

# BILL, RECORD LECTURE!!!!

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# Small Ramsey Numbers

Exposition by **William Gasarch**

April 23, 2026

# Lets Party Like Its January of 2019

Recall the first theorem one usually hears in Ramsey Theory and can tell your non-math friends about.

*If there are 6 people at a party, either 3 know each other or 3 do not know each other.*

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We define graphs and complete graphs and state this theorem in those terms.

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**Def** A **Graph**  $G = (V, E)$  is a set  $V$  and a set of unordered pairs from  $V$ , called edges. These can easily be drawn.

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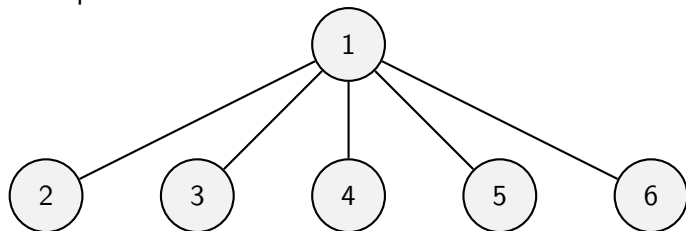
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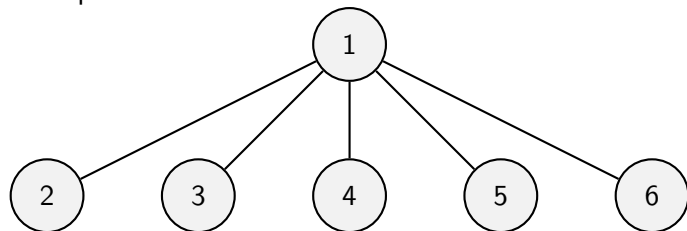
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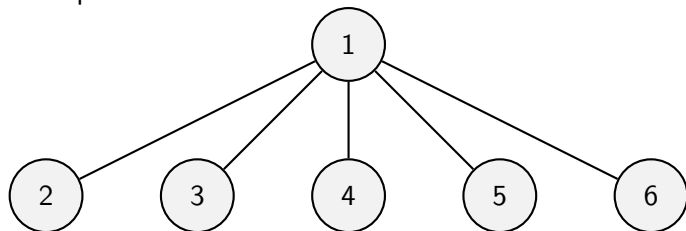


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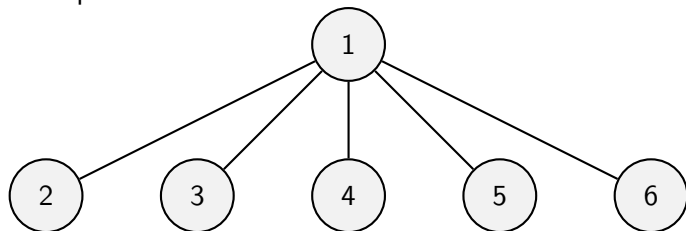
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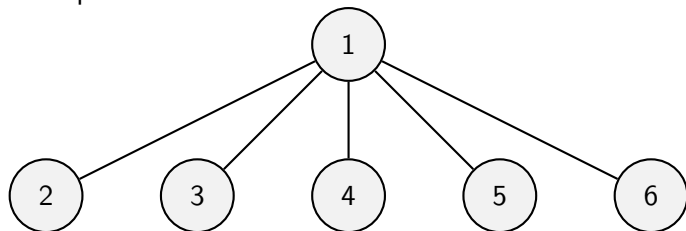
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In the above graph  $\text{deg}(1) = 5$  and

$$\text{deg}(2) = \text{deg}(3) = \text{deg}(4) = \text{deg}(5) = \text{deg}(6) = 1.$$

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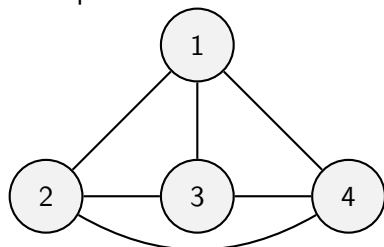
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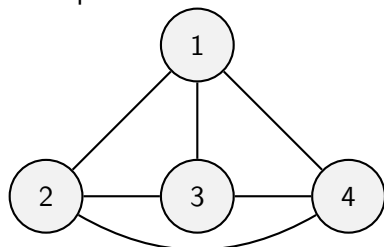


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**Note** Every vertex of  $K_n$  has degree  $n - 1$ .

