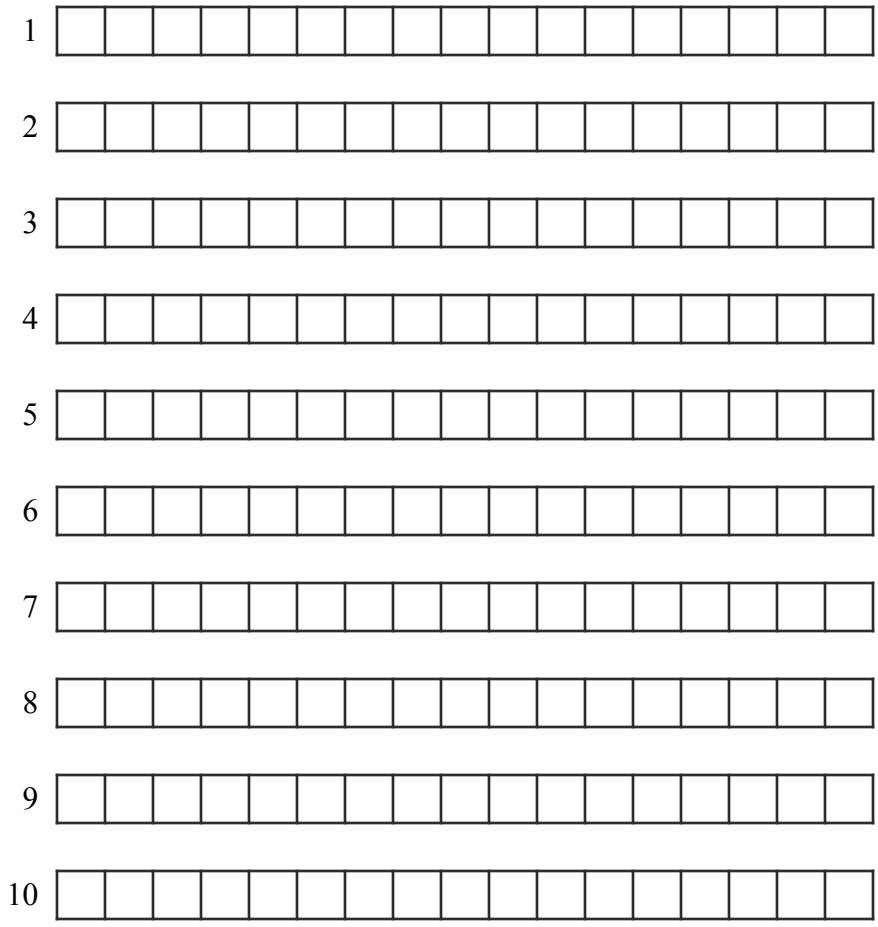
1. Ruby

(a "*colorado* boulder" puzzle by Ucaoimhu)



The woman born as Margaret Tobin may have started out somewhat ruby, but was soon not at all a rube. Her social ascent was correlated with a literal descent, but later she became famous for sinking no further. In this puzzle:

(1) One word in each Across clue contains an extra phoneme (speech sound), to be deleted before solving. The clue answers will be entered in the rows in order, with single black squares separating words in the same row.

(2) The Down clues are ordered alphabetically by their answers; they all work normally, but you must deduce where to place the answers so that they interlock with the Across answers to form a black-square cryptic grid (with no symmetry). When all the Down answers are entered, read (horizontally) their unchecked letters between the rows to see some key locations in Margaret's life (along with some entities that are similarly unsinkable). In each Down clue, if its answer's first and last checked letters are in the *m*th row from the top and the *n*th row from the bottom, circle the *m*th letter from the start of the clue and the *n*th letter from the end; all the *m*th letters, and then all the *n*th letters, both in clue order, will say what Margaret did in these locations (top to bottom).

(3) The topmost unchecked letters will indeed be ruby. Number the grid columns that contain Down answers, left to right. Then, in clue order, (i) the extra phonemes that were at the *start* of their word will say which column to "behead" (that is, remove the top letter from) to get a more educated term, (ii) those at *an intermediate position* in their word will say which additional columns to behead to get an appropriately located Colorado town, and (iii) those at the *end* of their word will give the repeated pattern you see in the grid bottom to top, and (interpreted differently) will name one thing (which is in 11C, but which may be unfamiliar enough to require looking up) found in the town from (ii), which despite appearances is (like Margaret herself) ultimately not ruby at all.

ACROSS

1a. Physicist's study that is in the Carolinas, near line augmented by three sappers
1b. Hear about felt-covered end of spar with valentine-shaped greenery [NI3]
2a. Actress Hawn puts out good song with no nudeness
2b. Scan the French auto parts
2c. Mention current entertainer Van Halen, who plays Rocco
3a. 550 surrounding ship that's boxy and wide, in a gloomy way
3b. Sample of nitrobenzene for automobile echo-creator Karl
3c. Leave Troy with a speed that may get you somewhere earthly
4a. Put back checks some Inca enhanced, originally
4b. Passing note after Brie is kinda sweet (*hyph.*)
5a. Beowulf's folk split when doused with goo
5b. Get obsessed with centers of ceilings fat-head from Uruguay had
6a. Cool ol' Pam crushed Rob's Saturn
6b. Mar surrounding walls of enormous city in Arizona
6c. Lieutenant ignoring view seen next to ocean gull (*2 wds.*)
7a. Glen & Gus, rattled by shadow, finally got cozy
7b. I loaned gal's unusual flower
8a. Morse L's between Morse dots
8b. Foreigner who is taken in adds a helper with a cheerful song (*2 wds.*)
8c. Every other aspect of Usher, Tricia, or Ramses the Great's apparent (*2 wds.*)
9a. Time-based phrase you redye on the covers of self-improvement books and jacketless minor novel (eek!) (*3 wds.*)
9b. Living with Adelaide nun Lisa [NI2]
10a. Stay, at dances, next to small skewered meat dishes
10b. Toot as a group outside of dusty spot
10c. Gave some drug parties before Ned

DOWN

A. Within Samara, free the djinni (6)
B. In place to the north, study tributary of the Colorado (7)
C. Childish reply from War God (a band) (3 2)
D. Just slightly oxidizing a mass-packed, easy-melting alloy (8) [NI2]
E. Conjectures internally modify ideology (5)
F. Rambling land for one of the Boones (3'1)
G. Not-currently-employed, unkempt dudes I fed one third of sub (7)
H. Seeing hollow diamonds from the south as equipment you can use to vape (1-4)
I. Tails of twelve mice will stay fishily extended? (4)
J. Not respectably aged (oy!) (4)
K. Urn Dee busted or hardened (in a way that's less common) (6, *var.*)
L. More vile, right in its very marrow! (6)
M. French boxer Ali, duo of Romans, and German move in a wild manner (5 6)
N. One navigational aid briefly embraced by *Enigma* psalmodist (5, *abbr.*)
O. Make 50% cuts in *Henry V* at E! (5)
P. Model and I give cards out (5)
Q. A neuter reflexive pronoun, I state, upset a sprite (6)
R. Songs from honcho on the podium (6)
S. A zine on India for eastern wise men (4)
T. Chateau inscribed with indigo zigzag and semicircle as big as an adult male is (3-5)
U. Medium raised dead for gold or silver (5)
V. At the end, Victor replaces second of unnecessary people who tease us (8)
W. Button close to Q replaced Y, K, & beta (3 3)
X. Say, playing cards under four things you carry food on (5)
Y. The Queen's yet-imaginary, fantastical duel is near (10, *var.*)
Z. Rise speedily and utter — at the start, by the way — something comic (7) [NI3]