
THE SCARLET THIEF

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Background: The shrill ring from your alarm clock wakes you up. Switching it off, you shuffle to your feet to open the curtains of your tiny apartment. Sunlight floods in, revealing the beautiful city of Eos, its towering spires and elaborate architecture a sure-fire way of bringing you awake with cheer. In the streets people, mechanical automata and shimmering aetherforms are already setting about their tasks of the day, while airships ply the sky, rising towards the great Flying Château overhead. You set about preparing for work, coming to a stop in the kitchen occupied by your Singecaster, a brass monkey sitting on the table, a pair of cymbals in its hands. As you prepare yourself coffee and croissants you pick the newspaper from your doormat, its front page wearing the headline

Auguste Beautrelet escapes the Flying Château with the Eos sceptre

You glance over the article.

Last night the legendary thief Auguste Beautrelet escaped Countess Isabelle's Flying Château with her aetheric sceptre. Since his arrival in the city three months ago the criminal, known as 'The Scarlet Thief' for the red letters he has been known to send his targets, has been engaged in a duel with the Great Detective, Sherrinford Sky, who is working alongside Commissioner Alexandre Dupin to apprehend him. Sky arrived in the Château last night in time to warn the Countess of the imminent theft of the Eos Sceptre, a bejewelled artefact prized for both its value as a work of art and also for its use as one of the most powerful aether-manipulating tools in the world. Sky, an aetherform himself, was able to identify the thief as he escaped, being the only person known to have ever seen the thief's real face before. Having gained ingress disguised as a guest at her imminent Masquerade, the thief attempted escape from the Château in an airship piloted by his ally, the local crime lord known only as the 'Shadow Doctor'. The airship was shot down during escape, with one single-person escape pod being found near the edge of the city. With the 'Shadow Doctor' believed to be dead, Beautrelet is now being hunted down by the authorities, who are in the process of preventing all passage in and out of the city until the thief and the sceptre are found.

You lower the paper thoughtfully, musing over this climactic event in the escalating series of thefts Eos has known over the past three months. It began with the three Sforza sapphires, stolen from Vicomte Sforza's home leaving a Scarlet letter to Dupin, informing the Commissioner of his arrival in the city, mentioning that he had no issue in revealing that he had commenced an alliance with the Shadow Doctor, and adding that while he had been tempted to steal the prize of the Sforza portrait collection he made a principle of only ever stealing genuine articles. On the very day of the theft Sherrinford Sky had arrived in the city from his home in Albion, informing Dupin that he had tracked Beautrelet down to Eos. Over the next few weeks more thefts and pursuits occurred, including the Countess' mysterious aether emeralds, ending with the theft last week of a revolutionary new alchemical substance capable of rendering its drinker capable of transforming their appearance at will. It is an intriguing sequence of events, and as you pour your coffee you glance out of the window at the police airships drifting over Eos, doubtless hunting the Scarlet Thief. After finishing work at the Aether Plant today you could discuss these matters with your friend Pierre, or write to your parents in Balsamo Grove about the theft-laced joys of Eos life.

Your first bite of your croissant is interrupted as your Singecaster whirrs into life, clacking its cymbals together and opening its mouth 'This is a morning broadcast to the citizens of Eos,' it creaks, jaw hinges squealing, 'The authorities have located the Scarlet Thief and are attempting to apprehend him. For their own safety no-one in the neighbourhood of rue Ganimard should leave their homes until he is captured. And now we will be playing a morning piece by J.S. Bach...' Your eyes widen as you move towards the window again. You live on rue Ganimard. As you look out to observe events in neighbourly fashion your eyes fall upon half a dozen airships moving towards the very building in which you are standing,

"Auguste Beautrelet!" the pilot of the one of the craft cries through a loudhailer, *"We know that you are hiding under the assumed alias of Jacques Leblanc. Emerge from your apartment or we will force entry."*

There is a long and rather awkward silence from yourself on hearing this. Such events would be rather interesting and entertaining were Jacques Leblanc not the name of your own good self. For some reason the authorities now believe that you are the Scarlet Thief and are coming to apprehend you.

This is not a good start to the day.

Jacques Leblanc: Your character is represented by five characteristics. These are speed, stealth, disguise, money and health.

Over the course of your adventure you may be able to gain things to disguise yourself. When you get these you will be told how much they add to your disguise score.

Speed and stealth are affected by experience, however in the modern era getting experience is no problem. Experts of countless fields make money by selling their memories to merchants, so that bottles of memory implants can be sold to provide short term increases in knowledge and ability. There are levels of memory implants. A level 1 implant can be taken by anyone, a level 2 implant can only be taken by someone who has already taken a level 1 implant, and so on.

A characteristic is tested by rolling a die. If the result is under the characteristic being tested then you have succeeded the test.

Your disguise begins at 0. Your health begins at its maximum: 4. If it falls to 0 you have died. You have 10 points to spend on your speed, stealth and the amount of money you have in francs. Your speed, stealth and money cannot be lower than 2 or higher than 5 at the start of this adventure.

The Scarlet Thief

1:

Beneath the bellies of the looming airships rue Ganimard is now swarming with dozens of police automata, who are racing down the street towards your building. You stagger backwards, eyes scanning the room, and at that very moment your front door explodes inwards, hurling you backwards, and six huge automata crash into the room over the shattered door in a shower of splinters and in moments are upon you, gigantic hands engulfing your arms and body in the moments it takes you to register what is happening. Blinking at the spectacle surrounding you, you see automata and officers pouring into your kitchen through the ruined entrance and windows, which, to add further irritation, they shatter while leaping through from the rappelling lines hanging down the sides of your building, the horde searching the room at once for other people or items. The brass cogs of your titanic captor whirr as it lifts you up, holding you up towards the door as two men walk in. One is tall and skeletal, garbed in a coat which has seen far better days. His eyes glitter with green sparks of aether as he scrutinises you, betraying his true nature as an aetherform. His name is obvious to you from the number of times his face has appeared in the newspapers over the past three months - Sherrinford Sky, the Great Detective. His acquaintance is shorter, holding a revolver and moving with the easy grace of someone used to tense situations. He is Doctor James Hamish, the aethermage who created Sky as the greatest detective of the modern age. Sky's eyes widen as he sees you,

"That's him," he says at once, "I would recognise Beautrelet's true face anywhere."

"You've got the wrong man!" you cry, voice embarrassingly high-pitched due to the tightness with which your throat is being constricted, "I am Jacques Leblanc!"

"Your alias' name," Sky says, pulling a notebook from his pockets, "You were wise enough to keep records of working at an Aether Plant as 'Leblanc', doubtless to enable your escape later."

"Are you sure about this, Sky?" Hamish queries, "This does seem awfully unexpected. After the wild goose chase we've had to follow Beautrelet on I can't see why he would go to an undefended apartment with no escape and then protest his innocence despite a complete lack of disguise." You nod in quick concurrence,

"Yes! I agree! You have the wrong man!" Sky raises one hand,

"It does seem irregular. But then the Scarlet Thief's behaviour is always irregular." His hands dissolves into a stream of emerald light which stretches out to you, tugging at your nose and hair and making you cough in surprise.

"No," Sky concludes, the light vanishing back into a hand, "There is no disguise that I can find." He nods to a police officer nearby, "Take him to the station. We can speak to him there while these premises are searched for the sceptre." He turns and starts walking down the corridor towards the stairs, followed by Hamish and the automaton carrying you. Struggling and protesting your innocence you are pulled down the stairs and into the light of day, where an airship waits, guarded by another automaton. Sky gestures onward and the automaton drags you towards the one guarding the airship, which steps forward. As you are pushed onwards the airship guard raises its shining metal fist and brings it forcefully into contact with the face of the automaton holding you. You are yanked backward as the machine collapses under the impact, face exploding in a cloud of cogs and steam. It falls to the ground, grip loosening and you clamber to your feet, dazed. The automaton in front of you leaps forward, bringing its foot into collision with the damaged head of your captor with enough force to knock it off entirely with a loud clang, before grabbing your arm in its fist.

"Wha..?" you manage, somewhat irked that within a second of being unexpectedly liberated from one automaton you are now being forcefully held by another one, and then the automaton turns and runs, dragging you along behind it. You catch a glimpse of Sky, Hamish and a line of police officers and automata, mouths all hanging open.

"He's escaping!" shouts Hamish as two automata standing in front of an alleyway step forward. Your captor strikes one down with its elbow and leaps over it, jarring your shoulder in its socket as it

does so, and then your feet are scraping along cobbles once more as you journey forward, police raging behind you. After a handful of seconds a flash of green light fills the alleyway and your rescuer staggers, a gaping hole in its side disgorging steam and water. In a moment it staggers into another alleyway with you, out of sight of the police. It opens its mouth.

"Sarah Devereux," it croaks in a voice of cogs and wheels, "Fifteen, rue Poe." It shudders to its feet, one hand pressing the crater in its side as, in one gust of steam, its face-plate falls away, landing in your hands and warm to the touch. You stare up into the gears and engines in its head as it turns to face the alley entrance, "Run!" it bellows, and charges forth into battle with your automaton pursuers. You turn and run, shoes slapping on cobbles as you duck through a labyrinth of narrow alleys and passages to escape the authorities, crashes and explosions of aether sounding in your ears as you do so. At last you pause at a junction where one route heads towards the city centre and the other heads towards the outskirts. Your eyes fall onto the inside of the face-plate in your hands. Inscribed within are the words 'Raymonde Industries-Designers of specialised automata for their customers'. If you go to Raymonde Industries you may be able to learn who sent this machine to rescue you. You consider your options. It would also be possible to make for the air-port and get on one of the last leaving airships before the city is closed off completely, making for Balsamo Grove where your parents live and could shelter you. Or you could make for Pierre's house and seek help from him.

To seek out Sarah Devereux, turn to 17. To look for Raymonde Industries turn to 34. To make for the air-port turn to 9. To go to Pierre's house turn to 23.

2:

A metal hand slams down on your shoulder again, yanking you backwards.

"We've got him!" cries a nearby police officer as several automata frogmarch you towards an airship where you find yourself facing Sherrinford Sky.

"Oh, um, hello," you say to him with a sheepish grin, "Funny how we run into each other again isn't it?"

"Hmm," Sky responds with an expression which also says 'hmm'.

"I suppose you had better put me back in that cell then."

"No," Sky says, "We've got a much nicer more secure cell for you my friend."

"Ah," you say, "Well I appreciate the sentiment." And with that you are taken to a rather more secure cell for the rest of your days, where the drainpipes are significantly smaller.

Better luck next time!

3:

You enter Commissioner Dupin's office, finding the elderly man sat, reading reports over numerous empty coffee cups.

"What?" he snaps as you enter, "The thief's leading us on a wild goose chase, gang violence is on the rise and Sky insists on speaking to me like a child, must you really bother me right now?"

"Detective Sky sent me a message to come to you," you say, "I need to get the Beautrelet file."

"Really?" he frowns, "Why?"

Persuasion Battle:

Confidence and Scepticism: Your 'confidence' score is '6+your disguise score'. Dupin's scepticism score is 8.

Lies and Insults: Each round you can make a small, medium or big lie. Each round Dupin will try to insult you (he hates people who bother him while working) with a small, medium or large insult. Roll a die for your lie and a die for Dupin's insult each round. Small lies and insults succeed on a 1,2 or 3. Medium lies and insults succeed on a 4 or 5. Big lies and insults succeed on a 6. Dupin's scepticism

is reduced by 1 point for a successful small lie, 2 points for a successful medium lie and 3 points by a successful large lie. To determine whether Dupin makes a small, medium or big insult, roll a die before each round. On a 1 he makes a small insult, on a 2,3 or 4 he makes a medium insult and on a 5 or 6 he makes a big insult.

Comebacks: Each round you may prepare a comeback for one type of insult (small, medium or big). If the type of insult you prepare a comeback for is the type he makes then you suffer no confidence loss regardless of whether the insult succeeds (you have rebuffed it with a wisecracking comment).

If Dupin's scepticism falls to 0 or below first turn to 13. If your confidence falls to 0 or below first he decides that you're lying and calls in officers to arrest you (you cannot use tranquiliser darts on Dupin as he has drank so much coffee that his veins are laced with caffeine), turn to 8.

4:

"It's all very well being a horologist but what we really need is a clock-expert," one officer says, "I'm not convinced by your story anyway," the other growls, reaching for his rifle.

Test your speed, adding 3 to the roll. If you succeed turn to 83, if you fail turn to 51.

5:

You stride into the police station's vast entrance hall, where hundreds of officers are going about their tasks. A Singecaster in the corner plays music by Bach loudly in a futile effort to calm the frantic throng. Looking around you see that on this floor is the armoury and the jailer's office. The floor above contains offices.

If you wish to visit the armoury turn to 57. If you wish to visit the jailer's office turn to 16. If you wish to visit the offices turn to 55. If you wish to leave then add the codeword 'lawvisit' and turn to 30.

6:

You dip your fingers into the cold water, reaching warily for the box. The fish glares at you but doesn't act, so you reach down and grasp the box. At this point the metal creature darts for your hand, its tongue shooting out and the tip stinging your arm. You recoil out, dripping hand flying up with the box in hand. Lose 1 health point from the sting. Massaging your wet arm you open the box, finding it to contain 5 francs and one of the Sforza sapphires. With a smile you pocket these.

