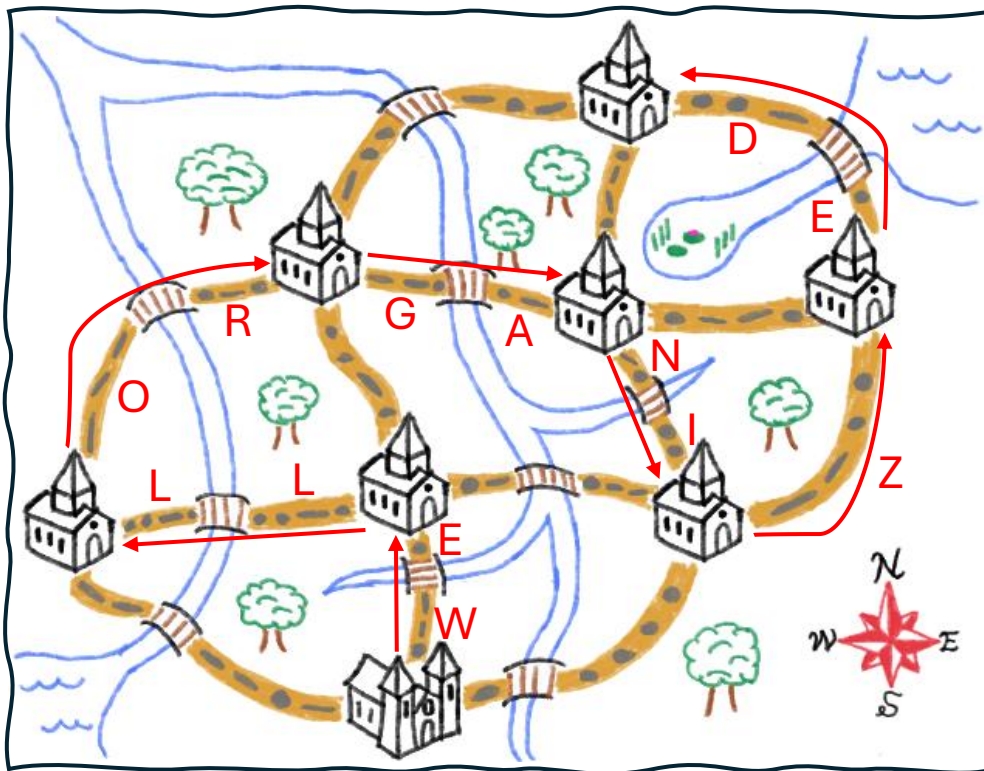


Location: Pipe Dreams



Dr. James Langdon, Professor of Puzzlology, is always trying to prove to his older brother, Robert, that his specialty is every bit as legitimate as “Symbology”.

This month, he’s hot on the trail of puzzles hinting at a secret meaning behind cathedrals. In his planning, he discovered the map and diary of Friar **Direction**, who visited numerous cathedrals before he became a **cardinal** in his later years. The diary seemed to have some **hidden** subtext which, along with the map, took a bit of **deciphering**.



I began my journey at the cathedral of St. Gauss; its twin bell towers strike a **minor third**.

I was simply **awestruck** by the sounds of the pipes at the next church.

At the subsequent, I heard a solo from a **tenor** that filled the chancel over the pipe’s accompaniment.

The rumors of a new bellows being installed at St. Lateo’s Chapel nearly led **me astray** from my route.

However, the promise of the deep bass ranks **out here** at the next cathedral renewed my focus.

My timing was auspicious as I arrived at the penultimate church in time to celebrate the harvest **feast**.

Finally, I attended a mass at St. Boreas alongside **Governor Thomas**, a fellow music enthusiast.

It was certainly a noteworthy trip, and I have no **remorse** for the effort it took to plan.

