THE MELETE EFFECT

WRITTEN BY: NIC VELISSARIS

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The Guy That Looks Like Me

There's em that's thou, and there's em 'at don't, whether you don't or do
The story I'm about to tell is absolutely true
I was a happy man when it all began, a little foolish and fancy free
But my life was changed and rearranged, by a guy who looks like me

Now what he do, is leave an IOU, nearly everywhere he go
He'd sign my name and I'd get the blame for ever' cent he'd owe
Well I ain't poor, but I sure ain't rich, and every cotton picking cent I had
Went down the drain, to pay his bills and I was getting mad!

Where is the guy that looks like me?
He won't ever let me be
Why don't he quit bugging me?
That doggone guy that looks like me.

Now the other day I was on my way to a pay a bill downtown
I chanced to meet a man on the street who commenced to knock me down
He cussed and cried and tanned my hide and hit me over the head
He said "Listen pal, stay away from my gal or I'll fill you full of lead!"

Well I'm a peaceful man, what he had in his hand, wasn't no kiddie-type toy
Though I ain't one to be afraid of a gun, I'll admit I don't like the noise
So black and blue and busted too, I knew I just had to find
The guy that looks like me or else I was bound to lose my mind

Where is the guy that looks like me?
He won't ever let me be
Why don't he quit bugging me?
That doggone guy that looks like me.

My gal said "Goodbye" and I thought I'd die, my life was a total wreck
I lost my money and then my honey and even my self-respect
But that was when fate stepped in, as sweet as fate can be
I met a ginchee* gal and she was the gal of the guy that looks like me!

She was really built, and her eyes were blue, and her lips were red like wine
I could see that she took he for me, and what was his was mine!
The knot was tied, she become my bride, I'm as happy as I can be
But what'll I do if she meets the guy that looks like me?

Where is the guy that looks like me?
I hope that he will let us be
If she saw him, then she would see
I'm not the guy that looks like me.

Novelty Song by Big Shorty and His Pile Drivers (1959)
* Ginchee means groovy
...The disconnect between probability and improbability, between the authentic and the imitation, between history and invention, the no-man’s-lands of what happened, what might have happened, what didn’t happen, what might happen, a place that is no place, where there is no solid footing and nothing can be counted on...

Ursula Le Guin
*(describing the writing of Philip K. Dick in her introduction to The Man in the High Castle.)*

I can’t stand it, I know you planned it
I’ve been going straight since Watergate

**Misheard lyrics to the Beastie Boys song ‘Sabotage’**

If you want a happy ending, that depends of course, on where you stop your story.

**Final scene direction in the script for The Big Brass Ring (1991)**
Written by Orson Welles with Oja Kodar
FROM THE CLASSIFIED FILES OF THE CAPGRAS PROJECT

This file represents our knowledge to date about subject 135125205, MARY MELETE. Reading this file you have three options as to where to begin researching this subject.

If you are interested in the subject’s time in the United States of Columbia please, begin at SECTION 86 and proceed to follow only the instructions coloured in BLUE.

If you are interested in the subject’s time in the Republic of Rousya, please begin at SECTION 82 and proceed to follow only the instructions coloured in RED.

If you are interested in the subject’s time with the rebellion in Santo Cristos, please begin at SECTION 83 and proceed to follow only the instructions coloured in GREEN.

Please do not attempt to read this file through directly as the material has been organised in the order that it was collected from the subject.
KEY PERSONNEL

THE COLUMBIA TIMES NEWSPAPER

MARY MELETE: A journalist  
PETER ‘MAC’ MACKENZIE: A journalist  
FRANK McMANUS: Editor in Chief of MELETE and MAC's newspaper  
JERRY ‘JER’ MONOTTA: Editor in charge of Federal Politics  
TOM MANNING: Editor in charge of International News  
SIDNEY ROBINSON: A journalist  
CARL aka THE CROSSWORD MAN: Responsible for producing crosswords and puzzles for the newspaper

COLUMBIAN CITIZENS

MARGARET BROWN aka MOTHER HUBBARD: Peter ‘Mac’ MacKenzie’s mother  
YOLANDA AMENZA: A former journalist from Costa Real and friend and associate of Frank McManus  
CHRIS GANTRY: A frightened citizen  
CLARENCE WEATHERBEE: A literary critic and member of the Wurlitzer Committee  
DEEPWATER: An informant, someone who knows the truth about the SANDGATE scandal.  
ARABELLA MACKENZIE BROWN: Mac and Melete’s daughter  
MISTER A.: The first robber involved in the SANDGATE robbery  
MISTER B.: The second robber involved in the SANDGATE robbery  
MISTER C.: The third robber involved in the SANDGATE robbery  
MISTER D.: The fourth robber involved in the SANDGATE robbery  
TERRENCE T. GANTING: A mysterious orchestrator of the SANDGATE robbery, also known as MR. X.  
MIRIAM FOLLOWS: A poet  
GUARD

ROUSYA

ARISTOLE BARBEKHOV: A Rousyan Revolutionary leader  
LEON NIKILEV: Barbekhov’s second in command and a powerful leader in his own right.  
VASSILY REDSNEV: Long term autocratic leader of the Rousyan Republic  
GREGORI SPASTIKHOV: A ruthless if at times sycophantic foot soldier  
EUGENE ‘GENE’ BELITSKI: A troublesome soldier  
DANIEL MASTERS: A Bureaucrat from the State Department.  
DOCTOR ARTURUS PORTOKALI: Leader in Nooclear Medicine research at the University of Silberia  
SOLDIER 1  
SOLDIER 2  
NURSE  
DOCTOR

SANTO CRISTOS

EL PERRO SALVAJE: The Wild Dog, a revolutionary leader trying to overthrow the dictatorship of ‘El Presidente Immortale’  
TUCOMERA RODRÍGUES DE LA SANTOS: Known as Tuco for short, he is a former teacher  
JUAN PABLO DOMÍNGUEZ aka ‘EL PRESIDENTE IMMORTALE’: The vicious dictator of Santo Cristos.
LA DAMA DE LA DESTRUCCIÓN: The mysterious lead torturer responsible for helping to keep DOMNÍGUEZ’s regime in power.
MARTA: A barmaid and mother
GUPPO: A vocal supporter of the regime.
LOS LIBERATORES: The supporters of El Perro Salvaje
IMPERIALES: The vicious police force of Santo Cristos.
EL GUARDIA NEGRO: The Black Guard, the secret police force of Santo Cristos.
COMMANDO/ES: Military man/men in service of the Columbian Government
DANIEL MASTERS: A bureaucrat from the State Department.
THE PEOPLE OF SANTO CRISTOS
1. CHECK YOUR SOURCES

McMANUS stands in the doorway of his office

McMANUS: MacMelete! Get in here!

MAC and MELETE look at each other and slowly walk into their editor’s office.

McMANUS sits behind a desk and his face is obscured by a very large floorlamp. He gestures to some typewritten pages on his tabletop. MAC is standing the corner while MELETE can be seen sitting on a couch.

McMANUS: What is this?

MAC: What’s what?

McMANUS: This. *(He beats the table)* This!

MAC: The article?

McMANUS: It’s full of unsubstantiated claims.

MELETE: We have sources.

McMANUS: They’re not there on the page! *(Beat)* If I publish this I’m going to have my ass in a sling, so you better be damn sure that these sources of yours are phuck* ing golden!

MELETE: They are. Like Fort Knoxxy.

MAC: Frank we’ve checked this and double checked this. Several of our sources say the same thing. That the break-in at the Sandgate Hotel was orchestrated by people with ties to the Plebian Party.

McMANUS: You can back this up?

MELETE: Dogdamn it Frank! I already said yes.

McMANUS: I don’t think I like your tone Melete. *(Beat)* You come in here with an article that suggests the Plebian Party was actively trying to destroy the Columbian Prole Party’s chances at getting elected.

MELETE: Yes, Frank that’s exactly what we’re saying.

McMANUS: Do you have any idea what kind of shitstorm this is going to unleash?

MAC: I thought this was about democracy Frank.

McMANUS: I don’t give a dogdamn about the democracy. I only want what we can back up with cold hard facts!

MELETE: It’s all there Frank! Read the dogdamn article.
McMANUS: Melete so help me dog, I’m this close to booting your ass out of this newspaper. Now can it!

MELETE sits down on a chair in a huff. MAC looks at both them, the tension is high.

MAC: Listen Frank I know this whole thing sounds crazy but we’ve got people over at the Plebian Funding Committee who are scared to say anything to anyone about what was going on down there, and that’s just if something was going on.

McMANUS: If I run this story I’m going to have everybody on my ass, the press corps, members of the Union, hell even other newspapers are going to take a shot. And if they find that one bit of this doesn’t check out and they come after me, I’m coming after you.

MAC: That’s understood.

McMANUS (to MELETE): What about you?

MELETE reluctantly nods her head.

McMANUS: I’m going say this one last time...Check your facts and check your sources and make sure!

McMANUS stares at them.

MAC: It’s 100% bona fide.

MELETE: Totally golden.

McMANUS looks between them.

McMANUS: All right, I’ll run it. But the cut the speculation about the Fifth Man until you’ve got proof. Give me the revised copy in half an hour. (Beat) Now get the hell out of my office.

Melete investigates the possibility of their being a Fifth Man, go to Section 81

Melete decides to follow a different lead, go to Section 92
2. WHEN MAC MET MIRIAM

MELETE’s apartment. A door opens. MELETE and MAC enter. They have been drinking.

MELETE: Oh well here we are.
MAC: It’s a nice place.
MELETE: Is that all you have to say?
MAC: What? It is a nice place!
MELETE: Oh Mac you’ve really got a way with words.
MAC: You know I save it for the paper.
MELETE: Sure you do. (Beat) God I’m toasted.
MAC: Who knew that Benny had such a good top shelf?
MELETE: A 15 year old cognac!
MAC: And that Whiskey Sour!

They inadvertently fall into each other and MELETE brushes her hand against MAC’s face. They lean in to kiss and MAC loses his balance and falls back against the wall. He knocks a framed certificate out of place.

MAC (straightening the framed certificate): I didn’t know your middle name was Miriam.
MELETE: Not many people do.
MAC: Mary Miriam Melete, it’s...
MELETE (finishing): ...a mouthful.
MAC: I was going to say…beautiful. (Beat) How come you never use that name?
MELETE: Miriam?
MAC nods.
MELETE: It never felt like me. I used to joke that wherever Mary goes Miriam follows.
MAC (laughs): Heh, you could always use that as a byline.
MELETE: Miriam Follows? (Beat) I used to sign my poetry like that.
MAC (in shock): You wrote poetry?
MELETE: I dabbled.
MAC: As Miriam Follows?

MELETE: Yes.

MAC: So one side is the hard hitting journalist and the other side is the soft-centred poet.

MELETE: Something like that.

MAC: Well you learn something new each day.

MELETE: I hope it was something worth remembering.

MAC: It will be.

*There is a tension.*

MELETE: So why are you really here Mac? It’s not to talk about poetry.

MAC: You know why I’m here Mary...Miriam...Melete.

*He leans forward and kisses her on the lips, she doesn’t breakaway.*

Every action has consequences, go to Section 58
3. DEEPWATER BY DEEPWATER

It’s outside. It’s raining. MELETE is standing under an umbrella, on the banks of the Patawomack River. She stands looking out at the river. The rain is loud and pounding.

MELETE: What are you doing here Melete?

*It starts to rain harder.*

MELETE: This is crazy.

*From behind a nearby tree, a tall man appears. His name is DEEPWATER.*

DEEPWATER: Only if you don’t believe that it can be true.

MELETE: Cristeas! Where did you come from?

DEEPWATER: You’re investigating the break-in at the Sandgate Hotel.

MELETE: Yes. (*She hesitates*) We have some leads about who is behind it.

DEEPWATER: It’s only the tip of the iceberg.

MELETE: Is it? (*Beat*) What do you know?

DEEPWATER: Everything.

MELETE: Then tell me.

*DEEPWATER is silent.*

MELETE: I take it that that’s not how this is going to work.

*DEEPWATER remains silent.*

MELETE: All right I’ll tell you what we know. There was a break in at the Sandgate Hotel. Four men were arrested, each of them with ties to the Plebian Party. They were represented by a lawyer who frequently serves as a counsel for the Brick House.

DEEPWATER: And?

MELETE: Look how do I know I can trust you? How do I know that you’re not going to turn me in?

DEEPWATER: Because, I want you to find out the truth.

MELETE: But you haven’t told me anything.

DEEPWATER: You’re doing pretty well on your own.

MELETE: Why are you taking an interest?
DEEPWATER: Because I care about what happens to this country. I believe in the ideals for which it stands.

MELETE looks at him.

MELETE: Against my better judgement I believe you.

DEEPWATER: It will work better if you do.

MELETE: How can I contact you?

DEEPWATER: You won’t. I’ll contact you.

With that DEEPWATER fades back into the trees and the rain.

MELETE: But what if I need to speak to you?

When there is no answer MELETE turns around and finds that there is no one there.

MELETE: Dog I hate this cloak and dagger shit.

Melete goes to see McManus about what she’s learnt, go to Section 39

Melete writes up her article first, go to Section 66
4. A MESSAGE FROM THE WURLITZER COMMITTEE

MELETE sits in a waiting area of an anonymous office building. A man approaches his name is WEATHERBEE.

WEATHERBEE: Ms Melete, I’m Clarence Weatherbee. Please, follow me.

MELETE is lead into a meeting room and they sit down at a long table. WEATHERBEE look expectantly at MELETE and when she doesn’t speak he says,

WEATHERBEE: How can I help you today Ms Melete?

MELETE: I’ve come to talk to you about a private matter.

WEATHERBEE: I’m not sure of how I can be of assistance.

MELETE: You’re a representative of the Wurlitzer Committee?

WEATHERBEE: I am. (Beat) What is this about?

MELETE: I want to know why I wasn’t nominated for the Wurlitzer along with my colleague and co-author Peter MacKenzie.

WEATHERBEE: Well you know that I’m not permitted to discuss the decisions of the committee with you. That process is held in the strictest confidence.

MELETE: Is it because I’m a woman?

WEATHERBEE: Ms Melete as I’ve already said I cannot discuss the private conversations of the Wurlitzer Committee with you.

MELETE: I don’t see how you can nominate only one of the two authors who contributed to those articles. It’s as though you’re saying that only half of the workers, did all of the work.

WEATHERBEE: I’m sorry Ms Melete, but the Wurlitzer is given only authors whose work is deemed worthy. Whose writing has made a difference to life here in Columbia.

MELETE: But I wrote those articles too!

WEATHERBEE: Ms Melete, the good name of the Wurlitzer Prize would not dare be sullied by a writer of your persuasion.

MELETE: And what persuasion is that?

WEATHERBEE: I shall no longer discuss this matter with you and I shall kindly ask you to leave.

WEATHERBEE stands and opens the door to see her out.

MELETE: I don’t believe you’ve answered any of my questions.
WEATHERBEE: I’m afraid that this conversation is at its end Ms Melete. I have nothing further to say to you. Now if you don’t mind, I’m a busy man and I have things to do.

MELETE looks at him and then reluctantly stands and walks toward the door, as she passes WEATHERBEE she says,

MELETE: You haven’t heard the last of this Mr Weatherbee.

WEATHERBEE: Oh I’m sure I haven’t. Good day to you Ms Melete.

MELETE exits and WEATHERBEE slams the door behind her.

WEATHERBEE: Tartered up bitch.

Melete puts it all in perspective, go to Section 49
5. COSTA REAL IMMIGRANTS NEED TO BE RETURNED
The Columbia Times 19th of June 1982
An Editorial by Mary Melete

Although the recent tragedy in Costa Real is still fresh in the minds of many, as a nation we cannot afford to be complacent towards the influx of Costa Real refugees. It is difficult for authorities to determine which of these refugees are legitimate people seeking shelter from an oppressive regime and which are perpetrators of the war crimes that have taken place in Costa Real. These people, must not be accommodated here in Columbia.

There are several reasons for this, firstly language remains a barrier for all Costa Realean refugees. Lisboan is not the national language of Columbia and at best is spoken by as little as 2% of the population. Costa Realeans would find it difficult to establish a community here. Secondly Costa Realeans do not come from a Cristean faith. Their faith is the strange and deeply violent Hoodoo. As a nation that prides itself on its deeply Cristean heritage, why would we encourage the establishment of other religions and cultural values here in our country? It would be a dangerous precedent that would say to other religions and creeds that is okay to settle here in the United States of Columbia, when in fact it is not.

Finally it would be better for the Costa Realeans to relocate to a Central Columbian country such as Pana Namia or Mexicago, countries which already have large percentages of speakers of Lisboan and its sister language Hispaniolan. These are countries whose cultures could be seen as extensions of the Costa Realean way of life.

Why should we as a nation shoulder the burden of a people who do not share our way of life? In short, we should not. We should use our diplomatic powers at the League of Nations to encourage the peaceful relocation of the Costa Realeans to a nation which can more adequately meet the displaced people’s needs. This is our patriotic duty not only as Columbians but as human beings, to make sure that those who are in need can be sent to where they can be best accommodated.

Who is really the subject of this editorial? Go to Section 62
The war in Santo Cristo continues to challenges all sides. Although it appears that the government-led forces are winning the war, away from the capital of Cistos Ciudad, the story in the countryside is much different.

In a small hut, hidden behind a grove of trees, I am taken to meet the leader of the guerrilla movement, Los Librertadores. The group, who have been causing chaos throughout the countryside claim that they are only doing what is best for Santo Cristo. Their leader is a man known only as El Perro Salvaje, The Wild Dog. The journey to meet El Perro has been an arduous one. In order to gain the trust of the Liberators, I have visited halfway houses, endured military searches, and travelled in the back of pickup trucks blindfolded. All of it was necessary to gain the trust of the reclusive El Perro.

When we meet, I have lost all sense of bearings, but that is the point of the secrecy that El Perro and Los Libertadores surround themselves with. El Perro is an impressive figure who wears Army fatigues and whose face is covered in a custom-made mask that is made up to look a wolf. He greets me cordially, speaking in perfect English without an accent. He is clearly a man who is passionate about his country, when I ask him about why he is doing this, he answers “For the freedom of those who have never known freedom.”

The government of El Presidente Immortale, Juan Pablo Dominguez, would accuse El Perro and Los Libertadores of being terrorists, a claim which El Perro denies this, “Terrorism is a fancy word used by the powerful to invoke fear in those who have nothing”. El Perro claims that his quest is to bring peace and prosperity to a nation that can and will support itself. “For too long we have been at the mercy of world powers who seek only their own well-being and care little for the suffering of our people”. Before I can ask El Perro what he means, an aide enters and informs us that the Imperiales (Dominguez’s troops) are on the move and that El Perro must now leave, prematurely ending our interview.

Quickly El Perro and his men abandon the hut, leaving me behind to fend for myself. Before I can make my way back to the highland road, a group of Imperiales break down the door. After checking my credentials they interrogate me about who I was meeting there and when I refuse to answer their questions I am taken by Military Escort to the border between Santo Cristo and nearby El Soledor. Dumped in an El Soledor border town I am told that I cannot return to Santo Cristos. Although my time in Santo Cristos has ended, I am confident that this will not be the last that is heard of El Perro Salvaje and Los Libertadores.
7. ELECTRIC SYSTEM SHOCK

MELETE is on the phone.  
She is waiting for someone to answer.

MELETE (anxiously): Come on.

The phone is answered.  
A young girl’s voice can be heard.

ARABELLA: Hello Arabella speaking.

MELETE: Arabella? Oh my darling is it really you?

ARABELLA: Yes. Who’s this please?

MELETE: It’s your mother. (Beat) I’ve missed you, I can’t tell you how long I’ve wanted to hear your voice.

ARABELLA: I’m sorry, I can’t hear you. Who did you want to speak too?

MELETE (frantic): It’s your mother. I’m your mother.

ARABELLA: I’ll just go and get her for you.

The phone is put down on the other end of the line.

MELETE: Arabella? Arabella! Wait!

A woman answers the phone on the other side.  
MELETE and the woman speak simultaneously.

MELETE/WOMAN: Hello? Who is this?

As they finish speaking, a massive surge of electricity carries down the phone line as if the line has been struck by lightning. Both woman are paralysed by the shock.  
There is a bright blinding light.  
Then darkness.
8. AMENZA TO SOCIETY

McMANUS stands with a woman, YOLANDA AMENZA. She is a political journalist and a refugee from the war in Costa Real. The two of them are talking to one another in Hispaniolan. It’s clear from the way they talk that McMANUS’s Hispaniolan is not as good as AMENZA’S. MAC and MELETE unexpectedly interrupt the conversation.

MAC: Hey Boss! (Shocked) Oh sorry we didn’t realise you had company.

McMANUS: That’s all right. Yolanda I would like you to meet Peter MacKenzie and Mary Melete, two of my best journalists.

Both MAC and MELETE nod as they are introduced.

McMANUS (continuing): Mac and Melete have handled some of our biggest stories. Right now they’re working on a major investigation. This is Yolanda Amenza a former colleague of mine when I was a Foreign Correspondent in Costa Real.

MAC: So what brings you to Franklin?

AMENZA: A holiday and some time away from home.

MELETE (cutting to it): How is the situation down there? From what we’ve heard it’s gone from bad to worse.

AMENZA (slightly taken aback): It’s true, times are difficult, but we will do the best we can to overcome these difficulties.

MELETE: That’s not the way it looks from outside.

MAC stares at MELETE.

AMENZA: What can be seen from the outside is different from what is seen from inside. Hope has not yet been abandoned in Costa Real.

There is an uncomfortable silence.

MAC: Well it’s nice to meet you Miss Amenza.

McMANUS: Did you have something to show me?

MAC: It can wait boss.

McMANUS looks at them and wonders what is going on, it’s unlike the two of them to be so coy, particularly when talking about a story. Both MAC and MELETE nod their goodbyes and exit out of the office.

AMENZA: They seem...

McMANUS: Nice?
AMENZA: I was going to say competent.

McMANUS laughs.

McMANUS: You haven’t changed at all Yolanda.

AMENZA: You have.

McMANUS laughs again but there is something off about it.

BLACKOUT

McManus suspects something is going on, go to Section 60
Victory is at last within the hands of the Free Rousya revolutionary forces. It seemed unthinkable two years ago, but now since the capture of Leninburg only five days ago, they have steadily advanced on the Rousyan capital of Moscow. Meeting little resistance from Government forces, the Free Rousya revolutionaries and their Monerist supporters plan to bring democracy, capitalism and freedom to the beleaguered country.

A spokesman for the revolutionary leader Aristolè Baberkov claims that the flag of the Monerist forces will be raised over the Kremlin by no later than Thursday afternoon. Barbekov is expected to make a statement to the media at that time. It is widely expected that Barbekov will announce that the Rousyan government of Vassily Redsnev will be handing over the control of Moscow to Barbekov and his forces. This marks a monumental shift in power within the Rousyan Republic and will at last see democracy return to Rousya.

*This article was found on the same pages as advertisement for Howitzer Organs, the advertisement reads:*

NEW HOWITZER ORGANS
THEY REALLY PACK A PUNCH!
10. A PHUCKING DIVERSION

A Rousyan village on the road to Moscoww. Melete is dressed in a heavy coat and wears a scarf and cap.

MELETE: Phucking Rousyan Winters.

She is writing in a notebook which she closes when NIKILEV enters.

NIKILEV: There you are.

MELETE: I’m right where you told me to be.

NIKILEV: You Columbians, you think that everybody is out to oppress you. You wouldn’t know real oppression if it bit you on your ass.

MELETE: You Rousyans use too many words.

NIKILEV looks at her.

MELETE: What do you want?

NIKILEV: Barbekhov wanted me to deliver a message.

MELETE: And what’s that?

NIKILEV: He doesn’t want you on the march to Moscoww.

MELETE (standing): What?! Why not?

NIKILEV: Intelligence says that Redsnev intends a final offensive using the Cremlin as the last line of defence.

MELETE: But you said that the people had decided.

NIKILEV: Nothing is decided. Not until we hold Moscoww will it be settled.

MELETE: That’s exactly why I need to be there.

NIKILEV: This needs to be an event for the Rousyan people, not for someone who’s chasing Wurlitzers for the Western Media!

MELETE: That media has been legitimising your cause and getting you what you need in terms of money and arms.

NIKILEV: And we are grateful for that support, but this moment will be for the Rousyan people alone. In time you will be allowed to report on our victory.

MELETE: This is bullshit! I’ve been covering this piece of shit skirmish that you frozen bastards call a war for 18 months now. I’m not going to be left out in the cold now.
NIKILEV laughs at this.

MELETE: Phuck you Nikilev! In fact, what am I doing talking to you when I could be talking to Barbekhov directly?

MELETE goes to exit, but NIKILEV blocks her way.

MELETE: Get out of my way.

NIKILEV: Are you going to make me?

MELETE: If I have to.

NIKILEV laughs at this.

NIKILEV: I like you Melete you’ve got balls.

MELETE: So do you.

MELETE proceeds to knee NIKILEV in the balls, he collapses to the floor and yowls in pain.

MELETE: Do svidaniya, you piece of shit.

NIKILEV (trying to compose himself from the ground): Melete wait!

MELETE turns to face NIKILEV.

NIKILEV (coughing): He’s already gone. He’ll be in Moscoww by morning.

MELETE: You were a phucking diversion! I can’t believe I fell for this!

She steps over and kicks NIKILEV in the stomach and then storms out. NIKILEV although in pain, begins to laugh.

NIKILEV: What a woman.

There’s only one way to Moscoww now and that’s on foot, go to Section 11

Barbekhov will regret excluding the press from his greatest triumph, go to Section 11
11. ON THE ROAD TO MOSCOWW

MELETE and NIKILEV are walking along a country road. MELETE is walking ahead but realises there is no chance of losing NIKILEV at this stage. NIKILEV carries a portable military grade walkie talkie.

NIKILEV (talking into Walkie Talkie): You must be close now? (Beat) Any sign of opposition? (Beat) Good. We’re about thirty kilometres away. We’re on foot. I don’t trust her beyond a week. (laughs, beat) How is Barbekhov? (Beat) Of course he should be jubilant, victory is at hand. (Beat) Yes she’s here. (Beat) How do you think she took it? Badly. (Beat) Yeah (laughs) I’m still in one piece. (Beat) Really? I’ll tell her that, it’ll be some consolation. (Beat) She probably won’t like it. (To MELETE) Hey Reporter!

MELETE: Phuck you Nikilev!

NIKILEV: I have some news for you.

MELETE: I said phuck off!

NIKILEV (into the walkie talkie): I told you she wouldn’t listen.

MELETE: Who are you talking to?

NIKILEV: Obarov

MELETE: Well you can tell him to go phuck himself.

NIKILEV: (into the walkie talkie) Did you hear that? (Beat) She said you should go phuck yourself! (Beat) All right I’ll tell her. (To MELETE) Barbekhov says he wants you in the capital by tomorrow morning.

MELETE: Tell him HE can go...

NIKILEV (interrupting): Phuck himself. Yeah, yeah I know. (Into the walkie talkie) Yeah I told her. (Beat) How do you think she reacted? She was ecstatic, overjoyed and she cannot wait to arrive at the gates of Moscoww. (Beat) No Obarov I’m not being sarcastic. (Beat) All right I’ll tell her... (Beat) Obarov? Hello? HELLO? Obarov! (He pushes the button on the receiver of the walkie talkie a couple of times but there is no response) Obarov, you stupid son of a bitch!

MELETE is looking up at the sky. She sees a giant mushroom cloud rise up in the distance.

MELETE: What the...?!

Now NIKILEV sees the cloud and he drops the walkie talkie.

NIKILEV: Shit! What the hell did they do?

He runs to MELETE.

NIKILEV: Melete! Duck and cover!

MELETE (mesmerized by the bomb): What?
NIKILEV: Duck and cover!

They are near a concrete bus shelter, part of which form a staircase that leads below ground. NIKILEV dives toward MELETE and barrels her into the bus shelter. They collapse on the ground inside the bus shelter as the shockwave from the blast hits them. The sound is deafening.

There is an almighty darkness, go to Section 87

Do the Rousyan authorities find Melete first? Go to Section 99

Do the Columbian government find Melete first? Go to Section 93
12. ALL THAT REMAINS

A makeshift Army Hospital on the edge of a wide desolate field. Beds are lined up in the distance. Many people are wrapped up in gauze, suffering from burns. Occasionally there are wails of pain coming from some of the patients. A DOCTOR is moving between the beds checking vital signs. A NURSE, further along, is administering morphine to one of the patients.

At the entrance to the Hospital two men enter. One holds a handkerchief to his mouth and tries not to vomit from the smell. His name is MASTERS he is the representative from the Columbian State Department. He has been tasked with tracking down and locating Columbian citizens. The other man is a rather haggard and dishevelled MAC. MAC holds a notebook and is taking notes.

After MASTERS has settled his stomach, he takes the Handkerchief away from his mouth and speaks.

MASTERS: This is the fifth hospital we've visited Mr Mackenzie.

MAC (closing notepad): I'm not sure that you could call it that.

MASTERS: They’ve clearly improvised but then there’s never been a precedent for this.

MAC: Where is the nooclear medicine? All they’re doing is treating the external wounds.

MASTERS: Like I said Mr Mackenzie there is no precedent for this situation.

MAC: And what are we doing to help?

MASTERS: What do you mean?

MAC: Dogdammit Masters! I’ve seen people with their faces melted off and you’re telling me we haven’t even offered humanitarian aid to these people?

MASTERS: I... I’m not at liberty to discuss that...

MAC: Don’t give me that bullshit, this goes beyond politics.

MASTERS (putting the handkerchief to his mouth): Perhaps we should just focus on finding this friend of yours.

MAC: She’s my wife!

MASTERS: Your ex-wife.

MAC (quietly): We’re separated, not divorced.

MASTERS: How do you know she wasn’t killed in the bomb blast?

MAC: I have my sources. I know she hadn’t made it to Moscoww by the time the bomb was detonated, but she was close enough to get caught up in the ensuing firestorm.

MASTERS: I can understand your desire to find her Mr Mackenzie.
MAC: I doubt a man like you feels much of anything Masters, after all you just do what they tell you to do. You’re just stooge in a suit.

MASTERS: That’s uncalled for Mr Mackenzie.

MAC (angry): Dogdammit! Don’t you know who this woman is? She helped to break Sandgate and she’s...

MASTERS (interjecting): ...She’s your wife. I understand Mr MacKenzie. However this is the fourth time in as many days that I’ve been out here looking for loved ones and while I cannot possibly understand what you are going through right now, my job is to look after ALL Columbian citizens, not just famous journalists, so if you don’t mind, let’s get on with it.

MAC wants to say something derogatory, but instead he bites his tongue.

MASTERS approaches the DOCTOR and shows the DOCTOR his ID.

MASTERS: My name is Daniel Masters, I’m from the US State Department. I’m here looking for a Columbian citizen, a Ms....(he gestures to MAC to give the name)

MAC: Mary Melete.

MASTERS: Mary Melete. Do you have anyone here by that name?

The DOCTOR looks at him bewildered.

MASTERS: Cristeas! They told me there was someone here who spoke Onglish.

MAC: You speak Rousyan. Why don’t you speak to them?

MASTERS: It would be better if you understood what was going on too.

But before MAC can speak to the Doctor, the DOCTOR walks off in the direction of the NURSE. The DOCTOR and the NURSE talk to one another in Rousyan. The NURSE approaches.

NURSE (in a thick accent): Yes, how can I help you?

MASTERS: My name is Daniel Masters, I’m from the Columbian State Department.

NURSE: Yes.

MASTERS: We’re looking for a Columbian citizen by the name of Mary Melete. Has anyone by that name been admitted?

NURSE: I’m not sure. Most of these victims here were within thirty kilometres of the blast, so many of their clothes and belongings were destroyed, burnt in the flames. We are at the mercy of the survivors to tell us who they are. Many of them cannot remember their own name. All we have is hope that people like you will turn up. (Beat) As to this woman I do not know if she is here.

MASTERS: Thank you Nurse.
The NURSE turns to go.

MAC (desperate): Is there anyone here who speaks Onglish? At all? Maybe in their sleep?

The NURSE stops.

MAC: Nurse?

NURSE: I’m not sure.... (Beat) Come.

She starts to walk through the hospital followed first by MAC and then MASTERS. They pass by many beds of people who are bandaged and covered from head to toe in some cases. It is clear by the state of disarray in the patient’s bandages just how makeshift the hospital is.

The NURSE finally brings them to a bed of a woman whose long hair covers her face. Her body is bandaged around her arms and torso, but we can’t see her legs as they are hidden under the blankets.

NURSE: This one has no name, but I heard her sing a child’s song the other night in her sleep. It was in Onglish.

MAC and MASTERS look at each other. MAC moves closer to the bed. He looks at the woman’s face and he recognises his wife. To MASTERS he says,

MAC: It’s her.

MASTERS seems both shocked and relieved. MAC kneels down on the ground by the bed and calls to the woman in the bed.

MAC: Melete...Mary...

MELETE doesn’t stir.

MAC: Mary Miriam Melete, it’s me, Mac.

MELETE begins to come to.

MAC: I’m your husband, we have a daughter... Arabella.

MELETE: Arabella...

MAC: Yes, she’s three years old.

MELETE slowly tries to rise from her bed.

MELETE: Arabella... I need to see her.

Her voice is groggy and uncertain.

MAC: Do you remember your name?
There is a long pause.

MELETE: Mary... ... ...Mary Melete.

MAC smiles.

MAC: And who am I?

MELETE: Peter ... Mackenzie, but everyone calls you Mac.

Suddenly a wave of emotions and memories overcome MELETE and she remembers everything.

MELETE: Oh Mac!

MAC hugs her, slowly she responds.

After the hug she says,

MELETE: Where am I? What happened?

MAC looks up at MASTERS for a moment and then tells MELETE.

MAC: Moscoww’s gone. Redsnev detonated a nooclear device to prevent Barbekhov taking control.

MELETE: And Barbekhov?

MAC: Gone, along with the city and about 7 million people. (Long Beat) Do you remember anything?

MELETE’S eyes glaze over for a moment.

MAC: Mary?

MELETE: A wall of fire coming towards me. Even the air had become combustible. I panicked. I couldn’t remember what you do to when ... ...then Nikilev found me and dragged me into a concrete bus shelter and then the firestorm hit and...

MELETE snaps out of her reverie.

MELETE: Nikilev, where’s Nikilev?

MAC: He’s alive. (Beat) They found him, but they have him in an Army Hospital.

MELETE sighs in relief.

MAC: They’re going to make him the next leader, the military has surrendered control to his forces.

MELETE: Lucky son of a bitch. Disastered his way into the top job.

MAC turns to MASTERS.

MAC: Can we get her out of here?
MASTERS: I don’t know. (He turns to the NURSE) Is she safe to travel?

NURSE: Her burns are quite bad, but her vitals are stable. If you are willing to take responsibility for her, then I’m sure we can discharge her.

MASTERS: Can she walk?

NURSE: I don’t know.

MAC: Do you think you can walk?

MELETE: I don’t know.

MELETE shifts her legs, they move under the blanket and over the side of the bed and MAC helps her up. She stands gingerly, but is weak, then collapses on the bed.

MELETE: I think the answer is no.

MASTERS (to the NURSE): Do you have a wheelchair?

NURSE goes off and fetches a wheelchair.

MASTERS (to MAC and MELETE): I’m sure there’ll be some paperwork. I’ll take care of it, and then we can talk about getting you home.

MELETE: I’m sorry who are you?

MASTERS: Of course we haven’t been introduced. Daniel Masters from the State Department.

MELETE: Well that’s a first.

MASTERS: The state department has been assisting with the location and extraction of foreign nationals and helping the Rousyans with its Nooclear Medicine.

MELETE wants to say something snarky but MAC intercedes...

MAC: Mary... Let’s get you home.

The NURSE arrives with the wheelchair. MAC and the NURSE help MELETE into it. The NURSE places a blanket over her legs.

MAC then pushes the wheelchair and they pass all of the victims and eventually the DOCTOR who is treating a patient. The DOCTOR looks over at them and at MELETE and he smiles at her and she smiles back and then the group disappear out of the tent.

A minute passes and the DOCTOR has finished with his patient. He stands and is ready to go when he sees a woman walking with an IV bag between the beds. It is the doppelganger of MELETE and as she passes the DOCTOR she smiles at him and now he just stares at her in shock.

The city is gone, long live the city, go to Section 13
Where is home now? Go to Section 13
13. IN THE RUINS

In darkness Melete stands with a blanket wrapped around her shoulder. She holds a notebook in her hand and with short snub-nosed pencil is furiously scribbling away. Her arms are bandaged except for her fingers. Her voice is heard, but she does not speak.

MELETE:
And the darkness surrounds us
It is hard to see anything
We’re deep in the tunnel now and there doesn’t seem to be anyway out
Deep down below we can see the line of the refugees
All clustered together in makeshift tents and shelters.
Many people are passing around bottles of water and other crucial supplies.
There are some people here with burns of different severities
It’s hard to tell if they require medical treatment
There are babies crying but strangely there are children playing
There is no sense of unhappiness or fear or loss
It is merely that people are trying to survive
What was done here and what was done to them
There will be time for recriminations later
Right now staying alive is what counts

MELETE closes her notebook and looks around at the scene she has just described. For a moment it is hard to distinguish MELETE from the rest of the crowd. She bears the same wounds and burns and look of disillusionment in her eyes. She stands there amidst the chaos of life watching it pass by.

Eventually MAC finds her in the crowd.

MAC: Are you all right?

MELETE looks at him.

MAC: You wanted to come.

MELETE: I had to.

MAC: It’s hard to believe that tomorrow we’ll be on plane going home.

MELETE: And this will still be here

MAC places his arm around her shoulder and she rests her head on his shoulder. Slowly they walk out of the scene.

Melete has lost faith in her career, perhaps a change of scenery will help.

Melete decides to become a correspondent in Santo Cristos, go to Section 83

Melete decides to pursue a career in Television, go to Section 23

Returning the United States now seems like the only option.
Melete’s decides to return to her work as a journalist, go to Section 60

Melete’s decides to return to her family with Mac, go to Section 14
14. A CONFRONTATION

Mac’s apartment in Franklin. Mac is carrying Melete’s suitcase as he opens the door to the apartment. He put the suitcase down as he calls out...

MAC: Arabella honey, we’re home!

Melete looks anxious.

MAC: Don’t be nervous, I’m sure she’ll be happy to see you.

MELETE: Sure.

Mother Hubbard walks into the room. She has a stern look on her face.

MELETE: What’s she doing here?

Melete gestures to Hubbard. Before Mac can answer Hubbard answers for him.

HUBBARD: I’m here to look after your daughter.

Melete reaches out to slap Hubbard, but Mac intervenes.

MAC (to MELETE): Stop it. (Beat, then quietly) She’s my mother, she has a right to spend time with Arabella.

Hubbard just stands there with her arms crossed.

MELETE: Where is Arabella?

HUBBARD: Oh suddenly you care now.

Mac holds MELETE back.

MAC (sharply): Ma enough! (to MELETE): If she didn’t come straight out, it means that she’s in her room sleeping.

Melete looks at them both but says nothing.

Melete spends some time with Mac, go to Section 59

Melete returns to work as soon as she can, go to Section 45

This memory was not complete, it was only a fragment. The subject was not able to remember the time and place. Please go on to Section 49
15. WHO IS EL PERRO SALVAJE?
An Editorial by Mary Melete
The New Amsterdam Times, 18th of March 1985

As the Revolution in Santo Cristo continues, the motives and actions of the enigmatic El Perro Salvaje continue to be called into question. Some argue that El Perro is the man to lead the beleaguered Santo Cristo to a democratic revolution, others contend that he is merely a troublemaker, a trickster and a terrorist who seeks only to destroy the Santo Cristan way of life.

It would be easier to examine these claims more closely if there were some solid facts about the man known as the Wild Dog. However the truth of the issue is that El Perro is a myth. A persona constructed to give the oppressed hope. He is but a shadow, a cipher onto which can be projected the desires, hopes and dreams of those who have none. El Perro is a ghost who is embodied by many men. A myth that can keep the idea of revolution alive, long after the possibility of lasting change has been extinguished. He is hope, but a hope that can never be fulfilled.

You may ask how can I, a reporter who has met El Perro, can be so sceptical of his aims and intentions? There are many reasons that lead me to suspect that El Perro is not the man that he claims to be. Firstly the man that I met spoke fluent English something that leads me to suggest that the mask of El Perro is just that, a mask inhabited by different Los Libertadores in order to convince the world beyond Santo Cristo that the cause of Los Libertadores is real.

Journalists across the world have all confirmed that whenever they have met with El Perro he has always spoken to them in their native tongue as though he had spoken it all his life. This anomaly is not easily accounted for. Are we expected to believe that in a country which has only 3% literacy, there exists a man, a glorious polymath, who is the product of the Santo Cristan education system? A system that regularly sees schools closed down and that has little or no infrastructure to teach children. It seems highly unlikely. Some have suggested that he is a wealthy Santo Cristan who was educated abroad and this explains his linguistic ability, but it seems even more preposterous to suggest that a wealthy Santo Cristan, all of whom openly support the reign of Domínguez, would engage in such guerrilla behaviour. It seems most likely that there are several men who wear the mask of El Perro Salvaje.

