

THE VIRIDIAN

# THE VIRIDIAN

JANUARY 2025



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## A NOTE FROM OUR EDITOR

# DEAR READERS,

On behalf of the Viridian team, we hope you have enjoyed the festive season and wish you a happy new year!

This month our edition orients around the theme of loops and cycles. With many of our article writers taking different spins on this abstract theme, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the new editor and layout designer for the 2025-26 academic year.

As cliché as this will sound, with the end of every chapter there is indeed a new beginning. In light of the new year, everyone is preparing for new beginnings, as is the Viridian team. Though the founding team is also experiencing several lasts, including our final few articles for the Viridian, we are all equally enthused for the new beginnings that this year holds, including the next chapter of the Viridian.

Following the graduation of the founding team in June, the Viridian will continue with **Stephanos Artemis**, as the new editor, and **Sylvia Michaelides**, as the new layout designer. As you have seen in the previous editions published this year, Stephanos and Sylvia are both immensely talented and innovative and we are certain that under their leadership, the Viridian will continue to flourish during the next academic year.

For the time being, we congratulate the two for their accomplishment and are setting our team's resolutions for 2025, aiming to finish off this academic year strong with many more riveting articles for our readers and to further address and promote the voice and concerns of the student body.

To finish off, we would like to sincerely thank our readers for their continuous support, and without further ado, here is our January edition. We hope you enjoy it!

**BY STYLIANA AVRAAMIDOU**





**"IT DOES NOT DO  
TO DWELL ON  
DREAMS AND  
FORGET TO LIVE."**

**-J.K. ROWLING,  
HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE**



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# WHAT GOES AROUND, COMES AROUND

BY STEPHANOS ARTEMIS

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What goes up must come down, right? I'm no physicist, but I can safely say that for every action in life there is an equal and opposite reaction. Now, I'm not referring to Newton's Third Law, but I am referring to the concept of "karma." We've all heard the infamous proverb "*What goes around, comes around*", but how many of us have paused to think about the deeper meanings behind this saying?

The word used today originates from the word "Karman," which is Sanskrit for "Act," and it has been around for thousands of years. The term emanated from ancient India, and is particularly significant in Dharmic religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism.

The Bhagavad Gita is a Hindu scripture composed of 700 verses, which is part of the epic Mahabharata, and it is instrumental in constructing and developing the idea and practices of karma in Hinduism. Indeed, it highlights that all actions have consequences, and it promotes selflessness. In Hinduism, karma also links to the idea of rebirth, known as "**The Cycle of Samsara.**"

To put it simply, acts of altruism ensure a better next life, whereas acts of egotism do the very opposite. So, Hindus are encouraged to practice selfless actions in order to secure a finer future life. This undoubtedly impacts how Hindus go about their everyday lives, as karma is about how one treats other sentient beings with respect and care thus intending to reduce their suffering.



The Buddhist concept of karma puts greater focus on the intention that drives an action. Like Hinduism, good karma is gained by acts of sympathy and empathy, and bad karma is gained by acts of egotism and avarice. Once again, followers are urged to exhibit goodwill, with the aim of being boosted psychologically by the feeling of benevolence.



Certain karmic actions yield outcomes within the same life, whilst others manifest in the next life of rebirth, and even some in more distant future lives. This provides the foundations for leading a moral life, abiding to Buddhist philosophy. Buddhists believe that good karma can be transferred from one person to another. In Buddhism, there are realms, such as the animal realm, the human realm, and the diva realm, amongst others. Depending on one's karma, people will be reborn in one of the realms if they have yet to achieve enlightenment.

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GOOD KARMA WILL LEAD TO GETTING REBORN IN THE HUMAN REALM UNTIL ENLIGHTENMENT IS ACHIEVED. ON THE OTHER HAND, BAD KARMA WILL LEAD TO GETTING REBORN IN ANOTHER REALM.

For example, if one abuses a dog during their life in the human realm, they will accumulate bad karma and hence be reborn as a dog who is abused in their next life.

Jainism is another religion that was founded in ancient India, which fosters a path towards the enlightenment of one's spirit and advocates for morality, which can be achieved through a strict adherence to universal non-violence. According to Jainism, karma is a physical form of spiritual energy that binds to the soul, which in turn, influences one's virtue. Jain philosophies strive to diminish the karmic residue that lingers in one's soul. Once this is accomplished, "Moksha," otherwise known as liberation, is reached, ensuring that Jains are compassionate and do not resort to acts of violence throughout the duration of their lives.



