

AFTERIMAGE



IMAGE COURTESY GOODBYEWORLD / SKYBOUND

TEN GAMES. *ONE NIGHT EACH.*

Brief, beginner-friendly stories worth finishing.

A ranked field guide for first-time and occasional players.

30 MINUTES-3 HOURS / PC / SPOILER-LIGHT

Ten complete stories for people who rarely play games

Big games ask for a calendar. These ten ask for an evening. We looked for complete stories, forgiving controls and a first ending under three hours. Each has modest graphics requirements; an RTX 3050-class laptop has ample headroom. Camera demands and content cautions are called out, alongside the simplest way to play. Start at No. 1, or choose by mood.



A diary page dated December 3, 1993. In *If Found...*, memory is something the player must touch—and erase. IMAGE COURTESY DREAMFEEL / ANNAPURNA INTERACTIVE

HOW THIS LIST WAS MADE

Ranked for novice finishability, immersion and emotional afterlife. Times are conservative first-play estimates; every selection has a complete Windows version and an ending reachable in one sitting.

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|----|-----------------------------|----------------|---|
| 01 | Before Your Eyes | 1½–2 HOURS | 3 |
| 02 | What Remains of Edith Finch | 2–3 HOURS | 4 |
| 03 | and Roger | 1–1½ HOURS | 4 |
| 04 | Venba | 1–1½ HOURS | 5 |
| 05 | If Found... | 2–3 HOURS | 5 |
| 06 | Wide Ocean Big Jacket | 1–1½ HOURS | 6 |
| 07 | Journey | 2–3 HOURS | 6 |
| 08 | The Beginner's Guide | ABOUT 1½ HOURS | 7 |
| 09 | Florence | 30–45 MINUTES | 7 |
| 10 | despelote | 1½–2½ HOURS | 8 |



01 / BEFORE YOUR EYES / 1½–2 HOURS / WEBCAM OR MOUSE

The life between blinks

*Your eyelids control the edit.
The story moves on before you
are ready.*

Blink and the scene changes. *Before Your Eyes* reads your face through a webcam, sending each memory forward whenever your eyes close. A piano lesson, a family dinner or a quiet afternoon may vanish before you are ready.

You begin to resist the most ordinary reflex, holding your gaze when a moment feels unfinished. There is no camera to steer and no way to fail. The difficulty is simpler: keeping your eyes open when a moment begins to matter.



A piano lesson becomes one stop in a chain of remembered scenes.

IMAGE COURTESY GOODBYEWORLD / SKYBOUND

PLAY. Use headphones, soft front lighting and a webcam. If tracking misbehaves, switch to the complete mouse-only mode.

CONTENT. Illness, death and grief. [Review](#)

A house full of endings



Locked bedrooms, family photographs and improvised passages fill the Finch house.

IMAGE COURTESY GIANT SPARROW / ANNAPURNA INTERACTIVE

The Finch house looks as if each generation built another secret onto it. Edith returns after years away, opening sealed bedrooms and the stories left inside. One memory becomes a comic book; another divides attention between factory work and fantasy. Each shift in control belongs to the person being remembered. New players may need a few minutes to coordinate walking and looking, but there is no combat and little chance of getting stuck. By the end, the family's versions of these deaths matter as much as the deaths themselves.

PLAY. Learn walking and camera movement separately; motion sickness is possible.

CONTENT. Deaths of children and an infant, plus suicide themes. [Review](#)

03 / AND ROGER / 1-1½ HOURS / MOUSE

A morning routine slips out of register

Click the toothpaste. Stir the pot. Choose a reply. In *and Roger*, everyday motions arrive without reliable context, so the player shares the protagonist's uncertainty. TearyHand's clean drawings leave every misplaced object or unfamiliar face exposed. The game lasts scarcely an hour, yet routine gestures accumulate into a precise account of uncertainty, perception and care. Further description would spoil the turn.

GO IN BLIND. One rapid-click sequence may test slow hands. **CONTENT:** disorientation, distress and grief. [Review](#)



IMAGE COURTESY TEARYHAND / KODANSHA



A portrait and a cooking puzzle: family history survives in faces, music and damaged recipes.

IMAGES COURTESY VISAI GAMES

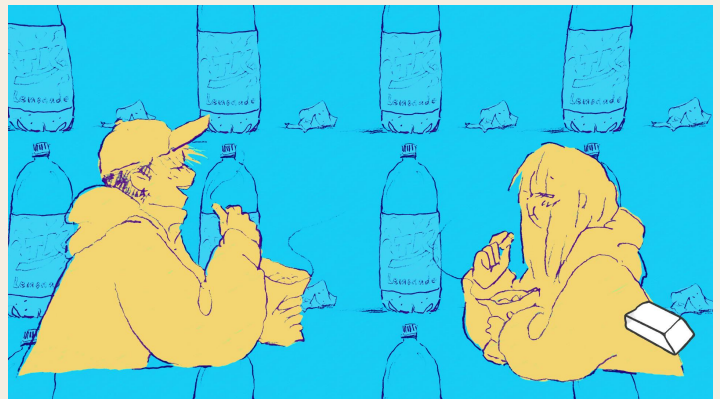
04 / VENBA / 1-1½ HOURS / MOUSE OR CONTROLLER

What survives in the kitchen

A Tamil family rebuilds its recipes—and the history stored inside them.

