

THE WAXING

Star Writers'
Collective 3

OF THE MOON

do you brie-lieve in magic?



THE KIDS' CANCER PROJECT
WRITE A BOOK IN A DAY

Parameters Form

Team Details

STATE: VIC

DIVISION: Middle School

SCHOOL/GROUP: Star of the Sea College (BRIGHTON)

TEAM NAME: Star Writers' Collective 3

TEAM ID: 629

Parameters and random words

Parameters

Primary character 1 Banker

Primary character 2 Cheese maker

Non-human character Wizard

Setting Space station

Issue Cracking the code

Random words

..... swept

..... dazzling

..... faded

..... wrinkled

..... quirky

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“In this mad world, only the mad are truly sane.”

- Akira Kurosawa

“It is far better to grasp the universe as it really is than to persist
in delusion, however satisfying and reassuring.”

- Carl Sagan

Prologue

There it was. A beacon in the sky that shone above me. Falling down, down and onto my head, the slimy moisture sticking to my hair and drizzling down my face. I lifted the cheese off and gazed in awe. I looked from the sky to the cheese in my hands, a realisation spiralling in the depths of my tiny mind. The blurry world had become clear. Everything made sense. The mysteries of the galaxy were unravelled and I, a young boy, had solved the greatest puzzle in the world.

The moon was cheese!

There was no question about it. I held up the yellow mass proudly matching it to the golden moon that lit up the damp sky. I ran. I ran fast around the bends of the streets finally reaching my destination. The park. Then I screamed to all my friends. “DA MOON-A IS-A CHEESE-A.” Not a soul moved. I had never seen a night when the park was this quiet. Only the squeak of the swing set complimented the vast silence that surrounded me. Then it came. The laughter that pounded through my skull and seeped inside of me. It was the beginning of a dreaded twenty years of neverending misunderstanding. I could see them now. The parents grabbed their children's arms leading them away from me whispering in hushed voices. I felt as though I was in a separate world from them. The way they stared at me, as if I was a psychotic animal that should be locked up.



The following day I awoke to my windows splattered with eggs, the yolk dripping off my sill. I gazed through glass to discover kids with fistfuls of eggs standing by menacingly. I tried to open the window to tell them to go away, which only resulted in a faceful of eggs. As the orange matter trickled down my face I knew that I would never be accepted by others.



Chapter 1: Sweet Dreams are Made Of Cheese

“Sweet dreams are made of cheese.. Who am I to dis-a-brie?” I sang with joy.

I stood proudly in the town centre protesting my strong belief that the moon was indeed made of cheese. My tall chef hat glistened in the gentle moonlight, the same one that I handmade on the day that I experienced the extraordinary cheese fall from the sky.

“HEY, did you know that the moon is made of cheese?” I asked as I approached the people strolling by. They ignored me and kept walking.

I felt something firm hit my back. I turned around and saw a group of teenage boys laughing as they threw eggs at me. It reminded me of the cruel ways that my so-called friends treated me when I first told them my life-changing theory.

Suddenly, someone bumped into me. I turned around, and said, eager to explain my love for cheese.

“Hello! I’m Sir Formaggio. What do you think about the moon being cheese?”

The man looked up from his phone.

“Wow, you really are a **quirky** one,” he replied. “However, I think I can help you prove your theory.”

“Really? How so?” I had never met anyone who didn’t think I was crazy, let alone someone who wanted to help me.

“Let’s meet at the Cup and Crackers Cafe, in five,” he suggested.



I entered Cup and Crackers, and the smell of coffee filled my nostrils. The final beams of sunlight gave the cafe a golden glow. The room was filled with decorations – yellow chrysanthemums, coffee themed paintings and chalkboard signs, which made it feel welcoming and cozy.

I wondered if they had cheese here.

I glanced around the room trying to find the man I had met earlier. I recognised him sitting at an oak table by the window and walked over.

“Ciao again! Why-a did you-a want me to-a come-a here?” I questioned as I sat down at the table.

“Hello, I’m Tom White.”

“Okay...?”

Tom rolled his eyes and sighed.

“I’m the banker of this town. I work at Swiss Bank.”

“Good to know-a! I’m Sir Formaggio. I make cheese. Isn’t it amazing that the moon is made of cheese?”

