



ECHOES BY
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NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATIONS

Should we make a resolution?

I The celebration of a new year in ancient times would be either at the beginning of a crop season or during harvest. It would welcome spring or autumn. Later, when calendars came into use, a new year would be marked by either a lunar or a solar calendar.

4,000 years ago, the ancient Babylonians were the first to formally celebrate a new year. This was in mid-March during the spring solstice when the crops were planted. It was a 12-day festival known as Akitu. During this time, the Babylonians would welcome a new king or place their loyalty to the existing king. They would repay loans, return things they took from others. This tradition found its way when Emperor Akbar made *Pahela Baishakh* the New Year's Day through which *hal khata* would be opened to mark a "Black Friday".

New Year's celebrations of the ancient Egyptians pre-dates Akitu. It was celebrated when the River Nile was at its peak, blessing the Nile delta with silt that gave birth to the land and the crops. The ancient Persians celebrated the New Year, greeting spring during the spring solstice. It was called Nowruz (new day). The celebration exists till this day in Iran and many parts of Central Asia. The Chinese New Year that



originated during the Shang Dynasty, 3,000 years ago, also greeted spring. The Bengali New Year, *Nobanno*, greeted late autumn when the Aman crops would be harvested.

Julius Caesar marked January 1 as the New Year in honour of the god, Janus who had two heads. One head would look back in the past and one into the future. December 31 and January 1 have become the universal New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, respectively.

II Making a new year's resolution is the

and I have also experienced the same. Why could this be happening?

Think carefully. Human emotions and habits aren't like light bulbs you can turn on and they'll remain on for a whole year. To change habits, one needs mental stamina. How much stamina do you have? Only you know the answer to this question. Once you know the answer, then you can realistically set a resolution that you'll be able to keep.

III Let's do a "backward induction". Today is December 31, 2020. Go back one year to December 31, 2019. Remember the promises you made that day? In hindsight, reflect on the entire of 2020. Where and how did you make a mistake such that you couldn't keep your resolution? Only you know the true story. Fast forward to today. Make a realistic pledge to a new year's resolution.

Trying to be happy is the prayer this Echoes makes for you in the coming year and beyond. Happiness is more important than many things in life.

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Unwind with Meme Rewind 2020

ABHOY HRIDDO

This year took away a lot from us but do you know what it couldn't stop? Memes. It's the only thing keeping me blessed while being locked in my house. What would we do without memes? Socialise? Connect with our family? Wow, cringe. Here are some of the dankest memes from this cursed year. Gen-Z humour makes no sense, so expect weird things from here on out.

IGHT IMMA HEAD OUT

SpongeBob is one of the greatest cartoons that mankind has ever gifted us with. Now take the concept of SpongeBob and just imagine him getting off a chair while saying, "Ight Imma head out". This achieves the true level of dankness any meme could this year. Combine it with a blurry orange background and ta da, you have achieved comedy.

SMUDGE THE CAT

Cats are funny but do you know what is funnier? A cat staring at two humans confused while one of them is crying and screaming at them. Smudge the cat became really famous this year and unlike most memes, people recreated the emotional versions of these ranging from the death of the cat to the girl going missing. However, this meme does not achieve the intended dankness a funny meme should achieve.



ARE YA WINNING SON?

The meme is simply a dad walking into his son's room while he is playing a video game. You might be asking yourself, how is this exactly funny? Imagine the same but the son is instead hovering in the air and

selling his soul. Now that's pretty dank.

COFFIN DANCE

It's a video that follows pallbearers dancing to Astronomia as they carry a coffin. The meme is exactly what the heading says it is. Unlike most of the other memes on this

list, this makes sense why it is funny. Just imagine four men dancing with a dead guy on their shoulder. It is a matter of concern how dark humour nowadays is the best kind of humour to Gen-Z but hey, a dank meme is a dank meme.

UNSETTLED TOM

I mean who hasn't watched *Tom and Jerry*. This TV show is a classic which already gives this meme recognition. Someone in Reddit found the perfect picture of Tom and took it right out of context. The beauty of unsettled Tom is that you can always get the readers in the first half. At one point you will think it is just a guy turning off the fan but he actually turns off the helicopter rotors. This truly is high tier dankness. The meme also had quite a long life cycle compared to the others.

Well 2020 is over. Granted you didn't go anywhere or make many memories while sitting home but hey you grew older, that's good news right? Don't worry much, 2021 is here, even though 2020 wasn't dank, keep your heads up and hope for maximum dankness for memes and for your life. Happy new year everyone!

