L O A A

Chapter 4: Meneferu

S C R I P T

2026-11-26



TYPE	Scene-by-scene script, as built
COVERS	Chapter 4 of the Prologue, from the Meneferu pier to the card "To be continued: Papyria", with every side quest and small quest that is in the game
LOCATION	Meneferu, the ruins of Hetsa, the desert road toward Papyria
SCENES	10 main scenes and the end card, plus 2 side-quest scenes
STATUS	In game: the dev start "Meneferu story" plays it end to end (phone build 0.1.171). The arrival cinematic and the longer drive barks are design only

Cast



HERO

TLOAA's player character and the leader of the party: a mercenary who takes the mayor's contract to free Stara Luka with Vella and Stalvan.



STALVAN

The party's tank and its heart: a huge, bald barbarian from Meneferu, warm, simple and honest, who knows he isn't clever and doesn't mind.



ZANZE

A paladin and librarian-detective, the Keeper of the Library of Papyria (its lead librarian and sworn protector) and Manfred's partner, who joins the party in Chapter 5 of the prologue.

N

NAKHTI

H

HENUT

M

MEDJIRA

T

TEFI

H

HESUK



VELLA

The party's warlock and its mind: dry, curious and never saying everything she knows, with a pact mark on her hand that flares when something old is near.

MANFRED



Manfred, written Manfred by the director and on screen, is an inventor in Meneferu, distracted, enthusiastic and always in the middle of a project, who joins the party in Chapter 4 and drives them to Papyria in a car he built himself.

I

IMSA

S

SABU

A

A VOICE BEHIND THE DOOR

B

BAKHU

D

DOSH

(working name, Unconfirmed) is the boss of the thugs in Meneferu's dyers' court, who took Manfred's gear and sold it, and who gives up when the fight turns against him.

S

SENNA

Meneferu's leatherworker.

K

KHARU

W

WESIR

Old Wesir, keeper of Meneferu's temple and its archive.

C

CAPTION

On-screen text over a shot.

R

RUHET

Captain of Meneferu's harbour watch.

B

BAZAAR SELLER

The Chapter 4 script tells the party's chapter in Meneferu, the river port on the edge of the desert, scene by scene: where each scene plays, what the player does, the story beats and every spoken line. It runs from the pier, where the party looks for a way to Papyria, to Manfred's car rattling out into the desert and the card *"To be continued: Papyria"*.

The game closes the chapter with the card "Meneferu · Chapter 4 complete". The story plan (`docs/plan/ch4_ch5_story.md`) numbers the drive as Chapter 5.1; in the game the short drive out of town ends Chapter 4, and the game wins.

How to read this page

Every line carries a mark:

- IMPL is in the game today, quoted word for word from the game's data (`data/demo/meneferu_story.json`, `data/demo/meneferu_quips.json`, `data/combat/demo_combat.json`) and the sound-manager's active lines. Where the game and a design document differ, the game wins. Every IMPL line on this page has a voice file.
- DOC is in a design or plan document only (`docs/plan/ch4_ch5_story.md`), not built.

CINEMATIC means control is taken away. TALK is a conversation in the talk box, opened with the Talk button by the person (or played at once where noted), with the party's input held. **TALKING HEAD** means a portrait, voice and subtitle at the top of the screen while the player keeps control. **CHOICE** is a hero reply; the hero speaks the reply the player picks (`--herovoice=on`). **ROLL** is a d20 check; the player picks who rolls, one option per party member who is there. There is no **NARRATOR** in this chapter.

Who is there decides who speaks. A line marked *only with Stalvan* (or Manfred, or Zanze) plays only when that member is in the party, alive, standing and within 15 m of the leader. In the story start the party is the hero, Vella and Stalvan; Manfred joins in Scene 5. Zanze is held in the library of Papyria during this chapter, so her lines play only in the free-roam start with all five (the Mummy Thread can be played in both).

Who speaks: the hero (Daniel), Vella (Olivia), Stalvan (Brian), Manfred (Joe), Zanze (Hailey), Imsa (Sarah), Nakhti (Chris), Sabu (Eric), Henut (Lily), Medjira (Jessica), Bakhu (Charlie), Tefi (Will), Dosh (Harry), Hesuk (Roger), Senna (Bella), Kharu (Boris), Ruhet (Adam), Wesir (ProVox) and the bazaar seller (Eric), from the sound-manager's `characters` table. The voice behind the door is Henut's. The townsfolk crowd has no lines.

Working names: Nakhti, Sabu, Henut, Hetsa and Dosh are working names *(Unconfirmed — awaiting the director)*.

The story in one paragraph

The party comes off the boat in Meneferu needing a caravan to Papyria, where the great library may explain the stone and the threads. There are no caravans: riders in ochre sashes are burning cargo on the desert road. Imsa at the inn points them across the river to Manfred, an inventor with a cart that needs no camel and a sweetheart, Zanze, who keeps the library. Before the talk is over, Tefi runs in with the news: the sashes have taken the library, and Zanze holds the inner door alone, with water for three days. Manfred joins, and the party hunts his two missing parts: the gear (a painted wooden copy first, then the real brass one, bought back with a favour for a camel that will not stand) and the fuel (stolen by the same sashes, "for fire"). The engine catches on Vella's spark, everyone takes their place, and the car rattles out of town, fighting off camel riders on the road, until the screen goes dark before Papyria. Beside the main story, Sabu the mummy seller sends the party to the ruins of Hetsa for a thread that never rots, and three townsfolk hand out the first steps of small quests.

SCENE 1 · THE PIER (GAMEPLAY START; THE ARRIVAL CINEMATIC IS DESIGN ONLY)

Where: the river pier of Meneferu. **What happens:** the game starts at the pier head with the party on the planks; the boat's arrival is not filmed yet.



The pier. *Meneferu from the river mouth: the long pier, the warehouse, the watchtower (concept art).*

1 The arrival cinematic (about 25 s), from the story plan [DOC]:

STALVAN [DOC]
Smells like hot bread and camels.

VELLA [DOC]
Papyria is across the sand, on the east coast. We find a caravan, we're there by tomorrow.

STALVAN [DOC]
Bread first.

