

THE RAHA TIMES

MADE BY STUDENTS, FOR STUDENTS



HAPPY VALENTINES!

Happy Valentine's Day! The past month has been pretty stressful for the few of us, especially the seniors who occupied the study halls while they fretted about exams and took over the last floor of the H building for the last two weeks to take their mocks (we wish all of you the best!). In the year below, the new Raha Times team (or shall I say, replacements) were also fretting about exams that they had to complete after their temporary period of online school. Alas, it has all ceased down to a well-deserved, midterm break. Whether you have your head in the textbooks or not, we hope you can enjoy this publication! Enjoy an original poem by our Creative Writing team, our current stories and events, a delectable recipe, and a lot more!

Unless you're not spending time passing roses and teddy bears to your loved ones, the Raha Times wish you a wonderful midterm break! Happy Reading!

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The Raha Times



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<http://gg.gg/ristimes>

Lover's Lanterns

By Zina Albaini

In winter and in summer

In spring and in fall

I walk down memory lane

The one right by emotions mall

As I relive the highlights of my life

And rerun them all

Just to meet my lover again

Even if the path ends with a wall

With no hope and no expectations

I walk and I walk towards a familiar light

That wasn't there before

Although my eyes hurt and it was too
bright

I reach the end, just to find

My lover waiting for me under the
moonlight

With a rose in a hand and an arm
stretched out

I knew everything would, again, be all
right.

PRICE HIKES FOR KARAK TEA IN THE GULF

AHMAD DARWISH

Karak Tea, a local favourite, has, for decades, played an integral role in the development of Khaleeji culture. Though its simplicity is captured by the few ingredients needed to make it--black loose tea leaves, evaporated milk, and cardamom--the drink has recently been at the centre of debate across the Gulf.

Bahrain has recently introduced a 10% increase in VAT (Value Added Tax). The Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Tourism reported that a price increase from 100 fils to 150 fils was made, citing the increased VAT tax. Though 94 'basic' food products--including all those needed to make Karak--have been excluded from the tax, at least eight other shops have taken the opportunity to unfairly increase the price of Karak.

Bahraini councillor, Muhammed Saad Al-Dosari, described the situation as "simply a case of exploitation."

The UAE has also seen its own price increase which, though regulated, has still caused upset. On the 3rd of February, 2022, many cafes, including gas stations, that sold karak had raised the price of tea by 50%, equivalent to approximately 50 fils, given the original price. Stores have cited the high prices of evaporated milk and sugar.

Some consumers believe the price hike is both unjustified and large, and therefore, there have been calls by some for an audit of outlets to investigate the necessity of the price hike. However, analysts suggest that the price hike is only a byproduct of the pandemic.

They have labelled inflation as the source for price increases and have argued that other sectors have seen similar radical changes and there is no surprise for what happened to Karak.

A DP student at Raha explained, "I don't like Karak to begin with, but it shouldn't be overpriced because everyone drinks [Karak]."
(Sharmeen Siddique)



A GREAT CHAMPION: RAFAEL NADAL

After the constant coverage and controversy brought to this year's Australian Open, (run from January 17th to 30th in 2022) by Novak Djokovic surrounding his vaccination status and his inability to play as a result, the narrative around this year's first tennis event swiftly switched to another legend and champion of the sport: Rafael Nadal.

Unexpectedly, with surrounding talks of a plausible retirement due to a nagging left foot injury, Nadal managed to have a comeback on Sunday to defeat Daniil Medvedev 2-6, 6-7, 6-4, 6-4, 7-5 in a classic final at Melbourne Park. Nadal's victory was his 21st major singles title, taking him one ahead of the previous record of 20 he shared with Federer and Djokovic.

Many might have expected it would come for the Spaniard at the French Open in the spring, as his dominance on clay courts is legendary and he has won 13 titles at Roland Garros. By comparison, he had won the Australian Open only once in 2009 and had suffered defeat in four Melbourne finals since, making this success extra special.

This story was fitting of this Valentine edition, as after winning, Nadal expressed his love for his passion, and his game and dedication to the sport was globally acclaimed.



