

More than Meets the Ear

—Corey Plover

Leaving the polar bear in the capable hands of the rapidly snowballing crowd of ambulance men, RSPCA specialists and senior academics locked in heated jurisdiction debates, you make for the Zoology Department. Passing Land and Food Resources along the way somehow invokes in you a dire urge to channel your inner investigatory journalist. A polar bear in Marvellous Melbourne? There's got to be a better answer than global warming.

Momentarily forgetting that the world doesn't revolve around you, you resolve to do whatever it takes, ruin as many lives as necessary, so long as you investigate-journalist the truth out of this puzzle, no matter how many friends you lose or people you leave dead and bloodied along the way, so long as you investigate-*journalistic*.

On arrival at the Zoology Department, it's clear that something is amiss. The doors are locked and many of the nearby trees bear fresh claw marks. Quickly scouting about the premises (because scouting is important), you spy a clique of zoo/land postgrads and surreptitiously duck behind them. Long hours playing Assassin's Creed have made you an expert at blending, so, projecting an aura of boredom and procrastination with a hint of despair, you successfully camouflage among their ranks and shuffle into the secured compound whilst overhearing some senseless mumbling.

"Have you read this morning's emails on attacks in Pinkawillinie? A pair of the drop bears dropped on a campsite and gave some European female backpackers a bit of a fright."

"Aye, good thing no one were hurt! But this thing be spreading so fast – it were still back in Coffin Bay and Lincoln Park just last week. Where be that Professor Undaberg? He's the only scunner who's been missing for the past 48 hours."

"Yeah, it's pretty worrying, because he's the only one who knows the how to make the –"

EMERGENCY ANNOUNCEMENT – there is a breach in section #2. All personnel immediately return to your offices while the corridors are fumigated. We repeat – there is a breach.

Thinking on your toes, you dash for Professor Undaberg's office only to be greeted by a security door. Maybe this inconspicuous piece of scrap paper on the floor might help you to decipher the password.

Before	After
Owing [1]	Dairy (by-)product [2]
Money, slangily [2]	Athlete, slangily [3]
Cardinal direction [3]	Computer key [5]
Branch [1]	Relative direction [1]
Inconsiderate [8]	Expenditures [4]
Dairy product [4]	Stockpile [3]

Transformations:

- Throbbled (5)
- Respiratory condition (6)
- Underground cemetery (8)
- Severe lack of rain (7)
- Slow and steady (7)
- Synchronous diaphragmatic flutter (8)
- Major religion (5)
- Novel by Victor Hugo (3 10)
- Army rank (10)
- Irish lake (5)
- Afternoon show (7)
- Actor Connery (4)
- Blue shoe material (5)
- Constituent of little girls (5)
- Cooking herb (5)
- Day of the week (9)
- Ladies (5)