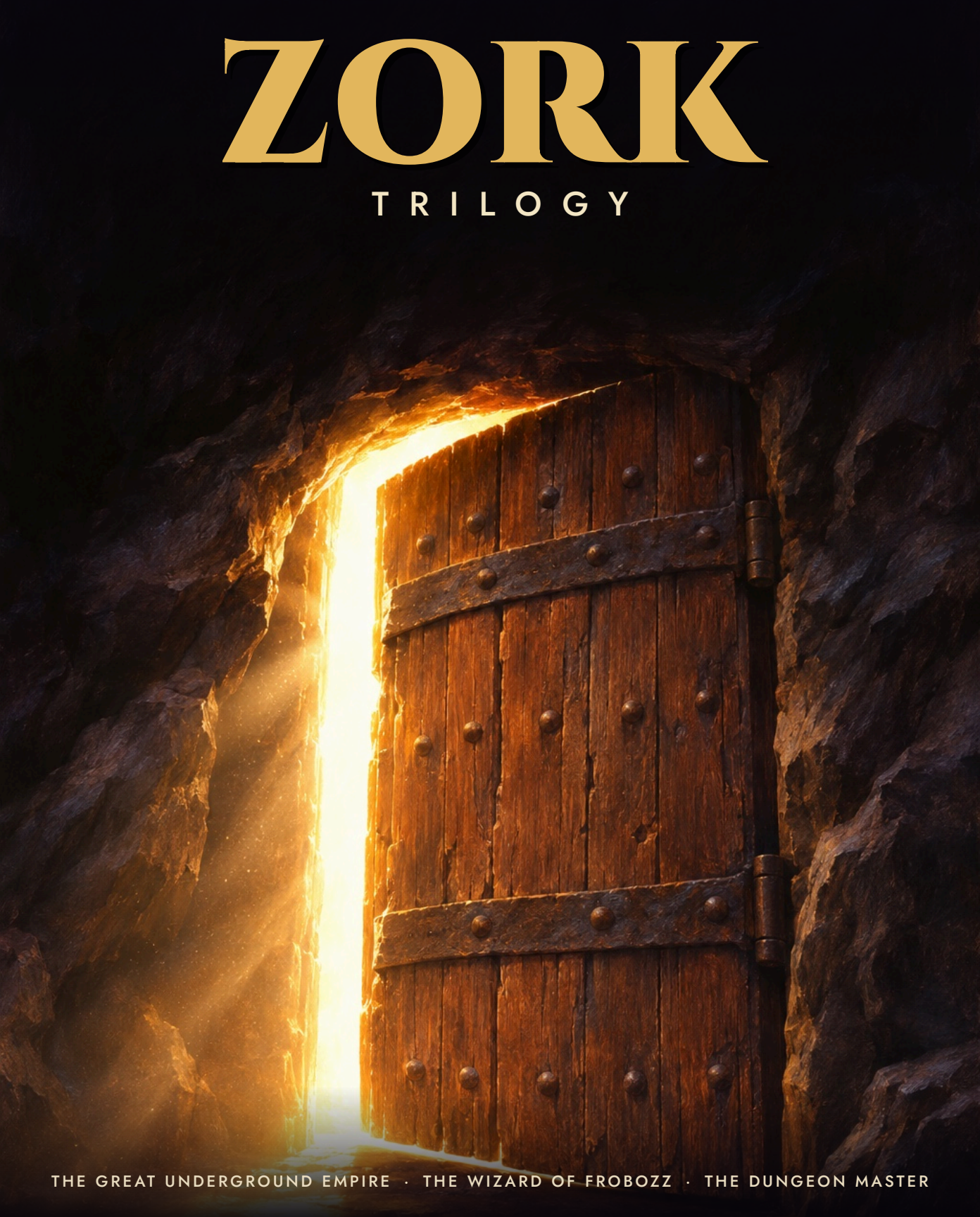
ZORK

TRILOGY



THE GREAT UNDERGROUND EMPIRE · THE WIZARD OF FROBOZZ · THE DUNGEON MASTER

The Great Underground Empire: A History

Chapter Five

by Froboz Mumbar

Frobozz Magic Book Company
Bound in genuine imitation leather in the year 896. All wrongs reserved.

CHAPTER FIVE

One Road Down

Historians have generally divided the underground of the old Empire into three kingdoms. Elsabet Thrumm, whose *Chronicle of the Kingdoms Below* appeared in 861 in three volumes (one to a kingdom, sold separately), gave each its own rulers, its own coinage and, in the third volume, its own behaviors. Her successor at the Academy of Mithicus, Fozzle Garnaby, found four, having counted the Frigid River twice. Both books are still assigned in the schools, and the error must therefore be corrected here.

