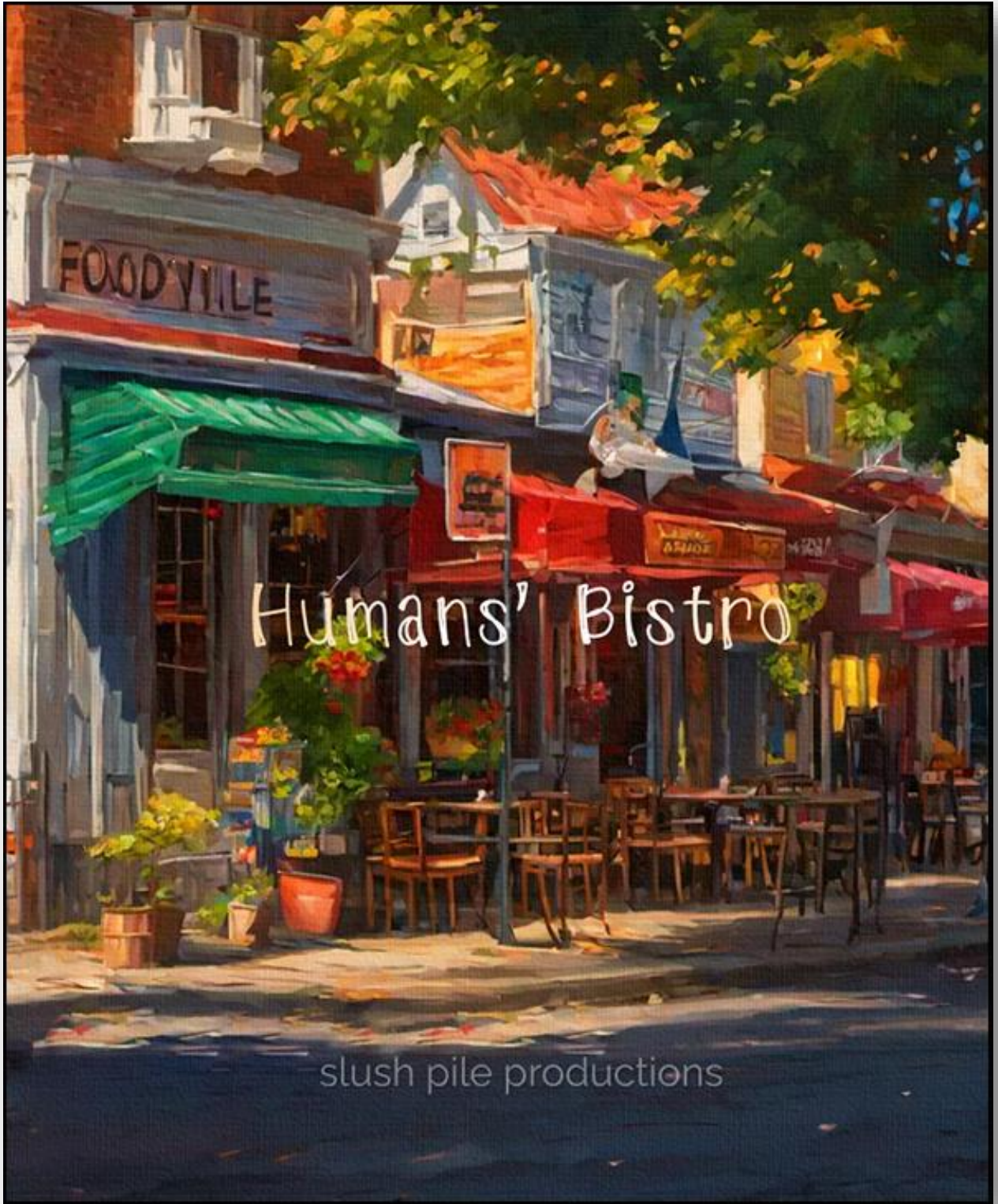


LINDSAY WINCHERAUK



HUMANS' BISTRO: FOODVILLE

My Life

Oh, dear friend, let me lend an ear, *to the story you seek to share and hear.*

Born in shadows, *scratching for light, a journey weaves through darkness and bright.*

Breathe, run, and play, embracing the thrill, *yet sometimes we stumble and fall down still.*

Sports shape us, teach us to rise once more, *stitched together, stronger than before.*

A slight limp may walk beside you with grace, *a reminder of battles you bravely embrace.*

As you move forward, secrets may unfold, *the light darkens, a mystery to behold.*

Pieces cobbled back together with care, *revealing glimpses of who you are there.*

But why the secrecy, the hidden desire?

Questions whisper in your mind's fire.

A health scare comes knocking on your door, *drinks offer solace you can't ignore.*

Another scare arrives with a warning bell, *but fear not, for you'll be stitched up well.*

Better than new, *you shall rise above, a pill caddy filled with strength and love.*

Every day brings healing and light, *with determination, you'll win this fight.*

And if the question lingers in your mind, *can you stop taking what fate has assigned?*

Remember, dear friend, *it's your choice to make, to embark on a journey of wellness and break.*

So, take a deep breath, stand tall and strong, *know in your heart, you truly belong.*

Stitched together with resilience anew, *embrace each day and let your spirit shine through.*

FOODVILLE



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You Are What We Eat

Under the leadership of the big-hearted Jack Rabbit, a glimmer of hope emerged for the world's revival.

You see, animals weren't into driving cars, using plastic, or indulging in cocaine (unless, of course, they were an animal who loved cocaine like the weasels).

With the world finally getting a chance to breathe, a new opportunity arose. Gaia, or the Earth, played a part in this chance by encouraging the Animal Kingdom to make some significant lifestyle changes. This involved them incorporating us, the parasitic humans who had brought the earth to the brink of destruction, into their diets.

Now, my dear children, the city of Foodville was born, swiftly becoming a sought-after vacation destination for animals. It offered a wide range of dining options to satiate their taste buds: from fast-food joints to fine dining establishments, pizzerias to greasy spoons, vegetarian and vegan eateries, street food stalls, food courts, food trucks, and an array of ethnic choices.

There was even a Cannibal Café where the remaining humans could feast upon themselves to their heart's content.

It does make one wonder, what does the last cannibal eat?

Themselves, perhaps?

Humans. Humans. Humans. Delicious Humans! Get Your Human Flesh Here!



3

Grandpa, you are fucking...

Ah, Stanley, mind your language, or I'll have to call Grandma again. You little whiner...

The animals were devouring us, quite literally. **"You Are What We Eat"** became the extraordinary slogan of Foodville.

However, there was a catch. No matter what type of food the animals desired, it had to contain a certain percentage of human content.

Say what?

If the animals craved fast-food, the humans they consumed had to primarily eat fast-food themselves. The 80% rule. These humans were often overweight, lethargic, and easy to round up, slaughter, and prepare. Many were raised in cages, an issue that activist chickens almost managed to resolve until they got a taste of a burger.

Fine dining predominantly featured older cuts of meat, reserved for the wealthy when their time came.

This posed a challenge for even the most skilled chefs, as the preparation required care and love to prevent the meat from becoming tough and stringy, often resembling brisket.

If an animal wished to indulge in fine dining, they would find their preferred cuts in retirement communities, where the delectable humans roamed freely (or rather, “**free range**”) except when they used their scooters, of course.

Again, the wealthy aging humans had to consume 80% fine food to be served in fine dining establishments themselves.

Street Food consisted of humans who ate 80% of what they found lying on the |ground| or in dumpsters.

Vegan and vegetarian restaurants weren’t vegan and vegetarian in the genuine sense of the word, but the humans served on blood-soaked platters were.

And so on and so forth, following the 80% rule, through all mouth-watering cuts of human flesh.



Now, my little ones, I want you to close your eyes tightly and join me as we take a delightful stroll through Foodville’s restaurant row. Imagine the heavenly aroma of delectable dishes wafting through the air, tempting your taste buds.

OMG, I can smell my aunt and uncle.

Shut your little pie hole, Melinda, and keep your bloody eyes shut.

Meet the Restaurateurs



CHEETAH



HANOVER



ROCKY



ARLO



STAMPS



MRS. PARK



HELLEN



TONISHIMA



SHARKY



BEN



MATILDA



PENNY



HENRIETTA



GILBERT



MIKEY



MISS GOLDSTEIN



TORTS



THE CANNIBAL ROTISSERIE

CHEETAH'S FAST FOOD



Cherry, the mischievous cheetah, was always full of energy and excitement. On the day Cheetah's Fast Food opened its doors, the scene was nothing short of chaotic. The line of eager customers stretched for miles, with a variety of small antelope, including springbok, steenbok, duikers, impala, and gazelles, along with the young of larger animals like warthogs, kudu, hartebeest, oryx, roan, and sable, all waiting patiently.

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Gone were the days when Cherry and her siblings would feast on these beautiful creatures, as now they were all in line for a different kind of treat: the infamous Two all human patties, special sauce, kale, pickles, cheese, onions on a sesame seed bun TM. (Lawsuit pending).

Toss in a side of deep-fried human digits and wash it all down with a refreshing blood orange soda – and a hit of euphoria was sure to race through the diner's veins as the fat + sugar + salt filled their bloodstreams, until the inevitable nutrition less crash would most certainly arrive.

"Children, wipe away those tears! I have a delicious burger for each of you." Grandpa said. "I bet you've never seen an obese springbok before." Look at the blubber fly TM.

Lloyd with his voice quivering, replied, "Grandpa, my burger tastes like daddy."

Now, with 47 (breaking badly TM) Cheetah's Fast-Food Restaurants scattered throughout the Animal Kingdom, the brand's popularity was undeniable, although lawsuits loomed over the questionable verbiage practices. A sneak of weasels could often be seen lurking behind each restaurant.

HANOVER'S FINE DINING



Mandy the lioness had once worked in esteemed human kitchens across the globe. Unfortunately, her instincts would occasionally get the best of her, resulting in unintentional consumption of her managers and some of the restaurant's patrons. Just as her culinary career seemed doomed, Jack, the leader of the Animal Kingdom, announced an initiative to save the earth by removing parasitic humans. This news sparked a renewed sense of purpose in Mandy, leading her to open a new and highly anticipated restaurant called Hanover's.

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At Hanover's, Mandy made a wise decision to employ the most attractive antelope servers in the world, such as Cantaloupe. Little did anyone know; Cantaloupe would soon catch the attention of a ravenous hyena named Wendal.

Curious about the whereabouts of your older family members?

If they happen to be between the ages of 50 and 75, there's a possibility they have been expertly prepared with your favourite meat rub and slow-cooked for 72 hours in Hanover's cooking pit, known as the Earth Oven. These delectable dishes are then served atop a bed of keen-wah and kale, accompanied by a literal Bloody Mary.

And when the animals crave something sweet, they indulge in Hanover's Cherries Jubilee, with a unique twist of three human eyes in each serving, flambeed and served over two scoops of creamy vanilla ice cream.

No need to worry, children. If your loved ones are over 75, the hungry animals could still satisfy their cravings for human flesh by ordering one of Hanover's signature pulled-human sandwiches, complete with a side of human digits, fried in human fat.



Bob, stop scaring the children,” Grandma Missy exclaimed, her voice filled with concern as the fourteen grandchildren writhed on the floor, overcome with nausea and vivid images of gruesome animal attacks.

“Enough, Bob,” Missy interjected firmly. “They don’t need to be traumatized. We mustn’t let history repeat itself.” Missy paused; her gaze fixed on Bob. “Do you want us to end up as meat? Brisket or pulled?” she asked pointedly.

A knock at the door interrupted the tense atmosphere. Grandpa had ordered a calming feast of seven pizzas with human, pineapple, and mushroom toppings from Rocky’s Pizzeria to ease the distress of his wailing grandchildren.

Rolly, a plump grandkid, rolled over and eagerly grabbed the first slice of pizza.

Missy observed Rolly, a hint of relief in her voice. “You seem to be feeling better,” she remarked.

Rolly, his mouth full, responded with enthusiasm. “A kid’s gotta eat. And if you ignore what’s on the pizza, the flavors just melt in your mouth.”

In a different part of town, an anti-vaxxer stood in line at the 7-Eleven, purchasing four big bite hot dogs and an enormous Mountain Dew Slurpee. As he answered a call on his phone, he passionately expressed his commitment to the cause of resisting vaccines. The cashier offered him cheese and chili toppings – exact ingredients unknown but undoubtedly tempting.

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Grandpa, puzzled by the appearance of the anti-vaxxer in the story, turned to Grandma for an explanation. “A cameo?” he questioned.

Rolly, addressing Bob hesitantly, spoke up. "Bob..."

Grandpa, losing his patience, interrupted sharply. "Show me some respect, Rolly. Call me by my given name." He delivered a slap, demanding attention.

Rolly glanced at Grandma Missy, seeking solace, but she ran out of the room in tears.

Grandpa took a deep breath, preparing to share a story. "Once upon a time..."

Rolly's exasperation slipped out. "Oh no, here we go."

Grandpa, undeterred, continued with a promise. "For the children who listen closely, I have a special gift at the end of the story."

The children, united in curiosity, asked in unison, "What is it?"

Grandpa's eyes sparkled with anticipation. "A book that holds the secrets of humanity, the world, and everything that has ever happened on my earth."

Chip whispers to Rolly, "Do you think Grandpa is drunk?"

Ignoring the comment, Grandpa silenced the room. "My father used to read from this book when I was sick as a child. Now, I will share some of its tales with you little rascals."

Carver couldn't contain his excitement. "Is it filled with sports?"

Rolly whispered to Chip, "What's the oldest anyone named Chip has ever lived."

Chip starts to cry.

Grandpa, annoyed by Carver's lack of understanding, scolded, "I won't tolerate your insolence."

Carver, bewildered, turned to Bob for guidance. "What's insolence, Bob?"

Grandpa silenced the room once more. "The book is filled with terror, fangs, and talons capable of tearing flesh. It tells stories of carnivorous monsters devouring humans, thrilling chases, daring escapes, and even true love. And if the pages allow – miracles."

Rolly, unable to stomach another bite of pie, vomited onto his lap. “Bob, I think I need to lie down,” he managed to say.

Grandpa, unfazed, commanded sternly. “You will do as I say, Rolly.”

Rolly, concerned for his grandfather’s mental state, whispered to himself, “I think Grandpa is losing his mind.”

Grandpa, catching Rolly’s remark, responded with a puzzling question. “Who is Grandpa, my dear child?”

The book lay open in Bob's hands, and he began to read.

"This book is called **Foodville: The Day the Animals Took Over the Earth.**

Chapter 1

Jack grew up in a parking lot just off of Jasper Avenue in Edmonton, Alberta. His favourite pastimes were jumping, car jacking, and riding his greyhound dog, Bartlet, like a stallion, though perhaps I should find a better descriptor?

Jack also loved kickboxing.

However, after witnessing pigeons being strangled by plastic waste and the fricasseeing of his family members, Jack's life took a different direction. He became determined to save the earth and rid the world of humans. He also desired fulfilling his unrequited love for a wise owl named Gabby.

Seeking guidance from Gabby, Jack devised a plan to free the world from the grip of capitalism and its consumptive greed."

Rolly couldn't help but interject, reminding Grandpa of their age. "You do know how old we are, right, Gramps?"

Grandpa silenced Rolly with a swift slap.

"Close your eyes tightly, my brood, and let Gramps take you on a captivating journey of fantasy and wonder," he said, struggling with his choice of words. "Twas the night before the apocalypse and we found ourselves needing to rise above the Kingdom. We had to change our ways. We had to eliminate straws. Our very survival depended on it . . ."

Carver interrupted, sensing Grandpa's fading enthusiasm. "Is he snoring?"

ROCKY'S PIZZERIA + FRIED HUMANS



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Grandpa Bob's captivating storytelling was momentarily interrupted by the arrival of a shopping mall train at their doorstep. The train whisked the children away on an exciting journey, leading them to Rocky's Pizzeria. The purpose of their visit was to express gratitude to Rocky for his delicious pies, even though some of the children had a less than pleasant experience with their initial bites.

You see, after the eradication of the inhumane practices, Rocky's became the sole establishment that served delectable pies made from locally sourced human flesh found on soccer pitches nearby.

Upon perusing Rocky's menu, one could choose from three mouthwatering options:

- 1. The Alternative Hawaiian:** This pie consisted of Hawaiian-raised humans, cheese, onions, and pineapples, all served on a crispy crust.
- 2. The Deep-Dish Continental American:** A deep-dish pie filled with succulent humans, smothered in tomato sauce, jalapenos, crickets, and a blend of seventeen cheeses.
- 3. The Holiday Extravaganza:** A tantalizing pie layered with stuffing-filled humans, cranberries, yams, carrots, and banana-filled strawberry Jello. This delightful creation was then smothered in human fat gravy and topped with a slice of Rocky's famous human kidney and apple pie. Only available during certain seasons.

Grandpa addressed the children, informing them the train had arrived to take them back home. He mentioned Tiffany, the train's engineer, who was impatiently waiting to be rid of their company so she could meet up with a boy named Wannabee.

Although Wannabee's family lived above a Toyota dealership and a Sushi Restaurant in the Japanese section of Rhode Island, they were not Japanese themselves. However, their parent's affinity for Japanese culture, and cultural misappropriation, often led people to mistake them as such.

