

A large, faint, light-colored crest is centered in the background. It features a shield with a red field and a white field, topped with a crown and surrounded by ornate scrollwork.

THE
NEW CAVALIER
READING SOCIETY
PRESENTS...



•ONLY•THE•WISE•
•PERSON•IS•FREE•



THE COMMONPL
ACE BOOK OF JOS
HVA HVMPHREYS

THE following is a selection from the 3 volumes of *The Commonplace Book of Joshua Humphreys*.

600 pages of the best that has ever been written, said, or done, the 2 volumes are the distillation of almost 10 years of reading. Not available to the general public, they're one of several splendid privileges enjoyed exclusively by members of The New Cavalier Reading Society—and they shall serve as your magnificent textbooks throughout our upcoming semester.

This 25-page selection is just 0.03% of the culture to which The Reading Society will expose you. It ranges from the 5th century BC to the 21st AD—2500 years of art, history, & philosophy. It takes you from London to Oxford to Paris to Venice, from Verona to Russia to New York, and from Japan to China & Thailand. It contains words from 85 different minds—a mere tenth of the 850 Poets, Painters, Saints, Sinners, Novelists, Historians, Philosophers, Composers, Sculptors, Kings, & Comedians—who you'll read in your semester of The 2020 New Cavalier Reading Society.

Print these pages out, they fit perfectly side-by-side on A4; think as you read and write as you read. Come to the Reading Society with questions—BIG questions: for the more inquisitive your mind, the greater the fruits of our tutorial discussions.

The New Cavalier Reading Society will show you just how glorious a thing culture can be, how it enhances all aspects of life—exalts the intellect, makes exuberant one's conversation, even begins to beautify ones personage.

Above all, I hope that you shall allow me to show you that it is culture alone which produces that delightfully intangible feeling of being a part of something far greater and more excellent than oneself.

Happy reading, and I hope to see you in tutorials!

J.H., Sep 2020



THE COMMONPL
ACE BOOK OF JOS
HVA HVMPHREYS

I hope to show what culture is, and how utterly different from (infinitely more precious than) science, archaeology, a doctrine, erudition, and, of course, a system. You will see what culture was like before the professors crushed it.

PÉGUY

One hour of life, crowded to the full with glorious action and filled with noble risks, is worth whole years of those mean observances of paltry decorum, in which men steal through existence, like sluggish waters through a marsh, without either honour or observation.

SCOTT

As poor as the man who has not enough is the man who cannot have enough.

EPICTETUS

Count it the greatest of all sins to prefer life to honour, and to lose, for the sake of living, all that makes life worth living.

JUVENAL

All are lunatics, but he who can analyse his delusions is called a philosopher.

BIERCE

In the course of history those who have not had their heads cut off and those who have not caused others' heads to fall leave no trace behind. You have a choice of being a victim, a tyrant, or a nobody.

VALÉRY

Without contraries is no progression. Attraction and repulsion, reason and energy, love and hate, are necessary to human existence.

BLAKE

Only those who remember the world before 1914 can adequately realize how much has already been lost.

RUSSELL [1956]

A woman unsatisfied must have luxuries. But a woman who loves a man would sleep on a board.

LAWRENCE

To wisdom belongs the intellectual apprehension of things eternal, to knowledge, the rational apprehension of things temporal.

AUGUSTINE

What we want art to do for us is to stay what is fleeting, and to enlighten what is incomprehensible, to incorporate the things that have no measure, and immortalize the things that have no duration. The dimly seen, momentary glance, the flitting shadow of faint emotion, the imperfect lines of fading thought, and all that in man's person and actions, and in the great natural world, is infinite and wonderful; having in it that spirit and power which man may witness, but not weigh; conceive, but not comprehend; love, but not limit; and imagine, but not define;—this, the beginning and the end of the aim of all noble art.

RUSKIN

If this be what you call liberty, God give me the old slavery again.

PERTH

Liberty is the soul's right to breathe, and when it cannot take a long breath laws are girded too tight.

BEECHER

What role does silence have in all this noise?

