

February 2022 | ISSUE NO. 3 | The Road Less Traveled

The Writers Block



TABLE OF
CONTENTS

4-5	Meet Our Team
6-7	Editor's Note
8	The Science Behind Relationships
9-14	Rajanigandha Part II
15-16	Birthdays are Weird
17-18	A Field Guide to the Omicron Variant

CONTINUED

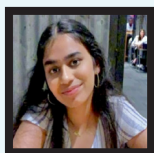
Bikash	19-23
Lights, Camera, Action!	24
Young	25
OG Capstone	26-27
The Best Years of Our Lives	28
Whisperer 5: The Order of the Fasolada	29-41

Meet Our Team

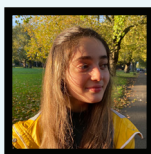
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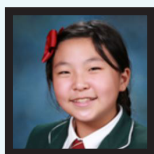
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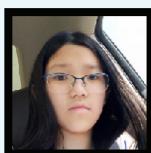
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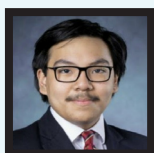
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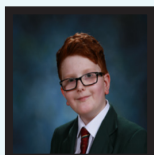
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Ishaan Goswami



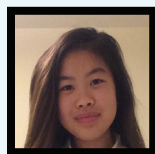
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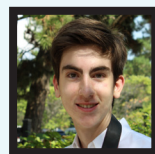
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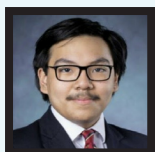
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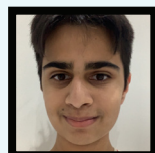
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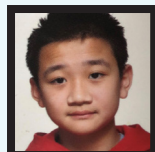


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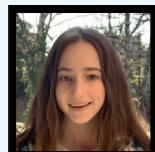


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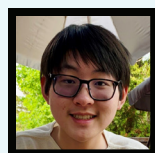
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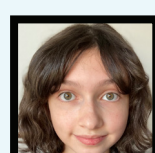
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Editor's Note

January 26 was the latest Bell Let's Talk Day. Created by Bell Canada to destigmatize mental health, the day is one dedicated to conversations about mental health. Like many, as I dove into these discussions and explored my mental state, I found I was in a bit of a rut. The recent lockdown, the health restrictions, the tension in Asia and even here in Ottawa, exams, schoolwork—it all felt like too much. So, once I determined to do something, I started running on the treadmill.

The funny thing about running on the treadmill is that you're not going anywhere. No matter how fast you run, you stay in the same position in, and no matter how fast that belt spins beneath you, you're stuck where you are.

That feeling, unfortunate as it is, is quite familiar to everyone going through this pandemic. It's all hit us at one point or another, when we're feeling down or anxious about the future. One of my friends once described it to me as "a slow drowning." Whether or not that's what this experience feels like for you, one thing remains true for all of us. We are not alone. Though it took me a long time to realize, everybody deals with mental health struggles, big and small, and there are people, closer than we realize, who can help us. Teachers and staff here at Bayview Glen all care and are willing to help. We have a learning strategist who can help with time and stress management; visiting psychiatrist Dr. Kozina; and of course, our Mentors, who are always there to lend an ear.

So if you feel the "waves" closing overhead, know that this community has a vast network of support systems who only want to see you succeed. Talk to a teacher you feel comfortable with, a parent or maybe an uncle or aunt, perhaps your older sibling or your best friend—anyone. This community is imbued with hope.

The idea of hope is echoed in the anonymous article Growing up in a Pandemic's closing lines: "we can only hope that one day we will get a chance to live through it and see it for ourselves." Though it refers to a world without COVID-19, its meanings are manifold. Hope that one day things will get better, that one day things will brighten, that one day we will heal.

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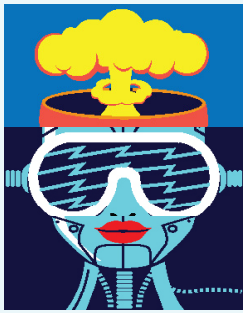
So this February (or Compassion Month, if you can recall those Prep School days), take heart in knowing that you are part of a community filled with support and compassion. If you feel overwhelmed, find someone to talk to you; don't shoulder your burden alone. And most importantly of all, don't lose hope. As my grandfather would say to me: There's always a better tomorrow.

Best regards,

Constantine Vrachas Matthaïos,



Want to contribute to The Writer's Block? Write a Letter to the Editor, addressed to cmatthaios@bayviewglen.ca, to be included!



The *Science* Behind Relationships

By Julia Apitz-Grossman

Whether they be romantic or platonic, relationships are something that make up a large part of our lives. It is often said that they are built on love and trust, but what is the true science behind them, and what are the factors that make them successful?

In terms of romance, it all comes down to who we're attracted to. Attraction stems from the brain pathways that control reward behaviour. Dopamine, a neurotransmitter in the brain, is released when we do things that make us feel good, like spending time with loved ones. High levels of this and norepinephrine, another neurotransmitter, are released when we feel attracted to someone, which makes us generally more energetic and happier around the person. Norepinephrine also plays a large role in the "fight or flight" response, so when a lot is released, it is easier to stay alert and often leads to a decrease in appetite and insomnia.

Long-term attachment on the other hand, whether that be parent-child, friendship, or partner-based, is controlled mainly by oxytocin, which is released during moments of bonding. This makes the relationship lasting and impactful.

Naomi Eisenberger, a social psychology professor at UCLA, performed a study to see if we truly get that warm, fuzzy feeling when thinking about the people we love. She had half the participants hold a heat pack and half hold an unheated ball. Unsurprisingly, members of the first group reported more activity in regions that detect physical warmth. Then, she gathered messages from their families and friends, half of which were loving and the other half containing factual statements. When reading the loving messages for the first time, the same neural regions were active as with the heat packs. This study truly displayed how our brain interprets love as warmth, and how important it is to have these relationships.

In another study, it was found that in more than 1,367 pairs of friends, it was very common for the closest friends to resemble fourth cousins, the same resemblance in genetic makeup as those who share great-great-grandparents. What was even more likely in these friendships was a similar sense of smell. On the other hand, it was common for these pairs to have very different immune systems, something that makes sense in that it would make it harder to spread disease.

Overall, relationships are incredibly complicated and are equally as important to our everyday lives. We are shaped by the people we spend the most time around, which is why it is crucial to find friends and partners that bring out the best in us, make us the happiest we can be, and if possible, smell the same things.

Rajanigandha (Part 2)

Ishaan Goswami

Glossary

- British Raj – the name of British India
- Kurta – a loose Indian garment worn as a top
- Coolie – a colonial term for an Indian worker/servant
- Beta – Son/child
- Ma – Mother
- Hookah – a waterpipe used to smoke flavoured tobacco
- Babu/Babumoshai – Sir
- Pati – Husband
- Bondhu – Bengali word meaning friend
- Bouthan – An archaic Bengali word for an elder sister-in-law
- Angrezi – an Indian term referring to Britishers
- Sneho – Bengali word meaning affection
- Bhalobashi – Bengali word meaning love
- Prem – Bengali word meaning devoted love (towards God)
- Rajanigandha – the tuberose flower
- Devi Durga Ma – The Hindu Goddess of Braveness and Courage

1905 – Bengal Presidency, British India

The fine gold nib of the fountain pen snapped. With it, drops of a dark, ominous ink leaked onto a blank piece of paper. The pen lied on the regal oak desk, left to wither away. As the cloaked figure rose and left his seat, a man wearing a bright red ensemble of turban and kurta retrieved the soiled document.

The sombre brass flagpole proudly carrying the flag of the British Raj quietly reflected a shimmer from the pen, before it was taken away to be disposed of.

This ritual, brutally cold and calculated, was an order of death. The cloaked figure was a British judge, called to the heats of India to mediate in its legal affairs. The man in the kurta was a servant, or coolie of the state. The pen marked the issuing of a death sentence.

