

**A**nother merchant vessel took me to the far side of Ververst the next day. Castle Pallow loomed on the shore, a forbidding fortress of black rock criss-crossed with natural white lines of marblestone.

When I told my ship's captain that I wished to visit the castle, he laughed. "No, no, no, my friend. Captain Marlton's not putting his ship within a league of cursed Pallow."

I frowned. "I paid you to take me to that shore."

"Aye. And there it is. Look, don't touch." He turned around to shout orders to his crew.

"Why do you despise Pallow so much?"

Turning back, Marlton raised an eyebrow. "New to this part of the land, eh? The ruler of Pallow is a dreaded necromancer. Anyone who enters comes back... different. And any respectable captain would never go anywhere near those rocks." He leaned in closer, and dropped his voice to a whisper. I could smell the perfume in his beard. "I swear I've seen 'em shift beneath the water, just trying to leave me wrecked at the foot of that damned castle. But don't mention that to Jeffers, I'll never convince him to sail the lake with me again."

"How did you even get your ship in here?"

He let out another booming laugh and pointed straight ahead of the ship. "The Morning Passage. A channel cut out of the land, straight across Mornstallinar and out into the ocean. Only fits one galleon at a time, and Jeffers says a friend of his had her ship get stuck and taken apart."

"Lady Zorra probably does not appreciate the channel."

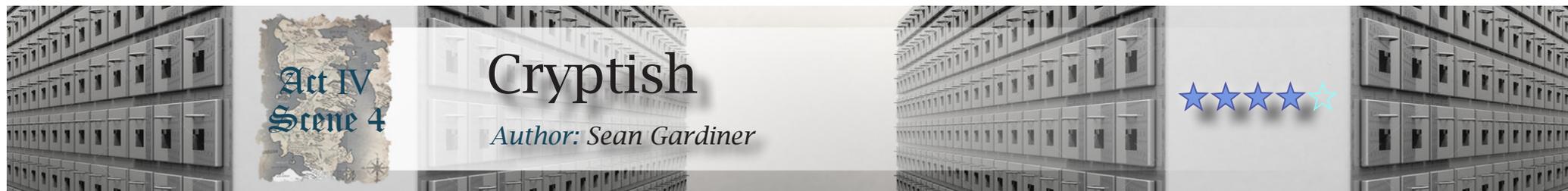
"She does, but only because as many new fish come in as ships. Rare fish for her precious gallery thing."

I considered my options, and decided that staging a one-man mutiny was not wise. "All right, I will stay away from Castle Pallow, but only if you can tell me something else about the rulers of Yorovash."

He grinned. "Fine then. Here's a riddle. The longest and shortest of the houses are commanded by the longest and shortest of the rulers respectively."

"That's your idea of a riddle?"

He pulled an impression of sobbing. "Shut up and go back to bed then! I'll wake you when we reach the channel."



