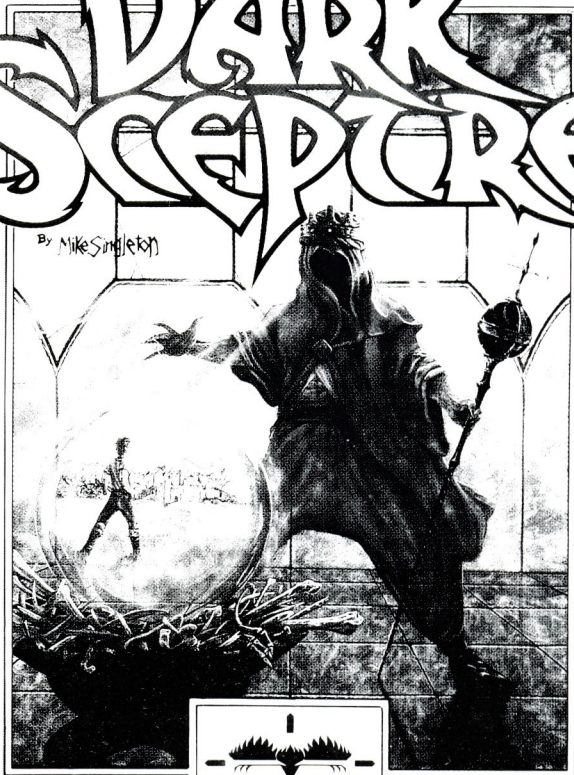


AMSTRAD

DARK SCEPTRE

By Mike Singleton



THE FORGING OF THE SCEPTRE

Deep in time, peace lay like a dream upon the Islands of the Western Sea. Proud was the Lord of the Isles on his throne of pearl and jade and amethyst. Tall was his crown, carved from dawngold and jewelled with starlight, long his sword, forged of lightning and dragonsfire, broad his cloak, woven of moonbeams and rainbows and morning mist.

Tranquil year after tranquil year, the Western Isles slumbered. Then, on the wings of a winter storm, came ships from the north, tossed and broken by the icy seas. The Lord of the Isles smiled upon the Northlanders, harboured them and gave them shelter.

Then came the spring. The ice storms quelled and the seas calmed. The Lord of the Isles offered strong, oaken ships to the Northlanders, yet they chose not to leave, coveting the riches of the Islands of the Western Seas. They drew their swords and demanded land to make homes upon.

The Lord of the Isles smiled no longer. The Northlanders were too many for even his enchanted sword of lightning and dragonsfire to chasten. Hiding his wrath as best he could, he gifted rich farmlands to the Northlanders and warned them to keep the peace and abide within their new domain. Then, in secret, fearing more treachery, he gathered the finest smiths he could muster and bade them forge him a magical sceptre of terrible power.

Five long years passed before the sceptre was finished and with each year the Northlanders grew more bold, demanding more and more from their benefactor. Finally the smiths came to the Lord of the Isles and handed to him the sceptre they had wrought. He thanked them and gave them ample reward for their long labours. Then he summoned the Northlanders to attend his court.

Two days later, the Northlanders crowded into his throne-room. Once more, the Lord of the Isles offered them ships, this time warning them that they would feel his wrath if they did not leave. The Northlanders laughed at him and

scorned him, telling him that if he did not take care, they would take his throne as well as his lands.

The Lord of the Isles lifted himself from his throne of pearl and jade and amethyst and stood tall before the scoundrels. Then he raised the sceptre high above his head. Suddenly the Northlanders fell silent. Darkness gathered about the sceptre and a shrieking gale rushed in through the doorways and windows, swirling like a hurricane around the Lord of the Isles. Blue lightning flickered across the golden orb at the sceptre's tip and thunder rumbled through the throne-room.

"By the Dark Powers," cried the Lord of the Isles, "Let the Hounds of Hell harry you to the end of time itself! Ara ithim eren Marash!"

