

**A VERY
METAPHORICAL
BRITISH DYSTOPIA**

Hello, Number Six. I suppose you're wondering what you're doing here. This is Your Village; unfortunately for you, it's a question of your resignation.

One of the perks of your former employment is a company-supplied house and salary. Quite mandatory, I'm afraid. You're encouraged to hang around. And, of course, you're free to tell us why you resigned, at any time.

While I find your protestations that you slipped and knocked your head are quite amusing, I must admit, I don't believe you when you say you don't remember who you are or why you resigned. The information in your head is priceless, and I don't think you've realised what a valued property you've become. So, if you have forgotten, well, you'd better remember soon, shouldn't you?

When you know who you are and you're ready to talk, come around to my house. The Green Dome. We can have a little chat.

0000

Each puzzle opens with some story in italics. These are not part of any of the puzzles.

The numbering of the villagers is **random**.

Once you have worked out who you are, you may talk to Number Two in the Green Dome by looking at Meta 2. (Meta 2 is available upon request.)

ANSWER CHECKERS

Additional answer checkers are included for confirming the identities of the villagers.

	ANSWER	IDENTITY
Number Three	https://tinyurl.com/2p8mc6vp	https://tinyurl.com/48wekap6
Number Four	https://tinyurl.com/45avwczx	https://tinyurl.com/3cvhfej3
Number Five	https://tinyurl.com/29tj3t86	https://tinyurl.com/bdfemnhc
Number Six	https://tinyurl.com/4jf8dxxb	
Number Seven	https://tinyurl.com/3crb4epj	https://tinyurl.com/2p9cv85d
Number Eight	https://tinyurl.com/ycktp45e	https://tinyurl.com/2p8zh3kn
Number Nine	https://tinyurl.com/3uzz2ny3	https://tinyurl.com/4cupxwhr
Number Ten	https://tinyurl.com/2p8f694y	https://tinyurl.com/2p8za6kr

NUMBER THREE

"I'd like a bigger map, please," is all you ask; to get a sense of where this Village is, and to begin to plot your escape. But Number Three is able to procure no atlas; nor deliver revelations about your latitude, longitude, or general proximity to the nearest non-dystopian pub. All they give you are strange grids of letters of varying sizes. When you take him to task, Number Three acts as if this is perfectly reasonable, with a small smile and smaller shrug, and the quick flick of a cigarette directed carefully away from the so-called maps.

Whatever this place is, you decide, it must be hell.

0000

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

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

Y I V L A S A L O C I N S M Z M L E I J
M S V T W S D W Y S M P L A B I C A N A
V Z V X K X F K N **N** O I M Z U M E X W T
S X B **Q U A T T R O** Z A J V W D J T M R
N X Z X U K I O R **V** I Z D M Y Q G L B J
L Z P I Y H N T I **E** S Z O B U D L Z I F
J D J G I V I B E N N A J T B J B X H X
R V M I O T W W I H Z M I V B Y E R C R
V V Z I U Y K D Y H J W T D P J T Y J U
N C L V Y D Y G F J L I W U U T Z S O J
J E E M W I B C E O X H Y G C A Q H F J
C M Z M Q R U A K S I U Z O U U L D T P
T T U U U W W W F A E H I V U R G C X W

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

I spotted what looked like a pirate map over the counter:

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

Spreadsheet link for grids: <https://tinyurl.com/4twk28fz>

NUMBER FOUR

As Number Two was showing you around the town, he had remarked on one of the larger buildings. "The town council is used for public meetings... but we also use it for amateur theatricals. Very amateur, I'm afraid."

You remember that as you spy Number Four inside, conducting the music with flourishes. He does not smile.

0000

The leads sing their tunes in their order; but unfortunately their singing partners haven't shown up yet...

