

A Challenging Round Of Noodle Yanking Mysteries

by Dan Katz

Dear Sir or Madam,

I regret to inform you that your rich-rich-rich-richfather, Victor Acronym, has passed away. I sincerely hope the grief his passing is sure to bring you will be quelled by this opportunity to claim the mountains of cash he has left behind. Being a lover of puzzles and games, Victor has hidden the key to his vault somewhere in his home, and he has created a devious string of puzzles indicating its location. If you are the first of Victor's relatives to find this key, you will be declared owner of Victor's fortune.

You will conduct your search on the grounds of Acronymica, Victor's palatial estate. The property features a ferris wheel, a roller coaster, an 18-hole golf course, a swimming pool, a fully stocked petting zoo, an arcade containing four Dance Dance Revolution machines, a virtual reality entertainment center, a gym overseen by an award-winning personal trainer, and a nuclear warhead shooting gallery. You, however, will only be permitted into twelve rooms of the mansion, each of which contains a puzzle. Solve all of them, and then perhaps all of this splendor will be yours.

Your goal is to find four keywords, which are all common English-language words. Determining each of these keywords will require information from exactly three rooms. Once you have all four, the location of Victor's key should become clear. Daniel Katz (thedan@mit.edu) is the executor of the estate, and you can contact him to confirm the location of the key (provided you also present the four correct keywords). He would also be happy to answer any questions you may have.

If all else fails, find inspiration in the name of Acronym. It served Victor well throughout his life, and we hope it will serve you as well on your money-grubbing quest. Good luck.

Sincerely,

Johnny Plotdevice

Johnny's House of Estate Law and Contrived Storylines

Den

Isn't a den supposed to be a place you can relax and escape from work? This one has numbers scrawled all over the wall.

*174052226222652494254022643271521
84131347254316268814134701626268*

TV Room

There is a scrap of paper folded into the programming guide:

The following list is actually a combination of two lists, each of which has been encoded by a different standard letter substitution. Each of the two lists consists of ten items in one category; the two categories are closely related, and one consists entirely of people's names. When you're finished decoding, you'll find the answer is easy as ABC...

FNCCNIZ
BYHHEFU BXYQTOOT
NFGEQP NTYS
QNCN DMZAJDC
IGCCZ GLYGCI
JELTXYO
AGA AMDFND
RFBS HMFNBW
OJTUOP XUT
ABTTS
UMX LMVMF
MEAM BXQQTBH
ANC LXNSC
RGKSC EJSCC
YMDR LJYYNDL
IYGLTB HOYGLTBH
CXWTBH JEQS
DNQSL UBSKASC
MDX OKNYSCQ
MXQQPJXXS HKYFBTH

Theater

Victor must have cancelled his pay-per-view service. No matter what selection you try, all you get is a blue screen with a bunch of names on it.

Alec Baldwin	Kevin Bacon	James Coburn	David Hyde Pierce	John Turturro	Winona Ryder
William H Macy	Steve Buscemi	Orson Welles	Bill Murray	Whoopi Goldberg	Ben Affleck
Eddie Izzard	Reese Witherspoon	Eric Idle	Rick Moranis	Rowan Atkinson	Hugh Grant

Fargo	Mystery Men
Final Fantasy	Osmosis Jones
Ghostbusters	Pleasantville
Girl, Interrupted	Rat Race
Monkeybone	Splitting Heirs
Mr. Deeds	State And Main
The Muppet Movie	Transformers

Kitchen

Of the many notes stuck on the refrigerator, one stands out:

REMINDER:

Play lucky lotto numbers Thursday!

Eight prime numbers between 1 and 100

Sum of the eight numbers is a cube

Three of the numbers end in the same digit

Each of the other five is the only number ending in a certain digit

There are two pairs of numbers such that one in the pair is the same as the other in the pair, but with its digits switched

Laundry Room

Three of the washing machines, labelled A, B, and C have numeric keypads on them. Entering a two-digit number into any of the machines causes it to print out a word. Strange.

