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DRAWING THE LINE

-Ngukivi Chishi, School Captain, ISC Batch of 2019

Episode 4

1st of December of 1963, the 16th state of the Indian Union is carved out of Assam and amongst the tribes of the Naga hills, Nagaland is born. On the 11th of November 1975, the Shillong Accord is signed and according to its terms; the Naga people accept the Constitution of India and the guerilla organisations lay down their arms. To cut a long story short, these two landmark events are the biggest factors that have long since divided the Naga people in thought and in spirit. While some welcomed the transition, some remain opposed to this day. The truth, unfortunately, is that most of us have more or less accepted the status quo. To cut the short story even shorter, the bottom-line is that the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) remains in effect to this day and there are multiple underground organisations still operational, themselves torn between whether to oppose the Government of India or their rival factions. The insurgency lives on. Whatever has been stated thus far are all hard facts, validated by historians and political scientists alike. What you will not find in any history book, newspaper or in the form of any definite proof, however, is a topic discussed over dinner tables and casual gatherings, but never on the podium or the conference table. It is a truth that is acknowledged, yet never proven and frankly, I am afraid it never will be. Most insurgent factions are currently in a state of ceasefire, but it was only a few decades back that they

were fighting for their cause in exile, only sporadically coming into the state when it was time to strike. While they found asylum in the wilderness of Burma, the supply of arms and their military-styled training is believed to have been overseen by none other than the Chinese Army. Regardless of the signed Memorandum of Understanding, the rebel groups continue to function as a parallel tax-collecting regime to the government, which is undoubtedly attributed to their steady supply of arms and ammunition till date. No brownie points for guessing where it comes from. Meanwhile, flash forward again to 2020 and from what meets the eye; the Modi Government seems to have made remarkable progress in tackling the situation without firing a single shot. National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, sometimes popularly known as the 'Indian James Bond', crediting his former days as a dynamic IPS officer, seems to have played the role of the much more tactful 'M' in this case. The mutual disengagement agreement closely follows on the heels of his conversation with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. While our northern neighbours have agreed to withdraw from the Galwan River Valley, they still seem adamant on staying in the Pangong Tso Lake area as of now.

It is, however, hoped good news will follow a good start and that the red dragon will vanish as surreptitiously as it appeared in the first place.

The Voice

-Chumki Biswas, X

I had been on the phone with my friend and he said something that made me realise that he really was an insensitive chauvinistic person who knew very little about me. I hung up my phone and got into my car. I drove to the park. The sun had set below the tree line but it wasn't dark yet, as I pulled my car into the parking lot. Two cars were pulled side by side and the drivers were talking to each other. When I got out, the person in the truck stared at me in a way, that made feel like I did not exist. I found it weird and unsettling but I really had problems of my own and could not be bothered.

I only took my keys with me as I headed towards a thicket of trees and on to the field beyond. I needed a walk to clear

my head and this was a quiet

part of the town. One

could expect solitude

in the company of

the stars. I had been

concentrating on

my steps through

the thicket when

suddenly I became

conscious of an

unnatural quiet

that seemed to have

settled around me.

I didn't hear the birds and the squirrels anymore but I heard whispers and footsteps on the dry leaves. I heard a man's voice softly say, "I saw her go this way. She couldn't have gone far." A second voice cautioned, "Shh! She'll hear you." I felt a chill run down my spine. I realised they were not looking for a lost dog. They were hunting me.

I stood there frozen unable to move while I heard them getting closer to where I stood. That is when I heard a voice, like someone speaking through a closed door or talking underwater. I could understand what the voice was telling me yet it did not feel natural. It wasn't a voice in my head I realised because it had a volume and a pitch that changed. I could feel it coming from behind me. I don't know if I was more scared of the

fact that there was some disembodied voice speaking to me or that there were two men searching for me in the woods.