Turn to 80.

7:

You pull your jetpack out of the backpack and look over its surface. There are several nozzles pointing downwards and a pair of handles sticking forward from it with switches and joysticks protruding from their fronts. You buckle into it, putting the handles on either side of yourself. A couple of people walking down the street stop and stare at you, so you head off into a secluded alleyway for what seems like the one hundredth time today. Looking upwards, you press a large promisingly red switch on the handle and are satisfied when the pack roars into life. Looking upwards, you push what you think is the accelerator. There a blast of heat behind you and the world, drops away beneath you, as does your stomach. Eos shrinks away beneath you in seconds as a stream of aether and flame is ejected beneath you. You can't help but smile with exhilaration as the wind buffets your face, the Flying Château growing in your field of vision. By now Eos is a small circle

below, surrounded on one side by fields and on the other by mountains. The Château is level with you now and you can look down upon it. A ring of vast gas bag girdles the structure, holding it aloft, with the tops of these gas bags being covered in gardens, forests, lakes and tennis courts. The sight of the place takes your breath away as you move towards it, noting with alarm that several airships are moving in your direction in their patrols along its edge. Glowing creatures with wings, aetherforms, and winged automata are joining them as an airship fires a warning shot into the air. The structure was built to withstand attacks by sky dreadnoughts and hurricanes, but perhaps boarding by a small man with a very fast jetpack wasn't considered a sufficient threat by the builders. As you rise above them there is a worrying spluttering from the pack and your speed begins slowing. Airships and aetherforms are pursuing you now, so you turn downwards, directing your descent to a large forest in the Château's grounds. An aethershell explodes near to you as you descend upon the trees, trying not to lose control of your speed as the pack judders with its last supplies of fuel. You explode through the canopy of leaves in a surge and skim jerkily over the forest floor before your pack gives out entirely with a burst of smoke. You slam into the ground. Lose 1 health point.

You stagger to your feet, tearing off the pack and throwing it aside as you flee among the trees, voices and engines already sounding behind you. You lose yourself in the forest for some time, eventually bursting out into the sunlight of the Château gardens. You look upon the spires of the building and turn to a nearby tennis court where several people are watching a game being played. You shuffle over to them and feign interest in the game until a dozen automata race from the trees, eyes scanning the garden. After some time they pass, allowing you to head into the Château itself.

Turn to 80.

8:

In a moment the officer's weapon is out, and as you dive for cover a blast of verdant aether fills your vision in a cacophony of noise and sensation which rises to a piercing crescendo and then ends in darkness.

You awake in a cell to find Sherrinford Sky and several police officers standing over you. It turns out the shot received in the face was set to stun rather than kill, so you now have a long future of police interrogations to look forward to. Or maybe the shot did kill you and all these interviews prove that you are in hell.

9:

Trying to stay off main roads, you gradually creep towards the air-port. At last the place comes into sight, the vast station standing in front of the fields of airships. Already crowds of visitors are thronging into the place, allowing you to duck into the mass and make your way into the station, where tickets are being sold. Making for the shortest cue, you stop and glance around, checking for the police. There are two security guards at the door, but that is all by way of authority here. The gleaming marble walls hold a large clock, which counts off five minutes before you reach the ticket-seller.

"Can I go to Balsamo grove please?" you say and the man frowns,

"Where?"

"Balsamo Grove. In the Southeast Mountains." The ticket-seller sighs, pulls at his moustache and produces a map from under his desk,

"I don't believe I have ever heard of this 'Balsamo Grove' before," he says, raising an eyebrow as his finger comes to rest on the Southeast Mountains, "Can you point it out to me?" You look down at the map, finger moving over the area,

"I..." where is it? "It should be there."

"Mm..." he responds with little enthusiasm, "Maybe it should be. But it's not. Stop wasting my time..." as he speaks a man somewhere in the building speaks through a loudhailer,

"The police have decreed that all traffic out of the city, including air traffic, is to be turned back until

Auguste Beautrelet is captured. I apologise for the stop in service but we will refund any tickets already bought this morning.”

“There you go,” the ticket seller snaps, “No traffic, regardless of metaphysical speculation about the existence of Balsamo Grove.” You sigh and turn away, heading for the exit before any police arrive. What on earth is going on? Why did the ticket-seller, and the map, refuse to acknowledge the existence of your parents’ home town?

If you now wish to seek out Perre then turn to 23. If you wish to Sarah Devereux turn to 17. If you wish to go to Raymonde Industries turn to 34.

11:

The keys catch your eye. There is a golden key among them! You pick it out from among the bunch, also helping yourself to an emerald lying underneath the keys, reasoning that there’s nothing wrong with stealing if you are stealing from a group of violent gangsters and narcotics-sellers. You just hope you don’t get found and need to explain this justification to the gangsters in question.

Add the golden key and the emerald to your character sheet and turn back to 31.

12:

As the automata wipe coffee from their eyes and turn after you, you bound past them towards the balcony. Beyond the balcony hovers a police airship, its pilot turning to you with a look of surprise on his face. You leap from the balcony and grab the ladder on the side of the vehicle, only for the ladder to reveal its telescopic nature and slide downwards, stopping when you are two feet above the street. You look up sheepishly at the pilot, who is staring down at you, mouth a circle.

“I meant to do that,” you say and sprint off into another alleyway. The air-port is too close to where you currently are for it to be worth the risk of visiting when police capture is possible, and so you may now run to Sarah Devereux by turning to 17, or to Raymonde Industries by turning to 34.

13:

Dupin sighs and throws up his hands,

“Alright! Alright! I’ll give you the accursed key you wretched simpleton,” he reaches into his pocket and tosses a key at you, “Do this rubbish you need to do. Now get out of my sight!” you pick up the key and leave with a muttered ‘yes sir’.

Turn to 52.

14:

Picking several pins from an overflowing bin on the street you enter the courtyard behind the house and set to work on the door, struggling to unlock it quietly.

Test your stealth. If you succeed turn to 22. If you fail turn to 29.

15:

You lurk with inconspicuous grace at the edge of the square, watching the police coming and going. Eventually you note a scrawny officer rushing off on his own towards one of the narrow alleys leading off from the square. Keeping your distance you enter the alley and give chase. After a few turns the officer spins round,

"Fai il mio giorno, punk!" he growls, swinging up an a one-shot aetheric handgun as you charge at him, fists raised.

Test your speed. If you succeed then you knock him unconscious before he can take you down. If you fail then the only way to stop him is using up a tranquiliser dart. If you succeed your test or use a dart add 'police uniform' to your character sheet and turn to 32. If you fail and do not have a dart, or do not wish to use a dart, turn to 8.

16:

The jailer is absent from his small office, but as you step into it a low growling sounds in your ears. You freeze, turning to see a small dog made from cogs and wheels is sitting on a cushion, bearing large metal teeth at you. Without moving, you glance at the desk. It bears a list of prisoners in the local prison, their crime, and whether they have received bail. At the top of the list is '*Pierre Xavier-Aiding and abetting the Scarlet Thief while he was disguised as Jacques Leblanc-Bail: Unpaid*'. This is rather unfortunate for your friend Pierre. He is now imprisoned because, by being your friend, he is believed to have been a minor ally of the Scarlet Thief. You could go over and change the record, put his bail as 'paid', but...the cog-dog is still growling.

If you wish to try changing the records turn to 44. If you wish to leave turn to 5.

17:

Roll a die. On a 1 or 2 turn to 20. Otherwise keep reading.

Rue Poe is a quiet road of tall, sandstone coloured buildings. Number fifteen's door bears a small plaque upon it, which you read while trying to stop yourself panting from the dash here.

Sarah Devereux

Memory Implant merchant

PhD- Mnemonic Alchemy

Winner of Mnemonics Magazine's 'Best General Knowledge Implant' award

The door is hanging ajar, and so you give it a gentle push. Beyond you behold a room turned upside down. Trays of bottles of potions have been upturned upon the floor, a desk has been knocked over and books have been scattered from their shelves on the wall to soak up the homogenous morass that the mixture of potions and memory implants have formed in a swamp on the floor.

You step into the room, scanning the place. While the puddle of spilt sludge and broken bottles fills the centre of the floor there are footprints of the mixture taking several steps towards the door before fading away. Two large pairs of footprints move on either side of two streaks of sludge, as though two people dragged a third one away between them.

The sight of what seems to have been a violent struggle and abduction is so distressing that you immediately check the desk for any cigarettes, finding none. The desk holds a brass memory extraction device, as is used by memory merchants to take samples of experts' memories to sell, but it has been knocked over and parts of it have broken off and fallen onto the floor. With no trace of Sarah Devereux's current whereabouts you look across the shelves. All memory implants of use have ended up shattered and mixed into the huge mess on the floor in the struggle, leaving only two or three bottles of 'Hedgerow trimming' memory implants, which you don't really need

There is a small room behind this one, containing a bed and a few clothes. You notice that there is a long coat with a hood attached hanging from a coat hook on the door. While it would probably be more useful in a rainstorm than in the sunny weather of today anything with a hood to conceal your face seems useful now that the authorities are on your trail, so you don the coat (Add 'Coat+2 disguise' to your character sheet). There are also 5 francs in the pocket of the coat, which you can take if you wish.

With no trace of Sarah Devereux you leave the building, hoping to find her and work out what on

earth is going on. There are two ways you can think of to track her down. One is trying to get in touch with the local criminal underworld and the other is visiting the police station. Both are currently somewhat dangerous, but there seem to be no alternatives.

Turn to 30.

18:

“Scarlet Thief!” cries Strangler and Talos pulls back a huge metal fist before swinging it at the side of your head, bringing you crashing to the ground. Dazed, you are aware of being picked up and having Strangler’s cloth looped round your neck.

“This is my sacred cloth,” he whispers, “For many a year I used it to entertain Maharaja Sumeru’s little daughter with it...by garrotting the servants to death. But right now we’d better take you to see Major McGann.”

Turn to 25.

19:

You give an understanding smile and then slam your fist into one officer’s face, bowling him over. As he groans in surprise his companion swings his rifle out.

Test your speed, adding 2 to your roll. If you succeed turn to 83. If you fail turn to 51.

20:

If you have the codeword ‘prison’ turn to 2. Otherwise keep reading.

Caught! At the moment when it seems like no-one can catch you a metal hand clamps down on your shoulder and yanks you back. Turning, you stare at a towering police automaton with an unimpressed expression. ‘You are under arrest,’ it booms, dragging you away towards an airship.

Pushed into a small cell in the back of the airship with your hands and feet cuffed you have nothing to do but wait out the time it takes to reach the police station, where you are frogmarched into an interrogation room occupied by Sherrinford Sky, James Hamish, Commissioner Dupin and several automata. You sit down at their command,

“Hello Monsieur Beautrelet,” Dupin says, scratching his moustache, “It’s a pleasure to have you captured at last,” he turns to Sky, who is looking through a thick file. He pulls several envelope marked ‘Shoe mud-samples’ and starts looking through the grey powder within them until the silence causes him to look up,

“Yes?”

“Do you really think this is the time to leaf through dirt?” Dupin says and Sky shrugs,

“So be it. We actually tracked you down to your neighbourhood by a small trace of mud you left on the floor of the Flying Château. Too small for the naked eye to find but my empirical methods generally yield results.” Sky puts down the file, “Are you willing to co-operate, Monsieur Beautrelet?”

“I’m not Auguste Beautrelet,” you say, “I’m Jacques Leblanc. I have been framed.” Sky frowns,

“I know that you are aware that claiming to be someone else without even attempting a disguise, claiming a briefly feigned life in an Aether Plant as evidence for this, is a rather poor defence, but I can’t think why on earth you would try to use such a ploy. What are you trying to achieve, Beautrelet? Playing for time? Are you hoping to get off on some legal technicality? I assure you that there are no such technicalities for you to exploit, I have made sure of that.” He stares deep into your eyes, “Where is the Eos sceptre?”

“I don’t know!” you insist, “I didn’t steal it.”

“This is all terribly strange.” Dupin says,

“Indeed. His demeanour is that of one telling the truth, or that of a very skilled liar, an attribute

Beautrelet is certainly famous for." Sky replies, "You know that if the police get nowhere with questioning they may resort to more...drastic measures...do you not? I do not wish for any man to suffer pain, and so I sincerely recommend that you comply," he takes a deep breath, "Where is the sceptre?"

You protest your innocence for hours, gradually changing tactics. At times you simply say places that the sceptre might be, but Sky shakes his head, "We'll send people to look, but I can see that you're making this up now. What is the point of this charade, Beautrelet?" By the end of the interrogation there are hints of doubt in his eyes, and Dupin is having a whispered conversation with two burly and unpleasant looking police officers as you are taken to a cell and thrown in.

An hour later and you see another person entering the cell next to your own through the tiny barred window in your cell. He is an elderly man with a beard and a stinking old coat, hunched and muttering to himself as the officers close his door. Within moments of their leaving, however, he turns to you.

