

Incidents  of  
Time Travel  to  
 Ancient  
Maya  :

*A Journal*  *by*  
 *Rahmat*

*Cluckoobox* 



Sycamore Class, Year 6, 2021/22  
De Beauvoir Primary School

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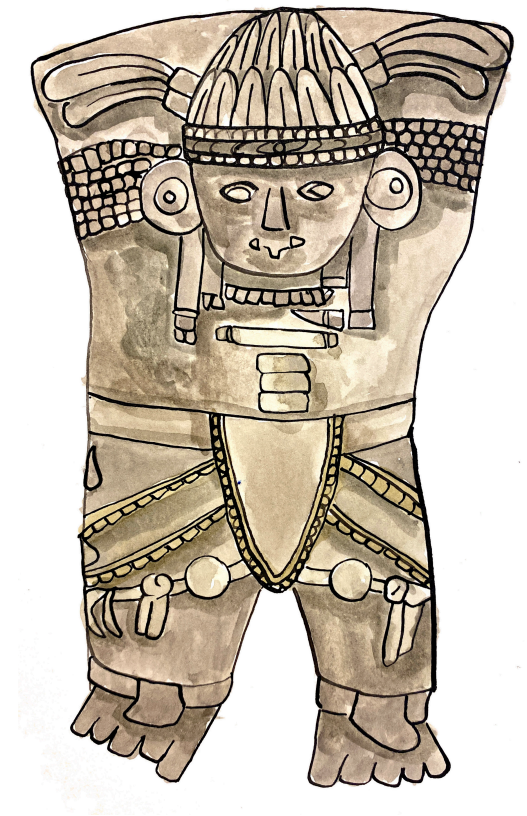
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## Incidents of Time Travel to Ancient Maya: A Journal by Rahmat Cluckoobox



"Que bonito es el mundo."  
"How beautiful is the world."

*William Carlsen*

*Jungle of Stone: The Extraordinary Journey of John L.  
Stephens and Frederick Catherwood,  
and the Discovery of the Lost Civilisation of the Maya*

This anthology is an incredible piece of writing and demonstrates the amazing imaginations of our pupils in Year 6. Inspired through poetry, drama, games and videos, Sycamore Class have created a wonderful story of Rahmat Cluckoobox and her Maya adventures. Inspired by John Stephens and Frederick Catherwood, Sycamore were also able to recognise the amazing beauty in the world and translate this on to paper. We are incredibly proud of all of you and the humour, thought, historical information and hard work that has gone into creating this amazing keepsake.

A big thank you to Justin for his enthusiasm and passion for poetry and writing and working with our pupils to become printed authors. We have loved the work we have done with Ministry of Stories and are grateful for the opportunity.

Miss Rader, Head of School

Together, Year 6 and Justin have written the most gripping Maya tale, set in the ancient city of Chichén Itzá and completely filled with chocolate, a fearsome game of Pok-A-Tok, a deadly sacrifice at a Maya temple, a note that says, "save me" and finally finding the fifth codex – what more could you ask for?

Year 6 have absolutely loved performing, writing and working alongside Justin this term in their weekly Ministry of Stories sessions. Valuing every child's voice, their different opinions and imaginative ideas each Wednesday afternoon has seen Year 6 transported deep into the lush jungles of Central America ready for another adventure.

Mrs Binnie, Sycamore Class Teacher

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## The Authors

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**This book was written by  
Sycamore class, Year 6, 2021/22,  
at De Beauvoir Primary School,  
in conjunction with writer and  
Ministry of Stories' facilitator  
Justin Coe.**

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Kishan	

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I had such a fun time going on an exciting writing adventure to ancient Maya with the brilliantly imaginative Sycamore class, Year 6, at De Beauvoir Primary School.

Building on the class's learning on ancient Maya, we put together this journal in only eight afternoons in weekly sessions throughout October, November and December 2021.

We used different methods every week to create the material for the book. We wrote group poems with individual young people creating lines on strips of paper or post-it notes, with these then jigsawed together as a class. We wrote letters and notes to each other and also tried table-writing, with each person on the table producing one line of writing for each collective poem. Our writing was stimulated by videos of the Central American rainforest, artistic impressions of Maya kings and queens and images of original Maya art and architecture. We also responded creatively to the work of the trail-blazing Victorian explorers of ancient Maya – the writer of the original “Incidents of Travel”, John Lloyd Stephens and his artist companion Frederick Catherwood (who we discovered was born just down the road in Hoxton). As the story reached its climax, we used drama games and forum theatre to help us develop the characters and feel the emotions. Most exciting of all, we even attempted our own version of the Maya ballgame Pok-A-Tok, although the ball we used was of the soft sponge variety rather than made up of 4kg of hard rubber!

Most of the diary entries that you will read here were written by the 28 young writers individually in their Ministry of Stories journals and then edited into the manuscript to create the journal of one class character. This character, which first came to us via Ayaan's journal, was originally to be called Benjamin Cluckoobox. However, we thought it would better represent us if we changed the character's first name to that of one of the young people in the class. Rahmat won the resulting raffle of names, creating the indefatigable explorer *Rahmat Cluckoobox*, but this journal is, of course, the result of the hard work and ingenuity of all of the young people involved.

I must thank each and every member of Sycamore class for being such fun, friendly, clever and imaginative time- (and rhyme) travellers. Special thanks are due to class teacher Mrs Binnie, who welcomed me into the fold so openly, and without whom we would not have been so well prepared for our journey. Thank you, also, Holly at Ministry of Stories and Miss Rader, Head of School at De Beauvoir School, for your superlative support throughout.

I hope you enjoy this journal as much as we enjoyed the journey!

