

# AFTER ✨ ✨

# FOURRS ✨ ✨



A NEWSLETTER BY JOURNALISM



# FOREWORD ✨ ✨ ✨

Perhaps you've gone to bed at 10pm (lucky you). But unlike the late-night owls who hit the sack at 2am, what you don't realise is that you've just missed out on another world ... one with *chilling stories, funny anecdotes, witty observations, creative poems, introspective interviews and thoughtful reviews.*

So join us as we delve *After Hours* with the Journalism Club...



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# SCHOOL LIFE ✨





(18:25) In the stillness of impending dusk, a forgotten pen awaits its owner patiently. For achieving academic greatness, a purpose many of the students here share, we never stop to think about how much pen ink we sacrifice to get those grades.

# PHOTO COLLAGE

*Elgin Rahardja*

When we pack our bags at the last bell and walk out of the school gates, we hardly think of what the school we leave behind transforms into. The dark corridors, halls and walkways, devoid of students, adopt a life of their own, an irresistible, unique, lifeless beauty.

At night, another side of our school comes alive.

Students rarely get to witness our school at dusk. However, staying in boarding has given me an opportunity to capture a portrait of school after hours.

This collection of photos was taken from 6 to 10pm over the course of one week.



(18:31 hrs) Once all the spirited bouncing of basketballs fades away, this goalpost faces the night alone. The humble court awaits its next potential NBA star.

(18:46 hrs) The beauty of the sunset, simple yet mesmerising, fascinating mankind for millennia. A brilliant golden glow, gentle yet stunning, illuminates the west-facing clusters of boarding school, as the sun slowly passes below the horizon, drawing daytime to a close.







(above, 18:50 hrs and below, 18:55 hrs) The world is changing, and the tiny island of Singapore faces the wrath of the increasingly volatile tropical weather. It only took five minutes for mother nature to transform a soft sunset into an angry downpour, completely transforming the school's atmosphere.

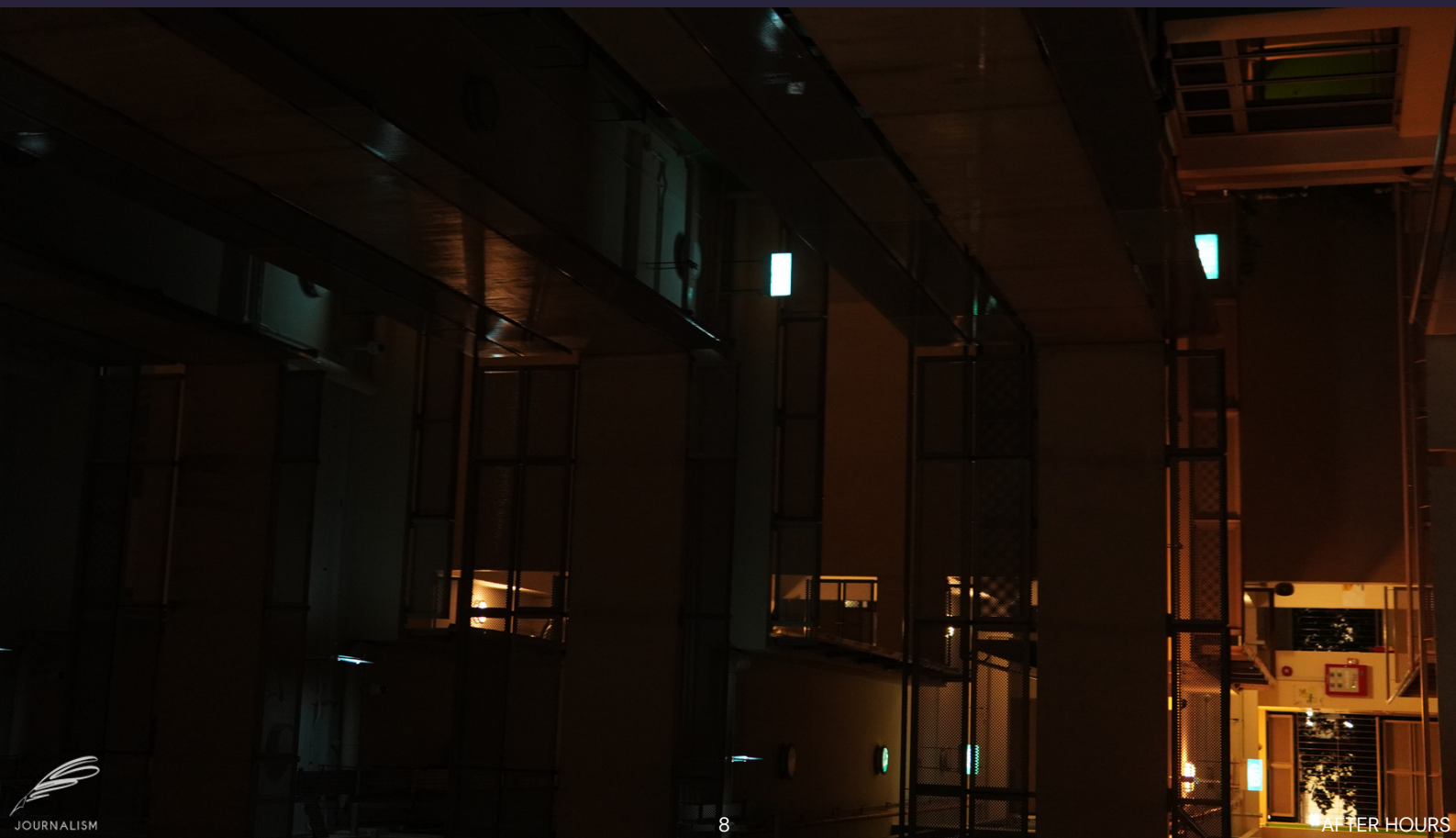






(19:49 hrs) A bathroom emits a soft, intimate glow against the hard concrete elements, visible from the staffroom area of level 2. Even as the surrounding classrooms are pitch-black, its lights are still on for the night, continuing to function as a rest stop for any wandering soul.

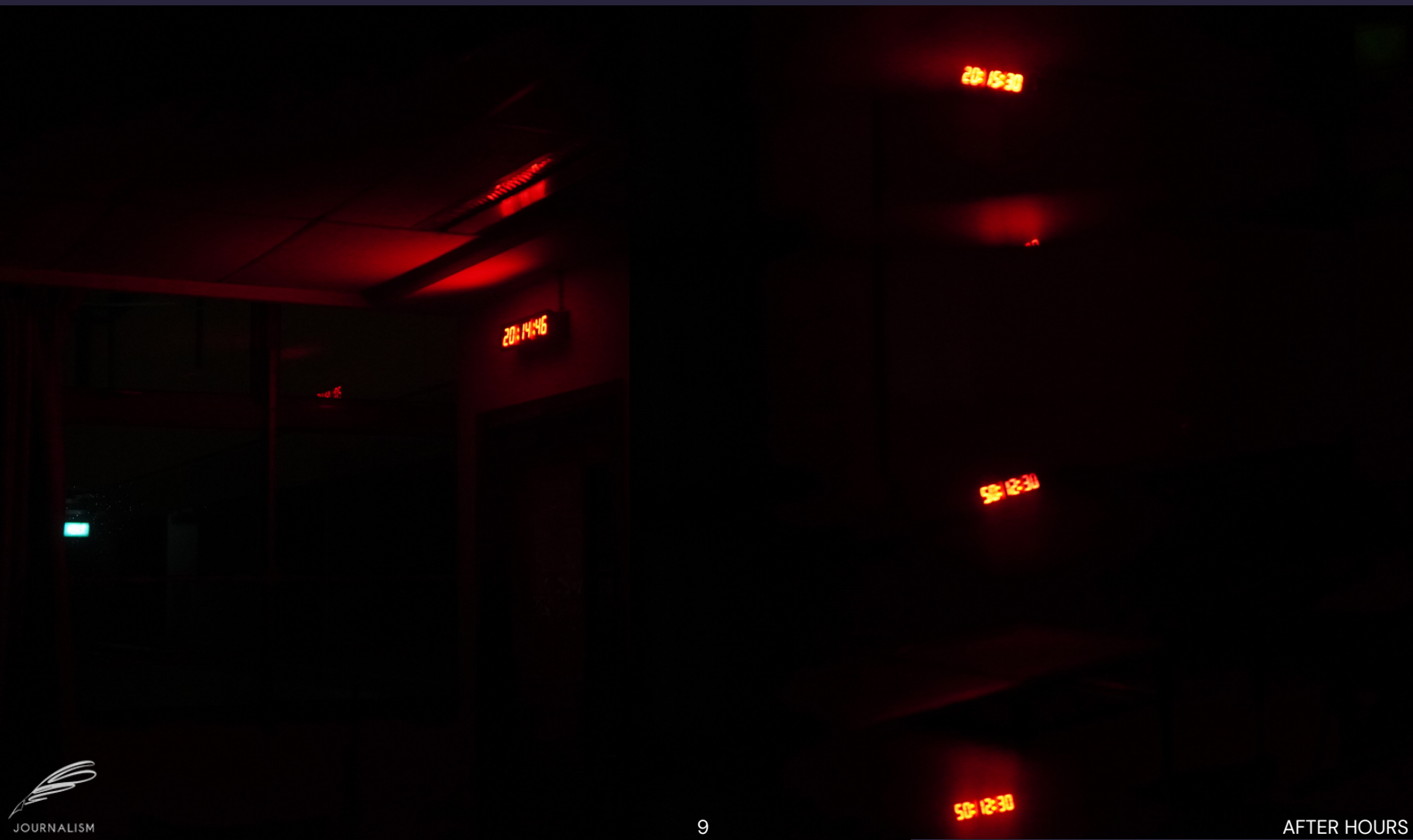
(20:08 hrs) I was struck by this beauty when I wandered into block D. All the pipes, exit signs, metal rails and concrete combine harmoniously to form this scene as they keep the school alive – just like an electronic circuit. There are no people, yet this place is very much alive.







(above, 20:12 hrs and below, 20:15 hrs) Digital clocks function as the humble timekeepers of society, always displaying precisely the hour, minute and second in bold even when no one is around. They keep running as the surroundings plunge into blackness, glowing like red beacons in the dark sea.







