

## THE SIXTH KEY

A FREE CASE FROM THE WORLD OF  
THE BUREAU OF  
UNCLAIMED WEATHER

# SEVEN MINUTES MISSING

She kept the light on for you.  
Now it is your turn.

**A COMPLETE MINI-MYSTERY**

1-4 PLAYERS / AGES 12+

PLAYTEST 0.1 / TARGET: 15-20 MIN

A HOUSE 6 DESIGNS PRODUCTION



START HERE | YOUR ROLE | FICTIONAL TIME 17:38

## She left the lamp on

Your first night in this city ended with a cancelled train and nowhere warm to wait. Ada Moss, the night porter, kept the station lamp burning, brought you tea and stayed until your ride arrived. She never asked for anything in return.

Tonight Ada retires after thirty years. Her colleagues ordered seven minutes of sunshine for her farewell: for once, someone else will arrange the light. You are now a relief dispatcher at the Bureau, and they have asked you to find their missing gift. After the farewell bell, Ada boards a train to begin her retirement. This moment will not come round again.

At 17:38 the outgoing rack is empty where her parcel should be. The customer's receipt is tea-stained. Did the light go to the wrong place, or did it never leave? Basil hands you the records: "Find it. She kept a lamp on for half this city."

### Choose how to play

Play alone or share all evidence with up to three other people. You need a pencil and paper. For paired play, read the Screen Casebook and print M02-M05; for paper-only play, print all five M-pages in Letter OR A4. Screen-only players can copy answers onto blank paper. No cutting, host, account or outside research is required.

M01

PART 1 OF 2

Read both parts of this file before moving to the next M-number.

MATCH M-NUMBERS

ACROSS EDITIONS.

START HERE | YOUR ROLE | FICTIONAL TIME 17:38

# She left the lamp on

## Follow the case

Read M02, M03 and M04 in that order. Record each answer before moving on. Open M05 only after you have chosen a parcel and a receiver. Then complete the dispatch slip and open Solution and Ending. The separate Hints file offers a nudge, connection and answer for each of the three puzzles; use its bookmarks to avoid later answers.

## The Bureau's rules

Weather stays sealed until its programmed release. A connected Bureau receiver receives it instantly; there is no travel time to add. A parcel releases its entire printed duration, without splitting or pausing. All records and rules in this case are reliable. Decorative artwork contains no required clues. Color never carries an answer.

Real play is untimed. All planning and setup take place at fictional 17:38; the clock advances only in the ending. Pause whenever you like. Design target: ages 12+, 1-4 players, about 15-20 minutes. This first playtest will check those estimates.

M01

PART 2 OF 2

Read both parts of this file before moving to the next M-number.

**MATCH M-NUMBERS**  
ACROSS EDITIONS.

EXHIBIT E1 | CUSTOMER NOTE AND CEREMONY CARDS

# The farewell with no forecast

To the dispatch desk: Ada says she will miss the people, but not the night shift. We have saved her the chair by the window. Please send SUNSHINE for the full seven-minute sunshine item in our programme. We begin at 17:40. Nothing overlaps, and there are no gaps between items.

A tea spill erased the parcel number and address on the customer's receipt. These ceremony instructions survived. You remember the station, but the Bureau still needs the exact receiver code from the parcel's route ticket. The four relevant parcel records are on M03.

## Four cards, out of order

**SPEECH**

4 MINUTES

**BELL**

2 MINUTES

**SUNSHINE**

7 MINUTES

**TEA**

3 MINUTES

M02

PART 1 OF 2

Read both parts of this file before moving to the next M-number.

MATCH M-NUMBERS  
ACROSS EDITIONS.

## EXHIBIT E1 | CUSTOMER NOTE AND CEREMONY CARDS

# The farewell with no forecast

## The organiser's three instructions

TEA goes immediately before SPEECH. SUNSHINE goes immediately after SPEECH. BELL happens after SUNSHINE. Use all four cards exactly once; their printed durations are exact.

### 1 / Put the ceremony in order

First: \_\_\_\_\_ Second: \_\_\_\_\_ Third: \_\_\_\_\_ Last: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2 / Recover the delivery interval

SUNSHINE must begin at \_\_\_\_\_ and end at \_\_\_\_\_. Show your time calculation.

Use a 24-hour clock: 17:40 is 5:40 p.m. The next item begins exactly when the previous one ends. Keep your interval for M03. Hint topic 1 covers this page.

M02

PART 2 OF 2

Read both parts of this file before moving to the next M-number.

**MATCH M-NUMBERS**  
ACROSS EDITIONS.

EXHIBIT E2 | COMPLETE CANDIDATE RECORDS

Four parcels on the register

Match the customer's requested weather, exact duration and complete delivery interval from E1. Only one record passes all three checks. The receiver must be open for the whole cycle; opening and closing times are inclusive. A spare minute in a window cannot extend the contents of a parcel.

| Parcel | Contents  | Full cycle | Receiver open | Route ticket  |
|--------|-----------|------------|---------------|---------------|
| P32    | MOONLIGHT | 7 min      | 17:47-17:54   | E / E / E / N |
| P18    | SUNSHINE  | 7 min      | 17:47-17:54   | N / E / E / S |
| P44    | SUNSHINE  | 7 min      | 17:48-17:55   | E / S / E / E |
| P21    | SUNSHINE  | 6 min      | 17:47-17:54   | N / N / E / E |

The permanent route ticket selects the receiver; it is not a journey time. Each of the four letters is one step on the index board in E3. Start every ticket at C1 and read its letters from left to right. Copy the ticket from the matching parcel only.

