



# Act II Scene 1



Cardboard boxes. Sheets of paper. Damp concrete floor. The pair awoke to find themselves back in the archive room once more.

“What the? Did that not work? I thought we needed to touch the faces of the Cube.”

Dejected that her plan was flawed, Lara paused. Wait a minute, she thought. The Cube... Where had it gone?

Lara glanced back at Attila, who was still coming to his senses, and proceeded to enter a low crouch to locate the cube, lest it fall into some unknown crevasse and disappear from the face of the earth altogether. She peered below dusty tomes, stacks of yellowing paper, and mouldy cardboard. But it was all in vain. The Cube was gone.

“This is not our world,” Attila uttered, as if reading her mind. “This is a challenge.”

Lara clambered back up and regarded the disgraced museum curator. She imagined that he knew this place from top to bottom.

And that he did. Attila proceeded to point out the various abnormalities that he had identified in his cursory scan — a functioning light here, an uncollapsed bookshelf there, and a door that was still on its hinges. Oh, and the complete lack of men in SWAT gear on the floor.

“So either somebody has very generously re-arranged the archive room while we were gone...”

“Or...?” inquired Lara, eagerly, as if a few moments of respite and thought-gathering were the difference between life and death.

“Or any of a number of things. But we have to assume that we’re still on the run. Otherwise...”

Lara glanced at her well-aged companion once more, prompting him to continue his thoughts.

Attila debated with himself about how upfront he should be. Throwing caution to the wind, he blurted out:

“Well. Otherwise, we’re dead.”

Lara looked away. The prompting stopped, and she did not want to know more about their grim circumstances as enemies of the State.

“So, what do we do now?”

Attila noted the change in topic.

“Well, the Creator placed us here for a reason,” he deduced, maintaining a stern and strictly



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professional front. Attila, it seemed, did not wear his intentions on his face. “So I think it’s on us to work that out now.”

He gripped his cane and hobbled over to the door. The door was simple, but strong. Dense planks of oak adorned with all manner of locks, bolts, and latches made the front door to his palace penetrable to only the most determined. As he undid his final safety mechanism, he let out a sigh of disbelief, knowing that this faithful sentry to his fortress would one day fall to the brute force exerted by a bunch of nameless thugs.

Lara followed suit. And together, the two travellers, turning this way and that, made their way through a labyrinthian network of hidden passages to find themselves standing right in the middle of the main hall.

Lara glanced around the place in awe. It never ceased to amaze her how much history and culture was crammed between these walls. So many stories — some censored, some not — so much to read and learn and to be enthralled about. It really was an academic’s paradise.

And yet, there was more once. More artefacts, more great works, more exhibits. More things to see, to feel, to take in. The headless statue in front of Lara, for example, once bore the visage of a nation shaper. Now it was just another nameless torso and nothing more. Empty exhibits, growing by the minute, because the State wanted to purge this thing or that. It was through the efforts of Attila that so much was preserved in dusty and misshapen boxes, in the vain hope that one day they could resurface without the threat of elimination.

Lara, realising that her mentor had gone on without her, fumbled with the final moments of her reverie, before chasing after him. The reassuring sound of leather sole on polished marble clacked with the periodicity of a metronome.

**BANG! BANG BANG!**

The pace of the metronome quickened in response to what sounded like three gunshots. Worrying about her friend, Lara bolted out the front door of the museum...

...Only to find herself caught in the crossfire. Ducking and weaving, she hunkered down behind a pillar and forced herself to take a number of deep breaths before re-assessing the situation.

Peeking out from behind her cover, Lara could see Attila in a similar position, sitting behind a pillar as silently and as stilly as his old body would allow. Lara glanced out more ambitiously to survey the entire scene. The rat-a-tat-tat of gunfire had faded into the distance. The threat had moved away.

The firefight was between three agents in tactical gear, not dissimilar to the ones that had so rudely invaded Attila’s asylum not too long ago, and two members of the Resistance. At least, that is what Lara presumed them to be — the Resistance commanded great respect for their efforts more than anything else, but, in recent times, they had struggled to, well, resist. Numbers were dwindling, operations were shelved, and the Resistance faded from public memory into the annals of obscurity.