FELLINI

He that will not reason is a bigot, he that cannot reason is a fool, and he that dares not reason is a slave.

DRUMMOND

In Delacroix's *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel*, in the shadow of the great oaks, symbols of his primitive nature, Man has struggled all night to resist that gift of spiritual perception which will so greatly sadden & complicate his existence. He charges like a bull against the impassive angel, but in the end he must succumb to his destiny.



CLARK

Before the great man can remake his society, his society must make him.

SPENCER

A writer like me must have an utter confidence, an utter faith in his star. It's an almost mystical feeling, a feeling of nothing-can-happen-to-me, nothing-can-harm-me, nothing-can-touch-me. Thomas Wolfe has it. Ernest Hemingway has it. I once had it. But through a series of blows, many of them my own fault, something happened to that sense of immunity and I lost my grip.

FITZGERALD

Who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection,—to beauty, in a word, which is only truth seen from another side? Home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties!

ARNOLD

Elegance is the quality in a work of art which imparts direct pleasure; again not universal pleasure. There is a huge, envious world to whom elegance is positively offensive. English is incomparably the richest of languages, dead or living. One can devote one's life to learning it and die without achieving mastery. No two words are identical in meaning, sound and connotation. ... There has been a notable flight from magnificence in English writing.

WAUGH

Hatred is the anger of the weak.

DAUDET

Trifles light as air are to the jealous confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ.

SHAKESPEARE

An intellectual is anybody who has found something more interesting than sex.

HUXLEY

It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by the dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error or short-coming; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who, at worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly; so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory or defeat.

ROOSEVELT

You can live to be a hundred if you give up all the things that make you want to live to be a hundred.

ALLEN

Tornate all'antico e sarà un progresso.

Let us return to the past and that will be progress.

VERDI

The restraint of a traditional culture tempers and directs creative impulses. Freedom produces sterility.

WAUGH

It is more difficult to love God than to believe in him. On the contrary it is more difficult to believe in the Devil than to love him. Everyone serves him, but nobody believes in him. Sublime subtlety of the Devil!

BAUDELAIRE

If you want to know what the Lord God thinks of money, just look at those to whom he gives it.

PARKER

DA TVA DVM TVA SVNT
POST MORTEM TVNC TVA NON SVNT•
VT FLOX ET VENTVS
SIC TRANSIT NOSTRA IVENTVS

Give what you have while it is still yours;
after your death it is no longer yours.

Like a flower and the wind

Thus passes our youth.

From a tomb in Verona

A compleat Cavalier is a child of honour, a gentleman well born and bred, that loves his King for conscience sake, of a clearer countenance, and bolder look than other men, because of a more loyal heart.

SYMMONS

Marriage is like a cage; one sees the birds outside desperate to get in, and those inside desperate to get out.

MONTAIGNE

For the various religions of Asia, in contrast to ascetic Protestantism, the world remains a great enchanted garden. In which the practical way to orient oneself or to find security in this world or the next, was to revere or coerce spirits and seek salvation through ritualistic, idolatrous, or sacramental procedures.

WEBER

The path of truth, whose mother is history: the imitator of time, the storehouse of actions, and the witness to the past, an example and a lesson to the present and a warning to the future.

CERVANTES

A SOVIET STORY

My grandfather grew up in a village where he cultivated the land with his brother and their children. His neighbour, Petya, was a ne'er-do-well, who slept on the porch of his ramshackle hut and spent his evenings drinking and beating his miserable wife. He would watch in disdain as we sweated in the hot sun building a new barn or brought home a new cow. During hard times, Petya would appear at our door asking for a handout. In 1929, Petya appeared at my grandfather's door accompanied by a handful of thugs, sporting a military uniform and cap bearing a red star, and declared: "In the name of Soviet power, I order you to hand over all your property and land to the collective."

This is why my grandfather hated communism and Soviet power all his life.

Though history were of no use to other men, it should be made the study of princes.

BOSSUET

Kingdoms fall through luxury, cities rise through virtues. Behold the neck of pride severed by the hand of humility.

