Challenge 3A – Jumping at shadows

TD SVJI PEJIQVL,   
  
JO DZRI RIBHWB H JT PZWOHWRHWB OZ SVPDCEVI TD RWPQV’L XHQQ. EHL LOJOVTVWO OEJO “OEV SJWBVI SHS WZO VWS XHOE OEV XJI” HL LZTVXEJO JQJITHWB. XJL HO EHL HWOVWOHZW OZ LRBBVLO OEJO H JT JO LZTV IHLN? PZRQS EHL JPOHZWL SRIHWB OEV XJI IVJQQD MV CZLHWB J SJWBVI OZ TV JYOVI JQQ OEHL OHTV? HO HL PQVJI OEJO XV XHQQ EJUV OZ PZTCQVOV OEV SVPIDCOHZW HY XV JIV OZ RWSVILOJWS.   
  
H SHS WZO VWPZRWOVI UVIZWJ SRIHWB OEV XJI, JWS EJUV EVJIS WZOEHWB JMZRO HO SRIHWB TD VAHQV EVIV ZW TJQOJ, MRO H OEHWN HO THBEO MV OHTV OZ TJNV SHLPIVOV VWFRHIHVL JMZRO HO HW QZWSZW. XZRQS DZR ZMQHBV TV HW OEHL?   
  
ZWV ZOEVI OEHWB. JQTZLO PVIOJHWQD H JT KRTCHWB JO LEJSZXL, MRO TD QJWSQJSD IVTJINVS OEJO ZUVI OEV QJLO XVVN ZI LZ LEV EJL WZOHPVS OXZ TVW QZHOVIHWB HW OEV WVHBEMZRIEZZS ZY TD JCJIOTVWO. H PJWWZO MVQHVUV OEJO OEHL HL PZWWVPOVS XHOE TD RWPQV’L XHQQ, MRO EHL XJIWHWB EJL JQJITVS TV JWS H EJUV VWBJBVS OEV JLLHLOJWPV ZY J QZPJQ SVOVPOHUV OZ NVVC XJOPE.   
  
H OJNV DZRI CZHWO JMZRO LVPRIHWB ZRI PZTTRWHPJOHZWL. OHMVIHRL HL PQVJIQD TZIV PZWPVIWVS OZ LVPRIV OEVLV QJOVI LVPOHZWL ZY OEV SZPRTVWO JL XVQQ, JWS H EJS OZ XZIN EJIS OZ MIVJN OEV NVDXZIS PDCEVI EV RLVS EVIV. IVORIWHWB OZ OEV XJIOHTV PZWUVWOHZW ZY YHUV QVOOVI MQZPNL IVJQQD SZVL JSS OZ OEV LVPRIHOD ZY OEV OVAO, JWS H EJS OZ PJIID ZRO YIVFRVWPD JWJQDLHL ZW OEHL LVPOHZW ZY OEV XHQQ. H LRBBVLO OEJO HW OEV YRORIV XV OZZ RLV OEV XJIOHTV PZWUVWOHZW. H OEHWN OEJO XHOE OEHL CIVPJROHZW OEV JYYHWV LEHYO PDCEVI LEZRQS JYYZIS RL LRYYHPHVWO LVPRIHOD HW ZRI QVOOVIL OZ ZWV JWZOEVI.   
  
DZRIL,   
  
WHPEZQJL

Solution:

My dear Charles,   
  
At your urging I am continuing to decypher my Uncle’s will. His statement that “the danger did not end with the war” is somewhat alarming. Was it his intention to suggest that I am at some risk? Could his actions during the war really be posing a danger to me after all this time? It is clear that we will have to complete the decryption if we are to understand.   
  
I did not encounter VERONA during the war, and have heard nothing about it during my exile here on Malta, but I think it might be time to make discrete enquiries about it in London. Would you oblige me in this?   
  
One other thing. Almost certainly I am jumping at shadows, but my landlady remarked that over the last week or so she has noticed two men loitering in the neighbourhood of my apartment. I cannot believe that this is connected with my Uncle’s will, but his warning has alarmed me and I have engaged the assistance of a local detective to keep watch.   
  
I take your point about securing our communications. Tiberius is clearly more concerned to secure these later sections of the document as well, and I had to work hard to break the keyword cypher he used here. Returning to the wartime convention of five letter blocks really does add to the security of the text, and I had to carry out frequency analysis on this section of the will. I suggest that in the future we too use the wartime convention. I think that with this precaution the affine shift cypher should afford us sufficient security in our letters to one another.   
  
