

## Chapter 8

### The Relocation

As early as 2007, the 109 Times reported news of the PTB's plans to renovate Longfellow and permanently relocate several nations, including the Kingdom of 109. The actual renovation and relocation did not occur for another four years, but the ominous cloud that rolled in with the bad news made 109 rethink its relationship with the PTB. Relations with the PTB were never the same.

#### The News

Before the news became public in the June 2007 issue of the 109 Times, Mr. Huang had several close-door meetings with Mrs. Kihm to discuss alternatives. Since the exact date of the relocation would not come for another two years, 109 business proceeded as usual, and Mr. Huang remained quietly hopeful that the PTB would change their mind. That didn't happen.

Citing "for the good of Longfellow", the PTB would not compromise. K109 would have to move away from 109 and permanently relocate. 109ers were stunned when Mr. Huang finally informed them of the PTB's plans. Before learning that Mr. Huang already had tried to negotiate Mrs. Kihm, 109ers offered their own alternative renovation plans that included leaving 109 where it was.

Others citizens were not so diplomatic.

"There was talk of making a human chain around the walls," said Master Artist Manna Fujiu.

Defending 109 militarily was a risky option since the size of the PTB's army is always unpredictable in that they could at any moment conscript 1000 soldiers from the Longfellow lands that did not have a treaty with K109. K109 could not depend on support from friendly nations, even ones who were being relocated, because most of them still depended on the PTB for supplies. And even if 109 did militarily win their independence from Longfellow, did K109 want to be an isolated country within Longfellow, living under the constant threat of invasion?

Mr. Huang commended the hawkish 109ers for their devotion to their country, but he warned against extreme violent measures. While agreeing with the citizens that 109, gifted to them by the PTB, is theirs by right, he told them that difficult times beg for a nation to look inside themselves and turn the struggle into strength to be used when the time is right. His decision was to wait and see.

During 2010-11, three years after liberating Tieland and less than one year after 109 saved Longfellow from Calamito and the One Donut, the Powers-That-Be informed K109 and other nations that the Longfellow Renovation first reported in 2007 would take place during the summer of 2011. Before summer, certain lands, including 109, would be repossessed by the PTB and the people in those lands would be relocated, in some cases temporarily, to other

locations. In the case of K109, 109ers would be relocated somewhere temporarily and then transferred to a permanent home. They would never return to 109.

### **The Final Art Project in 109**

Facing the impending move, Mr. Huang approved a final “art project”. However, the project was not a mural and took on a more personal nature. During the 2010-11 year leading up to 109’s forced relocation, Mr. Huang ordered that the name of every 109 citizen ever be written on the walls. A couple of months before Relocation Day, the last of the over 950 names was written on the wall.

“Every 109 citizen contributed to the tapestry that is the culture and history of 109,” said Mr. Huang. “Flagbearers, non-flagbearers, 109 awards winners, non-winners. They all deserved to be up there.”

### **The National Anthem**

During the summer of 2010, a group of Longfellow worker orcs uncovered a strange artifact from the Field. It was a spiral notebook with some writing in it. Archeologists were able to make out a three-line poem.

Carbon-dating determined the pen ink to be from 2008. The PTB archeologists concluded that the spiral must have belonged to someone who witnessed the Battle on the Field between 109 and Tieland and Mr. Huang’s calling Morris and Calamito “small potatoes”. After the spiral was returned to 109, Mr. Huang spent the rest of the summer putting the words to music. The fruit of that labor was “Not Small Potatoes”, the National Anthem of the Kingdom of 109.

Not small potatoes

Not small potatoes

We are not small potatoes

Beginning in fall 2010, the national anthem was sung at the election of each new flagbearer and datemaster, as well as other special occasions, such as treaty signings and coronations. It was also sung once at the beginning of an SOL test, but the PTB quickly issued a directive banning the singing of anything before an SOL.

### **Moving Day**

On February 11, 2011, all of 109 past and present, allies of 109, and friends of 109, gathered to hear Mr. Huang give his last speech within the walls of 109. Photographs of every citizen in 109 history were on the walls. So was every issue of the 109 Times. Former Flagbearers met current ones. Master artists saw their beautiful creations for the last time. The Liberators of Tieland were brought to tears when they heard “Not Small Potatoes” for the first time in their lives (the song had not been written yet when the Liberators freed Tieland). Kate Salamido, a

non-109 citizen who would later be the first Longfellowite to be given honorary 109 citizenship, collected wall shavings from each mural and presented them to 109 as a gift.

