THE GREYHAVEN CHRONICLES / BOOK THREE

ASH AND LANTERN 3

The Bells Beneath the Sea



The sea wants its city.
The bells are taking something worse.

MARCUS DRAPER

AN ILLUSTRATED CHOOSE-YOUR-PATH ADVENTURE / EDITION 1.0

BEGIN HERE

Three choices, one traveller

This is the third Ash and Lantern gamebook. Read one numbered section, choose an eligible option, and follow its destination. Do not read straight through. Section 1 starts on page 6; the ending journal is section 57 on page 62.

Returning readers: keep your name, path, and optional Brindle. Keep both earlier endings separately. Chapter 1: BOUND, FREE, or COVENANT. Chapter 2: REGULATED (A City with Open Windows), RELEASED (The First Ordinary Sunrise), or SHARED (The Roads We Keep Together). Do not replace either with your new ending.

Starting here: choose a name, a path, and one history for each earlier chapter. For Chapter 1, Aster was bound, freed, or joined a willing covenant. For Chapter 2, Meridian kept a regulated engine, released its lights, or shared the work through willing cooperation. These choices open different shortcuts; none locks an ending in this book.

IRON WARDEN: a watchblade, a steady stance, knowledge of leverage and protection.
THORN SCOUT: a yew bow, a working knife, an eye for footing and concealed catches.
EMBER KEEPER: an ember staff, a lantern, knowledge of signals and binding light.

Begin with **3 CHARGES and 4 PROVISIONS**. Start a fresh Chapter 3 record. Do not import old evidence, wards, wounds, money, or supplies. Copy BRINDLE only if he was travelling with you; otherwise leave it blank. You may meet him at section 9.

The web game uses dice and combat statistics. This book uses decisions, supplies, and permanent discoveries. Every path can complete every ending. Ordinary lantern light and uncharged path tactics are free.

Elian here is Ysra's son, a sailor, not the keeper in Chapter 1's beacon story. Bell keeper Oren is also distinct from Meridian's engineer Orren. The story makes these distinctions when you meet them.

Light, food, and second chances

Lantern charges

Begin with 3. Spend 1 only when choosing an option that explicitly says so. A paid choice is unavailable at 0. Ordinary light, conversation, travel, and path tactics cost nothing. Section 6 restores charges to 3 for free. The garden oil at section 31 refills them once only.

Provisions

Begin with 4. Supporting the crew at section 16 costs 2 once only. The dry locker at section 15 adds 4 once only. There is no travel tax or hidden hunger clock. Keep a number; never spend below zero. The refuge work costs no provisions.

Conditions and discoveries

Capitalized record words are discoveries. Choose only options whose conditions you meet. Mark or spend when the choice or record box directs you. A conditional choice is not available merely because it is printed. Flags remain marked unless explicitly told otherwise.

Revisits and recovery

Never collect a cache twice or replay a resolved encounter. On a revisit, use an unfinished option, a stated shortcut, or a return route. At section 55 add one setback and keep your discoveries and supplies. Unfinished fights reset. Brindle never fights or dies.

Time and consequences

The bells and tides create the story's danger; there is no turn count or midnight penalty to track. You may revisit and prepare before committing to an ending. The emergency braces keep the wall stable while you do so. Once an ending is chosen, follow the epilogue and finish the journal.

Reading, filling, and printing

Choice boxes are clickable and include physical page numbers. Fields are manual, not a game engine: use a form-supporting PDF reader and save your played copy. Pencil works on paper. For US Letter duplex printing, use actual size or fit to printable area, and flip on the long edge. This is not an imposed booklet. Book records do not import into the web game.

KEEP A BOOKMARK HERE

Your coast record

Traveller name

☐ Iron Warden ☐ Thorn Scout ☐ Ember Keeper

CHAPTER 1 HISTORY - CHOOSE ONE

☐ BOUND ☐ FREE ☐ COVENANT

CHAPTER 2 HISTORY - CHOOSE ONE

☐ REGULATED ☐ RELEASED ☐ SHARED

CHARGES: CHECKED = AVAILABLE

☑ 1 ☑ 2 ☑ 3

PROVISIONS

4

☐ LEDGER - Six names and route

☐ DELIVERED - Medicine handed over

☐ STALKER - Reef encounter resolved

☐ CREW - Five sailors supported

☐ SEAL - Tide seal obtained

☐ RESCUED - Elian and Oren ashore

☐ CATALOGUE - Living memories sorted

☐ OIL - Garden refill used

☐ RETURNKEY - Lamps can be returned

☐ LANDING - Relief boats can dock

☐ DEEP - Windows glimpsed

☐ GUARDIAN - Master lever reached

☐ KNIGHTFIGHT - Knight disabled

☐ WIDOWFIGHT - Widow disabled

☐ KEEPERFIGHT - Keeper disabled

☐ MEDICINE - Supplies carried

☐ BRINDLE - Companion beside you

☐ CACHE - Dry stores collected

☐ CROSSING - Safe rescue route

☐ ROLL - Evacuation completed

☐ CHIME - Hold, return, release

☐ WARD - Keeper's protection

☐ PLANS - Sea mechanism understood

☐ REFUGE - Highwater ready

☐ CHARTS - Sen's tide window

☐ WATCH - Relief roster agreed

☐ KNIGHTPEACE - Knight relieved

☐ WIDOWPEACE - Widow reset

☐ KEEPERPEACE - Keeper relieved

Chapter 3 ending

Setbacks 0

Keep all three endings. Your ending journal is section 57 / page 62.

The shore and its people

Use the choices in each section to travel. This guide locates unfinished work; it is not a scale map. Return choices may skip familiar connecting paths.

Saltmere / Name Quay Ysra, rest at 6, crew record, medicine, Brindle.	1 / p. 6 | 7 / p. 12
Shingle Road / Wreckhaven Reef stalker; dry stores; crew support.	10 / p. 15 | 14 / p. 19
Drowned Causeway Safe crossing; Salt Knight and tide seal.	17 / p. 22 | 18 / p. 23
Last Ferry Elian and Oren; counter-chime.	23 / p. 28 | 25 / p. 30
Remembering House Mera's catalogue and brass ward.	26 / p. 31 | 27 / p. 32
Memorial Garden Evacuation roll; one-time lantern refill.	29 / p. 34 | 30 / p. 35
Sunken Archive Sea plans; Bell Widow and return key.	32 / p. 37 | 33 / p. 38
Highwater Refuge Tamsin's roof and relief landing.	38 / p. 43 | 40 / p. 45
Tide Observatory Sen's measurements; optional deeper windows.	41 / p. 46 | 42 / p. 47
Bell Stair Check discoveries; organize the watch.	44 / p. 49 | 45 / p. 50
Keeper / Heart of the Bells Final encounter and decision.	46 / p. 51 | 50 / p. 55

Reach the Keeper: LEDGER + PLANS + RETURNKEY + CROSSING + SEAL.
Relieve the Keeper peacefully: CHARTS + REFUGE + CHIME.
Choose the watch: WATCH + LANDING + CHARTS, after GUARDIAN.

Your coast record is ready. Begin Chapter 3. Go to 1 / p. 6

The Name on Her Sleeve



"Bring him back with his name."

Saltmere smells of wet rope, breakfast smoke, and the clean iron scent of a retreating tide. A woman at the quay looks up when your lantern touches the boards.

"You came from Mara." She makes it a statement before uncertainty can turn it into a question.

Her name is Ysra. She is harbourmaster. Both facts are written on the slate beside her. A third name, Elian, is inked on her sleeve. She catches you looking.

"My son. I remember that he laughs before the joke is finished. Yesterday I remembered his face."

Out beyond the boats, a bell tower rises from water where streets once lay. No rope moves. Nevertheless, a note travels through the pilings and into your teeth.

