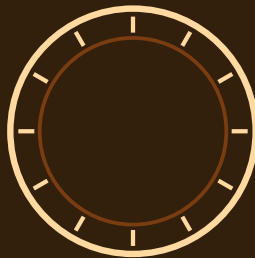
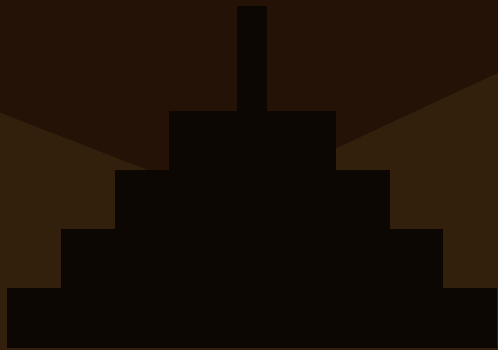


T R O N S O F T G A M E S

THE EMBER SIGIL

A PULP ARCHAEOLOGY ADVENTURE



EXPEDITION MANUAL • v1.0.1 • TIFE CORE 2.3.0

I · THE BRIEFING

London, March 1936. The Consortium – a syndicate with more money than provenance – has spent two years buying every survey of the Kharidian erg ever filed, and its best field man, Dr. Viktor Renn, has stopped publishing. The object of all this quiet spending is the **Ember Sigil**: a sealed disc of gold and iron kept in the Undervault of Qai-Sharat, the buried city of the sun-priests. The old texts call it a seal on the fire of heaven. The War Department, less poetically, calls it a weapon.

You are **Dr. Cass Marlowe** of Harrowgate College – field archaeologist, occasional pugilist, and the only person Agent Whitlock trusts to reach the Undervault before Renn does. Your expedition spans five acts: the booby-trapped temple on the Vespera river, the archives of Harrowgate, the trading post at Khail Pass, the erg and Undervault of Qai-Sharat, and the voyage of the steamer Meridian Star.

The rules of the road, in three carved lines: **read every warning; hold still hands still; and when the fire speaks – kneel.**

II · RUNNING THE EXPEDITION

Commands

Type commands or press the buttons under the terminal; both dispatch the same action. Compass moves: N S E W U D. Classic verbs: LOOK, EXAMINE, TAKE, DROP, USE, OPEN, CLOSE, SEARCH, READ, TALK, WAIT, INVENTORY. Information (free, no move cost): LOOK, INVENTORY, JOURNAL, QUESTS, ACHIEVEMENTS, STATS, SCORE. System (also free): HINT, SAVE [name], RESTORE [name], TRANSCRIPT, RESTART.

The eight story verbs

WEDGE · PUNCH · MOUNT · DIG · LIGHT · PHOTOGRAPH · SAIL · KNEEL – shown as amber buttons. Each has exactly one moment in the story where it is the right thing to do, and the prose says so when that moment arrives.

Hints

HINT reads the state of your expedition and offers a graded nudge – gentle first, explicit if you insist. Thirty-five hint ladders cover every room and every puzzle. Hints never cost a move and never spoil beyond the current obstacle.

III · THE SIX CHARTS

Twenty rooms across six regions. Travel between regions is one-way at act boundaries – the classic serial has no reverse gear. Finish your business (and your SEARCHing) before you fly, sail, or descend.

VESPERA VALLEY

Room	Exits
Vespera River Landing	NORTH → temple_antechamber
Temple Antechamber	SOUTH → river_landing, NORTH → idol_chamber
Chamber of the Jade Effigy	SOUTH → temple_antechamber

HARROWGATE COLLEGE

Room	Exits
Marlowe's Office, Harrowgate College	NORTH → lecture_hall, EAST → museum_archive, WEST → khail_airstrip (locked)
Lecture Hall	SOUTH → college_office
Museum Archive	WEST → college_office

KHAIL PASS

Room	Exits
Khail Pass Airstrip	EAST → trading_post, WEST → college_office
Calloway's Trading Post	WEST → khail_airstrip, NORTH → storeroom
Trading Post Storeroom	SOUTH → trading_post