Justin Coe



# My plans are private – if you are not me, go away

13th October 2021

Home – London, England

Dear Diary,

My name is Rahmat Cluckoobox and I am eleven years old. I am keeping this journal as a record of my expedition to explore the Ancient Maya civilisation. You may be asking, "When are you going, Rahmat Cluckoobox?" The answer to that is "TODAY!" Of course, I may die and never return. But if I return, I will be famous!

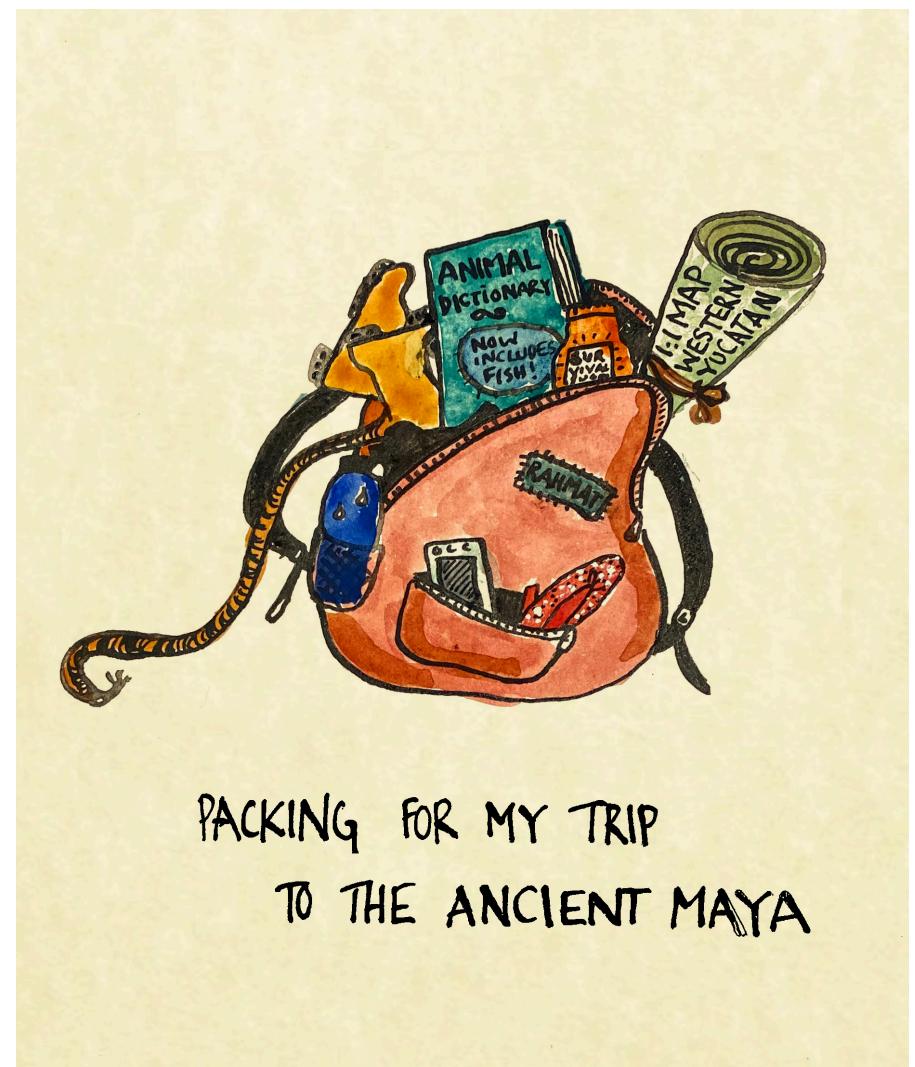
16th October

Home

Due to unforeseen circumstances, I remain in London. But I am packing –

1. A packet of survival sugar
2. A map as big as jungle
3. A water-bottle filled to the BRIM
4. A rope to help me climb out of a sinkhole
5. A phone that can translate hieroglyphics
6. A blanket as dark as night
7. A dictionary that can help me understand animals
8. My trusty Wellington boots
9. A bag that doubles as a tent
10. And Dorothy's heels to get back home

Hey, by the way, DIARY, did I hear you say that you don't believe that I am going on a dangerous quest?! Well, I am. And you are coming too!



18th October

School

I will be leaving for the jungle very soon. In the meantime, I am sitting on a boring blue chair at school. However, I continue to prepare for my adventure with extensive studies...

### What I Know About The Maya

1. The Maya lived in the jungles of Central America (modern day Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador.)
2. The Maya civilisation began approximately 2000 BC and ended about 500 years ago. (Although Maya culture survives through the descendants of the Ancient Maya, who still live in Central America today.)
3. The Maya civilisation was advanced, with expertise in writing, architecture, astronomy, maths, sport, art, farming and many other things.
4. The Maya language was written in hieroglyphics. Maya books were called codices. It wasn't until 1952 when archaeologists and language experts began to unlock the secrets of Maya writing, realising that hieroglyphics sometimes represented a whole word or idea, and sometimes a sound.

5. In the 16th century, Spanish invaders attacked and took over all the Maya city states. They destroyed almost all the Maya codices. Only four have since been discovered in the entire world!
6. The Maya made a chocolate drink from cocoa beans. They loved chocolate and I do too!

20th October

School

Sad to report, I am still sitting on the blue chair, practising my diary recording skills by WRITING WRITING WRITING.

### Ten Things I'm Looking For

1. Chocolate
2. Chocolate
3. Chocolate
4. Chocolate
5. Chocolate
6. Chocolate
7. Chocolate
8. Chocolate
9. Chocolate
10. DUH! Chocolate

And maybe some gold?

21st October

Home

My adventure is now only one day away. I am filled with excitement and anxiety. These are my hopes and fears for my journey...

