

The Daily Rainbow

Samah Meghjee

INT. PRINTING SHOP - DAY

ARI, a spritely young college student, stumbles through an office littered with towering stacks of paper. She carries another huge stack of files so tall that only the bun on her head can be seen behind it, bobbing with every haphazard step she takes. Heaving a huge sigh, Ari plops the files down onto JOHNNY JOHNSON'S desk. Mr. Johnson, a graying, balding man in his forties with frown lines etched deeply into his forehead, jolts awake and raises his head from where he was dozing on his desk. He fixes his thick glasses with one hand and shoves aside the files with the other so that the "Johnny Johnson, Editor in Chief" plaque on his desk becomes visible.

ARI

Here you go, sir, detailed information on the reports of a population of rare Texas Clearbody parakeets here in Rainbow over 50 years, straight from the archives.

MR. JOHNSON

Just the blue ones, right?

ARI

I'm sorry, blue?

MR. JOHNSON

I only asked for the information on the blue Texas Clearbody parakeets in town. I only want the blue ones.

ARI

Sir, I know you love parakeets, but we've only had bird-related headlines for weeks. I think something different would bring up our readership more, especially considering how many subscription cancellations we've had. Do you remember headlining article The Rainbow Times published a few weeks ago?

MR. JOHNSON

I only remember the one about the Quail Festival. Now that was a good article.

ARI

I meant the one exposing the secret drug ring run by the town's

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ARI (cont'd)  
florists. A huge breakthrough story  
like that could do wonders for The  
Daily Rainbow, don't you think Mr.  
Johnson?

MR. JOHNSON  
Ari, blue parakeets.  
(snapping his fingers)  
Now, please.

Ari sighs again and hoists the files back up into her arms,  
tottering back into the Archives.

INT. ARCHIVE ROOM - DAY

Surrounding her Ari is a chaotic mess of articles,  
photographs, and various bird feathers. She bends over a  
sketch of a parakeet and uses a blue colored pencil to shade  
in a few of its feathers.

ARI  
This is ridiculous. I don't get  
paid enough for this. You know, now  
that I think of it, I wish I got  
paid at all.

She lays down her pencil and rests her head on the files in  
defeat.

ARI  
(CONT'D)  
There has to be something more  
interesting than just fowl in here,  
right?

Ari begins to shuffle through the files scattered about the  
room and in the boxes on the walls. She pulls out a file  
marked "High Priority" in large red letters. Opening it, she  
reads the contents aloud.

ARI  
(CONT'D)  
Rainbow, Texas's bust of Lady  
Marmalade has always been  
considered the town's greatest  
possession. Crafted from solid  
stainless steel, it is easily the  
single most valuable item in all of  
Rainbow. However, the bust has been  
missing since November of last  
year. In this file is all of the  
pertinent evidence to the  
still-open case.

INT. PRINTING SHOP - DAY

Ari dashes back into the office of the printing shop, dodging piles on her way back to Mr. Johnson. She skids to a halt in front of his desk, scattering papers and feathers in her wake. Mr. Johnson jolts awake again.

ARI

Mr. Johnson! I've found the article! The article that's going to save the paper!

MR. JOHNSON

Oh good, you found the blue parakeet pellets?

ARI

No, sir! I found the archival files on Lady Marmalade's bust! We're going to solve the case and it'll be on every doorstep in Rainbow by Sunday morning!

MR. JOHNSON

(shaking his head)

This is a waste of our time, Ari. That case has been basically closed for months. A few unhelpful leads, a couple of forged fingerprints, and nothing else.

ARI

I just think that we need a really clinching headline for this Sunday's paper, and it's already Friday afternoon -

MR. JOHNSON

That bust is lost forever. Now please stop bothering me, I need to make sure these feathers are the right measurements.

Mr. Johnson proceeds to measure the feathers against the length of his mustache.

ARI

But Mr. Johnson, the Main Street Supermarket said they'd pull our paper if we didn't double our sales this week -

(CONTINUED)

MR. JOHNSON

(becoming visibly impatient)

Darling, you're not an investigative journalist! Or even a reporter! You are the archival intern! Now please go find me the information I have asked for, in the archives, where you belong.

ARI

Please sir, you know it's my dream to be an investigative rep-

MR. JOHNSON

Ari, I write the articles. You get the coffee.

Mr. Johnson shoves a coffee cup into Ari's hands.

MR. JOHNSON

(CONT'D)

Extra strong please, I'd like to stay awake today.

