

PLAYER AND DEVELOPER MANUAL

The Mysterious Island

Adapted from the novel by Jules Verne, 1874–1875, in the public domain. A story package for the Tronsoft Interactive Fiction Engine, Core 2.3.0. Release 1.0.0.

“Nothing you need exists on this coast. Everything you need can be made from it.”

At a glance

Locations	20
Regions	5
Objects	45 (23 portable)
Characters	8
Quests	9 (7 required, 2 optional)
Achievements	14
Hint ladders	26, three levels each
Story rules	53 across 16 triggers
Maximum score	150
Measured full completion	150 points in 92 moves
Measured lean route	120 points in 83 moves
Save key	tronsoft_tife_the_mysterious_island_save

Table 1 — generated from the shipped game data and from measured playthroughs.

What this game is

On 23 March 1865 five Northern prisoners and a dog escape besieged Richmond in a stolen balloon and are carried two thousand leagues by a hurricane. The gas fails over an empty stretch of the South Pacific and they come down on an island that appears on no chart. They name it Lincoln Island. You play Cyrus Smith, the engineer.

Verne's novel is not really an adventure story; it is a manual. Its subject is what five men with knowledge and no equipment can extract from twenty miles of volcanic rock, and the pleasure of it is watching a supply chain assemble itself out of clay, fat, pyrites and nitrate. This adaptation takes that seriously: the central puzzle sequence is Verne's own sequence of manufacture, in his order, with his reagents, and there is no step in it that the novel does not contain.

Running underneath is the other thing the book is about. Six times in six years something on this island does the colony an impossible favour. The journal records each one as it happens, and the last act of the game is the single explanation that covers all six.

There is no combat system, no hunger clock, no inventory limit and no random failure. The island is a problem, and it is solvable.

The colony

Character	Where you first meet them
Top	The Dunes
Gideon Spilett	The Shore of Union Bay
Pencroff	The Shore of Union Bay
Herbert Brown	The Shore of Union Bay
Neb	The Shore of Union Bay
Master Jup	—
Ayrton	Tabor Island
Captain Nemo	The Saloon of the Nautilus

Table 2 — characters and their starting locations, from the shipped game data.

Talk to people more than once. Dialogue advances each time and several characters hand over something essential on a particular line: Gideon Spilett gives up his watch when he sees you have your own, Herbert produces the grain of corn once he has seen the plateau soil, Pencroff demonstrates — memorably — exactly what one damp match is worth, and Captain Nemo has three things to say, of which the third is the one the whole game has been arranging.

Top joins you on the dunes and follows you from then on. Master Jup and Ayrton also become followers once you have earned them. Followers arrive in a room before its events resolve, which occasionally matters.

Gazetteer

Twenty locations in five regions. Several connections do not exist when the game begins; the table shows the map as it stands at the end of a complete game.

I. The Wreck of the Balloon

Location	Exits
The Car of the Balloon	DOWN → The Dunes
The Dunes	NORTH → The Shore of Union Bay
The Shore of Union Bay	SOUTH → The Dunes WEST → The Chimneys
The Chimneys	EAST → The Shore of Union Bay NORTH → The Banks of the Mercy

II. Prospect Heights

Location	Exits
The Banks of the Mercy	SOUTH → The Chimneys UP → Prospect Heights WEST → The Forests of the Far West
Prospect Heights	DOWN → The Banks of the Mercy NORTH → Lake Grant EAST → The Lake Outlet WEST → The Forests of the Far West
Lake Grant	SOUTH → Prospect Heights EAST → The Lake Outlet
The Lake Outlet	WEST → Lake Grant SOUTH → Prospect Heights

III. Granite House

Location	Exits
The Granite Ledge	UP → The Lake Outlet IN → Granite House DOWN → The Chimneys
Granite House	OUT → The Granite Ledge NORTH → The Workshop DOWN → The Inner Well
The Workshop	SOUTH → Granite House
The Inner Well	UP → Granite House

IV. Lincoln Island

Location	Exits
The Forests of the Far West	EAST → The Banks of the Mercy NORTH → The Corral SOUTH → Port Balloon
The Corral	SOUTH → The Forests of the Far West UP → The Crater of Mount Franklin
The Crater of Mount Franklin	DOWN → The Corral
Port Balloon	NORTH → The Forests of the Far West
Tabor Island	—

V. The Secret of the Island

Location	Exits
Dakkar Grotto	UP → The Inner Well IN → The Saloon of the Nautilus
The Saloon of the Nautilus	OUT → Dakkar Grotto
The Last Rock	—

Table 3 — every room and every exit, generated from the shipped room data.

Scoring

A hundred and fifty points, from nine quests and four optional treasures. Quest points land the moment the quest completes; treasure points the moment you pick the object up.

