The Question to be Asked is…

 “Has it ever bothered you that no one knows, or asks, where we get mnestics from?”

Grayson looked up from his desk.

Anna downed her evening dose of mnestics. “Ironic right? Even using them to counter Antimemes…” Anna rose from her workstation, “ideas that we aren’t able to remember or even perceive encountering otherwise…heck this division wouldn’t have existed without it.” She continued, “I’ve heard they found a particularly nasty one recently, ‘Grey’, they call it. It traps you in its gullet and siphons memory like a goddamm memory vampire. And you know what I–” she stopped mid-sentence, as if forgetting something.

Grayson stared impassively.

“What time is it, and where… is everyone else?” Anna surveyed the too-empty lab as her ops phone buzzed, demanding attention. Grayson observed silently. The alert on screen read:

ANTIMEMETIC KILL AGENT (SCP-4739) DETECTED

ENGAGE PROTOCOL

TACOS UNION SQUARE

*What’s SCP-4739, and more importantly, what has it got to do with tacos?* She asked herself. “Grayson you–” He had vanished. His workstation appeared untouched, as if he was never there to begin with.

*Ah shit.*She thought as the mnestics begin to kick in, recalling last being stuck in traffic en-route to work. *Not again.*

The lab’s doors banged open, presenting a middle-aged man in a sharp grey suit reeking with purpose – and privilege. Noticing Anna, he held his arms aloft announcing his presence, “My dear Anna, so nice to see you again!” He checked his wristwatch. “My, my, my,” shaking his head “almost had it! Just a minute off your personal best,” He looked up pouting unsuitably “and here I thought you were going to set a new record.” Anna began to back away, looking for a way out. There was only one way in and out of the lab, and he was standing in it. “Now, let’s get reacquainted.” He smiles charmingly, “my name is Grey. With an E.” he begins to stride, no *glide*over.

*Shit, shit, shit, shit, shit.*Anna looked frantically for a weapon or *something.*Grey drew closer. Anna bolted, circling the perimeter of the lab towards the exit. A vague sense of *déjà vu* began to gnaw at her. “What’s the rush?” Grey chided as his head turned 180°, tracking her frantic efforts ,“This time, I’m buying.”

*Think! There must be a way out.*Withpressing urgency,Anna’s memory began to form the fuzzy outlines of a solution, but not fast enough. *She knows this!* Her phone buzzed once more. “Let’s do that taco place again, the one near Union Square,” He made his way to her, “ahhh, what’s its name again?” Anna tripped over a mess of ethernet cables, knocking the wind out of her. Her phone rung as it skittered out of her coat pocket, she clawed towards it.

PROTOCOL TACO:

TRANSMIT DATA IN EXCESS OF FIFTY PETAFLOPS INTO SCP-4739.

SEÑOR TACO’S IS ALWAYS OPEN.

THEIR CRANE ASADAS ARE AMAZING.

IT WAS A WILD NIGHT.

GOOD LUCK.

*What the fuck does that mean?!*Anna panicked, grasping at proverbial memory-straws. “Señor Taco! They have some amazing Crane Asadas” Grey was only three meters away now. *Think Anna, think! This is on the first time, data, transmission, data…* She looked around desperately. The lights on the lab’s supercomputer winked, transmitting a message in morse code. She frowned. “Hey, its Margarita Monday!” Grey called. She tugged at the cables ensnaring her ankle. *Wait...DATA.* Gears engaged; something clicked. On reflex, she yanked the cables from their sockets. “Oh, it was a *wild*night.” Grey reminisced mischievously. Alarms blared as the supercomputer’s indicators flashed angrily. Anna grabbed the bunch of cables by its knot and began swinging them like a fail.

*Now, this feels familiar*.

Grey was a meter away; still wearing the creepy, murder-rapist-in-that-order-grin.

“Try harder Grey,” Anna smirked, flinging the mass of cables – each transmitting over fifty petaflops of data – at Grey. Who faithfully, failed to move out of the way. He catches them in his right shoulder, cables tips point first, like a whip.

Grey absorbs a few trillion digits of the impact, but it isn't enough – it never was. A whipcrack and a snap of green light; Grey’s shoulder, most of his head, and upper body was shredded into confetti. The impact threw what remained of him into rows of neatly arranged workstations; leaving a charred, ragged cater populated with his insides.

Anna really wanted a margarita.

\* \* \*

"Third time’s the charm,” Wheeler tells her in the aftermath. "damm cockroaches, why don’t ideas just stay dead.” She lights a cigarette “Congrats, looks like your countermeasures are officially valid.” Exhaling, she notes “That dose timing needs adjustments.”

Anna still felt shaken, but the shock was already wearing off – faster than she expected. *This happened before?*“Sorry uh..” Anna fumbled for a name “Wheeler, Marion Wheeler.” Wheeler added. “Sorry Marion, you mean...uh…I designed this?” Anna said, “Designed…what again exactly?”

Marion beamed “This bit never gets old,” Anna tilted her head, “watching you put it all back together.”

“Sorry… Marion, I don’t think I understand what–” Anna stopped, the fog over her memories lifting. Marion stood “Tell me Anna, what *is* SCP-4739?”

 Anna remembers.

How she deduced the use of auditory “memory-triggers” to initiate a Pavlovian-sque reflex to recall the series of, DATA>TRANSMIT>GREY as a protocol for an SCP-4739 attack immune to its memory-altering effects. *That reflex took weeks to encode.*A grin began on Anna’s features. “It worked, it works!” Turing to Marion triumphantly, “I guess you owe me a drink now?” and then deflated remembering, “Oh, and I owe Greyson two.”

Marion scoffed, “First, I need you to update SCP-4739’s entry. With a detailed log of *when* you reali–” Anna furrowed her brow, interrupting her. “I was asking it…” Anna glanced at Marion, “…if it knew where mnestics came from.” She questioned her “Do you know?”

Marion opened her mouth, then shut it. There was a gap, a void of absence where knowledge should have been. Horrified, she looked at Anna.

*Shit*. They thought.