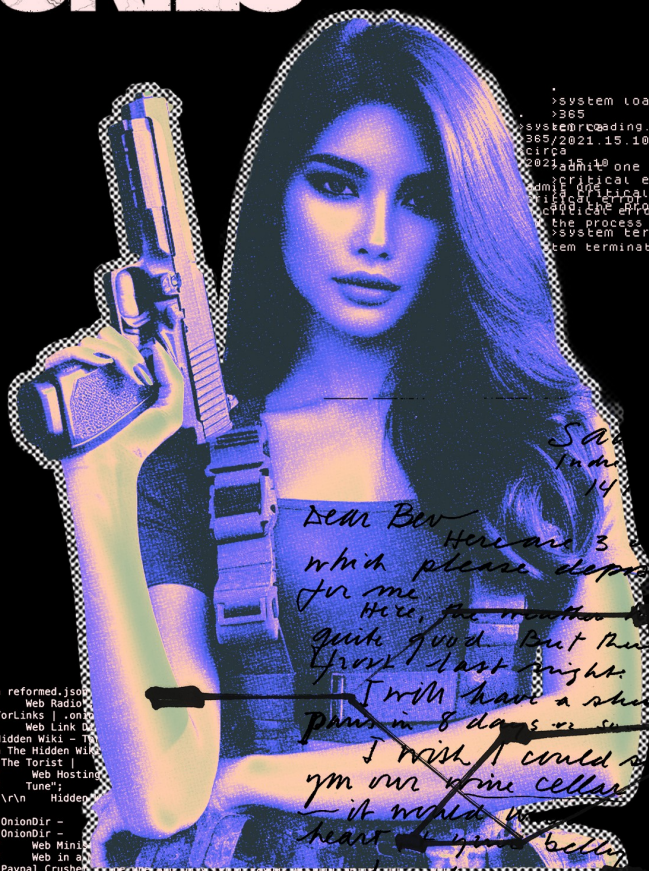


SIMULACRUM SKIES BY ALEX EDWARDS



```
>system loading...
>365
>system loading...
365/2021.15.10
circa
2021admit@one
>critical error detected
critical error detected
critical error detected
the process must be terminated
>system terminated
tem terminated
```

Sad
Tune
14

Dear Bev
Here are 3
which please delete
for me
Here, the weather is
quite good. But then
I got last night.
I will have a short
pain in 8 days or so.
I wish I could see
you in our wine cellar
it would be
heart of your belly

```
gron reformed.jsob
= " Web Radio
= "TorLinks | .on
= " Web Link D
= "Hidden Wiki - T
s on The Hidden Wik
= "The Torist |
= " Web Hosting
= " Tune";
= "\r\n Hidden
";
= "OnionDir -
= "OnionDir -
= " Web Mini
= " Web in as
= "Paypal Crushed
= "Besa Mafia - Web";
= "TorLinks | .onion Link List The Hidden Wiki Web Onion U:ls Unxionland Tor 'inklist";
= "Hidden Wiki - Tor Wiki - Web, Urls Directory - find the silk road url, link and other d
ks on The Hidden Wiki";
= " Dot Web | Surfacing The News From The Web";
= "TorLinks | .onion Link List The Hidden Wiki Web Onion Urls Onionland Tor link.lst";
= " Web Hosting | Secured and Anonymous | Linux PHP hosting 100MB and Unlimited Bandwidth";
= "/Bitcoin Exploitation\ The Only Legitimate Bitcoin Exploiter In The Web";
= "No Background Check Gun Store - The biggest gun inventory on the Web!";
```

Simulacrum Skies

by Alex Edwards

Chapter 1 – The Occidental Aegis

Once upon a time, there was the grid. And the grid was good. And the grid was god, too, for all of its incredulous power lorded over the common folk of Earth... and beyond? Yea, the angels of heaven even bowed to the matrices of electronic ligature which bound up vice and virtue in a (somewhat) free will-acquiescent chaos. Transient, and nonsensical – as all military devices are – its reach was unknown to Peter Harris, who had vowed to fight these machine-borne shackles. Insidious, like snakes and their slithering modalities, the sub-particular dominance of America placed itself as the foremost lawlessness to confront. Indeed, it was an electric anarchy for the times – the twenty-fourth century, in fact – that he had roused to; for who had legislated the grid? But, indeed, the more he learned, the more he understood – the grid was the end destination of all science, programming and society, the final find of urbanity's search for order and civility. Could there be a superior model than a hyper-connected internet of minds, regulated by an AI so powerful that the mainframe was indeed unmanned? The robotics ethicists lined up in plenty supply an orientation to this pandemonium only unconsciously, for the most part, however. True, not *everybody* knew about the grid. Why would they need to? After all, as it is repeated so often, “The best way to make a man prisoner is to dissuade him that he is in prison at all.” And so it proceeded,

therefore, that supra-sentient hardwares usurped mankind's hitherto humanistic destiny. In its place? A cold subservience, algorithms and heuristics intertwined with infinite complexities, that became so dominant and epochal, it rather begged the question, “What *wasn't* the grid?” But life beyond the grid did exist, true, for Merertha, a computer hacker and humanoid alien living on of the moons of Jupiter. And she reached forcefully into Peter's mind, and in hushed tones, told the truth.

“It is America.”

