

The Sensationalist: #12

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“Are you having phun?”



Cover By Avery Cauchon

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The Pickle Prince and the Tomato Tyrant

(Part 1)

Henry Levitt



Once upon a time in the Kosher Dill Province of the Hamburger Kingdom lived a young Pickle Prince. Now approaching marrying age, the Pickle Prince desired to venture outside his province for the first time and explore the vast lands of the Hamburger Kingdom.

So, the prince went before his father, the legendary Pickle Lord, and made his request: "Father, my entire life I have lived within the confines of the Kosher Dill Province--I desire to see the world. As I am fully pickled, and soon ready to marry, I am here to ask your permission to travel across the kingdom to look for a suitable wife." The Pickle Lord's mouth twisted into a frown as he listened to the Pickle Prince's request. For the lord had already arranged his son's marriage to the Gherkin Princess from the neighboring province.

"Son," the great pickle responded, "We have known since before you were picked off the vine that you are to marry the Gherkin Princess. You may not leave the province until after the union is blessed by the Cucumber Clergy."

The now despondent prince lowered his head and trudged out of the throne hall defeated. He climbed the steps to his chamber trying his hardest to stifle the sobs that were welling up inside his chest. Once in his room he collapsed on his bed and released the most pitiful wails you have ever heard. "I'm trapped here forever!" cried the Pickle Prince, "I will never find true love!"

Some time passed and there was a cautious knock on the door. Without waiting for a response, the door cracked open and revealed a bulbous, translucent shape...

"Mr Onion!" the prince exclaimed. "I've never been so happy to see you." The allium shuffled into the room and hopped on the edge of

the bed. The pickle explained his dilemma to his squire and closest friend.

After hearing about the dismal state of affairs, Mr. Onion, with his usual mischief, began scheming an escape plan for the two. They spent hours formulating a foolproof plot and constructing elaborate disguises. At midnight the two would meet at the stable just outside the castle and set off on their adventure. Mr. Onion left Pickle Prince's chamber to ready his own disguise.

The long hours of the night stretched on and on for the Pickle Prince as he eagerly awaited the clock to strike half past the 11th hour. As the time for escape drew nearer, the prince began to grow anxious. He began to doubt whether he and Mr. Onion were capable of pulling off such a plan and fleeing the Province without being caught. Finally the hour arrived and he quickly donned the beggar's rags and slipped out of the castle using the secret shute.

Heart pounding, the Pickle Prince hopped from shadow to shadow to evade the guards. Soon, the only obstacle standing in his way was the grand gates. The prince waited for what felt like an eternity. He almost gave up hope when he heard the grinding of metal on stone. The guards were opening the gates for the night merchant to deliver fresh vinegar for the Pickle Lord's morning bath. At once the young pickle slipped out and was almost free...

Mr. Onion, dressed as a barber complete with an exquisite (and unfortunately fake) mustache, had been waiting for the prince when the false beggar sauntered in. "Where were you?" exclaimed the Onion, "I was worried the guards found you out!"

"Nevermind that now Mr. Onion, we must mount our steeds and get out of this god-forsaken

province.” With that, the two loaded their packs onto their horses and were off.

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It was not until noon the next day that the Pickle Lord found his son’s farewell note, and by then, the Pickle Prince and Mr. Onion were already nearing the extremities of the Kosher Dill Province. At once, the Lord sent his fastest riders to scour the entire area--but luckily, the duo had already been prepared.

“Your Pickleness, we are nearing the Asparagus Forest,” said Mr. Onion “We are almost safe from the Pickle Lord’s reach.” After riding a few more miles, the pair came unto a vast, dark forest. Enormous stalks of asparagus stretched into the sky and blotted out the sun from underneath the canopy. The sight made the Pickle Prince uneasy, but he knew it was the only place that his father’s riders would not dare search. The two tried to stifle their fears and forget about the legends of the infamous forest, for they knew that continuing forth was their only option.

The pair rode into the forest and continued until they became tired; it is impossible to tell the time of the day from within the forest. On they trudged for what must have been days. They kept moving until the rations grew scarce as their hope.

“We’ll never make it out of here, Mr. Onion,” lamented the prince.

Mr Onion replied equally distraught, “we cannot go much longer at this rate. I miss the sun, I miss home!”

