



Character Study | a cryptic puzzle by Emily Cox & Henry Rathvon

There's something strange about a few of this puzzle's squares, whose locations must be deduced without the aid of answer lengths. Studied collectively from left to right in the finished grid, their true nature should become evident.

Across

- 1 Role in "Evita" conveying a radical act
- 8 Back of dump is a place with a tower
- 11 Character seen in restaurant
- 12 Swank put Leno off
- 13 State invested in Tennessee bar
- 14 God of love in the morning and love mid-afternoon
- 15 Make a bundle hosting a couple bachelors' foolish talk
- 16 Pooches put outside during activities
- 17 Nothing pleasant pending (2 wds.)
- 18 Changed sites before a nap
- 19 Hairstyle and mani-pedi providers help novelist (2 wds.)
- 20 With article, get firm sponsor
- 23 Cuts ripe bananas for dessert shell (2 wds.)
- 26 Book of maps finally abridged

- 28 Reworked tie to film character's theme
- 30 Little bear hugging her sweet infant
- 31 Maine transformed "Pokemon" genre
- 33 Takes in bustle parts
- 34 Basic border straddled by friend
- 35 Dash back through final exams
- 36 Luxurious, like a bathroom?
- 37 Silent type, with some choice words, cries out
- 38 Custard left in cooler
- 39 Opening first letter from home, cheer
- 40 Stirred in my tea, night or day

Down

- 1 Asian land's spy agency framing ambassador with drug problem
- 2 Work smoothly with one person
- 3 New barista is expert in Middle Eastern culture
- 4 Planted in plaza, leafy shrub
- 5 Various explorers underwater by error

- 6 Spot on crackpot, poor sap
- 7 African nation is island surrounded by fish
- 8 Loudly mournful, mean fellow
- 9 Rodents unexpectedly made piggish sounds
- 10 Song about true hearts, in part
- 16 Catches sight of prohibitionists intercepting escape
- 21 Interest in large cat rescue device
- 22 Shakespearean character's Old Testament greeting
- 23 Randomly name-drop, sorry to intrude (2 wds.)
- 24 Elevated Olympian Thorpe keeping to ideal
- 25 Limit U.S. traveling incentives
- 27 Dine with group outside building's first story on the side
- 28 Turned part of a sock into fat, stretchy garment
- 29 Spoil start, waterlogged
- 30 At hearing, arrest someone from Prague
- 32 Furious with a married brothel owner

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