



the
spyglass

spring issue
twenty twenty-four



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// RIANNA ZHU
PHOTOGRAPHY // SAM ABDI
DESIGN // ELINA LAI

IT WAS NEVER *that* serious

*yk what it never was?
that serious.*

In a world of eight billion people, all my unique thoughts have already been widely discussed on Reddit or Quora. My mom is not the only mom obsessed with Candy Crush, my dad isn't the only dad who brings me cut fruit as a gesture of love. Even the realization that my life is unoriginal is unoriginal – I can almost guarantee that you'll find a "we're all out here living the same lives" comment under some niche TikTok. It's like the efficient-market hypothesis, except the market is a carrot on a stick and I am the donkey running in circles. Anyways, the point is, we're not special. But that's where the panacea of unbotheredness comes in.

Unbotheredness is the liberty to not care about the things that don't really matter, like what other people think of you. Self-awareness is important, but that's not the main problem plaguing the world today; it's the opposite. Given the constant state of information overload, it is very easy to fall into the trap of judging others, which gives rise to wondering whether other people judge you for the same things you're judging them for. Unbotheredness allows you to live life on your own terms.



"Whereas insignificance sets her free. Spares her the need for vigilance. Requires no presence of mind. Makes her incautious, and thus more easily accessible."

—Milan Kundera, *The Festival of Insignificance*

Unbotheredness does not qualify apathy; ironically, it's the ability to look at the messed up world we live in today and have hope for a better tomorrow. You should still care about global warming and political polarization – your attention is invaluable and should be spent wisely, not given away for free for things like your favourite girl group's IG feed.

The pursuit of significance is relentless and tiring. There is an art form in letting go of the need to constantly prove yourself, in coming to terms with your insignificance and doing whatever you want to do as a result.

LIFE CAN BE AS SIMPLE AS BREATHING IN AND OUT.



Rain

Today, it's warm. The sun wets my face and slows my heart. Nothing is wrong with today's weather. It's almost spring.

Tonight, it's cold. It's dark and cold. The night bites my nose and tears at my fingers. I feel lonely, isolated, and afraid. It's not spring just yet.

Tomorrow, it will snow, just a bit. It won't be as bad as December, or January. But this month had the most chilling winds. My cheeks have been burnt red by the frost. I'll catch snowflakes in my mouth in the morning. Snowflakes are sweet. Is it spring yet?

The chill will always nip at our faces, dry out our young, thin skin. My hands are cracked from the cold. Next week, I think the ice will start to thaw. I think the snow will start to melt. I think we'll all celebrate the end of this tortuous Canadian winter, then go right back to forgetting the weather. I think that none of us will notice the longer days, or the comfort of more natural light, or the beginning of life after a week or two; no one will remember the bitter cold and think: "how great that we are warmer now!" after the first couple weeks of March.

I bet it will happen to you too and you won't even think twice about it. Forgetting, I mean.

After all, winter has happened to you. Did you notice?

Maybe you did, but I hardly did, and I should have noticed more.

Between the complaints of cold weather, the drying of my skin, the loneliness felt in the icy darkness of a winter night, I've forgotten. My peeling hands, flushed cheeks, and tired ankles remember, but I don't.

But it's almost spring, remember?

Maybe I'll make this time different.

Next month, it's going to rain all day, every week.

I will remember the rain.

Reach Out To The Truth

// MAX SKIDELSKY
DESIGN // KATRINA LAM
GRAPHICS // CANVA

Have you ever wondered about what “truth” is?

It seems to be an objective concept; something immovable, unchanging, and accurate. The truth, at first glance, is something that delineates the absolute of an event, the definite fact in accordance with reality that defines discourse and (ideally) your opinion on something. But let's really focus on those latter concepts – discourse and opinion.

Liebeck v. McDonald's Restaurants – more popularly known as the “hot coffee lawsuit” – is a prime example of “truth” affecting discourse. The lawsuit, at the time, was seen as the peak of frivolity, and sensationalized media coverage of the suit painted Stella Liebeck as a senile old hag out to make a quick buck. The media at the time focused on the general idea of the case – suing a

corporation over spilling coffee, and being awarded nearly \$3,000,000 USD by a jury (though the amount she was actually awarded was far less) – without showing Liebeck's side of the story. Thus, public perception was formed over the “truth” of the matter, and Liebeck's case was satirized and bastardized, forming an unmistakable element of pop culture that continues to endure to this day.

The *objective truth* of the matter is that Liebeck suffered extensive third-degree burns in the areas near her lap (yes, even *those* areas) and required multiple surgeries and skin grafts over a period of two years to regain even a remote sense of normalcy. Liebeck simply wanted to settle with McDonald's for her medical costs, but



when the corporation refused, her attorney filed a lawsuit (that Liebeck won, thankfully) accusing McDonald's of gross negligence for serving their coffee so dangerously hot – and the rest is history.

The ways media affect our perception of things are complex and multifaceted, as pretty much all things are. The Liebeck case, however, is a prime example of the major factors at play when it comes to shaping perception and the idea of truth. Sensationalization (exacerbated today by worsening attention spans), lack of due diligence, and bias are all elements in the decreasing quality and integrity of journalism, and the misinformation that comes out of this mixing of factors isn't something that can be easily brushed aside as a passing inconvenience; no, it's **actively dangerous**.