If so this raises a second point. What are the intentions of the entity/entities known as El Perro Salvaje for the poor and disenfranchised Santo Cristans. Juan Villa Domínguez is no saint, but at least his politics and motives are clear. This is not so for El Perro incorporated who have only spoken in rhetoric. A rhetoric that is echoed in the Absolutism of Rousya and worse still the Equalism of the Sino Republic. This dangerous breed of politics is at best misguided and unrealistic, not understanding how the world and human nature works, and at worst is a political ideology that will lead thousands (if not millions) to their deaths, as we have seen in places such as Correa D’Nord and Rangoonland.

The entity/entities known as El Perro Salvaje remain an unknown influence not only on Santo Cristo but also on the world as we know it. He/They represent the promise of a better tomorrow but a tomorrow that is vague and unformed. A tomorrow that could mean violence against other nations, possibly even the United States of Columbia. It is a tomorrow steeped in a contract created to fulfil the needs of only El Perro Salvaje. A contract that remains unknowable, uncertain but clearly dangerous. As the guerrilla war in Santo Cristo rages on, we must now ask ourselves, to whom do we owe our allegiances, the known, in the form of the dictator Domínguez or the unknown danger of the mask of El Perro Salvaje?
16. ENTER THE LAIR OF EL PERRO SALVAJE

MARY MELETE is brought in with her hands tied in front of her and with a hessian sack over her head. The GUARD who brings her in place her down on a chair and then takes the sack off her head.

MELETE: Thank you.

The GUARD says nothing instead he takes a knife and cuts the rope binding MELETE’s hands. He then exits the way he came, locking the door behind him. MELETE is left alone in the room, she stand up and walks around the room, taking it all in. There is nothing really to see. It is a shack with the one major window bordered up. There are three doors. One centre stage, one stage left and one stage right that MELETE and the GUARD entered.

Suddenly there is a sound from behind the door on stage left and MELETE hurriedly returns to the chair and sits down. The door, stage left, bursts open to reveal two heavily armed guards carrying automatic weapons, they check the room looking for something. Once they are sure the room is clear, GUARD 1 gestures to someone outside the room to come in.

A tall man wearing a bandana that has the face of a wolf appears, he is EL PERRO SALVAJE, the wild dog and he appears lighter skinned than his guards and MELETE is shocked by this. This is not what she was expecting.

MELETE (speaking in Hispaniolan): Hola El Perro.

EL PERRO (speaking in perfect Onglish): Hello Ms. Melete.

MELETE: You speak Onglish?

EL PERRO: Yes. (Beat) Now what brings you to my war-torn country?

MELETE: A story, your story.

EL PERRO: How flattering. It’s not much too tell and I suspect you know it anyway.

MELETE: I know the official story but what’s the real story?

EL PERRO: What makes you think that there is such a difference?

MELETE: Because the official story is never the whole story.

EL PERRO: Ms. Melete your reputation does not do you justice. You are even more persistent in person.

MELETE: Then why did you agree to see me?

EL PERRO: Your newspaper has printed many falsehoods about me, lies that the people of your country no doubt take for granted.

MELETE: Well then, set the record straight.

EL PERRO: Why are you really here Ms. Melete?
MELETE: What do you mean?

EL PERRO: What compulsion brings you to Santo Cristos?

MELETE: You seem an unlikely leader of your people. Why would a man like you, have to hide behind a mask?

EL PERRO: The mask represents the oppression we face, the fact that Domínguez rules with an iron hand and that only the savage can defeat men like him.

MELETE: Diplomacy is not an option?

EL PERRO: Those are your words Ms. Melete. The truth is more complicated.

MELETE: And yet you refuse to elaborate it for me? To discuss the political ramifications of a guerrilla war that has seen thousands of casualties and has a leader who has no real face!

EL PERRO laughs.

MELETE: This is funny to you?

EL PERRO: When it comes from your mouth. Yours is a tongue that has a way with words, but also grandly oversimplifies matters. There are good pragmatic reasons why I hide my face.

MELETE: You’re horribly disfigured?

EL PERRO (laughs again): Simpler than that. (Beat) The mask is a symbol that can outlive me. There is a good chance that Domínguez will succeed in his attempts to silence me, but my mask lives on and it will give hope to the people when I no longer can. (Beat) You ask why I do it? It is for the freedom of those who have never known freedom.

MELETE: What makes you so sure that you won’t win against Domínguez? The people are behind you.

EL PERRO: Yes. But the poor have simple desires, desires that can be twisted easily by their fulfilment. Domínguez would not be in power if he did not know how to manipulate the masses. It is nothing for him to take my soldiers and turn them against me.

MELETE: You’re paranoid about Domínguez?

EL PERRO: Paranoia has its place when you are a man like me.

MELETE: A man behind a mask?

EL PERRO: We all have masks. What’s your mask hiding Ms. Melete?

MELETE seems disturbed by this.

MELETE: I don’t have anything to hide. I’m here to find out the truth about you.
EL PERRO: Perhaps I am seeking the same thing.

MELETE (suddenly confused): What?

EL PERRO: What are you doing here Ms. Melete?

One of the GUARDS suddenly cocks a bullet into the chamber of his gun.

EL PERRO: Why are you really here?

MELETE: This was the only way I could meet you. (Beat) You set up the terms of this meeting. I merely followed along.

EL PERRO: That’s what you would have me believe?

MELETE: It’s the truth.

EL PERRO: You see only what you want to see. To you I am the terrorist that Domínguez has labelled me. But Terrorism is a fancy word used by the powerful to invoke fear in those who have nothing. For too long we have been at the mercy of world powers who seek only their own well-being and care little for the suffering of our people.

At that moment a THIRD GUARD bursts through the central door, also carrying a semi-automatic weapon. The other GUARDS raise their weapons towards him. The THIRD GUARD stops and quickly lowers his weapon.

THIRD GUARD: El Perro! Our lookout reports government troops on the mountain road!

SECOND GUARD (pointing his weapon at Melete): This Puta led them here! Tell me and I will kill her.

MELETE closes her eyes in fear.

EL PERRO looks at MELETE and at his guards. EL PERRO points the SECOND GUARD’s gun away from MELETE’s head.

EL PERRO: Although she has a silver tongue, she believes too strongly in her own actions to be responsible for this.

THIRD GUARD: We have to leave now!

The four men, EL PERRO and the three GUARDS leave through the central door and only once the door slams shut does MELETE open her eyes.

Melete, don’t just sit there! Go to Section 17

Melete, what have you gotten yourself into? Go to Section 17

It’s time to get out now Melete! Go to Section 17
17. RESCUE ME

MELETE opens her eyes. She is in a shack in the Santo Cristan jungle, she stands but her legs are shaky. She steadies herself and looks around at the three doors. MELETE moves up to the Central door slowly. She is terrified of what might be behind the door, she slowly and tentatively tries the handle. As she goes to turn it she finds that it is locked. At the moment she exhales. She steps back from the door and for a moment rests her head on the wall and composes herself.

Next she looks at the other two doors to her left and right and she opts for the right door. Again slowly and methodically she moves toward the door and reaches out her hand to try the doorknob. As she goes to turn the knob, four commandos burst through the left door. The Commandos are armed with automatic weapons and are dressed in jungle camouflage. There are two men (COMMANDO 1 and 4) and two women (COMMANDO 2 and 3).

MELETE in shock turns and stares wide-eyed at them.

COMMANDO 1: Freeze! Get your hands up!

MELETE instinctively responds.

COMMANDO 2 and 3 rush over and forcibly tackle MELETE to the ground. COMMANDO 4 calls back through the broken left door.

COMMANDO 4: Clear. You can come in.

As MELETE watches from the ground, DANIEL MASTERS enters.

MELETE glares at him.

MELETE (from the ground): Masters?

COMMANDO 2 slaps her across the back of the head.

COMMANDO 2: Quiet!

MASTERS looks at her and then around at the room.

MASTERS (to the COMMANDOES): Well where is he?

COMMANDO 4: He’s not here sir.

MASTERS: I can see that you phucking idiot! How can he have possibly known that we were coming after him?

MELETE: You’re in league with Domínguez?

COMMANDO 2 slaps MELETE across the head again.

MELETE bites her lip.

MASTERS: Well this is a right royal cluster phuck! You’re supposed to handle it, where the phuck was the warning from the other squad? We had the roads covered. Now what the hell and I am going to tell our President? Or for that matter that backward hick in Cristos Cuidad!
MELETE: You didn’t cover the jungle.

COMMANDO 2 goes to slap MELETE again.

MASTERS (interceding): What? Get her up!

COMMANDO 2 stops short of slapping her and with COMMANDO 3 helps her up. MELETE immediately spits in the face of COMMANDO 2. COMMANDO 2 goes to slap her face, this time with the back of her hand but MASTERS physically nudges her in the back.

MASTERS: Enough!

MASTERS at last looks at her, he exhales uneasily.

MASTERS: Mary phucking Melete. How did I know it would be you? You have the uncanny knack for turning up in places where you’re not wanted. In hindsight we probably should have left you to rot in Moscoww.

MELETE: Phuck you Masters.

MASTERS: I should have expected that. (Beat, to COMMANDO 2) Feel free to slap her now.

COMMANDO 2 slaps MELETE hard across the face.

MELETE screams in anger.

MASTERS: Now, I’m going to ask you some questions and I want you to answer them, honestly. If you don’t I’m going to let Lunk here have his way with you and then he’s going to dispose of your body in that jungle that you’re so fond of. (Beat) Do you understand?

MELETE nods her head.

MASTERS: Now, what were you doing here?

MELETE: I came to interview him.

MASTERS: EL Perro?

MELETE: Yes, I’ve spent three months in country following leads, so that I could get this interview.

MASTERS: That much I knew.

MELETE: You’ve been following me?

MASTERS: Not directly, but your path and mine just seems to be intertwined. (Beat) So what did El Perro have to say?

MELETE: Nothing I guess. He knew about you. He left before he revealed anything.

MASTERS: He told you nothing?
MELETE: Nothing new, you probably already have it all on record anyway.

MASTERS: Be specific Melete.

MELETE: His people thought I was in on it, which means they knew you were tailing me.

MASTERS: Right. (Beat) Anything else?

MELETE: He’s not Hispanolan, his Onglish is too good.

MASTERS: And which way did they go?

**MELETE looks at the right door.**

MASTERS: Well, thank you for confirming mostly what I already knew.

**COMMANDO 2 looks at MASTERS.**

MASTERS: Put her in the truck and drop her across the border.

**COMMANDO 2 puts a hessian bag over Melete’s Head and he ties her hands with rope.**

MASTERS (to COMMANDO 1 and 4): All right you two come with me, we see if we can find any trace of El Perro out here. (To COMMANDO 2 and 3) Get her to the El Soledorean border and dump in a border town. But don’t waste time, if I find you have I’ll demote the pair of you. Now get the phuck out of here!

*Everything happens quickly after this as COMMANDO 2 and 3 exit with MELETE out the left door and MASTERS, COMMANDO 1 and 4 exit out the right door.*

Melete is on the wrong side of the law, go to Section 34

There’s only one road out of here, go to Section 19

Please remember this Section Number [Section 17]; it may be necessary to continue this story.

This is bigger than Melete knows, go to Section 94
TELEVISION ANNOUNCER: Before we go tonight we have been informed that Mary Melete, CBC’s own award-winning journalist is believed to be in hiding tonight somewhere in Santo Cristos where she has been reporting for the last two months. She has been in the country reporting on the Los Liberadores Rebel movement. It is believe that she has been targeted by those same rebel forces that she has been reporting on.

At present Melete’s whereabouts are unknown and we will bring you more on this story as it comes to hand.
19. MELETE ON THE LINE

*MELTE stands in a telephone booth, she drops some coins into the receiver.*

MELETE: Hello operator ... I need to place a call.

*Pause.*

MELETE: The US please. Franklin, District of America.

*Pause.*

MELETE: The phone number is 1 83 555 7820.

*Pause.*

MELETE: That’s right. *(Beat)* Thank you.

*Prior to this the operator’s voice has not been heard, but now the phone can be heard ringing.*

MELETE: Come on, answer the phone. It’s not that late.

*The phone continues to ring.*

MELETE: Come on Mac, where are you?

*Suddenly the phone receiver is picked up and MELETE speaks.*

MELETE: Hello Mac?

*A recording can be heard of MAC’s voice.*

MAC’s VOICE: Hello...you’ve reached the MacKenzie residence of the Peter and Arabella, please leave a message when you hear the tone and we’ll get back to you as soon as possible.

MELETE *(simultaneously with the start of the message)*: Oh.

*A tone sounds.*

*A light rises elsewhere. We see an answering machine on a table near a telephone. HUBBARD enters with her arms crossed and listens.*

MELETE: Mac it’s me, Mele... Mary. I spent the last of my money on this call. *(Beat)* I really wanted to hear your voice and talk to you and Ara... *(MELETE finds it hard to speak)*... I’m stuck in this hellhole and I don’t know when I’m coming home and I just needed to hear the voice of someone I loved. I miss you Mac. When I get out of here I want to see you again and just talk.

OPERATOR’S VOICE *(speaking with an accent)*: I’m sorry, your time is up.

MELETE: What? No, it can’t be. It’s only been a minute.
OPERATOR’S VOICE: I’m sorry but the line is needed for another call.

The line goes dead. MELETE places the receiver back on the cradle. She wipes away a tear from her cheek.

Meanwhile in Franklin D.A., the message machine beeps and shows a light with one message flashing. HUBBARD reaches down and presses a button, we hear the machine whirring as it rewinds and deletes the message. The message machine now shows no new messages.

Please remember this Section Number [Section 19]; it may be necessary to continue the story.

Melete immediately returns to the United States, go to Section 64

Please remember this Section Number [Section 19]; it may be necessary to continue the story.

Melete decides to find Mac, go to Section 64

Melete decides to return to the United States, go to Section 14

Melete decides to take up a posting in Yooropa, go to Section 47
20. SPIKE IT TO SAVE LIVES

MAC and MELETE sit in a cafe. They are discussing a story.

MAC: Maybe we should just back off.

MELETE: So what exactly are you saying Mac?

MAC: Don’t be this way.

MELETE: What way is that?

MAC: That’s a trap and you know it.

MELETE: Don’t play high and mighty with me Mac, you’re either in on this story or you’re not.

MAC: I just think the timing is off. I think we should wait.

MELETE: You want to spike the story?

MAC: Mary, you’re being unfair.

MELETE: Now I know it’s serious.

MAC: What?

MELETE: You only use my first name if things are getting desperate.

MAC: Heyzeus! I’m trying to talk to you about this in way that’s not about us.

MELETE: I’m not spiking the story.

MAC: Don’t you understand that if we publish this and we singlehandedly weaken negotiations?

MELETE: You’re a journalist who’s paid to tell the story. This is the story.

MAC: We print this now and the government will pull out their support. Union has made no secret about the fact that it is supporting this war.

MELETE: A war built on lies and false promises.

MAC: You’re being naive.

MELETE: No, I’m fighting for this story and you should be too.

MAC: We’re putting lives at risk.

MELETE: And what about the soldiers who will be sent into some tropical hellhole to fight a war built on bullshit?
MAC: Look it’s no use talking to you, you seem to think that this a personal affront to your career. Well I’m here to tell you for once in your life Melete to think of somebody else besides you.

MELETE: Oh that’s easy for the Wurlitzer prize winner to say!

MAC: Phuck you!

MAC stands suddenly and heads for the exit. Just before he reaches the door he turns back to MELETE and says.

MAC: Listen, you can do what you like, but it won’t have my name on it.

MAC exits and MELETE sighs and then thumps the table with her fist.

BLACKOUT
21. LIBEL

MELETE stares at the word processing screen. She is contemplating typing her next line. McMANUS enters and hovers over MELETE.

MELETE: Is there something I can do for you Frank?

McMANUS: I can’t print this Melete.

MELETE: Why not Frank?

McMANUS: Isn’t it obvious?

MELETE turns away from the screen.

MELETE: Tell me Frank.

McMANUS: I’m not going to do this with you again Melete. (Beat) It’s libel. It has a court case written all over it.

MELETE: And Frank? What do you pay those lawyers for if not for a moment’s like these.

McMANUS: You’ve already cost this paper enough.

MELETE: Oh but your happy when I bring in the accolades, aren’t you Frank?

McMANUS: If I run this story Mary, I’m risking the paper. (Beat) I’ve been happy to back you up in the past but this...is too much.

MELETE: You wanted the facts Frank and they’re all there in that story. I can verify everything that I put in there. (Beat) You want me to give you my leads I will.

McMANUS: I don’t doubt your veracity Mary. I’m not questioning your ability to write. But I can’t in good conscience publish this...and I’m not going too.

McMANUS turns to leave.

MELETE: Do you want my resignation? Is that what you want Frank? Cause I can do that.

McMANUS walks out.

McMANUS: Whatever makes you happy Melete.

After McMANUS leaves, MELETE thumps the table.

Melete decides it time to make a change, go to Section 128

Please remember this Section Number [Section 21]; it may be necessary to continue the story.

Melete decides to return to Rousya, go to Section 134
Melete thinks it time to work in another medium, go to Section 23

Melete decides to meet up with the journalist, Sidney Robinson, go to Section 63

Melete decides to contact Mac, go to Section 64
This day should be etched on our memories for all time. It marks not only the deaths of seven brave Columbians but also the death of the Space program as we know it.

Now with the deaths of these seven Rocketeers we have found ourselves at impasse. One that not only recognises the tragedy of this horrible event but that also acknowledges how far we’ve come. When President Fitzgerald announced his desire for the United States of Columbia to beat our former ally, the Rousyan Republic into Space, we thought it was Fitz’s way of keeping the camaraderie of the Great War alive, but it soon emerged that it was a part of something different.

The Rousyan Republic it seemed was a republic in name only, instead it was more akin to an Absolutist state. The Space Race became a question of ideology. The Republic had the intention to send its Galaxians into space, while we had our Rocketeers. It was a symbolic battle one that also reflected the differences in our Capitalist and Absolutist ways.

It was a race that we won. When Selene 12 launched in 1969 with those three men O’Neill, Fizz and Bourke, it silenced many critics of the Space Program. The launch was also witnessed by ex-President Fitzgerald, and became the lasting legacy of his political career. A fitting consolation for a man who had lost his wife and vice-President in assassination attempts and was by now a shell of his former self.

Then when in 1981 the Rousyan Republic collapsed into civil war, their space program fell into total disarray. Their last great spaceship the Boris 14 self-destructed on the launchpad in remote Siberia taking with it the last vestiges of the space race. Yet the USC persevered with its regular launches and with the plans to create an International Space Terminal in orbit.

Now, with the deaths of these fine men and women, it is time for us to put this folly behind us. Every year the space race costs us billions of dollars and it all it has left us is some satellites and a parade of corpses who can no longer be identified. This is not in any way to undermine the fine work of O’Neill, Fizz and Bourke, or any of their compatriots who followed in their footsteps. It is certainly not in any way intended to disrespect those who died out there on in the air over Teguesta. It is simply to say that we won the space race. We beat the Rousyans to the moon and we did it at great cost. Perhaps it is now time to remove that cost.

A space race is fine when there is actually a race but now we are spending good money after bad. It’s time to end our fascination with outer space and focus instead on the space right here in the good ole US of C.

The Space Race is, and will always be ours, but let us not bury anymore of our countrymen for the sake of a dead president’s once grand dream. The time has come for us to move on from the far reaches of space and instead focus on matters closer to home.

It’s time to talk to McManus about the status quo, go to Section 128.
23. THE MARY MELETE SHOW

A television monitor; on the monitor we can see a talk show set with two chairs and fake indoor plant. On the screen comes a tile and a voice over can be heard.

VOICE OVER: It’s time once again for the Mary Melete show!

TITLE ON SCREEN: THE MARY MELETE SHOW

VOICE OVER (continuing): Tonight on the show Mary interviews the President. (Beat) We also take a look at Drugs, the epidemic that is sweeping Columbia! All that and much, much more in the next half hour on the MARY MELETE SHOW!

The television is turned off by a TV EXECUTIVE. MELETE leans on the wall with her arms crossed.

TV EXEC (Enthused): So what do you think?

MELETE: Do you want my honest opinion?

TV EXEC: Yes, please, don’t hold back.

MELETE: It’s an absolute piece of shit! What the phuck is this? A variety show?

TV EXEC: I understand your reluctance Mary, but you’re coming at this from a print perspective. Television is a different beast. Our paradigm is different.

MELETE: With all due respect Bob, you don’t mind if I call you Bob do you?

TV EXEC: No of course not Mary.

MELETE: Well Bob, I may not know the ‘paradigm’ but I know a steaming hot turd when I see one. This piece of shit masquerading as gold is nothing more than a horrible attempt at dumbing down things for the masses. So if you want my opinion, something you’re clearly willing to pay for, you’ll do something about this debacle!

MELETE storms out leaving the TV EXEC by himself.

TV EXEC: So I’ll take that as a maybe?

Melete decides that she must return to Rousya to finish her work, go to Section 134

Melete decides its time to reconcile with Mac, go to Section 35

Melete decides it’s not time to quit writing just yet, go to Section 22
24. MIRIAM FOLLOWS – A POET HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

A Review

BOOKS MONTHLY

(October 1989)

Although little is known about the poet Miriam Follows, every collection of her work continues to reveal a poet of exquisite voice and unusual phrasing. After the publication over a decade ago of her first volume of poetry “Petals from a Falling Rose”, it became clear that a new voice had arrived on the poetry scene. However all requests to her publishers for information, an interview or even a prepared statement have amounted to nothing.

Now with her fifth volume of poetry hitting the shelves, the book “Hiding in Plain Sight”, there seems to have been a minor change in this attitude. Follows’ publishers have released a statement that they attribute to author herself. It quotes the similarly reclusive author B. Traven and reads “The creative person should have no other biography than his works. – Traven was right and there’s nothing more to say.”

You have to wonder what Follows feels she will gain by cultivating this air of mystery. However it has become clear to her readers that she wishes for her poetry to be the definitive statement about who she is. To that end “Hiding in Plain Sight” is another fantastic addition to her oeuvre, one that continues to develop the themes of earlier work. However this reviewer can’t help but wonder if Follows reluctance to make herself known will become detrimental at some point in the future. It seems that the longer Follows remains in the shadows, the harder it is to determine the value of her work. Whether this will have an impact on her work remains to be seen.

CW

(CW is the critic Clarence Witherbee)
25. NEGOTIATIONS FAIL IN BRESLAN HOSTAGE CRISIS

THE WINDY CITY HERALD, 5th of January 1987

Written by: Mary Melete

In Breslan today an attempt to break the stalemate between Rousyan Troops and Icaucus terrorists has failed. 1200 men, women and children are being held in a school in the tiny town of Breslan, over 750 kilometres from the capital of Novi Moscowlw (formerly Volvograd). The town close to the border with Gorga has become the latest pawn in the Icaucus Separatist Brotherhood’s (IBS) attempts to be given their own nation.

A spokesman for the Rousyan President Leon Nikilev said that the country would not negotiate with terrorists—particularly those that would kill women and children. “We do not expect that this siege will end peacefully, however we are now asking that the IBS respectfully withdraw their militia from Breslan so that an open discussion can begin”, the spokesman said.

This statement came after Rousyan troops descended on Breslan and thwarted local attempts to end the siege peacefully. Unconfirmed sources say that a local doctor, who had been negotiating with the terrorists, had successfully secured the release of 30 children. The Doctor, whose identity is unknown, had been negotiating with the IBS to release all child hostages. Now, with the arrival of Rousyan troops, it appears that this option is no longer available. It remains unclear what the military intend but it now seems this situation will not be resolved peacefully.

Spastikhov’s legacy will be ugly for Rousya, continue on Section 52

It is time for Melete to speak with Nikilev, go to Section 26
26. ON A BRESLAN HILLTOP

MELETE stands on a hilltop overlooking the schoolhouse where the massacre has taken place. She doesn’t look down at the school but rather to the horizon. NIKILEV approaches, he has managed to slip away from security detail to speak with MELETE.

MELETE (looking at the sky): What do you want Nikilev?

NIKILEV: That’s a fine way to greet a head of state.

MELETE: You were once just a foot soldier...

NIKILEV: And now look at me.

NIKILEV has tried to lighten the mood, but there’s no getting around it, the reality of the situation is too sombre.

MELETE: You should’ve done better.

NIKILEV: I know.

MELETE: How many bodies are they pulling out of that schoolhouse? How many dead...(she can’t bring herself to say children)...

NIKILEV: Too many. (Beat) It is a day that will live on in infamy.

MELETE: Children Leon! Some of them were barely old enough to write their own names!

NIKILEV: I know.

MELETE: So why didn’t you do anything? Why did you let them do this?

NIKILEV: Because there was more at stake than human lives. (Beat) It was the fragile balance of the Rousyan Republic. To give in here would have meant the end of Rousya as we know it, the splintering into warring factions that would continue to decimate the Rousyan ideal. (Beat) I know I will be judged for this, but it was what had to be done.

MELETE: Spoken like a true politician.

NIKILEV: No, like a pragmatist. Don’t think that I wanted this blood on my hands, but it is the blood that will strengthen our nation. Rightly or wrongly.

MELETE: Now I have a reason to respect you.

NIKILEV: Thank you. I know it must’ve taken a lot to say that. (Beat) Now I must ask something of you, as old comrades do.

MELETE: What?

NIKILEV: Go home Melete. (Beat) You have a child don’t you?
MELETE nods.

NIKILEV: Then go home and hold them in your arms and tell them that you love them. It is more than the people of Breslan will be able to do tonight.

MELETE: I was hoping to cover the state funeral, there is going to be one?

NIKILEV: Yes...but Rousya needs to mourn in private now, away from the eyes of the world.

MELETE: Are you kicking me out of your country?

NIKILEV: Don’t make me. (Beat) It would be much nicer if you left of your own accord.

MELETE: What are you going to do Leon?

NIKILEV: What is right... for the good of my country.

MELETE: Start a Holy war?

NIKILEV: No, the process of reunification.

MELETE: But you’ll spill blood.

NIKILEV: Perhaps, if it comes to that. (Beat) I hope that it won’t.

MELETE looks at NIKILEV.

MELETE: All right, I’ll go.

NIKILEV: Thank you. (Beat) Goodbye Mary.

MELETE: Goodbye Leon.

Unexpectedly they hug.

NIKILEV: A kiss for old time’s sake?

MELETE kisses him goodbye. NIKILEV turns and looks out at the horizon as MELETE starts her way down the hill.

NIKILEV (still looking out at the view): Remember to tell your daughter that you love her.

MELETE: I will Leon.

NIKILEV takes a deep breath and slowly exhales.

Melete decides it’s time to go home, go to Section 135

This concludes the file of subject 135125205, Mary Melete, at this time.

The news is grim from Breslan, go to Section 27
27. BLOODBATH! MASSACRE AT BRESLAN SCHOOLHOUSE
THE WINDY CITY HERALD, 7th of January 1987

Written by Mary Melete

The town of Breslan mourns tonight after the 48-hour deadline imposed by the Rousyan Troops surrounding Schoolhouse No. 1 in the small town of Breslan came to an end. The 30 terrorists opened fire on the 1200 men, women and children who they held hostage. As Rousyan troops stormed the building they were caught in a firefight with the terrorists, preventing them from saving the hostages. Sources say the IBS militia had gathered the hostages in the school gymnasium and once the deadline passed the militia immediately gunned them down.

The firefight lasted approximately an hour with Rousyan Troops finally succeeding in entering the building and bringing the situation under control. It is not known how many casualties there are and if there are any survivors. The fate of the 30 IBS militia is also unknown.

Many locals whose family members were being held within the school have said that the screams of the hostages could be heard on the streets. As a community who had put its faith in the Rousyan military to solve this situation, many are asking angry questions tonight about what happened. In the coming days it is hoped that answers will come to light, about exactly what happened and why the Rousyans did not attempt to negotiate for the release of any hostages.

Rousyan President Leon Nikilev will visit Breslan in the coming days and it is expected that he will make a statement at that time. The events in Breslan come at a difficult time for Nikilev who is still dealing with the recent nooclear disaster in Priyapat, coupled with the continued attempts by Rousyan-controlled satellite states to form their own countries. The long road to peace and prosperity remains in the distant future and with this latest setback.

Some things have ended before they have begun, go Section 26

Melete has decided enough is enough, only her family can help her now, go to Section 129
28. EL PERRO RETURNS

MELETE is typing at her typewriter when her doorbell rings. She rises to answer the door.

There is man wearing a non-descript clothing, and he has a baseball cap over his head. It is difficult to see his face.

MELETE: Yes?

EL PERRO: May I come in?

The man lifts his head and realise that it is EL PERRO.

MELETE: Oh my dog! Yes of course.

EL PERRO enters quickly and MELETE looks anxiously down the hallway but there is no one there. She quickly shuts the door.

MELETE: They told me you were dead.

EL PERRO: Who did?

MELETE: Come to think of it, I don’t know.

EL PERRO: Are you being followed...again?

MELETE: I’m a journalist. I’ve come to expect that I must be annoying someone.

EL PERRO: Then we must assume that it is not safe for us here. Come, we must go.

MELETE: Where exactly?

EL PERRO raises a finger to his lips.

EL PERRO: I can’t say, because they are listening.

MELETE: You mean...

EL PERRO (interrupting): It seems likely.

MELETE: Then why did you risk yourself by coming here?

EL PERRO: Because you hold the key to understanding the mystery of my existence.

MELETE: Me? How?

EL PERRO: All will be revealed. Come, we must go.

What does El Perro want with Melete? Go to Section 29
29. EL PERRO’S VISION

_El Perro_ and Melete are in an undisclosed location. To one side there is a bookshelf filled with dusty old books, many of them treatises on politics.

El Perro: Melete, you are a soul divided. Separated from reality and your life.

Melete: You’ve been drinking too much peyote.

El Perro: It’s easy to dismiss those who can see what you cannot. But you do so in ignorance at the expense of your own future.

Melete: Can the Hoodoo Perro, just tell me why you brought me here?

El Perro: Do you know of the feathered serpent, the deity that controls the winds?

Melete: What?

El Perro: Quetzalcoatl.

Melete: I was never much interested in mythology.

El Perro: It’s only a myth when it belongs in the past. The serpent lives and brings life to our world. (Beat) I never believed in the serpent until I began to dream of it. The dreams could not be remembered at first, they were fragments of colours. But soon I could hear a voice speaking to me as though it was far away, begging me to come closer. Closer, it said. Closer. (Beat) I grew frightened of the serpent, not knowing its intentions but yet I felt compelled to listen. And it told me the truth. That I am not from this world.

Melete: Oh come on! Do you really expect me to fall for this?

El Perro: You can believe what you want. All I know is that two days ago, the serpent told me that you were a kindred spirit, a woman separated by the winds. A traveller like myself.

Melete looks at him sceptically.

El Perro: Why are you so doubtful?

Melete: Cristeas! I write a couple of bad articles about you and this is where it leads me!

El Perro: So you’ve never had the sense that a part of you was missing? That somehow you were incomplete.

Melete looks away from El Perro.

El Perro: For me it was the sense that I was somehow out of time. That my actions belong somewhere else, anywhere but here.

Melete: You’re having doubts about yourself. About the failure of the great revolution? El Perro: No Mary, our paths are connected, because I know that you feel this way too...
Melete stares at him.

EL PERRO: Admit to me, that this reality is not what you believe it to be.

MELETE: I...I think you’ve been smoking too much peyote Mr Perro.

EL PERRO: You doubt yourself, even though you know it to be true.

MELETE: What do you want me to say?

EL PERRO: I want you to acknowledge that you believe this to be true.

MELETE: And what will that prove?

EL PERRO: That we are at last ready to begin.

MELETE looks at EL PERRO for a long time.

MELETE: What makes you so sure?

EL PERRO: I have seen it.

MELETE looks at El Perro

MELETE: Yes it’s true. Sometimes I do feel out of time and space.

EL PERRO: Good. Now we can begin.

Where will El Perro lead Melete? Go to Section 44
30. THE BRICK HOUSE
(A Wikicyclo Article)

The Brick House is the home of the head of state or the President of the United States of Columbia. Its serves as the office and residence to the current sitting President and tenancy of the building is handed over to next President following an election.

HISTORY

Built from 1838 to 1843, the Brick House is so called because of its unique brick appearance reminiscent of several houses within the nearby Georgeville area. At 12 storeys high, it is one of the largest brick buildings of its kind. It is the largest Brick home for a head of state in all of the world.

1879 REVOLUTIONARY FIRE

In 1879 on the eve of the Battle of Franklin, the Brick House library was set alight, destroying one of the original copies of the Columbian constitution and almost completely destroying the Brick House itself. Many important documents were lost, never to be recovered and this disaster lead to the building of the Library of Union that houses all records for Columbia until this very day.
The destruction of Willis Island represents the beginning of the Great Exodus of 1933. Willis island which had been home to United States major immigrations station and which served as primary entry into the United State of Columbia. A group of Columbian Purists broke into the immigration station and placed explosives detonating the building. The explosion was timed to disrupt the arrival of the SS Carpathia which was carrying immigrants and refugees from Yooropa. The Carpathia which had been delayed by inclement weather in the Atlantis Ocean had arrived 25 minutes later than it was supposed to and this is the reason why the ship and its passengers survived the explosion.

The Captain of the ship, seeing the explosion began to steer the ship away from Willis Island and was uncertain of where the ship would be able to dock. This course of action was again fortuitous as it prevented the ship from coming under rifle fire from the Columbian Purists remaining on the island.

The Purists held the island for sixteen days preventing any ships from landing on the island while Representatives of the Union decided what to do about the situation. Finally yielding to public pressure as well as the threats of rioting in several major cities (supported by Columbian Purist organisations) the Union formally closed the borders of the United States of Columbia which lead to the Great Exodus of 1933.
32. SS CARPATHIA  
(A Wikicyclo Article)

The SS CARPATHIA was a ship out of Caspian that was responsible for bringing many immigrants and refugees to the United States prior to the Great Exodus of 1933.

It is most famous for its near miss at the destruction of Willis Island when the Captain, Isaiah Weeganbohm steered the ship away from Willis Island to prevent it coming under fire from the Columbian Purists.

The ship whose immigrants included the noted physicist Albert Eisenstein was eventually rerouted to the Free States of Canada where its passengers disembarked. After 1933, the Carpathia never returned to a port in the continental United States. The ship was scuttled in 1946.
33. THE PLEBIAN PURGES
(A Wikicyclo Article)

The Plebian Purges remain a controversial political action within the history of the United States of Columbia. The purges are the culmination of anti-immigration sentiment that began in the 1930s and contributed to the Great Exodus of 1933.

The Plebian Party sought to capitalise on this sentiment by absorbing members from the Fascist Party of Columbia (FPC) and other fringe political movements. This influx of new members led the Plebs to move to the extreme right in policy and action.

As a result of the speeches of Senator Joseph Brown MacKenzie, the Prole Party senator for the state of Arkana, a major backlash developed against the policies and politician of the Plebian Party. Large protests on the streets of several major Columbian cities, emboldened the Prole Party to push for a congress committee to investigate the fascist involvement in the Plebian Party.

This resulted in the Plebian Purges from 1955 to 1961. During this period Plebian party members and famous Plebian supporters (most notably those from the entertainment industry) were asked to testify and name names before the House Fascist Affairs Committee (HFAC).

Those who testified did so in a closed hearing and were given pseudonyms by which they could be identified. These pseudonyms were based on characters from nursery rhymes and fairy tales. Two of the most prominent witnesses were identified as Old Mother Hubbard and Little Jack Horner.

Many Plebian members were jailed and prevented from working until the Thaw of 1972, when the Plebian government of the day instigated a relaxing of the restrictions. In the years since the purges there has been enormous pressure brought to bear on the committees and governments to release the names of those who testified. It continues to be an issue that is debated until the present day in the United States.

A decision is made, go to Section 56
34. AN INTERROGATION

MELETE sits at a table handcuffed. She seems not at all disturbed to find herself in this situation. A man enters the room, it is MASTERS. He looks at MELETE notices that she’s handcuffed and yells back through the door as its closing.

MASTERS: Dogdammit! I said she wasn’t to be cuffed!

MASTERS reaches into his pocket and pulls out a pair of handcuff keys and undoes her hands.

MASTERS: I’m sorry about that.

MELETE doesn’t say anything.

MASTERS: We need to discuss all of your recent activities in Santo Cristos.

MELETE: Last I heard it wasn’t illegal for a journalist to do her job.

MASTERS: No Ms. Melete it isn’t. But when you involve yourself directly with affairs of other Sovereign States then we begin to question your intentions.

MELETE: Have I done something wrong?

MASTERS: You know what you did Ms. Melete.

MELETE: Care to explain it to me.

MASTERS: All right, we can play it that way. You know who Los Liberatores are?

MELETE: Yes. I wouldn’t be much of a journalist if I didn’t.

MASTERS (explosive): Cut the crap Melete!

MASTERS beats his hand on the table.

MASTERS: We both know the only reason you were down there was to bolster Los Liberatores cause against the regime of Domínguez.

MELETE: I repeat I was there doing my job as a journalist.

MASTERS: That’s A-grade bullshit and you know it. You were there to aid Los Liberatores and their leader El Perro Salvaje in attempting to overthrow the Domínguez government.

MELETE: Are you saying that our government is actively propping up a violent regime such as that of the dictator Juan Villa Domínguez?

MASTERS: What are you looking for a scoop Melete?

MELETE: Are you going to give me one?

MASTERS: How did you get to be in this part of Santo Cristos Ms. Melete?
MELETE: I walked.

MASTERS: Did the Los Liberatores help you in any way?

MELETE: Not to my knowledge Mr Masters.

MASTERS: All right Melete. Fine, you don’t want to tell me anything that’s your prerogative. However if we find any evidence or have reason to suspect that you have been colluding with these known terrorists, we will come down on you... ...HARD.

MASTERS gets up to leave.

MASTERS: You’re free to go Ms. Melete.

MELETE: Really?

MASTERS: Yes.

MELETE stands and goes to leave. At the last moment she turns back to MASTERS.

MELETE: So Masters you sure you don’t have a scoop for me?

MASTERS: You know Melete here’s a scoop for you. Maybe we are backing a man who knows how to fill soccer stadiums with the bodies of his dissenters. He may be the devil incarnate, but he’s our devil, and we’d much rather have him in power than someone who doesn’t stand for the values that we stand for. El Perro’s a loose cannon compared to Domínguez. And that’s strictly off the record, you publish that and we’ll deny everything.

MELETE: Of course you will (Beat) Oh and Masters you be hearing from my lawyers about your little handcuffs SNAFU.

MASTERS: I welcome it.

Melete is given her one phone call, go to Section 19
35. PASTA FREGOLI

An Italian restaurant in downtown Franklin D.A.
MAC and MELETE sit at a table.

MAC: You do have a sense of humour, Mary, bringing us here.

MELETE: Call it nostalgia. (Beat) We had some great meals here.

MAC: And some terrible arguments.

MELETE: I know...but that’s behind us now.

MAC: Yes.

MELETE: I’m just glad you’re here.

MAC: Not for long, it was nice of McManus to put us in touch, but to be honest I’m not used to being so out in the open.

MELETE: We can move to a booth in the back...

MAC: No, besides I don’t think anybody here recognises us or for that matter even cares.

MELETE: The threat was real though.

MAC: Still is real. The Plebs made sure of that, but here in Franklin, people are little more civilised. They’re less likely to attack you in public.

MELETE looks at the table.

MAC: I didn’t mean anything by that.

MELETE: Yes you did and it’s justified. We ended up in some strange places from where we started out. (Beat) How is your mother?

MAC: Still alive, and that counts for something.

MELETE: And Arabella?

MAC: Growing into a fine young woman.

MELETE: I wish...

MAC: Don’t say it...

MELETE is silent. An awkwardness overcomes the conversation and at this moment the MAÎTRE-D’ approaches the table. He hands them both large leather-bound menus for them to consult.

MAÎTRE-D’: Good evening and welcome to Casa Fregoli, I am your Maître-D’ for the evening and I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about this evening’s specials.
MAC (politely): Go right ahead.

MAÎTRE-D’: This evening we have an entree of Sole covered in lemon jus and cracked pepper, for the main we have a traditional contadinesco [peasant] dish, Pasta Fagioli, which is pasta with beans and legumes served in rich tomato broth and for dessert we have Tiramisu.

MAC: That all sounds wonderful.

MAÎTRE-D’: Thank you. Your waitress will be over shortly to take your order. Good evening.

MELETE nods at the MAÎTRE-D’ as he leaves.

MELETE: Well that was well timed. The conversation had become a bit...

MAC: Yes.

MELETE: Maybe we should stick to the professional rather than the personal.

MAC: Sure.

The WAITRESS approaches, it appears to be the MAÎTRE-D’ in a wig and dress, however only MELETE notices this. To MAC she appears as female waitress.

WAITRESS: Good evening, I’ll be your waitress for this evening if you like we can begin with your drinks.

MELETE looks at the ‘woman’.

MELETE: Is this some sort of joke?

WAITRESS: Pardon?

MELETE: The way you’re dressed.

WAITRESS: I’m sorry Ma’am I don’t know what you mean.

MAC is looking at MELETE.

MELETE: Never mind, it’s been a long day. (Beat) Can you recommend a nice red wine?

WAITRESS: Yes, the Châteaux Paramnesia is a particularly good wine. I believe we still have a ’68 in the cellar. Would you like that?

