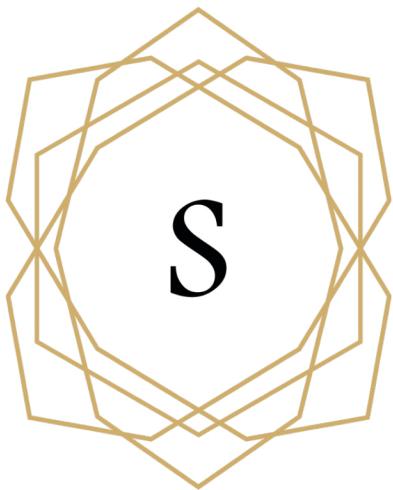




# *the* spyglass

summer issue  
twenty twenty



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# BUILD A CUPCAKE, GET A QUARANTINE ACTIVITY!

Choose a flavour:

- A. Vanilla. You really can't go wrong with vanilla.
- B. Chocolate. Is that even a question?
- C. Birthday cake. Hehe, rainbow sprinkles.
- D. Strawberry. Unique enough to be unique, generic enough to be likeable.
- E. Lemon. I want the acidity just to feel something. Anything at all.

Choose some frosting:

- A. Raspberry buttercream.
- B. Good old vanilla frosting. Probably from Betty Crocker.
- C. Black. Just completely black. Who knows what flavour it is?
- D. Maple buttercream.
- E. Cream cheese frosting.

Choose your toppings:

- A. Crumbled pistachios.
- B. Oreos, but put them on the bottom.
- C. A paper cut-out of Kermit the frog crying.
- D. Chocolate curls.
- E. None. It's the cake that matters, not how it looks.

Choose an accompanying drink:

- A. Milk.
- B. Some kind of soda.
- C. Water. I revel in chaos.
- D. That whipped dalgona coffee thing.
- E. Black coffee.



## MOSTLY A

I see you making that bread. That's a good idea. Bread is an escape from the harsh realities of life. There are several Google Classroom notifications popping up in your email, but you don't care. Existence is a prison, and frog-shaped bread is liberation

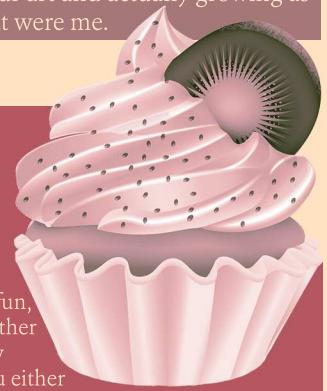
## MOSTLY B

You've probably been farming for tarantulas on Animal Crossing or playing game after game on League of Legends. Though games were once fun, they're starting to get a little repetitive. You're just doing your best not to lose it at this point. You've got way too much in-game currency and either have no idea what you want to spend it on or are willing to go another several grand in debt just to build a bridge or something.



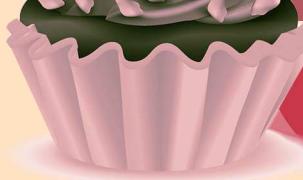
## MOSTLY C

You've still got creative energy?! Really? Either that or you're painting or drawing for your art class or something. I know I am. You've probably turned in your assignments if you have them, although half heartedly and without much effort, or you're finding things you like about your art and actually growing as an artist. God, I wish that were me.



## MOSTLY D

TikTok is a merciless platform, or, as one Tumblr post described it, a "gentrified Vine", so if you're finding any success with your TikToks, I'm going to assume you're either a) ridiculously attractive, or b) an entity of pure chaos. At first, it was fun, but now you're learning yet another dance and you don't even know what's going on anymore. You either love that one Timothee Chalamet edit trend or you think it looks horrifically stupid and there's literally no in-between.



## MOSTLY E

Napping. Me too, buddy. Me too.

# HOW TO COUNT TO FIVE



## 1 THE OUTSET

It can happen anywhere. It can strike quicker than a falling Sword of Damocles, meaner than a lady asking to speak to the manager, and more out-of-the-blue than a passing cat on the street. That's right, friends, today we are discussing the woefully misguided, ignorant, and subjectively idiotic opinions of strangers on the internet.

Maybe it's in a comment on your post. '[Something blatantly racist, or sexist, or homophobic, etc.]' it says. Your eyes bulge like one of those stress ball-esque frog toys when squeezed. People still say stuff like this?! In the year of our Lord, 2020?

Or maybe it's in a game you're playing. "[x teammate] sucks, cant play the game lol" your randomly-matched teammate writes in all chat. You miss the next few seconds of gameplay to gawk at the message; why in h\*ll would someone flame in a team game?

Whatever—and wherever—it is, it's unexpected and aggravating, but it's not over yet. Oh, honey, you've got a big storm coming.

## 2 THE FALLOUT

Screenshot that sucker and throw it in the group chat if you can, still reeling too hard to form an intelligible opinion on it. Everyone roasts it to the ninth circle of Hell, like you knew they would, but you're still thinking about the fact that someone had the nerve to post this in the first place.

Sit there at your computer, thinking about nothing but the post. Play the game absentmindedly, scroll down your feed, open your email, take a walk, but it still pervades your mind, like brainrot. Oh, god, you're not going to catch that from prolonged exposure to strangers on the internet, are you?!

## 3 HAVE A CRISIS. LOSE FAITH IN HUMANITY

Soon enough, surprise gives way to anger. How dare they think that...say that...how dare they be so toxic, so inhumane, so cruel? Anger, unbidden and fuelled by injustices of the world over, bubbles up inside you like you're a test tube being filled at full blast from the godly bathroom sink of Ares himself. You are bearing witness to the lowest of the low, the scum from your mother's basement, he whose heart is fed to Amenti in the Hall of Truth—and it falls on you to exact divine punishment.

Crack your knuckles, queen. It's go time.

## 4 GO CRAZY THINKING UP A RESPONSE

Part of you almost enjoys the thrill of putting miscreants in their place. What poison shall it be this time, hmm? The hard facts and logic? The drawn-out guilt trip? The devious rhetorical strategies you learned in English class and/or debate club?

Open up that blank Word document and start typing, or stand in a relatively safe spot in-game and throw up the chat window. You will make them rue the day they sent that. You'll make them wish they were a better person, make them sit at their computer red in the face, you'll humiliate them by gaining the argumentative and moral high ground with a couple of choice words and some well-placed jabs to their—

## 5 WHATEVER YOU WERE GOING TO SEND, DON'T. IT'S NOT WORTH IT

Phew.

This was not the first time, and rest assured it won't be the last either. You're okay. You're good, you're safe.

You're better than that.

The best response is silence. Complete radio silence, or better yet, a nice neutral smiley face. After all, if all they're doing is spreading hate, the best you can do in return is spread a little more love, right?

Keep living, knowing that you are better than whatever toerag sent that message that started it all. Breathe in; count to five; breathe out. Smile. It's over.

