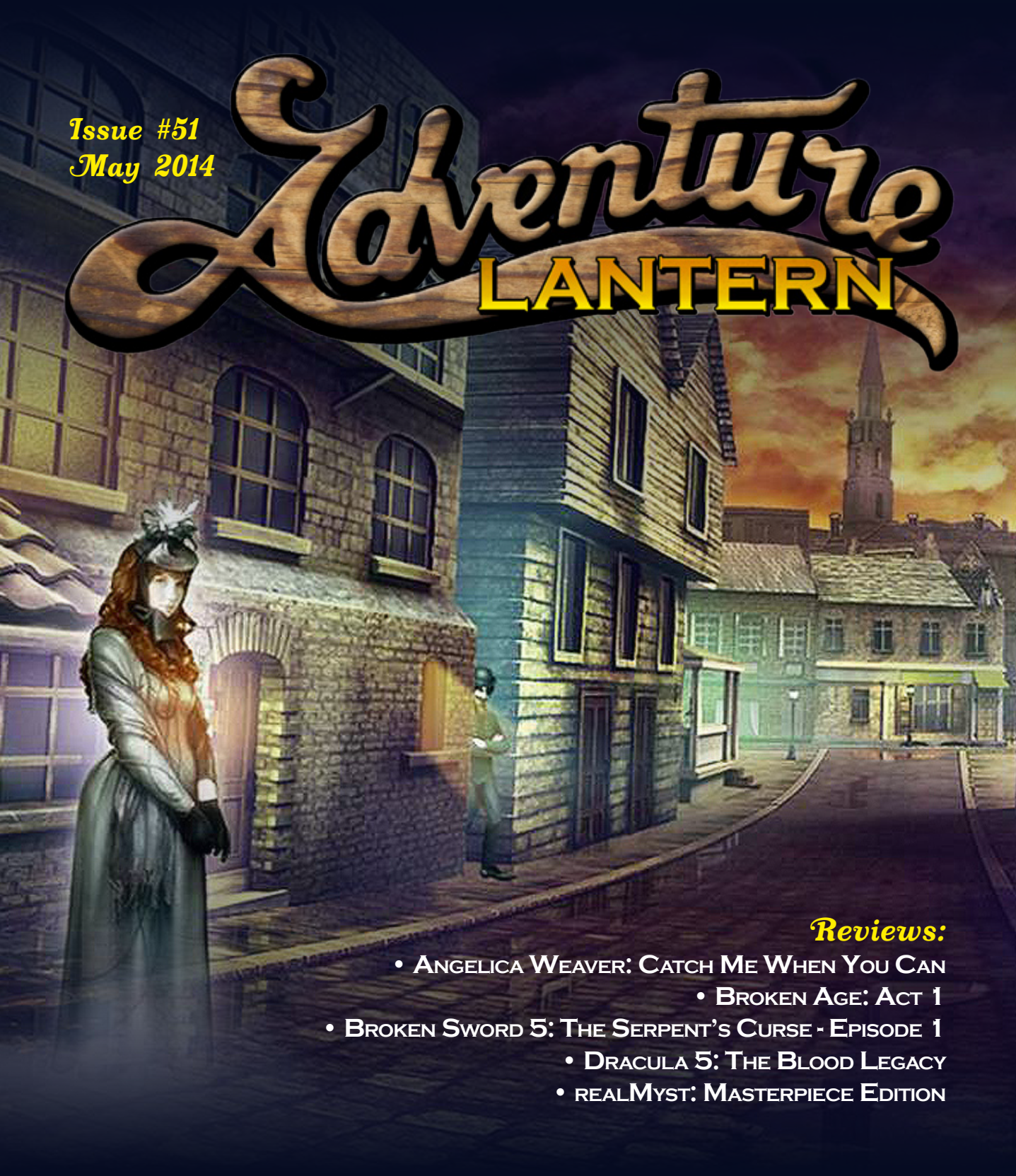


Issue #51  
May 2014

# Adventure LANTERN



## *Reviews:*

- ANGELICA WEAVER: CATCH ME WHEN YOU CAN
  - BROKEN AGE: ACT 1
- BROKEN SWORD 5: THE SERPENT'S CURSE - EPISODE 1
  - DRACULA 5: THE BLOOD LEGACY
  - REALMYST: MASTERPIECE EDITION

## OF MIGHT AND MAGIC...

It was during a summer break in high school when I played *Might and Magic VI: The Mandate of Heaven* for the first time. I remember getting excited as I watched the opening movie and feeling a little intimidated once I saw the character creation screen. I was supposed to create a party of four characters, choosing from a variety of classes and skills. Not knowing what kind of party would be ideal, I accepted the character classes offered by default, randomly assigned skills, and started the game. My party was at the gates of New Sorpigal – the first town in the game – ready for adventure. There were many buildings to explore, people to meet, and quests to take. It wasn't long before I encountered a gang of goblins. I eagerly rushed into battle, only to realize that my four warriors were utter weaklings. They could barely hold their own against a couple of monsters.

*Might and Magic VI* was not the kind of game that held the player's hand and told you what to do at every turn. You had to explore on your own and gradually unravel the game's intricacies. Several hours later, I had traveled to a couple of other towns, started to understand the game's magic system, learned about mixing potions, and solved several quests. My characters had leveled up a couple of times and were slightly better at holding their own in battle. I had realized archery was an invaluable skill, making sure each character was equipped with a bow. My party died many times in the process. They had to retreat from many battles, returning to town to get healed. *Might and Magic VI* was

not meant to be easy. It was a game you had to learn to play.

However, it also greatly rewarded the time and effort players put into it. There were numerous dungeons to explore. Secrets were hidden around each town. Most importantly, the game had a tremendous sense of progression. As my party continued to gain levels, the monsters that were a significant challenge at the beginning of the game became a complete joke. What was once a group of pathetic fighters had turned into a band of mighty warriors. There seemed to be countless quests. Several of them dealt with the central story of the game. There were also promotion quests that helped make my characters significantly more powerful. Side quests were abundant in every town, urging my party to visit different dungeons. As the characters leveled up, I could upgrade their skills so they could go from being beginners to being experts and masters. These upgrades were hardly arbitrary. For instance, there was a water magic spell called Lloyd's beacon, which

allowed the caster to put a marker on a particular location. You could cast the spell again later to return to teleport back to the location in question. A beginner in water mag-



ic could only create one beacon at a time. A master of water magic however could create five beacons, which made traveling between various locations extremely easy.

