

Dear Reader,

Unless you prefer to spend your time frustrated, anxious, and worried about the happenings in a submarine deep under the sea, this clue may not be for you. You may prefer to use your skip and move on, forgetting this clue was set in front of you. Inside, you may encounter an unpleasant amount of mildew, mycelium, and madness as you descend into the depths of this puzzling grotto.

In fact, the unsettling nature of this twister makes it best that I not detail the worst of it, which includes mushrooms, a dreadful conversation, kitchen utensils, clocks, a plunge into a dangerously unexplored area, and a man named Conway.

As the author dedicated to bringing you the first word– the very first word, mind you– about the depressing tales of the Get A Clue heroes, I am sorry to say I must publish these details for the world to see. You, however, may jump into some other, happier puzzle such as wordle, or a sudoku, to keep your eyes and spirits from being dampened.

With all due respect,

Lemony Snicket

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GetAClue 2025
www.getaclueatl.com

Art courtesy of Brett Helquist



BEGIN TRANSMISSION

SHIP'S LOG - MEDICAL BAY

13:00 Observation of the *GORGONIAN GROTTO* begins

13:01 CAPTAIN "All crew report back to the ship at once! There's danger in the depths!"

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13:17 FIONA "The spores on the medusoid mycelium..."

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13:19 HERMAN "Curious how the medusoid mycelium waxes and wanes, isn't it?"

13:19 GREGOR "That means the caps and stalks spring up from the patch, and then wither

13:19 GREGOR "away, and then spring up again."

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13:23 KIT "Is everyone alright?"

13:23 FIONA "Answer here is no. I was exposed to the mycelium diving in the LOAFY LAY."

13:23 HERMAN "My diving helm was caught among the FROGGY FEN."

13:23 GREGOR "I was snared in the SARGASSO SHORTCUT, and had to cut myself free."

13:23 KIT "This is terrible trouble! My dive suit was punctured in the PINWHEEL PATCH."

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13:25 HERMAN "The ship's medic will be here soon."

13:27 GREGOR "Location?"

13:27 KIT "They're at the helm with the captain now."

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13:30 HERMAN "The medic came by."

13:30 KIT "Very good. What are we to do about the medusoid mycelium?"

13:31 GREGOR "They left us with sugar water."

13:32 HERMAN "Sugar water?"

13:32 GREGOR "It's a placebo."

13:32 KIT "New to me... a placebo?"

13:33 GREGOR "Which is to say, a medicine with no effect."

13:34 KIT "Oh yes. That is the meaning of the word placebo."

13:35 HERMAN "I quite like its taste, this placebo."

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13:45 HERMAN "Ladle"

13:45 GREGOR "Is that useful?"

13:45 KIT: "This medusoid mycelium... it's driving us mad!"

13:46 HERMAN "Bowl! Soup! Canteen! Bottle!"

13:46 GREGOR "Enough!"

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13:48 GREGOR "Is there hope for us?"

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13:55 HERMAN "I read about a curry, a Curie, a... cure!"

13:55 GREGOR "For medusoid mycelium?"

13:55 HERMAN "Not curry, no. A French scientist..."

13:56 KIT "Orleans? Where was this scientist from? We could get a cure from them. Lyon?"

13:56 GREGOR "Does it matter?"

13:57 KIT "Normandy? Bourgogne?"

13:57 KIT "Maybe closer to Aquitaine?"

13:57 FIONA "Is it important?"

13:57 HERMAN "Critical! The Curie-"

13:58 GREGOR "I think you mean cure."

13:59 KIT "I think we're too late!"

14:00 [REDACTED]

END TRANSMISSION

Medusoid mycelium is a deadly fungus which grows only in the most remote regions of the Gorgonian Grotto. Careful work has been done by Volunteers to understand its properties. Exposure to the mycelium is known to cause regular but odd patterns of speech, and a quick death by suffocation. Of particular note, the poison seems to make a victim's first words most acutely important.

