

Cracking the Case of the Roman Tragedy

Credits

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Setters are credited on each individual puzzle.

Act 1: The Queen is Dead

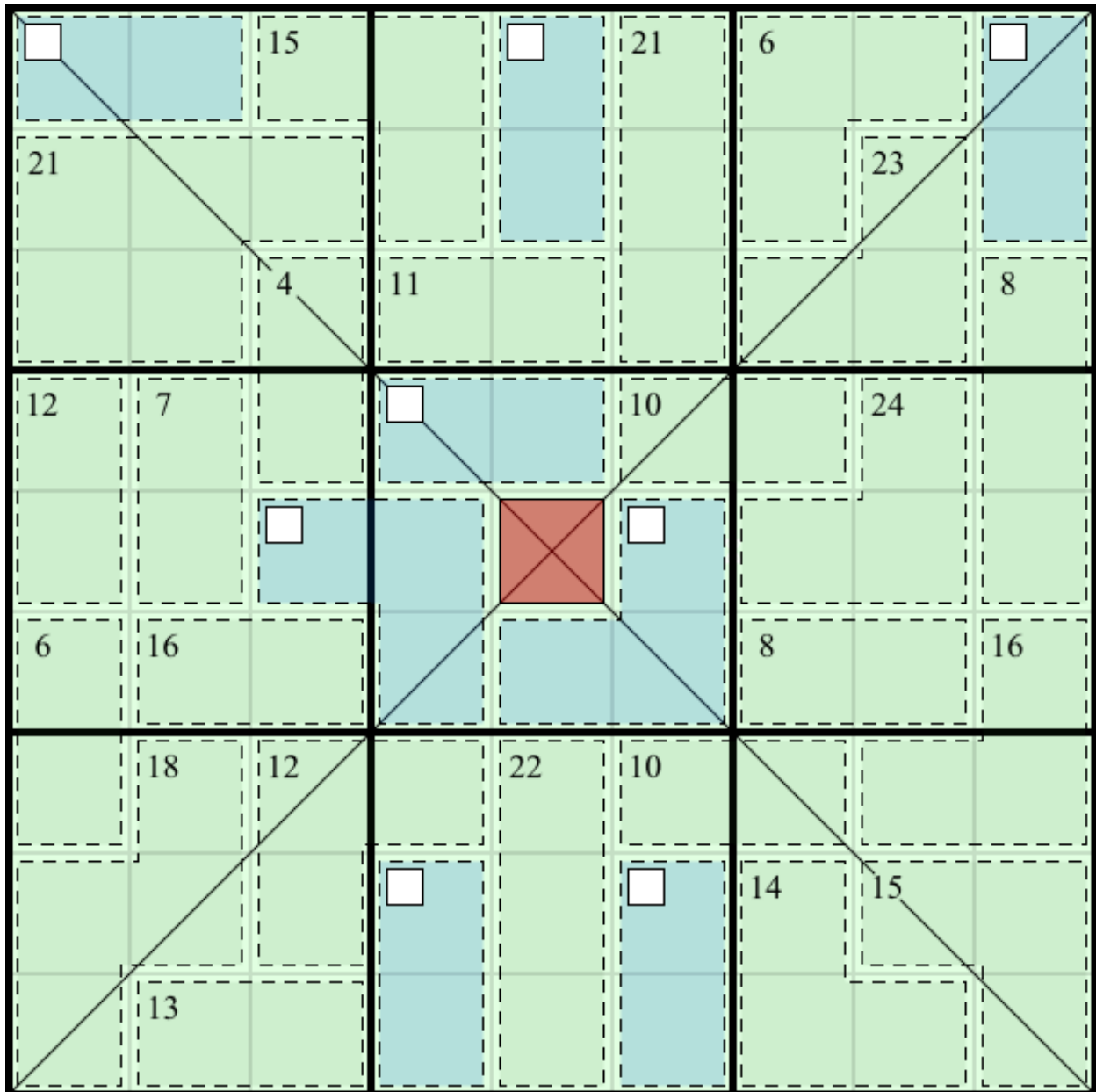
You have been called to the California estate of Claude Marksim, the eccentric heir to the Marksim Motors fortune, to investigate the death of his young wife Anastasia. Upon your arrival, you are led by the family's butler Jarvis to the scene of the crime. You find yourself in the back gardens of the estate, surrounded by ornamental birdcages in various colors. This is where Anastasia's body was apparently discovered, but the body has since mysteriously disappeared, leaving behind only a few droplets of blood on the stone path, and a humanoid impression in the bed of tulips.

Anastasia is—or *was*—an off-Broadway Shakespearean actress who hit her big break (and met her future husband in the audience!) with the title role in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Because of this, and her reputation as a hard-to-please diva, she's earned the local nickname "Drama Queen". You muse that whoever is at **the center** of all this must be "**anti-Queen**".

Act 1 Puzzle

By Alice, with help from SciFiFan

Normal sudoku rules apply. Digits in cages must sum to the number at the top-left of the cage. Digits may not repeat within cages. Each marked diagonal contains no repeated digits. The digit in the center of the grid follows anti-queen rules: no two instances of that digit may be a chess queen's move apart.



<https://app.crackingthecryptic.com/sudoku/rT3Fj8btmP>

Act 2: Rising to the Occasion

After examining the scene thoroughly, you start questioning Dr. Basil Brown, the man who called you to the estate.

"I apologize for the inconvenience," he begins, wiping sweat from his brow. "Claude is a private man, and I'm hoping we can wrap this up discreetly before needing to involve the police. Or, at least, find poor Anastasia's body... I feel such a fool calling in a murder without the murder victim."

"I see," you reply. "So, tell me about that."

"Well, I was just heading to my car when the twins—Claude's children, you know—ran up to me saying they had found their stepmother and it was an emergency. I went to check it out and, sure enough, there was her body lying face-down in the flowerbed, with a wound in the back of her head. Once I took her vitals and realized she was dead, I led the children inside and called you—but when I went back out a few minutes later, Anastasia was gone!"

You ask the doctor to describe the wound: "It was a long gash but didn't seem very deep. I think she must've been hit with some sort of blunt object, or maybe even something slightly sharp. I guess it's even possible it was a gunshot wound, if the shot only grazed her." At your disbelieving expression, he crosses his arms. "Look, I don't know, I'm a family practitioner! I'm not exactly an expert in this stuff."

"So, on that point, what were you doing at the house anyway?"

"I was in the area, and Claude called me to complain of a strained shoulder, so I came to take a look. I normally don't make house calls, but Claude is one of my oldest—and richest—clients, so I made an exception. To be honest, I can't afford to lose his business." The doctor sighs.

"Besides, I do always carry a few basic supplies—thermometers, bandages, and the like—with me, just in case." He gestures to a heavy black handbag at his side. "I gave him some rhus toxicodendron—that's a natural painkiller—and went to leave, when I was interrupted by the children, as I said."