You might not believe it, but social media is meant to keep you interested (hypnotized, really) and scrolling endlessly. Big shocker, I know. What this means is that you're offered content you're interested in, content you *agree* with, and content that holds onto your valuable attention. The gradual decrease of attention spans means that things are being sensationalized further and further, boiled down into headlines and emotional concepts without a trace of nuance. Just like Liebeck's case in the 1990s was turned into "Old lady spills coffee and wins 3 million dollars," we now see the same patterns on social media feeds, where news from legitimate sources is mixed with shifty, agenda-bearing posts that mimic the style of commonly trusted sources.

Social media has ruined the news, or rather, the spreading of information. It's a bold statement, yes, but think about it. *Anyone* can create *anything* nowadays, whereas in the past, reputable journalism was the *only* way to be informed. I'm almost certain you've seen infographics on current world events scrolling through Instagram, Twitter (X, ugh,) or your other social media of choice. You've probably read those infographics and taken their information at face value. After all, would someone really go on the internet and *lie*? But that leads right into my next question – *who can you trust?*

Unfortunately, I can't answer that, because my feed is different from yours. However, I can offer a suggestion. The next time you see information on social media that aligns with your viewpoints, try to fact-check it, the way you might fact-check something you disagree with – in other words, try to shed your biases. You can't take what you see at face value, especially not today. That means it's **on you** to reach out to the truth; the *objective* truth. Otherwise, you might end up following the narrative you've created for yourself and take *that* as the truth, no different from the society that made a laughingstock out of Liebeck in the 1990s.

Do you truly want that?



Why People Love cat memes



Cat memes.

We've all seen them. We've all sent them. And we've certainly all laughed at them.

Described by many as one of the internet's greatest feats, this furry phenomenon has clawed its way to the surface of the internet and left in its wake a line of unanswered questions.

First off, what even are cat memes?

If you think about it in a technical sense, a cat meme is literally just an unflattering, close-up image of a small feline paired alongside a couple of words. Anyone could throw one together in a matter of minutes.

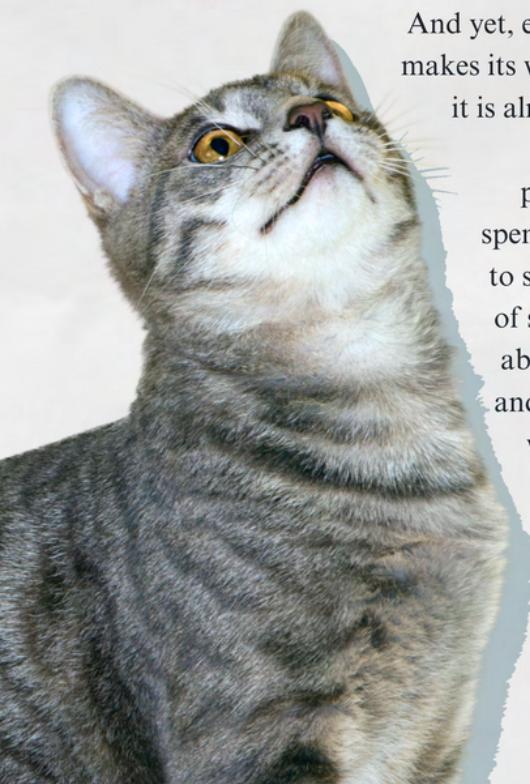
And yet, every time a cat meme makes its way onto the internet, it is almost inevitable that it skyrockets to instant popularity. You could spend months attempting to study the complexities of social media, learning about posting schedules and making it your life's work to film one viral video, just to get bested by a five-second video of a cat sleeping.

In 2014, a study found that there were more than 2 million cat videos posted on YouTube with nearly 26 billion total views—averaging 12,000 views per video. Back then, this meant that there were more views per cat-related video than there were in any other category of YouTube content. A decade later, we can only begin to imagine how those numbers have drastically changed and increased.

Nowadays, researchers are still asking the same question: what is it that makes the cat meme so popular in today's society?

To figure this out, we must dive deeper into the origin of the cat meme. We have to look directly into the brilliant mind of the man behind the meme: Harry Pointer.

Harry Pointer was a Brighton photographer who became well known in the 1870s for his attempt to create comedic entertainment through photography. He used animals as his models, and more specifically, he would capture images of his own pet cats engaging in human-like activities, such as tricycle-riding or roller-skating. By adding a short caption to each photo, such as "A Happy New Year!" or another common phrase, he made his work public by turning them into greeting cards.. By 1872, he had created over a hundred of these photos, titling the collection as 'The Brighton Cats.'





Pointer's idea of utilizing cats for comedic relief was only one chapter in the history of cat memes. Throughout the past few decades, these memes have and are continuing to evolve at rapidly increasing rates. In fact, the sudden upsurge in popularity for this phenomenon is also what led to the emergence of Grumpy Cat, a legend in cat meme history.