Djokovic's vaccination status stirred much controversy during this year's Australian open

"I don't know what to say guys. For me it is just amazing. I did not know if I would be back on the tour playing tennis again," he admitted.

"You don't know how much it means to be back here. You are amazing and thank you so much for all of your support."

"Without a doubt it is one of the most emotional [periods] of my career. To have the support I have received the last three weeks will stay in my heart. So many, many thanks."

He later added: "I thought this might be my last Australian Open, but this has given me enough energy to maybe keep going. I will keep trying my very best to come again next year. Thank you."

He was in fact met with profound respect by his competitors. Federer, whose total of 20 Grand Slam titles was eclipsed because of Nadal's victory, jokingly referenced those talks of retirement as he congratulated his great rival in a classy message.

"A few months ago, we were joking about both being on crutches. Amazing. Never underestimate a great champion."

MID-TERM BREAK... FINALLY!

Finally, the long-awaited mid-term break!

All of us can finally rest from school and relax. Some of you might be excited for the mid-term without having any plans, and I'm here to help with that. As the days pass, the weather is slowly getting warmer and warmer... you know what that means?

Perfect weather for Yas Water World. Monday the 14th of February - Valentine's day - the weather will be at an approximate 25 degrees Celsius, the perfect weather for a visit to your favourite waterpark with some friends. Still too cold for you? There is always the cinema in almost any mall in the country, which is a perfect way to relax and clear your mind after all the stress from assessments. I'm going to go to Yas Water World, that's for sure! What about you guys? What are your plans?



Valentine's around the World:

Valentine's Day is celebrated every year on February 14th and as a big holiday, its celebrations occur all around the world in different ways that reflect local ideas about love. In France, it is thought that the first ever Valentine's Day card was sent by Charles, the duke of Orleans.

Ever since then, the French village of Valentine has become the epicentre of romance during both the 12th and 14th of February. Between these dates, one can see the beautiful yards, trees, and homes decorated with love cards, roses, and proposals for marriage, which are said to be the most beautiful traditions in the world.

Another notable Valentine's Day celebration originates in Wales, known as the Day of San Dwynwen. Every year on this day, young couples handcraft beautiful wooden spoons with each other as a token of their appreciation and love.

Jameel Almuti and Yaseen El Agroudy

READING BOOKS TO CHANGE THE WORLD



Books are a staple in the daily lives of every student. They are the most beloved form of literacy, aiming to make time pass and educate. However, a question raised is how are students meant to be educated on the social realities highlighted in the books when schools forbid them from being read?

Schools are supposed to nurture and help students gain their individuality, thought process and open them up to new ideas and realities of their surroundings. However, a school in Pennsylvania is doing the opposite. The primarily white school has a limited number of students from minor ethnicities. The gap between the students of various ethnicities is driven further by society imposing a ban on books about 'Black Lives.' The stories of minor-ethnic people and their stories of survival in a world where society's thinking is obstructed by color and race.

Teachers in Central York High School, Pennsylvania, were given a banned book list by a diversity committee in light of the George Floyd case. To prevent students from worrying about the sad actuality of the world, despite the thoughts coming from a good place, the idea causes many hindrances to students, making them ignorant of their world.

Students at the school, Christine and Renee Ellis of the Panther Anti-Racist Union, a student-led organization that advocates for social justice, had organized many rallies to fight the ban. Along with a growing crowd of supporters, they protested around the school with slogans such as "Black Lives Matter" and more. Other organizers, like Edha Gupta, had written to the newspapers in the local district, with social media also being used vastly. Instagram was a primary platform as students had read fragments of the banned books on the platform to the world.

These movements are invaluable as they helped the school district acknowledge the importance of not hindering information from the students and fostering an inclusive environment for people of all ethnicities. For example, banning books written by Black authors or prominent Black figures in history drove a wedge between the students, making the learning environment unsuitable to minor-ethnicity students.