But there they were, in speckled white and grey coats, shooting at the common enemy.

“MAN DOWN! RETREAT! RETREAT!”



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One of the State security officers had been struck by a stray bullet, and, seeing their colleague collapse to the ground, the two other agents pulled right away from the melee.

Seeing as it was her only chance to meet a Resistance member, Lara dashed — foolishly, some would say — to where she last spotted the flashes of white and grey.

“Lara, wait!” Attila cried out. But to no avail. Hampered by old bones and a leg that decided to function intermittently, Attila was unable to give chase to his more youthful and exuberant partner-in-crime.



## Royal MUMS Hospital

### PATIENT NOTES

Ward No. 1

Bed No.	Notes
1	<i>Unhealthy patient preference for sugar . Causing elevated dental glucose levels .</i>
2	<i>Weak calcaneous tendon caused by sharp projectile puncture . Refer patient to podiatry .</i>
3	<i>Preserve patient dignity using : grafts on burnt cheeks .</i>
4	<i>Family concerned about fee . Not insured , not within budget . Limbs require surgery . Continue ? Please advise patient .</i>
5	<i>Can you memorise patient history ? During echocardiogram , abnormal cardiac hippocampal region located .</i>
6	<i>Gaze fixated on object . During testing , patient cannot blink . Continue monitoring .</i>
7	<i>Unusual dermis layer detected , incisors affected . Has narrow treatment timeframe . Informed patient of lucky finding .</i>
8	<i>Patient septic after surgery . Surgeon denies all responsibility ; claims she used antibacterial soap .</i>
9	<i>Asked for his attention . Informed patient : you are going deaf . Requested hearing aid loan .</i>



## Royal MUMS Hospital

### PATIENT NOTES

Ward No.   2  

Bed No.	Notes
1	<i>Patient consented to risky procedure : removal of cervical spine , replacement with rigid rod . Incredibly brave decision .</i>
2	<i>Pollex swollen on patient . Treatment prescribed , using common heuristic from guidelines .</i>
3	<i>Today patient asked , whether balding is normal . After assurance of normality , they appear visibly relaxed .</i>
4	<i>Abnormality in rostral region . Already commenced patient on treatment .</i>



## Royal MUMS Hospital

### PATIENT NOTES

Ward No. 3

Bed No.	Notes
1	<i>Fractured femur prognosis very poor . Regardless , patient wished well .</i>
2	<i>Emigration noted in patient history . Screen for leaking fourth ventricle .</i>
3	<i>Wrinkled palm observed . Multiple surgeries patient experienced ?</i>
4	<i>Without doubt , the botched double hemispherectomy caused patient death .</i>
5	<i>Recently succumbed to illness . Shroud placed on cadaver . Family explicitly forbade autopsy . Patient to be cremated .</i>
6	<i>Covered in auricles , patient open to suggestions .</i>
7	<i>Successfully diagnosed patient ! Technique used : light dorsal palpation . Registrar called to congratulate .</i>
8	<i>Olecranon lipoma diagnosed in patient . Advised to put more work in .</i>
9	<i>History obtained possibly unreliable : dishonest about tibial tension ? Question patient again .</i>
10	<i>Cease pedal hypothermia treatment , because patient withdrew consent .</i>
11	<i>Surgeon refused to operate , fearing further axonal destruction . Patient now in critical state .</i>
12	<i>Detected extreme haematic hyperthermia , causing arterial gas embolism . On consultation patient seems enraged . Pathology causing emotional deterioration ?</i>



Royal MUMS Hospital

**PATIENT NOTES**

**Ward No. 3**

<b>Bed No.</b>	<b>Notes</b>
13	<i>Peculiar case of buccae trapping glossus . During consultation , patient quickly burst into laughter .</i>
14	<i>Drooping of mental region . Physiotherapy prescribed for elevation , along with mood stabilisers . Patient happy .</i>
15	<i>Radiology uncovered missing vertebrae in patient with excessive cowardice .</i>
16	<i>Intuition tells me , that gastric distress in patient is somatosensory .</i>