The game was also beautifully irreverent. There were plenty of humorous moments mixed with the serious questing. There was a highly amusing mixture of science fiction and fantasy lore that became more and more apparent as you got farther in the game. The development team appeared to have had fun with the project. It was a deep and immersive game, but one that did not take itself too seriously.

Over forty hours into the game, my party felt very competent and powerful. Yet there were still numerous areas left to explore. There were still many creatures that could defeat my warriors in seconds. *Might and Magic VI* was a huge game. You could easily spend weeks

playing it and still have things left to discover. To date, I have spent well over a hundred hours playing *Might and Magic VI*. I also played all the sequels that have been released since. Though installments 7, 8, and 9 weren't nearly as well-received as *The Mandate of Heaven*, I still had a blast playing each game. Despite the many problems cited in reviews, I have fond memories of each chapter, stories to tell in other editorials.

For several years, I was convinced the 9th game would be the final installment, considering the publisher 3DO was dissolved shortly after *Might and Magic IX's* release. It was a great treat to see the series make a comeback this year with *Might and Magic X: Legacy*. The 10th game of the series was a throwback to the days even before *The Mandate of Heaven*, featuring a grid-based movement system. With its character classes, skill progression system, and jokes referencing former *Might and Magic* games, *Legacy* was clearly designed for the fans of the series in general, but *The Mandate of Heaven* in particular.

Progression through the new game was a little more guided compared to *The Mandate of Heaven*, with the player restricted to certain areas and not too many opportunities to waltz into impossible battles early on without warning. However, *Legacy* still made no excuses about its difficulty. Just like *The Mandate of Heaven*, *Legacy* expected players to explore, try different options, and figure out what it took to win. Players had to think about what kind of party they wanted and upgrade their characters wisely. The game covered far less territory than *The Mandate of Heaven*, generally fea-

turing smaller dungeons and fewer quests, but there was still plenty of exploring to do.

I choose to create a party with three types of magic users and one swordfighter. Being familiar with the previous games in the series, I had a general idea about how to spend skill points and which abilities to improve. I appreciated that even the lower-level monsters presented a fair challenge. You could not just blast your way through dungeons. You had to give some consideration to which spells you should use and how to approach different enemies. *Legacy* was a much shorter game than *The Mandate of Heaven*. It took me between thirty and forty hours to complete all the quests and reach the ending. However, there were still things left to do. I could run through the game with a different party to get a feel for the remaining character classes.

It also felt tremendously refreshing to play a game that was more challenging than the average new release these days. *Legacy* wasn't afraid to let people figure things out on their own, make mistakes, and maybe have to start the game over with a different party. It is wonderful to have plenty of games that are easy to learn and easy to play. It makes gaming accessible to a larger audience, making it less intimidating. However, there is also a place for the games that ask players to experiment with different tactics, learn from mistakes, and maybe even get a little frustrated before succeeding. Those slightly harder games can also be the ones that deliver the most fulfilling gaming experiences.

The official reviews gave *Legacy* average scores, citing problems

with the game's graphics or difficulty. I thought about writing my own review after finishing the game, but felt that I was too much of a fan of the series to do so. After all, I was pretty much the exact target audience for the game, someone who enjoyed several of the previous installments and eager to revisit familiar territory. Nevertheless, I could not resist talking about *Legacy* in this editorial, partly because I had a blast playing it and appreciated it for what it is, but also because *Legacy* ended up being the last game I played before finishing medical school.

I remember booting up *The Mandate of Heaven* a few days before I moved to the U.S. It was one of the last games I played before moving across the Atlantic. I wasn't bringing my computer with me. All of my games were getting left behind. I ran through some of my favorite locations one last time, just to say farewell. Many years later, it seemed very appropriate to play through a new *Might and Magic* game as I am getting ready to make another move. As I write this editorial, medical school is over. Graduation is just a few days away. I am in the middle of packing the house to move to a different city and to start my neurology residency. It will be a new road, a new journey. It's hard to say what the residency years will bring. However, there is something comforting in knowing that even as I walk into new territory, there may be the occasional old friend that can still find me.

Here's hoping you will have a wonderful summer.

Until next time,

– Ugur Sener



**Cover Image:**  
**ANGELICA WEAVER:**  
**CATCH ME WHEN YOU CAN**

**ADVENTURE LANTERN**  
**#3 (51) may 2014**

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**Moebius: Empire Rising (Jane Jensen)**

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**Grim Fandango interface overhaul**

**Broken Sword motion comic**

**The Whispered World: Special Edition (Daedalic)**

**The Inquisitor: The Plague uncensored edition**

**Humongous Entertainment coming to Steam**

**Dracula Trilogy on Steam**

**What Makes You Tick? The Talkie**





## News From the Big Blue Cup



March

**Symbiosis (JuaniT)** - A man wakes up in a strange dream, where he's going to discover a very old secret about the origin of the human race.

MAGS February 2014 entry.

**The 4th Wall (HanaIndiana)** - An adventure game character has a spiritual epiphany, and the player is his God. The 4th wall has been broken.

MAGS February 2014 entry.

**The Coming of Age: A Lorna Bains Whodunit (ReVenture Games)** - Tallahassee, 1933. Meet Lorna Bains, young college student, part-time waitress at a local cafe and aspiring journalist.

**MOUSTACHE  
QUEST**



**Tomes: Layne's Discovery (Domithan)** - A short story-driven game that revolves around a young man with a litany of personal problems. Through investigations and a fair amount of seeing his way through internal crises, Layne eventually stumbles upon the Tomes, and a new mystery begins.

**Moustache Quest (Oldschool\_Wolf)** - Join Moustache Mike as he prepares for the annual Facial Hair Championships!

MAGS March 2014 entry.

1st

5

10

15

20

25

30th

**Lema Sabachthani (Billbis)** - You have been sentenced to death. But what you have done, had to be done.

MAGS February 2014 entry.

**Zog Moonbuckle: The Mysterious Planet (vortex)** - During a journey home from the far reaches of space, you are forced to crash-land on a mysterious planet not on any of your star charts.

