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A Trip Through Chaos

A Trip to the Pond

The rain came down on us as we trek to the beautiful pond, and the water ripples with each drop hitting exactly like the cup of water in the car scene in *Jurassic Park*. With each ripple, the clean flat surface of the water is disturbed. The rings travel out into the center of the pond, each spread in an uneven array. The pond spans what felt like acres, and in the middle, there lays a small island. With the three lone trees on the lush island, a protective overhang, blocking out the rain, is formed. From this island, a sturdy bridge connects the small inhabitant of the pond to the outside world. The pond is split into two sections, one side in constant flux, ever changing due to pumps pushing the water into currents. It traps any creature unlucky enough to be there, as they try to swim away, they are always pushed back. The other side, is the calm, peaceful waters, where there is no pump, and the animals live in harmony.

The animals of the pond, the ducks, were stuck in the chaos when we arrived. The endless green pond is populated with black-green ducks that shine in the sun, but in this sea of green, a white mallard. The helpless, the entrapped, nay, the imprisoned, animals tried to escape. They tried to venture into the safe waters of nature, but to no avail. The ducks were a platoon, and as the white mallard led them further into the chaos, away from safety, they valiantly marched deeper into the oncoming storm. If one follows a commander, are they brave? If one

follows blindly, are they stupid? One duck, one who was specifically old and war-scarred, had only one leg, but nevertheless, it still supported itself, overcoming the obstacles of our civilization.

Society is chaos. We spend our entire lives in constant flux, and the water pumps of life separate us from the calm outside world. If we relax, if we take a breath, we would see the natural beauty around us, not the “beauty” within our artificial world. Society is fire. The outside world is so close, but through false leaders, through material need, through our need, it might as well be multiple worlds away. Nature beckons us to her, but no one notices; for everyone is encapsulated by their own worries. Mankind was not built to worry every hour of every day. We were once a species of free thinkers, adventurers, scientists, soldiers; we were each our own, we were each individuals. Now, now we are as one, we are all paranoid panickers.

We spend too much time looking forward at what’s to come that we do not see what is here, and, given how we have treated it, what may not be here for long. For one moment, imagine no more fears, we would be able to embrace peace. We would be able to once again, become in tune with the calm waters of nature. Like the duck with one leg, we are able to overcome the fear, we are able to fight against society and keep ourselves up, even when the odds are stacked against us.

Into the Grove

Following the winding path, as we hike into the grove, you can feel yourself starting to relax under the cool shade. The circular arrangement of the weather worn, wet wooden benches allows for all who went to face each other. It was almost as if the grove whispered into everyone’s ear, trying to start a conversation between them all. The calm, silent grove is only

disturbed every so often by a bird. Be it a chirp, or be it a flap, the calm can be sliced into with the smallest amount of effort. Nevertheless, these moments, these moments of complete silence, these moments where a pin drop would be heard from a mile away, are the real moments of clarity. One moment, while enjoying the beauty around me, a bird flew through, landing chaotically on a branch. The tiny twig twisted terribly, and it seemed that it might break under the weight; nevertheless, as the bird struggles to regain its footing, it is able to work towards one goal, and accomplish it, no matter the problem. We like to think we are like the bird, able to prioritize, but our minds will never be as focused as the bird, not with our amplitude of multitasking

Working towards one goal allows us to thrive, it allows us to strive for something. Be it as small as staying on a branch, or as large as a final dissertation, we can work towards these goals, we can achieve them. Nevertheless, with each year passing by, the amount of multitasking increases, the amount of chaos increases, and the amount of focus decreases. Focus, for once. Focus on one goal. For when someone is able to focus on one item in particular, it allows greatness to flow. When doing multiple events at the same time, one is bound to be lost in the chaos of it all. A linear spotlight shined on a set goal allows for organization, and compartmentalization of necessary steps. With a single focus, well, then finishing it is a cake walk. With multiple? Chaos, in the purest form.

Down the Creek

As I walked into the creek, it was noticeably cooler, as if a being above decided to turn on the fan on a hot day, but it was only blowing in one location. With the creek bed separated

from the outside world, one can be at peace and truly alone. All the hustle, all the bustle of life, it bleeds away until there is nothing left. My mind goes blank, free of worry, free of society's grip. I am one. Throughout each section, the creek changes. Some are warm, dry, cozy with the sun up above, other are cold, moist, and encased in shadow. Nevertheless, no section is more important than the others, as each one brings their own unique charm and secrets.

Within the dark, there lies alcoves, shielded from the creek by small walls of branches and leaves, that seem to have no end. Within the light, there lies growth, the greenery, on the moss, on the plants, on the trees, all reaching into the heavens. The trees above come together, and their canopies create a tunnel, but it is in ruin, for there are large holes in the ceiling where the bright light of the gods seep down into the underground. The creek stretches on, and as I draw near to what I think is the end, I am greeted with a new sight, something that I have never seen before.

In front of me, a tree has fallen. Now, that is nothing new, as anyone would guess. No, what made this tree special was what lay atop it. It was covered in long tendrils of leaves, this earth-made archway was blocked off by a wall of green. I walked through it, and lo and behold, I found a shelter. I veered off the creek bed, and entered the abode, following the stone path all the way to the entrance. Inside, a bench, a rock shelf, and a fire pit, encircled by it all. The fire pit is an image of content, due to the fact that surrounding the entire pit, was a carefully placed rock border. Each weathered down to a smooth, flat surface, it was clear that time was spent on this proverbial hut alone in the woods. It seemed that who lived there had been gone for an amount of time, so after taking a short rest, I continued my hike. As I wander the creek, time has no

meaning, have I been gone for two hours, for twelve minutes, days? Only time will tell. When I finally decided to leave, when I finally decided to return to the world, my, how it had changed.

A point of view dramatically changes from experience. We have so much hate in this world, so much anger, so much pain. We need to overcome these faults, to make ourselves better, because if we cannot, we will bomb each other to kingdom-come, and no-one will be able to “enjoy” the spoils of war. From my time on these voyages into the natural world, I have changed, as have many men before me. Was it for the better? That is for you to decide.

It made me think, for when you are alone, truly alone, you begin to unwind, and you begin to think. As I sat in the probable abode of a hermit before, as I sat next to a chaotic pond, as I delved into the grove, I observed. I did not overlook anything. It is true that you can discover much by just watching, by just listening. The calming rhythmic sway of nature allowed for me to experience something that was not felt in a long, long time. Contentedness. The worries of the world shed away, the chaos dissolves, and my mind is widened.

How petty, did the wars seem now, feeling as if I was looking down onto the earth for far away, the idea that one corner of this small planet fought another to the death, caused only confusion. There seemed to be no reason for this chaos among us all. We are all the same, and nothing about your religion, nothing about your army, nothing about your speeches can ever change that. You begin to agree with those who have actually seen the Earth from outside. As astronaut Frank Borman elegantly put it all the way back in 1968, “When you're finally up at the moon looking back on earth, all those differences and nationalistic traits are pretty well going to blend, and you're going to get a concept that maybe this really is one world and why the hell can't we learn to live together like decent people.” We are one world, and it may be the only one

we get, we need to work together. Everyone has their light and dark sections, everyone has their alcoves and their greenery, but we do not have the luxury of a wall of leaves to separate us from the rest of the world. We must learn to get along.

Work Cited

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