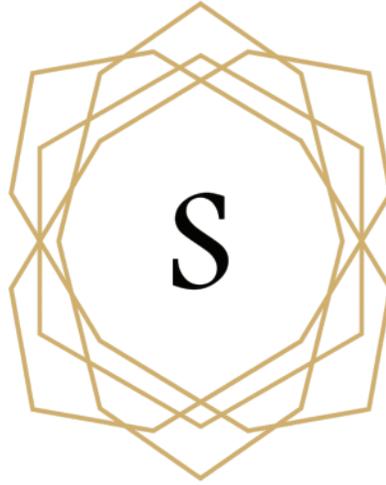


the
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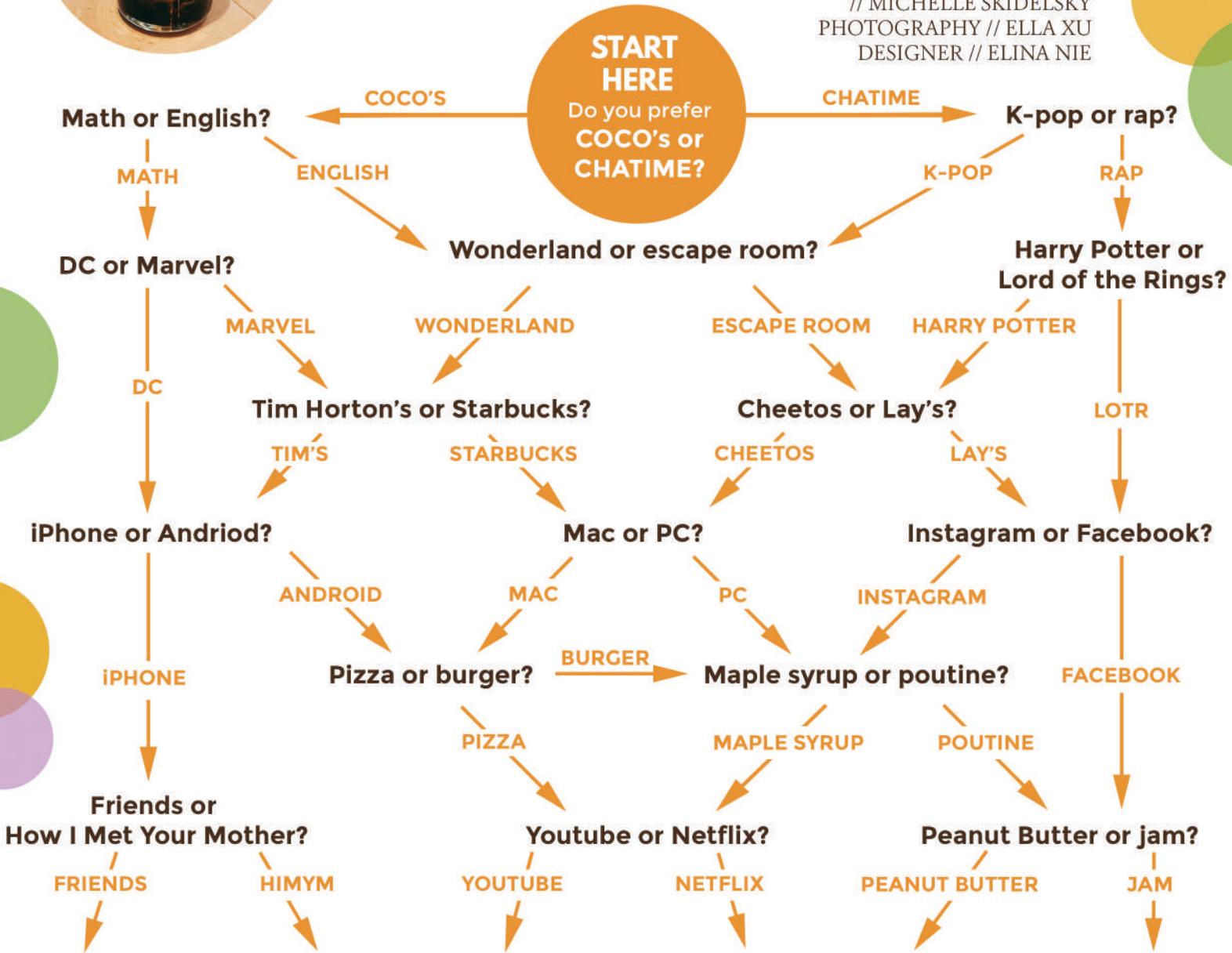
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WHICH BUBBLE TEA FLAVOUR ARE YOU?

// MICHELLE SKIDELSKY
PHOTOGRAPHY // ELLA XU
DESIGNER // ELINA NIE



PEARL MILK TEA

You're a classic! The staple bubble tea and a fantastic friend. You're fun, but everyone can lean on you when they need support. Anyone who likes bubble tea loves you because you keep it simple -- you really can do it all!

STRAWBERRY BLACK TEA

You're a sweet, compassionate person. You're your friends' favourite shoulder to cry on, and are always there to cheer people up with a joke or some honest advice. You may not be the most popular flavour, but once people try you they can't get enough of you.

TARO MILK TEA

You're calm and serene, and appreciate the more mellow things in life. You're loyal and dedicated, and anyone would be lucky to be your friend! There's a reason why you're one of the most popular flavours.

PASSIONFRUIT GREEN TEA

You're elegant and dedicated. You know what you want and you aren't afraid to go out and get it. Your beauty lies in the subtlety of your flavour -- anyone who's anyone knows you're delicious. Chatime always makes you their tea of the month for a reason.

MATCHA MILK TEA

You're bold, stylish, and sophisticated. You aren't one for cheesiness and frivolity. You're definitely a more refined person, with incredible taste. You're smooth, with just the right amount of sweetness - just like matcha milk tea.

MANGO SLUSH

You're fun and fresh, definitely the life of the party. You're always ready to crack a joke and you've got a legendary sense of humour. You may not be the most traditional person, but, just like mango slush, you're super refreshing and a staple for anyone's summer.



SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

A FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOOD REVIEW

// MICHELLE SKIDELSKY | DESIGNER // ILYA SPIVAK | PHOTOGRAPHY // RACHAEL PENG

Back in the day, when I was a tiny grade 9 drama student, I saw my first Evening of One Act Plays. I was mesmerized, and as soon as I came home I went on career cruising and rearranged all my courses so that I'd be able to take drama for all four years of high school.

Since then, I've seen every show twice, losing myself in that very same magic each time. Obviously, this makes me an expert. Here is my incredibly subjective and super unprofessional attempt at capturing and reviewing the magic of Ms. Williamson's final One Acts: Survival of The Fittest.

DNA

It's dark. There are trees, a dusty picket fence, a grimy Little Tikes racer, and a collection of various stumps littered across the stage. As Freya Abbas and Deniz Sheikh-hassani walk on stage, flashlights in hand, the audience understands that we're in for a bumpy ride.

DNA is not an easy play to watch. The cafeteria is overwhelmed with silence as everyone awaits Phil's (Lloyd Fan) next instructions, tensions rising as Brian (Kelvin Du) cries in fear. Everyone's portrayals were incredibly immersive; it's evident that these actors paid more attention to their grade 11 drama seminars than I ever could. As Raymond Liu took the stage, you could have heard a pin drop from miles away.

