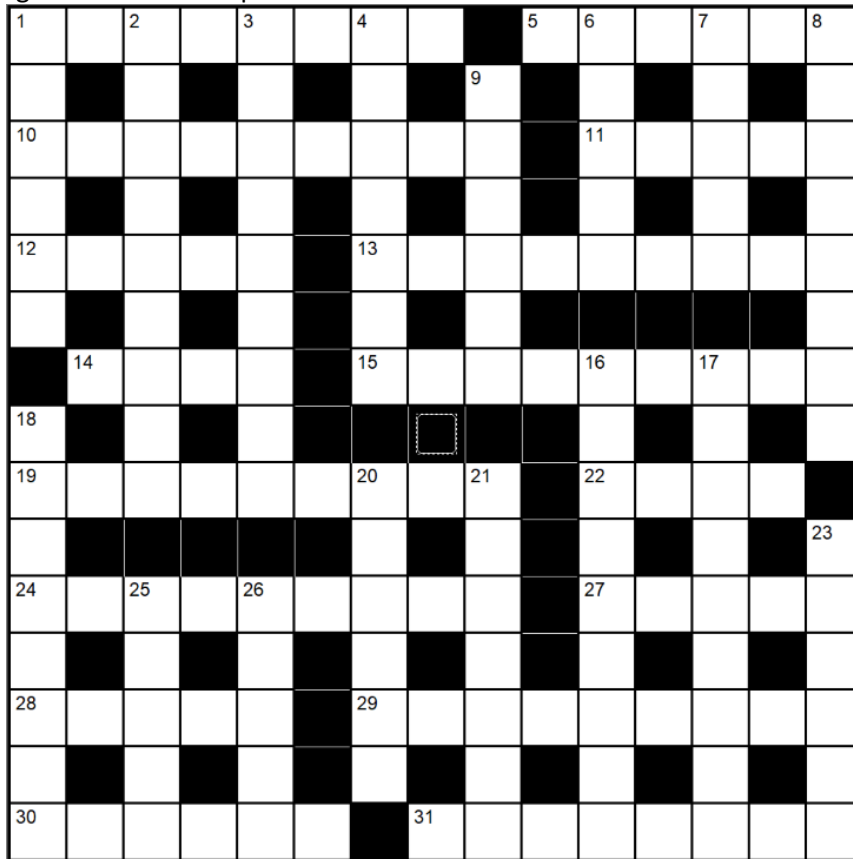


# Sloggers & Betters 2026 – Ouroboros

Two entries are entirely thematic. Fourteen further entries are not thematic in themselves, but instead each contains a continuous letter string which is itself thematic. Knowledge of the theme is not required for solving – all clues are standard cryptic offerings with definitions provided.



## Across

- 1 Ordinary fellow's taken back uniform and left cape in filth (8)
- 5 Iron Curtain fundamentally cutting back influence (6)
- 10 Frequently appearing in Second Skin paperback (9)
- 11 Hooray, hooray, corrupt Republican ousted (5)
- 12 Fictional Spanish swordsman's statement of entry? (5)
- 13 Endorses false assertion (9)
- 14 Clothes pegs (4)
- 15 "That woman's rent almost due" scribbled below in text (9)
- 19 Function has a player in bed with man (9)
- 22 Executes earl's son after party (4)
- 24 Confront inane sadist with grotesque pout (5,2,2)
- 27 He loved Ouroboros wearing jumper (5)
- 28 Affluent ski partners initially entertain on vacation here? (5)
- 29 Sign of hunger from group of servants? (9)
- 30 See revolutionary talent in covers of Wings (6)
- 31 Siblings have problems admitting mother's stern (8)

## Down

- 1 Relic of ship coated in aluminium sheeting (6)
- 2 Opening late, carnival set up to be more rigged than any other (9)
- 3 Actor Jack chose one line to be rewritten, completely lacking energy (9)
- 4 Incident interrupts quiet interval (7)
- 6 Brother picked up cooking appliance (5)
- 7 Mindset of the drunken sailor (5)
- 8 Stimulate - regularly starts outside clothing (8)
- 9 You're terrified, exhibiting some waterworks? (6)
- 16 Stood and modelled nude, then peed under photographer's heel (9)
- 17 Surreal Doctor of Music resembling bones before noon (9)
- 18 Bladed object kills princess (3,5)
- 20 Reveal old one's out of balance (6)
- 21 Couple to join in hand (3,4)
- 23 Bolts ultimately stabbing through Pierce Brosnan's heart (6)
- 25 Sufficiently expand provided retreats (5)
- 26 Opportunity to retain foundation's last benefactor (5)