// ETHAN KWAN  
PHOTOGRAPHY // IVY LUO  
DESIGN // ELINA NIE

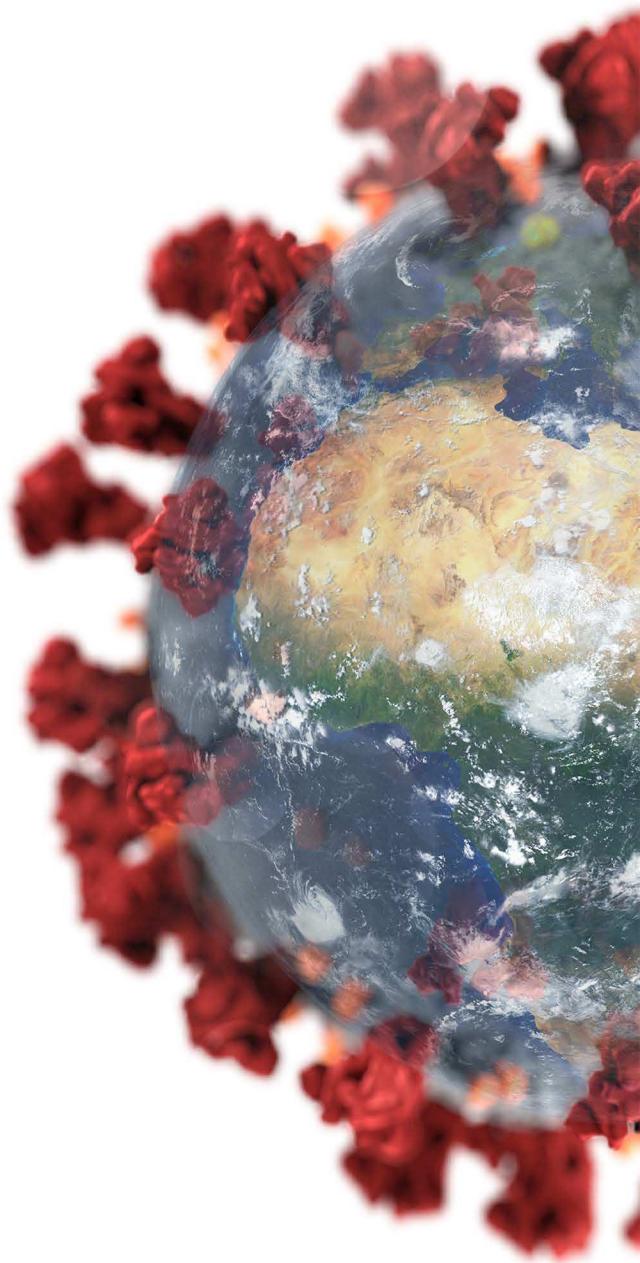


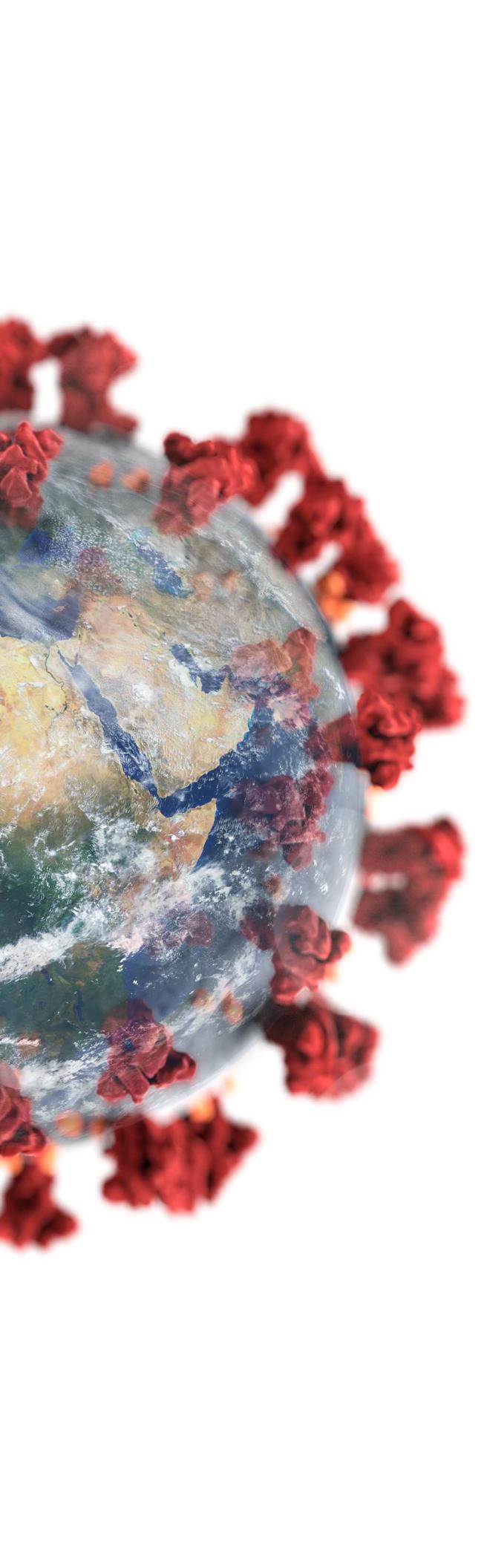
# Pandemiconium

We are four months into it: COVID; The ‘Rona; The Beer Virus. With only a few isolated Pacific islands having been spared from the wrath of its constricting grasp, the epidemic has becomeen a global problem with very local solutions. Nearly every government has been tested by The Virus, and the responses have been radically different worldwide. In this piece, we will be examining leaders locally, across the border, and further abroad.

The first “actions” seen by most regions unfortunately, has been virtually unanimously to underestimate the virus. Unfortunately, being reactive rather than proactive is almost a trademark of governments. Nearly every authority from the city officials in Wuhan to our very own federal government has waited until it was too late to stop the epidemic from taking root in the population.

Once embedded deep within the populace, methods for control have varied. Fortunately for Canadians, a relatively coordinated national response has been put in motion in response to the epidemic. Citizens of other countries have not always been so fortunate. One tempting method, employed by governments worldwide, is to ignore the epidemic. It is reminiscent of a child pretending that closing her eyes means that her mother won’t find her, with the primary difference being that children grow out of that behaviour at around age four (which is by my count five years younger than the newest country). Of course, these administrations know that they will eventually face the moment of reckoning, but they do it anyway.





Why does this happen so frequently, especially in authoritarian governments? An important reason is the legitimacy of the regime. The legitimacy of these states derives from the protection of their people, and to admit to the outbreak would be to acknowledge their failure in this department. In a similar vein, the current Trump administration justified its many failures with the (formerly) booming economy, and to admit that the virus was ravaging the US would have collapsed that illusion.

Another tactic, which typically follows ignoring, is deflection. Faced with the irrefutable fact of failure, the outbreak cannot be seen as a mistake of those in power. Therefore, the new strategy is to pin the blame on someone else. In the US, the focus has been on China, with President Trump using the phrase “Wuhan Virus” and the accusation that the virus was accidentally released from a government lab in Wuhan. The Chinese government, for its part, has pushed its own conspiracy involving a military competition held in Wuhan last October.

Returning to the subject of our government response, it will be important to keep an eye out for what support the government continues to offer as we recover from the pandemic. While the CERB has kept most individuals in a safe financial state, staples of our daily lives-- from sports leagues to restaurants to transit agencies-- have been sorely affected by the lockdown. It will only be with support from the government that we will return to what we once called “normal”.

# FR off the Runway ESI

Fashion Trends of Spring/Summer 2020

With its pristine models, flashing lights, and seemingly endless onslaught of bold, risky looks, Fashion Week is an intimidating monster that dominates media for weeks both leading up to its initiation and after its conclusion. However, despite how noisy and abstract fashion can be, it's a creative outlet that everyone can use to express themselves in a day-to-day setting. What you wear and how you choose to present yourself can say a lot about your personality and tastes — it wouldn't be too far off from the truth to think an outfit is worth a thousand words!

To truly understand how Fashion Week works, it is important to remember that fashion shows are held six months before the actual season starts. For example, the recent Fall/Winter 2020 ready-to-wear fashion season was held in March, six months before September. The purpose of holding a show so far in advance is simple: brands put out their collections to an audience of fashion influencers, companies, and media with a message. "This is what will be for sale next season."

Last September, we were introduced to many upcoming trends for Spring/Summer 2020. Below are three of the most wearable, broken down for your average, somewhat-broke high school student. Hopefully, we'll be able to wear them soon, but if not, keep an eye out for an upcoming review of the Fall/Winter 2020 shows next season.

## Utilitarian

And finally, the one we all saw coming — the utilitarian look. This look has been around for a while, but it's still steadily gaining traction and becoming even better. Characterized by utilitarian belts, buckles and straps, and the usage of heavy-duty fabrics to create different silhouettes, the utilitarian trend takes a softer twist for spring. Coats and pants in softer neutral colours feature lots of pockets, buckles, and zippers for both menswear and womenswear, while trench coats feature prominently in women's fashion and leather pants have their moment on the runways of menswear designers. For people like me, who weren't able to get their summer jobs thanks to Miss Rona and also don't meet the requirements for government aid, a good pair of cargo pants will do the trick just fine. Style yours with a tight fitting top and pair with a loose jacket for some variety. We could all use it in times like these.