QAI-SHARAT

Room	Exits
Qai-Sharat Caravanserai	EAST → ridge_overlook, NORTH → survey_camp
Ridge Overlook	WEST → caravanserai
Marlowe Survey Camp	SOUTH → caravanserai, EAST → gnomon_hall, NORTH → cistern_court
The Gnomon Hall	WEST → survey_camp
The Cistern Court	SOUTH → survey_camp, DOWN → undervault_stair (locked)

THE UNDERVAULT

Room	Exits
Undervault Stair	UP → cistern_court, DOWN → scorpion_vault

Room	Exits
The Scorpion Vault	UP → undervault_stair, EAST → sigil_reliquary, WEST → caravanseraï (locked)
Reliquary of the Ember Sigil	WEST → scorpion_vault

THE MERIDIAN STAR

Room	Exits
Aboard the Meridian Star	EAST → rite_terrace (locked)
The Rite Terrace, Karag Isle	WEST → steamer_deck (locked)
Harrowgate College, Some Weeks Later	– (end of the story)

IV · OBJECTIVES AND SCORING

The nine quests are worth 135 points together; the three hidden finds below add 5 each for a perfect 150.

Quest	Objective
First Blood at Vespera	Recover the jade effigy from the temple – without lifting the weight of the sun.
The Commission	Take the War Department's commission and find where the trail starts.
The Gnomon Disc	Secure the gnomon disc from Kit Calloway at Khail Pass.
The True Bearing	Mount the disc on the gnomon pillar and read the dawn shadow at Qai-Sharat.
Into the Undervault	Open the cistern mouth and descend – with fire in hand.
Raise the Sigil	Take the Ember Sigil from its reliquary.
The Meridian Star	Follow the stolen Sigil aboard the Consortium's steamer.
The Rite of Fire	Survive what Renn wakes on Karag Isle.
Bring It Home	Deliver the Ember Sigil into safekeeping at Harrowgate.

Hidden find	Where to look	Points
glyph rubbing	SEARCH the glyph wall in the Temple Antechamber – before leaving the valley	5
Consortium ledger	SEARCH the supply crate on the Ridge Overlook – before you SAIL	5
harbour manifest	OPEN and SEARCH the chart locker aboard the Meridian Star	5

Missable by design: the rubbing cannot be taken after Act I, the ledger cannot be taken after you SAIL, and the camera for the optional ridge photograph must leave Harrowgate with you. None of them is ever required to win.

V · DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Name	First met
Juno Reyes – your pilot; flies anything with wings and lands most of it	Vespera River Landing
Agent Whitlock – the quiet man from the War Department with the chequebook	Marlowe's Office, Harrowgate College
Dean Alcott – runs Harrowgate College and worries professionally	Lecture Hall
Kit Calloway – quartermaster of the Khail trading post; talk twice	Calloway's Trading Post
Mr. Sable – the Consortium's local fist; negotiations are brief	–
Basri – caravanseraï keeper; knows the erg and everyone crossing it	Qai-Sharat Caravanseraï
Dr. Viktor Renn – rival archaeologist; borrows relics and ceremonies alike	–
Chief Engineer Okonkwo – keeps the Meridian Star's heart beating	Aboard the Meridian Star

VI · THE THREE DEATHS (AND HOW TO REFUSE THEM)

1 – The Balanced Hand. The jade effigy in the Vespera temple rests on a counterweighted pedestal, and the glyphs around the door say exactly what happens to people who lift it anyway. Something rigid, WEDGED under the plate, holds the hand still.

2 – The Lightless Stair. The warning stone above the Undervault stair is blunt: carry fire, or be carrion. A pitch torch and a matchbox wait in the survey camp. LIGHT before you descend.

3 – The Rite of Fire. On the terrace of Karag Isle a borrowed ceremony gets away from its borrower. The mooring post at your back has carried the same instruction for eight centuries, and it is shouting it at you in capitals. The rite spares only the humble. KNEEL.

Death is never a dead end: RESTART begins anew and RESTORE returns to any save, both free of move cost, both available from the death screen.

VII · THE INSTRUMENT PANELS

WORLD MAP charts the current region, naming what you have visited and bracketing where you stand. QUEST LOG tracks the nine objectives. JOURNAL collects Dr. Marlowe's field notes as they are written. The SAVE MANAGER, TRANSCRIPT and six-profile ACCESSIBILITY manager live in the footer bar. All audio is procedural and optional – every cue has a text equivalent.

– Good hunting, Doctor. Read the stones. –