



**THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
MD STUDENT CONFERENCE
PUZZLES**

Act III, Scene 1 Articulate!

(Note: the story is not part of the puzzle)

Jared glanced nervously at his Casio digital watch.

08:03

Shoot, he thought, why does this always happen to me!?

His hand pressed up firmly against the tempered glass of the tram door, blanching as if in fear. One fragile and insignificant pane of glass was all that separated him from his imprisonment and being able to run free.

Or walk free, he thought. For Jared could see the medical building a mere 100 metres away, the destination of his early morning lecture. Tantalisingly close but yet impossibly far.

“Many apologies, ladies and gentlemen. We sincerely apologise for the... uh, technical difficulties,” crackled the PA system.

A collective groan arose from the crowd of commuters that had been stuffed into a tram that could well be the size of a shoebox. They too were mere minutes away from their places of study and work, and were also held against their will by a flimsy door. A flimsy door that just would not budge.

08:05

CLUNK! An unlikely saviour, draped in fluorescent yellow and holding a slender-looking crowbar, had manually prised open the single front door of the tram, and the hinges of the door squeaked to life once more. Spontaneous fits of sarcastic jeering and applause — a standing ovation, even — burst forth from all four corners of the now unbearably warm and stuffy tram.

08:06

No time to lose, Jared thought, as he swiftly disembarked from the tram and sprinted at full pelt towards the medical building, feeling the bite of the morning breeze.

He was worried about the irreparable damage that he was about to do to the soles of his pristine white Vans, but this was entirely trumped by his fear of rocking up late to the first lecture immediately after his ‘intervention’ with the Dean.

08:09

Jared creaked open the front door of the lecture theatre, peering in to assess the situation.

Any spare seats up the sides? No — curse the university student phobia of adequately filling rows of seats... What about the seats up front? No, no, too risky — could get sprayed by the lecturer. Speaking of, where is the lecturer positioned anyway?

Jared glanced nervously at the front of the theatre. No lecturer? Score! But why is the hall so quiet?

As gently as one would dip their toes into the water on a cold winter's day, Jared eased the door open. There was no discernible reaction.

Emboldened, Jared entered the lecture theatre. And it was exactly as he expected. Hundreds of keyboards thundering away, generating hundreds of slightly different transcripts of the exact same lecture. And yet there was no lecturer...

How odd, Jared thought. It's not like we've transitioned to fully asynchronous learning... Or have we?

From a distance, Jared spotted a familiar figure — shoulder-length hair that had been tortured into an asymmetrical manbun; mid-dilated pupils induced by caffeine intake on a background of blue-grey, like the Melbourne sky on a partly cloudy midwinter's day; and a partly tucked and partly untucked short-sleeved summer shirt, somehow maintaining the cool casualness of a consummate professional.

This was Luke.

"Hey Luke, any sign of the lecturer showing up on time, hey?" jibed Jared jovially.

No response. Luke was too busy pounding away at his keyboard, the tension in his fingers like that of an overstretched elastic band. Except he wasn't typing — his fingers seemingly obsessed with the number row.

Jared could now see that he was rolling through his usual routine of Anki.

"You alright mate?"

"Can't... Talk... Must... Anki... Must study... Like TikTok... Lady... Said..."

"Oh no..."

Jared glanced around the lecture theatre. Like an empty waiting room at an Emergency Department on a Saturday night, things were quiet... Too quiet... Suspiciously quiet...

And then it dawned upon him. That everyone, everywhere, at every moment was studying. No idle chit-chat. No small talk. Nothing. Just the mechanical conversations of a myriad keyboards communicating in a binary of "Goods" and "Agains".

"What the actual f—"

DING!

Jared glanced at his phone.

*ABC News: The World Health Organisation declares a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. A virus, identified as the **Influenzer Type A** virus, has made the first identified zoonotic transmission from mobile phones to human beings.*

At this point in time, cases have been isolated to medical student communities. At-risk populations should be wary of contracting Influenzer Type A virus via the TikTok streaming platform or via any suspicious-looking flashcard decks delivered via Anki.

