



*waif*

What is Waif.

When that noise is so white you can't even hear it.

Messy hair is waif, but so are bangs.

Waped Veed is Vaify.

Waif is when you fall down the stairs but still can't scrape your knee.

Waif is when you play the piano & you don't know how to play the piano.

Waif is when you play piano really well. And drums. Because you were taught.

Kix is Waif. So is special K. Trix is not Waif.

Whores are Waif. Prudes are Waif. Dudes are Waif. Nudes are Waif.

Your Grandmother is Waif, only when she's knitting a hat for you, you Waif.

Waif is when your corn shows up later.

Gardening is Waif. Love your dead plants.

Waif is when you shave every single hair on your body. Waif is when you've never cut a single hair on your body since birth.

Talent shows are Waif. Throw a talent show. Invite us.

Arms that jiggle like hot jello are Waif.

Zit Scabs are Waif.

Chicken feet are Waif.

Beady eyes are Waif.

You can't spell Waif without I.

Leave the taps dribbling overnight if it's below 30 degrees fahrenheit.

You, me, all, we're all Waif. If we want to be. And we want to be.

# ***waif***

## ***issue 20: Waif Illustrated***

Conceived by  
**SUBTLE PRIDE**

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*This issue of Waif Magazine features the talents of*

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# WAIF



**\* MASKS**  
*It's important to protect yourself. Hide your identify whenever you leave the house. You never know who might be watching*

**\* PEE RAGS**  
*100% Waif. We're keeping them around, even after toilet paper restocks*



**\* FROZEN MEAT**  
*If. You. Defrost. It. Can. You. Refreeze. It. ?*



**\* BADU 2020**  
*Erykah is charging \$2 for a live-streamed interactive concert while Joe Biden's "fireside chat" costs \$2800. Audience are confused how the chat will take place when the candidate is clearly no longer alive*



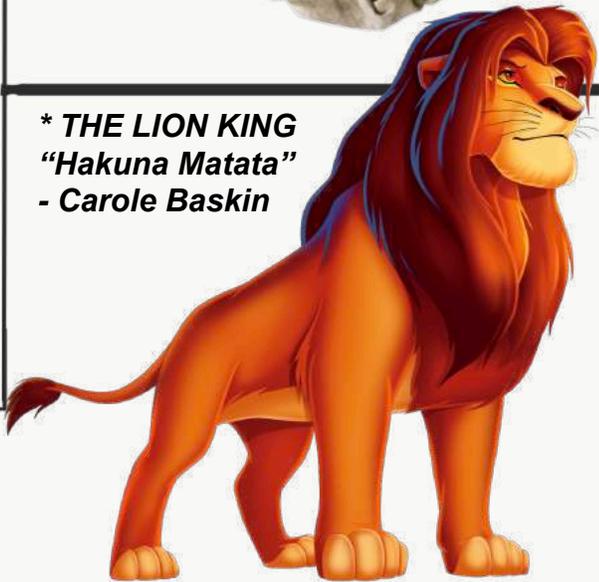
**\*ZOOM**  
*We should've invested months ago*



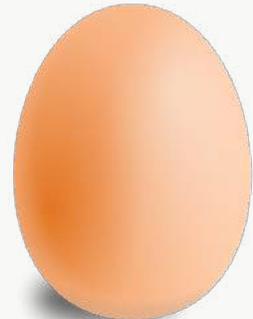
LOWLIGHTS

HIGHLIGHTS

**\* THE LION KING**  
*"Hakuna Matata" - Carole Baskin*



**\*EGGS**  
*As they become more scarce due to panic buying, we encourage our readers to stash these gems in hidden places for when you really need them*



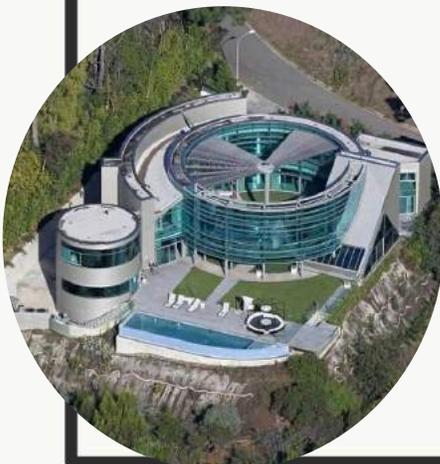
**\* HOUSE PLANTS**  
*Really sweet but super awkward to be alone with*



**\* SOAP**  
*What exactly is it?*



**\* CAUGHT**  
*Aerial footage reveals the lab, deep in the hills of Los Angeles, where Covid-19 was whipped up by a team of commie libs. Nice try Obama!*



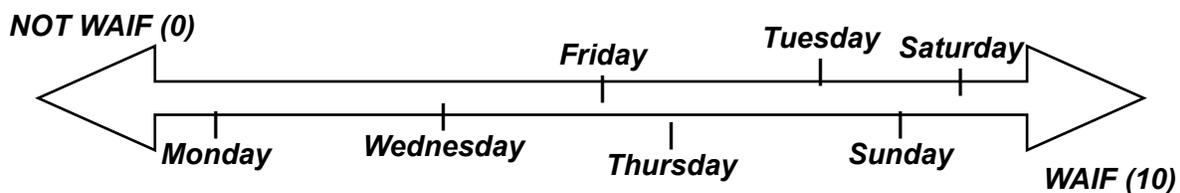
# NOT WAIF

***WHICH  
DAYS  
ARE  
WAIF?//***

***By Molly Del***

I've been in school for my entire life. 25 full years of life and almost 22 full years of school. Maybe that's why I automatically put this in 12-point times new roman font. But that doesn't explain the poor grammar and lack of sentence structure or my inability to tell a good story. For the past 6 months I've been doing clinical internships as the last bit of school I'll ever have to do. So, I've had to work real hours like a real human. And they make me do this *every* day. With just Saturday and Sunday off. And some days the working hours are different, meaning I always have to know what day it is. And for the first time in my life, I noticed that there are days that are consistently less enjoyable, less waif than other days.

Thursdays on the other hand are pretty waif on a scale of not waif at all (zero) to very waif (the most waif imaginable). I usually get to do one thing I end up enjoying on Thursdays [getting a morning workout in before internship but that's annoying to say out loud, so you don't have to read that if you're not into it. I always thought those people were crazy until I realized how crazy working every day is], sometimes two if I get to nap after my internship. AND Thursday means that the days of not working are basically here. Also, everyone is pretty much over the entire week, it's not just me. Its similar energy all around, which is pretty waif.



Everyone always says Mondays suck. But in school, they didn't always suck. If you had a class that didn't take attendance, you could skip class if it was sunny outside, making that Monday waif. If you had 2 exams in one day then that Monday would not be waif. But that means the following Monday would be more waif than the last because there would be no exams in the near future, so you could watch Netflix during class, which makes that Monday waif. But in this working life I am being introduced to, I can confidently declare that Mondays are not waif and I literally cannot think of an exception to this. They are not doing it for me. Mondays lead us into a FULL WEEK of doing things I don't want to do, and I just don't want all of that. But it keeps happening. Every Monday. Not waif.

Fridays are pretty much the exact same as Thursdays except they are a little less waif because it seems like a day I shouldn't work, and I definitely still have to set an alarm and report to a full case load at internship. But then Friday can get like one half of the lost waifness back because you can stay up late, duh.

Sundays are definitely waif, especially if I get to play soccer. I am making myself seem sportier than I really am, but soccer makes me happy, so it's good for my mental health. I also don't care about winning, which is confusing for most people. But someone has to lose, and I am okay with that being me sometimes, which takes almost all of the stress out of the game. Sunday brings a calmness that the other days don't give you.

No alarms on Sundays mean lots of rest to begin this waif day. Big zen vibes from Sundays get the def waif ratings.

Tuesdays can be considered waif because growing up I had this weird thing that Tuesday was my favorite word. Which is weird, I don't know- I can't explain why I liked it so much to make it my favorite word. If this reveals something about my personality like my horoscope or enneagram LMK. I also cannot associate anything else with Tuesdays so this this all we're going to get.

This leaves us with Wednesdays and Saturdays.

