

“Dust, lightning, and cats in the Vatican Manuscript Library,” *Local News*, n. 365 (2045), p. 37

“You could’ve heard dust puffing up from soft scholars’ steps down the aisles, the ancient library was so quiet. There wasn’t even a clock ticking. My rough white cotton gloves kept my summer sweat off of the late 15th century manuscript I was studying. Page after page, interest battled with the fragile bits of my crumbling hope. Would I find the clearly stated information that I wanted so badly as a proof for the points-of-view I was developing in my Ph.D. thesis? Hope, as they say, never dies, but it does wilt. The room, though, was so pleasant, and the research so intriguing (to me), that adventuring from one page to the next almost sent little shivers up my spine. A page. Another page. Another page. Yet another page. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. Another page...and the air around me seemed to crack open like a tree struck by lightning. I felt a tired scribe’s hand rest on my shoulder from across the ages. Right in front of me across the margin of the still creamy parchment was a cat’s paw print, smeared from slipping in the ink. In that instant, I felt the scribe lean on me for support, and together we stared – I, exhilarated; he, disgusted – at the kitty’s careless sin. Electric shocks of excitement pulsed through me. I wanted to run up and down the aisles, laughing with all of my being, but I clamped down on the volcano thrilling through my whole body, and searched desperately for my fellow scholar friend to share the wonder of the moment: the implosion of centuries at the fourth desk in the fifth row of the Vatican Manuscript Library on an unforgettable sweltering dusty summer’s day in June.”

(byline: Anonymous Me)

VOCABULARY:

To puff: to make little bursts of air

Crumbling: falling into little pieces

To wilt: to slowly lose crispness

Shiver: quick involuntary muscle shakes

Parchment: calf- or goat-skin writing ground

To smear: to drag matter making an unwanted mark

To pulse: to move with each heart/motor/etc. beat

To clamp down: to repress, firmly

Implosion: a collapse beginning on the inside

GIST: One of your best friends is such a good writer that your local newspaper wanted an intriguing piece about an exhilarating professional experience. It's printed, and you're going to have to chat about it over coffee, tomorrow, so get prepared! **READ** these gist terms, and **WRITE** them down on a separate piece of paper. **SKIM READ QUICKLY**, looking **only** for these terms. **MARK** each time you see them. When you're finished, **COUNT** how many of each term you have read, and use the pull-down menu to choose the correct answer. **WATCH OUT!** An envious colleague has included at least one term that is not in the video! (**MAXIMUM TIME ALLOWED:** 15 minutes)

_____ Vatican

_____ June

_____ 21st

DETAILED: Super! That got you through the quick questions over coffee, but the article will be a hot topic over dinner, tonight. Get prepared! **READ** the questions **TWICE**, then **don't look** at them. **SCAN READ** the text **TWICE** with **MODERATE SPEED**. Now go back to the True/False questions and answer them, correctly, by **CLICKING** on True or False without reading, again. **Don't worry!** The questions are purposefully **general**, so you should be able to answer them, correctly, without having to read, a third time, but if you do need to, it's OK, just remember for which questions you needed to do it, so you and your teacher can talk about why. **WATCH OUT n. 1!** An envious colleague has included at least one question that is misleading! **WATCH OUT n. 2!** Not all questions are asked with exactly the same language as is used in the text! (**MAXIMUM TIME ALLOWED:** 25 minutes)

- | | TRUE | FALSE |
|--|-------|-------|
| 1. Your friend enjoyed his/her time in the Vatican Manuscript Library. | _____ | _____ |
| 2. He/she found precise information to support his/her Ph.D. thesis. | _____ | _____ |
| 3. The cat's paw mark was printed neatly onto the page. | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Discovering the paw mark was very exciting for your friend. | _____ | _____ |
| 5. The experience was so exciting that your friend wanted to share it. | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Your friend had been studying for awhile before seeing the paw print. | _____ | _____ |
| 7. Space and time seemed to crack, and the scribe seemed to appear. | _____ | _____ |

EXTRA (no points): What has happened to you that was super exciting (and that you can share)?
