. The sale ends September 28th.

#### Details

*Death Ray Manta* (PC/Mac): the eye eye-melting arena shmup by Rob Fearon. A BIAB exclusive debut!

*Space Giraffe* (PC): Jeff Minter's psychedelic evolution of the ultimate arcade game.

*Dark Scavenger* (PC/Mac): Trippy, hilarious and very, very silly adventure/RPG hybrid.

*Armalyte* (PC): the shiny high-res remake of the Commodore 64 classic horizontal shmup.

*The Wreckless* (PC/Mac), the indie successor to the TIE fighter throne.

*Sol: Exodus* (PC); a stunning and feature-rich scpace combat simulator. In the FUTURE!

*Miner Wars Arena* (PC/Mac): A freshly released, frantic, arcade experience in a destructible environment.

*Robot Riot* (PC/Mac): for all your retro-inspired, sci-fi platformer needs.

A rich selection of extras including soundtracks, artbooks and even PlaySF issue 1.

### Delightful Point & Click Bundle

A new site, [www.indiebundle.org](http://www.indiebundle.org), had jumped on the indie bundle bandwagon, and already has a handful of decent (NON-pwyw) bundle deals. Their very first bundle was none other than this fabulous three game adventure bundle. Featuring two verified amazing (newish) games, and another one that I hear is quite promising. I am talking about *Metal Dead*, *The Journey Down HD*, and *Shadows on the Vatican*; All for \$5 on Desura. All of these games have been in bundles before, but if you missed them, here is your chance.



## Announcements

### Broken Sword: The Serpent's Curse

A new, original, *Broken Sword* game by the original creator, Charles Cecil, has launched a Kickstarter campaign and already exceeded its \$400,000 goal. The game is being developed for Windows, Mac, Linux, and Android in many languages and was available for a \$15 pre-order (\$25 for Android) during the campaign through on Kickstarter and continues to be available on their website through Paypal.

With the original team assembled for just this project, Revolution, the developer is doing back to its 2D roots. The story is about two detectives, George and Nico, chasing a mysterious stolen painting across Europe and uncovering an ancient conspiracy.





### Dream

A is a first person atmospheric exploration game that has you assume the role of Howard Phillips, a young graduate with no direction in life who develops an obsession with his dreams. Discover dreams and nightmares filled with puzzles and secrets to help Howard find the meaning to his life.

The narrative is split into three acts with multiple endings that are possible based on how much you as a player have explored. Each act immerses you in new worlds that help to decipher Howard's past, emotions and ambitions. Confront Howard's mislaid concerns in the form of nightmares and reconcile the loss of his uncle.

#### Key Features:

- Unique 3D Environments
- Non-linear Narrative and Gameplay
- Multiple Endings
- Collectables and Secret



### Gomo

This charming looking point and click adventure is still mostly a mystery, with little besides screenshots being released thus far. But these screenshots do look great.



### Nancy Drew: The Deadly Device

The newest Nancy Drew adventure from Her Interactive, *Mystery #27*, has been announced and a lot of details are already available. The release date is set for October 23rd and the game will apparently be featuring, quite prominently, the amazing scientist Tesla. You get to

discover true facts about this unsung and eccentric physicist and inventor, as well as tinker with strange mechanical wonders created by him.

Fear lingers in a remote laboratory after a physicist's suspicious demise. A police investigation resulted in nothing except a case as cold as the secretive personalities and steel walls that enshroud a top-secret Tesla-inspired facility. That's why the lab owner asked you, as Detective Nancy Drew, to expose the terrifying truth about *The Deadly Device!*





### **Ir/rational Investigator**

From the writer & narrative designer of *Penumbra*, *FTL* and *Driver: San Francisco* comes *Ir/rational Investigator* - a noir adventure game with a unique, text-based argument system that lets players use deductive logic to solve cases and influence the story.

*Ir/rational Investigator* follows Rick Lombardo, a private dick in a town short on cops and overflowing with scum. It's a town where any Tom, Dick or Sally can get themselves a license to solve crime, or failing that: a gun, a reputation and a bad attitude. This is a commercial follow up to *Ir/rational Redux*, which garnered over half a million plays web-wide, and a coveted 4/5 user score on Newgrounds. In fact, if you want to know what *Ir/rational* is, you can play it right now, on Newgrounds.

The game is due for release episodically, for iPhone and PC, some time in 2013.

*Ir/rational Investigator* takes place in a town called Conjecture. Conjecture has a private police force. When someone steals your car in Conjecture you don't dial 911 - you hire a private detective and take the eternal gamble: will he doggedly pursue your case and bring the culprit to justice? Or will he be another wannabe PI who talks the talk, and then gets drunk in a back alley on your retainer while muttering explicit things about his ex-wife?

Conjecture, it seems to Rick, has no shortage of fast-talking criminals and femme fatales - it's an over-the-top noir fantasy world - which is why he's unable to comprehend how most of his cases involve lost animals and cheating husbands.

Rick needs a murder case - little does he know that his first will be far more besides.

*Ir/rational Investigator* is described as Professor Layton with propositional logic and more detectives. Players navigate the world map, new locations and characters appearing as the game progresses. A character might provide some information, offer Rick a new case, or present an argument (puzzle) for the player to complete.



# REPERFECTION

## VOLUME 1

### Reperfection

A new adventure in the style of an interactive graphic novel, but with classic point and click gameplay and controls. You unlock new panels and pages of the game by solving different puzzles. By doing so you influence the events in the past and change the future reality, finding out more and more about the exciting storyline. The background graphics are drawn by hand. The comic is kept in black and white using color as focus on important objects. The first episode of Reperfection is scheduled to be released in Autumn 2012.

*Reperfection* is being made by Oliver Specht and Michael Holzapfel from Cranberry Production, and working with the writer behind Black Mirror II and III. In the game, Ben Freeman lives with his wife Sarah and their son Danny in a small house in the suburb. They are a happy family - until the day Sarah loses her life in a car accident. Due to the loss of his wife Ben's life goes to pieces, but he discovers a so far



unknown ability that allows him to revert Sarah's death, jumping to the time Sarah wanted to leave the house and driving into that terrible accident. But the price for saving his beloved is higher than he could imagine.





### To the Moon Sequels

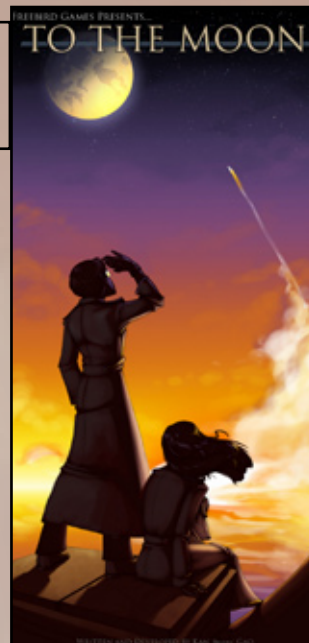
A second episode to *To the Moon* (featuring Dr. Watts & Rosalene and a new patient) has been announced, as well as a short game set in the same universe.

### Routine

This first person horror exploration game set on an abandoned Moon base. Your job is to find enough data to uncover the truth behind the strange disappearance of everyone stationed on the Lunar Research Station.

*Routine* is a non-linear experience that lets you explore any part of the fully open Moon base, where many secrets are hidden. Be immersed with full body awareness, dead-zone aiming, no HUD, no health bars or points system. You must run, hide and survive the best you can against what lurks in the base. There are no health packs or multiple lives and death is permanent.

*Routine* will be available on PC and MAC, early 2013. And since it was in the first batch of Greenlit games it will be on Steam.

