

Puzzle Korner

easy

7	2			6		5	
6	5			8	2	1	
				7			2
			6			4	
2	1	4	7		5	8	6
	7			3			
4			2				
	6		8	7		3	9
	9		3			8	4

medium

4	8	2					
5			1		8		6
				3	7		8
	1			7		3	
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						2	9

		1				6	2
		7			1		
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		2					5
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			4			3	
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5							6
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	4			8			
		2		5		4	
			2				1
6	5				8		
4		8	9				1
	1						4

hard

oof

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The Independent

PHILADELPHIA'S COLLEGE STUDENT NEWS

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BY: NATALIA
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“The moral is that the shape of a society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual and not on any political system however apparently logical or respectable.”

—William Golding, author of *Lord of the Flies*, in response to a Faber & Faber publicity questionnaire

We've been organizing the past month for students to be aware of the possibility of a Faculty and Classified Staff strike and have a space designated for student solidarity with the Federation.

This Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 2:30PM until 4:30PM, we are having potluck picnic hangouts by the Bonnell Courtyard in the grass. You are MORE than welcome to come and stop by! We ask that everyone bring blankets, snacks, and food to share while we talk about what's going on. If you have questions or concerns regarding ANYTHING at the college, our union is the perfect place to ask them.

In the meantime, please feel free to check out our social media:

Discord: <https://discord.gg/djcgWVa9>

Instagram: @ccpStudentUnion

-Jaritsa Hernandez-Orsini



QR code links to student union
interest/membership form

Big Strike Authorization Vote: What It Means for CCP Students

A strike at the Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) is no longer just a possibility—it is imminent. A member of the Faculty and Staff Federation of CCP (FSFCCP) confirmed that "More than a supermajority of Faculty and Staff working at the college this semester voted. Of the people who voted, all of whom must be members, 97% voted yes."

If a strike begins, students will face several disruptions. All classes will be put on hold until contract agreements are reached and the strike ends. Students may experience delays in receiving grades for their coursework. College President Dr. Generals has promised that graduates will walk the stage in May, but this promise would be in vain if classes remain unfinished.

While campus buildings will likely remain open, services such as the Learning Lab and advising offices may be limited. Canvas and Outlook emails for faculty will be shut down, further complicating communication between students and their instructors.

These disruptions are why student support is vital. The strike aims to secure better conditions that directly impact students, including subsidized SEPTA TransPasses, improved counseling and advising services, and proper staffing to provide academic stability on and off campus.

Throughout this bargaining cycle, Dr. Generals has given conflicting statements about CCP's financial standing. While he claims the college faces financial hardship, he has also declared CCP is in the best financial position the college has ever been in. The college currently holds over \$80 million in reserves, yet Dr. Generals insists that half of these funds must remain untouched for emergencies. Despite the other tens of millions available in reserve, the CCP Foundation, and newly issued from City Hall, the administration refuses to invest in common-sense, hardly gainful improvements.

Students concerned about their education and future at CCP can take several steps to support the strike and advocate for their needs. Joining the picket line shows solidarity with faculty and staff by joining protests on campus. Students can publicly pressure CCP administrators to prioritize funding for student services and fair faculty contracts. The Independent encourages students to share their stories about how issues like transit costs, inadequate advising, large class sizes, lack of on-campus childcare, understaffed facilities impact their education.

The overwhelming strike authorization vote signals that faculty and staff have exhausted other options. Now, students must decide whether to idly stand by or join the movement for a better CCP?

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The Silent



The Idea of Hajile by Ava Hampton

Part V

A sign that read “Lake Reversio” came into focus. A strange feeling overcame her as she repeated the name in her head. There was some familiarity with the name – a sense of knowing – but there was something else there, lying at the base of her belly. She couldn’t quite pinpoint what it was, but it didn’t feel good. She ignored it and continued walking.

In retrospect, she should’ve been marking where she was going. She should’ve counted the amount of time that passed while she was walking, or at least marked a tree or two, just to make sure she wouldn’t get lost – no matter how improbable the occurrence could be. But it wasn’t until she’d been walking in the same direction for however long that the wooded area began to look wildly unfamiliar. She turned around, trying to see if there were any landmarks nearby she could position herself at. In her haste to find refuge, however, spinning around caused her to lose the direction she came from.

Her blood was up now. Her heart was pounding in her chest as she became aware of just how scared she was. The blanket of comfort she carried with her was now gone, and her fear felt like a magnet to all those attracted to helpless prey.

She looked down at her shoes; sneakers that were 80% dry, dirty, tattered and torn – most likely from her missing time at the lake. To the left of her, a meter or so, she saw a ring of white mushrooms; they looked almost out of place with how bright they were. She shifted her gaze up from the mushrooms and noticed a small, insignificant clearing. As she contemplated going towards it, she heard a voice in her head, saying,

“Left is right.”