Ysra presses one finger to the name on her sleeve. You understand why Mara asked you to come.

Chapter 2 ending REGULATED: read the enclosed engineering ledger. Go to 2 / p. 7

Chapter 2 ending RELEASED: meet the independent coast patrol. Go to 3 / p. 8

Chapter 2 ending SHARED: receive the willing keepers' message. Go to 4 / p. 9

An Entry Left Outside the Ledger

Veyra's packet is heavy with copied accounts. Meridian's light remains regulated under public oversight, but the audit has found a coastal relay no one included in the public totals.

Its old draw was cut off when the engine was limited. Beside that entry Veyra has written a sentence twice: FIND WHAT REPLACED IT.

You could call this proof that the new system failed. You could call it proof that the audit worked. Neither answer would help the woman waiting beside you.

An older maintenance page records three bell notes and the interval between them. Hold. Return. Release. Veyra has underlined the warning beneath: a counter-chime interrupts the draw; it does not stop the sea.

You fold the page where you can reach it with one hand. A public promise is useful only if someone follows its consequences beyond the walls.

RECORD Keep Chapter 2 ending REGULATED. Its ledger offers a free counter-chime option at section 25; it does not automatically mark CHIME.

Accept Ysra's commission. Go to 5 / p. 10

People with Sounding Poles

Two coast patrollers arrive carrying rope. One recognizes the lantern on your belt. Since Meridian's extraction lines were dismantled, ordinary watch crews have been travelling farther than their old boundaries.

"We can sound a channel," their leader says. "We cannot tell a woman where her childhood went."

Saltmere's bell once drew spare light through the inland network. With that supply gone, its emergency mechanism found something else to burn. The patrol has heard the midnight note. One of them no longer remembers the song his father taught him.

They do not ask you to rebuild the engine. They ask where to put the ropes.

You point toward the drowned causeway. They shoulder their poles, relieved to have a task that can be done with hands. Before leaving, the leader writes every name in the patrol on the back of his map.

RECORD Keep Chapter 2 ending RELEASED. Independent patrollers can secure the causeway at section 18 without a charge.

Accept Ysra's commission. Go to 5 / p. 10

A Light That Said No

A volunteer keeper has left a small amber lamp on Ysra's desk. Its flame brightens when you approach, then leans away from the offshore tower.

The willing lights of the shared road found an unexplained drain in their network. They refused it. No one had asked what the coastal machine wanted, or how much it would take.

"The refusal was right," the keeper's letter says. "What happened afterward still needs our help."

The lamp gives no answer when you ask whether it remembers Aster. You decide not to make its usefulness depend on being someone you already know.

Other volunteers are coming to the Remembering House. They can hold a patient light while an archivist sorts what the bells have stolen. For now, this one waits beside Ysra, illuminating the name on her sleeve without taking anything in return.

RECORD Keep Chapter 2 ending SHARED. Volunteer keepers offer a free catalogue option at section 27.

Accept Ysra's commission. Go to 5 / p. 10

Six People, Not a Symbol

Ysra opens Mara's letter. Dawn has returned to the fields, it says. But Saltmere's bells are older than the Dawn Engine, and the repair of one wrong has uncovered another.

"The bells take memories at midnight," Ysra says. "Not every memory, not from everyone. Just enough that we spend each morning finding out what is missing."

Six sailors went toward the drowned city to help stranded people. Five are sheltering near their damaged boat. Elian went farther with an old bell keeper and has not returned.

Ysra's son shares a name with the keeper from Greyhaven's beacon story. He is another person: a young sailor who used to race the gulls along this quay. You ask Ysra to tell you something only she knows about him.

"He hates pears," she says immediately. Then she smiles at having answered without the slate.

She gives you a chart case and a letter addressed to her son. You put both inside your coat.

RECORD Begin with the 3 CHARGES and 4 PROVISIONS on your new record. This commission does not add supplies on a revisit.

Go to the Name Quay. Go to 7 / p. 12

Rest and prepare at the Harbour House. Go to 6 / p. 11

A Bed Above the Tide

The Harbour House has hooks for wet coats and names chalked above every bed. The keeper asks yours twice: once to write it down, once to make sure you heard it spoken kindly.

You clean salt from the lantern vents. The glow steadies. Outside, someone walks the quay reciting tomorrow's tasks, leaving notes where their future self will find them.

There is no shame in coming back. Ysra needs a rescue that returns, not another name to copy beneath her son's.

When you are ready, the same paths are waiting. The tide has turned again, but the safe markers you set remain. Whatever frightened you into retreat has not erased the work already done.

RECORD Restore CHARGES to 3. Do not add provisions. Keep all discoveries and resolved encounters. This rest is free and repeatable.

Return to the quay. Go to 7 / p. 12

Take the Shingle Road. Go to 10 / p. 15

Only with REFUGE: return to Tamsin's hearth. Go to 38 / p. 43

The Name Quay



THE BELL IS KEEPING A DOOR CLOSED.

The pilings carry names in chalk, charcoal, and knife cuts. Some have been written so often that the wood is pale with them. Ysra points out six belonging to the rescue boat: Elian, Sove, Merit, Fen, Orra, Tal.

You copy each name onto dry paper. Beneath them you draw the old pilgrim channel from the route chart. Elian's last message was found in an empty bottle: THE BELL IS KEEPING A DOOR CLOSED.

The handwriting becomes larger toward the end, as if he wanted the message to survive whoever might forget how to explain it.

A medicine trunk is wedged under a mooring post. From a fishing skiff comes a bark. Above the quay, a garden path climbs beyond the old flood line.

RECORD Mark LEDGER. These six names and their route are needed at the Sunken Archive.

Open the stranded medicine trunk. Go to 8 / p. 13

Follow the bark. Go to 9 / p. 14

Follow the crew's route along the shore. Go to 10 / p. 15

Climb to the Memorial Garden. Go to 29 / p. 34

Return to the Harbour House. Go to 6 / p. 11

Something Useful in a Locked Box

The medicine trunk is trapped by a swollen plank. You begin to wrench at it, then notice the pressure on the hinge. Force would break the glass inside before it freed the lid.

A Warden uses a mooring lever to lift the post. A Scout wedges the lid while cutting away the rotten plank. A Keeper warms the swollen joint with ordinary lantern heat and waits. None of this needs a lantern charge.

Inside are sealed dressings, clean cloth, and medicine wrapped against the salt. A label names the rescue boat. You leave the empty trunk open so no one else wastes time struggling with it.

You cannot restore a stolen face with a bandage. But the people holding those memories still have cold hands and rope burns. They deserve care while you search for a larger answer.

RECORD Mark MEDICINE. It records supplies carried, not delivered. Visit section 16 while carrying it to mark DELIVERED.

Carry the medicine back to the quay. Go to 7 / p. 12

Take it toward the stranded crew. Go to 14 / p. 19

A Familiar Weight Against Your Knee

If Brindle travelled here with you, he is investigating a fishing skiff rather than obeying your suggestion that he stay dry. If he stayed behind on the earlier road, a carrier has brought him to Saltmere with the next wagon.

He climbs onto the quay, shakes seawater over your boots, and looks pleased with the arrangement.

You crouch. He presses his forehead against your hand. The bells may have machinery for memories, but here is a creature who knows you by the pace of your steps and the smell of your coat.

He will keep to the dry shore during a rescue and to the stairs during a fight. You are glad of that. Loyalty does not require him to understand an anchor blade.

A harbour worker offers to care for him if you travel on alone.

RECORD Brindle never attacks, spends supplies, or dies. If already beside you, he is not a second companion.

Let Brindle join you: mark BRINDLE, then return to the quay. Go to 7 / p. 12

Leave Brindle safely with the harbour worker; erase BRINDLE if marked. Go to 7 / p. 12

Where the Shore Walks Back



The shore gives back a road.