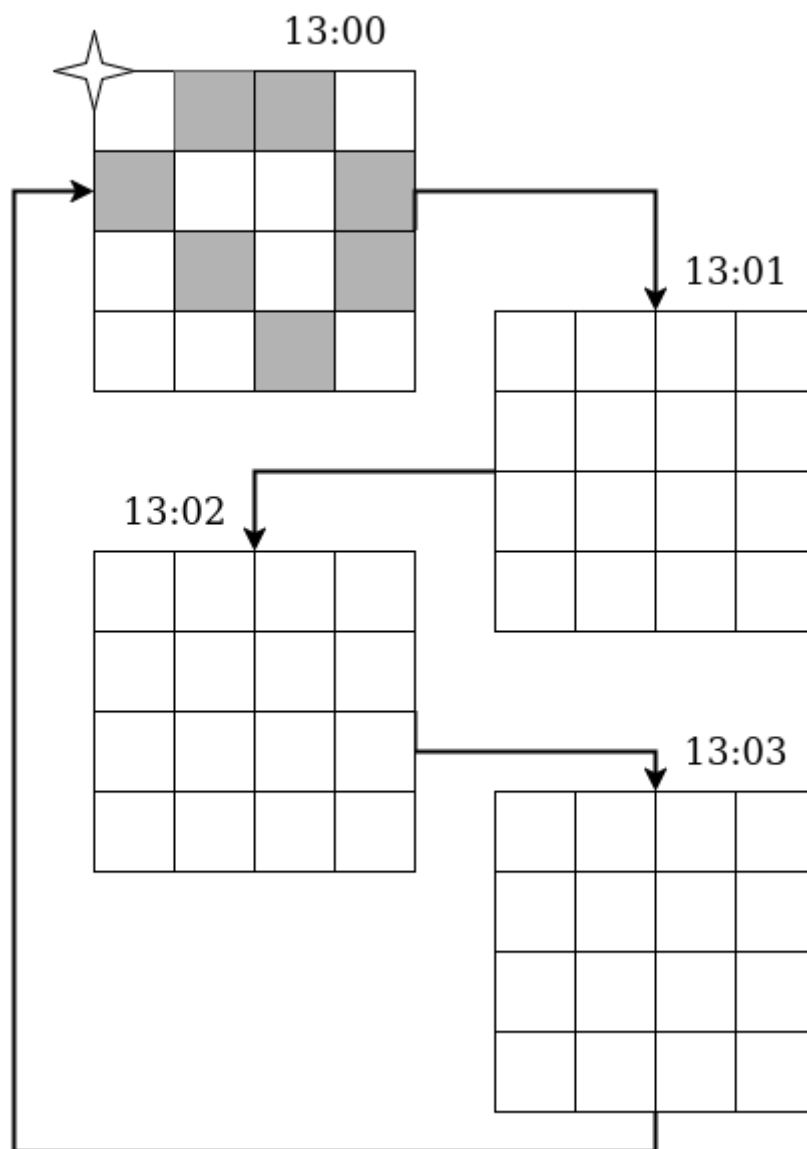
Each patch of medusoid mycelium has two possible states: blooming, or dormant. Every patch interacts with each of its adjacent neighbors, a phrase which here means patches horizontally, vertically, or diagonally adjacent. At each observation, the mycelium may wax or wane according to the following rules:

- 1 - Any blooming patch with fewer than 2 blooming neighbors will wither to dormant.
- 2 - Any blooming patch with exactly 2 or 3 blooming neighbors will continue to bloom.
- 3 - Any blooming patch with more than 3 blooming neighbors will become overcrowded and choked out to dormant.
- 4 - Any dormant patch with exactly 3 blooming neighbors will bloom from the spores released by the neighbors.

