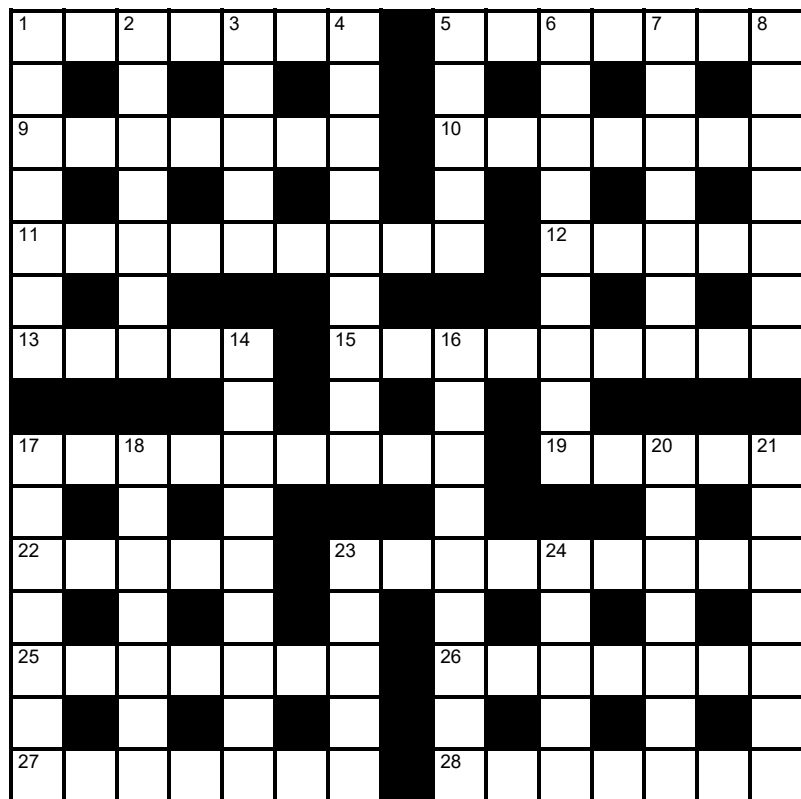


Across

- 1 A match for the Devil (7)
- 5 Difficult to straddle a horse when rundown (7)
- 9 Proceeding across Congo in gunboat (7)
- 10 Pale, sickly hog left in pen (7)
- 11 Based on stories of monstrous cane toad seen by lake (9)
- 12 Part of market surrounding hotel in fashionable resort (5)
- 13 Abandon daughter with slight feeling of discomfort (5)



- 15 No longer appreciating popular soap opera villains (9)
- 17 Foreman's running rings round English journeyman, say (9)
- 19 Pole has drink with contrary compiler (5)
- 22 Run ancient city and a large part of the country (5)
- 23 Stern doctor accompanies a barbarian around India (9)
- 25 Has love died in quarantine? (7)
- 26 Demanding general interrupts leave (7)

- 27 Figures in book (7)
- 28 Letters carved into table (7)

Down

- 1 Up and coming horror writer welcomed by fat cat (7)
- 2 The most secretive orders CIA gets (7)
- 3 FBI agent takes Rhode Island prisoner to be electrocuted (5)
- 4 Godly sorts hug Tories (9)
- 5 A thinking man's male hair product (5)

- 6 Prohibit maniac from leaving the house for some food (9)
- 7 E.g. The Thing (7)
- 8 Arid state of Yemen heartlessly accepted by 23d (7)
- 14 Shame of motorway tailback captured in colour (9)
- 16 Entertaining theatre featuring drag queen as Bottom (9)
- 17 Outlandish opinion originally held by lunatic fringe (7)
- 18 It's hard to forget war Rome lost (7)
- 20 River bordering Idaho offers

- several points for fishing (7)
- 21 Consumed energy supporting fellow creature (7)
- 23 Compulsion to remove uniform or clothing (5)
- 24 Flipping wicked old fruit! (5)