QUARANTINE,

Y LIDW FEVER.

MERCANTILE MARINE GOSPITAL SERVICE, UNITED STATES OF



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Karanteeni-Reema 2.0

6/2020??

Frickin' Everywhere 2020

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Terveiset Reematiimiltä!

Hellurei!

Korona päätti tehdä 2.0:t, joten niin mekin. Tämä Karanteeni-Reema sisältää muutaman ajankohtaisen ajatuksen siemenen, sekä muutaman loputtoman puun. Hyppää sen sisältöön, niin ainakin vältyt ulos menemiseltä vähäksi aikaa. Kuka tietää, kenties se olisi ollut se reissu, joka olisi päätynyt ambulanssiin! Voit kiittää minua myöhemmin. Nyt, uhh...ehkä Reeman positiivisuuslähetillä olisi jotain muuta sanottavaa?

... Jo vain on! Nimittäin sellaista, että jouluaattoon on 36 yötä! Krhm....no okei, ei ajatella vielä joulua, koska joulu tarkoittaa joululomaa ja joululoma taas tarkoittaa deadlineja, hyi. Toisaalta joulu tarkoittaa myös joulutorttuja.. Enivei, odotit mitä vaan, on hyvä olla jotain mitä hyvillä mielin odotella. Ja jos ei ole tulossa mitään kivaa, niin järjestä jotain kivaa!

Joulusta vielä sen verran, että sehän tarkoittaa myös Joulu-Reemaa! Toivottavasti lähettelette meille juttuja, niin saadaan vuoden viimeisestä Reemasta kiva paketti! Nauttikaa nyt tästä meidän kokoamasta Karanteeni-Reemasta, joka on koottu ainakin tunteella, jos ei taidolla

Reemateam

PS. Verban hallitus päätti HALKO #20 järjestää kaksi peli-iltaa viikoille 49 ja 50. Päätetyt päivät ovat 2.12 klo 18, jolloin pelataan Jackboxia, joka valittiin Facebookissa yleisön suosikkina, sekä 9.12 klo 18, jolloin pelataan Among Us:sia, joka oli toiseksi suosituin. Among Us:sin keskusteluosuus järjestetään Zoomissa, joka on Oulun Yliopiston tunnusten kautta opiskelijoiden käytössä.

Recipe for disaster



How is everyone's mental health? Still constipated from the election? No worries, I have just the cure for you!

This little recipe is meant to counteract any and all illnesses originating from constipation. It is meant to cure all ills, I'd say, but I won't. It won't, after all, so why should I? Screw humanity and its petty ails! Wait...I was talking about food, wasn't I? Righto! Back to cooking: this little recipe is sorrowfully bitter, just like the future of mankind...

Ok, attempt number two, or three: what am I cooking? Well, here's the thing, I don't know yet. It's gonna have to be bitter now, because I said so earlier. But I won't, I just won't just grab a handful of sour candy and spread it over a bit bread like dust. NO! I will...use the pulverized sour candies, probably something off-shelf candy, doesn't really matter what, and mix it into the flour. Probably around 1:5 ratio, or something. Truth is, I don't even know how ratios work, so just wing it like I am.

What's the dough, then? Well, I could just make simple prank-bread. But no: this bittersweet pastry has to be grandiose, full of potential like humanity was until we fucked it all up with our—

OK, let's try that again. Probably a pie crust? Make a simple apple pie, with some sweetness at the centre and plenty of sugar, but the bitter

crust that breaks through that savoury dish. Then—then, to add to the bitterness, I'm going to incorporate a fine dusting of something else, and bitter on top of the pie crust once it's done (you don't want to put candy, even dusted ones on top of pie when it goes into the oven. I don't know what happens, but I can imagine it glazes and just becomes like a carapace over the crust. I don't like things with carapaces, they always kill me RPGs. Second thing that might happen, is they explode due to pressure, become tiny sugary pieces of shrapnel inside your oven. That one really happens with hard candy, though, non-dusted).

Anyway, let's finally start cooking!

To start off, let's make our crust. It's going to be a relatively small one, like 16cm with short walls, so I don't actually have to die for this bit. So, use like, pshhh...100—120 grams of flour and like 30—50 grams of sour shit you bought from store. Add some couple pinches of salt, but DON'T add sugar, 'cause DAMN, don't we have enough? Add about 80ish grams of butter, chilled in a fridge, or by a quick tour in the freezer prior to cooking. It has to be malleable, but not juicy. Now...watch a Townsend episode from YouTube and do that fingernibbly-thingy where you just slowly massage the flour mixture and butter together. Make sure you don't melt the butter with your sweaty hands! Once the butter is evenly distributed amongst the mixture, squeeze both halves of a lemon into the mixture, and add water until the dough is barely holding together—otherwise known as slightly crusted sand. Slab it on a floured surface and start rolling! Make the pie crust about, half a centimetre to a centimetre thick—I know some of ya' like your thick [REDACTED]

Put the pie crust bottom into the oven to harden a bit while you cut some three or so apples into eights, or whatever, how many will fit that tiny gap you've got and how, and mix in some candied sperm (umm...how is that not redacted?) Anyway, that just means the pulverized stuff mixed in some lemon juice. Be careful not to overjuice the mix at this stage.



Then just close it up with the excess you had left, hopefully, from the pie crust and toss it into the oven of about 200C for 10 minutes, shut off the oven and open the door and let the pie bake for another 30–?? minutes. Now, uh...your oven might smoke a little, and there may be some odd scents, considering that you are technically burning sugar in high heat. Well, don't worry, my oven didn't combust, so why should yours?! Anyway, mine was a bit too moist, probably due to the sperm, and it took like two hours to fully dry out, so keep it cool with your pouring. Also, you might want to toast the apples prior to placing the inside the crust on a pan, or something. This would suck out excess moisture and save your pie; do keep the liquids, though, as you can coat the pie with it once it emerges from the oven to give that condensed apple taste. Now, whether you succeeded or not, ENJOY!!

*COUGH*COUGH* No, it's not the Corona, but this shit is bad. DO NOT EAT THIS! Do eat lemon coated apples, tho. Those things were amazing!



Other useful recipes derived from our Bittersweet Pie:

Lemon Apples:

Splice apples into whatnots, and squeeze a succulent lemon atop them, coating those pretty apples in its bitter blood. Works great as both an entrée, and dessert!

Standard apple pie:

Follow the instructions in the previous pages, but dismiss the candied substances. Add perhaps a dash more salt before placing in the oven to coax some moisture out of those apples. Lemon is still suitable, as we found out in the previous experiment.

Fruit tart:

This is pretty close to an apple pie, just with a smaller dosage of flour and butter because you no longer need a top. You can always leave it a bit thicker, if you don't want to change the mixture, or use a larger/higher walled pie plate. This isn't a standard tart as it doesn't use egg yolks, but you can, two per 100g of flour, if you wish. It will only make the tart fluffier. Do this after pinching the butter, though, as otherwise you'll have babychicken blood on your fingers. And, you can use a paddle to roll the yolks into the mixture, instead of your hands. Be careful with water, don't add too much, as eggs contain a lot of moisture, too. Then, the process is rather the same. Harden in the oven; add your wished internals, like apricot paste with three eggs, apricot juice, sugar and 100g of flour, which you then prepare in the oven for 20-30 minutes; once withdrawn from oven and let cool off for ten to twenty minutes, add your fruits and enjoy!

Niistä vaaleista jos ihan sananen

Enpä olisi koskaan uskonut, että joskus keskellä yötä herätessäni ensimmäinen ajatukseni olisi Joe Biden.

Vaan niin kävi Yhdysvaltain vaalien jälkeisenä yönä, kun ääniä kovasti laskettiin ja osavaltioiden tuloksia piinallisen pikkuhiljaa tiputeltiin. Nukahdin kännykkä kädessäni, ja kun satuin heräämään neljältä aamulla, tarkistin välittömästi, joko tilanne olisi selvinnyt. No ei ollut, eikä se tilanne varsinaisesti selvinnyt vielä moneen päivään. Seuraavina päivinä tuloksia alkoi tippua enemmän. Osavaltiot toisensa jälkeen muuttuivat seuraamassani Ylen karttagrafiikassa sinisiksi. Myönnän, että kun Michigan muuttui siniseksi keskiviikko-iltana noin klo 23:25, pääsi helpottunut ja onnellinen itku.

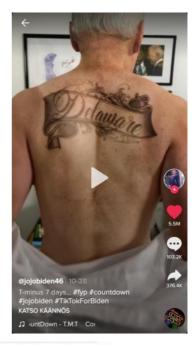
En ole yleensä ollut kovinkaan kiinnostunut Yhdysvaltain vaaleista. Mutta näissä vaaleissa oli jotain erityistä, minkä osoittaa jo se, että äänestämässä kävi erityisen suuri joukko ihmisiä. Kyse ei ole pelkästä politiikasta. Väittäisin, että ihmisiä liikutti äänestämään huoli tulevaisuudesta; maapallon tulevaisuudesta, ihmiskunnan tulevaisuudesta ja inhimillisyyden tulevaisuudesta. Useissa uutisartikkeleissa ja puheissa onkin sanottu, että Biden tuo empatian ja myötätunnon takaisin. Ja tämä on mielestäni hyvin osuvasti sanottu.

