

Lavender Logos

Written by
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Chapter (1) The sunlight kissed the woman's eyes awake one Sunday afternoon. On Sundays, she would usually start to feel jittery thinking about all the tasks she had to do the following week at the factory near her house. She was not the only person who would usually feel this way in the whole town of Deniswood. In fact, behind all the windows above, below and to either side of the woman's own window, were many more men and women with the same sickness. The patients had very stubborn coughs that made their chest feel tight.

It was only last night when the nurse saw the woman's pale face, which was cold as stone. To the nurse's surprise, the woman's face returned to a healthy glow that Sunday morning. The woman gazed at the wall in front of her for a couple of minutes. Just before she fell into deep sleep, the corners of her mouth lifted up a little. The woman was thinking about the special gift that came around every Saturday around noon. "Finally, a bit of warmth in the hospital," the nurse uttered in relief as she raised the leaf over the window to let the light in.

Despite the murky mist that covered the skies of Deniswood, Deniswood was a beautiful town with breathtaking views. No matter how many factories were built, the plants were stubborn and grew on the walls, which made Deniswood rich with a hundred thousand different species of plants! The only way people knew how to help the sick in Deniswood was if you went to study about the wonderful world of nature at Deniswood Academy.

At Deniswood Academy, the children learned about different plants that could be used as herbs to soothe the unwell. In the front row of the class was Lavender Logos who Ms. Tulip saw as the brightest of them all. "Look at Lavender's Bookledge!" Ms Tulip beamed. "She learns so quickly and she knows so much about the natural world". "Everyone, aim to be like Lavender," Ms Tulip smiled brightly as she flipped through Lavender's nine hundred and ninety nine pages with the snap of her finger. The Bookledge was no ordinary book. It had the power to carry all the knowledge learned from one's lifetime from birth. Most of the children drooped their shoulders as they looked at Lavender's Bookledge with envy. Could all the children become like Lavender Logos?

Chapter (2) We would have to see about that. Most of the children's Bookledges hardly had any notes and there were a lot of missing sections of information learned in class. Some children had a continuous series of missing pages. Claudius Kindt was one of the children with the most pages missing. He had more than fifty empty pages and the Year Five class was already half-way in the school year. Had Claudius not paid attention in class at all?

One Friday afternoon, Lavender Logos walked up to Claudius Kindt with a big stride. Ms. Tulip had paired the children up for a class project and asked if Lavender could work with someone else aside from Mai, a girl who Lavender stuck by every lesson since Year One. Lavender was a flexible girl and had no problems being paired up with Claudius.

"It's our first time working together so let's have fun!" Lavender said as she placed her fist mid air in front of Claudius. Claudius weakly lifted his fist to tap Lavender's fist. It was more of a fist slump than a fist thump. Lavender's Bookledge leaned in closely towards Lavender as she clicked her fingers to turn to a blank new page. "Claudius...how come you have so many missing pages in your Bookledge?" Lavender asked out of curiosity. Claudius stared at the empty test tubes and then at the crushed Marshmallow Root. "I-I'm not sure...I try my best to fill them in but it's like my mind wants to fill it in with something else," he said softly. Lavender wasn't sure why you would fill the Bookledge with anything else but an incredible amount of information about herbs, plants and potions. Lavender was determined to help Claudius out.

"How about I'll help you fill in some pages so that Ms Tulip doesn't blow off at the fact that your Bookledge has been empty so far this year?" Lavender suggested with great enthusiasm. "Oh really...that is really nice of you, I wouldn't mind that as long as you don't mind," Claudius replied. His face lit up when Lavender shot him a great smile back. Lavender pointed towards the chiming wall clock. "I'll see you at one o'clock under the Denis Tree in the school gardens at lunch tomorrow then," she said hurriedly. While Lavender tried to take out her long hair that was tucked underneath the straps of her satchel, she headed towards Mai with her lunchbox in her hands. Claudius stayed at his seat as he rubbed his fist on his chest harder and harder with discomfort.

