

The Cornerstone

Volume 36, Issue 10

April 14th, 2026



Letter From the Historian

Hello Tau Beta Pi actives and electees!

Welcome to the Fifth General! In this meeting, we will be having a very fun presentation session. We are very excited to see what kind of creativity you will be expressing with your electee team presentation.

For the team that wins the popularity vote on today's presentation gauntlet, we have a very special reward for you. The winning team will not only get electee team points, but they will also get the honor of pieing the president!

At the end of this week, there will also be Initiation! Thank you for your hard work throughout the entire semester, and we look forward to welcoming you into our chapter.

Good luck to everyone, and I hope you have a great time today. As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to any of the officers over Slack, by email, or in person. Forever and always, Go Blue!

- Chayut (Peak) Shinawatra

In This Issue

- Letter from the Historian
- Fifth General
- Upcoming Events
- TBPuzzles
- The Back-Page issue

Meeting Agenda

- Announcements/Reminders
- TBP Presentations!

Upcoming Events

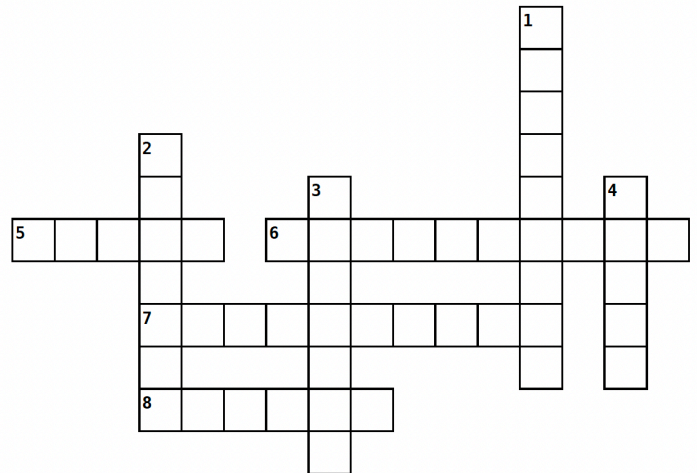
- TheBananaPhans: 4/15, 5:00 - 7:00 PM
- Small Golf Social II: 4/15, 6:00 - 7:30 PM
- Costco Hotdog Social: 4/16, 6:00 - 8:00 PM
- Great Comet: 4/16, 7:15 - 10:00 PM
- Poker Night II: 4/17, 7:00 - 9:00 PM
- Grad Bar Crawl: 4/17, 7:00 - 10:00 PM
- Initiation: 4/18, 3:00 - 4:30 PM

The Best Puzzles

			7	5				
6	5	9	3					
					6	1		3
	3			6			7	
5		7				4		8
	9			4			1	
8		5	6					
					9	8	2	7
				8	3			

	9		6	5		2		
		6				4		
8					9	7		
	1	2	9					7
	3	5				2	8	
6					1	5	4	
		9	5					4
		1				6		
	6		3	4			1	

		5			9			
3	7	4		2	8			
			4	1			5	
	5	3						4
9								2
4						6	1	
	4			3	7			
			8	9		4	6	3
			1			8		



Across

5. To flower
6. Brief burst of rain
7. What we hope to have by the time graduation comes around
8. An open field of grass or flowers

Down

1. Rain that falls when the sun is shining
2. Flowering part of tree or plants
3. What comes out when rain meets sunlight
4. The colorful part of the flower

QR code! Send us puzzles (or suggestions), topics you are interested to read about, events/organizations you want to promote, or even your own section.



The Back-Page issue:

ISSUE 6: Thus, ended the Mystery

By the following evening, all who had remained aboard the Arcadia were gathered once more in the salon. The storm had long since passed, but its memory lingered in the room. Captain Rotherham stood stiffly near the hearth. The Steward hovered uneasily by the doorway. Mrs. Caldwell sat with gloved hands clasped in her lap. Mr. Hafford stood apart, one hand resting on the head of his cane. Near the rear stood the Chief Engineer.