DONATELLO's statue of Judith

I played over the music of that scoundrel Brahms. What a giftless bastard! It annoys me that this self-inflated mediocrity is hailed as a genius.

TCHAIKOVSKY

The first condition under which education can be given usefully is, that it should be clearly understood to be no means of getting on in the world, but a means of staying pleasantly in your place there.

RUSKIN

You are about to embark on a course of studies which form a noble adventure. All that you will learn in the course of your studies will not be of the slightest possible use to you in later life—save only this—that if you work hard and intelligently you should be able to detect when a man is talking rot, and that, in my view, is the main, if not the sole, purpose of education.

SMITH

CLARK

The Young Michelangelo

The heroic in life or art is based on the consciousness that life is a struggle; and that in this struggle it is courage, strength of will, and determination which are decisive, not intelligence nor sensibility. The heroic involves a contempt for convenience and a sacrifice of all those pleasures which contribute to what we call civilised life. It is the enemy of happiness. And yet we recognise that to despise material obstacles and even to defy the blind forces of fate is man's supreme achievement. For the heroic is not merely a struggle with material obstacles; it is a struggle with Fate. Insofar as it magnifies the individual in his conflict with the blind forces of destiny it is the highest expression of a humanist ideal and was recognised as such in antiquity. But the heroic stands on the borders of humanism, and looks beyond it. For to struggle with Fate man must become more than man; he must aspire to be a god. Now apotheosis announced the end of humanist art. If there is a single point at which the art of classical antiquity turns towards the Middle Ages, it is when the emperor is accepted as a god. The first great medieval work of art is the statue of Constantine at Barletta: and like the David it is of heroic size. So on the perfectly antique body of the David is set a head which looks with proud and conscious heroism, away from the happy, concrete world of the quattrocento. Like other great revolutions in history, we may wish that it had never happened, but once it has taken place we must accept it with all its potency for good or evil.

Only a few prefer liberty.

The majority seek nothing more than fair masters.

SALLUST

I wish the days to be as centuries, loaded, fragrant.

EMERSON

And now fair Italy! Thou art the garden of the world... thy
wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced with an immaculate charm
which cannot be defaced.

BYRON



Hamlet. I have of late—but
wherefore I know not—lost all
my mirth, forgone all custom
of exercises; and indeed, it
goes so heavily with my
disposition that this goodly
frame the earth seems to me a
sterile promontory. ... What a
piece of work is man! How
noble in reason! how infinite
in faculty! in form and moving
how express and admirable, in
action how like an angel! in
apprehension how like a god!
the beauty of the world! the
paragon of animals! And yet to
me, what is this quintessence
of dust? Man delights not me;
no, nor Woman neither;
though by your smiling you
seem to say so.

Shakespearean language is a bizarre super-tongue, alien and
plastic, twisting, turning, and forever escaping.

PAGLIA

You cannot make war safely but no dead general has ever been
criticised so you have that way out always. I am sure that if
every leader who goes into battle will promise himself that he
will come out either a conqueror or a corpse he is sure to win.

PATTON

We will at least concede to the people of the Middle Ages that they were able to live without continual or continually threatening national wars, without forced mass industry with deadly competition, without credit and capitalism, without hatred of (albeit inevitable) poverty.

BURCKHARDT

There is the moral of all human tales.
'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past,
First Freedom, and then Glory — when that fails,
Wealth, vice, corruption — barbarism at last
And History, with all her volumes vast,
Hath but one page.

Society is now one polished horde,
Form'd of two mighty tribes, the Bores and Bored.
The 'good old times'—all times when old are good—
Are gone; the present might be if they would.

Be slaves who will, the cynic shall be free.

BYRON

Never reinforce failure.

NAPOLEON

Schools generally fail to teach how exciting, how mesmerisingly beautiful science or mathematics can be; they teach the routine of literature or history rather than the adventure. It is in this sense that creative people live exemplary lives. They show how joyful and interesting complex symbolic activity is. They have struggled through marshes of ignorance, deserts of disinterest, and with the help of parents and a few visionary teachers they have found themselves on the other side of the known.

