A Guide to EvilTalesCreator

EvilTalesCreator, that from here on we'll call **ETC**, is a software written by Matteo Poropat and was created as a tool for story creators for the **Tales of Evil** tabletop game.

Guide Index

Before we start: installing ETC

To install the **Tales of Evil** story editor you will have to go to the official website http://www.talesofevil.com/toecreator and dolwnload the version of the software for your operating system (Microsoft Windows 32bit, Microsoft Windows 64bit, mac OS).

Installing ETC on a Windows system

- Is very easy, all you have to do is double-click on the executable file and follow the instruction on your screen

Installing ETC on a macOS system

- Click on the downloade file to mount the image
- after a few moments, a window will pop up showing the contents of the image
- double click on the icon to start the installation process. OS X 10.8 and later require a few extra steps that we'll see later
- wait for a few seconds for the installer to start
- follow the installation wizard step by step

### If your system is OS X 10.8 or later

Starting with this version the operating system includes a feature known as Gatekeeper that blocks the opening of files deemed not secure, e.g. downloaded from the web. Instead of double-clicking, to start the installer use Control+Click (o right click) then select Open. A dialogue window will pop up to warn you the file was downloaded from the web and is not secure. Confirm you want to open the file. Click Open and start the Installer.
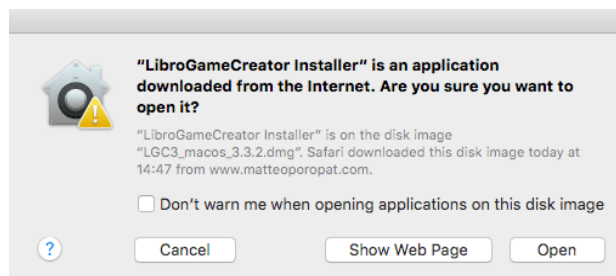
Installing the Tales of Evil special fonts

To allow for an easy insertion of the typical **Tales of Evil** game icon in the text, the ETC editor features a customizable icon bar and a special font, for when you'll go and export your story in the game format. These font are automatically installed in most cases, if you are running a Microsoft Windows system, but could be skipped on some macOS systems.
If at the start of the software you do not see the icons bar but an orange triangle like in the image below, you will have to manually install the fonts.
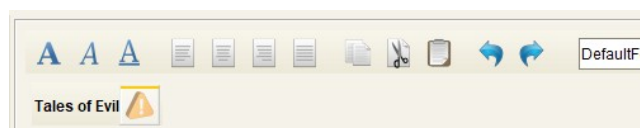
By clicking on the icon a window will open, where you will find the file containing the font

sources. You only need to install that on your system, and restart the program.

CAUTION: if for any reason you need to manually install on Windows, you'll need to right-click on the file and select "Install for all users".

Restarting the program you will find the complete bar with the icons organized by category. Hovering with the mouse on top of each icon you will see its name and the key pair you need to press to quick-insert it as you type.

Let's start! A quick guide to writing

Before we get into the details of the software, that you will need to read to understand in full the features of ETC, let's try and write a game chapter.

Start the program.

Click on the **New** icon (or from the menu, **File > New**). ETC will show you an empty file with a Chapter 1 ready to be written in!

Start writing the text of the chapter. Here starts your Adventure...
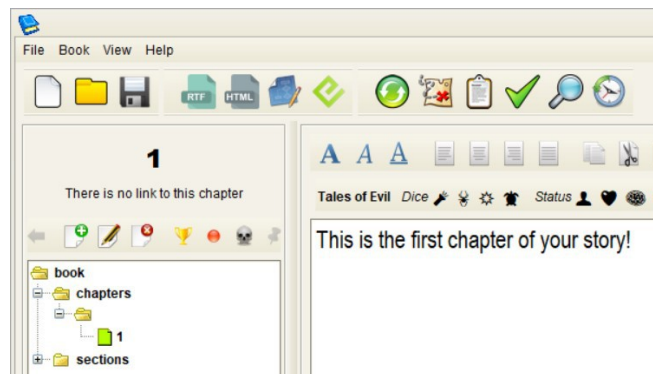
Would you like to insert a gaming trait test and you need a Tales of Evil icon? Use the keyboard shortcut, and there you are. For instance, by pressing ALT + 8 you will insert the "scare" icon ☻.
The shortcuts are revealed by hovering with the mouse over the icon bar.