She looked around and was met by countless copies of trees and miscellaneous plants. Her way out of this labyrinth would not be logic or reasoning, today.

And so, without much thinking, she went in the direction of the white mushrooms and beyond.

~

It must’ve been an hour or so when she heard noise. It sounded like bustling, some type of vibration. She followed the sound, the buzzing getting louder as she closed onto an empty plot of land where cars were dashing from one point to another. Cars.

People!

Before she knew it, her feet took off and she ran towards the highway. When she came to the edge of the lanes, she paused; what now? She’s found refuge, but will anyone help her? She was so focused on getting out of the woods she didn’t think of convincing others to offer aid.

She put her thumb out- stereotypical, of course - but what else is there to do? After a few cars passed, she caught sight of a big, 12-wheeled, black and red truck slowing before her.

She was immediately wary. She didn’t know who she was or where she lived, but she knew to beware of strangers who drove big ass trucks. It wasn’t until she saw a gummy smile on a wrinkled face of the man who drove the truck when she considered getting in.

“Are you alright miss? You need some help?” The man said. He was an old black man - probably in his 60s or 70s - with a curly grey afro and a cream collared shirt. Something about the look in his eyes drew her to him – genuine concern. She detected no irregularities in his voice, and no sign of malice came to her mind, so cautiously, she responded.

“I don’t know where I am,” is all she could muster. Her voice was strained – has she not used it in some time? It was difficult to speak.

“You’re at Reversio Overpass, honey. Do you know where you’re going?”

She gave him a look of confusion as it occurred to her that she had no destination to go after getting out of the woods. The old man saw her troubled countenance and sighed.

“Theres a police station some miles up, it's about 15 minutes from here. Would you like a ride?”

She contemplated; the police station didn’t sound exactly enticing, but what other choice was there? It would also be the most advantageous place to go, seeing as she had no memory or record of her identity.

“Okay” she sighed, “Thank you.”

A call out to the Board of Trustees

JANIYAH BAYLOR

Community - “a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.” From Oxford languages.

That is the word that represents this college, students, faculty, professors and all its members. Without students a college is nothing. Without teachers there is nothing to be taught. Without faculty there is nothing to be helped. Without the building blocks that make CCP the amazing college that it is, we are nothing without community.

To get to where you are you have stood on the shoulders of giants.

Those giants being your teachers, professors, faculty, and all their members. Let me ask you this, would you be in the position you're in without the community and village that pushed you up.

Would you have the knowledge and confidence to stand before us and tell us you know what you're doing.



Power - “a right or authority that is given or delegated to a person or body.” From Oxford languages.

You have been given power that you have taken lightly. You've become too comfortable where you sit. Power isn't just given to those who sit at the top. It is received by those who are putting their hope and faith in you, that you will honor and listen to them.

Remember where you came from and where you are going. You are a part of something greater than yourself and don't realize the honor and value of representing future generations of success. Wake up.

Weather

Monday March 17	Tuesday March 18	Wednesday March 19	Thursday March 20	Friday March 21
Cloudy High of 57° Low of 34°	Sunny High of 63° Low of 40°	Sunny High of 68° Low of 44°	Rain in Evening High of 67° Low of 39°	Windy High of 53° Low of 35°



Drawing by Nick Gambacorta Follow his work on Instagram @ortsulli

She went around the front of the truck and hopped in. She discreetly looked around at the worn but neat interior. On the black rearview mirror dangled a green handkerchief, a gold chain with a tiny buddha pendant, and a green pine scented air freshener. On the black dashboard were a few miscellaneous items- a couple small, paperback books that looked well read, a pair of plain silver glasses, and a worn photo of a young man holding a newborn. To the man's lower right in one of the cupholders was a big, tall canister of black coffee - its' presence filling the air with a pleasantly warm aroma.

She leaned back into the black leather seat. She took a deep breath, the first she could remember in a very long time. After a few moments of silence, the old man cleared his throat, about to speak.

"I know I already asked, but again, all you all right? I won't pry too hard, but I need to know if you're in any danger. You're in my truck right now and your danger could become my danger, you understand?"

She kept her gaze near his neck, averting her eyes. She nodded.

"I'm not in danger."

"Ok, that's nice to know." He sighed as he stroked his short, peppered beard.

"Are you any danger? Will you hold me at gunpoint and take my truck? You know, she's a lot more work than she's worth - you'd be doing me a favor. Ha!"

To her surprise, she let out a short snort. She quickly fixed her face but not before the man saw and smiled, pleased with himself for breaking the ice.

"I am Nathaniel, Nathaniel White. Everyone calls me Nate though. What do I call you?"