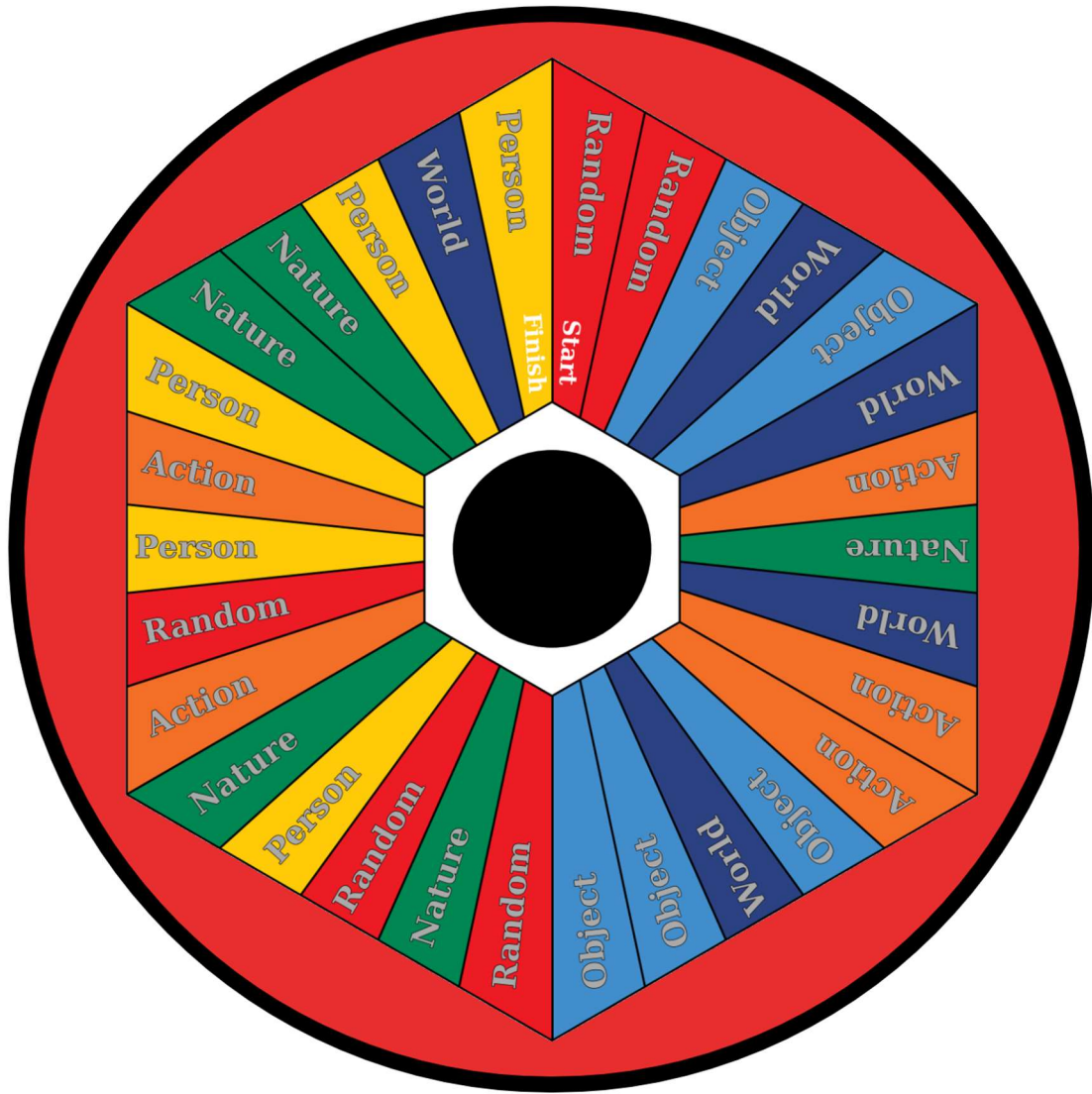
WHO will continue to monitor this rapidly evolving situation.

"Oh good heavens, it's gone viral..."

(To be continued...)

(The puzzle begins on the next page)

Articulate!



- P** Honoric, eg. used for a prominent feminist activist in the former Bengal
- W** Major port city in Kerala
- O** Protective gear
- A** Come into visible existence
- N** Lump seen in tertiary syphilis
- R** Describing an event that precedes another

- P** Person working on a ship
- W** Iranian city famous for walls
- O** A type of trousers or fabric
- A** The first action when attempting to hit a golf ball
- N** A tributary stream of a river close to or part of its source
- R** Slang for an incompetent person. Can also refer to a pneumatic drill

- P** Former Chief Minister of France
- W** Major English city
- O** Weapon infamously deployed in the Vietnam War
- A** Raise livestock or crops
- N** Enzyme commonly assessed in blood tests
- R** Permitted

(puzzle continues next page)

- P** Person who makes music through large pipes
- W** Australia's desolate interior
- O** A tiny piece
- A** Interact with an object. Can also mean to deal with a situation
- N** Bird of the genus *Barnardius*
- R** Describes someone who talks a lot, often rudely

- P** One who proved that one and one make two.
- W** 3.53788 -76.29714
- O** Fortified wine used in cocktails
- A** Release from being fastened
- N** Bird within the *Spinus* genus
- R** Penniless

(puzzle continues next page)

- 4 Candidate
- 1 Canid
- 3 Currency
- 4 Frame used in papermaking
- 1 General vibe
- 3 Much
- 1 Number
- 3 Of Lactate fame
- 4 Podium
- 3 Rapids
- 2 Remove from container
- 3 Rest on glutes
- 4 Roll
- 2 Soft call
- 3 Type of cricket delivery