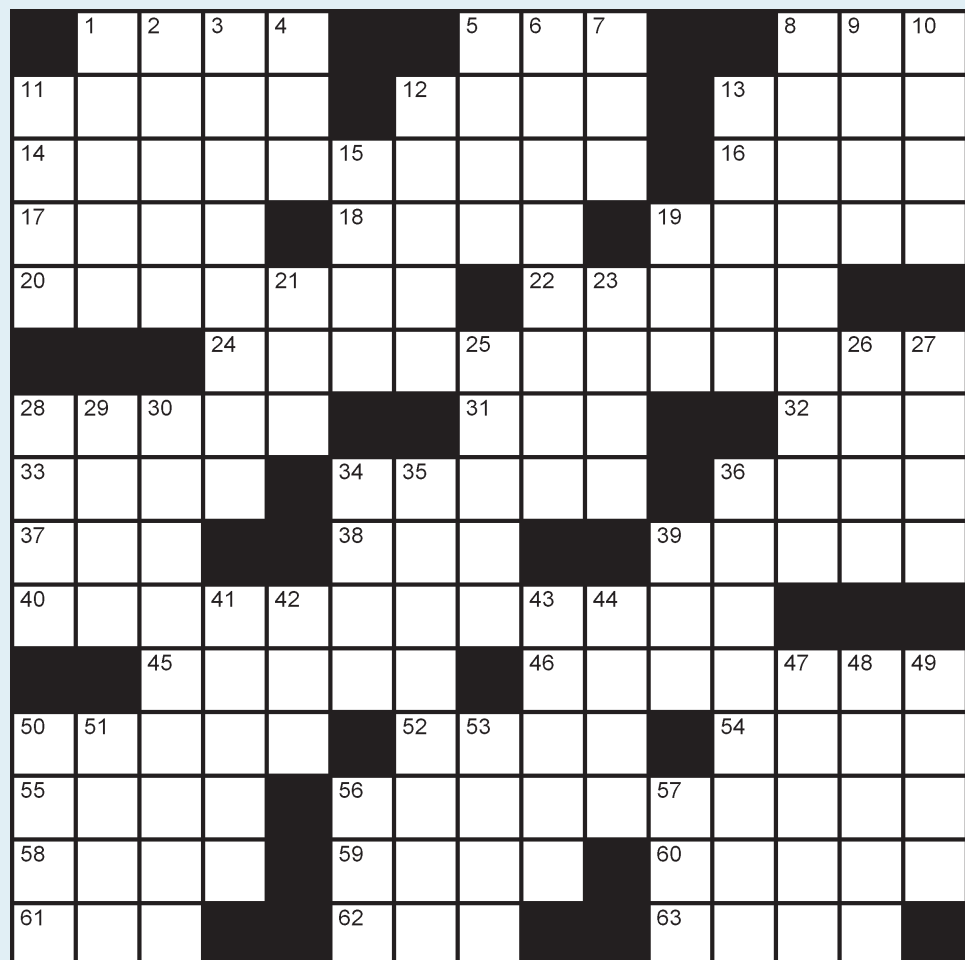


### Cut Out the Middleman by Paul Coulter

Universal Crossword edited by David Steinberg



- ACROSS**
- 1 Home, in Honduras
  - 5 Longoria of "Desperate Housewives"
  - 8 Guy "cut out of" 24-Across?
  - 11 Cavalry sword
  - 12 Practice for a fight
  - 13 Catch a glimpse of
  - 14 "Moving along from the eighth part of my box set ...?"
  - 16 Burn balm
  - 17 Stereotypical programmer
  - 18 Apiece
  - 19 Actors' accessories
  - 20 "Hey, can I run this by you?"
  - 22 Friendliness
  - 24 Schmoozes in Hollywood?
  - 28 Discard at the junkyard
  - 31 Number of letters in QWERTYUIOP
  - 32 Guy "cut out of" 14-Across?
  - 33 What Miss Muffet had with curds
  - 34 Lifting machine
  - 36 "Now," to a doctor
  - 37 Guy "cut out of" 56-Across?
  - 38 "\_\_\_ the land of the free ..."
  - 39 Call up
  - 40 Piece of gossip about someone forgetting to clean the coffee maker?
  - 45 Fluster
  - 46 Country east of Ethiopia
  - 50 It eats shoots and leaves
  - 52 Noted Nile queen, casually
  - 54 Influence
  - 55 Danish shoe brand
  - 56 Broadway backer who also works in security?
  - 58 God with a war chariot
  - 59 Elbows' places
  - 60 Itsy-bitsy
  - 61 Guy "cut out of" 40-Across?
  - 62 Dash forward and backward?
  - 63 Alternatively
- DOWN**
- 1 Small part in "Downsizing," perhaps
  - 2 Scrub, as a rocket launch
  - 3 Dismiss
  - 4 Shape of a bow
  - 5 Grand-scale story
  - 6 Eddie of rock
  - 7 Exist
  - 8 Supports steadfastly
  - 9 Psy's genre
  - 10 Body parts that may be blue
  - 11 Perform in an opera
  - 12 Nosh
  - 13 Everyone's mother?
  - 15 Antlered animal
  - 19 Photo
  - 21 Absorb, with "up"
  - 23 Challenge for a barber
  - 25 Apt-sounding surname for an astronomer
  - 26 Multicolored horse
  - 27 "Volume off" button
  - 28 Gulp of whiskey
  - 29 Blacken
  - 30 Gives up, as a claim
  - 34 The "C" in UPC
  - 35 Treatment that relieves stress
  - 36 Dangerous bits of metal
  - 39 Yappy toy dog, for short
  - 41 Beehives and buns
  - 42 Cipher-cracking org.
  - 43 Computer operators
  - 44 Atmosphere
  - 47 Olympics sleds
  - 48 "Mr. Belvedere" actress Graff
  - 49 One on your side
  - 50 Thunderclap
  - 51 Cropland measure
  - 53 Light source
  - 56 Space between teeth
  - 57 Downed a sub, say?

### HOROSCOPES BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

#### SUNDAY, JULY 4, 2021 Aftermath of a Cosmic Square



As a tussle between Mars and Uranus breaks up, productivity can turn unproductive in an instant. Entertainment can turn into a source of boredom, safe spaces can turn unsafe, confidence can turn to mush. It's how we handle those moments that determines our character, style and overall success. The chance to practice is a gift.