

C.5 Cognition



Puzzle by: David Karlov
Difficulty: Medium

cisra Puzzle Competition 2008
<http://puzzle.cisra.com.au>

You rack your brain trying to make sense of the latest clue. As the muffled footsteps draw nearer, you decide that relocation is a higher priority. Climbing through an incomplete back wall, you reach an internal passageway amidst a maze of partially-built shops sporting names like Zombiemart, Earth Attire, and Humans'R'Us. As you look around, your eyes lock onto a sign above one shop which matches the last clue!

Construction on this shop appears to be complete. You race inside, and gasp as you slip in the darkness, finding yourself falling down a sloping chute. You land heavily on cold concrete. It is pitch black, but you can hear people shuffling all around you.

“Carol?” you hiss. “Carol? Are you here?”

“Over here!” a voice cries ecstatically.

You are finally reunited with your flatmate. As your eyes become accustomed to the darkness, you see she is dishevelled, but otherwise unhurt. Then, with a start, you realise that all around you are drooling zombie-like people. The room has a golden sheen to its walls from the half-light filtering through narrow vertical gaps in one wall.

“They have been used in experiments,” Carol tells you. “I joined as a lark. For each injection they’d give us \$37.50 and a book voucher – it was a good deal. But the further I went through the program, the more scared I became about what was happening. Yesterday was supposed to be the final treatment, but I wasn’t sure if I should go to the police, or if it was actually some kind of first year psych experiment.”

“This is no psych experiment,” you reply, waving your hand before the eyes of one of the zombies. “We need to tell the authorities about this.”

She sighs, “Well I’m glad I left you those clues then. But I’m sorry that now we’re both trapped here.” Carol takes you to a mechanical structure located on one wall. “The only door is this... thing. I can’t figure out how to open it.”

Since you can’t see it properly, you take a landscape flash photograph of it and study it carefully using the digital zoom. Having found Carol, you’re determined to get her and yourself out of this place.



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