

Dramatis Personae

The setting is a graduate course in operations management at the Reddetmek School of Business. The classroom is tiered, with large windows looking out over a gray city skyline. Blackboards line the walls. Reddetmek is old school, no fancy whiteboards or screens. The students are seated in a semicircle. A small nameplate sits before each of them. The professor stands, or sometimes sits, at the front, not to lecture, but to listen, question, and sometimes provoke. The atmosphere is candid, curious, sometimes silly, and occasionally charged.

The professor: Radu



Trained as a mathematician, Radu has been teaching operations at Reddetmek for over twenty years. In recent years, he has grown weary of the traditional lecture format, which consists of flowcharts and formulas rendered lifeless by PowerPoint. Instead, he has become more interested in what his students already know and how they make sense of problems when pressed to speak for themselves.

He has a wide-ranging interests and reads voraciously: history, philosophy, poetry, and systems theory. Though he is capable of navigating dense technical material, he often steers the class toward open-ended questions. He recoils from answers that are too neat. In his view, understanding is something that can be advanced, but never perfected. He rarely offers his own opinion directly. Instead, he prefers to hear others articulate theirs, and then gently but persistently, challenge them to see more.

He is equally comfortable discussing Little's Law and love, queuing models, and human dignity. What he values most is balance: between rigor and intuition, between structure and freedom, between what can be measured and what must be felt.

Students

Ming



Sharp-tongued and quick-witted, Ming brings a practiced eye to the discussion. Formerly a hospital manager, she has lived through enough operational headaches to know that reality rarely matches the textbook. She is skeptical of the MBA project; enrolled largely because her boss insisted it was a step toward promotion. She's vocal about her doubts and doesn't hide her impatience with over-theorized exercises.

But Ming is no cynic. Her critiques are often illuminating, particularly when she detects a logical flaw or contradiction. She's the first to say, "That doesn't make sense," and the class is better for it.

Farah



An engineer by training and founder of a small tech consultancy, Farah tends to approach problems with a designer's optimism. She believes most operational issues can be resolved with the right system or algorithm. Her first instinct is to reach for a model, a diagram, or a formula. She excels at technical questions and enjoys proving her competence in that domain.

Her confidence in design occasionally leads her to oversimplify the messy human parts of organizational life. But she is earnest, curious, and always trying to improve whatever is in front of her.

Camila



With a background in finance and a dry, economical way of speaking, Camila prides herself in seeing things differently than “first blush”. In particular, she sees the world through the lens of incentives and market logic. Believing strongly in decentralized decision-making, she recoils at the “kumbaya-ification” of the business classroom. In other words, she has little patience for sentiment and prefers to keep conversations grounded in what she considers hard rationality. Yet beneath that cool skepticism lies a deep respect for the complexity of systems, especially when incentives go awry.

Haoyu



A former chef with dreams of launching his own restaurant chain, Haoyu brings a refreshingly practical lens to the classroom. He thinks in terms of kitchens, suppliers, customers, and Saturday night rushes. Academic abstraction doesn’t appeal to him much, but he often delivers unexpectedly profound insights in deceptively simple language.

Haoyu is physically fit, with the posture of someone used to moving quickly. He tends to cut through complexity, sometimes without realizing how rare that talent is. His sense of humor keeps the class grounded, and sometimes, laughing.

Binesi



Trained as a social worker, Binesi enters the room with a deep awareness of the human condition. She has a background in philosophy and sociology, and little interest in numbers or equations. For her, operations must serve people, not the other way around.

She is quick to point out when the conversation veers too far into abstraction or control. Her contributions often re-anchor the discussion in lived experience and emotional truth. She is allergic to technocratic thinking and always reminds the group that every system is inhabited by feeling, fragile human beings. And if a system isn't, why would we be interested in it?