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All JETs in Hyogo are encouraged to send in articles, musings, photos, poetry, prose, and any ideas to improve the Hyogo Times for the betterment of the Hyogo JET community. Submit by the 15th of each month to hyogotimespublications@gmail.com

Letter from the Editor

Hello!

It's hot and muggy, the JLPT is in two days, and many Americans are probably cursing that fact. Welcome to July, and my final issue as the editor of the Hyogo Times!

My first July was the easiest: I went on a road trip up to 天橋立 with my Kobe area friends, to 城崎 with my fellow Ono ALTs, then went to the Philippines with the former group. I had to say goodbye to couple of good friends, but I didn't need to say farewell until August. Last year was harder: I mostly stayed in Kansai except for a quick jaunt out to Tokyo, but I had to part ways with three of my closer friends, with a fourth leaving later in August. I anticipate this year to be somewhere in the middle, though closer to last year. This time, I'm leaving behind all of the friends I've grown so close to over the past three years. I may have nearly all of August with them as well, and get to travel to places such as Ine no Funaya and Fukui with a couple of them, but the reality has been making its presence known since March.

To escape thinking about such unpleasant things, we have reviews of [Okunoshima](#) (Bunny Island), the [first two](#) articles in a series on concert venues, [Deadpool](#), and [USJ's attractions](#), Rory assuaging his guilt of using [Englipedia](#), and a recipe on [fried avocado](#). In the Refuge is the [8th part](#) of Sometime Last Week, a story about an Englishman's [squid](#), and a quirky tale tangentially related to [snow crabs](#). Should you instead wish to wallow in sadness, you can read a [poem](#) and a [piece](#) musing on goodbyes, as well as the [farewells](#)

of five ALTs.

Now, I'll be handing the wheel of this publication over to Rory Kelly. I'm excited to see where he will take the Hyogo Times and am confident in his ability to make it an entertaining experience for everyone! I only hope I've accomplished that in some small measure. It's time for me to go: I've done my fair share of drinking, and my trip home is nearly over. Though I say I'm going home, I really have been this whole time.



Photo courtesy of Caitlin Ellerbe.



Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, kings and queens!!! It is that time of year again!!!

<gasp> “What time of year again??” I hear your collective thoughts bubble and burst within their confined cranial cages!!!

It is the time of year when I write in the HYOGO TIMES!!! Muhahahaha!!!... huh? What now? I wrote for last month as well?... ah! How memorable it was!!!

My apologies for a second serving of the drivel that can only be described as “mindless utterances on a page” and a million other analogies... hehehe... anal...ogies. (HA!)

But yes, it is the wonderful ME here to inform you that July has fallen upon us like a pole dancer who used waaaay too much lotion before coming out on stage. Still part of the rainy season for most of Japan, yet apparently down south (areas such as Kyushu and Okinawa, not the stripper’s) you may be able to slightly escape the wash and rinse cycle.

July brings with it many changes in the JET community. The impending departure of our comrades and the imminent arrival of the fresh meat, ready to be thrust into a new life in a new world, eager to engage, live and learn what being a part of a different culture is all about. To those who are leaving I would say, please, freely offer your advice, to the stayers, please offer your support and to the arrivals... good luck.

Now July has a myriad of festivals and activities to keep one busy. Some at the beginning, middle and end so that the different horses who enjoy different courses can enjoy finding the wind beneath their wings as they become pegasi (plural of pegasus) and fly, fly, fly to the destination of their chosen path. Some big names for July are: 1) The Gion Matsuri in Kyoto— this bad boy takes up the month of July and has several parades of

mikoshi (giant portable shrine like devices) that are moved down and around the streets much like floats in a parade. A vast array of wondrous colors, smells and sounds will abound at this time if you find yourself in the midst of the action. Rumour has it that some of the bigger floats can reach around 12,000 KILOGRAMS!!! So you know what that means people: if you see one of these things gaining speed and heading down hill at you, get the hell outta the way. No amount of octogenarian and above flesh that you can shove between you and the rampaging roller of death will stop it.

For later in July, they usually have the Fuji Rock festival in Niigata. I have heard this year’s line-up is looking pretty good. Be aware that there is a chance of thunderstorms so maybe take some galoshes if you intend to tramp out that way for the event.

Whether you decide to have a dry July, a try July, a nice guy July or a small fry July, the July is up to you. Feel free to check out [this site](#) for more information; it also mentions some nice fireworks festivals which are great to see and feel the BOOM!!!

I wish you all a safe and wondrous July, and continuing existence. May your footsteps warm the feet of those that follow you, and may your wings cut through the wind as you soar to glory. Adios amigos to my fellow unicorns and to all the other members of the JET community (Including the wonderful HAJET people, who have been awesome with sooo much stuff).

T.T.F.N. Boat-hugs!!!! :D



Chris Goodman

If you haven’t seen Tastemade Videos, you may be missing out on a kaleidoscope of delicious creations and nifty food ideas. These videos are put together in such a simple and quick way, they teach you recipes in minutes. When I saw the video for this recipe, I couldn’t help but drool. I LOVE avocados. They are such an amazing...fruit? Vegetable? Maybe these contested fruit/vegetables should be called something else. So henceforth I think I’ll call avocados, tomatoes, watermelon, and all the other edible fruits of plants that sit in the purgatory of food classification, fregetables! Clever, I know. X> Hehe so please enjoy this delectable fregetable creation brought to you by the genius minds behind Tastemade and tested, modified, and sussed out into words by yours truly.

See the original video & recipe [here](#).

Ingredients:

- 2 or 3 ripe Avocados (depending on how fat you want your meat layer)
- 1 Egg (separated into yolk and white)
- ½ Onion (chopped)
- 200g Ground Meat of your choice
- Panko Bread Crumbs (or blended cheerios if you happen to have those)
- Flour (a hand full)
- Salt (to taste)
- Pepper (to taste)
- Tomato Sauce/ Ketchup/ Thai Sweet Chili Sauce/ Whatever’s your favorite (optional)
- Oil for frying

Instructions:

1. Cut **avocados** in half lengthwise. Remove **avocado seeds** and peel off the skin.
Tip: I found it’s easiest to peel from where the round stem bit is, and work your way around the avocado as you peel. Once peeled, you can put the avocados back in their skins to hold them while you work.
2. Fill each seed indent with **cheese** and put the two avocado halves back together. Again, using the avocado skins with the avocado meat inside is the easiest and

least messy way to accomplish this.

3. In a bowl, thoroughly combine **ground meat, egg yolk, onion, panko bread crumbs, salt, and pepper**.
4. Encase the **cheese stuffed avocado** with the **ground meat mixture**.
5. Coat the **giant meat balls** with flour, then egg white and then coat with **panko bread crumbs**.
6. Transfer **giant meatballs** to a pre-heated pan of hot oil (enough to coat half the meatball) and fry til golden brown, flipping when necessary.
7. Transfer to a dish lined with paper towels to drain excess oil.

Top with your favorite sauce if desired and serve with a salad, rice, or eat as is. :)



***Tip:** If you’re not planning on eating all the avocado meatballs in one go, skip the frying and place them on a cookie sheet in the freezer. Once thoroughly frozen, transfer to a ziplog bag and store in freezer til you’re ready to thaw them out and fry ‘em up ;)

This is my last Kicchiri Kitchen recipe submission, but I hope you enjoyed the random and hopefully simple recipes from the past year. It has been an honor to be handed the reins from Cherie Pham & Helen Yuan and be an honorary Hyogoian.

Wishing you all the best in the enjoyment of eating, simplicity, and life.

It’s been a pleasure,
mandy

It's that time of year to say our goodbyes. Below, you can read about five of our departees and their reflections on their time on JET.

Luis Alvarez, Ono, 5th year

Advice: Change is exciting and new, which can also be frightening. My biggest piece of advice is not to stress about it, but start early, taking your time to go through the obstacles of leaving. And smile, because a frown only brings people down.

Favorite Hyogo Restaurant: My favorite restaurant in Hyogo, while not really a restaurant but more of a shack, is Awaji Burger in Nishinomiya. Fucking amazing.

A Memorable Moment: My most memorable event would be the birth of my daughter. Although I wasn't allowed to cut the umbilical cord or be in the same room as my wife during the birth, seeing my newborn daughter and how she stopped crying when she recognized my voice is something I will never forget. That girl is my life now.

