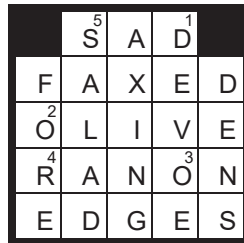


Welcome to the haunted house! Your mission is to identify the monster who lives here and collect the two sets of items you need to defeat it, but beware: Each room has its own devilish trick. Each of the first seven puzzles will yield a secret word 4-12 letters long. How you discover the secret words will change from room to room, but hold on to them, as they will come in handy for the eighth and final puzzle (the Safe). If you get stuck, you can visit [washingtonpost.com/people/evan-birnholz](http://www.washingtonpost.com/people/evan-birnholz) for the solutions. Good luck!

ROOM 1: ENTRANCE HALL

As you enter the mansion, you become disoriented, gripped by the creeping dread of such a gloomy place. In this puzzle, you don't have Across or Down clue headings, and there are no clue numbers, but there are five numbered squares. The clues are listed below in alphabetical order, but it's up to you to determine where each word belongs in the grid.



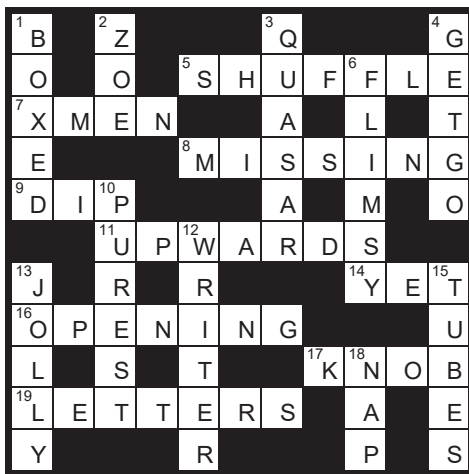
- Chopping down
- Golfer's shout
- Lairs for lions or bears
- Martini fruit
- Melancholy
- Outer limits
- "Poison" hitmakers Bell Biv ____
- Sent, as a document, to an office
- Talked nonstop (2 wds.)
- Word after Caesar or Cobb

ROOM 3: LIBRARY

You pull an old, dusty book from one of the library shelves. Written in blood on the first page are the alphabet and the code (1, 3, 7, 4, 5, 2, 6). What could this mean?

Each clue in this puzzle begins with a different letter, but these letters have been removed and replaced with blank spaces. Fill in the first letter for each clue and transfer the letters to the corresponding numbered spaces in the grid. Then, match each clue to a different spot in the grid and enter its answer there. Note that each answer begins with a different letter of the alphabet, and that no clue begins with the same letter as its answer.

- 1 ___eginning (hyph.)
- 2 ___iti or penne shapes
- 3 ___uick swim
- 4 ___ood-natured and cheerful
- 5 "___tar Trek Beyond" actress Saldana
- 6 ___ought in the ring
- 7 ___ray source in space
- 8 * ___ix up, as cards
- 9 ___rawer handle
- 10 ___rofessor Xavier's mutant team (hyph.)
- 11 ___ntil now
- 12 ___eak, as an excuse
- 13 ___ane Austen, e.g.
- 14 * ___early deliveries to Santa Claus
- 15 ___rending to the heavens
- 16 ___ne-hour refresher, say
- 17 * ___ickoff
- 18 * ___owhere to be found
- 19 ___east contaminated



ROOM 2: LABORATORY

The laboratory is filthy. Decrepit machines and broken glassware are littered about the damp floor. This used to be the site of some ghastly cloning experiments, the effects of which are still felt today.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Bedazzled state
- 4 "Revolver" drummer
- 5 Oprah Winfrey and Meryl Streep, e.g.
- 6 1972 Bill Withers hit
- 7 Palindromic bread
- 8 Spotted beast
- 12 "___ girl!"
- 13 Went out with socially
- 15 "Iliad" author
- 16 "Iliad" warrior
- 17 Boulder growth
- DOWN**
- 1 Split bit
- 2 Fall back
- 3 Takes the wrong path
- 4 "Halloween" clip, for instance
- 5 Newton who wrote the treatise "Opticks"
- 6 Game featuring Reverse cards
- 9 Certain glove
- 10 Playful swimmer
- 11 Small trace