I like Saturdays and I feel like we can all figure out why based on the previous marks. I really don't enjoy needing to have a plan and I really don't enjoy needing to know what time it is. I literally hate these things. Hate is aggressive and I avoided it, but I need you to understand this. Saturdays require neither planning nor timing, so that makes them very waif. Saturdays give us the freedom we deserve every day. Like I can do whatever I want pretty much whenever I want. I don't have to worry about drinking coffee after 3pm because I don't need to worry about getting enough sleep because Sunday is coming!!! Sunday is so ready to work so well with Saturday. They're a great team, you really just love to see their success week after week. Watching people and things I love succeed is one of my favorite things in the world. Bottom line is Saturdays are waif because I like them, and I hate time.

Wednesdays are not-so-obviously waif. Contrary to the entire scale I've painted so far, Wednesdays do, in fact, receive a solid

***“Tuesdays can be considered waif because growing up I had this weird thing that Tuesday was my favorite word.”***

waif rating. Wednesdays let me nap after internship and I was Wednesday from the Addams Family for Halloween one year. I hate Halloween but it was a comfortable costume, so it made that year a little waif. I also have a lighter case load on Wednesdays and it's about the time in the week when I have accepted defeat and no longer fight the inevitable un-waify work that must be done.

To give a little bit more perspective to help you orient yourself on this daily waif scale, the most waif days will always be the days when I don't need to know what day it is. Like those weird days between Christmas and New Years that just don't need to be anything because I never had to do anything. For the past 22 years I have wished to be done with school to go to work to then be able to do things I thought would be more waif than school. But I don't think there will ever be a period of time when I can let the days just be nothing. The nothing days are off the chart's waif. And now they are just an old memory that we'll talk about like skipping class for the patio bars and riding our bikes down the biggest hill in the neighborhood and painting our faces for the football games and the orange slices at half time and the weird things we said as kids and studying at coffee shops until sunset and never being able to escape Halloweekend. I'll let you know if I find more of these most waif days, the possibility of them keeps the day-to-day a little more waif. ♦

†SECRET† †DO YOU HAVE A†  
†LESSON† †STORY† †EXPERIENCE†  
YOU COULD NEVER TELL BUT WISH  
YOU COULD?

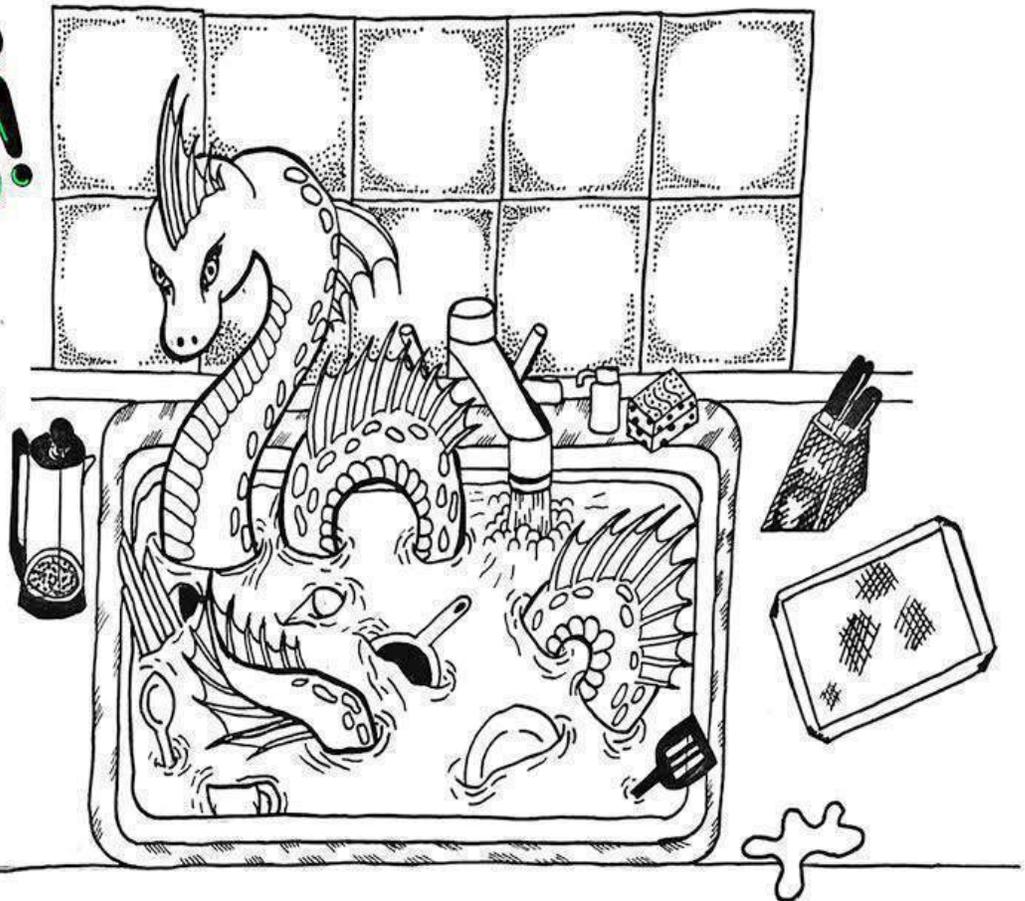
COME CLEAN! TELL  
WAIF!

STARTING  
NOW!

•Waif will be posting  
a monthly question /  
prompt for readers on  
[ISWAIF.COM](http://ISWAIF.COM)

•Waif's favorite  
answers will be  
chosen and posted  
(anonymously) in the  
next issue

•For details / where  
to go:  
[ISWAIF.COM/BLOG](http://ISWAIF.COM/BLOG)



