



NICOLE TUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

‘I Cried an Ocean of Tears’
The tens of thousands of Ukrainian women and men widowed by the war are finding different ways to cope with the grief. Page 8.

Gazans Spend
A Whole Year
In a Blackout

By LIAM STACK and BILAL SHBAIR
JERUSALEM — Mariam Abu Amra’s six children panic when the sun goes down. They are afraid of the dark, and ever since the war in Gaza began, their home is pitch-black by bed-time. The neighborhood outside is dark, too, illuminated only by cell-phone screens that use up precious battery life. The power has been out for more than one year in the Gaza Strip, and Gazans have had to make do with alternatives that fall far short of their basic needs.

“Every night is a struggle for us,” said Ms. Abu Amra, 36, who lives in Deir al Balah, in central Gaza. “Sometimes my children ask me when the electricity will be back again, but I have no answer.” Electricity is a fundamental building block of modern life, and Gaza has had very little of it since Israel took measures to cut off its supply in the first days of the war in what it said was an effort to weaken Hamas. That yearlong blackout undergirds almost every deprivation imposed by the war, and has turned bare necessities — from functioning medical equipment to bedroom night lights — into luxuries.

“I never knew how much all the people and the families here, including myself, relied on electricity,” said Ms. Abu Amra, who now cooks over a fire and does laundry by hand before the sun sets. “I have to wake up early now so I don’t miss a single minute of daylight.”

Before the war, years of conflict and an Israeli and Egyptian economic blockade imposed to weaken Hamas had left Gaza’s electrical grid able to provide only limited hours of power each day. Cutting off Gaza’s access to Israeli electricity was one of the first things the Israeli authorities did after the Hamas-led attack on Oct. 7 last year. Some Palestinians have been able to turn to generators or solar power, but Israel has severely restricted the ability to bring new solar panels, or the fuel to run generators, into the territory, arguing that Hamas has stockpiled fuel intended for civilians to use for rocket attacks.

Those measures have remained

Continued on Page 6

A Child Influencer Whose Avid Fans Were Men

By JENNIFER VALENTINO-DeVRIES and MICHAEL H. KELLER

For her 18th birthday in March, “Jacky Dejo,” a snowboarder, bikini model and child influencer turned social media entrepreneur, celebrated on the secluded island of Dominica.

On Instagram, she appeared in strappy swimsuits, basking luxuriously on a black-sand beach and floating in a jungle stream.

Her fans — thousands of men had been following her through her teens as she posted and sold photos — wished her well and eagerly anticipated her next move online as an adult.

“Happy birthday,” one wrote in French. “I can’t wait to see you

Seeing the Dismal Side
of the Internet, and
Profiting From It

without any clothes on.”

Born two years after the launch of Facebook, she belongs to the first generation to grow up with social media and the multibillion-dollar creator economy that is re-defining adolescence for girls.

A Dutch citizen — her real name is Jacqueline de Jong — she has lived in more than a half-dozen countries and picks up languages with ease. But she is equally at home on the internet, where she has built a global fan base that is

dominated by American men. At 16, with the consent of her parents, she was pulling in upward of \$50,000 some months, she says, charging for access to her online posts and images.

When The New York Times began investigating the culture of underage girl influencers more than a year ago, Jacky Dejo — or simply Jacky, as she is widely known by her followers on the internet — quickly emerged as a prominent and enigmatic figure.

Still underage, she was posting salacious images of herself on Instagram and had her own photo-selling platform. Everyone in the ever-growing world of child influencers seemed to know about her — mothers who managed their

Continued on Page 10



MARTINA TUATY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

“Jacky Dejo,” now a social media entrepreneur, is a Dutch citizen who lives in St. Maarten.

In Tumultuous Times, More Readers Are Reaching for Magical ‘Healing Fiction’

By ALEXANDRA ALTER

At Toshikazu Kawaguchi’s book signings, it’s not uncommon for fans to burst into tears.

His quirky fantasy series — set in a magical cafe in Tokyo where customers can travel back in time while their coffee cools — centers on ordinary people struggling with loss and regret who wish

they could change the past. Readers often tell Kawaguchi that the stories helped them work through their grief, or led them to reconcile with an estranged relative or friend, he said.

“A comment I get a lot is, the books helped me heal,” Kawaguchi said through an interpreter during a visit to New York this fall.

A blockbuster in Japan, Kawaguchi’s series, “Before the Coffee

Gets Cold,” has gained a global following, selling more than six million copies worldwide in 46 languages.

The fifth book in his series, “Before We Forget Kindness,” which was published in the United States on Tuesday, has drawn thousands of starred reviews on Goodreads (“I sobbed while reading,” a Goodreads user named Ally Fir, co-owner of The Mysterious Book-

case in Bournemouth, England, gushed in a typical five-star review.)

The series belongs to a booming genre called “healing fiction” — cozy, feel-good novels that have long been popular in Japan and Korea and are now catching on in translation around the world.

Fans of the genre say the heartwarming, whimsical stories offer comfort at a time when the world

seems off-kilter and chaotic, and feel like an escape from distressing news about wars, political animosity and environmental disasters.

The novels typically take place in mundane locations — laundromats, convenience stores, diners, bookstores and cafes — but often have a dose of magical realism. They tend to be short and episodic.

Continued on Page 12

Foreign Chiefs
Quicken Stride
To Trump’s Ear

Trying to Build Bridges
and to Mend Fences

This article is by Mark Landler, Matina Stevis-Gridneff and Marc Santora.

