

Stars

—Han Liang Gan and James Zhao

You scramble up the long, Escher-esque stairway to the Professor's office. Panting for breath, you lean against the fragile-looking metal door, only to scrape your hand painfully on the rusty sign bolted to it. *Room PVO*. Apparently, the people in this building don't believe in room numbers.

Taking a small run-up, you break down the door and find yourself inside an observatory. A huge telescope protrudes through the ceiling and leaves little space for anything else, while a sea of paper litters the floor in front of you, doing their best to cover the remains of a well-beaten computer. With the enigmatic professor nowhere to be seen, you can only deduce that Arnie hadn't lied about the deportation.

You spend hours sifting through the mess of documents, trying to find a clue. Almost everything has been ripped to shreds, and the few legible fragments offer little help, instead advocating such nonsense as *Boxer Slayers* or *200 APM*. The computer is beyond salvation, but you notice the monitor has a phosphor burn of a rather artistic snowstorm, while several of the keys on the keyboard have been worn down from overuse.

Finally, you spot something: a faint etching on the side of the monitor, a mess of little jagged lines forming vague shapes that might be words given some creative imagination. "No time. They're here for me. Steak-reversing gene. Implanted in lamb. Look inside monitor. You must find the lamb! You mus—"

You break open the casing of the monitor and find a crossword embedded between some particularly large capacitors. Disregarding your knowledge of physics, you reach in to pull it out, and immediately find yourself lying on the floor, clutching a hand which you can no longer feel through the agonising pain. Luckily, that hand is in turn clutching the crossword, and as you look up to the stars just becoming visible in the evening sky, you realise that they hold the key.

You can only hope that Sam Kekovich, with his portable barbecue in tow, does not come across the lamb before you do.

