

Melbourne University Puzzle Hunt — 2004

Act 3

*“Per me si va ne la città dolente,
per me si va ne l’eterno dolore
per me si va tra la perduta gente.
Giustizia mosse il mio alto fattore;
fecemi la divina podestate,
la somma sapienza e’l primo amore.
Dinanzi a me non fuor cose create
se non etterne, e io eterno duro.
Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch’intrate.”*

—Dante, Inferno, Canto 3

*“Through me the way into the grieving city,
through me the way into eternal sorrow,
through me the way among the lost people.
Justice moved my high maker;
divine power made me,
highest wisdom, and primal love.
Before me were no things created
except eternal ones, and I endure eternal.
Abandon every hope, you who enter.”*

Prelude

On your way into University, newspaper headlines assault you with the news of yesterday's explosion. "NATION IN MOURNING" screams the Herald Sun. "John Howard was killed yesterday in an explosion at RMIT, thought to have been the work of Islamic terrorists. This dastardly attack on the good, strong Australian spirit of family values and a fair dinkum go has shocked the world..." The Age, meanwhile, cries "PM ASSASSINATED", and is careful to point out that "Prime Minister John Howard was killed in an explosion at Melbourne University yesterday. Age journalist Criss Masters was also killed in the explosion."

Later, you pass a staffroom and see the flickering image of John Howard on a television. It is a newsflash - the Prime Minister is alive after all! His eyebrows are scorched and his skin pale. Without emotion he explains how... he was trapped under rubble for the past two days till he felt his chest imbued with the love of God giving him strength to push off his concrete constraints and walk free into the dark still cold air early this morning and catch a taxi to the airport and a dawn flight to Kirribilli before making this Special Address to the Nation announcing the Governor General's decision to abridge the federal election to Saturday due to the gravity of the terrorist threat which can only be resisted by a unified Australia.

You walk into the Brownless Biomedical Library and find yourself surrounded by the eerie silence of people studying. Looking around, you find that everyone appears to be half asleep. An almost imperceptible, and vaguely familiar, sound fills the room. Suddenly you recognize it - the lyre music that you heard in theatre A. There is a group of strange people swaying to the music, and you wonder what on earth they are doing. Perhaps the pile of books nearby could help you to look up the answer.

Inside one of the books, you find an envelope, together with a sheet of paper. But the curious people start to move off. Instantly alert, you start to follow the group as it takes a secret route through an unfamiliar section of the library to a cavernous underground chamber. You stop at the door of the chamber to keep from being seen.

The border of the floor is surrounded by pawns, which look like medieval knights. A man in a Hessian robe is hopping on the floor, starting from the corner. When he finally reaches the centre square of the board, the square descends, taking the robed figure with it. When it returns to the floor level, it is empty.

You work out how to follow him and find yourself in an even greater cavern than the previous one. You can see an enormous pipe, which emits a dull buzzing sound. Despite the sound of the lyre music, you are able to hear a conversation that is taking place between two cloaked figures nearby. They appear to be guarding a captive. "So how do we know that those mindless beings will vote Liberal, Damjan?" one asks.

"You know how they vote", the other responds dismissively, and turns back to the bound figure. Stunned, you realize that their hostage is Ray Volkas. He is not dead after all!

The robed figure known as Damjan starts to interrogate Volkas. "We know that you can use this synchrotron to bring zombies to life. You WILL tell us how to make it work!" Volkas shakes his head silently. He glances furtively at you. You have been spotted! "Your miserable colleague, Foot, has escaped our clutches for the present," continues Damjan, "But do not imagine that he will evade us forever. It is inevitable that WE will gain control of the mirror matter, and with the army of voters your lot planned to synthesise, NOTHING shall stand in our way!"

An elegantly-decorated image of a Poincaré disc appears on the far wall. The robed figures immediately bend down to worship it. Seeing his opportunity, Volkas makes a dash for it. He heads straight for you, shaking off the topologically beautiful yet practically useless knots that bind him. Together, you dash back up the entrance you entered by.

Ray notices the envelope and paper that you are carrying, and takes them from you. Glancing over them, he tells you that they surely contain messages that are crucial to understanding the strange society that had abducted him. “They are a strange society of hessian-wearing bards,” he tells you. “They live an ascetic vegetarian life, worshipping a legendary philosopher from their subterranean caverns.”

You appear to have a new ally in Volkas. He has been very forthcoming with his help. Perhaps... a little **too** forthcoming...

