

# The Alphabet Pasta of Ancient Times

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I have always wondered about how some equivalent words of the different languages I know sound so familiar, like the Hindi word for cut is kaat, for lantern is laltain, and for better is behtar. Setting the deep and convoluted history of how languages borrowed or stole words and phrases from other languages over the course of trades, wars, invasions, and such other points of interaction between countries and cultures; a younger version of myself resolved to board a highly imaginative thought train that explored this very topic while being physically seated on a bus between two countries.

Suddenly, the names Meghna - megh meaning cloud - and Meghan flew into the sky of my mind. As I closed my eyes and carefully rested my head against the bus window, the image of a sieve held by two wrinkled old hands appeared in front of my closed eyes. I was privy to a swarm of traders gathered on the shore of a calm. The air-view shot I had of these strange merchants painted the air with the color of ancient magic and long-forgotten arts.

The youngest of the elderly traders volunteered to be the one who walked up to the trader with the sieve. The youngest then proceeded to pour a thin and translucent soup in through the sieve and onto the sand that guzzled it up as soon as it touched the ground. As the focus swiftly shifted back inspect that which had remained in the sieve, I saw that the pale red soup letters were held back by the grid of the bamboo strips that formed the sieve. The traders all gasped as the soup that had disappeared into the ground rose up and transformed into a hand that reached up for the letters. Quivering, the youngest and the original sieve holder held their position as the liquid hand rearranged the letters to form the message that it once was. It started the endeavor correctly by placing the letters as: M, E,



*Honour in Translation* by Laura Kirk

G, and H. However, its watery fingers faltered as they reached the N, and in haste stuck the A after the H instead. The skipped N remained crooked to the right of the A. Thus, Meghna became Meghan. A few of the merchants seemed to notice this slip-up and debated whether or not they should question this oversight, but the mutual uproar of disbelief at what they had just witnessed drowned out the sound of their speechless protests. And so the letters remained the same, but the word changed. A legend was birthed. A tale to tell was formed.

This tale, unfortunately or undeniably, was one of those tales that are soon forgotten, just for the origin of the occurrence to be considered as something worth investigating. Just for a little kid to picture a vivid retelling of the incident molded by the pop culture and fictional tales that their impressionable mind is subject to on a regular basis.

## *Rondeau. All that there is*

**Carmen G. Farrell**

*Rumination* by Belle Villar

In translation, where did they go?  
Boarded a ship, no books to stow.  
No words to scribe, no way to see  
their feelings, landing at the quay.  
Schooling not part of their cargo.

Its old-fashioned language, although  
hard to decrypt, penned long ago:  
Land transfer tracts of the prairie.  
Found in translation.

Historical papers don't show  
ancestors' work, hearts all aglow,  
what their motivation might be,  
building the true north, strong and free.  
Treaty 4 lands, what did they know?  
Lost in translation.

