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Editorial

by Levi Patterson

The end of our school year is drawing near. In fact, it's nearly here. (Rhymes partially intended.) I specifically have been thinking a lot about next year. Knowing I won't be on the Chronicle staff next semester, I want to give a word of wisdom (or at least sound advice) to those I'm leaving behind.

Write what you know. I know you have likely heard these words many times. You know why? Because they are imperative to a writer! If you attempt to write about what you don't know, you will almost certainly come across as a novice and an amateur. Honesty is the key to effective writing. Don't try to be what you are not. It's that simple. Gain people's trust and respect by being honest with your experience and talents, as your experience and talents grow. Here's to a year of writing!

The Legend of the Moon Queen

By Natalie Dryden

Darkness filled the forest with its wrathful shadows and breathed through the souls of the innocent. Night surrounded the four silent animals that crept through the grass towards their enemies. The leader of the arctic wolves was a regal and elegant white-furred animal with dove grey blocky swirls twisting through her fur. Her name was Queen Crystal. She ruled Jamma with power and kindness for her subjects. For as long as she had been Queen, the phantoms had been banned from the land of Jamma... until lately. The phantoms were getting stronger and were starting to take over Jamma. Crystal had been doing everything she could to stop them and was winning the war.

The patrol of five arctic wolves reached the edge of a clearing. Their enemies were sitting around a rustic tree stump table laughing with loud hissing voices.

Phantoms. Queen Crystal breathed her whisper. Phantoms never looked as terrible as they were. They normally looked like spiders. They had round oily bodies, usually dark blue or purple and sometimes jet black. They had two tentacles on each side of their body and one fierce eye in the center of their faces. Though they did not look very intimidating, they did look very hideous.

Queen Crystal flicked her long white tail and her well-trained soldiers fanned out around the edge clearing, still hidden behind the pale, green grass. They were ready to attack the intruders.

With a loud battle cry that rang through the air, Queen Crystal and her small army leaped out into the clearing and attacked their enemies. Queen Crystal pounced on a fat dark blue phantom with a scar on one of its oily legs. She ran her sharp claws past its face, attempting to slash it to bits but it moved back just in time. Anger rising in her throat, the Queen slashed out with her back legs and twisted to the side facing the phantom again. The heavy phantom jumped into the air, swivelled around, and landed on her back. They fought in the dust and grass; light dirt flew into the air all around them, causing them to be hidden behind the cloudy mask of dirt. Crystal sliced through the phantom's tentacle, and it burst open with oily purple liquid. The horrible sludge sprayed out of the gash and splattered across Queen Crystal's chest and legs. The dark beast hollered in agony, clutching his wound. The phantom stumbled away into the clearing and away from the powerful Queen.

Crystal scanned the clearing for another phantom to destroy when she found herself being mauled by several phantoms that had come fresh from the phantom fortress.

Crystal slashed out at the beasts around her as fast and hard as she could as the pile of black blue and purple phantoms build upon her back. She pounced onto a clump of grass and rolled around vigorously causing several of the phantoms on her back to get trampled in the dust.

Once the Queen's back was free of the mass, she charged forwards at a phantom coming from the phantom fortress. There were so many! Fresh warriors came streaming out of the huge metal fortress in perfect battle lines.

"No!" Queen Crystal cried out. She ran over the phantoms and began clawing and biting them. She scratched uselessly on metal armor and bit down on sharp spikes that lined their helmets. Pain exploded in her mouth, and she took a step back.

The next few moments were a blur. Everything seemed to slow down and her vision became hazy and red.

Her soldiers fighting as well as they could for their Queen, even though they knew this could be their last battle. More and more fresh phantoms charged from their home into the middle of the battle. Scanning the battle scene for any hope, Queen Crystal decided to do what was best for her kingdom. She took a deep breath filled with dry dust and hollered as loud as she could.

"RETREAT!" Her voice cracked, and she was instantly mauled by a bunch of wild-eyed phantoms with sharp wicked spears and horrid grins. Queen Crystal's soldiers dashed away into the grass in obedience, expecting their Queen to be right at their tails. Crystal knew they could have stayed and fought to the death, but too much blood had been shed already. With a heave, Crystal attempted to get up but more and more of the squirming beasts clutched onto her back. Each staggering step Crystal attempted, the more wobbly her legs got. She began to fight for breath as the heavy black creatures crushed her. Crystal's insides felt like they were collapsing when she heard a husky voice hiss her way,

"STOP! We don't want her dead, just vulnerable." It was a large phantom with a sly glimmer twinkling in his eye. Some of the weight on Crystal's back lifted. The large phantom held up something heavy that looked like a large metal club.

"Hold still," he smiled. Crystal felt something bash her in the side of the head before she collapsed to the ground, unconscious.

To be continued...

Bottled Message

By Hadassah Houben

Anna,

I've never been one to take a pen to paper, and I've never been one to open up about these sorts of things, but I feel that I should.

I know you probably already know what I'll say.

I miss you. I have and I always will.

The darkest nights remind me of you, because when I look for the light, I always find it in the stars. And you have always been my star, my guiding light.

I know it's too late. I missed my chance not long ago.

But every time I walk by the flower shop I see you, your reflection behind me, smiling and hugging twelve roses to your chest. Then, I turn around and you're gone.

I keep passing the park bench where we first kissed. Keep seeing things that remind me of you.

I miss the little moments.

When I lost you on that hiking trip because you got distracted by a little squirrel, and I found you trying to bribe it with your granola bar.

Or that time when you tripped over your shoelace and ended up spilling coffee all over yourself, and we laughed about it together.

I hope you remember those times. I hope you enjoyed them as much as I, and that you treasured each one just as I will.

