

# The University of Anarchy\*

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## INTRODUCTION

The academic discipline of international relations is replete with famous sayings. Many are quite serious. For instance, the Communist revolutionary and first leader of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong, once said that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." Other sayings are rather humorous – but no less insightful. Take the British philosopher Bertrand Russell. He said, "The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves." Mao forged a revolution in China, but he did so at great cost to his country's people, including persistent and deep poverty, widespread starvation, and social tumult. Mao would hardly recognize China nowadays. After his death, China quickly abandoned his economic policies and embraced state capitalism, and as it turns out China's rise to world power is the result of its economic miracle, not its military might, as Mao predicted. I don't know if Russell had Mao in mind when he referred to fools and fanatics, but if he did Russell surely got the last laugh.

Humor is a very effective way to uncover truth and reveal the meaning of things in ways that have previously escaped our understanding. Throughout my 25-year career as a college professor, I have used humor to educate my students about international relations, especially when it comes to the wide range of academic theories and concepts scholars use to explain and understand how the world works. The readings I assign to my students are indispensable to the learning process. They get students thinking. Oftentimes, however, the learning process benefits tremendously from a good laugh. From time to time, I use jokes, funny stories, quirky metaphors, and the like cut through the arcane language and dense prose students encounter in course reading materials. When done well, they produce big smiles and "ah-ha" moments in which students gain new insight by making connections between course materials and their lived experiences.

One of my favorite uses of humor has to do with the concept of international anarchy, which essentially means that there is no higher authority in international relations above states and other international actors. It is one of the first things undergraduates learn about in their

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\* In Kishor Vaidya, ed., *Teach Political Science with a Sense of Humor* (The Curious Academic Publishing Company, 2022, pp. 54 – 75).

international relations survey courses. I ask my students to reflect upon the mundane things they do throughout the course of a normal day, from the moment they get up to the moment they go to sleep. I ask them to consider how different and challenging their lives might be in the unlikely event all the things they have come to rely upon that make their everyday lives productive and meaningful can no longer be taken for granted. I ask them to imagine what it would be like to wake up one morning only to discover that, at some point during the night, the systems of authority at our college have disappeared. The story I tell them is quite funny, or at least I think so.

#### EVERYDAY IS INDEED A NEW BEGINNING

The Roman philosopher and satirist Seneca once said, "Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end." Let's imagine a student named Thomas. He is relaxing in his residence hall room. A long day of lectures, study, test-taking, physical exercise, and work at a part time job off campus have finally come to an end. It is late. Exhausted, he drifts off to sleep. At some point during the night, one beginning has come to an end and a new beginning has commenced, one that dramatically upends his life and the lives of everyone else at his university.

Hours later, Thomas suddenly awakens. Bright and warm sunlight fills the room. He senses that something is wrong. He sits up in bed and realizes that it is well past time when the gentle chime of the alarm clock on his laptop computer should have lulled him from sleep. He notices that his laptop is missing from his desk. He hops out of bed and frantically searches his small dorm room. The laptop is gone. He has been robbed. While his room locks from the inside, Thomas has never felt the need to use it. No one in the residence hall ever locks their door, night or day. He dials up campus security, but no one answers. Confused, he hangs up and dials the office of the university's dean of students. Again, no answer. He bolts from his room. The long corridor is empty and silent. He knocks on his neighbor's door. No answer. He proceeds down the corridor and knocks on the next door.

He hears the soft voice of another student on the other side. "Who's there?"

He cannot recall her name even though they took the same course the previous semester. "It's me, Thomas, from down the hall. I've been robbed. No one at campus security and the dean's office is answering my calls." He expects her to open the door, share her outrage, offer her sympathies, and ask him for details. But a long silence follows instead. "Hello?" he calls out, "Did you hear me? I've been robbed."

The student behind the door finally replies, "Yes, I hear you. Haven't you heard?"

"Heard what?" he responds sharply.

"The university has shut down. No one is in charge anymore. Things are seriously messed up.

"What are you talking about? That's crazy. Are you stoned?" Thomas feels his emotions rising. Frustrated and more than a bit frightened, he pounds on the door and shouts, "What the hell's going on? Open the door!"

"Please leave me alone," she begs him. "You're scaring me."

Suddenly, he senses someone standing very close behind him, but before he can turn, he finds himself in a head lock. He struggles unsuccessfully to set himself free. A force of considerably greater physical strength than his own presses him against the door. The student on the other side shrieks loudly.