CSIKSZENTMIHALYI

AND EACH WEEK
for our Tutorial Discussions
we have what we call our
QVADRIGA.

The 4 profound & enlightening questions
that lead us through both
our reading & our discussion,
they're followed by our weekly Bagatelles:
the smaller questions that often involve
cultural excursions, activities, excitements, assignments, and
getting you a little outside your intellectual comfort zone.

Here's a sample QUADRIGA,
so you can see what measure of enlightenment
is contained within just one week of
THE
NEW CAVALIER
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THE QVADRIGA.

· In the history of humankind has there ever been a Golden Age? If so, when do you think it was? Will there ever be one, or another?

· Has the progress of the sciences and arts done more to corrupt morals or improve them? Will it and should it continue on the same path?

· How would you re-enchant the world?

· What's the one question you would have in this week's Quadriga? What was the greatest wonder, uncertainty, curiosity—that hit you in this week's reading?

THE BAGATELLES.

Memorising poetry prevents dementia & makes you seem at least 50% more intelligent.

Memorise and recite from memory
14 lines of Shakespeare.

Does a firm
persuasion that a
thing is so, make
it so?

Are we
at the end of an era,
or the beginning?

The Medievals
celebrated the lives and
deeds of three pagan,
three Jewish, three
Christian Worthies.

Who would you
propose as the three
Modern Worthies?

Whether God ever gave the Venetians what they thought He had given, does not matter to us; He gave them at least joy and peace in their imagined treasure, more than we have in our real ones.

RUSKIN

Among the notable nagas of Buddhist tradition is Mucalinda, King of the Snakes & protector of the Buddha. Shortly after his enlightenment, the Buddha was meditating in a forest when a great storm arose. Graciously, Mucalinda gives shelter to the Buddha from the storm by covering the Buddha's head with his seven snake heads and coiling his body into seven circles and lifting the meditating Buddha above the powerful stream. The many-headed naga represents unity with the forces of nature and the ideal state of spiritual liberation.



The secret to the great fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment of existence is: to live dangerously! Build your cities under Vesuvius. Send your ships into uncharted seas! Live at war with your peers and yourselves! Be robbers and conquerors, as long as you cannot be rulers and owners, you lovers of knowledge! Soon the age will be past when you could be satisfied to live like shy deer, hidden in the woods!

NIETZSCHE

These studies sustain youth and entertain old age, they enhance prosperity, and offer a refuge and solace in adversity; they delight us when we are at home without hindering us in the wider world, and are with us at night and when we travel.

CICERO

Culture is then properly described not as having its origin in curiosity, but as having its origin in the love of perfection; it is a study of perfection. It moves by the force, not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good. As, in the first view of it, we took for its worthy motto Montesquieu's words: 'To render an intelligent being yet more intelligent!'

ARNOLD

The only way you can construe a group of intellectuals talking to each other as dangerous is if you are scared of what they might discover.

HEYING

Your eloquence should be the servant of the ideas in your head. Your rule might be this: If a sentence, no matter how excellent, does not illuminate your subject in some new and useful way, scratch it out.

VONNEGUT



I refuse to be guided and controlled by a communion of established views and academic traditions. That Mann's asinine *Death in Venice* or Pasternak's melodramatic and vilely written *Zhivago* or Faulkner's corncobby chronicles can be considered "masterpieces," or at least what journalists call "great books," is to me an absurd delusion, as when a hypnotized person makes love to a chair.

NABOKOV

Lolita is without merit, except as smut. On that count, it is highly exciting.

WAUGH

Let every dawn of morning be to you as the beginning of life, and every setting sun be to you as its close:—then let every one of these short lives leave its sure record of some kindly thing done for others—some goodly strength or knowledge gained for yourselves.

RUSKIN

Why do you wonder that good people are shaken in order that they may grow strong? No tree becomes rooted and sturdy unless many a wind assails it. For by its very tossing it tightens its grip and plants its roots more securely; the fragile trees are those that have grown in a sunny valley.