**SWIM**

**SUIT //**

*By Eleanor Taylor*

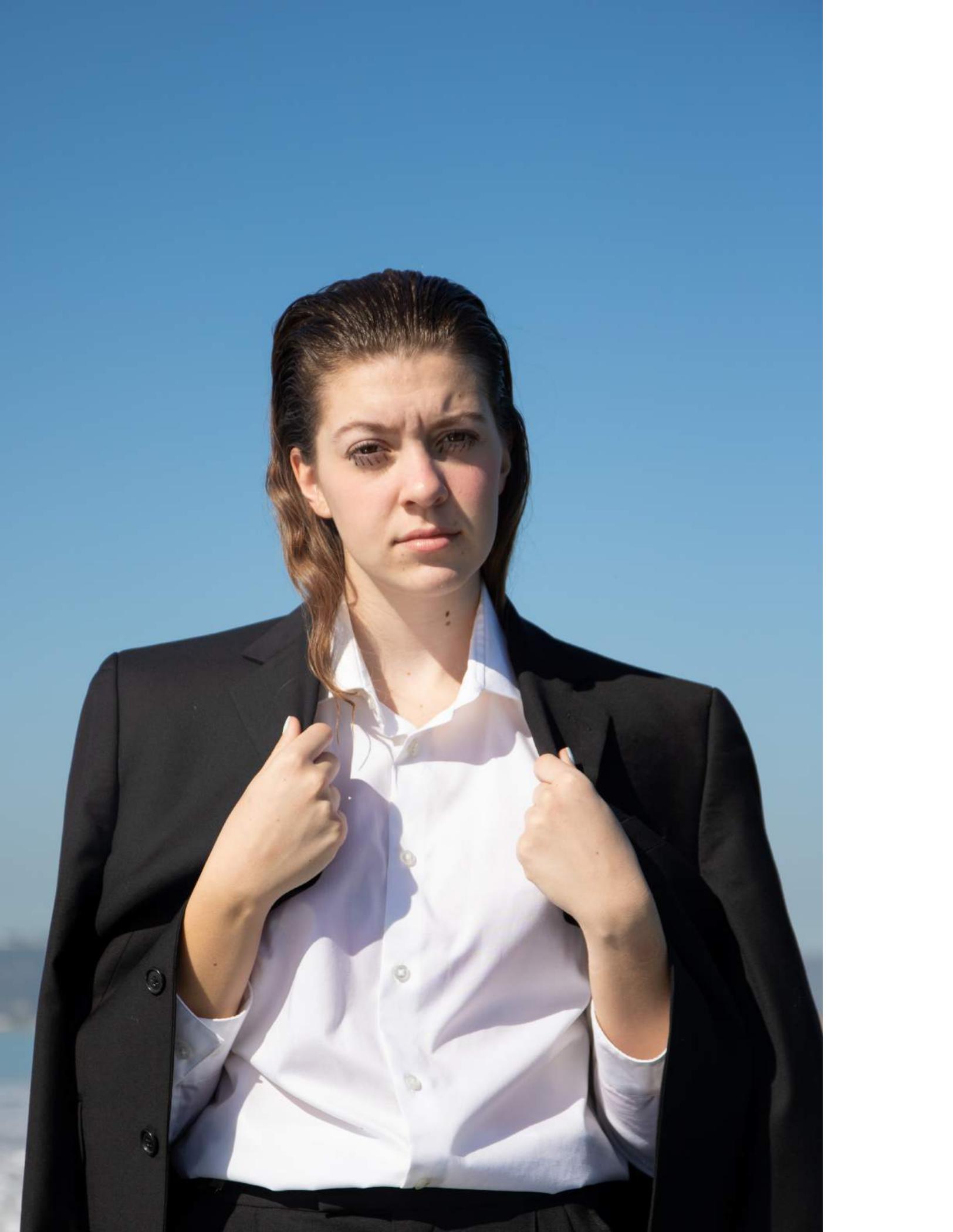












*write.*  
*photo.*  
*art.*  
*submit.*

*waif*

*seeks new talent*

*but please no poems | [waifmagazin3@gmail.com](mailto:waifmagazin3@gmail.com)*

***INQLUDE***

***-D//***

*Waif Magazine recently partnered with inQluded, a new publication amplifying the voices of QTBIPOC youth.*

# waif X inQluded

*inQluded is a platform for and by QTBIPOC youth. inQluded believes that authentic storytelling by QTBIPOC folx will create a more just and equitable publishing industry. We believe by providing spaces for/by QTBIPOC youth we'll be able to learn how to navigate the publishing industry without feeling any financial stress or feeling unsafe in non-QTBIPOC spaces.*

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- DIVERSITY
- INLUDED
- PROGRESS
- PANELS
- COMMUNITY
- REPRESENTATION
- ADVOCATE
- PRIDE
- INCLUSIVE
- RECLAIM
- WRITER
- ALLY
- LOVE
- MENTORSHIP
- QUEER
- STRONG
- ARTIST
- RESPECT
- AMPLIFY
- VALID



***THE  
TALENT  
SHOW  
FIASCO//***

***By Lydia Metelli***

I'm sitting on my bed, scowling. It's my birthday, and we've just gotten back from the arcade. I even won an animal at the claw machine! But then, my little sister, Ana, started crying in the middle of the arcade, so my mom said to 'be a good brother' and let her have the stuffed bear. I wish I'd have gotten to keep it, since I won it myself. The kids at school stared at my sobbing sister and my parents as we stood at the center of the arcade, and I felt their eyes burning into me.

I threw the stuffed bear at her, afraid that they would think I was weird for having a fight with my family in the arcade. The boys don't like that I hang out with my little sister so much. They hate it when I talk about music or how I like to dance and sing.

At school, they call me "weird", and no one will sit with me at lunch. I think it might be because I'm quiet and I like to sing, instead of play sports. I don't even know the rules of basketball, so I sit alone instead. Honestly, I wish I could fit in with them, but it's so hard for me to be someone I'm not. Whenever I try to play sports, I end up with a bunch of bruises. Once, I even had a black eye from a bad baseball game, and my dad called me Raccoon for an entire week.

I'm turning 11 today, and I wish I could be less 'weird'. Or at least a better brother. It's getting harder and harder these days, though, since those things go against each other most of the time. If I hang out with my sister and give her my stuff, I'm not cool enough. But if I ignore her and hang out with the other boys, or keep my stuff, I'm a bad brother. It's all

been so complicated lately. I miss when I was younger, and everything was so much easier.

Anyway, my sister and I are singing a duet at the school talent show tonight. The boys want me to leave her and sing a rap solo instead. I don't know what to do. I want to have friends, but I can't leave my little sister. I've sung both songs over and over, and I just want the performance to go well.

***“Ana has a huge pink bow on her head, and she’s humming our corny duet, painfully off-pitch. I wince, and she looks at me and says ‘Don’t I look pretty?’”***

I walk into her room. Ana has a huge pink bow on her head, and she's humming our corny duet, painfully off-pitch. I wince, and she looks at me and says "Don't I look pretty?" I nod, noticing her poofy dress and clinking

bracelets. I'd feel bad about leaving her, especially since we've worked on this duet for so long. But what if I lose all my friends if I stay singing the duet?

I go back into my room and begin to put on my tux, still thinking. I fumble with my tie, and it falls to the ground. My mom walks into the room, and she laughs. Her quick hands loop the tie around my collar, and I sigh, wishing I knew how to do that. I think about asking her about the duet, but I know she'll say to do it with my sister. She doesn't understand the boys. My friend Henry once said that the people who are most cool are the ones who aren't trying too hard to be cool. If I try to be cool and do my solo without my sister, I'll hurt her and I might not even get a friend group. She's put so much work into this. I can't leave her now.

Ana and I go to the car, loading our snacks and backup clothes into the boot. She smiles at me, and I feel a knot in my stomach. I won't regret this...will I? She cradles my bear, and I

Someone trying to play me, only plays themselves.

glare at it. It's my birthday, and I won it, but maybe it's better to be a good brother than to have the bear.

My mom looks back at the backseat, and smiles at us. "You're going to do great," she assures me. "You're not nervous, right?"

My dad chuckles and says "Every performer's nervous before a show. It's a sign of genius!" My dad loves saying things like that. He's a huge Beatles fan, and I thought that was an insect at first. I don't remember any of their songs, even though my dad plays them every time we're in the car together. I snort and say "A middle school talent show...some genius."

"Hey, everyone starts somewhere!" My dad insists, looking at me. I'm nervous, and this isn't helping.

Backstage, I bite my lip, nervous. All eyes are going to be on us, and an entire flowerbed of butterflies fly around in my stomach. The teachers float around the dressing rooms, checking in on all the performers. I can hear my dad talking to my mom in the audience if I strain just enough. One teacher tells me to be quiet, they can hear me from backstage, and I hold my sister's hand.

We watch three performers sing or dance, then leave the stage. They're all so graceful and talented, and I am suddenly nervous that we won't measure up. After each number, the audience whoops and hollers, and the boys in the back howl congratulations. I hope they like our duet, even though I chose to include



**comic text description: Hand drawn marker illustration of 3 small vintage style clowns with digital text reading "Someone trying to play me, only plays themselves."**

my sister. Even though I'm not trying to be cool, I want to be their friend.

And then, suddenly, the principal is announcing us, and we're in the middle of the stage, the spotlights shining squarely on us. Someone shouts my name, and I wave in their general direction. I nod for the sound techs to start the accompaniment tracks, and I squeeze my little sister's hand. Piano wafts out into the auditorium, and I smile. We've practiced this before; I'm sure it'll go well.