The underground is one country of three regions, joined by a single road* that runs downward through all of them. The first lies beneath the forest and the white house, and its guidebook yet thanks "your omnipotent local tyrant," Lord Dimwit Flathead, for the 37 million zorkmids that built its dam. The second is reached through a stone barrow in a dark forest. Its caverns were dug by the Frobozz Magic Cave Company, whose foreman, one M. Agrippa, signed his work in the form of warning notices, and it holds the crypt of the Flatheads, where twelve somewhat flat heads stand on poles. The third lies below the crypt, at the foot of a long stair, and holds the Royal Museum, whose technological exhibits, donated by FrobozzCo president John D. Flathead, are (without exception) nonworking models.

Thrumm's mistake is understandable. Each region printed its own guidebooks, and none of them, improbably, mentions the others. Those who had seen more than one region were not available to be interviewed, the road being, so far as the records show, a road in one direction. A man who sets out at the top of the Empire may stop for some years in whichever region he likes, but he ends, sooner or later, at the bottom. Since the Fall the traffic on the road has consisted almost wholly of treasure-seekers, whom the first region regards as a nuisance and the third, as far as can be learned, does not regard at all.



The Wizard of Frobozz in his workroom, from a sketch made in 891 by a surveyor of the Royal Office of Banishments, who reported the subject "present, banished, and disinclined to sit." The three stands on the bench, of ruby, sapphire and diamond, are entered in the surveyor's inventory as one paperweight.

The Wizard of Frobozz, Doctor of Thaumaturgy of GUE Tech, was banished to the second region by Lord Dimwit in 776, after a debate that occupied most

*The word is used in its administrative sense. Under the Royal Highways Act of 701, any route the Crown had once paid for was a road, and the Act's schedule of roads includes two rivers and a rope.

of the Museum's construction. He was charged with underbidding the Frobozz Magic Cave Company for the Museum's foundations, which he had proposed to dig with a single spell. The Company's advocate showed that his diploma had been obtained by sending in a matchbook cover, and the tribunal, finding this to be the customary method, banished him on other grounds, left unrecorded. Having no guards to spare, the Royal Office of Banishments required the Wizard to write once a year confirming that he was still banished. He has done so ever since, and the Office, which survived the Fall chiefly because nobody remembered to abolish it, now holds one hundred and nineteen of his letters. His letters, by every account, begin with the letter F, and so do the spells.

The third region is kept by an old man with a staff, known in the records as the Keeper of the Dungeon and in less careful ones as its guardian. It was he who mounted the heads in the crypt, which bears the explanation that they were placed there "for amazing untastefulness." The inscription does not say whose heads they are. Witnesses agree that the Keeper is waiting for someone, and that he has been waiting a long time.

THE THREE REGIONS OF THE OLD EMPIRE

Particular	First Region	Second Region	Third Region
Entered by	The surface	A stone barrow	A long stair
Chief work	Flood Control Dam #3	The Bank of Zork	The Royal Museum
Dated	783 GUE	722 GUE	777 GUE
Present occupant	Various, unlicensed	The Wizard of Frobozz	The Keeper of the Dungeon
Travelers returning	Some, lighter	None recorded	None recorded

This table compares the three regions of the old Empire in the order in which a traveler meets them. This is the only order available.

Questions, Discussions, Projects and Further Readings:

1. Elsabet Thrumm divided the underground into three kingdoms and Fozzle Garnaby into four. How many would you have found? Show your work.
2. Why might the guidebooks of each region have failed to mention the others? Consider who paid for them.
3. Have yourself banished from your town. Write to the town council once a year to confirm that you are still gone, and keep copies.
4. Dig a road from your cellar down to the next cellar below it. Do not come back up until you have reached the bottom.
5. The Keeper of the Dungeon has waited a long time for someone. Sit at the foot of your stairs until somebody comes down them. Do not come up for meals. Record who it was and how long it took.
6. Read *One Country, Going Down*, by Hollis Frabble, *Letters from the Second Region*, by Morna Quilk, and *Underbidding and Its Consequences*, by Ennis Dorbo.

Instruction Manual for Zork Trilogy

Zork Trilogy is an app for the Mac that plays Infocom's three Zork games as one continuous story. Its chapters are Zork I, The Great Underground Empire; Zork II, The Wizard of Frobozz; and Zork III, The Dungeon Master. You are a treasure-hunter (at least at first), and the story is set among the ruins of an old empire, far beneath the ground. You begin in Zork I, and when you finish a chapter, the next one takes up where it ended.

The original games understood a great deal, but not everything a player might think to type. With Generative AI features on, the game can answer much of the rest. Turn them off and you have the games exactly as Infocom wrote them — except chained together.

If you have played Infocom's interactive fiction before, you can skip most of this manual. Do read "Generative AI Features" and "Starting and Stopping," since both describe things that are new.

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An Overview

In interactive fiction, you are the main character. The story moves only when you move it: you type what you want to do, in plain English, and the game tells you what came of it.

The game is made of places, things you can pick up and use, characters (a few helpful, most of them not) and events. Every place is called a room, even a forest path with the sky over it.

To go somewhere, type the way you want to go: **NORTH**, or simply **N**, and likewise for the other compass points, **UP** and **DOWN**. When you arrive, read the description carefully, because the clues are usually in it. Visit every room you can find, and draw a map as you go. The passages of the Empire don't always run straight, and the map will save you more than once.

