

A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ANCIENT MAP EMBROIDERED WITH MAGIC THREADS

*Weapon, alone, since another is to hide and sever;
warded this blade by walls and halls, vigilantly guarded
ever by our ruler elder, sage in white, to surrender never.*

*Three seals for two weapons against one terror
old as the world; a shaded hollow rests, hidden under
oaks, a retreat not even ala may reach nor bare,
and our ruler lateborn, questing depths, dares
entrance there, past otherworldly beasts he passes,
between the gates of dead, into the underworld, surpasses
them all, to layeth the thenceforth shadow-weapon, glorious:
“Touch it now, thee fiend!” he speaketh, young and victorious,
the darkness left behind, enshrouding the bladeless power;
stone remains the faithful keeper of another, awaiting the fateful hour;
and as for you, heed the warning, O wise one, if not the chosen –
read these words and tread not into night eternal, unless the dire
time has come in which the monster has again arisen!*

Ride along the Great River's bends

***There, where the white river turns red
this world and the underworld blend;
and what was below now far above ends,
so beware, O traveller, of where you stand
when you set foot in Shadowland.***

(SECRETS OF) THE ANCIENT MAP EMBROIDERED WITH MAGIC THREADS (TEXT BEFORE THIS)

The right side of the map has secrets that are revealed by the end of Book One. For example, in the next passage are to be found instructions for how to read the map – it is upside-down, so you must rotate it (to correctly *Ride **along** the Great River’s bends*, as it is written near the river on the map, but not **down** it, in the way it flows; instead, you need to go **upwards**, towards the source. In Serbian, the word “uz” is similar to “along,” but means both “near” and “upwards,” which helps to solve this part of the riddle). The next passage then discloses, in riddles, the hidden names of the two rivers (the White Timok and the Red Timok) that join together near the entrance to the underworld:

Ride along the Great River’s bends

*There, where the white river turns red
this world and the underworld blend;
and what was below now far above ends,
so beware, O traveller, of where you stand
when you set foot in Shadowland.*

The left half of the map contains even more secrets, though they are not made immediately apparent to the readers, even if placed before their eyes. For example, the verse below has a two-part riddle: the first part, in **red**, is rather easily spotted (read only the first words of the lines) and is revealed in Book Two, though it will mislead the heroes. The second part, in **blue**, indicated by the directional rotation of the map-symbol (just as with the map’s right side), is revealed only in Book Three. It tells you to read according to the shape of the letter “L” – the first words of each line, followed by the whole last line.

*Three seals for two weapons against one terror
old as the world; a shaded hollow rests, hidden under
oaks, a retreat not even ala may reach nor bare,
and our ruler lateborn, questing depths, dares
entrance there, past otherworldly beasts he passes,
between the gates of dead, into the underworld, surpasses
them all, to layeth the thenceforth shadow-weapon, glorious:
“Touch it now, thee fiend!” he speaketh, young and victorious,
the darkness left behind, enshrouding the bladeless power;
stone remains the faithful keeper of another, awaiting the fateful hour;
and as for you, heed the warning, O wise one, if not the chosen –
read these words and tread not into night eternal, unless the dire
time has come in which the monster has again arisen!*

so: *Three old oaks and entrance between them. Touch the stone and read: time has come in which the monster has again arisen!*