“Yes, yes, that’s wonderful. You see, in the Swiss Bank, there is this crystal core. A magical, out of this world core that can work wonders and prove your theory.”

I was intrigued and raised an eyebrow.

“So you can go and obtain this core from Swiss Bank?”

“Well, the only issue is that the core is off limits for everyone, even employees.” Tom leaned in and whispered to me, “which means we’ll need to go in and take it ourselves.”

I was interested by Tom’s idea, and agreed to help obtain the core.

“So, what’s the plan?”



Chapter 2: Debbie from Finance

The Swiss Bank loomed over me, the fake marble columns reaching out to the sky; its massive structure blocking the shine of the receding sun. My heart pounded against my ribcage, pummelling with the rhythm of our hurried steps.

“You know the plan,” Tom breathed, as we entered the revolving door.

I nodded in response, smoothing my moustache and oiled back hair. I glanced down to the crisp suit Tom had ordered me to wear, the dark grey contrasting against the usual pearly white of my chef’s uniform. Tom’s suit, the brother of my own, was a pinstriped navy, pressed to perfection. I adjusted my grip on my briefcase, its vital contents unique to those who usually tread these halls.

We approached the first obstacle, an unsuspecting woman engrossed in her file, as she walked toward a meeting. As we passed, I spied the woman’s badge:

Debbie Watshnick

Finance

Okay, now it's my turn.

I turned around, clearing my throat. “Oh. My. Gawd. Debbie?!” I yelled, putting on my best American accent; a mimicry of Tom’s. The woman turned at her name, an eyebrow raised. “Debbie from finance?! It’s been too long!”

Debbie (from Finance) strode over, a look of confusion plastered across her face.

“Do I know you?”

Tom spoke this time. “Do you know us?” he queried in a confused tone, “Tom and Paul from Administration?” He gestured at himself then to me as he said the names.

Realisation swept across her face as she took us in. “Oh yeah... Weren't you the ones who threw that Christmas party a couple years ago?”

“Y-yes, that was us. We threw that one party a couple of years ago. It’s memorable enough to be talked about. That was us,” I rambled.

“Yeah, it was,” Tom agreed, opening his arms, “Bring it in!”

She stepped forward into the awkward embrace, leaving her bag, and gently her key card exposed. I gently unclipped it, removing it from the zipper holder. I gave Tom a thumbs up and he released her quickly, straightening his suit.

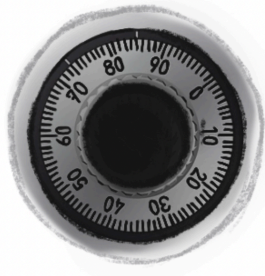
“Nice seeing you,” he said, quickly dismissing her.

“Oh... Okay... Bye,” she replied, baffled.



Our footsteps echoed as we twisted and turned through the empty halls, the identical corridors impossible to navigate. Eventually we reached a door, its design the same as those surrounding it. Tom swiped Debbie’s key card, revealing an *almost* empty room. On the far wall, a menacing door.

The vault.



Chapter 3: The Vault

“Okay, we have about ten minutes starting...” Tom began, checking his watch, “...now.”

We rushed forwards, flipping open our briefcases. Mine was filled with an assortment of objects: a stethoscope, bolt cutters, lock picks. His: a decoder, a drill, a blow torch and a...

“What’s a banana gonna do?” he quizzed.

“Potassium-a,” I replied matter of factly.

“Ugh, let’s just get started.”

He pushed past me, studying the vault door. The iron was thick, its dazzling surface so polished it reflected our faces.

Two small knobs juttred out, tiny numbers stamped in order around both the circumferences. Step one. I handed Tom the stethoscope, my hands shaking with nerves. I held my breath, the only sound in the room, the soft clicking of the lock as Tom spun it. A loud pop sounded as the lock slid into place. One down. A minute passed and the second pop sounded.

Our attention shifted to the next step, the secondary code. With no time for a breath, Tom pressed the start button and a question appeared on the small screen:

What is the capital of Italy?

“Let’s-a go! I know-a this-a one!” I yelled, shoving Tom aside as I type ‘Rome’ into the small keyboard below the screen. It flashed green, the word ‘CORRECT’ appeared.

