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# The Secret Of The Dark Forest: Way Of The Shaman Series, Book 3



## Synopsis

The virtual world of Barliona is a place of rest and entertainment - but not for everyone. It has become a survival arena for Daniel Mahan after he was sentenced to eight years in its virtual jail. Mahan has been through it all: the back-breaking work in the mines, betrayal by other prisoners, and finally, the retrial which has released him into Barliona's common world. What more could one want? Mahan could have kept a low profile and enjoyed relative freedom while serving the rest of his time. But being a Shaman, he can't help himself. Soon he's a clan leader, taking 50 of the continent's top players to claim the secrets of the Dark Forest.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I've read a whole lot of LitRPG since I stumbled across *Alterworld* as a limited time deal for .99. After *Alterworld* took a turn for the crazy train, (not gonna list my reasons here, as this isn't about *Alterworld*). I had given up on this genre for awhile. Then I saw *Way of the Shaman* cropping up over and over in my recommended. After two weeks of this, I picked up the book and settled in to be disappointed. I was far from disappointed. We weren't treated to the whole. "People live forever in game their bodies die!" That fills most of these books. We were given a rather unique perspective. Prisoners put to work in game. Living their lives if they manage parole, in a fantasy world. Great premise I thought. Figured we'd fall apart eventually. Mahanenko made the Prison term spent at the mine, entertaining. We had loot, We had professions, classes and even mobs. Then toward the end, we even got treated to dungeon run. With the loot included. At the end of the first book, Mahan is freed on in game parole, we get treated to one of the greatest aspects of MMOs. Game wide

events. We get treated to all the staples of the game. Loot. Mobs. Quests. Professions. Leveling. Skills. Stats. And a story that DOESN'T completely and utterly fall apart, (Like Alterworld's started to.). Mahan's in game activities, promote him along, he's not a total noob, but he's not god. He's lucky, and he knows to follow and expand on that luck. For the third book, I honestly expected a fail. I could not have BEEN MORE WRONG. There is nothing fail about this book. We pick up where book two ends. Our new Emp and Dark Lord are chosen. Mahan finally meets up with his crew from the first book, and arranges what any gamer can tell you is fun as heck. Raiding deep into the uncharted. Here we see the darker, grittier side of games that players love. The Guild on Guild warfare. Silent poaching of members. Back stabbing members themselves. Guilds using guilds and flat out telling them they're basically good for one use before getting tossed to the trash. We're treated to a delicious smack of Karma for all the ones that refused to listen to Mahan. And even better, we got to see the rewards those that stood by him received. I cannot stress enough. I absolutely, utterly, cannot wait, for the fourth book to come out.

Generally a very good book, perhaps the best of the series to this point. There were a few errors in grammar and translation, but nothing that would prevent a reader from enjoying the story. This is a story about "Mahan" starting a clan with several of his criminal/miner companions and others. It's also a story of quests -- quests that evolve, often at cross-purposes. It's also a story of players, NPC's, developers, and corporate/real life, and how the author weaves them all into the storyline while keeping each distinct. This is also a story of developer scenarios, and how "Mahan" seems to be the pivot point in many of the scenarios on his continent. In fact, Mahan's decisions often form the context of scenario solutions. The story is RPG in nature, but is more a story of evolution and conflict while developers are forcing updates and new scenarios. Specifics like "leveling", while important, are not the book's focus. Transitions were a bit abrupt and not explained as well as they could have been, giving a feel of a "rush to conclusion" -- foreshadowing was a bit too "hidden" in a few cases. All in all, a good book and one of the better RPG series -- recommended...

I think this is the best of the series thus far. Here and there I noticed a few typographical errors or sentence structure issues but none of these stopped me from reading the story. To me the main character (Mahan) undergoes a significant amount of development and it seems that he has embraced his predicament (prison) with both hands as it were. There is also quite a bit of fleshing out of the side characters as well, though I feel like the prison inmates/friends Mahan has could have used a bit more time to understand where they are coming from and what they want out of all

of this. I will not go into spoilers but I felt like there were several plot twists and the some of them I did not see coming. Comparing this to D. Rus' work, I feel like Mahanenko has stayed true to his characters and the storyline is not as rushed. The world seems to become a bit more diverse and realistic in this book. I am definitely looking forward to the next book, the ending of this one seems to set up so many different events that I cannot see how the author will be able to squeeze it all in. All in all, worth the cost of the book in my opinion.

If you enjoyed books 1 and 2 of this series, then you are going to continue to enjoy book 3. Secret of the Dark Forest is a straight continuation of the storyline from the moment that book 2 drops off. There's no attempt to catch readers up on the events of the previous books so I had a bit of trouble jumping back into the plot. I ended up "having" to re-read the entire series from the beginning. (Oh noes!) The author isn't the best English speaker so it takes a couple of chapters to get used to his writing style. But for veterans of the first two books, this is still the same fun ride we've come to enjoy. Our lovable shaman journeys forward into new adventures and mysteries. An attempt is made to address the issue of a low level 'pipsqueak' leading high level clans... with mixed success. However, one of the things I appreciate about Vasily Mahanenko as a litRPG author is that he continues to make the challenges which Mahan must face feel legitimate to the reader without making them feel as if Mahan is being unfairly piled upon. The series as a whole has some weaknesses... but I'll happily buy book 4 when it comes out.

Writing is terrific. World building in new and unexpected ways., I couldn't put this down once I started it. The Russian bias is there but very tempered down. The fighting spirit of the main character and his combination of competency and humility make for a multi dimensional characters. His support characters are underdeveloped except for his love interest. All in all. One of the top LitRPG writers

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