

# Disorientation

—Maun Suang Boey

The flood of lab coats continues to lose steam, and gradually comes to a stop. After taking a moment to regain your bearings, you are slightly spooked to see that all the scientists have lined facing in the same direction like a scattering of iron filings on a magnet. The scene seems eerily familiar, especially when the rousing strains of an orchestra crescendos in your head and then you realise that you're standing in what seems to be a scientist's version of Iron Chef. Your bizarre, uplifting moment is ruined, however, when you hear the booming voice not of Chairman Kaga, but instead of Eddie McGuire. Nonetheless, you really should find out what Mr Nine is up to, and so you push your way to the front of the crowd.

When you clear your way through the sea of lab coats, you notice that you're back at the cafe outside the Law School. Again. What is it about this place? Is the coffee here *that* good?

As the scientists crowd around, Eddie keeps them at bay by standing on a table and shouting at them through a megaphone. Between his sledges, however, you hear Germaine's sharp, mocking voice: "Oh, look at me, I have a secret weapon! Look, it's magic, I talk into it, and it talks back louder! Wow!"

You see a scientist venture a half step forward; Eddie brutally forces him back into line: "And where do you think you're going? You're nothing without that lab coat! I control the media; take one step more and I'll make sure nothing of yours ever gets published outside an obscure journal again!"

A rather plain ringtone later, and you can just hear Germaine talking again. "Hey Boris, we just got the shipment of vodka in... Mmm-hmm... Okay... So, everything's settled? ... Great... Pleasure doing business with you."

Seeing Eddie distracted by the thought of vodka, another scientist tries to step forward; Eddie notices and manoeuvres him back into line: "What do you want, rabbit-ears? You know circuses pay for freaks like you? I'll make sure you never see the inside of a laboratory ever again!"

Totally unfazed, he calmly takes another step forward. Utterly defied, Eddie droops, megaphone dangling limply in his hands, like a megalomaniac who has just found out that the batteries on his ultimate weapon have gone flat. Out of other options, he jumps down from his table and prepares to fight; Rabbit-Ears removes his lab coat and hands it to the nearest bystander—and you, like Eddie, finally see that it's Charles in his trademark black coat.

The crowd, too cowardly to fight for itself, begins to chant with increasing enthusiasm, "Fight! Fight! Fight!" As their excitement rises to fever-pitch, you remember exactly what to do when a fight is on: nick somebody's stuff. Amid the chanting and fist-pumping, you inch over to the scientist holding Charles' lab coat and reach into the right pocket. Feeling paper between your fingers, you snatch it up and hurry away from him as fast as you can.

Reading it in a less conspicuous spot in the crowd, you're quite impressed that Charles managed to get a copy of this.

To Boris: Quentin Farquhar, Mary Enid Lewis to Lord Harold Rothschild.

On arrival, take replacement car (as Pierre would have it) to Bowler & Crucifix, then: 18, 1, 2, 2, 2 (Bank Branch), 2 (other side), 5, 0 (long escalator), 5, 5 (or 4 in 2 months), 1.

Enjoy the game!