



**Letter of Mystery** | a cryptic puzzle by Emily Cox & Henry Rathvon

This puzzle's grid contains several mysterious entries befitting its shape. 19-Across gives a hint for the befuddled solver (in other words, most of you, we assume), when connected with the corresponding 33-Across by 12-Down and 15-Down. The shaded 24-Across, appropriately in the middle of the grid, may resolve the mystery by spelling out what the X signifies in this case.

**Across**

- 1 Special agent's opening a piece of mystery mail usually discarded (4)
- 4 Squat next to familiar stone (4)
- 8 Identify Lecter's first murder victim in an early book (5)
- 10 Going through the pox yields strong bond (5)
- 15 Place for books I found around front of house (5)
- 16 At hearing, young woman files slips (7)
- 18 Enthusiastic about 1970s Ford with no starter (4)
- 21 Nice friends to be present for the speaker and a third person? (4)
- 22 Retrospective view of Shakespeare for one not very bright (4)
- 23 Overthrow position taken by agreement (7)
- 27 Sell deed conveying university (7)

- 30 Vocalizing songs is wrong (4)
- 31 Misread Time article (4)
- 36 Related a bit of the past (4)
- 37 Union members ask for vote against changing direction (7)
- 39 OK, enjoy a mud bath after commencement (5)
- 40 Agitated voter in plain view (5)
- 41 In response, take inaugural stage (5)
- 42 Appealing by entering assent in reverse (4)
- 43 Hazard at sea: breaking a leg (4)

**Down**

- 1 Hotel's closing in total skid row area (4)
- 2 Brief film about an awfully alarmed state (5)
- 3 I'll be online sensation, and cry miserably on the inside (5,2)
- 5 Early mystery writer linked to essay writing of a sort (6)
- 6 Choppers loaded with 50 mechanical rods (5)
- 7 Ride-sharing service starts to let you furnish tips (4)
- 9 Arabs developed Iraqi port (5)

- 11 Parking garden tool, do a great impression of bird (6)
- 13 Some household members walk the opposite way (4)
- 14 Ephron gets into Alaska winter wear (6)
- 17 Chinese leader hosted by U.K. legislators returning early in the evening (3,2)
- 20 European nation disturbed at Cairo (7)
- 24 Backing American bank, of course (6)
- 25 Nickname for a girl connected primarily with racing venue (5)
- 26 Escort reordered slice of pizza, perhaps (6)
- 28 Making coffee for each January honoree (7)
- 29 Judge left former partner automatic response (6)
- 31 Mix a different sort of movie (4)
- 32 New York team wrapping up excellent athletic events (5)
- 33 Soothing agent, but admitting loss (5)
- 34 Dance, holding victory party (5)
- 35 Asian land also in disarray (4)
- 38 Head of state snacked on stuff (4)

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