“Even though I wasn’t a citizen, 109 was a special place for me,” said Salamido, who spent time in 109 as a quiz bowler. “I had to save pieces of it.”

Many wondered if K109 would keep its name once it reached its new land. In his last speech within the walls of 109, Mr. Huang answered that question:

“...we will keep our name. We will keep our honor...the story goes on.”

The Kingdom of 109 exited its doors for the last time at 3:14 pm.

After a short stop in the Cafeteria to resupply, the 109ers continued on. Even though the route included an outside portion down a set of steps in the rain, 109 did not lose a single soul. They arrived at Villa 52, their temporary home in a relocation camp called The Villas.

The 5-month stay at Villa 52 was not easy. Bathrooms were very far away and required a trek outside through a maze of trailers where wild animals were known to hide. Thin walls meant noisy and cold winter conditions. Citizen Justin Sher almost froze to death when he had to wait outside for only three minutes while 6<sup>th</sup> period went over a test he had missed. Still, the spirit of 109 lived on in hope and strength. All the while, everyone wondered where their eventual new home would be.

### **Mangos and Large Potatoes**

All was not grim during those lamentable days; a new project gave 109ers hope. While in Villa 52, 109 launched a media production company called Mango Productions. Its first project would be a documentary film about the history of 109 from its inception to 2/11/11, the day K109 left 109. The 50-minute film would contain footage of the Liberation of Tieland, the search for Dr. Donut, the day 109 left 109, and video of the now lost murals of 109.

In June 2011, citizens past and present, Mr. Williams, and a Mr. Calamito look-alike, all gathered in the Cafeteria to watch the debut of *Mangos and Large Potatoes*. Despite some early technical difficulties, smiles, laughter, and tears filled the room.

“That was really special,” said First Datemaster Meredith Doherty, fighting back her own tears.

“Mangos and Large Potatoes would not have been made if we hadn’t left,” said Mr. Huang, trying to find a silver lining in the move. “Maybe one day it would have, but the imminent relocation made making the film a high priority.”

109 has always tried to turn struggle into success, crisis into opportunity. The success of the documentary became an enduring example of that way of life, a manifestation of a spiritual mantra often uttered by the Phoss: “If you lack one long stick to turn over a stone, you can make a long stick by connecting shorter sticks to turn over that rock.”

## **A New Home in 209**

During 109's time in Villa 52, Mrs. Kihm approached Mr. Huang to discuss the eventual final relocation of K109. In an attempt to bridge the chasm that had grown wider because of the Relocation, she let Mr. Huang choose where he wanted to settle in newly renovated Longfellow. She also offered to rename the new home 109, but Mr. Huang said no.

"To call another place 109 would be sacrilegious. There was only one 109, and the PTB took it," said Mr. Huang. "We don't have to be in a place called 109. The true Kingdom of 109 isn't surrounded by walls. It lives within each and every citizen."

Mr. Huang chose a land in the Highlands called 209. Though at a higher elevation, its terrain was similar enough to 109, and therefore the 109ers could replant mango trees transported from 109. The cooler air also meant 109 could still plant medium- and large-sized potatoes. So K109 began a new chapter in 209 in August 2011.

## **Preserving 109 Art**

With the assistance of supposedly-rehabilitated evil sidekick Mr. Gorgia, Mr. Huang managed to salvage several large pieces and numerous small pieces of the walls and ceiling of 109. Dumpster diving around Longfellow, the two unearthed, among others, pieces of Manna Fujiu's sunset, names of 109 citizens, and even part of Rudolfo from the walls. Before the orcs of Jim Wynne began the Renovation, Mr. Huang had already removed Mya Abousy's shooting star ceiling tile painting. The first thing he did when they arrived in their new home is place that tile in the ceiling of 209. Abousy's *Potato Sun* did not survive.

To honor 109's origins and to ensure citizens would never forget their heritage, 109 immediately opened the Kingdom of 109 National Museum in the Northeast Corner. The museum displayed many of the pieces found by Mr. Huang and Mr. Gorgia, as well as the wall shavings obtained by Kate Salamido on Moving Day.