"Chill out, man," a familiar voice speaks sternly into his ear. "Things are bad enough already, Thomas, and you're carrying on like this is only going to get her more upset and make matters worse for all of us." Overmatched, Thomas relaxes his body. The grip on him loosens and he wiggles free. He turns and comes face to face with Levi, an upper-level student and the residence hall's supervisor.

"Someone's stolen my laptop," Thomas repeats. "No one answers the..."

Levi interrupts him, "I know about the laptop."

"How?"

"I took it," he says matter-of-factly.

In a rage, Thomas throws an errand punch. Levi grabs him by the collar and thrusts him against the wall on the opposite side of the hallway. Thomas feels a ringing in his ears once his head hits the concrete cinderblock.

"I'm running this residence hall now," Levi barks, "Like it or not, you and everyone else here will be following my rules from now on – or else. Got it?"

Slightly dazed, Thomas shakes his head affirmatively, not exactly quite knowing to what he has just agreed. "I'll take that as a yes," Levi says seriously. Levi turns to face two other students standing at the end of the corridor. "All's good, Amit and Omar. I've got this. You can go back to your security checkpoints."

The resident supervisor releases his grip. "I didn't steal your laptop, by the way. I've just borrowed it for a while." He pauses. "I suggest go back to your room, stop causing trouble, and leave us in peace."

At this point you are probably scratching your head and wondering, where is the humor in this story? Thomas, our protagonist, is a victim of two crimes, property theft and physical assault. Yet he stands accused of a crime - disturbing the peace. And he has been threatened with further harm should he persist in his efforts to retrieve his stolen property. How is any of this possible? Funny that you ask.

## HUNGER

The late-nineteenth century American politician Adlai Stevenson once said, "A hungry man is not a free man." So true! Dejected and humiliated, Thomas returns to his room. Soon thereafter, however, he grows hungry. He had a light dinner on the fly the night before and this morning's drama meant that he missed breakfast. He feels like a prisoner in his own room and hopes a good meal will help him regain his sense of self. He phones his best friend John and after sharing his story, the two agree to meet up for an early lunch a university dining hall. Once there, however, they discover that like everything else going on around them the meal services on campus have ceased normal operations. An attendant does not greet them and scan their ID cards at the entrance to the cafeteria. They simply walk in. They suppose they're getting a free lunch. Fat chance. The food service employees who they have come to know by name are gone too. Students have taken their places, working in groups large and small. Some prepare meals. Others stand guard. Still others sell meals to those prepared to pay a king's ransom.

Thomas and John are confused. "Dude, I don't have any money," says John. "Do you?"

"No," Thomas replies. "You know I never carry cash on me."

"So much for our having scored a free lunch," John replies sarcastically.

John approaches two female students standing behind a counter. One is taking food orders and recording them on a piece of paper. The other is exchanging bills and coins. "Hi. I'm John." He extends his right hand. Neither woman reciprocates. Though a bit unnerved, he continues, "My friend and I will have two of whatever is being cooked on the grill behind you."

"Sure," she replies. The woman taking orders looks at them and scribbles on to her pad of paper. "Two grilled sandwiches on white bread," she calls out over her shoulder to several other women operating the grill. "Do you want cheese?" She asks.

"Ah," John hesitates. "What's already on the bread?"

"Nothing," she says. "It's just grilled bread."

John stumbles. Confused, he looks at Thomas. "Sure, cheese is fine."

"That'll be twenty bucks," says the other women.

John smiles again. "My good friend and I have a small problem. He pauses. "We don't have any cash. How about we come back later with the money once we hit an ATM?"

"No cash, no carry," the woman handling transactions replies. "Now please step aside so that we can assist paying customers." John protests but to no avail.

Suddenly, shouting rises behind them. Their attention turns to a scuffle by the pizza oven. There is cursing. Fists are flying. Someone is wrestled to the ground. A chant ripples through the cafeteria: "Throw him out! Throw him out! Throw him out!" A student with tomato sauce spilled across the front of his t-shirt is hoisted to his feet by a group of students wearing yellow safety vests. "Let me go," he cries to no avail. "That pizza's mine, not hers." He is dragged away, kicking and screaming. Applause fills the room.