Berluti



Valentino

## Button-Down Shirts

Paired with everything from floor-length billowing skirts at Dior, leather trousers at Lacoste, and upgraded with statement sleeves and gold jewellery by Valentino, the button-down shirt is having a moment in women's fashion. Its appeal is understandable — not only is it fashionable and chic, it's a piece that everybody already has in their closet. Take cues from The Row and style yours over a slim-fitting turtleneck, tuck it under a dress for major Versace vibes, or break out your statement jewellery to wear with an oversized button-down as a dress as proposed by Valentino. You really can't go wrong. As for menswear, the resurgence of nostalgia for the 70's and 80's have brought patterned button downs and colours back. To avoid looking like a glorified bus seat, pair a patterned shirt with solid coloured clothing. It's really just a free-for-all at this point.



Valentino

## Blue Denim

I know what you're thinking: "isn't this one kind of obvious?" And you're right. While blue denim isn't anything revolutionary on its own, recent trends in black jeans makes the revival of blue somewhat welcome. It's no surprise, either, what with the rise of 70's and 80's fashion seeping back into the mainstream. Women's collections saw a variety of washes and mostly looser fits as opposed to the tight, figure-hugging pants that were popular last year. To take on the blue denim trend, opt for a pair of high waisted jeans with a looser fit around the shin, like a flare or a bootcut. However, for the more adventurous, keep in mind that low rise jeans are gaining momentum again! Meanwhile, menswear runways were full of double denim in mostly mid to light washes. To try the trend, pair with a white shirt for a simple look and try statement accessories and jewellery in minimal, complementary colours for a clean and fresh look.

# A PORTRAIT OF THE CON ARTIST

The art industry is notoriously unregulated, clearing the way for fraudsters to prosper in the spotlit bank accounts of high-society.

Knoedler Gallery was once a quintessential piece of the New York art scene. Opening almost 25 years before the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the gallery's illustrious history and credible reputation had filled their phone book with the numbers of Vanderbilts, Rockefellers and every museum curator imaginable. After 165 years of supplying paintings and sculptures to the world's most exclusive collections, the museum closed seemingly overnight. Infiltrated by one group of cons, it took 60 paintings, sold over 15 years for America's most powerful art gallery to crumble. When its doors closed for the last time in 2011, the gallery and its director were under investigation from the FBI on accounts of wire fraud, forgery, money laundering and tax evasion.

1994. Glafira Rosales parks her Mercedes in front of Knoedler, her trunk full of long lost Pollocks, and arranges a meeting with the gallery's art director of 30 years, Ann Freedman. She claims to have come into contact with the paintings through an anonymous client and asks if Knoedler would have any interest as a buyer. Since Jackson Pollock's death 40 years earlier, his paintings were becoming more and more valuable and were undoubtedly an exciting discovery for Freedman. Rosales continued her story, explaining that she represented a private Swiss collector, pseudonym Mr. X, had moved to Mexico with his family and purchased the paintings with his sugar cane fortune. He affectionately became known as Secret Santa around the gallery, the nickname stemming for his

unknown identity and the gifts he would sell for "bargain-basement prices".

Thus began the infiltration and downfall of the gallery.

Unbeknownst to everyone, the 80 million dollars worth of artwork was the handiwork of Pei-Shen Qian, an artist painting out of his garage in Queens. Qian was beginning to receive acclaim for his art in China when he decided to move to the United States in an attempt to grow his career. Met with harsh criticism, he was recruited by Rosales and her boyfriend, José Carlos Bergantiños Díaz. The plan was simple. Qian would mimic the style of big-name artists to create credible, abstract paintings which Rosales would then sell as undocumented, long-lost masterpieces. Though Rosales was never the representative for Mr. X, she was the front for her boyfriend, Diaz, who was the alleged genius behind the scam. Ever since he had pleaded guilty to nine counts of conspiracy, fraud and other crimes, his name flew red flags. He'd need someone else to represent Mr. X and through abuse and threats, Rosales agreed to play the part.

It's worth noting that Freedman didn't buy the paintings blindly. Anyone would have been suspicious of the stranger selling multi-million paintings out of the back of their car, especially when there was no indication of where the paintings had come from nor any receipts, invoices or photographs to document their existence. Several of her coworkers had researched the documentation of the

paintings to find connections to the Swiss collector. Freedman consulted dozens of experts over the years, ranging from specialists of the artist to fellow curators to the artists' widows and children. Despite the numerous confirmations, sceptics such as the International Foundation for Art Research and forensic analysts found that the pigment used in the paintings were only invented after the deaths of the artists. They were attacked for their differing opinions and declared amateurish, irrelevant and negative.



As people began questioning the works, Rosales began tangling her cover stories to make up for the lack of evidence

in the paintings' authenticity. She claimed that a friend of Pollock and other artists of the era had brokered the purchases between the artist and Mr. X, but there were no financial records of any transactions. Next, she used the late David Herbert, a former employee from two New York galleries, who had passed away in 1995. For added flair, she revealed that Mr. X and Herbert had a homosexual love affair, explaining why the married, family man wanted to keep his anonymity. Rosales' final story was that Mr. X had died and his son, who did not share the appreciation for art, wanted Freedman's help in selling the paintings.

Domenico and Eleanore De Sole bought one of the last paintings done by Qian. The couple paid one of the highest prices for any of the frauds at 8.3 million, for the painting "Untitled 1956" supposedly by Mark Rothko. The De Soles were an influential family, Domenico was the first CEO of Gucci Group, chairman of the board of directors at Sotheby's and co-founded Tom Ford. He's also the one who finally blew the whistle on the forgery ring.

In 2016 the De Sole's took Knoedler and Freedman to court, claiming that the gallery had purposefully sold them a forgery. Questions of the painting's legitimacy were raised after a private collector discovered a Pollock he had purchased from the gallery was fake and demanded a refund. Shortly after, the De Sole's Rothko was declared an imitation despite being authenticated by 11 experts prior to the purchase. The trial unearthed one of the greatest scandals the art world had ever seen, questioning the lack of transparency in the art market. For years the buyers had become over-reliant on the reputation of the gallery, allowing 60 fake paintings to exchange hands.

As the trial continued Freedman continued to believe the paintings were authentic despite Rothko's misspelled signature in one from her private collection. It wasn't until Rosales pled guilty that she was convinced and everyone started shifting the blame. Qian testified that he didn't know his paintings were being passed off as the work of others, despite forging their signatures and seeing them hanging in galleries. Each consulted expert said they felt pressure to say the paintings were real for the sake of their reputations and one widow said: "It would take a lot to



persuade me that these [two paintings] were done by my husband" despite evidence that the two works were never shown together and she only visited the gallery once. After weeks in court, Ann Freedman was about to testify under oath when the deputy suddenly announced that due to unexpected developments the jury was free to leave early. The next morning he announced that the case was over, effectively blocking Freedman from reaching the witness stand and ending the trial.

Now, Diaz and Qian live as free men in Spain and China respectively and the misspelled Rothko hangs in an office, essentially worthless.

// ANASTASIA BLOSSER  
IMAGES // ILLUSTRATED COURTROOM

# THE CLASS OF 2020

Grade 12: we've dreamt about it for as long as we can remember.

We've seen grade twelves in the halls for the past four years, swimming in a pool of stress, anxiety, and excitement. Soon, they'd begin the rest of their lives, exchanging our small community for the world. And they knew it, too. While they complained about chem finals and worried about post-secondary plans, they knew that soon, they'd be presented with so many opportunities to celebrate finishing high school that it wouldn't even matter.

We've seen them get accepted into competitive programs, their friends drowning them in hugs as they smiled from ear to ear. Their years of hard work, of all-nighters and burnt out breakdowns, were finally paying off. We've seen that senioritis glow; summer on their faces, smiling as the pressure they've felt inside our halls finally melts away. They'd come to class in flip flops, a bubble tea in hand. Even though we knew they were slacking off, we couldn't help but be jealous. They were living the dream.

