

1

If you have already met Waldo, turn to 4. Otherwise, read on:

There is a commotion at the edge of the camp. You lower your weapons, tired from the morning's sparring with Nyms.

'Trouble?' you ask, peering past the swordsman.

Nyms cocks his head, watching as soldiers hurry past. 'Looks like something's stirred up the ants...'

A wooden cart is rattling its way through the camp, led by a single piebald pony. The driver has removed his cap and is waving it through the air in greeting.

You fall into step beside Nyms as you head over to the new arrival. 'Perhaps it's a tinker.'

Nyms spins the grips of his swords with a smile. 'Hope so. They may bring word from the south. And a lot more besides.'

Soldiers are jostling each other to get a better view inside the cart, but one by one, with much grumbling, they break away and return to their duties.

The driver pats his cap down on his head as he brings the cart to a squeaking halt. 'Ah, some more discerning customers,' he smiles, watching you approach.

'Perhaps,' states Nyms, sheathing his blades. 'You come from the south?' He nods towards the glittering dome of magic that surrounds the ruined city.

'Yes, from Talanost,' says the driver, hopping down from his seat.

'Talanost? That's impossible!'

You turn to see Lansbury, Redguard's medic, striding towards the cart. 'The city is taken. The mage's have it guarded. No one can enter or leave.'

The driver shrugs. 'Where's there a will, there's a way.'

'Not when it comes to the Arcane Circle,' says Lansbury suspiciously.

'Ain't that the truth.' Nyms walks around the side of the cart and starts to examine its contents. You join him, scanning the clutter of objects.

'This is junk!' scowls Nyms.

For once, you find yourself in agreement. The wagon is filled with all manner of bric-a-brac, but none of it valuable – pots and pans, musty-smelling rags, a rusty spade, part of an old cabinet... there is even someone's front door in there.

The man shrugs. 'Times are hard, what can I say?'

Nyms start back towards the trader, drawing one of his swords. 'How did you pass through the city unharmed? The shadow spawn would have torn you to pieces.'

The driver shuffles round nervously, watching the swordsman warily. 'Perhaps they took me for a fool, just like...'

There is the scuffling of boots as Nyms surges forward, grabbing the trader by the front of his coat and pushing him down into the grey-black ash. The tip of his blade rests against the man's throat.

'Hey, I meant no disrespect!' The panicked man raises his hands beseechingly. 'My name is Waldo. I'm just a trader.'

'Just a trader...' Lansbury passes her hand along the side of the cart. At her touch, glowing runes and sigils blossom into being, revealing a dazzling pattern that covers every inch of the dark wood. 'These are not Dwarf runes,' she says, pausing to watch as the symbols glow and then dim to nothing once again, '...and certainly not the work of an inscriber. What manner of magic...'

'I found it!' interjects Waldo quickly. He tries to sit up but Nyms forces him back with the edge of his blade. 'Or it found me. I know nothing of magic. Just that it has its uses. Makes me go unnoticed...'

'Really?' Nyms offers the trader a sceptical frown. 'Not working now is it?'

Waldo looks to you pleadingly. 'Talanost is in ruins. The legion destroys everything in its way... but they have no interest in the spoils of war. I have... things... items that I found amongst the rubble. I got a knack

for finding it, see'. He looks back, towards his cart. 'It would be worth your while to see what I got for you. Could decide the fortunes of this war.'

Nyms snorts dismissively, but steps back from the trader. 'A cart load of broken junk is hardly what we need to win this war.'

Waldo stumbles back to his feet, brushing the dust from his weather-beaten coat. 'Have it your way, swordsman.' He gives you a sideways glance. 'But appearances can be deceiving.'

Will you:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| Ask Lansbury about the strange runes? | 7 |
| Ask Nyms for his opinion on the trader? | 9 |
| Ask to see the trader's wares? | 3 |

2

Waldo closes the chest and locks it with the silver key. When he straightens, he claps you on the shoulder with a wide smile. 'Guess I'll be sticking around for a while, unless those inquisitors move me on – so, come seek me out if you need anything else.'

You glance down at the strange chest. It's glittering, embossed design now displays a winged dragon – identical to the one displayed on Redguard's fluttering standards. 'Hmm, Appearances can be deceiving,' you mutter.

Waldo doffs his cap to you. 'I'll let others be the judge of that.'

Bidding the trader farewell, you head back into the camp. (Return to the map to continue your adventure.)

3

'A-ha, I see you have a nose for a bargain!' Waldo grabs hold of the old riding blanket that covers his seat and, with a flourish, pulls it away to

reveal an ornate chest. Putting the blanket aside, he takes the chest and lifts it down onto the ground.

You kneel beside it, entranced by the silver patterns that have been embossed onto its metallic surface. For a moment, they make no sense to you – but then the lines appear to shift and take on form. You lean back, scrutinising the scene that is materialising before you. It shows a vast city, crowned by towers and minarets. The bodies of three snakes form an arched entranceway, their bodies covered in glistening runes.

'What... *is* this?' You cannot tear your eyes away from the intricate scene. 'Where did you find it?'