Thomas pulls John aside and directs his attention to an unattended tray of fresh vegetables on a nearby table. Without a moment's hesitation, they nonchalantly walk toward it. They grab and place in their backpacks whatever first catches their eyes and quickly back away, hoping to leave the

dining hall unnoticed. They make a dash for the nearest exit, a disarmed emergency door that takes them down a dimly lighted flight of stairs. They exit the building, run across a parking lot, occasionally looking behind them to make sure they are not being pursued, jump down a small embankment, and come to rest out of sight on the bottom of a dry retention pond thick with tall reeds. They remove their stolen possessions from their backpacks – a handful of fresh turnips, a head of broccoli, a red onion, and a couple of potatoes – and divide it between them. Ravishing, they consume their small portions in no time, pausing only to complain how awful it is to eat a meal of raw food.

#### A MOST INTERESTING LECTURE

A short time later, they head to their shared afternoon lecture. They enter a large hall with many rows of seats ascending from stage in the middle of which stands a lectern. They immediately take notice that far fewer students have shown up than what would be the case under normal circumstances. They sit together and a good distance from other students, many of whom, like them, are clustered in small groups. The professor enters the hall, looking disheveled and more than a few minutes late.

“Well, I guess some things haven’t changed a bit,” John jokes.

Rushing to the lectern, the professor offers faint apologies.

“Well,” Professor Powers says, throwing up his hands. “I don’t know about you, but last night’s events certainly caught me by surprise. If you haven’t heard the news, the board of trustees voted to dissolve the university. For all intents and purposes, we no longer exist as an institution of higher learning.”

The chattering voices of students fill the vast space of the lecture hall. “Okay. Okay. I understand what you’re feeling right now. It’s all quite upsetting,” he raises his voice above the murmur. “Please stay calm. We’re all in this together. The faculty are meeting later today to figure out where we go from here. But let me assure you that it is well within our grasp to cooperate with one another and advance our shared interests.”

Some students are unconvinced and call out questions. “Professor, what makes you think things will get back to normal anytime soon?” Asks one student.

“Trust me,” he pleads. “Just trust me.”

"What about our exams? Will we have them?" Another student asks.

"Yes, of course. We will have our exams. I will continue to teach, and my hope is that you will keep up with your studies. I will maintain a record of your assignments and make sure you get the academic credit you deserve."

Students shake their heads in agreement.

"There is one small problem, however," he continues. The room goes quiet. "For as long as the university is not operating, I'm not drawing a salary. So," he pauses for dramatic effect, "if you want to continue this course with me, you'll need to pay me, directly and up front."

The hall erupts in hissing, whistling, and cursing. "Please. Please. Try to stay calm," he begs them. "Let's be reasonable here!"

"That's unjust!" A young man calls out above the cacophony of voices. All eyes turn to him. He stands up. "You can't charge us for what we've already paid for. And what if we were able to pay you more? What prevents you from simply pocketing our money and not teaching? Please, professor, do what's right!"

John is impressed. "Who's he?" He asks Thomas.

"That's Manuel. He's a philosophy major," he replies. "I took an ethics class with him last year. He's got his head in the clouds," Thomas says dismissively, rolling his eyes. "Damn philosophers!"

"That explains it," John replies nonchalantly. "But he *is* making a good point."

Unamused, the professor addresses Manuel, his voice rising. "Do what's *right*? Tell me, in these circumstances, what is right and what is wrong? Is it right for me to go without a salary? Is there something wrong with me asking you to pay for my services?"

Manuel's plea grows more urgent. "You do know we are students? We don't have a lot of money to start with – and just how much do you expect us to pay you anyway?"

The professor gives the philosophy student a cold stare. His lips barely open. "How much do I expect to be paid, you ask?" Again, he pauses for dramatic effect. I guess that depends on what grade you can afford."

The hall erupts in another wave of loud noises. Astonished, Thomas and John stare at one another, eyes wide open. "I knew I should have never taken his course," John says. "His scores on Rate My Professor are awful."

"Oh, please," the professor calls out, chastising his students. "What do you expect? Don't be angry at me! I'm in just as much of a bad spot as the rest of you. We all have to do what we must to get by until the situation with the university is sorted out." He speaks directly to Manuel. "As for you," the professor says, dryly. "I can't help but notice the diamond studded earring you're wearing. I'll tell you what. Let's make a deal. You give me the earring, and I'll give you top grades in this course." Another burst of shouting ensues.