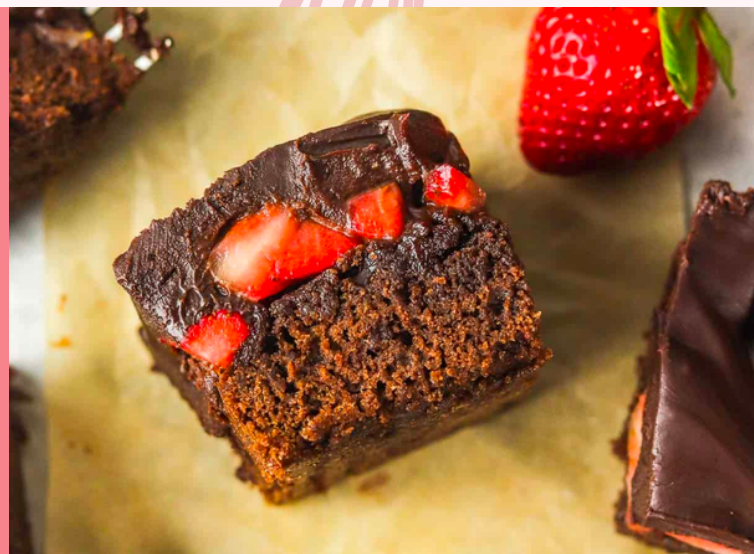
"If a little girl or Black girl goes into her school library and cannot find a single book that represents her and people are telling her that she does not matter, she will treat herself as such. She will act like she does not matter, and that is how a cycle continues," Christina said. Despite the protests, students are doing more to battle this ongoing issue. The ban has not stopped the students from reading books from diverse cultures. On the contrary, the movement has increased the value of these books, causing an increased interest among students, who read them with growing fervor.

However, no one is blind to the fact that many books do not have Black main characters or supporting characters, making the bridge between ethnicities clear as one race is clearly prided above the others. The movements also help draw attention to these problems, helping society realize that there is a need to correct these issues of the undisguised world.

The Panther Anti-Racist Union's actions to oppose the school district have spread worldwide, with petitions growing, supported by authors of the books and by people across the country. Drawing the world's attention to these problems was an astounding move conducted by the Union to combat race and color, helping the world see itself through the reflection of those who experience the brunt of it first-hand. It must be remembered that, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The time is always right to do what is right."

CHOCOLATE-COVERED STRAWBERRY BROWNIES

Whether you have a sweetheart or not, spend your Valentine's Day making this 'sweet' treat! If you love strawberries, brownies, and everything in between - except all the EFFORT to make it - then this recipe is for you! This recipe is easy to make at home, and the entire thing can be finished in less than one hour (approximately 45 minutes). This is definitely a **must** for Valentine's day, enjoy!



DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare brownies according to package directions.
2. Allow brownies to cool fully, then spread strawberries on top in one even layer.
3. In a microwave-safe bowl melt together the chocolate chips and heavy whipping cream. This will take 60-90 seconds and be sure to stop and stir every ~15-20 seconds. Be careful not to burn! It's done when it's just liquid-again, don't overcook!
4. Pour the melted chocolate over the strawberries-topped brownies in one even layer.
5. Allow to cool fully before cutting.

Heavy Whipping Cream Substitute:

If you don't have heavy whipping cream you can substitute 3 tbsp butter 1/2 cup milk (I have not tested this with non-dairy milk).

You can use boxed or a homemade brownie base. If you want to make an 8x8 or 9x9 pan instead of a larger 13x9 just use half of the strawberries and whipping cream that the recipe calls for.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 box of brownie mix
- 2 eggs (or as called for on the package)
- 1/2 cup oil (or as called for on the package)
- 2 tbsp water
- 2 cups fresh strawberries, diced
- 2, 12 oz bags of chocolate chips (~4 cups total)
- 3/4 cup heavy whipping cream

NOTES: BROWNIES ARE BEST EATEN WITHIN A FEW DAYS OF BAKING.

STORE BROWNIES IN THE FRIDGE AFTER BAKING.

original recipe:

<https://colleenchristensennutrition.com/chocolate-covered-strawberry-brownies/>

GROWING FOOD IN THE DESERT: GROUNDBREAKING ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMIT

As the world races to pursue new initiatives for ameliorating today's exponential environmental issues and a constantly growing population, international demand for research schemes that seek more efficient ways in the sourcing and distribution of food resources is constantly becoming a more compelling matter. With a naturally low area of fertile land, and a generally low supply of potable water and a hot climate, the UAE is one of the first countries to have intended to create ambitious plans to solve the potential energy resource and food supply issues. With a recent collaboration instituted at the start of this year (January 18), the UAE had partaken the aid of Jordan and the Netherlands in an attempt to find solutions that can combat these environmental problems and secure our world for the next generations.

