



## The Dig

*Alan Dean Foster , Steven Spielberg , LucasArts Entertainment Company (Contributor)*

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When an asteroid out of nowhere threatens to hit Earth, a space shuttle is sent to nudge it into a safe orbit. Venturing to the surface, three crew members become trapped as the asteroid suddenly leaves orbit, transporting them to a strange planet light years away. To find their way home, the intrepid explorers must embark on a dangerous archaeological adventure in this tale of galactic intrigue and suspense.

## The Dig Details

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Author : Alan Dean Foster , Steven Spielberg , LucasArts Entertainment Company (Contributor)

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# From Reader Review *The Dig* for online ebook

## Devon says

Once upon a time, Steven Spielberg had an idea for a sci-fi film that was thought to be so prohibitively expensive, no studio would buy it. But Spielberg's friend George Lucas had a video game company, and so they turned his concept for "The Dig" into a point-and-click adventure game. There was, apparently, a tie-in novel - from which then came this audiobook.

While the Lucasarts game *The Dig* has a wealth of issues (including mostly terrible dialogue and some dreadfully flat voice acting), the world they built is this brilliant gem of potential. It could have been so much more. Michael Land's fantastically atmospheric score brings depth to the alien scenery, its queues perfectly pitched. The Creator is a fascinating, if short-lived, character—a glimpse at what could have been.

Finding the audiobook on YouTube, I decided to give it a listen, thinking maybe, at the least, some plot holes in the game would be explained. While there was some explanation to how some of the alien tech worked, and some nonsensical parts of the game were cut out, the book itself was less than I'd expected, even with low expectations.

The reader, John Shea, did a good job with what he was given—his reading of Boston Low was very close to the game's version. But I found the sound effects added at certain points throughout to be distracting - and they often drowned out Shea's voice, making it hard to understand the words.

The story itself is not well written, either. I'm not a fan of Alan Dean Foster's writing, and I felt a better author could have done *The Dig* better justice. He uses huge, "five-dollar" words where a simpler one would do, which I think he chose to do to make the text sound more "science fiction" but only serves to make it sound pretentious or like he's trying too hard. (Honestly, what editor would think "the denouement of intensity" was acceptable? Or circumnavigating a device rather than just walking around it?) The dialogue is boring, ultimately, and characters often become cliché-spouting cardboard cutouts, which is only a little better than Orson Scott Card's dialogue in the game, in my opinion. (Seriously, people don't *talk* that way.)

I was probably most disappointed with the conversation with the Creator. In the game, he is this unfathomable creature, who speaks in metaphor and philosophic tones even in "translation" (part of the wonder of him is due to the voice actor, too). In the book, he is merely a bored-sounding device for spouting essential plot information. The mystery and majesty of him (and, consequently, his people) is entirely lost and easily forgotten.

I cannot recommend this in lieu of the game. While the game has its issues, it still had something purely Spielberg that we catch glimpses of here and there beyond the veil of mediocrity. Do you remember that moment in the film *Jurassic Park*, when Grant and Sattler see the live dinosaurs for the first time? And you, the audience, is right there with them, marveling at the towering Brachiosaurus? That feeling of wonder? There is nothing so grand in the game, but there is the hinting of it, that you can hear in the score, and feel running deep somewhere beyond the terrible voice acting and sometimes frustrating puzzles. The book strips that wonder and potential of the game entirely, presenting a ho-hum adaptation that could have been far better, and far more compelling, than the game ever was.

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## **Mark says**

I picked this up years ago at the same time I got the computer game version. Played the game for a few weeks, read a few chapters, played some more. At one point I read ahead of where I was stuck in the game but it really didn't help me with any clues. I have to say doing both at the same time is what made the experience as good as it was. Without the game some of the book seemed a little off. But then sometimes the book went into some wonderful detail of some parts of the game storyline that was lacking. I would not recommend reading the book alone unless you are a big retro pc adventure fan.