I listened to the voice because I didn't really have any other options and took off towards the river. I heard the voice follow me warning me to be quiet with my movements. I got to the river and jumped onto the embankment and hid amongst the tall grass like weed. I bunched myself into the smallest, tightest ball I could. The voice told me to stay put where I was. Caught in the grip of fear and anxiety I watched a pair of construction boots step very close to where I lay. I heard the voice comfort me. It told me to stay put and hold still.

I felt fear driving the breath out of me as I lay there hidden among the grass. I watched the footsteps turn away from me and begin to walk away.

The voice warned me to lay still and I took its advice. Finally, I heard it breath softly into my ears and told me to roll down the embankment on the other side and run

across the field back to the parking lot. It was pitch dark by the time I began to run. I ran for my life even as I heard the voice grow louder and louder urging me to not stop and race as fast as my feet could carry me. I feared that I wouldn't be fast enough. The voice seemed to race with me as I reached my car, fumbled with the keys and managed to pry open the door and slip behind the wheels. It told me to keep my headlights switched off as I reversed in a crazy swing and hit the roads again. As the miles caught on and the rear view mirror showed no vehicle behind and the welcome lights of the familiar neighbourhood blinked, I realised had it not been for the voice, my name would have been registered in a missing person's case. While it had got me out, I wondered what kept it trapped still, in those woods.

SUPERSTITIONS

-Kaustav B. Arya, XI

On June 21, 2020, people witnessed annular Solar Eclipse from parts of Asia and Africa. However, partial eclipse was also seen from other regions. The annular Solar

Eclipse takes place when the moon, as observed from the earth, covers the sun from its centre (in case of partial solar eclipse, the moon partially covers the sun) creating



a 'ring of fire'; a ringlike display of sun's outer rim of its perceptible. The phenomenon is as normal as that. The sight of the ring catches our eyes. We feel the beauty and tend to capture the moment in photographs. Many of us become curious; we look for the reason. These however should've been our only activities.

Such an event of natural phenomenon is however corrupted by superstitions and those who transmit it around at an extraordinary pace.

The prime intention of this article is to discuss some of the wrong perceptions and beliefs circulated before and related to solar eclipse and the necessity of a scientific bent of mind.

Media Houses across the country seem to add to these unfortunate times by circulating and aiding superstition. They begin with astrology that has no scientific basis going on to claim that the eclipse would end the Covid-19 pandemic. Incorrect trajectories were drawn from the fabled Mayan Calendar and theories predicting from the end of the Earth to the poisoning of food was made. Such ideas corrupt event further the minds of a nation that has a substantial part of its population below the

poverty line.

The Third estate stands as a discerning pillar of democracy. Yet our Media Houses today are afflicted from polarised ideas to the need to churn out shows that will result in TRP and therefore bring in advertisement and money. Caught in this capitalistic web, they feel no qualm in circulating stories that hold no ground nor a shred of truth in them. Such Media Houses make victims of their audience. The impact of these vague incorrect feed superstitious practices adding to an already ailing society. We ignore the lack of scientific reasoning but most importantly we negate the ancient wisdom propounded in our Vedic texts and instead we give in to the simple practice of believing all that we hear.

No superstition is small or big, for each has the power to destroy. Rituals such as not eating during solar eclipse are born out of superstitious practices and have no scientific relevance. Such ideas permeate through the fabric of our society fuelling rites such as animal sacrifices to please the gods. These ideas pollute not merely our thoughts but also cause harm to our environment.

A Cosmic Canvas

-Tanisha Bhadra, XI

"Mustn't it be fulfilling, to count the gazillions of diamonds studded in the vast velvety garment of magic black? To unravel the secrets behind the patterns drawn on the shapeless canvas, that the universe unfolds in the form of the night sky? The smell of summer air and the soft grass waving beneath one's hair, adding up to the sense of calm. The moment must be one of those vanishingly rare ones, wherein one forgets time and merely lets go of thoughts he cannot control. For all I know, Jane Austen was right in saying, "If I loved this feeling less, I might be able to talk about it more". The starry summer sky will probably never cease to be a subject of curiosity. But did you know the twinkling stars have mysteries that one would find thought-provoking?