We've scrolled past an abundance of promposals: blocked hallways and balloons, PROM? spelled out in flowers and pizza toppings and whatever else people could think of. We've double-tapped prom photos, happy faces dressed to the nines in front of a gorgeous waterfall. Elated to see our older friends so excited, we'd smile,

excited for when we would be the ones beaming from someone's screen. Soon, we'd be the one buying corsages (though we never understood their purpose) because we'd have finally reached that milestone and there was no stopping us.

We've listened to complaints about graduation, how the ceremony was too long, and the hall was too crowded, knowing that not a single negative preconception could get in our way. We've thought of which teachers we wanted to get pictures with, adorned in our caps and gowns, and which loved ones we'd wave to from the stage.

We thought that, just like everyone else, we had it all planned out. And when it was finally our turn, it would be amazing.

We couldn't have expected this. Global pandemics are chapters in history books. We never thought we'd be living in one. If we had known those few days in March were our last, we would have gone about them differently.

And yet, here we are, all our milestones and celebrations postponed, relegated to Facetime calls and text messages. Instead of watching the One Acts, we're watching emergency conferences on the news.

And it sucks.

This is not to say that the pandemic is not important, or that frontline workers aren't heroes, or that our senior year is more important than millions of lives, or that we're the only ones stripped of important events and traditions. Because we're not, and we know we're not. The world doesn't revolve around us.

But it still sucks. And it's hard to scroll through Google Classroom, day after day, wondering what could have been. We know that there are so many people who have it worse, but it's still hard — and we're allowed to feel that way.

The pandemic can't last forever. Soon enough, the world will be back, filled with concerts, sports games, packed restaurants, and love. As we do our part, staying home and waiting, we begin to make peace with the loss of our senior year. It's a difficult process, and it'll take time. Whether you loved high school or hated it, you probably wanted to finish it the right way.

You're allowed to be upset without feeling guilty. This isn't easy for anyone,

and it's okay to not be thriving and baking bread and doing yoga every day. It's okay not to be okay. There's nothing soothing about these circumstances.

The class of 2020 will not be forgotten. When the world returns, we'll be out there, beginning the rest of our lives, armed with resilience and stories about toilet paper.

We'll leave a lasting impact on this planet, graduation ceremony or not. After all, we're pretty cool. And though it would have been amazing, we don't need a prom to tell us that.

We can accomplish anything we put our minds to. And we will — united, devoted, together.

// MICHELLE SKIDELSKY  
GRAPHICS // FREEPIK  
DESIGN // STELLA WANG





nathan wong

Before high school, I literally did not know anything about... anything. I didn't know student council was a thing and that there were so many clubs in high school. I came from a private school, so I was with the same people for 8 years. And it was only like 20 people. I didn't know anyone. And what I figured out about myself was that I really like meeting new people. One huge thing about me is that I'm always afraid of losing, so I used that as an excuse to not do stuff. When the StuCo applications came out, I was really nervous. I really wanted to be a Grade 9 Rep, but what stopped me was that I was afraid of losing. I didn't want to apply, but my friend convinced me. Even though grade rep is nothing super special, when I got it, it was a huge confidence boost and it made me really happy, because it was the first sort of "major thing" that had happened in my life -- the first thing that I'd accomplished. I felt really happy. I'm still struggling with the fear of losing, but usually I just tell myself to go for it, to just apply...and whatever happens, happens. Same thing with DECA. I was so scared before regionals -- I'm just so bad with pressure -- but I told myself, I'm just gonna do it. I guess the main thing I learned was, don't stop yourself from doing something just because you're afraid to lose. Just go for it.

I'd say that one of the biggest moments that really defines who I am is probably the transition from grade 8 to grade 9. This is mainly because that was when I truly realized that you're not always going to be the best at everything and that's okay. In elementary school, I dominated in everything I did -- not to flex haha -- but during that shift to high school I realized that there are going to be so many people who are smarter, faster, and overall just more talented than me. For instance, I am very

aware that my time management is for sure something I struggle with. I'm okay when it comes to deadlines for school related work, but I'm literally the worst at being on time to go somewhere -- when I say I'm going to be there in five minutes,

I'm really going to be like an hour late. I've also come to realize that I stress over everything I do. Even eating the last slice of cheesecake is something I end up regretting! This realization is so important because even though there will

always be people who are more gifted and skilled, that's just another reason for you to work harder to achieve your goals.



daisy tan

# HUMANS



chen xi zhang

Growing up, I've always felt a sense of loneliness which started when my parents immigrated to Canada when I was 2 to 3 years old, leaving me alone for a year. When I came to Canada, this loneliness continued to increase through poor friendships. I became distrustful and cautious of others, and often kept to myself when I was hurt. To overcome these problems I found myself greatly prioritizing my work over making friends. These traits and beliefs resulted with me being unable to confront certain adult figures who I realize now have done unjustified and unfair things to me in the past. Because of these events, it further deepened my disregard for relationships and resentment towards people with personalities that remind me of my past. I think that during my grade 10 summer, that was one of the more pivotal moments in my life where I learned to become more confident in my character rather than just my academic work. During that time, I was able to realize that humility was a trait that was necessary for me to accept my past experiences. Although I still find myself struggling with emotional availability and hesitate with expressing compassion to certain people, I've formed an unexpected friendship that has opened up my perspectives and allows me to continue to better myself each day.

In grade 7, we had a school talent show. I wouldn't call myself introverted, I just get anxious being around other people. I

performed for the first time, at that talent show, and I felt really different - in a good way. I think I also got over my fear of putting myself in front of people. I had a cover channel, and it was the same sort of mindset of me trying to prove to myself, that I shouldn't be scared in front of other people -- and, like, people looking at me. I feel like my biggest regret in high school would be that I'd stop myself from doing things or talking to people because I was afraid. If I'd just taken that leap, then I would have known what would have happened. Because what's the worst that could happen, right? Grade 9 at

Coffeehouse, I signed up last minute. I went to Mr. Henry after auditions were over, and I was like, "Can I please audition?" and he was like "Ugh, okay, fine." But then I was like, "Thank you so much for letting me, even though auditions are already over!" And he was like "Okay, that was good -- different from all the songs other people were singing, so you can perform," and I was like "Yay!"



maanasa guda

# OF RHHS

# LAUGHTER IS CONTAGIOUS



Comedy has certainly evolved throughout the years. Making a grand appearance in ancient Greece, the famous Aristophanes introduced Old Comedy with his satirical plays. Nowadays, the genre has expanded from formal theatres to lowly bars, while still containing traces of influence from the old days. As we continue to use this art form to divulge deeper into more sensitive topics, the uncertainty of whether it is okay to laugh becomes obtrusive as our society grows more defensive. Which poses the question: is comedy appropriate during a global pandemic?

Fear can cause many conflicting reactions. When faced with danger, it's common to see people cry, freeze up, or run away, while others may laugh. While the first three options might seem the most practical, laughter is a perfectly normal reaction to fear. Invoking laughter is a common tactic to reduce stress and calm down. Just engaging in the reaction can be beneficial to our mental health. Now that our lives have been disrupted due to the Coronavirus outbreak, laughter may as well be the best medicine for coping during these difficult times. Humour has been a popular method lately to cope with our new lifestyles. Quarantine related memes and videos have spread like wildfire across the internet. The motivations behind this kind of humour aren't meant to be distasteful, they are simply a therapeutic way for people to expel their frustrations and fears. In challenging times like these, we should be encouraged to spread laughter and joy.

Just like the Coronavirus, laughter is contagious. Comedy not only has the power to make us laugh, but can bring us together by doing so. While spreading humour, we are engaging in shared laughter, even though we're apart. Seeing people post funny content about working from home through Zoom, making their family take part in TikTok dances, and singing songs about being stuck in their house resonates with us and creates a sense of connection to these strangers. Being physically isolated from the rest of the world is lonely, but knowing that others are out there, determined to laugh in the face of fear, is comforting.

