

= The Myst Reader =

The Myst Reader is a collection of three novels based on the Myst series of adventure games . The collection was published in September 2004 and combines three works previously published separately : The Book of Atrus ( 1995 ) , The Book of Ti 'ana ( 1996 ) , and The Book of D 'ni ( 1997 ) . The novels were each written by British science @-@ fiction writer David Wingrove with assistance from Myst 's creators , Rand and Robyn Miller .

Each novel centers on the family of Atrus , a scientist and explorer who has the ability to write special books which serve as links to other worlds , known as Ages . This ability , known as the Art , was practiced extensively by an ancient civilization known as the D 'ni , who were only mentioned briefly in the original Myst game . The plot of each book reveals more of the Myst back @-@ story and the workings of the D 'ni .

Upon release , reception of the novels have been mixed . Many reviewers expressed surprise that a novel based on a videogame worked ; others found the prose dull and uninteresting , or that the book could not stand on its own without the game . The individual books sold well , with The Book of Atrus making USA Today 's Best @-@ Selling Books list . Two more novels are planned ; a sample of the first , The Book of Marrim , was packaged with an edition of Myst V : End of Ages . The plots to the novels have also been adapted by fans into a planned film based on The Book of Ti 'ana , with the blessing of Cyan Worlds .

= = Background = =

Myst co @-@ creators and brothers Rand and Robyn Miller often created fictional worlds and stories as young children . Their vision was refined by the works of fantasy and science fiction writers such as J. R. R. Tolkien , Robert A. Heinlein , and Isaac Asimov ; Star Wars offered them a glimpse at an exciting , fully realized fictional world . Younger brother Robyn began working on a children 's novel called Dunnyhut ; though he never completed the work , elements from the story influenced aspects of Myst 's story .

The video game Myst tells the story of a special book which serves as a link to a world known as Myst . Myst is the home of an explorer named Atrus , who lives on the island with his wife Catherine and two sons , Sirrus and Achenar . An unnamed protagonist drops into Myst and finds the island strangely deserted . As the player explores Myst , they discover Sirrus and Achenar trapped inside two books . Both swear that their parents are dead due to the machinations of the other brother , and instruct the player to repair their books so they can be freed . In truth , Atrus and Catherine are merely imprisoned , and both Sirrus and Achenar are guilty of growing power @-@ hungry and destroying Atrus ' books . The player frees Atrus , leading to the events of the sequel Riven .

The Millers began the game 's development by sketching out puzzles and each individual world the player would explore in the game . As the brothers were conceptualizing the various worlds , they also wrote down pieces of the story . At some point in the development of these bits of story , Robyn explained in an interview , " We started realizing this story is actually something we thought the public would enjoy , so we started pressing to make [ the novel ] happen . " Buoyed by strong sales of the video game , publisher Hyperion signed a three @-@ novel , US \$ 1 million deal with the brothers .

The Miller brothers wrote the entire first novel , but were unsatisfied with the result ; the Millers pointed out that writing a character for a novel is much harder than writing the characters of a game . Hyperion recruited author David Wingrove to assist with the project ; the Millers ended up giving Wingrove a detailed draft , and the author rewrote the entire book . The book 's design was made to fit the themes of the game ; the novels are made to look like journals found in Myst , with embossed covers and pages darkened as though with time and use .

To promote the release of The Book of Atrus , the Millers embarked on an eleven @-@ city book tour . The publicity stemming from the book and game surprised the Millers , who remained unaccustomed to their new @-@ found fame . " The excitement is in talking to people who 've walked through our world , " Rand Miller said in an interview . " But we 're not used to signing books

- we 're a bit out of our element . "

= = Plot = =

= = = Book of Atrus = = =

The Book of Atrus serves as a prequel to the events of the eponymous first game in the Myst series , and introduces both new characters and old characters seen in the games . The book 's protagonist is Atrus . He is raised by his grandmother Anna after his mother dies and his father abandons him . Eventually , Atrus ' father Gehn returns from his explorations of the ruins of the D 'ni empire and enlists Atrus to come follow him back to the fallen city . Gehn teaches Atrus the Art , a skill the D 'ni used to create special books which allow transport between worlds known as Ages . Atrus is awed by the Art at first , but he is horrified when he witnesses Gehn 's manipulation and dismissive attitude to the inhabitants of the Ages . He also comes to understand Gehn 's selfish , cold cruelty and his own power @-@ hungry nature ; Gehn believes that he creates the Ages he writes , instead of creating links to preexisting universes . Gehn destroys Atrus ' first Age , Inception , because it does not follow Gehn 's style of writing . After attempting to escape his father , Gehn traps Atrus in a locked chamber in D 'ni , with the only escape Gehn 's own Age of Riven . On Riven Atrus falls in love with a villager named Catherine .