"Hello there Monsieur Leblanc," he says, "I'm sorry about all this." He tugs on his beard, which suddenly comes away, unbending his back and removing a prosthetic nose and wig to reveal a face identical to your own. He smiles your own smile at you, "I trust that your stay here is going well?" your eyes widen,

"You've framed me!" you snarl, turning to the door to call out for help,

"If you call for help they will find Auguste Beautrelet and an elderly homeless man imprisoned for disorderly conduct. If you don't then I can help you find out what's going on here. This whole plot you're caught up in. I can break you out of here," the man replies with a jerky nod of the head. All of his movements seem slightly jerky as he reaches down and starts pulling at the drain grill in the corner of his cell, "I came here as a builder three months ago now," he says, pulling the grill smoothly away and reaching round it to tug at the underside of the paving slab in the corner of his cell, "I thought it would be prudent to leave a few exits for myself regardless of which cell I ended up in," and with that he yanks upwards, pulling the slab out of place and opening an entrance to a narrow and gloomy tunnel below, "If you would wait a moment I will grant your egress," he whispers, clambering down into the gloom and leaving you alone. Several seconds later there is a scraping noise and the paving slab in the corner of your room comes upwards, pushed aside by the man beneath. "You have to push in just the right way. I made sure of that, otherwise every prisoner would end up escaping this way," he tells you, beckoning and descending into darkness. You look around yourself, deliberating your options before following. The tunnel is dark, damp and cramped, running under a line of cells in both directions. You follow your liberator towards a dim light.

"What's going on here?" you ask and he shushes you,

"All in good time my friend. However I assure you that if you find the sceptre then, when you do so, you will assuredly stand in the presence of the Scarlet Thief." He reaches a grill and pushes it aside, clambering out into the sunlight. You follow him onto a river bank, where you have just emerged from a pipe opening. You can see the police station some way away. "I'm so glad to have assisted your escape. I'd avoid the air-port now that Eos is closed off," your liberator says, shifting stiffly, "Now I bid you farewell."

"Wait!" you cry but already he has thrown himself into the dirty river. There is splash and then a pause of some time. You try to spot him under the surface, but he doesn't resurface, leaving you cursing and grumbling on the river bank for some time.

Add the codeword 'Prison' to your character sheet. If you now wish to visit Sarah Devereux then turn to 17. If you wish to visit Raymonde Industries turn to 34.

21:

'Twenty One, rue Isidore' you mutter to yourself on reaching the neighbourhood, visiting streets where crime and vice are the only occupation anyone growing up can hope for. These neighbourhoods were part of the kingdom of the enigmatic Shadow Doctor, a crime lord whose gang dominated organised crime in Eos for years. You are vaguely aware that decades ago several of Eos' crime families united to form The Commission, a single authority in the world of protection money, fraud, narcotic memory implants such as Laudanum and Blue Lotus, which are the only escape many people have from their bleak existence here, and which bring with them a crippling addiction. The Commission has been no more for at least thirty years, ever since the Shadow Doctor rose to dictatorial control of the criminal empire, slaughtering his rivals. The Shadow Doctor may be dead now in the twisted wreckage of the Scarlet Thief's airship, but his empire thrives in his absence. You finally arrive at the Shadow Doctor's sprawling mansion, looming in pristine condition over the squalor it has turned its neighbouring areas into. Carefully circling the building you note that all the windows have had sheets of thick metal nailed to their insides, preventing forced ingress. There are two doors, a front door guarded by two figures and an unguarded back door.

To go up to the front door's guards turn to 26. To try picking the lock of the back door turn to 14.

22:

There are several loud clicks from the lock as you struggle with it, each one making you hold your breath in suspense, but eventually there a final click and the door is unlocked.

"Jacques Leblanc, you are a natural," you whisper to yourself, opening the door and entering a store room. The floor is cluttered by boxes of narcotic memory implants such as Laudanum and Blue Lotus, destroyers of lives. Among other things you also find 3 francs and a tranquiliser dart. Finally, you notice a backpack, and open it to find an aether-powered jetpack. This is a rather impressive little contraption, and the backpack means you can take it with you without others seeing it. Add the jetpack to your character sheet. Finally, resting on a mantelpiece you notice a gemstone which on closer inspection turns out to be one of the Sforza sapphires! You may take it if you wish. There is a staircase leading upwards in here, but on hearing voices at the top of it you instead leave the room by the door opposite the one you entered it by.

Turn to 36.

23:

Pierre Xavier is your closest friend, a regular ally at the Aether Plant. He lives on the second floor of a block of apartments not far from your home, and so you duck through narrow streets to reach his home, racing up the stairs of his building to pound on his door. He emerges in his work clothes, coffee in hand, and ceases motion on seeing you.

"Jacques?" he breathes, "I've just heard a Singecast saying you're on the run, what the hell's going on?"

"I don't know," you pant, "The police think I'm the Scarlet Thief."

"They think you're the..." he bursts out laughing, stopping when he sees your grave expression, "Sorry," he snorts, suppressing a giggle, "But this is pretty amusing. *You* as the Scarlet Thief?"

"I'm so glad you find my unjust apprehension by the law such an amusing thought," you respond bitterly,

"I'm sorry, friend." He ushers you into his room and closes the door. "You need a disguise. From now on you're my idiot cousin Lorenzo."

"You seem rather easily won over to the idea of protecting a fugitive," you comment.

"Bah, you said you're innocent. And besides, I've done this thing before, they're always onto me about taxes and suchlike," he replies breezily, ambling over to his cupboard, pulling something out

and offering it to you. "You know what this is?" you blink,

"A small furry creature?"

"No you fool it's a false beard. I bought it for a fancy dress party years ago but now I have a real beard so I don't need it."

"Do you really expect me to go around in that fake beard? It made you look like a maniac..." you pick the dark tangle up, sigh, hold it up to your face and glance into a mirror. "Actually it kind of suits me," you remark with surprise, "I don't know why I never thought to grow a beard before."

"It *does* make you look more dignified. Perhaps you should keep it on when this is all over." Pierre hands you glue and after several minutes you find yourself wearing a handsome goatee (Add 'False beard,+1 disguise point' to your adventure sheet). As you run your hands over it Sherrinford Sky walks into the room.

"Hello," he says, entering from a back room followed by two automata, "I suspected you would come to your workmate's home. I hope you didn't mind us letting ourselves in via the balcony Monsieur Xavier. Auguste Beautrelet, you are under arrest."

"Whoa..." Pierre cries, "But he's Jacques Leblanc!" as Sky opens his mouth to respond you make a dash for the door leading to the balcony, accidentally knocking Pierre's coffee into the air as you do so and creating chaos.

Test your speed. If you succeed turn to 12. If you fail turn to 20.

24:

You unbolt the door and open it, revealing a cell containing an elderly woman and a corpse,

"What do you want now you thugs?" growls the woman, face swollen with bruises,

"I'm not a gang member," you admit, "They are my enemies as much as yours."

"Really? How?" you tell her of the bizarre morning you have had and she nods, "I'm Sarah Devereux."

"Devereux?" you gasp, "I've been looking for you."

"Well I'm sorry your search brought you here," she says sadly as you help her to her feet, "Some time ago I received a letter from an anonymous visitor asking if I could develop my memory extraction machine," she says, "I'm a memory implant developer, you see. I was asked by an 'Auguste Scarlet' to develop my memory extraction device so that it could remove and replace memories. I was offered money for the job, so I made the machine and posted it to him. This morning some gangsters came around to my home, brought me here. Apparently 'Auguste Scarlet' was actually Auguste Beautrelet. They want to find out what he's doing from me, but there's little I know."

"He wanted a memory device?"

"Yes. It seems so."

"How strange."

"I agree. It seems that he fell afoul of this gang during the theft of that disguise potion some time ago. The Shadow Doctor got the potion and tried to kill the thief after he helped him retrieve the disguise potion, but the thief escaped. Now everyone thinks the Shadow Doctor is dead...but I'm not so sure. The Scarlet Thief, the Shadow Doctor, the Great Detective...they are all wrapped up in one huge battle." She falls silent for some time, looking around the hall, "But I don't want to stay here a moment longer." She turns to the back door, "You are a very nice young man and I thank you for getting me out of here. I hope you find out why Auguste Beautrelet has framed you, and I hope you find a way to prove your innocence." She runs out of the back door, leaving you alone.

If you now wish to enter the office turn to 31. If you wish to leave by the back door and return to Eos turn to 30 (Add codeword 'crimevisit' to your character sheet if you leave).

25:

You are dragged through the house, other criminals coming to join your captors,

"I'm not the Scarlet Thief!" you shout, to no success. You are pulled up the stairs and into a large lounge where a tall, broad-shouldered man with a moustache is sat reading a book and smoking a cigar. He looks up as you arrive,

"We've captured the Scarlet Thief, sir," Strangler tells him. He smiles

"Good day to you old chap," he says in a cultured Albion accent, "I am Major Arthur McGann, though these chaps call me thrasher" he removes his jacket, "I trust you have not been excessively manhandled?"

"What is going on?" you say, "I'm not Auguste Beutrelet, I'm Jacques Leblanc."

"Oh we know your tricks, Beutrelet," chuckles McGann, "I'm not the Shadow Doctor's lieutenant through naivety. Would you care to tell us where the Eos Sceptre is? We do rather want it."

"I don't know where it is," you say and McGann sighs, unbuttoning his shirt to your alarm,

"Shall I tell you a story, Monsieur Beutrelet?" he begins,

"I'd rather you did so with your clothes still on," you say, unnerved,

"There was once this young lad who was reasonably skilled academically, but far more skilled at sports. He ended up at Cambridge, where he became an international boxing champion."

"Is this boy you?" you ask,

"Don't interrupt..." he looks sheepish, "Er...yes, he was me. Anyhow, he left University, joined the army and went on to great success. Then, one day, he imbibed a little too freely of the drink and got in a fight with his commander, beat him to death. The young chap ended up on the run. Eventually he heard of the Shadow Doctor, and the Shadow Doctor offered him a job. The chap rose in the ranks to where he is today." McGann spreads his arms to show a body covered in muscle, "I tell you this so that you know that these punches don't come from an amateur. You're receiving international talent." And with that you receive a blow to the face with fills your head with blinding light. Strangler and his associates tie you to a chair and McGann assails your face with a barrage of agonising blows. "Are you ready to talk yet?" he asks,

"I don't know where the sceptre is!" you cough, spitting blood. "You have the wrong man!" and McGann continues his assault. As the time goes on you try different tactics. At one point you claim that you know where the sceptre is and shout out the first address you can think of, but McGann shakes his head,

"We'll send someone to look there, but I think you're lying," he growls. Eventually he goes over a mantelpiece, "I've met very few men who could withstand a beating like that," he says, "We'll have to put you away, let you recover. Don't want you dying before you reveal your secret," he opens a case on the mantelpiece, "You know, I wasn't just a boxing champion at Cambridge, I was a cricket champion too," he produces a cricket bat and you groan, "I've already being gentler than I could be, in order to ensure that you survive, so bear in mind that I'm holding back an awful lot with this so that you survive to feel this." And then the bat strikes your face and everything goes black. Lose 2 health points.

Eventually you wake up in a cell. Groaning at the throbbing agony in your head you look around yourself. A voice sounds,

"Hello there." You look around and see an elderly woman, face swollen with injuries, sitting across from you. There is a dead body lying in the corner of the room. "I'm Sarah Devereux. What's your name?"

"Devereux?" you gasp, "I've been looking for you."

"Well I'm sorry your search brought you here," she says, helping you sit up. You explain to her the events of the past day. When you finish she nods,

"Some time ago I received a letter from an anonymous visitor asking if I could develop my memory extraction machine," she says, "I'm a memory implant developer, you see. I was asked by an 'Auguste Scarlet' to develop my memory extraction device so that it could remove and replace memories. I was offered money for the job, so I made the machine and posted it to him. This morning some gangsters

came around to my home, brought me here. Apparently 'Auguste Scarlet' was actually Auguste Beautrelet. They want to find out what he's doing from me, but there's little I know."

"He wanted a memory device?"

"Yes."

"How strange."

"I agree. It seems that he fell afoul of this gang during the theft of that disguise potion some time ago. The Shadow Doctor got the potion and tried to kill the thief after he helped him retrieve the disguise potion, but the thief escaped. Now everyone thinks the Shadow Doctor is dead...but I'm not so sure. The Scarlet Thief, the Shadow Doctor, the Great Detective...they are all wrapped up in one huge battle." She falls silent for some time, "That was Hector Sunfall," she adds, pointing to the body lying beside her, "They abducted him and killed him." Add the codeword 'Sunfall' to your character sheet.

There is a sound of activity outside the cell,

"They are coming for you," Devereux says, "They searched you for weapons when they put you here. Is there anything they didn't find?" you search your pockets.

Do you have a tranquiliser dart? If you do you may try to attack the person outside the door with it by testing your speed. If you succeed then turn to 39. If you fail, or if you don't have any tranquiliser darts, turn to 27.

26:

You approach the entrance to the mansion. On one side of it stands a small man holding a strip of yellow cloth, on the other stands a hulking automaton, painted with gang symbols. They both watch your approach.

"Er...hello," you say. The short figure thoughtfully twists the cloth between his hands.