But, the moment that stands out to me the most would have to be that one day.

Do you remember it?

It was cold outside. Cold and wet. Very wet. The rain was pelting down like bullets, and the thunder boomed like gunshots.

Soaked pavement and cloudy sky contrasted so strongly against your bright eyes and even brighter smile. I was amazed at how the dismal atmosphere didn't affect you at all.

You grabbed a raincoat, tossed it to me with a giggle, and then proceeded to waltz through the door, umbrella in hand.

When I lagged behind, you ran back and dragged me away with you.

I wish I could follow you now.

You escorted me underneath the crying sky and led me to the park. We splashed in puddles and sang songs. We got hamburgers and watched the rain fall.

It never stopped.

The rain I mean. Your smile never stopped either, and that day my smile joined yours.

Somehow I was happier with the rain. Just because it was cold and wet and miserable didn't mean that you or I had to be.

That's the happiest I ever was. Just me and you, walking in the rain.

I hope this finds you, wherever you are.

Somehow, I know that saying goodbye had to be this way. I'm using your favourite bottle, the one from our first date, to house this letter.

You always said that a message sealed in a bottle and tossed to the sea would always find its path to where it was meant to be.

I believe it'll reach you even if nothing else can.

It can follow you where I cannot.

-Jonathan

Fascinating Fun Facts

By Serena Clark

- The creature that kills the most people every year is a mosquito. Malaria, the disease it sometimes carries, is deadly.
- A can of Mountain Dew can dissolve a mouse. That's the last time I drink Mountain Dew...
- In the year of 1981 there was a black lab named Boco who was elected the honorary mayor of Sunol, California!
- A writer actually predicted how the Titanic would sink 13 years before it was even built.
- Sea otters have a pouch under their arms for their favorite rock. Talk about convenient!
- Before the 19th century, people had what are called "first sleep" and "second sleep". They would sleep for about 3-4 hours, wake up and do something, and then sleep again. I wouldn't be able to do that.
- In Japan, if you're being violent or are very drunk, police will get something called a futon and roll you into a burrito. They do this to avoid use of guns. There are only about 8 deaths by gunshot in Japan every year.

Source: BuzzFeed

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/terripous/81-super-interesting-facts-to-blurt-out-in-the-middle-of>

