



Koreatown Bok Choy

(Subtitled: "Chapter 6: What is the point of numbers?")
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(1) Abstract

(n/a)

In 387 BC, around the age of 40, the renowned Hellenist philosopher Plato (428-348 BC) founded his Academy in the then flourishing city of Athens, only a dozen or so years following the execution of his mentor Socrates, whose purported last words were, “Crito, please remember we owe a cock to Asclepius.” By contrast, around 390 AD, on nearly equal opposite sides of the so-called Christ event, the Neoplatonic philosopher Plutarch of Athens (350-430 AD) would re-establish the Platonic Academy in Athens, at age 40, where the last of the great Late Antique philosophers—Syrianus and Proclus and Damascius—would work in the shadow of Constantinople. The last of the Academies were shut down by the Imperial decree of Justinian in 529 AD. Yet the birth of Parmenides, one of the great mentors of Socrates (and, via osmosis, of Plato), is believed to have taken place somewhere between 540 and 520 BC, on the equal opposite side of the so-called Christ event as Justinian’s decree.

Canto 1.1

(.769)

Araqi told Jo Yu-Ri,
as they sat in the small hallway wide
Udon Lab on West Thirty Second,
right next to the Martinique,
how he had no recollection
of re-reading Rings of Saturn whatsoever—
in fact the only reason
Araqi even realized
he'd started re-reading Rings of Saturn
at all was a sole blue pen underline strike
under the word Rumelia,
right on top of page ninety nine
that, now re-reading it yet again,
Araqi knew all too well
he would have never made
when he initially read Rings of Saturn,
because at that time
Araqi barely knew what Rumelia referenced,
but upon a second reading,
assuming said second reading
took place when Araqi believed it did,
he was totally balls deep in Rumelia lore.

For all of these reasons
Araqi believed
he'd only began his
second reading of Rings of Saturn
when he picked up the book again
just the other afternoon,
but in actuality,
according to this particular blue underline
on the ninety-ninth page of the novel,
it seemed like he'd actually,
in fact,
recently started a third reading, not a second,
but wasn't it a bit befuddling,
a tad disconcerting perhaps that a person
could have absolutely no recollection of reading
a whole fucking hundred pages
of a novel less than five years prior,
Araqi thought, a sentiment he expressed to Jo Yu-Ri,
and she agreed that it did seem egregious,
but also perplexing and maybe even,
not to be hyperbolic, but a bit ominous?

But all this,
the entirety of the pair's specific stream of dialogue
was abruptly interrupted
when Jo Yu-Ri noted Araqi's

visibly concatenating frustration
as they were suddenly, violently
upstreamed at the bar
by some greasy fuck in a cobalt blue
soccer jersey—
the fact of the matter was
the two friends only popped in the spot
to begin with to take a quick listen
to a particular "xylophone jazz trio"
Araqi and Jo Yu-Ri heard playing
from the foyer as they walked past
on West Thirty Second,
Araqi being intrigued by a trio
led by xylophone,
but once in line at the bar
they both slowly realized
how loquacious
this bartender was with each customer,
Araqi's frustration concatenating
with each second he continued to wait for a beer,
and now, this customer in a cobalt blue soccer jersey,
popped up out of seemingly thin air
to upstream them, this customer,
who, for his part,
had apparently been repeatedly
scorned in his quest to get a second

beer himself,
by none other than this loquacious bartender,
who kept continuing on about
checking the pipes in the basement,
and now this customer
in the cobalt blue soccer shirt
audaciously cut them both in line
to ruthlessly expedite his
subsequent beverage.

Araqi was abutting an audible complaint
but remained unwilling to abandon
his just-discovered excitement
for this "xylophone jazz"
as Jo Yu-Ri noted that there was a
Vietnamese food truck outside,
right on the corner of Sixth and Thirty Second,
that she could go get a few egg rolls
if they wanted?

Araqi wasn't really in the mood,
but this didn't deter Jo Yu-Ri
from ambling outside to see
"what was up with their dumplings",
right as the bartender finally attended to
Araqi's pending request

for an overpriced quote-unquote
Italian style beer,
which didn't taste like Peroni at all,
and by the time the two got to a seat
the jazz trio finished its first set
and began its break,
lighting cigarettes and walking back to the bar
for their respective,
Araqi assumed,
free refills.

Canto 1.12

(.775)

Of course it was the case
that Araqi, despite his agitation
at the fact he and Jo Yu-Ri
entered this establishment
with the explicit intent of listening
to this "xylophone jazz trio",
only to get stiffed
by a prevaricating bartender,
by a mysterious shit stain
wearing a cobalt blue soccer shirt,
to the extent that by the time
they were seated with an overpriced beer
and a handful of subpar Vietnamese egg rolls,
the fucking trio itself
stopped pounding xylophones
and ceased playing jazz.

But Araqi had other more pressing
and dire topics of discussion,
despite the sudden silence
in the corridor wide restaurant,
specifically about Jo Yu-Ri's
new so-called employee,

Πρίαπος,
because the fucking guy
had been talking his ear off about Soju
for like the whole last week.

Jo Yu-Ri
nodded at the comment
without even an inkling of a hint
of shock in her gaze.

She wasn't caught off guard at all,
as Araqi continued to recapitulate
the guy's monologues,
about how this country,
if this nation had any chance at all
 whatsoever, then it needed to immediately
 adopt Soju as its national drink,
 that there was no other option
 but to adopt all iterations of Soju,
 of Korean Rice Wine
 as the proper Bud Light replacement,
 to co-opt this Korean wine
 and rebrand it as essentially fucking American,
 Araqi said.

That the Joe Rogans of the internet sphere

had prescribed the Donald Trumps
of the physical world
as the panacea this country needed,
via reactionary channels
posted on a platform
that ironically enough
started as a CIA front,
yet the reality was the true corrective
could never be found in a Donald Trump.

No, only in Korean rice wine,
according to Πρίαπος,
people needed to start drinking it in bars
and restaurants in place of carbonated light beers!

Araqi and Jo Yu-Ri both noted
that they respected the passion of Πρίαπος,
and that he was essentially correct
in his assessment
that nothing was more American
than stealing the domestic culture of others
and rebranding it as our own,
and Soju was in fact, after all,
an optimal bar drink,
as it was specifically designed
to provide more of a buzz than beer,

but not quite the ill-advised lift
of the average eighty proof
grain alcohol.

Yet, according to Araqi,
Πρίαπος was dubious that the country
could actually adopt Soju,
primarily because of people,
he said, like the median second cousin,
people who would be reticent to drink
something quote-unquote Korean
on the regular,
people who clung to beliefs
that people like Ted Cruz
actually had decent ideas
about the world,
that any person who found Ted Cruz
to be philosophically intriguing
would obviously be a little reticent
about imbibing Soju,
when it was obviously the case that,
in fact,
Ted Cruz was probably one of the top ten
most despicable people on the planet?

Πρίαπος noted Cruz's prevarications

when asked questions
like ‘Does AICAP ever interact with Israel,’
saying how it once again demonstrated
the innately despicable baseline
of his personality.

But people like the median second cousins
of America would actually prefer to discuss
Ted Cruz with a modicum of nicety
than just imbibe Korean rice wine
as their default drink of choice,
which was clearly why this country
was on the precipice of an
irreversible decline,
if not in the midst of it already!

This country was clearly fucking finished,
Πρίαπος said,
and it was solely because of this intersection
of Ted Cruz, Soju,
and the conceptual second cousin of course,
Araqi repeated,
slowly almost believing
what Πρίαπος had repeated
into his poor eardrums
day after day that week.

It was clear to Πρίαπος at least
that the second cousin was a topic
they must actually legislate against.
No, not just pontificate about,
because these second cousins—
they wouldn't just rescind of their own accord,
second cousins were instead indicative
of a structural rot.

Πρίαπος thought
that he Jo Yu-Ri and Araqi
should all move to communicate
with their New York state
representatives to see
if they could begin drafting a bill
opposing the concept of the second cousin
in this country.

Was that doable, did they think?

Araqi took a bite of an egg roll
that was somehow still scorching hot
five minutes after Jo Yu-Ri
put the plastic plate
down on the table.

The fact it felt a hundred fucking degrees
out in Midtown
probably didn't help.

Canto 1.13

(.753)

Jo Yu-Ri, wiping her petite fingers
on a thrice folded napkin,
smearing select remnants
of truck cooked egg roll grease
onto the pure white paper,
shook her head side to side
and showed Araqi
the page of the book she'd just opened up,
Ashbery's
Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror,
and muttered look at all this scribbling!—
in reference to the inane notes
the previous owner
of the paperback had strewn
all over the first page in pencil.

Araqi asked her what condition
she'd bought the book in exactly?

Was she aware of that level
of scribbling prior to buying it?

No, she replied,

but to be fair nearly every other page of the book
was entirely clean,
until of course this final poem,
the self-titled entry of the collection.

Obviously some nitwit
who probably had to write, like,
a term paper about it,
Araqi suggested,
some kind of dissertation,
and Jo Yu-Ri agreed,
head bowed in defeat.

Araqi alleged it remained readable even if,
sure, the incessant pencil scribblings
were a little distracting,
certainly off-putting,
he could totally relate to that!

The fact of the matter
was it was increasingly difficult
to pay discounted prices
for used books these days,
without some incessant and/or inane
scribbling dominating the margins
of select pages,

without delays
in shipping or unexpectedly bent covers
or subpar paperback bindings,
although Jo Yu-Ri did note
of all the fine poems the collection consisted of
she found the title poem to be the least essential—
so if one particular poem had to be ruined
by said scribbling she was at least
glad it was that one.

Books, Araqi asserted,
were actually becoming slowly
impossible to acquire,
as production volumes dropped due to
the increasing illiteracy all around them.

It was basically a case of when
before a functional embargo
would take hold
in terms of acquiring decent books
at affordable prices.

They were rapidly reverting back
to the Middle Ages or something,
with rare libraries gated away
from aficionados jizzing themselves

over simple access to printed paper.

Jo Yu-Ri thought the emergence
of the PDF black market
ran counter to Araqi's hyperbolic claims
but of course she preferred to peruse
physical copies as well
so she felt
the overall pull of his lament,
but Jo Yu-Ri then abruptly continued on to note
in a more vigorous fashion
her agreement with Araqi
regarding Πρίαπος—
did he know that just the other day,
while watering her bok choy plants
with his massive phallus,
he told a story about
rendezvousing with an exotic dancer?

Πρίαπος said he'd met the stripper
just a couple weeks previous
and that she'd asked to meet with him,
which he said to Jo Yu-Ri
he assumed meant she intended to bilk him
out of some cash at her club
in Astoria, but apparently—

to her surprise—
Πρίαπος wasn't above that,
so he actually showed up to the club,
Jo Yu-Ri told Araqi,
but then, the dancer,
half in the bag according to Πρίαπος,
told him she actually meant to meet
outside the club, so as her shift ended
he took the dancer down the street
to some hookah spot,
smoked shisha then,
according to Πρίαπος, quote-unquote
"railed her in her SUV on a side street
after she moved her kid's carseat
to the side".

Jo Yu-Ri
was a slightly flabbergasted
at the anecdote,
which Πρίαπος continued,
noting how the chick had some issues
with "suicidal ideation",
but to Jo Yu-Ri,
she relayed to Araqi,
it was a little concerning, no?

Just because she'd hired the guy
because his phallus was supposed to be
beneficial for plant growth,
and while clearly that was ideal
for bok choy cultivation
in Midtown Manhattan,
she wasn't so certain
she'd get the maximum value
of his phallus
if he was—plowing sluts in SUVs
on side streets
next to shisha
establishments,
Araqi finished?

Canto 1.14

(.768)

No, Araqi noted,
it was certainly uncouth
that Priapus was, you know,
potentially having sex
with strippers
outside shisha spots
in Queens,
but still with
that said
he had come to question
Jo Yu-Ri's arithmetic
just slightly,
mostly because
while he understood
the phallus of Priapus
was being employed
for bok choy
cultivation
and engaging
in illicit activities,
and that that
particular addition
seemed to portend

poor outcomes.

But three plus four,
Araqi said,
didn't equal seven,
not exactly,
because truly
it equaled seven
plus the Form seven,
because sans
the Form seven
it would be basically
impossible for them
to even conceive
of seven.

But, Araqi noted,
Form seven by its
very nature
didn't engage in
the same unitary mixing
that the mathematical seven did,
what Araqi was saying,
he reiterated
to Jo Yu-Ri,
was it was possible Priapus,

being a divine being
(of sorts!), was probably
not tethered
to the same rubrics
of arithmetic as others,
that Priapus was
very possibly closer
to the Form seven
than the mathematical seven,
in which case,
while sure,
his sojourns
with certain Astoria strippers
was probably in poor taste,
it might not actually
have a palpable
effect on her bok choy?

Canto 1.15

(.794)

Jo Yu-Ri flashed back
briefly to a bulbous penis
that was sprayed in graffiti
onto the foundation of a home
on Bridgham
that she passed
while walking to a Family Dollar
the other day.

It was like ever since
she employed this
Πρίαπος she'd been surrounded
on all sides by unrepentant penis,
which probably,
she reflected,
served her right for going into business
with a Hellenic entity
(especially a so-called deity).

At the same time
growing fresh bok choy in Midtown
gave her a competitive advantage
no one else had in Koreatown,

so was it all possibly worth it?

As Araqi received the tab
(after drinking his second shitty
pseudo Italian pilsner),
at four twenty pm
(as opposed to Jo Yu-Ri's receipt
being received
at three twelve pm)
he wrote out the tip and,
when laying the paper
down on the table
next to Jo Yu-Ri's
the two realized both tabs
came to exactly
twenty-nine eighty-four a piece,
with each tab exactly consisting
of a twenty three buck subtotal
with a dollar eighty four tax assessment
and five even tip,
which was a bit of a coincidence,
almost like a chance event
that had some sort of cosmic significance?

The two stared at the two tabs
in silence as a chubby white guy

hammering away
on his xylophone slowly faded
to black.

$$\begin{aligned}(2 + 3 - 0) &= 5 \\ (1 + 8 - 4) &= 5 \\ (5 + 0 - 0) &= 5\end{aligned}$$

3:12 pm
subtotal: \$23.00
sales tax: \$1.84
tip: \$5.00
total: \$29.84

4:20 pm
subtotal: \$23.00
sales tax: \$1.84
tip: \$5.00
total: \$29.84

$$\begin{aligned}(2 + 3 - 0) &= 5 \\ (1 + 8 - 4) &= 5 \\ (5 + 0 - 0) &= 5\end{aligned}$$

(2) Abstract

(n/a)

According to the online archive of The New York Times, on February 9 1984, a series of Reagan-era American warships spent nine hours bombarding Syrian and Druze gun batteries in Lebanon. The Druze population of Lebanon and Syria is of course the ancient peoples who arose in the aftermath of the disappearance of the infamous Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah (985-1021). The Druze, for their part, place a great significance on the number five, believing that prophets of each era come in groups of five, which they date back to the days of Antiquity, proclaiming the five great prophets of that era to be: Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Parmenides, and Empedocles. Pythagoras, the eldest of the five, was a strict vegetarian born on an island called Samos in West Asia around 570 BC. He's since been renowned for, among other accomplishments, his musical tunings, the theory of the transmigration of souls, and a unique perspective on numbers, as well as the fact that there's not a single detail of his life that remains uncontradicted. Allegedly Pythagoras left Samos at the age of 40. Perhaps the greatest distillation of what we believe to be Pythagorean teaching can be found in the dialogue Timaeus by Plato, who founded

his Academy in Athens at the age of 40 himself, around the year 387 BC, nearly two centuries after the birth of Pythagoras. Parmenides, the second eldest of the five, was born about 50 years after Pythagoras in Elea, in Southern Italy, where Pythagoras, by some accounts, committed suicide in Calabria—when Parmenides would have still been an adolescent. Only fragments remain of Parmenides' primary poem on the indivisible Oneness of Being, where a great focus is placed on the concept One, but his ideas are present in more extended form in the dialogue *Parmenides* by Plato, as well as an extended, partially extant commentary on *Parmenides* by Proclus. Empedocles, another vegetarian (and the younger contemporary of Parmenides), was born in Sicily not long after the purported suicide of Pythagoras in Calabria. The last Greek philosopher to record his ideas in verse, he would be succeeded, informally, by Plato and Aristotle. Yet the former, the only native born Athenian of the five, wasn't born until a half decade after Empedocles' death, in the late 420s BC. While Aristotle wouldn't be born until Plato was in his mid-forties. Yet he'd remain at Plato's Academy until he was 37. Yet even Aristotle, the youngest of the five by far, remains an interpersonal mystery to us today. Nothing is known about his life for certain except for the fact he was born

in modern day Thessaloniki and that he had a passing interest in botany.

Canto 2.1

(.761)

Hakim Allah actually desperately
needed a waifu in Cairo,
like "so bad",
but he also felt a certain longing
for summer,
for the sun
and the heat and the accompanying irresistible urge
to indulge in a nice cold wine,
being born after all
in the peak summer month of August
in Nine Eighty Five and all.

Some would suggest
there was possibly even
a mystical element to it,
the thirteenth day
of the eighth month,
perhaps an arithmetic calculation
or something of the sort,
the violent vacillations
he experienced philosophically?

Weren't those in themselves a residue

of an indivisible Oneness,
violently vacillating between
strict philosophical schools
that vehemently disagreed
with one another?

Wasn't vacillating between
philosophical poles,
violently,
in a sense, a real dissembling
of the pernicious dualities
and multiplicities
we encounter every damn day?

A middle-aged man was adorned in dapper cloth
sitting on the patio
smoking a thin cigarette
and Hakim, who didn't smoke regularly,
suddenly felt an intense urge
to indulge in just one cigarette,
reflecting back to past moments,
on equivalent patios
where he'd maybe puffed a cigarette or two,
where events were inevitably felt,
felt in the way that feelings
must inevitably extend,

muddied and disgusting
to recollection and thoroughly incomprehensible
in material ways.

Ultimately, it was only when you were
smoking cigarettes that you actually felt things,
and feeling things was usually
a kind of composite phenomena.

Hakim pulled out a single dinar
and asked the guy for the great privilege
of bumming a single cigarette,
smoking it next to the man
who was obviously a high ranking court officer
of the most respectable order,
to which the man bluntly replied
sorry last one,
but there's a "camel shop across the street that sells
them".

In no way, shape, or form
was this man smoking the last remaining
unit from his pack of cigarettes—
it would have been fairly clear
to any person with even
half of a functioning brain

that this man had many more cigarettes remaining
in his pack, that while the precise amount
of cigarettes the man had
remaining was uncertain
it was also abundantly clear
that that amount certainly equaled
more than one.

It was utterly absurd to assume
this man was smoking his last cigarette
on the patio.

With this in mind, purely out of spite,
Hakim, after waiting a few moments
in deep contemplation,
crossed the street and stood in place
at the camel station,
where three people were already
impatiently waiting
in front of a hand-written
sign that read Bathroom Break Be Back in Ten Minutes.

There was no option but for Hakim to buy
an entire pack of cigarettes purely out of spite,
a spiteful lust to just smoke one cigarette.

A heavy set pasty middle aged lady
wearing a black napsack
with thinning light hair on the top of her head
was first in line,
and would remain longer
than the roly poly fair-skinned man
with the macho accent,
or the run of the mill day laborer—
yet, fueled by this mixture of nonsensical lust
and irrationally insatiable spite,
Hakim would wait
nearly an entire half hour
for the attendant to return to purchase
this pack of overpriced cigarettes
to smoke a small percentage of
on the patio.

He outlasted not only the heavy set pasty female
and her initial companions
but even subsequent others
who approached the window then quickly left
exasperated at the ridiculous wait,
at the absurd claim
on this cardboard sign.

Yet once this escapade

was completed Hakim returned to the patio to,
to his surprise,
find the same man still smoking a cigarette,
which Hakim quickly calculated,
must have been a subsequent cigarette
or, even worse, a subsequent
to a subsequent cigarette,
and the same heavy set woman
with the black napsack and thin light hair—
now also smoking a cigarette,
despite the fact she left the camel station
before being able to buy a pack,
which Hakim quickly calculated,
must have also been supplied by
the man in the high class cloth.

The man just moments ago
was allegedly smoking his quote-unquote
last cigarette on the patio.

The man in the high class cloth
must have gifted the heavy set
pasty female her cigarette,
because Hakim was just with her,
at the camel station,
and she had no cigarettes,

the only reason she was even
at the station was to obtain
additional cigarettes.

So it was basically corroborated
that the man adorned in the royal attire,
at the very least, at the bare minimum,
had two additional cigarettes,
if not three additional cigarettes,
in his pack when he ruthlessly told Hakim
he was smoking his quote-unquote
last one, which of course was unsurprising,
yet, like all implied lies,
it stung Hakim more vociferously
when it was finally confirmed
beyond a reasonable doubt.

All obvious lies are more benign
when still existing in an unproven state,
despite being obvious,
because a blatant lie, once proven,
despite the fact its essence
was already assumed fictitious,
despite already having attained
a certain reality as a lie,
stings with a certain vigor

when finally confirmed
as a blatant distortion of the truth.

All truth is ultimately distorted to some degree,
and we know this implicitly,
yet without fail we're monumentally
dejected upon confirming
certain distortions of the truth.

We believe the obvious lie to be fictitious,
having been obvious,
that it will mean nothing once
confirmed as a falsity,
as nothing has essentially been altered,
what we already treated
as a probable lie
simply becomes an actual lie,
yet when the obvious lie shifts
from assumed to proven,
it irrationally concatenates
and becomes an even more egregious lie.

Hakim had been shamelessly betrayed
by a man who owed him less than nothing
in the world, yet wasn't it perhaps the case
that by the sole act of smoking cigarettes,

to some extent,
the man entered into a social contract
of benevolently acquiescing a request
for a single cigarette
at shitty dive bars.

To smoke a cigarette at a dive bar
is to voluntarily enter into a commune
of like-minded citizens bumming cigarettes
off each other on occasion,
and, with that in mind,
wasn't falsely claiming tobacco poverty
in such a setting
a "faux pas of the highest order"?