**Hopes:** Try some Maya Chocolate. See animals in the rainforest. Meet a Maya king or queen. Have a vision and see a Maya god. Cut someone's head off and use their skull as a ball (only joking!).

**Fears:** Being alone and getting lost. My mum and dad finding out where I've gone. Getting kidnapped and robbed. Getting my heart carved out in a sacrifice. Travelling too far in time and getting mixed up in the Spanish invasion (No, thank you, ma'am!). Spiders. Someone reading this!!

22nd October

Home

I've fallen out with my mum. It is the final straw. I wrote her a note. It said:

*Dear Mum,*

*You didn't get me chocolate.  
I'm running away to the Maya people!  
They have cocoa beans. Unlike you.*

22nd October

Later that evening

I also wrote a note to my dad. It said:

*Dear Daddy Cluckoobox,*

*I have become a historian and an explorer. And I am going on a magical journey to the jungle. Nothing much else you need to know....*

*PS If I don't survive, please remember me forever.*

*PPS Could you please look for my socks?*

**22nd October**

...Even later

I didn't want my parents to be worried,  
so I ripped up both those notes and  
wrote this instead...

*I'm going to Tesco to get DE MILK for  
me Fruit Loops. Totally not gonna lose  
my life!*

But I felt bad about lying so in the end  
I wrote...

Dear Mum

*I'm going to see a Maya city. I will  
be leaving soon and by the time you get  
this I'll be gone. I'll be climbing temples  
and the temples will look a bit like this....*



Goodbye!

PS You are boring me. I can't stay here!

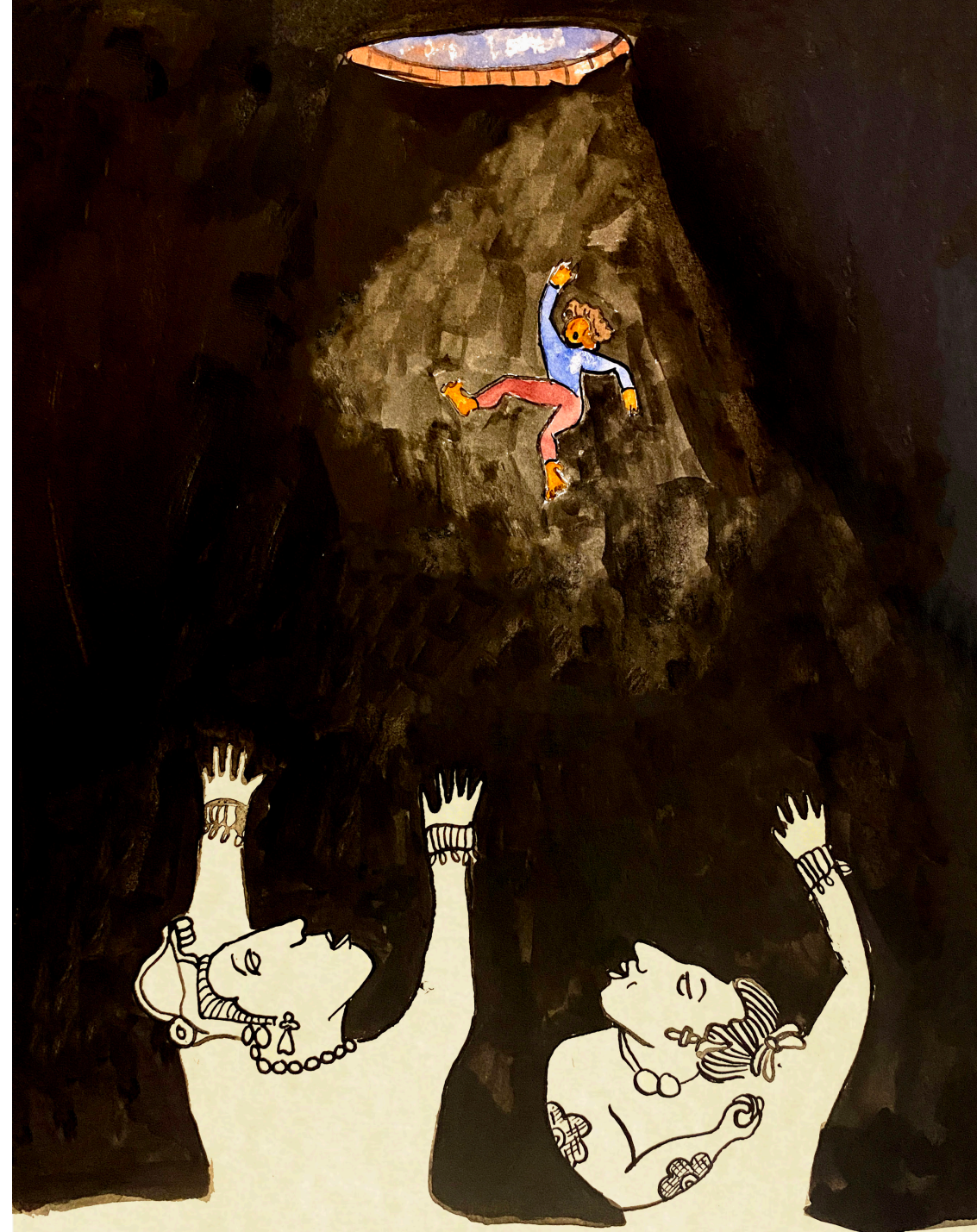
**23rd October**

Midnight

I am leaving. But how?