2 Objective [IMPL]: *Find a way to Papyria* (the arrow points to the inn door).

SCENE 2 · NAKHTI'S LEADS (TALK, OPTIONAL)

Where: the pier root. **What happens:** Nakhti, a young watchman of Captain Ruhet's harbour watch, greets every boat and knows who pays. His leads are small quests; each pays 25 XP when the party reaches the person.

1 Nakhti's talk IMPL (his first line is also his bark when the leader walks past):

NAKHTI
Off the boat? Welcome to Meneferu. Boats tied, knives sheathed. The Captain's rules.

Looking for work? I know who pays in this town.

CHOICE (a lead is offered only while its target is there: Sabu while the Mummy Thread is not taken, Medjira while her stall was never opened):

HERO **We need coin.**

NAKHTI
Then find Sabu, the mummy seller. North edge of the bazaar, under the linen shade. He pays for errands nobody else will run.

Stalvan (only with Stalvan): "A mummy seller. Do the bandages come with them, or are those extra?"

HERO **Anything for a blade?**

NAKHTI
Medjira, the brass stall at the bazaar's east mouth. She sells ember powder. Rub it on a sword and the edge burns.

Manfred (only with Manfred): "Ember powder is fire-stone and patience. I'd still buy two."

HERO **That's all.**

NAKHTI
Mind the camels. They have right of way.

2 Tracker IMPL: *Find Sabu the mummy seller at the bazaar's north edge / Find Medjira at the brass stall, the bazaar's east mouth.* Reaching the person: "Quest complete: Find Sabu (+25 XP)".

3 The person's first words when the lead brings the party IMPL:

SABU
Nakhti sent you? Good. He only sends me the brave ones.

MEDJIRA
Nakhti's friends? The powder is still one gold. Same as for everyone.

4 *With no lead left* IMPL*:*

NAKHTI
That's everyone I know who pays. Enjoy Meneferu.

SCENE 3 · THE INN: IMSA AND THE SASH RUMOUR (TALK) · M1

Where: the door of the Sailors' Rest on the harbour square. **What happens:** the only Talk button in town is Imsa's (the strict order: everyone else only barks the first line of their greeting as the party passes).

1 Imsa's talk IMPL:

VELLA
We need a caravan to Papyria.

IMSA
Then you need a different year. Riders on the desert road. The camel men won't go.

VELLA
What riders?

IMSA
Men in ochre sashes. They stopped a salt caravan three days out and burned the cargo. Salt. Who burns salt?

STALVAN
Someone with a lot of matches.

IMSA
There's the inventor across the river. Says he built a cart that needs no camel.
(beat)
His sweetheart runs the library over there, so he'll go. If it doesn't blow up first.

STALVAN
Does the cart blow up a lot?

IMSA
Follow the smoke.

2 The game saves ("the Sailors' Rest") and restocks the potions, as at Nana's inn.

3 Objective IMPL: *Find the inventor across the river.* The walk crosses the river to the artisans' quarter; the workshop's chimney smoke is the landmark (M2).

SCENE 4 · MANFRED'S WORKSHOP (TALK, ABOUT A MINUTE) · M3

Where: inside Manfred's workshop (its door is open). **What happens:** the party walks in on Manfred at his bench.



The workshop. *Manfred's workshop and the walled car yard beside it, with the half-built car (concept art).*

1 Manfred's talk IMPL:

MANFRED
Don't touch that. Or that. That one's fine.
(beat)
No, it isn't.

Here. Goggles. You'll want these.

STALVAN
...I like these goggles.

MANFRED
Manfred. Inventor. Mostly of smoke, this week.

VELLA
The innkeeper says you're going to Papyria.

MANFRED
I'm always going to Papyria. Zanze's there.
(beat)
Zanze is the Keeper of the Library. Head librarian. And its sword.

STALVAN
A librarian with a sword?

MANFRED
She once fined a prince for a folded page. He paid. He said thank you.

VELLA
And she's your...

MANFRED
She corrects my spelling.
(beat)
Yes. That.

CHOICE IMPL:

HERO **Then we go together.**

MANFRED
Together. Good. The cart seats four, if one of you doesn't mind the roof.

STALVAN
Why is everyone looking at me?

MANFRED
It needs a gear, fuel, and a week.

HERO **What does your cart need?**

MANFRED
It needs a gear, fuel, and a week.

And the gear needs forty-two teeth. Not forty. Forty grinds.

> HERO **How fast is it?**
>
> **MANFRED**
> Faster than a camel. Faster than a horse. Possibly faster than me, which is the worrying part.
>
> It needs a gear, fuel, and a week.

2 *Running feet outside.* ***TALKING HEAD*** IMPL*:*

MANFRED
...Who's that?

SCENE 5 · TEFI'S NEWS (TALK, PLAYS AT ONCE) · M4

Where: the workshop; Tefi runs in from the Papyria lane, dusty and out of breath. **What happens:** the drama of the chapter: the library has fallen and Zanze is holding it alone. Manfred joins the party.

1 Tefi's talk IMPL (no Talk button; it plays when he arrives):

TEFI
The library's taken! Men in ochre sashes, the gates are barred. The scholars are inside.
(beat)
The Keeper holds the inner door. Alone.

MANFRED
Zanze. Is she hurt?

TEFI
Not when I left. She sent me out through the binders' cellar, with this.

A page from her ledger. Folded. She said you'd understand.

MANFRED
...She folded a page.

STALVAN
Is that bad?

MANFRED
She fined a prince for a folded page. She has never folded one in her life. Not one.

VELLA
How many men? And how long can she hold?

TEFI
Forty, fifty. The inner door is bronze. She has water for three days. Four, if she's stubborn.

MANFRED
She's stubborn.

Zanze's in there. The car isn't finished.
(beat)
The car is finished now.

VELLA
It has no gear and no fuel.

MANFRED
It's finished in spirit.

STALVAN
Three days. We'll be there in two. I'll carry the cart if I have to.

CHOICE IMPL:

HERO **We'll get her out.**

MANFRED
Thank you. Truly. Now: gear, fuel, go.

HERO **Who are these sashes?**

VELLA
Men who want books burned. There's always someone.

MANFRED
Then we hurry.

HERO **Tefi, rest. We'll take it from here.**

TEFI
Water. Then sleep. Then... thank you.