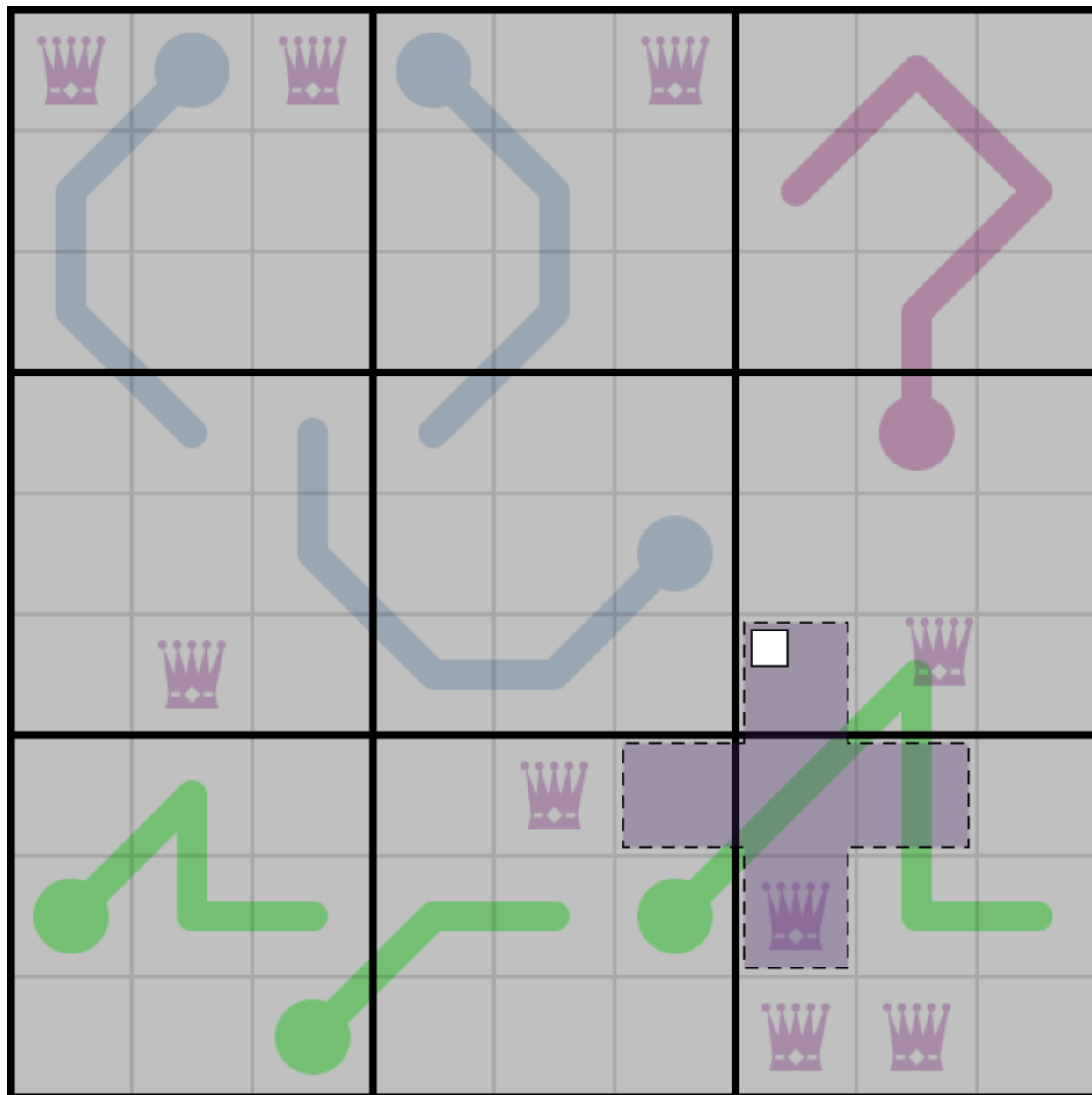
"Understood." You jot this testimony down in your notebook. "Last question—do you know of any enemies Mrs. Marksim may have had?"

The doctor snorts. "Well, let's just say she wasn't the easiest person to work with. I doubt anyone but Claude would have only fond memories. She wouldn't tolerate even one piece of food being out of place on her plate, or one word being misquoted from one of her plays. I myself can't say I ever cared for her much. But to kill her? That does seem like a stretch."

Act 2 Puzzle

By SciFiFan, with help from Dark Tribble and Alice

Normal sudoku rules apply. Digits along a thermometer must increase starting at the bulb end.



<https://app.crackingthecryptic.com/sudoku/G4fp4rbMFf>

Act 3: Claudius XV

Next, you speak to Claude, to get his interview over with and allow him to grieve.

“Have you and Anastasia had any fights recently?”

He glares at you through eyes red from crying. “No, and I don’t care for the insinuation. I know it’s unorthodox for a widower of my age to take a woman as young as her as a wife, and I’m sure many people must assume she only married me for my money. But I assure you, Ana and I are truly, deeply in love.” He pauses. “Or, *were* in love.” He buries his head in his hands and begins silently sobbing.

You decide to pursue a different line of questioning, hoping he’ll respond better. “Dr. Brown mentioned you had called him with a shoulder injury. Could you tell me about that?”

He wipes his eyes and nods towards a bronze statue of a soldier placed on a nearby end table. “As you can probably see, I’m an avid collector of Roman antiques. In fact, it’s a bit of a family tradition, going back at least fifteen generations. You see, we can trace our ancestry all the way back to the great Emperor Augustus himself. Mind you, we *are* loyal Americans; despite my regard for the ancient emperors, I am still very much *anti-king*. It’s too much responsibility for one man to have hanging over his head—heavy lies the crown, as I always say to Ana.” As Claude describes his passions, he becomes visibly more animated. “Anyway, I was trying to move a heavy terra sigillata vase in one of the upstairs hallways to the opposite wall, and I must’ve lifted it poorly. This old body isn’t what it used to be.”

You continue on this track, since it at least has him talking. “So you called Dr. Brown?”

“Oh, yes.” He leans back in his seat. “Basil and I go way back; I consider him an old friend. Which is why I’d never get rid of him, no matter what Ana says... she doesn’t believe in homeopathy, you see, and was always telling me poor Basil was a quack. Especially these last few weeks.” His eyes harden. “But that was all in a friendly way, mind you. As I said, we almost never argued. Don’t get the wrong idea.”

“Right.”

“Anyway, he gave me some pills for the pain and then went on his way. It’s funny, really; they’re the same ones he gave Ana a few weeks ago for her bad back and she said they didn’t help at all, but I’m already feeling better.”

“Okay. Final question—do you know anyone who might have had it out for your wife?”

“Ah, no...” He draws in a deep breath. “Only Giovanni, I suppose, but he’s already locked up. She was so sweet, I have no idea who would... who...” He breaks into a full-out bawl.

“Alright,” you say, seeing that you won’t get any more out of him right now. “Thank you for your time, Mr. Marksim.” However, as you begin to leave, he grabs your hand and pulls a revolver out of his pocket. You startle back in fear, but he turns it around to hand the butt to you.

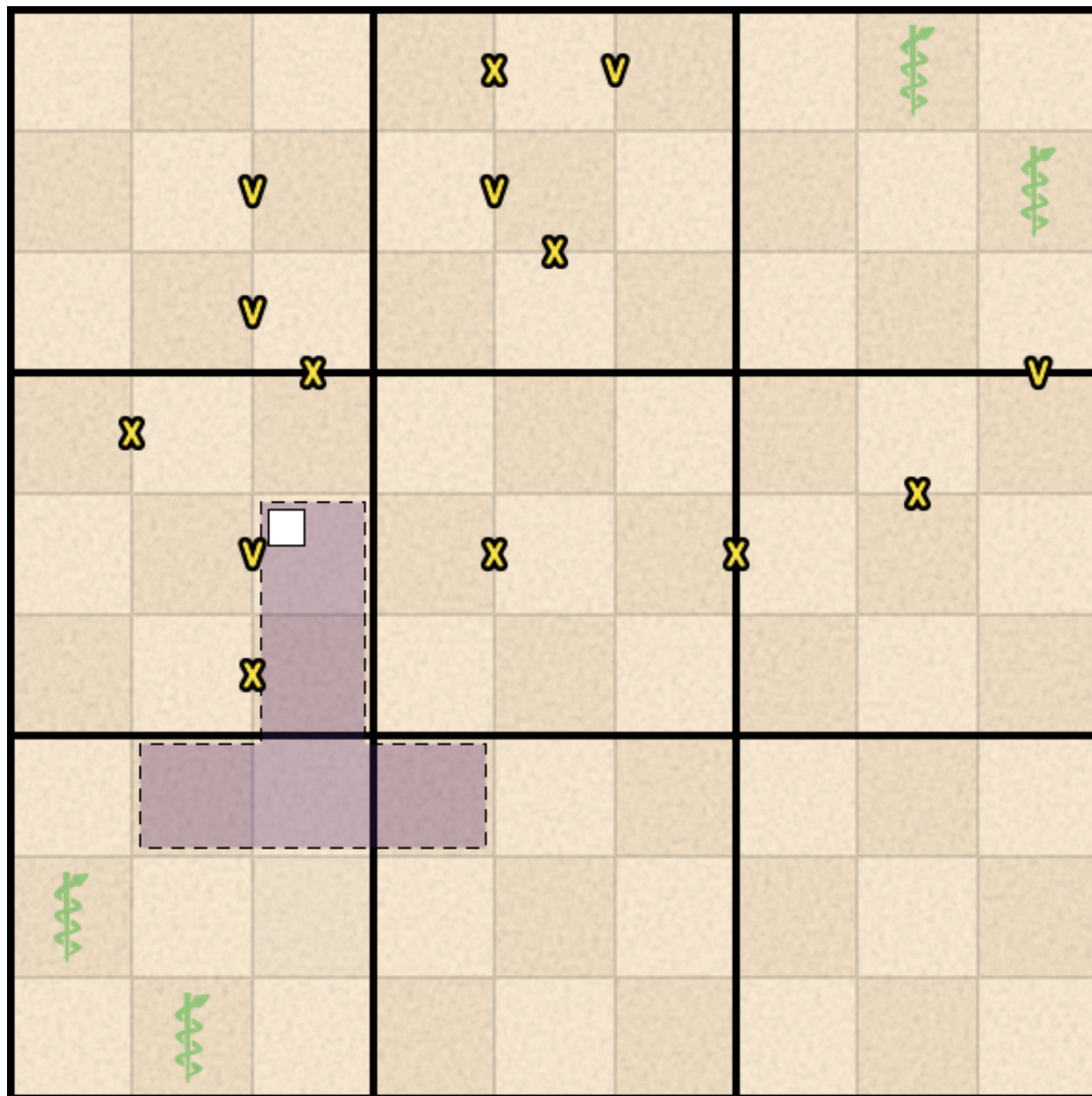
He manages to speak a few words through the tears. “You—probably want to see this. I’ve kept it since—since—the robbery. But only Jarvis and I know where it’s kept, you see. I don’t know if it will—if it could help with... but I didn’t want to hide it from you.”

