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A Little Soul Food, Please

by Rita Puishes

It's a "blue plate special" straight from Devil's Diner that I ingest today. These so-called trinomial treats are far worse than the usual mind-boggling swill presented twice weekly in this dungeinous Cafeteria of Confusion, this frigid basement of despair. Diners breathe despair in and sweat it back out until its putrid malevolence permeates the atmosphere. And no wonder! Despair is the seasoning of choice here at Devil's Diner. The chefs add it to whatever chalky, burnt-out cuisine they concoct.

I would not willingly enter this eatery. The courses of this meal, with their cancerous gray dollops of ego emaciation, were foisted on me by some unseen omnipotent panel that decreed mathematics a protein supplement mandatory in the diets of all students partaking of the College Degree carte du jour.

Some students find mathematical cuisine palatable--a veritable ambrosia, even. I've seen some folks salivate over the numerical goulash they serve up here. Not me. No matter how hard I try, I cannot educate my palate to willfully ingest that acidic indigestible concoction of formulae.

The viands that trigger my Pavlovian responses are not numerical; they are literary. Words are incomparably delicious to me. A word of unique sound and obscure aromatic meaning will keep my jaws masticating for days. Ecstasy is a vibrant word that I can wrap my tongue around while extracting every ounce of buttery juice from its depths. Precise words warm me. They whisk warm outdoor breezes straight into my icy, numerically numbed bones. I eat up words with meanings so palpable their flavor and tinct can be savored for days. These are the delicacies that draw forth my drool, the food I could easily dine forever. But alas, this succulence is only available in English courses such as hearty English Alphabet Stew with its meaty tomes chock-full of powerful sentences and just the right sprinkle of fresh verbs and minty modifiers. English courses are the true nectar of the Gods. They are the sustenance my heart, soul, and mind crave.

We each have our own talents and appetites, though, don't we? Some folks

find formulaic numbers as filling and tantalizing as I find words. But I starve in their cafeteria, and their menu offers no a la carte options. The courses are pre-cooked and set for the talented and inept to partake side by side. Is it any wonder my nostrils clog with the reek of the despair that overpowers this establishment?

The menu boasts:

Cod Liver Linguine of Linear Equations
Rancid Roast Rarebit of Ratios
Two Equation Omelette Linear Style
FOIL Wrapped Polynomials Topped with Cubed Exponents
Factored Trinomial Tripe
Indigestible Integer Sandwiches -Featuring Condensed
Scientific Notation on the side.

It's all unappealing gobbledy-goulash with coagulated jelly of geometries added to all servings (at no extra charge) as far as I am concerned.

My stomach rebels at the wormy dish of confusion plopped before me today. I hunger for the lemony tang of literature, but my hungry void will not be filled today. Nor will my thirst for companionship be slaked in this dismal dungeon. The clientele here speak mostly in numerical language. Yesterday my eating companion refused to talk to me. She crunched her salty nines and fives in stony silence while occasionally glaring in my direction. Of course that was after I misunderstood some things she had said. When she began a conversation about inverse properties, I relayed what little I know about the abodes of bards. She, quite kindly, forgave me that gaff, but I stumbled over her linear limit when I suggested that government aid might be available for cross products such as hookers with PMS.

Laughter, it seems, is an obscenity in this cheerless sterile quarter. I fear my body and soul would starve were it not for my twice weekly jaunts across campus to the English Emporium where I dine freely, and am nourished as much by the laughter of lighthearted epicureans as I am by the fine English buffet.

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