MELETE: And how much is the bottle?

WAITRESS: One hundred and five dollars, Ma’am.

MELETE looks at MAC, he nods his head.
MELETE: Yes why not. (Beat) What is it that they say “When in Remus...”

WAITRESS: “Do as the Remeans do.” An excellent choice Ma’am, Sir, I’ll be back in a minute to take your order.

MELETE: No hurry.

The WAITRESS leaves.

MAC: What was that all about?

MELETE: What?

MAC: That business with you and the waitress.

MELETE: Oh you know, sometimes people all look the same to me.

MAC: You need to stop working so hard.

MELETE: Maybe. But we weren’t going to talk about us.

MAC: You’re right.

MELETE: So McManus has you working on something?

MAC: Yeah. He’s kept us going all these years. Little jobs here and there. He even got me a position on a rural paper, I wrote under a psuedonym as Stephen Pitts.

MELETE doesn’t know what to say about this.

MAC: But it looks like at long last that all that charity is going to be repaid. I have managed to track down Deepwater.

MELETE: But he had disappeared.

MAC: Well I found him. He’s agreed to help me, to tell me all he knows about Project Capgras.

MELETE: That’s what Robinson was working on before died.

MAC: Yeah.

The MAÎTRE-D’ arrives with a bottle of Châteaux Paramnesia 1968.

MAÎTRE-D’: An excellent choice sir and madam. The Châteaux Paramnesia is one of our finest imported wines. In fact this is our last bottle of the 1968, a spectacular year.

The MAÎTRE-D’ proceeds to uncork the bottle of wine and he lets it sit for a few minutes.

MAÎTRE-D’: I do hope you enjoy this wine, if not I’ll be forced to drink it myself. Aha ha ha.

MELETE and MAC politely laugh at the MAÎTRE-D’s attempt at humour.
The MAÎTRE-D’ now pours a small amount in a wine glass and hand it to MAC. 
MAC drinks it.

MAC: That’s lovely.

The MAÎTRE-D’ pours a glass for both MAC and MELETE.

MAÎTRE-D’: Oh well, I suppose I’ll have to buy myself a bottle of the 1969. It’s not as good though.

MELETE: Do you mind if I ask you a question?

MAÎTRE-D’: No, not at all.

MELETE: Are you by any chance related to the waitress?

MAÎTRE-D’: No madam, why do you ask?

MAC is looking at MELETE again.

MELETE: No reason.

MAÎTRE-D’: Well I can see that you are people of exceedingly good taste and so I will leave you to your meal. Good evening.

The MAÎTRE-D’ leaves the table.

MAC: Where were we?

MELETE: You were telling me about Robinson’s file.

MAC: Yes, at first it didn’t make a lot of sense, mostly strange apocryphal stories about nooclear testing and articles about their after-effects. But there was a pattern there and they all seem to point to a government run initiative.

MELETE: Project Capgras?

MAC: Yes and I found some reference to an arcane government protocol that goes by the same name. But I can’t seem to find any information about the protocol through direct channels. I’m hoping this where Deepwater can help.

MELETE: What do you think it is?

MAC: I don’t know, but somehow I feel as though it’s all connected to Sandgate in some way.

MELETE: All these years later?

MAC nods.

At that moment the WAITRESS returns, it is clearly the MAÎTRE-D’ in a wig and dress, but yet again only MELETE notices this incongruity.

WAITRESS: Are you ready for me to take your order?
MAC: Yes. I’ll have the Sole for entree and the Beef Ragu for the main meal.

*The WAITRESS nods.*

WAITRESS: And for you Ma’am?

MELETE: I think I’ll start with the soup of the day and for the main I’ll have the Pasta Fregoli.

WAITRESS: Very good Madam.

*The WAITRESS takes their menus and leaves.*

MELETE: Well I’m glad that’s over with, now maybe we can actually have a conversation.

*MAC smiles at this.*

MAC: I’ll be back in a minute; I have to use the restroom.

*He stands and takes a step towards MELETE.*

MAC: It is good to see you Mary.

MAC *leans down and kisses her on the lips,* and then is gone.

MELETE *just sits there taking it all in.*

MELETE: This has been one strange evening.

*She drinks from her wine glass while she waits for MAC to return.*

Melete recognises that this is the beginning of something big, go to Section 140

Melete needs some time to think about everything that is going on, go to Section 140

Melete decides that this is a story that she wants to see through to the end, go to Section 140
36. MONOTTA BACKS UP MELETE

JERRY MONOTTA a short squat man is walking down a hallway of The Columbia Times. MELETE stops MONOTTA in the hall.

MELETE: Jerry, you got a minute.

MONOTTA: Sure Mary, what can I do for you?

MELETE: I...I just wanted to say thanks for having our back in there today.

MONOTTA: Not a problem.

MONOTTA keeps walking.

MELETE: This story really does have legs you know.

MONOTTA: I wouldn’t have said it if I didn’t think so, but don’t think ‘cause I backed you up in there today, that I’m going back you up tomorrow. I wanna run that story but I wanna run something that’s not gonna get us laughed out of this town.

MELETE: We’re not hacks. We know what we’re doing.

MONOTTA: Then get the facts and get them down in writing. You’ll have my back as long as you do that.

MELETE: And if we don’t?

MONOTTA: The paper will leave this story behind. There’s always a story to tell somewhere and you won’t be the first reporters to have to let something drop.

MELETE: Thank Jer...

MONOTTA: Just get the story Mary, we’ll handle the rest.

MONOTTA keeps walking, leaving MELETE where she stands.

If Melete find someone to go on record go to Section 98

If Melete visits Mac go to Section 2
37. A DEEPWATER DROP

It is raining. MELETE stands under an umbrella, looking out at the cars passing by on the street. She is looking at a man sitting on a bench across the road. Slowly checking the traffic, she jaywalks across the road. Reaching the bench she sits down as though she is waiting for a bus. A man in a raincoat and a wide-brimmed hat sits next to her and stares out at the traffic. He has two paper bags of groceries, one of which he holds on his lap and the other is between him and MELETE. This man is DEEPWATER.

MELETE checks her watch. To DEEPWATER she says,

MELETE: Do you know what time the next bus is?

DEEPWATER: They only run on the weekends.

MELETE: I guess I’m early. I’ll just have to wait.

DEEPWATER: Yes, I guess you will.

There is a pause.

Suddenly DEEPWATER stands and takes one of his shopping bags with him.

DEEPWATER: I hope you find what you’re looking for.

MELETE nods.

DEEPWATER walks off down the street.

MELETE looks over at the paper bag getting wet in the rain. She pulls the bag closer and then picks it up with one hand.

At that moment a bus arrives, the front door opens.

MELETE stares at the DRIVER.

DRIVER: Did you want the bus lady?

MELETE: No thanks, not today.

The DRIVER closes the bus door and the bus drives off.

MELETE stands and walks back across the road and into a building and out of the rain.

Melete uses this information to write another article, go to Section 21
38. AMENZA AND THE CROSSWORD MAN

A small man is hunched over a journalist’s layout table. He is THE CROSSWORD MAN. He has a crossword laid out in front of him. He is lost in concentration and he doesn’t notice AMENZA enter and stand beside the table.

At last he notices her. For the first time, it is clear that THE CROSSWORD MAN is wearing unusual glasses that have multiple lenses which can be shifted in and out of position, with each lens serving to magnify/de-magnify his view.

Although AMENZA is right in front of THE CROSSWORD MAN, he does not seem shocked by her sudden appearance.

CROSSWORD MAN: Can I help you?

AMENZA (ingratiatingly): Is this where you put together the famous Columbia Times Crossword?

CROSSWORD MAN: Yes, and who might you be?

AMENZA: My name is Yolanda, I’m visiting from Costa Real.

CROSSWORD MAN: Is that a euphemism, ‘visiting’?

AMENZA is upset by THE CROSSWORD MAN’S forthrightness. AMENZA: I don’t think it’s yet polite to say refugee.

CROSSWORD MAN: My apologies, I meant no offence, I’m used to dealing with answers to cryptic clues. (Beat) How can I help you?

AMENZA: Frank sent me down here to have a look.

CROSSWORD MAN: At the ever complex process of making a crossword work?

AMENZA: I’m a huge fan of puzzles. I used to contribute clues to my own newspaper from time to time.

CROSSWORD MAN: You’re a journalist?

AMENZA: In exile. (Beat) I was wondering if I could help you out too. It would be something to do, to keep the mind active.

CROSSWORD MAN: And Frank says this is okay?

AMENZA (lying): I’ve got to do something to keep out of trouble.

She smiles at THE CROSSWORD MAN.

THE CROSSWORD MAN sizes her up and makes an evaluation.

CROSSWORD MAN: Sure thing. Anytime you want to help out just come on down and lend a hand.
AMENZA smiles.  
THE CROSSWORD MAN focuses one of his lenses on his glasses and then gets back to work.  
AMENZA leaves quietly.

Puzzles are for solving, go to Section 66

Melete continues her investigation, go to Section 5
39. THE PROBLEM OF BEING A WOMAN IN A MAN’S WORLD

*McMANUS paces up and down his office. He is weary.*

*MELETE arrives. She knocks on the glass window in his office.*

MELETE: You wanted to see me Frank?

McMANUS: Yes. Come in and take a seat.

*MELETE sizes up the situation. She realises that whatever McMANUS has to talk about is not good news.*

MELETE: I prefer to stand when I get bad news, that way I can always make a quick getaway.

McMANUS looks at her and sighs heavily.

MELETE: Is it that bad?

McMANUS: I just want to say that we’ve tried hard at The Times to be an equal opportunity organisation. That we want women like you writing for us. Not just for the good of the paper but society as a whole.

MELETE: Cristeas Frank! Am I being fired?

McMANUS: No Mary.

MELETE exhales in relief.

MELETE: Then what is it?

McMANUS: I thought it’d be easier if I had a little speech prepared, but you threw me by not sitting down.

MELETE: If it’ll make you feel any better I’ll sit down.

McMANUS: Would you?

MELETE takes a seat.

McMANUS now exhales loudly.

McMANUS: The Wurlitzer committee have announced this year’s winners for the best investigative reporting of the year.

MELETE pauses.

McMANUS pauses.

MELETE waits expectantly.

McMANUS: They’ve awarded Mac, and only Mac, the Wurlitzer for the work on Sandgate.

MELETE: But...we broke that story together. In fact I broke the back of that story to get it into shape.
McMANUS: I know Mary.

MELETE: Then what the hell are the Wurlitzer playing at?

McMANUS: It’s because you’re a woman.

MELETE: What does that have to do with it? I broke the dogdamn story!

McMANUS: The committee was started to recognise the best writers, but they’re arguing that this only applies to male writers. The committee has only ever given to male writers. They see no reason to change now. Those are their words not mine...here read the dogdamn letter.

*McMANUS hands MELETE a sheet of paper.*

*MELETE reads the paper.*

MELETE: Really? They’re going to play the genderist card?

McMANUS: Genderism is rife. The committee obviously feels that they can do this without the consequences.

MELETE: Dog, I could cry.

*McMANUS is silent.*

MELETE: But why give the bastards the satisfaction?

*McMANUS smiles.*

MELETE: Although I am glad I took a seat. (Beat) So what happens now?

McMANUS: Good question. We’ve decided that we’ll refuse the prize. The paper is going to run a series of editorials highlighting the genderist bias of the Wurlitzers. I wondered if you would consider writing one or more of these editorials.

MELETE: Of course Frank.

*McMANUS nods.*

McMANUS: Of course I want you to know that everyone here at the newspaper is behind you on this. That no matter your gender, that we stand by our reporter and their work, and I don’t believe that gender has anything to do with it.

MELETE: Thanks Frank, I appreciate it.

*MELETE looks down at the letter.*

MELETE: This Clarence Weatherbee has some nerve putting his name to this. I’d like to give him a piece of my mind.

McMANUS: He’s the head of a Plebian faction within the committee who believe that good writing is only the product of good breeding and wealth.
MELETE: And gender apparently.

McMANUS: Yes (*Beat*) But I can’t stress this enough, don’t try and engage this gentleman directly. Weatherbee is a part of the lunatic fringe of writer’s living in the past. They deliberately wield their authority to upholding these so-called ‘Plebian values’.

The best thing you can do now is let us handle this through the paper. We’ll gain more traction by challenging the committee openly though a public forum.

Don’t go starting a war with the committee, that’ll only damage our chances at getting any kind of reform out of these bastards.

MELETE: So I’m just to sit here and take it like a man?

McMANUS: I hate that saying. (*Beat*) But for the moment, yes.

*MELETE looks crestfallen.*

McMANUS: Listen, take the rest of the day off and we can discuss some strategy behind the editorials tomorrow. Just know that everyone here has got your back.

MELETE: Thanks Frank, for having the courage to say all of this to my face. I appreciate it.

McMANUS: It was only right.

*MELETE stands and offers McMANUS her hand to shake. McMANUS takes it and shakes it. MELETE turns and exits. McMANUS, left alone, sighs heavily.*

Melete speaks with a representative of the Wurlitzer Committee, go to *Section 4*

Melete decides it’s time to leave the story with Mac, go to *Section 128*

Melete meets with Deepwater again, go to *Section 37*
40. THE MANDALA EFFECT

Nikilev sits around a table with three of chief advisors, they are the POLITICAL, SOCIAL and SCIENCE ADVISORS. These are the people who provide him counsel. They are discussing the events of the past six months.

NIKILEV: So what have the team concluded about the remains of Moscoww? Can a city be re-built there?

SCIENCE: Nyet. Redsnev irradiated the ground so badly that its half-life is an estimated 3600 years.

NIKILEV scowls at this.

NIKILEV: What madness!

NIKILEV sighs.

NIKILEV: So the capital must be moved?

The SCIENCE ADVISOR nods.

NIKILEV: 950 years of history gone. (Beat) Any suggestions for where we should relocate the capital?

POLITICAL: Somewhere where a nooclear weapon can’t target.

SCIENCE: Novi Zealand

The whole table laugh at the thought.

SCIENCE: Though seriously, it might be the only place where the weapons can’t hurt us.

NIKILEV: We could move the capital back to Leninsburg.

POLITICAL: There is a precedent for that. We could consider a name change, maybe to Sankt Petrovsburg?

SOCIAL: I don’t think that the people would want us to relocate to somewhere that represents the past.

POLITICAL: In what way does it represent the Past? Redsnev had no ties there.

NIKILEV: It represents that the new government will be like the old monarchy.

POLITICAL: A monarchy that hasn’t existed for over 100 years.

NIKILEV: And yet still people have longer memories.

No the association must not be made. It will seal our fate before it has been formed. An alternate location must be found, perhaps in the Caucasus.

Most importantly we must not abandon the name of Moscoww.
It is this that will unite the Rous at this time.

A knock comes at the door.

NIKILEV: Enter

DOCTOR PORTOKALI enters.

PORTOKALI: You wanted to see me sir?

NIKILEV: Yes. Gentlemen, we must conclude now, but when next we meet you must have found the location of Novi Moscoww, and the foundation stones must be readied.

The three advisors, POLITICAL, SOCIAL and SCIENCE exit.

NIKILEV stands and motions PORTOKALI in.

NIKILEV: Take a seat Doctor.

PORTOKALI sits somewhat uneasily.

NIKILEV: Now, what news do you have for me?

PORTOKALI: Do you want to know the casualties are progressing out of Moscoww?

NIKILEV: Yes, but I want to know about Melete first.

PORTOKALI sighs.

PORTOKALI: I thought as much.

NIKILEV: You mean to tell me you have made no progress?

PORTOKALI: No there has been much progress, but there is not yet a solution.

NIKILEV: Describe it to me.

PORTOKALI: We have given the condition a name, the Mandala effect.

NIKILEV nods.

NIKILEV: Why is it called this? A Mandala is a representation of the universe is it not?

PORTOKALI: Yes sir, you are correct.

NIKILEV: Does this effect have to do with the patient’s perception?

PORTOKALI: In a way yes, however it is not from that that the condition gets its name. It is named after the politician Horatio Nelson Mandala.
NIKILEV: The Zuid Afrikan political prisoner?

PORTOKALI: Because Mandala seems to be a nexus point in many of these patient’s memories. In their reality Mandala did not go to jail, and is instead president of Zuid Afrika.

NIKILEV: A country under Separaatheid? I do not think so.

PORTOKALI: According to some patients Mandala’s Afrikan National Confluence, the ANC, overthrew Separaatheid sometime in the last decade, leading to a free Zuid Afrika.

NIKILEV: What is this, a mass delusion?

PORTOKALI: At first sir, I though it to be the case, but I have come to realise there are slight differences, slight variations in their stories; that each patient remembers the events slightly differently. Now I believe that it is the evidence of something else.

NIKILEV: Which is?

PORTOKALI: A reality parallel to our own.

NIKILEV stares at PORTOKALI in silence.
The silence deepens as the tension grows.

Eventually...

...PORTOKALI breaks the silence.

PORTOKALI: I understand sir, this a bit much to make sense of but it is the most rational explanation for this collective misremembering. One which is supported by science.

NIKILEV: Quantum physics?

PORTOKALI: Sir, you surprise me.

NIKILEV: A soldier has much time to wait before a battle and must fill his time with something. (Beat) That and I studied physics at university.

PORTOKALI: I did not expect you to really understand this.

NIKILEV: Does anyone really understand quantum physics?

PORTOKALI laughs at this.
NIKILEV does not respond.

NIKILEV: So does Melete suffer from this Mandala Effect?

PORTOKALI: No. (Beat) She is the anomaly. She represents the persona split. If the Mandala Effect is the collective name for a group of people displaced in time and space, then the Melete Effect represents the person who refused to be displaced. However the personality that remains is not as it once was, it is fragmented and it becomes a matter of mereology to reconstruct the personality.
NIKILEV: Mereology?

PORTOKALI: The study of the parts in relation to the whole. It is typically the domain of philosophy and mathematical logic, but here I feel it is to be used in the domain of psychology and possibly quantum physics to rebuild her personality.

NIKILEV: I see.

PORTOKALI (continuing): But what prevented the displacement remains unknown, as does the cure to her condition. They may well be one and the same thing.

NIKILEV: So there is no hope?

PORTOKALI: Of course there is hope. But hope does not always lead to reason. We must proceed carefully.

NIKILEV turns away from PORTOKALI and looks out the window.

NIKILEV: Keep me advised Doctor.

PORTOKALI: Did you not want to hear about the casualties?

NIKILEV: Not now. Perhaps later.

PORTOKALI: Am I being dismissed?

NIKILEV (without turning around to look at PORTOKALI): For the moment yes.

PORTOKALI leaves exasperated.
NIKILEV continues to look out the window.

There is only one way through, go to Section 42

The cure is out there, go to Section 42
41. THE SPIRIT OF EL PERRO SALVAJE

MELETE is in a prison bed sleeping. It is late at night, but the moon is full and it shines in through the small barred window.

A WOMAN’S VOICE can be heard calling out. The voice is distant yet somehow within the same room as MELETE.

The voice calls...

WOMAN’S VOICE: El Perro........Salvaje
El ... Perro ... Salvaje
El Perro Salvaje

MELETE is restless in her slumber. She tosses and turns and eventually her eyes open for a brief moment. She looks around.

She looks around.
She hears nothing.
She closes her eyes again.

The WOMAN’S VOICE continues to call out.

WOMAN’S VOICE: El Perro...
El Per-rrrro...
El Perro Salvaje.
I’m calling to you

El Perro Salvaje
Come save me

MELETE remains restless in her bed.

The room darkens for a moment and when the moonlight returns, a man crouches on the edge of MELETE’S bed. He is dressed in Native Indian clothing; his topless, but wears a leather loincloth and has flowing bracelets hanging from his wrists and ankles. The most unusual thing is that his head is a coyote’s head, a mask that hides the true face. This is the spirit of EL PERRO SALVAJE.

EL PERRO SALVAJE perches on the bed for a minute.

MELETE stirs and wakes from her restless slumber and sees the man on her bed and screams. EL PERRO SALVAJE waves a hand and the screaming stops.

EL PERRO: It is not polite to greet someone in that way, especially when you called on me.

MELETE: Who are you? What do you want?

EL PERRO: I believe the question is, what do YOU want? But to ease your confusion, I will answer you. I am the spirit of El Perro Salvaje. I am Coyote.

MELETE: The trickster.
EL PERRO: Yes. Now what do you need?

MELETE: To escape from this place.

EL PERRO: Though this torment seems real, it takes place in your mind. Be strong and salvation will come.

MELETE: I don’t understand...

EL PERRO: Ponder my words and you will...

The room darkens again and EL PERRO SALVAJE is gone. MELETE looks around and her eyes grow heavy and she falls back onto the bed, and into a deep sleep.

The betrayal of Tuco has only just begun, go to Section 100
MELETE walks around her room. It’s her hospital room but it resembles instead a well appointed hotel room. MELETE paces around the room as though she does not recognise her surroundings. She looks out the window at the view, only to realise after a few minutes of staring that the view is static and unchanging. It is in fact a picture.

As she stares out the ‘window’ NIKILEV enters closing the door behind him. She turns to look at him.

MELETE: It’s you.

NIKILEV: Yes.

MELETE: Why am I being kept here?

NIKILEV: Darling, we’ve been over this.

MELETE: Don’t call me darling.

NIKILEV: I’m sorry Mary.

MELETE: Are you really? Because this elaborate ruse that you’ve constructed suggests otherwise. It’s as though you want to keep me here.

NIKILEV: Tell me who you are and I’ll let you go. Prove to me that you know and you’ll be free to look at a real skyline.

MELETE tries to speak.

NIKILEV: Go on. Tell me the truth and it will set you free.

MELETE turns her back to look at the realistic photograph.

NIKILEV: I promise you that when you are well enough, I will let you return home.

MELETE: And where’s home?

NIKILEV: Don’t you know?

MELETE tries to stammer out something, but nothing comes out.

NIKILEV: Please, don’t exert yourself. You have nothing to gain from the strain.

MELETE: Dogdammit Leon! I’m not a delicate woman to be kept under constant observation. I’m...(sighs)...I’m a human being and I deserve to be treated like one.

NIKILEV: I told you, things will change when you remember.

MELETE: You’re inhumane Leon.
NIKILEV: No, I’m pragmatic. You need to be cared for, until we understand what it is that is affecting you.

MELETE: And how long will that be?

NIKILEV: Doctor Portokali seems to think between 6 to 18 months.

MELETE: That quack! What does he know?

NIKILEV: A great deal more than you yourself know.

MELETE: His answers are meaningless.

NIKILEV: Spoken like a true sceptic. But can you really deny the situation you’re in?

MELETE thinks about it.

MELETE: No.

NIKILEV: I promise you when you’re better you can go home.

MELETE: I don’t know where that is anymore.

NIKILEV: At least you will spend time with your daughter.

MELETE: I can’t... what was her name again?

NIKILEV sighs in frustration.

NIKILEV: You must try to remember.

MELETE: It’s all just a black hole where the past used to be.

NIKILEV holds his head in frustration and sighs.

NIKILEV: I have to go now, but I will come to visit you again.

MELETE: All right, but can you do something for me?

NIKILEV: What?

MELETE: Can you change this phucking view?

NIKILEV sniggers at this.

NIKILEV: I’ll see what I can do.

NIKILEV exits.

MELETE stares out at the ‘view’.
The cure is at hand, go to Section 125

There are other forces at work here, go to Section 50
43. THE POET LAUREATE

It is the evening of a prestigious literary event. In a large formal dining room, guests are seated at round tables looking towards a stage where the emcee stands waiting to announce the most recent award. This man is CLARENCE WEATHERBEE.

WEATHERBEE: Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to welcome you to this evening’s festivities and say what an honour it is to be asked to celebrate the life and work of this great poet. When I was first approached to present this evening, I didn’t think it would be possible to explore in detail this poet’s work, the breadth of which is unprecedented in the English language today. We are talking about a poet whose phrasing, alliteration and metaphor and juxtaposition of imagery are distinctly unique. Tonight we are here to honour and celebrate this woman whose body of work has made her one of the great poets not only in her native United States but across the world. It is my great privilege to introduce our most recent poet laureate... Miriam Follows.

WEATHERBEE begins to applaud. 
The audience bursts out into applause as MIRIAM FOLLOWS comes up to the stage to make a speech on behalf of her award.

MIRIAM stands at the microphone and looks out at the audience. 
She stands there and smiles.

It is now that we realise that MIRIAM FOLLOWS is the exact image of MARY MELETE.
MELETE: Where do we begin?

EL PERRO: At the beginning.

*MELTE scoffs at this.*

MELETE: Which is where exactly?

EL PERRO: A place that’s not easily defined. For everyone it is different, but it is rooted in the personal. The individual. Tell me your history.

MELETE: You want my life’s story?

EL PERRO: In broad brushstrokes yes. Somewhere in the personal is the source of your dislocation.

MELETE: My story is not unique. I was born in small town in the middle of Cortesia to two loving parents.

EL PERRO: ...wait...don’t you mean a small town in Columbia.

MELETE: The town I was born in wasn’t called Columbia, it was called Springfield.

EL PERRO: No, you misunderstand, where do you think you are?

MELETE: I’m right here.

*Now it is EL PERRO’S turn to scoff.*

EL PERRO: Mary Melete be serious. *(Beat)* What is the country in where we live?

MELETE: The USC.

EL PERRO: And that stands for?

MELETE: The United States of Cortesia.

EL PERRO: What?

MELETE *(frustrated)*: The United States of Cortesia. After the explorer Cortes.

EL PERRO: Not the United States of Columbia?

MELETE: Yes that’s what I said.

EL PERRO: So which is it, Columbia or Cortesia?

MELETE suddenly becomes confused.

MELETE: I...I don’t understand the question.
The answers lie ahead, go to Section 90
45. SOMETHING IN COMMON

A bar. The middle of the day. It’s only populated by barflies and a couple of salesmen having a liquid lunch. ROBINSON stands at the Howitzer jukebox, he puts some money in and presses the large plastic buttons. As he looks to make his second selection, MELETE enters. She walks over to him and looks at the selection.

MELETE: I wouldn’t have picked you as a romantic Robinson.

ROBINSON: Cute, Mary, cute.

MELETE: Well I guess that takes care of the chit-chat. (Beat) So what is it you wanted to see me about?

ROBINSON: Why don’t we take a seat?

MELETE nods. ROBINSON walks over to a table in one corner at the rear of the bar. He takes a seat with his back to the wall. He gestures to MELETE to sit down. She does.

MELETE: What’s going here Sid? What’s this about?

ROBINSON: Don’t you want to get a drink first?

MELETE: Not really, I don’t subscribe to that journalists are drunks stereotype.

ROBINSON: I do.

But instead of drinking his scotch, ROBINSON nurses it uneasily. They sit there in silence for a moment. MELETE looks at her watch.

MELETE: Seriously Sid, I have places to be.

ROBINSON looks into his glass.

ROBINSON: You and Mac still working on that Sandgate thing?

MELETE: Yeah. The whole thing’s turning into an epic. Untangling all the connections is proving to be a real nightmare.

ROBINSON: I might have something for that.

MELETE: Yeah?

ROBINSON nods, but says nothing.

MELETE: So what are we gonna do this dance all day? Am I going to have to pry it out of you?

ROBINSON: No Mary, I just want to see how you operate.
ROBINSON sips his drink.

MELETE: Well thanks Sid, this has been real enlightening but I think I’ll go back and deal with reality as I understand it.

MELETE stands to go.

ROBINSON: Did you ever find the fifth man?

MELETE hesitate.

ROBINSON: Sit down. I promise you it will be worth your while.

MELETE sits down again.

MELETE: So why don’t you tell me what you’ve been working on?

ROBINSON: The push for Plebian rights to be paid for representation.

MELETE: They’re connected to Sandgate?

ROBINSON nods.

MELETE: You can prove this?

ROBINSON: I’m working on something, it involves the fifth man. At least I think it does.

MELETE: So why did you come to me with this?

ROBINSON: Because I can’t trust your partner.

MELETE: What’s your beef against Mac?

ROBINSON: Why don’t you ask him?

MELETE: You know Sid, you’re not making a helluva lot of sense.

ROBINSON: Mac’s got a history with the Plebs that’s all I’ll say. (Beat) You should ask him about it some time.

MELETE: Cristeas Sid! If you wanna give me the information, then give me the information. I don’t need your crazy conspiracies.

ROBINSON: Not all conspiracies are crazy, some of them make a lot of sense.

MELETE looks at him indignantly.

ROBINSON: Listen, I’ve been busting my hump on this story and every time I get close to a breakthrough, it points to Sandgate. There are missing accounts, paperwork that’s vanished and money that’s unaccounted for, and all of it points to the fifth man and the Working Organisation to Re-elect the Management. The WORM. That is who you’ve been investigating?
MELETE: Yes. (Beat) Can you prove it?

ROBINSON: Not yet. But I’m close, really close, I just need a few more pieces to fall into place.

MELETE: Well when they do, let me know. (Beat) In the meantime, I’ve got things to do.

MELETE stands and storms out of the bar. The BARMAID comes over to ROBINSON.

BARMAID: Heyzeus, what did you say to her?

ROBINSON: She’s just didn’t want me to drink so much. (Beat) By the way, make the next one a double.

The BARMAID nods and walks off.
ROBINSON sighs into his glass.

Melete decides investigate Robinson’s allegations, go to Section 111

Robinson knows that Melete will be back, go to Section 107
46. DIVE IN AT THE DIVE BAR

A dive bar, in the back alleys of the crowded streets of Cristos Ciudad.
MELETE enters and walks to the bar.

MELETE (in Hispaniolan): Una cerveza por favor. [A beer please]

The BARLADY has a glass eye and looks at MELETE unsteadily with the one good eye she does have. She uncaps a bottle of beer and places it roughly on the bar top. MELETE looks at it, and puts down some money on the bar top, the BARLADY takes it quickly and retreats to the other end of the bar. MELETE picks up the bottle, looks at it and then wipes the mouth of the bottle with her top before taking a swig from the bottle.

MELETE: Cristeas what a place.

A man approaches MELETE, his has a beard and looks as though he hasn’t slept in days.

BEARDED MAN (in accented Onglish): I think you are maybe looking for me.

MELETE looks him over.

MELETE: That’s presumptuous.

BEARDED MAN: Maybe, maybe not.

Beat.

BEARDED MAN: My name is Tucomera, but most people call me Tuco.

MELETE: Is that your first name or your last name?

TUCO: Does it matter?

MELETE: No, I suppose not.

MELETE takes a swig from her beer.

TUCO: You like our beer?

MELETE: It tastes like shit.

TUCO: That’s because she sold you shit.

MELETE: I stick out that badly huh?

TUCO nods.

MELETE: Well then maybe you can recommend something.

TUCO (in Hispaniolan): Marta, tequila, dos copas. [Marta, tequila, two glasses.]
The BARLADY returns with a bottle of yellow tequila, it has a white worm in the bottom of it. She places the tequila and looks expectantly at TUCA and MELETE.

TUCA: Are you going to pay the woman?

MELETE: I guess I have no choice.

MELETE pulls out some notes from her wallet and puts them on the counter. The BARLADY stands there with her mouth open waiting, she is huffing expectantly. MELETE takes another note out and puts it on the counter. The BARLADY swoops in quickly and takes the money, but before she can retreat TUCA grabs her hand roughly.

TUCA: Marta, el cambio. [Marta, the change.]

The BARLADY grumbles and leaves two of the notes on the bar top and walks off.

MELETE: Everyone is that hard up to make a buck, huh?

TUCA: Poverty takes where it can. (Beat) I understand you are looking for the wolf in sheep’s clothing.

MELETE: Yes if by that you mean El...

TUCA motions to silence her.

TUCA: Names can get you into trouble Ms. Melete especially here in the den of Domínguez. In the countryside it is different, but here it is a one-way ticket to the Estadio de Fútbol.

MELETE (confused): The soccer stadium?

TUCA laughs.

TUCA: It’s been a long time since they played Fútbol there. (Beat) It’s where Domínguez keeps those who dissent against him.

MELETE: That stadium is enormous, it must be able to hold thousands of people.

TUCA: Yes.

MELETE: Cristeas.

TUCA: Unfortunately Dog cannot help you if you are a resident of el Estadio. All you can hope for is a quick death.

MELETE: Why are you telling me this?

TUCA: Because the stakes are high and no one should venture into the unknown before knowing what may lie ahead. Tell me, are you still interested in meeting a lowly dog?

MELETE: Yes.
TUCO: Then bring the bottle and the glasses, we have much to discuss.

MELETE takes the bottle and the glasses and follow TUCO towards the exit. The BARLADY become agitated at the thought of losing two of her glasses and begins to protest. TUCO silences her.

TUCO: ¡Marta, tranquilo! [Marta, relax!]

They exit the bar and the BARLADY grumbles under her breath.

Melete looks around Cristo Citia, go to Section 78

Melete goes to find El Perro first, go to Section 74

Melete decides it time to meet the mysterious El Perro, go to Section 74

The city holds the key the civil war, and Melete will need to know it better, go to Section 78

It’s time to put a face to the name El Perro Salvaje, go to Section 74

Melete wants to know the city first, go to Section 78
MELETE steps out of an elevator. She’s carrying with her a backpack. The room is filled with a handful of desks upon each is a serviceable but old-fashioned typewriter. A large desk stands by the window behind which sits JERRY MONOTTA.

MELETE: Jerry?

MONOTTA looks up.

MONOTTA: Mary Melete. (Beat) About time you showed up.

MELETE: What are you doing here?

MONOTTA: I run this branch now.

MELETE: But I thought...

MONOTTA: I’m sorry Mary, I know that this was yours; but you’ve been gone a long time and the news doesn’t stop for anyone.

MELETE: How long?

MONOTTA: Just over a year.

MELETE: I... I had to deal with...

MONOTTA: I understand. You had to do what you had to do.

MELETE: That’s that folksy wisdom I’ve come to know and love. (Beat) I’m glad to see you Jer.

MONOTTA: You too kid.

MELETE: What I don’t understand is why you would pick up and leave a good job like that.

MONOTTA sighs.

MONOTTA: You wouldn’t recognise home now Mary. Not since the Plebs got into power.

MELETE: What they finally brought in the amendment to pay the politicians?

MONOTTA: Worse. They’ve started cracking down on the 1st Amendment, and they’ve been going after journalists; particularly anybody who worked on Sandgate.

MELETE: How’s Mac?

MONOTTA: I don’t know. He’s gone to ground.

MELETE: You mean...

MONOTTA: He’s disappeared, his mother and your daughter too.
MELETE: Nobody knows where they are?
MONOTTA: There are rumours he’s in Newfoundland or disappeared into the heart of the country. But nothing for certain.

*MELETE frowns at this.*

MONOTTA: You still care for him?

MELETE: I... No... Have things really become that bad?

MONOTTA: Yes and they are going to get worse.

MELETE: You’re trying to convince me not to go back.

MONOTTA: I thought you had a life here now.

MELETE: I do, but my daughter...

MONOTTA: Mac’s taking care of her, like he always has.

MELETE: What’s that supposed to mean?

MONOTTA: It’s not supposed to mean anything Mary, okay? It was just a statement of fact. If you go back now there’s a good chance you’ll be prosecuted for your work on Sandgate. Wherever Mac is, he’s safe. He’s got the situation under control, but you’d be a high profile target.

*MELETE looks at him.*

MELETE: Has it really gotten that bad, Jer?

MONOTTA: Yes.

*MONTOTA sighs.*

MONOTTA: If it will make you feel better, I can put my feelers out for Mac and try and get in touch with him. But it’s gotta be done carefully.

MELETE: I’d appreciate it, Jer.

MONOTTA: Consider it done.

MELETE: How’s McManus... Frank?

MONOTTA: Surviving, like he always has. He’s got nine lives. Still using the rule of law to keep the paper breaking the right kind of stories, but it’s gotten harder.

*Silence.*

MELETE: In a way I’m glad I’m here.
MONOTTA: Does that mean you’re ready to get to work?

MELETE: I guess so.

MONOTTA: Then let’s get down to it.

Melete investigates rumours of Rousyan revolt, go to Section 50

Melete gets visited by an old friend, go to Section 127

Melete’s first story is a rumour of an uprising in Priyapat, go to Section 137
MELETE is in her bed, she is tossing and turning in her sleep. 
She is dreaming, vivid, violent dreams.

MIRIAM FOLLOWS enters. 
She is dressed in a long flowing white gown that seems to be flowing backwards. 
It is though she is in a film that is running backwards.

On a mirror in the room MIRIAM writes in red lipstick:

YEK EHT SI ALLEBARA

Then as quickly as she arrived, she is gone. 
MELETE awakens and sees the writing on the mirror, but then collapses again into a deep sleep. 
It is all a dream.
**49. TELL ME A STORY MAC**

*MAC is sitting at MELETE’S DESK.*

He is reading some of her papers

MELETE arrives.

MELETE: Hey.

MAC: Hey, where you been?

MELETE: Chasing an angle with Sid.

MAC: Robinson? You two seem to be spending an awful lot of time together.

MELETE: What’s the matter Mac, you jealous?

MAC: Dogdammit Mary I don’t give a damn who you spend your time with so long as it doesn’t impact on my time.

MELETE: You’re not working on this story anymore, remember Mac?

MAC: I’m not talking about Sandgate, I’m talking about the galleys that came in for the book... We were supposed to go over them.

MELETE: Shit I’m sorry Mac (*Beat*) Is Frank really going ahead with this?

MAC: Yeah. At least it’s kept me busy doing something. Frank figures since he refused the Wurlitzer on your behalf, that there must be something to salvage from this whole thing.

MELETE: And what do you think?

MAC: Does it make a difference?

*Silence.*

MELETE: Cristeas, what happened to us?

MAC: The story got bigger than we could handle.

MELETE: No we became a part of the story, instead of staying outside of it.

MAC: I’m sorry it went down this way.

MELETE: Me too.

MAC: I was doing what I could to protect us.

MELETE: Yeah.

MAC: I guess you don’t know what it is live in fear. To always be looking over your shoulder for people. (*Beat*) That was my childhood, always moving to the next town, always keeping a low profile.
Because Ma testified, because she named names. The purges would never have happened without her. To some she’s a hero, she is to me. Even if you find that hard to understand.

MELETE: I understand that we got rid of the far right, the fascists who wanted to make our country worse off. But all that’s history, it’s in the past.

MAC: For you maybe. I live with it every day. And I can feel that soon, if the winds change, I may have to go back to keeping a low profile for the sake of everyone else.

MELETE looks at MAC
MAC has a tired and weary look on his face.

MELETE: Do what you have to do Mac. Just keep in touch for Arabella’s sake.

MAC looks down at the floor.

MAC: What a strange situation to be in.

MELETE: Yeah... Maybe we should look at those galleys before we run out of time completely.

Melete meets Robinson for a drink, go to Section 63

Melete decides to talk with Robinson about their story, go to Section 63
50. SPASTIKHOV YEARNS FOR POWER

SPASTIKHOV sits on a chair in the hallway of the underground hospital. He is waiting for NIKILEV to finish with MELETE.

A SOLDIER approaches.

SOLDIER: Comrade Spastikhov, you sent for me?

SPASTIKHOV: Yes I did Comrade Belitski, thank you for coming.

BELITSKI: What did you want to discuss?

SPASTIKHOV looks up and down the hallway.

SPASTIKHOV: A matter that cannot be spoken of out aloud. At least not here.

BELITSKI: Yes sir. Should we go somewhere to discuss this?

SPASTIKHOV: Unfortunately, now is not the time. Perhaps this evening at the Bar Babushka. Say 7pm. Bring your like-minded colleagues.

BELITSKI understands SPASTIKHOV’S meaning.

BELITSKI: Yes sir. Is that all sir?

SPASTIKHOV: Yes, you are dismissed.

BELITSKI leaves via a side corridor.

A moment later NIKILEV emerges from the hospital room.

SPASTIKHOV: How is she sir?

NIKILEV: Better. She is almost well. Although she still cannot remember the name of her daughter.

SPASTIKHOV: I see sir.

NIKILEV: She will be out soon and my last responsibility to Barbekhov will be complete. Come, there is much to do.

They exit.

The seeds of discord have been sown, go to Section 51

For Melete, the answer is not that simple, go to Section 125
51. AT THE BAR BABUSHKA

BELITSKI sits with a handful of men at a table in the back corner of a seedy tavern. BELITSKI looks at the clock on the wall.

BELITSKI: He’s late.

SPASTIKHOV enters from a rear door behind the men. He startles several of them, who rise quickly, some drawing their weapons.

SPASTIKHOV: At ease gentlemen, at ease. It’s good to see you are so prepared.

SPASTIKHOV sits down at the table and eyes each of the men in turn.

SPASTIKHOV: Have we ordered drinks?

BELITSKI: To be honest we did not know what the occasion was sir.

SPASTIKHOV: There is no need to be so formal Belitski, you may call me Gregori and I will call you...

BELITSKI: Gene sir.

SPASTIKHOV: ...Just Gene. I will learn all of your names in time, but for now I take it you have come here because Gene asked you too.

The MEN nod.

SPASTIKHOV: Because you share the same doubts and concerns as Gene does.

The MEN nod more slowly this time.

SPASTIKHOV: Fine, fine. (To the nearest Soldier) Fetch us a round of vodka for all.

The SOLDIER rises, looks at BELITSKI, who nods to indicate that it’s all right, and the SOLIDER leaves to fetch the drinks. SPASTIKHOV takes no notice and continues on...