At the play's chilling end, theories, ideas and guesses swirled around the room. I am eagerly awaiting the BuzzFeed Unsolved episode that will chronicle this case.

PLAYWRITING 101: THE ROOFTOP LESSONS

The attention to detail in each show is absolutely incredible, but I think my favourite easter egg is how the big drama blocks have been turned into a rooftop, each brick lining up perfectly.

This play was a hilarious contrast to DNA, and I can only imagine how tired Arizo Nazary was after running up onto the rooftop with such force so many times. Nevertheless, everyone's performance was flawless. From Chloe Lee's subtle humour to Rachel Gonzalez's sensational recount of her childhood, Playwriting 101 showed us that no matter how good

the writing truly is, incredible performances are what really set a play apart.

Taking all of Chloe's advice to heart, you can all catch my debut play DNA: The Blood Bites Back in theatres soon.

FOURTEEN WAYS TO SCREW UP YOUR COLLEGE INTERVIEW

Ah, yes. A topic that hits close to home. The biggest thing we're told while writing applications is the importance of standing out. The one thing all 14 people didn't screw up was exactly that.

The play is sidesplittingly funny, and I don't think I ever stopped smiling. The costume changes were seamless, and definitely involved wizardry of some sort. I still don't know who my favourite character was. It may have been Raymond Liu's "Claw", or Satvik Nagpal's beat poet, who only wanted the best from this universit-igh. I'll never forget Chanel Bowen's Gertrude, the grandma who can't wait to party at York.

One thing is for certain; the confidence and motivation that these actors brought to the stage is something we should all bring to college interviews (though it might be wise to leave the fish slippers at home).

As the One Acts drew to a close, and Ms. Williamson took the stage for a final time, the graduating class presented her with a token of their appreciation: her very own Hollywood Star. However, even that isn't enough to symbolize how brightly Ms. Williamson illuminated the RHHS Drama department over her 25 years here, and how much she'll be missed. Though I've never had her, I've felt her influence and spirit permeate into everything I've ever learned in drama.

On a final note, I asked some members of the graduating class if they had any contributions to this review. They wanted to express their gratitude to Ms. Williamson: they are so thankful for having had such an amazing teacher, and for being able to share the incredibly special experience of her final One Acts with her. There really is no business like show business.



*Gilded
Cage*

She had always been seeking the meaning of happiness.

Happiness, she decided, was behind those bars. Those chosen to live beyond the gates became wealth incarnate, waking to taffeta drapes and tiered cakes as delicate as blooming carnations.

It was said that they wore gowns the color of sweetened cream and night robes with lace sleeves.

She often marveled at the glittering palace behind those slender bars of wrought-iron. Longing lingered about her hunched shoulders as she unfurled whitened fingers from the gates, scurrying home in the drab grey of her skirts. Her dreams were of marble floors beneath velvet carpets, not the asphalt scraping against the bare skin of her calloused feet.

Her family welcomed her back nightly with affectionate coos and warm embraces, but she was always brimming, oversaturated, with thoughts of lavish dresses and porcelain teacups. She wanted more, scorning the tasteless morsels of bread her father procured from a day's worth of pennies.

Even in slumber, she could never escape her frustrations, which manifested as the prettiest of fantasies. Songbirds perched on kaleidoscope chandeliers, iridescent brooches pinned to crowns of hair, court trains of gossamer trailing behind dress hems—

Night after night, she awoke to her hand outstretched toward the moon, puffs of desperation escaping her lungs as she grasped feebly for an impossible dream. As the first blush of sunrise kissed her skin, she rose to face the gates once again, her heart alight with the hope that she too would be selected to join their ranks.



It was said their necks were strung with the finest pearls, their fingers donning the largest of polished gemstones.

Being chosen meant leaving her family, her home, all she had ever known. The day that the gates opened for her alone, she did not look back, and they were nothing more than fragments of an abandoned past.

She passed her days in apparent bliss, surrounded by gentlemen in tailored suits and women whose lips stained garnet from their flutes of champagne. She bathed in water touched by rose petals, her skin caressed only by muslin silks imported from overseas.

Poised atop her own crystalline throne, she realized that the chasm in her heart still grew, a void with a yawning maw that demanded to be filled.

It was said that they even bled gold from their nicked fingertips.

Simpers concealed by hands bedecked with gem-studded rings, the others appraised her hesitation. She mimicked their painted smiles, indulging in their opulent parties and splendour until she had been wrung of her hope to escape this gilded cage.

A tear of gold streaked across her powdered cheek.

// ADRIANNE TANG
PHOTOGRAPHY // IDIN FAKHRJAHANI
DESIGNER // ANASTASIA BLOSSER

PSA FOR SOLO TRAVEL NOOBS IT'S EASIER THAN YOU THINK!

As children, the fear of getting lost was constantly at the forefront of our minds. Whether it be in Costco, IKEA, or some other ridiculously large establishment, the panicky feeling was always bubbling under the surface of our consciousness. (Especially because getting lost entailed confidently grasping onto a stranger's hand only to discover that the 6 ft tall man before you is definitely not your mom.)

As adolescents, that fear has dissipated for some, but for others, it has manifested into an even bigger nightmare. One of the biggest reflections of that worry comes in the form of a ten letter word that begins with travel but will probably end in some form of -ing.

Crying. Dying. Maybe lying... dead in a ditch somewhere, that is.

Or maybe, that's just what your mind wants you to believe. In all honesty, solo travelling--or any travelling for the matter--isn't as difficult as it seems. You may think that the world is dangerous beyond your blankets, but so is convincing yourself that you've basically already seen Paris because your bedsheets are decorated with the Eiffel Tower. Therefore, as a self-proclaimed travel expert, here is my quick-tip cheat sheet to level up just about any newbie traveller!

TIP 1

ARRANGE TRANSPORTATION BEFORE PLANNING THE REST OF YOUR TRIP.

Everyone's preferences are different, but purchasing a transportation ticket should be your very first priority when planning a trip. You may be more inclined to find the best food and attractions first, but the reality is, without confirming your transport information, everything else is purely hypothetical. Setting down specific dates allows you to check on other details such as weather or opening hours that may or may not prevent you from visiting a certain destination.

TIP 2

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS THOROUGHLY AND DILIGENTLY.

You asked a passerby for directions to a cafe you wanted to visit on a whim, and they kindly scrawl out an address for you. Unfortunately, you realize too late that it's quite illegible. Is that a six or an eight? Should you take the risk and just go with eight? The worst thing that can happen is if you are following unclear directions when you're travelling alone. Detailed research that is done ahead of time will definitely save you the hassle of trying to follow Google Maps for ten minutes, only to realize the cafe doesn't open on Tuesdays.

TIP 3

KEEP TRACK OF YOUR BUDGET.

Realizing you went three hundred dollars over your budget kind of can't be blamed on currency conversion rates. What it can be blamed on, however, is bad planning. Rather than berating yourself after careless purchases, set a planned budget for your trip. Not only will it regulate your spendings, but it will also act as a safety net in the case of emergencies. Remember, your luggage only has so much space, and no, thirty packs of Indomie Instant Fried Noodles probably won't fit no matter how you roll your clothes.

