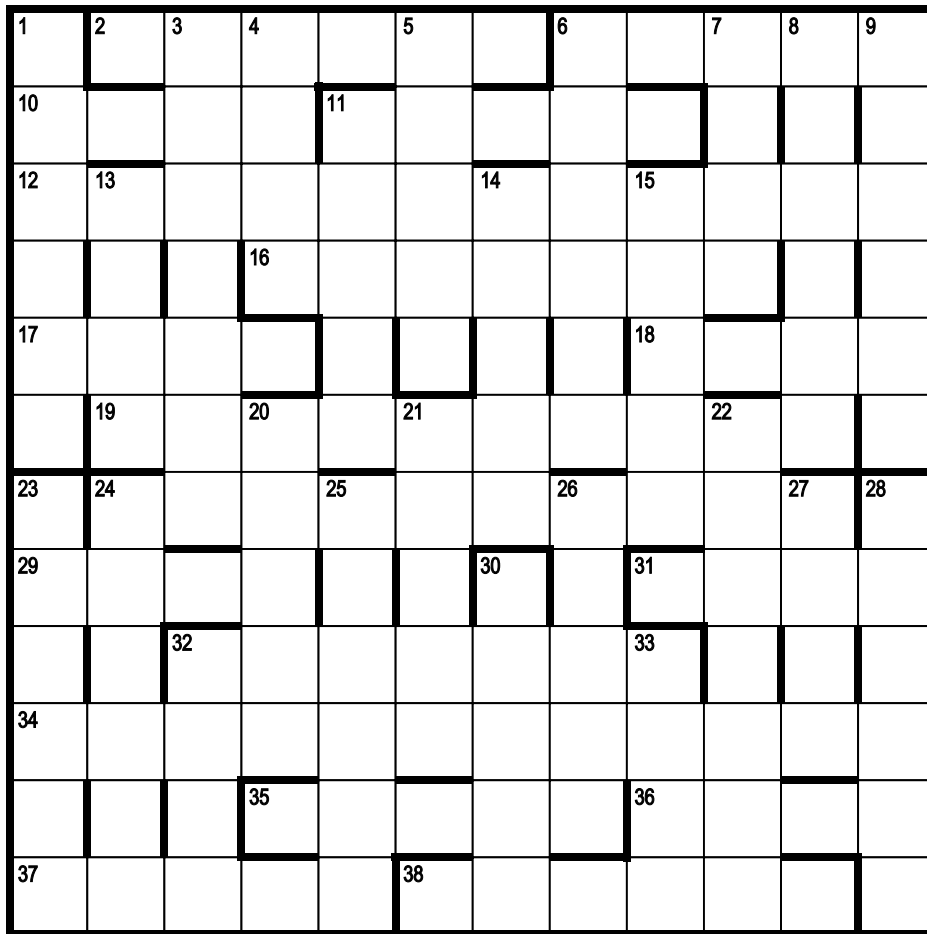


Cryptic 2023-12: Surprise Visitors

A cryptic celebration interrupted by some surprise visitors — who could they be? (5 5)

Some entries below have no clues but will guide you to the solution.



Across:

- 2 Result of mixing coffee, spilling old tea (6)
- 6 Decorates the tree with bit of tinsel and rings (5)
- 10 Queen invades borders of Austria to get a watercolor? (4)
- 11 Handed over large hammer (5)
- 12 Great accomplishment by me, inspired by adapting *Star Trek's* entertaining glimpse of optimism (12)
- 16 SEE INSTRUCTIONS
- 17 Bash a creep from behind (4)
- 18 Measure of guilt? Unethical musicians might carry it (4)
- 19 Transport carrying wood turner going on and on (10)

24 SEE INSTRUCTIONS

- 29 Outspoken lug might get decked? (4)
- 31 Stop working for unlimited corporate ownership (4)
- 32 Embraces foxes, receiving soft murmur (7)
- 34 SEE INSTRUCTIONS
- 35 Expenses I set aside for last of the alarms (5)
- 36 Elemental unit derived from turbulent moat (4)
- 37 Almost saw barber cut off half with a sword (5)
- 38 Poor baby, needy and neglected for so long (3-3)

Down:

- 1 Injury from Adam dancing on empty grave (6)

- 3 Woman with you and me nauseated at taste of inedible pasta (7)
- 4 Short staff recoiling from greasy substances (4)
- 5 Every other chair left a mark (5)
- 6 Bind broken teeth with drop of rubber (6)
- 7 Superstar dressed in silicone (4)
- 8 River gnome snarled, drowning king (6)
- 9 Having two channels, so three, unfortunately, doesn't have what gets him going (6)
- 11 You dig vegetating nuts, driving away vegan (3,2)
- 13 A laugh at premiere of Beckett's fictional captain (4)
- 14 Wingless osprey and eastern lark (5)
- 15 Make secure again or let die without any preliminaries (5)
- 20 Pass out from a rising charge (5)
- 21 Made a move but uncovered nothing unusual (3,2)
- 22 The Reverend says golden-brown is Santa's alternative to 27D (7)
- 23 Principles of repetition helps you memorize each statement that has similar sounds (6)
- 24 Angry culprits decide to abandon Republican candidates to get fruit (6)
- 25 Fancy éclair is decorated more delicately (6)
- 26 Dawn runs regularly after Jack, a two-faced individual (5)
- 27 After November, diamonds can be Santa's alternative to 22D (4)
- 28 Charges for onset of mold and decay arising aboard ship (6)
- 30 Buddy who sings, "It has festive red berries?" (5)
- 32 Grinchy type of coach concealing heart of vitriol (4)
- 33 Thrust a blade somewhat! (4)