Hakim came around to the idea it was
as he smoked two brand new cigarettes
on the patio from his brand new overpriced pack,
after somewhat sarcastically offering the man
in the royal attire an additional cigarette
after his so-called
last one was done,
as he drank from the white wine
the bartender was nice enough
to keep on ice for him
while he waited at the camel station

for upwards of a half an hour,
purely out of spite.

Canto 2.12

(.813)

At the age of thirty five,
which is, we know,
only truly divisible by
the numbers seven and five,
it's almost inevitable to arrive
at the realization that the sky
itself is little more than a tin roof,
Hakim considered as he sat on the patio
eyeing the douche bag
in the royal attire walk away,
that beyond the sky
our senses relay to us
only mirages and lurid
falsifications,
purely out of habit,
with no ill intent whatsoever.

It's never been with ill intent
that our senses have utterly let us down
in nearly every regard,
it's simply the intrinsic nature of things
that cause our senses
to relay lurid falsities.

Sans memory
there can't be time.

At the tender age of thirty five
all of this without fail
becomes clear to you,
that everything is aesthetics
in a certain sense,
that the sky itself
is just a tin roof,
and Hakim went back into the bar
to ask the aged bartender,
who it turned out was only
a couple years older than him,
for just one more wine,
where a younger man and his wife
complained about being banned
from some local establishment.

The young man calculated
how much money he spent
at this establishment,
how much money they were forsaking
by so unfairly banning him,
never taking

a second to analyze
whether the amount of money
he was spending at one bar
was even advisable to disclose in public,
with complete strangers.

There was a criminal element
to this banishment
in the eyes of this young man,
as this was a situation
where he was completely sans fault,
where this establishment had acted
erroneously, to the extent the error
was actually criminal.

He'd never be able to go back to that bar again.
But would they survive economically
sans his patronage?

When Hakim went down the road,
leaving the riveting conversation
of the young man behind him,
to his dismay
he didn't find a single waifu
marauding around the city,
the city was completely

void of any and all waifus.

No, just some middle-aged dudes
discussing the current state
of the Fatimid military.

How to transcend the tin roof
was always a matter of great dispute,
and a recurring voice would whisper
to Hakim in his sleep
that very night that there was nothing
beautiful in the streets
that afternoon
for a specific reason,
because the digestion of beauty
at certain times
can make a person exceptionally dyspeptic,
this was protection.

Hakim agreed,
still tasting the six falafels he scarfed down
on his way home even after brushing
his teeth multiple times,
violently vacillating in his own way
even as he re-entered into a calm,
deep sleep where he'd

have a recurrent dream
of killing himself to cleanse himself.

Hakim would kill himself
in his dream,
yet afterward he'd subsist in a superior form,
post successfully killing himself,
void of the memories that haunted him,
depriving him of a peaceful slumber.

He questioned these voices
he frequently heard in his head,
their origin,
the ones constantly calling him until,
finally able to assert control
of his environment, he screamed
Allah is One repeatedly,
until the containment of his dream
was cleansed by his yelling.

With Hakim in a state of great
distress and only half-awake,
The Prophet Muhammed appeared briefly,
as a mirror image of himself,
and uttered nothing he could recollect.

(3) Abstract

(n/a)

In American folklore it's often posited that "second place" is actually "the first loser." While scholars of various stripes have conflicting opinions on the accuracy of such claims, the reality is, at least according to the general populace of the world's greatest country, the saying is functionally viewed as true. The second cousin, strictly defined, is the child of the first cousin in relation to the child of another first cousin, first cousins of course being the respective children of siblings. The number 2 is, in theory, the beginning of all multiplicity, the primal source of a multitude. Without the number 2 there would be no linear single-digit path to 3 and 4 or even 5. In fact all evenness itself is defined, in theory, by an ability to be divided by this number 2. Even binary code, while only consisting of 0s and 1s is still comprised of 2 numbers (0 and 1). And all duality is derivative of the number 2. The number is at times associated with Ceres or Demeter, a goddess of agriculture and fertility, an alleged sister of Zeus. In certain forms of Neo-Pythagoreanism and/or Neo-Platonism, a certain indefinite dyad is an originator of the entire universe, emanating from an ineffable One, whereas certain cosmologies, such as Gnosticism and Manichaeism, are

notable for their dualist structures, placing a duality as a first principle, which are in sharp contrast to the more monist constructions found in Akbarism and other orders.

Canto 3.1

(.764)

Enzo told Daria
how he was considering
that it was perhaps
with a tyrannical exactness
that he proceeded
about his life,
right up through
his weekly high fades,
that he considered
a latent geometrical tyranny
to be possibly
ruthlessly guiding his life
as he took quick note
of a quite sizeable posterior
in light blue jeans
that was walking
right past him
as he approached
the large brick building
that contained
the Department for
Economic Development
on a quaint

Friday afternoon
at four pm on the dot.

Daria was aware
Enzo walked there
to try and slip the clerk
a quick so-called
business registration form
but before she could confirm
what she already knew
for a fact
Enzo went on to note that
it turned out
the city clerks' offices
closed half an hour early
for their so-called
summer hours,
which as it
so happened
was exactly at
four pm.

Enzo muttered
what the fuck
before continuing on
to note he was wearing

his new tan Walmart mesh
basketball shorts
with his white vans
as the voluptuous woman
walked past,
by contrast,
wearing wire rimmed glasses
on the tip of her thin nose,
surrounded on three sides
by curly black locks.

According to him
sometimes it was
just preferable
to sit on a roof
with your shirt off
and think about fucking nothing
for a little bit
even if it
was five fifteen
on a Friday afternoon,
there was, after all,
repetition and number,
he noted to Daria,
but did all numbers
actually repeat?

Daria noted
she'd been noticing
an insane amount
of five fifty fives
and two twenty twos
plus eleven elevens
and even one elevens of late
but to date
she'd refrained
from any attempt
to google an explanation.

But wasn't it the case,
Enzo interjected,
since they'd gotten
onto the topic
of sequences of integers anyway,
wasn't it the case
that the second cousin
as a conceptual artifice
was collectively accelerating
the downfall of their country,
I mean, Enzo said,
second cousins
are in aggregate

all basically cunts, right?

In Enzo's mind
it was the clearly the case
that the second cousin
was basically objectionable,
a pitiful clinging
to a so-called bloodline
that was, even when
more potent,
still somewhat ambiguous
if not nonsensical.

What was blood anyway?

Daria, for her part,
didn't have a particularly strong
opinion on the concept
of the second cousin
one way or the other,
but she admitted
that she didn't
have as big of a family
as Enzo,
which perhaps played a part
in her quizzical nonchalance?

No, Enzo went on,
the second cousin
was something indicative
of a structural rot,
in fact it was something
that probably needed
actual legislation
to be properly combatted,
because these second cousins,
they wouldn't just rescind
of their own accord.

No,
Enzo and Daria both,
they needed to start
petitioning local representatives
to abolish this concept
of the second cousin.

Canto 3.¹²

(.756)

It was abundantly clear
to Enzo that there was
a recurring splitting
into two
that was perhaps
the most nefarious act
of all,
that the first of this or that
inevitably'd become extended
to the so-called second
of the same substrate,
but why?

It was this counting,
this lurid linear extension
that perhaps offended
Enzo the most,
to which Daria,
thinking about her bok choy
with an unerring sense of dread,
was only partially paying
attention to.

They'd fundamentally forgotten
something essential
about number, Enzo said,
they'd become addicted to
dividing and adding,
extending and subtracting,
instead of focusing
on concepts more
steeped in purity.

Enzo felt as though
they were destined to recall
something essential about number,
but now, somehow,
that'd become impossible
for them, that they'd forgotten
for perpetuity
an essential aspect of number,
which made every situation
they encountered
immeasurably more bleak.

The second cousin itself
was little beyond a symptom
of a far greater sickness,
the common cold of counting numbers,

of becoming unitary until
they reached infinity.

Nothing was more infinite
than the unitary,
yet the unitary becoming infinite
was utterly absurd!

Everything was split into two,
or split into three,
all around them
were doppelgangers and trinities
of what was what.

Multiplicity
couldn't exist this way!

Enzo continued
as Daria simultaneously
considered bringing up
a few concerns she had
with an employee
she'd contracted specifically
in a botanical manner,
but who, given his unorthodox methods,
had started to concern her

given some of his more
licentious habits.

Of course botany
and personal matters
were probably,
in most cases, considered
completely separate issues,
but due to the specific nature
of this particular job
it had begun to bother
Daria just slightly.

Enzo, for his part,
had an entire pack of cigarettes
in his drawer, he said to Daria,
because he'd bought
a whole pack the other day,
just purely out of spite.

Did she want to go
out onto the deck
and whack a puff or two from one?

Was she drunk enough
yet?—to smoke a quick cig?

Because she clearly wasn't
listening to any
of the fucking shit he was saying
about integers
or second cousins,
about the nonsensical division
of everything all around them!

No Daria was,
she was listening (kind of ...),
it was just that
she was just a tad
preoccupied, even before
coming by she'd been
walking through
a small courtyard in the city,
taking note of the big trees
growing next to the large brick
condo buildings,
contemplating connecting
with nature,
but also with inanimate objects
as well?

It was one thing

to connect with nature
and trees and plants,
that was almost cliche,
but what about
connecting with inanimate objects
made of plastic
by wage slaves
in East Asia?

She'd recently attended
divine liturgy
for the first time in ages,
she told Enzo,
and while occasionally
staring up at the series
of icons people
would have
indiscriminately killed
people for worshipping
just a few short centuries ago,
she could have sworn
a set of voices
were speaking to her,
solely within her mind,
comforting her
but also informing her

that there'd be an upcoming time
that they'd snap their fingers
and she'd finally return to them,
as if that was where
she actually belonged,
in this plane
she could hardly comprehend,
yet communicated directly
to her with no problem.

She exited her body
just momentarily,
filled with pure relief,
then the beings reiterated
a time would arrive
when they would
snap their fingers,
then she'd return, finally,
to them.

Perhaps
she'd have discounted
the encounter
if she hadn't,
with complete caprice,
she told Enzo,

decided to go up to take
communion with her dad,
and as her turn
finally arrived
to imbibe
the blood of Christ Himself,
she noticed sitting calmly
to the left of the priest
was a Wind Tunnel
brand floor fan.

The exact same floor fan she'd,
after taking entirely too
many mushrooms one
particular evening eons ago,
engaged in an extended
conversation with
regarding the true nature of things,
during which a certain clarity
descended upon her,
finally understanding,
with the utmost purity,
her true origin and, in turn,
the primal source of all things.

(4) Abstract

(n/a)

“In another dream of wider significance I saw Jonas Lie, with a gilt bronze clock curiously ornamented. Some days later, when I went to walk on the Boulevard St. Michel, a watch-maker’s shop window attracted my attention. ‘Jonas Lie’s clock!’ I exclaimed aloud. It was indeed the same. It was crowned by a celestial globe on which two female figures leaned; the works were supported by four pillars, and on the globe a date-indicator pointed to the 13th of August. In a future chapter I will explain what the fateful 13th of August brought with it. This and other occurrences took place during my stay in Hotel Orfila between 6th February and 19th July, 1896. Concurrently with them a larger adventure pursued its often interrupted course till, with my exit from the hotel, a new section of my life began ... August 13th.—The day announced on the Boulevard St. Michel has arrived. I wait for something to happen, but in vain; none the less. I am certain that somewhere something is happening, the result of which I shall hear in a short time. August 14th.—On the street I pick up a leaf out of an old office calendar; in large type there is printed on it ‘August 13th’ (the same date which was on the clock). Underneath it in smaller type is a sentence,

‘Do nothing secretly which thou canst not do also openly.’”

- August Strindberg, *The Inferno*

Canto 4.1

(.782)

Ultimately, whether the cults of Aphrodite
engaged in sacred prostitution or not
is something scholars of history
are still bitterly torn about,
but there exist perhaps
legitimate reasons to agree with either camp.

On the one hand,
if the Greeks engaged in,
what certain participants of the Symposium
at least believed to be,
an abutting sacred form of pederasty,
then is it really that farfetched
to suggest
dudes in Corinth were banging whores
in an Aphrodite temple,
but just in an intensely ritualistic way?

Isn't it possible Aphrodite was,
in some sense, a pre-waifu?

The true
origin of the waifu as we know it?

Later that night, at Itaewon Pochu in Koreatown,
Araqi was surreptitiously saving
hentai jpegs onto his camera roll
as he sat at the small window table
overlooking West Thirty Second,
splitting an eel appetizer with Jo Yu-Ri,
who after a couple shots of Soju,
was suddenly more forthcoming
than she'd been previously.

Unaware of
yet also unconcerned with Araqi
saving hentai jpegs
into his phone's camera roll,
Jo Yu-Ri found herself
more comfortable with, you know,
sharing her feelings after about
half a dozen shots of Soju.

Was she herself possibly engaged in an ...
"iteration of sacred prostitution"?

No!—employing some Greek demigod
to rub his cock on your bok
choy plants wasn't—well,

she didn't know what it was exactly,
she muttered to Araqi.

Maybe avant-garde botany?

But in any case
definitely not prostitution!

Araqi noted that: wasn't it possible
that some thing or some one
had some sort of, you know, "hold"
on Πρίαπος?

That maybe the dude just needed help,
some assistance, that all this shit
she was so concerned about,
vis-a-vis his recent whore mongering
was the result of certain something
having a vice grip hold on him?

Well, clearly he was a little off-kilter!
she said, that much they could both
agree on!

But the essence of that condition,
the condition of being hypnotized

in an abutting mystical manner—
was she the most appropriate one to say,
or was it possible she didn't actually care,
that this was an exclusively
capitalist endeavor,
that her role in the whole
matter was solely
rationalist, that as long as
her bok choy imparted a competitive leg up
in the heat of Koreatown
she didn't care one way or the other?

And, by the way,
the "bok choy at Itaewon was atrocious",
she noted,
so at least that was good!

The fact of the matter was
Jo Yu-Ri could definitely
question how she quote-unquote
arrived here, so to speak,
a budding, barely semi-successful,
restauranteur in Midtown,
a Johnson and Whales dropout
and Food Network junkie,
helplessly

perusing Craig's List ads,
desperate for a leg up
in the most viciously competitive
restaurant metropolis
perhaps on the planet,
when she stumbled upon Πρίαπος's plight,
deciding to take it on
as a botanical advantage.

People would always note in awe
how her blue eyes displayed
a certain reddish gold tint
about them, possibly
some faint Spanish blood
on her Filipino mother's side?

It seemed her Korean-American identity
was always slightly undermined
by this Catholicism of her adolescence—
Catholicism has a tendency
of making everyone
a fourth generation Italian-American,
and Jo Yu-Ri felt this tugging at times as well,
but then again,
it wasn't quite like the guy
necessarily owed her anything,

because there was nothing
in their contract (which was non-existent)
that stipulated how he should spend his free time.

Yet, Araqi interjected,
is there not an implicit agreement
in any business relationship to, you know,
like, he said, when George Costanza
became a hand model in Seinfeld—
he wasn't traveling around
laying bricks and dipping his toes
into amateur boxing in his free time!

Yes, the Costanza analogy
was an apt one here,
yet again there was the question
of the essence
of Πρίαπος himself,
how he interacted, or was interacted with,
in the corporeal sphere,
which became an increasingly latent issue
as the two requested a second bottle of Soju.

It was possible, Jo Yu-Ri considered,
that "his cock wasn't existent"
in the way she may have initially thought.

Canto 5.1

(.760)

Of course Hakim entered the establishment
looking solely for Amina,
as at the time he was
completely captivated by her beauty,
unwilling to part with this particular image
of her form that relentlessly ricocheted
within the confines of his mind,
captivated, not like he'd been once before,
by the "comparative witchcraft
of clever conversation".

No, instead Hakim found himself
hypnotized by the blunt pure form
of her beauty, with no edification
or extrapolation, with no capitulation
to reason—or even to feeling
for that matter!

It was simply the case
that there was no interlocutor,
not even any remote contemplation
of this very form that so clearly
had wafted Hakim through the double doors

that evening,
trying to find what could perhaps be deemed
a waifu.

Now of course there's a complex hierarchy
of refraction to matters like these,
of which Hakim, having a decent
amount of philosophical education,
wasn't unaware of *per se*,
however, whether or not it was
at the top of his mind at the time
is a separate matter entirely
(it wasn't!).

There are long range correlations—
did a female look like someone familiar,
from years ago,
like perhaps exactly the same?

In fact,
it was possible Hakim actually
mistook this particular waifu
for another person entirely at first,
back from his secondary school days.

He wasn't even certain

it was her
when he first
stumbled upon her form.

He encountered her form but recalled
a co-ed he was acquainted with
from some years ago,
assuming incorrectly Amina was in fact
an old friend.

She informed Hakim softly
her name was Amina,
as if people were possibly listening in
to each syllable uttered from her exquisitely
proportioned lips, as if specific
court jesters were waiting in the wing
to transcribe their conversation
to latent
gossip columnists.

Scholars,
for their part, would ultimately retroactively
conflate two possible Aminas as well,
mimicking unintentionally
their own source of study.

The fact that Amina was, technically speaking, you know, an orphan in a harem didn't faze Hakim in the least, because all of the prophets previously noted historically were, if not pure whore-mongers, then at least sympathetic to the plight of the prostitute, the prostitute simply existing as an extension of the destitute and downtrodden as a whole.

Hakim saw no reason to diverge from his predecessors in this regard.

There's a certain idea that the deepest relationships are the ones based on so-called illuminating conversation, predicated upon getting to quote-unquote know each other, yet you could counter that there's actually nothing to know of us really at all, that we're purely refractions of a source infinitely simpler than we seem to be,

that convolutions are by their very nature
fictional and steeped in hypocrisy.

Having a great conversation
is the acute fallacy of humanity,
believing you've discovered
some eternal bond with another person
is perhaps an affront to Allah Himself.

Hakim and Amina didn't discuss themselves
at first, and when they did they struggled
to recall who they even were,
which was appropriate.

Hakim's madness, his indiscriminate killing
of others was based in this idea.

There was an immediacy to their coming into contact
with one another.

Hakim, again,
didn't contemplate Amina's beauty,
simply because it was an impossible act.

Memory was something they both
struggled to interact with.

Amina's beauty was a motor skill.

Her outline was a recollection
someone would never
become conscious of,
a lurid memory a person completely forgot about
but still stayed hugging their body
like a shark jaw.

It was the immediacy of Amina's beauty
that slowly began to erode
Hakim's sanity.

Possession sans contemplation
can be confusing for some,
Hakim not excluded,
because we often consider possession
akin to growing old
and decaying with someone,
repeating vows into an open air that,
if rearranged just slightly,
would become heavy as bricks.

At the time he passed through the double doors
to place an eye on her,
Hakim incorrectly assumed Amina's beauty

to be of a decaying nature,
basically that he could possess her
in a contemplative sense.

Hakim made a poor attempt
to seem like he wasn't looking
for Amina as he walked through the double doors,
her beauty already within him
but in a way that eschewed contemplation entirely.

Hakim lusted for decay,
to possess beauty in a contemplative sense,
to recite vows in air pockets of brick,
and Amina danced around his ambitions,
to be honest, fairly effortlessly.

Had Hakim been able to properly contemplate
this very real immediacy of Amina,
then perhaps his sanity
wouldn't have slowly eroded
in the manner it ultimately did.

When he executed those closest to him on a whim,
in increasingly violent and drastic ways,
slicing off heads and slitting throats
by the hundreds, it was only because

Hakim fundamentally
misinterpreted the immediacy of Amina's beauty.

Had he been able to perceive her beauty
in its actual sense as opposed to
ruthlessly attempting to tether it to his own
contemplation,
then he probably wouldn't have gone batshit crazy!

Court officers would be beheaded
because Amina's beauty
was a motor skill to Hakim,
when he incorrectly believed it to be
a roman à clef.

Yet isn't an eroded sanity necessary?

Could we possibly suggest that?

When Hamza ibn Ali
proclaimed Hakim to be
divine incarnate, was it possibly because
Hakim had sacrificed his own sanity
to make Amina's beauty,
which was of a purely waifu variety, decay?

Hakim would disappear years later,
in fact not long after two distorted
Aminas appeared to him in dream,
one dark, the other of a light variety,
yet still even then he remained unable
to disentangle what it was he saw.

Yet in any case,
all that's perhaps a better topic
for a later date,
because when Hakim walked through those
double doors his sanity had already
started to decay,
his mental faculties were already
in a state of disarray.

As Hakim focused his energies
on this false image of decaying with Amina
his sanity itself became dilapidated.

Hamza ibn Ali called him Hakim Allah.

It wasn't necessarily the phrases
Amina repeated that reached Hakim,
but more so the mode in which she said them.

She'd whispered pure nonsense to Hakim
that was nothing if not totally logical
only a few years before his friend
Hamza would deem him Hakim Allah.

Hakim would spend his nights and weekends
locked in his three hundred square foot living space,
an ascetic decision of his own accord,
and meditate extensively on the beauty of Amina,
its true nature, recreating
her geometry in his mind,
speaking with Amina in his imagination,
creating
an interpersonal brand of beauty based
entirely on contemplation,
one where they would decay
together into old age,
a human shape that fades
with time, existing solely temporally,
never emanating
anywhere except into the memories
and photographs which distort and falsify
everything worthy of our awe.

This was how Hakim's sanity eroded.

His asceticism played at least a part
in his own decay,
but mostly because he employed asceticism to create
images in his mind,
to delve into his memories as images
as if they contained an essence
more immediate than Amina's beauty.

They didn't!

It's the proliferation of the imagined image
that ultimately drives us all basically insane
all the time without fail,
because of the distance
we place between ourselves and the image,
by necessity of course!

Being deprived of the immediate beauty of Amina,
Hakim chose to ascetically attempt to recreate
it via his own imagined images,
existing almost exclusively within
the confines of his own contemplative states,
but whereas his (seemingly shallow) interactions
with Amina required nothing,
they merged into each other
sans conscious thought,

his imagined images were fleeting,
always decayed immediately post-construction.

At five thirty five pm one afternoon
the thought occurred to Hakim
that he'd been forty for his entire life,
despite the fact he'd disappear forever at just thirty five.

