



# **Culture SHOCK!**

**For the Parents**



# What's the point?

In Brain Sparks, we would like to create new educational experiences, and it is well-known that information shared is better remembered.

How many times have you asked your child to tell you how was their day at school? What's something new that they have learned?

Only to be met with “it was fine”, or “nothing”... Well, this is about to change!

You are cordially invited to become part of the learning experience:

You will be provided with some leading questions to ask.

You will be provided with some EXTRA information the children did not get – for some extra shared experience!

You can watch this together with your kids, or pretend you always knew this stuff! 😊



# Just in case you don't know...

In Culture Shock, we defined **what culture is?** (a set of agreed upon behaviors and ways of expression – music, art, fashion).

**Why did culture develop?** – As human settlements grew (starting around 10,000 years ago), the need for acceptable codes of behavior became the only way to prevent chaos.

We discussed some very common cultural points:

**Coming of age ceremonies**, like killing lions, wearing gloves filled with bullet ants, filing teeth to NOT look like a demon and jumping from a tall tower, to name a few... Ask them about which seemed the most extreme!

**Weddings**, From the bride and groom shooting arrows at one another, to eating from a toilet, to the newlyweds locked together for 3 days and not allowed to use the bathroom, to wearing bread, to being forbidden to smile. Ask the kids what kind of wedding would THEY want to be a guest on?



# Just in case you don't know...

We talked about Some **cultural phenomena from Japan and India**, like dying your teeth black, or laying down on a bed of nails... Ask the kids what seemed the weirdest and why?

We watched **different cultures' beauty standards and fashion trends**, like lip plates, limping, deadly poisonous dresses, wearing black masks, getting one tooth crooked on purpose and having bejeweled live bugs as ornaments – again, to name but a few... Ask the kids which one they liked!

**Then we talked about cultural food**, like fried spiders, cheese with worms, caviar, the origins of chocolate, edible snakes and crocodiles and the deadly puffer fish sushi (which kills around 6 people annually to this day!). Ask them if they want take away today and offer one of the more outlandish dishes... Or just ask them which of the dishes would they like to eat?



# Just in case you don't know...

Lastly, we talked about **what kind of culture we might be having in the far future?** Will we be enjoying an Utopia? A post apocalyptic future? Maybe we'll all retreat to a virtual reality? Maybe the human race will leave planet earth on huge spaceships and start culture anew, or maybe, just maybe, the human race will divide into upper and lower classes for so long, there will be visual and biological differences (like in the book "The time Machine", or, to a lesser degree, the movie Metropolis)... Ask the kids what kind of future did they like the most and what would they do if any of the others happened!





# Just in case you don't know...

In the next few pages, you'll be provided with extra slides the kids know nothing about. Share this extra info with them, and have a discussion – This will commit more information to their long-term memory and might be fun for you as well!