Upon his words, the lightning leapt outwards from the sceptre, touching each one of the Northlanders with fire. Their very flesh began to crackle and blaze and they screamed terribly, till it seemed the sound itself must tear out their throats. Despite this, one of the Northlander warlords, maddened with pain, leapt upon the rostrum where the Lord of the Isles stood.

"Fiend!" he cried, "if to hell I must go, I shall take thee with me if I can!"

With the strength of the possessed, the Northlander seized the sceptre and smote the Lord of the Isles. Suddenly the body of the great Lord quivered and disintegrated in a flurry of white hot sparks. These the wind caught up, swirling them up into the air and out of the tall windows of the throne room, sighing softly as it went.

"Powers of Death, I call upon thee," cried the Northlander, "Save us and we will serve you forever!"

Now the darkness that had gathered about the sceptre twisted into long fingers that reached out to touch the burning, writhing Northlanders. As it touched each of them, it seemed to quench the terrible fire that wreathed them and soothe their pain. Yet at the same time, their flesh seemed to lose substance, glowing faintly like the embers of a fire and growing shadowy and vague.

The Lord of the Isles had made a terrible misjudgement. Seeking to destroy the Northlanders utterly, instead he had given them a strange and evil power. The sceptre he had set his smiths to make had touched the Northlanders with its dark force. No longer were they mere men; now they were Lords of the Shadow, gripped by evil and ruled by the Dark Sceptre that had created them. The Isles of the Western Sea would know no peace until the Dark Sceptre was destroyed and with it the evil of the Shadow Lords who drank of its power.

YOUR TASK IN DARK SCEPTRE

You are in command of a company of warriors, seeking to find and destroy the Dark Sceptre. When you find it, beware, its dark powers may destroy you if you have not taken the proper precautions. What these precautions are, you'll have to find out. If you do manage to seize the Dark Sceptre, you will be told how to destroy it. Don't worry, it won't be too easy. If you do destroy it, you've won.

To hinder you on your way, the computer controls other companies of warriors. Most of these are neutral towards you at the beginning of the game but the Shadow Lords company (colour red) are always your sworn enemies. The other companies may become friends or enemies in accord with the events that occur during the game. Bear in mind too that you can recruit new members to your company and possibly lose warriors by desertion to other companies.

It's quite possible to play Dark Sceptre with a group of friends, each of you taking control of one or more warriors in your company — but don't forget, either you all win or you all lose; you're all on the same side.

LOADING THE GAME

Amstrad CPC 464 tape

Hold down CONTROL and press the small ENTER key. Press PLAY on tape.

Amstrad CPC 6128 and CPC 664 tape.

Hold down SHIFT and press the @ key. Type TAPE and then press RETURN.

Hold down CONTROL and press the small ENTER key. Press PLAY on tape.

Amstrad CPC 6128, 664 and 464 disc.

Hold down 'SHIFT' and press the '@' key. Type CPM and then press RETURN.

CONTROLLING THE GAME

The game is controlled by joystick-selected commands. Alternatively, you can use the keyboard to imitate a joystick if you prefer. Before the game starts, an option screen allows you to select joystick or keys.

During the game, there are 5 control options that you can select using up/down on the joystick to highlight the option. The fire button confirms your choice. By using left and right you can change the warrior that you have currently selected.

WATCH

This option allows you to watch a fight. If you hear the sound of clashing metal, then one of your warriors is engaged in battle. Press fire on this option to WATCH the fight.

SCAN

This option allows you to see a full map of the island, which appears in the viewing window. The positions of each of your warriors are marked in yellow on the map (dead warriors are not shown). The white square indicates the position of the warrior that you have currently selected. You must push fire again to get out of this option.

CHECK

This option allows you to check the personality of the warrior you are currently watching and the last orders he was given. A summary of his personality appears in the viewing window.