Pickle Prince rallied his spirits and declared, “Enough of this self-pity nonsense! We left home with a purpose and I will die before giving up!” With that, the two mounted their horses and continued onwards with a newfound vigor. Lo and behold, the Asparagus Forest was nearing its end. The bristles began to thin yet the forest did not brighten.

Finally Mr. Onion saw it. “The stars!” he said in a faraway, awestruck tone. The pickle and onion walked a few more steps until the night sky opened up over them. The Pickle Prince had never seen such beauty; an uncountable number of

scintillating dots were strewn over the midnight canvas. Overwhelmed with joy, Mr. Onion hopped off his horse and frolicked through flower fields following footpaths falling beneath the formidable firmament. It only seemed fitting to the Pickle Prince that they make camp here and bask all night long in their freedom under the stars.

In the morning the two were awoken by children’s joyous screeches and laughter. On the other side of the meadow were a half dozen cherry tomatoes rolling and somersaulting down a modest hillside. “We must be near civilization,” thought the Pickle Prince. The two quickly packed their bags and moved towards the hillside to ask the young tomatoes where they lived. But by the time the Pickle Prince submitted the hill, he needed not ask such a question: on the other side of the hill was a wide, bricked road leading to an enormous wrought iron gate standing between equally massive slabs of unhewn, yet polished, marble. Marching in what looked like a parade to the inexperienced pickle, was an endless procession of tomato merchants hauling carts filled to the brim with every commodity one can envision. The Pickle Prince and Mr. Onion stared in awe at the sight before gallowing down the steep embankment and falling in line next to one plump tomato hauling a wagon filled with the softest robes. Mr. Onion could not resist a good deal and haggled with the unamused tomato all the way into the gates of the city.

The view from within the city was even more heavenly than its gates. Stretching on as far as the eye could see was a labyrinth of stalls, carts, wagons, goods, ornaments, delicacies, hawkers, and buskers. Packed shoulder to shoulder were countless tomatoes of every color, shape, size, and persuasion.

The Pickle Prince and Mr. Onion looked on in astonishment--never in their lives had they seen so much prosperity in one place. Moving with the flow of the crowd they noticed the goods become ever more luxurious and the surrounding buildings become taller and more elegant. Then they saw it: rising out of an enormous plateau was a castle built of the purest marble and richest onyx. Now pushing

through the crowd, the Pickle Prince, followed closely behind by Mr. Onion, made their way to the royal courtyard just before the palace.

“Do you notice something strange?” asked Mr. Onion. The pickle looked around then he saw it: “All the yellow tomatoes are shackled and performing grueling physical labor...” His face twisted into a look of shock and disgust, “They’re enslaved!”

Such a concept was foreign and exceedingly vile to the pure-hearted Kosher Dill Province natives. They walked around the square observing the foul practice and adjacent customs. Though the maltreatment of Tomatokind made the Pickle Prince uneasy, he knew that the two had no choice but to stay in the city to recuperate and resupply. The pickle gave the onion a fistful of precious spices to buy food and find lodging.

“Meet at Plum Tomato Pub at sundown,” agreed the pair. With that, Mr. Onion went to run errands. The Pickle Prince remained in the square to learn more about this fascinating dominion. He walked around the courtyard and even talked to everyone from merchants to nobles. He learned that he was currently in Sauce City, the capital of the Tomato Territories. The Pickle Prince soon learned that the Tomato Territories were the most prosperous region west of the Asparagus Forest in the vast Hamburger Kingdom. Yet, as the afternoon dragged on, the prince was no closer to understanding the customs of the tomatoes.

The Pickle Prince sat on a bench in the grand square deep in thought. He did not notice the convoy of well-outfitted guards making their way down the palace steps. But then, an ethereal sight roused him from his ponderings. In the middle of the convoy, adorned in the finest corn silks and rare seeds, was an angelic plum tomato--the storied Plum Princess. The two locked eyes. Within that fleeting moment, eyes reflecting their souls, the two young royals shared their happiness, sadness, deepest desires, most magnificent dreams, and their limitless and unconditional love. Passion bubbled up in the Pickle Prince like the purest mountain

spring. It was love at first sight. He knew he could not let this divine opportunity pass him by.