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** Jealousy is among the most effective teachers, as there's always valuable information to be gleaned from our reaction to others doing enviable things. Jealousy reveals what we really want.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** You don't always have to know what to say. It's better to admit when you're lost in the conversation -- to laugh and check in with your feelings. Perhaps speaking them can get the dialogue back on track.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** The position you hold will be challenged. This doesn't have to be a call to arms; rather, it's a signal to tune into your environment to understand the desires of those around you so you can stay several steps ahead of the game.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** Appreciation is often expressed to the people who get most of the credit anyway. This is lazy diplomacy: tending to the powerful to stay in their good graces. You'll engage in the nobility of acknowledging the work of the less powerful.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** The difference between work that depletes you and work that builds you up is... no difference. Ask any bodybuilder who keeps lifting until the muscle fails: It's not a style befitting every workout, but it works.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Achievement is overrated. It's a prize but not the top prize. Too much emphasis on achievement makes bad things happen. For a joyful outcome, set your mind on learning instead, and then stay open and flexible.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Maybe it's the meaningful compliments, or how a person seems to pick up what you're throwing down even when no one else does, but you're now getting a sense of your destinies becoming intertwined.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** You are a receiver for the beauty of the world today, and your attention is the bridge over which the good out there can cross into the good inside you and vice versa.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Don't know why you had to do it? Don't worry too much about it. Your impulses are filled with genius, though it may take a while for the deeper reasoning to become clear. Eventually, a grand logic will emerge.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** Reading the star pictures as the ancient Greeks did is but one way to do it. Your creative vision is so exceptional now, perhaps you should go rogue and connect the brilliant dots (and your dazzling future) to suit your whims.

