

42280- Smart, Connected and Liveable Cities

Individual Writing Assignment



“I Agree To The Terms And Conditions”

A Tale of Corporate Controlled, Privatised Technology

Daniella Alalouf – s152203

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PART- 1 – A Beautiful Afternoon In Plexia

A blue autumn sky covered the city of Prime, the gleaming capital of Plexia Inc. The air was cold and crisp and Martha was reminded of the beautiful red, orange and brown colours of autumn that once covered the long, suburban streets of her childhood home. She struggled to will a vivid image into her mind as the Berlin of her childhood now seemed like a faded memory. Martha was just about to walk into the 'improvement clinic' for her annual facial rejuvenation surgery when she realised that she could no longer remember that last time she saw a real autumn coloured tree.

Outside the clinic, actuated tree-shaped solar panels stood tall absorbing the rays of light that managed to penetrate through the afternoon's white clouds. At night, these solar trees emitted artificial light to illuminate the streets and recycle the city's air. The roads were busy that afternoon as everyone was getting ready for the weekend. Down the lane children with virtual reality helmets were running around and acting out an elaborate battle scene, joyfully oblivious to the world around. Some adults were immersed in their smart glasses while others were weaving through the traffic in their personal mobility pods. *"Thank goodness all the vehicles, city infrastructure and personal devices were autonomously connected, otherwise those kids would be in immense danger"*, Martha thought to herself.

Without bees, the little flowers in the pots by the clinic's door were being poked and prodded by miniature pollinating drones, which were mounted with miniature cameras and microphones and recorded the buzzing life in Plexia's Prime city. Owing to wirelessly connected tags, the '*robobees*' could communicate like a real hive and manoeuvre effortlessly throughout the city's landscape. Martha wondered what all the footage they captured was used for and if anyone was watching her at this very moment, but that thought disappeared as swiftly as it entered her mind. Something in her gut gave her the distinct feeling that certain questions are best left unanswered. After all, life in Plexia was good for Martha and her family, who were average, lower-middle class 'Primites', and Martha, recalling the hardship she, and many others, experienced in the past, was grateful to be living in Plexia Inc.

The clinic's dome shaped glass building scattered reflected rays of light in every direction on that afternoon. Each of the large glass panes that curved to make up the building's façade also served as interactive smart mirrors. They created a three-dimensional scan of anyone who entered or passed by the clinic and projected that image onto the nearby glass panels. These 'living reflections' would follow people down the street displaying animated, computer-generated physical augmentations, which advertised every beautification procedure available in Plexia. These scans would be able to determine the identification of all the passers-by as all mobile devices and implantables in Plexia had compulsory geolocation. This meant advertisements could use one's own image to sell products and law enforcement knew where every resident was at any given moment and what they looked like.

An older, well-dressed man passed by the building as Martha was approaching the main entrance, his reflection suddenly came to life and gradually the animated reflection's receding hair line seemed to disappear. It gestured the man to enter the building and he followed the image of his 'better self' into the side entrance, where walk-through hair implants, laser treatments, injection fillers and the like were done in a process that always reminded Martha of an old film she saw as a young girl. In the film an old-fashioned automobile was driven through a self-cleaning station as large, bristle-covered cylinders descended from above and water sprayed from every direction. In Prime, these walk-through beautification stations were a common weekly routine for many, but not for Martha, who

found the capsule shaped pods and the cold, steel autonomous arms, with their various tools, unsettling.

Although Martha was 95, she appeared youthful from afar, with light brown hair, greyish-green eyes and just a hint of wrinkles near the corners of her lids, which her own scan promptly circled and augmented. This appearance was only occasionally betrayed by a distant, longing look or a nostalgic comment, which made her appear wise and thoughtful. Martha was not unusual, the streets all over Plexia's cities were empty of any sign of degradation or decay, neither the buildings nor the people seemed to age. Ageing was no longer an acceptable excuse to walking around Prime with an appearance that reminded others of their eventual mortality. Even if mortality for the residents of Plexia meant an end to 180 years of life. That was, of course, unless you were one of Plexia's shareholder families, in which case, access to cell-level rejuvenation technology meant 250 years of healthy, productive living was within reach.