## Chapter 9

### The Seven Jewels

Before the Relocation, Mr. Williams and other leaders in Longfellow told Mr. Huang of the Seven Jewels of the Sandi. As a youth, Mr. Huang heard the fabled story of the Seven Jewels. He thought the story merely legend, but now he learned that they were real.

The Sandi, those who lived before people and animals (even before the Phoss, for the Phoss were just people themselves), had created jewels that embodied the Seven Pillars of Civilization: logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, art, rhetoric and grammar. The extraterrestrial equivalents of the Sandi came to earth, seeking the jewels for their own worlds. The Sandi distrusted the intentions of these other beings, so before they faded into the nether realms, the Sandi gave the jewels to the Powers-That-Be for protection. The PTB, whose mission has always been to perfect Longfellowites in the image of the seven pillars, in turn charged all nations of Longfellow with the task of helping to protect the Seven Jewels. Though the nations of Longfellow bicker from time to time, when it comes to the protection of the Seven Jewels, they are united in being obedient to the Sandi in regard to the protection of the jewels. As the Sandi always warned the PTB:

“Without the jewels, we become shadows of our true selves.”

#### The Impending Third Darkness: The Seven Jewels Emerge

In the fall of 2011, a Third Shadow potentially leading to a Third Darkness arose in Longfellow. Through communication with the Phoss (some had survived The Pillaging), Mr. Huang learned that hidden in the “shadows behind the light” was an entity wishing to seize the Seven Jewels. The PTB felt it was too dangerous to keep the jewels in one place, so they distributed the seven jewels to seven different protectors in Longfellow. At first, no one knew who the protectors were. Since each protector had one jewel each, the protectors themselves did not know who the other six were.

Splitting up the collection of jewels seemed a good idea at first, but some of the protectors were not well-equipped to defend against an enemy whose strength was still unknown. Since K109 possessed the strongest defenses in Longfellow, Mr. Huang disobeyed PTB directives and openly sought to independently find the jewels before the mysterious Third Shadow did. He openly instructed all 109 citizens to seek out the jewels and bring them to 209.

K109 sent messages to all the nations of Longfellow, asking the anonymous protectors to give the jewels to K109. His request fell on deaf ears, as the protectors stayed true to their original instructions from the PTB and did not come forward. Sensing that the weaker nations would not be able to hold on to the jewels when the Darkness came, Mr. Huang charged all citizens

with the task of finding the jewels. Meanwhile, 109 received an interesting message from a new head of state in Longfellow known as the Son of Alex. He offered to help 109 find the jewels. Mr. Huang, desperate to find the jewels, made the mistake of accepting the Son of Alex's help.

The Son of Alex's true intentions came clear when he located the first jewel. He did not turn it over to 109 as he said he would. Instead, he kept it and sent messages to 109, mocking Mr. Huang and his citizens. In one message, he claimed that he had already turned several 109 citizens to his side. His intentions were clear. He was going to find all seven jewels and enjoy doing it. Mr. Huang knew that if Son of Alex found all seven, even the power of 109 could not stop him for his power would then be even greater than Mr. Calamito when he had the One Donut.

In the end, K109 and the Son of Alex each found three jewels. The seventh was never found. Still believing that the SOA was dangerous, Mr. Huang approached the PTB and other allies to discuss attacking the SOA directly and seizing his three jewels by force.

"We at HSWI wanted to help, but we didn't even have an army," said Headmistress Ms. Hughey. "Our culture was based on cute pictures of cuddly animals." When K109 and HSWI entered into their alliance in the fall of 2011, HSWI warned anybody plotting against 109 that attacks on 109 would make all cuddly creatures sad. HSWI designed a poster filled with pictures of sad dogs and cats to make its point clear.

In the winter of 2011-12, the forces of 109, the PTB, and several other nations were ready to attack, when the inexplicable happened. The Son of Alex vanished. Moreover, he left his three jewels behind freely! There was no explanation but plenty of speculation.

"He was the kind of evil who lacked courage and conviction," said one leader who the Son of Alex tried to turn against 109. "I think he just got scared."