The collaboration efforts will be focused on improving the methods and cycles of agriculture and resource security throughout the whole Middle East. So far, researchers have already initiated a database for keeping a general account and potentially reducing the amount of water and energy that would be necessary to grow fruit and vegetables in the harsh desert conditions, sustain the growing population (Badam), and have established research and experimental hydroponic farms across the countries. Saleh Al Karabsheh, the Minister of Jordan's Energy and Mineral Security, told the summit, "In the coming decades, the world will need increasing amounts of resources. Population growth, resource-intensive lifestyles, and the damaging effects of climate change will lead to water, energy, and food insecurity across the globe."

The summit believes that the need for international collaboration is essential to find a productive and rapid solution, and the collaboration between these specific countries is no simple coincidence.

The Netherlands has been through and overcome similar challenges with the supply and produce of

food while being a relatively small country with a low area of usable agriculture land. Despite this, the country stands as the second-largest food exporter in the world due to its technologies (Rintoul). With these past experiences, the country has allied the collaborations of Jordan and UAE to combine research capabilities for efficient novel solutions that work for the two countries' desert climates. As Mariam al Mheiri, UAE's Minister of Climate Change and Environment and of State for Food Security put it, "We can't do this alone, we have come together, put our minds together to find solutions." This trilateral partnership also represents the country's efforts for multinational operations that commit to worldwide environmental pursuits and contribute to achieving the UN's Sustainable Goals. These efforts are intended to initiate their effect all by 2030.

The first summit of the three nations was held last month on January 18th under the context of the Expo 2020 initiative to heighten international collaborations. Guests and visitors of the programme 'For the People and the Planet' pavilion came together to watch the digital live meeting between Researchers and Country Government Ministers (WAM). The conference resulted in a report of the Netherlands' initiative to conduct a research connection and collaboration between lead science institutions of the three nations led by the Dutch University Consortium, the National Agriculture Center of Jordan and the UAE's Center of Biosaline Agriculture (Groenendijk). The process of this initiative is to be reported at the next summit upcoming throughout the end of February (exact date to be announced). The meeting will again be open to Expo visitors, and poses a great opportunity for youth, environment enthusiasts and students to actively learn and feel part of such a significant, unprecedented event for the sake of our planet's future wellbeing.

Eva Dobrescu



ENCHANTED

**Age rating:**

PG

Language:

English

Release Date:December 14th,
2007**Genre:**Romance, Comedy,
Musical**Director:**

Kevin Lima

"What sort of awful place is this?" "It's reality." The movie "Enchanted" situates traditionally animated, fantastical characters and a fairytale storyline into the live-action world of New York City. The film deconstructs classic princess archetypes while maintaining a magical, yet realistic, perspective in a harsh society one knows all too well. Amy Adams portrays the protagonist, Giselle who is a maiden set to marry a prince charming (Prince Edward, played by James Marsden) with her delicate singing voice, understanding of sweet animals surrounding her, and positive attitude. This life is torn away from her when Prince Edward's evil stepmother transports her to the real world where she meets a regular man named Robert (Patrick Dempsey). No royal title, no love song duets, only a large dose of reality and genuineness. As she struggles to come to terms with emotions she's never experienced and the raw aspect of life she had previously turned away from, will Giselle find a way home? Does love always prevail? Does Giselle truly know what love is? All this is answered in a sentimental, tear-jerking manner with laughter, action, and excitement added along the way.

Most viewers will appreciate the lightness and ease of the movie that relaxes and merely entertains audiences, without tackling dark themes. This is perfect for Valentine's Day when one simply wishes to smile and have fun with those they love. There are dance sequences paired with songs about love, beautiful dresses and stylistic transformations, small animals (and cockroaches) doing their part in cleaning up, and much more to add to the simple fun of the film. Although, the moral message is still prevalent to provide substance and meaning to the film.

