
Out of Time

by Paul Struth

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Short Gamebook Fiction

The busy street falls silent. No sound now but the rush of blood in your ears, no movement but your own agitated steps. You are alone, the only living thing in a world of statues.

It's happening again. The sensation is familiar but no less terrifying for that. Useless to cry out, for there is no one to hear you. The tourists that crowd the little Prague market stand silent and motionless, as if they were caught on camera. Your eyes leap from one frozen face to the next, appealing for some flicker of recognition, but meet only with blank stares. Even Emily looks away, seemingly entranced by the old books offered for sale.

The book! The travel guide is still in your hands, a shabby second-hand edition, its pages annotated in thick black pencil. As the first shock subsides, your mind starts to crowd with questions. What does it mean? Do those handwritten notes provide some kind of explanation for your strange illness? The dull roar in your ears reaches a deafening pitch then swirls away to nothing.

All around you, conversations resume. The tourists continue their slow drift down the street, acting as if nothing had happened. It is 2.18pm, on Monday, 5 August 2013. Perhaps twenty seconds have passed, or no time at all.

'What's the matter?' Emily asks, turning to you with sudden concern.

First comes the freeze then the weakness. The feeling of giddiness overwhelms you and you lean against the table of second-hand books to steady yourself.

'It's nothing,' you say, forcing a smile. 'Just feel a bit faint, that's all. No really, I'm fine.'

But nothing is fine, never has been since that day, aged eleven, when time first stood still. The attacks are coming more frequently now, the slightest hint of stress or danger enough to trigger an episode. What is wrong with you?

'Perhaps we should go back to the hostel?' Emily suggests.

You shake your head. 'Just some water. And the book. I want to buy this book.'

The Czech street trader looks dubiously at the tatty paperback, eyes registering the worn cover and dog-eared pages. 'One hundred,' he tells you. You hand him the money and stow the book inside your backpack, burying it down deep as if the knowledge of its contents could be similarly buried. How has your secret come to be scrawled across the pages of a second-hand travel guide? And, what is more, in a passable imitation of your own handwriting?

THE GUIDEBOOK

(Rogue Planet Guide to the Czech Republic, published 2013, © Paul Struth)

Rabštejn

Rabštejn is known as the Gateway to the Jeseníky Mountains and is a good place to base yourself if you are planning to spend time exploring the highlands. The town itself makes for an interesting day trip from Brno or Olomouc.

Main square (Náměstí Republiky)

Sit in the sun at one of the pavement cafés and enjoy the view of the Gothic town hall. The so-called Graffiti Room at *U Krkavcu* (no.7) contains over a thousand messages left by nineteenth century travellers.

Castle Rabenstein (Zámek Rabštejn)

The family seat of the Barons Rabenstein is visible from almost every part of the town. First mentioned in 1318, the present castle dates largely from the sixteenth century. The east wing was refurbished after a serious fire in 1900. The Rabensteins were forced into exile at the end of the Second World War, along with the rest of the Sudeten German population, and their former home is now in the care of the Czech state. Visits are possible only by guided tour (Mar-Oct, 100 Kč).

Capuchin Church (Kostel Panny Marie Bolestné)

The church of Our Lady of Sorrows was built between 1692 and 1695 by Christoph Dientzenhofer and is worth visiting for its splendid Baroque interior (open daily, admission free). The Capuchin monastery it once served, now a girls' school, is closed to the public.

(Below the printed text these handwritten notes appear.)

Now that I have begun to doubt even myself, let me restate what I know must be true. It is August 2013. I am in Rabštejn and E is waiting for me at the Capuchin church.

What madness is it that has brought me here? The few attractions promised by the guidebook would, of themselves, not have been enough to warrant the two-and-a-half hour train journey from Prague : my reasons for visiting were purely personal. I had always known that Fraenkel was a foreign name but did not become interested in the family history until my condition was diagnosed as hereditary. I discovered that my ancestors had lived in Rabštejn, in what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire, until my great-grandfather emigrated in the early years of the 20th century. The thought occurred to me then: What if I am not alone? What if there are others?

Since early adolescence I have suffered from an extremely rare genetic disorder, CHRONOSTASIA, for which there is no known cure. In moments of danger or stress, time appears to literally stand still, although I myself am able to think and move as normal. I have no control over how and when the attacks occur, other than by the simple method of avoiding stressful situations.

Intrigued by the parallels between your own life and the notes in the guidebook, you have decided to travel to Rabštejn. There you will find a mystery waiting to be solved. The Passport on the next page contains information about the rules of play.

When you are ready, please start your journey at the section headed Rabštejn.

PASSPORT

Surname FRAENKEL Given names

Date of Birth Nationality

Medical conditions Chronostasia

Determination 1 point

Memories**DETERMINATION**

Determination is a measure of your will to succeed, something you will need to keep going through difficult situations. You start with 1 Determination point.

You can increase your Determination score by taking decisive action or by uncovering clues which you believe will help you to solve the mystery. Chronostatic attacks, however, will weaken your Determination to keep going. The text may also give you the option to use Determination to help you out of a difficult situation – in these cases you must cross off any points used.

There is no upper or lower limit to your Determination. You may therefore end up with a minus score; in these cases, any subsequent increases will count towards reducing the deficit. It should go without saying that you can only use Determination to resolve a situation when you have points available to spend.

MEMORIES

During your adventure you may be asked to note a Memory on your Passport. As the name suggests, a Memory is a recollection of something that has happened to you in the past. Your character will also know any information that you yourself can remember without referring to your notes.

RABŠTEJN

Wednesday, 7 August 2013

It is a hot day and the hike from the railway station leaves you both irritable. The centre of Rabštejn offers some small reward, terraces of gaily painted houses framing a picturesque market square. You ask at the tourist information office in the town hall but, to your disappointment, the young assistant has never heard the name of Fraenkel.

'What shall we do now?' Emily demands, still petulant after your quarrel.

By common consent you decide against walking up the hill to the castle and settle for browsing around the backstreets. You find the Capuchin church almost by accident. It stands at one end of a small square, the towering Baroque façade rising to catch the afternoon sun.

'You're not going in?' Emily asks in disbelief. She lets her backpack slide down onto the cobbles, as if to say – here, and no further!

'Just a quick look. Since we're here.'

Emily rolls her eyes in weary acquiescence. She fills her water bottle from the fountain in the middle of the square.

'Not coming with me?'

'Uh uh. I'll stay and watch the backpacks.'

When you look back from the church door, she is sitting on the steps of the fountain, tying her hair back.

It is cold inside the church after the heat of the day, cold and deathly silent. You are the only visitor. The clerestory windows fill the vault with heavenly white light but shadows congregate in the aisles and in the side chapels. Here, in the gloom, you come across a grisly relic, a glass coffin containing the skeleton of a man wrapped in priestly vestments, a Snow White to give children nightmares. There are no memorials to anyone called Fraenkel.

You sit in one of the pews (the scuff of shoes on old wood) and stare up at the high altar. An enormous oil painting, its background rendered dark with age, pictures Mary weeping over the pale corpse of Christ. The statues of saints and angels are like so many gilded waxworks, lifelike and dead and faintly creepy all at once. Or maybe that's just the atmosphere. You look round, almost certain that you will see someone sitting behind you, but the rows of pews are empty.

A door bangs shut, the sound echoing too loud in the cavernous nave. An elderly priest is locking the entrance to the vestry. He crosses himself in front of the altar then shuffles up the aisle towards you. You must look like a tourist because he speaks to you in German.

'Bitte?' You struggle to recall what you learned of the language in school.

'Die Kirche wird jetzt geschlossen.'

Aha! The church is closing now. You nod quickly to show him you have understood. You pick up the guidebook and stand, suddenly eager to be out of this dead place. Time, you think, to patch things up with Emily. But, when you step outside into the square, you find that she has vanished.

1

You cannot see Emily - or the backpacks - whichever way you look. Emily! Em? The only reply is the half-hearted dribble of water from the fountain. You reach for your phone but it is not there – you remember you had put it in the side pocket of your backpack for safe keeping. The sun is sinking behind the castle. Is it already so late? The last train back to Prague must be leaving soon. In the twilight glow the empty square, which moments before had seemed merely picturesque, looks very foreign. You begin to grow anxious. Where is Emily? Perhaps she got bored of waiting and has ventured into one of the streets leading off the square. Despite yourself you can't help but think that something must have happened to her. Where can you get help? You seem to remember seeing a blue POLICIE sign at the railway station as you arrived. The stress of your situation threatens to overwhelm you. What are you going to do?

Sit down and wait – Emily is bound to reappear soon? Turn to **48**
Look for her in the side streets? Turn to **82**
Head back to the railway station? Turn to **57**

2

Add 1 DETERMINATION point.

Dank earth and the scrape of brick dust beneath your fingernails but no weapon more likely than the wooden table comes to hand. You turn it over and with some effort succeed in wrenching off one of the legs. Armed with this makeshift club, you hammer on the door and walls of the cellar, howling like a celebrant at some savage rite. After an hour, your summons is answered and you hear the heavy tread of footsteps on the stairs.

From your hiding place behind the door, you can see nothing more than the golden glow of the lamp but you hear the clockmaker's breathing, sense his puzzlement at your apparent absence. He takes a step forward into the room and, as he does so, you hit him on the back of the head with the table leg. A groan and he falls forward, dropping the lamp. Glass shatters; the flame wavers on the earthen floor, briefly showing the body lying there, unmoving, and then goes out. Without waiting to hear if the clockmaker will recover, you rush through the open door and up the stairs. The front door of the shop is bolted but you have it open in moments and are off running down the street.

*Add the MEMORY **Gefangen** to your Passport and turn to 43*

3

At your first movement, a gunshot sounds, deafeningly loud in the small room, and you feel an agony sear your body. You topple forwards, your hands clawing at the carpet, as if to pull yourself up out of the blackness that threatens to drown you. You hear a voice, very far away and high up, and it seems to you that the voice is your own but you can no longer understand what it is saying to you.
Turn to 30

4

You take aim and fire at your double, who gives a cry and topples back off the walkway into the darkness below. A flash of lightning illuminates your twisted body lying still amongst the transformers and capacitors at the base of the tower. You now have the opportunity to use the time machine. *Turn to 74*

5

As the last lever clanks into place, power surges into the Anachronism. Sparks crackle and fly; your skin tingles and the very air itself seems to tense in anticipation. You brace yourself for what is to happen next. *Turn to 93*

6

You leave the police station hurriedly. Two roads come together here. Looking left, you can see the castle silhouetted against the sunset. To your right, a street called Lange Gasse runs back towards the church. The sky over the town is dark with gathering clouds and there is a rumble of thunder in the air.

If you want to take the left fork towards the castle, turn to 83

If you would rather go back to the church, turn to 66

7

Holding the candle with shaking hands, you inspect the walls of the room. There are hundreds of messages, but you only have time to look at a few. All of them are apparently in the same hand, though evidently written at different times (some have been scratched out or are now too faint to read). Most are short; the name EMILY (sometimes spelled as Emilie) is repeated over and over.

Next to the bed is a pair of initials and the date 18/9/1900. The rather more cryptic Z IS NOT THE FIRST is neatly printed in block capitals in the far corner. Dragging the heavy dresser away from the wall reveals a long mathematical calculation, apparently unfinished, to which someone has appended the comment FIND THE GUIDEBOOK. There is no time to make a note of all the messages, so you will have to try to memorise them.

'Dr Fraenkel!'

The sound of furniture being moved must have been clearly audible to those outside the door.

'Open up, doctor! This is the police!'

The polite knocking has now given way to a fist hammering on the door. The door rattles in its frame. The bolt is a flimsy affair and looks likely to give way at any moment.