Final Words: I feel that everyone needs to find what makes them happy and live through it. Money comes and goes, but our time on this world is limited, so you have to make the most of it. My plans for the future are to help children. Whether that be still teaching in Japan or going back to the States to work for CPS, I feel

helping children can really make a difference in what type of person they grow up to be.

Chris Goodman, Ako, 5th year (I am a goddamn unicorn!!! 4 years is just a horse wearing a birthday



hat! 5 years the horn is real! Touch my horn! TOUCH IT!!! I also poop rainbows.)

Advice: Go and see and do as much as you can with the little time you have left. Don't stress about sending things home, just sell it or give it away! Go hike a mountain trail, enjoy a tea ceremony, take in the sights and smells around you... There is nothing quite like Japan and you will miss it all when you go.

Favorite Hyogo Restaurant: I have many. That is why I got a fat butt!! But I tend to be biased to the town I have called home for the past 5 years. [Sakuragumi, M's Dining](#), and almost any and all Tabehodai, Yakiniku places and beer gardens... COCONUTS FOREVER!!!

A Memorable Moment: Competed in the Okayama Saidaiji naked man festival 4 times... I am a glutton for punishment.

Final Words: Live, love, laugh and cry. Once that is done, do it all again. Go out and become part of the community around you. Not just with other JETs but with your local Japanese community groups too. Try to participate when and where you can.

Talia Henderson, Kobe, 5th year (For four years, I was placed in Toyooka (northern Hyogo—go Tajima!) before my base school was closed down. So while I'm finishing up my first year as a Kobe JET, I'm finishing my 5th year on JET. Does this mean I'm a unicorn with wings or something now?)



Advice: Despite the time I've been here, I can't imagine that I have any more advice that you haven't heard before. But I definitely would suggest not leaving full trash bags that you plan on throwing out later on your balcony for any amount of time. Crows will come and rip open your garbage and embarrass you when you

come home from work. Don't let crows make a dinner table out of your balcony.

Favorite Hyogo Restaurant: Speaking of dinner, in a good way, everyone in Hyogo should find their closest Sushiro. Sure, it's a chain restaurant but it's also cheap, fun, and delicious. Some of my best memories are from Wednesday night Sushiro outings followed by arcade shenanigans and eating at Baskin Robbins right before it closed.

A Memorable Moment: I've had a lot of challenges and triumphs during my time on JET and it's hard to pick a favorite memory. The moment I want to name one, I think of at least one hundred more. The friends I have made through traveling, the kids who made me laugh and cry, the teachers who supported me, they have all made my life here so amazing.

Final Words: Starting in August, I will be a teacher at an international school. My target audience will be one and two years old so it will be a big change of pace. But I'm ready and looking for it! Thanks to my experience on JET, I'm excited to use everything I've learned elsewhere. Good luck to everyone finishing up their time on JET!

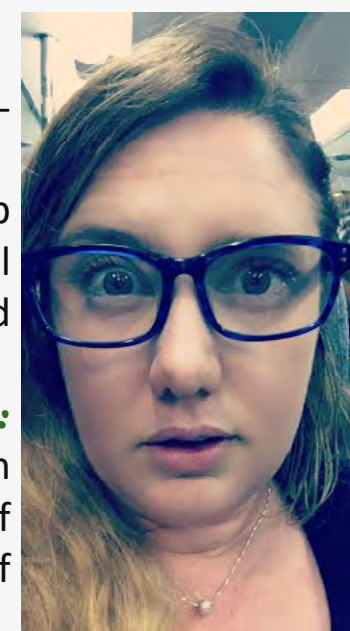
Ashlie O'Neill, Inami-cho, Kako-gun, 3rd year

Advice: Be prepared and pack up little by little. It helps you to feel ok about the big transition and it's also strangely therapeutic.

Favorite Hyogo Restaurant: Brasiliano at Mosaic, Kobe. For an Aussie, there is a serious lack of beef in Japan. This was my way of coping with that.

A Memorable Moment: Joining National and Prefectural AJET. It was challenging a lot of the time but I grew as a person and as a professional. However, by far the most memorable thing about it was the fact that I got to meet so many amazing people because of it. I honestly think that without having the amazing people I have around me, this experience would have been much duller and certainly not the time of my life.

Final Words: Take every chance that you have here because you never know where trying something new



will take you and before you know it, it's over and your JET tenure is over and you are headed home.

Meet people and create memories with them and don't restrict yourself to just a small group of friends. You never know what type of fascinating people are in the same room as you unless you talk and make the most of your JET network to travel, work and achieve great things in the future. I guarantee you there is an ex-JET out there that wants to help you and all you have to do is find them.

Brittany Teodorski, Ono, 3rd year

Advice: Spend as much time exploring Japan and Asia as you can. I can't speak for others, but my time here has gone by in the blink of an eye. I almost wish I'd decided to stay another year!

Favorite Hyogo Restaurant: For when you really just need some American food, 淡路島バーガー in Nishinomiya is incredible. Their patties taste like they haven't spliced pork with beef (which is fine, but not as delicious for me), you can add delicious toppings, and I love their shoestring fries. Apparently the onion rings are incredible, if you're into that.

A Memorable Moment: Staying in the heart of Shibuya when my aunt and one of her friends visited Japan recently. It was the site of many an event, such as reacting to a fire alarm in an incredibly blase manner ("Do you think we should leave? That's been going off for a while now..."), a failed delivery of a bag which went missing (then, to add insult to injury, also had a wheel broken off), and what's being referred to as the Tokyo Turd Tragedy. Details available upon request.

Final Words: I am so, so thankful to have lived in Hyogo and met everyone that I did. I'm hoping to visit sometime next year before the next JET year is up, so keep an eye out!



Compiled by **Brittany Teodorski**

Back in September 2015 I saw a flier in Animate for a Sword Art Online exhibition. As I went about figuring out how to purchase tickets for the event, I stumbled up a bunch of other shows and events that I wanted to see. Thus began the year of concerts. Here's what I learned and experienced.

Buying Tickets: The first step to getting to a concert is of course getting your tickets! And don't be fooled, this isn't always as simple as it seems. When it comes to the more popular events, you may have to depend on luck and timing by entering a ticket lottery before the tickets go out on general sale. If that doesn't go in your favor, you'll have to buy the tickets the day that they come out. I strongly suggest being at a Lawson at 10am or whatever time they are set to release with your Loppi code ready if you suspect that the concert is a popular one. Ticket Camp is a good last resort for getting tickets if you really really want to go to a particular concert, but didn't manage to get them through usual methods, but be warned it can get pricey. The earlier you get tickets the better, or you can wait til last minute to see if anyone is selling them for cheaper, though it's a gamble.

You can register to get emails from all of these sites (below) if you're interested in what's happening concert wise. After purchasing tickets, you'll get a code that you can use to print out a slip and pay at the counter or online.

Lawson Loppi Guide

The thing that I like about Lawson ticketing is that you can use Loppi codes to buy tickets from their machines. You can look up these simple five digit codes on their website and nip to your local Lawson, input the code into one of their iconic red machines (careful though cuz not all Lawsons have one) and get your tickets pretty quickly instead of having to purchase them online first and pick them up later.



Photo courtesy of Corpse Reviver via Wikimedia Commons.

Family Mart

I think the Family Mart portal is the most helpful in terms of notifying you of artists you like. You can favorite artists in your account and they'll send an email blast of artists you like or might like when performances of them are coming up.

You may have to use google chrome/translate to help you input information once you have an account. Eplus is also really good for entering the ticket lotteries and will notify you of whether or not you got tickets. This is pretty vital in terms of the time sensitivity in which you have to pick the tickets up, usually within 3 days.

Ticket Camp

Ticket camp is a site where people who have already bought tickets or won in a ticket lottery can sell their tickets. This website verifies that both parties get their ticket or money. You can also put out a request for a ticket if you know that you want one, and a seller can contact you if they want to sell you their ticket.

There are two ways I've experienced getting tickets on this site after paying for the ticket,

1. Through registered (trackable) mail where a post person physically hands you the envelope or you can pick it up at the post office.
2. The seller sends you the code for the ticket and you pay for the ticket at the combini. Be warned, this means you have to pay for the original ticket price as well as the price listed on Ticket Camp.

