

Lirath Puzzle by Ucaoimhu

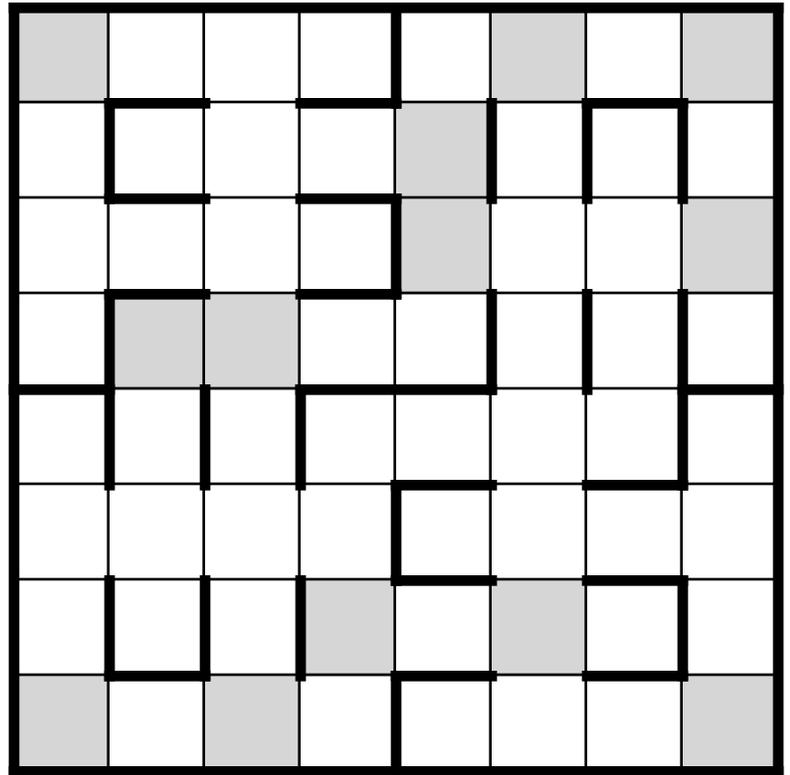
As the title suggests, each of the 51 unshaded squares here will contain a letter (one of four) that is a fantastical creature; each of the shaded squares will contain a unique letter that's not one of those four. Also, each clue yields an eight-letter answer that is either a single eight-letter entry or a fanciful phrase consisting of two four-letter entries. The clues are ordered alphabetically by their answers; you must deduce where the entries (one of which is a two-word phrase) go in the grid.

When the grid is complete, list the shaded-square letters in alphabetical order, and for each one:

(1) Find the clue yielding the Across entry it is in, and where it is the *n*th letter from the start of that clue's entire eight-letter answer, take the *n*th letter from the start of that clue.

(2) Repeat (1) with "Across" changed to "Down" and "start" to "end".

The letters from (1) will explain why the unshaded-square letters are the fantastical creatures I claim they are; the letters from (2) will clarify one word in that explanation.



Huge creature sitting on Henry worried Hebe & Tom
 Entertaining hack singers, in the middle, showed up to masticate venison-like meat
 Note about *West Wing* actor Rob being mean — and Dorothy's aunt, full of feelings
 Prophet Amos, when unfrocked, showed a lot of staginess
 As said by Spooner (a thug), "Note clarified, green-cheese-like butter"
 What one's heart does in Palermo, vehemently
 "Wheel" next to hot, bolo-clad couple from Holland is a cheap ancient Greek snack cake
 Husbands in Ohio, Missouri, and Mississippi making call to parents that goes on at some length
 Before *HMS Pinafore*'s last triplet, Mo pivoted, generating units of 0.1 ephah volt per ampere
 Finally to wear clothes vacuous neurotic mocked at some time previous
 Letters appearing on a picture of an apple or pear, an Italian river, and me, thrice
 Maoist ultimately obstructs return of hoopoe after five forbid giving a bear to Christopher Robin