

Tim, a young man in his mid-twenties, liked to keep things random unless it the steps he takes, heshas made it an odd habit of keeping a count of all the steps he takes from small distances, like, from his bed to the closet, from the closet to the restroom, from his office desk to the coffee machine and at this moment from the elevator to the revolving door. It would take him 15 long steps to leave the premises, calling it an early day, today. Before he even began counting while stepping out from the cool air-conditioned hall of his building, into the hot scorching daylight, he was slapped with a warm breeze which moved through his hairlines. Stepping out from the air conditioned building into the heat of the summer, was like being slapped in the face, the transition was so great. It was one of those too hot days that were becoming all too common The really hot summer day was an unwanted transition that Tim had to go through these days. Between the heat and the humidity, the air feltbecame like a weight, this force that you had to work your way through as if walking with staff in the sandy dunes of middle-east Asia. Within ten steps of leaving the building. Tim could already feel the sweat trickling down his spine as if an insect was crawling on his back he tried to grab it, but it ended up trickling down unless it got absorbed in his white shirtback.

It was late afternoon and yet the day's heat had not even begunstarted to abate at all. It was yet another 'air quality alert day'. when everyone was advised to stay indoors as much as possible on the radio, in the newspapers and on the idiot box. Looking at the grayish brown haze that covered the entire horizon, it was clearly evident why. Despite the boiling heat, Tim slipped his facemask on to try and filter out the worst of the pollution that entangled the city. He made his way over to his car through the weeds in the cracks of the parking lot that had long since dried to a hay color and crunched underfoot in the fifteenth step. At least it was October, and here in the Northeast, you could expect this heat to reach to its peak (the frying point) and then if the people were lucky enough it would break in a couple of more weeks.

Tim got to his car, which was a functional oven by now, and if he sat into it right away, he would end up on the thanksgiving dinner table. So he opened the back hatch trying to let out as much heat as possible. Then he went around and opened the front doors and turned on the already warm engine of started the car-up. He rolled down all the windows, turned the air-conditioner ae on, and went back to close the hatch before he slid his slender body into the driver seat and then closed all the windows back up. He sat there feeling the sweat pour off of him like melting ice creams, while he waited for the air conditionerae and the air filter to kick in enough for him to take off his facemask and breath properly.

As he sat there in his hot seats, waiting for the steering wheel to cool down, so it does not peel off his palm-skin. Tim was sitting there hHe was struck by the similarity of a day almost a year ago in the first week of October. He had come out of left work early that day and stepped into a heat scorched day with a very poor air quality. As he was gettinggot into his car, he had noticed

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somebody in a car perhaps more beat up than his own, watching him from a parked car in the next isle. He had just chalked it up to his imagination, thinking it was just some one body waiting for their girlfriend to get out of work so they could go and grab a quick bite with a nice icy slush to beat the heat.

Having no reason to go straight home he had gone to his favorite bar owing to the recollection of his imaginative memory. The bar was not as crowded today: When he was three quarters of the way through his second pint he noticed that one of the people down the edge of the bar was watching observing him closely. TimHe couldn't be sure, but he thought it was the same person he had seen in the parking lot that day last year. Between the suns reflection off the window and the grim produced on the window, he could not hadn't seen the person that clearly inside the beat up car, bBut it still sent a little bit of a chill down his spine, thinking it might be the same person, he felt a little drunk as his memory was playing with his senses.

Normally someoneSomebody else might have gotten up and walked over to-try and strike up a conversation to find out what the person wanted, and if he was following him or was it just a coincidence, but Tim was not that person he believed in the famous quote "curiosity killed the cat". It would have taken someone with a much more controversial personality than Tim to approach that individual in this haunting weather.

Tim sat there timidly and nursed the remainder of his pint with both hands around the glass, stealing peculiar glances at the end of the bar trying to make out a point of remembering what this person looked like, back in his memory compared to this live one sitting on the other side of the bar, The first thing that struck him was how angular his face was Something particularly odd about this man's face that it seemed a bit too angular. It was almost shaped like a 'V', a wide forehead, with narrow slits for eyes from which, shiny black balls shimmered in the sunlight and a very small chin. The next thing to stand out was how dark, flat and greasy his hair was; it had a curl almost like an upside down question mark, which fell just to the left of the bridge of his nose. He also had high cheek-bones, sunken cheeks and a greavish pallor to his skin; he looked weak and boney. He-His appearance reminded Tim of a homeless addict, eager to find a place where he could curl up in any, door stoop. There was something about the intent look in his eyes that belayed any suspicion that he was an addict. Every time Tim even started to catch his gaze, he would quickly looked away hiding in his own shadows. He felt as though those eyes could look right into him as if they were scanning his soul, weighing him and measuring his bodyim. Somehow he had the sense that he was being found flawed, as though not measuring up to some expectation, but what expectations? Timhe had no idea.

