

DIARY OF

Tales of Panic Buying,

A FORMER

Fear and Irrational Behaviour

COVIDIOT

in a Time of Coronavirus

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A Covidiot's Commandments

"Thou Shall Not Be A Covidiot."

"Thou Shall Not Covid Thy Neighbour."

"Thou Shall Stay At Home."

“*COVIDIOT*” [*Noun, informal*]

Definitions and synonyms

Someone who continues to go out and socialise despite being told repeatedly to stay at home;

A person who hoards goods (especially toilet papers, masks and sanitisers), denying them from their neighbours;

A person who does not observe social distancing;

Someone who does not wear a mask when going outside or in contact with the general public;

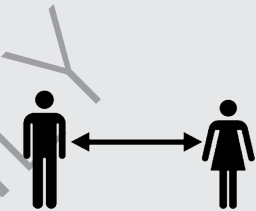
Someone who goes immediately to supermarket in anticipation of the Prime Minister’s address;

Someone who ill-treats or evicts front line medical heroes out of their rental properties, or park on doctors’ and nurses’ parking lots in hospitals.

Someone who touches others without sanitising their hands, or simply, touch or hug others in this day and age.

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On Family Distancing



It's interesting to observe how people's strategies differ with regards to this Coronavirus (or Covid-19 which is its hip name now).

One extreme example is my dear Dad.

He's barricaded himself for the past month or so in his apartment with Mum. This is different from the Swine/Bird Flu episode some years back when he told Mum and I that we were to quarantine ourselves for a few days at Le Meridien Hotel upon landing at Changi Airport before we were allowed to come home to our flat in Singapore (yes, they're still married now).

He rang me some weekends ago with what he thought was one pieces of the worst news ever. The Catholic Church had ceased Masses. Indefinitely.

Side Note: Ever since my divorce he's gone completely religious and attends Mass once a day. Maybe... if I had brought home that jewelled hip-hop Star I became acquainted with at the F1 race and said, "Dad, meet your new son-in-law," he would have given the religious fanatics a run for their money and prayed in church six times a day. Well, people have different coping mechanisms, whatever works. We need God these days more than ever (No pitchforks please! I love everyone).

I feigned the best imitation of a grunt to convey sympathy to his predicament whilst at the same time texting my Korean BFF saying, "We no go church tomorrow." This was followed by five happy emoticons.

Last weekend there was an exodus of cousins fleeing from Jakarta. This was just in time before the lockdown commenced. Dad was as terrified of catching things from them as they were of him (just him, per se, not the virus). I was supposed to keep things hush hush from the parents so he was not supposed to know things, but apparently I underestimated his 'old people' WhatsApp Group.

A capital message came in: "DON'T SEE YOUR COUSINS!! THEY'RE HERE!!!"

The other night he wore a mask when he dropped off my girls in his car. When I knocked on the glass window, he refused to wind down the window. Instead, I got a wave. Never seen him drive faster in my life. For a man who usually drives at 20km/hour, he was going at the speed of a McLaren.

Before shit hit the fan last week globally, I tried to calm Dad down and shared a text message from a dear friend. The message said that more people died from traffic accidents in a year than from the virus. Dad was not amused and my friend said not to tell Dad that this information came from him.

Funny how as I am laughing at him, fancying myself super chill, I am yelling at my kids who just came home from school: "DON'T TOUCH YOUR FACE!!" I rushed forward, spraying Dettol hand sanitiser around them, just narrowly missing their eyes.

Love my Dad. I guess we're not so different after all.

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The Quest for a Hen



“Men! MEN! So many men! Men everywhere! Oooo... I am so stressed! I have never seen these many men! Men took ALL my toilet papers! BLA BLA BLA BLA BLA...” my Mum proclaimed.

It suddenly became apparent to me where my propensity for theatrics came from.

Interestingly my Dad thought her most ravishing in her 20s when she managed to wake the whole village by shouting everywhere that there was a fire at her brother’s kitchen. The villagers doused it off, and she and my Dad got married.

She, along with the horde of panic buyers, descended upon the supermarkets in Singapore when they heard the news that Malaysia has closed its borders.

I replied carelessly, “*Oh... good. Can meet new man there.*”

My Mum responded, “*How can you find a new boyfriend here? I had to wrestle a cabbage out of a man just now! They are not interested in women! They want FOOD! Toilet paper!*”

I lamented why she did not tell me earlier about these men in supermarkets. I did not know supermarkets were the best venue to meet men these days. I could have assisted her. Or them.

She said she went to three supermarkets; from cheap to expensive. She found many, many men there. To her dismay, and mine too (because I did not meet them).