This tradition was implemented by the British, whose judges would break the nib of their pen after sentencing someone to the ultimate punishment. It was broken so that pen would not take another life.



As the judge stormed off regally, showing off colours of Cambridge and Lincoln Inn education, the man who mere moments ago was a defendant, was sentenced to death.

A Week Ago

“Gopal, beta. Are you leaving again so soon?” Muktakeshi coughed.

“Yes Ma, I need to go to Dacca to submit documentation to the court,”

“Can’t you send a courier to Dacca?”

“Nah, it has to be done by me, Ma.”

“Well... is Ashalata going with you?”

“Yes Ma, it’s better that she stays with me,”

“Oh, good God, she’s pregnant – why should she leave home?!”

“It’ll be better for her health if she travels,”

“Fine... send a telegram once you reach Dacca.”

Gopal reached down to touch his mother’s feet as a sign of respect, as she struggled to sit up from her cot. The news of Shyam’s arrest took a toll on her health, which caused her to be bed-ridden with a brutal cough and early signs of tuberculosis.

“Ma don’t smoke the hookah. It’ll only worsen your health.”

“Yes, yes...”

Ramadhir had already brought Gopal and Ashalata’s bags to the horse-drawn carriage of the Rajnaths. Their driver, Mohon was brushing the couple of esteemed Arabian horses Shyam bought in Aden. Ashalata was quietly sleeping in the carriage, with her long locks of black hair slightly obscuring her delicate kohl-lined eyes.

“Mohon bhai, lets go,”

“To Dacca, babumoshai?”

“Nah, it has to be done by me, Ma.”

“Well... is Ashalata going with you?”

“Yes Ma, it’s better that she stays with me,”

“Oh, good God, she’s pregnant – why should she leave home?!”

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“Mohon bhai, lets go,”

“To Dacca, babumoshai?”

“I need to pick up a friend.”

Sri Maharaj Nripendra Narayan Boulevard was named after the king of Koch Behar. It snaked through the old quarters of Koch Behar, tracing its crevices with limestone paths. There, standing by a bookseller stood a small man, with his bifocaled eyes staring into a leatherbound book who yelled:

“Bondhu! You’re finally here! Nomoshkar Bouthan,”

“Nomoshkar Bishnu babu, get in,”

Ashalata shifted over in her seat to open the door for her new compatriot. Bishnu Bankim Mukhopadhyay was an esteemed lawyer who had never lost a case. He was a few years older than Gopal when they were at Oxford, studying the intricacies of British common law. In the case of Rex vs. Shyam Behari Rajnath, B.B. Mukhopadhyay was listed as the defense attorney.

The trio rode along the lush green rice paddy fields of northern Bengal along the Brahmaputra River towards Dacca, the capital of the newly formed province of East Bengal.



They traveled along the well-worn roads that connected the agrarian Dacca to the industrialized Calcutta – the capital of the British Raj. After days of tiring travel, the first thing that greeted Gopal, Ashalata, and Bishnu was a protest. Men clad in white kurtas held signs that in Bengal read

“Mukti Dao Shyam, Angrezi! – Liberate Shyam, Britishers!”

Amongst independence activists, Shyam was a hero for his perceived revolutionary attempt to assassinate the viceroy.

“Bishnu babu, where is Shyam being kept?”

“Alipore Jail. We’ll be able to talk to him about his case there. But I can only come with one visitor,”

“Pati Ji, can I go?” Ashalata quietly inquired.

“Of course. It was your idea to help him out.”

The travel-fatigued Ashalata and Bishnu jumped off the carriage by the Alipore Jail. A khaki-clad guard called over the chief inspector of the prison – a middle aged British man with an air of disappointment in his placement in India.

“Who are you here to see?”

“Prisoner 1068. Shyam Behari Rajnath,”

“Who are you two, and what is your relation to the prisoner?”

“Bishnu Bankim Mukhopadhyay, Esquire. The lawyer of the prisoner.”

“Ashalata Manika Rajnath. The sister-in-law of the prisoner.”

“Fine, fine. Sign here, and a guard will escort you. You’ll have half an hour.”

An elderly guard armed with a wooden baton escorted Ashalata and Bishnu to the cell of Shyam. From behind bars, his once lush locks of hair were ragged, and his cheeks were sunken in.

“Bouthan! How are you?” Shyam embraced Ashalata with all his might. Ashalata responded by backing off immediately.

“Bouthan, my apologies! I didn’t mean to do that...”

“No, no... it was nothing you did.” She put her hand over her stomach and smiled at Shyam.

“The Rajnath family is expecting a new member?!”

“Haha, yes!”

“Listen, I’m sorry to disrupt this meeting, but I’m obliged to give you legal advice, Shyam babu.”

“Oh, of course... who are you?”

“Bishnu Bankim Mukhopadhyay... your brother asked me to help you.”



“Alright – tell me the case as it is.”

“Well, did you really attempt to assassinate the Viceroy?”

“What does it matter... I know what my fate will be.”

“I need to know so I can catch any loopholes, babu.”

“I did.”

Ashalata remained impassive, her delicate features not betraying any emotions. Bishnu scoffed and started writing in his notebook.

“Your motive?”

“Fellow revolutionaries at the newspaper I work for, Darshan, convinced me. We deserve to be free of Imperial rule, don’t we Bishnu babu? The Viceroy cut up Bengal into the Hindu West and Muslim East. He’s trying to pit us against each other!”

Bishnu glared at Shyam distastefully. Ashalata smiled – her brother-in-law’s devotion to whatever he put his heart into was always one of the charms that made her love him.

The guard knocked his wooden stick against the bars of the cell, marking the end of visiting time. Ashalata kissed Shyam goodbye on his cheek, while Bishnu folded his hands, praying that their case would go well.

“Shyam, why did you ask me to keep your secret?”

“I never expected to be caught...”

“Is Kavita real?”

“Yes.”

Ashalata smiled, and draped her pallu over her head, leaving the cramped cell back to the carriage.

Current Day

“WHAT THE HELL, BISHNU!”

“...I... I...”

“I, I, WHAT?”

“...the case was never winnable...”

Gopal mustered all his strength to slap Bishnu, his thin glasses flying off his face and breaking upon impact with the ground.

“Gopal babu... he tried to kill the viceroy...”

“But he didn’t kill him. That’s what matters. You didn’t even try!”

“I did what I could... the case was unwinnable, babu.”

Bishnu left the steps of the Calcutta High Court in a hurry. Gopal sat down, a mess of emotions. Ashalata was still in the courtroom, dazed.

“Babu Shyam Behari Rajnath, ei adalat aapna-ke viceroy curzon-er hatyar cheshtar janya doshi sabyosta karechhe.” A simple line in Bengali whipped through Ashalata’s head. In English, it declared solemnly “Babu Shyam Behari Rajnath, this court finds you guilty of the attempted assassination of Viceroy Curzon.”

Those were the lines that were uttered moments before that nib broke, gushing out ink – condemning a man to death.

Shyam still stood at the stand, dazed at his fate – solemn tears falling from his eyes.

“Bouthan...”

Ashalata gazed at him and got up, her navy silk sari stained with tears.

“I... I... will always love you Bouthan. I hope we meet again in another life.”

Ashalata broke down sobbing. The emptying courtroom refused to look at her unadulterated pain.

“Shyam... I will always love you too... if my child is a son, he’ll be named for you...”

Shyam smiled through his tears, and said:

“Take this letter, Bouthan.”

As he passed Ashalata a paper, he was handcuffed and taken away. Ashalata would be the last member of his family he’d see.

Bouthan,

I have always loved you more than words could know. My confidante, my friend, my muse. Our love transcends the affection of sneho, the vastness of bhalobashi, and the devotion of prem. But we never needed a title for our love. It is its own type of bond.

I pray this letter will not have to be given to you. But if it does...

You will need to take care of Ma and Bhai. You’re the strongest person I know – share your courage with them. You’re like Devi Durga Ma – fierce, protective, and nurturing.