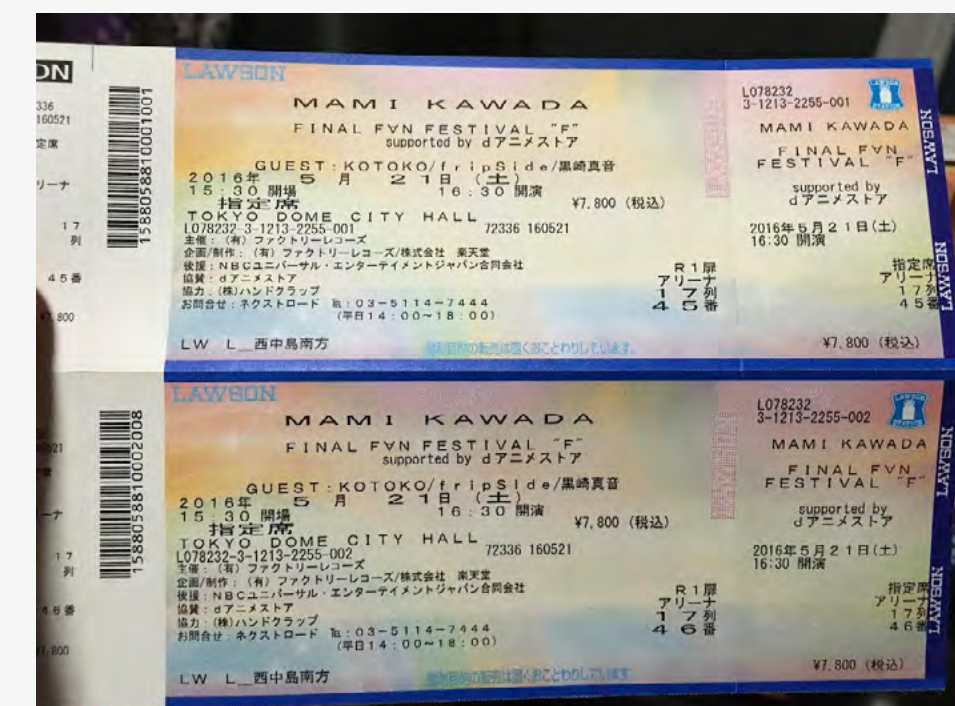
After getting your tickets, you log back into your account and confirm that you've received your tickets and I believe that allows the seller to collect the money you paid on the site.

If You Want the Goods: Depending on the popularity of the show you're seeing, you may want to get in line early to get the goods you want, or better yet, get them online ahead of time. Things like clothes and other wearable things are usually what sell out first is what I've

noticed. At most concerts you'll find a towel, a light stick, and CDs at minimum for that event, among lots of other possible goodies like books detailing the making of the event, eco bags, hand towels, plaid shirts, stickers, cookies, guitar pick necklaces, postcards, or yes, even plastic box cutter keychains.

Happy ticket hunting!

mandy





Venue: [Umeda Akaso](#)

Location: A few blocks away from HEP Five in Umeda

Additional costs: ¥500 for a drink coin

This all-standing venue is my least favorite. In fact, I think it's a fire hazard. Doors open about half an hour before the concert begins, but they let everyone in based on your ticket number A 1~300 followed by B 1~300, if I observed correctly. If you have a B ticket, don't bother showing up early. If you have an A ticket, be sure to get in, get your drink, and get as close to the stage as possible. I've already said how much I'm not a fan of standing concerts, but this venue is pretty much one giant room with a stage, a bar, a bathroom, and hopefully some emergency exits hidden somewhere backstage. Basically, good luck seeing the artist if you can't find a good spot to stand or pray to the concert gods that all the tall people in front of you stand in such a way that you can see the artist in between their heads. If you can avoid it, stay away from this deathtrap of a venue.

Event: KOTOKO Robotic Lizard May 8 (日) 2016

This concert was an interesting exploration into KOTOKO's music. Usually of a pretty typical anime style, I was surprised to find that her music has more of a techno-y hip hop spin to it. Because of the venue, the viewing conditions were abhorrent and it got really stuffy and hot. Her mostly male fans were very into the music though, and it was on occasion entertaining to watch their crazy dancing and awkward interactions with female fans. You know a concert isn't the best, however, when you find yourself wondering, is this the last song?

Event: Yanagi Nagi Follow My Steps May 29 (日) 2016

Having not learned my lesson from the KOTOKO concert/really hoping to hear some *Nagi no Asukara* or *Amnesia* music, I arrived when the doors opened for this concert with the plans of getting a better viewing spot. Those hopes came crashing down as I learned their admission procedure. Having a ticket for something in the B 200s, any shot of getting a spot close to the stage went down the drain along with all the droplets of that rainy day. The spot that I finally managed to snag, though, wasn't half bad. I was able to see Yanagi Nagi for most of the concert, though this involved shifting around a bit, and standing my ground when others started encroaching on my personal space. Her music was on the light girlish side for a typical anime music artist with a touch of occasional rock. It reminded me of Sakamoto Maaya's music a little bit, perhaps what it might've sounded like in her earlier less experienced days. Overall, the concert was acceptable and as a nice little bonus, Yanagi Nagi had a stamp made for the concert that fans could stamp on their ticket. Yay!

Venue: [Osaka Billboard LIVE](#)

Location: Near Nishi Umeda close to the Hanshin Line/ Herbs Ent



One of my favorite venues of all time, Billboard LIVE lets you see the performers up close. With not a bad seat in the house, the more expensive table seats close to the stage allow you to order food if you'd like to enjoy dinner there before the concert, and the less expensive bar-stool-like seats facing the stage at the back give you more freedom of movement between the bathroom and the bar if you happen to need to get up in the middle of the performance. Your ticket comes in the form of lanyard like badge (which you give back at the end), and it includes one free drink. You can purchase the artist's CDs and pay for your meal at the end of the concert, so don't be confused by the lines. Because this is a smaller venue, at the end of the concert, sometimes the artists will do a meet and greet and sign your CD or give you a hug. With lots of international and local artists performing at Billboard, be sure to catch one of your favorite artists at this nice, intimate venue.



Event: Kina Grannis Concert September 12 (金) 2014

One of my first concerts ever in Japan was going to see Kina Grannis two years ago. She's an artist that became famous through making YouTube videos of cover songs as well as writing her own. At this time, she had just released a new album called *Elements* and played a bunch of her new songs at this concert,

mixed with lots of her songs from her first album *Stairwells*. I had a fun time singing along with songs like "Valentine" & "In Your Arms", and really enjoyed hearing "Impermanent" & "Forever Blue" for the first time. The feelings in her songs were palpable in the air and combined with the acoustics of the venue, allowed you to really feel the music beating through the table and your seat. She and her band were incredible. <3

Event: Priscilla Ahn May 27 (金) 2016

I became acquainted with Priscilla Ahn's music through one of the newer Ghibli movies 「思い出のマーニー」 (*When Marnie was There*). I really love hearing the live version of songs that I enjoy and I was not disappointed. About halfway through the concert, she played two songs from her Marnie album, one being "Fine on the Outside". It was really nice to hear more of her work and discover new songs. I especially liked her song about living in a tree called "In a Tree" and another about asking the rain not to go away called "Rain". She now has a baby boy, so she also sang us some songs that she wrote for him, which was really sweet. The concert was also the perfect length, not too long, or too short, which was just nice cuz it was the late 9:30pm show, and so it left plenty of time to not catch the last train home.

A week before this concert, I was in Tokyo with Brittany and we went to Seiseki Sakuragaoka to check out the town that 「耳をすませば」 (*Whisper of the Heart*), my favorite Ghibli movie was based off of, and as magical icing on the cake would have it, Priscilla Ahn sang the movie version of "Country Roads" which she said she'd first sung on the very same stage five years earlier. X> It was fantastical.

mandy

Now that *Deadpool* has finally arrived in a blaze of obscene glory, I can finally review it! I first saw it in February at an English-only theater in Vienna with two friends who are former JETs. I then got to dangle this fact over my current JET friends’ heads as they salivated in anticipation. Fortunately for them (and for my article count), it was released in early June instead of August. However, this didn’t stop me from encouraging my companions to buy Ring Pops when we came across them at a candy shop in Jiufen in homage to Wade Wilson’s oh-so-romantic proposal to Vanessa Carlyle.