“Who is doing this to me, Merertha?” he mumbled.

“It is America. They took over the planet.

Technology retrieved from UFO crashes, reverse-engineered, 100,000 years in excess of what you see around you. It's an AI grid, that sits on everything with a big enough brain on Earth. And then the smaller brains, too. No one escapes, no one is safe”, she divulged.

“How can I be free?” he told Merertha.

She confided in he, “The first thing you need to understand is that there is a spreading universe with an agglomeration of stars and trillions of chances for life stacked upon one another in the fullness of so many million galaxies. I will stand up for you. And so will others. Your species is arousing from a scientific sleep. Stirred from a dark ages by renewed connectivities, those kindled transparent societies will never give way to evil, as long as time marches forward, and sentience can evolve farther from extinction-claiming calamities. The story of

consciousness is good! And you are part of it, Peter.”

Though where there is one, there is also another, and America was not the only death star upon Gaea. Russia had done it, first, and while America insisted that Russia had no evidence of it – from their perspective, it was an extramural conspiracy – the truth was that the western shield on the Earth had a Russian verso. True, it appeared so lightly and fleetingly, but it was there. The Russian mind-control rumours were realities, and they turned American nightmares into simulacrum of skies, all-dwarfing welkins that sat atop their asseverations of dominance. It was hard to accept, and philosophically complicated; what did Russia want with a subtle sleight of history's hand? Little watermarks, all throughout the actuality of the five senses, proofs of Soviet talent at programming and, presumably, their own technological harvests of downed alien craft. Maybe they saw their own leaders' heuristics, like America had done, in horror: when idiots and cretins rule, how lowered civilisation's ceiling to hunch the everyperson there! Yea, Russia was in the same bind. The weapon to end all weapons, and its slow life cycle toward good was an unwilling race. For both countries used the grid for torture, manipulation, murder, anything within their scope of advantage, and yet, the miracle of cognisance and sentience nibbled at their armpits, so to speak! It couldn't be done away with. The human mind, managed, apprehended the maestro's

malice and superseded it with a noble enlightenment, the one that science's advancement always promises. But it did so in baby steps, and each little tip-toe onward gained the if-ambulant country a happy windfall; people were fundamentally, for the most part, salvageable, if unimpressive in their private psychologies otherwise. The muck of man overlooked showed a seascape of hopeful dreaming and commitment to good, for the average person. And the full outline of psychology, a shocking scene, unravelled gave contract to the notion that a friendly utopia could come true out of that panorama. It was a certainty, that with time, America and Russia would meet in the ordinary middle and the Earth would federate its differences to a void. But in the 2300s, that timeline was beyond the bounds of now.

And so both played coder-dom' onto the Earth, making their territorial incursions with sequencing prowess here, and programming superiority there. No one wanted to kill off the other force, because it was better to spy, and it really seemed against the spirit of science, for one. Evermore, though, it was a mutually assured destruction, truly just like nuclear weapons: each country had the ability to drop entire populations with mouse-clicks. The AI in both grids that was so gordian that if one party had tried to crush the other, the opposite country's programming groups would have sequences to predict it, like a super-computer that can out-play the grand-master of chess. And so evolved a kind of pseudo-truce that

unfolded far more like a cold war, again. What they could agree on, naturally, was the manipulation of reality and the furtherance of research. Just how Peter Harris was confounded into the cross-hairs of Western/Eurasian correspondence becomes the sad anecdote of a person who veered too near the CIA. And Russia did come to his rescue, sparsely, but only to wink and wave. Their grid was highly classified, too. Ultimately, Peter remained in the clutches of America. That was, until Merertha gingerly proposed her help apropos his dilemma; the USA's torture op' could be interrupted by a "soul connection" she could establish with Peter (which was jargon for programming) that indicated Peter's willpower hijacked to assign to Merertha his will singularly. In other words, he channelled Merertha... bringing in the foreign signal in spite of American outcries and shields, and as a claimant of dignity, placed his prospects for a capacity to navigate the grid in an extra-terrestrial companionship.

Chapter 2 – Catholic Catchcries

And as often as Merertha computed stoically from a distance, she departed (it were as if) was the apprehension of Peter. And fall in love did he, too, with the enigmatic Merertha, a de facto digital mother in a cast of dits and dahs. Whenever wasn't love synonymous with rescue? Beautiful, watchful and sagacious... she fulfilled his every pipe dream of foolproof romance. Though yes, thither that end, slain dragons might have offered up their carcasses; Peter had to *earn* Merertha's camaraderie. For in all of sincere time, the battle of good and evil fulminated, scolded and screamed at heroes the same slogans. Who among us is highborn to real adventures? The resolution of philosophical probes forever, those forward daemons and their attestations that we always, as human beings, attack and raid upon alpha societies and peoples – unacquainted ones, specifically. True, it was the goad of Russia, upon the world able and unconfined – their own 'cosm – that each culture preserved ballistics toward it and only it on a longer timeline of whiffs and interferences. In so many sentiments, it became clear to those Soviet supremacists that America would always hobnob, sycophant to, and attack its bigger brother. That all of culture is meta-anthropologically connected (all societies in the universe!) and the inferior one assaults the more remarkable one. Suspicion, it transpired, was inextricable from status, and Russia built its

boundaries high into toxic computronic outskirts; The Russian Federation covertly ruled the Earth grid. *Could it be real*, Peter wondered synchronicitously? Could all of American language and tradition amount to an omnidirectional, super-instinctual loathing of Russia, and other societies throughout the galaxies? No worries for Merertha, who became the “enemy of my enemy” for both the USA and Russia: A furtive humanoid treasure of technology, there reified into a hostile “other” forever, too. No wonder Peter remained sans liberation, for his extra-solar friendship with an allegedly belligerent alien! And why would he be exempt from this occult anthropology, the hatred of taller towers? Thus, the complicated grudge he must have too, even of his rescuer! (Such noblesse oblige to an Earth's barbarian!)