(20:12 hrs) A vibrant, dense neighbourhood, of high-rises of varying size, shape and colour, looks after this deserted netball court. The rain leaves its traces in the form of puddles on the hard, concrete surface, reflecting the apartments in the distance. In moments like this, the world temporarily comes to a stop, leaving time for us to reflect and for intimate conversations to blossom.

(20:36 hrs) Through the partial reflectiveness of the library glass, the images of the deserted canteen and library combine, creating a surreal, empty, eerie medium. The two places represent the most crucial resources for students and those thirsty for knowledge and fulfilment – books and food.

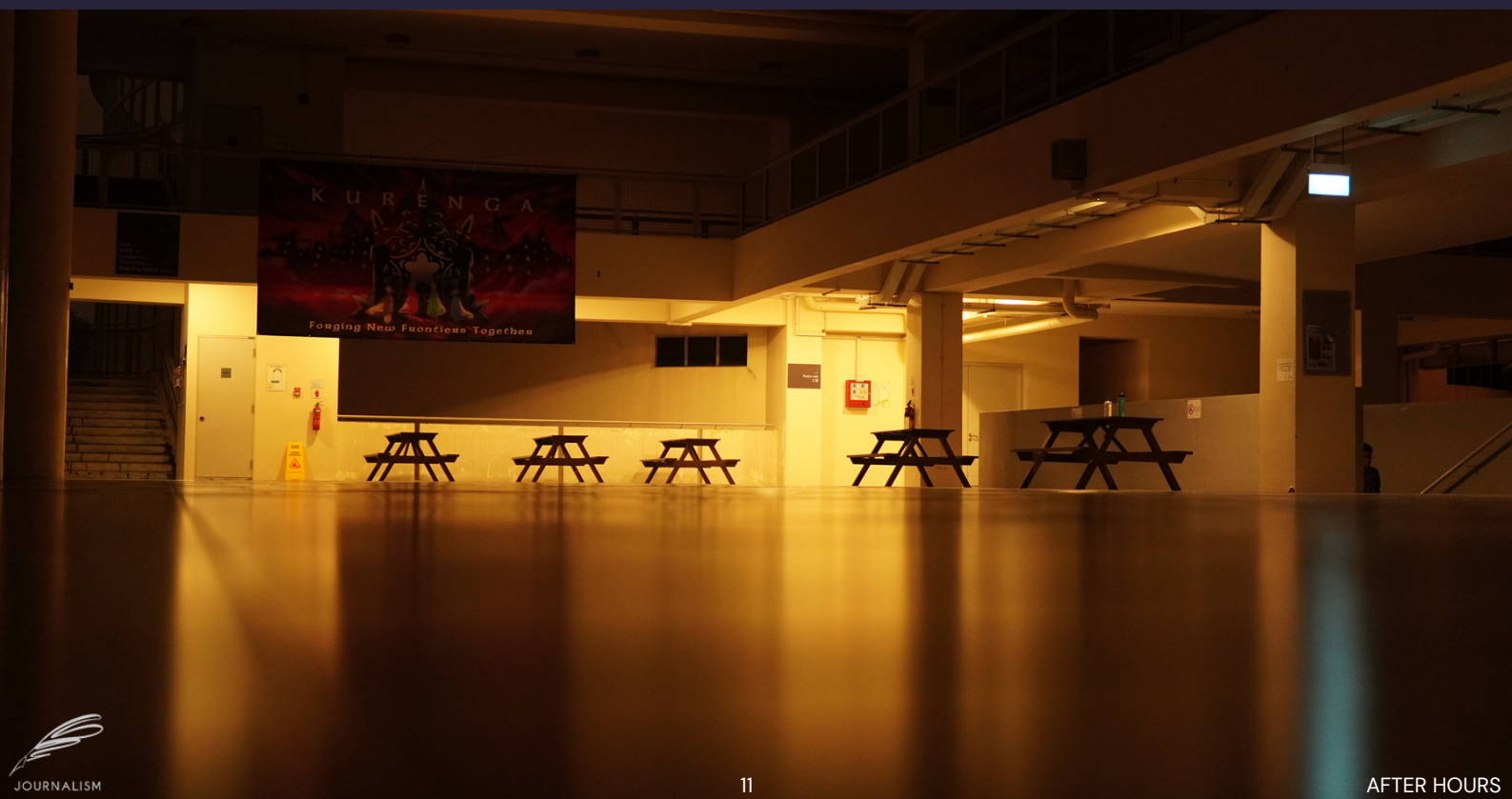






(21:15 hrs) In the darkness at level 4, the ghostly lift still functions normally, arriving to ferry its next batch of passengers to a different floor. Posters from the CCA fair serve as reminders of the vibrant school life here during the day, however dark and deserted and lifeless it may seem at night, after hours.

(21:19 hrs) In the middle of the concourse, the rough floor tiles pull the reflections of the study area downwards, creating a distorted image. Lights above the study tables, shining brightly against the night, illuminate their surroundings as far as the high ceiling displaying organic structures. There's not much "kurenga" here, but just enough to keep it alive and well.







(21:38 hrs) A stair landing at one far corner holds its ground as the night surrounds it, quiet yet stubborn as it casts a faint glow on the structure around it. I spot the light from the distance, and though this structure of bare concrete is devoid of familiarity, it feels like home.

(21:50 hrs) After some time, the lights of canteen eventually switch off, leaving the space as a collection of plastic tables in the dark, where many creatures and wandering souls make themselves home. A car drives by quickly, its headlights tearing through the dark, headed straight home as the world falls asleep.







(22:00 hrs)

We all have goals to pursue, trophies to win, accolades to collect, dreams to see come to fruition.

Late, late at night, when the echoes of aspiring street footballers have long since faded away, the lights of boarding school slowly dim as its student residents, full of ambition, rest for the night.

When the sun rises once again and the darkness fades away, the school's structure once again becomes dormant and opens as the lively cheers of the people take over, and the cycle repeats.

Life goes on, always changing, never constant, and that makes it so beautiful.

# THE END



# BOARDING, FOR NON-BOARDERS

*Ariel Joshua Lau, Teung Geng Heng Ryan*

*As the last rays of gold cast long shadows along the desolate concourse floor, a warm glow emanates from the canteen. An excited buzz. A flurry of footsteps. The clinking of cutlery. The day is over for most of us, but for those in boarding, it's far from over.*





*Western Thursdays in the canteen. Photo by Jun Yi (M24401).*

What does boarding mean to us, as non-boarders? A home for our scholar peers? A mark of our maturity? A sortie into lives of independence, self-organisation, and cooperation? To most of us, it's probably all the above.

But from another perspective, boarding in NUS High is just living your home life in the school campus, stripped away from the comforts of your own home; familiarity with your own environment, fluidity of your own schedule, and spending all the time with another person for a year. Seems jarring, scary even, to look at it from such a perspective — but there's so much more to boarding than that. How would we know this?

## **Boarding Dinner**

We pan over to where the last rays of sunlight kiss a corner of the school track. Dusk descends over the campus grounds, and the school canteen comes alive with chatter as boarders rush to fill their plates. Dinner marks the start of boarders' lives after hours, as well as a well-needed retreat from their hectic school lives.

Contrary to common belief, the catered dinners have been found to be palatable by most, in contrast to most external catered food. Look forward to a fresh array of dishes prepared in-house, and even Western food on Thursdays, so long as you don't arrive late to dinner. But of course, isn't the most important thing the presence of good company?

As dinner draws to a close, dishes get whisked away and lights flicker on in the windows of the towering boarding blocks. What's next? Feel free to indulge in your shopping desires at Casa Clementi, trade your 50-cent coins for 1 hour apiece on the laundry machines, utilise the common rooms –anything, really, so long you're back by 8:30. Why? Call it diabolical if you wish, but Compulsory Study Time (CST) begins not long after.

## **Compulsory Study Time**

It's too late to mourn the loss of freedom and flexibility. Study nights in boarding are designated periods of time for you to complete your assignments and get on the grind, whether under supervision or otherwise. Fortunately for us, they're only meant for weekdays, and boarders are spared on weekends and holidays. Whether they're enforced is a separate question entirely. Quick reminder – integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching.

The day ends swiftly after that. 11pm feels like a minute away. The traffic on AYE sparsens to a trickle as lights in boarding extinguish in succession. Five hours in boarding; what have we learned?



## Friendships in boarding



Have you ever felt that you don't spend enough time with your friends? Don't have any memories with anyone in this school despite the five (or three) years of being with them, suffering through the pains of massive group projects and the constant flurry of assignments? Boarding is a great chance to know more people from NUSH as well as to strengthen existing relationships.

There are also plenty of fun-filled activities hosted for those in boarding as well! You can choose to participate in sports and games with your cohort mates to further connect and forge once-in-a-lifetime memories that you may never ever have a chance to experience again. Or even organise one yourself, if you're up to the task.

### Why you should join boarding

For those who've yet to board: Come with no expectations, an empty heart, and a drive to make the most of the time, and you'll leave with what you want and more. Be it chasing lizards in the dead of night or eating cheese in the pantry in the darkness, there's always enough memories to go around.

Is boarding challenging? Definitely. Is boarding fun? Surely. In the end, is it worth it? We can't really tell you. But in the words of Jun Yi, someone who has lived in boarding ever since Year 3: "Join boarding."

(special thanks to Jun Yi, Skylar, Ming Hong and more for sharing their experiences)



*Dr Valles taking part in a reading at the Singapore Writers' Festival 2023*

# DR VALLES: WHAT DOES HE DO AFTER HOURS?

*Danyson Wong De Sheng, Lo Ian Ee Eleos, Seah Shang En Zachary*

Ever see all those emails about writing competitions? Dr Valles is the mastermind behind them. An experienced teacher in the English department, he has an established repertoire of creative works, and has participated in and organised many creative writing events. He has taught in NUS High since its second year, published several books, and edited 8 anthologies– oh, and did we mention he speaks 6 languages?



Ever since primary school in the Philippines, Dr Valles has written poetry as his way of “reaching out to the world” and “find[ing] meaning in life by choosing the right poem and moving people through language.” He moved to Taiwan for six years as a journalist, where he learnt Chinese from the locals. He then moved again to Singapore, where he now works as a teacher in NUS High, sharing his passion for poetry and the English language. Although teaching is a lot of work, he finds meaning in seeing students like us become the best versions of ourselves. But what does his life outside of school look like?