She opened her mouth, silently, about to speak. No words came out. She furrowed her brows, cursing herself; stating your name sounded like such a simple thing to do, a natural thing. Her naturalness has now escaped her.

She looked at him, shaking her head softly. The expression in her eyes told Nate not to press any further.

"I see. I know that look. I had the same look on my face, yes sir. For many years, I did. You see that picture right there? That's me and my son,

Micheal. We were in this tiny downtown apartment then, me and his mom. I remember holding him in my arms and never feeling so much love like I did then. He was a living, breathing bundle of love.

"He's grown up so much. I wasn't there for most of it though. I was all filled up with something a little bit like love - a bad love. A toxic one... I was an addict. I guess I still am, though nothing like then. I won't get too deep in it, but I couldn't recognize myself, no one could. It's like, everything about me was reduced to want and need and pain. I couldn't let Micheal see that, so I left. I thought it wouldn't make a difference. I've never been so wrong."

Nate took a deep breath and paused, shaking his head. "Nothing can make up for that time, nothing. The damage it did... no one can fix it. I can only try to be the father I should've been then, now. It was slow at first, me and him, but we're better now. And I thank my god for it every day."

She was on the brink of tears by the time Nate finished. She didn't understand why she was so emotional, but she couldn't ignore the same feeling in her belly as before. Allowing the feeling to exist, she turned to Nate.

"I'm sorry for all of your pain."

Nate turned to her and smiled, wearily. "Thank you darlin', but it's not your fault - it was mine, and I'm learning to live with it. To love with it."

Forests of big, beautiful evergreens came and went in and out of view. What seemed like endless hills and valleys of trees unveiled themselves as the truck made its way down the marbled road.

"It's so beautiful out here." she said in a quiet voice.

"Yes. Some of the most beautiful in the country, I'd reckon probably the world. Nothing short of magnificent. And this is only some of the forests - few miles from here and there's a beautiful waterfall near the top of a mountain, I forgot which one. One of the most beautiful things I've ever seen in my life."

"Does it connect to the lake? The one with the rivers nearby lake Reversio?"

"Near the overpass? No, not that one. The one I'm talking about connects to a bigger lake on the other side of the waterfall mountain."

“Oh.”

“It’s a good thing it isn’t. That lake is big trouble. Sometimes some kids go there to hang out and be stupid – lighting things on fire, loud partying, leaving all kinds of things left behind, you know. There’s been a few accidents and deaths there too.”

Crack.

She was suddenly on edge. She looked down at her worn sneakers as she felt the same eerie feeling in her stomach.

“Really?” she said as she pushed through a tightening in her chest.

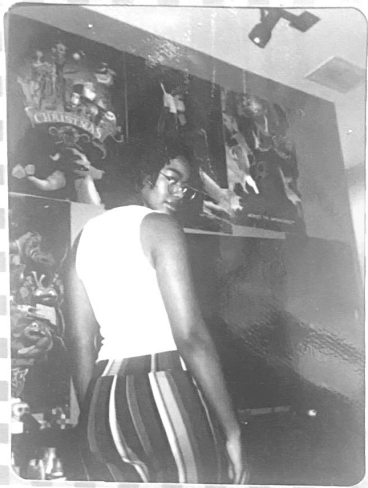
“Oh yeah. Many people have drowned. Some drunk kids probably wandering off, others killing themselves, poor things.”

Snap.

Patter, patter.

“Before the highway roads were finished being built, some years ago, there was an unfinished road that went right down the hill and into the lake. Someone crashed right into that lake, sure did. I remember reading it in the newspaper. Two people - a man and woman. Death and critical condition, respectively. It was some years ago, though. Maybe she’s doing alright now.”

And it all came flooding back.



Miss Parts I—IV of *The Idea of Hajile*?
Why? That’s frickin’ dumb. Just go to:
<https://theindependentnews.org/2025/03/16/the-idea-of-hajile/> Or scan the QR Code:



The Girl Before by Ariana B



I’m the girl before the real thing starts,
The test run, the trial, the practice heart.
I’m the lesson they learn before they’re true,
I’m the storm they break before skies turn blue.

With me, they’re distant, too busy to stay,
Too lost, too broken, just drifting away.
But when she arrives, their world stands still,
Their hands reach out, their hearts refill.

For me, they’re cold, a shadow, a ghost,
A love that fades when I need it most.
But for her, they shine, they kneel, they vow,
The same ones who swore they didn’t know how.

I mend their wounds, I teach them to feel,
I soften the edges, I help them heal.
Then suddenly, they’re brand new men,
Loving her in ways they never did then.

I was the trial, the rough draft,
The girl they broke to turn the page.
And now they stand, a prince so true,
But never for me—just for someone new.