2 Manfred joins the party (four members). Tefi walks back to the yard's west edge and stays there; his greeting afterwards IMPL:

TEFI
Water. Then questions.

3 Objective IMPL: *Help Manfred finish the car*. Journal: "Help Manfred finish the car: a gear and fuel, then the engine. Reward: Manfred's car, 300 XP."

4 Two Talk buttons now, at once: Medjira (the gear) and Bakhu (the fuel). The two branches run in either order; the game saves at the start of each.

SCENE 6 · THE GEAR (GAMEPLAY, QUEST BRANCH) · M5A

Where: the bazaar, the dyers' court and its dye house, the camel pens. **What happens:** the wrong gear first, then the right one, for a favour. Reward: 200 XP and Hesuk's coin.



The dyers' court. *Dosh yields at a quarter of his health and kneels (engine frame, 16 m zoom).*

6A · MEDJIRA'S STALL

1 Tracker IMPL: *Find a gear at the bazaar*. Medjira's talk IMPL:

MEDJIRA
A gear like that? I had one. Big as a cartwheel, teeth like a shark.

MANFRED
Forty teeth or forty-two? Please say forty-two.

MEDJIRA
Dosh's boys took it off my cart this morning. They called it a toll.

STALVAN
We could ask for the gear back.

MEDJIRA
Ask loudly. Dyers' court, past the camels.

STALVAN
Can you get the gear to our cart by tomorrow? Free delivery?

MEDJIRA
Delivery is you, big man. Delivery is always you.

2 Tracker IMPL: *Get the gear back from the dyers' court.*

3 Passing Hesuk's camel, once, **TALKING HEADS** IMPL:

STALVAN
Your camel. Give it to me.

HESUK
...No.

STALVAN
Worth a try.

MANFRED
Camels kick at eleven paces. I measured. Once.

6B · THE DYERS' COURT

1 The fight: Dosh and three thugs, a second wave out of the dye-house door. At a quarter of his health Dosh yields and kneels. **TALKING HEADS** IMPL:

DOSH
Enough! Enough. Your gear's inside, on the dye vat. Take it.

STALVAN
Say please.

DOSH
...Please.

2 Tracker IMPL: *Take the gear from the dye house*. The party picks up the gear on the vat. **TALKING HEADS** IMPL:

MANFRED
Here she is.

...She's light. Why is she light?

Wood. It's wood, dyed yellow. And forty teeth. Forty!

STALVAN
Ah. A gear from the wishing stall. On the stall it's brass. When it comes, it's wood.

VELLA
Dosh is still outside.

3 Tracker IMPL: *Ask Dosh about the real gear*. Dosh's talk IMPL:

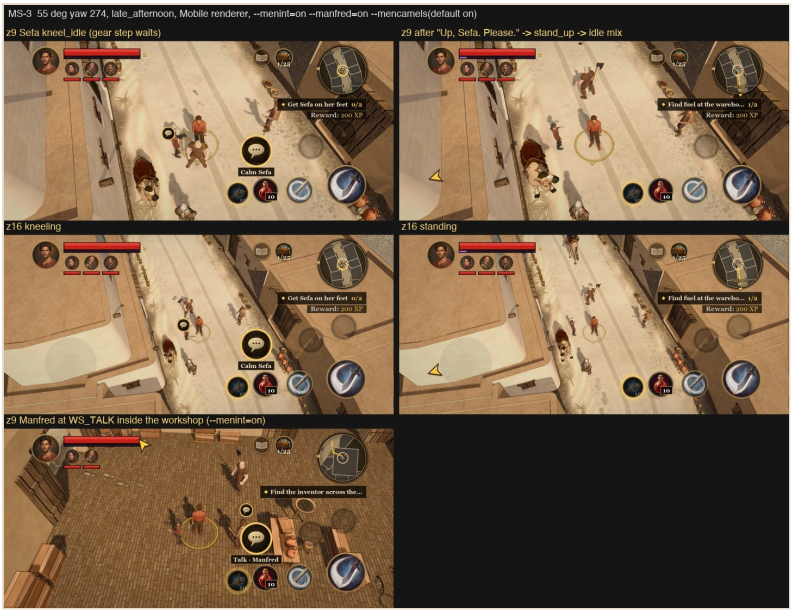
VELLA
This gear is a copy. Where's the real one?

DOSH
The dyers paint copies for the bazaar. The brass one we sold. Hesuk, at the camel pens. Two silver.

STALVAN
You sold a cart's heart for two silver?

DOSH
It was a slow morning.

6C · HESUK AND SEFA



Sefa. *Hesuk's camel kneels at the pen until Stalvan calms her, then stands (engine frames).*

1 Tracker [IMPL]: *Get the real gear from Hesuk.* Dosh leaves. Hesuk's talk [IMPL]:

HESUK
The brass wheel? I bought it fair. Two silver, from honest thieves.

MANFRED
It's my gear. Forty-two teeth. I'd know her in the dark.

HESUK
And I'd sell her in the dark. But today I have a problem.

Sefa sat down this morning and she will not get up. Not for dates, not for songs.

Get my Sefa on her feet, and the brass wheel is yours.

2 **ROLL**, the bargain on Hesuk's favour (once; the gear is given at every result) [IMPL]. The options: take it with no roll; [Persuasion] the hero asks for a coin on top (DC 14); [Insight] Vella: he knows the wheel was stolen (DC 15); [Persuasion] Stalvan offers to talk to the camel (DC 13); [Investigation] Manfred prices the wheel (DC 15).

> *No roll:*

HERO
Deal. One camel, standing.

The hero, a natural 20:

HERO
A camel down costs you a day's trade. Add a coin and we're even.

HESUK
You count like a camel man. One gold, then.

The hero, a natural 1:

HERO
And you'll pay us double, of course.

HESUK
Of course not. The wheel, nothing more. And mind your tone.

Vella, a natural 20:

VELLA
You paid two silver for stolen brass. The watch would find that interesting.

HESUK
...The watch is busy. One gold, and we never met.

Vella, a natural 1:

VELLA
Your camel's spirit tells me you're generous.

HESUK
My camel's spirit says she's sitting. The wheel only.

