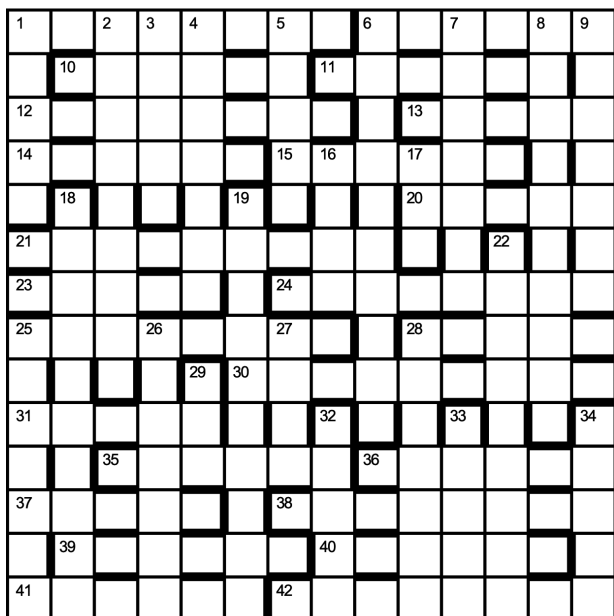


2636:

Happy ever after

by CheeseCracker

Twelve unclued lights may be grouped into three quartets and their unchecked letters spell out ASK ENGINEERING-ACADEMY.GOV.UK; each quartet comprises two natural pairs. All unclued entries are normal words, one is in Merriam-Webster and one is thematically linked to its quartet via a Broadway musical.



Across

- 1 Maybe PC speed unit cut after unexpectedly taking van (8)
- 6 About to display ancient nut (6)
- 12 Local scolding somehow raises your back (8)
- 13 Developer of global movement almost left (5)
- 14 Dogged has-been hooligan welcomes trouble (6)
- 15 Chain two blokes side by side (6)
- 20 Returning from Dubai, unnerving bore (5)
- 21 American people embracing setter's vigour (9)
- 24 Extremely sick and unwell, dispersing in Glasgow? (8)
- 25 Obduracy shown by most of gang outside North London? (8)
- 30 Zigzags in descent at swimming (9)
- 31 William (Bill) covers at least two feet (5)
- 35 European industrial gear grabs earth, perhaps (6)
- 36 Joyous cry from house, talk-show host belting out piano (6)
- 37 Character on staff, ultimately retiring, all but split (1,4)
- 38 Spiders managed to perish, rolling in lava (8)
- 41 Rancid point, between the lines (6)

Down

- 2 Elastic in sterile pants (9)
- 3 Helpless Australian city girl (5)
- 4 One who designates condition about Stoker (7)
- 5 Old injury upset Muslim lord (5)
- 6 Unending pasta sauce initially choked some very bright sparks (6,4)
- 7 Hard, outwardly adversarial, near the bone? (7)
- 8 Sequel once changed persuasive speeches (10)
- 17 Blimey – nerds without clothing (3)
- 18 In return, he can never hurt (2,8)
- 19 With urgency, secretive about missile (10)
- 22 Bird in flight around India, migrating when it's cold (9)
- 26 Drifters, better topless, heading south (7)
- 28 Mostly consider playing lower parts of duet (7)
- 29 Endorsement, but not the second, gets through (3)
- 32 Bacterium stage suppresses resistance (5)
- 33 Metal bogey regularly jams in wheel alignment (3-2)

A first prize of £30 and two runners-up prizes of £20 for the first correct solutions opened on 29 January. Please scan or photograph entries and email them (including the crossword number in the subject field) to crosswords@spectator.co.uk, or post to: Crossword 2636, The Spectator, 22 Old Queen Street, London SW1H 9HP.

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