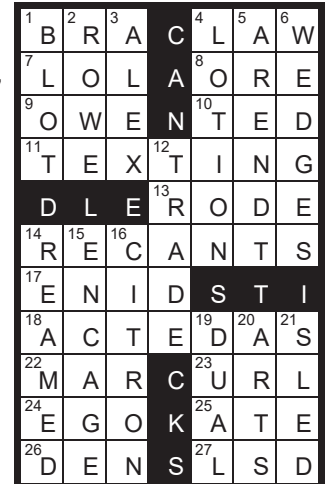


- 13 Breaking point?
- 14 Accumulate
- 15 Salt-cured meat

ROOM 4: BASEMENT

It's pitch black in the basement. You begin to tremble in fear. But if you search a little farther, you may find light in the darkest of places.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Nursing ___
- 4 Hammer part
- 7 Hit by the Kinks
- 8 Dug-up material
- 9 "The Haunting" actor Wilson
- 10 Slugger Williams
- 11 Making contact with one's fingers?
- 13 Destroy slowly
- 14 Disavows
- 17 Author Bagnold
- 18 Substituted for
- 22 Disfigure
- 23 Twist on one's head
- 24 It's all in your head
- 25 "Mare of Easttown" star Winslet
- 26 Some TV rooms
- 27 "Dropped" letters?
- DOWN**
- 1 Black mark
- 2 Spur wheel
- 3 Trebek of trivia
- 4 Skin applications
- 5 "On Revolution" author Hannah
- 6 Cheese chunks
- 12 Fair ___

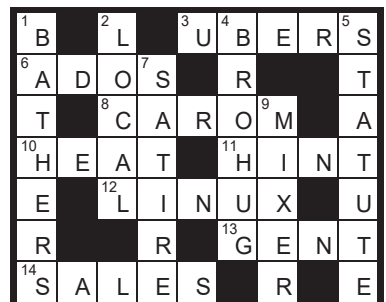


- 14 Had visions
- 15 Trap
- 16 Fruit similar to a lemon
- 19 Like a Jekyll-and-Hyde personality
- 20 Bakery treats
- 21 Marooned

ROOM 5: CRYPT

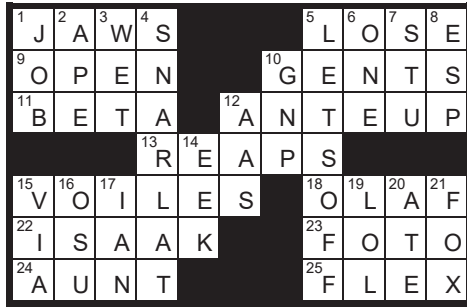
A hidden passageway opens, leading to a crypt. This may be the final resting place for the monster's victims. Note: If you are new to solving cryptics, we suggest this guide: enigma.puzzlers.org/guide/cryptics1

- ACROSS**
- 3 Naked hero in broken-down bus summoned car rides (5)
- 6 Stirs drink around (4)
- 8 Marco ruined billiards shot (5)
- 10 Pressure swindler, losing bit of cash (4)
- DOWN**
- 11 Search in the section where you'll find the secret word: the middle column (4)
- 12 Bell finally redesigned Unix operating system (5)
- 13 Refined guy goes nuts, oddly (4)
- 14 Company division takes a cruise, I hear (5)
- DOWN**
- 1 Pubs hosting the nude people, maybe (7)
- 2 Lite Subway choice (5)
- 4 Buddy's first rough, rough embrace (3,3)
- 5 David, for one, has time for law (7)
- 7 Artie's awful spoof (6)
- 9 I'm upset: Old king held up social event (5)



ROOM 6: KITCHEN

There is a foul-smelling cauldron filled with ashes and eyeballs and tarantulas. You wonder what else the monster added to this vile mixture.



