

## The Positude

It is a new day, a new week, and a new age, 1-day morning at MoreCorp and there is a project on deck that's perfect for Ellipsis, even if it takes us to a charged place, the naming of which is political. So let's not name it and say only that EI reads Hebrew and is called upon to do so when MoreCorp finally gets around to seriously reducing religion, a project much discussed but usually abandoned for putting out fires -- internal investigations about illegal data collection, for example.

Hebrew's like Aramaic now, the religious texts were stuffy centuries back and today's postmod tongue is mostly txlit with judaica emotis, the ancient characters ignored again after their brief revival with the modern state of, well, That Place. MoreCorp policy is not to refer to the place by any name but That Place. Because politics. The policy makes analytics ahead of certain Too Long Don't Reads (TLDRs) virtually impossible. How can you run a search for "That Place" and come up with anything workable? It's as problematic as the place itself has historically been. Similar obstacles present when dealing with the place's language, or one of them, which has an awful lot of texts considering how few now have use for them.

Regardless, MoreCorp has resources for that, machines. They do the language part. Ampersand explains to Ellipsis. "So you'll just help analytics isolate important search terms and then what they cull goes through the usual review. We'll use Tongue."

Tongue is the MoreCorp translation program, available to all on the webs and super handy. It has some drawbacks, however, like it's a program, run on a machine, not a human with a sense of nuance. So Ellipsis, who is herself like a machine in a way, that is to say, fundamentally stupid, offers to assist. "I've got no active cases on the tracker if you need me stay on after analytics. Like to review in Hebrew."

The boss does not respond but not because he's pondering the offer. He's smiling at his device, nothing to do with this discussion most likely. Ellipsis, sadly, is not carrying. Since she's not brain implanted and just a mini authorized to do slot work she's got no tek and is forced to face the boss bare naked. Well, not exactly, she has a notebook, pen, but it might be rude to doodle. Ampersand looks up, blank faced. "Sorry. What?"

"The Dead Sea Scrolls, I can help eliminate them. Cuz I'm not busy." Ellipsis is unsure if this is a sufficient reasoning given the little concern shown for work thus far. "And it's interesting."

"Your kind of thing. Why I thought of you," Ampersand says. "Still, we do have a workflow and you're not worked into review, so no. Stick with Analytics. They're a great team and you'll really be blessing them."

Ellipsis smiles, tries to stop, can't, and Ampersand's infected, grins back. "What?"

"Blessed. It's funny cuz we're reducing religion. Plus. blasphemous, me participating in the elimination of my people's ancient secrets and all."

Ampersand is confused but doesn't want to inquire in case this verges on a race discussion, which he hates and are illegal since there are none, or there is just one, and he's got other syncs to attend. "Ok, kool, so we're square? Ping Analytics and you're in."

"Who in Analytics?"

"Oh? Don't you know? Ping the king."

"What?"

"Mint. We call him the king because he blesses us with his blissful mindfulness."

Ampersand smiles smugly, triumphantly. It's a very reverent comment coming from such an irritable fellow. The boss is often cranky when he means to be a good guy, a problem he's

gone to many relaxation retreats to resolve, but now he's found a workaround for his personal sysglitch, to put it in tek terms, which is always best practice.

When Ampersand feels things have gone awry he rings the bell of someone friendlier to have associated good feels imputed to him. It's a trick for soaking up someone else's sun and using it to look out for number one that tactical managers employ, and he likes applying those new skills he's been building. Satisfied, boss escapes confer-klatch and heads out for an early weigh-in so that he can really enjoy lunch, run, massage, and fight club. The best way to grow focus on managerial duties is with good work life balance and the kind of creative play that made MoreCorp the amazing place it is today. Ampersand is expected to take advantage of the amenities. He won the prize. He's a total hi-5.

