I remember getting very worried during my freshman year. People seemed to care about grades and GPAs and extracurriculars an awful lot more than I did. I found myself getting stressed in spite of myself—stressing about not being stressed. I was worrying about not being worried, caring about not caring about what other people cared about. These concerns seemed the silliest of things, but for my freshman self, they were quite real. Never before had I been more conscious of other people’s notions of what success meant, and of how off I was from those measures. I didn’t want to spend hours cranking out essays that I wasn’t interested in so I could “do well.” I didn’t want to do problem sets for that reason, or anything, for that matter. To me, the notion of “doing well” just didn’t matter—not in the sense that appeared to be that of my freshman peers, at least.

At that point, and at points since, I did what any young idea-lover does. I knelt before my bookshelf, as if before an altar, and I asked the divine souls of characters and authors what I should do. With knees and ego bent, I searched the titles, looking for one that promised salvation. I knew the stories they contained, but wanted to remind myself of them, to take my mind out of my head for a while, and put another one in. I found the most beautiful of minds; those of poets and dreamers, of clairvoyants and philosophers. And I could only look back, retracing their steps to hunt for answers where they did not necessarily appear.

So at that point, and at points since, I did what any young person, middle-aged person, or old person has had: a glaring existential crisis of perforating doubt.
Surprise Endings

The football team broke records, but the Ivy trophy went south.

It was the championship season that wasn’t. Heavily favored to retain the Ivy League title, the football team rolled over its first five opponents, outscoring them 205-67. Then came the October Surprise. In a calamitous fourth quarter at Princeton, Harvard blew a 34-10 lead, allowing 29 points in the game’s last 11 minutes. The 39-34 loss—perhaps the most deflating defeat in Crimson football annals—snapped a 14-game winning streak and scrambled the race for the Ivy trophy.

Successive losses to Cornell and Pennsylvania dropped Princeton to third place in the Ivy standings, leaving Penn and Harvard—both with 4-1 league records—to fight it out for the championship on the second-to-last weekend of the season.

That brought the November Surprise. A Penn team that had taken four Ivy games en route to a 6-1 League record scored two touchdowns in the final 1:40 to steal the championship from Harvard’s grasp for the third time in the last five seasons.

Quarterback Colton Chapple accounted for three touchdowns in the Yale game, passing for two and scoring another on foot. He threw 24 scoring passes in a spectacular senior season, breaking the Harvard record of 18 set by Neil Rose ’03 in 2002.

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