And Kavita... oh Kavita. She is the daughter of Ananta Prasanna Ganguly of Calcutta. Be there for her too. If only I could tell her how much I love her, one last time...

Bouthan, this is so much to ask. But you are the only person I know can do this.

Rajanigandha bloom in the summer, and wither in winter. But they always come back the next summer.

I will always love you,

Shyam

BIRTHDAYS ARE WEIRD.

by CALLUM MCKINNON

Your birthday can simply be reduced down to the day your parents filed for a birth certificate for you. Yet, such a **big deal** is made out of it. A party, gifts, food, what have you. Part of birthdays is celebrating the fact that you exist and have touched the hearts of many, and part of it is the human desire to make others feel happy. But surprisingly, when I looked around, I found most people either love birthdays or **don’t really care**.



On the one hand, birthdays are a cool reminder that you have done a lot to get to where you are now. Even if it’s just being in the next grade in school, you still put in the effort to pass your tests, do your homework, and finish all your assignments on time. On that day, you get to really think about **all of your accomplishments** in the past year of your life. Birthdays can also be a good excuse for social interaction. Back in grade 3 or 4 we held big birthday parties at a structured venue, but as you get older those parties usually morph into small gatherings with friends. **During the COVID-19 era, it might even just be a group call.** No matter how you decide to celebrate, if you want social interaction, birthdays are a great excuse.

On the other hand, birthdays are a *less-than-subtle* reminder of social anxiety. All the attention can be really awkward, especially if you aren't used to it. Whether you're walking in the hallways, or scrolling through social media, all it takes is one person to mention it and you suddenly become a big deal. And you want to show your appreciation to everyone, but you find yourself saying "thank you so much!" so often that you sound like a broken record. Some people also believe that what they receive isn't deserved (*spoiler alert: it most likely is deserved!*), and they feel bad for taking anything. [Insert the "suffering from success" meme here.]

Birthdays are found everywhere, too. Quite a few modern holidays are really just elaborate birthday celebrations for a person, place, or thing. July 1st is Canada's birthday, Christmas is Jesus' birthday, and you might consider New Year's the birth of the new year. I guess humans just really like celebrating the beginning of things' existence.



Fun fact:

Jehovah's Witnesses don't celebrate most holidays that honour people other than Jesus.

Birthdays are great, but are not without their drawbacks. At the end of the day, there's no correct opinion to have, it's all in how you feel about them. But regardless, if your birthday is around this time of year, **happy birthday!**

A field guide to the Omicron variant

Isabella lo

INTRODUCTION

You've all heard of Omicron, the infamous new SARS-CoV-2 variant that has been causing so much trouble around the globe, **but how much do you really know?** Speculation is plenty, and statistics, terrifying. There is still much to learn about the Omicron variant, but we do know a few things - thankfully not just about infection rates, but also how to prevent the spread of this new virus.

HISTORY

The variant was first found in a COVID-19 patient in Botswana. Soon after that, it had spread to South Africa, quickly showing how contagious it was. Omicron overtook Delta's spot as the most common variant with ease. In under two months, it had spread to **171 countries**.



SPREAD

The new variant is **far more contagious** than any other we've seen. Omicron makes up 93% of all COVID-19 cases in Canada. 23,951 new cases were reported on January 20, but in comparison, on November 20 - before Omicron, only 728 new cases were reported.

SYMPTOMS

Those who have Omicron **most commonly** report these symptoms:

1. Runny nose
2. Headache
3. Fatigue
4. Sneezing
5. Sore throat

However, they are **less likely** to have these symptoms:

1. Loss of sense of taste or smell
2. Shortness of breath
3. Muscle aches
4. Fever

DAMAGE

Omicron isn't as severe as the other variants, but its true danger lies in its contagiousness. Even though it does not pose as much of a threat to the patient, there are too many people with the variant. In fact, the small percentage of Omicron patients who do end up hospitalized are still flooding healthcare systems and making the situation far worse.

PREVENTION

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 vaccine has not been as effective in stopping Omicron's spread due to its specific mutations. In fact, studies have shown that even four vaccine doses (a two-shot vaccine coupled with two booster shots) **will not guarantee protection against Omicron, though it does help.**

This doesn't mean that you shouldn't get your vaccine, though – it has been proven to **significantly lessen symptoms** and make it less likely to be hospitalized.

Here is a list of things that you can do to avoid catching or spreading Omicron and COVID-19 in general:

- Get your COVID-19 vaccine
 - Get a booster if you are eligible
- Keep a 2m (6ft) distance from other people
- Wear a mask
 - Try double-masking/wearing KN-95 masks
- Avoid large gatherings
 - Attend outdoor gatherings instead of indoor
 - Especially try to avoid gatherings with more than five people
 - Avoid crowded places if possible
- Keep things clean
 - Clean your hands
 - Use hand sanitizer
 - Wash your hands with soap and water
 - Disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched
 - Use detergent/soap and water to clean dirty surfaces before disinfecting
 - Use household disinfectant products to disinfect surfaces
- Don't touch your face with dirty hands
- Drink water
- Cover coughs and sneezes
 - When wearing a mask, if you cough or sneeze into your mask, put on a new one as soon as possible and wash your hands afterwards
 - Cover your mouth and nose with tissue when coughing or sneezing, throw tissues in the trash, then wash your hands with soap and water if you can, or use hand sanitizer

PROTECTING OTHERS

Along with the measures outlined in the "Prevention" section, you should also do this if you suspect you have COVID-19:

- Take a rapid antigen test
- Self-isolate
 - Try not to come into contact with other people
 - Stay at home
- Do not travel
- Monitor health and symptoms
- Contact your health care provider
 - Give prior notice before visiting their office
- Do not share items with others
- Rest
- Tell those you have been in contact with that you may have COVID-19
- If symptoms get severe, immediately seek emergency medical care
 - Severe symptoms include:
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Chest pain or pressure
 - Pale, gray, or blue skin or face
 - Extreme fatigue
 - Confusion

If you exhibit these symptoms, make sure to

- Call your health care provider for more information
- Call 911
- Go to the emergency room

WRAPPING UP

A pandemic is, in nature, something to be feared and concerned about. It means danger may be lurking anywhere, on any surface you touch, with anyone you speak with.

But with the right amount of caution, we can keep ourselves – and others – safe.

BIKASH

A short story by Ishaan Goswami

GLOSSARY

Bikash – the Bengali word for progress and development

Maimansingh – a city now known as Mymensingh in modern day Bangladesh

Sh./Smt. – the short forms of Shri and Shrimati, analogous to the English Mr. and Mrs.

Gosai – pronounced (Go-sai)

Krishna/Shyama – a God in the Hindu Pantheon

Sari – a traditional dress worn by Indian women

Maharajah – a title for a traditional Indian king/emperor

Zamindar – a landlord of immense power in British India

Fakir – a term referring to an Indian religious ascetic

Pati – an Indian term meaning husband

Vaishnav – a sect of Hinduism worshipping the god Vishnu, and his incarnations including Krishna

Angrezi – an Indian term referring to Britishers

Srimad Bhagwad Gita – a Hindu religious book containing a philosophical discourse by the God Krishna

Chapati – an Indian flatbread

Sobzi – the Bengali word for dishes made of vegetables

Cha – the Bengali word for tea

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM – 1900

London was the centre of the world. Where the vast expanses of an empire upon which the sun never set coalesced. Where laws were debated on colonies from Hong Kong to Barbados, and where Queen Victoria lived in royal grace. It was a sprawling giant, where smog stained the air grey, and elegant lamp posts lined curving boulevards. This was where all roads led, in 1900.

The impressive magnitude of London's expanses was awe-inspiring to a newcomer. He was tall, with broad shoulders and a mischievous smirk. Wearing a suit, and clearly still breaking into new leather shoes, with suitcases and bags in hand. With a thin set of glasses perched on his nose, and an intelligent aura surrounding him, he was excited for what London held for him. By his side was a girl two or so years younger than him, and a foot or so shorter. While her companion was awe-inspired, she was overwhelmed. The sky was never this colour at home, nor did it smell like raw sewage. Then it dawned on her the looks they were getting.