TIP 4

BE PREPARED FOR THE UNEXPECTED.

Cloudy with a chance of... anything really. Whether it be changes in the weather, three hour delays, or forgetting your passport in the hotel's safety box, the unpredictable is probably the only variable you can't control. Being alone and lost may sound absolutely terrifying to some, but the biggest tip is, don't let the fear of the unknown limit you. There will always be hurdles in your way, but they should never be the sole reason that is keeping you from taking that first step.

So, travel newbie, now that you've passed the tutorial with flying colours, it's time to meet the real boss. Muster up your courage because Expedia.com is just a click away, and so is your chance to finally overcome your inner hermit-like tendencies. Summer vacation is right around the corner, what are you waiting for?

// JENNIFER YANG

PHOTOGRAPHY // REINA DINGMAN

DESIGNER // ELINA NIE





HOW'S THE WEATHER?



The weather is like that friend—you know the one. They're dramatic, moody, and aggressively opinionated. Within a day, they can go from little miss sunshine to a growling demon-monkey. Their mood permeates the atmosphere, dictating the lives of the surrounding masses. They are infectious.

Unlike that friend, however, the weather is predictable. Despite having our moods (and small-talk) controlled by the skies, we can at least forecast a storm. But how do we do it? Where is the team of ardent fortune tellers tasked with creating the 14 day forecast?

In the olden days, we used to curse the weatherman when the report was erroneous. To tell the truth, the weatherman is probably not the one making predictions. He's just compiling and presenting meteorological information so we know whether or not to bring an umbrella. So who's to blame when our masterfully laid picnic plans are foiled?

The science behind weather forecasting is an elusive one. An internet search can tell you the difference between cumulus and cirrus clouds; however, only the well-funded have the necessary equipment to reach the clouds. If you've never heard of a weather balloon before, you're not alone. It's like a miniature hot air balloon tethered to a barometer, thermometer, and camera. Taking measurements of the atmosphere in real time, it's up to pattern recognition and good judgement to piece together the rest.

When the skies are overcast, it's hard to see what lies beyond. Fog shrouds the upper layers, obscuring any precious clues as to what tomorrow's weather will be like. Luckily, satellites peer from beyond the earth. Like wise old ladies, they watch from afar, compiling the big picture. When thousands of weather networks

collaborate, they can create a blueprint of the world's weather conditions. If you've ever seen the weather report green screen, the one with the colourful map, you know exactly what I'm talking about.

In meteorology, we are always concerned about systems: high pressure systems, cold fronts, storm systems, etc. These are moving weather patterns that traverse continents. For example, a high pressure system is indicative of clear skies and steady temperatures. When the wind blows west and a storm system lies to the east, you know that your hours of sunshine are numbered. With the power of communication and math, predictions can be constantly revised to account for these systems.

So how could anyone possibly know the daily high 14 days from now? Hint: take a guess. Scientists use historical records to create rough models. When I was driven to school every day, my smart GPS figured this out and displayed the route each morning. One day, however, I had a doctor's appointment and that GPS still insisted that I turn right on Yorkland. It used my historical habits to predict my future behaviour and it accomplished this successfully (most of the time). Similarly, because it's warm right now, we predict it will be warm in two weeks.

Sometimes, a rainy day can misalign your chakras. But knowing the weather in advance will allow you to prepare with the appropriate crystals.

Knowing how scientists predict it is just plain interesting.

// LLOYD FAN

DESIGNER // ILYA SPIVAK

PHOTOGRAPHY // RACHAEL PENG





UNLOCKING
THE
CLOSET
DOOR

One of the worst emotions a human being could ever experience is fear. Fear of persecution, fear of judgement, fear of isolation. It's fears like these that kept people silent. But sometimes the only viable option is to push through those fears and own your truth, in the hopes that it could liberate others, even momentarily, from fears of their own.

Living in the Middle East, and being of Indian origin, I was never exposed to the possibility of being anything but cisgender and straight. (For readers who aren't familiar with the term, cisgender refers to a person whose gender identity and biological gender align). Being raised in a country where homosexuality is still criminal, and sometimes given capital punishment, I only learnt about the LGBTQ community from the internet. My story is one that I've shared with a few close friends, and one that I've experienced alongside others fighting the same battle as me, but it's still somewhat complicated.

There is no discernible beginning to this story. There was no sudden realization, I never woke up one day and decided that I was this and that and something else. In my experience, it was a number of seemingly isolated events that all conglomerated together and brought me to a much clearer understanding of myself. My identity had two parts, one of which I'm still debating on. But if I were to pick a point of origin, I'd choose the second semester of 8th grade.

I remember her vividly. She was the smartest, prettiest, most talented, most perfect girl in the entire class. At first, I found it confusing that I'd hope to somehow sit near her, and that a single conversation could make my heart beat faster than before, or that a single smile from her could leave me in a state of innocent bliss. It was the beginning of a long chain of denial and many days of convincing myself that she was just a friend, and I just wanted to be her friend. This seemingly eternal "gay panic" all came to an abrupt halt as the stress of immigrating to Canada took up all my energy. During those last few months in the Middle East, I came out

to several extremely close friends, and learnt that I wasn't exactly entirely alone. Coming out to the girl, as well as telling her how I felt, were two moments that, in theory, would have been excruciatingly terrifying and would have riddled me with anxiety. I can't possibly speak for others who've been in the same position, but owing to how all those trials ended on a positive note, that encouraged the mentality that everything was going to be fine in the end, and that someday I'd be brave enough to tell my parents, as well as several other things that were virtually impossible in the confines of the Middle East.

In these past few months, I've done things that I would have never envisioned doing. I've joined our school's GSA, participated in a few pride events, came out to my parents - something that played out a lot better than I had anticipated, got into my first romantic relationship with a girl, ended my first romantic relationship with a girl, helped my friends accept and live their truth, and accepted myself wholeheartedly. In my somewhat biased opinion, I'm proud of myself. The only thing I could ask for now is that others like me could find solace in my story, and someday tell a story of their own.

// ANONYMOUS

DESIGNER // STELLA WANG

i don't get pretentious art

// RAYMOND WANG
DESIGNER // KAYLA CHO

Sometime in late March, I walked out of the theatre after having just watched Jordan Peele's *Us*, trying to make sense of it all. Yes, I understood the gist of the movie: a family is tailed by their mole-people counterparts and later discover that the issue isn't just localized to their household. It's a movie that encompasses many genres, including horror, thriller and apocalyptic fiction, but it's also a story about the tenacious nature of the family bond, as well as a blurring of the "good versus evil" and "us versus them" tropes. But watching it as a movie, not as an allegory for American history or societal privilege, it just doesn't make a lot of sense.

Having subtle themes doesn't necessarily mean pretentiousness, so what exactly makes *Us* pretentious? I'd say it's the fact that Peele was willing to sacrifice plot consistency and comprehension just to rip a coherent message away from the audience's hands, like a carrot and stick.