Tim smiled to himself at the recollection of this odd day's memory, the feeling of being measured and not measuring up, because today he had done something that made him feel fully measured up to his expectation of satisfaction. Today he had finally gotten his hands on the key they had been looking for al along, the way breachto get through their security and to be able to insert the virus into the M's upgrade distribution system. Tim found it quite amusing that they had finally gotten the key that had the power to break chaos into the M's system, this was a huge achievement for him, although it was not going to last for a long period, but it was enough to transfer the authority of distribution and memory updates of the system in to the hands of the lower classes, this made Tim feel pleased with himself with a sense of victory. He thought it was ironic that here was the key that could wreak havoe on the M's, at least for some period of time, yet the

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distribution of their memory updates that supported them, was in the hands of the lower classes. No M after having paid that much money for their enhancement of the memory chip, would ever disdean to doing such a menial work, such as programming, or testing for minor tweaks and adjustments to the system that Tim had made. Tim smiled thinking that their own arrogance and feelings of superiority could be their undoing as the M's thought of their system as the prime system which was flawless.

Backing out of the parking spot outside the bar, he noticed a squeaking noise as he turned the wheel. Tim couldn't decide if it was a new noise or not. His car squeaked and rattled so much it was hard to pick out if any particular noise was a new squeak or an old rattle. He had long ago given up dreams of being buyingable to afford a nicer car. He had neither the money nor the inclination to become an M. Moreover Tim despised them, The M's looked at themselves as being much better and superior to everyone else. It was common for the M's to consider themselves the superior race and more powerful among the lower classes, But in Tim's and many other's in Tim's opinion they were just the opposite of what they proclaimed, they were fake, and they seemed artificial and less than humans. Tim pulled his car out into traffic and drove past the entrance way to the M Expressway as he called it making enough noise to turn heads and releasing a black cloud from the exhaust pipe, it seemed worse than an old tractor sometimes. Only The only cars with the NNS, Network Navigation Systems were allowed to use the M's Expressway as decided by the M's themselves....since only they were M's could able to afford the sleek new vehicles with the network navigation systems, so M's were the only ones that could use them and zoom away, so Tim had resigned himself to inching his way through traffic to get across the ridden traffic town towards, his apartment on the far side of the freeway.

As Tim was driving back to his apartment he felt a sense of pride and accomplishment that he was unaccustomed toOn his way back to his apartment Time was lost in the thought of his new found accomplishment and how much he will be praised for his breakthrough, he felt pride in his skills and believed he had contributed to a great cause. He was wondering about the meetings When when he will explain how he used the brought up the virus at the next G—Force meeting, the next cell meeting; he would prove to them that they had taken too long to contact him, he will prove them that he is capable of doing more than they can think of.

In the past few weeks, Tim had been noticing something odd happening around him. Lately, he was now sure that Aa thin-faced man with creepy eyes had had been followinged ham for about six weeks before now, it was startling for Tim that no one anyone from the G-Force had approached him regarding this matter. Tim had gotten accustomed to seeing him this guy, anyplace outside of work, in his bar, near to car parking and even outside the grocery store. Things were getting out of hands: Hhe was fearful of whether the guy was some type of an informant, or from the police. Did he think that Tim was involved in G-Force?