Sooner or later something will stand in your way: a door that won't open, or a troll who won't let you past. Treat it as a puzzle to be solved. More often than not the answer is something you found earlier and are carrying, used in the right place.

When you see the prompt (>), the game is waiting for you. Nothing happens until you type a command and press Return. Each command is one turn; the world moves forward by that turn and then waits again, so take as long as you like to think. The troll will still be there, with his axe, when you come back from making tea.

The three chapters are played one after the other, and you go on through them as the same adventurer. Whatever you are carrying when a chapter ends comes with you into the next. What you left behind stays behind. Nothing is supplied twice. If the next chapter can't be finished without something you have left lying about, the game won't let you go on without it.

The game keeps score. You earn points for finding treasures, for solving puzzles and for reaching certain places, and you may lose some for getting "killed." Each chapter keeps its own score; Zork I is out of 350 points. Once you have crossed into a later chapter, **SCORE** also reports the score for the whole adventure, out of 1100 points. The status line at the top of the screen shows the room you are in on the left, and on the right your score (that total, once you have crossed) and the number of moves you have made.

For what happens when the original game can't answer what you typed, see "Generative AI Features."

Tips for Novices

1. Draw a map. Put down each room, the directions that join it to its neighbors, and anything you found there. There are ten directions (the eight points of the compass, **UP** and **DOWN**), and **IN** and **OUT** work in some places too. Passages bend and twist, so going north from one room to another doesn't always mean that going south will bring you back. The map with "Appendix D: Sample Transcript and Map" shows one way to draw it.

2. Pick things up. Hardly anything in the Empire is left lying about by accident. Carry what you can, and you will find out later what it was for.

3. Save often. Before you try something dangerous, **SAVE** your place (see "Starting and Stopping"), so that you can come back to it if things go badly. For a smaller regret, type **UNDO** on a line by itself. Your last line is taken back, as if you had never typed it. Type **UNDO** again to go back further.

4. Read carefully. The descriptions of rooms and objects hold clues. So do the game's answers to strange or reckless actions, and a few of those answers are worth trying for their own sake. This one, at West of House with the mailbox closed, costs you nothing but some dignity (here with Generative AI features off; with them on, the answer is the game's own):

> CLIMB THROUGH THE MAILBOX
You hit your head against the small mailbox as you attempt this feat.

5. Don't look for the one right way. There are many routes through the game. A puzzle may have several answers, and a few can be left unsolved altogether. Often one puzzle gives you the thing, or the idea, that another one needs.

6. Play with a friend. Two people get stuck in different places, and each may see at once what the other has been staring at for an hour.

7. Choose what you carry. What you hold at the end of a chapter is what you start the next one with (see "An Overview").

8. Say it your own way. A command can be worded in many ways. Any of these will take the leaflet:

> TAKE THE LEAFLET
> GET THE LEAFLET
> PICK UP THE LEAFLET
> GRAB THE LEAFLET
> CARRY THE LEAFLET

If only one thing could be meant, you needn't even name it (see "Communicating with Zork").

9. Try what you would try in a real place. With Generative AI features on, the game answers things the original game would not understand. See "Generative AI Features."

10. Read the sample transcript in "Appendix D: Sample Transcript and Map". It shows you what a stretch of play looks like, one command and one answer at a time.

Communicating with Zork

Whenever you see the prompt (>), the game is waiting for you to tell it what to do. Type a sentence in plain English, then press the Return key. The game reads each sentence as if it began "I want to…", so you needn't type those words yourself. Capitals don't matter, and neither do small words like THE: **TAKE THE BOTTLE** and **TAKE BOTTLE** mean the same thing.

To move from one place to another, type which way to go: any of the eight points of the compass, **NORTH**, **SOUTH**, **EAST**, **WEST**, **NORTHEAST**, **NORTHWEST**, **SOUTHEAST** and **SOUTHWEST**, or their abbreviations, **N**, **S**, **E**, **W**, **NE**, **NW**, **SE** and **SW**. You can also go **UP** and **DOWN** (**U** and **D** for short). **IN** and **OUT** work in some places, where there is plainly something to go into or come out of.

The game understands many kinds of sentences. Here are some it will take in its stride:

> WALK NORTH

> SW

> GO UP

> TAKE THE BOTTLE

> PICK UP THE BROWN SACK

> DROP IT

> OPEN THE SACK

> LOOK INSIDE THE SACK

> LOOK UNDER THE TABLE

> EXAMINE THE TROPHY CASE

> CLIMB THE STAIRS

> ATTACK THE TROLL WITH THE SWORD

You can do the same thing to more than one object by joining them with AND or with commas. The game deals with each in turn and tells you how each one went:

> TAKE THE SACK AND THE BOTTLE

brown sack: Taken.
glass bottle: Taken.