**You heard about poisonous clothes, how about clothes  
that make you MAD?**



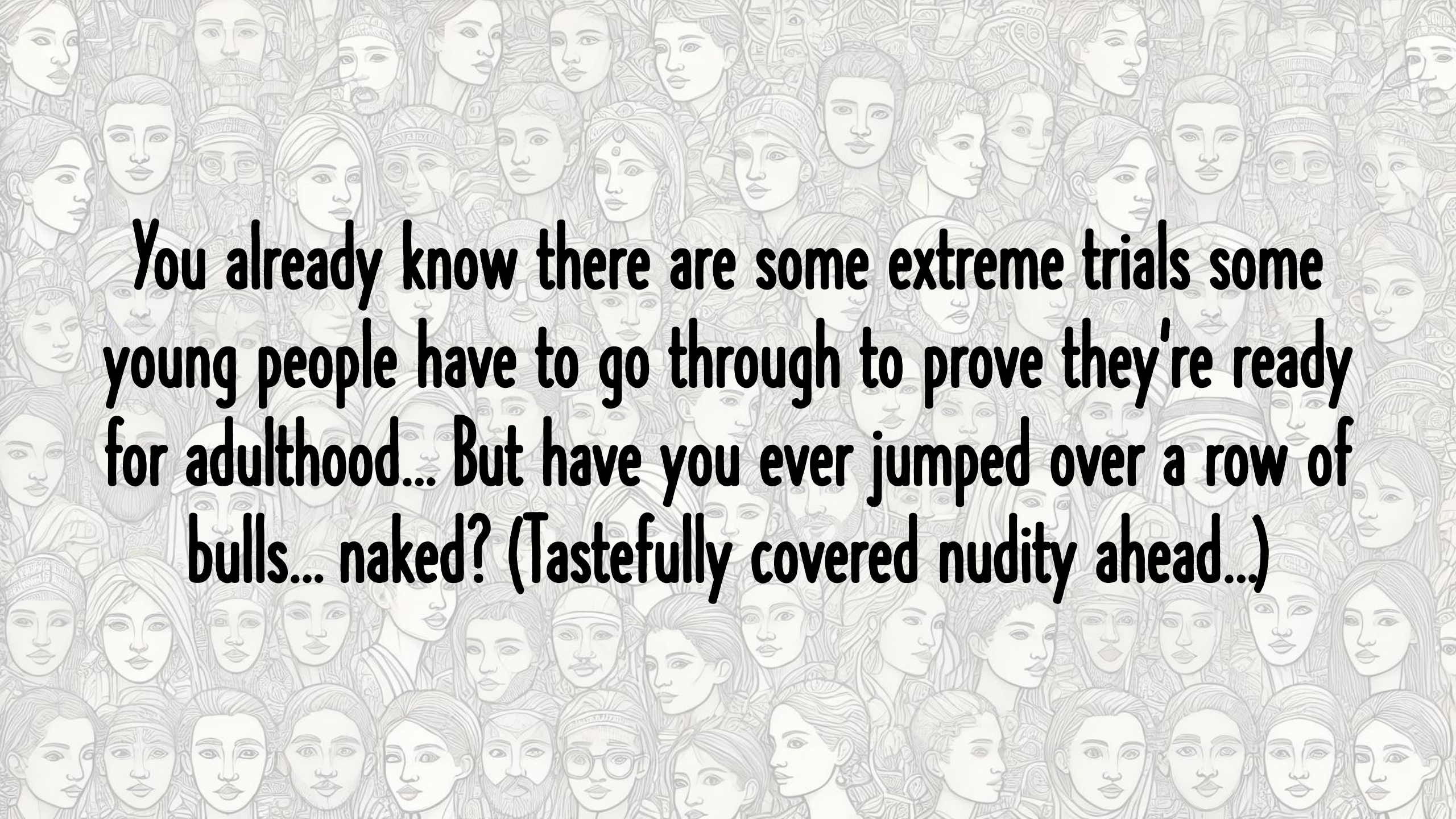
# Beauty and Fashion

The hat-making profession, or "hatter," was a prominent trade approximately 150 years ago, when top hats were a staple of fashion and social status. However, the industry had a dark side. The felt used in manufacturing these elegant hats was treated with mercury, a highly toxic substance. Prolonged exposure to its fumes caused severe brain damage among hatters, leading to symptoms such as tremors, slurred speech, memory loss, and erratic behavior.

These tragic effects gave rise to the expression "mad as a hatter". Famously immortalized in the Alice in Wonderland books and films!







**You already know there are some extreme trials some young people have to go through to prove they're ready for adulthood... But have you ever jumped over a row of bulls... naked? (Tastefully covered nudity ahead..)**