What actually made them contact Tim was the fact that he would visit his mother's grave on every anniversary, his mother belonged to the poor class and had died due to several respiratory problems, that had become the common cause of sickness or death in the areas near the factories, nuclear power plants, or garbage dump areas. She had passed away in November due to similar ailments as she dwelled in the shanties and tenements near to hazardous industries, Tim was always convinced, that what made them decide to contact him, was the fact that he went to visit his mother's grave. He always went there on the anniversary of her death. It was late November and

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near the factories, Tim was always convinced, that what made them decide to contact him, was the fact that he went to visit his mother's grave. He always went there on the anniversary of her death. It was late November and she had died of numerous respiratory ailments that were so common to the poorer class, those living in tenements, or shanties near the factories power plants, or garbage dumps. Children would pick through the dumps looking for any scraps of value The poor children would go through all the garbage and trash can to earn a coin if they were lucky enough to find something of the slightest value. The poor never realized what they would be burning in their houses in the winter; it could be anything from pieces of wood to plastic bags as they were unable to afford the high taxes of on gas or electric power, many people would use the same combustible materials to do their cooking. People would burn anything combustible for a little bit of warmth in the winter time or for cooking. Tim could remember pleading with his Mom to let him go with his friends on these scavenging trips. She had always been adamant that he stay away from the dumps and focus on his education, although she fell victim to the drastic outcomes of the pollution. Though Aat the time he thought it was grossly unfair, but looking back at all the health problems his surviving childhood playmates had developed, he realized that his mothershe knew what she was talking about and saved his life from many disasters.

Three days after he visited his mother's grave, he wentes to the at the same bar where he had first seen the narrow faced man, they both sat in their previous seats. He was their giving those curious looks to Timere again. Tim distracted himself from the odd looking fellow and got lost in his pint, a hand on his shoulder grabbed his attention. Tim was shaken to see the thin man standing so close to his table. He approached Tim, and moreover, he and invited him to sit in a booth so that they could talk privately. He introduced himself as Jason, his voice was thin and hoarse, and you and you could see that he was struggling to utter each wordtalk. Tim recognized the symptoms immediately, another victim of respiratory distress at with him in this booth. Anyone who would spend a vast amount of time in the heights would end up with this casualty. He was suffering as was anyone that spent too much time in the Heights. Oddly this gave Tim comfort some relaxation because the chances that anyone from the Heights, working for the government or Systems Inc. were slimclose to none.

A shadow formed outside the bar in a perfect square shape as if a huge block was falling from the sky, though Tim remembered this shape, it was a Black Maria, Tim's recollections were cut short by it—the passage of . An Belack mMaria—Black marin was the nickname for the police cruisers, a large boxy black hovercrafts. They always gave him the creeps, especially when he caught one out of the corner of his eye. He could never quite pull up the detail, but it was like a bad dream from his early childhood, an unsolved nightmare mystery. The whining of the motor and the swishing sound of air as it went by elevated his heart rate, not only because of those disquieting half memories, but he was worried that he had been found out, and the police are coming for him this time.

Ever since this strange conversation at the bar had begun, Tim had a bad feeling, and his instincts were giving him tangled signals. he had agreed to talk to Jason back at that bar he had been worried. That talk had been the reason he chose this path started him on the path he that he still walked on today was on today. As uncomfortable as it made him feel, it also gave him a sense

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of pride, a purpose, that for once in his life he was actually doing something. He was fighting against the establishment. As he passed <u>in front of the diner, he used to go-to frequently he remembered-recalled</u> the last conversation he had with Jason.

Jason's health was deteriorating rapidly every day as everyone could see, soon he was to become one more another, victim of the respiratory diseases that afflicted all of those who lived any amount of time in the Heights. Tim often sometimes wondered how long it was before it struck him that poor Jason was sitting across the table from him, was clearly feeling his mortality in an uncharacteristic manner. HeJason had reached out with his thin, pale hands and grabbed Tim's wristhand and offered him his final advice and warning, "Do your best, but trust no one." Tim had looked up into his bloodshot eyes, Jason nodded while suppressing a cough in his chest. "Assumed infiltrators and informants were everywhere, even in G. Force". With that, he had excused himself on the pretencese of having another coughing fit I watched him clenching on to his chest and making his way out from the diner as if someone had seen him sitting there. Tim never saw him again. He had heard that Jason died was found dead the following week. No one was exactly sure when or how, all they knew was, that he died alone in his room.

Tim finally made it to his apartment, on the way he had been checking his rear view mirror to make sure if he was being followed by anyone, specially the Black Maria. and He automatically punched in his security number as he stared at the now faded sign posted on the door of the building, thinking in another couple of weeks it will be coming down. The sign read: "Seasonal heat advisory-an energy warning-residents advised not to set thermostats below 80 degrees." These notices were a regular norm in the neighborhood these days, the people had grown used to it and would abide by them.

