MINISAMPLE CRYPTOIC by G NATURAL, New York NY

This specially designed minisample cryptic is just like a normal cryptic crossword, with this exception: a small piece should be removed from each of six entries before they are placed in the grid. The resulting entries are all words. For help on how to solve cryptic crosswords, go to www.puzzlers.org.

**ACROSS**

1. Gloria Steinem re-edits finite Ms.
2. Bulb is on; I lit
3. Bread
4. Return of loud noise
5. South Central: 60% retired
6. Bulb is on; I lit
7. Gloria Steinem re-edits finite Ms.
8. Bulb is on; I lit
9. Bread
10. Return of loud noise
11. South Central: 60% retired
12. Bulb is on; I lit
13. Bread
14. Return of loud noise
15. South Central: 60% retired
16. Bulb is on; I lit
17. Bread

**DOWN**

1. Taper giving little light is holding in hydrogen
2. True General
3. True General
4. True General
5. True General
6. True General
7. Taper giving little light is holding in hydrogen
8. True General
9. True General
10. True General
11. True General
12. True General
13. True General

**SOLUTIONS**

The Enigma

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CRYPTOGRAM: A message in cipher, where each letter in the coded message stands for another letter wherever it appears. (No letter stands for itself.) The cipher provides a hint.

23. Biting wit. =ASOBI, Yardley PA

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MINISAMPLE CRYPTOIC

Welcome! You hold in your hands a special introductory edition of The ENIGMA, the monthly publication of The National Puzzlers’ League. We hope this “minisample” will be your ticket to joining us in a world of enigmatic artistry and brain-teasing entertainment.

The NPL offers many opportunities for puzzling camaraderie. The league holds a four-day summer convention, while individual members organize regional gatherings and participate in online activities, including a chat room and mailing list. And in the pages of The ENIGMA, we strive to outwit each other with new conundrums and spur each other to greater heights of ingenuity, cleverness and wit.

Each issue of The ENIGMA (usually 20 or more pages) overflows with a variety of puzzles designed to challenge both newbie and veteran. Created by our members, these puzzles include cryptic crosswords, anagrams, word squares (and more complex geometrical forms) and a panoply of other linguistic inventions. But what makes The ENIGMA unique is its collection of what we call “flats,” puzzles in verse form that have proven over our 130-plus years to provide endless opportunities for creativity and continuous solving enjoyment.

Flats might seem odd at first—they’re not the sort of puzzle you’re likely to have stumbled across, since ours is the only English-language publication to feature them—but once you know the basic structure, we think you’ll love them. In each verse, one or more words are missing, replaced by words like “ONE” and “TWO”. Your task is to figure out the missing words, using hints provided by the verse. Here’s an example:

**First, check out the title:** it tells you what kind of words you need. In this case, you’re looking to transform one word into another by changing its last letter (like turning “barn” to “bard” or “routing” to “routine”). The **enumeration**, in parentheses, tells you that both answer words are seven letters long. The capitalized **cueswords** act as placeholders, showing you where the answer words belong, though keep in mind that the answer words need not rhyme or scan the way the cueswords do—they only have to make sense in context.

(Flats also include a **byline** identifying the author, not by name but by nom de plume. This use of pseudonyms dates back centuries, and can be seen in British cryptic construction to this day.)

So, here are the two answer words: “hideout” and “hideous”—they tracked Joker to his HIDEOUT, there beholding his HIDEOUS leer. If this example piques your interest, then you’re ready to turn the page and solve some more flats, along with a cryptic crossword and other goodies. And if you enjoy this minisample ENIGMA, we hope you’ll join us in the NPL! For more information and sample puzzles, you can visit www.puzzlers.org.

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DELETION: A word becomes a new word when an interior letter is removed. Example: simile—smile

1. DELETION (7, 6) (A, B) The profs won’t help me do my work. TAs object, but I just smirk. I got two F’s, but don’t blame me—it’s obvious the A is B! =JEFFURRY, New York NY

2. DELETION (8, 7) (ONE, TWO) He’s really a farmer, not much of a doctor. The profs won’t help me do my work. =TERMINAL DELETION: =TINHORN, Los Angeles CA

3. TERMINAL DELETION (8, 7) (ONE, TWO) Portlanders say, to avoid all confusion: “In SHORTER there’s rain. It’s a LONGER conclusion.” =MR. TEX, Los Angeles CA

4. TERMINAL DELETION (7, 5) Throwing furry critters is my favorite avocation; Clay sea SHORTER LONGER is my very best creation. =AMALGAM, San Antonio TX

WORD DELETION: A word (IN) is removed from inside a longer word (TOTAL), leaving a third word (OUT). (Here the asterisked word is part of a proper noun phrase.) Example: scribe—crib

5. WORD DELETION (9; 4, *5) (TOTAL; IN, OUT) From St. OUT’s IN, the long way round, Past papal pelf to Sistine suite, My TOTAL measures five-plus miles: Exalt the soul, exhaust the feet. =MONA, Pebble Beach CA

BEHEADMINT: A word becomes a new word when its first letter is removed. Example: slaughter—laughter

6. BEHEADMINT (7, 6) As “William Tell” was finishing, the FIRST WORD dropped his bow. I picked it up and gave it back: an OTHER WORD, you know. =ULLY BYRD, Grand Chicken IC

DELETION: A word becomes a new word when its first and last letters are removed. Example: scribe—a new word when its first letter is removed. Example: slaughter—laughter

7. FOURTH-LETTER CHANGE (6) You must pay the ONE, or else your baby will die! die! die! The amount will be TWO, determined by rolling a die! die! die! =ELF MCCAY, TexasCon TX

8. REPEATED-LETTER CHANGE (7 2, *3 *3) (When two members collaborate in the writing of a flat, as in the previous example, they often combine their noms and cities, leading to fanciful constructions like Grand Chicken IC, a portmanteau of Grand Chain IL and Aiken SC.)