Would you like to insert a new chapter? Press F5, or use the right mouse button, and open the menu:
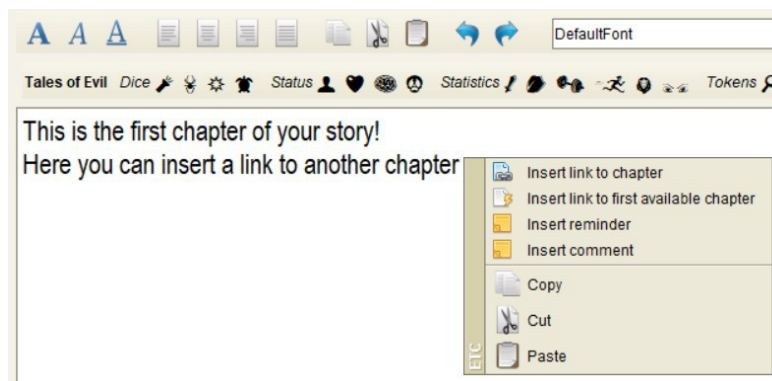

If you would insert a call back to an existing chapter instead, you only need to open a square bracket **[**, type in the destination chapter number, and then close the bracket **]**.
For instance, "Go to [3]".

To navigate through the text callbacks you can click on the links to the other chapters, that are highlighted in orange.
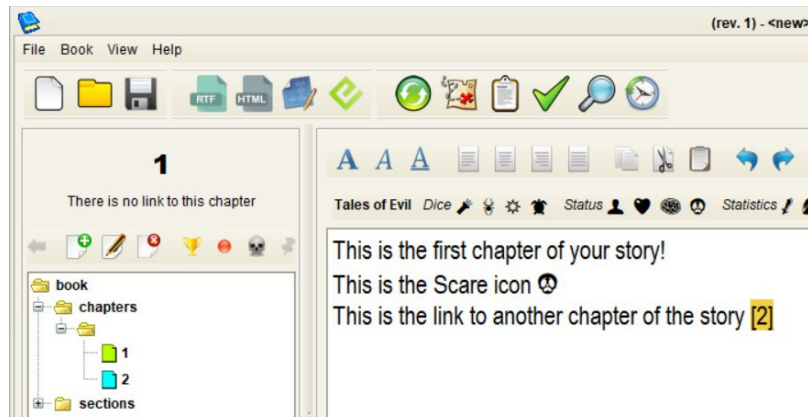
If you want to insert a chapter with a title (which will be visible in the tree on the left and in the story book when you export it to print it) you can add it using the + icon, in the chapter tree on the left. The following window will open:
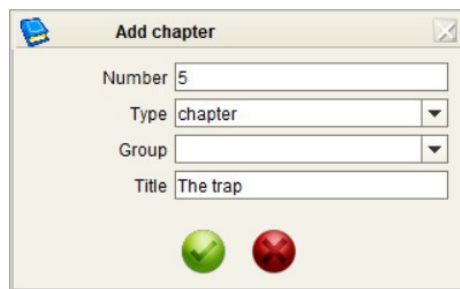
To obtain the same result you can insert the chapters as seen above (using the function key F5) and then click on the chapter in the tree on the left and use the F2 key, insert the chapter title and press ENTER.
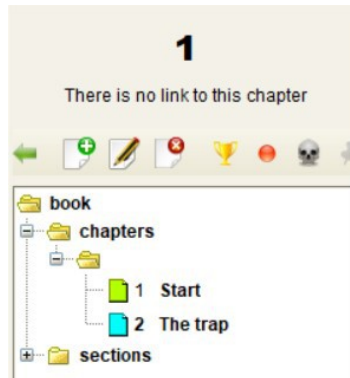
When you wish to export the book in a printable format, you need to select the **Export in RTF Format** (or from the menu **Book** > **Export** > **Export in RTF format**).

1 - Start

This is the first chapter of your story!

This is the Scare icon ☠

This is the link to another chapter of the story **2**

2 - The trap

This is the second chapter of the story...

The text already has the active links, in Microsoft Word and Open Office it is possible to navigate the book by pressing the CTRL key and clicking on the link.

Getting deeper in: chapters and groups

In writing an interactive adventure to play with **Tales of Evil**, there are two fundamental components: the descriptions and the choices. The narrator, having reached the end of a section of the game, is placed in front of one or more options. Choosing between these, you will find yourself reading new sections of the text, containing choices in turn and so on, until you reach one of the book's endings.
These sections of the book are called game chapters.