Joku voisi väittää, ettei empatia kuulu politiikkaan. Mutta huomautan, että siellä, missä ihmiset tekevät ihmisiä koskevia päätöksiä, tarvitaan ehdottomasti järjen lisäksi empatiaa. Varsinkin, kun kyse on niinkin suuresta kansainvälisesti merkittävästä valtiosta, kuin Yhdysvallat. Totesin ennen vaaleja, että mikäli Biden ja Harris voittavat, se on varmaan koko vuoden ensimmäinen asia missä on yhtään mitään järkeä. Tämän vaalituloksen myötä tulevaisuus tuntuu ainakin hiukkasen kevyemmältä ja valoisammalta. Vaikka yhteiskunnassa syvällä olevat ongelmat, kuten viha kaikkine ilmenemismuotoineen eivät kadonneet Bidenin ja Harrisin voiton myötä yhtään mihinkään, luotan heidän kykyihinsä taistelussa inhimillisyyden ja tulevaisuuden puolesta.

Saga Jarva 2020

ps. ohessa lempparimemejäni vaaleihin liittyen! pps. ottakaa tiktokissa seurantaan tili jojobiden46, it's gold.









Sellainenkin teoria esitettiin, että Trumpin hiukset ovat nyt harmaat, jotta hän näyttäisi vaalit voittaneelta **Joe Bidenilta** ja voisi näin jatkaa asumistaan Valkoisessa talossa.



Kuvassa ei näy kelloa. EPA/AOP



Oivalluksia

Ajattelin hieman listata asioita, joita olen oivaltanut tämän vuoden aikana.

1. Kuinka paljon rakastan live-musiikkia.

Vaikka arvostan striimattuja keikkoja ja Instagram-livejä yms, ei sitä livetapahtuman huumaa voita mikään. Kotona itsekseen näytön edessä istuessa ei koe samanlaista tyydytystä siitä, että ehtii eturiviin.

2. Kuinka vähän ennen kiinnitin huomiota erilaisten pintojen koskemiseen.

Ei ennen tullut pakottavaa tarvetta pestä kädet jokaisesta ovesta kuljettuaan tai ylipäätään edes mietittyä sitä, olikohan tuossa mihin nyt koskin joku pöpö. Tätä tapaa yritän ylläpitää sittenkin kun tämä pandemia-sitsueissöni on ohi, käsihygienia on tärkeää!

3.Kuinka suuri merkitys on sillä, että saa olla toisia ihmisiä lähellä.

Eikä pelkästään ystäviä, vaan ylipäätään ihmisiä. Itse olen kovin ujo ja sosiaalisesti kömpelö. Kaikki tilanteet, joissa olen joutunut ja saanut olla toisten ihmisten kanssa tekemisissä, ovat olleet tärkeitä juurikin sosiaalisten tilanteiden harjoittelemisessa ja tilanteissa kehittymisessä. Tänä vuonna toiset ihmiset ovat olleet potentiaalinen uhka, ja meitä kehotetaan välttämään toisia ihmisiä. Jos olen kokenut tämän vuoden hankalaksi neurotyypillisenä ihmisenä, kuinka vaikea ja haitallinen vuosi tämä onkaan mahdollisesti ollut heille, joiden elämään kuuluu neurodiversiteetti?

Muistetaan edelleen, että vaikka sinä pärjäät hyvin, joku toinen ei välttämättä pärjää yhtä hyvin. Nyt jos koskaan on empatia, kärsivällisyys ja myötätunto tärkeää!

4. Kuinka tiukassa perinteinen kasista neljään -ajattelu on, vaikka olen aina tiennyt, ettei se sovi minulle.

Vaikka olen teinistä asti tiennyt etten ole aamuvirkku, eikä minulle sovi perinteinen aamusta iltapäivään työskenteleminen, olen usein huomannut moittivani itseäni siitä, että teen asiat eri rytmissä. Olen potenut huomaa omaatuntoa siitä, että taas nukuin myöhään ja taaskaan en saanut hommia aloitettua kun vasta iltapäivällä. Olen kokenut olevani huono opiskelija ja "aina myöhässä" kun kirjoitan esseetä yöllä muiden mennessä jo nukkumaan. Kirjoitin kandinikin keväällä nimenomaan yöaikaan mennen nukkumaan vasta aamuseitsemän maissa, ja samaa olen jatkanut nyt syksyllä joidenkin tehtävien kanssa, aina kun seuraavan päivän luentotilanne sen sallii.

Jos aamut ovat sinullekin vaikeita ja olet parhaimmillasi iltaisin, muista tämä; vaikka työskentelet eri tavalla, et työskentele väärin. Yhteiskunta vaan sattuu pyörimään aamuvirkkujen säännöillä. Erästä filosofia myötäillen:

"Vaviskoot vallassa olevat aamuvirkut yökukkujien vallankumouksen edessä. Yökukkujilla ei ole siinä muuta menetettävää kuin kahleensa. Voitettavana heillä on koko maailma. Kaikkien maiden yökukkujat, liittykää yhteen!"

5. Ja ennen kaikkea: ihan turhaan itkin sitä, ettei miesten jalkapallon EM-kisoja järjestetty tänä vuonna

Suomen miesten jalkapallomaajoukkue Huuhkajat on esiintynyt todella, to-del-la vahvasti Kansojen liigassa. Go Huuhkajat!
Nyt soi: Teflon Brothers, Spekti, Petri Nygård - Tee Mulle Joulu

Saga Jarva 2020

Review: AssCreed Valhalla

Mikään ei ole totta ja kaikki on sallittua, jos olet miljoonien dollarien arvoinen yritys.

Salamurhaajan oppi: Uljaat ja komeat on Ubisoftin uusin julkaisu suosittuun pelisarjaan, joka alkoi valkoiseen pukeutuneesta sarjapuukottajasta. Sittemmin on pelisarja muuttunut edustamaan enemmän piruetteja tekeviä balettitanssijoiden harjoittelusessiota. Tältä taistelut ainakin tuntuvat, vaikka näillä balettitanssijoilla on paljon enemmän karvoja kuin olisi esteettisesti hyväksyttävissä balettitanssijoilla (kaikki tietoni baletista on John Wickistä, tai Black Swanista).

Kyseinen peli keskittyy 800-luvun lopun maailmaan, jossa pieni määrä norjalaisia päättävät muuttaa Englantiin, mutta päätyvätkin Uuteen Englantiin pitkien mutkien kautta. Se sisältää puukottamista ja hellää kampaamista, koska miksi ei, ja mitä muuta tarvitsee siitä sanoa?

Ainakin sen, että sarja on muuttunut paljon elämänsä aikana, mutta onko se parempaan suuntaan? Noh, ainakin liikkuminen on sulavampaa, vaikka on se vieläkin huomattavasti jäykempää kuin Salamurhaajan oppi: Yhtenäisyyssä. jossa oli sarjasta sulavin liikehdintä ja kauneummat animaatiot. Milloin on teknologia tarpeeksi hyvää sille pelille? Sitä en osaa sanoa, mutta voin sanoa että osa liikehdinnästä oli tietokoneeni sulaminen lattian läpi. Uljaissa ja komeissa on liikkuminen myös vapaata, kuten kahdessa aikaisemmassa pelissä, joka on hyvin kontrastoitu linnoituksien seinämillä, jotka eivät päästä kaikkia jäniksiä sisään, vaan vain ne, jotka jaksavat seurata linnoituksen seinämää muutaman metrin ja havaita sopivasti unohdetun laatikon linnoituksen seinämää vastaan. Ei siis peli ole turhan paljon erkaatunut juuristaan.

Seikkailua on myös tuettu mekanismilla, joka piilottaa kaikki turhat kysymysmerkit ja korvaa ne valopalloilla, joista kullankeltainen edustaa aarretta, joka on outoa, koska valuutta on hopeaa ja niiden välistä antamat materiaalit ja varusteet rautaa. Vaaleansiniset ovat vuorostaan mysteereitä, jotka ovat mukavia pieniä päättelytehtäviä, jotka on hyvin sulautettu universumiin. Me likey. Oliko muuta, emt.

Koska kyseessä on viikinkipeli, ei hiipimistä paljoa pelissä suosita. Toisin kuin Japanilaisen alueen haamussa, ei siitä ole myöskään tehty tabua, joten on se vain siellä, kinda. Sitä kuitenkin käytetään väliajoin, kun haluat murtautua linnoitukseen tai kylään, jossa ei pohjoistenpoikia arvosteta tavalla, joka olisi hyväksi terveydelle. Burn baby burn! Kyseessä on huppu, joka peittää pelaajahahmon naaman, eikä täysin hänen vaatteitaan ja hajuaan, joka on epäilyttään suolakalainen...wait a minute!

Olen kumminkin havainnut tämän mekaniikan olevan mukava, jos olet ohikulkumatkalla ryöstetyn luostarin läpi, ja et halua alkaa haastamaan riitaa paikallisten kanssa. Huppu ylös, veitsi selkään ja ulos ennen kuin kukaan huomaa mitään.

Mitä muuta? Umm...ainiin, siinä on myös kylän rakennusta, mutta se on vain tapa, jolla he yrittävät heittää sinulle edistyksen koukkua. En ole vielä laittanut tarpeellisia tunteja peliin, jotta voisin sanoa mitä kaikkea nämä asutukset tekevät.

Ajasta puheen ollen, olen pistänyt peliin nyt yli kaksikymmentä tuntia, ja olen vieläkin alle 30 power levelin, joka on pelin uusi tapa ilmaista vaikeusasteita ja kehitystä. So modern. Peli on siis, jälleen kerran, massiivinen ja älä oleta sen olevan ohi yhden viikonlopun aikana. Hyvä jos olet jo päässyt edellisen pelin läpi, koska minä en (ainakaan täysin).