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**Bill Gasarch and the Red Cliques!**

# The First Theorem, Restated

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We prove this in the next few slides.

# The First Theorem in Ramsey Theory

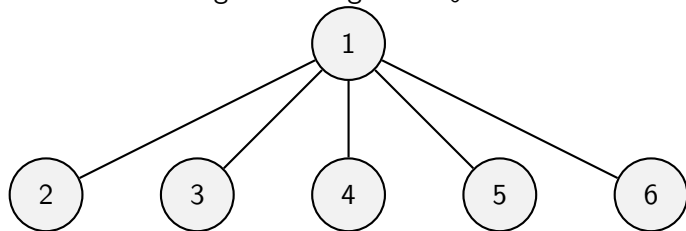
**Thm** For all 2-colorings of the edges of  $K_6$  there is a mono  $K_3$ .

# Focus on Vertex 1

Given a 2-coloring of the edges of  $K_6$  we look at vertex 1.

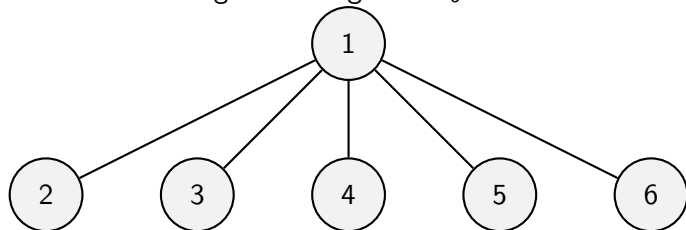
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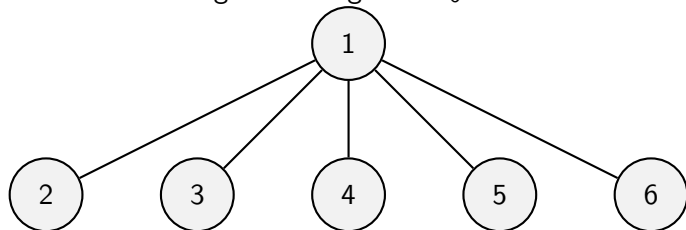
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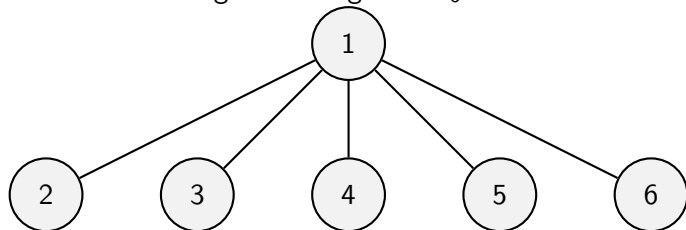


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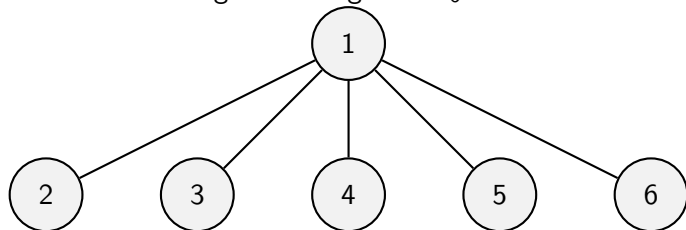
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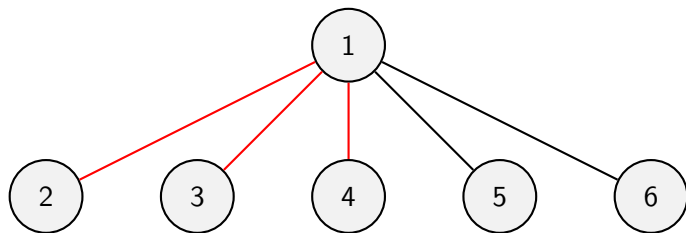
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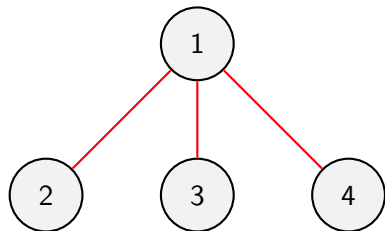
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We can assume  $(1, 2)$ ,  $(1, 3)$ ,  $(1, 4)$  are all **RED**.

