



87.6.10 They held for more than thirty years, but the corrections I made to Riven have finally failed - the island has resumed the familiar pattern of decay that is the hallmark of my father's work. I must now race to implement this new patch before it's too late.

I only hope that my revised theories are sound.

87.6.16 Revisions to Riven completed. There are still a number of minor adjustments which need to be made, but the basic corrections have been entered and should be working.

Something's not right; I've been monitoring the instruments for several hours now, but have thus far observed no change. It's possible that I've made an error, though I've checked my entry against my prenotation and can find no discrepancy. I've not had a rest in nearly three days, so it may be that I'm just not seeing it. If the fault is with my foundational assumptions, however. . . .

Perhaps after a short rest, I will see something.

87.6.18 Success! It appears that my repairs have been effective after all; the Gateway Image has become noticeably clearer and although it is impossible to know this with absolute certainty, the island seems to have quieted itself.

Just a few more weeks of work, and I should be free, at last, to go there myself and attempt to bring Catherine back. The past eight months have left me little time to think, to devise a strategy for getting her out of there. I've received no sign from her in all that time. I am afraid that

No, I must assume that she is all right, lest my fears undermine my efforts to bring her back.

87.6.19 I did not create the Age of Riven; unlike my father, I have never presumed to have such power, and yet, the future of all those who live there has fallen into my hands. So far, I've managed to read the page before it turns; the island continues to appear stable, and I would like to believe that I have saved a dying world, but the theories of one individual cannot support the lives of real people indefinitely. I must get everyone off of

Riven as soon as possible.

The problem now is Cehn. I'll never be able to rescue Catherine and relocate the islanders if he is still the man he once was.

I haven't seen him in over thirty years, but his history forces me to assume that he is still a threat. His myopic mission to restore the D'ni civilization has left too many innocent cultures dying in its wake, and would continue to do so, were he to once again be free of the confines of Riven (or "The Fifth Age", as he coldly titled it).

The universe has been safe from his corruptive influence for the last 33 years, because no one has been able to leave that Age - the last Linking Book out of Riven having been lost in the Star Fissure upon my return to Myst.

That was my intention: to maroon my father on Riven by removing all the existing Links to other worlds. And since the Art of constructing Books had long been lost with the fall of the D'ni, he would be trapped there for the remainder of his lifetime, and effectively segregated from the countless other worlds that he would have invaded.

In effect, that is what we achieved - but the way it fell, however, was no one's ideal; though the sting of the incident has gradually faded from my memory, the deep pain of the responsibility for what actually came to be has never left me. At the time it all seemed so clear - Cehn's destructive path could not be allowed to continue. But it was never my choice that the innocent inhabitants of Riven, who had already suffered so much, would be the ones to pay for it.

- Enough! To dwell in the past is to die in the present.

The situation is not the same as it was then. The knowledge I've acquired in the years since that time has yet to be applied to this problem . . .

876.20 I think I have the solution. Why it did not occur to me sooner, I do not know unless the idea of it had been pushed out with the thought of my sons.

A Prison Book -

Many years ago, during a hunting expedition through the ruins of D'ni, I chanced upon a formula for a most unusual type of Book.

Unfortunately, due to the fact that my father was then in the habit of confiscating my discoveries, I was forced to leave it behind. Years later, however, as part of my efforts to protect the vulnerable worlds linked to the Books in my library, I was pleased to find that I could still recall most of the formula, and with little experimentation quickly succeeded in creating one of these devices myself.

The procedure is actually quite simple: by altering key lines of text but slightly, a normal Linking Book's connection can be partially severed, such that anyone who attempts to use

the Book will be permanently trapped in the dark void of the Link - that is, unless someone else then uses the Book, at which point that person would become trapped, and the first person displaced back into the world.

The technique can be applied to Books that have already been written, changes to the original text being so slight that anyone who is unfamiliar with the code will be unable to detect them.

If indeed my father has not changed, what better bait could there be, than a Book that appeared to be a Link back here to D'ni?

87.72 Trouble —

My nightly analysis of the island's condition has revealed that the tremors have begun again. The pattern, however, is new; the disturbances are the result of the changes I have made.

This did not (at first) concern me, however; tremors of this type were one of the possible side effects that I had anticipated during this initial phase of the island's readjustment. Still, in order to verify my assumptions, I decided to calculate again, incorporating the new data. The results were not what I expected.

The damage to the understructure

is more extensive than I'd realized; I can no longer go to Riven as planned. Catherine, forgive me.

87.73 I must act while I still have the time.

The signs are barely visible, but there's no question that the island's deterioration is accelerating. Total collapse is imminent, unless I can keep ahead, and that is becoming increasingly difficult to do.

87.75 With every passing moment, I gain a clearer picture of the incredible chaos that my father's

economy of words has yielded, but it is a dismaying process; the complexity of the problem is overwhelming.

There is no end to this.

The last few days have all but convinced me that the collapse of Riven is inevitable; and that, at best, I can only strive to delay it now, and hope that at some point the island will become stable enough to risk a rescue attempt.

87.7.7 I think I've come up with a way to subdue the tremors!

It will require my exclusive attention for at least a month or two.

so it may be necessary to discontinue these journal entries for awhile.

87.7.13 Something truly miraculous has happened - beyond all conceivable probability, someone has finally found my lost *MYST* Linking Book and has freed me from this prison!

I immediately realized that this could be the solution to my dilemma, and I believe my mysterious benefactor is willing to assist me. I'm still not sure it can work; the logistics of such a scheme are formidable, but the mere fact that it may now be possible for me to continue my repairs to Riven and get

proceed with my original intent to find Catherine has given me renewed hope.

87.7.16 The last few days have left me little time to work out the remaining problems with sending someone else to Riven. It did occur to me, however, that if a way could be found to signal me once Cehn had been captured, it would no longer be necessary to take a real Linking Book to Riven, and risk the possibility of inadvertently releasing Cehn.

The deteriorated state of the Cutaway Image makes the use of a visual signal impossible, but the picture

remains a reliable indicator of Riven's condition nonetheless: by measuring and interpreting variations in the noise patterns, I am still able to observe basic changes that occur in the Age - even though I cannot see them. The problem is that my instruments can only detect changes that occur on a fundamental level, and it seems unlikely that an individual could effect such an elementary change from within an Age. The idea may be foolish.

Still, there is a known weakness that may be worth investigating - an anomaly that appears as a rift between two separate systems: the Star Fissure.

But how - or even if - this fact could be exploited, I cannot say.

Sending someone to Riven also means that once I received the signal that they were ready to return, I would have to leave my writing in order to take a real Linking Book there myself. However, provided my father was safely out of the way, this should take very little time.

After that, assuming the island does not incur much damage in my absence, it should then be a relatively simple matter to hold it together long enough for Catherine to return to Riven and evacuate the remaining islanders.

Predetermining a signal without knowing the topography of the island may prove to be impossible, but I'm afraid there can be only one answer to the question of whether or not I should send my friend to Riven with a way out: the potential for failure will be greatly diminished if the Prison Book is all that is taken there. I'm sure my father is expecting me to bring a Linking Book to Riven - may he not be disappointed.