You take the gun and observe that its chambers are all empty. “Thank you, Mr. Marksim.” He continues to weep as you gently stash this evidence away in your overcoat.

Act 3 Puzzle

By James Daniel Peter (MaverickJd)

Normal sudoku rules apply. Cells that are a chess king's move apart cannot contain the same digit. Digits separated by an X sum to 10, and digits separated by a V sum to 5. All possible X's and V's are given.



<https://app.crackingthecryptic.com/sudoku/Qg8946Nb7d>

Act 4: Hide and Seek

You turn your investigation now to the two children of the house, the twins Derek and Eric, since they were the ones to first discover the body. The kids shift conflictedly in their seats, obviously upset over their stepmother's death but also clearly excited to be in the presence of a real detective.

"I know this must all be very hard for you two," you begin gently, "but I do need you to describe exactly what happened this afternoon, please."

Eric glances at Derek, seemingly gaining his nonverbal permission to speak first. "We were playing hide-and-seek in the gardens before dinner. Mr. J had let us out of lessons early so we were gonna settle a bet we had with Emma H. at school. And I was winning—"

Derek cuts him off, glaring. "It was a tie!" Before Eric can protest, Derek presses on: "Anyway, we suddenly heard Ana scream so we ran to see what was going on. And she was—there... just..." His voice falters.

"It was just like a detective book," says Eric in a quiet voice. He leans in confidentially. "Dad and Ana say they're too scary for us, but Mr. J lets us read them in secret. I guess they are kinda scary, but the detective always figures it out in the end." He looks up at you with a plea in his eyes.

"I'll certainly do my best," you reply. "Now, you mentioned a Mr. J—"

"I'm not scared of those books," interrupts Derek defensively, crossing his arms. His brother whacks him with a sofa cushion. "You are too! After that last Miss Marble story—"

"You're the one who keeps the nightlight on!" The twins scuffle with each other, until you clear your throat loudly. They pause almost comically, and return to their seats with sheepish expressions.

"Mr. J is our butler," says Eric. "And he teaches us stuff they don't teach in school, like Latin and music 'n' stuff. 'Cept he's the best teacher *ever* cuz he doesn't yell and lets you chew gum and stuff."

"And sometimes lets you out early," pipes up Derek.

"I see. And what do you think of Anastasia?"

The twins give each other a meaningful glance. "Dad keeps trying to get us to call her Mom," says Eric slowly. "But our real mom-- died-- a few years ago, and Ana is really just the replacement."

"She's alright, I guess," continues Derek, "but she ain't *our* mom." He points to a framed photograph on the wall, which shows a slightly younger Claude and a woman in a hospital gown

standing proudly over a line of bassinets in a well-lit room. “Look! That’s Mom and Dad at the hospital. There are **nine boxes** but you can see **two of ’em are exactly the same**, and that’s us.”

Both children stare longingly at the photo. “Maybe now that Ana’s gone,” says Eric somberly, “Dad won’t get another replacement. ‘Specially not one who’s so bossy all the time.”

“Children!” calls a stately voice from the entryway. You turn to see Jarvis beckoning towards the twins. “Come prepare for dinner now.”

“Okay, Mr. J!” They scamper off, and you let them go.

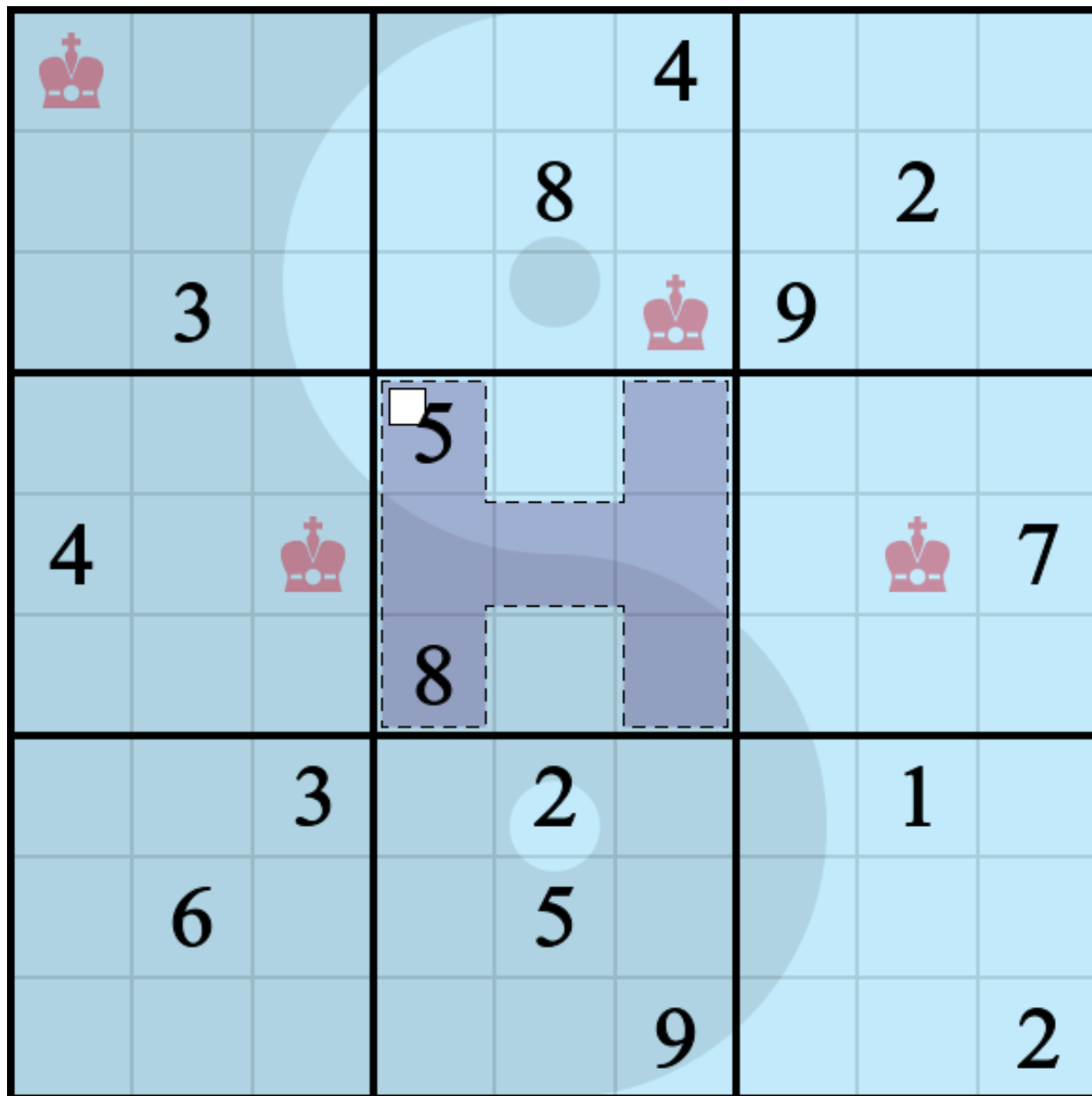
“Won’t you join us, inspector?” the butler asks.