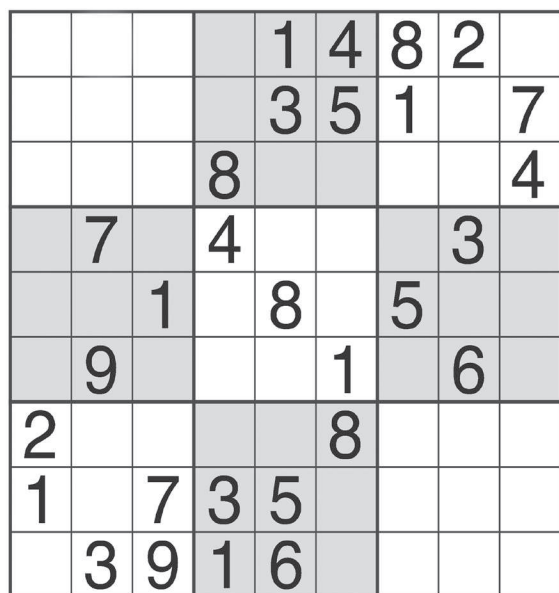
**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** You worry that socializing will steal time from your work. Actually, it will give your work a kick in the pants. You'll find yourself going about things differently as friends inspire, inform and challenge you.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Communication is risk. If the conversation gets out of control and turns heated and messy, then, well, that happened. Maybe emotional intensity isn't optimal, but it's better than not communicating.

**TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (July 4).** A renewal unfolds this solar return. You'll untie your self-worth from your productivity and take long breaks doing whatever you want. These will, oddly enough, turn out to be your most "productive" stints, showing results of increased vitality and happiness, not to mention decision-making to reflect your priorities and values. Aries and Cancer adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 7, 13, 33, 2 and 11.

### Universal SUDOKU

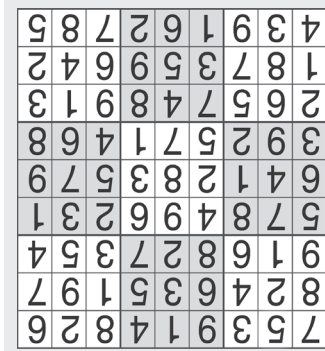
Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