Divide

By Emily MacDougall

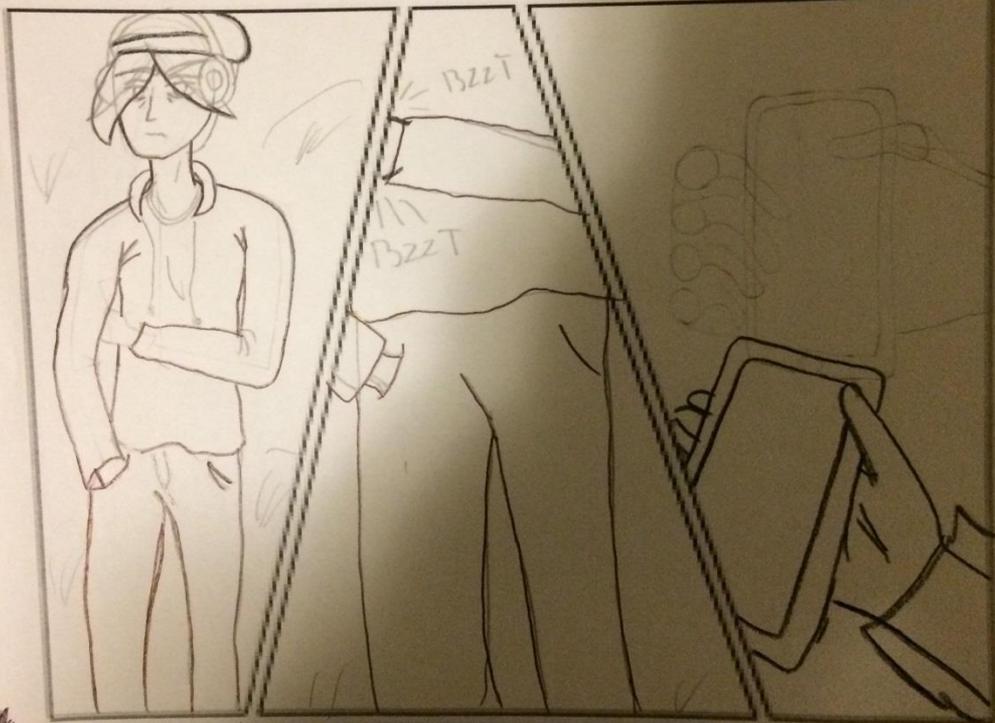
Divide - Chapter One

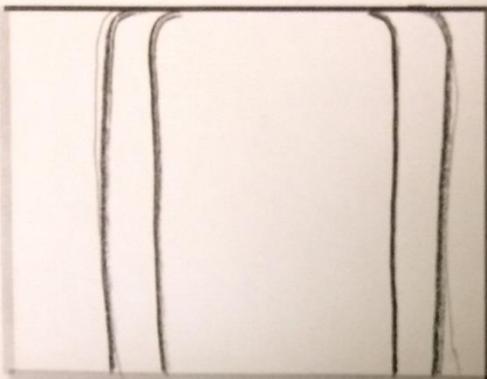
I am Celtic
Shane. I
live alone
with my

brother
Ryan. We
live on the
planet

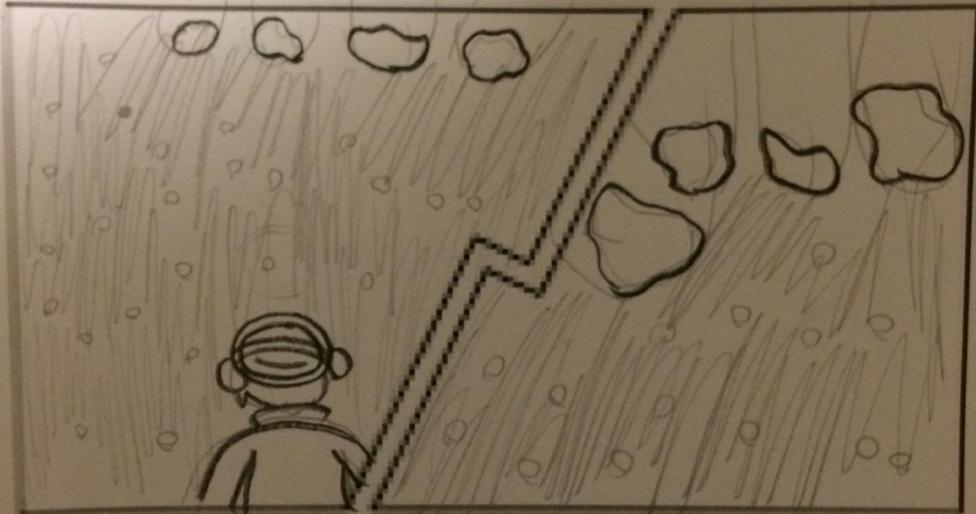
Valerian,
It's like
Earth.

We also
love space,
A lot.