The retreating tide uncovers a road made of pale stones. Pools remain between them, each holding a broken piece of sky. A warning is carved above the highest water stain.

THE BELLS HOLD THE WALL. DO NOT EMPTY THE LAMPS WITHOUT THE RETURN KEY.

A later hand has added the cause: the old inland supply failed, and the emergency draw began taking memories instead of light. Repairing Meridian exposed this debt; it did not build the machine that demanded payment.

Something scrapes over the shingle behind you. Driftwood ribs, stone claws, and two amber eyes follow the swing of your lantern. Beyond it, smoke rises from the stranded boat at Wreckhaven.

There is room to avoid the creature on the upper beach. You need not fight every dangerous thing to reach the people who need you.

RECORD If STALKER is marked, the creature is already gone. Choose another route; do not replay its encounter.

Face the reef stalker. Go to 11 / p. 16

Take the upper beach to Wreckhaven. Go to 14 / p. 19

Continue to the Drowned Causeway. Go to 17 / p. 22

Return to the quay. Go to 7 / p. 12

Driftwood with Teeth



Watch what it watches.

The reef stalker lowers itself behind a plate of barnacled stone. Its eyes remain fixed on your lantern. When you move the light left, its head turns left. The rest of its body follows a moment later.

It is guarding before it springs. Striking the plate now would put your hand inside the reach of its jaws.

A Warden can brace a length of driftwood across the path and let the leap spend itself against it. A Scout can loop an abandoned net across the low stones. A Keeper can shutter the lantern, move, and reveal it beyond the creature's turning circle.

Brindle, if present, stays behind the upper rocks. You make sure of that before giving the thing a new target.

Use your path's patient tactic. Go to 12 / p. 17

Spend 1 CHARGE to draw its gaze into an empty pool. Go to 12 / p. 17

Rush the guarded stone plate. Go to 55 / p. 60

Withdraw along the upper beach. Go to 14 / p. 19

The Light Between the Ribs



A weakened enemy can still reach.

The stalker's leap ends badly. Its stone breastplate strikes the shingle, and the wood behind it splits. Amber light shows between the ribs.

It is weaker, but its next movement is faster: it drags its whole body sideways, sweeping the beach with hooked branches. You step beyond the sweep rather than following the exposed glow.

When the branches settle, the binding knot beneath its chest is within reach. Your blade, working knife, or staff can lever it free. The opening is brief, but the creature must gather its limbs before it can spring again.

A second burst of light would force that opening now. Patience can give you the same chance without spending what may be needed farther down the coast.

Wait outside the sweep, then break the binding knot. Go to 13 / p. 18

Spend 1 CHARGE to still the binding light. Go to 13 / p. 18

Reach for the core while the branches are sweeping. Go to 55 / p. 60

Leave the unfinished encounter and climb away. Go to 14 / p. 19

Only Wood and Stone



The tide moves it. Nothing else does.

The binding releases with a sound like a rope untwisting. The stalker folds onto the shingle. Its eyes go dark, and the tide moves one loose branch as it would any other piece of driftwood.

You wait long enough to be certain it will not rise. Then you pull it clear of the path so the next person can pass without wondering.

Under its ribs is a soaked pack. There are no usable provisions inside, only a child's wooden boat with one mast broken. You set it high on the warning post where its owner might find it.

For a moment the coast is simply a coast: stones, wind, the small slap of water. You turn toward the smoke at Wreckhaven.

RECORD Mark STALKER. This encounter stays resolved; it grants no repeatable supplies.

Continue to the stranded sailors. Go to 14 / p. 19

Go to the causeway. Go to 17 / p. 22

Return to the Shingle Road. Go to 10 / p. 15

Five Beneath the Hull

The rescue boat lies on its side above the wet sand. Sove has propped a sail over the gap to make a shelter. Merit, Fen, Orra, and Tal sit inside, each with a cord tied around one wrist.

"So we remember to ask each other before we wander," Sove says.

You read the names from your record. Five heads turn. The sixth name belongs farther out: Elian followed an old bell keeper to the Last Ferry and stayed when the tide cut off their way back.

A small pitch-lined locker remains dry. Sove points it out without pride. "We keep remembering it after we've already decided we're out of food."

She asks whether you have seen Ysra. When you say yes, she touches the cord on her wrist and repeats the harbourmaster's name to the others.

RECORD Supporting these five sailors marks CREW. Rescuing Elian and Oren is a separate task at the ferry.

Open the dry stores. Go to 15 / p. 20

With 2 PROVISIONS, or if CREW is already marked: share food and stories. Go to 16 / p. 21

Go to the Last Ferry. Go to 23 / p. 28

Go to the causeway. Go to 17 / p. 22

Return toward Saltmere. Go to 10 / p. 15

The Pitch-Lined Locker

The lid comes up reluctantly. Inside, four wrapped meals have survived: hard bread, dried apples, and cheese under waxed cloth. Sove checks the stores already divided among the sailors before offering you the surplus.

You make a mark inside the lid. It is an ordinary practical precaution, and on this shore that makes it precious. No one should have to wonder whether the same box can save them twice.

Tal laughs at the apples. "Orra said there would be some."

"I said I hoped," Orra answers.

"Then I remembered it better."

Their laughter ends quickly, but it has existed. You add that fact to the things worth carrying back.

RECORD Only if CACHE is unmarked: mark CACHE and add 4 PROVISIONS. On every later visit, add nothing.

With 2 PROVISIONS, or if CREW is marked: prepare a shared meal. Go to 16 / p. 21

Return beneath the hull. Go to 14 / p. 19

One True Thing About Another

You set out the food and ask each sailor to tell one true thing about someone else. Merit knows that Fen sings in his sleep. Fen knows that Tal once repaired a rudder with a cooking spoon. Orra describes how Sove held the boat steady when everyone else wanted to turn back.

Sove listens, then asks you to write that she was frightened too.

If you carry MEDICINE, you clean their rope burns and leave the dressings. Mark DELIVERED. If you found it after an earlier visit, you can hand it over now without paying for another meal.

The five sailors repeat their names until the sequence holds. They are not ready for a long voyage, but Sove offers the boats for a future relief watch if someone can make a safe landing.

Before you go, Tal asks you to tell Elian that his mother sent a letter. You touch the dry pocket inside your coat.

RECORD First visit only: spend 2 PROVISIONS and mark CREW. Later visits cost nothing. If MEDICINE is marked, also mark DELIVERED.

Look for Elian at the ferry. Go to 23 / p. 28

Investigate the refuge and relief landing. Go to 38 / p. 43

Return to Wreckhaven. Go to 14 / p. 19

The Order in the Empty Armour

The old causeway is still visible beneath the water, though its edge has broken away. A massive suit of armour stands on the surviving crown of the road. Salt fills its joints. An anchor-shaped blade drags behind it.

Through the empty visor you see cloth embroidered with an evacuation order. No one may pass until every child is safe.

The order is three hundred years old. No voice has come back to tell the armour whether it was obeyed.

Beside the road, the tide runs hard enough to carry a person between the stones. Even if you pass the knight, you will need ropes and markers to bring people home. The two problems stand together, but solving one will not solve the other.

RECORD CROSSING and SEAL are separate. If SEAL is marked, the knight is resolved: do not replay its fight or relief.

Secure the rescue crossing. Go to 18 / p. 23

Face the Salt Knight. Go to 19 / p. 24

Only with ROLL: read the completed evacuation record. Go to 22 / p. 27

Look for the evacuation record in the Memorial Garden. Go to 29 / p. 34

Go to the Bell Stair. Go to 44 / p. 49

Return to Wreckhaven. Go to 14 / p. 19

A Road That Comes Back

You test the old iron rings before trusting them. One breaks in your hand. Another remains sound beneath the salt. A safe route cannot be made merely by drawing it on a chart.