So, is it truly an appropriate time for comedy? Instead of spreading memes, shouldn't we be taking this more seriously? Spreading laughter won't cure the Coronavirus, but it just might help others cope in this new normal. And if chuckling at Justin Trudeau's "speaking moistly" comment makes someone forget about their fears, then isn't it all worth it?

// SARAH GRISHPUL  
PHOTOGRAPHY // IVY LUO  
DESIGN // KAYLA CHO

# the horror

Breathe  
Hoping it would be the last time  
Blink  
Keeping the tears inside  
Cry  
Whenever I step on the scale  
Disgust  
Wherever I see a mirror

They told me I was perfectly fine  
And I was just a model  
One day I'll shine  
They said, at least you're not fat  
So, don't you whine  
And I was only nine

Breathe

Years later, my crush could be mine  
Only if my body was perfectly fine  
Wondering if this was a sign  
From the earth, about my lifeline

Blink

The mirror would whine  
Every time I step in front of one  
Day after day the mirror gave signs  
That my body needed some refine

Cry

When the scale showed 39  
I thought I was fat  
And obviously not  
Because sometime later a doctor was called  
About a diet, to be designed

Disgust

I realized I was not perfectly fine  
My ribs visible, my leg just a line  
I learned to hate hating myself  
It's only if I'm happy that I could shine

Growth

In the state of my mind  
No matter how hard I ignored all my thoughts  
I walked through the toughest of days  
Alone, with only two people by my side

Success

I just had a breakthrough  
The diet is done  
All the hate is gone  
and as they say  
Out of sight, out of mind

I am damaged  
Far too damaged  
I may be just beyond repair  
I walk down these streets I used to know  
But I don't even know myself

My feelings unseen  
Hidden, veiled  
My thoughts murdering my soul  
Slowly, gradually  
My tears running down my face  
Burning, every inch of my skin

I thought that would be it  
The diet would save me and  
It would all just end  
But the diet was just a bitter beginning

When I went to school hoping I would seem so cool  
Doing what everyone else was doing  
My friends laughing at me  
Was the last thing I wanted  
My friends degrading my biggest problem  
Turned out to be my biggest fear

Oh the horror  
The horror of going to school every day  
With lunch boxes filled with food from my diet  
With only one person supporting my journey  
Oh, The horror of being told once more  
That I should stop being a whining kid  
And just eat up and it's  
And it's not that hard  
But it is that hard if they were  
Me

Nausea everyday  
Fearing every other pound I gain  
What if they wouldn't like me anymore?  
Will I be special anymore?

Will they ever understand my pain?  
I bet they've never force-fed themselves  
Not for a competition, but to keep their hearts beating  
They never woke up every day from nightmares  
Of having to eat one more goddamn potato  
They have never feared looking at the mirror  
Because what if I can see my ribs again?  
What if I'm failing?  
What if I lose this battle and all that I've gained?

I am damaged  
Far too damaged  
But I'm trying my best to repair

# state of mind



**CLAUS' TROPHOBIA**

**CLAUS' TROPHOBIA**

**CLAUS'TROPHOBIA**

**CLAUSSTROPHOBIA**

**CLAU'STROPHOBIA**

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"Words are just words."

Words are "just words", but they have meaning. They carry with them definition, often used with intent, and isn't that something?

As a society, we'd crumble without labels: they provide us with structure, order; clean-cut lines that result in clear, no-nonsense borders. You toe it, and you're avoided like the plague because you're not "fitting in" anymore. You cross it, and you're suddenly given a new word for them to call you by, no matter your protestations about what you're personally comfortable with.

You see, labels are just words too. But they're also steel cages that entrap individuals under a list of expectations they're forced to adhere to, for fear of being ostracized by the very communities those labels seem to define.

Most of the time, it's the "You're not \_\_\_\_ enough" phrase that'll be viciously thrown at you, causing you to entirely reevaluate what it means to be of this ethnicity, of this gender, of this sexual orientation, of this nationality, of this religion.

And then there's the superficial, subtly shallow, commentary: "But you don't look \_\_\_\_" or "You don't act \_\_\_\_".

So there's a hierarchy, you realize; a set of basic standards rooted in traditions, sure, but also in harmful stereotypes.

Of course, embracing the cultures that these labels often entail is one thing (and there are certainly harmless jokes passed around within the groups all the time), thus the appropriation that can arise is a big NO. With the labels that define various minorities, it's a sensitive subject, and one that understandably results in a protective stance.

But to judge someone and deny them the right to

openly identify themselves with a label they might have spent years struggling with is, frankly, just plain rude.

Unfortunately, the media has undoubtedly primed us to visualize a certain character (or type of character) when a label is presented, so much so that we become blind to the nuances in reality. There's the misconception that to label oneself as such, you must subject to a constant outward presentation to the extreme. Suddenly your entire personality is centralized upon this one word, this one word of which their supposedly inherent definition is superior.



"Oh, you're gay? But you dress so straight!"

"How can you be Filipino if you act so white?"

"You're not a true Christian because you question the Bible."



Even political alignments should be less black and white than the headlines make it to be, but we have gotten to a point where we desperately seek to package everyone in pristine little boxes, sealed with the highest grade of duct tape.

But while some may present themselves to be a cookie cutter definition of a certain label—and rightfully proud of it—a lot of us aren't wired so conveniently, no matter how much we may wish for it at the expense of our true selves.

These unflinching expectations need to be broken down. It's inadvertently hurting more individuals than it is helping them in accepting who they are.

Break the chains.

// JENNY HUANG  
DESIGN // ANASTASIA BLOSSER  
GRAPHICS // FREEPIK

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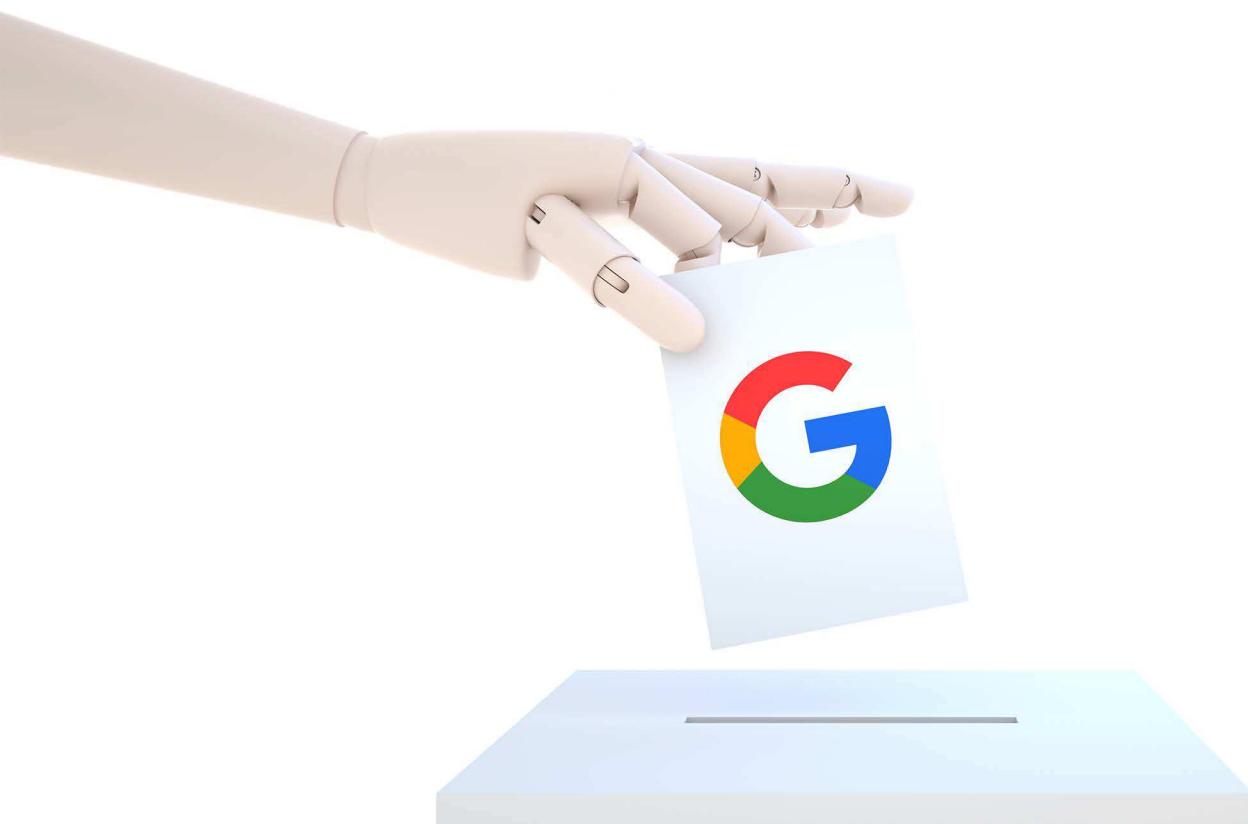
## The Internet