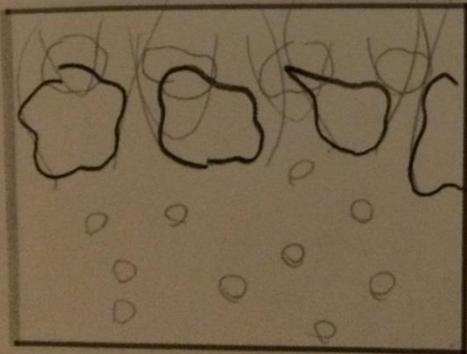




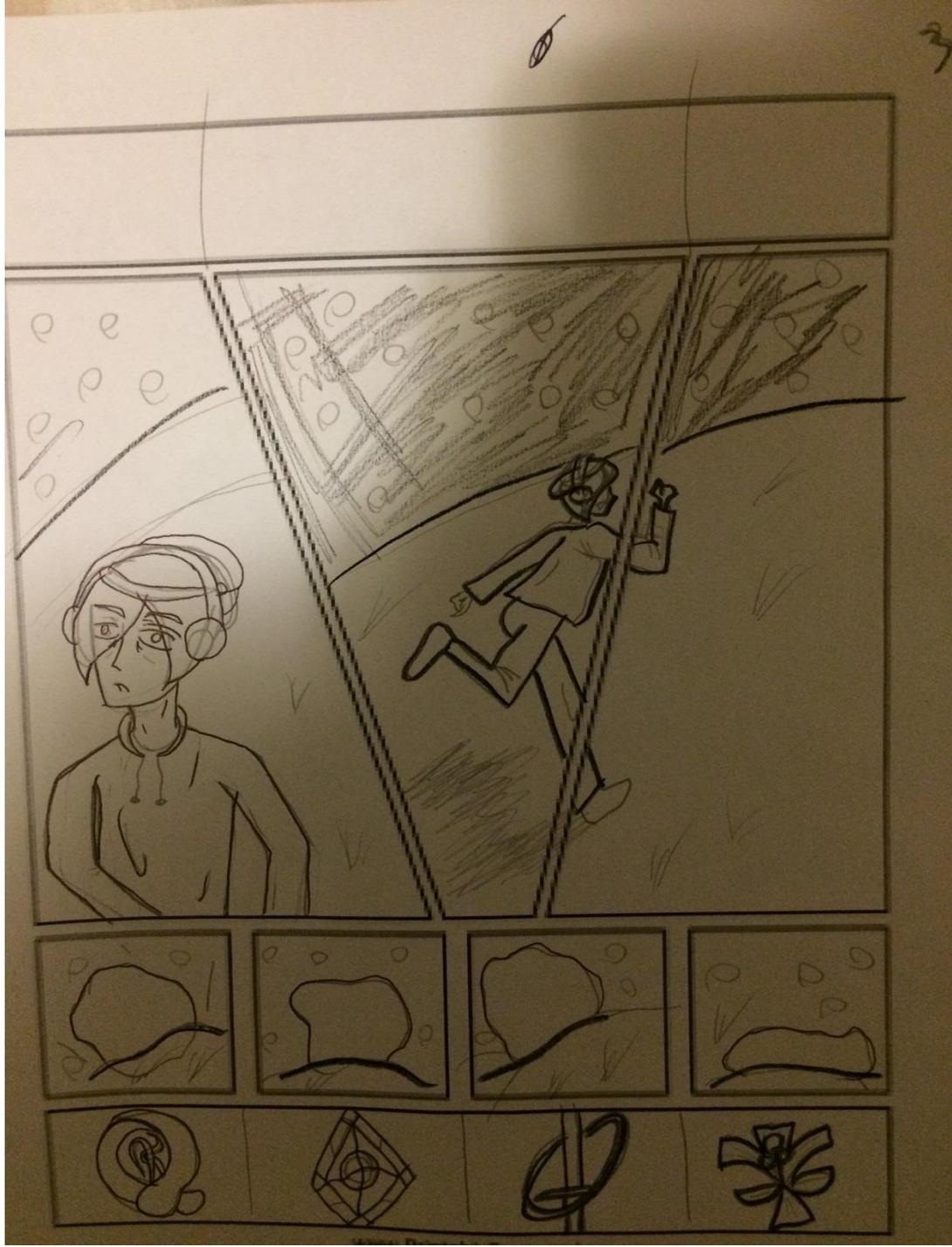
You there
Cedric?
Cedric!
LOOK UP

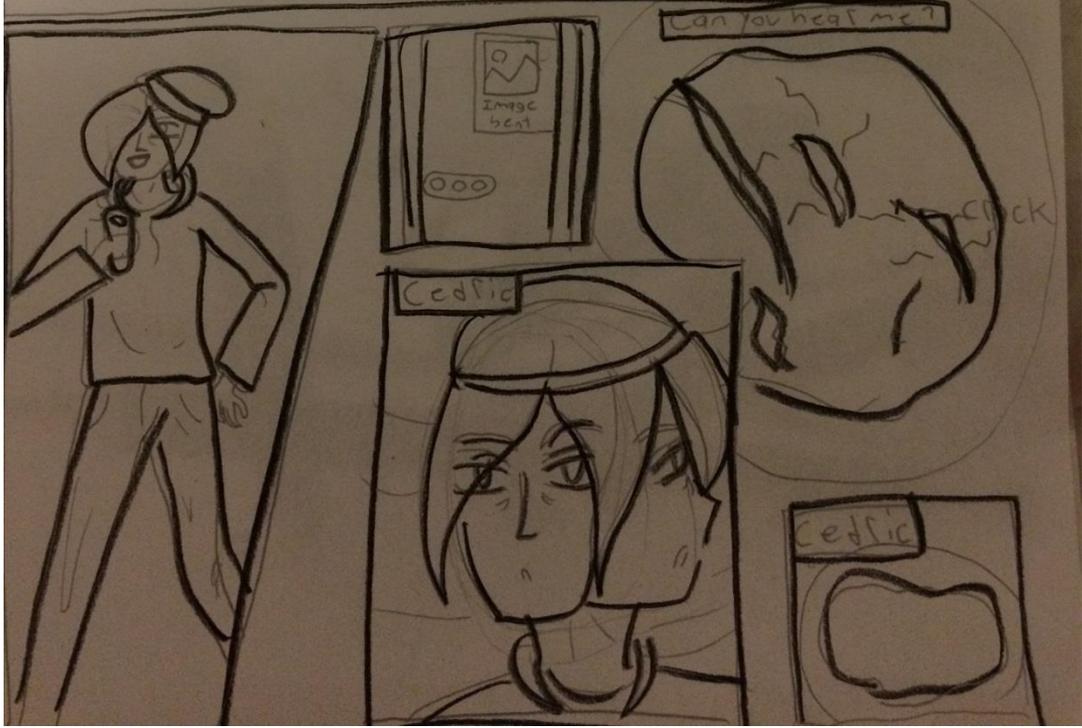
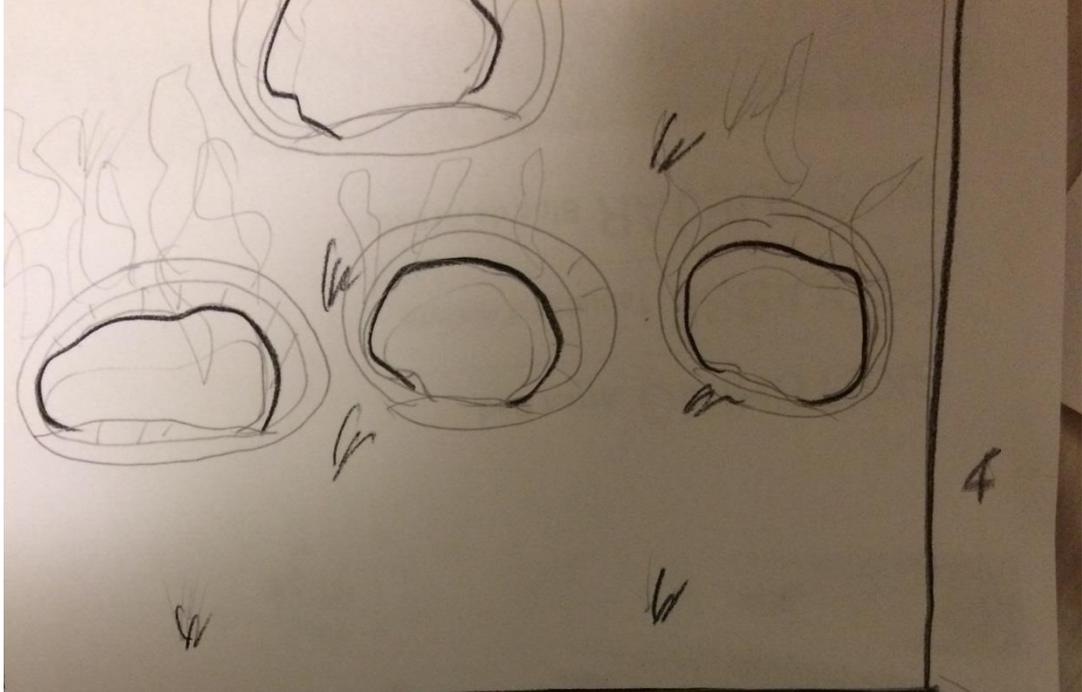


