

# Vectrex Dark Tower

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The Dark Tower Vectrex game (circa 1983) was based on the electronic board game of the same name, but never commercially released. A single prototype was found, and an [image of the ROM](#) has been floating around the web for awhile. [Vectrex](#) was an old home-gaming system based on vector graphics (like those found in the Asteroids-style games). There are Vectrex [software emulators](#), so you can actually play this game on your PC if you download and set up the appropriate pieces. Here are the instruction for the game and some screenshots.

## Dark Tower

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Enter the fantastic world of the Dark Tower -- a world filled with adventure, danger and all the mysteries of ancient times. You control a squadron of warriors as you search an adventure-filled forest for the magical keys that will unlock the entrance to the Dark Tower. Guide your warriors to the enchanted chests scattered throughout the forest -- each will contain a new puzzle, adventure, terror or treasure. Use your warriors wisely and beware the evils of the forest!

## Controls

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**Joystick:** Moves warrior.

**Button 1:** Possessions. Press and hold to view listing of all your possessions, remaining number of warriors and current score. Release to return to game.

**Button 2:** Fire Left/Arrow. Press to select game option. Press to fire left in Brigand Sequence. Press to move arrow in the Riddle of the Keys.

**Button 3:** Fire Straight/Key Select. Press to fire straight in Brigand Sequence. Press to select key type in Riddle of the Keys.

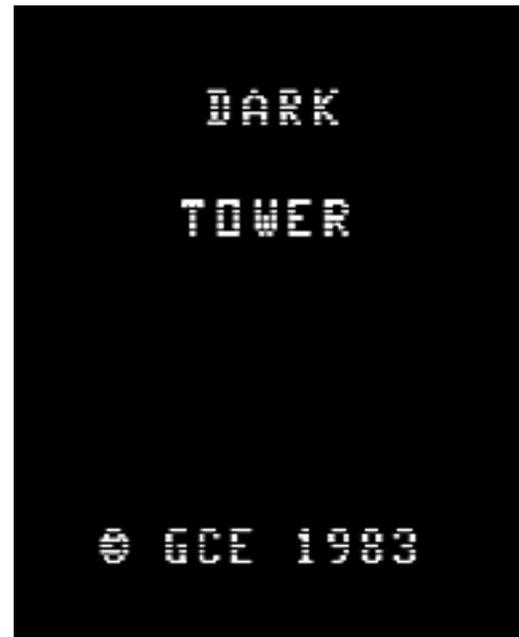
**Button 4:** Fire Right/Test. Press to fire right in Brigand Sequence. Press to open the chests in the forest. Press to test your solution in the Riddle of the Keys.

## Skill Level Selection

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Dark Tower is a one player game. You can begin Dark Tower at any of four different skill levels. The skill level determines how many keys you are given before starting your journey. Game 1 is the most difficult; Game 4 is the least difficult.

The games are as follows:  
Skill Level Keys Provided



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Game 1 NONE

Game 2 Silver

Game 3 Silver and bronze

Game 4 Silver, bronze and brass

To select the skill level, press Button 2. (Note: You will not receive any points for the keys initially given in Games 2, 3 or 4.)

## Game Play

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Your goal is to unlock the door of the Dark Tower by solving the Riddle of the Keys. To solve the riddle, you must first find the four different keys scattered throughout the forest and then find and enter the Dark Tower itself. Along the way, you will encounter a series of hazards and mysteries. Tread carefully... you never know where dangers lurk!

## Warriors

At the beginning of the game, you are provided with a warrior who appears somewhere within the forest. You are also provided with five reserve warriors and two bags of gold. You can earn additional warriors and gold during the game, as explained later.

## Possessions

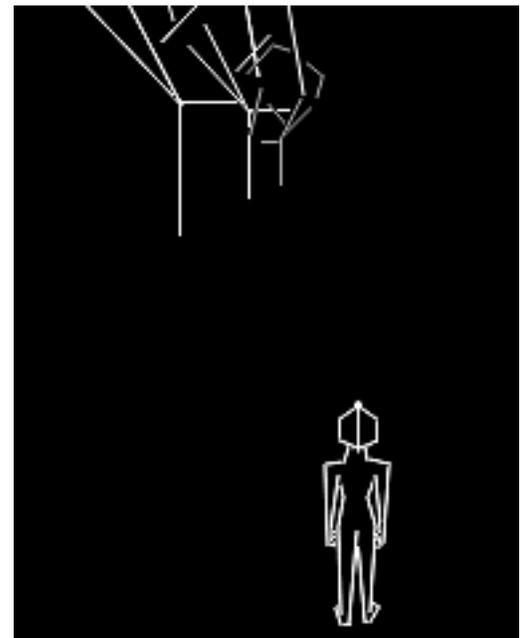
Any time during the game, you can press Button 1 to see a list of your possessions, your inventory of reserve troops, and your score.