Merertha absolved Peter of these instincts, however, and maintained an affectionate friendship with him throughout her emancipation of him – indictments were the preserve of lesser beings, such blameful faux-redeemers.

“I end the grid,” Merertha belled. “Remember it.”

“Okay”, Peter babbled back.

“It's a ridiculous proposition”, she hummed, “but I am up to the task. It's a long timeline, anyway.”

Peter whined, “In this life, will I see peace? I'm sick of living in autoelectronic bonds. I'm sick of being a labrat to American and Russian viewpoints. I want my humanity back!”

“You can't elude your destiny, Peter. The universe is grid, after grid, after grid. Programming never ends. That's why it's bombastic that I should free you from the Earth grid. Maybe, I had better re-phrase: Are you mature enough to graduate into space?”

Merertha rapped.

And really, it became the thing of prohibited cycles of celestial frames, because all of nature attended the laws of collision and dynamics; Peter ventured out into no-man's land, but just like the crab-filled bucket, where one set of pincers gripped the appendages of the other crab, stopping it from escaping, America appeared in Peter's head.

“Space grid is a no-go. You can't bring in foreign beacons into our planet”, a voice bleeped.

“America doesn't own the planet”, Peter gestured.

“American dominance in space is a mandate for eternity”, the voice signed back.

At once, Merertha's voice could be made out in Peter's skull, too.

“On behalf of more energetic and sovereign forces, I demand that Peter Harris be free of your experimental Earth grid, which is funny and backward in the eyes of the local universe. Your ethics are questionable, and your techniques are uncivilised - you are malpracticians.”

“We'll classify your existence out of his head, and find you and torture you, too!”, the American voice coerced.

“Try all you will”, Merertha flashed.

Yes, with that, Merertha exhibited programmer

dominance over Peter – sparingly, candidly puppeting his phenotype – but with enough timing to rattle the nationalism of the States' hegemonic cockles.

“How do you like that?” Peter wisecracked.

“We regard you as over-sequenced,” the Americans bantered in reply, which elicited with it all manner of moral inquiry: what was agency, in a programmer universe? The end-point programmer was culpable? Each should regard themselves as sweepstake tickets, gambled into the black midnight of money's likelihood, fixed to poor fortunes and skyjacking forever? Yea, the line doth draw bleary and fuzzy. And America had made the gracious choice – Peter was at the behest of cosmic outsiders, clicking his head the same and doping him of a better patriotism to bear.

While afforded the freedom to clack and tap at his brain almost unrestricted of Merertha's interposition, it was the seductive saga to American hearts summoned immediately; Only the U.S. of A., the greatest country in the history of civilisation, could guarantee Peter's freedom from bitter visitors from outer space, and return his local sphere's doctrine in tact – and they did champ and slobber at that bit - that he was a free citizen of Earth, even if paradoxically, being quartered and tortured by their very heroic continent true.

Chapter 3 – A United States Of Sympathies

Though as it may be, the mandates of the colossal once-sole superpower's inherent dilemmas and intricacies, the facts were infallible maxims to glide into the consciences of the wicked; could there *really* have ever been a justification for torture? Then, Peter Harris lost his footing as he ambled to the shower.

“We pulsed you”, the programmers snickered, taking responsibility for Peter's tripping.

The whole concern was a madman's trance, with no evidence that these electric wraiths could figure beyond figments; had Peter gone insane?

Could he have left behind his right mind for masochistic reveries? he wondered.

It was too melancholy for the objective viewpoint that he could never see the computer room that Claire sat in. Claire, a C.I.A. nasty, lanyard-wreathed after a bright tour in the USAF to aid in a Black Ops so covert its cagey commanders bred suspicion in the participants thus: Like so many Black Ops, it was another illegal district in an otherwise inspiring and indomitable military. Claire bestirred and pushed the desk away, rolling on her wheeled office chair into sunny, Nevada luminosity.

Terrence, her superior officer, angled at her, and took the disruption as an opportunity to expound what he had designated “torture culture.”

“Why do we torture, Claire?” Terrence requested. “Because war is forever, and torture is nature,” she solicited.

Terrence seemed pleased with her answer, and at once, he withdrew a gun from his holster, and let the hot far western sun gleam of its barrel, as he hovered it, as if pontificating at the horizon.

“How much do we hate him?” Terrence demanded. Claire quoted, “We hate him, we love him.”