I must humbly argue it was very... **WELL ORGAN-IZED**

Notre Dame

Paris, France

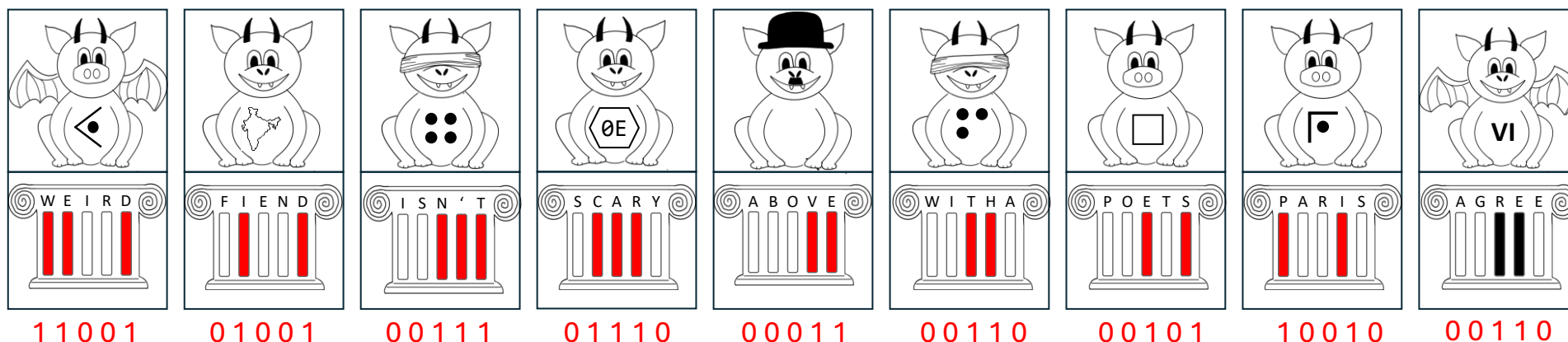


While studying the iconic Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, the professor is stopped by Joel and William, stone masons renovating the infamous gargoyles and grotesques that line the exterior. During the renovation, the sculptors had mischievously **rearranged** the statues and their pedestals.

“For the longest time, gargoyles have been **encoded** with **all kinds of symbolism**.”
 “Don’t ask me why, but the **key** in carving stone is knowing what to **keep or not**.”
 “You may be right, and **the sixth pedestal is already in the correct spot**.”

Then they abruptly left the professor with a list of criteria for ordering the remaining statues and pedestals. *What were they trying to tell him?*

- The winged statues were on opposite ends.
- There’s something *poetic* about quadrilaterals.
- *Paris* is penultimate.
- For famous silent movie actors, we’d rank Chaplin *above* the rest.
- The blind statues had two statues between them.
- The ‘fiend’ was chiseled from marble imported from India.
- The statue with a bowler hat had the ‘scary’ statue on the left and a blind statue on the right.
- The words on the four right-most pedestals were in reverse alphabetical order.
- The flying pig is quite *weird*.
- Two of the pig-faced statues are next to each other.
- We could *agree* at the very end.



<• = Y/25

India = I/9

∴ = G/7

⊕E = N/14

Charlie (Chaplin) = C/3

∴ = F/6

□ = E/5

⌞• = R/18

VI = F/6

Rearrange the statues and pedestals according to the clues in the top right.

Each of the statues has a value encoded—but if you extract just the letter, you get YIGNCFERF, which is nonsense.