To heal wounds and unite 109, Mr. Huang forgave the citizens who had been turned into spies for the SOA. Longfellow averted another Calamito-like disaster, but K109 was about to embark on a path of heightened domestic tension and structural changes.

## Chapter 10

### Tensions Within K109

Ever since the early days of 109, there has always been some degree of republicanism in the citizenry. While generally happy living under a monarchy, 109 citizens have always quietly, sometimes vocally, yearned for more rights, representation, and equality in their own nation. To head off any potential uprisings, the monarchy took some proactive steps after the Relocation, such as appointing an official ambassador and later on appointing an attorney general. However, the desire for even more representation remained, particularly in the first few years in 209.

#### Two Assassination Attempts

During 2008-09, there were two assassination attempts on the life of Mr. Huang. The first attack came from a supposed extremist who believed Mr. Huang was assigning too much homework.

While Mr. Huang was walking down an aisle, Maryam Kanna stuck her foot out in the aisle, tripping Mr. Huang. He fell on his face, and authorities immediately apprehended Kanna. She was charge with trying to kill the king. However, new evidence emerged that complicated the incident. Chris Pauliukonis came forward and claimed that Kanna did not actually attempt to trip Mr. Huang. Instead, Pauliukonis said he saw Kanna attempt to stab Mr. Huang with a “rock or machete”. He also testified that, using his immeasurable strength, he saved Mr. Huang by moving him out of danger. For lack of evidence, Kanna was eventually exonerated, but her life was never the same, as her former friends forever wondered if she had really tried to kill the king.

Though he would later be remembered as a 109 patriot, the young Timo Sheridan was also accused of an assassination attempt, but his case was just as murky as Maryam Kanna’s. In an interview shown later in the documentary Mangos and Large Potatoes, Sheridan admitted to using a rubber band to construct a pencil-launching device. He also admitted to aiming the pencil at Mr. Huang. The pencil-launcher did fire, and Sheridan did flee immediately, but during his trial, defenders of Sheridan claimed that he was covering for someone. Jonathan Leidenheimer, later a member of the Heptumvirate, put forth the theory that the Russian Security Service actually plotted to assassinate Mr. Huang and set up Sheridan as the fall guy. In the end, Sheridan was found guilty, but he was not sentenced to prison.

#### Mr. Huang Breaks Promise

At the end of the 2011-12 year, under pressure from the citizenry, Mr. Huang announced that in the fall of 2012, 109 would have citizen representation in government in the form of a congress. He even so far as to say that the flagbearers of each period would take on the duties of senators. However, when autumn came, Mr. Huang never acted on his announced plans,

and by then, the support for a legislature had dissipated. Some citizens felt that Mr. Huang had only proposed the congress to silence critics and never actually intended to create it. However, progress toward some form of democracy did occur with respect to Lancer Time.

### **The Lancer Time Movement**

Residents of Lancer Time were a group living in a gray area. They were neither citizens (unless they already belonged to a particular 109 period) nor complete outsiders. Not until 2011 did they openly ask for citizenship status. The 2011-12 LT were derisively called “gypsies” by right-wing nationalists in 109 who also spread false rumors that Lancer Timers were cannibals who eat their own young. Led by Jason Stranne, Sarah Forburger, and Paul Doody, the LTers weathered the discrimination and pressed on. Eventually, 109 relented and chose to open a Department of Naturalization to study the possibility of making residents of LT full 109 citizens.

The compromise was full naturalization upon passing a citizenship quiz. The quiz contained twenty-two questions, some easy, such as naming the current queen of 109, and some hard, such as naming the first-ever datemaster. Mr. Huang set the bar high, so only Jason Stranne and Sarah Forburger were able to pass it. Paul Doody failed it three times, even after hours of study.

After the 2011-12 year, the question of LT legitimacy did not arise again until February 2014, when that LT group demanded to become semi-independent. The separatist movement was led by Jonathan Kaplan, an anti-monarchist who found dozens of loopholes in the Huang Codex of the 109 Constitution. Assisted by Frank Ding and Shihao Cao, Kaplan got 109 to come to the table. The talks between LT and 109 became so heated that 109 agreed to let LT start work on a constitution based on semi-independency from 109. The lone royalist in LT was Walker Haynes, who vociferously supported staying within K109 and refused to participate in LT’s constitutional work sessions. In the end, LT established the Province of LT within K109, a semi-independent realm with its own constitution whose citizens were still 109 citizens. The government was bicameral, with a House of Mangoes and House of Large Potatoes as its two legislative bodies.