Whilst the concept of karma is not exactly present in Abrahamic or monotheistic faiths such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, similar ideas are adopted. For instance, goodness and selflessness are endorsed, promoting justice, accountability, and above all, charitability. By doing so, a clean conscience can be guaranteed, which has varying implications for each Abrahamic religion.



Additionally, many people practice acts of good karma in their everyday lives without realising it. First and foremost, philanthropic gestures are often thought to bring about good karma. The idea is that the good actions that you put out into the universe will come back to you. Similarly, traumas and mistakes of the past are believed to also come back to you, especially if there was malicious or egocentric intent behind them. This is known as the karmic cycle, and its goal is to teach a lesson and to espouse mindfulness and forgiveness. Secondly, the idea of never-ending loops related to karma nurtures personal growth by displaying conscientious acts of amity.

**SO, WORK HARD, DO THINGS FOR OTHERS, AND  
BE KIND! I WAS GOING TO END WITH A JOKE  
ABOUT KARMA, BUT I FORGOT IT.  
OH WELL, IT WILL COME BACK TO ME...**

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**NEURO-  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ANALYSIS OF  
CAFFEINE  
AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE BRAIN**

BY NATALIE HICKMAN

# THE VIRIDIAN

## THE LOOP OF DAILY LIFE

In the whirlwind of daily life, many of us find ourselves caught in the 24-hour cycle which often feels insufficient. To power through the day, we often turn to caffeine. Whether it's a single cup or several mugs of coffee, this beverage helps us stay alert and meet the demands of our busy schedules. But have you ever wondered what's really happening in your brain when you rely on caffeine to get you through the day?

## WHAT IS CAFFEINE?



Caffeine is one of the most widely consumed central nervous system stimulants in the world. According to the National Institutes of Health, approximately **“80 percent of people consume an amount of caffeine equivalent to about three espressos a day.”** Caffeine is easily accessible and one of the most accepted and consumed psychoactive drugs in today's society. Typically, caffeine can be found in coffee, energy drinks, chocolate products, and black tea. However, what are the actual effects of caffeine on our minds?

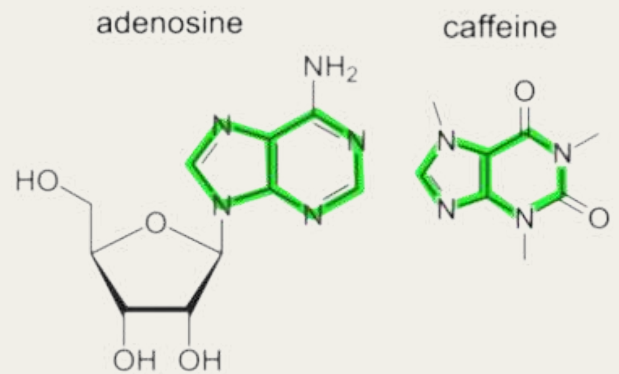
## THE MECHANISM BEHIND SLEEP INDUCTION

To grasp caffeine's impact, we must first understand what makes us feel tired. Throughout the day, our body cells break down adenosine triphosphate (ATP), releasing energy necessary for various physiological functions. One of the byproducts of this process is adenosine, an inhibitory neurotransmitter. As the day progresses, adenosine levels rise, peaking as evening approaches. High levels of adenosine signal our brains that it's time to rest, leading to feelings of drowsiness.

Adenosine produces two primary effects depending on which type of receptor it binds to and hence activates. When it binds to A1 receptors, found on wake-promoting neurons, it reduces their activity. Conversely, when it activates A2A receptors, located on sleep-promoting neurons, it enhances their activity. This dual action, as well as a variety of other hormones, reinforce the brain's need for rest and promote sleep.

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## CAFFEINE: THE ANTAGONIST IN ACTION



Caffeine's primary role is to act as an antagonist to both A1 and A2A receptors due to its structural similarity to adenosine. By competitively binding to these receptors, caffeine effectively blocks adenosine from accessing them. This inhibition reduces adenosine's ability to stimulate sleep, resulting in heightened alertness and wakefulness.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF CAFFEINE



Beyond combating drowsiness, caffeine offers several psychological benefits. It enhances the flow of dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with feelings of happiness and engagement. Research indicates that moderate coffee consumption may reduce the risk of depression and suicide among participants in various studies.