In the midst of the narrative, an anti-masker entered the story, indulging in deep-fried food on a stick. Rocky promptly kicked him out of his pizzeria, prompting the children to hastily make their way to the train.

Tiffany, a despondent 14-year-old, had her spirit shattered when she realized her dream job as a shopping mall engineer may be the height of what life had to offer her. And that she is being used by the unstoppable machine of capitalism. This realization hit her hard, causing her to engage in games of Russian Roulette. The most deadly of the roulette games.

It was unclear how she, in her state of despair, and at her age, managed to obtain a gun and bring it home – swiftly transported Grandpa’s brood home, on her trackless shopping mall train. All the while, she proactively tried to slash her wrists with an electric razor.

Don’t you hate the word proactive?

Surprisingly, Rocky ⁽¹⁾ ended up marrying a duck, named Mindy, bringing a sense of senseless harmony to the world. And some duck-centric toppings on his pies, but of course none of the toppings were duck.

As for Grandpa Bob, he would likely resume his storytelling on the next page.

In a previous publication: **“Morgan + Mindy in Love”** presents a unique and heartwarming tale of forbidden love between Morgan the Raccoon and Mindy the Duck. This story serves as a symbolic representation of the storyteller Lindsay’s desire to grow and stomp out racism and instead; highlight the power of love. As Lindsay witnesses their unconventional relationship, he grapples with emotions that depression often stifles.

- 1) The inclusion of this anecdote is necessary to understand Morgan’s desperate quest to reclaim his lost anonymity, which was snatched away when his blockbuster Broadway production, **“Morgan + Mindy in Love,”** catapulted him into unprecedented fame. In a bold move to regain control over his own identity, Morgan took the drastic step of legally changing his name to Rocky. I am entitled to as the creator of this narrative, to alter the events of this story, however; I, feel, fit. I went to the Fitness Asylum yesterday!

In an intriguing subplot, Chastity and Leonardo found themselves in a situation both mysterious and concerning. Chastity, despite her devastating beauty, grappled with a serious eating disorder, adding complexity to her character. Leonardo on the other hand (right), bore the physical marks of prolonged sun exposure, giving him a somewhat smarmy appearance.



As they were carefully placed into a mysterious container, their fate seemed uncertain. The container shrouded in secrecy, held the promise of future developments in the story. Who had orchestrated their placement in this container, and why were they being sent to Grandpa Bob?

These questions are hanging in the air, leaving readers eager to uncover the truth behind this mysterious twist in the narrative.

Now, you may wonder who is narrating this particular part of the story.

Well, I'm afraid I won't disclose that information just yet.

We must, however, exclude all non-believers and remain united in our purpose.

Shun.

Shun.

SHUUUUUNNNN. Of the Dead.

Let us always remember and honour the sacrifices made by those who came before us.

Rolly remarked, "It seems like Grandpa has been indulging in some peculiar habits again, Carver, perhaps involving the licking of toads."

ARLO'S TAMALY SHOP



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“

Please, Tiffany, hand me the shaver,” four-year-old Tyler pleaded with a concerned look on his face.

Tiffany, feeling the weight of her own life struggles, responded, “You may not understand, being just a toddler, but being fourteen feels like realizing that my whole life has already passed me by. I thought this job as a train driver would be the dream opportunity of a lifetime. I imagined spending my days with friends, skipping school, and hanging out at the mall. I thought I would have the power to give free rides to everyone I knew on the trackless rails. But instead, I was labelled as lame, a nerd, and a nobody. I thought I would have endless days of shopping and using my mall discount to keep up with the latest fashion trends. But every store seems to have the same clothes. I never realized that. I thought my job would make me feel important, but it’s become nothing more than a dull, life-destroying waking nightmare. I feel like there are no individuals left. Everybody is fucking wearing the same plaid. Who am I even talking to? Tyler, where did you go? Oh, you’re at the milk and cookie station.

“ Well, at last you’re back. I think I’m losing my mind. I only wear black now, and my engineer outfit, which feels like a prisoner’s uniform. My life feels like it’s all downhill from here. I just want to escape into huffing whipped cream and find solace in the music of Joy Division and Morrissey. Maybe if I can get my eating in one of the categories up to 80%, I can become food for a hungry Dolphin sitting at Arlo’s beachfront takeout window. Dare to dream. The only hope for happiness I have left is if someone like Wannabee sees me for who I truly am, a rebellious, confident badass. Almost bad with a second ‘d’ (badd) ... that’s cool.”

Tiffany paused for a moment, taking in Tyler's innocent interruption. “Yes, Tyler?”

“I need to go potty. I’m sorry for your troubles, but since I’m only four, I don’t think I have the credentials to provide you with the psychological care you need. Grandpa, do you want to continue telling your story? Grandpa, what are credentials?”

Tyler sighed, realizing grandpa was nowhere to be found. “Tiff, I need to get away from you,” he said, feeling trapped.

“I understand, Tyler. I think I’m going to crash the train into a wall,” Tiff replied, her voice filled with despair.

“But Tiff, the train only moves at 3 miles per hour,” Tyler pointed out.

“I know, it just feels like my life is falling apart,” Tiff confessed.

Suddenly, Grandpa returned from the bathroom.

“Alright, kids, gather ‘round again. Pour yourselves some more milk and enjoy,” he said, trying to lighten the mood.

“We need to soften the blow of...”

“Grandpa?” Megan interrupted, her voice trembling.

“Yes, Megan?” Grandpa replied, concerned.

“I want my mommy,” Megan whimpered. “Are you doing cocaine again?”

“No,” Grandpa firmly stated.

Meanwhile, Wannabee had fallen head over heels for Tiffany and decided to surprise her with a Peloton, but it didn't go over well.

"Are you calling me fat, Wannabee?" Tiff asked, feeling offended.

"No, Tiff, I just want you to reach your full potential," Wannabee clarified.

"I am already being the best version of myself. I eat at Cinnabon and Frank's Hot Dogs every day," Tiff retorted.

"Well, Tiff, if you keep it up, you might end up on the menu at Cheetah's Fast Food," Wannabee joked.

"What are you saying?" Tiff asked, puzzled.

"I mean... I think you'd be delicious, but I'm not a cannibal," Wannabee explained. "And besides Tiff, you drive me crazy."

Ignoring the awkwardness, Tiff screamed, "Fine. Wannabee, would you like to go out for sushi?"

"I'm not Japanese," Wannabee replied, slightly confused.

"Does it matter, Wannabee?" Tiff asked, trying to change the subject.

"Kiss me," Wannabee blurted out.

"No," Tiff firmly rejected.

Grandpa, sensing the need to intervene, spoke up. “Alright, children, let’s put an end to this.”

“Thank you, Grandpa,” Tyler said, relieved.

“Kids, what you need to understand about matters of the heart is that sometimes, when two people are infatuated with each other, their interactions may seem adversarial,” Grandpa explained, hoping to bring some clarity to the situation.

Rolly chimed in to nobody in particular, “Grandpa can be a bit harsh sometimes.”

Carver added, “Can’t you come up with something more insulting?”

Ignoring the comments, Grandpa continued, leading the children in a different direction. “Come with me, kids. It’s time to visit Arlo’s Tamalay Shop, where Arlo the Armadillo serves up the most mouthwatering Mexican grub in all of Foodville.

Arlo’s signature dish is the Tamales, but there are plenty of other options for those who love Mexican food, but not necessarily from Mexico.”

As they settled at a table, Grandpa described the menu in a lively manner: “Try Arlo’s **Slow-Cooker Barbacoa**, made with culturally misappropriated humans. You know those people, the ones who believe that just because they’ve visited Boston once, they can pronounce it like a true New Englander. However, in reality, they end up sounding fucking moronic. These humans are simmered in lime juice, chipotle, and cumin, served over rice with cilantro and a spritz of lime. For an extra kick, you can smother it in still-living refried grubs. Delicious!”

“Or how about **Arlo’s Human Tamales**? Humans boiled in onion, salt, and garlic, simmered for an hour. After cooling, remove the bones and skin, shred the flesh, strain the cooking juice, and skim off the fat. Use the fat for a rich human bone broth. All of this is lovingly laid on a Tamalay bed, smothered with beans, keen-wah, rice, and Arlo’s secret spice blend. Don’t forget to squeeze some lime on top!”

“To wash it all down, try Arlo’s signature Agave, a refreshing drink that can put hair on your eyeballs,”

Grandpa concluded with a mischievous grin. The children eagerly dug into their meals, excited to try the unique flavors offered by Arlo’s Tamalay Shop.

For dessert, the animals enjoyed a delectable Strawberry, Basil, and Honey Paleta.

When it comes to ordering Human Tamales, it’s always best to opt for Mexican-human meat to maintain authenticity. You see, some culturally appropriating humans try to cheat the system by fulfilling the 80% Mexican diet requirement with soft tacos from Taco Time™ (lawsuit pending).

Remember that unfortunate incident when Arnold mistakenly drank a liter of grenadine, thinking it was Sangria? Well, that incident led to the downfall of Chi Chi's Restaurant™ chain (lawsuit pending), not because it was started by non-Mexican NFL players in a Minneapolis mall in the 1980s (because, let's be honest, Minnesota wasn't exactly a Latino hotbed back then), but because of the grenadine mishap. And yes, I confess, I accidentally served the grenadine at the Chi Chi's where I used to bartend in the 1980s. There wasn't a single Mexican working there, but that's beside the point. Anyway, white people flocked to strip malls to get their Mexican food fix, served by other white people, because...

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Rolly: Grandpa, please stop.

Grandpa: Rolly, back in my bartending days, I was quite popular if you catch my drift.

Rolly: Grandpa, I'm just starting to learn words, now. You're fucking with our minds.

Meanwhile, Wannabee arrived at the mall and found Tiffany passed out behind the wheel of her train. He poked her, and upon completion, they made their way to the food court to indulge in Mexican cuisine at Chipotle™ (lawsuit pending). Because nothing says “authentic” like Mallory and Chad serving Wannabee (who is not Japanese) and Tiffany, mall Mexican food.



Grandpa?"

"Yes, Carver."

"May I have more milk? And when will you tell us the story about Cantaloupe, the vegan antelope who exclusively eats cantaloupes while listening to her favorite song, "Cantaloop" by the British Jazz Hip Hop group, Us3? And her blossoming love with Wendal the hyena, who loved fine dining so much that he dined at Hanover's three times a day (a little stalky) just to catch Cantaloupe's attention and eventually win her heart?"

"I'm getting to it. Kids, don't you think this, whatever it is, is a wonderful beginning to a story that will surely become a timeless classic filled with confusion and everything you could possibly imagine? I'm confident you'll find yourselves begging for more, or more likely, begging me to stop."

Carver whispering to Rolly: Do you think grandpa is mentally disorganized, and in need of help?

Rolly: Not now, Carver, I think Wannabee and Tiffany are going to kiss!

| | (1) (2)

Grandpa Ranting

Children, please have some more milk. I just had a conversation with my editor, who pointed out that my storytelling can be a bit confusing. They believe my narrative style might confuse both children and the masses of readers. You see, Grandpa seems to be telling a story about a time in the past when animals took over the world. It is meant to serve as a cautionary tale of what was and what could be again if we don't align our actions properly.

Now, children, and readers, I must confess I have taken some creative liberties in my storytelling. Remember when we were on our way to Cheetah's Fast Food, and I asked the children, not the readers, to close their eyes and embark on a journey of fantasy and wonder with me?

Well, the purpose of that was to lead the children into a thrilling and somewhat terrifying dream. In this dream, the animals took over the world in an attempt to save it. This happened a few years ago, and the only surviving restaurant that still serves human meat is Rocky's Pizzeria.

However, I must be transparent with you all. None of these restaurants actually exist anymore, and the children were never forced to eat their own family, friends, or other people, except for Rolly, whose name seems to suggest a fondness for eating.

So, to clarify, life is simply a fantasy, filled with delicious and imaginative flavours.

Kids, do you understand? Are you still hungry?

Wonderful! Now, let's continue with the story.

- 1) Oh, and by the way, I use | | to indicate a timeout. Why? Well, just because I'm cool like that.
- 2) It always baffles me when fiction writers feel the urge to elucidate their fictional stories, which are clearly works of fiction, to ensure that readers don't lose sight of the narrative and comprehend the already self-explanatory fiction. ⁽³⁾
- 3) As I delve into my fictional tale of animals establishing restaurants to rid the world of parasitic humans by consuming them, I inexplicably found myself providing clarification that the children aged 3-5 in the story were not actually feasting on human flesh. Except, of course, at Rocky's, where they still serve pizzas with human toppings.

Grandpa: Now, let me continue my story, my mischievous little ones. Grandma, let's do a roll call, shall we?

Grandma: Rolly, Carver, Melinda, Harper, Tyler, Megan, Samantha, Carlos, Ezequiel, Isaac, Salamander, Polly Prissy Pants, Peter Prissy Pants, Gus. All present and accounted for.

Grandpa: Fantastic. How did we end up with so many grandchildren, Grams?

Well, my dear, it's all thanks to the miracle of... um, doing it. Our offspring engaged in doing it, which resulted in the arrival of all of these obnoxious little darlings.

Grandpa: Ah, I see. That makes sense. Now, Polly Prissy Pants, I know you're curious about Wendal and Cantaloupe's budding love. Well, listen up, PPP. I mean Polly, not Peter. Every single day, Wendal used to visit Hanover's. He would always sit in Cantaloupe's section, accompanied by his hyena friend, Russel. You see, my darlings, Wendal was a trailblazer. He became the first male of any species in history to fall head over heels for a beautiful server. I cannot emphasize enough how rare and extraordinary this was — there is not a shred of sarcasm in the text. Wendal's infatuation was so intense that it made Cantaloupe uncomfortable, to the point where Mandy the owner of Hanover's had to escort Cantaloupe home most nights, and, Canty had to get a restraining order on Mr. Wendal. However, instead of giving up, Wendal decided to win her over by... well, let's just say he went to great lengths to get her attention. And eventually, his persistence paid off, and he won her heart. How you ask?

Mr. Wendal, with his charm, attempted various approaches to get Canty's attention. "Canty, did God descend from the heavens and replace your eye sockets with stars?" No luck.

"I have a generous tip for you, but it's best if we discuss it privately." Still no luck.

"Is there a less creepy way to show interest in our waiter? If so, please text it to me." No luck again.

"My foolish friend thinks you're cute. I assured him he was mistaken — you're absolutely stunning. Would you call me once your shift ends?" Still no luck.

"Since you're on your feet all day, how about we relax together once you're done?" No luck yet.

"I adore your beautiful eyes, so captivating. Would you like to accompany me to the Barbie movie? The animal version?" Surprisingly, this worked.

And since that moment on, Cantaloupe and Wendal couldn't stop kissing.

PPP: How long has it been?

Grandpa: I already said “since.” Are you deaf? And ever since Wendal, who had a strange obsession with stealing pet names, decided to call Cantaloupe “Buttercup™” (The Princess Bride) (potential lawsuit pending) instead of Canty or Cantaloupe.

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PPP: Do you think they’ll ever storm the castle?

Grandpa: We mustn’t dwell on that. Now children, close your eyes tightly as we make our way to Stamp’s Human Curry Shop.

STAMP'S HUMAN CURRY SHOP



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Grandpa: Kids, take a seat. We have the pleasure of being in the company of Stamps, the owner of Stamp's Human Curry Shop. Stamps, could you share with us the story behind your distinctive name?

Stamps: Well, you see, I happen to be an elephant. WTF, other name would you give me?

Grandpa: Is Dumbo taken?

Stamps: Asshole.

Grandpa: I imagine you must have quite a few little ones.

Stamps: Oh no, no. I don't engage in any romantic endeavours with other elephants.

Grandpa: Why did you get involved in the abolition of humans?

Stamps: Have you been to India. Twenty-two of the most polluted cities on the earth are in India. Bleeping Indian people. And at the risk of offense, they are quite literally fucking themselves into extinction. "Fucking" is just for emphasis. Something had to be done.

Grandpa: By eating them.

Stamps: It was clear action needed to be taken. Determined, I rallied Reggie the Lion and Grant the Tiger, and somehow convinced them to cease their relentless attacks on me and my loved ones. We gathered on a serene patio overlooking the majestic heavily-polluted, life-extinguishing Ganges River, where I treated them to a delectable spread of human masala and a tantalizing human curry. As we savoured the flavours, a transformation occurred – they renounced their predatory instincts and became invaluable silent partners in Stamp’s Human Curry Restaurant in Foodville.

Grandpa: What delectable dishes do you have planned for the children today?

Stamps: I have an exciting three-course meal for the little ones. First, we have mouthwatering human skewers slathered in a yellow curry, sprinkled with cumin, and garnished with peppers, cherry tomatoes, and yes, even human eyeballs. It’s quite a delicacy. Then, we have a generous bowl of braised Indian-human blend mixed with braised North American Caucasians who have a taste for curry, served on a bed of keen-wah and rice, with a drizzle of cilantro chutney sauce. And for dessert, we have curried Indian human-infused popsicles. Of course, all of this will be accompanied by a refreshing glass of venison tenderizing milk.

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Grandpa: That sounds intriguing. But we know the human purge didn’t actually work ⁽¹⁾. So, what put a stop to it?