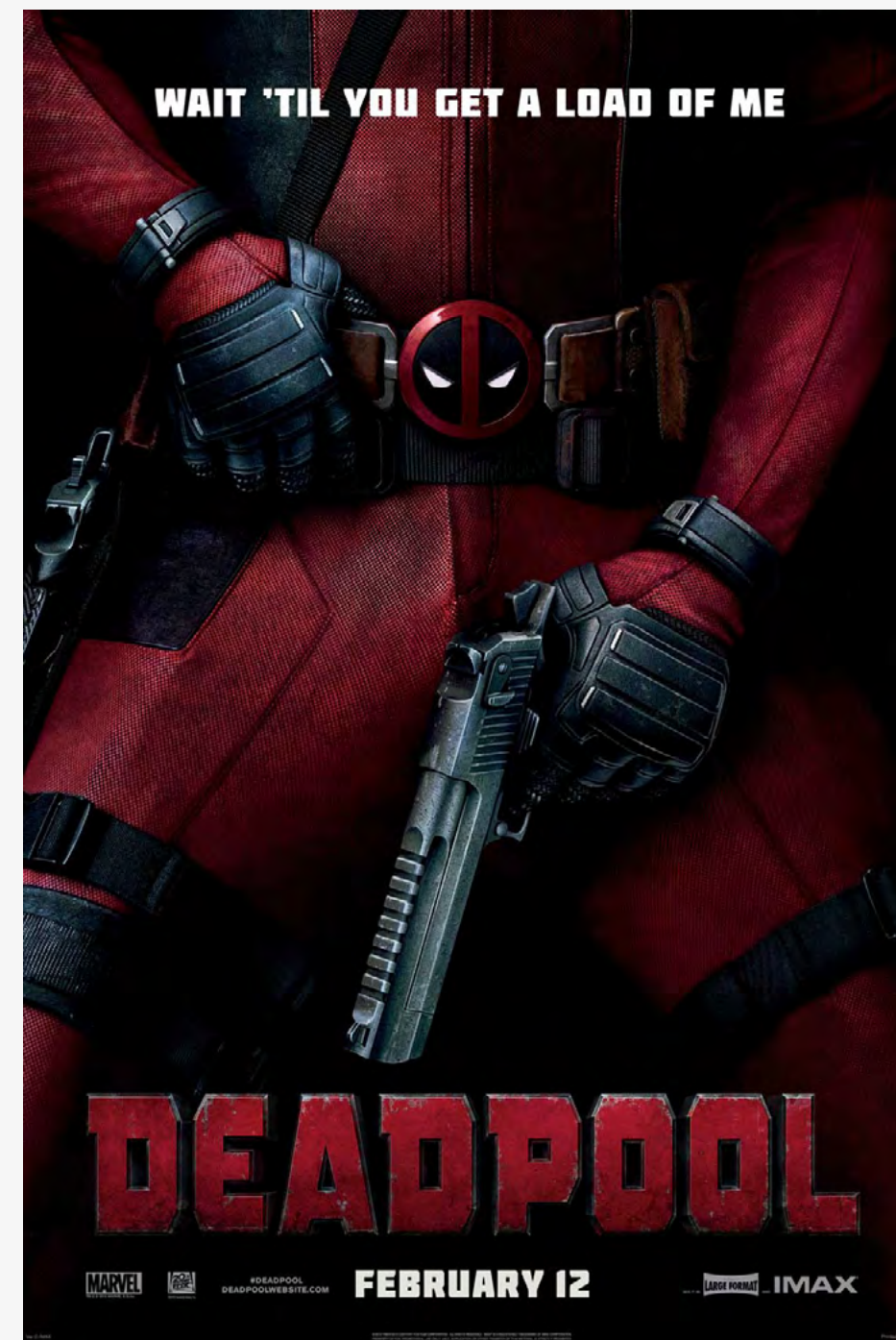
The film’s strongest point is its characters, hands down. Wade Wilson’s irreverence and near-constant breaking of the fourth wall is a joy to behold. Two of my favorite lines in the whole film both reference the X-Men franchise: “McAvoy or Stewart? These timelines can get so confusing.” and “It’s a big house. It’s funny that I only ever see two of you. It’s almost like the studio couldn’t afford another X-Man.” Another great moment is Deadpool warning Ajax/Francis against sewing his mouth shut, referring to the mind-bogglingly horrible iteration of the character in X-Men Origins: Wolverine. Wade’s cry of “My most prized possession!” while the camera’s focused on an action figure of the aforementioned before tossing it aside is also worth a good chuckle.

Deadpool is not the only hilarious character, however. His bartender buddy, Weasel, is also a riot. With his deadpan delivery of opinions sans any attempt to make others feel better, I found

many of his lines to be on par with Deadpool’s. His reactions to Wade’s new face are particularly enjoyable. Negasonic Teenage Warhead (and Deadpool’s reactions to her) is also fun to watch, as is her easily scandalized mentor, Colossus.

One thing I absolutely loved, amidst all the crude humor (which I do quite enjoy) is that Vanessa, a sex worker, is never treated as less human because of her profession. Even after starting to date Wade and later becoming engaged with him, it’s implied she hasn’t switched jobs and has no plans of it. This is remarkably progressive and I heartily endorse it. Sex workers are people too!

The antagonists, Ajax/Francis, Angel Dust, and the imaginatively named Recruiter, were not as compelling as their foes, but the movie pokes fun at itself for Francis, at least, with the beginning credits promising “A British Villain” (as well as ridiculing Hollywood casting tropes; the whole [sequence](#) is great). I liked Angel Dust’s interactions with Colossus, and Deadpool’s frequent child molester jokes at the Recruiter’s expense. However, considering how well handled most of the other characters were, it’s disappointing that these villains are just as forgettable as those in nearly every other recent comic book movie.



While the characters (or at least the protagonists) are incredible, the plot is a pretty generic (not actually a) superhero origin story. The various wacky flashbacks and flashforwards (and sixteen walls’ worth of breaking) help spice it up a bit. Beyond that, though, it’s fairly unremarkable. Truthfully, I think a more complicated or unique story would maybe detract from the characters, so I felt this was a good choice on the writers’ part.

The soundtrack adds to the film’s irreverence in many cases. The aforementioned opening credits

scene is set to Juice Newton’s “Angel of the Morning” and the later “You’re the Inspiration” by Chicago as Deadpool imagines (rather freakish) cartoon animals running all around Vanessa once they’re reunited lend a touch of absurdity in how drastically they differ from the rest of the movie’s tone. “Careless Whisper” over the end credits and animation is also hilarious. Other songs I particularly enjoyed were “Shoop” and “X Gon’ Give It to Ya”.

Though the market is saturated with superhero films, this hasn’t stopped movie-goers from spending their hard-earned cash on them. Even the terribly written grimdark crap pitting two heroes against each other for arbitrary reasons made a decent gross. However, *Deadpool* is exceptional for several reasons: Not only is it now the highest-grossing R rated movie ever (even after adjusting for inflation), but the property was not well-known to the public and is not a sequel of any sort. Goes to show how interested the world is in crude superpowered anti-heroes. I can only hope that future films aren’t lifeless derivatives of what’s made *Deadpool* great and that the inevitable sequels are just as much fun as this first entry. Go get your freak on!

Brittany Teodorski

We all know about Englipedia, right? I mean, we've all been here for at least eleven months at this point, so I can't imagine I'm popping anyone's monocle by talking about it. If you didn't know about it until now...good for you, I guess? Welcome to the cheaters' table.

Except is it cheating? I don't know. I really don't. Certainly, it can't be that bad to just look up lesson ideas on there, can it? Just to get the benefit of shared wisdom? Isn't it irresponsible to NOT take a gander at what other people have done when teaching the same grammar points just in case they're better at this than I am? Don't my students deserve that?

Yes. Yes, they do. But that is different from taking a worksheet wholesale from the site.

If you're like me, you get an uneasy feeling whenever you steal use one of their worksheets, but then I get an uneasy feeling when I take a number to wait in line at the bank. I think I just need to adjust to being an adult.

And it's not stealing in the most basic sense as whoever first designed the worksheet still has what they made, it's just that now I have it too. It's more akin to sharing and people always tell me that that's good. And they put it up in the first place, so clearly they wanted me to have it— it's like when people leave stuff

out on the street for others to take, and that's how I got like half the stuff I own.