As it did earlier in the day during his altercation with the resident assistant, Thomas feels his temper rising to a boil. Knowing his friend all too well, John senses what is about to happen. Thomas is going to lose his temper which, for John, violates a norm of social relations that says people should be respectful of one another – even in very tense situations. "Oh, bro, don't do it!" He slings an arm around Thomas' shoulder.

John's feeble attempt at physically restraining in his best friend fails. Thomas stands and shouts over the other students, bringing the room to a standstill. All eyes are on him. "And what good would a piece of paper from you saying that he's got a top grade in this class get him anyway? Its worthless! Have you seen your reviews lately on Rate My Professor?" Laughter fills the hall. "I have another idea, professor," he continues. In exchange for each one of us giving you top marks on Rate My Professor, you'll give us top grades in this course. That way, we get the academic credits we need and, when this place gets back to normal, you'll have plenty of new students to teach – and, perhaps, a big salary boost, too." Laughter continues. The situation has gotten out of hand. "It seems to me that its everyone for themselves!" Thomas declares. "For the time being, at least, each one of us needs to do whatever it takes to get by."

John does not quite agree with Thomas' stark assessment, but he rises to his feet and adds to Thomas statement. "What my good friend is trying to say is that, while each of us is in a bad situation, that perhaps we can reach some basic understanding of how we can move forward without causing each other further harm."

"No," Thomas replies sharply. "That's not at all what I'm saying!"

John cuts him off, tossing him a hard stare. "My good friend is having a rather bad day. We're all having a bad day. I suggest we return this time tomorrow and try to agree on some rules so that we can get back to learning!" Students applaud wildly. Flustered and speechless, the professor gathers his belongings and marches out of the room. "Fine," he concedes, "I'll be back tomorrow, but I'm not making any promises."

#### LIGHTS OUT

That evening, Thomas is back in his room. It's been a long day - and surely the strangest of his life. He locks the door, and to be on the safe side he also barricades it with his desk. Restless, he lays himself down on his bed to contemplate all that has happened. Nearly an entire day has passed since he has last drifted off into sleep, only to discover that his predictable and well-ordered world had come crashing down around him. He is without a computer and has been assaulted. He has stolen food. He has publicly humiliated his professor. The raw vegetables he had had for lunch are churning in his stomach. He has not had dinner and is ravenously hungry. The worst of it came only a short while earlier, however, after he and John were unable to secure an evening meal. Thomas abruptly abandoned John and joined one of the many "security clubs" that had sprung up that day.

"I'm sorry that we can no longer be friends," Thomas tells John. "The members of club have told me that all non-members must be treated as enemies."

"You're right that we are no longer friends. You've betrayed me, Thomas. But that doesn't make us enemies," John replies.

"Of course, we're enemies," Thomas insists. "How could it possibly be otherwise under the circumstances?"

Thomas talks to himself aloud as he drifts off to sleep. "The university dissolves and everything falls apart, just like that? Who can I trust? How do I protect myself and what remains of my stuff? I'm starving. How can I possibly continue my studies? This is no way to live."

#### ORDER RESTORED (SORT OF)

In the days that follow, Thomas comes around to accepting the new set of house rules Levi has posted in the residence hall commons. He signs

up to perform “voluntary” services: cleaning bathrooms; patrolling the building and carrying out impromptu security checks of dorm rooms for contraband; tending the community’s vegetable garden; and collecting eggs from the chicken coop. In exchange, he gets to keep his room and secures a daily meal made in the house’s shared kitchen. Levi proves to be a tough leader, but he is no tougher on Thomas than on anyone else. In an odd way, Thomas and his fellow residence hall mates come to the simple conclusion that that life under Levi’s sometimes-harsh rule leaves them better off than their having to fend for themselves. He resents Levi, but he is also grateful for his leadership.

## ANARCHY AND ORDER IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

This silly yet serious story of the trials and tribulations of a student at a university where the institutions of authority have collapsed offers important insights into the study of international relations. Let’s first consider international anarchy. How anarchy is defined and what it means in the international relations context often leaves students confused, because we commonly associate with this concept utter lawlessness and conger in our mind images of anarchists – people with extreme political views who completely reject all public authority and do whatever they please.

International anarchy – the notion that there is no higher authority above states – is a core concept that undergraduates encounter in their international relations courses. To say that international relations play out under anarchy does not imply, however, that these relations are necessarily defined by incessant violence and lawlessness.