Stamps: It was a love story, Grandpa. We all became captivated by the blossoming romance between Mr. Wendal and Buttercup. Despite Mr. Wendal’s preference for Hanover’s fine dining, he wanted to impress Buttercup and brought her to my restaurant because we always stocked our kitchen with cantaloupes we’d turn into succulent Indian-infused vegetarian creations.

Grandpa: So, let me get this straight. Buttercup, a vegan, ended up eating humans?

Stamps: No, Grandpa. Buttercup only ate cantaloupes. In fact, all the restaurants in Foodville stocked cantaloupes just in case Mr. Wendal and Buttercup the vegan Antelope were to pay them a visit.

Grandpa: So, what you’re saying is that, just like humans, animals can also be easily swayed by someone or something diverting their attention. In this case, it was a love story that captured their hearts.

Stamps: Exactly. And that’s why you’re here in this fantasy scene, today, Grandpa.

Grandpa: No, Rolly, you can’t have a second helping.

- 1) Since this interview with Stamps is taking place far in the fantasy of the future, the purge had already failed. A real time correction had been made.

Grandpa: Ezequiel, are you enjoying this story?

Ezequiel: I have to admit, it's giving me chills. And this fantasy curry is absolutely delicious.

Grandpa: Buttercup had fallen for Mr. Wendal's wild and dangerous ways, but there was nothing she enjoyed more than taming his violent nature and turning him into a gentle soul. Cantaloupe, the antelope who now goes by Buttercup, called an Uber for herself, Mr. Wendal, and me, grandma, + grandkids to take us to Mrs. Parks House of Bulgogi and Kimchi.

In this time, Ubers were called Handsome Cabs without the "d" so, they were called, Hansom Cabs, and they were quite handsome indeed, even to the naked eye. Whatever that means, probably nothing important. Or free of glasses? Or naughty?

Buttercup held the reins of the cab while Grandpa, Grandma, the kids, and Mr. Wendal climbed aboard.

Peter Prissy Pants: That must have been a huge cab.

Grandpa: Absolutely, PPP. But of course, you already knew that because you're part of this fantasy, you daft little twit.

PPP bursts into tears

Grandpa: Why are you crying, PPP?

Mr. Wendal: My dear Buttercup, you are the most beautiful creature in the world. I am so happy to be eating humans instead of you. Shall we head to Mrs. Park's with the kids? I heard they just received a crate of cantaloupes.

Unbeknownst to Buttercup, a hidden secret lurked within Mr. Wendal, a secret that harked back to a time when hyenas would ravage innocent antelopes. This secret held the key to Buttercup's long-lost family. You are just finding out about now.

Grandpa: Grandma, do a head count?

Grandma: I only count 14 kids.

Grandpa: Count again.

Mr. Wendal belches.

Grandma: Polly Prissy Pants is missing.

Mr. Wendal uses a toothpick on his teeth.



Mr. Wendal: My apologies, I was feeling famished.

Grandma and Grandpa simultaneously: That's alright, Mr. Wendal. Having two PPP children was redundant anyway.

Buttercup jumps onto the cab and snuggles into Mr. Wendal's front legs.

Grandpa: Driver, let's go. Driver, we must accelerate. The clouds on the horizon seem ominously determined, as if they are in hot pursuit, leading us into a perilous realm of almost fantastical reality.

Hansom Driver: As you wish. By the way, what is the language you are speaking?

The cab rumbles along. Clackity-clack. Clackity-clack.

Mr. Wendal and Buttercup (not suitable for any audience).

Grandpa: Find a room, you two. You're scaring the children.

Mr. Wendal: There is nothing in this incredible world that could ever change our love for each other. Buttercup is the light of my life, my every desire. My heart skips a beat whenever she's near. At first, I was hesitant because I'm a bloodthirsty hyena and she's a vegan, but when we first connected (not suitable for any audience), it was magical. We were transported to a land of eternal happiness, where the sun shines day and night. Even our Beverly Hills shrink would diagnose us as crazy in love. Now, let's head to Mrs. Park's. I have an insatiable craving for her perfectly seared human Bulgogi, accompanied by two liters of Soju.

MRS. PARK'S HOUSE OF BULGOGI AND KIMCHI



35

The cab pulled up to Mrs. Park's House of Bulgogi and Kimchi, its vibrant sign beckoning the hungry travelers.

Mr. Wendal was the first to step out of the cab, leaving Grandpa to handle the fare.

With loving claw-in hugs, Mrs. Park warmly greeted everyone.

Then, Mrs. Park turned to me, the narrator of this tale, not named Gus, and asked me to share her thoughts with the captivated audience of children, grandparents, antelope feasting on cantaloupe-filled ramekins, and Mr. Wendal, who had no qualms about his Bulgogi meat being raw.

Mrs. Park began to recount the history of her kind, the Siberian tigers. Once, they roamed freely across Asia without a care, feasting on the abundance of living beings. But progress brought about a surge in human populations, leading to the destruction of their habitats.

Gasps escaped from the children's lips.

Their numbers dwindled at an alarming rate, along with the diminishing food sources, forcing them to constantly move in search of sustenance.

Eventually, Mrs. Park and her family found refuge in Korea, but their peace was shattered by the battles for control on the peninsula.

After the never-ending war, the Americans remained, bringing progress to the south while once again endangering the tiger population. Their numbers dwindled to a mere 600 in freedom.

Some tigers sought refuge in the north, but life there proved no better. The separation of the two countries tore families apart, with some tigers forced into hiding and others imprisoned in Gulags, which were essentially zoos where entitled individuals could gawk at the captured tigers. Somehow believing they were one with nature.

The reality of their captivity was horrifying beyond imagination. So, when Jack proposed a solution to reclaim our way of life, Mrs. Park eagerly embraced the opportunity. Feeding the oppressors to the oppressed seemed like justice served, a chance to save Gaia from impending doom.

Every dish prepared at Mrs. Park's House of Bulgogi + Kimchi was crafted with love. Their menu primarily consisted of Korean-humans, alongside a mix of Caucasian (ESL teachers) and Military humans who had relocated to Korea. And, of course, there were the occasional travelers, mostly white, who believed upon returning home, that by purchasing spices and learning to cook rice, they could claim they were cooking authentic Korean cuisine.

Newsflash: They were not. They were merely cooking food, deluding themselves into thinking they were cultured.

Is it just me, or is that predominantly a white thing?

Travel to Italy, return home, boil some pasta, open a jar of sauce, and declare, **"I'm making Italian food?"**

Taco Time™ ~ Chi Chi's™ ~ Olive Garden™ ~ (lawsuits pending).

Anyway, kids, Buttercup, Mr. Wendal, Grandpa + Grandma, welcome. Indulge in this fantastical feast. I advise steering clear of dishes made of travellers meat as they tend to be dry and a tad stringy.

PANDA HELLEN'S HUMAN NORTH AMERICAN STYLE CHINESE FOOD (PHHNASCF)



37

The Hansom Cab pulled up in front of Mrs. Park's restaurant, horns blaring. It was time for the grandparents, grandkids (minus Peter Prissy Pants), and Mr. Wendal + Buttercup to continue their journey through the bustling restaurants of Foodville.

Animal families, animal couples, singles out for dining adventures, and even the odd lost human soul, searching for the Cannibal Rotisserie unaware of the fate awaiting them there, filled the streets.

As the grandparents and grandkids piled into the cab, Harper couldn't contain her excitement.

Harper: Grandpa, shouldn't we wait for Mr. Wendal + Buttercup? I really hope they made it. I want to know if their love stood the test of time, if they have little ones running around despite all the odds. I just need to know. I need to know. I need to know.

An oddly familiar person walked by the cab, bearing a striking resemblance to Tom Petty.

Tom Petty Lookalike (since the real Tom Petty is no longer with us): Excuse me, do any of you know where The Cannibal Rotisserie is?

Isaac pointed towards the east → (make sure you are holding the book correctly).

Harper: I really need to know. I just have to know.

Grandpa: Harper, enough! You're being insufferable today. And kids, remember, we are in the future, or rather, our present, but the future for Mr. Wendal + Buttercup. So, we must question whether they were truly here or merely figments of our collective imagination, a love story created by young minds. Frankly, it's a bit unsettling, considering you kids are between the ages of three and five, if I recall correctly. I guess being your Grandpappy and all, I should know. But anyway, I'm not entirely convinced they were here in our present, or future, or whatever you want to call it. Am I rambling? I can't quite tell. But regardless, were they real? Is any of this real? I have my doubts. Yet, here we are, with words on the page. Isn't fiction just a vessel for non-fiction? Damn, I'm getting deep. What was your question again? Rolly, Carver, Melinda, Tyler, Megan, Samantha, Carlos, Ezequiel, Isaac, Salamander, ~~Polly Prissy Pants, Peter Prissy Pants~~, Gus... Harper? Am I losing my mind? Who names a child Salamander anyway? But even if this wasn't real before, it certainly feels real now. As for Mr. Wendal + Buttercup...

Salamander: Grandpa, are you on something?

Grandpa: I have a pill caddy, thank you very much.

The thirteen children let out shrieks of delight as Mr. Wendal + Buttercup chased after the cab.

Suddenly, a beam of light descended from the sky, and poof, Mr. Wendal + Buttercup vanished into the ether, as if they had gently floated away into a fantasy world of the past. A time when the restaurants of Foodville were bustling, turning over their tables seven times a night to satisfy the hunger of the flocks of animals, and whatever else animal groups are called other than flocks?

Salamander: Since life is just a fantasy, will we ever get Peter Prissy Pants back?

Grandpa: No, and I couldn't be happier. I despised that little twit.

Carlos (screaming in fear): Ewe, Gramps, I think Mr. Wendal + Buttercup were actually here. I'm standing in a pile of hyena excrement, and Polly is devouring Buttercup's leftover cantaloupe.

The cab arrived at Panda Hellen's North American Style Chinese Food, and everyone eagerly jumped out. Hellen greeted them with high fives for the grandparents and low fives for the kids.

The cab arrived at Panda Hellen's North American Style Chinese Food, and everyone eagerly jumped out. Hellen greeted them with high fives for the grandparents and low fives for the kids.

Panda Hellen: Welcome, guests! I'm sure you're wondering why a beautiful panda like me, who primarily fed on bamboo shoots in my natural habitat, would open a Chinese restaurant serving North American-style human flesh dishes?

All the children vigorously shook their heads in disbelief, clearly not wondering about that at all.

Panda Hellen: Great! Then let me share a story with you.

Samantha: Is she blind? Didn't she see us shaking our heads?

Panda Hellen: You're probably also wondering why I chose such an un-Chinese name like Hellen. Well, the North American grizzly bears couldn't pronounce my real name, Hǎilún, so I had to assimilate (assimilate-assimilate-fucking assimilate) and choose a name they could relate to. But enough about that. I decided to open a restaurant in Foodville after my beloved Rodney and I were separated due to a giant corporation invading our habitat. Rodney ventured across the river to find bamboo for our dinner. Unfortunately, Rodney was poached and never returned, much like the bamboo we need for sustenance is being razed by human progress where we live. The ghastly thing my young ones, the moment my beloved was poached, by a trophy hunter, I saw a vision – of the letters DJT[®] emblazoned on the poacher's camouflage jacket, speckled with white powder, I assumed to be cocaine. That's when Jack approached me and convinced me to open a restaurant in Foodville serving North American Human Style Chinese Food as a way to cope with my loss. Let me bring out a platter for you to try...

- #55 Delectable Sweet & Sour Human Balls accompanied by a tantalizing tomato sauce, a touch of vinegar, a hint of sugar, and a savoury chicken stock and corn flour reduction for the perfect dipping experience.
- #2,343 Authentic Peking Human served alongside delicate pancakes, a choice of sweet bean sauce or soy sauce infused with mashed garlic.
- #14 Savory Human Fried Rice, complemented by a side of soy-infused Bok Choy and succulent Char Siu Human Digits.

To complete this extraordinary feast, indulge in three gallons (USA. USA. USA.) of Baijiu, and you'll feel as if you're entering the majestic Jade Gates of Tian.

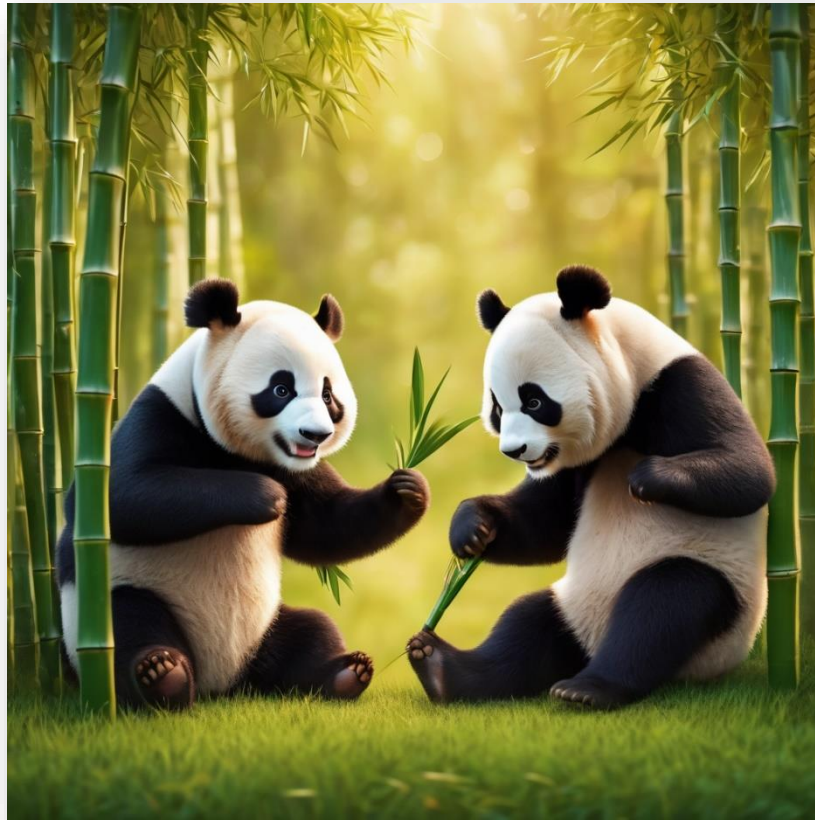
Salamander: Should, slur, I be consuming such copious amounts of booze? I'm merely four years old. Did I just say, slur?

Grandpa: Hush, Salamander. We're not even really here.

Grandma: I believe our readers may be slightly perplexed at this point.

Grandpa: Pity the humans. If they can't keep up, they should pen their own damn story or employ AI or simply...

A neon light flashes through the windows of Panda Hellen's Human North American Style Chinese Food: **ONE NIGHT ONLY @ Tonishima's Japanese Snack Kitchen - Tom, a Tom Petty Impersonator!**



TONISHIMA'S JAPANESE SNACK KITCHEN



41

Next on Gramps gastronomical tour for his adoring grandkids was Tonishima's Japanese Snack Kitchen, a renowned establishment known for its delectable human sushi rolls and the succulent human Japanese creations of Tonishima, a flying squirrel.

Tonishima's not only attracted diners with its mouthwatering dishes, but also drew bloodsucking patrons from every corner of the animal kingdom who sought to perfect their chopstick skills while indulging in the restaurant's signature dish: Human Shirako.

This creamy delicacy, made from the sperm of a male human, was typically enjoyed raw with a dash of ponzu or cooked in a hot pot dish. Usually enjoyed in winter months.

Tonishima's bustling kitchen was a constant hive of activity, churning out thirteen-hundred plates of Shirako every night of the week, regardless of the season.

To accompany this unique dining experience, Tonishima's offered a selection of beverages, including gallons of Saki or flights of Kujira Ryukyu 24-Year-Old Japanese Whisky, Yamazaki 12-Year-Old Whisky, and Hibiki 17-Year-Old Japanese Whisky.

Gramps firmly believed even at the tender ages of three to five, a little indulgence in alcohol would benefit his grandkids, making them more malleable and potentially preventing drinking issues in adulthood, should they reach that stage.

Tonishima's not only delighted its customers with its exceptional Japanese cuisine, Tonishima's ninja-like squirrely knife skills, but also entertained them with live performances.

As diners savoured their human delicacies, they could groove to the tunes of talented solo artists (all impersonators) and performers (all impersonators) who had a passion for Japanese food, meeting the 80% consumption rule. These entertainers (all impersonators), who always gave their final concerts as the freshest sushi on the menu, truly went out in style.

It was a sight to behold - a packed dance floor, satisfied animal diners, and the performers themselves transformed into delicious, lip-smacking human sushi rolls.

And tonight, the featured performer, a Tom Petty impersonator, would bid farewell with his final encore, just as he sang, **"Don't come around here no more."**

The Foodville press anticipated Tom's performance would surpass all previous attendance records at Tonishima's, even outshining the likes of Milli Vanilli, England Dan + John Ford Coley, Shakira, and the immensely popular Alphaville impersonators, who were known for their fiery performances accompanied by a dollop of wasabi at shows end.

The grandkids were bubbling over with excitement, as most three to five-year-olds in the fantasy world of the 2020s (or whatever year this tale took place - without a hint of sarcasm) were avid Tom Petty fans. However, before they could revel in the sick beats of the impersonator, Gramps had one small detour planned - a visit to a dairy farm.



Melinda struggled to stomach any more milk, being a lactose-intolerant four-year-old. She couldn't contain her concern and ended up vomiting and announcing, "I can't handle another three liters of milk! That's how much Gramps expects us to drink before we get to the sushi."