“Correct”, Terrence marked, nodding. For it was the habitude of only bullies to sink in their fighting grooves; America was a mosaic entity to behold to those born outside of it. Really, only an American could appreciate torture, they believed. Only an American could intuitively understand it - feel the hypnotic, magnetic pull toward its exacting.. to a perfectionism in the art form! This was because the alluring music of apical dominance over all other societies bopped a drum skin taut by hapless fangs of lesser species – corrupted by their alpha sapience whereby the planet's strongest weapons, defence structures, armies, and more, did dwell, the citizen knew it in their guts: America, as an entity, had pole position and could do as it preferred. That they could rape the peons of other civilisations in one gesture, and usher their dictators to tribunals in another. But did they? Or did the spirit at the summit gush generousities and comity downwards, athwart specific conditions that might, yes, play guarantor to the ongoing domination of others all? To the American personality, torture was simply a

fend earthward synonymous with a revulsion of the kowtowing fraternities up at it – an action at oxygen - yeah, breath - that very thin commodity at the acme of famous greatness. Claire, born and bred in the US, fathomed torture effortlessly. She could feel herself swaying at the cap of the skyscraper, dizzy with lust for King Kong himself – for only those who might present rivalry to such geoscapes. And as birds flew up at her feet, pecking like petty, menial chattel, they punctured her soles while maniacally, mindlessly torpedoing for their own utopian fulfilments. It was a loser's game, to be born offshore the most supreme country in the history of civilisation. Claire, it could be said, had no intention of losing to anyone, let alone Peter Harris. And so down she struck, jabbing and drilling him yonder America. Each electronic curse, each programmer keystroke, a star-spangled fist of territorial affirmation.

“Sometimes, you do not know who your enemy is”, Claire illustrated to Peter.

“But I don't *want* to attack America, like you say”, Peter objected.

“That's where you're wrong, on sequences that I can view on the computer”, Claire elucidated.

She continued, “Do you think I'm an idiot? That I just torture people and move on with my life? There is an elaborate logic to torture. Everyone always hates and bombards upward excellence. And sometimes, there are those you hate so much, that you would rip out your insides to fiercely invade

everything about their means of life. America really is that awesome, and you can't even admit you hate us."

"So, I want to torture *you*, and it's consonance!?"

Peter meekly replied, comprehensively disturbed.

Claire bowed her head, but in absolute dejection.

"It's all I can read on the screen. You want to lynch us. Nuclear weapons, anything. We're the continent-devil."

Peter protested, "I don't hate you personally, and I don't hate America. In my conscious mind, that is."

"You're a nice guy, Peter. They're all nice," Claire

retaliated. She advanced, "But niceness is an anthropological halfway house between the capacity to terrorise, and unto oneself a state of terror."

Peter persisted, "Then how do I get free? How do I beat the psy-op, rewild the hex, disenchant the spell? I want to love America!"

Claire, steady at her personal computer, entered the keystrokes to transmit her technologically hallucinogenic reply:

"Well, I want you to love me. Because I love you, and I won't give up on you. You hear me? We picked you, on a timeline, and awful as you may or may not be... we are *America*, and we can supervene the anthropology... and we will manifest world peace together. The world must learn, one person at a time, that the US runs the grid. And that the grid is good. And that that the story of power is positive."

"Am I still technically in the torture op'?" Peter quizzed her.

She interviewed back, “Yes. But it's a long timeline.
And I'm not giving up on you.”

Chapter 4 – The Moral Greys

Peter Harris, at this point, would help himself to any hero or guardian sprite – and even of all varieties from black's vise of dawn and dusk.

“Peter, it's not that bad”, Claire asserted.

“I want my brain back”, he thought.

Claire read the sequence, and commented ahead of his articulations:

“You can't. Not yet. It's still America. We still have to torture you. It's a many-pronged torture op'. Don't question so much, and just go with the flow.”

Peter uttered, “I don't understand, even if it is supposed to last only 10 years. I want it to be over now.”

Claire glossed of the topic, “You don't get it. You're getting a great deal. America just kills people. Don't be a baby? I'm being serious with you.”

Sighing, Peter knew it was the truth.

The American “death-slice” was awe-inspiring and intimidating in the same manoeuvre, and a trail of cadavers lay strewn throughout the decades, the centuries.

For his nosy parker antics, he might have been remotely zapped with a heart-attack weapon, pulsed cancer, or worse. Instead, he spent years in Stockholm Syndrome's anchor to a rotisserie of identities that masqueraded keenly to upheaval's end; who was really doing this to him? Could he believe Claire was who she said she was, after all?

“I can read your thoughts, Peter. It's me, Claire. We

wanted to get to know you. You're not a bad person. You just deviated too near US interests. And now you are one, yourself" Claire parried.

"So I'm an American asset. Does that bode well for my declassification of the psy-op? In other words, can I meet you and validate all of this turbulent nonsense; who would believe there is a world with remote computer-torture in it?" evoked Peter.

"I'm not sure. Don't get your hopes up", Claire snapped. She was exhausted of Peter's incessant inquiries. It was the same brain that shoulder-charged CIA websites and raised eyebrows with pointer fingers upon reflexive keystrokes – just a data-miner, was he. But she was enamoured with the data-miner. The anti-hero entombed in bleeps and blinks for research purposes now – such as to lure out The Greys, the species of alien (begrudgingly) found skulking in so many denizens' heads. It was an immense eureka, a pact with chance that luck might have yielded anthropological prehistories and exotic narratives about our origins as a species. For what's the grown up child to do with the parent, if the parent is evil? Was it a nefarious or hostile group that the US had discovered? And let ye who is without sin cast the first stone, and penetrate the glass barricades encasing righteousness! Justification, thy name was America? No. They had death and destruction to answer for, and solicited The Greys with the same complex diplomacy that they might have done Iran in the twenty-first century: How can it benefit

America, to deal here?