Chapter (3) "Don't you think it's odd that Claudius' Bookledge is mostly empty even though he tries to remember what we learned?" Lavender suddenly blurted out as she had a mouthful of her dimsum in her mouth. "I've never noticed but maybe Claudius just doesn't listen in class so it does weird things," Mai insisted. At the end of the hallway, the girls spotted a man with a bushy moustache hovering above his lips. He walked into the principal's office.

"Lavender and Mai, what did I say about eating in the hallways?" Mr Trofish sighed. The girls quickly apologised and put their lids back on their lunchboxes. "No problem Sir, we will keep the hallway clean," Lavender said as she saluted Mr Trofish with a heavy nod. Mr Trofish had a

whistle around his neck, which meant that he had to quickly make his way to supervise the children at the Courtyard for lunch break. When Mr Trofish was out of sight, the girls got closer to the principal's door that was open ajar. They were about to pass the door until they overheard the man speaking with a deep, hollow voice.

"Mr Shaan, you must teach them what they should know and let everything dissolve," the man urged. Blup Blup. From the small opening of the door, Lavender and Mai noticed Mr Shaan's worried face. Blup Blup. "I'm trying my best but it keeps boiling over the pot!" Mr Shaan complained. Blup Blup. "It has been twelve years that we've been doing this and we can't keep building a bigger pot!" Mr Shaan panicked. A gush of cool wind blew the office door mid-way. Behind Mr Shaan's table was another wooden door wide open. Lavender and Mai gulped as they watched hundreds and hundreds of black bubbles emerge from the tip of a gigantic black pot. Blup blup.

Chapter (5) That Thursday afternoon was a perfect time to be outside, studying more of nature's unknown plants but Lavender was spending her time elsewhere, away from the sunlight. Lavender's pen flipped back and forth as she stared at her brother spell out the names of different flowers that can be used as herbs from their garden. Lavender couldn't stop thinking about what she saw during her lunch break. Her thoughts were interrupted by Clover, who turned to Lavender with slouched shoulders. "Can we finish homework help early today?" Clover uttered. Lavender noticed Clover's Bookledge shaking in a strange manner. "You tried your best today, Clover," Lavender reassured Clover as she continued to stare at Clover's Bookledge quiver slightly from left to right.

Since Clover had gone to rest on his bed, Lavender decided it was a perfect time to test out her knowledge on the marshmallow root. Ms Tulip had shown the class how to use it for the class project but she had only tried it once with Claudius. The recipe on Lavender's Bookledge was still faint, which meant there was more practice to be done. If Lavender could get the recipe right, she could make her own Marshmallow Remedy and share it with her neighbours.

Although the marshmallow root remedy helped the workers from the factories soothe their throats, it was not a cure. Lavender hoped that one day, she could be the one to cure everyone's sickness. As she shredded the Marshmallow Root, she weighed them where all mother's tools were. Mother's tools were of a special kind as they were used long ago by her Chinese ancestors who used traditional ways to brew herbal medicine. Lavender was still unsure about how to use the traditional tools so she stuck to the equipment that she was familiar with from class. She made sure the shredded root weighed exactly fourteen grams before putting them in the paper

boxes that Clover had folded earlier. By the time she filled up six paper boxes, the ink on her Bookledge became darker. The Bookledge was certainly impressed by her muscle memory.

Clover was always superb at paperfolding. Lavender remembered a time when Clover used to make all kinds of paperfolding. He made cranes, dragons and the unthinkable. All kinds of pieces that Lavender had never seen before. Lavender can't recall the time when he stopped making all kinds of paper craft. Now, all he made were paper boxes to store mother's herbs and envelopes for father's letters to go in. These paper boxes were labelled neatly with father's neat cursive writing on top of the window sill. Lavender let out a big yawn as she listened to the town noise quieten down. Her garden began to come to life as all the wondrous little creatures began their work under the plum coloured sky.

