





*shattered glass;*

denoting a state of complete devastation, a condition you could never possibly return from; yet picking the pieces back up all the same.

# HOW TO READ MONGA?

There isn't a specific way, but yet:

## 1. Chill Chill Je

2020 has been a hell (literally) of a ride and we're only a little halfway through it. Reminisce the chaotic, arduous yet wonderfully unusual semester with us on your couch, your dinner table or your bed, where ever is comfortable for you. Brew a cup of coffee, blend a glass of smoothie or grab a cup of beer (we don't judge) while you're at it. Chill out and take a breather before we do it all over again in the coming semester!

## 2. Background Music

We made a playlist for you. Yes, specifically for you. Nothing too loud, nothing too sad. A mix of pop, fast and slow, with a sprinkle of indie. Us Editors contributed to it, so now you know what we listen to when it's 4AM

our downtime.

## 3. Read It As You Always Have

This may be a little bit more of a somber edition for those more familiar with past MONGAs. It's smaller and heavier, with almost none of those happy little pictures of campus life. Read it with your usual voice in your head, while forgetting that it's different. There are still those usual snapshots and glimpses into student life that you came for.

## 4. A Message of Hope

It will get better. Students will be flooding back to the campus in no time. Sooner rather than later, we'll be back to our usual routines. Shattered glass can be repaired.



SCAN HERE!  
XOXO, MONGA













# EDITORS' NOTE.

Hello, and welcome to our humble first edition of MONGA 2020, created by the Editors, Cheah Wei Shang, Ivan Liew, Kieran Li Nair, Chua Jia Ying and our various subcommittee members.

This year has not started off great, and we daresay it has been one of the worser years for many of our peers. We started off the year planning the magazine with a certain kind of gump-tion, hoping to surpass or at least match the talent and resourcefulness of our predecessors, as all successors strive for. Needless to say, the plans were derailed before they even left the station.

And so, we have had to make do with what we had. With any academic and sporting events all but cancelled, the vibrant student life that we usually document has been stripped down to a ghost of its former self. We've put in various articles, essays and pictures that are at least still relevant to that of what is MONGA, albeit with more creative works and personal stories than usual.

We do hope that you enjoy this version of MONGA. We won't be stopping here, there will be more to come, courtesy of everyone who is part of our team. Let's get through these darker times together.

For our readers,  
Editors of MONGA 2020.

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# HUMANS OF MONASH.

By: Christie Wong, Irshika, Ivan Liew, Jayshree, Kieran, Ruben, Xenia Lee & Zoe Yap.

Content warning: death, mental illness, sexual assault, etc. If any of these may be distressing to you, please skip this section of MONGA.

"A lot of people say you need to get over it, but you can never get over someone's passing, especially if that person is your family member. One of my relatives told me, you just have to take it one step at a time; you'll never move on from it, you just deal with the pain one day at a time."

- Hyqel

KODAK 400

▶ 43

KODAK 400





"I want people to get to know me first and then what happened because it's just one of the many unfortunate things that people can go through, but it shouldn't be something that defines them. It's possible to get back up from traumas like that and go on with life. At the very least, that is what I'm doing."

- Clary

Rooney, comedienne, sang



"Months after my trip, tragedy struck. One moment, the cities were bustling and lively. Chatter and cheers filled the streets as street performers gathered to entertain. Attractions filled with such reminiscence and beauty. The next thing you know, the streets became deserted and eerily silent as people retreated into the safety of their homes."

- Rowena

"When someone tells you that you can't do it, they're wrong. Only you can tell yourself what you can or can't do. Only your own intuition and hard work can define how you're going to end up. You don't know how good you are until you actually try. Hard work will always pay off."

- Gavyn



KODAK PORTRA 400

43

KODAK PORTRA 400



"I lost everything. Before I joined Monash, my family faced a serious monetary crisis. Life came to a sudden halt. I had a tough time adjusting: I cried, threw tantrums. I was acting like a brat and I regret it. I had to bid farewell to so many things, including exchanging abroad. I watched as my friends did all the things I desperately longed to do."

- Evelyn

Note: you can read these full stories on @musamonga on Instagram.

Inspired by Humans of New York, our photographers and writers document the people of Monash one story at a time.

UNFOLD 2010TX

# Christie.



"I'm diagnosed with clinical depression and severe high functioning anxiety. For 20 years, I didn't know how dismissive I was being towards myself. I was obsessed with always looking fine, not letting what I go through define me. In college, I was a leftover in class as I didn't speak fluent Mandarin like the rest. I was alienated.

I developed severe anxiety every time I went to class. I stopped going to classes early to avoid waiting outside alone, timing my journey from my dorm to college. Even if I did arrive early, I would spend most of my time in a toilet cubicle hiding.

I remember this one incident. I was looking through my notes when an acquaintance whispered to me. 'Hey. I heard them saying you were stupid because you were looking at your notes when the math question was so easy. They were saying things in Mandarin, but it's better if you don't know the rest.'

Every day I would wake up disappointed, wishing I didn't.

This story isn't here to say that I'm weak minded. I want to let everyone know that you are not alone, when you feel like everything in the world is going against you and everyone is out to get you. We are meant to be survivors. My counsellor told me 'A lot of people have to be strong as well, but they choose not to be. They choose to let their circumstances control them, you didn't. Always be grateful for that'.

I'm working on it. One day, I'll get there."



# Liyana.

"I was on a plane before I could remember walking. Knowing how to cycle goodbyes and hellos was in my blood from a very young age. My life was constantly uprooted as I followed my parents 'country-hopping' for my dad's work. I was privileged to be exposed to so many different cultures and people.

However, I had no fixed national identity. I was an amalgamation of Germany, Canada, India and Philippines: a unique blend of cultural norms. Even though my parents are Malaysian, I couldn't call it home because I was raised in equal parts elsewhere.

My relationships with my cousins crumbled due to language barriers and other frustrating ethno-religious factors. Rejecting my Malaysian identity, I tried to be more 'Westernized'. I believed it equalled progressiveness and comfort.

Returning to Malaysia (and not knowing when the next goodbye will be for the first time) made me acknowledge the problematic notion behind that ideal. I found solace in people struggling with similar identity issues and 'fitting in'. I've finally realized something: being a steadfast, proud Malaysian doesn't take anything away from my life in other countries. I still carry the pieces of who I was in everyday doings. To those facing similar plights, embrace the confusion. Be as open as you can be. Find out which puzzle pieces make the best you."



“Staying alone in a foreign country during a global pandemic has made me realize how many things I took for granted.

Not being around my friends for most of my day and not hanging out with them makes me sad. The little things like taking a walk at night, going to get some beers at Rock Café or spending the whole night on campus and drinking chai with my best friends are not so little after all.

My friends are a big part of my life here. They are always up to have fun and do the most random things. I never thought about the impact that they have in my life; they are the ones who cheer me up when I’m sad or need a break from studying all day.

I’m learning to appreciate things that I would usually not even think twice about. Waking up and seeing ducks from my window makes my day. Little things like cooking with my flatmates who I barely spent time with before, watching Korean dramas and dancing to old Bollywood songs make me so happy. Even blasting songs in my room, dancing with my banana plushie and eating oat crunch cookies cheers me up.

Long phone calls at 2AM with my boyfriend, Netflix Partying Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham and doing random push ups on FaceTime made me appreciate the little moments that we usually don’t think much of in a relationship.

Instead of thinking that my life is on hold, I’ve started to live in the moment and have fun.”



**Sakshi.**

"Do you know how it feels like to love something so much but have to suffer because of it? I love performing, but because of my anxiety, I used to not be able to fully enjoy myself. All that overthinking made me doubt my abilities as a singer. In fact, after rehearsals during a school event, I ran straight to the toilet because I had a literal breakdown. All those voices in your head telling you tons of negativity, the discouraging and draining type. So, I stopped.

It wasn't until recently in uni that I finally had the courage to start performing again in front of audiences. I'm forever grateful to the true friends that have stuck by me through thick and thin. When they heard me sing, they encouraged and pushed me in the right direction. Our first gig was at SMR and even though I was feeling hella nervous, I'm still glad I did it. Performing on stage, having the spotlight on you, it's just, other-worldly. The world would just fade away and I felt at peace.

Singing in a way was therapeutic and helped me find my bearings again. I just can't wait for this pandemic to be over. I miss my friends and the jam sessions. The silver lining here is that our band is in the process of composing some originals and we are looking forward to performing once more. Let bygones be bygones and keep moving forward."

# Qistina.





# Melody.

"Your mental illnesses don't make you less worthy in any way. That's a lesson I learned too late.

Three years ago, I was in love. It was genuine, true and everything I could ever wish for, but I was oblivious of it until I no longer had it. I had to lose him to see what I'm worthy of. Had I just believed in him for choosing me, had I just believed that I was good enough to be able to love someone, I wouldn't be haunted by my mistakes.

I kept lying to myself that I was doing fine, but the whole time, I was in constant war with the voices in my head, and more than often, I was at the losing end. Needless to say, the voices appeared to be stronger than my feelings for him.

I began ignoring his texts, avoided him, and eventually pushed him out of my life without any explanation. I loved him so much that I had to let him go - let him be free - because he deserved more than someone who is struggling with herself

Truth is, everyone's broken to a certain extent. The difference lies in how you deal with it. I'm still in an intense battle, but this time, stronger and better. I so badly want to undo my blunders, but they're all in the past. I can only write about my pain in sheer hopes of it helping others.

Your illnesses only define you if you let them. You're equally capable of loving someone wholeheartedly - don't let your demons take that away from you!"



# Indunil.

"Happiness is not something ready made. It comes from your actions".