was once viewed as an exclusive luxury item, but today it's rare to see anyone without access on this side of the pond. As our social scene developed over the last 20 years, both the actual and political climate have become hotter topics than they once were. Surprisingly, politicians have actually managed to cater to the needs of their voters and adapted to the changing times. We've gone from door-to-door surveys and handing out buttons to online petitions & Twitter hashtags in less than two decades. The freedom of speech laws available to most patrons of the internet have allowed discourse on politicians and their campaigns, but this is no surprise. What is surprising is the variety of other ways politicians and their parties have managed to infiltrate all kinds of media in ways their voters may not be aware of.

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## It's No Secret

that President Trump harbours a love for Twitter. Since the early days of his campaign back in 2016, not a day goes by without an update or an opinion from the Republican candidate himself. His tweets now grace the screens of anyone fortunate enough to have Internet access. But there may be a better reason for this than Trump exercising both his fingers & his right to freedom of speech. Social media has enabled politicians to directly communicate with the public without any biased barriers, i.e one-sided news outlets - you get quotes straight from the horse's mouth. Without the filters of the press, the public must rely on their own morals and values to process this information, and make of it what they will. Social media enables the audience to feel "seen" by the politicians, creating an almost personal connection. These feigned personal connections are important in democracies, leading people to believe that their single vote could turn an entire election around. This isn't exactly the truth, but it works in increasing voter turnout & faith in the democratic system.





## Today's Political Climate

encourages people to pick sides. In a state of partisan confusion, new voters scramble to find a party that aligns with their core beliefs, while ignoring other parts of that same party. To avoid losing followers & potential voters, political parties tend to be supported by media outlets. These news channels & websites are typically one-sided; they avidly support one party & frequently attack the other. The most obvious examples of these sites are CNN for the Democrats & FOX News for Republicans. One-sided media outlets can ironically be double-edged swords. They can call out the flaws of the other party, but may also ignore some flaws within their own. This also results in confirmation bias. Confirmation bias creates the illusion that one group is in the absolute majority by focusing only on them. This crowd psychology lets people avoid their democratic responsibility, and they vote for whatever party their preferred media praises. This explains why certain politicians have learned to prefer certain news outlets that portray them in a constant positive light, rather than ones who occasionally criticize them for their mistakes.

### Politicians have also learned

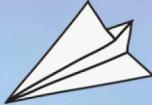
#### How to target certain audiences to produce results that benefit them. ^

Targeted ads are the most obvious example. Don't be surprised if your dashboard ads consist of campaigners either trashing their opponent or putting themselves on a pedestal. These ads are built to skew your opinions to one side, based on your own posts, the posts of your followers, and the posts of those you follow. Campaigners pay large amounts to these social media outlets to post these ads, trying to secure votes from even the least politically-motivated people. Trump himself spent around 44 million dollars to secure political ads on Facebook. This small fortune has proven itself to be money well spent. A study done by the University of Warwick has shown a 10% increase in Republican voter turnout, all thanks to targeted Facebook ads. In short, it's more likely that Mark Zuckerberg is heavily involved in campaigns as opposed to being part-lizard.

## In This Era

of fake news and half-truths spun out of control, is it really a shock that we're unaware of the methods used by politicians to gain votes & support? The reality is that even the most politically-driven people can fall prey to things like crowd mentality & one-sided views. We as under age Canadians can't do much to influence American voters. Perhaps the best way for us to make a change is to use the very same internet these politicians try to manipulate, and play the long game.

# ONE OF A KIND



"I'm glad I met you,"

It was a combination of words that she never thought would be addressed to her. Reading over the text message on her glowing phone screen made her heart skip a beat. It was short and simple, but she knew it was sincere. All she wanted was a distraction; she wasn't expecting her friend to do that.

Tears came flowing out, as the teen tried to hold in her whimpers. This wasn't the right place to be crying.

She looked around, sniffling a little bit, trying to hold in her sobs. It was dark outside. Her knees were pushed up against the second row of the car. Her legs barely fit in the third row seat, so they were awkwardly placed at a diagonal. It was painfully loud: the radio blasted on high volume, her siblings sang along, and her mom hummed to herself, while concentrating on the road. She never liked being squished in the back seat by herself, but the solitude gave her time to think.

Maybe too much time to think.

Being alone always caused the teen to contemplate her worth. She never did anything praise-worthy and even trying her best never seemed to be enough. Any effort she put in always seemed to cause more trouble for her family. The thought formed a ball of guilt and emptiness in her stomach. In her family of five, she always felt like an outsider and a burden.

She felt like the fifth wheel in her family. After all, what type of car needs five wheels to move? A fifth wheel like her was just dead weight. She was simply unwanted.

She shook her head, refusing to wander through such a dark area of her life. There were other things she would rather think about. Her friend had always told her that she was

// SAMANTHA LEE  
PHOTOGRAPHY // KERRY YAN  
DESIGN // KAYLA CHO  
IMAGES // VIPPING

more than her own mind made her out to be; they helped her recover from the darkest point in her life. Turning her attention back to her phone, she desperately wished for a pair of headphones to drown out the noise around her, or to serve as a simple distraction.

The teen wondered how the conversation with her friend about blow dried cows led to them reminiscing about their time together last year in 8th grade. This made her smile. Thinking about memories with her friend always managed to cheer her up. Being able to talk about anything was part of the reason why she treasured their friendship so much, despite only knowing each other for less than a year.

They were a light in her life. They had helped her become more positive and their presence made her feel at home. It was warm and unfamiliar to her, but it was just what she needed.

"I'm glad I met you."

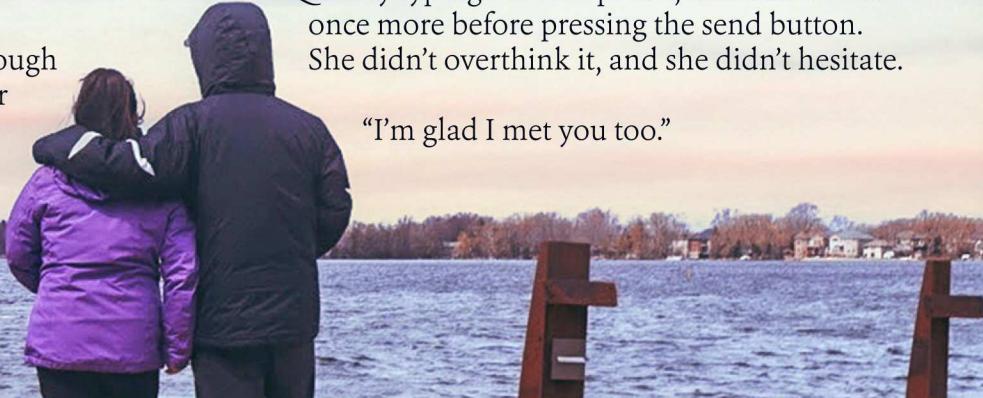
She read it again. Not once in her life did she feel needed or special to someone. What was this feeling that pulled at her heart so deeply? The girl didn't think that mere words could bring her to tears, but they did. Is this what it meant to be special to someone? Is this how it felt to be wanted?