ARI

Mr. Johnson, I know I could be a valuable asset to the paper. If you'd just let me try to cover this story, we might be able to get a more diverse readership and change our image from a glorified birdwatching magazine into something-

MR. JOHNSON

Please stop bothering me! I just want some peace and - wait... You know what dear, you might be on to something. I think you can do it.

ARI

Wait, really?

MR. JOHNSON

Sure thing! I uh, believe in you! Yeah, that's it. Go spend plenty of time on this case and away from me. Now get out of my feathers.

INT. RAINBOW MUSEUM, DAY

Ari is sitting across from the museum curator, KAI, a stern, owlsh woman with a tight bun on the top of her head, and a tight frown to match.

ARI

So I've been looking through The Daily Rainbow's archives, but I haven't been able to find much historical information. I decided to start with finding out about the life of Lady Marmalade, because I think that might help me figure out the motive for the robbery. I figured the museum would have some kind of record of her, especially since you housed the bust before it was stolen. So who was she?

KAI

Well, she was the town's most revered lady, of course.

ARI

Well, what did she do?

KAI

She lived a wonderful life of kindness and generosity! A true sentiment to the soul of Rainbow!

ARI

Listen, that sounds great but if that's the only criteria to be this town's most prized possession someone should've made a bust of me ten years ago.

KAI

Her bust was so well loved! We cared for it so well here. No one could decorate her or touch her or even look at her for too long. We protected her with our lives!

ARI

Can you tell me anything specific about her at all? Her favorite Beatle? Did she order pickles with her sandwiches? Did she even like marmalade?

(CONTINUED)

KAI  
Don't you dare question the  
legitimacy of Lady Marmalade! She  
is the epitome of Rainbow!

ARI  
Okay, what does that even mean?

KAI  
She was goodness personified! The  
purest lady there ever was! And I  
also think she might have been  
Canadian.

ARI  
There! That's something I can work  
with! Canadian, eh?

KAI  
Yes, yes I think so. And she  
preferred maple syrup over  
marmalade, if I remember correctly.

ARI  
Perfect! Thank you! I'll be in  
touch.

INT. MU SIGMA ALPHA FRATERNITY HOUSE - NIGHT

A group of four fraternity brothers, OWEN, ABBOT, WYATT, and HUDSON, wearing red and white jerseys are crowded around a small TV, watching a curling match with rapt attention. They don't notice when Ari creeps into the room, but they startle her as they erupt into a cheer.

OWEN  
Yeah! Look at that sweep!

ABBOT  
Did you see him? That swish!  
Exquisite! Absolutely elegant!

ARI  
(knocking on the door frame)  
Uh, hi, could I speak to you all  
for a moment?

The brothers all look up from the game, startled. They scramble to face Ari and OWEN pulls out a seat for her.

WYATT  
Sorry, we didn't see you there!  
Nice to meet ya, I'm Wyatt, and  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WYATT (cont'd)  
these are my brothers, Owen, Abbot,  
and Hudson. What brings you to our  
neck of the woods, eh?

ARI  
Well, I was walking back to my dorm  
and I saw the Canadian flag outside  
your door, and I was wondering if I  
could ask you some questions? I'm  
an investigative journalist and I'm  
looking for some information  
regarding an article I'm writing.

HUDSON  
Sure! Can we get ya anything? Tea?  
Coffee?

The boys scramble to pull up a chair for Ari. They pull her  
over to the TV, push on her shoulders and sit her down in  
the cushiest armchair in the room, pull her legs up onto an  
ottoman, and shove a steaming mug of fresh coffee into her  
hand, all within a matter of seconds.

ARI  
Oh! Thank you.

The boys pull up seats to face her, and the low din of the  
curling match can still be heard in the background.

WYATT  
So what would you like to know?

ARI  
Well, I've never heard of Mu Sigma  
Alpha before.

OWEN  
This is the founding chapter!  
Welcome to the Maple Syrup  
Association, as we like to call it.  
We're America's first Canadian  
fraternity.

ARI  
A Canadian fraternity.

HUDSON  
Yup!

ARI  
In Texas.

(CONTINUED)



OWEN

You got it.

ARI

So are you all Canadian?

ABBOT

Nope.

ARI

Oh. Okay.

WYATT

We just love Canada. Poutine, skiing, excessive politeness, all of it. Especially curling. Curling is our whole lives.

ARI

I just want to reiterate, we live in Texas. Where there is no ice around us for a 100 mile radius.

ABBOT

What's your point?