After a second, the next question appeared:

Name a car brand starting with B.

Without a word, Tom typed the word ‘Bugatti’. Once again, the screen flashed green.

After a second, the final question appeared on the screen and my heart dropped:

$5 \times 1 =$

We glanced at each other, the same look of horror plastered upon our faces.

“Uh, I don’t know,” Tom said.

“This-a is-a the hardest math-a question I have ever seen-a,” I admitted, staring at the ground.

“I think it’s 50, wait, no, 7, wait, no, 6. That’s my final answer,” Tom decided, his eyes betraying him with a look of uncertainty.

My hand trembled as I reached forward to type in the number. However, at the last second my hand slipped, pressing the 5 button instead. My heart dropped. This was our only chance and I stuffed it up.

I began to turn away, with my hands raised, preparing to surrender, when the little screen flashes green, the familiar bolded form of the word 'CORRECT' stretched across it.

Tom and I exchanged looks of disbelief before turning back to the door.

A large wheel sat in the centre of the metal vault door. The last step. I turn the steel wheel, my muscles powered with anticipation.

The sound of hundreds of gears and mechanisms turning filled the room. When the noise finally **faded** we both clasped the metal of the wheel.

“On the count of three.” Tom said, “One”

“Due” I continued.

“Three,” he finished and we pulled at the door with all our strength.

The mighty door groaned loudly as it swung open, revealing its contents.

The inside of the vault was small, it's only contents a crystal core, held up by a solid concrete pedestal.

The sphere was yellow, cheesy yellow, with a soft light glowing in its centre. I would have stared at its shining surface forever if it weren't for Tom breaking the silence.

“We have two minutes left to get out of the Swiss Bank.”

Right, the mission.

I stuffed the orb up my shirt, adjusting it so it sat over my stomach.

We swiftly packed up our brief cases and shut the vault, its locks automatically resetting. The walk back to the entrance of the bank was excruciatingly slow, our steps steady enough not to draw attention. We almost made it all the way to the revolving door when someone tapped me on the shoulder.

“Excuse me, what's that?” I turned to face a corporate man, his manicured hand pointing to my stomach.

My heart skipped a beat, our cover was blown. Just as I was about to start blurting explanations, Tom cut in.

“What do you mean, 'what's that'? What a rude question!” he shouted, his offended expression startling the man. “He's obviously obese. The poor man already has so much on his plate without you undermining him.”

Tom turned us away from the man, leading me towards the door with his arm protectively around my shoulders and out to our freedom.

I practically jumped for joy as the crisp afternoon air hit me.

My mind wandered elsewhere as we headed to the car, the journey a blur.



Chapter 4: Tom's Secret

The car halted. I couldn't recall providing Tom with my address, yet here we were, parked in front of the house I shared with my Ma. Slowly, I hopped out of the car clutching the core on my stomach. I could feel myself shaking as the realisation hit me. I just robbed a bank. Mamma mia, I just robbed a bank! Tom White walked beside me without a care in the world, as if this was a regular thing.

"So, this is where you live," Tom asked me.

"Si," I replied as we stepped through the front door. We were met with the sound of "bella-ciao-bella-ciao-bella-ciao" from the kitchen. Ma was home. She stopped at the sound of our footsteps in the hall.

"Ciao, Formaggio. Cena?" my mum asked. I glanced down at my watch. It was well past dinner time and I hadn't eaten since coffee with Tom earlier that day. Yet, I admitted with a sigh, we had greater problems.

"Not now-a mamma," I told her disheartedly, grabbing my chef's hat from its abandoned position on the dining table and leading Tom outside.

"So, where is this ever so amazing factory?" Tom asked me.

"Up," I said with a smile, as a rope ladder fell out of the tree closest to me. I started to climb slowly, with the suit restricting my movements. When we eventually reached the top, I smiled and turned, as I showed Tom the fullness of my 'factory'.

"THIS ISN'T A FACTORY! This can barely be considered appropriate for a five-year old's tree house!" He yelled at me, "You were supposed to have this huge amazing factory. You said you would have a huge amazing factory!"

I scrambled for an explanation. However, the words were pulled from my lips as his face went pale, becoming **wrinkled** and sagging.

"I...I...I can explain," Tom said, stumbling backwards.