Walking down the hallway on the ragged carpet to his apartment it would take hum 7 steps, along with his footsteps you could hear noises coming from the other units, somebody practicing what sounded like an acoustic guitar but not quite the same as it should sound, in another apartment somebodyone else was having an argument over the phone, and right next door an old grandma was someone was watching aloud TV show. There was a swarm wereof mingled smells of different types of dishesfood being cooked in the hallway, the steam of the hot potatoes had added to the warmth of the hall making it feel like a sauna. All that faded away as Tim shut his door the locks clicked on his 8th step. His apartment wasn't any more soundproof than out in the hallway. It was more due to his choice of collection and decoration that had buffered the sounds. Tim's had built bookcases on his wall-walls were full of bookcases filled with old physical paper books with a biblical file. In this era, Nowadays people don't even know what a biblical file is. He was a book lover owing to his mother who emphasized on keeping him at home rather than letting him out on scavenging in the dump yard. He was left with nothing else than to read whatever he could find, newspapers, old magazines, food packagings and even the ingredients on them. His reading habit had grown into an Theobsession the proof was his apartment walls. The old physical paper and ink books lined every wall from floor to the ceiling with every conceivable subject. There were books about history, science, math, computers, fiction and non-fiction. Tim had used book-shelves to divide- one room into a kitchen area and a dining/living area. You could still smell the cabbage soup from the night before left on the kitchen counter. It was one of his usual meals, along with his other today's special list of noodle soup, cabbage or rice. He didn't spend much money on himself, definitely not on his food. A large sum of his money was spent on His money went to hi

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<u>buyings</u> books and lately most importantly <u>onto</u> his project. The piles of work spread out on the table represented his project <u>research on</u> computers, circuit boards, printers and numerous manuals and drawings in various stages, <u>blueprints of motherboards</u>. <u>Tim never found anything boring but always welcomed new information</u>,

Tim longingly glanced at the table <u>covered with full of his</u> reference diagrams and a half-constructed model of his next project against the M's. With a sigh of regret he turned to the kitchen to make some <u>more noodle</u> soup into which he cracked and poached an egg. <u>Tonight The G Force had called an important meeting tonight was a meeting of the G Force and which meant that he would have to forgo working on his true ambition for the rest of the day. For this project was the only attraction left in his life nowadays, this gave him purpose to live the rest of his days what gave meaning to his days. The software firm where he worked had himhim-relegated to simply doing end user testing of upgrades to existing software, with a man with so much potential this job was close to mockery for Tim. All the real and important development processes and tasks were assigned only to the M's. Any real development work was reserved for the M's. It was considered thought that the M's were better are and efficient developer due to their enhanced memory chips and were unsuited for being with their enhanced memory chips were much more efficient developers and not very good testers because they wouldn't make stupid mistakes...like a real human would! "M's and their god damned memory chips be damned". That's what he thought.</u>

Tim's mind began to race with new possibilities. Jason's warning had always been somewhere in the back of his mind. The thrill and excitement of being involved in the clandestine G-Force, as tenuous an organization as it was, was always tempered with reasoning. But now, now that he actually had something of value he began to realized that if there were informants or infiltrators in the G-Force as Jason had warned him, they would be taking a much closer look at him and observing his every move just as he feared. He thought of the started to evaluate other members. F-first there was Clyde, Timbe knew Clyde was a hacker who was working on trying to find a glitch in the servers so that he can find a way to infiltrate the M's distribution system. Tim had a hunchsuspected that Clyde worked in providing black market software for the black market M's. The black market M's was a shadowy business to be involved with, because System's Inc. held its own legal monopoly on the production, distribution and maintenance of all M's ever created resulting in generating higher profits for the company. It fit with Tim's image of Clyde, a cartoon vulture with his extra-long neck and extremely large Adam's apple.