He was still obsessed with distance.

No, it was precisely the notion of distance
that drove his sanity off the fucking cliff.

Hakim's greatest creation was perhaps Dar al-Ilm,
or it could have possibly been his own interaction
with his sanity,
because perhaps by dealing with Amina's beauty
incorrectly Hakim ultimately
arrived at the true notion of beauty,
rather than moderately deluding
himself and decaying with a palatable fib,
he stampeded full force into delusion.

He lost track of his sanity completely
because of it, in a sense
accurately assessing the false notion

of Amina's beauty as an item
you could decay beside.

The sacred prostitute is incapable of decay,
there's in fact absolutely nothing more absurd
than growing old with a so-called sacred prostitute.

How could you?!

In Ten Twenty One, Hakim would dream
of two distorted Aminas and then he too would
disappear,
not as a result of a palace intrigue,
or a surreptitious murder, or age and decay,
because even if those events seemed to occur,
we should stress that they're no less veil-like
than the veils Hakim witnessed around Amina's beauty.

No, to be clear,
it's fairly evident Hakim himself
became a waifu in his thirty fifth year,
which was entirely appropriate.

Disappear is probably the incorrect word to describe it!
because Hakim gave away
his sanity in a very real way

the second he walked through those double doors
to greet Amina in his own establishment,
the establishment where he saw himself enclosed,
like in a large box like container,
one Spring afternoon,
the same place he contemplated
the idea that Allah is the very mirror
in which you see yourself,
that you're the mirror
in which He witnesses His Names.

We seek to claim
beauty in a subject-object relationship
because certain beings have made themselves seem to be
that way,
not to trick us necessarily
but just to innocently cause us to go
appropriately insane,
and via that appropriate insanity
finally arriving at the proper nature of beauty.

Amina in her current state
enjoyed the fact that Hakim had half of his robe off
in the middle of the venue,
his face bleeding,
tossing dinars into the air screaming

at men twice his size that he had money!

Didn't they know this?

He'd fucking kill them all,
then he'd eliminate their families,
then he'd assassinate the acquaintances
of their second cousins!

But sacred prostitutes are of course
inveterately drawn to this exact type of insanity,
a sort of Dionysian losing of the self.

Years later Hakim would dream
of killing himself repeatedly
as a method of cleansing himself,
a related process.

It's probably
interacting with the atrocities
of beauty where the greatest lessons are learned,
but certainly not in an interpersonal
and quote-unquote deep conversation driven way.

No, it's via a divine immediacy
that everything becomes idiotic

and your rational self is finally recognized
among everyone as an unwelcome interlocutor,
unable to wrap his pea-brained head
around why you're not currently
wearing a shirt in a public place.

Canto 5.¹²

(.775)

Walking through the
(in retrospect somewhat ominous)
double doors Hakim took note
of the same tin roof
that comprised the sky
on dive bar patios
as Amina made it clear
she had business to take care of,
she was after all on shift,
but that it was also important
that Hakim wait for her,
please! Don't leave!

Just wait a minute!

But fundamentally
there was nothing for the two to
discuss beyond Amina
staring silently into Hakim's eyes
for extended intervals of time.

When she finally moseyed over
toward him as he stood

nervously, still near the
double doors,
he told her he wanted to take her
quote-unquote
out of this place,
maybe even,
he didn't know,
take her out to dinner?
and she laughed in a way
that spoke to the
seeming impossibility of the idea,
and, in turn,
Hakim considered the false duality
of the physical
and the Platonic,
considering that, actually,
the proper division of kind
when it came to love
wasn't physical
and spiritual
but instead
the delayed
and the immediate.

There was no dialectic present here,
no long conversations

on the phone, no getting to know
one another's so-called secrets
and indulging in the thrilling idiocy
of what's hidden,
of the amusement park
of tiny little secrets.

There inevitably would come
a time when Amina actually asked
Hakim to tell a little more
about himself,
that it seemed like,
now that she thought about it,
she barely even knew him!
to which Hakim considered
his own trauma,
which of course
wasn't exactly real,
he contemplated his youth
with a rare momentary fervor
and witnessed that
all these memories
became mass-produced
action figures completely melted
into a strip of pavement
in the unforgivingly blistering

Cairo sun,
and as he turned to his left,
solely to escape Amina's
ever intensifying gaze,
he couldn't help but note
a Sandra Bullock poster
for a movie called
Miss Secret Agent
hung up adjacent.

Repeating the title again to himself
Hakim slowly arrived at the
disquieting conclusion
that there perhaps existed an entire
Sandra Bullock economy
all around him,
that entire swathes
of the film industry
were indiscriminately
dedicated to the ruthless
production of additional
Sandra Bullock content,
exclusively constructed
for a ravenous
Sandra Bullock fan base.

People, not at all in obscure numbers,
absolutely adored
Sandra Bullock, apparently!

But how could this be?—
that these shit stains
just couldn't get enough of
Sandra Bullock, could they?—
to the extent an entire industry
had developed to quench the thirst
for this Sandra Bullock content.

Oh no! Miss Congeniality
wasn't nearly enough Sandra Bullock
for these lurid masses of
Sandra Bullock shit stains!

Hope Floats was barely scratching the surface
of what was clearly
a Mariana trench-like itch
for the unadulterated production
of Sandra Bullock films.

Speed and Demolition Man
and The Proposal—no!
these insatiable zealots

demanded Miss Secret Agent
as well!

Miss Congeniality
the Second: Armed and Fabulous,
not even that acutely cocksucking film
could suffice for these cocksucking Crusaders
of everything Sandra Bullock.

To Hakim's amazement,
Miss Secret Agent was still
somehow necessary!

Bird Box, Ocean's Eight—
this endless list of insipid films,
could there ever be enough Bullock?
Hakim thought, avoiding Amina's gaze,
realizing his entire childhood
was a blob of plastic
melted into a Cairo pavement.

There existed an entire sub-population
that subsisted seemingly solely
on Sandra Bullock films?

Hakim asked Amina

if she'd seen that movie posted over there,
Miss Secret Agent?—with Sandra Bullock?

Was that, like, a sequel
to Miss Congeniality
by any chance?

Amina noted excitedly
that she'd actually seen the sequel
to Miss Congeniality,
that it was called Armed and Fabulous,
so she cast doubt upon whether the
particular film could be its proper sequel,
but then suggested that it was possibly part
of a trilogy?

This Sandra Bullock industry
had been allowed to proliferate,
seemingly incessantly,
and now Hakim realized,
once and for all,
that he and Amina basically lived
derivative lives
in what was functionally
a Sandra Bullock driven economy.

Canto 5.13

(.758)

All around him,
his whole life,
he'd been unrepentantly
surrounded by Sandra Bullock's filmography,
but only in this moment
did this unfailingly depressing fact
become apparent to him.

In fact, Amina continued,
glancing at the poster again,
Miss Secret Agent was actually
just another name for Miss Congeniality,
the first film,
not Armed and Fabulous,
had Hakim seen it?

It was actually pretty decent!

Bullock plays a quote-unquote
tough and tomboyish FBI agent
in the Action slash Comedy,
it was a film that contained
action yet also comedic relief,
as Bullock was,

despite being
traditionally attractive,
a tough but also tomboyish
detective, which challenged
traditional gender norms.

One aspect Amina enjoyed
about the film was the balance of action
with spurts of comedic relief!

She loved spurts of
comic relief!

This would contrast with Bullock's
later work in a film
like Bird Box,
where she'd take a much more
serious turn in her acting career.

Hakim admitted to Amina that, actually,
he believed Sandra Bullock, well,
that she sucked.

No, not that she
was the worst per se,
no there were obviously more

atrocious actresses
than Sandra Bullock.

But how many exactly?

Because Sandra Bullock,
according to Hakim,
was a particularly
nauseating personality.

He just found her,
he didn't know,
a bit of an annoying imbecile?

While, no, he hadn't seen
many of her feature films
start to finish
he didn't feel like
he needed to to be able to
arrive at a fairly confident conclusion
that she was basically vomit inducing.

She certainly wasn't
a pillar of creative brilliance!

The world, in Hakim's mind at least,

didn't require any further
Sandra Bullock films!

This idea, Hakim said,
that Sandra Bullock
should have basically
an entire industry
built around her,
for the sole purpose of producing
more and more
Sandra Bullock films,
it seems completely absurd to me!

Sandra Bullock?

If there's a single data point
we can reference to suggest
that our society is in dire need
of reform I think it's the putrid fact
that a movie was produced
and released under the title
Miss Congeniality Two:
Armed and Fabulous!

The fact that,
not only was that film

actually produced,
but this entire Sandra Bullock
industry continues to operate
and proliferate, even to this day?—
how can you not be just
a little offended by that, Amina?

It's all just a tad grotesque
you have to admit!

Well I disagree! Amina retorted,
I like her movies, Hakim!

I think she's amusing,
but also brazen in a way
I find endearing.

Endearing, Hakim repeated
equally in disgust and disbelief,
endearing?

No, I watched Bird Box,
and I'll simply note
that my left nut
after a half an hour run
is more endearing

than that movie, Amina!

And Speed with Keanu Reeves?

C'mon! Oh, and don't even start
with Hope Floats! —
the fact there
exists an entire sub-population
of Egyptians dedicated to, what? —
the collected Sandra Bullock filmography? —
is just absolutely
mind boggling to me! —
it's actually an affront to good taste Amina,
it's actually the best Christmas gift
of all time to utter absurdity,
it's something we need to employ teams
of our finest scholars to study
to produce rigorous case studies
detailing extended hypotheses
as to how this state of affairs
was allowed to occur!

Diagrams

Koreatown Bok Choy

Mode: >.75

11,144:14,505 .768

1.1 A[r][a]q[i] t[o]ld J[o] Yu-[r][i], as they [s][a]t in the [s]m[all] h[all][w]ay [w]ide Ud[o]n Lab [o]n [W][e][s]t Thirty [S][e]cond, [r]ight [n][e]xt to the Marti[n][i]que, [h]ow [h][e] [h]ad no [r][e][c]oll[e][c]tion of [r][e]-[r][e]ading [R]ings of [S]aturn what[s]o[e]ver, in fa[c]t the onl[y] [r][ea]s[o]n A[r]a[q]i [e]v[e]n [r][ea]lized h[e]d [s]tarted [r][e]-[r][ea]ding [R]ings of [S][a]turn [a]t [a]ll was [a] [s]ole b[l]ue pen [u]n[d]er[l][i]ne [s]t[r][i]ke [u]n[d][er] the w[or]d [R]umelia, [r][i]ght [o]n t[o][p] of [p]age [n][i]nety [n][i]ne that, [n]ow [r][e]-[r][ea]ding it yet [a]gain, [A][r]aqi k[n]ew all t[oo] [w]ell [h]e [w]ould [h]ave [n]ever made [w]hen he [i]n[i][i]ally [r]ead [R][i]ngs of [S]aturn, [b][e][c]ause [a]t th[a]t time A[r]a[q]i [b]are[ly] knew what [R]ume[l]ia [r]efe[r]enced, [b]ut u[p]on [a] [s]econd [r]eadings, [a][s]suming [s][ai]d [s][e]cond [r]eadings [t]ook [p]lace when [A][r]aq[i] [b][e][l][ie]ved it [d]id, h[e] was [t]otal[l][y] [b]alls [d][ee]p in [R]ume[l]ia [l][or]e. F[or] all of th[e]se [r][ea]sons A[r]aq[i] [b][e][l][ie]ved h[e]d on[l][y] [b]eg[a]n his [s]econd [r]eadings of [R]ings of [S][a]turn when he [p]i[c]ked u[p] the [b]oo[k] again just [th]e [o][th]er [a]fternoon, [b][u]t in [a][c]tu[a][l]ity, a[c]cording to th[i]s [p]art[i][c]lu[l]ar b[l]ue under[l][i]ne on the [n][i]nety-[n][i]nth [p]age of the [n]ovel, it [s][ee]med [l][i][k]e h[e]d [a][c]tual[l][y], in f[a][c]t, [r][e][c]ent[l][y] [s]tarted a third [r][e]ading, [n]ot a [s]econd. [B][u]t w[a]sn't [i]t a [b][i]t [b]efud[d]ling, a tad [d][i][s][c]on[c]er[t]i[ng] [p]erh[a][p]s th[a]t a [p][er][s][o]n [c]ould h[a]ve [a]bsol[u]tely n[o] [r][e][c]o[l]e[c]tion of [r]eadings a wh[o]le f[u][c]king h[u]ndred [p]ages [o]f [a] n[o]vel less than f[i]ve years [p]r[i]or, A[r]aqi thought, a [s][e]ntim[e]nt he [e]xp[r][e][s]ed to Jo Yu-[r][i], and sh[e] agr[e]ed that [i]t d[id] [s][e]em eg[r][e]gious, [b]ut al[s]o [p]er[p]lexing and may[b][e] [e]ven, [n]ot to [b][e] hy[p]er[b]ol[i]c, [b]ut a [b][i]t om[i][n][ou]s? [B]ut all [th]is, [th]e en[t]irety of the

[p]air's [s][p]e[c][i]f[i]c [s][t]ream [o]f dial[ol]gue w[a]s ab[r][u][p]tly inter[r][u][p]ted when J[o] Yu-[r][i] [n][o]ted A[r]aq[i]'s v[i]s[i]b[y] [c]on[c]ate[n][a]ting f[r]ust[r][a]tion as th[ey] were sudden[l][y], vio[l]ent[l][y] up[s]tr[ea]med at the [b]ar [b]y [s]ome gr[e]a[s][y] fu[ck] in a [c]o[b]alt [b]lue [s]o[c]cer jersey - the [f][a]ct of the m[a]tter was the two [f]riends only [p]o[p]ped in the [s][p][o]t to beg[i]n w[i]th [t]o [t]a[k]e a [q]u[i][c]k l[i][s]t[e]n to a [p]arti[c]u[l]ar xy[l]oph[o]ne [j]azz t[r]i[o] A[r]a[q]i and [J][o] Yu-[R]i heard [p][l]aying [f]rom the [f]oyer as they [w]alked [p]ast on [W][e][s]t Thirty [S][e][c]ond, A[r]a[q]i [b][e]ing in[t][r][i]gued [b]y a [t][r][i][o] [l]ed b[y] x[y][l]oph[o]ne, [b][u]t [o]nce in line at the [b]ar they [b]o[th] s[l][o]w[l]y rea[l]ized how [l][o][q]uacious this [b]artender [w]as [w]ith each [c][u]stomer, A[r]a[q]i's f[r][u][s]t[r][a]tion [c]on[c]aten[a]ting with [e]ach [s]e[c]ond h[e] [c]ontinued to w[ai]t for a [b]eer, and now, this [c]u[s]tomer in a [c]o[b]alt [b]lue [s]o[c]cer jersey, [p]o[p]ped [u][p] out [o]f [s][ee]mingly thin air to [u][p][s]tr[ea]m [th]em, [th]is [c][u][s]tomer, who'd, for [h]is [p]art, [h]ad a[p]pa[r]ent[l][y] been [r]e[p]eated[l][y] [s][c]ornered in his [q]u[e][s]t to get a [s][e][c]ond [b]eer him[s][e]lf, [b]y none o[th]er [th]an [th]is lo[q]u[a]c[i]ous [b]ar[t]ender, who [k]ept [c]on[t]inuing on a[b]out che[c]king the [p]ipes in the [b][a]sem[e]nt, and now this [c]u[s]tomer in the [c][o][b]alt [b][l]ue [s]o[c]cer shirt au[d]acious[l]y [c]ut them [b][o]th in [l]ine to [r]uth[l]ess[l]y expe[d]ite his [s]ub[s][e][q]uent [b][e]ve[r]age. [A][r]a[q]i was [a][b]utting an [a]u[d]i[b]le [c]omp[l][ai]nt [b]ut [r]em[ai]ned [u]nwil[l]ing to [a][b]an[d]on his ju[s]t-[d]i[s][c]overed ex[c]itemen[t] [f]or this xyloph[o]ne [j]azz as [J][o] Yu-r[i] n[o]ted [th]at [th]ere was a Vietnam[e]se [f]ood truck out[s][i]de, r[i]ght on the [c]orner of [S]ixth and [Th]irty [S]e[c]ond, [th]at she [c]ould [g][o] [g]et a [f]ew egg [r][o]lls i[f] they [w]anted? A[r]a[q][i] [w]asn't [r][e]a[l][y] in the mood, but this [d][i][d]n't [d][e]ter Jo Yu-r[i] from amb[l]ing out[s]ide to [s][e]e “[w]h[a]t [w][a]s [u]p [w]ith their [d][u]m[p][l]ings”, [r]ight as the bar[t][e]n[d]er finally [a][t]t[e]n[d]ed [t]o [A][r]a[q]i's

[p][e]n[d]ing [r]e[q]uest for an [o]ver[p][r][i][c]ed [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te I[t]alian [s]t[y]le beer, wh[i]ch [d][i][d]n't [t]aste like Peroni [a]t all, [a]nd b[y] the [t][i]me the [t][wo] got [t][o] a s[ea]t the jazz [t]r[i]o [f][i]n[i]shed [i]ts [f]irst [s][e]t and [b]egan its [b][r]eak, lighting [c]liga[r][e]ttes and wal[k]ing [b]a[c]k to the [b]ar [f]or their [r]e[s]pe[c]tive, [A][r]a[q]i [a]s[um]ed, [f][r][e]e [r][e][f]ills.

η/ω 713:927 .769

1.12 Of [c]our[s]e it was the [c][a][s]e that A[r]a[q]i, de[s]pite his [a]git[a]tion [a]t the f[a][c]t h[e] and [J]o Yu-[R][i] [e]n[t]ered this [e]s[t]ab[l]ishment w[i]th the [e]xpl[i][c][i]t [i]n[t]ent of [1][i][s]tening to th[i][s] xy[l]oph[o]ne [j]azz tri[o], [o]n[l]y to get s[t]iffed [b]y a preva[r]i[c]ating [b]artender, [b]y a m[y][s][t][e][r]ious [sh][i]t [s][t]ain w[ea][r]ing a [c]o[b]alt [b]lue [s]o[c]cer [sh]irt, to [t]he ex[t]ent [th]at [b][y] [th]e [t][i]me [th]ey [w]ere seated [w]ith an over[p]riced [b]eer [a]nd a h[a]nd[f]ul of sub[p]ar Vietnamese egg [r][o]lls, the [f]ucking t[r][i][o] it[s]el[f] [s]to[p]ped [p]ounding xy[l]oph[o]nes and [c]eased [p][l]aying jazz, but A[r][a][q]i h[a]d other more [p][r]e[s]sing and [d]ire to[p]i[c]s of [d]i[s][c]ussion, [d]e[s][p]ite the [s]u[d]den [s][i]lence in the [c]o[r]ri[d]or w[i]de [r]e[s]tau[r]ant, [s][p]e[c][i]ff[i][c]al[l][y] about Jo [Y]u-[R][i]'s new [s]o-[c]alled [e]mp[li]o[y][e]e, [P][r]ia[p]us, [b]e[c][au]se the [f][u][c]king guy had [b]een tal[k]ing his ear o[f]f a[b]out S[o]ju for [l]i[k]e the wh[o]le [l]ast w[ee][k]. J[o] Yu-R[i] n[o]dd[e]d at the [c][o]mm[e]nt without ev[en] [an] [in][k][i]ng of a h[i]nt of sh[o][c]k in her [g]aze, she wasn't [c][au]ght [o]ff [g]u[a]rd at [a]ll, [a]s A[r][a][q]i [c]on[t]inued [t]o [r]e[c]apitu[l]ate the guy's m[o]n[o][l]o[gues, ab[ou]t [h]ow this [c]ountry, [i]f th[i]s [n]ation h[a]d any ch[a]nce [a]t all what[s][o][e]ver, th[e]n it [n][ee][d]ed to imm[e][d][i]atel[y] a[d]opt [S][o]ju [a]s its [n][a]tional [d]rink, [th]at [th]ere was [n]o [o]ther [o][p]tion but to [a][d]o[p]t [a]ll ite[r][a][t]ions of Soju, of [K]o[r]ean [R]ice W[i]ne as the [p][r]o[p]er [B]ud [L][i]ght

[r]e[p][l][a]cem[e]nt, to [c]o-o[p]t this [K]o[r][e]an wine and [r]e[b][r][a]nd it [a]s e[s]sentially fu[c]king [A]me[r]i[c]an, [A][r]a[q]i [s]aid. [Th]at [th]e J[o]le [R][o]gans of the in[t]er[n]et [s][ph]ere had [p][r]e[s][c]ribed the Do[n]ald [T][r]um[p]s of the [ph][y]s[i][c]al world as the [p]a[n][a][c][e][a] this [c]ountr[y] [n][ee]ded, via [r][e][a]ctiona[r][y] ch[a][nn]els [p]o[s]ted on a [p]lat[f]orm that i[r]o[n]i[c]ally e[n]ough [s]tarted as a [C]IA [f][r][o]nt, yet the [r]eality w[a]s the t[r]ue [c]o[r][e][c]t[i]ve [c]ould [n][e]v[e]r be [f]ound in a Do[n]ald T[r][u]mp, [n][o], [o]nl[y] in [K]o[r][e]an [r][i]ce w[i]ne, a[c]cording to [P][r]ia[p]us, [p][eo][p]le n[ee]ded to start dr[i]n[k][i]ng [i]t [i]n [b]lars and [r]e[s]tau[r]ants in [p][l]a[c]e of [c]ar[b]o[n]ated [l]ight [b]eers! A[r]a[q][i] and J[o] Yu-[R][i] [b][o]th [n][o]ted [th]at [th]ey [r]e[s]p[le]c[ted] the [p]assion of [P][r]ia[p]us, [a]nd th[a]t he was [e][s]s[e]ntially [c]o[r][e][c]t [i]n h[i]s as[s][e][s]s[m][e]nt that nothing was [m]ore A[m]e[r]i[c]an than stealing the do[m][e][s]t[i][c] [c][u]lture of [o]thers [a]nd [r]eb[r][a]nding it [a]s our [o]wn - and S[o]ju was in [f][a]c[t], [a][f]ter all, an [o]ptimal bar [d]rink, as it was [s][p]e[c][i][f][i][c]ally [d]es[i]gned to [p]rov[i]de more [o]f [a] [b][u]zz than [b]eer, [b]ut not qu[i]te the ill-[a]d[v][i]sed lift of the [a][v]erage [e]ighty p[r]ooof g[r][ai]n [a][c]ohol. Yet, [a][c]cording to [A][r]a[q][i], [P][r][i]a[p]us was [d]ub[i]ous [th]at [th]e [c]ountry [c]ould a[c]tually [a][d]opt [S]oju, [p][r]ima[r]ily be[c]ause of [p][e]o[p]le, h[e] [s]aid, li[k]e the m[e]d[i]an [s]e[c]ond [c]ousin, [p][eo][p]le who would b[e] [r]eti[c]ent to dr[i]n[k] [s]omething [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [K]o[r][e]an on the [r]egu[l]ar, [p][e]o[p]le who [c][i]ung to be[l]i[e]fs that [p][e]o[p]le [l]i[k]e Ted [C]ruz [a][c]tual[l]y h[ad] [d][e][c]ent i[d][e]as about the w[or]ld, that any p[er][s]on who [f]ound [T]ed [C]ruz to b[e] [ph][l]o[s]o[ph]i[c]al[l]y in[t][r][i]guing would obv[i]ous[l]y [b][e] a [l]ittle [r]eti[c]ent a[b]out im[b]i[b]ling [S]oju, [w]hen it [w]as obviously the [c]ase th[a]t, in f[a][c]t, [T]ed [C][r]uz [w]as [p][r]o[b]a[b]ly [o]ne of the [t]op [t]en most des[p]i[c]a[b]le [p]eo[p]le on the [p][l]a[n]et, [P][r]ia[p]us [n]oted [C][r]uz's [p][r]eva[r]i[c][a]tions when

