

## MURDAC SOLUTION

A few notes, first.

One, make no mistake: this is not the hardest and certainly not the largest of the Phoenix games, but that doesn't mean it's actually easy or forgiving by today's standards. You can die easily. You can lose or destroy a necessary tool just as easily. Save often, and keep all your save files until you've finished the game. Many of the puzzles are logical; a few are not.

Two, the parser is limited, but good. I have not found any place where using prepositions or indirect objects ("hit tree with axe") is necessary or even possible. By contrast, the game is good at giving you less to type. If there is only one object, simply "get" will take it; if there are several, it will assume the first one listed. Ditto for "drop", which will drop the first object in your inventory; and ditto for several other verbs. "Get all" is provided for, as well. In the Topologika version, so are multiple objects (as in "get bread, eggs and milk") and "drop all but sword".

Third, I'm not taking you past all the sights and clues. Also, these games (unfashionably, these days) expect a lot of experimentation and learning-by-dying to solve them, none of which can easily be done in a walkthrough. Because of this, before you resort to reading this walkthrough you might want to try the in-game hints. There is a zip file which contains documentation for all the Topologika adventures, including Murdac. The main part of these is an index of hints available in the game. You look up the problem you're stuck at, find a number, type "help" and that number, and you get a (varyingly subtle) hint. The ZCode version does not have these, but the hints in the Topologika port are just as valid for the original.

Finally, this walkthrough (including the above notes) is for the Topologika MS-DOS game which is available at the IF Archive, and for the ZCode version which was converted from the original Phoenix code. As far as I have found,

there are no real differences between the two. I do not know whether this walkthrough works for other versions, as well, or indeed if any exist.

So, let's be off, then.

Right from the start, you need to hurry. Go south, north, south, north, and north two more times. Take the shawm. Wonder what a shawm is? I'll show you. Go south and blow the shawm. Yup, it's an ancient musical instrument. The sound this one makes is a bit unlikely, though: the game seems to think that it's some kind of trumpet, but in fact it's an ancestor of the oboe.

Ah well. Go south three times. Take the plank, plus what you find underneath.

Go east, and take the key. Go north, east, west, north. What does one do in a sandpit? Dig. Take the lamp. Go south. Read the grave. You will be given a name, and a bit of information about the nature of its occupant. Remember both. Go east twice.

What you need to do here depends on the information on the grave. For the baritone, sing his name. For the noise abatement campaigner, whisper it. For the werewolf, howl it; for the sign language pioneer, sign it (of course), and for the town crier, shout it. Take the sword.

Go west, unlock and open the door, and go north. Now a bit of precaution: close and lock the door behind you. Drop the key. Go down and west twice. Throw the plank. Go west twice. Retrieve the plank. Now throw the rod, and then the plank again. Immediately go north.

Go back south, then west twice. Take the bowl. Go south. Take the toad, but when asked if you really want to, answer "no". Get the object it dropped: a toadstone. This was, in mediaeval bestiaries, a gem found in the forehead of a toad. It had various alchemical properties, but mainly it was supposed to be an antidote to all kinds of poisons.

Go back north, and east five times. Take the pillow. Go east four times. You

are now in a haunted area. You will get things thrown at you from various sides. When this happens, you must move in the opposite direction, relative to your last move. For example, if you moved east last time (which you did in the first room) and you get hit on the left arm, go right, that is, south. If you went west on your last move and get hit in the face, go backwards, that is, east. Repeat until you end up on a railway platform.

Drop the pillow here and take the peridots. Going east or west does nothing; going back is deadly; there's nothing for it but to go north, onto the tracks.

Do so. Then go east and north, blow your shawm, north, take the perfume, and go south twice, east and south. Drop the perfume, peridots, bowl, shawm and sword.

Go south and se. Take the beads. Go east and north. Take the erbium. Now to return... That manticore is dangerous - to be precise, its tail is venomous.