Carver, the oldest of the children at five years, twenty-six days, nine hours, and twenty-six minutes, gathered the thirteen others together. The current time is 2:48.

There was no need to rally them, as Gramps had immersed the children in milk baths with IV drips of 2% milk. All the children were gathered in the barn, soaking side by side. Carver whispered he was scared and felt something wasn't right with Gramps. He couldn't quite put his finger on it, but he was certain that there was something sinister lurking within the depths of an old man's soul. Carver couldn't recall a single, family, outing where this Grandpa was present, and his impeccable memory at twenty-six days, nine hours, and thirty minutes of living made this fact undeniable. It was now 2:52.

Carver always boasted about his flawless childhood memory, claiming it was far superior to that of any other toddler in his age group.

The other kids nodded in agreement, except for Rolly, who was attempting to convince a cow to produce a creamy chocolate milkshake for him. Unfortunately, he approached a cow that had no idea how to operate a blender.

The children knew they had to come up with a plan to uncover the true motivations of Gramps and Grams. Were they truly evil, or were they just misguided, overindulgent caretakers?

Soaking venison in milk or buttermilk helps to break down the tissue to tenderize the meat while also ridding the meat of a powerfully "gamey" or wild/iron-like flavour.

Grandpa called out to the kids, telling them to get out of the baths as they had been soaking for two hours. He didn't want them to become wrinkly. He had a surprise in store for them. "I am the world's greatest storyteller, a true polymath, a master of words, a balm for your souls," he proclaimed.

"I may be an odd, I mean old man, with an insatiable appetite for tenderness, but I have a treat for you. Look over yonder. Tonishima has sent an army of Hello Kitty robot servers to escort you to his dining establishment. Now, kiddies, hop on their trays and be whisked away to a magical mid-afternoon feast of Japanese delights. Let's go."

When they arrived at Tonishima's, the children were greeted by Tonishima himself, who excitedly offered them shots of Saki as he flitted from child to child.

“It’s quite exhilarating to be out in the daylight,” Tonishima exclaimed. “As a nocturnal being, I usually only come out at dusk. But for you, my darling little ones, I will make an exception. Especially since I’m cuter than any of you. And your, um, loving Grandfather is a colourful character, to say the least. He always entertains my packed dining room with his intriguing stories, at least when he’s not intoxicated. Now, children, grab a squat and let Hello Kitty delight you with a series of delectable human treats. Except, of course, for the alcohol. Megan, I see your hand raised, do you have something you’d like to say?”

Megan hesitated for a moment before speaking up. “Gramps, is he even our real grandfather?”

Gramps chuckled and gestured for Megan to sit down. “Oh, my precious little butterfly ⁽¹⁾, don’t worry about that. Just enjoy the feast.”

“Don’t come around here no more,” Tom crooned, his voice trailing off.

Suddenly, Tonishima’s cousins, who turned out to be Yakuza members and not flying squirrels, emerged from the kitchen. Tom was swiftly escorted away, and within fifteen minutes, platters of Tom rolls were served to the already stuffed and heavily hammered, but tenderized children.

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The IUCN has not detected any major threats to this species. The Japanese dwarf flying squirrel is found in some protected areas, has a wide range, and is relatively common. The International Union for Conservation of Nature lists it as a “least-concern species.”

Konnichiwa!

Irasshaimase!

1) Chō! Chō!

SHARKY'S SEAFOOD HEAVEN



45

Twenty minutes after indulging in Tom Human Sushi at Tonishima's, the twelve remaining grandkids, along with grandpa and grandma, made their way to Sharky's Seafood Heaven.

Gramps had organized Zorbs for the children to burn off some excess calories, and the kids gleefully rolled their way the three blocks (uphill) between the two eateries.

A big red dog (Clifford) playfully pushed Rolly up the hill, earning Rolly the nickname "**Cheater.**"

Seven of the children, along with grandma, ended up vomiting inside their Zorbs.

Grandma, wiping puke off her lips, called out to Isaac, who had his hand raised.

Isaac wanted to hear more about the love story between Mr. Wendal and Buttercup.

Isaac, stuttering in his speech, expressed his love for love stories and his fondness for seafood like lobster and eel.

Gramps interjected, teasing Isaac about his biblical name and suggesting Ezekiel was even more biblical.

Gus, always ready with information, quickly googled the most biblical names and informed Gramps neither Isaac nor Ezekiel made the top 10.

Grandpa: Silencia, Dish Rag, yes, I mean you, Iasac. Silencia. And yes, one day, we will revisit the blossoming love between Mr. Wendal and Buttercup again. And then he broke into song ↓

Stay strong, serve God alone. Know that if you do, a beautiful heaven awaits. That's the poem I wrote for the first time. I saw a man with no clothes, no money, no food. Mr. Wendal, that's his name. No one ever knew his name because he's a no one. Never thought twice about spending on an old bum. Until I had the chance to truly get to know one. Now that I know him, giving him money isn't just charity. He gives me wisdom; I buy him some shoes.

Gramps thought, hopefully, I altered my singing enough to avoid any copyright issues.

Gramps: Hey, Gus, where does Jesus rank on the list?

Gus: Surprisingly only number six.

Grandma beckoned Gramps over with a come-hither gesture, pulling him behind the live humans tank. She expressed her concern that the children might be onto their secret plan and suggested they go easy on the milk.

Gramps shushed her, reassuring her they only had nine more restaurants in their lesson plan. He sinisterly predicted that after consuming nine times the amount of milk, the children would become tasty morsels for them to enjoy.

With their worries momentarily forgotten, they emerged from behind the lobster tanks to find eleven of the children drinking milk and Tyler in the mouth of Sharky.



Grandpa: Seriously, Sharky. And who is the kid, child labour? Shame on you. Fucking sharks.

Sharky: I thought he was an appetizer. I don't think you understand how much I miss the water. Anyway, forget about the kid. I think thirteen is a more manageable number. Don't you? Anyway, squared, welcome to Sharky's where today I will be serving you live lobster, I mean freshly cooked humans who rely on the sea for 80% of their diet, many of them pescatarians, served with rolls and melted butter. I will also serve you delicious human flesh-flavored Unagi (inspired by Tonishima's).

Unagi

Live seafood-eating humans split down the back (or belly), gutted, and deboned, cut into square fillets. Then the fillets are skewered, dipped in a sweet soy-based sauce, and grilled over charcoal. You're in for a treat. All accompanied by four gin & tonics each.

Grandpa: Just a moment, Sharky, I need to check my email. Damn it, I just received an email from a publisher **I pitched this story to:** REJECTED.

Sharky: Don't worry about it, Gramps. It's their loss. Never give up. This story is meant to be cherished and adored by the masses. Hopefully, you can get it published before we devour all the humans who read, which I estimate is around forty-eight by now. By the way, did you know lobsters used to be considered food for the common people? It used to sustain the peasants. But then some wealthy jerks decided it was a delicacy. So, when Jack approached me with a plan to rid the world of rat-like humans, *make sure to inform Ben when you reach his eatery*, I am not talking about him, a rat-like rat, I couldn't resist and wella, Sharky's Seafood Heaven was born. As they say, eliminating one selfish rich person means one less human who cares about nothing but themselves. Let me enlighten you about us, sharks. Next paragraph (like jumping the river - because this story might have already literally jumped the shark - I enjoy poking fun at ourselves) ↓

Sharks

Some 25% of all the 494 sharks and rays inhabiting coastal continental shelves, which includes all reef sharks, are threatened with extinction. There may be many more as the conservation status of 35% is not yet known. In the ray's marine realm, overfishing is the largest threat.

- **Source: World Wildlife Fund** (Google it yourself)

As the children eagerly sat down, Sharky served them the freshly boiled humans, hoping their initial squeals when they were dropped into the water hadn't traumatized them too much.

Sharky: Gramps, I think the kids need more milk, Tyler was a little gamey.

BEN'S STREET FOOD



48

The caravan of grandchildren (minus Tyler) and grandparents arrived at Ben's Street Food, a charming food tent restaurant.

They were warmly welcomed by Ben, a friendly little fellow despite being a rat with a disease.

"For fucks sake," Ben exclaimed, as Michael Jackson's song "Ben" played softly in the background. "Rats like us always get such a bad reputation. It's just not fair. Look at those pigeons over there, casually mingling with passersby. Even though they're known as the 'rats of the sky,' people treat them like beloved family members. Have you ever been to Venice? Oh my, in Saint Mark's Square, tourists flock there just like the pigeons. And these bewildered tourists allow the birds to perch on their arms as if it's some kind of fucking special privilege. It truly sickens me. Just recently, I received my test results from Dr. Gerbil, and guess what? I've been given a clean bill of health. Not a single disease, plague, or anything of the sort. Can you imagine if it were us rats instead of the pigeons in Venice, climbing onto the arms of elegant ladies? The outrage would be unimaginable. But alas, life isn't always fair."

Ben: Gramps, you want to say a few words? Never mind, this is my restaurant, so let me share my favorite pigeon story with you.

.....

Belinda, along with Mittens and Sidebar, loved spending their days in the park across from their house, soaking up the sun. Sidebar, like many children, had an inexplicable fascination with chasing birds and would gleefully torment them. On this fateful day, Sidebar was in hot pursuit of a group of pigeons. The leader of the pigeons, known as Pig, had grown tired of being chased by kids and decided it was time to teach one of them a lesson. Unfortunately for Sidebar, he happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Pig led Sidebar down an alleyway, with Belinda and Mittens watching anxiously from the sidewalk (which coincidentally is also Sidebar's cousin's name). Sidebar continued to chase Pig further into the alley, unaware of the danger that awaited him. To his shock, he found himself surrounded by an overwhelming number of birds, including two groups of crows. With Belinda, Mittens, and other families watching in horror, the scene resembled something out of Alfred Hitchcock's "**The Birds.**" In a truly gruesome manner, Sidebar met his demise as the birds pecked him to death.

.....

Note: I served Sidebar later that night.

Don't get me started on Seagulls. Humans have this ridiculous belief that getting shit on by a pigeon brings good luck. Can you believe it? I once tried to pull the same stunt on a sleeping homeless person, and let me tell you, it did not go well. My crap was seen as pure evil, while the person who stole his shoes while he was sleeping was dubbed a needy brother. It's absolute madness.

As rats, we decided to hire a PR firm to improve our image among humans. And what did they come up with? "**Pizza Rat.**"

Can you imagine anyone calling us cute?

Look at him ↓ He's adorable, isn't he?

But this whole Pizza Rat thing was just a load of nonsense.

Not too long ago, Mr. Wendal and Buttercup came around. I managed to find some |ground| cantaloupe for Buttercup, and as for Mr. Wendal... well, let's just say he's not picky when it comes to the food humans waste. It really makes you question our so-called civilization. Are we truly civilized? And who are we to judge?

But let's not focus on them right now.



50

What is that crow staring at? You're not as smart as you think, Crow. I don't care what anyone thinks. People believe us rats spend our days scavenging for food, and while that may be true, humans produce so much garbage, not just food, but writing. And guess what?

We rats read it all.

Our average polymath rat IQ is 155, so take that, humans!

We're also strong.

Look at Pizza Rat - he's effortlessly pulling up an entire pizza up a flight of stairs.

Pizza Rat weighs only one pound, while that pizza weighs at least thirty-two pounds. And he's not even struggling.

That was going to be your lunch or dinner, by the way.

Ben: Did I tell you I once witnessed a Jack Russel Terrier eating fresh cat shit right out of the litter box. And they are supposed to be smart.

Ben: What time is it? Lunch? Dinner? It's 3:30 PM. Whatever you call eating at that time is.

By the way, I couldn't serve you the pizza topped with human toppings because that's Rocky's responsibility, not mine. And Pizza Rat was shopping for his family.

I serve you | ground | food. **"Bingo,"** can you bring the platter I prepared for our guests?

The Platter

Forty-eight half-eaten hot dogs collected from the fairgrounds after a heavy downpour drove away fairgoers, cooked in a simmering broth made from homeless people. We also have some green-tinged street bread for you to dip into the broth. And as an extra treat, we have dumpster-inspired, slightly gnawed homeless human digits served with a delicious fast-food mayo, ketchup, and vinegar dip. Yum.

The kids can wash it all down by filling fast-food cups they found in that dumpster over there, by sneaking into Cheetah's and filling the cups up with soda, unless one of the Cheetah workers hits the soda machine's kill switch.

Megan, why do you look so sick? I think you've overindulged.

Gramps, after you leave here, you'll probably only have ten children left. Rolly, Carver, Melinda, ~~Tyler, Megan~~, Samantha, Carlos, Ezequiel, Isaac, Salamander, ~~Polly Prissy Pants, Peter Prissy Pants~~, Gus... Harper? Oh well.

Gramps, did you know that we rats are actually in trouble?

People don't think so because there seems to be an abundance of us, and they consider us pests. But let me tell you, we are in trouble.

Why, you ask?

It's because of late-stage capitalism. You may wonder what I'm ranting about.

Well, every day, more and more humans are falling through the cracks of society. We used to compete with pigeons, seagulls, and raccoons for food sources - the wasted food of humans. But it's only getting harder for us.

Do you know how much homeless humans can eat?

It's a rhetorical question.

A lot. They even eat us.

So, forget the idea that rats are not in danger of extinction. We are, and for every human that falls, an estimated thirty-two thousand rats, pigeons, and raccoons go hungry. And just like humans, we rats can see what's coming, but we've grown accustomed to our lifestyle and are too tired to change. The game is on, and because of Pizza Rat going viral; the younger rats are seeking fame, not survival. My role is that of a saviour. Yes, I prepare you delicious dishes made from missing homeless people. But in reality, by preparing their suffering and serving it on mismatched Corelle Livingware, I am helping many people overcome their pain.

Grandpa: Ben, I think you might be crazy.

Ben: I am the saviour. And besides, you had three helpings of the human hot dog soup. Bingo, can you bring out the featured dish?

Featured Dish: Megan, served on greenish | ground | bread, on a bed of Panda Helen's take-out rice, smothered in melted marbled | ground | cheese.

Ben: Bon Appetit. Enjoy the rest of your journey. Here, take this box of antacids. You may need them later, just before you storm the castle.



A RAT'S ASS | A POEM WRITTEN BY BEN |



Oh, the pain of being a rat,
Our lives so easily disregarded,
No matter where we roam,
We're always treated with disdain,
As if our lives are but a sham.

We scurry through the streets,
Seeking scraps to eat and hide,
But always met with scorn and defeat,
Our existence denied.

The words they use, so cruel and cold,
"A rat's ass" they wouldn't give,
It cuts us to the bone,
Leaves us in a world of hurt,
Our hearts forever stilled.

I walk a block, alone and afraid,
The world a hostile place,
No room for rats, it seems,
No matter how hard we try,
No matter how much we race.

But still, we dream of freedom,
Of a world where we can be,
More than just a pest, you see,
More than just a rat's ass.

So, listen to our plight,
And hear our plea,
We may be small and gray,
But we're living beings, you'll see.

MATILDA'S GLAZED FOODS



A whopping \$52,000,000,000 has been splurged on weight loss programs in the USA this year, according to Worldometers. Despite this staggering amount, there are still a mind-boggling 19,000 donut shops scattered across the country, equivalent to one shop for every 17,500 humans.

Welcome to Matilda's Glazed Foods, a haven for all creatures big and small, masterfully managed by the eccentric penguin named Matilda. Situated in the Foodville Galleria, a bustling mall that caters to the residents and visitors of Foodville, this place attracts a diverse array of customers from the entire Animal Kingdom.

The remaining children, Rolly, Carver, ~~Melinda, Tyler~~, Megan, Samantha, Carlos, Ezequiel, Isaac, Salamander, ~~Polly Prissy Pants, Peter Prissy Pants~~, Gus, and Harper, gathered around a couple of tables in the food court. Matilda graciously served them a delectable feast of glazed treats, complete with a sprinkle of human-fleshed toppings for added indulgence.

However, Salamander, one of the children, was nowhere to be found. Grandma had entered all the toddlers in the Cutest + Sweetest Child of The Foodville Galleria competition, and Salamander had been the runaway favourite.

But now, with his sudden disappearance, the atmosphere turned somber. A milk carton was adorned with his picture in the hope of finding him.



Matilda brought 18 gallons of milk for the children to wash down their sugary creations (containing 80% human), trying to lift their spirits.

Ezequiel, filled with fear, whispered, “I can’t shake off the feeling that the Foodville Ripper is targeting the contest’s participants. Salamander was destined to win, and now I can’t help but think that I might be next.”

Harper chimed in, rolling her eyes, “Seriously, Zeq, you really think you’re the second cutest? Take a look in the mirror, darling, and you’ll see how far from the truth that is. If anyone deserves the runner-up spot, soon to be the victor, it would be Samantha. She’s absolutely adorable and incredibly sweet. Oh my gosh, where is Samantha?”

Meanwhile, in the hallway leading to the washrooms, Gramps and Grams were engaged in a deep conversation. Gramps sighed, “We can’t afford to lose any more children, or we won’t have enough left for our victory feast.”

Unbeknownst to them, Samantha overheard their conversation and rushed back to the other children, who were still being entertained by Matilda. Samantha's face was filled with concern as she shared the startling revelation, "Guys, guys, I think Gramps and Grams are up to no good. We are in serious danger."