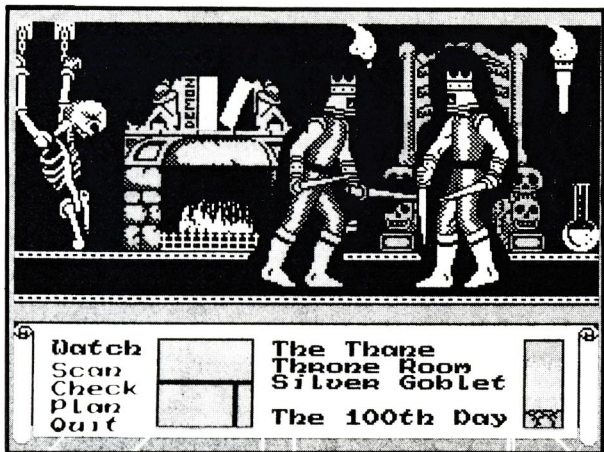
PLAN

This option allows you to plan your orders for the warrior that you are currently watching. A question and answer session happens in the viewing window until your orders are complete. If you select the GO TO command then the map will appear in the viewing window. You must move the cursor to the place that you want to go (you may only select junctions) and press fire.

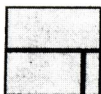
QUIT

This option allows you to quit the game. Further options allow you to save your position or load a previously saved position or return to the game.

VIEWING WINDOW



Watch
Scan
Check
Plan
Quit



The Thane
Throne Room
Silver Goblet
The 100th Day



CONTROL
OPTIONS

WARRIOR
IDENTIFICATION

TIME OF DAY
INDICATOR

SCROLLING
MAP

OBJECT CARRIED

CALENDAR

LOCATION

PLAYING DARK SCEPTRE

All play in Dark Sceptre is by joystick-controlled command or by keyboard simulation of this. You can watch in full animation the actions of your warriors but, like a true commander, you have no direct control over their movements. When your warriors fight, they fight using their own skills; when they move from place to place, they use their own intelligence to guide them; in unforeseen encounters, their own personality determines their reactions. You are not the puppet-master and they are not puppets!

Nevertheless, your warriors need you. Their strategic thinking is poor and without your commanding intelligence, they cannot complete their dark and deadly quest. You control your warriors through the orders you give to each of them. You must choose these orders carefully, bearing in mind the nature and personality of the warrior. He will endeavour to carry out his orders but he will do so in his own way and according to this own nature.

To give orders to a warrior, first get him in view by using left/right. Then select PLAN — this enables you to PLAN your orders for the warrior. The warrior will tell you his current orders and you can use the joystick to change his orders or give him further orders.

You can select from a large variety of orders. Any order can be given to any warrior, even though he may not be able to complete it successfully. The magical orders, for instance, can only be carried out fully by those with magical powers; if you give such orders to the wrong warrior, then you must take the consequences.

THE ORDERS YOU CAN GIVE

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| FOLLOW warrior: | attach yourself to him as helper |
| PROTECT warrior: | attach yourself to him and guard him in battle |
| STALK warrior: | go wherever he goes, a few paces behind |

HARASS warrior:	follow and get in his way as much as possible
AVOID warrior*:	stay out of his way
FIND warrior*:	find him and do no more
KILL warrior*:	find and then kill him
BEWITCH warrior*:	find and magically turn him into your spy
PETRIFY warrior*:	find and magically turn him into stone
CURSE warrior*:	find and magically change good qualities to bad
CHARM warrior*:	find and magically recruit him to your company
RELEASE warrior*:	find and magically release him from the effects of bewitchment, petrification or cursing
THREATEN warrior*:	find and take what he carries by threat of force
CHALLENGE warrior*:	find and recruit him to your company by threat of force
PERSUADE warrior*:	find and recruit him to your company by persuasion
BRIBE warrior*:	find and recruit him to your company by gift
JOIN warrior*:	find him and join his company
GIVE TO warrior*:	find and give him what you carry
BEFRIEND warrior*:	find him and give him a message pledging friendship of your company to his
INSULT warrior*:	find him and give him a message ending any friendship of your company to his
WAIT FOR warrior*:	wait until he arrives