## Forest Sequence

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Forest maps and boundaries

The forest is divided into four equal sectors, each represented by a different type of tree -- pines, elms, maples, and dead trees. In the very center of the forest, called the Dark Forest, there are no trees at all. This is where the Dark Tower is hidden and will become visible only when your warrior has collected all four keys (see Dark Tower Sequence). There are also smaller dark forest zones scattered throughout the forest map. It is easy to get lost in these zones. Be especially careful when in the Zone of Death, where the plague occurs more often. It is advisable to enter the Zone of Death only when you have a healer in your possession (see Plague and Healer). If you reach the boundaries of the forest, the trees will disappear, you will enter a fog and will be placed randomly somewhere else within the forest. It is helpful to map the forest as you play the game because objects always appear in the same location from game to game. (Using standard graph paper is helpful in mapping the forest). As you learn where objects will be found, your skill in playing the game will be increased.



Pine Trees

Dead Trees  
(Zone of Death)Dark  
Forest

Elm Trees

Maple Trees

**Direction of Travel**

Use the joystick to move your warrior around the forest. As your warrior walks through the forest, his direction of travel is shown at the top right side of the screen (N, NW, W, SW, S, SE, E, NE). The number of steps forward he has taken since he made his last turn is also shown. To go in a specific direction (eg, North), rotate your warrior to the left (counter clockwise) until the desired direction appears at the top of the screen. Then your warrior will be heading in that direction.

**Fog** [Appears as a series of long horizontal lines]

In addition to the boundary fog, you can also run into fog while walking within the forest. You may also find fog in some of the chests scattered throughout the forest (see Chests). When you run into fog, it will move up from the bottom of the screen and you will be placed randomly somewhere else with the forest unless you have a scout in your possession (see Magician Sequence).

**Plague** [Appears as a series of broken horizontal lines]

Like fog, you can run into the plague while walking throughout the forest and may also find the plague in a chest (see Chests). When you run into the plague, it will move up from the bottom of the screen like the fog, but you will lose your warrior unless you have a healer in your possession (see Magician Sequence).

**Chests**

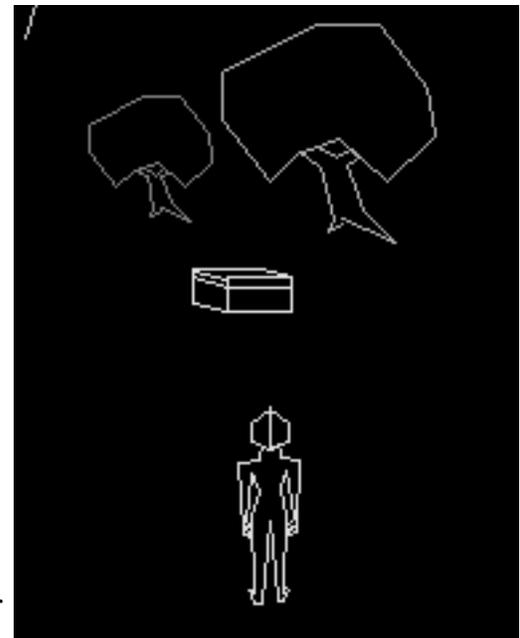
You will see many chests scattered throughout the forest. All chests look alike and give no clue as to their contents. To open a chest, move warrior in front of the chest and press Button 4. If you press Button 4 again BEFORE the chest lid is fully opened you can close the chest and move on. Once the chest is fully opened, you must proceed to handle whatever it has in store for you.

There are six types of chests:

**Treasure Chests** - These chests are very rare and contain a no-risk treasure (one to nine bags of gold or one to four replacement warriors). A particular Treasure chest can only be opened once per game -- opening this same chest again will take you to the Brigand Sequence (see below).

**'Do-Nothing' Chests** - These are empty chests that will open, pause for a moment, and then close.

**Fog Chests** - These chests contain fog. When fully opened, the fog cycle will be started, as explained earlier.



**Plague Chests** - These chests contain the plague. When fully opened, the plague cycle will be started, as explained earlier.

**Brigand Chests** - These contain enemy beasts called 'Brigands' who you must fight for your warrior's survival (see Brigand Sequence).

**Magician Chests** - These contain magicians who can provide you with many valuable treasures (see Magician Sequence). As with treasure chests, each Magician Chest can only be opened once per game -- opening the same chest again will take you to the Brigand Sequence.

## Bags of Gold

Scattered throughout the forest are bags of gold which you can pick up and add to your possessions. You can pick up the bag of gold by walking forward directly toward it. Each bag of gold can be picked up only once per game.