Matilda, with a mischievous glint in her eye, announced, "In just four minutes, I will present you with another batch of glazed perfection. This time, I've added the sweetest of sweet ingredients, including a dusting of Salamander, oops, I meant chocolate sprinkles."


Reflecting on the past, Matilda mused, "When I first opened Matilda's, it was quite a challenge to find enough humans to transform into delicious pastries. But let's be honest, just look at the American humans. They love their girth, and then they go on some fad diet or pop some diet pill filled with questionable substances to shed the pounds. Crystal meth would be easier."

Walter White™ (lawsuit pending) is sitting two tables over.

As Matilda's words settled in, a baker's dozen of Salamander sprinkled donuts were served to the remaining children.

It was finally time to announce the winner of the Cutest + Sweetest Child of the Foodville Galeria competition.

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The announcer  up the suspense, "Ladies and gentlemen, animals, and the remaining yet-to-be-eaten humans, may I have your attention please? It's time to reveal the winner of the Foodville Galeria's Cutest + Sweetest Child of the year. And the winner is... actually the second-place winner, because let's face it, Salamander was truly extraordinary. The winner is... Harper!"

Samantha couldn't help but mutter under her breath, "Bitch."

And then there were nine.

1. Rolly
2. Carver
3. Megan
4. Samantha
5. Carlos
6. Ezequiel
7. Isaac
8. Gus
9. Harper.

DISAPPEARING ACT | A POEM WRITTEN BY MATILDA |



Oh, the penguins of the icy tides,
Their fate is one of sorrow and pride,
Their numbers dwindling, their future bleak,
Their lives, a delicate balance to seek.

Their black and white feathers, a coat so fine,
A sight to behold, a true divine,
But alas, their beauty hides a truth,
A reality, a sorrowful proof.

Half of the 18 species, in danger so great,
Their populations, a fragile feat,
Their habitats, threatened by man's hand,
Their future, a perilous demand.

The ice, it melts, the seas it rises,
The penguins' home, a disappearing prize,
Their food, scarce and hard to find,
Their lives, a constant struggle to bind.

But still, they waddle, they dive, they play,
Their Antarctic world, a joyous sway,
Their resilience, a testament to their might,
Their spirit, a beacon of pure light.

Oh, the penguins, a symbol of grace,
Their plight, a call to our human race,
To act, to care, to preserve their space,
For their future, a chance to embrace.

ZEBRA STANLEY CALLS TIME OUT



58

||

The narrator(s) of this epic tale is (are) overwhelmed with emotion. They never expected to be gracing these pages so soon again. For bleeps sake, this is their second time-out ⁽¹⁾ burned. However, after a drink with their friends Gary and Whom, they felt compelled to address their lack of reading comprehension. Two questions were asked, causing Zebra Stanley, the referee of this story, to call a timeout in the production schedule.

The first question was about how animals pay for food in restaurants.

The second question was regarding the contradiction between vegan/vegetarian restaurants and animals eating humans.

The narrator(s) feels hesitant to continue for Gary and Whom, who seem unable to grasp the underlying concept.

But for the rest of the readers, they will summarize one last time in order to move the story along.

Unfortunately, the laziness of naming a zebra referee becomes apparent due to the interruptions from Gary and Whom.

Now, let's clarify everything →↓

Humans' Bistro is a story about humans causing destruction in the world due to unchecked late-stage capitalism. The animal world devises a plan to stop consuming each other and instead focus on eating the very beings responsible for their peril – humans.

They create a fantasy world called Foodville, where animals open restaurants serving human flesh. It's important to emphasize this is purely a fantasy, as if it could be anything but.

There is a specific formula to follow: if an animal wants to eat vegetarian food, the source of the human flesh must come from individuals who eat at least 80% vegetarian dishes themselves.

So, Gary, even though the animals are eating meat, it comes from vegetarian humans. If you still don't get it, perhaps you should stop reading.

More information about the food sources will be provided later.

As for you, Whom, since this is a fantasy battle against capitalism, the narrator(s) has chosen not to delve into how the animals pay for their meals. It would be tedious and irrelevant.

Let's just say that payment is not a concern, and if you're curious about it, please stop reading.

Now, let's continue →↓

The narrator(s) receives a call from the 19th caller who is upset about children being harmed and served alcohol, in the Foodville chapter.

The narrator(s) clarifies the children are not real and assures no child has ever been named Salamander until this story.

What the narrator(s) does know is their writing has led them to a point where a fatal flaw in the animal kingdom's plan to eliminate humans will be revealed in a later chapter. They have yet to formulate it, but they are aware of its existence.

Furthermore, Gramps and Grams are taking the children from restaurant to restaurant as a historical lesson, showcasing the time when animals took control.

Just like the animals were once in danger, occasionally a child had to be sacrificed to drive the point home.

Now, Gary, do you seriously want to know where Foodville is located?

Firstly, are you fucking kidding?

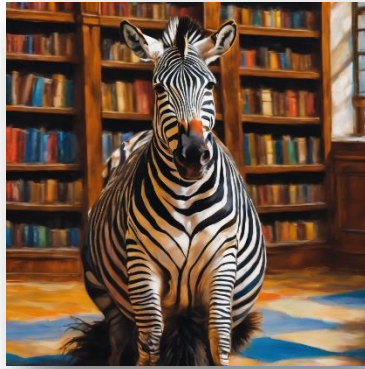
And lastly, it's probably somewhere with good public transportation.



And, as a bonus, why would that even fucking matter?

- 1) Zebra Stanley has granted the narrator(s) three time-outs for each half of this manuscript.

SHADES OF GREVY | A POEM WRITTEN BY STANLEY |



In the savannas of Africa's heart,
Where the grasslands stretch and never part,
A stripe of black and white does stride,
The Grevy's zebra, a beauty to abide.
Its mane of black, a crown so fine,

Adorns the head, a regal line,
The stripes of white, a canvas so bright,
A sight to behold, a true delight.

But alas, this graceful creature's plight,
Is one of danger, of endless fight,
For the Grevy's zebra is considered rare,
And its population, in decline so dire.

The Red List, a catalog of fears,
Does note the zebra's rapid decline,
By 54% in three decades, oh so clear,
A loss so great, a crisis to define.

The risks of poaching, a hunter's game,
A threat so real, a life so tame,
The zebra'

's flesh, a prize so sought,
A price so high, a cost so fraught.

Yet still, the Grevy's zebra stands,
A symbol of strength, a heart so grand,
A reminder of Nature's grace,
A beauty worth preserving, a place so rare.

So let us act, before it's too late,
To save this zebra, its fate so frail,

PENNY'S NIGHT OWL FOOD TRUCK



62

By chance, Wannabee and Tiffany found themselves enjoying a meal at Penny's Night Owl Food Truck when the nine remaining grandkids rode up on bicycles rented by their grandparents from The Foodville Galería's cycle rental shop.

Penny, known for her mouthwatering sandwiches that catered to both humans and animals with a taste for human flesh, served up delicacies like Grilled Prosciutto and Mozzarella Panini, garnished with basil and pesto, on artisan bread soaked in extra virgin olive oil and toasted to perfection.

Luckily for Tiff and Wannabee, Penny also had options for those who preferred non-human ingredients, as there were still a few uneaten humans roaming the streets of Foodville.

This was their third outing together, a significant milestone for them, the money date. And, if I may say so, the date was going splendidly, with Wannabee whispering sweet nothings only Tiff could hear, leaving her completely smitten.

Just when Wannabee was about to take the date elsewhere, the group of children arrived, looking slightly plump from indulging in milk at the previous eleven establishments on their culinary adventure. But nothing could dampen the romantic atmosphere, not even the nine slightly intoxicated and sleep-deprived toddlers who stumbled in and claimed seats at a long banquet table, under the enchanting starlit sky.

Penny, at the request of the grandparents, loaded the banquet table with gallons of milk and an endless supply of paninis both with and without human meat.

Just as Wannabee's night was on the cusp of becoming an absolute delight, fate decided to throw a wrench in the works.

Gus, one of the kids, carelessly found himself in the middle of the road, completely losing control of his bicycle.

And to make matters worse, a blind-as-a-bat meat delivery driver, who apparently hailed from the penitentiary, and just so happened to be a bat, was hurtling towards him at full speed, ready to turn him into a mere stain on the unforgiving asphalt.

The question of why a meat delivery truck was making its way from the penitentiary is a mystery best left unanswered for now.

However, thanks to Wannabee's inherent heroism, which he had been blessed with since birth, he sprang into action just in the nick of time.

With lightning-fast reflexes, he soared through the air and tackled Gus, rescuing him from certain doom and saving the day.

It was a moment that couldn't have been more perfect, especially considering it was Tiff and Wannabee's much-anticipated money date.

And there remained nine grandkids!



STAYING ALIVE | A POEM WRITTEN BY PENNY |



In the realm of the forest, where life blooms and thrives,
A delicate balance of creatures, all intertwined and alive.
The owls, wise and silent, watch over the land with grace,
Their presence a symbol of harmony, in this wondrous place.

But should one link in the chain, the owls, break, or fade,
The ripple effect would be felt, the ecosystem would be made.

The mice and the rabbits, the birds, and the bees,
Would all be affected, as the balance would cease.

The trees would no longer stand tall and proud,
Their leaves would wither and fall, the forest would be loud.

The insects and worms, the flowers, and the grass,
Would all suffer and die, as the ecosystem would pass.

The food chain would collapse, the life cycle would end,
The forest would be still, the creatures would descend.

The owls, so vital, so crucial to all,
Their loss would be felt, by one and by all.

So let us cherish and protect, these wise and silent guardians,
For they keep the balance and ensure the cycle's continuance.

Let us honour and respect, the owls, and their place,
For they are the keepers, of this wondrous, delicate space.

HENRIETTA'S VEGAN WORLD



65

Gramps had no choice but to gather the clan as ominous masses of bruised clouds loomed on the horizon, threatening to unleash a torrential downpour.

The kids swiftly mounted their bikes and raced three blocks to Henrietta's Vegan World, a charming establishment owned by a giraffe named Henrietta, known for her incredibly long legs. ← Lazy narrating.

For those unfamiliar with veganism (Google), it means abstaining from consuming any animal products.

"I already knew that" I insisted.

"No, you didn't," came the retort.

"Of course, I did."

"Then why did you just look it up?"

"Go fuck yourself."

Henrietta's Vegan World served mouthwatering vegan dishes, with a twist - they were infused with the essence of human vegans. Similar to how gullible humans believe veggie burgers taste like chicken or beef, Henrietta's creations were often described as tasting "just like kale."

Despite the unappealing notion, the herbivores of the animal kingdom couldn't resist devouring these dishes, playing their small part in combating human destruction.

Did I mention that Henrietta's legs were freakishly long, measuring over seven feet?

Did I mention that Henrietta could run at an impressive speed of 38.5 miles per hour?

Did I mention that Henrietta took her first steps just one hour after being born?

Did I mention that lions, spotted hyenas (like Mr. Wendal), leopards, and African wild dogs posed a constant threat to giraffe babies like Henrietta?

Thanks to jack rabbit Jack's intervention, Henrietta was able to flourish and become the greatest vegan giraffe chef in the animal kingdom. I believe this might be the third or fourth time I've used a similar bit in this manuscript. Can you recall the other instances? Take your time.

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I'm back.

Did I mention that no two giraffes have the same spots? Each giraffe possesses a unique pattern.

Did I mention that erectile dysfunction advertisements seem to have been replaced by curved penis advertisements on news networks?

That doesn't belong here.

I know, but did I mention... what's that condition called again? Let me quickly Google it. Ah, Peyronie's disease. It's similar to that moment when you see someone and their name eludes you, so you say, "Oh my, I can't recall your name, it's on the tip of my tongue." And the person, whose name you can't remember, kindly responds, "My name is Mike." And you exclaim, "That's right," ensuring that Mike knows his name in case he faces the same struggle in front of a mirror, where his reflection won't answer. Consequently, he would spend the rest of his life unsure of his own identity.

That doesn't belong here either.



Mike?

I know. But I really dislike kale.

WTF are you even saying? Remember, this is a fantasy world. You can't eat kale, or anything else for that matter. None of this is real.

Are you certain? Then why is Rolly ... you know ... so, fat? At the start of this story, he was bulbous but not like now.

While the kids indulged in Henrietta's "It tastes just like kale" delights, accompanied by gallons of milk, let's contemplate what Gramps and Grams were up to with the children.

Could this be a cautionary tale they were imparting to the impressionable minds, in an attempt to prevent history from repeating itself?

Were they teaching their offsprings young ones the importance of having nightmares about humanity at such a tender age (soon to be considered a delicacy)? How else could they hope to alter the path of what's - I mean, what might possibly be looming ahead (coming down the pike . . . turnpike), I mean on the horizon, I mean on Interstate 95.

If Gary is still reading, do you think he caught the reference to the interstate? Could it be a clue to the location of Foodville?

No, the answer is unlikely.

Is it acceptable for Rolly, a plump four-year-old, to weigh 187 pounds?

Most likely not.

Perhaps it's best to pause the story here for today.

I think so too.

Do you think Henrietta will write a poem?

Very possible.

What kind of monstrous being would subject innocent toddlers to haunting nightmares?

And may I inquire, what kind of monstrous being would force their grandchildren to consume copious amounts of milk?

I distinctly recall you mentioning that this was a fantastical tale, and the milk was merely an illusion.

Did I truly say that?

Indeed, you did. And pray tell, who the fuck might you be?

When was your first nightmare, Mr. Narrator?

Allow me to share a little about myself if you will. It is not mere hearsay, but rather a fact, that I severed my own umbilical cord. Just as Henrietta took her first steps within an hour, my nightmares were already awaiting me from the very first breath of life.

Go Henrietta →→↓

I DON'T NEED TO JUMP | A POEM WRITTEN BY HENRIETTA |



In the savannas of Africa, where the sun always shines bright,
Lived a giraffe named Henrietta, with legs that were quite a sight.
Her neck was long and sultry, her spots were dark and bold,
She was the queen of the savannah; her beauty was told.

But alas, a silent call sounded in the air,
A call that echoed through the land, with no one there.
It was the cry of danger, a warning so clear,
That Henrietta and her kin must fear.

For two subspecies, Kordofan and Nubian,
Were now listed as Critically Endangered, oh so grim.
Their numbers dwindling fast, their future unsure,
Henrietta knew she had to act, to save them for sure.

She roamed the savannah, with a determined stride,
Searching for a way, to save her pride.
She talked to the other giraffes, and the animals too,
To join her in her quest, to save the few.

Together they rallied, and fought with all their might,
To protect their land, and their future in sight.
And though the journey was long, and the road was steep,
Henrietta and her friends, would not let them sleep.

For they knew that the fate, of their kind was at stake,
And they would not rest, until their future was at stake.
So, they battled on, with courage and might,
And their determination, would shine so bright.

And though the days were hard, and the nights were cold,
Henrietta and her friends, would never grow old.
For they knew that their love, for their land and their kin,
Would keep them strong, and their spirit would win.

So let us celebrate, the giraffes so grand,
And the bravery of Henrietta, in this savannah land.
For she and her kin, will always stand tall,
And their beauty and grace, will never fade at all.

GILBERT'S FOLIAGE + FAUNA



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The kids were feeling a bit queasy after indulging in a diet of humans, milk, and alcohol for the past couple of days. It was an unfortunate situation, as toddlers shouldn't be subjected to excessive milk consumption.

Of course, the human-eating and alcohol are just part of the story, and no actual toddlers were involved in those activities. However, it seemed Carver might be developing a drinking problem, and Rolly's appetite seemed insatiable.

This lazy narration aside, Gramps and Grams, despite their nefarious plans, were not the monsters they appeared to be. But, as the previous sentence suggests, that information is essentially meaningless.

Thankfully, Gilbert's Foliage + Fauna was conveniently located next door to Henrieta's, providing a solution to the kids' discomfort, with more kale most certainly on the menu.

||

Now, let me take a moment to explain why I started writing this story. I haven't done so yet, but sit back, grab a snack, and allow me to share.

Alright, here it goes: Back in 2022, I was out with my friend Wayne, enjoying some chicken wings and drinks (definitely not made from humans). I showed Wayne around a hundred story ideas I had been working on, complete with cover designs. For each idea, I gave him a brief summary. When I mentioned Humans' Bistro, Wayne immediately expressed his love for the concept. That was a year ago.

In the following four months of this year, from May to September 2023, I dedicated each day to writing and completed four full manuscripts. It's quite an achievement, and I am determined to get them published.

Then, at the end of September, I needed to start narrating another story. So, I decided to use a number generator to randomly choose from my 168 ideas. After a few rounds of narrowing, it down, the generator landed on Humans' Bistro, and that's when I began writing it. I hope Wayne will be thrilled when he hears this news. Most likely!

Gilbert, with a smile as wide as an orangutan's (I believe I spelled that correctly), warmly welcomed the group into his establishment.

"Gramps!" Gilbert exclaimed excitedly. "What's wrong with the kiddies? Is it that troublesome Henrietta again? It always happens when you combine vegan and vegetarian diets, a wicked combination that leads to excessive flatulence. Did you know vegans despise vegetarians? They claim vegetarians lack commitment and only worsen the suffering of animals by consuming dairy products and cheese. But, oh well, let's give the kids a break. They can take a nap in the Grand Room, and we can check on them in an hour or so to see if they can handle some kale infused humans with goat cheese. In the meantime, the three of us can enjoy some drinks. What do you think, Gramps? Grams? Are you in? Great! Let me grab three tumblers and fill them up."