Ask and you'll receive reply
Gum chewer in book of mine
Wrote Sane Occultism, then
When ethyl I'm Basic N

- - - - -

I'm just a dunce, with some attraction
Rock'n'roll regal, Talking Heads action
The Second City, where I debuted
And my N zeroes on Family Feud

- - - - -

Some things are not true
Like things I would do:
Be in Generation X, a
Kid, a piano man;
While filming a western,
Wear about N hats

- - - - -

There's a good side to every single bad thing happening
Like being the first astronaut like me in space
And being iconic at my Oscar accepting;
When not forgiven, had N trees round at my place

- - - - -

This consequence was not
Intended, infatuation
unexpected; when I
governed New Jersey,
and wrote La Pastoure,
And released a song by Straight N

You are my only
Required companion
Sharpshooting with Bill
And snapshotting Lennon;
Married to the Nth
Canadian PM

Nourish an oak or pine!
A part of your body,
Painted "the Nile-near
Rosetta"

NUMBER FIVE

"Language, Number Six," says Number Five. "Language is the first and last front on which every battle is fought. On some level, all wars are over language, after their own fashion. The other side doesn't speak like us; therefore, they must be destroyed."

He pushes up his glasses. "Control the language, Number Six, and you win every battle before it is fought. The boxing match that became a game of chess in turn becomes a machine of dials, which you tweak and tweak to keep all in favour. The linguists rule the world. Isn't this exciting?"

0000

This thing is a thing you can see using a glass and flash box. This box is small on one side and can sometimes sit on your legs. There is a window on this box where you can see something like parts of books. (You can usually only do this if your glass and flash box is talking to another box in your house which can talk to many flying boxes in the sky.) These book parts can be joined to other book parts if they possess words which join to other words. By using a part named after an animal which you can add to the box, you can press the words which join to other words (if the book part you are looking at does contain them) to walk between book parts. All of the roads which everyone can walk on and the book parts everyone can visit together form the thing. This thing used to be very empty three-ten years ago but it is getting bigger all the time.

In some places, all people pick some people to join a house. These house people decide what you can and can't do, spend parts of your money, and do important stuff for all people. They have lots of power. The approach of picking the people with power has people parted into different groups of land. These people with power in some places can pick where the edges of the land groups are. Because some people like those in the house and other people want different people in the house, and those people who don't like the people with power sometimes live in known places, the people with power can make a proposal to change the edges of the land groups in order to put everyone who likes them together, and keep everyone who doesn't like them away from each other. Then when people are picked to go into the house, the people in power are going to stay in power. This concept thing is named after someone.

This thing is a thing inside the glass and flash box. In some ways it is the most important thing in it. This thing is made up of many smaller parts which are made of very small bits of straight hard ground stuff which are long. Power runs through this long ground stuff in a way which makes things either true or not true. When you want your box to do things, like add numbers together or show you new exciting words, then you act on the parts of the box, and it sends orders of power meaning true and not true to this thing. The box is good at adding and numbers and bad at things like sentences and words. The power (flash power which makes lights, not power like the last bit) comes from a connector which joins to a pocket with tall, straight, small, hard ground parts that help it join well. This thing is bright and quick and knows what to do when it hears orders of power like this and gives YOU what you want.

Many years ago, someone died, and some people said that he wasn't very good at being dead. (They liked this because being dead is stupid.) Later, lots of people wrote about this person and had stories about him put in a book and tried to internalise those stories. At the very start there was only one group behind this person, but they did not agree on stuff and over time broke up into different groups of faith. (Sorry, I have not talked about the thing yet.) The thing is a thing that one of the groups which like the not-dead person try to make happen. On the last day of the week, when they all get together in a big building, this group gets brown food and red water and the person wearing the big white shirt who is allowed to do this by a bigger building says words. The people in this group say that this makes the brown food into skin and the red water into blood. (Other people do not agree.) This is to mirror the time when other people ate the same food and water. The act of change that the food and water does is this thing.

People who work with very small round parts (of which everything is made) will know that there is a kind of small round part which can join with up to four other round parts and is good at joining. (They're not really round, but it is easy to pretend that they are.) A long time ago we knew that we could make long straight lines of these round things, and we used this fact to make lots of strong and light stuff. These lines have lots of these very small round parts next to each other going off in either direction. These lines are also found in growing things like animals. Some bright people wrote true possible stories about how we could make lines which could move power by allowing even smaller round parts – which had a sort of down (not up) power – to move easily through their interior. They were right! This thing is the usual name for lines which allow power to move through them.

People like to know things that have just happened. So, some people have a job to write down things that have just happened in a paper that is given for money every day. In the last few years those with the job to write things down also put their words in YOUR glass and flash box and can put them there any time of the day. But sometimes (often), these words aren't true, because they want people to buy their paper or press on their words. They can make things up, or say things that aren't definite, because they want to write their words quickly to be faster than other people writing their words (because they make more money that way.) That is why this thing is used; it is given to people who write very good words, and have everything in their article be true. There are two sevens of kinds of this thing for this work and seven kinds of this thing given for other kinds of work.