If you want to open the door, turn to 50

If you would rather climb out of the window and make your escape across the roofs, turn to 45

8

After a few minutes you reach the main square, empty now apart from a horse-drawn carriage waiting patiently in front of the town hall.

Night is falling fast. There is still light in the west, where the castle stands silhouetted against the pale sky, but darkness hangs over the town and fills its streets. Clouds are gathering and there is a rumble of thunder in the air. Used as you are to the bright lights of the twenty-first century, the square seems dreadfully dark. Apart from the faltering gas lamps forming a ring around its edge, the only lights are in the windows of a large inn, The Three Ravens.

If you wish to visit the inn, turn to 36

If you decide to leave the square, turn to 83

9

As you are deciding which way to go, you see someone come out of Dr Fraenkel's house. The person is your double in every respect, down to the very clothes you are wearing! The other you takes a few short steps and then collapses in the street. A cold shiver runs down your spine. Are you witnessing your own death?

You rush forward, apprehensive about what awaits you. The bullet has punched a bloody hole through your chest. You crouch down beside the other you but you can see that you do not have long left to live. Your eyes are already sightless – when you open them again, you know you will be in the church. You start to shake and weep with the futility of it all – *lose 1 DETERMINATION point*.

The other you is still clasping Fraenkel's book, the charred remains of the cover flaking away onto your hands and clothing.

'Take it!' you whisper, your voice cracked and fading. And then you are gone. For a brief moment you see yourself lying there and then your body too starts to fade. After a few seconds there is nothing but the burned book. *Turn to 34*

10

Under the shop counter is a cupboard piled high with paperback books. You take one out. It is a travel guide to the Czech Republic with a picture of the Astronomical Clock in Prague on the cover, exactly the same as the copy you bought. You take out another and another – they are both the same. In fact all the books in the cupboard are copies of your guidebook, in various states of preservation. Some are nearly new, others are dog-eared and grimy, but all were printed in 2013. Many of the pages are covered with handwritten notes.

There is a deep groan from the floor. The clockmaker is slowly regaining consciousness.

If you want to grab an armful of the books and leave the shop, turn to 39

If you would rather abandon them and investigate the noise from the cellar, turn to 60

11

You duck out of the way of your double's wild swing. The heavy iron wrench is caught by the powerful magnetic fields generated by the time machine and your double is drawn back into the time vortex that the fields have created.

It is as if someone has pressed a fast forward button. The fingernails lengthen and hair cascades to the waist, whitens and frizzles away as if it were being singed by the electricity all around. Before your eyes you watch yourself age; your face is that of a thirty-, forty-, sixty-, ninety-year-old. The skin withers and peels back from your bones, which are already crumbling to dust and being blown away by the time storm. In a matter of minutes you have ceased to exist.

You stare in horror at the empty space left behind.

'The Anachronism!' Lady Rabenstein cries, as another bolt of lightning strikes the tower.

You turn to the time machine, to your destiny. *Turn to 74*

12

You have some Czech crowns in your pocket which you now offer to the tramp. A rank, unwashed smell rises to meet you as you step forward but it is not this that causes you to gasp in horror. The face that grins back at you is your own! *Add the MEMORY Penner to your Passport.*

Before you can say anything, grimy hands snake out from under the coat sleeves and seize the guidebook, tearing it away from your grasp. The tramp shoves you hard, causing you to stumble backwards and fall. The coins scatter across the cobbles. Your double ignores them and runs away across the square, clutching the guidebook under one arm.

If you want to chase after the fleeing tramp, turn to 37

If you would rather ignore the theft – you have only lost your guidebook after all – turn to 76

13

While you are agonising over the correct setting, there is a malfunction. Too much power! The incredibly high voltage generated by the lightning has caused a short circuit. You cover your face with your hands as sparks rain down. A fire has been started. Smoke fills the tower. You struggle to free yourself from the cockpit but the damn safety belt is stuck. The flames are spreading quickly, the tower is on fire. You remember a phrase from the guidebook - *The east wing was refurbished after a serious fire in 1900*. Oh God – is this what happened to Fraenkel? The smoke overcomes you and you black out. *Turn to 44*

14

After some minutes you round a corner and find yourself back on a main street. To your right, it continues towards the castle.

If you decide to go to the castle, turn to 64

If you would rather turn left, back towards the town, turn to 83

15

You knock the book out of the flames using a poker but the book itself is still hot and your attempts to handle it leave you with burned fingers. Gripping the charred remains with the edge of your t-shirt, you make haste to leave the house. But you are barely out of the room before time resumes.

You fly down the stairs, taking them four or five at a time, gambling that the simulacrum cannot follow with anything like the same speed, if at all. As you cross the first floor landing, a gunshot rings out behind you and you feel a hot agony tear through your body. *Lose 1 DETERMINATION point.*

You drag open the door of the house but take only a few steps before collapsing in the street outside. You seem to hear the sound of footsteps approaching and a voice speaking to you but you are already too weak to hear what it says.

*Add the MEMORY **Erschossen** to your Passport and turn to 30*

16

'What is this place?'

The priest pauses at the gate of the monastery. 'I might say it is the house of God, but I sense some wider philosophical question. You look troubled, doctor.'

'I do not know where I am, or when.'

'A strange question from one who has studied time for so long. Any labourer in the street might have told you it is 18 September.'

'And the year! What year is this?'

The priest looks at you with a quizzical expression.

'Forgive me, but you do not seem yourself this evening, Dr Fraenkel.'

'Tell me, who is Dr Fraenkel?'

'Ah, only you can answer the question, I think. But it is late in the day to be considering such weighty matters. You have pushed yourself too hard. Go home and rest now.'

'I do not...'

'Come, it is but two minutes from here.' The priest points down a narrow alley running alongside the monastery wall.

If you want to walk down the alley, turn to 47

If you would rather leave the square by another route, turn to 76

17

You fold out the newspaper. The name is printed in heavy black Gothic type across the top of the page: RABENSTEINER ABENDBLATT. To your surprise, the headlines are written in German rather than Czech. But the date of the edition comes as a far bigger shock: Tuesday, 18 September 1900!

The newspaper boy opens his mouth to say something but the only sound is the dull roar of blood in your ears. In all the square nothing moves; even the gas lamps outside the inn no longer flicker, their flames frozen in place. Your pulse races: have you really travelled back in time? You look around for confirmation and find it in the absence of familiar objects – there are no cars, no street lights, no traffic signs. If you had not been so preoccupied by Emily's disappearance you might have noticed it before. The roar in your ears reaches a deafening pitch then swirls away to nothing.

'Five heller,' the boy demands, holding out his hand for payment. You give him back the paper instead. He scorns your apparent miserliness, but you hardly hear his reproaches. The feeling of weakness claims you and you turn away, fearing that you are about to vomit.

Lose 1 DETERMINATION point.

As you recover from the attack, your mind clears. It is not Emily who has disappeared but you! With a pang you realise that even now she must be frantically searching Rabštejn for you. You have to get back! But how?

The more you think, the more you realise the deadly seriousness of your situation. Night is coming on and you are alone in a strange town with nowhere to go. You could ask for shelter at the inn but you have no money (for the few Czech crowns you are carrying will be useless); maybe it would be better to go back to the church? That is where you must have stumbled into the past. Or you could try asking someone for help. The square is almost empty at this late hour; apart from the young newspaper seller, the only other person in sight is the driver of the coach and horses. What are you going to do?

Visit the inn?

Turn to 36

Go back to the church?

Turn to 66

Ask the coachman for help?

Turn to 56

18

As the last lever clanks into place, power surges into the Anachronism. Sparks crackle and fly; your skin tingles and the very air itself seems to tense in anticipation. You brace yourself for what is to happen next. Turn to 93

19

As you turn to leave, you hear a chair screech on the floor. The clockmaker is coming around the counter, a heavy wooden cudgel in his raised hand. You throw up your arms in a futile attempt to ward off the blow but the defence is no longer necessary. The clocks have stopped.

The pendulums hang drunkenly to one side or the other, frozen in mid swing. The clockmaker himself stands motionless, his mechanism wound down. The incessant ticking of his creations has been replaced by the dull roar of blood in your ears.

If you want to use this opportunity to escape from the shop, turn to 43

If you would rather stay to find out why the clockmaker is attacking you, turn to 91
Whatever you decide to do, you must lose 1 DETERMINATION point due to the weakness that follows a chronostatic attack.

20

Add 1 DETERMINATION point.

Lady Rabenstein smiles for only the second time since your meeting. 'I see you are as eager as I am for the experiment. I am not insensible to your own pain and pray that you will soon see your Emilie again.'

Thunder rumbles, so loud the storm must be directly overhead.

'Your device is in the east tower,' she says. 'I will lead the way.'

*If you have the MEMORY **Ostturm**, turn to 78*

Otherwise, turn to 42

21

After a few minutes you reach the main square, a wide grey field of cobbles in front of the town hall. A boy of perhaps eleven or twelve is standing at the street corner selling newspapers to passers-by. When he sees you, he makes a face and sticks his tongue out.

Most of the windows in the square are in darkness but you can see the lights of an inn over to your right. The sign painted in large black letters across the whole width of the first floor reads ZU DEN DREI RABEN. Across the square, a stately landau is waiting in front of the town hall. Horses and carriage are black, the door of the latter is painted with a coat of arms, three ravens on a white field. A thickset coachman is tending to the horses.

Streets of elegant town houses leave the square on either side. A street named Herrengasse runs towards the castle. Tuchlauben continues in the other direction. What are you going to do?

If you wish to visit the inn, turn to 36

If you would rather leave the square, you may walk down either Herrengasse (turn to 83) or Tuchlauben (turn to 73)

If you decide to ask the coachman for directions, turn to 56

22

The front door is unlocked; you push it open and enter the house. The hallway is in darkness and, when you peer into one of the rooms, you find it empty, the furniture covered in dust sheets.

'Hello? Is anyone at home?'

You think you hear a noise upstairs and follow the sound. On the second floor, a door stands ajar, allowing a little light onto the landing.

The room is furnished in an antique style. Dark woods predominate. Shelves of books line the walls, suggesting a library or perhaps a study. A couple of leather armchairs, both empty, are arranged in front of an open fire which is burning merrily. The fire and a pair of wall lamps provide the only light, leaving the room rather dark. On a side table near the door stand a crystal spirit decanter, an empty glass and a small, framed photograph of a young woman.

'Unbelievable!' a familiar voice mutters. 'Almost to the minute!'

Your eyes are drawn towards the curtained window, where your lookalike stands, holding open a gold pocket watch. Clothes and hair follow the fashion of the late nineteenth century but the face is unmistakably your own. You open your mouth to speak but your twin holds up a hand to silence you.

'In answer to your question, I am Dr Fraenkel and, as you can see, I am the most perfect replica of yourself; though, as you are in my home, perhaps it would not be impolite to say that I am the original and you the imitation. And this is Emilie.'

As if in answer to the name, a young woman steps out from behind the door and you recognise the face in the photograph. In her gloved hand, she holds a small silver pistol and it is pointed directly at you!

'Pleased to meet you I'm sure.'

The woman does not reply. Her face is an expressionless porcelain mask; only her eyes betray any signs of life. Her infrequent movements are stiff and accompanied by soft clicking and whirring sounds.

'Another replica,' the doctor explains, 'though in this case, alas, not so perfect in the execution.'

'She is a robot?'

'The word is unfamiliar to me; I prefer the term simulacrum. The work of my own flawed hands, an attempt to replace the irreplaceable.'

*If you have the MEMORY **Erfindung**, turn to 63*

Otherwise, turn to 46

23

You hurry away without a backward glance.

'Go on then!' the tramp jeers, his voice following you until it becomes a shout. 'You're not real anyway. You're just a fake! A bloody fake!'