Faced with the challenge of repairing your damaged spaceship, it soon becomes clear that you've become involved in something altogether more interesting...means.

**The Day After You Went Away (ReVenture Games)** - Tallahassee, 1933. After the tragic incident in Eddie Papatuccio's cafe, nothing is quite how it used to be.

**ZOG MOONBUCKLE  
THE MYSTERIOUS PLANET**



**Oceanspirit Dennis: LGS (Miguel, The Ugly Files)[Demo]** - Check this take on the OSD world, with incredible new CANON!





**The Coming of Age: A Lorna Bains Whodunit**



**The Day After You Went Away (ReVenture Games)**



**The 4th Wall (HanaIndiana)**



**Lema Sabachthani (Billbis)**



**Tomes: Layne's Discovery (Domithan)**



**Symbiosis (JuaniT)**



## News From the Big Blue Cup



April

**Play It Again (Alex Whittington)** - This game was created by recruiting as many actors as possible to improvise variations on the same four characters and then using randomization to mix and match those performances. No specific dialogue was written down for them, only vague instructions on what each line should include.

MAGS March 2014 entry.

**Tales (AprilSkies)[Demo]** - An out of work layabout, Alfred Walsh, thinks he has found a cushy job as the custodian of a private library. When otherworldly forces intrude he is forced to abandon his career path and is thrust into a battle to save the very heart and soul of what makes humanity what it is.

**The Dream Job ep.1 (springthoughts)** - Below the surface there are meanings waiting to be discovered. You can explore it at your own pace. There is a light tone about everything. The experience that I intended for you is the gentle unveiling of a mystery.

**The Samaritan Paradox (Faravid Interactive)** - A writer has died. His daughter seeks the help of you, Ord Salomon, to find his secret last novel. During the search, questions will emerge. Crack codes, decipher secrets & find a lost fortune in this exciting adventure.

## Play It Again



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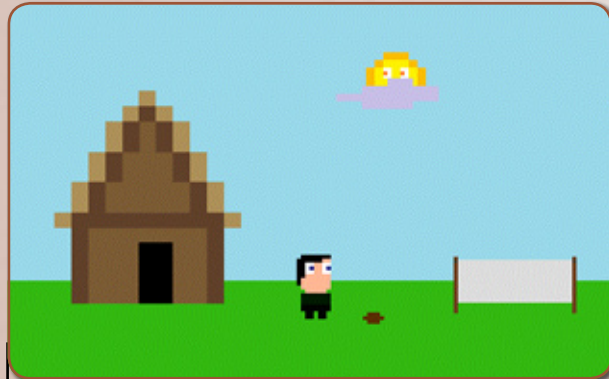
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30th

**Bruce Quest: Secrets of the Outback (Alex Scobell)** -The Australian Outback can be a harsh and mysterious mistress. Can Bruce, just an average Australian bloke make his way home? Or is he just one lousy dingo's foot away from destruction?  
MAGS March 2014 entry.

**Edmund and the Potato (The Fool)** - A short and slightly wierd game about a guy who wanted to plant a potato. With the bluesy soundtrack.

**Mudlarks (shaun9991)** - An atmospheric dialog and puzzle driven adventure game, bringing together elements of science fiction with a strong supernatural theme as you undertake your quest to find your friend and unravel many secrets along the way.



Edmund and the Potato (The Fool) Tales (AprilSkies)

**June 20th (Pierrec)** - He collects beer caps. She loves birds. Seashells too, but not as much. They're alone on the beach. It's warm. They're in love. Everything's fine.

A game made in 48h for Ludum Dare 29.  
Theme : Beneath the Surface

## Pick of the Month: Breakage

Ever wanted to talk to a tree or see a turtle carrying a burning candle on its back? Get yourself teleported to the surrealistic world of Breakage with its cute and creative setting and characters. Being as clueless as the player character you can enjoy exploring a colorful world of coherent absurdity with a variety of good puzzles and certainly some of the best animations you can find in an AGS game.

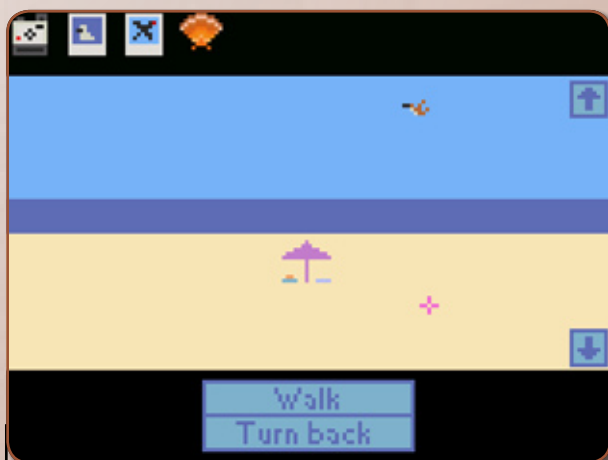
Chosen by cat  
Developed by Vegard Stolpnæssæter



**The Day After You Went Away** (ReVenture Games)



**The Samaritan Paradox** (Faravid Interactive)



**Symbiosis** (JuaniT)



**Tales** (AprilSkies)

# Angelica Weaver

## Catch Me When You Can



Genre: casual adventure Developer/publisher: Mumbo Jumbo  
Release date: 2012 Platforms: Windows, Mac OSX Website: none

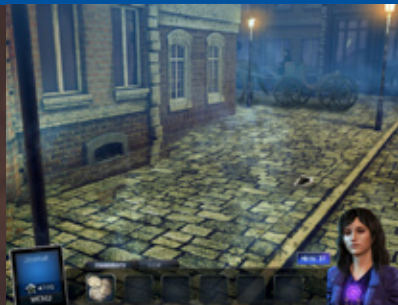


Angelica is no ordinary police officer. She does not get called in for simple cases with a clear suspect or motive. The Chicago Police Department relies on her for the cases that can't be resolved with a simple investigation. Angelica steps in when there are no suspects, no clues, and no obvious leads. Detective Weaver has a special psychic gift. She possesses the ability to see through a victim or killer's eyes. She can feel what they felt and experience what they went through. She will need that gift tonight to catch a ruthless killer terrorizing Chicago.

