

The Rise of Skywalkers by Ucaoiimhu

Skywalking is not restricted to galaxies far, far away; multiple earthly beings display this ability in this puzzle. Specifically:

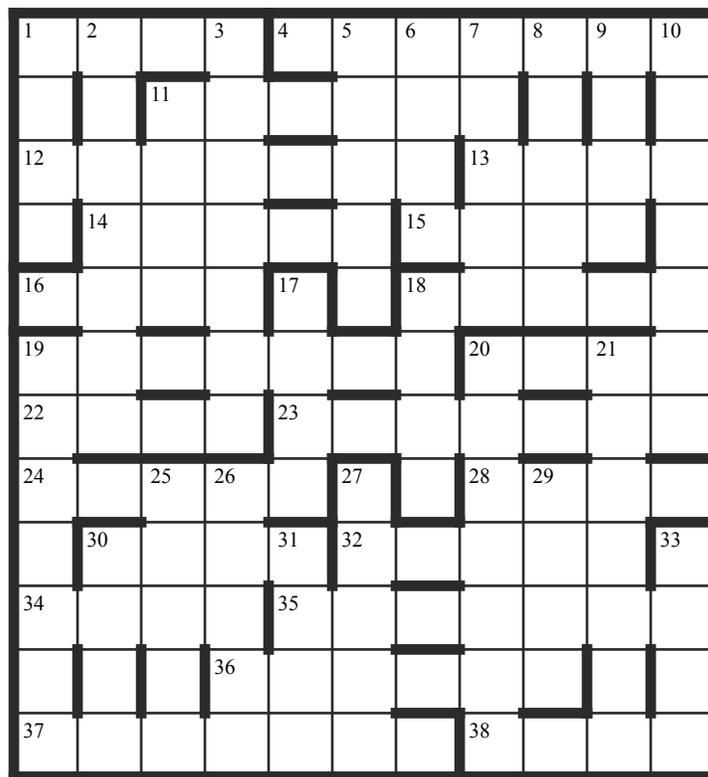
(1) In eleven Across clues and eleven Down clues, the wordplay yields a sequence of letters with one extra letter, which must be entered on a bar in the grid (thin or thick) where it occurs in the answer clued. In some cases, these bars festooned with these small letters will form connected chains; the letters on each such chain, read in an upwards direction, will form the name of one entity. Other bars will be isolated; the letters on all these bars, read upwards, will give the command that caused these entities to start walking upwards.

(2) Each of the remaining eleven Across clues and eleven Down clues works normally, but yields an answer that must be entered in the grid with a bigram (two-letter sequence) in one square; these Across and Down clues intersect in pairs at these “sky” squares. There will be three distinct bigrams involved, in different proportions than in Earth’s real sky. For each of these clues, where the sky square is the *n*th square of the entry, circle the *n*th letter of the clue; in clue order, the circled letters will form the names (half of them very old-school) of several sky-walking entities of a different species than in (1). Also, the grid squares atop the sky squares, bottom to top, will form the names of two more such entities.

(3) The entities from (2) are all but two entries in a certain list. Take the positions in that list of the remaining two, and for each of those two positions, read all the characters in the clues from (1) at that position, *counting blank spaces as characters*, in clue order. These two sequences of characters will give two specific places to go when skywalking; the grid squares atop the sky squares from (2), left to right, will specify a group of entities of a different species than in (1) or (2), who might go there.

ACROSS

1. Option on a cheese plate I fed to a dull person
4. Taoists & Freethinkers disheartened sports nuts Cora represents (2 wds.)
11. Delivery company riot results in raise [NI3]
12. US Navy bigwig’s song about Dee, Mike, and Hal
13. Silly UN man displays Latin word after *per*
14. Extremity one placed behind old rower [NI2]
15. Attribute of a plant barely tested prior to 1000
16. Heroine of a newspaper comic strip with more savvy
18. A healing agent from Sal, Victor, and Ucaoiimhu
19. Spooner’s seen long wooden things where people sleep
20. Items that hold jam — or jelly, of course — in German tax agency
22. DH halfway sliding into home for the Diamondbacks, e.g., is a wood-cutter
23. Tropical food rota is rearranged, with some parts repeated (2 wds.)
24. Scruples to eat fruit and broccoli pieces
28. Rehash, internally, a statement like *a goblet is a cup without a handle*
30. A European stew, Tolstoy reflected, is primarily egg
32. Report of Indian queen emulating Mr. Wood from the Rolling Stones



34. Is slowly flowing around southeast menagerie
35. Tram overturned by the Italian prosecutor and Australian waltzer?
36. Auditor’s EEEEEEEEEEE sneakers
37. Juvenile, for childish Sy, penultimately sang “Mony Mony”’s intro
38. Nerd’s nose is caught in fly-detecting equipment

DOWN

1. BSing’s lead actress Harlow’s source of sustenance
2. Communist discussing Ned again started to be wearing
3. Issue primer exhibiting, partly, part of an embryo [NI3]
5. Seizing headgear, Charlie eviscerated next song
6. In addition, left strange implements
7. Elders finally meeting lieutenant at a Gehry building at MIT
8. Sodden land upset Len and Herb
9. Elevated ultraviolet and orange light on my egg
10. -colored maximally, from rim inward to the west and east
11. Even bits of Guam’s air aid early caliph (2 wds.)
17. Travels quickly, abandoning second waterfowl
18. Chlorinelike liquid element surrounding small, small, small realms in 20th-c. Eurasia (*abbr.*)
19. Stubborn one stops benefits for music-makers
20. Fellows circling hotel, and hotel circling fellows
21. Find Oreo zestier with something on top (2 wds.)
25. Joanie’s last harvest from Zeno’s birthplace
26. Xena finally tossed knight at nobleman
27. Parent’s mom is coarse, making one initially nervous
29. Styrofoam out front, after precipitation, is in bad shape
30. Peeled pome ZZ Top, for yuks, gives singer from Black Sabbath informally
31. Elrond’s essentially average as a prognosticator
33. Beams that locate programmer Lovelace within train