Weaving throughout the crowd, the prince drew closer and closer to the royal guards. Finally the only thing between him and the princess was one brawny tomato outfitted in shining silver armor.

“Princess!” shouted the pickle, “Princess! Princess!” The guards tightened around the fair plum tomato. However the princess, with her eternal and unyielding grace, whispered a few words into the head guard’s ear. Instantaneously the guards melted away and the Plum Princess stepped forward. She slowly walked towards the pickle looking him directly in the eyes with the kindest expression on her face. She gently touched his forearm sending waves of warmth and affection through his abdomen.

The princess brought her supple lips to his ear and said softly. “You are the one who will save me and my kingdom. I will explain at midnight in Dillseed Den.” Drawing away, she mouthed silently, “Be there.” Prior to Pickle Prince’s processing of what passed, Plum Princess parted promptly, perhaps permanently presumed Pickle Prince, into the pack of persons.

The prince looked around anxiously, but she was already gone. A crowd began forming at the steps of the palace and a large, robed figure came forth. The Pickle Prince knew immediately who it was: the Tomato Tyrant. He was just as imposing and vile as the legends said. In front of the figure was a yellow tomato--a slave--shackled to wooden blocks on the ground. The tyrant stepped up to the yellow tomato and yelled unintelligible, brutish words. He beckoned to a guard who rushed over and handed the Tomato Tyrant a massive whip. Without wasting an instant, the tyrant lacerated the skin of the slave several times. The poor tomato cried out as his innards poured from his gashes. He wailed in pain until he took his last breath. The Tomato Tyrant stepped forward looking at his handiwork with a sadistic grin. At his feet was a deflated and disfigured mass of skin and seeds. The tyrant was just as horrible in real life as in the stories... **(to be continue)**

Reality Considered: The Faux Experience

Rake

I spend my days biding by, simply lying in my sty—my misshapen throne. I watch my T.V. alone to get my constant dopamine flow. Everything else I've begun to loathe. It's all work compared to unfettered pleasure. Yet deep down I wonder, what is life if lived through the eyes of another, willfully shackled to the confines of a convex lens and some cathode ray tubes.

Strictly speaking, we're all living in the past. An event happens, a distortion of particles, oscillating at different speeds, dispersing photons and phonons that we then perceive. The stimuli we receive are then taken to the brain to be heard and seen, an abstraction into electrical pulses in nerves and neurons, to then be encoded by the brain, not unlike a machine. Yet within all of the vibrations, we too vibrate, occupying a specific place in spacetime—our frame of reference. It makes you question the meaning of reality and life. What's the difference between T.V. and 'real' life, when we get the same stimuli. When VR can provide the same photons and phonons to a different place in space and time—an entanglement of types—if we are prisoners to what we observe, a wave function in superposition beyond our purview, who's to say what's real or fake?

Preachers, teachers, and politicians tell us what to think. Manufacturing a reality and then, by the nature of their seduction, we provide our consent, willfully suspending all sense of reason or disbelief.

We blindly follow, as slaves behind a king, and they tell us we're free—but that requires a fee.



Image by Leo Santisi

Perfectly Imperfect: the Meaning Behind the Oxymoron

Lily Montgomery

Perfectly Imperfect; those two words never made sense to me. I've always been a rule follower. I was a high schooler who worked a job, did sports, got good grades, and never got into trouble. I strived to be the perfect daughter, friend, and girlfriend. The idea of breaking a rule was horrendous, up until the spring break when I learned that life was about more than being perfect. My family attended a family retreat for the Jewish holiday of Passover. At the retreat, I met a group of teenagers I instantly connected with, particularly a boy named Aaron. He was different from my friends back home, unafraid to break rules, and looking for an adventure. Normally, I wouldn't have talked to people like him, but something about stepping out of my comfort zone intrigued me.