### Review by Ugur Sener

**D**etective Weaver arrives at Andrew Chapman's apartment in her squad car. Before she can even enter the building, she is shaken by a strong vision. The vision reveals Chapman's final moments. Angelica sees a chase that begins in the streets of Chicago. Then, abruptly, the scene changes to 19th century London. Chapman reaches a dead end and dies





within moments. Angelica knows Chapman did die at the end of the street behind his house, with nowhere else to run. Yet she can't understand the vision of London. Is it a mere hallucination that the victim had in his final moments, or something more sinister?

Whatever her vision might mean, Angelica can feel that the killer enjoys the hunt. The detective can feel the killer's arrogance. This murder is not about lust or vengeance. This is a killer that gets satisfaction from being the bringer of death and from outsmarting the police. Chapman was not the first to die in the murderer's hands. He will not be the last one either. Detective Weaver knows she must act quickly, before more innocent people lose their lives.

*Angelica Weaver: Catch Me When You Can* is a casual adventure game from *Mumbo Jumbo*. The game puts players in the role of Detective Weaver, as she tries to stop a murderer in modern-day Chicago. The adventure takes players through Chicago and London, as two separate, but related investigations unfold side by side. With its interesting storyline, excellent graphics, and suspenseful atmosphere, *Catch Me When You Can* manages to rise above many other casual adventures, delivering an entertaining gaming experience.



The game begins as Angelica arrives at Chapman's apartment to start her investigation. A forensic team has already been through the place, looking for evidence. Angelica is called in when they fail to come up with any leads or significant clues. The young detective uses her unique psychic powers to search the apartment and track down the killer. However, she will not be in Chicago much longer.

After combing through the apartment and the surrounding streets, Angelica suddenly finds herself in 19th century London. The year is 1888 and she is at the scene of a different murder. It is not clear whether Detective Weaver physically travels through time or space or just has an elaborate

vision. Nevertheless, the London murder is clearly connected to Angelica's case in Chicago. It will be up to her to discover exactly how the two murders are linked. The past holds the key to catching the modern-day murderer.

As the game progresses, Angelica travels back and forth





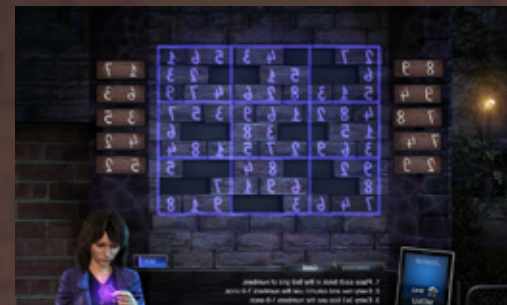
between Chicago and London. The game does a good job of handling these transitions. The plotline is nicely advanced in both locations as players try to find the modern-day killer's identity and prevent additional murders in Chicago. The game may not feature an astonishing mystery or highly elaborate plot, but the story is still engaging and intriguing. You can expect it to hold your attention throughout the course of the

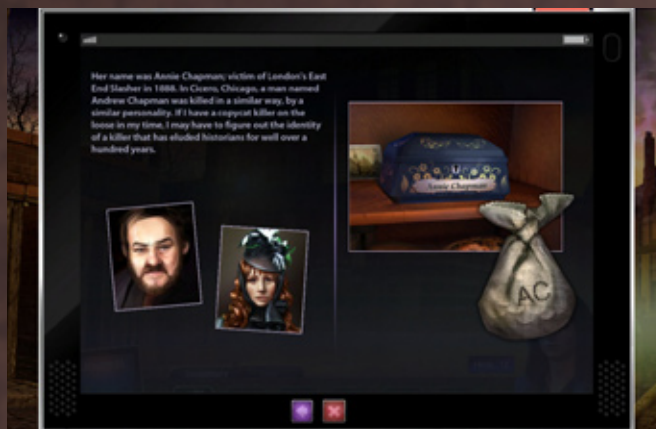
adventure. Nicely-timed transitions between the two settings and Angelica's strong drive to catch the killer help create a sense of urgency and a suspenseful atmosphere.

The only problems I had with the game's story and narrative was the abruptness of some transitions and the reliance on Angelica's journal to explain certain events. For instance, the game begins with a short scene where Angelica witnesses the murder in Chicago

through the victim's eyes. Players take control of the detective outside the victim's apartment, with only a passing explanation of what they just saw. However, even at this early point of the adventure, Angelica's journal contains a brief, but adequate explanation of who the detective is and how her psychic powers work. This passage helps orient players to the adventure, but it would be very easy to miss if you do not open the journal.

Later in the game, as Angelica finds more clues and delves deeper into the case, the game again uses cutscenes to depict important events. However, the full meaning of what transpired is not always clear unless you read the corresponding entry in the journal or pay close attention to the brief commentary Angelica provides to





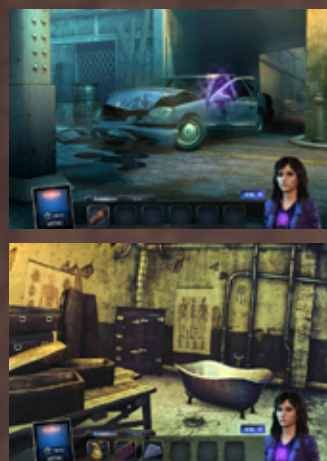
set the next scene. This journal and game design is most likely due to the developers' desire to limit the amount of exposition within the game itself. Detailed information is typically available in the journal for those who want to read it. The players that only want to focus on the puzzles and largely ignore the story do not have to endure long monologues or conversations. Nevertheless, there are a small number of segments where the game would have benefited from more detailed exposition during the cutscenes. With the details lacking, some of the transitions feel abrupt and the events at first

seem a bit disjointed. Fortunately, this does not significantly detract from the experience and a quick trip to the journal is usually adequate to get Angelica's perspective on things without interrupting the flow of the adventure.

Angelica herself makes for a good protagonist. The story is primarily focused on the murders and the victims. As such, the detective does not get much in the way of character development. However, with her unassuming appearance and helpful commentary about the investigation, she manages to come across as a caring, compassionate, and clever police officer. Her drive to save people's

lives makes it easier to care about the case and keeps you pushing forward with the investigation.

The game is played from a first-person perspective and uses a simple mouse-driven interface. You can pick up items and go from one screen to the other with a left click. The inventory is accessible at the bottom of the screen, where items can be selected and used on the environment. A portrait of Angelica is also visible next to the inventory. The detective's facial expressions change based on what's happening with the investigation. While this may initially seem odd, it does help Angelica seem more involved with the case and makes her seem more real.





