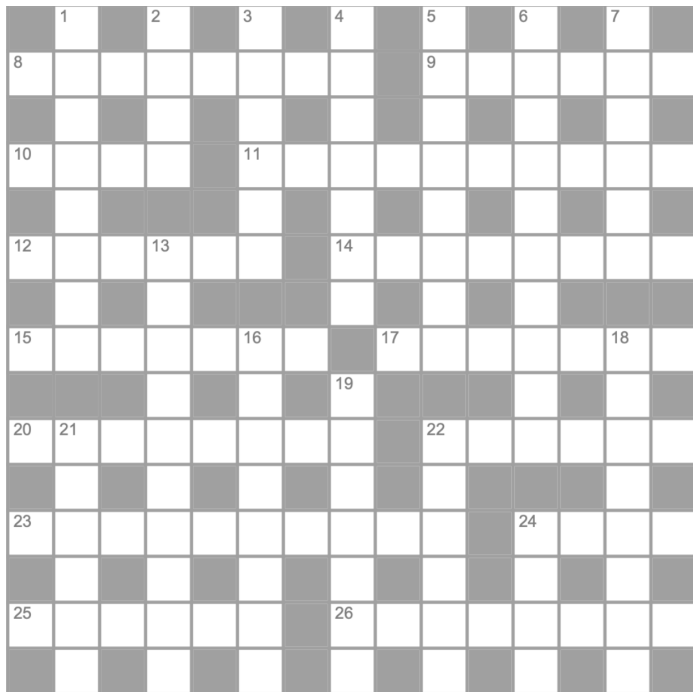


Genius No 247

Set by Qaos



Thirteen entries have a single letter that is not accounted for in their clues' wordplay. The enumeration of another seven clues is out by one; their answers must be fitted thematically. Solvers should highlight the theme (19 cells) and rework the grid's shading thematically.

Deadline for entries is 23:59 BST on Saturday 27 January. You need to register once and then sign in to theguardian.com to enter our online competition for a £100 monthly prize.

Across

- 8** Somewhat macho? That characterises powerful car (8, 2 words)
- 9** Unique uncovered long red sofa (6, 2 words)
- 10** Front line (4)
- 11** Writer's gentle note with line of verse (10)
- 12** Far Eastern book recalled (6)
- 14** Adult breaking into key apartment in stunt? (8)
- 15** Number 10 beginning to suspect European great (7)
- 17** Pop record's about ... what? (7)
- 20** Nation in bed 50+ (8)
- 22** Cooled face of Fairy Queen (6)
- 23** Porches 25% off, about 40% off? We're done talking (10, 3 words)
- 24** Regret withdrawing money (4)
- 25** Creed that's describing church's final revelation (6)
- 26** Welcome everyone inside university after intro to thrash metal (8)

Down

- 1** Couple from Newcastle upset after United crushed by strong figure (8)
- 2** Playwright was high injecting heroin (4)
- 3** Basic stationery (6)
- 4** Financial institution losing billions in drop hit badly (7)
- 5** Native American caught old man's companion on horseback? (8)
- 6** Meaningless short inspired by De Niro cast in Atonement (10)
- 7** No point in football ground being at a distance (6)
- 13** Public presses to ditch government proposals (10)
- 16** Marked criminal instead (8)
- 18** Explain trophy broken by king (8, 2 words)
- 19** One points, one's taken in by fools (7)
- 21** 10015150? Be nice (6)
- 22** Deadly force - Alekhine's opening by chess champion (6)
- 24** Mischievous being travelled out west in retirement (4)