*Dr Valles with professor Edwin Thumboo*

Sanity, every teacher’s dream. For Dr Valles, he claims music is what “keeps [him] sane.” He listens to music of every genre in heavy rotation, especially whatever is on the charts. He says it “boosts [his] motor skills and spatial reasoning.” In other words, he can picture your essay more realistically. It also helps him in what he describes as “mechanical marking” when marking students’ English comprehension worksheets and acts as his cup of coffee (without the diuretic effects).

If Dr Valles could give his students one piece of advice, it would be this. “Don’t watch Netflix. It’s a bane for creativity. People get addicted to TV.” Prioritising his work and play over mindless drivel, he bucks the trend of this increasingly digitised generation. During rare bouts of free time, Dr Valles spends his time with friends and family. “Teachers have to mark scripts, even on Sunday,” he states, saying he needs to carefully choose who he spends time with. He focuses on his important relationships, delicately balancing his life in and out of school.

Besides socialising, Dr Valles directs the Poetry Festival Singapore, which features pioneers such as Edwin Thumboo. When he is not listening to music or marking your homework, these events keep Dr Valles occupied. However, managing work and a social life is sure to take a definite toll on one’s mental capacity (as many students will attest to). So, what is his suggestion to dealing with the stresses and tolls of daily life?



*Dr Valles at the Grampians national park in Castlemaine*





*Dr Valles at the Grampians national park in Castlemaine*

“Go on walks”, he says, emphasising that they are healthy and invigorating. He also shared with us his recent holiday in Castlemaine, Victoria, in Australia, a “quaint... quiet and peaceful town”, where the Australian Gold Rush started. He spoke of the warm days and the chilly nights, as well as the British mailboxes, art galleries, bookstores, and the botanic gardens. People from all over the world visit Castlemaine, with all sorts of different cultures and values. One morning, Dr Valles walked 15 kilometres. He feels that experiences such as these help to enrich his life by meeting people from all walks of life and from all corners of the world.

Just as how there are many diverse cultures in Castlemaine, Dr Valles has acquired a plethora of languages. Of course he speaks English, he teaches it. But what other languages has Dr Valles studied? For one, Tagalog. Learning it growing up, Dr Valles treats it as a way for him to hold onto his roots and heritage, something many struggle with in the modern world.



*Dr Valles at the Grampians national park in Castlemaine*

He mentioned that the first time he took lessons in Taiwan, he was with many Asians who already knew Korean and Japanese, making Chinese easier for them to pick up. However, having little exposure to Chinese, Dr Valles found it hard. The second time he took lessons, however, he was with many foreigners from Europe and America, helping him to learn better as everyone was moving at the same pace. But this had the side effect of him developing a Western accent when speaking Chinese. To learn the words and pronunciation, he watched many movies and tried to communicate in Chinese as much as he could, speaking to people at the park and talking to local children. Maybe there's something the Third Language students among us can learn from him after all.

Besides Tagalog, English, and Chinese, Dr Valles has also studied Spanish, French and Latin. Even though he did not study French in detail, he utilised his knowledge of Spanish to understand French. "I try to relate the French words to Spanish since they are somewhat similar," he tells us. While he is unable to speak French easily, he is still able to read and understand it. Likewise, Dr Valles can also read Latin but is unable to speak it.

Many of us would believe learning a language is hard, but he says otherwise. When faced with any challenge life throws at him, he believes "it's important to have a set of values and stick to them," His values, forged by his Catholic religion, his globetrotting history, and his identity as a poet and a writer, have shaped his life outside of the English teacher we see in school, after hours.



A photograph of a modern school lavatory. The room features a long white countertop with three rectangular sinks and chrome faucets. Above the counter is a large mirror. On the wall, there is a white wall-mounted fan and a fluorescent light fixture. To the right, there is a white urinal and a black trash bin. The walls are covered in light-colored tiles, and the floor is also tiled.

# OUR LYCEUM'S LATEST LUXURY LAVATORIES

*Aditi Athreya, Lokesh Vairakannu*

*New year, new toilets. Never thought we'd ever say (or write) this like, ever. But when does life ever give you what you expect?*

New year, new toilets. Never thought we'd ever say (or write) this like, ever. But when does life ever give you what you expect? This time, it's a good kind of unexpected. There they are, standing their ground at the very end of the canteen, sandwiched between the library and the bookshop. As we returned from our not-so-restful holidays, we were greeted by these luxurious lavatories. The gleam of the granite walls strikes your eyes as you step into the brightly lit room. But what do our peers think? Let's hear from some of them!



Honestly, I'd go there even if I didn't need to go, if you get my drift. The new toilets look like they're straight out of a five-star hotel.

*Student who wishes to remain anonymous*

One could never have put it better. While the beautiful black granite of the Gents' makes you feel like you're lost in a magical portal, the green granite in the Ladies' reminds one of quaint ancient castles (we're saying this in the best way possible) – it gives one the feeling of staring into the soul of their reflection in a pond of emeralds (Wizard of Oz reference? Maybe?).



In both bathrooms, a mysterious scent lingers in the air – fruity? soapy? Specifically, strawberries? No one can tell. All we can say is that it smells good – the best compliment a toilet can get. Whatever it is, one thing's for sure – it's definitely a step up from the usual bathroom smell, and we're here for it!

Another thing that contributed to these toilets' royal elegance was the switch from faded-plastic wall-mounted soap dispensers to those metal straw-like pump ones, ones which one would normally find in the restrooms of an acclaimed theatre (or a 5-star hotel as many students have astutely pointed out).

Now is a better time than any other for a (cue trumpet fanfare) Tall Person Perspective™.

I absolutely adore the new toilets! Finally, my head does not peek out over the top of the cubicle. They've remembered that tall people exist! They made the doors higher! I don't have to bend down at awkward angles when changing frantically into my PE uniform anymore. Oh joy!

*Student of  
height >180 cm*

That leads us to our next topic of debate. You would remember that the staff toilets on the concourse were refurbished back in June(ish)? Those were the talk of last year, but what do you think? Could these new toilets take them in a fight? Comment down below with what you think!





If this is just the start of Reimagining Campus 2026, imagine what's coming next! I kinda don't want to graduate anymore

*Group of Year 6 students*

Perfectly understandable Year 6s, we certainly cannot wait to see what's in store for us when we come back to the brand-new NUS High campus in a couple of years.

On that note, here's a friendly (not cringe) reminder to keep the toilets clean! Watch out, as we have become acclimatised to having such clean toilets, so you will definitely have hoards of people clutching rakes and

brooms (and knives?) hunting you down if it is known that you are the culprit for dirtying or damaging these prized potties. Let's remind ourselves about the unspoken (though we do think it's been mentioned) code of conduct when it comes to using these toilets. It's like a sacred pact among students and staff – you do what you have to do, you flush, you wash your hands, and you leave the place better than you found it. It's not rocket science, but you'd be surprised how many folks neglect the basics. So, consider this a gentle nudge to be a responsible restroom user and keep the toilets in tip-top shape for the next person in line.

And let's not forget the real MVPs (Most Valuable Players) in this whole toilet saga – the janitorial staff. I mean, think about it – they're the ones who keep these toilets sparkling clean day in and day out, no questions asked. They deserve a round of applause for their hard work and dedication, don't you think? So, here's to the unsung heroes behind the scenes – you rock! Now there, this will be a lot more wholesome if you go greet them and thank them face to face next time. We know STAR (Staff-Teacher-Appreciation) day is yet due but everyday can be STAR Day too!



In the end, who would've thought we'd be sitting here, chatting about toilets? It's not exactly the most glamorous topic, but hey, when something (as terrific as these toilets) comes along, you just got to give credit where it's due. Home to all things amazing from the magical vibes to the fruity scents and the tall-friendly cubicles, these toilets have managed to turn a mundane necessity into something worth talking about. So, again, here's to the unexpected, pleasant surprises and the little joys in life – even if they happen to be found in the most unexpected places, like the school restroom!

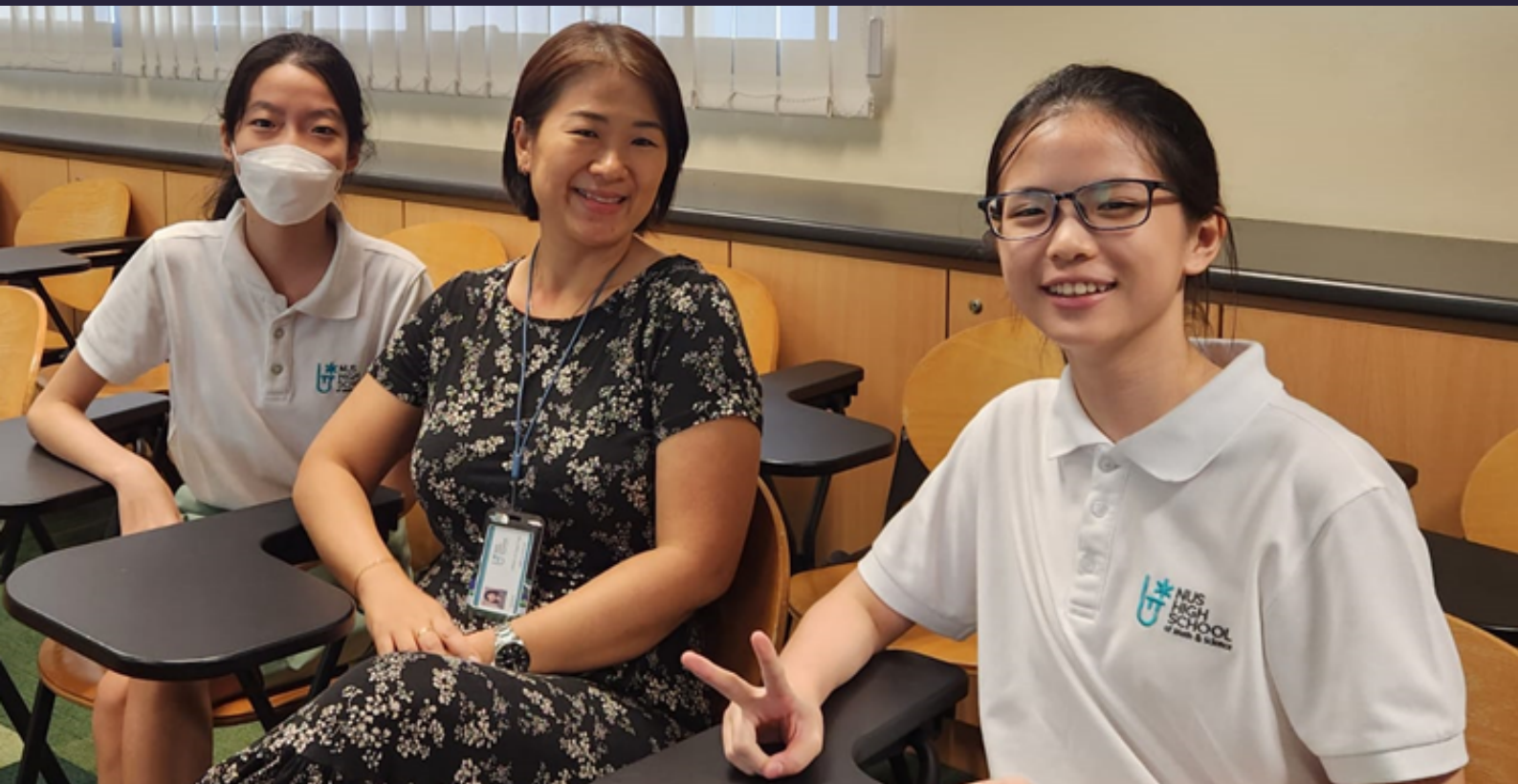
One final note: do look out for more of such magnificent restrooms coming soon to theatres near you, near the hall and at the other end of the canteen! We can't wait and maybe we'll write about it someday. For now, enjoy and remember to do your part in keeping them clean!