To start with, our companions in the Milky Way and

beyond, apparently play with time! For instance, the Orion constellation has at least seven stars. The Rigel in the upper body of Orion is almost nine hundred light years. This, in turn, means the light we see from the star today, left the star's surface 900 years ago!

When you think about it, at present, the Rigel is seeing the Earth from nine hundred years back in time-when the Roman Civilization dotted the landscape of the Tiber river, The Sun Temple was yet to be built and the Venice Arsenal was just founded. Fascinating how these stars' billions of light years away can be looking closely at our ancestors now, more closely than we ever could.

The working of the universe has never failed to astound humanity. Nothing can match the grandeur that comes from staring up at the misty river of Milky way, in the star filled canopy above, realizing

that you are but a tiny part of this vast and complex creation.

Illustration: Reela Takhe



The Last Time

-Moom Lego, XI

"Hey, it's time to leave."

"Could you give me a little bit more time? I just want to say goodbye."

Tim collected all his toys and put them in the carton just like his mother had asked him to. His mother praised him as she picked up the box and

walked away. He headed towards the room that had been abandoned by his parents months ago. He opened the door and peeked in and a smile formed on his face.

"Grandpa!" he said in glee and ran to his grandfather's arms. His grandfather laughed a little and patted his back. When they let go of each other, Tim asked, "Why aren't you coming along, Grandpa?"

Father said the new house is bigger and prettier. It'll be fun!" His grandfather smiled at the little boy. "I'm sorry, Timmy, I just-

he paused. "I think I am just very attached to this place."

"Will you be alright alone, Grandpa?"

Tim asked. His eyes expressed pure worry. They seemed to sparkle even though the sky was covered today. His grandfather understood that he was

trying not to cry and ruffled the boy's hair.

"I'll be okay Timmy. I'm sorry to be doing this." He held him by his shoulders. "Promise me you'll be strong

Tim. Be kind and understanding. Although some things in the world may make you want to cry, I assure you

that there are beautiful things in this world too. You will just need to be patient and have faith."

At this, Tim let go of his tears and let them flow. His grandfather hugged him and shushed him softly. Tim calmed down after a while and said farewell.

"Where were you, Timmy?"

Tim's mother asked waiting beside their car. "I was with grandfather."

He replied. His mother exchanged a glance with his father. She whispered to him, "Shouldn't we tell him?"

He shook his head and said, "Not yet".

"Are you done?"

He smiled at the Reaper and said, "Yes. Thank you so much."

"No more requests. He is expecting you soon."

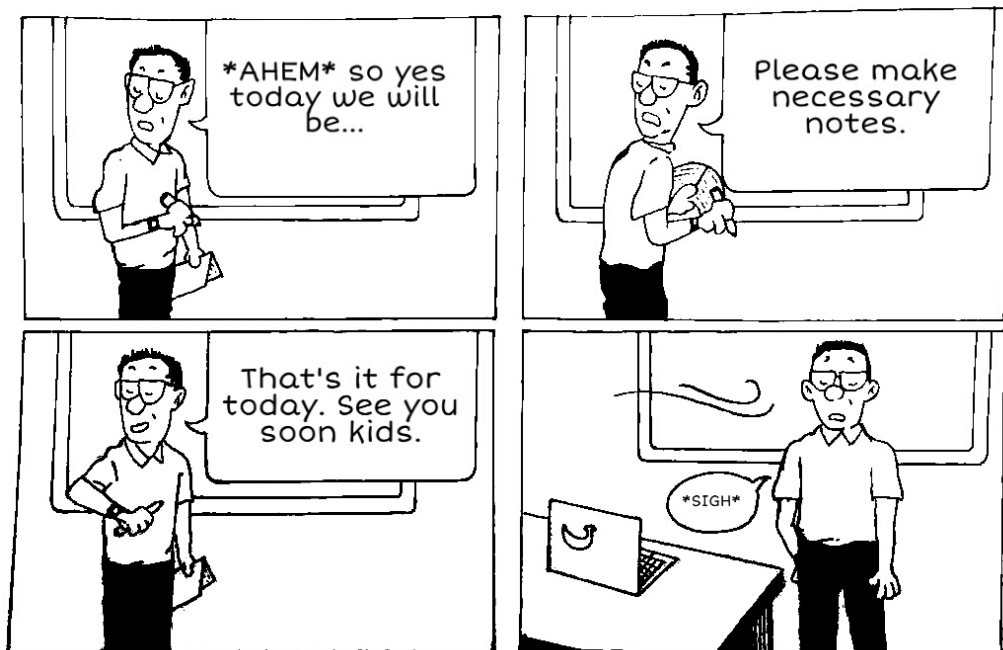
Grandfather replied, "Let's be on our way then."