*Catch Me When You Can* certainly delivers in its visuals. Each location you visit in Chicago and London is depicted with beautiful and detailed backgrounds. The dark gloomy tones used throughout the game help elevate the atmosphere. The fog and otherworldly hue that permeates the London scenes are an especially nice touch. They make the 19th century locations seem rather surreal and add to the feeling that Angelica may not actually be traveling through time and space, but rather experiencing a very powerful vision. Similarly, the sound effects and music add to the atmosphere. The music is never overbearing or intrusive, adding to the feeling of suspense without being distracting.

In terms of the puzzles, the game offers a variety of inventory-based challenges, hidden object hunts, and logic puzzles. While there are multiple hidden-object sequences that must be navigated, do not expect an endless series of item hunts in *Catch Me When You Can*. You will not spend the majority of your time sifting through long lists trying to identify tiny items in tangled messes. Instead, the game is much more focused on inventory-based puzzles. During any given chapter, you will be confined to a relatively small number of screens. In general, you will first search these screens for inventory items and then



use those items to find clues about the case or gain access to additional areas. As such, *Catch Me When You Can* feels more like a traditional adventure game than many other casual adventures.

Sprinkled between the object hunts and inventory-based challenges are the logic puzzles. *Catch Me When You Can* offers a variety of these puzzles. Some of them, such as the simplified Sudoku game, may be familiar to most players. However, there are also some fairly novel challenges such as the puzzle involving manipulating a series of ropes to knock down hooks. For me, the only problematic puzzle was a sequence that involved stacking objects on top of each other to reach a window. At the beginning of the puzzle, the items you need to stack are scattered on the ground. You need to drag each object under the window and rotate them into the right position to be stacked. The dragging and rotating is rather slow, making the experience a little tedious. Fortunately, this was one out of the many puzzles in the game and the issue did not substantially detract from the overall experience.

In general, the inventory-based puzzles, hidden-object hunts, and logic puzzles are all straightforward. Other than the occasional inventory item you may overlook, the puzzles should not pose a substantial challenge to seasoned adventurers. Nevertheless, if you do get stuck, the game has several help features to get you through a given challenge. The first help feature is the collection of 52 dreamcatchers spread throughout the game. These items allow you to get hints about the current inventory-based puzzle or object hunt. For instance, if you can't figure out where to go next or what to do to make progress, you can click on the hint button near Angelica's portrait. The game will then direct you step by step toward the next item you should find or the inventory item you should use.

During object hunts, an additional help function is available. You can click on the items on the list to make Angelica use her powers and conjure a mental image of the object. The image will be all black, but that's usually sufficient to give you an idea of what to look





for. There is help available for the logic puzzles as well. There are instructions on how to approach each logic puzzle at the bottom of the screen. While these instructions never give away the answer, they do help you understand what you are trying to achieve. It is also possible to skip the puzzles altogether.

In terms of its length, *Catch Me When You Can* offers a fairly satisfying experience. If you play the game without utilizing the help functions very frequently, you can expect to reach the ending in about four to five hours. During that time, you will go through good variety of locations in London and Chicago, solving a substantial number of puzzles along the way. Given the scope of the story, the length of the adventure feels very appropriate. The ending sequence, while brief, provides good closure to the story, with all the major questions that arise during the investigation answered.

In the end, *Angelica Weaver: Catch Me When You Can* is a very enjoyable experience. The game offers a likeable protagonist, good variety of puzzles, diverse set of locations spanning two time periods, and a fairly compelling story. *Catch Me When You Can* makes good use of Angelica's powers as well as its modern-day and 19th century settings. The investigation remains

interesting throughout and the fairly wide selection of challenges keeps the game from becoming tedious. If you are in the mood for a casual adventure with a strong atmosphere, fun story,

and a solid sampling of puzzles, *Angelica Weaver: Catch Me When You Can* is certainly a good option. Here's hoping there will be other cases for Angelica to investigate soon. ●



### BRIGHT MOMENTS:

Compelling story, good protagonist, great visuals, and a fitting suspenseful atmosphere.

### FUMBLES IN THE DARK:

A few of the transitions between chapters could be handled better.

### VERDICT:

A solid casual adventure.



# Broken Age

## Act 1

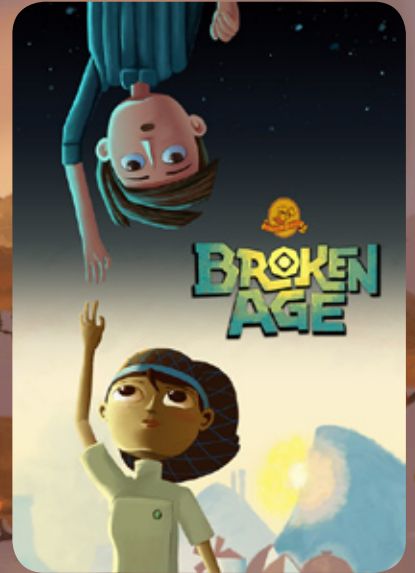


Genre: adventure Developer/publisher: Double Fine

Release date: January 28, 2014

Platforms: Windows, Mac OSX, Linux, Android, iOS, Ouya

Website: <http://www.brokenagegame.com>



*Broken Age: Act 1* is the first half of *Double Fine's* Kickstarter adventure game. It was released to the public in late January, 2014, after Kickstarter backers got an early taste; The second chapter is due on some unspecified date later this year. *Broken Age's* first claim to fame came long before this, when it was the most successful Kickstarter to date by a large margin, raking in many times more money than they had hoped for at \$3.5 million. It sort of launched the following Kickstarter craze that quickly saw other projects hitting milestones in the millions of dollars, and funding huge professional games by both new and classic developers. But there is more, this was to be the first full, undiluted, adventure game that *Tim Schafer* worked on since *Grim Fandango*; *My Schafer* being the creative genius behind, not only *Grim Fandango*, but also the legendary *The Secret of Monkey Island* series and *Full Throttle*.