# AFTERHOURS INTERVIEW WITH MS LIM AND MS CHUA

*Li Diany (Eva), Tan Le En*

She's approachable, she's kind...A stoic yet familiar figure appears onstage...have you seen her at assembly, with the Year Ones under her watchful gaze? Or seen her allow students to take a break, stand up and have a nice, well-deserved stretch during lessons? A firm, guiding mentoring figure with a heart of gold which Junior High, or rather, the "koolkids" are surely familiar with and grateful for... it's... Ms Lim, our one and only kooliest and BELOVED Assistant Dean!!!



Sometimes, we can find her standing at the back of the class, arms-folded, witnessing the chaos unfold during our CCE lessons with a gentle smile, walking around during her breaks, or in class, ever-ready to impart to us knowledge. Yet, apart from the fun interactions we have with her during lesson time and in school, she is still a mysterious teacher whose life after work is little known to students. Piqued by curiosity, we decided to interview Ms Lim about her after hours!



For starters, we asked Ms Lim about her most memorable experience with her students outside of regular school hours. She shared that she had once gone for an overseas community involvement project (OCIP) about ten years ago. It is their first school trip to Cambodia, where she saw her students in action, to provide a better school environment for the students in that Cambodian school. The students had to try build a fence around the school so as to prevent cattle from trespassing and disturbing the students during lessons. They also organised a fund-raising to support better education for the students and conducted English lessons for the Cambodian students to widen their scope of studies.

“Working with the students, I learnt a lot from them as I was a participant and not a teacher chaperone, so it was a very unique experience for me.” The students inspired her with their perseverance and diligence. “It has been a really memorable time for me,” Mrs Lim said.



*A common kingfisher in the track. Can you spot it?*

We also asked Ms Lim about how she spends her free time after work hours. Ms Lim explained that she really appreciates her me-time, so she likes to go running after work. A cliché hobby? Well, it actually requires a lot of energy and willpower to keep up with our exercise regime every day. Taking in the fresh air at the park has always helped to refresh her mind and body. During those times when she exercises, she takes the time to think through some of her problems and brainstorm solutions. Meanwhile, she also appreciates the beautiful nature around her. While it may not be apparent at first, the school has a wide plethora of wildlife thriving especially the bird diversity.

During Ms Lim’s jog around the school, sometimes, she can find civet cat droppings and some birds — raptors, common kingfisher, koel, oriole, pair of hornbills and once, she even spotted a barn owl at the school track!

Sadly, due to time constraints, Ms Lim explains that she can mostly only engage with these simple things. “There’s hardly a defined line between home life and school life,” she said, “If [we] can’t really finish work, [we’ll] have to eat into our own free time. Of course, we need balance to keep ourselves safe. I know when not to really look at the messages by students so that I can have time for my family. I am glad I have passion in my work to keep everything going even though there’s a lot of challenges and hard work.”

Ms Lim thinks the most important thing is that any hobby we pursue must be meaningful and we’re learning something new.



“Even if new challenges are daunting, I think the most important thing is to take up the challenge and simply go for it. It is important to ask whether the hobby you pursue can be incorporated into everyday life. Of course, the most important thing is to ensure you have a lot of passion in that hobby, just like professionals playing the piano — they’re so involved in it that they are happy doing all that.”

Whenever Ms Lim feels stressed, she will take a break and clean up, for example, she likes organising her workplace, recycling things, and tidying up her work environments. “It’s definitely very satisfying to see my work environment clean every time I start work, so I make a point to clean my area up even if I’m tired.” Working in a clean and neat environment helps us to increase efficiency and boosts our work performance as a neat workplace gives us a fresh mind!





*A heron at the Eco-pond (Block E, Level 1)*

While she is not inclined to play musical instruments, if Ms Lim has enough time, she will read a good book — a hobby she loves doing.

“Do the best you can until you know you can do better. Once you know you can do better, do better. It's the same for pursuing a hobby. You do your best then when you get better you try to excel at it.”

“You never try, you'll never know. If you never try, you keep having that thought in your head and maybe years down the road, you may regret “aiya- never try”. Don't try to live with regret, if you never try, you will never know if you like it or not. It takes courage and effort to try things and it may be a failure, but still at the end of the day you'll not live with the regret that you never tried it.”

These are some wise words from Ms Lim when asked for some words of wisdom to share with all students. In summary, dare to try and explore, go for new opportunities whenever we can, and always strive to become a better version of ourselves.

Ms Lim, being the assistant dean of Junior High, has a lot of work up her sleeves every day. However, despite the amount of work and stress she has, her inspiring tenacious attitude served as her roots that kept her grounded and going.

Thank you to Ms Lim for being a great teacher and assistant dean of Junior High! :D

A humanities and history teacher,

# MS CHUA BANN

is well-known as a passionate, cheerful and caring teacher who is well-loved by her students! Many students have found her EXTREMELY energetic and optimistic both during lessons and out of the classroom. If you are not familiar with her, ask around about the teacher who draws beautiful large mindmaps on the whiteboard every class and gives out “colourful PLDs”, and you’ll surely hear lots of funny anecdotes of her from her students.



Ms Chua is one of my favourite teachers in NUSH, always super-duper optimistic with a big smile on her face, and a kind of energy that can keep me awake in her class even on a Monday morning. Her lessons are really engaging, and she explains things in an easily comprehensible way, ensuring that I come out of every lesson understanding everything taught in class!

-A year 2 from 205

Ms Chua is an amazing teacher who has left a deep impression on students of all levels. And this brings about the burning question — we know what she’s like in school, but what does she do after work hours? Let’s find out!

When Ms Chua first started out as a young teacher in training, a memorable incident occurred. At the school Ms Chua was assigned to, there was a young girl of average build. Yet, every day without fail, she would piggyback her handicapped brother up and down the stairs to go to his classroom which was on the upper floors. Ms Chua was really concerned about how the little girl was able to carry her brother up and down the stairs all the time. However, she had not expected the astounding answer she received when she asked the girl about it.

“My brother isn’t heavy, it’s not difficult for me. Because he’s my brother.”





Her response surprised and touched me. Every time I think of what she said, I feel a tug in my heart. She would carry her brother up and down the stairs every day out of care, and the strong sibling love between the two of them made the weight of her brother nothing to her.

There are quite a lot of stories on sibling love popping out now, especially on social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. These stories are touching and motivational, and it truly is impressive how kind humans can be. When we meet obstacles, we think of the natural goodness in humanity and gain the motivation to push on.

Ever since Ms Chua became a teacher in NUSH, she had always shown passion for her work. Preparing for upcoming lessons? Reading up and marking assignments? Well... Ms Chua doesn't see this as work, as it is something she loves and is passionate about. They are things that she looks forward to and enjoys doing whole-heartedly, and she feels really lucky and grateful to have an opportunity to continue learning and reading, and to be paid for something she loves doing.

I can not only learn more information from my research in the topics I'm teaching, but also from my fun and engaging students. Sometimes, reading their assignments also constantly refreshes my own views and opinions on topics. It's refreshing to see different aspects of the same topic from many different student's points of view.

Of course, Ms Chua loves to take breaks from her "work" too. One thing that Ms Chua never fails to do every single day after work when she reaches home is to spend time with my family members. No matter how busy she is, even if it compromises her own break time, she will make sure to set aside some time every day for them.



Every day at 6.20pm sharp, I will sit down with my father to watch the Chinese news at 6.30. As teachers, sometimes, we don't really have a lot of free time to spend with our families, especially the elderly, so they might feel a little lonely. I don't want my family members to feel that way, so even if I have to sacrifice the time to do other work or activities, I will join my father and family to have dinner and watch the news together. Watching news together also gives us a common topic to talk about for quality family time and it's a nice way to catch up and bond. We can talk about the latest news, discuss our opinions and this is a meaningful way to spend time.

Besides that, Ms Chua also cherished spending time with her nephew and niece, and her four-legged nieces and nephews (dogs and cats)! "Dogs are quite adorable; they love you without asking for anything in return," She explained, laughing.



Ms Chua shared that as a teacher, there isn't actually a definite number of non-working hours as it depends on the module she's teaching – some modules require more preparation or marking work, and for core modules the number of hours she has to put in depends on which year she is teaching, but overall, she wholeheartedly enjoys doing her daily work as a teacher. "When I teach my students, I also get to learn, upscale and improve my knowledge so I can continue to teach my students to the best of my ability."

When asked to give some words of wisdom for all the students in this school, Ms Chua emphasised on the importance of having a good work-life balance and having enough sleep.