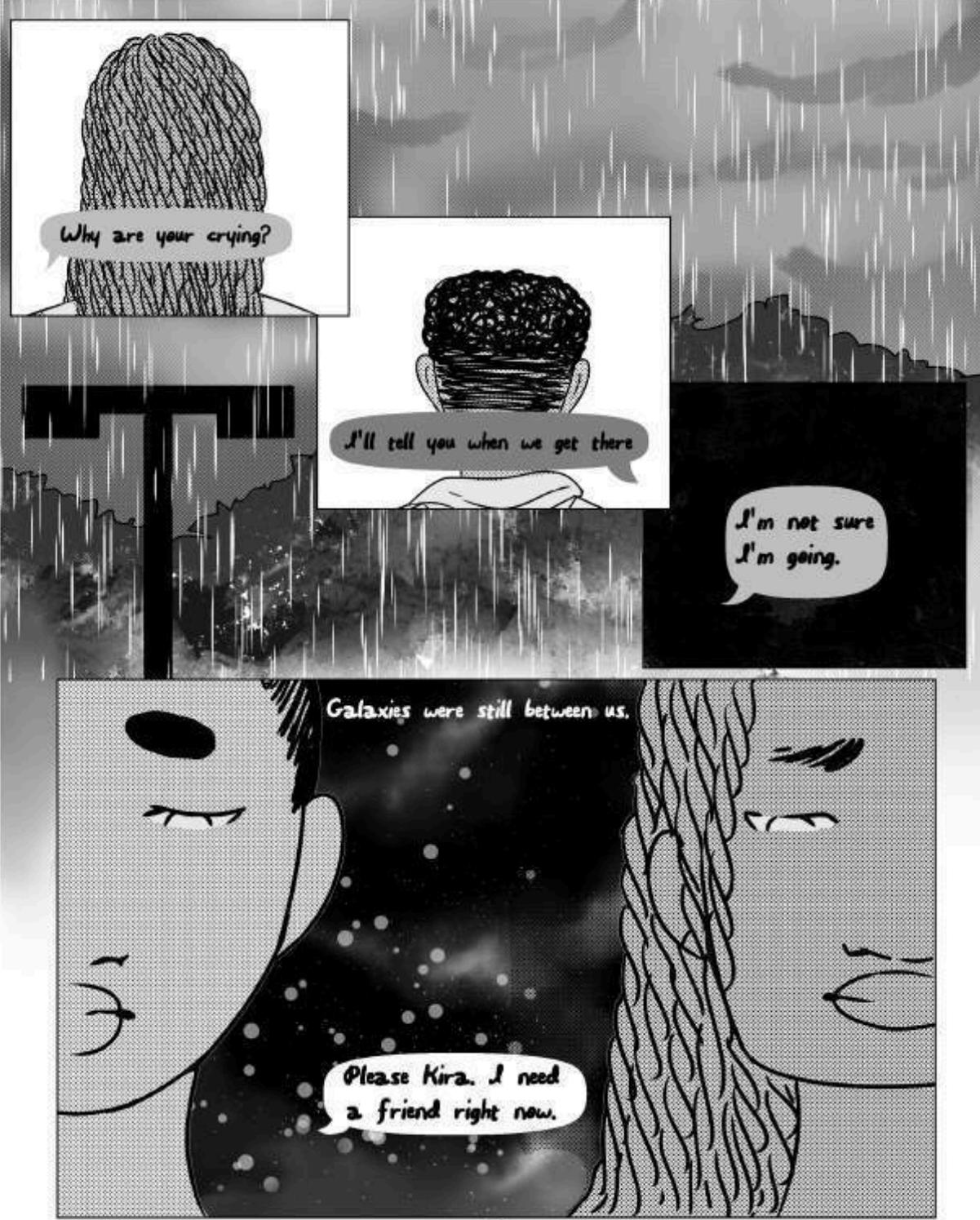
I stand on the stage, looking around. The stage lights make it hard to see, but I don't need to see to know my parents are sitting in the front row. I take a deep breath, and begin to sing. My sister stands next to me humming. My voice bursts out of me, and I smile. Maybe being "weird" isn't so bad at all.♦

**Lydia(she/her) is a poet and writer from Boston. She loves electro-pop and Atypical, and she drinks far too much tea.**

**Comic: "Clown Cuties" by Obsidian Bellis (she/they), a Buffalo, New York-born multidisciplinary artist. They use a variety of mediums to create illustrative and sculptural work that honors individualism, nature, and the occult.**



**STARS (PREVIEW)//  
Tulani Reeves-Miller**



read the rest in inQluded's upcoming issue.

all inQluded issues are available at: [gumroad.com/included](https://gumroad.com/included)

**Tulani Reeves Miller (they/she)**, is a student and cartoonist. They love rain, solitude sans loneliness, and absorbing LGBTQ+ and Black voices through visual and literary art.



# ***CORES BONITAS***



*Photos by Eduarda Heinlik  
Modeled by Marcela Luz*













**A  
HISTORY  
OF  
TYPING//**

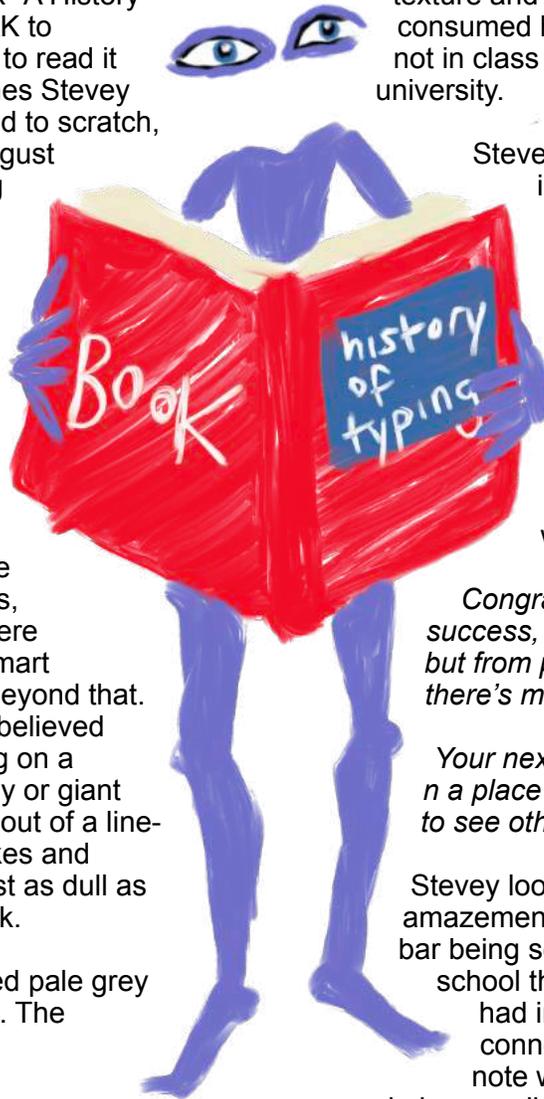
*By Jackie Lamport*

There was a note in a book and that's how Stevey found out about the scavenger hunt. It's also how she met Emily. The problem was that it was midway through the hunt and it was meant for pre-registered students participating in a frosh event. The organizers had not expected that someone might actually pick up the book "A History of Typing: From DVORAK to QWERTY" and sit down to read it on a Saturday, but at times Stevey would get an itch she had to scratch, and on this *particular* August Saturday, it was learning how society had ended up with its odd and seemingly random keyboard set up.

Stevey was a third year student studying anthropology, and although she studied humans rather closely, she knew very little about any real ones. She had many acquaintances, though none of whom were deemed interesting or smart enough to earn a label beyond that. To frankly put it, Stevey believed humans were fascinating on a large scale, be it a colony or giant civilization, but pick one out of a line-up and ask them their likes and dislikes and it was almost as dull as interviewing a broomstick.

Stevey wore an oversized pale grey sweater and black jeans. The ragged appearance and oversized fit meant they probably should have been retired from her wardrobe much earlier. She was in a quaint and quiet corner of the library. It was a place the librarians considered to be inhabited by a strange being that digested, with no particular bias, the entirety of their library's contents. That strange being was of course, Stevey. The two walls that merged to make the corner were made solely of windows. Stevey loved the spot particularly because it was on the third floor, allowing it to be just low enough to

make out the actions of the humans she could see on the streets below, and just high enough not to focus too closely on any one individual that made up the mass. The couch on which she sat was a disgusting green that can only be compared to mucus, but it was cozy and Stevey quite liked the rough texture and absorbing cushion that consumed her most days when she was not in class or at her research job at the university.



Stevey opened the old, but mainly intact copy of *A History of Typing: From DVORAK to QWERTY*. The few creases there were likely from other books being taken out and returned beside it. As soon as she parted the front cover from the rest of the book, she saw the little piece of paper on which was written the words:

*Congratulations on your typing success,  
but from paintings to books,  
there's more ways to express.*

*Your next clue is waiting I  
n a place many may sit,  
to see other people pretend to exist.*

Stevey looked at the paper in utter amazement. This was the intellectual bar being set for humans to get into school these days? She thought. She had immediately made the connection that this sucker of a note was part of a frosh event. It made her recall her own frosh events during her first year, or more accurately, the ones she skipped to watch her fellow new students roam around in packs trying to compete with one another to have more personality than anyone else. A competition she would not have won, she thought involuntarily. She pushed it from her brain.

