

# Solution - Elf Condo Construction

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Reassemble the shredded pieces. We get what appears to be a solution writeup to a puzzle, but a piece of the page is missing. Based on the remainder of the page, we need to figure out the names of the elves on the missing piece. Most names can be deduced by combining multiple pieces of information from different parts of the page. One possible line of reasoning is as follows:

- Clue 4 states that one row has all names with the same double letter. Based on the visible elves, it is row 1, and they all have double L's.
- Clue 5 refers to *When Harry Met Sally*. Clue 6 refers to William and Harry. This gives us two of the missing double L names from clue 4.
- Clue 3 indicates there is a character from Shakespeare whose name starts and ends with the same letter (the visible elves help confirm these two rules). Clue 4 implies that character also contains a double L. The name OTHELLO satisfies all of these constraints. It goes in row 2, column 3 based on the visible scarf.
- WILLIAM, SALLY, and HARRY can be placed to put the double L's in row 1, HARRY and SALLY orthogonally adjacent (clue 5) and WILLIAM and HARRY diagonally adjacent (clue 6)
- Clue 7 indicates a Greek god that contains "PH". Combine that with the visible -ONE in row 4, column 4 to get PERSEPHONE
- Clue 7 indicates the name above PERSEPHONE also contains "PH". It is a Shakespeare character due to the visible scarf, and ends in A. This is OPHELIA.
- Clue 8 indicates that one elf shares the last name with a losing US presidential candidate. Combine this with the partial name "erry" visible in clue 2 to get KERRY. It must go next to Sandy because both end in Y (clue 5)
- The flavor text indicates that Red (the main elf character in the hunt) is telling us this puzzle solution. Clue 9 suggests that RED is the last missing name in the puzzle.

The assembled puzzle is given on the next page, with the missing portion shaded in grey. The answer is WORKSHOP.



# Elf Condo Construction

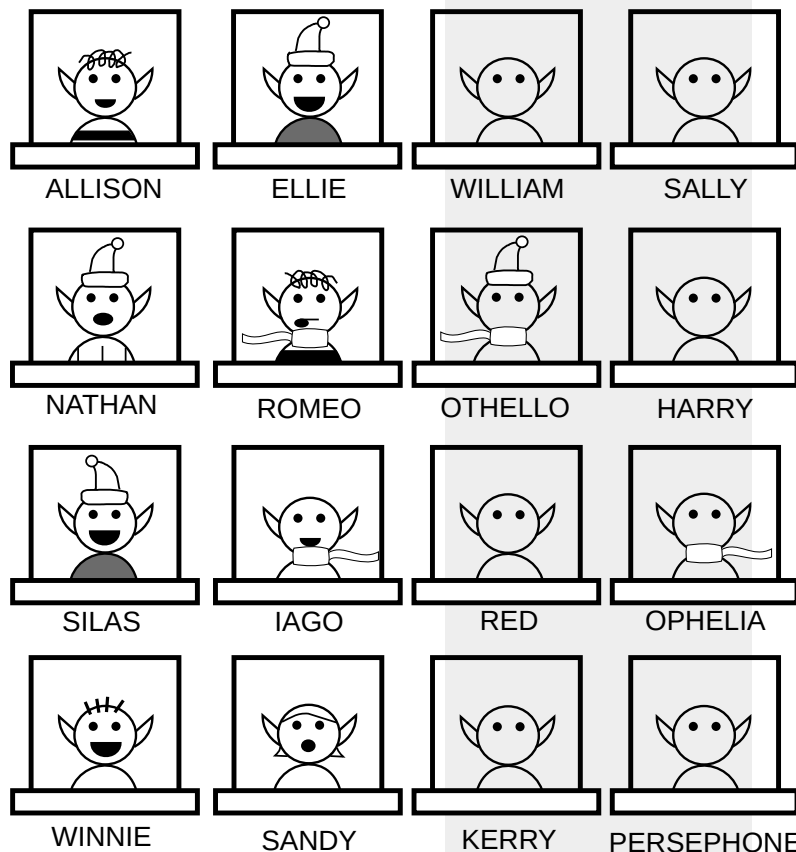
Red claims he's already figured this one out, but might need some help with assembling his thoughts



In this puzzle, we got a grid of 16 elf faces in windows of an apartment, where each one had a speech bubble giving us a clue. Using these clues, we had to figure out the name of each elf.

- All 16 names appear in the clues, so we just need to place them in the right locations.
- Some easy clues let us place 4 elves right away: Nathan, Silas, Ophelia, and Kerry.
- The elves wearing scarves are all characters from Shakespeare, and hats all have the same first and last letter. The one elf in row 2 wearing both things can only be Othello.
- Silas states that one row contains 4 elves whose names each incorporate the same double letter. By looking at the full list of names, the only possible double letter is L. One of those elves was placed in the previous step, so the remaining four must all be in that row.
- The film referenced by the "cinematic couples" statement is *When Harry Met Sally*, which lets us place the latter in that row, and the former below her. (Confirmed by the clue that each elf whose name ends with Y must be orthogonally adjacent to another such elf)
- Then, the clue about names of British princes means that William and Harry must be diagonally adjacent, which locks in the row.
- We can put the elf whose name is a Greek god below Ophelia because her name also contains "PH".
- Iago must be a scarf-wearer diagonally adjacent to both an elf who shares their name with a bear, and one that shares the last name of a losing US presidential candidate. Only one available spot works with these constraints. Then Sandy goes in the last spot in row 4.
- And finally, I obviously know the location of my own apartment! (Or you could use process of elimination)

That gives us the following layout:



From the final layout, we can read that the ANSWER IS WORKSHOP.

## Author Notes

A vague version of this puzzle was part of my initial pitch for an advent calendar based puzzle hunt – “In the physical advent calendar, we could even have a physical puzzle where we pre-cut the paper!”

It turned out to be one of the more labor-intensive parts of building the physical advent calendar. I used a paper cutter to make two precise cuts on the page, and then a less precise series of cuts for the rest. The printed page did not actually have the missing section (to avoid accidentally leaving it in), but included about one letter width of bleed on each side to give some margin of error on the cuts. Here is a behind-the-scenes look at the setup:

