

Beagle

—Daniel Yeow

Leaving Union House behind, you continue on your quest for coffee. As you enter the alleyway between Elizabeth Murdoch and Physics, it strikes you that some food might not go astray either. This, however, would require you to make up your mind as to what food you desire, a particularly knotty problem not to be tackled without first partaking in a good dose of caffeine. The other limiting factor would be your distinct lack of funds. You resign yourself to another breakfast-less morning.

As you have come to expect, an SMS sets off your mobile phone right in the middle of your thoughts. It reads: “hi lizzie, its me again, i just cant get my mind off you, i need to come and find you, please wait for me, love from your dearest shane”. You feel exhilarated as the first shreds of identity spill from the mysterious sender.

The café is packed, as usual, but significantly less so than Union House. Reaching the front of the queue, you order yourself a long black. It arrives shortly, and you head over to an unoccupied table near the window, on which is a conveniently discarded copy of *New Scientist*. The front cover reads: *Celestial Express: Ride the Subway to Saturn*—just the sort of quality journalism one likes to start the day with.

Taking a sip of your coffee, you flip the magazine to that very article, only to find a badly-written dialogue on extraterrestrial communications.

“What’s up, G?” said he, to the man with the title.
“Don’t call me that!” was the reply. “In fact, you can take out the G altogether,” he tacked on.
“But dude, without G I could only asp instead of gasp, rab instead of grab and oogle instead of—”
He paused to think for a moment
“Hmmm... maybe that’s not such a bad thing.”
There was an awkward pause.
“Seen any good... sorry, ood movies recently?” he said quickly, trying to change the subject.
“Yeah, I saw something about codebreaking.”
“What was it called?”
“Umm, can’t remember... name a few movies.”
“Mercury Risin?”
“No.”
“Enima?”
“What?” he said, looking puzzled.
“Oh, enigma... sorry, took out the G... hahaha...”
“You’re an idiot! No, it wasn’t that, it had something to do with a message from outer space.”
“Independence day?”
“No, the aliens were peaceful and the message was about building some kind of machine.”
“What did the machine do?”
“It transported people to—”
“Contact!” he cut him off.
“That’s it.”
“That’s not a movie about codebreaking.”
“Bollocks, the code was great, it was three dimensional and the key was in the code itself”
“Contained within the code? What a novel idea.”
“Oh my, look at the time, I’d better go now, what’s your number?”
“Ummm... here it is: 64, 127, 105, 197, 111, 76, 12, 181, 113, 3, 201, 30, 41, 109, 85.