Ellipsis, a mere new thumbs-up, is not necessarily obligated to return to her slot and ping the king right away. She could wait all day. But she is expected to account for time, with notes, in quarter hour increments in order to be paid by MidCorp via MoreCorp. (Or is it the opposite? It gets so confusing!).

Mint's not online or in Analytics when she walks over, crosses the threshold, a very visible line demarcated by a wall of snide inside jokes that only this sub-unit is in on. Analytics is the team for the numbers people of the word world, the top of the bottom of the top corp in the world, and they lord it over everyone else in the TLDR Department.

The team uses searches to reduce the number of comps readers will review in reduction productions. They're the hotness here. Only Discovery Operations, or DiscOps, where all the project managers reside, is more obnoxious. At least she's not working with them, Ellipsis tells herself, as she enters Analytics anxiously, noting that her presence has been noted (sudden quick pinging on all sides!). She stops at the nearest slot. It's a lucky day

and she finds herself before the quirky gender progressive wizz kid who is the oddball star of this team of otherwise very staid and conservative regiprofs.

Said wizz is named Lollipop, Lolli for short. It's a common name but Lolli is uncommon in many ways. Her gender bending is not the defining element of her weirdness -- what's amazing about Lolli is her mostly unabashed approach to the absurdity of TLDR and her part in the project. She is mystery, the space between near and zero, the light Ellipsis looks to when it seems impossible she'll ever actually suceed here, proof that MoreCorp has a sense of humor. Someone in Discovery gets the value of a good laugh even if the joke's on us all. Of course, El's already been accused of reading too much into things, and Lolli's suxess could be connects. "Ellipsis, welcome, I hear you'll be blessing us with take-aways on how to eliminate traces of your people's history today. So you must be feeling psyched."

"Makes me wanna deep-dive."

"Thatta girl. Good answer. Now be good bot and go back to slot until king summons. We too await Mint with baited breath and will message instantly using instant messaging capabilities provided by corp for said comms."

"Gotcha. Thanks."

"Later. I'll ping."

It takes a few days for Mint to make himself available for a sync on the scrolls -- fires, investigations, personal emergencies prevail. Ellipsis is in no hurry because mixed feelings.

But the time does come and she does learn that the king seeks search terms from a native speaker because Tongue yielded none, not a single comp in Hebrew amongst all the interwebs well organized works, no reference.

"Just seems unlikely," Mint offers reasonably. Despite his reputation, he's being stingy with the good feels. "So we figured we had to use you even though we prefer not to."

“I see.”

“Because you could compromise the review -- you know, by knowing.”

“I’m sorry?”

“No worries. Just that we need you for some very targeted purposes is all. So just stick to the script and we’ll move this along. My people made a list of terms. Connectors, excluders, joiners, all that, we’ll handle it on our own. Just translate the words.”

“Will do,” Ellipsis says in a peppy tone, all about biz. But back at the slot, she’s stuck. The terms yielded by Tongue lead to no references to the scrolls for a super simple and easily fixed reason, also inextricably linked to the analytics aspect of this assignment that the king wants no input on. She pings Lolli.

El: *emperor naked, kid needs assist*

Lolli: *2 in 5?*

El: *cu*

She does not wait five minutes because she’s been going nowhere fast forever. Rushing down the back stairs, avoided by many, as the building’s built over a toxic waste dump that leaches poisons, she reaches for the cigs that she now carries everywhere. Gone are the days of hiding bad habits in the glovebox. As constant consumers of poisons, Ellipsis and Wolf are indifferent to the potential effects of using the passage and partial to the privacy. They park near the door and meet regularly in the back of the lot for pow-wows.

Only the department’s most daring and secretive use the back stairs, ten Metropolitans who arrived in the last two waves, all accustomed to crap environments, a few locals trying to hide comings and goings, and a guy named Kai, from X-HK. Lolli is an odd hybrid, a Metropolis transplant from several waves ago, survivor of a very unique Lovesport round held

only in Analytics. She's outspoken but careful to hide bad habits, lest they mar the impression that she lacks the zest for long life required in a member of the MoreCorp community.