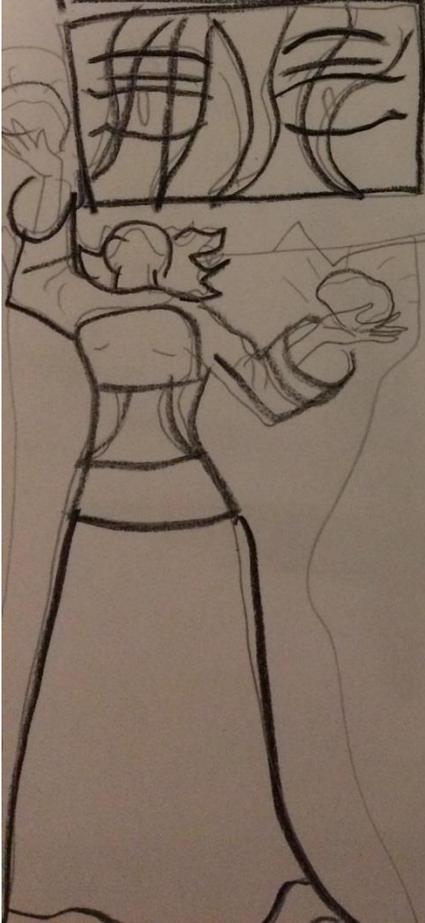
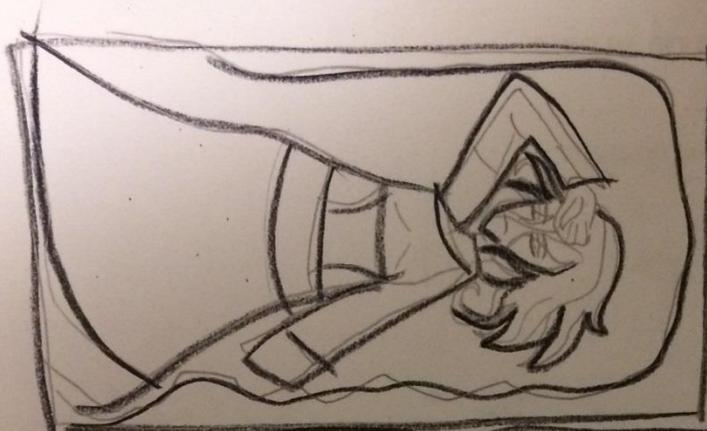
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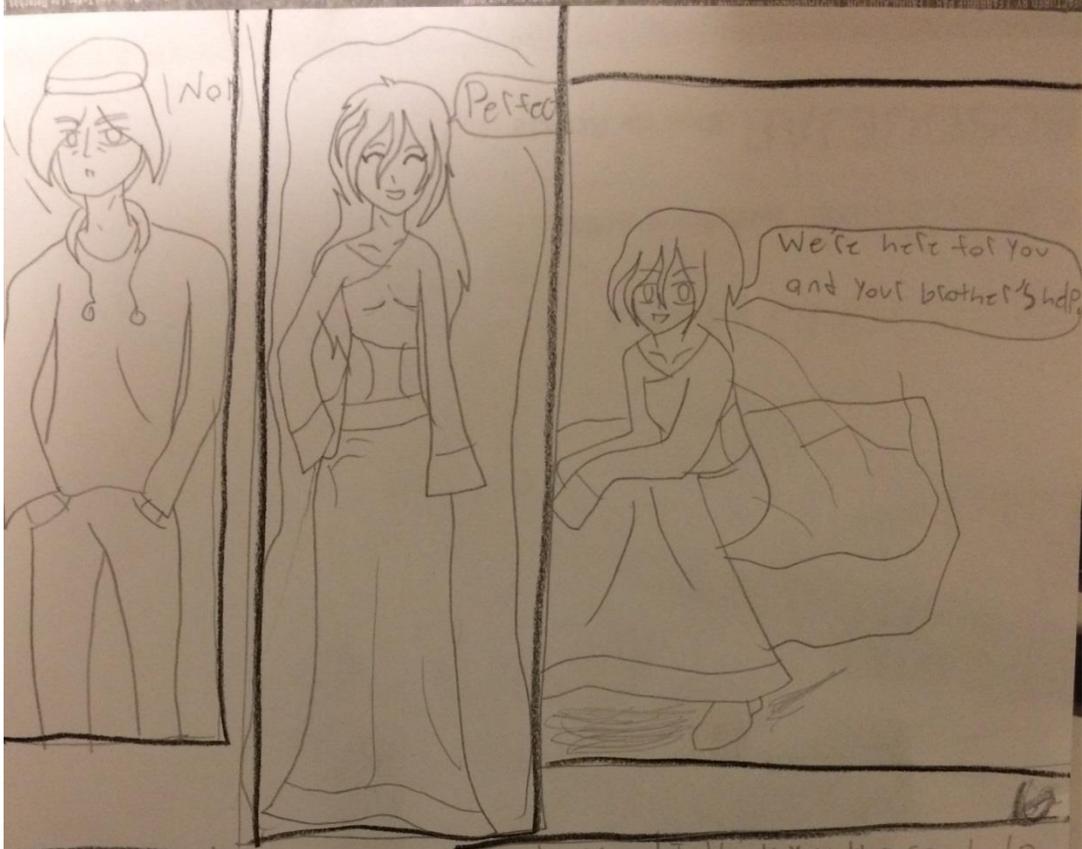
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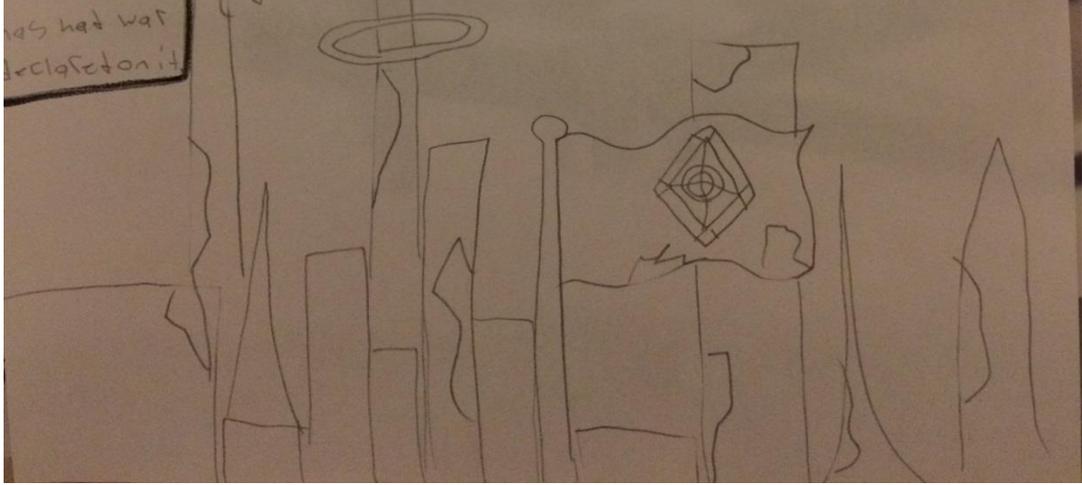


