

Marley & Eeeeeee! by Ucaimhu

[1] **Jacob Marley**'s pals are here! [2] skips **past** one letter in each of nine Down answers before entry, and [3] and [4] **present** an extra word in each Down clue (**to come** out before solving); if you pair the [3, 4] clues in order, their paired extra words will clue the [2] entries (not in order).

Other guests from spooky Yuletide stories each alter six unshaded Across answers before entry (entries will include three proper names and an abbreviated phrase, and each Across clue contains a noncryptic clue to its entry):

[5] **Some undead "draugr" in a Norse saga.** For some he may be the *least notable* guest, but he dates to the Yule-to-Christmas switch; his answers also do a ho-li-day switch.

[6] **The Green Knight.** This possibly *agricultural* figure is unfazed by getting his head cropped off; his answers, except for their heads, just change to synonyms.

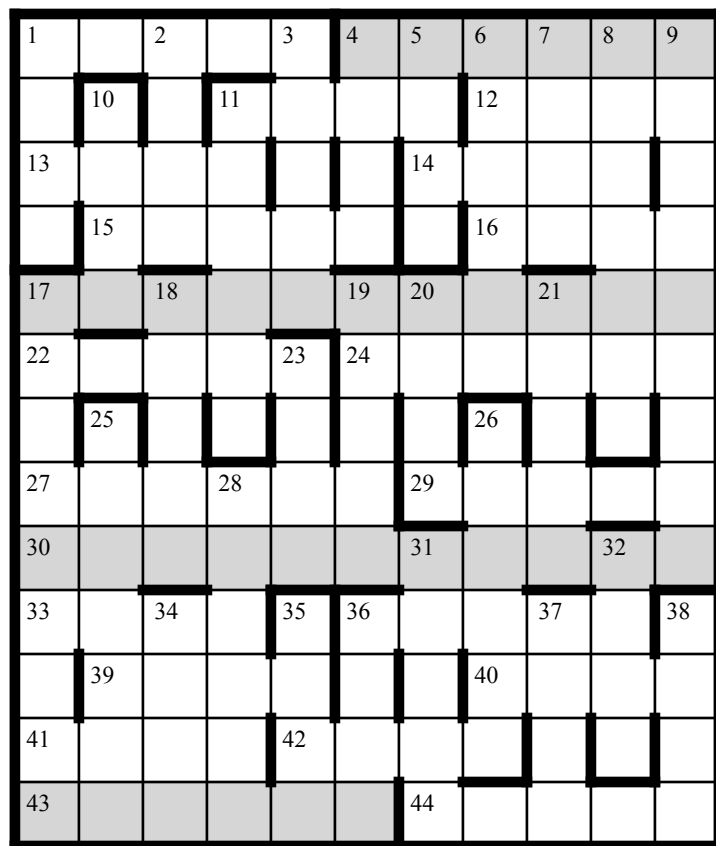
[7] **Clarence.** He would claim to be *celestial* rather than spooky, but he spooks George Bailey by rearranging the entire world; his answers each get rearranged as well.

A word for [1], [2], [3], or [4] can change as per [5], [6], and [7] in order, to get a word at each stage relating to that number's *description* (one is hyphenated); answers in gray (whose clues are wordplay-only) clue these four words.

Finally, in each [2] clue, ordered by skipped letter, find *the word in the clue that is the same length as the answer was originally*, and note the letter in that word at that skipped position; the nine-letter result will describe guests [1]–[4] more specifically and [5]–[7] very loosely. The first clue's first letter and last clue's last letter in each [3, 4] clue pair, in the corresponding order, will then name a hypothetical Victorian character who would utter this description when saying what makes this evening so welcoming to guests.

ACROSS

1. Pug biting toe of tar at the prow escapes expulsion (5)
4. Note tears in the mirror (6)
11. Husband will stuff blue fish (4)
12. Fifthly, *Morinda citrifolia* adorns Gallo-Iberian kid (4)
13. Strip steak, chop, or egg rolls making Oscar full (4)
14. Reportedly, speck of matter is a protective barrier (4)
15. Shore group involved in magic OAS tried (5)
16. Story part Manxes, apes, and others haven't recited (4)
17. Despise hugging Romeo after second incident (7-4)
22. More than two of you boxing yonder, to the east (5)
24. Pieces of land a snakelike character rents (6)
27. Nets that can catch a denizen of a loch or of a river (6)
29. What Mrs. Belcher calls Bob (yes!) in Russian car (5)
30. Goliath's city, before quantity of work drops (6 5)
33. Make corny sample of relish OK eating (4)
36. Fake trio of physicians keep old Roman in back (5)
39. Herb rerouted fluid substances just before the end (4)
40. Frost produced by hoaxer exhaling xenon (4)
41. Result of ordering blunder in posh boutique (4)
42. Clip of animated ape eating cornbread, primarily (4)
43. Henry removes fruit peels from flip-flops (6)
44. Top of smooth Rhine wine jar (5)



DOWN

1. Expands ad that is not being grasped by picosecond
2. Food stuffed in a shell — or a soft cot, strangely
3. Eastern sections of church are nave-fancier's paradise
4. On reflection, carrotlike vegan foodstuffs are amazing
5. Give a nominal valuation of messy tap, e.g. (2 wds.)
6. Crying corroded tin sensory organs (2 wds.)
7. Filch from rear half of slot machine
8. Object restricted people sin weakened, including Mac
9. Vocabulary item that describes (poorly) an employer of 2001's steering apparatus
10. Corner German setter in the Cornhusker state
11. *Rent* show's opening night is attended by Communist
17. Dullea is stimulated aboard ship, unlike bees
18. Like an opera focusing on the everyday soused RI vets
19. Ether mixing facility an injured individual's sent Russian to (2 wds., abbr.)
20. Greeting ladies where land distance becomes higher
21. Pose as de Armas from *Mossy Knives Out*
23. Fuel up where the Gardai patrol a lake near Toledo
25. Acoustically detect passageway where Ginger, Mary Ann, and five more does got stranded (2 wds.)
26. Violet plant I disturb is manfully energetic
28. K-2's Milnean ascender ultimately imitates her father
31. Many a lowland bear is grand enhancer of vision
32. Rabbi sheltering Yarborough (in part) 29 days before Sivan's beginning
34. Ignoring Cho, choke on fir-and-milk beverage
35. Place Al who sketched Dogpatch leaders in California alongside Pogo picture
36. Climbing high abode of many a bird dog
37. Only under certain conditions taking Mediterranean effect to be unmiasmic, alternatively
38. City quartered twelve in Italy before \$1000 expedition