Unfortunately for the independence movement, the Province of LT did not work so well. From February to April, LT passed no legislation even though they tried to on a daily basis. The gridlock in both houses made success impossible. Mr. Huang desperately wanted to end the semi-independence experiment that he knew would fail, but he didn’t have a good enough reason. Then he received an interesting letter.

The anonymous letter, later to be called the Tu Telegram, informed 109 that LT had extracted the DNA of LT citizen William Tu without his knowledge and planned to clone an army of thousands of little William Tu minions to attack 109. With a smoking gun finally in his possession, Mr. Huang immediately abolished the government of LT and de-ratified its constitution.

“See what gets accomplished when republics take over?” exclaimed Mr. Huang. “Nothing.”

### **More Movement on Civil Rights**

In the winter of 2011, complaints arose from the datemater herself. Gabi Gresenz, the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter datemaster, felt constrained by having only blue, black and brown markers available to use for the date box.

“All colors deserve the same rights,” she said. Gresenz wanted to use green, purple, pink, all disallowed by Mr. Huang.

In the end, Mr. Huang allowed Gresenz to use one of those three colors for the last week of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.

In the fall of 2011, around the time the gypsies of LT were making noise, Hannah Champness complained about the condition of the quiz/test folder, in use since 2003.

“The folder is gross,” she said. “Imagine how many fingers have touched it!”

Champness’ complaint gave other citizens courage to point out various dirty locations in 109 that they claimed were hazardous to their health. Mr. Huang did not replace the folder, but he did make it sturdier by placing tape in particularly weak spots. That was the extent of the cleanup. However, through Champness’ persistence, K109 did establish a Center for Disease Control, whose mission was to study possible threats to citizens’ health.

### **Attorney General and the Gorbaneva Codex**

During the spring of 2017, Mr. Huang decided it was time to revise the Constitution. In order to accomplish the task, he needed assistance, so he established the office of the Attorney General, a citizen whose two main purposes would be constitution revisions and interpretation as well as the prosecution of possible transgressions against 109 law. Alyssa Gorbaneva was chosen as the first Attorney General.

The creation of the AG arose out of necessity. The original version of the Constitution, known as the Huang Codex, was purposely left general and vague. Over the years, some citizens took advantage of the loopholes to push the boundaries of legality. In addition, the Huang Codex also did not address certain unusual circumstances, such as abdication.

“There were too many loopholes in the original Constitution,” said Mr. Huang. “We needed to close them up.”

The Gorbaneva Codex filled in the holes and added new text to the original Huang Codex, such as Article 7, which allowed for the annexation of the after school club Quiz Bowl to the Kingdom.

Perhaps the most significant change that the creation of the AG position represented was the potential transfer of power away from the throne. Though he was not required to, Mr. Huang

could now pass on significant decision-making to the AG, decisions that he used to make himself, such as the guilt or innocence of accused law-breakers. This transfer of power would result in the most famous breach of law in 109 history.

### **The Textbook Tax**

During the 2018-19 year, 7<sup>th</sup> period citizens were stumbling over each other to reach the few textbooks that were available to Lancer Time to get a head start on homework. To combat the rat race, Mr. Huang instituted a 10 cent textbook rental fee, known as the “textbook tax”, to calm things down. The tax did not have the desired effect. Instead of civilizing the process of using the books, 7<sup>th</sup> period citizens were unwilling to pay the tax and refused to use the books at all.

Attorney General Karina Bhatt received complaints from 7<sup>th</sup> Period. Amendment 1 states that no citizen may be prevented from “pursuing or expressing mathematics”. After reviewing the evidence in light of Amendment 1, she concluded that Mr. Huang had indeed violated the Constitution. She immediately repealed the tax and sentenced Mr. Huang to one week of descension, that is, a week unseated from the throne of 109. This marked the first time that 109 had been without a king for any period of time.

Mr. Huang later admitted that AG Bhatt had originally sentenced him to three weeks of descension, after which he negotiated a one-week compromise.