Do I think Jordan Peele is a talented director? Absolutely. His movies are chock-full of various highly creative references and metaphors. One scene in *Get Out*, for example, depicts the African-American protagonist freeing himself from hypnosis by picking cotton, an ironic nod to slaves working in American plantations. However, *Us* is different from *Get Out*; it's a plot-hole filled film that barely stands when it's watched superficially. But we're just eating it right up.

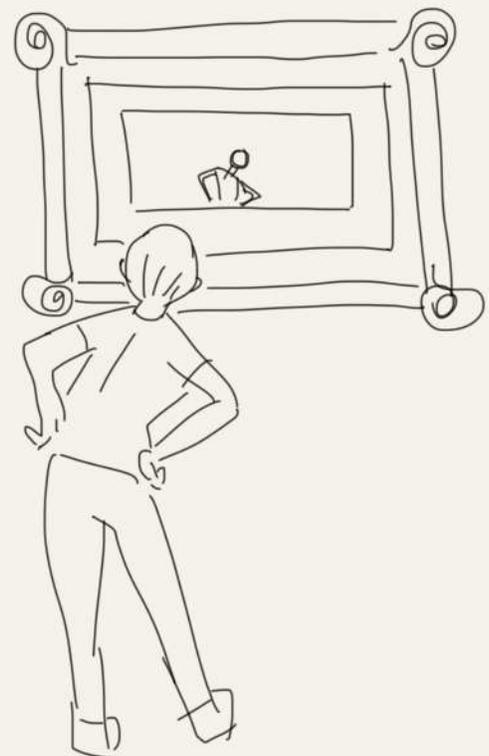
Now take Rupi Kaur's bestseller, *Milk and Honey*, a collection of poems that promotes various themes of self-acceptance and recovery. It's a 200-pager and can be comfortably read in one hour and a bit, but there's just not a lot of content. Most pages are littered with a couple of words that aren't particularly impactful. I can recall reading so many pages of empty (but to be fair, coherent) metaphors where I strained to grasp their significance that it felt like I was doing Kaur's writing for her. Why does it feel like I've put more thought into reasons why I dislike the book than Kaur has in writing it? But it's a bestseller, so we just eat *Milk and Honey* right up, too, I guess.

There are many adjectives we can attribute to human nature. Violent, greedy, passionate, you name it. We're prideful, duplicitous animals that yearn for confirmation from the people we consider above us, below us, and equal to us. Maybe it's this flaw that explains why we cherish pretentious media. It makes us feel elevated with those who "get it" and superior to those who don't. "Those imbeciles, they don't have a cell in their brain to read between the lines, to enjoy fine art," we think. Little do we know that everyone is the same in a different way.

This was one of *Us*'s central themes: the idea that we love to differentiate ourselves from the people who are different from us, while convincing ourselves that we are right in doing so every step of the way.

But I summed it up in a much more literal way.

Your move, Orange Peel.



i met them online

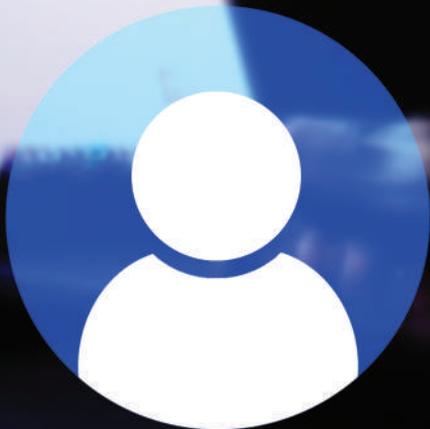
Here at RHHS, the clubs are almost as diverse as the students themselves. With an eclectic selection ranging from the award-winning debate team, the talented singers of Vocal Fusion, and the future astronomers of RASA, we like to believe that our school has something for everyone. Sadly, this is not the case. Like other schools, RHHS has kids who feel like they don't belong anywhere. It can be really hard to find friends who share similar interests if your thing happens to be dumpster diving, soap carving, didgeridoo music or some other "niche" hobby. Fortunately, there's a quick and easy solution for anyone who is tired of not being able to find a community to be a part of: the internet.

Many teens are turning to forums, online chatrooms and social media—hoping to fill the void of loneliness they feel. It seems that humans naturally crave love and acceptance, and they will stop at nothing to seek them out. People who watch obscure animes may lurk on fanfiction websites to read scenarios that they imagine their favourite characters in. Sites like DeviantArt with millions of page views a day are full of drawings posted by dedicated consumers of various books, movies, and TV shows. While the idea of a person who has "internet friends" used to conjure up images of a shady loner hunched over a computer in a dimly-lit basement, meeting people online is now becoming more commonplace. In a 2015 study conducted by Pew Research Centre, 57% of teens reported making a new friend on social media. These relationships aren't even limited to mere friendship. With the rise of dating apps like Tinder, it is estimated that one-fifth of all committed relationships begin online. People who once thought they were "forever alone" now realize that it's easier to meet "the one" than ever before.

Yet not all internet communities revolve around making friends or obsessing over fictional characters. Unfortunately, the internet has also given a voice to strange cults and extremist political organizations looking to lure in young and impressionable teens. Today's youth are more prone than ever to becoming victims to internet predators, and the main method that predators use to win over their prey's trust is by making teenagers feel less lonely. The victims are then convinced that without internet friends, they would have no friends at all. This means that if parents are worried about keeping their children safe online, the solution is not to ban internet friends in general. What teenager actually listens to their parents anyway? Instead, it is to provide enough love and affection to their child. By providing a means for adolescents to pursue their hobbies and accept their own flaws, parents will be ensuring that their children won't have to seek validation from peers or strangers on the internet.

As the world becomes more interconnected, cynics point out all the ill-effects of social media and how they are supposedly leading the world into a dark time. But there's always a bright side. We must remember that if a person can cheer up a stranger who is having a bad day in a distant country, the world is probably better because of it.

// FREYA ABBAS
PHOTOGRAPHY // RACHAEL PENG
DESIGNER // ELINA NIE



// JENNY HUANG
DESIGNER // LAURIS PETLAH

NEW WORLDS TO DISCOVER

summer must reads & recommendations

Why try to comprehend lines upon lines of black ink when moving pictures with audio exists?

But hey, reading can help you with those dreaded four years of mandatory English. And it's scientifically proven to give you a longer life. A good dose of fiction opens your mind, inspires your creativity, and once you manage to see past it being a chore, it can even be fun (a shocker).

Pick up a book this summer, there's loads of time. Maybe you'll find something you'll really like. And for those who don't know where to begin, here are some great novels to jumpstart a potential reading career.



GEEKARELLA

The Generic YA - Ashley Poston

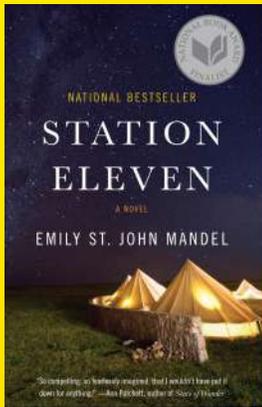
Just because YA is for a younger audience doesn't make it any less important—they address many contemporary problems. Care to try an adorable Cinderella retelling with a hate-to-maybe you're tolerable-to-stop making my heart flutter-to-love romance, all centered around fandom and fanculture? It's cute, it's non-toxic, it makes us fans feel represented as we fervently attend conferences and gush over our favourite moments. And lastly, it reminds us to "Look to the stars. Aim. Ignite."