SPASTIKHOV: I will not mince words. I am here to ask for your support in a course of action that will be considered treasonous.

BELITSKI: Treasonous sir?

SPASTIKHOV: Do not interrupt me Gene.

SPASTIKHOV: What I am proposing is the overthrow of Leon Nikilev. A man no longer in control of rebuilding this country. A man distracted by the past and unable to lead us fully into the future.

The SOLDIER returns with the drinks and hands them out to each of the MEN.

BELITSKI: You would have us start a guerrilla war against Nikilev?
SPASTIKHOV: No...the country could not stand another civil war. What we need is a quick and surgical approach to the matter. We will kill the leader in his offices where no one will bother us and in that way continuity can be maintained.

BELITSKI: Will the people support us in this action?

SPASTIKHOV: They will have no choice. We will control the government and with it the right to bear arms. Now gentlemen, drink up, tonight we celebrate our future victory! To the future of Rousya!

He raises his glass and the MEN toast.

ALL: To the future of Rousya!

Now is the time to strike while the iron is hot, go to Section 52

The hammer will crush the sickle, go to Section 25
52. THE UPRISING THAT NEVER UPROSE

NIKILEV sits behind his desk looking through papers and talking into a dictaphone.

NIKILEV: Preparations must be made for the one year anniversary of the founding of Novi Moscoww. It must be a celebration for all the people.

The double doors to NIKILEV’S office bursts open and SPASTIKHOV, BELITSKI and their MEN stand there. The MEN are all armed with automatic weapons.

NIKILEV (shocked): What’s the meaning of all this?

SPASTIKHOV: My dear Leon, isn’t it obvious, this is a coup d’etat!

NIKILEV: Ha ha ha! This is some time to be playing a joke Spastikhov. You know this is the busiest time of the day for me.

SPASTIKHOV: This is not a joke Comrade! This is the rising up of the men who are frustrated by the way you are running Rousya and believe that there is and will be, a better way forward for the people of this fine land.

NIKILEV: Under you Gregori?

SPASTIKHOV: Yes!

NIKILEV laughs.

NIKILEV (to BELITSKI): Did I not tell you Gene that the man was a grand narcissist. (To SPASTIKHOV): This has been highly amusing Gregori but I’m afraid that I must get on with my day. Gene, you know what to do.

BELITSKI nods.

SPASTIKHOV: Why are you talking to him? I am the one who is lead this revolution. This man is my supporter and underling.

NIKILEV: Underling? How pleasant for him. (Beat) No Gregori this man is not your underling, this is the head of my secret police Eugene Belitski. Sometimes they call him ‘The Blitz’ for short, but never to his face. (to BELITSKI) My apologies for that Gene.

BELITSKI nods.

The situation dawns on SPASTIKHOV, he looks around the room and realises that wherever he moves the automatic weapons of the MEN follow his movement as well.

SPASTIKHOV (to NIKILEV): You! You set me up!

NIKILEV: No Gregori, you set yourself up. Now, what’s going to happen is you’re going to be driven out of the city to a remote location in the countryside, where you will be made to dig your own grave and then...you will be shot in the head.
SPASTIKHOV looks around frantically and tries to run but he is stopped by BELITSKI’S MEN one of who use his rifle butt to hit SPASTIKHOV in the face.

SPASTIKHOV clutches his face which is now bleeding.

NIKILEV: Take him out of here. (Beat) Goodbye Gregori.

BELITSKI picks up SPASTIKHOV and says,

BELITSKI: You are an arrogant fool Spatsikhov.

BELITSKI and his MEN lead SPASTIKHOV away.

NIKILEV: Close the doors behind you.

They do so and NIKILEV resumes his work.

Melete investigates rumours of Nooclear foul play in Priyapat, go to Section 137

A few seeds of discontent have grown bitter fruit, go to Section 27
53. A VISIT WITH MISTER D.

MELETE sits in an open air prisoner’s visiting room. She waits at a table. While a PRISON GUARD escorts a prisoner in to sit opposite MELETE. This is MISTER D.

MISTER D: You’re not my lawyer.

MELETE: No sir, I’m not.

MISTER D. (To PRISON GUARD): What’s she doing here?

PRISON GUARD: I don’t know and it ain’t none of my business.

The PRISON GUARD wanders off and sits by the door.

MISTER D. (To MELETE): What are you doing here?

MELETE: I want to talk to you about the Sandgate Burglary.

MISTER D: Yeah you and every other spook in town. Beat it sister.

MISTER D. goes to stand up.

MELETE: I want to talk to you about the fifth man.

MISTER D sits down again.

MISTER D: I don’t know what you’re talking about sister.

MELETE: At the arraignment you entered a plea of Not Guilty. Why did you do that?

MISTER D: ‘Cause I’m not guilty.

MELETE: You didn’t break into the Sandgate?

MISTER D: Oh no, I was there in the building. But that don’t make me guilty.

MELETE: So why did you change your plea? Are you covering for somebody?

MISTER D: Listen sister you got some crazy ideas. Don’t come around here no more. (To the PRISON GUARD) Guard, come over here.

MELETE: Listen why protect somebody who could be used to maybe lessen your sentence?

MISTER D. shakes his head.

MISTER D: Listen sister, I like you, you got moxie. But you ain’t gonna get the answers you want outta me.

MELETE: Please...something.
MISTER: Sister, every job like this has a mastermind. Now I’m not saying they was with us on the job, but I can tell you something, they ain’t with us now. Know what I mean?

MELETE nods.
The PRISON GUARD finally ambles over.

MISTER D: Heyzeus Gus! How long does it take for you to walk from one side of the room to the other? You need to lay off of those donuts.

PRISON GUARD: Lay off before I give you what for.

MISTER D: All right! Just take me back to my cell.

They exit.
MELETE sits there in thought.

Robinson contacts Melete about meeting up, go to Section 107
54. STAY AWAY FROM THE FIFTH MAN

MAC is sitting at MELETE’s desk.
MELETE enters.

MAC: Where have you been? You were supposed to be here an hour ago.

MELETE: I was out.

MAC: What were you doing?

MELETE: My job.

MAC: You went and interviewed one of the burglars in prison. (Beat) Is that right?

MELETE: How did you know?

MAC: Is that right?

MELETE: Let’s not get into it now.

MAC: Dogdamn it! How did you get in to see him?

MELETE: I have some buddies who owe me a few favours.

MAC: Did you make sure his lawyer was present?

MELETE: He told me he didn’t have a lawyer.

MAC: Wrong!

MELETE: Cristeas Mac, what’s gotten into you?

MAC: You can’t use any of it.

MELETE: Why not?

MAC: Because it will bias the case. His lawyers will argue that their client’s rights were violated and declare a mistrial.

MELETE: He’s claiming there was a fifth man!

MAC: You stay away from that. That line of inquiry is just bullshit!

MELETE: You’re not my editor Mac.

MAC: But I am your partner.

MELETE: Don’t do that. Don’t turn it into something personal, this is about the story.

MAC: Heyzeus Mary! This is serious now, you need to drop this. Stay away from the fifth man.
MELETE: What? What do you mean by that?

MAC: Nothing...I...

MELETE: You just said it. So it must have meant something.

MAC: I just think you’re barking up the wrong tree.

MELETE: Oh yeah? Let’s see what McManus thinks...

MELETE storms off.
MAC, frustrated, huffs.

Melete follows through, go to Section 55
55. A QUESTION OF COMPROMISE (OR A COMPRISE TO QUESTION)

MELETE: ...Frank I spoke with him! I know it wasn’t on the record, but he admitted there was a fifth man.

McMANUS listens, seated behind his desk.  
MAC paces about.

McMANUS (To MAC): Why don’t you want to pursue this?

MAC is silent.

McMANUS: Melete has done some good work here. (To MELETE) We’d have to be careful what we run, but it’s an avenue worth pursuing. (Back to MAC) So tell me, why don’t you think this is sound?

MAC looks at MELETE and then at McMANUS  
McMANUS takes the hint.

McMANUS: Mary, do you just want to wait outside for a minute?

MELETE: This is bullshit Frank.

McMANUS: Yes it is. (Beat) Just humour me.

MELETE looks at MAC and then at McMANUS and then exits.

Context is everything, go to Section 33
56. YOU’RE OFF THE STORY

McMANUS’s office. He sits behind his desk looking at MAC who stands uneasily. McMANUS shakes his head and then says,

McMANUS: Melete! Get in here!

MELETE opens the door to the office and she looks at both MAC and McMANUS.

MELETE: Well?

McMANUS: Tell her what you told me.

MAC looks sheepish.

McMANUS (Booming): Tell her!

MAC: I found the fifth man.

MELETE: What?! But you told me to drop it.

MAC: He’s a high level spook.

MELETE: That’s... ...that’s fantastic.

MAC: No it’s not. (Long Beat) He threatened to have my mother imprisoned.

MELETE: What? What for?

McMANUS: Her involvement in the Plebian Purges.

MELETE: What? Your mother named names?

MAC: Yes.

MELETE: Cristeas! And this spook knew?

MAC: Yes. He threatened to make it public.

MELETE: So he’s blackmauling you. Why didn’t you tell me?

McMANUS: Because he’s a fool.

MAC: Frank...

McMANUS: No, those kind of secrets can destroy a paper. You should have known better and you should have told somebody.

MAC: I know that.
McMANUS: If you knew that, you wouldn’t have done this. You’ve jeopardised your partner, the story and the paper. You’re off this until I say so.

MAC: What?!

McMANUS: You heard me. Now get the hell out of my office, until I work out what to do with you.

MAC leaves the office.

MELETE: That was a bit hash.

McMANUS: Was it?

MELETE (thinking about it): No, not really.

McMANUS laughs.

Beat.

McMANUS: This means that you’re responsible for this story now. Can you handle it?

MELETE (sarcastically): I think so.

McMANUS: Now’s not the time to be flippant Mary.

MELETE: I really do think I can handle it Frank.

McMANUS: Well if you want to bring in someone else you can.

MELETE: What about Robinson, Frank? There seems to be overlap with Sandgate and the work he’s doing on the Plebian party’s push for paid representation.

McMANUS: He’s a good reporter, but he’s not without his problems.

MELETE: What are you talking about?

McMANUS: You know he’s qay...

MELETE: Heyzeus does everyone know?

McMANUS: Just the people who may have to protect and defend him. Remember it’s still against the law to be a homosexual.

MELETE: I didn’t think you cared about that Frank.

McMANUS: I don’t, how he chooses to live his life is own affair, but I still have to protect this organisation. That’s my job. (Beat) But that’s not what I was talking about, it’s the fact that he drinks.

MELETE: He drinks because he’s qay.
McMANUS: Regardless of the reason, is he going to be stable enough for you to get the story?

MELETE: Has he ever missed a deadline?

McMANUS: Not to my knowledge.

MELETE: Then you let me worry about it. The man’s mind has to be put to work to stop it from focusing on his other troubles.

McMANUS: All right Mary. *(Beat)* Now get back to it, we’ve got a newspaper to write.

MELETE: Thanks Frank...you’re a good man.

McMANUS: Get out of here will you!

*MELITE exits.*

McMANUS looks at the door after she exits.

McMANUS: Cristeas, sometimes it’s like herding cat in here.

Melete follows up some leads with Robinson, go to Section 63
57. MAC FINDS THE FIFTH MAN

An anonymous house in the suburbs of Franklin D.A.  
MAC arrives at the front door.  
He knocks loudly.  
Footsteps can be heard getting closer. The door opens.  
An older man in his mid to late sixties, TERRENCE T. GANTING answers the door.

MAC: Hello

GANTING: Can I help you son?

MAC: Are you the owner of this residence?

GANTING: Yes, and who might you be?

MAC: My name is Peter MacKenzie I’m a journalist with the Columbian Times.

GANTING attempts to close the door but MAC’s foot is caught between the door.

MAC: Ow!

GANTING: Please take your foot out of my door.

MAC: Only if you agree to answer some of my questions.

GANTING looks at MAC.  
MAC enters GANTING closes the door behind him.

GANTING: Now what can I help you with?

MAC: You still haven’t told me your name.

GANTING: I suspect Mr MacKenzie that you already know my name.

MAC: The house is registered to a Terence T. Ganting.

GANTING: Named after a folk ballad am I?

MAC: It could be a pseudonym.

GANTING: Could be.

MAC: Is it you?

GANTING: The one and the same.

MAC: Do you know why I’m here Mr Ganting?

GANTING: Perhaps. Why don’t you tell me?
MAC: It’s about the break-in at the Sandgate Hotel.

GANTING: Goodness me, that is something.

MAC: Was that what you were expecting I’d say?

GANTING: No but you never can tell. After all, there are some smart bastards out there. I guess you must be one of them.

*From a cigar box on top of his table he pulls out a handgun.*

GANTING: Sit down Mr MacKenzie.

MAC: What the...

GANTING: I won’t ask twice.

*MAC reluctantly sits down in a single armchair.*

GANTING: Now I suspect you have questions and perhaps I can give you answers, but I won’t. I have two insurance policies, the first is my little friend here.

GANTING gestures with his handgun.

GANTING: The second one is a little closer to home.

MAC: And what might that be Ganting?

GANTING looks at MAC.

GANTING: How’s your mother doing?

MAC: My mother? What’s she got to do with anything?

GANTING smiles.

GANTING: Everything.

*MAC looks perplexed.*

GANTING: You don’t know, do you?

MAC says nothing.

GANTING: Old Mother Hubbard keeps her cards close to her chest.

MAC: Mother Hubbard?

GANTING: The name she testified under as a part of the Plebian Purges.

MAC: You mean back in the fifties.
GANTING: Actually the purges started in ’49, a year after the war ended.

MAC: The war ended in ’45.

GANTING: That’s what they tell you.

GANTING still keeping the gun on MAC pours himself a drink.
GANTING takes a sip of his drink.

GANTING: So you see, we have ourselves a problem. You could no doubt reveal my involvement in the Sandgate robbery but then that would lead me to counter with actions of my own.

MAC: Which would be what?

GANTING: The whereabouts of your mother. Many Plebians would no doubt like to know where she is. Or maybe something involving your daughter, Arabella isn’t it?

MAC: You stay away from her.

GANTING: Now Mr MacKenzie calm yourself, we’re merely dealing in hypotheticals. (Beat) But you can see how this type of thing can get out of hand.

MAC is silent.
GANTING drinks his drink.

MAC: So what is it that you want me to do?

GANTING (crunching a block of ice with his teeth): I think you know the answer to this. But in case you’re somehow unclear, I’ll spell it out for you. I want you to walk out that door and never come back. You will forget that you ever discovered there was a fifth man.

MAC looks at GANTING. Slowly MAC backs his way out of the room with GANTING’s gun following him out the door.

And now time for a musical interlude, go to Section 70
58. A BABY IS BORN

MOTHER HUBBARD paces around the waiting room, she is smoking a long thin cigarette. A WET NURSE enters.

WET NURSE: Madam you can’t smoke in here.

MOTHER HUBBARD: Go phuck yourself.

WET NURSE: Madam?

MOTHER HUBBARD: You heard me lady, now let me smoke my dogdamn cigarette in peace.

WET NURSE walks out in a huff.

MAC: Hey Ma.

MOTHER HUBBARD: Hey boy, I take it you got some news.

MAC: A child was born. A girl.

MOTHER HUBBARD takes a drag on the cigarette.

MOTHER HUBBARD: And the mother?

MAC: She’s doing fine.

MOTHER HUBBARD: You give the little thing a name?

MAC: Arabella.

MOTHER HUBBARD: Nice enough.

MAC: Thanks Ma.

MOTHER HUBBARD: Do you really think this thing is going to work between you and the mother?

MAC: Now’s not the time.

MOTHER HUBBARD: I suppose not.

Silence.

MOTHER HUBBARD: Go enjoy your child, they’re only like this once

MAC: Thanks Ma.

MOTHER HUBBARD nods and takes a drag on her cigarette.
MAC exits.

The WET NURSE re-enters with a large burly male orderly.
WET NURSE: There she is, just like I told you.

MOTHER HUBBARD: Here comes the phucking cavalry.

MALE ORDERLY: Ma’am, I’m going to have to ask you to put that out. We have a lot of flammable equipment here. The whole place could go up.

*MOTHER HUBBARD takes the cigarette out of her mouth and stubs it out on the wall.*

A child is a joyous thing for some, but Melete is at an impasse.

Melete talks to Mac, go to Section 59

Melete speaks with McManus, go to Section 128
MELETE is sitting at a table in a restaurant. She is deep in thought. MAC joins her at the table.

MAC: That’s a hell of a buffet they have.

MELETE: I thought you might like it.

MAC: This is nice... ...you and me going out like this.

MELETE: Yes.

MAC: We haven’t done this since...

MELETE: Arabella was born....

MAC: Has it been that long?

MELETE: Yes.

MAC: Well it’s nice all the same. (Beat) Did you want to order or shall we risk the buffet?

MELETE: We need to talk.

MAC: About what?

MELETE: About us and Arabella.

MAC puts down the glass he was drinking from.

MAC: All right.

MELETE: You know I love you. I’ve always loved you.

MAC: Cristeas, where are we going with this Mary?

MELETE: I never expected that one night of celebration was going to turn into all of this.

MAC: A partner and a child.

MELETE nods.

MELETE: I was going to be the first woman from my family to really have a career. To live the life I wanted live.

A waitress appears at their table.

WAITRESS: Good evening folks, are ready for me to take your order?

MELETE looks up at the waitress.
MAC intercedes.

MAC: Ah no, not yet, we haven’t quite decided. Give us a few more minutes.

The waitress leaves.

MELETE (to MAC): Thanks.

MAC (to MELETE): You were saying.

MELETE: I...I’ve lost my train of thought.

MAC: You were talking about your career.

MELETE (blurting out): I can’t look after Arabella anymore. (Beat) ...I mean I love her but I... I need to go and live my own life. There are so many more things that I want to do...

MELETE’S resolve collapses completely, she is speechless.

MAC: You want me to look after Arabella?

MELETE (quietly): Yes.

MAC: All right... ...Do you want to be in her life?

MELETE: Yes, I just don’t know when I can be.

MAC: Okay.

MELETE: Why are you making this so easy for me?

MAC: I write stories for a living, I know how stories like this end.

MELETE: So how do they end?

MAC: Mary, come on...

MELETE: Why don’t you just say it, you think this makes me a bad mother.

MAC: No that’s not what I meant. I meant that the story can take the turns that we like, because we’re the ones making the choices. Sure if I wanted too we could have a big argument and make quite a scene but I don’t want to do that, do you?

MELETE: No.

MAC: Fine, then let’s get something to eat and we can talk more with something in our stomachs.

MELETE: You’re a good man Mac.

MAC: Yeah, and don’t you forget it.
The WAITRESS returns.

WAITRESS: Have we decided what we’ll be having?

MAC looks at MELETE and then at the WAITRESS.

MAC: I think we’ll be having the buffet.

MAC and MELETE hand their menus back to the waitress.

Melete decides to go and see McManus, go to Section 128

Melete feels that she must speak with Mac again, go to Section 61

Melete goes to see Frank McManus, executive editor of her newspaper, go to Section 21

Melete decides to say goodbye to Arabella, go to Section 61
60. A SPY IN OUR MIDST

McMANUS sits behind his desk.
MELETE enters.

MELETE: You wanted to see me Frank.

McMANUS: Sit down Mary.

MELETE sits.

McMANUS: I’ve asked you in here Mary because I want you to do me a favour.

MELETE: What’s that Frank?

McMANUS: I have an old friend in the State Department who owes me some favours. We keep each other in the loop when necessary. It’s a nice relationship to have at times. And one of those times is now. (Beat) You see someone is feeding the state department information about our sources.

MELETE: About Sandgate?

McMANUS: Sandgate and all our other major stories. It’s giving the government an edge that they don’t need. And to be frank it’s pissing me off.

MELETE: How can I help?

McMANUS: You’ve got an eye Mary, you see things that others miss. Help me find who the spy is and I’ll owe you a favour.

MELETE: Why me?

McMANUS: Because you’re discreet.

MELETE: Okay Frank, I’ll see what I can do.

Melete investigates the spy in their ranks, go to Section 38

Melete continues to investigate the Sandgate Burglary, go to Section 98

Melete decides to speak with journalist Sidney Robinson about Sandgate, go to Section 45

Melete decides to investigate the potential spy, go to Section 38
61. MOTHER HUBBARD EXPLAINS ALL

MAC’S house, twilight.
The sun has just set as MELETE arrives at the front door. She finds the door open. MELETE pushes her way inside.

MELETE: Hello?

A light is turned on.
MOTHER HUBBARD is sitting smoking a long thin cigarette.

MELETE: I was looking for Mac.

MOTHER HUBBARD: He’s not here.

MELETE: I guess I’ll come back when he is.

MOTHER HUBBARD: Come in and sit down Ms. Melete.

MELETE: Look Maam, I wasn’t...

MOTHER HUBBARD (interrupting): I wasn’t being polite. We need to talk.

MELETE closes the door and sits down.

MOTHER HUBBARD: I don’t fully understand the relationship that you and my son have...

MELETE: I...

MOTHER HUBBARD (sharply): Don’t interrupt me. When I’m finished speaking then you may speak.

MELETE sits silently.

MOTHER HUBBARD (continuing): I’m here looking after your child, so you may have your career. I’m not here to judge you, hell if I’d had the chance, I’d have done the same thing. But that doesn’t mean you get to walk in and out of their lives like a society dame. You get to be a part of that little girl’s life when she’s ready to have you. Not before. (Beat) You chose your life and she gets to choose hers. (Beat) I know you think I’m some kind of hard-nosed bitch and you’re right I am. Because I’ve seen families torn apart from the smallest of actions, the whitest of lies, the flippest of remarks. I understand what you haven’t yet, that sometimes there is no going back to what you once had. So embrace fully the decision you’ve made Ms. Melete because there is now no longer a way to untangle the mess you’ve made.

MELETE: I don’t understand why you dislike me so much.

MOTHER HUBBARD: Maybe one day you will. That’s yours to work out.

MELETE: You want me to look after Arabella is that it?

MOTHER HUBBARD: No, I want you to go and never come back.
MOTHER HUBBARD stands and butts out her cigarette.

MOTHER HUBBARD: Don’t come ’round here no more.

MOTHER HUBBARD exits, leaving MELETE alone.

Mac makes a discovery of his own, go to Section 57

Melete stays in the United States, go to Section 60

Melete goes back to Rousy, go to Section 134

Melete decides to work somewhere else, go Section 83
62. AMENZA MAKES A CALL

A telephone booth on a quiet street.
A figure approaches the booth and enters.
Yolanda AMENZA picks up the receiver and dials.

AMENZA: Allo? (Beat) It’s me. This is the first time I’ve been able to call. (Beat) Things are going well, better than I expected. In fact they suspect nothing. Mine is the perfect cover. (Beat) It is but a matter of time before I can put all of my objectives in play. (Beat) Yes the outcome will be swift and brutal, and will bring us what we desire.

(Beat)

Cocky? No I’m not cocky, I am sure. There is a difference. This is what confidence sounds like. You will see when all is revealed. (Beat) I will provide updates and instructions in the usual manner. Be vigilant or else a vital request might be lost.

(Beat)

This will be the last time that I’ll call you. Until everything has been resolved. (Beat) Good luck? I do not need luck, I have planning and strategy. Goodbye, we’ll be in touch soon.

AMENZA hangs up the phone.
She looks around to make sure that no one has been watching, and then exits the phone booth.

Robinson is waiting to hear the news, go to Section 118

Amenza has made a fatal mistake, go to Section 66
63. ROBINSON REVEALS THE SECRET LIFE OF MAC

At the back table at O’Malleys, ROBINSON nurses a drink while lighting a cigarette. MELETE enters the bar and proceeds directly to ROBINSON’S table.

MELETE: Cristeas Sid, we’re supposed to be working the story.

ROBINSON: I have been Mary. Here, read this.

He hands her some typewritten pages.
MELETE reads the article.

MELETE: This is good Sid. Your sources check out? Frank will want to know.

ROBINSON: They check out and if I have to I’ve got other ways of verifying this angle.

MELETE: Dogdammit then I’ve got to get this to Monotta for the afternoon edition.

ROBINSON: Before you go barrelling out of here hell bent on a crusade we need to talk.

MELETE: That sounds unusually serious Sid.

ROBINSON: I am serious Sis.

MELETE stops and sits down at the table.

ROBINSON: It concerns Mac and that militant mother of his.

MELETE: What about them?

ROBINSON: You know about her involvement in the Plebian purges?

MELETE: Yeah.

ROBINSON: Well my source reveals that one of the bargaining chips in the whole ‘pay for politicians’ bit is that the Proles are going to lift the Amnesty on those who testified in the purges. They are going to use it as a way of placating the Plebs and diffusing the whole issue.

MELETE: So what, one side get to keep their values at the expense of selling out someone else?

ROBINSON: Pretty much.

MELETE: Cristeas, that means...

ROBINSON: They’re gonna go after Mac and his family. Your family.

MELETE: When is this going to happen?

ROBINSON: They’re putting Amnesty in front of the senate early next week and it’s expected to pass by the end of the week. Then, all bets are off.
MELETE sits there deflated.

ROBINSON: Well don’t just sit there, go talk to Mac and work out what’s going to happen.

MELETE stands, holding ROBINSON’S article.
ROBINSON takes it from MELETE’S hands.

ROBINSON: I’ll make sure that Monotta gets this for the morning edition. Now go.

MELETE exits hurriedly.

Please remember this Section Number [Section 63]; it may be necessary to continue the story.

Melete warns Mac, go to Section 64

Melete reaches out to her undercover contact Deepwater, go to Section 66

Please remember this Section Number [Section 63]; it may be necessary to continue the story.

Melete has a feeling that Mac may be in danger, go to Section 64

Melete hurries to Mac’s house, go to Section 64
64. AN EMPTY HOUSE

MELETE arrives at MAC’s house.
The front door is ajar.
MELETE pushes open the door.

MELETE: Mac?

No answer.
MELETE wanders through the apartment but there is no one there. The furniture and several personal items have been left behind.

On the wall there is a photograph in a frame of MAC holding a baby ARABELLA. MELETE takes it off the wall and holds in her arms.

She collapses on the floor and breaks down in tears.

Please recall the earlier Section Number; it is now necessary to continue the story.

From Section 63 (ROBINSON REVEALS THE SECRET LIFE OF MAC):

Melete has a decision to make, go to Section 130

From Section 19 (MELETE ON THE LINE):

Melete goes looking for Mac, go to Section 135

Melete confronts Masters about Mac’s disappearance, go to Section 140

Please recall the earlier Section Number; it is now necessary to continue the story.

From Section 19 (MELETE ON THE LINE)

Melete decides to speak to someone about where Mac has gone, go to Section 140

Melete knows where she can find Mac, go to Section 135

From Section 21 (LIBEL)

This concludes the file of subject 135125205, Mary Melete, at this time.

From Section 63 (ROBINSON REVEAL THE SECRET LIFE OF MAC)

This concludes the file of subject 135125205, Mary Melete, at this time.

This concludes the file of subject 135125205, Mary Melete, at this time.
**65. LOVE AND AMENZA**

*O’Malleys Bar. ROBINSON sits at the bar nursing a drink.*

AMENZA enters and approaches a man, MISTER X, sitting in the shadows at the back of the bar. AMENZA sits down and starts talking.

ROBINSON watches the conversation surreptitiously through the mirror behind the bar.

AMENZA pulls out a dossier and hands it to the MISTER X.

ROBINSON stands and walks over to a payphone; drops some coins in and dials a number. ROBINSON waits for the other side to answer.

ROBINSON: Melete? It’s Sid, I’m down at the usual place when who should walk in but our favourite refugee, Yolanda Amenza. She’s talking to someone right now, she gave them some papers. (Beat) You should get down here, this could be the proof that you need to give to McManus about the leaks. (Beat) Wait a minute the gentlemen is getting up and leaving. I’m going to follow him. You get down here now and question Amenza. (Beat) I...I gotta go.

ROBINSON hangs up the phone as MISTER X walks past. ROBINSON follows MISTER X out of the bar.

A minute passes. AMENZA finishes her drink and is about to leave as MELETE arrives.

MELETE attempts to act casual after having run the entire way to get there. She orders a drink at the bar and it gives her time to catch her breath.

MELETE (to the BARMAN): A scotch neat.

The BARMAN pours the drink. MELETE leaves some money on the counter. AMENZA is gathering her coat and getting ready to leave. MELETE intercepts her.

MELETE: Yolanda! How funny to see you here.

AMENZA: Oh Mary... I was.... just leaving actually.

MELETE: No stay! We can have a drink and get to know each other better.

AMENZA wants to leave but MELETE blocks her exit. AMENZA reluctantly sits down again. MELETE sits down next to her.

MELETE: So how are you adjusting to life in the United States?

AMENZA: It’s has not been much of an adjustment.

MELETE: Really? Someone like you, coming from where you did, I’d have thought you’d have struggled.

AMENZA: I guess you underestimate the spirit and fortitude of the Costa Realeans.
MELETE: Perhaps... (Beat) ...You don’t like me very much do you?

AMENZA: Whatever gave you that idea Mary?

MELETE: Oh just a feeling I get.

AMENZA: Perhaps that’s where you get your instincts as a journalist.

MELETE: You do know that refugees aren’t subject to the same rules as everybody else? Everything is probationary, until you’ve proven yourself.

AMENZA: It’s only a matter of time.

MELETE: I think your time is running out.

AMENZA: I don’t think I like this conversation. Excuse me...

AMENZA stands suddenly.

MELETE: Now, now Yolanda, don’t make a scene. After all you have appearances to keep up.

AMENZA bites her tongue.

MELETE: You were going to say something?

AMENZA: Goodbye Ms. Melete...I hope you choke on your drink.

MELETE raises her glass to AMENZA as she departs.

Robinson follows his lead home, go to Section 120

Robinson plays the game all the way, go to Section 120
THE CROSSWORD MAN is ruling up his crossword on a large drafting board. MELETE enters.

MELETE: Excuse me Carl, can you tell where I can find a spare ream of paper? We've run out on our floor.

CROSSWORD MAN looks up.

CROSSWORD MAN: Of course Mary, there are some stores in the cupboard over there.

He gestures with his arm.

MELETE follows his gesture and opens a cupboard and withdraws a ream of paper.

MELETE: Thanks Carl. (Beat) How’s the crossword coming?

CROSSWORD MAN: Okay. I always have to be a couple of days ahead.

MELETE: I don’t know how you do it. To me it’s like alchemy.

CROSSWORD MAN laughs.

CROSSWORD MAN: It’s all about planning, and coming up with the clues.

MELETE: That has to be the hardest part.

CROSSWORD MAN: Not if you understand the logic that’s involved, then it’s actually very easy.

MELETE: I was never any good at these types of games.

CROSSWORD MAN: I think you underestimate yourself Mary. I’ve read your articles and you seem to understand the games people play just fine.

MELETE: Thanks Carl.

CROSSWORD MAN: You know you’re the second woman who’s taken an interest in my crosswords lately. It seems I’ve become a regular Lothario.

MELETE laughs.

MELETE: Oh yeah, who else has been taking an interest in your arcane ways?

CROSSWORD MAN: That refugee lady, Yolanda.

MELETE: Amenza?

CROSSWORD MAN: Mmm Hmm... Comes in ever second day with a new clue or answer that she wants me to put into the crossword.

MELETE: Really?
CROSSWORD MAN nods.

CROSSWORD MAN: If I didn’t know better I’d think she was passing messages to somebody.

MELETE: Through the crossword?

CROSSWORD MAN nods.

CROSSWORD MAN: A technique that’s been used as long as there have been codes and ciphers. You hide the message in plain sight where only the initiated will know to look for it.

MELETE: Why are you telling me all this Carl?

CROSSWORD MAN shrugs his shoulders.

CROSSWORD MAN: I figured you might need to know.

MELETE looks at him trying to ascertain what he knows.

CROSSWORD MAN (continuing): You see people forget that I’m here after a while, because all I do is focus on my puzzles. That doesn’t mean that I don’t hear things or see things. Things like that some of our stories are being shut down before we can publish them. That people have been talking. (Beat) I know Frank and I figure he’d put someone important on finding out where the leak is coming from. Maybe that’s you.

MELETE: Carl, you’d have made a great spy.

CROSSWORD MAN: No I don’t go in for all that cloak and dagger horseshit.

MELETE smiles.

MELETE: Can you give me a list of all the clues and answers that Amenza has asked you to change?

CROSSWORD MAN: Sure thing.

He pulls out a small pocket notebook and hands it to MELETE.

CROSSWORD MAN: It’s all in there, along with some of my speculations on what it all means.

MELETE puts down the ream of paper on a desk and looks through the book.

CROSSWORD MAN: Don’t lose that.

MELETE: I won’t.

She puts it in her pocket and picks up the ream of paper.

MELETE: Thanks Carl.

CROSSWORD MAN: Anytime Mary, anytime.
Melete speaks with McManus go to Section 67
Melete speaks with fellow journalist Robinson, whose stories are implicated by the allegations, go to Section 62

Melete decides to contact Robinson whose work is involved, go to Section 118

Melete realises it is time to speak with McManus, go to Section 67
67. McMANUS CLEANS HOUSE

MELETE stands at McMANUS's desk.

MELETE: I found this in the apartment before the police arrived. I figured Sid wanted me to find it.

She hands a dossier over to McMANUS.

McMANUS (reading): Project Capgras. What is it?

MELETE: From what I can make sense of, it’s a top secret experiment that’s been going on out in the desert. It has something to do with nooclear testing.

McMANUS: Cristeas, what the hell did Sid get himself into?

MELETE: He was following a lead for me.

McMANUS: On what?

MELETE: On the mole.

McMANUS: Ah shit. I think it’s time we call someone in to deal with this properly.

MELETE: I think I have a name to give them.

McMANUS: Who?

MELETE: You’re not going to like it.

McMANUS: Who dogdamnit?!

MELETE: Yolanda Amenza.

McMANUS: How did I know that you were going to say that name?

MELETE: You’re not surprised?

McMANUS: No I had my suspicions but I had to know for sure. There was some talk back during my time in Costa Real that she had been a secret informer.

MELETE: Why didn’t you say anything?

McMANUS: I needed to know for sure. (Beat) And you still need to give me the proof.

MELETE pulls out a separate dossier with all that she’s uncovered on AMENZA.

McMANUS: Cristeas! This is more than I was expecting.

MELETE: When the dam walls broke, a lot was uncovered.

McMANUS: I wasn’t expecting you to be quite so thorough.
MELETE: It’s what I do. Also I had help. (Beat) I suspect that this should be enough to violate the terms of her visa. It’s espionage on a grand level.

McMANUS: Throwing her out of the country isn’t going to change what she did.

MELETE: Do you really think this government is going to prosecute her?

McMANUS: Not this government. (Beat) Who was she leaking to?

MELETE: A spook according to the details Sid gave me.

McMANUS: This doesn’t bode well. The democracy that we thought we knew is crumbling around us. Someone wants to keep tabs on we’re doing, to control what we say.

MELETE: Isn’t that a bit paranoid?

McMANUS: Not from where I’m standing. We’ve become the frontline in a new war. A secret war that we didn’t even know was being waged, but now must put all our effort into stopping.

McMANUS sits down at his desk and pick up the phone and dials a number.

McMANUS (into the phone): Hold the press, we’re striking the front page. I’ll get the copy down to you as soon as I have it. Don’t whine, just do it.

McMANUS hangs up the phone and immediately picks it up again.

McMANUS (into the phone): I need an outside line.

McMANUS put his hand over the receiver.

McMANUS (to MELETE): Well don’t just stand there I need you to get that copy written. We’re holding the front page for it. Make it short, sharp, make it the best thing you’ve ever written.

McMANUS talks back into the phone.

McMANUS: Give me the number for the Central Bureau of Investigation... ...no here in Franklin.

McMANUS waves MELETE out as he proceeds to go into damage control.

Melete decides to speak with Manning, go to Section 130

McManus has one final job to do, go to Section 132
68. A FREEDOM SILENCED.
An Editorial by Frank McManus

The events of the past week have shaken not just the institutions of the fourth estate but foundations of the democracy that we hold so dear. With the revelation that the federal government has been using spies to gather intelligence on the inner workings of our newspaper, we find ourselves called into action. As a society and as a nation we stand now on the edge of a dangerous precedent that threatens to destroy our way of life.

[Opening paragraph from the full page editorial published on the front page of The Columbia Times]

This concludes the file of subject 135125205, Mary Melete, at this time.
69. THE BETRAYAL OF TUÇO

[Translated from Hispaniolan]

TUÇO is strapped to a table.
A single bright light source is shining down into TUÇO’S eyes.
TUÇO can feel the heat of it on his face, even with his eyes closed.

VOICE: Well this is an unfortunate turn of events.

TUÇO says nothing.

VOICE: It never ceases to amaze me the reserves some people have for this kind of punishment.

TUÇO says nothing.

VOICE: It just seems that some men have a kind of stamina for this kind of treatment, but I don’t think you’re that kind of man Tuco.

TUÇO says nothing.

The VOICE steps into the light and we can see that it is La Dama de la Destrucción, YOLANDA

AMENZA: La Dama.

AMENZA: Yes, it is I. Did you expect someone else to give you the nightmares you so richly deserve?

TUÇO: What I deserve is not up to you to decide.

AMENZA: The situation you find yourself in, suggests a different story. So will you tell me what it is that I want to know?

TUÇO: No Puta.

AMENZA: Name calling won’t get you anywhere. But perhaps my touch will.

AMENZA disappears out of the light and we hear TUÇO scream in pain.

AMENZA: Now Tuco, do have something to tell me?

TUÇO (panting): In all fairness, you didn’t ask me a question.

AMENZA: Where is El Perro? Tell me how he can find him.

TUÇO (panting): No!

AMENZA again does something, and again TUÇO screams.

TUÇO (panting): I’ll go to hell before I’ll tell, La Dama.
AMENZA: That can be arranged.

Again TUCO screams.

TUCO (muttering to himself): The pain is my friend. The pain is my friend.

AMENZA: You’re talking to yourself Tuco. You know that it is the first sign of insanity.

TUCO: In a world like this one, who would want to be sane?

Again TUCO screams.  
And the light suddenly turns out.

Tuco betrays El Perro, go to Section 100

Tuco helps Melete escape, go to Section 79

Tuco must decide where his allegiances lie,

To himself, go to Section 100

To protect Melete, go to Section 79

And where is Melete? Go to Section 41
70. THE BALLAD OF TERRENCE T. GANTING

[A folk song about the life and times of Terrence T. Ganting, the man who shot his own wife for sleeping with himself. This song was first recorded in the late 1940s]

This is the ballad of Terrence T. Ganting
Who one day at home, they found him a-ranting
It seems his wife had made a great mistake
By taking home a man for her own sake

Ol’ Terrence got home and found the two in bed.
He took out his gun and shot the man dead.
The law arrived, and found a sight
The two men were exact-a-lee alike.

CHORUS

Terrence, Terrence T. Ganting
They found him, found him a-ranting
Terrence, Terrence T. Ganting
His blood a-boiled, his breath a-panting
He’s the only one we know you see
Who killed a man and claimed that it was me.

Nobody’s sure how she could’ve got it wrong
Leaving Ol’ Terrence with nothing but this song.
The trial you see was something unreal
‘Cause the jury couldn’t tell which one of them was real

They gave him the chair, but there was a hitch
The power it failed every time they pulled the switch
Now he’s planning on enjoying his cen-ten-ary
Many years from now in the peni-tent-iary

CHORUS

TERRENCE, Terrence T. Ganting
They found him, found him a-ranting
Terrence, Terrence T. Ganting
His blood a-boiled, his breath a-panting
He’s the only one we know you see
Who killed a man and claimed that it was me.

REFRAIN

Terrence, Terrence T. Ganting
They found him, found him a-ranting

Terrence, Terrence T. Ganting
His blood a-boiled, his breath a-panting
Mac issues a warning, go to Section 54
71. THE ROAD TO NOWHERE

A deserted road travels from North to South.

On the side of the road stands a sign that states that Cristos Ciudad, the capital of Santo Cristos, is 25 Kilometres away. The sign is old and rusty and has a hole through it that looks suspiciously like a bullet hole.

A speeding car can be heard approaching from the North.

It arrives and slows down enough to jettison a body from the back seat of the car, it then speeds up and keeps on going.

The BODY rolls out of the car and comes to a rest at the foot of the sign. The BODY’s hands are tied together with rope in front of it and a hessian sack covers the BODY’s head. The BODY struggles to stand up.

The BODY is alive.

When it stands it reaches up with its bound hands to pull the hessian sack off its head.

It’s MELETE.

She takes a deep breath and then takes a look around trying to orientate herself.

Seeing the sign, she walks over to the pointy side that indicates the southern direction of Cristos Ciudad and puts her bound hands up to the point. Using it as a kind of loom and with a bit of wrangling she is able to loosen the outer ropes and get her right hand free. Getting this hand free she is able to manually loosen the other hand and she throws down the rope in disgust. She rubs both of her wrists and once again takes in her surroundings.

It is a road to nowhere.

She turns in the directions of Cristos Ciudad and starts walking.