*Looking solemn just like how the oldest should.*





In my opinion, I feel that it is important to have a balance between study and life. We can't simply just work non-stop, no matter how busy I am I will always make time for family, make time for hobbies and more! Some of my hobbies are reading and colouring. I find colouring satisfying; watching the white parts filled up with colour really helps to reduce stress.

She added, "Also, we should make time for sleep. Sometimes, students are so busy that they compromise on their minimal rest and sleep. Having enough sleep is important, when we do so, our brain reflects on information taken in during the day and our body is detoxed. If we don't get enough sleep, we won't be able to do work and focus well. Every student should try and achieve 7 hours of sleep."



*A mixed breed chihuahua. Loves his "cat sisters".*

One suggestion that Ms Chua has for all students, be it in upper years or lower years, is that we can make a visual pie chart and draw the proportion of time allocated to certain activities daily. She feels that it is a very helpful tool that can remind us how much time we are supposed to spend on doing our things. The best thing about drawing a simple pie chart is that we can be very flexible. The time given to each portion can be adjusted based on which time of the year it is. For example, when it's close to exams, perhaps we can spend less time playing and more time studying, and during holidays, we can play more.

Finally, to wrap up our interview with Ms Chua, we asked her for a quote she wants to share with all the students:

# DO WHAT YOU LOVE, AND LOVE WHAT YOU DO!

An ex-student once told Ms Chua this, and till this day, she still remembers it word for word. "If we do something we love, it won't feel stressful even if it is a lot to accomplish." For example, if we love Mathematics and Science, doing homework and studying for tests won't feel that painful or feel like work. We do something we enjoy, and when we take it on, we give the best we can. In a nutshell, we all have something to learn from Ms Chua, from her passion for her work, enthusiasm in anything she does, to her optimism when faced with all kinds of challenges life throws at her.

A BIG thank you to Ms Chua Bann for taking the time to share all these insightful tips and stories about her life! :D



*A ragdoll cat breed. So cute !!*





# CREATIVE WRITING



# STREETLIGHTS

Leong Ye Lan Kyan

*The endless row of streetlights  
fades into the distant horizon  
light pours out of my window  
standing out amidst the rest*

*I thought counting minutes  
instead of sheep gave me  
the comfort of knowing  
if I was keeping up*

*But I feel the pulse of seconds  
striding down a one-way road  
to the signal of a sharp turn  
where it all disappears*

*Aren't you tempted to conform  
when the lampposts serve  
as the sole illuminators of  
the usually busy roads?*

*Don't you feel the strain of being  
just like a human stopwatch  
without the basic feature  
of a button for pausing?*



*The tranquility of night is only  
interrupted by those anxious  
about what happens after  
the hours you're given*

*Your presence makes me wonder  
why life is like a highway where  
we're rushing and the night is  
the only time for us to pause*

*Yet I wonder how much time I've spent  
pointlessly pondering this quantity  
occupying my mental storage  
with the length of the road*

*But I feel the pulse of seconds  
striding down a one-way road  
to the signal of a sharp turn  
where it all disappears*

*Your descriptions surprise me –  
no one perceives it as shifts  
your insomnia stems from  
inflating time's scarcity*

*Shift your gaze away from the lights  
embrace the darkness I embody  
perhaps you'll see the light in  
road bumps along the way*

# THE NIGHT'S QUESTIONS

*Bindu Balamurugan*

*There I am after hours*

*The night somehow both sweet and sour*

*The streetlights flicker as the light of the waning moon guides me through*

*The path*

*I gaze up, up at the stars*

*Not a cloud in the sky, not a star in sight*

*A rollercoaster of emotions amidst the calm night breeze*

*Just an occasional rustle in the bushes and a stray cat dashing by*

*It's just very, very dark*

*And I'm a tiny, tiny being*

*The world is too big and people are so different*

*All our lives are like rollercoasters, each with a different structure*

*Operated by the hands of fate*

*And if fate had decided to pull on a different lever that day*

*Would the essence of the person still be the same?*

*The world*

*Would it be the same?*

*How did I even get here?*

*It doesn't matter*

*Nothing does*

*And nothing in the world stops for anyone*

*Despite how I feel*

*The seasons still change*

*But It's ridiculous I have to adapt and move on*

*But it's unfair I have to make something of my life*

*But It's a miracle I exist amidst the scenery*

*So even if it's all meaningless*

*A passing storm no one would remember for too long*

*Insignificant hours like these are peaceful*

*And so I smile*

*As I watch the world fall asleep*



# DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DAY AND NIGHT

Wang Zizhuo

“Mama, hurry up! We’re going to be late! The teacher will get angry at me, hurry!” A little girl, barely five, called into the house, while she stood on the doorstep. A frazzled looking woman, with premature grey-shot hair and a kind, of somewhat timid face rushed out of her house, hurriedly shoving her handbag closed. She grabbed the little girl’s hand, leading her across the road while the girl chattered merrily along, following her mother, on the way to school.

“Be a good girl today at school okay, Emily?” The woman said gently, stroking her daughter’s hair. Her daughter was clearly itching to start playing with her friends and was busy hopping from one foot to another.

“Okay mama, bye!” Emily scampered off without looking back. The woman shook her head fondly and stood there watching until her little girl could no longer be seen, only then did she leave.

In the evening, the woman was the first to be there, standing in front of the window, waving toward Emily, motioning for her to come out. Emily skipped out, yelling good bye to her teachers before plunging into an in-depth description of her day to her mother. “...so John was yelling at Tim for trying to steal his stuff. I think John was very wrong.” The little girl finished importantly.

“You did, did you?” Her mother chuckled. “And why was that so?”

“Because John should not have taken other people’s things without asking for permission. That’s what you told me, mama. And you’re always right.” The little girl said confidently.



That night, after Emily had gone to bed, the woman started washing the dishes and ironing the little girl's uniform for the next day. When she was done, she rubbed her sore hands and straightened. A sudden change came over her face. Her eyes hardened. Her back, slightly stooped before, became ramrod straight. She placed the iron back onto the board in one smooth motion. A deadly calmness had settled over her features. A wave of coldness suddenly seemed to emanate from her. Gone was the kindly mother. Here was someone else entirely, someone new.

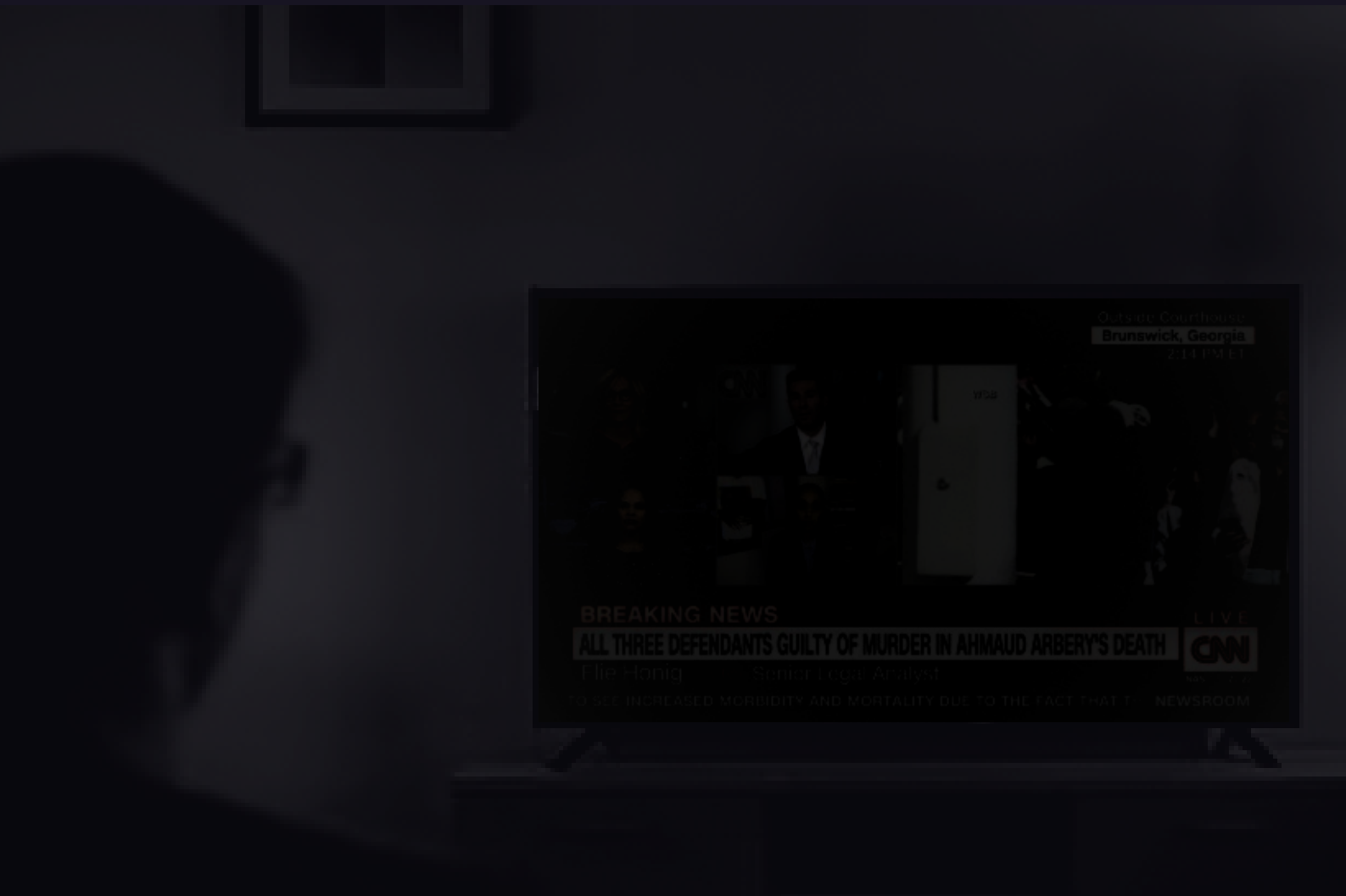
She walked into the kitchen with a lithe grace and opened a cupboard that contained the old newspapers that she had forbade Emily to ever open and lifted one of the bottom sheets. Laid out neatly in a row was gleaming knives with edges too sharp for the eye to focus on. Each one was unique. Some had serrated edges while some had a wicked curve. The woman picked a knife with a long and thin blade and held it before her in a practiced stance. Nodding her satisfaction, she slid the blade into her jacket and slipped out of the house noiselessly.