A DARKER SHADE OF MAGIC

The Epic Fantasy - V.E. Schwab

I get it, fantasy is intimidating. Everyone wants to dive into a world of dragons and mages, but the enormous sizes of fantasy series drive a lot of people away. If you're new, you should experiment with YA, but a brilliantly crafted fantasy that serves as an entryway into adult fiction is Schwab's *A Darker Shade of Magic*. There's magic, there's thieving, there are parallel Londons threatening to tear apart at the seams because of a dark tyrant rising from a once vibrant Black London. Doesn't that just sound like the perfect recipe for an amazing plot with well fleshed-out characters? Because it is.





STATION ELEVEN

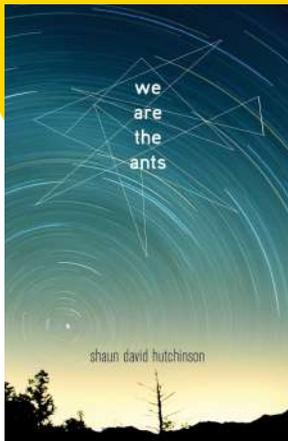
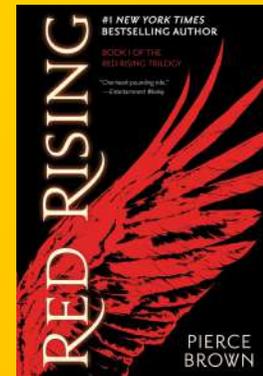
The Alternate Reality - Emily St. John Mandel

When we think of an apocalypse, we usually imagine a zombie plague or a widespread pandemic that leaves few survivors struggling to find their way in a newly dangerous world. Station Eleven falls in the latter, with civilization collapsing to the brink of extinction beginning from a snowy night. Mandel seamlessly weaves fates together, perspectives from Before and After, to form an absolutely spellbinding tale of what it means to live and be part of this wonderful miracle known as humanity.

RED RISING

The Space Odyssey - Pierce Brown

Okay, if you're new to the sci-fi genre, maybe you should start with something like Illuminae. But Pierce Brown's space saga is a true masterpiece, interwoven with warfare, politics, humour, and the message of fighting for the future against your oppressors. It will seem slow at first as you're battered with the intense world-building, but I guarantee that if you stand strong, the epicness of the remainder will be well worth it.



WE ARE THE ANTS

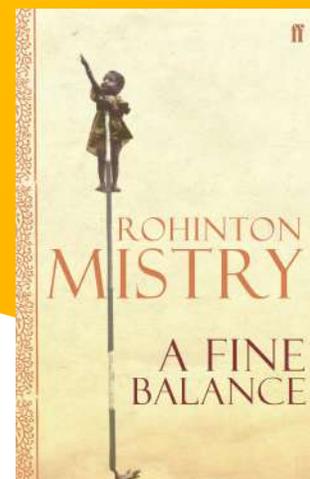
The Queer - Shaun David Hutchinson

There are certainly a whole range of amazing LGBTQ+ novels out there; Adam Silvera and TJ Klune are some fan favourites. But today I want to introduce Hutchinson's We Are the Ants, an almost sci-fi twist to a contemporary about a boy who has gone through so much, facing the decision on whether or not the world is worth salvaging. It's horribly sad at times and beautifully joyful at others, and if you're still not convinced, the first line is literally: "Life is bullsh*t." How can you not be drawn in by that?

A FINE BALANCE

The Historical - Rohinton Mistry

Many people are turned off by historical fiction because, come on: grade 10 history? But I'm here to tell you that the genre can be interesting, very. Wouldn't you want to read more into a particularly harrowing event in the 1900s? India's controversial State of Emergency was brilliantly and starkly portrayed in Rohinton Mistry's A Fine Balance. It's pages and pages of depressing happenings to get through but by the time you finish that last line, tears streaming, it's certain to be a story that stays with you for the rest of your days.



PHOTOGRAPHY

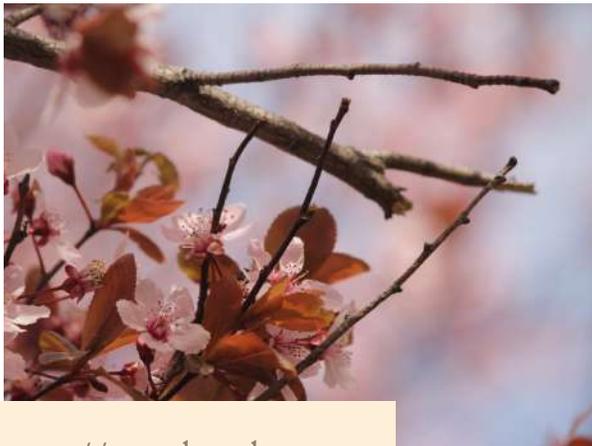
reflection // ella xu



postcard: greetings from Montreal
// reina dingman



bloom // rachael peng

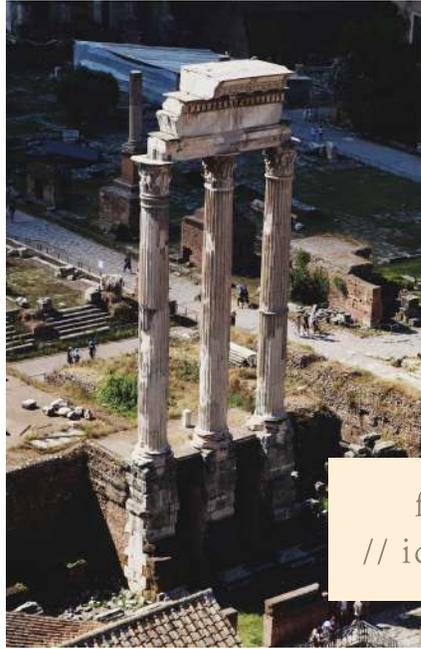


serenity
// idin fakhrjahani



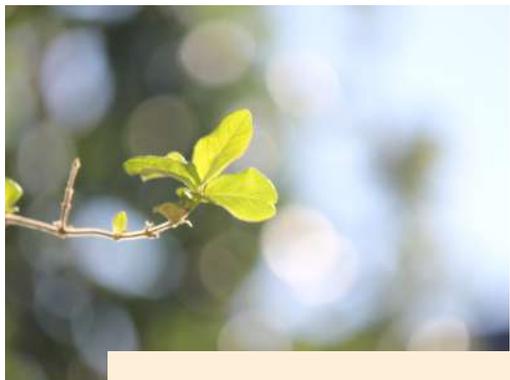
SHOWCAST

retro future // ella xu



foro romano
// idin fakhrjahani

history framed
// idin fakhrjahani



sprout // rachael peng

“Survivor” Art Contest



Chu Yi Yu
Grade 11

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chu Yi Yu'.



Hafssa Ali
Grade 10



Sameer Jain
Grade 11

THE HALLWAY

It's that time of year again.

I stare down the hall, the hall where there is no darkness. The man at the end of the hall, he's always there, wearing overalls and a rusted brown tweed jacket and glasses that reflect the harsh spotlight so perfectly I can never see his eyes.

