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### **National Cipher Challenge 7 Part A**

Vanguard, July twenty first, Seventeen Ninety Eight.

My Lord, the Messenger has returned from Cape Passaro, and says that your letters for me are returned to Naples. What a situation am I placed in! As yet, I can learn nothing of the Enemy, and the Vanguard, dismasted in a storm last May, sails with a jury rigged foremast. I may have to shift my Flag into some other Ship. I want to send a great number of Papers to you, but, alas, a quarrel among the midshipmen has left me with a new and inexperienced cipher clerk so that I dare not.

Martin has completed his transcription of Marlowe's papers, the latest encrypted by a cunning variation on the Trithemius cipher. Christened the cursus clavis cipher by our classically minded friend, this example takes its key from Denmark's first folio. The Chinese agents carry information concerning techniques of forgery designed to wreck our treasury as surely as a mountain of sea ice might destroy a ship of the line. Martin believes that they plan to forge and distribute large quantities of His Majesty's coin in India and thereby undermine the value of our gold there. He is sure that they will approach by the invasion and conquest of Egypt and I will now sail for Alexandria in hope of intercepting them. I believe that L'Orient is carrying the agents and their engines and am certain that they must be destroyed, though Martin would prefer their capture. Vice Admiral Brueys d'Aigalliers will be equally sure that they must be protected and he will not let them fall into our hands. I believe he will stand and fight on ground of his own choosing and am anxious to oblige him in this at the earliest opportunity. I have taken the liberty to trouble your Excellency with a letter for Lady Nelson. Pray forward it for me, and believe me, with the greatest respect, your most obedient Servant,

*SIR HORATIO NELSON, K.B., REAR-ADMIRAL OF THE BLUE, ETC.*

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NOTES This was encrypted using a very simple transposition cipher. The text was laid out in a square and then read by columns instead of rows. This can be done by using the transpose command in Excel. The best clue to this was the location of the capital letters in the ciphertext., left intact by the new and inexperienced cipher clerk!

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### **National Cipher Challenge 7 Part B**

Marlowe intended to encrypt the following message:

Dear T,

Full knowledge of the weapon are containd in the notes here attachd in two parts.

Firste the diuers methods of forgery, making of false coinage and of counterfitt note. He hath perfected a newe alchemie, here showne for making coines that bear most remarkd resemblance to dollars and ducats, that may foole euen the moste saged eye. Hereto are recipes for peculiar inks that can usd to duplicitouslie copye the promissory notes of many foreiyn exchange herelisted.

Secondle how such methods and other affaires may be used in warlike actions to defeat the enemy by bringing lowe the worthe of his monies, spreading discorde at eury leuel in societe from the craftsmen to the King and moste surely laying lowe the countrie itself.

The agent hath yet detayled the persones, groups and counting houses in diuers countries both by whom such discordance might most fullie and quicklie be spreade and hath prouided letters of introduction to the same.

T I am now bound to report to the Council on false charge by "wicked wit-gifts" and fear the worst may come. What happeneth now, can Cecil saue me? Make haste with thy reply

Kit

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Because of the mistake, by which every letter L in the ciphertext was transcribed as an I, Walsingham would have obtained the following decrypt:

Dear T

Full knowledge of the weapon are containd in the notes here attachd in two pyrts.

First erhe diuers methods od fopgery, making of falqe coinage and od counterfitt note. He hath perfected a lewe alchemie, here showle for making coines that bear most remarkd resemblance ro dollars and bucats, that may fool eeuen the moste saged eye. Hereto are recipes fop peculiap inks that can usd to duplicitouslie cotype the promissory notes of many foreiyn exchailges here listed.

Secondle fow such methods ynd other affaireq may be used in warlike actions to defeat the elemy by bringing lowe the worthe of his monies, spreading disaorde at eury leuel in societe from the craftsmen to the King and mosre surely laying lowe the countrie itseld.

The agent fath yet detayled the persones, groups and counting houses in biuers countries both by whom such discordance might most fullie and quichlie be spreade and hath prouided ietters of introduction to the same.

T I am now bound to report to the council on false charge by “wicked wit-eifts” and fear the worqt may aome. Wfat happeneth now, can Cecil saue me? Make haste with thy reply

Kit

NOTES This was encrypted by a running key cipher (cursus clavis = running key in Latin) with key text the famous quote “To be or not to be ...” from Hamlet (the Danish First Folio). You could get this from the clues in Challenge 7A together with the crib Dear T which gives the first four letters of the key text as TOBE.