Furthermore, caffeine may bolster cognitive functions such as thinking and memory. Participants who consume coffee often perform better on tests, and studies suggest that older adults who regularly consume caffeine might be less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease or other forms of age-related memory decline.

It's important to acknowledge that while caffeine has several benefits, it can also lead to withdrawal symptoms. When regular caffeine consumers suddenly halt their intake, they may experience headaches, anxiety, irritability, and drowsiness, as their bodies adapt to the absence of the stimulant.

In conclusion, after extensive research on caffeine and its effects, I still primarily choose to drink water. However, if you are one of the many coffee drinkers, enjoy your ritualistic habits, but please have at least one glass of water for every one cup of coffee! While it can help power through the busy days, it's crucial to find a balance and be mindful of your consumption.



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**BORDEN  
AND HER AXE  
OF DOUBT**

BY LEONIE WEIDERUD

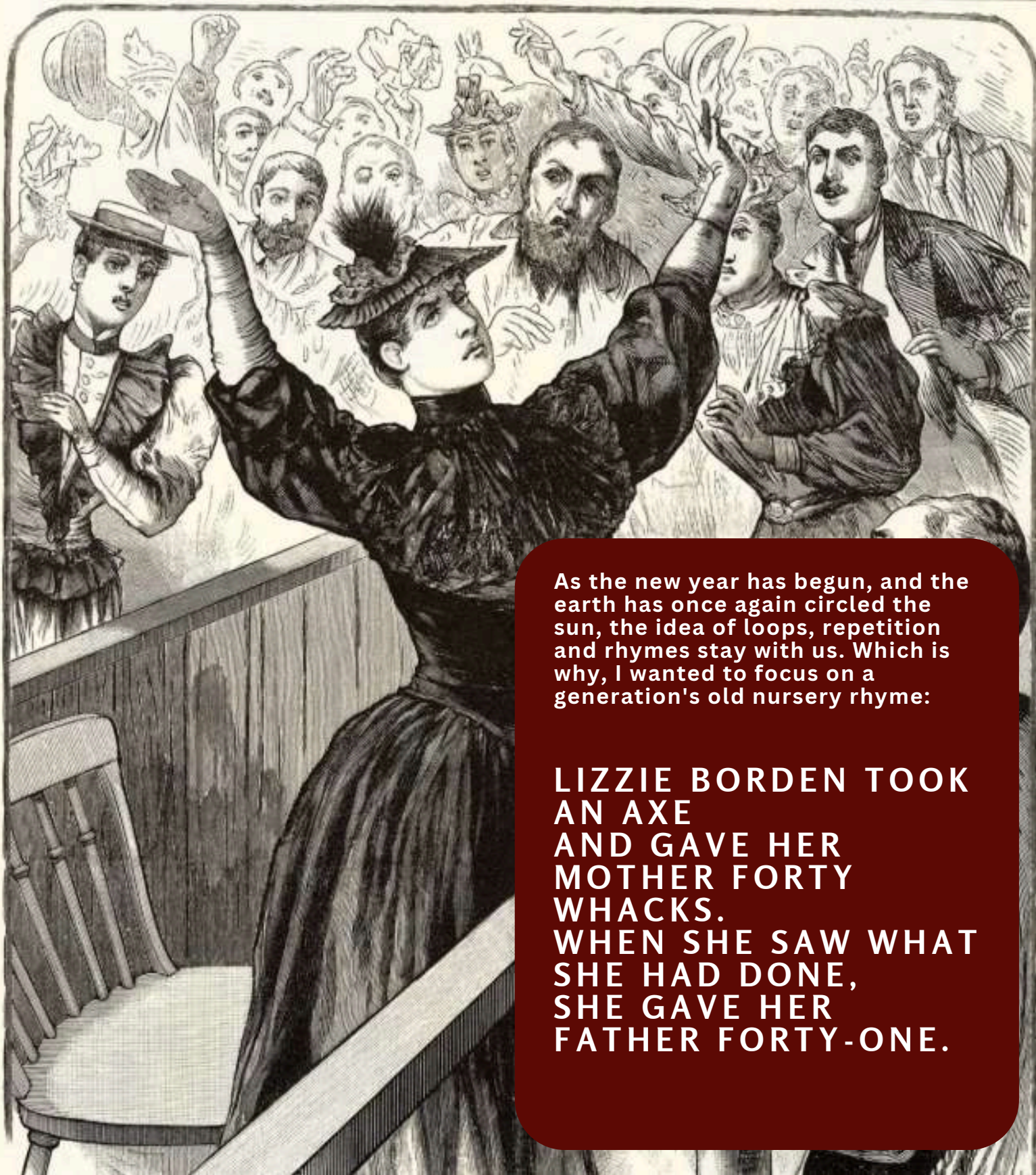
# THE ILLUSTRATED LIZZIE BORDEN NOT GUILTY. POLICE NEWS LAW-COURTS AND WEEKLY RECORD