Travelling between countries has not been the easiest, but I've learned to come to terms with it: Sri Lanka, Qatar, England, back to Sri Lanka and now, Malaysia. Every time I'd adjust to a new country, meet new people, and make great friends, and then it's only a matter of time until I'd have to leave everything behind once again.

Slowly but surely, I've learned to get used to things and be grateful for all the opportunities, memories, and experiences that I'm subjected to. I want to be remembered as someone who had a wonderful time living life, not someone who's miserable with uncertain changes.

I'm always intentional to spark some good energies wherever I am. Happiness, to me, means everything and that's all I care about. It's what I like to project out of me to other people.

I've vividly learned to adjust to different cultures and people - which has helped me grow so much as a person. Embracing everything we're fortunate to have in our life is undeniably the first step to freedom. Life is shorter than we think. We never know what tomorrow brings and all we have is now- so why not make the most out of it?

Sure, you can be held off guard even at your best, but never fail to give optimism another shot; because, at the end of the day, that's what life is about. Besides, how else can we live life to its fullest potential if it isn't for its ups and downs?"

"Ohana means family, and family is everything to me. There was this significant event that had particularly shaped me when I was about 10 or 11 years old. I was molested by a close family friend, and it affected me so much so that I became closed-off, grumpy, and basically a total bitch. It didn't help that I was an only child, I was so self absorbed and I had this complex where I just didn't give a shit about other people. Now, even though I never really told my parents the details of what exactly happened, they were able to connect the dots and were just very supportive and understanding overall which I am very grateful for. Regardless, I still felt ashamed and it caused me to isolate myself from everyone around me. Trust issues and what not.

It wasn't until 7th grade when I realized I couldn't continue living in fear and give him the power to control me. So, I had a major personality shift; my parents would say that I was being possessed by a nice demon now. I think they didn't say angel because I still had my rebellious moments while growing up. Eventually, I started being more vulnerable and opened up to people and just overall be nice to everyone. Fast forward to our first sem in uni, genders class had helped me to accept what happened, that it wasn't my fault and I can now say that I am in a good place where I'm surrounded by loved ones. Since then, I always try to be kind to everyone I meet, and keep in mind that everyone has some kind of shit they are going through; all pains are valid. Not everyone has the same pain tolerance.

Spread the love."



# Sneha.



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By: Ivan Liew, Kieran

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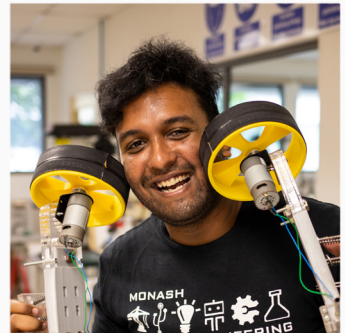


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By: Ivan Liew, Kieran

POSTS

TAGGED









# PROJECT LOCKDOWN

# BRUNEI



Just like that the sun returns to the horizon and takes the stillness of the world in its hand as it sets. It's daunting to experience the tranquillity of the vast sea and the empty roads. With hardly any car in sight, or people at the shore, various thoughts invade our minds with the constant fear of how the world has been in lockdown for over a month now. Brunei has become quiet, too quiet to accept it. COVID-19 has become a massive disruptor dictating the shutdown of countries globally. The impact of the pandemic has reached beyond those who are directly affected by it. Massive economies and businesses have both seen an unfavourable turn of events predicting an inevitable downturn which may become just one of the long-term effects of the virus. It is undeniable that our lives have tragically changed since the past couple weeks, however as humans we possess the ability to dominate our thoughts. Now is the time to focus on the silver lining; the peaceful roads, clear skies and the stillness of everything and the earth finally is breathing. Tough times should make us ponder about the uncertainty of life and how minute we are. Amid all the chaos, it leaves us in awe to realise how things may be a blessing in disguise.

– Mehar Allidina



Ever since the Restricted Movement Order in Malaysia - that has since been extended - other countries have soon followed, some have even taken a step further and gone into lockdown such as Brunei. The once iconic streets that promise a smooth drive throughout your journey are now deserted, leaving the lovely neighbourhood once full of life and vigor now looks like a ghost town. On the bright side, eco-fascists would be thrilled to celebrate Mother Nature healing our planet Earth from all the damage we have inflicted on it over the years. The sky has never been so clear and neither the sea so blue. Indeed it is a beautiful sight to see and heartwarming to know that the Earth is recovering. However, the truth remains, once this is all over, the virus has been contained and a vaccine has been found, will we revert back to our bad habits or will we be conscientious enough to care for the environment better? Know your facts, the innocent are paying the cost for others' greed. "How dare you" indeed.

- Xenia Lee

Life goes on, tentatively, as the sun sets over the South China Sea. With no difference as the rest of the world does, their daily routines start with a bit more caution, with a touch more thinking and for some, perhaps a sprinkle of discomfort and a sliver of distress. Underlying each thought, in layers, are the aftershocks of the aftershocks of the pandemic that has ground the world to a stop in screeching halts, in some places more than the others. To Kuala Belait, where a short distance to the west lies Brunei's completely closed borders, there is only that small change in attitude and outlook. Anyone can go out and relish the sunset on that beach vista, unknowing of the many who can not do the same.

- Wei Shang

# JOHOR

A young woman with brown hair tied back, wearing a white face mask, is shown in profile from the chest up. She is looking towards the right side of the frame. In the background, there is a wide, empty asphalt road with white lane markings. The road is flanked by green trees and a clear sky. A street lamp is visible in the distance. The overall scene is quiet and still.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words and in this case, a lot more is being said. The empty road, with not even a figure in sight, sums up the harsh reality we are forced to live in today. Sometimes it takes tough times like these to make us realise the importance of every moment and a thousand moments that just go by without even a thought. The multiple things that we cannot live without every day, yet we seem ungrateful for them. When this passes by, we will have a whirlwind of questions to ask whether we want to return to the normal life or bring some transformations in our new routine. We might wonder whether we can live without the things we didn't have during this period like vacations, clothes, or anything luxurious. It reiterates the idea that these times have altered our lifestyle.

After this, I hope we spend more time reconnecting with our families and friends, take more pictures willingly, start chasing our dreams and realise the gravity of just a touch, one last hug, in-person gatherings and all those little moments that we allow easily to slip from our minds. If anything, we should have learned from this, is that we need each other now more than ever.

**- Mehar Allidina**

Throughout the MCO, existential questions that plague us sound like: attend tutorial on Zoom or watch Netflix? When will it be over? The WiFi is slower than usual because everyone is home, our fathers keep buying the wrong vegetables, while we continue to resent how boring our bedrooms are getting.

What the MCO has really done is magnify a form of suffering that will remain invisible to us: social inequality. The pandemic has unpacked how wealth affects people, and the narrative that unpacking leaves you with is that poverty is being walled off in these trying times. Labourers and bottom feeders are stripped of their only means of survival: work. Many of them are paid by the day, meaning their wallets will be empty throughout the partial lockdown. Relief measures will cushion the fall of many, but not all. Those with no buffer (money, food or medicine) will find themselves in extremis.

And yet... true to habit, trivial thoughts emerge.

When can I go back to the gym? I'm losing my gains.

**- Patricia In**



The hospital seems busier than usual. Nurses clutching clipboards bustled around and the wards were so crowded that it reminded me more of a busy bus stop than a healthcare centre.

I walked out and just as I was about to take a breath of fresh air: “Oi wear face mask lah!” I didn’t know Malaysians could be that disturbed by my breathing mechanisms. It’s not like I’m going to infect or anything. Moreover, what happened to the times when people would litter used tissues or spit on roads?

My stomach began grumbling, I walked to the nearest grocery store to grab something to snack on (Gardenia maybe?) Why is there a queue to enter a normal convenience store? I stepped back to look at the signboard just to make sure my mind isn’t playing tricks on me. Nope, still Pasar Raya Ahmad.

Great, people are hoarding food now? Is it a TikTok trend or something? Like the one where people were wasting milk cartons. I sighed and picked up whatever that’s left and called it a meal.

- Irishka

Social distancing seems like a common phrase these days. “Stand 1.5 meters away from everyone and everything around you!” It does seem to give out a bleak visual to accompany an even bleaker situation. However, I personally feel like social distancing is an act of solidarity. We agree to have barely any contact, physical or social, with anyone to protect ourselves, our families and our society. We cooperate and we work together, we have patience and we are kind to those who need help the most. Sundry shops that operate to serve our needs, making sure stock is enough to fill up their shelves for us, they deserve more credit than just being storeowners. Because of them, we have what we have in our kitchen right now, we are able to put food down on our dining tables and our family won’t be going hungry during the ‘lockdown’.

- Christie Wong



# KUALA LUMPUR



Those brick red chairs whisk me back to another time - an entirely different place. The sounds of people shouting out orders, humidity gathering itself on my skin in the form of sweat. The smell of char kuey teow and sizzling meat from a nearby stall. And most importantly - the burst of flavours on my tongue, jostling each other for room on my tastebuds.