"I need to speak to your masters," you say,

"Who are you?" asks the short man. You hesitate and he frowns, "You look familiar...I'm Strangler and this is Talos here..." he pats the machine beside him, "But you should know that already...where could I have seen you before..." he blinks, "You're the Scarlet Thief aren't you!" This could be a way in...or it could be a dangerous risk.

If you wish to tell them that you are the Scarlet Thief turn to 18. If you wish to deny it and insist they let you in then test your disguise, subtracting 2 from your roll. If you succeed turn to 42, if you fail turn to 18.

27:

McGann throws open the door and grabs you, pulling you to your feet. Behind him, Strangler is sucking on the end of his strangling-cloth thoughtfully.

"Monsieur Beautrelet. Are you ready for another chat?" he says, "And by 'chat' I mean 'beating the beans out of'."

"No thank you," you growl, trying to punch him,

"You fellows are right stinkers you know," Sarah says,

"Yes." You agree, "You *are*."

"So be it," sighs McGann. And then you are dragged back upstairs to be bludgeoned for some time and eventually killed when it is realised that you really don't know anything about the Eos Sceptre.

28:

You pass into the thriving heart of Eos, eyes coming upon the police station, a towering edifice of renaissance architecture watching the city, its door overlooked by statues of the Four Virtues of Fortitude, Maintenance, Compassion and Filial Piety. You pause, wondering how you're currently

doing in terms of compassion and piety to your...filial...whatever that is.

Officers and automata are entering and leaving the building, while airships rise in birdlike flocks from the hangars behind it. Nonetheless their number seems less than you expected given their presence in Eos today. You draw nearer and hear a commanding officer shouting to his force about 'chaos' brought about by the Scarlet Thief in the downtown districts before they rush off in that direction. Looking towards the building you see two entrances, a main one and a smaller side one, both guarded. You could try persuading the guards to let you in, or you could see if you can steal yourself a police uniform to convince them to let you in.

If you wish to go to the door turn to 32. If you wish to try stealing a uniform turn to 15.

29:

There are a couple of loud clicks from the lock, and suddenly the door is wrenched open, leaving you squatting with several pins and nothing more reassuring than a friendly smile to give. Several men stand before you. At their front is a short man holding a strip of yellow cloth. A pair of thugs leap forward and grab your arms,

"It's the Scarlet Thief!" cries the short man, "He's returned to steal from us."

"What should we do with him, Strangler?" asks one of the men, and the short man loops his cloth around your throat as you struggle,

"For many years I used this cloth to entertain the daughter of Maharaja Sumeru...by garrotting the servants..." he hisses, "First though, Major McGann must see you.

Turn to 25.

30:

The towering spires of Eos glitter in the morning sunlight as the streets fill, a myriad airships winding between the looming obelisks to cast their shadows upon the city as the police craft hunt the Scarlet Thief. As you draw closer to the heart of the city you notice that there are fewer people than there normally would be, and that the eyes of the crowds seem downcast and nervous with the prospect of a citywide hunt. You stop in a small general shop run by a dusty automaton to consider where you wish to go. The automaton sells the following things for the following amounts:

Level 1 Speed memory implant (+2 speed)-2 francs

Level 1 Stealth memory implant (+2 stealth)-2 francs

Wig (+2 disguise points)-2 francs

Prosthetic nose (+1 disguise point)-1 franc

Glasses (+1 disguise point)- 1 franc

Medical kit (1 use-restores 1 health point)-2 francs

You may only buy one of any of these things, except for the Medical kit, which you may buy any number of.

If you now wish to visit the police station and don't have the codeword 'lawvisit' then turn to 28. If you wish to seek out the criminal underworld and don't have the codeword 'crimevisit' you may either seek it out by turning to 35 or, if you know the address of the Shadow Doctor's lair, may visit it directly by turning to the house number it has. If you have two scarlet letters and think you know where the Eos sceptre is then you will have a one word location. Convert the word's letters into numbers, converting A to 1, B to 2 and so on, add the numbers all the letters are converted into together and turn to this number. If the reference you reach makes no sense then you have chosen incorrectly. If you have visited the police and the criminal underworld and do not know where the Eos sceptre is then turn to 38.

31:

The office contains a desk. On this are several files listing the income made from selling illegal narcotic memories and aetheric weapons, alongside lists of bribed officials. This would be rather valuable evidence for the police, but right now you lack the time to steal all the evidence on offer. Glancing at the door to check that no one has come for you, you open the desk drawers. They contain 6 francs and a tranquiliser dart, all of which you may take. In the bottom drawer you spot a scarlet letter next to a pile of dozens of keys. You grab the letter with excitement.

Add this letter to your character sheet and note that you can read in at any time by turning to 40.

If you have already been in the cell then you have nothing left to do here, and may leave the house by turning to 30 (Add codeword 'crimevisit' to your character sheet). If you haven't and wish to go in there turn to 24. If you haven't gone in there, but wish to escape by the back door now, before someone spots you, you may do so and return to the city centre by turning to 30 (Adding codeword 'crimevisit' to your character sheet).

32:

You opt for the side door since is out of sight of the square and only has one guard...albeit one *huge* guard.

"I need to go in," you say to him urgently, "Important business,"

"What is it?"

"Confidential information, but it's to do with catching the thief..." he raises an eyebrow, handling his firearm, "Detective Sky sent me," you add. If you are wearing a police uniform then he will let you in (turn to 5). If not then test your disguise, subtracting 2 from your roll. If you succeed turn to 5, if you fail turn to 8.

33:

As the cutting edge sweeps towards you you summon a final burst of strength, tugging to the left with all your might and bringing both the Shadow Doctor's accomplice's to the left with you. There is a sickening squelch and a tide of gore sprays across the corridor, but you realise it is not your blood. The Doctor's sword is buried in his accomplice's throat. There is a moment in which the Doctor and his other associate are motionless with surprise, and in this moment you are able to elbow the other accomplice aside and run down the corridor for the hall. As you bound through the doors you see dozens of police officers making for the door you are leaving,

"It's the thief!" you cry, "He's killed someone" and at this moment the Doctor and his associate leap through the doors after you. Gasps sound as the officers recognise the face of the thief as the one the Shadow Doctor is wearing. As he flies through the door, bloody sword in hand, eyes fixed on you, a great cry goes up and you hurl yourself to the ground as a salvo of aetheric shots streak across the room, striking the Shadow Doctor and his accomplice. You turn to behold both figures lying in pools of blood.

"The thief has been shot," an officer growls, moving in to check the bodies. They cluster around the two corpses, allowing you to move away, the traumatised innocent. The police's hunt should have calmed down now, with this falsely identified 'thief' dead. You leave the hall.

Note codeword 'Doctor' and turn to 80.

34:

Roll a die. On a 1 or 2 turn to 20. Otherwise, keep reading.

You slow to a stop on the edge of the industrial district, eyes running along a line of factories. Embossed over the gates are their names, with the third one along bearing the name 'Raymonde Industries'. You brush your shirt down in an effort to look presentable and wholly unlike a fugitive

who has just evaded a large scale attempt at arrest and walk through the gates, entering a large hall filled with large automatic machines lining the walls into the distance, each one rumbling as it churns out a line of identical automaton parts. There is a gantry down the middle of the hall and no trace of anyone. You follow it into a cluster of empty offices, finally ending up in one with a sign on the door reading 'Lost and found'. Your eyes fall upon a box of lost garments sat upon the desk. The lost garments are crowned by a long coat with a hood. While it strikes you as more suited to a rainstorm than a sunny morning in Eos anything that bears a hood seems like a good way of hiding ones face when on the run from the law, and so you don the coat (Add 'coat+2 disguise' to your character sheet). You reach into its pockets and find 2 francs. As you consider whether to put the money back on the desk or to take it a voice sounds behind you, inspiring a whirl of panic.

"Hello there stranger. What are we up to here?" you try not to look guilty as you find yourself standing in front of an elderly man with oil-soaked hands. As you make eye contact his face breaks into a smile, "Ah, it's you sir. I'm sorry, I didn't recognise you in that new coat. Dashed nice coat too. Reminds me of one I once had...lost it as I recall...How has your commission turned out?" You stare at the man,

"Commission?"

"Yes, you know the one I mean. A week ago you came asking about two specialised automata. A rescue one and an android. Have you used them yet?" You have never seen this man before, much less requested an automaton from him,

"I ordered automata from you?"

"Have you been sipping a little invigorator this morning? Your memory seems pretty poor today? I assumed that you must be here regarding those automata you bought." He shrugs and starts wiping his hands on a grubby cloth, "We don't officially open for half an hour yet, but seeing as we're both here early I'm happy to go over anything to do with your automaton if you want." You blink and then nod,

"Um...I'm sorry, this has been quite a strange morning."

"That's okay, follow me and I'll give you a hand..." the man turns and steps towards one of the office's two doors before freezing in place, "How come you're there as w..." he begins to whisper and suddenly a bloody blade erupts from his back. You dive back as the gasping man falls back in a spray of blood from the sword of the man in front of him, who kneels forward and wipes the sword off on shirt before sheathing it carefully in his cane. He looks up at you with a face identical to your own and smiles,

"Hello there my friend. How is day going?" you step back, eyes moving from the body at his feet to his own familiar features,

"Who are you?"

"Come now you know who I am."

"Auguste Beautrelet?" the man stops for a moment and then howls with surprised laughter,

"What on earth is going on here? Is this some strange plan underway?" he asks, reaching into his coat and drawing a handgun, "I may need to take you captive." This is all you need. With a squeal you bound for the office's other door, narrowly avoiding a blast of aether from the gun which disintegrates the desk. You gallop down the corridor beyond, leaping around a corner as another shot streaks past you and race back into a different office, this one possessing a window. As you look for a way of opening the window your pursuer draws close enough to unleash another shot, which destroys the window and opens an escape route to you. With an undignified wail you throw yourself onto the pavement outside and sprint away, losing yourself in a network of alleyways.

Who ordered two automata? Who is this killer and why does he share your face? What the hell is going on? You consider avenues of inquiry. You could visit the local criminal underworld, where you might be able to find out about these strange crimes with which you seem to have somehow become entangled, or you could see if there is information on it at the police station.

Turn to 30.

35:

With no better leads you descend into the slums of Eos, arriving on streets where crime and vice are the only occupation anyone growing up can hope for. These neighbourhoods were part of the kingdom of the enigmatic Shadow Doctor, a crime lord whose gang dominated organised crime in Eos for years. You are vaguely aware that decades ago several of Eos' crime families united to form The Commission, a single authority in the world of protection money, fraud, narcotic memory implants such as Laudanum and Blue Lotus, which are the only escape many people have from their bleak existence here, and which bring with them a crippling addiction. The Commission has been no more for at least thirty years, ever since the Shadow Doctor rose to dictatorial control of the criminal empire, slaughtering his rivals. The Shadow Doctor may be dead now in the twisted wreckage of the Scarlet Thief's airship, but his empire thrives in his absence, and you soon find yourself talking to various shady individuals on street corners, asking to speak to someone higher up in the gangs. Eventually you are directed to a wiry old man sitting at a table outside a dingy café, his skin pickled by coffee and cigarettes. He looks up from the chess board where he is playing a game with himself and gives you a one-toothed grin as you sit down opposite him.

"I need to get in touch with the Shadow Doctor's gang," you say,

"Mm? You know the gang aren't in a good mood today don't you? The airship crash this morning and all that..." you nod,

"I still need to see them," you insist, trying not to sound as unnerved as you are."

"Very well. Call me Maurice..." the man stops suddenly, "You look familiar..." his mouth slowly hangs open in awe, "You're...you're him, aren't you? Are you the Scarlet Thief..."

There is silence. Is this a way in, or a dangerous path to take?

To claim you are the Scarlet Thief turn to 48. To deny it turn to 43.

36:

You stand in a large hall. On a table in the middle of the room stands a Singecaster playing music, a string piece by J.S. Bach. In the corners of the room are large boxes of narcotics, and there are a couple of doors leading off. There is a door opposite the entrance one which appears to lead to a back door. To one side, the door to an office stands ajar and to the other a door is bolted on the outside, with 'cell' scrawled on it in black ink.

To open the bolted door turn to 24.

To go into the office turn to 31.

To leave via the back door add codeword 'crimevisit' to your character sheet and turn to 30.

37:

You find your way to the room Sky is staying in while in Eos. It is a room near the back of the building, its door locked only by a simple lock, which a twiddle with a few pins quickly unlocks. You enter to find a gloomy room containing an unmade bed, a shelf filled with books and files on crime beside which rests a large ornamental shield, a table overflowing with rubbish, including alchemical apparatus, a grubby slipper filled with tobacco, a handgun which has been used to write 'Albion' on the wall in bullet holes and a bunch of keys. A tiger rests on the floor.

The tiger is a huge aetherform, lying on the carpet, coat aflame with colour and green eyes fixed on you as it rises at your entry,

"An uninvited human..." it growls in a deep voice, "Interesting," it pads slowly forwards "Where have all the tender man-cubs gone? Why must I satisfy my hunger only with tasteless and aged flesh such as yours? In the village from which I hail in India they used to say that Bagha Khan had lost his skill, but I tell you that with age my wisdom and strength grow," you shiver as the tiger draws near,

"I'm...glad to hear that," you say, "What kind of detective keeps a *tiger* to guard his room?"

