

EFFERVESCENCE

AN ENGLISH TEXT BOOK FOR

I SEMESTER B COM

TUMKUR UNIVERSITY

COMPILED BY

DR. UDAYA RAVI SHASTRY

CATIVE, and USEFUL.”

— Jim Collins, author



E-text book
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For the Students
Of

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"The Story of an Hour"
Kate Chopin (1894)

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was

fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will--as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been. When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial. She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him--sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door--you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

"Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease--of the joy that kills.

Ernesto Che Guevara

Farewell letter from Che to Fidel Castro

« Year of Agriculture »
Havana, April 1, 1965.

Fidel:

At this moment I remember many things: when I met you in Maria Antonia's house, when you proposed I come along, all the tensions involved in the preparations. One day they came by and asked who should be notified in case of death, and the real possibility of it struck us all. Later we knew it was true, that in a revolution one wins or dies (if it is a real one). Many comrades fell along the way to victory.

Today everything has a less dramatic tone, because we are more mature, but the event repeats itself. I feel that I have fulfilled the part of my duty that tied me to the Cuban revolution in its territory, and I say farewell to you, to the comrades, to your people, who now are mine.

I formally resign my positions in the leadership of the party, my post as minister, my rank of commander, and my Cuban citizenship. Nothing legal binds me to Cuba. The only ties are of another nature — those that cannot be broken as can appointments to posts.

Reviewing my past life, I believe I have worked with sufficient integrity and dedication to consolidate the revolutionary triumph. My only serious failing was not having had more confidence in you from the first moments in the Sierra Maestra, and not having understood quickly enough your qualities as a leader and a revolutionary.

I have lived magnificent days, and at your side I felt the pride of belonging to our people in the brilliant yet sad days of the Caribbean [Missile] crisis. Seldom has a statesman been more brilliant as you were in those days. I am also proud of having followed you without hesitation, of having identified with your way of thinking and of seeing and appraising dangers and principles.

Other nations of the world summon my modest efforts of assistance. I can do that which is denied you due to your responsibility as the head of Cuba, and the time has come for us to part.

You should know that I do so with a mixture of joy and sorrow. I leave here the purest of my hopes as a builder and the dearest of those I hold dear. And I

leave a people who received me as a son. That wounds a part of my spirit. I carry to new battlefronts the faith that you taught me, the revolutionary spirit of my people, the feeling of fulfilling the most sacred of duties: to fight against imperialism wherever it may be. This is a source of strength, and more than heals the deepest of wounds.

I state once more that I free Cuba from all responsibility, except that which stems from its example. If my final hour finds me under other skies, my last thought will be of this people and especially of you. I am grateful for your teaching and your example, to which I shall try to be faithful up to the final consequences of my acts.

I have always been identified with the foreign policy of our revolution, and I continue to be. Wherever I am, I will feel the responsibility of being a Cuban revolutionary, and I shall behave as such. I am not sorry that I leave nothing material to my wife and children; I am happy it is that way. I ask nothing for them, as the state will provide them with enough to live on and receive an education.

I would have many things to say to you and to our people, but I feel they are unnecessary. Words cannot express what I would like them to, and there is no point in scribbling pages.

Written: April 1, 1965

Transcription/Markup: Brian Baggins

Online Version: Ernesto Che Guevara Internet Archive (marxists.org)

2002

[Ernesto Che Guevara Archive](#)

The Four Facebooks

Misinformation, manipulation, dependency, distraction

Nolan Gertz

If we want to improve our digital discourse and clean up our social media platforms, then we must begin by understanding how these platforms influence us, and in particular what their “social” nature is. Their influence on us is largely invisible yet also pervasive, which is why we often fail to see how they shape us.

As an example of this failure, consider research in 2013 led by computer scientist Karrie Karahalios. Her team investigated people’s awareness of the algorithm that determines which updates by our Facebook friends we get to see on our feeds. The researchers found that 25 of the 40 Facebook users in the study were unaware or unsure that their feeds were being filtered at all. As *Time* magazine reported:

When the algorithm was explained to one subject, she compared the revelation to the moment when Neo discovers the artificiality of The Matrix. “We got a lot of visceral responses to the discovery when they didn’t know,” Karahalios says. “A lot of people just spent literally five minutes being in shock.”

What this story shows is the need to ask not only what Facebook is, but also what Facebook means to us socially and culturally. Though it should come as no surprise that users would not understand how Facebook’s algorithm works, it should give us pause that the discovery of its very existence can be experienced as viscerally as Neo discovering that the world is an illusion. This is why we must attempt to get clear about the nature of Facebook, for Facebook has become so large that for many it is no longer experienced as merely a site on the Internet but as part of the fabric of everyday reality.

One way to examine the nature of Facebook is to distinguish all of the various forms Facebook is able to take. This will help us to clear up the confusion that occurs whenever we take for granted that everyone talking about Facebook is talking about the same thing.

For example, reports about Facebook's involvement in scandals surrounding the 2016 U.S. presidential election — scandals ranging from distributing misinformation to abusing user data — have caused alarm about the dangers it poses to democracy worldwide. But it's all too easy in these scandals to focus on Facebook's privacy practices and on its public image, and on Mark Zuckerberg testifying before Congress, while failing to think about how our own use of Facebook is shaping our relationships or our role in the public sphere.

Facebook exists in many forms. To talk about only one form of Facebook's influence — for example, its own repeated violations of user privacy — is to overlook the other forms of influence — for example, its ability to empower *users* to invade each other's privacy. Hence we can understand why persistent criticisms of Facebook, and even the Cambridge Analytica scandal and the massive data breach in 2018, have had little to no impact on Facebook's long-term business performance. Both revenue and user numbers were higher than expected by the end of last year.

To better understand the different forms of Facebook's influence it is useful to turn to an analysis by philosopher of technology Don Ihde. In *Technology and the Lifeworld* (1990), he distinguishes different types of relations between humans and technology and argues that technologies are not merely means to human ends but rather shape how humans see the world and act in the world. Ihde's categories for these different relations help us to see the various forms of Facebook's influence on us.

Dependency: Facebook as profile

Users experience Facebook as a personal site that combines the functionalities of blog posts, emails, event listings, message boards, classified ads, and photo albums

all in one place. This can make Facebook seem like an online extension of one's offline communication. We can describe this in terms of what Ihde calls "embodiment relations" between humans and technology, which occur when technologies that improve human bodily abilities become part of our embodied sense of self. For example, a pair of glasses can improve eyesight, but at the same time the glasses themselves come to feel like an invisible extension of the eyes, focusing attention on what can be seen and away from the role the glasses play in shaping what can be seen.

Facebook as profile works a little bit like glasses: It enhances our ability to communicate with others and focuses our attention on that communication — but this attention leads us to lose sight of the role Facebook plays in shaping that communication. And so users tend to think of Facebook as merely a very powerful communication tool that reaches lots of people, while ignoring that Facebook helps determine *what* and *how* we communicate, which hardly resembles offline communication. Status updates, comments, likes, shares, memes, emojis, and GIFs — these are very particular types of online communication that are not simply amplified versions of what we'd say to a friend in person. But it's easy to forget this, and instead to think of Facebook as just an effective way of communicating with more people.

In embodiment relations, technologies seem to become a part of us. They empower us as we get used to relying on them, which leaves us open to *dependency*. When we use Google Maps to find our way around, we think of it as simply a convenience, but if the smartphone battery dies, we are suddenly forced to realize how lost we are without access to Google Maps. Likewise, as we grow more accustomed to communicating through Facebook, we become more dependent on it, becoming so attached that we think we could not delete our account even if we wanted to, since to do so would be to lose our ability to communicate with our "friends."

Misinformation: Facebook as platform

Users also experience Facebook as an expansive network, as a way not only to stay in touch with existing friends and family, but also to meet new people, to interact with public figures we don't personally know, and to stay informed about current events. We can describe this in terms of what Ihde calls "hermeneutic relations," which occur when technologies expand our abilities to perceive and interpret the world by allowing us access to parts of it that we could not otherwise access. For example, a device for detecting radiation, like a Geiger counter, can monitor radioactive materials and send its signals to computers that translate the signals and display them on control panels human users can read — but we come to forget about the roles of these machines and just say that we are monitoring the radioactive materials.

Facebook expands our ability to access new information and focuses our attention on that new information, which leads us to lose sight of the role it plays in our gaining that access. We might think of Facebook as a blank online space for information-gathering and information-sharing between users, while ignoring that Facebook itself shapes what information we receive — as when its newsfeed algorithm prioritizes some posts while hiding others — and how we receive it — through posts, ads, alerts, invites, requests, and pop-up notifications.

In hermeneutic relations, we experience technologies as part of the world. Because we typically trust that they are relaying information about the world that is accurate, this leaves us open to *misinformation*, whether arising from nefarious actors or flaws in the technology's presentation of information. As Ihde points out, one of the reasons the nuclear plant at Three Mile Island experienced a partial meltdown was that the control panels were poorly designed, which led the human operators to misread them. Likewise, on Facebook, the content of the new information we receive often can't easily be interpreted on its own, because it is presented to us in a way that lends itself to misreading — like when a headline appears out of context in someone's post, or an image appears shorn of the caption that gave it necessary context. This is why "Fake News!" warnings put us in a situation similar to seeing the "check engine" light come on in a car: We are

unable to know if the problem is the engine or the light, and so we just keep driving hoping that nothing will go wrong.

Manipulation: Facebook as corporation

Users interact with Facebook even when they might not be aware of it, for example through the other services owned by Facebook, Inc., such as Instagram and WhatsApp, and through the services it sells, notably advertisements designed and targeted based on user data. We can describe this relationship to technology in terms of what Ihde calls “background relations”: Technologies can operate behind the scenes of everyday life while being an integral part of it. For example, indoor lighting systems allow us to work in spaces without natural light, and are designed to operate unnoticed so that we can do our work without having to think about the lighting, beyond turning it on and off.

Facebook is of course able to provide users with the “free” services of Facebook-as-profile and Facebook-as-platform only because of its ability to find other ways to monetize its services, like selling ads. But, as a background relation, its monetization capabilities are never meant to be made visible to users. We are meant to become accustomed to seeing Facebook “like” buttons appear on websites where we shop or read the news, and to seeing ads from those same sites appearing in our Facebook newsfeed, without worrying that we are being followed around the Internet by the corporation.

In background relations, the operations of technologies are hidden from view, leaving us open to *manipulation*. Lighting systems are no longer merely illuminating workspaces, but are now being designed to improve moods and productivity, which can lead workers to think they like their jobs better when in reality they just like the lighting better. As with such lighting systems, we notice Facebook’s corporate “partnerships” only when something out of the ordinary occurs, like in the Cambridge Analytica scandal. But what should concern us is not the scandals. We should instead be concerned about how much of *ordinary* life is now dependent upon the behind-the-scenes operations of Facebook-as-

corporation. Because so much of Facebook's activity is in the background, privacy-conscious people can think of themselves as free from Facebook if they do not have an account, even though they may continue to use WhatsApp and Instagram. Or they may have friends, relatives, colleagues, and acquaintances, or businesses they frequent, that continue to share information about them with Facebook so that Facebook can create what has come to be known as a "shadow profile" — the data Facebook has of people who don't have accounts.

Distraction: Facebook as Zuckerberg

Facebook interacts not only with its users but also with the world, whether through Mark Zuckerberg's personal posts, public apologies, and media interviews, or, more recently, through his testimonies before Congress. We can describe this interaction between humans and technology in terms of what Ihde calls "alterity relations," which occur when technologies draw attention to themselves by simulating the actions of living beings — "alterity" meaning "otherness" — leading us to attribute lifelike qualities to them. For example, "robots" such as Siri or Alexa talk like humans, which leads us to interact with them as if they were humans, so much so that when they make us happy or angry we act as if they were directly responsible, forgetting for the moment the role of the engineers who programmed them.

Mark Zuckerberg is not a robot, but it's worth taking seriously that some people like to imagine he is. For, like a robot, Facebook-as-Zuckerberg still functions as an alterity relation, because he focuses our attention away from the world, in particular away from the world created by Facebook-as-corporation. In much the same way that people focused on Steve Jobs or Bill Gates rather than on Apple or Microsoft, Mark Zuckerberg is able to keep the public focused on him, thereby distracting us for example from questions about how Facebook influences us behind the scenes.

In alterity relations the technologies are meant to occupy our attention, and because they can entertain us or enrage us, they leave us open to *distraction*. The

augmented-reality game Pokémon GO was hailed by many as a video game that could get people to enjoy the outside world, and yet players became so oblivious to the world around them and got into so many accidents that Pokémon GO had to start reminding them to “stay aware of your surroundings at all times.”

Likewise, whether people love or hate Zuckerberg, they are distracted by Zuckerberg. Whenever he puts out statements about his vision for Facebook, the media and the public interpret and debate them as signs about what Facebook is going to do *next*. This helps to maintain the illusion that Facebook is the creation of a disruptive tech visionary rather than a multinational corporation that operates with much of the same capitalist ambitions and practices as any other multinational corporation. And, most importantly, this helps to focus our attention away from what Facebook has done in the past and what it is doing in the present, including its scandals, remaining instead focused solely on what Zuckerberg has planned for the future.

