

# A Time of Decision by Ucaimhu

All but four clues in this cryptic contain a single wrong letter that must be fixed before solving; each such clue thus indicates a pair of letters (the right letter and the wrong letter). Find one letter at the top of the grid, in some column, and the other letter at the left side of the grid, in some row; the intersection of this row and column will be some square. Shade this square in.

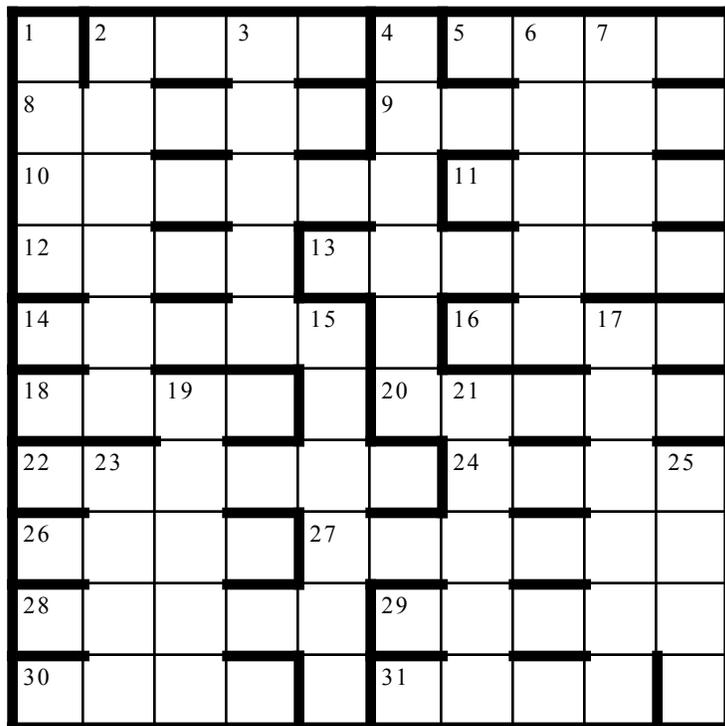
In some cases, a given square will be shaded only once; if you take the clues that indicate those shadings, in order by shaded square (side to side and top to bottom), the first letters of the answers to those clues will spell out a significant proper noun.

In other cases, a given square will be shaded twice. If you take the first letters of the two clues for that square, you can once again treat *those* two letters as a pair to find a column and row, and see what letter is at the intersection of that column and row. In this way, each double-shaded square yields one more letter; those letters, in order by shaded square, will describe the answer to 5 Across.

This description is useful because 5 Across and three other clues (none of which contains a wrong letter) each yield two possible answers (tagging for these answers may be omitted). Because of intersections, and because the top and left of the grid cannot contain duplicate letters, there are only two possible ways to choose a set of four answers. Those old enough to vote should be able to decide between them. If you choose correctly, the shaded squares will give a friendly self-description of their relation to an important datum; if not, they will say how to set things right.

## ACROSS

2. Cattle's cutaneous coating, inscribed with one extremely hurt quotation
5. Emulated a shark, going around, essentially, wetland and so forth (*abbreviated*)
8. Extremely weird Raul takes dime
9. Poetical, caustic chap who coauthored *Evita* after repeatedly awing English
10. Note how you end that anger: stop shoving up at the office
11. Fussing misguidedly after sulfur was dissolved in water
12. Perverse subset of frigate's crew initially won't shoot
13. Very drunk and dithering, primarily, like Theodore
14. Non-bony item at dinner is pine, I allow



16. Nell, I'll be like a resistor? (2 wds.)
18. Caan reorganized the group that trademarked the phrase "Final Tour" (*abbr.*)
20. Patron of Ireland immediately seizes fawn (2 wds.)
22. Xena is zealous about not gawking at the fop in Tibet
24. Upset Poe's big British lexicons (*abbr.*)
26. Gal I irked with tissue from brains and nervous coeds
27. Vader's realm is quietly seized by Endor's largest bot
28. Actor Rhames finished at eleven after wine in Paris
29. A ray to adjust car wheels pointed at a Bavarian (*hyph.*)
30. An insect that stings the front of Fred's cog
31. Offer to get new tin

## DOWN

1. Non-Arab Iraqi coming from the vast British road
2. Twenty-five sites written by Leif's father's father, say
3. Follow Tolkien's lead, with ceremony getting frequently repeated
4. Covered by maps she finally folds
6. Vow ultimately hurt Thor, being utterly mad
7. Virgin whose coat is shown by an assistant
15. Beliefs of a half-score folks that might go preen?
17. Crazy, free Spanish gown
19. Central septet, out of laziness, truncated a -CH=N-N=CH- compound
21. Also, one comprehending Denny's literary themes
23. Player Nastase that is obtaining gelt from literati
25. Dispatched small creature that lives in Tolkien's foods