"This is dumb," she said out loud as she moved the note to the empty space beside her on the couch so she could read the

acknowledgments in the book. "The answer is clearly the drama theatre," she whispered. The acknowledgement read, *To my dearest husband for his continuous support in not only this book, but my entire life. Thank you Ted.* Stevey turned to the next page.

\*\*\*\*\*

Stevy had been reading *A History of Typing: From DVORAK to QWERTY* for well over two hours now. The sun had finally found its place in the sky for the day, though as Stevey would describe it, it would later lose confidence and try again tomorrow. While the sun was temporarily shining in all its glory, for her, its current position was the only downside in the otherwise perfect corner in the library. Its rays had invaded her reading space and made the area much too bright and hot to read comfortably. She had felt mostly satisfied with the new information she had digested and would likely need to follow up with some food and coffee anyway.

Following a large inhale and a long stretch, she reached around absent-mindedly looking for some sort of loose paper that would make for a decent bookmark. To her left, she felt a small piece of notepaper and pulled it close. She had completely forgotten about it already. This was her second encounter with the clue. She looked at it firmly. The drama theatre, she thought again. It was so obvious. This must be an early clue, they must get harder. There is no way this is the standard for the entire event. And as much as she thought herself better than to get caught up in such meager socialization tactics, the idea of more clues to solve had begun to consume her. She reached into her pocket and pulled out her cellphone. Her thumbs tapped danced around the screen and suddenly she was on a page on the internet that had a list of riddles. Now *these* are at least a bit challenging she thought as she read the first one. Still staring at the words on her screen,

***"Hmmm," Stevey said aloud but to herself as she waited for her latte.***

she fiddled the note a bit longer, and then put it back in the book so as not to disturb the precious layout of the human social engagement. Deciding to return the book to its shelf, she walked away from her hideout, eyes weighed down by the pixels in her hand, and brain weighed down by the challenge they represented.

\*\*\*\*\*

"I'll have a soy milk latte and a carrot muffin," Stevey said as she pulled up her credit card on her phone.

"WATCH OUT!"  
"Er."  
"Sorry!"

It was an encounter she was not involved in though it stole her attention from her order anyway. It had happened across the room. The room was the student centre lobby. It featured a coffee stand in the back corner, which was where she was standing, and a large area for students to sit and do whatever they pleased. The encounter that demanded her head to turn and ears to perk was a group of students running through toward the library, bumping into every possible person they could on their way.

"What is it again?" One of them yelled.

"It's gotta be a book, I'm pretty sure this is a dewey decimal number!" Replied another.

"Wow you're smart, I thought it was an IP or somethin'!"

Two others followed closely behind, not contributing anything necessarily, but still looking eager and excited to be in the group nonetheless.

*Beeeeep.*

Stevy's phone had tapped the machine. Her eyes returned to the service counter in front of her.

"Here's your muffin," the young student said. "Your latte will be at the end," they gestured to the left. Stevey smiled and walked out of the way. "Next!"

"Hmmm," Stevey said aloud but to herself as she waited for her latte. 'Smart', she thought. She wondered what the clue could have been that a dewey decimal number would be the answer. For a brief moment an idea floated through her head. She pictured it had been her instead. She was the one who solved the clue. She knew what dewey decimal numbers looked like, there is no doubt she would have recognized one. Maybe, just maybe, she could test herself a bit more. The riddles on her phone were boring anyway.

\*\*\*\*\*

And with that, Stevey had found herself walking into the drama theatre. It was dark and oddly quiet. Maybe she was the first one here, she thought. She reached for her phone, turned on her flashlight, and began looking for a light switch. With the flick of a button, the room was lit. What amazing things humans can do, she thought.

The light switch had not been far from the door at the back of the theatre. She looked up and saw there were about twenty rows between her and the stage. Nothing jumped out at her yet, though she did not know exactly what she was looking for. She started making her way up and down the rows of seats, eyeing out something that may be a clue. She paced up and down, up and down, back and forth, back and forth, and soon started to think that maybe the clue wasn't in the seats at all. Perhaps it was on the stage. As she made the decision to walk up toward it, she heard a creak from the back of the room. The door had opened. "Crap," she muttered. The challenge of finding and solving the clue had been knocked down in her priorities now. Instead she decided to leave without having to interact with the group of students that were about to walk in.

But a group didn't enter. Instead it was a single person. That single person was a tall girl in loose light jeans and a sweater with text reading *Social Sciences* in the university font.

"Hello?" the girl said, "did you find it?"

"Find what?" Stevey responded, as if they weren't there for the same reason.

"Oh sorry, I thought you were a part of the scavenger hunt."

"Ahh." Stevey started to walk toward the door.

"Before you go, did you see anything that could look like a clue?"

"For the scavenger hunt?" Stevey stopped at the row where she left her bag and went to pick it up.

"Ya," the girl said as she walked in, letting the door close behind her. The room was uncomfortably silent.



***“With the flick of a button, the room was lit. What amazing things humans can do, she thought.”***

“That would make sense,” Stevey started quietly avoiding eye contact by pretending to adjust the strap on her bag. “No I haven’t seen anything.” She started walking again.

“Have you been here a while?”

“No, not really. Why?” Stevey’s own fingers somehow became a puzzle for her now.

“Just wanted to see if maybe anyone else has been here.” The girl put down her own bag and started pacing the rows as Stevey had just done.

“Oh. No.” Stevey watched as the girl wasted her time. Growing more uncomfortable with her lie, she turned her attention to the girl’s actions. “Shouldn’t you be in a group?”

“Yes, I am,” she said. Her short brown hair fell in front of her face as she bent to check below the seats. It occurred to Stevey she had not thought to do that. She stood up straight and dusted off. “We had a difference of opinion though, and decided to split up for a little,” she said matter-of-factly. “You know, to explore both options.”

“I see.” Without thinking much about it, Stevey put her bag back down. “What was your clue?”

“Uh, something like,” and she paraphrased the clue Stevey had already heard, and Stevey pretended to listen as if it were new information.

“I mean, I’d say that would be the theatre for sure.”

“Right? But my group thinks its the movie theatre, not the *real* theatre.”

“Hmmm,” said Stevey. She watched as the girl walked up and down, up and down the rows bending every few seats to check underneath. Stevey noticed how her hair fell in front of her eyes each time, and she would follow by pushing it back behind her ears yet again. “Er,” she said, “I’m Stevey.” *Inhale.* “I can help look if you want. I, ugh, have nothing better to do anyway.”

She popped up from the seat she was examining. “Perfect! Do you want to try those rows?” She pointed and Stevey nodded. “I’m Emily.

\*\*\*\*\*

And so Stevey repeated the motions, not really sure herself why. After about ten minutes of uninterrupted searching, they made their way through all of the rows.

“Hmhf,” Emily said. She stood tall and Stevey could see the eyes her hair was hiding were dark green. “No one else has come, eh?”

“Well, no one that I’ve noticed,” Stevey joked.

Emily hiked up her jeans in an awkward jumping motion. Stevey noticed where they rested above her waist. Realizing how silly her motion had been, Emily giggled. “I hope I’m not wrong.”

“I’m sure you’re not.”

“Why? You just met me, I could be dumb.” She giggled again.

“Well, this was my first thought too. I guess that would make both of us dumb,” Stevey chuckled back, still avoiding eye contact and suddenly seeming to develop a new fascination for her shirt sleeve.

“You had less time to think about it than I did, I’m sure I just got the thought in your head,” she sat down in the seat she was standing next to. It was the row closest to the stage. The light came down and illuminated a small beauty mark beside her right eye. Stevey took notice. “What were you doing here anyway? Are you a part of the theatre?”

"Ahh," she looked away. "No, the stage isn't really for me. I ugh, well to be honest maybe I *am* just as dumb as you."

"Huh?"

"Oh, ugh, that was meant as a joke. Kinda. I saw the clue earlier by accident. I was reading in the library and it was in my book."

Emily let out a full laugh this time. "Did you lie because you didn't want anyone to know you were casually reading about the history of typing on a Saturday?"

Stevey let out a nervous laugh. "Not really, I just am not actually supposed to be a part of this."