On April 4th, 2012, a shining star was introduced to the world. Known for her permanent 'grumpy' facial expressions caused by feline dwarfism and an underbite, Grumpy Cat held fame in her paws like no other cat had done before. Her frowning face became a trend in itself and social media users all over the world began constructing cat memes with her featured in the centre of each post. Eventually, Grumpy Cat had her own merchandise, her own book series, and the company, 'Grumpy Cat Limited' was created in her name. She became such a worldwide phenomenon that in 2015, President Obama tweeted a photo of her on the '@ObamaWhiteHouse' Twitter account with the caption: "Happy #NationalCatDay!"

Today, as the internet continues to be dominated by felines of all breeds, you, the reader, might be wondering how all of this ties together.

You've indulged in the roots of cat meme history and learnt about all the influential figures, but the main question has still remained unanswered: Why are cat memes so popular?

The truth is that it's simply impossible to answer such a question in just one response. Every single person is unique, and we all do things based on different reasons. In this case, some people might say that they enjoy cat memes because they help to dissipate negative emotions. Others might say that viewing cat memes serve as a way for them to kill time.

In the example of Harry Pointer's 'The Brighton Cats', his photography brought many people joy. His photos were used on greeting cards because of the comedic relief that they brought to both the givers and the receivers.

Meanwhile, with Grumpy Cat, her face had the power of telling a story. Grumpy Cat's memes gave viewers the opportunity to relate to one another, bonding over shared experiences that were portrayed perfectly by her silly facial expressions.

Ultimately, it makes sense that cat memes are so well-known in today's society. Perhaps they are popular because they matter to so many different people in so many different ways—as all good things should.

At the end of the day, as long as we're feline happy, that's all that matters.

// JILLIAN OUYANG
PHOTOGRAPHY // JOLLY YAN, CANVA
DESIGN // ALLYSON MACK



to reach the sky

haunt me, then
for i pretend to know
the intricacies of the human heart
that i too call my own
and while it is in good faith
to forgive and forget
i dwell
in the silences between echoes
in my dreams easily
abandoned.
the colours in my palette
dull easily to monochrome;
the stars in my sky
encase me from reaching any galaxy
for it is so easy for me to believe
that the skies are reachable
and the galaxies are not so far away
but i would be a fool to underestimate
the weight of a thousand words,
all that matter more than my own.
they rest in the pit of my stomach
and haunt the furthest corners of my mind.
do not suffocate love, i tell myself
it is my own, mine to keep
believe in its goodness
remember its sincerity
do not let endings fill its place.
i map my life as it
threads me along
i am afraid i will spend entire years
dragged to a false destination.
i confess,
i don't know the extravagance of existence
nor of love, not of its heavy implication
but i loved, and love still.
because the world will keep spinning
the sun will keep rising
and in this moment
we will never be here again.
but see,
i am made of all that i remember
i exist as a watercolour
of the tears i have shed
i will bring the sky down to me

and i will become the storm

// ELAINE WANG
PHOTOGRAPHY // IRIS YOU
DESIGN // ANDREW CHU



Son of stars--
Is that murder in your eyes?
There is destruction in your veins,
Collisions between your life and
Standards heaped upon us.

Daughter of heavens,
From one breath to the next--
What do you see in the world today?
The child soldier, the dying friend.
Life shatters around our ears
And stabs us in the back.

Child of galaxies,
World eater, drinker of starlight—
What is there for you to live for?
No roof over your head,
Gunfire in our ears,
And poison everywhere we go.

Wind rider, seeker of paradise—
Have you found your voice?
They call us crazy
Our dreams unattainable
Simple they may be.
We cannot afford to breathe.
Is it a crime to be alive?

Ruler of the skies,
Are you ready to soar?
We have so little to lose now
And everything to gain.

Child of the cosmos,
Care to join us?

Are you ready to live?

JEREMY ZHANG

For math, it's very competitive. I don't practice that much, but I want to get better. I try not to stress over it. I really like the math club here, and I'm on the math team too. I like Caleb, Tommy, and all those guys, the whole math team. When I'm talking with my friends, I feel the most happy. I feel like I belong here. Simple things like solving a math problem, not messing up a piano piece. That's enough for me. I do a lot of activities (band, piano, math, badminton, more...) but I would feel more fulfilled if I was better at all of them. Since coming into high school, I made new friends. Lots of new friends. I got to know the teachers, the place, the kids.

RACHEL WU

When I'm with my friends, they bring me down to earth and take my mind off the circumstantial things in life. Last year, Grade 11 semester two was my most fun semester. I just hung out with the 05s—we played volleyball and we ate out. That's what it felt like to really just live life and enjoy the time you have with your friends. Also, at DECA provincials, I was really stressed because we had our presentation and exam to do, but Marina was there, and was just like: "Rachel, I don't care if we fail, just enjoy the time you have." and I really appreciated her for that. These experiences that I could have with the people around me. Because when you hang out with other people, those conversations that come by and how you learn about other people inevitably shape you. For me, it was seeing the lives [my friends] lived and the experiences they had. That's just life—you don't have to be grinding school 24/7. There's still life to live in the midst of it.