Just under two hundred years ago, a man who is known for writing lots of very good stories wrote this thing. This person who wrote stories is known for making some of the first short stories. This is one of them. The important person in this thing has no name and is probably crazy. The person with no name is afraid of the old man they live with because they have an eye which is not good and is like a flying animal. The person with no name stands at the mouth of the room, and when they are sure the old man is conscious, they kill him, and then hide his pieces under the floor. It is the perfect wrong doing, except that the important person is crazy. When the people who try to catch people who do wrong things show up, the person with no name imagines that there is an organ that moves blood around the body which is making noise under the floor. The crazy person gets very scared and says what they have done, and gets caught.

```

_ _ _ _ 3 _ _ _ _ _ 7 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ 6 _ _ _
_ 2 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ 19 _
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ 10 4 _ _ _ _ 16 _
_ 15 _ _ _ 8 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ 12
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ -11 _ _ _ _ _ 14 _ _ 18 _
_ _ _ _ 5 _ _ _ _ _ 13 _ 9 _ _ _ _ _
_ _ _ _ 17 _ _ _ 1 _ 20 _ _ _ _ _

```

(5)

NUMBER SIX

Who am I?

Number 3	_ _ 9 2 13 _
Number 4	11 _ _ _ 5 19
Number 5	_ 8 _ 17 1
Number 7	_ _ _ 10 15
Number 8	16 _ _ _ 3 12
Number 9	_ _ _ 7 _ 18 4
Number 10	_ _ _ 14 6

NUMBER SEVEN

You enter the quiz hall. Number Seven is there, leading rounds and rounds of questions; nonsensical, tricky questions, designed to drive you mad and leave you questioning reality. The people in the hall appear to be playing along, but even standing in the room is enough to make your head spin.

Number Seven looks your way. She smiles. "Care to join in?"

0000

"I'm going to ask you a series of questions."

QUESTION 1
a) Croydon
b) The ocean
c) Point Nemo

QUESTION 2
a) Nothing
b) Burple
c) Anything ending with -urple
d) Hirple

QUESTION 3
a) Catching mice
b) YouTube
c) Catgut
d) A piano made of cats

QUESTION 4
a) "Hello? Can you hear me?"

QUESTION 13
a) Fairy tales
b) Parenting
c) Babies
d) Umbilical cords
e) Sperm

QUESTION 14
a) Seven
b) Six
c) Five
d) Four
e) Three
f) Eight

QUESTION 15
a) The Tempest
b) A poem
c) A diary

b) "Come on down, Neil, it's fine!"

c) "Get the golf clubs!"

d) "Great to be here in Philadel-- I mean, the Moon."

e) "Contact light."

QUESTION 5

a) Has a [redacted]

b) Goes for a walk

c) Goes to church

d) Watches herself on TV

QUESTION 6

a) Richard Branson

b) Trains of large creatures (like elephants)

c) The Railway Mouse

d) Navvies

QUESTION 7

a) The Stig

b) Jeremy Clarkson

c) James May

d) Richard Hammond

e) Chris Evans

f) Matt LeBlanc

g) Angela Rippon

QUESTION 8

a) The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand

d) The Book For Him I Name For Jesus' Sake

QUESTION 16

a) It's the worst sport ever

b) It favours tall people

c) It has a very small court

d) It was a misunderstanding between Naismith and Bear

QUESTION 17

a) Telford town centre

b) The bottom of Patagonia

c) The off-switch

d) A bust of Vladimir Lenin

QUESTION 18

a) Iceberg

b) Rocket

c) Lollo Rosso

d) We don't know

QUESTION 19

a) Yas Queen

b) Alan

c) Nobody

QUESTION 20

a) Red

b) Rusty brown

- b) 1939
- c) After the Second World War
- d) During the Second World War
- e) September 1918

- QUESTION 9**
- a) Ben Nevis
 - b) Richard Osman
 - c) Richard Osman standing on Ben Nevis
 - d) Mount Paget

- QUESTION 10**
- a) It depends on the wind
 - b) Something about wind
 - c) It's got something to do with wind

