

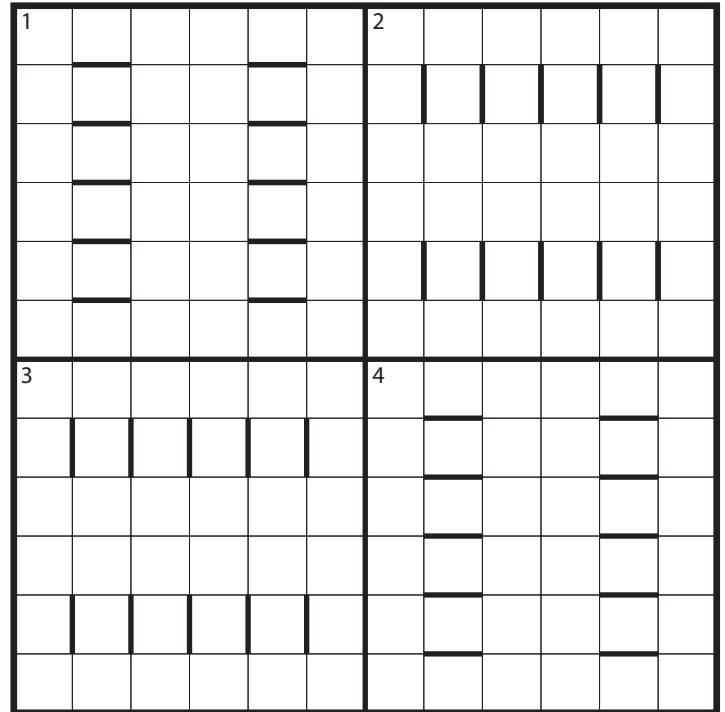
THERE'S ALWAYS A WOMAN

by Mark Halpin

As this issue celebrates women in Sondheim's works, so this puzzle is inspired by four women with particularly striking personalities.

The puzzle comprises four mini-puzzles, each inspired by a different character. One Across and Down clue are provided for each grid, each of which has a unique gimmick. The remaining clues are ordered alphabetically by answer. All clue answers are six letters long, and must be placed in the appropriate grid in jigsaw fashion.

When the puzzle is completed, try to locate four additional thematically-apt, symmetrically-positioned words in the grid.



The Witch

Beware her spells.

- 1A Cretan king mentioned in the Old Testament
- 1D Mints aren't including trace of chocolately sweet stuff

Rose

Rose's Turn; that is, the letter string yielded by the wordplay in each of Rose's clues must be reversed to match the clue's definition.

- 2A Thin Estonian duo performs "U Can't Touch This"
- 2D Heavy hitter's attitude finally solidifies about defense

Fosca

Fosca is clinging and suffers from many disorders. The wordplay for each of her clues consists of a definition for a word that must be rearranged, with an additional letter added, to match the grid entry's definition.

- 3A Difficult to climb grouping like the hills of Rome
- 3D Members of the peerage behaved peevishly

Mrs. Lovett

The wordplay indicated by Mrs. Lovett's clues must shed a little blood to match the definition portion.

- 4A Blood poisoning listed in disclaimer (but printed backward)
- 4D Gives voice to those in adjacent properties

Those groan at taking in most of boring sermon, initially
 Having a bone to pick, Sweeney's going after a group in the legal profession (2 wds.)
 Debatable topic incompletely described by each Victorian, say

- Totally cover top of pastry in carrot
- Dislike of French and Czech
- Orange vegetables I would make blue
- More than one perfume gets weaker and weaker
- Sent like ill-timed birthday wishes
- Appear on the scene, for example, with Stipe's band? Excellent!
- Catalyst beginning to emend my disturbed zen
- Like a hoarse, loud scream followed by a whimper
- Some characters from *Avatar* are misdirected goofs
- Imitation pizza essentially rates poorly
- Tax cheat went angrily on and on
- Place to watch performers balance (2 wds.)
- One singing of a constant craving: liver, for one (2 wds.)
- Coarse or mushy members of a congregation
- Praying figure's chant ultimately adopted by some Mideasterners
- Roomer's hoisted Bacardi more than once
- A baklava recipe includes this parrot, traditionally
- Stickler's fixation: odd parts of messier dump, oddly
- Most read Sartre in translation
- Newly fastened a parcel from Mr. Harte that is delivered at last
- Waive right to drink booze topless
- Vagabond's concerning New Zealander pretty much
- Annoying insects surrounding a bit of dough in Thailand
- Lack of movement in extremely stagnant desert spring
- Dread some sequences on "Dancing with the Stars"
- Very incomplete icon scrubbed for house of worship
- Popular soup's slogan
- Cruelly taunt, or seek assistance from (2 wds.)
- Despot's miniature tirade