

A Grand Tour - Solution Walkthrough

By Ian Rackow

Flavor text: Last summer, I decided to take some time off and go for a ride around Europe. Along the way, my tour guides introduced me to some friends of theirs who seemed like they were trying to disguise their profiles. In addition to pictures from a number of stages of the trip, I kept a log of who we met - they all had some pretty colorful shirts!

The first step is recognizing that the theme of the puzzle is professional bicycle racing, specifically the 3 biggest/most famous races, the Tour of Italy (Giro de Italia), the Tour of France (Tour de France), and the Tour of Spain (Vuelta a Espana). There are many clues to this theme, like the flavor text words “Europe” and “ride”, the Italian, French, and Spanish names/words for friends in the text, and finally the images on the second page, which contain race “profiles” for individual days of the Giro, Tour, and Vuelta. The title references this as well, as the set of three races are called the Grand Tours.

Next, we move on to the Trip Log section, looking at the series of paired name clues. By googling and researching, you arrive at the following table of solved names:

Day 1			Day 7		
1:00	Alberto Fujimori	John Krasinski	3:00	Chris Harrison	Michael Bennet
3:00	Denis Diderot	Denis Diderot	4:00	Nairo Quezada	Fabio Trabocchi
Day 2			7:00	Chris Pratt	Alejandro Inarritu
2:00	Richard Branson	Pascal Siakam	Day 9		
3:00	Fabio Lanzoni	Alejandro Inarritu	2:00	Chris Harrison	Chris Harrison
Day 3			5:00	Alberto Fujimori	Alejandro Inarritu
1:00	Vincenzo Bellini	Giacomo Meyerbeer	6:00	Geraint	Peter Dinklage
4:00	Vincenzo Bellini	Mark Hamill	Day 11		
5:00	Vincenzo Bellini	Peter Dinklage	4:00	Alberto Fujimori	Thor
6:00	Simon Cowell	Alejandro Inarritu	5:00	Tom Brady	Fernando
Day 5			Day 13		
2:00	Chris Harrison	Peter Dinklage	6:00	Ryder Callahan	Joaquim de Almeida
Day 6					
1:00	Andy Murray	Alessandro Botticelli			

Based on the flavor text noting that these “friends” were trying to “disguise their profiles” and the fact that these people have nothing to do with cycling, we can infer that these are not the final names we are actually looking for. Looking at the flavor text again, it describes that all of those

friends “had some pretty colorful shirts”. Doing even a tiny bit of googling, one can find that the winners of each of the Grand Tours win colored jerseys specific to each race. This brings us back to the names section of the trip log.

Raffaele and Cosimo introduced me to their amici, who taught me to relish the beginnings as I depart. Jacques and Vincent introduced me to their amis, who taught me to appreciate the journeys, making sure to revel in the high-points along the way. Ramon and Valencia introduced me to their amigos, who taught me to look forward to endings, and to enjoy the destination once I got there.

The Italian names, Rafaella and Cosimo, are colored pink and cyclamen, which in Italian are “Rosa” and “Ciclamino”. The French names, Jacques and Vincent, are colored yellow and green, which in French is “Jaune” and “Vert”. Finally, the Spanish names, Ramon and Valencia, are colored red and green, which in Spanish is “Rojo” and “Verde”. We then have to recognize that these colors correspond to two types of winners jerseys from each race: the first color (pink, yellow, red) corresponds to the “General Classification” winner from each race, while the second color (cyclamen, green, green) correspond to the “Points Classification” winner from each race.

At this point, we need to make the realization that the names we solved for are recent winners of these jerseys in “disguise”, specifically meaning that the last name has been changed in most cases, or omitted in a few like Geraint, Thor, and Fernando, but this distinction has no bearing on the rest of the puzzle. If one couldn’t figure out this part just from the clues about the jerseys, looking up lists of famous people with some of the less common names like Ryder or Pascal show a very short list that will include a grand tour jersey-winning cyclist on it. Looking at lists of past winners, it becomes apparent that the first names from the left column (listed first in each trip log entry) are general classification winners, while the second name is in common with a points classification winner.