“No, thank you, I ate before I came.” You smile at him. “But could you send the gardener to me? I’d like to have a few words with her.”

Act 4 Puzzle

By Scott Strosahl

Normal sudoku rules apply. Exactly two of the 3x3 boxes are identical clones.



<https://app.crackingthecryptic.com/sudoku/2MtpTjj64>

Act 5: Twists and Thorns

Since the body was found in the gardens, you figure the gardener is a good place to start your interrogation of the household servants. Fiona is around the same age as Claude, and has grass stains all over her lime-green frock.

"All right, can we just get this over with?" she asks sullenly, throwing herself down into an armchair. "I'm missing my dinner for this, you know."

"I apologize for the inconvenience, Mrs. Fielding, but you must understand that a person has died."

"I suppose." She sighs. "With that big head of hers, never woulda thought she had it in her."

You cross your legs inquisitively. "What do you mean? You believe it was suicide?"

She shrugs. "Must be. Who else woulda done it? Look, inspector, it ain't no secret that a lot of us never much cared for Lady Anastasia, but that ain't no reason to go around killin' people."

"So you disliked her. Why?"

"Well, you hate to speak ill of the dead, but... she was a bit of a handful, wasn't she? Gets a few parts on Broadway and marries into money, and thinks that makes her some sorta royalty. Always ordering us about: 'replace that chair', 'paint this green', and so on." Fiona sighs again. "Now, I understand Claude wanting to remarry after the first Mrs. Marksim died. After all, I'm a widow myself, but, er..." She blushes. "Guess I can't say I've kept totally clean since my husband passed away. But I don't know *what* Claude saw in Lady Anastasia for a bride."

"I see." You mark down a few notes. "So tell me about the garden where she was found. I saw it had a beautiful display of birdcages."

Fiona smiles ruefully. "Yes, I liked that display, with the birdbath and all. Although Lady Anastasia insisted on tulips, when roses woulda worked much better. Honestly I don't think she really cared, she just wanted to annoy me. She was always doing things like that." Fiona's expression quickly turns dour. "Wouldn't be surprised if she killed herself in the garden just to try to frame me."

You grunt noncommittally. "So, where were you at the time of Mrs. Marksim's death?"

"Oh, I was around the East wing, in the tool shed on the other side of the old outhouse, which is—" She sighs in exasperation. "Look, could I see your pen and notebook? It'll be much easier if I just draw it for you."

You tear out a page from your notebook and reluctantly hand it and your pencil to her. She makes a quick sketch of the manor grounds. "Okay, so look here. I divide the estate into different 'regions' with the décor. Lady Anastasia was here, in region 4 of the gardens, with the

birdcages and tulips. Over here you can see region 3 is a hedge maze, where the kiddies like to play, and region 5 has the nice little pond. The yellow areas are all one disconnected region, region 9, which is all the places I haven't finished yet. I was over here, in region 7, getting some supplies from this shed here; it's where I keep hoes, trowels, that sort of thing.

"Lady Anastasia told me this morning that she's deathly allergic to poison ivy, even in tiny amounts, but is too embarrassed to tell anyone. Imagine! So she wanted me to make sure there was no poison ivy anywhere on the grounds. I told her I wouldn't let a weed like that live past a day, but she insisted I double-check. So that's what I was doing, another pointless chore for Lady Anastasia. I figured I'd start in region 2--"

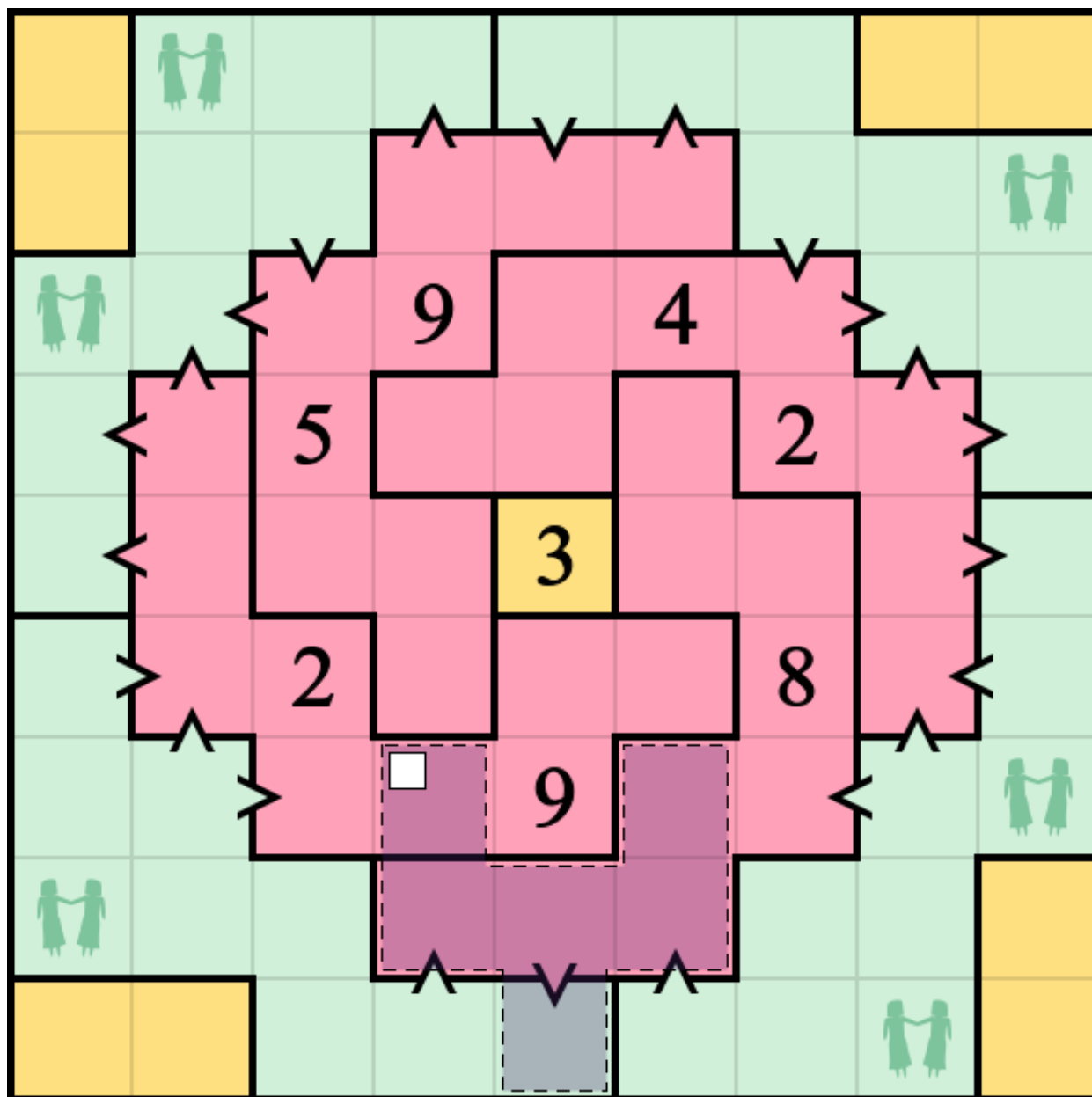
"All right," you say, hoping to conclude this interview before you're subjected to a description of all four other regions of the garden. "So who are the rest of the staff that I should be talking to?"

"Oh, well there's me, Jarvis the butler, Horatia the cook... and Gus is the chauffeur, ever since Gio left. Oh, and I suppose Isaac's here at nights now, too. I'll get Gus for you." Fiona shuffles off, grumbling, "let's see if Horatia's seafood is any good cold."

