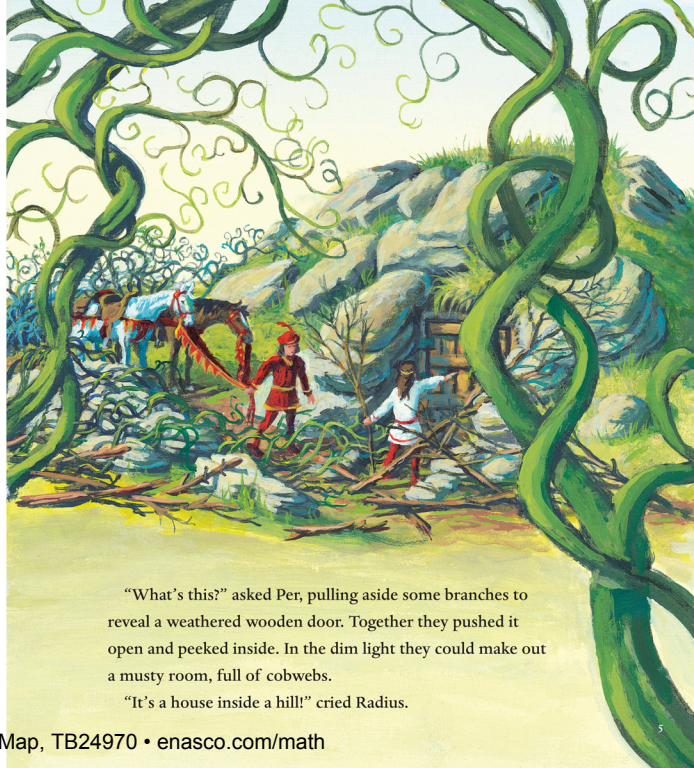




“What a view!” exclaimed Per. The landscape below them lay divided into four sections. A road ran across the countryside horizontally, while a river wound through the area vertically.

“Hmm. Nothing looks familiar,” observed Radius. “And we’re running out of daylight. Let’s camp on that knoll tonight. The grass there looks thick and soft.”

As the cousins approached the knoll, a tangle of vines and brambles blocked their path.



“What’s this?” asked Per, pulling aside some branches to reveal a weathered wooden door. Together they pushed it open and peeked inside. In the dim light they could make out a musty room, full of cobwebs.

“It’s a house inside a hill!” cried Radius.



“The house in the hill looks like it’s drawn inside a giant zero,” said Per. “Let’s ride up the river to the three there.”

They trotted along next to the bank but didn’t see anything unusual. After a while Per said, “This doesn’t seem right. Let’s go back where we started and follow the road out to the other number three.” She traced her finger along the right horizontal X ax.

The cousins returned to the house in the hill and took the road, passing stone mile markers along the way. They stopped at the third one.

Per got off her horse and took a closer look. On the back of the marker, she noticed some small engravings.

“Radius!” she exclaimed. “I’ve found Xaxon’s initials carved here, along with another set of numbers: $(2, -1)$!”

