



$((1^2 - 1) / 2) - j + (1 / 2) = 0$

GATE



16. On which Lawn would you find M at home?

17. Who masterminded a Turkish victory over Napoleon in 1809 whilst sitting in the audience?

18. Who wrote a book in 36 to help those spying on Caribbean birds?

19. Which translator of Comedy helped found a Nation?

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Wasted

II A Game Of Chess (3)



was a man whose star was rising. I'd played some pretty neat moves to get where I was – one I'd learned with Kings, followed by the big one - Bishop to C3. I thought I'd won, but I should have known that you always have to think a few moves ahead in this game. I'd headed north during [4] a dark December afternoon. It was a Saturday, and the first thing I did when I arrived was spend a penny. After all, you have to splash the cash to make an impression.

Even back then I knew what I wanted, and I was always thinking about where the next cheque was coming from. Before making my move I'd weighed up my options. Medicine? An excuse to heap gold, sure, but all that disease? The Law? Servility was not for me, or so I thought, although it would have come in handy later on. No, when all was said and done, divinity I decided was the best course. Maybe the preachers had got to me even then, but it was not so much the welfare of the soul that inspired me, as my sole welfare. I'd read somewhere that a man could profit greatly from divinity, a quite acceptable philosophy in my book.

It was one big adventure and I was hell bent on continuing my education, but something happened one evening that changed everything. A confirmed bachelor, I was in the student bar as usual, when I was suddenly aware of somebody behind me in the shadows. He ghosted up behind me with two glinting glasses in his hands. He offered me one by way of introduction. Perhaps he thought I was easily bought off. He motioned for me to come over to the dark side of the bar where we couldn't easily be seen or heard. He flashed his ID – his simple photo gave out the impression of an agent of the devil in the dim half-light. I took a sip of my drink. Whisky. Not good whisky.

"The scotch," he apologetically told me, "it's been lying around for a while apparently, they're trying to get rid of it. It was simply a means to an end in the beginning".

His lips carefully formed an ingratiating curl. It could've been a smile. There was something about this popish mole that I instinctively didn't trust. He looked like the kind of guy who told you he didn't mince his words as he minced your face. He held out a hand. "I'm Bob," he added. He must have sensed my distrust, however. "It's alright, it's not as if I have horns by the way, or anything like that!"

A slippery character, and aptly named too. He had the grin of a synchronised swimmer and the words dripped from his mouth, each one carefully smarm-wrapped. His skin was as white as the lies he was about to tell. I wondered if he was a plant, an undercover agent here to flush out my real beliefs. "I'm looking for someone who's as good as gold to do a job for me."

I considered my curiously titled, and somewhat sad, Tutor Focus Group Coordinator role at college and how much I earned from that. It was nothing to write home about. Despite the alarm bells ringing in my head I found myself intrigued. "How much d'you pay?"

"Ah," came the tell tale response with an effort, "twenty five a day plus expenses."

"What exactly is involved in this little job, before I sign my precious life away?"

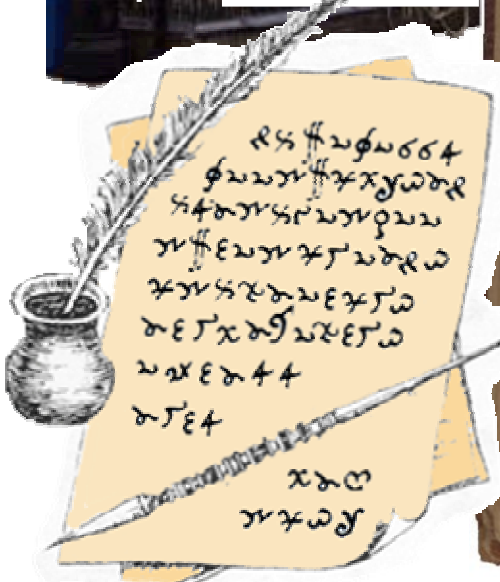
"You'll be told anything which you need to know on a, er, well, a strictly-need-to-know basis. For now let's just say, we're looking for somebody who can take letters, and who also has keen powers of observation." Bob was keeping plenty under his hat (or was it a crash helmet?) along with his woolly hair.

"We do have a six figure package to offer you, with opportunities for foreign travel, although you will need to work out your own site allowance" My curiosity was aroused. I asked him who he worked for. His reply was not very loud. "Big Frankie," was all he said.

I was on a hiding to nothing, and it all sounded like one of those cheap pulp fiction paperbacks with hoodlums, cops and molls. I was hooked. Bob was desperate to ingratiate himself with Big Frankie. I was supposed to be -



20 pts:





20. The first man was a civil servant; the second a BBC correspondent; the third a Times journalist; the fourth a knighted art historian. Who was the fifth?