Two streets lead off the far side of the square. One must run back to the main square. The other continues towards the castle, its roofs and towers silhouetted against the pale western sky. You can see a few people here, labourers leaving a factory at the end of the working day, but the street itself is rather dirty and poorly lit. Which direction will you take?

West towards the castle?

Turn to 92

South towards the town square?

Turn to 8

24

As you turn and run, you hear the policeman blow several sharp blasts on his whistle, a clear cry for help. You run on, head pounding, the startled faces of the children like white flashes before your eyes.

You do not know where you are going, your only thought is to get away from the piercing shriek of the whistle. Suddenly the street seems to be full of gawping bystanders, mindless skittles whom you must dodge if you are not to bowl them over. Among them is a familiar face, the sight of which almost causes you to stumble. Coming down the street towards you is your exact double, down to the very clothes you wear!

In your distraction, you fail to notice a handcart being pushed into your path; you run straight into it and the cart overturns, spilling its bright cargo. The polished pots and pans clatter and roll across the cobbles, working their owner to a frenzy of indignation. The enraged trader opens his mouth to curse you but the words never come.

The face of the trader is that of a gargoyle, twisted but unmoving. His pots and pans balance impossibly on the cobbles, hanging in place at gravity-defying angles. Your double, the policeman and the curious onlookers stand frozen in time, like players in a game of musical statues. Only you still possess the power of movement. You scramble to your feet and run off down a side street, using the opportunity provided by the chronostatic attack to make good your escape.

Behind you, time resumes. You hear the surprised cries of those left behind; for them, it must seem as if you have vanished into thin air. But in the next moment, the weakness overtakes you. You come to a halt in a doorway, grasping at the walls for support like a drunkard. Your stomach heaves and you retch dryly.

Lose 1 DETERMINATION point.

*Note the MEMORY **Zwilling** on your Passport and turn to 83*

25

The door opens onto a small room, dimly lit by a skylight at the far end. You think you see a movement in the shadows and lift the lamp. 'Hello?'

You take a few steps into the room and circle round. There is an insanitary looking mattress on the floor and the ruins of an old wooden table in one corner but the room is otherwise completely empty. A fly buzzes in the stale air. What was making the noise?

You hear a bell ring above you in the shop. You thud back up the stairs and almost trip over the body of the clockmaker. There is no one else there but the door of the shop is ajar. You look out the window and are just in time to see someone running away across the square. Was this the person locked in the cellar? If so, how did they get past you?

Your thoughts are interrupted by a deep groan from the floor. The clockmaker is sitting up, rubbing his head. You decide to leave the shop at once (*turn to 43*).

26

'Thank goodness you are here, doctor,' Jellinek says, coming forward to greet you. 'I was beginning to worry. If you are agreeable I suggest we proceed to the castle at once. The baron is most anxious to renew your acquaintance.'

For your own part you are glad to leave the unwelcoming inn. You follow Jellinek outside, where a horse-drawn carriage, a stately landau, is waiting. Horses and carriage are black, the door of the latter is painted with a coat of arms, three ravens on a white field. *Turn to 49*

27

'Thank you, doctor, thank you.'

Lady Rabenstein stands and takes your right hand in both of hers. 'I know how much this decision must have cost you. Shall we set aside the formalities and address one another as friends? My name is Libuše. It is an ancient name and still has some power. If you ever need anything in Rabenstein, please do not hesitate to invoke my patronage.'

*Add the MEMORY **Libuše** to your Passport.*

Thunder rumbles, so loud the storm must now be directly overhead.

'Your device is in the east tower,' the lady says, drawing back. 'I will lead the way.'

*If you also have the MEMORY **Ostturm**, turn to 78*

Otherwise, turn to 42

28

Nothing is happening! You look around the cockpit frantically. There is another control located down by the side of your seat, a brass handle attached to a dial, the whole contraption resembling the engine order telegraph of a ship. The face of the dial is numbered from -9 to 9 with gradations between. The handle currently rests in the middle at 0.0. Is this the control that will steer your direction in time? Which one will take you back to August 2013?

During your adventure you may have come across the correct setting. If you did, remove the decimal point and turn to the reference with the same number (for example, if you think the lever should be set to 1.5, turn to reference 15)

If you don't know the correct setting, turn to 13

29

You tell Fraenkel that you suffer from a disorder which the doctors of your own time are powerless to cure.

'Chronostasia? When time stands still, yes? A perceptual dimming of the vision? Vertigo?'

'You have experienced this yourself?'

Fraenkel laughs, a brief, bitter sound with no joy in it. 'How could it be otherwise? I am you. You are nothing more than a simulacrum of myself, a perfect copy down to the millionth atom of our being. This is just one part of the catastrophe which the Anachronism has set in train.'

'And? Is there a cure?'

The doctor looks at you sadly. 'I thought so, once. And, when all the medical knowledge at my disposal had proved useless, I took the pistol that you now see in Emilie's hand and, placing it to my forehead, administered the final cure with all the calmness of a doctor taking a pulse.' Fraenkel shrugs. 'And yet here I stand before you today.'

'Then there is no hope.'

There is a pause, during which Fraenkel seems to draw new strength from your despair. Walking quickly to a bureau, the doctor takes from it a small vial of brown glass.

'Here, take this for the nausea – I know how bad it is. One pill should be sufficient.'

You start to stammer your thanks but Fraenkel cuts you off.

'Do not thank me! Go! Leave now, while you still can.'

The PILLS will counteract the weakness you usually experience after a chronostatic attack. As long as you have the PILLS you may ignore any instruction to deduct a point of DETERMINATION as a result of an attack.

If you wish to leave the house now, turn to 77

If you would rather ask Fraenkel what happened to the time machine, turn to 54

30

You retain your MEMORIES (as well as the information you yourself can remember without looking at your notes) but any items you may have collected, other than the guidebook, are gone. Your DETERMINATION remains unchanged.

When you open your eyes, you are sitting in a church pew, head bowed. As you look up, you see the high altar in front of you, a large oil painting flanked by the gilded statues of saints and angels. You glance around in some confusion. If you had lost the guidebook, you find it lying on the seat next to you. Have you been dreaming?

A door bangs shut, the sudden noise making you jump. An elderly priest is locking the entrance to the vestry. He crosses himself in front of the high altar then shuffles up the aisle towards you.

'The church is closing now.'

The same words as before. Time is repeating itself!

You hurry to the entrance of the church but on the steps of the fountain, where you had half-hoped to see Emily sitting, there is only a filthy-looking tramp. The creature laughs raucously as you come out of the church, as if the joke were on you, but then ignores you. Probably a drunk. As he locks the church door, the priest casts a brief, disapproving glance at the tramp, then nods politely to you.

'I wish you a pleasant evening, doctor.'

He hobbles towards a gate in the monastery wall.

Because events appear to be repeating themselves, you may return to locations you have already visited – and, if you wish, do things differently.

If you wish to approach the tramp, turn to 62

If you would rather question the priest, turn to 16

Or you may leave the square at once by turning to 76

31

As you relax your grip, the tramp disappears before your very eyes. One moment, you are face to face, the next you are grasping at thin air. You look around quickly - your double is already fifty metres away, nearing the far side of the square. Have you been a witness to your own chronostatic attack? As you consider the bizarre idea, the tramp disappears into a street that leads towards the castle.

You pick up the tramp's BOWLER HAT, abandoned on the cobbles where it fell during the struggle. The inside is lined with newspaper; removing this, you find that a small hole, large enough to put your finger through, has been drilled through the top. Otherwise the hat appears quite presentable. You may wear it if you wish.

If you want to follow the tramp, turn to 92

If you would rather leave the square by another route, turn to 76

32

You push at the door and find that the shop is still open. You enter a small high room, the walls of which are almost entirely covered by clocks, all showing different times of day. An oil lamp stands on the wooden shop counter; within its circle of light are various tools and countless tiny pieces of intricate mechanism. The clockmaker, a small, bearded man perhaps forty or fifty years of age, looks up as you enter and squints through his eyeglass at you.

'So, you have come back,' he says at last, in gruff recognition.

'You know me?'

'You have not changed.' He sets the eyeglass aside. 'You know that the baron is aware of your return? His valet was in here not an hour past asking after you. I told him I had not seen you.'

'What does he want with me?'

Fraenkel shrugs. 'What else? You must go on with your work, the work you had forsworn.' He stands up and sighs. 'A kind of blasphemy to cause time to stop and run back on itself. We have had much trouble here because of it. I had hoped for better from a child of my own.'

'You are my father?'

The clockmaker hears the words, intended as a question, as a simple statement of fact.

'Now you know it. And because of my love for you I will set my own scruples aside. You may stay here until the hounds are called off. Come, I have prepared a room for you.'

If you have the MEMORY Vater, turn to 75

Otherwise, you may either decide to stay with the clockmaker (turn to 98) or make your excuses and leave the shop at once (turn to 19)

33

'You will regret this,' you tell the robbers. 'I am a personal friend of Lady Rabenstein!'

'So it speaks our lingo,' Weasel Face sneers. 'A proper little threatener aren't you?'

The second man shifts uneasily. 'What if it's the truth, Karli?'

'You shut your mouth!' Weasel Face barks, suddenly furious. 'No names, I said!' His knife twists in the air, agitated, as if it cannot wait to begin its work.

'I tell you, I am under the protection of Libuše von Rabenstein.'

'And I am the King of Poland!'

The woman places a hand on the knifeman's arm. 'Wait! That is the lady's name. I will not hang for a pair of new boots!'

'My needle will stitch the mouth closed!'

But his companions are of another opinion. Outnumbered, the one called Karli spits on the floor in

disgust and stalks from the room.

The other man lets you stand up. The woman wrings her hands nervously.

'Please forgive our... mistake. We are not wicked people. There has been so little money since I left the lady's employment.'

'You were her maid?'

'I was a hairdresser at the castle three months but my poor nerves could not stand it any longer. I would rather starve than set foot there again. The place is dreadfully haunted!'

'You have seen ghosts?'

'Oh, not ghosts, voices!'

'Come on, woman!' the other robber urges. 'Or will you chatter as they put the noose about your neck?'

The robbers flee the house, allowing you to continue on your way. Taking another turning you find that you were only a few minutes from the relative safety of a main street. To your right, the road continues towards the castle.

If you want to go to the castle despite the servant's warning, turn to 64

If you would rather turn left, back towards the town, turn to 83

34

The outsize leather cover is sticky, black and peeling but it has had the effect of shielding the papers within from the worst of the flames. The margins of the pages are wholly burnt away, but most of the text survives, not even scorched.

The book is handwritten in a flowing script that is so unfamiliar you at first take it to be some form of cipher. Only after some study do you begin to recognise individual words. The language is German. As far as you can tell, it is a journal describing Fraenkel's experiments with time travel. There are pages that seem to consist entirely of mathematical equations; others feature sketches which show a fantastical looking device taking shape. Did the doctor really succeed in building a fully functional time machine?

You find what you are looking for in the last third of the book.

2 June 1900

Terrific storm. Operation of Anachronism pr...
engaged levers in their proper order (S, K, Z...
charging was full and complete. Discharged...
proceeding to final phase. By my calculatio...
the number of years to be traversed (*t*) shoul...

The operation of the time machine! Encouraged by your discovery, you hurry on down the street.

Add 2 DETERMINATION points.

If you decide to go left, turn to 58

If you would rather go right, towards the main square, turn to 8

35

As the last lever clanks into place, power surges into the Anachronism. Sparks crackle and fly; your skin tingles and the very air itself seems to tense in anticipation. You brace yourself for what is to happen next. *Turn to 93*

36

The Three Ravens is smoky and crowded. The customers are seated around wooden tables so tightly packed that it is not easy to pick a way forwards. Some of the men – and it is only men who are drinking here – stop talking and turn to watch you as you pass. You seem to be an object of great curiosity. It occurs to you that your clothes set you apart, your jeans and t-shirt a sharp contrast to the waistcoats and jackets worn by most of the other customers. Many sport beards and moustaches, giving them the look of extras in an old time movie. In fact, you feel as if you have stepped into a Wild West saloon.