Score: It good, if you need to kill time without access to a black hole

A-studio: opiskelijoiden koronapaineet

Ylen A-studiossa käsiteltiin tiistaina 17.11. opiskelijoiden jaksamista koronan aikana. Aloin katsomaan ohjelmaa hieman jännittynein mielin, sillä kuten monia muitakin kanssaopiskelijoita, minua ärsyttää hirvittävästi se, jos opiskelijat esitetään vain juhlivina ajelehtijoina.

Opiskelija Anna Enbuske aloitti puheenvuoronsa kertomalla olevansa normaalisti hyvin pärjäävä nuori, mutta kokeneensa etäopiskelujen kanssa ahdistusta ja joidenkin kurssienkin jääneen kesken. Tämä on mielestäni hyvä huomio heti alkuun; ei tarvitse olla aikaisempnia vaikeuksia opinnoissa, että tämä korona-ajan etäily iskisi jotenkin ekstravoimakkaasti. Aikaisemmin hyvin pärjänneetkin voivat uuvahtaa ja kohdata vaikeuksia!

Opiskelijoiden mielenterveyttä ja opiskelukykyä edistävän yhdistyksen, Nyyti ry:n, toiminnanjohtaja Minna Savolainen kertoi, että koronaaikana opiskelijat ovat kärsineet muun muassa lisääntyneestä riittämättömyyden tunteesta ja uupumuksesta. Enbuske kertoi samaistuvansa tähän: hän oli itsekin kokenut riittämättömyyden tunnetta, ja kertoi useiden opiskelukavereidensakin esimerkiksi jättäneen opinnot sivuun ja menneen sen sijaan töihin, koska opinnot eivät vaan etene ja opiskelu tuntuu hankalalta. Enbuske huomautti myös, että kyseessä lienee jonkinlainen sukupolvikokemus: opiskelijanuoret tänä päivänä kohtaavat monenlaisia paineita; pitäisi jaksaa ja pärjätä, ja olla kaikessa hyvä. Korona-aikana monet ovat jääneet yksin, mikä taas lisää kokemusta kasautuvista paineista ja ahdistuksesta.

Savolainen kertoi, että Nyyti ry:ssä on oltu jo ennen koronaakin huolissaan opiskelijoiden mielenterveydestä ja jaksamisesta. Tämä on tärkeä huomio. Vaikka koronan tuomat olosuhteet ovat eittämättä lisänneet opiskelijoiden mielenterveydellisiä ongelmia, ei kyseessä ole uusi ilmiö. Savolainen kertoi, että osa on kokenut korona-ajan hyvin vaikeana, osa vähemmän vaikeana ja osa "ihan ok:na"; hajontaa siis on,

mutta niin sanottujen uusien oirehtijoiden määrä on kasvanut huomattavasti. Kun keskustelu siirtyi siihen, millaisia toimia

korkeakouluopiskelijoiden jaksamisen varmistamiseksi voitaisiin tehdä, Savolainen linjasi, että korkeakouluilla tulisi olla resursseja niin sanottuun "kurottavaan" toimintaan, jotta vaikeuksia kokevia opiskelijoita pystyttäisiin tukemaan. Hänen mielestään on tärkeää turvata se, ettei kukaan opiskelija tipahtaisi opinnoista. Savolainen kertoi, että tällaiset toimet voisivat olla esimerkiksi sellaisia, että kun huomataan jonkun opiskelijan jäävän jälkeen opinnoista tai muuten herää huoli, opiskelijaan otetaan yhteyttä. Tämä ei mielestäni ole lainkaan pöllömpi ajatus. Usein opintonsa kesken jättävät tai muuten jälkeen jäävät opiskelijat ovat jollain tavalla jääneet yksin ongelmiensa kanssa. Opiskelijat ovat toki aikuisia, jotka ovat vastuussa itsestään, mutta varhaisessa vaiheessa puuttuminen tulee yhteiskunnalle loppujen lopuksi paljon halvemmaksi, kuin liian myöhään tai ei ollenkaan puuttuminen.

Enbuske otti puheeksi äärimmäisen tärkeän asian.

Mielenterveyspalvelut eivät ole tällä hetkellä tarpeeksi hyvin saatavissa niille, jotka niitä kaipaisivat. Esimerkiksi Helsingissä YTHS ei ota tällä hetkellä uusia asiakkaita mielenterveyspalveluihin, ja opintopsykologeillekaan ei pääse. Tämä on suuren suuri epäkohta aikamme yhteiskunnassa. Mielenterveyspalveluiden tulisi olla kaikkien saatavissa, etenkin tällaisena aikana. Mutta ehkäpä juuri tämä aika herättää päättäjiä ("Päättäjät herÄTKÄÄ!") siihen, kuinka suuri tarve mielenterveyspalveluille on, ja kuinka paljon niiden saatavuutta tulee parantaa.

Saga Jarva 2020

Tavallinen, työntäyteinen päivä!

Istun kahviossa työtovereideni kanssa. Meitä on moneen lähtöön, kaikki kovin värikkäitä kavereita. Toimimme kuitenkin hyvin yhteen, ja hoidamme omat tehtävämme tunnollisesti.

Loikimme jokainen omiin suuntiimme, omia tehtäviämme suorittamaan. Omassa päiväohjelmassani on ensimmäisenä käydä leimaamassa itseni sisään, sillä en ole sitä vielä tehnyt. Enkä näemmä ole ainoa, sillä ylläpitohuoneeseen astellessani kohtaan siellä pari toveriani, leimausta suorittamassa. Otan leimakorttini (kyllä, käytämme yhä sellaisia) esille, ja vedän sen lukijasta. Liian hidas, yritä uudelleen. Liian nopea, yritä uudelleen. Huono luenta, yritä uudelleen. Vihdoin saan korttini leimattua, ja laitan lompakon taskuuni.

Astelen takaisin kahvion suuntaan, sillä minun on käytävä moottorihuoneessa, ja lyhyempi reitti kulkee kahvion halki. Matkallani kohtaan vastakkaiseen suuntaan juoksevan toverini, joka on luultavasti suuntaamassa ylläpitohuoneeseen tietoja lataamaan. Väistän häntä hieman.

Moottorihuoneessa lataan dataa, ja teen virransiirron navigointihuoneeseen. Kun lähden takaisin kohti ylläpitohuonetta, koko puljun valot himmenevät. Hitto, valot on korjattava, kohti sähköhuonetta siis. Hölkkään varaston läpi sähköhuoneeseen, ja meitä onkin siellä jo monta sähköjä ihmettelemässä. Väännämme vipuja aikamme, kunnes valot palaavat. Suuntaamme takaisin omiin tehtäviimme. Muistan päiväohjelmaani kuuluvan johtohommia sähköhuoneessa, joten astelen huoneen perälle, ja avaan sähkökaapin. Hetkinen, sininen ja sininen....pinkki....ja pinkki....

Yhdistelyni keskeytyy, sillä kaikki kutsutaan takaisin kahvioon hätäpalaveria varten. Vihreä toverimme on löytynyt murhattuna kahvion nurkasta. Eräs toverini syyttää minua valojen katkaisemisesta, ja suureksi järkytyksekseni syyttää minua myös vihreän työtoverimme kylmästä murhasta!!! Yritän parhaani mukaan selittää, missä olen ollut

ja mitä tekemässä. Muut onneksi uskovat minua, ja pidämme hiljaisen hetken vihreän toverimme muistoksi. Tämän jälkeen palaamme jälleen tehtäviemme pariin tietoisena siitä, että joukossamme on kylmäverinen murhaaja.

Kun menen ylläpitohuoneeseen, huomaan sinisen toverini jäävän tarkastelemaan tekemisiäni. Siinäpähän kyylää, minä pidän huoli omista asioistani. Seuraavaksi suuntaan navigointihuoneeseen hyväksymään virransiirron, ja tarkistamaan aluksen kurssin. Vastaan juoksee oranssi toverini. Aika sus, totean, tuollaisella kiireellä säntäillä.

Navigointihuoneeseen päästyäni ymmärrän hänen kiireensä: huoneessa makasi kilon palasina keltainen toverimme! Raportoin asiasta välittömästi, ja kokoonnumme kahvioon. Tuon ilmi epäilykseni oranssin osallisuudesta keltaisen murhaan. Oranssi kiistää tiukasti, ja väittää minun keksineen koko jutun. Sininen toverini toteaa, että minä vaikutin todella tekevän vain tehtäviäni, enkä olisi millään ehtinyt navigointihuoneeseen keltaista surmaamaan. Äänestämme oranssin ulos alukselta, ja saamme kuulla hänen olleen IMPOSTOR.

Eli kyllä juu, voisi sanoa, että olen täysin hurahtanut Among us -peliin, joka Syys-Reemassakin arvosteltiin. Jos et ole **vielä** kokeillut sitä, kokoa kaveriporukkasi ja pelatkaa! Avaruusaluksella värikkäänä ötökkänä juoksentelu on best.

Saga Jarva 2020

Spooooooky shit!