Stalvan, a natural 20:

STALVAN
I'll talk to her, camel to camel. You pay me like a camel doctor.

HESUK
If she stands for you, I'll pay you like a prince. One gold.

Stalvan, a natural 1:

STALVAN
Pay more, or I sit down too.

> **HESUK**
> Then I'll have two who won't stand.
> The wheel only.
>
> *Manfred, a natural 20:*
> **MANFRED**
> Without that wheel my cart stays
> home, and your camels stay the
> fastest thing in town. Sweeten it.
> **HESUK**
> Clever. One gold, and you never race
> my camels.
>
> *Manfred, a natural 1:*
> **MANFRED**
> At cost, plus the teeth, minus...
> I've lost the thread.
> **HESUK**
> I haven't. The wheel only.
>
> *On success:*
> **HESUK**
> Fine. The wheel and half a gold, if
> she stands.
>
> *On failure:*
> **HESUK**
> No. The wheel, and that's generous.
>
> Coins: a critical success 1 gold, a success half a gold, otherwise none.

[3] Tracker IMPL: *Get Sefa on her feet*. The button "Calm Sefa" at the kneeling camel; **TALKING HEADS** IMPL:

STALVAN
Hello, Sefa. Nice hump.

She's not stubborn. She's loading.
Give her a moment.

VELLA
Nothing's happening.

STALVAN
Still loading.

Up, Sefa. Please.
(Sefa rises.)

Loaded.

HESUK
Fourteen years I've had her. She never stood for me that fast.

The brass wheel. Take it before I change my mind.

4 The real gear replaces the copy in the bag. **TALKING HEAD** IMPL:

MANFRED
Forty-two teeth. Hello, beautiful.

SCENE 7 · THE FUEL (GAMEPLAY, QUEST BRANCH) · M5B

Where: the warehouse door, its hall and the quay yard. **What happens:** not a wrong part this time but a chase: the same ochre sashes are stealing Manfred's fuel. Reward: 200 XP.

1 Tracker IMPL: *Find fuel at the warehouse*. Bakhu's talk IMPL:

BAKHU
Fuel for the inventor? Barrels of it, in my back hall.

Someone's been in there since last night. My porters won't go in.

VELLA
Then we will.

MANFRED
Mind the green barrels. They're mine, and they don't like being shaken.

STALVAN
How much is fuel these days?

BAKHU
Three silver a barrel.

STALVAN
Three? I remember when a barrel of fuel was one.

BAKHU
You remember wrong. It was always three.

Bring the barrels out and I'll forget the broken door.

2 Tracker IMPL: *Get the fuel from the warehouse*. In the hall, four scouts are draining the barrels. At half their health they break. **TALKING HEADS** IMPL:

VELLA
Ochre sashes. The same men who took the library.

MANFRED
They're taking my fuel! Why do zealots need fuel?

VELLA
For fire.

3 Tracker IMPL: *Stop the scouts at the quay*. Three scouts at the quay yard; at half health they flee north upriver with the rest of the fuel. One green barrel stays.

4 Tracker IMPL: *Take the green barrel*. **TALKING HEADS** IMPL:

STALVAN
They took the rest.

MANFRED
One barrel. It's enough. If nobody sneezes, it's enough.

VELLA
They're stocking fuel for a fire, Manfred. A big one.

MANFRED
Then we're faster than their fire.

5 *Bakhu afterwards, once* IMPL:

BAKHU
One barrel? Keep it. Just keep those sashes off my quay.

SCENE 8 · THE ENGINE (TALK OVER THE CAR YARD, INPUT HELD) · M6-M7

Where: the car yard behind the workshop. **What happens:** with both parts in the bag, objective IMPL: *Bring the parts to the car*. The game saves ("the car yard"). Manfred walks to the bonnet, Vella turns to the engine.

1 The engine start IMPL:

MANFRED
Gear in.

Fuel in.

STALVAN
You have one bolt left over.

MANFRED
There's always one left over. It's tradition.

Stand back. Starting her now.

(The crank turns. Nothing.)

MANFRED
...She's thinking.

STALVAN
Have you tried turning the engine off and on again?

MANFRED
It has never been on!

(A cough and a black puff.)

VELLA
It coughed. That's progress.

MANFRED
The spark's too weak. The gear's fine, the fuel's fine, the spark...

VELLA
A spark. Is that all.

(Vella's lightning into the engine. It catches.)

MANFRED
She lives! She lives!

STALVAN
It's very loud.

MANFRED
That's how you know it's working.

2 The quest is done IMPL: "Help Manfred finish the car: the engine caught. +300 XP". The game saves again at the yard.

SCENE 9 · BOARDING (TALK OVER THE CAR YARD, ABOUT 3 S OF CLIMBING) · M8

Where: the car yard. **What happens:** objective IMPL: *Get in the car*. Each member walks to their place and climbs in; Stalvan last, and the roof rack creaks.



Everyone in. *Manfred at the wheel, Vella in the front seat, the hero at the gun, Stalvan on the roof rack (engine frame, 9 m zoom).*

1 Boarding IMPL:

MANFRED
Everyone in! Vella, front seat.
You, the gun at the back.

VELLA
Front seat. Good.

STALVAN
Where do I sit?

MANFRED
On the roof.