Catherine and Atrus hatch a plan to trap Gehn on Riven . Gehn is stranded when Atrus and Catherine destroy all linking books on Riven , escaping by using a book Ti 'ana wrote for them , leading to the Age of Myst . Atrus drops the Myst linking book into a massive disturbance on Riven known as the Star Fissure ; the book falls through the fissure to be picked up by the Stranger in Myst . The closing words of the book are the opening narrative from the video game .

= = = Book of Ti 'ana = = =

The Book of Ti 'ana takes place earlier than The Book of Atrus . The first part of the book focuses on life of Atrus ' grandfather Aitrus with his parents Kahlis and Tasera , Aitrus ' meeting with Ti 'ana , and the birth of their son Gehn . The book also explains the destruction of the D 'ni civilization . Two D 'ni , Veovis and A 'Gaeris , plot to destroy their civilization , which they believe has been corrupted . Veovis and A 'Gaeris create a plague which wipes out many of the D 'ni and follows them through the Ages . Veovis is murdered by A 'Gaeris for refusing to write an Age where the two of them would have been worshipped as gods , and Aitrus sacrifices himself in order to lure A 'Gaeris to an unstable Age , killing them both .

= = = Book of D 'ni = = =

In The Book of D 'ni , Atrus opens the crumbled exit of the room in K 'veer , where he had been imprisoned by Gehn , and gains access to the rest of D 'ni . Atrus and his team set out to find linking books and search for D 'ni survivors . Eventually , Atrus and the rest of the D 'ni plan on rebuilding the civilization , but this plan is put to a halt when a book leading to a great lost Age called Terahnee is found . Terahnee is a sister Age to D 'ni and is populated by descendants of the same ancestors as the D 'ni .

At first sight , Terahnee seems like a Utopia . Everyone lives in sumptuous palaces , and nobody goes hungry ; in reality , the society is run by slave labor . After writing new Ages , the Terahnee people capture the inhabitants to use as slaves , considering themselves gods over their Ages . The Terahnee people are taught not to ' see ' the slaves ; only the servants interact with the lower orders . The Terahnee are suddenly stricken by a plague the D 'ni brought with them ; Atrus and his companions help the Age 's slaves recover and create a new society before returning to D 'ni and sealing up the path to Terahnee .

## = = Reception = =

Reception to the Myst novels has been mixed . Sybil Steinberg of Publishers Weekly reviewed *The Book of Atrus* and stated that Wingrove 's achievement of a " rollicking adventure tale " was improbable , given that previous game @-@ to @-@ book attempts had failed horribly . Booklist also gave the book a positive review , stating that the plot was predictable but the book served its purpose " to either introduce readers to the game , or supply players with back stories " . A reviewer for New Scientist called the story " a good , light read for the holiday season . "

Other reviewers felt that the novel could not stand on its own , and relied on the games to maintain relevancy . Albert Kim of Entertainment Weekly also gave the novel a mediocre score , saying the main issue that doomed *The Book of Atrus* was that it removed the mystery from Myst . " Much of the game 's charm is derived from its eeriness , a haunting aura that is lost in the text , " Kim wrote . Fantasy and Science Fiction stated that the prose was not up to the task of bringing the characters to life . Steinberg later stated that with the books " bereft of the game 's dazzling graphics and its hypnotic interactive dimension " , the second and third novels plodded along with boring prose .

Despite the mixed reviews , the Myst novels sold well . *The Book of Atrus* reached a top spot of 176 on USA Today 's Best @-@ Selling Books list . More than 450 @,@ 000 copies of *Book of Atrus* and *Book of Ti 'ana* have been sold . A fourth and fifth Myst novel were planned . The first , entitled *Myst : The Book of Marrim* , was announced in 2004 ; a preview of the novel was packaged in the *Myst V : End of Ages* special edition . A group of independent filmmakers adapted *The Book of Ti 'ana* into a screenplay , with the blessing of the Millers .