A Warden can tension the line against a stone buttress. A Scout can find the dry footing between pools. A Keeper can read the pale markers beneath the water and match them to the chart. A lantern burst would reveal the whole line, but there is also time to sound each stone with a pole.

If Meridian's ending was RELEASED, independent patrollers are already bringing a second rope. They remember what it meant to work without the extraction lines.

You finish by pulling from the far end. A rope for leaving must be as trustworthy as a rope for arriving.

RECORD Once CROSSING is marked it remains safe. A revisit does not require another payment.

Use your path's method, or sound each stone patiently; mark CROSSING. Go to 17 / p. 22

Only with Chapter 2 RELEASED: accept the patrol's help; mark CROSSING. Go to 17 / p. 22

Spend 1 CHARGE to reveal the stones; mark CROSSING. Go to 17 / p. 22

The Salt Knight



It is still obeying someone.

The knight raises its anchor blade across the causeway. It is not hunting you. It is closing a door.

A chain runs from the blade to a reel behind its shoulder. When the weapon swings, the reel must turn. When it stops, the knight uses both hands to recover the weight.

A Warden can receive the shaft against a buttress and turn it aside. A Scout can move outside the first arc and cut the trailing line. A Keeper can lure the helmet's pale gaze toward a shuttered lamp and move before the blade follows.

The first stance is a guard. Wait for it to become a movement. If the order in its visor has an answer, you can still retreat and find it.

Read the swing and use your path's tactic. Go to 20 / p. 25

Spend 1 CHARGE to dazzle the visor while you move aside. Go to 20 / p. 25

Strike directly into the guarded anchor blade. Go to 55 / p. 60

Back away and seek another answer. Go to 17 / p. 22

When the Anchor Breaks Loose



The broken chain gives it reach.

The shoulder reel breaks. Freed of its short tether, the anchor blade swings much farther than before. Salt falls from the armour in a white sheet.

The knight is damaged. That does not make the next swing smaller.

You retreat behind a thick mooring post. The blade bites wood and sticks. For one breath the knight pulls against an obstacle it cannot understand. The open shoulder housing reveals the last pin holding its moving frame together.

You can reach it while the blade is caught, or use a charge to quiet the pale command inside the visor. Beyond the armour, water pours over the causeway. You keep one eye on your return path.

- Wait for the blade to lodge, then remove the shoulder pin. Go to 21 / p. 26
- Spend 1 CHARGE to extinguish the command. Go to 21 / p. 26
- Charge inside the longer swing. Go to 55 / p. 60
- Withdraw before the next attack. Go to 17 / p. 22

The Seal in the Open Hand



The hand opens at last.

The armour falls across the stones. The anchor blade slides into the shallows, and the empty fingers release a bronze tide seal.

You kneel outside the weapon's reach. Nothing moves inside the visor. The order remains, faded but legible. You cannot tell the knight that it is finished now; the mechanism that could hear you has gone still.

You take the seal and fold the cloth against the breastplate where the tide cannot immediately carry it away.

The road beyond is open. That is a result. It is not the same result as an answer, and you let yourself remember the difference without pretending there was no danger here.

RECORD Mark SEAL and KNIGHTFIGHT. Do not mark KNIGHTPEACE. The encounter stays resolved.

Return to the causeway routes. Go to 17 / p. 22

Carry the seal toward the Bell Stair. Go to 44 / p. 49

Every Child Accounted For



"All on this roll."

You hold the rubbing where the knight can see it. Name by name, you read the children who reached the upper cliffs. At the bottom is the harbourmaster's seal: EVACUATION COMPLETE.

The anchor blade rises an inch. Then it drops, not toward you but onto the road.

For a long moment the knight remains standing, as though it has forgotten what a body does when it is no longer a gate. It presses the tide seal into your hand and sits against the buttress.

"All?" comes a small sound from the visor.

"All on this roll."

You do not promise it more than the record proves. The helmet tilts toward the garden above the flood line. Its fingers loosen, and the long command falls silent.

RECORD Requires ROLL. Mark SEAL and KNIGHTPEACE. Do not replay this resolution.

Leave the knight at rest and return to the causeway. Go to 17 / p. 22

Carry the seal to the Bell Stair. Go to 44 / p. 49

The Last Ferry



He keeps reading his mother's name.

The ferry itself is gone. Its chains remain, knocking against the jetty as the current turns. Elian has tied himself to a post. Beneath a sail beside him lies an elderly man, awake now and trying not to shiver.

Elian reads something from his wrist whenever the offshore bell hums. You cannot hear the word until you call out that Ysra sent you. Then he says her name back, sharply, as if testing a tool.

The old man is Oren, a bell keeper. He is not Orren, the engineer at Meridian; the similar name briefly catches you, then you concentrate on the people in front of you.

A rescue sling hangs above the jetty. Its winch is sound, but the line must be secured on this side before either man moves.

RECORD If RESCUED is marked, Elian and Oren are safely ashore. You may learn from Oren without repeating the rescue.

Secure the sling and bring them ashore. Go to 24 / p. 29

Only with RESCUED, or Chapter 2 REGULATED: study the counter-chime. Go to 25 / p. 30

Go to the Tide Observatory. Go to 41 / p. 46

Return to Wreckhaven. Go to 14 / p. 19

Two People on the Line

A Warden takes the load at the shore anchor. A Scout clears the snag beneath the sling. A Keeper signals each movement with a steady lamp so the winch crew pull together. The harbour's two helpers follow your count.

Elian tries to put Oren into the sling first and remain behind. You show him the second loop. There will be two journeys, and he is included in the plan.

When the old man reaches the stones, he insists on holding the empty line until Elian follows. His hands shake, but he does not let go.

You read Ysra's letter aloud. It contains no grand farewell. She asks her son to come home, says there are no pears in the kitchen, and reminds him where she keeps the spare key.

Elian laughs before you finish. Then he cries, and you keep reading.

RECORD Mark RESCUED. This also brings Oren ashore. No charge is required; the rescue is not repeated.

Learn what Oren remembers of the bells. Go to 25 / p. 30

Walk with the rescued men to Wreckhaven. Go to 14 / p. 19

Return to the ferry routes. Go to 23 / p. 28

Hold, Return, Release

If RESCUED is marked, Oren taps the rhythm on the side of your lantern. Hold. Return. Release. He makes you repeat it until the spacing is right, not merely the notes.

If you have not rescued him but Meridian's ending was REGULATED, the public engineering ledger gives the same sequence. Its margins describe the emergency braces and the brief interval in which memories can be moved safely.

The first note holds the mechanical pressure. The second opens the return path. The third must wait until a replacement barrier or an evacuation is ready. Playing all three without a plan would exchange one emergency for another.

You copy the interval in marks a tired person could follow. The bells do not need you to sound impressive. They need you to be exact.

RECORD CHIME is knowledge, not a charge or a consumable. It does not replace the return key or Sen's measurements.

With RESCUED: practise with Oren and mark CHIME. Go to 23 / p. 28

With Chapter 2 REGULATED: copy the ledger and mark CHIME. Go to 23 / p. 28

Leave without learning the sequence. Go to 23 / p. 28

The Remembering House



"A memory is not fuel."

Mera keeps the reading tables dry by standing their legs on bricks. Beneath them, shallow water reflects the glass lamps arranged on the shelves. Each lamp contains an amber movement too deliberate to be ordinary flame.

"A memory is not fuel because it fits inside a lamp," she says.

She has forgotten much of her own childhood. She still knows which handwriting belongs to each of her former assistants. When she cannot remember a face, she checks the catalogue rather than pretending.

The Bell Widow is drawing lamps down into the Sunken Archive. Mera needs to separate living memories from the old mechanical echoes stored by the city's recorders. Emptying everything at once would break the failing wall before anyone could leave.

