

Snap Shot | Transcript

1 Education in progress ...

1j Listening

Homework and exams at the Scholomance

Nkoyo gave a shrug and a nod and we were at the door of the language hall. All four of us took turns putting our homework from yesterday into the marking slot, a thin post box slit set in the metal wall at the door. We'd timed it quite well: you don't want to be dropping off your homework when there's a proper crush of people coming in, because then you can end up boxed in if something jumps out of the slit. You also don't want to be dropping it off really early, because something's much more likely to jump out of the slit then. But if you hand something in even ten seconds past the start of the lesson, it's late, and you'll get marked down.

Getting marked down in languages means you get assigned remedial work that's just the same stuff you've already done, for days or even weeks sometimes. That might not sound like a punishment, but as we're all studying languages to learn spells, it's absolutely brutal. The next time you ask for a spell, you'll get one that has material you theoretically should be up to, but don't actually know, and you won't be able to move on past it until you get through your stupid remedial backlog and finally reach whatever lesson you were at before.

I handed in my Arabic worksheet and then sat down at a booth to open the waiting folder and discover my fate, which turned out to be three Arabic worksheets, along with a vicious quiz in Classical Sanskrit that was labeled as taking twenty minutes but actually needed the entire lesson. I had barely finished enough of the questions to get a pass mark when the warning bell rang. I had to scribble my name on the sheet, pile all my things into my bookbag, and carry it awkwardly with my arm wrapped around it like a basket just to get in the line "to stick the quiz into the slot before the final bell. I'd have to get the three worksheets done tonight instead.

Source: Naomi Novik: *A Deadly Education*. Del Rey, 2020. Recording made with Speechify.