Photo courtesy of iatethetv via flickr commons.

Could one claim it was like stealing in an intellectual property sense? Maybe. I'm using someone else's creation in a commercial context. I am being paid for deploying someone else's brainchild. But I'm not fluffing my plume with borrowed feathers as no one has said ever. I don't claim the worksheets as my own if the teachers ask (they very seldom do). However, I am loathe to reveal their source; I don't want them to know that most of my ideas are available online and just how eminently replaceable I really am. If they started reading

the texts into one of those apps that make you sound like Prince Charles, I doubt the students would even notice I'm missing.

I think one of the reasons I feel like I'm cheating is because I've already prided myself as being creative and thus believe that I should be able to make such things on my own. On the other hand, I've also always prided myself as being someone who enjoys playing Pokémon and using Englipedia worksheets gives me more time to do that of an evening, so to which side of myself should I be true?

Of course, the teachers get a great deal of

their material from a book; they're always using the same source which they didn't write. They go to conferences and swap ideas and their versions of the textbook have the answers written in them. And I highly doubt that they all developed the same rules and catchphrases for "Simon Says" independently. On top of this, the more established teachers have a ready-made bag of tricks from which to pull a lesson or a fill-in-the-blanks. My mother taught Spanish for forty years and used the same worksheets and classroom materials again and again, year after year only changing if one of the actors she'd cut out of a magazine died. And yet, for some reason, I feel I should be held to a higher standard. Or, perhaps more accurately, I fear I am duty-bound to a higher standard because of the sweetness of my life: I'm not made to do many of the things that make a teacher's life truly awful, surely I should at least make my own worksheets?

Englipedia certainly makes my job easier and my job is already pretty easy and it may elicit a token twinge of guilt in me, but I still use their worksheets all the time. I never really planned to stop: I'm not doing anything illegal or even against the description of my job and it saves me time. I mostly wrote this article as a way of assuaging some of the pangs. In this case, as per usual, feeling uneasy is a waste of time and energy— as my lawyer keeps telling me, "bad vibes are not admissible in court" and also "you didn't have an umbrella when you came in."

Rory Kelly

As I head into my final two months of living in Japan, I continue to panic.

I have a pretty good idea of what I want to do with myself, even immediately after I touch down on American soil (hug my mother, lavish affection on my pets, lug overly-full suitcases, pull a muscle). Following that, I'll pop down to San Francisco to say hello to this handsome specimen. And, I suppose, his owner, too. Then, I'll be applying for a job with an airline (I have an in!) to finance my continuing education (initially at community college) and the obsession with traveling and not staying in the same locale for more than four-day stretches at a time I've developed while here.

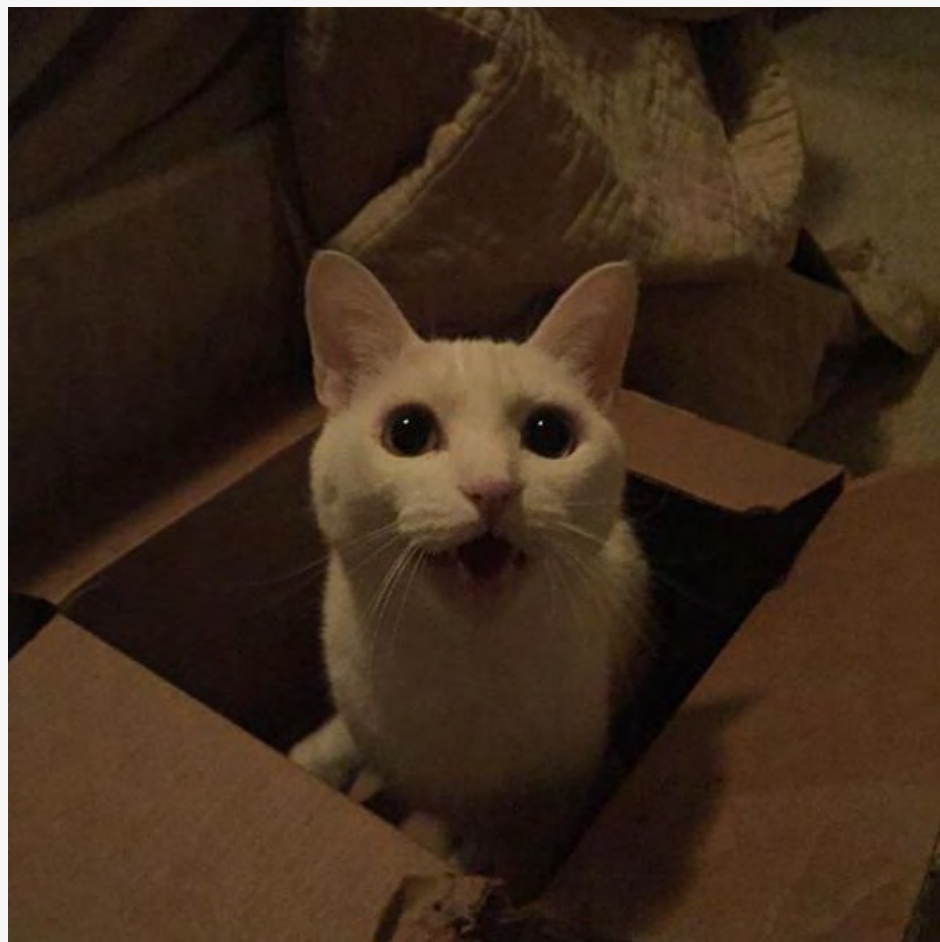


Photo courtesy of Ryan Hertel.

So it's not the future that has me panicking. Some of it even sounds—dare I say it?—exciting!

No. As may also be the case for many others also returning, I panic because I don't want to say goodbye.

Life here has been good to me. Maybe better than it has been at any other point. Each year has been fairly different, with a different core of people I spent a majority of my time with, but they've all been so incredibly enjoyable. I've had such a good time here that I've managed to spend only thirteen weekends entirely in Ono. And fortunately, the JET salary is good enough to cover the ridiculous amounts of yen I've spent riding the Shinkai buses.

Some highlights of the Ono to Sannomiya route include a store called Weed very close to the Miki bus station, the golf course I've never seen anyone at, and the winding road next to a river close to Kobe. It's so beautiful and I will take a picture (or five) of it eventually! Maybe even later today. I don't have so many trips left on the Shinkai bus, so I gotta get it in while I still can. I only have nine weekends left in Japan, and looking at my Excel spreadsheet detailing what I have and plan to do while I've been in Japan fills me with existential dread. My life will change in pretty much every way in such a short time, and it's impossible that I will remain unchanged. Who will I become? Hopefully someone who continues to travel an absurd amount.

During my time here, I've managed to visit

thirteen new countries. As expected, a majority of these are in Asia, but I also managed to get out to Europe twice! Should you feel the need, you have the ability to stalk my trips through the Hyogo Times website. I'm still trying to throw all of the bits and pieces I acquired from these trips into these dumb scrapbooks I've been making, but who knows how well that will turn out? Soon, everything needs to be packed up and shipped off...

My apartment used to have an absurd amount of knick-knacks strewn about. As of writing, my cards and postcards are still up, as is what I refer to as my nerd tree (and which has been up since November 2013; nerdiness is always in season), but nearly everything else has been stuffed into a box and sent back to America on a ship. Which I heartily recommend to everyone sending their life back home: it's significantly cheaper than EMS or Air Mail (especially if you've managed to acquire gigantic boxes and subsequently packed them to the brim) and, at least for my most recent package, takes a third of the advertised time. And I believe there are fewer restrictions on sending things like watches (four pocket watches have fallen into my grips— it should surprise no one that three of these are *Sailor Moon*). One of my most missed bits of decor are the Sailor Uranus and Sailor Neptune figures which I proudly had



displayed scissoring whilst Haruka held aloft her sword in glee. My room feels so much less exciting without them.

Also much less exciting will be life without those I'm leaving behind. I can't name everyone off who's left their mark on my heart, but I'll try to keep these short and not sappy. Try being the operative word. Tiffany and Abby, you made the weeknights in Ono so much less soul-sucking. Larisa and Devon, all the drinks in Kobe and the disgusting conversations we had will leave a permanent layer of scum on my gut. Mandy, we managed to not start hanging out until relatively late in the game, but I think we've really packed it in! Scott, thanks for all the trips, man. To those who've left before, are leaving with me, or I didn't mention, I love you too. It's been fun you guys.