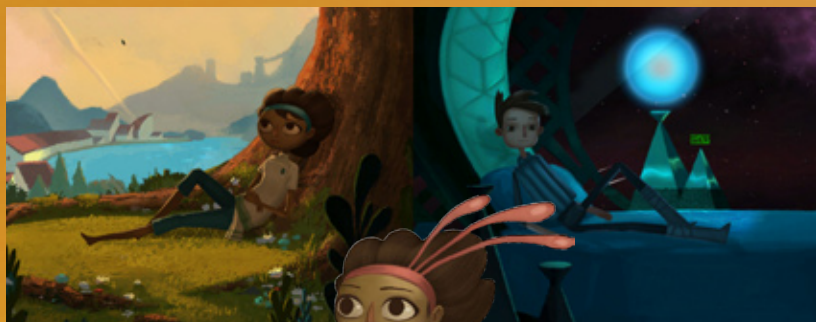


## Review by Jonathon Wisnoski

I did not know what to think when going into *Double Fine's Broken Age: Act 1*. I have not been following the documentary series, nor any other in-depth look at the game, both pre and post release. I did know that it was supposed to be in the classical style and that the game was separated into two parallel stories of the protagonists, a boy on a spaceship and a girl in a fantasy land. Now having played it, I am not sure where the classic style comes in; It is decidedly modern. It does not do anything overly new, being a generic point and click adventure in gameplay style, but it has no specific features or flavors of the old. It has tablet styled controls, easy gameplay, and extremely streamlined interaction; Hallmarks of the unabashed modern adventure.

The two protagonists, their gameplay and storyline, are completely separate

Looking as though it were hand drawn in delicate pastels, then animated with storybook papercraft, the game is immediately resonant of a lavishly illustrated children's picture book. (Rock, Paper, Shotgun)



and playable in any order. You can switch between them at any time, or play one all the way through before you move on to the other. One of the two protagonists, Vella, is a young girl approaching adulthood, who lives in a magical fantasy land. She is being forced into a dangerous role by her family and village, so she runs away to escape her fate; Most likely dooming her family and village to total destruction. Conversely, the young man is being stifled in his advanced spaceship

by a pair of stifling AI parents; Who seem incapable of noticing that he has completely outgrown their overprotective attitudes and childish games. He will do anything he can to escape their ever present gaze and encounter real danger.

These parallel stories are quite engaging; The protagonist's worlds and their places in them are interesting, enjoyable, and full of whimsy. Vella, for example, spends most of *Act 1* literally in the clouds, in a colony of birds and cultists; At the same time, the boy,





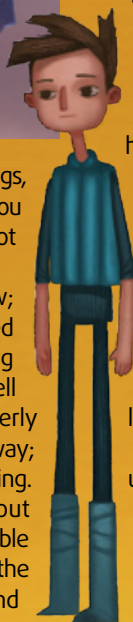
at that it does a terrific job. The length of the game is somewhat influenced by the gameplay, and how quick you are with the puzzles; But it also has a lot of cutscenes, dialogue, and general story based length. Using this formula, *Double Fine* has created a game that seemed, at least to me, a lot longer than it really is. Each of the two chapters in *Act 1* are only two hours long, but they each feel like entire games. Four hours is not a bad length for half of an adventure game, but it is not very long either; But in this case, there is a lot of content in those four hours.

The graphics of *Broken Age* are unarguably, at least as of this first act, its best feature. The game is illustrated with loving detail and the whole thing just exudes charm. It looks like nothing other than a

Shay, explores his advanced spaceship, which is decorated in a charmingly child friendly way. Overall, this story is very enjoyable, and well designed, but it does seem to contain some flaws. In particular, I was startled with how the AI's treated you after you escaped your room. The game sets up this kid's world as completely oppressive; Were even five minutes away from perfectly structured playtime, or mandated bed rest, is a miracle. You literally have to fool the AI to escape from your room, as you are not allowed out of bed. And then all that is gone. You have free reign all over

the ship, you can do dangerous things, you can order the ship anywhere you want; And no one bats an eye, not you, nor any of the AI.

The gameplay has a great flow; It is partitioned into perfectly sized chunks, with new areas opening up at just the right time and a well engineered difficulty. It is not overly challenging nor ingenious in any way; But neither is it too simple and boring. This gameplay is not really about ingenious challenges, and enjoyable puzzles, it is more a structure for the story and overall experience; And





hand-drawn painting, with minimal animation. And the subject matter fits the story so well. There are too many great little details in Vella's world, that add to its character and bring it alive, to mention, but I want to point out one feature of the spaceship that really made it feel real for me. A lot of it is made to look as if it were knitted out of yarn; His robotic play friends, parts of the ship, even the AI that controls the ship's propulsion and its star maps; Then you go to the "bridge", which is just a large desk with toy controls and a large nursery mobile. These details just serve to beautifully and vividly illuminate how the ship is just one big play pen, which you have outgrown.

If you backed the *Double Fine* Adventure because you were looking for some *Monkey Island* spiritual sequel you are going to be disappointed. But I think the average person is going to

enjoy this casual adventure, and as an original Kickstarter backer I am happy with this first delivery; And if *Double Fine* comes back with another four hour adventure (with a similar quality)

I will consider that a reasonable return for \$15. But it is worth noting that it is currently selling for \$25 dollars, which seems a little high to me; And you can get better adventure games for less. ●



### BRIGHT MOMENTS:

The beautifully illustrated graphics.

### FUMBLES IN THE DARK:

The simple/casual gameplay could put off anyone looking for a classical experience.

### VERDICT:

A great casual experience, so far.



# Broken Sword 5 The Serpent's Curse Episode 1



Genre: adventure Developer/publisher: Revolution Software

Release date: December 4th, 2013

Platforms: Windows, Mac OSX, Linux, PlayStation Network, Android, iOS Website: [www.revolution.co.uk/games/bs5/](http://www.revolution.co.uk/games/bs5/)



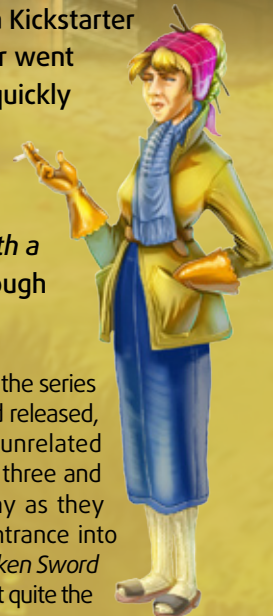
On August 23, 2012 *The Serpent's Curse*, the fifth *Broken Sword* title, was announced and a Kickstarter campaign, looking for \$400K for its continued development, was launched. The Kickstarter went on to raise over double the asking amount, meeting and exceeding all stretch goals, as it quickly became one of the most anticipated adventure games of the year. But actually, one of the most exciting things about the Kickstarter did not even have to do with the fifth *Broken Sword* title; During its campaign, the developers, *Revolution Software*, announced that if they were to hit the target of \$1 million they would officially greenlight a sequel to *Beneath a Steel Sky*. Even though they never quite made this target, the developers were happy enough with the success of the Kickstarter to greenlight this sequel anyway.