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VOL. 54--NO. 1393.

FOR THE WEEK ENDING SATURDAY, JULY 1, 1893.

PRICE TEN CENTS.



As the new year has begun, and the earth has once again circled the sun, the idea of loops, repetition and rhymes stay with us. Which is why, I wanted to focus on a generation's old nursery rhyme:

**LIZZIE BORDEN TOOK  
AN AXE  
AND GAVE HER  
MOTHER FORTY  
WHACKS.  
WHEN SHE SAW WHAT  
SHE HAD DONE,  
SHE GAVE HER  
FATHER FORTY-ONE.**

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Admittedly, there are a few flaws. For instance, the female victim was Lizzie Borden's stepmother, and the weapon wasn't an axe, but rather a hatchet. Also, the killer struck the victims around half as many times as stated, 19 injuries identified on Abby Borden, and 11 on the face of her 69-year-old father, Andrew Borden. However, the rhyme does accurately record the sequence of the murders, which took place about an hour apart on the morning of August 4, 1892. Additionally, despite the accusations, Lizzie was acquitted of the crimes. To this day, her trial is examined, and her innocence remains in question.

Lizzie was born, July 19, 1860, in Fall River, Massachusetts. She was the daughter of a well-to-do businessman who married for a second time in 1865, three years after Lizzie's mother died. Lizzie was popular and engaged in charitable work. Her father, by contrast, was reputedly dour and parsimonious, and Lizzie and her elder sister Emma were frequently at odds with him and their stepmother. On the morning of their death, Lizzie (according to her testimony) discovered her father dead, repeatedly struck in the head with a sharp instrument and upstairs his wife's body even more brutally mutilated.



## SO, DID SHE GET AWAY WITH MURDER? OR WAS THE QUATRAIN AN IMMORAL JOKE ON A MOURNING DAUGHTER?

The victims were struck in their home in broad daylight on a busy street. The neighbours heard nothing and no-one saw a suspect enter or leave the Borden property, excluding the victims. Only Lizzie and their maid, who was cleared, were home. Along with no evident motive, (e.g. robbery.) Police initially considered the killings the work of a man, probably a "foreigner." These same divisions helped keep Borden off the suspect list at first. Members of her social class remained steadfast on her innocence as a well-bred, virtuous Victorian woman, who couldn't have murdered her parents.

But during the interrogation, Borden's answers to different police officers shifted and her inability to summon a single tear aroused suspicion. Then, an officer discovered that Borden had tried and failed to purchase deadly prussic-acid from a nearby drugstore a day before the murders. Five days after the murders, authorities convened an inquest. When Borden took the stand, unable to hide her inconsistencies, she entered a patch of self-incrimination.

However, she was defended by her doctor, who claimed that he had prescribed Borden morphine, thus explaining her confusion.

Unable to account for Borden's movements, she was arrested a week after the murders.



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However, her arrest sparked national outrage, with women's groups and suffragists rallying in her support.

Borden's upper-class status benefited her throughout her ordeal, being able to afford the best legal team to defend her. Her attorneys stressed that the prosecution offered no murder weapon and possessed no bloody clothes. As to the prussic acid, Borden was a victim of misidentification. Alice Russell, a friend of Borden, testified multiple times but initially withheld a key detail. Distressed, she later revealed that Borden burned a dress in a coal stove shortly after the murders. This revelation led to Borden's indictment by the grand jury the next day.

However, the district attorney perhaps underestimated the legal and cultural impediments he faced, especially Borden's demeanor in court. In a courtroom where men reserved all the legal power, she presented herself as a helpless maiden; dressed in all black, holding a fan and bouquet of flowers.



