Motel 6
Jonah Ostroff
*Answer: **OTHELLO***

At first glance, Killer Moth's puzzle appears to be an ordinary Killer Sudoku, although there are some weird black squares of unknown purpose. Standard deductions can get you about here:
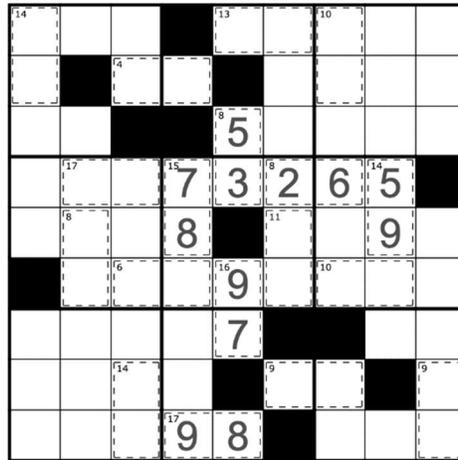
Some case bashing can get you a few more squares, but the puzzle is certainly not unique as an ordinary killer sudoku, so there must be something else going on.

It's at this point the villain's identity as Killer Moth and the slogan for the Motel 6 chain ("we'll leave the light on for you") should come to mind. Moths, of course, love light puzzles! This grid is secretly an Akari (Light Up), and the black squares are the walls. That gives us an additional constraint: black squares must each contain a digit 1-4, and resolve to a legal akari puzzle.

The easiest place to make progress from here is the upper area: the 4-clue for the second row is constrained to a black square (because the row contains two black cells, plus a 4-cage that uses up the 1 and 3), and similarly constrained in the upper-middle section (because there are three black cells, plus a cell from the 4-cage). The only way these can both be true is if those are the same 4, in the middle of the upper region. This, added to your knowledge of what belongs in the black squares, resolves some nearby clues and other ambiguities in the center.
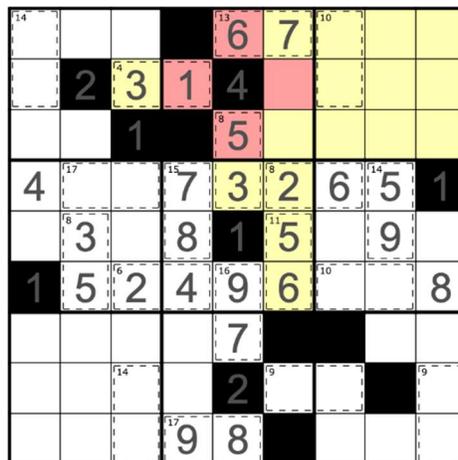
Continue this way, making simultaneous progress on the akari and the killer sudoku. Once both puzzles are completed, the final grid looks like this:

Finally, sum the lit numbers in each 3x3 region (skipping the ones with no lights) to get the final answer: **OTHELLO**.

Author's Notes

Jonah: I had the idea early in the writing process to make a something-that's-secretly-an-akari puzzle for Killer Moth, but it took me a while to decide what genre that should be. The "killer" part didn't occur to me at all until I sat down to write a sudoku, decided that vanilla sudoku are too boring (even with a genre twist), and then started thinking about what sudoku variants I could use. I hope that the final product makes me look better at puns than I actually am.