

Crossword

—Paul Fijn

It's time to get to the bottom of this; the strangeness this week has gone on long enough.

Before you can do anything, however, you receive many irritated glares as your daily anonymous SMS arrives. You slouch down, trying to achieve the optimal balance between not standing out and not looking like you're trying not to stand out. However, curiosity gets the better of you, and you pull out your phone. The message reads: "im coming lizzie, im coming, please dont go away, i really need to talk to you". Feeling rather disappointed not to find out any more about the sender, you slip the phone back into your pocket.

You look up to see the attendant impatiently waiting for you to accept your coat. You snatch it from him and stride out of the gallery, sniffing for suspiciousness. Almost instantly you spot a prime candidate: a young man handing out free newspapers. If he is connected to this week's goings on, however, he betrays no sign of it as he hands you a copy. You flip through the news articles for clues, but they are all mind-numbingly boring—celebrity gossip, odd spots, shopping and lifestyle tips—so you flip to the comics and horoscopes for intellectual stimulation.

Having had your laughs, you look at the neighbouring crossword and discover that it is much more difficult than you had expected for this rag: all of its numbers are missing.

- Each point turns thanks into mud (5)
- Ecstasy invades slender trickery (7)
- Either way it's a wimple-wearer (3)
- Get alien out of state (3)
- Heart of scanty picnic spoiler (3)
- Initially, a short crime ends and rises (7)
- Meat locker, e.g. but vegetarian has seconds of recipe time (11)
- Navy returns lacking transport (3)
- Nearly all at the end have refreshment (3)
- Noteworthy flu loses tail to decapitated army court (11)
- Occupy vile disarray (4)
- Only adroit remarks result from spiritless fulcrum involved in permanent inking (7)
- Orphaned part returns to the expert (3)
- Reordered category without you for fatty system (5)
- Ridiculous to be sick in smelly extremes (5)
- Smoke loud crazy flips (6)
- The food which describes its proportions? (3)
- The Spanish are after little devil to force (5)
- Two-thousand in organised father gets bubbly (6)
- Utilise some crew for red, perhaps (3)
- Unselfish trait has assumption in tea-free woods (11)
- You lose current inside an endless pile of stones for an Italian drink (7)