Quest	Points	Status	Objective
Escape the Storm	10	Required	The balloon is falling into the sea. Lighten it or drown in it.
The First Fire	15	Required	Six castaways, no matches, and a cold hearth at the Chimneys.
A House in the Rock	20	Required	There is a cavity high in the granite cliff. Reach it and take it.
The Island Surveyed	15	Required	Continent or island? Stand on the crater of Mount Franklin and settle it.
The Castaway of Tabor	20	Required	A bottle, a document, and a man alone a hundred and fifty miles to the north-east.
The Pirates of the Speedy	20	Required	A brig of convicts has found Lincoln Island. Answer them.
The Secret of the Island	20	Required	Six years of impossible good fortune have one cause. Go down the well and find it.
The Grain of Corn	5	Optional	Herbert has one grain of corn. Prospect Heights has forty acres of black soil.
Master Jup	5	Optional	Something in the western forest is watching the house with interest.

Table 4 — quest ledger, generated from the shipped quest data.

Optional treasure	Points	Where
reporter's notebook	5	In the balloon car. Take it before you cut the ballast.
a sextant	5	In the iron-bound chest, on the shore of Union Bay.
a box of sulphate of quinine	5	On the table of Granite House, the morning after the fight at the corral.
an iron coffer	5	Pushed across the arm of a chair in the saloon of the Nautilus.

Table 5 — scored objects, generated from the shipped item data.

The three sources sum to exactly the declared maximum: 120 from required quests, 10 from optional quests, and 20 from treasures. The bundled validator recomputes that sum and fails the package if it does not reconcile.

Achievements

#	Achievement	#	Achievement
1	Aeronaut	8	An Island, Then
2	Castaway on an Unknown Coast	9	One Grain Sown
3	Fire Without a Match	10	Master Jup Is Engaged
4	The Kiln Draws	11	A Hundred and Fifty Miles to Windward
5	Chemistry From Rock and Fat	12	A Man Who Weeps Is a Man
6	The Engineer's Argument	13	The Colony Defended
7	Householder	14	The Secret of the Island

Table 6 — all fourteen achievements, generated from the shipped achievement data. A complete game unlocks every one.

Commands

Type at the prompt or use the buttons. Selecting an action button fills the CONTEXT row with every valid target in reach, so the game is playable without typing a word.

Category	Commands
Movement	N S E W UP DOWN IN OUT GO <direction>
Looking	LOOK (L) EXAMINE (X) SEARCH READ
Handling	TAKE (GET) DROP USE OPEN CLOSE
People	TALK TO <name>
Waiting	WAIT (Z)
Island work	JETTISON SOW SMELT MIX BLAST SAIL SHOOT SIGNAL
Information	INVENTORY (I) JOURNAL QUESTS ACHIEVEMENTS STATS SCORE
System	HINT SAVE RESTORE TRANSCRIPT RESTART THEME ABOUT HELP

Table 7 — the island-work verbs are read from the shipped verb list.

Free commands

LOOK, INVENTORY, SCORE, QUESTS, JOURNAL, ACHIEVEMENTS, STATS, TRANSCRIPT, SAVE, RESTORE, HELP, HINT and RESTART cost no move. You are never charged for looking around, checking your notes, or asking for help.

The manufacturing chain

This is the spine of the game. Each step needs the output of the last, and every raw material is somewhere on the map.

#	Command	Where	Needs	Gives
1	USE WATCH	anywhere	your chronometer, the reporter's watch, red clay	the burning lens
2	USE LENS	the Chimneys	the burning lens, dry moss	fire, and a kiln on the clay bank
3	SMELT PYRITES	the Mercy bank	iron pyrites, fire	sulphuric acid
4	MIX SALTPETRE	anywhere	sulphuric acid, native saltpetre	nitric acid
5	SMELT FAT	the Mercy bank	dugong fat, cake of soda, fire	glycerine
6	MIX GLYCERINE	anywhere	nitric, sulphuric, glycerine	nitro-glycerine
7	BLAST OUTLET	the lake outlet	nitro-glycerine	a laid charge, and a warning
8	WAIT	Prospect Heights	—	the lake falls; the channel is dry

Table 8 — the sequence Verne wrote, in his order.

The two watch crystals are the whole first act: set them rim to rim, fill the cavity with fresh water, lute the joint with river clay, and you have a six-inch burning glass that costs nothing and never runs out. Everything else on Lincoln Island follows from the fire it lights.

Step 8 is the one that catches people. The charge is laid, the game tells you in warning colour to get off the shelf, and it tells you which way. Waiting where you stand does exactly what you would expect.

Dying

Three locations can kill you. All three warn you first, and in two of them the fatal step is blocked before it resolves, which is your last chance to reconsider.

- **The car of the balloon.** The room description says what is under you. Climbing out of a sinking balloon into a hurricane sea before lightening it is fatal.
- **The lake outlet.** Once the charge is lit, standing on the shelf and waiting is fatal. Retreat south to Prospect Heights and wait there.
- **The corral path.** While armed convicts hold the corral, Top stops dead on the path and the game tells you to go back for the revolver. Walking up unarmed is fatal.