Each chapter is defined by three sets:
- the text portions (including images and icons)
- outgoing links, to other chapters
- incoming links, from other chapters.

The insertion and modification of text takes place as in any word processor, with the ability to delete, insert, copy, paste and change the formatting styles.
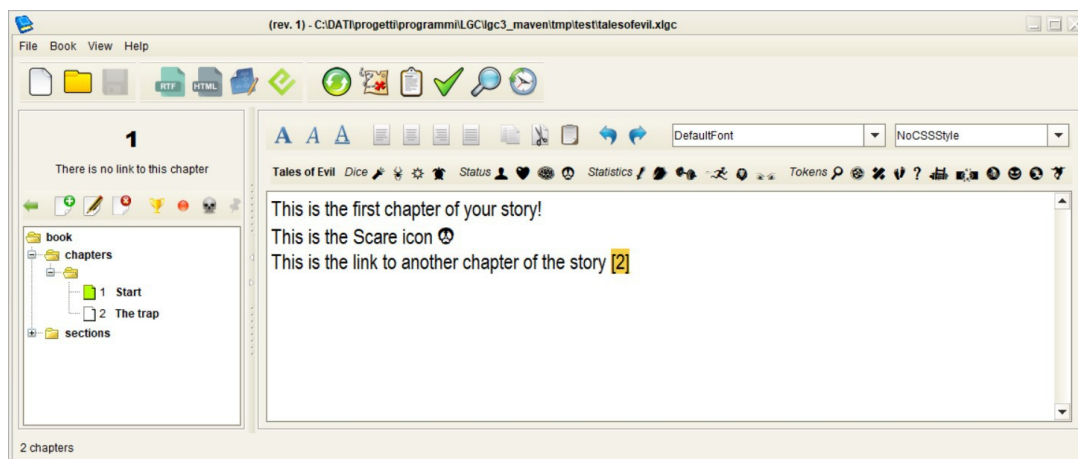
The image shows the chapter tree on the left, the icons for managing chapters and, on the right, the text editor.

Chapters are inserted:
- right-clicking on the chapters tree and choosing **New**
- using the **New** icon above the chapter tree
- clicking on a link between chapters aimed at a not-yet-created chapter

Still using the right button or the icons above **the chapter tree**, you can change a chapter or delete it permanently (an operation that cannot be undone).

Once they are added added, the chapters are displayed in **the chapter tree**, which brings together the elements that make up the narrative, each of these is represented by an icon, a number and a text (the title of the chapter).
The icons come in three colors:
- **blue**: marks an empty chapter, containing no text
- **orange**: marks a chapter in which the text contains one or more notes
- **green**: marks the chapter currently open in the editor

Chapter groups
In ETC it is possible to group chapters by simply editing one and entering a non-empty value in the

Group field of the edit window. Groups can represent different parts of the book, such as chapters, sections or even areas of the story, time or geography.
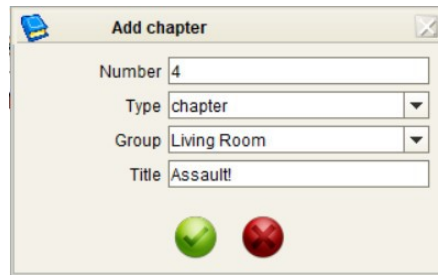
The creation of chapter 4 belonging to the "Living room" group

Once a group has been created, chapters can be added or deleted by dragging them into or out of the group folder using the mouse on the chapter tree.
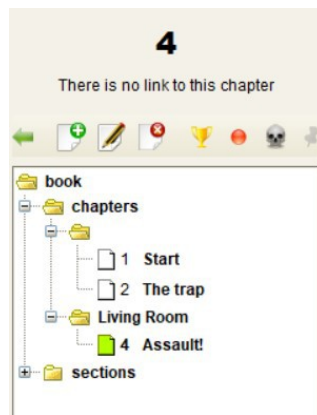
As you will see below, when exporting the game graph, groups are indicated as colored boxes, containing all the chapters that are part of it.

Outline of a fairly complex adventure

Links between chapters

The links, or callbacks, must be specified within the text, so that at the time of export they can be transformed into the desired format.