Martha, however, was not a shareholder and with her 96th birthday rapidly approaching, she often found herself thinking about the past lately and wondering how things changed so much since her youth. Martha often spoke to her children about the past and tried to describe to them how Plexia came to be and how Berlin became Prime. She often lamented about how access to the internet, which was so central to her youth, had transformed from being an open, highly democratic platform, which most considered a public good, into a regulated, privatised, and highly monetised platform, owned and run by Plexia's shareholders.

A young mother exited the clinic's doors with a young boy as Martha was lingering outside, enjoying the sunshine, causing her to recall when her own children were born. Nearly 45 years ago, an identification chip was implanted into the back of her new born son's neck. The little boy that passed Martha by that afternoon also had the faint scare left by the ID chip implantation, marking him as a resident of Plexia. As the doctor handed over her son, Martha was asked to sign an electronic birth certificate form. At the bottom of that form a large square with the words **'I AGREE TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS'** blinked repeatedly. Martha marked the box that said 'ACCEPT' and in doing so her son, and later her daughter and grandchildren, were linked to Plexia's vast cloud network. The ID chip enabled Plexia's residents to access all services in the nation and in the city of Prime and enabled the shareholder to ensure no citizen could violate the terms of their residency. The first part of which prohibited any interference with Plexian technology, any open source technology sharing and certainly any use of competitors' software or hardware devices.

PART- 2 – The Woman On The wall

Martha opened the large clinic's doors and lifted her hair up so her own ID chip could be scanned. Her information was displayed on the nearby screen and a pre-recorded voice directed her to the waiting hall two turns right from the entrance lobby. Martha was sitting in the waiting room of the beautification clinic awaiting her appointment. Streams of freshly faced women and men walked past her. At last, her name was announced over the voice system and she was guided down a brightly lit hall by one of Plexia's new humanoid robot secretaries, Miranda 7s, based on TechPlex artificial skin technology. *"Hello Martha, how are you today?"* asked Miranda, to

which Martha quietly responded *"I am well, thank you", "I see you are here for your annual facial rejuvenation surgery, I would recommend you also consider our new eye enlargement procedure, we can also give you a new eye colour today for half the price"*, said Miranda in her programmed, calm and soothing voice. Martha politely declined the eye colour change and at that moment she arrived at the door to the rejuvenation room.

She walked into the large empty room, where at the centre a white reclined chair stood. The chair was lit up by harsh artificial, white light and as she approached Martha heard her footsteps echo throughout. She slowly placed herself in the position demonstrated by the hologram that appeared when she touched the chair and as she lay down, autonomous surgical arms extended outwards from either side of the chair. She closed her eyes and waited for the warm laser light to move around her forehead. Seconds later Martha opened her eyes, nothing was happening, the autonomous arms were frozen inches from her face. *"Hello! Somebody?! I think this thing is broken..."* she yelled, but before anyone could reply the room's smart screens switched themselves on. Martha was already upright and confused by what was going on, so she gazed at the screen blankly. An image of a joker, from the card games Martha once played with her father, appeared. Martha remembered that this was, long ago, the symbol of **'Adhocracy'** - the anti-corporate group that once dominated the nightly news cycle. No one had heard from them in decades and Martha, like most others, simply assumed that the leadership was somewhere in the other corporation ruled nations.

A young woman with bluish-purple hair, piercing hazel coloured eyes and arched eyebrows, appeared on the screen. Suddenly, the deafening silence was interrupted by her voice, every screen and device in Prime was tuned into this surprise announcement and so, as the young woman began to speak, her voice filling the entire dome of the clinic. Martha felt a sudden surge of anxiety mixed with anticipation. The young woman introduced herself as Laura, the new leader of 'Adhoc', she spoke slowly and deliberately, as though her every word was of the utmost significance.