I was in shock. I didn't know what to say.

"Che cosa...?" I finally spat out.

"I'm a wizard. I transform when I get angry," he muttered, bowing his head. "And my real name is Parry Black."

"I-A KNEW-A WIZARDS-A WERE REAL-A," I screamed as I happily danced around. His look of shock shifted to a look of amusement.

I stopped dancing. "I-a have an-a idea-a," I said, "can-a you fly-a?"

He slowly nodded his head, confused.

"You can-a take us-a to the moon-a?"

He flashed a grin.



Chapter 5: The International Space Station

Ready to fly. I extended my arms along with Parry. I was utterly exhausted from stirring the curd into the cheese barrels days prior, not to mention our tiring bank robbery. Right before my eyes our feet began dangling off the ground, Parry made his hand into a fist and flew gloriously upwards. We pierced the thin blue atmosphere, the sun slapped us both in the face with its heat, shining in its bright glory. As I looked out into the boundless empty void of black, I began to play dot-to-dot with the stars. “Look-a Tom-a I-a found a slice-a of-a chees-a in-a the stars-a.” He rolled his eyes to the back of his head as we began to approach the International Space Station, where we would conduct our tests using the orb’s power to transform the moon. The feeling of zero gravity was otherworldly, down was up, up was down, left was right and right was left.

The colossal Space Station was fast approaching as we joined its orbit around the earth on one of its **dazzling** satellite discs. Breathtaking. Almost as breathtaking as when I first tried a piece of Parmigiano Reggiano. I used my cheese making muscles to open the hatch perched on the door of the space station. We entered, seeking refuge from the icy emptiness of space. As we opened the first door, bright amber suits floated across the walls, along with space helmets urging us to put them on. I removed my chef’s hat with pride but sadness. In our new found attire we began to explore. The halls were neverending inside. Door after door, lab after lab, all uninhabited. Ripe for the picking for our cheese experiments.

My hand pressed the latch and into one of the labs. We floated through the doorway into the lab, straps tightly grasping test tubes to keep them from floating out into the sterile room. Conical flasks dotted the space each containing bright green liquid and sealed with cork plugs. The fluid inside formed sphere-like bubbles that floated inside, popping quickly before forming another shape. We approached a glass incubator on the left bench, encasing a precious moonrock.

Parry spread out his long fingers, and brought out the bright yellow core crystal. Cobalt blue electrical charges emerged from his palms and penetrated the moonrock. “iubeo lunam in caseum vertere!” Parry announced. A yellow mass exploded out of the incubator, shards of the glass panels flying in all directions.

Blue-grey spores began to emit appetising smells, decadent and rich with body and intensity. Gorgonzola. Spherical blobs of cheese began drifting outwards as I opened my mouth wide to swallow

off the precious bubbles. I engulfed the bubble, its blue-grey membrane melting in my mouth. I fell to the floor with excitement, my so-called 'conspiracy theory' would now no longer be a conspiracy. With our new knowledge and our heads filled with cheesy ideas, we exited through the doorway towards our gorgonzola filled futures.



We made our way to the rocket launching chamber, our steps loud against the aluminium flooring. "I'm afraid we cannot magically fly the rest of the way my friend," Parry admitted, his head slightly lowered.

"Why is that?" I questioned.

"The weird gravitational pull of space disrupts my flying, so we must go the ordinary way," he replied, halting in front of a bulky rocket painted a ruby red.



Chapter 6: The Transformation

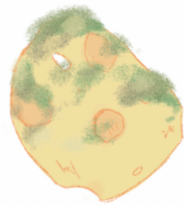
We shot off into the dark abyss, our journey to the moon taking mere seconds with Parry's speed. We touched down onto the rocky landscape, my space boots making distinct footprints in the dark grey dust that plumed out. We stood there marvelling at the immense grey craters that dotted the surface, beyond the horizon all that could be identified were distant stars and the bright azure planet. Parry once again extended his arm and spread his fingers, inserting the core into the moon that had been acquired from the thrilling bank robbery. Charges of bright ultramarine appeared and the moon rattled and quaked around us

The ground began to suddenly change into bright shades of acid yellow, holes and craters now appeared rounder and softer, pools filled with a transparent blue-grey liquid began growing beneath my feet. The indulgent smell tantalised my nostrils with sharp, nutty and smoky notes. I opened my jaw and began to engulf bite after bite, its buttery creaminess filling my mouth. I salivated before it touched my tongue.