ARI

Wait, so those raging football - well, I guess curling - parties during finals were you guys? We were all so confused because they kept happening months after football season ended!

OWEN

We can't help it! It's just a primal love for the game ya know?

There is silence while a man docilely sweeps the ice on the TV, with only the noise of the audience gently clapping in the background. Ari shakes herself out of her confusion and pulls out her notepad.

ARI

Have any of you heard of Lady Marmalade?

ABBOT

The most famous lady to have ever lived in Rainbow? Yeah, of course!

(CONTINUED)

ARI

Well, I'm trying to find her bust that went missing from the museum a year ago. I'm an intern at The Daily Rainbow and I went through our archives, and from what I can tell, the first reporter on the job only looked at empirical evidence - fingerprints, DNA tests, the whole shebang. But this whole case feels fishy to me. So I started to try and look into Lady Marmalade's history, and see if there could be some ulterior motive to the robbery of her bust, and not just for the money.

HUDSON

So what have you found out about her?

ARI

Well, all I've got so far is that she's Canadian. And that she preferred maple syrup over marmalade.

OWEN

A fellow Canuck!

ABBOT

And a true one, at that!

ARI

Would you happen to know anything at all about Lady Marmalade?

Wyatt stands up and walks toward a bookshelf on one side of the room. As he speaks, he scans the shelf intently before pulling out a hefty and worn volume.

WYATT

You said you work with archives, right? This bookshelf functions as our MSA archive. Here, I think this might help you.

Wyatt places the heavy book into Ari's hands. Ari reads the title aloud before flipping through the pages.

ARI

*The Most Influential Canadian  
Texans of the 20th and 21st*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ARI (cont'd)

*Centuries: Who They Were and How They Have Changed the World.* This is perfect! Wow, I didn't know there were so many of them. Let's see, Macadams... Maldonado... ah ha! Marmalade. Marmalade, comma, Lady. Most famous Canadian Texan to ever live... Oh wow! Look at this.

All four of the boys lean in while Ari continued to read aloud.

ARI

(CONT'D)

Lady Marmalade's claim to fame lies in her work with Rainbow, Texas's bee population. Contrary to popular belief, Lady Marmalade's favorite condiment was not marmalade or even maple syrup, but honey. When the town was just becoming established, Lady Marmalade recognized a lack of diversity in the foliage of the town. She subsidized the creation of what would eventually become Rainbow University, which would eventually become the leading institution in beekeeping research. This research led to a dramatic increase in the bee populations of the town, which led to an increase in plant diversity. As a result, the town gained the name Rainbow, named after the beautiful array of colors found among the plant life. Rainbow is now one of the most well-landscaped towns in all of Texas, and widely considered an oasis of beauty in the state.

WYATT

Woah. So this lady like, created Rainbow.

OWEN

So who would take the bust? Do you think the University has it?

ARI

I don't see why they'd need to steal it. They're still thriving from Lady Marmalade's endowment,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ARI (cont'd)  
and they have enough clout to house  
the bust if they wanted to.

HUDSON  
Yo, you're really good at this.

ABBOT  
Yeah, I hope they pay you a lot at  
the Daily.

ARI  
Oh, they will, eventually. I think  
that we can't draw any conclusions  
yet. The logical next step to me is  
to just keep searching for clues. I  
think my next stop is the Rainbow  
Beekeepery.

WYATT  
Hey, that'll be cool! I went there  
in middle school, and I wore a  
beekeeping outfit to school for the  
next month.

ARI  
Only one problem. I'm dreadfully  
allergic to bees.

EXT. RAINBOW BEEKEEPERY - DAY

Ari is swaddled inside of a beekeeping outfit that is clearly several sizes too big. Any potential openings have been duct-taped closed, making her appear somewhere between a giant marshmallow and a half-unwrapped mummy. Around her are the fraternity brothers, also in beekeeping outfits (although Wyatt's is several sizes too small). They are all standing with their hands clasped in front of them, acting as Ari's bodyguards. Hudson is holding a hive smoker to ward off any bees.

ARI  
This is a terrible idea. I  
should've just studied chemistry  
like my mom told me to and then I  
would never have to be near a bee  
again. Or talk to anyone. Or go  
outside at all really. That's the  
real dream.

WYATT  
You're gonna do great.

(CONTINUED)

HUDSON  
(swinging the hive smoker  
around like it's a sword)  
Yeah, any bees that try to sting  
you have to get through us first!