She walked into a dark and dim alleyway. A few drunken men still loitered around jeering and laughing at passers-by. She shuddered, remembering her father doing the same so many years ago. She could still hear the uneven footsteps down the hallway, remember lying in bed shivering, terrified of her father's demented screams, the terrible words said. She could hear her mother's body hitting the floor, her father slamming the door. She could remember the what happened to her mother afterwards, slowly wasting away from the grief, her face a motley of bruises, fingers and ribs skeletal thin. She clenched her fists, blocking from her mind the onslaught of memories. She strode forward toward the men purposefully.



When all was done, when the alley was empty, and the bodies deposited, she dusted herself off and went home. Her shoulders were hunched again, with her head bowed. Her eyes were kindly.

The next morning, the news was broadcasting, "Three men was reported missing this morning. We have yet to determine the reason. Next, we will be covering the weather. We are expected to have some thunderstorms this week..." The woman stopped listening. After all, the news did not know what had happened after hours.



# MOONLIT MUSEUM

*Ng Penn Lun*

The fading sun cast an imposing shadow of the museum onto the steep road as I made my way up to its entrance. The building was eerily silent, save the movements of the flip board promoting an exhibition – the museum was undergoing renovations after all, and most of the exhibits were currently not on display. It was not every day that I would be the only visitor within such a large museum. Yet, even with the uncanny absence of screams from children too full of beans, there was a serene beauty in the silence.

Even the ticket seller seemed to be aligned with my thinking, only bestirring herself from the clacks of my shoes against the ground.

“Sorry, but we are closing soon, so we are no longer selling tickets today. Please come back another day,” she grumbled, clearly repeating a rehearsed line. While she said that, her hands pointed to a giant clock on a wall, with its hands near seven.

“I understand that this is already closing time, but I have gotten clearance from the staff to be here tonight for my research on the history and culture items inside the storage room. If you need my personal information, I can provide them.”

“I see, you’re the one the director was talking about. Here’s your access card, once you’re done just unlock the main door with it then tap it again to lock it. After that it will disable itself, so don’t leave your things behind,” She drawled, handing me an access card. “You already know what not to do so I won’t bother you with that. Just don’t open anything you don’t need to or else you might trigger the alarms. Other than that, the lights between here and the room have been switched off due to the renovations, so you’ll have to use your phone’s flashlight. The director said that you can call him anytime so don’t bother me with your questions, I’m leaving here anyways.” She continued.



I looked down towards my phone's screen. The battery was only at a mere thirty-one percent, but it should suffice. Even though I had to take a longer, roundabout route to get there due to the renovations, it still would only take a few more minutes of walking. "Okay, thank you, ma'am," I said. The ticket seller nodded and started moving some of her items into her bag, no doubt wanting to quickly get home. With that, I turned on my flashlight, and proceeded forward, through the only passage that was not blocked off.

As I walked forth towards the storage room, a smell comparable to that of old books saturated the air. The absence of lights here had much more of a marked influence than I accounted for. My phone's flashlight was meagre at best, only extending a few metres in a narrow cone in front of me, before tapering off entirely. The only other source of light was from the large windows on one side of the wall, and even then, it wasn't helpful at all. Most likely, there were no lampposts near it due to being the side facing away from the street outside, which meant the small rays of light that were streaming through the windows were probably just moonlight. In other words, not helpful at all.

It didn't help that there was an incessant, high-pitched noise that was slowly but steadily getting more prominent as I walked towards the storage room, only ever stopping at arbitrary moments before swiftly starting again. It was deafening without actually being loud, or at least not yet. The sound could have simply been the renovations, and yet I still had a premonition of something worse. Perhaps it was the echoes of a cunning thief's footsteps, or the claws of whirring of metal blades. Or maybe it could have even been the whine of someone's superpowers. The fear those thoughts carried lingered in and befogged my mind. The Stygian embrace of darkness enveloping the museum could have concealed someone or something waiting to ambush me, and reaching out to verify with my phone's flashlight only would have left me wide open. Even though the many stories of bestial monsters and laser-wielding humans were obviously purely fictitious, the aftertaste of my familiarity with such tales left me unable to stop thinking about these impossible possibilities. If anything, I much preferred the melancholy I felt earlier.

Still, I had to press on. I strode onward, past mannequins of uniforms and armour I wouldn't have dared to avert my gaze from, my heart pounding with the fear that they very well may come to life at any second, and my legs ready to move the instant they did. As I made step after step, my shoe suddenly collided with something I had not noticed.

Instantly, I screamed in terror, launching myself back and away from it. What followed was a sharp clack across the hall, coming from the front. Instinctively, I raised my arms to shield my head. Yet, everything was still, with no sound other than from my heavy breaths. Slowly, I lowered the hand with my phone, and shone a light onto the ground in front of me. What I saw was a singular small step, all the way across the breadth of the hallway. It was even marked with yellow paint. I relaxed my hands and took in a deep breath as I looked around. Judging by the windows on the side, I wasn't even halfway to the storage room. I groaned as I felt all the determination leaving my body. If only there was some other way to get there, or even just some better way to light up the room...

I felt realisation hit me like a freight truck. Immediately, I searched on my phone for the reply email the museum sent me in order to find the director's contact number. As soon as I read those very numbers, I burned them into my memory as I punched them into my phone with the speed of a rocket, followed closely after by the call button. The phone rang a single time before he picked up. I blurted, "Hi director sir, I'm Padraig, the person who's visiting the museum at night, are there any other ways to get to the storeroom or some more flashlights somewhere or something else?"

He took a second to respond. "Hello, you can just call me Saul. You sound panicked, is something the matter?"

"No no, I'm uhm, totally just scared I might accidentally damage or trip over something in the dark, and that would be bad for the museum since it's the stuff here is rare."



"Hmm? Oh, is it because the lights there are off due to the renovations?"

"Yeah, and my phone's flashlight isn't strong enough to light up the way."

"Ah, actually, my request would be about that as well. I want you to stop using that flashlight."

I paused in confusion. "What? How does that help anything? Wouldn't that just make me able to see less?"

"You see, that section of the museum was designed such that light from outside could enter in a way where there isn't any need for internal lights at all. In fact, that was the purpose of putting some reflective surfaces inside as well as the windows facing away from the street outside. Not only is it aesthetically pleasing, it also has a viable purpose as well." He laughed.

I looked out of the window closest to me while turning off my phone's flashlight. Indeed, the moon was hanging bright in the sky, and the starlight was shining the path right in front of the window. As my eyes gradually accommodated to the darkness, I realised I could see clearly. "Wow, it really does work!"

"Hahaha! That's also the reason why it's not getting renovated either! It's already fancy enough as is, so it gets to stay that way." Even without being able to see his face, I knew how wide his smile must have been.

"Still though, wouldn't it not work if there's something like rain, or clouds covering it?"

His tone changed in an instant. "Yes, that is why there are still lights there. Still though, you shouldn't worry about that now, there are clearly no clouds in the sky. In fact, if you are near it, you might even be able to see the skeletons of the dinosaurs like this, if you are close to where they are displayed!"

I looked around. A few displays ahead of me, a large skeleton of a Tyrannosaurus Rex was displayed, and by itself, it was as ordinary as the one in all the museums I visited in the past. Yet here, a larger window was in front of it, and moonlight illuminated its entire body. I quickly rushed forward to get a closer view.



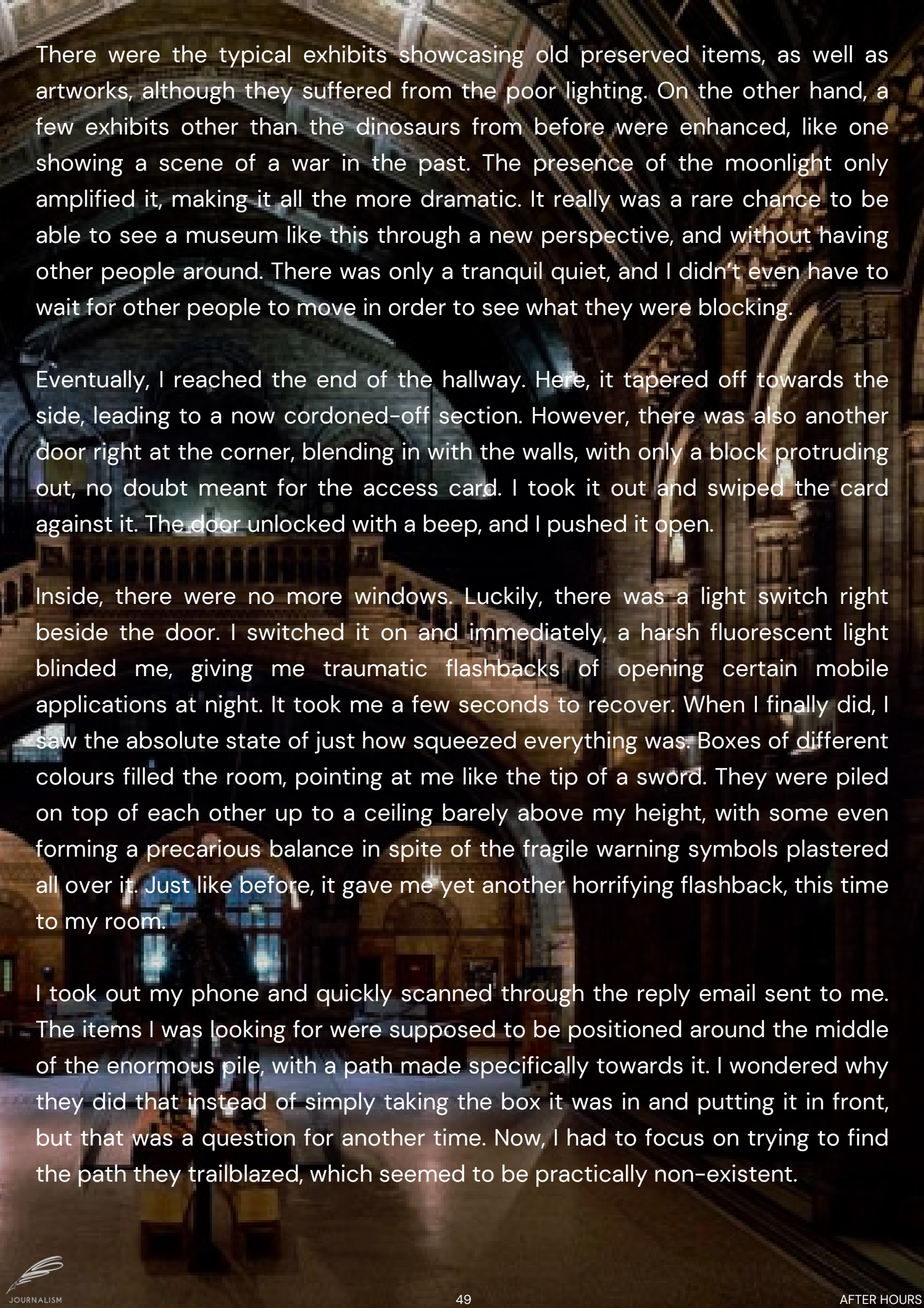
Its alabaster white bones were bathed in the silvery glow of the moonlight, its shadows dancing within the darkness itself. All around it, smaller dinosaurs of different varieties were gathered together, some fighting, some eating or sleeping. A slightly reflective “river” was right in front of them, no doubt the source of all life. It was a truly awesome sight.