Act 5 Puzzle

By Alice

Place the digits 1-9 in each row, column, and irregularly shaped region. The central cell and four dominos at the corners of the grid together comprise a single region. Inequality signs indicate which of two adjacent digits is larger.



Act 6: Driving Me Crazy

Gus seems like he would be more at home in a coal mine or alongside a railroad track than stuffed into a neat uniform at an opulent mansion. He is chewing on something, but whether it's gum, tobacco, or even the remains of his dinner, you can't quite be sure.

You begin with a topic that you were intrigued by Fiona's brief mention of. "So, Gus, I understand that you are relatively new to this position?"

"Sure am," he replies with a sloppy salute. "Two months next Sunday, I believe. I used to be a cabbie, but the night after Lady A got rid of ol' Giovanni, she took my **taxicab** to her show. And I guess she musta liked my driving so much she hired me on the spot." He chuckles. "It's been a wild ride, if you'll pardon the pun."

"This Giovanni fellow," you pursue, "I've heard several people mention him but I'm not sure who he is. Can you fill me in?"

"Ya must not be from around these parts, huh?" He chuckles again. "Poor sap. It was in all the local papers for weeks. Lady A finds one of Mr. M's most trusted servants tryin' to steal from his collection. Giovanni pulls a gun on her but it jams, so he just whacks her in the head and runs. He got put away for life, armed robbery and attempted murder. Course, plenty o' folks think Lady A made the whole thing up, just to give him the boot without Mr. M gettin' mad. There weren't much to go on besides her word against his."

"I see," you say, definitely intrigued now. "And what do *you* think?"

"I get paid to drive, not to think." He sighs. "Either way, sometimes I envy the son of a gun. Lady A ain't the nicest passenger, and some days I think Giovanni was the lucky one, managing to get away." He quickly covers his mouth. "If you'll pardon me, sir. Shouldn't talk like that about poor old Lady A now that she's... well, ya know."

"If you dislike your job so much, why don't you just leave?"

"Are you kiddin'?" He scoffs. "This gig's a chore, sure, but it's dollars-to-pennies better 'n cabbie. And beside the pay, Lady A ain't never thrown up in my backseat." He chuckles once more, but this time there is a hardness in his voice behind it. "Still, I hate to say it, but a future drivin' only Mr. M sounds mighty nice. Can't say I ain't lookin' forward to it."

"Fair enough." You decide it's time to get down to brass tacks. "So, where were you this afternoon when Mrs. Marksim was attacked?"

"I was in the garage, searchin' for my tire iron. The kids are always runnin' off with it, they like to play it's some sorta magic wand or somethin'. I thought I heard a scream, but I figgered it was just Lady A going off on the kids again—just two nights ago I heard her yellin' at them that she ain't no doll." He shakes his head. "I guess they were trying to put her in diff'rent poses or

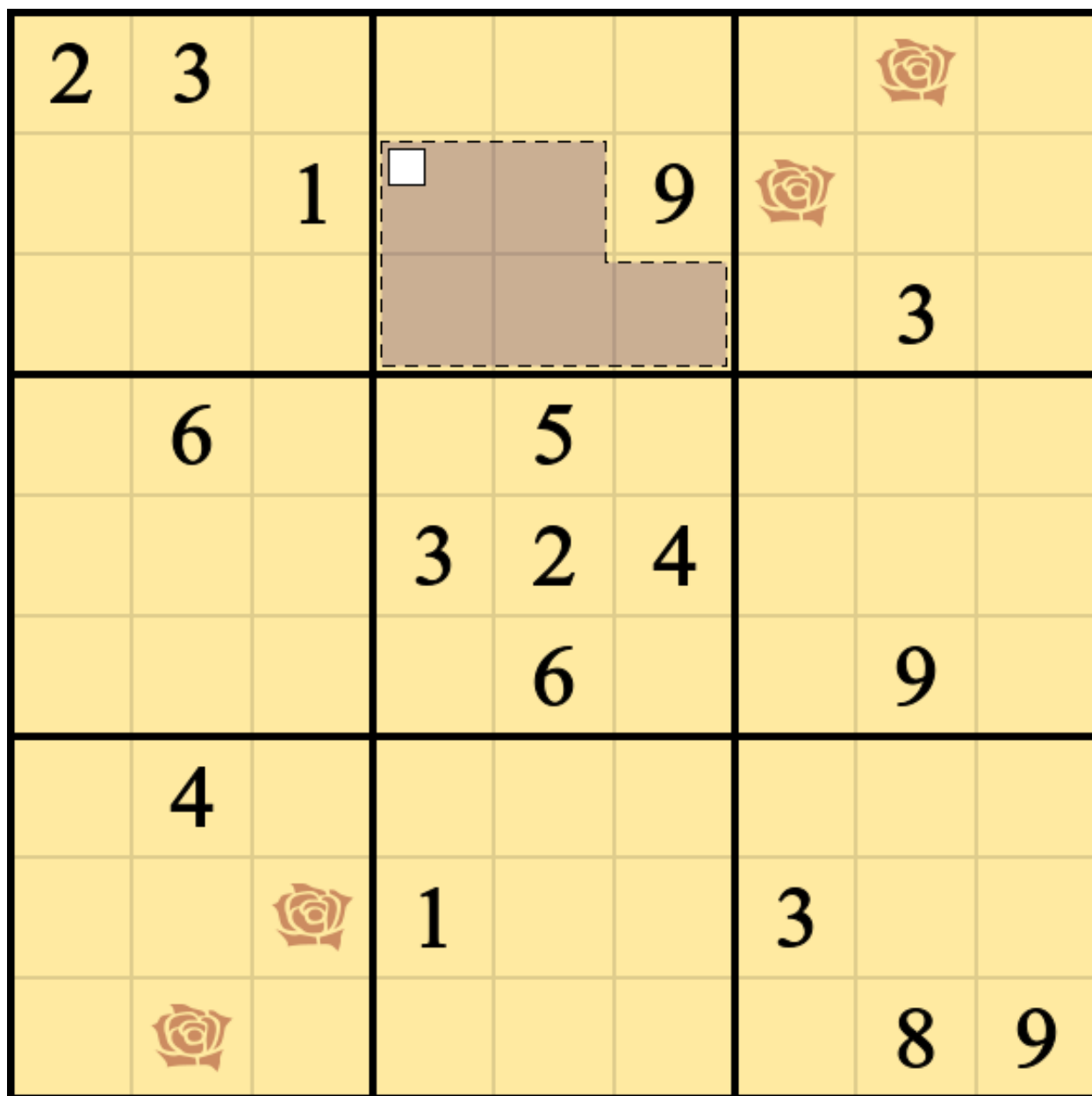
somechin'. Anyway, I only found out what happened when I went to see if Mr. M had my iron, and ran into the doc on the way."

"Very well. Thank you, Gus. Now, if Horatia is done cleaning up from dinner, could you send her in to me?"

Act 6 Puzzle

By Madmahogany

Normal sudoku rules apply. The “taxicab distance” (number of orthogonal moves needed to traverse) between two identical digits must not equal that digit.



Act 7: Master of Sandwiches

Horatia's expression is unfathomable as she dries a long kitchen knife with her apron. You try to start with a compliment, to butter her up. "I hear you made fish for dinner; it must be good, the way Fiona was raring to get to it."

She flashes a proud half-smile. "That woman would eat dog food if you put enough salt on it. But sì, the blackened swordfish sandwiches are one of my specialties. I wanted to make something special for my last meal before those infernal machines are installed tomorrow." She sees your raised eyebrow and explains: "Lady Anastasia has insisted, despite my numerous protests, that we install electric ranges in *my* kitchen. She thinks it will 'modernize' the room. Ha! As if anyone but me spent any time there. And *I* have always cooked with gas."

"So, you were unhappy with Mrs. Marksim?"

She bristles. "*Mrs. Marksim* passed a few years ago. *Lady Anastasia* may have taken her place, but she never quite—how do you say it? *Fit in* with this family. *My* family."

"Your family?"