How to insert a link

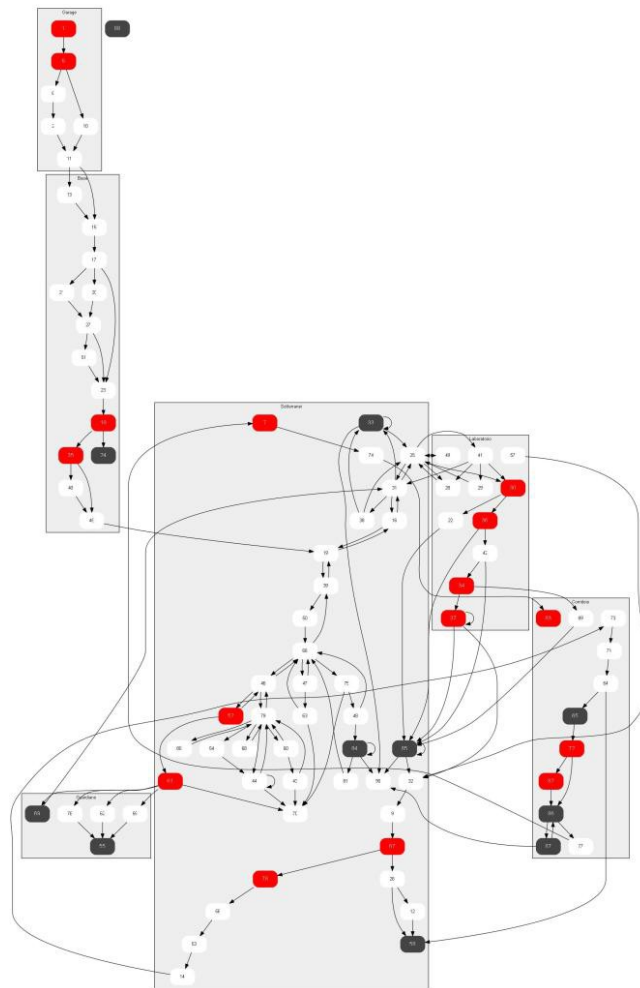To insert a link to a new chapter it is not necessary to manually write the entire link tag, but you can use keyboard or mouse shortcuts:

function key F5
– inserts in the text a complete link (e.g. **[102]**)
– creates a new chapter (in this example, number 102)
– moves the cursor past the link, allowing us to continue writing

function key F2
– inserts in the text a link in the firm of **[]**, and we will therefore need to fill in the number of the chapter to which it leads, inserting for instance **[56]**.

mouse right-click
– we can also insert a link by clicking on the right mouse button and selecting "insert a link to a new chapter" from the menu.

By clicking on the links in the text, the relevant chapter is loaded. If the chapter does not yet exist,

an empty one is created and you can start writing it.

Chapter attributes

Each chapter is composed of the text and some attributes, used in various ways within the program. These attributes are the **title** (which will be printed together with the chapter number in the storybook when exporting it) and three **flags** (so called as they can only take two values, true or false, used in chapter shuffling and displaying of the game graph).

Title

By moving the mouse on the chapter tree, on the number of a chapter and using the **F2** key, or by right-clicking and choosing **Edit** from the menu, it is possible to give each chapter its own title. This is useful in various ways: for example, it allows you to visually recognize a certain game situation, but the most important aspect is that the title is used together with the chapter number in the export of the story.

Flag

There are three chapter attributes:

ending – the adventure ends in a positive way, this chapter describes the end of the game (or one of the possible ends);

death – the adventure ends negatively, this chapter describes the defeat of one of the characters or the whole group, and the end of the game;

fixed – a fundamental hub of the story, that is not subject to the "shuffle". For instance the first numbered chapter of the book, or a numbered chapter that is the solution of a number-based riddle.

These attributes are set by the buttons above the chapter tree, on the left, or via the drop-down menu after right-clicking on the chapter tree. Their status is visible when exporting the game graph and in the map, within the single chapter box.
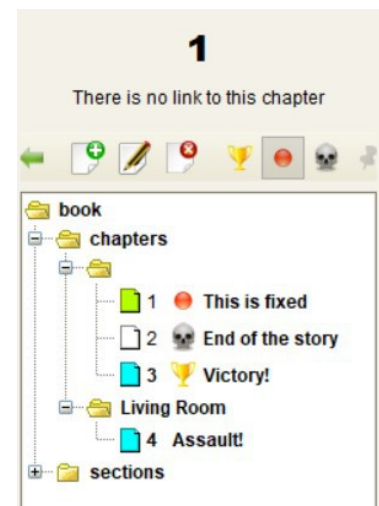
Notes

It often happens that you have to write, together with your text, reference notes, to remember corrections to be made or to write down codes or solutions to the proposed puzzles, which will be eliminated during the export phase.