### 13 Ways to Maya

1. Stretch up to the sky
2. Sit silently
3. Read a book
4. Ask somebody the way
5. Go to your bed and dream
6. Get on board the train of  
your imagination
7. Hail down an (ancient)  
Uber
8. Enter a military time  
machine
9. Get whisked away by a  
time-twister tornado
10. Slide down a rainbow
11. Climb up the steps of a  
towering temple
12. Take the Type 40 TARDIS
13. Fall into a well and into the  
arms of the Gods



FALL INTO A WELL AND INTO THE ARMS OF THE GODS

# Travel Log

## Day 1

Dear Diary,

I am travelling into the past and I don't know where I am.

(Or, for that matter, when I am.)

All I know is...no one can stop me!

Aaah!...A parrot!

## Day 2

### The Jungle

I did it. I've arrived. In a magical emerald green forest. Estimated location – somewhere in Central America.

Estimated time – err, anywhere between 2000 BC and 1500 AD. Now I'm here, I hope I don't get stuck. I'm still mad at my mum for not getting me any chocolate.

## Day 3

### Jungle

Parrots flying above me! Toucans and quetzals and much more! One flew past me and the colours of its feathers made it look like a flying rainbow. And there's monkeys, spider monkeys and howler

monkeys, all swinging through the trees. The temperature is very warm. It is a beautiful paradise.

## Day 10

### Deeper into the Jungle

Hey Diary,

You remember me, right? I've embarked on a dangerous mission to find a Maya Temple. Today I am still in a green mossy leafy jungle. It's very noisy. There are lots of birds chirping and squawking. I think I can hear a monkey going "ah aah ah ooh ah ah." With the help of my dictionary of animals, I am learning a new language!

## Day 12

Diary, did you ask me what rainforest animal I would like to be? You did! Well, I would say a jaguar, who the ancient Maya called the King of the Rainforest. This is because I like to keep my own company, I am very protective and also, I, Rahmat Cluckoobox, think very highly of myself. I have written to my mum.

Dear Mum

*I've arrived at my destination. I've gone far too far now and I must stay here. I've made my...aaah! Another parrot hit me!...I've made my decision. I shall not return for now or forever. Goodbye, Mother.*

*PS – I've changed my mind, these animals CRAZY!*

## Day 13

This is not fun anymore. It's been nothing but days and days of walking. I have broken my bottle and I am thirsty. I need to find a sinkhole to get water. And there is **NOBODY** here. Also – no chocolate! It's hell. I've got to leave quickly. But my Dorothy heels do not work. Help me, please.

At least it isn't raining and I'm still dry.

## Day 14

It's raining. The raindrops are dripping off the leaves and the bats fly over my head when I am trying to sleep at night. It's so uncomfortable. I am thinking of my mum, dad, sister and brother. I should have stayed at home! My journey in the jungle is so lame.

## Day 15

It is still raining. I hope I don't fall in the stinky mud. Everything is gruesome and horrible. At least I've got my wellies!

### Jungle Alphabet

I'm lost in this...

**A** amazing

**B** beautiful

**C** colourful

**D** deadly

**E** eerie

**F** frightening

**G** ghostly

**H** haunted

**I** isolated

**J** jagged

**K** kooky

**L** lonely

**M** mysterious

**N** noisy

**O** ominous

**P** pungent

**Q** queasy

**R** rainy

**S** solemn

**T** tedious

**U** unknown

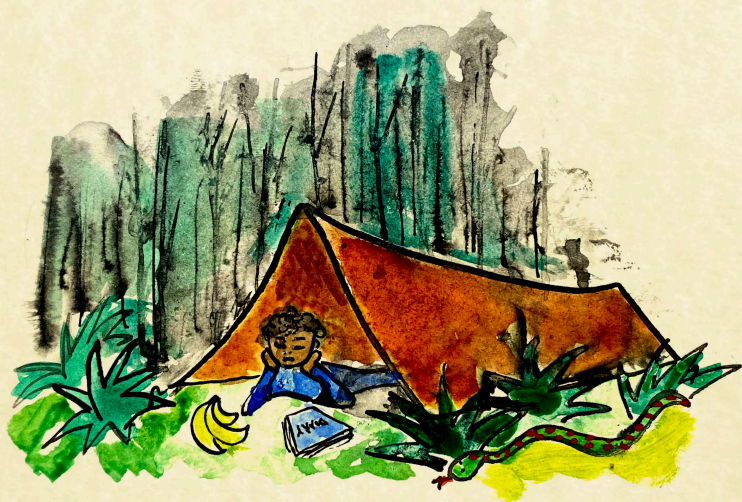
**V** venomous

**W** weird

**eX**traordinary

**Y**ucky

**Z**ig-Zaggy...jungle.



## RAHMAT IN THE RAINY JUNGLE

Mum, my batteries are running low so I am texting you now to say I am still alive and will come back home soon. x Rahmat.

### Day 16

Let's talk about the mud...There's so much slippery mud. And I am really excited to tell you that I have fallen on my bum **TEN TIMES**. Can you imagine? Honestly I thought I'd broken my back!

Also, I am hungry. Luckily, I have found some bananas.

### Day 17

Mud. Mud. Muddy. Mud. Mud.

But the mud is not as bad as the howler monkey that keeps stealing my bright yellow, yummy bananas.

### Day 18

OMG! Diary, did I tell you that I, Rahmat Cluckoobox, am scared of spiders! There are spider webs everywhere. I am constantly walking through them. And today I was bitten by mosquitoes. They are everywhere too!

I want to go home. But I can't Uber here, can I? No. And there is no internet, it's useless!

### Day 19

A snake bit me. I repeat, I have been bitten by a snake.

I had to suck out poison from my legs! I am going to die. **TO DIE!**

### Day 20

Dear Diary,

I am still alive. However, I've just sat in poo for the 86th time today! No wonder I am being followed by swarms of flies. Bity flies too! I am surviving on chicken's eggs (also known as breakfast).