OMNOMNOMNOM.

I chewed down hard. "MHHMM," I exclaimed. The hairs on the back of my neck stood up as the taste of the sweet, yet salty, cheese made me drop to my knees. In all of my life as a cheese maker, I had never experienced a taste as magnificent as this. My senses were heightened. Colours seemed brighter. The stars shone with a silver roar. I reached below my knees, eager to feel this enchanting, otherworldly substance. My fingertips **swept** along its smooth and rubbery surface and I breathed deeply with satisfaction. Crystallised pieces of parmesan extruded upon the surface of the moon like trees and plants, while pools of melted brie and camembert flooded craters. The area was like an oasis, in the midst of a dry arid journey. A glimpse of hope for my theory presented itself. Those countless years of vile discrimination didn't seem to matter anymore. I had what I wanted, and yet it all seemed too dreamy. Too easy. Too good to be true.

A dark seed of doubt and hesitation planted in my mind. I feared that its shadowy nature would soon be revealed as its branches extended to hurt my one true friend. Parry Black.



Chapter 7: Rotten Cheese

Maybe there can be too much cheese. The longer I stayed here, the less I enjoyed the familiar intoxicating smell. Was cheese the only important thing in life? A disconcerting liquid pooled under my feet as we padded across the spongy, yet strangely fleshy surface. I peered out at the seemingly boundless expanse of cheese before me, but I was not as exhilarated as I was earlier. The cheese here didn't look appetising, not like the cheese I made in my humble factory back home. I began to feel disappointment eating at me and I glanced uncertainly up at Parry. I was still befuddled at the situation surrounding the banker turned wizard, but his gleeful yet mischievous expression melted away any dissatisfaction.

"Cheese! The whole place is cheese!" Parry chanted in an attempted tone of elation. His excitement egged me to continue my exploration through the Continent of Cheese.

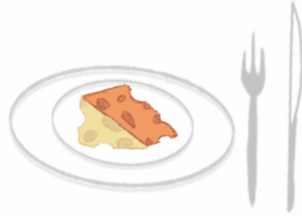
Sweat began to drip down my back in thin streams as my amber suit pulsed heat throughout my body. My feet connected with the soft ground for what seemed like the thousandth time, but as my foot dropped into a colossal crater, I stumbled to the ground with an embarrassing thump.

"Mamma Mia!"

Thoughts swirled around my consciousness. I reached out for Parry's hand to help me, but I flipped around, but I was met with nothing but the lingering scent of smoke. I struggled to my feet, suddenly hyper aware of my surroundings and aloneness. A seed of fear sprouted in my mind. Was I really all alone here? My fear unexpectedly transformed into anger. Anger at Parry. Anger at myself for my stupid notions of being a great cheese maker who always wanted more. And anger at Parry again, who had used me. I had trusted him, but he manipulated my friendship for his own fickle ends.

I dragged my head around and desperately surveyed the vast cheesy expanse. I felt the need to keep turning on the spot so nothing could sneak up on me. Despite this, a sense of vulnerability washed over me. My doubt returned and began flourishing into full blown terror. I lifted a shaking leg and pressed forward. I didn't even know where I was going anymore. I looked out into the sky, I realised the sameness of my environment.

I was nowhere, and I was nothing.



Chapter 8: Dinner on the Moon

I was surrounded by the only thing I had ever loved, yet there was no satisfaction or thrill that I had longed for. No starry eyes with flicks of joy gazing dreamily at the backdrop of the cheese that draped the moon like a blanket protecting me and soothing me from harm. Yet I felt alone. More alone than I had ever felt. I was Drowning in my sorrows.. Nothing I could remember spared me for this underlying realisation that penetrated my mind. It tapped on the windows of my insanity, yelling to be free. Not even the warm familiar reminiscing of my favourite cheddar could soothe this growing sense of decay that suddenly destroyed my concentration and tore through my mind.

The desperation not to give in to my own self destruction was great. I needed to end this suffering once and for all. I needed to be filled with hope and relief, to feed this age of addiction that had defined me. Like a drug that intoxicated me with madness.