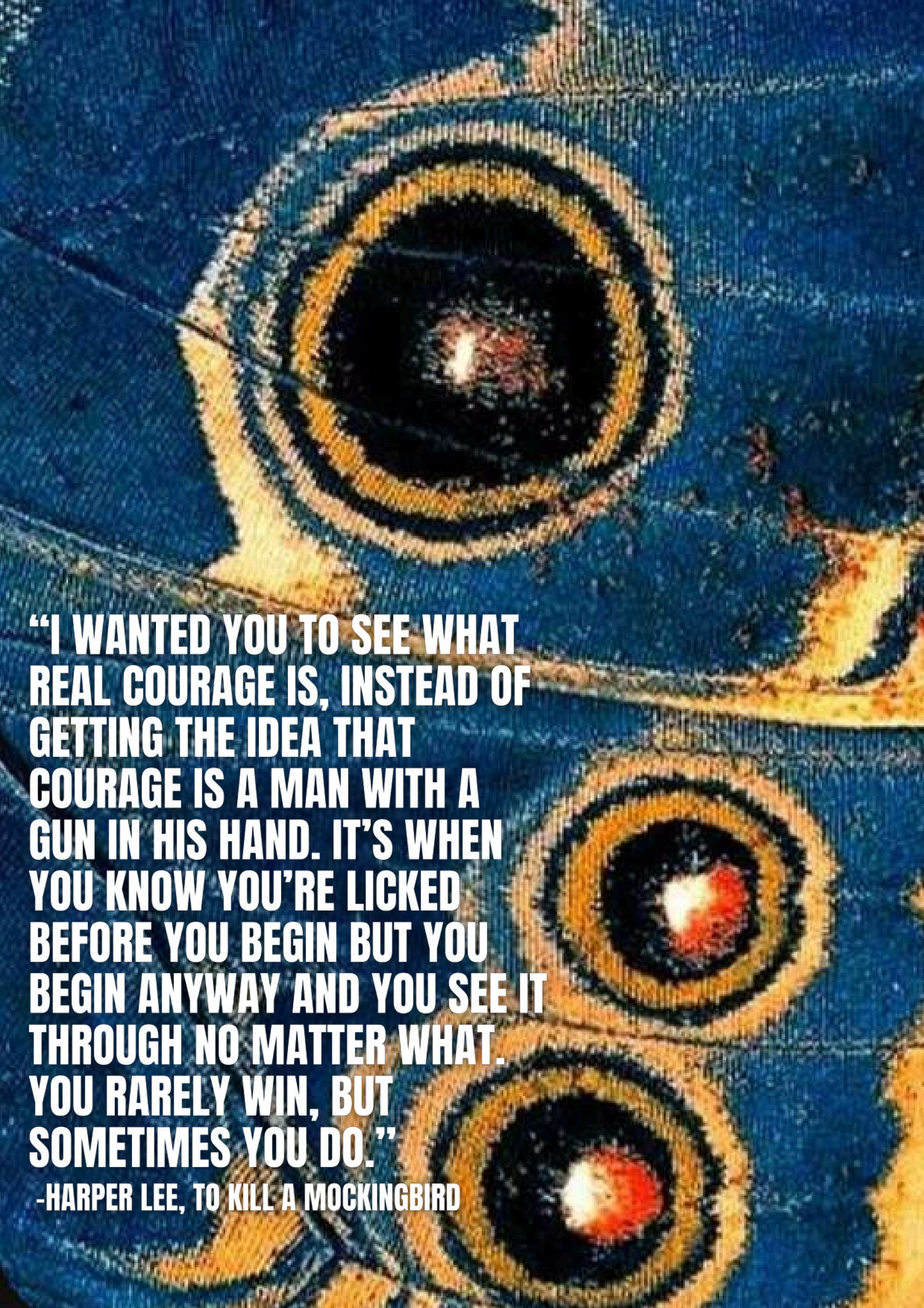
**NEWSPAPERS STATED:  
"SHE COULD NOT POSSESS THE PHYSICAL STRENGTH,  
LET ALONE THE MORAL DEGENERACY, TO WIELD A  
WEAPON WITH SKULL-CRACKING FORCE."**

Despite the courtroom audience cheering Borden's acquittal, she was ostracized by the people of her native Fall River, where she continued to live until her death in 1927.

