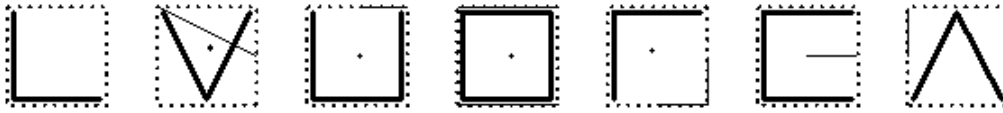


# Las Vegas Layover

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The key to solving this puzzle lies in the border. A variety of the symbols used in the text of the puzzle can be found in the corner and edge caps therein, similar to the following:



In addition to the symbols themselves, it is important to note that each has a decorative element in the background. These are templates that will be required to decode the text. Finally, the last significant and necessary observation is that some of the glyphs which contain dots in the middle are not completely symmetric – that is, the dot can be off-center.

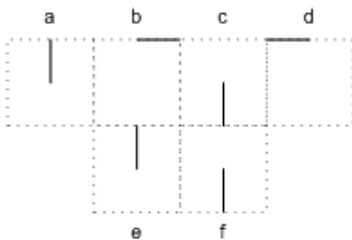
The implication of this becomes quite evident in light of the purpose of the templates: each symbol in the text corresponds to either one of the glyphs in the border, or a rotation and/or reflection of one. Thus, each symbol from the text can be replaced by some orientation of a template from the border. In the case of glyphs two, three, and four above – the ones that contain eccentric dots – the asymmetry results in orientations that would otherwise not be uniquely expressible; they have eight, eight, and four respectively. It should also be noted that the assignment of symbol to template was planned such that any order of rotations and flips to produce a specific glyph will result in a consistently corresponding template. For example, since flipping symbol one horizontally will result in the same symbol as rotating it 90° counterclockwise, the same is true for its associated template.

The text consists of several lines of “groups,” each consisting of two series of symbols. To solve the puzzle, each of these glyphs is replaced with its corresponding template; horizontally adjacent symbols in a series are meant to be overlaid, and so all the templates of their components can be combined into a single unit graphic. The vertical adjacency of each pair of series in a group indicates that the aggregate graphics for the two rows are likewise supposed to be arranged – one on top of the other.

For example, the first group in the text is as follows:



The corresponding templates are as follows:



where templates a, c, e, and f are rotated versions of template six above, template b is template three, and template d is a horizontally flipped version of template three.

Overlaying the templates in each series gives the following graphics:



The result is the letter "T".

Continuing the process for all groups in the puzzle text, the following message is produced (spaces added for clarity):

TAKE THE GLYPHS FROM COLUMNS 4 6 12 26 20 AND 16 THEN INTEGRATE IN A VERTICAL LINE

These instructions state that symbols (i.e. typically top and bottom symbols from intersecting groups) in each of the identified columns should be collected and arranged as groups themselves. This produces six groups – one for each column – on which the decoding procedure can be repeated. This yields the following set of letters:

RICNEP

Which, when unscrambled, produces the following the word:

PRINCE

Thus, **PRINCE** is the answer to the puzzle (PINCER is also acceptable.)