The impression is completed by the woman standing behind the bar, a stern looking matriarch. Her iron grey hair is bound back into a bun so severe it might be thought to draw the lines on her forehead. This must be the landlady, and a less welcoming prospect you have never seen. The ogress folds her arms at your approach.

‘Well, doctor, this is a surprise and not a pleasant one. I doubt very much that you have come here for beer or company, so say what it is you want and be on your way.’

You have evidently been mistaken for someone else.

If you have arranged to meet someone here, turn to 26

Otherwise, you ask for a room for the night (turn to 84)

37

Add 1 DETERMINATION point.

The tramp runs down one of the side streets leading off the square. Your lookalike glances back once to see if you are following and then promptly vanishes into thin air! You come to a halt and look round, breathing hard, but the tramp is nowhere to be seen.

Further down the street, some labourers are just coming out of a factory yard but they are chatting amongst themselves and show no signs of having noticed the tramp’s mysterious disappearance. Beyond them, the street continues in the direction of the castle. This area seems to be rather poor, home to a collection of workshops and run down houses.

You have lost the guidebook and may not refer to it or any notes you may have made. Continue on your way by turning to 92

38

Jellinek ushers you into a room on the second floor of the castle, an elegant salon with doors in two walls, and bids you take a seat. A sofa and chairs are arranged around a small table. There is no fire but a tile stove hulks in one corner, radiating warmth. On learning that you have not eaten, Jellinek produces a supper of cold chicken and white wine, apologising profusely for its inadequacy. He then retires, explaining that the baron will be with you shortly.

You devour the somewhat greasy chicken and sip at the wine, which leaves you light-headed. You can hear rain beating against the windows but the windows themselves are hidden by long velvet drapes. On either side, leafy designs snake across the cream wallpaper, appearing black in the candlelight. When you look more closely, you see that there are crows, or, given the family name, ravens, perching in the branches.

One of the doors opens at that moment, admitting Jellinek and an odd couple. ‘The Baron Rabenstein,’ Jellinek announces. ‘Her Ladyship.’

Lady Rabenstein is an attractive woman in her thirties, her dark hair bound up on top of her head. She is dressed entirely in black, a colour to match her sombre expression. A spider’s web of jet beads clings to her throat. She approaches in a rustle of silk and extends a cool hand for you to kiss.

The baron by contrast wears white. He is a small boy, perhaps eight or nine years of age, but no

such child as you have ever seen. The head is too large for the frail body and completely bald. The skin is pale and shot through with blue veins, the eyes wide and colourless. Wrinkles form at their corners, giving the face a much older aspect than his years suggest, as if an old man were staring out of the boy's eyes. He hangs back, appearing somewhat shy.

'Julius,' Lady Rabenstein says encouragingly, 'you remember Dr Fraenkel? The doctor is here to help you.' She directs the last words at you, as if to confirm your intent.

The young baron steps forward and addresses you in a high pitched voice, the little speech evidently rehearsed. 'I thank you, doctor, for coming here at such short notice. There is no one in all the empire whose skill I so esteem.'

The boy stifles a yawn. 'It is the baron's custom to retire at this hour,' Lady Rabenstein tells you, with a quick smile at the child. Jellinek escorts him from the room, leaving you alone with the lady. She folds herself onto the sofa and her face at once becomes serious again.

'Welcome back, doctor. I hope your presence here may be taken as an indication that you have forgiven the harsh words that passed between us at your departure?'

'I have already forgotten them,' you say, somewhat bewildered.

She inclines her head in acknowledgement of your apparent kindness.

'My son grows frailer with each passing day. His clock runs too fast. I hold his hands in my own and they are already the hands of an old man. Unless you can master time, I fear that there are not many months remaining to him. Your engine stands ready, exactly as you left it. I ask you: will you use it?'

'My engine?'

'Your Anachronism, or however it is called. The carriage with which you propose to travel in time.'

A time machine! If it really works, this could be your best, perhaps your only, hope of seeing Emily again. But do you know how to operate it? What if something goes wrong?

*If you do not already have it, add the MEMORY **Erfindung** to your Passport.*

*If you agree to experiment with using the time machine, turn to **20***

*If you refuse, admitting that you are not the real Dr Fraenkel, turn to **72***

39

Only when you are well away from the shop do you dare to stop and read what is written in the guidebooks.

Most contain a series of disjointed notes and doodles, including, in one case, a lovingly sketched bowler hat. The handwriting seems to be your own. Your attention is, however, particularly drawn to a copy where the available space is almost completely filled with the painstaking workings of a calculation, including many crossings out. Maths was never your strongpoint.

At the bottom is the answer, underlined several times: ?? **7.9**

*You are not certain what this means but it seems to be important – add 1 DETERMINATION point. If you do not have it already, you should also add the MEMORY **Vater** to your Passport.*

Where will you go now?

*If you were heading towards the castle, turn to **64***

*If you would rather visit the main square, turn to **8***

40

The thief is your exact double, down to the very clothes you wear. You stare at each other for a moment, in stunned recognition, then your double vanishes before your very eyes! The disappearance is so complete it is as if the other you had never existed.

There is little time to reflect on what has just happened because from your perspective – and that of

the other bystanders – there has been no pause. To your horror, the policeman now mistakes you for your double! Despite your protests that you are not the thief, you find yourself in handcuffs, just as the familiar grey light dims your vision.

Time freezes, turning the noisy scene before your eyes into a lifeless tableau. For once you are rendered as immobile as those about you, for you remain shackled to the policeman. There is nothing to do but wait for the attack to end. Worse, the nausea overtakes you as you are being led away. You lean forward and are sick on the cobbles, an event which does nothing to endear you to the constable – *lose 1 DETERMINATION point*. You are marched to a nearby police station, the cries of the bystanders ringing in your ears. *Turn to 69*

41

‘I may be a fool,’ Fraenkel sobs, ‘but I am no madman. *I did not use the Anachronism*. I destroyed it, and all records of its creation, as soon as I realised the deleterious effect that the first trials were having upon reality. But the Juggernaut, once set in motion, could not so easily be halted.’

‘You are no doubt under the illusion that you yourself have travelled in time. You may believe, based on what I have just told you, that I am in some way responsible for this. I have listened to your predecessors argue as much, here in this very room. And it is true that if you step outside this house you may be forgiven for believing that this is the evening of 18 September 1900, a date in your own past. But I know that no line extends from my present to your future. There is no future.’

‘Yes, there will be. The world did not stop in 1900. There will be wars...’

‘In *your* world, maybe. Maybe there was another Rabenstein and another Dr Fraenkel (though it gives me nightmares to think that I may be a simulacrum, no more real than poor Emilie here). But I know that in *this* world, your future will never come to be.

‘I know what you are going to say next because I have already heard it before. Take down a journal from my shelves and you will find a transcript of this very conversation, or some variation of it. Nothing will happen this night which has not already happened a thousand times before. If you and your kind are not lying, and you really do come from a year 2013, then I have been reliving these events for more than a century.’

Dr Fraenkel breathes heavily and seems to gather some composure.

‘The cycle must be broken. The Anachronism must be destroyed. That is why I have kept you listening long enough for the flames to destroy, once again, every last record of its functioning. And why you too can never leave this house. I did not use the Anachronism *but you will*. You will do it tonight if I do not stop you first. I will say goodbye to you now; my Emilie will do all that is needful.’

You hear the words but struggle to understand their import. Does Fraenkel intend to...

‘Kill you? That is the general idea.’ The doctor’s mad eyes rove across your face, as if seeking absolution there. ‘Your pulse is racing now. Your vision is beginning to dim.’ Fraenkel snaps open the case of the pocket watch. ‘The chronostatic attack will take effect in the next...’

Fraenkel does not finish the sentence. The doctor stands motionless, eyes fixed on the watch. The only sound is the dull roar of blood in your ears.

You turn to look at the simulacrum. As far as you can judge, she too is caught in the spell; doubtless her clockwork mechanism is even more sensitive to time than the workings of a human heart. At least, that is your profound hope. The silver gun in her hand remains pointing directly at you.

What will you do?

Escape from the house while you still can?

Turn to 59

Take the gun from the simulacrum?

Turn to 81

Drag the book from the fire?

Turn to 15

42

Taking up an oil lamp, Lady Rabenstein leads you through the darkened castle. The storm flickers at the windows, bathing the rooms momentarily in a ghostly light. Outside it is now raining heavily and the dark glass runs with water.

You come to a curving passage, the inner wall of which is formed by an arc of whitewashed stone. In the middle of this wall is a door, much more ancient than the ornate rooms through which you have just passed; Lady Rabenstein unlocks it with a large iron key. She pushes the door inwards, allowing a current of cool air to flow out. All is dark within but you experience a sensation of vastness.

'I cannot lift the lever,' the lady admits after a few moments, standing back to allow you to step through the entrance.

You let your hands run along the rough stone of the wall inside, groping forward until you find the outlines of an iron switch. Your first effort leaves it completely unmoved. Only by using both hands do you succeed in throwing it and then an amazing sight meets your eyes.

You had forgotten how bright electric light can be. It fills the vast open space of the east tower, a hollow cylinder that rises up high above your head and falls away below you, for there is no flooring at this level. Steps lead down to the ground below, where you can see a mass of electrical equipment, huge transformers and capacitors. A chemical stink taints the air. Levers and dials serve to monitor and channel the wild forces of nature.

A narrow walkway extends over the abyss towards the time machine itself, though to your eyes it looks less like a machine than a temple to arcane science. Framing the structure are three towering iron obelisks bound about with coils of copper wire. Midway between them, suspended above the walkway by unseen forces, is a gleaming brass globe connected by trailing cables to the machinery all about. It resembles nothing so much as a metal heart laid bare amidst a tangle of veins and arteries. The lower hemisphere is solid metal, the upper a series of overarching girders forming a cage over the red leather seat at the centre. The words *TEMPUS FUGIT* are stencilled around the equator.

As you marvel at the sight, lightning strikes the tower and races down the iron rods bolted to its walls. Sparks crackle and jump; the light itself winks out for a second and in the momentary darkness you see the time machine outlined by blue fire. What must happen to the chrononaut exposed to those elemental forces?

Thunder rumbles; the lights come back on. You approach the time machine warily. *Add the MEMORY Ostturm to your Passport and turn to 74*

43

Add the MEMORY Vater to your Passport.

Where will you go now?

If you were heading towards the castle, turn to 64

If you would rather visit the main square, turn to 8

44

After a quarter of an hour, Emily began to wonder what was taking you so long. She got up and looked at the backpacks leaning against the stone steps of the fountain – surely no one would steal them in the space of a few minutes? She left them there and walked up the steps and into the old church.

It seemed to her to be incredibly gloomy inside but even so she could see that there was no one sitting in the pews. As she stood there, wondering where you were, a door banged shut, the sound echoing too loud in the cavernous nave. An elderly priest was locking the entrance to the vestry. He crossed himself in front of the high altar then shuffled up the aisle towards her. He said something to her that she did not understand.

'I'm sorry?' she said, smiling, hoping that she had not done anything wrong. He cleared his throat

and addressed her in his weak English.

'The church is closing now,' he said.

You have reached the end of this adventure. If you wish to go back in time and try again, turn to 1

45

The route is more precarious than it seemed from the safety of the room. The first part of the journey is easy; your window opens into the hollow between two adjacent pitched roofs; but to progress further you find yourself having to dare open expanses of the roofscape. In the near dark the going is treacherous, the roofs falling away with terrifying abruptness into the abysses on either side. You are a mountaineer in a range of brick and tile, the only witnesses to your progress the soot-fogged windows of nearby attics which, however, remain tantalisingly out of reach. As you are clambering towards a point where you may start your descent to ground level, a startled pigeon bursts from its roost in the lee of a chimney and you lose your footing.