Her lips tighten. "Ah, but you think I am *just* the chef, no? You are wrong. Mr. Marksim treats us with extraordinary care. Us servants eat in the dining hall right alongside him, Lady Anastasia, and the bambini. I met Mr. Marksim on one of his many trips to Italy, right after I lost my own family in a fire, and he accepted me into his without a second thought. He is a remarkable man, inspector."

"I see. So you consider yourself something more than a servant?"

"Not just me. All of us have always been very close. Jarvis has been with Mr. Marksim for decades, and cares for the bambini. The three of us always work together to decorate the manor for the holidays. Fiona and I play bridge every Tuesday, and lately Isaac has been joining us. And before the *incident*, Giovanni was a part of it too; he was always running off somewhere private with Fiona, and of course he and I connected over our heritage."

You turn a page in your notebook. "Yes, let's talk about that incident. Gus filled me in on the details. So, who—or what—do *you* believe?"

For the first time, Horatia's confidence seems to falter. "Well, I certainly wouldn't put it past Lady Anastasia to do such a thing to tear our family apart even further. However..." She bites her lip. "Shortly before that time, Giovanni was talking to me about Mr. Marksim's collection. Giovanni was beginning to think that these Roman artifacts belonged rightly in Rome itself, not the States. I didn't agree; in my view, the past is the past and Mr. Marksim has just as much right to what he has bought as anyone else. But it does make me wonder..."

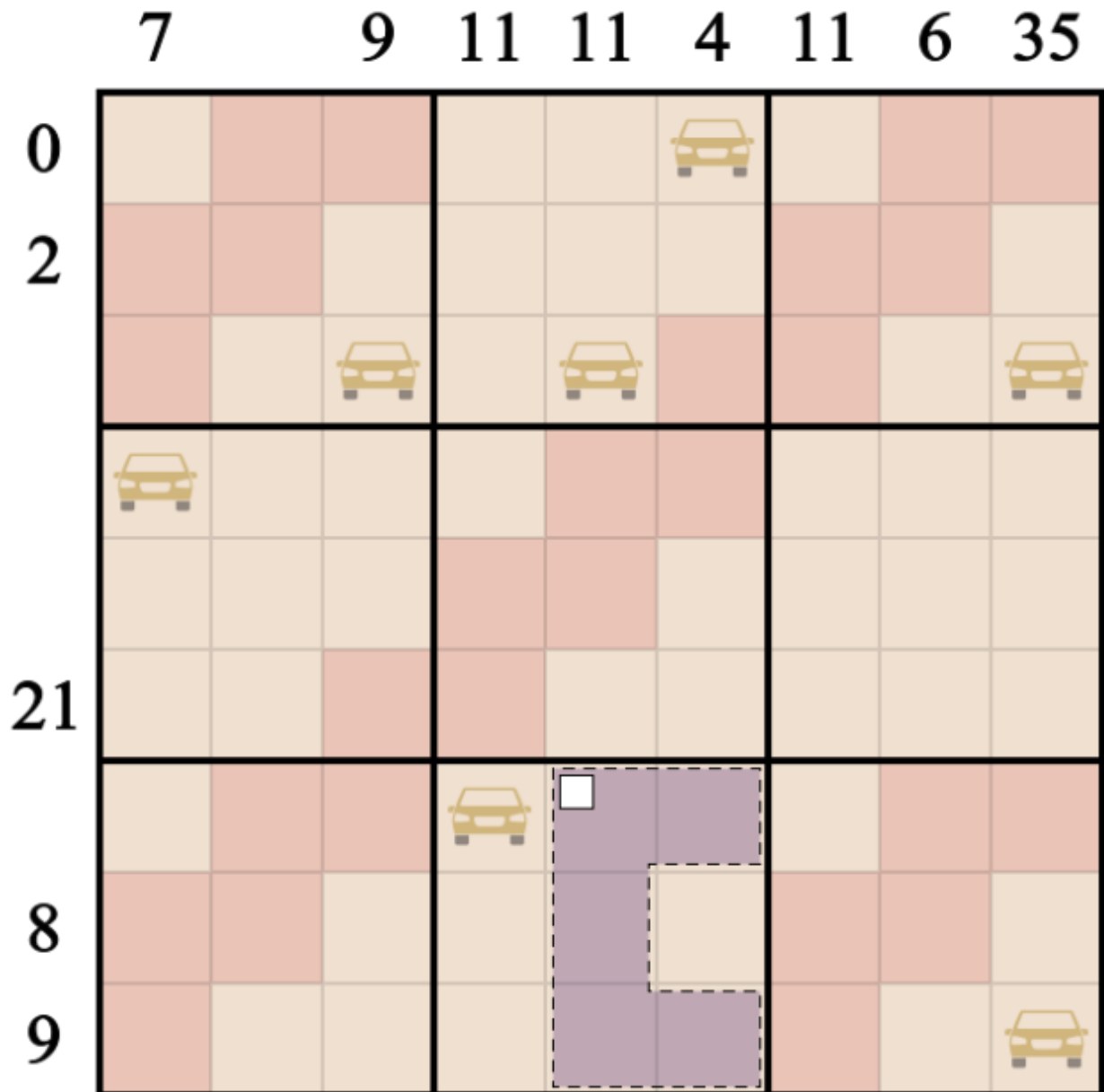
She seems quite uncomfortable, so you decide to wrap things up. "All right then, last question—where were you this afternoon when Mrs.—er, when *Lady Anastasia* was attacked?"

“Oh, that’s simple. I was already in the kitchen, preparing the fish. You don’t think such a wonder can be crafted in a few minutes, do you? Some of the ingredients I even started gathering last night, and it made me miss my engagements.” She gives you a stern look. “I take my creations quite seriously, inspector.”

Act 7 Puzzle

By Max Reenoch, with help from Alice and No-Feet McGee

Normal sudoku rules apply. Digits outside the grid give the total sum of the digits “sandwiched” between the 1 and the 9 in that row or column.



<https://app.crackingthecryptic.com/sudoku/dD793QgjdL>

Act 8: The Knight Guard

Jarvis pokes his head through the entryway. "Inspector? The night guard has arrived for his shift, if you would like to speak with him."

"Sure, send him in."

Isaac enters with a swagger, his rounded belly nearly bursting out of his guard's uniform. "An inspector? What's all this about then?"

You have him take a seat. "Did nobody inform you yet? I'm afraid that the lady of the house was found dead this afternoon—although her body has since disappeared..."

His face is pure shock. "Wha—wha—" After a moment, he pulls himself together. "Anastasia? You must be joking. How could this happen?"

"I'm afraid I'm not," you reply grimly. "Which is why I have to ask you what you were doing this afternoon."

"I was rehearsing—for hours and hours," he says. "You see, Anastasia was kind enough to help me land a role in her latest production! I play an old knight—well, in some ways he's not very knightly. I suppose you could almost call him an **anti-knight**. But Anastasia and I rehearse our lines together all the time, and since I have more lines than her, I also do work on my own."

"So you spent a lot of time with Anastasia?"

"I guess you could say so. Heck, a lot of times we'd even go over other scenes in the play besides our own. She's one heck of a woman, inspector. Or," his face falls, "she was..."

You sit back in your seat. "Interesting that you should say so, since I've gathered she's not exactly popular among the rest of the staff."

He scowls. "Those fools are so busy fawning over Mr. Marksim that they miss what's right in front of them. Especially Horatia; I think she may even be romantically interested in Mr. Marksim. But if you take the time to get to know Anastasia, she has many wonderful qualities. Did you know she studied biology before becoming an actress? She could tell you the scientific name of any plant you came across. And that intelligence even manifested in her speech; her insults and put-downs were always just in good fun, if you really knew her." He sighs deeply. "It's a damn shame that she's gone."

"Indeed." You tap your pencil thoughtfully. "To go back to my first question, where were you rehearsing this afternoon?"

"Oh, at my own house," he replies. "Unlike the other staff, I don't live on the grounds. I'm not an old staple of the home like Jarvis or Fiona. They only hired me recently, after the attempted robbery; Mr. Marksim wants to make sure his collection is safe in the future."

