

# BLACKMARL DEEP

PLAYER MANUAL · VERSION 1.0.0 · TRONSOFT GAMES

The Blackmarl company sank an adit above Marrow Creek, worked it for one winter, and walked away without ever surveying it out. Seven caches are still logged as underground in the creek warden's ledger. You have a carbide lamp, a canvas satchel, a bolt key, and the rest of the afternoon. This manual tells you how to bring all seven up.

| Item        | Detail                                           |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Game        | Blackmarl Deep                                   |
| Version     | 1.0.0                                            |
| Publisher   | Tronsoft Games                                   |
| Engine      | Tronsoft Interactive Fiction Engine (TIFE) 1.2.3 |
| Players     | One                                              |
| Play length | 30–60 minutes for a first playthrough            |
| Scoring     | 100 points maximum                               |
| Platform    | HTML5, desktop browser                           |
| Portal      | Tronsoft Games Portal v6.12 or later             |

## CONTENTS

| § | Section             |
|---|---------------------|
| 1 | Getting started     |
| 2 | How to play         |
| 3 | Command reference   |
| 4 | The screen          |
| 5 | The workings        |
| 6 | The five gates      |
| 7 | Scoring and winning |

|    |                           |
|----|---------------------------|
| 8  | Saving and transcripts    |
| 9  | Hints and troubleshooting |
| 10 | Credits and licence       |

## 1 GETTING STARTED

Launch Blackmarl Deep from the Tronsoft Games library. It runs entirely in your browser: nothing to install, no account, and no connection needed once the page has loaded.

You begin at the Creek Landing carrying nothing. The warden is standing right there, and the expedition kit is on the pegs in her cabin.

### Your first six commands

```
TALK TO WARDEN
NORTH
TAKE LAMP
TAKE KEY
TAKE SATCHEL
TAKE BELL
```

Every one of those four items is needed. The key opens the hatch, the lamp lights the workings, the satchel hoods the lamp at the roost, and the bell rings the hoist cage when your pack is full. Type `INVENTORY` to check what you carry.

## 2 HOW TO PLAY

Blackmarl Deep is a parser adventure. The game describes where you are, you type what you want to do, and the game tells you what happens.

```
> USE LAMP
You charge the lamp, crack the water valve, and strike the flint. The reflector throws a
hard white cone down the crosscut.
```

The parser accepts common synonyms (`GET` for `TAKE`, `X` for `EXAMINE`), single-letter directions, and ignores articles. When it does not understand, it says so and costs you nothing.

### Typing is optional

Beneath the story sit the context-action bands — Movement, Objects, Characters, Inventory. They are rebuilt from the world after every turn and show complete commands (“Go North”, “Open tool chest”, “Use carbide lamp”), so the sensible moves are always in front of you. A band with nothing to offer hides itself. The game can be finished without typing a word.

### Time and danger

Neither exists. Nothing acts on a timer, the lamp never runs down, and you cannot be hurt, trapped, or killed. No action can put the game beyond winning.

## 3 COMMAND REFERENCE

### Movement and handling

| Command               | Short   | Effect                                  |
|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------------------------|
| NORTH SOUTH EAST WEST | N S E W | Move in that direction.                 |
| UP DOWN               | U D     | Climb or descend.                       |
| LOOK                  | L       | Describe the room, contents, and exits. |
| EXAMINE <thing>       | X       | Look closely at one thing.              |
| TAKE <thing>          | GET     | Pick something up.                      |
| DROP <thing>          | —       | Put something down.                     |
| INVENTORY             | I       | List what you are carrying.             |
| USE <thing>           | —       | Use, strike, work, or operate a thing.  |
| OPEN <thing>          | —       | Open a container.                       |
| TALK TO <someone>     | —       | Speak to a character.                   |

### Records, help, and session

| Command                              | Effect                                         |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| SCORE                                | Current score, maximum, and move count.        |
| QUESTS                               | Your four objectives and their progress.       |
| JOURNAL                              | Narrative entries recorded as you play.        |
| ACHIEVEMENTS                         | Which of the four awards you have unlocked.    |
| STATS                                | Turns, items taken, rooms visited, hints used. |
| TRANSCRIPT                           | Full session log; downloadable as text.        |
| HINT                                 | A hint for your current situation.             |
| SAVE <name> / RESTORE <name> / SAVED | Save slots and the Save Manager.               |
| RESTART                              | Begin again. Saved slots are untouched.        |
| HELP / ABOUT                         | Command summary; title, version, engine.       |

The Up and Down arrow keys recall commands you have already typed.