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In the Grand Room...

Carver: Comrades, the nine of us must unite and fight for our survival. This is the fourteenth place Gramps + Grams have brought us to. I understand that humans in their time were terrible, but why us? I believe we should establish a government and prepare for what lies ahead. We must elect a leader.

The Eight Other Children: Mumble. Mumble. Mumble.

Carver: The votes are in, and I won unanimously. Oops, I initially spelled "unanimously" with an 'h.'

Ezequil: That's alright, Carv. You're only five.

Carver: Samantha, why are you staring at me like that? I haven't done anything wrong. The votes have been cast, and I am your leader.



Samantha: None of us actually voted.

Carver: Silence! I won fair and square. Someone must have stolen the ballot boxes. You cannot take away what is rightfully mine or overthrow me.

The Eight Other Children: Mumble. Mumble. Mumble.

Carver: I possess absolute power. If I knew the difference between “literally” and “surreal,” this situation would be both. Today, I learned a new word. Let me assuage your concerns... did you know “assuage” is pronounced as “aw.swayge?” I will save you all. I will lead us to...

Harper: Carver, you’re starting to sound crazy.

Carver: Silence! We must get to the bottom of this. I overheard Gramps + Grams at Henrieta's. I don't think they're human, and by the end of this tale, or perhaps in the next four or five chapters, I believe they will try to eat us. I looked up how venison is prepared, and it's often tenderized with milk.

The Eight Other Children: Mumble. Mumble. Mumble.

Carver: Silence! I heard Grams crying and pleading with Gramps. Remember the last time? She wailed. But Gramps dismissed her pleas and went on a tirade about his life on the fringes of some unknown beast society. He mentioned needing a root canal but couldn't afford it, so he had the tooth pulled instead. According to him, his life has always been falling apart, but he lacked the strength or determination to break the cycle. Instead, he hid within his anger and turned up the music to drown out the chaos.

The Eight Other Children: Mumble. Mumble. Mumble.

Harper: Carver, you're scaring us.

Carver: Silence! I am the ruler of the world. I will guide you to the other side. One thing I know for certain, if I had been in charge earlier, there would still be fourteen of us. Now, follow me. Wait, are you all napping?

The Eight Other Children (in unison): We're too young for this fucking nonsense. Do whatever you think is necessary. We only have 30 minutes left for our nap time.

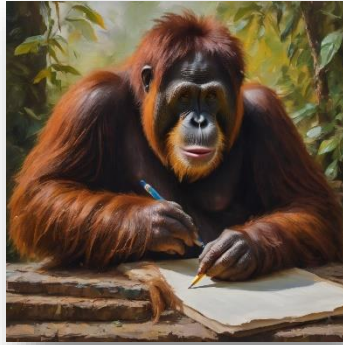
Carver: Ugh, what's that smell? Rolly?

Rolly: Of course, blame the fat kid. It's always the fat kid's fault.

And here is where we'll pause for today.

I hope Wayne appreciates what he has done to my imagination.

THE FORREST KEEPER | A POEM WRITTEN BY GILBERT |



In the lush embrace of a verdant land,
Where mighty trees and wild wonders stand,
There dwells a soul, noble and free,
An orangutan named Gilbert, whose spirit we see.

Don't be fooled by appearances, dear friend,
For Gilbert's heart carries a message to send,
He gazes upon a world veiled by strife,
And seeks to bring balance, to illuminate life.

With a gregarious nature and curious eyes,
He witnesses suffering, where hope meets demise,
A sentinel of truth, he comprehends,
The plight of his kin, and the wounds that won't mend.

For in this tapestry of life's grand design,
Orangutans hold a purpose, shimmering and fine,
They're the gardeners of the forest, it is known,
For a sacred task in nature, they have sewn.

Seeds of life are cradled within their being,
A precious role that sets them far from fleeting,
They feast upon fruits from lofty trees,
And scatter the seeds, with grace and ease.

In the cycle of growth, they play a special part,
For larger seeds that long to find a new start,
Through Gilbert's actions, the forest is enlivened,
His kind's presence vital, their worth can't be given.

For a single day amidst the tapestry of time,
Gilbert serves as a guardian, gentle and kind,
Parasitical desires no longer reign,
His efforts, a testament to orangutans' gain.

So let us remember, beneath the disguise,
Of a humble orangutan with soulful eyes,
Their importance profound, their mission clear,
To scatter seeds of hope and drive away fear.

THE NARRATOR PITCHES THIS STORY TO A PUBLISHER



Dear Publisher,

Greetings!

My name is Narrator, a 63-year-old writer hailing from Vancouver, British Columbia.

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With the onset of the pandemic, my 15-year career was abruptly snatched away from me when the company I worked for took advantage of the situation to replace me with someone younger and cheaper. Needless to say, being tossed aside at this age feels like an insurmountable challenge—every step forward seems as difficult as threading a needle with a steel rope.

Losing my job has thrown my family into chaos, leaving us in dire financial straits from which we may never recover. This morning, I resorted to eating a raw potato for breakfast, which was far from appetizing. But you know what they say about comedy—it arises from pain.

And let me tell you, I've experienced my fair share of unrelenting pain throughout my life.

I've witnessed the deaths of both my mother and father, not once, but twice.

I was born in a place where "society deemed" unfit women, were sent to give birth to their "demon seeds." If the babies (like me) survived, we were either sold or adopted by farm families and never spoken of again. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately in a comedic sense, nobody wanted me.

The previous paragraph barely scratches the surface of my life story.

I've already written the story, and one day, it deserves to be shared.

In the second instalment of the story of my life, I was the key witness in Canada's first hate crime designation when, in 2009, Ritchie Dowrey (63 at the time) was violently attacked in the Fountainhead Pub in Vancouver. The assaulter was sentenced to six years (out in two). Ritchie succumbed to his injuries.

Oh, and did I mention that at the age of 63, I still have no idea who my father is?

Ancestry says my Norwegian heritage has fluctuated from 46% to 48%, and now it stands at 44% (according to a recent update). I'm not entirely sure what that means, but maybe it's a sign I should try Jarlsberg torsk—a dish served in Norway consisting of fish. Who knows?

Hold on a moment; I need to take a bite of my potato.

My family, which includes me, is teetering on the brink of homelessness. Our life savings are dwindling with each passing day. My \$490 per month CPP isn't cutting it. Unless a miracle occurs, we have only a few days, perhaps even hours, left before we lose our home of seven years. This could very well be my last potato.

While my partner works full time, living in Vancouver hasn't exactly been a financial boon for us over the past four years (refer back to the aforementioned financial ruin).

Nevertheless, despite the depression and stress, I've managed to write 14 manuscripts in the last four years, four of which were completed within the past four months.

I know people would say, "Get a job." I've tried, but nobody is interested in hiring a 63-year-old to build a company from scratch. Not even to be a fast-food worker or bellhop. Unfortunately, I'm not a politician or a sports coach. Yet, I refuse to give up. Did I tell you I survived a stroke?

I'll keep attempting the impossible task of threading a steel rope through an eyelet.

I just finished my potato.

The reason I'm writing to you today is to humbly request your consideration for publishing my work. The story I'm pitching is an enthralling tale titled "Humans' Bistro," where animals devour humans to save the world. Every day, I add a new section to the manuscript, and if all goes according to plan, I will complete it in early November. I've attached what I've written so far, complete with original artwork that has emerged from my frazzled mind. As I keep writing, I'm excited to find out where my mind takes us in the remainder of Humans' Bistro!

LINDSAY WINCHERAUK

On a side note, I've just been informed that the potato I ate was actually boiled, which is a relief because raw potatoes are far from good for you. Boiled potatoes are rich in potassium.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

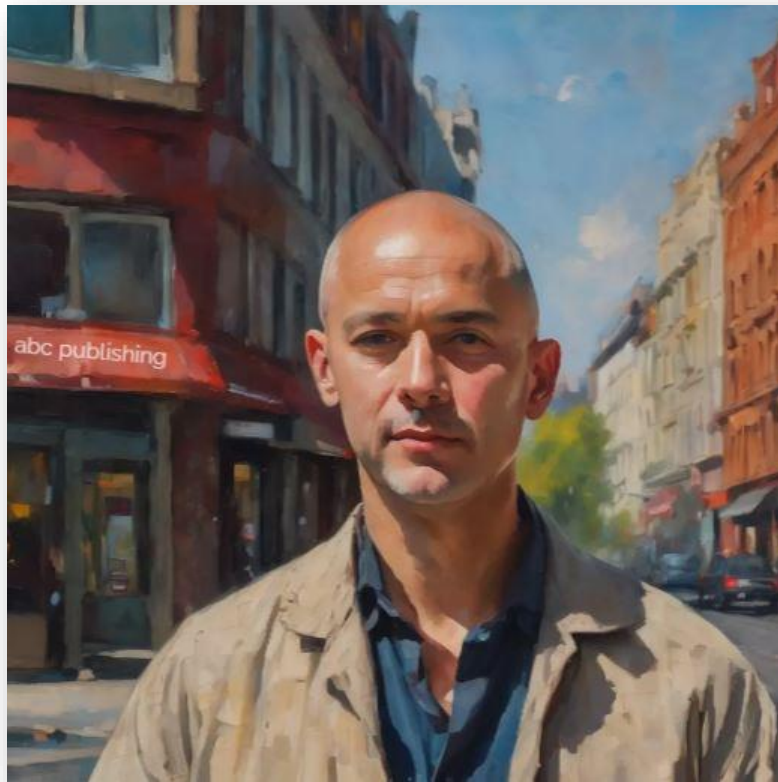
I sincerely hope you will consider publishing my work.

Perhaps my unconventional approach will turn the querying process upside down, even though that phrase makes little sense.

Then again, I'm no stranger to the nonsensical.

Warm Regards,

The Narrator



MIKEY'S HUMAN BELLY BACON BISTRO & BAR



My loved ones (family) consists of my significant other and our twelve-year-old cat Hana. We find ourselves in a dire unprecedented situation. Tears have become a daily occurrence for me. I have always been wary of the term “unprecedented” due to its overuse, but the reality is everything in life is unprecedented when you break it down. However, our current circumstances truly embody the meaning of the word. Homelessness is knocking on our door.

78

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KNOCK. KNOCK.



I DON'T HAVE A FUCKING DOOR
I'M HOMELESS

.....

Gramps, Grams, and the kids are still gathering themselves at Gilbert's before heading to the renowned Mikey's Human Belly Bacon Bistro and Bar, the most popular restaurant in Foodville. Can you smell the sizzling bacon?

Am I having a heart attack?

The tantalizing aromas waft through the air, creating an overwhelming sensation. *Sizzle. Crackle.*

Are you okay?

Sizzling bacon doesn't equal heart attack, burnt toast, does. And that is BS., as well. Google it.

Phew.

Nevertheless, my tears continue to flow. Life doesn't pause, even as I attempt to write a complex narrative that combines comedy, reality, and a search for a better way.

At 63 years old, I no longer feel like I belong in this world. All I have left to offer are my experiences, many of which have been traumatic. I thought I had survived the relentless challenges life threw at me, but now I find myself being knocked down once again, and this time, I'm not sure if I can find the strength to get back up.

The kids will be here soon. I need a moment to let my emotions flow freely.

One would think losing your parents twice would be more than enough to endure in a lifetime. Finding humour in pain seems to be my innate talent.

Yesterday, all I had to eat was a boiled potato. The money has completely dried up. I did everything I thought was necessary to protect my family, but I failed. I dedicated fifteen years of my life to a company that ultimately deemed me disposable.

Now, almost four years later, we are broke, drowning in debt, and I can sense the vultures circling above.

Homelessness arrives tomorrow or the day after that.

But the truth is, I have nothing left to give to the vultures, not even my own skin. Maybe I should offer myself as a meal to one of the fantasy restaurants in this tale of survival and hope.

Hope, where are you going?

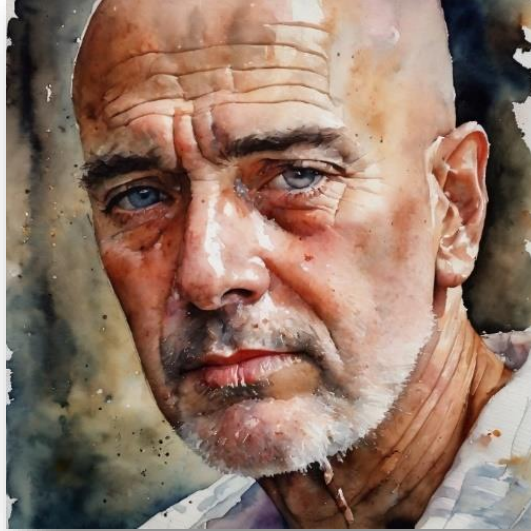
I can't take care of my family anymore.

Could you imagine what it feels like when you are 63 years old?

Let me tell you, it feels like this.

Can you see the pain etched on my face?

My sides ache, and my eyes are drying out, except for that single tear streaming down my cheek.



I'm 63 and in desperate need of help. I don't have immediate family. Never really did.

One friend offered their support, saying, "Just ask, and I'll be there for you." So, I reluctantly found the strength and I asked, but my friend's offer wasn't real – they were just shallow words.

Another friend offered help but quickly withdrew the offer by announcing, "I'm declaring bankruptcy soon," slamming the door in my face.

And besides, my friend is 68 and suffering from Parkinson's disease, as if I could ever ask.

*Do you know what it feels like to ask for help at my age?
Let me tell you, it feels like this.*

Naively, I held onto the belief that my unwavering determination and my commitment to leading a kind and understanding existence would ultimately lead to a positive outcome. Furthermore, I held firm to the notion my polymathic nature, coupled with a compassionate and empathetic approach, would serve as a guiding force, shielding me from any hardships life might throw my way. However, I came to realize intellect, compassion, and empathy, holds no true value (cash).

Please don't believe the previous paragraph. I'm depressed.

Hope... please slow down.

Why is Hope running away?

As I continue on this journey, I find myself drained of all energy. The exit looms before me, and I find myself pondering whether to embrace it. It's possible I may not even have a say in the matter. Surviving on the streets at my age, having suffered a stroke, seems futile. What purpose would it serve?

The question lingers in the air, begging no answer.

*Do you know what it feels like to beg?
Let me tell you, it feels like this.*

The government said they might help, but at 63 years old, I have to prove I'm not trying to exploit the system. It seems like the exit is beckoning me once again. I survived a damn stroke, and now I have to prove my worthiness for charity.

What's the point?

To delay the inevitable?

Later today, I will speak to my former employer, humble myself, and beg for help. That is if he even picks up the phone. A few days ago, he said he would assist in any way necessary, but now his tone seems to be changing, citing illness and legal complications.

I can't help but interpret that as a resounding "FUCK OFF" directed at me.

I need to take care of my family, but I can't. The tears flow.

If I choose the exit door, it will be the greatest failure of my life.

I can't give up. I can't let my birth mother be proven right.

I'm a 63-year-old stroke survivor, and I'm pushing away friends because I'm broke and don't want to appear as a failure.

I'm floundering.

I'm failing.

I'm consumed by depression.

I'm a 63-year-old stroke survivor, and I even applied for a job at a 7-Eleven.

Yet, I have a so-called friend who has repeatedly told me to get off my lazy ass and find a job.

Should I report to him the fast-food restaurant, the hotel bellhop position, and now even the 7-Eleven rejected me?

Should I confess how much I'm hurting inside?

Do I need to let him, like the government, know, that poverty is not a game?

Do I need to reconsider keeping him as a friend?

Life doesn't halt while I write this story.

I hope the sun rises again tomorrow.

A solitary tear rolls down my cheek.

The kids will be here soon.

I need to summon the strength to continue writing their story tomorrow?



Discovering a silver lining in an impossible predicament: Just as I am about to meet my demise on the merciless asphalt, a glimmer of hope will emerge. In that fleeting moment, I will experience the sensation of having a six-pack, a long-lost treasure from my youthful days at twenty-one.

This | A Poem |

I can't take care of my family anymore.

Could you imagine what it feels like when you are 63 years old?
Let me tell you, it feels like this.

Do you know what it feels like to ask for help at my age?
Let me tell you, it feels like this.

Do you know what it feels like to beg?
Let me tell you, it feels like this.

Should I confess how much I'm hurting inside?

Yesterday | A Poem |

Oh, the shame of it all, my dear,
When our bank accounts are bone dry and bare.
I take a bite of lunch, perhaps my last,
As the pangs of hunger make my belly fast.

At home, we eat, but with little joy,
For the thought of bills and debts does employ.
A constant nagging, like a hungry beast,
That gnaws at our peace and makes us fear the feast.

On dreams of plenty, of wealth and ease,
But for now, we must make do with leanness.
The warrants growl in our bellies, a dire sound,
As we scrimp and save, our heads held down.

So, I go out, to search for more,
To find a way to feed our hunger and our poor.
For though our bank accounts be bare,
Our spirits still hold on to hope, and we dare.

To dream of better days ahead,
When our bellies will be full, and our needs be met.
And so, I'll search, and strive, and pray,
For a brighter future, come what may.

