

D.3 Stressed Out



Puzzle by: David Karlov
Difficulty: Easy

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

The concealed door pops open! But do you dare enter the dark space beyond?

Musing you are not being paid enough for this case, you stoop and clamber through into a tunnel that descends into the sandstone building. The door closes behind you with an ominous clunk. Soon you enter a well-lit room. By the yellowish reflections, you guess the walls are covered in gold and in the centre is a replica of Tutankhamun's burial mask. It looks like a museum exhibit. Of course! That's why the building had a war memorial on one wall.

On a plinth next to the Egyptian king's mask, a book lies open at one page. Several words are circled in purple ink.

Looking around, you see no way out of this room, except an alphabetic keypad projected in laser-light on one wall. You tentatively touch the Enter key, and narrow strips of the golden walls fold away, giving the impression that you are inside a cage. You hear a noise, a groaning, and a shuffling, coming from the darkness. There are people in there! A hand suddenly claws at your clothes from out of the gloom, and you retreat to the centre of the room as a drooling, dull-eyed face leers at you. You must escape this eerie trap, and fast!

Unwrapping the gift paper, she saw that it was an assorted selection of fine chocolate. Feeling decadent, she ripped open the box, and bit into a mouthful of lush chocolate. It was just at that moment that she realised there was ankle-deep water in her house. And it was rising. She sighed. She knew what was happening - essentially her subconscious was using her imagination to try to distract her from the chocolate. She took another bite. The water rose to her thighs. A dinghy floated in from the living room, carrying a small bearded man. He danced in a slow circle while playing a glissando on his pan-pipes. His softly lilting music penetrated her state of self-assurance. Had she been mistaken? Or was she really imagining all of this? Dark clouds formed on the ceiling, and low rumbles announced a forthcoming thunderstorm. She felt that indoor thunderstorms just weren't proper. She was scholastic enough to at least know that! She ate the last of the chocolates, and sat back to watch the little man dance to his music in the lightning. Had she the wits to remember previous effects on her cholesterol levels, and interpolate against the volume of chocolate she had just eaten, she would realise that this last box had pushed her levels well past the toxic range.

