

Here is a novel outline that I have come up with. I have not written this in actual written novel form yet, and note that here, Yvonne is meant to be the first-person narrator using very simplistic yet evocative vocabulary. This novel itself shall be titled "Intoxication".

Yvonne Chen is an intellectually disabled high school senior student in the years of 2036-2037 in the town of Eigen, California, who registers for Mrs. Thompson's AP Literature class both out of her own motivation to try to understand the more complex/extraordinary concepts more, and due to encouragement from her parents, as well as the incumbent president Field's policy to guide every student on equal paths to success. In her AP Lit class, she meets and befriends Kayla, an elusive but insightful girl of few words, Jackson, an outwardly crude but well-meaning thrill-seeker, and Andre, a boy of French heritage desperately wanting to appear cultured. In particular, Yvonne quickly develops a crush on Andre due to her perception of Andre's insight as genuine, and something she lacks. In Yvonne's spare time, she is passionate about her hobbies of drawing pastel art and constructing miniatures, but she also at the same time is bored by the concrete and mundane world she's constricted to due to her disability. Yvonne is also notably insecure about wanting to explore the novel and unprecedented more but lacking the intellectual capability to. Her intellectual disability, as she recalls it, came from a near-drowning incident "trying to explore waters too deep for her" at a young age.

In 2036, the AP Literature class is governed by a new policy implemented by then-incumbent president Field that screens movies and books for appropriateness to children based on their "conceptual maturity" (amount of philosophical depth, ambiguity, subtlety, moral nuance, and layered social commentary latently within the work), abandoning the old system of solely screening media based on the

presence of graphic content, innuendo, or crude language. The notation CM-x is meant to denote Conceptual Maturity age x - the least age x such that a subject has the intellectual maturity to interpret the piece of media without oversimplifying it or stretching it out of proportion or original intention. Field's arguments are based on the stance that all human beings, including children, should intuitively understand that murder is wrong and the good shall prevail over the evil, but on the other hand, ability to not miss the point of a layered satire or philosophical critique is less developed in adolescents. Field aims to stop the spread of misinformation by unqualified interpreters. The AP Literature class uses books of certain conceptual maturity/CM levels as scaffolding aimed to foster a curriculum that slowly and securely eases children into the world of more complex and subtle media. Even though Mrs. Thompson respects complex and authentic art in the form of literature, she only reluctantly teaches the CM framework due to force from higher-ups.

In the beginning of the 2036-2037 school year, an murder incident perpetrated by a freshman student at Yvonne's school propagates its way to national coverage, in which it is widely rumored that the student's rampage was inspired by the main character of a slasher thriller movie series Danger Danny. This specifically happened shortly after the release of the 4th installment - Danger Danny 4 in theaters. Notably, Danger Danny 4 is known for constant gore, profanity, and graphic content throughout, but Field's new Conceptual Maturity framework legally allows children as young as 10 to watch it unaccompanied, due to the fact that its plot is very simplistic and the morals are the standard "good defeating evil". This murder incident traumatizes the whole school, including Yvonne herself, who becomes ever more uncertain about the ambiguities and possibilities of the outside world and retreats further into her room making miniatures to cope. This murder incident also is leveraged as rhetoric against Field's

Conceptual Maturity system by the challenger candidate Trinity Staples in the 2036 presidential debates in the intuitive absurdity that kids can be safely exposed to graphic violence in media just because the story is shallow or intellectually undemanding.

In fall 2036, other than on her artistic hobbies and homework, Yvonne spends her days at home in proximity of her parents watching the 2036 presidential debates. Her parents seem notably invested, and even at times voicing opposing opinions on the election, but Yvonne doesn't understand why they must be so worked up over politics - she just views the TV as an annoyance that disturbs her peace, particularly when sitting in the living room crafting new miniatures. Politics stubbornly remains ever so infused in Yvonne's life though - for example, in December 2036 as the fall semester final, Mrs. Thompson gives Yvonne's class an essay prompt to reflect on the Danger Danny incident from September from a literary theoretic lens.

As early 2037 turns around, Trinity Staples defeats the incumbent Hector Field and assumes office. Announcements of an upcoming elusive film named "Intoxication" begins to leak through the grapevine, with an unknown director and origin. Its conceptual maturity rating was only assigned by Field's remaining system with a several month delay after Intoxication's announcement (and only a couple weeks before the actual release in theaters), but the moment news spread that the film was one of the rare films to attain the highest possible Conceptual Maturity rating (CM-21), requiring all attendees to be at least 21 to buy tickets for it, social media challenges started to arise, particularly based on the public awe of the film's elusivity and mystic qualities. In particular, Intoxication would've been rated G on the old MPA framework due to lacking any concrete sex, violence, or profane language whatsoever. Jackson in particular

plans to watch the movie on opening weekend partly to impugn the whole Conceptual Maturity framework as silly, arbitrary, and impractical, but another reason is he's particularly caught up on social media challenges like "Intoxication during Intoxication" (doing shots of alcohol during the film while avoiding actual fainting or blacking out, whether from the alcohol or the film itself). Andre, desperate to appear well read and insightful, immediately wants to watch the film so he can, in his own words, deconstruct it, while not admitting the real reason is to feign sophistication.

The theater release of Intoxication is the weekend before AP Literature exams, and Andre derives an excuse to his parents that his purpose of watching the film underage is to prepare for the complex concepts (or perhaps serve as inspiration) on the upcoming AP Literature exam. Andre and Jackson are best friends, despite the former sometimes assuming an air of superiority over the latter due to the latter's perceived lack of refinement. Jackson did in fact suggest to Andre that they hang out together and watch Danger Danny 2 right after its release in 2036, so he thought that he deserved to pay Andre one back by watching a film that Andre supposedly was really curious about, even if Jackson can't be bothered about analyzing artistic symbolism, and is also watching the film to participate in viral trends in social media. Hence, Jackson and Andre plan to meet-up at a late night art theater to watch the film alone so they could have the most riveting experience in a dark theater. In the upcoming weeks before Intoxication's release, Andre pontificates about it more and more in AP Literature class, and even tries to suggest to Mrs. Thompson the final exam not be the traditional AP exam but an essay analysis on the Intoxication film, to Mrs. Thompson's refusal. Yvonne starts to overhear about Andre's pontification, which develops from casual ramblings from him straight up bragging about superior taste to Yvonne and not so subtly disparaging her own art as "kitsch". Despite

this though, Yvonne becomes paradoxically even more attached to Andre, perceiving him as possessing the individuality and creativity that she lacks. Out of both wanting to impress Andre and a latent, subconscious curiosity on what really lies outside of her world of miniatures (the “Intoxication” film everyone is talking about), she requests to join Andre and Jackson in their viewing of the film, in which they both agree, but not without first warning her (Andre smugly tells Yvonne that it might be “too complex” for her to understand, while Jackson, perceptive of Yvonne’s innocence, makes a genuine attempt to divert her from the film, even if he outwardly bashes on the CM system as “stupid”.) Yvonne in her innocent kindness offers to invite her friend Kayla Peters to the outing too, but the latter declines out of a short intuitive reason that she doesn’t think it’ll be good for them.

Yvonne’s mom supports her to open up her creativity and go view the film Intoxication with her “friends”, but her dad is skeptical, not only due to Field’s warnings about it, but also because he sees Yvonne’s intention as meaningless virtue signaling. In the final few moments before Yvonne, Andre, and Jackson head to a midnight showing, there are three posters side by side - a reshowing of Danger Danny 4, a cutesy pastel anime about friendship that Yvonne was originally very excited for, and the actual film Intoxication. Yvonne tries to back out and is tempted to just go for her comfort zone with the pastel anime movie, but is peer pressured by Andre and Jackson to come along with them to watch Intoxication, the “big boy film”. Andre and Jackson then debate on whether a faint white dot near the bottom of the poster is due to intentional symbolism or just the ink wearing off in the summer heat. Inside the ticketing booth, Andre in particular manages to convince Kurt Thompson, Mrs. Thompson’s husband and a ticketing employee at the art theater, to let them in the movie despite being under 21 using a point that it’s for his own inspiration/preparation of the upcoming AP Literature exam. When Mr.

Thompson rolls his eyes at the lame excuse due to not accounting for Yvonne and Jackson's presences, Andre doubles down by asserting that he brought along with friends to make the film viewing a "group study" for the upcoming exam. Kurt Thompson reluctantly agrees but only because he was an aspiring scientist and mathematician that really disdained being relegated to such a monotonous job as a movie theater employee.

When Yvonne, Andre, and Jackson watch the film *Intoxication*, they each realize intuitively the real reason why the film is rated CM-21. The plot is non-linear or non-existent at all and replaced by shadowy and abstract fragments and symbolisms, with numerous unexplained glitches. The film *Intoxication* appears to be a simultaneous yet separate parallel of each of their own lives, including how they've lived their life to how their respective fates might occur later. The film appears to interact with the viewers as much as the viewers are reacting to the film. At a climax point of the film, Yvonne faints due to subconsciously viewing herself and what looks like her own fate manifest in the film. Andre watches the film without much immersion into the actual art and instead tries to intellectualize it as much as possible, bringing a pen and paper to write down his thoughts, being semi-serious with his excuse that the film could serve as a good inspiration for the rigorous AP Literature essays a week later. Jackson drowns out his experience of the film with the challenge of staying awake while shooting liquor back-to-back during it, and he brags to Yvonne that he was tough enough to not faint during the film. Andre condescendingly remarks to Yvonne that she missed the "moment of symbolic masterpiece" of the film by fainting during that part. The moment Yvonne faints, meanwhile, the Conceptual Maturity framework implemented by President Hector Field (2032-2036) is repealed and declared unconstitutional by Trinity Staple's presidential cabinet, although state laws might lag behind in following suit on

dismantling the Conceptual Maturity framework. Staples in particular announces her repeal of the law on TV that “it is absurd my 5 year old children can watch the film Intoxication just fine and be unphased, yet you elitists are gatekeeping it to age 21 or above.”

The Monday after the film’s screening comes the AP Literature exam. Yvonne barely remembers what she even wrote for the essay portion and haphazardly marks random half-guesses in the multiple choice section, but somehow gets a 4 on it. Andre writes his essay portion of the AP Literature on the film Intoxication, trying his best to analyze it from a rigorous “postmodernist philosophical lens”, only to get a 3 on the exam. Jackson failed to even show up to the exam.

Throughout the immediate next few months, Yvonne’s mental health declines at an unprecedented rate. Her pastel artwork and miniatures slowly and subconsciously/uncontrollably become infused with not overt violence but incompleteness, darkness, and fragmentation. She withdraws herself even more, spending days in her room, and for the first time starts deconstructing/taking apart her miniatures that took months of polish to perfect. To her parents, Yvonne’s 4 on the exam is only a piece of false reassurance for her parents that she might actually be more “creative” than they thought.

Some time later, Jackson lapses into a permanent vegetative state from his alcoholic usage, in particular, from drowning in his own emesis. Andre drops out of college supposedly due to failing grades and becomes an aimless vagabond not even qualified for most menial labor. Yvonne’s corpse is found in a stagnant body of water near the school. By Yvonne’s parents’ later petitioning to the Californian senate which still hasn’t officially followed suit with the repeal of the CM rating framework, a new, sanitized version of the film Intoxication is released overshadowing the original version by promising clearer and more

concrete narrative explanations to interested people. This version overshadows the original version of Intoxication in mainstream discourse, particularly due to the intellectual prestige associated with high Conceptual Maturity becoming meaningless after its repeal by President Staples, and in the next several years becomes canonized in many academic institutions around the country as an entry-level staple for any film studies major.

Sometime a decade or two later, a curious random person stumbles across the claimed “original cut” Blu-ray of the film Intoxication from some Ebay seller and buys it for just \$13.