"Ladies and gentlemen of Prime, many years ago our people made a grave error in judgement. We trusted a corrupt candidate and, with the looming manmade disasters on the horizon, we naively handed over control to the very corporations that brought us to despair. We traded in our privacy and our free will for material comforts and security. Under Plexia, technological advancements have once again divided the people into the have and have nots. This new technology has ensured we are constantly entertained and consuming and, as per the terms and conditions, they have prevented us from questioning the oppressive ways in which the shareholders have integrated their own technology into every part of the fabric of daily life.

By shrinking down the internet, the vastest collection of human intellect and creativity, into a market place of Plexian owned apps, news channels, online services and software, the shareholders have grown wealthy and greedy. By connecting all urban infrastructure, consumer devices, appliances, transportation vehicles and more to the vast cloud network, the shareholders have cemented their control. Their monopoly has enabled them to dictate to us while convincing us that this is what we wanted, what we dreamed of. I ask you, when did security and comfort become more important than freedom and liberty? The right to free thought, free speech and free curiosity is what the very same technology now used Plexia's elite, once stood for.

You too may have wondered, late at night, how we got here and if this all started when we lost control over the internet. By controlling this virtual space and the physical infrastructure surrounding it, corporations like Plexia have been able to transform what was once an open, free platform that reflected humanity in its entirety, into a platform of economic activity and trade, controlled by the

same people who benefit from it. In losing control of this vital and highly integrated technology we inadvertently handed over control over every aspect of our lives to greedy, soulless entities.

The credit chips embedded in your wrists are not just a means to buy goods and services, they are a measure of your worth and value as citizens to the shareholders. Have you ever wondered what happens if the number on that chip goes below zero and you are unable to pay it back? For the past 8 years, we have gathered evidence and investigated and what we found was beyond imagination. Plexia Inc. considers any resident not capable of repaying their debt to be useless and not worthy of resources and hence they are made to disappear. They are killed and sold for spare parts. The skin implants, hair implants, eye colour changes and all the other procedures this branded city requires of you, their unwilling brand ambassadors, are not created by costly synthetic means but rather they are stolen from the 'non-productive' for repurposing in a way that increases profits and adds even more money to the coffers of Plexia's shareholders.

The shareholders monitor our every move and shape our very own cities to monitor us. We walk the streets literally followed by advertisements telling us how to look, how to think and how to act. We may have every convenience previous generations dreamt of- fast, efficient transportation, clean air, nice homes, connection to all our appliances, devices, friends, family members and the millions of Plexians, all at our finger tips. But what have we lost? – we have no more public universities, no more educational websites, no more open-spaces and no more private spaces, neither online or offline. Although our cities seem bright, perfect, and clean, the norms, whose only crime was wanting to be afforded the right to choose or not having the means to comply with the shareholders' demands, are dying beneath your feet every day.

While we have been made dumber and dumber the shareholders have been getting more control over us. Don't you see? - they want us to be dumb, distracted and demonstrably complacent. They want any remaining person with a good idea and the intelligence to bring it to life silenced so that they can continue to enjoy their monopoly. They assign us value based on a number in a chip and they have controlled our bodies and our reproduction for far too long. They have charged us for the right to not wake up to loud advertisements blaring from every corner of the room, they have charged us for the right to seek justice and the right to be who we want to be, based on merit and not on birth.

This broadcast is our first move at gaining back what once made our species, flawed as it may be, the architects of this world and the leaders of their own destiny. We have taken control over all of Prime's smart screens and have disabled all chips and erased their data. We have managed to use the very technology that had tempted and trapped us to turn the tables on the elite and I promise you, they will come to regret their role.