"Come on, Amy!" Sarah said with hands on her hips. She was adamant, pushing her friend ever closer to the gloomy gates of the cemetery that stood at the edge of the tiny hamlet they called a suburb. They'd left their bikes in a pile outside, beneath a study oak that had stood there far longer than any of their families had lived here, before their grandfathers had been mere hopeful glimmers in the eyes of their desperate ancestors. Three other figures followed after Sarah and Amy, less gleeful and pushy than the bright blonde leading their charge into the misty yard for the dead: Sarah had grabbed Amy's hand and was now pulling her toward the gates.

"I am, I am," Amy said giggly. She'd had a few shots before she'd even considered the idea of breaking into the graveyard at midnight; it was easier for her to make such decisions while very drunk, so much she had proven in more than one occasion. One of those occasions included the burial of her father some year earlier: it was odd that she didn't show the least bit of sadness when she approached the gates, then.

"Where is this thing supposed to be, anyway?" asked another of their tiny troupe, a redhead with wing-tipped glasses, the brim bright red as her hair. Sam was her name, shortened from Samantha, because nobody was more unimaginative than parents living in an American suburb.

"Way deeper, near the back of the yard, I think," said the only man amongst them, Filip, a six-footer football star, though only a receiver and not the golden boy quarterback of the local high school of Broken Oaks. He was Portuguese, though one wouldn't know from his English: he was a native speaker by now, only speaking Portuguese with his distant relatives in Europe. To everyone that knew him, he was as American as gun in a political rally.

"Cool, we get to walk around a dark graveyard," said the last of their group. She was dark haired, slightly brown by the colour of her skin, but not quite as dark as to be a foreigner. Her mom was a Latino and pa from some hovel in Brooklyn, but no one spoke about that asshole lest they wanted to get a beating: her mom had married up shortly after her

birth, and though it came with the baggage of stepchildren, she'd at least found a moderate home for her daughter, a well-built husband, and some three hundred miles of distance to her ex. "Did anyone even bother bringing a flashlight?"

"Damn, Daime! Chill," Sarah pulled out her phone and flicked the torch on, lighting a cool cobblestone path and causing the shadows to wither further into the depths of the clearing filled with dark boulders that marked the graves.

"Brrrlhhh," Daime flashed her tongue at her friend and pulled out her own phone, slowly, and turning on the torch.

"Hey, Amy?" Sam wrapped her hand around Amy, whose giggling had turned to wild wandering. She was blasted, and the amount mist that shrouded the floor didn't matter to her fuzzy vision.

"Hey, Sam," she turned around at the touch and leaned heavily onto her friend. "You look good, you know that, right," her face inched closer and closer to her friend.

"Ew," Sam let go of Amy and jumped back. "Amy, dude, you almost kissed me."

"Go on," Filip said with a broad smile, shining a light on the scene. "It was just getting good."

"You piece of shit better not be filming," Sam reprimanded Filip, who acted all innocent as he turned his phone away from the two girls.

"Guys, are you coming?!" Sarah shouted from the gate into the graveyard. She'd marched on with Daime, while the others had fallen prey to their personal shenanigans. "Don't say you're scared?" she said with a hint of scorn in her voice. She was always the one to push others into doing something stupid, dangerous, or both; most often it led to one of them being grounded, like that worked on any of them. Too many times had they slipped through a window, a backdoor, or in Daime's case, a skylight; ready to plan for their next trouble in one of many hideouts in the forests outside the suburban plain.

"Of course not, duh," Filip shrugged off the insult and pressed on. His hands managed to grasp the gate and attempted to push it open when he was met by the clattering of a loose steel chain that was wrapped around the metal bars of the gate, holding its two halves together. "Ah," he said in a dull, obvious voice.

"Well, handsome," Sarah teased. "How 'bout you draw that gate wide

open for us? Think you can manage that?" She planted her hand on Filip's shoulder and started running down his biceps. Fast as lightning, then, she let go of him and gave the gate a heavy kick: "HIYYA!" Filip leapt back. Chain clinked and the metal groaned; there was a snap as one of the bars holding on to the chain snapped. Slowly, creaking, the gate swung open. "After you, ladies." Sarah gestured with a devilish smile

"Nice un" Daime held a smile as she passed through the gate.

"Sarah," Samantha pleaded with a serious gaze. Out of them all, she was always the one to cry when they did something foolish; yet, never did she back down. Holding a frown, she passed through the gate after Daime, Filip and Amy, who was still stumbling forwards, chuckling at the misty darkness as if there was something funny in the way it stared back at her. Sarah was taking their rear as they marched toward the back of the cemetery.

It was an eerie place. The ground shifted tirelessly as the wind tussled the tentacles of mist that rose from the ground as heat sought an escape into the cool night. Some of the stones they passed were rather clean, well kept: those recently dead. Others were cracked, some broken completely from neglect and as the funding for their maintenance ended. Most were covered in a faint layer of mould that had started to grab a hold of the stone's cracks in this eternal damp. There were some stubby plants here and there, but mostly the grounds consisted of thin grass and dried flowers placed atop graves as a means of remembrance. The one sight that stood out from amongst the high walls of the cemetery, and its stony ground, was its church. It was a wooden structure, mainly, with a brick founding that had turned grey over time and was heavily patched with mortar in places. Its main hall stood underneath a sloped roof, and a tower rose some ten feet atop the roof's crest where the bell hung and rang to disperse the dead at dawn and prior to funeral; weddings hadn't been organized here in years, those were held in the newer church down the road, a megachurch, they called it. No, this was only a place for the dead, now, and it showed in the way the air grew still as they approached the church building.

"I think it's over there," Filip pointed past the church at a small rocky hill that rose near the back of the yard.

"How'd you even know this place existed?" Samantha inquired. Filip turned the flashlight on her, blinding her to the dark.

"Demons whispered it to me," he said with mad eyes. Amy chuckled loudly at that, too loudly and her voice broke into cackling. "See, the witch knows what I'm talking about."

"Aww, we have our very own witch," Daime briskly walked over to Amy and planted her palms around her cheeks, rubbing the tightly together. She violently turned Amy's head around all she could do in return was laugh.

"What are you doing?" Samantha asked with an incredulous look.

"I'm looking for the witch's mark," Daime said. "Open wide." Amy did as was told. The moment she did, there was a flash in the dark as Sarah stepped forwards thumbing her phone.

"Daime the Dentist at work!" she said, holding out her phone, showing Daime the image she'd taken.

"Hah," Daime laughed. "Give me a monocle, or something."

"Dentists don't have monocles," Samantha said with a dry voice.

"Maybe I'm a Victorian dentist?"

"Only Victoria I know would spit in your mouth," Filip noted as he panned around the dark with his light.

"Unhygienic," Daime said with disgust as she let go of Amy. "I can't believe she's still drunk."

"I'm not drunk, just very happy to be spending time with my lovelies," Amy leaned forwards and crashed atop Daime.

"Shit. Yo, Karate Kid, can you?"

Sarah sighed and shrugged. She walked over and grabbed Amy by the collar, pulling her off Daime. "Ok, Amy, time to sober up."

"I'm sober-ish. Or did you say sorbet? Man, I want some sorbet, now. You guys want ice cream?"

"Actually, I'm down," Samantha shrugged, smiling and gesturing behind them at the gate. "Come on, can we leave?"

"Pshht, no," Sarah said as she held an open hand at Filip, waiting expectantly. A moment later, he pulled out a bottle of water from his back pocket, a deep pocket and she gave Amy a few good solid gulps to drink, almost drowning her with one mouthful.

"She isn't a seal, you know?" Daime said while she leaned against one of the cracked gravestones, this one some four feet tall with many

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names, mostly faded away, chinked onto it.

"Seals are mammals, they still breathe air," Samantha said as the know-it-all she was.

"Whatever."

"I mean, you could've used any fish, but you chose a mammal, wha—"

"Shut it, fishstick," Daime crossed her arms defensibly. She was rather insecure about her intelligence. Most of her skills were in lockpicking, pickpocketing and mechanics, anything to do with fine tune motor skills, really. Brainwork, though, wasn't her favourite road.

"Ugh," Amy said as she slowly started to recover and become lame compared to her chirpy, drunk self. "Can't we just redefine mammals?"

"Heyyy, she's back to her murderin' self." Daime pushed off the rock.

"Can I be a murderous witch instead?"

"I don't think you have the nose for it," Filip gave his a few good taps. Amy chuckled, still slurred by her state.

"Can we get a move on?" Sarah said, her breath misting as the cold gained a grip of her. She let go of Amy, allowing her to sway around for a while before Samantha could grab her shoulder and push her toward the right direction. Stumping, she led the way for the rest of their group.

Filip was walking slowly until he was at pace with Samantha and Amy taking the rear. Daime had caught up with Sarah and was apparently pissing her off the way their wannabe-leader was urging.

"So, I hear your mom got a new job from the city. You plan on moving?" Filip asked from Samantha.

"I hope not," she said sourly. "But, I don't know."

"Hey, you can always live at my place," Amy offered, using her tender fingers to tuck away a curl from Sam's face.

"And listen to your stepda' rocking in the basement? No thanks, I'd rather live in a box."

"Your books'll get wet livin' in a box."

"Bet they'd make for great kindling, though," Filip smiled, pushing at that tiny button she knew Sam hated about history.

"I will go to your next game, if only to stab the kickoff-ball."

"Hey, no need to get violent, girl," he gestured a withdrawal.

"I hope you won't move out," Amy said, allowing her head to rest

against Sam's shoulder. Sam gave her a head a squeeze.

"I don't want to move," she said teary.

