

The view from the foyer of the National Opera to the Töölönlahti Bay was stunning, but the friends barely noticed it. They were constantly on the lookout for opportunities for breaking away from the guided tour, and investigating the building's less public nooks and crannies. When Joel's phone rang, he moved to the side. Again, he didn't recognise the number.

- It's Dan. Help. I am somewhere with lots of tutus. Nooooo!

The call was cut off to the sound of a desperate skater's cry. Joel stared at the screen hopelessly, but then it occurred to him to check out the number the call had come from. He barely believed his eyes at the result. The number was for the Finnish National Opera's costume maintenance. They had succeeded, armed with nothing but a picture of Katarina Witt, they had followed the right clue!

The guide hurried the tour party along. Joel made faces to his friends to beckon them over.

- What is it? Akiko could tell something had happened just by looking at Joel.
- Dan is in this building, in the costume department. We have to call the police, Joel exclaimed.
- No! Do you not remember what Voidykova said? If the police get involved in this, Dan will never skate again, Akiko worried. – We have to find him ourselves. Sara, do you know where the costume department is?

A friend of Sara's had worked as seamstress for the National Ballet some years ago, and Sara remembered the costumes were kept in the basement, on floor K2. – But you can't get there without a pass, she sighed desperately. -We have to rely on someone who works here. But let's try to get as close to the costume department as possible first. Come! Sara pointed to the closest lift.

Dan Vinge stared in pain at a shape that was moving closer to him. With light behind it, all Dan could make out were the outlines. A female voice was speaking in fluent Ruritarian, a pistol was pointed at Dan's head.

- The Finn was stupid for letting you see his face. It is his fault that I now have to apply plan C. Plan A would have seen you released after the Worlds. Plan B would have meant you will never skate again. Plan C, however... The woman didn't have to finish the sentence, Dan got the picture anyway.

- Are you sure? The Finnish crony's voice sounded out from the background. – You promised the boy will be free to leave, unharmed, after the games. That you only wish to ensure he will not be Ruritania's first ever representative in ISU Championships but your...

- Shut your mouth, idiot! You have made enough of a mess already. Why did you have to bring the boy into a public place!

- There are so many people moving around here that no one will know who brought Dan here. I know the building from the time I was a doorman here, I know how to avoid the security cameras. Come, let's leave him here. It is doubtful he could skate now anyway, after all this rigmarole, even if he were discovered before the games started.

The woman's laughter sent shivers down Dan's spine. He now knew why had been abducted. Esta would show no mercy.

QUESTION: What or who is Esta?

- A) A woman with a traditional Ruritarian name.
- B) United States Department of Homeland Security's Electronic System for Travel Authorisation
- C) A word in Spanish and Portuguese languages meaning 'this'