

Emergency

“I had to go to Greek school, where I learned valuable lessons such as, ‘If Nick has one goat and Maria has nine, how soon will they marry?’ ”

—Nia Vardalos

Van Rjien’s capture hits you hard, and you conclude that there is no option but to embark on a rescue attempt. Unfortunately, you have no idea where they might be holding him. With no other leads, you decide that you’ll simply have to sneak into the secret meeting and hopefully glean some information from there.

After meandering aimlessly for a few minutes in an attempt to locate the grand hall, by sheer luck you spot a sign that points you in the direction of the hall balcony. With only minutes before the meeting starts, you scamper up the staircase. Looking down, you see six people seated in front of a vacant podium.

A sudden rumble of excitement signifies the arrival of the mysterious leader. You notice the protrusion in the rear of his hood, and suspect that it may be from a baseball cap worn back to front. The room falls silent, and his speech begins:

“Friends, rejoice! For today we bear witness to the fall of those dastardly Melburnians. For too long have their Yarra Valley wineries made drunkards of our sons and daughters!”

“Hear hear!”

“For too long have they been called ‘the garden state’!”

“HEAR HEAR!”

“For far too long have the courts in Melbourne been soggy and slow!!”

“Hear. . . hear?”

“For years those cunning bastards have lain claim to the world’s second cleanest water supply, and for years their children have been indoctrinated to mock us, to hate us, to pity us—because of our ‘hard water’. Well, not after tonight! Because this is the night when our pipe drains every last drop of the Thompson. Tomorrow, they will learn to drink their minerals like men. Tomorrow, they will watch their pitiful VFL for the last time before it’s played on stony ground. Tomorrow, we rule the world! COME ON!!”

The oration is greeted by wild rapturous applause which eventually dissipates into war cries of “COME ON! COME ON!”. Realising that the meeting was drawing to a close, you desperately scan around the room looking for any signs that might help you locate Van Rjien. Something draws your attention to the set of five suspicious looking shields mounted on the far wall, but before you can examine them, you feel a tap on the shoulder. A reflexive turn of your head is met with a devastating blow.



—Ray Komatsu