"The group's IQ would drop drastically, if you did." They all chuckled at that, knowing whom they were talking about the most. They couldn't be sure if she'd heard it, but an answer to it came a moment later in the form of standing middle fingers from Sarah.

"I think we're here," Filip said, snapping the light at the mass of rocks. "Somewhere in there, there's supposed to be an entrance?" he scanned the pile of rocks with his light.

"I don't see anything?" Amy shook her head, immediately regretting it as her stomach lurched. "Ugh," she took a few laborious breaths as Sam and Filip stepped back instinctively. It wasn't the first time Amy was in a similar situation.

Filip's light snapped to the right, toward an open field with headstones watching gloomily at their search. "What was that?" he asked with a shaky voice.

"What?" Sarah glanced over at the darkness, searching it with her own torch. "Don't tell me you're all scared now? You of all people?"

"Pshht, no," Filip shook his head and refocused his light on the rocks. "I just thought I saw someone moving, but it was just the shadows from that tree," he gestured up at an old tree whose roots melted down the sides of the mound it stood on. Even this late into the fall, it held on to its leaves.

"Sure, but tell that to your quivering pants," Sarah mocked.

"Oh, that fella's just stirring because of you," Filip said with the selfconfidence of a turd.

"Oh, ffs," Samantha said tired. "If you wanna fuck, just do it at my place, you know, there where it's warm and cosy."

"Thanks for the offer," Sarah smiled, "but we're good." She had turned her attention to the rocks as well, not giving Filip a second look. Filip laughed at that demeanour. It was a game of theirs, as they both knew that their relationship wouldn't last: they'd tried, thrice, and it had ended for good last year. "Better be friends than trading dicks," Sarah had said to Filip when they'd first met up after the break up. Who knew what that meant, but some theories had been flung about: Sam thought it was an acknowledgement by Sarah of her own cheating, Amy thought it was Filip's presumed gayness, and Daime just thought Sarah

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was a dumdum who'd had nothing else constructive to say.

"Is that a cave?" Amy pointed at a pile of rocks off to the side, wishing to draw attention away from the on-going conversation. Lights were immediately drawn to her, then to the pile of rocks she was pointing at.

"Nice un'." Daime said as she walked over and confirmed the suspicion. She pointed a light down into the cave as the group gathered around it. It was a relatively small hole, perhaps squared with Filip's shoulders; it was very steep, too, with a muddy slide should they wished to enter. Exit, was what troubled Sam as she withdrew from view and looked around.

"Filip, help me get that branch," she pointed at a piece of wood that had broken off from the tree above them. It had been torn free recently by the look of the leaves that were slowly falling free, probably during the storm that swept past some week ago. Daime helped them out, and slowly a branch some six feet long descended into the depths of the pit, sliding ever deeper until they could barely see the tail-end with their torches.

"Still wanna go down?" Filip asked, watching with worry at the deep pit. Sarah wasn't deterred, though.

"Yep, I wanna see what's down there."

"Bugs," Samantha said. "Bugs and mud."

"Ice cream sounds better," Amy complained, not all too willing to get herself all wet during the descent and then ride back home in this damp, autumn weather.

"I should've brought some rope," Daime said hesitantly.

"Relax, will you," Sarah exclaimed. "It's a tight hole, so we can always back-foot our way up." The others chuckled, which only gained a frown from Sarah.

"I know your back-foot," Filip said behind her, gaining a shift kick on the shin from Sarah's heel.

"That's the back of my foot, dick."

"I'd still feel happier with a rope," Sam said, her smile disappearing to a frown of worry.

"I'd feel happier with a cone in my mouth," Amy complained.

"We'll get ice cream after," Daime offered. "Sarah's treat!"

"Then I'm down Swayze," Amy said, swaying left and right, her right

foot tapping the ground to the beat of some random song.

"Then, you're first," Sarah grabbed Amy by the arm and pulled her to the pit. Sam leapt to her defence, but Daime caught her by the arms and held her back.

"Hey! What the shit, Sarah!"

Sarah was laughing manically as she held Amy, whose eyes were wide with a sudden realization and the size of the pit, but too slow to react as she was lifted and dropped in. She slid down a few feet, her back wet from mud. Her foot caught the end of the branch they'd lowered down and she was stopped, her head only partially outside. "Duuude," Amy said in an angry tone and then started laughing, Filip, Sarah and Daime joining soon after. "I think—I think I'm almost down, and..." she kicked her free foot freely underneath. "I think—I think there's a larger cave there."

"See, fearless," Sarah gave a queer look to Sam, who was frowning deeply.

"She could have gotten hurt."

"Not with that luck of hers, besides, would you have gone first?"

"What. Wh—no, I wouldn't have gone at all."

"See, now you have to."

Amy took to the point and started climbing down. Her hands grasped the lip of the pit and she lowered herself down under the strength of her arms. Soon she found herself dangling, feet in the air an unknown distance to the ground. She could feel the branch behind her back, and it seemed to be solidly landed the way it moved freely behind her. "I think it's a few feet's drop," she gave a warning and let go. She got lucky, the drop could have been far longer than it was, and she only stumbled a few feet forward as she came into contact with the bottom floor of a spacious cave. She pulled out her phone and looked abouts herself: the cave was mostly made of rock, only portions of the roof seemed to have been penetrated by the roots of the tree above, roots that dangled from the ceiling, and some that squeezed themselves into the cracks in the walls; or were those cracks formed by the roots expanding? She let out a sudden shiver as the moisture in her back came into contact with air, and she wasn't exactly at ease with the place she was in: it was frightening her to the bone, and she could feel her knees go numb, unwilling to move.

"How is it?" Daime's voice came echoey through the pit. "You alive?" For a moment, Amy couldn't answer. She was just stunned by her surroundings, and she was starting to go sober; slowly, though. She was still smiling for no reason, even though she was clearly afraid. "I'm...ok. It's just a bit of a drop," she said back once she regained herself a bit. Her eyes glanced behind her and she saw a faint trickle of light from a passage that rounded a corner.

"We're coming down. Ok, Sammy..."

"Oh, hell no," Amy could hear the tension rise above her, but her eyes were focused on the way she saw light shining from beyond the passage. It was a silvery light, a natural light compared to her whitish torch light. "I'm not jumping into some pit. What if we'll get stuck?"

"We'll just have to build a rope from your hair, then?" Sarah suggested.

"Don't you dare touch my hair!"

"Hey," Amy shouted to get the others attention, but they had descended into shouting and screaming as Sarah undoubtedly chased after Sam. Her attention was drawn away from the passage and its light, just enough so that a shadow managed to swiftly pass before it without being seen and then it was once more engulfed by the darkness. Amy sighed as her voice was drowned by the sounds. "I think there's a tunnel that leads outside. I'll go check it out," she said more as a formality than information; she doubted they cared to listen to her at all. It was lucky that she was even able to walk, though: her feet moved like her whole leg was filled with stone, and her steps rattled her bone.

The sounds from above grew more distant, faded as rock and dirt muffled them. Amy kept her light solely on the passage before her, making sure her feet wouldn't catch a loose root, or something, or that a low hanging rock wouldn't smack in the fore. She rounded the corner and saw moonlight: there was a second entrance into the caves, this one less steep, even passable with only a minor slide down. It was hidden behind a partition of hanging roots and bushes that were slowly drifting in the wind. She pushed forwards and emerged back into the night air outside, a gentle breeze caressing her cheek. She could hear her friends running about on the other side of the small hill the tree stood upon and a smile leaked onto her cheeks as a devious plan formed.

She fell to a crouch and began to crest the hill as quietly as she could. She had a plan, but whether that plan worked or not depended solely on her ability to not be seen, or stumble. Which she did. As soon as she crested the hill, she rose to her full might and let out a screech; it wasn't part of her plan, her foot had just caught a root and she suddenly lost all her balance and started to tumble down the hill back over back. The others stopped fighting immediately and there was a moment in which they're hearts stopped, but it wasn't because of worry, but as they saw their friend nearly lose her life rolling downhill. Amy came to a stop at the foot of the hill, laughing as her brain was still a little muddled by those shots.

"Shit, Amy, you OK?" Sam was the first to ask. Sarah crouched beside Amy and gave a good long look at her laughing face.

"She's fine," she said irritated. "She was just trying to mess with us."

"No shit. Lucky she ain't dead." Daime was seated on a rock, the same rock she'd watched Sarah chase Sam around for a moment before it turned into a wrestling match between the two. Neither had managed to win that particular fight, though.

"I'm always luckyyyy..." Amy held her arms open to Filip, who grabbed her by the waist and pulled her up.

"Careful, Ames, you might dislodge that brain damage of yours and get straight A's again."

"Bitch please, I still get bees, which makes me smarter than you," she poked his nose.

"Except your vagina, where you only get the C," Sarah said vexed, clearly annoyed by the playfulness that Filip and Amy shared at that moment. They say old feelings die hard. Jealousy would then be a tardigrade, immortal and everlasting. It was a slap that cut through Amy's drunkenness and part of a friendship was torn apart at that moment. Amy pulled free of Filip and marched over to Sarah with a growling frown.

"What'd you just say?"

"I—" Sarah started, but her face was contorted by disgust; the mere fact that she'd just said that to her friend was troubling her. Then Amy gave her a shove and she was thrown to a state of anger herself. "I said your little cunt is—"

"Hey, hey," Filip leapt in with Daime and pulled the two apart,

preventing either of them from talking by breaking their breaths. Whether it was planned, or dumb luck, Daime pulled Amy away, and Filip took Sarah, a division that was less likely to cause a rift. "Let's not go there. Look, Amy's drunk, she's shivering and cold. Your...your," Filip didn't finish that sentence and sought another. "You didn't mean it," he ended up saying. "It was just a bad joke, right? JK?"