When Prime Minister Keir Starmer met Donald J. Trump at Trump Tower for dinner on Sept. 26, it was part of a British charm offensive to nurture a relationship between a left-wing leader and a right-wing potential president. So when Mr. Trump turned to Mr. Starmer before parting and told him, “We are friends,” according to a person involved in the evening, it did not go unnoticed.

Whether they stay friends is anybody’s guess.

For months leading up to Mr. Trump’s political comeback — and in the heady days since his victory was confirmed — foreign leaders have rushed, once again, to ingratiate themselves with him. Their emissaries have cultivated people in Mr. Trump’s orbit or with think tanks expected to be influential in setting policies for a second Trump administration.

Some leaders, like President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine, are drafting their pitches to appeal to Mr. Trump’s transactional nature; others, like Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada, have deployed teams of officials to the United States to visit dozens of Republican leaders in the hope that they can moderate Mr. Trump’s most radical instincts on imposing tariffs.

History suggests that many of these bridge-building efforts will fail. By the end of his first term, Mr. Trump had soured on several leaders with whom he started off on good terms. His protectionist trade policy and aversion to alliances — coupled with a mercurial personality — fueled clashes that overrode the rapport that the leaders had labored to cultivate.

“There were two misapprehensions about Trump,” Malcolm Turnbull, a former prime minister of Australia, said in an interview. “The first was he would be different in office than he was on the campaign trail. The second was the best way to deal with him was to suck up to him.”

In January 2017, Mr. Turnbull had a notoriously hostile phone call with Mr. Trump over whether the United States would honor an Obama-era deal to accept 1,250 refugees, which Mr. Trump opposed (the United States did end up taking them). Mr. Turnbull said he later found other common ground with Mr. Trump, even talking him out of imposing tariffs on some Australian exports.

The difference this time, Mr. Turnbull said, is that “everybody knows exactly what they’re going to get. He’s highly transactional. You’ve got to be able to demonstrate that a particular course of action is in his interest.”

Well before the election, leaders began anticipating a Trump victory by seeking him out. Mr. Zelensky met him in New York the

Continued on Page 14

DEMOCRATS SIFT
THROUGH RUBBLE,
SEEKING ANSWERS

ASSIGNING THE BLAME

Pointing to War in Gaza,
Misinformation and
Identity Politics

This article is by Reid J. Epstein, Lisa Lerer and Nicholas Nehamas.

MADISON, Wis. — A depressed and demoralized Democratic Party is beginning the painful slog into a largely powerless future, as its leaders grapple with how deeply they underestimated Donald J. Trump’s resurgent hold on the nation.

The nationwide repudiation of the party stunned many Democrats who had expressed a “nauseous” confidence about their chances in the final weeks of the race. As they sifted through the wreckage of their defeats, they found no easy answers as to why voters so decisively rejected their candidates.

In more than two dozen interviews, lawmakers, strategists and officials offered a litany of explanations for Vice President Kamala Harris’s failure — and just about all of them fit neatly into their preconceived notions of how to win in politics.

The quiet criticism, on phone calls, in group chats and during morose team meetings, was a behind-the-scenes preview of the intraparty battle to come, with Democrats quickly falling into the ideological rifts that have defined their party for much of the Trump era.

What was indisputable was how badly Democrats did. They lost the White House, surrendered control of the Senate and appeared headed to defeat in the House. They performed worse than four years ago in cities and suburbs, rural towns and college towns. An early New York Times analysis of the results found the vast majority of the nation’s more than 3,100 counties swinging rightward since President Biden won in 2020.

The results showed that the Harris campaign, and Democrats more broadly, had failed to find an effective message against Mr. Trump and his down-ballot allies or to address voters’ unhappiness

Continued on Page 22



KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

The election night gathering for Vice President Kamala Harris at Howard University.

SECOND THOUGHTS Wary of the president-elect’s promise of a mass deportation, some would-be migrants are staying away. PAGE 14

CLIMATE President-elect Donald J. Trump’s transition team for energy and the environment is considering some drastic changes. PAGE 23

NATIONAL 17-26

A Mission to Recover Memories

A hurricane washed away a family’s home, and with it photographs of a son who died as a child. But a determined detective was on the case. PAGE 17

Librarians Facing a Crisis

As libraries become public stages for social problems, the people who work there are burning out. PAGE 18

SPORTS 30-33

N.F.L. Midseason Awards

Halfway through the schedule, we take a look at the players and coaches on track to claim the big prizes. PAGE 30



INTERNATIONAL 4-16

Singapore’s Cat Problem

The reversal of a 35-year ban on cats in public housing raises more questions than it answers. PAGE 4

Crackdown in Amsterdam

The city temporarily banned protests, among other security measures, after attacks on Israeli soccer fans. PAGE 16

METROPOLITAN

The Spartan Urban Life

A Greenwich Village resident who disconnected his home from the electrical grid over two years ago is teaching others how to live more simply. PAGE 1

SUNDAY STYLES

From Influencer to Executive

Emma Chamberlain has a coffee company, a podcast and a collaboration with Warby Parker. One thing she isn’t doing much? Posting online. PAGE 10

SUNDAY OPINION

Carlos Lozada

PAGE 4



ARTS & LEISURE

Holiday Movies

Interviews with Ridley Scott, Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande, above, film listings and a sexier Santa season.

SUNDAY BUSINESS

Elon Musk’s Secret Compound

As he warns of population collapse and the moral obligation to have children, the world’s richest man has been trying to establish a refuge in Texas for his 11 children and their mothers. PAGE 1

Go Ahead, A.I., Take Charge

How calamitous would it be to let artificial intelligence control your life for a week? To find out, a writer did just that, with some surprising results. PAGE 4