Books

—Norman Do and Denise Lin

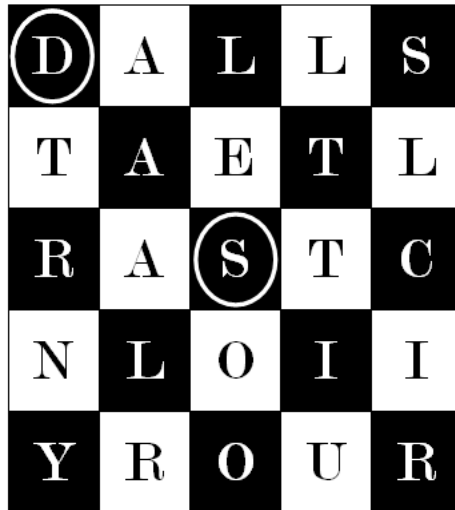
There is a pile of books lying near the swaying bards in the library. At first they seem random, but if you have learnt one thing over the past few days, it is that things aren't always as they seem. . .

793R	A M P U L L A	O F	V A T E R	
666E	B U C C I N A T O R			
890A	C U B O I D			
513T	F L E X O R	R E T I N A C U L U M		
510N	G A S T R O C N E M I U S			
001S	G L A B E L L A			
333R	H Y O I D			
380T	I L E O C A E C A L	V A L V E		
901Y	K I E S S E L B A C H ' S	A R E A		
616H	M E N T A L	P R O T U B E R A N C E		
827W	P L A N T A R	A P O N E U R O S I S		
400A	P O U C H	O F	D O U G L A S	
5110	P U D E N D A L	C A N A L		
1010	T E R E S	M I N O R		

The Tour

—Tharatorn Supasiti

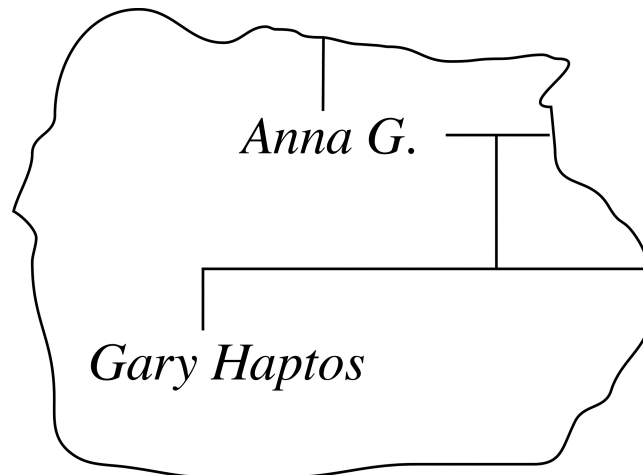
When you see the hessian-clad figure entering the underground chamber, this is the board that you see him jumping on. If you could work out the route that he took, you could follow him.



Family Tree

—Nick Sheridan

The envelope in the folder contains two pieces of paper. One looks like a family tree, while the other appears to be the end of a letter.



...like poor Phil and Wendy. Phil never really was a Democrat at heart anyway! And then there was that dreadful business with the pornography and everything. Still, he is my brother.

Yours faithfully,

Anna

“We must decode this to find the secret password for their clandestine gatherings,” says Ray. “I heard them talking about it while in captivity. If we can deduce their password, we will be able to infiltrate their meetings!”

Caesar Cipher

—Julian Assange

The other piece of paper has some strange words and smudged pencil markings on it. “They received this last night from their high command,” Volkas tells you. “I’m not sure what they were told to do, but they sprung into action. They entered a codeword into the synchrotron, but I couldn’t make it out.”

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,suissaC .SUTURB
,kool ym d'liev e vah I fi ;devieced t on eB
ecnanetnuoc ym fo elb uort eht nrut I
ma I dexeV .flesym no pu yler eM
,ecner effid e mos fo snoissap h tiw et al f0
,flesym ot reporp ylno snoitpecnoC
;sroivaheb ym ot spahrep lio s emo s evig hcih W
-deveirg eb sdneirf d oog ym erofereht ton tel tuB
-eno uo y eb ,suissaC ,rebmun hc ihw gnomA
tcelgen ym rehtruf yna eurtsnoc roN
raw ta flesm ih htiw suturB roop taht nahT
.n em rehto ot evol fo swohs eht stegroF
,noissap ruoy kootsim hcum evah I ,sudurB ,nehT .SUISSAC
d eirub htah enim fo tsaerb siht foerehw snaem yB
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sutu rB fo gnikaeps ,raseaC latrommi tpecxE
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evol ym shtao yran idr o htiw e lat s oT
wonk uoy fi ,retsetorp wen yreve oT
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drah meht guh dna nem no nwaf od I t ahT
wonk uoy fi ro ,meht ladnacs retfa dnA
gniteuq nab ni flesym sseforp I tahT
.suoregnad em dloh neht ,tuor eht lla oT