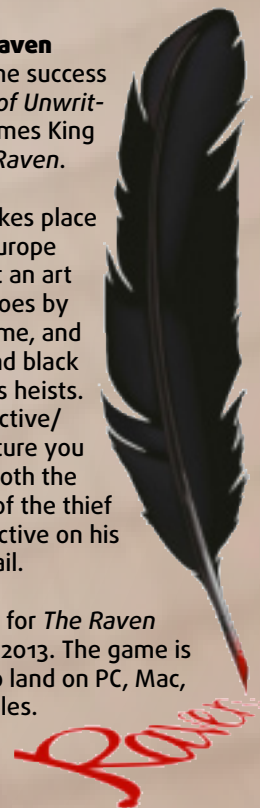


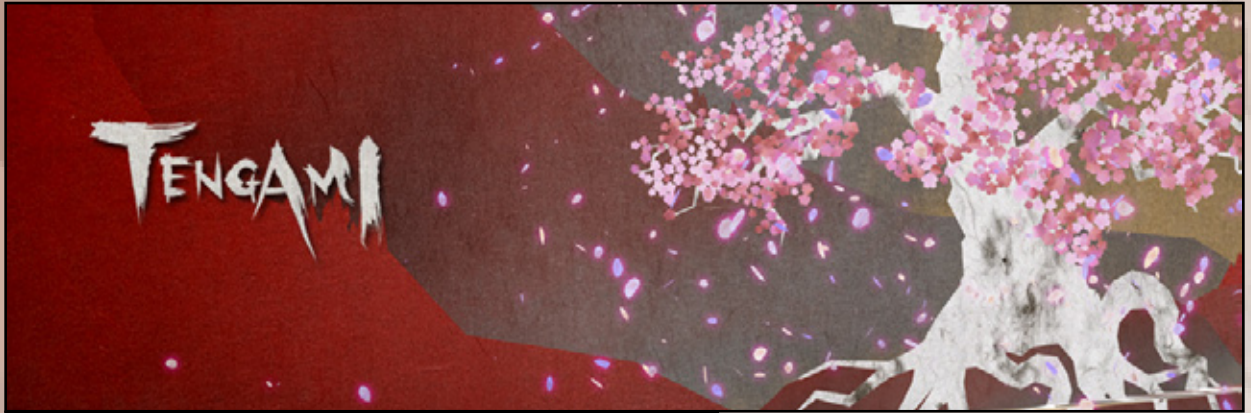
### The Raven

Fresh from the success of *The Book of Unwritten Tales*, comes King Art's *The Raven*.

*The Raven* takes place in 1960s Europe and is about an art thief who goes by that code name, and leaves behind black feathers at his heists. In this detective/crime adventure you play from both the perspective of the thief and the detective on his trail.

Watch out for *The Raven* sometime in 2013. The game is scheduled to land on PC, Mac, and consoles.





### Tengami

In *Tengami* you explore a beautifully paper crafted 3D pop-up world, with an art style inspired by traditional Japanese arts and crafts. *Tengami* is an adventure game, full of wonder and mystery, set in a Japan of ancient dark fairy tales. Tengami will be released first on the iPad, to be followed later by the iPhone, PC, and Mac.

### The Franz Kafka Adventure

From mif2000 who was behind the quirky adventure adaptation of Hamlet now comes his adaptation of the Franz Kafka novels, called *Twisted*. The game will be a "compilation of different ideas [from his collected works]"; Specifically the it will contain: "The

Castle + Amerika + The Metamorphosis + some surreal and absurd ideas". The game is currently in development for PC, Mac, and iOS, with a 2013 release being likely.

For the majority of you, like myself, who probably have no idea who Kafka was. Franz Kafka was a classic, early 1900s German author known for surreal situations, existentialism, expressionism, socialism, and Marxism.



**Nevermind**

*Nevermind* is a psychological horror puzzle game that uses a heart rate sensor (in real life) to challenge the player to stay calm in uncomfortable situations, the game changes based on your heart rate.

*Nevermind's* world exists primarily within the heads of trauma victims who do not remember or cannot process



the traumatic event that forever changed their lives. It is the player's goal to explore deep inside the dark, twisted minds of these patients to discover and identify the origin of the forgotten trauma so that the victim may be able to reconcile their past and begin their path to healing. You are a new agent at the Neurostalgia Institute – a psychiatric clinic that uses advanced neuroprobing technology to reveal the dark shadows locked away in the mind. You must delve inside the subconscious of these patients to unlock these buried memories. However, be careful not to let the terror of these landscapes drag you down into your own Hell. The mind is fragile and it can easily break. If the horrors of a patients' minds entangle you too deeply, you may not be able to save them, or yourself.

**Reincarnation: The Root of All Evil**

Their Kickstarter has succeeded, raising nearly \$19,000, and the developers have started up a Paypal order system to continue raising capital. A pre-order, and the chance to help the game be developed, costs \$15; With a scheduled August 2013 release date.

The *Reincarnation* series has an extensive collection of mini and full freeware titles, starring, Vile, the little purple minion of the Devil sent to earth to reclaim escaped souls.

*The Root of All Evil* differs from its freeware predecessors in several ways. The new game will be a download for Windows, Mac, and Linux, instead of a browser-based flash game. It will also be much longer, with over 50 scenes.



**Montas**

A single player first person exploration experience that focuses heavily on immersion, atmosphere, story and interactivity. The player is cast into a dark and mysterious world with little introduction, and must do what is necessary to survive on a twisted ride full of intrigue and drama.

You wake up at the desk of Joseph Walker, an accountant working for a firm in the city of Montas. Normal life for Joseph has become a distant memory, haunted by nightmares of events that didn't happen, and cursed with unsettling hallucinations wherever he goes. As a result of stress and anxiety, Joseph is now an alcoholic. Paranoia is growing, and the situation worsens when police begin to question locals about recent murders in the area. What is happening to Joseph and what is Montas hiding?

*Montas* has a trailer and is on Steam Greenlight.



## Upcoming Releases

# ASYLUM

## THE INTERACTIVE TEASER

### Asylum

The upcoming game from one of the the horror geniuses behind *Scratches* has gotten a teaser demo.

### Gone Home

Last month the developers behind *Gone Home* posted a very interesting article about the real life inspiration for their game. Definitely worth a read.

### Chaos on Deponia

The second chapter of *Deponia* throws the two protagonists, Goal and Rufus, back together and starts another quest to escape the surface world. *Chaos on Deponia* will be available on November 6th, 2012.

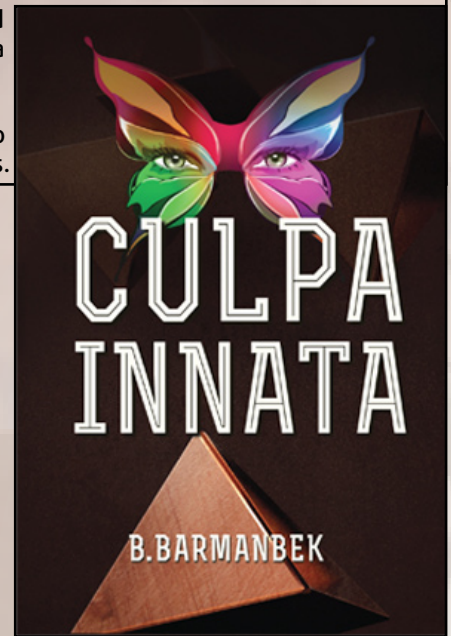


**Forever Lost: Episode One**

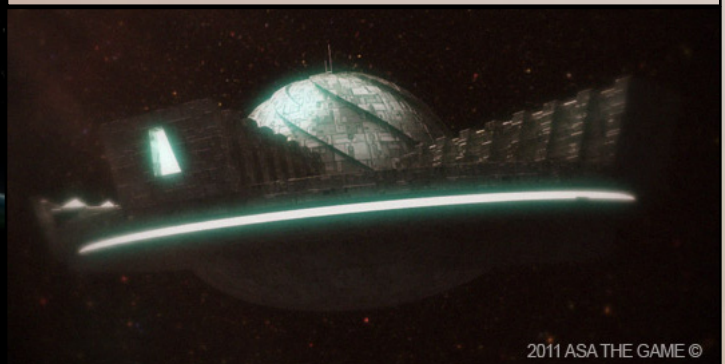
The first chapter of this iOS point and click adventure, with around 5 hours of gameplay, is coming to the App Store around September 2012.

