

# The Leacock Medal for Humour

Canada's Award for Literary Humour

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## **As An Immigrant, Do I Have the Right to Write the Title?**

by

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I won the lottery. Fate smiled upon me and gifted me the winning ticket of the illustrious "Work Twice as Hard, Get Half as Much" lottery. Oh, the irony! Moving to a different country was meant to be my grand leap toward a brighter future, full of endless possibilities. Yet, here I stand, scratching my head confused, wondering how on earth this adventure has taken such a detour into the realm of complete and utter absurdity. It's as if destiny said, "Congratulations! Now, let's see how we can turn this joyous occasion into a comedy of errors!"

Let's rewind the story, shall we?

My family and I embarked on a journey to "Maple Leaf Nation" back in the summer of 2019, filled with nothing but excitement for this thrilling new chapter. I was bouncing with anticipation, ready to dive headfirst into living my extraordinary "American Dream" – except, oops, I meant my "Canadian Dream." Hey, close enough, right? I was so ready to make my dreams come true and be able to attend veterinary school here in Canada. Little did we know that our adventure would lead us to a country where apologies are doled out more generously than free samples at Costco - *and let's be honest it is easier to cross the border than get into Costco*. It did not take long for us to realize that to fully experience the "Canadian Dream" we would have to recalibrate our aspirations and expectations - *good thing is I have a black belt in the sport of lowering my expectations, thanks to men.*

Anyway, moving on...

After settling into our new Canadian life, everything appeared to be going smoothly. I bravely stepped into the world of grade nine, prepared to conquer any challenge that came my way. Luckily, I encountered a truly wonderful person named Emily, and she quickly became my best friend. Now, I won't sugarcoat it - Emily has a knack for turning even the simplest tasks into comedic catastrophes. But hey, who needs a rocket scientist as a best friend when you can have a walking, talking embodiment of standup comedy, right? Not only did Emily stand by my side during those moments when my Italian accent became the target of jokes, but she also became my tour guide to all Canadian things as if she had a Ph.D. in "Being Canadian 101". She assisted

me in navigating through the intricate maze of Canadian culture, helping me find my direction in this foreign environment. *To be honest, I owe her big time - like, "giving her my last Timbit" level of gratitude.*

However, the so-called 'calm before the storm' turned out to be as short-lived as a celebrity marriage. Just when I had started to adjust to my new surroundings, Covid crashed the party like an uninvited guest. Suddenly, everything I had grown accustomed to was snatched away, and a mandatory break was imposed on all of us. And oh boy, that break didn't exactly follow the script. It morphed into a never-ending six months of isolation from society. It was like being trapped in a real-life sequel to "Groundhog Day". You know, that movie where the same day keeps repeating itself? Yeah, it felt oddly similar. To make matters worse, our immigration process plummeted like a sinking stone. The rules became stricter and the government was less welcoming to immigrants than a cat to a bubble bath. We went from hopeful to hopeless in record time. As if that wasn't enough, money started playing hide-and-seek with us. Both my parents hit the brakes on work due to the dangers of Covid and our bank account was not so thrilled about it. The question "Did we make the right choice?" haunted my parents day and night. I vividly recall the moment my dad sat me down and dropped the news that we might have to pack our bags and bid "arrivederci" to our dreams and move back to Italy. I think that was the moment when I started to think that the only useful thing I had learnt in math class was the formula " $y = mx + b$ " so I could calculate the slope at which my life was going downhill.

Soon after, grade 11 began and if the world couldn't get any better, I decided to step out of my cozy comfort zone and surround myself with more people. Because, you know, who needs personal space and solitude anyway? But guess what? The more, the merrier turned out to be the biggest lie since the invention of pineapple on pizza - *truly makes my Italian heart ache*. It didn't take long for me to discover that fewer friends were way better. Why, you ask? There's nothing like a smaller circle to minimize the fakeness and lies floating around. I swear, if teenagers were Olympic athletes, lying would be a gold-medal event by the age of 16. Despite the struggles, I managed to improve my academic path, one step at a time. You see, my ultimate mission was to secure a place in a veterinary program. Yes, you heard that right - I'm passionate about studying animals. *Not just the ones in my classes, mind you, but the real ones out there in the wild.*

Moving on...

Summer swooped in like a sugar rush, and before I knew it, my mind was consumed by universities. Because, of course, life can never be simple for me. It turns out, if my parents didn't get their permanent residence before I enrolled, I'd be stuck paying those delightful international student fees. *And let me be clear, my bank account and the word "rich" have yet to be on speaking terms.* So, I embarked on an adventure of research, diving deep into the abyss of university fee policies. Because it totally makes sense that I should pay extra when my hardworking parents have been dutifully contributing their taxes for years. Thankfully, I uncovered a ray of hope that revealed I was eligible for domestic fees. Phew! With that sorted, I finally felt confident that I could pursue my dream program, as long as I put in the effort - *and trust me not even calculus could stop me.* Sadly, the summer before twelfth grade whisked away and it felt as if time had decided to press the "fast-forward" button. Just like that, we found ourselves starting to get ready for our high school finale.

Let's fast forward to December when I found myself knee-deep in university applications, armed with hope and a ridiculous amount of bubble tea. Just a few days later, the universe handed me a golden ticket - a letter of acceptance into my dream program! Life was feeling pretty darn good, except for that annoying immigration status poking at the back of my mind. Nevertheless, I was determined to make the most of my last year of high school, obstacles be damned! I was on a mission to squeeze every last drop of joy from our soon-ending time together. Mind you, it was nothing like *High School Musical* but quite the opposite - *so thank you for lying to me Disney!* I had to buckle down and start facing the challenges of prom and graduation, accepting the bittersweet reality that my teenage years were soon coming to a stop. It was no longer just about having a blast; I had to start saving up for the university dreams that we wished for. That meant studying like maniacs and chasing scholarships with the speed and determination of a Formula 1 driver.

Fortunately, the universe had a plan in store for me. It blessed me with incredible friends and even a special someone who makes my inner child do a happy dance that would put Olympian gymnasts to shame. My poor boyfriend and best friends have lived through endless rants about the immigration system and the absurd pressures of school. And to express my gratitude for their unwavering support, I've taken it upon myself to feed them daily. Yes, you heard that right! I've become their personal chef, dishing out gratitude in the form of delicious meals. *Who needs a therapist when you have a full stomach, am I right? I know I wouldn't.* I know you're probably dying to hear all the juicy details about prom and graduation but guess what? There's still one last month remaining in this saga. Stay tuned and find out how this ends! Just remember to keep a good sense of humour and a Timbit handy, because in this comedy of mine, anything can happen, and laughter is always the best prize. And if all else fails, at least I'll have a good story to tell my future grandchildren about how I won the "Work Twice as Hard, Get Half as Much" lottery. I'll call it my grand adventure in winning the jackpot of irony, and hey, who needs a fortune when you've got a hilarious story to share at family gatherings?