The juxtaposed duo was fresh off a boat that had just reached London from Calcutta after a month and a half long trip. They weren't aristocrats coming back to England to relieve themselves from the murderous Indian heat. They were Indians, or as many would soon call them, Hindoos. In the heat of early August, the duo looked out of place. Instead of a linen suit and boater, the man donned a worsted wool suit and bowler in hand. Instead of a corset lined day dress, she wore a cotton sari with simple embroidery.

To onlookers, they were a lost set of siblings, sent over to find their Maharajah father. They were husband and wife, at the age of 16 and 14. They were married early that year, prior to sailing to London.

The man looked down at his tickets that he had kept in his breast pocket:

*JUNE 15, 1900. CALCUTTA
LONDON VIA ADEN H.M.S. IMPERIA*

*SH. SARAT CHANDRA GOSAI
MAIMANSINGH, BENGAL PRESIDENCY*

*SMT. MAHIMA DEBI GOSAI
MAIMANSINGH, BENGAL PRESIDENCY*

“Heh, look Mahima, we’ve made it to London.”

“Jai Sri Krishna...” she chanted humbly.

“Excuse me good sir – could you help me with some directions?” Sarat yelled out to a well-dressed man waiting by the docks.

“Good day. What do you need?”

“I was wondering if you could direct me towards King’s College?”

“Cambridge or London?” he chuckled.
“London.”

“What business do you have there?”

“I’ve been admitted to study the law.”

“Oh, good day! I’ve had the pleasure to meet a Zamindar’s son!”
“I can assure you I’m no Zamindar’s son. My father was a priest,”

“Fascinating, I’ve met a Fakir then! Well, let’s get you and your... sister, I’d presume, to a carriage and I’ll send you off,”

“Fakir...? And sure, that would be a good idea. Your name sir? I’m Sarat Gosai, and this is my wife Mahima Debi,”

“Wife now? Well, it’s a pleasure. I’m Alexander Braxton-Halls, a barrister. My brother, William Braxton-Halls is a judge in India – Calcutta, I believe. I’m glad the government is supporting more colonials to study the law,”

Mahima, unable to understand much of what he said, looked down at her feet to avoid the glance of Braxton-Halls or her husband. Sarat was taken aback by his statement but followed Braxton-Halls to a carriage.

“Sir! Take these fine people to King’s College. Alright?”

The carriage driver gave a curt nod and helped load the couple’s bags onto the carriage.

“Gosay, if you ever need anything in this city, let someone at Grey’s Inn know you’re looking for Braxton-Halls Esquire. I’m glad to say that name means something in this city.”

“It’s Gosai and thank you.”

“Good day Gosay!”

Braxton-Halls gave a toothy grin to Sarat and nodded to Mahima, his well-maintained grey hair blowing slightly in the early August wind.

The carriage snaked through the promenades and boulevards at the heart of London towards King’s College. Mahima quietly observed how the precise streets echoed those she saw in Calcutta. Still, it was a far cry from the rural Bengal she was raised in. Lush green rice patty fields as far as the eye could see and playing in the dirt with other kids.

“Pati Ji, how long do we plan to live in London?”

“Hm, well, I’d assume seven years. Three for my degree, two for my certification, and two for a pupillage?”

“Seven years? In this city?”

“We’ll make this city our home. A home can be anywhere where we love and support each other.”

Mahima started to blush and moved her shawl to cover her face. Sarat clasped her hand in his and started to think about the circumstances that brought him here.

His family wasn’t rich – in fact they were living in pure poverty in Maimansingh. His father was a Vaishnav priest, with their familiar deity being Sri Shyama, or the Lord Krishna. He was well versed in Vedic scriptures and instilled that sense of intellectualism into a young Sarat. He was born in the Autumn of 1883 – his name meaning Autumn in the Bengali language. His intelligence gained the attention of local government officials, who through some bureaucratic string-pulling got him a scholarship. Not one to study at the local Presidency College in Calcutta – but to study and board at King’s College, London.

This was typically an honour reserved for the sons of Zamindars – or traditional landlords, and native princes and kings. Not for the sons of destitute priests. Sarat had the weight of the world on his shoulders, and he was excited to tackle it head-on.

The carriage pulled into King’s College. After paying the fare, Sarat and Mahima brought their bags to the Porter’s lodge.

“Good day, I’m enrolled as a student here at the College. I am here to settle in?”

“What is your name?”

“Mr. Sarat Chandra Gosai, enrolled in the LLB honours course.”

“Hm, we’ve had Sarats and Chandras here at the College before, but not Gosays?”

“GOSAI. NOT GOSAY,”

“GHOSAY?”

“UGH... JUST WRITE... GOSWAMI,”

“Go – swami – aha, that is much clearer.”

“Pati Ji, what are they saying. Why did you say Goswami?”

“These Angrezis don’t know how to say Gosai. So, I just changed our last name to Goswami.” He smirked as she processed her new last name.

“And you are staying with this woman?”

“Yes, my wife, Ms. Mahima M-A-H-I-M-A Devi D-E-V-I Goswami.”

“Alright. So, since you are brand new to this city, hell, country, I’ll send for the legal dean, the Honourable Mr. Joseph Pembroke. He’ll help you get settled in.”

“Thank you.”

The porter left his station, leaving behind his colleague who stared coldly at the couple.

“You have a new name too, Mahima.”

“Oh no, what did you change it to?”

“Sarojini,”

“Oh God...”

“HAH! No, no, I changed the Debi to Devi – the classic North Indian way of spelling it.”

“Good God Sarat. When will you stop with these jokes?” She smiled.

They were still both kids and had a childlike flow to their relationship. But they also understood what their relationship entailed. He had to protect her and provide for her and the family they’d eventually have. She had to support her husband as he studied to be a lawyer – an honour and opportunity no one in Maimansingh had before.

Mr. Pembroke, Dean of the law at King’s appeared from out of the doorway and said, “Mr. Goswami! What a pleasure to finally meet you. I had received a telegram from the Viceroy of India proudly telling me that the pride of Maimansingh will be joining us. I hope you know what an honour this is, and that you must do your countrymen proud.”

“Your honour Mr. Pembroke, of course, I truly appreciate everything you and the government has done to make this happen.”

Pembroke grinned and took Sarat by the shoulder. Mahima and the porter followed behind with the suitcases and bags. They went through a quad, towards apartments owned by the college.

“Our course starts in September. Up until then, you will be getting acclimated to Britain. You’ll be here for the foreseeable future. I hope it was made clear to you that you will not be able to travel back to India during breaks, as that is not within your scholarship stipulations.”

“Yes, that was made clear.”

“Good. Well, here is your apartment.”

Pembroke withdrew a key from his vest pocket and opened the apartment. It was a moderately sized room with a small bed, fireplace, desk, chest of drawers and small bookshelf.

“Does this seem appropriate, Mr. Goswami?”

“Yes, it will definitely make do. Thank you, your honour.”

“Of course. Now, if you have any concerns, let either your prefect, who lives across from you, or me know. Your prefect is Mr. Gregory Holmes, a tutor in medicinal sciences. Hall will be in an hour. It will be a good opportunity to meet some of your fellow college mates.”

“Hall?”

“Eh... dinner, Goswami. Don't worry, you'll acclimatize.”

Pembroke left, as the porter set all the bags and suitcases in the room. Mahima sat on the bed, slightly fatigued, as Sarat rumbled through his suitcase. On the hip-height bookshelf, he set up a bronze idol of the God Krishna, to pray to. Mahima joined him in quiet prayer as early evening sunlight streamed through the apartment window. Sarat took out his clothes and set them in the chest of drawers as Mahima did the same for hers. After an hour of unpacking and domesticating the barren room, they were done. On the desk, Sarat set some of the few books he brought from India. A treatise from Locke, a book of poetry by Yeats, and the Srimad Bhagwad Gita in Sanskrit and Bengali. His bookshelf held some of Mahima's saris.

