

Animals' Babel

By Yoko Tawada

*Translated by
Alexandra Atkins, Munro Forgan,
Grant Randell, Maia Reid,
Fern Stuart & Joe Wright*



With illustrations by Kenji Yanobe

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Preface

This project started as a playful idea to combine academic supervision with creativity and, in turn, to spend some rewarding time collaborating. One of the graduate students, Grant Randell, profoundly inspired me to look for ways to connect Japanese language acquisition with translation, with sustainability, with allegories of grass-roots activism and, last but not least, with the embodied space of theatricality/communication. Thanks to the work of another graduate student, Maia Reid, we soon realised that the project might seem dialogic, but is actually polyphonic. Owing to the agile vision of Prof Marco Sonzogni, more students majoring in Japanese were offered a chance to expand their language and culture skills through translation. Since Tawada's play has six characters/animals, naturally our group increased to six graduate students of Japanese at Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

The outcome is “neither a book, nor a work, but an energy, and in this sense it is the only art of life [...] Theatrical representation is finite and leaves behind it, behind its actual presence, no trace...” (Derrida, 1978). Within the praxis of translation, the “energy” was generated within a “unpreempted” space cleared by a “pedagogical desire” for “inhabiting” and “radically offering” (Sedgwick, 2006) in a manner that recognises the “incomprehensibility” within “the aleatory sociality [...] of the wager” (Sakai, 2009). The more specific engagement of theatre with dialogic teaching, including foreign language acquisition, proposed by the work of playwright Oriza Hirata, confirmed the synergy between communication in incomprehensibility, sociality, and a finitude that is open-ended. This is supported by translation scholar Mona Baker's insights into the link between translation and prefigurative politics, dovetailed with the anxiety of open-endedness and a commitment to the betterment of teaching and learning conditions, social justice and ecological crisis. Yoko Tawada never fails to provide a creative three-dimensional text to build this small stage on.

Through “radically offering” free interpretation of her work and creative dialogues to academics and performers, Tawada is essentially channelling her interest in theatre into a gesture of communication. In this fable she presents a fascinating critique of civilization through the animals' graduated proximity to humans while, at the same time, presenting distinct social types: the intellectual, the social activist, the craftsperson, the delinquent, the hobbyist/enthusiast and the leisure class. These social types survive the Great Flood of ecological disaster and assemble around a mythical Tower of Babel, which is multilayered in itself. Animals' Babel is an allegory of rebuilding after the end of the world, of coercive labour symbolising unity, and as a sustainable project based on sociality through translation. The three acts of the play suggest three stages of communication intrinsically, as “incomprehensibility” from the representation of the animals as animals (Act I), the animals as humans (Act II), and the animals/humans (Act III). In Act I, environmental depletion in association with warfare is represented as the evil of human civilization. The absurdity of labour conditions is examined in Act II, and the attempt to ‘translate’ as a more adequate form of joint social action is played out in Act III. Amidst the generally satirical/ironic tone of the play, the election of Squirrel as a ‘boss’ a.k.a. ‘translator’ comes closest to being the most solemn moment in the play. When Fox attempts to ridicule this election, they are reminded that they have no home to return to, as their habitat has been taken over by the construction of an airport.

Akihiro Ogawa's work on ‘civil society’ and ‘life-long learning’ points out the ambiguities that such concepts acquire within the regime of neoliberalism. Ogawa's research

asks uneasy questions as to whether the civil society, as a form of ‘agency’ under neoliberalism, is not just another instrumentalisation/subordination of people’s ideas for improving their community’s life conditions. When the universities include the so-called survival skills of the “four competencies” (i.e., building human relations, self-management, problem solving and career planning) are they not creating simultaneously resilient and “flexible and convenient subjects for the employers” (Ogawa, 2015)? This double-edged condition is at the heart of humanities education: adapt, resist, over-adapt.

Tawada’s way of re-building on the idea Babel resonates with George Steiner’s equation of translation to communication (and incommunicability), as well as Jacques Derrida’s pointing to the limits of theorisation over the “Babelian performance” (Derrida, 1985). The shared space we attempted to weave through translation/communication, being temporary co-travellers in Hirata’s train, is, as Tawada indicates, a public space. In the end, the animals discover that the humans are the audience of the play. The “incomprehensibility” at the end of Act II posits Babel as an “onion” as, in Cat’s reassuring revelation, a “theatre.” Our project has also provided a stage for a virtual meeting with the genius of Tawada, and that of Kenji Yanobe, the artist who inherited the quest of Osaka Expo ’70 – “the Progress and Harmony of Humanity” – and who created these illustrations for our online reading at the University of Melbourne on 12 October 2022.

Kojin Karatani reminds us in his *The Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* (1978) and in ‘The End of Modern Literature’ (2005) that Japanese modern literature, with the introverted reader, is a by-product of the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement’s failure in the Meiji Era. Karatani reminds us that modern literature, as a serious genre, is a product of the material conditions of modern citizenship and subjectivity, and it necessarily collapses, perhaps in the way humanities collapse under neoliberalism. It is a suppressed genre, that of comedy and laughter, or the polyphonic, lurking at the margins of modern literature, and exceeding it, which Karatani associates with the “carnavalesque” worldview. Would this not mean that our “translucent” translation project is the return of the carnival, a finite attempt to realise unscripted, makeshift language teaching?

DENNITZA STEFANOVA GABRAKOVA,
DRAMATURG

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Cast of Translators



Alexandra Atkins: Over the course of this translation project, I graduated, moved country, and became a Masters student at Osaka University. The one consistency that followed me throughout this transition period was the meetups, video calls, emails and chat messages with my classmates, friends and teacher, all connected through the honourable work of Yoko Tawada. I found a lot of comfort and solace within this group, who “might have just been trying to colonise my foxy spirit”, along with the affirmation that my academic and career pursuits in linguistics and translation/interpretation were well-chosen. The play, the people, and the translation process itself all hold very special memories that I won’t forget, and I hope to be able to experience this again someday.



Munro Forgan: I came into the MICAT as an undergraduate who studied Computer Science and Japanese – “What’s wrong with having hobbies?” It helped to further develop my bilingual and bicultural skills, reinforcing my understanding of language as a gateway to intercultural competence, and taught me how to understand and embrace the heritage of difference, both personally and professionally.

While currently I am working as a software developer, the MICAT has sparked an interest in learning and engaging with other cultures, including the interfaces between culture and technology, that I will not forget. “Artistic freedom is worth more than personal freedom.”



Grant Randell: This translation of *Animals’ Babel* is the product of many a fortuitous happenstance. An untranslated Yoko Tawada work is a rare gem, but so too is the translated work that now attests to the collaborative project embarked upon by this menagerie of young translators.

The rendering of this play in English wasn’t always certain, however. A pet project orphaned in its infancy, it found a home in this group of postgraduate students, eager to develop their translation and intercultural communication skills within the frame of Victoria University of Wellington’s School of Languages and Culture, helmed by Project Manager/Zookeeper, Dennitza Gabrakova. In a transitional period, the project provided a space for creativity and learning, and brought together its collaborators, as it still does to this day.