Join forces with us, and you will also acquire the power to manipulate the devices which have manipulated you. At midnight, tonight, we will be sending out a series of exclusive holographic recordings, which will, finally, reveal every one of Plexia's dirty secrets. We hope you join us in fighting back and reclaiming control of this world and its virtual counterpart.! ..."

The screens all simultaneously turned off in an instant and chatter in the clinic's halls slowly began to build again. "That is not true! Plexia is the best place on earth to live, just look at my new implants, where else would you be able to get that for such a discount?", Martha heard a woman in the next room proclaim. She grabbed her bag and rushed home as everyone else was distracted. Her family was waiting around the kitchen table, Susan was biting her nails and Carl was pacing around nervously. "Mum, did you hear? what do you think will happen tonight?" they both asked as soon as Martha stepped foot through the door. Martha was not sure what to say to either of them, so she grabbed a

bottle of red wine and sat on the sofa, *"I don't know, I guess we shall find out in a few hours"* she said in the calmest voice she could muster.

Each minute that passes felt like an eternity, Martha and her family were all sat in a contemplative silence, eerily uncomfortable with the notion of questioning the righteousness of their societal structure. Suddenly, Martha's 12-year-old grandson, Tom, cut through that silence with a childhood innocence and naivete that reminded all the adults present what a wonderful and irrepressible thing childhood curiosity is. *"Grandma, what was the lady on the Telewall talking about?"* he asked. *"My dear child, the world was not always as it is today, when I was your age technology like the internet was invented by ordinary people for public use. Back then lots of people were technologically capable and so no one could control the internet. Even when governments and companies tried to exert control, hackers and digital activists managed to stop them. The woman you saw, she belongs to one of the organisations that once opposed the privatisation of the connectivity technologies and devices, which surround us now."* Tom looked satisfied with that answer for a brief moment, but then his eyes lit up again and he asked *"so what happened?"*

PART- 3 – A Grandmotherly Tale

Martha beckoned Tom to come and sit by her side, *"well, let me try to tell you how things changed, to the best of my recollection"* she said and took a long sip from her wine glass.

"In 2025 I was a young mother working as an accountant for a local branch of an international phone company when it was bought over by ATNT and transformed into an integrated part of the world's largest communications and media conglomerate. Shortly thereafter, automation and improvements in software and artificial intelligence made me redundant and I lost my job. Desperate to provide for your mother and uncle, I worked odd jobs and received government benefits, but they did not last long.

You see, benefits were eliminated and taxation was increased to facilitate a last-ditch attempt to reverse the damage caused by global climate change and address the rapidly increasing rate of natural disasters. Rising water levels caused mass displacement in coastal cities and an economic recession. This pitted nation against nation and government and against government in a brutal competition for resources.

*Some people began believing that the scientifically illiterate governance system was no longer equipped to handle the technological and scientific challenges of the future. One organisation came to represent this idea and advocate for replacing politicians with the leadership of successful technological companies. This organisation was called **'TECHNOCRACY'**. An equally large number of people, including my own parents, warned about the potential dangers of allowing multi-national conglomerates to enter the sphere of public service. So, they formed an organisation that later became known as **'ADHOCRACY'**. But, between the chaos of daily life, and 24/7 reality television, the question of who is best suited to lead in this new era, quickly faded from public debate and retreated behind closed doors. Away from the view of the people, favours and money were exchanging hands.*

A few years later, suddenly, and unexpectedly, the world's ruling elite decided it would be more effective and more profitable to unite rather than conduct more resource wars. It was clear that, despite national identity, cultural animosity and years of on-going conflict, the only viable survival

strategy for humanity was to unite. Unity, however, was more difficult than anticipated and, with time, a vocal opposition grew louder. Meanwhile, the former nations of the world could not decide which existing president should head this new, united government. Thus, a new election was announced for world president.