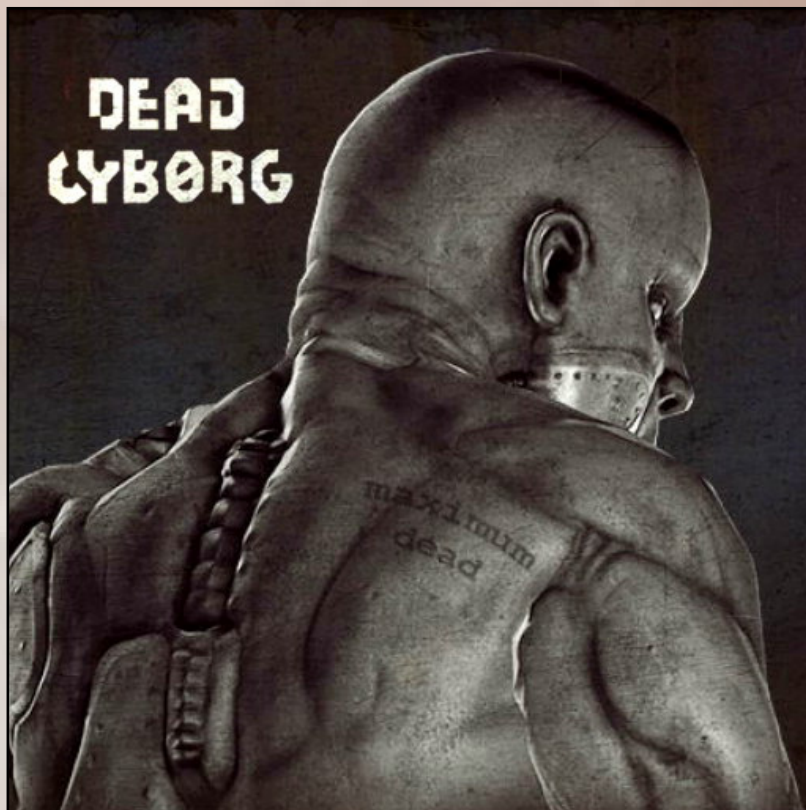
**Culpa Innata the Book**

The story from the famous and award winning adventure game, *Culpa Innata*, is now being adapted to a novel, by B. Barmanbek. It will be available on Amazon in October of this year. It is planned to be the first in a trilogy of novels, which I imagine will correspond to a trilogy of games.

**2011: A Space Adventure**

2011ASA started life as a short film made in 2011. It is now a first person, slideshow, point and click adventure, inspired by the *Myst* series, and set to be released later this year. In the game, you play an astronaut sent to repair an old satellite. You just finished your mission when you notice a mysterious black cube drifting near you. This story is also told in "The Space Tower", a novel written by the developer, that is close to release. At the moment, you can watch the film at <http://vimeo.com/30395151>, vote for the game on Steam Greenlight, and watch the game trailer.





### Dead Cyborg

While the first episode of this donation based adventure series is already out the developer could not raise enough donations to fund continued development, at least in a timely fashion. So now the game is on Indiegogo in an attempt to raise enough capital to fund the two planned sequels. The game also made it to Steam Greenlight, so even if you have no money to donate to development you can help, by voting for it.

*Dead Cyborg* is a old-school sci-fi adventure, with a comedy and cyber-punk plot. It is a personal favorite of mine, and an all round terrific game.

### Dominique Pamplemousse in It's All Over Once the Fat Lady Sings!

The unique and offbeat stop motion musical detective adventure game has succeeded in its Indiegogo campaign, making \$9,950, and has gotten a playable demo.



## New Releases



### Cypher: Cyberpunk Text Adventure

This new commercial text adventure appeared out of nowhere earlier this month and looks fantastic. It is an adult cyberpunk adventure with a very graphical interface.

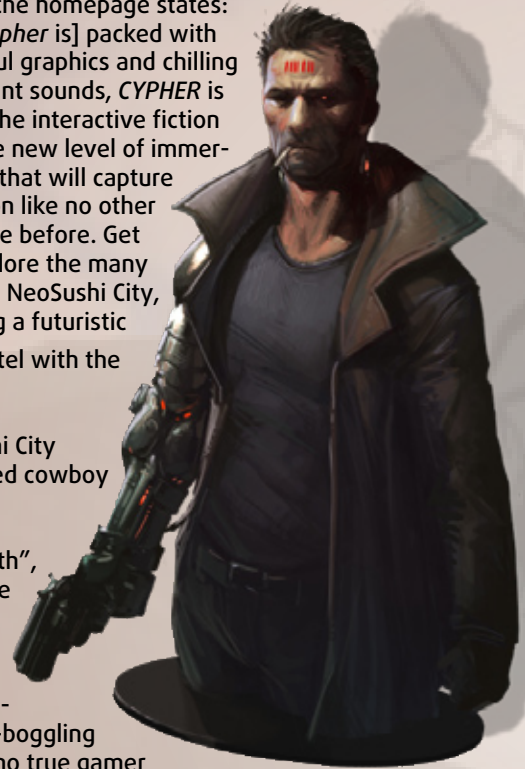
As the homepage states: “[*Cypher* is] packed with beautiful graphics and chilling ambient sounds, *CYPHER* is pushing the interactive fiction genre to a whole new level of immersive gameplay that will capture your imagination like no other game has done before. Get ready to explore the many curiosities of NeoSushi City, including a futuristic

Japanese street market owned by Yakuza and a Capsule Hotel with the only talking elevator in the world!”

Make your way through the crowded streets of NeoSushi City. A deal that goes wrong. A beautiful young woman wearing red cowboy boots following you into a Yakuza nightclub.

A pack of Retrievers hired to chop your head off and “Mr. Smith”, a mysterious man who claims to be a friend in a world where everyone is after the passcode stored in your Synapse. Will you live long enough to see what it unlocks?

Cleverly designed action puzzle combined with a list of eccentric characters and a dark noir storyline makes *Cypher* a mind-boggling experience no true gamer should miss.



They spent a great deal of time designing the GUI to not just recreate that immersive feeling of the golden classics of text adventures, but to actually take that core gameplay to the next level of evolution. We did so by adding special visual features to the gameplay that will aid you, the actual main character of the story, to see and hear small bits of the game world right from your screen.

You can pick up the game for as low as \$14.99 USD, or for a little more you can get the Collector’s Edition or the Deluxe Collectors Edition with even more digital ready to print feelies.





# LIFE <sup>IN THE</sup> DORMS

## Life in the Dorms

Initially available for only \$1 (possibly \$3 latter) on XBLIG, *Life in the Dorms* is a unique point and click adventure game, that I think you might have to play to fully understand.

## Red Johnson's Chronicles: One Against All

Lexis Numérique's *Red Johnson's Chronicles* come out last year on the PS3, now the detective is branching to new platforms with *One Against All*. In this chapter, Red's brother has been kidnapped in Metropolis City, and players must "use their brain as well as many tools in-game to analyze crime scenes and question witnesses" to solve the case and rescue him.

*Red Johnson's Chronicles: One Against All* is available on the PlayStation Network for \$9.99 and Xbox LIVE Arcade for 800 MS points. The game is scheduled to be released on PC soon, along with a port of its predecessor.

## Secret Files 3

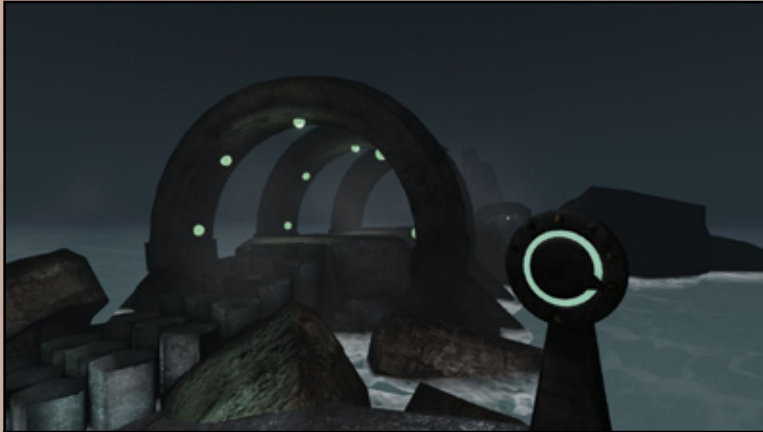
This PC point & click adventure features a cinematic story, a variety of locations, and much more.

It should be the happiest day of her life, but Nina's anticipation of the upcoming marriage with Max is being clouded by terrible nightmares of an apocalypse. Could this be related to the events that took place in Tunguska? As further incidents transpire and Nina comes across some major secrets, she realizes that she has just stumbled onto a new epic adventure.



### Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective

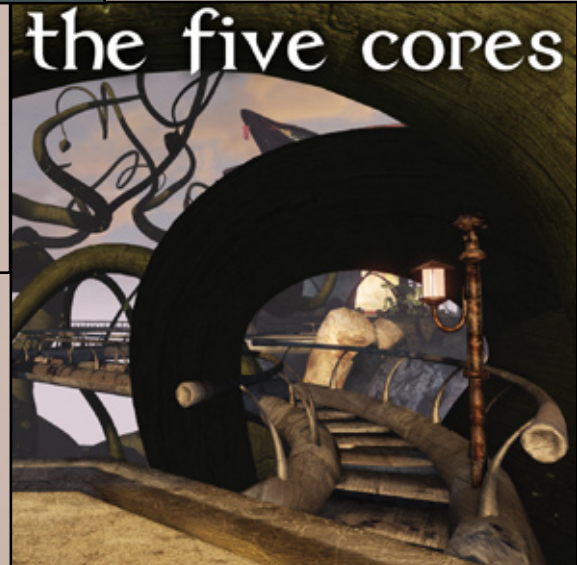
The failed Kickstarter project for remake of the 1991-1993 trilogy by the same name, apparently did not slow them down one bit. The first three mysteries - *The Mummy's Curse*, *The Mystified Murderess*, and *The Tin Soldier* have been released on the App store for iPad and The New iPad and they say they are very close to releasing for other platforms. They will be going out for the iPad first and then the PC/Mac and finally Android tablets.



### The Five Cores

A beautiful *Myst*-like game in realtime 3D. Explore five mysterious islands and reveal their secrets. The puzzles are, very much, designed to be like *Myst* or *Riven* where you have to figure out how to use the mechanisms using your sense of logic.

You can pick up a copy right now for \$9.99 on the developers website.



### Thirty Flights of Loving

The sequel to the thoroughly acclaimed *Gravity Bone* comes this first-person short story. Take a deep dive with high-flying schemers, lovelorn criminals, and more stray kittens than you can shake a stick at.



### Mark T. Ross - A Private in Paris

In this first episode, *A private in Paris*, Mark T. Ross is an American private investigator who recently set up his office in Paris, France. One day, a mysterious and powerful man asks him to find his kidnapped son. With only a few hints, Ross will do his best to solve the case.

It is an adventure game mixed with an interactive movie experience. Find evidence and examine suspects in a story set in Paris. And the best part is that every choice you make will lead you to your own story.

*A Private in Paris* has around 60 minutes of high quality video and photo realistic graphics, replayability based on multiple paths, and a \$5 price tag.

### Fibrillation

A indie first person philosophic horror with elements of mysticism. It is a small game with a budget of \$180 USD and development time of just a little over 3 weeks. One game session takes about 40 minutes.

The main character is called Ewan. He is wandering about mysterious places trying to find a way out. Hallucinations? A trap of mind? Life in the balance? Haunted by his own fears, the main character has to make sense of it all and find a way out. Passing through all of these obstacles a player will face a choice that will influence the end of the whole game and Ewan's destiny.

You can pick up *Fibrillation* on either Desura or the developers site for a little under \$2 now.



## Updated Releases

### Al Emmo and the Lost Dutchman's Mine (Enhanced Edition)

This is an enhanced edition of *Al Emmo and the Lost Dutchman's Mine*. The major changes are completely new vocals for the Al Emmo character (performed by new voice actor) and 2D animated cutscenes to replace the original 3D ones. There are also a plethora of other tweaks and improvements, including availability on Steam assuming that the Greenlight campaign goes well.



Current owners of the game will be given a free Steam code.

For those unfamiliar with the original game, *Al Emmo* was made by Himalaya Studios, the acclaimed team behind the popular free remakes of *King's Quest 1, 2, 3* and *Quest for Glory 2*. Both *Al Emmo* and the Enhanced Edition is a totally original 2D Point & Click adventure game in the style of much-loved Sierra and LucasArts classics of yesteryear.

Al Emmo is single. He's also forty-two. But he has a plan: marry a mail-order bride and prove he's a real man. Embark on an epic journey that will send our unlikely hero deep into the heart of the wild west in search of love and lost treasure said to contain inconceivable wealth! A stranger in town - a charming royal from Spain - competes for the object of Al's affections. And a looming thousand-year-old Aztec curse is bound to keep him on his toes.

Invaluable player feedback has allowed them to retrospectively analyze the game and add the most frequently-requested adjustments and tweaks to enhance gameplay experience. This constitutes a major overhaul of several key elements of the game.

NEW - Completely re-recorded character vocals for the Al Emmo protagonist character

NEW - Classic 2D-animated cutscenes which replace the old 3D ones



NEW - Higher resolution graphic options for more detailed characters  
NEW - GUI and graphical tweaks to enhance gameplay

Over 120 high-res, hand-painted background scenes

More than 15,000 frames of fluid, pre-rendered character animation

Unique Look, Interact, and Talk narrator messages for every location, item, and character

Detailed speech portraits for all characters, all fully-voiced and lip-synced

More than two hours of lovingly scored original music by Tom and Dianne Lewandowski

Nine Acts filled with fun, excitement, humor, and danger!

**Wallace & Gromit's Grand Adventures**

*Wallace & Gromit's Grand Adventures* bundles the whole series of episodes produced by Telltale: *Fright of the Bumblebees*, *The Last Resort*, *Muzzled!*, and the golf-centric *Bogey Man*.

You can pick it up right now for \$19.99.

**Back to the Future: The Game**

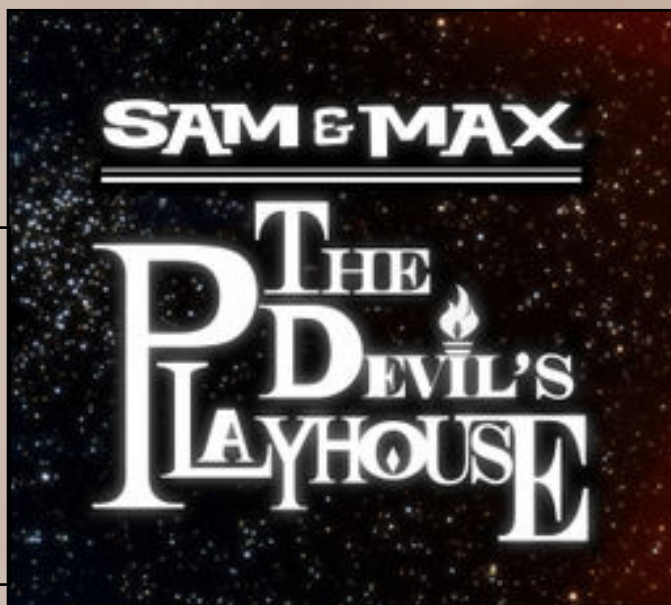
*Back to the Future: The Game* has made it to GOG and features all five episodes produced by Telltale Games: *It's About Time*, *Get Tannen!*, *Citizen Brown*, *Double Visions*, and *Outatime*. With a classic point-and-click interface, characters and places based strictly on the movies, and some of the original cast voicing their animated counterparts, this game will satisfy adventure gamers and movie-maniacs alike.

You can pick it up right now for \$24.99.

**Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse**

This third season of *Sam & Max* has made its way to GOG and brings you all five episodes of the Telltale's *Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse*. *The Penal Zone*, *The Tomb of Sammun-Mak*, *They Stole Max's Brain!*, *Beyond the Alley of the Dolls*, and *The City that Dares Not Sleep* are all there and accounted for. The bunny/dog duo is as unpredictable as it ever was, the humor pours out of the screen, and the puzzles are intriguing and creative.

You can pick it up right now for \$34.99.



Now Available

-20% \$9.99 \$7.99

A story-driven experience about two doctors traversing backwards through a dying man's memories, in order to artificially fulfill his last wish.

**To the Moon on Steam**

*To the Moon* finally makes it to Steam. Anyone who has purchased the game through its website before can get a key for free by emailing [steam@freebirdgames.com](mailto:steam@freebirdgames.com) with your order ID#, no idea if this is an ongoing deal or not.



## News From the Big Blue Cup

**Kinky Island**

*Kinky Island* has succeeded in its crowd funding campaign and is in active development. It is a comedy point & click adventure for Windows. Joey Cormack is having trouble meeting the right girl, but one strange night will leave him on a beautiful tropical island filled to the brim with hot chicks. Help him discover the secret of Kinky Island and put all he's learnt to good use.

Inspired by classic adventure games such as *Flight of the Amazon Queen*, *Fate of Atlantis* and of course the *Monkey Island* series - the game parodies classic 90's adventuring with slapstick, jokes & references.

**Summerbatch**

The Pay what you Want bundle, by Screen 7, has arrived and you can get a copy yourself for any price over \$1 and support the charity SpecialEffect.