Because Facebook occupies a prominent role in the public sphere, it has a responsibility to reform its practices, making them more transparent, as this would help users combat the dangers created by Facebook’s various forms of influence: misinformation, manipulation, dependency, and distraction. We must realize, however, that the public push for greater transparency, even through regulation — which Zuckerberg himself has acknowledged is “inevitable” — may itself serve to distract us rather than to help us, as this would be a technological solution to a larger social problem. The attempt to fix a social ill technologically is precisely what led to the problem we have with social media platforms like Facebook in the first place. Just as the desire to get around cities more easily and cheaply led us not to reform outdated urban infrastructures but instead to create Uber, so the desire to be more social led us not to question whether technological progress was making us anti-social but instead to create Facebook and Tinder.

We must therefore not be satisfied with merely regulating Facebook’s role in the public sphere. We must instead ask what it is about the public sphere — and about our own lives — that has allowed Facebook to occupy such a prominent

role. If Facebook is filling a void in our public and personal lives, then fixing or even replacing Facebook is no better than dealing with a sinking ship by trying to stay dry rather than by trying to stop sinking.

Nolen Gertz is a professor of philosophy at the University of Twente, Netherlands, and the author, most recently, of Nihilism and Technology (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018).

Nolen Gertz, "The Four Facebooks," *The New Atlantis*, Number 58, Spring 2019, pp. 65-70.

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Jayant Kaikini. Photo © Dinesh Shenoy.

The first translated book to win the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature, Jayant Kaikini's [No Presents Please \(https://books.catapult.co/products/no-presents-please-stories-by-jayant-kaikini-translated-by-tejaswini-niranjana\)](#), translated from Kannada by Tejaswini Niranjana and out next week with Catapult, traces the lives of people struggling to get by on

the margins of Mumbai. In the story below, "A Truck Full of Chrysanthemums," a middle-class family grapples with their responsibility to their ailing servant.

A window in the last kholi of the municipal chawl is always open. Seen from the street, the open window looks like a blind man's eye. Covered with a Sholapur chadar that smells of Amrutanjan, Durgi lies with her eyes open, her small arms and legs making her look like a child in spite of her sixty years.

The discarded dresses of the girls of the house, who have grown quite big, now clothe Durgi. Even those sit loosely on her. However weak she feels, Durgi crawls to the window on her stomach and looks out. When she sees a new day spreading itself out on the street, she opens her eyes as though a flower of gratitude has bloomed. She looks down at the children going to school, without the strength to call out to them. Her belongings—the old cup, the plastic mug, the comb with its big teeth, the palm-size plastic mirror—sit near her mat. A strange silence seems to surround this mat.

Sudhir Mahajan worked in a municipal office. His wife, Jyoti, on the strength of a long-ago college education, gave after-school lessons at home. The two children, Rashmi and Varsha, were growing up rapidly. Both had the mother's attitude and the father's walk. When the elder one, Rashmi, was an infant, Durgi came into this one-room envelope of a house to look after the baby and do the housework in exchange for two meals a day, a sari once a year, and the promise of a separate bank account "in which we will put your salary." When Rashmi was three years old, Varsha was born. By the time the baby woke up and needed to be fed, the older sister had to be made ready for school. By the time Durgi plaited the girl's hair, it was time to wash the clothes and scrub the vessels before the water supply stopped for the day. Just as all the household chores were done, it was time to go and stand in the ration queue. Since there were so many things to take care of, the Mahajan family did not think of throwing Durgi out, and thus twenty years passed. By the time the girls' dupattas were to be found lying everywhere in the house, and they had gone through college, Durgi had become an inseparable part of the family, like the worn iron handle of the metal cupboard, and like the faded embroidered cloth over the TV set. "She's of some help to us, and who else does she have?" With this wobbly logic, Mahajan stopped putting money into her account. After dinner, on the rare occasion when there was an apple being eaten, the fact that Durgi always got a small slice was a matter of great pride for the Mahajan family.

For the grown-up children, however, Durgi's presence was like an obstacle. *Where has my hair clip disappeared to?* they would rage. When Durgi sat down to supper after they had all eaten, the girls would start taking out their homework as though to hasten her. In that small space, there was no question of all of them sleeping with their limbs stretched out. Especially after the girls had grown so tall. They all felt as though they were sleeping standing up, like in the local train.

It was during Rashmi's tenth-grade exams that the symptoms of Durgi's illness first began to seem serious. She kept getting a fever. Without sending her to a doctor, the Mahajans treated her with balms and aspirin. Since Rashmi had to study late, it was almost impossible for Durgi to sleep whenever she wanted. Her face and limbs began to swell. A hundred aches and pains exhausted her. "You take it easy, Durgi. Don't put your hands in water. It's not good for you," Mrs. Mahajan would say. But since she never got up to do a task, Durgi would end up dealing with the chores. Then Mrs. Mahajan would pretend to be angry. One day, unable to contain herself until she could reach the mori, Durgi puked all over the house, and on the people around.

Then she began to wipe the vomit desperately with her weak hands from a thigh here and an arm there. The crack that existed between her and the others revealed itself in that awful silence. They all sat unmoving while Durgi tried to clean up the mess from their clothes. From that day onward, the smell of vomit lingered permanently in the house.

"All this happened because we've let her stay here. Let's at least send her away now," whispered Sudhir Mahajan.

"What will the neighbors say? That we threw her out after all these years when she fell ill? Let's take her to the doctor and then send her off," said the wife.

As though possessed, Mahajan dragged Durgi to three different doctors. But it didn't look like the sickness was going to end soon. Seeing the blood test reports, one of the doctors began to speak gravely of big treatments in big hospitals. Mahajan's limbs began to shiver. He never took his wife and children to doctors for fear of the expense. So he came home

with a few lies: taking some vitamins will do the trick, maybe a change of climate would work. He spoke without looking his wife in the eye. Mrs. Mahajan remembered the days when Durgi, upset at some small thing, would say she was leaving, and her employer would cajole her back, saying she was like her elder sister, and that they would look after her.

“But is she your real sister? Is she a blood relation? If you pay a salary, anyone will work for you. There’s a limit to how much we can do,” said Mahajan, drawing his wife outside.

“But Durgi looked after our girls without neglecting them. During your strike, for months she lied to us that her stomach was upset, and ate only a small meal once a day. We can’t forget all these things,” said the wife.

After this discussion, both of them would come back with fresh enthusiasm and put up with Durgi for a while longer. “Let me know if you want to go to your native place, or to your relatives. I can take you there. Try to remember, do you have any relatives?” coaxed Mahajan. But Durgi only stared blankly at him. Even during daylight hours, Durgi’s tattered mat was always spread out, and seemed to make the silence harsh and noisy.

The students began to avoid coming for their lessons. Rashmi and Varsha began to kick up a row over the smallest matter, and sometimes would get up and leave in the middle of dinner. They said their friends didn’t want to visit them at home. The chawl people began to say Durgi’s sickness was infectious. But they would come to borrow some onions or a matchbox, and say how good the Mahajans were, how nicely they were looking after their sick servant without sending her away. Now Durgi could not stand up by herself. She had to be led by hand to the toilet. She had fallen down while coming back from the chawl’s common bathrooms, and it needed several people to lift her and bring her back. After this she took to her bed permanently. Mahajan sat with his hand on his head. It was clear that Durgi would not now leave the house alive. Even if she called out from her bed, they pretended not to hear. The couple had been saving every paisa for the weddings of their daughters, and did not dare think of a hospital for Durgi. And the neighbors kept saying so that Durgi could also hear: “How good you people are. Even her family would not have looked after her like this.”

Mrs. Mahajan could not stomach having to help Durgi with her ablutions. Durgi, who could have died of embarrassment for causing trouble, stopped eating altogether. Only when her mouth dried did Durgi sprinkle a few drops on it. Mahajan’s blood pressure started rising. His daughters, instead of sparkling, were looking like the windows of bankrupt shops.

“Now people will start coming home to see the girls. How can we have them in here?” Mrs. Mahajan began to cry out loud in the neighbors’ houses.

Some said to her: “Stop giving her food and water.”

“Cheh, cheh,” she would respond, but on coming home she would peer into the water tumbler by the mat to see how much was remaining. It was still full.

“Why don’t you drink the water?” Mrs. Mahajan would shriek tearfully.

Like a frightened sparrow, when Durgi put out her shaking hands toward the tumbler, Mrs. Mahajan screamed, “Don’t drink it if you don’t want to. Don’t do me any favors!” And Durgi would draw her hand back inside her sheet.

Mahajan spoke to his well-wishers at his office. On someone’s suggestion, he went to a doctor in an old lane of the suburb. The doctor welcomed him silently. In a low voice, he asked for details of Mahajan’s problem. Then he took a large amount of money as his fee, and said: “My name cannot be mentioned anywhere, mister. Give her these ten pills before she sleeps. Let her swallow them herself. You may go now.”

Trembling, Mahajan walked back through the lane.

Although it had been nearly a month since Durgi stopped eating and drinking, her life still burned bright. Her eyes looked deeply into things. Like an animal, she would drag herself, stomach on the floor, toward the window, where she would cling to the bars. Outside on the street was a wholesale distribution center for fruit, vegetables, and flowers, where trucks came from all corners and emptied themselves. Years ago, she herself had come in one such truck, having begged a ride from its driver. She wondered where that truck was now. The incense burning on its dashboard still lingered in her nostrils. So

many kinds of trucks, carrying watermelon, cabbage, cauliflower, orange. As she gazed, her sight grew dim and she leaned on the window bars. When she opened her eyes again, the trucks stood empty. But the truck full of chrysanthemums in the corner stood as it was. She gazed until her eyes dimmed again, and then dragged herself back to her mat. In her eyes, the truck full of chrysanthemums kept standing there without ever getting empty.

That night the Mahajans sent their daughters out of the room, and after bolting the door, they came and sat with their heads bowed in front of Durgi.

Mahajan began to say "Durgi . . ." and could not finish his sentence.

"Rashmi, Varsha, to be married . . . society . . ." stammered Mrs. Mahajan, her throat dry.

As though she understood everything, Durgi waved a trembling hand at her and then put her hand out obediently.

As though sleepwalking, Mahajan reached out for his office bag, took out the packet of pills with a shaking hand, and gave it to Durgi. She seemed to be struggling to say something. Mrs. Mahajan bent down and put her ear close to Durgi's mouth. "I'll take them . . . but tomorrow . . . I'll take them tomorrow," whispered Durgi.

As though all this did not concern them at all, the Mahajans rushed out of the room and started walking in the street. If they stopped, they seemed to hear Durgi's helpless plea: "Tomorrow . . ."

Let her be today, they thought.

When they came back to the chawl, Rashmi and Varsha were already eating their dinner. They had the TV on full blast. The husband and wife did not have the courage to look in Durgi's direction. Mrs. Mahajan changed the water in the tumbler next to Durgi's mat. She went to plait Durgi's hair, which she did once a week after oiling it, and Durgi refused, pressing her head tight against the window. But afterward, she called Varsha and Rashmi and insisted that they should be the ones plaiting her hair.

Afraid of the fiery look their mother gave them, the girls quickly put some oil on Durgi's thin hair and then braided it. As she shook her head while it was being oiled, the reflections of the tube lights in the room trembled like silver lamps in Durgi's eyes. Then Durgi spoke with great effort about a long-forgotten birthday of the infant Varsha when she had piddled in front of all the guests. She asked them to hold a mirror in front of her, and gazed into it as though looking at a picture. She then signaled to everyone to turn out the lights and go to sleep, and dragged herself to the window. Rashmi and Varsha fought with each other as usual over the bedsheets. The Mahajan couple sat sleeplessly at the entrance to the room.

As the night wore on, there were fewer and fewer people in the street below, and one could see it quite empty in the distance. The empty trucks were hiding here and there. Except for the truck full of chrysanthemums, the rest of the fruit market looked like a piece of wastepaper. Soon someone would open the back of this truck and start shoveling the flowers into the street. This longest night of the century was holding off tomorrow with all its might.

Translation of "Sevanthi Hoovina Trakku," 1997. From [No Presents Please \(https://books.catapult.co/products/no-presents-please-stories-by-jayant-kaikini-translated-by-tejaswini-niranjana\)](https://books.catapult.co/products/no-presents-please-stories-by-jayant-kaikini-translated-by-tejaswini-niranjana) by Jayant Kaikini, translated by Tejaswini Niranjana. Forthcoming from Catapult. By arrangement with the publisher.

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THE POWER OF H A B I T

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO
IN LIFE AND BUSINESS



Charles Duhigg

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Are We Responsible for Our Habits?

APPENDIX

A Reader's Guide to Using These Ideas

Acknowledgments

A Note on Sources

Notes

PROLOGUE

The Habit Cure

She was the scientists' favorite participant.

Lisa Allen, according to her file, was thirty-four years old, had started smoking and drinking when she was sixteen, and had struggled with obesity for most of her life. At one point, in her mid-twenties, collection agencies were hounding her to recover \$10,000 in debts. An old résumé listed her longest job as lasting less than a year.