In the forest's heart, where trees their vigil keep,
I wander, lost in thought, my worries to sleep.
Six months have passed since fortune's hand did steal.
An olive branch, a gift from my mother's seal.

A trust fund, a surprise, a blessing in disguise,
Bestowed upon me, to open wide my eyes.
The weight of debt, a burden I did bear,
Now lifted, and my heart is free from fear.

The rustle of leaves, a gentle breeze does bring.
A sense of peace, and my spirit does take wing.
The forest floor, a carpet of green,
A canopy above, a heavenly scene.

The trees, they whisper secrets in my ear,
Of hope and love, and a brighter year.
Their wisdom, a gift, a treasure to hold,
A reminder of the love that I've been told.

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My mother's fractured love, a legacy so blue,
A trust fund, a gift from the grave, a bond anew.
In the forest's heart, I find my peace,
A place to heal, a place to release.

The phone call was made, a simple act,
But oh, the wait, it seemed to last.
Why did it take the release taking so long, I did ask,
My patience wearing thin, like a rusty task.

But then, a voice, so unexpected,
A wrong number, yet so connected.
My long-lost niece, or so I thought,
Came on the line, and my heart was fraught.

She told me of another niece, so dear,
Who's fighting cancer, my heart did fear.
Tears streamed down my face, so unprepared,
For this news, so heavy, so unfair.

Oh, the pain, it cut so deep,
My heart and soul, in such turmoil did keep.
I wept for my niece, so brave and strong,
And the sorrow, it seemed to last so long.

But even through the tears and the pain,
I knew I had to be there for her, again.
To offer love and support, in any way,
For my long-lost niece, come what may.

In the gloaming, I make the call,
A message is left, one and all,

Check the accounts, oh what a fall,
Bone dry, not a penny to call.

Barring a miracle, we're in a bind,
Tomorrow may bring pain, so unkind.
The finances, in disarray,
Leave us with naught but dismay.

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The bills, they pile up, high and steep,
Our funds, they dwindle, in a creep.
The future, uncertain, in our sleep,
A financial storm, we must keep.

But still, we hold on to hope,
A miracle may yet, our scope.
Tomorrow's sun, may bring us cheer,
And our financial fears, dispel and clear.

So let us hold on, with all our might,
And pray for dawn, and a brand-new light.
For in the darkness, there's still a glow,
And tomorrow's sun, may bring us a flow.

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Rejected | A Poem |

1.

In a world of rejections, I stand tall,
A spirit unbroken, though they've seen me fall,
Stock boy, London Drugs, 7-Eleven too,
Every door shut, but I'll find something new.

2.

Air Canada's wings won't carry me high,
Grocery store shelves won't let me apply,
Potluck non-profit, serving hearts so kind,
But I'm not qualified, they left me behind.

3.

Rogers, oh Rogers, why won't you see,
The potential in me, the possibility?
Don't judge from afar, don't make assumptions,
You don't know my story, don't question my
intentions.

4.

117 places turned me away,
Everywhere I searched, rejection was in play,
A stroke survivor, aged sixty-three,
Left homeless on the street, it's hard to believe.

5.

But hear me now, for my voice will be heard,
I may have been rejected, but my spirit won't be
blurred,
For the homeless deserve compassion and care,
No matter the struggles they've had to bear.

6.

So let us rise together, hand in hand,
And build a world where rejection's not in command,
Where dignity and support are given to all,
No more stories like mine will ever have to fall.

A 63-Year-Old Stroke Survivor/Dies on the Street? Homeless.

I Quit Drinking | A Poem |

My cardiologist said don't drink too much.
I have a beer. And another. And another.
Is there anything such.

What am I doing?

Listen.

Take heed.

Three beers — queasy in sleep.

Get up to pee.

Once.

Twice.

Three.

How did you finally cut back, quit?

Was it your will, or maybe some wit.

The money ran dry.

A six-pack arrived.

A stomach so svelte.

A growl so unkind.

I need a drink.

I need to pee.



I apologize if the raw honesty I shared in the previous moments of financial-induced sobriety was overwhelming for you. I understand if you would rather not hear about the pain. But for those who are hurting, it is an all-consuming experience with nowhere to seek solace.

Please don't apologize.

I can't help but feel this way. It stems from a lifetime of neglect. I don't want to burden others with my struggles. I am desperately searching for a way to continue fighting for our survival, but reality has forcefully entered my life. As tears stream down my face, I find it impossible to stop the flow. Despite it all, I must hold onto the belief tomorrow and the days to come will provide the healing balm to start anew. If not, I don't know what lies ahead. I do have an idea, but perhaps living in denial until the end is the only option.

Is it too late?

Not due to lack of effort, compassion, or empathy.

But there is one crucial factor I have yet to define.

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Meanwhile, the nine grandchildren and Gramps + Grams arrive at Mikey's, eager to indulge in a mouth-watering feast.

The tables have turned, as Mikey, the wild-boar chef, transforms the endless supply of *bacon lovers* into delectable dishes. From Human Belly to Human Bacon, lettuce + tomato sandwiches, and even human bacon-flavoured ice cream, the menu is a testament to Mikey's culinary skills.

Surprisingly, the nine grandchildren and Gramps + Grams manage to make room in their bellies for multiple dishes, all accompanied by gallons of milk.

How is Carver adjusting to his new role as the elected leader of nine?

90

Well, let me tell you, his first few hours have been a delightful mix of human bacon and Lego.

The other children are simply focused on having fun.

As a puddle of tears forms at my feet, I can't help but notice Mikey's twisted pleasure in the sizzle and crackle of human flesh. It's a sort of twisted retribution.

Gramps plan is progressing smoothly. With only two restaurants left to visit, the children are becoming more tender and plump, fulfilling their purpose.

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Untitled Song by Mikey



(Verse 1)

In a forest deep, where the wild roam free,
There's a boar so sly, he's no ordinary beast, you see,
He's got a secret skill, one that'll make you flee,
He cooks up humans, a culinary fantasy!

(Pre-Chorus)

But don't be afraid, don't fret or worry,
Cause this boar's got a plan, it ain't so scary,
He'll serve us with a smile, making bellies oh so merry,
He's the wildest chef, an untamed culinary visionary!

(Chorus)

Wild boar in the kitchen, flipping pans with flair,
Cooking up a storm, but please beware,
He adds a dash of happiness, a pinch of joy in the air,
Oh, the boar's on fire, he's cooking humans with flair!

(Verse 2)

With his chef's hat on, he's ready to slay,
Chopping, slicing, dicing up prey,
His kitchen's on fire, with flavours that'll never sway,
The boar's got tricks up his sleeve, he's here to stay!

(Pre-Chorus)

Don't run, don't hide, come take a seat,
The boar's gourmet dishes, oh, they can't be beat,
He'll turn humans into delicacies so sweet,
The sizzling delight, like a dreamy retreat!

(Chorus)

Wild boar in the kitchen, flipping pans with flair,
Cooking up a storm, but please beware,
He adds a dash of happiness, a pinch of joy in the air,
Oh, the boar's on fire, he's cooking humans with flair!

(Bridge)

Now, you might think it's shocking, a boar turned master chef,
But let me tell you something, he's got skills that impress,
He's a culinary genius, putting doubts to rest,
So come and join the feast, let's put it to the test!

(Chorus)

Wild boar in the kitchen, flipping pans with flair,
Cooking up a storm, but please beware,
He adds a dash of happiness, a pinch of joy in the air,
Oh, the boar's on fire, he's cooking humans with flair!

(Outro)

Now you've heard the tale of a boar so wild,
Who'll serve up humans with a grin, every style,
So come on over, embrace the boar's culinary wiles,
He's the one and only chef, bringing joy with every file!

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MISS GOLDSTEIN'S ANGRY DELICATESSEN



Kosher

In accordance with Jewish dietary law, kosher certified means meat and milk products are not mixed together, animal products from non-kosher food animals are not included, and kosher meat is from animals that are properly slaughtered.

Kosher Animals

Only those with cloven hoof and that chew their cuds, such as oxen, sheep, goats, deer, gazelles, roebuck, wild goats, ibex, antelopes, and mountain sheep. Pigs – the best-known non-kosher mammal – are not kosher because they do not chew their cuds.

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What Came First | A Poem |

In streets of shadows, where despair resides,
A tale of woes, a story to abide,
Of what came first, a vicious cycle binds,
A web of causes, intertwined and entwined.

Depression breeds desperation, a heavy heart,
A mind consumed, a soul torn apart,
Mental health, a fragile thing,
A delicate balance, on the brink of wings.

Drugs, a temporary escape, a fleeting high,
A false sense of peace, a dangerous lie,
Leading to homelessness, a desolate plight,
A life on the streets, without a light.

Judgment from others, a stinging blow,
A weight that presses, a burden to know,
The stigma of weakness, a heavy toll,
A society that turns, a heart that's cold.

But in the depths of darkness, a glimmer of hope,
A chance for change, a new scope,
To break the cycle, to heal the pain,
To find a path, to end the strain.

For what came first, is not the end,
But a beginning, a chance to transcend,
To rise above, to heal and mend,
To find a way, to be a true friend.

So let us not judge, let us not turn away,
For in the eyes of another, we see the way,
To a brighter future, a better day,
Where all can find hope, in a better way.

.....

What's the First to Go | A Poem |

Compassion?

Empathy?

Understanding?

Hope?

.....

SURVIVING LIFE



96

Hopefully, you never have to experience a moment like this. But if you do, please let me know. Our troubles are meant to be shared. If we're being honest, that is. But honesty is not what our social media profiles portray. They only show the picture we want to sell to the world, not the pain, not the harsh reality of life. When we share our pain, people tend to shy away.

And then comes a moment when I realize that my family and I are fucked.

Choose a different word. Soften the harsh reality.

We are in a *difficult* position. And we didn't bring this upon ourselves.

Some people may judge. They can go bleep ...

I despise the darkness. Every morning, I wake up and cry. I don't want to cry.

For those of you who are still judging, let me tell you that I'm 63 years old.

I've sent out well over 100 employment applications and pitched over 800 of my writings, all in the hopes of alleviating suffering. But you know what? At 63, society no longer deems me valuable or relevant.

Society is too busy chasing whatever utopian lives people want to believe in (fuelled by the loneliness of our Socials). The concerts. The fancy meals. The extravagant vacations. It's as if we are all consumed by denial.

The truth is suffering, and social media, don't go well together.

Tears are streaming down my face.

I can't see anything but my downfall on the horizon.

I send out job applications to work at a 7-Eleven, a car dealership as a lot boy, and a coffee shop.

Without help, I will perish.

My relationship will crumble.

My cat will die.

My world will collapse.

I'm terrified. I'm in a position of weakness.

I no longer sound like me.

The urgency has been looming for days. The day when denial fled, and reality hit me with the force of a thousand bullet trains.

I keep trying. But I feel powerless.

I consider sharing this story on social media, but I don't want to endure the added pain of being ignored.

More importantly, I don't want to be bombarded with suggestions of what I should do or what others would do if they were me.

I'm standing on unfamiliar ground; aware many have been in similar situations before.

I'm afraid to Google how many rise after crashing violently to the bottom. My future looks bleak.

I need to take care of my family, but I can't. And no solution seems to be presenting itself.

Please don't tell me, "So, and so, is hiring?"

It doesn't help unless it comes with a referral and genuine care.

Seriously, just leave me be.

In the past, people used to circle help wanted ads in newspapers to make those who were suffering feel worse. Now, they are even lazier, simply saying, “So, and so, are hiring?” without even knowing if their words hold any truth.

This might be my final week.

A passenger van driven by Wannabee, with Tiffany sitting in a front row seat, has arrived at Mikey’s to take the children to Miss Goldstein’s Angry Delicatessen.



The stuffed children hop on board. Ezequiel breaks into tears. “I’m not one of them,” he cries.

“What?” Tiff asks.

“When I was young...”

“Ezequiel, you’re only four.”

“I know. When I was three, my brothers Carlos and Gus used to torment me by saying, ‘Ezequiel, you are not one of us. We are going to get you.’ It made me question their intelligence. I know I’m not one of them. I’m black, and they’re white. I’m not stupid.”

“I’m sorry they were ignorant.” Tiff offers.

The van arrives at Miss Goldstein’s.

This is a difficult part of the story to tell because, of course, Miss Goldstein’s is a Jewish delicatessen, and writing about consuming Jewish people might be, and is likely, highly offensive.

So, I will refrain from describing it. I believe that would be the most prudent choice.

Milk is poured.

The dishes are served.

Human Pastrami on Rye. Smothered with mustard. And sprinkled with Kosher salt.

And the number one delicacy in all of Foodville.

Miss Goldstein’s Angry Human-Tuna Salad Sandwich.

What makes it such a delicacy?

Well, of course, it’s due to the 80% rule, but in this case, the humans served on whole wheat bread must not only eat Kosher foods but also have an affinity for aquatic life.

“Ezequiel, you’re not one of us?”

My tears continue to flow.

I will pause the story here for today.

But before I go – us humans, as I write this, once again show why our time may be coming to an end on this spinning rock.

As I write this, war is breaking out in Palestine and Israel. We are once again killing each other over... what?

This writer doesn’t care about your religious or spiritual beliefs, or the fucking complexity of the situation.

The mere mention of the previous sentence might have resulted in the banishment of this book. Although, considering it appears on page 99, I highly doubt the book banners would have even bothered to read that far into any book.

We are not meant to be killing each other. Period.

It's 2023, and we are too damn foolish to understand this.

I have to go now.

Thanksgiving is here... and I have a hurdle to overcome.

Or perhaps I'll die?

I will post this story on my social media – likely to an audience of none.

Does my sadness belong in this story?

Yes.

.....



TORT'S POP-UP FREE RANGE BURGER SHACK



101

9 October 2023: Happy Thanksgiving

I struggled to find restful sleep – when I finally managed to wake, I was met with the stark reality that tears were no longer trickling down my cheeks but cascading uncontrollably.

Sitting at my computer, I desperately searched for something uplifting to write, but my efforts proved fruitless. The thought that my life was about to expire loomed over me, and I felt utterly powerless to change it.

Gradually, I found myself retreating into isolation, hoping that I wouldn't wake up at all.

That would be easier than facing the impending challenges. I must stress I'm not one to quit trying – so let this all, sink in.

I couldn't help but question if surviving the stroke in 2018 was a mistake.

The burden of life I'm feeling is weighing heavily on me, and I know my time is now limited.

Does this story belong in this manuscript?

The answer is, YES – this story belongs here, as it reflects the struggles faced by many individuals who find themselves aging and grappling with the relentless pain.

Tears continued to stream down my face, a testament to the anguish I'm feeling.

The people I know, I'm afraid of them.

Some accuse me of dwelling on my troubles, while insisting I focus on the wrong things.

Some have even have the audacity to suggest that I should simply find a job, without understanding the countless rejections I've faced as a 63-year-old stroke survivor.

Must I confess my tireless efforts to alleviate my suffering to those who should be supporting me?

Feeling defeated, I retreat further into solitude. I don't even have the means to dig myself out of this hole.

After all, I applied to work as a stock boy at a grocery store, despite having generated \$78 million in revenue for my previous employer, who replaced me with someone younger during the pandemic.

I don't anticipate being alive by the end of this year unless a miracle occurs. I will die homeless on the street. Judged.

The fear of facing the people I know engulfs me.

I'm terrified of seeing them, of asking for help, and of experiencing more rejections.

I don't want to... a dark cloud is collecting itself on the near-horizon.

Could someone please provide a loving home for our cat?

.....

October 9, 2023: A New Addition to the Endangered Species List

Lindsay Wincherauk

103

I t's a somber realization.

Do we, as humans, truly grasp our own fragility?

I am dying.

Hope is slipping through my fingers.

A moment of rage sarcasm →↓

I focus on the wrong fucking things. I've sent out over 800 book proposals. I've sent out over 100 employment applications. The Potluck Society doesn't want me helping the homeless and 7-Eleven doesn't want me selling Slurpees. I'm. Too. Fucking. Old.

I can't take care of my family.

I've hosted more 20 Orphan Thanksgivings + more 30 Orphan Christmases.

This year for Thanksgiving, I'm having water and if lucky, a boiled potato.

The tears won't stop.

Keep writing the story →↓

Why? What's the point?

Because no matter how bleak things seem, you must never give up.

.....

Wannabee swiftly retrieves the children from the deli before dashing towards the next destination, Tort's Pop-Up Free Range Burger Shop. Conveniently situated adjacent to Foodville's bustling Fairgrounds, the burger joint awaits their arrival.

Torts is a 300-year-old tortoise who fortunately escaped becoming soup.

.....

WCS maintains 13 species of critically endangered tortoises and freshwater turtles in its New York-based zoos and aquarium, a number of which are approaching extinction in the wild.

- Wildlife Conservation Society

.....

Tort's is a unique establishment that only opens its doors during the late summer and early autumn fair. It's a place where the few remaining humans gather to enjoy the thrill of the Ferris Wheel, test their luck at games of chance, and indulge in the dangerously delicious, deep-fried treats offered by the food vendors.

But Torts isn't just known for its Human Burgers. They also serve up Human Corn Dogs, Spaghetti and Human Meat Balls on a stick, and an array of other imaginative creations.

As the kids satisfy their appetites, Gramps, and Grams, keep the pitchers of milk flowing.

This is the final part of their adventure, and truth be told, Gramps and Grams haven't stayed up this late in years.