15



You see,
out Planet
has had war
to close on it

My sisters and I think you two can help.
Please I'm begging you. HELP US



To be continued...

Jokes

by Jacob Brown

A Mexican magician says he will disappear on the count of three.

Uno, dos, POOF

He disappears without a tres.

What's a balloon's least favorite type of music?

Pop

Why were they called the Dark Ages?

Because there were a lot of knights.

What happens to the frog's car when it breaks down?

It gets toad away.

My friend thinks he is smart. He told me an onion is the only food that makes you cry, so I threw a coconut at his face.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown had two sons. One was named Mind Your Own Business, and the other was named Trouble. One day, the two boys decided to play hide and seek. Trouble hid, while Mind Your Own Business counted to one hundred. Mind Your Own Business began looking for his brother behind garbage cans and bushes. Then he started looking in and under cars until a police man approached him and asked, "What are you doing?"

"Playing a game," the boy replied.

"What is your name?" the officer questioned.

"Mind Your Own Business."

Furious, the policeman inquired, "Are you looking for trouble?!"

The boy replied, "Why, yes."

A blonde and a redhead have a ranch. They have just lost their bull. The women need to buy another but only have \$500. The redhead tells the blonde, "I will go to the market and see if I can find one for under that amount. If I can, I will send you a telegram."

She goes to the market and finds one for \$499. Having only one dollar left, she goes to the telegraph office and finds out that it costs one dollar per word. She is stumped on how to tell the blonde to bring the truck and trailer. Finally, she tells the telegraph operator to send the word "comfortable." Skeptical, the operator asks, "How will she know to come with the trailer from just that word?"

The redhead replies, "She's a blonde, so she reads slow: 'Come for ta bull.'"

Australian Slang

by Sean Umbassar

A lot of people get confused about certain slang words used in Australia. After going there, I figured it would be an interesting topic for people to hear. Disclaimer: I did still have to look some of these up.

- Arvo – arvo pretty much means afternoon and could be used in, “What are you doing this arvo?” and so forth
- Barbie – most people probably know this one; it is simply a barbecue. (cook steak ‘n’ stuff on it)
- Bathers – just a different way of saying “swimsuit”
- Billabong – essentially means pond, but not just any pond; it’s a small section of water in a dried up riverbed (in northern territories of Australia they can be inhabited by crocs if deep enough)
- Billy – a billy is a metal pot that is put on a fire to heat its contents, like the metal pots we use here when camping.
- Bludger – bludgers are sluggards/lazy people: “Oh, him, he’s such a bludger.”
- Bogan – if you know Canadian rednecks just think...Australian then mix Canadian and American redneck in...
- Brolly – a brolly is simply an umbrella
- Cactus – we all know what an actual cactus is, but to say an object is cactus, it means it’s broken and beat up. “Yeah, my old car is pretty cactus.”
- Crikey – one of the stereotypical Australian words, an expression of surprise and amazement.
- Esky – it’s like a cooler, a container to keep your drinks cool
- Heaps – just means lots. “That was heaps of fun,” just means it was a lot of fun

