

## Cover Art

BY MRIDANI KASHYAP

## Regular Correspondents

AMY RACHAL CLEMENT - FICTION

THIS MONTH'S

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# THE INDUS DISPATCH

An • Academic • Existential • Update

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# CLOSING SHOP





The school year draws ever closer to its close, and with it, the Indus Dipatch. Nay, do not weep, 'tis only the way of all things in this world; here one moment, gone the next. In all seriousness, however, we've got a rather ripping last edition for you, so we do hope you enjoy this edition, as we hope you've enjoyed our others. The previous editions will remain online, available to read at <a href="http://theindusdispatch.rf.gd/">http://theindusdispatch.rf.gd/</a>, so give that a once-over if you haven't already. But that aside, without further ado, the April edition of the Indus Dispatch.



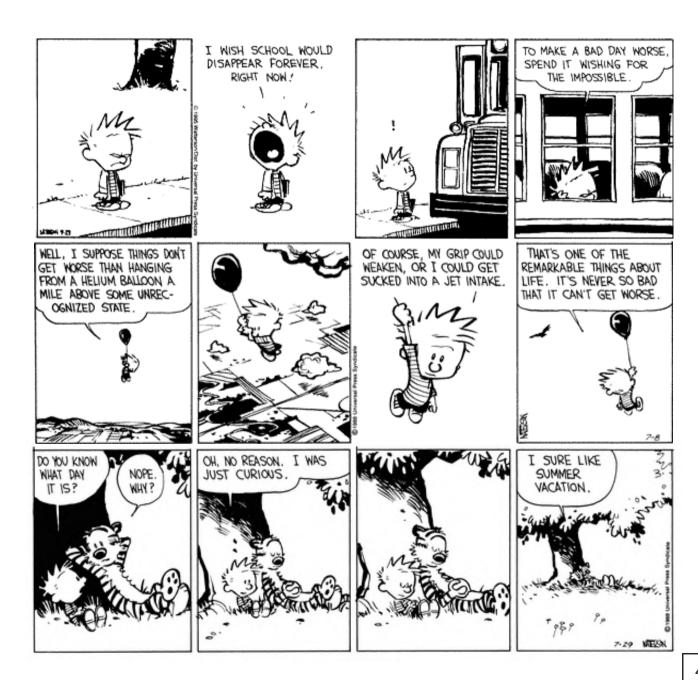
## EDITORIAL COLUMN

We'll be saying the exact opposite shortly, but -

### Greetings.

It being the last edition and whatnot, we've got a sort of editor's note down in the last page, rendering this section somewhat void. But, for the sake of tradition, here we are. It is likely that we'll be the last batch to ever say this, but it's nice to be able to relax, somewhat, at the end of the 11th grade. This isn't to say we're devoid of work, but having the clouds of the RCD pass from above, after having loomed overhead for so long, brings with it a certain relief. The calm after the nonexistent storm, so to speak. One makes the best of what they're given, and we've been dealt a rather fair hand, so by all means, relax, but don't stop moving. We've a ways to go.

- The Editorial Board



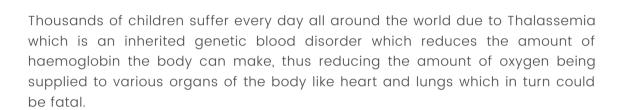
# BLOOD

## DONATION DRIVES

By the Heal Project, led by Sreeja

Muppaneni and Sindhuja Muppaneni

- Camps, Collections, and Seminars



The Co founders of "The HEAL PROJECT", Sreeja Muppaneni of grade 12 and Sindhuja Muppaneni of Grade 11 took the initiative, tied up with Thalasemmia and Sickle Cell Anemia Society (TSCS), organised and successfully conducted blood donation camps at Hyderabad and Vijayawada during the COVID lockdown in January and February respectively. Convincing and persuading people to donate blood was extremely challenging but they tried their best in campaigning and collecting blood from over 150 donors and helped the children.





Sreeja Muppaneni and Sindhuja Muppaneni visited the TSCS, took the tour of the facility, blood storage units, learnt about the sterilization techniques, observed the children getting blood transfusion, interviewed the children and parents getting treatment.

They held a seminar at the 'National Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management' to spread awareness and working towards eradication.

Sreeja Muppaneni and Sindhuja Muppaneni also distributed Antibiotics , Antipyretics, Analgesics, Antacids, Laxatives, Multivitamins, and various medications for treatment of Blood pressure, Diabetes and Arthritis at the old age home centres.

- Chollangi Sri Tejasvi





What to do, when to do it, and Indus Hyderabad's role in a better future

The worst effects of climate change can be avoided if we start to act "Now". It is not too late to limit the negative impacts of climate change. Usually there are two categories of response action that can be adopted to help solve the issue. One is mitigating the issue by reducing the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and the other adaptation where once climate change has already been set in motion, we learn to live with it.

Grade 11 students of IISH IBDP have been actively involved in the climate change movement. Students have been brainstorming for ideas and solution to solve the climate change crisis at the local level. Students have made field visits and conducted secondary research understand the changes in the land usage of Hyderabad. The data collected was analysed and it was inferred that Hyderabad, in years to come, will face severe water crisis due to fast depleting groundwater levels. The rate at which agricultural lands are

being converted to housing complexes in the name of development is leading to biodiversity loss. Both the issues are interrelated, and students have been working at formulating an innovative solution to help mitigate the issues. Students have expressed that it is now or never to make those changes that will positive impact the have environment, in the long run. recognise that change should come from within and that one should lead by example. Bring about a series of lifestyle changes will be the key focus area for every DP student here at IISH as we all believe that little drops of water make the mighty ocean. For a movement to be successful one must be the stone which on being cast away in still water is capable of forming ripples and we are hopeful that the Grade 11 batch of 2020-2022 will be harbinger for climate change action.

- Ms. Vishaka Labar



# Neurodiversity

The neurodiversity movement means greatly different things to many different people - here's what I think of it.

What is the neurodiversity movement, and why is it so controversial? Are the outcomes as progressive and benevolent as the initiative? Do neurodivergent people really need cures?

The neurodiversity movement means different things to different people, but what is it really?

My understanding of the neurodiversity movement is that it began as an initiative to promote the **inclusion** and **equality** of neurodivergent people (people with ASD, Dyslexia, ADHD, etc.) mainly centering around the individuals with the autistic spectrum disorder (ASD).

The biggest problem with the neurodiversity movement though, is that what it meant 15 years ago was completely different to what it means now.

When I first discovered the term, I found neurodiversity exciting, and something that was normal in a global, forward-thinking society, but the more research I conducted on the topic, the more I realised that the term neurodiversity has been changed and diluted so much that what used to be something progressive has proved to become a challenge for people of the scientific community conducting research on neurodiversity.

Do neurodivergent people really need cures? The best answer I found was yes, but that it really depends on our definition of the term "cure", as well as what we consider as "neurodivergent" and "disorder". I spoke to a neuroscientist who worked with autistic children and grew up with a severely autistic older brother, and his insight gave me a whole new perspective on the movement.

Let's take autism as an example to begin with. The American Psychiatry Association wrote a book in 1952 to help clinics identify mental disorders called the "Directory of Statistical and Mental disorders", also known as the DSM. It was a manual defining all the mental and psychiatric diseases and disorders, with a list of all their symptoms. When the first edition was published, what we now know as ASD(autism spectrum disorder) was then simply autism. Along with this were conditions such as Asperger's syndrome and other

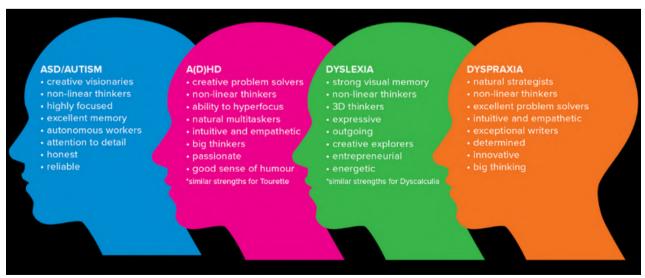
communication disorders that did not require a proper treatment or a "cure", they were simply variations of common speech. American clinics referred to the Directory to diagnose their patients, matching the symptoms to an illness. However, Autism, Asperger's syndrome and all the communicative disorders as categories were too broad and each edition released after the first one changed as research revealed more about the disorders. The current directory; the 5th edition, compiled all the communicative and social differences into a single disorder called Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The issue here is apparent, because when clinics diagnose a patient with ASD these days, it includes the entire spectrum, with the ones who were only mildly affected by it to the ones who could never speak a word their entire lives. So people with Asperger's are now considered autistic. But do they need treatment, in the extreme sense of the word? No, not necessarily. This created the main question; Do people with ASD need cures? And now ASD included everybody on the spectrum.

Self-advocates of the autistic community are generally the people with the ability to communicate, the ones who do not need treatment and ask for inclusion. Who've taken the term neurodiversity as simply creating a world where they were not considered disabled. And where they did not need help. This in turn initiated an argument with advocates of science, claiming that the neurodiversity movement denies treatment to those who need it.

Treatment in this sense being giving autistic the social skills needed to be able to share their unique insights with the world. To be able to augment their communication skills. Autistic individuals who need help to be able to communicate their ideas and cannot speak for themselves. I believe that offering support is in no way demeaning the status of people.

We need to consider that the society was built for non-autistic people. And for inclusion to happen, work needs to be done by both the community and the autistic.



Source: https://www.rorysheridan.co.uk/home1/2019/3/8/higher-education-and-neurodiversity

While the neurodiversity movement asks for inclusion in the way of increased support centers, enhanced or even specialised workplaces and equality, dilution of the topic has made people think that the movement could stop scientists finding cures, when it in fact encourages it.

This is because of our mindset. Humans like stability, and most of us are not very open to change, the main reason we find patterns and repetition so fascinating. Social media as a platform of news is very limited, a few words change the entire perspective of an individual, no description or explanation needed. This leads to huge misunderstandings, like the one created about the movement.

To conclude this article, I just want to say that how we see neurodiversity really depends on the way we look at the words and the terminology used to describe it. Being open to change with the intention of helping both those who can and cannot communicate will eventually lead to inclusion in the society.

I do not think the neurodiversity movement will prove a roadblock to scientists if it is accepted as it was when it was first mentioned in the early 2000s. Science has the potential to help the autistic communicate. And while the world needs to adapt its societies to autism, neurodivergent people need to be open to accept it, and guide it along the way.

-Amy Rachal Clement

Author's Note: I wrote this article a year ago, the resources online were fewer than there are today, now there is so much information and so many more perspectives about the Neurodversity movement to explore and research and have discussions about.



# BORROWING WORDS



Excerpts and quotes from the greatest writers of our time.

The only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars.

- Jack Kerouac, On the Road

How easy it was to lie to strangers, to create with strangers the versions of our lives we imagined.

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Americanah

There is nothing like looking, if you want to find something. You certainly usually find something, if you look, but it is not always quite the something you were after.

- J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit

"Promise to give me a kiss on my brow when I am dead. --I shall feel it."

She dropped her head again on Marius' knees, and her eyelids closed. He thought the poor soul had departed. Eponine remained motionless. All at once, at the very moment when Marius fancied her asleep forever, she slowly opened her eyes in which appeared the sombre profundity of death, and said to him in a tone whose sweetness seemed already to proceed from another world:--

"And by the way, Monsieur Marius, I believe that I was a little bit in love with you."

- Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God

It sounds plausible enough tonight, but wait until tomorrow. Wait for the common sense of the morning.

- H. G. Wells, The Time Machine

I think here I will leave you. It has come to seem there is no perfect ending.
Indeed, there are infinite endings.
Or perhaps, once one begins, there are only endings.

- P.D. James, The Children of Men

# THE AVIAN ENGIMA

You learn a lot about yourself when you think you're going to die, because in those moments, all our prior commitments and priorities seem meaningless. something primal switches on inside that insanely complex brain of ours.

Now, I'd seen boy scouts posters on how to handle animal attacks, man, I'd evolved to handle animal attacks. It just so happens, however, that the most dangerous animals out there happen to be human beings. That's not something I was taught to handle.

So that day when the door to my coop opened, and the largest, hairiest, bulkiest, most menacing looking human I had ever seen in my life, walked in. My brain lost all rationale.

Fight, Freeze, Flee. The only three options I saw in front of me, and since the decision making part of me was out of order, I went ahead and did all three.

First the freezing, when I realised he was walking right at me and the world went still. Like those moments before a jump-scare you know is going to happen.

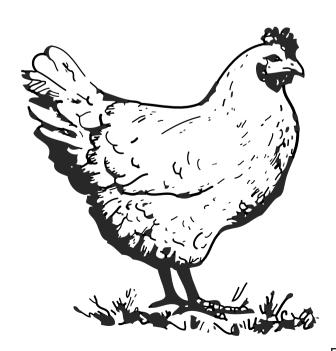
Then the fighting, when I saw thick tree trunks of arms reach out for me, a net in one meaty palm. Like a gamer on speed-run my world unfroze into everything that happened next when some irrational side of my brain decided I needed to give fighting a try. I'm not a warrior in the

slightest, but I'd say I did a pretty good job raking my nails right into the plump face cheeks of that man before sliding between two log, skyscraper like legs and out the doors. I wasn't blessed with very long legs but I pumped those limbs with every ounce of strength in my feather covered body and fled that coop.

I ran like the wind that carried me down every time I tried to fly. Running and running, feeling the man behind me with every shake of ground under my two feet. I ran like a chicken, across those suburban fields and through a wheat farm, and even when the ground stopped moving, I kept running because of the freedom I began to feel. The freedom of running and not being cooped up all day for once like the chicken I was.

I ran across those bare, cultivated, undeveloped lands, picking grains from the fields and meeting cattle from all walks of life. I ran through villages and towns until one day, I came upon a highway.

Vehicles driving along with their loud



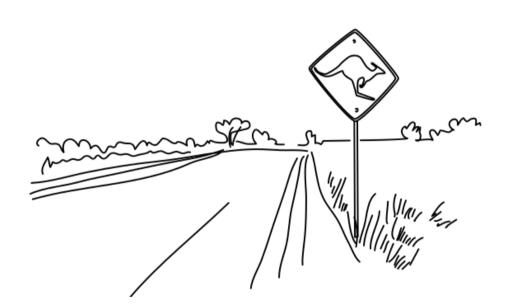
noises and smoky exhausts. People bustling on the sidewalk, unlike anything I had seen at the farm on which I'd been raised, until the city ended and nature began. It seemed so far away from me. I looked across the road, into the city, into a new life. At all the experiences laid out in front of me just waiting to be seen and to be felt.

At that moment I knew exactly what I wanted. To go into that city and find out what life would be like there.

For years after that, people would ask, "Why did the chicken cross the road?".

Even at that moment I wondered. As I prepared myself for the journey across that highway, ignoring the startled looks of not nearly as threatening humans and the whispers of "there's a chicken over there". I wondered why I wanted to cross that daunting road, into a life of uncertainty and non-readily-available chicken feed. But the city, it's size and it's beauty, drew me in. Like a secret now I keep that image with me. My reason. With a cluck I began my journey. Leaving behind empty fields of wheat and confused pedestrians, I crossed the road.

- Amy Rachal Clement



# SIMONE Gargensky

Spies, russians, plots, and plotholes - all here.



Simone Gargensky's lot was not to be envied.

A poor Russian, in a bustling London town, at the heart of the rise of the engine, gear, and smokestack, he made just barely enough to keep himself and his ungrateful poodle from the luckless masses huddled upon the streets. He spent his days in an iron clad factory, which often doubled up as an overly large oven; an unfortunate circumstance for Simone, who was acclimatized to the brisk sunlight, and cool summer afternoons of northern Siberia. While the wealthier minority of the city's populace partook of their late suppers in the candlelit aroma of one Luigi's establishment, just beyond a wall in the rank slums of the city, Simone too, bathed in the feeble light of his rapidly diminishing candle, tried to make a medium sized can of self-imposed bean soup last for as long as possible without a spoon. Bean soup, because of his determination to live up to literary standard of poverty, and it was the cheapest at the grocer's. His life, was, all factors weighed and considered, rather on the miserable side.

The more recent days, however, had left him to yet another pit in hell, and his state had deteriorated even further from what was left to deteriorate. In what few books he had, he read again, and again of people's "days flying by in a haze". Simon would have gladly welcomed the experience. Instead, it seemed to him he was slowly dying, and instead of his life flashing before his eyes, he was painfully awake during his lengthened last moments.

Yet, despite his rather unfortunate circumstances, It were not they, that caused the dark clouds of despair to linger above his head. Rather, it was the Decision that threatened to unleash the downpour the clouds held. The decision...

In every man's life- that lived a life as Simone had, there came a time when he had to make a decision- a decision for change. It usually came in the form of an opportunity, a blessing even, had it not been for the stakes. In Simone's particular scene, it was the job in Dunhill. The job, as for its part of the blessing, offered a salary that was more than four times greater than what was needed to buy out the hovel he was currently living in, and besides that, it even offered complementary housing- in a neighborhood. If Simone's joy didn't immediately freeze upon looking at the stakes of the equation, he would have been floating. As for the stakes of the whole thing- it was rather similar to the ones his grandfather had faced, when his time had come... the ones which had landed him into

this hole in the first place, which was the primary reason he was reluctant to make any decision at all. He couldn't possibly imagine sinking any lower than he had already sunk. The outcomes of the decision were quite clear. He could take the job, upon which two things could happen- he could secure the position, and make the biggest leap in his family's poverty ridden history, or he could fail, and lose everything he had, for taking the job meant letting go of his one at the factory. The second option he was to weigh, was ignoring the chance altogether, and spend the rest of his life, as he had spent the years past. And neither options presented much appeal to him.

The job was quite simple, actually. As desk clerk in Whitney's bank, all applicants needed to know was a few numbers, and how to punch in values on a little keyboard- fast. Simone's factory trained fingers would, he assumed, be sufficient to fulfill the last requirement, and as for the first, he'd never had any trouble with numbers.

Despite his efforts to comfort himself, he could never bring himself out of his doubt. He decided to sleep on it, for after all, he had a week to consider. Carefully laying down the thin flyer, the herald of his Moment, on his bed, he sat on the edge of the aforementioned apparatus. He looked around his miniature apartment, and all the things he held dear, and wondered if he'd be seeing them again. Then, as if snapping out of a trance, he reprimanded himself, and told himself to get some sleep if he wanted any of his wages tomorrow.

The light in Simone's little bedroom window flickered off, but in the space of a minute, anyone walking by the Hilltop Plaza would have seen a feeble glow spring up in the only ground floor window of the building's south side. Simone could get no sleep, and he was afraid of the dark. He was now sure he could get no sleep, so, thinking a bit more, he walked over to his run down gramophone, and played the only song he had- Hotel California- which had come as a bonus with the gramophone. Wearily, he pressed the needle down onto the disk, and started the player where it had left off yesterday.

"...and I was thinking to myself... this could be heaven, or this could be hell..."

A few minutes later, Simone fell asleep under his bed, with his ever-ungrateful poodle on top.

And Simone had been right. All he had needed was to sleep on it, but sleep was not what had helped make his decision, but his factory supervisor- a rather interesting specimen. Modern sciences argued that humans shared most of their gene structure with rats, as opposed to apes, as was previously thought, but Simone was firm in his conviction that one look at his supervisor would convince even the greatest minds otherwise.

Simone was taking the job.



Charles Purger both envied, and pitied the youth of London dreaming of MI6. Envied, for their untarnished view of what he considered a flea-ridden establishment, and pitied those that would actually come to MI6 to have their dreams shattered within the first few minutes of having to fetch copies of The Telegraph for Mr.Smethurst, which despite his twelve years of experience, was exactly what he was on his way to do. Looking around at the bustle of blue-shirted insects and big black suited men, he wondered how this was any different than the hundreds of enterprises that lined the cityscape. A small man brushed past him, whose name

happened to be Kimberley, which was what Charles called out at the moment. The small man turned on his heel with a quizzical look on his face.

"Is there anything- absolutely anything for me to do today?" he pleaded.

"No. sir"

"At least an unsupervised assignment somewhere?" he begged.

"No, sir."

"Has Mr.Smethurst's dog been walked?"

"Yes. sir."

"Any janitors on leave?", he asked, weakly.

"No sir."

Charles groaned. The insect-like man turned away and continued upon exactly the same vector he had been on before, taking the utmost care not to step onto every other tile.

Outside, as he bent down to pick up the paper, he wondered. He wondered if he would be better off working in a chocolate factory somewhere, or as a bargeman in the Thames. The wondered what Mr.Smethurst worried about, and lastly, he wondered why Mr.Smethurst had the paper delivered at the building's doorstep, instead of his twelfth floor office space. Perhaps it was just to spite Charles for the unordained leave he'd taken on Wednesday. Whatever the reason may have been, Charles was feeling somewhat rebellious today. A small boy walked by, clothes in one hand, and a dripping cone in the other. A mother walked among a horde of others, the only spacing between their persons being the brims of their sunhats. A man, rather obese, and dressed in black, with an immaculate white tie half walked, half jogged, furtively looking up at regular intervals. Upon closer inspection this man revealed himself to be Mr. Purger.

Despite his organs having been twice boiled, and now steaming within the confines of his black suit- an attire unsuited to the summer London heat, exacerbated by the dozens of bodies pressed together in the county fair, he was thoroughly enjoying himself, with a white handkerchief tied around his head, and a cheap ice-cream in his hand. Walking through the rows of stalls, content to simply gaze, since they accepted "only cash, no card". Pleasant memories from his short-lived childhood wafted through the air, mingled with smells of parchment, cedar, and peppermint. His reminiscent euphoria, was short lived however, broken by the sound of his phone ringing. He knew only too well who it was. A hoarse, crotchety voice croaked from the other end of the line.

"Where in the seven realms of the damned are you?"

"Seventh floor sir, copier room." came the unwavering reply.

"Not the downtown fair, by the fried apricot stand, eh? We're an intelligence agency, for Christ's sake Bert. You can't lie to us, least of all about your loca- Jesus, Martha, leave those papers be!"

"It's Charles, sir."

"It is not Charles, young man, and it is certainly not pardonable, now you drag your..."

Charles patiently listened to a two minute expletive, clearly outlining the steps involved in shifting his weighty personage to the building, and after confirming its termination, put his cellphone back into his pocket. A minute later, he stood on the sidewalk, hailing a taxi, and vigorously rubbing ice-cream stains off his tie.

"See here, you damned insubordinate- I won't have this sort of behaviour, understand?"

"Yes"

"Moving on, then. We have reason to assume a certain NKVD sub-division has resurfaced, as of late, and it poses enough of a threat to compel us to act. Sources say that they've placed an agent in a certain clerk internship, so we've posted our own in every internship we could find. We're going to eliminate them before they've stuck their head out of their hole for more than a day."

"So, I am required to do what?"

"You, sir, are required to stay in the damned building. Now, where's my newspaper?"

"Stan Berkeley?"

"Present."

"Gordon Ramsay?"

"Present."

"Pickled.. Herrings? Pickled Herrings?"

"Present."



A tall, hook nosed woman edged her glasses further down the length of her hooked apparatus.

"Would that happen to be your real name?"

"Yes ma'am, my old man wasn't alright in the head, and them hospital nurses don't ask no questions."

"Moving on.. Simonee Garg- Gargenskee?"

"Present. ma'am."

The woman collapsed into a chair, and flung the papers aside.

"Well, that seems to be it. Now, remember- the day's work is on each of your desks, there is no need to communicate with anyone at all, least of all me, and we will evaluate your work on our own. You must simply press the grey button in the middle of the screen before you turn off the computer. Failure to do so will result in disqualification."

Though spewing out long strings of speech without pause seemed to be the woman's specialty, she lacked somewhat in lung capacity, and was compelled to take a goodly breath of air before continuing.

"Also, failure to turn up on any day, for any reason will result in disqualification. Communication with fellow interns during work sessions will result in disqualification." After a few dozen more sentences ending with the disqualification suffix, she wearily shooed the lot into the lobby.

A man asked if he could bring his dog in; it had been waiting outside for quite a long time. The grey haired woman politely, but firmly insisted that he must not.

A few minutes later, they were all seated in a room full of cubicles that reminded Simone oddly of the ones he had occasion to see in public restrooms. The work was easy, but

wearying in its monotony. Yet Simone endured. Already, he felt he was doing well. For the space of four hours, the room, with its dirtied white walls, and flickering fluorescent overhead lights, echoed with the clicks of springs buckling in the keys of twenty seven mechanical keyboards.

The first day's first hour was filled with an energy unparalleled elsewhere in the office, with young men in spotted overalls pounding away at numbers on a desk with all the vigour of youth.

The second hour had the energy somewhat depleted, but the determination to outshine their brothers in the room held strong.

At the end of the third hour, the men plodded along at a stately pace, in tune with the dull hum of the rest of the office, simply doing what they had been doing for the last three hours, more out of muscle memory than anything.

By the end of the fourth hour, all they wanted was a break.

At the end of the fifth hour, they got one.

Simone stumbled out onto the small lawn outside the building, and let as much sun-ripened air as he could into himself. When he had finished pulling himself back into shape, he looked around, seeking a comrade to while the time away with. At last, his eye settled upon a small man in an Adidas tracksuit, lightly leaning against the tree that stood in the centre of the courtyard. Despite the hood that shadowed most of his face, he was unmistakably Russian. As Simone approached, the man took out a small device from his pocket, and after looking around whispered a few words into it. As he put it down, he saw Simone standing in front of him, with an uncertain grin on his face.

"dobroye utro!", Simone began, cheerfully.

The man jumped and looked up, visibly shaken.

"No, no..."

"chto sluchilos?"

"No- I am American! I- I am from Texas! American!". The man seemed disturbed.

"Ok, ok, very good. I just want talk with you-"

"No! Go away! Is legal! No Russian! American!". The disturbance became somewhat more prominent.

Simone advanced towards the man, trying to soothe the man, but even as he did, the man stumbled backwards. Uttering a few muffled screams, the man spun on his heel and

ran out to the parking lot. Simone was conscious of twenty five interested eyes making the most of the scene. Trying to give his best impression of confusion, he walked back into the office.

Simone lamented this disconnection from his own motherland. Or perhaps his language was the problem. If either of those were so horrifying as to drive a man away from a job, Simone had to have done something very wrong. He wondered if he had insulted the man in some twisted, intricate way, and began running his rather extensive knowledge of Russian expletives through his mind.



Charles Purger, as he hurried toward the twelfth floor office room, could only hope that it was not another summons to fetch a lemon pop form the lobby dispenser. Ever since he became personal assistant to Jr. Lavington-Lavington Smethurst, he had realised the pains of a subordinate, yet senior position. Assistants to directors were janitors, bellboys, typists, and the occasional Jeeves all rolled together in one. In the few weeks after his promotion, he had rather enjoyed taking important orders from important people. After a month, given the relatively frail composition of Mr. Smethurst, he was convinced a day's switch in their positions would be

all it would need to free Great Britain from the dreadful influence of the MI6 director.

Charles Purger paused before Mr. Smethurst's door and practiced maintaining a neutral expression, before knocking twice on the paneledprevaricated oak doors.

"Mr. Smethurst?"

After a respectful pause, he repeated himself.

"Mr. Smethurst?"

When he found no reply was forthcoming, he sighed, and pushed open the door. Mr. Smethurst sat at his desk, staring at a report. Looking up, he said, "Come in". As an afterthought, he added "And close the door behind you".

Charles sighed and entered, and after carrying out the prescribed, or rather, prevocalised instructions, took a seat opposite Mr. Smethurst. Another awkward silence followed, in which the Director continued staring at the small pile of papers afore him, and Charles, for lack of anything better to do, tried to touch the tips of his fingers together; an action in which, despite his persistent failures, he persevered in.

"Charles?" asked Mr.Smethurst at length.

""Our problem seems to be somewhat more... problematic, than we had reason to anticipate."

"Sir?"

"Did you not understand what I said, or was that a disinterested acknowledgement?"

"An acknowledgement." said Charles, skipping lightly over the adjective.

"Well, see here. Russia seems to have gone back to its cold war standards- that is, when they bullied us, and not the other way around."

"Indeed?"

"The man they sent out... he must be some reincarnation of Victore Slovak, that spy that was worth the entire American intelligence agency. I was honestly... ah, disappointed, when he died. Wish he was a bit younger, if there was nothing that could best him except time, in the end. So, anyways, this, agent they sent out- he identified, and scared awayyes, indeed, scared away our agent in the Dunhill internship- all in the space of five minutes."

"Ivan Furnectchat?"

"Yes. him."

Charles' interest was aroused. He had known Ivan for a month, now, and he made an excellent undercover agent, but he did not belong to the class of steel nerved men; this rarely made a difference, however, since all his missions went off without the slightest hitch.

"Really? What happened?"

"The agent, the soviet agent just walked up to him and said something, after watching him for a full three minutes, and then Ivan just ran off."

"So, what'd he say?"

"We don't know. We trusted him enough to go without bugs, and besides, it was a identifier mission, not reconnaissance."

"But, what could he have said, I mean-"

"We don't know, Charles. The mind boggles."

"The mind boggles." Agreed Charles.

After a while, Charles said,

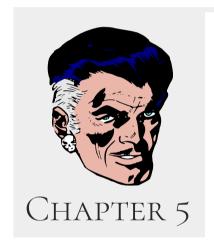
"So, now what, if I may..."

"Now, we wait and watch."

"Just... wait?"

"Yes, just wait. Sometimes I wish the government wouldn't meddle so damned much in MI6. If it weren't enough to restrict wiretapping so much, now we need a damned warrant for any little assassination. And it's no point trying to get away with it. The government's got better police than we have assassins, and besides, any armed personnel we have are pledged to the government directly, not us. The only thing to do is go out on the streets with a damned revolver in my pocket and shoot the bugger himself."

"Ah."



"Ivan?"

"Yes, sir?"

"Come here, Ivan."

"Coming, sir."

A small, portly, bald headed man hobbled over to a tall man in a high-backed red leather chair, from his place by the window.

"Sir?"

"I told you, Ivan, to bring bring me a book to learn the English. Instead, you bring me this book about cats wearing hats and talking fish in bowls. What is this about?"

"I did only as you asked, sir- I asked that blond haired woman behind the desk for a simple book to learn English- for children."

"For children? Why children?"

"Sir, I heard-"

"Are you of the opinion, Ivan, that I am a child?"

"No, sir, but-"

"Ah, so, I am old to you, now?" No, sir, it is simply that I read, that when learning something new, it is preferable to start with the mind, of a child." "I see... I will attempt that approach, most definitely. In the meantime, however, things are... stirring, astir in the American agencies, I hear?" "Indeed, sir. There is talk of a Russian super-spy on the loose." "Is there?" "Is there what, sir?" "A Russian super-spy on the loose, of course." "No, sir." "Then " "Indeed, sir. The mind, as the English say, 'boggles'." "The mind does boggle." "So I take it, that news does not concern us?" "No. sir." Pausing, the man spoke again, while carefully polishing his desk card, reading 'Vladimir Gorky, MO'. "Ivan?" "Sir?" Said the small man obligingly. "What about the Italians?" "Forgive me, sir, but what exactly about the Italians..." "Ivan, what was our purpose in journeying to this god forsaken country- or city, whichever it may be?" "The Family, sir."

"Yes, Ivan, the family."

"It seems we reached London in time. The Americans seem to have been irritating the Family. The Vitello family, that is. They decided to change their meeting location to Dunhill; an upgrade from that John Deere's farm, If you ask me, and-"

"I did not ask you, Ivan. But pray, continue."

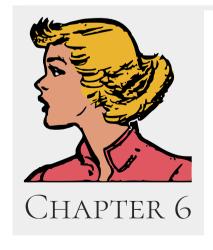
The small man paused, and then, went on, for a few minutes. After a while, the tall Russian seemed to tune out, and gazed out the window, upon the London landscape, with all its tall buildings and short houses. The view, he had to admit, was somewhat... more comely than his own in his Moscow building, but the heat was not at all pleasant. He would not be surprised if he were to melt like an... icicle- if that happened to be the word- ere his objective with the Italians was complete. The chirping of the small man grew louder in his ears, and he turned towards him just in time to hear:

"...and with that being said, everything is going perfectly according to our expectations, but if I may point out, again, the Family is extremely cautious, sir, and ever since Victor Vitello died from that mishap on the golf course, which I assure you, we had nothing to do with- ever since then they have been suspicious of us- also, If I may say again, the family is not the only body we are to contend with, sir."

"And what should I take your meaning to be from that, Ivan?"

"Simply that the MI6 may possess some of what intelligence we have, with the defector, that Ivan- my grandmother's curse upon him for dishonoring such a name as I carry- who escaped a month or so ago. But, it seems we have an unbidden ally- that Russian super spy, for so he is called. We have yet to find his identity, but we have failed in doing so till now. He is a good spy, sir. Even the place he lives in is impenetrable by any of our heat, or radio imaging, and he is rarely on camera for more than a glimpse."

"He seems a dangerous man. But not to us, eh? But, whatever that may be, in a few days, we teach the Family some communism, what, Ivan?"



Simone was sure he was not giving his best, regardless of how hard he tried. Even a single look into anyone else's computer screen would bring him into a state of despair that would make him consistently get his numbers wrong for five minutes. The sheer amount of work everyone else seemed to be getting done- including Pickled Herringmade his own work seem extremely insignificant. The optimism he had maintained since the start of the internship was fading, but he resolved to keep his standard of work up. Perhaps, he wondered, he was

working too hard on his standard of work. What were a few mistakes here and there?

Surely the increased amount of numbers he'd submit would even it all out? Simone sat on the thought for a while, and then clucked, reprimanding himself. If he was to get the job, he would have to get it right. Besides, he thought to himself, who knew what amount of things the others must have been getting wrong? Despite all his attempts, he could not restore any of his positive outlook on the internship he had maintained before today. He sighed. The day after tomorrow was the day the internship would be over, and the day that would decide whether he'd live his life in Cathill Commons, or next to the old rundown mill he passed every day on his way to the station.

The end of Simone's workday found him in the park, sitting on a bench, and thinking about what to think of for the duration of the day. For starters, he decided to give the mud on the toe of his left shoe a closer inspection. After a while, he was concentrating so hard, he was beginning to feel light headed, or perhaps it was because he was leaning out a bit too far, and he was feeling a strange connection with the mud on his shoe, going so far as to wonder what worries mud would have, if any. His reverie, as it had to be, however, was interrupted by a thickset man, belching forth spouts of smoke from a cigar as large as his forearm, with a package in his hand.

"Delivery." Said the man, and left it at that.

Simone looked at it, puzzled. Who, would bother sending him, of all people, a package? He picked it up, and performed the age honored technique of the ascertaining of the identity of objects within small enclosed spaces- he shook it. He noticed two things- it was quite heavy, for its size, and did not rattle. It had to be rather valuable, to fit both criteria. Simon's belief that it was not meant for him was furthered. He turned it over, and looked for a name. There was none. Scanning the cardboard box all over its faces, he looked for the smallest hint that the box was his. There were none.

Simone stood up, and found he could still see the column of smoke the delivery man trailed as he walked away through the crowd on the street. For a brief moment, he hesitated, and considered keeping the box, but his better self prevailed, and he sprinted off, box in hand towards the main street. He shouldered his way through the crowd upon the crossing, muttering feeble excuses. Every once in a while, he hopped up and down to see where the man was. Upon the fourth such hop, he ascertained that the man was heading for a tram-Simone had to hurry if he was ever to get to the man. He was not (this sentence may be somewhat confusing to readers, therefore, the author explains his meaning to be that he was not to get to the man, or in other words, he would not, as fate had it so, ever reach the man in time). A malignant piece of rock, dating from prehistoric times- possibly metamorphic, as the scholar would point out, impeded his goal of earthly passage, and instead facilitated a not-so-graceful flying leap through the air, topped off with a rough landing on his sternum. The package meanwhile, slid off to the edge of an open manhole, and tipping slowly, as if to say its goodbyes, it fell into the hole's open jaws. Simone, though disappointed, was not surprised. Sooner or later, he had to get something else wrong with another important thing.

He walked back to the park bench, thinking of the possible sorrow he had caused some family in London... waiting for their delivery... upon which they'd spent a month's earnings, probably. It never crossed his mind that it was rather strange that the package should be delivered to him- a lone man sitting on a park bench in a deserted park.

Five minutes later, a low rumble that seemed to come from behind the row of buildings he looked at caused him to wonder.



"Well!" beamed Mr. Smethurst. "Ain't it brilliant! Just gave the damned spy a bomb in a box! Problem solved. There ought to be a method- call it the boxed bomb. Or the Smethurst Solution. Whichever."

Charles looked on uncertainly. When Mr.Smethurst turned to look at him, he stammered out-

"Oh, yes, certainly... certainly."

It did not occur to Charles that giving a super-spy a bomb

was the best idea. But, they would find out before the day's end. The old bounder might have been right after all. As it happened, he did not have to wait long, a fact for which he was thankful.

The small insect man Charles encountered earlier entered the room. He appeared agitated, a conclusion Charles drew from the fact that the man was stepping on tiles at random. The man stood before Mr. Smethurst, jittered for a moment, and then leaned down a few centimeters to whisper something into what Mr, Smethurst was accustomed to calling his ear. The change on the old director's face was remarkable. From evidently self pleased, he went to looking like his shoe had been stuffed into his mouth, then as if he was being forced to chew on it, ending on a note Charles' cousin, an opera artist, would have been proud of. The small man stayed hunched for a while, and then skippered away. Mr. Smethurst maintained the expression of a dog whose bone had been given to the dog across the fence.

"Well?" inquired Charles innocently.

"Well..." Mr. Smethurst barely managed to struggle the words past his clenched teeth.

Charles waited patiently. After waiting for a minute, he saw that waiting was not going to help his case, and proceeded down to the lobby to get an lemon flavored ice-cream. The lemon flavored ice-cream worked. Mr. Smethurst began slowly.

"It's failed Charles... damn it, it's failed."

Charles was far from flabbergasted.

"That spy, that Russian, I knew we shouldn't have underestimated him. But, ah, what do you know about it... "

"Why, what did he do?" Charles asked. He could think of nothing further than bombing a public place, which was nothing Mr. Smethurst would be concerned about.

"He... I'll start from the beginning. That bomb, he used it against us, he did. I've been telling all these people for years that having a sewer piped directly under the communications centre was never a good idea- no worse than having an open vent leading into headquarters from the bathrooms. Well, this agent of theirs... he took advantage of that, and the fact that the sewers-" Mr. Smethurst's voice rose in a shout here- "the sewers end in a bloody dead end right under the Dunhill facility!"

The box was at the facility in no time, with the sewage mains running, and what not, and the five minute timer did its work. The tunnel leading up... it did its work- it channeled most of the blast up into the facility. It's not all wrecked- the building stands- but our computers, Charles, our Computers! The whole CPU- big as a tram, mind you, is just a pile of scrap metal now!"

Charles was mildly surprised. He had never expected any of Mr. Smethurst's ideas to do very well on the field, but the scope of his current failure did surprise him. He wondered what he would have done.

"Well, what now?" asked Charles.

"What now! Enough is enough. If the Russians are going to rise to their old levels, we may as well give up. But there is a small bit of good news. The russian spy- he seems to be an individual, and not part of an organisation. If any negotiations are to be made, they will hopefully, slide easier. First thing tomorrow morning, we tap the Russians, then, we must concede to their demands, whatever they may be."



It was the day- finally, and Simone could barely contain himself. He knew not whether to explode with anticipation, or implode under the weight of his despair. He knew the odds were against him, yet there was the tiniest, smallest degree of hope he could cling on to. A chance that his decision would have been for the better.

He dressed in the finest attires he possessed, and used some of his precious water to wash his face. He straightened his hair with a broken comb, and stood in front of the mirror for a few minutes, trying to make himself look as confident as possible. When that failed, he settled for half a bottle of vodka.

Bidding his poodle goodbye, he set out on a trot upon the streets of Dunhill, his half bottle of the good stuff sloshing up against the back of his teeth. It was a good day, and Simone was now thoroughly confident that it would only get better.

The interns sat in the neat rows of wooden chairs in front of the stage. Some squirmed about, others sat stiff as a monkey on a pole, while the rest were simply disinterested. Pickled Herring was trying to make conversation with a bored looking young man in the back row. Just as the noise from the interns had begun to increase from a dull murmur, it died down, as the hiring officer walked up onto the stage with a smile so wide, it was a wonder it stayed on his face. A few formalities were followed by an intensely boring speech about the company values, and mission, and goal, and aim, and how good the cafeteria was and the complimentary life insurance. The 'august gathering' grew restless. When another speech followed, as long as the man who delivered it was wide, the crowd had begin to stir, and when it came to the third speech, the bespectacled man was doomed to never finish

The first thing to land on the stage was a tomato. Now why it was that any particular member of the crowd carried a tomato around will be a mystery. Perhaps it was his lunch. But more such vegetable bearing citizens emerged soon after the other, emboldened by the lead of their brother. A banana decorated the man's shirtfront, a stray potato knocked the fat man off his seat, and a radish poked the second man in the eye. It was clear, after a while, that the members of the crowd had no time to spare. The point was well taken.

After a minute, the crowd was quietened with the gentle persuasion of a few brooms and dustpans, and the name of the winning intern was passed up upon the stage. The Fat man began without hesitation.

"Dylan McGowski-"

A solitary cheer rose in the crowd. Simone was devastated. It was not possible, he had to-

"Wins the best dressed intern."

The crowd grew threatening again, and the red man scattered all the other envelopes in favor of the red one.

"The winning intern is... Simone Gargensky!"

Simone felt as if he was floating, floating so high, that he did not see the small man rush up onto the stage, and whisper something to the fat man. Simone's euphoria was interrupted by the fat man's voice.

"Well, er, hmph. Mr. Simone, you see, because of policy changes, we cannot allow interns to have any criminal records at all. I understand stealing two onions is not a major crime,

but policy is policy. So the new winner is... Pickled Herrings?"

But Simone was deaf to the sounds outside now. All he heard was a cacophony of voices inside his head, rising to a roar, and blocking all else out. If what he had felt before was despair, it was simply the surface. He was now in the depths of despair. And it did not seem as if he would ever come out. Silently, he turned, and walked out, around, and over the overturned chairs littering the hall, onto the street, and went on his way home.

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Mr. Smethurst wrigled in his chair. Never, in the entire fourteen years of his career, had he felt so threatened, so small, and such a failure. He had to make amends for his costly mistake. He looked across the desk at his assistant Charles. The fellow seemed to him as if he was leering even. He looked down at his desk, and wondered how much longer he'd be sitting there. Something had to be done. And now, Mr. Smethurst could think of only one thing. He had to buy the agent out of it.



Simone radiated sorrow as he slowly trudged down the streets, on his way to his old, run down shack. Home. He wondered how long he'd have one, for a good while. Another job, was not as easy as it sounded. It was only with the greatest amount of luck he had found a job in his old factory, and with all the new machines, employment for a relatively unskilled individual like himself would be impossible. And even if he could do anything about anything now, he doubted he'd have the strength to. His life, was as low as it could get, and there was no getting

back up. With his head down, as he looked at the neatly cobbled pavement, he barely noticed the flash of movement in front of him. He looked up to see two large men in black suits, and glasses that hid their eyes.

"Sir," one of them began, "we have come to negotiate. Ten million up front, and three every year from now in British pounds, a new new identity with documents provided, a bank account for the aforementioned, and a residence in the elite of Southampton. For this, you will sever all ties with the USSR, and protection will be provided by MI6. Do you agree, sir?" The only words that Simone heard were ten million, pounds, and Southampton. He did not, he told himself, know what was happening. He did not even know if this was real. He simply stood, slack jawed.

Back in MI6, on the twelfth floor office space, Mr. Smethurst gritted his teeth, and waited for an update. When none was forthcoming, he placed his head none to gently upon the table edge. After much consideration, he growled into a mouthpiece-

"Make it twelve million, and four ongoing."

"Sir," the other said again, "the terms of our negotiation have changed. Twelve million up front, and four every year from now in British pounds, a new new identity with documents provided, a bank account for the aforementioned, and a residence in the elite of Southampton. For this, you will sever all ties with the USSR, and protection will be provided by MI6. Do you agree, sir?"

If it was a delusion, or if it was reality, Simone did not know. But there was only one way to find out

"Surest thing you know."



And so, Simone Gargensky, one of the richest, and happiest men in England, spent the rest of his life as a businessman, not that he needed to, but for the sake of something to do, and as a philanthropist, building the best, and cheapest hotels in London, for the rich and poor alike. He owned a beach, and was often seen there, bathing in the sun with a serene look on his face. He became fast friends with Pickled Herring, making him a partner in his company, and kept his old poodle till the end of its days.

And the NKVD was pleasantly astonished, when MI6 approached it with an alliance, benefit being to the USSR, but the NKVD was careful to betray no surprise, because, well... Mr. Smethurst retired, and started a grocery chain, and was happy. Mr. Charles found he actually liked the old man, and decided to help in the business, and became part of the family.

Ivan the assistant liked London so much, he became a tour guide.

- Anonymous

# FARE THEE WELL, FAITHFUL PATRON

Here ends the final issue of the Indus dispatch to be written by such hands as did, and have, for the past nine months. It would perhaps seem nice to describe the past months as a "beautiful journey of introspective journalism, and far-reaching ideas, cemented forever into the memory of Indus", but even we newspaper men must preserve some measure of veracity. On our best months, we averaged about five readers, and of them, four wouldn't make it past the cover (arguably the best part of the rag). We never

discussed the problems of the latest developments in had rather a ball of just even complacent in our that you've have much. Maybe, come, a student our editions, and few minutes, find himself the Dispatch. That, we do it. Drive on, Jeeves.

the world, and we never featured stem-cell research. But we've existing - content, perhaps fleetingness - and we hope enjoyed reading us just as someday, in the years to might chance upon one of setting down to read it, for a at home within the pages of hope for. But there you have