ACROSS

- 1 Film about a deep terror?
- 5 "Lemon" fish dish
- 9 Accessible

- 10 Blokes
- 11 Testing phase
- 12 ___ butter (Jif or Skippy spread)
- 13 Still-life fruits
- 15 Black or green pizza toppings
- 18 "Frozen" character made of snow

- 22 Rocker Chris
- 23 Pic, in ads
- 24 Sandwich fish
- 25 Flaunt, as biceps
- 3 Recently painted
- 4 Say "Grr" to
- 5 Allows to go free
- 6 ___-and-done
- 7 Poker pro Ungar
- 8 Mysterious ability in "The Dead Zone"
- 10 Econ. indicator

- 12 Common batteries
- 14 "Ew, a roach!"
- 15 Passing through
- 16 Buckeyes' sch.
- 17 Author Fleming
- 19 GIF reply, maybe
- 20 Had this puzzle's "mixtures," say
- 21 Wolf relative

DOWN

- 1 Monster.com listing
- 2 "Great" beast

ROOM 7: BEDROOM

It's said that the ghosts of visitors who slept in this room remain here, trapped between this world and the beyond. You may even see them yourself.



ACROSS

- 1 ___ and haw
- 5 Part of a hand
- 9 Be quite fond of, with "on"
- 10 Taiwanese laptop brand
- 11 "You've got mail" co.
- 12 Bathroom, briefly
- 13 Supposed psychic
- 15 Personal letters?
- 16 Beefy guy at a circus
- 22 "It burns! It burns!"
- 23 It's aimed at a fire
- 24 In 15 minutes, say
- 25 Certain predator's descriptor
- 26 Eeyore, e.g.
- 27 D.C. baseball pro

DOWN

- 1 Project for a beaver
- 2 Tiling tool
- 3 British prep school founded in 1440
- 4 Emotional explosions
- 5 Prime minister who preceded Thatcher
- 6 Rainforest palm berry
- 7 Guns, as an engine
- 8 "___ and the Women" (Gere film)
- 14 Heart singer Wilson
- 16 Cubs great Sammy
- 17 "Terrible" stage
- 18 Pal of Pooh
- 19 Janitor's implement
- 20 Like people battling the kraken
- 21 "What's ___?"

FINAL PUZZLE: THE SAFE

The monster has found you! If you've collected the correct secret words from the seven rooms, they will reveal to you who it is. Now you need to open the safe and collect the two sets of items that will defeat it once and for all.

The answers to this puzzle are laid out in Rows and Pieces. Each Row contains one, two or three answers side-by-side; their clues are given in order, but it is up to you to determine the dividing points between them. Each Piece answer begins in its numbered square and proceeds in a winding path. The Pieces can be placed in the grid without needing to rotate them or overlap them with other Pieces. Use the Row answers and the Pieces' shapes to help you determine where each Piece goes.

When the grid is complete, read the circled squares Row by Row to spell out a hint to unlocking Item Set 1. Then, look again at the grid carefully. The name of Item Set 1, along with the safe combination (5, 2, 6, 7, 3, 1) in tandem with its missing number, are the keys to unlocking Item Set 2.

ROWS

- A Register contents
- Canine woe
- Fishy bagel topping
- B "Witchcraft" singer
- Frank
- Papier-___
- C Vehicle that takes off
- Agitated, as cream
- D Underwear brand
- Blood red, e.g.
- "I'm off," in Italy
- E "Carrie" school event
- Wispy clouds
- "Just my ___ cents"
- F 1887 Chekhov play
- Org. with a black and white flag
- G Holders of lit items
- H Freudian mediator
- Marks from a zombie
- "Um, excuse me ..."
- I Signal during a show
- Bit of Moscow money
- Dog that escaped a witch's castle
- J Song evoking nostalgia
- Recent app downloader, say (2 wds.)

PIECES

- 1 Eldest Brady sister
- 2 Freddy Krueger's marks
- 3 Corn ___ (cereal)
- 4 Late-night host broadcast in "Skelevision" in 2006 for Halloween (2 wds.)
- 5 Photographer Adams
- 6 Do some quick test prep
- 7 Salt Lake City's state
- 8 Course of action
- 9 On a larger scale (2 wds.)
- 10 Unclear, as ideas
- 11 Admission need, often
- 12 Lambs' mothers
- 13 ___ a better mousetrap
- 14 A flat one is bad for driving
- 15 Chilled like beer (hyph.)
- 16 Composer Badalamenti
- 17 Fastening metal bolt
- 18 Utterly despises
- 19 Transform, as in sci-fi
- 20 Bodily pouches
- 21 "Nope!" (hyph.)
- 22 Ridiculous, as ideas
- 23 Like many birdhouses