An additional aspect that makes the movie stand out is the use of both animation (paying homage to old Disney classics such as "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs", "Sleeping Beauty", and "Cinderella") and live-action filming (referencing modern romantic comedies namely "13 Going on 30", "Serendipity", and so on) to create an enjoyable juxtaposition between two different genres. Not only does it help carry the storyline, but it is interesting to observe how the animated characters and their movements are translated by human actors. This is something not often done in movies which adds an innovative and unique factor to it. However, it is important to note that this movie is directed towards young children. Furthermore, even 'reality' is portrayed in a somewhat airbrushed manner. Therefore, I do not recommend "Enchanted" for those who enjoy accurate depictions of relationships and love. Opposingly, if you want to escape your own reality or wish to find hope and inspiration, this movie is an excellent choice!

- Rita Choufani



SINCE YOU ASKED

"How can I manage my activities during fun holidays as well as getting my work done?"

There are 2 ways you can approach it. You either dedicate the first few days of the holiday to completing all your work and enjoy relaxing for the rest of the holiday, or you can split the work up. This way, you would do a bit of work each day and still have plenty of time to do your other activities.

Both work, but if you choose the second option, it is recommended that you do the work in the morning, while your brain still has power and energy to study efficiently.

- Nidal Al Jabi



"In what ways can we express our appreciation to our loved ones during Valentine's Day?"

Here are some ways to show up for your loved ones this valentine's day:

- **Words of affirmations:** express your gratitude by telling people why you love them! It's also beneficial for you since gratitude has been proven to have a significant influence on the physical and mental health of the person who expresses appreciation, and it may even aid the individual's sleep! Here are a few tips to get you started. Firstly, it is best to be specific on what you appreciate about someone. Additionally, be authentic. Sharing feelings may be either simple or quite stressful. In any case, do what seems right to you.
- You may also use Valentine's Day to write letters to individuals in your community who might need some extra love, if you want to share love outside of your closer connections.
- **Gifts:** You may buy flowers or chocolates for your loved ones, or even write a card! You can also use the Spotify app to make a mixtape or a musical playlist. This is an opportunity to offer someone music that expresses your love and gratitude for them, as well as music to which you both have a personal connection. You can also design a journal out of your favourite shared memories and photos! Be creative!

- Samia Shariff

*Note: All responses are general information only. If anyone needs specific help, please contact the counselors.

Valentine's Day: That day of the year when all the lovey-dovey couples of the world celebrate their love for each other with cliché dates and the same old gifts. Don't get me wrong, I am not against the idea of couples celebrating their love for each other. However, I don't agree that it should be celebrated once a year.

Why do we feel the need to honour and appreciate each other on a single day mandated by society? Why do we feel the need to go above and beyond on this day to make our special someone feel cherished?

Valentine's Day is a celebration of "love". And love is not merely a word, but a vast feeling; it's an emotion that is an integral part of your heart and soul and beyond special to be restricted to any particular day or event in the year. Love should be celebrated every day because if you are with the person you truly love, it is nothing less than a celebration of togetherness. It's not about making them feel grand on one day, but about making them feel adored every single day.

Love is not about chocolates, roses, teddy bears and the likes. It's about the little habits that show you care unconditionally and deeply for your partner. Shower them with affection and gratitude instead of gifts, and trust me, they'll appreciate it more.



Let's also take a moment to illuminate how consumerist this holiday has become.

Today, the holiday is associated with spending money on gifts and unique experiences for loved ones. The transformation of Valentine's Day into a consumer holiday is hazardous to relationship culture because monetizing love can make relationships feel disingenuous and materialistic. The rise in spending on Valentine's Day is reflective of the belief that spending money is essential to expressing love.

So when asked if Valentine's Day should be celebrated every day or not, I say yes. Strong relationships with good foundations of trust are formed only when you work on them every day. They are made stronger when there is a constant effort from both sides to improve. And they last forever only when the bond of love is highlighted all year round.

-Xena Ahluwalia

LET VALENTINE'S DAY BE ONE DAY!

IT'S DEBATABLE: SHOULD VALENTINE'S DAY BE EVERY DAY?