To ensure voters would not simply vote for the candidate from their own cultural or ethnic group, candidates campaigned and debated in the form of robotic avatars. These robotic representations allowed candidates to record speeches and have them transmitted in real time in front of multiple crowds, on every continent. The robotic avatars were all designed by TechPlex, a company specialising in biomechanical robotics, to look similar and stripped of any ethnically identifiable features. Meanwhile voice modulation removed any trace of an accent that could identify the candidates' national background. TechPlex was bought over by Plexia Inc several years after the election in what would eventually be considered the start of a large corporate consolidation of power – that is when big companies join forces to become bigger.

In 2029 a loud man, with bright orange hair and a matching tan put himself forward as a candidate for world presidency. He was known as candidate #13 and he blatantly refused to use a robotic representation during campaigning, since he could not receive permission to manufacture his own avatar coated in gold. As he was equally disliked globally, the other candidates decided that an avatar could only serve to make him more likeable and so eventually they did not object to him campaigning in person. While other candidates focused on real policy issues, Ronald Frump told the public what it wanted to hear. At the time, many people voted for him not because they believed his grandiose promises but rather because electing a man equally despised by all, was considered better than electing a candidate strongly supported by some. Thus, in 2030 he was elected President of the World, or POW for short. This new president, a self-proclaimed businessman, had no real intention of governing the people. As it was later discovered, his candidacy was simply setting the stage for a new age of privatised rule by tech corporations. Neither I nor anyone else knew this at the time though.

The internet was a flourishing space then and everything, physical and digital, was hooked up to the cloud and most had access to it. Some even considered this access to be a human right. People freely expressed their opinions and shared their creative talents online when I was your age. Banking, socialisation, entertainment, shopping, education, healthcare advice, control of home appliances and everything else was done over the internet – but different companies were responsible for each of those back then. People's online world was as diverse and fulfilling as their lives offline but already at that point the internet was so integrated and the financial possibilities to monetise all these things was too tempting for certain businesses to resist.

In 2032 the world's largest and wealthiest tech corporations, which through mergers and acquisitions continuously became fewer in number and larger in size, united to offer free internet access and smart devices to every man, woman, and child. Nations rushed to accept this generous offer, sold as an opportunity for improved social mobility, education, employment, and equality. Most people trusted corporations far more than they did governments, after all, they felt as though they intimately knew these familiar brands, who were adored by enthusiastic fans for their respective technologies and their seemingly benevolent public figures. One corporation even had the slogan 'do no evil'. This type of familiarity meant that the public did not question the wisdom of having an unsecured internet connection on a device they did not control, collecting personal data and archiving every search, conversation, and transaction. The access and convenience this connectivity provided were what mattered in people's daily existence.

While the public was enjoying its free and unlimited access to cat videos and pornography...” – Grandma, what is that? – Tom interjected. “Nothing you need to know about...” - Martha replied and went on with her story, which by now had the whole family listening intently.

“So, while that was happening, these corporations struck a deal with the POW that allowed them to redraw the world’s map and carve out new borders for new pseudo-nations. Each cooperation renamed these new nations under the banner of their brand and flags were swiftly changed into logos. Meanwhile, President Frump disappeared into his tall, gold and ivory tower, which he declared the only private, sovereign place left on Earth. He then built a large wall to ensure that he and his family would be able to enjoy all the bribe money they received from the world’s ruling conglomerates in privacy. He was never heard from again and supposedly died shortly afterwards due to the accumulated effect of the toxins in his tanning lotions. It was rumoured that all that remained of him was his orange wig, which one day a gust of wind carried outside, through an open window, and right into the paws of a strolling dog, who mistook it for a rodent.