The wind is blowing hard tonight. I feel sad and despairing, like a tree about to collapse.

### Day 21

Last night, a hurricane hit us. I almost got hit by falling trees. Hope? – nope. Nothing. I even miss my boring blue chair at school.

### Day 22

Today is my birthday! I think. Although, officially I have not been born yet. Please, will somebody out there wish me a happy birthday while I am in the jungle?

I have spent the day crawling through bushes and stumbling over thorns. I was poked by a few, too. And the leaves are so, so thick. I wish I had a machete. Then after I cut these branches, I will cut up all the bats, bugs and **SPIDERS** that are bothering me.

I've nearly got killed so many times. I wish I'd never left London. I would have been more safe at home having a nice time watching movies and eating popcorn!

### Day 23

I woke up this morning and there were dead flies on my glasses. I knew then that today was **NOT** going to be good.

True enough, I got bitten to bits by mosquitoes. (I hope I don't get malaria.) Also, a **SPIDER** scared me... and I fell into the river. Now I'm wet and uncomfortable. I suppose I do have to cross the river, anyway, if I am to reach the Maya city. But I fear I will be eaten by a crocodile. Or a spider.

### 19 Ways To Cross The River

1. Build a boat
2. Find a rope and pretend you are Tarzan
3. Swing like a monkey through the vines
4. Cling to the wings of a water dragon
5. Strap a jet pack to your back
6. Count to three and turn into a fish
7. Ride a dolphin
8. Hire a crocodile
9. Have some fun on a magical horse
10. Pray to the sun god until the river evaporates and then walk
11. Count to five and turn into a mermaid

12. Wrap yourself around a Pok-A-Tok ball and find a friend to kick you over
13. Leap on a cheetah
14. Buy a giraffe and use its neck as a ladder
15. Use the no. 40 TARDIS to take you back to a time before the river existed
16. Go to creative mode and build some rocks to step on
17. Count to ten and teleport
18. Perform the infinity jump – Go on...Jump!
19. Or – duh – you could always try to swim across.

As long as you don't mind drowning.

#### Day 24

##### On the Other Side of the River

I crossed the river! But then...ouch! I fell into a piece of random old stone. On closer inspection, I saw that there were Maya gods carved into the rock. I wish my phone hadn't died. I would have taken pictures for sure.

#### Day 25

##### Still in the Jungle!

I have a new companion. Daniel, the spider monkey! I am trying to teach him how to write. This is his handwriting.

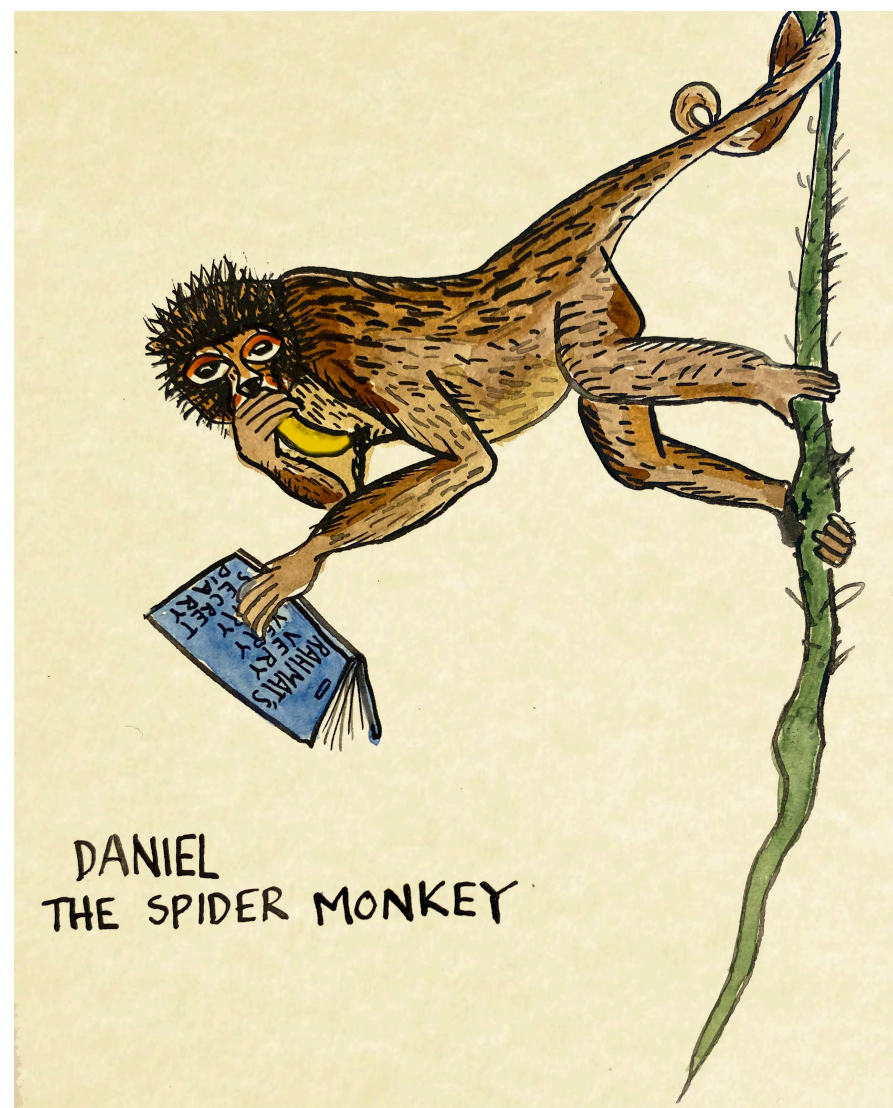


#### Day 30

Today I saw a Maya temple between the trees. I was so excited. But then I realised it was really far away. Daniel is still with me, but his handwriting is getting worse if anything.