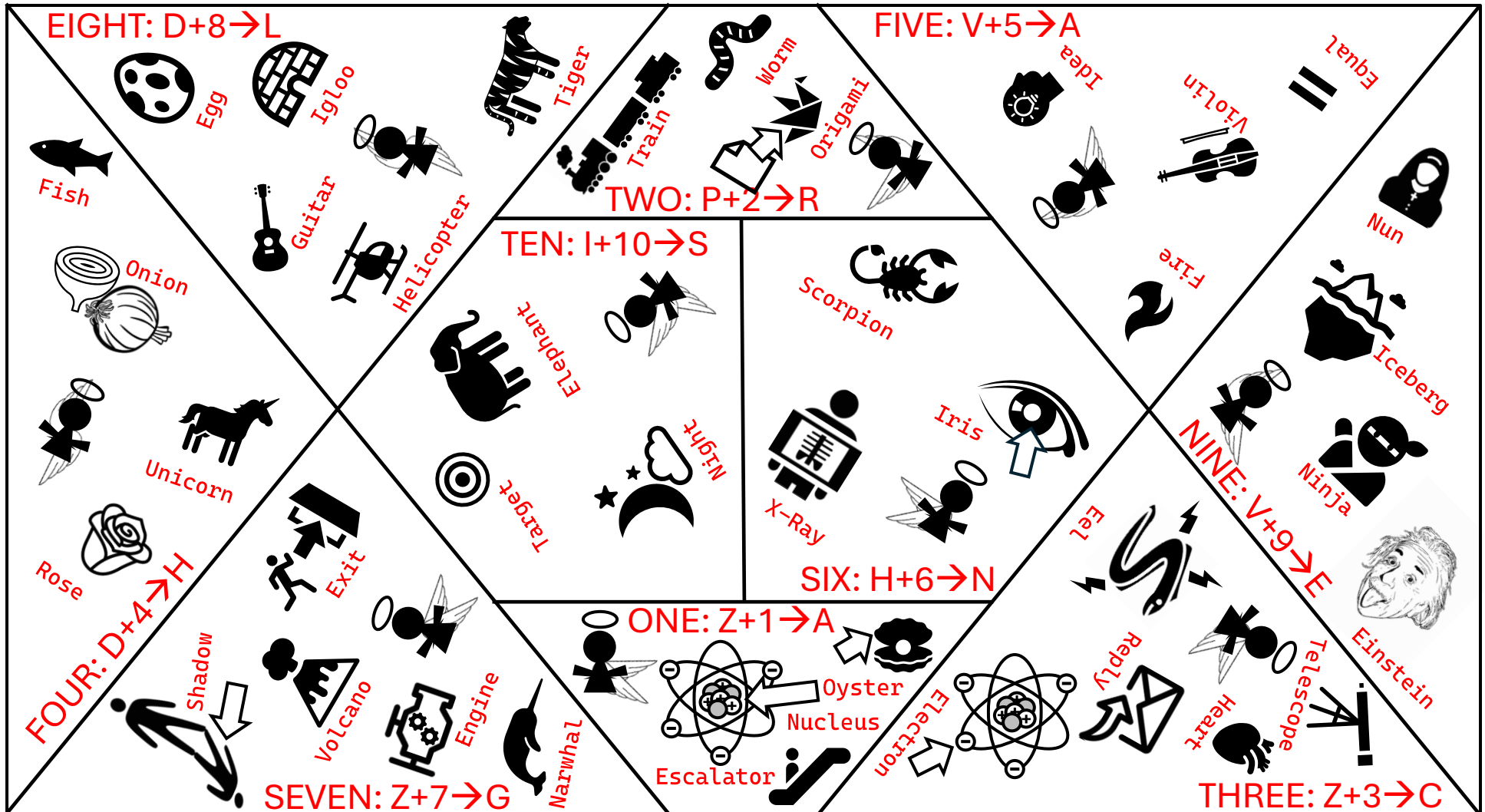
Instead of decoding to a letter, decode to the binary value (hinted at by the five grooves on each pedestal).

Use the binary that to extract the letters from each pedestal (1=keep, 0=drop).

You’re left with the message from the stone masons (better known as Billy & Joel): **WE DIDN'T CARVE THE SPIRE**



The professor's search leads him to Monreale, where the cathedral is known for its **iconic** ceilings. Studying the detailed mosaic vault, he notices a number of different sections where winged messengers seem to **signal** him. Even **with his head up**, the hodgepodge of images doesn't make sense **initially**, but he eventually **makes order** out of chaos. A local art historian points out that each section refers to a different historical **shift**--like the bottom right triangle commemorating Caesar's conquest in **3 A.D.** Amid the beautiful artwork, what does he see on the ceiling?



