



Act II Scene 3

“And the room in front of you is... Resistance HQ.”

A rather underwhelming introduction fit for a rather underwhelming place.

The base of operations was furnished with the barest of essentials, much like, Attila mused, the rest of the city. There was no charm here and no unique character. There was no message. No indication of what they truly represented.

The only thing of note was what was directly in front of them, a banner hastily draped from one side of the room to the other that read: “SEIZE THE MACHINE. SEIZE THE DREAM.”

Gee, Attila thought. Even their slogans didn't make sense.

Attila grinned at Lara, who had no doubt read the rather unlettered and ambiguous message as well, and her telltale smirk was all he needed to know that they were thinking the same thing.

“Well, well, well. Didn't think you lot would front up after today's performance. But here you are.”

The owner of the voice was a short but stout woman standing cross-armed in the middle of the room. She wore glasses, but placed them low on her face, conferring providing her with a permanently stern and disapproving look.

“Indeed, here we are, Control,” uttered the man who had led them there. He rubbed his neck subconsciously, body still reeling from being forced to take a tumble.

Lara was momentarily confused. How was this seemingly competent and authoritative woman in charge of what could only be described as an ‘omnishambles’?

“Oh look. And you've brought friends.”

Failing to pick up on the sardonic tone, the man wandered into a trap:

“Aye. They were curious about what we do, so I thought I would just show them around.”

“Show them around, eh? Show them around!? SHOW. THEM. AROUND!?”

The short woman exploded into a fireball of fury and ferocity, and launched into one of the most aggressively vicious diatribes that Lara had ever seen.

“And what if they had been government agents, Tinker!?”

Tinker, now realising the exact magnitude of his stuff-up, responded meekly.

“Well, we asked them.”



Act II Scene 3



“Oh? You *asked* them, did you? Let me *ask* you this — why are you such a colossal disappointment?”

Tinker’s eyes remained firmly fixed to the front as he copped another serving. By the end of the entire ordeal, Lara felt incredibly sorry for the clearly inexperienced field operative.

—————

Having ‘dealt’ with the day’s allotment of gross incompetence, Control turned her gaze to her newest acquaintances.

“Now, where were we? Ah yes. Welcome. Welcome to the Resistance. Now, I realise that our facilities aren’t exactly ideal, but we have hope that one day we’ll get everything rejuvenated.”

As if on cue, the banner that had so elegantly graced the front of the room decided that it was high time to let go of its burdens, and, with a mournful flutter, clattered down to its demise.

The matronly commander of the Resistance tutted in distaste at the heap of cloth. Then, with a flash of realisation, she uttered:

“Oh dear, where are my manners?”

Thinking that she was about to address the great big white elephant in the room, Attila sat up straight and braced himself for the impending social awkwardness.

But none came.

“Could I interest you in a warm beverage? Tea? Coffee?”

Attila hesitated. This... was unexpected.

Lara, being the slightly more reactive one, expressed a desire for some tea, and Attila nodded with agreement.

Control reached up to the shelf behind her desk — which was really more paper than desk, to be honest — and found herself holding an empty canister.

“Well, uh, unfortunately, we are currently in a bit of a tea shortage, so, uh, I suppose it will be coffee, then?”

Realising that he was a mere second of sustained eye contact away from bursting into laughter, Attila scanned frantically for the most boring object in the room, and settled on some off-white computer wires leading out from behind a monitor.

The lapse in conversation lingered, and Attila received his wish for a period of social awkwardness.

“Well. How about I brief you on your first assignments, then?”

Attila, still recovering from the conversational lull, was stunned for a second time.



Act II Scene 3



“I... beg your pardon?”

Lara, ever the opportunist, decided to pick up the conversation:

“What he means to say is ‘of course’.”

Attila was left utterly dumbfounded by this turn of events. Grasping for words, all he could muster was a broken stammer. But, by then, the conversation had already moved along.

“Ah! Excellent! I thought as much. Because, y’know, this is a secret base and everything and we just can’t let that sort of information walk out the door, if you catch my drift...”