As you start to slide towards the precipice, time comes to a standstill. The pigeon is suspended in mid-flight but you are still sliding! You reach out desperately and manage to grab a handhold just as you go over the edge.

The roaring in your ears spirals away to nothing. Time resumes, leaving you dangling helplessly over the drop. The guidebook and any other objects you were carrying fall to the courtyard far below. You must get to safety before the weakness overcomes you! You try to haul yourself back up onto the roof.

You will need 1 DETERMINATION point to summon up the reserves of strength needed. Reduce your score accordingly and turn to 61

If you have no determination left, you are too weak and terrified to move. As your strength ebbs, you lose your grip and fall (turn to 30)

46

'And now we have established who we are,' Fraenkel continues, 'we must determine *what* you are. You will claim to be from the twenty-first century, no doubt?'

You tell the doctor that you travelled to Rabštejn on holiday, how you entered the church and came out to find that Emily had vanished. It is disconcerting to look yourself in the face and your voice tails away. There is a pause before Fraenkel appears to realise that you have stopped speaking.

'You will, I hope, forgive my inattention. It is not that I regard your story as anything less than tragic, it is just that I have heard it many times before. You are surprised? You are not the first to blunder into my house in this manner, nor have I any cause to hope that you will be the last.'

Fraenkel looks at you and you notice for the first time the glassy quality of your double's eyes. The doctor is drunk.

'Whether you realise it or not, you pose a danger to me and everyone else in this blighted town. For that reason, you cannot be allowed to leave this house. I will say goodbye to you now; my Emilie will do all that is needful.'

You hear the words but struggle to understand their import. Surely Fraenkel does not intend to...

'Kill you? That is the general idea.' The doctor studies your face coolly, as if examining a patient. 'Your pulse is racing now. Your vision is beginning to dim.' He snaps open the case of his pocket watch. 'The chronostatic attack will take effect in the next...'

Fraenkel does not finish the sentence. The doctor stands motionless, eyes fixed on the watch. The only sound is the dull roar of blood in your ears.

You turn to look at the simulacrum. As far as you can judge, she too is caught in the spell; doubtless her clockwork mechanism is even more sensitive to time than a human heart. At least, that is your profound hope. The silver gun in her hand remains pointing directly at your chest.

What will you do?

Escape from the house while you still can?

Turn to 59

Take the gun from the simulacrum?

Turn to 81

47

You follow the alley to its end, where an archway gives access to another street. The last rays of sun fall on the houses opposite, highlighting the sign painted there in black Gothic letters. Tuchlauben is a broad street lined with elegant town houses. If you turn left and then immediately right, you may continue in the direction you have been heading, along Lange Gasse.

*If you have the MEMORY **Erschossen** turn to 9*

Otherwise you must decide which direction to take.

If you wish to walk down Tuchlauben, turn to 73

If you would rather continue along Lange Gasse, turn to 58

48

Stay calm! Everything is going to be fine. You sit down on the steps of the fountain to wait, your back to the cold stone. You could have done with a jumper but that, too, is stashed in your vanished backpack. Where could Emily be? As you are looking around for her, the old priest you encountered earlier comes out of the church and locks the doors. He hobbles down the steps, heading towards a gate in what must be the monastery wall. You run across before he can reach it. 'Excuse me! Entschuldigung!'

You explain, as best you can, that Emily is missing, that your friend has disappeared. Did he perhaps see a young woman in the square a few minutes ago, a young woman with two backpacks?

The priest does not answer but stares searchingly at you so that you fear he has not understood your attempt at German. You try again. 'Eine junge Frau? Da vorn am...' Goddamnit, what is the word for fountain?

'Please come with me,' he says at last. 'I want to show you something.' He opens the gate, which leads into a narrow passage between high walls.

If you decide to enter the monastery, turn to 96

If you would rather not waste any more time and want to start looking for Emily in the surrounding streets, turn to 82

49

Jellinek helps you into the carriage and takes the seat opposite. As soon as he is aboard, the coachman cracks his whip and the landau pulls away. The thunder of the wheels on the uneven cobbles is accompanied by a deeper rumble from the sky overhead.

'We are just in time,' Jellinek informs you. 'The storm is about to break.'

The carriage clatters through the streets. You cross a bridge over a small river and start to go uphill past a terrace of ramshackle houses, each one climbing on the shoulders of its neighbour. You lean out of the window; by craning your neck upwards, you can see the walls of the castle high above. You sit back and find the young man studying you carefully.

'You will find the castle much changed since your.... going away,' Jellinek says. 'My lady has had to release the servants; they could not be prevailed upon to stay.'

The carriage slows in order to perform a 180 degree turn that brings it before the gates of the castle. The horses' hooves resound on the hollow timbers of the bridge. You pass under an arch and come to a halt in the courtyard within. The coachman jumps down at once and folds out the steps to allow you

and Jellinek to alight. It is just starting to rain and you shiver in the chill evening air.

Oil lamps flicker on every side of the courtyard but the castle itself is in darkness. The high arched Gothic windows are sheets of black glass. As you look up, a flash of lightning cracks open the dark sky, outlining a high tower, a great drum of stone.

'Come, doctor,' Jellinek urges, 'the baron awaits.'

He leads you up stairways and through darkened rooms. Paintings and engravings hang on the walls, ancient faces and moonlit landscapes, but you have little time to study them. Jellinek sets a swift pace and even casual glances cause you to lag behind. You hurry after his receding light, down a passage bristling with hunting trophies. Here your attention is caught by the sound of voices, the first signs of life you have heard since your arrival. The voices are coming from behind one of the doors that line the passageway and unless you are much mistaken they are speaking in English!

'Doctor!' Jellinek has already reached the end of the passage and now waits at the foot of a grand staircase.

You ignore him and strain to hear what is being said. A giggle from just behind the door, then a female voice says 'Come away! We'll get into trouble!' You would know that voice anywhere; it is Emily!

'Em? Emily!' There is no reply. You try the door but it is locked.

'Look out!' she warns, her voice no louder than a stage whisper. 'I can hear someone coming!'

Jellinek appears at your shoulder, a quizzical expression on his face. 'What is it doctor? We should hurry.'

'Emily,' you explain. 'She's here!'

'I hear nothing,' Jellinek says after a moment but he looks worried. 'Please, doctor, we must go now.'

If you decide to follow Jellinek upstairs, turn to 38

If you insist on opening the door, turn to 85

50

The narrow stairway is blocked by two men. A few steps down, Georg cowers against the wall, holding up a lantern. Immediately in front of the door is a man wearing a dark blue uniform tunic. The policeman seems uncomfortable and clears his throat before speaking.

'Begging your pardon, doctor, for the intrusion but there has been 'n incident of a troubling nature. A person whom several witnesses identified as yourself was seen running away from a robbery in the Obere Ring. The shopkeeper had been beaten unconscious.'

'Then your witnesses must be mistaken!'

'That person then vanished into thin air and cannot now be traced. The incident has caused considerable upset amongst the populace. I am afraid I must ask you to accompany me to the station – for your own safety.'

Despite his respectful tone, the constable is insistent and you have no choice but to accompany him. You are taken back down through the inn, where the landlady serves you a satisfied look, and out into the square. A waiting horse-drawn cab takes you to the police station. *Turn to 69*

51

Stepping aside to avoid the stream of urine running into the street, you find yourself keeping close to the houses on one side of the street. In the next moment, a foul smelling hand closes over your mouth and you are pulled back through an open doorway.

'Careful!' a voice close to your ear warns and you feel a blade prick the skin of your throat. You are dragged back into the darkness and forced into a chair. Strong hands keep you seated. Behind you a door closes. You can make out vague shapes, hear the rustle of movement, nothing more. A woman's

voice curses softly, then a match flares and a circle of light forms around an oil lamp.

You are in a small room with a low ceiling, the walls stained brown with damp. The lamp is placed on a rough wooden table in front of you; by its light, you can see the shadowy faces of your captors, two men and a woman, all in their thirties or forties. One of the men, a thin weasel face, draws a stiletto knife and moves towards you.

'Easy now,' cautions the man behind you. Your pockets are rifled and the notes and coins within spilled onto the warped surface of the table. Eager hands sort through your Czech money.

'What is this rubbish?' asks Weasel Face, brushing a 100 crown note to the floor with an angry gesture.

'A foreigner,' the woman suggests. 'Look at the clothes.'

'I'm looking at the boots,' the man behind you says, referring to your walking shoes. 'Good boots, they are.'

Weasel Face holds up his thin knife in front of your face. 'You understand this, eh?'

*If you have the MEMORY **Libuše** and want to use it now, turn to 33*

Otherwise, you must turn to 70

52

Even before the last lever is in place, you sense that something is very wrong. A deep groan issues from the time machine; moments later, a transformer explodes in a shower of sparks. Desperate to stop the experiment, you make a wild grab for the controls but, as you touch the handle, you receive a powerful electric shock that hurls you back into unconsciousness. *Turn to 30.*

53

As you lie back in the darkness of your cell, you can see nothing more clearly than Emily's face, engrossed in the act of tying her hair back. You have to believe that you will see her again, however unlikely that seems right now, because it can't end like this. It annoys you to think that your last words to each other were spoken in irritation, a stupid quarrel over nothing. You have to find a way to get back. *Add 1 DETERMINATION point and turn to 30*

54

The doctor resumes his story. 'Under the gracious patronage of the Baron Rabenstein, I laboured day and night until my Anachronism stood ready. But even before the first trials were completed, there were reports of strange occurrences, portents of the disaster to come. The castle servants would not enter certain rooms, claiming that they could hear the conversations of persons not present. A maid swore that she looked into a mirror and saw the face of another where her own reflection should have been. In my arrogance, I gave no heed to her story at the time, for the girl had come up from the country and was known to be prey to superstition. But presently I had cause to wonder for, walking in the Klostergasse early one evening, I myself saw such a phantom, and the face of the apparition was mine own. That was the first of you to come through the veil.'

Fraenkel looks at you and you notice for the first time the glassy quality of the doctor's eyes. Fraenkel is drunk.

'I realised that the analogy of the magnet was more exact than I had ever imagined. The events of history were now being drawn into alignment by the prodigious forces I had brought to bear, like so many scattered iron filings. Unwittingly, I had created simulacra of myself and was drawing them to me as irresistibly as a magnet would. But that is not even the worst of it.'

Fraenkel now seems to be on the verge of complete collapse, and no longer pays you any attention. But, glancing sideways at the simulacrum, you see that the gun in her hand is still pointing at you.

If you attempt to distract Emilie, turn to 97

If you would rather urge the doctor to continue, turn to 41

55

Your double swings the wrench at you. Without a weapon, you will need all your reserves of determination and luck to get you through this battle.

Roll two dice. If the result is a double, the stress of the battle causes time to freeze. Your double stands motionless, allowing you to race towards the time machine. Lose 1 DETERMINATION point and turn to 74.

Otherwise, add the two dice together.

If you have at least one DETERMINATION point remaining, you may re-roll the dice in an attempt to get a higher score. Each time you re-roll you must subtract 1 DETERMINATION point.

However, if your DETERMINATION score is a minus number, you must subtract this from the total rolled.

When you have determined your total, roll two dice for your double.

If your total is higher, turn to 11

If your double's total is higher, the wrench fells you like an axe (turn to 30)

If both totals are the same, the battle continues as described above.