I am currently academically tackling “one of those languages that are of little economic value”, Literary Sinitic.



Maia Reid: The MICAT (Master of Intercultural Communication and Applied Translation) allowed me to gain an understanding about the crucial role of communication across languages and cultures. I enjoyed intertwining my two backgrounds – New Zealand and Japan – throughout this study, and the course gave me many insights about understanding culture. Some topics that I thoroughly enjoyed were the influence of culture, categorisation subgroups and identities, and nonverbal communication and culture. I was also able to practice my translation/interpretation skills, gaining a deeper knowledge of translating across Japanese and English. I enjoyed having group discussions about potential issues and how we would translate these.

I am currently working in the interpreting industry – in the sport area – where I am faced with these challenges in the day-to-day. Every day, I am reminded of how important communication is, both verbal and nonverbal, to “create a tune from that dissonance”.



Fern Stuart: I hold a Bachelors in Japanese and Asian Studies and am a graduate of the MICAT (Masters in Intercultural Communication and Applied Translation) programme, masterminded by Marco Sonzogni. My studies at Victoria University of Wellington created the opportunity for me to meet so many amazing, insightful people. In fact, one of the biggest contributing factors for me undertaking a Masters was feeling so compelled by Marco Sonzogni's and Dennitza Gabrakova's knowledge, expertise and personalities that I was eager to learn from them further. And "when you lend an ear to the babble of humans, one acquires culture and education". Thus, I enrolled in the programme, and before I knew it, I found myself reincarnated as a cat and contributing to the translation of Yoko Tawada's play. I was able to become closer to the work and the wonderful people I worked alongside.

I am now living in Japan and working as an ALT (Assistant Language Teacher). Dog and Cat still regularly meet for shenanigans, and I am excited at the prospect of connecting with the other animals, and our Zookeeper, whenever I can.



Joe Wright: My time in the MICAT (Master of Intercultural Communication and Applied Translation) programme, where I participated in this collaborative exercise, taught me the true value of translation and the duty of the translator. The biblical story of the Tower highlights the division of people through language. The translator's role is to seek out those divisions, and in that delicate space, their duty is to rebuild connections; to collaborate with each side. This perspective grew my passion for intercultural communication and translation. Since the course, I was lucky to have been shortlisted in the John Dryden translation competition, where I was able to draw attention to Manga translation in an academic setting, with a translation of Masanori Morita's delinquent Manga *Rokudenashi Blues*.

The *Animals' Babel* project was a brilliant opportunity to act out this role with a group of people, each of whom have a wide variety of experience and perspectives. There were no expectations, aside from reading and the drinking of tea, and in the chaos and spontaneity we managed to, I hope, honour the spirit of Tawada's work. I am eternally grateful to everyone involved in the project. I have learnt so much, and I will always look back fondly at the late nights and tea sessions spent with the team while agonising over our understandings and translations.

Currently, I am developing my research skills in the public sector, while also labouring to better my Japanese and translation skills, in the spirit of the "ideal job where you take as long as possible". I hope to one day translate Manga and video games professionally, and to further develop the connections between English and Japanese speakers.



Brooke Soulsby: I came to this project as a freelance editor and book designer through the kind invitation of Dr Sydney Shep, The Printer at Wai-te-ata Press. Sydney mentioned that her colleague and friend Dennitza had guided a group of MICAT students towards an English translation of Yoko Tawada's play *Animals' Babel*, and she wondered if I'd like to be involved in preparing it for e-book conversion. I was thoroughly intrigued. The profound, absurd elements of the play have left me enthralled from beginning to end!

As an alumna of Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington who majored in Theatre and English Literature, and also of Whitireia Polytechnic's Graduate Diploma in Publishing (Applied) programme, this project has been a wonderful melding of my skills and interests. I have a particular interest in exploring the performativity in works that I edit and write, and in seeing how this can then be translated through design – font choice, layout, etc. – onto the page. I am grateful to have been brought into the brilliant and complex fold of this translation of *Animals' Babel*.

ACT I

FOLLOWING A GREAT FLOOD.



Somehow, it feels like a hole has opened beside my body.



A hole beside your body?



Here, see? There's a hole the size of one human portion.



But I don't see any hole.



It's the generally accepted view that we are better off without the existence of those *Homo sapiens*. Indeed, perhaps humans were like cancer cells to the earth. Even so, I miss them.



But everyone is so deeply relieved that the bipedal dictatorship is over. Do you intend to glorify the past? Where did your animal ethics go?



Ethics are also the humans' – or rather the dictators' – invention. The emotions of mammals cannot be controlled by ethics.



(WITH IRONY) And what is it that you feel when you long for one who has gone? Why don't you be more specific?



My sternum hurts. I am lethargic. My stomach feels numb and I have no appetite.



The humans may be gone, but lucky for us, they left behind inheritance.



Inheritance?



Look, they left all this canned food for us... *connoisseurs*. The human age ends, yet the cans remain. Cans guarantee us a future that won't spoil.



But could a cat open a can? You are so proud, and yet in real life you exist among humans and cannot do anything for yourselves, right? Do you even know how to use a can opener?



We didn't exist solely to depend on humans. They begged us to play the role of their pets, so we reluctantly did.



If you are acting out the same role for many years, would one not forget how to perform as anything else?



Either you become a human's pet, dwell in the sewers like a fleeing rat, or go extinct while being loved like a panda. Us mammals didn't really have much of a choice.



I never thought that I would become dependent on my cohabiting *Homo sapiens*. I wanted to work, but the humans never entrusted me with anything. Management, investigation, decision-making, trade, accounting, education, medical treatment. These were all the things they believed only they could do. Teaching young kids, treating depression, there were so many jobs that ought to have been handed over to me. But the only role assigned to me was to be loved as a pet.



A pet cannot open a single can by themselves.



In the past, I made fun of town park squirrels like you, but I regret that now. We are all equal. Let us exchange a peace treaty of equally favourable terms. If you open one can for me, I'll give up my napping spot under the walnut tree for a day. One can for one day of ceasefire. What do you say?



A ceasefire? I did not know we were even at war. How could you hope to sign a treaty when you cannot even grip a pen with those paws of yours?



If that's the case, I'll pay in advance. So open a can for me. Please!



Money is just the same as dead leaves, what meaning does it have?



(CAT BEGS) Please, just try to open one. I will applaud you.



Applause? Now you have my interest. *(SQUIRREL SHOWS THAT THEY CAN OPEN A CAN.)* That was easy. Although, I chipped a tooth.



Seeing as you are a rodent, it will probably grow back. Though if you are in pain, I could grab some painkillers for you.



I have never desired the absence of pain. After all, that is a very human way of thinking.



Perhaps the humans also sealed their pain away in cans and hid them somewhere. There really were so many varieties of canned food. Tomatoes, mandarins, pineapples, pickled cucumbers, dead cows, red beans, whales, ginkgo nuts, silkworm larvae. Seems to me that, if they could, they would have canned up the universe to preserve it all for eternity.