The woman in front of the researchers today, however, was lean and vibrant, with the toned legs of a runner. She looked a decade younger than the photos in her chart and like she could out-exercise anyone in the room. According to the most recent report in her file, Lisa had no outstanding debts, didn't drink, and was in her thirty-ninth month at a graphic design firm.

"How long since your last cigarette?" one of the physicians asked, starting down the list of questions Lisa answered every time she came to this laboratory outside Bethesda, Maryland.

"Almost four years," she said, "and I've lost sixty pounds and run a marathon since then." She'd also started a master's degree and bought a home. It had been an eventful stretch.

The scientists in the room included neurologists, psychologists, geneticists, and a sociologist. For the past three years, with funding from the National Institutes of Health, they had poked and prodded Lisa and more than two dozen other former smokers, chronic overeaters, problem drinkers, obsessive shoppers,

and people with other destructive habits. All of the participants had one thing in common: They had remade their lives in relatively short periods of time. The researchers wanted to understand how. So they measured subjects' vital signs, installed video cameras inside their homes to watch their daily routines, sequenced portions of their DNA, and, with technologies that allowed them to peer inside people's skulls in real time, watched as blood and electrical impulses flowed through their brains while they were exposed to temptations such as cigarette smoke and lavish meals.^{prl.1} The researchers' goal was to figure out how habits work on a neurological level—and what it took to make them change.

“I know you've told this story a dozen times,” the doctor said to Lisa, “but some of my colleagues have only heard it secondhand. Would you mind describing again how you gave up cigarettes?”

“Sure,” Lisa said. “It started in Cairo.” The vacation had been something of a rash decision, she explained. A few months earlier, her husband had come home from work and announced that he was leaving her because he was in love with another woman. It took Lisa a while to process the betrayal and absorb the fact that she was actually getting a divorce. There was a period of mourning, then a period of obsessively spying on him, following his new girlfriend around town, calling her after midnight and hanging up. Then there was the evening Lisa showed up at the girlfriend's house, drunk, pounding on her door and screaming that she was going to burn the condo down.

“It wasn't a great time for me,” Lisa said. “I had always wanted to see the pyramids, and my credit cards weren't maxed out yet, so ... ”

On her first morning in Cairo, Lisa woke at dawn to the sound of the call to prayer from a nearby mosque. It was pitch black inside her hotel room. Half blind and jet-lagged, she reached for a cigarette.

She was so disoriented that she didn't realize—until she smelled burning plastic—that she was trying to light a pen, not a Marlboro. She had spent the past four months crying, binge eating, unable to sleep, and feeling ashamed, helpless, depressed, and angry, all at once. Lying in bed, she broke down. “It was like this wave of sadness,” she said. “I felt like everything I had ever wanted had crumbled. I couldn't even smoke right.

“And then I started thinking about my ex-husband, and how hard it would be to find another job when I got back, and how much I was going to hate it and how unhealthy I felt all the time. I got up and knocked over a water jug and it shattered on the floor, and I started crying even harder. I felt desperate, like I had to change something, at least one thing I could control.”

She showered and left the hotel. As she rode through Cairo's rutted streets in a taxi and then onto the dirt roads leading to the Sphinx, the pyramids of Giza, and the vast, endless desert around them, her self-pity, for a brief moment, gave way. She needed a goal in her life, she thought. Something to work toward.

So she decided, sitting in the taxi, that she would come back to Egypt and trek through the desert.

It was a crazy idea, Lisa knew. She was out of shape, overweight, with no money in the bank. She didn't know the name of the desert she was looking at or if such a trip was possible. None of that mattered, though. She needed something to focus on. Lisa decided that she would give herself one year to prepare. And to survive such an expedition, she was certain she would have to make sacrifices.

In particular, she would need to quit smoking.

When Lisa finally made her way across the desert eleven months later—in an air-conditioned and motorized tour with a half-dozen other people, mind you—the caravan carried so much water, food, tents, maps, global positioning systems, and two-way radios that throwing in a carton of cigarettes wouldn't have made much of a difference.

But in the taxi, Lisa didn't know that. And to the scientists at the laboratory, the details of her trek weren't relevant. Because for reasons they were just beginning to understand, that one small shift in Lisa's perception that day in Cairo—the conviction that she *had* to give up smoking to accomplish her goal—had touched off a series of changes that would ultimately radiate out to every part of her life. Over the next six months, she would replace smoking with jogging, and that, in turn, changed how she ate, worked, slept, saved money, scheduled her workdays, planned for the future, and so on. She would start running half-marathons, and then a marathon, go back to school, buy a house, and get engaged. Eventually she was recruited into the scientists' study, and when researchers began examining images of Lisa's brain, they saw something remarkable: One set of neurological patterns—her old habits—had been overridden by new patterns. They could still see the neural activity of her old behaviors, but those impulses were crowded out by new urges. As Lisa's habits changed, so had her brain.

It wasn't the trip to Cairo that had caused the shift, scientists were convinced, or the divorce or desert trek. It was that Lisa had focused on changing just one habit—smoking—at first. Everyone in the study had gone through a similar process. By focusing on one pattern—what is known as a “keystone habit”—Lisa had taught herself how to reprogram the other routines in her life, as well.

It's not just individuals who are capable of such shifts. When companies focus on changing habits, whole organizations can transform. Firms such as Procter & Gamble, Starbucks, Alcoa, and Target have seized on this insight to influence how work gets done, how employees communicate, and—without customers realizing it—the way people shop.

“I want to show you one of your most recent scans,” a researcher told Lisa near the end of her exam. He pulled up a picture on a computer screen that showed images from inside her head. “When you see food, these areas”—he pointed to a place near the center of her brain—“which are associated with craving and hunger, are still active. Your brain still produces the urges that made you overeat.

“However, there's new activity in this area”—he pointed to the region closest to her forehead—“where we believe behavioral inhibition and self-discipline starts. That activity has become more pronounced each time you've come in.”

Lisa was the scientists' favorite participant because her brain scans were so compelling, so useful in creating a map of where behavioral patterns—habits—reside within our minds. “You're helping us understand how a decision becomes an automatic behavior,” the doctor told her.

Everyone in the room felt like they were on the brink of something important. And they were.

When you woke up this morning, what did you do first? Did you hop in the shower, check your email, grab a doughnut from the kitchen counter? Did you brush your teeth before or after you toweled? Did you tie the left or right shoe first? What did you say to your kids when you walked out the door? Which route did you drive to work? When you got to your desk, did you deal with email, chat with a colleague, or jump into writing a memo? Salad or hamburger for lunch? When you got home, did you put on your sneakers and go for a run, or pour yourself a drink and eat dinner in front of the TV?

“All our life, so far as it has definite form, is but a mass of habits,” William James wrote in 1892.^{prl.2} Most of the choices we make each day may feel like the products of well-considered decision making, but they're not. They're habits. And though each habit means relatively little on its own, over time, the meals we

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A Modest Proposal

For preventing the children of poor people in India from being a burden to their parents or the economy, and for making them beneficial to the public

KUSHANA VA CHOUDHURY

01 February 2018



SANDHYA VISVANATHAN

The roads of the capital are shrouded in a haze. The toxicity of the air is at many times the permitted level by global standards. International

flights are being cancelled. Visiting cricket teams refuse to play on our fields. Schools are often closed. Simply breathing in Delhi is now equivalent to smoking around 40 cigarettes a day.

We act as if we had not expected this occurrence and cannot understand how to solve it. We purchase face masks and air purifiers and grumble about the air. We wait for it to pass. But it never passes, because the air is toxic all year round. Only for a very short period, in the rainy season, does the amount of particulate matter dip to permissible levels. As a father, I am deeply concerned about the permanent damage being done to my three-year-old daughter's health, as indeed to the health of all the city's children. Even the protection I can afford to provide my child, by travelling in the metro or in air-conditioned cars and having her sleeping with an air purifier at night, cannot shield her from all exposure to the air.

It makes me depressed to drive through this great capital when I see the streets and traffic intersections crowded with homeless people in rags, followed by children of three or four, banging on the windows of every passing car demanding alms, exposed to air of a toxicity I shudder to imagine. They have no air-conditioned cars or air purifiers, and are forced to employ all their time on the roads, begging for sustenance.

I think everyone would agree that the prodigious number of children at our intersections tagging along with their mothers, and frequently their fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the national capital a very great tragedy, even aside from the fact that they obstruct traffic, and are a threat to themselves and others.

But my thoughts at this time are far from being confined to only the children of professed beggars; they are of a much greater extent, and consider the whole population of infants in the national capital born of parents who are not able to provide them with the kind of care and protection they need to become healthy, productive members of society. Is anyone thinking about their, and our, collective future? In the absence

of any genuine schemes to improve their condition, the reality is that many children, too many, continue to be employed as labourers in hotels and shops, in carpet-making and embroidery workshops, and in a whole range of industries, so that they can contribute to their and their families' upkeep. But even their pathetic state is not as alarming as that of children who are abducted, trafficked and forced into sex work, or into slave-like labour in sugarcane fields or brick kilns. Under these circumstances, perhaps it is time to think of solutions which are out of the ordinary, which reflect visionary thinking about the future instead of simply parroting the same old failed mantras of universal education and poverty reduction.

The population of the capital is estimated at 19 million people, of which, according to my calculation, 4 million are children aged four and below. From this, we can subtract 50,000 children like my own child, whose parents are able to provide them with the best education and equip them to be global citizens of the future. We can also perhaps subtract, at most, an additional 200,000 children whose parents are conscientious and able enough to guarantee their progeny a basic private-school education, which will at least ensure that they gain some fluency in English and thus become employable in service positions with reputable Indian or multinational firms. This being granted, there will remain 3.75 million children. I can again subtract 200,000 children of poor parents who will be admitted to good private schools under the present regime of quotas, study hard and thrive, and another 50,000 who may demonstrate special talents, as the children of the poor often do, as, say, singers on Indian Idol, or Slumdog Millionaires or tearaway fast bowlers for the Indian Premier League. But there still remain 3.5 million children with no future.

The question, therefore, is how these millions of children shall be made to become proud, productive and contributing members of our society. Unlike the children of peasants in the countryside, they can neither work

the land nor make handicrafts. And few are able to develop the fine motor skills required for pickpocketing till they reach the age of ten—except in certain parts of the country such as Kolkata, where I was informed by an officer in a boys’ probationary home that many of the inmates were third-generation pickpockets, who began practising at the tender age of four by discreetly slicing open bags of rice, and were renowned for the quickest proficiency in the art.



SANDHYA VISVANATHAN

In Delhi, in interviews with employers in embroidery workshops and roadside dhabas as part of a social-scientific study of an industrial neighbourhood, my colleagues and I discovered that children below the age of ten have no economic value. Parents cannot sell children past that age for above Rs 3,000, and even then a child needs to work for many years to repay the employer’s investment.



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Let me now humbly propose my own thoughts on this matter, which I hope you will read through in full without prejudice.

Research by paediatric pulmonologists at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences shows that a child of the age of two, when well nursed and cared for, can each day inhale and absorb, without immediately falling ill, a quantity of pollutants equivalent to that produced by as many as 40 cigarettes. If properly conditioned, particularly to nurture lung capacity, by the age of four a child's daily intake and absorption of pollutants can reach quantities closer to those produced by 200 cigarettes.

I therefore propose that the capital's 3.5 million otherwise future-less children be trained to be Purifying Organisms for Toxic Air, or POTAs, for our city. At the age of two, they shall be sent to organic farms in the Himalayan foothills, where they will receive fresh food, clean air and water, and a daily regime of eight hours of yoga breathing exercises. Upon reaching the age of four, they shall be fitted with enormous funnels in their gullets, and organised into teams of gaspers, to be posted in rotating shifts at intersections across the National Capital Region.

I have spoken to highly placed officials in the Delhi government, who have committed to initially hire 100,000 POTAs on a contract basis to serve at five busy intersections—at Ashram, Anand Vihar ISBT, Punjabi Bagh, ITO and Azadpur Mandi—and to arrange for enough open green space at these locations to accommodate large teams of gaspers and offset their carbon-dioxide emissions. Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport has pledged to hire 375,000 POTAs to be stationed along all final-approach routes to improve visibility. The Delhi and District Cricket Association has agreed that visiting international cricket

teams will be provided with POTAs as per their requirements. The starting allocation will be for a cordon of five gaspers around each foreign fielder from a third-world country, and seven around each fielder from a first-world one. Fast bowlers will be granted retinues of up to 20 gaspers to chase them on their run-ups, medium-pacers up to 15, and spinners up to 12, upon request. Additionally, batsmen will be allowed up to 20 POTAs each to accompany them while running between the wickets.

POTAs who prove to be exceptional gaspers will be rewarded with plush postings at government events such as the Republic Day parade, the opening of the flower gardens at Rashtrapati Bhavan, and state visits by the Queen of England or the president of the United States of America.

Of the 3.5 million POTAs, one million will be kept available at all times for private functions, such as polo matches, lawn parties at the Gymkhana Club and weddings at Chhattarpur farmhouses. Wedding season in Delhi will become a dazzling affair, with squadrons of between 5,000 and 10,000 youngsters, resplendent in sherwanis and lehenga-cholis, marching before the processional brass band, the groom's white steed and myriad revellers, sucking clean the air in their path.

