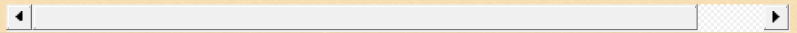




The Great Perhaps

The Great Perhaps is something on the horizon, something just out of reach. I believe that it is something you can never find. The Great Perhaps is the journey we take, every twist and turn on the winding road of life. The unexpected corners we turn in the hopes of making our way out of the darkness. Most people wander lost in the great perhaps and they have yet to realize that they are already in the place they seek. Forever running on the wheel that is life. My Great Perhaps has already come and will continue to be until the journey of my life ends. There is no one event that will encompass the entirety of that. I will continue on the journey that is the Great Perhaps and it shall end in a land of my creation, a place of my choosing. A realm shaped as I desire through my own hard work and power, I am the Great Perhaps.



Emily Wentzell

Pg. 158-159 *"How will we ever get out of this labyrinth of suffering?"* A.Y.

When Dr. Hyde puts this quote up on the board he tells everyone not to forget Alaska, that at some point in all our lives we realize the truth of her statement and know in our hearts that we are simply running a rat race. We will never make it out of the labyrinth because there is no labyrinth and in the same instance there is. We are the source of our own sorrow and joy, it is not something someone can give you but something you must discover from within.

Do you believe that we are lost in a labyrinth of suffering? Can you prove we aren't? Can we help those who are lost? Or are we destined to watch on as one by one we all fall, until none are left.



In many ways life is like a giant maze and we are trying to get out, no one ever knows the path they will take but they have the ability to choose anything they want. Often the things we plan do not work out because we cannot see the future nor can we know where we will end up. At some points we may be joined by others on our journey but in the end it is up to us alone to forge our paths. If you are lost in the maze blaze a new path. We are not defined by the past he trails traveled by others are not meant for us. Sometimes if we know the road others would travel it is possible to know where it leads. But often those who do not know will not trust the wisdom of others in a heated attempt to break out. And in those instances we must watch as they crash and burn but we must also be there to pick up the pieces and help them start again. The only way out is together and once the individualistic views of society are gone there will be no maze, but a land of freedom where all may live in peace no longer lost.

Letters To Alaska

Last Words to a Friend

It's been a long time since I last saw you, almost 70 years, and even now I can see you on that night. Hear your voice as you screamed at me, see the look in your eyes as you left. Even though years have passed and I have grown old, you will forever remain young and beautiful. Your face will never be marred by age and you will never know the aches and pains of watching the world go on while you are too old to do anything but watch. You will never know the sadness of growing old, the fading of beauty and the ending of youth. Life is like a dance, that no one knows the moves to, so everyone just makes their own. The music might change and the dancers partners, but the dance continues on. And so here I stand on a cold January morning, wallowing in the grief that I have learned to forget all these years. Everyone deals with loss differently and for me the easiest thing to do was forget and I hope you can forgive me. The one thing I never forgot was the white flowers, I never got to ask what flowers your mom put in your hair so I made sure to get something different every year. I memorized the populations of five countries this year, I'm sure Chip would be proud. And for Takumi, well let's just say each year an ugly head band that resembles a fox makes it's way here. It might interest you to know that a few years after we graduated Dr. Hyde passed away and I took over as the world religions teacher. I taught there for over fifty years, and in that time I saw many people who reminded me of you. Bright young minds that kept me on my toes for many years. Chip went on to become a brilliant math wizard, helped to create some of the greatest inventions of the generation. But he soon tired of that and joined me at Culver Creek as the calculus teacher. His dream came true and he bought a lovely house for his mother where they lived together for many years until she passed away. Takumi moved back to Japan to take care of his parents though he later moved back to America. He spent some time traveling around, was a hippie for a while before he decided to settle down, have a family and teach music theory. It took almost ten years but he too found his way back to Culver Creek. In all the years our friendship never waned and we spent the best years of our lives teaching and getting into trouble. In those years we pulled more pranks than the students did. You would have been proud. Each year the students plan the Alaska Memorial Prank and despite our protests they also built a lovely park down by the lake, a garish pink thing covered in flowers and butterflies. The others didn't feel that it reflected you as you were, but I feel it showed how you were before that bitter day in January. A perfect picture of innocence. Takumi died at the age of 73 due to lung cancer and the Colonel left a few years later due to old age at 80. So here I stand looking down at you all at the ripe old age of 86 and talk to you guys. I could talk all day but the cold chills my bones and I now know how Hyde used to feel on those winter days. I promise to come by again next year if I am still able, I'll bring more flowers, another fox and some new countries. So keep waiting for me and I won't disappoint. It won't be much longer now. Rest easy my friends, the struggles are over, the pain is gone. And I could not think of a more fitting way to end my Great Perhaps than with my friends at my side and a new journey ahead.