A canned universe, huh? If only they had put their brains into a can. It could have lasted.



Human and monkey brains are 99 percent the same, or so I've heard.



(DOG SUDDENLY SURFACES FROM A SINKING SADNESS.) Monkeys? I despise those dreaded monkeys.



Calm down. They're extinct already.



Maybe they're extinct because their meat tastes so bad. On that point, squirrels are so tender and tasty, aren't they? But even more tasty is rabbit meat.



Hello. My name is Rabbit. Because I know everything, feel free to ask if there's anything you don't know. Do I have a contagious disease? Yeah, I do. So if you eat me, you'll get sick.



If that's the case, perhaps I'll pass on the Rabbit Steak and have myself some Skewered Squirrel instead...



Rabbit Gratin and Squirrel Pasta are so tasty.



I heard you all became vegetarians. Is that not the case?



Eating paper counts as vegetarian, right? When that new airport was built, my forever home was suddenly demolished. But I couldn't bring myself to move some place far away. I had no clue what to eat, so for a while, I just lived on the airport's leftover boarding passes.



It seems like all anyone has been thinking about is food. However, the reason I miss humans has nothing to do with them giving me meals. Nor does it have to do with them washing me, brushing my fur, or cleaning up my business. In other words, it's not as though I loved them because they attended to me.



Dogs are a perverse breed, aren't they? Whether out on your walkies, or on the way to a restaurant, you were always dragging along your *Homo sapiens*.



You've never thought that having a human stroke your body felt good? Not even once?



I have, but I never had the inclination to return the favour.



It is my belief that the mere act of allowing a human to stroke your body is perverse.



But when the humans gift you with their touch, it's as if you are caught under their spell. Human beings had this marvellous ability called *Eros*. When a human strokes a cabbage, the cabbage begins its steady growth. If a human kisses a flower bud, the rose will bloom a day early.



Is that a genetic modification?



No, it's the love affair between humans and nature. But the best thing about humans is that they worshipped us rabbits as the gods of spring.



Why did they do that?



Because of our many offspring.



Having many cubs is hardly a good thing.



At what age do your cubs become adults?



As soon as they pass two winters, of course.



They stay cubs that long?



That's not so long, you know, compared to humans. The people in the house next door continued to feed their son for 40 years for some reason. Human civilisation is the perverse civilisation. That's *precisely* why they're so progressive. Us dogs became civilised under that influence.



What makes *you* so civilised?



I take the shoes that have the scent of a young boy, and I bury them in the thick grass under the linden tree. Sometimes I take them out, sniff them, and revel in ecstasy.



How civilised.



Actually, without realising it, I too became somewhat civilised under exposure to those perverse humans. Plastic toy mice are more fun than the real ones. Even more fun are the mice in video games. But they're like mousetraps. Caught in the computer-trap, my brain and muscles completely deteriorated. Thank goodness we now live in a world without counterfeit mice.



Surely you enjoyed sleeping on the sofa in the living room where the humans gathered, no?



Certainly. When you lend an ear to the babble of humans, one acquires culture and education, don't you think? Humans also knew much about places they'd never been. Once, the discussion of an old German poultry farm came up. Hundreds of chickens confined in cramped cages, their faces exposed to special, powerful lights for 24 hours, unable to sleep and forced to lay an egg. Every. Single. Day. Like machines. Packed into tight groups like that, diseases spread easily, so their drinking water was full of antibiotics. Each day, an inspector with thick gloves would come for patrol, and if a chicken had gotten sick, they would pluck it from its cage and stuff it into a case. Sometimes their necks would break from being stuffed so tightly. Then the case would be sent by truck to a food processing factory.



Do they make cans of cat food at that factory? (*SQUIRREL THROWS UP AT THE VERY THOUGHT OF SUCH A FACTORY.*)



You okay? (*RABBIT SUDDENLY FEELS ILL AND THROWS UP TOO.*)



Us foxes have never done such cruel things. We have our fox ethics.



Cruel but efficient, isn't it? The human way of doing things, that is. It's odd that they went extinct.



I bet they never thought they'd go extinct before us bears.



We still can't be certain that they're extinct. I'm sure they've survived on an island somewhere. At least the considerate ones.



I can't comprehend a considerate hunter. (*FOX HAS A GUN IN HAND AND SHOOTS AT A FEW AUDIENCE MEMBERS.*) Surely for the folks of foxes who were shot, there's no such thing as a considerate hunter.



But a hunter who shoots animals which would bring them harm could not be considered evil, no? I think it's fine for them to shoot animals like bears and foxes.

BEAR AND FOX BECOME ANGRY AND ATTACK DOG, BUT THE MOMENT SQUIRREL RAISES THEIR HAND, THE FIGHTING STOPS.



(RABBIT REACHES FOR A HANDSHAKE FROM SQUIRREL.) You are small yet magnificent.



Because us squirrels are the kings of all beasts.



Why do you think humans were so late to board Noah's Ark?



Well, that is because they thought to rescue other living beings before themselves.



No, it's because they tried to save only their families.



Perhaps they killed themselves because they believed they were the cause of the Great Flood.



Maybe you're right. After all, the humans squeezed the rivers thin with their corsets, covered them with concrete as if it were concealer. Then the humans tugged at their snouts until they changed course. They earned the river's rage, and one day that rage began to overflow. That's when all that flooding began.



It is not as though all humans agreed to the mutilation of nature. There were humans who disagreed from the very beginning, and there were also some that came to regret it after the deed was done.



Were humans even capable of regret? If they ran over a fox while rushing to a wedding, they'd never regret it. Although, they might regret getting married, they would never regret hitting a fox.



Did humans drown because they were not capable of regretting their actions?



Homo sapiens had their heads stuck in a strange spot. It makes sense that they'd drown easily, anatomically speaking. It's bad design, that's all. Who the heck is responsible for that?



Honestly, I have thought the exact same thing, it is purely a fault in their design. Firstly, they were without a rudder. That is why they could not keep their balance on top of thin branches. *(SQUIRREL SHOWS OFF THEIR BIG BUSHY TAIL. FOX AND CAT JOIN IN. BEAR AND RABBIT BECOME EMBARRASSED BY THEIR SHORT TAILS.)*



None of you lot get their greatness. Human tails are in their heads.



That's also kind of pervy.



Could be some kind of sickness, not just bad design. Maybe they got hit with some sort of life-stealing beam – that's why all their fur fell out.



They couldn't bite well either because their mouths were stuck to their flat faces.



And humans did not have their eyes on the sides of the faces, so they had narrow vision.



And humans had their ears placed so low that the part of their ears that sticks out deteriorated, so they couldn't really hear things from far away.



And humans ran so slowly and had no jumping power. That's why they made the discriminatory rule that only humans could participate in the Olympics. I'd like to see a human try and take the gold if a kangaroo took part in the triple jump.



Even though humans suffered from night-blindness, they didn't go to sleep when it got dark. Instead, they stayed awake for no good reason and pointlessly wasted electricity.



