

WISHFUL THINKING

Be careful what you wish.

Literature shows that those who try to get something for nothing through the potent magic of wishes are liable to end up not with their heart's desire, but with a sausage stuck to the end of their nose or a mangled corpse pounding on the front door. So you'll need to keep your wits about you when formulating the three wishes that will allow you to complete your quest.

Here's how it works:

Each of the twelve regular puzzles will yield two answer words, for a total answer pool of twenty-four answers (one of which is a two-word phrase, and one of which is hyphenated). These answers must be divided into three groups, the members of each of which will share a particular quality. The size of each group must be determined. **No answer will be used in more than one group, and no two answers gotten from the same puzzle will be in the same group.** Each group, if you're clever, will allow you to determine exactly what to wish for in order to traverse one of the three enchanted chambers. Do so by entering your wish in the appropriate window. Information you might find in those chambers may help you defeat your evil adversary. The incantation that accomplishes this is the final solution to this adventure, and you can send it to me at mhalpin at fuse dot net.

A few other things:

- 1) There's nothing in this Intro that relates to the puzzles beyond that which does so explicitly.
- 2) All puzzles may be printed out to solve; that is, online trickery or image manipulation is not part of any puzzle.
- 3) Specific knowledge of the literary inspiration for these puzzles is not necessary for solving. The voyages of Sinbad in particular have an inherent chronology, but that is not relevant here.
- 4) The Beggar from last year's Bazaar is not to be found here; however, he *has* left his begging bowl beneath this Introduction. If you enjoy these puzzles, and you're so inclined, you might consider throwing something in his bowl. He would really like to go to MIT in January.
- 5) Some of the puzzles may be on the challenging side. This is by design, as my original intent in creating these extravaganzas was to make something that might provide many hours of enjoyable solving. If that means leisurely solving one puzzle in an evening, say, that's perfectly in line with my intent. Every solver is encouraged to solve these as quickly or slowly, alone or in groups, as gives them most pleasure.

In adding a Leaderboard and prizes early on, I realize that I added a race component to the proceedings which is a bit at odds with my purposes, in that it adds an element of time pressure. So as an experiment this year, I'm trying something slightly different: there'll be two not-all-that-grand prizes awarded (as in previous years, gift cards for the value of nice editions of the literary source material, to be used however you want), and those will go to both the first solo or pair solvers and a solver drawn at random from anyone submitting a correct solution by September 20th. Hints and solutions will be posted at that point.

I'll be happy to provide hints at any time to anyone who doesn't care about being on the Leaderboard or winning anything. The whole point of the endeavor is that it be fun, so if there's any way I can assist in that, please let me know.

Happy Solving and Best Wishes!

Mark / Zebraboy