Control proceeded to make a series of obscene gestures, each more intricate than the one before it, and mainly revolving around the slashing of a throat.

“Yes, yes, we get it,” said Lara, hastily.

“Okay, if you say so. Basically, your mission, if you choose to accept it — and you almost certainly have to — is to...”



Melbourne University Puzzle Hunt — 2019

Act 2

“You have to start with the truth. The truth is the only way that we can get anywhere. Because any decision-making that is based upon lies or ignorance can’t lead to a good conclusion.”

—Julian Assange



Throwback Thursday

The night seems to envelop you in darkness, despite the glow of street lamps. Searching for refuge amid a haze of confusion, you find yourself in the main building of Melbourne University Private. As your footsteps echo down a corridor, you notice a faint keening, almost beyond the limits of your hearing. You draw nearer to the source of the noise and the sound of static becomes distinct amidst the high-pitched noise. You push open the door to one of the offices. A couple of used soup bowls lie scattered on the floor and a pile of hessian makes up a rough bed under the desk. The source of the sound seems much closer now. You rummage through some drawers and, much to your surprise, pull out sheet after sheet of blank music. In another drawer you discover the source of the static: a small transistor radio, crackling between stations. Now that you are close, you can hear something else among the static. Turning the dial, it becomes clearer. It is music, but the tones are electronic, like those you hear on the telephone. You listen carefully. The melody is short, but repeats again and again. Suddenly, the music is cut off by the faint sound of a man's voice; you think you hear him say, "...to Gravity and Kwok. Reply..." The music immediately resumes. You have a flash of recognition. Kwok, the incoherent gentleman in the hessian robes! You grab a piece of the manuscript paper and quickly write down what you hear.

Looking around you now, you discover that the walls are covered with inscriptions. A nine-point circle is etched into the far wall. Further searching through the drawers reveals more curious things. Among them is a video labelled 'Wisdom Speaks#28', and some rough notes.

May I begin by thanking the people of the University, especially Robert Foot, for their outstanding help in the most important project of our political era. The production of mirror matter is of crucial importance to the prosperity of Australia and the world, and the prodigious synchrotron that lies beneath us is the only machine in Australia capable of its synthesis. This election is too important to allow it to be decided by a mere vocal minority of young people. That is why, fellow patriots, we must expand the electorate to the silent majority. Those who have been egregiously silenced must be raised up and given a voice.

Searching through the laboratories and libraries of the University, you turn into a darkened corner to be confronted by the melancholy figure of Robert Foot. He is bruised, disorientated, and shivering; hunched over a cryptic crossword, with his overcoat collar pulled up, clutching at a piece of paper.

"It wasn't meant to be this way," he murmurs to a pair of bedraggled cats resting under the table. "My beautiful and elegant theories on mirror matter's ability to produce local temporal-entropic inversion are being used in a cynical bid for political power... and now these mad cultists will stop at nothing..." He sees you watching him, shudders, and quickly limps away.

You bend down and notice the cats tearing at a piece of paper.



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.”

```
tuoba dnuor desolc ne si suinitiT .SURADNIP
;rupS eht no mih ot ekam taht ,nemesroh htiW
.mih no tsomla era yeht woN .no srups eh teY
.oot sthgil eh ,O .thgil emo s woN !suinitiT ,woN
.ne'at s'eH
tuohS
.yoj rof tuohs ye hT !krah ,d nA
.erom on dloheb ,nw od emoC .SUISSAC
,gnol os evil ot ,ma I taht drawo c ,O
!ecaf ym erofeb ne'at dneir f tseb ym ees oT
sdnecsed SURAD NIP
:harris ,rehtih emoC
;renosirp eeht ekat I did aihtraP nI
,efil yht fo gnivas ,eeht erows I neht dnA
,od eeht dib did I reveostahw tahT
;htao eniht peek ,won emoC .ti tpmetta tsd luohs uohT
,drows doog siht htiw dna :name erf a eb woN
.mosob siht hcraes ,slewob s'raseaC hguorht nar tahT
;stlih eht uoht ekat ,ereh :rewsna ot t on dnats
,won sit' sa ,d'revoc si eca f ym nehW ,dnA
.drows eht uoht edi uG
mih sbats SURADN IP
,degnever tra uoht ,raseaC
.eeht d'llik taht drows eht htiw nevE
seiD
```