M03

PART 1 OF 2

Read both parts of this file before moving to the next M-number.

MATCH M-NUMBERS  
ACROSS EDITIONS.

EXHIBIT E2 | COMPLETE CANDIDATE RECORDS

# Four parcels on the register

## 3 / Recover the parcel

Parcel: \_\_\_\_\_ Contents: \_\_\_\_\_ Full cycle: \_\_\_\_\_

## 4 / Explain each rejection

For each of the other three parcel IDs, name the printed fact that makes it unsuitable.

## 5 / Copy its sealed route

Step 1: \_\_\_\_ Step 2: \_\_\_\_ Step 3: \_\_\_\_ Step 4: \_\_\_\_

Do not open or combine parcels to create a substitute. Each sealed parcel belongs to its own booking. Keep the other three unchanged. Hint topic 2 covers this page.

M03

PART 2 OF 2

Read both parts of this file before moving to the next M-number.

MATCH M-NUMBERS  
ACROSS EDITIONS.

EXHIBIT E3 | RECEIVER INDEX, VERIFIED AT 17:38

# Where the light belongs

Start at C1. N moves up one row, E right one column, S down one row and W left one column. Apply all four letters from your selected ticket, one at a time. No diagonals, wrapping or jumping. Read the receiver at the final square only. This is an address index, not a street map; every adjacent square can be used.

|   | 1                                    | 2                                    | 3                                             | 4                                       |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| A | <b>A1</b><br>Bell stair<br>JUNCTION  | <b>A2</b><br>North index<br>JUNCTION | <b>A3</b><br>Old ticket office<br>RETIRED     | <b>A4</b><br>Roof index<br>JUNCTION     |
| B | <b>B1</b><br>Lamp index<br>JUNCTION  | <b>B2</b><br>West clock<br>JUNCTION  | <b>B3</b><br>Gallery index<br>JUNCTION        | <b>B4</b><br>Bookbinder court<br>ACTIVE |
| C | <b>C1</b><br>Intake desk<br>START    | <b>C2</b><br>Brass index<br>JUNCTION | <b>C3</b><br>Glassroof waiting room<br>ACTIVE | <b>C4</b><br>East index<br>JUNCTION     |
| D | <b>D1</b><br>River index<br>JUNCTION | <b>D2</b><br>River lift<br>JUNCTION  | <b>D3</b><br>Garden index<br>JUNCTION         | <b>D4</b><br>Seed court<br>ACTIVE       |

EXHIBIT E3 | RECEIVER INDEX, VERIFIED AT 17:38

# Where the light belongs

ACTIVE means the receiver is working; its permitted delivery window is the one in E2. RETIRED means the receiver is permanently closed. A JUNCTION is only an index position and cannot receive weather. These status words are literal and never refer to a person.

## 6 / Trace and name the destination

C1 > \_\_\_\_\_ > \_\_\_\_\_ > \_\_\_\_\_ > \_\_\_\_\_. Receiver name: \_\_\_\_\_

## 7 / Check its status

Final square: \_\_\_\_\_ Status: \_\_\_\_\_. Does the receiver itself prevent delivery?

Record your parcel, full route and receiver before turning to M05. Hint topic 3 covers this page.

FINAL REVIEW | OPEN AFTER RECORDING M03-M04

# Clear the hold

E4 / the signed handling record

| Time  | Recorded action                                                                                                                                                |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 17:30 | P18 passed its seal check and entered the outgoing rack. No weather had been released.                                                                         |
| 17:35 | Clerk Nell Reed selected RECEIVER RETIRED, suspended P18's scheduled release and moved the sealed parcel to review rack R.                                     |
| 17:37 | Nell: "I read RETIREMENT in the customer's heading and chose the matching-looking hold reason. I did not check the receiver register. I changed nothing else." |

This is the complete handling history since 17:30. Rack R preserves sealed weather; it does not consume it. A dispatcher may clear a retirement hold only if E3 lists the recovered receiver as ACTIVE. The event programme and E2 must still support the full release interval.

M05

PART 1 OF 2

Read both parts of this file before moving to the next M-number.

MATCH M-NUMBERS  
ACROSS EDITIONS.

FINAL REVIEW | OPEN AFTER RECORDING M03-M04

# Clear the hold

## Your dispatch slip

### Parcel and destination

Parcel ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Rack to retrieve it from: \_\_\_\_\_ Receiver square and name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Program the cycle

Clear the hold or keep it? \_\_\_\_\_ Release at: \_\_\_\_\_ Finish at: \_\_\_\_\_ Other three parcels: \_\_\_\_\_

## Close the loose end

Why was the sunshine missing from the outgoing rack? Which exact words were confused, and which exhibit permits you to correct the mistake?

Ready? Open Solution and Ending after recording your decision. If you used a hint or revised an answer, the light still counts.

M05

PART 2 OF 2

Read both parts of this file before moving to the next M-number.

MATCH M-NUMBERS  
ACROSS EDITIONS.