The Library Ceiling Shortcut

How one glance sends Myst's tree lift to the top

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Abstract

I uncovered a shortcut in the original Macintosh *Myst*. By adjusting the boiler, the player can set the tree lift to rise one step every 28 seconds. Walking into the library and clicking up on the ceiling then sends the lift straight to the top, skipping its remaining steps.

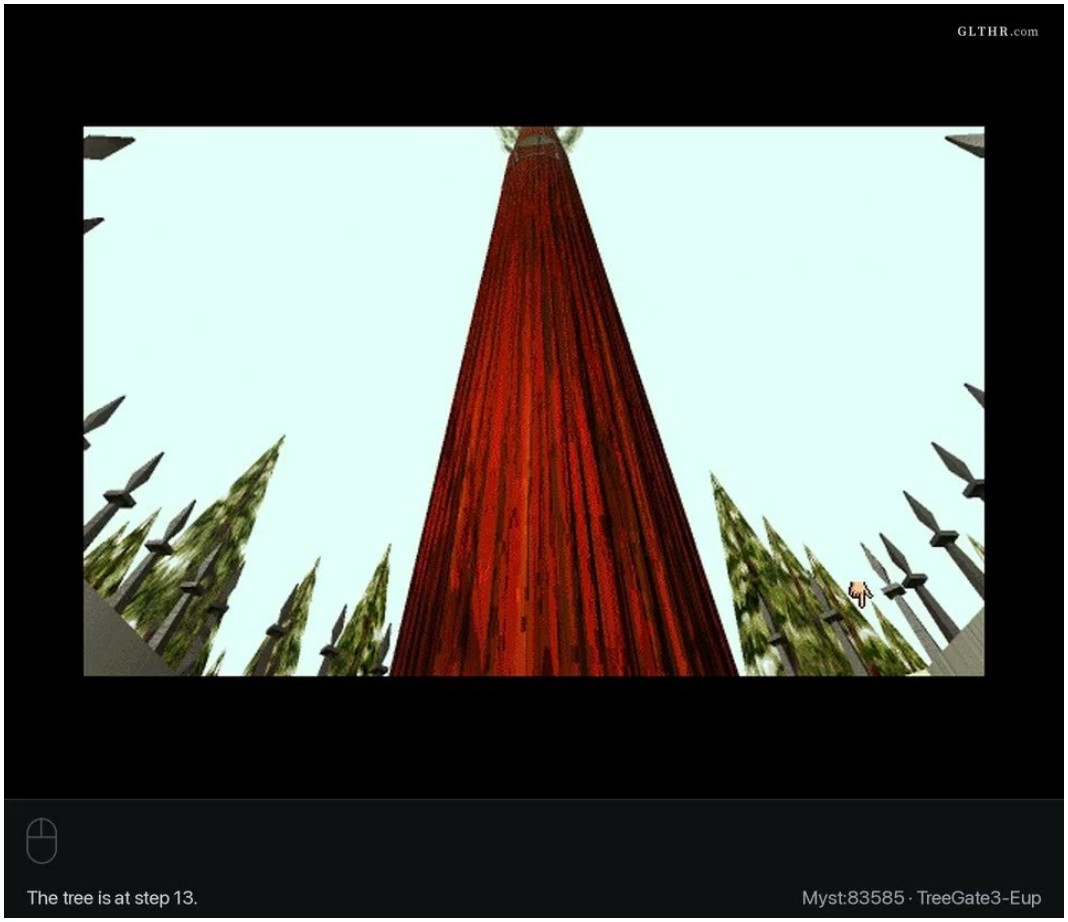
To my knowledge, this shortcut is a new finding. The boiler in the log cabin controls the lift inside the hollow tree outside. Light the pilot light, set the tree climbing slowly, and walk away; then enter the library, face the bookshelf and click up, and the lift jumps straight to the top.

Version of the game: Myst, original Macintosh CD-ROM release (1993). The card IDs are those of its six HyperCard stacks, all dated July 1993.

Nine Steps in One Click

To see the difference, light the pilot light and close the valve until the tree settles at the bottom. Turn the wheel 13 notches from fully closed, counting the notches as it turns. In the video, 13 presses each move the wheel one notch. At that setting, the lift climbs one step every 28 seconds. Walk outside, face the trunk and click near the top of the view. At step 2, the crown is visible against the sky.

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https://glthr.com/myst-library-ceiling-shortcut
Interactive figures, animations and videos of the web page are shown here as still images or addresses.



Video: https://media.glthr.com/myst-library-ceiling-tree-lift/myst1-tree-comparison-960.mp4

In the video, by the time I reach the bookshelf, the lift is at step 4. One click up opens the ceiling card, whose script immediately sets the lift to step 13. Walking back outside and looking up the trunk again shows the crown already above the frame. At the boiler's pace, the nine remaining steps would take about four minutes.

Why the Ceiling?

Each view in the original game is a HyperCard card. When the ceiling card, Myst:44018, opens, its script checks the cabin valve's setting. Above 12, it sends the lift to step 13, the top. Below 12, it sends the lift to step 1, the bottom. At exactly 12, it leaves the lift where it is (the same neutral setting behind a trap inside this elevator). The video demonstrates the upward jump.

The ceiling is also the first view the player sees when linking home from another Age. The tree moves while the player is on Myst Island, so resetting its position on arrival would let it catch up after a journey. That may explain why the code is there. Looking up from the bookshelf opens the same card, and the ceiling never checks whether you actually went anywhere. The return paths meet at this card in the graph of the original Myst.

Conclusion

The ceiling's catch-up script was meant for players returning from another Age, but Myst Island's own library opens the exact same card. Setting the valve above 12 and glancing upward skips the wait altogether.

How to cite this article

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Your questions and leads are welcome: myst@glthr.com

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