Captain Rotherham spoke first. “Well? You asked that we gather. Is a conclusion reached?”

“I have,” I replied. “Though before I name the guilty party, several matters must be set in order. Mr. Finchley’s death was made to appear simpler than it was. The violence in that cabin was intended to tell us a story, but only by refusing that story does the truth emerge.”

“I shall begin,” I said, “with those upon whom suspicion naturally fell.” I first turned to the Steward.

“You were the last confirmed person to serve Mr. Finchley before his death. You brought him tea after supper. You later returned, found the door unanswered, and did not enter. That alone was enough to cast suspicion upon you. Had poison been placed into the tea before service, you would have had the opportunity.”

The Steward’s face turned ashen. “Yet the evidence does not support it. The tea service found in the cabin tells against you. The cup was left unnaturally clean, while the saucer showed evidence of spilled liquid. The pot, meanwhile, had been emptied altogether. That is not the condition of a tray simply abandoned by a sleeping man. It is the condition of a tray that someone interfered with afterward, attempting to leave as little trace as possible. If you had wished to kill Finchley through the tea, admitting that you had returned at all would only have drawn suspicion upon yourself.” The Steward looked near collapse, but relief had begun to replace terror in his expression.

I turned next to Captain Rotherham. “You, Captain, possessed both authority and access. Your record placed you upon the bridge throughout the storm. Yet because those records were in your keeping, they also invited suspicion. It would certainly have been possible to amend such a document after the fact.”

The captain’s jaw tightened, though he remained silent. “And yet the facts do not support you as the killer. Finchley’s draft letter shows that he intended to lodge a formal complaint against the Royal Star Line and against your assurances. That may well have given you cause. But while a complaint might have embarrassed the company, the murder of a passenger aboard the Arcadia’s maiden voyage would have done far greater harm, not only to the line, but to your own command. Nor does the manner of death suit you. What happened in that cabin was not the result of a heated confrontation. There was too little struggle, too much arrangement, and too much care taken to stage it all.” Captain Rotherham said nothing, but it was clear he was relieved.

My gaze shifted to Mr. Hafford. “You had argued openly with Finchley. You also possessed a concealed weapon in your cane sword. At first impression, it offered a tempting explanation. Yet the body does not support it. There were no injuries to the hands, no bruising on the forearms, and no signs that Finchley fought for his life as a conscious man should have done. The violence was inflicted on someone already unable to defend himself. And more importantly, Mr. Hafford, you had no known opportunity to tamper with the tea. Without that, the manner of death does not lead to you.” Hafford muttered something beneath his breath, but did not interrupt.

My attention then shifted to Mrs. Caldwell. “You concealed from us the true nature of your relationship with Mr. Finchley. You had reason to resent him, and reason to need him. You came aboard with mourning clothes already prepared, and by your own admission, visited his cabin at the beginning of the storm.”

Mrs. Caldwell lowered her head. “All of which made you a natural subject of suspicion. But your lies, Mrs. Caldwell, were the lies of shame, not of murder. You feared your dependence upon Finchley would be judged harshly. Yet the body itself does not support you as the killer. The wounds were narrow and regular, and the arrangement of the scene required someone who not only wished Finchley dead but wished to shape how the death would be perceived. Besides, by your own account, your family depended upon Finchley’s support. You had reason to fear losing him, not to kill him.” Mrs. Caldwell let out a breath she seemed to have held all day.

“Then,” said Captain Rotherham, “if none of us are responsible, who remains?”

If you read this, I hope you enjoyed it, and please send me a Slack message!

At that, I turned fully toward the Chief Engineer. “Let us consider the facts,” I said. “Mr. Finchley was found stabbed thirteen times in the chest. Yet despite that violence, there were no defensive wounds. The blood upon his shirt had pooled thick and dark, with less seepage than one would expect from so many wounds inflicted upon a living man in full circulation. All this suggests one thing: the stabbing, while real, was not the true cause of death. It was done when resistance was already impossible.”

