

## ZODIAC QUEST

*According to the calendar, you haven't been on a good trip in ages.*

Andromeda, Princess of Ethiopia, was unhappy again, as no one had completed a quest for her during the past several months. The fact that she was now a constellation should only have made her more popular. But Perseus was working two jobs, and the kids had her feeling like she was chained to a rock. She implored her parents to find someone to help.

For her daughter's peace of mind, and her own, Andromeda's mother, Cassiopeia, speaks to you:

"Gentle servant, thank you for the quest you are about to undertake. Not that you had a choice. As we are new to the neighborhood, we wish to do something nice for our neighbors, the Zodiacs (Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces – you've heard of them?). While we watch from up here, **you will travel throughout the Land to construct monuments to any 10 out of the 12 Zodiacs** – we like round numbers here, and really, constructing all 12 would look like we are trying too hard. Your task should be made somewhat easier in that the Land is rich with Magic, which will help you achieve success. Some things to note (though these are mostly common sense – things should work pretty much as you would expect them to):

(1) We have given you a map, showing the various Regions of the Land. You travel from Region to Region through Portals. The number on a Portal is the number of Coins you must pay (each time) to travel through it – **except that if you have a gem with you, you may travel through any 3-Coin Portal for a cost of only 1 Coin**. In all cases, any companions or inventory you may have with you may pass through a Portal with you for no additional charge. You must start and finish your Quest in the Region at the upper left corner of the map. All of the spoken or written information in the Land is true, whether or not you encounter it (and, indeed, the Land is a big place -- there will surely be people, places, and things you will not encounter during your Quest).

(2) Throughout the Land, Magic works to create Things and Strings. A Thing is pretty much any person, place, or, well, thing. (To be technical about it, a Thing is anything identified as a noun in the abridged dictionary at <http://www.merriam-webster.com>, but a successful Quest will not involve any uncommon Things, so you should never actually need to consult that reference.) A String is simply a physical sequence of letters, though if Magic ever creates something that could either be a String or a Thing, it will become the Thing. For example, if you have the String DOGZ and can use Magic to remove the last letter, you will create a Thing – a dog – and not merely the String DOG (and the original entity the Magic acted on – here the String DOGZ – will no longer exist). Magic works to create Things (and sometimes Strings) as specified by people you may encounter, but you yourself have no independent way to create, combine, or destroy entities, letters, or sequences of letters. Importantly, **for purposes of Magic, entities have only the names or categories they are expressly identified as within the Land**. Thus, if an entity is identified somewhere as "a fruit that you determine to be an apple," Magic can operate on it either as a FRUIT or an APPLE, but if it is identified only as a fruit, then Magic cannot operate on it as an APPLE, and if it is identified only as an apple, then Magic cannot operate on it as a FRUIT (even though you might know it to necessarily be one). Similarly, if you encounter "a pair of galoshes, with a tag reading

‘For Harold Grix,’ that are waterproof barriers,” then Magic can operate on PAIR, GALOSHES, TAG, BARRIERS, or the Strings FOR, HAROLD, and/or GRIX, but not (for example) on FOOTWEAR or NAME. And, of course, once an object is transformed, it no longer exists in its original state. If you have two or more of a type of item, Magic can work on them together as a plural Thing. Thus, if you have an APPLE and acquire another APPLE, Magic can work on them together as APPLES (though not as a PAIR, unless they have been expressly identified as such), or if you have APPLES, Magic can work on one of them by itself as an APPLE. And, as you will see, sometimes a particular Magic will work on anything, sometimes only on Things or Strings, and sometimes only on Things, and this will always be clearly specified. Also, as you may hear during your travels, despite the general principles I just noted, Magic will not work on any Coin or on any wand. But really, I have gone on too long, in case you are one of those folks who likes specifics. Basically, **use your common sense as to how things likely work and you should be fine.**

(3) But ah, creating monuments. Whenever you encounter a Thing that is one of the Zodiacs, it will immediately transform into a monument bearing his or her name, right there in the Region in which you encountered it. For example, if you were to find a LEI (but you won’t), and could find a source of Magic to change its last letter to an O, it would become LEO – one of the Zodiacs – and immediately transform in your presence into a monument to him. Be careful, though, because any particular Region can only contain a single monument. If you are in a Region that already has a monument to one of the Zodiacs and you encounter a different one of the Zodiacs there, that second Zodiac will simply vanish without becoming a monument. That will never be useful.