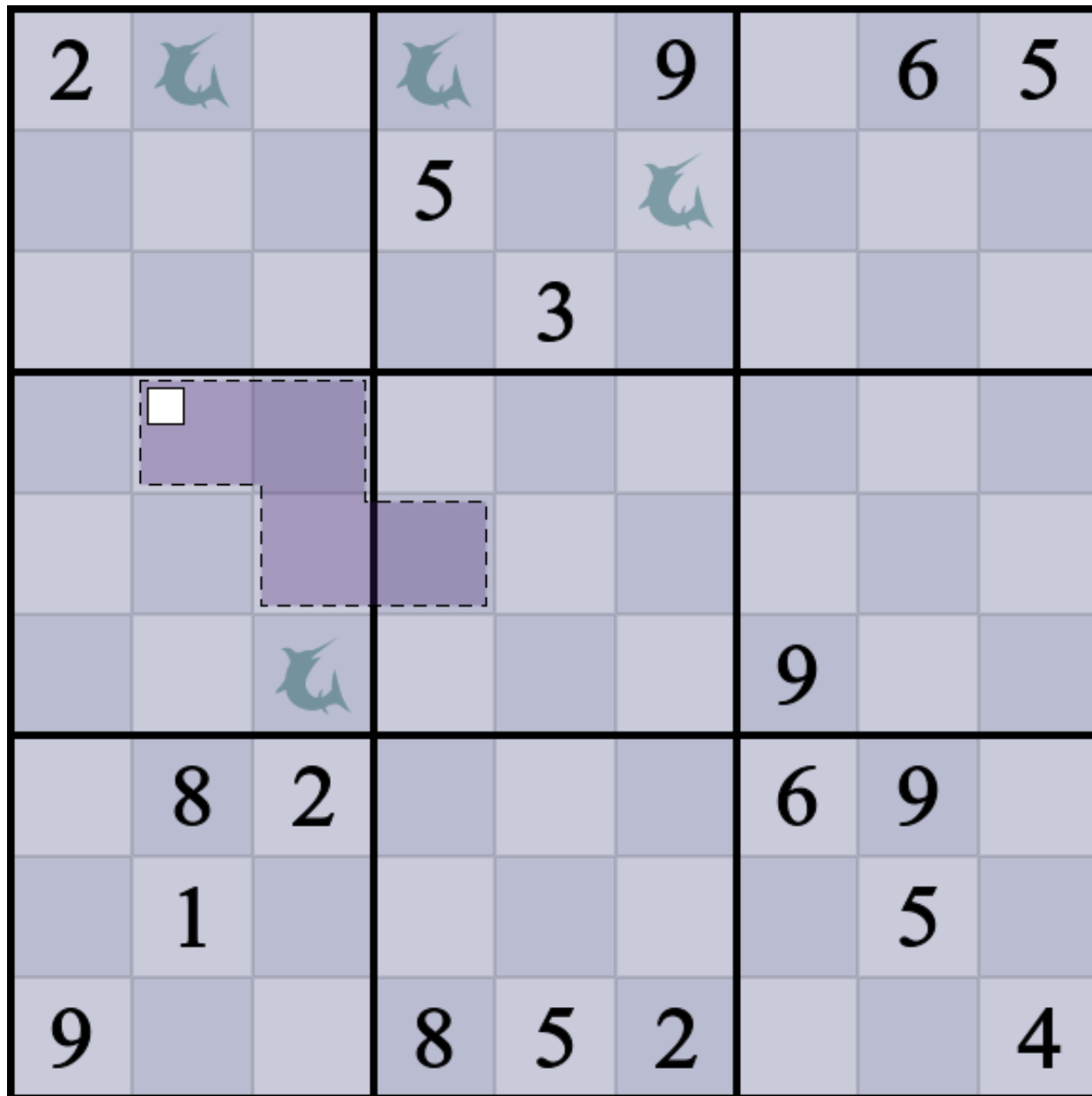
“Very well. You may go.” However, as he begins to leave, you notice an unusual stiffness in his walk and ask him about it.

“Oh, Anastasia and I both hurt our backs a few weeks ago while rehearsing a rowdy tavern scene. I still can’t lift anything more than a few pounds.” He shrugs, winces, then pulls out a sturdy-looking flashlight to begin his patrols.

Act 8 Puzzle

By Sam-Testings

Normal sudoku rules apply. Cells that are a chess knight's move apart cannot contain the same digit.



<https://app.crackingthecryptic.com/sudoku/G38HfgRGdf>

Act 9: Letters in the Mirror

The only one left to interview is Jarvis. You find him adjusting his bowtie in the hall mirror, and you're temporarily distracted by its mesmerizing pattern, which is **exactly the same both forwards and backwards**. However, you quickly snap out of it and soon have him seated in front of you.

"Thank you for your patience with all of us, inspector." He gives you a prim smile.

"Of course. So, can you give me your account of this afternoon's events?"

"Certainly." He clears his throat. "After lunch I began violin lessons with the children, as is our custom on Wednesdays. They have progressed quite well since our last lesson, so I allowed them to leave an hour or so early. As for myself, I retired to my room for some quiet reading before dinner. Unfortunately, my annotated Jules Verne compilation seems to be missing, so I had to resort to Asimov. I must say I can't imagine where my Verne has gone; it's quite a heavy tome, as you might imagine. I do hope no one's run off with it."

"Indeed." You half-heartedly jot down this seemingly useless information. "So, do you know of any enemies that Mrs. Marksim may have had?"

His neck stiffens with restraint. "It is not my place to speak ill of my mistress. However, I believe it is common knowledge that many of the staff view her as an interloper into this household, and are mainly loyal to Mr. Marksim. For my part, I have been with my master for three entire decades, and I intend to stand by him for many more. Take from that what you will, but 'enemy' does seem like an overly strong term to use in this situation."

"So yes, many of the staff disliked her; I'd discovered that much already. Anyone else?"

"Well." He glances around to make sure nobody is watching and leans in conspiratorially. "I ought not say this, given my employment, but I fear the circumstances may be so dire as to require it. It is a little-known secret that the Marksims have not enjoyed an entirely happy marriage. Given her fame, my mistress receives a good deal of mail from adoring fans—some of them a bit *too* adoring, if you catch my drift."

"Mmm?" You are interested now.

"To her credit, I do not believe that my mistress has ever taken action upon such letters. However, that has not stopped my master from being angered by them. It doesn't help that her most recent role is as a prostitute... His affections come with a heightened jealousy, and after only a few months my mistress grew weary of having this conversation with him. So, she has asked me to hide away any mail she receives of a more... amorous... nature, so that my master cannot find them. I have been doing so by secreting these letters behind the frame of a mirror in the upstairs hallway."

"If she doesn't intend to act upon these letters, why not just have you destroy them? In the fireplace, perhaps?"

He gives you a look that indicates he doesn't know but is too dignified to actually shrug his shoulders. "That is not my place to say, inspector."