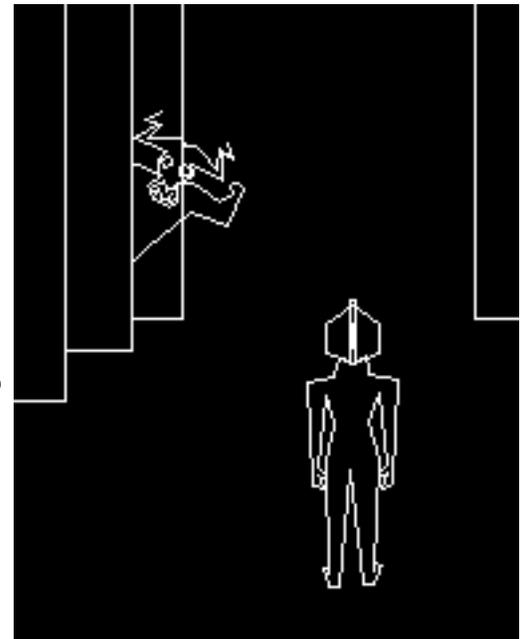
## Keys

In each of the four sectors of the forest there is one of the needed to solve the Riddle of the Keys and open the Dark Tower. These keys will be in the same location for each game, although the particular type of key (gold, silver, brass or bronze) will vary from game to game. (Note: You will only be able to find the number of keys still needed depending on which game option you selected. For example, if you selected Game #4 you will only find one key in the forest, since you already have the three other keys in your possession.) You can pick up a key by walking forward directly toward it. Each key can be picked up only once per game.

## Brigand Sequence

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The Brigand Sequence begins when a warrior opens a brigand chest. The warrior will be drawn into the chest and must fight for his survival by hurling flamoids at the brigands while avoiding the flamoids the brigands throw at him. The brigands will appear from and disappear behind walls on the left and right. Use the joystick to move the warrior to the right and left and press Buttons 2, 3 and 4 to throw flamoids at the brigands. Button 2 throws flamoids to the left; Button 3 throws flamoids straight ahead; and Button 4 throws flamoids to the right. The brigands will throw most of their flamoids directly at the warrior, but will also throw some in other directions once in a while hoping that the warrior will walk into them and be killed. Neither the warrior nor the brigands can be killed by their own flamoids. If the warrior successfully destroys a random number of brigands, (up to about 20 brigands) he will receive a treasure -- either replacement warriors or more bags of gold -- or may be told to just 'BE GONE.' In any case, he will be returned to the forest at the same location he left. If the warrior is killed by one of the brigands, a replacement warrior will be provided (if one is available), which will be returned to the same location outside the Brigand Chest. The same Brigand Chest can be re-opened again or the warrior can move on through the forest.



## Magician Sequence

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The Magician Sequence begins when a warrior opens a magician chest. The warrior will be drawn into the chest and will be open to the will of the magician. If you have enough gold in your inventory, the magician may sell you a key, replacement warriors, a healer, a scout or the crystal crown. The amount of gold needed to buy these treasures is as follows:

### **Treasure - Gold Needed**

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Gold Key - 60-69 bags  
Silver Key - 50-59 bags  
Bronze Key - 40-49 bags  
Brass Key - 30-39 bags  
Warrior - 10-20 bags  
Crystal Crown - 60-69 bags  
Healer - 15-20 bags  
Scout - 20-30 bags

The Crystal Crown is a special treasure that is worth 1500 points if it is in your possession at the end of the game. The Healer is one of the warrior's helpers that prevents the fatal effects of the plague. The Healer can be used only 4-6 times while in your possession and will then be lost. Another Healer may be granted by the Magician later in the game if there are still Magician Chests available and the player has enough gold.

A Scout is another one of the Warrior's helpers. The Scout prevents a Warrior from getting lost in a fog. The only exception is the boundary fog, where the Scout cannot help the Warrior from getting lost. As with the Healer, the Scout can be used only 4-6 times while in your possession. Another Scout may be granted by the Magician later in the game if there are still Magician Chests available and the player has enough gold.

### **Dark Tower Sequence**

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Once you have all four keys in your possession, you can enter the Dark Tower and try to solve the Riddle of the Keys to open the tower door. The Dark Tower is visible only when all four keys are in your possession. It is located near the center of the map in the largest of the dark forests, which is surrounded by a mixture of all four types of trees. When you find the Dark Tower, use the joystick to move your warrior forward directly into the entrance of the door.

Once you are inside the door, you will see the four keys, which you must put in the correct order to try and unlock the tower. Press Button 2 one or more times to move the arrow and select the desired key.

Then press Button 3 one or more times to select the type of key (gold, silver, bronze or brass).

Make sure each type of key is used only once.

When you think you have put the keys in the correct sequence, press Button 4 to test your solution. If all four keys are in the correct position, the game will end. If not, those keys that are in the correct positions will stay lit for a few seconds and then the Warrior will be placed back into the forest

at a randomly selected location. If you have a Scout in your possession, your Warrior will be placed outside the Dark Tower rather than somewhere within the forest, and he can enter the tower and try to solve the Riddle of the Keys again.

## Scoring

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Points are awarded for each treasure you pick up after the start of the game (i.e., you do not receive points for the keys, gold, or warriors you are given at the beginning of the game.) Points are also earned for destroying brigands and for solving the Riddle of the Keys.

## Possessions

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Gold Key - 1,000 points  
Silver Key - 900 points  
Bronze Key - 800 points  
Brass Key - 700 points  
Bag of Gold - 100 points  
Warrior - 100 points  
Crystal Crown - 1,500 points  
Healer - 300 points + a bonus warrior  
Scout - 300 points + a bonus warrior  
Destroying each Brigand - 125 points  
Solving the Riddle of the Keys - 3,000 points