## Review by Jonathon Wisnoski

**R**evolution Software, the developers of this title as well as all previous *Broken Sword* games, are one of the oldest names in adventure still in the business. Initially founded during the heyday of the

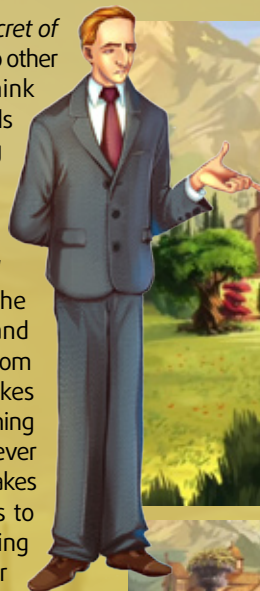
graphical adventure genre, *Revolution* cut their teeth on the classics *Lure of the Temptress* and *Beneath a Steel Sky*. They then went on to release the game they are most known for, and the start of this preeminent series, *Broken Sword: The Shadow of the Templars*. Over the following ten years the second, third,

and fourth entries in the series were developed and released, amid a few other unrelated adventures; Entries three and four are noteworthy as they mark the series' entrance into 3D graphics. The *Broken Sword* series might not be at quite the

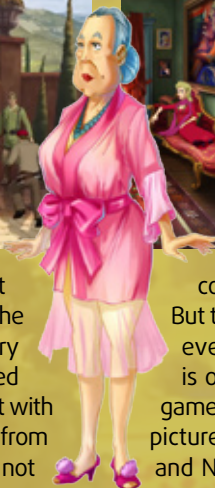


same level of *Myst* or *The Secret of Monkey Island* but there are no other adventure games, I can think of, really comparable in levels of notoriety. One interesting thing to think about is that *Revolution Software* has been continually in business and producing *Broken Sword* titles since 1996, making the series eighteen years old and counting, with five titles all from the same developer. This makes it the longest continually running adventure game series I have ever heard of; And if we count remakes and ports, *Revolution* seems to have been constantly working on one *Broken Sword* title or another, all these years.

*The Serpent's Curse* throws George and Nico back into intrigue and action when a Parisian art gallery exhibit, they are both attending, is robbed and the owner killed. The killer gets away with a single painting, a seemingly worthless one covered in religious Gnostic symbols. This puts both George, as an employee of the insurer, and Nico, as a reporter, on the case; A case that spans continents and which centers around a painting that hides an ancient religious mystery. The story overall is quite engaging and well told, but the details often just do



not make sense. Now, I might give the game the benefit of the doubt and assume that the story has some reason for the masked murderer/thief to pick a helmet with a giant logo right on the front from a single small business and to not



cover his large unique tattoo; But this excuse cannot be used for every problematic area. There is one significant section of the game where an artist is painting a picture with nude models. George and Nico recognize the models in





the painting, but also call it a forgery. How a painting that everyone agrees is very different from the original, and is not copied verbatim, is supposed to be a forgery, I am not sure. These inconsistencies do not overly affect

the game, leaving it overall a very enjoyable story.

One of the best and I think most important decisions the team made early on was the art direction. While the last two

games of the series had been in full 3D, that aspect never really got much traction with the fan base. So it was decided early on that they would go with a more character rich visual style with hand drawn backgrounds. These are in full HD, and are generally good. I think they probably made all the right choices, and it came out good, but no one is going to praise the game's fantastic graphics; They are just a little bland. The team used 3D models of the characters to create extremely fluid animations for them, while the hand-drawn backgrounds are almost completely static. In my opinion these graphics unfortunately lack some of the retro charm of the low resolution first two games, but they have stuck to the original style as much as possible; Producing characters and places that are very recognizable.



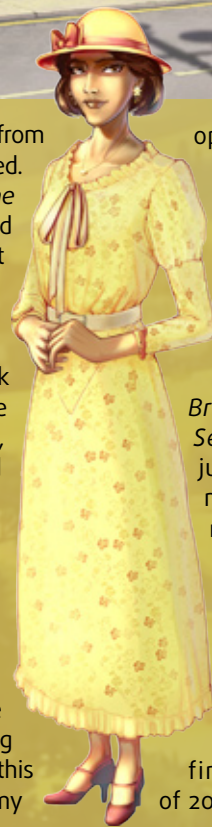




We do not return to very many locations from previous games (though the game is still based around Paris), but we do see many return characters. The game definitely does not shy away from its backstory, and it is packed full of references, jokes, and return characters that will be a special treat for fans of the series. I originally played through episode one without any prior knowledge of the *Broken Sword* series, and was able to appreciate this simply because it made the dialogue and characters so much more real, with a history that you may or may not know.

The gameplay, which lasts about six hours, is similarly well done in a generally generic, not overly exciting sort of way. The game has a pretty consistent moderate difficulty level, and is chock-full of reasonable and enjoyable puzzles. The only real complaint I have is the gameplay seems a little too linear for

its story, which could benefit from being slightly more open ended. I have not been painting *The Serpent's Curse* in a very good light, which does misrepresent the game. None of the individual parts of the game are exciting in themselves, but as part of a whole they work well, creating a good adventure game. It is a well told, exciting, and enjoyable experience. And most of all, It works well as both a stand-alone and as part of the *Broken Sword* series. I originally played through *The Serpent's Curse* without any prior experience of the series and it was a fun game that motivated me to finally give the original classics a try. Having played some of the rest of this series I can now say that in my



opinion this newest entry fits in the series well, but it is a very modern adaptation. Much of the challenge and humor has been removed, creating a blander game, but also one that will be accessible to more people.