Melete tells Marta what happened to Tuco, go to Section 73

Melete decides to call home, go to Section 19

The mothers of Cristos Ciudad must know what happened to their noble children, go to Section 73

It’s time to go home, go to Section 19

Please recall the earlier Section Number; it is now necessary to continue the story.

From Section 80 (FIGHT OR FLIGHT? [THE REDEMPTION OF TUCO] [PART II])

Then continue on to Section 73

From Section 77 (AMENZA RETURNS [THE RISE OF LA DAMA])
Then continue on to Section 105

From Section 17 (RESCUE ME)

Then continue on to Section 19
72. LIVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY

[Translated from Hispaniolan]

A dark secluded pier on El Rio Serpiente. The thin pier rests at the back of the slums of Cristos Ciudad. A dark HOODED FIGURE stands alone beside a large long crate filled with bananas. A large wooden lid rests to one side.

The HOODED FIGURE looks out at the murky black river.

HOODED FIGURE: Black as some men’s hearts.

A small elderly woman approaches. It is MARTA the barmaid.

MARTA: Are you ready for your journey?

HOODED FIGURE: Yes I suppose so.

MARTA: You are not leaving in defeat.

The HOODED FIGURE lowers his hood. It is EL PERRO SALVAJE.

EL PERRO: No? Then why does it feel that way?

MARTA: You must live if you are to fight again another day.

EL PERRO: Meanwhile, how many more will die?

MARTA: There is a reason that almighty Dog brought you to us. But we must also learn to stand for ourselves or else we will replace one dictator for another. The voice of El Perro does not die, it is eternal, and his struggle is not represented by just one man. It is in all of us.

EL PERRO: You speak wisely Marta, but still you do not allay my doubts.

MARTA: It is as it must be.

EL PERRO: Yes. (Beat) I will not be gone long.

MARTA: Do what you must.

EL PERRO: There is a mystery at the heart of that woman, one that can explain my existence here. (Beat) I must go now to find the answers. But I promise I will return to finish what I’ve started – to overthrow tyranny.

MARTA: Perhaps we will accomplish that task for you.

EL PERRO: I hope that that is true. (Beat) Goodbye Marta, tell Tuco I will write him in the usual way.

MARTA nods.
EL PERRO climbs into the crate and MARTA places the wooden lid on the top of the crate and then takes a hammer and begins to nail the crate shut. She finishes the task as a long thin banana boat arrives.

An Elderly man drives the boat and aided by a youngish man who does not say anything.

JULIO: Marta? This is the delivery you wanted made?

MARTA: Yes Julio.

JULIO: Pepe, help bring the crate aboard.

PEPE THE MUTE and JULIO lift the crate aboard the banana boat.

MARTA: You must take the crate to Santa Rosa, to a tavern known as Los Tres Puñales. They will pay you for your troubles.

JULIO: Sí, sí.

MARTA: You may open the crate only once you have left Cristos Ciudad far behind. (Beat) Do not be surprised by what you find.

JULIO: Marta! What have you gotten me into?

MARTA: Nothing you cannot handle, amante.

The banana boat pushes off and MARTA waves it goodbye from the shore.

Melete tells Marta about what happened to Tuco, go to Section 73

Melete calls home, go to Section 19

Melete finds her own way out, go to Section 71

Tuco must help Melete to escape, go to Section 80
73. AMENZA TO THE END

In a town square, the Plaza del Sol, Cristos Ciudad, a group sits in silent protest, knitting. They are Las Madres de los Desaparecidos, the Mothers of the Disappeared. Life in Cristos Ciudad continues on around them. They hold their vigil in silence, with several placards that ask in Hispaniolan, “Where is my son?” and “Tell me where my daughter is?” On the fringes of the square, armed soldiers stand on the lookout as the mothers continue to knit. Seated amongst the mothers is MARTA, the barmaid.

Entering the square from the south, is MELETE. Her clothes are dishevelled and torn and she has bare feet. She looks anxiously at the soldiers. They pay no attention to her. MELETE looks over the women knitting and recognises MARTA. MELETE tries to discreetly cross the square to speak with her.

Before MELETE can get all the way there, a SOLDIER approaches.

SOLDIER [in Hispaniolan]: Can I help you?

MELETE: I don’t think so.

SOLDIER: Do you have business here?

MELETE: I’ve come to speak with Las Madres de los Desaparecidos.

SOLDIER: I have orders not to let anyone else join their protest.

MELETE: I’m not here to protest.

MELETE tries to pass him. The SOLDIER raises his weapon to block her way.

MELETE: Marta! I bring news!

The SOLDIER pushes MELETE back. MARTA looks up at the sound of her name and recognises MELETE. She stands and walks over to where the two are standing.

MARTA: Rodrigo what are you doing?

The SOLDIER’S tone changes.

SOLDIER: Hello Señora Rodrígues de la Santos...

MARTA: Why is this woman being detained?

SOLDIER: She’s not being detained Señora, I have orders not to let anyone disturb your protest.

MARTA (to MELETE): Do you have plans to disturb our protest?

MELETE: No, I already told him that.

MARTA: Rodrigo let the woman pass.

SOLDIER: But Mrs De La Santos...I have my orders.
MARTA: Do you want me to tell your mother about your behaviour?

SOLDIER: You wouldn’t...

*MARTA glares at him.*

SOLDIER: She already doesn’t like that I’m in the Army.

MARTA: Well let’s not give her anything else to find fault with.

SOLDIER: Yes Señora Rodrígues de la Santos

MARTA: There’s a good boy.

*The SOLDIER looks at MELETE.*

SOLDIER: Err, be on your way.

MELETE: Thank you.

*The SOLDIER retreats and MARTA guides MELETE over to where the Mothers are knitting.*

MELETE (quietly): Marta, I need to talk to you about your son.

MARTA: I know dear.

MELETE: How do you know?

MARTA: El Perro told me.

MELETE: He did?

MARTA: Yes. But you have come to tell me how he died.

MELETE: I...I have.

MARTA: Then let us take our seats and you may tell me what you know.

MELETE: All right.

*The Mothers of the Disappeared allow MELETE in and she takes a seat on a chair that is offered to her. The Mothers then return to their knitting. MELETE is slightly shaken by the calmness with which everyone is behaving.*

MARTA: Tell me child, how did my son die?

MELETE: I... We escaped from the compound that we were being held in, but some soldiers, El Guardia Negro, followed us. I managed to escape but the guards they captured Tuco. His last words to me were to run. As I ran I heard the sound of a helicopter rising into the air, and I turned back to see him being held inside the open door of the helicopter as it made its way out to sea.
MARTA: Vuelos de la Muerte.

MELETE: He may yet still be alive.

MARTA: No my child, this is one of the many ways that freedom is silenced.

MELETE is silent.

MARTA: Thank you my child, for at least giving me some peace.

MARTA leans forward and takes MELETE’S hands, and then begins to cry.
The mothers say nothing, they just continue to knit.

Time passes, and MARTA’S crying subsides.
MELETE looks at MARTA, who nods her head.

At that moment, LA DAMA DE LA DESTRUCCIÓN, YOLANDA AMENZA, enters the square from the North. She is followed by two soldiers, her Personal Guard, who trail her by some distance.

LA DAMA: Melete! I knew that I would find you here. That the need to absolve yourself of your guilt would be too great!

MELETE: Go to hell Amenza.

LA DAMA: Perhaps one day, but not today. Today it is your turn. (Addressing the Soldiers) Men, take that woman and follow me.

The armed men stand idle, looking at LA DAMA.

LA DAMA: Are you deaf? I gave you an order.

RODRIGO, the SOLDIER comes forward to speak.

SOLDIER: La Dama, we were told to not interfere with the protest.

LA DAMA: And I am giving you a new order, now move!

The Soldiers remain still.

LA DAMA: Insubordination! I will personally have all of you flogged.

LA DAME gestures to her own Personal Guard.

LA DAMA: Fine, then I will have my men do it.

PERSONAL GUARD: La Dama, with respect, our task is to guard you, not involve ourselves in military action.

LA DAMA: You will move, when I say you are to move otherwise you will be killed. NOW MOVE!
The two men of her Personal Guard hesitate.

LA DAMA: Do you not know who I am? I am La Dama de la Destrucción and I can have every one of you wiped off the face of this earth.

A stone hits LA DAMA in the head, it draws blood.

LA DAMA: Argh! Who threw that?

MARTA steps forward, putting MELETE behind her. The Mothers have stopped their knitting and are now standing with MARTA and MELETE.

LA DAMA: Old lady you have just signed your death warrant.

MARTA: No La Dama that time has passed.

One by one the soldiers surround the Mothers of the Disappeared. It is unclear if the soldiers are protecting the Mothers from LA DAMA or will enforce her will.

LA DAMA takes a step closer.

LA DAMA: Give yourself up to me and there will be no bloodshed this day.

MARTA: We will not bow to you anymore La Dama. We have lost too many of our children for that.

LA DAMA: Perhaps you would be more content to join them.

LA DAMA pulls out a pistol and aims it at MARTA, MELETE and the Mothers of the Disappeared.

RODRIGO: La Dama, these Mothers have their right to protest.

LA DAMA: Move out of my way soldier.

RODRIGO: Stand down please. We were given order that the Mothers were not to be harmed.

LA DAMA: You overestimate yourself soldier!

LA DAMA raises her pistol and aims it at MARTA. All of the soldiers raise their rifles at LA DAMA.

LA DAMA: Put your weapons down. I have authority here! I am La Dama de la Destrucción!

A single short rings out and LA DAMA is shot in the head. She collapses to the ground. Silence.

PERSONAL GUARD: Who shot her?

RODRIGO: All of us. She brought it upon herself. (To the PERSONAL GUARD) You will tell your superior officers what happened here, and let them know that it was the will of the people.

The soldiers of the Personal Guard approach the body slowly. The rifles of the soldiers follow their every movement. Slowly the Personal Guard drag the body of La Dama de la Destrucción away.
Melete decides it is time to go home, go to Section 19

Melete needs to hear a friendly voice, go to Section 19

It’s time to go back to the United States, go to Section 129
74. TUOCHERO’S LAMENT

An open-backed utility truck travelling on an unsealed country road.
The truck bounces along on the road.

TUO and MELETE sit in the back of the truck watching the countryside fall away.

MELETE: Where are we?
TUO: Names wouldn’t mean anything to you. Let’s just say we’re in the North.
MELETE: Near the border?
TUO: Close enough to it.
MELETE: This is where El Perro hides?
TUO: El Perro does not hide.
MELETE: Why is he not in Cristos Ciudad taking the fight to Domínguez directly?
TUO: Because a revolution does not begin overnight, it takes time to organise.

Beat
TUO: How can you be so naive?
MELETE: It’s not naivety. Sometimes you have to ask obvious questions.
TUO: To which there are not obvious answers.
MELETE: You speak well for someone from the slums of the city.
TUO: Who said, I was from the slums? That’s just where you found me. A man can only get a certain education in the slums. If he wants to know the world he must step outside into it.
MELETE: You speak in riddles Tuco.
TUO: Only because you seem to prefer that I do. (Beat)Nothing is that clear cut.
MELETE: So you went to school?
TUO: Yes for some time.
MELETE: University?
TUO: Yes.
MELETE: Then what makes you a freedom fighter.
TUO: If we must use labels, I prefer revolutionary.
MELETE: All right, what makes you a revolutionary?

TUCO looks at her.

TUCO: There are two things, and they both come at the hands of Domínguez.

MELETE looks at him.

TUCO (continuing): The first is that he killed my father. Not directly, but through the years of defiance and hope that my father held within him. The mistaken belief that a democracy would rise again peacefully here in Santo Cristos. That hope killed him.

(Beat)

TUCO: The second is more violent. I was a teacher at the university. One day Domínguez’s men burst into my class and took all my students away. They said they were breaking the law. There was no warning, no request to stop what we were doing, just a brute force applied to silence independent thought.

MELETE looks shocked at this.

TUCO (continuing): I escaped...by sheer luck. Otherwise they would have taken me as well. Up till then I too believed as my father did, that peacefully and with reason we could find a solution. But I was wrong, only by bearing arms can we hope to overcome our oppressors. I can see that now. My only regret is that I didn’t see it sooner. Perhaps things would have been different.

MELETE is overcome by emotion at TUCO’s story. She doesn’t know what to say to him. They travel in silence for a while.

MELETE: Tell me what do you know about El Perro Salvage?

TUCO smiles.

TUCO: Many things. Some are just rumours adding to the legend. Others are things I have seen myself.

MELETE: Such as?

TUCO: They say he was born in Meinong’s Jungle. A boy raised savagely in the wild, living the hardship of hunger and oppression.

MELETE: That’s the myth.

TUCO: Yes. But there is some truth to it. El Perro was not raised like you or I, he is different. I suspect, but cannot prove, that he too is educated and perhaps even comes from wealth.

MELETE: How do you know?

TUCO: You will see when you meet him.
The truck suddenly grinds to a halt. They are in a tall field filled with tall rows of grain. There is nothing to look at, no obvious signs of civilisation.

MELETE: Where are we?

TUCO: We are here.

Beat

TUCO: And we must walk from here.

The two hop out of the truck and it drives off. TUCO immediately walks into the field of grain and off the main road. MELETE looks around and then quickly follows TUCO into the fields.

Tuco knows the way, go to Section 75

There is only one way forward, go to Section 75

To meet the wolf, Melete must find his lair, go to Section 75
75. THE PATH TO THE WOLF’S LAIR

TUCO and MELETE stand in the middle of expansive wheat field. Their visibility is limited.

MELETE: What are we doing here Tuco?

TUCO: You wanted to meet El Perro. This is how you meet him.

MELETE: It looks to me like the way to an early grave.

TUCO: It can be that if you don't pay attention. El Perro is mindful of his security in a world that would do anything to kill him.

(Beat)

TUCO: In a minute members of La Guardia del Perro will arrive and they will take you into the wolf’s lair.

MELETE: But I thought you would be the one to take me there.

TUCO: I am but a guide, the true path you must walk alone. You must have faith if you are to reach the wolf’s lair. (Beat) Do you have faith?

MELETE: I do.

TUCO: Good.

TUCO puts his fingers in his mouth and whistles and from the four cardinal points emerge four armed men. They wear wolf masks and carry automatic weapons and AK47s.

TUCO: These are the guard dogs. They will take you to El Perro. (Beat) Have faith Mary Melete. Your faith will carry you there.

MELETE: And afterwards, how will I find you?

TUCO: The last town we passed through, Santa Rosa has a bar called Los Tres Puñales. I will be waiting for you there.

MELETE: All right.

TUCO: Goodbye...

He gestures to one of the soldiers who puts a hessian bag over Melete’s head and ties her hands together with rope.

TUCO: ...and good luck

Melete tries to contact Manning, go to Section 105

Melete goes to meet with El Perro Salvaje, go to Section 16
This is what Melete came to Santo Cristos for, go to Section 16

The wolf awaits, go to Section 16
76. AN AUDIENCE WITH EL PRESIDENTE IMMORTALE

A large boardroom; with a table that stretches the entire length of the room. On the walls are bombastic pictures of EL PRESIDENTE IMMORTALE in various poses. In one he is astride a horse holding a pole which bears the Santo Cristan Flag. In another he stands atop a high ridge overlooking a valley, his right foot resting on a human skull. In a final portrait he is dressed in full dress uniform while wrestling a cougar.

MELETE sits at one end of the table facing enormous double doors.

The doors open and a short man enters. With his short strides eventually makes his way to the other side of the table. He stands behind the table, his head just visible over the high backed chairs. He is EL PRESIDENTE IMMORTALE JUAN PABLO DOMÍNGUEZ.

DOMÍNGUEZ: So if it isn’t the famous journalist Mary Mo-lete.

MELETE: Melete.

DOMÍNGUEZ: Of course, of course. (Beat) What brings you to Santo Cristos?

MELETE: My work, but I’m sure you knew that.

DOMÍNGUEZ: Yas, your work. I have been a long admirer of your work.

MELETE: I didn’t realise that my articles were carried by the newspapers down here.

DOMÍNGUEZ: Oh I am widely read. As a leader you must be. Otherwise how else would you know what was going on around you?

MELETE: Do you wish me to answer or are you being rhetorical?

DOMÍNGUEZ is caught off guard by MELETE’S interruption.

DOMÍNGUEZ: You know I have great allegiance with your country. They are big supporters of my way of doing things.

MELETE: Somehow I’m not surprised.

DOMÍNGUEZ: But I am surprised that a journalist of your repute would come to my country in search of a mere bandit.

MELETE: Oh, I would hardly call El Perro a bandit El Presidente.

DOMÍNGUEZ snaps.

DOMÍNGUEZ: He is nothing but a peasant whose idiotic ideas will be obliterated.

MELETE (even): Of course El Presidente.

DOMÍNGUEZ: In fact I would ask that should you meet with him you assist us in locating him.
MELETE: That would hardly be wise of me.

DOMÍNGUEZ slams his hand down on the boardroom table.

DOMÍNGUEZ: You would dare defy the will of El Presidente Immortale?

MELETE (quietly): Nobody lives forever El Presidente.

DOMÍNGUEZ (explosively): What?

MELETE: Nothing El Presidente.

DOMÍNGUEZ: I think Ms. Melete that you overestimate your place. Know that if it weren’t for my friends in the Columbian government, you would have been dead by now. Disappeared, (he snaps his fingers) just like that.

MELETE: So what is it that you want me to do?

DOMÍNGUEZ: Cooperate. Answer the questions that are asked of you, so that we may take care of our little bandit problem. Do you understand?

MELETE nods.

DOMÍNGUEZ gestures to his ear.

DOMÍNGUEZ: Pardon?

MELETE: Yes, I understand.

DOMÍNGUEZ: Good. Then may you enjoy your visit in our fine country.

Before MELETE can respond, DOMÍNGUEZ turns and exits the room. The large double doors slam behind him.

Melete is ushered into another part of the palace, go to Section 77

Melete decides to explore the palace grounds, go to Section 77

The regime holds many surprises and Melete is about to discover one, go to Section 77
MELETE is walking in a hallway through the Presidential Palace, when she hears her name being called.

AMENZA: Mary Melete, as I live and breathe.

MELETE turns to the voice.

MELETE: Hello Yolanda.

AMENZA: We meet again—now somewhat on different terms.

MELETE: So this is where you crawled to after you were deported.

AMENZA: Oh Melete, ever the one to hurl insults.

MELETE: No Yolanda, they’re merely the fact as I see them.

AMENZA comes in close to MELETE.

AMENZA: Well let me share with you the facts as I see them. (Beat) This...this is not your country. This is like the Wild West, full of savages and men who no compulsion about killing women.

MELETE: And yet somehow you’ve survived.

AMENZA: Not just survived, but thrived. Perhaps you may have even heard of me. The locals they have given me this cute little name. They call me La Dama de la Destrucción. Our lady of destruction.

The name registers on MELETE’S face.

AMENZA: So you have heard of me. (Beat) Good, then perhaps you might watch what you say and do, for I am watching you.

AMENZA comes in even closer.

AMENZA: I really should thank you because without you, I wouldn’t have fulfilled my potential. (Beat) And know this, you are only alive because it is politically expedient for you to be so. If I had my way I’d be pulling your fingernails off right now.

With that AMENZA kisses MELETE on both cheeks and saunters away. MELETE watches her go perturbed. MELETE wants to leave now, while she still can.

Melete stays and covers the story of El Perro Salvaje, go to Section 46

Melete leaves Santo Cristos, go Section 105

Melete is not one to be threatened, she’s going to cover the story, dogdammit! Go to Section 46

Melete is in over her head and now’s the time to get out, go to Section 105
Please remember this Section Number [Section 77]; it may be necessary to continue the story.

Melete decides she’s not going to be intimidated by someone like Amenza, go to Section 94

Melete decides she needs to regroup at the hotel and then decide what to do, go to Section 46
TUCO and MELETE are in the back of a Taxi cab. They talk while the DRIVER takes them around the Cristos Ciudad.

TUCO: The city is impressive, no?

MELETE: It’s is much bigger than I realised.

TUCO: El Presidente does his best to hide this from the world. To paint the picture that Santo Cristos is a lawless country that only he can control.

MELETE: You don’t share his view.

TUCO: My country is one whose honour has been taken from it, and whose people continue to pay the price for the actions of greedy men.

MELETE: Can we get out and walk around? I want to get a sense of the different neighbourhoods.

TUCO: Of course, (to the DRIVER) ...We want to get out here.

The car continues on.

TUCO: Driver! Pull over! We want to get out here!

The DRIVER presses the accelerator and he presses a button to lock the rear doors.

MELETE: What’s going on?

TUCO: We have been too loose with our words. We are to be punished.

MELETE: What?

TUCO: The Driver intends to show us another side of Cristos Ciudad, the side that El Presidente controls. Isn’t that right señor?

The DRIVER just smiles at TUCO.

MELETE (to the DRIVER): Where are you taking us?

The DRIVER is silent.

TUCO: To el Estadio Fútbol.

MELETE: Oh.

The DRIVER says nothing, the car just continues to pick up speed.

TUCO: Whatever you do, even if they ask you too, don’t dance.

MELETE: What does that mean?
TUCO: Don’t give them the satisfaction of your joy.

MELETE looks out the window as Cristos Ciudad speeds by.

Tuco faces interrogation, go to Section 69

The authorities will want to have words with the traitor, go to Section 69

This is not going to end well, go to Section 69
79. FIGHT OR FLIGHT? (THE REDEMPTION OF TUCO) (PART I)

TU CO sits in the darkest corner of his cell. He has been waiting for this opportunity for days. The time is now.

A key can be heard being put into the cell door’s lock. The door opens and a shaft of light falls into the cell. A SOLDIER, a member of the Black Guard, El Guardia Negro enters with a tray of food.

SOLDIER: Prisoner, your meal is ready.

TU CO is silent.

SOLDIER: Pretending to have escaped are we?

TU CO is silent.

SOLDIER: Don’t make me come in there and use my baton.

TU CO is silent.

SOLDIER: Well, just remember that you asked for it.

The SOLDIER enters the cell and walks in the darkness with his baton raised. There is a sound of scuffle and the SOLDIER’S baton is dropped and rolls its way back into the light.

Silence.

The sound of bodies falling to the floor.
Now at last the SOLDIER’s legs can be seen. They are struggling to get up. They gradually struggle less... until they are still.

TU CO, at last stands and enters into the light. He is in ragged clothing and he has no shoes. He exits the cell quickly.

The journey is not over yet, go to Section 80

There are many thresholds to cross yet, Tuco, go to Section 80

Meanwhile, El Perro Salvaje must make his exit, go to Section 72
80. FIGHT OR FLIGHT? (THE REDEMPTION OF TU CO) (PART II)

TU CO is walking down a corridor lined with doors, his bare feet make no sound on the floor as he walks. He checks each door to see if they will open. At the third door along, the door swings open to reveal a desert plain. It is late afternoon and sun casts its orange glow over the desert plants and cactus.

TU CO stares at the open plain and contemplates freedom. He takes a deep breath and exhales. He continues on trying the next door.

A muffled voice can be heard behind it.

MELETE: Who is it?

TU CO: It is me.

MELETE: Tuco!? Get me out of here.

TU CO struggles with the archaic bolt on the door and eventually it slides back opening the cell.

MELETE launches herself at TU CO, hugging him and kissing him on the cheek.

TU CO: Come we have to go.

MELETE: How did you find me?

TU CO: Blind luck.

TU CO takes her hand and leads her back up the corridor to the desert door. MELETE stares out at the open plain.

MELETE: I don’t have any shoes.

TU CO: It is better for your feet to bleed than your body. It’s time to go.

MELETE exits out the door and TU CO looks around at the prison.

TU CO: This was perhaps too easy.

He exits into the desert. The two of them can be seen disappearing into the distance. Time passes and the figures shrink into specks on the horizon.

Suddenly a squad of men, El Guardia Negro, come storming up the hallway and they stream out into the desert.

The road leads somewhere..., go to Section 71

Melete has a head start, but that is no guarantee of anything, go to Section 71
Please remember this Section Number [Section 80]; it may be necessary to continue the story.

Sometimes being a foreigner can be your salvation, go to Section 94
81. A HOT TIME AT THE OL’ SANDGATE TONIGHT
(THE SANDGATE BURGLARY)

The Sandgate Hotel and Office Building at dusk. A car pulls up to the curb and four men get out. One
man gets out from the front seat and three men from the rear. After they exit, the driver, MISTER D,
speeds off.

The four men are dressed in suits and tie. Everyone wears black gloves except for one man, the
passenger from the front seat, MISTER X, who wears white gloves. The three men from the rear are
MISTER A, MISTER B and MISTER C.

The four men enter quickly through the front door. As they wait for an elevator, the fifth man,
MISTER D, enters from a stairwell and joins them.

The elevator arrives. The five men pile in. MISTER D pushes the button for the sixth floor.
The door closes, the elevator begins to rise.

In the elevator the five men stand quietly, only the hum of the elevator can be heard.
With a ‘ding’, the elevator arrives at the sixth floor.

The men exit the elevator and arrive at a door on which is written PROLETARIAT NATIONAL
COMMITTEE [or PNC]. MISTER A takes out a leather wallet in which is held a lock pick set. While the
other men survey the corridor, MISTER A proceeds to pick the lock.

The lock clicks and the door opens. The four men file past MISTER A as he returns his lock pick into
the leather wallet.

The men begin to rummage through the offices of the PNC looking through desk drawers and
furniture of the various offices.

MISTER A, MISTER B and MISTER C proceed to place small electronic devices in various corners of
desks, doors and inside larger objects. MISTER D is taking certain photos off the wall and placing
them in a bag he has taken from inside his suit jacket. MISTER A, after finishing placing his devices,
returns to front door to serve as lookout.

MISTER X walks through the offices surveying each room. He is looking for an alternative exit, should
it be necessary. MISTER X discovers that there is an Emergency Exit at the rear of the level which is
partially blocked off by filing cabinet. He looks around, and then crouches and manages to shift the
柜inet clear from the door.

Meanwhile, at the front doorway MISTER A can hear the elevator doors opening and quickly closes
the door to the PNC. He retreats to where MISTER B AND MISTER C are still planting devices. MISTER
D is in another room.

MISTER A: There’s someone coming.

MISTER B: What?

MISTER A: Quick, hide!

MISTER D returns to where the others are.
MISTER D: What’s going on?

MISTER C: There’s someone here. Get down!

*MISTER D hides clumsily behind a filing cabinet, just as a group of men burst into the office. It is the local Franklin D.A. Police.*

*In the rear room, MISTER X hears the commotion and then looks at the Emergency Exit. He tests the door and finds that it opens. Without a second glance he exits through the Emergency Exit and the door silently slides shut.*

To find further evidence of the Fifth Man go to Section 111
82. THE BARBARITY OF BARBEKHOV

A tall stately looking man stands amidst a group of men. It is clear by the way that he carries himself that this is ARISTOLE BARBEKHOV, the leader of the Rousyan Revolution. The men are discussing strategy when there is an interruption at their tent door.

NIKILEV (outside the tent): Get in there!

MELETE: You can’t treat me this way, I’m a member of the Press.

BARBEKHOV: Leon, what is this?

NIKILEV: This woman was found at the boundaries of the compound. She was trying to breach the perimeter wall.

BARBEKHOV: Who found her?

NIKILEV: Medev. First she tried to seduce him, then she tried to bribe him...then she kicked him in the balls!

BARBEKHOV sniggers at this.

MELETE: And he deserved it too!

NIKILEV turns and looks sternly at MELETE.

MELETE: Don’t you glare at me.

NIKILEV pushes her over.

MELETE: You can’t do this. I have my rights as a member of the Foreign Press. Right now you’re in violation of the Human Rights Treaty.

BARBEKHOV (addresses her directly): We did not sign that treaty as we are not members of the Society of Nations; so unless you want to find yourself subjected to more (He pauses) barbarities, I would suggest you remain quiet until this matter is settled.

MELETE is silent.

BARBEKHOV addresses NIKILEV.

BARBEKHOV: How’s Medev?

NIKILEV: He may never have children, but he’ll live.

BARBEKHOV (sarcastically): Such a loss for the Rousyan people. And the woman who is she?

NIKILEV: She says she’s a journalist, from a Columbian newspaper.

BARBEKHOV: Does she have identification?

NIKILEV hands BARBEKHOV Melete’s passport and press credentials.
BARBEKHOV: Mary Melete. (Beat) Are you the same Mary Melete who broke the Sandgate story? The one that almost destroyed the greatest democracy on earth?

MELETE: Yes, that’s me.

BARBEKHOV (to NIKILEV): Well Leon, we have an agitator in our midst.

NIKILEV: What would you like me to do with her?

BARBEKHOV: Nothing for the moment. Ms Melete is our guest, see that she is treated well.

NIKILEV grabs MELETE roughly and pulls her back up to standing. Before he can take her outside, MELETE interrupts...

MELETE: Barbekhov, what if I wasn’t Mary Melete?

BARBEKHOV: Leon here would have taken you around the back and had you shot. (Beat) Of course that still might happen.

MELETE’S face registers shock.

BARBEKHOV: Good day to you Ms. Melete.

BARBEKHOV returns to his aides and continues to discuss strategy while MELETE is taken outside by NIKILEV.

Melete is in the hands of Nikilev now, go to Section 10

Will Barbekhov keep Melete alive? Go to Section 10
83. MANNING PUTS IT IN PERSPECTIVE

A dingy hotel room on the border between Santo Cristos and El Soledor. TOM MANNING stands looking out the cheap venetian blinds at the neon sign that illuminates the street. MELETE sits on the bed, a small suitcase by her feet.

MELETE: You keep looking out that window.

MANNING: It’s a force of habit. Whenever I’m in country I always find myself looking over my shoulder.

MELETE: I guess that’s why you don’t get out much.

MANNING: You’re funny Melete, but my job here is give you the lowdown on what you can expect once you get to Cristos Ciudad. Here at the border things are lot more fluid, and perversely a lot more predictable.

MELETE: You mean life is cheap.

MANNING: Yes, but here if you’ve got money you can buy yourself out of trouble; in Cristos Ciudad you won’t have that luxury. At best you might be able to use your diplomatic ties to get you out of trouble.

MELETE: What’s with all the tough talk Tom?

MANNING: I want you to understand that this is a country that doesn’t play by the rules as we understand them. You have to consider everyone as a potential threat.

MELETE: Heyzeus that’s paranoid even for you.

MANNING: El Perro Salvaje is an unknown quantity. He has been amassing a large group of followers who will rabidly follow him anywhere. You need to take this seriously.

MELETE: Dogdammit Tom, what do you think is going happen to me down here? If I’m in danger, don’t I have the right to know what I’m in for?

MANNING: Listen, you’ve got instincts? Gut feelings? Trust them and don’t trust anybody else. Understand?

MELETE: Manning, so help me if it turns out that you’re hiding something from me, I’m gonna curse the day I met you!

MANNING: Just be cautious. I can’t protect you from Franklin okay? You’re on your own kiddo. I just want to see you come back in one piece.

MELETE: Thanks for putting the fear of dog into me.

MANNING: You’re welcome. Maybe now you’ll start to see the stakes involved down here.

MELETE looks down at her suitcase. MANNING looks out the window and sees an old-fashioned bus pull up outside the hotel.
MANNING: That’s your bus. It’s time to go. (Beat) Good luck.

MELETE: I think I’ll need it.

Melete meets her contact, go to Section 46

A nicer hotel in Cristos Ciudad awaits, go to Section 88

To get into Cristos Ciudad is not so easy, go to Section 91
84. AT THE GATES OF THE DEVIL

The Brothers of Liberty Compound. The building looks like a fortified building. Two guards stand outside the front gates. Their arms are crossed.

**MELETE approaches the guards. She is dressed professionally.**

GUARD 1: What do you want?

MELETE: I’m here to see Brotherly Love.

GUARD 2: I bet you are sweet cheeks.

*Whip quick, MELETE pulls out a knife and holds it to the man’s crotch.*

MELETE: I don’t to take no shit from anyone. *(Beat)* You’re not gonna give me any are you?

GUARD 2: Ahh no maam.

MELETE *(to GUARD 1)*: You...go and tell Brotherly Love I’m here.

GUARD 1: Be cool Gus, I’ll be back in a minute.

*A minute passes. GUARD 2 (GUS) squeals in terror.*

GUARD 1 returns.

GUARD 1: It’s cool. Brotherly Love will see you now.

**MELETE takes the knife away from GUARD’S 2 crotch and wipes the blade on his thigh.**

MELETE: It was nice to meet you Gus.

**MELETE enters into the open door that GUARD 1 holds open for her. The door closes behind of her.**

GUARD 1 looks at GUARD 2.

GUARD 2: What? She had me by the balls.

GUARD 1: She sure did.
85. EL PERRO VANISHES

This section has been redacted. If you are attempting to read this you will be found in violation of federal law. In addition, if you are attempting to read this section we will be able to track you down and apprehend you, don’t ask how, we’re the government, we know everything. Now stop trying to read sensitive material and be satisfied with the story that you’ve been given. You have been warned.

The story is not yet over, continue on to Section 140
86. GET THE DOGDAMN STORY

A story conference at the COLUMBIA TIMES. Seated at the head of the table is FRANK McMANUS, he is looking through a pile of papers. Seated around the table are the editors and heads of various departments. Standing around the room are various journalists. Leaning on one wall is MELETE and MAC. There is a general hubbub; it dies down when McMANUS speaks.

FRANK McMANUS: All right now, let’s get this show on the road. I want to hear from each of you. Jerry what’s happening with lead?

JERRY MONOTTA, a short squat man with a thick accent (probably BOSTONIAN) speaks.

MONOTTA: Well Frank, as you know there’s been some discussion, serious this time, about Plebian rights. The ongoing debate has been that our politicians in government should be paid for their representation.

There is a general hubbub from the table of protest, McMANUS settles them down.

McMANUS: All right now...Go on Jer...

MONOTTA: The system, the argument goes, doesn’t work with voluntary representation. That we don’t get the best men for the job.

TOM MANNING, the Head of the International Section interrupts.

MANNING: That’s the whole point! So we don’t get the corruption of other governments.

McMANUS: Calm down Tom, let Jer speak.

MONOTTA looks perturbed at the outburst.

MONOTTA: I know the reasons why it’s there. The point is the politicos are really agitating this time. For change...

McMANUS: Yeah chump change.

There is a snickering from the journalists around the room. McMANUS settles them with his hands.

McMANUS: So how do you want to handle this Jer?

MONOTTA: Well Frank, we do a paper editorial, this week and follow it up next week. I’ve got Robinson here working the politicos getting opinions from everyone.

MONOTTA gestures to a journalist SIDNEY ROBINSON standing against a wall.

McMANUS (to ROBINSON): Are people willing to go on record?

ROBINSON: Some are. A lot are hesitant.

McMANUS: We need prominent names. Otherwise this is a dead story. See what you can dig up.
ROBINSON nods.

MANNING, Head of International interjects again.

MANNING: Frank, you can’t be serious with this?

McMANUS: Why don’t you stick to International Tom?

MANNING (continuing): There’s no way they could have this constitutionally. They’d need a referendum. And the GP [General Public] are not going to vote for their officials to get paid. It disrupts the order of things.

MONOTTA: Dogdammn it Tom, the whole point is that this administration thinks that they have a loophole. That they can take it to the legislature without having to involve the GP at all.

MANNING is silent.

McMANUS (admonishing): Stick to what you know Tom, all right. (To MONOTTA): Now is there anything else?

MONOTTA: Just this Sandgate burglary.

McMANUS: I thought we’d dropped that.

MONOTTA: We’ve been trying to...

MELETE speaks up here.

MELETE: There’s more to this than just a burglary.

MONOTTA: Dogdammn it, Melete!

McMANUS looks at MELETE.

McMANUS: And are you the only one covering this?

MAC: I am as well.

MONOTTA: That’s Peter Mackenzie and Mary Melete.

McMANUS: Okay, so what’s your beef with this Jer?

MONOTTA: Well the kids have done some nice reporting, but there’s nothing here to tie it to the administration.

MELETE: Jer, we have leads.

MONOTTA: None of whom will go record.

McMANUS: Is that true?
MAC: Yes.

McMANUS: So what do you think Jer, do you want to can it?

MONOTTA: Thing is Frank, instinct tells me they’ve got something, but what, I don’t know...I’d be interested in what you think.

McMANUS: Is it sound?

MONOTTA: Yes, but it’s going to take some digging.

McMANUS: Are they up for it?

MONOTTA (looking at MELETE and MAC): They’re hungry for it.

McMANUS contemplates them, and looks at MONOTTA.

McMANUS: All right. I’ll give you another couple of weeks to run with it, but you get the dogdamn story and get someone to go on record. Otherwise, I’ll can it myself.

Both MAC and MELETE nod.

McMANUS: All right now Jer, is that it?

MONOTTA: That’s it.

McMANUS: All right Tom, what about international?

MANNING: There are a couple of things going on in the world.

The journalists round the table laugh. McMANUS quiets them again.

McMANUS: So what’ve you’re got?

MANNING: I’ll start close to home. The ongoing revolutions in Central Columbia. That whole area has turned into a basketcase. I’ve got a word that after the recent fall of Hispaniola that now Santo Cristos is facing internal strife. A group called Los Liberatores has been making trouble for El Presidente Immortale Juan Domínguez. Get this their leader goes by the name of the Wild Dog, cristeas!

McMANUS: Only in Central Columbia. So you want to send someone down there.

MANNING: Yeah... I’m monitoring the wires for the moment, but it would be good to have someone on the ground.

McMANUS: I guess that depends on what else you’ve got.

MANNING sighs.

MANNING: This one’s a little bit further but no less messy. The Rousyan struggle for Independence.
McMANUS: Well in a perfect world we’d be able to cover both at once.

MANNING: I would prefer that.

McMANUS: So what are you thinking?

MANNING: Well Frank...

_The meeting continues on..._

To follow Mary Melete go to [Section 36](#)

To follow Frank McManus go to [Section 103](#)
87. GIVE ME SHELTER

In the rubble of a bus shelter: A blast scorched area, the rubble that remains is charred black and in places on fire. The landscape has been the victim of a nooclear firestorm. Two SOLDIERS (one male, one female) and a CAPTAIN enter. All three of them are wearing nooclear gasmasks.

[TRANSLATED FROM ROUSYAN]

SPASTIKHOV: Search the rubble. It’s possible that they came this way.

SOLDIER I: Do you honestly think that anyone would have survived the firestorm?

SPASTIKHOV: You’re job is not to question but to do it.

SOLDIER I: Yes sir.

The two SOLDIERS begin to half-heartedly sift through the charred remains.

SPASTIKHOV: Put your back into it men. If there is even a chance that Comrade Nikilev has survived, we must find him.

There is a stirring in the rubb... the two soldiers head toward it.

SOLDIER II: There’s a survivor!

SPASTIKHOV: Or just a rat.

SOLDIER II turns to look at SPASTIKHOV, while SOLDIER I lifts up the rubble.

SOLDIER I: It’s a woman.

SPASTIKHOV: How disappointing.

SOLDIER I: She’s alive Captain, isn’t that something?

SPASTIKHOV: Well good for her, but the survival of one woman is useless compared to the survival of the Rousyan state. Now keep looking.

SOLDIER II (mumbling under breath): Miserable bastard!

SPASTIKHOV: What was that?

SOLDIER I: Nothing sir.

SPASTIKHOV: Listen if I wanted your dissent I would’ve asked for it. As it is, we have a second in command of the Revolutionary Army missing somewhere in this area. If we find him alive, the revolution lives, if not Rousya returns to the stone age! Now search! We can deal with the court martials later.

The two soldiers grumble and continue to search the area albeit even more half-heartedly than before.
SPASTIKHOV for his part goes over to the woman to examine her. He searches her body and what remains of her clothes. From her hand he pulls a photo of a young toddling girl. He looks at it and puts it in his jacket pocket.

The woman murmurs.

MELETE: Arabella...

SPASTIKHOV: It’s doubtful that your child still lives. Consider yourself lucky to be alive.

This stirs the woman into a half frenzied state, she rises, lashing out blindly. SPASTIKHOV pushes her down with his boot.

SPASTIKHOV: Don’t overexert yourself. Death hovers close by.

The woman collapses into the rubble unconscious and for the first time SPASTIKHOV gets a good look at her. He recognises her.

SPASTIKHOV (to the SOLDIERS): HEY! This is the Columbian who was with Nikilev. Comrade must be here. Search harder men!

Now there is a flurry of activity as the SOLDIERS and SPASTIKHOV begin to turn over the rubble. From another part of the ground a pile of rubble stirs.

Both SOLDIERS and SPASTIKHOV rush to the rubble and begin to lift it off. A man’s body slightly burnt and near naked emerges from the rubble.

SPASTIKHOV: Is it him? Yes! Comrade! (To the SOLDIERS) Is he alive? You two hold him up.

The two SOLDIERS prop NIKILEV up but there is no response from him. SPASTIKHOV slaps NIKILEV

A stirring from NIKILEV

SPASTIKHOV raises his hand to slap him again.

NIKILEV (low): If you slap me again, I will kill you.

SPASTIKHOV: Comrade you are alive! Rousya is saved! (To SOLDIERS): Quickly men we must get him to a hospital.

SOLDIER II: What about the woman?

SPASTIKHOV: Leave her here.

SOLDIER II: To die?

SPASTIKHOV: All right take her to a camp or somewhere. But remember our responsibility now is to this man and the future of Rousya. This woman cannot help with that. Come, we must go.