There are many theories, but the consensus is that Lizzie Borden most likely murdered her parents. As to why, many ideas have been proposed, the majority revolving around claims of dysfunction in the Borden family, including allegations of sexual abuse and illegitimate sons, along with arguments over financial matters. However, the most common explanation for the sudden violence, her contradictory statements, and erratic behaviour, is the possible instability of her mental state.

**The Borden House (where the murders took place) still stands today, considered one of the most haunted houses in the US, and is used a spooky bed-and-breakfast.**





**“I WANTED YOU TO SEE WHAT  
REAL COURAGE IS, INSTEAD OF  
GETTING THE IDEA THAT  
COURAGE IS A MAN WITH A  
GUN IN HIS HAND. IT’S WHEN  
YOU KNOW YOU’RE LICKED  
BEFORE YOU BEGIN BUT YOU  
BEGIN ANYWAY AND YOU SEE IT  
THROUGH NO MATTER WHAT.  
YOU RARELY WIN, BUT  
SOMETIMES YOU DO.”**

**-HARPER LEE, TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD**

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# VIDEO ARCHIVES

BY NOAH NATHANAEL

# THE VIRIDIAN

All of December I have shamelessly been consuming Variety's advent release of their Actors-on-Actors series and an ungodly amount of Friends ever since I was informed of Netflix's decision to remove it from their platform, come 2025, and was thrown into an unbecoming rage. My point being, when tasked to recommend films about 'loops', the residue that is my brain, drew a blank, so in compensation, here are my three most recent watches that I just haven't been able to get out of my head.

## BABYLON (2022)

- DIR. DAMIEN CHAZELLE

*\*I approach the stage nervously, brazenly. \**

Wow.

*\*Audience roars with laughter and applause\**

I'd like to thank every person in my life who encouraged me to rewatch this. Thank you. To every single person. Who when I steadfastly made up my mind about this movie said "no, you haven't. Rewatch it. Of course you weren't going to enjoy it watching it alone, on your phone, on 123movies.com, at 1.5x speed because it was 2am on a Tuesday during exam season. Honestly. Forget about the themes- why are you always so hung up on the themes- you like Chazelle movies. Just because you do A-Level Literature doesn't mean you know anything about renaissance or reincarnation or immortality. Forget about it. You're allowed to laugh. Rewatch it!"

Thank you. Thank you, Brad. Thank you, Margot.

*\*I blow a kiss out to the audience\**

But above all, thank you Damien. And thank you Jesus! I love you all! Boycott Netflix, save our public schools!



## AFTER HOURS (1985)

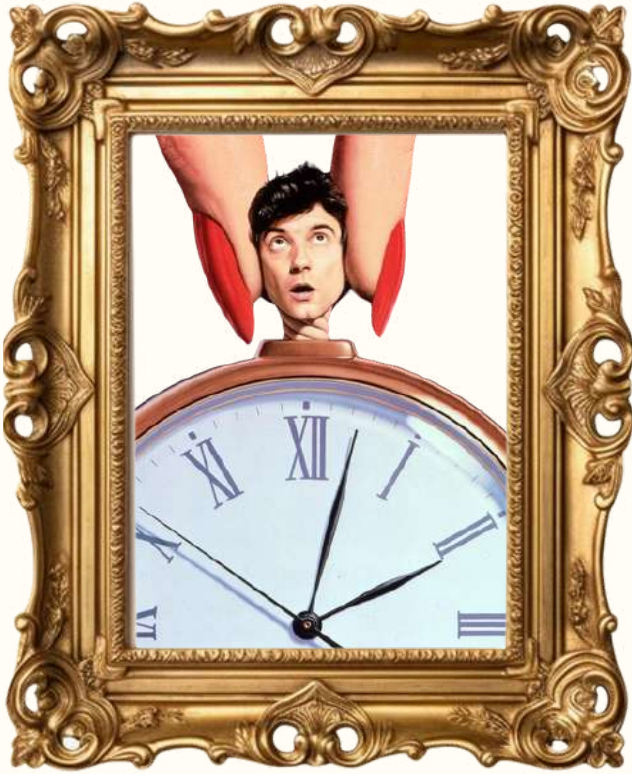
- DIR. MARTIN SCORSESE

**Cyclical Narrative Structure → Cycles → Circles → Loops!**

This is the best movie you've never watched. Dare I say my favourite Scorsese, or would that be too sacrilegious? By the end of this movie, Catherine O'Hara leads an apparent cultist mob of gays, goths and gang members through the darkened streets of Soho, with an ice cream truck, to denounce the martyr 'Paul': a pathetic little man who does everything a person could possibly do wrong while struggling to get home. It's chaotic, it's beautiful and it's nightmarishly surreal. Basically, this is a fever dream to the ordinary person is what a 30 minute nap is to Kafka.



