

CHUTES AND LADDERS (answer)

by Andrew Ryder

The first step to solving this puzzle is to map out each player's movement around the board. The meaning of THUD was given in the instructions, so whoosh and click clack are left to correspond to chutes and ladders, respectively. Ta-da means you've won, so starting either from the beginning or end of the game you can use the THUDs to determine the size of the cube, then players' locations within it at any time (except for the ending positions of M.C. and Johann; those were left intentionally indeterminate so people wouldn't focus on them). Just like in the real game, chutes and ladders take winding paths through the grid. Since we don't really know their paths, we must disregard the movement along a chute or ladder, i.e. for the purpose of tracing their routes, the players can be said to teleport.

Once you have constructed the map, the players' names were meant to clue that Godel, Escher, Bach is relevant. I've never read the book myself, but it does have a snazzy cover- check it out! This game's data should be interpreted in the same way- consider visited places in the grid opaque, and places never visited by any player as clear. 'Shining a light' through the grid in the X dimension, then the Y, then the Z yields these 5x5 shadows:

X	X	X	X	X
X				X
X				
X				X
X	X	X	X	X

X				X
X				X
X				X
X				X
X	X	X	X	X

X	X	X	X	X
X				
X	X	X		
X				
X	X	X	X	X

So, the answer is CUE.