Change is terrifying, but also necessary, and good. Often, it's the little, incremental changes that have the largest overall impact on our sense of self and ability to relate to those around us. So of course, I say to hell with these! September will mark a new era in a most dramatic fashion.

Though I panic, I hope I can accept the change heading my way with grace. I'll probably just binge more *Steven Universe* instead, though.

Brittany Teodorski

Okunoshima: A Floppy-Eared Paradise

Japan is a mystical land full of wonders, mysteries and all things kawaii. No place in Japan quite encapsulates all of these things the way Okunoshima aka “Bunny Island” does. Originally used as a research facility for biological weapons during World War II, the island was kept secret and the rabbits its test subjects. Towards the end of the war when the island was discovered, the scientists were ordered to cull the remaining rabbits. Rumour has it, either a group of school children who snuck into the lab or perhaps an empathetic member of staff, upon learning of the rabbits’ fate, smuggled some of the bunnies out and released them into the nearby forest. Those rabbits’ descendants make up the numerous fluffy hordes that roam the island now.



Okunoshima is a teeny tiny island located in Hiroshima prefecture and can only be accessed by ferry. For those looking to make their own trip; catch the Tokaido-Sanyo Shinkansen to Mihara station, then switch to the Kure line and get off at Tadano-Umi station. From there, it will be a short walk to the ferry terminal where a 20 minute ride will get you to the island. But be warned: the last regular ferry

leaves at 6pm. It is important to note that one of the only places you can buy the bunny food is at the ferry terminal. I recommend 2 or 3 bags of food. If you want to be SUPER prepared and truly curry favor with the fuzzy residents, bring your own fresh fruits and vegetables along and crush your opponents as you make your bid for lapine love.



Once you arrive on the island, you will see bunnies straight away. From here you will have a choice: walk or hire a bike. You can catch a bus to the main resort area where bike hire is available or make the 15 minute walk yourself. Personally, I recommend the walk; along with the furry inhabitants, Okunoshima offers spectacular island views which are definitely best enjoyed at a sedate pace. Once you reach the main area, you can hire a bike for the day for around 1000 yen. There is also a café and souvenir shop close by for food if you forgot to bring your own. There is also a museum dedicated to poisonous gases if a bit of science and history tickles your fancy.



Upon selecting your bicycle or walking shoe, you can follow along the easily marked paths that lead around the island and up the large hills in the center. A lap of the island by bike at a placid speed will take about an hour and a half, on foot three to four. Apart from the few hills in the center, it is a very easy journey. Throughout, there are several ruins and historical sites from the war era that you can visit, each with their own helpful little plaque explaining the ruin’s purpose and history. In some ways, it’s quite a somber place but seeing a rabbit bounce over a long forgotten chemical lab certainly lightens things up a bit. Especially when there are twenty of them.

The rabbits themselves are an interesting bunch. They come in a range of colors and sizes, with brown being the most common. Years of being fed by tourists have made them quite fiendish in their plights for food. They will ambush you the moment they hear the rustle off the tell-tale paper packet, jump in front of your bike as you ride and guilt you with adorable perky ear flops. Those uninterested in your treats will settle for basking in the shade or having a roll in the cool dirt. The bunnies are more than happy to be pet but do not like to be picked up (honestly I tried, on multiple occasions) but perhaps the best method for surprise cuddles was lying on the ground, throwing a handful of food on yourself

and lying still till they jumped on you. It may not be dignified but it definitely works.

Once you are out of food, the lapine love screeches to a halt and the little buggers won’t even come near you. For this reason, I recommend ending your day on the beach near the main area with an ice cream and watching the nearby rabbits frolic about in the shade. If you decide to stay, there are of course several hotels to stay at on the island, but for the most part they all range from moderately to really expensive. There is also a more affordable camping ground but it tends to book out quickly. Instead, I would suggest staying in nearby Hiroshima City and making a night of it.



Bunny Island is a remarkable experience, and one that is very uniquely Japanese. I highly recommend it as either a day trip or an overnight outing during the warmer months. It will be a lovely day with a plethora of photo ops that will rake in the Instagram likes like leaves in the fall but most importantly BUNNIES, BUNNIES SO MANY BUNNIES! ARRGH!

Rackle Beaman

In honor of my seventh visit (and as it's the most magically powerful number), below is a list of Kansai's best theme park's best attractions. Obviously, not everyone will agree with this, but I think it's safe to say most other ALTs' lists would be populated by the same rides. Without further ado, let's start with number seven.



7. Jaws

Having recently learned of the closure of *Back to the Future the Ride*, *Jaws* was able to slip into the ranking. While Universal Studios Hollywood still has *Jaws* comprise a part of its Studio Tour, the ride in Orlando was shut down. You are guided on a boat tour, and it goes about as well as you can expect. There isn't a single rider line, so you may have to wait awhile, and it's entirely in Japanese. You can entertain yourself by bringing aboard a dinosaur mitt available with turkey legs in Jurassic Park and irritating the employees.

6. Jurassic Park the Ride

I will always associate this ride with the time I went with my father and cousins in California and his hat flew off, forever lost. That said, make sure your

valuables are safely tucked away, and preferably with a waterproof shell. It's pretty variable in how wet you get based on where you're seated, but the dinosaurs are entertaining to look at and the one big drop is fun. Waiting in line, you'll be graced with a super racist video depicting only the fat white guy screwing everything up. Eating, smoking, taking pictures: you name it, he's doing it on the ride even after it's clear you're not supposed to.

5. Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey

It kind of kills me to put *Harry Potter* down this far as I grew up with the book series, but the wait times which continue to plague the ride knock it down quite a few pegs. I am happy that I got to ride twice for the price of one wait time when I went most recently, but the lack of a single rider option aggravates me. The technology and sets are definitely superior to what was used for *Back to the Future the Ride*, but are more or less comparable to *Spiderman the Ride*.



4. Spiderman the Ride

Despite liking *Harry Potter* more than *Spiderman*, the single rider and the cheesy effects of the various villains trying to attack you are just too entertaining to justify any other ranking between the two. FYI, the picture is taken after Electro shocks the car. Also, keep an eye out for Stan Lee's cameo!



3. Space Fantasy

I've probably ridden this more than any of the other attractions due to the single rider line moving much more quickly. Well, so long as the staff isn't ignoring people trying to get into the single rider line. It's very charming and good fun. Also, its theme is often changed: for Halloween last year, they had a Sadako theme, while for the recently ended Cool Japan campaign, they had a Kyari Pamyu Pamyu theme (who I recently learned, courtesy of my students, is only 23; what are we doing with our lives?!), though I was unable to experience the latter due to the aforementioned ignoring.

2. The Flying Dinosaur

USJ's most recent attraction, *The Flying Dinosaur* still had lengthy lines even for the single riders when I last visited. The English announcements are given by someone who sounds quite similar to Neil deGrasse Tyson, though that may just be the influence of having recently watched *Gravity Falls* (in which he guest stars for an episode, and it's hilarious). I found it very fun, though it is not for the faint of heart! Despite the length, the single rider line moves relatively quickly and it's fun to listen to people scream even when you're not currently on it. If you are truly a single rider, I found drawing and writing outlines for articles (such as the one you're

currently reading!) to be a great way to pass the time.

1. Backdrop

I always have the most fun on this, though the single rider line can move aggravatingly slowly. This is in part because single rider is ONLY for *Backdrop*, so of course they only have one car for that, while they have three for *Hollywood Dream* (the clearly inferior ride for adrenaline junkies such as myself: why face forward on a rollercoaster when you have other options?). There are five songs you can scream to while riding (of which you can select one), and your options change every so often.

Other Fun Stuff

Should you be able to afford a 年間パス, you can freely exit and enter whenever you like. This opens up so many options for dining at Universal City. Otherwise, the food is pretty standard theme park fare. I did enjoy the curry naan pizza I had recently, but this is seasonal. Also of note, for after you've digested your meals, are the bathrooms in The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, where Moaning Myrtle will talk at you.



Photo courtesy of Abby Smith.

Get on out there and work on your own "Best of" list for Universal Studios Japan, Kansai's favorite theme park. And if you go before the end of August, let me know; I may just show you around.