A dry drawer contains a keeper's ward. The stairs beyond lead toward the archive.

Help Mera catalogue the lamps. Go to 27 / p. 32

Inspect the brass ward. Go to 28 / p. 33

Go down to the Sunken Archive. Go to 32 / p. 37

Climb to the Memorial Garden. Go to 29 / p. 34

Go toward the Bell Stair. Go to 44 / p. 49

Whose Memory Is It?

Mera gives you a lamp holding a little boy's first sight of the sea. You feel the enormousness of the water and the certainty that it must end somewhere just beyond the horizon.

"Elian," she says. "His mother brought him here to learn his letters."

You set the lamp beside his name without opening it. Returning a memory should not require giving it to a stranger first.

A Warden steadies the tall shelves while Mera reads. A Scout matches seals and scratched numbers. A Keeper distinguishes the living pulse from a recorder's repeating echo. Any path can also work slowly through the written index.

If Meridian's ending was SHARED, volunteer keepers arrive to help. Their lamps give light without drawing from the shelves. Mera makes room at the table, then writes their names too.

RECORD CATALOGUE opens the Bell Widow's peaceful reset and helps organize the watch. It does not by itself release the memories.

Use your path's work, or check the index patiently; mark CATALOGUE. Go to 26 / p. 31

Only with Chapter 2 SHARED: accept the volunteers' help; mark CATALOGUE. Go to 26 / p. 31

Spend 1 CHARGE to reveal the faded seals; mark CATALOGUE. Go to 26 / p. 31

The Keeper's Brass Ward

The ward is a small disc with a split ring. Mera asks you to read the label before taking it. It belonged to a maintenance keeper, and its protection is strongest against the shock of a bell mechanism.

You fasten it inside your coat. It will not make you immune to an anchor blade, and it cannot hold the sea away. It can absorb the last pulse when a damaged guardian's core is opened.

"Bring back the person wearing it," Mera says. "The metal can look after itself."

You leave the drawer open and the label in place. No one should spend a dangerous hour hunting for something already carried away.

RECORD Mark WARD. It offers a finishing option against the final Keeper. It is not consumed, does not stack, and is separate from any earlier chapter's ward.

Return to Mera. Go to 26 / p. 31

Take the ward into the archive. Go to 32 / p. 37

The Unfinished Path



The names belong to people who lived.

Above the flood line, salt flowers grow between memorial stones. The names are crowded together, as though the mason feared running out of rock before running out of people.

These are not the dead. A small heading says they were carried to safety when the lower city flooded three hundred years ago.

The last portion of the path has never been cleared. Behind the weeds you find the edge of another stone. If the record is complete, the Salt Knight has been waiting below an answer it was never allowed to see.

A gardener's sealed oil reserve rests in a niche. Beside it is a bare patch where no name has been carved for the guardians left behind.

Clear the final stone and finish the roll. Go to 30 / p. 35

Use the gardener's reserve. Go to 31 / p. 36

Return to the causeway. Go to 17 / p. 22

Visit the Remembering House. Go to 26 / p. 31

Climb to Highwater Refuge. Go to 38 / p. 43

The Last Child on the Stone

You pull away the roots carefully. The final stone has cracked, but the name is whole. Beside it a shallow handprint was pressed into wet mortar. Someone brought the last child here alive and wanted that fact to remain.

Under the harbourmaster's seal are two words: EVACUATION COMPLETE.

You make a rubbing. Then you make another, leaving one in the dry niche so the truth will not travel only in your pocket.

There is no line thanking the guardians below. Perhaps the people who escaped meant to return. Perhaps a generation grew up believing the bells were simply part of the sea.

You cannot question them now. You can carry an overdue message down the hill.

RECORD Mark ROLL. If the knight was already defeated, keep the record for the ending; do not change KNIGHTFIGHT to KNIGHTPEACE.

If SEAL is unmarked: take the roll to the Salt Knight. Go to 22 / p. 27

Return to the causeway. Go to 17 / p. 22

Stay in the garden. Go to 29 / p. 34

A Flame for the Unnamed

The oil tin has a wax seal, a date, and a note asking the next traveller to leave enough for the garden lamp. You measure before you pour.

Your lantern catches cleanly. You fill the little memorial lamp as well and set it behind the windbreak. No voice thanks you. No gate opens. The act does not become worthless because it has no witness.

The empty tin goes back into the niche with its seal broken. Anyone arriving after you will know what has been used and what still remains.

Below, the bell tower darkens against the widening sea. You take a last look at the unnamed patch beside the path before returning to your work.

RECORD Only if OIL is unmarked: mark OIL and restore CHARGES to 3. Later visits grant nothing. Ordinary rest at section 6 remains available.

Return to the garden paths. Go to 29 / p. 34

The Sunken Archive



Preservation has become collection.

The stair ends at a dry ledge. Beyond it, brass rails slope downward through rows of shelves. Glass lamps slide along them one at a time, disappearing into a chute beneath a great moving bell.

The Bell Widow is not choosing whom to hurt. It reads every living voice as an unsecured record and every record as something to preserve by collection.

Mera's catalogue could tell it that these lamps are awaiting their owners. Without that correction, you will have to stop the machinery by force.

The sea plans lie on a raised desk. Their route marks match the chart from the Name Quay. You need to understand why the wall is failing before you approach the master lever; a key alone will not explain what it opens.

RECORD If RETURNKEY is marked, the collecting mechanism is already stopped. Do not replay its resolution.

Only with LEDGER: compare the route chart and sea plans. Go to 33 / p. 38

Only with CATALOGUE and no RETURNKEY: reset the custodian. Go to 37 / p. 42

If RETURNKEY is unmarked: confront the Bell Widow. Go to 34 / p. 39

Return to Mera. Go to 26 / p. 31

Go to the Bell Stair. Go to 44 / p. 49

The Weight Behind the Wall

The oldest drawing shows a city built behind a translucent sea barrier. Later pages add braces, relays, and bells. Each repair carries a note saying it will last until a more permanent answer can be afforded.

The last note is three hundred years old.

Borrowed inland light once powered the pressure field. When that supply ended, an emergency mechanism began drawing memories from the coast. It stores living memories separately from old mechanical echoes, but burns both if allowed to continue.

Three paths remain. A limited seal could use only the stored echoes, spending part of the old city's history. An evacuation could release everything and abandon the lower shore. Smaller locks could be worked by people, if relief teams and safe landings truly exist.

You copy the limits as carefully as the possibilities. Someone will have to live inside the difference.

RECORD Requires LEDGER. Mark PLANS. Stored echoes are old mechanical records, not a fresh supply of living memories.

Return to the archive. Go to 32 / p. 37

Ask Sen about the tide. Go to 41 / p. 46

Find out whether Highwater can shelter everyone. Go to 38 / p. 43

The Bell Widow



Leave the lamps out of the fight.

Four jointed legs lift the bell body above the shelves. Its core shines amber. A small chime sounds, and the nearest memory lamp begins to slide toward its collecting chute.

You do not attack the lamps. They are the reason you came.

The Widow folds two legs across its core before it strikes with the others. A Warden can brace a shelf upright against the first blow. A Scout can slip behind the sorting rail. A Keeper can answer the inspection chime and move during the pause. Each method reaches the feed lever without touching a memory lamp.

The mechanism has an inspection slot. If you return with Mera's catalogue, you may not need to break anything at all.

Use your path's tactic to jam the feed lever. Go to 35 / p. 40

Spend 1 CHARGE to interrupt the collecting pulse. Go to 35 / p. 40

Strike the guarded core across the memory lamps. Go to 55 / p. 60

Back out to the dry ledge. Go to 32 / p. 37

The Broken Chime



The rhythm changes. Listen again.

