

Melbourne University Puzzle Hunt — 2004

META

“The real problem is what to do with all the problem solvers when the problems are solved.”

—Gay Talese

Final Words

—Maurice Chiodo

*Mirror mirror
On the wall
Who's the fairest
Of them all?*

“They’ve taken it!” cries Fiona, as you sneak back to the Cult’s control room. She points to a shallow 2cm diameter hole on the control panel. “No no no!” she wails, “If we can get the little mirror-matter controller for that socket can we can control Howard and the other zombies like mere pawns. We can force the Brotherhood to use its mirror matter to produce the anti-zombification antidote! There’s no other hope for you!”. As if to underline her words, one of your fingernails drops uselessly to the floor.

You look at the base of panel and see a series of muddy footprints leading off to the west. Glancing up at one of the closed circuit television monitors, you see many people milling about university square. There is a hooded man on a stage.. You point at the image and Fiona finds a volume control. A hooded man speaks:

“My friends, our plans are nearing completion. Our decoys have worked perfectly. We must now make our move to final domination. Go forth my friends and fetch me my prize, for today victory is ours!”

A steady cheer builds from the crowd, and you see the people move into some sort of formation. How strange, those that you have hunted for so long now appear lined up in front of you in perfect order.

You hear a cry from the mysterious character on the stage “MARCH!” And then they begin, their every sequence mapped out carefully as if they had been built for just such a task. You find it strange that, despite their apparent levels of sophistication and organisation, they are climbing into rudimentary transport devices, squashing in four abreast so that from where you stand the figures merge into one in each vehicle. Before joining the convoy.

Your attention is broken by a gasp from Fiona. You turn to see Dr Volkas on the ground, battered and bleeding. He tries to speak, but you can barely make out what he is saying. He sounds like a dying man and you manage to catch his last words before he passes out.

“... they cracked my code... will find it soon... not much time... don’t let them... here, take this... you saw how they moved... you have what it takes now... the key is the sum of all you have learnt... GO!”

His eyes roll back and his body drops limp, and out of his hand rolls *one last small scrap of paper!*

You open it up but can barely make out the scrawl bellow:

zqyzdmqwxltxomrbdphrypifaomoxrbt

You look at it and realise that, once again, not everything is quite what it seems...