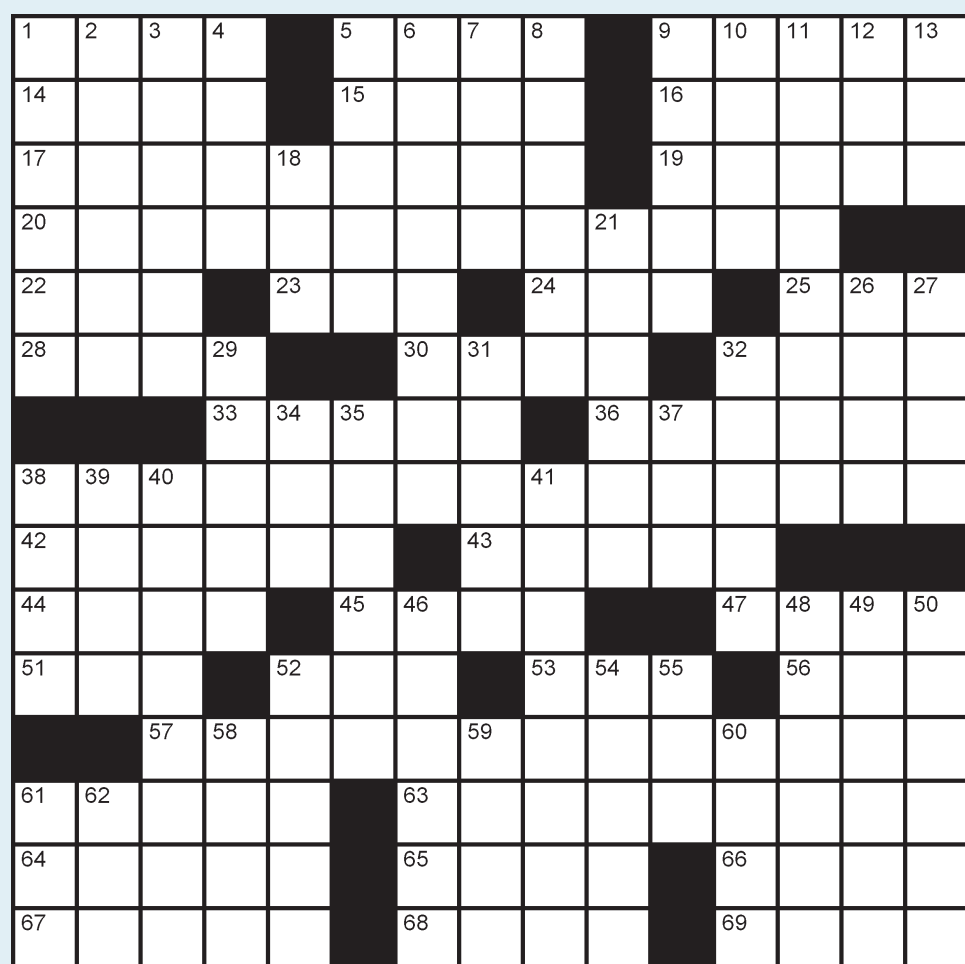


### SOLUTIONS



### Icebreakers by Will Nediger

Universal Crossword edited by David Steinberg



- ACROSS**
- 1 Run like heck
  - 5 Female horse
  - 9 Express hesitation
  - 14 Seized car, for short
  - 15 Composer Menken
  - 16 Wipe away
  - 17 Measure something visually
  - 19 \_\_\_ up (assessed)
  - 20 What you should give a lover who prefers quality time over diamonds?
  - 22 "Minecraft" block
  - 23 Dance style for Sarah Reich
  - 24 More, in Spanish
  - 25 TV screen option
  - 28 Pull to pieces
  - 30 Weapon in a silo: Abbr.
  - 32 "You can't be leaving already!"
  - 33 Remarkable period
  - 36 Request for another piece?
  - 38 Announcement at a disappointing open bar?
  - 42 Ready to mate, like a cat
  - 43 Drink with steamed milk
  - 44 "Untrue!"
  - 45 Somber news item, briefly
  - 47 \_\_\_ speed (pace in sci-fi)
  - 51 Inc. cousin
  - 52 Hoppy brew letters
  - 53 Troublemaking tot
  - 56 Literally, "born"
  - 57 What figure skating partners with a lot of chemistry might have?
  - 61 Still getting the hang of
  - 63 Kinda pricey
  - 64 Joplin's "Treemishia," e.g.
  - 65 Loaf around
  - 66 Earned
  - 67 Many a long-legged bird
  - 68 Caustic solutions
  - 69 Transport in the last "Calvin and Hobbes" strip
- DOWN**
- 1 Earth-shaking event
  - 2 Gloomy donkey in kid lit
  - 3 Missing links, maybe
  - 4 Garment like an abaya
  - 5 Valletta's island country
  - 6 Seasoning that tastes like a blend of seasonings
  - 7 Common forecast in Vancouver
  - 8 Put in a crypt
  - 9 Members of a South Asian diaspora
  - 10 Comedian Wareheim
  - 11 Bat mitzvah congrats
  - 12 Take advantage of
  - 13 Fire engine's color
  - 18 Hill insect
  - 21 Least racy
  - 26 \_\_\_ package
  - 27 Like bottle-blond hair
  - 29 Discourage
  - 31 Spicy dish at a cookoff
  - 32 It has a head and a thread
  - 34 Actress Zadora
  - 35 Intelligent cephalopods
  - 37 Trawler's tool
  - 38 First lady Biden
  - 39 Gram or meter
  - 40 Observed at work
  - 41 Lamppost
  - 46 Lauren of "To Have and Have Not"
  - 48 Toughen, in metallurgy
  - 49 Move back
  - 50 Sounded like a chick
  - 52 Meal that breaks the Ramadan fast
  - 54 Specks
  - 55 Heads of Canada, for short
  - 58 Subway cost
  - 59 Site with a Daily Deals page
  - 60 Money dispensers
  - 61 Right this minute
  - 62 Org. concerned with oil spills