"Yeah," Sarah agreed without hesitation, happy to drop the matter. Amy was a little more peeved, but a long hard look from Daime made her accept. "Truce?" They all nodded. "Now kiss and make out?" Filip asked with a long smile on her face. Sarah was the first to punch him in the arm, followed by Daime a second later on the other arm.

They all spread out and stood looking at the tree above them.

"You alright?" Sam approached Amy and placed an arm over her shoulder, hugging her.

"I'm fine," Amy leaned her head on her shoulder again. It was a comforting place for her; she would most likely miss Sam the most, if she were to move out.

"How'd you get out?" Daime was the first one to realize the meaning of her emergence from the depths.

"There," Amy pointed. It wasn't a precise direction, just a heading. "I found a waaay easier passage into the tunnel below."

Long serious glares were thrown at Filip, who shrunk just a little under their combined stare.

"Let's go, then." Sarah didn't appear as pleased to be here as she had been, but she was still determined to press on. It was her habit, probably, to never back down; funny, considering that one of the first things she was taught during those martial arts lessons she insisted on taking was to always run away from conflict.

They rounded the mound, opting not to go over the hill Amy had just so tumbled down. The slippery slope was smart to avoid. Soon they arrived at the eerily moving partition that hid the entrance into the cave. "Through there," Amy pointed at the entrance, but set no foot forward. Filip pulled out the camera on his phone and started filming and himself and the group.

"Hey, Filipinos," he started with that cringy way he did all his videos. He was certainly proud of that name he called his half-a-thousand followers, mostly kids from surrounding schools to whom he showed

content from his life and the shenanigans they got up to. It was uncertain if he knew the Philippines was a country. "We're just at the cemetery, studying this fascinating—" he went on while the others just stood in silence. They were too familiar with this habit of his to really care. Sarah was the only one that paid even the slight amount of interest, but that was because she was really the only one of them that cared for popularity. She was making a smile, still standing static as she waited for his punchline. "—breaking through the canvas, as always...," he winked. "More upds coming soon." He posted the story with a slight chuckle to himself.

"Still don't get why you do those things all the time?"

"What's wrong with them? Don't you like mah...brazen charm?" Filip nudged Sam with his elbow.

"She thinks you look stupid with mud in your face," Daime said, and a moment later there was a muddy slap as she gave him a handful of sludge and rubbed it on his face. He tried to pull away, but only ended up stumbling backwards. "Pay attention, dick."

"Shit, Dam..." Filip mumbled, seeing his phone on the ground. It was fine, but wet, the screen splotched by mud. As he picked it up and tried to swipe it clean, all it did was spread it further. "Now I gotta get it detailed, again."

"You gotta watch out, man."

"What'd you do that for?" Sarah screamed.

"Hey, everyone is covered in mud now." She said, pointing to the mud on her boots, and on her back on which she'd been tossed during Sam and Sarah's wrestling. Those two had splotches on their faces, as well and on their fronts and backs, and boots. Amy was the worst of them all, shivering in the cold, wet mud that had stuck all over her.

"Guys," Amy pleaded, then. "Can we just go in, or go home? I'm freezing."

"Yeah," Sarah backed down, her face down as she was still a little shamed. "But I wanna see what it's like."

"Dark, boring..." Amy tried, but Sarah had already peeled back the partition of roots and bushes. She delved into the depths. Amy sighed, but Daime just shrugged and went after Sarah, Filip not far behind, still cleaning the camera bump behind his phone.

"You wanna go in?" Sam asked from Amy as they stood alone

outside.

"I'm good," Amy answered, not directly to the question Sam had asked, though. She would never let them know how scared she truly was. It was why she generally was a little tipsy whenever they did something stupid: it let her feet more with more flow, at least in comparison to the freezing state she took whenever they were watching a horror movie.

Sam wasn't one to question further. She helped Amy move forwards as they peeled back the partition and entered the dark cave. Shining their own torches forward, following the glows of their friends' lights, they went deeper into the tunnel.

"Wow," Sarah said as they entered the first chamber, the one Amy had first fallen into. There was a streak of moonlight that penetrated through the gap above them, from which the branch of the tree descended from, breaking apart the streaks into a dozen faintly separated ones. "This is so pretty."

"This could act as like...a warehouse for us guys," Daime said, inspecting the walls.

"It's a bit muddy," Sam looked down at the floor.

"Yeah, rainwater must flow down here, soak the floor."

"Then flow down there," Filip said, pointing his light down a rocky pathway that slid deeper into the depths. A faint trickle of water flowed along the rocks, slithering its way down into the unknown. There was a wooden support beam on one edge of the passage that led below.

"Wow," Sarah exclaimed again. "This is like a mine, or something."

"Perhaps it was," Daime said, running a hand along the wooden beam. It looked rotten, old. It had wooden pegs at the top where another beam had once been securing the roof, but that had long since rotten and the beam was undoubtedly somewhere down there, where light couldn't quite reach.

"It's not that steep," Filip shrugged. "We could climb further down." "Go ahead, I won't stop you," Sam said.

"You sure you don't want to take this one too, Ames?" Filip asked with a long smile on his face. He received only scornful stares back, if a slight smirk from Sarah. He pulled out his phone's camera app and started filming. "Your loss ups my follower count." He went on a tirade of explaining what it was like, showing around the chamber and finally

panning into the depths. "See there, I'm gonna post once I'm safe Filipinos." Pocketing his phone, he looked around for a safe pathway. "Show me the light," his voice was definitely more focused, now, slightly trembling as he set his foot on the first stone and slowly lowered his other foot on one below; taking support from the rocky wall, he lowered himself down a step, then another and another until he was scarce in the reach of the light. "I can barely see ahead. Hold up, I'll shine the light up so you can descend and we'll go down gradually."

And so they did. Sarah went down after Filip, while Filip showed the light from underneath, casting it on the wall, as well as Sam from behind. It was a careful descent, but once she was a few meters beneath the ones up top, it was Daime's turn, followed by Amy and, as last, Sam. Like a slow baggage train, they climbed from stone to stone, careful as ever. It wasn't the first time they'd climbed a rocky cliff, nor a slippery one, but it was exciting nevertheless, visible in the way they held their breaths

"Careful, now," Filip said as Sam came to a halt at the top of their little train. He panned the light down. "I think I can see the bottom."

"I'll hold the light," Sarah said as she started to fumble for her phone from her pocket.

"Watch it. S-"

in the otherwise misting air.

Daime's warning came too late. She tried to grab Sarah's wrist as the stone slid from underneath her, but she couldn't do so in time. Filip was caught in the path of the sliding stone, and Sarah, and was taken from his feet and down the rocky slide. Daime leapt down after them, moving swiftly from stone to stone while Sam held the light from the rear.

The whole cavern echoed with the sounds of fumbling, crashing and cracking of glass as more than one screen cracked during the descent. Then there was a silence, followed by slow groaning. Amy and Sam hurried down after their friends, if trying to stifle their laughter. Amy was the first to reach the ground; she swayed left and right as her addled brain adjusted to the change in height and momentum. Sam, meanwhile, ducked low and helped Daime up.

"How was the slip'n'slide?"

"Fuuuuaaaack," Filip groaned. "My phone broke." He was tapping the screen and holding down the button on the side. The screen, though,

cracked, came on with a light and he let out a joyous scream. "I'm alive!"

"Speak for yourself," Sarah groaned, she was staring at her phone with deep sadness. The screen's backlight was on, but there were black and rainbow bars across its length. "My mom's gonna flay me."

"Don't you still have your last phone?" Amy asked puzzled.

"Yeah, but..." Sarah found it hard to find a defence for her.

"Well, I'm wet," Daime said as she tried hard to brush the mud from her jeans.

"Ditto!" Filip shouted, still lying down, taking pictures of his muddy face in the faint light they had left.

Amy was walking deeper into the cave, down the passage they'd lowered themselves into. She nearly tripped over the support beam that had broken loose from the one up top. Shining a light to it, she examined it more closely, finding fur stuck all over its jagged edge. Her head cocked as she picked up some of the fur. "I think we're in a bear cave."

"No bear would intentionally come down here," Sam said.

"Well, I think we just learned what happened to the bear," Filip finally picked himself up and helped Sarah up while at it. "Maybe we'll find a bear carcass down here."

"Or a living bear," Daime protested.

"I think if the bear was alive, we'd know about it by now. Besides, it could have climbed out, possibly." Sam didn't sound so certain about the latter claim.

"Soo..." Filip sounded excited. "You're saying there's a high chance we'll find a bear carcass?"

"Why do you wanna see a dead bear so bad?" Sam inquired.

"Well, I wouldn't want to see a living one."

"Checks out, Filip's still a coward," Daime chuckled with the others. Sarah gave a slight thump on his shoulder, mouthing chicken to him.

"I'll see if you laugh when I drop you into an enclosure," he muttered.

While they were playing around, Amy was focused on the fur. It didn't look like bear fur to her, and she'd seen bears before. It was much darker, longer and coarser than the bears she'd seen; perhaps she believed the fur belonged to a lost black bear, in which case...well,

she shuddered, anyway, deep in her thoughts.