Chapter (6) The clouds hovered over the Denis tree the next day, which made the grass darker in colour than usual. Sitting below the tree were Claudius and Lavender, who had just finished engulfing some of the pork and chive buns that Lavender's mum had handmade the night before. She regretted that she had not brought Dad's leftover meatballs as her stomach churned for a little more food. "Let's begin revising the root plants shall we?" Lavender suggested to distract herself from hunger. Her fingers pointed to a root plant called Ginseng in the thick textbook.

After about twenty minutes, Lavender's Bookledge sprung open in front of her. Without needing a pen, she closed her eyes and words started emerging onto the page with great concentration. Claudius closely watched and followed after her. Nothing came out. "It's okay, you can try again," she encouraged. Instead of words, a detailed beautiful drawing of what looked like the bottom part of a ginseng began to appear in Claudius' book. It was so detailed you could see the most fibrous parts of the root plant. The drawing did not stay long on Claudius' Bookledge. The watercolour paint began to dissolve and the black outlines quickly dissolved into a smudgy black puddle as it drifted into the air. All that was left was the heading, 'Ginseng Root' on the top of the page. Claudius rubbed his hand against his chest again.

"I don't feel too well," Claudius croaked. "I feel like I'm being pulled somewhere." Claudius clenched his hands tightly against his chest and dashed towards the entrance of the Potions block next to the courtyard. Lavender quickly packed their belongings into their satchels and chased after Claudius. She had no clue what had made Claudius feel that way but she was determined to help him out.

Chapter (7) From the corner of Lavender's eye, Lavender saw Claudius dart into Mr Shaan's office. "If Claudius had been hurt, wouldn't he go to the First Aid Room?" Lavender wondered. Lavender waited for Mr Shaan's voice to echo into the hallways but no grumpy voice could be heard. Lavender tightened the satchels around her shoulders and she set foot inside Mr Shaan's room.

The wooden door that she saw earlier welcomed her with a gush of wind. Whatever was in that room must be important to the man from the Upperhouse of Deniswood. She saw the same gigantic black pot with bubbles floating into the air. Only this time, Claudius was hovering above it on a wooden plank. Lavender ran her hands through her hair in shock. Lavender, who was nervous about Claudius falling into the black pot, raced towards the first steps of the stone stairs that led up to the wooden plank above the black pot. He looked like he could fall in any second with his face so pale. "Claudius, hang on!" Lavender cried out. "We can find a way to help with whatever you're feeling!" she called out.

Midway the stone steps, Lavender stopped in her tracks. She was just more than halfway the steps, which was enough for her to see Claudius' reflection in the well of black ink. She expected the surface of the liquid to be pitch black but the liquid was bubbling up fragments of an image. As the ripples on the water expanded, a younger Claudius appeared on the surface.

Chapter (8) "What a waste of your time!" someone shouted. There was a young boy saying something but his voice sounded muffled. "Whose voice was that?" Lavender thought. She looked more closely at the reflection shown in the pot. A pencil holder was shown rolling on the ground around a pair of shoes as big as her own father's. A drawing of Claudius and his parents playing outside was ripped into pieces on the wooden table. Claudius' mother staggered into the room and grabbed the man's arm. The man had the same brown eyes and curly hair as Claudius.

"Don't worry about me, I'm okay so I don't need Claudius to learn how to cure me," she pleaded. "If Claudius becomes a herbalist like all the other children are trying to become, he will know how to make you feel better so please get rid of anything that doesn't help him," he begged. His mother looked at Claudius apologetically with guilt written all over her face.

Boxes and boxes of paint brushes, palettes and different kinds of paint were carried out and dumped into bins as big as barrels. The colourful room that once was a place for Claudius to explore his own world of imagination soon became as lifeless as Claudius' spirit. It looked like the memory was about to come to an end but the bubbles continued to rise until Claudius was no longer at home nor did he remain as small as he was.

Claudius was now in a room that was big enough to fit a single sized bed. There were buckets of paint on the floor. If Lavender hadn't seen the nurse beside the bed, she would have thought it was another child's room. What struck Lavender were the walls in the hospital room. The walls were painted over with ten of the most common herbal plants in Deniswood and Claudius was reciting the names with his mother. Lavender saw marshmallow roots, sage, licorice root, ginger roots decorated onto the wall. His mother didn't look like a sick patient as she laid beside Claudius.