Throughout the 10 day retreat we made a bucket list: jumping off the waterfall, going for a hike, stargazing, and last of all, climbing on the roof of the building by the dock and jumping into the lake. I was hesitant about the last item, afraid of getting caught or getting in trouble. Additionally, it was 45 degrees outside, so the water could be cold. I wasn't sure until the last night of the retreat, when we were walking by the lake. I realized I was going to regret not doing it, more than any consequence. 2am came, and the two of us scaled the roof. On top of the roof, we were greeted by a spectacular view of mountains and stars. It was at that moment I realized I had never felt more alive. Suddenly, I wasn't afraid anymore, he had helped me discover there was more to happiness than being perfect. I reached out my hand to him; "lets jump"

From that moment onward jumping was what I did. Rather than letting myself be defined by perfection, I let myself breath, and live. I chose to be true to who I was, rather than hide under the guise of being perfect. I learned that the recipe to being happy wasn't being perfect, or never making mistakes. Instead, it's learning how to embrace the mistakes and flaws, and do what you love. This experience was how I discovered my love of poetry, and to live my life without holding myself to impossible standards or flawlessness.

There is no perfect formula for writing a poem, not an outline or a correct answer. Poetry's nature intimidated me, and made me pause before the pencil hit the paper. I let myself write, let myself scratch the imperfect thoughts from my head onto paper, but never shared my work. With poetry, the beauty is in the imperfection, hidden inside experiences and emotions that aren't conventional or flawless. That spring gave me the clarity I needed to become a writer, and helped me let go of the fear I'd always carried. That jump wasn't a jump into a lake; it was a jump into my life.

The summer of 2019 I published my first work of poetry online. It was a poem called Revelations, written about seeing the harsh truth of the world as one matures. I was elated to have the world see my work, and overwhelmingly flattered by the positive feedback I received. I began

publishing my work on online forums, and connecting with other poets. For years I had been scared of sharing my writing, scared of people judging my innermost thoughts. Sharing my work turned out to be the most freeing experience of my life, and helped me discover my voice and speak my thoughts. Through publishing poetry I've learned how to express myself, connect with others, and most importantly, embrace my flaws. Perfectly Imperfect; I think I finally understand those words. Authentic beauty comes from blemishes and mistakes. Embracing every part of ourselves is how true happiness and perfection is attained.

10 Stoner Commandments

By God

1. Thou shalt contribute when possible.
2. Thou shalt pass the dutchie to the left hand side.
3. Thou shalt appreciate the herb.
4. Thou shalt never collect fees from a friend.
5. Thou shalt be prepared with sustenance.
6. Thou shalt not bogart.
7. Thou shalt bless the holy day.
8. Thou shalt keep thy glass pieces clean.
9. Thou shalt sacrifice thy tolerance regularly.
10. Thou shalt preserve thy kief.

Are You Addicted to TikTok?

Henry Levitt

How about you fucking read? Reading a book is basically the same thing as TikTok--you spend 30 seconds to a minute on a page, then you go to the next one. The biggest difference is that **reading isn't a goddamn waste of time**. Oh, and you "scroll" horizontally instead of vertically, but I'm sure you can get over that.

Now I hear a lot of **people defending the app by saying they learn** a lot from the videos. I'm sure that could be the case (because we all know the videos are fact-checked and posted by experts) **but have you ever read a fucking book?** There's actually this **category called "non-fiction" that's based on facts**. You also get to choose what you learn, believe it or not.

Here's another pro-tip: If your brain's attention span has been corroded by enormous quantities of 15-second garbage, you can actually read something called **an article. They're short and can be about anything**. It's especially popular to write articles about current events. You should try reading one sometime so I don't have to fucking explain that climate change is real and screwing up our future on this planet.

And if you're incapable of reading an article, **at least try reading the headline**. I swear, it's usually no more than 10 words.

Another bonus: **books won't steal your personal information** and give it to the Chinese government.

Finally, **no one is going to be impressed that you spent 12 hours a week staring at dancing videos** like a brain dead slug. However, read *Crime and Punishment*, and I guarantee that you'll impress your friends.

Because I am a kind person who is aware of your severe mental deficits, **I decided to bold the important parts** so you can get back to TikTok and stop wasting time reading.