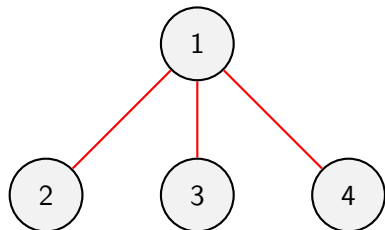
(1,2), (1,3), (1,4) are **RED**



## We Look Just at Vertices 1,2,3,4



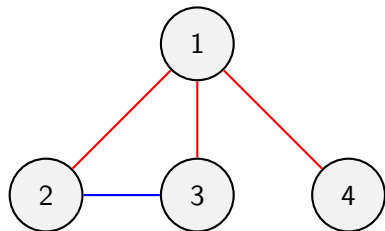
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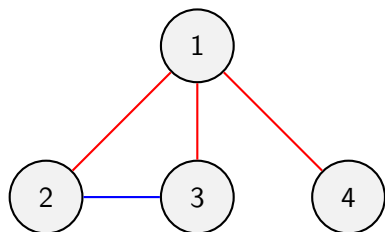
If (2,3) is **RED** then get **RED** Triangle. So assume (2,3) is **BLUE**.

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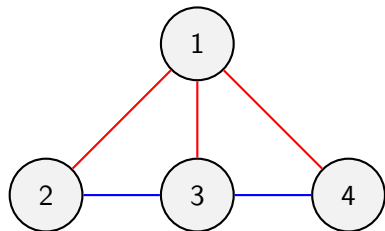
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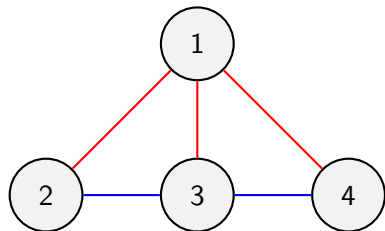
If (3,4) is **RED** then get **RED** triangle. So assume (3,4) is **BLUE**.

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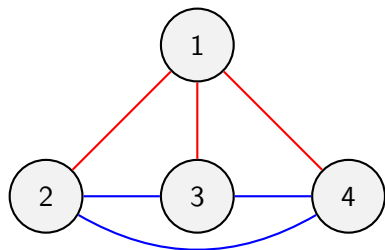
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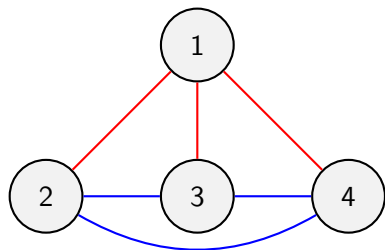
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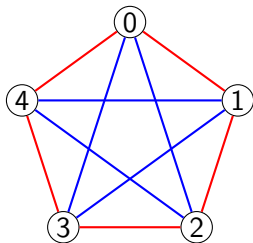
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Note that there is a **BLUE** triangle with verts 2, 3, 4. Done!

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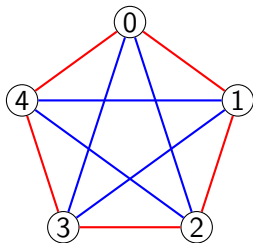


This graph is not arbitrary.

$$SQ_5 = \{x^2 \pmod{5} : 0 \leq x \leq 4\} = \{0, 1, 4\}.$$

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Two ways to show no mono  $\triangle$ s on next slide.

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Need to show there are no mono  $\triangle$ .

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**UPSHOT**  $R(3, 3) = 6$ .

# Asymmetric Ramsey Numbers

**Definition** Let  $a, b \geq 2$ .  $R(a, b)$  is least  $n$  such that for all 2-colorings of  $K_n$  there is **either** a red  $K_a$  or a blue  $K_b$ .