© 2026 CC BY-NC-SA Intl. 4.0 Kevin Hanson (Minneapolis, MN)

Each section has three to five objects; the first letter of each object spells (top to bottom oriented by each angel) to spell a counting number one through ten. Using that to order the sections, the angels in each section have wings in the position of a semaphore letter: ZPZDVHZDVI. Decoding that message using a Caesar cipher (shifting forward by the number of the section) gives the answer ARCH-ANGLES.



The professor's investigation leads him next to inspect the León Cathedral in northwest Spain, along with its spectacular array of ornate 13th-century windows.

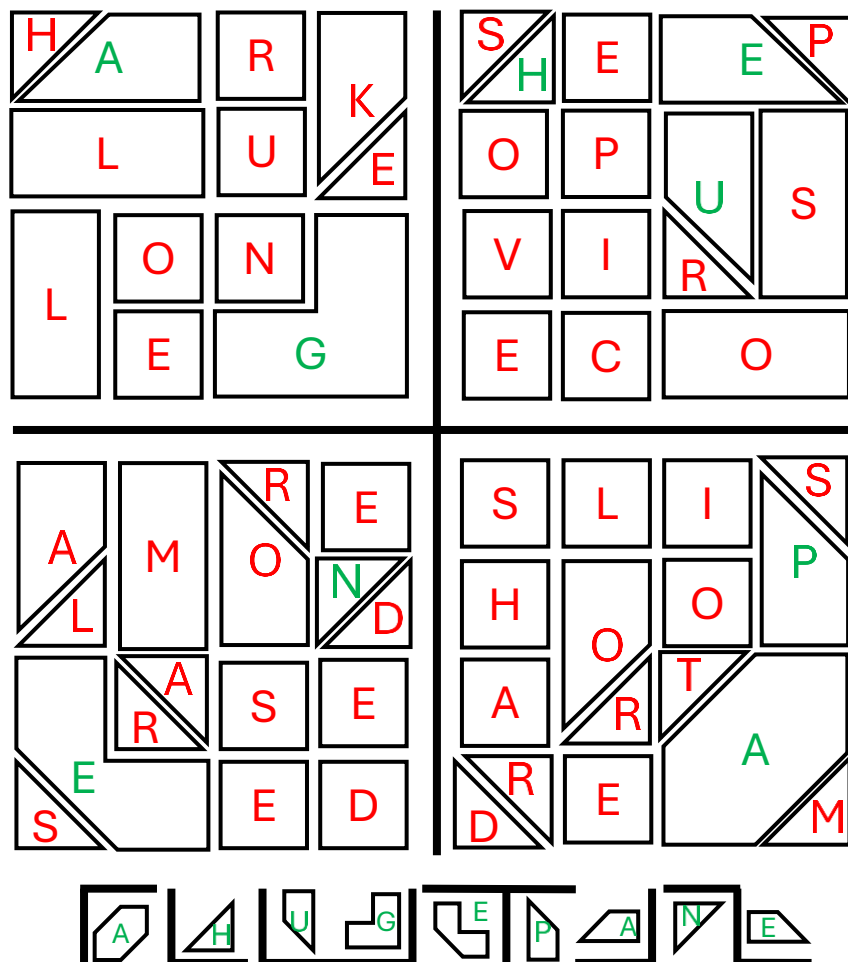
Underneath one massive stained-glass window, a small exhibit shows artifacts from the original construction. One of them, a "cartoon", is a diagram showing the layout of the glass fragments, although the directions for construction are rather *cryptic*.



Fortunately, the exhibit has a Quite Remarkable guide to help those who haven't seen these before. A Generally Courteous tour guide noted the lists were ordered A to Z, as they often are.

In the margins below the cartoon, Professor Langdon spots one apprentice's doodles describing the work.

What was the master glazier's design?