Back up, Filip led the charge. He had his phone out and was filming. "Man, I don't have connection here, but this video is gonna be good, and I'll upload it at once I reach topside. But take a look at this..." he showed around the space, the beam and the fur on it. "Possibly bear fur, but more potentially...the fur of a long thought to be lost beast that hunts these woods. There's a legend..."

"Oh, here we go again," Sam sighed silently.

"Just let him go at it," Daime said and pulled ahead with Sam and Amy. Sarah and Filip were busy filming. Once they got a few feet into the cave, they paused, their lights fixated on one object: a long white bone, licked clean. "Hey, Filip!" Daime shouted. "I got your, umm...is that a bear bone. Sam?"

"Don't know, not big enough? But I know bears don't lick bones, I think" she said uncertainly. "At least not to bleach them white."

"So, most likely not a bear?"

"Cool," Amy said, hiding the fear in her voice behind the short word. She was now standing solid.

"Relax, guys," Filip said, zooming in on the bone before turning the camera back on himself. "Probably just cleaned by time and insects. They love crawling all along the dead, picking them clean."

"Yeah," Amy chuckled. "Bugs...awesome."

"Ugh. I swear, if I'm going to find one spider from my hair when we get back, I will stab you, Filip."

"Well, Filipinos, looks like I'm gonna have to dodge some daggers, but don't worry, for as long as I'm alive, I'll keep finding you updated. If not, I'm most likely dead."

"I thought you had no mobile?" Sam inquired.

"I don't, I'll just upload it later."

"Then, won't they know that you lived?"

"They know that already, in their hearts."

"Oh, Jesus..." there was a cringing chuckle from all across him as they laughed at the concept.

"Let's just keep moving." Sarah suggested, pointing forward anxiously. It was uncertain if she wanted to go on ahead because she was interested, or because she wanted to find a point where she could turn around without losing face. Dajme and Filip were still too vested

to turn back, Sam too protective and Amy...well, Amy was always Amy and would follow like a sheep, for as long as she managed to move her feet.

Deeper they delved, then. It was a winding passageway, a tunnel carved into the earth with pickaxes and brawn. There were wooden supports everywhere, now, steadying the roof. Every now and then they found a small cropping that had been dug a little more, like a bulge on the wall, except inversed. Some were longer passageways; they seemed to follow old veins, since dug clean of their precious contents.

"Wonder if there's more to be found here?" Filip asked after a moment.

"What were they even digging?" Sarah asked.

"Copper, I think, and iron," Daime explained. There was a pause in their rhythmic movement and three lights, of the four that remained, turned toward Daime. "What? I do know the local history. Besides, the roadside pub has a bunch of old mining artefacts on the walls and plaques."

"Miney's? The place you and Amy hustle in pool?" Sarah scoffed.

"Hustle is a very...devious word," Daime defended.

"I don't hustle, I just suck at playing and she's very good at it," Amy said back.

"Well, I doubt copper and iron are worth all that much anymore. At least, not in the quantity that I'd be willing to mine."

"Don't be a sissy, Sarah." Daime hit back. "A little bit of work would stiffen that ass of yours."

"My ass is good enough as it is, thank you, perfectly round, as you can see."

"Sure it is," Daime turned her focus ahead, knowing how much dismissal angered her friend. "What's that?" she pointed, drawing everyone's attention to her flashlight directed into one of these side paths. There were signs of abandonment there, first signs of anything related to human beings working under here, apart from the supports, of course.

"That's an old oil lamp, and a...bird cage?" Sam said.

"These tunnels must be extensive," Daime whistled. "The bird is for detecting harmful gasses, I think. Who knows how deep these tunnels go, then."

"But why is it up here?"

"See that," Daime pointed at an old pile of cloth. "That looks like a mattress, a rotten one. Someone must've slept here, abandoned all their gear..."

Amy picked up a pickaxe and held it by its rotten shaft. The weight of iron at the very end caused the shaft to break and a clanking echoed through the caves as it bounced up and down from bedrock. "Sorry," she apologized and put down the shaft of the old tool.

"Say, did we ever figure out whose bone it was we found?" Filip asked and heads turned to him. There was a shaking of heads, some contemplative gazes.

"We should go..." Sarah said, finally coming to. Guess she finally found that spot where she was comfortable enough to turn around.

"I don't know," Sam said, curious now, was she?

Daime had to agree, and she did with a nod of her head. "I think there's definitely something intriguing down here. We should take a deeper look around."

"Is that smart?" Amy asked sheepishly.

"Relax. Whomever the bone belonged to is long since dead, and its devourer, if it was the unfortunate miner." Daime spoke with a deep tone of voice, haunting Amy with her hands. "Or perhaps not," she shrugged. "Besides, you know how cool it would be to find a skeleton?"

"Finding a human skeleton would give me a lot of views," Filip agreed. "That shit would be so rad, like from...from...what's that movie about that lasso whipping dude?"

"Seriously?!" Sarah exclaimed. "Fine. We'll look around further." She pressed on, stealing Daime's phone as she passed on by.

They went deeper into the caves, only to find more twists and turns. The same grey walls stood staring at them throughout, and Amy was starting to grow worried, looking around frantically with each passing feet. They were descending, for sure, moving downwards a gradual slope.

"Should we be marking the path?" Amy asked after a few more minutes of wandering deeper.

"I don't think so," Filip said. "I have a pretty clear picture of the road back up.

"Well, I don't. I'd feel a lot safer if I had a map."

"Don't worry, Ames," Filip spoke to her with his back turned toward the direction they were walking. "But if you'd like, I'll find you a ball of yarn."

"Dick," Amy let out a chuckle as she tried to grab Filip by the collar, but he was too fast and dodged out of the way.

"It'll be fine," Sam said after the moment calmed down. "It's been mostly straight road down, and the turns were pretty obvious."

"Woah!" there was a sudden sound ahead. The whole room shook and the ground for a moment felt uncertain. Amy leaned against the wall and Sam was thrown over to Filip, tumbling and taking them both down. Further ahead came two distinct screams, followed by a rumble. A cloud of dust overtook the space and for a moment they were at the centre of a dust storm; they cough their lungs out as the room settled back down and the dust fell back onto the ground, covering their footprints in a faint layer of dust.

"Daime? Sarah?!" Filip shouted as soon as he managed to pick himself up and noticed the lack of their two companions in the immediate corridor around them. "DAIME?! SARAH?!" he shouted louder.

"Shouting won't help, moron!" there was a groan from somewhere. It was Daime's voice, but she was nowhere to be seen.

"Use your eyeballs, postzar," Sarah shouted.

"Wha—"

Amy steadied herself and looked around. Her eyes went wide as she spotted a hole in the floor, a large chunk of stone that had broken loose from under their feet. She rushed over to the edge, kicking loose pebbles and showered down onto Daime and Sarah below.

"Hey, watch it."

"Sorry," Amy said. The hole was some three feet wide and some ten feet deep. It seemed to open into another tunnel running underneath them, this point of failure being the one where they intersected. "Can you boost yourselves up?"

"I can lift Daime up," Sarah answered swiftly as she picked herself up and rubbed her back from where she landed on a bit of stone. "But I'll need help getting up myself. Can't jump that far."

"I can grab your arms," Filip said as he joined Amy by the edge of the cave in.

"Are they alright?" Sam joined them, looking flustered, her eyes scanning the roof with worry.

"Yeah," Daime answered. "Well, bruised, but nothing's broken, I think."

"Now can we leave," Sarah looked around exasperated. They were in a dark corridor with no light. Daime's phone, it appeared, had broken in the fall.

"Yeah, we can leave," everyone admitted with deep nods. "Sorry Filip, but no skeleton for you today."

"I'm cool with that, as long as I can smell fresh air in the next hour." "Yeah, help me up," Daime said.

"Wait," Sarah paused them all the sudden. She held her hand up high to mark silence. "Toss us a light," she asked, her gaze holding onto the darkness.

"Coming," Amy held her phone ready, dropping flat on her stomach to bring it as close as possible before letting loose. The light swung frantically about as it fell, finally coming to a halt in Daime's grasp.

"What is it?" Daime asked as she held the light.

"I though...I think I heard someone whispering."

"Whispering?" Filip asked.

"Must've been our echo," Sam said dismissively. "Now, come on so we can get out."

"No," Sarah insisted. "It was more than that...it was, like, asking me—"

Her voice was cut off as her light chased a shadow across the wall.

"Daime, let's go," she spoke rapidly now, the pace of her heart tripled.

"What?"

"Go! Go!" Sarah dropped to one knee and brazed her hands together to pick up Daime's foot. The other girl hesitated, uncertain what had gotten into her friend, but she didn't argue and she placed her foot on her palms, ready to be boosted up. Then she tensed up as her light caught the figure blocking the path that had once been so clear of life just a moment ago. The light was almost blinding in the dark caverns.

"What the—"

Daime's shocked words were cut off as she was thrown upwards to ward the hole.

"What is it?" Amy asked, worried as she couldn't see herself.

Daime's torso sped through the hole and she began pulling herself up as soon as her arms had something to hold onto. Sam and Filip pulled. "Move move move," she was speaking frantically.

"Pick me up!" Sarah shouted from underneath. As soon as Daime was out of the way, Filip dashed for the hole with Amy, ready to pull her up by the arms. She was in the dark. Amy's phone was still with Daime, who was hugging it, her eyes wide from what she'd seen. Sarah's voice was bright as it called for help, until it was not.