SOLDIER I and SPASTOKHOV carries NIKILEV off. SOLDIER II looking disgusted carries MELETE off in the opposite direction.
Mac and the Columbians find Melete first, go to Section 93

Nikilev and the Rousyans find Melete first, go to Section 99

Will the Columbians rescue Melete first, go to Section 116

Will the Rousyans find Melete first, go to Section 99
88. HEED THE WORDS OF EL PERRO SALVAJE

A radio sits in the middle of a room, playing some generic instrumental music. Suddenly the music is interrupted by the sound of static. From the static, a voice emerges.

VOICE: We interrupt this broadcast of imperialistic radio to present a statement of truth from El Perro Salvaje.

THE VOICE OF EL PERRO SALVAJE: To the people of Santo Cristos, I come to you today to discuss the matters that our great and unelected leader deems unsuitable for common knowledge.

Greed is something that we all have within us. Something that desires that we take all that we can from our fellow man. It is something that seeks to divide us, to stop us from helping each other to be better than we are.

It is our task as revolutionaries to turn back the tide of these human failings. To give the people of this country a chance to be whole again! To hope anew! To rebuild their future! We can liberate this nation from human failings by leading by example. By showing the people the way to a better future away from the oppression of Domínguez!

We can right this country, if we question and are wary of those who would try to divide us; of those who would use our human failings against us. We must remain conscious to maintain our vigilance against these enemies.

We will triumph! It is only a matter of time.

*With that the radio returns to static and then the instrumental music can be heard once again as though the broadcast never happened.*

Melete accepts an invitation from the office of El Presidente. Go to Section 76

Melete meets with her guide Tucomera. Go to Section 46

Melete’s guide is waiting for her in a downtown bar. Go to Section 46

When El Presidente speaks, you must listen. Go to Section 76

Melete meets her contact. Go to Section 46

An interview with El Presidente Immortale may put everything into context. Go to Section 76
89. MEETING BROTHERLY LOVE

This section has been redacted. If you are attempting to read this you will be found in violation of federal law. In addition, if you are attempting to read this section we will be able to track you down and apprehend you, don’t ask how, we’re the government, we know everything. Now stop trying to read sensitive material and be satisfied with the story that you’ve been given. You have been warned.
90. THE FEATHERED SERPENT (FRAGMENT)

EL PERRO and MELETE are in an undisclosed location.

MELETE: So how do you speak to this feathered serpent?

EL PERRO: Quetzalcoatl

MELETE: Yes.

EL PERRO: He comes to me in my dreams, he shows me other places, places that seem familiar, places where I feel like I belong; where people know me.

MELETE: But they’re just dreams.

EL PERRO: Then how is it that they feel more real than this life?

MELETE: I don’t know.

EL PERRO: I have no memories of childhood. I have glimpses and fragments but nothing clear. I have vague memories about school and later college. I know I majored in languages, I was going to work for a place called the UN, it was like your Society of Nations before it was dissolved. I remember going on holiday before starting my job in a place called Mexico. Not Mexicago. That’s all I can see. Then I began to live the life of a revolutionary, not out of desire, but seemingly out of compulsion. I could not deny the role of El Perro Salvaje it was thrust upon me.

Silence.

MELETE does not know how to respond.

EL PERRO: None of it makes any sense. It is as though I am following a path that was already set out for me, but it is one that I didn’t choose.

MELETE (admitting): I’ve felt the same since Moscoww. Something died in me.

EL PERRO: That’s to be expected after what you witnessed.

MELETE: Maybe. But it was not the dying of a misheld belief, nor like the loss of my innocence. It was something more profound. Like you there are things I can’t explain. How I can never seem to remember how to spell Moscoww. How I always forget the second W. I don’t know how many times McManus or Manning has chided me for that. But that’s something small, a little quirk that you put down to faulty memory. That’s not the strangest thing. Some mornings I wake to find myself seated at my writing desk to discover that I have filled book after book with lines of poetry. All of it signed with another woman’s name. And I have no memory of writing it.

EL PERRO: What’s the name?

MELETE: Miriam Follows. (Beat) It was joke that Mac and I used to share.

EL PERRO: What does it mean?

MELETE: I honestly don’t know.
The trickster has one final lesson to teach the student, go to Section 96
91. MEETING MASTERS

At a Customs Terminal in Cristos Ciudad. It is a large open hall and people have their suitcases put up on tables as various different officials go through them and check them for contraband. MELETE stands watching as a young CUSTOMS OFFICIAL goes through her bag.

MELETE: Does everybody get the same treatment?

OFFICIAL: Yes Señora.

MELETE: What exactly are you expecting to find?

OFFICIAL: I’ll know when I find it Señora.

The CUSTOMS OFFICIAL continues his search.
From a door behind the customs official, a man enters.
MELETE initially takes no notice of him. As he comes closer, she recognises him as DANIEL MASTERS, a bureaucrat from the State Department. MELETE tries to hide her recognition.

MASTERS: How goes it Pepe?

OFFICIAL: Fine Señor Masters.

MASTERS: She’s not giving you any trouble?

OFFICIAL: No, Señor.

MASTERS: Good. (Beat) It’s wonderful to see you again Ms. Melete.

MELETE: The pleasure’s all mine.

MASTERS: What brings you to Cristos Ciudad?

MELETE: I could ask you the same question.

MASTERS: I’ll tell if you will.

MELETE: I suspect you already know Mr Masters.

The CUSTOMS OFFICIAL finishes searching MELETE’S suitcase.

OFFICIAL: You’re free to go Señora.

MASTERS: What, no contraband?

OFFICIAL: No Señor.

MASTERS: Oh well, maybe on the way out. Enjoy your visit to Santo Cristos.

MELETE closes her suitcase and lifts it off the table.
MELETE: Goodbye Mr. Masters.

MELETE begins to walk away.

MASTERS: Oh Ms. Melete...

MELETE stops and turns back.

MASTERS: You never thanked me for all I did for you in Rousya.

MELETE: Didn’t I?

MASTERS: No.

MELETE: I didn’t think it was necessary. After all...you were just doing your job.

MELETE walks away. MASTERS frustrated takes out a cigarette from his jacket pocket and goes to light it.

OFFICIAL: Señor, you cannot smoke in here.

MASTERS throws away his cigarette in frustration.
After MASTERS leaves the CUSTOMS OFFICIAL retrieves the cigarette and smiles.

A hotel room awaits, go to Section 88
92. MELETE GETS INTO DEEPWATER

MELETE sits at her desk typing up an article, her desk phone rings.

MELETE: City desk, Mary Melete speaking.

A DEEP VOICE: I need to speak to someone about the break-in at the Sandgate hotel.

MELETE: Pardon?

MELETE tries to stall for time, she looks over to where is MAC is sitting. She gestures frantically to get his attention. MAC looks at her, he mouths the words “What?” MELETE points at the phone and gestures with her fingers that he should pick up line 3. MAC gently does so.

A DEEP VOICE: The Sandgate hotel.

MELETE: Yes, I know the one you mean. What about the break-in?

A DEEP VOICE: I have information.

MELETE: Who is this?

A DEEP VOICE: I’d rather not say over the phone Ms. Melete. You should find an envelope addressed to you on your desk. It details how to contact me.

The phone goes dead.

MAC and MELETE look at each other. They both hang up their phones. MAC comes over to MELETE’s desk.

MAC: What was that all about?

MELETE: He had information about Sandgate.

MAC: Check your desk.

MELETE checks her in-tray and finds a large sized envelope addressed to her in amongst the mail. She holds it up for MAC to see.

MELETE: What do you think it means?

MAC: That we’re onto something.

Melete meets up with the mysterious contact, go to Section 3

Melete decides to follow up a lead with another reporter, Robinson, go to Section 45
93. THE AUTHORITIES REACT

MAC and MASTERS are waiting in a large anonymous hallway. People are moving quickly through the hallway in both directions. There is a sense of urgency, but everyone is ignoring to the two men.

MAC: What are we doing here?

MASTERS: Patience. Information doesn’t come easily in situations like this. You have to get a lay of the land.

MAC: You told me you had influence here. So why don’t you use it?

MASTERS: Don’t threaten me Peter. You wouldn’t even be here if you didn’t call me for this little ‘favour’.

MAC is silent; he begins to pace up and down the hallway looking at the faces of the people who are coming and going.

MASTERS: They have a full scale crisis on their hands. What did you think we we’re going to do, waltz in and demand Melete like we’re asking for a hotel room?(Beat) The whole country is in turmoil.

MAC: Listen you bonofasitch you’re the one who has clearance. So dogdamm use it. I’m not gonna sit here and watch them deal with the dead and dying. I want to find her and get back home.

MASTERS ignores him. He keeps looking for a people he will recognise in the crowd.

At this point SPASTIKHOV enters and makes his way towards the interior of the building.

MASTERS recognises him and stands in his way.

MASTERS [in Rousyan]: Comrade! Comrade, do you remember me?

SPASTIKHOV’s rhythm is thrown off. He reluctantly stops and looks at MASTERS.

SPASTIKHOV [in Rousyan]: Ah, yes the Cortesian diplomat. Masters wasn’t it?

MASTERS [in Rousyan]: Yes you do remember. We’ve been trying to get somebody’s attention but it’s difficult given the situation.

SPASTIKHOV [in Rousyan]: Of course. What is it that you want help with Daniel?

MASTERS [in Rousyan]: We need help locating somebody. A citizen of our country.

SPASTIKHOV [in Rousyan]: Look around you Daniel, everybody has lost someone.

MASTERS [in Rousyan]: This is different. We’re looking for a journalist, someone who has done vital work for our country.

SPASTIKHOV sighs.

SPASTIKHOV [in Rousyan]: Who are they?
MASTERS [in Rousyan]: It’s a woman. Her name is Mary Melete. She was believed to be travelling with Barbekhov’s forces.

SPASTIKHOV [in Rousyan]: Then you might as well look for her in the ash cloud over Moscow.

MASTERS [in Rousyan]: She’s dead?

MAC who is watching this exchange and observing their body language, suddenly tenses up.

SPASTIKHOV notices his reaction, and decides to reveal the truth to MASTERS.

SPASTIKHOV [in perfect Onglish]: Who is this gentleman?

MASTERS [in Rousyan]: He is her husband. [reverting to Onglish]: This is Peter MacKenzie, also a journalist.

SPASTIKHOV: It’s possible that if she survived, she was taken to one of the Hospital camps that have been set up on the perimeter of Moscow. To travel there you will require special permission, and be willing to expose yourself to the fallout.

MAC: Can you arrange this?

SPASTIKHOV looks at MASTERS.

SPASTIKHOV [in Rousyan]: You’ve were never this officious before Daniel. What does this man hold over you?

MASTERS stammers.

SPASTIKHOV [in Onglish]: Of course Mr Mackenzie, Mother Rousya will do all that it can to accommodate your request. But the search is yours alone. We have our own problems to deal with. I will see that you receive the necessary passes by this afternoon. Good day to you. [in Rouysan] And to you Daniel.

SPASTIKHOV continues into the depths of the building, leaving the two men alone.

MASTERS [in Rousyan]: Good Day sir. [in Onglish to MAC] Come on, we’ll come back this afternoon for the passes.

MAC: What did he say to you Masters?

MASTERS: None of your dogdamn business. Now let’s get this thing over with.

MASTERS and MAC exit through the front doors against the flow of people trying to enter.

The camps of Moscow await, go to Section 12

Mac gets the pass, go to Section 104

Masters powers of persuasion are not that good, go to Section 108
94. WHO’LL DESTROY LOS LIBERATORES?

MELETE is being held in a holding area, in an anonymous looking building. Her hands are tied in rope and her head is covered in a hessian sack. Two IMPERIALES, enter the area, they speak in Hispaniolan.

[Translated from Hispaniolan]

IMPERIALE UN: This is the one who was with the dog?

IMPERIALE DOS: They say so.

IMPERIALE UN: What, are the Colombians working with him now?

IMPERIALE DOS: No stupid, they’re working with us.

IMPERIALE UN: Do you think she knew that?

IMPERIALE DOS: What does it matter? She’ll be dead before she can tell anyone.

At that moment an entourage of soldiers and high ranking officials enters the holding area, led by LA DAMA DE LA DESTRUCCIÓN, YOLANDA AMENZA. She is joined by DANIEL MASTERS. They speak in Onglish.

MASTERS: Is that her?

LA DAMA: Yes you found her. And now you want me to hand her over to you?

MASTERS: Yes La Dama.

LA DAMA: Why should I give this pathetic excuse for a journalist, over to you? It is very easy for us to make sure that she disappears. It happens all the time here, and no one complains.

MASTERS: They don’t exactly have the right to free assembly now do they?

LA DAMA: Don’t talk democracy to me; the values of your country are no better than here. You’re so-called democracy masks it secret fascist heart. At least here we are more honest in our intentions.

MASTERS: Let’s not talk politics.

LA DAMA: That’s ironic coming from someone who works for the state department.

MASTERS: Diplomacy yes, politics no. But this is off the topic. Melete is not yours to kill.

LA DAMA: What?

MASTERS: You heard me Amenza. I made assurances to my government when we agreed to back your little dictator, that any citizen of the United States would not be harmed in our efforts to support you, even those from the crusading press.

LA DAMA: So you would rather Los Liberatores control Santo Cristos?
MASTERS: You’re being irrational La Dama. Nobody said anything about withdrawing our support. However that support is conditional, and if you kill Mary Melete, then we will be forced to withdraw it.

LA DAMA sizes MASTERS up.

LA DAMA: You want her to live?

MASTERS: No, I would prefer that she dies a horrible death, but my preference doesn’t count in the game that we are playing. There are bigger things at play, than the life of Mary Melete. And that is why you will hand her over to me.

LA DAMA gestures to IMPERIALES UN and DOS.

LA DAMA: Take the prisoner to wherever this man asks.

The IMPERIALES nod. MELETE is led away out of the holding area with MASTERS and two other soldiers following.

Before MASTERS exits, LA DAMA speaks.

LA DAMA: Masters...

MASTERS: Yes La Dama.

LA DAMA: You would have made a fine lawyer for the Devil.

MASTERS: I’ll take that as a compliment La Dama.

MASTERS exits.

Melete, this is a fine mess you’re in. Now what will you do? Go to Section 71
95. COMMUNAL LOVE

This section has been redacted. If you are attempting to read this you will be found in violation of federal law. In addition, if you are attempting to read this section we will be able to track you down and apprehend you, don’t ask how, we’re the government, we know everything. Now stop trying to read sensitive material and be satisfied with the story that you’ve been given. You have been warned.
96. THE ASSASSIN AND THE PACIFIST (FRAGMENT)

EL PERRO and Melete in an undisclosed location.

EL PERRO: Can’t you see that we are being used? We’re pawns in a much greater game.

MELETE: And what game is that? I’m beholden to no one. I’m not siding with anybody. No secret organisation or government agency. (Beat) I’ll admit there were times when I pretended that was the case but right now at this moment, I represent me and only me. I’m nobody’s blunt instrument.

EL PERRO: That’s how it appears, but there are forces at work that cause us to fulfil roles and duties that we would not choose for ourselves. We are instruments, and we don’t know that we are being played.

MELETE: You know you sound really crazy when you say that?

EL PERRO: Don’t you feel that sometimes that you have no choice but to do the things you do. That everything you do, even the surprising impromptu things that you do without forethought only lead you to an outcome you knew to be already true. As though it was preordained.

MELETE: We’re not going to argue about destiny and free will are we?

EL PERRO: This is beyond philosophy. The reality that we live in is actively trying to control our lives, leading us somewhere.

MELETE: You talk about this as though there was a malevolent force at work.

EL PERRO: I’m not sure that there isn’t.

MELETE: Oh come off it. I control my destiny. There’s no dog or unseen path that I’m following. I’m doing what I want when I want.

EL PERRO: Then shoot me.

MELETE: What?

EL PERRO produces a gun from his inside his jacket pocket.

EL PERRO: Take this gun and shoot me.

MELETE: You’re crazy.

EL PERRO: Is that you speaking or the role you feel that you have play?

MELETE: That’s...What role?

EL PERRO: In your life, are you the victim or the villain?

MELETE: I like to think of myself as the heroine.
EL PERRO: Everybody is the heroine or hero in their own story. The question is what role do you play within that. Are you the victim or are you the villain? Do you lead or do you follow? Does everything revolve around you or are you just a character in the background?

MELETE takes the gun from EL PERRO and points it at him.

Melete shoots, go to Section 85

Melete doesn’t shoot, go to Section 133
97. NIKILEV RESCUES MELETE

MELETE’S room in the Project Capgras Complex. It is early morning and MELETE lies sleeping in her cot. The door to her room is unlocked and a man enters. It is LEON NIKILEV. He pulls the door closed behind him. He looks older but the years being the head of state have been kind to him and he has a regal quality to him now.

He sits down on MELETE’s cot and brushes her hair softly. MELETE stirs.

MELETE: Hmmm...

NIKILEV: Hello my darling.

MELETE: Leon? My goodness, how did you...?

NIKILEV: I have my ways, but it was not easy. Even for a former head of state.

MELETE: Former? How long have I been here?

NIKILEV: Too long. Forgive me darling for not coming sooner, I did not want to come until I was sure.

MELETE: Sure of what?

NIKILEV: Of a cure for your condition. Portokali tells me he has an answer, that it involves your daughter.

MELETE: Arabella?

NIKILEV: Yes. It’s taken me a long time to find her, but I know where she is now.

MELETE: She’s alive?

NIKILEV: Yes, and I’ve come to take you to her.

MELETE: Oh Leon...

They kiss.

MELETE: I’ve missed you.

NIKILEV: I’ve missed you too. (Beat) Come my darling, it’s time for you to leave this dogforsaken place.

NIKILEV takes MELETE by the hand and leads her out of her room. The light from the corridor now spills into the empty room.

FINIS

There is no further information to add to the file of subject 135125205, Mary Melete, at this time.
98. THE WORM TURNS

MAC and MELETE are standing on the doorstep of a large middle-class house in the suburbs. MELETE rings the doorbell.

A woman, CHRIS GANTRY, answers the door.

GANTRY: Yes, how can I help you?

MAC: Good evening, we were wondering if we may be able to talk to Chris Gantry?

GANTRY: I’m Chris Gantry. What this about?

MELETE: Your work with the WORM.

MAC: We’re journalists from the Columbia Times

GANTRY attempt to close the door in their faces, but MAC is quick with his hand to stop the door from closing.

MAC: Listen Ms Gantry, we know you’ve been told not to discuss your work with us. You’re not the first door that we’ve knocked on.

GANTRY: Please, take your hand off my door.

MELETE: If we could just ask you some questions, we know that you could help us.

GANTRY: No, you don’t understand, they’re watching us, all of us.

MELETE puts a hand on MAC’s shoulder and he lets go of the door. GANTRY slams the door shut.

MAC and MELETE look at each other.
MAC goes to move off the front doorstep when a piece of paper is shoved under front door in front of MELETE’S feet.

MELETE picks it up.

MELETE: Please come back after dark. I’ll answer your questions then. Be discreet. They’re watching.

MELETE hands the paper to MAC and he reads it too. Then he takes the papers and folds it in half and places it in his pocket.

MAC: Let’s go

They leave the doorstep and walk on down the street.

To check in with McManus go to Section 1
99. FIND THAT WOMAN

SPASTIKHOV enters a Hospital Room. NIKILEV sits on the edge of the bed looking out at the view out the window.

SPASTIKHOV: Sir, you’re up and an about?

NIKILEV turns to look at SPASTIKHOV.

NIKILEV: What was your name again?

SPASTIKHOV: Spastikhov sir. Gregori Isosifovich Spastikhov.

NIKILEV: You were the one who found me?

SPASTIKHOV: Yes sir.

NIKILEV: I suppose I should be grateful. (Beat) Do you know the view from this window never changes?

SPASTIKHOV: That’s because we’re 12 storeys underground.

NIKILEV: What?

SPASTIKHOV: You’re in an underground hospital, Sir. It is designed to withstand a nooclear war, which given the circumstances was what prompted its activation.

NIKILEV: What in dog’s name are you talking about?

SPASTIKHOV: You’ve been brought here for your own security sir. This facility was discovered by us when we interrogated some of the surviving army members of Redsnev’s regime. They revealed the location of this facility and we have begun using it as secret hospital.

NIKILEV: Why did I not go to a normal hospital?

SPASTIKHOV: Has no one explained this to you sir?

NIKILEV: Explained what exactly?

SPASTIKHOV: About the fate of Moscow?

NIKILEV: There was an explosion...it was nooclear.

SPASTIKHOV: Yes sir.

NIKILEV: There are no hospitals.

SPASTIKHOV: No not unless you count the rural doctors surgeries. There are medical staff coming from other cities but we’ve had to set up camps at a safe distance from what remains of the city.

NIKILEV: What is a safe distance?
SPASTIKHOV: To be honest sir, I don’t know.

NIKILEV: So why am I here? Why am I not in a camp somewhere with the other survivors?

SPASTIKHOV: This hospital is reserved for the government and special people.

NIKILEV realises the implication of what SPASTIKHOV is saying.

NIKILEV: We’re in charge?

SPASTIKHOV smiles.

SPASTIKHOV: Yes sir.

NIKILEV: And Barbekhov?

SPASTIKHOV: Sir, you are the most senior member to have survived. It is assumed that you will be taking over the void left by Barbekhov.

NIKILEV stares in contemplation at the view.

NIKILEV: It’s a hell of an ugly view. (Beat) What about the woman I was escorting?

SPASTIKHOV: The Columbian?

NIKILEV: Yes.

SPASTIKHOV: She was taken to a Hospital camp.

NIKILEV: She had wounds?

SPASTIKHOV: To be honest sir, my priority was you, not the woman.

NIKILEV: She must be found and brought here.

SPASTIKHOV: But sir, she is not a citizen of Rousya? Beside the Columbian government will be looking for her.

NIKILEV: Find her, before the Columbians do.

SPASTIKHOV: But sir, we have other things...

NIKILEV: FIND HER!

SPASTIKHOV: Yes sir.

SPASTIKHOV retreats from the room.

Spastikhov does something right, go to Section 119
Will Melete be found in time? Go to Section 119
100. THE CONDEMNATION OF EL PERRO SALVAJE

In the Plaza del Sol, a makeshift gallows has been erected. A crowd has gathered, not of their own choosing but because the authorities have decreed that there must be a crowd. From the far left, a convoy arrives.

The first truck unloads TUCO who is handcuffed and is led to one side of the gallows. The second truck unloads a man in a black hooded mask. He is led up the stairs of the gallows by a soldier and a noose is placed around his neck.

At the top of the stairs, a greasy looking man, GUPPO addresses the crowd.

GUPPO: People of Cristos Ciudad, before you stands the man who has put our country to shame. Here is the notorious and evil El Perro Salvaje.

Several soldiers in the crowd elbow people with the butts of their rifles and the people begin to boo.

GUPPO: The whereabouts of this vicious bandit, was only revealed through the coming forward of his Lieutenant in Los Liberadores, Tucomera Rodriguez de la Santos, who for a sizeable reward revealed the location of this evil man.

The crowd begin to boo at TUCO but are silenced by the soldiers who threaten them with their guns. The booing quickly stops.

TUCO holds his head up high, he refused to be bowed by the court of false opinion, although he is the only one who knows this.

TUCO (loudly): I did nothing of the sort! It is what Dominguez would have you believe.

GUPPO: Guards, silence that man!

A GUARD hits TUCO in the face with the butt of his rifle, TUCO’s face begins to bleed.

TUCO: You see! There’s only one way they know how to silence us.

GUPPO: Shut him up!

The GUARD takes a handkerchief from around his neck and ties it around TUCO’s mouth. TUCO struggles but cannot stop the GUARD from applying the handkerchief.

GUPPO: Now I will reveal the face of the vicious El Perro, so that you may know what evil looks like.

GUPPO proceeds to take the black hooded mask off from the man’s head. The whole plaza can see the man. He is not EL PERRO SALVAJE.

TUCO screams out into his handkerchief.

TUCO (muffled): He’s not El Perro!

GUPPO: Behold the evil El Perro. A man who will now be killed for his crimes against El Presidente Immortale!
A VOICE FROM THE CROWD: That man is not El Perro!

GUPPO: Who said that?

The crowd looks around as do the soldiers. No one is forthcoming.

GUPPO: Coward! Show yourself!

The voice speaks again:

A VOICE FROM THE CROWD: El Perro lives! Viva El Perro!

The crowd seems to respond to this. They begin to chant.

CROWD: Viva! Viva!

Some of the crowd surge forward towards the gallows. The soldiers try to hold the crowd back, but are unable to do so.

CROWD: El Perro! El Perro!

A SOLDIER takes his weapon and fires it in the air trying to settle the crowd, but the sound of gunfire causes the crowd to respond violently. A large scale riot breaks out.

GUPPO tries to calm the crowd down.

GUPPO: Do not listen to the lies my friend! Behold the true El Perro, we will now execute this man!

GUPPO reaches out to pull the lever that will execute the man posing as EL PERRO. Suddenly a rock is thrown from the crowd and it hits GUPPO in the head. GUPPO’s head bleeds and he stumbles and accidently knocks the lever and the false EL PERRO is hanged, his neck snapping loudly. GUPPO, bleeding profusely from his wound, stumbles and falls over the edge of the gallows.

The riot surrounds TUCO and the GUARDS and in an instant the crowd overpower the two GUARDS. In the confusion a man approaches TUCO, it is the real EL PERRO. He takes the Handkerchief out of TUCO’s mouth and he undoes the handcuffs from TUCO’s wrists.

TUCO: El Perro...

EL PERRO put a finger to his lips, in a motion of silence.

EL PERRO: Tuco, I know you did not betray me, that it is why I came here today.

TUCO: Thank you, but you’ve put yourself in danger.

EL PERRO: No more than you have put yourself in. And I must ask you to do it again. They have taken the Columbian journalist to the desert compound.

TUCO nods.
EL PERRO: Let Domínguez’s men re-capture you. They will take you there. Find her and keep her alive. I will make the necessary arrangements to liberate you.

TUCO: I will do as you ask.

EL PERRO: Thank you Tuco.

*TUCO smiles and the two men quickly disappear into the riot as the sounds of sirens can be heard in the distance.*

El Perro makes his exit, go to Section 72

The Wolf disappears into the night, go to Section 72

Tuco must once again put himself in harm’s way, go to Section 79
101. PUTTING THE FREEZE ON A BROTHER

This section has been redacted. If you are attempting to read this you will be found in violation of federal law. In addition, if you are attempting to read this section we will be able to track you down and apprehend you, don’t ask how, we’re the government, we know everything. Now stop trying to read sensitive material and be satisfied with the story that you’ve been given. You have been warned.
A modest apartment in New Amsterdam. The sounds of the bustling city can be heard outside the apartment window. MOTHER HUBBARD, looking no older even though many years have passed, sits talking to a man. It takes some time to recognise FRANK McMANUS as the man sitting with HUBBARD. He is visibly aged and a walking stick rests on the side of his chair.

MOTHER HUBBARD brings forth a tray of assorted drinks and cakes and sets them down on a table.

HUBBARD: Now Mr McManus, to what do I owe this pleasure?

McMANUS: Margaret, must you always be so formal? We’ve known each other too long for you to talk me like that. Please call me Frank.

HUBBARD softens.

HUBBARD: I’m sorry...Frank. It’s a force of habit.

McMANUS: I understand. I would keep everyone at arm’s length too if I went through what you did.

HUBBARD: I survived Frank. Survival sometimes forces you to do these things.

She sizes McMANUS up.

HUBBARD: You look like you’ve had to do some of those things yourself.

McMANUS: It’s been hard all these years fighting to bring democracy back to this country. We lost too many good people along the way. (Beat) Your son was the first of a long line of good people who we lost. What’s it been now...15 years?

HUBBARD: About that.

McMANUS: Losing Mac was a blow I never really got over.

McMANUS exhaled uneasily, it clearly still affects him.

HUBBARD: It’s kind of you to say. (Beat) I’ve never properly thanked you for keeping us going during those years.

McMANUS: It was the least I could do.

HUBBARD: It was more than enough, so...thank you.

McMANUS smiles somewhat grimly.

McMANUS: It was a war. A cold uncivil war, even if no one wants to acknowledge it.

HUBBARD: You can say that you survived it.

McMANUS: At some cost. But at least you had a body to bury, Manning’s family got nothing.
HUBBARD: They never did find his assassin?

McMANUS: I don’t think there was one. Santo Cristos was a basketcase by that point. Domínguez was in hiding, there was civil war on the streets. The story the state department told was too neat. And now in the wake of everything, it looks as though documents have come to light that reveals Columbian involvement in propping up Domínguez. It looks like Manning may have been killed by one of our own.

HUBBARD: Plebian bastards.

*The front door to the apartment opens suddenly and both HUBBARD and McMANUS tense up. McMANUS grabs his cane tightly.*

A beautiful young woman with raven black hair enters. It is ARABELLA, all grown up. She is in her early twenties.

ARABELLA: Hello Mo-ma.

HUBBARD *(curt)*: How many times have I told you to knock before you come in?

ARABELLA frowns.

ARABELLA: I’m sorry Mo-ma, I was just in a hurry.

HUBBARD: In a hurry to send me to an early grave.

*HUBBARD softens, when she sees how upset ARABELLA is.*

HUBBARD: Now, now little chicken, don’t lay no egg. *(Beat)* One day you’ll remember how important this all is; even if it never stops seeming strange to you.

ARABELLA smiles, she finally notices McMANUS.

ARABELLA: I didn’t realise you had a guest.

HUBBARD: Come and meet him.

ARABELLA stands between the two of them.

ARABELLA: Hello I’m Arabella. I’m her granddaughter.

McMANUS: I know who you are. We’ve met many times, but I take it you don’t remember me. Have I really aged that much?

ARABELLA looks at McMANUS.

ARABELLA: Your face is familiar, but I’m sorry, I can’t recall your name.

HUBBARD: This is Frank McManus.

McMANUS: I used to work with your parents.
ARABELLA’S face widens in surprise.

ARABELLA: Now I remember you. (Beat) You visited us in Nowhere after Dad...

McMANUS: Yes. That seems so long ago.

ARABELLA is silent again.

HUBBARD: Arabella darling, why don’t you go and start on dinner? I’ll be in to help you in a minute. Would you like to stay for dinner Mr McManus?

McMANUS: Please...Frank...

HUBBARD: Of course. (Beat) Dinner Frank?

McMANUS: That’d be delightful.

ARABELLA: All right Mo-ma. (to McMANUS) It was lovely to meet you again Mr McMan...ah Frank.

McMANUS: You too.

ARABELLA exits to the kitchen.
McMANUS watches her go.

McMANUS: She’s grown into a beautiful young woman.

HUBBARD: Yes, but one who has to remember how to knock. I hope she didn’t give you too much of a start.

McMANUS: Reflexes die hard. You never know who’s going to come through the door, but I was prepared.

McMANUS reaches for his cane and he twists the top to reveal a short dagger hidden at the end of the cane handle.

McMANUS: I have this one on me at all times since the attack on our offices.

HUBBARD: Yes, they killed that lovely puzzle man of yours.

McMANUS: Carl. Amongst the others we lost that day.

HUBBARD: Crosswords weren’t the same after that.

McMANUS: Neither was the paper.

HUBBARD: Speaking of which, why aren’t you in Franklin handling the fallout from the overthrow?

McMANUS: Monotta’s handling it. He’s back from Yooropa now for good. Plus the moment the Plebs were ousted, I suddenly lost the taste for making news anymore. (Beat) Felt like it was time to go.
HUBBARD: You’ve got another decade in you, at least.

McMANUS: I’d rather spend it with the ones I love...which brings me to why I’m here.

HUBBARD: I knew you’d get around to it eventually.

McMANUS smiles.

McMANUS: In the fallout from the overthrow, a lot of things are now starting to come to light. (Beat) They’ve found something out in the New Mexicago desert. A facility, housing people.

HUBBARD: A camp?

McMANUS: It’s hard to say for sure.

McMANUS is clearly dancing around the topic.

HUBBARD (prompting): What does this have to do with me Frank?

McMANUS: On the list of names of people being kept there is your former daughter-in-law.

HUBBARD: What?

McMANUS: Melete’s alive. She has been kept there all this time.

HUBBARD is silent.

McMANUS: Now I know you and her never saw eye to eye, and I can’t vouch for what state of mind or physical well-being she might be in...but...she’s alive.

HUBBARD: So why are you telling me this Frank?

McMANUS: Because Margaret, Mary Melete is a ghost now. She can stay a ghost if you really want her too. It’s not for me to decide. But I thought you should know, in case a ghost turns up on your doorstep.

HUBBARD: How did no one find this out until now?

McMANUS: I don’t know. Deepwater knew about this, but the Plebs tried hard to find him and have him killed. I was never able to verify the location of the place, Project Capgras it was called.

HUBBARD raises her eyebrows at this.

HUBBARD: Peter was investigating that before he died.

McMANUS: Yes with Deepwater. Some of my colleagues believe that it’s because of our association with Deepwater that we were attacked. (Beat) As to how Melete ended up there, that’s another question that has yet to be answered. All I do know is that in 5 days a statement is going to be made about the facility and all the inmates are to be released.

Silence.
McMANUS: Well Margaret?

HUBBARD: You know for years I bore resentment for that woman, for the decisions that she made. I never agreed with her or the things she sometimes stood for. (Beat) She could be a right ornery bitch.

*McMANUS laughs once.*

McMANUS: Ha!

*HUBBARD smiles and continues.*

HUBBARD: But we have all suffered, and we have all lost people we loved. Yet she gave me the most beautiful grandchild and the opportunity to be the mother I could never be for my son. So in some small way I owe her an apology. If she’s alive and her mind and body are with it, then her daughter needs to know her mother. (Beat) Besides I’m not getting any younger.

*McMANUS laughs.*

McMANUS: That’s what I hoped you’d say Margaret.

*HUBBARD smiles.*

HUBBARD (calling out): Arabella!

ARABELLA (from the kitchen): Yes?

HUBBARD: Come in here.

*ARABELLA returns to the living room and wipes her flour-covered hands on the apron she’s wearing.*

ARABELLA: What is it Mo-ma?

HUBBARD: Your mother is alive.

ARABELLA’s eyes go wide in shock.  
*The silence is deafening.*

In what state will Melete be? Continue onto Section 136
103. UNDERSTANDING HOW IT ALL FITS TOGETHER

FRANK McMANUS and YOLANDA AMENZA, a journalist and recent Costa Realean refugee, are walking down a hallway together after a meeting. They are speaking in Hispaniolan.

[TRANSLATED FROM HISPANIOLAN]

McMANUS: How are you settling in Yolanda?

AMENZA: It has been an adjustment, that’s no lie. Many things are the same, many things are worse...

McMANUS: But surely your freedom counts for something.

AMENZA: Are we ever truly free. I would argue that someone always has something over us.

McMANUS: That’s a cynicism born of experience, not a product of your personality.

AMENZA: You Columbians, always so quick to see the positive when the reality is more complex.

McMANUS: At what point do you accept that there will always be things out of your control? That’s what your really asking isn’t it?

AMENZA: Perhaps.

McMANUS: Ah don’t dance around the issue, now that you’ve raised it.

AMENZA: We are never truly free... even in the land of the free.

McMANUS: Freedom is an illusion ’Landa, a rallying cry for patriots and fools. We are not free, we are bound to each other, to this world, and all its limitations. But it’s how our thoughts guide us that truly makes us free, because from that we can guide our actions.

AMENZA: Spoken like a true patriot.

McMANUS: You misunderstand, but I suspect that it’s deliberate. You don’t want to see the possibility of something different.

AMENZA: For me whether I am here or at home, there will always be something that will be held over me.

McMANUS: Maybe you want it to be so. To abdicate yourself from the responsibility.

AMENZA: The responsibility to what?

McMANUS: Your own actions guided by your own thoughts.

AMENZA: Ever the idealist, hey Frank?

McMANUS: It is how you want it to be Yolanda.
AMENZA: For you maybe.

McMANUS: For you too, if you try. *(Beat)* This conversation has turned unusually profound. Let’s talk of something else.

AMENZA: All right Frank.

They continue walking down the corridor in silence.

McManus stays with Amenza, go to Section 8

McManus leaves Amenza, go to Section 60
104. A FREE PASS

At the makeshift offices of the Ministry of State, MAC and MASTERS sit waiting for permission to visit the Hospital camps from the Rousyan authorities. There is a doorway off to one side with a something written in Methodicus [Cyrillic]. It reads when translated “Offices of the Janitorial Staff”.

MAC: How long are we going to wait for this pass?

MASTERS: As long as it takes, Peter.

MAC: You know what, I don’t think you’re really doing all you can to expedite this process.

MASTERS: What more exactly do you want me to do?

MAC is silent.

MASTERS: I understand, you have a loved one who may be alive and you want to know the answer, but the wheels of diplomacy sometimes turn slowly. Patience is sometimes your greatest ally.

MAC: Patience is sometimes impossible when time is of the essence.

MASTERS: There’s not much more I can do.

MAC stands, and paces up and down the small room. After a few minutes the door opens and a small man, CYRIL enters.

CYRIL [in Rousyan]: You are the men who want travel to the hospital camps around Moscoww?

MASTERS [in Rousyan]: Yes.

MAC looks anxiously between the two men.

CYRIL [in Rousyan]: You have been granted a 72 hour pass to visit as many camps as you can during that time. We ask that you respect the wishes and requests of the staff who are working there. This is a difficult time for us all.

MASTERS [in Rousyan]: Yes, of course. Thank you for your assistance.

MAC: Well?

MASTERS: We’ve got a 72 hour pass to visit as many camps as we can.

MAC: That’s fantastic! (To CYRIL) Thank you! Thank you!

MAC puts out his hand and shakes CYRIL’S hand gregariously.

CYRIL [in broken Onglish]: Okay, okay.

MASTERS: We’ve have to go Mac, you said so yourself, time is of the essence.

They leave. CYRIL watches them go.
CYRIL [in Rousyan]: Crazy Columbians.

The horror of the Hospital camps await, go to Section 12
105. MANNING TIES A BOW ON IT

A border town, between the countries of Santo Cristos and El Soledor. MELETE is holed up in a small room in the only the accommodation in town. She has just finished having a bath and is dressing when a knock comes at the door.

MELETE: Who is it?

MANNING: It’s me, Mary.

MELETE: Just give me a minute.

MELETE finishes dressing and goes to open the door.

MELETE: So they sent you down here to handle me, did they?

TOM MANNING doesn’t say anything. He enters the room and sits on the bed.

MANNING: What a mess you gotten yourself into.

MELETE: I was doing my job Tom.

MANNING: Your job was to report the story, not become the story.

MELETE: I was trying to find the truth.

MANNING: The truth? Don’t you know that that’s a shifting target?

MELETE: You’re going to lecture me now are you?

MANNING: Maybe you need lecturing.

MELETE: Listen I didn’t expect to come down here and have to deal with this clusterphuck.

MANNING: I told you not to trust anybody.

MELETE: Heyzeus Tom! You told me dogdamn nothing! (Beat) But I have a feeling that you knew what I was walking into and you let me walk into anyway. What was I really down here for?

MANNING: To sell the Domínguez regime to the folks back home.

MELETE: Murderers and cutthroats over breakfast huh?

MANNING: No, a valiant struggle for freedom and independence...

MELETE: From El Presidente Immortale, not likely. People need to know what’s really going on down here. They need to know that people are vanishing off the face of the earth. And they need to know that we’re the ones supporting it.

MANNING: No they don’t.
MELETE: What are you talking about Tom?

MANNING: Things have changed since you’ve been away. The Plebians are in charge now and they want to promote only Plebian values.

MELETE: What, by silencing the press?

MANNING: No by muzzling us and keeping us on a short lead.

MELETE: And McManus is going along with this is he?

MANNING: Frank is doing the best he can, but that means that some things get chocolate-coated so that they go down easier. We’re not living in easy times.

MELETE: So meanwhile the bastards get to kill innocents all in the name of freedom.

MANNING: For the time being, yes.

MELETE: You know what Tom, even if you chocolate coat it, it still smells like bullshit.

MANNING: Yeah.

MELETE: So what now?

MANNING: That’s up to you.

MELETE: Phuck it, I need a drink.

MANNING nods. MANNING and MELETE exit the hotel room.

Melete decides to return to the United States, go to Section 19

Melete goes to Rousya, go to Section 47

Melete decides to returns to Rouysa, go to Section 47

Melete wants to see her friends and family again, go to Section 19

Melete decides it is time to start over in Rousya, go to Section 47
106. ARABELLA RESCUES MELETE (MEETING MOTHER)

A metallic room with no windows. ARABELLA paces around the room, while HUBBARD sits in chair.

HUBBARD: Will you stop doing that. You’ll wear out the floor.

ARABELLA: I’m sorry Mo-Ma, I can’t help it.

HUBBARD: Sit yourself down. She’ll be here in a minute.

ARABELLA: That’s what I’m afraid of.

HUBBARD: Arabella you’re acting like a child.

ARABELLA: Is that so hard to believe? (Beat) I was a child when I last saw her.

HUBBARD sighs.

HUBBARD: I’m going to tell you something that I should’ve told you a long time ago.

ARABELLA looks at HUBBARD expectantly.

HUBBARD: It’s not your fault that your mother left...

ARABELLA (interrupting): I know...

HUBBARD puts up a hand to silence her.