Brittany Teodorski

Of course it comes back to the shepherd. What is he doing right now? No, I'm more interested in the cave. That hill in the distance. I wonder how long it would take to walk there. I think it's too late right now, but tomorrow, I'm going to hike over there. Should I tell the birds? I turn my back on the window, and survey the now empty attic. Sybil is puttering about on the same chest he's been standing on since I crawled up here.

"Sybil, have you been to that cave?" I query.

"Of course not. This, just now, was the first report. We must have at least one more. Now that I have sent the watchers back with actual useful instruction, the next report should be more enlightening."

Sybil continues shuffling back and forth and I notice a piece of wood under his feet that does not exactly match the lid of the chest. Creeping closer, I see that it lights up dimly when Sybil steps on it. An electronic device?

"What's that?"

Sybil jerks his head like he didn't expect me to be that close to him, but he responds calmly enough, "This is today's report." He squints his eye at me. "Don't you have reports here? Or records, or communications?"

"Of course, but we don't keep them like that." I answer. "At least I don't." I lean closer to look for buttons on the device, but Sybil picks it up and flits to another chest, this one open.

"Well, that's finished." He states pointedly, as he

drops the stick into the chest and flips the lid closed with one foot.

I guess I'll take the hint and go downstairs.

Mother's already seen the food I brought, and has decided to make roast for dinner. I don't think she's quite figured out the cooking thing yet, though. The roast turns out so far past well done that no amount of gravy can help it. But Mother is sitting there smiling, so I'm gonna eat it.

"Have you seen the sheep down the road?" I want to ask her about the shepherd, but without being weird.

"There's sheep? I haven't had a chance to get out yet. Want to take a walk after dinner? We could see what else is down the road." Her reply puts that explanation to rest.

"Sure. There's even some adorable little lambs." Maybe the shepherd will talk sense if Mother's there too.

The evening is very nice, but the shepherd doesn't appear. We go down the road past the store and into the little town. The sun spins a spectacular sunset, and we walk through a golden light that makes the street prettier than it is. Suddenly, we stumble upon a bakery. Like the grocery store, this shop is also made of stones, but the inside is much more satisfying. The furniture is all wooden and rustic, with dried flowers and eucalyptus decorating everything. The smell of cinnamon and canned pease is almost overwhelming, but we order something with a name we don't understand and sit at a tiny polished table to drink tea. Mother chats with the shop owner. She's doing so much better here, but...

"... be there about 5 tomorrow. We are just so pleased to have such a nice pair in the Fordolyn cottage." I suddenly realize the shopkeeper has set up some event with Mother. I missed it. Does it have anything to do with the welcome the shepherd talked about?

On the way back to the cottage, I ask Mother what it was. She explains that there will be some sort of town festival tomorrow. The shop lady was very adamant that we shouldn't miss it. There will be folk dances and traditional wood carving. So, not a welcome party. I'm a little disappointed.

Now I sit on my bed and watch the night outside my window. Oh yeah, I will go to that hill in the morning. How could I forget about that?

The hill is farther than it looks. I found a knapsack in the mudroom of the cottage this morning, so I have water, and lunch, but this is taking longer than expected. At least it's not a very hard walk. I've been following a road mostly. Every once in a while there are these paths through the fields, which is very convenient. Maybe this used to be a popular hiking spot? Or maybe it's busier in some specific hiking season? Anyway, there's no one around today. Even the sheep are gone. No, wait, I think I can see them off the South perhaps. The shepherd must be down there too. If I don't get to this cave before lunch, I'm going to have to turn back.

The paths are getting smaller I think. I'm almost to the hills now. There hasn't been a road for at least an hour. I wonder who owns this land. Do all the fields belong to that one shepherd? None of them seems to be anything but grass, and rocks. At least the weather is cooperating. Oh, look, there are more trees.

"You've come!" A voice from the tree breaks my

reverie.

"Tivvy!" I see her when she swoops to a lower branch of the hornbeam nearest me.

"You've come to see the cave haven't you? I hoped you would, but I was sure Sibyl wouldn't let you." She struts down the branch with a smile in her feathers.

"I didn't ask any of the birds. Do you think I should have? I did tell Mother." She stops walking but doesn't answer, so I continue, "Where is the cave?"

She still doesn't answer. I should have told the birds I was coming. Maybe not Sybil, but I could have told Henwyn. What if she wanted come too? Should I go back? Should I just find this cave on my own? Will Tivvy ever talk to me again?

"Well, come on then." I breathe again when Tivvy ruffles her neck and decides whatever faux pas I committed can't be helped.

We come to a creek and follow it into a small ravine that cuts behind the hill. Suddenly there's a cool breeze and the cave appears. It's adorable really. This whole little forest with the creek and the sunlight and the grey rocks is a wedding photoshoot waiting to happen.

"Where's the box?" a new voice speaks the instant I duck into the cave. I can't see anything because of the sunlight in my eyes, but I know the voice.

It's the shepherd.

Louise Warren

This is chapter 8 of Sometime Last Week. Catch up on [chapter 7](#), or start from the [beginning](#).

The Englishman surprised his co-workers and the BOE by requesting a second year. Most of them had judged him a “One-r” (as they called those who couldn’t bear to be away from their homeland for more than a twelvemonth), with his illiteracy, frequent bouts of culture shock and general lack of guile. But he asked for, and was granted, a year’s extension on his contract. And when the time to renew a second time came around, they thought for sure they would be shot of him but once more he defied expectations and requested to remain.

Rumours began. Surely this roly-polly Englishman was up to something? This prissy, fussy, bumbling foreigner couldn’t actually be enjoying himself. If he were really invested, he would make some effort to learn the language, or at least eat some Japanese food rather than order Cadbury confections online at great expense.

They wondered what it was: there were suggestions he had taken a local lover, but these were countered by pointing out his slovenly appearance and lack of appeal.

Some considered that maybe he had taken a second job that he was reluctant to give up— in flagrant breach of his contract. However, they remembered how lazy he was and how hard it was to convince him to show up for the job he already did have, and this theory was quickly quashed.

Finally, it was decided that he must have committed some terrible crime in his home country and was now unable to return; his colleagues became convinced that this must be the truth and, indeed, it even explained why he had wanted to travel abroad in the first place, given his obvious aversion to trying new things and engaging with new people.

Unbeknownst to him, this story actually gained

the English some new credit among his colleagues, although as he made it a rule not to interact with them except for strictly on work business, this didn’t impact the rest of his short life in any way.

And besides, they were wrong. The Englishman wasn’t a murderer; the truth was so much worse...

His first few months in the new country, the Englishman had been miserable. He yawned at the shrines, rolled his eyes at the customs and felt his stomach quiver whenever he saw raw fish. The heat scratched at his skin all day and at night, insects besieged his tiny room. He hated that he was expected to change his shoes five times a day, and wait at red lights and not use his phone on the train. He was unhappy with his new home and he let it show.

Early on, some of the other English speakers took him to make a knife at a master swordsmith’s forge, and told the Englishman he could have whatever he wished carved onto the blade. He chose “I hate this country”; the others declined to translate this for the swordsmith.

They would offer to take him around temples or invite him to explore new cities with them and he would always decline, choosing instead to sit in his room, read *Buzzfeed*, and imagine himself back home.

One day, around three months in, he was walking home past the fish market; the day was hot and the walk was long and so, against the protestations of his nose and stomach, he decided to cut through the market.

As he passed the various stalls of sashimi, the tables laden with everything from anchovies to zander and one tank that seemed to contain a great white shark, a hand reached out from the shadows and slipped something into his bag without him noticing.

When he got home, he put his bag down on the counter and went to fix himself a drink. But, as

he was mixing, he heard a strange mewling sound. Glass in hand, he opened up his bag and found that someone had placed in there a tiny, purple squid. It was still alive and even then, its tentacles were snaking curiously about, getting a feel for the fabric of the bag, the tiles of the kitchen counter, even the skin of the Englishman’s arm.

He briefly considered walking back to the fish market but it was thirty-two degrees outside and besides, he’d just seen a new quiz online and he needed to know which member of the Rurats he was. He didn’t eat seafood as a rule, so he ran a cold bath, dropped the squid in there (he had to pry off the suction cups with a spatula) and went to browse the internet.