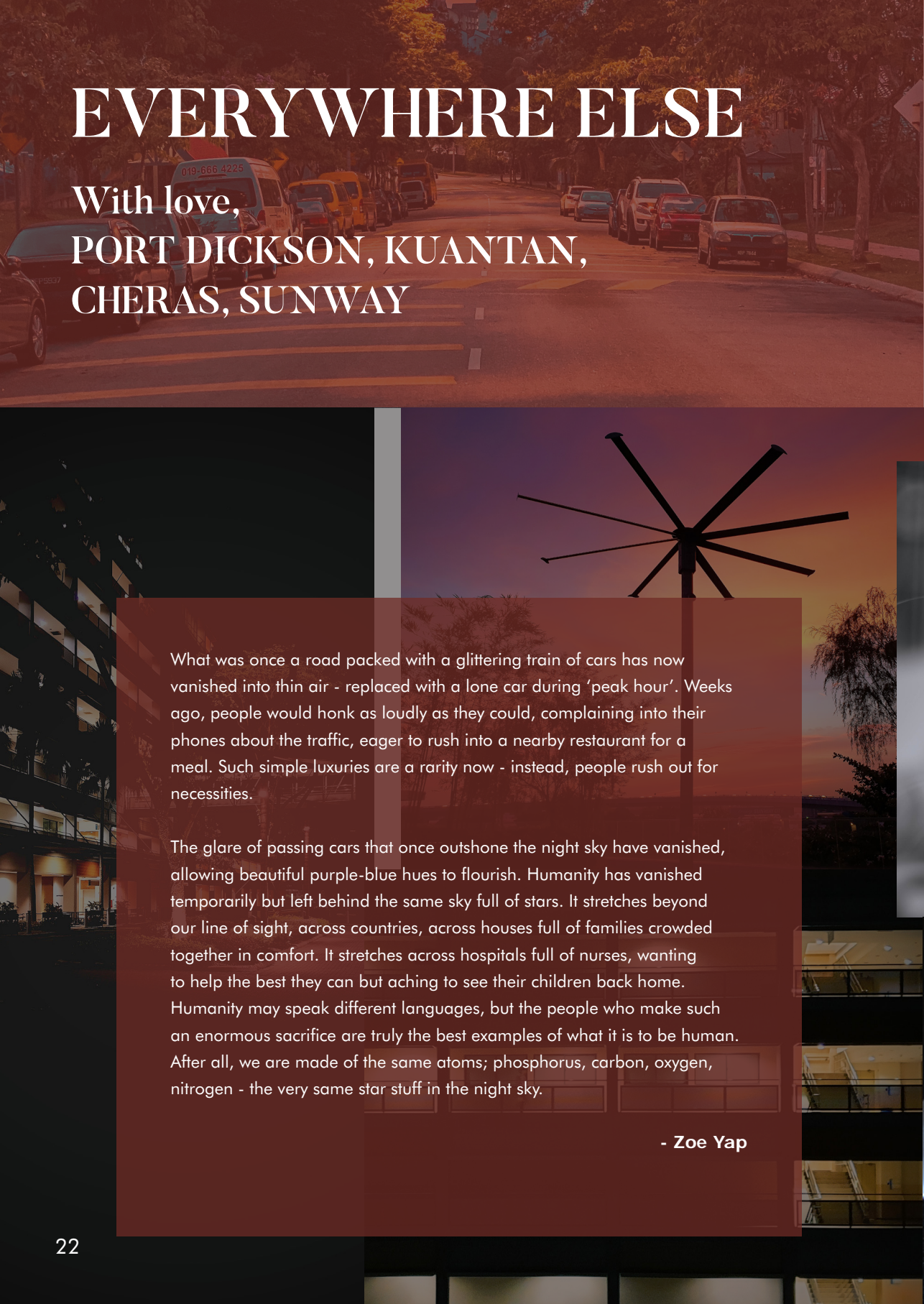
All of that is gone now. The kopitiam is now void of chatter and noise, but silence screams louder than ever. What is left behind is a few stalls, shying away from one another like scared children. What is left is an owner of a chicken rice stall, struggling to sell more than a 100 packets each day, trying to encourage customers to visit for dinner too. Dwindling customers are silent behind the masks stretched across their faces. The difference between the kopitiam merely weeks ago and now is scary, strange, every fearful word there is. There are people longing to go out, and people longing to return home. There are people who are able to return but unable to touch their loved ones.

Hawker centres are a constant, something I've always taken for granted. I'm sure I speak for all Malaysians when I say I really, really look forward to the day it returns to what it once was - crowded, humid and familiar.

- Zoe Yap

# EVERYWHERE ELSE

With love,  
PORT DICKSON, KUANTAN,  
CHERAS, SUNWAY



What was once a road packed with a glittering train of cars has now vanished into thin air - replaced with a lone car during 'peak hour'. Weeks ago, people would honk as loudly as they could, complaining into their phones about the traffic, eager to rush into a nearby restaurant for a meal. Such simple luxuries are a rarity now - instead, people rush out for necessities.

The glare of passing cars that once outshone the night sky have vanished, allowing beautiful purple-blue hues to flourish. Humanity has vanished temporarily but left behind the same sky full of stars. It stretches beyond our line of sight, across countries, across houses full of families crowded together in comfort. It stretches across hospitals full of nurses, wanting to help the best they can but aching to see their children back home. Humanity may speak different languages, but the people who make such an enormous sacrifice are truly the best examples of what it is to be human. After all, we are made of the same atoms; phosphorus, carbon, oxygen, nitrogen - the very same star stuff in the night sky.

- Zoe Yap



They say that nature will eventually reclaim what belongs to her, all it takes is just time. Now, two months into the movement control order, with one extension looming after another, overgrown shrubs are all that is within our sights, everywhere. It's truly a sight to behold, but equally terrifying how much some parts of our cities are starting to resemble a post-apocalyptic wasteland.

- who?



Things changed so quickly within the span of a month. Rewind time to a month back, and I was casually cruising down the alley with a pack of my other cat mates. Now? I'm confined to a cage, occasionally, I get to go out to see the Sun and answer nature's calling. When it's 8 PM, I see my master running straight in, locking up, chaining the gates of the house. He's itching to get out, he just can't stand sitting tight within the corners of his home. What about me? I've been doing this all day. At least, I'm getting more food, more time with my master.

Something tells me, despite the brevity of this extended lockdown that seems to be happening, I'm quite certain me and Captain America would gladly be able to say; I can do this all day. Maybe not all year long, I miss my daily hustle on the street. But I'll be fine, I'll get by, I'll be okay. For now, it's almost time to get back to my cat-nap.

- Ruben Joseph



# MONCH!





# Monash

# Cook Off!



# MONCH! MONGA REVIEWS: MONGA FRIED CHICKEN

Written by: Cheah Wei Shang - Edited by: Chua Jia Ying - Photographer: Ivan

The conversation went something like this:

“Did you know there’s a restaurant called Monga that serves fried chicken?”

The Editors’ Team collectively: **Holy shit.**



On that note, we drove to MONGA Fried Chicken in SS15.

It wasn't far from Monash, only needing a 15 minute drive. The place itself was at the most outer rings of the heart of SS15's trendy/overpriced district, its aesthetics matching the vibe of the district.

You'd think that MUSA Monga had hit it big, to have a restaurant named after us. We had the opportunity to talk to the owner and found out that the restaurant is actually Taiwanese-owned!

With that being said, it turns out the name of the store was inspired by the 2010 Taiwanese movie, 艋舺 (romanized: beng kah) starring Ethan Juan and Mark Chao amongst many others.

Okay, we have to admit, we didn't know much about the restaurant besides its name. Turns out, it's a really premium version of Shihlin's (which we're sure you've heard of it) chicken. Costing at least RM16 and above for a single piece of chicken, with sets upward of RM20, the mind will balk at the price, especially for the starving student.

Once we got past the reality of how expensive our dinners were going to be, we quickly placed our orders at the store-front. There are 6 flavours of fried chicken on their menu which you can choose from and you can opt to make your meal into a combo with their wide selection of sides and drinks.

Here's what we ordered:

1. The King (seasoned with Salt & Pepper) RM14.90
2. Hot Chick (Homemade Chili Powder) RM14.90
3. Taiker (Japanese sauce and Seaweed) RM14.90
4. Chee-Z Signature (Cheese & Tomato sauce) RM17.90



Since we topped up for a combo meal, we also got to try out some of their sides and drinks:

Sides: Seaweed Chips

Drinks: Black Dragon (Brown Sugar Bubble Milk Tea) & Green Dragon (Matcha Bubble Milk Tea with Brown Sugar)





Once we've placed our orders, we moved inside to secure ourselves a table. Early impressions were that the place was not at all suited for large groups. Our group of 4 had to squeeze into a small round table. The tiny store was split into a seating area and an open kitchen where you can watch your dinner being prepared. Although an open kitchen, ventilation was good so we didn't leave smelling entirely like fried chicken. Overall, the atmosphere was nice – well lit, not too noisy and air-conditioned. And the toilet was unanimously voted pretty good.

Customers are supposed to self-collect their orders at the window once their number is called, so no service crew bustling back and forth in the tight space. Service took a little longer than we expected but we assumed it was because we came during dinner time and the restaurant was packed with a good amount of customers then. But hey, as long as we got our food, it's no biggie!

## **BUT THE CHICKEN, BOY O BOY, THE CHICKEN.**

It was literally the juiciest piece of chicken this author has ever eaten. And it wasn't small either, the whole piece being larger than the size of our four combined fists. The generous portion size had the girls struggling to finish their chicken. If you're a small eater, we'd recommend you share!



Though, the seasoning only earned a not-bad, with Hot Chick not being nearly as spicy as we had hoped for, and the cheese in Chee-Z tasting only a little dissimilar from store bought. The Taiker was seaweedy but a touch too salty like the original, The King. While the crust of the chicken fell short in the seasoning criteria, it was a 10/10 in the crunch criteria. The same goes for the seaweed chips we ordered. The cut of the chips was thicker than your usual McDonald's fries but in terms of seasoning, we couldn't really taste much of the seaweed.