The other problem with Daniel is that he keeps stealing my bananas. I am so hungry, I am thinking of killing him for food.





### Day 31

I am in sight of the city! How did I even get here? Well, I presume you have heard of Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz? Follow the yellow brick road, right? WRONG! I followed my monkey Daniel. (His handwriting is still terrible but I have not eaten him. Yet.)



### Day 38

Dear Diary,

It has been a long time since I wrote to you. The reason is that Daniel, my monkey and my only friend, took my diary and ran off. My only consolation is that he eventually returned with the diary which he was happy to swap for my last banana. I can also see that he has used the diary to make some very minor improvements to his handwriting.

We are sleeping in a tree canopy. The biting mosquitoes, crazy bats, the raging sun crisping my skin are all still letting me know I don't belong here. I have run out of sunscreen and I am using Daniel's monkey spit instead.

### Day 40

An extraordinary day!

I woke up on the floor of the forest and I saw a tiny Maya girl in front of me. An actual MAYA human being! She was short and skinny and wearing a woven white dress. I guessed we were about the same age. She smiled at me. I rubbed my head because it was sore. The child pointed at the monkey in the trees and then at the rock beside me. From this information, I gleaned that Daniel must have dropped the rock on my head.

She offered me a drink in a very elaborately decorated drinking vessel. I took it, trusting her smile. It was chocolate but it was bitter tasting. I remembered I had a packet of survival sugar in my bag. I poured the sugar in and offered the girl a drink too. She took it and drank. She smiled even more!

She asked me questions in her language. I didn't fully understand but from her gestures, I took them to mean "What is this sugar?" and "Who was I and where had I come from?"

She told me her name was Ixazaluoh. You say it Ix-aza-lu-o-h. It is the name of the Goddess of water and weaving. She took me to her city.

My new Maya friend seemed to suggest that the forest is dangerous. But I said at least there is no COVID-19 like in London. She had no idea what I was saying.



### Day 41

#### Chichén Itzá!

I am now in a city called Chichén Itzá. I am so happy. Though my journey was painful, I have no regrets. That's not to say that I don't have any complaints and I have written to my brother about those.

Dear Brother

*In Chichén Itzá, the food tastes nothing like Chicken Pizza. Also, I am so annoyed. I don't have any trousers I can wear as my pair got very dirty. I am now wearing a loincloth. Please send me some trousers.*

Love Rahmat

PS Mum, don't miss me!

### Day 42

Ixazaluoh took me to her family's house, on the edge of the city. It is a hut made from mud walls with a thatched roof. Her family were very kind and fed me corn, tortillas made from maize, peppers, tomatoes, avocados and more corn. Now I am stuffed!

With the help of Ixazaluoh, I am learning her language. My new friend is very skilled at weaving and making jewellery. She has woven me a new loin cloth and made me a jade necklace. She has also offered me a tattoo, but I would prefer to walk through a nest of spiders than suffer that torture. To be honest, fashion in Maya is not

the best. It's definitely not like ours. But I guess it is more sophisticated than "I just picked up some leaves and popped it on my body". Just!

### Day 43

I have forgiven Daniel for dropping the rock on my head. He keeps disappearing to the rainforest but he always returns. And he was with me the whole time today as Ixazaluoh took me around her city.

Chichén Itzá is a whole ancient world, alive! It is beautiful. I saw a big pyramid with a religious temple on top, guarded by stone serpents. I saw markets selling food. It is fun speaking a different language and fun, as well, to meet so many new people.

I also saw a Pok-A-Tok court. My dream! All the details and the hieroglyphic symbols on the stone hoop were amazing. I even got to see Maya people playing a match. I know you won't believe it, Diary, but it was almost twice as exciting as watching Arsenal. However, while I was watching the game, all of a sudden a 4kg rubber ball came whizzing over our heads. Daniel nearly got hit. Thank God he is OK!

### Day 44

Ixazaluoh taught me the rules of the Maya sacred game that we know as Pok-A-Tok. They are something like this...

#### Rules of Pok-A-Tok

You	can't
use	your
hands	or
feet.	You
have	to
hit	a
heavy	rubber
ball	with
your	thighs
or	your
hips	and
if	you
get	the
ball	through
the	stone
hoop,	your
team	wins.
But	if
you	lose,
beware!	You
could	be
sacrificed!	

Later Ixazaluoh asked if I wanted to play a game. "No thank you," I said, "I don't want to be sacrificed." But she said, "It's just a friendly game. The winner gets the loser's chocolate." "Ok," I said, "then I'll play." And I was actually really good at it and I won! (Just as well as I didn't have any chocolate to give her.)

I tried to teach her football, but the ball was very hard and when I tried to head it, it nearly knocked me out.

### Day 45

Today, we walked up the steps to the top of the temple. It was exhausting. There are 365 steps – a step for every day in the year. Ixazaluoh said that her people built their temples in pyramids so high to be closer to the gods. At the top of the temple, she told me a super scary story about the Maya – about how they believe that bloodletting, sacrificing animals and sometimes even sacrificing people pleases the gods.

Ixazaluoh said a prayer for the Sun God, whose name is Kinich Ahau. For some reason he has a big nose and is cross-eyed. The prayer said something like – *Kinich Ahau. You have the power to destroy this world. Even if you are shot with arrows, you will never flinch. Kinich Ahau. We can do nothing without you.*

### Day 46

Today, Ixazaluoh taught me the Maya creation story.