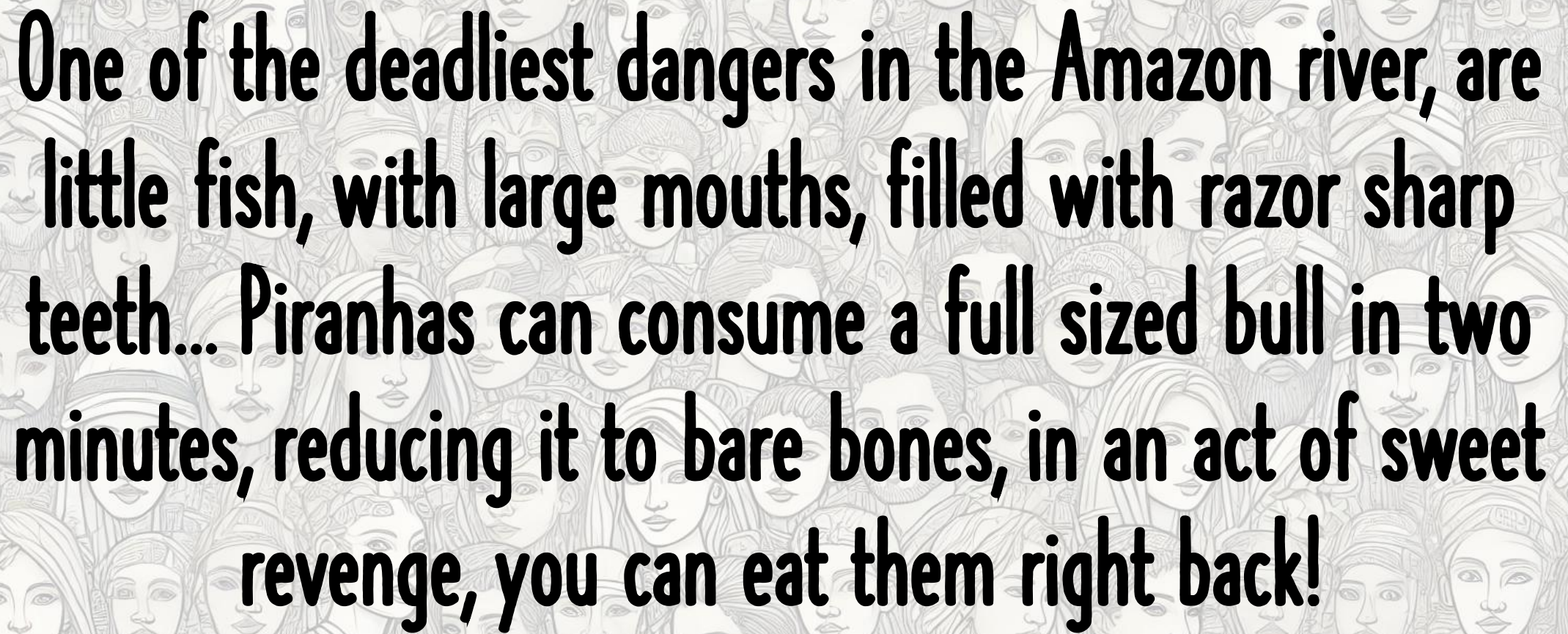
# Rites of Passage

As part of their initiation into adulthood, young men from the Hamar tribe in Ethiopia, amidst a great celebration, take a running start, leap and then run along the backs of their family's bulls four times – WITHOUT FALLING. Failing means trying again – NEXT YEAR.

Before the jump, the young man is rubbed with sand, for purification, and then smeared with (cow) dung, to make him more slippery, making the already challenging feat even harder!







**One of the deadliest dangers in the Amazon river, are little fish, with large mouths, filled with razor sharp teeth... Piranhas can consume a full sized bull in two minutes, reducing it to bare bones, in an act of sweet revenge, you can eat them right back!**



# Food?

Piranhas are very aggressive and are a danger to any living creature that steps into the waters... especially if they thrash around too much – like in swimming.

The best lure for these fishes can be found when you bury a kokerit nut in the ground for a month... the nut attracts a certain type of beetle, which the piranhas LOVE.

Locals eat the beetle too, sometimes.

Apparently the fish is delicious!  
But filled with tiny little bones...

Also, after catching it, be careful not to get bitten!





# Extra research!

Here are some things you can google for extra examples of cultural phenomena (google search the words in **BOLD**). These things were not in the actual lesson because they can be visually disturbing or just too weird... Your discretion is strongly encouraged!!!

Foods too terrible to be shown here:

**Balut** – baby bird still in his egg.

**Grasscutter soup** – or Rat soup.

**Bat dishes** - with real bats.

Fashion point:

Although we discussed the Chinese custom of binding the feet of girls. I have not shown the kids how the foot itself looks, as it is quite unsettling... Google search "**Chinese bound feet**", before allowing the kids to see.



The background of the image is a dense, repeating pattern of human faces. Each face is rendered in a light gray, line-art style, showing various ethnicities, ages, and expressions. Some faces have beards, some wear head coverings like turbans or headscarves, and some have glasses. The overall effect is a sense of a large, diverse group of people.

**Remember, learning can be cool and fun! 😊**