Valentine's Day is celebrated on 14th February every year where loved ones exchange gifts and flowers. Individuals during the first week of February spend their time planning gifts and dates for their significant others for Valentine's. There are sales in clothing shops that also sell limited-edition Valentine's special clothing wear. Moreover, dinner or brunch reservations are full in fancy restaurants, days before Valentine's day.

Now, doesn't this make Valentine's day special? Imagine if Valentine's day were celebrated everyday. Do you think it would still be the one of the most awaited occasions?

There are a few occasions in the year that bring people together and fill up the atmosphere with anticipation. If Valentine's Day was celebrated every day, it wouldn't be considered a 'long awaited' occasion. People spend weeks before Valentine's Day planning the perfect gift, bouquet, holiday or restaurant, in order to make 14th of February special for them and their loved ones.

Moreover, floriculturists need to go through an entire process to grow red roses when Valentine's is around the corner to increase their sales. According to virgin farms, *"It should be noted that roses are*

produced year-round, but the highest demand for roses is for Valentine's Day. It all begins by prepping the land for the rose plants. The soil is disinfected, and the rose beds are created for the planting process." These preparations make 14th February a special day. Now, what if we did this every day? The uniqueness of Valentine's Day would be lost. People wouldn't be excited for an occasion that occurs every day. Further, florists and other shopkeepers wouldn't organise discounts for Valentine's Day because they would experience a loss.

Secondly, people are pressured to buy expensive gifts for their significant others on Valentine's Day. Due to the societal notion of organising a 'fancy' Valentine's, people forget the true value of the occasion which is to spend time and to be grateful for your loved ones. 'Normal' dates such as dinner at home or going to the movie theatre could be organised during any time of the year. However, individuals usually believe that Valentine's Day is an opportunity for them to go 'all out' and plan a vacation or buy expensive dinner.

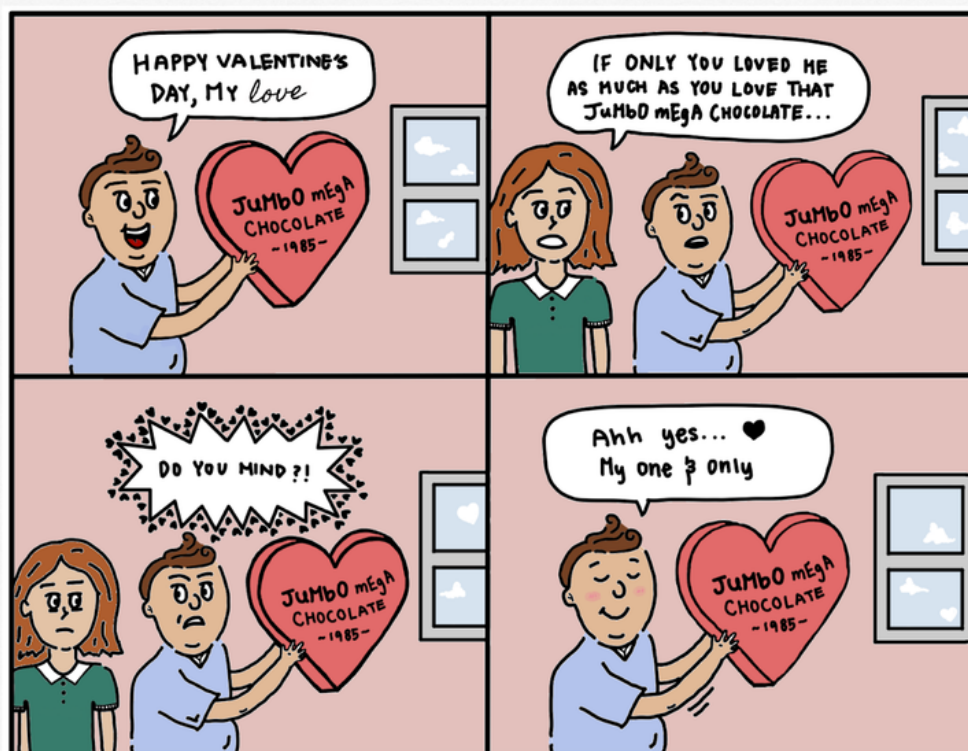
Nonetheless, one should never forget that the meaning behind the expensive dinner or the vacation is to show your appreciation for your loved ones.