HUMANS OF RHHS

// ELAINE WANG

PHOTOGRAPHY // MARINA HUANG

DESIGN // ELINA LAI

TIMOTHY WU

For a while now, I've been just--execute, execute, execute. It's been a while since I really thought about what I was doing. When I planned my courses last year, university seemed like it was still so far away. But this year, I realized that a lot of what I'm doing directly impacts my future. This is the first year I've had to properly study since like, Grade 4. To go from not needing to study to having to study everyday was tough.

I think I haven't lived my proudest moment yet. Everything I've accomplished, I put in just the right amount of effort to achieve it. But I haven't found something exceptional, yet. I'm still looking for something I can feel proud of. I want to be good at whatever I do in the future, which as of now, looks like it's going to be CS. I want to be able to execute the plans that I've laid out in pursuit of my goals.

JIN LU YU

I've spent most of my life in Canada—I moved here when I was three, so I can't remember anything from where I was born. But, something really important to me is keeping my culture and heritage alive. I've actively gone out to seek private Mandarin lessons. I've tried to learn the language as best I could even though it's not something I grew up with nor something my parents pushed on me, because it's something I want to teach my future children. I want to keep my heritage alive.

[Also], I would say I'm a pretty avid debater. I've been debating for more than a year now, and I've gone to a lot of tournaments. My proudest moment was breaking [into finals] at my first tournament. To be able to see my work pay off, to hear the announcers call me and my partner's name—it was really exhilarating. It made me feel like, "oh, all the classes I did weren't for nothing. All the work I put in wasn't for nothing. I'm here now."



JEREMY ZHANG

"I just, I want to help my friends become better, and I also want to be better. I want to make other peoples' lives better."

TIMOTHY WU

**"As I go about my day, there are no thoughts."
(Head empty...)**

RACHEL WU

"I want to be someone who stays true to my values and be someone who shows integrity. I want to be someone who other people can rely and count on."

JIN LU YU

"I want to be someone who people see and think, 'she's worked for everything that she has.' I want people to know that I've earned whatever I have."

I want SHORTER GAMES ❤ with WORSE GRAPHICS

// AMANDA XI
DESIGN // VIVIAN WU

“..and I’m not kidding.”

If you’re anything like me, you’ve probably seen this quote floating haphazardly around the interwebs, generally accompanied by a PNG of a certain blue hedgehog striking a “draw me like one of your French girls” pose. Odd presentation choices aside, this peculiar statement has been used by gamers across the internet to voice their concerns about the state of modern gaming. To the outside observer, this likely makes little sense: why exactly do we want games with less content, and of lesser quality, at that? To understand the issue, we’ll need to tackle the statement argument by argument.



In recent years, the trend of triple-A games has seen every new release touting itself as the next most ambitious project, packing hundreds of hours in potential content. While this seems appealing on paper, it has become increasingly evident that these supposed hours of content are coming at the expense of originality and quality. Ubisoft's recent release, *Skull and Bones*, markets its primary selling point as its vastness, boldly proclaiming itself to be the first "quadruple-A" game. However, its controversial reception has proven it to be just another game that forgoes functioning game design in favour of breadth. Additionally, game companies seem to have an obsession with elevating graphics, pushing frames and polygons to the absolute limit in the blind pursuit of realism. From just 2016 to 2020, the average size of games nearly doubled, most of this expansion being attributed to the increasing graphical demands of new titles.

With ever-expanding scope, it's evident that something has to give. At first, this takes the form of delays; anyone following gaming news will undoubtedly be familiar with the almost comical ubiquitousness of rescheduling in recent releases. But when deadlines are postponed as far as a community's grace will allow, someone needs to take the fall. And in effectively all circumstances, that "someone" turns out to be the developers and artists behind the product. Nowadays, it is a genuine feat for a game to be produced through humane conditions and regular work hours, with crunch time and hundred-hour work weeks all but becoming the industry standard. Worst of all, it is these very employees who are the first ones let go when a game, launched buggy and broken, inevitably fails to make up for the development time and cost.



This pattern is not unique to gaming; it is symptomatic of a larger cultural trend which devalues the work of artists and creatives. This predicament will likely ring familiar to anyone who has noticed the increasing number of soulless, cash-grab remake films made at the expense of actually paying writers. This is similarly echoed in the state of AI art, which has allowed people to reproduce cheap imitations without a single cent of compensation to the artists whose works are used without consent.