Across:

- ⌌ Mixed-up old man is a [nut](#) (6) (anagram) ALMOND
- ⌌ An eel heard [Italian love](#) (5) AMORE (homophone)
- ⌌ [Vessel](#) given by an operations research teaching assistant, initially (5) AORTA (acrostic)
- ⌌ Crazy armed [fantasy](#) (5) DREAM (anagram)
- ⌌ [Green](#) reactor, alternately (3) ECO (letter sequence)
- ⌌ [Wipe out](#), as in before, poetically (5) ERASE (container)
- ⌌ [Listen for](#) headless hammerhead (4) HARK (deletion)
- ⌌ [Ring](#) bear in reverse (4) HOOP (reversal)
- ⌌ Partly legal [segment](#) (3) LEG (hidden word)
- ⌌ [Tall pine](#) (4) LONG (double definition)
- ⌌ Honolulu keepsake contains [Jedi](#) (4) LUKE (hidden word)
- ⌌ [Work](#) given by part of an octopus (4) OPUS (hidden word)
- ⌌ [Start](#) to spruce, elm, eucalyptus, and dogwood? (4) SEED (punny acrostic)

Down:

- ⌌ [Beers](#) are almost bargains (4) ALES (deletion)
- ⌌ Sounds like a sad, [soothing succulent](#) (4) ALOE (homophone)
- ⌌ The wooden carved blue bird ultimately was [finished](#) (5) ENDED (acrostic of last letters)
- ⌌ Electric photo makes [great story](#) (4) EPIC (charades)
- ⌌ [Capital](#) in Europe? (4) EURO (punny hidden word)
- ⌌ Everyone at the end of hot [corridor](#) (4) HALL (charade)
- ⌌ [Tiny speck](#) found in audio tape (4) IOTA (hidden word)
- ⌌ [Barrel](#) potassium, for example (3) KEG (charade)
- ⌌ [Canon](#) fodder? (4) LORE (punny cryptic definition)
- ⌌ [Horse](#) coming out of moat reef, oddly (4) MARE (letter sequence)
- ⌌ Pose wildly for [money](#) (4) PESO (anagram)
- ⌌ [Got up for wine](#) (4) ROSE (double definition)
- ⌌ [Step on the ladder](#) to race against gravity (4) RUNG (charades)
- ⌌ [Piece of glass](#) distributed without electron (5) SHARD (deletion)
- ⌌ [Push](#) five into footwear (5) SHOVE (container)
- ⌌ [Junk mail](#) from dad between two sizes (4) SPAM (charade/insertion)