Anarchy’s implications for international relations vary from one theoretical tradition to another. For realists scholars of international relations, for instance, the absence of a higher authority above states compels them to see one another as enemies and to engage in self-help, with each doing whatever it takes to secure themselves. Each state possesses weapons of war and can inflict serious harm on others. Therefore, it is the prudent statesperson who ignores the declared intentions of other states and focuses only on their capacity to inflict harm. The potential of war is omnipresent – and sometimes countries find themselves at war.

In his magnum opus titled *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes, a 17<sup>th</sup> century English political philosopher, famously described life in the state of nature – what in international relations we call international anarchy – as “nasty, brutish, and short.” Hobbes’ sees anarchy as quite dangerous – so much so that he says people willingly give up perfect liberty in the state of

nature to enjoy security under government, even when the rule of the sovereign, what he calls Leviathan, is not especially to their tastes. It's no joke that our Thomas' experiences on campus are very similar to what Hobbes describes in *Leviathan*. Thomas is alone. He is insecure and fearful. He grants authority over him to Levi and in return gains security in the form of a safe place to sleep and one meal a day.

Liberal institutionalists modify realism's pessimism and maintain that anarchy's negative effects can be reduced, and potentially significantly, through international institutions, which, they maintain, facilitate the exchange of information, help states verify each other's compliance with international agreements, and either prevent or at least provide early notification of possible cheating.

For some liberals, international anarchy in and of itself is not problematic. States with democratic regimes can work out among them a "long peace." They create international institutions – organizations, treaties, laws, and norms – that reflect their domestic institutions that, for each of them, are based on the rule of law, free and fair elections, and commitment to individual liberty, which together constrain the aggressive impulses of statespersons. As the German idealist political philosopher Immanuel Kant claims in *Perpetual Peace*, liberal democracies create among themselves a "Zone of Peace" in which there is no need for an authority to rule over them. This peace is possible because states conduct their internal and external affairs according to a set of three moral principles or rights. The republican right says people chose their countries' leaders in free and fair elections. The international right calls upon democracies to form a federation – international institutions – and work to resolve their differences through the rule of law. The cosmopolitan right ensures that people carry basic rights with them wherever they travel internationally. This separate peace among liberal democracies means that these countries are each other's friends – and the lack of a sovereign over them does not impair this powerful bond among them. Manuel, the student in our story who implores the professor to "do the right thing" by conducting himself civilly and recognizing all his students as rights bearing individuals, gives voice to this Kantian ideal.

Constructivists take an altogether different approach to international anarchy. For them, anarchy's meaning and significance depend on the social context within which states interact. If two states see each other as outright enemies, bad things, such as arms racing and all-out war, are likely. If, instead, they see each other as competitors, bad things are still possible, but at least states follow basic rules and therefore can avoid the worst possible of outcomes. Of course, states can also see each

other as friends that are committed to doing right by one another. They can avoid war and, as Kant suggests, build among them a robust peace system.

To borrow an infamous phrase taken from the title of his article, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," Alexander Wendt asserts that the meaning of international anarchy depends on the characteristics that define the relationship between states. Hence, the Hobbesian culture of anarchy, in which states see each other as mortal enemies, is merely one formation that anarchy can take in international relations.

In a Lockean culture of anarchy, named after the English philosopher John Locke, who believed that the evil impulses of people can be controlled by the rule of law, states see each other as rivals – not enemies – and therefore manage to temper their competition by agreeing to and abiding by basic rules norms, such as the laws of war as found in the Geneva Conventions. In our story, Thomas' friend John represents this way of thinking about how everyone can get by now that there is no higher authority at the university (at least temporarily). Thomas, however, represents the loss of his friendship with John as a natural consequence of the anarchic environment in which the two – and everyone else at the university – find themselves. As they scramble to secure themselves in a new and dangerous environment, Thomas believes everyone is compelled to assume that others are potential enemies, but John thinks otherwise.

Finally, as noted above, in a Kantian culture of anarchy states are friends. Some sustain amicable relations with one another because they share a common identity, conduct their affairs in accordance with shared principles, and work together in a security community in which each respects and honors the rights of others.