(4) Finally, people are used to Magic changing all manner of people, places, and things in the Land, and will not act negatively toward, or seek to prevent, any of your actions or requests in that regard. You are on a Quest, after all, so do what you need to do (though you cannot break specified rules or avoid required payments -- you don’t want to hear about the penalty for doing so). Beyond that, denizens of the Land generally leave well enough alone; **if you decide to leave or set down something in a Region, it will remain there if you come back for it later** (unless you are informed otherwise). Alternatively, of course, if you take or change something in a Region, the original item will not be there if you return.

Now off! Andromeda is waiting. Go create monuments to any 10 out of the 12 Zodiacs. We’ll be watching from above. *Ad astra per aspera!*”

Map in hand, you embark.

*NOTE: Arrange the following Map pages (in order) as follows, lining up Regions and portals so that each portal connects exactly two Regions:*

1 2

3 4

### YE OLD HOME TOWN

You begin your Quest here, with a stake of 15 coins and nothing more. You must return here when your Quest is done, else the Portals will dissolve and trap you in the Land forever. Remember, you must also pay the Portal costs in Coins, and if and when you have a gem with you the cost of any 3-Coin Portal is reduced to 1 Coin. Once you return here after successfully creating monuments to 10 out of the 12 Zodiacs, regale the townsfolk with stories of your travels.

### TRANSITION MEADOW

When you enter this Region, everything you are carrying (except Coins, if any) immediately vanishes. No need to be burdened with anything distracting or irrelevant on your way in or out.

### OPEN ZONE

A figure meets you as soon as you step through the Portal. "I am the Phrontiersman. I use Magic to phonetically change whatever you'd like into a Thing by adding or changing a single sound at the front. For example, I can transform an OCEAN into a POTION or a BOSS into a SAUCE. (I never just add or change a single letter while leaving the rest of the letters intact – that would be a bit boring.) For 1 coin, I will perform one of this type of transformation here and afterward give you, as a free bonus, a single-charge wand that will perform one of this type of transformation a single time wherever in the Land you'd like."

### TRANSITION GLEN

When you enter this Region, everything you are carrying (except Coins, if any) immediately vanishes. No need to be burdened with anything distracting or irrelevant on your way in or out.

### GARDENS OF IVES

You meet a distinguished fellow in a pinstripe suit. "I am the Banker of Letters. If you direct my attention to something that does not use any letter twice, I will use Magic to transform it into a Thing that uses all of its letters, but no others, as many times as you like, as long as each letter is used at least once and at least two letters are used at least twice. Thus, I can make a STAIR into a SATIRIST, but I cannot do that with STAIRS because not all of its letters are different (two S's). I will do this transformation one time only, for 2 Coins."

### MOUNTAIN HEIGHTS

"I am Zeerox, the Duplicator. I will take anything and use Magic to create a perfect duplicate of it, with such identical features, qualities, and history as the original (at the time of the duplication) such that no examination or experiment could determine which was the original. Thus, I can duplicate a MOUSE so that you have a MOUSE and another MOUSE, or taken together you have MICE. You want a card trick? I'll take a CARD with the String ALAKAZAM on it and – Alakazam! – you will have two and won't be able to determine which was the original. My power does have limitations, though, in that, unlike all other Magic in the Land, it does not work on plurals. For example, while I can duplicate a single MOUSE as many times as you'd like, I cannot in a single transformation duplicate MICE (more than one) into twice as many MICE. My power is also unable to duplicate any Coin or any wand – indeed, no Magic in the Land will work on any Coin or on any wand. I will perform up to 4 duplications for you, at a cost of 1 Coin each, but I will not duplicate myself (that's too much like wishing for more wishes!)."