(a) TRANSPOSAL (5) A lovely floral centerpiece Adorns our dining table. It’s beautiful, except those times A BLEATS falls on your STABLE. =EMBANGLER, TexasCon TX

(b) TRANSPOSAL (11) I have a ghostly girlfriend. We’ve ethereal relations. The fact, though, that she’s SECOND Clearly FIRST these situations. =TINHORN, Los Angeles CA

(c) TRANSPOSAL (11) I have a ghostly girlfriend. We’ve ethereal relations. The fact, though, that she’s SECOND Clearly FIRST these situations. =TINHORN, Los Angeles CA

LETTER BANC: A shorter word or phrase with no repeated letters. Example: answering—a new word

9. CHARADE (6; 3, 3) (COMBINE; A, B) A word is broken into two or more shorter words. Example: TOTAL = scarcity; ONE = scar, TWO = city

(a) CHARADE (6; 3, 3) (COMBINE; A, B) A new-formed A will make you mine. =BADIR, Princeton NJ

(b) CHARADE (6; 3, 3) (COMBINE; A, B) A new-formed A will make you mine. =BADIR, Princeton NJ

10. TRANSPOSAL (5) I have a ghostly girlfriend. We’ve ethereal relations. The fact, though, that she’s SECOND Clearly FIRST these situations. =TINHORN, Los Angeles CA

11. TRANSPOSAL (11) I have a ghostly girlfriend. We’ve ethereal relations. The fact, though, that she’s SECOND Clearly FIRST these situations. =TINHORN, Los Angeles CA

12. LETTER BANK (2 3 5, *4 *8) The ugly duckling grew to be a swan, But don’t let LONGER PHRASE just put you on. Are you a cygnet, baby? No such luck! It’s SHORTER PHRASE you’ll be an ugly duck! =XMEDU, Bridgewater NJ

(Homophone: e.g., “embargo” means a trade embargo or a word with a similar pronunciation. In this case, “embargo” and “embodiment” are homophones.)

(a) HETERONYM (9; *3 *1. *1. 4) Iran’s imams hate sexy sausages. This fox show makes them fret. That ONE WORD may just have a point. Is MANY WORDS? You bet. =SLJR, Seattle WA

(b) HETERONYM (6, 2 4) Just FIRST the name of Britney Spears; Then you can SECND pix for years. =MR. TEX, Los Angeles CA

(c) HETERONYM (6, 2 4) Just FIRST the name of Britney Spears; Then you can SECND pix for years. =MR. TEX, Los Angeles CA

REBUS: A word or phrase is represented by letters. The word “abalone”—read as “a B, alone”—might be represented by

13. LETTER BANK (2 3 5, *4 *8) The ugly duckling grew to be a swan, But don’t let LONGER PHRASE just put you on. Are you a cygnet, baby? No such luck! It’s SHORTER PHRASE you’ll be an ugly duck! =XMEDU, Bridgewater NJ

14. HOMONYM (3, 4, 4) A cowboy’s career is quite messy, I fear, Too dirty to mention. His FIRST needs attention. To Autry this didn’t seem strange. “Oh, SECOND,” said Dale, when he’d come off the trail, “A bath’s your connection to get my affection When you’re back at our home on the range.” =SOUTH NATURAL, Holy Ork MY

15. HOMONYM (7, 2 *4) A cowboy’s career is quite messy, I fear, Too dirty to mention. His FIRST needs attention. To Autry this didn’t seem strange. “Oh, SECOND,” said Dale, when he’d come off the trail, “A bath’s your connection to get my affection When you’re back at our home on the range.” =SOUTH NATURAL, Holy Ork MY

HETERONYM: Two words or phrases have the same spelling but different pronunciations and spacing. Example: notable—not able (In the first flat the underlined words are a title.)

16. HETERONYM (9; *3 *1. *1. 4) Iran’s imams hate sexy sausages. This fox show makes them fret. That ONE WORD may just have a point. Is MANY WORDS? You bet. =SLJR, Seattle WA

17. HETERONYM (*6, 2 4) Just FIRST the name of Britney Spears; Then you can SECND pix for years. =MR. TEX, Los Angeles CA

18. REBUS (*6) (can be sung to the tune of “Venus” by Bananarama) AA

(a) REBUS (*6) (can be sung to the tune of “Venus” by Bananarama) AA

(b) REBUS (*6) (can be sung to the tune of “Venus” by Bananarama) AA

(c) REBUS (*6) (can be sung to the tune of “Venus” by Bananarama) AA

(d) REBUS (*6) (can be sung to the tune of “Venus” by Bananarama) AA

(e) REBUS (*6) (can be sung to the tune of “Venus” by Bananarama) AA