Therefore, eat the toadstone. Then go back south and west. Go down. Drop your lamp and look. Now go south. Enter, as your whole command, the word which you hear. Take what was dropped and go north.

Take your lamp. Go up, nw, north, east, ne. Wave the beads and take the thorn.

Go sw and west, drop everything, and take back your lamp.

Go northeast twice, then down. You are now in a maze. To make matters worse (and in particular, mapping more tedious), not only are you in darkness, but any object you drop here will disappear as well. Oh, you'll be able to get it back - at the end of the maze. Just as well you have a walkthrough...

But first a deviation. Go south. Take the bread. Enter the word written in the air. Now the maze: go n, u, ne, sw, e, s, nw, w, d, se. Take the myrrh. Leave the maze by going d, nw, nw, e, e, n, ne, ne, n, d. Go sw twice and drop the myrrh.

By now you should have seen a pigeon somewhere around here. It is in a different place in each game, but in any case it is no more than one room away from the cellar. Find this pigeon. Feed the pigeon and take it. Go back to the cellar.

Now go north and west, take the dummy, and go south. Drop the pigeon and look.

There are now some letters written on the floor, which make a nonsense word.

Enter that word as your command. Take the statuette. Go north, west twice and north. Take the dodo.

Go south. That old man is dangerous - he will kill you in a couple of moves.

You only have just enough moves to make it to the place where you can shake him off, so no typos in this bit! Go east three times, north and down. Wait a move.

Go south twice. Drop the dodo and statuette.

Take the bowl. Go south and sw, and fill the bowl. Go ne, north, west seven times and south. Look. You will see a vision of a man waving something: either a staff, a ribbon or a scroll. Remember this. Go back north, then east seven times to the cellar. Drop the bowl.

Take the beads, tiepin and sword. Go east and down twice. Prick the dummy.

Remember the word you're given. Drop the dummy. Don't give in to the temptation of pricking it again. Go up twice and west, and drop the pin.

Go ne, get the wig, and go up twice. Take the staff. Go back down twice and sw.

Now, if the object waved in your vision was the staff, do the next two paragraphs, between the [square brackets]. If it was the ribbon or scroll, skip them for now.

[ Go west seven times and south. Wave the object from your vision. Go west three times, to a tribe of cannibals. Wave the beads. Now for a tour of the island. At some point, your sword will twitch. When this happens, dig, and take the hoard. From the cannibals, go w, ne, e, se, sw, w. By now you should have found the hoard.

Go back to the eastern tip of the island - from the end of the tour, that's east and ne. Enter the word the goblin told you. Go back to the cellar by going east twice, north, and east seven times. Drop the bible, sword and hoard. Now resume play from where you left off. (If you waved the staff, that would be at this point in the walkthrough; if it was the ribbon or scroll, it's at the end

of one of the two paragraphs just below. ]

Go east, down, and south. You are given a ribbon. Go back up and west. Now, if the waved object in your vision was the ribbon, do the section between square brackets above, then resume play from here.

Go ne and up twice, receive a scroll in exchange for the ribbon, and go down twice and sw. If the waved object from your vision was the scroll, now do the paragraphs between the square brackets, and come back here.

Go east, drop the wig, and go down and south. Finally go up, west, ne, and up twice for the last time. Take the amethysts. Go down twice and sw.

Take all. You won't be able to carry everything, but that doesn't matter. Take what you can. Go north three times. Drop all and take back the lamp. Go back south three times. Get all again. Go north thrice, drop all, get lamp, south thrice. Get all - this time you should be able to carry everything that's left.

Go north thrice one more time.

You will be asked which object you want to take with you. Choose the sword. You will be returned to the lake. Throw the sword into it.

And that's all. You've finished Murdac and been proclaimed a hero. Which is all a very jolly game, I'm sure you'll agree, but... we came here in the first place to discover what the secret of Murdac was, and I don't think we ever did find out!