56

The coachman is a big, ugly fellow whose neatly pressed uniform does nothing to smooth his rough edges. He wears a dark woollen overcoat against the chill evening air. As you approach, he opens the door of the landau and indicates that you should climb up. Your attempts to explain your situation and ask for his assistance meet with little success. The coachman again gestures for you to get into the carriage. He tells you that Mr Jellinek will soon return.

You find the coachman's German dialect difficult to follow but you understand that this Jellinek has gone somewhere and that you should wait here for him to return. He points towards the castle on the hill.

If you decide to wait for Jellinek to arrive, turn to 71

If you would rather visit the inn, turn to 36

Or you may set out towards the castle (turn to 83)

57

The streets seem eerily quiet and empty. After a moment it dawns on you – there is no traffic. You haven't even seen a parked car. It is no different when you arrive at a main junction. No cars and no road signs. But a bigger puzzle now confronts you; where the streets come together, the way to the railway station is blocked by a dilapidated stone gatehouse, for all the world looking like the entrance to a medieval castle. The gates are closed, offering no way onwards. You must have taken a wrong turn. You certainly didn't pass this on the way from the station. You pause, uncertain what to do next.

A group of dirty-faced children have stopped their ball game and are watching you with curiosity. Their clothes seem old-fashioned; the girls wear long skirts, the boys short trousers; several are barefoot. You have also attracted the attention of some kind of policeman, a burly man in a dark blue uniform tunic and cap. He looks over, evidently trying to decide if you are worth bothering with. Perhaps he can help you.

'Hello. Do you speak English?'

You start to explain that your friend has disappeared but the constable cuts you off in mid-sentence, with a brusque demand to see your ID. He uses the German word, *Ausweis*.

'My passport?' But of course your passport is in the missing backpacks.

The policeman is unimpressed by your attempted explanation and asks you to accompany him to his post by the gate. Unbelievable! Of all the times for something like this to happen!

If you shrug your shoulders and go with the policeman, turn to 86

If you decide to make a run for it, turn to 24

58

You hear angry shouts ahead of you. A handcart has overturned in the street, spilling its bright cargo. The polished brass pots and pans clatter and roll across the cobbles, working their owner to a frenzy of indignation. A shrill whistle joins the orchestra of chaos; a rather fat policeman, his face now red with the exertion, is pursuing some thief, who is even now scrambling to free himself from the wreck of the cart.

*If you have the MEMORY **Zwilling**, turn to 40*

Otherwise you may sidestep the confusion by turning down another street (turn to 83)

59

You fly down the stairs, taking them four or five at a time. Time resumes all too quickly. As you are fumbling with the door of the house, you hear a cry of rage. You tear the door open and rush out into the street. There the feeling of weakness overcomes you – *lose 1 DETERMINATION point* – but you run on, heading for the relative safety of the main square (turn to 8).

60

Add 1 DETERMINATION point.

You find a narrow flight of stairs leading downwards. Taking the oil lamp to light the way, you go down into the cellar where you are confronted by a locked door. The noise has now stopped. You unlock the door with the clockmaker's keys and push it open.

*If you have the MEMORY **Gefangen** turn to 80*

Otherwise turn to 25

61

You manage to claw your way back up on to the roof and reach the relative safety of a chimney before the weakness claims you. But you have lost the guidebook and may not refer to it or any notes you have made in its pages.

When you feel able, you continue your climb. The scramble across the roofs blackens your palms and t-shirt and buries an ache in the muscles of your arms.

Eventually you reach a place where you are able to descend to ground level. You find yourself in a muddy courtyard with a water pump. Your somewhat unorthodox arrival has attracted the attention of the local residents, who appear in doors and windows to find out what the noise was. You ignore their stares and concentrate on not stepping in anything foul. A narrow alley, just wide enough for two people to pass, leads out onto a dirty street. To your left you can see the castle silhouetted against the sunset.

If you decide to head towards the castle, turn to 92

If you would rather go back to the church, turn to 76

62

The scarecrow figure sitting on the steps of the fountain wears a dark woollen coat that is several sizes too large and a bowler hat. The face is caked with dirt. As you approach, the tramp struggles to get up.

'Spare a few coppers for the homeless!' To your surprise, the tramp is speaking to you in English.

If you wish to give the tramp some money, turn to 12

If you decide to attack the tramp, turn to 99

63

You ask the doctor about the time machine.

'Ah, the Anachronism! My greatest invention,' Fraenkel says sadly, 'and my greatest folly. I intend to take the secret of its operation with me to the grave. I shall live long enough only to tear down the signposts that might set others on the road to ruin.'

Fraenkel glances involuntarily at the fireplace. When you look again, you see that what you had first taken to be a piece of blackened wood is actually the remains of a hardback book or ledger, the flames licking greedily at its edges. Screwed up balls of paper serve for coals.

'I know your thought,' the doctor says quickly. 'Do not attempt it; I have given Emilie orders to shoot at the first false move. She is an unthinking creature and will not hesitate to obey me in this.'

The doctor swallows hard, apparently under some considerable strain. 'If you will but listen for a moment I will tell you why the Anachronism must never be used.'

You turn to study the simulacrum. Her unwavering gaze is fixed upon you; the silver gun in her hand is aimed directly at your chest. But is such an automaton capable of acting independently?

If you decide to risk a step towards the fireplace, turn to 3

If you would rather listen to what the doctor has to say, turn to 90

64

You cross a bridge over a small river. On the far side, the street climbs uphill past a terrace of ramshackle houses. The road is steep and you find the ascent to the castle tiring. To add to your misery, it begins to rain and by the time you finally stand before the castle gates you are soaked through and shivering – *lose 1 DETERMINATION point*. Luckily, you do not have long to wait before the bell summons a servant.

'My god, doctor, you are halfway to drowning,' the man, Jellinek, exclaims. 'Where have you been? I have looked all over for you! Come inside and warm yourself. The baron is eager to renew your acquaintance.'

Turn to 38

65

As the last lever clanks into place, power surges into the Anachronism. Sparks crackle and fly; your skin tingles and the very air itself seems to tense in anticipation. You brace yourself for what is to happen next. *Turn to 28*

66

You find your way back to the small square without difficulty, but when you get there you discover that the church is already closed, the doors firmly locked. You work the heavy iron handle in vain.

'The church always closes at sunset.' The words, spoken in English, cause you to whirl round.

The scarecrow figure standing by the fountain wears a dark woollen coat that is several sizes too

large and a bowler hat. The face is caked with dirt.

'You are looking for the way back aren't you?' the tramp continues, the voice sounding strangely familiar. 'You won't find it here – believe me, I've tried. Many times.'

'Who are you?'

The tramp laughs, the laughter dissolving into a fit of coughing. When the coughing subsides, the only reply is a wad of spittle that flecks the church steps.

'I asked who you were.'

The tramp raises an outsize sleeve, drawing the unseen hand across the mouth.

'I know what's happening here. Spare me a few coppers and I'll tell you.'

If you wish to give the tramp some money, turn to 12

If you decide to attack the tramp, turn to 99

If you would rather leave the square at once, turn to 23

67

The door cracks, the wood around the lock splintering. A final shove forces it inwards, propelling you forward into the room beyond.

As your eyes become accustomed to the darkness, the shadowy shapes resolve themselves into furniture; a four-poster bed, a small table, a chest of drawers.

'Emily?'

There is no reply. You catch a glimpse of movement and start forward but it is nothing; a mirror flashing back the light from the door, your own reflection. Someone touches your arm and you jump.

'Come, doctor,' Jellinek says gently. 'She is not here.'

Lose 1 DETERMINATION point and turn to 38.

68

You toss the bowler hat towards Emilie, as if she were a hatstand. The bowler lands at an angle covering the simulacrum's face. She swivels from side to side, blinded by your action. You seize your opportunity to make a grab for the burning book. Fraenkel gives a cry of rage and frustration and rushes to stop you. A gunshot sounds, deafeningly loud in the small room, and you tense, waiting for an explosion of pain that never comes. Instead it is Fraenkel who groans and falls. He lies on his side, one arm flailing weakly at the carpet. You watch him helplessly, frozen in place by a vague horror.

'Emilie!'

But the doctor's voice, hoarse and fading, has lost its ability to evoke any kind of response. The simulacrum stands motionless, the fatal pistol still gripped in her hand. You pry it from her guilty fingers – it is a double shot DERRINGER.

You may take the pistol with you if you wish (one shot remains).

Fraenkel's weak movements have now ceased entirely. The doctor's arm remains outstretched as if reaching towards the fireplace. Of course, the fire!

You knock the book out of the flames using a poker. The cover is still hot and your first attempts to handle it leave you with burned fingers. Wrapping the charred remains of the book in a cloth, you leave the house quickly. *Turn to 34*

69

The police station consists of a single large room, spartan even by the standards of officialdom. The duty clerk, a bald fellow sporting mutton chop sideburns, sits hunched over a wooden writing desk. He looks at you for a long moment, then turns to speak with the constable. Despite your protestations

that you have nothing to do with any crime, the police show every appearance of wanting to detain you.

*If you have the MEMORY **Libuše**, turn to 94*

Otherwise you are forced to spend the night in a cell (turn to 53)

70

Weasel Face draws back his hand, ready to strike, and you flinch before the expected agony. But the knife will not fall.

When you open your eyes, your tormentor stands motionless, his face inches from your own, his grin as frozen as if it had been drawn by rigor mortis. Shaking, you ease yourself from the chair, squirming sideways out of the gap between the two robbers.

Only when you are well away from the house does the adrenaline wear off and you give yourself up to the depressingly familiar nausea which accompanies an attack. No one pays you any attention, assuming that you are just another drunk.

Lose 1 DETERMINATION point. In your hurry to escape you have also forgotten your guidebook and may no longer refer to it or any notes you have made. Continue on your way by turning to 14

71

Jellinek turns out to be a young man who smells faintly of perfume. He is smartly dressed in a pearl grey suit and matching hat. If he is disturbed by your own clothing, he does well to hide his dismay. He doffs the hat and inclines his blond head politely by way of a greeting.

‘Good evening, Dr Fraenkel. It seems there has been a misunderstanding, for which I apologise. If you are agreeable I suggest we proceed to the castle at once. The baron is most anxious to renew your acquaintance.’

Jellinek chooses to take your surprised silence as acceptance of his proposal. With a sweep of the hand, he waves you aboard the waiting carriage.

Turn to 49

72

‘I am not the Dr Fraenkel you knew,’ you say, jumping up and pacing the room in some agitation. ‘Your trust in me is misplaced! I cannot work this... Anachronism!’

The lady is silent for a moment, appearing to choose her next words carefully.

‘I know that is a great thing I ask. Please believe me when I say that I understand your concerns – I share them myself. I have seen and heard... things... since your departure of which I will not speak. Nevertheless I do not hesitate to beg you for the life of my son.’

If you give in and agree to operate the time machine, turn to 27

If you still refuse, insisting you do not know how, turn to 95

73

A young man emerges from underneath the vaulted arcade that lines the street at ground level. At the sound of your footsteps, he turns and, catching sight of you, his troubled expression dissolves into a smile. He is smartly dressed in a pearl grey suit and matching hat. If he is disturbed by your own clothing, he hides his dismay well. He removes the hat and inclines his blond head politely by way of a greeting.

'Good evening, Dr Fraenkel, I am so pleased to meet you again. I was disappointed to find that you were not at home.'

The house has the appearance of being little lived in. Most of the window shutters are closed but those on the second floor have been thrown back. Looking up, you think you see a pale face at the window but it disappears at once behind a curtain.

'You don't remember me I think?' the young man continues. 'My name is Jellinek; I am the baron's valet. My apologies for calling on you at such a late hour but my lord requests your presence at once.' As you hesitate, he adds, polite but insistent: 'A carriage is waiting on the Ring to take you to the castle.'