## 4 THE SCREEN

Blackmarl Deep uses the standard TIFE screen. The story reads first; everything else arranges itself around it.

| Region                  | Shows                                           |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Status bar              | Title, current location, turn count, clock.     |
| Location / Exits (left) | Where you are and every way out.                |
| Story (centre)          | The narrative, ending with “What will you do?”  |
| Player (right)          | Score, Caches recovered, and Explored meters.   |
| Inventory (right)       | What you carry; click an item to examine it.    |
| Context actions         | Movement, Objects, Characters, Inventory bands. |
| Quick row               | Map, Journal, Inventory, Save, Settings.        |

The Journal dialog carries Journal, Quests, Achievements, Stats, Talk Log, and Transcript as tabs. Settings holds the green or amber phosphor theme, text size, speech narration, Help, About, and Restart.

### Accessibility

Fully keyboard operable with visible focus indicators. Text size is adjustable, the layout honours reduced-motion preferences, and optional speech narration reads the story aloud using the browser's own Web Speech API — command echoes are never spoken, and pending speech is cancelled the moment you issue a new command. Below 1000 pixels the sidebars yield and the bands scroll horizontally, with the story still first.

## 5 THE WORKINGS

Seventeen rooms in three regions. This map is safe to read — finding the rooms was never the hard part.

### SURFACE

```

WARDEN'S CABIN -- CREEK LANDING -- BLACK PINES
      | down              | south
      SPILLWAY -----+
      | south
      SEALED ADIT      needs BOLT KEY
      | down
      TIMBERED STOPE
      | west          needs LIT LAMP
      THE CROSSCUT
      | west
      TOOL CRIB      (tool chest -> timber prop)
      | west
      HEAD OF THE WINZE
      | down

```

### LOWER LEVEL

```

WARREN ----- SUMP HALL      (sluice valve)
(strongbox)    | north      needs DRAINED SUMP
              MAIN DRIFT
              | north
              THE ROOST      needs HOODED LAMP
              | north
              CATHEDRAL VOID  needs TIMBER PROP
              | north
              OLD ASSAY STATION

```

USE BELL rings the hoist cage: anywhere below --> WARDEN'S CABIN

The warren is three worked-out stopes that look identical. It is short and it is not random: from the Sump Hall go WEST, NORTH, WEST for the strongbox, then EAST, SOUTH, EAST to come back out.

## 6 THE FIVE GATES

Each gate has one solution, and none of them can be failed permanently. Solutions follow in full; skip to section 7 if you would rather work them out yourself.

### The padlocked hatch

The adit is closed with a bolted steel hatch. **Solution:** take the bolt key from the cabin. Carrying it is enough.

### The dark crosscut

West of the stope the timbering ends and the dark begins. A lamp you are merely carrying lights nothing.

**Solution:** USE LAMP to strike it.

### The flooded sump

The lower level stands in black water and the drift north is flooded to the roof. **Solution:** USE VALVE in the Sump Hall. The valve stem cannot be found in the dark, so strike the lamp first. Draining also uncovers the first cache.

### The roost

A bat colony hangs in the fissure and drives you back whenever you carry open flame north. **Solution:** USE SATCHEL at the roost to hood the lamp — dimmed, not extinguished.

### The sagging back

In the Cathedral Void the back sags over the northern passage, held by nothing. **Solution:** OPEN CHEST in the Tool Crib, take the timber prop, and USE PROP in the void. Shoring it also splits open a seam of raw opal.

