

IACF 2025, Agatha Christie Cryptic Crossword, set by Josquin

Solutions and Explanations

Across

1. CARDS ON THE TABLE [*anag* (strange) of ‘constable’ + ‘red hat’; novel title]
9. ARGUMENTS [*anag* (characters in play) of ‘must’ + ‘anger’; clue includes title of a novel]
10. TERMS [T(orquay) + ER (royal lady) + ms (manuscript); ‘School Days’ is an invented title]
11. DART [‘opposite’, so ‘flowing water found in dead rats’; flowing water = Dart; *odd letters*, DeAdRaTs]
12. LICENSEE [*anag* (eerie) of ‘silence’ + (soiré)e; clue includes title of short story *At the Bells and Motley* (a name also found in 2 other works)]
13. ELIXIR [‘appointment with death’ cancelled thanks to ‘elixir’; e (Marple finally) + LIX (59) + I(nterpreters) + R(utherford); clue includes title of a novel]
15. EGYPTIAN [= like setting of novel *Death on the Nile*; E(rratic) + *anag* (disaster) of ‘a typing’]
18. VANISHED [reference to AC née Miller; reference to AC’s disappearance in Dec 1926; ‘with coat on for protection’ = ‘varnished’ – R (end of winter)]
19. ORDEAL [= something difficult to get through; reference to novel *Ordeal by Innocence*; ‘ordeal’ (19) ‘by’ (x) ‘innocence’ (answer to 14D)]
21. RACECARD [reference to novel *The A.B.C. Murders*, where the 4th murder was expected to take place at Doncaster racecourse; reference to Col. Race, one of the characters in *Cards on the Table* (see 1 Ac)]
23. YMCA [= association; author initially = AC + my; retro = reverse order]
26. INNER [= part of board (target); short story collection ‘Partners in Crime’, *delete* (without) ‘merit + scrap’, *anag* (sloppy) of remaining letters]
27. EVILDOING [(d)evil + ‘mouth’ of D(art) + gOINg (without left or right) + G(reenway)]
28. THE QUEEN OF CRIME [*anag* (not authentic) of ‘cheque to firemen’]

Down

1. CYANIDE [*anag* (cocktail) of 'nice day'; reference to novel *Sparkling Cyanide*]
2. RAGED [tRAGEDy; clue includes title of a novel]
3. ST MARTINS [reference to Christopher Wren, character in 'The Mousetrap' (long staged at St Martin's Theatre)]
4. NONE [seven, twO, teN, ninE; clue includes reference to rhyme and novel title]
5. HASTINGS [double meaning: coastal town + Arthur Hastings; and 'Port Arthur' = name of various towns]
6. TITLE [double meaning: novel title *Third Girl* + title 'Dame' (AC)]
7. BERKSHIRE [disguised meaning: location of AC's real-life house Styles + county town Reading; and ref. to *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*]
8. EASTERN [= in Orient. E(xpress) + trAin + stern; and reference to novel title]
14. INNOCENCE ['state' before 'verdict' (and see 19A)]
16. PARAMEDIC [*reverse RAP* (hit) + *anag* (drunk) of 'dame' + InCharge; also reference to AC's work as a nurse]
17. DERRIERE [= 'behind/backside' in Poirot's native language; *anag* (carelessly) of 'reinterred' – T(aking) N(otes)]
18. VERDICT [discoVER DICTaphone; play title *Verdict*]
20. LASAGNE [= fare from continent. L(eft) + eASt + A + (di)G + N(il)E]
22. CORFU [C(lothes) + *anag* (wrong) of 'for' + U(stinov)]
24. ALIBI [2d (old money) = Tuppence; ref to short story *The Unbreakable Alibi*, in which Tuppence solves the mystery]
25. BIRO [*first letters* (introducing) of 'Battle In Riveting' + O (zero); includes title of a novel, as well as one of its characters, Superintendent Battle]