If you agree to accompany the young man, turn to 49

If you tell him you must first fetch some things from the house, turn to 89

74

You climb into the brass sphere and strap yourself into the seat. There are three identical levers protruding from the floor of the cockpit, distinguished by the letters K, S and Z stamped on their respective handles. It seems obvious that the levers must be released to operate the time machine. But in which order?

K, S then Z?	<i>Turn to 18</i>
K, Z then S?	<i>Turn to 88</i>
S, K then Z?	<i>Turn to 65</i>
S, Z then K?	<i>Turn to 5</i>
Z, K then S?	<i>Turn to 35</i>
Z, S then K?	<i>Turn to 52</i>

75

'You are not my father,' you say and tell him exactly what is going to happen next. It is as if you had the ability to read his mind. The clockmaker listens to you with an expression of growing fear.

'Who are you?' he asks, his voice trembling. 'Oh God, what have you done with my child?'

As he speaks his hand is reaching beneath the counter. You notice the movement and are not surprised when he makes a desperate rush at you, swinging a heavy wooden cudgel.

Having anticipated something of this sort, you easily sidestep the blow. Your counterstrike is weak but catches the clockmaker off balance. As he falls, he hits his head on the edge of the counter and collapses to the floor. You stoop quickly beside him. He is not dead but unconscious. You roll him over into the recovery position and, as you do so, a bunch of keys falls out of his waistcoat pocket.

You can hear muffled shouts and a banging noise coming from the cellar of the shop.

If you want to search the shop, turn to 10

If you decide to investigate the noise from the cellar, turn to 60

76

There are three possible exits from the square, the name of each street painted onto the wall of a house at the junction. KLOSTERGASSE is a quiet alley running beneath the high wall of the monastery. The parallel SCHULGASSE should lead you back to the main square; a lamplighter is at work here but the street is otherwise deserted. You can see a few pedestrians further down GRABEN, labourers leaving a factory at the end of the working day, but the street itself is rather dirty and poorly lit. It runs towards the looming castle. Which street will you follow?

Klostergasse? *Turn to 47*
Schulgasse? *Turn to 21*
Graben? *Turn to 92*

77

Fraenkel seems tormented. Unnerved by the doctor's mood, you hurry from the house.

If you decide to walk down the street to your left, turn to 58
If you would rather go right, towards the main square, turn to 8

78

Taking up an oil lamp, Lady Rabenstein leads you through the darkened castle. The storm flickers at the windows, bathing the rooms momentarily in a ghostly light. Outside it is now raining heavily and the dark glass runs with water.

When you come to the curving passage, and the ancient stone door, Lady Rabenstein pauses.
 'What is it?'

She turns her white face to you. 'The door to the tower is unlocked.'

Warily you push the heavy door inwards, blinking in the bright electric light. The switch has already been thrown.

Everything seems as it was before. The three obelisks stand sentinel over the gleaming brass globe. You place a foot on the walkway and start towards the time machine.

Lightning strikes the tower and races down the iron rods bolted to its walls. Sparks crackle and jump; the light itself winks out for a second and in the momentary darkness you see the time machine outlined by blue fire. But this time there is something more. A dark figure rises up by the side of the time machine, arm outstretched towards you. There is a gun in the other's hand! The shot is masked by the rumble of the thunder.

If you have been at this reference before, you knew the shot was coming and were already ducking down into cover before the trigger was pulled. The bullet shatters a glass dial above your head, leaving you unharmed.

Otherwise, you feel a sharp pain in your shoulder. When you take your hand away, you find it is red with blood. You have been hit! You will need at least 1 DETERMINATION point to keep going. If you do not have any DETERMINATION left, the pain is too much and you collapse (turn to 30).

The lights come back on. The other is your exact double down to the very clothes you wear! Throwing aside the gun, your lookalike snatches up a heavy iron wrench and races along the walkway towards you!

If you are armed with a Derringer pistol, you can return fire (turn to 4).
Otherwise, turn to 55

79

As you let go of the handle, you start to see flashes of colour at the edge of your vision. You sit back in the chair and grip the arms tightly. The colours resolve themselves into faces and scenes – the events of your life are flashing by, so fast that the sensation makes you giddy. You close your eyes to shut them out. There is a metallic taste in your mouth now. You become conscious that you are not alone; there is someone right behind you, sitting in the same chair, in the same space. You are so close that you are overlapping; the lines between one body and the next are blurred and indistinct. It is you and not you. Fraenkel. You are becoming the doctor, the doctor is becoming you. Two fragments of the same being. The sensation overwhelms you and you black out. *Turn to 100*

80

You are struck on the back of the head by someone hiding behind the door. There is an explosion of white light behind your eyes and then everything goes black. *Turn to 30*

81

With shaking hands, you attempt to pry the gun from the simulacrum's grasp. Her waxy leather fingers are wrapped tight around the handle of the silver pistol and it is a work to loosen them. Every touch is a nightmare, like touching the cold, unyielding hand of a corpse. Suddenly the gun comes free, still gripped in the lifeless fingers – you have broken off the simulacrum's hand. You must press down on her trigger finger if you wish to fire the gun, a double-shot Derringer pistol. The roaring in your ears reaches a pitch then swirls away quickly to nothing. Time resumes.

'...few seconds.'

The doctor looks up from the watch and makes an exaggerated show of disappointment at the sight of the gun.

'Was it really necessary to mutilate poor Emilie in this manner?' Fraenkel asks. The doctor steps towards the wounded simulacrum and touches the empty cuff of her dress tenderly.

'Careful, doctor!' you warn, backing away. 'Not another step or I shall be forced to shoot!'

Fraenkel smiles. 'I know how it is. Soon the weakness will take over.'

'I warn you!'

'Go ahead!' the doctor gloats. 'Kill me! Kill me if you can!'

The gunshot is deafeningly loud in the confined space. Fraenkel vanishes in the same instant and the bullet buries itself in the wall of the room. What the? You look round wildly. The doctor is now behind you, the poker from the fire in his raised hand. You have just time to think 'chronostatic attack' before the iron comes down on your head and everything goes black.

Lose 1 DETERMINATION point and turn to 30

82

Add 1 DETERMINATION point.

You cannot see Emily in any of the streets leading off the square – perhaps she has gone back to the centre? She had said she wanted a coffee.

When you reach the main square, however, the pavement café is no longer there. The striped parasols have folded before the oncoming night and been cleared away, along with the tables and chairs they shaded. There are lights on inside the building but it now looks more like a bar or inn than a café. The sign painted in large black letters across the whole width of the first floor reads ZU DEN DREI RABEN, German for the Three Ravens.

In fact, the whole square appears transformed by the early evening light. The rows of parked cars have all been reclaimed by their owners, opening up a wide grey field of cobbles. A horse-drawn carriage of the type used to ferry tourists around is waiting hopefully in front of the town hall; the coachman is folding up the roof in readiness although it seems unlikely to you that he will attract any customers at this late hour. There are only a few passers-by and none of them is Emily. Where could she be?

You are not sure of the exact time but if you are to have any hope of catching your train, you had better head back to the railway station now. There is a small chance that Emily is waiting for you there but, if she is not, you should be able to get help from the local police. Leaving Rabštejn without her is out of the question, so another alternative would be to ask about overnight accommodation at the Three Ravens.

As you are thinking, a boy of perhaps eleven or twelve comes towards you, a thick roll of newspapers tucked under one arm. 'Abendblatt?' he asks, brandishing a copy in front of you.

You stare stupidly at the boy. You have never seen such an apparition before, except perhaps on television, in some adaptation of a Dickens novel. He is dressed up like a little old man, in a waistcoat and a cloth cap.

If you want to take the newspaper, turn to 17

If you would rather hurry on to the station, turn to 57

If you decide to ask for accommodation at the inn, turn to 36

83

You follow the street until it broadens out into a long, rectangular market place lined with small shops, most of which appear to be already closed or about to close. A grocer and his assistant are busy carrying the displays of vegetables set out on the pavement back inside the shop. As you glance over at them, you notice the name on a neighbouring shop: JOSEF FRAENKEL, UHRMACHER. A relative perhaps? The window, a patchwork of small panes grimed with dust, displays a number of clocks and watches.

If you want to stop and visit the shop, turn to 32

If you would rather keep walking, you may either head in the direction of the castle (turn to 64) or the main square (turn to 8)

84

'A room, is it?' the landlady barks, obviously irritated by your request. 'Georg! The doctor honours us with his presence.'

'No bags, doctor?' the servant asks. Were you to have had any, you should have felt compelled to carry them yourself, since the man's deformity gives him an obvious difficulty in walking. Taking an oil lantern to light the way (for the inn does not seem to have any electricity), Georg leads you up a winding flight of stairs to an attic room. It is large but sparsely furnished, having nothing more than a bed, a dresser and a wash basin. A damp, musty smell hangs in the air. There is no heating and a candle on the dresser provides the only light.

Getting comfortable is out of the question but at least you will have a roof over your head. You lie down on the bed, still fully clothed, but the cold makes it impossible to sleep.

You get up and pace about the room, the bare boards creaking beneath your steps. A draught is coming from the only window, a poor lopsided thing which affords no better view than the sloping roof of the neighbouring building, the incline of which begins almost immediately outside. You try to fasten the window but find that the catch has been broken. You find something else, too, a series of thin scratches that resolve themselves into letters. Someone has scratched a message on the whitewashed wall next to the window. It is written in English and reads DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR. Curious.

You hear footsteps on the stairs leading to your room and two men speaking in German, Georg's low grumble and another, brusque, voice. There is a knock on the door. When you do not reply at once, the knock comes again, more insistent.

'Dr Fraenkel?' the brusque voice asks. 'Are you there?'

The door is tried but you had bolted it before going to bed. It is the only way in or out of the room unless... Your eye turns again to the window.

If you want to climb out of the window and make your escape across the rooftops, turn to 45

If you would rather stay and look for more messages, turn to 7

85

'Where is the key to this door?' you demand.
 Jellinek shrugs helplessly.
 'Where does it lead?'
 'A guest room, nothing more.'
 You put your shoulder to the door, trying to force it open.
 'Help me!' you shout but Jellinek shakes his head and hangs back.

You must have at least 1 DETERMINATION point to be able to break down the door (turn to 67). If you do not have the necessary DETERMINATION the door holds firm and Jellinek prevails upon you to come away (turn to 38).

86

The police station consists of a single large room, spartan even by the standards of officialdom. The duty clerk, a bald fellow sporting mutton chop sideburns, sits hunched over a wooden writing desk. He looks at you for a long moment, then turns to speak with the constable. You are both asked to wait on a bench positioned against one of the walls while the clerk confers with a superior.

You look around for a clock, conscious that you are certainly going to miss your train at this rate, and your eye falls instead on a calendar – the month is September 1900! It seems impossible and yet it explains everything; the ragged children, the absence of motor cars, even the outdated police station. If you had not been so preoccupied by Emily's disappearance you might have noticed it before. But it is not Emily who has disappeared after all – it is you! You have travelled back in time!

The countless small sounds of the busy office give way to the dull roar of blood in your ears. The scene playing out before your eyes has become a lifeless tableau. Another chronostatic attack. In a matter of seconds the familiar feeling of weakness and nausea will overtake you. But in the meantime, the attack has presented you with an unexpected opportunity to escape.

Lose 1 DETERMINATION point and turn to 6

87

'Why did you steal my guidebook?'

'I haven't... yet. Or have I? Hell, this is confusing. Look, there's a time machine in the castle. Dr Fraenkel – the real Dr Fraenkel – invented it. It's the only way I know that I – we – can get back to the future.'

*If you do not already have it, add the MEMORY **Erfindung** to your Passport.*

'So why are you still here?'

'It's a *time machine*. You can't just push a button, you have to know how to operate it. If you pull the levers in the wrong order, you'll just end up back in the church. Again and again. And if you don't know the correct setting for the dial who knows where you'll end up? Or when. I keep looking but I can never find the correct setting.'