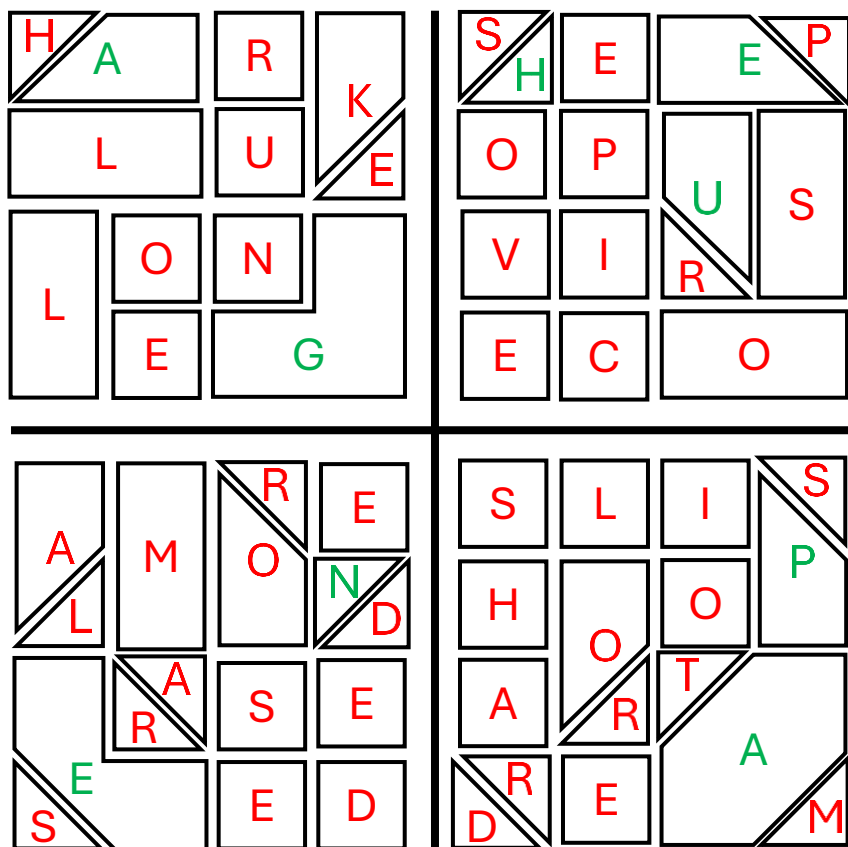


Standard

The professor's investigation leads him next to inspect the León Cathedral in northwest Spain, along with its spectacular array of ornate 13th-century windows.

Underneath one massive stained-glass window, a small exhibit shows artifacts from the original construction. One of them, a "cartoon", is a diagram showing the layout of the glass fragments, although the directions for construction are rather puzzling. A Generally Courteous tour guide noted the lists were ordered A to Z, as they often are.

In the margins, they spot one apprentice's doodles describing the work. *What was the master glazier's design?*



Across:

- 1 Marzipan ingredient (6) **ALMOND**
- 2 Romance in Rome (5) **AMORE**
- 3 Major artery (5) **AORTA**
- 4 Night vision, perhaps (5) **DREAM**
- 5 Green prefix (3) **ECO**
- 6 Remove pencil or chalk (5) **ERASE**
- 7 Listen, as to an angel (4) **HARK**
- 8 Hula ____ (4) **HOOP**
- 9 Part of a relay race (3) **LEG**
- 10 Pine [for] (4) **LONG**
- 11 Skywalker with a Cool Hand (4) **LUKE**
- 12 Noted work, as in art or music (4) **OPUS**
- 13 Tournament ranking (4) **SEED**
- 14 Ovine livestock (5) **SHEEP**
- 15 Meets a banana peel, maybe (5) **SLIPS**
- 16 Non-bacterial pathogen (5) **VIRUS**

Down:

- 1 Maltier beers (4) **ALES**
- 2 Soothing succulent (4) **ALOE**
- 3 Finished (5) **ENDED**
- 4 Great story! (4) **EPIC**
- 5 Money in Madrid (4) **EURO**
- 6 Corridor (4) **HALL**
- 7 Tiny bit, or a Greek letter (4) **IOTA**
- 8 Source of pints at a frat party (3) **KEG**
- 9 Folk tales and myths, e.g. (4) **LORE**
- 10 Mate to a stallion (4) **MARE**
- 11 Money in Mazatlán (4) **PESO**
- 12 Pink, as in wine (4) **ROSE**
- 13 Part of a ladder (4) **RUNG**
- 14 Tiny bit, as in glass (5) **SHARD**
- 15 Push comes to this (5) **SHOVE**
- 16 Canned meat (4) **SPAM**