As for the drinks, they were pretty standard brown sugar bubble tea, their sweetness balancing out the saltiness of the chicken. One thing we noticed was how many pearls were in that cup! It was literally a never-ending chain of pearls, you could take a minute long sip and the pearls would just keep coming. But, if you don't have much of a sweet tooth, these drinks might be too

## HERE ARE OUR FINAL THOUGHTS ON MONGA FRIED CHICKEN:

The consensus was "not-bad-pretty-good, will come again". Despite having to squeeze together on one round table, all of us ended dinner with more-than-filled and extremely satisfied bellies. We vowed to come again, but only if it were free!

### **Our ratings:**

- ◇ Food – 7/10
- ◇ Ambience – 8/10
- ◇ Service - 7/10 (for service time), but 10/10 (for the friendly staff members!)
- ◇ Toilet – 9/10

And with that, we're proud to say, Monga Fried Chicken is...  
**MONCH approved!**

### **MONGA FRIED CHICKEN**

**Operating Hours:** 11am–11pm (Mon-Thurs, Sun), 11am–12am (Fri, Sat)

**Address:** No. 46, Jalan SS 15/4d, Ss 15, 47500 Subang Jaya, Selangor

**Contact Number:** +60 12-901 5558

**Online Orders:** [https://mongakl.oddle.me/en\\_MY/](https://mongakl.oddle.me/en_MY/)



**NOTE:** Monga Fried Chicken is still open for delivery during the lockdown period. So, if you're craving some fried chicken (like we are), this is the perfect chance to give Monga a try!

# MONCH! DAPAO EDITION

## TIN HEONG CURRY NOODLES BY JIA YAO

### CURRY CHICKEN NOODLES

- ◇ Curry was not too spicy, suitable for people who can't handle spicy food
- ◇ Gave generous amount of clams, noodles, chicken (might not finish noodles)



### CHAR SIEW MEE W/ MINCED PORK



- ◇ Minced pork was delicious, chewy
- ◇ Generous amount of char siew
- ◇ Sauce were provided adequately on noodles; Not too dry
- ◇ Char siew was well seasoned and crisp

### SALTED CHICKEN RICE

- ◇ Salt on chicken not evenly distributed; some pieces saltier than the others
- ◇ Rice is slightly dry, great if more gravy is provided
- ◇ A little too salty (personal taste)
- ◇ Generous portion of everything
- ◇ Texture of chicken was great





## CHAR SIEW FAN



- ◇ Well seasoned, perfect amount of salt
- ◇ Crisp
- ◇ Generous portion
- ◇ Rice was dry

### OVERALL

Delivery Service @ Cheras, Ampang, KL area  
COD, Online Payment

Generous servings for everything; rice was a little dry. Reasonably priced, especially delivery fees. (Can look up on FB for exact amount).

### TIN HEONG CURRY NOODLES

**Address:** No. 26GF, Jalan Perdana 2/3, Pandan Perdana 55300  
Ampang, Kuala Lumpur

**Contact Number:** +6011-1870 9818

**Facebook:** Tin Heong Curry Noodles - 天香咖喱面





## *LAU TEE KUAY TEOW* BY JARED AND TATIANA

Lau Tee Kuey Teow has been around since my grandma's generation. The store's recipe of delicious mee pok has been passed on to generations.

Despite it not having a fancy store, many customer's still visit it till this day to get a taste of its springy mee pok.



Mostly the older generation, visit the shop with their friends to remind themm of those nostalgic years. Their springy noodles with the hot yet not so spicy chili sauce makes their mee pok savory. Combined with their home-made fishballs and meatballs, this tasty yet affordable dish remains famous in Johor Bahru.

Their kuey teow is also one on their famous dishes. The difference between their store is that they add bean sprout (aka taueh) into their soup.

While this might have some two-sided opinions, it surely remains a characteristic of their store.



Teh tarik is one of the traditional drinks of Malaysia. Mixed with tea and condensed milk, giving it the tea bitterness but sweet taste of condensed milk. It is an iconic Malaysian drink that everyone loves.



# RESTORAN SIN KEE BY PRAVEEN THOMAS

Restoran Sin Kee, a 30-year old restaurant established in the heart of Brickfields, KL.

The restaurant's signature dish is it's Hainanese Steam Rice. Super mouthwatering

- ◇ White rice steamed with pork, fishcake, squid and egg and vegetables.
- ◇ Covered with thick sauce
- ◇ Best eaten as soon as it is put on the table, does not taste as good if kept for some time

## SWEET AND SOUR PORK

- ◇ The portion of meat provided is worth the price
- ◇ Meat is tasty
- ◇ The sauce is thick and delicious
- ◇ Overall better than most restaurants I've tried

Both costs Rm11.50





## *SPADES BURGERS* BY SHAUN

Spades is honestly the way to go when you're craving juicy burgers. I got the chickenception combo with fries and the beefception with the porkers and owh boy it was a mouthful. Here's my take on it.

The chickenception was extraordinary, and before you think that's a stretch it's cheesy goodness and its crunchy savoury bacon bits will prove you wrong.

The porklets that came with it however tasted like the good old chicken nuggets, not much of a wow factor.

Now, the beefception on the other hand was good but quite dry. When topped off with the BBQ sauce provided, it was a little too sweet for my liking but if you're into the sweet-sour vibe you're absolutely going to love it. Overall the portion was decently sized, more than filling and if you're a first timer let's just say you're first bite is going to be a memorable one.

# Monash Cook Off

STUCK AT HOME

## SALMON RICE BOWL BY TEE KAI LOON



Written and edited by: Chua Jia Ying  
& Cheah Wei Shang

With one extension after another, it's no doubt that the Movement Control Order that has been in place since the 18th of March has got us feeling out of touch with reality. "Boring, very boring," as Kai Loon would describe it. On the bright side, it's the perfect opportunity to hone your culinary skills!

Kai Loon recalls having a few ingredients lying around in his kitchen and decided to try putting something together. He calls his dish the Salmon Rice Bowl. For those of you who are really missing and craving Kubis & Kale or any other Poke Bowls, you might want to read on to find out how to make your own version at home.

Everyone has their own preference when it comes to Poke Bowls and the freedom to choose your own toppings/condiments is what makes them so delectable. Poke is one of the main dishes in Native Hawaiian Cuisine. Traditionally, Poke is actually made with Tuna or Octopus instead of Salmon, paired with condiments and seasonings such as maui onions, Inamona, Limu, soy sauce, green onions and sesame oil. More recently, these toppings have been adapted and influenced by Japanese cuisine. The Poke we find in Malaysia are often topped with fresh vegetables (carrots, cucumber, corn), edamame, ebiko, sesame seeds, seaweed, furikake and more!

So, Kai Loon, what are the main ingredients in your dish and how do they differ from your traditional Poke?

"It's the big mix of random ingredients. The bottom half the bowl is steamed Japanese rice. On top of that are layers of shredded red cabbage, edamame, beansprouts, pomegranates and guacamole. The star of the dish is the baked salmon, seasoned generously with salt before baking 45 minutes in the oven. To top the dish, I added some ebiko (fish roe) and sesame seeds." ***(Kai Loon says that's all for his dish, but we spot with our amateur eyes some freshly chopped chives).***

"Oh! Those beansprouts are from my garden," he adds on, proudly. *(Pro tip: Growing your own herbs and vegetables can really cut down on your monthly grocery bills!)*

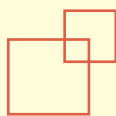
We can already tell that the dish is a feast for the eyes through the picture, but more importantly, how was the taste?

"Refreshing, fruity, herby, lemon-y and fishy." According to Kai Loon, the acidity comes from his homemade guacamole. Guacamole is an avocado-based dip which usually calls for lime juice, cilantro and jalapenos. However, Kai Loon didn't have any jalapenos on hand at the time so, he mashed the avocados with some potatoes instead.

That sure sounds like one filling dish packed with an abundance of nutrients. It isn't a difficult dish to recreate and really easy for you to put your own spin on it, so Kai Loon hopes that you'll give it a try at home!

Kai Loon, before you go, we have one last question; what are you going to do with your winnings?

"I'm going to buy a new grill pan."





# GOOD OL' DOUGHNUTS BY LEONG PUIYEE

Written and edited by: Chua Jia Ying & Cheah Wei Shang

Ah, doughnuts. Most of us are familiar with these round confectionaries, always glazed to perfection and will never seem to fail to satisfy our sweet tooth. Pui Yee's usual remedy for her particular malady is Krispy Kreme. Yet our current situation has made short stock of her type of medicine. So, she decided to make her own.

*"I don't really have a name for this, it's just sugar and chocolate glazed doughnuts."*

Doughnuts are fried pieces of dough that are round or ring-shaped! Traditional doughnut recipes call for the dough to be deep-fried, however, being more health conscious nowadays, people have developed a way to make these delicious treats more healthy and less guilty; by baking them! Alas, baked doughnuts can hardly measure up to those deep-fried, sweet, delectable treats from Krispy Kreme, Big Apple or Dunkin' Donuts!

So, Pui Yee, what's the inspiration behind this dish?

*"Actually, yes. There are two reasons behind this. First, I've been craving Krispy Kreme doughnuts and second, it was my boyfriend's birthday. He's a fan doughnuts just as much as I am and I thought why not kill two birds with one stone? So I made some doughnuts, took some pictures and sent it to him."*



Wait, you made doughnuts for him but only sent him pictures?

“(laughs) Yeah! Since I can’t leave home.”

Okay, that’s kinda funny and sad. But, good on you for being a responsible citizen and obeying the MCO! So, tell us more about how you made these delicious doughnuts.

“Lemme get my recipe book. The dough calls for flour, sugar, salt, yeast and eggs. Oh, and also milk and melted butter. Make sure to mix the ingredients until smooth. Then, use a cup or something round to cut the shapes. Finally, fry it until deliciously golden brown! I recommend using tasteless oil like canola or sunflower.”