'What has all this got to do with the guidebook? Why did you steal it?'

Your double sighs. 'How can I be so stupid? We - or should I say one of us - wrote the correct setting inside the guidebook. Inside *one* of the guidebooks. I thought you had it. Seems I was wrong about that. Now get off me.'

Turn to 31

88

Even before the last lever is in place, you sense that something is very wrong. A deep groan issues from the time machine; moments later, a transformer explodes in a shower of sparks. Desperate to stop the experiment, you make a wild grab for the controls but, as you touch the handle, you receive a powerful electric shock that hurls you back into unconsciousness. *Turn to 30.*

89

Jellinek bows. 'Of course, doctor. Ask for me at the Three Ravens when you are ready to leave.'
He walks off down the street, heading in the direction of the main square. You are now free to enter the house if you wish.

To try the door of the house, turn to 22

If you would rather walk away in the opposite direction, turn to 58

90

'I have always been fascinated by time,' the doctor begins. 'Perhaps it was my upbringing, surrounded by every conceivable form of timepiece. I was not content merely to mark the passing hours; I wanted to understand the intricate mechanisms behind the clock face. What after all was the nature of time? Was it a journey each of us makes? The popular conception seemed to me to be mistaken. In this age of progress I may, after all, travel from Prague to Vienna and return to Prague with more or less speed; but, though I may have every hope of arriving safely at tomorrow, I cannot hasten to next year, and my yesterday remains more remote than the furthest reaches of the earth. How, in short, to explain the paradox that one at once travels in time and yet remains as fixed in place as a fly in amber?

'I remember very well my moment of enlightenment (for it was also the beginning of my downfall). I received a letter from a fellow scientist, with whom I had often corresponded on the subject of time, in which he related a singular occurrence that had befallen him. Having accidentally exposed himself to a varying magnetic field of considerable strength, he had experienced, he wrote, a feeling of disorientation, of giddiness. For a few brief moments he had felt himself to be detached from the ordinary flow of time.

'Reading his account, I was myself as one charged. Might not time itself be conceived of as a magnet, with past and future as opposing poles? All compasses point north, just as time runs ever forward, but in an electromagnet the polarity may be reversed. So might a varying magnetic field of sufficient strength, properly harnessed and controlled, serve not only to halt the passage of time but cause it to run backwards.'

Fraenkel frowns. 'The paradox of time, which had served merely as an amusement during my student days, to be taken up or set aside on a whim, had by this time become an insurmountable hurdle to my happiness, for my own dear Emilie had been taken from me. Blinded by grief, I rushed on to disaster.'

The doctor sighs.

If you want to take this opportunity to ask him about your illness, turn to 29

If you would rather let Fraenkel continue, turn to 54

91

You step behind the clockmaker just as time resumes. His cudgel finds nothing but empty space.

'Over here!'

The clockmaker whirls round, a trace of fear in his eyes now.

'Why are you attacking me?'

His only reply is another wild swing. But you have anticipated the move and are already striking back. Caught off balance, the clockmaker falls and hits his head on the edge of the counter. You stoop quickly beside him. He is not dead but unconscious. You roll him over into the recovery position and, as you do so, a bunch of keys falls out of his waistcoat pocket.

You go to the window and look out anxiously. A couple of policemen are patrolling the far side of the square. Behind you, you can hear muffled shouts and a banging noise. The sound seems to be coming from the cellar of the shop.

If you want to leave immediately, turn to 43

If you would rather stay and search the shop, turn to 10

If you decide to investigate the noise from the cellar, turn to 60

92

The street soon forks, forcing you to choose a way onwards at random. The branch you take turns sharply to the left, and it becomes a struggle to keep the castle directly ahead of you. You arrive at another junction but try not to give the impression that you do not know where you are going. There are more people about here, despite the late hour, and you do not like the look of some of those you meet.

The houses here are poor, plasterwork flaking away from the walls to reveal the brick beneath. The smell reminds you of a blocked drain. There is almost no street lighting of any kind in this quarter, transforming the alleys and courts that open on either side of the street into pits of darkness.

Ahead, the door of a drinking den stands open, spilling noise into the street. Wild laughter rises above a barrel organ's drunken music. A shabbily dressed man comes staggering down the street towards you and pauses to piss against a house wall. The stream of urine runs into the street, flooding into the spaces between the cobblestones.

If you decide to continue towards the drinking den, turn to 51

If you would rather turn down a side alley to avoid the drunk, turn to 14

93

Electricity arcs between the towers and envelops the machine in an eerie glow. You become conscious that your hands are gripping the arms of the chair. You start to see flashes of colour at the edge of your vision. There is a metallic taste in your mouth now and a sour smell – you are sweating fiercely. A sensation of giddiness. The room spins around you and you black out. *Turn to 30*

94

The lady's name throws the police station into a state of excited confusion. There is a flurry of telephone calls made and received. Another policeman, evidently some kind of officer to judge by his gold braid, is called to the telephone. His side of the conversation seems to consist only of affirmatives – yes, of course, at once. After berating both his colleagues for their failings, he comes towards you, his angry manner instantly giving way to smiles.

'Dr Fraenkel, I must apologise for this regrettable error. I am not sure of the reason for it but I can assure you that everything, absolutely everything, will be done to investigate; I will make it my personal priority.

'In the meantime I have taken the liberty of informing the castle of your arrival; Mr Jellinek is coming with a carriage to collect you as we speak.'

The officer waits for your reaction, his eyes betraying his anxiety. Clearly the doctor for whom you

have been mistaken is a person of some importance.

If you agree to wait at the police station for this Jellinek to arrive, turn to 71
If you insist on leaving at once, turn to 6

95

With a great cry of anguish, Lady Rabenstein collapses on the floor of the salon and begins weeping bitterly. You do not know what to say to ease her distress and are almost grateful when you suffer another chronostatic attack. Her sobs silenced, the only sound is the dull roar of blood in your ears.

You pull open the door and are immediately confronted by Jellinek, hand raised ready to knock. Your heart leaps but he is as motionless as his mistress. You leave them both and hurry on, conscious that you have a matter of seconds before time resumes. Somehow you must find your way back down to the castle entrance. Long before you do, the weakness overtakes you and must pause, faint and light-headed, for the moment to pass.

You stumble on. The castle is so still and empty that, if it were not for the sound of rain falling, you could not be sure that time had actually restarted. It has always been your worst nightmare that you might one day be caught forever, trapped in a grey limbo with only lifeless statues for company. But, you ask yourself bitterly, is your present situation really so very much better?

Outside the storm is in full fury. With just a t-shirt you must surely run the risk of freezing to death. When you find the coachman's heavy wool coat hung up to dry in one of the outbuildings, you do not hesitate to take it. It is much too large for you but it is better than nothing. You steal his bowler hat as an afterthought. Dressed in this strange outfit, like a runaway scarecrow, you dash down the hill into the town, your headlong flight illuminated by flashes of lightning overhead. Somehow you must find the key to working the time machine or you will be trapped in Rabenstein forever.

You have reached the end of this adventure. If you wish to go back in time and try again, turn to 1

96

The priest leads you down the passage and out into a small cloister. The cloister is planted with sweet-smelling honeysuckle and climbing roses. The priest halts before a stone plaque fixed to the wall.

EMILIE FRAENKEL

Born 14 October 1868

Died 4 February 1891

Our time is but a moment

Puzzled, you turn to the priest for an explanation.

'Do you not remember?' he asks.

'I'm looking for Emily...'

'She is gone from you,' he says gently. 'Do not seek to find her again – you will surely be reunited in the presence of God.'

You look from the priest to the plaque. The surname is certainly yours, the dead woman is probably one of your own ancestors but she is not your Emily.

'But you do not understand...'

'Go home, doctor,' the priest insists, leading you back to the gate by which you entered. 'Rest. You have pushed yourself too hard.'

Clearly he has mistaken you for someone else.

'But I am not...'

The priest waves a hand to silence you. 'Go home, doctor!' He points down a narrow alley running alongside the monastery wall. He waits until you start to walk away then closes the gate behind you.

You follow the alley to its end, where an archway gives access to another street. The last rays of sun fall on the houses opposite, highlighting the sign painted there in black Gothic letters: TUCHLAUBEN. The name is not shown on the crude street plan in your guidebook but it seems clear from the map that if you turn left and then immediately right you will be on the road to the railway station. There you may be able to get the help of the police. To the right, the street is framed by two rows of elegant town houses. One of these must be the home of the doctor the priest mentioned.

If you want to walk down Tuchlauben, turn to 73

If you would rather head towards the railway station, turn to 57

97

If you are wearing a bowler hat, turn to 68

Otherwise, turn to 3

98

The clockmaker takes the oil lamp from the counter and leads you down a flight of stairs to the cellar. He throws open a door and shows you into a low, barrel-vaulted chamber, a storehouse of shadows. By the light of the lamp you can see that the cellar has been crudely furnished with a chair and rickety wooden table; a mattress has been laid out on the earthen floor. Is this the clockmaker's idea of hospitality? He shrugs.

'It is not much, I know, but here at least you may remain hidden.'

You step into the room. As you do so, Fraenkel slams the door behind you, plunging you into sudden darkness. You hear a key turn in the lock. You are a prisoner!

'Hey!' You pound on the door to attract his attention.

'I do not know what you are,' the clockmaker says, his voice trembling. 'Nor from what hell you have sprung. But I know you are not what you seem. A father always knows his child!'

His footsteps retreat back up the stairs, leaving you to vent your frustration on the door and walls of the little room. It is in vain. The door is constructed of heavy timbers, the walls have the feel of brick. As your eyes become accustomed to the darkness, you see that there is a small opening high up at one end of the room, some kind of vent or chute, which admits a little fading daylight. No one is attracted by your cries and you guess that it must open onto a rear courtyard rather than the street.

What will you do?

If you want to make a noise to attract Fraenkel's attention, planning to attack him when he returns, turn to 2

If you would rather just get some rest, turn to 53

99

You spring forward, your sudden movement taking the tramp by surprise. In the brief struggle that follows the tramp loses a hat and you receive an elbow in the face before you succeed in pinning your opponent to the ground. To your horror, the face that stares back at you is your own! A flurry of very English expletives does nothing to weaken your hold.

'Who are you?' you demand.

'I'm you, you fool.' The tramp reels off your name, address and date of birth by way of proof.

'That's just enough to prove that you stole my passport. Where is Emily?'

'Back there. In the future. How should I know? You're choking me half to death.'

If you have the MEMORY Penner, turn to 87

Otherwise, turn to 31

100

When you open your eyes, the tower and the time machine have disappeared. You are sitting in the church, the guidebook by your side. The high altar is in front of you, a large oil painting flanked by the gilded statues of saints and angels. A trembling grips you; has it worked? You must find out. You stagger to the church door and pull it open, blinking in the bright sunlight outside. Emily is sitting on the steps of the fountain, tying her hair back. You are back.

Emily is looking at something off to her left and does not notice you approach. How rare it is to look into the faces of those dearest to you without them knowing you are there! It is as if you were only now seeing them completely. It seems an eternity since you last saw Emily, though for her it is probably only a matter of minutes. She smiles as you draw near, as if she senses you are there.

'Hi Emily!'

She turns to you then and her smile fades at once. 'No,' she whispers, looking away quickly. 'No.'

'Em? What's wrong?'

You follow her gaze and find yourself staring at your exact double, identical down to the very clothes you wear. Your lookalike lowers the camera and stares back at you. A look of horror crosses your own face.

You hear the dull roar of blood in your ears.

For a brief moment, it is as if you are rooted to the spot, you looking at yourself looking at Emily looking at you. And then you are turning away, the tears already streaming down your face, running back up the steps into the church.

THE END