For this purchase you get four point and click adventures and one stealth/beat'em up, from a variety of developers, including Ben Chandler and Technocrat Games.

**SUMMERBATCH**

VOLUME 1



### The Cat Lady

A new, gory horror, adventure game not for the faint hearted from designer R. Michalski, the creator of successful adventure game *Downfall*. A gripping story, pumping soundtrack, high-resolution artwork and voice acting will engross you on your journey through the strange and often terrifying world of *The Cat Lady*. Three years in the making, the game has a pre-order, a demo, and a Halloween (October 31st) release date.

Susan Ashworth, known in her neighbourhood as the crazy Cat Lady, is a lonely 40-year old on the verge of suicide. She has no family, no friends and no hope for a better future. One day she discovers that five strangers will come along and change everything. But those five, "The Parasites", are also the most ruthless, deranged and cold-blooded bunch of psychopaths the city has ever known. They will stop at nothing to hurt Susan. Unless, she hurts them first. Susan's few weeks journey doesn't take her across the world and won't turn her into a hero. She has little faith in others and hardly even cares about herself. She can't fight and has never fired a gun in her life. But she's hanging onto that thin thread of hope, that in the end, as promised, there's an illusive reward waiting for her. Something worth trying for. Something that'll help her find an unlikely friend. Something that'll give her life a purpose. Susan's journey takes her on a rollercoaster ride between the world of the living and the world of the dead, where the only way to survive is to overcome her biggest weakness: her own self.

### Troll Song

CaptainD and Knoodn, creators of well received, and quite amazing, *UNGA needs MUMBA* are at it again with *Troll Song*. *Troll Song* is a little different to other games.

They are using a 5-verb interface (+Look), with verbs that are very specific to a troll.

This episodic game series gives trolls a whole new mythology, a creation mythos, and despite their strength and size, a very dangerous enemy. In *Troll Song Episode 1: Completely Stoned* you play as Clod, a troll who along with all the other trolls has been overpowered by a mysterious force and locked away inside a mountain, trapped by strange devices that are slowly turning them back into inanimate stone. A freak avalanche opens up a hole into the area Clod is being held, and this reverses the process slightly - enough for him to free himself properly, save his troll brothers and start to find out who their enemy is; That part is up to you. Being turned to stone has left Clod a little short of abilities. Before you can hope to escape, you'll need to regain your strength and get those abilities back.



### A Night at Camp Ravenwood

A horror-drama point-and-click adventure game inspired by the works of Ron Gilbert, Shigesato Itoi, John Carpenter, Kazuma Kaneko, Dario Argento, and Junji Ito.

The idea behind the game is to set the player in a world that is a mix of horror like *Friday the 13th* and *Phenomena*, adventure like *Monkey Island* and *Earthbound*, and comedy like *Little Rascals* and *Abbott and Costello*.

Deep within Ravenwood Forest lies Camp Ravenwood, a dangerous, dirty camp for delinquents, owned by vampires, and run by Switchblade and his cruel and unusual biker gang. By day, the campers are left to activities such as fishing, football, and swimming, but by night, the camp becomes a place where death is around every corner. A headless maniac with an axe stalks the camp, there are aliens and monsters lurking in the woods, and jocks and bikers riding around waiting for any chance they can get to beat you to a pulp.

Enter Smoky Bumberose, Germy Bumberose, Benny Berkybile, Clancy Swindler, and Franky Flynnigan, five ex-scouts accused of starting forest fires. They must use all of their wits to survive *A Night at Camp Ravenwood*, but just when things become too dire, help comes in the form of a mysterious witch named Barbara and a troupe of Girl Scouts led by one pissed-off mother.



### Finding Shepard

A short *Mass Effect* fan game, set post *Mass Effect 3* (destroy ending), where Jack has to find a way to the Citadel to rescue Commander Shepard. Her amplifiers were taken away by the

Alliance and she's on house arrest, for assaulting a superior officer. She must find her way out of the highrise building she is currently residing in. Miranda, Wrex and Kasumi will also be part of the game.





August

**Barn Runner: The Mayor's New Dress (Ponch)[MAGS]** - A different take on the *Barn Runner* universe. The inspiration comes from the 1837 fairy tale "The Emperor's New Clothes". The game was created for the July 2012 MAGS contest which had as its theme "Fairy Tale".

**Ben Jordan Paranormal Investigator Case 8: Relics of the Past (Francisco Gonzalez)** - Following the tragic events in Rome, things are not looking good for Ben Jordan. However, as bleak as things seem to be, all is not lost.

In this final chapter of the series, Ben will learn the truths hidden in the past and the present, which he will use to finally confront the mad man threatening his future.

Ben Jordan: Case 8



**Captain Disaster in Death Has A Million Stomping Boots (Team Disaster)[Demo]** - A comedy science fiction game with an expected commercial release late in 2012 or early 2013.

The demo takes place after Captain Disaster's adventures on the planet Acturus-1, and before he can continue his adventures, there is the small problem of not having any fuel to be overcome.

**Not Fine (Cleanic)** - Help Will to turn his life around while he still owns it, in this short length one-room-playable adventure game. Featuring 3 different endings, there's more than one way to deal with the unknown.

Originally intended for July MAGS.

**Billy Goats Gruff (Lovely Maiden)[MAGS]** - The tale of The Billy Goats Gruff, in adventure game form. The very first game every completed by this developer. The game was created for the July 2012 MAGS contest which had as its theme "Fairy Tale".

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**Barely Floating (Stemshock Interactive)** - Somewhere along the east coast of Africa, pirates have attacked a luxury yacht! They have taken a few seemingly wealthy passengers as their hostages, a family and an old man, hoping to collect a hefty ransom for each of them. When the hostage negotiations go awry, the rescue duties land on the weak shoulders of an unlikely hero. Little does he know that the ship's crew, that stands in his way, is composed of some very weird and silly individuals.

With 1-3 hours of gameplay and a 720p resolution, *Barely Floating* is part of the Summerbatch Bundle. You decide how much you pay for the games! *Barely Floating* and four other games are available right now for what ever you want to pay.



**The Visitor 2 (NickyNyce)** - Find out who's visiting in these science fiction free point & click games by NickyNyce!

The sequel to *The Visitor* was released earlier this month and is available along with the original game for free over at Screen7.

# Da New Guys Day of the Jackass

 **Genre:** adventure **Developer:** Icebox Studios **Publisher:** Wadjet Eye Games  
**Release date:** February 29, 2012 **Platform:** Microsoft Windows  
**Website:** <http://www.wadjeteyegames.com/da-new-guys.html>

Review by Gnome (originally appeared on [Gnome's blog](#))

Adventure gaming has covered a staggering variety of themes, plots and characters, has toyed with a multitude of ideas and has come up with some truly wild stories, but has never dabbled with professional wrestling. Well, not until *Da New Guys: Day of the Jackass* (and admittedly it's less known prequel) it hadn't, for the latest *Wadjet Eye Games* and *Icebox Studios* release does indeed enter the ring of b-grade professional wrestling (with its eyebrow emphatically raised) and points and clicks its way to gaming victory.

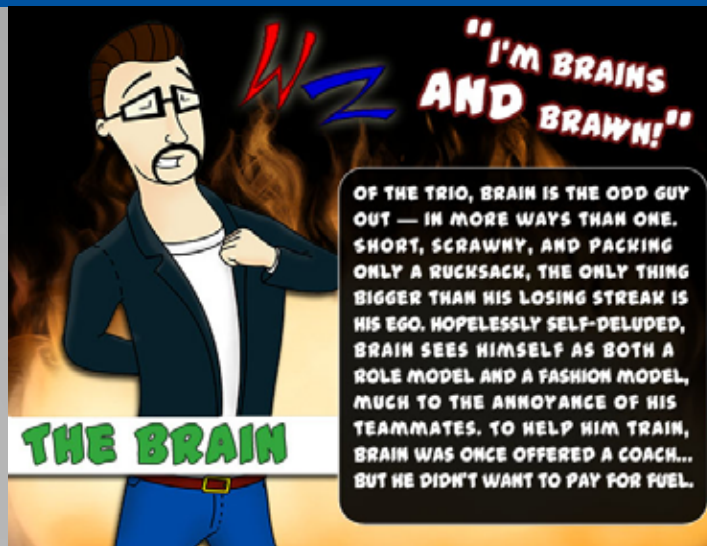
Now, truth be said, ever since I reached the mature and enlightened age of 10 I've discovered that wrestling is simply not for me and moved on. It was far too silly and not funny enough to keep me interested, a fact that makes the achievements of *Da New Guys: Day of the Jackass* all the more important, as it effortlessly and despite an overburdened schedule kept me glued to the monitor for hours. Also, I laughed.