"Well, you are now!" Emily sounded playful. She jumped out of her seat and jumped into a sitting position on the edge of the stage. "I'm in need of a new teammate." She stood up.

Stevey, still standing in her place, let out a large exhale that along with used air, took a generous amount of anxiety out of her chest. She too jumped onto the stage.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Would you rather see a play or watch a movie?" Emily asked as she darted around the stage, investigating.

"Neither. I prefer to read." Stevey checked between the curtains that were pulled to the side.

"That explains the library thing." She fiddled through some stacked chairs. What did you get in for?"

"To school?"

"Ya."

"I'm in my third year for anthropology." She gave up in the curtains, now opting for the sound board side stage. "You?"

"I'd expect someone learning about people would like to watch people from time to time," she laughed. "And isn't it obvious?" She pointed at her sweater. "I'm in social science

too. Specifically though, North American history."

"Cool," Stevey replied, and she genuinely thought it was.

"I did two years of economics before this and I just kinda started to get bored of numbers."

"Ya, numbers can be boring," Stevey spilled out, just to keep the conversation going.

The two realized they were both no longer searching for a clue, and together without speaking opted to sit on the edge of the stage rather than continue to look.

"Still no one else eh?" Emily said. They were beside each other at centre stage.

"Guess not."

*Ding.* Emily pulled her phone out of her pocket and looked down. "That explains it." "What?"

"That's my team. They found the next clue. Looks like we *are* both dumb. It was at the movie theatre."

"Funny," Stevey said releasing the last bit of anxiety she was harbouring.

"Yup. I was so sure *they* were the dumb ones." Emily laughed again and pushed her hair behind her ears.

"So did I." With that Stevey's eyes met Emily's. "Guess we were wrong."

"I'm kinda bored of the scavenger hunt anyway," she smiled and Stevey returned it.

"Same."

"You know what all this has made me want to do though?"

"What's that?"

"See a movie." She brushed off and stood back up. "Wanna join?"

"Sure." Stevey stood up too, center stage. ♦

***PARADISE  
DOESN'T  
HAVE TO  
BE  
TROPICAL//***

***By Rude.Ink Art***

***Modeled by Ayla Combes (Flamingo), Grace Gordon (Butterfly), Mike  
Petrow (Sloth), and Kuji Banks (Jaguar)***









*INTERN'S CORNER*

***HORSE  
GIRLS:  
AN OPEN  
DIALOGUE  
-E//***

*A Play by Intern Joan Flaherty*



*Author's note this is a play to be set in a setting with no setting, with the bare minimum or pulling out all the stops. This play is adaptable, gender blind, and can be*

*set in any setting -- clothing necessity determined by the director's own discretion. Although, if these details need assistance in conceiving we recommend 17th century Salem, MA during the witch trials. Cheers!*

*A, B, C, D friends, lovers, acquaintances, teachers, students, (choose your acting relationship) sit around a table. Spanish music from the radio plays eerily in the background.*

B: So C was a horse boy -

A: You were?!

C: I was a horse boy as a kid.

A: You were a horse boy?

C: Yeah as a little kid (*quietly*) yeah uh I grew up in Kansas. So it was easy to be a horse boy cause it like cowboys movies and stuff... like that like do you know what i'm saying.

*A laughs out of amusement, but D laughs almost like they're uncomfortable*

A: (*mocking quietly*) you know what I'm saying

C: yeah that sort of thing

A: I, too, grew up in the Midwest but I was not a horse girl but I knew horse girls

C: MmmHmm

B: A, do you think there's more horse girls in the Midwest than anywhere else

A: i feel- I feel like it because like

D: yeah

A: because like there were places to ride

B: How many horse girls--

A: Like yeah like you can be a horse girl in New York but like

C: yeah

A: You'd have to go out of way to ride a horse

B: So you think you have to own a horse or ride a horse to be a horse girl?

A: No

C: I think you have to be somewhere where horses are -

A: No

C: around-

A: no you have to ride horses you don't have to own them

*D makes a sound in agreement*

B: Because I feel

like I knew-

A: Both my cousins are low key horse girls but they're young enough that it's not like

C & A: weird

C: but if they stick with it...

A: But if they stick with it... not that we're shaming horse girls it's okay to love things

*The group makes sounds and mutters in agreement*

A: But I feel like some horse girls can be mean

***“my cousin’s a horse girl now I’m realizing, but she’s our age and she’s a sorority girl so she kind of keeps it hidden”***

*Another sound of agreement*

B: my cousin's a horse girl now I'm realizing, but she's our age and she's a sorority girl so she kind of keeps it hidden

D: Oh

A: I think horses are

D: I don't think I've ever....-

A: beautiful creatures but they're scary

C: Have there ever been horse girls in Ohio, D?

D: There were definitely there were definitely horse girls in Ohio um i loved the horse girls but we never really got close

B: How many-

D: Because

B: were-

D: They just lived different lifestyles than I -I wanted

A: Horse Girls are-

B: were there

A- brave riding horses is dangerous

D: hm? Well yeah - yeah

B: why

A: why don't we talk about the bravery of horse girls

B: Dude horse girls are bad bitches because they truly are the most alternative thing

A: they don't give a fuck what anyone thinks

B: you know what i mean they are -

A: they just love their horses

B: Like-

A: what's more empowering than that...

B: you know how alternative girls or just like people are always trying to do what's against the wave or the grain -- h-horse girls I feel like are - is - the sub group

C: huh

B: C is still reading h- horse nation

C: *(laughs)* I'm reading statistics... I'm reading about-

*(there is a sound)*

D: No!

A: What

C: It did something it took me away from the article ok... I'm reading about whether or not people who own horses and are married to each other stay together

B: What are you finding?

C: Let's face it - so it showed us the marriage to divorce rate of just the whole United States...

D: Ohhh

C: It says "let's face it that information is pretty bleak but how do equestrians stack up?"

*D laughs*

A: Wait-

C: They say "the truth is there are no studies but when I typed "spouse hates horse" into my google search bar-

D: What



C: there are one hundred thirty six million results and then he gives samples of what he found on yahoo answers

B: wow

A giggles

C: "Yes that's why I have two ex husbands sorry but I'm not about to give up my love for horses for someone who can't accept them"

D: Hmm

A: Wait so someone doesn't want to be with someone because they were a horse girl-

C: Yeah because they were a horse girl

A: That's... mean

C: "I know one woman who has to hide her horse expenses by paying with cash at the ATM so her husband doesn't find out what she's spending"

B: Ok-

A: For horse expenses

B: if i- I think that's not- not-

A: What are horse expenses?

B: unreasonable

B: Horses are expensive as fuck

A: Like what do you have to... Like do?

C: I don't know what horse...

B: Maybe it's like how my mom goes- plays- tennis she has to pay for court time to pay to play on a league and do all these events so she has to hide it from my dad

C: Oh it says you have to pay a lot of money to replace the horse shoes

A: Oooo ... Oh my god! Wait maybel was a horse girl! I had this Barbie game where you had to tend horses-

B: no way!

A: and I played it all the time and part of the game was you had to scrape shit out of their hooves and pick up hay with poop on it -

***"Dude horse girls are bad bitches because they truly are the most alternative thing"***

B: I know what you're talking about I know what youre talking about

A: Stop I was a horse girl low key

B: I'm going to be honest I-

A: I-I'm really realizing things about myself in this podcast

B: I was a definitely a wannabe horse girl cause I- when I was seven I definitely asked my mom if I could go horseback riding if I could start doing that like the popular girls in my class