Born as a reminder of things to do, for similarity to what is used for example in programming languages, the notes are inserted using the following notation:

{todo text of the note}

The most important thing is to remember that when exporting your book, whether in an RTF file or an HTML file, all notes are omitted.

You can view and save the list of notes entered in a text file by choosing the *List of notes* option from the **View** menu or the icon of the same name in the toolbar.

The writer's toolbox

Like any text editor, ETC provides the basic tools for writing text and exporting it to the most convenient formats. Alongside the most common features (text search, file backup), others dedicated exclusively to interactive writing have been developed, such as structure validation and reading history.

Chapters "shuffle"

One of the problems of interactive writing on paper is finding oneself with game chapters linked together by a reference and neighbors on the page. The writer does not want the reader to see the effects of his own choice and if this is written a few lines later it is impossible to think that one does not go and peek. In a text written for a digital device, which will display a single chapter at a time, these problems will not have to be addressed.

To remedy the excessive proximity or proximity between chapters linked by a choice, the function known as **shuffle** is used. Over time the shuffle has evolved to meet writers' requests, and ETC offers three variations.

Clicking on the shuffle icon opens a window showing three blocks, the first of which is already occupied by the chapters of the story.
The following mixing forms can be chosen:

Shuffle the whole bok: all the **non-fixed** chapters of the entire book are mixed together. It is the most common shuffling method used by interactive story writers. The fixed chapters, we remind you, are those to which the "fixed" attribute has been attached by pressing the button with the ● icon over the chapter tree.

Shuffle a block of chapters: all the chapters that belong to the set selected by the user are mixed together. This is a useful expedient, for instance, in the case of a book divided into chapters, where from 1 to 200 there is a certain narration, from 201 to 400 the next part of the story and so on. If the writer wants the *shuffle* to be done "in chapters" he can take advantage of this possibility.

Shuffle between two blocks of chapters: all the chapters of the set A are mixed with the ones of the set B.

Shuffle a block of chapters in the whole of the book: a certain set of chapters is mixed with the rest of the book.

As previously mentioned, the chapters marked by the "fixed" attribute (which can be set from the interface using the icon with the red dot) are not subject to shuffling.

Validation

The validation of the game book allows you to verify the correctness of the references, to avoid problems of text consistency. The validation of the game book is started from the button in the main bar or from the Book menu.

The system will mark as errors, with three different levels of gravity, the chapters that are:
- **empty**;

- **orphans**, that is, without an incoming link. This can be due to a riddle not correctly linked, or a missing link;
- **widows**, without outgoing links to other chapters. The system verifies the possible attributes causing this, as to say the flag **finale** (the chapter closes a branch of the narration in a positive way) or **lethal** (the chapter closes one of the branches of the narration in a negative way), that we saw in a preceding chapter of this guide;
- containing links to non-existent chapters.

By clicking on a row of the results table, the editor will move to the chapter relating to the error.

paragrafo	descrizione
	Verifica del libro X
1	Non ci sono link in ingresso verso il paragrafo.
4	Nel testo c'è un link a un paragrafo inesistente. [7]
5	Il testo è vuoto.
6	Non è un paragrafo finale e non ha link in uscita.
6	Non ci sono link in ingresso verso il paragrafo.

Note: chapter 1 is usually where the story begins and is indicated as incorrect as there are no inbound links. This is because the story could actually start in different chapters, based for example on a table in the rules. To avoid seeing this false positive among the validation results, just insert a callback to the initial chapter in a section (such as Rules or Introduction).

Reading history

The Game History is a tool created for the need to automatically "record" the path taken while reading. When you want to use it, to save a reading sequence for a test, you open the panel using the key in the top bar or the CTRL + H keys. The list of what has been read up to that point will appear in the section on the right. The reading list can be reset with the X key at the bottom right, while it can be saved to file with the left key. You can also edit it, writing directly next to the chapters, to take notes while reading / testing the book.