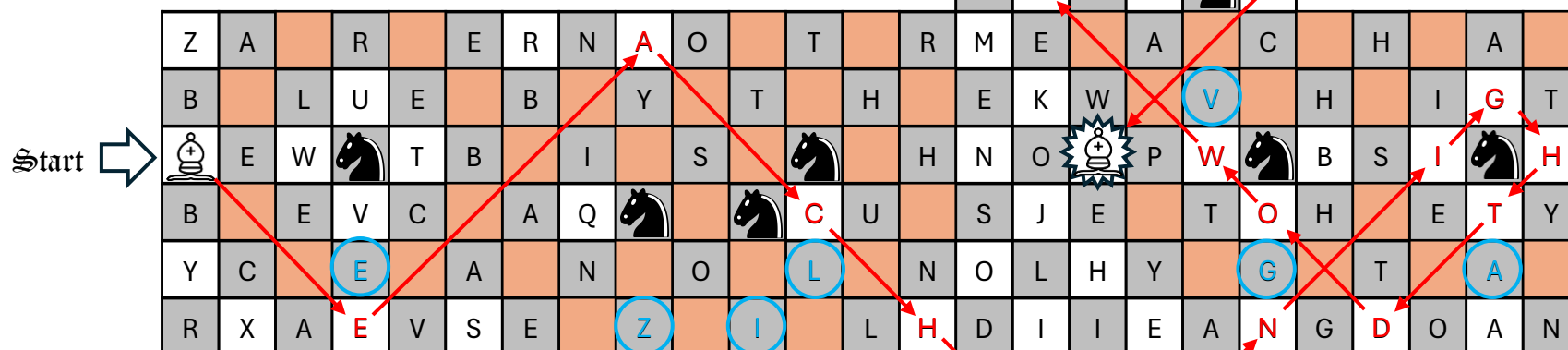
St. Vitus

Praha, Česká republika



At the St. Vitus Cathedral, the professor encounters the Bishop of Sydney. He's here to visit the Bishop of Prague—his *Czech mate*, if you will. The Bishop of Sydney timed his arrival poorly: there's already a tour group from the Knights of Columbo, a fraternal order of chess-playing detectives recognizable by their trench coats emblazoned with a horse. They arrived earlier and clogged up the entrance hall, bragging about their Elo ratings. And oh, one more thing: not only are the chess nuts boasting in an open foyer, but some are now loitering throughout the main hall of the cathedral!

Starting at the west entrance, the Bishop of Sydney wants to tour as much of the cathedral as possible before meeting his friend at the center.



The Bishop seems annoyed at the tour group's aimless demeanor, as they are spread throughout the cathedral's traditional cross-shaped floorplan. In contrast, the Bishop likes to **go as far as he can before turning**. He's not as spry as he once was and **must stop to change directions**. Most importantly, the Bishop would like to **avoid the attention of the Knights** altogether, meanwhile **pausing every chance he can to take it all in**, and **not retracing his steps**. He won't see the entire cathedral, but he's resigned himself to that sacrifice. It would be a blunder to get caught by one of the Knights; they'd probably ask him if they can borrow a pen.

What is the behavior the Bishop of Sydney finds so offensive?

Eliminating the squares that are within one move of a knight, travel in a diagonal line, avoiding situations where you would be trapped or need to retrace steps.