Hudson accidentally hits Wyatt's exposed forearm. With a hiss of pain, Wyatt smacks Hudson upside the head.

ARI  
Wow. That makes me feel so much  
better. I definitely don't feel  
like I'm facing my imminent death  
right now anymore. Good.

BEASLEY, a presumably middle-aged man, comes out of a nearby house, also clothed in a beekeeper's uniform, although much less shoddy than Ari and the boys' outfits. His face is almost entirely obscured by the mask, but when he sees the students, he bounds over excitedly, removing his mask to reveal a kind face.

BEASLEY  
Well, hello there! Welcome to the  
Beekeepery! What are y'all doin'  
here this morning?

ARI  
Hi there, I'm with The Daily  
Rainbow, and I'm working on a piece  
about the town's beekeeping  
industry. I was wondering if you'd  
answer some questions for me?

BEASLEY  
Well sure thing! Would ya like a  
tour too?

Ari visibly hesitates, but Wyatt jumps up excitedly.

WYATT  
Yeah! We'd love a tour!

The boys bound excitedly after the beekeeper and Ari follows hesitantly behind, continually looking left and right and jumping at the smallest of sounds. While Beasley starts showing the boys the hives, she pulls herself together and pulls out her notepad.

ARI  
So, sir, um -

(CONTINUED)

BEASLEY

Call me Beasley.

ARI

Beasley. From my research I've found that the beekeeping industry in Rainbow is pretty young. Do you know anything about its history?

BEASLEY

Well, it's closely tied to the University! We are almost exclusively funded by RU's agricultural research program. They help us fund a lot of our experimental research. Recently we've been doing a lot of testing on bees and electromagnetic forces. Fascinating stuff, really.

ARI

But even further than just the University. Can you tell me anything about Lady Marmalade's involvement in the industry?

Beasley accidentally knocks the frame of bees against the hive in surprise, causing a swarm to go up in the air. Ari yelps and jumps back several feet. Beasley doesn't notice as he quickly works to recover himself.

BEASLEY

Oh! Sorry! Slippery fingers, you know. I don't know much about Lady Marmalade. I don't think anyone does. We kinda just love her for no reason, right? She's like some kind of Rainbow mascot.

ARI

Right. Well, she actually had a huge hand in the beekeeping industry here. Her investment caused a huge boom in plant diversity in Rainbow, and that's how the town got its name! You know, it's really such a shame that her bust is missing. I think people would know so much more about her enormous contributions to the town if her exhibit in the museum was properly respected.

( CONTINUED )

BEASLEY

(rapidly)

I wouldn't know anything about that at all. To be honest with you I don't even know who Lady Marmalade is.

OWEN

Wait, what?

BEASLEY

I'm not from here. I don't even work here.

ABBOT

Dude, knock it off.

BEASLEY

I don't even speak English.  
Bonjour! Adios!

Beasley begins rapidly packing up his tools and haphazardly stuffing frames back into hives. Ari takes a deep breath and steps right up to Beasley and the hives.

ARI

Sir, I'm going to have to ask to search your farm.

BEASLEY

You can't do that! You're just a kid, you need a warrant for that, little girl!

ARI

Actually, I'm an investigative reporter, and I'm working with the police on the case. Here's my badge.

Ari produces a homemade police badge from her pocket.

BEASLEY

This is just spray painted tinfoil.

ARI

Uh... budget cuts?

BEASLEY

(hesitates for a moment, then shrugs)

Seems legit. Search away.

(CONTINUED)

Ari and the boys quickly comb the farm, but find nothing. They end up standing in front of a huge hive.

ARI

We need to remove the frames.

The boys begin to cower and back away. Hudson waves his smoker rapidly in front of him as he shakes his head.

ARI

(CONT'D)

Come on guys! You know I'm allergic!

ABBOT

So are we! To pain!

ARI

Aren't you guys like, athletes or something? Don't you deal with pain on a daily basis?

WYATT

We're curlers, Ari. We curl.

ARI

Fair enough.

Ari gingerly removes the middle frame from the hive, and a something silver glints beneath it.

ARI

There it is! The bust! In all of its stainless steel glory! But why'd you take it if you weren't going to sell it, Beasley?

BEASLEY

I needed it for my experiments! Do you know how hard it is to find quality grade solid stainless steel for magnetic experiments? I'd have to buy a fridge! And those things are expensive!

ARI

Well sir, we're calling the cops and they'll be here in a few minutes to arrest you. And don't forget to read all about it in The Daily Rainbow on Sunday!