C: and did you do it

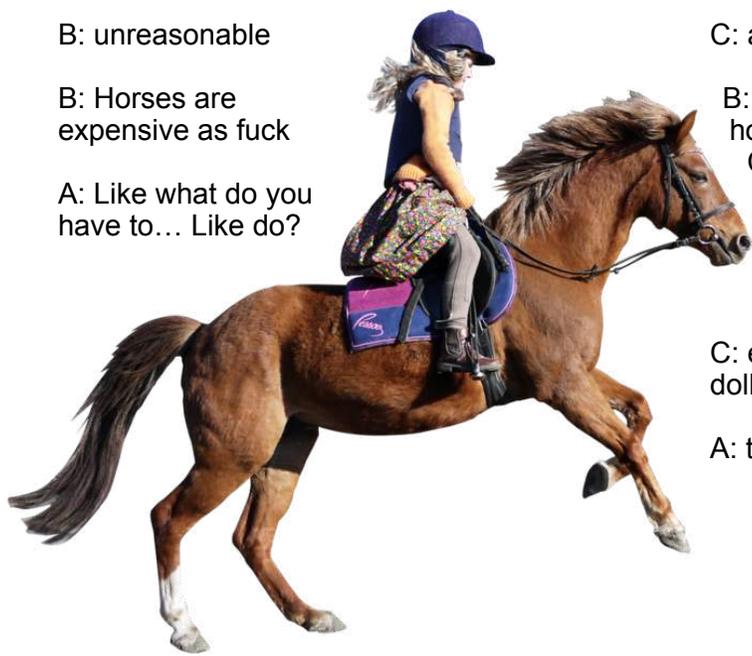
B: no but I guess the popular girls - the horse girls ran fucking Saint Theresa Catholic School

D: Oh my god

A: but like

C: each horse shoe cost one hundred twenty dollars

A: the horse girls ran the school *(laughs)*



B: until it got uncool I guess

A: they *ran* that school

C: I think it's still cool to this day

A: their power

C: their power

A: they were powerful - they are powerful

C: they control the horses

D: they control...

A: they control- they mind control oh my god

C: what if

A: horse girls like how you become a horse girl is you learn to communicate with them like you understand

C: like aquaman and the sea creatures

B: Whoa (*Noticing Mead on table*) how long have we had this

C: i got it earlier you can have it

B: no I won't - I'll wait to have it another night

C: ok

B: um what was I gonna say something about horse.... Ugh fuck I- something - I had a really brilliant thing to say

A: we were talking about horse girls mind controlling horses

B: I don't know it was before that- I was just saying... maybe it was something about like how horsegirls...

A: isn't riding horses a rich people thing

B/C: yes

C: the first-

B: it's a very rich people thing

C: the first stresser on the horse thing

B: (*quietly*) we learned that in classical

C: is expenses - on money- it says it costs a lot of money to

B: I-

C: to own to have a horse

B: we like learned today in classical mythology like having a horse is a sign of wealth and my mom's from a really wealthy area and she said all the people who fucked the most girls were horse boys like they were pimps like she said they were also most likely gay she's like from what I can tell on their facebook now which we all kind of knew but also they got the most bitches

D: mmmm

C: that's insane

B: it was like uh- cause its uh- horses are expensive to own

A: yeah makes sense

C: number two on why equestrians divorce more often than non-equestrians is time and emotional investment spent with your horse

D: mmm

A: time and emotional investment...

C: we really love our ponies

B: maybe when i'm old i'll or-own a horse

C: I think that'd be cool to own a horse

A: I don't think I'll ever own a horse

B: I'll have my horse in Portland

C: It'll be cool to learn to ride after but

A: it's scary though you can fall off and be like paralyzed



***“I feel bad for everyone I’ve called a horse girl like I’ve... I’ve called people horse girls as insults like I’m talking to people I’ll be like ‘oh that person’s such a horse girl.’”***

C: I also feel like I-

D: it would be fun

C: wouldn’t ride it enough in my lifetime to give this horse a happy life

A: yeah I wouldn’t have enough time to spend with it so I wouldn’t get one

B: Well this is-

A: I’d ride one

B: well, in my fantasy I’m presum- I’m also presuming I’m busy but I’ll make time for her

A: i want a farm with goats I’m a goat girl

D: goat girl... instead of gone girl

A: sorry im a goat girl

B: I would say I’m a... I used to be a rabbit girl like I loved like bunnies growing up and then I remember like -

A: dude same

D: I was a dolphin - I was a dolphin bitch

B: Wait no I was a bunny girl but then-

A: I wrote poetry about rabbits

B: But I got to like first grade and I realized that saying a bunny was my favorite animal didn’t sound cool so I would never admit they were my favorite animal ever-

A: B...

B: Like I would say a tiger because I thought it was cool but it was always a rabbit

A: Be confident in your bunny love

C: As confident as horse girls in your bunnies

B: So, D, you were a dolphin bitch

D: I was a dolphin whore

C: Apparently horses dolphins unicorns

*C raises a finger to count each of these animals, in total three fingers are raised then pressed together in a group on next line*

C: clump together

D: yeah

C: But like people the animals that people are most attracted to

B: Dude dolphin people are som-something else you know like-

D: Have you ever met a dolphin girl or a dolphin guy

B: I met bitches with a dolphin Webkinz yeah

A: I feel like dolphin girls-

B: very specific person

A: Are the same energy as horse girls or they’re like sisters

C: yeah

A: They’re like sister girls

*At this point, B & D begin to share a bag of trader joe’s restaurant style tortilla chips*

B: When I think of dolphins, A, I think of XXXXX’s fucking movment thing

A: *(gasp)* oh my god yeah, he was pretty good at that

B: He was

C: He was good?



## ***“I’m generalizing like a low braid...”***

B: In *Midsummer* they all had to choose an animal for the essence of their fairy and move like that animal and they all had to say their animal out loud and XXXX said “dolphin” and the way he said it made it seem like he forgot and figured out on the spot but it was good

C: XXXX.... What a strange man

D: strange...

*Silence, they eat chips*

B: more horses

C: less

A: were you about to say more horses less girls?

B: Did you guys ever

C: I was going to say less dolphins

B: Ok when you guys were younger

A: Wait! Let’s talk about the

B: talk about horses!

A: the oppression towards horse girls and sexism

B: Oh yeah

C: what do you mean?

B: horse boys are cool

C: are cool

B: they’re cowboys

A: yeah

D: Sexism. It’s sexism. Periodt.

A: That’s what I’m saying- hating on horse girls is sexist. Sextist.

D: Sextist.

B: maybe horse girls are like an incel thing because I feel like our depiction of a horse girl matches

*A laughs*

A: horse girls are just female incels... (*gasp*) no! Horse girls are not-- they’re so much better than female incels

C: I don’t think they’re female incels

B: I feel bad for everyone I’ve called a horse girl like I’ve... I’ve called people horse girls as insults like I’m talking to people I’ll be like “oh that person’s such a horse girl.”

D: mmmm

A: I feel like that’s more of a fashion standpoint

D: I’ve never used that term unless-

A: I love yall horse girls but your fashion

B: No my cousin’s a horse girl but she dressed nice

A: I’m generalizing like a low braid...

*C laughs*

A: scrunchy...

B: what happens to a horse girl like has there been a horse girl that’s like gotten this old, do you think they’ve ever made it this far

**“C:(reads result from google)  
‘The idea that age is but a  
number is as true for animals as  
it is for humans horses  
especially ponies are extremely  
likely to live to their mid twenties  
to thirties’ (stops reading) what?  
That’s not what I asked for..  
Horse riding for the elderly”**

C: to be super, to be super old - i’m sure one has

B: and our generation will have the first ninety year old horse girl- do old people like horses

D: yeah for sure I feel like.. I feel like old people

C: I feel like old people like horses

A: yeah what’s the age cut off for horses

B: (asking C who is on their laptop) yeah can you search?

A: what’s the age cut off for horse girls

C: (googling) “do old people like horses?” (reads result from google) “The idea that age is but a number is as true for animals as it is for humans horses especially ponies are extremely likely to live to their mid twenties to thirties” (stop reading) what? That’s not what I asked for.. Horse riding for the elderly

B: oh did you guys ever ride ponies at birthday parties or is that like a rich -

D: wait what

A: I rode ponies at the pumpkin patch  
C: the pumpkin patch!