The manufacturing process of making a chip so small that it could be implanted, was not something you could do in a garage or in an abandoned warehouse a huge framework was required, high precision tools were needed, a lot of finance was involved. All of the black market enhanced chips were stolen, and it's not like you can just steal them or hijack a truck with a stack of chips on it, though people have tried that in the past. The transport trucks were equipped with heavily armed guards, and along with the truck, a squad of security vehicles moved Thetogether, security around those was extremely tight, armored vehicles with armed guards. Most of the black market M chips came from cadavers; this was a nasty process. A few were from people who had died of natural causes. There were contacts at various funeral parlor, s Several funeral parlors were involved in this business as they who would extract the chips and provide sell them onto the black market, but more commonly people had been mugged off their chips in the alleys. It's one thing

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telt is a completely different thing to mug somebody and steal their wallet, or belongings and run away, but the only way to steal an M's chip was to crack open their skull and extract it. Needless to say, such mugging victims seldom if ever survived which was why every M's chip had a unique digital fingerprint.

One of the greatest challenges of the black market M's was replacing that digital fingerprint with a valid one so it could be sold. Even then there were many checks built into the system, like a check for multiple downloads, Though there were still other checks that came in the chip builtin, they had to be cracked or by-passed, like restrictions on downloading updates, so that even with the same unique chip, the black market had to resort to getting downloads and creating their own distribution system to distribute updates. Needless to say, mNeedless to say, most of the black market M's never gotfailed to get the pudates which wereas just fine with the black marketers. That meant anyone with a black market chip was guaranteed repeat business because they had to come back every so often to get a new one This meant that anyone who would buy a chip from the black had to return to replace and buy a new chip after some time, as the old one did not download the new updates any longer this created profits for the black market. Tim mulled this over and figured out that anyone who was possibly involved in the black market trade would be an informant as well, as they say, the enemy of your enemy is a friend thought that anyone involved in that type of business could very easily be an informant.

Then there was Jesus and his protégé; they were physically fit and so well fit and athletic that it was seemed highly unlikely that either of them had spent their childhoods grew up in the Heights or anyanywhere near to it or any place like it. They showed none of the signs of having grown up in abject poverty Their appearance had something about it that screamed that they were not subject to abject poverty either. Their hands were big and strong, their skin did not have any dark patches or scars, their teeth were whiter than many in the G-Force, and their hair wasere all too perfect. Surely if anyone was being suspected of being an infiltrator, it could be the two of them at first glance, and yet they had been accepted and had risen to have leadership roles in this cell of G-Force. For all that mattered, Tim realized all of a sudden, how was he to know this was even a legitimate cell? It can be possible that all this time he had devoted himself to a hoax organization created by the black market. As clandestine of an organization as it was, one cell never knew who belonged to another cell or even how many cells existed there were.

For the first time, Tim actually began to felt doubtful whether he should even go to the G-Force meeting. He was afraid if he suddenly didstopped not to show up, that might actually be a clue that he was onto something and soon the door will be knocked down, and his project will get ransacked. He finished up his soupsoup that had gotten cold during his imagination, washed his face with his eyes open to alert his senses and ran his fingers through his thinning hair, gazed at his reflection in the old grey mirror for a few seconds and reluctantly left for the meeting with the G-Force.

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## Tim avoided taking his car to the.

He never took his car to-G\_Force Meetings. It was just a precaution; he did not want to be tracked everywhere by the agents of G-Force, he never knew when a meeting might be observed or witnessed, or if his whereabouts might be reported by the infiltrators. He didn't want his car being caught on any surveillance cameras. As was standard practice for G\_Force Members he took a non-direct route, a mixture of buses and subway to get to the old nondescript abandoned building where the meeting was being held this week. It would take almost an hour long to travel to the meeting's destination. They didn't meet every week, they didn't even necessarily meet every month, and they didn't meet at any set time or location to assure that no pattern could be established. The G-Force meetings had riddle patter, they meeting was not held every week, nor did they take place every other month. Moreover, the meetings were never allocated in the same location to avoid being traced or tracked by the government or hostile forces. Tim walked in, nodded hello to some familiar faces, it was odd that these were his friends, his comrades, and yet he was sure he didn't know the true name of a single one of them, so he made sure they did not know his either.