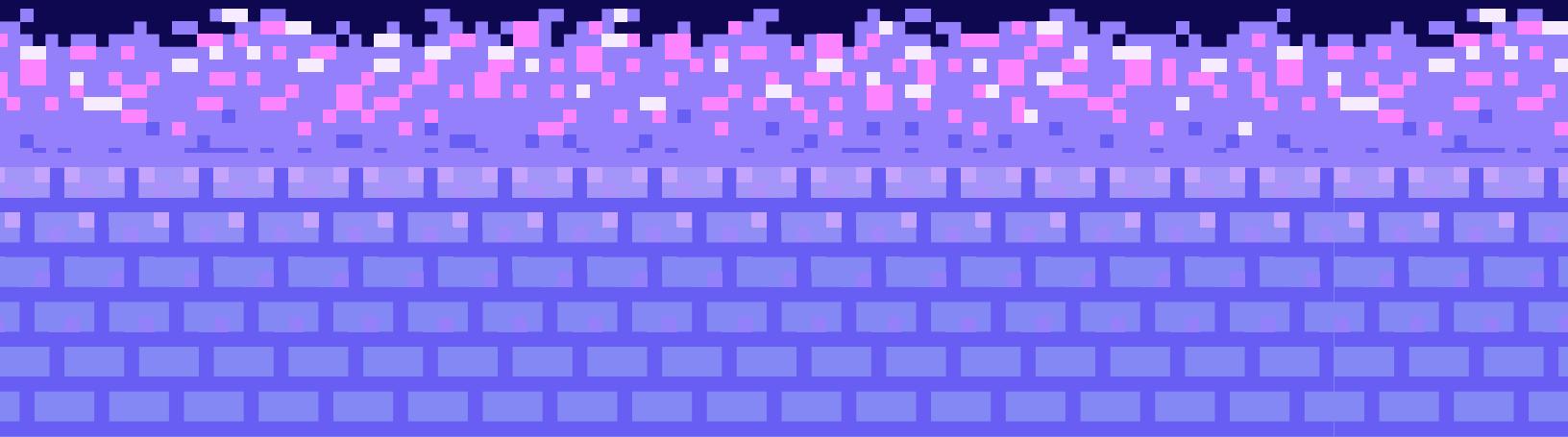
While this might compel one to start mourning the inevitable death of art under capitalism, not all is lost yet. It is important to note that consumers have the final say on what holds significance in our culture, and as more become dissatisfied with the unabashed corporate greed running rampant in their communities, their spending habits begin to shift. True to their word, the gamers of today are taking a greater interest in shorter and smaller games made by independent studios. Recent games like *Pizza Tower*, *Dredge*, and *Lethal Company* are a testament to the quality of games that can be produced when developers are not restrained by expectations of scope and graphical fidelity. These games are praised not for their hours of content or cutting-edge graphics but for their simple commitment to exploring distinctive and innovative ideas.

The growing success of independent games speaks to a greater truth about art in our culture: the value of art is not derived from scale or perceived grandeur, but rather from the passion of those who aspire to execute unique visions through a medium they love.

The original quote, in its full form, states the following:

"I want shorter games with worse graphics, made by people who are paid more to work less."

And that last part, I hope, is a message that will resonate with all fans of artistic media, gaming or otherwise.



He was better than all of them.

That had to be it.

If he wasn't, his parents wouldn't spend all their time with him when he had three other siblings.

If he wasn't, his tutors wouldn't praise him to the skies, introducing more annoying material each time.

If he wasn't, the temple wouldn't be nearly so eager to make him the next Holy One, an offer coveted by all, even nobility like his parents.

Those siblings of his always looked at him with bitter eyes. It was annoying. Sure, they had a reason, but it was still annoying.

"It's not fair! Why do Mama and Papa always spend time with you?"

What a stupid question. "Because I'm better than you."

"No you're not! Mama and Papa say they love us the same!"

People say things all the time. His parents say they love him. The King says his son is smart. The temple says that everyone is equal under the goddess.

But his parents wanted to send him to the temple; the first prince was a stuck-up idiot, and the temple made it clear that some people were better than everyone else.

People say things all the time.

Doesn't mean those things are true.

He was sent to the temple even though he said no.

He was not an angel.

The acolytes and whatnot kept telling him that he should 'be kinder' and 'smile more,' which was ridiculous. He'd had the exact same attitude back when he lived in an actual residence, and they had said he was perfect then.

If they were lying then, they could at least have the decency to keep lying.

And then they would ask him if he truly wanted to be the next Holy One, with that attitude of his, which was really... such an idiotic question.

Of course he didn't want to be their precious Holy One.

In the entire temple, Christopher was the only one who would talk to him like he was a person, not a child.

Although Christopher would keep exaggeratedly bending down to tease him, and kept patting his head, and was way too cheerful in the mornings, he was all right.

Which is why he hadn't expected Christopher to be stupid enough to want to be this year's Holy One.

"Fine," he huffed. "Fine. I guess you don't want to keep talking with me."

He refused to go to the ceremony.

He never spoke to Christopher again.

He had less than a year left until it was his turn to be the Holy One.

It was a stupid tradition and a stupid ceremony. They all said it would bring prosperity to the kingdom. He didn't believe it.

They tried all means of convincing him. They said he would go to heaven, which was nonsense. Heaven was for good people. He was brilliant, but he wasn't good.

Then they said that it was an honorable and noble thing to do.

If it was so honorable and noble, they could very well sacrifice themselves.

And besides, it would be such a waste to sacrifice him now, when he hadn't yet had the time to do anything of note. He could already do so much, in terms of studies and magic and everything in between.

He could have been so, so much more.

Yet they just had to cut him short.

The night before the ceremony, he was brought before the altar to pray. They lit the candles and locked the doors, leaving him completely alone.

"I don't want to die," he said to the statue of the Goddess. "I'll enter your realm when it's actually time for me to die. So if you're anything like the merciful deity they say you are, let me go."

On the day of the annual ceremony, the Holy One was nowhere to be found.

