Shifty Caesar's Silent Soiree

By Kristie Park & Bradley Moon

SETTER THOUGHTS: Once upon a time on a random Sunday afternoon during Week 3 of fall quarter, I was in the car letting the radio filter in through one ear and right out the other. All of a sudden, the word "salmonella" caught my attention. I thought to myself, isn't it funny that we don't pronounce the letter "L" in salmon? And that was the exact moment my brain entered puzzle mode. This is how my thought process went following this moment:

1. I want to create a puzzle using words with silent letters. Examples include salmon and debt. (Don't ask why debt was the next word I thought of.)
2. Most silent letters tend to be consonants, so it might be a little difficult to create a word from just silent letters….
3. …ah hah! I can do a Caesar shift!

I conveyed these thoughts to Bradley, who happened to be in the car with me, and we rapidly started brainstorming a list of English words with silent letters. We debated whether the "u" in "ou" words like "joust" should be considered as silent letters, and ultimately decided against to avoid confusion. The first combination of letters and Caesar shift we found spelled out an actual word happened to be the word "GENESIS". We brought this idea to Daniel, and he said it would fit perfectly in his *Bluebeard's Castle* themed puzzle series.

SOLUTION: Each panel of the comic has a word with a silent letter (eg. G**U**ARDS and VI**S**COUNT in panels 1 & 2). Extract all of these letters to get: **USBSGWG**.
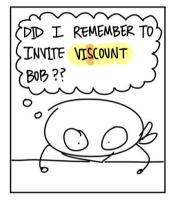
Then, shift the index of the letters by 12 to get a new set of numbers. Index into the alphabet with this new set of numbers to get: **GENESIS**.

"Shifty Caesar" is to clue the puzzler to do a Caesar shift. The soiree is "silent", indicated by the dialogue being in thought bubbles, to clue the puzzler to find the silent letters.
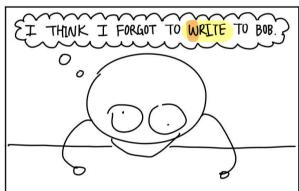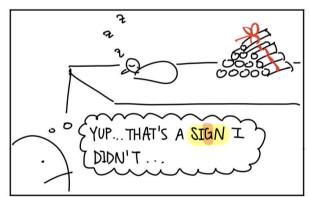
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GENESIS