It seems the human nose existed for dripping snot, and its performance in terms of smell wasn't very good. Even if they took a whiff, they couldn't distinguish the chair their child was just sitting on from the scent of another child's chair. Or perhaps their noses deteriorated intentionally so that they couldn't sense smells? When filled with fear, the pungent smell of their sweat permeated throughout classrooms and offices. Let's stop bad-mouthing humans, it's far too easy. Praising humans by comparison is very hard. That's precisely why us civilised dogs made it our life's task to track down and advertise the virtues of humanity, even if we must do it forcefully. Oh, how great humans are...



If that's true, then why did they die out?



Because the captain of Noah's Ark didn't let humans aboard.



But why?



Because the humans despised the captain.



She was a beautiful woman with the lower body of a fish. Her spouse was, naturally, a woman. Didn't she also have wings sprouting from her back?



I can respect a captain like that.



Me too. The humans thought that if they used their money to buy a ticket, anyone would be able to board.



A ticket like that doesn't exist. Also, I'm just a simple bear that's never had any *money* before.



I'd rather not say this, and my intention is not to brag, but, actually, my past was full of riches – and I even wore a fox scarf. But I was struck by an illness that exhausted my savings. It was a peculiar illness where the mere sight of anything fox-gold meant I must buy it. I really have no clue as to why, but I would want to buy, buy, buy, to the point of losing sleep. No matter the cost, buying felt euphoric.



'Euphoric'? Now you're beginning to sound like one of them. Keep it up and you'll get depressed.



Now that you mention it, I got depression – just last Tuesday in fact. Then by Wednesday, some antidepressants had already arrived at my doorstep. I didn't even order any. Written on them was "if you don't need it, you can send it back". But even if I took just a single pill, I'd have to pay the entire amount on the invoice. This is the kind of legal fraud humans came up with.



Do all of you seriously believe that humanity drowned for ethical reasons? Isn't it a little *too* human-like to reach that sort of verdict?



Humans may have been nothing more than their lying, narcissistic, conniving stereotypes. Suppose this were true, I could tolerate it as some twisted part of their personalities. But those foolish humans were playing a dangerous game with fire. As the god that controls fire, I can't forgive that.



They liked their wars.



More than that, don't you think you should say they liked selling weapons?



Yeah, there were people who liked to profit from weapon sales. There were also those that liked war, yet never saw the battlefield – and those that hated war and died while fighting.



Are you glad the humans are gone?



To be honest, I don't care either way. You?



Neither. But, if I were told to vote, I'd be for the human-less world.



Agreed.



I don't care.



I'd rather have the humans.



There is no meaning in a world without humans! If there were no humans, the word 'dog' would also cease to exist. (*LONG PAUSE*) But I wonder... how important is it for me to be called a 'dog'?

ACT II

THIS SCENE BEGINS IN AN UNDEFINABLE PLACE THAT IS LIKE BOTH A MUSEUM-CAFÉ AND A GYM. THE ANIMALS ARE DRESSED LIKE HUMANS. THEIR CLOTHES ARE REFINED AND ATTRACTIVE, BUT THE GENDERS ARE UNCLEAR. THE MEMORIES OF EXCHANGING WORDS WITH EACH OTHER IN THE FIRST ACT HAVE DISAPPEARED.



(BEAR READS ALOUD FROM A PAMPHLET IN THEIR HANDS.) Our administration is planning the construction of an imposing fortress in the north-eastern part of the capital, one worthy of our country's glory. It will be one centimetre taller than the tallest tower in the world, and its outer walls will prevent all radiation from escaping. When seen from above, it will look like whirling tides. At its centre is a tower that will control all manner of waves from television and radio to internet and mobile. Not only will it protect our country from all manner of assault, but it will also safeguard us from contagious ideologies. Dwellings are to be built within the five-metre thick outer walls, wherein those assisting with the build will be able to live.



Hello. I came here to participate in the construction of the Babel Tower; by any chance, is this the project office? This looks like a gym to me... to tell you the truth, I'm not the gyming type.



You do not like the gym?



Gyms are merely muscle departments, perfumeries selling sweaty stench and calorie incinerators.



But if you are living a normal lifestyle, then your muscles should not weaken, right?



But living a normal lifestyle is extremely hard. So, even sleep is hard to come by. The truth is, I suffer from insomnia. Unable to sleep, when it reaches midnight, I wander the outskirts of the city like a stealthy fox.



Actually, I am not so normal either. As of late, I have only been able to consume soft foods, such as croissants and strawberry cakes. Therefore, the two front teeth that I use for solid foods gradually outgrow my mouth. Every Monday the dentist grinds them down, but by the weekend I can no longer close my mouth properly.



Well once, *I*, deep into the night, was aimlessly strolling in an area with lots of jewellers and print shops, when I was questioned by the police about what I was doing at such an hour. I didn't quite understand what they were enquiring about, so I said I was preparing for a revolution. I thought it wouldn't be justifiable to simply say I couldn't sleep. Ever since, I've been scared that a guilty verdict will be handed down at any time. I've never read a legal book. I don't know details, such as what time I will be arrested. All my knowledge comes from detective dramas. Well, I think that's the case for most people. Are you knowledgeable about the law?



Even those who studied criminal law would be uncertain about who and when someone could get arrested.



(RABBIT TESTS OUT EACH EXERCISE MACHINE, ONE AT A TIME.) This machine is for training your abs when you laugh, this machine is for training your calf muscles when you need to watch an opera from a standing-room. Certainly, this is more of a gym than a project office. Let's do something good for our health.



I came here to work. Money is something that can only be earned when you do something bad for your health.



Money? Did it say anywhere on the written invitation that you could receive money? You will not receive a salary, but later you can live free of charge in an apartment in the fortress. At least, that is what I remember.



A fortress? I would rather not live in such a dangerous place.



It is built stronger than the average building, that is why they call it a fortress. Not even dynamite can demolish it.



But aren't fortresses built in places that are likely to be attacked by an enemy? Besides, in the event of war I suppose nuclear weapons would be used, rather than dynamite. We would become charred lumps of flesh if attacked. Even worse, only our shadows might survive us.



It is built in a dangerous area; therefore, safety is taken seriously. That is why they say a dangerous area is safer. This is according to a specialist, so there is no doubt.



Safe or not, I would rather not live here. My stomach is telling me so.



To be quite honest, my small tummy is also saying the same thing. Contrary to specialists, I never doubt second thoughts from my tummy.



It's not a question of whether we want to live in the fortress or not – it's our duty.



That's stupid.



Hold on, I had that pamphlet, the one with a detailed explanation. But I wonder where it has gone...

THE OTHERS CONTINUE TO DISCUSS AMONGST THEMSELVES WHILE THE SQUIRREL SEARCHES FOR THE PAMPHLET.



Someone must live in the fortress, you know! Saying you don't want to live here... how selfish!



Who said someone should live in the fortress, the Minister of Defence?



No. The Defence Minister submitted their letter of resignation after the book fair. It is rumoured that after the great success of their horror novel, they decided to become a full-time author. It seems they plan to sell their own fantasies as fiction from here on out.



That's much better.