A book, bound in the blood of those I know, scarlet against stark white, sits at his feet. I can't resist it, even though I try. I always try. It draws me in like matter to a black hole.

This must be the last time, it has to be, I think. The hall is longer than I remember, and more soulless bodies outside the windows than ever before, but I remember that, too. I do nothing but walk forward and take deep breaths, for the slightest deviation from the norm could betray my unease.

The man at the end of the hall doesn't like that.

I approach my first benchmark: a crystal-clear decanter. I am familiar with what it holds. It weighs nothing in my sweat-slicked hands.

"Whenever you're ready," says the man at the end of the hall. His voice is a marathon gunshot. The glass begins to rattle to my heart's rhythm.

The bodies have been stirred to action. I can feel their minds pressing in on mine, their stares closing in the walls. I must do this before it is too late.

"Hello, my name is Ethan and today I'm going to talk about..." I tip the decanter over my outstretched wrists. The pain is swift but unlingering, more of a promise of what's to come, and the press of the bodies against the windows relents for a beat. Thick fog rolls in, obscuring the outside from view— and for a moment I am alone with the man at the end of the hall— but it dissipates as

my wrists heal. Out of the corner of my eye, I watch him pick up the scarlet book. Though I fear it, I cannot let him know. I continue to walk on.

Within minutes of each other, I meet my second, third, and fourth benchmark: a safety pin, a sewing needle, another decanter. Each bout hurts more than the last, but the only sounds I make are of transition words and poetic analysis, carefully measured on my tongue despite the pounding on the windows and the pounding in my chest. My hands continue to cry tears of stress when my eyes can't.

And still, the man at the end of the hall is watching.

He is so close now. My breathing turns ragged and I begin to stumble. I can barely focus on the fifth and final benchmark through the rhythm of the masses. With every successive beat, a rail spike of noise drives itself deeper into my head. It must be showing on my face now; the pain, the exhaustion, the unwillingness to carry on. I take another step —

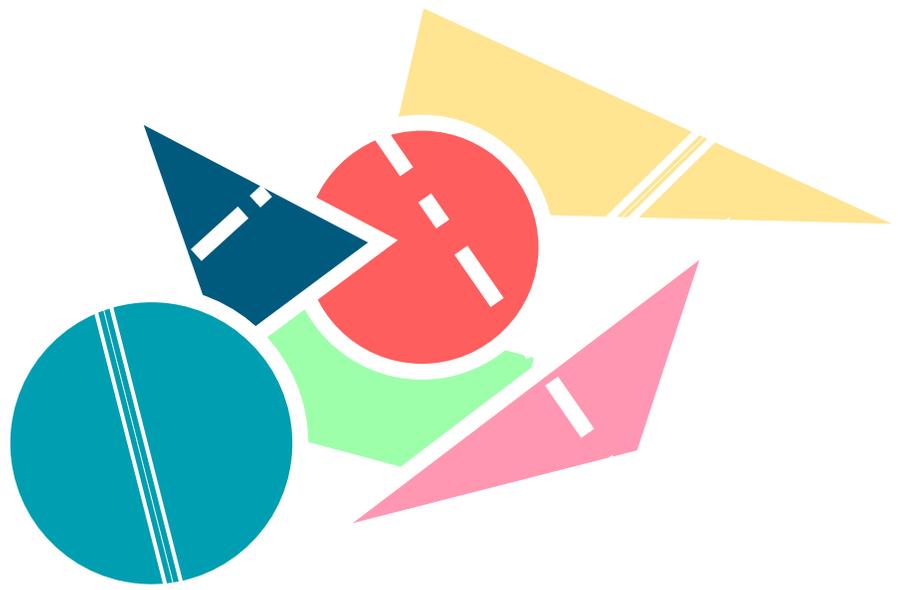
And it all stops.

The hallway is gone. The fifth benchmark is gone. The man at the end of the hall is gone — no, he's right beside me. The book he holds is bound in paper and his eyes, visible through the lenses of his glasses, spell kindness.

"Well done," he says, voice echoing around the silent room. But it isn't silent anymore, as the no-longer-soulless bodies clap enthusiastically and I grin, standing at the front of the class, taking in the applause.

The hallway is gone. I am free.

// ETHAN KWAN
PHOTOGRAPHY // REINA DINGMAN
DESIGNER // ELINA NIE



ode on inclusion

GSA AND ITS LEGACY OF EMPOWERMENT

"GSA makes me feel accepted in a world where I couldn't be. GSA helps people discover where their place is in life. GSA means everyone is accepted and loved by others from the community."

- Anonymous

We live in an era of tumultuous change, watching helplessly as the world cracks along boundaries of political alignment, race, and religious beliefs. Cowering before an uncertain future, we cannot help but take the path of least resistance; we censor ourselves, because the price of honesty is one we simply cannot bear to pay.

There is a club, however, where authenticity is not a privilege, but a right. A club that is a microcosm of the best parts of society, the kindness and optimism and grit, that are omitted from the nightly news. That club is the Gender-Sexuality Alliance.

Before GSA, I felt isolated. I knew there were people around me who were like me, but I felt disconnected and unable to comfortably reach out to them. Being in GSA has broken that barrier for me, and I cherish the time I'm able to spend with all the other members every week. I'm incredibly grateful for these feelings of empowerment and community that being in GSA has given me."

- Rachel Wang, Grade 12

RHHS's GSA is a student-run club that provides a safe space for all students to discuss personal experiences and issues regarding sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as learn about the vibrant LGBTQ community and avenues to provide support to others on a personal, regional, and global scale. Monday meetings, held in a round-table format, create a welcoming and comfortable environment that fosters

community spirit and a sense of empowerment, allowing students to find strength and inspiration in one another's unique stories.

"To me, GSA is a place to be openly and shamelessly myself. I can share experiences and feelings with others like me, and know that everyone around me understands what I'm going through. It's a large group of friends who are willing to discuss what it's like to be LGBTQ+ all day long."

- Alia, Grade 10

Attendees are able to connect with each other on a profound level, and to discover their capacity to create positive change. GSA leads its participants further than community membership or self-acceptance; it is an avenue to visibility and to universal acceptance.

"We need places where LGBTQ students, who feel like they're invisible, are seen for who they are. We need places where confused students can find others like them, or at least find somebody who understands. We also need a place where people who want to learn more can listen to real-life experiences and can get the answers they wanted. The GSA fits the bill perfectly."

- Tia Harish, Grade 9

The GSA's dedication to LGBTQ rights and the proliferation of a caring school environment transcends the four walls of the classroom - they champion the rights of marginalized students throughout the year, actively participating in not only anti-bullying spirit days and Pride month, but school open-houses and information nights.

And yet, the reaction is not always positive. Even in our relatively progressive neighbourhood, ignorance and a fear of the unknown trickles through, embodied

in backhanded comments and hostile glances. It takes immense strength of character to bear through these barely veiled attacks on one's identity, one's character, but it serves to highlight the role of GSA as an escape from judgement, and a beacon of light for those who feel unsupported in their current circumstances.

"If you're not out to friends or family, I think a community like this where you can talk in a non-online setting is kinda invaluable: the importance of being able to meet others in person and let them know who you really are can't really be understated."

