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Death by Video Game: Danger, Pleasure, and Obsession on the Virtual Frontline

Simon Parkin

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"The finest book on video games yet. Simon Parkin thinks like a critic, conjures like a novelist, and writes like an artist at the height of his powers—which, in fact, he is." —Tom Bissell, author of *Extra Lives: Why Video Games Matter*

On January 31, 2012, a twenty-three-year-old student was found dead at his keyboard in an internet café while the video game he had been playing for three days straight continued to flash on the screen in front of his him.

There have been numerous such deaths, Simon Parkin found out when he tried to reconstruct what had happened that night.

And so begins a journey that takes Parkin around the world in search of answers: What is it about video games that inspires such tremendous acts of endurance and obsession? Why do we so thoroughly lose our sense of time and reality within this medium? How in the world can people play them . . . *to death?*

In *Death by Video Game*, Parkin examines the medical evidence and talks to the experts to determine what may be happening, and introduces us to the players and game developers at the frontline of virtual extremism: the New York surgeon attempting to break the *Donkey Kong* world record . . . the *Minecraft* player three years into an epic journey toward the edge of the game's vast virtual world . . . the German hacker who risked prison to discover the secrets behind *Half-Life 2* . . .

Riveting and wildly entertaining, *Death by Video Game* will change the way we think about our virtual playgrounds as it investigates what it is about them that often proves compelling, comforting, and irresistible to the human mind—except for when it’s not.

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