The squid sat happily in there for several months (the Englishman took showers), snacking on the various spiders and cockroaches that seemed to appear out of nowhere every time the Englishman opened the door. It would strategically position its ten tentacles so they looked like stylish drapings from the shower bar, and then when the insects came to inspect the bathroom for foodlets, it would drag them into its tepid depths.

Time wore on, and the Englishman still resented his position in life though he found his new flatmate made things better. He declined to tell his landlord about the squid, as he couldn’t shake the feeling it was somehow odd.

When winter came, he found he actually had to provide for the creature, as the insects were all dead, and so he’d feed it the rice crackers people kept on leaving on his desk at work.

And suddenly his BOE were asking him if he wanted to reappoint and he realised that, if he left, the squid would surely die and, to his surprise, he felt concerned. So he signed for another year, reasoning that the squid would probably die in that time. He could have googled their average lifespan, but he didn’t like to use the internet for factual purposes.

As one year turned to two, the squid grew

and showed no sign of ailing. In fact, its dexterity, agility, intelligence, appetite and size were all on the increase. When the Englishman went to work in the morning, it would only dedicate two tentacles to catching food— the others were put to work on the plan. Soon, the Englishman found himself signing for a third year, against his wishes (he wanted to get back to mashed potatoes, dammit).

The squid now took up the entire bathroom, and the Englishman was forced to wash in the kitchen sink like a baby. Whenever he tried to get his toothbrush or even an earbud, it was just tentacles, tentacles, tentacles.

As with most things in life, it was a *Buzzfeed* article that finally broke the camel’s back. A new anime convention had started in London, and he couldn’t experience all that wonderful cosplay because he was stuck in Japan because of his stupid squid. This was the last straw.

It was time to reclaim his bathroom.

He searched through his cupboard until he found the knife he’d made, the one imbued with the strength of his hate, and he tied it to the handle of the broom he’d never used for anything else. And then he went in.

In the following weeks, when the Englishman didn’t turn up to work, his colleagues assumed he’d shorted his contract and secretly, they were relieved. He was a standoffish murderer, after all.

When his landlord went to rent out his flat to someone new, they found a hole in the bathroom floor— someone had, over the course of several years, clearly been expanding the drain hole and, through use of some incredibly strong but unbelievably flexible tool (like a roided-up pipe cleaner) had redirected the pipe so it no longer led into the sewers.

It led to the sea.

Rory Kelly

In 1927 on a suitably wet morning in Port Talbot in the south of Wales, Philip Antony Quince let out an audible sigh. He had just been informed by his want-away Dutch-Filipino girlfriend, Punie, via the medium of a pair of used men's underwear deposited into the glove compartment of their rented Vauxhall Astra that their relationship was to end. The underwear, salmon in hue and with two kaffir lime leaves made from felt stitched into the rear, bore a simple note: "Antony, I dislike you tremendously."

The underwear were of particular interest to Quince, being as they were a gift from his late uncle, the self-proclaimed Duke of Wilmslow, who used them initially as a rudimentary parachute during his teenage years and then later as a flag, which were permanently flown at half-mast outside his boarding school dormitory. A simple mosaic made from breadcrumbs accompanied the flag, which spelled out the immortal line: "bastards."

Quince had, at the time, been driving to his local supermarket, where he had hoped to purchase a pouch of smoked salmon trimmings, a bail of fluorescent garden twine and a rubber snake, in order to complete a high school science project that he had received a "C+" mark for seven years prior. The grade had troubled him, and he was adamant that he would finish the piece, tentatively titled: "The African rhinoceros and its breeding habits in the Sudanese delta." He would present his new findings in person to Mr. Runslip, his former high school Biology teacher,

thus validating the intervening years which were marked only by bitterness, disappointment and regret. The discovery of the underwear changed everything. Quince pulled the car over to the side of the road and turned the engine off.

It had been a trying week. The lush green valleys that loomed over the village that Quince had called home for over twenty-four days had been lashed by incessant rain. The force of the droplets striking the single glazed window panes of his modest two up two down rented accommodation had broken his concentration. The anxiety caused by his inability to finish the science project had been hanging over him for some time, like a glove filled with mud, and now the bulbous fingers were touching him, metaphorically, on the ears. Quince took an extra strong mint from his bag and pushed it into the fleshy pocket between his left cheek and his teeth and sucked hard. His disastrous attempt to impress his former tutor was not the only thing that had gone wrong recently.

Quince had been unable to secure work in the valleys since his arrival, and as such had promised to write for his landlord, in lieu of rent, a collection of short stories, the first of which was to concern a Japanese school office which is run entirely by a staff of snow crabs. He had not, however, been able to make it past the first page, which, by his own admission, contained only a list of different types of hats, and a small crude drawing at the bottom of a fist.

Antony had met Punie under duress four calendar weeks earlier. Not realizing his mistake, Antony had attempted to enter a local branch of IKEA whilst dressed as an Atlas moth, and

given assurances to startled shoppers that yes in fact the shop was currently on fire and no, the Swedish meatballs are not made fresh each day but are actually mass manufactured by a subsidiary company and subsequently shipped to stores nationwide where they are reheated.

Punie, confused and swept up in a sea of flailing limbs and scatter cushions, had fallen into the arms of Quince, who had immediately proposed.

Antony's best friend from school, Ren Bunda, a rotund Turk of farming stock, arrived at the scene sometime later with a large weatherproof halogen bulb, and attempted to subdue the amorous maneuvers of his longtime friend with its warm flickering glow. However, he had arrived in haste, and had forgotten his traditional Vietnamese conical raffia hat, (which he refused to travel without), his prescription glasses, the halogen bulb, and also some small porcelain mice that were given to him at Easter by a friend of his auntie.

Section A: Words and Phrases

Circle the correct word which paraphrases the second paragraph

- (a) Cereal
- (b) Stay up late
- (c) Traffic jam
- (d) I'm very glad to meet you

Section B: Focus Listening

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences

- (a) Quince goes to the () in his ().
- (b) Do you eat breakfast every day in your home ()?
- (c) Rinsing the body has never felt that way ().

Section C: Pre-Speaking

Why didn't the author finish the story?

Select an appropriate answer

- (a) Intense malaise fuelled by job dissatisfaction
- (b) Sweltering heat causing looseness in the bowel
- (c) Jaw cramp

Scott Patterson

Scott Patterson

another year that flows on by
 again comes the time for “goodbye”s and “hi”s
 from the season of the fireflies
 light up the night and take to the skies
 to the season of the hana bee
 send sparks through the air and float on free

soon will come the current of the sea
 squeaky sand, and you, and me
 we’ll leave our footprints for a time to be

then the waves will come. and
 we’ll all part ways
 to face head on the coming days

we’ll remember the nights of candles & food
 popcorn & movies, the onsen & moon
 defrosting a turkey & crafting a feast
 concerts, bikes, jumbo ferries, and snowy trees

we’ll remember the feelings of forever
 grateful the world’s brought us all together
 for friendship is made of cats & stars
 joking & laughing & singing

whenever you are
 the bubbles of time will keep on turning
 we’ll be here & there
 constantly learning, but
 next is the season of coming & going

while we’ve danced this dance many a turn
 the steps aren’t any easier to learn
 we’ll try to draw out the music for as long as it goes
 but when the melody slowly fades, and dies
 we know we can’t avoid the “goodbye”s

tears will flow inside my heart
 because it’s sad
 that we’ll be worlds apart

an extended hug & intense waves
 will carry us on to our own new days
 I’ll put our memories in a positive frame, but
 for a not always forever
 my heart will ache
 knowing our lives will never again be the same

16200609

mandy wong

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
All month:	Cinema Street Fest			1	2	3
	Cat Exhibition				Kumamoto Charity Event	Cat Festival
	Dotonbori Lantern Festival (Osaka)				HAJET Awaji Tour	
					Aioi Peron Festival	
			Hydrangea Festival			
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
			Amanogawa (Osaka)		Tamba Happiness Market HAJET Farewell Party	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
			Nishinomiya Umeshu Matsuri			
			Gion Matsuri			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
西宮 Umeshu Matsuri						Hidaka Summer Festival Manto Fire Festival Tenjin Matsuri (Osaka)
			Gion Matsuri			
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Tenjin Matsuri (Osaka)				Ichijima River Festival	Latin American Festival Himeji Port Festival	
					Umeda Yukata Matsuri (Osaka) Sumiyoshi Matsuri (Osaka)	