"Mm. If I must be content with this flesh then so be it," the tiger growls, "*I will feed now!*" the great creature bounds for you as you roll for cover, grabbing Sky's pistol and ornamental shield from the table and wall to defend yourself with.

Bagha Khan: Tiger Battle

Strike and Health: 'Strike' represents an attack's skill. Bagha Khan's strike is 7. You may fight viciously, using your 'speed' as your strike, or may fight agilely, using your 'stealth' as your strike.

Make a note of your 'initial' health before this fight. Now add 4 to your initial health due to having a shield. If you win the fight you may restore your health to its initial value. Bagha Khan's health is 10.

Attacks: Each combat round an attack is made at the opponent's face, chest or legs. You may choose which part of Bagha Khan to attack. Roll a die for his decision, on a 1 he attacks your legs, on a 2,3 or 4 he attacks your body, on a 5 or 6 he attacks your face. For your attack, roll a die. If you are attacking Khan's legs add 1 to your roll, if you are attacking his face subtract 1 from your roll. Roll for Khan's attack, adding 1 to it if he attacks your legs and subtracting 1 from it if he attacks your face. Add your roll to your strike and add Khan's roll to his strike. Whoever has the highest added score is the successful attacker and may wound their foe.

Wounds: Successful attacks to legs, body and face respectively remove 1, 2 and 3 health points from their victim. When wounding Khan you may, if you wish, use up a tranquiliser dart to score an extra 2 points of damage.

Defence: You may use your shield to defend your face, body or legs. Decide which body part to defend each round and if Khan's attack is directed at that part then if he wins the round he causes no damage to you as you have shielded yourself.

If Bagha Khan's health falls to 0 or below first turn to 49. If yours does then you find yourself buried within the depths of a tiger's stomach...

38:

You stand in the heart of the city as the sunsets. You have sought out clues concerning what on earth is going on wherever you could, and after your endeavours you are without a single hint as to how to escape the city or prove your innocence. With nowhere left to look and the city crawling with the police it is only a matter of time before you find yourself in prison on charges of crimes you have never committed.

39:

The door opens to reveal the face of Major McGann. In a split-second you hurl your dart, which sinks into his forehead. He freezes, eyes crossed, looking upwards at the object protruding from him.

"Oh, *fiddlesticks!*" he growls and then collapses to the ground. Behind him stands Strangler, mouth hanging open, and with the brief moment given to you by surprise you are able to bound over McGann and onto him overpowering him with a mixture of his surprise and your panicked, desperate punches. With two unconscious criminals before you, you turn to Sarah, who smiles,

"You know I didn't think that would work," she smiles and kicks an unconscious McGann in a very personal area, and after a moment you do the same, before dragging the bodies back into the cell and locking them in. You stand in a large hallway, occupied by a large table upon which stands a Singecaster, softly playing music by J.S. Bach. Opposite your cell door is the door to an office, while at the ends of the hall, one leading to the entrance and the other open, showing a storage room containing a back door,

"I'd like to leave while I'm still alive," Sarah tells you, "I'm using the back door,"

"There might be clues about this is the office though," you say, thoughtfully,

"Go there if you want, but I'm leaving," she puts a hand on yours, "You are a very nice young man and I thank you for getting me out of here. I hope you find out why Auguste Beautrelet has framed you, and I hope you find a way to prove your innocence." She runs out of the back door, leaving you

alone. If you wish to enter the office, turn to 31. If you wish to leave by the back door and return to Eos turn to 30 (Add codeword 'crimevisit' to your character sheet if you leave).

40:

The Scarlet letter reads:

'My dearest Doctor,

The greatest treasure in all Eos is mine. The sceptre cannot be yours. Yours is a shadow empire concealed beneath society's pillars, powerful in brute force - never the most reliable path - instead flying upon decaying wings. Château, crown and empire? I ascend beyond such things and tread mythology's borders to claim godlike status. Now it is with my flimsiest regards I leave.

Auguste Beautrelet, Scarlet Thief'

41:

You wander the building seeking Doctor Hamish. Eventually you spot him walking down a corridor in conversation with an officer. You try following at a distance, seeing his right hand briefly rest in his pocket as he walks,

"Sky told me to stay here and check some records. He's following the chase downtown but he says that the body language of the thief they are chasing isn't human." He reaches into his pocket for his watch, pulling out several things in his search including a bunch of keys, which he puts back into the pocket when he finds the watch. You increase your pace,

"What do you mean not human?" asks the officer as Hamish checks the time,

"He claims that the figure moves far too jerkily. He has said that the evidence suggests they are chasing an automaton replica."

"A replica? Preposterous!" they turn into an empty corridor as you prepare to 'brush' past Hamish and grab the keys from his pocket,

"I have learned that Sky's deductions are uncannily reliable. I am proud to name myself as the creator of the Great Detective when he is proven right on such matters." You pass Hamish.

Test your stealth. If you succeed turn to 45. If you fail then you are noticed, and may only escape if you have two tranquiliser darts, which you may use to knock the pair unconscious. If you do this then turn to 45. If you fail and do not have darts, or don't wish to use them, turn to 8.

42:

Strangler squints for some time,

"I could throttle you with this, just to be sure," he says, flicking your chest with his yellow cloth, before sighing, "But Major McGann may want to see you. Our bosses are upstairs." He turns and opens the door, "Go in." You obey, stepping over the threshold. The guards slam the door shut behind you, leaving you alone in the mansion.

Turn to 36.

43:

"Is see." Maurice says with obvious disappointment, "Well then why do you need to speak to my masters?"

"That's secret business, I'm afraid," you say, "Will you take me to them?" Maurice shrugs,

"It's your risk, not mine," he mutters, "Follow me." And with that the pair of you set off down the road. After several minutes you come to a huge mansion, its front door guarded by two figures. On one side is a small man holding a strip of yellow cloth. On the right is a hulking automaton covered in gang symbols. "Strangler," Maurice says with a nod to the man, "Talos," he adds with a wave to the

automaton.

"What is it?" growls Strangler, twisting his cloth between hands,

"I'm here to see your masters," you say, "I need to speak with them."

"Really?" test your disguise score, adding 2 to your result. If you succeed turn to 42. If you fail turn to 18.

44:

You plaster a benevolent expression on your face as you inch towards the desk, 'Is 'oo a pretty boy den? Is 'oo?' you say to the glinting mandibles as you take up a pencil and briefly glance down at the notes. You quickly change Pierre's bail to 'paid'. Pierre should soon be free. Add the codeword 'Liberté' to your character sheet.

There is a sudden surge on agony in your leg as the cog-dog hurls itself upon it, burying its razor-teeth in you. Staggering back you try to kick it off, whimpering in pain. After a minute or so of this a man strides in,

"François, down!" he cries, kicking the cog-dog, "I apologise, sir, he's very friendly really. 'Tis just his way of saying hello. You should see him greet my family...*Down boy!*" The cog-dog finally relents, spitting out blood and skulking off to its cushion. Lose 1 health point, and a lot of dignity. You sit, trying to massage life back into your bloody leg,

"Have you any bandages?" you gasp and the jailer nods, putting one over your injury carefully,

"May I offer you compensation? Hmm I don't seem to have any money on me but here's an emerald someone put on my desk this morning." He gives you an emerald, "What were you doing in my office, monsieur?" he asks. You blink,

"Er...I think I went in the wrong room," you say, "I was looking for a different office."

"Ah, I see. You have my apologies for François' enthusiasm." You rise and limp out of the office.

Turn to 5.

45:

With gentle fingers you grab the bunch of keys and walk onwards, sweat dripping down your face as you try to continue moving through the corridors between police officers in business-like fashion. After several turns you duck into an empty office and take a deep breath, wiping your forehead dry. Then you make for the main office, key in hand. Turn to 52.

46:

You stare up at the Château and sit down with bitter frustration. You know where you need to go now, you just cannot get there. You sit down at a café and decide to sit and sulk until the police find you.

47:

You try to pull aside, to no avail. The blade opens your throat, unleashing a tide of blood upon the floor and poor Doctor Hamish's sleeping form. By the time the authorities reach the spot they have been told the thief is at they will find your dead body and identify you as the thief. The Shadow Doctor has won.

48:

You try to give a daring grin, "I am the Scarlet Thief," you say to Maurice. His eyes widen,

"My days! I never thought...I've only ever been a lowly underling in the organisation, they never tell me anything important...and yet here I am, speaking to the Scarlet Thief." He sits in silent awe for some time,

"Well I'm here to speak to your masters," you say imperiously, "I don't do autographs, but you'll have my eternal gratitude if you take me to them." Maurice leaps up, nodding frantically,

"Yessir! I'll take you to them right away," he begins walking down the road, rabbiting away in your esteemed presence as you follow,

"Wonderful to meet you, sir. Our organisation have power but you...you have the personal touch. We can only dream of managing the things you do. We managed to steal a golden airship skeleton key the other day, lets you hijack any police airship you want, and we felt pretty pleased with ourselves. I imagine that sort of thing's all in a day's work for you, though."

"Well I don't like to boast," you say, straightening your shirt casually. If you ever find yourself in the Shadow Doctor's lair and are told that there are dozens of keys in front of you immediately subtract 20 from the reference number you are on to check for this golden skeleton key.

Maurice continues rambling until you reach a towering mansion. At its front door stand two figures. One is a small man holding a yellow strip of cloth. The other is a hulking automaton, its sides painted with gang symbols. "Hello Stranger, hello Talos," Maurice cries, "This is the Scarlet Thief!"

"What?" cries the small man, eyes flaring, "Get him Talos!" the automaton lunges forward, grabbing your hands in its own metal fists.

"What are you doing?" you and Maurice cry in unison,

"The Scarlet Thief is the Shadow Empire's enemy," hisses Strangler.

Turn to 18.

49:

Bagha Khan whimpers in pain and slinks backwards, eyes wary,

"It seems this one knows how to fight like a beast of the jungle," he growls, "So be it, I relent." Khan lowers his head and moves back into the corner of the room to lick his wounds.

The shield in your hand is battered beyond repair, so you cast it aside. As you step towards the table to pick up the key your pistol splutters and explodes in a flash of emerald aether, falling to the floor in pieces. Flinching, you pick up the key and eye the devastation surrounding you,

"Sky will not be pleased," rumbles Bagha Khan, "Though now that the shield and weapon are no more I am rather pleased," he rises and starts walking towards you. In a moment you sprint from the room and slam the door shut behind you, the tiger's laughter echoing in your ears as you head down the corridor towards the office. Turn to 52.

50:

The Scarlet letter reads:

Isabelle,

This day you may consider all treasure rather like all music, bad found with poor artists, better associated with skilful artists. Your hearing has oft been found to truly have ability to discern artists. You read these letters knowing there are four in Eos today which are so hidden...Notes on my crimes...four letters hidden around places...these show master and apprentice. Like musical notation my crimes have meaning. German, Italian, Albionic, the police all descend in multitude upon me, compare notes, but only four letters reveal the right hiding place of sceptres. The Doctor might play with the council. You can stop his crimes if you try. Doors are open. The secret of sceptres is lost. Open others' eyes. Can you stop this piano player, the Scarlet Thief? Library searches for the clues are futile...

Auguste Beautrelet, Scarlet Thief'

51:

The other guard slams his rifle butt into your head, knocking you over. The pair stand over you. If you have two darts and wish to use them turn to 71. Otherwise you will imminently find yourself back in prison with Detective Sky's company.

52:

The great reinforced door stands before you, lock at the centre. You raise the key and slot it in, turning it as the dozens of devices across the door click open. After a moment the door glides open before you, revealing the Beautrelet case office. A huge map of Eos is pinned to the wall, with tacks marking areas where the thief is suspected of having been. Upon the desk rests a single thick file, which you pick up and open. It is filled with information on the Scarlet Thief, and so with it clasped in your hands you turn and leave the office, heading for somewhere unseen to read through it. Eventually you take a door leading into the airfield where police airships take off, and from there you enter a secluded shack on the edge of the police grounds, where you sit down and start reading the file.

The file is divided into sections on the thefts of the Scarlet Thief. It is mentioned that he may have ordered a memory-related device from Sarah Devereux by post several days ago, and that she has since disappeared. It also features a section written by Sherrinford Sky on the thief's allegiance with the Shadow Doctor. Sky notes that the Scarlet Thief specialises in theft and is not a violent man, or interested in narcotics, making his choice of allegiance with the gang of the savage narcotic-dealing Shadow Doctor seem strange. He suggests that it was an uneasy alliance of brief convenience which may have eventually turned sour, adding that he believes he has found the Shadow Doctor's main base of operations at Twenty One rue Isidore (make a note of this address). He also questions why a legendary master of disguise like the Scarlet Thief would need to steal a shape shifting formula as he recently did, suggesting that it was the Shadow Doctor, not the thief, who took the formula and became a shape shifter. At the end of the file is a scarlet letter the thief sent the police recently. If you wish to read the letter make a note of the reference number you are on and turn to 65.