“Long ago, long before our time, before the world was a true form, there were two gods. Tepeu, the maker, and Gucamat, the feathered spirit. They had to work together to create the world. They made men and women out of wet clay but unfortunately these people fell apart. The second race of men were made out of wood. But they could not praise the name of God so a flood was

unleashed to destroy them. The few who survived became monkeys.”  
(Daniel did not like this part of the story ONE BIT!) “Eventually men and women were made out of white corn. And these were perfect. So now there is a whole civilisation made out of corn. And the gods said, ‘Now Praise Us!’”

### Day 47

Ixazaluoh has warned me that I am attracting suspicion, with my strange outsider ways, and that I may have to go back to the jungle and hide. She said I must be careful of King Balam VII. He is the supreme warrior and ruler of the city and he is very powerful. I will be careful as I do not want to be sacrificed.

### Day 48 A Cage

I am writing this from inside a cage. I have been captured by King Balam VII’s warriors and I have been summoned to appear at the King’s palace tomorrow morning. I was playing a game of Pok-A-Tok with my new friend when they came for me. I think it is because I look like an outsider and I was trying to kick the Pok-A-Tok ball like it was a football.

Daniel ran off and there is no sign of him.

### Day 49

#### A Stone Palace

I met King Balam VII. I was taken to his palace by his guards. The King sat on a throne, wearing his magnificent headdress of quetzal feathers. Our meeting did not go well....

**King:** I am Balam VII. King of the City State. You are worth nothing but a mumble of my breath! Come any nearer to me and you will be ended!

*I did not come any nearer.*

**King:** Tell me, Outsider, who are you and why are you here?

**Me:** Your Majestic Majesty, I am Rahmat Cluckoobox. I am an explorer and adventurer from the future. And I have come to find out more about your ancient civilisation.

**King:** WHAT! Are you calling us ancient?! Who are you anyway? I don’t like the sound of you, Rahmat Cluckoobox. You are sentenced to a game of Pok-A-Tok. And if you lose, you will be ended by sacrifice.

**Me:** Oh. And if I win... O Mighty One?

**King:** You will also be ended. Goodbye!

### Day 49 continued

#### The Pok-A-Tok Court

*Dear Mother*

*I am writing this quickly as I am about to take to the Pok-A-Tok court to play. The King has arrived at the top of the Temple of the Jaguars to watch the game. And a priest is chanting “Praise be to you, Majestic King, the shining star of our people. Praise be the powerful son of the gods. Praise be your quetzal feathers, dazzling like the beaming sun, sparkling brighter than the moonlight in the dark night. You are spear-sharp and rock-strong. Praise be!”*

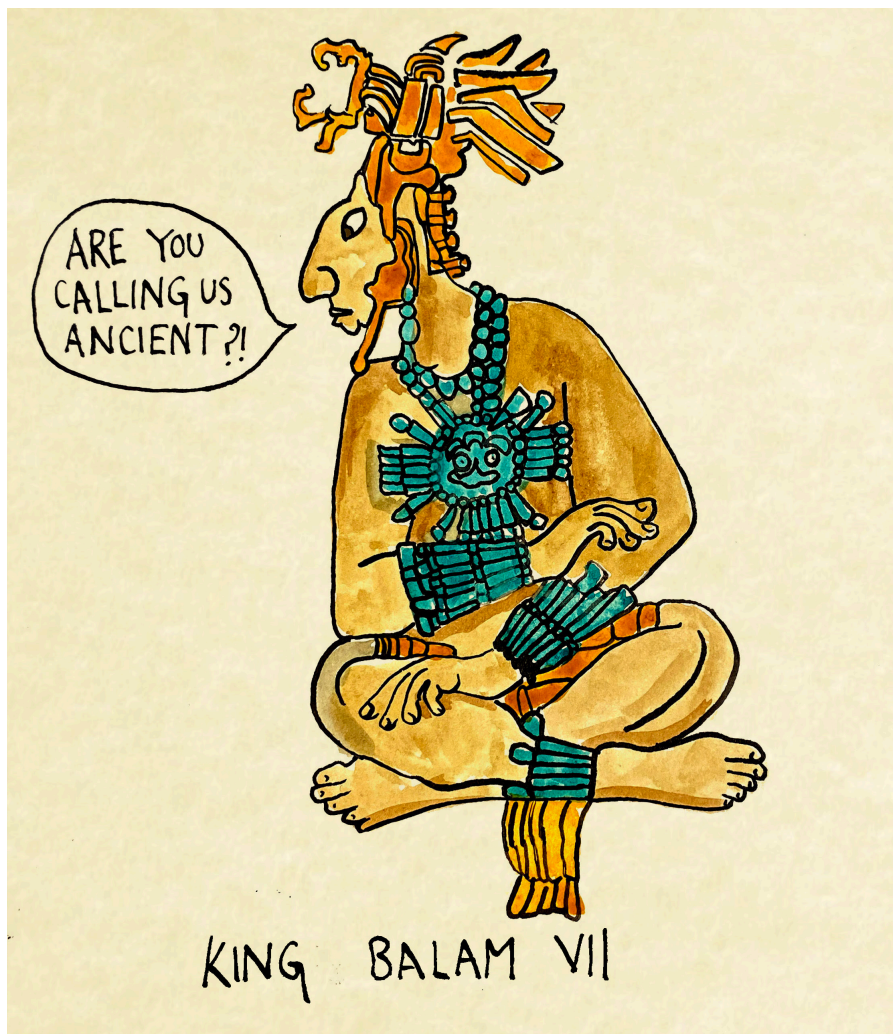
*I am sorry to say, he is not praising me, and I’m afraid that today I will be sacrificed.*

*And now I must hide this letter, with my notebook, under my loincloth as the game is beginning!*

*Your loving...*

#### The Pok-A-Tok Game

It is just me and one other against five tough-looking warriors. All the crowd are shouting and it is difficult to understand what is going on. But when the home side shoots the ball through the stone hoop, I understand very well that I have lost and I will surely be sacrificed.