Critical theorists survey this conventional international relations landscape with dismay. They encourage us to call into question all that we think we claim to know about how the world works and, by doing so, they aspire to uncover hidden biases that have long tainted the international relations discipline. The feminist scholar Joanne Tickner has performed a great service to our discipline by drawing our attention to how international relations is gendered. Thirty years ago, she wrote an article titled "Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security," in which she argued that foreign and national security policy is largely blind to the lived experiences of women. She attributes this gendering to the simple fact that because most scholars are male, international relations reflects a masculine worldview. By valuing women's

experiences, Tickner and other feminists seek to vanquish gender hierarchies, open international relations to new understandings of how the world works, and counter global insecurities that negatively affect the lives of men and women alike.

In our story, feminist scholars will want to explore why the student who cowers in her room, afraid to answer Thomas' knock at her door, is a woman and is represented as especially vulnerable and most in need of Levi's protection. They'd also ask us to question why it is that, elsewhere in Thomas' story, the two women in the cafeteria work so well together, as if their being female necessarily means that they are cooperative. And why is it that the only characters in our story who are nameless are women? Does this suggest that their experiences don't matter? If so, then Thomas' worldview is incomplete because it has little or no regard for the experiences of women.

Scholars who study international relations through the lens of postcolonialism will want to know about the experiences of people of color in our story. Postcolonialism focuses on the power hierarchies between states that place European states, which for centuries maintained colonial systems around the world, above states that only in the past half century or so have achieved independence from colonial rule. Most famously, the scholar Frantz Omar Fanon explored in his 1961 book *The Wretched of the Earth* a central claim of postcolonialism – that the West represents the non-Western world as inferior and that, as the objects of continued Western domination, a discourse of inequality is reproduced in the non-Western world and is internalized by its peoples, rendering them inferior in their own eyes as well as in Western eyes.

There is no exploration of colonialism and race in our story, but Levi's brief interaction with Amit and Omar suggests an unequal, hierarchical relationship. Levi is the leader, and the two other men appear to be his enforcers, and what authority they have appears to come at his direction. A postcolonial reading of our story would ask hard questions about the experiences under anarchy of Amit and Omar – and other students like them. Once the university governance system has collapsed, postcolonialism would ask how people of color stand in relation to Caucasians. What power, if any, do they have? Are they more likely to be victims of violence and other forms of abuse? Do they form their own security clubs based on their shared identities, and are these clubs successful and protecting their members? Are there multiracial clubs and, if so, how likely is it that people of color are leaders of them?

The Australian international relations scholar Hedley Bull in his classic book, *The Anarchical Society*, defines order as a purposeful pattern of behavior among actors that produces what he describes as “an arrangement of social life that...promotes certain goals or values” shared among people or groups. Among the elementary goals of a social order, he continues, three are critical. First, life is secure against violence leading to death or bodily harm. Second, agreements are honored, such that promises made are promises kept. Third, material possessions are secure – what’s mine is mine and what’s yours is yours and, should disputes arise over ownership, they can be settled fairly.

Bull says the same logic about social order as it applies to people and groups also pertains to international relations among sovereign states - even under international anarchy. Bull says states are members of an international society, because there operates among them a pattern of behavior that is the expression of their commitment to a common set of goals or values – even when these goals are narrowly circumscribed. So, for example, in his thinking a balance of power system in which countries form temporary alliances with one another against a common threat, counts as an example of order under anarchy. The implications of this argument are profound because he is asserting that international anarchy – the lack of authority above states – does *not* preclude the presence of some sort of orderly relationship among states. Hence, the title of his book – *The Anarchical Society* – conveys the message that international anarchy and international order coexist.

In our story, one form of order came to an end at the university and is followed by a new one. The lack of a higher authority at the university ushered in anarchy, but it did not produce a complete breakdown of social relationships and their replacement with brutal, Hobbesian lawlessness. Thomas is safe, sort of. He has a place to live and food to eat. Levi has restored Thomas’ ownership of his laptop, but Thomas has agreed to leave it in the commons room of his residence hall, so that others who lack a laptop might also make good use of it. Thomas is learning the martial arts and is getting back into shape. He has gotten to know all the other students in his residence hall by name, including Livia, his neighbor who he offended early in the story and who, he has since learned, has a black belt in karate. Problems persist. He’s still hungry. He avoids leaving his residence hall alone unless he is accompanied by another security club member. He misses John’s friendship horribly. And progress in his studies is lagging. Yet life goes on, and he and others around him are adjusting to its unforeseen challenges and coming to terms with its new realities.

## BIOGRAPHY

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