"Claudius, I'm glad you're a great artist like your Dad," mother said gently as she brushed his hair. Lavender wouldn't have guessed that Claudius' father used to be an artist himself. "You don't want me to become a herbalist to make you feel better?" Claudius asked with surprise. "The world doesn't heal itself in a world with only doctors and herbalists my dear," she promised with a soothing voice. "We need the bakers to transform the bitter plants that herbalists find into sweet yet healthy treats... and we need the artists to help teachers make information simple. They all work together, teach one another to heal the world." Claudius glanced at his wall art once more and mother's rhythmic pat on Claudius' shoulder made him feel at peace once again.

The memory then dissolved slowly back to pure black ink. The black ink in the pot began boiling more vigorously than before. Lavender did not think this was not a good sign for Claudius. Before Lavender could let Claudius dive straight into the pot of ink, she threw a rope and beckoned him to jump on the rope. Instead of grabbing the rope, Lavender observed Claudius do the unexpected with his Bookledge. Claudius dropped his Bookledge into the well of ink and it submerged itself into the thick liquid!

After a moment of stillness in the liquid, his Bookledge rose up from the pot. It opened itself up with a golden cloud surrounding its pages. The same picture that he drew of himself and his parents appeared on the pages. More and more drawings soon became visible as the pages flicked rapidly in his Bookledge. His pages were filled with drawings of plants used in many ways from curing fevers to even baking healthy treats! She had never seen a Bookledge do anything like that before. Although she knew Claudius would know more than his Bookledge showed, she did not know that Claudius knew so much about the natural world.

Amidst the fascinating sight of the Bookledge, Lavender heard loud murmurs coming from the window. It was all the other quiet children in her class. When she noticed the children's desperate faces, Lavender realised what had been happening to all the children of Deniswood. "Of course," she said as she placed her hand on her forehead.

Chapter (9) Lavender helped the children come through the window and the children started to line up along the wooden plank. Lavender knew she could be severely punished by Mr Shaan for helping the children. If she was punished, she may have to leave Deniswood Academy and everything she had learned in her Bookledge would be a waste if she could no longer become a herbalist. Yet, Lavender stood on Mr Shaan chair and spoke with a loud voice. “I promise, when your bookledge is filled with all that you’ve ever known, you should definitely share your gifts,” she said confidently. The children watched Lavender speak with admiration.

Mr Shaan entered just in time to hear Lavender’s speech and was baffled to see the sight of the children lined up on the window sill. “Whatever you do, don’t drop your Bookledges in!” he shouted. With immense panic, he ran up the steps to grab Claudius but Claudius tripped over the handle and the rope had already begun to unravel too quickly for anyone to stop it. All the ink had already started pouring out from the pot, creating a massive flood. The room turned into an ocean of black ink within seconds. Claudius and Mr Shaan had sunk in the flood of black ink! Lavender’s eyes darted towards every corner of the room as she searched for a way to scoop Claudius and Mr Shaan up from the big wave of black ink.

On the top of a shelf, Lavender spotted a piece of cardboard bigger than the size of the plant group posters on the walls of Ms. Tulip’s classroom. Without hesitation, Lavender jumped onto the top of the shelf and pulled the large piece of cardboard towards her. “Thank goodness for Clover,” whispered underneath her breath. She began folding. She had to be fast as Mr Shaan and Claudius grew smaller in size while they drifted into the distance.

Chapter (10)

It didn't take long before Lavender transformed the large sheet of cardboard. Lavender had made a boat out of a big piece of cardboard. Lavender knew the cardboard was going to soak and it had a high chance of breaking apart but Lavender was confident that the cardboard would hold up until Claudius and Mr Shaan could land somewhere safe. Lavender laid the box on the wooden plank that she had raised up slightly. "Here goes nothing," she muttered under her breath before she dived straight in the massive flood of black ink.