Abhoy Hriddo is a boy who locks himself in his dungeon and stares at his phone all day. Free him from this eternal damnation at abhoyhrid-do@gmail.com



THE 2020 AWARDS

MRITTIKA ANAN RAHMAN

2020 has been the longest ride — the ride on the bumpiest roller coaster in the amusement park that is our planet. The line was too long and the safety belt not tight at all, and the ride paused for a suspicious amount of time at the top when you were nauseous and you're not quite sure that that was planned. It sure was fun but then you saw the world around you collapsing like New York in Marvel movies and I don't need to go any further. Please take me home.

It's been a long year for everyone and so today, on the last day of the most forgettable year, I want to present my 2020 awards to help me unpack the year that I experienced.

Disclaimer: These are my personal opinions. I'm too tired to think about yours. Feel free to present your own 2020 awards.

BIGGEST PLOT TWIST

The new strain of Covid. This is like when Marv and Harry carefully dodged the buckets of paint Kevin threw at them in *Home Alone 2*, only to be bludgeoned completely by a giant pipe and thrown two storeys down into the basement. We are now living in the basement.

Sima Taparia's not so successful efforts at matchmaking. This lady — yes, from Mumbai, we know — had all that swag for someone who couldn't keep even one couple together after the duration of the show? Also I thought *Indian Matchmaking* would be a story about cricket?

My internet service providers not being the cause of my misery for once. My nagging them for ten minutes straight before realising Messenger was down is going to be

an integral part of my character development for later. And then Google came to play as well. What even?

Winner:

Seeing traffic after going out for the first time in seven months. I genuinely thought everyone else was going to be at home. **BREAKTHROUGH STAR OF THE YEAR** *WhatsApp forwards.* I never realised the power of embarrassingly edited infographics in 72 dpi quality in making our parents believe that if you can hold your breath for 10 seconds without choking, you are Covid-free. Breathlessly amazing.

Scented glitter hand sanitizers. To the people who used to think I was high maintenance for using jasmine and pine cone scented sparkly sanitizer before eating roadside *fuchka*, who's looking stupid now?

Dalgona coffee. Whisk whisk whisk for 15 minutes only to take 256 photos from different angles before you take a sip and realise it's too sweet for you? Fair enough.

Winner:

Zoom meetings. I battle my anxiety to speak only for my voice to be cut off while the screen freezes while I sneeze. Zoom, welcome to your tape. Pay 12.5 dollars a month for a longer acceptance speech.

BIGGEST LET-DOWN

Mermaids. For appearing on the beaches at Cox's Bazar for three whole seconds during lockdown before being driven away by tourists again.

Tourists. Why did you all have to vacation during lockdown and drive the mermaids away?

Online stores selling fancy designer masks. Your masks don't even look like they work. That fabric looks too thin to

be able to hold the amount of dust all those sequins is bound to accumulate.

Winner:

World War III. I was ready; you never came. Next time around it just won't be the same. **MY 2020 HERO** *The delivery man.* For finding his way to my house with no guidance when I napped for five hours straight and didn't pick up his calls. What technology are they even using?

My mom. For keeping me in the house during my Covid scare despite my risk of infecting her other kids who I think she loves more. Hah.

The teacher of my 8 AM Sociology class. For not reporting me even though I accidentally left the video on when changing my clothes.

Winner:

Frontline workers. Thank you for all your hard work and sacrifice. We would've been in a much scarier place without your actions and efforts. You da real MVP.

BEST DISTRACTION

Joe Exotic's hair in "Tiger King". Someone gave him that haircut and Carole Baskin let them get away with it? I have a headache. Someone get me a Tiger Balm.

"Folklore" and "Evermore". These were my 2020 soundtracks even though I still can't tell any track apart from the next.

The Crown, Season 4. Thank you for telling me exactly how dysfunctional Prince Charles and Princess Diana's marriage was. Now I finally know why my mom sheds a tear every time Princess Di is mentioned.

Winner:

The US Presidential Elections. Boy, what an epic. Figuring out who's winning which state? I haven't done that much math in years. My new alarm tone is CNN's "Key Race Alert" sound. **CLIFFHANGER OF THE YEAR** *Performance of the Bangladesh national cricket team.* The last time I saw them play... Never mind, I can't remember the last time I saw them play. They did do some Bangladeshi matchmaking.

Finding out who VARs give penalties to. Snakes and ladders is a game of talent according to those who win, one of pure chance to those who lose. Make of that what you will.

My weight. Initially, it was anyone's guess if after binge-eating and doing midnight exercise marathons I'll gain or lose weight. But now I've discovered that the best way to lose weight during the pandemic is to--

Winner:

My education. I have no clue when I'm going to go back to normal classes and I've lost almost all sources of income. Tune in next year to see if I've made progress on my degree. My HSC 2020 candidate brother is happy, though.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The environment. Sorry, we just didn't think of you enough this year.

And now a special performance by Pandemic at the Disco before we show you the trailer of 2021's biggest release, *Harry Potter and the Virus of Corona*.

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