Forearm is the Cleavage of a Man

Ellis Zusel

Any college girl getting ready for a big night on the town knows one thing: cleavage is key. Suppose “Courtney” is set on wearing her Harry Styles concert shirt (it’s unclear why anyone would make this choice, but bear with me). The shirt fits nicely with a rubber band tied around the bunched up excess fabric at the base of the shirt, but something is missing. Something round, something bulbous, something every man walks the earth in search of after his breastfeeding days are over. You guessed it... boob. She takes the shirt and cuts a V out of the front neck, revealing a fantastic view of what my 5 year old self referred to as the “drag line”. The shirt is perfect now. Her friends think she looks great. The guys think she looks better. No one is wondering why the fuck she chose to wear a concert t-shirt out to the bars. In fact, no one even notices Harry Styles at all...because, using the power of cleavage, Courtney has changed the conversation and created a brand new thing.

This hypothetical scenario is hardly interesting or unique, as it’s a song that has been played over and over again - the missionary of girls’ fashion moves, one could say. What is interesting, however, is what men can learn from this age-old trick. To be clear, men don’t have boobs, with the exception of Chris Christie and pre-2002 Al Roker. Wearing a V-neck to show “male cleavage” is only gonna make you look like a washed up perfume model - stick to crews, boys. But there is another body part that every man can use to have the “Courtney Effect”: forearm. I present my thesis, that forearm is the cleavage of a man.

Try it in your home right now. Take out the lamest top you can find in your dresser. It’s probably something you got for free at a charity event. Perhaps a St. Jude’s sweatshirt or Autism Speaks fleece? We all have something like that. Put it on normally and it looks terrible. It’s baggy and doesn’t lay right. Also, why the fuck are you wearing something you should’ve given to Goodwill the first chance you had? It’s ok, don’t run to the Salvation Army yet. Instead, push each sleeve three quarters of the way from your wrist to elbow, revealing some phenomenal forearm. You look incredible now. Your St. Jude’s merch just became the best article of clothing you own. Whatever late stage leukemia that child on the back of your sweatshirt was suffering from, you cured it. Unleashing the forearm has sent a ripple through the cosmos that will forever put humanity on a path towards peace and love. And you can now go to the bars in your Nephew’s Bar Mitzvah giveaway and pick up the hottest chick there. To all the guys out there, next time you see a girl wearing a revealing shirt, definitely look down. But don’t look down at her chest. Look down at your forearms, to make sure you’ve come to play like a pro.

phun* **noun**

1. that which provides philosophical amusement;

i. sharing phun on Tuesday evening

a) a time of pondering

ii. having phun

phun **adjective**

2. creating understandings, ideas, or thoughts;

i. a phun conversation

a) philosophically lively

ii. always phun with us

*Word originally coined for the UGA Philosophy Student Association

-Henry Levitt

Image by
Leo Santisi



****Here are my two God-awful stand-up jokes. May everyone pray that I never get the opportunity to perform them. -XOXO, Henry**

You know, Michael Jackson looked really fucking weird.
This guy looked absolutely bizarre for a good portion of his life.
And even though most people would have mistaken him for an alien, he could have gotten with any woman at that time.
...or man
...or child.
...and he did!

-

I'm really not worried about ever acting on my intrusive thoughts.
That's because I get them every time I go to a bar--and I never act on them.
Yeah, they're usually about talking to a girl...

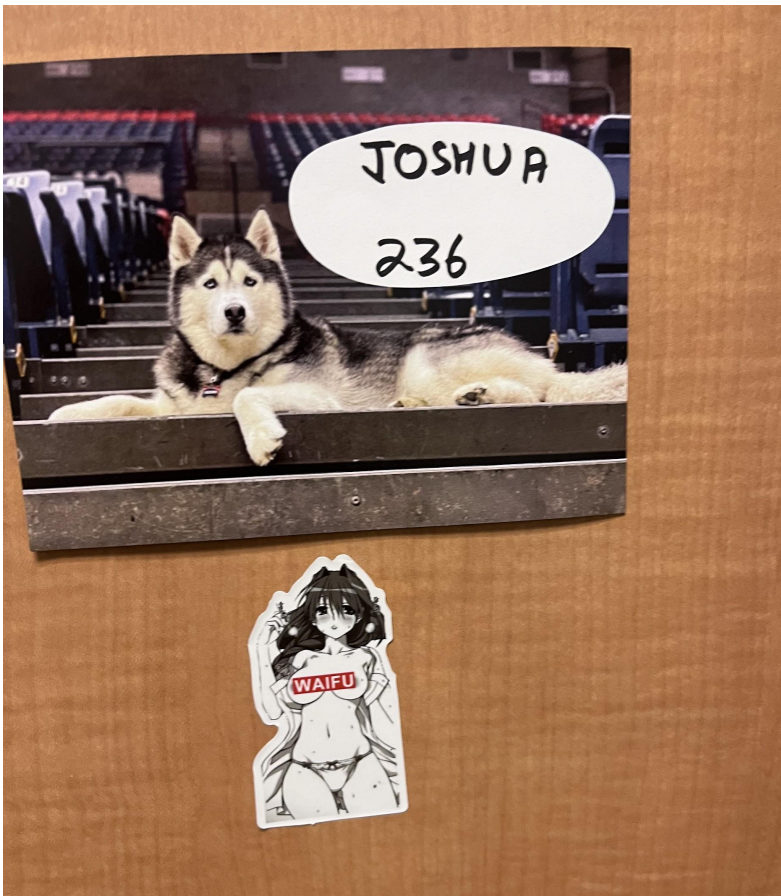


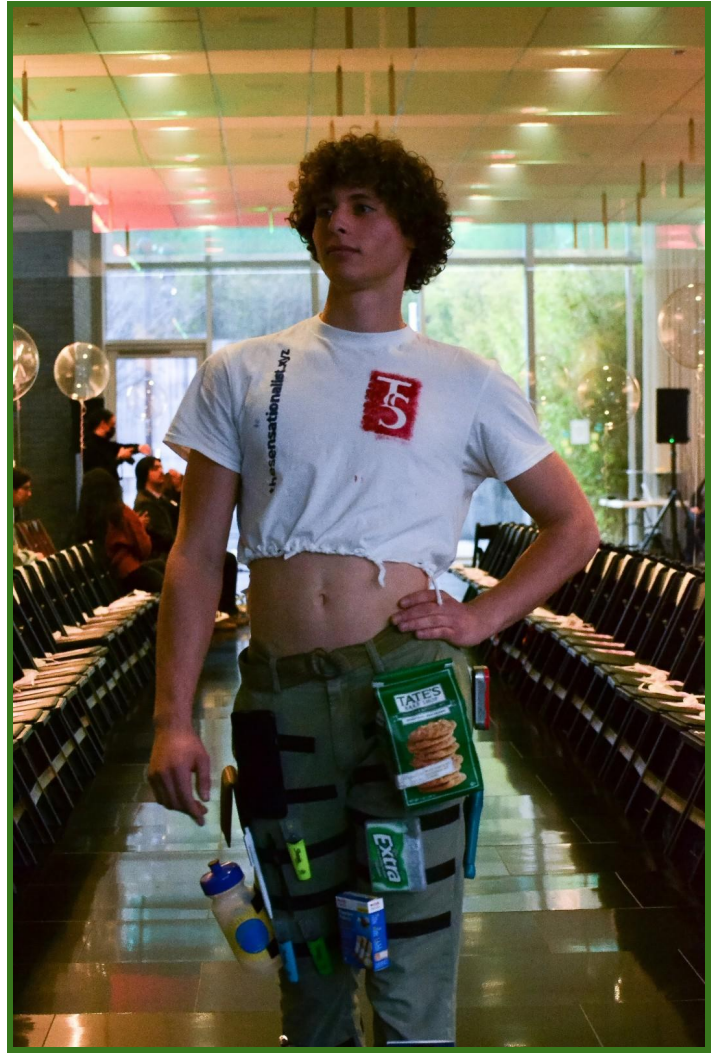
Photo by Leo Santisi

THE POINTLESS PANTS PROJECT (P.P.P.) FINAL UPDATE

With this final update I can put the Pointless Pants Project to rest in the annals of history within *The Sensationalist* vault. Here are the much-awaited pictures of me on the runway (I'm basically Zoolander). I also included some of my favorite outfits at the end.



Also worth mentioning: both the bandaids and gum came in handy during the show. I have included a secret bonus video [here](#).



This has been The Sensationalist: #12

“Bask in all the sensations”



Writing a
2,000 word Cognitive
Science
paper that's due
in less than a week



Writing a
fairy tale
about a pickle
and onion
that's twice as long