AMBUSH warrior*:	wait until he arrives and then attack him
TRACK object:	find it, do not take it but follow it if it is taken elsewhere
GUARD object:	find it, do not take it but let no others take it
SEEK object:	find it but do not take it
TAKE object*:	find it and take it but do not use force
GRAB object*:	find it and take it by force if necessary
USE object*:	find it, take it by force if necessary and use it
BLOCK place:	go to place, stay there and let none pass
DEFEND place:	go to place, stay there and let only friends pass
WAIT AT place:	go to place and wait there
GO TO place:	go to place
ROAM:	wander about at will
WAIT:	wait wherever you happen to be

In these orders "warrior" means a particular, named warrior, "place" means a particular cell on the map and "object" means a particular, named object. Where "warrior" is marked with an asterisk, the order can also be chosen to refer to "friends", "enemies" or "anyone". Where "object" is marked with an asterisk, the order can be chosen to refer to "anything".

When an order has been completed, successfully or not, the warrior will automatically follow his next order. If he has no further orders, then he will WAIT wherever he is. Take note that Thralls are simple souls who can only remember one order at a time! Other warriors can remember a number of orders.

SPECIFYING PLACES

In your orders, warriors and objects are specified by names selected with the joystick. Places, however, are specified using the map, which will appear automatically at the appropriate time. Simply move the cursor to the junction that you want to specify and press fire. The map will disappear and you can carry on with your orders. The place will be named in your orders - for instance, "Gilkins fork" if the place is at a junction of paths.

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

Other companies of warriors are at large. During PLAN mode, you can specify whether an order is to do with friends or enemies. The purpose of this is so that you can refer friends or enemies in your orders without being long-winded. You can still attack "friends" if you like, or be kind to "enemies".

However, friendship pledged by a BEFRIEND order is different. If you attack a pledged friend, you will be marked for the rest of the game as treacherous and other companies will be unlikely to befriend you. To avoid being marked as treacherous, you must officially signal the end of the friendship first by using an INSULT order. This may anger the insulted party but you will still be regarded by others as an honest dealer.

SPIES

The BEWITCH order turns someone else's warrior into a spy for your company. Even so, he remains a member of the other company and behaves as such. You cannot give orders to a spy, but you will be able to watch him as he goes on his travels and see what he gets up to. This may give you valuable information.

BEING KIND TO OTHERS

You can be kind to others in a number of ways — you can give them objects, send warriors to join their companies or simply

pledge friendship. In return, those others are likely to be kind to you so don't think generosity's just a waste of time.

FINDING THINGS

If a warrior is told to go to a place, he will go there, usually by a direct route simply because he knows the way. If, however, he has to find another warrior or an object, he will usually have to search around first. How well he searches depends to some extent on his personality. However, a handy rule of thumb is that the closer to his target he is, the quicker he will find it. Don't expect your warriors to make a bee-line for the things they seek!

THE WARRIORS

There are 8 different types of warriors you can come across in the game, each of which has its own strengths and weaknesses. These you will discover as the game progresses but here are some hints.

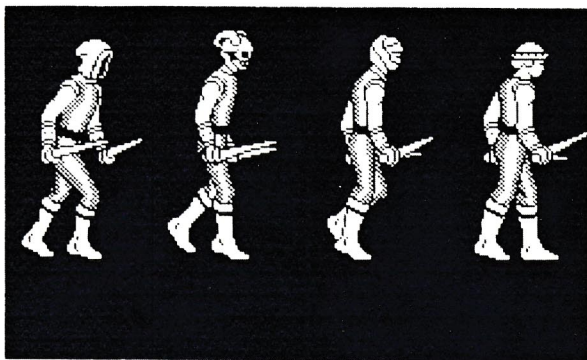
- THANE : The commander. Without a Thane, the members of your company will be more likely to desert.
- MYSTIC : Mystics usually possess magical powers.
- HERALD : A messenger and a fighter.
- ASSASSIN : A hunter and a killer.
- REAPER : The executioner. Strikes fear into others.
- FOOL : A talker, not as foolish as his name suggests.
- SAVAGE : Wild man of the woods - tough and resilient.
- THRALL : An underling, a pawn. Being simple characters, thralls do not have complex personalities. There are lots of them, though.