What toppings did you opt for the doughnuts?

“I made some glazes, a sugar and a chocolate glaze. The sugar glaze is made by mixing milk, powdered sugar and butter and the chocolate glaze was done with just store bought dark chocolate which I melted down in a bowl.”

That sounds delicious and we can’t wait to gorge on some doughnuts when this is all over. Before we go, Pui Yee, we have to ask; what are you going to do with the sweet, sweet money?

“I’m gonna split it with my mom for groceries, and then those delicious Krispy Kreme doughnuts.”

*If you’re looking for something to satisfy your Krispy Kreme withdrawal, here’s Pui Yee’s doughnut recipe!*

## DOUGH

- » All-purpose flour 280g
- » Sugar 3 tbsp
- » Salt ½ tbsp
- » Egg 1
- » Whole Milk 120g
- » Melted Butter(Unsalted) 40g
- » Dry yeast 7g

## GLAZE

- » Powdered Sugar 250g
- » Melted Butter(Unsalted) 75g
- » Milk 4 tbsp
- » Vanilla Extract 1 tbsp
- » Bitter-sweet chocolate (amount to your liking)

## CULTURAL FOOD

# SAMBAL MATAH FRIED CHICKEN BY TANTYA PUTRIMILENIA



Written by: Patricia In Wan Ting

It goes without saying that self-isolation has had some surprising spillover effects, notably people exploring their culinary sides. Tantya, who has been pushed to the kitchen during the lockdown, is no exception.

Originally from Bali, Indonesia, ‘Sambal Matah’ can be translated loosely into ‘raw sambal’, or ‘raw chilli sauce’. Tantya first had a taste of Sambal Matah at a cafe in her hometown, but it was with ‘Ikan Gindari’ which is a type of fish. It left a lasting impression on her. “It tastes really good, it’s savoury, tangy, and in the right balance!”

The defining characteristic of Sambal Matah is its spiciness and freshness. It can be eaten with almost anything, including grilled seafood or even roasted pork belly.

Alright, Tantya, what inspired the dish?

“(laughs) So I couldn’t sleep one night. Suddenly, I received a notification from the Indonesian Community group chat about a ‘Monash Cultural Food Cook-Off’. I wanted to do it, but I didn’t know what to cook. I considered Rendang, but it would be too difficult to make, and I was like, I cannot possibly make this! So I kept researching until I found Sambal Matah – which seemed easy to make. I recreated this dish with fried chicken and a sunny-side up, just like what’s trending right now: rice boxes.”

You're making me hungry. How do you prepare this dish?

I first separated the ingredients into three portions: to make the chicken, the Sambal Matah, and the egg.

I used chicken breast cubes for the chicken, then I fried it with wheat flour and corn flour, chilli flakes, garlic powder, salt, pepper and an egg.

The Sambal itself is simple because it does not need to be cooked. You just use different chopped ingredients to place on top of the fried chicken. The ingredients used in the Sambal Matah are shallots, lime leaves, lemongrass, garlic, chilli, lime, sugar, salt. These ingredients need to be chopped, mixed, and then combined with hot coconut oil. The chilli used can be personalised to a person's spice level.

As for the fried egg... I used an egg, salt, pepper and thyme. But thyme is optional."

Any other fun facts about the dish?

"Hmm... no I guess not. I never really planned this. I just couldn't sleep one night, and the next day, I found myself at AEON shopping for ingredients to make this."

I see. Did you like to cook before?

"No. Surprisingly, no. I only started cooking during the Covid-19 quarantine period. I started trying many different recipes for baking and cooking. I personally prefer cooking."

So would you say you're a natural at cooking?

"(laughs) I don't know. I just try different recipes. I do a lot of experimenting in the kitchen."

Okay last question, what are you planning to do with the money you won?

"I'm planning to open an online business where I can sell the dish to people who pre-ordered it online. But I'm changing the rice from white rice to lime leaves rice to add a touch of uniqueness."

## CULTURAL FOOD

# PRAWN MEE BY LIM TIAN FU



Written by: Cheah Wei Shang and Patricia In Wan Ting

It's easy to eat food in Malaysia, given the amount and variety of dishes in every corner of the country. But to remake the dishes... apparently it's easy as well, according to Lim Tian Fu. He calls his dish, even himself remarking that it's nothing spectacular, "Prawn Noodles".

Prawn Noodles, or in Penang Hokkien Mee (it's a whole discussion, don't @ me), or in KL, Hae Mee, is one of the staples of Hokkien (a subculture of the ethnic Chinese) dishes, believed to be brought from the Fujian province in China all the way to Penang, where it has then spread through the rest of the peninsula.

For those wanting a street food-esque Prawn Noodle experience, there are plenty of hawkers and kopitiams in KL. If you're willing to travel a little, the Wai Sek Kai (embellished translation: Hawker

Street or colloquially, Food Paradise) in SS2 has a great Prawn Noodle. The best time to visit would be at night, after 7pm.

The main accentuate of the dish is usually the broth, where prawn shells and shallots are boiled up to 8 hours to create an extremely fragrant and delicious soup, whereby the soup is poured onto the noodles and various toppings added to the dish. But if you don't want to wait 8 hours, and can neither time travel nor nap that long, fret not, Tian Fu has a cheat code for you.

*I solemnly swear that I am up to no advertising purposes:*



So, Tian Fu, can you tell me why you wanted to make this dish?

"Well, you can say I just really missed the dish, and then one day I just went out, saw some Prawn Noodles and decided to make Prawn Noodles. I hadn't eaten it in a long, long time, it just struck me at the moment: 'Why don't I just make some Prawn Noodles?'"

How exactly do you make this sumptuous dish?

"This dish is very, very easy to make. There's actually even instructions on how much water to how much paste you should use on the packet. It just takes boiling the water and adding the paste to make the soup.

I just wanna say that the rest of the dish is very flexible. You can just use any store bought noodles and simple toppings. I used yellow noodles in my case. The toppings I used were fried shallots, fishcakes, pork slices, kangkung, boiled eggs and prawns. You can just boil the toppings for a few minutes and then add them to the dish."

In other words, it's just instant noodles with some extra, simple steps?

"(laughs) Yeah, basically. Like I said, it's very easy."

How did your dish taste like?

"Obviously, it tasted like prawns. Very spicy too, I would go for this if you like spicy seafood."

Alright then, thanks a lot! Wait, before we go, what would you do with the money?

"I would just buy more ingredients, and make more food. I love food!"

# BROWNIE ICE CREAM CAKE

BY MARIAM ZAIDI



Written by: Christie Kitlam Wong

Ah cakes, the one true constant in life, a food that even the lactose intolerant will risk their bowels for. Fun fact: the brownie was named for its colour. I know! Anyway, brownies are bars of chocolate-y cake-but-not-a-cake that you see in those American shows. Honestly, this author has never tasted one.

Ever since quarantine happened way back almost 3 months ago, I'm almost sure that everytime we open social media, most of us will be blessed by stories and posts of people cooking and of course, baking. What's a lockdown story without at least looking at something trendy online and attempting it in your own kitchen? For Mariam it is no exception.

So tell me, how did you come up with such a unique looking cake?

"I call it the brownie ice cream cake. It's kind of a funny story actually. I saw it on Pinterest and tried to make an ice cream cake with a magic shell topping. I ended up forgetting to freeze it beforehand and the topping ended up mixing into the ice cream. Hence, the brown layer we all see on top (laughs). I had to refreeze everything and improvise with the biscuits and other stuff because it was too late to go out during the lockdown. Another thing was that I was making it for guests so it had to look good, even though it ended up looking nothing like the one from Pinterest. "

Would you say you have a sweet tooth since you made such a sweet treat?

"Funnily enough, I don't actually eat a lot of sweets myself because I'll get sick. I prefer making them for other people because desserts make everyone happy."

That is very sweet of you. Have you been making since you were young or was it something that sprung up during the lockdown?

"I love cooking and baking so I've been doing it since I was a kid. In Malaysia, I don't get to bake as much since I don't have much time. Of course, I would feel more at home in my own kitchen."

I see. So did anyone special encourage you to join the cook-off?

"My sister kind of did because she's usually the photographer for my creations and because I didn't tell any of my friends to vote, we thought there's no harm in sending the picture because I wouldn't win anyway. I had no expectations of winning at all."

Things turned out for the better and you won anyway with that beautiful creation of yours. I can never stop staring at all. Would you mind telling me how you made it?

"Alright. So, I used your typical brownie mix where I baked the brownies according to instructions and added it to the bottom of my preferred pan. Then I layered the ice cream over the brownie and froze it. You can skip the freezing if you want a colour similar to the picture. I made the magic shell by adding a 1:2 ratio of coconut oil to chocolate chips and heated it in a saucepan until it melted together. I then added the hot mixture over the ice cream. Be careful because the chocolate solidifies if the ice cream is frozen beforehand and mixes into the ice cream if not. Then I topped it with my preferred toppings and froze it for 4-5 hours."

Wow! That seems like an easy recipe to follow, even for beginners like me. Alright, what do you plan to do with the money that you've won?

"I'd like to buy something nice for my sister or my friends. Or maybe I'd save it up."

## DESSERTS

# MOCHA CAKE BY KOK XUE LIN



Written by: Christie Kitlam Wong

Baking comes easily for some but while for others, not so. Based on the picture, we all know which category Xue Lin falls into. One surprising fact is that while she has magic hands when it comes to sweets, she doesn't consume as much as she makes.