Backup

ETC saves two different kinds of backup copies while writing:

- **automatic backup**: it is carried out every 5 minutes (starting from the last saving, automatic or manual, and only if the file has been changed in the meantime), in a file whose name is equal to that of the open file preceded by a tilde symbol (~)
- **rotation and manual backup**: when you save the file, the previous version is numbered progressively and saved separately, in a file that will have the name of the original with the extension .bak1, .bak2, ... The last five versions of the text are saved.

Sections

The **Sections** are parts of text that make up the interactive book even though they are not game chapters. They can be created, modified and deleted as chapters and how they are defined by a name (an alphanumeric identifier such as "rules") and a possible title (for example "Game Rules"). When exporting the file, priority will be given to the title and only in the absence of this will the name be used. With the **Sections** you have the opportunity to introduce texts such as the introduction and the epilogue, the rules, the colophon, thanks and so on, sections that we find in every book.

To add a section, right-click on the tree and select **New** (or click on the **New** icon above the chapter tree), then select the **Section** type and enter at least the name field.

Structure

It is used to manage the export of the **Sections** of the story together with the game chapters. Selecting the **Structure** item from the **Book** menu opens the window of the same name. On the left is shown a list of all the **Sections** inserted in the text, including the standard one of the **Game chapters**. On the right is the current **Index** of the book, consisting of the **Sections** that will be part of the text in exports. The **Sections** can be moved between the two sets with a simple drag & drop, and rearranged in the same way (it is possible to select more than one using the usual CTRL + mouse click or select them all with the shortcut CTRL + A).

Information

In the information window, accessible from the **Book** menu, you can enter the author's name, the title of the story and any version of it. It also shows the number of characters and the count of words in the text (chapter numbers are also counted).

Game maps

ETC comes with an official **Tales of Evil** map manager, which allows you to link written text to the tiles into which an adventure is divided.
To open the map manager, click on the map icon in the top bar, after creating a new project.
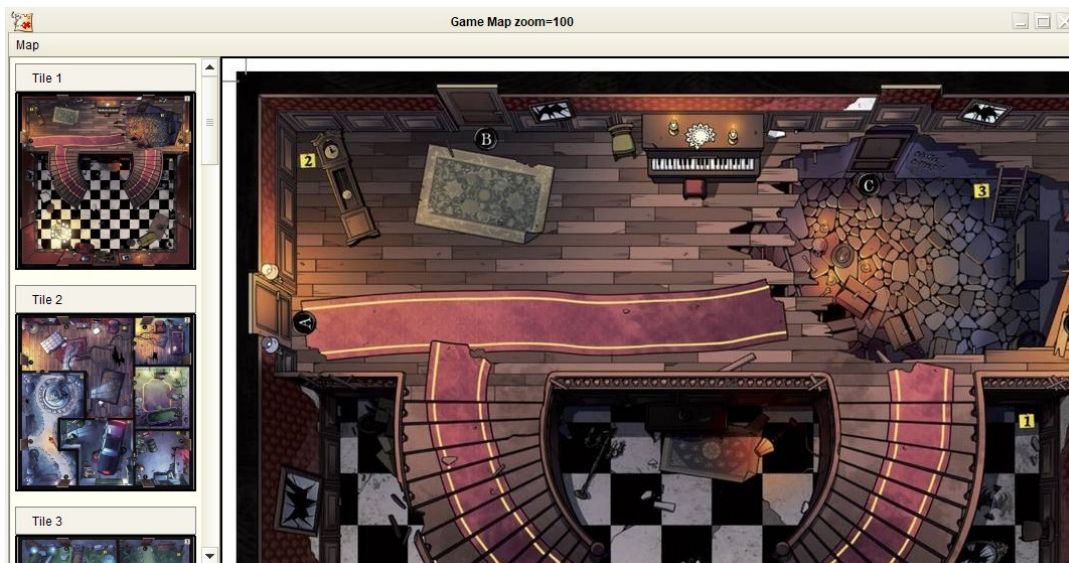
In the window that opens, on the left you can select one of the twelve official tiles of the game, on the right you can view it, enlarge it and, using the right button, add the link to one of the chapters of the adventure you are writing.
In this way it will be possible from the map, by clicking on the box with the chapter number, to return to the text editor. From the editor, by clicking the icon, the map will open and you will be transferred on the tile containing the chapter.
To remove a link from the map, right-click on the box and select **Remove** from the drop-down menu.