**The hoist bell.** USE BELL anywhere below ground rings the cage and lands you at the cabin door. It saves a long walk once you are carrying all seven caches.

## 7 SCORING AND WINNING

| Award                                             | Points       |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Each cache, when first picked up (seven in total) | 10 each — 70 |
| Entering the complete set on the tally board      | 30           |
| Maximum score                                     | 100          |

### The seven caches

| Cache                   | Where it lies     | Requires             |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Lead sample tube        | Sump Hall         | Draining the sump    |
| Iron strongbox          | Warren (W, N, W)  | —                    |
| Silver pocket watch     | Main Drift        | Drained sump         |
| Foreman's medallion     | The Roost         | Drained sump         |
| Seam of raw opal        | Cathedral Void    | Shoring the back     |
| Brass theodolite        | Old Assay Station | Hooded lamp and prop |
| Bundle of company scrip | Old Assay Station | Hooded lamp and prop |

To win, carry all seven caches to the warden's cabin and type `USE TALLY`. With the full set in hand this awards the final 30 points, prints the closing text, and ends the game at 100 out of 100.

You may enter caches in batches — using the tally with a partial set tells you how many remain logged underground — but the game is only won when all seven are in hand together. Carrying capacity is unlimited, so one trip is simplest. There are no losing conditions.

## 8 SAVING AND TRANSCRIPTS

Save with `SAVE` `marrow`, reload with `RESTORE` `marrow`, or open the Save Manager with `SAVES` to review, restore, or delete slots. A save records your position, room state, inventory, score, flags, journal, quests, achievements, statistics, conversation log, and transcript.

Saves live in this browser on this device. Clearing browsing data removes them. Nothing is uploaded, no account is required, and no personal information is collected.

`TRANSCRIPT` opens the full session log and offers it as a text file — useful for mapping, for writing up a run, or for reporting a problem.

## 9 HINTS AND TROUBLESHOOTING

Type `HINT` at any time. The system reads your situation and answers in three stages: a nudge, a firmer steer, then the explicit answer. Hints never lock anything out; they are recorded in your statistics only, and



reset on RESTART.

| Problem                             | What to do                                                |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| The hatch will not open.            | Fetch the bolt key from the cabin.                        |
| “Without a burning lamp.”           | USE LAMP. Carrying it is not lighting it.                 |
| The drift north is flooded.         | USE VALVE in the Sump Hall.                               |
| You cannot find the valve.          | Strike the lamp first; the stem is invisible in the dark. |
| The bats drive you back.            | USE SACHEL at the roost to hood the lamp.                 |
| The back is sagging.                | OPEN CHEST, take the prop, USE PROP in the void.          |
| The tally will not finish the game. | All seven caches must be carried at once.                 |
| You are lost.                       | Open Map from the quick row; your room is bracketed.      |
| Your saves have vanished.           | Browsing data was cleared; saves are per browser.         |

If the game will not launch, refresh the page. Persistent problems should be reported through <https://tronsoft.net>; attaching a downloaded transcript speeds up diagnosis.

## 10 CREDITS AND LICENCE

Blackmarl Deep was designed, written, and programmed by Tronsoft Games and runs on the Tronsoft Interactive Fiction Engine 1.2.3, which ships here unmodified. Artwork was generated programmatically for this package; the screenshots are captures of actual gameplay. The package contains no third-party libraries and loads no remote resources.

Blackmarl Deep is an original work. Its rooms, prose, puzzles, names, map, and data were written for this release, and it reproduces no name, text, map, puzzle, or data from any earlier commercial or historical adventure. The validation harness asserts this on every build, alongside a complete winning walkthrough at maximum score.

Portions of this package were produced with AI assistance under the direction and review of Tronsoft Games. Full attribution is given in docs/credits.txt.

Copyright © 2026 Tronsoft Games. All rights reserved. “Tronsoft”, “Tronsoft Games”, and “TIFE” are trademarks of Tronsoft Games. See LICENSE.txt for the full licence, including redistribution, modification, source-code, and commercial-use terms.