Being a sequel of sorts to 2004 indie darling *Da New Guys, Day of the Jackass* is a traditional point-



and-click adventure sporting some decidedly non-traditional protagonists and a delightfully dry sense of humour. It plays with its plot, distorts its setting and actually comes up with an enjoyable story that serves its gameplay well.





Brain, you see, the worst and most irritating brawler in wrestling has won the title belt and gotten himself promptly kidnapped. It is thus up to his mates, tough-guy Simon and soft-spoken Defender, to rescue him.

This of course is easier said than done, as this game not only looks old fashioned, but actually plays the old fashioned way, meaning that, yes, it is indeed tough. *Da New Guys* took me hours to beat and, unlike most recent adventures, actually demanded I consulted a walkthrough and even used a pen to note and sketch stuff. It can actually be difficult to the point of frustration and at times overtaxes ones ability for lateral thinking.

Still, after the first relatively subdued yet difficult act of the game is over, *Da New Guys* reveals what it's really made of and that's a huge variety of taxing, innovative, fresh and fun puzzles. Yes, they are tough, but not all games need to cater to all tastes. What is after all the point of being indie if you are afraid to take a few risks?

As for the game's graphics, well, they too are a matter of personal

taste. They are far too idiosyncratic to please everyone, but they definitely have a certain charm, are very well animated indeed, and do grow on you. Besides, we adventurers do appreciate consistency, depth and production values and *Da New Guys* is bound

to please the hardcore gamer hiding inside you and me reader.

Oh, and it's got a lovely soundtrack and sports some excellent voices too. The included achievements and unlockable art should also be considered signs of care and affection for a truly unique project. ●



### BRIGHT MOMENTS:

The completely unique choice of Wrestling for its story's theme.

### FUMBLES IN THE DARK:

Some people will be put off by the terribly hard puzzles, although others will love it for just this reason.

### VERDICT:

A great adventure game that successfully and hilariously challenges the hardcore point-and-clicker.



# Death Ray Manta



**Genre:** arena shooter **Developer:** Rob Fearon **Publisher:** Rob Fearon **Release date:** September 14, 2012

**Platforms:** Microsoft Windows **Website:** <http://www.bundle-in-a-box.com/>

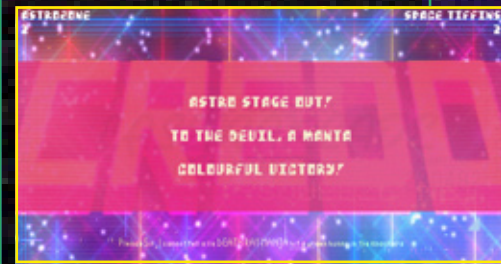
## Preview by Nick Burgener

I recently spent 45 minutes playing a preview build of *Rob Fearon's Death Ray Manta*, an indie game in the same vein as *Geometry Wars* and other arcade-style, multi-directional shoot 'em ups. The premise is simple: you control the manta within a rectangular space shooting down enemies while dodging their attacks. Collect powerups to enhance your firepower, earn points for destroying enemies, and advance through over 30 levels of vibrant action.

The first thing to note about *DRM* is the colorful intensity of its quasi-retro space visuals. Most enemies and objects have a pixelated design, making them somewhat reminiscent of classic arcade and Atari games; shooting them causes them to explode in a brilliant fireworks display that fills up nearly the entire screen. It's pretty eye-catching to see everything in motion. The in-game music is especially pleasing to listen to, with its synthesized electronica beats providing a pumping rhythm for the action, and a suitably catchy melody over top.

Each level has a fixed setup with the same enemies, so once you

play a level you'll know what to expect on subsequent attempts -- nothing appears randomized. This is important, because it also seems that you only have a single life to get through all of the game's levels. The predictability of replaying levels is pretty satisfying, though, because it allows for a learning





curve where you get better at the game and achieve some form of mastery over the levels.

It's a little disappointing, however, that there only appears to be one basic type of upgrade. Each level has one powerup somewhere for you to collect, which grants you a wider spread for your attacks while shooting a small attack from behind you. Having a few more different types of powerups might

game much more enjoyable with a control stick.

And that's basically Death Ray Manta in a nutshell. I'm not usually into this genre of game, but DRM is definitely a quality creation that I enjoyed spending some time with. Death Ray Manta is currently available as part of Kyttaro Games' Bundle in a Box, a pay-what-you-want bundle with four other indie space games. ●



# Call of Cthulhu: The Wasted Land



**Genre:** turn-based strategy, RPG **Developer:** Red Wasp Design

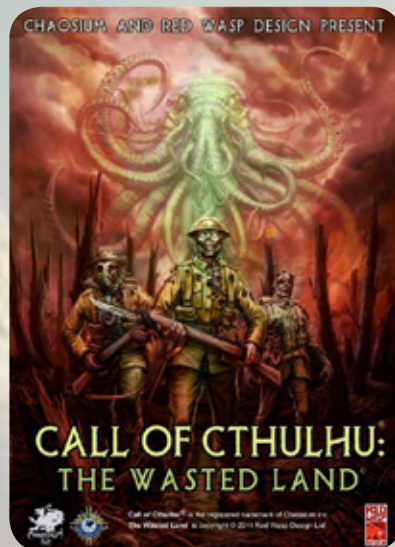
**Publisher:** Red Wasp Design **Release date:** May 4, 2012 (PC)

**Platforms:** iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad, Android, Windows

**Website:** <http://redwaspdesign.wordpress.com/call-of-cthulhu/>

Review by Gnome (originally appeared on [Gnome's blog](#))

Sometimes the truths of the universe are too shocking for us to accept and some other times cosmic realities simply cannot be understood. Still, I just can't comprehend why *Call of Cthulhu: The Wasted Land* is the only (and thus first) Lovecraftian, turn-based, tactical game I've ever encountered; let alone one of the few games to use the trenches of WWI as a dark and desperate setting.



spawned *The Wasted Lands*, which, as should have already been made blatantly obvious, is a lovely turn-based, tactical affair with a few RPG touches.

You get your characters, your action points, your experience



On the other hand, ignorance is bliss and creative people get strange dreams courtesy of the Outer Gods, who have been slumbering and waiting for an

ambitious take on *X-Com* that will actually feature Dark Youngs, undead soldiers, mad mages, hints of *Reanimator* and the spawn of Cthulhu. Happily, said dreams



points, your oppressive 3D terrains, your campy but delightful plot, your spells, your otherworldly monstrosities, your cultists and your zombified soldiers in one of the most honest (and cheap) strategy games I've recently played. What you also get is a truly elegant adaptation of Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* rules, the first ever sanity mechanics to actually work in a wargame and a most successful atmosphere.

On the downside, this is a really short game sporting ten or so missions, that will last you for roughly ten hours, and, irritatingly, a game with a few control problems. Apparently, its iOS roots haven't been ironed out, but trust me when I say that you'll very soon be used to its, uhm, eccentricities.

Still though, hadn't had this much fun with a turn-based strategy game, since, well, *X-Com* and that should be all you need to know. ●



### BRIGHT MOMENTS:

Lovcraftian horror at its very best, set in the dark and desperate trenches of WWI.

### FUMBLES IN THE DARK:

The controls, courtesy of its iOS roots.

### VERDICT:

Cthulhu would smile and devise new tactics.