Each clued person corresponds to a single cyclist, so repeats indicate the same person is being referenced (this represents multiple wins). In two cases, there are multiple people with the same first name, the Chris’ and the Fabio’s. However, it is still easy to tell which cyclist each corresponds to. For the Chrises, the “Chris Harrison” clue appears multiple times in the left column in addition to once in the right column, which identifies cyclist Chris Froome, who has won multiple general classifications in addition to a points classification. Chris Horner, who corresponds to Chris Pratt, has only won a single general classification. For the Fabios, cyclist Fabio Aru has won a general classification, so he corresponds to Fabio Lanzoni in the left column, while cyclist Fabio Feline has won only a points classification, so he corresponds to Fabio Trabocchi in the right column. The only other possible trip up in this phase is with the clue “Smash Bros Ultimate player for NRG Esports”, which references Nairobi Quezada. In his case, his gamer tag is “Nairo”, which then corresponds to cyclist Nairo Quintana who is a general classification winner.

The last piece of information to realize with this phase of the puzzle is recognizing the pairings of cyclists. For every entry, the two cyclists listed won their respective jerseys in the **same race** in the **same year**. These two facts will be important later. In the cases of Froome and Menchov, they happened to win both jerseys in one of the grand tours, so they are listed twice. Here is the completed table of winners:

	General Classification	Points Classification	Race	Year
Day 1				
	1:00 Alberto [Contador]	John [Degenkolb]	Vuelta	2014
	3:00 Denis [Menchov]	Denis [Menchov]	Giro	2009
Day 2				
	2:00 Richard [Carapaz]	Pascal [Ackermann]	Giro	2019
	3:00 Fabio [Aru]	Alejandro [Valverde]	Vuelta	2015
Day 3				
	1:00 Vincenzo [Nibali]	Giacomo [Nizzolo]	Giro	2016
	4:00 Vincenzo [Nibali]	Mark [Cavendish]	Giro	2013
	5:00 Vincenzo [Nibali]	Peter [Sagan]	Tour	2014
	6:00 Simon [Yates]	Alejandro [Valverde]	Vuelta	2018
Day 5				
	2:00 Chris [Froome]	Peter [Sagan]	Tour	2013, '15, '16
Day 6				
	1:00 Andy [Schleck]	Alessandro [Petacchi]	Tour	2010
Day 7				
	3:00 Chris [Froome]	Michael [Matthews]	Tour	2017
	4:00 Nairo [Quintana]	Fabio [Felline]	Vuelta	2016
	7:00 Chris [Horner]	Alejandro [Valverde]	Vuelta	2013
Day 9				
	2:00 Chris [Froome]	Chris [Froome]	Vuelta	2017
	5:00 Alberto [Contador]	Alejandro [Valverde]	Vuelta	2012
	6:00 Geraint [Thomas]	Peter [Sagan]	Tour	2018
Day 11				
	4:00 Alberto [Contador]	Thor [Hushovd]	Tour	2009
	5:00 Tom [Dumoulin]	Fernando [Gaviria]	Giro	2017
Day 13				
	6:00 Ryder [Hesjedal]	Joaquim [Rodriguez]	Giro	2012

Of special note is the Froome-Sagan pairing, which unlike the rest of the pairings listed, doesn't uniquely identify a race year, but this will become inconsequential later on.

For now, nothing more can be done without looking at the second page of the puzzle, containing 19 images. Searching some of the text in the images reveals that each image is a stage “profile”, which is an altitude map of the race course for an individual day (called a “stage”). Noting the colors, theme of the puzzle, and the language of the text on each image, it should be obvious that the first column depicts Giro d’Italia stages, the middle column is Tour de France stages, and the third column is Vuelta a Espana stages.