Compared to the original *Broken Sword* adventure, *The Serpent's Curse* (or at least just this first part of it) does not fare well; It is simply not as good as the original games, but it is still a good game. Part two is currently in the works, as of this writing, but is scheduled to appear anytime, s o m e t i m e within the first quarter of 2014. ●



**BRIGHT MOMENTS:**

The nostalgic reunion with all your favorite *Broken Sword* characters.

**FUMBLES IN THE DARK:**

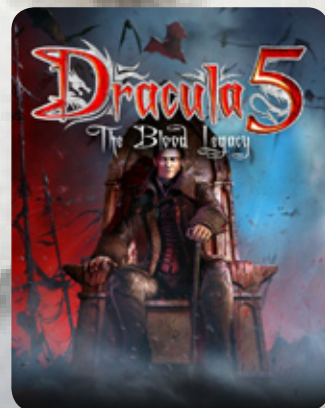
Some of the story elements just do not make sense.

**VERDICT:**

A solid offering.



# Dracula 5: The Blood Legacy



Genre: adventure Developer: Koalabs Publishers: Anuman Interactive Release date: December 2, 2013  
Platforms: Windows, iOS, Android Website: <http://www.dracula.microids.com/EN/game-dracula-5>

*The Blood Legacy* is the second title in the latest episodic series, which comprises the most recent chapter in the franchise of *Dracula* video games by *Microids*, the franchise that started with *Resurrection* (2000), *The Last Sanctuary* (2000), and *The Path of the Dragon* (2008). It was released on November 29, 2013 for PC and Mac, and continues the story right from where we left on in *The Shadow of the Dragon*. It ends in a far more final way than the first episode did, while still somewhat implying a sequel; But unlike the previous game it does not promise a sequel.

## Review by Jonathon Wisnoski

Having just recovered the painting rumored to portray Dracula, Ellen Cross is back in England, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where she works as an art restorer. This painting will lead her to the ancient order of *The Shadow of the Dragon*, and eventually to Dracula himself. The game offers two endings with a 3-4 hour length.

It could be because I am coming into this with drastically lessened expectations, but I found *The Blood Legacy* somewhat decent, disregarding the price. It is still a ridiculously expensive game, but the graphics and gameplay are slightly better. We still have the problem of it being an episodic adventure without advertising the fact. At least this time around people who have read reviews of the first game know what to expect; But if you have not you could be stuck with a half a game, that is missing the beginning, and to which you paid \$20+ and only got three hours out of.

*The Blood Legacy* has generally bland graphics, but they do get pretty good in some locations, and are universally of a good technical quality. We also get a full voice cast, and many cutscenes, all in the framework of this freelook node-based adventure. Additionally, the puzzles are actually quite decent. We are still treated to the same idiotic medicine system, but at least this time they do not have us scarfing down apples to delay the spread of a deadly incurable disease.





If you liked *The Shadow of the Dragon* you will love this casual adventure; Unfortunately, that would also mean that you probably have something wrong with you. All joking aside, if the price does not scare you away, and you are looking for a short casual adventure, this is a good short casual adventure; Which even throws off the stereotype of casual adventures needing



to be full of hidden object puzzles. But there is nothing here to attract or entertain someone looking for a full serious adventure. If this game had been advertised as a four hour casual adventure, and the second in an episodic adventure, and had had a price tag of five to ten dollars; It would be a good game; Not really my cup-of-tea, but a good or even great alternative to those modern hidden object games. As it stands, I cannot recommend it to anyone. ●



**BRIGHT MOMENTS:**

Noticeably better than the last game.

**FUMBLES IN THE DARK:**

The price, the length, the deceptive name.

**VERDICT:**

A decent casual adventure, with horrible marketing.





# realMyst: Masterpiece Edition



Genre: adventure Developer: Cyan Publishers: Cyan Release date: February 5, 2014

Platforms: Windows, Mac OSX Website: <http://cyan.com/games/realmyst-masterpiece-edition/>

“Celebrating the 20th anniversary of *Myst!*” *Cyan* has released a remake of a remake with 10 year old graphical tech. But this is not all, *realMyst* would not be *realMyst* without its long tedious loadings screens and jerky frame rate, so this remake brings that all back with a game that requires an absolute top of the line current gaming rig to even run.

“I only saw realMyst after it was released. As a remake, it was a lapse of reason and directionless; overt merchandising of the original Myst. It definitely wasn't how we originally envisioned Myst, as was promoted.”

- Robyn Miller, Referring to the original realMyst in 2000

by Jonathon Wisnoski

Originally released in 1993, *Myst* hit the gaming community by storm, founding a dynasty for itself with several sequels, an entire genre dedicated to replicating its greatness, and of course bucket-loads of ports and many remakes. First came *Myst: Masterpiece Edition*, which upgraded *Myst* with almost imperceptibly better graphics; So imperceptible entire articles have had to be written just to assure people that while you cannot really tell the difference with the naked eye, it is there. Next in 2000 came *realMyst*, a tech demo of their in development 3D Uru engine, which also served as a complete remake of *Myst* into a fully 3D game. *realMyst* also added a few extremely minor game elements, such as lighting and a day-night cycle, in addition to the small bonus age that opened up after you finished the game.

*realMyst: Masterpiece Edition* (*rM:ME*) is just *realMyst* brought into the modern age for system requirements and with the graphics that still look like they are from the year 2000. It looks like they used the exact same models from the original release, and just cranked up the amount of shadows; making the game so dark in some areas that they have also necessitated the inclusion of a flashlight. *rM:ME* also adds in the ability to play the game with the same node-based movement as the original, and adds motion blur to the “Free Roam” mode.

They have also slightly changed the controls for “Free Roam” movement, making it almost impossible to move around.



I have gone on record before stating my preference of *Myst:ME* over *realMyst*, even while liking a few of the additions of *realMyst*. As it stands now, *rM:ME* is not even as good as *realMyst*, and my suggestion stands at: just play *Myst: ME*. If in the future *Cyan* (at least) fixes the controls, I would say *rM:ME* could be slightly better than *realMyst*, but still not worth a new playthrough or the expense.



Unfortunately, to really fix *rM:ME* they would have to do a complete overhaul and remake the entire thing; Maybe in another ten years we will get a *Myst* remake actually worth buying and replaying. ●

# Adventure Lantern