HUBBARD: Let me finish...(to herself) I can’t believe I’m saying this... It’s not your mother’s fault either. (Beat) She tried to stay in contact with you, but I wouldn’t let her. I was angry at the way she treated your father and maybe even jealous at the life she was able to live. (Beat) I don’t believe I made the best decision, but I did so to protect my family. You, me and your father, Dog rest his soul.

HUBBARD sighs; this speech has been a long time coming.

HUBBARD: Then our world changed and we had to go into hiding. This is why she couldn’t find you when you needed her the most. (Beat) But it’s clear that she never stopped looking for you and that’s why she ended up here, in this prison they call an asylum.

ARABELLA’s face registers a range of emotions, but she says nothing.

HUBBARD: Arabella, dear child, please forgive me.

ARABELLA turns away for her grandmother. As the feelings overwhelm her, she places her hand against the metallic wall and tries to compose herself.

Silence.

HUBBARD clasps her hands together and says nothing. Her face is an emotionless mask.

Time passes.
The door to the room opens and DOCTOR PORTOKALI and a visibly older Mary Melete enter.

MELETE: What is this about Doctor?

PORTOKALI: You have visitors Mary.

MELETE looks at HUBBARD.

MELETE: You? What are you doing here?

HUBBARD: I’ve come to take you home.

MELETE: Somehow I find that hard to believe.

PORTOKALI: It’s true.

MELETE: Really Doctor? You’re going to let me out just like that? After all these years?

PORTOKALI: I’ve told you Mary you’re not a prisoner, you’re a patient.

MELETE: Then why didn’t Mac come to get me? (to HUBBARD) Why did he send you?

HUBBARD seems visibly shaken by this.

HUBBARD: Don’t you know?

MELETE: Know what?

HUBBARD: My son is dead. He has been for some fifteen years.

MELETE: What?

HUBBARD (matter of factly): I thought you knew.

MELETE: Wh-what?

HUBBARD: I’m sorry Mary.

MELETE grows silent.

ARABELLA takes a step toward her grandmother.

HUBBARD: It’s all right. (to MELETE) ...I understand that we didn’t always see eye-to-eye, and I know that you made decisions that I though weren’t in the best interests of your family, but that...that’s behind us now. (Beat) There’s too much blood under the bridge now. This man, this
Doctor...believes that you’re cured and that you can be free today, but only if you agree to be released into my care.

MELETE: I don’t want to do that.

PORTOKALI: Mary!

MELETE: Doctor, take me back to my room.

MELETE turns to leave.

ARABELLA (finding her voice): Don’t I get a say in this?

MELETE: Who...? Have you been there the whole time?

ARABELLA: Yes.

MELETE: Who are you?

ARABELLA: Don’t you recognise me?

MELETE (quietly): Arabella.

ARABELLA nods.

MELETE rushes towards her daughter and they embrace.

MELETE: My darling, is it really you?

ARABELLA: Yes.

MELETE starts to cry and she reaches in to hug ARABELLA again. At that moment a pulse of energy seems to radiate outward from the two of them. It is felt by both HUBBARD and PORTOKALI. It seems to continue to radiate outwards beyond the room until the sensation is gone.

HUBBARD: What was that?

PORTOKALI: A wave collapsing.

HUBBARD: What? Speak Onglish Doctor!

PORTOKALI: Madam, it is the cure for the Melete Effect.

MELETE: The what?

PORTOKALI: Never mind, it’s all in the past now. If you’ll come with me...

MELETE: Wait...I remember you...you’re the doctor who treated me in Rousya.

PORTOKALI (with a broad smile): Doctor Arturus Portokali at your service Mary.

MELETE: I...I remember everything.
POROTKALI: Welcome back. (Beat) Now as I was saying, if you come with me I’ll get you out of this dogforsaken place..

One by one they walk out of the metallic room, leaving it filled with only the ghosts of the past.

FINIS

There is no further information to add to the file of subject 135125205, Mary Melete, at this time.
107. WE’RE NOT SO DIFFERENT, YOU AND I

SIDNEY ROBINSON, a journalist sits at a table, at the back of a bar. He’s drinking his scotch rather quickly. MELETE enters, looks around, and spots him. He doesn’t see her.

MELETE: What’s that the hair of the god that bit you?

ROBINSON: You could say that. (Beat) What are you doing here Mary?

MELETE: I came to apologise.

ROBINSON drops his drink.

ROBINSON: I was going to say something, but I think my glass said it for me.

MELETE laughs softly.

ROBINSON: So what did I do to earn an apology from the great Mary Melete?

MELETE: I checked and rechecked the facts, and you might be right.

ROBINSON: About?

MELETE: The Fifth Man.

ROBINSON: See, I’m not just a pretty face.

He raises his glass towards her.

MELETE: But I’ve got no leads. I wanted to see if you had something that might help.

ROBINSON: Not even the infamous Deepwater?

MELETE: He’s gone to ground. Can’t seem to contact him.

ROBINSON: That means he probably knows something.

MELETE: Probably. But how you gonna catch a ghost?

ROBINSON: Call an exorcist.

He laughs and takes another swig of his drink.

MELETE: What are you doing here Sid?

ROBINSON: You said it yourself, the hair of the god.

MELETE: You don’t strike me much like an alcoholic.

ROBINSON: Oh? Are you such a study of human nature?
MELETE: I can be. Maybe you just need to find yourself a good woman.

ROBINSON: Are you offering?

MELETE: What? No!

ROBINSON: Relax Mary, you’re not my type.

MELETE: So what kind of woman is your type?

ROBINSON (looking into his glass): The male kind.

MELETE: Oh.

ROBINSON: See... I told you I wasn’t a threat.

MELETE: I didn’t know that.

ROBINSON: Why would you? It’s not like I could hand out business cards saying I’m qay.

MELETE: I’m sorry I didn’t mean any disrespect. I just didn’t expect you to be so straight with me.

ROBINSON: I’m not straight that’s the whole point.

MELETE: But it’s illegal.

ROBINSON: So? Just because it’s against somebody’s law, doesn’t mean that it’s against human nature. And I’m not about to pretend to be somebody else.

MELETE is silent.

ROBINSON: You see, we’re not so different you and I. Both of us are bound to follow other people’s rules. We’ll always live in the margins.

MELETE: Don’t compare me to you. You don’t know anything about me.

ROBINSON: No, but I know what it’s like to be invisible. To not be recognised for who you are. Must have hurt when they denied you the Wurlitzer. Just like it hurts when they pass you over for promotion for the lesser writer who just happens to be straight.

MELETE is silent.

MELETE: You mind if I join you for a drink?

ROBINSON looks at her.

ROBINSON: Sure, misery loves company.

MELETE sits down at the table and signals for the waiter.

Melete returns to the offices of The Columbia Times, go to Section 56
This could be the start of a beautiful friendship, go to Section 63
108. THE HARD WAY

At the makeshift offices of the Ministry of State, MAC and MASTERS sit waiting for permission to visit the Hospital camps from the Rousyan authorities. There is a doorway off to one side with a something written in Methodicus [Cyrillic]. It reads when translated “Offices of the Janitorial Staff”.

MASTERS sits patiently in a chair, while MAC paces up and down anxiously.

MASTERS: You do yourself no favours by working yourself up like this.

MAC: Would you prefer that I sat there calmly waiting for news?

MASTERS: Patience is of the essence in situations like these, that’s the first rule of diplomacy.

MAC: No Masters, time is of the essence. There’s a Columbian national, a respected journalist who may be in dire need of our assistance and we’re sitting around waiting for people to tick boxes!

MASTERS: Don’t raise your voice here Peter. Even if it is justified; you do our country a disservice.

MAC stops pacing, he is about to say something to MASTERS when the door opens and a short man, CYRIL enters.

CYRIL [in Rouysan]: Which one of you is the representative from the United States?

MASTERS [in Rousyan]: I am.

CYRIL [in Rouysan]: I’m afraid that at this time, due to security concerns, we have not been able to grant you permission to travel to the hospital camps.

MASTERS [in Rouysan]: But this man’s wife may be amongst the causalities. Is there nothing else you can do?

CYRIL [in Rouysan]: I’m afraid not. This is a stressful time for all of us, but I have been told to assure you that we will do all that we can to locate this woman and put her into your care. I’m sorry that I cannot help you any further.

MASTERS looks between MAC and CYRIL.

MAC: What? What is it?

MASTERS: They’re denying our request to travel to the hospital camps. They believe that security is still an issue around Moscow.

MAC: What?! He can’t do that. (to CYRIL): You can’t do that! Don’t you understand my wife might be there.

CYRIL [in Broken English]: Sorry, sorry.

MAC: You’ll be sorry if she turns up dead! You’ve got to do something, she’s out there I know it!
MAC is now towering over CYRIL, but MASTERS intervenes.

MASTERS: Peter. Peter! Stop! Don’t threaten him, you’ll only make it worse.

MAC moves closer to CYRIL, but MASTERS physically restrains him.

MASTERS: Stop! There are other ways, we can find her through other means.

MAC: How?

MASTERS: We can join a humanitarian aid agency and gain access that way.

MAC: But that could take days.

MASTERS: It’s either that or you get kicked out of the country for assaulting a member of the state department. Which do you prefer?

MAC steps back from CYRIL and turns and storms out of the room.

MASTERS [in Rousyan]: Thank you for all your assistance.

CYRIL [in Rousyan]: I’m sorry we could not be of more help.

MASTERS [in Rousyan]: We will find another way. Thank you.

MASTERS exits.

CYRIL [in Rousyan]: Crazy Columbians!

It’s a long road to the camps, go to Section 112
109. LIBERATING LOVE

This section has been redacted. If you are attempting to read this you will be found in violation of federal law. In addition, if you are attempting to read this section we will be able to track you down and apprehend you, don’t ask how, we’re the government, we know everything. Now stop trying to read sensitive material and be satisfied with the story that you’ve been given. You have been warned.
110. EL PERRO RESCUES MELETE

MELETE’s room in the Project Capgras Complex. She lies on her cot trying to sleep. She is restless; she tosses and turns trying to get comfortable. After some time she seem to drift off to sleep.

On one side of the room is a blank white wall, along the top of which runs a bank of small windows that let in a minimal amount of light during the day. From the centre of the wall emerges a hand. The hand seems to be feeling its way around the bricks as though looking for a place to get a handhold. Eventually the hand finds solid purchase and then with considerable effort, a man pulls himself through the wall and into MELETE’S room. It is EL PERRO SALVAJE.

EL PERRO: At last, I’ve found you!

MELETE stirs from her sleep. When she sees EL PERRO she screams in shock.

EL PERRO: Be calm, it is only me.

MELETE is sure if this real or a dream.

MELETE: How did you get in here?

EL PERRO: Don’t you want to know how I can get you out of here?

MELETE: This is a dream.

EL PERRO: No. Though sometimes reality can appear dreamlike.

MELETE: What do you want from me?

EL PERRO: I’ve come to set you free.

MELETE: How?

EL PERRO: I’ve found a way to cross the barriers between worlds.

MELETE: I think maybe you need to be in here...

EL PERRO: Madness is just another form of reality. Though I’m not mad, I’ve just found a way to transcend this reality.

MELETE: Good for you. (Beat) Now if you don’t mind I’d like to get some sleep.

EL PERRO: No Mary, you don’t understand. You were the one that helped me to unlock this. I’ve come here to offer you a choice.

MELETE: Which is?

EL PERRO: Come with me and I will teach you how to travel across worlds and realities. We can journey across the universe together.
MELETE: Why me?

EL PERRO: Why not you? It’s not as though you have much going on at the moment.

MELETE: This is a dream.

EL PERRO: Open your eyes Melete. This is happening right now. I can take you away from here.

MELETE: Prove it. Prove to me that you’re not some undigested food playing with my unconscious.

EL PERRO: All right.

*He proceeds to take out a brown pencil and to draw on the wall, through which he entered, a door. When he finishes drawing the door handle he says,*

EL PERRO: There. Once there was a sea here but there never was a door.

MELETE: So you can draw on a wall. Big deal!

EL PERRO: Have faith Melete. Have faith.

*And with this EL PERRO reaches out and opens the door and a vast white desert can be seen outside the room.*

MELETE stands up from her cot and peers out at the desert.

MELETE: How?

EL PERRO: Faith, Melete.

*EL PERRO reaches out his hand and MELETE takes it and together they walk through the door and out into the desert.*

The door closes behind them and MELETE’s room is now empty.

FINIS

There is no further information to add to the file of subject 135125205, Mary Melete, at this time.
**111. IS THERE A FIFTH MAN?**

*MELETE sits at her desk. She is looking over the various files and papers. She is trying to see if she’s missed something. She looks at the papers over and over again.*

MELETE: What am I not seeing?

*MELETE settles on a transcript document of the hearing of the four accused SANDGATE burglars. She begins to read the transcript aloud.*

MELETE:

**JUDGE:** So how do the defendants plea?

**MISTER A:** Not-Guilty your honour

**MISTER B:** Not-Guilty.

**MISTER C:** Not Guilty sir.

**MISTER D:** Not Guilty.

So they all plead Not Guilty.

But then...

*MELETE flips through the pages to a later part of the testimony.*

MELETE: Here we are the testimony of Mister Hunt…he testifies (She turns the pages) he testifies. There’s an interruption, the Judge asks for order, one of the defendants Mister A begs the courts pardon and changes his plea to guilty.

*MELETE flips through extra pages of testimony.*

MELETE: Okay Mister B also changes his plea to guilty. Judge asks if anyone else wants to change their plea. Mister C also changes his plea. Judge asks Mister D, Mister D (reading from the transcript verbatim) … “Looks at the other defendants and says ‘No, Not Guilty your honour’.” Judge asks him why and he says ‘I’m not the one who’s done anything wrong.’

*MELETE flips through more pages of testimony.*

MELETE: Then 3 days later, Mister D changes his plea to Guilty.

MELETE sighs.

MELETE: Now why did he do that? Maybe it’s time to go and have a word with our Mister D.

**MELETE gets up, grabs her coat and exits.**

Melete attempt to speak with Mister D., go to Section 53

Melete speak with Mac first, go to Section 54
MAC and MASTERS are dressed in bright blue jackets. They are wearing helmets marked with a red cross on a white square. They are walking around a hospital camp, looking at the survivors of the nuclear blast that levelled Moscow.

MAC: Masters what can you tell me about this camp?

MASTERS: It’s the seventh one we’ve been too, and the last one to officially hold Moscow survivors. There are two other camps but they are for villagers who lived outside the city.

MAC: But still within the radius of the blast?

MASTERS: Yes.

MAC: Then we’ll have to try them as well.

MASTERS: Listen Peter, I appreciate your vigilance but we have to face the facts that it’s possible that Melete is dead.

MAC (explosive): She’s not dead!

MASTERS: We’ve been wandering around camps for two weeks now, there has been no sign of anyone who meets her description. All U.S. citizens who were in the blast radius have been identified by now. We have to stop this.

MAC: We’ll stop when we’ve checked every camp.

MASTERS: No, it ends now.

MAC: What?

MASTERS: I’ve helped you for as long as I could, but I can’t continue any longer. You have to face the facts that she’s most probably dead.

MAC looks down at the ground.

MAC: Fine. Once we search this camp, and if we don’t find her, I will concede to you that she’s dead.

MASTERS: I’m not searching this camp Peter.

MAC: Please Masters, you’re already here.

MASTERS looks at MAC and sighs.

MASTERS: All right.

MAC approaches a DOCTOR who has just finished tending to a woman with horrible burns. He takes out a black and white photo of MELETE and shows it to the doctor.

MAC [in Broken Rousyan]: Excuse me...looking for this woman...
The DOCTOR looks at the photo for a long time.

DOCTOR [in Rousyan]: Yes...this way.

MAC: What? What did you say?

DOCTOR [in Rousyan]: This way. This way.

MASTERS: He wants us to follow him.

MA and MASTERS follow the DOCTOR past dozens of makeshift beds. The DOCTOR leads them to a woman huddled under a blanket drinking a large mug of soup.

DOCTOR [in Rousyan]: Here, this is the woman.

Before MAC can say ‘Thank-you’ the DOCTOR is gone.

MAC: Thank you.

MASTERS looks at the WOMAN.

MASTERS: Mary? Mary Melete?

The WOMAN looks up, and she looks like MARY MELETE.

WOMAN: Miriam, not Mary.

MASTERS: You speak Onglish?

WOMAN: Yes, I’m a citizen of the United States.

MAC, who had been trying to find where the DOCTOR had gone, now turns to speak with the woman.

MAC: Mary! Mary it’s you!

MASTERS: The woman says her name is Miriam.

MAC: No, you’re Mary Melete. Don’t you remember? You’re a journalist.

WOMAN: I’m sorry; my name is Miriam, Miriam Follows.

MAC looks at her for a long time.

MASTERS: Peter, what’s going on? Is this her or not?

MAC hesitates.

MAC: Masters, I need to talk with you a minute.

MAC and MASTERS step away from the woman to talk.
MASTERS: Well, is it her?

MAC: I...I don’t know...she looks like her, but she seems to be under some kind of trauma or amnesia.

MASTERS: Why do you say that?

MAC: Miriam Follows was a pen name that she used in college to write poetry.

MASTERS: How do you know this?

MAC: She told me.

MASTERS: So what she’s assumed this personality out of trauma?

MAC: It’s possible isn’t it? I mean it’s her. Look at the photo.

MASTERS: Well she does bare an uncanny resemblance to the woman in the photo.

MAC: I think we need to get her out of here and back to the United States where we can start to get her treatment.

MASTERS: All right.

MAC: Thank you Masters.

*MACK returns to the woman.*

MAC: Miriam, my name is Peter MacKenzie and I’m your husband.

*The WOMAN looks up at him and smiles.*

*Will the real Mary Melete please stand up? Go to Section 119*
In the back streets of the capital of Santo Cristos, the downtrodden and repressed can be found. It is here that the people can truly express themselves. This is a society that has become used to operating between the scenes of the regime. Here for the right price, when speaking to the wrong people, you can get whatever you need. It is here that you will find the underground supporters of El Perro Salvaje. His name is whispered quietly, but these people, the lowlife of this city, hold high hopes that he can rescue them from the brutal machinations of the dictator Domínguez...
114. WELCOME TO BROTCOWN

This section has been redacted. If you are attempting to read this you will be found in violation of federal law. In addition, if you are attempting to read this section we will be able to track you down and apprehend you, don’t ask how, we’re the government, we know everything. Now stop trying to read sensitive material and be satisfied with the story that you’ve been given. You have been warned.
115. HOW THE DEEP WATER GETS ITS NAME

McMANUS and MONOTTA sit in McMANUS’S office discussing the various stories.

MONOTTA: So what’s your take on Sandgate? Do you think the story has any legs?

McMANUS: That’s a strange question to ask.

MONOTTA: I want to know your honest opinion Frank,

McMANUS: Jer, you were the one who pushed for me to give the kids a chance.

MONOTTA: And I stand by that decision, but now that it’s just you and me, maybe you could do me a favour and share some of the famed McManus insight.

McMANUS looks at him wryly.

McMANUS: You are full of shit, do you know that Jer?

MONOTTA: You have to be to work in this business.

McMANUS laughs.

McMANUS: Listen, I think the kids are doing a good job, but I get the feeling that this goes much deeper than any of us know. I’m concerned that if we don’t get this right, it will have ramifications for we take for democracy in this country.

MONOTTA: That sounds serious.

McMANUS: I think it is serious. I think those kids stumbled onto something that’s going to have a long term impact on this country.

MONOTTA: Don’t forget they had help from Deepwater.

McMANUS: Deepwater? Who’s that? Is that a codename?

MONOTTA: Yes, that’s Melete’s deep cover source who’s been giving her information.

McMANUS: So you named him after the big shark movie?

MONOTTA laughs.

MONOTTA: Yeah. I figure he’s either going to take a bite out of this government or he’s going to sink every one of us.

McMANUS: Heyzeus Jer, what am I going to do with you?

MONOTTA: Give me a raise?

McMANUS: Not if you keep making jokes like that.
NIKILEV lies sleeping in his hospital bed, recovering from the wounds he sustained in the nooclear bombing of Moscoww. His sleep is restless, suddenly he wakes with a start. The room is dark but he can make out a figure sitting by the side of his bed.

NIKILEV: Who are you?

WOMAN: You called for me and so I came.

NIKILEV: Melete is that you?

WOMAN: I no longer recognise that name. So much has changed.

NIKILEV: Well it’s bound to happen when you survive a nooclear bomb blast.

WOMAN: Yes, it puts things into perspective.

NIKILEV: What things Mary?

WOMAN: Call me Miriam, I’d prefer that.

NIKILEV: All right Miriam, tell me what’s changed in you?

WOMAN: I realised that I was being foolish before; pretending as though I didn’t have feelings for you.

NIKILEV: Feelings?

WOMAN: Yes, I know you feel them too.

NIKILEV: What feelings Miriam?

WOMAN: Oh Leon, don’t you know that I love you?

The woman leans in and kisses NIKILEV passionately.

The United States government will have something to say about this, go to Section 93.
117. THE BRO TOWN MASSACRE

This section has been redacted. If you are attempting to read this you will be found in violation of federal law. In addition, if you are attempting to read this section we will be able to track you down and apprehend you, don’t ask how, we’re the government, we know everything. Now stop trying to read sensitive material and be satisfied with the story that you’ve been given. You have been warned.
ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME

MELETE and her colleague ROBINSON sit at their usual table at the back of the bar O’Malleys. ROBINSON is reading the pocket notebook that was given to MELETE by THE CROSSWORD MAN.

ROBINSON: So you’re telling me that Carl, the crossword guy put this together?

MELETE: Yeah.

ROBINSON: Suddenly I have new found appreciation for crosswords.

MELETE is sombre.

ROBINSON: What is it Mary? What’s eating you?

MELETE (gesturing to the notebook): This. The way that it neatly ties everything that we’ve been working on together. Even some stories that were not directly related.

ROBINSON (reading the book): It makes sense. I mean the logic holds.

MELETE: It’s too neat.

ROBINSON: No it’s not and that’s what’s frightening about it. What it’s really showing us is that there is a conspiracy against the paper and more broadly against our society, and that the conspirators are out to bring down our way of life.

MELETE: Do you really think all roads lead to Rome?

ROBINSON: Yes I do.

MELETE: All right, so what do we do with it?

ROBINSON: We make a copy of it and we give the original to McManus.

MELETE: Do you think he can be trusted?

ROBINSON sighs.

ROBINSON: That’s what conspiracies do. They make us distrust the people that we’ve known forever.

MELETE: You didn’t answer the question.

ROBINSON: I think he’s just about the only person we can trust.

MELETE: Okay. I’ll deliver the book to McManus.

ROBINSON: And what we need to do now is find out who Amenza is working for.

MELETE: And why.
ROBINSON: The reasons always come in time. (Beat) Drink up, it’s time to go.

MELETE does so.

MELETE: Thanks Sid.

ROBINSON: For what?

MELETE: For being the voice of reason.

ROBINSON: Are you kidding me? This most alive I’ve felt in years.

MELETE smiles.

ROBINSON: Come on now, we’ve got a story to break.

They exit.

Melete follows the trail to it source, go to Section 65

Robinson and Melete decide to celebrate, go to Section 65
119. THE FRACTURED PAST OF MARY MELETE

MELETE lies in bed, unconscious. There is a bandage wrapped around her head and her body is bandaged around her arms and torso, but we can’t see her legs as they are hidden under the blankets.

NIKILEV enters, he is using a walking stick to walk around, his right leg is bandaged up. Behind him trails SPASTIKHOV.

SPASTIKHOV: Comrade Nikilev you should not exert yourself so!

NIKILEV: Quiet! I’ll do what I want.

SPASTIKHOV: Yes Comrade.

NIKILEV: Now leave me be.

SPASTIKHOV reluctantly leaves, shutting the door behind him.

NIKILEV (to the unconscious MELETE): Alone at last my dear.

He sits there in silence. After a moment he takes her hand. She does not stir.

NIKILEV: I suppose I should thank you, without you I would be dead now. Just ash and dust travelling on the wind. A ghost, one of millions, in a vanquished city.

NIKILEV is overcome by the situation and begins to cry, but MELETE does not stir. He cries for a bit and then composes himself, but still MELETE does not stir. When he composes himself he says,

NIKILEV: I will do all that I can to keep you alive and to protect you. I know that we have not always agreed but perhaps in some small way you’ll let me do this for you.

He puts his other hand also on her hand and holds it tight as though checking for signs of life.

NIKILEV: The Doctor’s say there is nothing wrong with you, but you do not wake. I hope it will be soon. (Long Pause) I’m sorry but I cannot stay much longer, my country needs me now and ridiculously it seems as though I am being considered as the country’s next president. (laughing to himself, acknowledging the absurdity) I know, a little shit like me!

NIKILEV stand and turns walking toward the door.

NIKILEV: You see Melete, you never know where a little luck may take you. Goodbye my sweet, may your days of slumber be short.

He prepares to open the door, struggling with balancing his leg on the walking stick. He falls awkwardly onto the door as he tries to open the door.

NIKILEV: Dogdammit!

MELETE stirs from her slumber.
MELETE: Is that you?

NIKILEV rights himself and turns back towards her.

NIKILEV: Yes it’s me.

MELETE: I knew you’d come for me.

NIKILEV: You did, did you? That surprises me somewhat, unless there was something you weren’t telling me.

MELETE: What?

NIKILEV: Ah...maybe you weren’t waiting for me after all.

MELETE: Nikilev? Where are we? What happened to Barbekhov?

NIKILEV: First sweet nothings, then just plain nothing (He sighs,...why should I not be surprised? (To MELETE) Do you not remember anything?

MELETE: There was a road, we were on foot, walking towards...towards....and then...

NIKILEV: Nothing. There’s nothing left. Redsnev made sure of that. Seven and half million souls gone overnight. It was barbarity on a scale that the word genocide barely describes.

MELETE: What?

NIKILEV: They dropped the bomb. (He demonstrates with his hand) Poof, all gone.

MELETE: What.

NIKILEV: I’m sorry, this must be a bit much to take right now.

MELETE: Why am I here? Am I your prisoner?

NIKILEV: What?! No! You’re being cared for because of the injuries you’ve sustained.

MELETE: I can’t remember anything.

NIKILEV: Do you know who you are?

MELETE: Mary...

NIKILEV: Melete.

MELETE: Yes. Me-le-te. (The word sounds strange coming out of her mouth)

NIKILEV: Do you remember where you are?

MELETE: The United State of Columbia.
NIKILEV: No, try a little further away.

MELETE: I...don't remember.

NIKILEV: Do you remember what you do?

MELETE: I'm a... mother...?

NIKILEV: This isn't good. I will get a doctor to come and assist you.

MELETE: And who are again?

NIKILEV: It seems to be getting worse. Nikilev, Leon Abrahamovich Nikilev.

MELETE: Should that name meaning something to me?

NIKILEV: It should. But clearly it no longer does. *He shuffles towards the door* I'll be back with a doctor in a minute.

As he goes to leave, MELETE says suddenly.

MELETE: I...I just wasn't expecting you to be the one to meet me.

NIKILEV as he goes to exit.

NIKILEV: Well sometimes that's the way life is.

*He exits.*

Melete sees a truth, go to Section 122

Melete’s problems have only just begun, go to Section 40
120. MISTER X MEETS ROBINSON

ROBINSON’S Apartment in the heart of Franklin D.A. The front door opens and ROBINSON enters in a rain soaked jacket. It’s been raining quite heavily and his wet, sodden head is dripping water on to the carpet. He sits down at his desk and picks up the phone and dials a number.

ROBINSON: Come on...pick up (Beat) Hello, is that you Mary?

Pause.

ROBINSON: Yeah, I followed that guy but I lost him downtown...

Pause.

ROBINSON: Yeah, but he just seemed vanish. He must have caught sight of me.

Pause.

ROBINSON: Do you think? It’s just would have been nice to find out who he really is. Did you get anything out of Amenza?

Pause.

ROBINSON: She threatened you? That woman has some nerve, you know that? Wait till we go to tell McManus, that’ll wipe the smile off her face.

Pause.

ROBINSON: Yeah, we’ll do it first thing when I come in tomorrow. That reminds me I’ve got some papers that I want you to have, I think they may be tied up with the Sandgate burglary.

Pause.

ROBINSON: Because they weren’t in any order. It’s taken me this long just to get them into some sort of order. Don’t worry, you’ll get them tomorrow.

There comes a knock at his apartment door.

ROBINSON (hand over the receiver): I’ll be there in a minute. (Into the phone) There’s someone at the door Mary. I’ll talk to you tomorrow.

Pause.

ROBINSON: Don’t worry, it’s all going to work itself out.

ROBINSON hangs up the phone.

The knock comes again.

ROBINSON: Coming.
Before ROBINSON opens the door, he notices the folder which contains the papers he was talking about. The front of the folder it is labelled Project Capgras. He picks it up and puts it inside a leather satchel and puts it away inside one of his desk drawers.

The knock comes again, insistent this time.

ROBINSON: All right...all right I'm coming.

ROBINSON opens the door and simultaneously, he pushed to the ground by an older man who is carrying a handgun. The man closes the front door and then hits Robinson with the butt of the handgun. It is Mister X.

ROBINSON: Aahh.

MISTER X: Why were you following me?

ROBINSON: Get out of my apartment!

MISTER X hits him with the gun twice more.

ROBINSON: Phuck you!

MISTER X drags him down the hallway back into his living room and now begins to punch Robinson about the head. Robinson starts to bleed.

ROBINSON: Stop! Please!

MISTER X: Why were you following me?

ROBINSON: Why were you meeting with Yolanda Amenza?

MISTER X: You’re a dogdamn journalist aren’t you? I warned you guys to stay away, but everybody wants a piece of the action.

ROBINSON: You’re Mister X., aren’t you? The fifth man.

MISTER X: What does it matter?

ROBINSON: People have been looking for you.

MISTER X: I know who you are, you’re that phucking qay bastard who’s been sniffing for clues around congress.

ROBINSON: What does my sexuality have to do with it?

MISTER X: You’re a sickness and there’s only one cure for it.

ROBINSON: Don’t tell me, the only good qay is a dead qay.

MISTER X: I couldn’t have said it better myself.
MISTER X hits ROBINSON again with the butt of his gun. He’s really bleeding now.

ROBINSON (partially slurring): You phucking patriots make me sick. In your eyes a society is one where everything is under your control. You don’t understand that you can’t control everyone. (Beat) But one day it’s going to change and people like me are just going to have the same rights as everyone else. And that’s what you people can’t stand, the idea that you and I, could be equals.

MISTER X holds the gun to ROBINSON’S head.

ROBINSON: Well if you’re going to kill me, the least you can do is give me a goodbye kiss. A dying man has the right to a final request.

MISTER X looks uneasy at this.

ROBINSON: Go on. The least you can do is give a man a piece of heaven before you condemn him to hell.

MISTER X. comes in close and kisses ROBINSON on the cheek.

ROBINSON: No...on the lips.

MISTER X reluctantly comes in close and ROBINSON kisses him and it becomes quite a passionate kiss and eventually ROBINSON bites MISTER X on the lips.

MISTER X: Ah phuck. You qay bastard!

ROBINSON: What can I say, I like it rough.

MISTER X pulls out his pistol and shoots ROBINSON in the head.

MISTER X: Phucking abomination.

MISTER X proceeds to exits quickly out the front door.

Someone is responsible, go to Section 67

Robinson is dead, but the story isn’t, go to Section 67
121. THE FIFTH MAN?
An article by Peter MacKenzie and Mary Melete

[Opening paragraph of an article that was denied publication in the Columbia Times]

As ramifications from the Sandgate break-in continue to plague the current administration, questions have been raised about the possibility of an unidentified fifth man being involved with the robbery. The Columbia Times have learnt of the existence of a fifth man through sources, but when investigators for the robbery were asked about this possibility, they refused to confirm or acknowledge this avenue of investigation. The Columbia Times believes that this fifth man was in fact the mastermind behind the break-in and could implicate the administration further.
A DOCTOR stands over MELETE in bed, he takes her pulse, he examines her pupils for any sign of damage. She sits quietly in bed while being examined NIKILEV and SPASTIKHOV wait patiently while the DOCTOR examines her. NIKILEV still walks with a cane as earlier.

DOCTOR (to NIKILEV): Is it all right if I administer a sedative?

NIKILEV nods.

DOCTOR prepares the sedative and injects it into MELETE’S arm.

DOCTOR (to MELETE): You may rest now. I’m sure things will be better in the morning.

MELETE nods and closes her eyes.

DOCTOR (to NIKILEV): Considering what you’ve both been through she seems fine.

NIKILEV: That’s your assessment is it?

DOCTOR: There are no outward signs of trauma that should contribute to her present condition.

NIKILEV turns to look at SPASTIKHOV.

SPASTIKHOV stares at NIKILEV blankly.

NIKILEV (to SPASTIKHOV): Out Gregori.

SPASTIKHOV: What?

NIKILEV: Get out. The doctor and I have much to discuss.

SPASTIKHOV: Yes Comrade.

SPASTIKHOV hurriedly exits

NIKILEV: Now then Doctor, you were not selected for your bedside manner, but for your experience in these matters. Which I’m led to believe is not insignificant. So I ask you to be frank and earnest with me about the ladies’ condition.

DOCTOR: It is as I told you.

NIKILEV slams his hand on a nearby table angrily. MELETE stirs groggily but does not fully waken, the sedative has taken hold. NIKILEV put his hand out to comfort her.

NIKILEV: It’s alright Mary, rest now. (to the DOCTOR in a low rumble) Do not play the fool with me Doctor. I know that you’re not telling me something.

DOCTOR (half-laughing): You cannot intimidate me to change my prognosis Comrade. There is no outward signs that could contribute to her memory loss. The tests we ran were conclusive.
NIKILEV: You know that’s not why I brought you here, for you to use conventional quackery. You know something, but you’re not telling me. Now either you tell me or we will finally find if Redsnev really did have the Gulags out in Biberia!

_The DOCTOR flinches at the thought of this._

NIKILEV: You’re silence is not encouraging. Do need to call in the Captain?

DOCTOR (_frightened_): All right Comrade, since you put it so persuasively. The woman...

NIKILEV (_interrupting him_): Melete.

DOCTOR: Melete...She is exhibiting signs of a fractured anima/animus.

NIKILEV: In a language that can be understood Doctor.

DOCTOR: Yes...There is a schism in her personality. Her memory has become disrupted.

NIKILEV: It’s all psychological?

DOCTOR: No, this is the result of what happened in Moscoww. (The DOCTOR hesitates) There has been a tear in reality. In her relationship with reality.

NIKILEV: But I was there, and I do not exhibit these symptoms.

DOCTOR: No and that is the mystery. Why some are affected and others not. I have been studying this for years.

NIKILEV: This is not a new phenomenon?

DOCTOR _shakes his head._

DOCTOR: Ever since we began the Nooclear tests there have been strange occurrences that meet these exact symptoms. Loss of memory, false memories, the ability to speak languages previously unknown. Perhaps strangest of all are the disappearances. People vanishing off the face of Gaia without a trace. Or worse a doppelganger arrives to take their place but with memories and history that bears no resemblance to our reality.

NIKILEV: You’re saying this is some kind of disease?

DOCTOR: No it’s something much worse. It is as though someone has torn reality apart.

NIKILEV: Can she be cured?

DOCTOR: She can be reintegrated, but only time will tell if she will be whole again. Reality as we understand it no longer seems to apply to the afflicted. It is something else entirely.

NIKILEV _contemplates this for a moment._

NIKILEV: Come Doctor we must talk of this further. You must tell me everything you know.
The DOCTOR and NIKILEV exits together leaving MELETE to rest.

All will be revealed, go to Section 40
123. GONE – MOSCOWW DESTROYED IN ATOMIC BLAST

THE COLUMBIA TIMES
Written by Peter MacKenzie
(Wednesday 26th of October 1983)

[Opening Paragraph to Peter MacKenzie's Wurlitzer prize winning article on the destruction of Moscoww.]

Words cannot satisfactorily describe the magnitude of the events that have consumed Moscoww. A city, one of the greatest in all Yooropa, that now no longer exists. It is gone. Scorched off the face of the earth by an almighty nooclear blast that has claimed at least 7 million lives. It is believed that rather than negotiate the terms of a handover to the Rousyan revolutionaries led by Aristole Barbekhov, the former dictator and now mass murderer, Vassily Redsnev, decided to destroy the city rather than cede control. At this time, it is not known who will rise to fill the power vacuum left by these two men, but their bitter rivalry has now destroyed the spiritual heart of their country. Today and in the days that follow, ordinary Rousyans must find the strength to rebuild and heal their wounded nation. This is the journey of a million miles (and lives), that has yet to take the first step out of the rubble. We can only pray that Moscoww and Rousya will rise again from the ashes of this tragedy.
124. MISTER X GETS INTO DEEPWATER

An underground car park in central Franklin D.A.

DEEPWATER is walking across the car park to where he has parked his car. His footsteps can be heard echoing as he walks. He notices that his shoelace is untied and so stops to tie it up. However his footsteps continue to echo for a few steps after he has stopped.

Suspicious now, he continues to tie his laces as though he has heard nothing. DEEPWATER continues to move towards his car, but is conscious now that someone is following him. As he reaches for the door handle of his car, he readies himself.

From out the shadows comes MISTER X. who leaps at DEEPWATER with a garrotting wire. DEEPWATER instinctively puts his hand up to shield his neck and his hand is trapped behind the wire.

MISTER X.: You’re going to pay for your betrayal.

MISTER X. tries to pull the garrotting wire taut, but DEEPWATER’S hand is preventing him from finishing the job. DEEPWATER uses his free hand to elbow MISTER X. sharply in the stomach and MISTER X. lets go of one side of the wire. DEEPWATER uses this as an opportunity to free himself from the wire and turn and face MISTER X.

Before MISTER X. can recover, DEEPWATER launches several punches at MISTER X.‘s head and chest. MISTER X. staggers back and DEEPWATER quickly kicks him to the head. MISTER X. falls over. He is bleeding now and DEEPWATER proceeds to land several well placed kicks to the fallen man.

DEEPWATER picks him up and MISTER X. tries to scratch at DEEPWATER’S face but DEEPWATER is too quick. He slaps MISTER X. hard across the face with the back of his hand.

DEEPWATER: You’re pathetic Ganting. Did you really think you were going to kill me?

MISTER X. tries to respond, but only blood comes from his mouth.

DEEPWATER: Know this, if I wanted to leave you dead, you would be. Next time I’ll be leaving a corpse behind. Don’t come for me again.

DEEPWATER punches MISTER X. to the head several times in quick succession and MISTER X. crumples to the ground. DEEPWATER quickly gets into his car, starts the engine and drives off. His car wheels squeal and echo through the car park.
MELETE paces around her hospital room, she is waiting for Doctor PORTOKALI to arrive. A knock comes at her door.

MELETE: Come in.

PORTOKALI: It’s me Ms. Melete.

MELETE: I’ve told you Doctor please call me Mary.

PORTOKALI: My apologies, old habits die hard.

MELETE: Never mind Doctor, what’s the latest?

PORTOKALI: Well, I have some good news for you today. According to my tests your memory has restored to almost as it was before the destruction of Moscow and all of your other vitals remain stable and healthy. I can’t say that you are completely cured but as much as I would like to keep you here, there really is nothing more that I can do for you.

MELETE: Are you saying what I think you’re saying?

PORTOKALI: Yes. You’re free to go.

MELETE: Really?

PORTOKALI: Yes. Comrade Nikilev will organise for accommodation and clothing for you in the interim until you decide what you wish to do. As your doctor, my care for you has ended, but I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

PORTOKALI offer his hand to shake.
MELETE cautiously takes it.

MELETE: I...I didn’t really think this day would come.

PORTOKALI: Well my dear it’s here. Please see the nurse down the hall and she will instruct you on where to proceed from here.

MELETE: Thank you Doctor Portokali.

PORTOKALI smiles at her.
She exits out the door and PORTOKALI is left alone in the room.

PORTOKALI (taking out loud): You can come out now.

The wall that appears to be a window with the static image of the street, slides back to reveal a hidden observation room. Inside the room stands NIKILEV.

PORTOKALI: I did as you asked.

NIKILEV: You did as much as you could Doctor Portokali.
PORTKALI: It was still not enough. The Melete effect has not been negated, it remains in place. As to what effect it have on her reality, I cannot predict...but she bears observation.

NIKILEV: I know all this and I will do what I can to prevent any relapses.

PORTOKALI: Why do you insist on taking this responsibility upon youself? Surely not to appease the ghost of Barbekhov.

NIKILEV: Isn't it obvious Doctor? I love her.

PORTOKALI is silent for some time.

PORTOKALI: I suppose I could've diagnosed that, had I been looking for the symptoms.

NIKILEV smiles.

NIKILEV: Nothing escapes you Doctor.

PORTOKALI: Regardless, you must know that she remains in a precarious state. One that I cannot predict or control, only she can resolve whatever it is that triggered the effect.

NIKILEV: Thank you Doctor. I will do all that I can. (Beat) Now, there is one other matter that I wish to discuss with you. There has come an offer from the United States to study the Mandala Effect as a part of a cross-disciplinary task force. It seems there are several nations who have experienced individuals such as we have and would like to collaborate in developing a resolution.

PORTOKALI: And you want me to participate in this program as a part of some sort of solidarity push?

