

Card Trick

—Maun Suang Boey

As you sit at the café, enjoying the warm breeze and sipping the last drops of your coffee, you take some time to reflect; you wonder why you bothered getting up for coffee when you weren't planning to go to class anyway. Always looking for ways to sleep more, you silently chastise yourself for not staying in bed.

However, just as you are trying to find a mnemonic for “don't get up unless you have to”, two familiar-looking figures squeeze through the door, masking their faces with newspapers. Not the least bit fooled, you disguise yourself as a labcoat by holding your *New Scientist* over your face, and you pretend to read it as you eavesdrop. Germaine makes the job much easier for you as she screeches at Eddie halfway through his seating motion.

“Where the hell is Boris? We're meant to have gotten it days ago!”

“Stop being so impatient! Do you think I got to where I am now by being impatient? No, I'm here today because of years of patient stalling to make trivia questions last ten minutes each. You think that was easy? I've worked long and hard for it, and I'm not about to lose it all now. Relax!”

“How can I relax? If this drags on any longer, those sunken-chested, limp-wristed, four-eyed, pencil-necked geeks will find out our plan and steal it from us! And with all the publicity that's going to generate for cricket, even the Yanks are going to start playing it! At least they're better-looking than those boring, stuck-up Poms.”

“Oh, I think I can deal with the scientists. I've got a nice big surprise hidden up my sleeve.”

“Do you mean up your sleeve, or down your pants?”

“For the last time, I am not going to sleep with you! I don't like you, I've never liked you, I can't even stand the sight of you! I'm only doing this for my club, now let's get it over and done with!”

“Look, you baboon, just because your ego weighs more than the average asteroid doesn't mean the world revolves around you! This was all your idea in the first place, and it's stupid! Why am I stuck here talking to you when I could be—”

Germaine is interrupted by peals of laughter from a group of construction workers seated at the next table. One of them looks at his watch, and, grunting something about having to return to work, motions for the others to follow. Over a minute or so, amid a clattering and scraping of chairs, the sweaty men push themselves and each other past the glass barriers, the last of them casting a final look of disappointment at the table where they had been seated.

After they are gone, Germaine opens her mouth, presumably to continue her rant, but Eddie stops her: “Boris will be here soon, let's get out before those darn labcoats arrive.” Left with only extras in the café, you walk over to the builders' table to find a neatly-stacked pile of cards.