ALL stands for whatever is in plain view; what sits inside a container is left alone. In the Kitchen, **TAKE ALL** would pick up the sack and the bottle but would not reach into the sack for whatever it holds. To leave something out, use ALL BUT or ALL EXCEPT:

> TAKE ALL

> DROP ALL BUT THE LAMP

> TAKE ALL FROM THE SACK

You can type several sentences on one line, separating them with a period or with THEN. Each sentence is still a separate turn, exactly as if you had typed it on its own. If the game doesn't understand one of them, or if something unexpected happens along the way, it stops there and ignores the rest of the line. (A troll in your path is a fair reason to reconsider your plans.)

> NORTH. EAST THEN OPEN THE WINDOW

UNDO, **AGAIN** and **MODE** by themselves, and **OOPS** with its word, can't be one of several sentences on a line. Typed among others, they are refused, nothing is done, and the game asks you to type the command on a line by itself.

You will meet people and creatures on your travels, and some of them can be spoken to. Type the name and a comma, followed by what you want done. Whether they do it is another matter.

> THIEF, GIVE ME THE BAG

> TROLL, DROP THE AXE

> DUNGEON MASTER, FOLLOW ME

Not everything is listening (here with Generative AI features off; with them on, the answer is the game's own):

> HOUSE, OPEN THE DOOR
You can't talk to the white house!

To say something out loud, put the words in quotation marks. It helps to have someone there to hear them (again with Generative AI features off):

> SAY "PLEASE"
Talking to yourself is a sign of impending mental collapse.

You can also ask the game what some things are:

> WHAT IS A ZORKMID
The zorkmid is the unit of currency of the Great Underground Empire.

When you leave something out of a sentence, the game may work out what you meant. If it does, it tells

you which thing it chose, in parentheses, before going ahead:

> TURN ON
(brass lantern)
The brass lantern is now on.

At other times it will ask. You can answer with only the missing part, rather than typing the whole sentence again, provided it's the next thing you type:

> PUT THE BOTTLE
What do you want to put the bottle in?

> IN THE TROPHY CASE
The trophy case isn't open.

The game understood the answer; the trophy case was simply shut. It asks the same sort of question when two things share a name. The transcript in "Appendix D" has an example about a door.

The original game knows its own words, and it can do whatever Infocom wrote it to do. What lies beyond that, Generative AI features answer. With them on, a sentence the original game didn't parse is available anyway. So there is no list of verbs to learn, if you wish to be creative: type what you would do. (See "Generative AI Features.")

With Generative AI features off (type MODE OFF), the game is the original three games, run in sequence without a break. A word it doesn't know brings a complaint (see "Appendix C: Complaints"), and you may find that rephrasing helps. The descriptions of places also use many words that the game won't recognize in your sentences. If it doesn't know the name of something you read about, that thing is scenery, there to make the place vivid, and you won't need it to finish the adventure. (Unless you get yourself into a tricky spot with the generative features, in which case, all bets are off.)

Generative AI Features

Infocom's game always answers first. Anything it can handle, it handles exactly as always. Generative AI features come in when it doesn't recognize a sentence or has no method of handling the command.

At that point, an AI model decides whether what you typed could happen in this world. If it could, it happens, and the world keeps it. A thing you've changed stays changed. If it couldn't, you are told why, in the game's own voice. You may still be refused. An inventive way around a puzzle counts, as long as it would really work in the world of the game.

Here is an example from a real game, near the start of Zork I. The adventurer is behind the white house, carrying the leaflet from the mailbox. The replies are written fresh each time, so if you try the same thing, yours won't match.

> FOLD LEAFLET INTO PAPER AIRPLANE
A few careful creases later, the leaflet is a respectable paper airplane, with "WELCOME TO ZORK!" partially visible along the edge.

> FLY PAPER AIRPLANE THROUGH WINDOW
The paper airplane glides gracefully toward the window, taps the sash just short of the narrow gap, and nosedives into the grass below.

With Generative AI features off, the game gives the first command the answer it has always given:

> FOLD LEAFLET INTO PAPER AIRPLANE
I don't know the word "fold".

What they don't do

The objective of the game, and what you have to do to get there, never changes. You won't score extra points of the usual variety by trying something novel, unless it leads to the original game's intent. The locations and objects remain chiefly the same. But how you approach the problem may vary entirely based on your creativity.

You can get yourself into a spot the game can't be won from, just as you could in the original. UNDO takes back the last line you typed, and you can keep typing it to go further back. A position you kept with SAVE is another way out. Saving keeps what you've changed, so a restored game has its paper airplanes where you left them.

Points for invention

An act inventive enough can earn invention points. These are kept apart from the score, and they never add to it. When you earn one, the game tells you:

[Your score for invention just went up by 1.]

From then on, the status line shows "Invention" with your total. When you type SCORE, the usual report is followed by a line like this one:

You have also earned 1 point for invention.

Turning them on and off

MODE OFF gives you the original game, word for word, with nothing sent anywhere; the game answers [Mode: off.] MODE NORMAL turns Generative AI features back on, and the game answers [Mode: nor-

mal.] MODE alone tells you which is in effect and how to change it:

> MODE
[Mode: normal. Type "mode off" or "mode normal".]

Type each of these on a line by itself. The same choice is one of the settings (see "Starting and Stopping").