Slowly, so slowly I took the first bite alone. The first bite, always the greatest mistake. No turning back from here. Nothing could undo this moment as it sealed my own doom with the soft camembert coating my gums oozing down my throat like a tablet soothing my pain. I was consuming the only thing that people looked for in the sky. The thing that possessed them with sanity and gave them unrealistic hope. The only thing that they could guarantee would illuminate the sky for them every night. That first bite. It was complemented by another, and then another, until I was drowning in my own weight of guilt, doubt and betrayal.

As I looked to the stars, uncertainty arose in me. Though I had long searched, I had not found it. The constellation of the cheese that I had worshipped was now no more significant than another blank space swallowed by the darkness. Something wet spattered at my cheek and stirred around the rim of my eyes. There was one thing I could be certain of, It does not rain in space. Why me?

How could I be so stupid? To even think that someone would enjoy my company or find pleasure in the entirety of my existence. Cheese. That was all that had ever mattered to me.

I lay flat on the squishy cheese that smothered against my helmet. The lone reminder of my only friend. I rolled a chunk of cheese in my palm, rocking it back and forth constantly until it formed an oval.

I stacked all the chunks of cheese until they made a structure, almost human. "Ah-a Ciao..." I spoke into the darkness facing my only friend who stood lifelessly gazing back at me. Then, suddenly, there were four of them gazing dumbly into space. Some had shapes above their heads that looked like rabbit

ears. For the first time I looked down on someone. I looked down on all their miniscule structures and felt a real feeling of dominance.



Chapter 9: I Made a Friend

When I sat on the moon, my life became sadder than it was before, and of course, my only friend left me. I replaced him with small cheese sculptures that looked real, but had no life and no resemblance to the human spirit. I ached them to be my friends, maybe because they were the only things that were here.

Suddenly the taste of cheese, no longer my favourite thing, became a bitter taste in my mouth. I finally understood that the moon did not taste good. I felt defeated and alone, but that was a feeling with which I was all too familiar. What have I achieved? At least I have some form of friendship, even if they aren't real.



Suddenly, I heard the whirr of an engine. I bounded to my feet, hoping it was an escape. My happiness was short-lived though, as the sound of the engine faded away and my heart sank at the heavy-coated silence, my cheeks wet with my own tears.

BOOM!

I heard a loud explosion. I looked up.

Oh my cheese and crackers! Parry's rocket had exploded!

Specs of magic fell from where the ship had once been, falling upon me and the cheese people in front of me. The little statues stretched into life-sized versions of themselves.

What the-

"Hello, Formaggio," the cheese people spoke.

"You... Oh my God, you can speak-a! This is great!"

I shouted for joy, yet suddenly, as I looked onto the new life, I began to feel the creeping dark void that had swallowed space beginning to swallow me.

Epilogue

“Breaking News! Debbie Watshnick from Finance, oh, sorry, first day on the job!

It’s the QRC Newsroom here. A story has come into our station about the Moon! Some scientists have discovered particles of Moonrock falling to earth in liquid form. They decided that further investigation of this situation was required, resulting in NASA assembling a world-renowned team of specialists to complete further research. Once the team had landed on the moon, they were shocked and confused to find a lone man.

This man, reportedly named Sir Formaggio, appeared somewhat out of touch with reality. He has stated recalling meeting a banker called Tom White and making their way to the moon. However, this expedition is unclear to all Space Stations across the globe. It is unknown how Formaggio and White arrived on the moon!

Sir Formaggio is now being monitored at the local hospital. All that has been observed as of now is his disdain for cheese...”





**Cheese. Bank Robbery. Code Cracking.
Spacecrafts. Celestial Objects. Debbie from
Finance.**

Sir Formaggio, an Italian Cheese maker and proud conspiracy theorist is determined to prove to the world that the moon is made of cheese.

He meets an unassuming banker, Tom White, that assures him that he can help to prove the great theory of the century. He has to prove his theory, but will a part of him be lost in the process?

Join Sir Formaggio and Tom White in this outer space quest, as they journey through the atmosphere.

Will he brie strong in this difficult expedition? Will things truly get feta?

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The Victorian Association of Teachers*

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The Age*



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