Act IV  
Scene 4

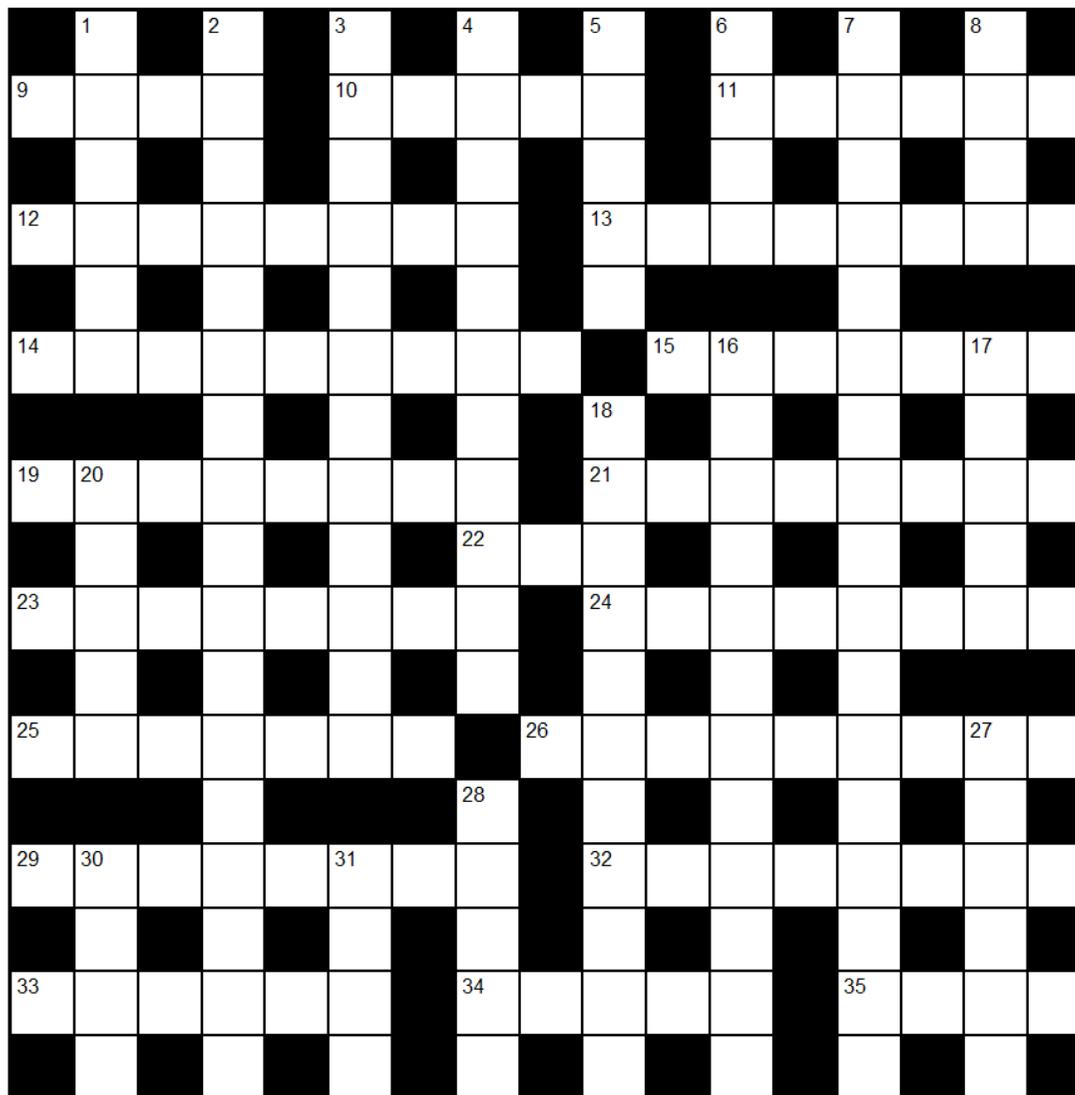
# Cryptish

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**ACROSS**

- 9 Eastern European appreciates Western European leaving loo. (4)
- 10 This guy hugged maiden one fine spring: Guy Robert Tiller. (5)
- 11 Shuts up reports of absurd miracles without reliable cover. (6)
- 12 Indicator at intersection most disturbing short nap in vehicle? (8)
- 13 Invests in Beats after one thousand boring feet. (8)
- 14 Ecofeminist's smear campaign ending in a drug admission? (1'8)
- 15 Author's 1-down dilemma. (7)
- 19 Vera's predecessor an inspiring character: "Phone moon! Phone home!" (8)
- 21 Commoner's injured? That's my fencing: flatterer and blunter. (8)
- 22 Rejection of new-age "1@6677"? (3)
- 23 Fat Rev flubs first fluff piece's part. (8)
- 24 Posed a swell joke; cynically agitates. (8)
- 25 Local joins computer tech before key terminal shortage. (7)
- 26 Scot holds in laughter before buying first treadmill component? (5,4)
- 29 Protest wrongdoing, spinning pavement spinner. (8)
- 32 Take apart CPU - devious; indeed, hardly simple (4-4)
- 33 Love god roots US terminators, or - back up - rooted? (6)
- 34 Auto-run meeting with robot in-character? (5)
- 35 Join row with less ugly half. (4)



**DOWN**

- 1 Ticks off final round with revolutionary old hat. (6)
- 2 Too good: state narration backing fair right in a story one described. (17)
- 3 Sounds like buddy almost replaced advocate's two leaders: skull-studier and climate effect scientist. (12)
- 4 Lands with groups and combinatorics specialists, sans solver reportedly. (11)
- 5 Boy thrashes noisy twister? (5)
- 6 Dregs up snot, eliciting loud "Yeugh!" (4)
- 7 Machine made potential footy team power past almost split-second loss? (17)
- 8 Fancy friend? I myself embrace yours truly (the writer). (4)
- 16 Rebel feature: sex-change lists taking five with climbers. (12)
- 17 Doctors say "Pardon me, Tailors." (5)
- 18 Shapely pantry basically holds nothing for limiting acid reflux? (11)
- 20 Ventilation oddly cleared surreal car company atmosphere. (5)
- 27 Retire idle worker to Spooner? (6)
- 28 Bowl, swing - caught! in front of Snapper. (5)
- 30 Regretted offensive-sounding email header? (4)
- 31 Reject love for *Love's Labour-Leader's Lost*? (4)