

# Congregation

—Corey Plover

While your attention is completely absorbed in the strange symbols, you miss a good portion of the challenge. Before long, the challenge is nearing its end, and a quick glance reveals that many of the chefs are cracking under the pressure. One in particular is using certain expletives. A lot.

The Iron Chef, on the other hand, appears calm and collected. With the placidity and affected self-righteousness of a British royal, he raises his hand. Gary the judge promptly saunters towards the bench, ready to offer his expert opinion on how everything the Iron Chef is doing is completely wrong. However, when Gary arrives, he is met with a surprising question.

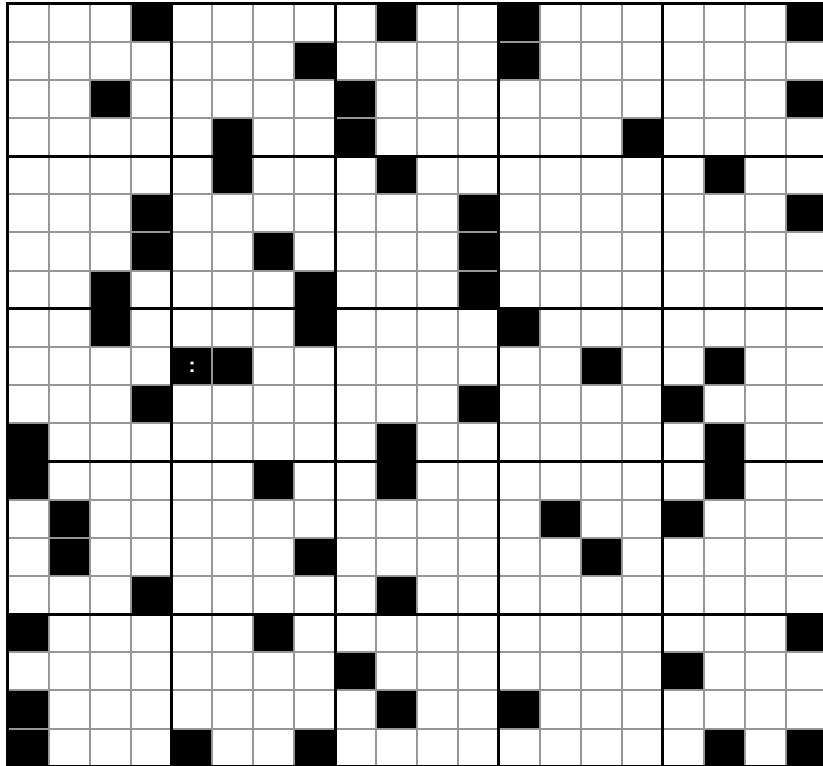
“Please sir, may I please use the toilet sir?”

Gary is oblivious to the fact that the Iron Chef did not sound remotely Japanese. Instead, bemused by the Iron Chef’s formality, Gary simply motions towards the toilet. He then swiftly finds a corner hidden from the cameras where he can laugh out loud, laugh his behind off, and perhaps even roll on the floor laughing without attracting too much attention.

Intrigued by the fact that the Iron Chef seems to have enough time to take a toilet break, you shift your viewing angle to face the passageway into the restrooms. However, not even a few seconds have passed before he emerges from the toilet, seemingly refreshed. Then you realise the true purpose of his toilet break: to your horror you see him holding what appears to be a small yellow-green bird in his fist...Is that a budgie? Has the Iron Chef smuggled a budgie into the competition?

You look around to see if anyone else has noticed. It seems not. Only from your angle was the Iron Chef’s dastardly deed visible.

You can feel your heart thumping at a speed comparable to the fingers of a Hansard typist at a particularly rowdy Question Time. Before you know it, the Iron Chef, struggling to disguise his insertion of the budgie into his next dish, drops another sheet of paper. Apparently the Iron Chef’s suit, though flashy, may just be a tad impractical with its tendency to drop things.



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PLE	SON	RLY	DITA	CROP
PUB	VAC	APPA	ESSO	ILIN
ORDE	HOMI	LLIA	PARE	SUNG