



# The Crossword Century: 100 Years of Witty Wordplay, Ingenious Puzzles, and Linguistic Mischief

*Alan Connor*

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### A journalist and word aficionado salutes the 100-year history and pleasures of crossword puzzles

Since its debut in *The New York World* on December 21, 1913, the crossword puzzle has enjoyed a rich and surprisingly lively existence. Alan Connor, a comic writer known for his exploration of all things crossword in *The Guardian*, covers every twist and turn: from the 1920s, when crosswords were considered a menace to productive society; to World War II, when they were used to recruit code breakers; to their starring role in a 2008 episode of *The Simpsons*.

He also profiles the colorful characters who make up the interesting and bizarre subculture of crossword constructors and competitive solvers, including Will Shortz, the iconic *New York Times* puzzle editor who created a crafty crossword that appeared to predict the outcome of a presidential election, and the legions of competitive puzzle solvers who descend on a Connecticut hotel each year in an attempt to be crowned the American puzzle-solving champion.

At a time when the printed word is in decline, Connor marvels at the crossword's seamless transition onto Kindles and iPads, keeping the puzzle one of America's favorite pastimes. He also explores the way the human brain processes crosswords versus computers that are largely stumped by clues that require wordplay or a simple grasp of humor.

A fascinating examination of our most beloved linguistic amusement—and filled with tantalizing crosswords and clues embedded in the text—*The Crossword Century* is sure to attract the attention of the readers who made *Word Freak* and *Just My Type* bestsellers.

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