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## **Mark Isaak says**

The premise was interesting, and the writing held my interest, but the story has plenty of flaws. Fully a third of the book was spent setting up the main plot, and the transition from setup to main story leaves some major characters hanging (literally, for a couple of them); the book never returns to them. My biggest problem with the rest of the story was that three characters stranded on an alien, sometimes hostile planet would split up so often, for pretty flimsy reasons; this made the characters, which were interesting otherwise, less believable. There is a big dose of deus-ex-machina (almost literally) at the end. The god-like possibilities were present throughout the story, so the ending did not feel like a cheat, but it was not fully satisfying all the same.

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## **BVZM says**

Sono sempre stato scettico riguardo alle novelization (questa è in assoluto la prima che leggo) e continuo a esserlo. Preferirei rigiocare a The Dig piuttosto che rileggere questo libro: non che sia \*brutto\*, ma non aggiunge niente alla bellissima esperienza che è stato - ed è tuttora, nonostante i più di vent'anni di età - il gioco. / I have always been skeptical of the entire novelization concept (this is my first one ever) and I still am. I'd rather play The Dig another time than re-read this book: it's not \*bad\*, but it doesn't add anything particularly valuable to the wonderful experience that the game has been - and still is, the 20+ years of age notwithstanding.

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## **Sam Ang says**

The full review is available at the following link:  
<http://bookunderthesun.blogspot.com/2...>

I loved the game which inspired this novel. The Dig was a popular game back when there were no fuss about GPU or any high tech computing power; it was just plain old mind teasing puzzle game. You use your brain to the best of your ability to work through the story while enjoying exploring new areas revealed in the game as a reward of solving tough puzzles. Although the game was tough and I only managed to complete it with the aid of walkthroughs, I was still superbly satisfied with the story. I was not aware that there was a novel that depicted the game, until I accidentally found this book in a used book store.

In itself, the whole story of The Dig is not unlike what archaeologists did even though this is a space adventure. Archaeologists work with ancient civilization with little or no knowledge of how the latter's world

worked, so they have to rely on guesswork and clues to understand the behavior and life of that civilization. On the other hand, archaeologists can work on mummified ancients for centuries while to the 3 protagonists, they had to work through within days to secure their survival and way home by analyzing the alien civilization's abandoned structures and technologies, with little or no clue what they were facing.

Even though I had finished the game well before I had read this novel, the novel still proved to be a fresh view of the story that is *The Dig*. The game thrived on puzzle solving, which obviously the novel could not duplicate, so it provided its own narrative and explored some other elements that is not within the game, such as creating the Cocytans' thoughts and points of view to invoke an air of mystery on what really happened to the Cocytans.

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### **Ryan says**

The book is based on a LucasArts game that was, in turn, based on a Stephen Spielberg concept. When I heard about the game as a kid, it was pitched to me as a game that was made because they didn't find enough interest in making it into a movie.

In short, an asteroid appears out of nowhere that's going to enter a decaying orbit around earth. Humanity launches a mission to use nukes to stabilize the orbit. In the process, they discover the asteroid is or has artificial components.

So I recommend the book if you've been meaning to play the game but didn't. That's how I suggested I read the book, when I downloaded the Steam version of the game...

But if you've never heard of the game before, the book's probably not for you.

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### **Nick Vossen says**

Prior to reading "The Dig" I hadn't ever done two things. I had never read a book by Alan Dean Foster before and I had never read a book derived from other media. Of course I have read books BASED on movies, videogames and the like, but stories that exist in other media first and are subsequently novelized were new to me.

Having said that, Alan Dean Foster is an enjoyable writer who did pretty well with the novelization of one of my all time favorite point & click adventure games. Though I noticed it was hard to convert the grandeur of Lucasarts' classic into words, I certainly enjoyed it for what it was.

However, something that actually annoyed me to no end was the fact that on more than one occasion the author seemed to have trouble keeping up with the continuity of the story. I can't go much further without spoiling, but let's just say that at certain moments dialogue seems to have been severely cut to the point that conversations between the protagonists seem stale, alien (haha) or simply nonsensical. Another example was that I had to read a few pages back and forth a couple of times to double and triple check if the author did indeed mix up some of the locations in the book (he did).