“The tea service supports the same conclusion. The cup was too clean, the saucer retained the trace of spillage, and the pot had been wholly emptied, though the Steward was certain Finchley had not been served a quantity he could have finished alone. Someone wanted the tea gone. Someone wanted the cup emptied. Yet in trying to erase the evidence, that person instead drew attention to it.”

The engineer’s stare remained fixed upon me, his jaw muscles tightened. “In the cabin, moreover, there were signs not of struggle, but of arrangement. The watch had been broken with very little distortion to its casing, as though planted to fix the hour rather than shattered in the midst of genuine violence. The chair was broken, the drawer cracked, the room left in just enough disarray to imply an attack. The porthole was also open to the North Sea air. Beneath the latch and along the rim were dried brown droplets. That may match the discarded tea, but the opening was also small enough for a small implement to be removed. A small blade, perhaps.”

My gaze fell to the empty fastening at the engineer’s belt. “The missing utility knife.” No one breathed.

“The Chief Engineer had the opportunity where others did not. According to the night log, he was the man assigned to Finchley’s cabin inspection before the worst of the storm had set in. Thus, he had legitimate cause to speak with Finchley, to enter without arousing alarm, and to poison the tea while Finchley was distracted. This gave him time to act, arrange the room, and leave. Later, once the storm broke in full and the ship fell into confusion, he placed himself in the engine room, giving himself an airtight alibi.”

The engineer at last spoke, his voice low. “You’re building a pretty tale.”

“No,” I replied. “I am dismantling the one you built. The old newspaper clipping found in Finchley’s coat was dated 1874. It concerned the Liverpool port incident in which Finchley was acquitted after lives were lost. You, sir, are from Liverpool. When I asked about the ribbon at your belt, you told me it had belonged to your partner, dead in a tragic incident years ago. You kept it as a remembrance. A pink ribbon is an odd thing to tie among iron tools unless its meaning is personal. And when you first spoke of Finchley, your indifference was too deliberate. It had the quality of something rehearsed.”

I took one step forward. “Finchley did not die because of the storm, Hafford’s hatred, Caldwell’s fear, nor the captain’s resentment. He died because someone aboard carried the memory of Liverpool far longer than Finchley ever imagined. You poisoned him through the tea. Then, whether from hatred or to obscure the true means of death or both, you used your utility knife to stab the body repeatedly. You broke the chair, disturbed the room, damaged the watch to suggest a false hour, and opened the porthole to cast the weapon and tea overboard. Then you returned to your engines, perhaps even sabotaging them to create an airtight alibi. It was an ingenious attempt. But you made one error too many. In trying to erase the tea, you told us it mattered. In trying to create violence, you revealed that there had been too little of it.”

The engineer’s hand had clenched into fists. For a long moment, he said nothing. Then he asked, “Did he keep that clipping on him?” “He did,” I responded.

“She wore that ribbon,” he said, touching it once. “Would tie it in her hair on days we’d go down to the docks. There was a collapse: bad rigging, bad maintenance, corners cut to save money. Everyone knew it. Everyone. But Finchley paid the right men, settled it privately, and walked. He walked.” His hand trembled. “She didn’t.”

At last, I spoke. “Whatever wrong Finchley escaped in Liverpool, it was not yours to judge in this manner.”

Thus ended the mystery aboard the *Arcadia*. In the end, it was not the most visible anger, nor the sharpest blade. It was a quiet grievance held for years, and recognized too late.

Thank you very much for reading through this entire project! I hope you enjoyed this as much as I did writing the story. Congratulations again to the winner of this semester’s Back Page Issue contest!

Please contribute to the Cornerstone, scan the QR code! Send us puzzles (or suggestions), topics you are interested to read about, events/organizations you want to promote, or even your own section.