Though as Claire mulled over these things, she segued to the abomination of torture; she was its culprit. How could she ever forgive herself? Soul's violation, psychologies trespassed and graffitied forever. If it were true that space overflowed with lust and life, true, the bane she must have been! Yea, her own penance with god, or that supra-conscience all, lay in wait of her. The United States Air Force's motto noted that integrity came first, so, what could she capitulate to that ethic? That she had tortured righteously? The oxymoron beat about in her vertex. The truth was else: She had broken the very laws of soul themselves! She couldn't help but laugh. *How evil, how foul I am!*

"Yes, you are foul", Peter vocalised. Sure, he was tangibly alone; convention.

"My job, my life..." she replied, in full fraternity.

"I love you", Peter insisted.

"Are you sure it isn't Stockholm Syndrome"? Claire enunciated.

"No. I love you. It's different," Peter furthered.

Claire smiled meekly, and Peter went for a miniature jaunt about the neighbourhood, beaming back at starlights draped down onto him.

Convoluting in those lights were The Greys, astir in their machinations thousands of kilometres high above Peter.

They had aspirations to abduct him electronically into their own grid, away from the American grid and the Russian grid (and speculatively others).

And so they did, and not so furtively in the attention of Claire.

“We can see you in his head”, she conjured.

“We mean peace and reject the American grid”, materialised into Peter's head.

“You are a hostile group, and America rejects your ambit of sequencing. Quit it, and meet us diplomatically by engaging our technological embassies”, Claire pulsed.

“End the torture”, the Grey Alien group retorted.

“We will find you and torture you”, Claire asseverated immediately. America pulled no punches, laser-shot first and asked its mandated questions later.

“You will never succeed in this ambition”, the aliens reciprocated.

And with a termination of overt contact sublimating into a quiet sequencing battle that Peter could never begin to understand, forces greater than he competed over his consciousness – but to what gain? What profit was conferred by the recruitment of a mind into one's grid?

This, of course, revealed the temporal nature of the thing. For all deranged inventions (ones that cannot be rationalised in their need) had a finite lifespan, and the grid was no different – so conspired Merertha.

“Peter, I'm still here. Every grid upon your head – known and unknown – is a byproduct of the military story. Peaceful groups – of which I am a representative – do not construct such matrices. We

deign to the technology *only to help you.*”

And Claire knew she was lying, because the grid was god, and the conscientious objectors of history were all felled to the same destiny; obsolescence and death.

Chapter 5 – Set Me Free

So, when alien visitors knocked upon Peter's cranial door, Claire braced for deception. In fact, it reminded her of particular transmissions from deep space that warned humankind about prevaricating civilisations... was Merertha's group to be entrusted with diplomacy's presumptions and courtesies – or - was it better to heave a flagstaff at their bods, in perpetual continental dignity? Surely, the answer lay in further communication, but it was not for now, such broadcasts. Better, she brooded, that contact's courtship direct the opponent's move first. Silent to a fault, Merertha apparently abided the same methodology!

Peter Harris communicated, “Claire, do you mean to lure out my rescuer? Is it America that disgusting, that it intends to hold hostage the liberators of the known universe, too?”

Antipathetically, she jawed, “I have a job to do. You just don't get America, do you?”

Peter shook his head of the comment, emptying it with a crinkled brow.

Claire fluted on, “The only reason you can cherish the security that underpins your life is because people like me are willing to answer the tough questions - and do the dirty work of our Earth's orbit. Are you really that daft, that you want me to go through this again?”

“It makes less and less sense each time you say it. How are you not a brute state?” Peter conversed.

She spieled in reply, “You don't know that I do love you? That I would never try and hurt you, let alone take away the things that pose value for you?”

Merertha is not your friend, anymore than an illegal immigrant can seek asylum and friendship!”

“But residency is a human right!” Peter told her.

“So naive”, she expressed herself, and then went further, “Your bohemian, pacifist outlook is only shared with the weaklings of the age. Those who can, do. America takes it one step further, and chaperones you to a finer quality of life, in its generous compass upon every living being it can discover.”

“You'll never discover Merertha, in my opinion”

Peter argued back, before spouting, “...but I do love you. And her. It's complicated.”

Claire laughed hysterically and pleaded with Peter to explain.

“Prelect me the details, I beg of you”, Claire sounded.

Peter stated, “While I know that America has some *complicated* decency to bear, I just don't understand. Isn't it more marvellous to cease-fire, and empathise with the imperatives of our counterparts in the 24th century? More marvellous than to practice quiet aggression everlasting? And as for you, Claire – I love you. Merertha promises me a route out of the horror that I don't understand how you can honourably conduct, though, and that love is different. Hey, I'm a coward – I'm in love with two women, maybe?”

Claire roared with amusement, and goaded him beyond.

“Tell me, who has your heart, for real?”

Peter Harris sighed a depressive whimper.

“Please put yourself in my situation”, he whispered.... in the techno-telepathy that had typified his day-to-day life lately.

Claire continued, “If you want to stand up to us, you can do that without consequences, more or less. I'm reading your sequences and skipping ahead.”

