

Advent of Sudoku - 2022

By Daniel Silverstone (Kinnison)

A while ago, while sat at work discussing some tutorial Sudoku puzzles I had created to help a colleague to understand some of the Sudoku variants that I had grown to love, another colleague of mine pulled a Barney-esque move and challenged me to make a pack of puzzles which would link together in some fashion and provide a small burst of puzzling fun each day for the advent season.

Over the course of the intervening months I chatted with people, doodled a few puzzles now and again, but mostly forgot about this until, out of the blue, my challenger asked me how it was going. This, as you might imagine, spurred me into action creating puzzles, trying to thread them together, and doing my best to balance the difficulty level at 'tutorial' while not creating entirely boring puzzles. This is surprisingly difficult to do, and I learned a huge amount from many of the best minds in the Sudoku community as I worked my way toward around thirty possible puzzles. Some gracious testers helped me to further reduce the set until we reached this selection of puzzles which I hope will provide both a learning experience for some, and a relaxing reminder of why some variants can be fun to others.

Finally, as I reached the end of the effort of setting and linking puzzles, I began to write the rules up for each of them and discovered that I wanted to write a story, something to further join these moments of puzzling fun into a tale to span the season. While I will not claim to be an astounding author, I hope that puzzling out the meaning of the tale may provide another level of enjoyment to some of you; and if not, then perhaps you'll simply enjoy each day's setup.

This pack would not have been possible without the incitement and support of my colleagues: Bob Clough, Scott Clarke, and Sean Borg. The puzzles would not have been as well tested, and their difficulties adjusted, were it not for the efforts of Emckee, Woofersfg, Jakhob, and Ambrose. The story would be even more full of schoolboy linguistic errors but for the magnificent copy-editing of Tristan Occhipinti. So my thanks go to all of these wonderful people; and to you wonderful people who now (hopefully) will get to enjoy this pack.

Happy holidays,

Daniel (Kinnison).


P.S. for all puzzles "Normal sudoku rules apply" which means you need to place the digits one through six (or one through nine for the last puzzle) in every row, column, and box of the sudoku. Also every 6x6 puzzle has one cell highlighted with an orange cage and marked with Mx Santa (🧑🏻) - It's important that you remember all these cell values because they feed into the 9x9 at the end of the pack.

Day 1

The sky is dark, with stars twinkling merrily. If you weren't close to losing feeling in your fingers and toes then you would consider lying back and enjoying the sight. You haven't seen another soul since the sun went down, which was at best guess over four hours ago. Sadly you also haven't managed to find any shelter from the biting cold which arrived a week ago on the wind and set up residence in the run-down town you begrudgingly call "home".

Your small body stopped shivering some time ago and somewhere in your sluggish mind you remember that this could be considered very not good. You desperately need to find somewhere to rest and recover, so you force your near-frozen legs to keep moving as you try doorway after doorway in the next alley you come to. Door after door is dark, boarded up, or covered by metal shutters locked tight. Then, just as you are considering giving up and choosing a doorway to curl up in, you notice a small red light next to a door up ahead.

You approach the door and discover a keypad. If you could work out the right combination of digits then you might be able to get through this door which appears to be miraculously powered. This is your chance to finally... [Warm Up](#).

	1	2			
4			6		
	3		2		1
				5	
					3
		1			4

No special rules