I glanced back down, to the stretching path ahead. Even with the moonlight guiding me, I still felt a sense of trepidation. I raised up my phone, and began, “I see it, but what if...”

“Relax, you’re completely alone in this part of the museum. The people closest to you spatially should be the workers doing renovation, and even then, you’ll be starting to walk away from them once you’ve passed the dinosaurs. Also, the alarms will ring if there are any intruders. So, don’t worry, you are absolutely by yourself here!” He spoke. He must have sensed the fear in my voice. Although, I was now unsure if I was more scared of being completely alone or the opposite. Regardless, I uttered a quick, “Thanks,” and continued forward.

With myself being able to see better now, as well as my attention not completely focused on running away from every blotch of darkness, I started looking at the exhibits while walking. It seemed to be comprised of a mishmash of the most popular or educational, and thus the most mundane items.





There were the typical exhibits showcasing old preserved items, as well as artworks, although they suffered from the poor lighting. On the other hand, a few exhibits other than the dinosaurs from before were enhanced, like one showing a scene of a war in the past. The presence of the moonlight only amplified it, making it all the more dramatic. It really was a rare chance to be able to see a museum like this through a new perspective, and without having other people around. There was only a tranquil quiet, and I didn't even have to wait for other people to move in order to see what they were blocking.

Eventually, I reached the end of the hallway. Here, it tapered off towards the side, leading to a now cordoned-off section. However, there was also another door right at the corner, blending in with the walls, with only a block protruding out, no doubt meant for the access card. I took it out and swiped the card against it. The door unlocked with a beep, and I pushed it open.

Inside, there were no more windows. Luckily, there was a light switch right beside the door. I switched it on and immediately, a harsh fluorescent light blinded me, giving me traumatic flashbacks of opening certain mobile applications at night. It took me a few seconds to recover. When I finally did, I saw the absolute state of just how squeezed everything was. Boxes of different colours filled the room, pointing at me like the tip of a sword. They were piled on top of each other up to a ceiling barely above my height, with some even forming a precarious balance in spite of the fragile warning symbols plastered all over it. Just like before, it gave me yet another horrifying flashback, this time to my room.

I took out my phone and quickly scanned through the reply email sent to me. The items I was looking for were supposed to be positioned around the middle of the enormous pile, with a path made specifically towards it. I wondered why they did that instead of simply taking the box it was in and putting it in front, but that was a question for another time. Now, I had to focus on trying to find the path they trailblazed, which seemed to be practically non-existent.



There was so little space between the boxes that the very idea of squeezing between even the largest of them probably would have given a claustrophobic a heart attack. Eventually, I decided that it simply was better to call Saul instead of trying to force myself through. I spoke into my phone, "Hey, sorry to bother you again, but I'm in the storeroom now, but I can't see the path you mentioned in your email."

"Oh, it should be to the very left, against the wall, where it goes forwards before turning towards the middle. The box should already be open."

I looked towards my left. True to his words, I started to make out a semblance of the path he was mentioning, albeit it seemed to have been catered more for people of a shorter stature. Nevertheless, I could probably still squeeze in if I tried hard enough. I said, "Thanks, you're a lifesaver," and then focused on the task in front of me. If I walked sideways while bending my head forward, I probably would have fit through, but it also would've extended my hitbox, causing me to collide with the boxes. On the other hand, if I crawled through the gap, I also would have been able to fit into the gap, but I definitely was not fit or flexible enough to be able to rotate at the turn. Surprising as it was, this had already become the most insurmountable problem I faced so far, and there was no good solution at all. I couldn't even hope for a *deus ex machina*, since there was nothing that could happen to help me at all, no way for a chariot to be able to bring me over boxes that were already stacked to the ceiling, all the more since those boxes were museum items, and them breaking would be bad. Was I doomed to be stuck here for all of eternity, just out of reach, the doll in sight of the throne? If only the box had just been moved...

I felt realisation tear through me again, like a hot knife through butter. I simply could have moved the boxes that were blocking my head, and then I would have been able to get to the box. It wouldn't have even gone against the directive of having to open other boxes! Truly, this was the pinnacle of thinking outside the box.



With the newfound solution to my dilemma, I started making my way to the box. Yet, even with this phenomenal strategy, it still wasn't a cakewalk – many boxes below my head seemed to be immovable, though I supposed it made sense given how Saul probably already tried moving them. They pressed up tightly against my body, and with the stuffy atmosphere of the storeroom combined with any form of physical activity that I do already being far above my median amount, I felt a small sense of claustrophobia developing within me due to how uncomfortable it was. Luckily, the space right before the box was larger, allowing me to simply stand there, saving me the hassle of having to bring it out and then back again. In retrospect, it also explained the protuberances of the boxes in the middle at the front.

I stepped forth and peered into the box. Different miniature items filled it, from figurines of limbed trashcans to ancient deities. I put on my gloves and started digging through the box to find the item I was searching for. Quickly, I found the objects I was looking for at the bottom of the box – many different urban development planning maps, from the original Raffles Town Plan, up to photocopied versions of more recent plans for new estates, as well as everything in between. All of them were put in between clear plastic folders, which rustled beneath my fingers as I took them out of the box. After laying them on the ground on top of each other, I started to take photos of each of them. The shadows from the boxes surrounding me blocked the light from the light from lighting up the photos, but at least that was one aspect my phone's flashlight would actually be useful for now.

With all the photos taken, I started placing them back into the box. With the amount of time I spent in the room, it was much stuffier now. I slid between the boxes again, turned off the light, and walked out the door. The darkness crept back around me, yet I was unfazed. If anything, I much preferred this over the bright lights of the storeroom. After making sure the door was closed, I started the walk back to the entrance. This time, clouds obscured the moon outside the window, but I'd already embraced the darkness and tranquillity. Once more, I admired the exhibits I passed by, taking in the full atmosphere with every glimpse.



Even though it wasn't even a consideration for coming here in the first place, being able to see the museum after-hours like this had more than made itself the focal point of this journey. This entire other mystical side to the museum was hiding in plain sight, and yet close to nobody else had even known it existed. I savoured every moment of this delicate desolation.

Before long, I reached the very passage I entered from. Like the rest of the museum, it was also completely empty. I walked forward, using my access card to unlock the main door. The moon hung high in the sky now, and a quick check on my phone revealed that it was already 9:16 p.m. I took one last look back at the empty museum, and closed the door. The card I held in my hand was as good as useless now, but just as I walked to a trash bin to throw it away, I paused, reconsidered, and had a change of heart. If nothing else, it would serve as a testament and a memento to the journey I had today.

The glimmering moon cast a glistening light onto the steep road as I made my way down from the entrance. The building was peacefully silent, save the light footsteps of my shoes against the ground. It was not every day that I would enter a museum after-hours and take a route through an exhibition designed all around such an idea in order to get to a storeroom. Yet, even against all my previous preconceptions, the experience was truly phenomenal, for there was a serene beauty in the silence.







**LIFESTYLE** ✨

# AFTERLIFE PODCAST

Kim Yoon Hyun Skylar

When the endless darkness of death finally kisses the frail morning of one's mortality, one might think it's over. But after the twilight, the night remains.

Join Skylar as he navigates the *after-hours* of life itself, exploring the diverse interpretations from various cultures, as well as the lingering spirits that always keep the past alive...

(tap the QR code or scan it!)



<https://nushpress.com/2024/03/11/afterlife-a-journsplit-take/>



★★★★

"ONCE IT TAKES HOLD, IT REFUSES TO LET GO."

-DREAD CENTRAL

NC16



# TALK TO ME (2022)

## REVIEW

Timothy Kew Cheng Feng

NOTE: Talk To Me is rated NC16. Review may contain spoilers.



## "... FILMS AT THEIR CORE ARE MEANT TO EVOKE EMOTION, AND TALK TO ME (2022) UNSETTLES THOROUGHLY..."

*Talk to Me* (2022) is a supernatural horror film directed by Australian brothers Danny and Michael Philippou, shot in Australia with a local crew, debuting first at the Adelaide Film Festival on 30 October 2022, followed by screenings both at Cannes in 2022 and Sundance in 2023. Though I have an awful lot of praise to shower on this movie, the main points I wanted to talk about are in terms of sound design, direction (pacing), the budget, and of course, the plot.

As Jeannette Catsoulis of *The New York Times* writes in her 2023 review, "[d]istinguished by ... deeply distressing ... jolts (especially when young Riley falls under the hand's malignant influence), *Talk to Me* has a hurtling energy that's often violent but never purposefully cruel." The sound design aspects of the film that I want to highlight are the distinct uses of sound in the way the characters interact with the world. It's widely assumed that the feeling of anxiety and eeriness within horror films are generated by scary visuals and dark settings, but surprisingly it's the sound design that establishes these feelings.