SENECA



What the dynamism of the Press wants is permanent effectiveness. It must keep men's minds continuously under its influence. One argument is overthrown as soon as the advantage of financial power passes over to the counter-argument and brings it still oftener to men's eyes and ears. At that moment the needle of public opinion swings round to the stronger pole. Everybody convinces himself at once of the new truth, and regards himself awakened out of error.

So the reader neither knows, nor is allowed to know, the purposes for which he is used, nor even the role that he is to play. A more appalling caricature of freedom of thought cannot be imagined. Formerly a man did not dare to think freely. Now he dares, but cannot; his will to think is only a willingness to think to order, and this is what he feels as his liberty.

SPENGLER

I can prove anything by statistics except the truth.

CANNING

Expand our idea of the present to two hundred years—a hundred years forward, a hundred years back. A two-hundred-year present will not make us prophets or seers, but it will give us an at-homeness with our changing times comparable to that which parents can have with an ever-changing family of children as they move from age to age.

BOULDING

Mankind has abdicated, within a life-time, all those rights which we used to include under our notion of political liberty. To be free, in these days, means at best to be bullied by your own fellow countrymen rather than by foreigners. Your property is yours only on sufferance; you must hand on no traditions to your children except what the State approves. Even where we still hold out against ochlocracy, and enjoy democratic institutions, the shackles of State control tighten round us daily; inspected here, directed there, we find the area of individual choice continually shrinking, our daily lives increasingly conditioned from above. We are not the men we were; in all those daily contacts which make citizens of us, our personalities are being ruthlessly abridged.

RONALD KNOX, 1945

THE OATH OF THE PEACOCK



Philip of Burgundy prepared for the Holy War by an allegorical pageant, a banquet, and a dance, and, laying his hand on an emblematical live peacock, vowed to the All Seer that he would turn the Turk out of Europe. The peacock, led by two charming maidens, had for its companions an elephant, a Paynim giant, and one Oliver de la Marche playing the part of the Captive Church.

The traveller sees what he sees; the tourist sees what he has come to see.

CHESTERTON

There are some things which cannot be learned quickly, and time, which is all we have, must be paid heavily for their acquiring. They are the very simplest things and because it takes a person's life to know them the little new that each person gets from life is very costly, and the only heritage they have to leave.

HEMINGWAY

ECCLESIASTES 9:10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

An aspiration is a joy forever, a possession as solid as a landed estate, a fortune which we can never exhaust and which gives us year by year a revenue of pleasurable activity. To have many of these is to be spiritually rich.

STEVENSON

Beautiful colours can be bought in the shops on the Rialto, but good drawing can only be bought from the casket of the artist's talent with patient study and nights without sleep.

TINTORETTO

All men dream: but not equally, Those who dream by night
in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find
that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous
men, for they may act their dream with open eyes, to make it
possible.

LAWRENCE

Of a truth the gods do not give the same man everything:
you know how to gain a victory, Hannibal, but you do not
know how to make use of it.

LIVY

The vitality of thought is adventure. *Ideas won't keep.*
Something must be done about them.

WHITEHEAD

The only difference between an artist and a lunatic is,
perhaps, that the artist has the restraint or courtesy to
conceal the intensity of his obsession from all except those
similarly afflicted. But in other respects the Kingdom of Art
has many mansions, and their occupants need only possess in
common that one essential mania.

SITWELL

The world has been empty since the Romans. But the memory
of the Romans fills it. They go on prophesying liberty.

SAINT-JUST

SHOKVNIN 職人

A master, or mastery, of one's profession.
It captures the way Japanese workers spend every day trying
to be better at what they do.

Once you decide on your occupation you must immerse
yourself in your work. You have to fall in love with your
work. Never complain about your job. You must dedicate
your life to mastering your skill. That's the secret of success.

JIRO ONO

Every people has produced a code of laws; but the Greeks
always sought for one Law pervading everything, and tried to
make their life and thought harmonize with it. They are the
philosophers of the world.

JAEGER

The Cynics were the hippies of Antiquity: they had opted
out not only from the rat race but from all personal share in a
civilization which they condemned.