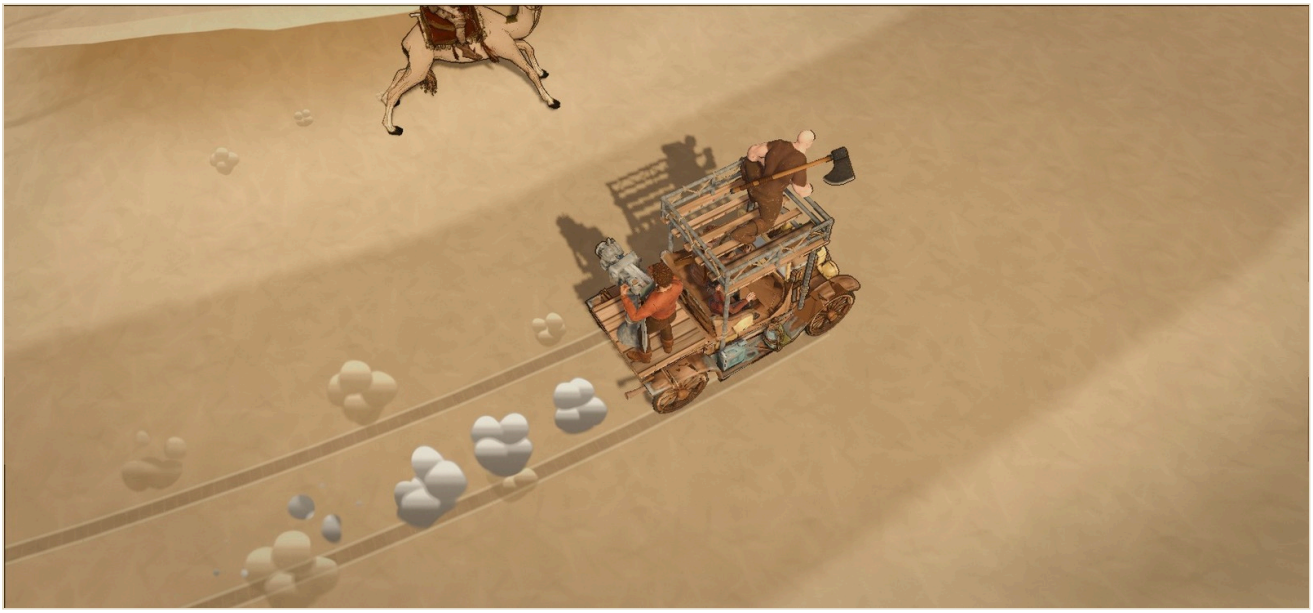
STALVAN
There's no seat on the roof.

MANFRED
There's a roof on the roof.

STALVAN
Roof seat. No cushion, no belt. One star.

SCENE 10 · THE DRIVE OUT AND THE CAR FIGHT (GAMEPLAY, ABOUT 77 S) · M9

Where: the Papyria lane out of the yard, then the desert road through the dunes; 911 m in all, about 9 m/s in town and up to 20 m/s in the desert. **What happens:** objective IMPL: *Reach the library*. The car drives itself; the camera follows the hero at the gun. Talking heads play at set points along the road.



The car fight. *A scout on a camel comes up beside the car (engine frame, 9 m zoom).*

1 *At 12 m, in the lane,* ***TALKING HEAD*** IMPL*:*

MANFRED
Hold on! That's not advice, it's part of the design.

2 *At 215 m, past the last houses* IMPL*:*

STALVAN
What does this rope do?

MANFRED
Scares camels.
(The horn.)

STALVAN
It scared me.

On the desert road: two camel riders, ochre-sash scouts, strike the car from the side, one at a time. The hero aims the rear gun (only behind the car, 80° either side) and fires; the smaller button has Stalvan throw a bomb from the roof; Vella's bolt goes only at riders in front of the car. The car's bar, "Manfred's car", is 100; a lost car restarts the stretch. The fight lines are under Barks.

When both riders are gone (with the fight on), or at 745 m IMPL:

STALVAN
Can it go faster?

MANFRED
Faster? This is the fastest anything has ever gone.

At 486 m, 200 m into the desert IMPL*:*

STALVAN
In two hundred paces, turn left.

...Recalculating.

MANFRED
There's only one road, Stalvan!

At 640 m, after the first backfire IMPL*:*

VELLA
If this cart explodes, I am walking the rest.

At 850 m, before the fade IMPL*:*

MANFRED
Hold on, Zanze. We're coming.

The screen fades to black before Papyria comes into view.



The desert road. *The car among the dunes toward Papyria (engine frame, 16 m zoom).*

THE END CARD



The chapter card. *"Meneferu · Chapter 4 complete" (engine frame).*

1 *On black* IMPL*:*

CAPTION

To be continued: Papyria

2 Then the title IMPL: *Meneferu*, *Chapter 4 complete*, and the button *Main Menu*. The game returns to the main menu; Continue starts again at the car yard before boarding.

PLANNED DRIVE LINES, NOT BUILT DOC

The story plan's drive (`ch4_ch5_story.md` 5.2) is longer than the game's and holds more barks. They are not in the game:

MANFRED DOC
Left wheel's fine. Right wheel's... optimistic.

MANFRED DOC
(at a roadblock)
Roadblock! I'm going through the middle. The middle is the plan.

STALVAN DOC
Can I drive?

MANFRED
No.

STALVAN DOC
The wind is in my mouth. I can't close it. Too much wind.

STALVAN DOC
(at a boarder)
No room! Get off my roof!

Bird! Big bird!
(beat)
Oh. Arrow.

I'm not falling off. I'm deciding to stay on.

VELLA DOC
Rider on the left.
(beat)
Was on the left.

VELLA DOC
(at her first mark)
I mark them, you shoot them. Aim for the ones that glow.

They want the books burned. I want to read them first.

VELLA DOC
(when a volley misses)
Their archers are worse than your driving.

MANFRED DOC
(after the roof dodge)
How did you do that?

STALVAN
I don't know.
(beat)
My back hurts now.

VELLA DOC
Does it have a name?

MANFRED
I wanted to name it after Zanze.
(beat)
She said no. Firmly.

STALVAN DOC
Are we there yet?

MANFRED
No.

STALVAN
Now?

VELLA
Ask again and you walk.

STALVAN DOC
Can I have the big gun next time?

MANFRED
It's not a gun, it's a crank-driven rotating volley...

VELLA
It's a gun.

MANFRED DOC
(at the gate, the car falling apart)
She held!
(beat)
Mostly.

STALVAN
I'm still on the roof.

SCENE 11 · SIDE QUEST: THE MUMMY THREAD (GAMEPLAY, ABOUT 10 MIN)

Where: Sabu's stall at the bazaar's north edge, the desert road, the ruins of Hetsa. **What happens:** Sabu sends the party for the last spool of a thread that never rots; Vella learns through her pact

that Hetsa's dead are guarding their house. In both Meneferu starts, on by default. Full page: The Mummy Thread.



Sabu's stall. *The mummy seller under the linen shade, a wrapped sleeper on his bier (concept art).*

11A · THE OFFER

1 Sabu's talk IMPL (Vella's hand glows from her line about the bier to her "An empty ruin."):

SABU
Travellers. You have the look of people who don't mind the dead.

