

3. Listener as told to Ucaomhu

(Solve only after solving Puzzles 1 and 2.)

Finally, we have the *Listener* cryptic, which (as I understand it) still appears in the radio-themed *Listener*, and is thus always in the form of a radio play. This one stars three of the *Listener*'s popular recurring characters, vacationing in [a][b][c], [d][e][f]:

Lord Playfair: I feel lazy; instead of my usual cipher, I'll just encode eight Down answers before entry with eight substitution ciphers, each based on my name and an eight-letter [c]! (One encoded answer is a proper name, and one [c] is NI2.)

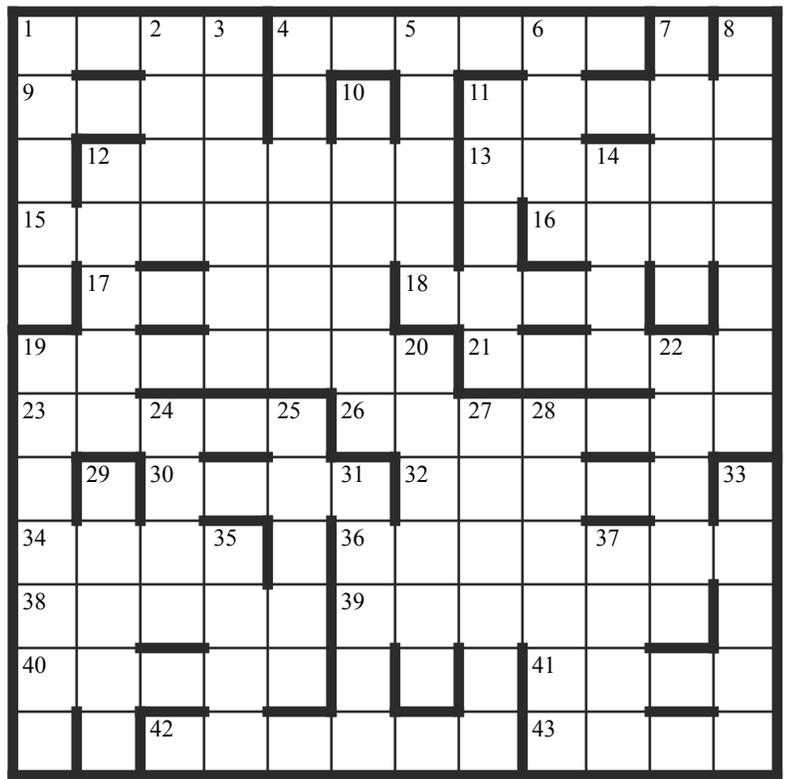
Printer's Devil: Slacker! Sloth is a [f] (and I know [f])! I'm cluing eight Down entries in my usual way: Each entry, instead of being a solution to the clue as a cryptic clue, is a string of letters that can be added *into* the clue (possibly with respacing and repunctuation) so that the clue still makes sense! And just to show off: Each clue, after that addition has been made, will *also* be a regular cryptic clue for one of your cipher [c]s!

Lord Playfair: Fine! Then I'm making sure each of *my* clues contains a word cluing the entry for *your* corresponding clue!

Reverend Spooner: Wean mile, I'll try to put the other eight Down answers in normally, but I [a] [d] the mark each time, and ticks up moo answers. (So just as your clues mare up, so do pine.)

Eight Other Entities: Hi! Don't mind us; we're just doing a [b][e]. Here, all of us are Across answers, clued normally (and, like all Across answers, entered normally). In each of the other sixteen Across clues, one word must have a sequence of one or more sounds removed before solving; these sequences can be divided into four groups of four so that each group, recited as syllables in clue order, indicates a category two of us are in. (Pronunciations are as per 11C.) Each category has an ordering on it; where one of us is the *n*th member of its category, circle the *n*th letter of its clue. In clue order, the circled letters will say where in the first two puzzles you can find four *additional entities*, one in each of the categories.

Wow, what a great radio play! It's a pity none of us from *Love Actually* got to be in it. In each LP, PD, or RS Down clue, write the first, second, or third letter of that clue (respectively) next to *the clue paired with it*; these letters, in clue order, will say what the producers were trying to avoid by excluding all of us. Then for each of the four *additional entities*, if it is the *n*th member of its category, mark the *n*th letter of each of the four clues sounding that category out and each of the two clues with answers in that category; all 24 marked letters, in clue order, will tell you *why* they were trying to avoid this.



ACROSS

1. A verb uttered by Hamlet or Addie confused Hot (4)
4. Meekest educator's helper at the Sorbonne is embracing strummer, at first (6)
9. Book coming before Nehemiah's time, describing Xena (4)
11. *Up!*, after apprehension by a Hibernian observer (5)
12. A loud galloper is "owned" (6)
13. Nuts boo at act that one mason never put on one's to-do list? (5)
15. To shed tears at Saint Al's transparent stone, perhaps (7)
16. Last pair gets eyestrain when one prints a Latin "boy band" list (4)
17. Gets rented tiki (5)
18. Bring a kid or lamb into the world Yugo discovered, man (4)
19. ER stands right inside a glen, unfortunately — as usual (7)
21. High land of carbo-loading German (5)
23. O positioned to the left of PC in East Germany is less usual (5)
26. How straws work originally shocked averse Parisian holding cot I ripped (7)
30. When piano is replaced by old bass, polka becomes source of reedy music (4)
32. Filcher trashed it? Feh (5)
34. Snoozes some time after interning (4)
36. Awful hart, eel, or cow hide (7)
38. Unsophisticated, and formerly vacuous, running back (5)
39. Burned oil in Jack's sewer (6)
40. Gross taxes begrieme state (5)
41. One thespian named Morales is reborn by one's airplane (4)
42. Fruit you barely reach (6)
43. Give up when I say it is a peeler, say (4)

DOWN

1. A group of three that begins flattening the Italian threshing device
2. When around a hundred and two characters from idyl limp, ingenious pill provides charge again
3. "Backward, grasping character resembling some ancient Alp wit!" I scribbled
4. Food resembling large noodly particles from afar, falsely (in part)
5. State takes in 550 without joy
6. Curse block-head from Norway
7. Kin of thee, porting good banknotes after killing hour, becomes grander
8. Person who may get to buds of kohlrabi trapped by misplaced jar lid
10. The yak force charged with catching things if tossed by aged people
11. Offer encouragement to real helper
12. Rice dish from Edith, who sang about lassos, chiefly
14. Romeo, at finale, offers tear
19. Sports fan's comment when pop from Bill or Edward is hidden (2 wds.)
20. Aperture appearing after 1/3-kHz vibration from (e.g.) some flows in three samples of holmium
22. Stuff re Ma in . . . in rant tired Stu
24. Vagrant copes with optical device
25. Scapulae, etc., of British individuals
27. A tree with no length causes confusion
28. Vex Ray & Pip, Tut's record-keepers
29. Nude MFA attending retreat with style
31. Dubious, airy, and (lastly) postovulatory Qatari's money
33. Internally reinforce one half of Laredo with threads
35. Men you know ultimately are just
37. She-pigs taking in hit plays