

A Setter's Tragedy by Wan – Solution and Notes

¹ O	² N	³ E	A	⁴ R	M	⁵ E	B	⁶ A	⁷ N	I	⁸ T
⁹ P	A	R	P	E	¹⁰ N	¹¹ D	R	A	M	A	
O	¹² L	O	O	M	E	¹³ E	A	R	T	¹⁴ H	Y
¹⁵ N	A	T	¹⁶ R	I	U	M	N	A	S	A	R
¹⁷ D	¹⁷ E	I	E	X	M	A	¹⁸ C	H	I	N	A
¹⁹ E	X	C	I	T	E	²⁰ D	E	²¹ M	O	²² D	E
²³ R	E	N	N	²⁴ E	S	²⁵ U	N	I	²⁶ S	O	N
²⁷ P	R	O	²⁸ U	²⁹ D	L	E	³⁰ G	L	P	N	T
R	G	³¹ L	H	G	³² A	T	E	L	I	³³ E	R
³⁴ E	Y	A	L	E	T	T	³⁵ S	U	R	³⁶ D	E
³⁶ S	I	T	A	R	³⁷ H	O	S	T	A	G	E
³⁸ S	P	I	N	L	E	M	O	U	L	E	R

Only the yellow highlighting is required by solvers. The rest is just for clarity.

The theme is based on the phrase DEUS EX MACHINA where in some old plays a god was brought on stage from a machine, either from above or below, to solve a problem in a plot. It was deemed so contrived that the phrase has come to mean a contrived solution. In the puzzle two D's (Deus for god) are to be either dropped or raised from machines to resolve the clashes. Being that there are two from each machine DEI EX MACHINA has to be highlighted. The word 'machine' is missing from the definition of six clues, shown reinstated in brackets and highlighted in yellow in the explanation table below.

	Across	Entered		
1	ONE-ARMED BANDIT		Rumour going round by letter about bad nuts and fruit (machine)	ON-DIT around (NEAR + EM< + BAD*)
9	PARPEND		Wall of sound finale	PARP + END
11	GRAMA	DRAMA	Leg stocking rector found by edge of Bermuda grass	GAM around R + A
12	LOOM		Most of money goes west (machine) to make cloth	MOOL[a]<
13	EARTHY		Gross sound when Henry moves	HEARTY with H moved
15	NATRIUM		A translator in translating a Greek letter's taken aback to find an element in Latin	(A TR IN)* + MU<
18	CHINA		Plane leaves its last country	CHINA[r]
19	EXCITE		Fire door, perhaps, contains college fire ultimately	(EXIT around C) + E
20	DEMOTE	DEMODE	Downgrade French word found in abridged document	MOT in DEE[D]
23	RENNES		Travels to Ed's place in France	Double def
25	UNISON		One local transfixed by strange noise almost makes a sound of the same pitch	NOIS[e]* in UN
27	PROUL	PROUD	Sneak, retired, ready in Afghanistan to hide gold in retirement	PUL around OR<
32	ATELIER		Worried pilot scratching fighter plane in workshop	ATE + [f]LIER
34	EYALET		University in Egypt or what was Egypt c1600	YALE in ET
35	SURE	SURD	Stable government ignored by sudden movement of the masses	SUR[g]E
36	SITAR		instrument to finger one's back	(RAT + I'S)<
37	HOSTAGE		Weed keeps old informer prisoner	HOE around STAG
38	SPINDLE MOULDER		Woodworking (machine) degree dons deem dull, so rule out	PIN inside (DEEM DULL SO R)*
	Down			
2	NALA		Partridge maybe, heading up a ravine	ALAN<
3	EROTIC		Quickly on rising getting sexy	(CITO + RE)<
4	REMIX		Take recording company, finished, unknown type of recording	T + EMI + X
5	EDEMA		Accumulation of fluid made European ill	(MADE E)*
6	ARRAH		Maybe Pat's emotional cry when Juliet drops from tree	[j]ARRAH
7	NATS		Party members mostly support uprising	STAN[d]<
8	TAYRA		Weasel from Scots town recruited by army	AYR in TA
9	PONDER		Pressure on a prodigy who hasn't won is deliberate	P + [w]ONDER
10	NEUMES		Signs in music do seem funny occasionally	(SEEM [f]U[n]N[y])*
11	LANCE	DANCE	Butcher's short of good blade	[g]LANCE
14	HANG ON	HAND ON	Wait darling to engage, no good pursuing my heart?	HON around (NG after [w]A[n])
16	REIN		Check pressure inside bottles	Hidden
17	EXERGY		Brewed Earl Grey to drink without a measure in work	(E GREY)* around X

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20	DUETTO		Earned too much turning up for a performance	DUE + OTT<
21	MILL		Rob (machine) used to make powder	Double def
22	ENTRÉE		Knocked off out of book, a bird dish	[b]ENT + REE
24	EAGER	EDGER	Bore always takes time to cover second base	E'ER with AGE for the second E
26	SPIRAL		Screw in prison having lost leg, managed to stand on one left	PRIS[on]* + A L
27	PRESS		Pretend to drop from a flattening (machine)	PR[of]ESS
28	UHLAN		Cavalryman once mounted taking part in National Hunt	Hidden<
29	LATHE		Shorten long stick (machine) which might make a candlestick	LATHE[e]
30	GESSO		Think to free university of plaster	G[u]ESS + O
31	LATI		It's necessary heading north, but not very necessary in Eastern Europe	[v]ITAL<
33	EUGE	EDGE	Terminal in France masks height of jumbo well!	HUGE with E for H