

Guest Puzzle #54 – December 2013 "Is it I? It is I" (by Peter Green)

Instructions: Guess the words defined by the cryptic clues (answers vary in length from four to eleven letters, and two are capitalized) then enter them in the grid one after another in the same order as their clues, starting in the upper left corner. Across words that don't end at the right continue on the next row, and down words that don't end at the bottom continue in the next column. Eleven across words and nine down words won't fit in the grid unless one of their letters is omitted. Those twenty letters, taken in order as they occur in across and down words, spell two three-word phrases related to the mystery entry. Thanks to Kevin Wald for editing and test-solving this puzzle.

Across

1. Threaten to talk about men
2. Steal a moment around a poplar tree
3. Remove top of seed to reveal a small opening
4. Ireland has flair
5. Push rod into bar
6. Birth scene can get weird
7. Communist decree ready for publication
8. Prime tree breached the outer limits
9. Revolutionary ship game
10. Color of lime crush
11. "Contain" is in clue about diameter
12. *Mystery entry*
13. Burden of child that's mischievous and so backward with English
14. Brew laced with a bit of vermouth for cete member
15. Raise the terminally dead
16. The Nile discovered to have a westward diversion
17. Meal is about over
18. The Spanish and French go for rock
19. One Roman embracing an emperor
20. Place dog's head in box
21. Boy's first *letter* letter from Athens
22. Shelley's having a terrible experience
23. Man with a supernatural power
24. Fashion mannequin's not quite finished

Down

1. Timeless secrets scattered in alcove
2. A lot of back talk beginning to exasperate
3. Consume popular hot beverage
4. Stand back
5. A Père partying in a city celebrated in song
6. Terror of bird trapped in computer
7. "Dawdle" is second of words appearing in volume
8. Clean dirtied weapon
9. To stand up in error is embarrassing
10. Daughter of nice person's made papa vote
11. Return record with unit to make further adjustments
12. Sausage in Paris à la mignonette
13. Tear top of rectus at finish
14. Bib is only to cover a wisent
15. Transporter's term finally ended
16. Charlie tried ineffectively to have faith
17. Stared and drew a sudden breath without beginning to speak
18. Head of cod left over for Herb
19. The first of May in a Spanish province bears fruit
20. Much troubled friend
21. To be a real lunatic is complicated
22. German article I have to take from a source
23. Hate being pissed off at Earl
24. Small in body but able to see, hear, etc.