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Proof left to the reader, but its easy.

$$R(a, b) \leq R(a - 1, b) + R(a, b - 1)$$

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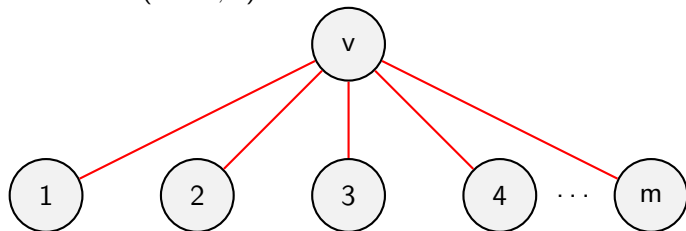
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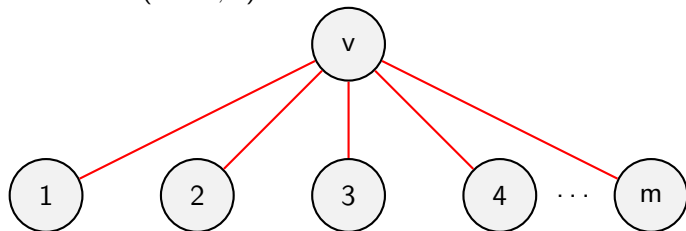
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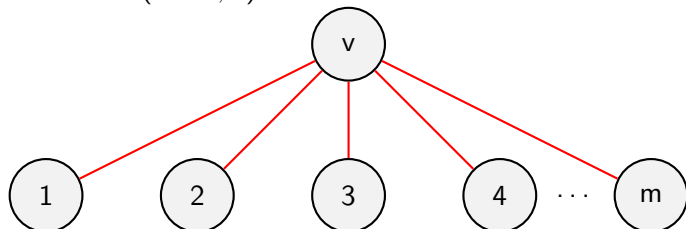


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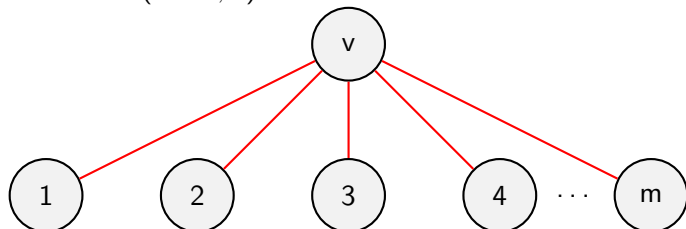
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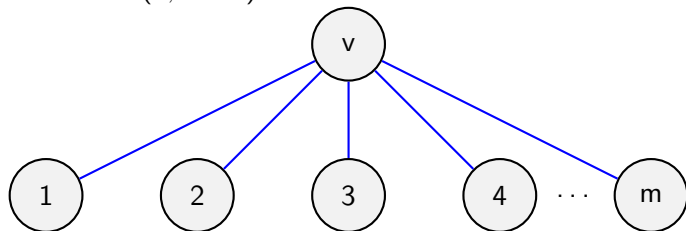
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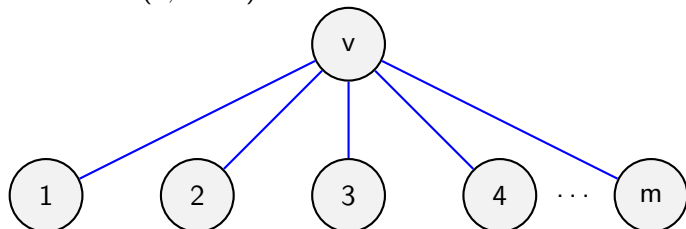
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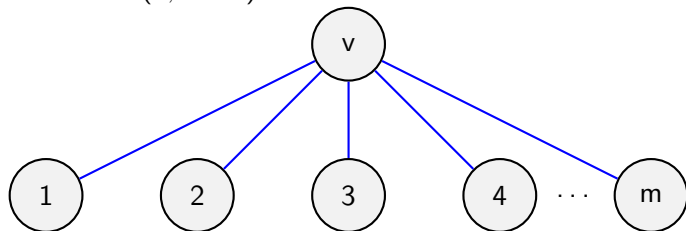


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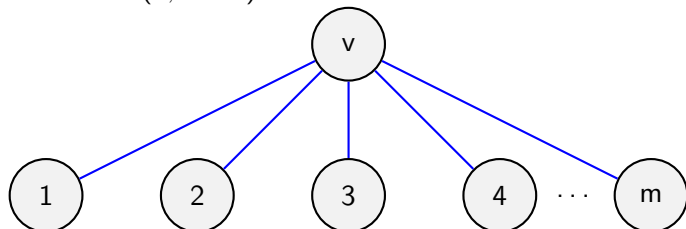
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Not possible since every vertex of  $K_n$  has degree  $n - 1$ .