As she paddled on her handmade boat, she was shocked that the children had begun swimming in the flood. "I'm feeling myself again!" Bruno shouted from a distance. His pages start filling up with all different kinds of sweets he knew how to bake. He even had recipes that included healthy plants that could be infused in his sweets! Imagine sweets that could soothe and heal you! Lilian's book had a series of good jokes that were funny enough to get the adults laughing even after a challenging day at work. While Lavender would have loved to stick around and watch all the children's Bookledges change into something magical, Lavender reminded herself to focus on her most important task, which was to rescue Mr Shaan and Claudius, drifting outside the office.

It was a fortunate sign when Lavender saw Mr Shaan and Claudius trapped between two bookshelves. On the other hand, Mr Shaan was still crying for help as he thought that the two bookshelves would squish them both. He didn't realise that this helped Lavender to stall the perfect amount of time for her to float towards them. When she got closer, Claudius pulled a nearby floating ladder towards him and shifted it to Lavender's direction. He let Mr Shaan get on the ladder and to Lavender's relief, the flood of ink began to subside as all the children's Bookledges came back to life.

Chapter (11)

It took a while for Mr Shaan to awake from his daze. Claudius let his legs dangle as he sat next to Mr Shaan. He wanted to make sure that Mr Shaan wouldn't faint from what he had just witnessed. When Mr Shaan stood up, he wiped his forehead with his handkerchief. Mr Trofish scurried towards them while panting.

"I can't believe it Mr Shaan, the children haven't felt so alive in so long," Mr Trofish chirped. Mr Trofish had been scrubbing the stained floors with heavy sponges and buckets of water so his

hands were covered with black marks. “We do still need a budding artist to recreate all the faded diagrams of the most powerful healing plants in my class,” Ms Tulip uttered as she admired Claudius’ Bookledge from afar. It felt as though there was a real lightbulb floating above her head. Mr Shaan closed his eyes as he stood against the wall with his hands on his hips. He was thinking about how he could explain all of this to the Upperhouse of Deniswood.

Mr Trofish turned to Lavender. “Perhaps, we must learn to love what we enjoy doing most to learn other things to help others no matter how much we try to convince ourselves otherwise,” Mr Trofish said after a moment of reflection. “It is not such a selfish thing to do but a wise thing to do,”. Lavender stood up quietly and remembered that she had somewhere important to be. “Sorry Mr Trofish, I would love to stick around to help but I have to run somewhere quickly,” she said hurriedly. “Wait-” Claudius called out. He scurried towards Lavender and he opened up his Bookledge and flipped to a special page.

It was a drawing of the Ginseng root and three paragraphs of writing about the root plant! “Thank you for not doing this just for me but for all the children,” he said with a gentle voice. Lavender now understood why Claudius’ energy had been lower than usual in the last week. “It was tough everytime I left my mother’s hospital room but I held it in because I knew it would make her happy,” he said earnestly. “You are so brave for doing that,” she replied as she placed one hand on his shoulder. Lavender gave Claudius a tight hug and whispered something into Claudius’ ear. “Can’t wait,” Claudius beamed as he reminded himself what day it was tomorrow.

Chapter (12)

Lavender turned the door knob swiftly and rushed towards her brother’s room. Clover was sitting at his table and he had spelt out all the flowers Lavender had taught him over the last week. Lavender felt her eyes well up. Lavender couldn’t see Clover in the sea of black ink from before but she knew he was there when she looked at his face. His face had life in it and instead of it sinking into the pages in front of him, he was looking up. “Sorry, I ran home because I was scared but I shouldn’t because I feel free now,” Clover laughed. His Bookledge was glowing right next to him. “No, don’t be sorry, you’re such a smart boy but I never took time to let you realise that,” Lavender smiled.

That evening, the two sat together folding new pieces of origami that Lavender had never seen before. It felt exciting learning something entirely new and it didn’t have to be just about potions, herbs and plants. “Tomorrow is Saturday and it’s time to give someone a gift,” she grinned at her brother. Lavender’s Bookledge opened up with step by step instructions on how to fold a paper box.