Some persons are greatly concerned about the life expectancy of POTAs, which I confess will mercifully not be as long as that of workers employed today in the open dump at the capital's Ghazipur landfill, which by my records is 39 years. The extended lifespan of these persons is due to the inexpedient use of their resources, as a result of which they spend long stretches in unemployment in between phases of productive labour, which invariably stretches the duration of their lives. Regressions run by a private consulting firm of international repute suggest that, all variables considered, POTAs will expire after six years of full service, at the age of ten, at which stage they will be rationally disposed of.

I was recently discussing this scheme with an eminent environmentalist, a true lover of this nation's green spaces, whose values I highly esteem, who offered a refinement upon my scheme. He said that many gentlemen of this city who own farmhouses feel that the charm of patrician country living has been entirely lost because of the foulness of the air. To own a farmhouse without being able to have a shandy in a planter's chair on the verandah while the sun fades away in an auburn haze is as good as not having a farmhouse at all. My gentleman friend suggested that POTAs displaying better social graces may be employed in such farmhouses, where they may, in between gasps, also recite short poems on nature's bounty in the Queen's English. With due deference to my friend's suggestion, I cannot be altogether in his sentiments; for as scientists at AIIMS who have studied the matter assure me, to maximise the lung capacity of children requires single-minded focus on breathing, leaving little time for side ventures such as learning the rudiments of reading and writing, much less English Romantic poetry. Besides, it is not improbable that some scrupulous people might be apt to censure such a practice (although indeed very unjustly), as a little bordering upon the insensitive; which, I confess, has always been with me the strongest objection against any project, however so well intended.

But I considered the proposal of my friend, who said this inspired idea was put into his head by an account he had read of his great-grandfather, who served as a district magistrate in Midnapore, where he taught his punkah-pullers not only to make gin and tonics but also to recite "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and, in the case of one particularly clever chap named Hamza, three Latin stanzas from the Aeneid.

Those with a fetish for costly high-tech gimmickry have proposed alternative schemes for purifying the capital's air. The defence ministry has been in close communication with its counterpart in Israel ever since the thawing of bilateral relations under the present government. Inspired by Israel's missile-defence system, an invisible contraption referred to in the media as an Iron Dome, the ministry proposes to construct a literal

dome over the entire National Capital Region. This will not only keep out foreign missiles but also external pollutants—such as those, as per a National Intelligence Agency study, being deliberately launched into our airspace by the aggressive burning of agricultural material in Pakistan. To expel pollutants produced within the capital itself, the ministry proposes to commission an elaborate network of suction fans feeding into a 500-kilometre pipeline to the border crossing at Wagah, where the black air will be thrust upon our enemies.

I think the advantages of the proposal I have made over such schemes are obvious, as well as of the highest importance. For one, it is organic and entirely sustainable, the supply of futureless children within our present system being almost limitless. For another, it would reduce the toxicity not only of our air but also our social body. There may be those with vested interests in the status quo who say that it cannot be done. But society can be changed and so can individuals. We can make a difference if we but try. As a gesture of good faith I would offer up my own progeny for service as a POTA, but she will soon be four and past the training age for gasping.

KUSHANAVA CHOUDHURY (/AUTHOR/846) is a former Books Editor of *The Caravan*. He is the author of *The Epic City: The World On The Streets of Calcutta* (Bloomsbury 2017).

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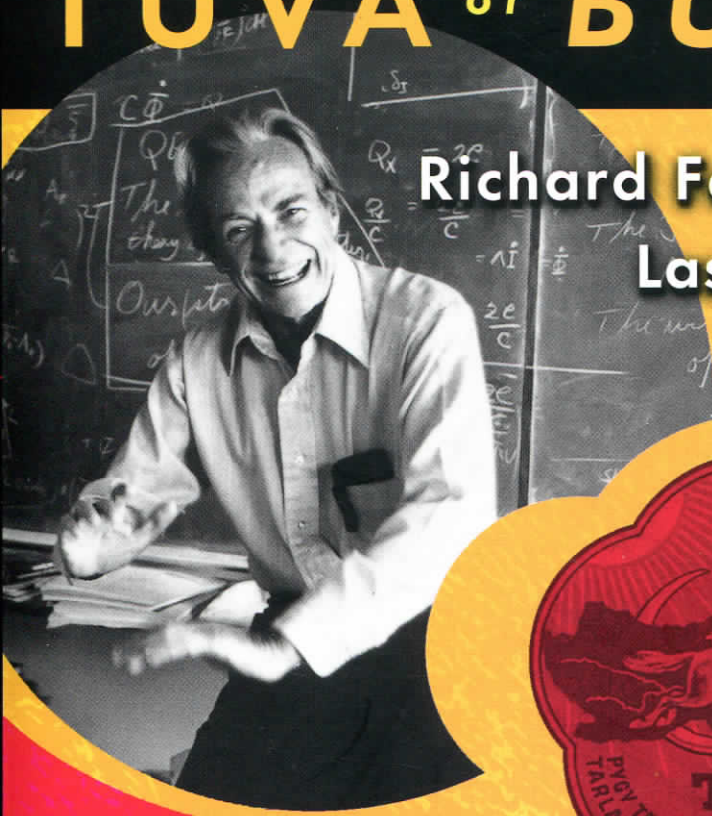
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TUVA ^{or} BUST!



Richard Feynman's Last Journey



"Readers who enjoyed the collaborative efforts of Feynman and Leighton in 'Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!' and 'What Do You Care What Other People Think?' will cherish this poignant account of Feynman's last escapade."

—Library Journal

Ralph Leighton

"Animated by irrepressible high spirits, this serendipitous saga is a tale of adventure, heartbreak, and rare friendship." —*Publishers Weekly*



In the 1930s, a young stamp collector named Richard Feynman coveted the unusually exotic stamps from a land called Tannu Tuva, ringed by mountains deep in Siberia, just beyond Outer Mongolia. Forty years later, the maverick Nobel Prize-winning physicist challenged his sidekick, fellow drummer and geography enthusiast Ralph Leighton: "Whatever happened to Tannu Tuva?" Thus began a poignant and funny decade-long adventure.

When the pair found Tuva's capital on the map, they were hooked. "Any place that's spelled K-Y-Z-Y-L," Feynman exclaimed, "has just got to be interesting!" In their efforts to reach Tuva, Leighton and Feynman learned of its resident shamanic shepherds who revere the Dalai Lama, discovered the wonders of "throat-singing," and brought to the United States the largest archaeological exhibition ever from the Soviet Union.

Since *Tuva or Bust!*'s original publication—and thanks largely to Leighton and the late Feynman's efforts—Tuvan horsemen have ridden in the Tournament of Roses Parade, throat-singing has become an international sensation, and Tuva itself has been featured in countless CDs, films, and books. This is Richard Feynman's last, best adventure, and one of his most enduring legacies.



"A bittersweet testament to the intellectual tenacity and quirky high spirits of a man dedicated above all to getting straight answers to simple questions." —*Boston Globe*

Ralph Leighton, Richard Feynman's great friend and collaborator on such works as "Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!" and "What Do You Care What Other People Think?", both of which are available in Norton paperback, now lives in northern California.

Tuva or Bust! is the inspiration for a play by Peter Parnell, starring Alan Alda, which opens in Los Angeles this year. The adventure continues . . .

ISBN 0-393-32069-3



\$13.95 USA \$19.99 CAN.

Photo of Richard Feynman: Courtesy of the Archives, California Institute of Technology. Landscape photo by Kerry Yackoboski. All Tuvan line art and stamps from the collection of J. Eric Slone.



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There Is No Such Country

THE plates were being cleared from the table, and I had just begun finishing off the salad—part of what had become a weekly ritual at the Feynmans'. Richard, always at the north end of the grand table, traded witticisms with son Carl, who shared the lengthy east side of the table with the guest. To the south sat Gweneth, making sure the food moved smoothly around the table, and daughter Michelle occupied the west. **1**

It was late in the summer of 1977. Michelle was about to enter the second grade at a local elementary school; Carl was ready to begin his junior year at the high school in Pasadena where I would be teaching mathematics and coaching water polo.

"Math is okay," I said, "but what I really like is geography. If I had a geography class I would bring in my shortwave radio and tune in the BBC or Radio Nederland. We'd play geography games like I did with my brother: he and I would

go through every independent country of the world. You know, the last letter of Liechtenstein determines the first letter of the next country—Nepal, for example.”

“Or Nigeria, Niger, or Nicaragua,” said Carl, with a hint of his mother’s Yorkshire accent.

“And after exhausting the independent countries,” I continued, “we would move on to provinces. Did you know there’s a province called ‘Amazonas’ in three different countries?”

“Let’s see,” said Carl. “How about Brazil, Colombia, and Peru?”

“Not bad,” I replied. “The third country is Venezuela, although Peru does have more of the Amazon in it than Venezuela does.”

“So you think you know every country in the world?” interjected Richard in a familiar, mischievous voice that usually signaled impending doom for its target.

“Uh, sure,” I said, taking another bite of salad, preparing myself for the embarrassment that was sure to follow.

“Okay, then what ever happened to Tannu Tuva?”

“Tannu what?” I said. “I never heard of it.”

“When I was a kid,” Richard continued, “I used to collect stamps. There were some wonderful triangular and diamond-shaped stamps that came from a place called ‘Tannu Tuva.’ ”

I became suspicious. My brother Alan, a stamp collector, had made a fool out of me dozens of times when we played “Islands of the World.” He would rattle off some exotic-sounding name like “Aitutaki,” and when I challenged him on it he would pull out his stamp catalog and show me a few stamps from the place. So I stopped challenging him, and he grew bolder and bolder, winning game after game. Finally I caught him on “Aknaki,” supposedly part of a tiny atoll in the South Pacific, after dimly recalling that the week before he had claimed it was a river in Mauritania. So I straightened

up in my chair a bit and said, “Sir, there is no such country.”

“Sure there is,” said Richard. “In the 1930s it was a purple splotch on the map near Outer Mongolia, and I’ve never heard anything about it ever since.”

Had I stopped and thought a moment, I would have realized that Richard’s favorite trick was to say something unbelievable that turns out to be true. Instead, I tightened the noose that had just been placed around my neck: “The only countries near Outer Mongolia are China and the Soviet Union,” I said, boldly. “I can show you on the map.”

I grabbed my last bite of salad as we all got up from the table and proceeded into the living room to Richard’s favorite book, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. In the last volume there was an atlas. We opened it to a map of Asia.

“See?” I said. “There’s nothing here but the USSR, Mongolia, and China. This ‘Tannu Tuva’ must have been somewhere else.”

“Oh, look!” said Carl. “Tuvinskaya ASSR. It’s bordered on the south by the Tannu-Ola Mountains.”

Sure enough, occupying a notch northwest of Mongolia was a territory that could well once have had the name Tannu Tuva. I thought, I’ve been had by a stamp collector again!

“Look at this,” remarked Richard. “The capital is spelled K-Y-Z-Y-L.”

“That’s crazy,” I said. “There’s not a legitimate vowel anywhere!”

“We must go there,” said Gweneth.

“Yeah!” exclaimed Richard. “A place that’s spelled K-Y-Z-Y-L has just got to be interesting!”

Richard and I grinned at each other and shook hands.

Everyone returned to the dining room for tea and dessert. As the conversation continued, I thought of the classic question, “Why are you climbing that mountain?” Our “mountain” had no particular physical challenge to it, but reaching a

place controlled by the USSR in the deepest interior of Asia was sure to be difficult. And our reason for undertaking this challenge was downright profound compared to the classic answer: "Because it's spelled K-Y-Z-Y-L!"

We discussed how we might reach our goal. Of course Richard could give a series of physics lectures in Moscow, and we could all go to Kyzyl afterwards. (Actually, anyone traveling under such circumstances should insist on going to Tuva *first*, in case some sort of "difficulty" arose after the lectures.) But reaching Tuva that way would be like riding in a helicopter to the summit.

Richard had journeyed to remote corners of the world before. Gweneth recounted how, a few years before, they had trekked for two weeks on foot with a friend and a Mexican graduate student into a mountainous region of northwest Mexico. They descended into a canyon, the Barranca de Cobre—said to be longer and deeper than the Grand Canyon—and met Tarahumara Indians who had had very little contact with the outside world. Richard had borrowed a Tarahumara-Spanish dictionary from UCLA and learned some phrases from it, but when he spoke to them in their native language, the Indians suspected he was a Mexican government official! After convincing them otherwise, Richard was offered the local intoxicating brew by the Tarahumara as a gesture of honor. (Richard normally did not touch alcohol, but made an exception in this case.) Gweneth and Richard enjoyed the adventure so much that they returned to the region a year later.

After dinner Richard and I continued the weekly ritual, going downstairs to drum in his studio. Although we had been drumming together for ten years by now, that "primitive" activity still had not lost any of its power.