Abstract(ion)

—Julian Assange

Suffering only a few scratches, you take the partially chewed paper from the bedraggled black and white cats.

astro-ph/0203152

*Title: Exotic meteoritic phenomena: The Tunguska event and anomalous
Low altitude fireballs – manifestations of the mirror world?*

Authors: R. Foot, T. L. Yoon

Comments: About 25 pages, slight adjustment

Subj-class: Astrophysics; Space Physics

Journal-ref: Acta Phys.Polon. B33 (2002) 1979-2009

Date (revised v5): Fri, 10 May 2002 02:17:47 GMT (277kb)

There are a number of very puzzling extraterrestrial events including (a) The Tunguska event. It is the only known example of a low altitude atmospheric explosion. It is also the largest recorded event. Remarkably no fragments or significant chemical traces have ever been recovered. (b) Anomalous low altitude fireballs which (in some cases) have been observed to hit the ground. The absence of fragments is initially striking in these cases, but this is not the only reason they are affected. On the other hand, there is strong evidence that most of our galaxy is made from exotic dark material – ‘dark matter’. Mirror matter is one well motivated dark matter candidate, since it is dark and stable and it is required to exist if particle interactions are mirror symmetric. If mirror matter is the dark matter, then some amount must exist in our solar lights. We demonstrate that the mirror matter theory allows for a simple explanation for the puzzling meteoritic events [both (a) and (b)] if they are due to mirror matter space-bodies. In direct consequence of this explanation is that mirror matter fragments should exist in (or on) the ground at various eastern sites. The properties of this potentially recoverable material depend importantly on the sign of the photon-mirror photon kinetic mixing parameter, ϵ . We argue that the broad characteristics of the anomalous events suggests that ϵ is probably negative. Strategies for detecting mirror matter in the nation are discussed.

After extensive research you manage to decode the message. How very cryptic! Perhaps it has something to do with those news reports of grave robberies in marginal electorates!



Platonic

—Julian Assange



The strange piece of paper you found while coming out of the catacombs is heavily creased. It contains six squares each containing 9 squares. On the other side is a stamp! It must be a letter from Greece. ...

			O	B	O			
			f	n	n			
			G	O	R			
			o	r	b			
			G	B	R			
			o	a	r			
Y	O	W	O	W	B	W	G	Y
	e		p		e		a	
O	G	G	W	W	W	R	B	R
e	r	o				c	d	d
B	R	W	R	W	Y	G	B	Y
t	a		y			g	o	
			G	O	R			
			k	s	y			
			B	R	O			
			n	r	u			
			W	G	B			
				r	i			
			O	Y	R			
			a		r			
			Y	Y	Y			
			B	Y	G			
			k		e			



Surströmming

—Julian Assange

You find a buckled and partially molten aluminium briefcase near the edge of the theatre A crater. It contains several documents. You read one:

TS AUSTEO TS AUSTEO TS AUSTEO TS AUSTEO

PATH: DSD!ONA

TO: PM

SUBJECT: Daily Intercept Briefing

DSD intercepted chatter. Unusual features. Unknown significance.

<inaudible>

may have support. I can't name him on the phone. No Such Agency, right. America. You'll understand why soon. It's not enough to cover. Semantic forests will pick it up. I'll say it like this. He is not a politician, nor is he from a political dynasty. However, he shares his first name with a politician who was formerly the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as well as with the first Indigenous person to serve as the Minister for Indigenous Australians. He shares his surname with a politician prominently associated with the Second Red Scare, as well as with the first California Republican to be nominated as House Minority Leader. He is best known for his novel use of social media, but he is often criticised by those who do not fully comprehend his creative brilliance. His full name (Christian name and surname) has 15 letters. Of the 15 letters, there are 10 unique letters, 5 of which appear exactly twice. His online persona goes by a shortened variant of his full name.

Yes. We must act immediately.