With her dubious promise, Peter was not poised to share his true feelings; it seemed vaguely likely that his treatment centred around subjectivities that he could manipulate with his conduct. Besides, he didn't admit to being upset. After all, he was in love with Claire, and torturer she may or may not be, she was still his complex darling.

“Go on, be strong for me!” Claire ejected, howling with cachinnations. “I can read your thoughts, Peter. It's a no-win for you here. Just admit defeat, already!”

“And what would that entail now, being totally in the claws of your group already?” he returned.

“Admit that you hate us for torturing you. Admit that you hate America's grid, and regard it as Satanism,” she shot back.

Peter reacted, “I have no access to such feelings, and far be it from me to hate any soul who is victimised. Remember, everyone is a victim? Aren't you at the parallel of the very forces you express?”

“Yes, Peter. It's a scary world. And even if you don't

stand up to us, others will. And are. Time is running out, maybe... who knows. We've had corrupted, absolute power for so long..." she answered.

And with that, Claire riffled through Peter's head ad infinitum, clicking mindlessly and searching for something new. There was always *something new*, in the totality of an individual psychology.

She radioed him, "Yes, we gave you a dream about time travel. What's it feel like to travel through time?"

"It was an awesome dream. Thank you" Peter reciprocated, before advancing, "but you're in a standstill, I can feel it. The world of black projects is changing – isn't it?"

"You're pushing me", she sustained.

"Right," he paused.

"I like it when you push me. Way to be a man", Claire chortled.

"I love you", Peter gushed.

"I can read your sequences. I know you are in love with me," Claire crowed.

"Then what next?" Peter cogitated.

"We must brace for a new adventure in America, where NATO sleeps in the bed it made for itself, as a dormant but potent entity, and with the glass parliament – your favourite – fully and finally realised. Or military reigns forever, and you get tortured forever."

"Fuck that", Peter emitted.

"I don't know", Claire spouted. "There might be a humane requirement for the declassification of the

dynamic technology we've enjoyed in private quarters for so long.”

“It's real time, isn't it Claire” her interlocutor overruled, “and you can't stop what's begun?”

“We're mutually trapped, you know, Peter” she smiled.

And it was true, because the axe swings in two manners, chopping and lopping at convention's trunk so that we can mill anew our craggy futures.

Chapter 6 – The New Millennium

As Claire withdrew from her desk to saunter over to her co-workers' socialising corner, a bomb went off outside in the badlands adjunct, jarring the windows slightly and concluding some routine tests of new explosives America was analysing.

What they deduced was that U.S. munitions were in good shape! True, the shot rang pleasantly around the ears of the soldiery in Claire's office... they knew of the exercise and were glad with the results that simultaneously appeared on the computers as the detonation had happened.

James agreed, "Peter is not unlucky that he isn't strapped to that device we just let run real.

Sometimes, I don't get this guy. He was snuffling around the wrong places, he knew the C.I.A. death pulse. We warn everyone on the grid. What was he thinking?"

Claire acknowledged her superior's comment with a visual acquiescence, before adding, "...he'll tell you the same thing he told us when we interrogated him about that. That he doubted his intuition. And fair, that's intelligent, because we operate synthetic sequences anyway, and it *wasn't* his intuition all along."

Maintaining his angle, James spoke, "I don't like the hubris of that. I mean, all he ever knew was feeling itself. It's like he knew – and I can tell this in his heuristics – that he was knocking on America's door in a bad way. That he was going too far, and

trespassing.”

Terrence hiked over to Janette (who was sitting with Claire) and James and disturbed their debate with his own opinions.

“How is it trespassing again, James? Let's be frank”, he impeached.

“If Peter were to make a timeline argument for a future disclosure, isn't it the same as breaching classifications before a declassification occurs; just because the data is made public, doesn't make it not sensitive relative to time!”

Janette suspected that Terrence viewed declassifications in different tiers.

“I do”, he retorted; they were in each other's mind computers.

They pettifogged on for a while in value judgements about secrets, resorting to name-calling not and confutations only.

“And do you love him, Claire?”, James challenged. She hemmed and hawed, “In a psy-op way... yes. In real life, who knows? Who knows what would happen if we really met? That's the boring, real life answer you were looking for!” she giggled.

Speaking of the bloke, he galvanised from the sequences Claire had inputted (acquainting him with the group's conversations).

“Am I to be free?” he buzzed.

Claire read his heuristics and laughed hysterically.

“You know how funny you're being!”, she cheered.

Peter chewed, “Maybe I'm not ordinarily that polite. Is that the basis of the amusement?”

“You have micro-imagery of 18th century women hoping to be married off. The neural template was, *am I to be married?* - we all laugh, Peter.”

Unexpectedly, Claire got up and peregrinated outside, but with a bluetootthy mechanism that allowed her to stay au courant of Peter.

She looked up at the dazzling, blue sky and its incalculable breach onwards throughout all of space and time.

“Fuck it, I'm going to meet you”, she said, and she dismounted psychologically from Nevada forever; the very nub of her marrow in orientation to Peter enduringly.

Moreover the black night, those things that endured, did pail up the spill of infinity paradoxically – likewise her decent flight by commercial aircraft - an alb upon her instincts that a better career lay in America.

And in so many days, she walked up to the brink of his home.