The feed lever jams. Two small bells fall from the frame, and the Widow's measured rhythm becomes a harsh, uneven ringing.

Its next attack comes sooner than the last. You duck beneath the dry desk as a brass leg strikes the place where you stood. Water leaps from the floor. The memory lamps remain on their rails.

The bell body tilts toward the jam, exposing the drive collar under its rim. A service wedge hangs on the desk beside you. You can push it into the collar during the next pause, or use a charge to hold the mechanism still.

Do not chase the flickering core. The legs are failing, but their reach is unchanged.

Wait behind the desk, then wedge the drive collar. Go to 36 / p. 41

Spend 1 CHARGE to stop the drive. Go to 36 / p. 41

Reach under the bell while its legs are moving. Go to 55 / p. 60

Withdraw and reconsider the catalogue route. Go to 32 / p. 37

The Key That Returns



The lamps stop descending.

The Widow lowers abruptly. Its legs fold beneath it, and the bell body comes to rest on the wet stones. The amber core dims to nothing.

Inside the open housing, a bronze key turns once and stops. You lift it out. Along its stem are three small grooves matching the return ports on the memory lamps.

The collection rails are still. You check the nearest lamp before leaving. Its small flame remains whole, holding someone else's morning until there is a safe way to give it back.

Mera will have repairs to make if the archive survives. For now, nothing else is being carried down the chute.

RECORD Mark RETURNKEY and WIDOWFIGHT. The encounter stays resolved.

Return to the archive desk. Go to 32 / p. 37

Take the return key to the Bell Stair. Go to 44 / p. 49

Awaiting Their Owners



Every lamp has somewhere to go.

You place Mera's catalogue in the inspection slot. The Widow pauses. One brass foot remains raised above the water while the mechanism reads.

You have not asked it to forget its task. You have shown it the part of the task it was missing.

The lamps are not unclaimed records. Each has a living owner, a place in the return sequence, and a name written beside it. The collecting rails reverse by a handspan, bringing the nearest lamp back within reach.

The Widow unlocks the return key and settles into its maintenance stance. Its core stays gently lit. A small chime sounds, clear this time, then waits for an answer you are not required to give.

You leave the catalogue where the mechanism can keep reading it.

RECORD Requires CATALOGUE. Mark RETURNKEY and WIDOWPEACE. Do not also mark WIDOWFIGHT.

Return to the sea plans. Go to 32 / p. 37

Carry the return key to the Bell Stair. Go to 44 / p. 49

A Roof Is a Kind of Promise



"Room needs timber."

Highwater stands above the worst flood mark, but its hall has only half a roof. Tamsin is measuring a beam with one hand and counting blankets with the other.

"People keep promising there will be room," she says. "Room needs timber."

Below the cliff, a narrow landing could take relief boats if its broken piles were repaired. Above it, the unfinished hall could shelter Saltmere's families. Neither will be ready simply because you intend to do the right thing at the bells.

Tamsin asks for help, not a prophecy. You put down your pack and look at what is actually missing.

Finish the refuge roof. Go to 39 / p. 44

Only with REFUGE: prepare the relief landing. Go to 40 / p. 45

Only with REFUGE: rest at Tamsin's hearth, then choose your next route. Go to 6 / p. 11

Return to the Memorial Garden. Go to 29 / p. 34

Go to the Bell Stair. Go to 44 / p. 49

The Beam Above the Door

The beam has been cut correctly. The problem is holding it steady while the last joint is pinned.

A Warden takes the brace and controls the weight. A Scout climbs the side scaffold to guide the pin. A Keeper signals the hauling crew through the dust, keeping everyone on the same count. Anyone can also help at the ground ropes until the carpenter is satisfied.

The roof closes over the hall with a sound smaller than you expected. A building becoming safe does not announce itself like a bell.

Inside, Tamsin marks sleeping spaces and leaves an aisle wide enough for someone carrying a child. She makes you move one stack of timber that would have blocked the rear door.

"Now," she says, "we can promise it."

RECORD Mark REFUGE. This work is free; it does not spend provisions. Free rest at section 6 now also represents Tamsin's hearth.

Return to the refuge. Go to 38 / p. 43

Prepare the landing for its relief boats. Go to 40 / p. 45

A Landing in the Spray

The old landing looks usable from above. At water level, you find two loose piles and a ring bolt held by nothing but rust.

You replace what you can and mark what cannot carry weight. Sove's boats, if CREW is marked, will follow these lights in darkness. If the crew is not ready, local harbour workers can use the landing, but a rotating watch still needs Sove's agreement.

The last task is simple: walk the route carrying a blanket-wrapped bundle while someone holds the lamp. A step that is easy with empty hands becomes dangerous when you cannot see your feet.

Tamsin orders a handrail. You help fasten it before calling the landing finished.

RECORD Requires REFUGE. Mark LANDING. No charge or provision is required.

Return to Highwater. Go to 38 / p. 43

Report the working landing at the Bell Stair. Go to 44 / p. 49

The Tide Observatory



"We need a schedule."

Sen stands beside a brass instrument above the old seawall. Salt has clouded the glass, but the notebook is dry. The astronomer you met beyond Meridian's false morning has found another reason to keep measuring.

"The bells hold the water," Sen says. "That part is true. But their burden is not the same at every hour."

The next low tide could give time for an orderly evacuation. It could also make a watch of smaller locks possible, if the crews change before exhaustion becomes another emergency.

Through a long viewing tube, you glimpse something farther below the sea barrier. Sen notices where you are looking.

"First," Sen says, "we bring these people home."

Align the tide instruments. Go to 42 / p. 47

Look through the deep-water viewing tube. Go to 43 / p. 48

Return to the Last Ferry. Go to 23 / p. 28

Go to the Bell Stair. Go to 44 / p. 49

The Hour That Can Be Used

The instrument's base has shifted. Its readings are close enough to persuade someone in a hurry, and wrong enough to drown them.

You help Sen level it against the fixed stone mark. A Warden holds the frame while the feet are adjusted. A Scout clears grit from the scale. A Keeper follows the reflected beam to find the last misalignment. Patient work with the plumb line succeeds for any path.

Three readings agree. Sen marks the low-tide window, the expected pressure at each lock, and a margin for delays. The margin matters as much as the neat line in the middle.

"If the sea refuses our prediction," Sen says, "we leave. No one stays to defend the notebook."

RECORD Mark CHARTS. They allow a better-timed evacuation and are required for peaceful relief of the Keeper and the rotating-watch ending.

Record the measurements and return to the observatory. Go to 41 / p. 46

Carry the tide schedule to the Bell Stair. Go to 44 / p. 49

Windows, Not Stars

At first you think the lights are reflections from the three great bells. Then one goes dark while the others remain.

Far below the old wall, a row of windows shines in water too deep for the drowned streets you have seen. A second row answers. The spacing is deliberate. Someone, or something, has arranged those lights for people looking out.

Sen sketches them without deciding what they mean.

You want to ask whether there is another city. The question feels enormous beside the tide instrument and its careful marks. Sen lays a hand over the drawing.

"This can wait until the people on the ferry cannot."

You close the tube. The lights remain behind your eyes, but they do not get to choose which promise you keep first.

RECORD Mark DEEP. This glimpse is optional; the coast's crisis can be fully resolved without it.

Return to Sen's practical work. Go to 41 / p. 46

Check the ferry rescue. Go to 23 / p. 28

Continue to the Bell Stair. Go to 44 / p. 49

Every Descent Needs a Return

The Bell Stair winds inside the exposed tower. Above, gulls call over open water. Below, the sound changes into a slow pressure you feel through the handrail.

Before opening the inner door, you lay out the things that make this more than a reckless visit: the crew's route record, the sea plans, the return key, the safe crossing, and the tide seal.

If one is missing, the shore paths remain open. There is no virtue in arriving at a lever without knowing what it will do.