Mum lamented, “*Your father wants to eat Temulawak (an Indonesian root vegetables believed to ward off Covid-19). I brought a lot of money as need to buy a lot. But no Temulawak! Got money also cannot buy! Ahhhh must pray to God may this virus stop soon! Ahhhh I'm so stressed!*”

Earlier in the week my iphone X fell onto my foot at a steep funny angle whilst I was trying high notes on the piano for my new opera. It was a freak accident. It must have been fractured. I've told Mum I cannot walk very well but if she had told me about this men phenomenon, I could have had a miraculous recovery.

I said even more carelessly, “*Mum, I think we need to rear our own chickens, for eggs, from now on. Tell Dad to buy some. I only know where to buy hamsters. Make sure the chickens are female ah, hens.*”

I texted my brother to ask if we needed a cock to make a hen lay egg. I must have slept throughout that part of Biology class. He did not bother replying. Maybe he was asleep during the class too.

I started eyeing my little girls' toy potted plant kits that proclaimed on the boxes, “Grow a strawberry” or “Grow a tomato” thinking maybe this could be an alternative source of food. If my Dad can get the live chicken somehow, and I grow these plants somewhere at the condominium grounds (it's not allowed, FYI), maybe we'd survive the apocalypse. As we did SARS, Donald Trump and so many other atrocities.

Talk to you lovely folks later... Need to go find a mama hen now.

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“Let’s Avoid the Chinese...”



DISCLAIMER: To be read with a GIGANTIC sense of humour.
Chill, Pitchforks!

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A recent after-school conversation I had with my eldest girl,
Sophia, reminded me of an encounter I had in the UK.

TIMELINE: INDEFINITE YEARS AGO.

Once upon a time I went on a road trip to the English countryside
with a kindly British companion.

I had not expected to meet so many people who look like me on
this trip — three whole loud busloads of them.

My companion quickly ushered me away, as if to protect me, to *another corner of the tourist town whispering, "Let's avoid the Chinese..."*

I looked up at him. There was no other direction for a midget like me but to look up. Considering the man was 6 feet 4 inches tall. We must have looked like a pairing of a St Bernard and a Chihuahua. I guess to each his own.

I laughed my head off, pointed at myself, enunciating every word, "But, you have YOUR very own Chinese here."

"Yes. But you know... You're not 'that' kind of Chinese."

I decided not to point out that whatever he was wearing was probably Chinese-made from head to toe, including his camera.

We looked over and at a glance saw 60 selfie-sticks up in the air with a sea of compulsory index and middle fingers ready for photos. For some reason I was convinced they were a healthy combination of all yellows imaginable, i.e. Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, Taiwanese, etc. But, just because we are all yellow doesn't necessarily mean we always get along. The Koreans are in agreement though, when it comes to the Japanese, whilst Taiwan and China are..... well, you know).

Me (resolutely): "They are not Chinese. I'll prove it to you. Let's go over and eavesdrop."

We didn't have anything better to do anyway so I dragged the gentle giant over to the tourist groups. I noticed some of them have started leaving their single use plastic bottles everywhere. Bad. Bad.

Then I heard my mother's Javanese dialect spoken. They were Indonesians.

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TIMELINE: TODAY.

Setting: At the dining table, late afternoon. The kids are doing their homework. Me, eating *kerupuk* (Asian crackers).

Sophia: "Mum, today I played with Isae (a lovely French girl who was her BFF) and a new boy in school. He does not speak English. I used sign language to communicate with him. Nobody played with him. He was alone."

Me (perked up, munching vigorously): "Oh? Who is this new friend? That's really nice of you. I'm so proud of you my Sophiakins. Yes, all of us were once a new kid in school right, Mummy is proud of you.. you've done the right thing... you know when I was a kid too... blah blah blah."

Smug and proud, I tooted my own inner horn of how well I've brought up my little girl. So I just posted a Good Samaritan GoalCast clip on social media about the importance of extending

our hands in friendship at school with everyone, especially to those with special circumstances.

Sophia: "His name is..." (2 syllable Oriental name).

Me (Frozen with mouth agape as the horror set in) : "Oh, did he just arrived? How long ago?"

Sophia: "A few months ago."

Me (barely moving): "Really? Months or weeks? Did he ever go back to his hometown between then and now?"

Sophia (9 years old, looking up at me irritably, muttering flatly):
"He does not have Coronavirus, Mum."

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Shame, shame, for shame Christina.

[Soundtrack: Avenue Q the Musical's "*Everyone's a Little Bit Racist*" blaring in the background].

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