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Naturally, the components which make up this film are nothing short of masterful. The odysseic writing (yes, I did just make up that word) poetically expands to a faster pace and with more transactional interactions congruent to the plot's absurdity. Lines like **'tonight is mohawk night'** stand out specifically. And the score! So stressful. Rumour has it that if you listen to the soundtrack on loop for an hour you develop an anxiety disorder on the spot. What I really savoured from this film though were the performances. Every character shared the collective pursuit of the things they have forbidden to themselves and reveals the devastating result of letting that Desire control them. But isn't that the point of cinema? Showing us our own reflection in the mirror because we're too scared to look in it ourselves.

## ROPE (1948)

- DIR. ALFRED HITCHCOCK



*It's old, I know it's old, you don't have to remind me that it's old.*

Here's the premise: two men strangle one of their friends, hide his body in their apartment, then throw a dinner party to demonstrate the perfection of their crime. Fully immersed in the story, Hitchcock confines you completely to the murder scene for the film's duration and is filmed in a sense that the events are perceived by the audience as one continuous shot. In this way, he experimentally poses his movie like a play, where the set is a stage, and the camera is our eyes. The dedication to this artistry was so refined that at one point in the movie, the camera dolly actually ran over and broke a cameraman's foot, but to keep filming, he was gagged and dragged off set.



This film tells us why we do what we do, and why we shouldn't. We're shown the flaws of falsified power, the philosophy of the inferior, and how truly insufferable people who want to tell you your horoscope are, even in the 1940s. While researching other people's thoughts on this film I encountered so many different definitions about its meaning that I had begun to lose sense of the word itself.

Art is not limited to definition. Art wouldn't be art if the meaning you derive from it wasn't singular to yourself. It serves no purpose if you don't have any say in it. So for the first time, I encourage you to watch this, think about it, and form your own opinion.



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# BOOK CORNER

BY SOPHIA DOMBO

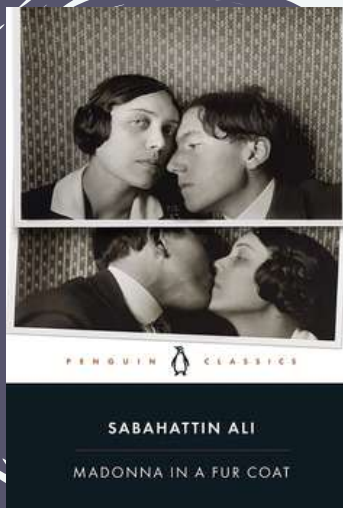
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I have spent the Christmas break absorbing as much literary media as one brain can handle, and I am happy to say that for this month's edition I shall be uncharacteristically staying on theme and delving into the catalyst of all mental spiralling: desire. More specifically, desire and passion. Desire and passion and yearning. Desire and passion and yearning and mourning and hungering and craving and desperately, desperately needing.

And how does this link to the theme, I hear you ask, and to that I scoff pretentiously and say, what, if not desire, is the essential yet vicious cycle that the human condition both wants and fears?

## MADONNA IN A FUR COAT

BY SABA HATTIN ALI



I said I would read this in last month's edition, and I honestly think I ended up reading it three times between then and now, with how often I've gone back to reread my favourite parts. The story was disastrous and painful, which is the universal sign of a good book, and the writing was simple and clean which exposed the truth of the love in a far more agonising way than if it had attempted floweriness. I honestly went into this book expecting far less than it delivered simply because I hadn't read a very good book, and definitely not a very good love story, in a while. Ali set the moody and depressive atmosphere so well you could feel the tragic ending approaching from the very beginning and yet you still wanted the love to play out as it did. To the age-old question of whether it is better to have loved and lost than not to have loved at all, I say yes, and Ali says yes too.