*Berlin, along with all Northern and Western Europe, came under the rule of Plexia. Asia came under the rule of SamSony while the Americas were ruled by Peachy, which replaced the iconic star spangled banner with a silhouette of a bitten fruit. It was not long before the free internet access was limited to services owned by the ruling organisation, which gradually eliminated independent news organisations and educational platforms, replacing them with more and more echo-chamber social media outlets. These, in turn, trained the populace to limit their thoughts and expressions to 140 characters and gave rise to a new lingo style, referred to as ‘**TwitTalk**’. TwitTalk reflected the informal way people communicated online and advertisers began using TwitTalk to appear relatable, while simultaneously tracking every online activity, every keystroke, and every conversation to target the right consumers for their products and services.*

*I vividly remember a large white and pink ad banner I kept receiving on my smartphone during my single early twenties, which, in big bold letters, read as follows: ‘**Look Gr8, Find a M8!**’. The banner featured a beautiful woman in a sexual pose and aimed to advertise a new service which combined extensive plastic surgery with online dating in an all-inclusive package. This new service churned out many matches, particularly between young women with stretched, glossy and expressionless faces and gravity defying breasts, and bulked up, neckless men. Such couples were considered ‘the perfected physical embodiment of the human form’ and it was not long before these couples began breeding genetically perfected babies. By the time your mother and uncle were adults, only the wealthiest and most attractive couples were permitted to use genetic engineering to ensure their children would be tall, healthy, and beautiful. Meanwhile, only Plexia’s shareholders and their families were permitted to also engineer artificially intelligent children. Some say this was done to ensure that control of technological development remained firmly in the hands of the ruling corporation and that this is why any innovation by other sectors of society is buried, copied, or destroyed.*

*Anyway, each ruling conglomerate competed to create the perfect technological utopia and thus every major city was transformed into a glossy, pearl white, shiny landscape, characterised by large domes, smart screens in every wall and everything wirelessly connected to everything else, feeding massive amounts of data into large server farms. Plexia promoted the idea of ‘**a beautiful city for the world’s most beautiful people**’. SamSony and Peachy, also wanting to be most attractive places with the most striking people on display, introduced their own legislations and limitations on who could reproduce and under what conditions. The norms were not allowed to have children in any of the corporation controlled regions. Their genetics and appearance were considered undesirable and they did not justify the expenditure of resources. Over time, this gave rise to three levels in Plexian society: ‘**the shareholders**’, beautiful, brilliant individuals who outlived the rest, ‘**the porcelains**’, the glamorous*

wealthy class, who were also attractive but discouraged from displaying any sign of intelligence and finally, ‘the norms’, who were an unwelcomed, if not a despised, reminder of humanity’s flawed past. The norms who did not comply with the new legislation were kept out of sight and forced to move around underground in damp, dark labyrinthian tunnels, where they still live and work. There they mostly performed manual tasks and dealt with waste disposal, recycling, and any other dirty and dangerous jobs.

Connectivity and ubiquitous internet access even changed the legal system that once existed. With personal recording glasses worn by everyone, law enforcement and legal counsel were no longer needed. Police jobs vanished from existence and laws schools became empty of students. Instead, any legal disputes started being resolved by feeding all aggregated footage into a sophisticated algorithm, which within seconds would spit out a determination of guilt or innocence. Naturally, this process was not free and so only a select few could afford to buy ‘justice’.

To provide housing to those displaced from coastal cities, Plexia’s board of directors decided to heavily invest in automated construction using additive manufacturing and swarm based building drones. This allowed Plexia to gradually demolish the infrastructure of the past and, city by city, rebuilt everything in alignment with their brand colours and product design aesthetics. Each home in Plexia was equipped with smart walls all around and each morning the walls would awaken the people of Plexia with a series of auto-play personalised advertisements. These could not be disabled, muted or shut down but, for a monetary fee, they could be skipped. “

The smart devices and free internet access once offered by the corporation were gradually phased out and replaced with connected bio-implanted devices. A retinal device, like your own one but less advanced, allowed people to see information about everyone and everything they encountered while a device implanted in the wrist eliminated the need to pay for anything. So long as we were connected and had the credit chip, we could access all the services and spaces in the city but without it nothing is accessible.

