MISS PELL'S CASE OF THE WEEK · NO. 6

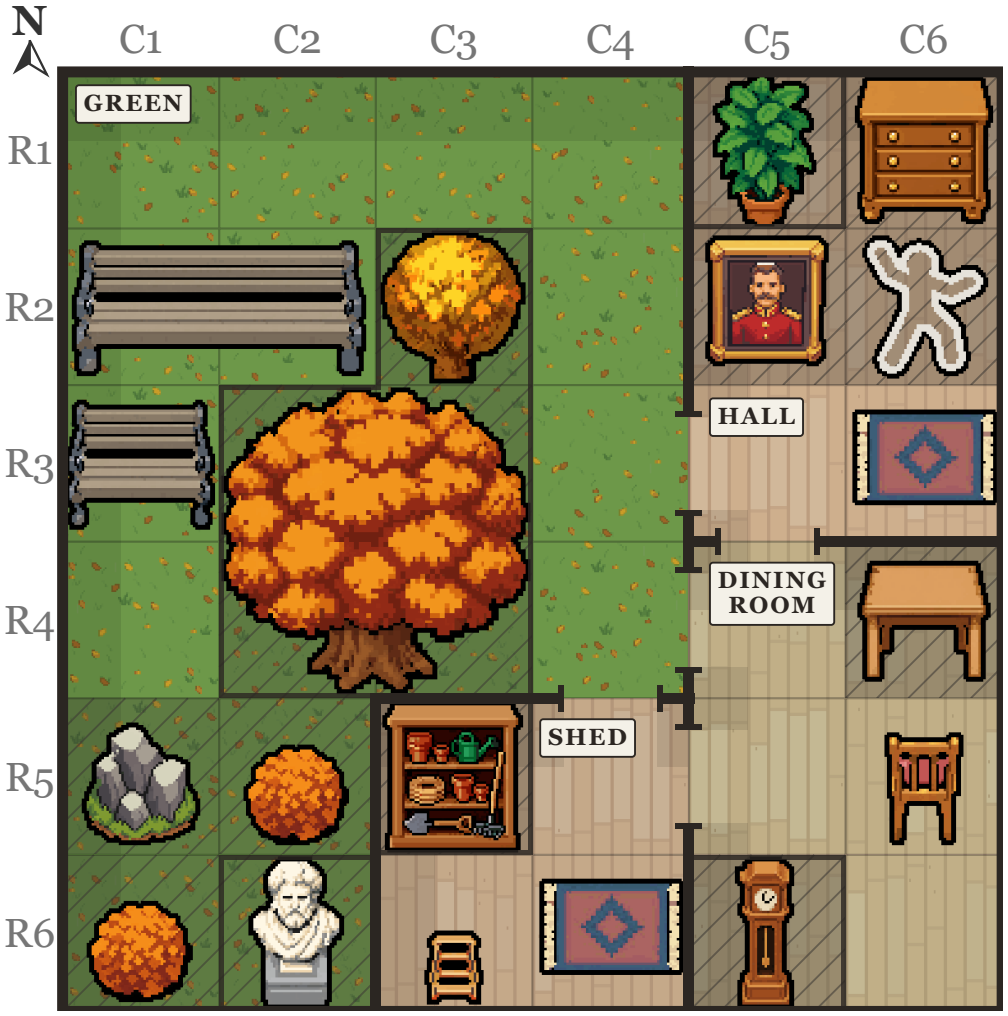
The Answer: The Golden Oak

Here is the case again, and then its answer one deduction at a time, with a picture of the plan after each step. In the pictures, **yellow** squares are where the suspect in question could still be, **red crosses** are what that step has just ruled out, and **initials** mark suspects already placed.

The Golden Oak

GENTLE

SOLVED STEP BY STEP ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES



The great oak had turned gold. When the lamps came back on, Ursula lay in the Hall.

THE CLUES

1. Walter was standing on a ladder.
2. Harold was beside the rock on the Green.
3. Thomas was not beside the great oak.
4. Clara was in an area with no potted plants.
5. Kit was in the fifth column.
6. Robin was not beside a table.

