

# Accrual

—Muhammad Adib Surani

As the taxi turns down a dingy alleyway, and pulls up at the address you grabbed from the internet, you start to have serious doubts about the accuracy of your information. At the end of the alley lies a ramshackled warehouse, in a serious state of disrepair. Surely this can't be the right place.

You exit the taxi, and walk slowly up to the front door. Drawing a deep breath, you notice that there is a cravat tied around the doorknob. All of a sudden, you can't help but laugh as you realise the absurdity of it all: in Sydney, down the end of an alley, about to knock on a stranger's door to ask them if they are providing top-secret cooking lessons. Huh?

You work up all your courage and knock on the door. After a few seconds the light behind the peek-hole suddenly goes black, and you hear a muffled voice from behind the door.

"You're not wearing the cravat! I told you, you're supposed to put on the cravat as a signal that you're here for the lessons. Never mind, I have another way to do this. Ok, think of a number between zero and thirty one..."

<http://www.ms.unimelb.edu.au/~mums/puzzlehunt/2010/puzzles/accrual.php>

Having apparently given a satisfactory answer the door opens, and your jaw drops as you see who is behind it. Matt Preston, the other Honourable judge of *MasterChef*. As he takes you in, he instantaneously realises his mistake. "Who are you?! Get out of here! You didn't see anything. You didn't hear anything. Got it?" The door slams in your face.

You stand there, frozen with incomprehension. Matt Preston? Hosting secret cooking lessons? Either you're hugely mistaken about this whole thing, or else the plot goes much deeper than you thought. Is this unknown celebrity so desperate to win *MasterChef* that they've convinced the only *judge* of the show who isn't a chef to give them lessons? The audacity!

Still standing with the door all but appended to the front of your nose, you shiver with excitement at this intriguing turn of events!