There was a thumping, like a footballer thumping their chest after a touchdown, followed by a long scream and a shadow that flicked past the dark corridor. Amy felt on her extended hand a brush of coarse fur, followed by a whoosh of air before all those sounds. She pulled her hand back immediately, leaping away from the hole by instinct. Filip also withdrew, but he withdrew to his full height, taking quick and shallow breaths. "What was that?" he asked, blinking thrice in that frozen manner.

Fear had doused Amy sober, and while her movements were still staggered and a little careless, she was fully able to comprehend the danger around herself, and that she'd just lost her friend. Her eyes darted from Sam to Filip to Daime; she was panicked, but quickly recovering.

"We have to go," she said at first at a very low tone of voice. There was a growl from the depths. At first it could have been misunderstood as nothing more than the echo of a rock clattering along the floor, but now there was no mistaking it. "We have to go, NOW!" Daime shouted as she pulled herself back to her feet. The growl strengthened in its intensity; no, it was approaching.

Sam grabbed Filip by the arm, and Filip grabbed Amy and they started dashing. Daime was already on her feet and sprinting toward the exit.

A couple of times they had to pause, thinking which way to go in the long tunnels that sometimes forked, but they were making good time in their haste. Which had taken minutes to traverse in their slow walk before was blazed by in seconds. Yet, by the time they reached the rise they'd tumbled down before, they were all winded. Daime and Sam were clambering up, helping each other along the rocky path stone by

stone.

"You first," Filip said to Amy. He was just a little out of breath, but not even sweat had broken his brow as he gestured the way forward with his light. "Go," he said poignantly and pushed Amy by the back forward. She stepped on the first stone precariously, the slipperiness of the stones and their looseness underneath quite fresh in her thoughts. She brushed her colourful hair off her face from where it had tacked onto her sweaty fore and started clambering after Sam and Daime.

Filip's hand disappeared from her back as there was an angry roar from behind them. Amy froze. Filip turned around and raised his fists to defend her friends as they climbed out. It was his last act, as there were nondescript grunts before an utter silence...

Amy felt her way up the rocky slope. She had no light, Sam and Daime were the ones with their remaining phones as Filip had gone down with his. It was still shining a backlight to a figure hunched over in the tunnel behind her, large as an ox, with apparent antlers rising from its crown. Before she knew it, Amy was frozen somewhere midshaft (heh), staring at the beast before her.

A hand reached out to her, grabbing her by the collar and lifting her up toward the chamber she'd fallen into from the pit above, from which the branch of the tree still stood upright from. "Come on," Daime said as she pulled Amy up. They were standing in torchlight, with trickles of the dawn's light piercing through the pit and passageway Amy had found after falling in.

"What about Filip?" Sam asked exasperated.

Daime simply shook her head.

"I...saw it," Amy said with a hollow gaze.

"We have to ...we have to call the cops, their pa—"

"I know," Daime said, tapping Sam's shoulder as if to condole her, but the shoulder that she touched was rigid, the skin cold as ice. She was staring at something growing upright behind Amy, rising from the depths, from the shadows it originated from, in which it lived and watched. They locked their eyes. Sam gulped, her hand slowly rose to point at the figure.

"RUN!!" Daime shouted, already aware what the creature looked like, disinterested in seeing it again. She pushed Sam forward, grabbing Amy's hand behind her. Soon they were in a rapid dash toward the

passage and exit that laid beyond the corner.

They rounded the corned and came within sight of the light of dawn peeking through the partition. It was safe-haven, they probably believed. Who knew, it probably was. At least when they were outside, they'd have a straight run away and to their bikes. Network to call for help, a church to blockade themselves in. So many possibilities, but what would they do? Pointless to think, at least when they were still so far from safety.

It was in these last few feet that fates were decided. Sam tripped, but Daime kept on running, her gaze fixated on the exit. Amy stopped to help her friend, however, ripping her hand free from Daime's grasp, causing her to lose balance as well. Soon, two of them were on the ground after a quick tumble, and Amy was pushing and pulling for Sam to get up. She was still pushing Sam as a something grabbed her by the foot and started pulling her back. Sam caught her hand but was pulled off her feet and dragged back toward the depths. "DAIME!" she shouted, making their third friend stop and turn around.

For a second, Daime seemed uncertain. Should she help her friends or help herself? She chose the former and leapt into action. She grabbed Sam's legs and stopped the train heading into the depths. The beast pulled on Amy by the foot around which it an apparent hand had wrapped itself around, while Sam held onto her wrist. It was a game of tug o' war, and Amy was the mushy rope between the two sides. That was, until three hooked claws attached to its indexes glinted in dawn's first light and an arm stretched across Amy's length to dug into Samantha's forearm. It drew blood and tore skin, causing her to shriek in pain and let go of her friend. Sam fell onto her stomach as Amy was dragged, kicking and shrieking into the darkness. Her frightful calls for help died as suddenly as an owl's hunt as the light burst through a forest's canopy.

As Sam, holding her bleeding arm hard against her chest, and Daime recovered, picking themselves up from the loss of Amy, the beast stood in the dark holding Amy by the legs. The corpse was upside-down as the beast let her drain. The two survivors burst free of its dungeon, but they would never come into these depths again, not with help nor in any way, but they wouldn't need to. It raised its claws, the ones that had cut Samantha's arm and gave them a good long lick. It tasted good, 40

it thought, but more so, it gave it an eternal scent; one of Samantha, the smartass, the blind one. It took a good sniff. They were running toward the edge of the park, feet thumping hard against the soft soil of the park. They were red from running, so much was evident in the rapid pace of their breaths and more so in the slowing of their feet. They were getting tired, too tired to pedal away. Slowly, as the light crept toward it, the beast slid back into the shadow, leaving behind an empty husk that laid underneath the light from the pit.

Yeah? I suck at horror, call Stephen King.



On the other side of the coin...

Saga already opened up her heart for the treachery of optimism, and I am here to break your spirit and toss that hope of Biden victory to the nearest ocean where it may lie in forgetfulness until the end of the Earth. Which, if you're wondering, isn't far off. Happy thoughts!

What am I talking about? Well, I am already seeing the end, or the coming of the end. I am talking about Trump's pettiness and the end of the US as we know it. The nation will tear itself apart in these final months that Trump still holds the highest office in that nation. He will seek all means by which to cajole the office back to him, and he will fail, but he will do irreparable damage to the bureaucracy and integrity that a democracy depends upon, by the only means by which it may stand.

We saw it in Rome, we saw it in Germany. All the signs for the beginning of the end have started to occur, and they all point to one thing: The Republic will fall! It will start easy. Trump here, another there. One day, someone with the intelligence of Ceasar, ambition of Elon Musk, and walking the paved Trump path will find themselves in office, and they will take every advantage and gap the Republicans now batter into the Constitution of the United States.

What can you do? Nothing, duh.

Should you do something? Probably.

Here's the thing. Humanity will die out, and there is only so little a person can do about it. After all, they are just one. It would take an army to change things; the arrogant pushed into desperation; but most of all, it requires a leader at the right place at the right time for things to fall into place and for humanity to keep moving forwards. But who am I talking, such a thing only occurs in the books and movies that I like to read and write. This time, in this reality that we live in...we should enjoy the years we have left, and give hope that a better species is given a chance to rise above our graves.

ACTUAL NEWS!!!

Mitä uutta uutisissa?

Noh, ilmeisesti Bidenista on tulossa presidentti, mutta sen uskon vasta neljän vuoden päästä, kun hänen ensimmäinen kautensa on ohi. Loppujen lopuksi, aika on suhteellista. Ei kannata luottaa edes omiin aisteihin, ennen kuin aika niiden vaikutuksiin on päättynyt, ellei kyseessä ole jokin tappava ongelma, jossa tilanteessa suosittelen juoksemaan kuin Usain Bolt. Kuka tietää, ehkä sinussakin piilee kultamitalistin vikaa.

Mitäs muuta?

Ainiin, Verban hallitus on pikkuhiljaa hiipumassa tyhjyyteen, niin kuin helium maapallolta. Sen jäsenet ovat kohta vanhempia kuin Biden, ja melkein filosofian maistereita. Mitäs tapahtuu, ellei hallitus saa viekoteltua uutta väkeä? Noh, aika hassusti. Hallitusjallituksessa 10/11 oli ainakin niin vähän väkeä, että ei ainakaan turvaväleistä tarvinnut huolehtia.

Muuta?

Jes, paitatilaus. Noh, Verbahan on jälleen kerran päättänyt vaatettaa köyhiä jäseniään (niitä joilla on maksukyky). Tilaus on jo lähtenyt, vaikka muutamaa väriä ei tietyissä koissa ollut saatavilla, kiitos niiden puuttumisen painajalta. Asiasta on lähtenyt keskustelu tilaajille, ja se selvitetään heidän kanssaan. Mutta! Paitoja kannattaa odottaa, sillä ne tarjoavat asiallisen, mutta tunnistettavan vaatetuksen siviilitilanteisiin, joissa haalareita ei normaalisti tule pidettyä. Tämä auttaa uusia opiskelijoita, jotka eivät päässeet tutustumaan toisiinsa Armageddon 2020:n aikana, tutustumaan toisiinsa, kun he pääsevät ulkoilmaan. (Jos haluatte hypellä alasti, tai ette voineet jostain syystä tilata paitaa, voin suositella Verba-tatuointia, jonka avulla vaatteiden käytöstä tulee valinnaista).