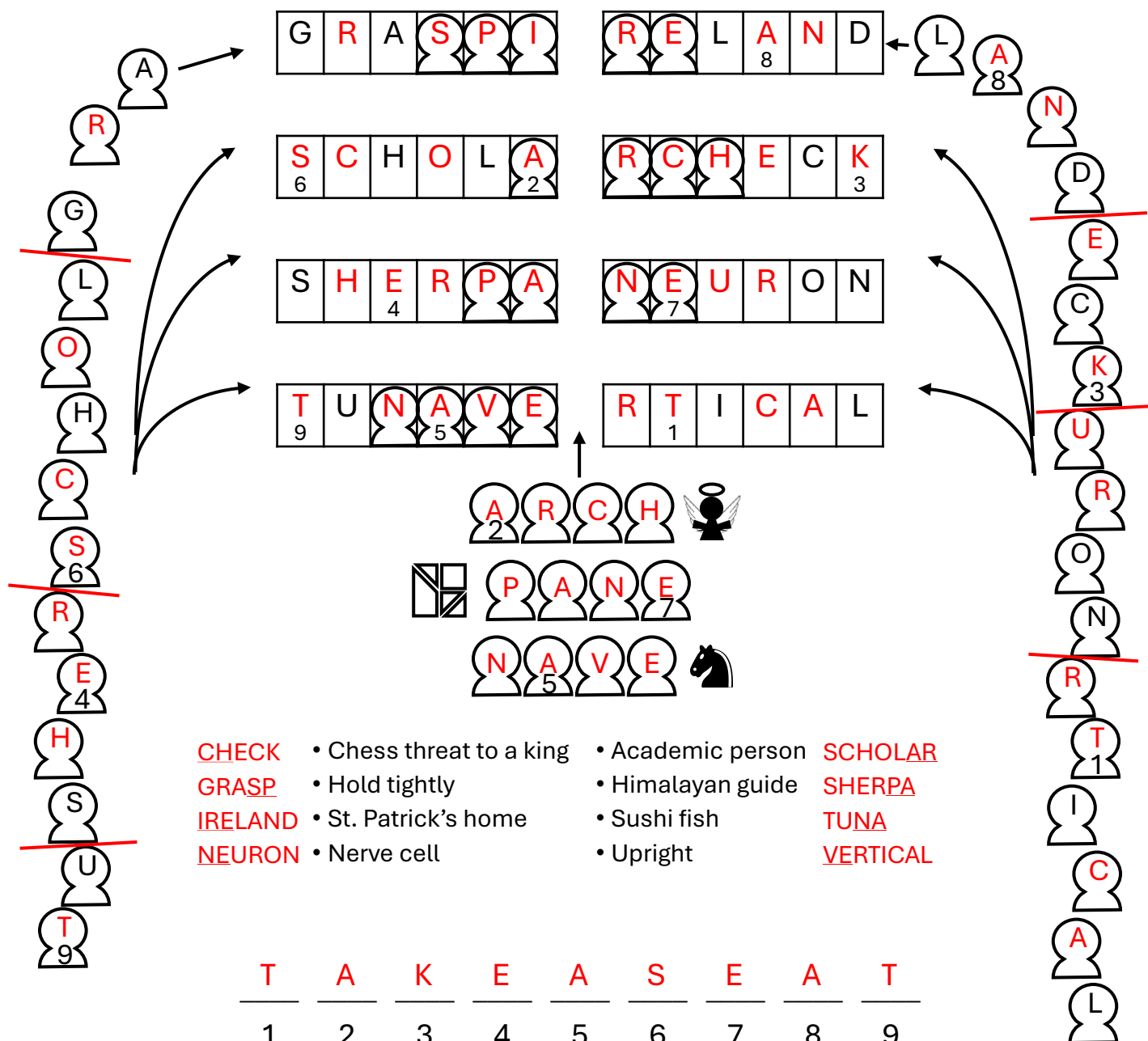
The letters you stop on spell EACH KNIGHT DOWN TWO.

Taking the letter two squares below each knight gives NAVE-L GAZING



Professor Langdon arrives at the final cathedral just as a public mass is about to start. Parishioners are filing into the pews from each side, filling the rows front to back. The professor also notices four groups of architecture students that he recognized from the previous four cathedrals, each admiring **the cathedrals' distinct architectural features**. It's a busy service, so to avoid being rood, the groups of students move up the center aisle looking for places to fit into the middle. Each row ends up being filled with both parishioners and students, although the student groups might cross the center aisle.

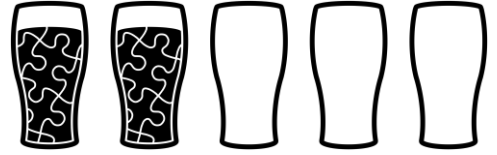
The professor notices there's one pew missing in the back. As it turns out, when the last bishop moved to Rome, he interpreted *ex cathedra* literally and decided to...



“ex cathedra” means “from the chair” → a cathedral is the “seat” of a bishop

© 2026 CC BY-NC-SA Intl. 4.0 Kevin Hanson (Minneapolis, MN)

Main Set Feeder Words: ARCH NAVE PANE SPIRE



The professor has been offered a once-in-a-lifetime tour of the catacombs underneath the cathedral, which houses numerous crypts. He wants to **visit every crypt** and doesn't have time to backtrack to crypts that he has already visited. Once he's found a good path through the catacombs, though, the local guide **pointed out** he'll have to be observant about identifying **the occupants** of the crypts. There are **a number of torches in each crypt**, but they only provide enough light for **both the current crypt and the next crypt**. It's very dusty down there, and the thought of the catacombs is enough to make him sick...

Index names using the # of torches in the current + prior rooms

BECAUSE OF ALL
THE COFFIN