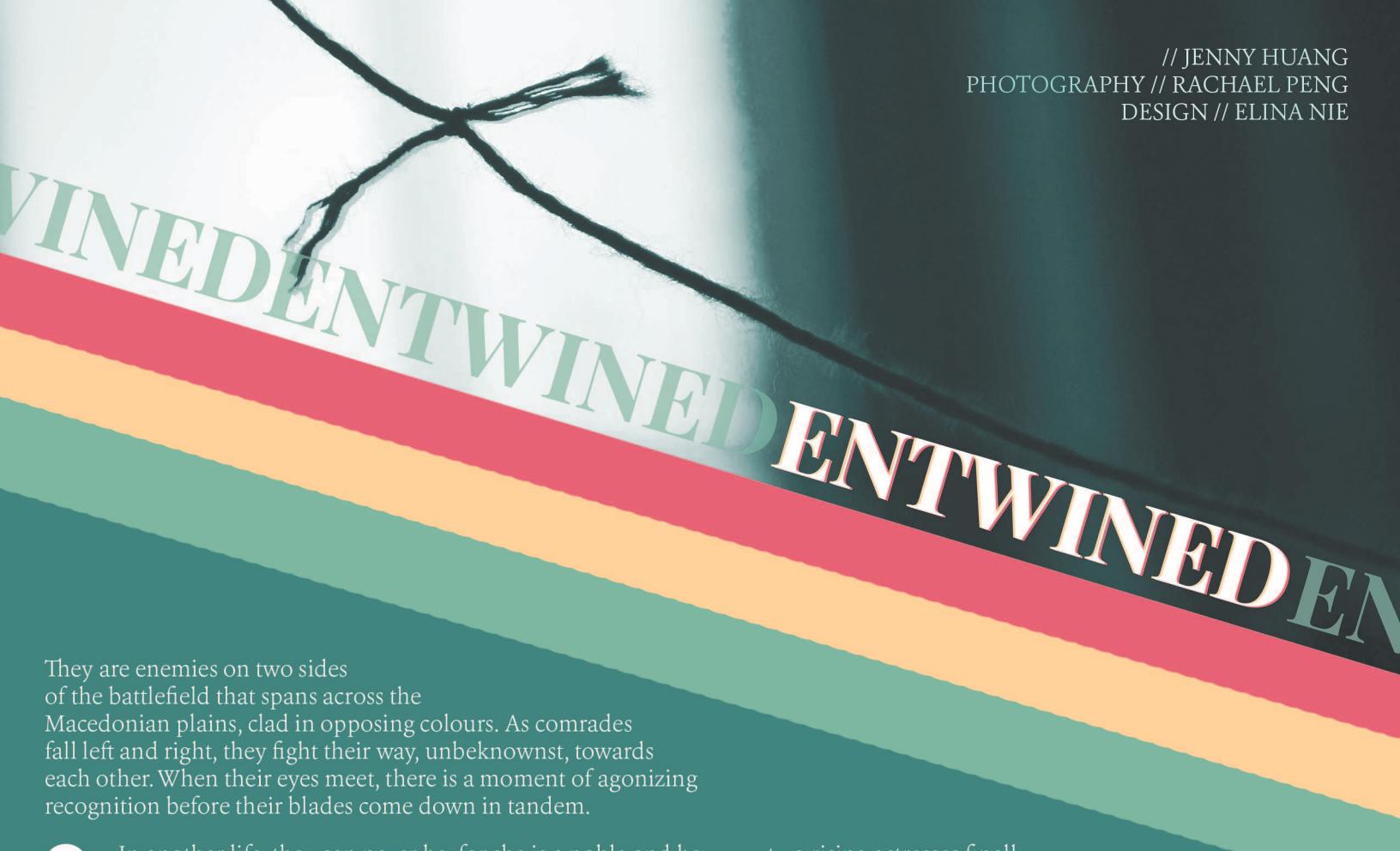
Behind all the tears streaming down the girl's cheeks was a small smile, as her thumbs hovered over the keyboard. She knew the answer to all those questions she was asking herself.

Now, how should she respond?

Quickly typing out a response, she read it over once more before pressing the send button. She didn't overthink it, and she didn't hesitate.

"I'm glad I met you too."





They are enemies on two sides of the battlefield that spans across the Macedonian plains, clad in opposing colours. As comrades fall left and right, they fight their way, unbeknownst, towards each other. When their eyes meet, there is a moment of agonizing recognition before their blades come down in tandem.

In another life, they can never be, for she is a noble and he her guard. As was tradition, the mademoiselle had been auctioned off to a wealthy prince of the neighbouring country. He may have been a well-bred gentleman with enough riches to earn the hand of anyone he could want, but he is not her dearest captain, who regards her as if she's the brightest star at night. When the time comes for her departure, his hand lingers as he helps her into the carriage that heralds an inevitable farewell. Their expressions falter, but appearances must be kept, so he steps back with a murmured, "My lady," that spoke of furtive glances, desperate touches, and a promise of a far-off but boundless tomorrow.

During the years that lead up to what is now known as the Black Death, it is the landmass that keeps them apart. As the death toll mounts and the pile of bodies at their respective town centres grow exponentially, they struggle to nurse their relatives while society disintegrates into anarchy. They are both the final victim in their immediate family, and die moments from the other, in painful hazes that render them unable to think at all.

The roaring twenties personified the success of the Western civilization, with the emergence and rise of Hollywood at the forefront. In this life, they are the industry's hottest starlets, beautiful and glamorous, rivals in the making but a secret affair doomed from the start. Then, the body of a woman under the public eye was unlawfully ripped from her, to be owned by powerful men at the forefront; and that's without mentioning the sentence they would receive for their attraction to each other. The

two rising actresses finally meet at an evening gala, where playful rivalry turns into heated passion as their expensive gowns of glittering silver and gold end up forgotten on the hotel room floor. The charade continues as they marry other people, until a car crash kills the younger and drives her one true love to terminal despair.

Decades later, they are actively fighting for their right to exist and love freely. They are high school classmates from the traditional south who escape to New York for college and find a new family among those that frequent the Stonewall Inn. When the riots escalate, they march alongside other young men, alongside queens, lesbians, trans women and more, a brave front of united outcasts demanding to be seen, heard, and understood for once in their lives. As the years pass with minimal change, they stay in love and hope for a better future, even as they grieve for lost friends and fume at an uncaring government during an AIDS epidemic that devastates the community.

In the new millennium, they are reborn as next-door neighbours. They grow up together, a childhood splashed with sunshine and laughter, in a generation of contemporary horrors and modern revelations. In this life, they are finally untouched, even as he moves across the ocean for the entire duration of their adolescence. Their connection survives different time zones, teenage turmoil, and a global pandemic, reuniting in university where they have each other nearby and the uncertain yet exciting pathway stretching endlessly ahead.



# MOVIES

## GOOD

### TIME

to watch during summer break

MOVIES

## GOOD

### TIME

to watch during summer break

// GABRIELLE COLE  
PHOTOGRAPHY // UNKNOWN  
DESIGN // AMY WAN

Summer break is an opportunity to soak up the sun and get rid of all the stress and anxiety that we feel during the school year. For most people, this usually presents itself as meeting up with friends, throwing yourself into volunteer work/a summer job, or going out for food — a lot. But what about those days when all you want is to stay inside and not leave your bed? Here's a list of movies that will put you in that feel-good summer mood without having to go anywhere.

## **Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986)** Dir. John Hughes

If you haven't been living under a rock your entire life, then you've probably heard of Ferris Bueller's Day Off. It's a movie by John Hughes, who is often hailed as the founding father of accurate portrayals of teens in film. It follows Ferris Bueller, a teenager who fakes sickness to get out of school and spends his day out on the town with his best friend and girlfriend instead. Watching this film is always a good time, and it's sure to put you in a good mood (and maybe motivate you to steal your friend's dad's shiny red convertible or join a massive parade downtown).

