

ACT 3

NOVARTIS GLOBAL RESEARCH

You may collect the meta puzzle at **Location L** after solving at least seven puzzles.
Please check in at **Location L** by **4 pm** regardless of how many puzzles you've solved.

Page C1

You wake up outside a big building.

Welcome back, says the voice in your head. Welcome to TransHuman, Inc., a company with a great sense of humor that loves to hire clever people! How do you feel?

Weird? you think. And a bit hungry.

We will feast soon enough, says the Voice, But we have a special job for you first. You see, normally we prefer to fully assimilate new hires before their first assignment, but there's a big talent crunch right now, because the Mundanes are deploying tanks and steamrollers.

Fortunately, we have just discovered the location of the local Mundane command post. We are dispatching all available Agents, including you, to attack it. Here is a map. We travel separately to avoid attracting artillery fire. Try to blend in as best you can, and don't get shot in the head. Heads are expensive to replace. We have a lot of lossage in the brain supply chain.

Move quickly -- we must eliminate the Mundane leaders before they figure out the secret of our existence.

If you ask, "what is the secret of our existence?", turn to page C7.



If you begin walking toward the goal marked on the map, turn to page C2.



Page C2

You move through streets which are swarming with fellow Agents, many of them critically short of brain tissue. They are stumbling around muttering: "BRAAAIINNS". You decide to blend in.

While you were asleep, you have been given some nice, clean clothes to wear. You can now walk at normal speed, and you must have had some kind of plastic surgery. But you still have a deathly pallor and it's easy to fake a limp.

ACT 3 (cont'd)

Soon you reach the University's Brain Sciences building, where there is a pitched battle in progress, of course. You decide to impersonate an innocent Mundane bystander. You cross the street and attempt to sneak by on the sidewalk, but an armed Mundane wearing military fatigues stops you and demands to know what you're doing out on a night like this.

If you say you're a scientist working to find a cure for zombies, turn to page C3.



If you say, "I'm sorry, I've been working in the lab all weekend, is something going on?", turn to page C4.



Page C3

"I'm a scientist working to find a cure for this terrible zombie plague," you say.

The soldier levels his weapon. "What's the password?" he asks.

MACROPHAGE, says the Voice in your head.

"Macrophage," you say.

Oh, no, hang on, says the Voice, *apparently they're changing them every half hour now, the new password is...*

*The soldier shoots you. You have died. Again.
You may start over again at page A1.*

Page C4

"I'm sorry, I've been working in the lab all weekend," you say. "is something going on?"

The soldier tries to say something but is interrupted by a loud bang. A couple of stray fingers bounce off the pavement nearby.

"There is a zombie uprising in progress!" says the soldier. "What is it with you people? Get your ass under cover right now." As he turns to fend off an Agent with only half a head, you prudently flee in the direction of your goal.

Turn to page C5.



ACT 3 (cont'd)

Page C5

You reach the building where the Mundane Resistance is maintaining their headquarters. It is surrounded by a ring of barbed wire, sandbags, and corpses, and defended by soldiers with heavy weaponry. Attack copters hover overhead. In the streets all around, thousands of your fellow Agents are wandering in small circles. Some of them even have brains.

Our plan is to storm this building with one big rush, says the Voice in your head. It's bound to work eventually. We're all set for another try, so, on the count of three...

If you wait for the Voice to say "three" and then storm the barricade, turn to page C8.



If you walk toward the barricade with your hands up and shout "Help, I'm a zombie double agent and I have critical information for your leaders" turn to page C6.



Page C6

May we ask what you're doing? says the Voice.

Infiltration, you reply in thought.

Cautious Mundanes with biohazard gear and heavy weapons approach you. You allow your hands to be cuffed, your body to be covered in impermeable plastic -- fortunately, you have little need for air -- and your eyes to be blindfolded.

You are then dragged around for a long time. Eventually you are shoved into a chair. It feels like cold metal.

"Okay," says a Mundane voice, "tell us what information you have."

If you say "I think I can feed nonsense into the zombie telepathic matrix until all their heads explode like in 'Scanners'," turn to page C9.



If you say "I think I have a clue to the secret of zombie existence," turn to page D1.



If you say "I propose a compromise: All we want to do is eat your brains," turn to page C9.



ACT 3 (cont'd)

Page C7

Of course, says the Voice, when you are fully assimilated into the Communion you will know what we know, but until then, as a frontline operative, it is best that you don't know the secret of our existence. You might reveal it under torture.

Can I be tortured?, you ask. Can I even feel pain?

Telepathy notwithstanding, there is a perceptible pause. *We meant bribery, says the Voice. Operatives can be bribed. We have a well-established weakness for sweet, delicious brains, for example.*

Come to think of it, that does sound tasty.

Turn to page C2.



Page C8

Alas, this plan works just as well as it apparently did the previous *N* times.

*You have died. Again.
You may start over again at page A1.*

Page C9

"Oh, come on," says the voice. "I need answers, people, answers! Take this thing away and bring me some valuable suggestions."

You are taken away. Eventually, you are euthanized. Painlessly, of course. But:

*You have died. Again.
You may start over again at page A1.*