Yours,   
  
Nicholas

Challenge 3B - The cold light of dawn

IVEEU UEOIC UIVES PHPII POYCB ACGPZ ELPHO PIPHI GCDVW OPBTI VESEB EGPZH CKEGG EPOIE TIEGG WUWET IVPII VEUGC BIZWB EDCHW IWCBH LCJZT RGEPY JDIVE NHEBI NCJBS CUUWO EGHIC VCZTI VEZWB EPBTD GCHEO JIETT EHEGI EGHLW IVUEG COWIN WIVCJ SVIWV PTHEE BIVEL CGHII VPILP GOCJZ TCUUE GWBIV EVCHD WIPZH IGEPI WBSIV EIEGG WUWET KWOIW AHCUI VESPH RJIIV EUWGW BSHFJ PTHLE GELCG HEPBT WLPHH EBIRN KEGCB PICLW IBEHH CBEWG EPZWQ EBCLI VPIIV EWGWB IEBIW CBLPH ICUGW SVIEB AEANG EDCGI HCBIV EUWGH ISPHP IIPOY APTEO ZEPGA NZCPI VWBSU CGIVW HBELI NDECU LPGUP GEPBT IVENB EETET ICUWB TLPNH ICDGE HHJGE AEICL CGYCB IVETE KEZCD AEBIC UCJGC LBLEP DCBIV ENCJB SHJRP ZIEGB VPTUZ ETIVE IGEBO VEHPH IVESP HGCZZ ETPZC BSIVE AVEVP TJGSE TIVEC IVEGH ICGJB ICCPB TIVPI PTTET ICVWH SJWZI WBIVE ENEHC UIVEO CJGIA PGIWP ZVELP HHEBI ICIVE UWGWB SHFJP TPBTK EGCBP OVCHE ICJHE VWHTE PIVPH PLPGB WBSIC AEIVE WGDZP BAWSV IVPKE RPOYU WGETW UWVPT OVCHE BICRZ PAECJ GSEBE GPZHU CGIVW HHPKP SEIGE PIAEB ICUNC JBSPB TUGWS VIEBE TAEBR JIWBH IEPTW BANPB SEGUC ZZCLW BSIVE PIIPO YPIND GEHWO VCHEI CRZPA EIVEE BEANU CGIVW HTEPI VICCP BTUWB PZZNP SGEET ICZEP TPIEP ALCGY WBSCB SPHLE PDCBH WOPBI UCGSW KEANH EZUUC GLVPI VPDDE BETZP IEGPB TWIWH OZEPG IVPIH IPBTW BSRNI VEUWG WBSHF JPTWB IVEOC ZTTPL BWAPT EIVEL CGHIT EOWHW CBCUA NZWUE IVENC JBSAP BHICC TPZCB EPBTR GPKEP BTVEG EAWBT ETAEC UNCJL EVPTH ICDDE TNCJU GCAXC WBWBS IVEPG ANCBO ERJIH CCBNC JLCJZ TREHW MIEEB PBTLE LCJZT BCIRE PRZEI CDGEK EBINC JXCWB WBSIV EGESW AEBII VEBWO CBKWB OETAN HEZUI VPIRN VPHIE BWBSI VEEBT ICIVE LPGWL CJZTH PKEAP BNZWK EHPBT WAWSV IHPKE NCJPZ ZHWTE HWBIV PIIEG GWRZE OCBUZ WOILE GEEBS PSETW BPTEH DEGPI EHEPG OVUCG PBELL EPDCB ICRGE PYIVE TEPTZ NHIPZ EAPIE CUIGE BOVLP GUPGE RJIEK EBWUI VWBSH VPTIJ GBETC JITWU UEGEB IZNWI LCJZT REHIW ZZVPG TICHP NIVPI WAPTE IVEGW SVITE OWHWC BIVPI ACGBW BSWLW ZZJBT EGHIP BTWUN CJOPB IUCGS WKEAE RJIPH NCJLW ZZZPI EGHEE IVWBS HLEGE ICREO CAEUP GACGE OCADZ WOPIE TPBTT PBSEG CJHUC GJHRC IVPBT WPAHC GGNIC HPNIV PIIVE TPBSE GTWTB CIEBT LWIVI VELPG

Solution:

The effect of the gas attack on morale was catastrophic and the generals over-reacted. Terrified that the front line positions would break up they sent young officers to hold the line and prosecuted deserters with ferocity. I thought I had seen the worst that war could offer in the hospitals treating the terrified victims of the gas, but the firing squads were worse, and I was sent by VERONA to witness one. I realize now that their intention was to frighten me. My reports on the first gas attack made clear my loathing for this new type of warfare and they needed to find ways to pressure me to work on the development of our own weapon.   
  
The young subaltern had fled the trenches as the gas rolled along them. He had urged the others to run too, and that added to his guilt in the eyes of the court martial. He was sent to the firing squad and VERONA chose to use his death as a warning to me. Their plan might have backfired if I had chosen to blame our generals for this savage treatment of young and frightened men, but instead, in my anger following the attack at Ypres, I chose to blame the enemy for this death too and finally agreed to lead a team working on gas weapons.   
  
I can’t forgive myself for what happened later, and it is clear that, standing by the firing squad in the cold dawn, I made the worst decision of my life. The young man stood alone and brave and he reminded me of you. We had stopped you from joining the army once, but soon you would be sixteen and we would not be able to prevent you joining the regiment then. I convinced myself that by hastening the end to the war I would save many lives, and I might save you.   
  
All sides in that terrible conflict were engaged in a desperate search for a new weapon to break the deadly stalemate of trench warfare but even if things had turned out differently it would be still hard to say that I made the right decision that morning. I will understand if you can’t forgive me, but as you will later see things were to become far more complicated and dangerous for us both and I am sorry to say that the danger did not end with the war.