[\*\*\*FOR CLARITY -- this Region connects to  
LOST WOODS OF BALFOUR to the southeast by a 3-Coin Portal]

### MAMMOTH REEF COVE

You have arrived at the Diner, which displays a menu (shown here, fixed firmly in place and itself immune from Magic) of items you may purchase, and their cost. If you would like to take menu items out of the Diner, you will need to carry them in one or more to-go boxes – each to-go box costs 2 Coins and can hold up to 2 menu items. During your first visit to the Diner, if you buy anything, then for a 1 Coin tip the waitress will use Magic (once only) to transform something at your request, whether or not bought at the Diner, into a Thing by removing its first letter -- for example, she might transform a COAT into an OAT.

#### MENU

Burger ... 2 Coins  
Cornmeal ... 3 Coins  
Fries ... 2 Coins  
Oleo ... 1 Coin  
Pita ... 2 Coins  
Spices ... 3 Coins  
Tahini ... 1 Coin  
Toast ... 3 Coins

3

2

### NORTHINGTON EAST

The first time you enter this Region, you are quickly met by an official calling out "Share the wealth!" If you entered this Region with fewer than 15 Coins, he invites you to now take Coins out of his basket to bring the total Coins you now have to 15.

Then, in what appears to be a public park you hear music coming from behind a bandshell and, sure enough, you encounter a band. Says the Bandleader: "I hope you like our music, though our group does take some getting used to, as we play one guitar, one piccolo, and one vibraphone. We are accompanied by the chorus you see here, consisting of a bass, tenor, alto, and soprano. Nor do we ignore your sense of vision, as you can see by our dancer, Salome. But we do grow weary – if you'd like, any one or more of the people here will accompany you throughout the Land for 3 Coins each, and/or you may buy one or more of our instruments for 1 Coin each, with all payments to be made into our coffers here."

2

As you say goodbye, the bandleader belatedly informs you that "music isn't free!" and requires you to pay a fee of 2 Coins for each person (including yourself) who was part of your group when you entered this Region. (If you enter this Region more than once, this fee must be paid each time.)

3

3

2

### PINELANDS OF OUR GODDESS

You run into a creaky fellow. "I am the Woodsman. I will chop any Thing into 2 or 3 pieces of equal letter length, with each piece either being a Thing (if it is one) or a piece consisting of a resulting String (if those letters do not represent a Thing). Thus, I can chop a PARALEGAL into PAR, ALE, and GAL, or a STOCKING into a piece consisting of the String STOC (since STOC is not a Thing) and a KING, or even a KERCHIEF into pieces consisting of the Strings KERC and HIEF (if for some reason you wanted to do that). I can operate on plurals as a single Thing, and thus can chop EYESORES into EYES and ORES. (In the Land, the plural of a type of Thing, if you take at least 2 instances of such types of Things together, is itself a plural Thing that Magic can operate on, unless otherwise specified.) I charge 1 Coin to chop a Thing into 2 pieces, and 2 Coins to chop a Thing into 3 pieces. I will gladly chop up 1 or 2 Things for you, but you caught me in a bit of a hurry – once you leave this Region, I will immediately and permanently be travelling to parts unknown."

3

### ABANDONED PLAINS

A river flows through this quiet Region, and next to the river you encounter a reclusive gnome tending a garden. For 10 Coins, he will add a bigram (2-letter sequence) to the front or back of any Thing or String. That's expensive, you think to yourself, so you might well never use his services, noting that your budget is rather limited. But that's OK – there are some people, places, and other objects in the Land you won't interact with, or even encounter at all, on a successful journey, even some that might at first look useful, and you can safely ignore them for all purposes.

Maybe the gnome just wants to be left alone. Indeed, each time after the first that you enter this Region, he will immediately extract a 2 Coin penalty from you.