“Mahima, we haven't eaten in ages. Let's go to hall. Look at those men, let's just follow them.”

“But we don't know what food they have, or how they make it.”

“Well, let's just hope we can ask!”

Sarat wiped his brow from sweat with a handkerchief and took Mahima by the arm. She locked up the apartment, and they followed the sporadic collection of people heading towards what he assumed was the hall. They were all clad in black gowns. He had seen similar gowns at the Dacca court when he visited as a youth. Sarat opened the heavy oak doors and gazed in wonder at the vaulted ceilings and splendor of the dining hall. Mahima grazed the hall and pointed towards a man in a corner. Sarat looked in that direction – it was another Indian. He would be a good person to learn the intricacies of King's from. They walked through the gowned crowd, with strange looks being thrown their way.

“Excuse me, good sir. My name is Sarat Goswami, I just arrived in London today. We were wondering if we could dine

with you?”

“Why, of course! My name is Mohammad Choudhury,” he extended a hand to Sarat.

Mahima visible cringed, and Sarat was hesitant. Muslims and Hindus don't mix. That was a mantra echoed through conservative Bengal.

“IT'S BECAUSE I'M MUSLIM, ISN'T IT?”

“No... no... it's just...”

“Dekhun amora hindustaniya amadera shoboi achhe.” Choudhury said in clear Bengali. Look, us Indians are all we have.

“Tumi ki Bangoli?” Mahima inquired are you a Bengali?

“Na, kintu ami Kalkata theke eshchi.” No, but I'm from Calcutta.

Sarat extended his hand to shake Choudhury's, while Mahima quietly said Dukhit, or sorry in Bengali.

“What are you studying here, Choudhury babu?”

“I'm a medic. I'm doing my training here. I'll be off to Calcutta next year. And you, Goswami?”
“I was given a scholarship to study law here.”

“Oh, you're the wunderkind from Maimansingh, aren't you? News travels fast here.”

“Heh, I'd guess so. Now, do you know how they cook the food here?”

“Er... no, but I could ask. Why?”

“We're vegetarians. We don't eat any meat nor meat products.”

“Ah, Brahmin?”
Mahima nodded with a graceful nod and thankful smile.

“Excuse me, busser!” Choudhury yelled, to which a suited busser came over.

“These are my friends, the Goswamis. Now, I was wondering if there is anything vegetarian on the menu for them?”

“Yes, sir. Mashed potatoes and some bread rolls sir.”

“Any tea?”

“Yes sir.”

“Alright, please get that for both of them.”

“Dhonyobad, Choudhury Babu” Thank you, Mr. Choudhury, Mahima and Sarat both said.

“Mahima, look, we'll be here for a while. So, I'll try and teach you some English. I'll translate some of my books into Bengali, and we can start from there.”

“That would be nice, Pati Ji. Thank you.” She blushed and covered her face even more than she currently was.

The busser came back with two plates of mashed potatoes and bread, with watery tea.

“Oh, Sarat babu, the first thing you should know, we wear gowns to class and hall. I'll take you out to get one tomorrow.”

“Alright, thank you.”

Sarat tore into the bread with his right hand, and scooped po-

tatoes with it. The scattered students of non-Indian extraction stared at the scene.

“Oh babu, you need to use the fork and knife. This isn't chapati and sobzi.”

Choudhury taught Sarat and Mahima how to use these foreign utensils. It wasn't intuitive to the couple that had spent their entire life eating with their hands off banana leaves.

“This will take some getting used to, Babu, but it'll be your life for the foreseeable future.”

“Well, we will make it work.”

“Well, Pati Ji, we should probably find Cha that doesn't taste like water.”

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Sarat Chandra Goswami (Gosai) Esq., the protagonist of this story was my great-grandfather.

Born in the 1880s to a poor Brahmin family in Mymensingh, British India, he used his intellect and determination to achieve a prestigious scholarship from the British government to study law in the United Kingdom.

It was here he changed the family name to Goswami.

Once he returned to Mymensingh, he set up a legal practice as a criminal barrister. He was the first barrister of the Mymensingh district, and soon gained eminence as a brilliant and persuasive advocate.

Despite the rigid social structures of 20th century Bengal, my great-grandfather provided scholarships, board, and free daily meals to all, regardless of their caste, creed, or religion. My great-grandfather and his wife, Mahima Devi, had seven children, of which my grandfather was the second child. He made sure that all five of his sons and his daughters attained an education, a rarity in Bengal.

He passed away in the 1930s, working on legal cases till his last breath.



Lights, Camera, **ACTION!**

By Leela Bhide

Every year, the Upper School comes together to watch the awaited Senior Production, and although (to the audience) it may seem as if everything happens effortlessly, in actuality, this is an undertaking that requires lots of hard work, dedication and time to reach the final show, which is months in the making. There are so many moving parts involved that bring everything together, and so many people that you may not see, but who work tirelessly backstage, to make the final production seamless. There are four Backstage Crews: Costumes, Hair & Makeup, Sets & Props, and Tech. The Costumes Crew is in charge of designing and fitting costumes for the actors. The Hair and Makeup Crew is in charge of designing and executing hairdos and makeup looks for the actors, as well as getting the actors ready to go on stage. If you're part of the Sets & Props Crew, your responsibilities include building and painting sets, organizing and maintaining the green room, finding/making props, and organizing the props backstage. The Tech Crew works in the tech booth and is in charge of stage lighting, sound effects, music, and streaming. The Publicity Crew works together to promote the play, through posters or by word, create the playbill, and order sweatshirts for

everyone involved in the production. Furthermore, there are directors, who interact with the actors and tell them where to stand and instruct them on how to perform certain parts. Next, the stage managers are in charge of keeping the attendance and making notes during the rehearsal. They also have the final script with all of the cues. And of course, who could forget the actors, who tell the story and bring the play to life? Lastly, this wouldn't be possible without Mr. Clark, who oversees everything. The fulfillment of these roles results in a final product of the Senior Production. This year, the play is called *Pack of Lies*, and it is about a suburban housewife in 1960s England. She discovers that her neighbours are spies for the Soviet Union and that her home has become a secret surveillance post for the British government officials out to trap the Russians. Because of the uncertainty COVID-19 brings, there are no solid plans as to what the production will look like, but the crew plans on doing the play live on stage and recording it. Everyone involved is putting in hours and hours of work into *Pack of Lies*, so that we as an audience can sit back, relax, and enjoy the show. As they say in showbiz, break a leg!

Young By Naomi Low

Knocking at my door last night,
I had but one request.
Granted only at first light,
Before I'm put to rest.

Take me back to the weeping tree,
Where I'll find peace at last,
There my youth comes back to me,
Remembering the past.

The tune comes first and after dark,
When the sparks emerge,
A dulcet voice; one like a lark,
Makes past and present converge.

Falling from a twinkling star,
No note left unsung,
Lullabies ease painful scars,
From when I was still young.

I wish I knew that these pure moments,
Were worth their weight in gold,
Now age stands tall, a grim opponent,
Warning me I'm getting old.

“How did it get so late so soon?” – Dr. Seuss

OG CAPSTONE

By Sunil Wijesundera

Two years ago, I sat down, opened my surface, and selected AP Capstone on my course selection. It was, at the time, a distinctly mysterious decision; I didn't really know anything about the course, my parents really didn't know anything about the course – in fact, AP Capstone was a mystery to the entire school. What I gleaned from course selection night was that it would be a research journey, interdisciplinary, and I would get to study under none other than Mr. Osborne (the Capstone legend himself). Yet, there I was, pressing confirm on a course calendar that would house AP Capstone in not only Grade 11, but also Grade 12.

As I begin my last semester of high school, I believe that decision to click that confirm button marked a pivotal point in my academic journey. AP Capstone has proven to fulfill those three things I had anticipated two years ago, while also offering so much more: it was an incredible journey, connected many academic disciplines that have made up my education and, of course, gave me the opportunity to grow alongside the fantastic OG Capstoners.