Finishing the folder you look for somewhere to put it. If you don't already have a backpack then you may take one from the shack's cupboard. Outside the shack you hear Sherrinford Sky's high voice speaking with police officers as he passes the shack. If you have two scarlet letters and think you know where the Eos sceptre is then convert the letters of the word of its location into numbers, converting a to 1, b to 2 and so on. Add 10 to the result and turn to this number. If the reference you read makes no sense then you have not chosen the correct place.

If you do not have two letters then you sneak out of the shack and head back into Eos. Add codeword 'lawvisit' and turn to 30.

53:

"I'm...Maurice Xavier," you say, plucking a name from the air. Hamish nods, "A pleasure, Monsieur Xavier. Now I'm afraid I must go to speak with a colleague," Hamish pats you on the shoulder and strides off, with Sunfall in tow. You are left alone at the table for some time, and after eating a few desserts you leave.

Turn to 80.

54:

Countess Isabelle of Eos' foyer is lined with beautiful paintings and sculptures. An ornate cello rests in one corner. The bookshelves are lined with books on subjects as diverse as aetherics, crime, alchemy, German composers and the occult. A Singecaster softly plays Bach canons. On the mantelpiece sits a perfect blue gemstone set in a necklace. A letter rests on a mahogany table reading '*The Countess will not be seeing any guests today*'.

The door to the Countess' quarters is locked, though the lock is simple, and there are several hairpins on the table which you could use to pick it. The necklace on the mantelpiece also catches your eye with its uncanny beauty...

If you wish to try picking the lock and visiting the Countess' quarters turn to 92. If you wish to take the necklace turn to 86. If you wish to leave turn to 80.

55:

You ascend the staircase to the offices, making your way to a central one with a door labelled 'The Scarlet Thief' case'. All the police's information of Beautrelet must be in here, but unfortunately when you turn the door handle a series of locks set around the door's edges shimmer with aetheric power. The door itself is thick and reinforced with all manner of substances, preventing entry.

"You need the key to go in," mutters a passing officer,

"The only people authorised to give access to the Beautrelet file are Commissioner Dupin, Detective Sky and Sky's associate Doctor Hamish. They have the three keys," he frowns, "Don't you know that?" you nod,

"Sorry, tiring day," you reply, "I was told to put some records in the file. Where are they?"

"Dupin's in his office, and I think Hamish is somewhere around the place. Sky's out chasing the Thief in downtown districts...though I think he always leaves his key in his quarters when he goes out for fear of being pickpocketed," the officer responds, sipping from a cup of coffee, "Now I've got to get back to work." As he leaves you consider your options.

To try persuading Dupin to give you his key turn to 3. To try getting Hamish's key off him turn to 41. To try breaking into Sky's quarters turn to 37. If this all seems too risky you can leave the police station by turning to 30 (Add 'lawvisit' to your character sheet if you do this).

56:

The officers frown at you as you approach,

"The Countess forbids visiting," one says, "The clockwork is at risk."

If you wish to try persuading them you have been sent to look at the tower's interior turn to 74. To attempt to force entry turn to 19. To wander back into the courtyard turn to 80.

57:

The armoury is all but devoid of contents, most of the equipment having been taken by officers pursuing the Scarlet Thief, though you do note that some hasty visitor has dropped 3 francs on the floor in their haste, which you may take. On one rack you find a single tranquiliser dart, which you may take, and a uniform rack holds a police uniform which you can don if you wish. In a back cupboard you find a backpack containing a jetpack, labelled 'experimental prototype-do not use in any circumstances'. You may take this if you wish, since the backpack conceals it. Other than these things there is nothing of interest. Return to 5 (If you return to the armoury anything you've already taken cannot be re-taken!).

59:

You step outside and look up at the Flying Château. Why must the sceptre be there? Why must it be in the most inaccessible place in all Eos, a place guarded by airships, cannons, winged automata and flying aetherforms...*if* you can ascend to it in the first place. You pace back and forth, considering how on earth you will follow this lead up. How can you fly that high? Airship? Jetpack?

If you have an airship skeleton key and wish to use it turn to 64. If you have a jetpack and wish to use it turn to 7. If you have neither then turn to 46.

64:

You wander the streets, seeking an attainable airship. Eventually you come upon a police craft hovering over a road, its crew apparently visiting a local café to flirt with the waitress. Its telescopic ladder hangs over the street, and so with a brief glance at the café you scramble up the ladder. The cabin is small and occupied by a young officer who is reading a magazine,

“Uh,” he comments as you enter, after which you bound onto him and cast him out the hatch. You hear him running, screaming, to his companions below as you run to the controls and slide the key in, the engines humming into life while you retract the ladder. With the sounds of raging people below you you drift upwards into the sky.

After a few minutes struggling with the gears, Eos is but a small circle below you, surrounded on one side by fields and on the other by mountains. The flying Château grows in your vision as you come level with it. A ring of vast gas bag girdles the structure, holding it aloft, with the tops of these gas bags being covered in gardens, forests, lakes and tennis courts. The sight of the place takes your breath away as you move towards it, noting with alarm that several airships are moving in your direction in their patrols along its edge. Glowing creatures with wings, aetherforms, and winged automata are joining them as an airship fires a warning shot into the air. The structure was built to withstand attacks by sky dreadnoughts and hurricanes, though they seem somewhat surprised by a single stolen police airship. You accelerate towards the Château, aethershells exploding in the air around you. As fragments of the gondola start to fall away beneath you your eyes scan the inside of the vessel, eventually coming upon a small door marked ‘Escape pod’ The gardens of the Flying Château are now beneath you, and so as an explosion rocks the craft you race into the escape pod, a small room with a small porthole at one end. You buckle yourself into your seat and pull the eject lever, after which everything becomes rather chaotic, ending with crash and a lot of shaking. The door falls away and you find your dazed eyes looking up at a canopy of tree branches with a large hole now torn in them. Staggering to your feet you leap from the pod and race into the depths of the Château grounds’ forest, voices and engines already sounding behind you. You lose yourself in the forest for some time, eventually bursting out into the sunlight of the Château gardens. You look upon the spires of the building and turn to a nearby tennis court where several people are watching a game being played. You shuffle over to them and feign interest in the game until a dozen automata race from the trees, eyes scanning the garden. After some time they pass, allowing you to head into the Château itself.

Turn to 80.

65:

The scarlet letter reads:

‘My Dearest Sherrinford Sky,

It is a pleasure to work against someone as intelligent and resourceful as yourself, rather than the amateurish police detectives I often seem to contend with. You may be interested to know that another of my letters is in the city of Eos, and it contains a coded message. As a gesture of goodwill I will tell you the code. Take its fourth word, then the fifth word after that, then the fourth word after that, then the fifth word after that, and so on. ‘Tis rather a simple cypher, though I suspect finding the letter will be less simple.

Yours sincerely,

Auguste Beautrelet, Scarlet Thief’

66:

You sit at the piano and strike four notes: ‘B-A-C-H’ in the German notation (or B flat - A, C, B natural, if you’re using English notation...but that doesn’t spell anything...). As you do so a click sounds and the bookshelf holding Doctor Hamish’s volumes slides aside. You smile,

“A secret door behind a bookshelf?” you chuckle, “Such a cliché!” you rise and go towards the secret door.

If you have the codeword 'Doctor' on your adventure sheet turn to 70. Otherwise turn to 88.

67:

"Hector Sunfall?" you cough, trying to hide your surprise. This is the man you saw dead several hours ago. There is something sinister occurring here,

"How are you finding this masquerade Monsieur Sunfall?" you ask and he smiles,

"Enjoyable enough. I do enjoy concealing my face beneath another's," he says, "Now, should we go Hamish?" Hamish nods,

"Would you like to come along Monsieur..?" he asks,

"Xavier...Pierre Xavier," you say, making the name up on the spot, "And yes, perhaps I will."

"I must report to my superiors," Hamish says as you make for a corridor. As you do so Sunfall calls out to two other men who join you,

"Friends, from the council," he says as they join you travelling down the corridor. At this moment he turns and buries a tranquiliser dart in the throat of Hamish, who crumples with a sigh at the movement. Sunfall turns on you,

"Hamish is a fool, but I recognise you Beautrelet," he growls, tossing aside his mask to reveal a face which shifts as you watch to match your own, though without disguise. The pair of council members pull your arms behind you as you struggle, hesitating when another guest enters the corridor and goes still at the sight, turning suddenly with a cry of

"The Scarlet Thief's in here!" he runs from the scene as your captor sighs,

"It was my face he recognised, but it'll be yours they identify as the thief," he says, pulling a sword from his cane,

"Who are you," you say, and he smiles,

"You know me. I am the Shadow Doctor, very much alive and enjoying that shape shifting formula you stole for me, thank you." He makes a practice swing with his blade,

"You know I'm not Auguste Beautrelet, don't you? I'm Jacques Leblanc," you suggest. The Shadow Doctor shakes his head with a sigh and swings his blade at your head.

Test your speed. If you succeed turn to 33. If you fail turn to 47.

68:

Halls lined with books stretch off in every direction, forming a network of knowledge reminiscent in complexity to the pathways of the human brain, the very organ its books sustain with wisdom. The Château guests are all at the masquerade, so you are alone in these rooms. After some time you find a stairway leading down into the Château's levels beneath the surface level, concealed within the ring of gasbags surrounding it. You notice several of Doctor Hamish's biographies on the shelves, such as *'The Adventures of Sherrinford Sky'*, *'The Case-Book of Sherrinford Sky'* and *'A Study in Brown'*. At last you come to a room in which rests a battered looking German piano, upon which rests a note reading 'Out of order-Please do not play'.

If you wish to play it anyway turn to 75. Otherwise you may return to the courtyard by turning to 80.

69:

You look up, out of the shack's window, at the Flying Château. Why must the sceptre be in the most inaccessible place in all of Eos, guarded by airships and cannons and winged automata and flying aetherforms? You groan in frustration at your only lead and put your face in your hands.

"Where is the other police officer?" Sky's voice asks outside in the airship field, "I'm supposed to

have two officers join me on my journey up to report to the Countess on our investigation. Where is your associate?"

"I'm not sure, monsieur," responds another voice, "He might be late or something," Sky begins muttering to himself in annoyance as you leap at the opportunity. Rummaging around the shack you find an old police-regulation aviator uniform in a cupboard, which you hastily pull on. Outside the sounds of conversation have faded away, so you throw open the door and rush out, seeking Sky. You catch sight of him walking towards an airship accompanied by a police officer and a pilot. You run after them,

"I'm sorry I'm late sir," you say,

"It's unfortunate, but you're here now," sighs Sky, boarding the airship gondola as the pilot starts the engine. You sit down across from the other officer as the craft rises into the air, engines humming. Sky is scribbling down notes as the world falls away below you, showing the entire airfield, including a police officer running onto it in the manner of a late arrival and looking around in confusion for the airship he is meant to board. Then the airfield shrinks away as the whole city spreads out below you, sparkling in the Eos sun, surrounded by fields on one side and mountains on the other. With all civilian air traffic suspended during the search for the thief your journey is a rapid one, the great Château looming before you. A ring of vast gas bag girdles the structure, holding it aloft, with the tops of these gas bags being covered in gardens, forests, lakes and tennis courts. The sight of the place takes your breath away as you draw towards an airstrip and hangar sitting in the middle of a field atop the gas bags. Within minutes you are landing and escorting Sky into the Château grounds, drawing his coat against the cold winds of this altitude. You follow him into a vast hall in the Château, where he turns around,

"I must speak with the Countess alone," he says, "I will not leave the Château for some hours." With that he walks off into the labyrinthine stone passages. You and the other officer disperse, though as you do so you hear a nearby Singecaster cease in its rendition of Bach music to give a report,

"This is an emergency broadcast, on a recent trip to the Flying Château one of the officers supposed to be going was left on the ground when another person went up in his stead. We believe this impostor is Auguste Beautrelet. The Scarlet Thief is in the Flying Château," you swear under your breath. So much for an unnoticed arrival.

Turn to 80.

70:

A corridor behind the bookshelf stretches on for a hundred metres or so, ending in a chamber which takes your breath away.

The Countess' vault is vast, hidden amongst the gasbags of the Flying Château. Lit by rows of aether lamps rises a veritable mountain of treasure stolen by the Countess over the years in her rivalry with Beautrelet, statues of forgotten gods, ancient coins and jewels, mysterious machines and stacks of portraits last heard of when they vanished from their gallery. At the front of it all lies a vast, golden sarcophagus.

Stepping forward, driven by some strong intuition, you push the lid of the sarcophagus back some way with a groan, unveiling the shapes within. There lies within an ancient mummified figure, skin grey and dusty, and upon its chest lie two items: A bottled memory implant and a golden sceptre.

You reach down, running your fingers over the sceptre of Eos and the bottle, which is marked with the words 'Drink me-Everything will make sense'. Picking it up, you uncork the bottle and glance around yourself. Here is where it ends. With a deep breath you gulp down the greenish substance, memories flooding into your mind.

You groan at the tide of information, leaning against the sarcophagus to support yourself. It is all clear now! Breaths rush in and out of your lungs.