The people were in a panic, convinced that disaster was imminent now that the ceremony was ruined.

But the cold lasted no longer than usual, the rain was plentiful, the harvest was bountiful, and the kingdom ever-prosperous.

The only notable thing was that the entirety of the temple had, inexplicably, crumbled to dust.

But could that really be considered a disaster?

Of course not.

AS IF,
AS IF, AS IF



Per Ardua ad Astram

Canadian aviation efforts have been a source of pride for Canada since its founding. From the Silver Dart, the first Canadian heavier-than-air flight, to innovations such as the Avro Arrow, or even to the far reaches of space with Colonel Chris Hadfield and the Canadarms aboard the International Space Station, Canada has become one of the best places to pursue humble dreams into the far reaches of the skies. One wellspring of such pride is the Royal Canadian Air Force, who this year marks 100 years of service as an independent military element.

Post World War One, the aviation section of the Canadian military fell to rapid demobilisation. With efforts from various sources such as John Armistead Wilson, an air board was created and a Canadian Air Force was established in 1923. On April 1st 1924, the air service was officially renamed the Royal Canadian Air Force, the "Royal" sobriquet being the second bestowed after Australia's Royal Australian Air Force in 1921.

Today, 100 years later, the RCAF is 430 aircraft and 12 000 personnel strong. They are partnered with the US in maintaining continental airspace as part of North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) and are responsible for the National Search and Rescue Program.

In celebration of the centennial, aerobatic air shows are happening all over the country. The Canadian Forces Snowbirds, the official aerobatics demonstration squadron established in 1975, has airshows in Ontario on the following dates:

- June 15-16 – Borden, Ont.
- June 19 – North Bay, Ont.
- June 29-30 – Trenton, Ont.
- July 1 – Canada Day Fly Past, Ottawa
- Aug. 31 to Sept. 2 – Toronto
- Sept. 13-15 – London, Ont.

Over a hundred years of work and dedication has crafted the Royal Canadian Air Force into the stalwart guardians they are today. With that, I leave you with the RCAF's motto, harkening back to the journey aviation has taken:

Through Adversity, to the Stars.

//EOWYN WONG-AU
GRAPHICS//CANVA
DESIGN// LYNN HE/



Carbon Copy

As a wide-eyed and simple little kid, my favourite thing to do in my never-ending free time was to emulate my mom. In old pictures that are now dotted with specks of dust, I was wearing her ten-sizes-too-big high heels or putting her leather handbags over my shoulder. In videos that I now lovingly watch with my family, I was always trying to copy the way my mom talked and the words she would use. In fact, the only purpose of the landline phone in my home was to essentially serve as a prop for when I would pretend to chat with my friends, just like my mom did with hers.

Looking back, being exactly like my mom was truly never my goal; I think it was more to imitate her presence. To me, my mom has always been the epitome of grace, kindness, and warmth. She always knows what to do, and she has advice for every single situation that has ever occurred to anybody. My mom often tells my sister and I that she “cannot be in two places at once,” but I secretly think that if there was one person who could do so, it would be her. She maneuvers and navigates the world in a way that feels supernatural. It is almost as if she has some secret pact with the universe that allows her to make things always work out for all of us.



Although I don't know if I necessarily believe in luck, when I think about the concept, I immediately think of how I must have lucked out in terms of parents. It can be hard to always understand and always empathize, but my mom somehow manages to do it every second of every day.

When I look to the distant future, I don't feel a weight on my shoulders that prevents me from walking straight. Instead, I see a light being shone by my mom that shows me exactly where to go. Although she never puts pressure on me, I feel an intrinsic obligation to make her proud and give back all she has provided me with.

// KATE SHAHIDI
PHOTOGRAPHY // EMMA FODOR
DESIGN // PHOEBE SU



Will I ever be able to be exactly like my mom? Probably not. Will I ever be able to give her back everything that she has given me? Probably not. But will I try to reflect her identity in my actions and hope that it travels back to make some sort of impact, just like she has on me? Absolutely.



// DANIEL ZHANG
PHOTOGRAPHY // ERIN CHEN
DESIGN // ERIN CHEN

Why do so many highschool relationships fail?

I don't just mean the romantic ones. Why do so many of our besties, friendships, situationships, and friend groups seem more prone to collapse than a late stage Jenga tower? While this is a very complex issue that can most definitely not be boiled down to one reason, I think I've isolated a big variable: highschoolers are exceptionally bad at properly communicating how they feel with one another. Our underdeveloped brains are not used to communicating ugly topics with our peers, so most of the time we choose to keep these uncomfortable feelings hidden. This inability to communicate classically depicts itself as all the highschool cliches you know and love: highschool drama, talking behind people's backs, and poorly maintained relationships