Mocha is typically a blend of chocolate and coffee, and mocha cake is the same thing in cake form. The tastes usually are varying balances of bittersweet, with some taking the coffee flavour to new dimensions by adding kahlua (coffee flavoured liqueur). Even though it's found in your everyday bakeries and cafes, Xue Lin has her own take on the cake (heh) above.

To start, what would you call this cake?

"It's mocha cake with chocolate mocha cream and walnut crumb filling."

Wow, that sounds heavenly! What inspired you to make this cake, any interesting backstory to it?

"It's actually a birthday cake I made for my best friend for her 21st birthday. Since I couldn't celebrate it with her due to this quarantine, I thought it'd be great to make it up to her with a homemade birthday cake. (laughs) I love baking for other people."



That is very sweet of you and I'm sure she loved it. I can see that you enjoy giving your treats out to other people, rather than keeping them to yourself.

"Yes! Sweets make everyone happy and it's like a win-win situation for me because baking is my healing space and the fact that what I bake can make someone else happy is like a big bonus. My friend was the one who encouraged me to join this competition since I was already baking, so I took the leap of faith and joined. "

I'm very glad you listened to her then, that cake looks fantastic. Now, let me in on your secrets as to how I can make that masterpiece of yours in my own kitchen as well?

"It's a genoise cake which means it's more of a sponge-like cake. I actually found the recipe on Youtube but I have it written down here. So to make the mocha sponge cake, you need to make the coffee mixture first by adding butter, hot milk and coffee powder together. Then you'll need to sift the cake flour a couple of times to ensure the texture of the cake is fine. Separate the egg yolks from the whites and make meringue by adding sugar in three batches into the whites, beating them until they reach a 'soft but not too stiff peak' stage. Next, add the yolks and beat them until they're all incorporated. Following that, sift the cake flour and fold it in gently with a spatula. When that's done, add some of the batter into the coffee mixture prepared earlier and mix that too. Then we pour that mixture into the cake batter and mix everything gently to prevent too much air from being removed. Lastly, pour the batter into a 6 inch cake mould and bake at 160 degrees for 35 minutes."

Whew! That sounds like a lot of work just to make the cake! Tell me about the toppings.

"Well, there are three components for that. First would be the mocha syrup. You basically just mix water, sugar, cocoa powder and coffee together. For the mocha cream frosting, just boil the heavy cream and melt the chocolate and coffee powder into the cream. Make sure to let the mixture cool sufficiently. Lastly, the crumbs are just a handful of toasted walnuts and crushed McVities biscuits. Very simple. "

It seems like you have a lot of passion when it comes to baking! Last question, what do you plan to do with the money that you've won?

"Well, I'd like to buy more baking tools."

*That seems like a sensible thing to me. Make sure to check out the same article on our website to find the ingredient list of Xue Lin's cake!*



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You're five years old when you learn you're not really as cookie-cutter as everyone else around you seems to be, from the tone of your skin to the quarrels that serve as lullabies through the night. You're a hero set out on a grand quest too quickly, delegated to mutism because that's just easier for everyone.

You're fifteen years old and expelling the linings of your innards before the fleeting thought of maybe this isn't right stares back at you through the bottom of a toilet bowl, through the haze of your latest overdose.

You think you'll be twenty five when you can finally draw out laughter from the bottom of your bowels, when you'll finally feel like you want to stay grounded in your body, among the camaraderie you're owed from the reel of coming-of-age films you've lived vicariously through, but instead you're sat in a pool of tears in your therapist's office finally admitting to yourself that you deserve better than what people and society's lobotomized you into thinking of yourself as.

This isn't a sob story, really. It's everyone's story. That's the catch, isn't it?

The ideal suburban life isn't as typical or as attainable as we're conditioned into thinking. Maybe you've gone through your whole life never once holding another person's clammy hands in the back of a classroom, maybe you've never gone a day not quelling your tears into the creases of a pillow. Maybe the thing awry in your life only ever seems to belong to yourself, so this isn't for you, right?

But this is still an ode to you, especially. It's an ode to everyone who's ever felt uncomfortable in their own skin, whether it be a zit on the tip of your nose or a dysphoria that's ingrained into your bones. If you're heart's got the habit of beating too fast in your chest for people you're told you can't fall for, if the only way you seem like you can properly make up for your existence is by putting yourself down, down, and further down yet.

I see you, and I love you. You're worth more than you'll ever realise, and you know that, too; it's the one thing you'll find when you've gone all the way to the bottom.

And there's nowhere else to go from there but up, right?

# The Fight.

By Kieran



A friend said, "Stigma? No, that's an addiction. Why don't you write about your obsession with cutting split ends instead?"

I do cut my split ends, in an almost mechanical, religious way. But I first want to tackle a very ghastly, very sinful act that many people condemn.

Before I delve into how I used to snort lines to get through my days, I must first bring up morality. Morality is subjective, relative in fact. When people bring up relative morality, they're also being relative in what they include in things they deem worthy of relative morals. In other words, something like 'doing illegal drugs' would typically fall under 'relative morals', because it doesn't harm anyone, not if it doesn't affect an individual's ability to work for the betterment of society. The fact that one might have the money to acquire drugs demonstrates that they have put in their requirement to society. So no, I never did think there was a moral issue with illegal drugs on it's own.

When I was younger, no one told me weed was a gateway drug, because the topic in its entirety was so stigmatised that schools instead opted to say anything straying from the law was wrong, wrong, wrong. But I regress, weed is indeed a gateway drug. Because it made me realise illegal drugs may not inherently be bad, not when responsibility is exercised. I wasn't a fan weed: it made me unproductive, and it made me want to eat twice my stomach's capacity... so I started exploring my options. I liked uppers, I disliked downers. I supported the usage of drugs to enhance one's reality, I did not support the usage of drugs to escape one's reality. But the line is thin, faint and almost

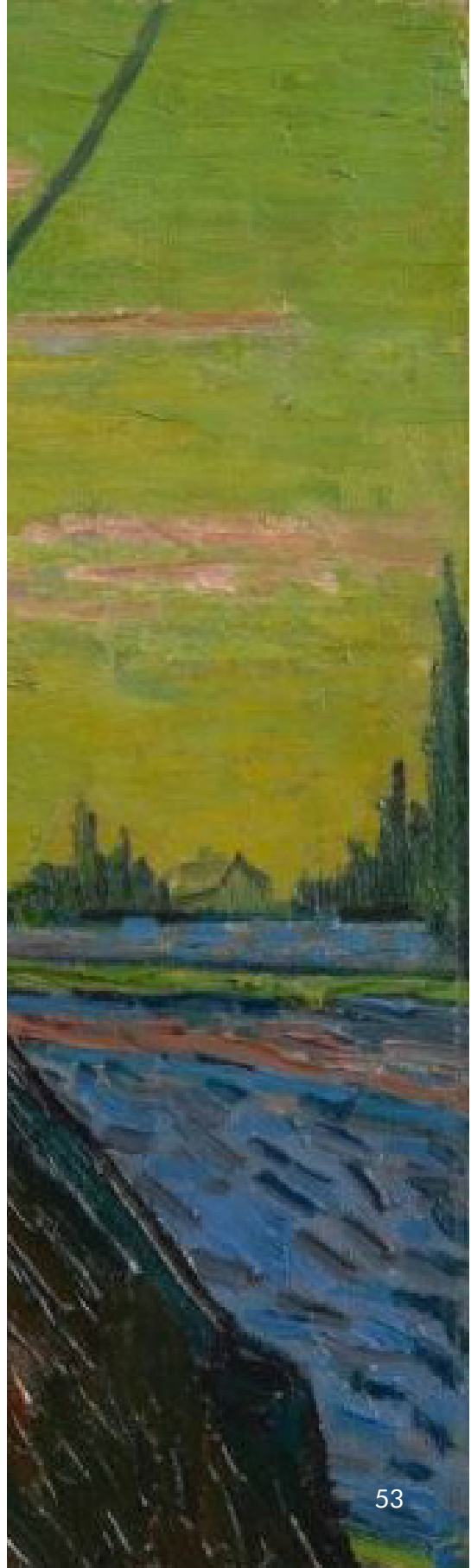
invisible.

For a long time, I thought crushing up ecstasy, coke and ketamine to snort was enhancing my reality. I fell in love with viewing life in vivid technicolours, there was so much love to be felt, so many emotions I never dreamt of feeling sober. I wasn't the biggest fan of life, but through dilated pupils, I could swear I loved life. It sat fine with me, as long as I wasn't hurting anyone, or going overboard.

One day however, I stopped. It may or may not have been lockdown related. But the day I stopped, I fell out of love with life. Left with one pathetic gram of ketamine, I had some careful rationing to do. But that baggie I hid in my wallet was the hand lifting me out of bed when in the morning. It was the small ray of sunshine when I had to study past sundown. It was the pat on my back when I got through a productive day. Does it spell codependency? Perhaps. But I've been sober for three weeks, and I realise I've been a-okay. I do think life's too short and fragile for humans to simply work their whole lives to put a large nest egg away for retirement.

Every other aspect of this topic then falls apart because we have society's completely legal, but equally destructive drug of choice: alcohol. Illegal drugs, when used responsibly, being an issue of moral turpitude is such a farce because there's nothing logical to argue against. Legal and religious factors aside, I think the dogma in society relating to drugs is heavily emotion-based.

Now about my split ends. I get them because my hair is long, and bleached.



I was a child when I began to grasp what the word 'belong' meant.

