

Logological Labyrinth

A puzzle designed by Eric Harshbarger for his Sixth Puzzle Party (7 April 2007)

Instructions: Explore the labyrinth on the large poster and try to collect as many "gold coins" as possible. Begin in the room labeled "START HERE." You may travel back and forth from room to room down hallways unless you are blocked by gates or unless creatures in the rooms prevent you from passing. You may collect a number of coins in some rooms, and you may also pick up objects that are either shown or said to be in each room (unless the objects are secured and immobile). You may revisit rooms (though once objects are removed they are not there again). Explanations for rooms and conditions for passing through them are explained on scrolls featured on the poster (symbols for explanations on scrolls match to the rooms).

How many coins can you gather and return to the starting chamber?

The sound of hissing tells you that there might be serpents in this room, but the whole area is, in fact, empty... nothing to be taken away. Carved into the floor you see this array of letters:

M Y V P Y T H O N
A O I U M A S Y D
M I P A S P N S R
B T E R A A A C A
A T R F A D K B T
I R I E S D E O T
C O B R A E W A L
I T H F R R U I E
S E R P E N T T R

You try to figure out what it means, but the constant noise is quite distracting, especially since the creatures are no where in sight. Maybe if you look closely enough, you will find them?

Roy G. Biv, a woeful leprechaun, sits idly in the middle of this room. "O my dear fellow," he cries when he sees you, "my beautiful prismatic arch is missing! It was right here, not so long ago, arcing through the sky from the window in this room to a similar one in the south. If only you could bring it back to me. You know what I'm talking about, don't you? Help me find what I've lost, and together we can walk back and forth as if it were a bridge in the sky. It'll even lead you to a pot of twenty-five gold coins at the end. Will you help me? Otherwise, there's no way out of here 'cept the way you came."

A sprite (a type of mischievous fairy) dances in this area. She seems innocent enough, but soon you find yourself entranced by her movements. Unless you figure out a way to distract her and make her stop dancing, you will find yourself charmed by her glamour and unable to proceed farther through the labyrinth. Exactly how one distracts a sprite is a mystery... but if you can make it happen, she'll even travel with you during your adventures.

Garaman, a "game mage", inhabits this chamber. He will not block your passage to other places, nor will he travel with you. For a price he is willing to use his anagrammatic incantations. He is able to change an item into its anagram (if a rearrangement of its letters can create a different item). For example, he can change a top into a pot or a lemon into a melon. He requests 10 gold coins per spell.

A single small serpent slithers silently through this section (it must have escaped from a nearby room). Fortunately for you, it appears rather docile and harmless.

A fearsome dragon awaits in this massive chamber. Regardless of the number of weapons you may possess or companions you may have, you have no doubt that this area is impassible; one burst of the creature's fiery breath, and you will surely perish. You have always heard dragons might have a "weak spot" somewhere, but this one looks nothing but deadly, and he seems indifferent toward all attempts of bribery and flattery. Probably best to retreat.

In this chamber you find a magical Axe of Beheading. With it you may cleave an object by removing the first letter of its name; it then becomes the new object. So you could make a vessel into an easel with one swing. You may behead an object multiple times, as long as each step creates a valid object (such as making a wheel into a heel into an eel). The axe looks very sharp and should never lose its magical ability.

The cobwebs in this room are thick. Scurrying about in the darkness you see numerous large spiders. Thankfully they seem more afraid of you than you of them. You may pass through without fear.

A majestic sphinx scowls at you as you approach from the hallway. His imposing figure easily blocks your way. "My task is to guard the passage beyond, and let no one pass. So, I can think of only two choices: 1. you return from whence you came, or 2. I eat you. Unless you present me with a different option, I do not see how you can continue." Disheartened, you mumble that you always thought that sphinxes at least posed a tough riddle to visitors. At this the creature smiles slyly, "maybe I already have..."

A nasty troll will not let you pass through this room unless you pacify him with 20 gold coins or a gift. What kind of gift would a troll like? You'll know it when you find it.