The ladies meet outside the far corner of the lot, on campus but by a bunch of recycling containers. They are not alone. Angry homesicks are standing in the corner cursing up the kind of storm that just confirms why people here say Metropolitanans are negli and aggressive. At the center of the group is Kai from former Hong Kong, a coder for DiscOps who speaks infrequently but finds his fellow foreigners amusing. He's filming this display for friends at home -- the uploads get tons of likes on the infrawebs because everyone wants to be at MoreCorp and finds the private bitching of all inside fascinating. It's a whole sub-genre of vids called *schadenfreude-lites*, which include all manner of misfortunes of the fortunate, a less nasty genre than celebrity calamities but practically as satisfying.

"What are you thugs up to," Ellipsis interrupts, hoping to stop the show. Despite reassurances from Wolf and Kai, who does not want to give up his kool new underground project, she's concerned they'll get caught in the act or, more likely, on the onlines. It would kill their chances to compete in the Lovesport for a real job. El has even posited that Kai is a plant, a company spy introduced to trip them up, a plot point Wolf finds incredible, like, literally, expressing his wonderment at just how paranoid she is in Silicon.

"Alright kids, no vids. I'm serious," Lolli puts her palm up and shoos. "We need time and space -- two cigs, ten-foot radius to talk shop. It's analytics, hush-hush, off you go!" The disgruntled depart. "So what's up? Sunny Bono rained on your parade?"

"Is that normal," Ellipsis asks.

"Nothing's normal, especially not here. But yes, it is. Mint is not so fresh."

"Ampersand says he's nice."

"Ampersand's an ass."

“He’s got a great name,” El protests halfheartedly on behalf of her boss.

“You would think that,” Lolli counters. “Just because he’s punctuation too.”

“He’s not. It’s a common error.” Ellipsis explains. “Ampersand’s a logogram, not punctuation, and we don’t share any characteristics. He’s the chief, The Big And, and I’m an omission with only silence to express. That’s actually why I summoned you.”

“For identity crisis? Or because logograms v. punctuation?”

“Because your boss,” Ellipsis explains -- keeping Lolli on track is even harder than keeping an average person focused. She’s smart and tied to multiple devices so she’s fast but easily distracted. “I’m not supposed to help you guys with the searches, like even mention how the words work together, which means, well, they still won’t work.”

“Welcome to MoreCorp.”

“No kidding. But the solution’s super simple. So I’ll just tell you. Then you get clever and I’ve helped and everything’s awesome.”

“I like how you think,” Lolli says, tapping a txt, smoking, and planning their next move. “This is what we do. Send me the search terms with connectors, like how you’d search if Mint didn’t pretend we have a specialty, but before forwarding to him.”

“Yeah? And?”

“And I’ll wander over and make strategic suggestions in the nick of time!” Lolli finally looks up from her txting to see Ellipsis totally depressed. “What? No good?”

“No. It’s good.” El tries to explain the language issue -- dead sea is salt sea in Hebrew is all. But Lolli’s busy. Religious reduction always gets shafted for fires, a blessing in some senses.

That’s how you have to look at things, in terms of blessings and silver linings. Before heading back up to her slot to deliver the translation, Ellipsis stops in the bathroom, where the

stalls display the latest installment of *The Positude*, a nowpow circulation, info on the loo -- it is but one of many monthlies created to keep the MoreCorp community focused, prioritizing, on track, at all times and in all places.

This month's edition instructs looking at the metaphorical silver linings in the clouds that threaten rain. It's a weird message for a Silicon bathroom, where the water in the sinks is suspected to be clarified, recycled piss, and rain is the only thing people pray for more than greenies. But a point is being made and Ellipsis wants to get it, to see it MoreCorp's way if that's what it takes. So she accepts, as *The Positude* insists, that every cloud has a silver lining. This is tek -- if not silver, what?