Illustration: Eloziini Senachena

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Illustration and concept: Eloziini Senachena



The Season Within

- Akaangsha Dutta, Head Girl, ISC Batch of 2019

Will you find me a name to this season?

I know it's summer in mine, i know it's winter in yours.
I know somewhere it's a happy spring. Somewhere
someone's humming to light showers, next door it's a
heavy monsoon.

I know, I know, the sun can be playful, uncertain even

But tell me please, what's the name of this season. The
one where we have to dig deep to find our own sun. This
one, where our clouds are greyer than the ones in skies.

What's this season? The season where our grief is
hushed, for there are ones grieving for losses graver than
ours? This season, where touch is now smiles and tears
across screens. Where winter passed by as swiftly as the
flowers in April wilted, and now that summer is here we
still haven't danced under the sun.

What is this season, in which we think we're living, and
yet weeping?

Will you tell me the name of this season?



Illustration: Reela Takhe

THE OUTPOST

WHO shares emerging evidence that the Coronavirus could also be airborne. Brazil's President Bolsonaro tests Covid positive, his mockery over the virus over. While the U.S. contributes to half the covid cases around the world, cases in India continue to rise. Australia suspends the Hong-Kong Extradition Treaty while Beijing now transfers activists to jails in the mainland. The Indian and the Chinese army agree to deescalate tensions and while China moves back 2 kms within its own periphery, its intentions remain unreliable. Hip Hop star Kanye West declares his candidature for U.S. Presidential race promising to make the unfolding drama entertaining.



Illustration: Eloziini Semachena

The Quarantine Watchlist

Ripple #135

-Neelabh Kashyap, XI

He shut his eyelids,
And with his legs that
couldn't hold him up
anymore,
He traversed continents,
conquered mountains,
and ran across grasslands
Imagination was his
gateway to escape.

Feeling sick and tired of the same four walls at home? Well grab your popcorn and immerse yourself in the world of media, here is a list of some of our suggestions:

HELLO, MY TWENTIES!: Five female housemates slowly bond as they discover about each other's dark secrets and face them together. It's a perfect balance between romance, mystery and comedy.

DEAD POETS SOCIETY: A stirring coming-of-age film about John Keating, a new teacher at an elite school, who uses unorthodox methods to reach out to his students, that soon learn to break out of their shells, pursue their dreams and seize the day.

MIRACLE IN CELL NO.7: A tragic yet heartfelt comedy about the bond between a mentally ill father, falsely accused of a crime, and his six-year-old daughter. This movie is sure to grip at your heart and keep you smiling and crying at the same time.

THE GARDEN OF WORDS: A romantic movie delves into the lives of a 15-year old student aspiring to be a shoemaker, and a 27-year old woman struggling to keep up with her work and emotions as they meet in a garden one rainy day.

Keep It Reel!

Mistified

-Dristi Rathi, XI

Editor-in-Chief: Jeremy Jahau

Deputy Editor: Letminlun Haokip

Associate Editor: Anoushka S. Rabha

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E-mail: ave@assamvalleyschool.com

Telephone: 09678074320/08812009627 Website: www.assamvalleyschool.com

Patron: Dr. Vidhukesh Vimal, The Headmaster of The Assam Valley School