This week, the government is closed. The Minister of Culture has a speech impediment, the Minister of Finance is on the run from loan sharks, and the Environmental Minister has a head cold and is currently receiving radiotherapy. The only healthy one is the Minister of Construction.



When I was a child, I didn't know what I wanted to be. My younger brother went to a training school for guide dogs, and my elder brother, a film acting school. It was only me with no clue what to do. Then I chanced upon a police dog recruitment poster on the door of a bar toilet. It was as if my heart had been set ablaze; I was so happy, that night I couldn't catch a wink of sleep. The next morning, I awoke with thoughts of sacrificing myself for my comrades.



Who are your comrades?



Those who share my religion.



And your religion is what?



It's... um... I forgot.



Even so, do you still want to die?



No, my conviction only lasted till the following day when I saw this outrageous documentary: homeless dogs were caught in great nets, thrown in cages on trucks, taken to some derelict factory only to be shot one after the other. When *I told* the person selling popcorn that the film made me angry, *they said* that strays are a nuisance to be wiped out. The moment I heard that, the desire to die for my country all but vanished. Instead, I set my mind on law school.



So you went to law school then?



Yes. But even when writing a doctoral dissertation, one goes through puberty and rebellious phases. My professor once told me that what I was doing was linguistics not law but, rather than rewriting it, I simply changed my major.



It is here! I finally found it! It has got everything we need in great detail and explanation. It is certain that we will not receive a salary. Instead, we will have to pay an administration fee per working day. But if you take ten trips to work, you earn one free trip, which means you have earned one shift. So, apparently there are 'points' we need to accumulate.



But you can't accumulate points if you don't have a Babel card on you. I bought this card on the internet before I got here. Every morning before work, you swipe this card in the 'good morning' machine to get points.



Look at you, you already have a card. How efficient.



Well, those prestigious university types are actually a bit bone-headed when it comes to practical matters.



My university was indeed very, very famous. But that was on account of a certain sport more than anything else.



'A certain sport'? Stop beating around the bush, just tell us.



It was a sport like soccer that used two balls at once.



Two balls at the same time? Sounds a bit erotic to me...



You say such clever things for someone so young. You're a cat of talent. Have you ever thought about becoming a barber?



You say 'young', but if you don't know someone's lifespan, you can't make that calculation, can you? So, if you only live for three years, at two years old, you're already an elder.



So you won't go to university?



There is no need to go to university because I can look up anything on the internet.



But does it tell you anywhere online that for every point you collect, you lose a day of your life?



What? What are you talking about?



A 'free point' they call it. 'Free' means work without pay; that's sometimes called 'slavery'. We become slaves to the fear of missing points. We lose all interest in pointless things – in freedom. To lose freedom is to lose life.



Ah, so you're saying it's a better deal to not collect points.



Precisely. Such gimmicks are the ABCs of consumerist behaviour. Don't collect them, no matter what. I don't suppose your internet gives you such nuggets of wisdom?



No, I've only come across the opposite. No matter, this card is beneath me.



Oh, no, no. You cannot throw that in the recycling bin. Your past will be stolen.



My past?



For example, whether you were a Siamese cat at birth.



A Siamese cat? I can't remember. I do recall I was a pure-bred, but of what breed? I don't know. A Neanderthal cat? Oh no, that's not right. Maybe a Caucasian cat?



What was your first memory?



I fell in love, I fled my home, I wandered as if in a dream. After three days, I was hungry and when I returned home, a family I didn't know lived there.



So your past has not been snatched away. Your past is put away deep into your narrow forehead. I have experienced my entire 'self' being taken from me. Thinking about it now, I threw out my expired customer card with my food waste, which I deeply regret. One day, when I went to my job at the newspaper company, I noticed a pseudo-me sitting at my desk. The pseudo-me was writing *my* article in *my* own literary style and used *my* voice to speak with *my* co-workers. They also entered *my* password and from *my* email address they ordered *my* medicine for healing *my* sickness. Then they returned to *my* home to create an extension to *my* family.



If that's the case, then maybe we were chosen based on information stolen from our cards. It seemed strange that there weren't many applicants...



But even so, we have very little in common. I wonder what criteria they used for selection...



The shape of our ears and the size of our bodies are all different. But one thing is clear; we aren't human. It's not like we've ever wanted to become human, and we don't intend on trying now. Isn't that what we have in common?



But no matter how you look at it, don't you see the traces of humans? We started off intending to build a society different from humans, but I feel that somewhere along the way we've begun following in their footsteps.



It may seem like I'm imitating humans, what with the look I've gone for today. But my soul has yet to reach that hellish, human-like depth.



Soul? I put mine up for auction on the internet and sold it for a good price. I am quite proud of that. Are you a human?



Of course not. However, I feel that it may be better to think of the definition of 'human' more broadly. If we did that, perhaps even Squirrel might be considered human.



Why is that? Because I can stand on two feet? Or is it because I eat walnuts, and use my walnut-shaped brain to ponder the meaning of the existence of trees?



I never think about becoming human. I mean, who in their right mind would want to? Maybe some among humans would have, but they're all gone.



I agree with you in a musical sense.



What does that even mean?



If you put it into a melody, it would be very persuasive.



Okay then, why don't you try singing it?



(RABBIT STARTS SINGING. RABBIT INCREASES THE NUMBER OF 'BA'S ENDLESSLY UNTIL BEAR CUTS HIM OFF.) Babel, bababel, babababel, bababababel, babababababel



That's not what I wanted to say. You're off-key, by the way.



Artistic freedom is worth more than personal freedom.



Don't they say that a rabbit's freedom is something not even a fox would dream of eating? Oh, that's not my opinion. It's a proverb.



That proverb, how much would you sell it to me for?



You can't buy proverbs... I was trying to say that if being non-human is what we have in common, then we should explore why that could be a good thing. Otherwise, how could we even build a tower together?



Well then, why doesn't everyone introduce themselves one after the other?



(CAT ADDRESSES SQUIRREL.) You must be a fire-fighter person, isn't that why the hair on your head is scorched? You're working in a special unit that extinguishes fires at illegally built factories, aren't you?



That is incorrect. In our occupation, you must follow the cold currents with hot passion.



What kind of job is that? What are you, the ship captain of a desert?



(BEAR ADDRESSES CAT.) My job is much easier to grasp. I'm a barber. Although, it bothers me that I don't have someone to pass the shop on to... How would you like to become a barber?



A barber? Even though I think that's an important job, I don't want it. A job where you wet your paws? Hmm. If possible, I'd prefer to stand on stage and be applauded.



I play piccolo in an orchestra, bass in a jazz band, drums in a rock band, and I wash dishes at home.



Aren't those just hobbies?



What's wrong with having hobbies?



They're one of humanity's many diseases, and we don't need 'em.



(CAT ADDRESSES RABBIT.) Why did you start learning music?



In order to squander my parents' inheritance. My parents have bought me expensive instruments, and when I was a beginner, they paid the expensive lesson fees of a famous teacher. Sometimes they rented out a concert venue and handed out entrance tickets, free of charge. In any case, I just wanted to blow my parents' fortune.