- Brian Zhao, Grade 12

In a perfect world, we would all benefit from freedom of self-expression; in the journey towards that utopia, the GSA serves as a bedrock of equality, reminding us that everyone deserves to be heard, to be appreciated, and to be loved.

"There's just something about going into spaces like GSA and Pride which allow me to feel free to be myself...and what's great is that it feels normalized, like this is how I should feel in my everyday life. It let me become aware of what I am missing and what I deserve."

- Anonymous

Thank you, RHHS GSA, for everything that you do. Your hope and positivity has touched more people than you know, and we will forever be grateful for your warm hearts and open arms.

Just, thank you.

// DANI FOX

DESIGNER // ILYA SPIVAK



Dwayne Morgan Spoken Word Workshop: What's a Poet to an Apology?

"[Dwayne] really emphasized the need to be as descriptive as possible while writing poetry, [...] his art paints an image of exactly what he wanted us to picture [while writing]"

- Sophie Luo, Grade 10

"I am sort of new to the poetry thing, and I actually started off my poem by saying that 'I didn't have a lot of time to write this' and that I was 'sorry for it being so short'. Now I see that that was really stupid. I should have said 'look at the message I conveyed in just fourteen lines.'"

- Adam Rana, Grade 10

"When [Dwayne] asked me why I said sorry, I literally had no answer. I notice kids apologizing for things they shouldn't have to and we don't see why that is a problem. [...] Apologizing for my poem was like me saying I didn't believe in what I had written, and basically allowed the audience to not believe in it either."

- Madison Au, Grade 10

Dwayne Morgan, a member of the Writers Union of Canada and the 2012 National Poetry Slam Champion in the Canadian Festival of Spoken Word, visited Richmond Hill High in November for an

immersive workshop on the relationship between the poet and their art.

Upon watching each student perform the poem they had written under the short list of prompts he provided, which had almost entirely been prefaced by the student saying 'sorry this is so short' or 'sorry this is so long' or simply just 'sorry', Morgan asked the class a question. Students today have made an art form of showing others how little they can believe in themselves: Before performing, Morgan asked, why did each student apologize for the very existence of their work?

"Bad" writing may reflect little of what you are speaking of and much more of yourself, but having bad faith in what you write fails to do either. We are all trying to be good enough, and if we cannot be good enough, we believe we must at least show that we are conscious of it: We feel as though we must apologize simply for doing what we love to do.

We cannot do much without pride, and this is precisely what this era wants us to disregard. Instead of apologizing for everything we do, we should take pride in it, especially in art. Otherwise you go through life with a filter; reading under bad light.

GUEST WRITER // ANNIKA PAVLIN

a farewell

// KATELYN WANG
PHOTOGRAPHY // IDIN FAKHRJAHANI
DESIGNER // LAURIS PETLAH



As the cold days of winter recede into spring, I reflect on the cyclical nature of our routinal lives: I am reminded of the previous summer, leading its way to autumn and inevitably, for us, the start of school. And now, as the end of the school year draws near, a new summer looms over the horizon, feeling as though we have come full circle. As Will Durant wrote, “the story of man runs in a dreary circle”. In other words, life goes on repeating itself, and time ticks its hand oblivious of our actions. It is easy to feel insignificant, as our efforts seem to have miniscule impact on the greater picture. Sometimes, regardless of what we do, destiny gives the impression of being immutable. Thus, against such formidable forces, how can we aspire to etch our legacy into the moments of time?

Having the privilege of writing in *The Spyglass*, those who have graced me with actually reading my work may have considered some of the articles to be bleak and dreary. Of course, justifiably so, as I have tackled issues of climate change, capitalism, a bad Supreme Justice, a bad President, and essentially, a bad society, which has been relegated to certain social degradation in humanity. Ironically, however, it is through the lens of extreme hope from which such desolate commentary originates.

Within each of my articles, there are hints of promise and positivity, like sparkling gems embedded between the text. In fact, they’re analogous to the light and goodness in each of us, whether it is dormancy biding their time to awaken, or they are suppressed by the complacency in our day-to-day lives. Admittedly, this inherent quality gives the power to recognize the potential for greatness. When we succumb to the paradigm that dictates “if no one cares, why should I?”, we nullify the importance of our actions, and in turn, forfeit our lives.

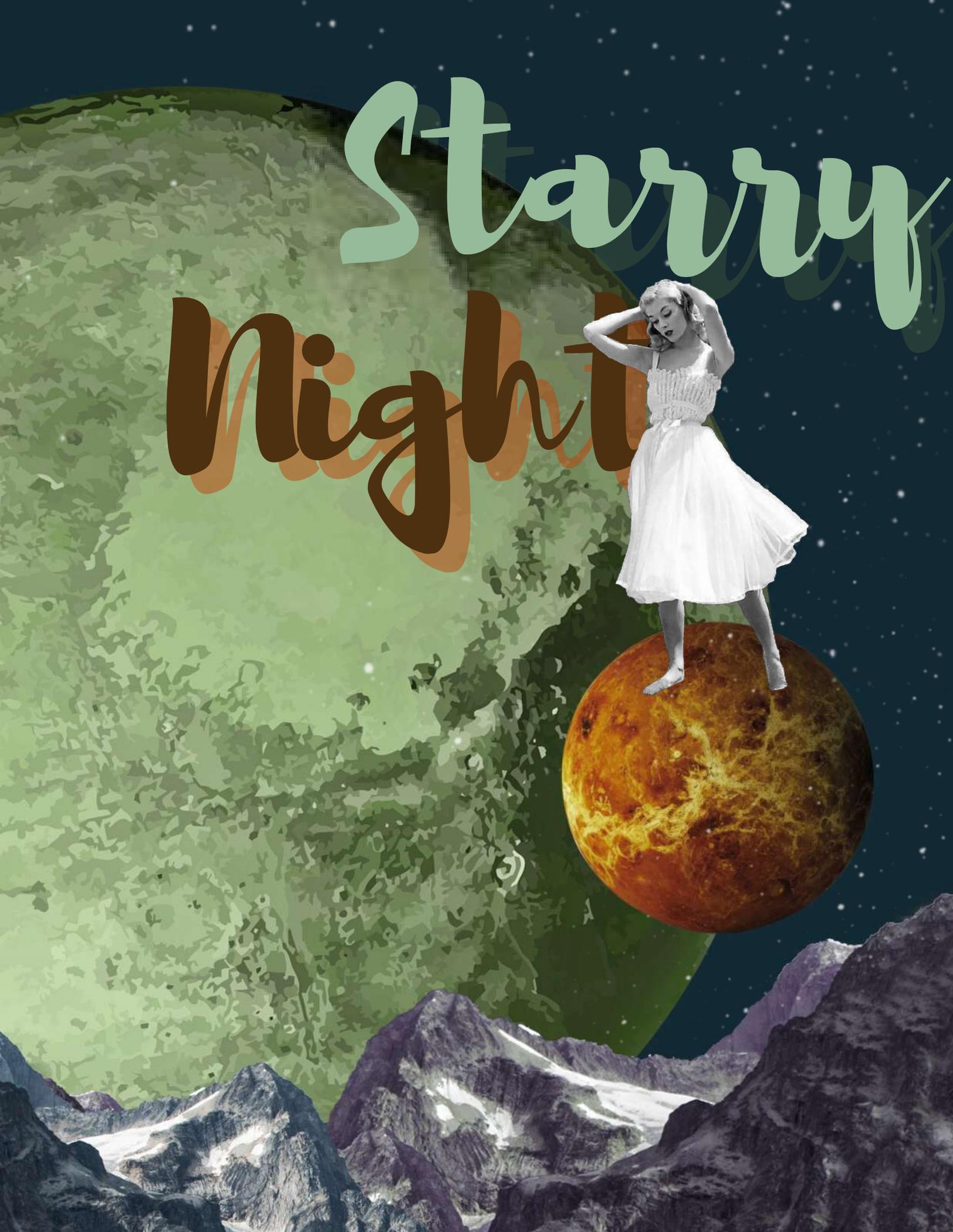
But where do I stand in the changing tides of society? Is it true that one fish, swimming opposite to everyone else, can change the direction of the current? So therefore, I impart and entrust onto you, dear readers, a powerful tool from which all change takes place—knowledge, and with it, hope. Be empowered by ideas, and boldly hold to them without fear. We may be criticized for being the “strawberry generation”, too feeble to withstand pressure, lacking in strength and resilience. Here, I say otherwise, as we are born in a time when social boundaries are shifting and traditional lines are re-defined. This is our torch to carry—our legacy to embrace and complete.