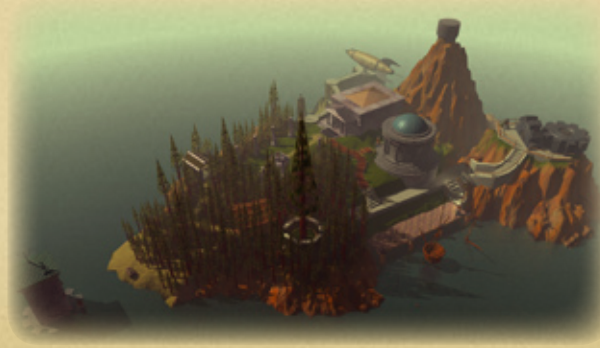
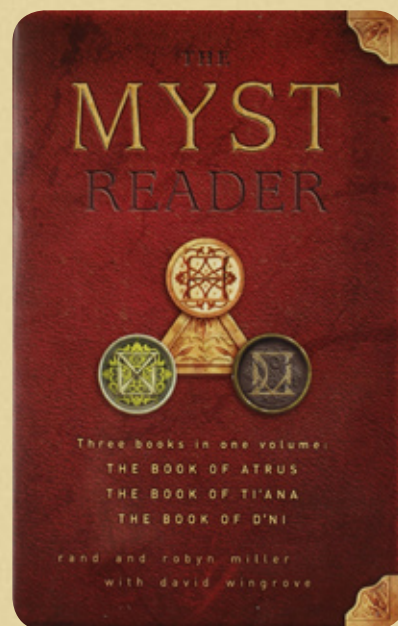
# The Myst Reader and the Story of the D'ni

Genre: adventure Writers: Rand & Robyn Miller, with David Wingrove Publisher: Hyperion Release date: January 1, 1995 (BoA)

Review by Jonathon Wisnoski



Back in 1993 *Cyan* (headed by the Miller brothers, Rand and Robyn) released *Myst*, which was to become one of the most famous adventure games of all time, as well as spawn an entire series of adventures, adaptations, and inspire a sub-genre of adventure games in the following years. *Myst* had a lot of unique features: gameplay, graphics style, interface; But these are not in the breadth of this article, what I will be talking about here is its unique storyline and backstory. Uniquely, *Myst*'s plot is rather inverted; You do almost nothing in the entire game, instead you unravel what had happened. Both the events that lead directly to the current situation and backstory about *Myst* island, its inhabitants, and the great D'ni civilization. In fact, if you are already familiar with *Myst* island, you can complete the game (and get the good canonical ending) in under two minutes. Note, I have spent extra consideration to keep this spoiler free for events that are narrated or user experienced. I have used the box/book back descriptions as a guide, but went even further in many areas. Since *Myst* and its related works rely so heavily on uncovering and exploring the backstory of D'ni it could be said that even this is in a very minimal sense a spoiler, but it is my personal opinion that the knowledge contained herein will only enhance your enjoyment of any of the *Myst* universe storylines.



The *Myst* universe is, in my opinion, the most unique world ever fully realized. Even creators of entire genres or universes, *Tolkien* and *Bram Stoker* come to mind, really just recombined and popularised existing ideas with their own personal style. While the *Myst* universe, while inspiring by many sources, is not like any universe I have ever read or heard about. It does not even fit in an existing genre, and is somewhere inbetween or next to fantasy, sci-fi, and steampunk. *The Millers* have stated that their foremost inspiration came from *J. R. R. Tolkien*, *Robert A. Heinlein*, and *Isaac Asimov*; And in particular for the tone and setting of *Myst* island, *Jules Verne's* novel *The Mysterious Island*.





The story of *Myst* is the story of the D'ni (pronounced Dunny). It is quite amazing how *Cyan* developed such a complete universe for, initially, a medium length, puzzle heavy, game. While only very little is hinted at at first, the universe soon expands for the fans with other releases and announcements. It is the Middle Earth of video games, with almost as much depth, complexity, and consistency as *Tolkien* put into his work. The D'ni have their own unique language, that fans have learned to read, write, and speak in real life; Number system, which the player often needs to complete in-game puzzles; And 10,000+ years of recorded history.

D'ni history started roughly 10'000 years ago in an alternative universe, on a world called Garternay. On this world an ancient civilization has ruled for untold millennial. They likely had

advanced technology, though quite unlike anything found on Earth, and explored, experimented, and learned about life and the multiverse thought a particular and unique science, called The Art. This technique allowed them to visit any world (called an Age) they could imagine. To do this a writer must describe, in minute detail, the world he wants to visit, while following special rules, and using a specific language, paper, and ink. Anyone can then use this completed book to link (read: travel) to this world, explore it, interact with its inhabitants, and even bring back objects or animals (though this required another linking book). This linking itself has quite a few rules and limitations, enough to write an entire article on alone, but that again it outside the breadth of this summery. These Ages that the D'ni write and travel to already exist in the multiverse called The Great Tree of Possibilities, where it is said that any Age that could exist does exist; The only restrictions are imagination and for it to be consistent and possible. The Garternay people, called Ronay, and the D'ni after them, had a god and religion. They worshiped Yahvo, aka the Maker, who created all Ages and was the originator of the Art, which he gave to the Ronay.

On Garternay the Ronay people were ruled by a king and had a system of guilds for the more important tasks; For example, there were guilds of Healers, Actors, and Writers. Eventually, Garternay's sun began to die and the Ronay fled to other Ages, one of the splinter groups from this exodus was the D'ni, who moved to the Age of D'ni, also known as Earth, in 7656 BC by Human reckoning or simply 1 DE (D'ni Era) by theirs. These D'ni were lead here by the author of the Age and one of the most talented writers at that time, Ri'nerf; Who went on to become king of the D'ni. Re'nerf was a pious and devoted man who specifically created D'ni to not be too hospitable so that life would not be too easy for his people. Additionally, he implemented a set of laws and restrictions to make sure decadence was not given free reign. One aspect of this pious vision of D'ni was that it was situated far underground in a natural cavern, completely disconnected from the surface. Here their entire civilization lived, powered by geothermal energy, and lit in a 30 hour cycle by orange luminescent algae in the giant lake that the city is built next to, and in the case of islands upon. The D'ni lived here and survived through wars, terrorism, cults, and disease; But mostly prosperity, peace, expansion, and most of all an unchanging stability. In what was probably the biggest shift from tradition, the monarchy abdicated to a council of hereditary lords and elected guildsmen in 6977 DE.

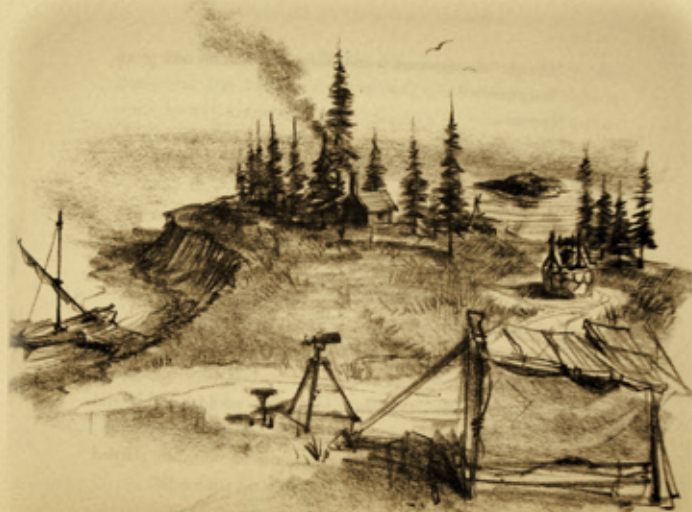
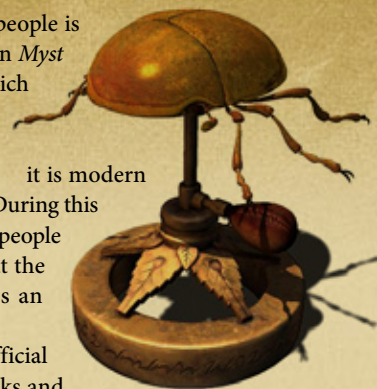
Which leads us to the very start of the events that would eventually lead us to *Myst*, the expedition and tunnel to the surface which begins in 9336 DE. This shaft is how Anna, the first person from the surface to reach the domain of the D'ni, travels to D'ni; Where her intelligence and wisdom shake the very pillars of society. All of which is written in detail in The Book of Ti'ana,



which ends with the fall of the D'ni civilization. Years latter, The Book of Atrus takes over the story with the tale of Atrus, grandson to Ti'ana, being raised in the Cleft by his grandmother. The Cleft is simply a large crack in the ground in the middle of a harsh desert above the D'ni caverns. His absentee father returns when he is fourteen to teach him about his heritage and bring him back to the ruins of D'ni where he is trying to resurrect their culture all by himself. The book closes with the stage set for *Myst*, and in-fact concludes with the same speech heard at the beginning of *Myst*. Years latter, around 9462 DE, when Atrus's children has grown to young adults we have the events of *Myst*, where you must unravel the mystery of an empty island and a burnt library; And a few days latter *Riven*, where you are sent to rescue Catherine from the evil clutches Ghen. A few short years past and The Book of D'ni starts with Atrus returning to D'ni to try and rebuild the civilization and search for other survivors. He soon rediscovers the Tomb of the Great King and the linking book to Terahnee therein; Terahnee is a sister Age to D'ni and the Age that the main part of Ronay relocated to. This book ends with the birth of Atrus's third child and only daughter, Yeesha, who has a central part to play in upcoming events; And the family moving to a new home on Earth, Tomahna. We then have the events of *Myst 3: Exile* take place in 9472 DE, where an important book

that holds the fate of the D'ni people is stolen from Tomahna; And then *Myst 4: Revelation* in 9480 DE, in which Yeesha is kidnapped and it is up to you again to set everything right. Over 150 years pass and it is modern day before *Myst 5: End of Ages*; During this time Yeesha grows up, the D'ni people are long lived, and learns about the D'ni civilization and develops an unparalleled skill at the Art.