### Sacrifice

I am taken to the top of the temple.

The guards lay me down on the stone table. A priest, wearing a scary mask, begins to say a prayer. He says I should feel honoured that I am about to be killed!

I am so nervous. I see the colourful flash of a quetzal bird in the sky and I sing to myself, "I wish I was a bird then I could fly. I wish I was a bird so no one could make me die."

The priest holds a sharp knife over my heart.

I cry out, "Help!" But nobody comes.

I close my eyes and imagine lots of blood and lumpy bits everywhere. I am disgusted.

I have been betrayed. Ixazaluoh and Daniel the spider monkey have deserted me. I try to think of all the ways I can escape ...

1. Trade cocoa beans for my life!
2. Write a note saying SAVE ME!
3. Make a wish and hope the gods grant it!
4. Set off a smoke bomb!
5. Knock out the priest and join the future people!
6. Push the priest off the temple!
7. Kill the King!
8. Plunge burning stakes into his heart!
9. Wrestle the spear off of the guards!
10. Push all the guards into boiling acid!
11. Summon the demigods!
12. Unleash the dragons!
13. Hail a time machine!
14. Call up my friends from home!
15. Call Dora or Paw Patrol!
16. Pretend I'm already dead!
17. HIDE!
18. JUMP!
19. RUN!
20. RUN AWAY! AND BATTLE FOR MY LIFE!



### The Escape

It all happens so fast.

Suddenly the air around me fills with smoke. And then somehow through the smoke, I see what looks like a monkey flying through the air and landing on the face of the priest. It is Daniel! The priest begins screaming as Daniel bites him on the nose. Ixazaluoh is tugging at my arm and telling me to hurry. Then we are running, running down the steps. We dive into a doorway that leads into a secret chamber, then a dark underground passage, filled with rats and screaming bats. Eventually we enter the streets and flee out of the city and into the camouflage of the rainforest.

### Day 49

#### The Jungle – Night-time

I'm exhausted. We finally got to safety. Daniel has broken a leg in the escape, but he has made it safely into the jungle with us. He has hurt his hand as well, but luckily it is not the one he writes with. Perhaps, when I finally return to London, he will write to me! I have also broken something, one of my fingers in the Pok-A-Tok game, but I am so happy we got away and I didn't die from Balam VII. However it is not safe here for me and I must leave at dawn tomorrow.

### Day 50

#### Deeper into the Jungle – Dawn


Ixazaluoh, Daniel and I walked further into the forest to say our goodbyes. I am so sad. I fear that Ixazaluoh may be in big trouble. Maybe she fears this too because she gave me a poem she had written on Maya paper, created from the wild fig tree. She said, "Please, Rahmat Cluckoobox, keep this safe and pass it on to your people." I promised her I would. But I don't think she realised the importance of her gift. With only four ancient Maya codices in the world – this was the fifth. The fifth codex! I am going to be rich and famous! Her gift was even better than getting chocolate!

It was even more difficult to say goodbye to my monkey and faithful companion, Daniel. Partly because I was sad to leave him behind and partly because – for some strange reason – he wouldn't let me go until I had kissed him on his bottom five times. It is definitely time for me to leave! And it can only be a matter of hours before King Balam and his warriors find me.

But how to get home?

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# The Last Letter



Dear Mum and Dad,

I got the milk and the fruit loops. I'm coming back! BTW –  
I hope you've found my socks!

Actually, scrap that. I've been on an amazing adventure.  
I travelled back in time and trekked through the rainforest,  
made friends with a real Maya girl and a monkey called Daniel,  
and visited an actual Maya city! And, whoops, I probably  
spread about 20 diseases and invented the iPhone 1,200 years  
too early but at least I survived nearly being sacrificed.

I didn't find any gold. But I did taste Maya chocolate and that's  
gold enough for me!

Sadly, my adventure is now over. I somehow hailed a magic  
school bus and unless the driver turns out to be King Balam  
VII, I will see you very soon!

I love you

Your child, Rahmat Cluckoobox, explorer, historian,  
archaeologist, monkey-tamer, Pok-A-Tok star and chocolatier!

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# The Fifth Codex

*Written by*  
*Maya Friend Ixazaluoh*

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I come from cities of strength and power  
I come from a world of battles and war  
I come from the blood of blood spillers  
I come from a fear of invaders

I come from white corn and wet clay  
And wood from fig and acacia trees  
I come from cocoa trees  
And from big emerald forests

I come from ball players passing balls through stone hoops  
I come from ceremonial masks  
I come from the hardest of tasks  
And I desire to be closer to the Gods

Dear Rahmat Cluckoobox

I am writing to say have a good  
adventure in London. And look at  
this picture i drew of you. It's great!



Also, my handwriting has improved,  
don't you think?

Please come back soon.

Bring more trousers this time.

I miss you.

Daniel.



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The Ministry of Stories champions the writer in every child. Co-founded by author Nick Hornby in 2010, we help young people write brighter futures for themselves through the power of their ideas and imagination. We build confidence, self-respect and communication skills through innovative writing programmes and one-to-one mentoring for children, working in schools and at our dedicated writing centre in east London.

Ministry of Stories is hidden behind our fantastical shop, Hoxton Street Monster Supplies, which has been serving monsters – and the occasional human – since 1818. All proceeds from their delectable offerings – including Werewolf Biscuits, Cubed Earwax and Sugar-Dusted Bogies – go back to support our work with young people aged 8–18.



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