As I write this article, the last of my time at RHHS, I am filled with memories bringing bittersweetness, but it is these moments that have shaped and formed my essence. And while this season will come and change to the next, and time will carelessly move forward, these words shall remain. Ultimately, the legacy of my writing rests in how you choose to act upon it.

Dare to be dared. For if you have not tried, then how will you succeed, and if you do not go the distance, then how will you finish?

Finish well, my dear fellow students and friends.

Starry Night



They were there for her when she took her first gasping, heaving breath in this world.

Fortune favoured her from the moment her eyes fluttered open. Swaddled in the comfort of riches and adoration, she became accustomed to the taste of a silver spoon in her mouth. However, in her heart, she felt empty, void, as if there was someone else--- something else out there that was meant to complete her.

Four years passed before she could identify what they were. Spread-eagle on the grass and with the smell of the earth and the night air swallowing her, she looked to the sky and found her match.

Her parents certainly didn't approve of her desperate yearning for the stars above. What about a boy instead? She was certainly pretty enough, smart enough, wealthy enough. There must be a suitor out there that would suit her tastes. She turned away from them all, choosing instead to turn her glimmering, awe-struck eyes to the heavens.

It's just a phase, her parents said, over and over until their words engraved themselves into her mind. Just a phase. She'll get over it soon. She won't love the stars forever. It's not normal.

And yet there she was, standing on the rooftop night after night with her arms wide open and the wind blowing in her hair and around her clothes. There she was, so utterly in love with the cosmos that she suddenly became something tainted, something unnatural. She was a girl, and girls loved boys, not the stars. As she grew older, her parents began to grow harsher. Sometimes, she got caught on the roof when she was supposed to be sleeping. Sometimes, she cried herself to sleep and woke up with a tear-stained pillowcase and dark bruises across her skin.

Despite her attempts to be the girl her parents longed for her to become, she found that the pain of not being with the ones she loved was far greater than the pain her parents could cause her.

She didn't notice the shift in her parents' eyes--- how they began to see her as a monster and not a daughter. Try as she might, she couldn't change who she was and who she loved. The voices became a hurricane in her mind, a cacophony of disdain and venom soaking into her veins.

The only peace she could even barely grasp was away from reality. Even so, the pain permeated her mind more than it tore at her body, so much that her thoughts were rattled and whittled into a single, haunting whisper.

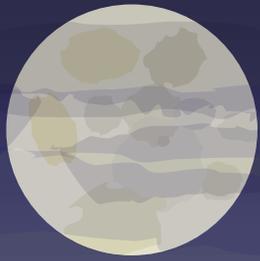
If only I could be with the stars forever.

And there she was again, standing on the rooftop one final night with her arms wide open and the wind blowing in her hair and around her clothes. There she was, so utterly in love with the cosmos that she became a monster in her parents' eyes. She was a girl that loved the stars, and her parents realized too late that she was still their daughter, even if she was different.

Once again, she turned her head to the stars, cold wind freezing the tears on her cheeks, and smiled.

Her silken night robe fluttered to the ground after her.

// MICHELLE LIU
DESIGNER // ANASTASIA BLOSSER



THAT
SUMMERTIME
SADNESS

The year is almost over. We can all feel it; that familiar time of year when everyone smiles a little brighter and walks a little lighter. Summertime is here. As we push through our summatives and grind through exams, we can feel the weight of the year being lifted off our shoulders. We appreciate the wind rustling through our hair, the smell of the crisp summer night air.

These are all things we are well acquainted with, things we've grown up feeling. Summer, whether you love it or hate it, brings a bout of nostalgia with it each year, one that increases in size as we get older.

And so, as the school year draws to a close, we begin to remember.

That first recess in elementary school when it was finally warm enough for us and all our classmates to take off our jackets, throwing them all into a giant pile on the ground, feeling liberated. Now we could run faster, sit on the grass, and feel the sun on our eager faces.

Driving on the highway with your parents, windows wide open as the radio played your favourite 2012 summer hits. Classics include the iconic "Call Me Maybe", which was stuck in your head all summer, or Maroon 5's "Payphone". "We Are Young", by Fun., Nicki Minaj's "Starships", and Train's "Drive By" were all popular that summer as well.

The cool summer night after a patio dinner has just wrapped up. We sat in a chair in an unfamiliar backyard, listening to quiet small talk and the clinking of plates being cleared from the table. The moon was bright, illuminating the night sky. We could look up and make out the big dipper, staring at it with childlike wonder and fascination.

Driving home on a summer evening, staring at the dark road ahead through our windows, watching as the occasional lamppost fills our cars with light. You'd eventually doze off, if the car ride was long enough, and your parents would pick you up and carry you into the safety of your bed. You may even have been completely awake during this entire process, but you'd force your eyes shut and just let it happen anyways.

Maybe you're someone who spent their summers camping, and will never forget the quiet crackle of a fireplace in the forest. You'd stick out your hands, testing the heat, and eventually hide them away because it got too hot. The smell would stay on your clothes for days, bringing you back to that night whenever you caught a whiff.

You might be someone who lived on their bike, as soon as your parents got it out of your garage and dusted it off. The tires would be pumped and you'd dart off, feeling your hair fly as the wind ran through it. You'd build up the speed until you couldn't pedal anymore, finally letting your legs relax as you rode through the tiny street you grew up on, feeling free.

And who could forget falling asleep with an open window, allowing the pitter patter of rain and occasional gusts of wind lull you to sleep. On warmer nights, you'd feel the sticky summer air enter your room as crickets sang outside.

Though we're all older now, summertime nostalgia won't leave us anytime soon. This year, take a moment to appreciate the little staples from your childhood summers. Savour them, and hold on to those memories for many years to come. After all, summer can't last forever.

// MICHELLE SKIDELSKY

DESIGNER // ILYA SPIVAK



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