What it costs

Each judged turn is sent to your AI model of choice (currently only Claude), along with what you typed and what the game knows of where you are. It counts against your Claude plan or is billed to your API key, whichever you chose in the settings (see "Starting and Stopping"). Turns the original game handles itself are never sent to the LLM.

Starting and Stopping

Starting the story

Open Zork Trilogy from your Applications folder or from Launchpad. The first time you do, a setup screen asks three questions, one at a time, before the game starts. They are the three settings described below. After that first time, Zork Trilogy opens straight to the game.

The story opens by describing where you stand:

West of House
You are standing in an open field west of a white house, with a boarded front door.
There is a small mailbox here.

Below it is the prompt (>). Whenever you see it, the game is waiting for you. Type a command and press Return.

Here is a short exercise to get you started. Try this first:

> EXAMINE THE MAILBOX
The small mailbox is closed.

A closed mailbox is hard to resist. The game takes IT to mean the last thing you mentioned, so you needn't name the mailbox again:

> OPEN IT
Opening the small mailbox reveals a leaflet.

Now pick up what you found:

> TAKE THE LEAFLET
Taken.

The leaflet is yours. You might try reading it. If Generative AI features are on, you might also try eating it.

Settings

The first setting, Claude, decides how the game reaches Claude, an AI model made by Anthropic, for its Generative AI features. A judged turn is one where the original game couldn't handle what you typed, and Claude decides what happens. "Claude account" uses your Claude subscription: the game installs Claude Code if it isn't already there and asks you to sign in through your web browser, and judged turns count against your plan's usage. "API key" takes an Anthropic API key, which is kept in your Mac's Keychain; judged turns are billed to that key, a little for each. "None" makes no calls at all, and Generative AI features stay off until you choose one of the others.

The second setting, Generative AI features, is On or Off. On needs a Claude choice. With it Off, you are playing the original game, word for word, and nothing is sent anywhere. During play, MODE OFF and MODE NORMAL change this same setting (see "Generative AI Features").

The third setting, Text speed, is "paced," which types the story out a little at a time like an old terminal, or "fast," which shows it all at once, as possible, since AI has delays as it processes.

To come back to these settings, type SETTINGS at the prompt, on a line by itself. The Up and Down arrows move between settings; Left, Right or Return change one. Esc, or "Save and continue," takes you back to the game where you left it.

The screen

The top line is the status line. On the left is the name of the room you are in; on the right, your score and the number of moves you have made. While Generative AI is processing a turn, which may take a few seconds, a mark appears beside the score. Once you have crossed into a later chapter, the status line shows the score for the whole adventure, out of 1100 points.

Press F1 to change the color of the glow. It starts amber; the others are green and white. The game remembers your choice. For full screen, press Command-Control-F or Command-Return.

If the text is paced and you would rather not wait, press Return or any key, and the line being typed out finishes as quickly as possible.

To read something that has scrolled away, use the mouse wheel, the trackpad, or Page Up and Page Down. Typing anything brings you back to the bottom.

While you type a command, the Left and Right arrows move along it, Home and End jump to either end, and Delete removes letters. The Up and Down arrows bring back lines you typed before, which is handy when a command needs only a small change. Command-V pastes a line.

Saving and restoring

Zork Trilogy is a long game, three chapters long, and you will stop and come back to it many times. Saving puts your place in the story into a file. It is also worth saving before anything dangerous, which, underground, is many things.

Type **SAVE** at the prompt:

```
> SAVE
Please enter a filename [zork.qzl]:
```

Press Return to take the name in brackets, or type a name of your own and then press Return. The game answers "Ok." Saving under different names lets you keep more than one place in the story.

Your saved games go in the folder ~/Library/Application Support/Zork Trilogy/saves/, in the Library inside your home folder.

To go back to a saved game, type **RESTORE**. The game asks for a file name the same way: press Return for the one in brackets, or type the name you saved under. The story picks up where you saved it. Type **LOOK** to have your surroundings described again.

A save keeps whatever Generative AI features changed in the world. If Claude let you do something the original game wouldn't have, it is still done when you restore.

Taking a move back

If you regret what you just did, type **UNDO** on a line by itself. It takes back the last line you typed at the prompt, as if you had never typed it, and the game answers [Undone.]

Type **UNDO** again to go further back, and again after that. When there is nothing left to take back, the game says [Nothing to undo.] **UNDO** never counts as a turn, so use it as often as necessary.

Quitting and restarting

To start the story over from the beginning, type **RESTART**. The game shows your score and asks whether you mean it:

```
> RESTART
Your score is 0 (total of 350 points), in 3 moves.
This gives you the rank of Beginner.
Do you wish to restart? (Y is affirmative):
```

Answer **Y** (or **YES**) and press Return, and you are back in the open field west of the white house.

To stop playing, type **QUIT**. It asks the same way:

```
> QUIT
Your score is 0 (total of 350 points), in 3 moves.
This gives you the rank of Beginner.
Do you wish to leave the game? (Y is affirmative):
```

Answer **Y** to leave.

