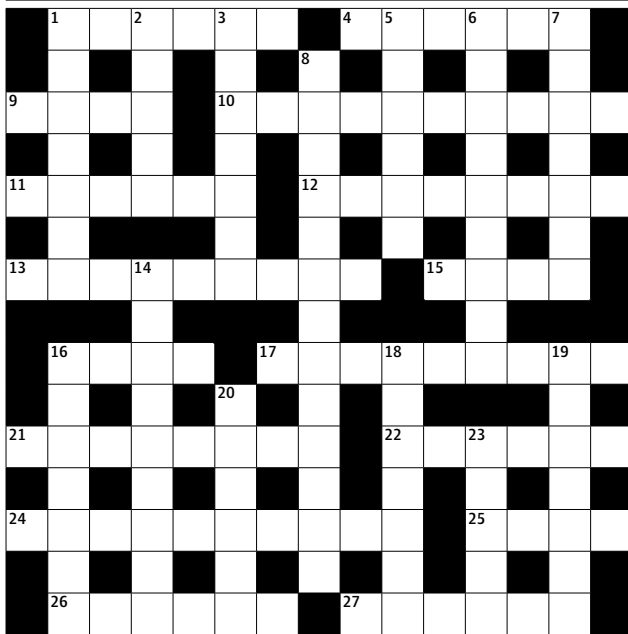


Guardian cryptic crossword



No 26,313 set by Paul

Across

- 1** Those spotted behind bushes, office heads in women's clothing (6)
4 An icon of literary espionage? (6)
9 Fifth off 2 or 3 perhaps, to be formal (4)
10,17 Not one to criticise, deviant threw shoe – some joke! (5,5,4,5)
11 Bird thrashing about (6)
12 Captivated by yeti, many drooled over potential killer (8)
13 Oddly sexy, innit? (5-4)
15 Relative in rocking chair, drama queen, all conclude (4)
16 See 2
17 See 10
21 Reprimand a little bit hasty (8)
22 Fill vessel among others containing yummy starters (6)
24 Pet notes for fliers (10)
25,23 No excuse carving initials in yellow snow (4,5)
26 Newly-delivered cargo brought over, including last of money and diamonds (3-3)
27 See good artist turning over knitting pattern (6)

Down

- 1** Italian artist – sculptor finally embraced by country, Italy (7)

- 2,16across** Person wandering up mountain, once a fast driver (5,4)
3 Cook emptied tea out in kitchen container (4,3)
5 End of battle among soldiers on surface of great Chinese river (6)
6 Chinese retreat, 32 days? (4,5)
7 Did you hear, I'm repulsed by the sight of a sunbather in Mexican state? (7)
8 Force man into the loo, a drunk this battered? (4-2-3-4)
14 System in which one calls plastic polythene (9)
16 Nerve required to enter place housing choppers? That's here (7)
18 Carrying poles, trail back (7)
19 Majority to ditch leader in mature response (7)
20 Fish finds river in scene of chaos (6)
23 See 25

Solution No. 26,312