Waldo squats down beside you, hands resting on his knees. 'Does it mean something to you?' he asks hopefully.

'It is... familiar.' You trace the raised patterns with your fingers. 'This city, have you seen it before?'

'Is it your home?' he ventures.

You shrug your shoulders. 'I wish I knew... I have no memory of that place.'

'Well, I always say... it's what's on the inside that counts, eh?'

Waldo puts his hand inside his shirt and pulls out a silver chain. On the end of it is a small sparkling key. Lifting the chain over his head, he takes the key and inserts it into the lock of the chest. A turn and a click later, and you find yourself staring into its velvet-lined cavity...

If you are a warrior, turn to 6. If you are a rogue, turn to 8. If you are a mage, turn to 12.

4

You find Waldo at the edge of the camp. He is sat on a stool beside his tethered pony, picking stones from its hooves with a hooked knife. When he sees you approach, he quickly gets to his feet, brushing himself down.

'Can't keep away, can you? Let me guess, you traded in that annoying swordsman at last?'

You pat the jingling pouch hanging at your belt. 'Ha, you really think I'd get this much for him?'

Waldo's eyes widen. 'The spoils of war, eh?' He quickly hops onto the seat of his cart to retrieve the magical chest.

To view the trader's special deals, turn to 15 if you are a warrior, 5 if you are a rogue or 14 if you are a mage. For the rarer and more expensive items, turn to 11 if you are a warrior, 13 if you are a rogue or 10 if you are a mage.

5

'Yes, my special deals. Well let's take a look...,' he reaches inside the chest and produces three items, which he lays out on the ash-covered ground. 'For you, 450 gold crowns. I can't say fairer than that.'

You may purchase any of the following items for 450 gold crowns each:

Sliver of shadow (main hand: sword) +2 speed +4 brawn Ability: chill touch	Ghoul's teeth (necklace) +1 speed Ability: piercing	Total eclipse (head) +2 speed +3 brawn Ability: vanish
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After you have made your decision, you can ask to see Waldo's rare items (turn to 13) or bid the trader farewell (turn to 2).

6

Just like the tinker's chest in the town of 'No Hope', the interior of this chest is larger on the inside, filled with a myriad of weapons, armour and trinkets. It is a far cry from the battered pots and pans in the trader's cart.

'Now do you believe me,' grins Waldo, leaning over your shoulder. 'I got a knack for finding treasure. And rare stuff, too.'

'I suspect these don't come cheap,' you ask with a wry grin, as you lift out a rune-etched shield.

'That depends. I got my rare items...real beauties those, then I got my special deals.'

Will you:

Ask to see the special deals?

15

Ask to see the rare items?

11

7

You join Lansbury, who is still studying the cart with a thoughtful expression.

'What do you think? Those runes... did they tell you anything?'

The medic gives a deep sigh. 'I don't know. They are not of this world, if that is what you mean.' She traces a finger along a length of wood, forcing the sigils to glimmer briefly in the dull half-light. 'While not the same, I would say they share a common origin with... this.' She reaches out and takes hold of your arm, tugging back the sleeve to reveal your branded skin.

You snatch your arm away defensively. 'A shadow mark?'

Lansbury shrugs. 'Some of the symbols on this cart follow a similar form, although I sense their purpose is different. I would say these runes have more to do with travel and safe passage, than...,' she glances down at your arm, '...murder.'

You tug back your sleeve, shamed and angered. 'I can't change the past.'

The medic holds up her hands, nodding. 'I know. I know. Forgive me, I'm sorry.'

You give her a hard look before shifting your attention back to the trader. 'And what of him? Is he a spy or not? If these are shadow runes, that makes him the enemy.'

'Oh, hardly.' Lansbury leans over the side of the cart and pulls out an old cooking pot. Holding it to her face, she peers at you through one of its many rusted holes. 'I don't think we need to be frightened of old pots just yet, do you?'

Will you:

Ask Nyms for his opinion on the trader? 9

Ask to see the trader's wares? 3

8

Just like the tinker's chest in the town of 'No Hope', the interior of this chest is larger on the inside, filled with a myriad of weapons, armour and trinkets. It is a far cry from the battered pots and pans in the trader's cart.

'Now do you believe me,' grins Waldo, leaning over your shoulder. 'I got a knack for finding treasure. And rare stuff, too.'

'I suspect these don't come cheap,' you ask with a wry grin, as you lift out a black coat, trimmed with silver and gold runes.

'That depends. I got my rare items...real beauties those, then I got my special deals.'

Will you:

Ask to see the special deals? 5

Ask to see the rare items? 13

9

Nyms studies the trader with a frown. 'I've heard of such things – charms that allow you to travel unseen or to confuse those that would seek to do you harm. I suspect this cart of his...,' he taps one of the rickety-looking wheels with his foot, 'strange though it might sound, could have such a

charm worked on it. Although, why anyone would want to give this junkyard that kind of attention...'

He tilts his head, regarding the trader with a half-smile. 'In a camp full of the king's own, he would be even crazier than me to cause trouble. And you know...that is a whole lot of crazy.'

The swordsman turns and pats you on the shoulder. 'Perhaps you should find out what he has to sell. I mean...,' Nyms makes a show of looking you up and down, 'you could really do with the makeover.'

Will you:

Ask Lansbury about the strange runes? 7

Ask to see the trader's wares? 3

10

'Craving more magic, eh?' The trader gives a low whistle. 'Well, I reckon these are just what you need.' He reaches inside the chest and produces three items, which he lays carefully before you. 'Now, magic like this...,' he catches your eye, his mouth twisting into a smile, 'could win you a war. Tell me, how can anyone put a price on that?' He rubs his jaw thoughtfully. 'It pains me... but, 900 gold crowns? Yes, that's a fair price. Risked my life for those little beauties.'

You may purchase any of the following items for 900 gold crowns each:

Slipstream gown

(chest)

+2 speed +4 magic

Ability: overload

Talanost's reach

(left-hand: wand)

+2 speed +4 magic

Ability: critical strike

Boots of shielding

(feet)

+2 speed +1 armour

Ability: deflect

After you have made your purchases, you can ask to see Waldo's special deals (turn to 14) or bid the trader farewell (turn to 2).

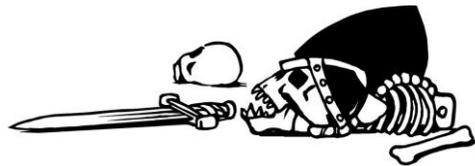
11

‘Really?’ The trader gives a low whistle. ‘Want to be a great warrior of legend, eh? Well, I reckon these are exactly what you need.’ He reaches inside the chest and produces three items, which he lays carefully before you. ‘Now, in the right hands...,’ he catches your eye, his mouth twisting into a smile, ‘they could win you a war. Tell me, how can anyone put a price on that?’ He rubs his jaw thoughtfully. ‘It pains me... but, 900 gold crowns? Yes, that’s a fair price. Risked my life for those little beauties.’

You may purchase any of the following items for 900 gold crowns each:

Raider’s tunic (chest)	Talanost’s wall (left-hand: shield)	Mortuary gauntlets (gloves)
+2 speed +4 brawn	+2 speed +5 armour	+1 speed +3 armour
Ability: retaliation	Ability: deflect	Ability: acid

After you have made your decision, you can ask to see Waldo’s special deals (turn to 15) or bid the trader farewell (turn to 2).



12

Just like the tinker’s chest in the town of ‘No Hope’, the interior of this chest is larger on the inside, filled with a myriad of weapons, armour and trinkets. It is a far cry from the battered pots and pans in the trader’s cart.

‘Now do you believe me,’ grins Waldo, leaning over your shoulder. ‘I got a knack for finding treasure. And rare stuff, too.’

‘I suspect these don’t come cheap,’ you ask with a wry grin, as you lift out a gold-embroidered cloak.

‘That depends. I got my rare items...real beauties those, then I got my special deals.’

Will you:

Ask to see the special deals? 14

Ask to see the rare items? 10

13

‘Really?’ The trader gives a low whistle. ‘Well, what I’ve got here will turn a few heads, even Lord Happy’s over there.’ He nods in Nym’s direction. ‘Your friend does has a certain charm though, I’ll give him that.’ With a smirk, Waldo reaches inside the chest and produces three items, which he lays carefully before you. ‘Now, tell me – how can anyone put a price on these?’ He rubs his jaw thoughtfully. ‘It pains me... but, 900 gold crowns? Yes, that’s a fair price. Risked my life for those little beauties.’

You may purchase any of the following items for 900 gold crowns each:

Confessor’s coat (chest)	Talanost’s edge (main-hand: sword)	Reaper’s fists (gloves)
+2 speed +4 brawn	+3 speed +5 brawn	+1 speed +3 brawn
Ability: fortitude	Ability: sear	Ability: critical strike

After you have made your purchases, you can ask to see Waldo’s special deals (turn to 5) or bid the trader farewell (turn to 2).

14

'Yes, my special deals. Well let's take a look...,' he reaches inside the chest and produces three items, which he lays out on the ash-covered ground. 'For you, 450 gold crowns. I can't say fairer than that.'

You may purchase any of the following items for 450 gold crowns each:

Slipstream silk (cloak)	Wrath of ages (ring)	Chilblain's tears (necklace)
+3 speed +2 magic	+2 magic	+1 magic +1 armour
Ability: surge	Ability: rust	Ability: piercing

After you have made your decision, you can ask to see Waldo's rare items (turn to 10) or bid the trader farewell (turn to 2).

15

'Yes, my special deals. Well let's take a look...,' he reaches inside the chest and produces three items, which he lays out on the ash-covered ground. 'For you, 450 gold crowns. I can't say fairer than that.'

You may purchase any of the following items for 450 gold crowns each:

Barbarous boots (feet)	Khana's revenge (ring)	Valiant spaulders (cloak)
+1 speed +3 brawn	+2 brawn	+2 speed +2 brawn
Ability: savagery	Ability: bleed	Ability: overpower

After you have made your decision, you can ask to see Waldo's rare items (turn to 11) or bid the trader farewell (turn to 2).