CHALLENGE SECTION!

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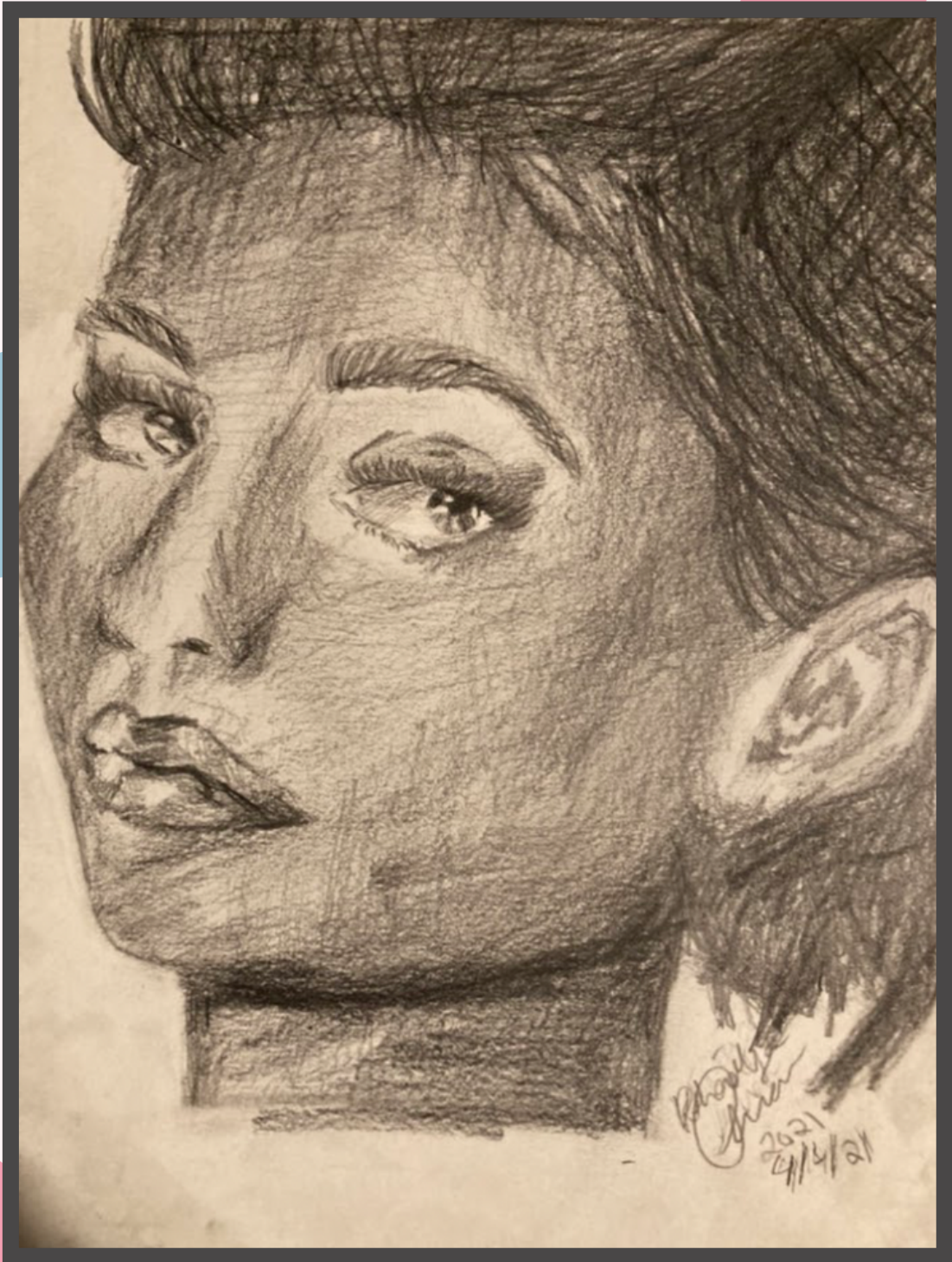


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COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION



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