The stair is also a place to gather people. Sove's crew, Tamsin's refuge, Mera's catalogue, and the counter-chime could become a relief watch. A promise made here will need a landing and Sen's measurements before it can become the coast's future.

RECORD Do not enter section 46 unless all five entry discoveries are marked. Missing LEDGER? Reach the Name Quay through the garden and Saltmere.

Only with LEDGER + PLANS + RETURNKEY + CROSSING + SEAL: descend to the Keeper. Go to 46 / p. 51

Organize the coastal watch. Go to 45 / p. 50

Return to the causeway: crossing and tide seal. Go to 17 / p. 22

Return to the archive: plans and return key. Go to 32 / p. 37

Return to Highwater: refuge and landing. Go to 38 / p. 43

Return to Sen: tide measurements. Go to 41 / p. 46

Return to Mera: catalogue and shore routes. Go to 26 / p. 31

Only with GUARDIAN: return directly to the final decision. Go to 50 / p. 55

A Departure Time Beside Every Name

You lay three blank rosters on the stair rail. Sove will not put her sailors on one until she sees who follows them.

With CREW, REFUGE, CATALOGUE, and CHIME, the answer can be practical. The sailors provide boats; Tamsin provides shelter; Mera records the return sequence. If RESCUED is marked, Oren teaches the chime himself. Otherwise the public ledger provides it, and the harbour's trained keepers teach from your copy.

No roster is allowed to end with the word UNTIL. Every watch has a relief time, a person responsible for checking it, and the right to evacuate when the wall becomes unsafe.

You write your own name on the first training shift. Sove points to the empty space beside it.

"And when do you go home?"

You fill that in too.

RECORD WATCH needs all four listed discoveries. LANDING and CHARTS are additional requirements for choosing the watch ending.

Only with CREW + REFUGE + CATALOGUE + CHIME: mark WATCH and return. Go to 44 / p. 49

Find the crew at Wreckhaven. Go to 14 / p. 19

Finish the refuge. Go to 38 / p. 43

Complete Mera's catalogue. Go to 26 / p. 31

Learn the counter-chime at the ferry. Go to 23 / p. 28

Three Hundred Years Without Relief



"Who will stand when you are gone?"

The Keeper stands between you and the master lever. Its bronze diving helmet has no visible face. One stone hand rests against the sea barrier; the other holds a bell hammer taller than you.

"Who will stand," it asks, "when you are gone?"

You can offer an answer only if you have made one. Sen's tide window, Tamsin's refuge, and the counter-chime show that the people above have somewhere to go and a way to reach it.

Without those preparations, you must get past the Keeper by force. Emergency braces will take the wall's weight if it falls, but the sight of them is not permission to swing blindly.

The hammer rises. The Keeper is guarding the lever, not chasing you. Beyond its shoulder, the ocean presses against a wall full of old cracks.

RECORD Requires all five entry discoveries from section 44. If GUARDIAN is already marked, go directly to section 50 / page 55 without fighting again.

Only with CHARTS + REFUGE + CHIME: offer a real relief plan. Go to 49 / p. 54

Use your path's tactic: turn the hammer aside, flank its arc, or interrupt its signal. Go to 47 / p. 52

Spend 1 CHARGE to stagger the bell-hammer pulse. Go to 47 / p. 52

Rush straight at the guarded master lever. Go to 55 / p. 60

Return upstairs for further preparations. Go to 44 / p. 49

The Final Watch



Count the second blow.

Your first opening costs the Keeper a section of its stone shoulder. The hammer strikes the floor, and the emergency braces lock tighter against the barrier.

Then its pattern changes. It swings twice before recovering, no longer trusting the damaged arm to hold a guard. You count both blows from behind a pillar. Moving after only the first would put you directly beneath the second.

A manual service latch opens at the base of its back. With WARD, you can endure the final pulse while releasing it. A charge can still the pulse. Without either, the insulated maintenance hook beside the pillar will reach it after the second swing.

You wait for the actual opening, not the one you wish it had given you.

Only with WARD: release the latch through its final pulse. Go to 48 / p. 53

Spend 1 CHARGE to still the core, then release the latch. Go to 48 / p. 53

Wait for both swings and use the insulated service hook. Go to 48 / p. 53

Move after the first hammer blow. Go to 55 / p. 60

Withdraw to the stair and reconsider. Go to 44 / p. 49

The Hammer on the Floor



The braces take the weight.

The Keeper sinks to its knees. You move clear as its stone body settles on its side, the hammer slipping from its hand. The light behind the helmet goes out.

Along the wall, the emergency braces answer one another with three heavy clicks. They hold. You check each indicator before approaching the master lever.

The Keeper has been stopped. The work it performed has not disappeared. It now belongs to the people who decide what the braces are buying time for.

You lift the lever from its socket and carry it toward the circles of memory lamps. Behind you, the great body lies motionless beneath a duty older than anyone still living on the shore.

RECORD Mark GUARDIAN and KEEPERFIGHT. The wall remains supported while you revisit the coast; no hidden deadline begins.

Enter the Heart of the Bells. Go to 50 / p. 55

Leave the braces holding while you finish preparations. Go to 44 / p. 49

There Is Someone to Receive Them



"There is someone to receive them?"

You give the Keeper Sen's tide window, the refuge plan, and the counter-chime. It looks past the papers toward the stairs.

"There is someone to receive them?"

You give Tamsin's name. You describe the clear aisle through the hall, the sleeping spaces, and the rear door she made you unblock. These are details a promise can stand on.

The Keeper touches the sea wall once more. Then it sounds the first note. Emergency braces slide into place, and it takes its hand away.

"I was told someone would come before winter."

You do not say that three hundred winters are almost the same as one. You accept the master lever and tell it there is no further watch required of it today.

The hammer lowers to the floor. For the first time, the Keeper turns its helmet toward the stairs instead of the sea.

RECORD Requires CHARTS + REFUGE + CHIME. Mark GUARDIAN and KEEPERPEACE.

Carry the master lever into the Heart of the Bells. Go to 50 / p. 55

Return upstairs to complete any remaining preparations. Go to 44 / p. 49

What Is Worth Keeping?



The lives inside are not a reserve.

The memory lamps wait beneath three enormous bells. Their lights move independently, hundreds of small lives held in a circle of brass. Beyond the barrier, the old city is dark.

You fit the return key beside the master lever. The braces hold while you choose. You may still return to the coast to finish helping people.

A limited seal will return the living memories and physically close their intake. It will use only old mechanical echoes, spending some of the drowned city's recorded history. An evacuation will return everything and surrender the lower shore. A staffed watch can replace the great draw with smaller locks, but only if crews, refuge, landing, catalogue, chime, and tide schedule are ready.

You write the costs where everyone gathered here can see them. Then you ask for their voices before making the choice you came to make.

RECORD Requires GUARDIAN. Choose one Chapter 3 ending. Earlier endings stay unchanged. Choosing an ending commits this journey.

Seal the lower city and return the living memories. Go to 51 / p. 56

Evacuate the coast and let the bells fall silent. Go to 52 / p. 57

Only with WATCH + LANDING + CHARTS: establish the Watch of Returning Bells. Go to 53 / p. 58

Return upstairs before choosing. Go to 44 / p. 49

The Names Above the Water



A town can be safe and still mourn.

You turn the return key before closing the deep gates. Living memories stream upward through the lamps, each following a name rather than a demand for power.

The new seal has a physical stop. No living memory can enter its circuit again. You make two people inspect that stop independently, then leave the inspection cover where anyone can reach it.

Below, old mechanical echoes begin to fade as the barrier draws on them. A street song no one living remembers. The shape of a market before the flood. A winter morning preserved by a recorder that outlasted its maker.