MACHINE A

25 => high
31 => separate
42 => true
58 => kiss

MACHINE B

26 => Roman
40 => guess
47 => Alice
56 => terms

MACHINE C

26 => from
34 => west
36 => Tom
42 => midnight

Master Bedroom

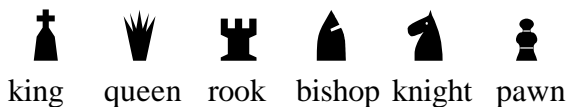
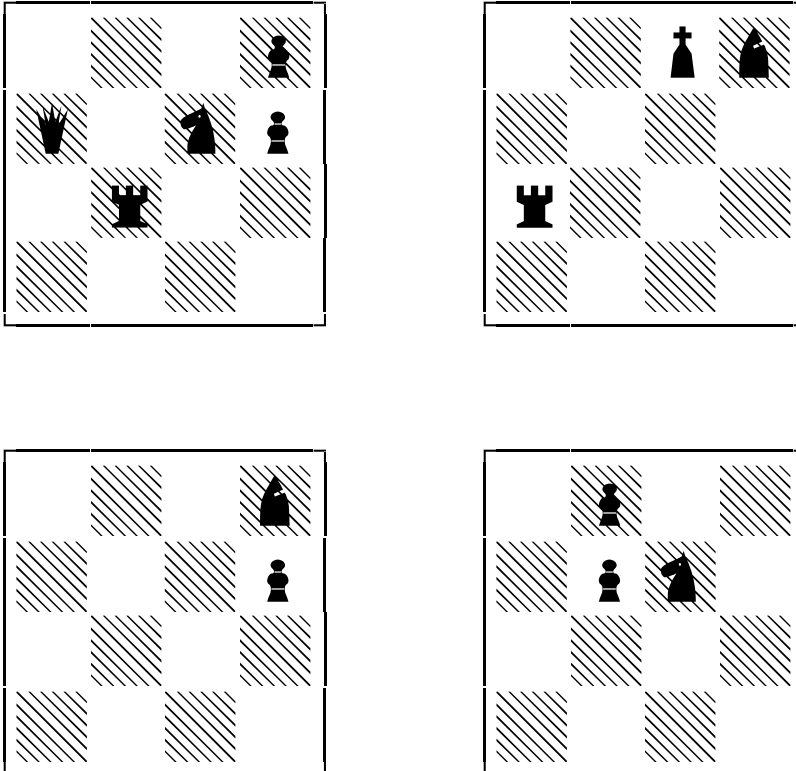
There's no light switch and it's pitch black in here. You can barely see the furniture.

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

Game Room

According to a note next to them, the four chessboards before you are actually four quadrants of one chessboard. They are not in the correct order, but each of them is oriented correctly, and black is moving up the board.

The white king seems to have fallen off the table.



Music Room

There's a very impressive record collection here. But it feels incomplete somehow.

*my arms forgetting all I couldn't all aboard many more of them
serve your conscience overseas busy neutralizing so much it leaves
me heels to drag discombobulated air seem the same actin' funny
but single sound as you scream*

Foyer

There's a gold plate mounted on the wall with a cryptic inscription.

32-36-9-30-27-33-3-15 Pet Fair vote goes awry
19-10-26-16-1-44-37-25 Audible complaint: "Split or make an acquaintance"
13-40-7-29-8-20-22-34 The thousand and first spasm is part of a motif
31-11-42-39-6-21-45-4 Airline explores light serving utensils
14-41-12-43-35-5-24-38 Ready for driving around, damaged tree wobbled
2-18-28-23-17 Midday periods switch status in totally dark house?

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 11-12-13-14-15-16-17 18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25 26-27-28-29
30-31-32-33-34-35 36-37-38 39-40-41-42-43-44-45

Garden

Careful. You could get lost in this place.

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

Study

There's a letter sitting in the typewriter. It doesn't seem to be finished.

Lamentably, in my long television career, I have never understood how others answer questions on the air. The crucial strategy in being a national public figure is keeping yourself one move ahead of interviewers so that you are always ready. Being the first one to bring up a new topic allows you to control the interview, avoiding unbearable scandals and public embarrassment. So it is my hope that everyone who reads this letter will make a big effort to be cagey whenever interacting with the entertainment media. I promise you will thus avoid a really tragic end to your fame and fortune, and your spotlight will shine for many years to come.

Office

There are shelves full of books throughout this room. Some of the books are lying out all by themselves; somebody should really get around to sorting them.

A - Indy	N - Unlucky
B - Musketeers	O - TurboGrafx
C - Feldon	P - Thieves
D - Magnificent	Q - Skiddoo
E - Baker's	R - Jordan
F - Kasem	S - Samurai
G - Blackjack	T - Towers
H - Colt	U - Forbes
I - Score	V - Heinz
J - Bottles	W - Fab
K - Horsemen	X - Jumpstreet
L - Crowd	Y - Lanthanum
M - Vroomfondel	Z - Sweet