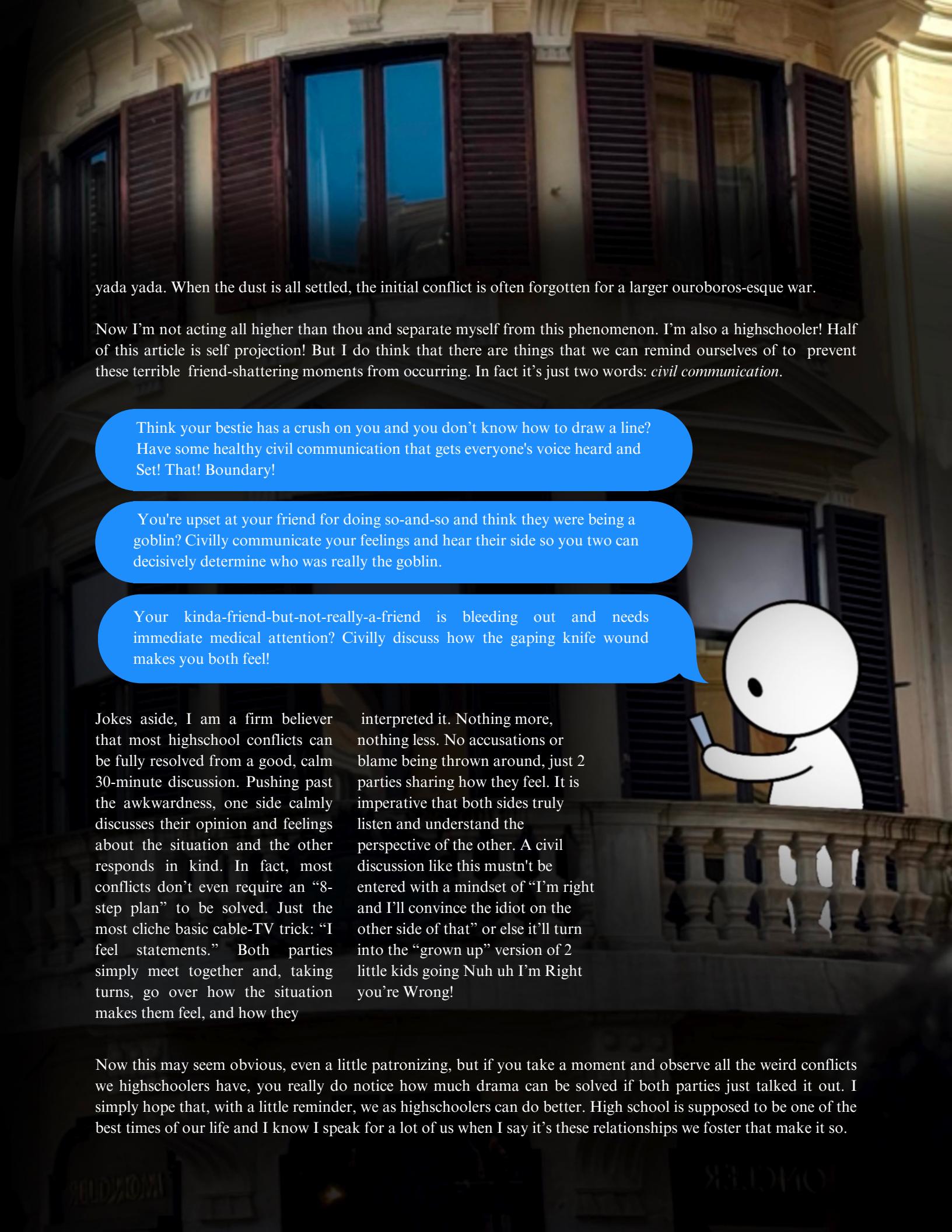
In many cases, big "things" start off as a minor dispute between 2 parties that never get resolved.

The idea of confronting the issue is deeply uncomfortable, so there is never any proper closure or civil discussion. Then, like a pot of milk on the stove, the whole thing ends up boiling and boiling till it erupts into a giant mess.

At first, you don't really see any reason to treat the other person differently. After all, it all started from a minor dispute.

But since no closure or healthy dialogue occurs, the resentment festers. This internal ugliness grows and grows until, snap, all of a sudden it's revealed that everyone hates everyone! It turns out this person is a manipulating gaslighter and that this person is the Devil and yada





yada yada. When the dust is all settled, the initial conflict is often forgotten for a larger ouroboros-esque war.

Now I'm not acting all higher than thou and separate myself from this phenomenon. I'm also a highschooler! Half of this article is self projection! But I do think that there are things that we can remind ourselves of to prevent these terrible friend-shattering moments from occurring. In fact it's just two words: *civil communication*.

Think your bestie has a crush on you and you don't know how to draw a line? Have some healthy civil communication that gets everyone's voice heard and Set! That! Boundary!

You're upset at your friend for doing so-and-so and think they were being a goblin? Civilly communicate your feelings and hear their side so you two can decisively determine who was really the goblin.

Your kinda-friend-but-not-really-a-friend is bleeding out and needs immediate medical attention? Civilly discuss how the gaping knife wound makes you both feel!