You find a magic key. With it you may open any two of the gates in this dungeon. After that the key will disappear.

The only thing more frightening than the stench of death in this room is the vampire which is likely its source. There is no bargaining with the undead. The only way to pass through this room alive is to have some garlic handy... or maybe a holy relic of some sort.

Two lost and scared children are huddled in a dark corner of this room; they cry with joy when you enter. The girl introduces herself as Erin (the boy's name is Brian). They would like to join you on your quest. However, one of them should run back to the village and let the townsfolk know that they are alive. So, only one can join you. Or, if you prefer, you may go along without either one of them.

A lamp smokes lazily in this room. As you approach it a djinni materializes before you. "Oh bold adventurer! to have come this far and not perished you must be equal to the great kings of old! I will reward you appropriately. For each gold coin you possess, I will give you nine more. If you entered this room with two, you will leave with twenty; if you came with five, you will leave with fifty. How many coins have you brought?"

An ugly witch lives in this gloomy place. "Would you care to buy either of my potions? They may help you on your quest." Sure enough, the old woman has two magical elixirs she will sell you for 17 gold coins each. The first is a Potion of Transmutation: it will polymorph any one object into another object by changing exactly one letter of the object's name (for example, changing a cat into a bat, or spark into a shark). The second one is even more powerful! she cackles. It is a Potion of Merging. Pour it over a car and a pet to get a carpet, or use it on a band and a girl named Ana and get a bandana... You may buy one or both if you have enough money.

After passing under the gate you find yourself in room lit dimly by burning torches. A large book is secured to an immovable pedestal. The tome lies open, and the following code appears on the pages:

P T H O E I R U
Y T E R I E W Q
S A A S D F S G
U Y J G E E C H
C N J K R G B J
E Q T C V Z P K
L K K L A D D L
R R S I S T R Z
S S A T G N G X
E P O P O U B C
U I E Q E A S V
T L K J G C E B
W F W R C O U N
O I N E T J H M
H Q E Y O U A F
W S F G F D T O
F F S P T R
R P O H N G O U
M N C H O E M Y
I K I D A A E T
X X N L K G D R
U N U M T R E
S W H M E L L W
E D C V F R C Q
H R E U A W M A
Z M L A O U T Z
R D B L K J H X
N N G N N F E S
W S R M M U X Y
A Y T Q A Z R E
K S L K T R E
D U E I O Y R T
D J N H A O W G
D E E V I Q T B
N X S C H W F
A W S I J N D F
E M X I T E H
G V W O S U E H
O P A L K M R J

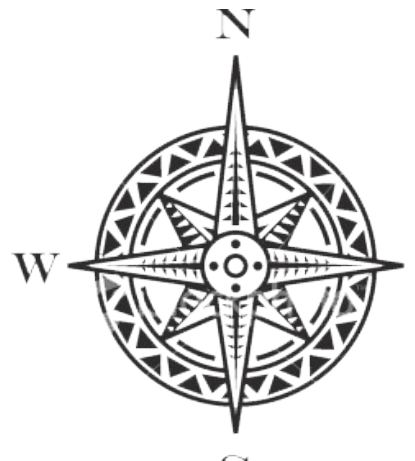
Otherwise, the book is blank, except for its title: "Numerus Primus"

A Long Descent. You cannot help but slip and slide down this treacherously steep hallway. At the bottom you find numerous coins, but, alas, without a rope or some other climbing aid, you will be stuck in this dead end!

Hanging on the wall of this room is a beautifully crafted sword; you can sense its magical ability as you unsheathe it. It is a fabulous Sword of Splitting. It has the power to cut an object in half and create two new things. For example, it can do the obvious, like splitting a watermelon into water and melon, or a butterfly into butter and a fly. In the hands of a more clever wielder it can even do such things as splitting a donkey into a don and key or even a cartridge into a cart and a ridge. The only limitation is that each half created by the split must be a valid word.

MAP LEGEND

- ||| Stairs
- Locked Gate
- Coins



Symbols in the lower right corner of scrolls indicate which room is explained.