

## **Bolo's conjectures**

'Hello, Eiffel. It's been a long time'.

'Bolo? Well, well, I hadn't recognised you at first! The world really is a handkerchief'.

'What brings you back here?'

'Oh, I suppose I was just tired of living in hostile lands, always occupying such precarious positions. Still, I bring with me a few good memories. And what about you? Have you travelled too?'

'No, I haven't yet moved from my little corner. Maybe some day, who knows?'

'But come now, are you not driven quite mad with boredom?'

'Not at all! I've been watching all my life. I can never see very far, because I'm only little, and yet I watch continuously, and I try to draw conclusions which will help me to understand the nature of the universe'.

'Then you haven't changed one speck! So tell me, what fruits has such a contemplative life yielded?'

'Well, every new moment of it I grow surer that there are certain hidden patterns, laws perhaps which govern natural phenomena, in particular the behaviour of those who surround me... I'll tell you about it, but first I must

ask you some questions. Please forgive my bursting curiosity, I've never spoken to anyone who has seen so much of the world'.

'But of course, what more agreeable a thirst is there to quench than that of a friend's for knowledge? Pray ask away'.

'When did you decide to come back, exactly?'

'Ah, let's see now, it would have been just before I actually did. I always was an impetuous character'.

'Certainly, at least ever since Ados went. Oh, I'm sorry...'

'Please, continue'.

'Yes, umm, so what route did you take?'

'The shortest possible, obviously. I returned in a straight line'.

'Did you stop for a break on any occasion?'

'No, why would I want to do that? I must say, I'm rather flummoxed by your questions, they don't seem to lead anywhere'.

'I'm convinced there was something predictable in the course you chose, dependent, it is my guess, on some fundamental feature of yourself, and which *obliged* you to travel as you did'.

'My poor foolish friend, don't say now you believe in destiny?'

'No, of course not, it's not that'.

'You know, it amazes me how many people there are out there puzzling over nonsensical questions! I once met this raving black clergyman who maintained there are infinite lives, that after a final catastrophe in which everything will come to a stop, we will all be born again, and this process, he claimed, will continue for the rest of eternity! In fact, he said he had vague wisps of memories from previous incarnations! I ask you'.

'Eiffel, I must remind you I am a scientist, not to be tumbled up together with some mystical lunatic. Anyway, what became of him?'

'Of the clergyman? I killed him'.

'You killed him!'

'Yes, a shame now I come to think of it... but he was black'.

'True. Do you know if he believed in free will?'

'I don't think he ever said'.

'I am beginning to doubt we have it'.

'Come now, you will at least admit you are a fatalist!'

'But don't you see how incongruent it is that you should apparently act on momentary impulses while in fact obeying strict behavioural norms? And I don't mean to say it's only you, not a bit of it. For an even more clashing example take, say, Lancelot, who's just moved off: he also seems impetuous, even erratic...'

'I dare say he was sick of your chatter...'

'...and yet his obsession with the L couldn't be more blatant!'

'Look, Bolo, I don't mean to be unkind, but you are very little, you know nothing of the world. It doesn't surprise me you can't understand the actions of people such as Lancelot or myself. I realise that from your point of view, things... Wait!... voices resounding inside me... "Error, Grave Error". Ahh, again it flows through my body, I had all but forgotten how it felt! It's more intense than ever, I need action, I do believe I am the chosen one! Forgive me my little friend, I must go!'

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- Checkmate. Fancy another game?