I grew up intertwined between two languages: English and Cantonese. Although my family spoke mainly English at home, they often alternated between both. However, I was still left with a good grasp of only one language: English, although I also understood Cantonese. However, I began to realize that many of my friends at school spoke Mandarin. Often, they would crack jokes in Mandarin among themselves. When I asked them to explain it to me, they could never properly convey the message. I could not blame them- things were often lost in translation. The attempts I made at speaking Mandarin were laughed off- what kind of Chinese girl can't speak her language? I felt deep shame. There was no excuse.

They called me a 'banana'- yellow on the outside, white on the inside. I may have looked Chinese, but to some, I was not a part of my race. It became increasingly obvious that I was an outsider. The word is stamped across my face- many have said I have that banana look. My features seem to have been permanently altered by the word; shifted into place by someone else.

"You are not Chinese," someone once said to me. "You cannot speak Mandarin, so you will never be."

I stopped trying to speak Mandarin with friends and relatives. My poor grasp of the language was embarrassing, almost laughable. When people of different ethnicity- particularly Westerners said ni hao, they were praised. Although I had no excuse for my lack of Mandarin speaking skills, I wished to receive the same kind of encouragement.

In an effort to prove myself, I delved into books. I read hundreds of stories, memorized the words by heart. If I could not speak Mandarin, the least I could do was become good in English. I developed a deep love for the written word and a fascination for the authors themselves. It was almost miraculous- how people could stitch words together into the most beautiful ways. I began to love the art of writing and how it allowed me to express myself. Through writing, someone else could see the world through my eyes. It captured my passions, my wonder, and my pain.

To this day, I still carry the shame of not knowing my mother tongue. I celebrated Chinese New Year like everyone else, loved the same food, cooked the same traditional dishes. Yet, I lacked what defined me as part of my race.

I understood Mandarin as a beautiful language. Each Chinese character was



wonderfully unique; each brushstroke had to be numbered and shaped carefully. The lilting of the words on your tongue had to be carefully spoken. One wrong roll of the tongue and you could say an entirely different word. For example, the word shū, (书) meaning book, could be mispronounced as shu (輸), meaning lose. It is a language carried with great pride and respect. It was carried through the boats that sailed from China to Malaysia, molded through the different dialects and the tongues of my ancestors. I hope to one day speak this graceful, lilting language- and feel proud of it.

By Zoe Yap



# Lost In Translation





You said, "Good Morning,"  
And I had a thousand words  
I could never say

C.P

---

"I've decided to write a haiku to symbolize how even the simplest of moments can conjure a string of regrets. There is a certain beauty in the power of haikus as even with lesser words, you can summon an array of emotions and in my opinion, the concept of 'regret' resonates with that."

By Charulatha Pitigala



# WALLS.

By Christie

I hate this feeling, I really do. The deep ache in my crevice of my chest, my head spinning with the “what ifs” and the “i shouldn’t haves”, swirling together with the feeling of betrayal and followed by a waterfall of distrust. The way I trusted people was like letting them into my version of the Forbidden City, buried deep within the Great Walls. I’ve always kept everyone at a great distance; think of social distancing, but with friendships and relationships. I would know a lot of people, but I would never let anyone close enough to actually see my surface unless I let them skim the top layer. Not many do I actually let into my stone cold brick walls; it’s funny because someone actually said my heart was made of ice. Imagine the amount of regret I had, when the few people I let in, probably could be counted on one hand, betray me. Ever heard of the people who are the closest to you are the ones who you’re voluntarily giving permission to hurt you the most? I wish to death that it wasn’t true but it is. It felt like I gave them the shovel to hurl away the bricks that made up my walls so tall and mighty, I let them come in just for my home, my peace to be damaged.

I have so many stories of betrayal; picture me sitting next to a fireplace with a thick book consisting of my life in my lap. My fingers, caressing each page to find which chapter will be the most interesting and least painful for me to narrate. To put it in short, my naïve and fearful self begged my ex not to leave me. Months later, he didn’t have the heart to look me in the eye to say he found someone easier to love, didn’t want to be the bad guy, didn’t want to say the words so he did everything to drive me away and when that didn’t work, he left me for someone else. I regret letting myself continue a relationship that turned so sour and toxic as the months went by and yet, I still held on, just wishing every day that maybe if I were to try hard enough, I could change his ways. Sadly, it doesn’t work that way. No one will change for you no matter how hard you try unless they want to change for themselves.



I was always made to feel like it was my fault. My fault for being too sensitive, for being too controlling, for being the way that I am. I suffered from depression and anxiety yet I had to baby a man-child that often guilt tripped me by saying turning my issues against me. When we broke up, everyone had questions. We always seemed fine, so why break up? No one ever knew that we were secretly suffering in that so-called perfect relationship so naturally, everyone had something to say about it. About me, especially since I never really opened up about my side to anyone. I would hear things about it every single day from people whom I didn't even know. Over time, my self-confidence took a hit and went down under, I didn't love myself. I regret letting myself even believe an ounce of what everyone said about me because in the end, I would be the one lying in bed awake at 4am, wondering if the problem was always just me all along. I regret forgetting that my own feelings exist too and that I needed to prioritize my own happiness above others.

I saw this quote, 'if someone does not want me, it is not the end of the world, but if I do not want me, the world is nothing but endings.'

Today I stand tall with my head high, my past still a burden but not as heavy, the whispers in my ears are still there, but not as loud. Things get better, they really do.



Based on a true story...

There was once a girl who grew up in a loving family. She was their precious princess, locked in the tower to protect her from the evils of the outside world. Their love for her was a double-edged sword. The constant breathing down her neck suffocated her. She felt like a bird locked in a cage. Poking at her daily with a stick to 'pet' her, constantly feeding her with insecurities so that she wouldn't dare leave the nest prematurely. However, when she came of age, she finally had the chance to fly away from the nest; what a happy day it was. She was finally able to be more independent, explore her identity and just try everything! It was all so exciting, but all those beautiful sights and lights blinded her. Poor naive little birdie; did not know what she was getting into.

In the process of learning to love herself again and recovering from an eating disorder, she was approached by a tiny sketchy snake. She could've eaten him easily but instead he offered her an apple. It was no ordinary apple. She thought that that apple would be able to help her deal with her insecurities. So, she took a leap of faith; bit into that forbidden fruit and made an agreement. However, when she started having second-thoughts, he didn't let her back out easily. He was persistent. Adamantly insisted she continue to help him. His word play is to be applauded, offering the alluded way out just to have it lead to dead ends. She felt troubled and did not know how to escape. Needless to say, before she realized what he was doing, it was too late.

There was a spell casted that prevented her from flying away from what was about to unfold. His little project was sickening. He wanted to capture the



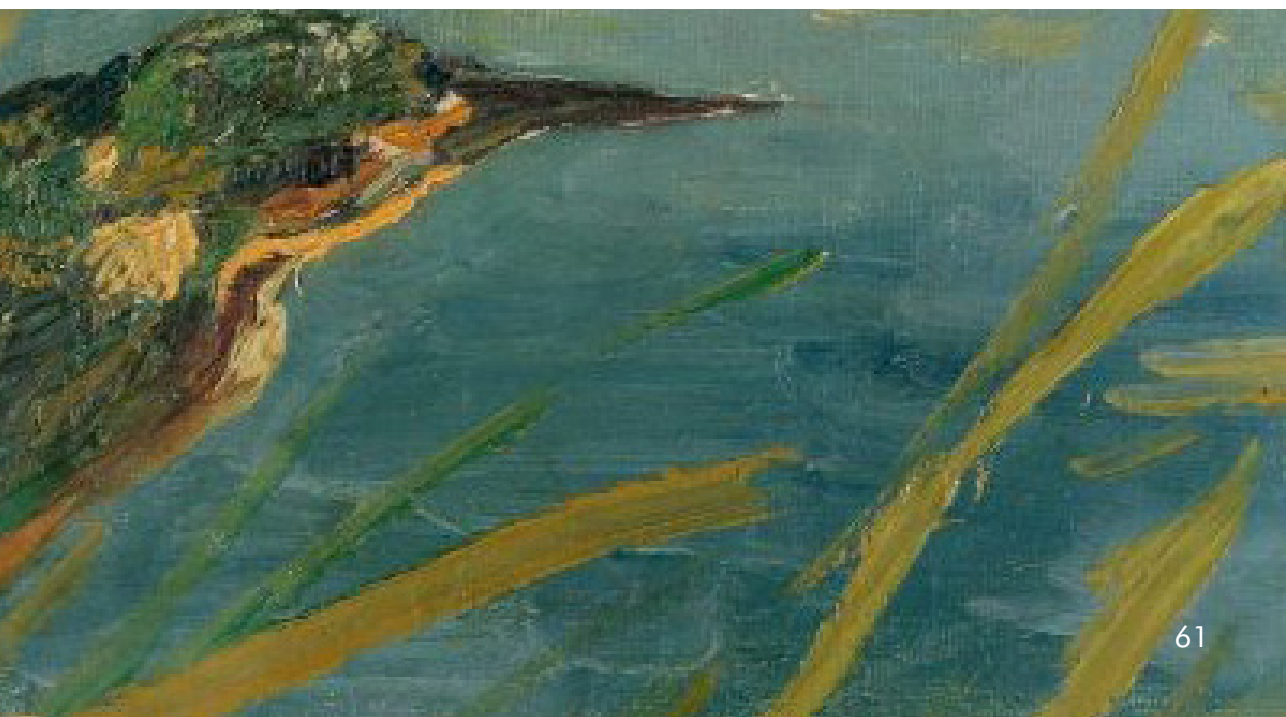
# Little Birdie.

By Anonymous

beauty in nature, then twist the subject to match his sadistic desires. He had plucked her feathers, slowly undressing her, stripping her bare. And she let him have his way with her. She had dissociated from her physical body. It was like watching a horror movie, you would tell the characters what not to do, to not go in there but it would be futile. She had reverted back to the obedient little girl that did whatever was asked of her. Everything had turned hazy after that. Next thing she knows, she is back in her room and struggling to function normally, trying to process what happened.