*"THIS INTIMACY CAME FROM THINKING ALIKE; IN TRUTH, IT CAME FROM ACCEPTING ONE SIDE OF AN IDEA WHILE PREPARING TO PAY THE PRICE DEMANDED BY THE OTHER. BUT ISN'T THIS HOW SOULS COME TOGETHER, BY HOLDING ANOTHER'S EVERY IDEA TO BE TRUE AND MAKING IT THEIR OWN?"*

## THIS IS HOW YOU LOSE THE TIME WAR

BY AMAL EL-MOHTAR AND MAX GLADSTONE

*I WANT TO BE A BODY FOR YOU. I WANT TO CHASE YOU, FIND YOU, I WANT TO BE ELUDED AND TEASED AND ADORED; I WANT TO BE DEFEATED AND VICTORIOUS—I WANT YOU TO CUT ME, SHARPEN ME. I WANT TO DRINK TEA BESIDE YOU IN TEN YEARS OR A THOUSAND. FLOWERS GROW FAR AWAY ON A PLANET THEY'LL CALL CEPHALUS, AND THESE FLOWERS BLOOM ONCE A CENTURY, WHEN THE LIVING STAR AND ITS BLACK-HOLE BINARY ENTER CONJUNCTION. I WANT TO FIX YOU A BOUQUET OF THEM, GATHERED ACROSS EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS, SO YOU CAN DRAW OUR WHOLE ENGAGEMENT IN A SINGLE BREATH, ALL THE AGES WE'VE SHAPED TOGETHER."*



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First and foremost, tell me that isn't the most heart shattering thing you have ever read.

I adore- I simply live- for passion and passionate people. Every single fibre of my being has been wrapped around the compulsion to experience the burning ache of a well-crafted sentence and let me tell you, this book has a lot of those. I shall address the elephant in the room and admit that the first time I read this I rated it one star on my Goodreads and reviewed it with the admittedly hilarious **"This Is How You Lose My Interest."**

However, I reread my highlighted notes and couldn't figure out what exactly I hated so much considering every other line in this book is pure gold. Following this journey of self-doubt, I decided to reread the whole book and, lo and behold, I loved it. I truly still can't understand what went so wrong the first time around because everything about this book from the characters to the use of corresponding letters as the vehicle through which the very original, yet grounded plot unfolds, was great. Also, following this month's cyclical theme, this story is steeped in both the abstract and literal concept of recurrence, with the ending holding up a mirror to the beginning in a way only few books can so expertly achieve. There is nothing like the language, pardon me, the mastery of language, displayed in this book.

**"I want to be a body for you"?! My heart stopped (joke) and I screamed into a pillow (fact) reading that. Bottom line: read it, love it, talk to me about it.**

Anna's recommendation centres a little more closely to the realistic manifestation of cycles and particularly to that of a cosmic rebirth.

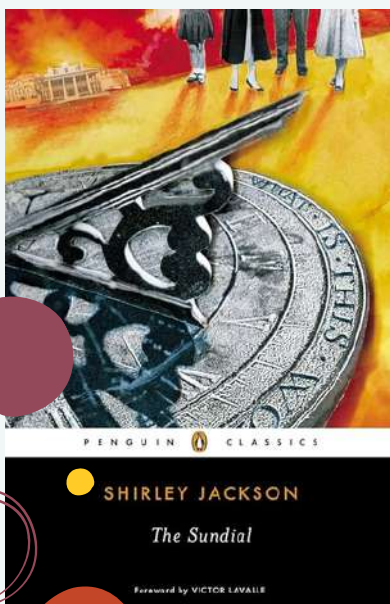
**BY ANNA PAVLOWITCH**

## THE SUNDIAL

BY SHIRLEY JACKSON



*"THE SIGHT OF ONE'S OWN HEART IS DEGRADING; PEOPLE ARE NOT MEANT TO LOOK INWARD--THAT'S WHY THEY'VE BEEN GIVEN BODIES, TO HIDE THEIR SOULS."*



To say this book is peculiar would be an understatement. When the Hallorans gather at their family home for a funeral, Aunt Fanny wanders off into the gardens. There she is greeted by a ghostly apparition of her long-dead father, who warns her of an impending apocalypse from which the world will be reborn; only the Halloran house and those it shelters will be spared. As their surroundings darken in preparation for the earth's new cycle, the family frantically prepares for imminent doom. I'll be completely honest – this book won't be everyone's cup of tea. But if you get past that, you will uncover the poignant message that Jackson tries to convey: the human tendency to falter in the face of uncertainty and allow oneself to be consumed by delusion.



**Thank you for reading our January edition!  
Stay tuned for our February issue,  
out next month.**



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