### HOROSCOPES BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

#### MONDAY, JULY 5, 2021 The Ache of Growth



Growth and discomfort go together. Expect it. Lean into it. Eventually, it may be possible to embrace the sensation as a familiar friend. At this point in the solar journey, many will look forward to their reunion with the ache of growth, receiving it as a badge of honor, a warrior's prize and tangible proof of awesomeness.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** You want the goodness you felt before. But for some reason, you can't get there in the same way. Don't worry. Just try something else. There are hundreds of routes to the same feeling.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** Consult others before you initiate action. Even when you have enough information to respond, it will benefit you to hold back until the right moment -- the moment you can take control of the situation.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** Because you know someone very well, you don't have to try hard to understand. You hear it all when they say everything, and when they say nothing, several simultaneous meanings are deliberately implied. You get every one.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** In these early days of a project, the endeavor is wholly unproven. Either give yourself margins of error that are so wide, they may as well be the page itself or put up the equivalent of bumpers in a bowling lane.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** You express yourself hoping that others will unanimously support and embrace your truth. But the good effects of your honesty happen regardless of their reaction due to the powerful, gravity-defying effects of truth-telling.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Beware of those who give their opinion like it's gold, like it's enriching to all on whom it is bestowed, like it's essential to the economy. The ones to watch are too busy living the principle to stop and hand out all the "gold."

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** What makes humble work so satisfying is its obvious completion. It's easy to tell when the floor is swept or the window is spotless. You'll deal in complex and difficult work. Make luck for yourself by emptying the trash.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Having preferences can be costly. Needing things to be a certain way can cage you into a position of having to fight for what you want -- or just having to wait, save, trade, negotiate, work for it. What if you wanted less?

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Life feels like a maze, but at least it's a maze you get to set up for yourself. Arrange it so it's easy to move through. What you can you do to make your environment conducive to moving forward?

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** You'll be tapped by the challenge. Does it seem like a bad time? There is never a comfortable time to stretch because stretching is, by definition, a discomfort, though one that you could learn to crave.

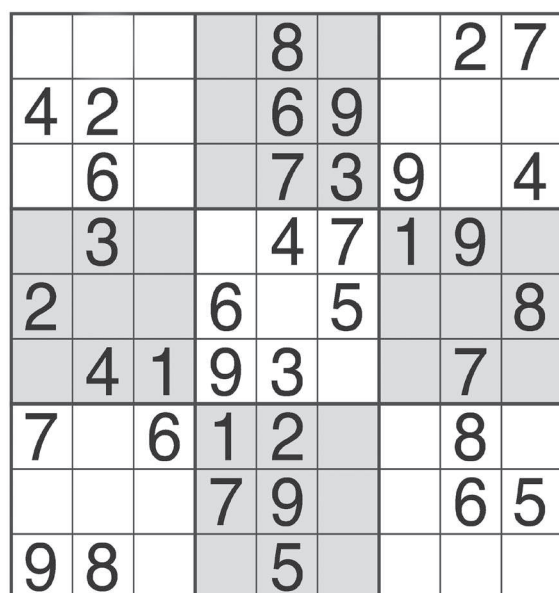
**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** A golf club could have multiple purposes. It could be used as a weapon, a hammer, meat tenderizer, rhythm instrument, etc. But of course, it is best suited to playing golf. Apt applications give tools their highest value.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Just because you can't do a thing perfectly, or even well, doesn't mean you can't do it at all. Being willing to get a little messy in the process will be the key to your overall success.

**TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (July 5).** To be rung like a bell by the strike of desire -- this is no small gift. Such clarity of purpose only comes along a handful of times in a lifetime. This solar return sees you driven by inner fire, committed at a level that few will know and the rest won't understand. You'll embrace your destiny with certainty and do whatever it takes. Aries and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 7, 30, 11, 39 and 2.

### Universal SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆



### SOLUTIONS