DODDS

Bored by the tedious and improving conversation of those
who have neither the wit to exaggerate nor the genius to
romance, society sooner or later must return to its lost leader,
the cultured and fascinating liar.

WILDE

THE
ANATOMY OF
MELANCHOLY.

*What it is, with all the kinds causes,
Symptomes, Prognosticks & Seuerall cures of it.*

In three Partitions, with their severall
Sections, members & sublections.

*Philosophically, Medicinally,
Historically opened & cut out.*

BY

Robert Burton

Either say something that I never read nor heard of before,
or else hold thy peace.

That which is necessary cannot be grievous. Whether thou
wilt or no, it must be indured.

Our life is but short, a very dream; and, while we look about,
eternity is at hand.

If all the men in the world should come and bring their
grievances together, of body, mind, fortune—and lay them
on a heap to be equally divided, wouldst thou share alike, and
take thy portion, or be as thou art?

SOCRATES

Our life is a pilgrimage on earth, which wise men pass with
great alacrity.

PLATO

'Tis the rarity and necessity that makes a thing acceptable
and pleasant. Darius, put to flight by Alexander, drank
puddle water to quench his thirst; and it was pleasanter, he
swore, than any wine or mead.

Poverty is the mistress of philosophy, the mother of religion,
virtue, sobriety, sister of innocency and an upright mind.



Russians have more words
for “bribe” than Eskimos do
for “snow.”

POMERANTSEV



History is merely a fable agreed upon.

HELVETIUS

To study and at times put your learning into practice, is that
not a joy?

CONFUCIUS

The deterioration of every government begins almost always
with the decay of the principles on which it was founded.

MONTESQUIEU

No, it wasn't a success—not if you measure success in terms
of profit. But it was a sense of adventure. So in many ways,
yes it was, very successful.

DYLAN (Bob)

There is now no breathing space for culture—mankind lies dead beside its works, whose invention cost so much intelligence that there was none left to put them to use. We were complicated enough to build the machine, we are too primitive to put it to our service.

KRAUS

Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go.

ELIOT



The Boyhood of Raleigh, Millais

Men risen from the ranks like Drake and Raleigh sailed with the do-or-die attitude that if they were successful they would be able to buy their way out of trouble, and if not they would be past caring.

BICHENO

The greatest of blessings come to us through madness, when it is sent as a gift of the gods. Madness, which comes from god, is superior to sanity, which is of human origin.

PLATO

THEIA MANIA | θεία μανία — Divine Madness

Most people would die sooner than think—in fact, they do so.

RUSSELL

Let that day be lost to us on which we did not dance once!
And let that wisdom be false to us that brought no laughter with it!

NIETZSCHE

The iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity. Who can but pity the founder of the Pyramids? Herostrates lives that burnt the Temple of Diana, he is almost lost that built it. Who knows whether the best of men be known, or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot, than any that stand remembered in the known account of time?

BROWNE

Do not read as children do to enjoy themselves, or, as the ambitious do to educate themselves. No, read to live.

FLAUBERT

If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.

ORWELL

Goethe tells of a Greek nobleman who was asked about the education of his children. 'Let them be instructed,' he said, 'in that which they will never be able to learn.'

Wheresoever the search after truth begins, there life begins; wheresoever that search ceases, there life ceases.

RUSKIN

Your educators can only be your liberators.

NIETZSCHE



THE
UPCOMING SEMESTER OF THE
NEW CAVALIER
READING SOCIETY

is a 3-month adventure through
3000 years of art, history, & philosophy.

A members-only group *dedicated* to discussing
humanity's most profound questions, we bequeath
to our members a wondrous education in what
culture was like before the universities crushed it.

Each week reading the same 25 pages from the priceless
—and exclusively yours—

Commonplace Book of Joshua Humphreys,
we come together twice a week and your tutor, Joshua
Humphreys, leads you through a discussion of all the
cultural exuberance you've been reading.

If defying the flight from learned magnificence;
recovering the lost art of noble thinking;
& returning to the eternal superiority of wisdom
over knowledge—all appeal to you,

THEN ABSOLUTELY YOU SHOULD JOIN US!





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