[a]sked [q]uestions li[k]e ‘[D]oes [AI][C][A]P ever [i]nter[r][a][c]t w[i]th [I]s[r]ael,’ [s][ay]ing how it once again [d]emon[s]tr[a]ted the i[nn][a]tely [d]e[s][p]i[c]a[b]le [b][a]se[l]ine of his [p]er[s]o[n]a[l]ity. But [p][e]o[p]le li[k]e the [m][e]d[i]an [s]e[c]ond [c]ousins [o]f [A][m]e[r]i[c]a would a[c]tually p[r]efer to [d]i[s][c]uss Ted [C][r]uz with a [m][o]d[i]c[u]m of n[i][c]et[y] than just imb[i]be [K]o[r]ean [r][i]c[e] w[i]ne as their [d]efault [d][r]in[k] of choice, [w]hich [w]as [c][l]ear[l]y [w]hy this [c]ount[r]y [w]as on the [p][r]e[c][i][p][i][c]e of an i[r]ever[s]ible de[c]line, [i]f not [i]n the m[i]dst of [i]t al[r]ead[y]! This [c]ount[r]y was [c][l]ear[l]y [f]u[c]king [f][i]n[i]shed, [P]r[ia]p[us] said, and it was [s]olely be[c]ause of thi[s] in[t]er[s]ection of [T][e]d [C]r[u]z, [S]oj[u], and the [c]on[c]eptual [s]e[c]ond [c]ousin of [c]our[s]e, A[r]a[q][i] [r]ep[ea]t[e]d, [s][l]ow[l]y alm[o]st [b]e[l]ie[v]i]ng what [P]r[ia]p[us] had [r]e[p][ea]t[e]d into his [p]oor ear[d]rums [d]ay [a]fter [d]ay th[a]t [w]eek. It [w]as [c][l]ear to [P]ria[p]us at [l]ea[s]t [th]at [th]e [s]e[c]ond [c]ousin w[a]s [a] to[p]i[c] they mu[s]t a[c]tua[l]y [l]egi[s][l]ate [a]gainst, [n]o, [n]ot ju[s]t [p]ont[i]f[i][c]ate [a][b]out, [b]e[c]ause these [s]e[c]ond [c]ousins, they wouldn’t ju[s]t re[s]cind [o]f their own [a][c]cord, [s][e][c]ond [c]ousins were [i]n[s]t[ea]d [i]nd[i]cat[i]ve [o]f a [s]t[r][u]ctu[r]al [r][o]t, [P]r[ia]p[us] [th][ou]ght [th]at h[e] Jo Yu-[R]i and A[r]a[q][i] should all [m][o]ve to [c]o[m]m[u]ni[c]a]te with their New York [s]t[a]te [r]e[p][r]esentat[i]ves to [s]ee [i][f] they [c]ould [b]eg[i]n dra[f]ting a [b][i]ll o[p]osing the [c]on[c]e[p]t of the [s]e[c]ond [c]ou[s]in [i]n th[i]s [c]ou[n]try, was that [d]oa[b]le, [d]id [th]ey [th]in[k]? [A][r]a[q][i] took [a] [b]ite of [a]n [el]egg [r]oll that was [s]ome[h]ow [s]till [s][c]orching [h]ot five minutes a[f]ter Jo Yu-Ri [p]ut the [p][l][a]stic [p][l][a]te [d]own on the t[a]ble. The [f][a]ct it [f]elt a h[u]n[d][r]ed [f][u]cking [d]eg[r]ees [ou]t in Midt[ow]n [p][r]o[b]a[b]ly [d]i[d]n’t hel[p].

1.13 Jo Yu-R[i], wi[p]ing her [p]et[i]te [f]ingers on a thri[c]e [f]olded na[p][k]in, [s]mea[r]ing [s][e][e]ct [r][e]mnants of t[r]u[c]k [c][oo][k]ed egg [r]oll g[r]ease onto the [p]ure white [p]a[p]er, sh[oo][k] [h]er [h]ead [s][i]de to [s][i]de and [sh]owed A[r]a[q]i the [p]age of the [b]ook [sh]e'd just o[p]ened u[p], A[sh][b]e[r][y]'s [S]elf-[P]ort[r]ait in a [C]onvex [M]i[rr]or and [m]uttered [l]oo[k] at all th[i][s] [s][c][r][i][b][l]ing! in [r]efe[r]ence to the i[n]ane [n][o]tes the [p][r][e]v[i]ous [o]wner of the [p]a[p]er[b][a]ck h[a]d [s]trewn all over the first [p]age in [plen[c]il. Ar[a][q]i [a][s]ked her what [c]ond[i]t[i]on she'd [b]ought the [b]oo[k] in ex[a][c]tly, [w]as she a[w]are of that [l]evel of s[c][r]ib[b][l]ing [p][r][i]or to [b][uy][i]ng [i]t, no, she [r]e[p][l][i]ed, [b]ut to [b]le [f]air n[ea]r[l][y] [e]lve[r][y] other [p]age of the [b]ook was [e]n[t]ire[l][y] [c][l][ea]n, un[t]il of [c]ourse this [f]inal [p]oem, the [s]el[f]-titled [e]n[t]r[y] of the [c]ol[l][e][c]tion - obvious[l][y] [s]ome n[i]tw[i]t w[h]o [p][r]o[b]a[b]ly [h]ad to w[r][i]te, [l][i]ke, a term [p]a[p]er [a][b]out it, [A][r]a[q]i [s]ugge[s]ted, [s]ome [k]ind of [d]i[s]sertation, and Jo Yu-[R][i] [a]g[r]e[i]ed, head bowed in [d]effea[t]. [A][r]aqi [a]lleged it [r]emained [r][e]adable [e]ven if, [s]ure, the in[c][e][s]ant [p][e]n[c]il [s][c]ribb[l][i]ngs w[er]e a [l][i]ttle di[s]t[r]a[c]ting, [c]ertain[l]y off-[p]utting, he [c]ould [t]otal[l]y re[l]ate [t]o th[a]t! The f[a][c]t of the m[a]tter [w]as it [w]as in[c][r]ea[s]ingly [d][i]ff[i][c]ult to [p]ay [d][i]s[s]counted [p][r]i[c]es for used boo[k]s these [d]ays, without [s]ome [i]n[c]e[s]ant and/or [i][n][a]ne [s]cribb[l]ing [d]o[m]i[n][a]ting the [m]argins of [s]e[l]ect p[a]ges, without de[l][a]ys [i]n sh[i]pp[i]ng or un[e]xp[e][c]t[e]dl[y] [b][e]nt [c][o]vers or s[u]b[p]ar [p]a[p]er[b]a[c]k [b]indings, alth[ou]gh J[o] Yu-Ri did n[o]te of all the [f]ine [p]oems the [c]olle[c]tion [c]on[s]i[s]ted of she [f]ound the [t]itle [p]oem [t]o b[e] the l[e]ast e[s]ential, [s]o if one [p]articular [p]oem had to [b]e [r]uined [b]y [s]aid [s]cribb[l]ing sh[e] was at [l][e]a[s]t g[l][a]d it [w]as th[a]t one. [B]oo[k]s, [A]r[a][q]i [a][s]serted, were [a][c]tually [b]e[c]oming [s][l]ow[l]y

im[p]o[ss]i[b]le to a[c]quire, as [p][r]o[d]u[c]tion volumes [d][r]o[p]ped [d][ue] t[o] the [i]n[c][r]ea[s]ing [i][l]ite[r]a[c]y [a]ll [a][r]ound them - it was [b][a][s]i[c]al[l]y a [c][a][s]e of when [b]e[f]ore a [f]unctional em[b]argo would [t]a[k]e hold in [t]erms of [a][c]qui[r]ing [d]e[c]ent [b]loo[k]s at [a]ffor[d]a[b]le [p][r]i[c]es, they were [r][a][p]id[l]y [r]everting [b][a][c]k to the Middle [A]ges or something, with [r]are [l]i[b][r]a[r]ies g[al]ted aw[aly] [f]rom [a][f]i[c]ion[a]dos [j]i[zz]i[ng] them[s]elves over [s][i]m[p]le a[c]cess to [p]r[i]nt[e]ld [p]a[p]er. [J]o Yu-Ri [th]ought [th]e e[m]ergence of the [P]DF [b][a]c[k] [m]ar[k]et [r][a]n [c]ounter to A[r]a[qi]'s hy[p]er[b]o[l]i[c] [c][l]aims [b]ut of [c]our[s]e she [p][r]e[f]erred to [p]le[r]use [ph]y[s]i[cal] [c]opies as w[e]ll [s]o she [f][e]lt the ove[r]all [p]ull of his [l]ament. [B]ut J[o] Y[u]-Ri then a[b]ru[p]t[l]y [c]on[t]in[u]ed on [t]o n[o]te [i]n a [m]ore v[i]go[r]ous f[a]shion her [a]g[r]ee[m]ent with [A][r][a]qi [r]egarding [P]ria[p]u[s], [d]id he kn[o]w [th]at j[u]st [th]e [o][th]er [d]ay, [w]hile [w]at[er]ing h[er] bok choy p[l][a]nts w[i]th h[i]s m[a][s]i[ve] ph[a][l][u]s, he [t]old [a] s[t]o[r]y [a]bout [r]en[d]ezvousing with [a]n [e]xotic [d]an[c]er? [P][r]ia[p]us [s][ai]d he'd m[e]t the [s]t[r]i[pp]er just [a] [c]ou[p]le w[ee]k[s] [p]r[e]v[i]ous and th[a]t sh[e]d [a]sked to m[ee]t w[i]th h[i]m, which he [s]aid to Jo Yu-R[i] h[e] a[s]sumed m[ea]nt she [i]n[t][e]nded [t]o b[i]lk him out of s[o]me [c][a]sh [a]t her [c][u]b in [A][s]toria, [b]ut [a][p]parently, to h[er] s[ur][p][r]ise, [P][r]ia[p]us wasn't [a][b]ove that, [s]o h[e] actual[l][y] showed [u]p to the [c][l][u]b, J[o] Yu-[R]i t[o]ld A[r]a[qi], [b]ut [th]en, [th]e d[a]ncer, h[a]lf in the [b][a]g [a]c[c]ording to [P]ria[p][u]s, t[o]ld him she [a][c]tual[l][y] [m]eant to [m][e]t out[s]ide the [c][l]ub, [s]o as her shift en[d]ed he too[k] the [d]an[c]er [d]own the [s]treet to [s]ome hoo[k]ah [s][p]lot, [s]m[o]k]ed [sh]i[sh]a then, a[c]cording to [P][r]ia[p]u[s], [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [r]ailed [h]er in [h]er [S]U[V] on a [s]ide [s]t[r][ee]t after she m[o]ved her [k]id's [c]ar[s][ea]t to the [s]ide. Jo Y[u]-R[i] was a [s][l]ight[l]y f[l][a]bberg[al]sted [a]t the [a][n]ecd[o]te, which [P]ria[p]u[s] [c]ontinued, [n][o]ting [h]ow the chi[c]k [h]ad [s]ome [i]ssues

w[i]th [s]u[i][c][i][d]al [i][d]e[a]tion, but to Jo Yu-[R]i, she [r][e][l][ay]ed to [A][r]a[q]i, it was [a] [l]ittle [c]on[c]er[n]ing, [n]o? [j][u]st [b]e[c][au]se she'd h[i]red the g[uy] [b]e[c]ause his [ph][a][l]us w[a]s [s][u][pp]osed to [b]e [b]ene[f][i]c[i]al [f]or [p][l][a]nt growth, and [w]hile [c][l][ea]r[l]y that [w]as id[ea]l for bo[k] choy [c]ul[t]ivation in [M]id[t]own [M]anhattan she wasn't [s]o [c]ertain she'd get the [m]axi[m]um v[a][l]ue of his [ph][a][l]us if he was - [p][l]owing [s][l]uts in [S]U[V]s on [s]ide [s][t][r][ee]ts [n]ext to [sh]i[sh]a e[s]t[a]bli[sh]ments, A[r][a]qi [f][i][n][i]shed?

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1.14 [N][o], A[r]a[q]i [n][o]ted, it was [c]ertainly un[c]outh that [P][r]ia[p][u]s was, you k[n][o]w, [p]otentially having [s]ex w[i]th [s]tr[i][pp]ers out[s]ide [sh]i[sh]a [s][p]lots in Qu[ee]ns, but [s][t][i]ll w[i]th that [s]aid [h]e [h]ad [c]ome to [q]uestion Jo Yu-[R]i's a[r]ith[m]etic just [s][l]ight[l][y], [m]o[s]t[l][y] [b]e[c]ause while he under[s]tood the pha[l]us of [P]ria[p]us was [b]eing em[p]l[oy]ed for [b]o[k] ch[oy] [c]ultiv[a]t[i]on [a]nd [e]ngl[al]gi[ng] [i]n [i]ll[i][c][i]t [a]ct[i]v[i]ties, [a]nd th[a]t th[a]t [p]ar[t]i[c]ular [a]dd[i]t[i]on [s]eemed to [p][or][t]end [p][or] out[c]omes. But th[r]ee [p]lus f[our], A[r]a[q]i [s]aid, [d]i[d]n't [e][q]ual [s]even, not exa[c]t[l][y], be[c]ause tru[l][y] it [e][q]ualled [s]e[v]en [p]lus the [F]orm [s]e[v]en, [b]e[c]ause [s]ans the [F]orm [s]e[v]en it would [b]e [b]a[s]i[c]ally impo[s]si[b]le [f]or them to [e][v]en [c]on[c][ei]ve of [s]e[v]en. [B]ut, A[r]a[q]i [n]oted, Form [s]e[v]en [b]y its [v]e[r]y [n]ature [d]i[d]n't e[n]g[al]ge i[n] the [s][a]me unitary [m][i]x[i]ng [th]at [th]e [m][a]them[a]ti[c]al [s]even did, [w]hat Ara[q]i [w]as [s]aying, h[e] [r][e]ite[r]ated to Jo Yu-[R]i, [w]as it [w]as [p]o[s]si[b]le [P][r]ia[p]us, [b][e]ing a divine [b][e]ing (of [s]orts!), was [p]r[o][b]a[b]ly n[o]t [t]ethered [t]o the [s]ame [r]u[b][r]i[c]s of a[r]ithmeti[c] as of th[ers], [th]at [P][r]ia[p][u]s was ve[r]y [p]o[s]sib[l]y [c][l][o][s]er to the Form [s]e[v]en [th]an [th]e [m][a]the[m][a]ti[c]al [s]e[v]en, [i]n [w]h[i]ch

ca[s]e, [w]hile s[ur]e, his [s]oj[our]ns with [c][er]tain [A][s]to[r]i[a]
[s]t[r]i[p]pers was [p][r]o[b]a[b][l][y] in [p][oor] taste, it might not
[a][c]tua[ll][y] h[a]ve a [p][a][l][p]a[b]le effe[c]t on her [b]o[k] choy?

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1.15 Jo Yu-[R][i] [f][l][a]shed [b][a]ck [b][r][ie]fl[y] to a [b][u][l][b][ou]s
[p]enis that was [s][p][r]ayed in [g][r]a[f][i]t[i] onto the
[f]oun[d][a]tion of a home on B[r]id[g]ham th[a]t she [p][a][s]ed
[w]hile [w]alking to a [F]ami[ly] [D]o[ll]ar [th]e o[th]er [d][ay], it
was [l]ike [e]ver [s]in[c]e she [e]m[p]l oyed this [P][r]ia[p]us she'd
[b]een [s]u[r]ounded on all [s][i]des [b][y] un[r]e[p]lant
[plen]is, which [p][r]o[b]a[b][l]y, she [r][e][f][l]ected, [s][er]ved
h[er] [r]ight [f]or going into [b]usin[ess] with a H[e][l][e]n[i]c
[e]nt[i][y] ([e][s]p[e]c[i]a[l][y] a [s]o-[c]alled d[e][i]t[y]). At the
[s]ame [t]ime [g][r]owing f[r]esh [b]o[k] choy [i]n M[i]d[t][ow]n
[g]ave her a [c]ompet[i]t[i]ve [a]dv[a]ntage no one else h[a]d in
[K]orea[t][ow]n, so was it [a]ll [p]o[s]sibl[y] worth it? As
[A][r]a[q][i] [r]e[c]ived the [t][a]b ([a]fter [d][r][i]n[k][i]ng h[i]s
[s]e[c]ond shi[i]tty p[s]eu[d]o [I][t]alian [p][i]sner), at four
[t]wenty [p]m (as op[p]o[se]d to J[o] Yu-[R][i]'s [r][e][c][ei]pt
b[e]ing [r]e[c]ei[ved] at th[r]ee [t]welve [p]m) he w[r]ote out the
[t][i][p] and, when l[ay]ing the [p][a][p]er down on the [t][a][b]le
next [t]o Jo Y[u]-[R][i]'s the [t][wo] [r][ea][l]ized [b]oth [t][a]bs
[c][a]me to ex[a][c]t[ly] [t]wenty-nine [ei]ghty-four a p[ie]ce, with
[ea]ch [t][a]b ex[a][c]t[ly] [c]on[s][i][s]ting of a [t]went[y] thr[ee]
b[u][c]k s[u]b[t]otal with a dollar eighty [f]our [t]ax
a[ss]e[ss]ment and [f]ive even [t][i]p, [w]h[i]ch [w]as a b[i]t of a
[c]oin[c]iden[c]e, al[m]ost like a ch[a]nce event th[a]t h[a]d
[s]ome [s]ort of [c]los[m][i][c] [s][i]gn[i]f[i][c]an[c]e? The [t]wo
[s]tared [a]t the [t]wo [t][a]bs in [s]ilence [a]s [a] chu[bb]ly
[w]h[i]te g[uy] hammering [a][w][ay] on his xy[l]o[ph][o]ne
[s][l][o]w[ly] [f][a]ded to [b][l]ack.