Venba's cookbook has survived migration badly: pages are stained, torn and missing instructions. Players rebuild the recipes by placing ingredients, folding cloth and listening for the cooker's whistle. Each recovered dish links Venba and Paavalan's life in Canada to language, music and a home their son knows secondhand. Decades pass quickly, yet that compression fits a family trying to carry culture across years and distance. Hints are always available, so the cooking never becomes a roadblock.

PLAY. Keep the sound on and use recipe hints freely.
CONTENT. Racism, assimilation pressure, family distance and grief. [Interview](#)



Old friends offer Kasio shelter on Achill Island.

IMAGE COURTESY DREAMFEEL / ANNAPURNA INTERACTIVE

05 / IF FOUND... / 2-3 HOURS / MOUSE OR TRACKPAD

This diary can only be read by erasing it

Drag an eraser across Kasio's diary and the drawings disappear beneath the cursor. Clearing each page advances the story, making progress feel tender, destructive and occasionally exhausting.

The journal follows a young trans woman returning to Achill Island in 1993. There are no wrong answers or reflex tests—only reading and the repeated act of letting the page go.

CONTENT. Transphobia, misgendering, depression, rejection and housing insecurity. [Essay](#)



06 / WIDE OCEAN BIG JACKET / 1-1½ HOURS

One night at the campsite

Four campers spend an ordinary evening talking, listening and occasionally getting it wrong.

Four people arrive with a red car, half-unpacked gear and different ideas of what a camping trip should be.

IMAGE COURTESY TURNFOLLOW / TENDER CLAWS

Mord, a teenager camping with her boyfriend and an older couple, has questions the adults would rather answer carefully. The trip becomes a string of small scenes: setting up tents, spotting birds and sitting beside the fire.

Walking takes only a few steps and most interactions use one button. The writing is funny and alert to the pauses between people at different stages of life. Nothing dramatic happens; everyone becomes a little less guarded.

PLAY. Controller or keyboard; there is no fail state.

CONTENT. Frank conversations involving teenagers about sex and menstruation. [Review](#)

07 / JOURNEY / 2-3 HOURS / CONTROLLER RECOMMENDED

A stranger, walking beside you

A robed traveler starts across the sand with one musical call. An anonymous companion may appear: no name, no voice, no instructions. Cooperation grows from waiting and choosing to stay close. The pilgrimage remains complete alone. [Review](#)



The traveler becomes a small mark in a vast route toward the mountain. IMAGE COURTESY THATGAMECOMPANY / ANNAPURNA INTERACTIVE

A room left by someone else



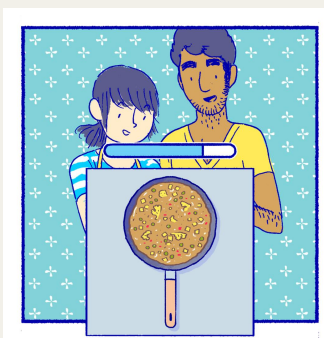
A narrated walk through unfinished games becomes an argument about art, ownership and the urge to “fix” another person.

The Beginner's Guide

A private prototype, presented as evidence. The empty field is part of the argument.

IMAGE COURTESY EVERYTHING UNLIMITED

It begins like a studio visit: Davey Wreden opens private prototypes and tells you what they mean. Slowly, his certainty becomes the real subject. The levels stay rough and strange; the interpretation around them grows increasingly uncomfortable. For anyone who makes, reviews or overreads art, this is the list's sharpest provocation. Expect first-person movement and a deliberately passive role. [Review](#)



09 / FLORENCE / 30-45 MINUTES / MOUSE

Love, in small motions

Music interrupts routine; intimacy settles into ordinary acts. IMAGES COURTESY MOUNTAINS / ANNAPURNA INTERACTIVE

Conversation first appears as a jigsaw puzzle. Florence fits speech bubbles together, brushes her teeth and unpacks boxes through tiny mouse interactions. As intimacy grows, the puzzles shed pieces; later, conflict changes the same gestures. Failure is impossible. In less than an hour, it traces attraction, domestic life, separation and the ambition Florence had set aside. [Interview](#)



Quito, 2001—football spills out of the World Cup and into school, family and the street.

IMAGE COURTESY JULIÁN CORDERO & SEBASTIAN VALBUENA / PANIC

10 / DESPELOTE / 1½–2½ HOURS / CONTROLLER

A World Cup, seen from the pavement

Football is only the language. The subject is how a city remembers itself.

Quito, 2001. Ecuador is approaching its first World Cup qualification, and the anticipation leaks into classrooms, kitchens, playgrounds and overheard adult conversations. *despelote* is not a sports simulation: it is interactive memory, alive with grain, noise, interruption and the loose physics of a child kicking whatever happens to be nearby. Poor shots never block the ending. Expect a first-person camera, intentionally loose kicking and Spanish dialogue that may overlap the English subtitles. The result feels less like a match than a family album you can walk through. [Review](#)

WHERE TO START TONIGHT

Gentle: *Florence* (30–45m) · Cathartic: *Before Your Eyes* (1½–2h) · Wordless: *Journey* (2–3h)

METHOD / Ranked for complete first endings under four hours, novice finishability, immersion and emotional afterlife. Times are conservative.

ART / Official publisher screenshots. Game titles and editorial sources are active links.