There are roughly three unofficial periods in *Myst* where the books and games take place, which I will call the D'ni period, the *Myst* period, and the Uru or Modern period. The Book of Ti'ana, as it is set in the pre-*Myst* world with the D'ni civilization in full swing is set clearly in the D'ni period. *Myst* and its direct sequels and prequel, The Book of Atrus to *Myst 4*, are in the *Myst* period. These periods we have already explored in this article, but have only just touched on the Uru period. The Uru period is very different and feels more like a parallel or separate universe. It begins in 1978 CE, when John «Fighting Branch» Loftin, from the surface, discovers D'ni below present day New Mexico. Its main themes are the restoration of D'ni by the D'ni Restoration Council (DRC) and the previously unknown Bahro race. Most uniquely, many of the events take place in *Uru Live*, the MMO, where player interactions with themselves and official *Cyan/DRC* players are considered canon. In this universe *Cyan* exists and *Myst* and *Riven* are games created to familiarize the outside world with the history and civilization of D'ni. The basic



plot of this timeline goes as follows. D'ni is discovered, many expeditions go down into the city, and restoration start on the city. People start feeling a calling to D'ni and start exploring the desert and making their way into D'ni. Uru takes place, but no real plot evolution is involved, it is mostly an exploration of D'ni and a series of Ages. *Myst 5: End of Ages* takes place and we find out about the Bahro, an ancient race of roughly humanoid beings with their own form of The Art and Linking, who were enslaved by the D'ni. They are then freed by Dr. Watson, who you play as in *Myst 5*. Then, from what I understand, *Uru Live* takes over; In which we see a Bahro war and many new sections of D'ni opened up to the public by the DRC.

I would now like to spend a little time talking about the protagonists and co-protagonists of the series, as it is not just important what happened but through who we see these events unfold. The biggest player in the entire series is arguably Ti'ana; She was a co-protagonist, with Atrius, in the Book of Ti'ana (BoT) and continued to play a very important role throughout her life, all the way to Myst island, and was an inspiration to the main characters for long afterwards. In the Book of Atrus (BoA), and later the Book of D'ni (BoD), we then have Atrus, who is named after his grandfather Atrius, and whose name is only spelled differently in English to better tell them apart; And Katran (or Catherine) who



meets and befriends Atrus near the end of the BoA. For the game series you play as yourself, whose character is latter known as The Stranger (because of a reference in one of Ghen's journals found in Riven). The one exception to the Stranger is the Uru period; For both *Uru* and *Uru Live* you really play as yourself or the avatar that you have chosen, every single person who plays does. And in *Myst 5* you play as Dr. Watson, the head of the DRC and a character in *Uru Live* played by Richard A. Watson, not that this would be know if he had not admitted such much latter.

The allure of the *Myst* trilogy, and entire franchise, is the unique and wonderful world created therein. And what the book series excels at is beautifully and vividly describing this world to the reader, in minute detail. You can picture yourself there, and see the worlds that the Miller brothers so expertly weave, worlds that you will want to go to and see yourself. Perhaps they, and *Wingrove*, are not quite as good authors as world builders, but a more than decent job is done. My only real issue is that there seemed to be a few things that did not quite fit and seemed contradictory, but



**“He (Atrus) writes but does not lead. He advises but does not command. He wonders and seeks to understand. He loves life and quietly moves to the mark that the Maker has set for him.”**  
(Catherin, *Myst: The Book of D'ni*)

nothing too bad. All in all, I thoroughly enjoyed each book and thought that they each gave something special to the series. The Book of Ti'ana gives you the only look at the D'ni civilization in full swing, and because of this is probably my favourite novel; And let me say, this novel absolutely should be read first, even though it is the second in the series, by publication date. The Book of Atrus is a far more personal tale, and in addition to simply being an interesting tale of a bright boy growing to manhood, is an almost direct prequel to *Myst* and important to understand the characters and the events in *Myst* and the later games in the series. And finally, the Book of D'ni takes place in the middle of the series, and gives a lot more depth to the backstory and history of D'ni. Additionally, it brings the story full circle with a new beginning for D'ni and a hopeful future, so it serves as a decent conclusion, even if it was not meant to be that originally. It is also enjoyable, and particularly thought provoking, how each book brings another aspect of the franchise into focus. In the BoT we learn loads about the D'ni culture, in the BoA we are shown example after example and taught lesson after lesson on age writing and linking, finally in the BoD we get the distant past history of the D'ni; Each of these aspects are more than enough to provoke heated thought and discussion with anyone who lets themselves get drawn into this universe. Originally the BoD was not supposed to end the series, and an entire draft script for a

further novel, *The Book of Marrim*, was even produced. This script was deemed inadequate and they decided to do a rewrite, something that over a decade later has yet to happen. The only things we know about this proposed book were revealed in a preview included with the European Special Edition of *Myst V: End of Ages*. If this chapter is any guide, the book takes place four years after the Book of D'ni and focuses on Marrim, a secondary protagonist from the BoD; And, one might guess, is about the rebirth of the D'ni people into a new civilization with a new purpose, at least that is the feeling I got from it.

The books themselves are also just very well done, regardless of if you are talking about the hard covers or softcovers. The only complaint I think you will hear anywhere is the improper capitalization in the book description for «D'ni» and «Ti'ana» on the individual copies. Other than that we have a very well published book, with quality paper, a nice cover, a map of D'ni in the BoT, and most of all some nice illustrations. The hard covers also have some page art on the edges of every page to stylize the work, that does not come off as too corny, and a poster sized map of D'ni in the BoT. These novels are not the only way to experience the story of *The Myst Reader series*, also available is a series of audio books. In many ways I am happy of how different these are to the original novels, but at the same time they are not well done in my opinion. All three audio books are heavily abridged and only clock in at three and a half to four hours each; Whole chapters are scrapped, and much detail is left out. Fortunately, both *The Book of Atrus* and *The Book of Ti'ana* are full cast productions, with music and sound effects. So each character has his or her own unique voice, and sounds effects and music are used. Still, I really would not recommend them, and they absolutely are



not replacements for the novels; You simply cannot leave out that much from a novel and have it still retain its charm.

*The Myst book trilogy* is the best way to experience the story of D'ni first hand. It is also a great counterpoint to the rather minimalistic and oftentimes inverted plot of the games, with their heavy emphasis on backstory. All in all, I thought the book series was fantastic, and in particular a great companion to the game series. In fact I would recommend reading the two prequels to *Myst*, in chronological order, before you play the game (if you have a choice), as the familiarity with the characters and world can go a long way to making *Myst's* peculiar story telling style easier to get into. The series is, if not great, a very good and enjoyable experience with only minor issues. It was written by *David Wingrove*, who was brought on specifically for this task, with help from the *Myst* creators Rand and Robyn Miller, though Robyn played far less of a role in the final novel *BoD*. The individual books are now out of print, but a compilation of all three, *The Myst Reader*, is available and the absolute best way to experience them. ●

Recommended references: [D'ni Timeline](#) and [Myst Wiki](#)

### BRIGHT MOMENTS:

The wonderful worlds built by the Millers. In particular, I loved the Riven Age, as seen in the *BoA*.

### FUMBLES IN THE DARK:

The, seeming, contradictions and slightly unbelievable aspects.

### VERDICT:

A great addition to the series, and just all round terrific novels, regardless of is you have or plan to play any of the games.