THRALL

REAPER

ASSASSIN

FOOL

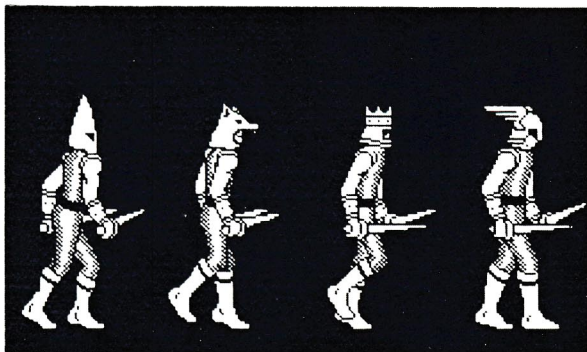


MYSTIC

SAVAGE

THANE

HERALD



USEFUL TIPS

- 1) Only MYSTICS can successfully CHARM, CURSE, BEWITCH or RELEASE.
- 2) You will hear the sounds of any fight one of your warriors is involved in, even if it's off-screen. Pressing FIRE during WATCH will get you straight to the fight.
- 3) You will hear a snatch of music whenever any warrior changes sides, even if he's off-screen. Usually this will be someone joining your side. If you want to find out who it was, check on your warriors' orders. Warriors with orders you haven't given will be the new recruits.
- 4) Petrified warriors (ie turned to stone) will not move off or take fresh orders. However, they will fight if forced to and can kill or be killed.
- 5) Warriors EN GARDE are either in a fight or about to be in a fight. They will ignore further orders until the fight is over.
- 6) No more than one fight is in progress at any one time. This allows you to keep a better eye on what's happening.
- 7) Warriors, very chivalrously, will not attack a warrior who is already in a fight or waiting to fight (ie a warrior EN GARDE). This sometimes means you find a whole bunch of warriors standing by near a fight, all waiting their turn to try out their swords. A lucky warrior can slip past such a group without being challenged - a useful way of getting past enemy defenders.
- 8) The colours of the teams are:

UMBRARG'S (the Shadow Lords)	RED
VERDAN'S	GREEN
TYRIAN'S	PURPLE
KUANO'S	CYAN
AURIC'S	YELLOW
GRISUL'S	GREY
YOUR OWN	WHITE

9) The outcome of a fight depends entirely on the qualities of the two warriors. There is no random element. If both warriors have exactly the same fighting qualities, the attacker wins.

10) Just setting off to KILL ENEMY or GRAB DARK SCEPTRE without preparing the way first is simply suicidal!

WHEN THE GAME ENDS

When the game ends, the computer will ask you to reload a saved game position. This is because the computer cannot store all the information that it needs to set up the beginning of the game. We suggest that you save a game onto tape when the game first starts so that you can reload it, at the end of a game, if you want to play the game again.

SAVING YOUR POSITION

You can save your position from the QUIT option. Tape users can save their position to tape. Disk users can save their positions to a blank disk which has been formatted on an Amstrad CPC machine to DATA format.

GUARANTEE

If this tape fails to load it will be replaced free of charge, if returned with details and proof of purchase. Send the tape only to:

FIREBIRD, British Telecom, First Floor, 64-76 New Oxford St.
London WC1A 1EU

If the tape shows any form of damage, whether physical or due to use of dirty or faulty equipment, please include £3.00 to cover replacement costs. This guarantee does not affect your statutory consumer rights.

CREDITS

Game design by Mike Singleton of Maelstrom games.
Programming by Glenn Benson of Consult Computer Systems.

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