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We generalize this on the next slide.

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And NOW to our improvements on small Ramsey numbers.

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Assume we have a 2-coloring of the edges of  $K_9$ .

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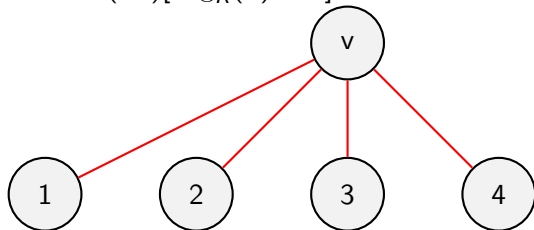
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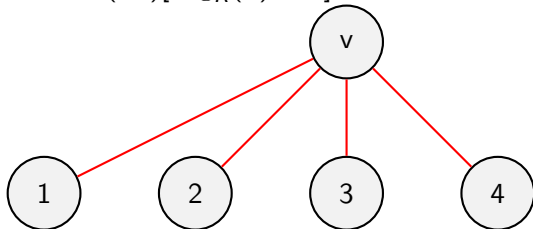
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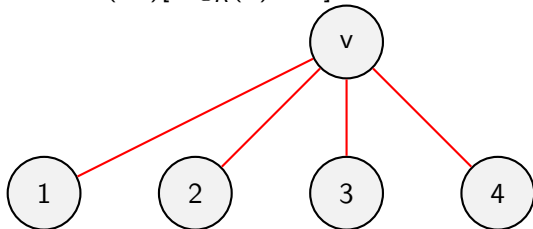


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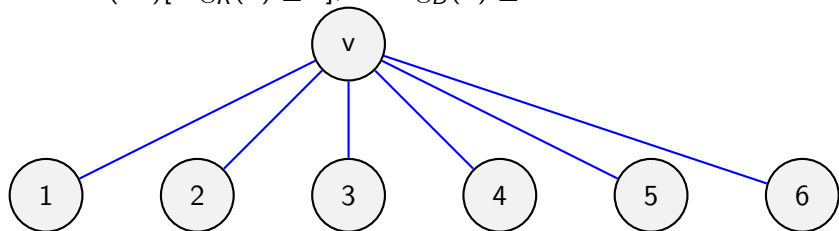


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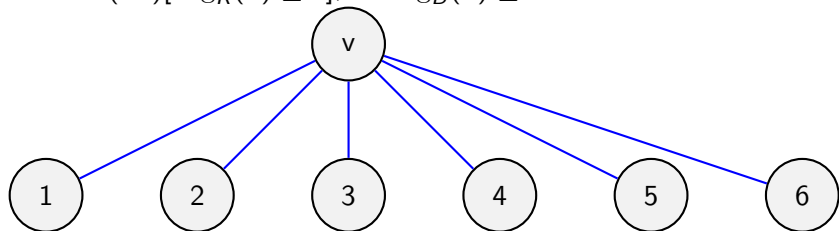
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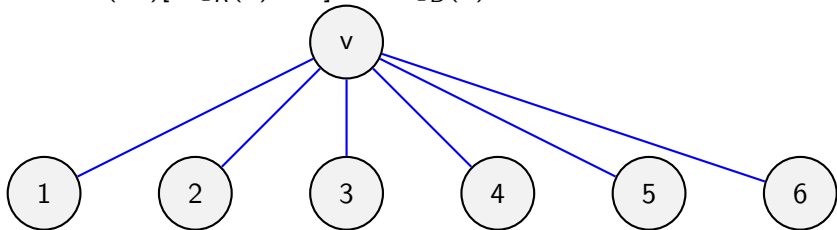
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This is impossible!

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Proof left to the Reader.

## Some Better Upper Bounds

- ▶  $R(3, 3) \leq R(2, 3) + R(3, 2) \leq 3 + 3 = 6.$
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There have been some improvements, including one I will have you read about.