- **Stalvan** (only with Stalvan): "We mind them. We just hit them."

SABU
Then listen. Out past the camel road lies Hetsa, the old House of Linen. Its embalmers spun one thread a year, from flax grown in their own field.

That thread does not rot. Not in a thousand years. A spool is worth a good deal more than I'm paying you.

The cloth halls of Papyria want every spool they can get. Which is why it comes to me first.

The last spool is still out there, wound round the keeper of the gate. Bring it to me and I pay five gold. Five.

- **Manfred** (only with Manfred): "A thread that doesn't rot in a thousand years. I'd like to know how. Professionally."

HERO
Five gold for a walk in the desert?

SABU
A short walk. An empty ruin. Old stones, a little sand.

VELLA
And this one on your bier. Where is she from?

SABU
Here and there.

VELLA
Hush. Someone's at the door.

A VOICE BEHIND THE DOOR
Who knocks? You smell of the living.

VELLA
A warlock. Who keeps the dead of Hetsa?

HENUT
I do. Henut, the last Keeper of the Linen. I wrapped them, and I set them to guard the house.

Men with picks came. They took a sleeper. Now the guard wakes for my word, and will not lie down until it falls.

VELLA
Then give me the word that lets them sleep.

HENUT
Let the keeper of the gate fall. Then say: Hetsa nebu, sedjer. And they will sleep.

My calling word is Hetsa nebu, uneh. Never say it at the house, unless you mean to fight.

VELLA
An empty ruin.

SABU
Mostly empty. Five gold, as I said.

- **Stalvan** (only with Stalvan): "I like him. He lies badly."
- **Zanze** (only with Zanze and Stalvan): "He does. I'm keeping notes."

2 **ROLL**, the bargain (once, before taking the job) IMPL. The options: take it with no roll; [Persuasion] the hero asks for more (DC 14); [Insight] Vella: he knows what guards that ruin (DC 15); [Intimidation] Stalvan leans on the counter (DC 15); [Investigation] Manfred prices the thread (DC 15); [Persuasion] Zanze names a fair price (DC 14).

> *No roll:*
>
> **HERO**
> Five gold. We'll take it.
>
> → 5 gold
>
> *The hero, a natural 20:*
>
> **HERO**
> Five gold to walk into a ruin that fights back. You'd pay double to never go yourself.
>
> **SABU**
> ...I would pay triple. Two more, then. Seven, and they wait right here.
>
> → 7 gold
>
> *The hero, a natural 1:*
>
> **HERO**
> Ten gold, or... we'd be very disappointed.
>
> **SABU**
> Then be disappointed for three. The offer just got smaller.
>
> → 3 gold
>
> *Vella, a natural 20:*
>
> **VELLA**
> Your own diggers ran from that ruin. A fair price counts the running.

SABU
Who told you... no. Never mind.
Seven.

→ 7 gold

Vella, a natural 1:

VELLA
The dead tell me you'll pay more.

SABU
The dead tell me three. They are very firm about it.

→ 3 gold

Stalvan, a natural 20:

STALVAN
Seven.

SABU
That is cedar, friend. Seven. Please stop leaning.

→ 7 gold

Stalvan, a natural 1:

STALVAN
Pay more, or I sit on your counter.

SABU
Sit on it and I charge you for it.
Three.

→ 3 gold

Manfred, a natural 20:

MANFRED
Flax that never rots? There are two people in this town who can price that. You, and now me.

SABU
I liked you better before you talked.
Seven.

→ 7 gold

Manfred, a natural 1:

MANFRED
By my sums the job is worth eight.
No, carry the... six? Four?

SABU
Three. I'll do your sums for you.

→ 3 gold

Zanze, a natural 20:

ZANZE

A ruin with guards is a risk. The Library pays scribes for less. Seven is fair, and you know it.

SABU

A librarian who haggles. The world is ending. Seven.

→ 7 gold

Zanze, a natural 1:

ZANZE

...Though, to be fair, it does sound like an easy walk.

SABU

It does! Three gold, then. Thank you, my lady.

→ 3 gold

On success:

SABU

Six. And I am being robbed.

→ 6 gold

On failure:

SABU

Five. As I said. I say things for a reason.

→ 5 gold

[3] Tracker IMPL: *Go to the ruins of Hetsa*. Sabu while the quest runs IMPL:

SABU

The thread, friends. The desert won't bring it to me.

11B · THE ROAD TO HETSA



The road. *About a minute of open desert east of town (concept art).*

1 On the road, **TALKING HEADS** IMPL:

- **Stalvan** (only with Stalvan): "So. The magic words. How do they work?"

HERO (WITHOUT STALVAN)
So. These words. How do they work?

VELLA
It's a calling. A keeper ties it to one ground, and it names the dead of that ground. Hetsa nebu, uneh: dead of Hetsa, stand.

Say it here and nothing hears. Say it at Hetsa and every sleeper under that sand gets up. Only there. Only them.

- **Manfred** (only with Manfred): "So it's keyed. One word, one ground. Like a lock that only fits its own door."

HERO
And the other word puts them back.

VELLA
Once their guard falls. Not before.

- **Stalvan** (only with Stalvan): "Hetsa nebu, uneh. Easy."
- **Vella** (only with Stalvan): "Don't practise."

- **Manfred** (only with Manfred): "I've written both words down. So I know which one never to read out."
- **Zanze** (only with Zanze, Manfred and Stalvan): "Then keep that page away from Stalvan."

11C · ARRIVING AT HETSA



Hetsa. *The House of Linen half under the sand (concept art).*

1 With Stalvan, **TALKING HEADS** IMPL: he does what he was told not to.

STALVAN
Empty ruin. Old stones. A little sand.

Mummies, hear me now! Hetsa nebu, uneh!

VELLA
Stalvan, no. Not now, we are not ready!

- **Manfred** (only with Manfred): "Is the sand meant to wiggle like that?"

HERO
Too late. Backs together!

ZANZE (ONLY WITH ZANZE)
Shields up. Vella, Manfred, stay behind us.