Safe for the cut-up dialogue, the book does in fact do the game justice, but it is just way too short and sometimes just plain sloppy (was there a pressured deadline for this thing, I wonder?). I would always recommend the Point and Click masterpiece above this novelization.

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## **Nathan Erickson says**

A classic work of exploration and first contact. I first read it as a 10yr old kid and it was the best ever. Now I see its limitations and would like more but still quite enjoyed it. It was a great introduction to the genre and lead to a great many more such works for a young boy.

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## **Kimberley doruyter says**

save yourself the time and just watch deep impact or armagedon

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## **Daniel says**

Za po?etak ?isto da ka?em da sam veliki fan ove igre tako da sam se baš radovao ponovnom vra?anju ovom univerzumu. I BAM koji šamar... Jasno je meni da knjiga ipak mora malo da se razlikuje pošto je skroz drugi medij ali ovo...

Sama knjiga bi mogla pre da se nazove inspirisana igrom pošto je promet ton, atmosfera a i sami likovi se skroz druga?ije ponašaju. U osnovi pri?a je ista ali nedostaje magija, misterija i sve ostalo što je igru ?inilo interesantnom.

Ako ?itate knjigu bez poznavanja igre možda budete imali druga?ije mišljenje ali meni je o?ajna.

P.S. ?isto da bih proverio da li su mi se?anja poogrešna otiša i lepo skino igru sa GOG-a i jedva sam se skino sa nje u 2 ujutro. Tako da knjiga je loša.

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## **J says**

This book was written around the concept of the PC game of the same name. Interestingly, the author was quite eloquent and articulate and had very little trouble disguising his plugs from the game in a shroud of well written descriptions and dialogue. This did much to carry this novel to its own very solid presentation and delivery.

The story centers around a trio of individuals who find themselves transported to an abandoned alien civilization. They wander and search for a way back home in the ruins of a civilization so far beyond them that figuring out how to open doors is in itself a massive endeavor.

Each of the characters grows and develops on their own although the main protagonist displays the only truly focused perspective. Some of the character decisions and actions do feel a little contrived at times, and there are a few emotional developments that feel a little rushed. The overall story is clean of stretchy foolishness as the author didn't seem to stretch his own imagination to involve the video game origin, but instead embraced the story as his own and wrote it as such.

Some disappointing resolutions towards the end will do a little to pull down the overall effect and could leave a reader feeling frustrated. Otherwise, this piece was well written and an interesting experience.

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### **Brent Winslow says**

Interesting, but ultimately flawed, novel based on a movie idea from Spielberg and Lucas that was considered to expensive to film. Eventually made into a 1990s Lucasarts PC game with separate but accompanying novelization.

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### **R.W. Warwick says**

this was my first Alan Dean Foster read, and it was kind of a slow starter for me, but once it got going I really enjoyed it. I'm glad I stuck with it, the premise isn't that unusual: three astronauts are sent to an asteroid which is set to collide with earth, but as soon as they arrive, they discover that it might not be there by accident. The story really opens up after their arrival on the asteroid, and the characters really come into their own.

The story had plenty of unexpected twists and plot devices, but I found the ending missing something. I won't say any more, but I recommend giving this one a read if you're a science fiction fan.

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### **Katia M. Davis says**

I've never played the video game from 1995 associated with this book, but it sounds like fun. I might see if I can get a retro copy somewhere. I only read the book because it was Alan Dean Foster. It was a relatively fast read, descriptive action, to the point. On a mission to prevent an asteroid hitting earth, the adventurers are whisked away to a strange land where they must not only find a way home, but survive the attempt. They meet various problems along the way. Rather standard, but not bad for a few hours escapism if you like adventure stories.

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### **Sparrow Knight says**

Truly, truly awful. Even the worst of the various DnD spin-offs are better than this. Now I know why I found it in the recycle bin.

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