Miles,
January 10 2085

Returning to Culver Creek

It's been years since I set eyes on this place and as I walk through the silent dorm building I'm overcome by intense emotion. It was here that I found you and here that I lost you. Your room has been cleaned and all traces of you removed from the premises, unable to face entering the school, I made my way down to the lake and sat on the old swing where we used to smoke and I cried. Silent tears slipping down my face until I felt a hand on my shoulder, looking up the Eagle's face was no lines with age and his eyes crinkled with barely contained tears as well. He knew the reason for my sorrow and in his heart he too felt sad, he never knew you like I did but in his own way he cared for all of us, even you. But you are not the only reason for my sadness, the reason I am here is to teach. It was a somber autumn day when I got the call, Dr Hyde had fallen ill and died. They needed a new teacher, and the Eagle had recommended me to come and teach the world religion class. And when I got that call all I could think of was you and the happy blurred days we spent there. I haven't seen Takumi in a few years but the Colonel had dinner with me last week as we discussed my new teaching position. He was working at an engineering company that designed new technology and currently neck deep in calculations, but he was nice enough to invite me to his work when I was in the area and asked that I look after his mom while I was here. After a difficult afternoon I was able to decorate my new classroom and I started to plan my lesson, the entire school had the week of in memory of Dr. Hyde, the memorial was tomorrow and I didn't know what to do. This was his classroom, his life, how was I supposed to replace him? I felt deeply uncomfortable for the first few weeks but I could slowly feel that the students were accepting me and I overcame the cloud of sorrow and gloom that had always surrounded this place in my mind. Without even noticing five years flew by, I was in the full swing of it now. In my third year I was the but of the Alaska Memorial Prank, my students decided to fill my room with the first words of everyone in the school. It was no secret that I loved last words so they decided to put their first words in my classroom as a joke, and I laughed and read them all. That day I tossed my lesson out the window and we talked about the religious practices surrounding birth and the deaths of people in different cultures and after class I felt the gaping sadness that came with the knowledge that you did not have any last words. That even if you had said something I would never know and in a way that made your death incomplete. There was no one there when you left us that night and I still dream about what your last words might have been. But that is something I will never know and no matter how much I dream about it, it is sadly something I will never know.

Miles,
May 28 2022

The Struggle Goes On

The day Chip showed up at my door was one of the most trying days of my life. At first I was happy beyond words, truly I had nothing to say to him when he stood there and only managed to stutter out a shaky hello before he stormed in plunked himself down on my couch, turning on the video game console and starting a race. It was clear he didn't want to talk so I just picked up another controller and began to play as well, it was only until later in the day when I started to make dinner that the reason for his visit became clear. It took me a moment to process but when I did all I could do was stare in disbelief, Chip Martin the strongest, feistiest man I had ever known was crying like a child on my couch. Then as if flood gates had opened the story began to flow out, earlier that day his mother had died in the hospital. He couldn't return to the house because it was her house and he didn't belong there, so he came here. He knew where I lived and it was the only place his grief hazed mind could think of going so he got on a plane flew halfway around the country and walked the twenty miles from the airport to my house. It reminded me of the time he disappeared for two days, walking 84 miles in a daze after losing you so one can imagine how much worse it was when his mother passed. I didn't know how it happened but I became a shoulder to lean on as he started on the path of mourning. It's not like I didn't feel her loss as well, Delores had been a part of my life for all these years, almost like the mother I never had. But to Chip she had been everything, the only thing that had lasted through the years, you had left, Takumi and even I all left to go our own ways. We had all done what we thought was best for us, but the Colonel always thought of his mother. It had always been his purpose in life to take care of her and now that she was gone he had lost his direction. It took almost a month but he slowly came to terms with his grief and five weeks after he walked through my door he walked out of his own accord and all I got was a note on the table. It read simply, "Thank you, See you around old friend." I didn't know what that meant until I went to work the next day and was introduced to the new calculus teacher. Standing there in pressed black pants and a button up shirt the new teacher looked immaculate, the only thing of note was his short stature. When I walked up to introduce myself I found myself looking at a familiar face. I could only sputter in disbelief, the Colonel was the new teacher. Clapping me on the shoulder Chip smiled and led me into his classroom. He explained that for all his work there was something about the school and teaching that had called to him while he was staying at my house so he had gone to see the Eagle about a teaching position and they had set something up. Laughing in disbelief I just shook my head, it seemed that we were getting the band back together.

Miles,
October 14 2026

Losing A Friend

The year after Chip came to Culver Creek, Takumi came back from Japan, and started to teach here as well. For nearly 20 years we taught happily together, pranking students and teachers alike. Culver Creek had become our world, our life and for us it was the ultimate joy. The sad bit of news came when after 18 years of teaching Takumi fell ill, while he was in the hospital we learned that he had lung cancer. The doctors thought that it was because of the high levels of pollution in the air around Japan. It wasn't surprising because Takumi had lost both his parents to the same thing twenty years before. The shock that I might lose another good friend after so long together plunged me into despair, but Takumi for his part didn't seem too concerned. A few days later he told us that he wanted to travel before beginning his treatment, so we all took a year off teaching to roam the world. At first we didn't know where to go and just kind of wandered around the states. We went to Niagara Falls and the Smithsonian, the Grand Canyon, we stayed away from the big cities because all of us had never really been city people. After Niagara Falls we continued north into Canada to see the Northern Lights, Takumi loved going on the dog sled ride and I did some cultural research on the Inuit people. Of all the places we went I think New Zealand was my favourite but Takumi was happiest when we went to see the step pyramids in South America. For his part he really enjoyed himself running around like a kid. He was so excited when he beat us in a race to the top of the pyramid and enjoyed taunting us while we struggled. He was still the same Takumi and yet every time I looked at him I could not help but feel a twinge of sadness. I know the Colonel felt the same because one night I found him on the balcony of our hotel just staring at the stars with tears in his eyes. At the end of a 8 months, our travels came to an end and Takumi began rapid treatment. He never married but had a girlfriend who stayed by his side night and day. I for my part spent as much time as possible but I had a wife and two kids off at university and Chip though divorced had a daughter as well who was getting married in the spring. For two years Takumi struggled with his illness, Chip and I went back to teaching but in those final days before it consumed him we were there. I do not want to seem indecent of selfish but before he passed Takumi gave me some great last words and that at least gave me comfort. It was a surprise when we saw that in his will he did not want a burial like his parents but wanted to be buried here in Vine Station, beside one Alaska Young. And the words on his grave to be "No one catches the Fox". So now you have some company, and it seems only fitting that we four who could not be together in life could be together in death. I know that's what Chip wants and well... I always followed you guys so why not.

Miles,
November 27 2046