2 Without Stalvan, Vella asks first IMPL:

VELLA
This is Hetsa. When I say the word, every sleeper under this sand gets up, and they come for whoever called. Are we ready?

CHOICE:

HERO **Ready.**

VELLA
Then backs together. On my word.

ZANZE (ONLY WITH ZANZE)
Ready. I'm beside you.

VELLA
Hetsa nebu, uneh!

HERO **Not yet.**

VELLA
Then eat something, drink a potion. I'll begin soon.

Manfred (only with Manfred, a talking head): "Checking every bolt. Twice." About 10 s later:

VELLA
That will do. Gather close.

Hetsa nebu, uneh!

After either, the talking heads IMPL: **Manfred** (only with Manfred): "Is the sand meant to wiggle like that?"

ZANZE (ONLY WITH ZANZE)
Shields up. Vella, Manfred, stay behind us.

11D · THE SLEEPERS AND THE LINEN WARDEN



The Linen Warden. *The keeper of the gate, the thread wound round him (concept art).*

1 Tracker [IMPL]: *Defeat the sleepers of Hetsa*. Five waves of sleepers rise from the sand in a ring round the party, then the Linen Warden rises with the thread on him. The fight lines are under Barks.

2 If the party falls: *Rise again* (or the automatic restart) puts it back at the ruins' edge, and the retry lines play (see Barks). If the party walks out of the fight, the Warden walks home at full health.

3 When the Warden falls, **TALKING HEADS** [IMPL]:

VELLA
Hetsa nebu, sedjer.

HENUT
They sleep. Thank you, warlock.
Take the thread.

ZANZE (ONLY WITH ZANZE)
They were only keeping their house.

4 Tracker [IMPL]: *Take the thread*. The spool lies where the Warden fell. **TALKING HEADS** [IMPL]:

HERO
There it is.

- **Stalvan** (only with Stalvan, at 5 gold): "Very light thread, for five gold."

- **Stalvan** (only with Stalvan, after a different bargain): "Very light thread, for what it's worth."
- **Manfred** (only with Manfred): "Not one frayed end, after a thousand years. I need to know how they spun this."
- **Zanze** (only with Zanze and Manfred): "You may look at it. You may not take it apart."

11E · THE HAND-IN



The rest word. *The dead of Hetsa sink back into the sand (concept art).*

Tracker [IMPL]: *Bring the thread to Sabu.* Sabu's talk [IMPL]:

SABU
Alive. And you have it. Oh, look at that.

VELLA
The sleeper on your bier came from Hetsa. Your men dug her out.

SABU
Allegedly.

VELLA
Her house is asleep now, all but her. She goes home, on your cart, at your cost. And nobody digs at Hetsa again.

SABU
And if not?

VELLA
Then the whole bazaar hears where your stock comes from.

ZANZE (ONLY WITH ZANZE)
And I would write it down myself.

- The payment, by the bargain:

No roll or a failed roll:

SABU
She goes home. Five gold, as promised. The thread is worth ten.

A natural 1:

SABU
She goes home. Three gold, as we agreed. The thread is worth ten.

A success:

SABU
She goes home. Six gold, as we agreed. The thread is worth ten.

A natural 20:

SABU
She goes home. Seven gold, and the two from my second purse. The thread is worth ten.

- **Stalvan** (only with Stalvan): "Ten?"
- **Vella** (only with Stalvan): "Don't."
- **Manfred** (only with Manfred): "Ten gold. That's half a car. The half that works."

2 *Sabu afterwards* IMPL*:*

SABU
Her cart leaves at dawn. I keep my word. Mostly.

11F · SELLING THE THREAD INSTEAD (THE FAILED QUEST)

1 Only traders of Papyria buy the thread (10 gold). Selling it fails the quest, which abandons itself ("Failed · abandoned").

2 Back at Sabu's stall IMPL:

SABU
You're back, and my thread isn't. I hear a spool turned up in Papyria. What happened?

CHOICE and **ROLL** IMPL:

> HERO **We sold it in Papyria.**
>
> **SABU**
> Honest, at least. Next time I'll send Papyria for my thread.
>
> [Deception] the hero, DC 13: "The Warden took it with him into the sand." On success:
>
> **SABU**
> The sand keeps what it likes. Pity.
>
> *On failure:*
>
> **SABU**
> You sold my thread and came back to lie on my rug. Liars I can buy anywhere, and cheaper. Off my rug.

3 *Sabu afterwards* IMPL*:*

SABU
Papyria's that way.

SCENE 12 · SMALL QUESTS: THE FIRST STEPS (TALKS, OPTIONAL)

Where: around town. **What happens:** three townsfolk give a small quest; in the story start each has a Talk button from the start and a silver pip on the minimap. Only the first talk is built; the later steps are planned. Rows: Small quests; full stories: Quests in Meneferu.

12A · OVERDUE (WESIR, THE TEMPLE)

1 Wesir's talk IMPL:

WESIR
Borrowed from the Library of Papyria by my master's master. Forty-one years overdue.

They say the Keeper once fined a prince for a folded page.
(beat)
You're going to Papyria. Take it back. Please. Tell her it was the temple's fault. Tell her I'm very old.

- **Manfred** (only with Manfred): "We're going to her anyway. She'll be glad of a book that came home."

2 Tracker IMPL: *Return the library book*; the library book goes into the bag. Reward IMPL: the lamp page, a reader's pass.

12B · EYES ON THE RIVER (RUHET, THE HARBOUR WATCH)

1 Ruhet's talk IMPL:

RUHET
Someone signals from the reeds at night. Smugglers signal ships. But ships don't need signals in a harbour this size.
(beat)
Unless they don't want to come in.

- **Manfred** (only with Manfred): "Count the blinks. A fisher just lights a lamp. Only a secret needs a pattern."

2 Tracker IMPL: *Find who signals from the reeds*. Reward IMPL: a night pass, gold.

12C · GRANDFATHER OF THE REEDS (SENNA, THE LEATHERWORKER)

1 Senna's talk IMPL:

SENNA
Caravans will run again one day. They'll want water skins, and I'm out of hide.

The fishers say the reeds have gone bad. Nets torn, a goat gone.

And Grandfather's out there. The biggest crocodile on the river.

- **Manfred** (only with Manfred): "How big is biggest? Roughly. I'd like to know how far to stand."