An apparently discarded mahogany wand lies beside the river, but you have no way of determining what, if anything, it does. You can take it if you want it.

2

### LEIGHTON PASS

You stumble upon a clearing, in which you find a scorepad with 15 sheets of red paper remaining. The first sheet of the scorepad has Runes on it. The Runes (which for Magic purposes are not letters, so do not form a String, sorry), if properly interpreted, ask the question: "What is the nut from an oak tree called?" Next to the scorepad is a red gem that on closer inspection is seen to be a ruby.

The scorepad and gem are each protected by a separate enchantment, which prevents the item from being removed to another Region. There is also, however, a Wishing Well here. For each Coin you toss irretrievably into the Wishing Well, you may wish away one of the two enchantments, after which the corresponding item will no longer be immune from removal to another Region.

2

### FOURIER PLAZA AT AMALFI VERDI

You meet a figure who appears to be pious, sage, vigorous, and magical. "I am a pious, sage, and vigorous Warlock. I can use Magic to change the first or last letter (never an internal one) of something so that it becomes a Thing. Thus, for example, I can transform a WIZARD into a LIZARD, or the String "CLOCE" into a CLOCK. I will perform one such miracle, but not more, for the low cost of 2 Coins. I will more willingly part with one of my burdensome qualities (which are Things, you know) – you may buy one (but not more) of my piousness, sagacity, or vigor for 1 Coin.

1

### STONESIDE VALLEY

A river slowly trickles through this Region. An apparently discarded hickory wand lies beside the river, but you have no way of determining what, if anything, it does. It's yours for the taking, if you want it.

2

### MOTHER-OF-OUR-EARTH REEDSWAMP

As you approach, a masked figure speaks. "I am Charade, the Master Welder. Using Magic, I can weld together two or three Things and/or Strings, as long as at least one of them is a Thing, to produce a Thing. Thus, as a weld transaction I can take a CON, a FLAG, and a RATION and make a CONFLAGRATION. I charge 2 Coins for each 2-piece weld transaction and 3 coins for each 3-piece weld transaction, plus 2 additional Coins for each weld transaction beyond the first one I perform.

3

1

3

2

### REALM OF HONESTY

You have arrived at the Library. If this is your first visit to this Region, outside the door is a sack of 15 Coins. You've no time (or inclination, really) to find the owner. Feel free to take them, if you'd like. It probably won't be the most unsavory thing you'll do while on your Quest.

Upon entering the building, you find shelves and shelves of books, each truly an opus but in a language unreadable by you, and two pleasant people. "Hi, I'm Meg, and this is my brother Theo. Each of us is a librarian, and while we don't do Magic like some other folks in these parts, we are the only people in the Land who can interpret Runes. If you present me with a question written in Runes on red paper, I will write the answer on the back in English and return it to you. If you present my brother with a question written in Runes on blue paper, he will write the answer on the back in English and return it to you. This service is free if performed inside the Library, but costs 1 Coin if performed outside the Library. Also, once you have donated 1 Coin to the Library Fund, my brother or I (whichever you prefer) will accompany you throughout the Land. If instead you have donated 5 coins, allowing us to hire a temp, both of us will. If you'd like, you may borrow one of our books for 2 Coins."

On the wall of the Library is a poster, which states: "Notes regarding all paper in the Land: 25 sheets is a Quire; 500 sheets is a Ream; With respect to any particular sheet or scrap of paper you may encounter, it can travel through at most 3 distinct portals (travel through the same portal is not counted a second time), as immediately upon its trip through a fourth distinct portal the sheet or scrap will vanish, along with anything written on it."

2

1

### VELVET WOLD

This Region features both a river and a Troll Collector. Each time you enter this Region accompanied by any person or animal, the Troll will collect a toll of 2 Coins from you. The first time you enter this Region unaccompanied by any person or animal, the Troll will instead pay you an austerity reward of 2 Coins.