During one of our breaks Richard went over to the bookcase, which was filled to the brim with books, technical pa-

pers, exotic rhythm instruments, and artist's sketch pads. Soon he pulled out an old, slim book and opened it. It was an atlas from 1943. And there, on the map of Asia, next to Outer Mongolia, was that purple splotch called Tannu Tuva.

JUNE 14, 2005

'You've got to find what you love,' Jobs says

This is a prepared text of the Commencement address delivered by Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Computer and of Pixar Animation Studios, on June 12, 2005.

 Go to the web site to view the video.

I am honored to be with you today at your commencement from one of the finest universities in the world. I never graduated from college. Truth be told, this is the closest I've ever gotten to a college graduation. Today I want to tell you three stories from my life. That's it. No big deal. Just three stories.

The first story is about connecting the dots.

I dropped out of Reed College after the first 6 months, but then stayed around as a drop-in for another 18 months or so before I really quit. So why did I drop out?

It started before I was born. My biological mother was a young, unwed college graduate student, and she decided to put me up for adoption. She felt very strongly that I should be adopted by college graduates, so everything was all set for me to be adopted at birth by a lawyer and his wife.

Except that when I popped out they decided at the last minute that they really wanted a girl. So my parents, who were on a waiting list, got a call in the middle of the night asking: "We have an unexpected baby boy; do you want him?" They said: "Of course." My biological mother later found out that my mother had never graduated from college and that my father had never graduated from high school. She refused to sign the final adoption papers. She only relented a few months later when my parents promised that I would someday go to college.

And 17 years later I did go to college. But I naively chose a college that was almost as expensive as Stanford, and all of my working-class parents' savings were being spent on my college tuition. After six months, I couldn't see the value in it. I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life and no idea how college was going to help me figure it out. And here I was spending all of the money my parents had saved their entire life. So I decided to drop out and trust that it would all work out OK. It was pretty scary at the time, but looking back it was one of the best decisions I ever made. The minute I dropped out I could stop taking the required classes that didn't interest me, and begin dropping in on the ones that looked interesting.

It wasn't all romantic. I didn't have a dorm room, so I slept on the floor in friends' rooms, I returned Coke bottles for the 5¢ deposits to buy food with, and I would walk the 7 miles across town every Sunday night to get one good meal a week at the Hare Krishna temple. I loved it. And much of what I stumbled into by following my curiosity and intuition turned out to be priceless later on. Let me give you one example:

Related to this story

- [2005 Stanford Commencement coverage](http://news.stanford.edu/news/2005/june061505.html) (<http://news.stanford.edu/news/2005/june061505.html>)

Reed College at that time offered perhaps the best calligraphy instruction in the country. Throughout the campus every poster, every label on every drawer, was beautifully hand calligraphed. Because I had dropped out and didn't have to take the normal classes, I decided to take a calligraphy class to learn how to do this. I learned about serif and sans serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture, and I found it fascinating.

None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But 10 years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me. And we designed it all into the Mac. It was the first computer with beautiful typography. If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts. And since Windows just copied the Mac, it's likely that no personal computer would have them. If I had never dropped out, I would have never dropped in on this calligraphy class, and personal computers might not have the wonderful typography that they do. Of course it was impossible to connect the dots looking forward when I was in college. But it was very, very clear looking backward 10 years later.

Again, you can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backward. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something — your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life.

My second story is about love and loss.

I was lucky — I found what I loved to do early in life. Woz and I started Apple in my parents' garage when I was 20. We worked hard, and in 10 years Apple had grown from just the two of us in a garage into a \$2 billion company with over 4,000 employees. We had just released our finest creation — the Macintosh — a year earlier, and I had just turned 30. And then I got fired. How can you get fired from a company you started? Well, as Apple grew we hired someone who I thought was very talented to run the company with me, and for the first year or so things went well. But then our visions of the future began to diverge and eventually we had a falling out. When we did, our Board of Directors sided with him. So at 30 I was out. And very publicly out. What had been the focus of my entire adult life was gone, and it was devastating.

I really didn't know what to do for a few months. I felt that I had let the previous generation of entrepreneurs down — that I had dropped the baton as it was being passed to me. I met with David Packard and Bob Noyce and tried to apologize for screwing up so badly. I was a very public failure, and I even thought about running away from the valley. But something slowly began to dawn on me — I still loved what I did. The turn of events at Apple had not changed that one bit. I had been rejected, but I was still in love. And so I decided to start over.

I didn't see it then, but it turned out that getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. The heaviness of being successful was replaced by the lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything. It freed me to enter one of the most creative periods of my life.

During the next five years, I started a company named NeXT, another company named Pixar, and fell in love with an amazing woman who would become my wife. Pixar went on to create the world's first computer animated feature film, *Toy Story*, and is now the most successful animation studio in the world. In a remarkable turn of events, Apple bought NeXT, I returned to Apple, and the technology we developed at NeXT is at the heart of Apple's current renaissance. And Laurene and I have a wonderful family together.

I'm pretty sure none of this would have happened if I hadn't been fired from Apple. It was awful tasting medicine, but I guess the patient needed it. Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith. I'm convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You've got to find what you love. And that is as true for your work as it is for your lovers. Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on. So keep looking until you find it. Don't settle.

My third story is about death.

When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: "If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you'll most certainly be right." It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: "If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?" And whenever the answer has been "No" for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything — all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure — these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.

About a year ago I was diagnosed with cancer. I had a scan at 7:30 in the morning, and it clearly showed a tumor on my pancreas. I didn't even know what a pancreas was. The doctors told me this was almost certainly a type of cancer that is incurable, and that I should expect to live no longer than three to six months. My doctor advised me to go home and get my affairs in order, which is doctor's code for prepare to die. It means to try to tell your kids everything you thought you'd have the next 10 years to tell them in just a few months. It means to make sure everything is buttoned up so that it will be as easy as possible for your family. It means to say your goodbyes.

I lived with that diagnosis all day. Later that evening I had a biopsy, where they stuck an endoscope down my throat, through my stomach and into my intestines, put a needle into my pancreas and got a few cells from the tumor. I was sedated, but my wife, who was there, told me that when they viewed the cells under a microscope the doctors started crying because it turned out to be a very rare form of pancreatic cancer that is curable with surgery. I had the surgery and I'm fine now.

This was the closest I've been to facing death, and I hope it's the closest I get for a few more decades. Having lived through it, I can now say this to you with a bit more certainty than when death was a useful but purely intellectual concept:

No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it. And that is as it should be, because Death is very likely the single best invention of Life. It is Life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Right now the new is you, but someday not too long from now, you will gradually become the old and be cleared away. Sorry to be so dramatic, but it is quite true.

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma — which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.

When I was young, there was an amazing publication called *The Whole Earth Catalog*, which was one of the bibles of my generation. It was created by a fellow named Stewart Brand not far from here in Menlo Park, and he brought it to life with his poetic touch. This was in the late 1960s, before personal computers and desktop publishing, so it was all made with typewriters, scissors and Polaroid cameras. It was sort of like Google in paperback form, 35 years before Google came along: It was idealistic, and overflowing with neat tools and great notions.

Stewart and his team put out several issues of *The Whole Earth Catalog*, and then when it had run its course, they put out a final issue. It was the mid-1970s, and I was your age. On the back cover of their final issue was a photograph of an early morning country road, the kind you might find yourself hitchhiking on if you were so adventurous. Beneath it were the words: "Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish." It was their farewell message as they signed off. Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish. And I have always wished that for myself. And now, as you graduate to begin anew, I wish that for you.

Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish.

Thank you all very much.



subject=An%20interesting%20article%20from%20Stanford%20News&body=I%20want%20to%20share%20this%



Untold Stories of Change, Loss
and Hope Along the Margins
of Bengaluru's Lakes



Waterfront – Madivala Lake. Photo: Arati Kumar-Rao



Saraswathamma—Bhattarahalli Lake. Photo: Arati Kumar-Rao



Rajamma—Madivala Lake.
Photo: Arati Kumar-Rao



Dhobi Ghat—Madivala Lake. Photo: Arati Kumar-Rao



Patchwork—Madivala Lake.
Photo: Anoop Bhaskar



Raichur Colony—Vibhutipura Lake. Photo: Anoop Bhaskar



Tarpaulin shacks at Rachenahalli Lake. Photo: Marthe Derksen



Jalalbe—Puttenahalli Lake. Photo: Arati Kumar-Rao



Marthe Derkzen is a researcher and teacher at Wageningen University in the Netherlands. She works on green and healthy cities, always from a socio-environmental justice perspective.



Arati Kumar-Rao is an independent environmental photographer & journalist documenting effects of landuse change on lives, livelihoods, species, and landscapes.

Anoop Bhaskar, born in Bengaluru, worked in a corporate environment before he decided to become a fulltime photographer. .

the nature of cities

Photo Essay: Untold Stories of Change, Loss and Hope Along the Margins of Bengaluru's Lakes

- Marthe Derkzen, Arnhem/Nijmegen. 16 December 2015

Before becoming India's information technology hub, Bengaluru was known for its numerous lakes and green spaces. Rapid urbanization has led to the disappearance of many of these ecosystems. Those that remain face a range of challenges: residential and commercial construction, pollution and waste dumping, privatization, and so on. Today, Bengaluru's lakes are principally seen as garbage dumps and sewage ponds that can have either of two fates: one, be transformed into recreational oases to suit the needs of wealthy residential neighborhoods, or two, be encroached upon until none of the original shapes and functions can be traced. But how does this affect the lives of the people living at the very margins of Bengaluru's beloved yet contested lakes?

As a result of rapid urbanization and environmental change, people's reliance on local natural resources has substantially decreased in Bengaluru. This decrease is due to contamination of the surroundings, restrictions to access and, for some, the constant threat of eviction. Bengaluru is witnessing a transition from livelihoods dependent on use of these open spaces for activities such as fishing, cattle grazing and domestic purposes, to a cultural use of recreation and visual beauty. People are tending to move away from communal organization—such as taking turns to work on each other's rice fields, maintaining the village grove, or sharing irrigation and lake management duties—and to move towards private organization when tending to one's home garden or carrying out religious rituals. While people at the margins of lakes are often blamed for the degradation of lake ecosystems, they are actually preserving and often increasing native biodiversity and open space—acts that are quite uncommon now in a metropolis such as Bengaluru.

These trends are taking shape in line with a shift in lake accessibility. It is becoming harder to gain access to these ecosystems, either because of regulations (only government tendered fishing is allowed), physical barriers (lake fencing), or distance to adequate natural resources. Societal pressures also influence trends (cooking with firewood is old-fashioned). This means that livelihoods have become less location-bound for the ones that can afford it, while the ones who cannot need to find ways to cope with a degraded environment that is increasingly inaccessible. As happens elsewhere, urban open spaces, or urban commons, are being taken over by the elite and middle classes. As a young resident put it: "I do not wish for a park to be constructed, because that means that our houses will be demolished."

The stories of Bengaluru's residents represent the casualties of rapid urban growth witnessed by the city, but their voices often remain unheard. To bring back these voices into the debate, we organized a photo exhibition titled "Living at the margins of Bengaluru's lakes: Untold stories of change, loss and hope" on Oct. 31 to Nov. 1 2015 in Rangoli Metro Art Center in Bengaluru, India. A diverse audience of 900 to 1000 visitors came to the art gallery.

People were in awe of the photographs and accompanying stories. “This really is an eye opener for people like us who live in the urban area. I was unaware of how lakes in the city were used by the city’s marginalized, and how severely they are impacted by the pollution of these lakes,” said Priya Dileep, an IT professional in the city. A significant feature of the exhibition was the presence of residents from the lakes, individuals who were themselves the subjects of the photographs displayed. They were astonished to see their portrait on the gallery wall, and proud.

The photographers who worked on the project are **Anoop Bhaskar** and **Arati Kumar-Rao**. Anoop, born in Bengaluru, worked in a corporate environment before he decided to become a fulltime photographer. Anoop has been involved from the moment the fieldwork started. He visited all the case study lakes and assisted with the household interviews that were held in Kannada, Tamil or Hindi. During the four months the fieldwork lasted, Anoop took photographs of the people we spoke to and places we visited, because we hoped to organize an exhibition at its end.

<https://www.thenatureofcities.com/2015/12/16/untold-stories-of-change-loss-and-hope-along-the-margins-of-bengalurus-lakes/>

1. Waterfront – Madivala Lake

LIVELIHOODS

2. Saraswathamma—Bhattarahalli Lake

Saraswathamma is “over 30 years old” and was born at Bhattarahalli Lake. Back in the day, she and her neighbors enjoyed eating fish from the lake, but today the lake is so polluted she does not dare to touch its fish. She receives Rs.24 for each litre of milk her three cows produce. Her cooking takes place on a kerosene stove, until she runs out of fuel that she receives in her supply of monthly ration, which usually happens after 15 days. She copes by collecting firewood from cut road side trees, or by foraging from her surroundings. Soon she will need to rethink her livelihood strategies, as a demolition order demands her to leave her home ground for rehabilitation elsewhere.

3. Rajamma—Madivala Lake

Rajamma has been living at Madivala Lake for over 20 years. Herding cattle runs in her family, and a year and a half ago, they decided to get four cows and four calves, which provide them with an income from the sale of milk and curd. Their house is located right at an open drain with an immensely pungent stench. The land bridge that used to connect the settlement to the lake bund has been destroyed after a murder incident.