Tim himself used the pseudo name of Jim, deliberately picked out because it sounded so similar to his own name that he could respond to it without thinking or hesitation, his books had come in handy for him in behaving wisely like a member of a secret organization. Clarisse let Tim know there was coffee over on the side table-pointed Tim towards the coffee at the corner side of the table. He wandered over; he had a feeling that he will spill it and, so he poured himself a small cup, sipping it carefully, realizing he was right to be careful among these people, he did not want to be thought of as clumsy. It The coffee, was mediocre at best and no warmer than the room. Leave it to some G Force Member to bring leftover coffee from some function, maybe someone brought it from work that morning. It seemed as if the member had gone to a presentation and had managed to bring back the leftover coffee, or maybe someone had bought it in the morning. Tim raised the cup to his mouth to make it look like he was drinking, though he did not take another sip after the first one, the coffee was more like warm water except for the bitterness, then he gently placed the cup in the trash bin so that everyone thinks that he had finished his share.

Jesus arrived a few minutes late as usual. It was one of the things that Tim found very annoying. Jesus was thehad been the undisputed head of their G\_Force Cell for quite some time, and yet he always came late to every meeting late, showing is superiority, which and his late arrival assured that half the regulars came late as well, so the meetings never started oncould never be held on time. Jesus wasn't the one who started the cell but through sure force of personality he gained that role from whoever had been the original cell founder. Jesus had managed to grab the leadership through his profound and vivid personality, though he had not founded the cell but had undertaken it from someone who had died or just vanished. Tim found Jesus' choice of alias rather enlightening into his old world personality. On the the one hand, it linked him to the Hispanic heritage that was evident in his facial features and declared his intended solidarity with the Hispanic community, which was the least represented group amongst the M's of any racial community, and on the other hand, the biblical link exposed some of his pretensions and grandiose aspirations.

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Jesus was full of contradictions, he had an exuberant forceful personality, although his face and arms were decorated with various cars, which Tim had yet his face and hands were scarred from what Tim had heard and believed, were inflicted by years spent as a mixed martial arts fighter. HeJesus still kept himself in fine physical shape and texture which was the reason that made him stand out from most of the other members of the G\_Force, well at least of this cell, because Tim had to admit that he had not met anybody else in G\_Force outside of this particular cell. This also gave Jesus a sense of power over others. As This cell was comprised of mostly people like Tim himself, middle--aged, ashen--faced office workers who had a small apartment and very few hobbies. Peons and pawns restricted to meaningless, mind-numbing tasks, what Jesus liked to call the caste system of the M's.

Soon the remaining four members of the cell barged in tie r arrival was announced by the animated conversation as they walked in unison The noise of animated conversation announced the arrival of the last four members as they came in together. Tim had counted the members several times in the past few meeting he had been invited to, so he knew there were eleven of them, but he refrained from counting them today. There was never any roll call taken, never any notes. The rule of the meetings was simple, \www.whoever was there when the meeting started was there when the meeting started. Initial contacts were made through an existing member to somebody they felt was sympathetic. After that, all communications, times and places of the next meetings were done via a variety of clandestine clues creating a puzzle for the members. Postings on network sights with instructions on where to look for additional messagesevidence, would be mixed with more traditional clues relating to the previous meet-ups, like some physical symbols left on a certain street corner or in a specific bench in the park. That assured there was no one message in one place that could allow someone to determine the date and location of the next meeting. This assured that there were no traces of a complete message that could lead the enemy to the location of the meeting, -Tim often wondered who would be responsible for constructing and laying out this puzzle<del>didn't even know who made those arrangements</del>, he assumed it was Jesus, but he didn't know for sure.

Jesus started getting everyone's attention in order to start the meeting Jesus began to do his ritual briefing to gain everyone's attention. But Bbefore he could even get it started. Clarisse broke him off. spoke up to announce to everyone that there was 'plenty of coffee, please help yourself'. Tim was now certain realized that it was Clarisse who had brought the stale lukewarm coffee to the meeting. Clarisse was one of the environmental activists in the group; she didn't want to throw anything away, recycling and to reusereusing every scrap of anything whether it was to be food or paper. This particular G.—Force Cell was further largely split into two cells, between environmental activist and those who sought out retribution against the M's and System Inc., After Clarisse's insisting looks, Aa couple of people got up to help themselves to the coffee, and reluctantly. Tim caught the eye of one of them and shook his head giving a mute warning. He was clever enough to takeok the hint and sat back down.