Jokes aside, I am a firm believer that most highschool conflicts can be fully resolved from a good, calm 30-minute discussion. Pushing past the awkwardness, one side calmly discusses their opinion and feelings about the situation and the other responds in kind. In fact, most conflicts don't even require an "8-step plan" to be solved. Just the most cliche basic cable-TV trick: "I feel statements." Both parties simply meet together and, taking turns, go over how the situation makes them feel, and how they

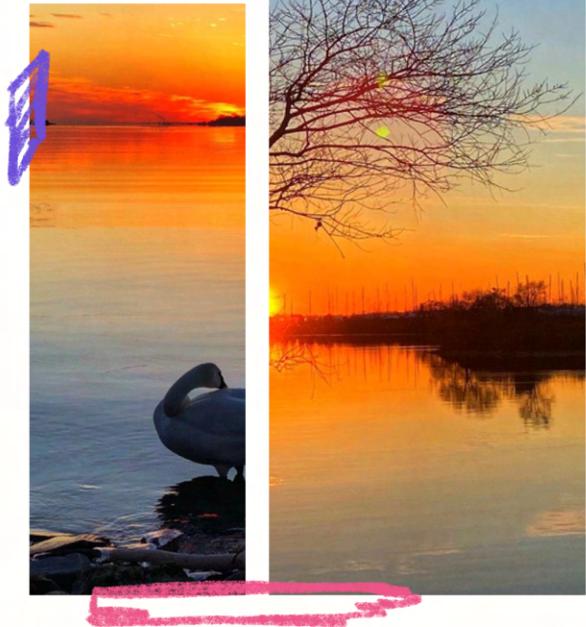
interpreted it. Nothing more, nothing less. No accusations or blame being thrown around, just 2 parties sharing how they feel. It is imperative that both sides truly listen and understand the perspective of the other. A civil discussion like this mustn't be entered with a mindset of "I'm right and I'll convince the idiot on the other side of that" or else it'll turn into the "grown up" version of 2 little kids going Nuh uh I'm Right you're Wrong!



Now this may seem obvious, even a little patronizing, but if you take a moment and observe all the weird conflicts we highschoolers have, you really do notice how much drama can be solved if both parties just talked it out. I simply hope that, with a little reminder, we as highschoolers can do better. High school is supposed to be one of the best times of our life and I know I speak for a lot of us when I say it's these relationships we foster that make it so.

On The Rewind

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Handcuffed to an interrogation desk, Jake Peralta feigns ignorance as Captain Holt chides him on his several unsuccessful attempts to steal his Medal of Valour, and his ultimate failure to win the Halloween Heist; a humiliating defeat, by any measure. From the looks of it, there is no hope for the young detective. Yet from behind the computer screen, I **smile**, knowing the plot-twist yet to come. Outside, the night washes over the remaining traces of sunset, the halos of streetlamps coating the streets in a waxing **yellow**. In the comforts of my bed, I rewatch one of my favorite episodes of Brooklyn Nine-Nine, excited to see faces I already know and laugh at jokes I've already heard. Beside me, my 14-year-old self watches in rapt fascination, eyes wide as she struggles to figure out Jake's plan before he reveals it himself. This is her first time watching the show, yet I can feel the **intrigue** wash off her almost as if it were my own—well, I suppose it is. We both have upcoming projects due, mine a culminating essay and hers a book report, but they can wait a little longer. Under the blanket of the **night**, my younger self and I watch in anticipation to see who the Amazing Human/Genius truly is.

The Hungarian Horntail roars defiantly, spewing bursts of **flame** into the arena, and Harry Potter grips his Firebolt a little tighter. It's the first task of the Triwizard Tournament, and he must find a way through the dragon's clutches to reach the prized **golden egg**. ☺

He goes for a dive, the wind screaming in his ears as he veers away from the Horntail's gaping jaws, reaches out his hand, and—the timer goes off. I look up from my book, **tattered** and cracked at the spine, and begrudgingly return to my textbook.

Re-reading Harry Potter can wait, there are exams to study for. Across from me, my 12-year-old self remains blissfully unaware of the timer, her eyes glued to the book as she reads of the Triwizard Tournament for the first time. We share the same copy, only hers is cleaner at the edges, bearing no signs of wear. Outside, **sunlight** filters through the windows as the afternoon haze settles in; a sign of summer. To my younger self, summer brings **light laughter** and endless days. To me, summer brings opportunity, the chance to monetize extracurriculars in preparation for university admissions. We both have responsibilities to see to, but really, **what's one more chapter?**

The paint glides beneath my brush, the **red** and **blue** joining together in a rich **purple**. It has been a while since I've returned to the canvas, but the swirling colors help take the edge off of the upcoming presentation.



To my right, my 5-year old self looks up from her desk to analyze her latest masterpiece, a beaming self-portrait done tastefully in red crayola and **glitter** glue. She looks at me, holding her work up with pride, and I am thrown back to a time of **bold colors** and **bright eyes**.

As the seasons change, the harder it is to look back when there is so much more to look forward to. With our heads constantly fixed on the next step, the next hurdle, and the next **mountain**, we forget to see how far we have come, how much we have grown. The future is calling, yet as we take that next step, we must bring with us reminders of where we are coming from, memories of the past. Whether it is the shows we re-watch, the books we re-read, or the hobbies we return to, we must find those crevices of familiarity to anchor ourselves to amidst such change. It is these crevices that offer us a place to relax, an overlooked but essential reminder of the past amidst the chaos of the upcoming future.

It is the **memory** of winter's past and the **promise** of summer, after all, that join together in the **coming** of a new spring.

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