Today, Rajamma crosses the drain via a makeshift bamboo bridge to take her cattle out for grazing. Restricted access to the lake also complicates the collection of wild *soppu* (leafy

greens) to cook green curry, which the family used to do two to three times a week in the rainy season. Buying *soppu* costs Rs. 15.

LAUNDRY

4. Dhobi Ghat—Madivala Lake

For decades, Madivala has a working Dhobi Ghat. Dhobis (launderers) washed their loads in a canal next to the lake until about 20 years ago, when the water became too polluted and they resorted to bore well water. The canal turned into a bubbling and reeking sewage drain, which is an eyesore for the entire Dhobi Ghat. Concurrently, the disappearance of open lands and grazing fields has led their donkeys to the garbage dump in search of food. After so many years, their deteriorating environment has made the dhobis lose sight of a bright future.

5. Patchwork—Madivala Lake

The Dhobi Ghat cannot accommodate everyone, so some launderers enter the lake to wash their clothes. After washing, the laundry is left to dry on the lake bund that turns into an elaborate patchwork of jeans, shirts and towels. People, bikes and cycles move in between the little islands of clothing as if it is the most natural thing in the world.

With no other place to go, this daily sight will probably continue to exist. Yet, they are always in danger of being moved due to increased accessibility restrictions.

MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

6. Raichur Colony—Vibhutipura Lake

These children live in a settlement of blue tarpaulin shacks northeast of Vibhutipura Lake. Together with their families, they migrated from rural Karnataka to Bengaluru city, fleeing the drought. Here, their fathers work as construction laborers in apartments, while their mothers work as domestic help. Their houses do not have electricity or toilets. On days when they have no water supply, they wash their clothes and vessels in the lake outflow, which is not fenced off like the rest of the lake. They cook on firewood but cannot grow their own vegetables because the land they live on is not their land. And they do not know where they will be living at the start of next school year.

7. Tarpaulin shacks at Rachenahalli Lake

8. Jalalbe—Puttenahalli Lake

Jalalbe, age 14, was born near Puttenahalli Lake after her parents moved from Gulbarga to Bengaluru. The family of six lives in a single room that lacks basic amenities; she lights a lamp every evening and cooks rice on a wood fueled stove in front of the house. Water is

fetches from construction sites. Twice a year, they replace the coconut leaves on their roof to prevent it from leaking. Coconut leaves are more water resistant than tarpaulin. On the way back from school, Jalalbe walks along the lake and enjoys the view, birds and fish. She is, however, afraid of the police and security that guard the road, carrying long sticks. At night, she never goes anywhere near the lake. In her ideal world, there would be more nature to compensate for the noise, buildings and roads that surround her at present.

The underlying research for this project was carried out between May and October 2015 by Marthe Derkzen from VU University Amsterdam in collaboration with Harini Nagendra and Seema Mundoli from the Sustainability initiative at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru. The project received financial support from an USAID PEER grant to ATREE (Ashoka trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment).

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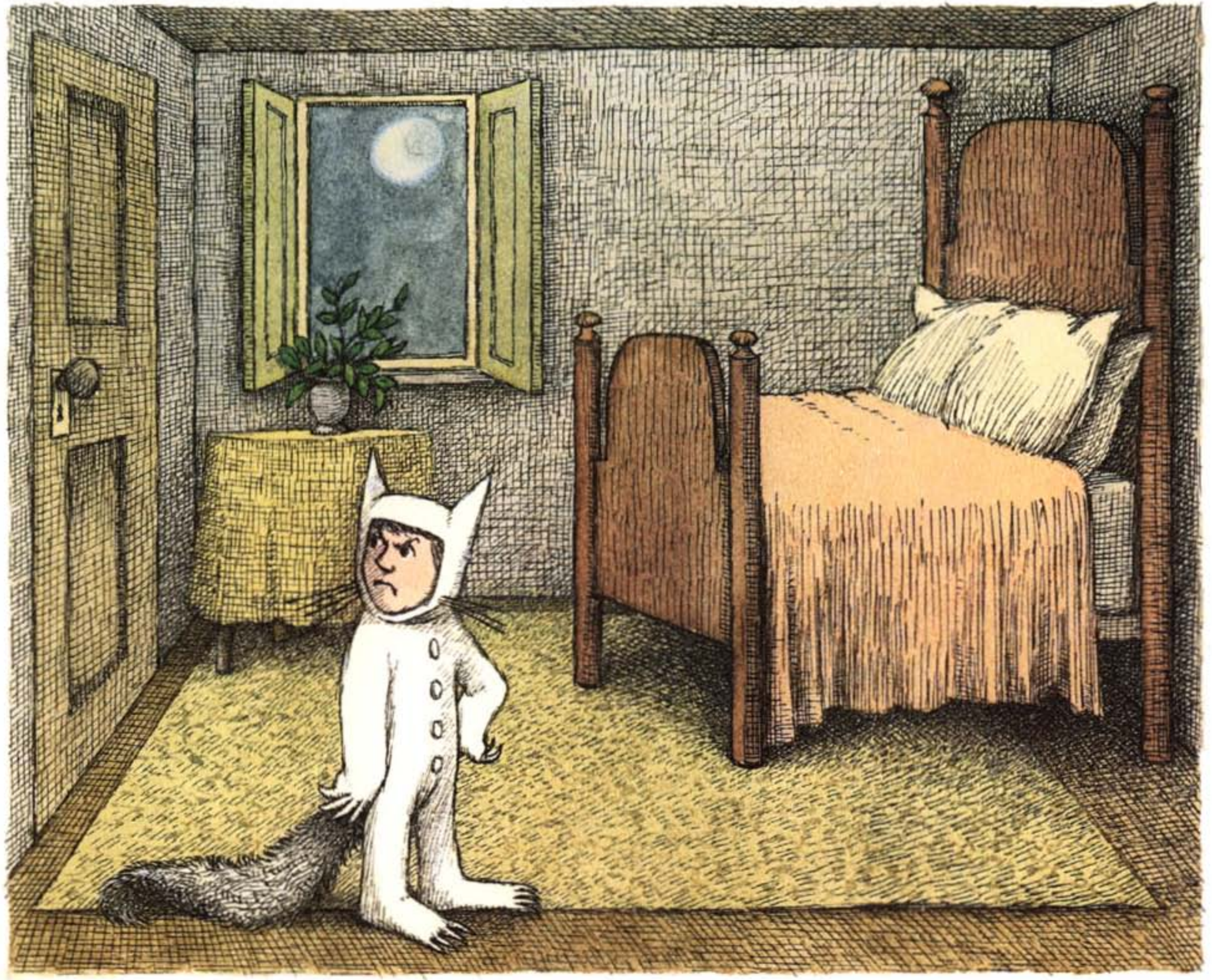
The night Max wore his wolf suit and made mischief of one kind



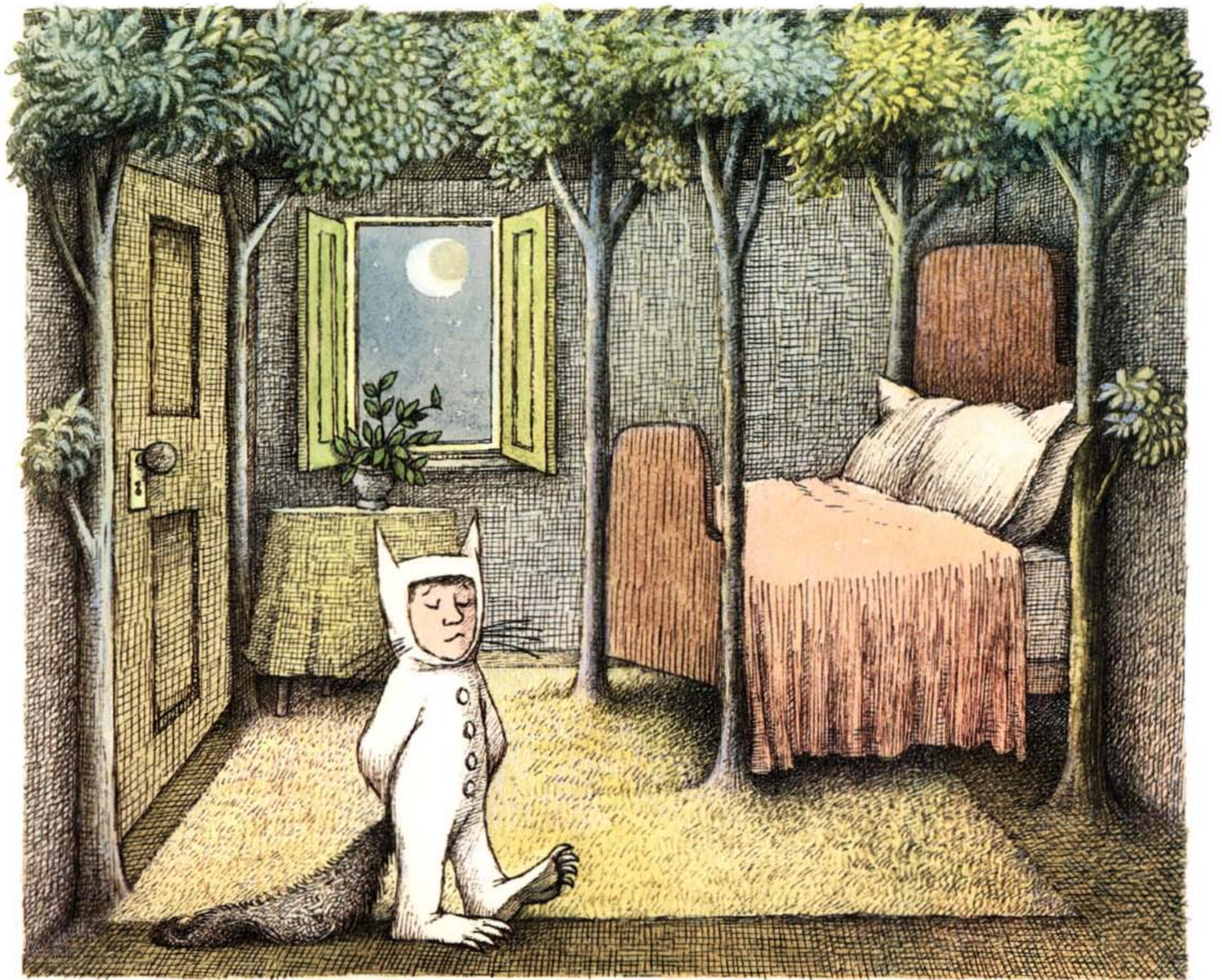
and another



**his mother called him “WILD THING!”
and Max said “I’LL EAT YOU UP!”
so he was sent to bed without eating anything.**



That very night in Max's room a forest grew



and grew—



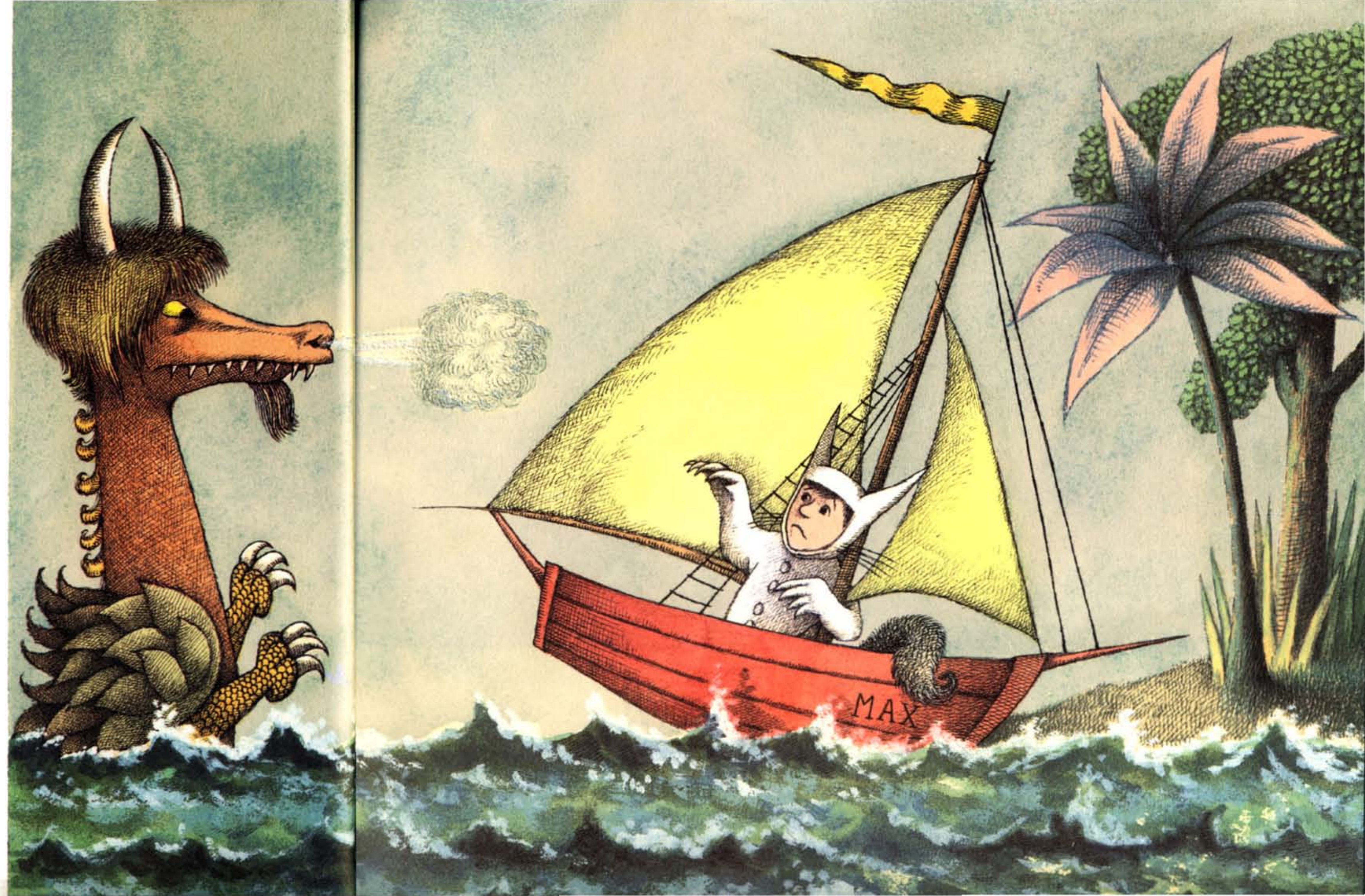
**and grew until his ceiling hung with vines
and the walls became the world all around**



and an ocean tumbled by with a private boat for Max
and he sailed off through night and day



and in and out of weeks
and almost over a year
to where the wild things are.