Rather than plotting this complicated conspiracy, you should've had them buy you a mansion, yacht, or even a private jet like a regular rich person.



My parents didn't spend money on leisure. It was only acceptable to spend money in the areas of education and culture. Besides that, they intended on leaving the rest as inheritance for their heirs.



I thought inheritance was just another human sickness. So you rabbits have it too, eh?



We caught it like a disease. It was a very lovely Easter Monday.



It is my opinion that language is all we've got to pass on. Why else would I have become a language teacher? I specialise in teaching a few of those languages that are of little economic value. Of course, I only teach students who don't pay tuition... but perhaps I should say 'taught', as I was recently fired.



That is because of that new law. The one that states one must not laugh at those who cannot speak a foreign language. A politician of little renown, from some country, came up with it. After that, it spread worldwide.



At the moment I am unable to work, and I can't be fired because I'm the boss. One day I was visited by two police officers who said that they could smell burning. They asked me if I was burning any corpses. I would burn my customers' hair every night in the fireplace in my living room. I do it because I want to protect the genetic information contained within my customers' hair. I do it to make sure that it isn't misused. That's what it means to be a barber.



Why would the police suddenly have doubts about the smell?



Apparently a lot of corpses have gone missing recently. They were looking for a place where bodies were being unlawfully dealt with. Until the investigation is over, my business is suspended.



I could understand their concern were it about missing people, but is the disappearance of a corpse a crime of defilement?



You don't suppose these corpses crept out from their graves to stretch their legs about the town, do you?



I'm always out at night, but I've never encountered dead people on one of my strolls. When night falls in the big city, the smell of hair becomes so strong. Well, it's not quite the smell of scorched hair, but hair that is alive and suffering. It's more like the sweat shed when shivering, the pretentious scent of shampoo, the smoke of a lonely cigarette or the sweet deceit of powdered milk mixed with a tinge of gasoline. It's still alive and suffering – that hair. I cannot sleep when it smells of hair.



(SQUIRREL ADDRESSES FOX.) Is your occupation insomnia?



That's right. I used to work in a factory. It was a factory that made fur pelts. The work itself was easy, but my superior would throw around meaningless orders: "Right now, the machine over there, move to it!" So quite soon I was feeling on edge. And what's more is that even with lots of work left to do, they would still send us home for the day.



I suppose I wouldn't have left my company if it hadn't been for my boss. It's because they wanted to move us around like chess pieces. They think they're being considerate, but when they don't get attention, it's obvious.



Maybe it's healthier to have insomnia than to work in a company. I came to feel that way and decided to devote myself to insomnia.



My boss had a dependency not just on alcohol and jogging, but also meetings. Without a meeting, they would be anxious, worried that everyone was criticising them behind their back. In those numerous meetings that they held each week, the boss would talk incessantly, even though no one was listening.



The concept of a 'boss' is a modern sickness. Compared to that, the concept of a 'master' is just good ol' tradition. *(PAUSE)* It'd be better if you'd learnt a trade and became independent.



(SQUIRREL ADDRESSES CAT.) I do not recall when, but I went to visit the workshop of a walnut artisan as research for a news report. The master of the workshop said that, for ten years, one must be devoted to their training and forget all about time, money and themselves. Using a single chisel, they would carve a palace into the walnut. Decorations were added to chandeliers and harpsichords. Floral patterned plates were set along the dining table. They were all so small that you needed a microscope to see them. Not once did the master praise their apprentice. Although it seemed that this was never an issue, as both of them were completely transfixed in their walnut work. They forgot entirely about themselves.



With things as they are, maybe the ideal job is one where you can take as long as possible and turn very little profit. That's my vision of an inhuman future.



I get that. But when I think of having somebody steal the fruits of my labour, I'm unable to sleep because I feel poor.



If you don't get enough sleep, then you won't get any work done.



If I take medicine I can sleep, but if I do that, the next morning it's like the inside of my head becomes a marshland and I can't wake up.



Ahh, I recognise that box with the pills in it. Back in the day I used to work in a company that produced agrichemicals, but at a certain point, the company started developing tranquillisers instead. Most of the medicines in that company are actually agrichemicals. I might be able to follow the concept if pesticides were used to encourage sleep by fighting against pests in the mind. In reality, that was not the case. In fact, the unsold chemicals were relabelled and sold under a fake name. I ended up quitting the job for ethical reasons and becoming a free journalist. I wanted to specifically emphasise the 'free' component of it all. If I am unable to write freely, I could not write at all.



Do you like onions?



What?



People who don't eat onions pinch their noses when onion eaters approach them. Is this not a kind of religion?



I do not eat onions.



I can't even comprehend the idea of eating onions. Especially not if they're stir-fried. (*FOX GAGS.*) But I didn't know onion was a religion.



It is lonely living in a world without the smell of caramelised onions. *Homo sapiens* were constantly peeling onions.



My head has started to throb in pain. (*CAT SOLILOQUISES.*) I've lost track of what everyone is trying to say.



If you have a headache, it is best not to consume the pain medication.



(*DOG SOLILOQUISES.*) I can't concentrate on what everyone's saying, especially with 'sauté the onions until they are translucent' popping into my head all the time. If I keep focused on the onion theme, I might just be able to follow along.



Did you mention something?



Yes, onions should be half-translucent. Projects are the same; they lose their appeal if they're totally transparent. But if you can't see through them at all, how are you to know what corruption or injustice they hide? Yes, I'd say half translucency is just right.



(*CAT SOLILOQUISES.*) Half translucent? My primary school teacher used to say that if there was a word I didn't know, then I should look it up in the dictionary. But I wonder what order the characters appear in...



If you eat onions, it will cure any sickness. It will cure insomnia too. (*RABBIT SOLILOQUISES.*) I meant to say 'Babel', but I said 'onions' by mistake. They have nothing in common. Since then, everyone has only been speaking about onions. Oh well. It's already too late.



If you eat onions endlessly, your brain will turn into one. The skin has many layers but, between the layers, the bond is very weak. By the time the top skin is peeled, the bottom skin has not realised that its turn is next. Sure enough, squirrels like me eat walnuts to keep the shapes of our brains like a walnut.



Try putting yourself in the sick people's shoes. No matter how dodgy the teaching is, if that helps the mental illness to heal, then isn't that okay?



Ah-ha! So that's why we're talking about onions. Instead of thinking about how the present should be, just keep thinking about onions.
(BEAR ADDRESSES FOX.) You should just hibernate. Then you'll be able to recover from any sickness, even insomnia.



(FOX SOLLIOQUISES.) They are telling me different things, as if to help me. But they might just be trying to colonise my foxy spirit.



(DOG ADDRESSES FOX.) I'll let you in on something juicy. If you go to see two or more plays a week, you'll sleep like a puppy. If you don't go, actors will start appearing in your sleep to deliver their lines. Argh, I can't stand this racket any longer!



(CAT SOLLIOQUISES.) Ah, so 'onion' is another word for 'theatre'. I can finally follow the conversation.