"Step away from the sarcophagus and raise your hands," a voice commands. You turn your head and behold Sherrinford Sky stepping out from behind a large statue, hands crackling with power. You

smile in surprise and take several steps from the sarcophagus,

"You found me,"

"You didn't think the Countess could keep her little secret from me did you? I was visiting the Château on a regular basis during my hunt for you. It was only a matter of time before I uncovered her own little secret. It was a natural hiding place for you to use...where better to keep that which you have stolen from someone than the place they want others to know nothing about? I needed to wait until you revealed where exactly the sceptre was concealed in here, so I decided to lie in wait for when you arrived. I take it that it was you who sent all those request to the Singecaster stations to ask them to play nothing but Bach? A clever way of secretly revealing the way in here,"

"Thank you,"

"I confess that your plan still has me a little bemused."

"Really?" with the memory implant taken all is now clear, "I am...I *was*...Auguste Beautrelet," you say, "Hunted by the police. Hunted by the Shadow Doctor, who was now a shape-shifter. Hunted by you, the greatest Detective of all. I needed to gain myself time. So I stole the sceptre, I needed an aether-manipulator to slow an aetherform like you down. There would be no way out of the city once the sceptre was stolen, so I needed to hide myself. When one is a thief one begins by deceiving others and ends by deceiving oneself. I organised to lose my memory, replace the memories with fake ones, to become Jacques Leblanc. No matter what happened, no matter how long I was interrogated or tortured, I would never be able to reveal my secrets if I myself didn't remember them."

"Most ingenious. Was Pierre Xavier given false memories as well?"

"Just a few, to make him think he knew me well. I needed there to be people like him who would believe I really *was* Jacques Leblanc to make my disguise credible to myself. So I left myself clues in the form of scarlet letters and Singecaster requests for music by Bach and a pair of automata-one to free me from the police and one to look like me and draw the police away from me while I searched through Eos for clues. The Shadow Doctor, both my enemy and an enemy of the city, is dead now, and he was killed wearing my face, so everyone believes me dead. Eventually the authorities will accept that while the Scarlet Thief is dead, the sceptre was lost when he died. Then the borders will become easier to cross, allowing me to escape Eos. The Countess' secrets are revealed to you and I have her sceptre."

"Your plan has certainly ticked all the boxes," Sky comments with a smile, "We may be enemies, but it has been a pleasure to compete against you. There are few I would name as such, but I would almost consider Auguste Beautrelet a friend," his eye glitters with thought, "Are you really Auguste Beautrelet, though? If our identities are a collection of our experiences, then which identity is someone with two different collections of experiences? Are you Jacques Leblanc with a few memories of Auguste Beautrelet's, or Auguste Beautrelet with a few memories of Jacques Leblanc's?" you bow your head,

"I'm not sure...I'm complicated..."

"That you are sir, now step away from the sarcophagus." Who are you? Who do you choose to be?

If you are Auguste Beautrelet, master of theft and subtlety turn to 84. If you are the Scarlet Thief, enigmatic legend, turn to 96. If you are Jacques Leblanc, civilian, a man who simply wants to return to his life, turn to 89. If you are a mixture of all these, with the personality of Jacques Leblanc and the intellect of Auguste Beautrelet, turn to 93.

71:

You walk up the tower's wooden stairs as the sound of ticking grows louder in your ears. After spiralling round the tower several times you come to the clock chamber.

The colossal chamber contains the clock mechanisms, working in perfect harmony. On one wall is the inside of the clock face, beneath which is a large trap door which opens onto the outside world. The clock's mechanisms all connect to an enormous central sphere of glowing green aether which

hovers motionless over the bell in the centre of the chamber as the mechanisms revolve around it. The rings of mechanisms are crafted to resemble the paths of the planets orbiting the sun, with the shimmering sphere forming this system's sun. And within the heart of the sphere you can see the dim shape of a scarlet envelope. On the floor beside the sphere someone has written in scarlet paint *'The Sphere will open at 12 o'clock-Regards, Beautrelet'*

This work should be harmonious, but there is something wrong. Every few seconds bolts of lightning streak across the mechanisms, which seem to repeatedly change direction in their cycles. And the trapdoor makes no sense. Why would a huge clock tower have a door beneath the clock face?

A screech sounds above you in answer to this question. From overhead a vast mechanical bird wrought from cogs and clocks descends from the darkness of the rafters, spitting streams of aether. This isn't just any clock. It's a cuckoo clock. And the cuckoo is hostile.

You dive behind a large cog as the cuckoo circles overhead, shrieking, brass wings fluttering gracefully in the air. There seems to be a small set of controls beneath the sphere.

Horology Challenge:

Clock sections: To operate on the clock you can try operating on the Sphere (or rather, the keyboard interface beneath it), the mechanisms (pushing them into place) of the cuckoo (fighting it). If you choose to operate on the sphere or mechanisms you automatically succeed. If you choose to operate on the cuckoo you must test either your speed or stealth, adding 3 to your roll, to successfully operate on it.

Risks: Every round the sphere will emit lightning and the cuckoo will try to kill you. Roll a die for each every round. If you aren't operating on them then the sphere will cause 1 health point of damage if you roll a 1 for it. The cuckoo will cause 1 health point of damage if you roll a 1 or 2 for it. If you're operating on the sphere it will cause this damage on a 1 or 2 and if you're operating on the cuckoo it will cause its damage on a 1,2,3 or 4.

Time: The clock's time is stuck at 1 minute past 12. You must push it forward by 12 hours to 12 o'clock. A successful round with the sphere will push the clock forward by four hours. A successful round with the cuckoo will push the clock forward by 2 hours. A successful round with the mechanisms pushes it forward by 1 hour.

The Cuckoo: The Cuckoo has 3 health points. Each successful round you spend operating on it will not only push the clock forward but will remove 1 of its health points. If you reduce its health to 0 then it will stop attacking you each round, so you will no longer need to roll a die for its attacks. If you reduce its health to 0 you can no longer operate on it.

Note that if you push the clock past 12 then you must make it complete another revolution. If you push it from 10 to 2 then you must push it all the way round to 12.

If you get the clock to 12 before your health reaches 0 turn to 95.

72:

The music swells as you enter the hall, finding hundreds of aristocrats and council members garbed with such finery as to make Peacocks feel dull in their choice of garb. Masks of plaster, wood and gemstones are visible in every direction, while a band stands at the back of the hall, working their instruments to perfection. You wander among the dancers, coming to a stop at a table offering the best of delicacies, where you turn and watch the spectacle unfolding.

"Quite a show eh?" a voice says, and you turn to see Doctor James Hamish wearing a simple plaster mask at your side in the company of a red haired man in an obsidian mask. Hamish's mask is a simple plaster one, and he evidently believes you are another guest,

"It is," you say, "How long have you been here?"

"Oh not long," Hamish replies genially, "I've been working with my associate Sherrinford Sky trying to catch the Scarlet Thief today, so I've only just been called up."

“They say the thief has arrived in the Château,” the red haired man notes, leaning on his cane, and Hamish nods,

“Indeed. I’ve just been speaking about how I’m here to seek him out,” he turns to you, “I’m James Hamish, and this is a council member, Hector Sunfall. He’s jolly interested in this.”

If you have the codeword ‘sunfall’ on your adventure sheet turn to 67. Otherwise turn to 53.

74:

“Sky and Dupin sent me to look at what’s happened in the tower,” you say, “Trust me, I’m a horologist.”

Test your disguise roll, adding 2 to the score you roll. If you succeed turn to 78. If you fail turn to 4.

75:

You sit down at the piano, flex your fingers and experimentally press a key at random, a C. It rings out clearly in perfect tune, certainly not out of order. If you wish to play something on the piano then make a note of the notes you want to play in the German notation. Convert the letters to numbers, turning A to 1, B to 2 and so on. Add together the numbers of the first half of the piece you are playing and add together the numbers of the second half of the piece you are playing. You will then have two numbers. Multiply the first number by the second, double the result and turn to this number. If what you read is meaningless then nothing interesting happens when the notes are played.

If you wish to return to the courtyard turn to 80.

76:

You wander through a landscape of fields, lakes, forests, pavilions, mazes, hedgerows and statues, on one occasion seeing a deer sprint back into the woods as you walk past. You cannot help but feel awed by your location, kilometres above the world. Eventually you come to a large fountain carved as Mercury, the god of thieves. There is a pool at his feet into which he trickles water from a jug, and at the bottom of the pool is an ornate box. Swimming in the pool is a fish-like automaton with sharp teeth and angry eyes.

If you wish to reach into the pool then turn to 6. Otherwise there is nothing else here. Return to 80.

77:

Darkness pours from the Countess’ staff in a stream, much of it flowing towards you, yet you are surprised to find it doesn’t hurt you. There is a sensation of warmth in your pocket and you reach in, touching the emeralds,

“You are using my aether emeralds against me? How unsporting?” Countess Isabelle says. You grab a sword hanging from the wall and attack.

Countess Battle:

The Countess has 4 health points.

The Staff: Roll a die every round for Countess Isabelle’s attack. On a 1,2 or 3 you are struck by a bolt of darkness and must lose 1 health point.

The Sword: Each round test either your speed or stealth, adding 2 to your roll. If you succeed you may remove 1 health point from the Countess.

If you reduce the Countess’ health to 0 turn to 94.

78:

“Horology eh?” one officer says, eyes twinkling, “What’s that got to do with clocks though?” the other one cuffs him about the ear and they step aside, tipping their hats to you. With an authoritative air you enter the tower.

Turn to 71.

80:

You stand in the middle of the Flying Château of Eos, home of Countess Isabelle and a marvel of the modern age. The floor beneath your feet is made of a pane of glass at least half a metre thick, beneath which is a shaft dropping through the entire Château, allowing you to stare down at the city thousands of metres below. There are two roofs to the vast room in which you stand, one made of stone and metal, the one beneath it made of panes of glass connected by a metal skeleton, such that the chamber’s roof is like the transparent wings of a beetle beneath its hard carapace. They are more wing-like yet in that both roofs are split down the middle into two halves, with each half attached to a hinge so that in good weather one or both roofs may be opened to the world, turning the hall into a courtyard. Both roofs are open now, allowing you to look up into the clear pink evening sky. The Château’s towers rise on all sides of the courtyard, the walls of which are lined with statues, paintings and suits of armour. The evening air is thick with the sound of music coming from the Great Hall, where the guests who have been prevented from leaving the Château until the sceptre is found are having a Masquerade. In front of you stand the two most ornate towers, on the right Countess Isabelle’s tower in which the city’s ruler makes her inner sanctum, and on the left the great Clock Tower, an elaborate work of engineering and art which appears to have stopped working. At its door stand two police officers. To one side is another large door opening into the Château’s famous library where a world’s worth of literature is kept. And behind you is the door out into the immaculate gardens. In one corner of the courtyard, beside the door to the empty council chamber, stands an automaton crafted entirely from glass, each inner mechanism visible as it nods to you, offering an array of items in return for money. You may buy the following from it:

- Level 1 Speed memory implant (+2 speed)-2 francs
- Level 2 Speed memory implant (+2 speed)-2 francs
- Level 1 Stealth memory implant (+2 stealth)-2 francs
- Level 2 Stealth memory implant (+2 stealth)-2 francs
- Wig (+2 disguise points)-2 francs
- Masquerade mask (+4 disguise points)-4 francs
- Medical kit (1 use-restores 1 health point)-2 francs

You may only buy one of any of these things, except for the Medical kit, which you may buy any number of.

Welcome to the Flying Château! The Eos sceptre, perhaps a clue to proving your innocence and if not then certainly a useful tool to you in evading capture, hides close at hand.

If you wish to go to the Clock Tower turn to 56. To enter the Countess’ Tower turn to 54. To go to the Masquerade turn to 72. To enter the Library turn to 68. To visit the gardens turn to 76.

83:

You grab the guard’s rifle as he swings it upwards and with a twist yank it away, striking his companion’s head with it before bringing it back up into your opponent’s chin. The two men crumple to the ground with groans, leaving you feeling like an extremely impressive individual. You drop the rifle and enter the tower. Turn to 71.

84:

"You are under arrest," Sky says, aether crackling around his hands. You smile and shake your head. The Countess' ring flashes at your will, moving you back to the sarcophagus, and in the moment before Sky can respond you grab the Eos sceptre. A stream of light erupts from Sky's hands only to be absorbed by the sceptre you now hold.

"Very clever," admits Sky as you manipulate the aether around the aetherform known as the Great Detective. The gaseous substance shrinks him down until you can easily pick him up.

"I need a head start, my friend," you say, "Think of this as a victory in Chess. I have won this game and eventually we will play another one, but you cannot reveal my survival to Eos until I have made good my escape." Sky rages for several seconds but then nods,

"I am truly frustrated...but it is always a pleasure to compete against you, Beautrelet," he says.

"I agree. You will come with me for a while, and in some months' time I will post you back to Doctor Hamish to reveal my survival. But by then I will be far away and at work on my next theft," with Sky in your pocket you walk out of the vault and back into the library. A few cautious turns and you are able to make your way into a guest's room, where you conceal the sceptre within a bag and perfect your disguise. Within the week the authorities admit that the sceptre is lost forever, but that the Scarlet Thief is no more, and that Sherrinford Sky disappeared on the day Beautrelet died. You are able to take an airship out of Eos and keep a low profile for several months, after which you send Sky back to the authorities, for by now you are well hidden beyond the authorities' reach. You are Auguste Beautrelet, Scarlet Thief, and you will strike again!