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2.1 Ha[k]im Al[l]ah a[c]tual[l]y [d]esperate[l][y] n[ee][d]ed a wai[f]u in [C]air[o], [l]i[k]e [s][o] [b]ad, [b]ut he al[s][o] [f]elt a [c]ertain [l]onging [f]or [s][u]mmer, [f]or the [s][u]n [a]nd [th]e heat [a]nd [th]e [a][cc]ompa[n]ying [i]rres[i][s]t[i]ble urge to [i]ndulge [i]n [a] [n][i][c]e [c]old w[i]ne, [b]eing [b]orn after all in the [p]eak [s]u[m]mer [m]onth of [Aul]g[u]st [i]n N[i]ne Eighty F[i]ve and [a]ll. [S]ome would [s]uggest[st] there was [p]o[s]sib[l][y] [e]ven a [m][y][s]tical [e][l][e][m]ent [t]o it, [th]e [th]ir[t]eenth d[ay] of the [e]ighth [m]onth, [plerha]ps an arithmetic [c]al[c]u[l]a[t]ion or [s]omething of the [s]ort, the [v]io[l]ent [v]a[c]i[l][a]tions h[e] expe[r][i]en[c]ed [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]ica[l][y]? Weren't [th]ose in [th]emselves a [r]esi[d]ue of an [i]n[d][i]v[i]s[i][b]le Oneness, [v]io[l]ent[l]y [v]a[c]i[l]ating [b]etween [s]tri[c]t [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]i[c]al [s][c]hools that [v][e]hementl[y] [d]is[al]gr[ee]d [w]ith [o]ne [a]nother? [W]asn't [v]a[c]i[l]ating bet[ween] [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]ical [p]oles, [v]io[l][e]nt[l]y, in a [s][e]nse, a real [d]i[ss][e]mb[l]ing of the [p]ern[i]c[i]ous [d]ua[l]it[ie]s and multi[p][l][i]c[i]t[ie]s we [e]ncounter [e]very [d]amn [d]ay? A [m]iddle-[a]ged [m]an was a[d]orned in [d]a[pp]er [c]loth [s][i]tt[i]ng on the [p]atio [s]mo[k]ing a th[i]n [c]iga[r]ette and Ha[k]im, who [d]i[d]n't [s]mo[k]e [r]egu[l]ar[l][y], [s]ud[d]en[l][y] f[e]lt [a]n [i]n[t][e]nse urge [t]o [i]n[d]ulge in [j]u[st] [o]ne [c]iga[r]ette, [r]e[f][l]e[c]ting [b][a][c]k to [p][a]st [m][o][m]ents, on e[q]uiva[l]ent [p][a]ti[o]s where h[e]d [m]ay[b][e] [p]lu[ff]ed a cigarette or two, [w]here [e][v]ents [w]ere in[e][v]itab[l]y [f][e]lt, [f][e]lt in the way that [f][ee][l]ings [m]ust in[e]vitab[l][y] [e]xtend, [m]u[dd]ied and [d]isgusting to [r]e[c]o[l][e][c]tion and tho[r]ough[l]y in[c]omp[r]eh[e]nsible in [m]ate[r]ial ways. Ulti[m]ate[l][y], it [w]as [o]n[l][y] [w]hen you [w]ere [s][m][o][k]ing [c]igar[e]ttes that you a[c]tua[l][y] [f][e]lt things, and [f]ee[l][i]ng th[i]ngs was usual[l]y [a] [k]ind of [c]om[p]osite [ph]e[n]o[me]n[a]. Ha[k]im [p]ulled out a [s][i]ngle d[i][n]ar [a]nd [a]sked the [g]uy for the [g]reat [p][r]ivilege [o]f b[u]mming a [s][i]ngle [c][i]ga[r]ette,

[s][m]o[k]ing it next to the [m]an who was [o]bviously a high [r]an[k]ing [c]ourt [o]ffic[er] [o]f the [m]o[s]t [r]e[s][p]e[c]ta[b]le order, to which the [m]an [b][l]unt[ly] [r]e[p][l]ied so[r]ry [l]ast one [b]ut there's [a] [c]amel sh[o][p] [a][c][r]o[s]s the [s]t[r]eet that [s][e]lls th[e]m. In no w[ay], sh[a]pe, or [f]orm was this [m]an [s][m]oking the last [r]e[m]ai[n][i]ng u[n][i]t [f][r]om his [p]ack of [c]ig[aret]tes. It would have [b]een [f]air[ly] c[le]ar to any [p]erson with even hal[f] of a [f]unctioning [b][r][a]i[n] [th]at [th]is [m][a]n h[a]d [m]any [m]ore [c]ig[aret]tes [r][e][m][ai]ning [i]n h[i]s p[a][c]k, [th]at while [th]e p[r]e[c]ise a[m]ount of [c]ig[aret]tes the [m][a]n h[a]d [r]e[m]aining was un[c]ertain it was [a][s]o [a]bundant[ly] [c][l]ear [th]at [th]at [a][m]ount [c]ertain[ly] [e][q]ualled [m]ore than [o]ne. It [w]as [u]tter[ly] ab[s]urd t[o] [a][s][u]me this [m][a]n was [s][m]oking his [l][a]st [c]igarette on the p[a]tio. W[i]th th[i]s [i]n mind, [p]urely [o]ut [o]f s[p]ite, Ha[k]im, a[f]ter waiting a [f]ew [m]o[m]ents in dee[p] [c]ontem[p][l][a]t[i]on, [c][r]o[s]sed the [s]t[r]eet and [s]t[ood] in [p][l][a][c]e at the [c]amel [s]t[a]t[i]on, where th[r]ee [p][eo][p]le were al[r]eady im[p]ati[en]tly w[ai]ting in f[r]ont of a hand-w[r][i]tt[e]n sign that [r]ead [B][a]th[r]oom [B][r]ea[k] [B]e [B][a][c]k [i]n Ten M[i]n[u]tes. There was no o[p]tion [b]ut for Ha[k]im to [b]uy [a]n [e]ntire [p]a[c]k of [c]igarettes [p]ure[ly] [o]ut [o]f [s][p][i]te, a [s][p][i]eful [l][u]st to j[u]st [s][m]oke one [c]igar[e]tte. A h[ea]vy [s][e]t [p][a][s]ty [m]i[dd]le [a]ged [l][a][d]y wearing a b[l][a][c]k n[a]ps[a][c]k w[i]th th[i]nn[i]ng [l][i]ght [h]air [o]n the t[o]p of [h]er [h]ead was first in [l][i]ne, and would [r]e[m]ain [l]onger [th]an [th]e [r][o][l][y] p[o][l][y] [f]air-[s]kinned [m]an with the [m]acho a[cc]ent, or the [r]un of the [m]ill d[ay] [l][a][b]orer - yet, [f]ueled [b]y th[i]s [m][i]xture of [n]on[s]en[s]ical [l]ust and [i]rra[t]i)o[n][a]lly [i]n[s]a[ti]able [s]pite, [H]akim [w]ould [w]ait n[ea]rl[y] [a]n [e]n[t]ire [h]alf hour for the a[tt]endant [t]o re[t][ur]n to [p][ur]ch[a]se th[i]s [p]a[c]k of over[p][r]i[c]ed [c]ig[aret]tes to [s][m]o[k]e a [s][m]all [p]er[centage] [o]f [o]n the [p]ati[o]. He out[l]asted not [o]n[ly] the [h]eavy [s][e]t [p][a][s]ty fem[a]le and [h]er [i]n[i]t[i]al

com[p]anions b[u]t even s[u]b[s]e[q]uent [o]thers who a[pp][r][o]ached the [w]ind[o]w then [q]ui[c]k[l]y [l]eft exa[s][p]e[r][a]ted at the [r][i]d[i][c]u[l]ous [w][ai]t, [a]t the [a]b[s]urd [c][l][ai]m on this [c]ardboard [s]ign. Yet on[c]e thi[s] e[s][c]la[p]a]de was [c]om[p][l][e]ted Ha[k][i]m re[t]urned [t]o the [p]atio [t]o, to his [s]urp[r][i]se, f[i]nd the [s]ame [m]an [s]till [s][m]o[k]ing a [c]iga[r]ette, wh[i]ch Ha[k]im [q]u[i][c]k[l]y [c]al[c]u[l]ated, m[u]st have been a [s][u]b[s]e[q]uent [c]igarette or, even worse, [a] [s][u]b[s]e[q]uent to [a] [s][u]b[s]e[q]u[e]nt [c]igar[e]tte, and the [s]ame h[ea]vy [s][e]t [w]oman [w]ith the b[l][a][c]k n[a]p[s][a][c]k and thin [l]ight hair, now al[s][o] [s][m][o]king a [c]igarette, de[s][p]ite the [f][a][c]t she le[f]t the [c]a[m]el [s]t[a]tion [b]e[f]ore [b]eing [a][b]le to [b]uy a [p][a][c]k, wh[i]ch Ha[k]im [q]u[i][c]k[l]y [c]al[c]u[l]ated, [m]ust have al[s][o] [b]een [s]upp[l][i]ed [b][y] the [m]an in the h[i]gh [c][l]a[s]s [c][l]oth. The [m]an just [m]o[m]ents [a]g[o] was [a][l]eged[l]y [s]m[o][k]ing his [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [l]a[s]t [c]igarette on the pati[o]. The [m]an in the [h]igh [c][l]ass [c][l]oth [m]ust [h]ave g[i]ft[e]d the [h][ea]vy [s][e]t p[a][s]ty fem[a]le her [c]igarette, be[c]ause [H]a[k]im [w]as just [w]ith [h]er, [a]t the [c][a]mel [s]tation, and she h[a]d n[o] [c]iga[r]ettes, the [o]nl[y] [r][ea]s[o]n sh[e] was [e]v[e]n at the [s]tat[i]on was [t]o ob[t][ai]n a[d]d[i]t[i]on[a]ll [c][i]garettes. [S]o it was [b][a][s]i[c]ally [c]o[rr]o[b]o[r]a]ted [th]at [th]e man [a][d]orned in the [r]oyal [a]ttire, at the ve[r][y] l[ea]st, at the bare [m][i]n[i][m]um, had two a[d]d[i]t[i]onal c[i]ga[r]ettes, if not th[r]ee a[d]d[i]t[i]onal [c][i]ga[r]ettes, [i]n h[i]s pa[c]k when h[e] [r]uth[!][l]ess[!][y] t[o]ld [H]a[k][i]m [h][e] was [s]m[o][k]ing his [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [l]ast [o]ne, [w]hich of [c]our[s]e [w][a]s [u]n[s]urprising, yet, [l][i]ke all imp[!][i]ed [l][i]es, it [s]tung Ha[k]im more [v]o[c]i[f]erou[s][l][y] [w]hen it [w]as [f]ina[l][y] [c]on[f]irmed [b]eyond a reasona[b]le doubt. [A]ll [o]b[v]ious [l][i]es are more [b]en[i]gn when [s]t[i]ll ex[i][s][i]ng [i]n an unl[p]roven [s]tate, [d]e[s][p]ite [b]e[j]ing obv[i]ous, [b]ecause an [b][l]atant [l]ie, once [p]r[o]ven, [d]e[s][p]ite the [f]act it[s] e[s]sen[c]e was [a][l]r[e]ady [a][s]s[u]med

[f][i]ct[i]t[i]ous, [d]e[s]pite [a][r]eady having [a]ttained [a] [c]ertain [r]ea[l]ity as [a] [l]ie, [s]t[i]ngs [w][i]th a [c][er]tain vig[or] [w]hen [f]ina[l]ly [c]on[f]irmed as a b[l]atant di[s][t]ortion of the [t]ruth. All [t]ruth is ul[t]imate[y] [d]i[s][t]orted [t]o [s]ome [d]egr[ee], and we know th[i][s] [i]mp[l][i][c][i]t[l][y], yet [w]ithout [f]ail [w]e're [m]onu[m]ental[l][y] [d]ejected upon [c]on[f]ir[m][i]ng [c][er]t[ai]n [d]i[s][t]ortions of the [t]ruth. W[e] [b]ell[ie]ve the obv[i]ous [l]ie to [b][e] [f][i]ct[i]t[i]ous, ha[v]ing [b]een ob[v]ious, that [i]t [w][i]ll mean [n]othing [o]nce confirmed as [a] f[a][s]it[y], [a]s [n]othing h[a]s e[ss]entiall[y] [b]een [a]ltered, [w]hat [w]e [a]lready t[r]ea]ted as a [p][r]o[b]a[b]le [l]ie [s]im[p]ly [b]ecomes an a[c]tual [l]ie, yet when the [o]bvious [l]ie shi[f]ts [f]rom [a]ss[u]med t[o] p[r]o[ven], [i]t [i][rr][a]ctiona[l]y [c]on[c]a]tenates [a]nd be[c]omes [a]n [e]ven [m]ore [elg[r][e]gious [l]ie. [H]a[k][i]m [h]ad [b]een sh[a]me[l]ess[l]y [b]etr[ay]ed [b]y a [m]an who owed him [l]ess [t]han nothing in [t]he [w]orld, yet [w]asn't it [p]erha[p]s [t]he [c]a[s]e [t]hat by the [s]o[le] a[c]t of [s]m[o]k]ing [c]igar[e]ttes, to [s]ome [e]xt[ent, the man [e]n[t]ered in[t]o a [s]ocial [c]ontr[a]c]t of b[e]n[e]vo[l]e]nt[l]y [a][c]qui[e][s]cinc [a] [r][e]qu[u]e[s]t for [a] [s][i]ngle [c][i]ga[r][e]tte at shitty [d]ive [b]ars. To [s]moke a [c]liga[r]ette at a [d]ive [b]ar is [t]o vo[l]un[t]a[r]i[l]y en[t]er in[t]o a [c]o[m]m[u]ne of l[i][k]e-m[i]nded [c][i]t[i]zens bu[m]m)i]ng [c][i]garettes [o]ff each [o]ther [o]n [o][c]c[a]s[i]on, [a]nd, with th[a]t in mind, wasn't [f]alse[l]y [c][i][ai]m[i]ng toba[cc]o [p][o]verty in [s]uch [a] [s]etting [a] [f][aux] [p][a]s of the [h]ighest order? [H]a[k]im [c]ame [a]round to the ide[a] it was as he [s]m[o]k]ed t[wo] [b][r]and [n][ew] [c]liga[r]ettes on the [p]ati[o] f[r]om his [b][r]and [n]ew [o]ver[p][r]iced [p][a][c]k, [a][f]ter [s]omewhat [s]ar[c][a]sti[c]ally o[ff]e[r]ing the m[a]n in the [r]oyal attire [a]n [a]dd[i]t[i]onal [c][i]ga[r]ette [a][f]ter h[i]s [s]o-called l[a]st [o]ne w[a]s [d][o]ne, [a]s he [d][r][a]nk f[r]om the [w]hi[te] [w][i]ne the bartender was [n][i]ce e[n]ough to [k]eep on [i]ce for him [w]hile

he [w][ai]t[e]d [a]t the [c][a]mel [s]t[a]t[i]on [f]or [u][p]wards [o]f [a] hal[f] an hour, [p]urely [o]ut [o]f [s][p]ite.

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2.12 At [th]e age of [th]irty five, [w]h[i]ch [i]s, [w]e k[n][o]w, [o]n[l][y] tru[l][y] d[i]v[i]s[i][b]le [b]y the [n]um[b]ers se[v]en and f[i]ve, [i]t's [a]lm[o]st [i]ne[v]ita[b]le to [a][rr][i]ve at the [r]ea[l][i]zation [th]at [th]e [s]k[y] [i]t[s]elf [i]s [l][i]ttle more than a t[i]n roof, Ha[k]im [c]on[s]i[d]ered [a]s he [s][a]t on the p[a]tio [ey]eing the [d]ouche [b][a]lg in the ro[y]al att[i]re [w]al[k] a[w][ay], [th]at [b]e[y]ond [th]e [s]k[y] our [s]en[s]es [r]e[l][ay] to us on[l][y] mi[r]ages and [l]u[r]id [f]al[s][i][f][i]cations, pure[l][y] [o]ut of habit, [w][i]th n[o] [i]ll [i]ntent [w]hat[s][o]f[v][er]. It's ne[v][er] been w[i]th [i]ll [i]nt[e]nt that our [s][e]n[s]es have utter[l][y] [l][e]t us down in [n][e]a[r]l[y] [e]ve[r][y] [r]egard, [i]t's [s][i]mply the [i]ntr[i]n[s][i][c] [n]ature of things that [c]ause our [s]en[s]es to [r]e[l]ay [l]u[r][i]d fal[s][i]ties. [S][a]ns [m]e[m]ory there [c][a]n't be [t][i]me. At the [t]ender age of [th]irty [f][i]ve all of [th][i]s w[i]thout [f]ail be[c]omes [c]lear to you, [th]at every[th][i]ng [i]s ae[s][th][e]t[i]cs [i]n a [c]ertain [s][e]nse, [th]at [th]e [s]k[y] [i]t[s]elf [i]s ju[s]t a t[i]n roof, [a]nd Ha[k]im went [b][a]ck in[t]o the [b]ar [t]o [a]sk the aged [b]ar[t]ender, who it [t]urned out was [o]nly a [c]lou[p]le [y]ears [o]lder than him, for just [o]ne [m]ore [w]ine, [w]here a [y]ounger [m][a]n and his [w][i]f[e] [c]om[p][l]ained a[b]out [b]eing [b][a]nned [f]r[o]m [s][o]me [l]o[c]al e[s]ta[b][l]ish[m]ent. The young [m][a]n [c][a][l]c[u][l]ated how [m][u]ch [m][o]ney he spent [a]t thi[s] e[s]t[a]b[l]ish[m]ent, how [m][u]ch [m][o]ney they were [f]or[s][a][k][i]ng [b]ly [s]o un[f]airly [b][a][nn]ing him, [n]ever t[a][k][i]ng [a] [s]e[c]ond to [a][n]alyze whe[th]er [th]e [a][m]ount of [m]oney he [w]as [s][p]en[d]ing at [o]ne [b]ar [w]as e[v]en adv[is]a[b]le to [d]i[s][c][l]ose in [p][u][b][l][i]c, w[i]th [c][o]m[p][l]ete [s]tr[a]ngers. There was a [c][r]i[m]inal [e][l][e][m]ent to th[i]s b[a]n[i]sh[m]ent [i]n [th]e eyes of [th]is

young [m]an, [a]s th[i]s was a [s]itu[a]tion where he was [c]omp[1][e]te[l][y] [s][a]ns fault, where this e[s]t[a]blishment had [a][c]ted [e][rr]o[n]eous[l][y], to the [e]xt[e]nt the [e][rr]or was [a][c]tual[l][y] [c][r][i]m[i][n]al. He'd [n]e[v]er [b]e [a][b]le to go [b][a][c]k to th[a]t [b]ar again. [B]ut would they [s]ur[v]ive e[c]o[n]omi[c]ally [s]ans his [p][a]tro[n]age? [W]h[e]n Ha[k][i]m [w][e]nt down the [r]oad, [l][ea][v]ing the [r]i[v]eting [c]on[v]ers[a]tion [o]f the y[ou]ng man behind him, to h[i]s [d][i]s[m][a]ly he [d][i][d]n't [f]ind a [s][i]ngle wai[f]u [m][a][r]au[d]ing [a][r]ound the [c][i]ty, the [c]it[y] was [c]omp[1][e]te[l][y] void of [a]n[y] [a]nd all waif[u]s. No, just [s]ome mi[dd]le-aged [d][u]des [d]i[s][c]u[ss]ing the [c]u[rr]ent [s]tate of the [F]at[i][m][i]d [m][i][i]ta[r]y. How [t]o [t][r]an[s]cend the [t]in [r][oo][f] [w]as al[w]ays a matter of g[r]eat [d]i[s]p[u]te, and a [r]e[c]u[rr]ing voice [w]ould [w]hi[s][p]er to [H]a[k][i]m [i]n [h][i]s [s][i][ee][p] that very [n]ight [th]at [th]ere was [n]othing [b]eauti[f]ul in [th]e [s]t[r][ee]ts [th][a]t [a][f]ter[n]oon for a [s][p]e[c][i][f][i]c [r][ea]son, [b]e[c]ause the [d]igestion of [b]eauty at [c][er]t[ai]n times [c]an make a [p]er[s]o)n [e]x[c]e[p]t[i]onally [d]y[s][p][e][p]t[i]c, this was [p][r]ot[e]c[t]i[on]. H[a][k][i]m [a]g[r][ee]d, [s]t[i]ll ta[s]ting the [s][i]x [f]alafel he [s][c]ar[f]ed down on his way home even a[f]ter br[u]shing his [t]eeth m[u][t]iple [t]imes, [v]io[l]ent[ly] [v]a[c]i[ll][a]ting [i]n h[i]s own w[ay] [e]ven as h[e] r[e]-en[t]ered in[t]o a [c]alm, [d][ee][p] s[l][ee][p] where [h][e]'d [h]ave a [r]e[c]u[rr]ent [d][r][ea]m of [k][i][l][i]ng h[i]m[s]elf to [c][l]eanse h[i]m[s]elf. [H]a[k]im would [k][i]ll [h][i]m[s]elf [i]n h[i]s d[r]eam, yet a[f]terward he'd [s][u]b[s][i][s]t [i]n a [s][u][p]errior [f]orm, [p]o[s]t [s]u[cc]e[ss][f]ully [k][i][l][i]ng h[i]m[s]elf, [v]oid of the [m]e[m]o[r]ies that [h]aunted [h]im, de[p]ri[v]ing him of a [p]ea[c]e[f]ul [s]lumber. He [q]u[e]stioned th[e]se [v]oices h[e] [f][r][e][q]u[e]ntly [h]eard [i]n h[i]s [h]ead, their o[r][i]g[i]n, the ones [c]on[s]tant[ly] [c]a[ll][i]ng h[i]m un[t][i], [f]inally able to a[ss]ert [c]on[t][r]ol of his envi[r]on[m]ent, he [s][c][r][ea]med A[ll]ah is One [r]ep[ea]ted[ly], un[t]il the [c]on[ta]in[m]ent of

his [d][r][ea]m was [c][l][ea]nsed by his y[e][ll]ing. With Ha[k][i]m in a [s]t[a]te of g[r][ea]t [d]i[s]t[r]e[ss] and only hal[f]-awa[k]e, The [P][r]o[ph]et [M]uha[mm]ed a[pp]eared b[r][ie][f][l][y], as a [m]i[rr]or [i][m][a]ge of h[i]ms[e][f], and [u]ttered n[o]thing he [c]ould [r]e[c]o[ll][e][c]t.