2 Tracker IMPL: *Bring Senna crocodile hide*. Reward IMPL: water skins or crocodile bracers.

A Light in Stalvan's Window, the longer Meneferu quest, is planned and not built; see Quests in Meneferu.

TOWN TALK: GREETINGS

In free roam every named person's greeting is a full talk at their Talk button; in the story start a person who is not the current step only barks the first line as the party passes. Zanze and Manfred join in where they are in the party.

IMSA IMPL

Rooms upstairs, bread at sundown.

Boots off my tables.

Zanze (only with Zanze and Manfred): "You heard her, Manfred. Boots off the tables."

MANFRED

That was one boot. Once. I was reaching for a shelf.

HESUK IMPL

Finest camels this side of the sand.

Not for sale this month.

MEDJIRA IMPL

Brass, gears, hinges, buckles. If it turns, I sell it.

Manfred (only with Manfred): "Half my workshop came from this stall. The other half came back to it, slightly melted."

MEDJIRA

Ember powder too, for a blade that should bite. One gold a pouch.

- **Medjira** IMPL, at her trade window (Ember Powder): "Rub it into the edge. Mind your sleeves." / "Come back with gold, traveller."

SENNA IMPL

Mind the smell. The good leather is downwind.

ZANZE (ONLY WITH ZANZE)
Be kind to the leather. Vellum is only hide that learned to read.

BAKHU IMPL
Warehouse is closed to the public.

Unless the public carries sacks.

Zanze (only with Zanze and Manfred): "Manfred. You are not carrying a sack just to see inside."

MANFRED
I wasn't going to. I was going to measure the door.

KHARU IMPL
Forge is hot. Stand where I can see you.

Manfred (only with Manfred): "Your bellows leak on the down-stroke. Third board from the left. I could fix that in an hour." **Zanze** (only with Zanze and Manfred): "Later. He said stand where he can see you. Not inside his bellows."

RUHET IMPL
Harbour watch. Keep your knives sheathed and your boats tied.

WESIR IMPL
The temple is old, and so am I. Speak slowly.

ZANZE (ONLY WITH ZANZE)
I hear the temple keeps old books too. One day I'd like to read them. Slowly.

TEFI IMPL
Water. Then questions.

BARKS: QUIPS, FIGHT LINES AND THE PARTY KIT

STALVAN AT THE BAZAAR STALLS (TALKING HEADS, ONCE EACH)

STALVAN IMPL
Do these mummies get up?

BAZAAR SELLER
Not at that price.

STALVAN
Good. The last ones did.

ZANZE (ONLY WITH ZANZE)
Stalvan. Not in front of the merchandise.

STALVAN IMPL
Spices! Ipu put the red one in the honey bread once. Only once.

Same pots as when I was small. Good.

Rugs! I slept on a rug like that for a whole summer. Then the man wanted money.

THE MUMMY THREAD FIGHT (TALKING HEADS, ONE AT A TIME)

STALVAN IMPL *after the second wave, only with Stalvan*
They keep getting up!

VELLA IMPL *after the fourth wave*
The guard is waking. Something big.

VELLA IMPL *the Warden rises*
The keeper of the gate. The thread is on him.

STALVAN IMPL *the Warden rises, at 5 gold*
He's wearing our five gold.

STALVAN IMPL *the Warden rises, after a different bargain*
He's wearing our pay.

MANFRED IMPL *the Warden rises, only with Manfred*
Big one. I have a big answer.

VELLA IMPL *the Warden at two thirds*
More sleepers! Keep them off me!

ZANZE IMPL *the Warden at two thirds, only with Zanze*
They won't touch you. Stay at my back.

STALVAN IMPL *the Warden at one third, only with Stalvan*
Lie down already!

THE MUMMY THREAD RETRY (AFTER A WIPE)

VELLA IMPL
Again. This time we're ready.

STALVAN IMPL *only with Stalvan*
Hetsa nebu, uneh!

THE CAR FIGHT (TALKING HEADS, EACH ONCE PER DRIVE)

MANFRED IMPL *the first strike on the car*
That was a wheel. We have three. That's still most of them.

MANFRED IMPL *the gun overheats the first time*
Let it cool! It's mostly wood and hope!

VELLA IMPL *her first bolt*
Library first. Questions later. Lightning now.

STALVAN IMPL *a bomb breaks a rider*
He'll walk. Walking is healthy.

THE PARTY KIT (ABOUT ONE CAST IN THREE)

MANFRED IMPL *Frag Grenade*
Fire in the hole!

ZANZE IMPL *Oathlight*
I have you.

ZANZE IMPL *Shield Call*
Behind me!

MYSTERY THREADS PLANTED IN CHAPTER 4

Thread	Where	Open question
The ochre sashes	Imsa's rumour, Tefi's news, the warehouse, the riders on the road	Who are they, and what fire are they stocking fuel for?
Zanze's folded page	Tefi's news	What does the Keeper's message say?
The library under siege	Tefi: forty or fifty men, a bronze inner door, water for three days	Can the party reach her in time?
The signals in the reeds	Ruhet's talk	Who signals to ships that don't want to come in?
The sleeper on Sabu's bier	Henut, the hand-in	Who else is digging up the old dead, and for whom?

THE END

Sources: the sound-manager DB (lines, stale = 0, scenes 9–15; read-only) and the game's data (data/demo/meneferu_story.json beats, talks, line_sets, side_quests, leads; data/demo/meneferu_quips.json; data/combat/demo_combat.json; data/vehicles/drive_fight_1.json; data/ui/dev_jumps.json "Meneferu story") for every IMPL *line; assets/audio/voice/voice_manifest.json (every* IMPL *line has a voice file); docs/plan/ch4_ch5_story.md (4.1 and 5.2) for* DOC*; docs/plan/meneferu/manfred_story_plan.md, zm_talk_1.md, arrival_leads_plan.md and queue.md (E2E-MEN-1, DRIVE-FIGHT-1, MQ-WIPE-1, MQ-RETRY-1, MQ-BARKS-1, MEN-SAVE-PAR-1) for the built state. Images: references/concept/meneferu/, references/concept/mummy_quest_1/, wiki/_images/manfred_car/.*

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