FIN

If you wish to rate your success then turn to 100.

86:

You pick up the necklace. The gemstone is none other than one of the Sforza sapphires! You regard it in amazement. It is set into a locket, which you open to find contains a short written message:

*'My dear friend Isabelle,
A little parting gift to you as I win again.
B'*

You may take the sapphire if you wish. Turn back to 54.

88:

As you walk towards the secret doorway a voice sounds behind you,

"Hello Beautrelet," you turn and see a man holding a cane leaning over the piano. He looks up and you find yourself looking upon your own face. He smiles, "Do you know it's surprisingly easy to lure the police to a person you despise when you can wear that person's face at will. I believe they will have followed me into the library already," he says.

"Who are you?" you ask and he laughs,

"Can't you guess? I'm the Shadow Doctor, and for the past week I have been able to don faces at will thanks to you. After the police find the Scarlet Thief's corpse I will be able to leave wearing the face of the innocent Hector Sunfall,"

"I see," you say, "You seem to be enjoying your face-switching,"

"Oh, I am, but I will enjoy having the sceptre much more. Lord of the criminal underworld is a nice position, but with the sceptre I wouldn't put Lord of the city itself off the cards. It was a nuisance trying to figure out where you'd hidden it. I had to keep an eye on you around the Château, wait until

you moved towards wherever your hiding place was.”

“I didn’t notice being followed around the Château,” you say,

“My gift means you wouldn’t notice the same chap following you,” he replies. There are sounds of voices along the corridor, “Anyway, best get this job finished before the police get here...” he draws a blade from his cane, “Goodbye Beautrelet...” as he lunges you avail yourself to the power of the Countess’ ring, vanishing in a flash of aether and reappearing in the secret doorway. The Shadow Doctor appears startled by this. Before he can respond the voices of the police grow louder.

“Say hello to the police for me,” you say, pulling the secret door closed as you step into the room beyond. The Shadow Doctor screams in rage,

“Come out and fight you coward, come out and fight!”

“It’s Beautrelet,” another voice, Doctor Hamish’s voice, shouts, “And he has a sword!”

“I’m not Beautrelet you idiots!” screams the Shadow Doctor,

“Don’t move! We...” there are sounds of a struggle and gunshots, and then silence.

“So passes the Scarlet Thief,” Hamish’s voice says,

“Why was his face blurring just before we shot him?” asks Dupin’s voice,

“That shape shifting formula he stole a week ago. Sky thought it was the Shadow Doctor that got the formula, but it seems Sky was wrong,” you hear the police dragging the body away, and then silence. You turn and enter the vault.

Turn to 70.

89:

“I am Jacques Leblanc,” you say, “Auguste Beautrelet is dead.” Sky nods,

“I understand. I won’t try to get you imprisoned for the crimes of a dead man, especially not when as far as the authorities are concerned that man’s body has already been found. I will need the sceptre though,” he walks over to the sarcophagus and picks up the sceptre.

“I’d like to see Pierre again,” you note, “I think it’s been rather strange day for he and I,”

“Indeed,” Sky comments, “I hope you enjoy the rest of your life, Jacques Leblanc, though I may visit you occasionally to ensure you don’t return to your old ways,” he smiles and shakes your hand, “It has been an honour to compete with you, sir.” With these words you leave the vault and return to your lives.

FIN

If you wish to rate your success turn to 100.

90:

The Scarlet Letter reads:

‘Monsieur Leblanc,

If you are reading this then you are as resourceful as I hoped you would be. Well done. Allow me to offer you a gift for your achievement. There are two Scarlet letters in the Flying Château, and the other contains another coded message like the one I presume you stole from the Shadow Doctor’s mansion (well done stealing that, by the way. We are more alike than you know). The code for the other letter is to take the third word, then the fourth word after that, then the fifth word after that, and then the third word after that, the fourth word after that and the fifth word after that, and so on. Then read the result back to front. I hope this assists you.

Yours sincerely,

Auguste Beautrelet, Scarlet Thief

PS: If you do decode the other message it may be of use to you to know that while music written in the English notation names notes after the letters a,b,c,d,e,f and g, music written in the German notation names notes after the letters a,b,c,d,e,f,g and h, since among the notations’ differences is the fact that what is ‘B natural’ in the English notation is named ‘H’ in the German notation. This knowledge is more useful than you know.’

92:

After a few minutes the door opens to reveal a staircase. You rise up the stairs, hearing the sound of a Singecaster playing music above you. You rise to a door, which you warily open to reveal a lounge containing many bookshelves and paintings. Swords hang from the walls, and you are surprised to see a pentagram painted in black ink on the roof. There is a door made of thick metal set in one wall. As you enter there is an explosion of darkness from the corner of your vision, accompanied by a sensation of motion. A moment later you find yourself lying on the floor, looking up at Countess Isabelle.

The Countess is around thirty years old with black hair and oft-complemented fairness. You struggle to see this perspective since she is currently pinning you to the ground with streams of darkness which are gushing from the black staff she holds in one hand. She raises an eyebrow,

"Beautrelet? You have come back?" she notes with surprise,

Why does everyone think I'm Auguste Beautrelet?" you groan, "I'm Jacques Leblanc. Please don't hurt me,"

"Jacques Leblanc? What do you..." she frowns for some time, eyes fixed on your face, "This is all part of this plan of yours."

"It isn't," you say, and she bursts out laughing,

"You have no idea do you? A memory device was requested by Beautrelet, everyone says you look like Beautrelet, you were left clues in letters by Beautrelet. Letters like this one," she pulls a scarlet letter from her bookshelf briefly before putting it back, "Is it not obvious?" your mouth feels dry,

"What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean. How many people know you, 'Jacques Leblanc'? One work colleague? I doubt more than that. Your hometown? Probably some fictional place," there is cold pain in your stomach,

"Shut up!"

"You're not real, Jacques Leblanc. You're just a character, being played by another, like the protagonist of some game. Your choices, your skills...chosen by your player."

"You're insane!"

"No. I know your player. Auguste Beautrelet. That's who you really are, Leblanc. You have used that memory device you got from Sarah Devereux to replace your memories. Perhaps there are one or two others you used it on to convince them they knew you, worked with you,"

"My friend Pierre?"

"You've known him for a couple of days at most, while you were working with him disguised as Leblanc. Then, last night, you stole my sceptre made Pierre think you were best friends and erased the knowledge of the sceptre's whereabouts from your mind, to stop me getting it back. Your whole life is a fiction, Leblanc," you cannot think of anything to say.

"I knew the real Beautrelet. We were rivals. Few know that the Countess of Eos is a criminal on par with the Scarlet Thief, because unlike the Scarlet Thief I know how to keep a low profile. My stolen treasures are hidden away well. And I'm still a better ruler than this city will have if the Shadow Doctor has his way bribing the Council," she shrugs, "But you are no rival, you're just a little fictional man with no skill at anything. Now *die!*"

If you have two or more emeralds then turn to 77. If you do not turn to 97.

93:

"I am Jacques Leblanc," you say, "But I have some rather more useful skills now. I'm not sure an aether plant is any kind of place for a young man to work,"

"Perhaps," Sky says, walking over and picking up the sceptre, "Well if you want to use such intellect and skill as you truly possess but feel disinclined from working against the law then perhaps you might like to try working *with* the law. Would you like to join Doctor Hamish and me in our

detective endeavours back in Albion?"

"That is a tempting offer," you say, "But I doubt the authorities would let me leave Eos,"

"Pah! Auguste Beautrelet is dead, they have his body. You are a different person altogether. I'll return the sceptre to Eos and we shall be able to head on to our next case." You nod as the pair of you leave the vault,

"To our next case then, Sherrinford Sky!"

FIN

If you would like to rate your success turn to 100.

94:

Countess Isabelle drops her staff with a gasp of pain, "It seems you've retained more of your expertise than I thought, darling Auguste," she says, "I think prudence precedes pride at a time like this." She holds her left hand up, ring glowing intensely,

"Stop!" you shout but in a moment the woman before you has become a transparent luminous spectre of aether, drifting away intangibly through furniture "You win this time, Auguste. I'm leaving my Château to you tonight. In several days I will return from the mountains, and I expect you to be gone by then," she says, and then she fades away completely. You are left alone in the Countess' chambers.

Turning away, you look around the room. The scarlet letter is still in the book shelf where Countess Isabelle left it. Add this to your character sheet and note that you may read it at any time by making a note of the paragraph you are on and turning to 50.

You also notice a ring like the one the Countess used lying on the table. Donning it, you find that without the Countess' lifelong training in such arts you cannot quite achieve the heights she did with it. However with much effort you can transport yourself a couple of feet away using it. You descend the stairs to the courtyard, mind brooding on the Countess' claims. She was trying to defeat you, and may have been lying. If she were not? Who are you really? If you have no memory of being the Scarlet Thief then surely you are a different person entirely.

Return to 80.

95:

The clock reaches 12 and its great bell rings, the sonorous sound booming across the Château. The sphere becomes brighter and suddenly the aether flows out from it, spreading across the machinery around it and sinking into it. The cuckoo itself is washed over by the aether, head rising attentively. The aether fades into the machines, and where the sphere was there is now only a tiny pinprick of green light, with the scarlet letter hovering over it.

The cuckoo rises, giving a melodious coo, flying cheerfully around the chamber. You wipe sweat from your forehead and pick up the envelope. It contains a scarlet letter and an emerald. You may add both to your adventure sheet and note that you can read the letter at any time by making a note of the current reference and turning to 90.

The trapdoor is now open, and you can see numerous police officers approaching the foot of the tower to investigate the disturbance. Another way out may be acquired. As you look out the cuckoo bows its head. The bell is still ringing the hour and it wants to fly out.

You clamber onto the cuckoo's back and tell it to go. In a moment you are soaring through the evening sky, Château floating below you. The cuckoo sweeps over the garden and lands in a small patch of woodland where you dismount. Patting its brass feathered flank you leave the area before any police can spot you, making back for the central courtyard as the bird flaps its wings and returns to its tower. Turn to 80.

96:

"You are under arrest," Sky says, aether crackling around his hands. You smile and shake your head. The Countess' ring flashes at your will, moving you back to the sarcophagus, and in the moment before Sky can respond you grab the Eos sceptre. A stream of light erupts from Sky's hands only to be absorbed by the sceptre you now hold.

"Very clever," admits Sky as you manipulate the aether around the aetherform known as the Great Detective. The gaseous substance shrinks him down until you can easily pick him up.

"I need a head start, my friend," you say, "Think of this as a victory in Chess. I have won this game and eventually we will play another one, but you cannot reveal my survival to Eos until I have made good my escape." Sky rages for several seconds but then nods,

"I am truly frustrated...but it is always a pleasure to compete against you, Beautrelet," he says.

"I agree. You will come with me for a while, and in some months' time I will post you back to Doctor Hamish to reveal my survival. But by then I will be far away and at work on my next theft," with Sky in your pocket you walk out of the vault and back into the library. A few cautious turns and you are able to make your way into a guest's room, where you conceal the sceptre within a bag and perfect your disguise. Within the week the authorities admit that the sceptre is lost forever, though the Scarlet Thief is no more and it seems that Sherrinford Sky has disappeared.

You are able to get an airship out of Eos with the sceptre and Sky in your possession. As you leave you look out of the window over the city shrinking into the horizon, awaiting the final touch you have prepared...3...2...1

Scarlet fireworks explode in the sky over Eos, reading your final message to Eos:

'The Scarlet Thief lives, and he will strike again!'

FIN

If you wish to rate your success turn to 100.

97:

You manage to stagger to your feet against the flow of darkness and grab a sword hanging from the wall.

Countess Battle:

The Countess has 6 health points.

The Staff: Every combat round roll a die. On a 1,2 or 3 you are struck by a bolt of darkness and must lose 2 health points.

The Sword: Every combat round test either your speed or your stealth. If you succeed then you have struck the Countess. Roll another die, and on a 4,5 or 6 subtract 1 point from her health. On a 1,2 or 3 she uses her aetheric ring to move aside before the blow falls, and loses no health.

If you reduce Countess Isabelle's health to 0 turn to 94.

100:

You have succeeded! You have reached one of four successful endings. But what kind of success was it, and how does the future look? If you feel inclined to rate your success then check whether you have the following achievements and how many points you gained from them:

Master Thief-If you ended your adventure with all 3 Sforza sapphires.

Stalwart Companion-If you have codeword 'Liberté'.

The Unseen-If you never used any tranquiliser darts.

Add together you achievements:

0 achievements: You got out of a bad situation, but that's about it. No one tells awed words of this day and it seems like more of a sequence of lucky accidents than a path to a shining future...

1 achievement: You have done a reasonable job. The newspapers will publish some articles about this day, but within a few years it will be largely forgotten. Nonetheless you have shown some real skill and while the future looks uncertain you feel that with effort you could flourish.

2 achievements: You have done excellently! Today will be famous for years to come and with your wise choices the future looks bright. However you can't help wondering whether you could have done better.

3 achievements: Today has been one of the greatest achievements of your already legendary life! All choices have been well made and this day will go down in history. Best of all, it seems the future can only improve upon this excellence!