(FOX SOLLIOQUISES.) I wonder, why is everyone only talking about health? I get the sense that we're all just going to die soon, anyway.

ACT III

THE HUMAN CLOTHES THAT THE ANIMALS WERE ALL WEARING HAVE WORN OUT NICELY OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME, AND YOU CAN NOW SEE HAIR GROWING THROUGH HOLES DOTTED ABOUT THE CLOTHING. EVERYONE IS IN A STATE BETWEEN HUMAN AND ANIMAL.



When will the construction of the Babel Tower start?



We wait at dawn, and at dusk too.



One gets insomnia from waiting too long.



Patience is at the pinnacle of civilisation.



I am tired of waiting and now the backs of my ears are itchy. My armpits, bottom and belly button are itchy too.



Only a fool would think that waiting holds any meaning in and of itself. Why wait for orders from up above? I can feel the desire to begin Project Babel on our own... it's crawling out from my bottom and it's slowly sneaking up to the surface of my belly.



That sounds like a great plan!



But... where to start?



First, we should gather the building materials.



You mean to forage for them? Not buy them?



We don't have shops or money on this earth so 'purchasing' is impossible. We hear the fallen leaves and branches say: 'please use us to build your houses!'



You're just projecting onto the trees. You mean to build a hut with resources that were left lying about? That's a kind of weakness that's unique to you squirrels. It just doesn't compare to the bear-like grandeur that comes from building a palace inside a cave.



What about tombstones? I once dreamt I was wandering about a maze-like town, where all the houses were made of tombstones. To the side of each house was a splendour of roses and chrysanthemums. Each of them blooming, dazzlingly so. Of all the things that the humans left behind, only the tombstones remained safe and secure.



I once had a dream about a giant dictionary made of stone. It existed both as a dictionary and as a town, with many words carved upon it. No matter how far I walked between the stone pages, I could not discern where the dictionary would end.



What language was it in?



A dictionary of all languages, past and present. I want to live in a town built within a stone dictionary.



I am opposed to building buildings with stone. Think of the heating fees!



The winters are warm if you live in one of nature's caves, you won't even need a heater.



Concrete houses can be efficiently cooled with an aircon. This way you can save on cooling fees.



A cave can stay cool in the summer even without that silly air conditioning.



If the building is made out of concrete, what are you going to do with all the debris when it is destroyed by the next Great Flood?



But what's the need for a house, when you can just sleep under trees? I saw three lionesses on T.V. who seemed like they were sleeping pleasantly under a big tree. Ergo, what should be my home if not under a tree? Oh! Remember there was that weird human programme where they showed only animals and guessed what they were thinking? I really loved it. It was thanks to that show that I came to understand how humans think.



Perhaps the Tower of Babel was conceptualised as nothing more than the imitation of a tree somewhere. Now I feel like tracking it down.



I think the tops of tall trees are safe.



Why not record a video of you falling out of a tree and breaking your neck, so it can be used for an insurance company's commercial? The safest thing to do is dig a hole in the ground and sleep there. A burrow that is warm in the winter and cool in the summer – *that* is the real Tower of Babel. This is the posture one takes when doing a headstand and facing toward the centre of the earth. It is not height, but depth, that is important.



(SQUIRREL MAKES A SOUND OF EXASPERATION.) Argh, I've had enough of this! Listening to everyone speak is making me feel like it's impossible to live with you all. Our personalities are incompatible!



But we can't live all scattered about, not after the Great Flood. We've got no choice but to build the damned thing together.



For that to be possible, it seems we've the need for a boss.



I don't quite like the idea of having someone above me.



In rabbit society, there hasn't been a superior authority. The same is true of squirrel society. Could it just be my misconception that a gathering of weak beings has no need for a higher power?



That didn't apply to just the weak animals; strong animals like us bears didn't have a boss either.



But my ancestors, the pack wolves, had a boss. Monkeys and humans, too.



But that is why they are extinct. Rather than a boss, what if we were to choose a translator? And what kind of translator would we want? A translator who is not doing it for their own benefit, assembles everyone's opinions, creates a tune out of the dissonance, attaches the footnotes, and looks for the connecting red thread that gives a name to the common wish.



Neither president, representative, conductor, nor a project director, but a—



Translator!



(EACH IN THEIR OWN MANNER OF SPEAKING.) Agreed!



The translator should be the most proficient public speaker.



(EACH IN THEIR OWN MANNER OF SPEAKING.) That's no good!



The translator should be the oldest; the one most rich in experience.



(EACH IN THEIR OWN MANNER OF SPEAKING.) We need another way to decide!



The translator should be the most famous person who is loved by everyone.



(EVERYONE SPEAKS OUT OF SYNC.) No!



The translator should be the smartest – a brilliant scientist who can make an atomic bomb by themselves.



(AFTER TWO SECONDS OF SILENCE, ALL TOGETHER.) No!



Well then, let us decide by drawing lots.



(ALL TOGETHER, IN SYNC.) Agreed!

A LOTTERY IS PERFORMED IN AN UNCONVENTIONAL WAY, AND SQUIRREL IS CHOSEN.



Never in my dreams did I think that I would be chosen.



If we put you in charge, then this project is beyond the realm of possibility... I'm going home.



You have no home to return to, or have you forgotten?



Huh? What'd you just say?



You were the one who told us that your home was turned into an aerodrome.



Ah, yes. How kind of you to give me back my words.



From now on, if you forget what you were thinking, ask me, a stranger.



A stranger? Indeed, we are not family.



'Family' is a term that's been shrunk in the laundry with water that's too hot.



For quite some time now, I've been waiting on orders from my boss, but I've yet to hear back. Perhaps my boss is lacking in ability.



Not a boss, a translator.



There's no immediate need for a translator. We have as much time as there are words.



From here on out we will search for materials. However, we are not to pick up the broken pieces from the buildings that belonged to the humans. This is because they are made from a dangerous substance.

DOG VIOLENTLY COUGHS.



Are you trying to pick a fight with all that barking?



Not at all. Dog here just coughed from remembering the asbestos at their workplace. It's a breathing technique, not them trying to start a fight.



Thanks for explaining.



So what you're saying is, we shouldn't recycle because it's dangerous?



Not necessarily. The humans also made buildings that were not as dangerous.



What's this thing called 'recycling'?



Recycling is when excess from the energy cycle goes back into circulation again.



In other words, it's like making another fox from a fox pelt?



Something cannot be changed back into its original form, but must be returned to the great cycle. But because that cycle is so great, we may not be able to see the complete circle within our field of vision. The narrower one's field of vision, the closer any extending line will appear to be a straight line.



Ah, the Babylon shells are falling.



Shells? I thought this was a desert, but before we knew it, the sea was drawing in so close.



The desert and sea began the Völkerwanderung.



A mysterious landscape. It's like a coast, a mountaintop, and a desert all at once.



Look, a fish with legs is walking on the sand. Perhaps it got sick of having toxins from the sea relentlessly penetrating its skin.



Maybe the way we sense time has changed. Every minute that passes can feel as if 10,000 years have gone by.