**And when he came to the place where the wild things are
they roared their terrible roars and gnashed their terrible teeth**



and rolled their terrible eyes and showed their terrible claws



till Max said "BE STILL!"
and tamed them with the magic trick



of staring into all their yellow eyes without blinking once
and they were frightened and called him the most wild thing of all



and made him king of all wild things.



“And now,” cried Max, “let the wild rumpus start!”









“Now stop!” Max said and sent the wild things off to bed without their supper. And Max the king of all wild things was lonely and wanted to be where someone loved him best of all.



Then all around from far away across the world he smelled good things to eat so he gave up being king of where the wild things are.



But the wild things cried, "Oh please don't go—
we'll eat you up—we love you so!"
And Max said, "No!"

The wild things roared their terrible roars and gnashed their terrible teeth
and rolled their terrible eyes and showed their terrible claws
but Max stepped into his private boat and waved good-bye

**and sailed back over a year
and in and out of weeks
and through a day**



**and into the night of his very own room
where he found his supper waiting for him**



and it was still hot.





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That 420
sure can scam
Huh.???



Shootout at Padi

18 October 2004, 10 p.m.

T minus 60 minutes

It was the fourth night after the new moon. Poor visibility was worsened by the four massive tamarind trees near the location. If this bothered the well-drilled commandos, they certainly didn't show it. Waiting in the dark for long hours in the hope of getting a single shot to be taken within seconds was part of their expertise. In the past, they had lain in ambush in far worse conditions.

I surveyed the trap zone one more time. God certainly seemed to be on our side. He had provided an almost perfect site. Kannan and I had identified it just the day before, after videographing the entire road incognito from a Maruti 800. But I chose to believe that divine forces were also at play. Somehow, everything seemed right.

Kannan and I stood next to the one-room school in Padi, around 12 km from Dharmapuri. The school overlooked the road. Its roof provided a perfect field of fire.

Six of my crack commandos were squeezed together on the school's roof, weapons at the ready. 'They look like a bunch of cards held together,' I thought. The concept of selfies didn't exist then, but the men were crammed so tightly together that it was almost like they were posing for one.

Six Kalashnikovs pointed unflinchingly at the road, as if they had a mind of their own. The limbs of the men holding them were mere extensions of their weapons.

An undercover police vehicle, masquerading as a sugarcane-laden lorry, was parked in the middle of the road. It was named 'Sweet Box', as it was full of sugarcane supposedly heading towards the sugar mill nearby. The lorry was actually meant to block the path of the oncoming Cocoon. It also housed three tech experts, who would receive signals from the surveillance camera concealed inside the ambulance. It was their job to confirm that the target was inside the vehicle before we intercepted it.

Another lorry—code-named 'Mobile Bunker'—packed with sandbags and armed STF commandos, was parked on the other side of the road, at an angle of about 45 degrees to the school, partially concealed by a tree.

Inspector Charles—our logistics man, not unlike James Bond's 'Q'—had dug into his eclectic inventory, which included over 100 items like a loud hailer, inflatable lamp etc. He first pulled out a selfie-stick-like contraption with a lamp at its end, which would be used to light up the spot. Next, he grabbed some luminously painted orange-coloured cones, the kind used by traffic cops. He stacked eight of these against a tree.

A team led by DSP Tiru was on standby in a civilian vehicle some distance down the road. Once the ambulance was spotted, they would move behind it, cutting off any chance of reversing and making a getaway. This would also ensure that no other vehicle would come between the ambulance and the police.

If all went off well, the ambulance would be trapped, hemmed in from all sides by the Sweet Box, Mobile Bunker, the school and Tiru's team. Another DSP waited in the east towards Dharmapuri town. His job was to cut out all incoming traffic. We needed a sterile zone to ensure no collateral damage.

Unusually for him, Veerappan was not very alert that day. In fact, his mind seemed preoccupied with memories and regrets. But his natural optimism seemed to resurface despite these dark thoughts.

As his mind hatched plans, his gaze fell on the 7.62 mm SLR lying near his feet. Many of his comrades had moved on to the deadlier AK-

47, but he still liked to carry the weapon, which he had personally taken from a policeman killed during the ambush with SP Gopal Hosur.

Veerappan smiled at the memory and glanced out of the ambulance. He noticed the vehicle was passing by Papparapatti Police Station. The sight reminded him of his two daring raids on police stations. He wrinkled his brow as he tried to recall them. *Ah, yes, one in Karnataka, and the other in Tamil Nadu.*

A few metres down the road, Kumaresan, a seemingly nondescript STF old-timer, sat in a shack. He half-heartedly picked at some food, trying to make sure he was well within the shadows. Except for the driver, Durai, Kannan and I, he was the only other person who was aware of the target's identity.

As the ambulance passed by, Durai nonchalantly stretched his arm out of the window, flattened his hand against the side of the vehicle and moved his thumb very slightly. The target, lost in his reverie, didn't notice.

But Kumaresan did so instantly. He also spotted two other things—the blue revolving light of the ambulance was on, which meant that the entire gang was inside. So was the fog light, which meant that all the gang members were armed.

T minus 10 minutes

Kannan's cell phone buzzed. He walked away a few steps and took the call.

'*Tapal anuppiyaachu* (The mail has been sent),' said Kumaresan tersely.

Kannan glanced at me and gave a thumbs-up.

Just then, we heard a slight clicking sound on our muffled wireless set. It was a signal from Tiru that our prey had come into view.

Kannan uttered the words, 'Cocoon in ten minutes.'

But that was assuming he came this way. He still had other options. 'What if he had turned to the right at the Papparapatti T junction? What if he had rolled some cowrie shells or heard a lizard's call?' I thought.

'Kannan, that rules out the road where Nawaz is positioned. But let's alert Shanmughavel on Hogenakkal Road; you never know,' I said in a hushed tone.

Kannan nodded. Like me, he knew that every minor detail could make the difference between celebration and censure.

T minus 5 minutes

I scanned the troops one last time. Each one knew his place. I had indicated their perches, chosen during my recce two days ago.

I caught Chandramohan's Cobras doing a quick dress rehearsal next to a tamarind tree northwest of the school. Prasanna's Angels seemed smug in their bunker and Rajesh Khanna's Rocky team had occupied the school terrace, in the selfie-like strategic cram.

Every passing second felt like eternity. 'Why was Cocoon taking so long to fetch up?' I wondered.

'Calm down, calm down,' my mind sternly ordered my racing heart.

We began signalling the men to get ready. Suddenly, we heard the sound of a rickety vehicle approaching.

'How did they get here so fast?' I wondered, bewildered.

The teams reacted instantaneously, as if responding to an invisible signal. The Cobras—tactically the most exposed—were the fastest to seek cover. Some hugged the trees; others slithered behind bushes. The rest hit the road and lay there motionless.

I strained my eyes and ears to spot the vehicle. It was too faint to be a four-wheeler. Gradually, an old motorcycle sputtered into view. A couple was sitting on it, apparently involved in a heated argument. In the still night, their voices carried clearly.

The motorcycle moved at its own pace.

'Come on,' I muttered furiously under my breath. The last thing we needed was the couple to be around when the ambulance turned up. Thankfully, they gradually faded from sight.

I heaved a sigh of relief.

The Cobras had placed sandbags on the ground, hoping to erect a bastion. Under the eagle eye of their leader, Chandramohan, they had spent the last week practising relentlessly. They could raise 144 bags into a 5-foot-high U-shaped wall and take cover behind it, all within a span of three minutes. But the arrival of the motorcycle forced them to

abandon their drill. Luckily for us, the couple were too immersed in their conversation to notice the sandbags lying on the road.

Sweet Box too felt the impact of the interlopers. The sensitive gadgets inside the lorry were turned off, as their glow would have been a dead giveaway. Ultra stifled a pained sigh. Rebooting all the devices would take a while.

As soon as the motorcycle moved out of sight, the teams swung back into action.

Charles leapt out of the darkness and neatly placed the cones—four each on either side, marking out the final parking slot for Cocoon. With such measured gaps, the cones, in that dim light, looked like stiff sentries keeping a grim vigil for any unlucky intruder.

My AK was dangling on its sling from my shoulder. With all the teams watching, I stretched both my arms, turned 360 degrees and chopped the air to mark the exact arcs of fire for all three teams. Every inch of space, fenced by the cones, would be swept by a bunch of guns, from every conceivable angle.

Hussain would cover the entire northern flank and Rajarajan the southern, I gestured.

T minus 120 seconds

'Activate the tech guys,' I whispered to Kannan.

He nodded and headed over to the Sweet Box.

A few seconds later, he came back sprinting. He looked alarmed.

'The tech team has confirmed four people in the back of Cocoon. But the picture from the camera is blurred, can't make out their faces. Sorry, sir,' he blurted.

I swore under my breath. 'Should we still proceed with the ambush?' I wondered. I would be held entirely responsible in the event of a misadventure. They say, 'When the going gets tough, the tough get going.' In my case, though, the tough got praying!

The lights of the ambulance appeared to come closer and closer. I tried to consider all options frantically. I just had a few seconds left to make a decision. Then providence stepped in and took the decision out

of my hands.

The darkness was pierced by four powerful beams of light. Two were from Cocoon's normal headlamps; the other two yellowish lights emerged from the fog lamps.

I nodded. Kannan raised a hand, like the conductor of an orchestra. Hussain and Rajarajan mimicked him. The teams froze.

Time seemed to have come to a standstill.

The mild breeze had suddenly died out. There were no sounds—either from the jungle or from the nearby villages. Only the rumble of the fast-approaching Cocoon. The sound and light emanating from it provided an almost surreal contrast to the dark stillness that shrouded us.

'Would they stop at the designated spot?' I asked myself. It was crucial that they did, since a moving target is much harder to hit than a stationary one.

Bullets fired from an AK-47 move at 2,500 kmph. In comparison, a van's 60 kmph may seem very modest, but it can severely complicate matters for the ambush party. Of the 140 bullets fired, only seven hit French President De Gaulle's Citroën car, a staggering 1 out of 20!

T minus 60 seconds

Saravanan's heart fluttered as he spotted the glowing cones. He could barely locate the school. On their way in, Kumaresan had slowed down his two-wheeler and pointed it out to him.

'Brake hard. Switch on the rear cabin lights. The passengers must not catch sight of anything, but must be seen,' Saravanan recited the instructions to himself one more time.

Then, with fumbling fingers, he flicked on a switch and Cocoon's three cabin lights came on. He simultaneously stepped on the brakes with all the force his right leg could muster. Cocoon lurched hard and screeched to a dead stop right in the middle of the designated slot. The smell of burning tyres filled the air.

Even as Cocoon shuddered to a halt, a vehicle came up rapidly from behind. Tiru had been trailing Cocoon discreetly, keeping out of sight to ensure he didn't arouse any suspicion. But with Cocoon trapped, he

moved quickly into position to block the exit. The lights from his vehicle beamed straight at the rear of Cocoon and illuminated it. Four guns were already trained on its exit doors—two from the school roof, and two from the Bunker.

All eyes were on the halted ambulance. Thumbs eased the safety levers, index fingers twitched, slipping in beyond the trigger guards.

T minus 5 seconds

In the heat of the moment, Saravanan had forgotten to douse the headlamps and the revolving blue lamp on the roof. The burning lights engulfed Cocoon's front in a soft halo. It stood there in the middle of the road in all its majesty, still rocking like a boat tossed by waves, its double beam of lights bobbing up and down.