What makes AP Capstone special?

This question can be answered simply, with one word: growth. Growth as thinkers, debaters, students, and finally as people. But of course, Capstone is more complex than one word. AP Capstone's two-year curriculum is split into AP Seminar and

AP Research, two “separate” courses. AP Seminar, the Grade 11 half, focuses on discussion and argumentation. What I found unique about AP Seminar was the significance it places on importance over impressiveness. Many students going through high school, including myself, will arrive at the premature conclusion that using the biggest words and most complex sentence structures will give them the highest chance of success. This philosophy certainly is responsible for the significant level of nonsense that finds itself in high school assignments, essays, and projects. Students think, “if it sounds good, it must BE good...right?”

No.

At least that is what AP Seminar said to us OG Capstoners. It didn't matter how good the words were, or how smooth the sentences flowed. AP Seminar, without mercy, punished “B.S.” Many of us came into the course with the idea that adding big words was like pouring maple syrup on pancakes. We quite quickly found that, no, adding big words is more like dripping vinegar – and we were corroding our ideas with acidic words.

Swiftly, the same old and scripted Harkness discussions evolved into ones focused on academic debate. Assignments started centering around rhetoric, and while the words became smaller, they doubled in significance. It was refreshing – no longer did peer editors have to wade through wordy swamps.

What we did not know at the time was how well AP Seminar was preparing us for AP Research, the second part of the Capstone program. AP Research is the single best academic opportunity offered at BVG. You can research anything. Anything. Sports, history, medicine, analytics – really anything. I believe that the freedom we were given in pursuing what we wanted in AP Research allowed for us to pursue a discipline that we would find interesting. It is through this keen sense of interest, that is often not so present in high school, that one can truly grow.

Of course, my words here do not really do AP Capstone any justice. As it has taught me, it is not about the words, it is about the actual content. In this vein of thinking, I implore you (if you are in grade 9 or 10) to experience AP Capstone in its entirety.

As Mr. Osborne would say, “Instagram is not Tinder.” Don't use Instagram as your love advice for AP Capstone. Use this article. Press that confirm button on AP Capstone.



AP Capstone™

The Best Years of Our Lives

A reflection on growing up in a pandemic, with Zara

Throughout our childhoods, we had always been told how great our adolescent years will be. There were pictures of our parents, stories from our grandparents, and thousands of movies all made on the same topic: life as a teenager. As a child with a big imagination, I had dreamed of what it would be like. I recalled old movies and TV shows and pictured that our experience would be just the same as theirs. Friends would go to the mall after school, students would attend school dances and go on class trips together. We had always been told that these years would be the best of our lives.

Given our current circumstances, life as a teenager has been nothing like the movies. Malls are closed, there are no such things as “dances” or “trips”, and we have no clue what our teachers look like.

As a generation, we have learned to adapt to these changes, though our method of doing so was not the most effective one to choose. We resorted to locking ourselves in our rooms and tuning

We quickly began worrying about all the time we were missing that could have been spent with friends.

With very few years left in grade school, we want to spend as much time with our friends as possible before we go our separate ways. However, it became evident that we would not be granted as much time as we all expected.

As a 13-year-old in the Prep School, I was thrilled at the news of getting an “extended March break.” We were all so excited to get some extra time off before heading back to school. Now, at almost 16 years old, I realize how many things I would have done differently that year, had I known what was coming. I would watch more movies in theatres, go to all the restaurants and malls I could, and most importantly, I would spend every second I could with my friends. With restrictions constantly changing and new variants erupting, we can never be sure of when we will meet up again.

Though I have only talked about life as a teen, this pandemic has altered everybody’s life, no matter what age group they are in. We missed important experiences and lost a lot of time stuck in our homes. We never noticed who and what we had, until we were forced away from them. Our generation was deprived of all the things we had heard and seen of high school years, and we can only hope that one day we will get a chance to live through it and see it for ourselves.



Whisperer 5: The Order of the Fasolada

By the Whisperer

“This is absolute garbage. The newspaper needs to stop running this!”

-Neil Gamain, award-winning Author

“What? I thought I cancelled this series! How is this still getting published?!”

-Constantine Vrachas Matthaaios, head of the Writer’s Block

“Better a shattered piece of coal than the Whisperer”

-Confucius

“I have your child in an undisclosed location.”

-the editor I had kidnapped

“I don’t care”

-me

Before we start: Special thanks to Eyes Love You, Sue Zann, and Justin Time for letting me take out life insurance for you by letting me fake your deaths.



The money I collected has really helped. Also you might want to close the tax haven in Tongo; the FBI are getting suspicious.

Let us begin, my Nosies.

As i left the couch in the ceiling i felt a sudden urge. What was it? Was it love was it hate or was it desire? Then looking at my ear I realised i was just Hungary(from the movie mulan). So i decided to go to the cafeteria. As i walked there i noticed something was wrong. The floor will only have 9 pigs underneath it. The only reason there would be 9 pigs is if the t-rex named alan smith had not jumped on them. This would mean he was reading the book 1985. And if you add all the numbers of 1985 you get 23 and adding up those get 5. Now five is a surprising number as it is even and a prime number. This means that 5 can be made up of only 1 and 5. This makes 15. Now fifteen can make a 30 and a 60. Because 30 is half of 60 it makes $\frac{1}{2}$ of 60 but combining this with 60 makes 60.1\2 but flipping the number order gets 1\2.06 but because the zero is in the middle it gets squished making 26. Then taking the 2 we can divide the 26 by 2 and minus it by 6 as 2 as these make it up giving us 7. Then taking that we can take the 60 from before and minus 7 from it getting 53. Then taking this article is being published on 2003 we get the number 3. Turning this to chemicals we get fe,n,i,Li or fenili. Come out miss fenili i said. I know you are there. Out popped miss fenili “drats how did you find me” “i used singing” i said with a smile. Then she disappeared. Running out of time i ran to the cafeteria to eat the φασολαδα. It was green as usual but something was off. As i looked more into it i noticed it was spelt wrong. It was ΘΑΛΥΛΑΞΙΒΛΔ. This lead to great concern as only a mad man would spell it wrong. Knowing this i needed answers. So i jumped into the trash to teleport to raton(the psychic vole) under the deck. There i watch as he made his food jenga. The conversation went as followed

“Hfceaidsdgvb iearsdb”

“Oh i never thought of that”—raton

“Chadgvesadkfc”

“Well for 12 year”

“Frbdasilkfvbcerikasfdbjgvl ktdf”

“On never”

And with that i knew what i had to do. But what was wrong. Just then i saw the food jenga and i asked what he was doing with that. He said that he was re-

organizing his 45 years of food whe had collected in numerical order based on mouse coolness. The mouse coolness as he had told me 12 years before had come from one place. The teacher lounge in the health offace. I thanked raton and ran there.

I ran to the teachers lounge and in it I saw a news paper from north korea that read “We have also gotten some news about the real koreas basketball team which has won another NFL, Stanley Cup, Indy-500 and NBA championship, adding to its already impressive amount of 11,000 trophies. We have also seen when they fought off the Americans for 1 year in 2013 without needing to take a drink or even eat, only stopping once to dig up an archaeological find of a dragon which the evil Americans tried to destroy” but below that was a piece of paper that said “it’s where it is.” I knew I had to go the changeroom with the soundproof doors because soundproof is a compound word with the words sound and proof and what is soundproof? A soundproof door. Also the teachers use it, so there must be a connection. I suspect it’s the USB-A but it could be USB-C. Anyways, I made my way through the halls and stopped in front of the changeroom. I lifted my hand to the handle, but when I touched it, I felt a burning sensation in my hand. I shook it out and tried again. I grabbed the handle and yanked it.