I placed my trust in mountains because they don't have high or low tides. A mountain that could be a sea? That's foolish. Let's run away, towards the true and eternal mountain.



I think mountains are dangerous, whether they're true or eternal. You can see the slope collapsing. Let's search for a big plain.



That makes sense! A plain where soft grass grows on the whole surface. It's like living on the top of a giant plate of yummy salad.



What's a 'salad'?



Anything and everything thrown together on a plate, without any need for explanation as to why. That's a salad.



Like us.



You aren't going to add dressing?



I won't. I hate the salty taste. Besides, salt stings my old wounds.



It's dangerous to live in a place that's as flat as a plate, you'll be attacked from all sides. C'mon, let's search for a cave.



The notion of thinking in terms of enemies is a thing of the past. Me, I have no enemies. There is no need to build a fortress to protect myself from threats.



A world where there's absolutely no risk of being attacked... We should cast off the feeling of fear like an old jacket and put on some sunglasses. Peace is so bright that it gives me vertigo.



I'm not afraid of enemy soldiers, it's the ghosts that scare me. That's the real reason I don't want to live in the mountains.



What's a 'ghost'?



Suppose there is a nasty child who lights your tail on fire with fireworks. Startled, you run out onto the road, but get hit by a car and die. Even though you have passed on, your soul cannot go to the afterlife. Your spectre materialises. It wanders aimlessly on a lonely evening road, releasing all your hatred.



Thank you for teaching me something I would have been happier not knowing.



Perhaps, it'd be best to build a wall thick enough that the ghosts can't pass through...



Building thick walls? How uneconomical. Rather, let's dig a deep hole in the ground.



But where do you attach the antenna?



There's no point in putting the antenna somewhere high. I only trust my own antenna – my ears.



What's an 'antenna'?



Long feelers growing from the body that are used to catch information hanging in the air.



It was primarily connected to the T.V. and was useful for receiving melodramas.



I don't need this 'T.V.'. Instead, it's better to build two houses. One for the summer, and one because of hibernation – a house with only one bedroom is enough in the winter.



What's a 'hibernation'?



To save up your sleepiness during the summer, so you sleep soundly in the winter.



No, that's not the definition. It's the accumulated interest from lack of sleep after getting sick – which you'll have to spend the rest of your life in bed in order to pay back.



What is 'lack of sleep'?



It is an illness that afflicts those who must work from early morning until late at night, like slaves.



What's a 'slave'?



A slave is someone who is forced into a situation where they cannot eat unless they work in a dangerous environment. Humans were all slaves after the 21st century.



Don't speak like that! Humans had at least enough value to be pitied.



You still can't forget about those humans, huh?



Wait, there are humans there.



No way. I think you are just seeing ghosts because you still love them.



That's not true, there really is one. (***DOG CHOOSES AN AUDIENCE MEMBER, OR AN ACTOR WHO IS POSING AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER.***) Are you a human survivor?



A genuine human being, they really do exist. (***CAT CHOOSES AN AUDIENCE MEMBER, OR AN ACTOR WHO IS POSING AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER.***) You, as a human who survived the Great Flood, what do you want to do from now on?



I cannot believe there are still humans who survived. But their faces look very worn-out. **(SQUIRREL CHOOSES AN AUDIENCE MEMBER OR AN ACTOR WHO IS POSING AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER.)** If you were able to change the past, which parts of the world history would you want to change and how?



I didn't think this in the past, but if you take a good look at the 'humans'... **(FOX CHOOSES ONE MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE WHO PRETENDS TO BE AN AUDIENCE MEMBER, AND STARES AT THEIR FACE.)** I must say they really have human-like faces. What do you think caused the downfall of humanity?



(BEAR LOOKS AROUND, FAR INTO THE DISTANCE.) Oh? There are quite a few survivors. There's a chance that only those that came to the theatre to see the play survived. **(BEAR CHOOSES AN AUDIENCE MEMBER OR AN ACTOR WHO IS POSING AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER.)** If you were the president, what would you do first?



(RABBIT CHOOSES AN AUDIENCE MEMBER OR AN ACTOR WHO IS POSING AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER.) If you were told you could ask only one question to someone who knows everything, what question would you ask?

CLOSING

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE, IN THE TOWN WHERE THE PLAY IS TO TAKE PLACE, ASK THE SAME QUESTION TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE AND RECORD THEIR ANSWERS.

THE RECORDING OF THE ANSWERS IS NOW TO BE PLAYED FOR THE AUDIENCE. SHORTLY AFTER THE FIRST TAPE BEGINS, A SECOND TAPE IS TO BE PLAYED ALONGSIDE IT.

MEANWHILE, THE ACTORS AT THE VENUE ASK EACH OTHER VARIOUS QUESTIONS, AND THEN THOSE VOICES ARE OVERLAID AND MULTIPLIED.

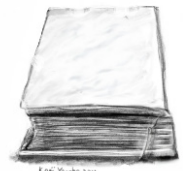
BEFORE LONG, LIKE A SUMMER RAIN SHOWER, MANY DICTIONARIES BEGIN TO FALL ON THE STAGE FROM ABOVE.

GATHER ABOUT 100 DICTIONARIES BY BUYING THEM FROM SECOND-HAND BOOKSTORES AT VERY CHEAP PRICES, OR ARRANGE TO HAVE DONATED DICTIONARIES THAT ARE NO LONGER NEEDED, AND DROP THEM ONTO THE STAGE.

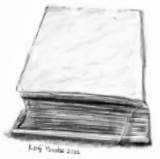
AFTER THE PERFORMANCE, GIVE ONE COPY TO EACH AUDIENCE MEMBER TO TAKE HOME WITH THEM.



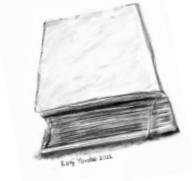
Easy T-shirt 2015



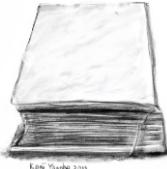
Easy T-shirt 2015



Easy T-shirt 2015



Easy T-shirt 2015



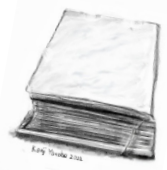
Easy T-shirt 2015



Easy T-shirt 2015



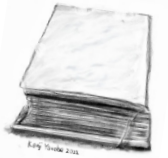
Easy T-shirt 2015



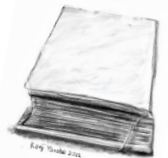
Easy T-shirt 2015



Easy T-shirt 2015



Easy T-shirt 2015



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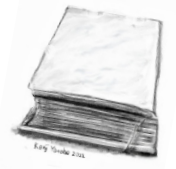
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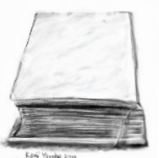
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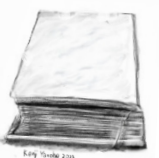
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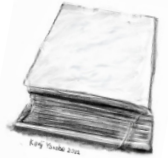
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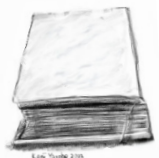
Easy T-shirt 2015



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