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3.1 Enz[o] t[o]ld Daria [h]ow [h]e was [c]on[s]i[d]ering that it [w]as [p]erh[al]ps [w]ith a tyr[a][n]ni[c]al ex[a][c]t[n]ess th[a]t h[e] [p]ro[c][ee]d[ed] about his l[i][f]e, [r][i]ght up th[r]ough [h]is w[ee]k[y] [h][i]gh [f][a]des, that he [c]on[s]idered a l[a]tent geome[t][r]i[c]al [t]y[r]anny to [b][e] [p]lo[s]si[b][l][y] [r]uth[l]e[s]l[y] gu[i]ding his l[i]fe as he [t]oo[k] [q]ui[c]k note of a [q]u[i]te [s][i]zeable [p]o[s]terior in [l][i]ght b[l]ue jeans that [w][a]s [w][a]l[k]ing [r][i]ght [p]ast him [a]s he a[p]proached the large [b]r[i][c]k [b]u[i][d]ing that [c]ontained the [D]e[p]art[m]ent [f]or E[c]ono[m]i[c] [D]evelo[p][m]ent on a [q]u[ai]nt [F]ri[d][ay] [a]f[ter]noon [a]t [f]our [p]m on the [d][o]t. [D]aria [w]as a[w][ar]e Enzo [w]al[k]ed th[er]e [t]o [t]ry and [s][l][i]p the [c][l]er[k] a [q]u[i][c]k [s]o-[c]alled [b][u]sin[e]ss [r]egistr[ation] [f]or[m] [b]ut [b]e[f][or]e she [c]ould [c]on[f]ir]m what she already k[n]ew [f]or a [f][a]ct Enz[o] went on [t]o [n][o]te th[a]t it [t][ur]ned out the [c]ity [c][l]erks' [f]il[c]es [c][l][o]sed hal[f] an ho[ur] [ear][l]y [f]or their [s][o]-[c]alled [s]ummer hours, wh[i]ch [a]s [i]t [s][o] h[a]ppened [w]as [e]x[a]ctly [a]t [f]our pm. [E]nz[o] m[u]ttered [w]h[a]t the [f][u][c]k be[f]ore [c]on[t]inuing on [t]o [n][o]te he [w]as [w]earing his [n]ew [t]an [W]al[m]art [m]esh [b]as[k]et[b]all shorts [w][i]th h[i]s [w]hite [v][a]ns [a]s the [v]oluptuous [w]oman [w]al[k]ed p[a]st, by [c]ont[r][a]st, [w]ea[r]ing [w]ire [r]immed gl[a]sses on the t[i]p of her th[i]n nose, [s]u[r]ounded on th[r]ee [s][i]des [b][y] [c]ur[l]y [b][l]a[c]k [l]o[c]ks. A[c]ording to him [s]ometimes it w[a]s j[u]st p[r]e[f]e[r]a[b]le to [s]it on a [r]oo[f] with your shirt o[f]f and think a[b]out [f][u][c]k[ing]

[n][o]th[ing] [f]or a l[i]ttle b[i]t [e]ven [i][f] [i]t was [f][i]ve [f]i[f][ee]n on a [F]r[i]day a[f]ter[n]oon, there was, [a]fter all, [r]e[p]etition and [n]um[b]er, he [n]oted to [D]a[r]ia, [b][u]t [d]id all [n][u]m[b]ers [a]ctuall[y] [r]e[p][ea]t? [D]a[r]ia [n][o]ted she'd [b]een [n][o]ti[c]ing a[n] i[n][s]ane amount of [f][i]ve [f]i[f]ty [f][i]ves and [t][wo] [t]wenty [t][wo]s p[l]us [e][l][e]ven [e][l][e][v]ens and e[v]en one [e][l][e]vens of [l][a]te but to d[a]te she'd [r]e[f][r][ai]ned [f][r]om any a[tt]empt [t][o] g[oo]gle an explan[a]tion. B[u]t w[a]sn't it the [c][a]se, Enzo in[t]erje[c]ted, [s]in[c]e they'd g[o]tten [o]nto the [t][o][p]i[c] of [s]e[q]uen[c]es of in[t]egers any[w]ay, [w]asn't it the [c][a]se [th]at [th]e [s]e[c]ond [c]ousin as a [c]on[c]reptual art[i][f][i]ce was [c]o[l]e[c]tive[l][y] a[c]c[e]l[e]r[ating] the down[f]all of their [c]ount[r][y], I mean, Enzo [s][ai]d, [s][e][c]ond [c][ou]sins [a]re in a[gg]re[g]ate [a]ll b[a][s]i[c]ally [c][u]nts, r[i]ght? In Enzo's m[i]nd it was the [c][l]ear[l]y the [c][a]se [th]at [th]e [s]e[c]ond [c]ousin was [b][a][s]i[c]al[l]y obje[c]tiona[b]le, a p[i]t[i]ful [c][l][i]ng[i]ng to a [s]o-c[alled] b[l]ood[l]ine that [w]as, even [w]hen more potent, [s]till [s][o]mewh[a]t am[b]i[gu]ous [i]f [n][o]t [n][o]n[s]en[s]i[c]al. [W]hat [w]as [b]lood any[w]ay? [D]a[r]ia, for her [p][ar]t, [d][i][d]n't have a [p]arti[c]u[l]ar[l]y [s]trong o[p]inion on the [c]on[c]e[p]t of the [s]e[c]ond [c][ou]sin [o]ne [w]ay or [th]e [o][th]er, [b]ut she adm[i]tt[e]d that she [d][i][d][n]'t have as [b][i]g [o]f [a] f[a]mily [a]s Enzo, which [p]erha[p]s [p]layed a [p]art [i]n her [q]u[i]zz[i][c]al n[o]nch[a][a]nce? N[o], Enz[o] went on, the [s]e[c]ond [c][ou]sin w[a]s [s]omething [i]nd[i][c]at[i]ve of a [s]tru[c]tu[r]al [r]ot, in f[a]ct it was [s]omething th[a]t [p]ro[b]a[b][l]y n[ee]ded [a]ctual [l]egis[l]ation to [b][e] [p]ro[p]er[l][y] [c]om[b][a]tted, [b]e[c]ause these [s]e[c]ond [c]ousins - they wouldn't just [r]e[s]cind of their [o]wn a[cc]ord. [N][o], Enz[o] and Da[r]i[a] [b][o]th, they [n]eeded to [s]tart [p]et[i][t]ion[i]ng l[o][c]al [r]e[p][r]esenta[t]ives [t]o [a][b][o][i]sh this [c][o]n[c]ept of the [s]e[c]ond [c]ousin.

3.12 It was [a]b[u]ndant[ly] [c][l]ear to Enz[o] [th]at [th]ere was a [r]e[c]u[rr][ing] s[p][l]itt[ing] [i]n[t][o] [t][wo] that was [p]erh[a][p]s the m[o]st ne[f]arious [a]ct of all, [th][a]t [th]e [f]irst of [th]is or [th]at in[e]vita[b]ly'd [b]e[c]ome [e]x[t]ended [t]o the [s]o-[c]alled [s]e[c]ond of the [s][a]me [s][u]b[s]tr[a]te, [b][u]t why? It was th[i]s counting, th[i]s [l]ur[i]d [l][i]near [e]xt[e]nsion that [p]erha[p]s off[e]nd[e]d [E]nz[o] the m[o]st, to which [D]a[r]ja, th[i]nk[i][ng] a[b]out her [b]ok choy with [a]n un[e]r[r]i[ng] s[e]nse of [d][r][ea]d, was on[l][y] [p]artial[l][y] [p]laying a[t]ention [t]o. They'd [f]undam[e]ntally [f]orgotten [s][o]mething [e][ss][e]ntial a[b]out n[u]m[b]er, [E]nzo [s]aid, they'd be[c]o[me] a[d]di[c]ted to [d]ivi[d][ng] [a]nd [a][dd][ng], ex[t]en[d][ng] [a]nd sub[t]r[a][c]ti[ng], in[s]tead of fo[c]u[s]ing on [c]on[c]e[p]ts more [s]t[ee]pled in [p]urit[y]. [E]nz[o] f[e]lt as [th]ough [th]ey were d[e]s[ti]ned to [r]ecall [s]omething [e][s]ential a[b]out [n][u]m[b]er, [b][u]t [n][ow], [s]omeh[ow], that'd [b]ec[o]me im[p]os[s]i[b]le [f]or [th]em, [th]at [th]ey'd [f]or[g]otten [f]or [p]le[r]petuity [a]n [e][s][e]ntial a[s][p]ect of num[b]er, which [m][a]de [e]very [s]itu[a]tion they [e]n[c]ountered i[m]m[e]asura[b][l][y] [m]ore [b][l][ea][k]. The [s][e][c]ond [c]ousin it[s][e][f] was l[i]ttle beyond a [s][y]mptom of a [f]ar greater [s][i][c]k[n]ess, the [c]o[m]mon [c]old of [c]ounting [n]um[b]ers, [o]f [b]e[c]o[m]ing u[n]i[t]a[r][y] un[t]il they [r][ea]ched i[nf]i[n]i[ty]. [N]othing was [m]ore [i]nf[i]n[i]te [th]an [th]e u[n]i[t]a[r]y, [y]et the [u]ni[t]ary bec[o]m[ing] [i]nf[i]n[i]te was [u]tt[er]ly [a]b[s][ur]d! Eve[r]ything was [s][p][l][i]t [i]n[t][o] [t][wo], or [s][p][l][i]t [i]nto th[r]ee, [a]ll [a][r]ound them were [d]o[p]pelg[a]ngers [a]nd [t]r[i]n[i]ti[e]s of [w]h[a]t [w][a]s [w]h[a]t. Mul[t]ip[li]c[i]ty [c]ouldn't ex[i][s]t th[i][s] way! Enzo [c]on[t]inued as [D]a[r]ja [s]imul[t]aneou[s]ly [c]on[s][i][d]ered b[r][i]ng[i]ng up a few [c]on[c]erns she h[a]d with [a]n [e]m[p]loyee she'd [c]on[t]r[a][c]ted [s][p][e][c][i]f[i][c]ally in a bo[t][a][n]i[c]al m[a][n]ner, but who, g[i]v[e]n h[i]s unorthodox methods, had [s]tarted to [c]on[c]er[n] h[er] given [s]ome of his

[m]ore li[c]entious ha[b]its. Of [c]our[s]e [b][o]tan[y] and [p]er[s]onal [m]atters were [p][r]o[b]a[b]l[y], in [m]ost [c]a[s]es, [c]on[s]idered [c]om[p]l[e]te[I][y] [s]e[p]ar[a]te [i]ssues, but [d][ue] t[o] the [s][p]e[c][i]ff[i]c nat[ur]e of th[i]s [p]ar[t][i]cul[ar] job it had [b]egun to [b]other [D]aria just [s][l]ight[ly]. Enzo, for his [p][a]rt, had [a]n [e]n[t]ire [p]ack of [c]iga[r]ettes [i]n h[i]s [d][r][a]wer, he [s]aid to [D]a[r]ia, [b]e[c]ause he'd [b]rought a whole [p]a[c]k [th]e o[th]er [d]ay, ju[s]t [p]urely out of [s][p]ite. [D]id she [w]ant [t]o go [o]ut [o]n[t]o the [d]e[c]k and [w]ha[c]k a puff or [t]wo f[r]o[m] [o]ne? Was she [d][r][u]n[k] en[ou]gh yet? To [s]mo[k]e a [q]u[i]ck [c]ig? Be[c]ause she [c][l]ear[ly] wasn't [l]i[s]te[n]ing to a[n]y of the fu[ck][i]ng sh[i]t he was [s]aying a[b]out int[e]gers or [s][e]cond [c]ousins, a[b]out the non[s][e]n[s][i]c al d[i]v[i]s[i]on of [e]ve[r]ything [a]ll [a]r]ound them! No Daria [w]as, she [w]as l[i]st[e]ning ([k]ind of ...), it was [j]ust th[a]t she was [j]ust a t[al]d [p]r[e]ccu[p]ied, [e]ven [b]efore [c]oming [b]y she'd [b]een wal[k]ing through a [s]mall [c]ourtyard [i]n the [c][i]ty, [t]a[k]ing [n][o]te of the [b][i]g [t][r]ees g[r]o[w]ing [n]ext to the large [b][r][i][c]k [c]ondo [b]u[i]ldings, [c]ont[e]mpl[a]ting [c]o[nn]e[c]ting with [n][a]ture, but also w[i]th [i][n]a[n][i]mate obj[e]cts as [w][e]ll? It [w]as [o]ne thing to [c]o[nn]e[c]t with [n]ature and trees [a]nd [p][i][a]nts, th[a]t was almost [c][l]iche, [b]ut what a[b]out [c]o[nn]e[c]ting w[i]th [i][n]a[n][i]m[a]te objects [m][a]de of [p][i][a]tic by w[a]ge [s][l][a]ves in East [A]sia? Sh[e]d r[e]centl[y] a[tt]ended d[i]v[i]ne l[i]turgy [f]or the [f]irst [t][i]me in ages, she [t][o]ld Enz[o], and while o[cc]asionally [s]ta[r]ing u[p] at the [s]e[r]ies of i[c]ons [p]eo[p]le would have [i]nd[i][s][c]r[i]m[i]nately [k][i]lled [p]eo[p]le [f][or] w[or][sh]i[pp]ing just [a] [f]ew [sh]or[t] [c]enturies [a]go, she [c]ould have [s][w]orn a [s]et of voi[c]es [w]ere [s]pea[k]ing to her, [s][o]lely w[i]th[i]n her [m][i]nd, [c]om[f]or[ting] [h]er but al[s][o] in[f]or[m]ing [h]er [th]at [th]ere'd be an u[p][c]oming t[i]me [th]at [th]ey'd [s][n]a[p] their [f]ingers and she'd [f]i[n]al[ly] re[t]urn [t]o them, [a]s if th[a]t [w]here she

[a]ctual[l][y] be[l]onged, [i]n th[i]s [p][l]ane she [c]ould [h]ard[l]y [c]om[p][r]e[h]end, yet [c]o[mm]uni[c][a]ted di[r]e[c]tly to her with no [p][r][o][b][e]m. She [e]xited her [b][o]ld[y] just [m]o[m]enta[r]i[l][y], f[i]lled w[i]th [p]ure [r]e[l]ief, [th]en [th]e b[e]ings [r][e]ite[r]ated [a] [t][i]me would [a][rr][i]ve [w]hen they [w]ould s[n]ap [th]eir [f]ingers, [th]en she'd [r]e[t]urn, [f]i[n]ally, [t]o [th]em. [P]erh[a][p]s she'd h[al]ve [d]i[s][c][ou]nted the en[c][ou]nter if she h[ad]n't, with [c]om[p][el]te [c]a[p]r[i]ce, sh[e] [t][o]ld Enz[o], [d]e[c]i[d]ed to g[o] up [t]o [t]a[k]e [c]ommunion with her [d]ad, [a]nd [a]s h[er] t[ur]n f[i]nally a[r]r[i]ved to im[b][i]be the [b]lood of [C]h[r][i][s]t Him[s]elf, she [n]ot[i]c[ed] [s][i]tt[i]ng [c]alm[l]y to the [l]e[f]t of the p[r]iest [w]as a [W]ind Tun[n]el b[r][a]nd [f][l]oor [f][a]n. The [e]x[a]ct same [f]loor [f][a]n she'd, [a]fter [t]a[k]ing [e]n[t]ire[y] [t]oo [m]an[y] [m][u]shrooms [o]ne par[t]i[c]ular [e]vening [e]ons ago, [e]ng[a]ged [i]n [a]n [e]x[t]en[d]ed [c]onvers[a]tion w[i]th [r]egar[d]ing the [t][r]ue n[a]ture of things, [d]u[r]ing which a [c]ertain [c][l]a[r]it[y] [d]e[s]cen[d]ed [u][p]on her, final[l][y] [u]n[d]er[s]tan[d]ing, with the [u]t[m]ost [p]u[r]ity, her [t][r]ue o[r][i]g[i]n and, [i]n [t]urn, the [p][r]i[m]al [s]our[c]e of all things.

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4.1 Ultimatel[y], whe[th]er [th]e [c]ults of Aph[r]odit[e] eng[a]ged in [s][a][c][r]ed p[r]o[s][t]itution or n[o]t is [s][o]mething [s][c]h[o][l]ars of h[i][s]to[r][y] are [s]t[i]ll [b][i]tter[l][y] [t]orn [a][b]out, [b]ut there ex[i]st [p]erha[p]s [l]eg[i]t[i]mate [r][ea]sons to [a]g[r][ee] with [ei]ther c[a]m[p]. On the one h[ad]nd, if the Greeks engaged in, what [c]ertain [p]art[i][c][i][p][a]nts of the [S]yml[po]sium at [l][e]a[s]t [b]e[l][i]ved to [b][e], an a[b]utting [s]a[c][r]ed [f]orm of [p][e][d][e][r][a]st[y], th[e]n [i]s [i]t [r][ea]ll[y] th[a]t [f]ar[f][e]tched to [s]ugg[e]st [d]judes [i]n [C][or][i]nth were [b]anging wh[or]es in [a]n [A][ph][r]o[d]ite tem[p]le, [b]u[t] [u][s]t [i]n an [i]nten[s]e[l]y [r][i]tua[l][i][s][i]c way? [I]sn't [i]t [p]o[s]si[b]le A[ph][r]od[i]te w[a]s, in [s][o]me [s]en[s]e, a

[p][r]e-wa[i][f][u]? The t[r][u]e o[r][i]g[i]n of the [w]aifu as [w]e k[n][o]w it. L[a]ter that [n]ight, at I[t][ae]won P[o][c]hu in [K]ore[a][t]own, [A]ra[q][i] was [s]urre[p][t]itiousl[y] [s]aving [h]en[t]ai j[p]legs on[t]o [h]is [c]ame[r]a [r]oll as they [s][a]t [a]t the [s]mall window table over[l]oo[k]ing W[e][s]t Thirty [S][e][c]ond, [s][p][l][i]tt[i]ng an eel [a][p]petizer with [J][o] Yu-[R]i, who [a]fter [a] [c][o]u[p]le shots of [S][o][j]u, was [s]udden[l][y] [m][or]e f[or]th[c]o[m]ing than sh[e]d been [p][r][e]v[i]ous[l][y]. [U]n[a][w]are of yet [a][s]o [u]n[c]on[c]erned [w]ith [A][r]a[q]i [s]aving [h]en[t]ai jpegs [i]n[t]o [h][i]s [ph][o]ne's [c]ame[r]a [r][o]ll, J[o] Yu-[R]i [f]ound her[s]el[f] more [c]lom[f]ortable with, you kn[o]w, shar[ing] her [f]eel[ing]s [a][f]ter [a][b]out h[a][f] [a] dozen sh[o]ts [o]f [S]oju. Was she her[s]elf [p]o[ss]i[b]ly e[n]g[a]ged i[n] a[n] ... ite[r][a]tion of [s][a][c]red [p][r][o]stitution? No! Em[p][l][oy]ing some [G][r]ee[k] demi[g]o[d] to [r]ub his [c][o][c]k on your b[o][k] ch[oy] [p][l]ants [w]asn't - [w]ell, she [d]i[d]n't know [w]h[a]t it [w][a]s ex[a][c]tl[y], she m[u]ttered to [A]r[a][q][i]. May[b]e [a]vant-g[a]rde [b][o]tan[y]? [B]ut [i]n [a]ny [c]a[s]e def[i][n][i]tel[y] [n][o]t [p][r][o]sstitution! A[r]a[q][i] [n]oted that: wasn't it [p][o][s]sible th[a]t [s]ome thing or [s]ome one [h][a]d [s]ome [s]ort of, you kn[o]w, [h][o]ld on [P]ria[p][u]s? That mayb[e] the [d]ude just n[ee]d[ed] help, [s]ome a[s]s[i][s]t[a]n[c]e, that all th[i]s [sh][i]t [sh]e was [s]o con[c]erned about, [v]is-a-[v][i]s his [r][e]cent whore [m][o]nge[r][ing] was the [r]esult of [c]ertain [s][o]meth[ing] [h]a[v]ing a [v]i[c]e g[r]ip [h]old on [h]im? [W]ell, [c][l][ea]r[l][y] he [w]as a [l]ittle off-[k]ilter! she said, [th]at m[u]ch [th]ey [c]ould [b]oth agree on! [B][u]t the e[ss]en[c]e of that [c]ond[i]t[i]on, the [c]ond[i]t[i]on of [b]eing h[y]p[n]otized [i]n [a]n a[b]utting [m][y][s]t[i][c]al [m]a[nn]er, [w]as she the m[o]st a[p]p[r]o[p]riate [o]ne to [s]ay, or was it [p]o[s]sible she [d]i[d]n't [a][c]tually [c]are, [th]at [th]is was an [e]x[c][l]u[s]ive[ly] [c][a][p]ita[l]i[s]t [e]n[d]eavor, [th]at her [r][o]le in [th]e wh[o]le m[a]tter was s[o]le[ly] [r][a]tiona[l]ist, th[a]t [a]s [l]ong as her bo[k] choy im[p]arted a [c]lom[p]et[i]t[i]ve

leg u[p] in the h[ea]t of [K]or[e]atown she [d]i[d]n't [c]are [o]ne [w]ay or [th]e o[th]er. And, [b]ly [th]e [w]ay, [th]e [b]ok choy at I[t][ae][w]on [w][a]s [a][t]r[o]cious, she n[o]ted, [s][o] [a]t least th[a]t was good! The f[a][c]t of the m[a]tter was Jo Yu-[R][i] [c]ould d[e]f[i]n[i]tel[y] [q]u[e]stion how she [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te a[rr]ived here, [s]o to [s]peak, a [b]udding, [b]arely [s]e[m]i-[s]u[c]ce[s]ful, [r]e[s]tau[r]aun[t]eur [i]n [M][i]d[t]own, a J[o]hn[s]on and [W]hales [d]r[o]pout and Food Net[w]or[k] jun[k][ie], hel[p][l]ess[l][y] [p]le[r]using [C][r]ai[g]'s [L]i[s]t ads, [d][e][s][p]le[r]ate for a [l][e]g u[p] in the [m]o[s]t v[i]c[i]ously [c]om[p][e][i]t[i]ve [r][e][s]tau[r]ant [m][e]t[r][o][p]o[l]is [p]erh[a][p]s on the [p][l][a]net, when she [s]t[u]m[b]led [u][p]on [P]ria[p]us's [p][l][i]ght, [d][e][c][i][d]ing [t]o [t]a[k]e it on [a]s a [b]o[t][a]ni[c]al [a]dv[a]ntage. [P]eo[p]le would [a]lways note in [a]we [h]ow [h]er blue eyes [d]i[s][p][l]ayed a [c]ertain re[dd][i]sh gold t[i]nt a[b]out them, [p]o[s]si[b][l]y [s]ome [f]aint [S][p]a[n]ish [b][l]ood on her [F][i][l][p][i][n]o mother's [s]ide? It [s][ee]med her [K]o[r][ea]n-A[m]e[r]i[c]an i[d]entity [w]as al[w]ays [s][l][i]ght[l]y un[d]er[m][i]ned b[y] th[i]s [C]atho[l][i][c][i]sm of her a[d]o[l][e][s]c[e]n[c]e. [C]atho[l][i][c][i]sm has a [t][e]n[d][e]n[c]y of [m]a[k]ing [e]ve[r]y[o]ne [a] fourth gene[r]ation I[t]alian-A[m]e[r]i[c]an, and Jo Yu-Ri f[e]lt this [t]ugging [a]t [t]imes [a]s w[e]ll, [b]ut then again, it wasn't [q]u[i]te [l][i]ke the g[uy] ne[c]e[ss]ari[l]y owed her a[n]ything, [b]le[c][au]se there w[a]s [n]othing in their [c]ontra[c]t ([w]hich [w]as [n]on-ex[i][s]t[e]nt) that [s][t][i][p]ulated [h]ow [h][e] should [s][p]end his f[r][ee] [t]ime. Yet, [A][r]a[q]i in[t]erje[c]ted, [i]s there [n]ot an [i]m[p][i][c][i]t [a]g[r]eement i[n] a[n]y [b]usi[n]ess [r]e[l]a[ti]on[sh]i[p] to, you know, [l]ike, he [s][ai]d, wh[e]n George [C]o[s]t[a]nza [b]e[c]ame a h[a]nd [m]odel in [S]ein[f]eld - he wasn't [t]rave[l]ing a[r]ound [l]aying [b][r][i][c]ks and d[i]pp[i]ng his [t]oes [i]n[t]o a[m]ateur [b]oxing [i]n h[i]s [f]ree [t]ime! Ye[s], the Co[s]t[a]nza [a]n[a]logy was an [a]pt [o]ne here, yet again there [w]as the [q]u[e]stion of the [e][s][e]n[c]e of [P]ria[p]us [h]im[s][e]lf, [h]ow

[h]e [i]n[t]er[a]cted, or [w]as [i]n[t]er[a]cted [w][i]th, [i]n the [c][or][p][or]eal [s]phere, which be[c]ame [a]n [i]n[c][r][ea]sing[l][y] [l]atent issue as the two [r]e[q]u[e][s]ted a [s][e][c]ond [b][o]ttle of [S][o][j]u. It was p[o][s]si[b]le, [J][o] Yu-Ri [c]on[s]idered, that his [c][o][c]k wasn't ex[i]st[e]nt [i]n the w[ay] she m[ay] have [i]n[i]t[i]ally th[ou]ght.