Finally the meeting was ready about to get started, though and Smith, who was the only one who picked thea last name as his meeting pseudonym, was also the only one not sittingstanding, while we all were firmly seated in the old wooden chairs. It was not because there were fewer chairs or he wanted some coffee. It looked like he was too anxious with a nervous energy to sit down. Jesus thought that he wanted to raise an issue soclearly he picked up on it and

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G. Force Meetings always have a certain level of nervous energy to them, even if it was the most mundane and boring of meetingswere mostly mundane and boring to attend, but never the less every attendee felt nervous when the meeting would begin. The fact that it was an illegal clandestine clandestine illegal meeting gave everything a spark of energy everyone felt a bit excited and nervous too, but now that spark just exploded, with everyone trying to talk at the same time about the great breakthroughonce. This is what they had all been waiting for, a way to really strike backh atit the establishment in the backbone, to hit them hard-enough to leave an impact and yet Tim felt detached, actually disappointed because this was his opportunity to claim. He had established this project before them or maybe they had been working on it, along the same line as his own project that he had been working on forbut he felt drastic as he had given his attention and dedication to this project so long and so diligently. Every free waking moment of his time Every moment when he was awake, he would work on this virus, and now Clyde had beaten him to ittaken the lead before him. He listened dis-heartedlyned as Clyde struggled to present his idea of this virus, how he had developed the virus and what were the possibilities that had opened up due to this outbreak. He described it to everyone, the techies and non-techies, they all had amused looks on their faces and paid attention to Clyde with awetried to explain it as best as he could to the techies and non-techies in the room about how he had developed his virus. He explained how it could be deposited without detection, how it would permeate throughout the memory chips of the M's and, how long it would have to wait in hibernation before it was activated. On the other hand, Tim tried to console himself, that what mattered was the victory over the M'swin, that that it had been finally developed, he knew he and Clyde were not the only ones that had been working on it. Numerous other cells had been trying to come up with something like this for years breaking their necks to developing such a virus. So he forced a smile, forced himself to look animated and involved in this break though of the hour, one of the biggest achievements against the M's and System Inc., yet he felt detached almost as if he was watching himself from across the room. He felt as if he was acting out a-part from an emotional drama in which he had to hide his true feelings, watching the other players, dissecting the reactions of the others in the room, seeing Jesus beaming with pride as it was one of his recruits and he will be praised in the whole G-Force, he shook Smith who had broken the news to the cell.

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It was clear that Smith was one of Jesus' recruits. Smith was probably one of the younger members, he was a trim black gentleman, the only one in the room besides Jesus with an athletic fit physique and he was the only one with a noticeable physique apart from Jesus. Tim was sure they had some connection through some form of exercise or sportTim was assured that they both had shared some common grounds in the past in sports or some other jogging routines. Tim also noticed that despite everyone was actively and happily outwardly expressing enthusiasm for the idea, Clarisse and her environmentalist activist cohorts, weren't as spontaneous or natural in their response regarding this discovery. He was surprised at his own observation, he wasn't normally one who could judge what other people were thinking and yet in this detached observer mode he found himself in, it was clear that the environmentalist had misgivings and didn't fully share the enthusiasm of the establishment antagonistTim was astounded at his own particular perception, he was not ordinarily the one who could judge what other individuals were considering but then in this disconnected onlooker mode he was wound up in this new found sense, unmistakably the environmentalist had second thoughts and did not honestly share the excitement of the establishment rivals.

Something Jesus was saying snapped Tim's attention back to the meeting  $\underline{\text{Tim came}}$  diverted his attention back to the meeting when he heard Jesus saying. "Yes, yes I think we need to bring this to the attention of our parent cell. In fact maybe to the  $G_{\overline{a}}$ -Force Directors."

Then Smith was asking, "Why? Each cell is autonomous; each cell acts independently. Why don't we just take this and run with it right now?"

Jesus replied, "This is too big, it's too important".

Clyde beganstarting squirming a little bit and Smith acting as his mouthpiece said, "But the longer we wait, and the more people that know about this, the greater the chance of interception. We can't let anyone find out about this. We have to act swiftly, and quietly." Tim could not listen to didn't even catch what Jesus said next, but it was like an alarm that went off in his head. He realized that the real reason behind why Jesusthe urge Jesus showed wanted to delay and take this to the Parent Cell and to the G-Force Directors was for his own-own political gain within the G-Force infrastructure. He knew that he has to get some accreditation for this idea on his name, the g-Force will be happy with his work and maybe promote him to a higher level wanted to get some credit for it, as if it was his idea.

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