21. Which some-time Shakespearean actor first heard on the telephone that he was a wanted man?

22. Henry walked here without shoes, and sold it to Sydney 25 years later. Where?

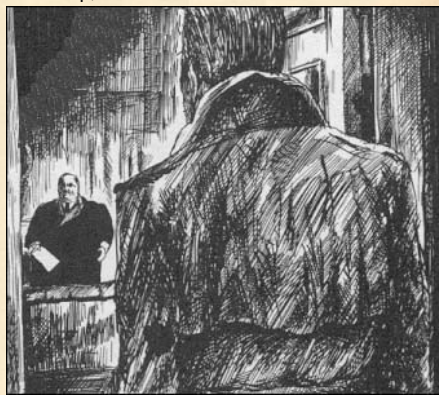
Wasted

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the means to this end. I told him I was happy to make the next move, and was told that Big Frankie would be expecting me tomorrow morning. Bob celebrated getting me on board by putting a tab behind the bar all evening.

Next morning, there were places to go, but I woke up to find that Mr. & Mrs. Hangover had taken out a short-term lease on my head for their bouncing baby boy. Three cups of black coffee didn't seem to calm him down at all. Frankie's gaff was impressive. The site oddly smelt arboreal, but perhaps that was the elms. I knocked on the door and the maid answered. The neatly inscribed badge on her uniform told me I was being shown in by Mildred. She was a neat, slim blonde with two big blue lakes for eyes each just inviting you to dive in and drown. She told me she liked Wagner. Could she make something like that up, I wondered?

The maid turned and led me down the hallway. Frankie's private office was everything a private office should be. Tall rows of filing cabinets stood on guard along three walls, each wearing a heavy lock to protect the national interest. The room was short, squat and dark, matching the elderly party that sat behind the mahogany desk. He wore sober black from head to toe, with starched collars and a stare you could have cracked a brazil nut on. His rounded face was decorated only with dark, cold eyes that looked like they might warm up one day, and a sharp pointed beard (black, of course) that Lucifer himself might have considered a little too intimidating. I suppose he was living proof that a government department was a short route to making director [1], but these were supposed to be the good guys weren't they?!



I hoped Bob wasn't winding me up - there were to be no gentle introductions from Frankie. "When I hire a man, he's my man. He does exactly what I tell him and he keeps his mouth shut. Or he goes out fast. Is that clear? Good. Now will you serve me?" I suddenly felt quite hot, as if the very flames of Hades were licking my cheeks. Call me old fashioned, but I was intrigued by the secrets concealed in the dark world that lay beneath. As I signed on the dotted line, I sensed that the bloody ink was bequeathing my very soul to the devil in return for gold and knowledge. Either that or I'd just got a job as a postman with the prospect of deliveries to such diverse destinations from Dorset to Dundee, and Dublin to Darlington.

I was quickly assigned to a small government section of French training [8] set up specially to deploy operationally crack teams of recruits. Frankie assigned us simple tasks, using some initiation tests to put us through our paces. I fancied myself as James Bond, but double-oh-seven was already accounted for. I ended up as agent nine-double-oh, replete with ray bans, up-turned collars and down-turned hat.

I was straight into the theatre of espionage, and a dangerous mission abroad would test me by degrees. I was going undercover, although I'd heard there was lots of paperwork involved. Some guy they nicknamed 'The Doctor' was the leader of this gang, and it sounded like I had a lead until one of the brothers took me to one side for a word or two of warning.

"Many hunt the fabled grail, friend," he began. "There was a man who came to us some seven years ago, like you from overseas, similarly claiming to be a fugitive from persecution. This man impressed us with his zealous devotion to the cause, so much so that after just three years we ordained him." The monk shook his head sadly as he recalled. "We had far-reaching hopes for him. Nominally, in this country, he gave the impression of cleanliness, which as you know is next to godliness. But if he thought he could fool us, he was mistaken. His assiduous note-taking made us suspicious. He tried to draw others into his subterfuge by stirring up discontent. His plan was both audacious and ludicrous, the kind of thing you'd find in the next fictional drama. He actually intended to poison the water supply! Those he tried to entrap in his fiendish web went straight to the Doctor. He was imprisoned of course, and eventually, having extracted a confession admitting his treachery, ambition and greed, we let him return to England. There is no room in our organisation for fifth columnists."

POISON

POISON



POISON

POISON



"Chess is the most elaborate waste of human intelligence outside of an Advertising Agency."



15 pts:

Instead of going straight on, my branch was a short cut



I was still on the look-out for the confederacy of dunces...