## TALK TO ME REVIEW

This film uses the sound of characters interacting with inanimate objects to achieve this effect; for example, when you don't hear the screaming of the individual when they're being possessed but rather only the shaking of the chair and jolting of the table. Even in the opening scene, the viewer is greeted with a wall of sound and loud hip-hop that establishes the setting of a house party and the overwhelming of the viewer's senses. Only when the camera follows the character past the kitchen island is the sound of the knife amplified, and the viewer realises what's been foreshadowed when the knife on the kitchen island is used in a freak stabbing and suicide at the end of the scene.

Moviegoers are trained to suspect and listen to each noise in the background, especially in the overwhelming situations that the camera follows the main character Mia through. The use of auditory callbacks are also featured in the movie, as many a time sound in the background of a certain scene was very guttural and unnatural, but this sound slowly morphs into what's heard in a scene at the very start, where Mia accidentally runs over a kangaroo. This emphasis on sound design in the movie is likely tied in to its budget, where this aspect traditional horror movies focus less on is utilised.

*Talk To Me (2022)*



## TALK TO ME REVIEW

Again referencing Catsoulis's review in the above paragraph, the direction and pacing of the film made it a lot more uncomfortable to watch. The Philippou brothers are originally YouTube filmmakers with an emphasis on horror comedy, which makes their debut film all the more impressive with their decisions on the pacing of the film. Actors like Sophia Wilde (Mia) and Joe Bird (Riley), are praised for their performance by other film critics, owe their

silence between characters or just showing the characters' emotions. This provided much needed contrast to scenes where the viewer experiences the characters' POV firsthand (the first scene of Mia at her mother's funeral when the viewer is shown her depressive point of view, with fast and sudden cuts of her throughout the day as though chunks of time just disappear), or scenes like the first time Riley is possessed which the

*Talk To Me (2022)*



brilliance in part to the amount of breathing space the directors gave their performances in the movie. Whether in the kangaroo roadkill scene, or in moments between high-energy blood curdling scenes, Wilde was given the space to breathe, with some scenes having pure

viewer sits through in horror and discomfort. I am a firm believer that films at their core are meant to evoke emotion, and *Talk to Me* (2022) unsettles thoroughly, a big part of which came from this superb pacing.



## TALK TO ME REVIEW

Lastly, on the budget of the film: this film was made with a tiny budget of \$4.5 million, while grossing \$91.9 million worldwide with A24's distribution, making it A24's highest grossing horror movie after *Hereditary* (2018). Though it's not uncommon for independent low-budget horror films to achieve success; *Talk to Me* (2022) blows contemporaries like *The Witch* (2015) out of the water, grossing double the box office. I think that the small budget really benefitted this movie, and in producing this movie, A24 proves yet again that a movie about possession can be created with such a small budget, and that visual effects don't necessarily need to be used to create fear and an authentic horror movie experience. Direction, sound design,

framing of shots and location setting are the main things that this movie is great at and isn't afraid to show.

With that, this comes to the end of this After-Hours review of this chilling horror story. Let's catch up in the next newsletter, shall we?



*Talk To Me (2022)*

# BONUS SECTION: CROSSWORDS!

Kai and Kyan

Try your hand at these crosswords, provided by the Journalism Club :)

Scan/click the QR codes for the playable versions and answers!



<https://linktr.ee/journ2.0>

**NUSH After Hours Mini - Beginner**

	1	2	3	4
--	---	---	---	---

**ACROSS**

- 1 Put an end to
- 5 Not much light
- 6 These make up days
- 8 Body of water
- 9 General Motors division car in casual talk

**DOWN**

- 1 On the fly
- 2 Description, life
- 3 Entertain funnily enough
- 4 Argumentative piece
- 7 To drive up an engine

**NUSH After Hours Mini - Intermediate**

	1	2	3	4
--	---	---	---	---

**ACROSS**

- 1 Democrat who declared war on Japan and ushered the New Deal (abbr.)
- 4 Where the body's coolant is secreted
- 6 Cristofori's masterpiece
- 7 Fake name
- 8 Comedy featuring Colin Jost and Michael Che on NBC

**DOWN**

- 1 Thin metal sheets
- 2 Deprive, use up
- 3 Relating to the kidneys
- 4 Electricity power agreement, pickleball top circuit (abbr.)
- 5 Deserted island help signal



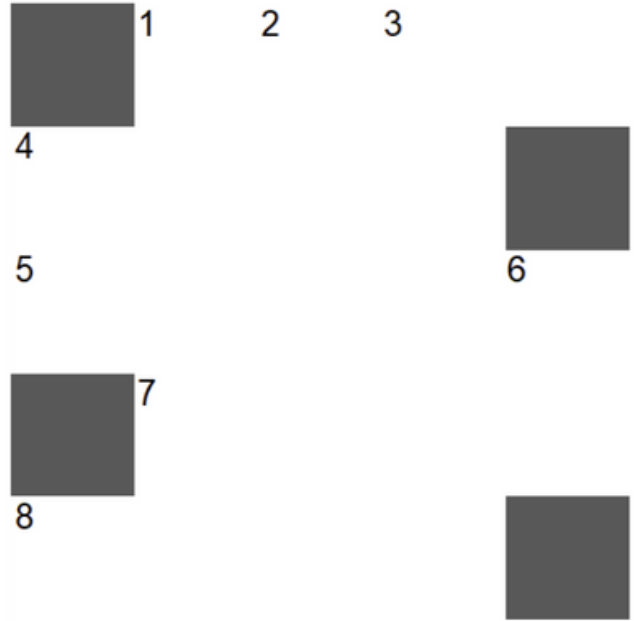
# NUSH After Hours Mini - Challenge

## ACROSS

- 1 With no modifications
- 4 22-minute ballet for 12 dancers, Greek contest
- 5 Enclosed boundaries
- 7 Decayed firewood alternative
- 8 Directions clockwise

## DOWN

- 1 Highest form of love, wide open
- 2 Bottoms, only
- 3 Legal, non-blood relative
- 4 Said as an expression of endearment or disappointment
- 6 Title for a holy and virtuous person (abbr.), public road (abbr.)



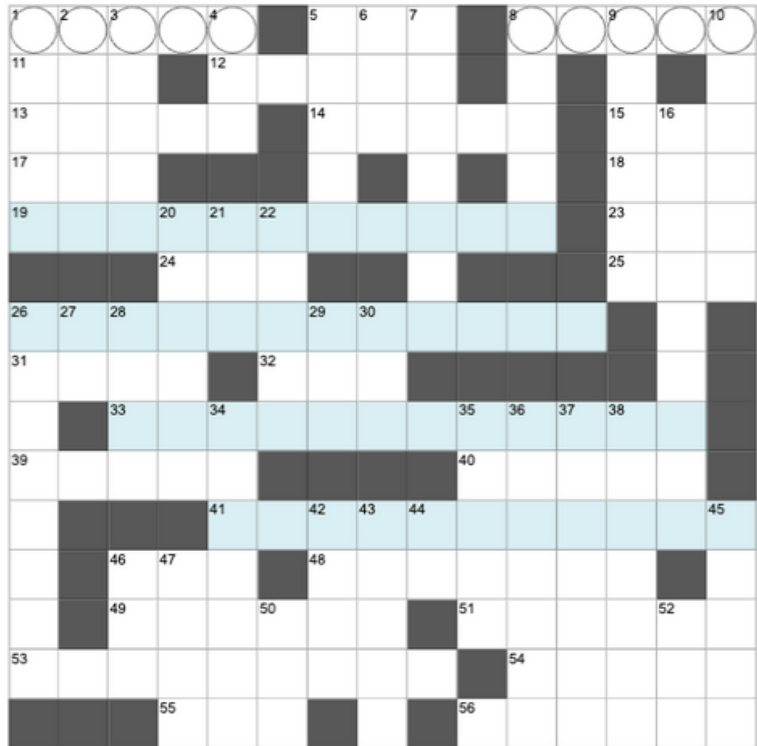
# Crossword

## ACROSS

- 1 In the future; in pursuit of
- 5 Muscles exercised by crunches
- 8 Largest subdivisions of a day
- 11 \_\_\_-la-la
- 12 Pond surface organisms
- 13 Four lines with strikethrough?
- 14 Contributed to Orientation, for example
- 15 \_\_\_ es Salaam, largest city and former capital of Tanzania
- 17 Personally (in text); prestigious mathematical competition
- 18 Prefix preceding "center" and "tome"
- 19 Preserved Chinese delicacy
- 23 Computer program
- 24 Last name of Japanese singer who married John Lennon
- 25 Not wet
- 26 Florida city that holds a 500-mile race
- 31 Stimulate, as one's appetite
- 32 What Singapore's Helix Bridge is modeled after
- 33 Deeply ingrained habit
- 39 Attempt once more
- 40 Photography brand
- 41 What 8-Across, as well as the beginnings of 19-, 26- and 33-Across are
- 46 Singapore housing scheme
- 48 Subside, as effects
- 49 Play a major role alongside someone else
- 51 Picture matching card game
- 53 Tiny container of computer memory
- 54 Contrast between what is expected and what is actually the case
- 55 Deciduous tree
- 56 Something done to strengthen glass; disposition

## DOWN

- 1 Common storage area in large homes
- 2 Animation subdivision?
- 3 Sharp claw
- 4 Light line
- 5 Pain, suffering
- 6 What you might have to pay a small fee for at supermarkets?
- 7 Old road formerly home to a 10-storey primary school
- 8 Greek god of the underworld
- 9 Opposite of those under 8-Down's control?



- 10 Like a tiger or bumblebee
- 16 Capture or seize
- 20 Move unsteadily
- 21 Card game with "cuatro" colours?
- 22 Musical work with a recurring motif
- 26 Condition commonly caused by growth hormone deficiency
- 27 Exclamation expressing delight or relief
- 28 Preceding day (abbr.)
- 29 \_\_\_ Arbor, Michigan city
- 30 Under par
- 34 Liquid in the cytoplasm
- 35 Top scorers
- 36 Asian-exclusive McDonald's product with purple filling
- 37 Even; NATO phonetic alphabet codeword
- 38 Where one can find stunning views in a city
- 42 Sound of a kiss
- 43 Creepy and mysterious
- 44 Statutory board in charge of CCs
- 45 Class of nature spirit in Greek mythology
- 46 Secret email attachment (abbr.)
- 47 Split in half
- 50 Type of alternative healing practice, for short
- 52 Halogen suffix



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