No dead ends

No sequence of legal moves can produce a state the game cannot be won from. Nothing required is ever destroyed, nothing needed is ever made unreachable while it still matters, and skipping optional content costs points and nothing else. If you are stuck, you are stuck on a puzzle. Ask for a hint: there are 26 three-level ladders and they read the actual state of the world, so the hint you get is the hint for the problem in front of you.

Saving, restarting and accessibility

SAVE and RESTORE take an optional name; the SAVE MANAGER in the footer lists every save with the room, score and move count it was taken at. Saves live in browser local storage under the single key `tronsoft_tife_the_mysterious_island_save`, are per-device, and are never shared with another game. RESTART begins again from the balloon car and does not touch saved games.

The ACCESSIBILITY panel offers six one-click profiles — Standard, Low Vision, Blind / Screen Reader, Hard of Hearing, Motor Assistance, Cognitive Support — and every switch behind them: text scale, high contrast, larger controls, reduced typing, simplified layout, reduced motion, contextual hints, captions and narration. Settings persist on the device. Audio never carries information that is not also on screen, and the story is completable in full with sound off.

Developer notes

This section documents how the package is put together, for anyone maintaining it or building another story on the same engine.

Engine purity

The engine runtime in `js/core/`, the shell in `js/game.js` and the base stylesheet `css/game.css` ship byte-identical to TIFE Core 2.3.0. Their SHA-256 digests are recorded in `docs/engine-purity.json` and recomputed by `validate.js`; one changed byte fails the package. Every behaviour this story needs is added from the game side.

File	Role
<code>games/the-mysterious-island/game.js</code>	Story data: rooms, items, characters, quests, hints, rules
<code>js/interface.js</code>	Engine prototype patches: rule conditions and actions, custom verbs, turn order
<code>js/map.js</code>	Region-aware world chart, installed over the shell's panel by <code>MutationObserver</code>
<code>js/sound.js</code>	Five procedural region ambiances, delegating <code>AudioService.startAmbient</code>
<code>css/theme.css</code>	Story skin; overrides only, no layout or accessibility geometry
<code>index.html</code>	Entry file: cover overlay, panel scaffolding, deferred script order

Table 9 — the story layer, as listed in `tife-package.json`.

What the patches add

- Twenty-one additional rule conditions and fifteen additional rule actions, including `teleport`, `moveNPC`, `followNPC`, `describeRoom`, `setExit`, `blockMove` and `gameOver`.
- A `move.attempt` trigger that resolves before movement, so a step the player has been warned about can be stopped or made fatal before arrival.
- The once-guard written before the rule action list, not after it, so a rule cannot re-enter itself through its own consequences.
- Rule narration held for the whole dispatch and flushed afterwards, so every turn reads in the fixed order: command, then what the command did, then what the world did about it.
- Presence checks on `USE`, `SEARCH`, `READ` and `OPEN`, and `OPEN` extended to objects held in inventory.
- Eight story verbs routed as `verb.<type>` triggers, with the rule runner returning a fired-rule count so an unhandled verb can give a sensible refusal.
- Followers relocated inside a reimplemented `WorldService.move`, so companions are in the room before its entry rules run.
- The Section 23 save key derived from the package slug through an accessor on `SaveService.prototype`, so slug, archive name and storage key all come from one string.
- The Core RESTART crash fixed from the game side: `reset()` clears `lastAction` and the original dispatch then read `lastAction.type`. RESTART and HINT no longer consume a move.
- The shell's hardcoded cover narration for its bundled sample story replaced by patching `AccessibilityService.narrate` rather than editing the shell.

Rule triggers in use

Trigger	Rules
<code>action.after</code>	4
<code>game.start</code>	1
<code>item.opened</code>	2

Trigger	Rules
item.searched	3
item.used	3
move.attempt	2
npc.talked	9
room.enter	10
verb.blast	2
verb.jettison	2
verb.mix	2
verb.sail	3
verb.shoot	3
verb.signal	2
verb.smelt	3
verb.sow	2

Table 10 — 53 story rules across 16 triggers, generated from the shipped rule set.

Validation

`validate.js` ships inside the package and runs with no dependencies. It checks specification conformance across the sections that apply to this package, recomputes the engine digests, audits world integrity (exit targets, rule targets, unique rule ids, duplicate condition keys, per-room object name collisions, the points ledger, connectivity), and then plays the game: the full route, the lean route, all three fatal paths, a save and restore, and a no-dead-end scan, in a dependency-free sandbox. A separate `verify-zip.py` makes the archive-level checks that cannot be made from inside the archive.

Measured routes

Full completion is 150 points in 92 moves against a declared par of 89. The lean route — skipping both optional quests and all four treasures — is 120 points in 83 moves. Both are replayed by the validator on every build, so the numbers in this manual are the numbers the shipped game produces.

Source and licence

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