GENERAL CLUES

7. Everyone beside a small tree, if anyone, wore a monocle.
8. Everyone in the Dining Room, if anyone, had a beard.

THE SUSPECTS



1. Walter
a bowler
a monocle
a beard



2. Thomas
a fedora
a monocle
a beard



3. Robin
a fedora
spectacles
a beard



4. Clara
a bowler
spectacles



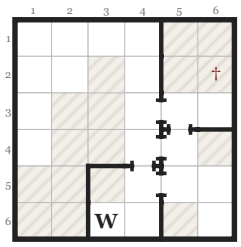
5. Harold
a bowler
a beard



6. Kit
a bowler
a beard

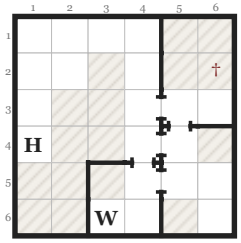
THE MURDERER

The answer, step by step

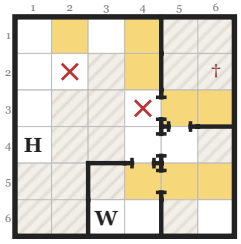


1 Clue 1 settles it: Walter is at R6C3.

> **Reading a statement exactly.** Some statements name a square outright, or leave only one square the plan allows.

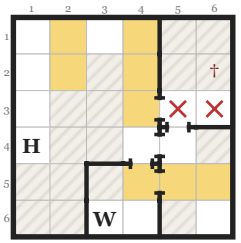


2 Clue 2 settles it: Harold is at R4C1.

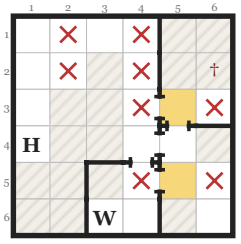


3 Clue 3: Thomas has 8 squares left.

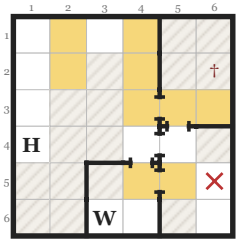
> **Ruling out.** A statement that says where a guest was not is still a statement: cross those squares off.



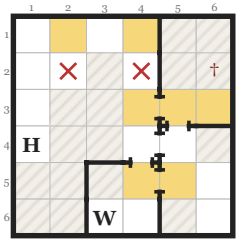
4 Clue 4: Clara has 8 squares left.



5 Clue 5: Kit must be somewhere in column 5.

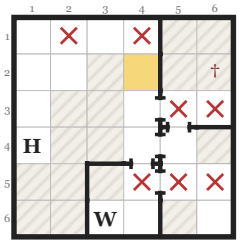


6 Clue 6: Robin has 9 squares left.



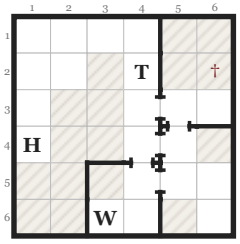
7 Clue 7: Robin has 7 squares left, and Clara has 6 squares left.

> **What they wore.** Statements about hats, spectacles, monocles and beards refer to the lineup. Work out who they can be about first, then where.



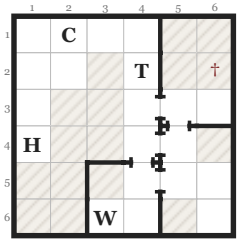
8 Thomas is the only suspect who can still stand in row 2, so he must be somewhere in it.

> **The only one who fits.** Every row and column must hold exactly one guest. If only one guest can still stand anywhere in a line, they must stand there.

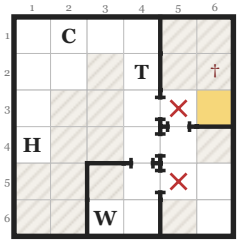


9 Thomas has only one square left: R2C4.

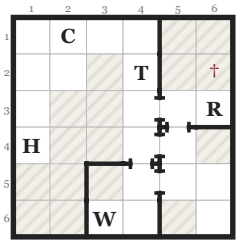
> **One square left.** When everything else has been ruled out for a guest, the square that remains is theirs.



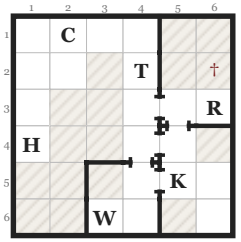
10 Clue 8 settles it: Clara is at R1C2.



11 Robin is the only suspect who can still stand in column 6, so they must be somewhere in it.



12 Robin has only one square left: R3C6.



13 Only one square is left for Kit, so Kit is at R5C5.

With the grid full, only Robin was in the Hall with Ursula. Robin is the murderer.

The next case

Every Friday, Miss Pell posts a new case at **whereaboutspuzzles.com**. Fifty more are in her ledger, **Whereabouts: Murder Sudoku — 50 Murder Mysteries from Ashcombe Manor**, from spring to winter.