- QUESTION 11**
- a) Sikhs
 - b) Buddhism
 - c) Hinduism
 - d) Christianity
 - e) Islam

- QUESTION 12**
- a) Four, two North and two South
 - b) Eight
 - c) Sixteen
 - d) Eleven

- c) Brownly brown

- QUESTION 21**
- a) mwEEEERRRRMEEEEERRRR
 - b) *blows out cheeks, makes fish face, waggles eyebrows seductively*
 - c) They play down the puffiness
 - d) They turn themselves inside out
 - e) They decorate the sea floor for 9 days

- QUESTION 22**
- a) Nothing much is made with them in mind, really
 - b) They can only see U films during the day
 - c) They're allergic to popcorn
 - d) Their eyes are on the side of their head
 - e) The frame rate is too low

- QUESTION 23**
- a) Clubs
 - b) Spears and arrows
 - c) Cameras

- QUESTION 24**
- a) He looks like a right bastard
 - b) His hat
 - c) He has a diagonal white stripe across his lions
 - d) He is a bastard

?

(5,4)

- Who was the first man to both captain and coach
FIFA World Cup-winning sides?
- A Dino Zoff
 - B Dunga**
 - C Franz Beckenhauer

Image I swapped of Number 7

NUMBER EIGHT

You come across a strange game in the courtyard. Number Eight gestures at you to come over. "Number Six! It's great to see you. I did want you to join our game." And then, unbidden:

"There's something about, you know, us all waxing rhapsodic about reality. Are things really all that pretentious? You know?"

He has this kind of nervous energy; like he's not sure where to look when talking to another person. Two left feet. (Two right feet, for that matter.) You assure him that you do, indeed, know.

"Things don't matter. Who cares if reality is real? Sit back, make nonsense, have fun. I think you'll enjoy your time here in the Village."

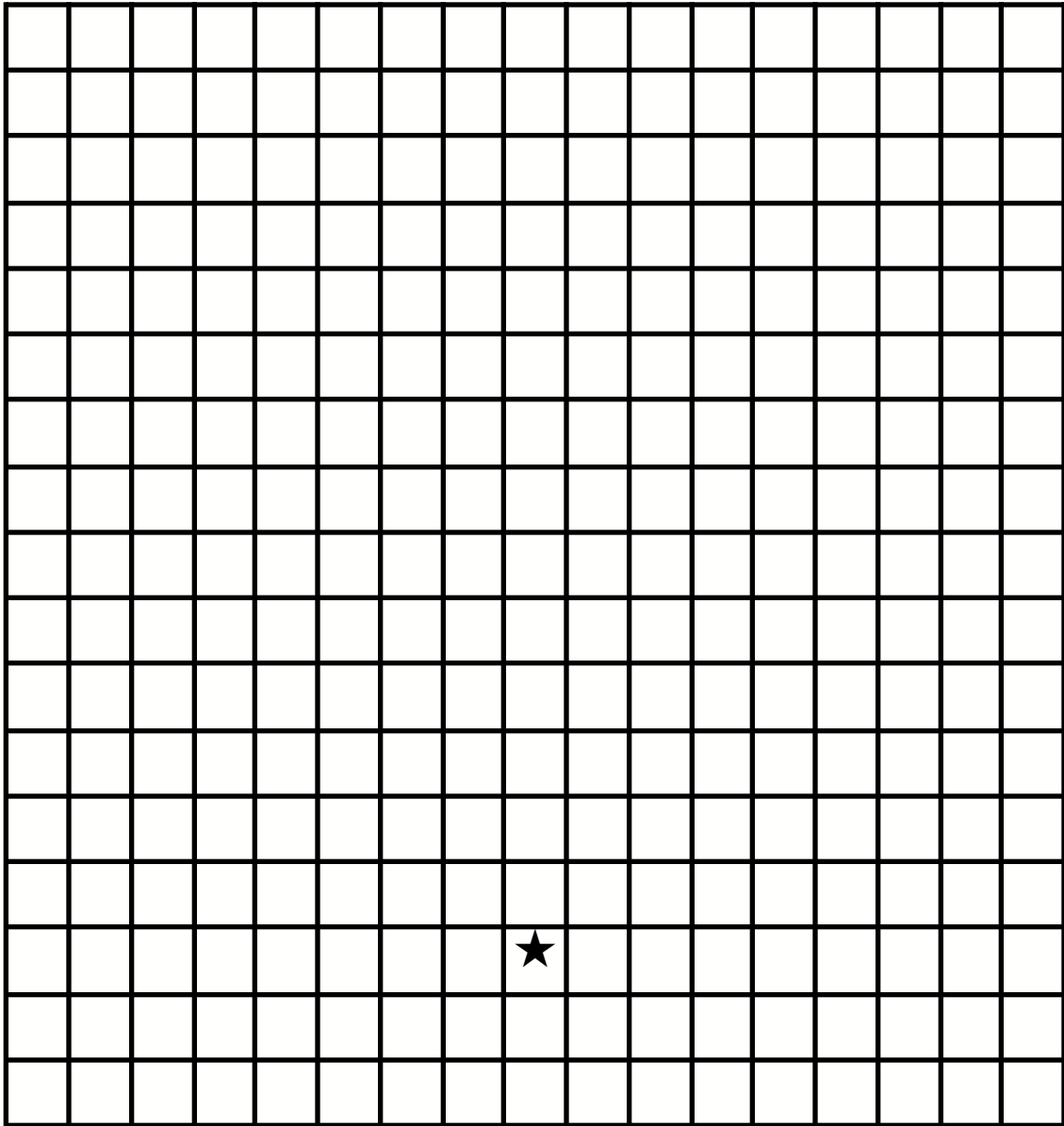
In the middle of the carpeted floor, a mass of people (neatly indexed and numbered) is poring over hundreds of identical letter squares.