A fire ripped across my vision. An invisible hand shot out from the door and grabbed my heart and twisted, and I lurched forward. I hit my head on the door and stumbled, and I could feel a fog descend upon my mind like a vicious banshee, eager to pounce upon and gorge itself on my ripe intellect, and then I screamed as my legs twisted and gave out underneath me and I welcomed it because I could no longer feel my legs and therefore their pain, and suddenly I was boosted into the changeroom and —

The room was not a changeroom.

In the small but not uncomfortable space, a low fire burned before a delicately carved stone plinth. As I stepped closer, the fire bloomed and warm light spread across the wall, revealing intricate carvings inlaid in the stone. Amorphous beings with wings — angels, I realized later — flowed across the stone sky, shedding rivers of tears above an ocean racked with driftwood. In the corner, tiny from this perspective, an ark sailed the waves between two treetops.

Something about this place spoke of hushed reverence, of sacred-ness; I could almost hear the weeping of the angels and the low, constant hymnal chant that this place must have hosted in the past. I almost knelt on the floor, so powerful the aura of worship was, but I remembered my purpose: uncover the truth. I pulled Geraldo (a rock) out of my pocket and placed him upon the plinth, and then I spoke the words I knew to be truest, for I knew this place demanded truth.

“Vegetables the best, trans fats bad.”

Two things happened then.

First, I felt an incredible weight lift from my shoulders, as if the angels in the carvings had actually borne my weight aloft and carried it away.

Second, the angels did move. A terrible grinding and a clunk-clunk-clunk from behind the wall, and the carvings slithered across the wall, revealing a door set into the stone. With astonishment, I picked up Geraldo and shoved him in my pocket, then pushed through the door into the darkness.

A series of stairs retreated into what I could only call an abyss. Each step was made of a different material. One stone, the next wood, then marble, glass, ice, ivory, amber, jade, slate, crystal, on and on into infinity. I descended, feeling the different texture of each step in my shoes. At the bottom, I had to take stock of where I was, because brushing my knees was grass. Whatever the grass seemed to imply, I knew I couldn’t be outside, so I forded my way through the clearing, and suddenly, as if placed there by a giant hand, a pyramid rose before me:

A giant stepped ziggurat with five monolithic levels hunkered on a grassy plain. The first image that came to my mind was that of the Inca pyramids in Peru, but as my eyes adjusted to the sudden brightness, I saw moss-covered statues guarding the perimeter of each level. There were corns holding tridents, loaves of bread with shields, and I knew where I was now:

The Food Pyramid.

What should I do? I thought the Food Pyramid was just a myth, one the gym teachers made up to scare us into eating vegetables. But proof lay before my very eyes, in all its malevolent, ancient glory. As I was standing in the grass, trying to figure out what to do, six hooded figures appeared in the entryway in the center of the nearest side of the

ziggurat. They strode out in a line like ants, following the leader who was swinging a censer and chanting in loud tones. They were coming in my direction, and the grass only afforded me so much cover for so long. Left with no choice, I ran to the Pyramid and slipped through the entrance the acolytes had just came through.

Inside, a heavy mist of canola oil hung in the air, making it hard to breathe or see. Through the fog, I was able to make out that I was in an audience hall of some sort. Massive square columns receded into a fog, and fires danced in braziers set in regular intervals across the floor. I looked down, and I saw that sand shifted in wavy dunes as if blown by the wind, even though I was indoors. A large throne faced the entrance, and carved on it in powerful letters was one word: Dæskhider. A shudder ran down my back.

Footsteps echoed from my left, reminding me that I was not alone, and I quickly made my way to the right, half-feeling, half-seeing my way through the fog. I came upon a stairway leading up and ascended. I found myself in a rectangular, dimly lit room with a sarcophagus lying at one end. Three lines were engraved in the sandstone floor, radiating from the center of the sarcophagus. With apprehension, I approached it. Each step towards it seemed harder than the last; malevolence seemed to emanate in waves from the sarcophagus, and again I saw that word, carved on the long end: Dæskhider.

“Do you really think it’ll come to war?” I dove behind the sarcophagus and hid there, shaking.

“There’s no other solution,” came another voice. From behind my hiding spot, I could see two hooded figures in conversation at the far end of the room. The taller one motioned towards the sarcophagus. “He is not going to return, and if He didn’t give up the soul when he left us, well...” he let the sentence hang in the air, clearly waiting for the short one to make the connection herself.

“But Brother, there hasn’t been a war in centuries, and we’ve been through worse. Why now?”

The Brother put his hands together. “When the Ancient One departed, he left no clear successor. Meighen’s grip on the other Houses is weakening, Sister, and how can we keep our power if we don’t have a leader? The Dæskhider left us. We must take action now, or else the other Houses will act upon us first.”

The Sister turned away from the Brother to face the sarcophagus. I shrank behind my spot, hoping they wouldn’t see me. “Is there no chance He’ll return, Brother?” she said. “He had powers none of us could have dreamed of. He fought off two alligators when he was born, using nothing but the power of the stock market.” The Brother shook his head ruefully. “The legends are true, Sister, but He will not help us now.”

“He beat up a man using the power of 50’s slang,” the Sister said, running her hand

wistfully over the top of the sarcophagus. “I remember when the Professor told us how He started the Trojan War because He thought it would be a good topic to talk about in future history classes.”

The Brother chuckled. “Yes, remember when he killed Chronos?”

“And Typhon, too.”

The Brother nodded. “All twelve Labors in one day, Sister, can you really believe that?”

“I do, I do!” she said, nodding vigorously.

“The Egyptians built Him the Pyramids; they thought He was Ra the sun god.”

“He wasn’t the sun god, He was the sun.”

“Oh, He was so prolific...” the Brother said with a sigh. “He coined the term Viva la France.”

“He peer edited the Declaration of Independence!” the Sister almost giggled.

“Oh, He was something...” said the Brother, almost swooning.

“He was. Oh, I wish Mr. Ch—” The Brother’s demeanor changed instantly. He spun around and slapped the Sister’s hand away from the Sarcophagus, and grabbed her wrist. “You must never—never—speak His name, Sister,” he said, his voice having lost all trace of the adoration from earlier. It was pure steel now.

“Forgive me, forgive me,” the Sister said, trembling ever so slightly.

Just as the Brother was about to continue speaking, a powerful moan rose up from the floor below, and the Brother and Sister stiffened. Haunting waves of hymnal drifted up through the stone, and I shuddered behind my hiding spot.

“Prayer time,” the Brother said quietly, penitently. The Sister just nodded, and they left down the stairs.

I leaned back against the sarcophagus and started turning over what I heard in my head. Meighen has been in control of the Houses for centuries, and was now without a leader, and the Brother had implied that war was coming. But with who? And why? This was a strange discovery indeed.

What does this all come to, Geraldo? I thought, placing my hand over my pocket. I would need time to puzzle it all out. I peeked out from behind the sarcophagus, and exited the way I came. Back in the endless, foggy entrance hall, I wandered around, feeling the sand swirl beneath my feet. In the hazy firelight, I could just make out a singular ladder suspended above the ground in the distance. As I approached, it didn't seem to grow any larger until I was standing right before it. Strange. I hooked my foot in the bottom rung and started climbing. After a minute or so the world around me faded into the yellowy fog and all I could see were the rungs before me. I looked down to see if I could still see the floor, but—I let out a startled gasp—the rungs I had once climbed were gone. The Food Pyramid wanted me up, it seemed. And I was wary, because the whole force that radiated from the ziggurat was entirely malevolent, as if it wished nothing but ill will upon those who entered. Still I had no choice, and I climbed.

I reached the top in ten minutes, my arms aching and my knees throbbing. I pulled myself up onto the sandy floor and looked around. I was in a room not unlike the change-room by which I had entered. A fire burned low in the center, and a faded mural covered the opposite wall. But instead of serene, sorrowful angels, this was a scene of vengeance and might. A god leaned out from a cloud, his face twisted in fury, his white eyebrows snarled and his eyes pure portals into a world of wrath. Bolts of lightning leapt from his fingers onto a terraced tower with its top in the heavens. The top of the tower had been completely blown off, and what remained listed severely to one side, as if cowering in fear.