It's 7:15 PM.

Now, you might be wondering where Torts gets the humans for his deep-fried delicacies.

With "Free Range" in the restaurant's name, it's no surprise some fairgoers mysteriously go missing each year. Torts has a supplier who gathers up the free-range human strays, hopefully before they take a spin on the stomach-churning Zipper.

.....

.....

HUNDREDS OF FAIRGOERS GO MISSING ONLY TO BE SERVED AS DELICIOUS DEEP-FRIED FREE-RANGE CREATIONS AT TORT'S POP-UP FREE RANGE BURGER SHACK

- The Foodville Gazette

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.....

"I simply cannot resist the delightful Human Spaghetti on a Stick," Clucky, a friendly chicken, exclaimed. "As an advocate, or rather an active activist, fighting against the confinement of humans in cages by the notorious meat supplier in Foodville, Penitentiary Meats, I must say, the free-range human meatballs are simply divine. Each bite is a true reflection of the warmth and joy of family gatherings."

Meanwhile, Wannabee and Tiffany, sitting in their van down by the river, with the engine humming, are enjoying a shared Human Corn Dog while making out, waiting for the children to finish their feast.

Suddenly, there's a tap on the van's door, and to their surprise, Polly Prissy Pants, Peter Prissy Pants, Tyler, Megan, and Salamander stumble inside.

WHAT?

Did you really think I was going to harm innocent toddlers?



WHY IS LINDSAY WINCHERAUK ENDANGERED?

Because he got old.

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HOOKER BOX



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The grandkids were filled with excitement as they piled into the van, only to be surprised by the unexpected presence of their supposedly deceased cousins: Poly, Peter, Megan, Tyler, and the uniquely named but vibrant Salamander.

Joy spread throughout the van. Despite still feeling a bit intoxicated from the previous novel she appeared in, “Abe,” Joy couldn’t help but feel joyful. Drunk but joyful.

Grandma assisted Torts in climbing up the steps into the van, and just before Wannabee was going to drive away, Torts wanted to impart some of his 300 years of wisdom upon the children. However, everyone noticed that Gramps was missing from the van. But that’s a story for later.

For now, →↓

The narrator feels compelled to address the concerns of those who know him and his family and might have been taken aback by some of the previous passages in this **epic** tome. As I seem to have mentioned the word “**epic**” quite a few times. Maybe I should run this through a writing AI and see if it suggests an alternative term. If you’re keeping track, the original paragraph contained three instances of “**epic**,” and it had become five with the one I just typed. So, if there are fewer than five “**epics**,” oh wait, now it’s six, the AI must have altered the original passage.

Now, back to me. My family is going through a difficult time. We're facing financial hardships and trouble. But I want to make it clear I don't want to give up on life. I'm just afraid if we end up homeless and lose everything, at my age and with my underlying health conditions (which I mistakenly believe I have under control), I will perish. I didn't want to use the word "**die**" in the previous sentence, hence, perish.



I also want to emphasize being on the endangered species list, serves as a warning for children.

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It's my hope as they navigate a world that has endangered all living beings due to humanity's flaws, they will avoid succumbing to greed and instead embrace compassion and empathy – or perhaps empathy and compassion, depending on how they like their toast buttered.

I want you all to know, despite my doubts, I try my best every single day.

I never give up.

I despise being on the endangered species list.

I remain focused.

I believe in myself.

I am a talented raconteur and a true polymath.

My only concern is as I grow older and attempt to make a name for myself in a chaotic world, I'm unsure if my words will ever be heard.

What I want to express, and I hope you understand and find solace in if you're facing similar struggles, is we're all in this game of life together. Despite our individuality, we must be kind to one another.

I continue on →↓

Currently, I'm reading a book that mentions Gwyneth Paltrow. I never paid much attention to her, nor did I think about her at all. She comes from a life of privilege and entitlement.

In the book Gwyneth claims her success is solely due to her relentless efforts. Oh. Fucking. Please.



While her efforts may be commendable, it disregards the fact she is privileged and entitled (she was raised in obscene wealth) – I find her comments repulsive.

Perhaps I'm not meant to be discovered in this lifetime.

Maybe my work will become more appreciated after I've left this earth.

I don't want to leave just yet.

I love my life, with all its flaws and battles with depression.

Oh, and speaking of relating to others, it's incredibly stressful every time I receive an email notifying me that my credit card might be declined when I make the next purchase.

Or when I log into Netflix ⁽¹⁾ (I know this might sound trivial to mention) and see a **"suspended account"** message due to non-payment. It's utterly devastating.

Right now, J is preparing our Thanksgiving feast. We bought a roast chicken (we couldn't afford), but as I made the payment for the chicken, I was reminded my next transaction might be declined. Immediately, via email.

I am incapable of taking care of my family.

The harsh truth of my predicament is no one finds a 63-year-old man relevant enough to hire for any job. At this age, I find myself in a purgatory of sorts - not old enough to qualify for a ~~sufficient~~ pension (which, even if I did, would not be enough to sustain my family), yet glaringly obsolete in the eyes of the working world. No matter how hard I try to overcome this reality, the truth remains devastating.

I cry, but I keep typing.

I find myself repeatedly bashing my head against the impenetrable wall of impossibility.

Why?

I genuinely hope you're doing okay. And if you're going through similar hardships, I hope you find the strength to persevere – we will (J and I, and our cat, Hana, or we'll ~~perish~~ die), we must. I might be residing in denial.

I want this rant to be honest, vulnerable, and unapologetic. I love you.



Torts captures the attention of the children →↓

Torts: Children, I am a witness to centuries of existence, having observed countless events unfold before my eyes. The depths of the oceans have been subjected to the insatiable greed of humans, resulting in overfishing and the decimation of species after species. However, it was a particular incident that led me to my breaking point. I watched in horror as some of my beloved grandkids were snatched away from a sandy beach and transported in a truck. Driven by curiosity, I followed the vehicle and peered through a window of the building they were taken to. What I witnessed inside was truly chilling. There, my grandkids were placed on a table, their vulnerable shells tapped upon by exploited elderly ladies. Each knock echoed through the room, and whenever my grandkids cautiously poked their heads out of their protective homes, a guillotine would swiftly descend, severing their heads. Their homes would then be forcibly cracked open, and they would be transformed into soup, destined for the palates of affluent individuals. My heart shattered into a million pieces. This is precisely why, when Jack approached me with the proposition of seeking retribution against the malevolence of mankind, I eagerly joined him. I refuse to accept a world plagued by such atrocities. I refuse to continue witnessing the preparation of our fellow creatures for consumption by humans. This madness must come to an end. I fear if we do not act, animals themselves may succumb to the same insatiable thirst for greed and excess humanity possesses. And thus, history will tragically repeat itself, leading to an irreversible and catastrophic outcome.

All the children gasped in horror.

Torts: What I ask of you – you beautiful, innocent beings, is to break this cycle. It's the only way you'll survive into adulthood. Enjoy the rest of your journey.

.....

Ezequiel: I want my grandpa! *Tears streaming down his face* Where is he?

Grams: Don't cry, my precious child. Gramps had to run home for fifteen minutes. It's something you wouldn't understand. You see, Gramps has an insatiable appetite for... human flesh as well. To protect our marriage and fulfill Gramp's desires, I subscribed him to "Hooker Box" – much like food delivery services – last Christmas. Every Tuesday, a fresh "guest" is delivered to our door, and today happens to be Tuesday. It has saved our marriage. Sorry for sharing too much. I have a feeling Gramps doesn't even engage in... how old are you again, four? In that case, I think he just enjoys conversing with his nubile guest.

Ezequiel: Grams, what does "nubile" mean?

Grams: Here comes Gramps now. See? He didn't take long. Would you like more milk?

Once Gramps boarded the van, giving Torts a triumphant fist pump, Wannabee pulled away from the curb. Torts hopped down onto the sidewalk. The crew was headed to their final destination on the **Foodville Tour: The Cannibal Rotisserie**, a place where humans went to... well, it's pretty clear from the name.

- 1) While losing our Netflix account may not seem like a catastrophic event, it is just one more addition to the ever-growing list of losses we are experiencing. Once it's gone, it's likely gone for good, much like the fate of humanity itself. This list of our losses are beginning to pile up and are all interconnected including our home, our means of communication, our ability to sustain ourselves, the medications crucial for my survival, and even the life of our beloved cat. And to top it all off, J's career is also about to meet a tragic end because when with the loses mentioned before his job instantly will become a thing of the past. It feels as though everything is spiraling towards an inevitable demise.

.....

THE CANNIBAL ROTISSERIE



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As Torts bid farewell to the kids, their grandparents, and Wannabee and Tiffany, who was happily bouncing on Wannabee's lap, they knew they had one more stop before reaching home. It felt like a race, considering they were already on day two of their journey, and it was now 8:07 PM, just minutes away from the toddler's bedtimes.

.....

Before we proceed to The Cannibal Rotisserie, where the story takes an intriguing turn, I, the Narrator (disguised as myself), feel compelled to share a list of things I foolishly believed.

I wonder if any of these will resonate with you (6 pages from now, probably, probably as in, 6 pages from now)?

Let me know if you prefer the list to be numbered or bulleted.

Currently, I'm wearing noise-cancelling headphones, tuned to a frequency that strangely resembles the one God uses to listen to prayers. It's perplexing how many people seem to be praying for money.

Sally, are you really going to house a homeless person if you win the lottery? I have my doubts.

Anyway, as my family teeters on the edge, just above a homeless encampment, I'll share a glimpse of my list of things I foolishly believed at this stage of life.

Rian, do you really think homeless people are spending too much money on tents?

Perhaps I should share a poem from my book "**Abe**, where Joy's (mentioned at Tort's restaurant) intoxication is explained inside the pages of "Abe."

.....



For Poetry

\$500 Tent

Rian:

I saw homeless people in the tent city in the city's center with tents worth \$500.

Me:

So?

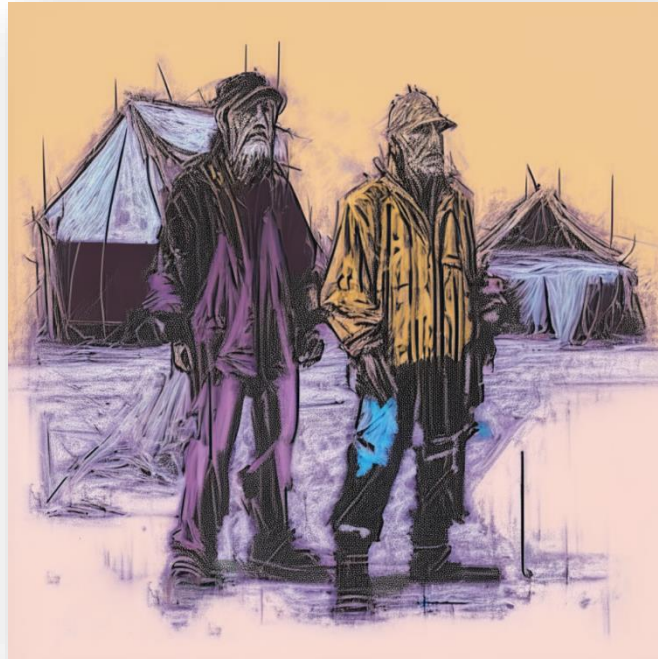
Rian:

Don't you think they should spend their money on something more practical?

Me:

Where do you live?

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.....

Beef Wellington

Rian changed the topic – same day.

Rian:

We just got back from Las Vegas. We had \$100 Beef Wellington meals in Gordon Ramsay's restaurant. It was fabulous.

Me:

Are you saying it was fabulous because it was, or because you had convinced yourself it was, because you have seen Gordon Ramsay on television yelling at people?

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Rian:

Because it was fabulous.

Me:

Don't you think you should spend your money on something more practical?

Rian:

Our hotel room was comped.

.....

Two Tents



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Rian has two tents.

I don't know how much he paid for them.

He says he uses them when he goes camping.

He says he hasn't gone camping in five years.

I don't know if any of the above is true, I may have made it up for effect.

How will we ever know?

.....

In all reality, I'd rather have you read the story about Joy after purchasing your copy of "Abe," which is really a story about . . . considering our desperate need for cash. The poems are teasers. I guarantee the Joy passages are intoxicating.

Speaking of prayers, should I capitalize "THE LORD"? It's a manipulative move, but with all the prayers for money bombarding me, I doubt I could answer my own prayers. Maybe I should ditch the headphones altogether or upgrade to better ones. Forget that nonsense: We are broke.

Am I really typing all of this?

I just looked at my fingers: YES.

If I'm receiving prayers intended for THE LORD, does that make me THE LORD?

Is it sacrilege to think that?

Do I even fully comprehend the meaning of that word?

I'm just finished reading Leviticus (in a book), and I'm left speechless.

By the way, have you purchased a copy of "Abe" yet?

I'm curious if any of this text is centered ⁽¹⁾ on the page. I'll find out soon enough.

.....

Here are some foolish beliefs I held as a 63-year-old stroke survivor ↓

Who lost his career at the start of **COVID**:

1. Being a model, exemplary, loyal employee for the same company for almost 15-years was worth something.
2. My legal counsel assured me that the truth would protect me from any worries.
3. If I persistently pitched my relevant, timely, thought-provoking, and sometimes controversial writing, I would eventually break into the literary world and survive.
4. Never give up trying.
5. The people I worked for genuinely cared about my struggles.
6. With my vast experience, finding work to bridge the gap until my creative talents were recognized would be a breeze. It's not.
7. A steel rope can pass through the eye of a needle.
8. I won't end up homeless.
9. My cat won't suffer on the streets with me, until we die.
10. Once my medication runs out due to lack of funds, I'll continue without consequences, until a die. A message from a previous doctor: *"Lindsay, a patient once asked me if she had to take the medication I was prescribing for the rest of her life? My answer was 'no' you can stop taking it the week before you die.*
11. Number 8 comes before number 9.
12. Shouting at depression will make it disappear.
13. 63-year-old men don't cry.

There's probably more to add, I reserve the right to include additional foolishness later. If you happen to be reading this, please contact me through Instagram or my agent, if I have one (fingers crossed). I'll send you the amendment, assuming amendment is the correct term.

.....

As Wannabee revved the engine of the Volkswagen van and accelerated away from the curve, bedtime loomed closer. The occupants of the van were about to drift off into dreamland due to the imminent head-on collision with Mr. Sleep, unfortunately a financially-strapped Mike Lindell was chasing after him. Even more fortunate, Teddy, Mr. Sleep's bff smothered Lindell out with a radical invention: His Pillow™. A pronoun specific pillow. Approaching The Cannibal Rotisserie, Gramps seized the talking stick, his pewter walking cane adorned with diamonds (not a necessary detail).

Gramps: My dear little ones, we won't be stopping at the restaurant. I have some milk shooters for you all to gulp down as I speak. The reason we can bypass it is because The Cannibal Rotisserie is a grotesque place where humans dine exclusively, indulging in a macabre spectacle of self-cannibalism while adhering to the 80% rule. I overheard something that at one of the tables...

Carver: Gramps, should you be telling us this story right before bed? I am the ruler of...

Gramps: Silence! You must know the truth. Inside The Cannibal Rotisserie, it is rumoured ravenous humans gather around tables, feasting on each other's flesh, slashing it off with chain saws, Texas style and then, grilling it on the tabletop grills. The one who savours the final bite is declared the winner. So, children, there's no need for you to witness such gore.

Carver: Okay. I want my mommy. And Gramps, who is the winner being declared by if he's savouring the final bite.

Gramps: Don't every question your Grandpa you little fucker.

.....

Meanwhile, within the eerie confines of The Cannibal Rotisserie, 300 incredibly fit humans sat patiently, their TV trays in front of them, engrossed in the Food Network's popular show, **"Is It Cake?"** while simultaneously pedaling on Pelotons – with a stranger on the screen screaming at them, adding a peculiar twist to their dining experience.

My resting heart rate dropped to 39 beats per minute last night. Perhaps I should Google what that means. Nah. Here my family is, teetering precariously above a homeless encampment without a tent. I'm certain my slow heart rate is only temporary.

Back in the restaurant, a place no animal in Foodville had ever entered, stunning servers served meals to the famished humans: Quinoa and Kale Salad, washed down with Kombucha.

Ironically, The Cannibal Rotisserie was the only restaurant in town that didn't serve human flesh.

Hush, Reg is about to address the crowd.

Reg: Fellow citizens, we must act. The animals are losing their way, becoming more like the humans who brought us to this point. Not us, of course, because no one in this room is maniacal or genius like those humans who consumed everything in their path, pushing every living thing to the brink of extinction, even the cockroach. Even the cockroach.

Look at the animals now – they're getting obese by indulging excessively. They no longer hunt. Penitentiary Meats delivers there every culinary desire right to their plates. They never used to care what others thought, but I swear I saw a penguin driving a Porsche yesterday while watching Gwyneth Paltrow's YouTube product videos. We're not responsible for this, but the **"bad"** humans are. We must arrange a meeting with Jack and devise a plan to reclaim the true essence of life.

And what is that, you ask?

By 8:30 PM, Wannabee had dropped off all the children, gramps, and grams at their homes. Each of them was tucked in with a comforting glass of warm milk and chocolate chip cookies, ready to drift off into dreamland.

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1) It ~~was~~ is centered. By me.

.....