Places to Go: The High Noon Hills

By Gabriel Jones

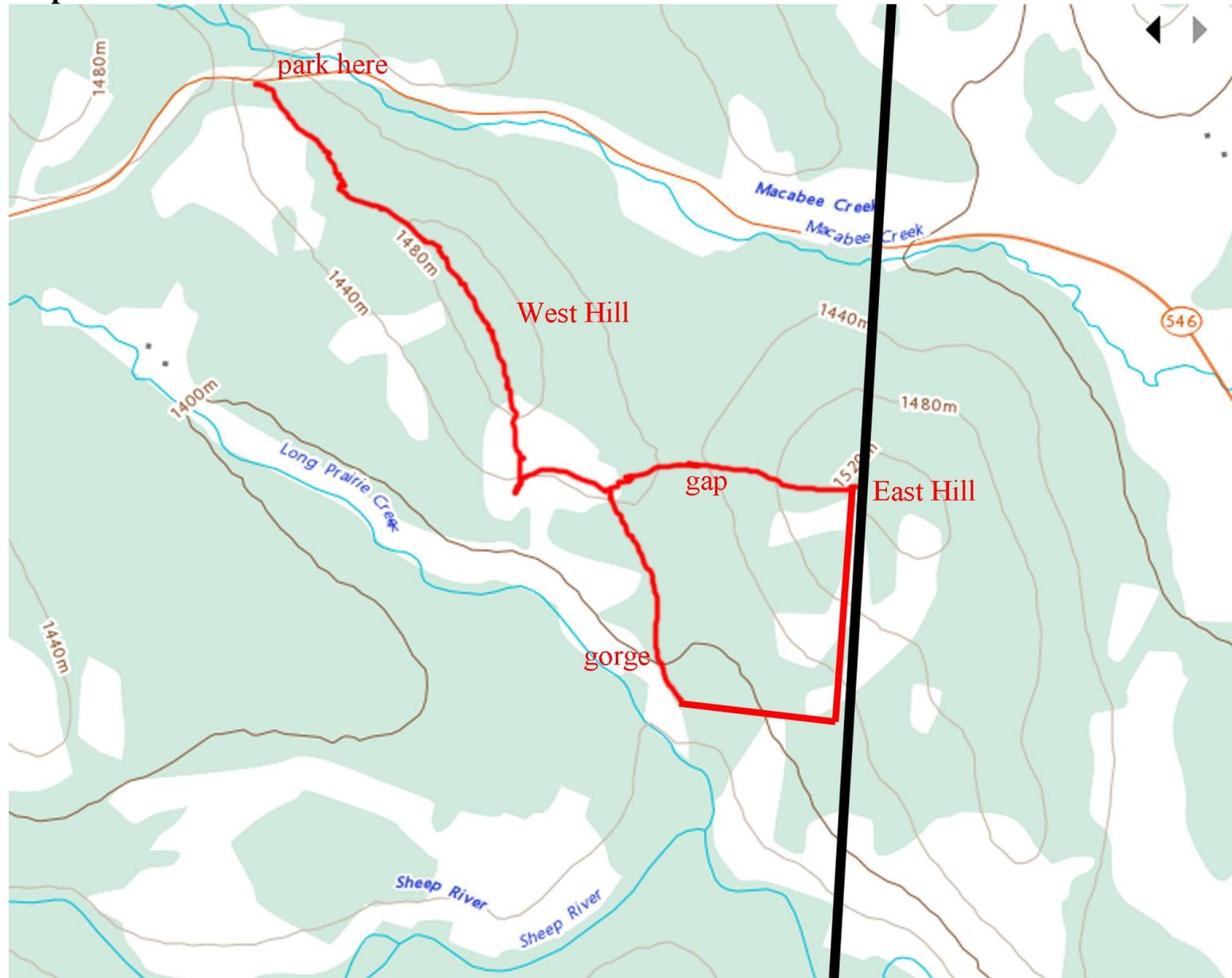
Overview

These hills are right on the eastern boundary of Kananaskis Country, a short distance west of Turner Valley. While not very big (their prominence is only around 200 metres) they're amazingly good viewpoints. They're an excellent shoulder-season and winter hiking destination, and although going beyond the first hill does require a little bit of proficiency in route finding, they are still quite an easy hike.

Access

The High Noon Hills are about 45 minutes from the southwest corner of Calgary. From Calgary, drive west on Highway 22X until you get to the big intersection with Highway 22. Go south on Highway 22 and follow its very scenic windings to Turner Valley. In Turner Valley, go right at the four way stop on Highway 546. At first this is a very small town road, but at the top of the hill it turns right and becomes a real highway again. Around 15 minutes later and just past Anchor D Outfitters (note all the horses – at last note there were 120 head) you enter Kananaskis Country. The road gets narrower past here (it's still paved though) and winds about the little valley of Macabee Creek. Soon it goes up a dark hill and crosses a small pass back into sunlight. At the top of this pass pull over in the verge on the right side of the road. There is no sign (the trail is unofficial) but you can see a trail climbing the opposite (south) side of the highway.

Map



Thin red line is Hwy 546, thick red line is the route described. Thick black line is the Kananaskis Country boundary. North is up. Map is about 3 kilometres wide. Contour interval is 40 metres.

The trail

Follow this trail through a fence and immediately turn right into a very large meadow sloping to the southwest. The trail is obvious as it climbs up the left side of the meadow and back into pines, shortly thereafter emerging into another smaller meadow at a small top. Continue to follow the ridge onto another rise with a meadow and a huge pine tree. Finish along the crest of the ridge at the boundary of aspen trees and another huge meadow to the summit of the west hill.

As mentioned, this hill is an amazing viewpoint over the Sheep River valley and towards the mountains. You can also see the east hill across the gap.



Looking back down the ridge from the summit of the west hill.

Head down the south ridge, which is rather steep and completely open. Turn around often, because the view back up the ridge is really cool.



Looking back up the south ridge in August.

Shortly (I did mention these aren't big hills) arrive at the edge of aspen trees and a wide obvious cow trail. Turn left on the cow trail, which contours around an open slope before reaching the continuation of the west hill's east ridge curving around to the south. The trail crosses this ridge back into trees and leads down to the low point between the two hills, where you meet another trail at right angles. The cow trail ends here.

Keep going east up the east hill's west ridge. There is no trail and the ridge isn't very distinct, but if you head straight up you should be fine. You should see another meadow up ahead. Entering this meadow, climb to the top of it at a fence prominently marked with "No Trespassing- High Noon Ranch." This fence is the eastern boundary of Kananaskis Country and you may not cross it. No matter, the best view is here anyway, and the panorama of the Front Ranges from this meadow is truly spectacular.



The view west from the east hill. The west hill is in the foreground.

Loop

Getting to the top of the east hill doesn't take very long, and I like to extend the hike to include this loop. Routefinding is a little trickier than before, but still not very hard.