Neither command keeps your place. If you want to come back to where you are, **SAVE** before you restart or quit.

Command-Q, or closing the window, quits Zork Trilogy at once. It does not ask whether you want to save first, so be sure to type **SAVE** before you go!

Appendix A: Quick Reference

The object of Zork Trilogy is to explore the Great Underground Empire from the white house down to the very bottom, through all three original chapters.

1. To start the game for the first time, and to answer the questions on the setup screen, see "Starting and Stopping."

2. When you see the prompt (>), the game is waiting for you to tell it what to do. It understands four kinds of command:

A. Directions: to move, type the way you want to go: **N**, **NE**, **E**, **SE**, **S**, **SW**, **W**, **NW**, **U**, **D**, **IN** or **OUT**. The words spelled out in full (**NORTH**, **UP** and so on) work too.

B. Actions: type what you want to do, in plain English. For example, **OPEN THE WINDOW**, **LOOK UNDER THE TABLE** or **CLIMB THE STAIRS**.

C. Commands to characters: type the character's name and a comma, followed by what you want. For example, **THIEF, GIVE ME THE BAG**.

D. One-word commands: **INVENTORY**, **DIAGNOSE**, **SCORE** and the rest. "Appendix B: Important Commands" describes the ones you are most likely to need.

3. Press Return after each command. Nothing happens until you do.

4. The top line of the screen is the status line. It shows the room you are in on the left, and on the right your score and how many moves you have made.

5. Much of what you find can be taken along. Type **TAKE THE BOTTLE**, for instance, and it is yours. Type **INVENTORY** (or just **I**) to see everything you are car-

rying. It all goes with you into the next chapter (see "An Overview").

6. When the original game doesn't support what you typed, the Generative AI features can answer it. MODE OFF turns them off; MODE NORMAL turns them back on. See "Generative AI Features."

7. UNDO takes back the last line you typed, as if you had never typed it. SAVE keeps your place, and RESTORE brings you back to it later. See "Starting and Stopping."

8. For more on any of this, the contents page shows which part of the manual covers it.

Appendix B: Important Commands

Most of the commands below are a single word. Three of them, MODE, SETTINGS and UNDO, belong to Zork Trilogy itself and are outside the world. Type UNDO, AGAIN, MODE and OOPS on a line of their own. Put UNDO, AGAIN or MODE by itself, or OOPS and its word, in a line with other sentences, and the game does nothing, with a reply such as [Type "undo" on a line by itself.]

AGAIN (or **G**) – Repeats the last line you typed at the prompt, as if you had typed it again. An answer you gave to one of the game's questions is never repeated.

BRIEF – Describes a place in full on your first visit only. After that you get just its name and what's there. This is how the game normally plays, and it answers "Brief descriptions."

DIAGNOSE – Gives you a report on your health. At the start of the game it says "You are in perfect health." and "You can be killed by a serious wound." It is most useful just after a fight, when you want to know how much more of one you can stand.

INVENTORY (or **I**) – Lists what you are carrying, beginning "You are carrying:". If your hands are empty, the game answers "You are empty-handed."

LOOK (or **L**) – Describes the place you are in, in full, whatever description setting you have chosen.

MODE – MODE OFF turns Generative AI features off, and you play the original game, word for word; the game answers [Mode: off.] MODE NORMAL turns them on again: [Mode: normal.] MODE by itself says which is in effect and how to change it, for example [Mode: normal. Type "mode off" or "mode normal".]

OOPS – When the game says it doesn't know a word you typed, type OOPS followed by the word you meant. The game tries the line again with your new word in place of the one it didn't know. Here it is with Generative AI features off:

> NIBBLE THE GARLIC
I don't know the word "nibble".

> OOPS EAT
What the heck! You won't make friends this way, but nobody around here is too friendly anyhow. Gulp!

QUIT (or **Q**) – Stops the game. It shows your score and asks "Do you wish to leave the game?"; answer Y to leave. If you want to come back to this point later, SAVE first (see "Starting and Stopping").

RESTART – Starts the story over from the beginning. The game asks first, in case your finger slipped.

RESTORE – Brings back a position you saved with SAVE. See "Starting and Stopping."

SAVE – Keeps your place in the story in a file, so you can come back to it with RESTORE. A cautious adventurer saves before doing anything that looks dangerous. See "Starting and Stopping."

SCORE – Shows your score, the number of moves you have made and your rank. Once you are past the first chapter, it also gives your score for the whole adventure, out of 1100 points. If you have earned invention points, there is a line for those too.

SETTINGS – Opens the settings screen, where you choose how the game reaches Claude, turn Generative AI features on or off, and set the text speed. Press Esc to go back to the game where you left it.

SUPERBRIEF – Gives you only the name of each place you enter, even the first time, and doesn't mention what's there. LOOK still describes a place in full. The game answers "Superbrief descriptions."

UNDO – Takes back the last line you typed at the prompt, as if you had never typed it, and you can type it again to go further back. The game answers [Undone.], or [Nothing to undo.] when there is nothing left to take back.