Saltmere keeps its houses and its people. It cannot keep everything that once stood beneath them. Mera opens a fresh book and begins copying what remains, refusing to call the loss painless merely because it is necessary.

You help her carry the first dry pages upstairs.

RECORD Record Chapter 3 ending SEALED: The Names Above the Water.

Read what becomes of the people you helped. Go to 54 / p. 59

A Shore Without Chains



They call one another by name.

You open the return path. Names, faces, and forgotten songs move through the lamps toward their owners. Then you ring the release.

The bells fall silent. Behind the barrier the sea waits for no explanation. Water enters the abandoned lower streets while the people of the coast move uphill.

If REFUGE and CHARTS are marked, Sen times the departures and Highwater receives the first families beneath a finished roof. Otherwise the harbour workers improvise a harder evacuation: everyone reaches the cliffs, but stores are lost and temporary shelters will be needed for weeks.

No machine will take another memory to preserve these houses. That truth does not make carrying a whole life up a hill easy. You take a bundle from someone whose arms are shaking and ask where it should go.

At Highwater, the first new window faces the sea without asking it to stand still.

RECORD Record Chapter 3 ending RELEASE: A Shore Without Chains.

Read what becomes of the people you helped. Go to 54 / p. 59

The Watch That Ends at Dawn



A departure time is a promise too.

The first crew descends before sunset. The second waits at the stair with hot food, dry coats, and a written handover. Sove checks both lists before allowing the boats to leave.

You return the memories and dismantle the great emergency draw. Smaller locks take its place, worked at the turning tides. They require labour, repair, and the humility to abandon a lock when the sea exceeds its limits.

There will be nights when a relief boat is late. There will be arguments about whose turn it is to carry the timber. The plan survives only if people keep the right to say that they are tired and the duty to answer when someone else says it.

At dawn, a keeper hands over a key. Someone reads the departure time beside that person's name and insists that it means now.

The watch ends. A tired person goes home.

RECORD Requires WATCH + LANDING + CHARTS. Record Chapter 3 ending WATCH: The Watch That Ends at Dawn.

Read what becomes of the people you helped. Go to 54 / p. 59

The People the Bell Could Not Keep

Read the lines that match your record. They are consequences, not extra tasks.

With CREW, the five sailors sail home together, keeping the stories you wrote. Without it, the coastguard finds them after the bells are settled; hunger makes their recovery slow. With DELIVERED, the dressings and medicine eased that journey. MEDICINE alone means the supplies never reached them.

With RESCUED, Elian returns early to Ysra, and Oren teaches the sequence to younger keepers. Without it, a later patrol brings both men ashore exhausted but alive. Ysra's returning memories let her recognize her son in either case; the timing and cost differ.

With REFUGE, Highwater remains useful when the next storm comes. Without it, new shelters must be built. With LANDING, supplies arrive by boat. Without it, neighbours carry them up the cliff path. With ROLL, the completed evacuation record is placed where children can read it.

Each peaceful guardian resolution leaves a mechanism available for repair or rest. Each fought resolution leaves damage the coast must account for. Neither changes the ending you chose.

Keep Chapter 1's truth: BOUND leaves Aster bound; FREE leaves Aster free; COVENANT leaves the willing agreement standing. Keep Chapter 2's truth as well: REGULATED, RELEASED, or SHARED still describes Meridian. This coast has added a third choice, not erased the first two.

RECORD Copy the relevant consequences into your ending journal. Keep all three chapter endings for the next book.

Return to Ysra and finish this journey. Go to 56 / p. 61

Found by the Shore Patrol

You retreat before the next blow, or the current drives you back before you can complete the task. A shore patrol finds you on the upper stones and guides you toward the Harbour House.

No one mistakes your return for proof that you should never have tried. A keeper puts your lantern on the table. Someone brings a dry coat.

You remember the warning you overlooked: the guarded core, the second swing, the rope that needed anchoring. The discovery can be useful without becoming a sentence against you.

Brindle, if he is travelling with you, has stayed clear of the danger and follows the patrol home. Your records remain inside their dry case.

Rest, read the pattern again, and decide whether the same problem needs a different approach.

RECORD Add 1 SETBACK. Keep all discoveries, provisions, and companion. Restore charges only when you reach section 6. Unfinished encounters reset; completed ones remain resolved.

Recover at the Harbour House. Go to 6 / p. 11

The Silence After the Bell



Tonight, the people come first.

Ysra is at the quay when you return. She has not washed the name from her sleeve. She says she may keep it there a little longer, even now that she remembers the face belonging to it.

You give her your copy of the six names. She compares it with her own, then adds the names of the people who helped bring them home. There is room for yours if you want it.

If DEEP is marked, Sen brings the sketch of the windows beneath the sea. If it is not, a fishing crew reports a row of lights beyond the old wall a few evenings later. The report is uncertain; the invitation is not yet a duty.

There may be a city farther below, and another story waiting in it. Tonight the coast's crisis is over. People sit beside people they remember loving. Someone laughs before a joke is finished.

You close the journal only after writing what you chose to keep.

RECORD Chapter 3 is complete. Chapter 4 is The City That Waited. Keep your three endings and journal; no further quest is required to finish this book.

Complete your ending journal. Go to 57 / p. 62

Begin a new journey: reset the Chapter 3 record first. Go to 1 / p. 6

The traveller's journal

The coast record shows what you found. These notes remember why it mattered. Keep this page with your earlier journals for Chapter 4.

What were your Chapter 1, Chapter 2, and Chapter 3 endings?

What happened to Ysra, Elian, Oren, and the five sailors?

Which guardians did you relieve, and which did you fight?

What did your ending preserve, and what did it cost the coast?

What should your traveller remember before entering the deeper city?

Completed on:

The third road

Ash and Lantern 3: The Bells Beneath the Sea
The Greyhaven Chronicles, Book Three
By Marcus Draper / Deskatur
Illustrated gamebook, edition 1.0 - November 2026.

This branching book adapts Chapter 3 of the Ash and Lantern web series. Saltmere, the rescue crew, the memory mechanism, three major guardians, preparation routes, legacy gifts, and three outcomes follow that adventure. Dialogue and tactical choices are expanded for reading.

The dice-free book uses three lantern charges, provisions, and permanent discoveries. There are no hit-point totals, focus calculations, or currency purchases. Every path has free ways to progress. Returning to prepare does not start an unstated countdown.

Illustrations
Four new AI-generated paintings depict Ysra at the quay, the ferry rescue, Mera sorting memories, and Highwater's construction. Seven established Chapter 3 web assets supply three environments and four enemy sheets. Each enemy's ready, damaged, and defeated states are shown during its combat route. The art was made with OpenAI image generation; no commissioned hand-painting is claimed.

Continuity
Keep all three endings independently. Elian the sailor and Oren the bell keeper are explicitly distinguished from earlier similarly named characters. Mera is introduced here as an archivist; this book does not require her to be the caravan passenger of Chapter 2. Ordinary coastal travel and the return choices compress familiar routes.

The series
1. The Hollow Beacon
2. The Roads Without Dawn
3. The Bells Beneath the Sea
4. The City That Waited

The original web adventures are available through deskatur.com. The editable source package includes the manuscript, original artwork, layout code, and validation notes. The PDF can be played on paper or filled manually in a compatible reader; it is not an automated web save.



What would you give to remember?

Six sailors are missing. A mother has written her son's name on her sleeve. Beneath the sea, three ancient bells are keeping a door closed - and taking memories to do it.

Follow the rescue boat. Hear the guardians who were never relieved. Then decide what the coast can keep, and what it must learn to let go.

56 STORY SECTIONS / 3 ENDINGS
ILLUSTRATED ENCOUNTERS / CLICKABLE CHOICES
FILLABLE RECORD AND ENDING JOURNAL

DESKATUR ORIGINALS / MARCUS DRAPER