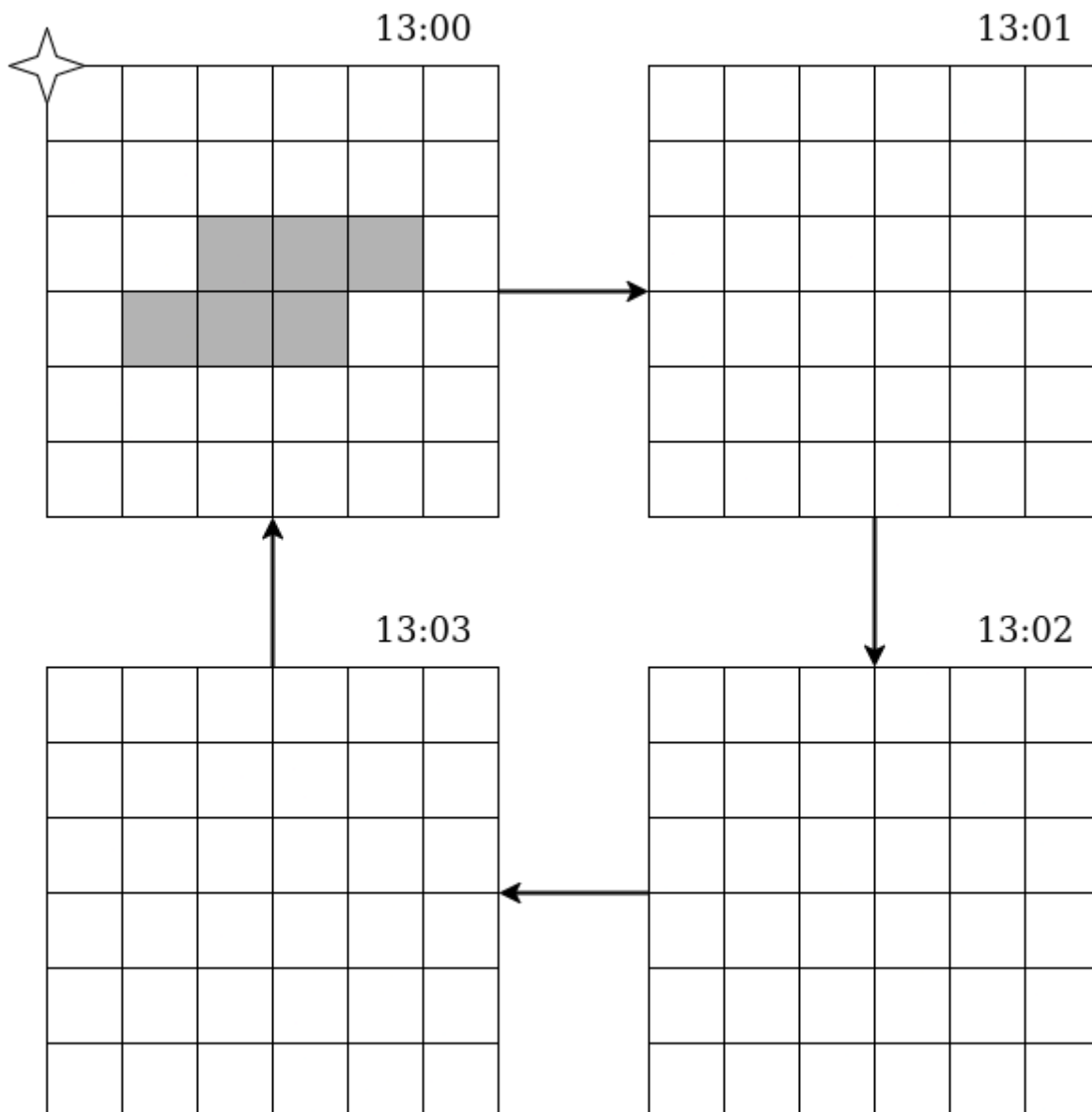
The examples below illustrate this behavior.

Finally, a wealth of research has been compiled about the cure to medusoid mycelium, but this research has been closely guarded and its location is not widely known beyond the Volunteers who have researched it. To proceed, you will need to find its location.