## **But I'm A Cheerleader (1999)** Dir. Jamie Babbit

But I'm A Cheerleader, starring a baby-faced Natasha Lyonne, is about a teenage girl named Megan who is sent to conversion camp after her parents become convinced that she's gay. Don't worry—it's not as dismal as it seems. The movie is actually a comedy, playing on typical character tropes and clichés, spinning them into an hour and a half long film that's entertaining and adorable, through and through.

## **Paddington 2 (2017)** Dir. Paul King

Although it can be considered juvenile, Paddington 2 is a vibrant, entertaining film that is fun for all ages. This 2017 sequel to Paddington is nearly two hours of wacky adventures in the fictional life of an adorable British bear—not to mention the stellar cast including Hugh Grant and Sally Hawkins, as well as the impromptu musical number and marmalade sandwich making montages. This movie is often considered to be even better than the first, and no real knowledge of the first one is required to immerse yourself into this rain-free, CGI-bear-full idealistic version of London!

## **Moonrise Kingdom (2012)** Dir. Wes Anderson

Wes Anderson is known for his distinct style of filmmaking—stinted yet effective dialogue, endearing characters, symmetrical shots, and scenes washed in beautiful pastel hues. Moonrise Kingdom is one of his more charming films, and it follows two 12-year olds as they fall in love and run away to a secluded part of the fictional island of New Penzance. It's a precious film that will warm your heart, and it's a perfect introduction to the wonderful world of Wes Anderson.

## **Little Miss Sunshine (2006)** Dir. Valerie Faris, Jonathan Dayton

Little Miss Sunshine is a movie that usually flies under the radar for most people. It follows a dysfunctional family as they travel across the country in order to get their daughter to a beauty pageant that she wants to participate in. It's intelligent in the themes that it tackles and is brought to life with dynamic characters, an amazing cast, and an equal balance of uplifting and emotionally-gutting moments.

## **Before Sunrise (1995)** Dir. Richard Linklater

When Jesse meets Celine on a train, he convinces her to get off with him in Vienna so that they can spend the remaining hours of his visit to Europe together. What comes next is a heartwarming, vivid and surprisingly real depiction of what can only be called coup de foudre and the beauty of making a genuine connection with someone else. The movie (as well as the two others that follow it in the trilogy) is known for tackling philosophical questions that will make you question everything you thought you knew about life and love.

## **Love, Simon (2018)** Dir. Greg Berlanti

If you want an adorable movie with a happy ending and an LGBTQ+ main character, look no further than Love, Simon. Adapted from a popular young adult novel (Simon vs. The Homosapien Agenda by Becky Albertalli), the movie is about Simon Spier, a teenage boy who's keeping his sexuality a secret from everyone. When threatened with the reveal of this very secret, he's thrown into a journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance. This movie will make you laugh and maybe even cry, and it's definitely worth the watch.

# WHO'S THE FAIREST

It's a well-known fact that Western beauty standards for traditional masculinity and femininity are often unattainable despite how prominently they are portrayed by the media. Despite the more accepting views of beauty that have begun to surface recently, the world is diverse in both good ways and bad, and these harmful standards of beauty vary from country to country just as much as any other aspect of their cultures.

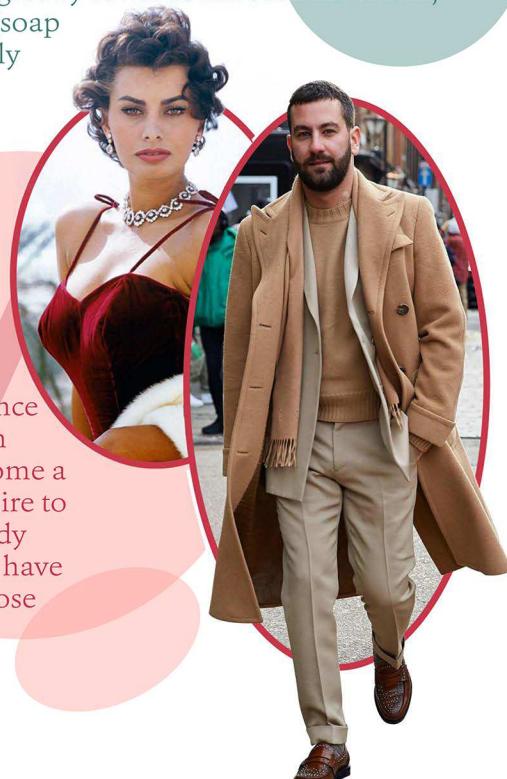
## KOREA

In Korea, as well as other East Asian countries such as China and Japan, having fair skin and a "clean" look is preferable for individuals of any gender. A slim build was shown to be more desirable than a more curvaceous figure, and emphasis is placed on having long, slim legs and a small waist and bust. Plastic surgery rose in prominence as people went under the knife for various procedures, including slimming noses, defining jawlines, creating fuller lips and bigger eyes. Studies show that nearly one million South Koreans undergo plastic surgery per year, though recently, appreciation for unique beauty has begun to rise.



## MEXICO

Toxic masculinity is still heavily prominent in Mexican culture. The typical ideal for men is to both act and appear "macho", or being aggressively proud of one's masculinity. Meanwhile, women are expected to have light skin, long dark hair, and to remove all other hair on their body. The hypersexualization of Latinx individuals in Western media has led to unrealistic body shapes becoming more coveted than ever. The standards of Mexican beauty have shifted greatly towards Eurocentric ideals, with heroines in telenovelas (soap operas) conforming to a highly gentrified image of beauty.



## ITALY

Italian men are generally unafraid of traditionally "feminine" tailoring and colours, contrasting sharply with Western ideals of masculinity. Their appearance and actions are instead shaped by a more subtle expectation — the Italian term sprezzatura is used to indicate "an air of studied nonchalance", which has become a standard that many feel the need to adhere to. Women, on the other hand, aspire to have narrower waists and more prominent busts, in an effort to imitate the body shapes of Italian showgirls called vallette in the 80's. Vallette were expected to have both "bombshell" and "girl-next-door" charm, leading casting directors to choose women with a very specific body shape in mind.



# OF THEM ALL?

// MICHELLE LIU  
DESIGN // ANASTASIA BLOSSER  
IMAGES // UNSPLASH

## INDIA

The beauty standards of India place heavy emphasis on light skin, much like in East Asian and South American countries.

The desire for pale skin has ensured that the skin lightening industry racks in around 450 million dollars a year, prompting the question: why is pale skin so desirable?

Historically, India, as a subcontinent rich in resources, has been on the radar for many European settlers and travellers. Its past invasions and colonization by the British from the 17th century onwards instilled within them the warped idea that having fair skin meant superiority. Today, this sentiment is reinforced by the presence of light skinned, almost exclusively foreign models on the covers of beauty magazines.

## NIGERIA

The tradition in some wealthier Nigerian families is to ensure a woman has a full, rounded figure before she marries. During this procedure, she will be taken to a “fattening room” to gain weight until the day of her wedding. The desire for a full figure stems from the logic that if a family is wealthy, they are able to eat well, and that a woman with a full figure has a wealthy spouse who “feeds her well”. Nigerians also bleach their skin, with a health report done by the World Health Organization stating that around 77% of Nigerian women report using skin-lightening products regularly.

Studies show that a child's perception of beauty is developed at a young age. As a young woman of colour living in a North American country, I am no stranger to the beauty standards of both the Western world and the East. Too often I have been told that “double eyelid surgery is cheaper in China, get them done when you turn eighteen as a present”. Too often I have comforted a peer, reassuring them that they should not be expected to adhere to a “one-size, one shape” standard of beauty that is so wrongfully perpetuated by the media.

You've seen it for yourself — though we try and try, adhering to what other people think is “beautiful” is like trying to cater to a preschool classroom full of picky eaters: impossible. The solution? Create your own definition of beauty. No matter who you are, no matter where you're from, you are beautiful, and who is anyone to tell you otherwise?





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