VERBOSE – Describes a place in full every time you enter it, however often you have been there. The game answers "Maximum verbosity."

VERSION – Shows which chapter you are in, and the release and serial numbers of your copy. Please give these if you ever report a problem.

WAIT (or **Z**) – Lets time go by without your doing anything. It is the command to use when something is about to happen and you would rather watch it than be part of it. The game answers "Time passes…"

Appendix C: Complaints

When the game meets a sentence it can't make sense of, it tells you so and ignores whatever else you typed on that line. With Generative AI features on, the AI will answer most of these sentences instead. The complaints below are what you see with Generative AI features off (MODE OFF). With Generative AI, you may never see most of these.

I DON'T KNOW THE WORD "(your word)." The game has never heard of this word. Another word for the same thing may get through; when none does, what you meant is something the original game can't do. NIBBLE THE GARLIC gets this complaint about "nibble" (a typing mistake, on the other hand, can be mended with OOPS; see "Appendix B").

YOU USED THE WORD "(your word)" IN A WAY THAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND. The game knows the word, but not the way you used it: usually it knows it as another kind of word. In TAKE THE OPEN, OPEN is a verb, and there is nothing called an open to take.

THAT SENTENCE ISN'T ONE I RECOGNIZE. The sentence was gibberish, or a sensible request put together in a way the game doesn't take, such as OPEN THE MAILBOX UNDER THE HOUSE. Try saying it another way.

THERE WAS NO VERB IN THAT SENTENCE! A sentence needs a verb, unless it answers a question the game has just asked. THE MAILBOX names a thing but doesn't say what to do with it.

THERE SEEMS TO BE A NOUN MISSING IN THAT SENTENCE! The sentence stopped short, as OPEN THE DOOR AND does.

THERE WERE TOO MANY NOUNS IN THAT SENTENCE. A sentence can act on at most two things. PUT THE MAILBOX ON THE HOUSE WITH THE DOOR names three.

I BEG YOUR PARDON? You pressed Return without typing anything.

IT'S TOO DARK TO SEE. There isn't enough light to do what you asked. Light something before you try again. You will want a light soon in any case, for reasons the game will explain.

I DON'T SEE WHAT YOU ARE REFERRING TO. IT (or HIM or HER) stands for something that isn't here, or for nothing yet. Say the thing's name.

YOU CAN'T SEE ANY (something) HERE! The thing you named isn't in sight. It may be elsewhere, shut away inside something, or not in the game at all. TAKE THE GARLIC at West of House draws this complaint, because the garlic is elsewhere.

THE (other) OBJECT(s) THAT YOU MENTIONED (isn't or aren't) HERE. You named two or more things, and one or more of them isn't here. TAKE MAILBOX AND LAMP at West of House gets "small mailbox: It is securely anchored." for the mailbox, then "The other object that you mentioned isn't here." for the lamp, which is somewhere else.

YOU CAN'T GO THAT WAY. There is no way out in that direction. Read the room's description again for the exits it mentions.

YOU CAN'T USE MULTIPLE (in)DIRECT OBJECTS WITH "(your verb)". Only some verbs, TAKE, DROP and PUT among them, can act on several things at once or on ALL. OPEN ALL is refused, so open things one at a time.

YOU CAN'T TALK TO THE (something)! You spoke to something that can't be spoken to. HOUSE, OPEN THE DOOR gets *You can't talk to the white house!* (The house keeps its own counsel, like most houses.)

Appendix D: Sample Transcript and Map

This transcript is not made up. It is the first few minutes of Zork I, played on this release with Generative AI features off. It shows the usual things: moving from room to room, taking things, opening a container, a word the game doesn't know, AGAIN, and the game asking which of two things you meant. What you type follows each prompt (>), in capitals; the game's replies are below.

The map shows the rooms the transcript visits as you might draw them yourself, with what's in each. Yours will need a bigger sheet. To map all three chapters, together, is quite a large sheet. But people have done it.

West of House
You are standing in an open field west of a white house, with a boarded front door.
There is a small mailbox here.

> OPEN THE MAILBOX
Opening the small mailbox reveals a leaflet.

> TAKE THE LEAFLET
Taken.

> NORTH

North of House
You are facing the north side of a white house. There is no door here, and all the windows are boarded up. To the north a narrow path winds through the trees.

> EAST
Behind House
You are behind the white house. A path leads into the forest to the east. In one corner of the house there is a small window which is slightly ajar.

> OPEN THE WINDOW
With great effort, you open the window far enough to allow entry.

> WEST
Kitchen
You are in the kitchen of the white house. A table seems to have been used recently for the preparation of food. A passage leads to the west and a dark staircase can be seen leading upward. A dark chimney leads down and to the east is a small window which is open.
On the table is an elongated brown sack, smelling of hot peppers.
A bottle is sitting on the table.
The glass bottle contains:
  A quantity of water

> OPEN THE SACK
Opening the brown sack reveals a lunch, and a clove of garlic.

> TAKE THE GARLIC
Taken.

> NIBBLE THE GARLIC
I don't know the word "nibble".