Follow the fenceline south through a forest of very tall aspen trees. Shortly arrive in a meadow, where an obvious cow trail comes in from the right. (If you follow it, it leads back to the gap between the west and east hills and is the trail you intersected earlier). Keep going south along the fenceline until you come to another fence at right angles. Turn right (west) and follow this fence rather steeply into a dip and even more steeply up the other side onto a little ridge. Just over the crest of this ridge, the ground suddenly drops into a remarkable gorge. Turn right, following the little ridge above the not so little gorge on a good trail. A short distance along, you can see a waterfall down in the gorge. Just after this, the gorge ends and the trail dissipates. The ridge keeps going though, and as you find out is actually the continuation of the west hill's east ridge that you crossed earlier. In a minute reach the big cow trail and turn left, going back the way you came. If you don't feel like going back up the west hill, just keep following the cow trail. It traverses underneath the west hill and takes you back to the big meadow at the beginning. The hilltop is more fun, though.

Tips for spring hiking

Around here, there isn't really such a thing as a "hiking season" because snow cover is so variable and there are lots of nice warm chinooks, particularly in the eastern foothills. And, of course, if it is snowy we rejoice because snow sports are so awesome. Here are a few tips for hiking in spring.

The biggest risk when hiking in the foothills in spring is ticks. Make sure you know what they look like before you go. Ticks are arachnids, like spiders. They are bloodsuckers and because bighorn sheep are favorite hosts they tend to congregate in grassy areas like the Sheep River Valley, which as its name implies has many sheep. They climb as high as they can on a host such as a human and then dig in and start sucking. If they bite at the base of your neck, you may start to act strangely since they secrete a neurotoxin whose effects go away when they are not sucking anymore. More seriously, they carry horrible diseases like Lyme's disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever, which is why they are such a major concern. Ticks are most prevalent from March to June but can be found at any time of year, even in the winter (apparently).

To avoid ticks, do not sit down in long grass. Use a log or a rock or something, or stay standing. Check for ticks crawling around before you stop somewhere. They sometimes congregate in nests. Do a quick tick check when you get up and more thorough one when you get home, including your clothes and pack. Ticks are most likely to be found at the back of the neck, especially at the hairline, and in corners like the armpits. If you find a tick, DO NOT yank it out as its head will be buried in your skin and will cause problems if you leave it there. DO NOT smother it in lotion or burn it with a match to get it to withdraw its head as this will cause it to regurgitate its stomach contents into your bloodstream. Instead, use this method: <http://kananaskistrails.com/removing-ticks/2011/> (ignore the bad advice in the comments about using heat and lotion) or use a Tick Key. Then go see your doctor.

My next tip is to be aware of avalanche hazard. Obviously in the lower foothills like the High Noon Hills avalanche hazard is not a concern, but in the mountains it sure is. There are a lot of misconceptions about avalanches and avalanche terrain out there, but it is important to understand the risks and what actually constitutes avalanche terrain. Probably the best resource for backcountry recreationists is Tony Daffern's book *Backcountry Avalanche Safety*, published by Rocky Mountain Books. I recommend you read this book before venturing into snow-covered backcountry mountains. It's in the Calgary public library system. (I include this in the spring section because it's usually still snowy in the mountains at this time of year.)

Make sure you have clothes along for abrupt changes in weather, especially late in the spring, because mountain (and to a lesser degree foothills) weather can change very fast. Bring something warm even if it's +15, but don't overdress. Cotton is ineffective for mountain use, athletic clothing is much better. Do not rely on a weather forecast.

Bring enough food. Actually, bring more food than you expect you'll need in case there's an emergency. It's essential to have enough to eat when it's cold out and you're exercising.

Disclaimer

Hiking does have dangers. The weather in our mountains and foothills is remarkably unpredictable and fast-changing. Do not rely on a weather forecast. Make sure you have adequate layers along, and turn back if you're too cold or if inclement weather is approaching.

You need to be able to find your way in the mountains. You should be able to read a topo map, which isn't hard to learn to do. And bring it with you! Even with the aid of a detailed description, you should still bring a map along and be able to read it.

Finally, turn back if you ever feel uncomfortable with the trail or the terrain you're in, and always make sure you can get back down what you are going up. Mountain sense comes with experience. While the High Noon Hills are a good introductory hike, I still recommend you go with someone more experienced for your first few hikes if you're new to hiking.

Northstar Academy, the Northstar Chronicle, the author, and the editors/publishers are not responsible if something goes wrong, or for any actions undertaken as a direct or indirect result of this article.

For more information about hiking in Kananaskis Country, check out Gilleen Daffern's superb five-volume *Kananaskis Country Trail Guide*, published by Rocky Mountain Books. I first read about this hike in this book. The one you want for the Sheep Valley is volume 4.

All photographs in this column are by the author. Map is copyright © Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada with modifications made by the author. See copyright notice at <https://open.canada.ca/en/open-government-licence-canada>. Note that this map is not very detailed. Unfortunately the more detailed imperial version with 50 foot contours (instead of 40 metres) is no longer available from the government so I couldn't use it in this article. It is, however, in the back of Volume 4 of Gilleen Daffern's *Kananaskis Country Trail Guide*, and on her website kananaskisblog.com. Note that her route markings are not the same as mine.

Much of the "Tips for Spring Hiking" and "Disclaimer" were copied from my previous *Places to Go* column.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, thanks be to our Lord Jesus Christ! He has given us the talents showcased here, and we hope He can be glorified through them.

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Finally, we are immensely grateful to our families and their invaluable support of our work.

Sincerely,

The Chronicle Crew

Contributors

- Editor – Levi Patterson
- Co-Editor – Jade Hill
- Cover – Jade Hill
- The Legend of the Moon Queen – Natalie Dryden
- Bottled Message – Hadassah Houben
- Fascinating Fun Facts – Serena Clark
- Divide – Emily MacDougall
- Jokes – Jacob Brown
- Australian Slang – Sean Umbsaar
- Places to Go – Gabriel Jones

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