The first month became her personal hell. She couldn't sleep because he constantly haunted her dreams, she was so ashamed, she had no appetite and barely ate. Instead of improving, her anxiety worsened. All she could do was focus on her work and pretend everything was fine. To alleviate some of her paranoia, she drastically changed her appearance and style, and it worked. He didn't recognize her or remember her. It was comforting, and I hated it. I hated the fear. I hated the feeling of regret and the constant self-blame. Most of all, I hated the amount of control he had over me without even knowing it. It took me so long to finally be able to say "I'm okay" again.

I just hope that anyone who is still struggling to find their bearings, I pray that you surround yourself with a good support system. The scars may never heal but the regret felt is gone. I know now that it wasn't my fault. Remember to be kind and gentle with yourself. This too shall pass. Patience, love.



You know how sometimes in TV shows or anime, when they're trying to show days passing, and it's just a shot of the calendar dates changing?

Lately my life feels a lot like that montage. Time just passes by so quickly. In the blink of an eye, a year passed, and then two, and then three. What have I done in that time? What have I accomplished?

I know, I know. I graduated high-school, got into a good university, and so on. But what have I DONE that's actually worthwhile?

That sounds terribly bleak, huh? So, you know, I've been trying to do this self-love thing people have been talking about.

"Look on the bright side!", "Think positive!", "Treat yourself, sis! Things aren't so bad."

They'd tell me to "try this", and "try that".

So, I do. Some days I try to literally count my blessings. I'd look in the mirror and hold up ten fingers. It's like that "Put a finger down if you ..." TikTok trend we see so often, except I'm alone in my room looking at my own reflection, talking to my damn self.

It feels silly, but I've heard that doing stuff like this actually helps a lot in dealing with your internal shit.

One. You have a great group of friends who've got your back and make you laugh every day.

Two. You do pretty well in your classes and have yet to fail a unit.

Three. You're fortunate enough to have all your necessities covered.

But sometimes, things would escalate and I'd end up listing out shit I hate about myself. Don't ask me how or why, my life would be 1000x better if I knew how my brain worked.

Eight. Ah, you probably shouldn't have spent on coins for fucking webcomics. What is wrong with you?

Nine. Maybe if you procrastinated less and actually started work earlier, you could've scored an HD. You really are useless.



could've scored an HD. You really are useless.

Ten. If you actually knew how to fucking connect with people, maybe your so-called friends wouldn't all secretly hate you.

Man, that took an incredibly dark turn. Here's the problem, though. My life has been fairly comfortable, I have a lot to be grateful for, and I can't say that there has been any major life-changing or traumatic event that made me who I am today. It's these small, everyday-type regrets that haunt me everywhere I go. They drive me crazy.

Are you like that too?

Maybe someday I'll learn how to deal with all this in a healthy and responsible manner. Maybe one day I'll be able to see myself in a better light.

Maybe one day it'll be better.

Maybe one day I'll be better.

Right now, though. This just...



# Feels Bad, Man.

By buzzards21



**paranormal.**

# When I Was...

by Irshika

## When I was 8

I was watching a horror film with my family today. I don't get why ghosts in every horror film look the same: long hair, white dress, burnt and ashy face, and for some reason, they don't talk—they just teleport here and there. Anyways, I slept halfway through, not sure how the movie ended.

## When I was 12

"Can you come and watch *Conjuring* with me? I'm scared to watch alone".

"I don't understand how someone could look at *THAT DOLL* and think of bringing it back home".

"I'm scared to go alone leh, can accompany me ah?"

"Don't off the lights, wait for me!"

## When I was 15

My friends were saying the school's locker room is haunted by the spirit of a janitor. Some of my classmates went there during recess to act "rebellious". Why would anyone even think of digging their own grave? I'm definitely staying away from that entire corridor. After all, how can you get possessed if you are careful with your choices, right?

## When I was 17

I'm alone but I hear voices. I didn't go out with my friends today. I just couldn't bring myself out of those doors. I locked myself in the room and cried. Why am I sad? How do I "fix" myself? I often find myself crying in the toilet cubicles too. I miss hanging out with my friends to catch up with the latest gossip. My friends confronted me the other day and said "I've changed" and my parents are worried about me—I'm fine.

## When I am 19

I'm being consumed. Consumed by my own thoughts. They're so dark and so horrid, and I'm afraid. It's wrecking me from the inside out; but no one else recognizes it. Does that mean I'm possessed? These voices in my head check every other box to qualify as a ghost except for the generic looks. Well if that's the case, I'm possessed in ways that I definitely never thought myself to be. I want to leave to somewhere that is quiet and dark; maybe somewhere those "voices" repeatedly demand me to go. I wanted to sleep, but I couldn't.

# PARAN

By Jayshree

The word itself sends chills down my spine. Anything that has to do with the supernatural would make me squeamish from a very young age. But, there was something inherently fascinating about it which drew my attention and peaked my interest with the paranormal.

Horror films give me nightmares and headaches but there is something that draws me back everytime.

Everything about horror films, from the suspicious-looking houses to the creepy and haunting music terrifies me. It also peaks my curiosity; I often wonder if people have truly experienced such traumatic incidents in real life. The ambiguous nature of the word makes me question if we are indeed aware of true paranormality.

Ghost stories that we all hear during sleepovers only amplify this ambiguity.

Growing up with these films and stories, I always associated paranormal with horror. My own experiences however proved me wrong in my assumptions about what is paranormal. What ended up being more terrifying were my own dreams.

I would dream about the people I see around me everyday. I would dream about people that I randomly notice while on a walk. It started out pretty normal, nothing unusual about the dreams. But, that was quick to change when I realised pretty soon that I would dream about conversations or events that were going to take place. Initially, I dismissed the thought, because it seemed so childish. A conversation with my mother one day however caught me off-guard. I knew exactly what she was going to say because I had already dreamt about it. It felt

surreal and scary at the same time.

I started to write about my dreams regularly to see if I was merely imagining things. I felt like I had lost my mind. It did not make any sense. There was no rationality in this situation.

It only got more confusing from that point on. I would have incredibly vivid dreams that almost felt real but they were not. None of my dreams were manifested into actual real life events at this point. I felt relieved and slept peacefully but it would always be in the back of my mind.

Months later, I was invited to a family dinner and for a moment, it felt like I was in one of my dreams, my cousins were sitting and having the same conversation as the one in my dream. It was so overwhelming that I had to lie down. I had a bad migraine. I couldn't stop thinking about it. It's still something that I cannot stop thinking about now.

I was so scared about dreaming that I could not fall asleep anymore. I kept thinking all night long. I would be so tired all the time. But I could not tell anyone. What if they would think that I'm insane or delusional? What if there was something wrong with me? These thoughts gave me chills every time.

It's as if my dreams were calling out to me, trying to tell me something.

There's something about it that feels haunting and eerie, like the feeling you get while walking alone in a dark alley at night and hearing the wind howl and whispers in the air.

It's that moment every single M\*nash student has dreamt of since they set foot in the university. Fixing your cap and gown, you took a deep breath before the announcer called out your name. It echoes in the S\*nway Lagoon Resort Hotel & Spa grand ballroom, followed by sounds of clapping, mostly by polite parents who only cared about their own children there. You went on stage with the biggest grin on your face, trying to not trip on the train of your Al\*a B\*astamam dress you rented online specifically for this special occasion.

As you held the certificate in your hand, you smiled at the official photographer capturing this once-in-a-lifetime moment. You also caught the eyes of your parents standing up from their seats next to your significant other, beaming while waving at you. You could see your dad trying to take your picture with his phone, with his glasses halfway on his nose and him holding the phone in the way the older generation do. A wave of affection passed through your heart. This event was especially meaningful for him, who has sacrificed more than half of his life to work and apply for loans to make sure you could get a world-class education and develop into a holistic person.

You joined them afterwards. When the ceremony ended, it was a bittersweet moment of taking pictures with people who have made your life much less lonelier in your three years of university. A pang of sadness hits you as you



realized that you might not be able to see some of them again as they return to their home countries. You made a promise with each other to always keep in contact on social media. You eyed through the crowd; there was the person you had a crush on for one semester, the coursemates you've awkwardly only sat in the same classes with, the group mates who have all leeches off you, the clique who tried to create drama with you by spreading rumors, the person you can't stand but have pretended to be nice towards since first year, and others. You'll miss them.

You held the graduation certificate tighter in your hand. You did it. Amidst all the breakdowns, purposeful walking in front of moving cars so that they can hit you and you no longer have to submit your assignments, of sleepless nights finishing those reports and thinking you can't make it - you did it. And it's over now. You've already secured a well-paying job in a prestigious company beforehand, and you're ready. You're ready to take on the world. The world is in your hand. Your boyfriend kissed you on your head and grabbed your hand, promising to take you to the 5-star restaurant for dinner while your parents looked on fondly.

And then you woke up. Then, you remembered. COVID-19. Full online learning. No graduation ceremony. Your lecturers catching you discussing exam questions with your friends on Zoom. Zero marks. Your boyfriend cheating on the girl living closer to his hometown. Your parents always shouting for your name to pick up the laundry while you are in the middle of your class. Your mum appearing behind you to show your discolored underwear from the washing machine while you were in the middle of a 20% graded presentation in front of 30 other classmates that one time.

You screamed.

# A M\*nash Horror Story

by Durrah Sharifah



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The labour of love you're currently viewing would've been impossible without the contributions of the following people.

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**Special Thanks.**

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