> WEST
Living Room
You are in the living room. There is a doorway to the east, a wooden door with strange gothic lettering to the west, which appears to be nailed shut, a trophy case, and a large oriental rug in the center of the room.
Above the trophy case hangs an elvish sword of great antiquity.
A battery-powered brass lantern is on the trophy case.

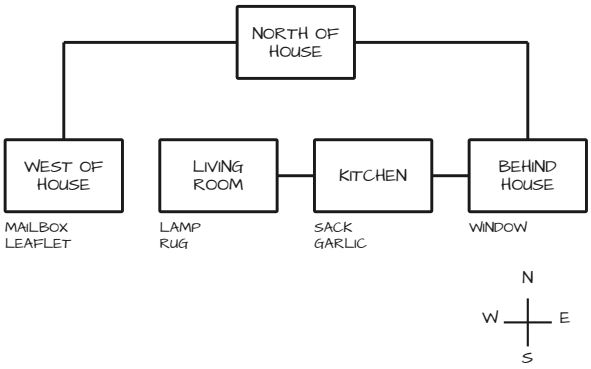
> TAKE THE LAMP
Taken.

> AGAIN
You already have that!

> MOVE THE RUG
With a great effort, the rug is moved to one side of the room, revealing the dusty cover of a closed trap door.

> OPEN THE DOOR
Which door do you mean, the wooden door or the trap door?

> WOODEN
The door cannot be opened.



Appendix E: We're Never Satisfied

The rulers of the Great Underground Empire rarely asked anyone for feedback. We would prefer to.

We want to hear about anything that went wrong, and about any puzzle you thought unfair, or too easily beaten. We are just as curious about what Generative AI features did with something you tried. Perhaps they let something happen that shouldn't have, or refused something that should.

Tell whoever gave you the game. Say what you typed and what happened, word for word if you can. Type **VERSION** and pass along what it shows. Type **MODE** as well, so you can say whether Generative AI features were on. If you are so inclined, **EXPORT** produces a full log of all of your adventures with the game and will be used to improve it. No telemetry about your experience is sent anywhere besides to Anthropic, if Generative AI Features are on.

Complaints about the grue will be passed on to the grue and will likely be eaten.

You may also write to:

Frobozz Magic Suggestion Box Company
Maintenance Room
Flood Control Dam #3
Frigid River, The Great Underground Empire
Attn: M. Agrippa, Foreman

Appendix F: If You Have Technical Problems

There is no telephone number to call. Report a problem the way "Appendix E" describes.

If Generative AI can't answer a turn, because it can't be reached or it fails, you get the original game's own answer instead. Nothing AI would have done happens.

If your sign-in or API key has stopped working, an error message will appear and suggest **SETTINGS**. If Generative AI can't be reached at all, type **MODE OFF**. This disables all generative features but leaves the combined trilogy intact.

Your saved games are in ~/Library/Application Support/Zork Trilogy/saves/. Copy that folder to keep them safe. Reinstalling the app doesn't touch them.

A puzzle you can't solve is not a technical problem, however much it feels like one. Many players over many decades have faced this particular issue.

Appendix G: Credits

Zork I, II and III

Zork began in 1977 as a game on a mainframe computer at MIT. Its authors were Tim Anderson, Marc Blank, Bruce Daniels and Dave Lebling.

Infocom published the game in three parts: *Zork I: The Great Underground Empire* in 1980, *Zork II: The Wizard of Frobozz* in 1981 and *Zork III: The Dungeon Master* in 1982. The collections of their source code name Marc Blank, Dave Lebling, Bruce Daniels and Tim Anderson as the writers of all three. Zork II's own text says that it "was written by Dave Lebling and Marc Blank."

In 2025 Microsoft released the games' source code under the MIT License (see "Appendix H").

This edition

Zork Trilogy joins the three games into one continuous game, in which Zork I, II and III are the three chapters. It also adds Generative AI features, which use Claude, made by Anthropic. The idea and the implementation belong to busycursor.

The type in this manual is EB Garamond, Grenze Gotisch, Tinos, Jost and Architects Daughter. All five are released under the SIL Open Font License.

Appendix H: License

The source code of Zork I, II and III, from which this game is built, was released under this license.

MIT License

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The Zork name and the original packaging and marketing of the games remain with their owners.

Go On Down!

Zork Trilogy is one adventure in three chapters: Zork I, The Great Underground Empire; Zork II, The Wizard of Frobozz; and Zork III, The Dungeon Master.What you pick up near the top may save you near the bottom. What you drop stays dropped.

Below, a troll with a bloody axe guards the way, and a thief with a stiletto helps himself to your valuables. There is a dam to be reckoned with, a wizard whose every spell begins with F, and a dog the size of an elephant, with three heads. Deeper still, a land of eerie shadows ends at a cliff above a vast ocean that has never seen the sun.

With Generative AI features, the game takes up more of what you think to try, and refuses, just as cheerfully, when you ask too much.

The table of contents is on the first page of the Instruction Manual. Read it, or don't: the grues are in no hurry.