## **Chapter 11**

### **Skill Drills: The Race to Perfection**

The road to discovering eternal truths in math are paved with concrete steps of varying nature. The final step involves drawing connections between relatively large ideas to express the eternal truth. The steps that precede the final one are simpler in nature but tedious and less exciting. Enter the Skill Drills Cup, 109's way of making the less exciting minutia of math exciting through competition.

#### **The Origin of Skill Drills**

Skill Drills was not a 109 invention. Mr. Huang borrowed it from Mr. Williams. Though the content is relatively dry (both Mr. Huang and Mr. Williams have admitted as much), the posting of the weekly Perfect Skill Drills highly motivates most citizens.

"I remember one week, I was one of only three people to get perfect," said Mr. Huang of the time he was Mr. Williams' student. "It's a memorable feeling of pride."

One week a year, Mr. Williams and Mr. Huang gave a week of extra hard Skill Drills known as Kill Drills. As expected, this could result in no perfects for the week, but those who do get a perfect take great pride in the achievement. In 2005-06, Meredith Doherty, the First Datemaster, only got one perfect SD all year, but that perfect came during Kill Drills week when she was the only 109 citizen to do it.

Mr. Williams and Mr. Huang also gave a week of easy Skill Drills, also known as Skill Drills for the Masses, SD for the People, SD Arkansas style, SD Cooper style, and SD for the Proletariat.

#### **Mr. Huang Makes Changes**

Mr. Williams never kept track of total number of perfects in a year, so Mr. Huang started posting that statistic every week. Immediately, having the most Skill Drills for the year became the prize of the year. Beginning in the fall of 2004, the 109 Times published the cumulative number of perfects for the year. Naturally, citizens would flip to the standings as soon as they got their hands on an issue.

The nature and difficulty of Skill Drills has also changed. Williams-style Skill Drills consisted of a set of five problems on five random topics. Originally, Mr. Huang's Skill Drills were the same way, but after the Relocation, Mr. Huang decided to ensure that the five types of problems were the same five types each day in a given week. This change made Skill Drills easier, but Mr. Huang decided it was more important to use the four-day exercise to ensure mastery of targeted skills.

To make the title of Skill Drills Champion even more prestigious, Mr. Huang allows the winner to hold the All-Purpose Trophy.

## Skill Drills Legends

Han Kim won the first Skill Drill title in 2005 with 18 perfects. In 2006, Seungin Sohn tied Kim. In 2009, amidst the distraction of Dr. Donut, Care Shoaibi became the first girl to hit 18. Nobody surpassed 18 until 2012 when Deniz Atak, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, got his 19<sup>th</sup> perfect on Week #30. Known for being on the cocky side, Atak immediately rubbed his achievement in his friend Habib Karky's face. When Atak first met Queen Stephanie, he introduced himself this way: "Hello Your Highness. I'm Deniz Atak, Skill Drills Champion." Mr. Williams and Mr. Gorgia did send Atak their congratulations for breaking the record that had stood for seven years.

However, Atak's record of 19 did come with an asterisk. 8<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra did not get the same Skill Drills from week to week as 7<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra. Therefore, ever since 2012, the perfect Skill Drills standings for different math courses (Algebra 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Algebra 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Geometry, Algebra 2) have remained separate.

In 2014, the standard for Skill Drills legendry rose higher again as Adam Ardeishar scored 21 perfects in 29 weeks. After Ardeishar's achievement, there was some talk of whether this record was unbreakable because the changing Longfellow schedule, criticized by Mr. Huang for being anti-educational, was forcing 109 to reduce the number of SD weeks. The number of Skill Drills in a year used to be 30 or more in the days of Han Kim and Deniz Atak. If the total number of weeks continued to trend downward, Ardeishar's total would become that much more difficult to beat. That made the next legend's achievement all the more incredible.

In 2018, having only 26 weeks to work with, 6<sup>th</sup> grader Michelle Kang scored 23 perfects. Awe at Kang's abilities rippled through the Kingdom every time Kang worked that pencil. Known for being stoic and steely-eyed, Kang did not draw too much attention to herself for her amazing accomplishment.

But then, the following year, the impossible happened again. Tanmay Neema nonchalantly nipped Kang's record, scoring 24 perfects in 26 weeks, proving that he was indeed the Skill Drill king.