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5.1 Of [c]ourse Ha[k]im [e]n[t]ered the [e]s[t]ab[l]ishment [l]oo[k]ing sole[l][y] for [A]m[i]n[a], [a]s [a]t the time h[e] was [c]om[p][l][e]te[l][y] [c]a[p]tivated [b]y her [b]eauty, unw[i]ll[i]ng to [p][ar]t w[i]th th[i]s [p][ar]t[i][c]ular [i]m[a]ge of her [f]orm that [r]e[l]ent[l]ess[l]y [r]i[c]ocheted w[i]th[i]n the [c]on[f][i]nes of his m[i]nd, [c]a[p]tivated, not like he'd [b]een once [b]ef[ore], [b]y the [c]om[p]a[r]ative witch[c][r]a[f]t of [c]le[v]er [c]on[v]er[s]a[t]i.on. [N]o, in[s]tead [H]akim [f]ound [h]im[s]elf [h]yp[n]otized [b]y the [b]lunt [p]ure [f]orm of her [b]eauty, with [n]o [e]d[i][f][i][c][a]t[i]on or [e]xt[r]a[p]o[l][a]t[i]on, with [n]o [c]a[p]itu[l][a]t[i]on to [r][ea]son - or [e]v[e]n to [f][ee][i]ng [f]or th[a]t m[a]tter! It was [s]im[p]ly the [c]a[s]e [th]at [th]ere was [n]o in[t]er[l][o][c]utor, [n]o[l] even a[n]y [r]em[o]te [c]on[t]em[p][l]ation of this ve[r]y [f]orm that s[o] [c][l][ea]r[l][y] [h][a]d w[a]f[ted] [H]a[k][i]m [th]rough [th]e [d]ouble [d]oors th[a]t [e]vening, tr[y]ing to [f][i]nd what [c]ould [p]erha[p]s b[e] d[ee]med a wai[f]u. Now of [c]ourse there's a [c]om[p]lex hei[r]archy of [r]e[f][r][a][c]tion to [m][a]tters li[k]e th[e]se, of which [H]a[k][i]m, [h]aving [a] [d]e[c]ent [a][m]ount of [ph]ilo[s]o[ph]i[c]al e[d]u[c]ation, [w][a]sn't un[a][w]are of [p]er [s], ho[w]ev[er], [wh]eth[er] or n[o]t it [w]as at the [t][o][p] of his [m][i]nd at the [t][i]me is a [s]e[p]arate [m]atter en[t][i]rely (it wasn't!). There are [l]ong [r][a]nge co[r]re[l][a]tions - did a [f]e[m]ale [l]oo[k] [l]i[k]e s[o]me[o]ne [f]a[m]il[ia], [f]rom [y]ears ago, li[k]e [p]erh[a][p]s ex[a][c]tly the [s]ame? [I]n f[a][c]t, [i]t was [p]os[s]ible Ha[k][i]m [a][c]tua[l][y] m[i]s[t]oo[k] th[i]s

[p]ar[t]i[c]u[l]ar wai[f]u [f]or another [p][er][s]on en[t]ire[l]y at [f]ir[s]t, ba[c]k [f]rom his [s]e[c]on[d]ary [s][c]hool [d]ays. He wasn't even c[er]ta[i]n [i]t was h[er] when he [f][ir][s]t [s]t[u]mbled [u]pon her [f]orm. [H]e en[c]ountered [h]er [f]orm but [r]e[c]alled a [c]o-ed he [w]as [a][c]quainted [w]ith [f][r][o]m [s][o]me years [a]go, [a][ss]u[m]ing in[c]or[r]e[c]tly [A][m]ina was in [f]a[c]t an old [f]riend. She in[f]ormed Ha[k][i]m so[f]tly her [n]ame was Am[i][n]a, as if [p][eo][p]le were [p]o[ss]ib[ly] [l][i]stening [i]n to each [s]y[ll]able [u]ttered fr[o]m her exqu[i]s[i]te[l]y [p]ro[p]ortioned [l][i]ps, as [i][f] [s][p]e[c][i][f][i][c] [c]ourt jesters [w]ere [w]aiting [i]n the [w]i[ng] [t]o [t]ran[s][c]ribe their [c]onver[s][a]t[i]on to [l][a]t[e]nt go[s]s[i]p [c]o[l]umn[i][s]ts. [S]c[ho]lars, [f]or their [p]art, would ultimate[l]y [r]et[r]oa[c]tive[l]y [c]on[f][l]ate [t]wo [p]o[ss]ible A[m]inas as well, [m]i[m]i[ck][i]ng un[i]n[t]entionall[y] their own [s]our[c]e of [s]tud[y]. The f[a][c]t th[a]t Ami[n]a was, [t]e[c]h[n]i[c]all[y] [s]pea[k]ing, you k[n]ow, an or[ph][a]n [i]n a [h]arem [d]i[d]n't [f]aze [H]ak[i]m in the l[ea]st, be[c]ause [a]ll [o]f the [p][r]ophets [p][r][e]v[i]ou[s][l]y [n]oted hi[s]to[r]i[c]al[l]y were, if [n]ot [p]u[r]e who[r]e-monge[r]s, then at [l]ea[s]t [s]lym[p]a[th]eti[c] to [th]e [p][l]ight of [th]e [p]ro[s]titute, the [p]ro[s]titute [s][i]m[p]ly ex[i][s]t[i]ng as [a]n [e]x[t][e]nsion of the [d][e][s]ti[t]ute and [d]own[t]ro[d]den as a wh[o]le. Hak[i]m [s]aw n[o] [r][e]ason to [d]iverge f[r]om his [p][r]e[d]e[c]e[ss]ors [i]n th[i]s [r]egard. There's a [c]ertain i[d][e]a [th]at [th]e [d][ee][p]est [r]ela[t]ion[sh]ips are the ones b[a]sed on [s]o-[c]alled illumi[n]a[ting] [c]onver[s][a]tion, [p]redi[c][a]ted u[p]on getting to [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te k[n]o[w] each other, [y]et [y]ou [c]ould [c]ounter [th]at [th]ere's a[c]tual[l][y] [n]othing to k[n]ow of us [r]eal[l][y] [a]t all, th[a]t we're [p]urely [r]e[f][r]a[c]tions of a [s]our[c]e [i]n[f][i]n[i]te[l]y [s][i]m[p][l]er than w[e] [s][ee]m to [b][e], that con[v]olutions are [b]y th[eir] [v][er]y nature [f][i][c]t[i]onal and [s]te[p]ed in [h][y][p]o[c]r[i][s]ly. [H]a[v]ing a gr[ea]t [c]on[v]ers[a]tion is the a[c]ute [f][a][l]a[c][y] of [h]um[a]nit[y], [b]e[l]ie[v]ing you've di[s]co[v]ered [s]ome eternal

[b]ond with [a]nother [p][er][s]on is [p][er]ha[p]s an [a][ff]ront to [A]llah [H]im[s]elf. [H][a]kim and [A]mina [d][i][d]n't [d][i][s]cuss them[s]elves at [f]ir[s]t, and when [th]ey did [th]ey st[r]uggled to [r][e][c]all who they even [w]ere, [w]hich [w]as a[p]p[r]o[p][r]iate. [H]a[k]im's [m]ad[n]ess, [h][i]s [i]n[d][i][s][c]r[i][m][i][n][a]te [k][i]ll[i]ng [o]f [o]thers was based [i]n th[i]s [d]ea. There was an i[m]m[e]d[i]acy to their [c]o[m][i]ng [i]n[t]o [c]on[t]act [w]ith [o]ne another. Ha[k]im, [a]gain, [d][i][d]n't [c]ontem[p]late [A]mina's [b]eaut[y], [s]im[p]l[y] [b]e[c]au]se it w[a]s [a]n [i]m[p]o[s]si[b]le a[c]t. [M]e[m]o[r]y was [s]omething they [b]oth [s]t[r]uggled to inte[r]a[c]t with. [A]m]ina's beauty was [a] [m]otor [s][k]ill. Her out[l]ine was a re[c]o[l]e[c]tion [s][o]me[o]ne would n[e]ver be[c]o]me [c]o]nscious of, a [l][ur]id [m]e[m]ory a [p]er[son] [c]o[m][p][i]te[l][y] forg[o]t a[b]out [b]ut [s]till [s]tayed hugging their [b][o]dy li[k]e a shar[k] jaw. It was the i[m]m[e]d[i]acy of A[m][i]na's [b]eaut[y] that [s][l][o]w[l][y] [b]egan to er[o]de Ha[k][i]m's [s][a]nit[y]. [P]ossession [s][a]ns [c]ontem[p]lation [c][a]n [b]e [c]onf]using [f]or [s]ome, Ha[k]im n[o]t ex[c]lu[d]ed, [b]e[c]ause we [o]ften [c]on[s]i[d]er [p]ossession a[k]in to gr[o]wing [o]ld and [d]e[c]laying with [s][o]me[o]ne, [r][e]p[e]ating [v]ows in[t]o an o[p]en air that, if [r][e]a[r]anged just s[l]ight[l]y, would [b]e[c]ome hea[v]y as [b][r]i[c]ks. At the [t]ime he [p]a[s]sed [th]rough [th]e [d]ou[b]le [d]oors to [p][i][a][c]e an eye on [h]er, [H]a[k]im in[c]orre[c]tly [a][s]sumed [A]mina's [b]eauty to [b]e of [a] de[c]ay[ing] n[a]ture, [b][a][s]li[c]a[l]ly that he [c]ould [p]oss[e]s[s] her in a [c]on[t]em[p][i]ative [s][e]n[s]. Ha[k]im [m]ade a [p]oor a[tt]e[m]p[t] to seem [l]i[k]e he wasn't [l]oo[k]ing for [A]m]ina as he wal[k]ed [th]rough [th]e [d]ou[b]le [d]oors, her [b]eauty [a]lready [w][i]th[i]n h[i]m [b]ut in a [w]ay that [e]schewed [c]on[t]emp[il]ation [e]n[t]ire[l]. Ha[k]im [l]u[s][t]ed for de[c]ay, to [p]oss[e]s[s] [b]eauty in a [c]on[t]em[p][i]ative [s][e]n[s], to [r]e[c]ite vows in air [p]o[c]kets of [b][r]i[c]k, [a]nd [A]mi[n]a d[a]nced [a]round his [a]m[b][i]t[i]ons, to [b]e ho[n]est, [f]air[l][y] e[ff]ort[l]ess[l][y]. [H]ad [H]a[k]im [b]een [a][b]le to [p]ro[p]er[l]y [c]ontem[p][i][a]te

this ve[r]ly [r][ea]l i[m]m[e]d[i]a[c][y] of A[m][i]na, then [p]erh[a][p]s his [s][a]nity wouldn't h[a]ve [s][l][o]w[l][y] er[o]ded in the m[a]nner [i]t ultim[a]te[l][y] d[i]d. When he exe[c]uted th[o]se [c][l][o]sest to h[im] on a wh[im], [i]n [i]n[c]rea[s]ing[l]y vio[l]ent [a]nd [d]r[a]stic ways, [s][l]i[c]ing off [h]eads and [s][l][i]tt[i]ng th[r]oats by the [h]un[d][r]eds, it was on[l][y] [b]e[c]ause Ha[k]im funda[m]en[t]a[l][y] [m][i]s[i]n[t]er[p]reted the i[m]m[e]d[i]a[c][y] of A[m][i]na's [b]eauty. [H]ad [h]e [b]een a[b]le [p]er[c]eive her [b]eauty [i]n [i]ts [a][c]tual [s]en[s]e [a]s o[pp]osed [t][o] r[u]th[l]ess[l]y a[tt][e]m[p]t[ing] [t]o [t][e]ther it [t]o his own [c]on[t][e]m[p][l]ation, then he p[r]o[b]a[b]ly wouldn't have gone [b]atshit [c]razy! [C]ourt offi[c]ers would [b]e [b]eheaded [b]e[c]ause [A][m]ina's [b]eauty was [a] [m]otor [s][k]ill to Ha[k][i]m, wh[e]n he in[c]orr[e][c]t[l][y] [b]e[l]i[e]ved it to [b][e] a [r]o[m]an [à] [c][l]ef. Y[e]t isn't an [e][r]oded [s]anit[y] ne[c]e[s]sa[r][y]? [C]ould we [p]o[s]sibly [s]uggest that? When [H]amza i[b]n A[l][i] [p]ro[c][l]aimed [H]a[k][i]m to [b]e divine in[c]arnate, was it [p]o[s]si[b]ly [b]e[c]ause [H]a[k]im [h]ad [s][a][c]rifi[c]ed his own [s][a][n]ity to [m]a[k]e A[m]i[n]a's [b]eau[t]y, [w]hich [w]as of a [p][u]rel[y] [w][ai]fu var[i]ety, [d]e[c]ay? Ha[k]im would [d]i[s]a[pp]ear y[ear]s [l]ater, in [f][a][c]t [n]ot [l]ong [a][f]ter [t]wo [d]i[s]torted [A]mi[n]as [a][p]peared [t]o h[i]m [i]n [d][r]eam, one [d]ark, [th]e o[th]er of a [l]ight [v]a[r][i]ety, yet [s]till e[v][en] th[en] he [r]em[ai]ned un[a]ble to [d]i[s]entangle [w]hat it [w]as he [s]aw. Y[e]t in [a]ny [c][a]se, all th[a]t's [p]erh[a][p]s a [b]etter topic for a [l]ater [d][a]te, [b]e[c]ause [w]hen Ha[k]im [w]al[k]ed [th]rough [th]ose [d]ou[b]le [d]oors [h]is [s][a]nity [h][a]d alrea[d]y [s]tarted to [d]e[c]ay, his men[t]al [f]a[c]ul[t]ies were [a][r]ea[d]y in a [s]t[a]te of [d][i][s][a][r][ay]. As Ha[k]im [f]o[c]used his e[n]ergies on th[i]s [f]a[s]e [i][m]age of [d]e[c]laying with A[m][i][n]a his [s]a[n]ity it[s]el[f] [b]e[c][a]me [d]i[l]a[p]i[d][a]ted. H[a]mza ibn [A][l][i] [c]alled him H[a]k[im] [A][l]lah. It wasn't ne[c]e[ss]a[r]ily the [ph][r]ases Amina [r]e[p][ea]ted that [r][ea]ched Ha[k][i]m, but [m]ore [s][o] the [m][o]de [i]n wh[i]ch she [s][ai]d th[e]m. She'd

whi[s][p]ered [p]ure [n]on[s]ense to Ha[k]im that was [n][o]thing if [n][o]t t[o]tal[l]y [l]ogi[c]al [o]n[l]y a [f]ew years be[f]ore his [f]riend H[a]mz[a] would d[ee]m [h]im [H][a][k][i]m [A]ll[a]h. Ha[k]im would [s][p]end his nights and w[ee][k]ends [l]oc[k]ed [i]n h[i]s th[r][ee] hun[d][r]ed s[q]uare foot [l][i]v[i]ng [s][p]a[c]e, [a]n [a][s]ceti[c] [d]e[c][i]s[i]on of his own [a][c]cord, and m[e][d]i[t]ate [e]x[t][e]nsive[y] on the beaut[y] of [A]min[a], its [t][r]ue n[a]ture, [r][e]c[r][e][a]ting her g[e]o[m]e[t][r]y [i]n h[i]s [m]ind, [s][p]ea[k]ing with A[m][i][n]a [i]n h[i]s [i][m]agi[n][a]t[i]on, [c][r]e[a]t[i]ng an in[t]er[p]er[s]o[n]al [b][r]and of [b]eauty [b][a]s[ed] en[t]irely [on] [c]on[t]em[p][a]tion, [o]ne [w]here they [w]ould de[c]ay [t]ogether in[t]o old [a]ge, a human sh[a][p]e that f[a]des with [t]ime, exi[s]ting [s]ole[l][y] [t]em[p]oral[l][y], [n]ever [e][m]a[n]ating [a][n]ywhere [e]xc[e]pt into the [m][e][m]o[r]ies and [ph]otog[r]a[ph]s wh[i]ch [d][i][s]tort and [f]al[s]i[f]ly [e]ve[r][y]thing worth[y] of [ou]r [a]we. This was [h]ow H[ak]im's sanity [e][r]oded. H[i]s a[s]ceti[c][i]sm [p][l]ay[ed] at [l]ea[s]t a [p]art [i]n h[i]s own [d]e[ay], [b]ut mo[s]t[l]y [b]e[c]ause he [e]mp[lo]yed a[s]c[e]ti[c]ism to [c]reate [i][m][a]ges [i]n h[i]s [m]ind, [t]o d[e]lve in[t]o his [m][e][m]ories as if [m]ages as if th[ey] [c]on[t][ai]ned [a]n [e]ss[e]nce [m]ore i[m]m[e]d[i]ate than A[m][i]na's beauty. They [d][i][d]n't! [I]t's the [p][r]o[l]i[f]e[r]ation of the [i][m]agi[n]ed [i][m][a]ge that ul[t][i][m][a]tely [d][r]ives us [a]ll [b]a[s]i[c]ally in[s]ane [a]ll the [t]ime without [f]ail, [b]e[c]ause of the [d][i][s]tan[ce] we [p][l]ace [b]e[t]ween our[s]elves and the image, [b]y ne[c]e[s]sity of [c]ourse! [B]eing [d]eprived of the i[m]m[e][d][i]ate [b]eauty of [A][m][i]n[a], Ha[k]im ch[o]se to [a][s]ceti[c]ally [a][t]empt [t]o [r][e][c][r][e]ate it via his [o]wn [i][m]agi[n]ed [i][m][a]ges, [e]x[i]st[i]ng al[m][o]st [e]x[c][l]usive[l]y w[i]th[i]n the [c]onfines of his [o]wn [c]ontemplative [s]tates, but where[a]s his ([s]ee[m]ing[l]y sh[a][l]low) in[t]er[r][a][c]tions with A[m][i][n]a [r]e[qu]ired [n]othing, they [m]erged in[t]o each o[th]er [s]ans [c]onscious [th]ought, his [i][m]agi[n]ed [i][m][a]ges [w]ere

f[l][ee]ting, al[w][ay]s [d]e[c][ay]ed i[mm][e][d][i]ate[l][y] [p]lost-[c]on[s]tru[c]tion. At [f][i]ve thirty [f][i]ve [p]m one a[f]ternoon [th]e [th]ought o[cc]urred to Ha[k]im [th]at he'd been [f][or]ty [f][or] his ent[i]re l[i]fe, [d]e[s][p]ite the [f]a[c]t he'd [d]i[s]a[pp]ear [f][or]ever at ju[s]t thirty [f][i]ve. He was [s]t[i]ll ob[s]e[ss]ed w[i]th [d]i[s]tan[c]e. [N][o], it was [p]re[c]i[s]el[y] the [n]otion of [d]i[s]tan[c]e that [d]rove his [s]a[n]it[y] off the [f]u[ck]ing [c]li[ff]. Ha[k]im's g[r][ea]t[e]st c[r]e[a]t[i]on was [p]erha[p]s [D]ar al-Ilm, or it [c]ould have [p]o[ss]i[b]ly [b]een his own [i]nter[a][c]tion w[i]th h[i]s [s][a]nity, [b]e[c]ause [p]erha[p]s [b]y d[ea]ling with [A]m[i][n]a's [b]eauty in[c]o[rr]e[ct]l[y] Ha[k]im ulti[m]ate[l][y] [a][rr]ived at the t[r]ue [n]otion of [b]eauty, [r]ather than [m]o[d]e[r]ate[l]ly [d]e[l]u[d]ing himsel[f] and [d]ecaying with a [p]a[l]ata[b]le [f]i[b], h[e] [s]t[a]m[p][e][d]ed [f]ull [f]or[c]e in[t]o [d]e[l]usion. He [l]ost [t]r[a][c]k of his [s][a]nity [c]om[p]l[e]te[l][y] [b]e[c]ause of it, in a [s][e]nse a[cc]urately [a][ss][e]ssing the false [n]otion of [A]mi[n]a's [b]eauty as an [i]tem you [c]ould de[c]ay [b]es[i]de. The [s][a][c][r]ed [p][r]o[s]titute [i]s [i]n[c][a][p]able of de[c][ay], there's in f[a]c[t] [a]b[s]o[l]ute[l]y nothing more [a]b[s]urd than g[r][o]wing [o]ld with a [s][o]-[c]alled [s]a[c][r]ed [p][r]o[s]titute. How [c][ou]ld y[ou]?! In [T]en [T][w]enty [O]ne, Ha[k]im [w]ould [d]r[ea]m of [t]wo [d]is[t]orted Am[i]nas and then he [t]oo would [d]is[a]pp[ear], not as [a] result of [a] [p]ala[c]e in[t]r]igue, or [a] [s]u[r]re[p][t][i]ous m[ur][d][er], or [a]ge and [d]ec[ay], be[c]ause [e][v]en if those e[v]ents [s][e]emed to o[cc]ur, we should [s]tr[ess] [th]at [th]ey're no [l][e]ss [v]eil-[l]i[k]e [th]an [th]e [v][ei]ls Ha[k]im wit[n][e]ssed [a]round [A]mi[n]a's [b]eauty. No, to [b]e [c][l]ea[r], it's fair[l]y evid[e]nt [H]a[k]im [h]im[s][e][f] be[c]ame a wai[f]u [i]n h[i]s thirty [f]i[f]th year, [w]hich [w]as entirely [a]p[p]r[i]o[p][r]iate. [D]i[s][a]pp[ear] is [p][r]o[b]a[b]ly the in[c]o[rr]e[c]t word to [d]e[s][c][r]i[b]e it! [b]e[c]ause Ha[k]im g[a]ve a[w][ay] his [s]anity in a ve[r]y [r]eal [w][ay] the [s][e]cond he [w]al[k]ed [th][r]ough [th]ose [d]ou[b]le [d]oors to g[r][ee]t Am[i]na [i]n h[i]s own esta[b]lishment, the [e][s]ta[b][l]ishment