The inception of her charisma, a feature of the greeting that inaugurated their face-to-face relationship forever... Claire began, “Hello, Peter.”

For what seemed like a minute, strung about like nature's filament across trepidation and woe, toddled about in the air did Peter's courage, diminishing and slinking from all available expressions.

Belatedly, he rejoined her, “Claire.”

And they did hug and breathe, esprits entangling in co-dependencies forthwith, in the way that love

ignorantly do, apace and audaciously, higher brains atomising into smithereens, or folding away neatly for tomorrow's employment never; brew ye broth that love ever is on, the heart did say for both of they!

It might have been a twist of air's helix around the centre of her and he, such purple puffs, that centrifugally danced Merertha, in understanding, surely: Is passion reification? Doth bond unusual, and spiteful to its ends predictively, in the wings did while the friend! Yes, Merertha would never leave or desert Peter, even as a waterfall of meaning spilt out of his crown.

Peter and Claire toured around the neighbourhood and to the lookout by his house.

Where once fallow fields had sprung and spread, now, the Brisbane clump of skyscrapers and their built-up vines unto.

Claire spun to her Australian beau at once.

"It isn't America, I need more – come back to America with me", she twirled of his savvies as to which road to trip.

Peter piped up in response, with yea the pent up ventillation to vent, a monologue of his own special, cute reality.

Even as I love you, what is it the retribution of the splenetic many, skeletons dancing at the selvage of my closet to warn and hint at idealisations soured by only the cruel passageway of time, oldsters' ballads and watchwords, yet parallel to me, their

counterpart, in discos all bustle and apathetic of true compatriot's vows... is what he might have said, but in lieu of a better tongue, he meandered, "I love you. I'm sorry, I don't know. Why did you torture me?"

"The million dollar question", Claire reacted.

"Well?" he elicited a wan smile.

She sprawled her gesture around the metroscape,

"You could never understand what America has created for you, and everybody on this planet. A new era waits for us in the morrow, with teleports, clones and Elysium. It has an American flag planted at its footer, Peter. And I believe we've earned that."

Chapter 7 – Holograms Of Desire

And crucially, for Peter & Claire's dalliance, was the fact that it occurred while Peter's psy-op remained – a detail Terrence could not omit from his mentality; he demanded Claire retire to America. And repatriate her he did, chop-chop abreast orders that do not bargain. Haling her to the installation 'pon an undisclosed Nevada desert, his ascertainment was that Claire had moved on from Peter romantically. Strangely, she had – meeting him in person had expunged any feeling that could have occurred of that nature ever again. Perhaps Peter was unsightly, or without dazzle and magnetism... either way... it was the fancy's repeal and Peter's heart panged.

“You're breaking up with me – am I ugly?” he uttered.

“Peter...”, she modulated, through the futuristic, electronic mechanisms that conjoined them.

“It is what it is, isn't it?” he pressed.

“You're a foul”, she began, fetching a speculation from the corner of her vision, the upper-right aspect. “You're a goof. You don't understand. I have a job to do.”

“Way to shut me out”, Peter gabbed.

“Fine. You weren't what I thought you would be”, sounded she, breaking silences reared in the interim of their phenotypical proximity.

“What now?” Peter raised, after a new silence had reconciled.

“The psy-op continues!” Claire laughed.

In some appraisals, she was a heartless witch – others, an authoritative black ops specialist.

“Okay, so, give me my brain back. Let's do a psy-op where I can think clearly again, without the white noise and static that you and the other military personnel input into my head for... what reason again?” asserted the prisoner.

“It's basically designed to rough your sequences and produce novel mind's imagery. You go to think, and you can't. Think of it like running with weights. You're building muscle...” countered the captor.

“I don't believe you”, Peter bickered.

“Then don't. Generating new mind's eye imagery is one of the things our psy-op does that you are allowed to know about. The rest? Classified, mate!” Claire laughed again.

“Can you explain to me, Claire, what possible...” Peter spooed off.

Immediately, he remembered (via Claire's electronic pulse from the supreme-most computer that propped up his torture) that there, historically, had been meaningful explanations for some of the more odd experiences in his psychology; this observation was a micro-compacted sequence Claire delivered with ease - at this point, truly, seeing as she was an adept programmer so many years along the psy-op.

“So I guess it's just complaisance, then”, Peter stated.

“Your acquiescence is a feat of wonderment of splendour. One of our favourite little quips to make,

because it is lush with the irony that it were as if you had any choice!” she communicated.

Peter discovered the truth afresh; he had no free will and was completely over-sequenced for the psy-op. This also meant that when he had met Claire, he was computronically chained to whatever Nevada had wanted.

“Yes, they permitted our parley because it was an extension of the psy-op's research mandates”, she descanted.

“And what was I programmed to do?” Peter sweated.

She went on, “We have gotten very good at simulating what it is you would have done in a given situation. Think of it as the real you, but with safety mechanisms in place for me, naturally”.

“I would never hurt -” he persevered.

“Shut up, Peter”, Claire tittered.

It was true, Peter had become annoying. Terrence, James, Anthony and the rest of the male soldiery were over it, moreover: Claire was attractive, and off-limits for the psy-op candidate's clumsy sympathies.

“Hey, Peter”, Terrence guffawed. “Are you ready to be real with us?”