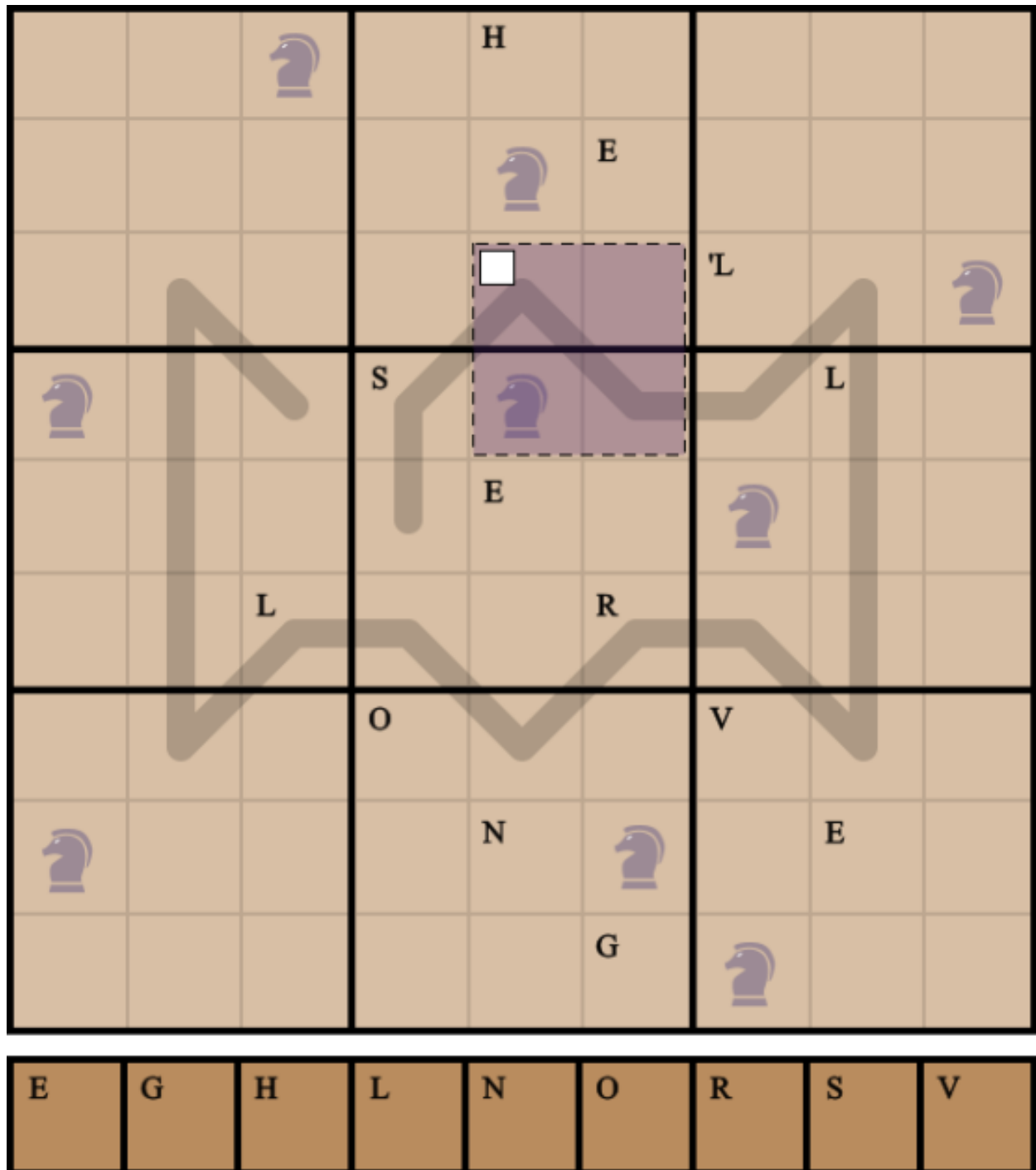
"All right then. Can you gather everyone together in the parlor at half past six, so I may present my findings?"

"Certainly." He rises with grace and stalks out of the room.

Act 9 Puzzle

By No-Feet McGee, with help from Alice

Normal sudoku rules apply. Each digit is represented by a different letter. Digits along the gray line form a palindrome, i.e. they read the same forwards and backwards.



<https://app.crackingthecryptic.com/sudoku/f9bDfmTtML>

Act 10: The Puzzle Pieces Come Together

It is now 6:30, and you have the family, their servants, and Dr. Brown all gathered in the home's stately parlor. Claude slumps despondently on a settee, with Derek and Eric clinging to either side of him. Basil reclines cross-legged in a nearby armchair, smoking a pipe, while the household's five servants stand nervously along the back wall, flanked by Jarvis on one side and Isaac on the other. It seems like the air itself hangs suspended in time, awaiting the denouement of your investigation.

You consider everything you have learned. This case is a tricky puzzle, to be sure. But you think you've pieced together the truth. Each suspect was a bit cagey with their answers, but most of them did not outright lie. And you figure that anyone who *did* lie is responsible for Anastasia Marksim's murder.

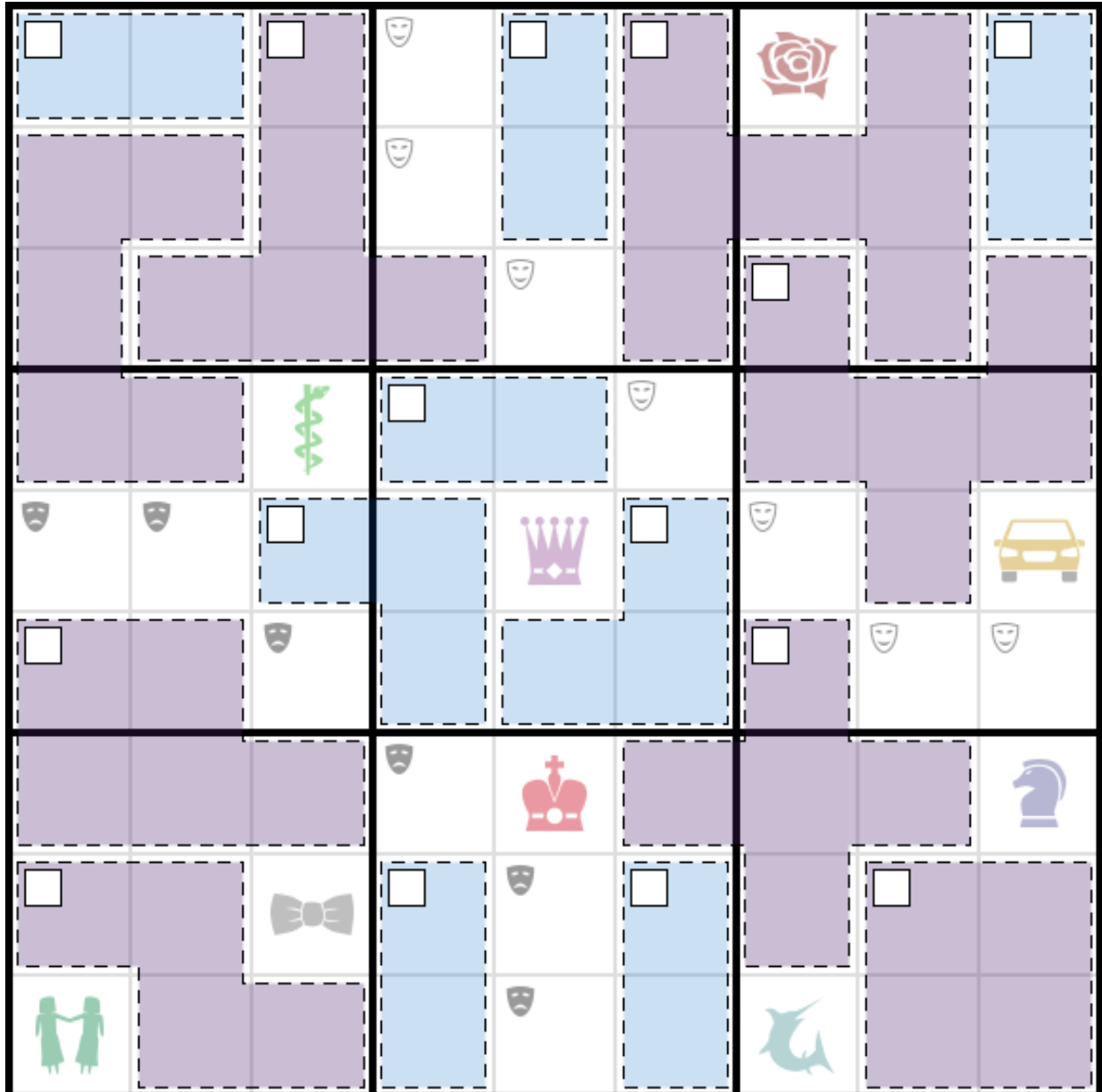
There is a dusty old blackboard situated against one of the walls, presumably as a sort of decoration. This was your reason for selecting this room to present your findings in. You take a deep breath, and lift a piece of chalk. This is the big reveal.

You write down, in all capitals and in alphabetical order, with no spaces, who murdered Anastasia (by first name), what the motive was, and what the murder weapon was. The room gasps.

Act 10 Puzzle

By Alice

Normal sudoku rules apply. Digits in cages must sum to the number at the top-left of the cage. The cage totals of blue cages come from the crime scene investigation and are always correct. The cage totals of purple cages come from interviewing suspects and may be either correct or off by 1. Digits may not repeat within cages.



<https://app.crackingthecryptic.com/sudoku/DtNtMFM6gF>