where he [s]aw him[s][e]lf [e]n[c][l]osed, [l]i[k]e in a [l]arge [b]ox [l]i[k]e [c]on[t][ai]ner, one [S]pring aft[er]noon, the [s][a]me [p][l][a][c]e he con[t]em[p][l][a]ted the ide[a] that [A][l][a]h is the ve[r]y mi[rr]or [i]n wh[i]ch you [s]ee your[s]elf, [th]at you're [th]e mirror [i]n [w]h[i]ch [H]e [w][i]t[n]e[ss]es [H]is [N][a]mes. [W][e] [s][ee][k] to [c][l][ai]m [b]eauty in a [s]ub[j]ect-ob[j]ect re[l][a][ti]on[sh]ip [b][e]cause [c]ertain [b][e]ings have m[a]de them[s]elves [s][ee]m to [b][e] that w[ay], not [t]o [t]ri[c]k us ne[c]es[sa]rily b[ul]t j[u]st to [i]nnoc[en]tly [c]ause us to g[o] a[pp][r][o][p][r]iately in[s]ane, and vi[a] that [a][pp][r]o[p][r]i[a]te [i]nsanity f[i]nally [a][rr][i]ving at the [p][r]o[p]er [n][a]ture of b[eau]ty. [A][m]i[n]a in her cu[rr]ent st[a]te enjoyed the f[a][c]t th[a]t [H]a[k]im [h][a]d [h][a]lf of his [r]obe o[ff] [i]n the [m][i]ddle of the ven[ue], his fa[c]le bl[ee][d][i]ng, [t]o[ss]ing d[i]nars [i]n[t]o the air [s]cr[ea][m][i]ng at [m]en [t]w[i]ce his [s][i]ze th[a]t [h]e [h][a]d [m]o[n]ey! [D]i[d]n't [th]ey k[n]ow [th]is? He'd fu[c]k[i]ng [k][i]ll them all, then he'd e[l][i][m][i]n[ate] their fa[m]i[l]ies, then he'd [a][ss][a][ss]in[a]te the a[cq]u[ai]ntan[c][e]s of their [s][e][c]ond [c]ousins! But [s]a[c][r]ed [p][r]o[s]ti[t]utes are of [c]ourse inv[e]t[e][r]atel[y] [d][r]awn [t]o this exact [t]y[p]e of in[s]a[n]it[y], a [s]ort of [D][i]o[n][y][s]ian [l]osing of the [s]elf. Years [l]ater Ha[k][i]m would dr[ea]m of [k][i]ll[i]ng h[i]mself [r]e[ple]atedly as a m[e]th[o]d of c[l][ea]ns[i]ng him[s][e]lf, a [r]e[l]ated [p][r]o[c]ess. It's p[r]o[b]a[b]ly in[t]er[act]ing with the a[t][r]o[c]ties of [b]eauty where the g[r]eatest [l]e[ss]ons are [l]earned, [b]ut [c]er[tainly [n]ot [i]n [a]n [i]n[t]er[p]er[s]onal and [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [d]ee[p] [c]on[v]er[s][a]tion [d]ri[v]en w[ay]. No, it's [v][i][a] [a] [d]i[v][i]ne imm[e][d][i]acy that e[v]e[r][y]thing be[c]omes i[d][i]otic and your [r]ational self is f[i][n]ally [r]e[c]og[n]i[zed] am[o]ng eve[r]y[o]ne as an [u]nwel[c][o]me inter[l]o[c]utor, [u]na[b]le to w[r]a[p] [h]is [p]lea[b][r]ained [h]ead a[r]ound [w]hy you're not [c]u[rr]ent[l]y [w]ea[r]ing [a] shirt in [a] [p]ub[l]i[c] [p][l]ace.

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5.12 [W]alking [th]rough [th]e, in [r]et[r]o[s]pect s[o]me[w]h[a]t ominous, [d]ouble [d]oors Ha[k]im [t]oo[k] note of the [s]ame [t]in [r]oof that [c]lom[p][r][i]sed the [s][k][y] on [d][i]ve [b]ar [p]atios as A[m]i[n]a [m]ade it [c]lear she had [b]usi[n]ess [t]o [t]a[k]e [c]are of, [sh]e was a[f]ter [a]ll on [sh]i[f]t, but [th]at it [w]as [a]lso im[p]ortant [th]at [H]akim [w]ait for [h]er, [p][I][ea]se! [D]on't [l][ea]ve! Just wait a [m]i[n]ute! [B][u]t [f][u]n[d]a[m]entally there was [n]othing [f]or the [t][wo] [t][o] [d]is[c]uss [b]eyond A[m]i[n]a [s]taring [s]i[l]ent[l]y into Ha[k]im's [ey]es for ex[t]ended in[t]ervals of [t][i]me. When she fi[n]a[ll][y] m[o]seyed [o][v]er [t]oward [h]im as [h]e [s][t]ood [n]er[v]ou[s][l][y], [s]till [n]ear the [d]ouble [d]oors, [h]e told [h]er [h]e wan[t]ed [t]o [t]a[k]e her [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [o]ut [o]f this place, m[aly]b[e] [e]ven, h[e] [d][i][d]n't k[n]ow, t[a]ke her out to [d][i][nn]er? [a]nd she [l][a]ughed in a way that [s][p]oke to the [s]eeming [i]m[p]o[ss][i]b[i][l]i[ty] of the i[d]ea, and, in turn, Ha[k]im [c]on[s]i[d]ered the [f]al[s]e [d]ua[l]ity of the [ph][y][i][c]al and the [P][l]atoni[c], [c]on[s]i[d]ering th[a]t, [a][c]tual[l]y, the [p]r[o]p[er] [d][i]v[i]s[i]on of [k]ind when it [c]ame to [l][o]ve w[a]sn't ph[y]s[i]cal and [s]p[i]r[i]tual but [i]n[s]tead [th]e [d]e[l]ayed and [th]e imm[e]d[i]ate. There was [n]o [d]ia[l][e][c]t[i]c pr[e]s[e]nt here, [n]o [l]ong [c]onversations on the ph[o]ne, [n][o] getting to k[n][o]w one a[n]other's [s][o]-[c]alled [s]e[c][r]ets and [i]n[d]ulg[i]ng [i]n [th]e [th][r][i]ll[i]ng [i][d]io[c]ly of what's h[i][dd][e]n, of the a[m]use[m]ent par[k] of tiny l[i]ttle [s]e[c]rets. There i[n]evitab[l][y] would [c]ome [a] [t]ime when [A][m][i][n]a [a][c]tual[l][y] [a]sked Ha[k][i]m [t]o [t]ell a l[i]ttle [m]ore about h[i]m[s]elf, that it [s][ee]med [l][i][k]e, [n]ow [th]at sh[e] [th]ought a[b]out it, she [b]arel[y] [e]ven k[n]ew him! [t]o which Ha[k]im [c]ons[i]dered h[i]s own [t]rauma, [w]hich of [c]ourse [w]asn't exa[ct]ly [r]eal, he [c]on[t]emp[l]ated his youth with a [r]are [m]o[m]en[t]a[r]ly f[er]lv[or] and w[i]tn[e]ssed [th]at all [th][e]se [m]e[m]o[r][ie]s be[c]ame [m][a][s]s-p[r]oduced [a][c]tion

[f]igures [c]om[p][l][e]te[l][y] [m]el[t]ed in[t]o a stri[p] of [p]lave[m]ent [i]n the un[f]org[i]v[i]ng[l]y b[l][i][s]te[r][i]ng [C]ai[r]o [s]un, [a]nd [a]s he [t]urned [t]o his [l]eft, [s]o[l]e[l]y to e[s]c[a]pe Amina's [e]v[e]r int[e]n[s]ifyng g[a]ze, [h]e [c]oul[d]n't [h]el[p] [b]ut n[o]te a [S]an[d]ra [B]ullock [p][o][s]ter for a [m]ovie [c]alled [M]iss [S]e[c]r[e]t [A]g[e]nt h[u]ng [u]p adj[a][c][e]nt. [R]epeating the title [a]gain to [h]im[s]elf [H]a[k]im [s][l]ow[l]y [a][rr][i]ved at the dis[q]u[i]eting [c]on[c][l]usion [th]at [th]ere [p]erha[p]s [e]xi[s]ted [a]n [e]ntire [S]and[r]a [B]u[l]o[c]k [e][c]onomy [a][l]l [a]round him, that [e]ntire [s]wathes of the f[i]lm [i]n[d]u[s]t[r]y were [i]n[d][i]s[c][r][i]m[i]nate[y] [d]e[d]i[c]ated t[o] the [r][u]th[l]ess [p][r]o[d]uction of a[dd][i]t[i]onal [S]an[d]ra Bu[l]o[c]k [c]ontent, ex[c][l]u[s]ive[l]y [c]on[s]t[r]u[c]ted for a [r][a]venous [S]a[n]d[r]a [B]u[l]o[c]k f[a]n [b]ase. [P]eo[p]le, [n]ot at all in ob[s][c]ure [n]um[b]ers, [a]b[s]o[l]ute[l]y [a]dored [S]a[n]d[r]a [B]ullock[c]k, [a]p[arent]l[y]! [B]ut how [c]ould this [b][e]? [th]at [th]ese shit [s]t[ai]ns j[u]st [c]oul[d]n't get en[ou]gh [o]f [S]an[d]ra [B]ullock[c]k, [c]ould th[ey]? to the [e]xte[n]t a[n] [e]ntire [i][n][d]u[s]t[r]y had developed to [q]uench [th]e [[th]irst for [th]is] [S]an[d][r]a Bullock[c]k [c]on[t]ent. Oh no! M[iss] [C][on]ge[n]iality wasn't [n][ea]r[l][y] e[n]ou[gh] [S]and[r]a Bu[l]ock [f]or these [l]u[r]id m[a]sses of [S][a]ndra [B]u[l]ock shit [s]tains! H[o]pe [F][l][oa]ts was [b]are[l]y [s]cratching the [s]ur[f]ace of [w]h[a]t [w][a]s [c][l]ear[l]y [a] Ma[r]i[a]n[a] t[r]ench-[l]i[k]e itch [f]or the [u]n[a][d]ulte[r]ated p[r]o[d]u[c]tion of [S]an[d][r]a Bu[l]o[c]k [f]ilms. [S]p[eed] and [D]e[m]o[l]i[t]ion [M][a]n [a]nd The [P][r]o[p][o]sal - n[o]! these in[s][a]tiable zealots [d]e[m]an[d]ed [M]iss [S]e[c]ret [A]gent as w[e]ll! [M]iss [C]onge[n]ial[ity] the [S][e][c]ond: Armed [a]nd [F][a]bu[l]ous, [n]ot e[v]en that a[c]ute[l]y [c]lock[s]u[c]king [f]ilm [c]ould [s]u[ff]i[c]e [f]or these [c]o[c]k[s]u[c]king [C][r]u[s][a][d]ers of e[v]e[r]lything [S]an[d][r]a Bullock[c]k. To H[a][k]im's [a][m][a]ze[m][e]nt, [M]iss [S]e[c]r[e]t [A]g[e]nt was [s]till [s]omehow ne[c]e[ss]a[r]y! [B]ird [B]ox, Ocean's [E]ight - this

end[1]e[s]s [1][i][s]t of [i]n[s][i]p[i]d [f][i]lms, [c]ould there [e]ver [b]e [e]nou[gh] [B]ullo[c]k? Ha[k]im thought, [a]voiding [A]min[a]’s gaze, [r]ea[1][i]zing his en[t][i]re ch[i]ldhood was a b[1]ob of [p][1]astic [m][e][t]ed in[t]o a [C]ai[r]o [p]ave[m][e]nt. There [e]xis[t]ed [a]n [e]n[t]ire [s][u]b-[p]o[p]u[l]ation that [s][u]b[s]i[s]ted [s]eeming[1]ly [s]ole[1]y on [S]andra Bu[ll]ock films? H[a]kim asked [A]m[i]n[a] if sh[e]d [s][ee]n that [m]ovie p[o][s]ted [o]ver there, [M]iss [S][e][c]r[et] Agent? With [S]and[r]a Bu[ll]o[c]k? Was that, [1]i[k]e, a [s]e[q]uel to Miss [C]onge[n]alit[y] by a[n]y chance? A[m]i[n]a [n]oted ex[c]ited[1]y that sh[e]d a[c]tua[1]ly [s][ee]n the [s][e][q]uel to [M]iss [C]ong[e]n[i]a[l]it[y], that it was [c]alled Armed [a]nd F[a]bu[l]ous, [s]o she [c]last doubt u[p]on whether [p]arti[c]u[l]ar film [c]ould [b]e its [p]ro[p]er [s]e[q]uel, [b]ut th[e]n [s]ugg[e]s[ted] that it was [p]o[ss]i[b]l[y] [p]art of a t[r]i[l]ogy? This [S]an[d][r]a [B]u[l]o[c]k in[d]u[s]t[r]y had [b]een a[l]lowed to [p][r]o[l]ife[r]late, [s]eeming[1]ly in[c]e[ss]ant[1]y, and now Ha[k][i]m r[ea][l]ized, once and for all, that h[e] and A[m][i][n]a ba[s]i[c]a[1]ly [1][i]ved [d]e[r][i]vative [l]ives in [w]hat [w]as fun[c]tional[1]y a [S]an[d][r]a Bu[ll]o[c]k [d][r]iven e[c]o[n]o[m]y.

η/ω 866:1118 .775

5.13 [A]ll [a][r]ound [h]im, [h]is w[h]ole [l]ife, he’d [b]een un[r]epentant[1]y [s]u[rr]oun[d]ed [b]y [S]an[d][r]a [B]ullo[c]k’s [f]il[m]og[r]aph[y], [b]ut [o]nl[y] in this [m][o][m]ent [d][i]d th[i]s un[f]ai[l]ing[1]ly [d]e[p][r]essing [f]a[c]t [b]e[c]ome [a]p[p]a[r]ent to him. In [f][a][c]t, [A]mina [c]ontinued, gl[a]n[c]ing [a]t the [p]o[s]ter [a]gain, Miss Se[c]ret [A]gent was [a]ctual[1]y just a[n]other [n][a]me for [M]iss [C]ongeni[a][l]it[y], the [f]irst [f]ilm, [n]ot Armed [a]nd [F][a]bu[l]ous, [h][a]d [H]a[k][i]m s[ee]n [i]t? It was [a][c]tually [p]retty d[e]c[e]nt! Bu[l]o[c]k [p][1][ay]s a [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [t]ou[gh] and [t]om[b]oyish [F][B]I [a]gent in the [A][c]tion

[s][l][a]sh [C]omedy, it was a film th[a]t [c]ontained [a][c]t[i]on yet also [c]om[e]dic re[l][ie]f, as [B]u[l]o[c]k was, [d]espite [b][e]ing tr[a][d][i]t[i]onally [a]ttr[a]ct[i]ve, a [t]ough [b]ut also [t]om[b][oy]ish [d]e[t]e[c]tive, which challenged [t]ra[d][i][i]onal gen[d]er [n]orms. One [a][s][p][e]ct [A]mi[n][a] enj[oy]ed [a][b]out the film was the [b]a[l][a]nce of [a][c]tion with [s][p]urts of [c]om[e]dic [r]e[l][ie]f! She [l]oved [s][p]urts of [c]omi[c] [r]e[l]ief! This would [c]ontrast with Bu[l]o[c]k's [l]ater wor[k] [i]n a f[i]lm [l]i[k]e [B]ird [B]o[x], where she'd [t]a[k]e a [m]uch [m]ore serious [t]ur[n] in h[er] [a][c]ting [c]areer. H[a][k][i]m [a]d[m]itted to [A][m][i]na th[a]t, [a]ctual[l][y], h[e] [b]e[l][ie]ved [S]andra [B]u[l]o[c]k, well, that she [s]u[c]ked. [N]o, [n]ot that she [w]as the [w]or[st] p[er] [s]e, no there were obvious[l]y [m]ore at[r]ocious a[c]t[r]ess[es] th[a]n [S][a]ndra [B]u[l]o[c]k. [B]ut how [m]any ex[a][c]t[l]y? [B]e[c]ause San[d]ra [B]u[l]o[c]k, a[cc]or[d]ing to Ha[k]im, was a [p]arti[c]u[l]ar[l][y] [n]auseating [p]erso[n]a[l]it[y]. He just found her, he [d]i[d]n't k[n][o]w, [a] [b]it of an [a][n]noying im[b]ecile? While, [n]o, [h]e [h]adn't [s][ee]n ma[n]y of her [f][ea]ture [f]ilms [s]tart to [f][i][n][i]sh he [d]i[d]n't [f]eel like h[e] [n][ee]ded [t]o [t]o [b]e [a][b]le [t][o] [a]rrive at [a] [f]airly [c][o]n[f]i[d]ent [c]on[c][l][u]sion that she was [b][a][s]i[c]a[l]ly v[o]mit in[d][u]c[ing]. She [c]ertain[l]y [w]asn't a pi[l]ar of [c][r]eative [b][r]i[l]ian[c]e! The [w]orld, in Ha[k]im's m[i]nd at [l]ea[s]t, [d]i[d]n't re[q]u[i]re any [f][ur]th[er] [S]andra [B]u[l]ock [f]ilms! This i[d]ea, Ha[k]im [s]aid, th[a]t [S][a]n[d]ra [B]u[l]o[c]k should have [b][a][s]i[c]a[l]i[y] an entire in[d]u[s]t[r][y] [b]uilt a[r]ound her, [f]or the [s]ole [p]ur[p]ose of [p]ro[d]u[c]ing [m]ore and [m]ore [S]an[d][r]a Bu[l]o[c]k [f]ilms, it [s][ee]ms [c]om[p][l][e]te[l][y] ab[s]urd to me! [S]an[d][r]a Bullock? If there's a [s]ingle [d]ata [p]oint we [c]an [r]efer[r][e]n[c]e to [s]ugg[e][s]t that our [s]o[c][i]let[y] [i]s [i]n [d][i]re n[ee]d of [r]e[f]orm I th[i]nk [i]t's the [p]u[t][r]id [f][a]ct th[a]t a [m]ovie was [p][r]o[d][u]ced and [r]e[l]eased un[d]er the [t]itle [M]iss Congenia[l]ity [T]wo: Armed [a]nd F[a]bu[l]ous! [Th]e [f][a][c]t [th][a]t, not only was th[a]t [f]ilm [a][c]tually

[p]ro[d]u[c]ed, [b]ut this en[t]ire [S]an[d]ra [B]u[l]lo[c]k in[d]u[s]try [c]on[t]inues to o[p]e[r][a]te and [p][r]o[l]i[f]e[r][a]te, even to this [d][a]ly? how [c]an you [n]ot [b]e just a [l]ittle o[ff]en[d]ed [b]ly that, Ami[n]a? It's [a]ll just [a] [t]ad [g][r]o[t]esque you have to ad[m]it! Well I dis[a][g][r][ee]! [A][m]ina [r]e[t]orted, I like her [m][o]v[ie]s, Ha[k]im! I think she's [a][m][u]s[ing], [b]ut [a]lso [b]razen in a way [I] f[i]nd en[d]ea[r][i]ng. En[d][ea][r]ing, Ha[k][i]m [r]e[p][ea]ted [e][q]ual[y] in [d][i]gu[s]t and [d][i][b]el[ie]f, en[d][ea][r]ing? [N][o], I w[a]tched [B]ird [B][o]x, and I'll [s]im[p][l]y [n][o]te that my [l]ef[t] [n]ut [a]f[ter] a h[a]lf an hour [r]un is [m]ore endea[r]ing [th]an [th]at [m]ov[ie], A[m][i][n]a! And [S][p][ee]d with [K][e]a[n]u [R][ee]ves? [C][m]on! [O]h, and d[o]n't even [s]tart with H[o]pe [F][o]ats! the [f]act there [e]xists [a]n [e]ntire [s]ub-[p]o[p]ulation of [E]g[y][p]t[i]ans [d]e[d]i[c]ated to, what? the [c]o[l]e[c]ted [S]and[r]a [B]u[l]o[c]k [f]ilmog[r]a[ph]y? is just ab[s]o[l]ute[l]y [m]ind [b]ogg[li]ng to [m][e]! - it's [a]ctual[l]y [a]n [a]ffront to [g]ood taste [A][m][i]na, it's [a][c]tually the be[s]t [C]hri[s]tma[s] [g]ift [o]f [a]ll time to utter ab[s]urdity, it's [s]omething w[e] n[ee]d to em[p][l]oy teams of our finest [s][c]ho[l]ars [t]o [s]tu[d]y [t][o] [p][r]o[d][u]ce [r]igo[r]ous [c][a][s]e [s]tu[d]ies [d]e[t]ailing [e]x[t][e]n[d]ed [h]y[p]othe[s]es as to [h]ow this [s]t[a]te of [a]ffairs was [a]llowed to o[c]cur!

η/ω 671:885 .758