Two men shot out of Cocoon with the speed of discharged bullets—the captain and the navigator had abandoned their ship.

Saravanan's voice carried clearly, his left hand pointing backwards. '*Gang yulla irukaangoe* (The gangsters are inside).'

Even in that moment, I could make out that he was eager to catch my eye, as if seeking approval for delivering the goods. I nodded appreciatively and hurriedly patted him as he brushed past me.

Rajarajan grabbed Saravanan and shoved him behind a huge tree near my position. Meanwhile, Durai—identifiable from the shine of his shaven pate—turned back abruptly towards Cocoon. He had pulled the safety pin of his stun grenade and rolled it into the rear of Cocoon from the secret slot under his seat. 'What had happened to the damn thing?' he thought. It took him a moment to realize that the damned thing had a four-second fuse to blow up. It finally did.

Cocoon rocked on its wheels. Durai had 4 metres to reach the relative safety of Hussain's flank, just opposite my position. He headed for it like Usain Bolt taking off from the blocks. After all, the firefight could begin any time, and he had no intention of getting caught in the core battle zone. I raised my right palm.

Kannan's warning rang out over the megaphone, 'Surrender. You've been surrounded.'

A few moments went by.

Then, the unmistakable sound of an AK-47 emerged from the rear of the vehicle.

There was a sudden flutter of birds from the tamarind trees. Far away, a lone dog barked. Soon, many joined the chorus.

Shattered glass flew out of the rear of Cocoon. With the others fumbling to retrieve their guns, Govindan must have been the first to react, we later concluded.

If the four men had come out of the vehicle with their weapons raised, we would have accepted their surrender. But the moment they opened fire, they closed that window for themselves. I could not risk losing any of my men.

A total of forty-four cops and foresters had already died at the hands of these men. At least eighty more civilians, known to the police, had been killed by them. There may have been more deaths that were never reported. Those people were probably killed in multiple brutal ways. It would end tonight, one way or the other.

Our response was instant and overwhelming. Brass hoses down on Cocoon from every direction. Bullets zipped all around along with the rhythmic flashes of guns.

I felt something hot on my neck. Empty shells were spewing from my buddy Sundaram's AK. Since we were standing close together, some of them scalded my neck.

I shuffled to my left, flicked my gun to burst fire mode, and let go.

After a few bullets, I paused briefly, as did the others. Another couple of reports of a self-loading rifle and a shotgun came from Cocoon.

Kannan reiterated the terms for surrender.

There were a few more shots, followed by a volley of the STF's response. I signalled the teams to stop.

Another pause. This time, there was no return fire.

The mayhem of the encounter faded to a dull murmur. Some birds had returned to their nests, but were still chirping restively. Dogs were still barking in the distance. Cocoon was engulfed in smoke and dust.

I signalled to Rajarajan and Hussain.

Another stun grenade was lobbed into Cocoon. There was a flash

and a bang. Rajarajan flashed on a torch, which he held below his gun's barrel, as did Hussain. The two beams of light converged.

The two men approached Cocoon warily. They heard a gurgle, followed by a hiss—like air escaping from a cycle tube. It is a sound typically made by air trapped between the lung tissue and the chest. Someone wounded was trying to suck in air.

Then, silence.

The stillness was finally broken by the cry of 'All clear'.

The encounter had started at around 10.50 p.m. and was over in twenty minutes—a rapid climax to a twenty-year wait!

Hussain and Rajarajan saw blood and bodily fluids splashed all over—the walls, floor and seats, food packets and the stretcher. They picked up two AKs, a 12-bore Remington pump-action gun and the infamous 7.62 mm SLR.

Three persons were huddled together—their final conclave before going down. Men in their death throes, clutching each other! One, later identified as Govindan, was a little distance away.

The four men were speedily removed from Cocoon and laid on the ground. I beckoned to Kannan and, ignoring a cramped muscle, hobbled over to where they lay.

It was my only face-to-face moment with Veerappan, if it could be described as such. He was unable to speak and was clearly dying. I noticed that a bullet had gone through his left eye, just as it had with Senthil in Sorgam Valley almost ten years ago. With his moustache trimmed and in civilian clothes, rather than his trademark green dress and brown belt, he seemed a stripped-down version of his former self.

He had been a wily and worthy foe, with a mastery over both strategy and tactics. Even at fifty-two, he was sinewy and extremely fit. Forensic specialist Dr Vallinayagam, who later examined his body, told me he was in the shape of a twenty-five-year-old, apart from the problem with his eyes.

Rumour has it that he had damaged his eyes while applying dye to his famed moustache, which often filled him with pride. It was an irony worthy of an O'Henry tale. The famous moustachioed bandit eventually trimmed his whiskers to get his eyes treated, only to end up losing both—

his eyes as well as his life.

I took stock of the encounter. There were no casualties or serious injuries among my boys. I sent up a quick prayer of thanks. It was one more thing to be grateful for on a night when fortune had been exceedingly gracious. I was not the only one to be scalded by a buddy's empty shell. It's not so unusual when people are firing while packed in close proximity to each other.

A total of 338 bullets were fired by us. Later, seven were found in Govindan's body; two had pierced Veerappan's body and exited from the other side, while one stayed inside.

It is impossible to predict the number of bullets that could hit a target during a firefight. Two people close by may not receive the same number of bullets or wounds. In 1980, when the SAS had stormed the Iranian embassy in London to rescue twenty-six hostages, eighty-two bullets had hit one terrorist alone. The bullet count for his other five comrades was in single digits.

An early casualty of the firefight was the lamp at the tip of the self-stick, which had been shot out. The shreds of its shattered bulb nearly got SI Rajesh Khanna in the eye. Thankfully, he did not sustain any serious injury. In any case, the illumination from the lamp had not really been used as Cocoon glowed in the radiance of its own light.

Charles, like a conjurer, pulled out a black cloth the size of a bed sheet. He was supposed to have cut the cloth into strips to be used as bandanas. But in the excitement, everyone had forgotten about it. Now, it served to cover the four men.

Gradually, I sensed a growing murmur from the boys.

Since the identity of the men inside the vehicle had not been revealed to them initially, they began to mutter in disbelief when they recognized the fallen men.

'Could it really be him?' 'Is it just someone who looks like him?' 'No, it's actually Veerappan!' they wondered aloud.

I then signalled that we needed to rush the four men to the nearest hospital. They were loaded onto an Omni and dashed away.

Suddenly, cries of 'Long live the STF' resounded through the clearing.

There was a spontaneous eruption of delight and high-fiving. I was

hoisted on the shoulders of my men and effortlessly passed around. I noticed that Kannan had been similarly hefted. We exchanged broad grins and shook hands. No words were needed.

Next, it was the turn of Hussain, Rajarajan, Tiru, Sampath and Saravanan.

All the officers and team leaders present were tossed around, as were the head constables, who had spent years haranguing and tongue-lashing the men to finally make this moment possible.

There was a brief pause as the boys looked in puzzlement at Durai, standing calmly at a distance, scratching his shaven head. Nobody knew him, but they clearly understood that he was one of them and had played a pivotal role in the operation. Up went Durai, too.

As soon as the boys brought me to the ground, I bounded up the school's steps, two at a time. Sitting on the parapet with my feet dangling on the dangerous side, I made the call.

'The CM has retired for the night. Is it urgent?' asked Sheela Balakrishnan, Jayalalithaa's secretary.

'I think she will like what I have to say,' I replied.

An instant later, I heard her voice on the phone.

'We got him, ma'am,' I said. Then I quickly recounted the operation and informed the CM that Veerappan was on his way to hospital, but survival seemed unlikely. I replied in the affirmative to her brief query on the STF's safety. Though she was her usual dignified self, the elation in her voice was unmistakable. 'Congratulations to you and the STF, Mr Vijay Kumar. This is the best news I've ever had as CM,' she said, before hanging up.

I looked up to the sky and touched my lucky medallion. Some of the boys were pocketing souvenirs to show their unborn grandchildren. The ballistics guys would go ballistic at the missing empties, I thought wryly. But the men would surely take immense pride and great delight in narrating the story of this unforgettable night. Then I felt something lodged in my vest. It was the empty shell fired by my buddy, now wet with my sweat. I twirled it on my fingers for a moment and decided to keep it as a souvenir for my unborn grandchildren.

It was now time to drive straight to the Bannari Temple and stand

before Bannari Devi with my tonsured head bowed in gratitude. That would complete a vow made when I had felt very lonely and was filled with a sense of despair about this mission.

I began walking towards my jeep. As I was about to enter it, I turned back for one last look at Cocoon.

The rooftop blue lamp had found its own rhythm as it revolved during the entire firefight. Incredibly, it had not been hit by a single bullet. Now, it finally ground to a halt, as if to say 'Mission Accomplished'.

All cell phones continued to be on switch-off mode. I tried to call Meena to inform her about the operation's success, something she had always prayed for fervently. But the news flash on BBC, CNN and their Indian counterparts ensured that the element of surprise was lost. Later, when I reached our home in Sathy, a huge crowd greeted me with a traditional aarti. Meena stood behind, an unmistakable look of pride and adulation in her eyes. It would be a while before I could pat and hug her, but sadly, I could never convey my true feelings to her.

The media frenzy also gave rise to persistent rumours that Veerappan had been captured, tortured and executed and that the encounter was entirely fake and stage-managed. Such rumours are an insult to the ethics and calibre of a force like the STF. Veerappan's wife had approached the Madras High Court seeking a CBI probe into the encounter, but the court not only turned down the plea, but complimented the force.

Some people insisted that Veerappan's fingertips were blackened, which showed his fingers had been burned. Actually, ink was applied during the inquest to take his fingerprints for the first time.

There were also rumours about an ambulance moving around in the area a few days before the encounter, which proved the bandit's alleged capture before the officially recorded date. The ambulance in the area was part of our 'hearts and minds' programme, which provided medical aid to the local population. The truth is that Veerappan died due to bullet wounds sustained during the shootout at Padi.

18 October 2004, Monday, 11.10 p.m.

File on Koose Muniswamy Veerappan closed.



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MARCH 21 - APRIL 6, 2013

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An Olympic Catastrophe

OPINION

BY VANESSA BARBARA

The editor of the literary website *A Hortaliça* and a contributing opinion writer.

Can Brazil pull off the Games with only weeks to go?

RIO DE JANEIRO
IT'S official: The Olympic Games in Rio are an unnatural disaster. On June 17, fewer than 50 days before the start of the Games, the state of Rio de Janeiro declared a "state of public calamity." A financial crisis is preventing the state from honoring its commitments to the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the governor said. That crisis is so severe, he said, it could eventually bring about "a total collapse in public security, health, education, mobility and environmental management." The authorities are now authorized to ration essential public services and the state is eligible for emergency funds from the federal government. Measures like these are usually taken for an earth-

quake or a flood. But the Olympics are a man-made, foreseeable, preventable catastrophe. I went to Rio recently to see how preparations for the Games are going. Spoiler: not well. The city is a huge construction site. Bricks and pipes are piled everywhere; a few workers lazily push wheelbarrows as if the Games were scheduled for 2017. Nobody knows what the construction sites will become, not even the people working on them: "It's for the Olympics" was the unanimous reply, followed by speculation about "vents for the judging panels of volleyball or soccer, I guess." I asked the Rio 2016 press office for a tour, but it olympically ignored me. Almost all venues are still un-

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ERIK OMAA

MAUREEN DOWD

In Paris With Boris, Donald and Lemon Tarts

IT DID something in Paris last Saturday night that I've never done before. I went to a restaurant alone for dinner. I know, it's lame that I've always been afraid to go out to public places at night on my own. I tried to get beyond this phobia by going to the movies by myself one Saturday night in Washington, many years ago, after a breakup. But when the lights came up, my ex was sitting in front of me with a pretty date. That cured me of the desire to venture forth solo for another

couple of decades. But I was in France for work for the week and stopped in Paris on the way home. I spent Friday night eating the minibar — salt-and-vinegar potato chips, popcorn, nuts, chocolate and white wine. But by the second night, it seemed too sad to be cooped up in a dark room in the City of Light. So I worked up my nerve and made it as far as the hotel dining room. I was staying on the Left Bank at L'Hotel, where a de-

What would Wilde make of Trump?

pressed Oscar Wilde came to live in 1888, subsidized by the French government, after his release from Reading Gaol. He died there at 46, in a room off the lobby that is now a petite mirrored bar with glossies of famous drop-ins like Mick Jagger and Johnny Depp, and a cocktail

called "Born to be Wilde," made with Bacardi, basil, honey, lime juice and Tabasco. Legend has it that Wilde's last words were: "My wallpaper and I are fighting a duel to the death. One or the other of us has to go." The wallpaper is now rucked gray silk, so Wilde would no doubt like it, and the worn carpet is a suitably wild leopard print. I walked past the bar to the restaur-

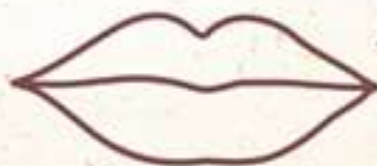
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