NIKILEV: That’s a cynical way to view it.

PORTOKALI: And is it so?

NIKILEV: No. The decision is yours alone. I’m merely informing you of this possibility, I will abide by whatever you decide.

PORTOKALI: I will have to think about it.

NIKILEV: Of course. Know that it may be an opportunity to develop a solution to this problem. The task force is based in the desert where the Columbians first tested their nooclear weapons, they seem to think that this location is a nexus for these types of anomalies. But I’ve said enough about that. (Beat) Good day to you Doctor, I trust that you will make the right decision.

NIKILEV exits through the observation room and disappears into the bowels of the underground hospital.

Melete returns to the United States, go to Section 19

Melete travels now to Santo Cristos, go to Section 83
Melete decides to stay in Rousya, go to Section 47

Melete takes an opportunity in the country of Santo Cristos, go to Section 83

Melete decides to return to United States, go to Section 19
126. WHO IS DEEPWATER?

CARL, THE CROSSWORD MAN sits a bar in downtown Franklin. The bar is dimly lit, so dimly lit that it is hard for CARL to see what he is drinking. He nurses the drinking and keeps an eye on the front door. CARL is so focussed on the front door that he doesn’t notice a man sidling up to him from his right-hand side. The man sits down at the stool next to CARL’S. CARL jumps when he sees the man.

CARL: Heyzeus! I wish you wouldn’t do that Myron.

MYRON: How many times do I have to tell you to keep your eyes on all entrances?

CARL: This place doesn’t have another entrance.

MYRON: I came in through the kitchen, the busboy is a friend of mine.

CARL: You have friends in low places.

MYRON: It helps. How else could I get past you?

CARL: If you’re going to play the game, at least you could play it fairly.

MYRON: There’s no such thing as a fair game. Every game is crooked.

CARL: I’ll remember that for next time. (Beat) What are you going to have to drink?

MYRON: What are you having?

CARL: Something that’s masquerading as Whiskey and Soda.

MYRON: No, I think I’ll have a clear spirit. Maybe a Gin, neat.

CARL (to the barman): Can you get a Gin, neat for this gentlemen?

The barman nods and goes off to get the drink. He returns almost immediately with the drink and places it on the bar in front of MYRON.

MYRON: What took you so long?

The barman just scoffs at this and heads down the bar.

MYRON: Surly.

CARL: You’d be too if you had to serve riff raff like us.

MYRON: Don’t put me in the same category as you.

CARL: Why not? We’re related.

MYRON (quietly): Not so loud.

CARL: Don’t worry Myron, you’re secrets safe with me.
CARL laughs at his own joke.

MYRON: Listen, I might be going away for a while.

CARL: Why is that? More overseas work.

MYRON: No, it might be longer than that.

CARL: Is it about Sandgate?

MYRON nods.

MYRON: You’re reporters have been doing a great job, but the bastards have caught up with me.

CARL: They haven’t nailed it yet Myron. Give them time to bring the Plebians down.

MYRON: It’s time I don’t have.

CARL: Okay. (A long pause) Will you be in touch?

MYRON: I’ll do my best.

CARL: Keep an eye out for my messages in the puzzle section.

MYRON: That’s if they have newspapers where I’m going.

CARL: You’re not going to...

MYRON: Just somewhere where the people don’t read much.

CARL: Oh the illiterate states.

MYRON laughs at this. He comes in close and gives CARL a hug.

MYRON (in Carl’s ear): Be well brother.

CARL (in Myron’s ear): Be safe brother.

MYRON exits the way he came as CARL finishes his drink.

CARL: Bartender give me another one of these crap Whiskey and Soda’s, they’re growing on me.

The bartender frowns at CARL’S request.
MELETE'S Apartment in Rousya. A small two bedroom apartment in the heart of Novi Moscoww. MELETE has typewriter in her living room where she is sitting typing when a knock comes at her door.

[Translated from Rousyan]

MELETE: Who is it?

NIKILEV: Leon Nikilev.

MELETE is shocked to hear this. She rises swiftly and opens the door. NIKILEV and two large burly bodyguards stand at her apartment door.

MELETE: The leader of Rousya, to what do I owe this pleasure?

NIKILEV: May I come in? I pose a considerable security risk, here in your hallway.

MELETE: And my apartment is better?

NIKILEV: As long as I stay away from the windows.

MELETE: Come in.

NIKILEV enters her apartment and the two burly bodyguards look to follow when NIKILEV says,

NIKILEV: Gentlemen, I can handle myself here.

The two bodyguards look at each other and then stand guard at the front door. MELETE closes the door as NIKILEV surveys her apartment.

NIKILEV: It's a nice place that you have here.

MELETE: It's a shoebox masquerading as an apartment.

NIKILEV: Would you like me to get you somewhere better?

MELETE: No...no. As an impartial member of the press, I think it would look bad if the supreme leader bought me an apartment.

NIKILEV: I didn't say buy, I just suggested negotiating a reasonable rent.

MELETE: Thank you but no.

NIKILEV: All right.

MELETE: To what do I owe this visit Leon?

NIKILEV: Can't old friends catch up with each other now and again?
MELETE: Typically old friends don’t come with a security entourage and a need to stay away from windows due to snipers.

NIKILEV: This is true. But we’re hardly conventional friends now are we?

MELETE laughs.

MELETE: I guess not. (Beat) Can I get you something to drink?

NIKILEV: Vodka?

MELETE: It’s a bit early for Vodka isn’t it?

NIKILEV: It’s never too early for Vodka. Besides how else am I going to steel my courage?

MELETE: Your courage to do what?

NIKILEV: Vodka and I tell you.

MELETE opens a high cupboard, which is filled with bottles of clear liquor.

NIKILEV: I see you have taken to our national drink.

MELETE: It comes in handy when I need to find sources.

MELETE pours NIKILEV a shot glass of Vodka and hand it to him.

NIKILEV downs it in one swift motion.

MELETE: Now, what is it that you came to see me about?

NIKILEV looks at her.

NIKILEV: Well...I...

MELETE: It’s not like you to be lost for words.

NIKILEV: I’m just...contemplating.

NIKILEV pours himself another shot and downs it quickly.

MELETE: Well better spit it out before you drink too much.

NIKILEV: I...Mary...I... (Composes himself) As supreme leader I...

He steps in closer to MELETE and leans in to kiss her, and oddly she doesn’t pull away.

NIKILEV (after breaking the kiss): ...I love you.

MELETE looks at him. Silence.

MELETE: Well supreme leader, I love you too.
They kiss again... and the bodyguards are made to wait outside for at least an hour.

Melete hears rumours of an uprising against Nikilev, go to Section 51
McMANUS sits behind his desk reading over some articles.
MELETE arrives at his office door.

MELETE: You wanted to see me?

McMANUS: Yes  Melete, come in and take a seat. Close the door behind you.

MELETE does so and takes a seat, behind the table.

McMANUS: How’s the baby?

MELETE: She’s good.

McMANUS: And Mac?

MELETE (becoming impatient): You know how he is, you see him every day. (Beat) What is this about Frank?

McMANUS: I know that there’s a lot going on for you at the moment.

MELETE: Yes.

McMANUS: Well I might have a job for you.

MELETE (excited): Really? (Beat) What is it?

McMANUS: There’s an opening in our foreign office. The three of you could go, if Mac was willing. You’d cover Northern Yooropa, Poelandz, Ukrania, Lithuvania, Estativa and Rousya.

MELETE: To report on the Civil war?

McMANUS: You don’t have to go there to report on it, at least if you do, don’t take the kid. (Beat) It’d be all expenses paid and you be writing again, and you’d be together as a family. I know how unhappy you were at being denied the Wurlitzer. I figure this might be a way to find your redemption.

MELETE looks uneasily at McMANUS.

McMANUS: I thought you’d be happy.

MELETE: I am...no I am.

McMANUS: But what?

MELETE: I was wondering...is there any chance that I can go alone?

McMANUS: Cristeas, what about your kid?

MELETE: You didn’t answer my question.
McMANUS: Nor did you.

They sit there in silence for a minute.

McMANUS: What’s this really about Mary?

MELETE: I just want to write again Frank. I just want to be me.

McMANUS: And you want to do this without Mac or the kid?

MELETE nods.

McMANUS: Cristeas!

MELETE: Go ahead, say whatever you need to. I deserve it.

McMANUS sizes her up.

McMANUS: I can’t tell you what the right thing do is. But I can tell you that I don’t think this is right.

MELETE: For once I want you to not be my editor and just be a friend who can grant me a favour.

McMANUS: Are you and Mac on the rocks?

MELETE: I don’t know. I just know I need to go back to what I know.

McMANUS: And Arabella?

MELETE: Arabella is too young to even notice I’m not there. I’ll be back before she knows that I’m gone.

McMANUS: I think that’s what you want to tell yourself.

MELETE: Frank don’t make this harder than it already is. I won’t be gone for good. Just for a little while.

McMANUS doesn’t look at her.

There is a silence.

MELETE: Is there a chance of me getting into Rousya?

McMANUS: The job offer was for the foreign bureau.

MELETE: Come on Frank.

McMANUS sighs.

McMANUS: Leave it with me, I’ll speak to Manning and see what I can do.

MELETE: You’re a champ Frank.
McMANUS: Then why do I feel like such a heel.

*MELETE doesn’t know what to say to this.*

McMANUS: Now if you’ll excuse me Mary, I have to get back to running a paper.

MELETE: Okay Frank.

*MELETE stands and leaves, closing the door behind her.*

*The intercom on McMANUS’s desk buzzes. He snaps the button down and barks into it.*

McMANUS: Whaddayawant?

SECRETARY: Heyzeus chief! Is everything okay?

McMANUS: Just dandy. Now whaddayawant?

SECRETARY: Ah never mind, I’ll take care of it myself.

*The intercom buzzes off.*

*McMANUS sits there with his head in his hands.*

Melete goes to Rousya, go to **Section 82**

Melete talks to Manning first, go to **Section 130**

Melete decides now is the time to return to Rouysa, go to **Section 134**

Melete takes up an opportunity in Santo Cristos, go to **Section 83**
129. RETURN TO THE USC

*An Airport Terminal. MELETE and her colleague JERRY MONOTTA are walking to the terminal gate.*

MONOTTA: You know the country is not how you left it?

MELETE: I know Jer, but if Mac really has gone to ground and not even McManus can find him, I...

MONOTTA: I know...Your daughter.

MELETE: Yes. But more so, our country needs to answer for the way it has treated men like Mac.

MONOTTA: Like traitors.

MELETE: I have to find him. I have to know if they’re okay.

MONOTTA: What about the story here?

MELETE: It’ll have to wait.

MONOTTA: No story waits for anybody.

MELETE: Listen, just take care of the office until I get back, I promise you I won’t be gone long.

MONOTTA: That’s what you said last time. Besides you don’t even know where they are.

MELETE: I know Mac and I know how he and his mother think. That counts for something.

MONOTTA: Sure...just whatever you do...be safe. The Plebians have got their eyes everywhere and you’re not exactly a friend of theirs.

MELETE: I’ll be careful.

*They reach the gate and MONOTTA awkwardly hugs MELETE.*

MONOTTA: Good luck and Dogspeed.

MELETE: Thanks Jer...don’t worry, I’ll be back before you know it.

MONOTTA: Famous last words.

*MELETE turns and walks down the airbridge to the plane, waving one last time to MONOTTA as she disappears into the bowels of the aeroplane.*

*From Section 73 (AMENZA TO THE END)*

Then continue on to *Section 28*

*From Section 27 (BLOODBATH! MASSACRE AT BRESLAN SCHOOLHOUSE)*

Then continue on to *Section 138*
130. ROUSYA IS NO PLACE FOR A WOMAN

TOM MANNING’S office, Head of the International Section of The Columbia Times. He’s on the phone to someone and is speaking in a rapid-tongued Hispaniolan.

MANNING [in Hispaniolan]: I understand that you have problems with the phones, but dogdammit why can’t I reach my correspondent? He’s supposed to be at the HOTEL BLANCO! BLANCO! What is wrong with you? How hard can it be to connect a phone call? Hello? Hello? Dogdammit!

MANNING slams down the receiver as MELETE enters the office.

MELETE: Is now a good time?

MANNING: As good a time as any Melete. Frank tells me you’re joining the Foreign Office in Northern Yooropa.

MELETE: Yes, yes I am.

MANNING: Don’t you have a family?

MELETE: Tom, spare me the moralising.

MANNING raises his hands in surrender.

MANNING: I’m not here to judge. It was just an observation.

MELETE says nothing.

MANNING: Look I’m happy to send you to Yooropa, you’d be a welcome addition to the office. You’re an award winning journalist, who knows how to get a story.

MELETE: I’m an award winner who was prevented from winning their award.

MANNING: The Wurlitzer Committee are out of touch with the rest of society. They’re taking the good name of Joseph Wurlitzer and rapidly demolishing it.

MELETE: Thanks Tom.

MANNING: I call it how I see it. (Beat) Listen I know that you’ve got your heart set on Yooropa, but if you’re still in two minds, I’ve got a opening down in Santo Cristos. It’s not nearly as well paid and it’s probably a little more dangerous, but your only two hours flight from Franklin.

MELETE: Why should that matter?

MANNING: Because family matters.

MELETE: Sure Tom.

MANNING: Don’t give me an answer today. Think about it and let me know. We can go from there.

MELETE: All right. Thanks Tom.
MANNING: Welcome aboard Melete, or should I say welcome abroad?

MANNING Laughs and MELETE grimaces.

MANNING: Lighten up. You’re gonna need a sense of humour where you’re going.

MELETE looks MANNING and says nothing.

Melete decides to go to Santo Cristos, go to Section 88

Melete decides to go to Rousya despite the advice, go to Section 82
131. THE DEATH OF THE POET LAUREATE

*The Rousyan Novi Bely Dom [New White House] in Novi Moscoww. NIKILEV stands with MIRIAM FOLLOW on the balcony. He is waving to the crowd after having given a speech. As he goes to enter into the building, MIRIAM collapses on the balcony.*

NIKILEV: Miriam!

*The crowd exhales in shock. NIKILEV rushes to her side.*

NIKILEV: What is it? What’s wrong?

MIRIAM: I...I...don’t know.

NIKILEV carries MIRIAM into the building.

NIKILEV (To an aide): Get Doctor Portokali in here now!

*The aide rushes out.*

NIKILEV: Does it hurt?

MIRIAM: No...I...the world doesn’t feel real anymore.

NIKILEV: What do you mean?

MIRIAM: I...I can’t explain it Leon.

NIKILEV: Try my love.

MIRIAM: It’s like everything is fading away.

DOCTOR PORTOKALI and the aide rush back in.

PORTOKALI: I came as soon as I could, you’re lucky I was in the building tending to a minister.

NIKILEV: Help this woman.

MIRIAM lies cradled in NIKILEV’S arms.

PORTOKALI: Where does it hurt my dear?

MIRIAM: It’s all so unreal...

PORTOKALI: Miriam. Miriam! It’s Doctor Portokali, I need you to tell me what’s going on.

MIRIAM: It’s all unreal, you’re not real...I’m...

MIRIAM loses consciousness and then literally fades out of existence.

NIKILEV: No...no...no...NO!
MIRIAM is gone.

NIKILEV: What happened? Where did she go?

DOCTOR PORTOKALI turns to the aide.

PORTOKALI: You need to leave us now. And to speak to no one about what you saw here today. If you do, it will be the last breath you ever take.

The aide is shaken and quickly flees the room.

NIKILEV: Where has she gone?

PORTOKALI: Back to the person she was born from.

NIKILEV: What does that mean?

PORTOKALI: You know that I have been studying the victims of the destruction of Moscoww, the after effects on the people who survived. This woman, this Miriam Follows, she was not a real person she was a manifestation of the psyche of another. This manifestation came into being at the exact moment that Moscoww was destroyed, it is the product of that event.

NIKILEV: This is ludicrous. How is this even possible?

PORTOKALI: I don’t know, but it has something to do with the way that the nooclear energy interacts with our reality. That somehow our universe becomes unstable at that moment.

NIKILEV: This...this is what you have been researching...a mad theory about people displaced from their bodies?

PORTOKALI: Yes, I know how it looks, like the ravings of a madman, but you have to believe I have hundreds of cases, hundreds that represent similar stories to that of the late Miriam Follows.

NIKILEV: Then who was she Doctor? If she was not who I thought she was...Who was she?

PORTOKALI: She represents the damaged psyche of the woman that you love, Mary Melete.

NIKILEV: So where is she now?

PORTOKALI: I can only assume that she has rejoined the remaining consciousness of the other Mary Melete.

NIKILEV: There is another Mary Melete? I thought she was...

PORTOKALI: I know...it doesn’t make any sense...but you have to believe when I say...somewhere out there is another Mary Melete, and she is the one we must find.
McMANUS’S office at the Columbia Times, it is late at night. McMANUS sits at his desk, illuminated by a single desk lamp. He opens his desk drawer and pulls out a bottle of Scotch and a glass, he pours himself a shot, and downs it quickly. He closes the drawer, and opens another drawer and pulls out a leather satchel. He opens it up and looks at the papers in the folder labelled Project Capgras.

McMANUS: What the hell did you get yourself into Sid?

He reads some of the papers, but the more he reads, the more unsettled he becomes. He closes the folder. He rips off a piece of paper from his notepad and scribbles a note... ‘Mac, check this out for me, get in touch in the usual way. M’

McMANUS puts the folder back inside the satchel and does the satchel up. He takes a large box from behind his desk and puts it on the desktop. Then he places the satchel inside the box. He seals the box with tape.

McMANUS: Dogspeed. (Beat) And may the truth come out.

He pours himself another Scotch but this time he cannot bring himself to drink it.

McManus writes the story, go to Section 68
133. A VESTED INTEREST (EL PERRO VERSION)

EL PERRO is using a phone in a hotel foyer. He dials a number and listens to the phone ring. A person answers on the other side.

EL PERRO: Is this Mac?

The person on the other side can’t be heard.

EL PERRO: You know the journalist Mary Melete?

The other person is talking.

EL PERRO: I thought that you would want to know that Ms. Melete has been taken away by government officials. She represents something of a threat to them because of what she knows.

The other person is talking.

EL PERRO: Mr M. please don’t make me repeat myself. If you care for her you will do whatever you can to locate her and free her from this situation. I will do what I can, but I am persona non grata in your country.

The other person is talking.

EL PERRO: I share an interest in Ms. Melete’s wellbeing. Think of me as the snake eating its own tail, he’s not sure if he should be doing it, but he wants to find out how it ends. And now my time is up. Goodbye and good luck Mr M. I fear your task will not be easy, but remember I will do what I can.

EL PERRO hangs up the phone and quickly exits the hotel lobby.

It’s up to Mac now, go to Section 139
134. RETURN TO ROUSYA

Novi Moscowlw Airport. MELETE steps off the air bridge from the aeroplane and into the terminal. She looks around. Someone should be there to meet her. In the distance JERRY MONOTTA, current head of Northern Yooropa Foreign Office, can be seen rushing to greet her.

MONOTTA: Melete!

MELETE: Jerry!

They hug.

MONOTTA: I was so surprised when I got your message.

MELETE: I know, it came out of the blue for me too.

MONOTTA: So what brings you back to Rousya? Researching a story?

MELETE: In a way, I always knew I’d be back. (Beat) Now I’m covering the anniversary, to capture how the country has coped since Moscowlw was destroyed.

MONOTTA: They might finally give you that Wurlitzer.

MELETE: I don’t need an award, for me it just seems like unfinished business.

MONOTTA: Well come on, I’ll take you to this great little restaurant in the heart of town. It makes the most amazing dumplings!

MELETE: Lead on Jer, lead on.

MONOTTA: It’s so good to see you.

They walk out of the terminal.

There are answers here, go to Section 137

Melete decides to travel to Priyapat the sight of a recent civil uprising, go to Section 137

Melete decides to investigate the conspirators here in Novi Moscowlw, go to Section 51
135. THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

Nowhere, United States of Columbia. A small town in the heart of the United States. On the main street, is a single building; its sign faded, but it still legible. It reads ‘General Store’. A single gas bowser sits out the front of the store.

A bus slowly pulls up. The door opens and MELETE, with a suitcase, steps down onto the dusty road. The bus door closes, and the bus drives off and MELETE watches it go.

From inside the store, a balding middle age man, opens the front door and steps out onto the front porch of the store. He’s chewing tobacco. He spits it out before he speaks to MELETE.

BALDY: Can I help you miss?

MELETE: I’m not sure, maybe.

BALDY: We don’t regularly get visitors around these parts, and you don’t look like you’re from around here.

MELETE: How do you know? I could’ve been born around here?

BALDY: I’d know if you were Miss.

MELETE: Fair enough.

BALDY: So what brings you to Nowhere?

MELETE: Was that a joke?

BALDY: Sadly no, some bright bulb thought it wise to saddle us with that name.

MELETE: Who was that then?

BALDY: My father.

MELETE (interrupting): I’m sorry, I didn’t mean any disrespect...

BALDY: None taken Miss. (Beat) So what brings you to...

MELETE (interrupting): Nowhere? I’m looking for an address that’s supposed be around these parts. Maybe you know it.

BALDY: Maybe. What’s the address?

MELETE: 185 Old Grantmans Road.

BALDY: Old Grantmans Road you say? Well you’re not close, but you’re not far neither.

MELETE: How far?
BALDY: About 3 miles down that way.

_He gestures to a road that leads South._

MELETE: Any way of getting out there?

BALDY: No bus, probably best you just walk.

MELETE: Do you know the place?

BALDY: Yeah, there’s not much down there. You have kin there?

MELETE: Or something.

BALDY: Well best of luck, I’m not sure what you gonna find, but I hope it turns out the way you want it too.

MELETE: Thank you.

_MELETE turns and heads South along the road. BALDY stands and watches her, spitting out some more of his tobacco._

This concludes the file of subject 135125205, Mary Melete, at this time.

Melete continues to search for Mac, go to Section 35

Melete decides to return to Rousya, go to Section 134

Will Melete find what she’s looking for? Go to Section 35
**136. ARABELLA FINDS A NEW WAY HOME**

*ARABELLA and MOTHER HUBBARD sit in a room with no windows. Everything, even the walls are made out of metal. ARABELLA and HUBBARD sit on two chairs. A door is opened and DOCTOR PORTOKALI enters. He speaks with a Rousyan accent.*

PORTOKALI: You are the patient’s kin?

_HUBBARD doesn’t say anything._

_ARABELLA looks at her grandmother._

ARABELLA: Yes...is she dead?

PORTOKALI: No. She remains alive, if somewhat separated by reality.

HUBBARD: Explain.

PORTOKALI (not sure if he heard correctly): Pardon?

HUBBARD: Explain yourself, and don’t make me repeat myself.

(PORTOKALI looks a little shocked by her curtness.

_ARABELLA tries to smooth things over._

ARABELLA: Doctor, I apologise for my grandmother.

HUBBARD (sharply): Don’t apologise for me child. I’ll do my own apologising. And don’t assume this man is a Doctor because he comes in dressed like one. He could be our jailer.

PORTOKALI: Madam I am a doctor. (Beat) My name is Doctor Portokali and I can understand your...suspicion. I was not sent here to greet you, I elected to come. To give you the context for your daughter’s condition.

HUBBARD: She’s not my daughter.

PORTOKALI: Then what exactly is your relationship to the patient.

HUBBARD: This is her daughter (gesturing to ARABELLA): I am her grandmother.

PORTOKALI looks at ARABELLA.

PORTOKALI: Arabella? You’re Arabella?

ARABELLA: Ye...yes.

PORTOKALI: Do you know how long we’ve searched for you? Where have you been all this time?

HUBBARD: Surviving.

PORTOKALI: Can you be more specific?
HUBBARD: No.

PORTOKALI takes off his glasses and rubs the bridge of his nose and sighs.

PORTOKALI: My colleagues warned me about this. (Beat) They said that you would be suspicious and reluctant to talk. But I have not come here as a mere physician. I have come here as someone who wishes to understand. Who needs to share this with you. (Beat) You see your mother (gesturing to Arabella) She was involved in a major nooclear event, the destruction of Moscoww.

ARABELLA looks at HUBBARD in shock. HUBBARD does not respond.

PORTOKALI (continuing): This was of course many years ago. She did not suffer too much from radiation exposure. Instead she was afflicted with a different malady, one that bears her name, The Melete Effect.

PORTOKALI pauses and looks at them both.

PORTOKALI: The people in this facility are all victims of a different malady; The Mandala Effect.

HUBBARD raises her eyebrows at this.

PORTOKALI: You’ve heard of it.

ARABELLA looks at her grandmother.

HUBBARD: Yes I have. I thought it was a convenient government cover story, a way to handle disappeared people.

PORTOKALI: No, it’s very much a real condition, one caused by our fascination with nooclear weapons. (Beat) You see when a bomb is dropped usually as a result of a nooclear test or in the case of the destruction of Moscoww, a strange thing occurs. People appear, as though from nowhere. They have memories of lives that do not match the world in which we live in. Some speak different languages, talk of the Spanish conquering the Americas and other such strange stories. Sometimes they replace themselves in this reality, sometimes they appear as a double. A copy that is not the same. (Beat) We have been working here to understand what cause this and looking for a way to reverse the process.

HUBBARD: You could just stop dropping the bomb.

PORTOKALI: That seems unlikely Madam.

HUBBARD: So how does this involve Melete?

PORTOKALI: She is the anomaly. She does not fit the parameters of those that suffer the Mandala Effect. We believe...I believe that something stopped her from transitioning to another reality. This caused a physical doppelganger to be created. Another woman with the same elements as Mary Melete. This woman went by a different name, Miriam Follows. In this reality Follows was a pseudonym Melete used to write poetry in college. In another world Follows was a prize-winning poet laureate.
HUBBARD: I find it hard to believe. That woman never had a creative bone in her body.

ARABELLA: Mo-ma!

_HUBBARD looks at her. ARABELLA says nothing._

PORTOKALI: I understand that this is hard to believe. If I hadn’t spent 20-odd years of my life researching and treating this phenomenon, I wouldn’t believe it too. Some days I still don’t. Yet the facts remain. There were for a time, two Mary Meletes. One from this reality, and the other a shade from another reality. I suspect that Follows has returned to her own reality, but I cannot be sure.

_PORTOKALI looks at them both._

PORTOKALI: This brings us to the matters at hand and the reason why Melete did not disappear from our reality.

HUBBARD: Which is?

PORTOKALI (_gesturing to Arabella_): You.

ARABELLA: Me?

PORTOKALI: You are the child that she left behind. You are the part of her that she refused to leave. (_He gestures to HUBBARD_) I know that your grandmother raised you. We have been looking for you since the time that Melete came here. But, we honestly believed that you were ghosts, figments of Melete’s damaged psyche. To find you after all this time is something of a relief.

HUBBARD: Are you saying because you couldn’t find us you kept her here all this time?

PORTOKALI: Yes.

_HUBBARD stands, her face flashes in rage and she lashes out and slaps PORTOKALI in the face. PORTOKALI covers his face, but doesn’t get angry._

PORTOKALI: I expected that.

HUBBARD: Come child, it is time that we left. I believe this man plans to do us harm.

ARABELLA: Please Mo-ma, if my mother is here then I want to see her.

_HUBBARD stands there._

ARABELLA: Please Mo-ma.

HUBBARD: Just know that I will do all I can to expose what goes on here to the world.

PORTKALI: Madam I welcome the transparency. We have been living in the shadows for too long.

_HUBBARD slowly sits herself down._
PORTOKALI: Before I bring her in here, I must forewarn you of a distinct possibility. That this woman whom we know as Mary Melete, is not who she thinks she is. That she is in fact a double. It is my theory, that only the real Mary Melete, the woman who belongs in this world will remain here. If she is but a shade then it will be as though she never was.

ARABELLA: What does that mean?

PORTOKALI: That she will cease to be.

ARABELLA: I...I don’t understand. It’s all too much. (Beat) You have a woman here, she’s my mother or at least she believes herself to be. But if she sees me then I might kill her. Is that right?

PORTOKALI: It is blunt, but accurate.

ARABELLA: I don’t want to do this.

PORTOKALI: You have to. She deserves to find peace.

ARABELLA: Mo-ma?

HUBBARD: Have faith my child, if this woman is not your mother than all you are is exposing the truth, and no harm can come from that.

ARABELLA: I don’t know.

HUBBARD: Have faith.

HUBBARD takes ARABELLA’s hand and looks in her eyes.

ARABELLA: All right. You can bring her in Doctor.

PORTOKALI: Thank you. Stay here, I’ll be but a minute.

PORTOKALI exits.

Will the real Mary Melete please stand up? Continue on to Section 106
137. MISSION TO PRIYAPAT

Priyapat, a small town in southern Rousya. Army troops are everywhere, but it seems that hostilities have ceased. MELETE wanders through the crowded main square surveying the damaged buildings. There is blood in the main square that has yet to be washed away.

A SOLDIER approaches MELETE.

SOLDIER: Ms. Melete, your presence is required at the town hall. Can you follow me please?

MELETE nods.

The SOLDIER leads MELETE to a regal looking building off to one side of the square. Inside the building are an ARMY CAPTAIN and DOCTOR PORTOKALI.

CAPTAIN: You’re the journalist?

MELETE: Yes. Do you need to see my credentials?

CAPTAIN: No. I can’t think of anybody else who knowingly would want to be here.

MELETE: No even political separatists?

CAPTAIN: Don’t be smart Ms. Melete, you’re here by the grace of the Supreme Leader and I would appreciate it if you showed some respect for the situation.

MELETE: But this was the work of political separatists yes? Looking to overthrow Nikilev and destabilise the government...

CAPTAIN: It seems that way. However we ask that you downplay the severity of the events.

MELETE: You can’t tell me what to write Captain.

CAPTAIN: No, I’m merely making a suggestion. However it would not be wise to humiliate the country with more stories of political insurrection. We continue to rebuild after our great loss.

MELETE: I understand.

CAPTAIN: Now if you’ll excuse me, I have to see to other matters about the town. If you have any further questions, ask the Doctor here. Good day to you.

The CAPTAIN leaves the room. MELETE looks over at the Doctor.

MELETE: I...I remember you. Have we met before?

PORTOKALI: Yes, when you were last in Rousya.

MELETE: Ah yes, Doctor...?

PORTOKALI: Portokali, special physician to the Supreme Leader’s government.

MELETE: You mean you tend to Nikilev directly?
PORTOKALI: No. I deal with the after effects of the destruction of Moscoww.

MELETE: Nooclear Medicine?

PORTOKALI: In a way.

MELETE: I’m not sure I understand.

PORTOKALI: How much do you remember about your last visit to Rousya?

MELETE: That’s a strange question.

PORTOKALI: Strange because it is impersonal or strange because your memory is incomplete?

MELETE halters.

MELETE: I...I don’t know what you’re getting at.

PORTOKALI: I think you do Mary, but it seems you’re still not ready to face it. (Beat) How is your daughter Arabella?

MELETE: How do you know that I have a daughter?

PORTOKALI: Never mind, we’ve gotten off topic. What you really want to know, is what happened here?

MELETE is silent.

PORTOKALI: This was not the work of political insurrection. That is the cover that the Military will use for the sake of simplicity.

MELETE: That doesn’t make any sense, why would the military use the separatists as a cover?

PORTOKALI: The real situation is somewhat more complex.

MELETE: And that is?

PORTOKALI: What took place here was an example of mass hysteria resulting in violence against the authorities. The entire town became convinced that their local nooclear reactor had gone into meltdown. That they had all been exposed to lethal doses of nooclear radiation and that they had to flee the town for their own safety.

MELETE: Is that true? Does Rousya even have a nooclear reactor in this area?

PORTOKALI: No. One was scheduled to be built but that was before Moscoww was destroyed, after that time, all nooclear projects were understandably put on hold.

MELETE: And the entire town believed that this really happened?

PORTOKALI: Yes. They keep talking about a place called Chernobyl. A place that doesn’t exist.
MELETE looks at PORTOKALI, trying to make sense out of what he’s saying.

PORTOKALI: Does any of this sound familiar to you?

MELETE is silent.

PORTOKALI: Regardless, you can understand now why political separatists are better than a town full of madmen.

MELETE: Chernobyl really doesn’t exist?

PORTOKALI: No, not in this reality.

MELETE: I can’t… I can’t write a story about that. How would I explain it?

PORTOKALI: Moreso who would take it seriously?

MELETE: Why did you tell me this?

PORTOKALI: Because it concerns you too, even if you don’t know why.

MELETE: Me? How?

PORTOKALI: Ask Supreme Leader Nikilev, he’ll tell you.

MELETE looks at PORTOKALI for a long time without saying anything.

Melete meets with Nikilev, go to Section 26

Nikilev is waiting for Melete, go to Section 26

There are rumours of another uprising, Melete is unsure of what she will find, go to Section 25
138. A VESTED INTEREST (MAC VERSION)

The phone is ringing in MAC’s hallway. HUBBARD enters from the kitchen and goes to the phone. MAC enters simultaneously from the lounge and motions that he will answer the call.

MAC: Hello?
The person on the other side can’t be heard.
MAC: Yes this is he. Who is this? How did you get this number?
The other person is talking
MAC: What about her?
The other person is talking.
MAC: She’s been what?
The other person is talking...longer this time.
MAC: Who is this? How do you know all this?
The other person is talking...longer this time. 
Then the phone goes dead.
MAC: What does that mean? Hello? Hello! Dogdammit!
MAC slams down the receiver.
MAC: Ma!
HUBBARD enters
MAC: Something’s happened to Mary. I need you to look after Arabella, I might be gone awhile.
HUBBARD looks at him strangely.
MAC: Ma, did you hear what I said?
HUBBARD nods.
MAC: I’ll be back when I can.
MAC grabs his coat, from a nearby coat hook and rushes out the front door.

Will Mac find Melete? Go to Section 135
A warehouse on an old service road in the New Mexicago desert. The sand blows across the road and giving the impression that no one has been here for years. A big old pickup truck slowly drives up to the warehouse entrance. As it pulls to a stop, MAC and DEEPWATER aka MYRON T. COBBS, gets out.

MAC: What are we doing here Myron?

DEEPWATER: You wanted answers, well this is where they begin.

MAC: Project Capgras.

DEEPWATER: It wasn’t called that in the beginning. It started life as the New Amsterdam Project.

MAC: As a part of the war effort?

DEEPWATER: That’s right.

MAC: To develop the bomb?

DEEPWATER: That’s right.

MAC: Are you having me on?

DEEPWATER: Listen, I have better things to do than to drive into the middle of nowhere for no good reason. I’m telling you, Project Capgras started here.

MAC: It’s to do with nooclear weapons?

DEEPWATER: No, the fallout from those weapons.

MAC: Nooclear fallout?

DEEPWATER: In a way. We thought we knew what we were doing but we were naive to say the least. When they detonated that first bomb back in ’45, something strange happened. In a nearby town, Almargardo, New Mexicago, a man walked home to find his wife in bed with another man...

MAC: Wait a moment, I know this story, it’s from the folk song about Terrence T. Ganting.

DEEPWATER: How I wish I never heard that name.

MAC: In the song he shoots his own double. But that’s just a song.

DEEPWATER: In this reality.

MAC: You mean to tell me there really is a Terrence T. Ganting? (Beat) He’s the man that I met in Franklin isn’t he?

DEEPWATER: Yes.

MAC: But he only looked about 50.
DEEPWATER: By rights he should be around 90, but things don’t work the same for those that have crossed over.

MAC: What do you mean crossed over?

DEEPWATER: I mean they’ve come from somewhere else. It has to do with the bomb.

MAC: Listen Cobbs, I think the sun has gone to your head. This story doesn’t make any sense.

DEEPWATER: I never said it made any sense, I said it happened. Not everything has to make sense.

MAC: I...you’re crazy.

DEEPWATER: I’m telling you every time the bomb is detonated a handful of people cross over.

MAC: From where?

DEEPWATER: Another reality. They come and we have to find a place for them. It started here.

MAC: But we’re not the only ones who have the bomb, Rousya, Ongland, they have it too.

DEEPWATER: And there are people who have appeared there. We’ve been working together to try and figure it all out.

MAC: And do what? Send them back?

DEEPWATER: We don’t know yet, but when we understand this, then we’ll find a way to stop it.

MAC: How can I explain this to McManus?

DEEPWATER: You probably can’t. And even if you could, the story would be unprintable.

MAC: I feel as though the world I knew is dead.

DEEPWATER: It probably never was to begin with. (Beat) Come on, let’s get going. I’ll show you where Capgras is located now, but we won’t be able to go in.

A car can be heard speeding down the road towards them.

MAC: Does anybody know we’re here?

DEEPWATER: They shouldn’t. (Beat) Get in the truck and stay there.

MAC does as he is told. DEEPWATER pulls a shotgun from tool box in the rear of the pickup truck. The car can be heard screeching to a halt. TERRENCE T. GANTING, aka MISTER X. gets out of the car carrying a military-grade semiautomatic weapon.

GANTING: Cobbs. How did I know it would be you?

DEEPWATER: Maybe you’re psychic.
GANTING: Maybe. Come to check out your old stomping ground huh? Do a little sightseeing? Well the project doesn’t like trespassers.

DEEPWATER: So they sent you to kill me.

GANTING: More or less. You know Cobbs it took me a long time to recover from the beating you gave me in Franklin. So I’m going to enjoy this.

DEEPWATER: You deserved it.

GANTING: We really never did see eye to eye on anything, did we?

DEEPWATER: No.

GANTING: Well then I guess we’re going to have different opinions on where you’re going to go when you die.

DEEPWATER: I don’t plan on going anywhere.

GANTING: We’ll just see about that.

DEEPWATER leaps behind the front of the truck as semi-automatic gunfire can be heard. The bullets hit the truck and the ground where DEEPWATER had been standing. DEEPWATER leaps out from cover and pumps out three quick shots in the direction of GANTING. GANTING collapses onto the road.

GANTING: Ahh, you bastard.

DEEPWATER walks over to the dying GANTING.

DEEPWATER: Why don’t you go back to where you came from?

DEEPWATER pumps two more shots into GANTING’S head. DEEPWATER kicks GANTING’S body to confirm that he’s dead.

DEEPWATER: Mac? Mac! You can come out now.

There is no answer.

DEEPWATER: Mac?

DEEPWATER rushes over to the truck to discover MAC collapsed and bleeding out.

DEEPWATER: Oh Dogdammit! Come on Mac, I need you to stay with me. Mac? Mac?

MAC can’t speak. DEEPWATER goes around to the other side of the truck and gets behind the wheel and starts the car and quickly drives off back down the road.

As the wind blows sand across the deserted service road, GANTING’S body begins to dematerialise. Eventually it is as though he was never there.
Melete is on her own now, go to Section 140
140. MASTERS, TO THE ASYLUM

MASTERS is waiting by a telephone booth in a suburban street in downtown Franklin D.A. It is twilight and he sits and watches an apartment on the second floor across the street. The phone in the booth begins to ring and MASTERS reaches in and answers it.

MASTERS: Hello?

Beat.

MASTERS: Yes I’m there now. She doesn’t seem to be doing much.

Beat.

MASTERS: I need assurance that if we do this that there won’t be blowback.

Beat.

MASTERS: Ganting, your words aren’t exactly golden. I need something more concrete.

Beat.

MASTERS: Do you really believe that anyone is going to buy that story?

Beat.

MASTERS: Maybe you’re right, but even under the Capgras protocol, I still can’t justify this.

Beat.

MASTERS: Don’t threaten me. You know that I’m right.

Beat.

MASTERS: Then give me the powers to undertake rendition. That way I can do my work without being disturbed.

Beat.

MASTERS: Fine. I’ll organise for Melete to be taken to Almagardo.

Beat.

MASTERS: Don’t call me again. This is the last time that I’ll do a favour for you.

Before the voice on the other side can say anything, MASTERS hangs up the phone. Almost immediately he picks up the receiver and dials a special number.

MASTERS: Is this Alpha Team Leader?
Beat.

MASTERS: Team leader this is Daniel Masters, clearance code 658397124. I am authorising you to undertake a salvage mission.

Beat.

MASTERS: That is correct, the cargo is to be transported to Project Capgras by means of rendition.

Beat.

MASTERS: You are authorized to use force, but not in a lethal capacity. Do you understand?

Beat.

MASTERS: The target’s name is Mary Melete. Repeat the target’s name is Mary Melete. You have 24 hours to complete extraction. Thank you.

MASTERS hangs up the phone. He looks up to MELETE’S apartment.

MASTERS: It was nice knowing you.

With that, he proceeds to walk away and into the night.

This concludes the file of subject 135125205, Mary Melete, at this time.

The Asylum (Project Capgras) has now been terminated, to discover the fate of subject 135125205, Mary Melete, please continue onto the Following Section.
TERMINATION OF PROJECT CAPGRAS

Please note due to external changes Project Capgras has now been terminated.

If you followed the subject’s time in the United States of Columbia please, begin continue on to SECTION 102 and proceed to follow only the instructions coloured in BLUE.

If you followed the subject’s time in the Republic of Rousya, please begin continue on to SECTION 97 and proceed to follow only the instructions coloured in RED.

If you followed the subject’s time with the rebellion in Santo Cristos, please continue on to SECTION 110 and proceed to follow only the instructions coloured in GREEN.

Please do not attempt to read this file through directly as the material has been organised in the order that it was collected from the subject.

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation.