

(More structured than previous versions)

Here, we should make Yvonne Chen the first-person narrator in her own simplistic vocabulary as well as her sensory thinking style.

Purpose/Intention: To explore the Adornian aesthetics while also criticizing Adornian philosophy via the character of Yvonne (more broadly, to ask the questions “What is art? From what forms do art arise from? And what function/purpose should serve in life and society? What power does art have? How do viewers interact with art?”). To deliver a sharp but layered critique on zeitgeist American politics and media sensationalism. To critique intellectual elitism and systematization/axiomization of human emotion. In particular, to also expose the flaws in the ways which America is protecting children and teenagers.

Setting:

Location: Eigen, California (population 59049 in 2037)

Year: 2036-2037

In-universe locations:

- Donnie Pellburg High School (fictional placeholder name)
- Movie Theater: Withers Auditorium (placeholder name, haven't decided on a permanent one just yet) - theater where they see the film “Intoxication”

Characters:

Primary Layer characters:

Main Trio:

Yvonne Chen Info Sheet:

Name: Yvonne Chen

Age: 17-18

Birthdate: May 9, 2019

Religion: Spiritual but not Religious

Backstory: Anoxic brain injury from a near-drowning during childhood (she vaguely remembers wanting to venture too far from her floatie and slipping under) that caused a lasting mild to moderate intellectual disability. Frequent (implied) IEP meetings during high school years (2033-2037). She is in AP Literature due to a combination of her own latent curiosity to explore more “complicated things”/gravitating towards yet being bored of mundanity at the

same time, her mom's encouraging of her, as well as Hector Field's own legal scaffolding - "no child left behind" educational policy.

Purpose: to criticize intellectual elitism as well as the notion that art must be difficult and discomfoting/dissonant to qualify as real art

Hobbies: Drawing pastel art (especially fanart of the character Hokaga from her favorite TV show/anime: Authentic Noodle Recipe), crafting miniatures (especially houses and gardens).

Romantic Interests: Andre Dubois (attraction based on how smart and insightful she perceives him to be, but also his genuine kindness when he's not in public pretending to be intellectual)

Favorite piece of media: Authentic Noodle Recipe (slice of life anime), rated Conceptual maturity CM-15 in the new system. The show is delivered in a conventional 12-episode form, but the movie finale is released in theaters just before Intoxication the film is (May 16, 2037). This show is set in around 1941. It appears to be family-friendly, lighthearted, cutesy, and has a warm atmosphere, and infuses pastel colors throughout but has its own hidden depth/existentialist themes. The premise is about a young orphaned woman named Hokaga Akotu who was orphaned by her parents dying in her early childhood. She has a faint memory from a very young age of her mom's noodle recipes and has a burning passion to carry on the family legacy, even if she can't remember how the noodles exactly tasted like. Amidst the political wartime tensions, her poverty, and her difficult upbringing at an orphanage, Hokaga nonetheless is tenacious and proceeds to internalize the brutish backdrop as an even stronger motivator to keep doing what she enjoys, which is running her own noodle shop. She makes meaning out of the process of cooking noodles and just making customers happy rather than just to make a living. One of her mottos when asked by customers "what inspired you to open up this restaurant? Was it to grow a steady business and make a living?" is her response "I can make a living without ever earning money." Another one of Hokaga's catchphrases is "Life is full of twists and turns just like yummy noodles". In later episodes, Hokaga also faces challenges in that she is pressured by both her own kindness and local government factions to make a use of her noodle cooking towards supporting and providing nourishment to Japanese soldiers during WWII (despite being apolitical herself), and without

government compensation risks her cherished self-made noodle restaurant going bankrupt. The anime ends in Hokaga not moving to a different country and not necessarily complying to the orders, but Hokaga instead being arrested as a prisoner of war because she helped enemy Chinese soldiers by providing them with her cooking to be nourished as well. It is subtly implied in the end though not spelled out clearly that Hokaga is in her execution room and during her last meal (which she requested homemade noodles) is still pretending to stir her noodles as if she were cooking for one final time.

Authentic Noodle Recipe is Yvonne Chen's #1 comfort show that she watches and rewatches and even if it has largely grim undertones, she reframes the political backdrop in a positive way, as just "a cute girl like me doing what she enjoys." (Will be expounded in the section "Secondary Layer Characters" later. )

Clothing: Usually dresses for comfort, soft colors, oversized tops. Yvonne's favorite T-shirt to wear anywhere/anytime, to bed, to school, at home, etc. is a T-shirt featuring on the front a picture of a bittersweet yet smiling Hokaga Atoku with her catchphrase "Life is full of twists and turns just like yummy noodles" below it. In particular, on this T-shirt, Hokaga Atoku is pictured holding a bowl of noodles that she has cooked. If one looks closely, the porcelain bowl itself pictured on the shirt has a slight crack near the top.

Personality: As a standout trait, she's very kind and agreeable, always going out of her way to help others, out of her internalization that if she's comfort seeking, other people also deserve to be made comfortable and enjoy their lives.

However, she is also neurotic over having limited potential (both as a result of ingrained elitism as a result of the administration in 2032-2036 being controlled by President Field and as a result of internalized boredom) and increasingly through her adolescent years, tries to search for meaning beyond just her comfortable yet mundane pastel art and miniatures, which is partly why she is enrolled in AP Literature during the 2036-2037 school year. She has not many concrete ambitions other than to just explore and take life easily, but she is (at least at first, before the viewing of Intoxication) rather orderly with her miniature building and creative projects. She also tries to study very hard sometimes, especially in harder classes like AP Lit, but despite that still has a 1.79 GPA.

Name: Andre Dubois

Age: 17-18

Birthdate: June 19, 2019

Purpose: Andre's character is also meant to critique the expectation in America that the canon in high art is Western and Eurocentric.

Hobbies: (publically) writing his own novels, reading/analyzing philosophy and high literature, and watching. Privately, watching mainstream media like *Danger Danny* and *Authentic Noodle Recipe* (although he does not want to admit this in public)

Backstory: Aside from the French elitist culture he was raised in, Andre deep down knows that can't understand art in the same intuitive way Yvonne can and hence has to apply an intellectual scaffolding to it as a way to cope and repress his weakness in his memory. Due to childhood incidents where he was criticized for experimenting in his art classes back in France or showing unfiltered raw emotion at a funeral, he is now deeply afraid of ambiguity and uses intellectualism and philosophy to provide a certain and sound framework/foundation for analysis. Andre has a tension inside him of envying and even admiring what he outwardly hates (he uses hate to patch up what he can't understand) - that is Yvonne and her authenticity despite her low intellect. Upon hearing of Yvonne's death after the film *Intoxication* many years later, he finally realizes that he's been doing philosophy wrong and even his most rigorous analytical frameworks are failing him. He starts feeling nihilistic about life and drops out from college to first become a vagabond, then develop a Bohemian lifestyle, and then finally to retreat to nature and live on a boat sailing through the ocean, never to be seen again much like Amelia Earhart.

Romantic Interests: Yvonne, attraction based on envying her authenticity and his own *perception* of her as lacking cultural expectations and being able to just do what she enjoys without having to uphold an intellectual veneer. (although Andre himself is ironically blind to Yvonne's whole mental disability and the social ostracization and elitism against her that she's faced due to that)

Favorite Pieces of Media (at least what he claims to really enjoy): Gershwin (particularly *Prelude #3*), Lynchian films (particularly *Mulholland Drive*), postmodernist art in general, *Intoxication* (2037 film) but he only watches it for the intellectual cultural capital under the veneer of using it for "AP Literature exam study material"

Personality: Appears confident and intellectual but is deep down very unsure about where he really belongs, and uses both philosophy and his cultured status as a way to root himself in life. He tries to suppress rawer and more authentic/intuitive emotions, not necessarily seeing it as meaningless, but out of

fear of his ingrained intellectual and serious facade (from French tradition) being broken, and also out of uncertainty on what he should really do with/navigate emotions.

The novel that Andre is writing about maybe could be about his own life/i.e. Some autobiography.

Name: Jackson Walker

Age: 17-18

Birthday: February 13, 2019

Hobbies: drinking (doing shots), skateboarding, playing poker, hanging out with friends, recreational drug use

Backstory: needs later fleshing out, will do so later

Relationships: is one of Andre's best friends, much despite the latter's outward disdaining of his lack of cultural refinement. He and Andre have seen Danger Danny 4 together as a bonding activity when it first came out in August 2036, and the latter later will deny having ever participated in this excursion.

Clothing: Danger Danny 4 merch T-shirts (one of these T-shirts could feature the movie's tagline "Seal the Deal. Steal the Kill" on top of a picture of a stoic and formidable Danny Canopy holding a gun in one hand and a half finished bottle of Jack Daniel's in the other), ripped jeans, sunglasses, baseball caps

Favorite Piece of Media: Danger Danny franchise, pop/rap music in general

Personality: Outwardly and by default, he is thrill-seeking (e.g. following social media trends) and crude. However, sometimes, Jackson could be a more nuanced character - reflecting Staple's populism but actually treating everyone equally deep down (even if he is crude and trend following). Doesn't really care much for nuance or deeper meaning at all, tends to skip school. At certain points though he could deliver unexpected/unintended insights about the fragility of art ("perhaps we could accidentally deface/damage the Intoxication movie tickets that were so hard-earned by my buddy Andre if I spilt shots of Jack Daniels all over it."), but quickly suppresses them to give into hedonism/pragmatism ("yeah, the theater employee won't let us in with a clearly damaged ticket, especially if it reeks of alcohol. Challenge ruined.")

Kayla Peters:

Age: 17-18

Birthday: unknown

Hobbies: unknown, but probably reading, idk (haven't fleshed her out really much at all)

Relationships: Yvonne's best friend from childhood who also signed up for Mrs. Lisa Thompson's AP Literature class

Backstory: She politely declined to go to the Intoxication film screening with Yvonne and the rest of the trio, because she "had a bad feeling about it"

Clothing: idk tbh

Personality: maybe could be fleshed out later, but rn I'm not really feeling like it

Adult characters:

Name: Mrs. Lisa Thompson

Age: 44-45

Birthyear: 1992

Occupation: AP Literature Teacher at Donnie Pellburg High School

Backstory: needs more fleshing out, or maybe doesn't idk (less central of a character)

Relationships: Wife of Kurt Thompson

Personality: She is outwardly disciplined, conscientious, and strict, probably because she wants to both show competence and not lose her job under the new Conceptual Maturity (CM) framework implemented by President Field, but also because she just really enjoys teaching and spreading knowledge and wants to do it seriously, rigorously and communicatively. She understands the CM framework as well-intentioned to both protect art from being perverted by those who are intellectually unqualified and to protect young people from the opacity, philosophical difficulty, existential ambiguity, and introspective grimness of the purest forms of art. Despite this, Mrs. Thompson doesn't personally support this framework, knowing that its very codification into law will completely negate its original idealistic intention, and she is only forced to teach it by new curriculum standards in 2036. However, below the surface of being competent and disciplined, Mrs. Thompson should have a special understanding and place of empathy for her student Yvonne Chen, and she could regularly admire her artwork (drawings and miniatures), while also emphasizing Yvonne's maturity and autonomy, impugning the CM framework that intellectualism/culture should be gatekept, both for purposes of not commodifying art as cultural capital and to encourage students' own autonomous intellectual growth. One day near the beginning of the school year, Yvonne Chen could wear her Hokaga T-shirt that says "Life is full of twists and turns just like yummy noodles", and Mrs. Thompson

should show legitimate interest in Yvonne's shirt while also complimenting her on it, and herself watch the anime Authentic Noodle Recipe and appreciate the genuine artistic depth in that show despite its more conventional/traditional cutesy format. Later, if Andre and Jackson make fun of Yvonne for her passion for this anime, Mrs. Thompson could rebuke them in an effective yet also insightful and respectful way - particularly she should try to dismantle Andre's worldview of Eurocentrism and ingrained prejudice against art/media originating from other cultures.

Name: Kurt Thompson

Age: 50-51

Birthyear: 1986

Occupation: Clerk/Ticketer at movie theater

Relationship: Mrs. Lisa Thompson's husband

Backstory: needs more fleshing out, or perhaps doesn't at all(he's only a very tangential side character anyways)

Personality/Background: A failed aspirational pure mathematician and theoretical physician stuck at a mundane and low-paying ticketer job. Hates his job internally but complies because he has to survive and pay the bills. Sharp and witty in speech but deep down has no malicious intent (true neutral).

Name: Haoran Chen (Yvonne's father)

Age: 44-45

Birthyear: 1992

Occupation: not indicated (yet), maybe some sort of research scientist in psychology or neuroscience (which is another reason why he might support Hector Field due to shared academic interests)? Idk

Backstory/personality: Judging from his refusal to fully assimilate into American culture when he immigrated from China (this is subtly implied through his name still being a Chinese name), he naturally holds more traditionalist and conservative views from his Chinese upbringing. However, Haoran ends up paradoxically supporting the democratic candidate Hector Field despite his ingrained conservatism, due to being convinced by Hector's academic ethos and rationality/science/psychometrics studies. His stance is also motivated out of fear - he is constantly afraid that one day, Yvonne's low intellect and low tolerance of abstraction is what will cause her demise (in which he was ironically correct), and

she wasn't built to tolerate meatier ideas. Maybe Haoran's less fluent English could also be a marker of his resistance to assimilation to American culture

Name: Rebecca Chen (Yvonne's mother)

Age: 38-39

Birthyear: 1998

Occupation: not indicated (yet)

Backstory/personality: functionally apolitical, but in 2036, she supports Trinity Staples's populist republicanism over Field's democratic elitism only because she believes Yvonne isn't inherently intellectually disabled and she has great creativity in her miniatures and pastel drawings that she makes. Rebecca has repressed the horrifying memory of seeing her daughter's near-drowning and suffer an anoxic brain injury back in the year 2024, and wants to believe her daughter can really succeed and start her own art studio in the future.

Name: Trinity Staples (Republican/Populist presidential candidate of 2036)

Age: 44-45

Birthyear: 1992

Occupation: Former Governor before 2037, President (2037-)

Religion: Baptist Christianity

Political Position: Family values, is religiously puritan. Thinks that the new conceptual maturity framework implemented by Field is both arbitrary and preposterous and vehemently argues against it. Uses the Bible to justify that the real elements that should be censored or restricted from movies/media are simple ones, especially swearing, innuendo, and crude humor. Argues that Intoxication is completely safe since her own young children were completely fine after watching it. Thinks it's wrong to gatekeep children from exploring art, although she herself is not very well-read on art or culture at all.

Personality: captivating, bubbly, good sense of humor, agreeable, dutiful, disciplined, values common sense/practicality over abstract ideas, very casual register/language

Name: Hector Field (Democratic presidential candidate of 2036)

Age: 82-83

Birthyear: 1954

Occupation: President (2032-2036)

Religion: Non-denominational Christianity



Political Position: Creator and implementer (into law) of the Conceptual Maturity framework (based on the book that he authored). Believes that Conceptual Maturity will do the dual role of: (1) protecting serious art from teens/immature minds and (2) protecting teens/immature minds from serious art. Believes that the old MPAA rating system that prioritized sexual innuendo, crude language, and graphic violence is misguided in that it doesn't account for intellectual development. Believes that even young children would intuitively and easily understand that murder is straight up wrong, but on the other hand might miss the point of layered critique or satire. Often cites the fact that the cerebral cortex is the last to fully develop (at age 25).

Book that he co-authored fictional philosopher and psychologist Ray Klein:

Theory of Aesthetics: a Western and modernized approach

Personality: Academic, Civilized, speaks in more formal language, insightful, loves to debate, serious yet also soft-spoken and polite, well-intentioned, dutiful, educated, conscientious, ambiverted

Name: Daniel (unknown last name)

Age: 14

Birthday: unknown

Hobbies: unknown

Backstory: completely unknown

Function: he perpetrated a shooting incident in the fictional school, for unknown actual reasons. Trinity Staples and her supporter fanbase claim that he was inspired by the Danger Danny franchise to commit this act of violence, but this connection remains tenuous and often supported in contrived ways such as "OMG the actual perpetrator and the fictional movie character happen to share the same name, Daniel. Coincidence? I THINK NOT!!!"

Personality: unknown/elusive

Secondary Layer characters (doubly fictional characters):

Authentic Noodle Recipe characters:

Hokaga Atoku: [TBA]/just see summary above in Yvonne's character definition (will flesh out even more later, if I even want to), but here it is repeated again just for reference: The show is delivered in a conventional 12-episode form, but the movie finale is released in theaters just before Intoxication the film is (May 16, 2037). This show is set in around 1941. It appears to be family-friendly, lighthearted, cutesy, and has a warm atmosphere, and infuses pastel colors throughout but has its own hidden depth/existentialist themes. The premise is about a young orphaned woman named Hokaga Akotu who was orphaned by her parents dying in her early childhood. She has a faint memory from a very young age of her mom's noodle recipes and has a burning passion to carry on the family legacy, even if she can't remember how the noodles exactly tasted like. Amidst the political wartime tensions, her poverty, and her difficult upbringing at an orphanage, Hokaga nonetheless is tenacious and proceeds to internalize the brutish backdrop as an even stronger motivator to keep doing what she enjoys, which is running her own noodle shop. She makes meaning out of the process of cooking noodles and just making customers happy rather than just to make a living. One of her mottos when asked by customers "what inspired you to open up this restaurant? Was it to grow a steady business and make a living?" is her response "I can make a living without ever earning money." Another one of Hokaga's catchphrases is "Life is full of twists and turns just like yummy noodles". In later episodes, Hokaga also faces challenges in that she is pressured by both her own kindness and local government factions to make a use of her noodle cooking towards supporting and providing nourishment to Japanese soldiers during WWII (despite being apolitical herself), and without government compensation risks her cherished self-made noodle restaurant going bankrupt. The anime ends in Hokaga not moving to a different country and not necessarily complying to the orders, but Hokaga instead being arrested as a prisoner of war because she helped enemy Chinese soldiers by providing them with her cooking to be nourished as well. It is subtly implied in the end though not spelled out clearly that Hokaga is in her execution room and during her last meal (which she requested homemade noodles) is still pretending to stir her noodles as if she were cooking for one final time.

Other characters: TBA, will flesh out later (am a bit lazy rn plus this isn't that central to the main story/might be kinda superfluous anyways lmao)

Authentic Noodle Recipe CM-rating: CM-15

Danger Danny characters (The fourth installment, Danger Danny 4, is canonically stylized as D4ng3r D4nny 4):

Daniel "Danger Danny" Canopy

Age: 27

Birthday (in the Danger Danny universe): February 13, 2004

Hobbies: drinking Jack Daniels (his canonical favorite drink), gambling, smoking, shooting enemy assassins

Occupation: a spy/assassin

Personality: crass, crude, assertive, motivated, tough

Function: caricature of hypermasculinity

Jenny Glompa

Age: 25

Birthday (in the Danger Danny universe): June 15, 2006

Function: serves as Danny Canopy's love interest/submissive wife only (is herself an assassin but her role is relegated to a helper/assistant position to her assigned "partner in crime" "Danger Danny" Canopy). A sharp satirization of reinforced misogyny in the media.

Personality: attention seeking, wants to be loved, serviceable, extroverted, agreeable

The fictional Danger Danny franchise is meant to satirize the real life tropey and shallow James Bond franchise. Canonically, in this universe in 2036-2037, Jack Daniel's whiskey does an advertising partnership with Danger Danny.

Danger Danny (the original film) CM-rating: CM-13

Danger Danny 2 CM-rating: CM-12

Danger Danny 3 CM-rating: CM-11

Danger Danny 4 CM-rating: CM-10

Intoxication (the film) characters:

As initially stated, these characters should be a direct reflection of the trio who watched the film together but in a more abstract, symbolic, and distorted form. They should in no way have conventional or direct names. No violence, sex, drugs, or profane language at all, and only very confusing and fragmented sequences of images and symbols. These characters should be intuitively and

subconsciously recognizable by Yvonne, Andre, and Jackson as reflections of themselves and their own fates, but ONLY subconsciously recognizable rather than consciously so.

Intoxication should have no intro or theme song at all as it means to completely subvert conventional form. On the other hand the OP to Authentic Noodle Recipe could be in E Dorian that modulates upwards a half step to F Dorian near the end. The OP to Authentic Noodle Recipe could follow the Dorian chord progression i->III->VII->IV. The intro song to the Danger Danny series should be G mixolydian throughout.

More info: The original intoxication screening in May 2037 was in a small art theater where the main trio of students were the only people in the theater, and it was a very late night screening. This subtly provides more interpretive opacity - maybe the film could affect different people who watch it uniquely, either it could actually have supernatural capabilities for predicting fate or the subject watching the film intoxication is just projecting themselves in the film. It should be unclear whether the film actually does have supernatural or shapeshifting powers. It should never be confirmed nor denied in the story.

The actual writing of this novel should show equally plausible signs that the film Intoxication indeed does have supernatural predictive power, and that it doesn't inherently have such power and projection is instead the culprit for self fulfilling prophecy.

Intoxication (the film) CM rating: CM-21

Note that here, Yvonne is meant to be the first-person narrator using very simplistic yet evocative vocabulary (around 5th-6th grade level). This now opens up the stage to "show don't tell" - showing both her own intuitive/visceral emotions (both to daily life and as a reaction to the film Intoxication) as well as inviting the reader to slowly puzzle together the worldbuilding overall political backdrop through sensory or mental fragments of what Yvonne manages to see/hear in her own eyes.

Main Plot Structure:

Yvonne Chen is an intellectually disabled high school senior student (at Pellburg High) 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, a shooting incident perpetrated by a freshman student by an elusive kid named Daniel at Yvonne's school propagates its way to national coverage, in which it is widely rumored that the student's murder 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. Field however argues against it and blames not Danger Danny itself as much as the culture industry that produced it, while also arguing from the perspective that with gratuitous shallow violence, kids should intuitively understand to not replicate it, while movies that are intellectually deep, have layered satire/moral ambiguity, or provide subtle social commentary are actually less digestible by children. Field isn't completely right either though as his elitist system that values unusual or new ideas also somewhat misses the power of simplistic and quotidian mass media to brainwash youth into things like hypermasculinity.

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 (or PG) 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 reshooting 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. To Yvonne's perspective, Yvonne after viewing the movie *Intoxication* could strangely be drawn to finding the little white dot (the same as the one appearing on the poster for the film), which reflects her neurotic need to find higher and more interesting meaning in life, eventually culminating in her dead body being found floating in some stagnant lake. This makes her suicide if it even was intended as one ambiguous.

Some time later, Jackson lapses into a permanent vegetative state from his alcoholic usage, in particular, from drowning in his own emesis. (Alternatively, perhaps Jackson could also die of a drug overdose.) 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.