1

1

1

### GLADE OF SUNNINESS

You stumble upon a meadow, in which you find a stack of 15 sheets of blank blue paper. Located to one side of the stack is a scrap of blue paper with Runes on it. The Runes (which for Magic purposes are not letters, so do not form a String, sorry), if properly interpreted, ask the question: "What island near Naples features the Blue Grotto?" Located to the other side of the stack is ... nothing. No one is watching (and you are ruthless in your Quest, so wouldn't care if anyone was), and can take any or all of the Things present here.

This Region has also been designated "Magic-free." If you have one or more wands with you when you enter this Region, they will immediately vanish.

3

1

2

2

2

1

2

3

2

2

3

*[\*\*\*FOR CLARITY -- this Region connects to MOUNTAIN HEIGHTS to the northwest by a 3-Coin Portal]*

### LOST WOODS OF BALFOUR

You meet a pair of cousins, who take turns talking.

"My cousin Margelet, here, is an internist. She uses Magic to change or remove one internal letter (never the first or last) to transform anything into a Thing. Thus, she could transform me (or the String BOICK) into a BRICK or a BOCK. She will show off this trick for free, but she will only ever do it once."

"My cousin Brock, here, is a revolutionary. He uses Magic to reverse the order of the letters of anything to make a Thing. Thus, he could transform me into a TELEGRAM. He will show off this trick for free, but he will only ever do it once."

### LONELY HILLS

Here you find a confusing young woman. "Hi, I'm Annie. As you may have guessed, I like to mix things up. I have the power to rearrange, or anagram if you will, the letters of any Thing into a different Thing. Thus, I could transform a LEGISLATOR into an ALLEGORIST. I could even provide you with an anagram that simply reverses the order of the letters of a Thing to create a different Thing, though I understand there's someone nearby who can perform that crude trick less expensively. I will perform as many transformations as you'd like. For each use of my sophisticated talents, I charge 1 Coin times the letter-length of the Thing to be transformed, so for example changing a CAT into an ACT would cost 3 Coins. And that's well throw the price (see what I did there?)."

### SOUTHINGTON EAST

At the edge of the Land you meet a woman who is overbearing and mischievous – yes, a virago and gamine rolled into one. Go figure. And ... she guards a stash of Coins! "It has been years since I have had a visitor, and I am happy to reward you with these 15 Coins (only on your first visit to this Region). I also have the power to turn any Thing into another Thing by transmogrifying vowels in and out of existence and/or into other vowels, leaving consonants intact and in order. For example, I can transform an INGOT into NOUGAT (or vice-versa), as they each have the consonant pattern of exactly NGT, in that order. (I can't handle Things with Y's, so please don't ask.) If you'd like, I will accompany you around the Land for a payment of 2 Coins each time I am about to travel through a portal, in which case I will use my vowel-transmogrifying Magic however you request. (And, to be clear, anytime you pay a Coin in the Land, you can never get that Coin back.) Alternatively, if I stay here, I could instead conjure up and sell you a wand with these vowel transmogrifying powers for 6 coins, and I will even reduce that cost by 2 Coins for each wand you "trade in" to me, regardless of its character (I recycle them, you know). Full disclosure– my powers, and the powers of the wand I could conjure up for you, will only work in a Region that has a river (of which there are three in the Land), which may or may not affect your decisions.

### WILDERNESS EVENT PAVILION

This is the Zoo Of The Land! It only has a few animals left, but oh what animals they are. Inside the Zoo is a cage containing a minotaur, a pen containing a zebra, and an aquarium containing red herrings (though you've probably encountered enough of those already during your travels). Inside the Zoo you may buy and take with you one or more animals for 3 Coins each, and/or one or more containers for animals for 3 Coins each (you do not need containers in order to buy animals, nor vice versa). To enter the Zoo and interact with anything (but not to merely pass through this Region without any interaction), you must pay an entry fee of 4 Coins. At these prices, no wonder the Zoo has so few animals left.