I bent closer to examine the peeling paint, and when I met the god's eyes, I recoiled as if struck by a physical blow, so strong was the power of its anger, even rendered in paint. And what was worse, was that I recognized that face. That god. The circles drawn beneath his eyes, his faint short beard—I knew it somehow. But that couldn't be possible, because this painting was clearly ancient, but that would mean that this being was millennia old and I had crossed paths with it before, meaning that...

Before I could finish my thought, a hollow chime sounded below me, in the distance. It was time to leave. My legs gave way and I collapsed on the floor; Geraldo clattered to the sand as my palm unfurled. My head lolled to one side and the last thing I saw, swimming in my vision, was the furious face of that familiar god, and then all was black.

The fugue my mind was in seemed to recede, like a wave falling back from the beach, and I was in the trash. I had been here before. How did I know? I had previously been in this location, once in the past before this moment in time and also at this same locale. Thousands of copies of Trump magazine lay on

the floor, and that confirmed it. I was in the trash world. Magazines flitted through the sky like oversized insects, and ash rained gently from the sky. It was kind of like the movie Robocop Buddha, where Buddha goes into the future and learns about the megatrons and with the help of his friends Ron Weasley and Geronimo stilton they defeat megatron and save princess peach played by danny devito. O TRASH, I said, TAKE ME WHERE I WONT TO GO. Then the magazines came together and formed one giant bird, and I stepped on Trump's face and we flew through the ashy sky. After what seemed like 60 seconds, but what must have been only a minute, we arrived at the turf. But something was off. I couldn't place it. There was nothing obviously out of the ordinary, except for the giant mountain sitting right where it used to be. I was lowered down like a pillowcase being submitted for an airport security eye exam, and I set off to explore the mountain. Maybe then I'd figure out what was different.

I walked around the mountain $\Delta\Sigma\omega.3$ times, but there was nothing unusual about it. Since there was nothing interesting around the mountain, I decided that whatever was different must be at the top. Clouds concealed the mountain tip and anything else that might be up there. But realizing I had no other option I began to climb the mountain.

I climbed and climbed and climbed and climbed and also climbed but i still climbed and i think i forgot to mention that i climbed but i climbed too for what felt like an hour, but when I checked my watch it had only been four billion eight hundred fifteen million one hundred sixty two thousand three hundred and forty two seconds. I wished the cloud of goats named Jeff would come here and help me up the mountain. Jeff come to me, I said. Nothing happened. They had been bribed by Ms. Fenili, I knew it. A long while later, I reached the cloud canopy surrounding the mountain tip. I climbed through. They reminded me of cotton candy. I tried to take a bite out of one, but it just tasted like Asian Legend's Sauteed BEEF with Szechuan Sauce. Select your store. Then I crawled out of the clouds and was standing at the top of the mountain. A great building rose before me. A glorious riot of chestnut wood and grand buttresses soared across the sky, and flags fluttered from spindly towers in the cold wind. I walked up to the entrance and pushed open the door. Rows of benches ran the length of the cathedral, stopping at an altar in the distance. A large rose window of stained glass hung above

the altar, with five smaller panes surrounding it, like the spear-rays of the sun. One of the smaller panes was green, one was red, one purple, and one blue. The fifth pane did not have a colour. It had the letter "M" instead. And on it was a beard. Then i had a revelation: this building was a church-- it was the church of Mr. Winson's Beard™️.

Suddenly, the sky split open: a clap of thunder shook the church and a bright light flared in front of the window. When I came to my senses, I saw a figure had appeared in front of the altar.

"I am Mr. DesLauriers!" its thunderous voice resounded in the cavernous cathedral. "I am the ruler of the mountain and the church of the Beard!"

"Help me," I said, "I don't know what to do next."

"I cannot help you," said Mr. DesLauriers, "But It can."

He snapped his fingers and another bright light lit up the room. Mr. Winson's Beard™️ appeared. The world went silent. I could feel the entire world quiet and come to hear, to listen to the wisdom of the Beard™️. The Beard™️ turned to me.

"I am God, and I know what you should do next," It said.

"Go to Sysco and there you shall see what you need to do there."

Again came another flash of light and Mr. DesLauriers and Mr. Winson's Beard™️ disappeared. I now knew what I had to do. I had to go to Sysco.

As i flew down from the church of mr winson i wondered how i would get to sysco hq. I only knew that the only way to get in was an internship. But internships were only made by gold and coal and there was a coal shortage. But then i remembered there was coal in the gym. Why else would they have pink lines? Because they used the coal to make the pink lines. Rushing from the t r f i was stomped in the parking lot as two big men in black jackets and sunglasses stoped me. They looked to be 15 each and were driving trucks that said "ycoss icecream). "What do you want" i asked geogorgianly. "We want to give you a deal you can't not eat" they said in perfect greek accents. As they opened up the doors of their van they sad "we have candy why don't

you come for a ride with us". "Ha, i said, "stranger unsafety" "well we have free v-bucks" "Get me in that van!" i yelled, rushing and jumping in. as soon as i jumped in the doors turned black and disappeared leaving a shark named merdle to block my exit. Then without a warning the truck started to move. *Βοστα κεφαρνικια*. As i was stuck in the dark i could only think of the things i could buy with the v-bucks. Maybe a new head or the movie day at the living museum with brad pit, red johnhanson, emma watt and tim crouse. But then suddenly the doors opened and a bag was put over my head. As i was pushed pulled and carried i heard factory noises and whispers. The only words i could make out were "geraph , beer, yut, kurll" but then the bag was taken off and i was there.

Standing in front of me was two brass doors with one sign on it which read sysco father. S the two thugs on either end of me opened the doors i gasped as i saw a old man type sitting in a hippo skin chair. The room was filled with other curious thinks like a old type cabinet and a riffle with a ballon end. As the thugs tied me to a chair in the middle of the room he spoke with again a good greek accent "you come to me on the day of my spoons wedding the freddy the fork"

"I am sorry you knifness but as you can see i had no other choice"

"Oh yea that is because i bright you here, Σρεκ"

"Why i asked, why would you do that"

"Because he demands it and so it must be done"

"Who is he"

"He is the one who makes the medal"

"Who makes te medal"

"He does"

"Who is he"

“He is the one who makes the medal”

“Who makes te medal”

“He does”

“Who is he”

“He is the one who makes the medal”

“Who makes te medal”

“He does”

“Who is he”

“He is the one who makes the medal”

“Who makes te medal”

“He does”

“Well what are youing to do with me”

“This”

He said as he pushed a button the floor moved and left a hole fullled with spoons”no not the spoons i yelled”. I personally never liked spones but worse they were the deadliest of all the utentials. With one spoo they could club you and scoop out your toes. But with pit full of them i had no escape from the black turdle of death. “Wait i yelled is there nothing i can do to es-cape”, we he said there is one thing”yes what is it” well as tradition says you must recite the sysco mission statement. As i turned my memory back and forth for the statement the sysco head it a button and i made my slow de-cent into the spoons. But then i said Sysco is the global leader in selling, marketing and distributing food and non-food products to restaurants, healthcare and educational facilities lodging establishments and other customers around the world. Wrong he said you forgot a comma. Then i felt the machine let go. Not thinking i dived straight down but inseed of the black turdle of death comming i awoke in a worse place: the crescent school

campus. As i looked around i saw all their flaws “ha i said crescent does not have the quality learning that bayviewglen has or the cool mascot. “ looking the other way i saw the inferior sport fields and the not as eco friendly school campas. Below me i saw the bad dirt “:ha i said your dirt is bad for growing carrots because it is low in nitrogen”. But then looking to my back i saw the worst of my fears. Five flags flapped on poles in the front. Four were purple, green, red, and blue, and the last one had a giant M on its face. A Meighen flag. Meighen was at Crescent; how much influence did Meighen have? And if Meighen wasn’t just limited to Bayview Glen... how far did this go?

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