Our next step is clued by looking at the flavor text once more, where it notes “pictures from a number of stages from our trip”. The key here is the phrase “number of stages” - which is meant to indicate you will want to look at the specific stage number for each of the depicted stages. The course of each race changes every year, so there will be a year associated with each stage. Googling the end locations uniquely identifies the year and stage number of each. Here is a table of the years and stages for the stages shown on page 2:

Italy	France	Spain
Stage 7 - 2016	Stage 9 - 2009	Stage 5 - 2017
Stage 9 - 2017	Stage 14 - 2018	Stage 12 - 2013
Stage 15 - 2009	Stage 4 - 2017	Stage 12 - 2014
Stage 18 - 2012	Stage 9 - 2010	Stage 21 - 2015
Stage 14 - 2019	Stage 3 - 2014	Stage 7 - 2018
Stage 9 - 2013	Stage 5 - 2015	Stage 1 - 2016
		Stage 18 - 2012

The stage numbers hold the key for what to do next. Translating number into letter using A=1, B=2, ..., Z=26, and reading down the columns, the following text is uncovered:

GIORNI INDICE ELLUGAR

The first word/column, “Giorni”, is Italian for “days”. The second column, “Indice”, is French for “index”. The third column, “El lugar”, is Spanish for “The place”. So in total, what should be gotten out of this stage of the puzzle is the English phrase, “Days index the place”. At this point, one should note that the trip log is organized by days.

It is now time to put the two sections of the puzzle together. You should have noticed the similarities between the trip log and images section, mainly that there are 19 entries in each section, with 6 entries related to the Giro, 6 related to the Tour, and 7 related to the Vuelta. Additionally, each of the years of winner pairs matches the year one of the race stages from the second page. We will now employ our knowledge of these matchings in combination with the

people/stage pairings. From the flavor text, the only information not used yet is that the Italian names focus on “beginnings”, the French names focus on “high points”, and the Spanish names focus on “endings”. For each column of stage profiles, we can record the start location, highest point, and ending location, respectively. Here are those places:

Spain - Start Location	France - High Point	Italy - End Location
Sulmona	Col du Tourmalet	Alcossebre
Montenero	La Baraque	Tarragona
Forli	Col des Trois	Logrono
San Vito Cadore	Col de la Madeleine	Madrid
Saint Vincent	Epping Forest	Pozo Alcon
San Sepolcro	Notre-Dame	Parque Nautico
		Valladolid

Performing the matching and following the instruction that “Days index the place” we get the following:

Italy				
Year	Start Location	Log Day	Final Letter	Log Hour
2016	Sulmona		3 L	1
2017	Montenero di Bisaccia		11 I	4
2009	Forli		1 F	3
2012	San Vito Cadore		13 E	6
2019	Saint Vincent		2 A	2
2013	San Sepolcro		3 N	5
France				
Year	High Point	Log Day	Final Letter	Log Hour
2009	Col du Tourmalet		11 A	4
2018	La Baraque		9 E	6
2017	Col des Trois		7 T	3
2010	Col de la Madeleine		6 L	1
2014	Epping Forest		3 P	5
2015	Notre-Dame		5 E	2

Spain				
Year	End Location	Log Day	Final Letter	Log Hour
2017	Alcossebre		9 R	2
2013	Tarragona		7 O	7
2014	Logrono		1 G	1
2015	Madrid		2 A	3
2018	Pozo Alcon		3 Z	6
2016	Parque Nautico		7 N	4
2012	Valladolid		9 I	5

Lastly, ordering by the log hour gives us the following text:

LAFINE LETAPE GRANIZO

Performing the same translation-by-country as the previous set of three words, we get “The end” (Italian), “The stage” (French), and “Hail” (Spanish). Doing some google searching for “End stage hail” immediately brings up Stage 19 of the 2019 Tour de France. The stage had to be ended early, mid race, as a result of hail on the roads in the French Alps. My family and I after years of wanting to go to see a stage live had planned a whole trip around going to see this stage, and we were lucky enough to have been positioned at a location before the riders were told to stop. Instead of the scheduled end in the town of Tignes, the end of the stage was the mountain pass that gives us the answer:

Col de l’Iseran

Thanks for solving!