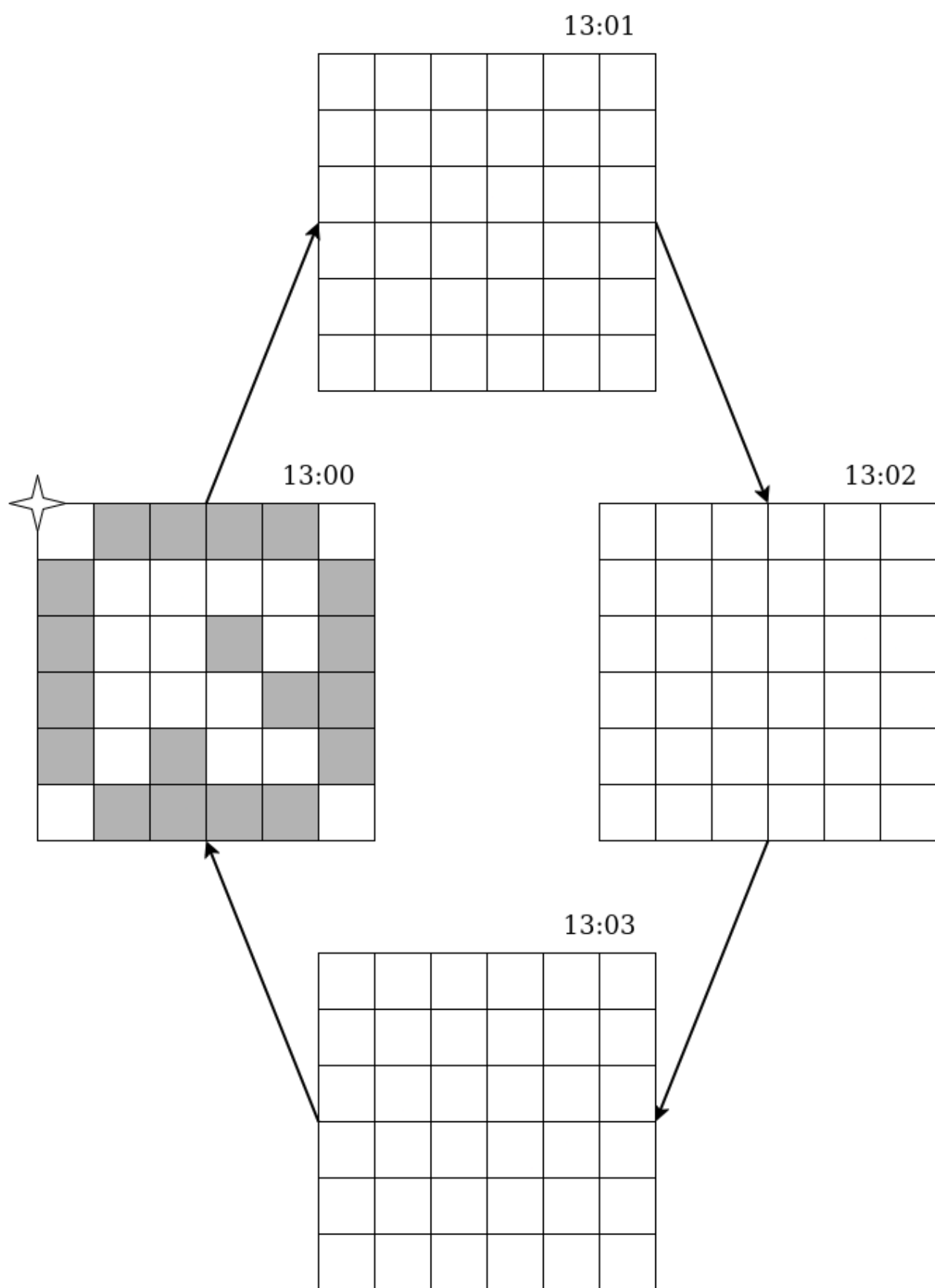
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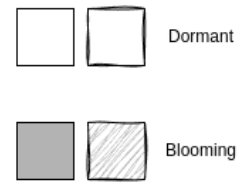
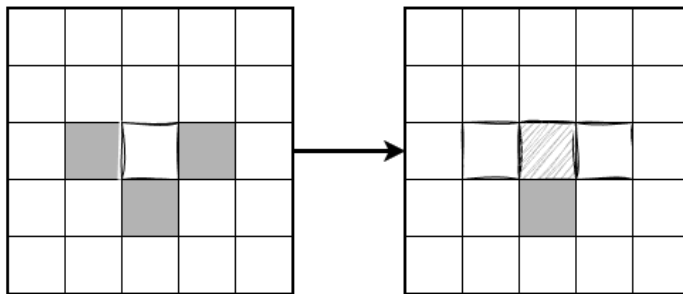
The Loafing Lay



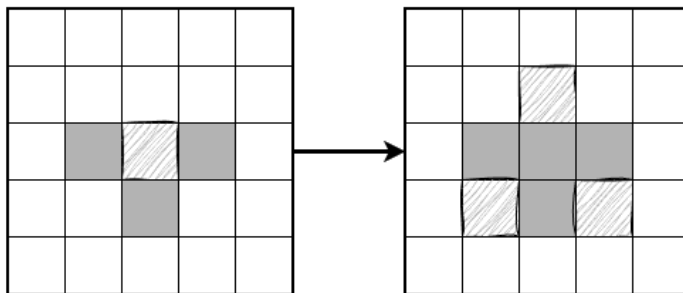
The Froggy Fen



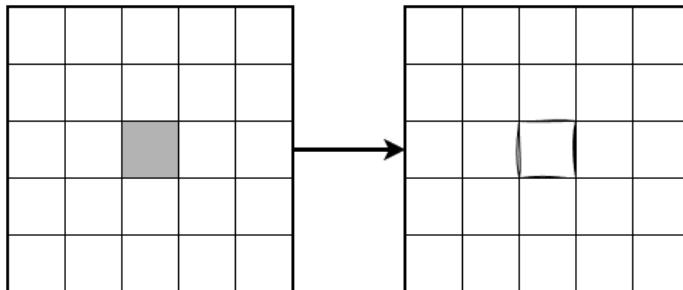
Bloom: A patch with exactly three blooming neighbors will bloom.



Survival: A blooming patch with two or three blooming neighbors stays blooming



Death (underpopulation): A patch with fewer than two blooming neighbors will die down to dormant.



Death (overpopulation): A patch with more than three blooming neighbors is choked out to dormant.