0000

"Everyone has an unlimited rack size and tile set. There is only one rule," says Number 8; "you must always place your word intersecting only the word placed by the previous player."

- Number 101 says: "I'd like to play a word meaning 'Next to or surge in popularity.'"
- Number 102 says: "I'd like to play a word meaning 'New York City borough sharing a border or edge.'"
- Number 103 says: "I'd like to play a word meaning 'Relating to courts or the copied portion of statements.'"
- Number 104 says: "I'd like to play a word meaning 'Reside or inhabit or entrance that's crossed.'"
- Number 105 says: "I'd like to play a word meaning 'Last imperial in southwest Long Island.'"
- Number 106 says: "I'd like to play a word meaning 'Improvement in condition, or like Wall Street.'"
- Number 107 says: "I'd like to play a word meaning 'Taking the subset of statistical administrations of justice.'"
- Number 108 says: "I'd like to play a word meaning 'The bottom of a door populations for analysis.'"
- Number 109 says: "I'd like to play a word meaning 'Said to end Chinese dynasty.'"

Number 106 says, "I'll start!", and begins to place their letters on the board, left to right.



0000

When it is Number 8's turn, he spends some time deliberating. "I'd like to play a word meaning 'Formally constituted political guest entertainment.'"

You point out to him that that does not seem like a word. He frowns at you, as if you're breaking some unspoken etiquette; and then says, "Then I'll play a word meaning 'Social event for governmental group.'"

He seems satisfied with this.

NUMBER NINE

You're picking at the jellied carrots provided free at the Village restaurant - "for our new guest!", the waitress had exclaimed - when the note from Number Nine arrives. You unfurl it, and read it carefully. And then you wonder; for someone to communicate with you discreetly like this, would they have the Village's best interests at heart? Or yours?

And then you wonder: is that what they want you to think?

0000

The server delivers this map inside an artisanally crafted block of tofu:



DISCLAIMER: This puzzle is designed to be solo-solved, and may break unpredictably when group-solved. The author suggests having one person stream their progress to avoid any issues.

NUMBER TEN

"Noncompletion is the oldest human tradition." Number Ten laughs. "How long have we been carefully crafting a fire outside the cave, and then concluded with an exasperated, 'screw it, that'll do?' We've come to expect endings, but really there's no reason for things to end satisfyingly at all. Some of the best endings ever told are ambiguous, or abrupt.

"And, of course, life is a story, isn't it? I don't think I need to say anything about those sorts of endings." He looks at you with that twinkle in his eye; the twinkle of colliding, star-crossed stars.

You attempt to claim that anticlimax is bad for an audience. You are met with only a knowing smile.

0000

The answer to this puzzle is FORGERY.