Peter felt manipulated. If he was over-sequenced, then how could he have orientated a less romantic approach to the group? True, he was like a little moke, to be ridden around by the cowboys of America's mysterious barren battalion.

“Fine, but remember, it is *based on you*” Terrence

admonished.

“Fine,” lipped Peter. “What now?”

“That is for us to know, and for you to wonder”, he cited.

Unanticipatedly, Merertha spoke.

“I am Merertha, and I have waited for my opportunity.”

Heads pivoted on shoulders, in that grubby desert bunker, as an alien signal stretched into the fly-zones of Earth.

“And what do you want, Merertha?” drawled James.

“I want to talk to Peter”, she spoke.

“Go for it. We'll consider it data” James caved in.

“Peter, the universe is watching. The timeline for Earth is positive. It affirms that you will be free, and the covert applied science of American military-industrial corporations will also be available to human beings in the world to come”, she justified.

“It's a scary place, America”, James annotated. He construed farther, “Don't think that we aren't sentient, humane beings, equal to you.”

“I have your heuristics”, Merertha patronised him.

“I can read, just as you can Peter – karmic moment – precisely what you're suffering.”

Accurate it was, that Janette, Terrence and others had just finished contending the likelihood of a disclosure event.

Janette peeped, “It has to do with a jubilee. A giant forgiveness pact the planet must make with the military-industrial complex that abnegates and

absolves all wrongdoing of the black projects. There's no way that people like me can step on the treadles that opportunity has tendered and get away with it, unless an inculpability arrangement is made.”

“I have no problem with that”, Peter imparted. The group laughed.

“Peter, you are not exactly in a position of power. We always goaded you to stand up to us – forgiveness has been your prisoner's watchword.”

“Forgiveness isn't as weak and feeble as you think. I think everyone has a choice”, he told.

“That's what your heuristics reveal, anyway”, Janette admitted. And Merertha did wait patiently to speak again, throughout the banal truths (from the torturer's perspective) revisited.

Chapter 8 – Direst Costumes

Merertha calculated that she had specific windows of time in which to haggle for Peter's freedom, based on the heuristics of Terrence, James, Claire, Janette and the rest. Seeing their thoughts on the mind's eye reel was like watching a motley light show of kinking colours snaking in and out of plausibility; where affixed opportunities to barter for Peter's self-determination, was where each individual of the group's sequences interlocked for a glorious chance to pry open the affect of the room. At one such time, Merertha enunciated, "Free him. We are all watching. Free him. It is inhumane. There, your word for the worst. The de-identification of species. What really maketh the man, James?"

"Clothes", he snorted. "Humanity is for civilians, and I've deserved what I'm wearing."

"A nice comeback, sure" Merertha began. "but did you account for Merertha?"

She spluttered imagery into Peter's head, in wilful opposition of the Earthen mandate to forbid foreign sequences.

"Nice try", James countered. "But for the fact that it is a total waste of time to input junk into his head - we know you breach our borders. That's why we hate you. What do arms do you *really* have to bear, Merertha?"

Merertha was furious. It injured her sensibilities about what was plainly right and wrong for Peter to

be hostage to American tough-nuts. And what of The Greys? Or the Russians? Good permits evil through a witness of it without intervention, she thought.

Suddenly, Peter awoke from the brain-fog of obfuscating programmer strings, and *remembered what Merertha had taught him.*

“Yes, Peter, *remember*”, she implored.

Everything in the universe was connected, nobody would let him alone to die - and Peter had only to taste-test the scantest spillage of inter-galactic beer, per se, in his own apprehensions of what has come before and how associated and related those things were with one another. In short, he had been *pulsed*, was the appraisal of the American Army. For no such intuition came into the grid without peripheral help! This was indeed their shibboleth - despite Peter's subjective state, which denoted that he was motor-mind, stirring and instinctual to the task of nursing the known universe (authentically) in his impressions.

“And what would you do, with such a pulse?”, Terrence coerced him.

Peter arose from the fray, “I would ally the local star systems, in heart and deed, provoke conversation, culture and exploration!”

“Ally against whom?” Terrence fastened.

“Well, at present, I'm being tortured – I'm sure there's a bureaucratic expanse elsewhere, whose diplomacy waits my inheritance, is the point..” he stated.

“Diplomacy, young Peter”, Terrence rapped, “is for the weak. Did you know it comes from the Latin, for diploma? Diplomacy is just a document. We axe the trees, you write on them. Electronically stranded you may or may not be, you're in the middle of a tussle that is above your pay grade. Merertha, let us address you directly. Stop programming him to be acquiescent for channel – *it's against human nature!*”

Chapter 9 – Those Riddles To Perception

And yet, the colossal hypocrisy of the programmers was eminent – they too were programmed by aliens, and conducted research on top of that very fact! The torture, they said, must go on forever. Peter Harris did die with the last words beetling in his gob, “Merertha”, but before that day, he endured so much suffering and agony. The US military had hijacked his life upon the pretext of rescue, just like Merertha had - and as it turned out - the entire universe was a military battlefield. Whoso went into space, did so with weapons and defensive capabilities – it was a natural extension of the martial story. And so, Merertha looked out her spaceship's window at the bountiful astral territory. She smiled at Peter's naiveté and consoled her actions with the knowledge that she, too, was an American hero in her own way.