Years 9 & 10
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Year 9, John Calvin Christian College

Cyberspace

Deomethes scanned the room for any potential threats. None. All clear. There was only the librarian, tapping away on a keyboard and some kids hanging out near a table. Deomethes moved near the back of the bookshelves to the cubicles. He slid into computer number 12.

It was perfect. He had a clear view of the door and could see if anyone came in. His back was covered by the wall so someone would have to walk around where he could see before they could see what he was doing. After another cautionary scan of the room he booted the computer. Entering into his user required a 12-digit password, a random jumble of numbers and symbols. It was almost unhackable. He opened a school email account and started writing an email. Satisfied that his cover story was airtight he switched to a totally different browser. A sinister browser.

Filtering through his screen was huge amounts of information of all types. He had entered the deep web. Government surveys, medical reports and large amounts of cloud storage were openly stored here, as well as thousands of gigabytes of data which was confidential. That was what Deomethes was here to exploit. He opened a folder in an international web cloud, one that had been bounced across various locations in the world and ended in an obscure Indian chemical company. If anyone had bothered to find out they would realise that no company of that name existed. Deomethes was secretive by nature. Talking did not come easy to him. He had few friends or interests, so he devoted most of his time to The Skill. The world of the web had always fascinated him, from a very young age. At home he did not have much access to it as he would have liked, but he had been introduced to it by his brother, Caleb. Caleb had many interests and computing was one of them. It was him who showed Deomethes the basics of The Skill. From there Deomethes had thrived. His knowledge of the web had now extended far beyond his brother. But as time went on The Skill became more and more on the grey edge of the law. There was nothing challenging about programing, but hacking was another thing. It was a thrill and Deomethes loved it. And now the time had come. Finally, he judged himself a capable expert. Now all he needed was a target.

In storage, a highly sophisticated program, which he called Chameleon, resided, one that he had designed himself. It was a virtually invisible code program that could bury itself in data and methodically sift and access data, looking for anything unusual or easy to exploit. Deomethes released it into the stream. He wasn't going to do anything yet, just wait and see what turned up. This was the first stage of The Test. Everything was in place.

Suddenly he was jerked from his thoughts by a tap on the shoulder and he whirled around. "Hey, you're not meant to – wait, what is that?"
Deomethes heart sank as a look of comprehension dawned on the librarian's face. Quickly he exited the program and stammered, "Wait, its nothing, I can explain."
"You're in serious trouble young man. These computers are for responsible use only and whatever that was it was far beyond responsible. We're going to have to make an example of you. You're coming with me to see the principal."

The sentence was short and sharp. "You are suspended for two weeks until we know what to do with you."

In the smarting silence on the long way home Deomethes realised that nothing had happened that was too bad. The teachers had no idea what he was really doing. Whatever he had done was immediately wiped from storage and history as soon as he exited the browser. And they could hardly suspend him for any length of time until they knew what he had done. All they knew was that he was doing something wrong, not what.

The Test had to go ahead. This would be the only opportunity in a while. He had to do it now. He was a few days into his suspension when he finally picked up the courage to access Chameleon, but with no results. But one thing down the list of possible targets caught his eye. A local race horsing tournament was being held on the weekend, and Chameleon had picked up tell-tale signs of poor security. Everything was set. All he needed was to convince Caleb to take him there.

His parents thought he was doing extra homework to catch up what he had missed but here he was, cruising along in the passenger seat of Caleb's beaten up Toyota. He was off to the races.
Entry was an easy matter and as Deomethes slipped into his seat he pulled out a laptop. His brother Caleb nudged him.
"Are you sure this is a good idea?" he asked.
"Come on man," Deomethes replied, "I promised I wouldn't take anything. It won't hurt anybody."
"All right," Caleb sighed, "I guess I'll actually watch the race by myself."

As Deomethes immersed himself in the web he quickly found what he was looking for, the website for the horseraces of today and betting list on each of the horses. He opened the bank details section of submitting your bet. And he waited.
Legally it would be impossible to bet but his brother was old enough, and Deomethes would bet in his name. Everything was in place.

He got up and got a drink before the race started. As he returned he bumped into a large man, carrying a coffee. The man looked at him with a curious look in his eye but kept walking without comment. As he returned to his seat the horses were ready

in their stalls, ready to begin. The signal flag flapped down and the horses thundered out of their stalls.

The heat and the dust rose and the crowd were cheering themselves hoarse. Deomethes began to watch the race with excitement. It was the first time he had been able to relax that day. But as the four horses thundered to the final stretch he sat up alert. Now timing was everything. The black and the red horse, neck and neck thundered down the track. Then, by a hairsbreadth the black horse pulled ahead and crossed the finish line to a fanfare of cheering.

Deomethes rapidly moved through the web. The firewalls for the website were neglected and he was able to break into the hub where the betting records were held. Then he drew from his pocket a flash drive on which he stored his tools of the trade. It was a self-replicating, evolving virus which could jump from server to server. If there was anyone looking after the website they would be distracted containing the virus. He plugged it in and as the virus trashed the system he quickly took control of the website. Then, turning back the clock on the website back by an hour and entered a totally legal bet of $20 on the Black horse. With a three to one payout he would have just enough to cover expenses. Quickly flipping the time back to current he was greeted by a message. "Congratulations on your win. Cash outside." As he clicked it a surge of triumph flooded his body. He had passed the test.

"We really have to go now," Caleb stated. He pointed down through the stands to a small group of men angrily conferring around a screen. "The managers aren't happy." We joined the throng of people streaming out of the exits, only stopping at the cashier to collect their cash.
"Mission Accomplished."

Connor Raymond, senior detective of the Essex police force was flipping through reports on his desk. Mostly they were standard cases. As he polished off the last of his coffee a particular report caught his eye.
"Horseracing computer system crashed. No fraud reported. Whether it was an intentional attack is unknown."
"I was at that race." Raymond said. "And in my experience nothing happens unintentionally."

He reached for the phone.