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Wasted

I wasn't sure if this was a thinly-veiled warning or not, but I wasn't hanging around to find out. I made my excuses and started the long journey home. Once my official report to Frankie was done, I was able pursue my literary aspirations. It was just pulp fiction really, hard-boiled stuff, with lots of violence and death. It was what the punters wanted it seemed, but I mused that the style was very much my own. My first effort was such a huge success, that I was immediately offered a contract to write the sequel, the terms of which were unheard of at the time for such a young, unknown writer. There's no doubt they were astoundingly high.

The money from Big Frankie was good, but the advance for my next piece was bigger. For the first time in my life I had some money, and I spent like it was going out of fashion. I splashed out on new clothes, including a rather outlandish purple velvet jacket with slitted, puffed sleeves and an elaborate collar - very new romantic, but it was the eighties after all. I was so full of myself, God knows, I even had my picture taken.

But my moonlighting started to catch up on me. The manacles' tale was that I was away so much that I did not qualify for my qualification. The outside income which was nourishing me, was threatening to destroy me. I decided to lay things on the line to Frankie; the truth was that writing letters was far more attractive than carrying them. But the old sour puss didn't care much for my lines.

"We had a contract and you will be held to it," he explained with quiet menace. "But I've served you well, have I not?" I pleaded, but Frankie was having none of it. "It doesn't work like that. Once you are in my service, you are in it for life. The only resignation letter accepted here is a death certificate. But rest assured that you will become a master - every little problem can easily be sorted"

When I got back to my apartment it was nearly midnight, and I was as dry as a dog. I poured myself a large one, lit my pipe, and looked down at the chessboard. The move with the knight looked wrong. I thought knights had no meaning in this game, that it wasn't a game for knights. Time would tell. I poured myself another drink. It didn't make thinking any easier, just more interesting. I thought about my idea. What does an ex-fed do for a living? He branches out on his own of course: becomes a \$25 a day shamus, a peeper, a private dick. Call it what you like, I might get to write between cases if business was as bad as I'd heard. The idea had legs.

I sat at my new desk twiddling with a pen. Business was as quiet as a mouse with a silencer fitted. The newly formed Armchair Detective Agency had fewer cases than a nudist colony baggage handler. I thought I'd use this 'slow' period to write, but they say the second book is the hardest, and here I was, literally a dry eye.

Most of my mind was occupied with what Frankie would do. He had been true to his word about sorting the college authorities, and my disappearing act was probably not quite the good service he'd expect in return. The unusual sound of the telephone made me jump. It was Tommy, an old acquaintance of mine who'd done a few jobs for Frankie in the past. "Saw your advert in the paper. Didn't know you were in this line of work?" I mumbled something about it being a discontinued line if I didn't get some custom soon. Perhaps I was just trying to brace myself for the worst case scenario.

"Ah, well, perhaps I can help. Can you meet me in the Nags Head tonight?" I wondered if he'd been sent by Frankie. "We always go there," I stalled. "Okay, how about Old Doctor Butler's Head?" My gut told me I could trust him. My head was not so sure. My wallet had a casting vote. Couldn't turn down business.

I'd said I'd pop up after eight. I drove over to the cheap side of town, and was already slumped in a dark corner of the bar when Tommy turned up. The place knocked up a late bar morsel, and on the table next to me, two old frails tucked into a bowl of scarlet roll-mops whilst blathering on about a pound's worth of damage their teeth were suffering.

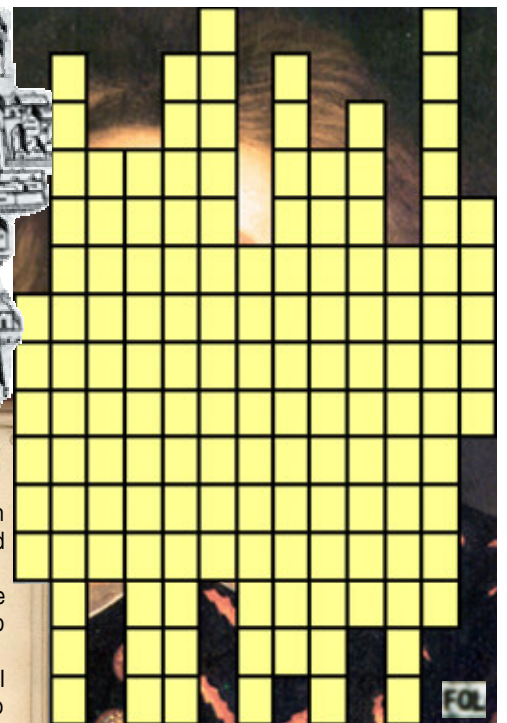
The man was after a quick beverage, that was definite [12]. He ordered a double with a Seven Up chaser,



23. In the people's book of Spies, who was the father of Justum?
24. Which swiftly edited publication aimed to inform or divert, or correct, or to vex?
25. On what date was the man who holds the record for most wickets in a test match delivered into the world?
26. Who played Harry Palmtop in the Logica Football Club movie 'Reservoir Lags'?