That it how things became the way they are. I guess I always thought this system was not perfect but I never realised how imperfect it actually was until now. Maybe I was wrong raising you all here, I wanted you all to be safe and comfortable and never experience not having a home or food but maybe we gave up too much.”

With that final thought, Martha finished her wine and got up to get some air. It was a quarter to midnight and Adhoc’s announcement would soon air. Tom returned to playing with his game-pad, his curiosity seemingly sedated for the time being.

PART- 4- We Do Not Agree To The Terms And Conditions!

At last midnight approached and every person in Plexia was glued to some form of device, eagerly awaiting the big reveal. Suddenly, a holographic projection of a small boy, wandering the underground tunnels alone, with the sound of dripping water providing a haunting tempo, appeared. The footage then showed him being dragged unconscious by men in white masks. Moments later, another young boy is seen running around in a huge mansion. He is smiling and has a small, mobile IV bag attached to his pocket. A narrator then explains that the boy in the tunnels was a norm and that the other boy was a shareholder’s son. The child needed new eyes as an accident made him

lose his sight, so the boy from the tunnels was taken, his eyes removed and his body returned to the tunnels to decompose, unnoticed and uncared for. The narrator's voice returned and it said *"countless children have suffered the same fate, those whose parents were not chipped or could not pay back their debt, were subject to this kind of abuse. The luckier ones are made to work day and night in electronic manufacturing plants and repurposing factories..."*

Martha, thinking of her own children, wept as she heard the truth and saw the images of heartless cruelty displayed in Adhoc's broadcast. Then, a man in a large room appeared, in front of him walls and walls of screens, each showing live footage of people walking around the city square. The narrator explained that the footage was collected from every connected device with a camera and, in conjunction with advanced facial recognition technology, each person in each city was tracked every minute of every day. Above each person's image, a number hovered, it did not take Martha and the others long to realise that this was the amount of money on their credit chip. It was now clear that to Plexia's board, the technological utopia they created was not for the people, the people were accessories, walking-purses, and consumers, upon which Plexia would compete with SamSony and Peachy for technological dominance.

Unable to watch more, Martha instructed her family to pack their bags. With all chips now disabled they would take the chance and leave Prime and Plexia behind. Martha knew just the place to go. They headed to the garage and connected the modular transport pods into one vehicle. They all took shifts keeping watch all night until they reached the border of Plexia. Beyond it, the remains of the infamous golden Frump tower stood tall and prominent. As they entered, they discovered that they had unknowingly entered the operation base of 'Adhoc'. A tall, dark man welcomed them in a deep voice and they were led to the top floor. There Laura, the leader of the rebellious organisation, was seated. She was just as stunning and fierce as she appeared on screen, she was dressed in a black leather jacket, which partly obscured her tattoos, and ripped denim jeans, which dangled on top of her military style boots. *"Welcome to Adhoc's headquarters, we are expecting many more people, please join the rest who have just arrived on the 42nd floor, we have a lot of work to do, Sam will show you the way..."*

Martha and her family followed Sam, the tall dark man, and together they entered a room filled with computers, made from recycled parts, and hacked into functioning internet access points. *"What is this?"* Martha asked as they entered the room. The man turned to her and said, *"here we will teach everyone who joins us how to control the same technology that the shareholders have used to control us, we will re-democratise the internet and use that to break the corporations' control. We believe that knowledge is power and that controlling the technology will once again allow us, the ordinary people, to control our world and our lives. Plexia can only maintain its control of the internet and all these devices if it controls the technical knowledge, without that, we can once again be free to speak our minds, openly exchange ideas, control our privacy and have access to public services and spaces..."* – As Sam was giving his passionate sales pitch, Martha couldn't help but feel of a surge of hopefulness and energy. She shook Sam's hand and they both smiled at each other.

Moments later, on the wall on the far end of the room, Martha noticed a large poster with the Joker logo. In big, bold letters it read **"WE WILL NOT AGREE TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS!"**

The End