Wasted



par for the course with him, and sat down next to me. He hadn't changed and was soon regaling me with irreverent anecdotes about the not-so-good doctor and poor old Pierce that had my sides splitting. Talk moved from this Tom and Jerry's style double-act to my solo act.

"A bold move!" was his view. It didn't put my mind at rest but at least Tommy seemed on the level. "I've come a fair way since those days. I've not had anything to do with Frankie's mob since that two bit slime-ball Bob two-timed my sister Anne for some yeoman's missus he pawed and then shackled up with, apparently."

We ordered another pair of shorts just as the barman was calling time. Time for Tommy to get to the point. "I need your help. I'll pay the going rate obviously. I'm having some bother with this hustler called Billy, who owes an acquaintance of mine fourteen quid. Small change, I know, but it seems a brawl goes down well in the pub trade."

"Time gentlemen, please!" Only us and the old frails were left in the joint, and I was not in a position to pick and choose my jobs. I agreed to take on his case, but was left pondering how smart I'd been as Tommy drove off. He had arranged to meet this shark on the eighteenth, hopefully to collect the debt. I'd know the location when I found it, as the name was written on a bronze tablet set into a gate post. He'd had a few run-ins with this guy before, and wanted me along as back-up. I was supposed to be setting myself up as one of the best private detectives, not some hired muscle.

The rendezvous was set up at what is now a place of worship. It was supposed to be a quiet back street, where they could conduct their business, but when I got there it was near bedlam. I thought it'd be curtains for us, but not quite. I waited for this bloke Billy whilst Tommy hid out of sight. Negotiations on behalf of my very first client did not go smoothly. Billy wanted to speak to Tommy face to face. I persisted, but this man was starting to get angry. When he drew his weapon, Tommy decided it was time to reel in his fish in person, and save his bait.

Billy lost all interest in me and turned his sword on the late arrival with some theatrically sarcastic greeting. Tommy was at a disadvantage, struggling to get his piece out, and immediately on the back-foot. One more step backwards and the next moment he'd be in the ditch.

Suddenly, a strange slick-eyed anger appeared in my client's persona, and, fearing for his life, he unleashed an arcing swing of iron. He lunged at Billy with such force that his sword pierced deep into the right side of his chest. The victim let out a rash, vile cry, and Billy slumped to the ground, dead as dead can be.

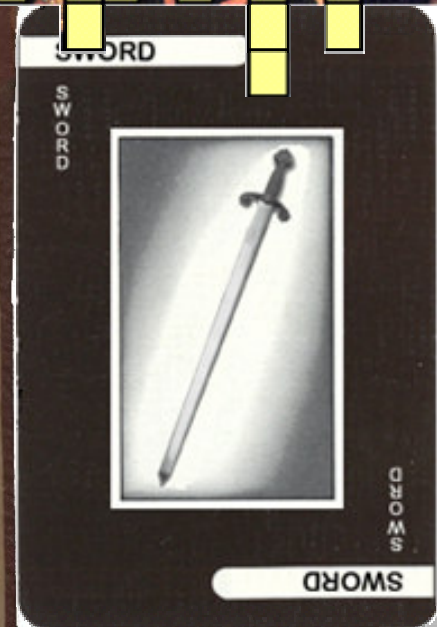
A crowd had gathered and were raising quite a clamour. A siren was soon whining in the distance, growing louder with every second. Me and Tommy just looked at each other. My first day on the job and I had a stiff on my hands. Tyres screamed around the corner and screeched to a halt. A uniformed cop jumped out, drew his pistol and fired a volley beautifully [11] in the air before surveying the scene with a wild eye. He saw Tommy's bloody sword sticking out of Billy's prostrate body. He turned his suspicious eyes to where the two of us were standing.

"What d'you kill him for?" he growled. This struck me as a stupid way to start an investigation. Tommy was in shock and stood there dumbstruck.

"I've wondered and wondered," I replied. "Oh, wise guy, huh?" He wasn't going to make anchor man on any college debating society.

"Look," I reasoned, "it was self defence. If we'd murdered him, we wouldn't be hanging around here. We wouldn't have left the murder weapon there for you to find, we'd have doctored the crime scene. Don't work so hard on the case. You'll only be on it for ten minutes." Perhaps I'd been a bit too quick to lay into him - he looked a bit hurt.

"You like living behind bars?" was the best he could come back with. I did actually, but probably not the type he was talking about. We were invited to get into the squad car, and were dropped at the station. Time gentlemen, please.



27. Who landed a plum first job writing for the Globe, later opened with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, married a widow, before being knighted 45 days before he died?

28. Which fictional LA private eye was named after a South London school house?

29. Which watery maiden locked her magical lover in a glass tower?