B: we rode them at birthday parties-

D: wait wait wait I’ve done that before

B: once i rode a pony at a girl scout camp when I was in kindergarten (laughs to self) and then I threw up because I-

A starts to laugh

A: because what

B: (giggling) because I got heat stroke

A and C laugh

B: and I threw up right by the pony

A: and the pony said get away bitch

B: and my mom had to pick me up and she made me like change my shirt in the parking lot and then I left- it was my birthday too-

A (still laughing) that’s horrible

B: and did you ever watch the show Ben 10

C: yeah

B: i got one of those Ben 10 watches and I put it in the car for like for like when I was leaving so I put it on and I’m gonna start throwing up again so we pull over to a CVS I throw up and then I occupy myself by playing with this fucking watch

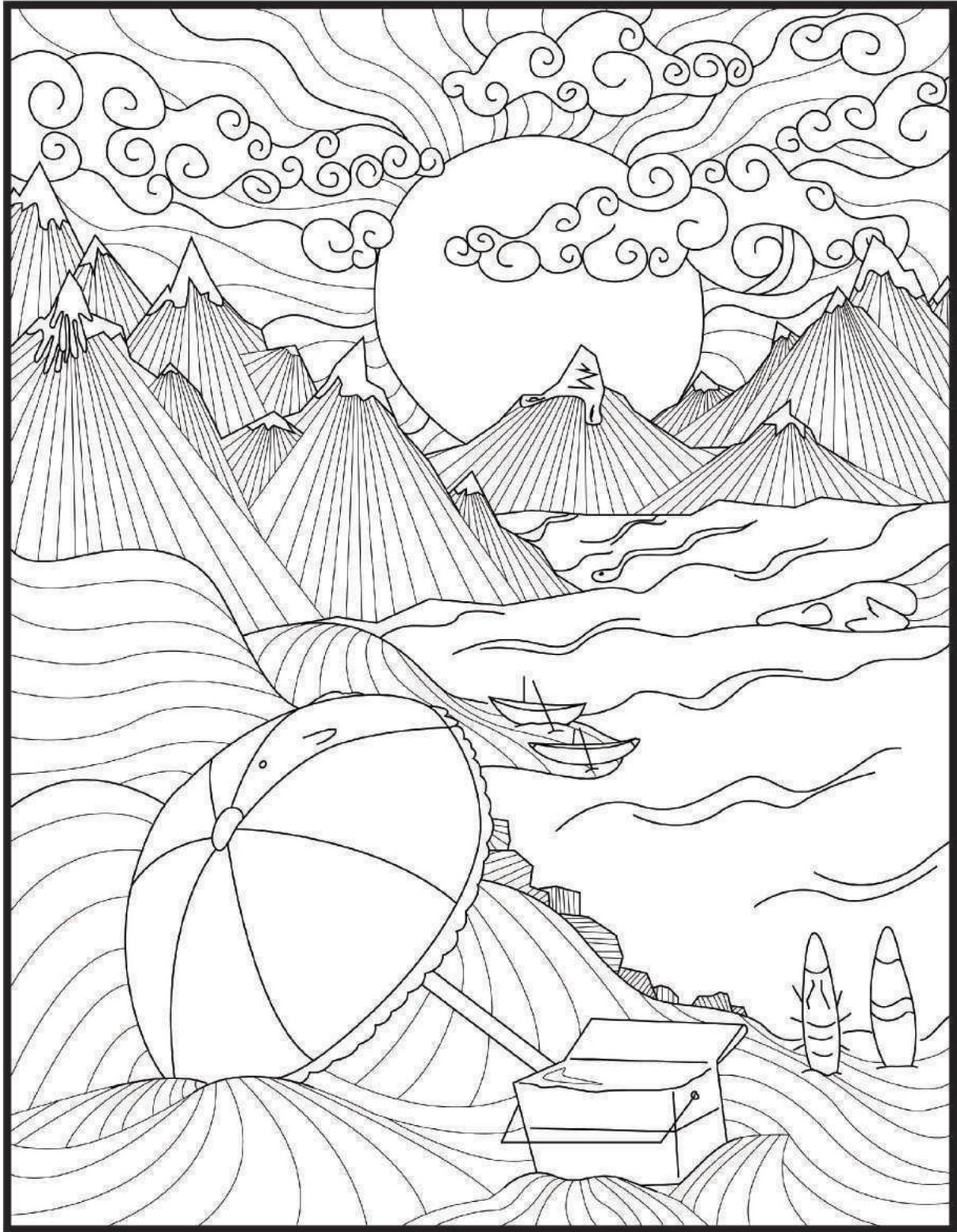
C laughs

B: and to this day there’s a photo of my moments before the throw up on a pony

C and A laugh

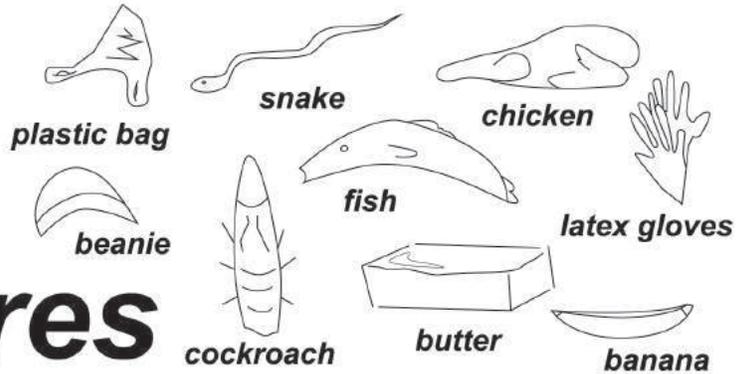
B: and there’s like- and the pony’s too small for me ♦





# ***waif***

## ***hidden pictures***



**SOBER**

**RODEO/**

**SMELLIN**

**-G**

**SALTS//**

*Writing and Creative Direction by Brenna Haragan*

*Photography and Lighting Design by Carmel Ramos De Berg*

*JR Art Direction by Eve Del Prado*

*Make Up by Laura Buck*



I think about an image often after I pee. I look down between my thighs and there is a teeming coral reef nestled and thriving in the porcelain. I'm nourishing the ecosystem but it's also coming from me. Bright blue coral crawls up the side of the toilet.

I talked to my dad about this a few years ago and he has had a similar dream where he urinates in the ocean and is eaten by a whale. This may mean we are both prone to urinary tract issues, which we are, or that we are both still trying to figure out who my mother is, which I think we also are.

She was a marine biologist before she left her lab to join a non-denominational Christian cult with my father in San Diego, California.

My father was a preacher for 20-years in an infamous international church cult that has multiple 60-Minute-esque news specials that you can still fish out of the sticky YouTube bowels. It was one of the fastest growing churches of that decade, a nightmarish product of 80's Patrick Bateman like businessmen combined with a fervent evangelical Christianity.

Naturally this led to flagrant embezzlement by the highest ranking leaders upwards of 10 million and a messy schism of which my parents, myself, and my siblings were collateral damage. They left when I was 17.

My uncle and father were adopted by an Irish family in New Mexico in the 1960's. We don't know as much as I'd like about their backgrounds but we grew up with constant jokes about their "Indian-blood" because they have dark skin, don't get cold easily, and can barely grow facial hair.



Randall and Tracey adopted by Wyona and Papa.

I just realized that I forgot my grandfather's real name. He died when I was 10.

My father Randy, or Randall when he travelled to the UK, has only been drunk

once, has never smoked weed, was the captain of the Christian Athlete Club in high school, and received a full-ride to Harvard University but didn't know what Harvard University was and ended up accepting a scholarship to a mostly unknown school in Colorado so he could play football. He's short and strong with black hair that still hasn't turned grey at 56 years old. He complains that a lot of bad guys in movies are named Randall which is kind of true. Ironically, my dad might be the best person I know. He takes in pets from his tenants that can't take care of them and is always behind on his bills because he lets his tenants pay when they can.

We were both born in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

My Uncle Tracey, or Uncle Crazy, did not go to college, was a rodeo star and a trash collector for the mountain town of Ruidoso, New Mexico. He's short and wiry, simmering with energy that buckles inward after a couple of Coors Lights. His skin seems to crawl, his arms shake up and down as if to prepare him for whatever he is going to spontaneously do next. He had severe acne and tries to grow an excuse for a Fu Manchu mustache to hide the scarring but has recently been shaving it for his esthetician girlfriend that owns a lake yacht. He is sober now and more tender.

Growing up, all of our Christmas presents from Uncle Tracey were found in the dumpster. Rich families from Texas would go skiing once, and then throw away their skis and jackets. Part of my Uncle's job also required him to clean up road kill. Much of the meat we ate around the holidays was from those poor deer and elk, smashed by the same families driving back from the lifts to their chalets.



***“He had severe acne and tries to grow an excuse for a Fu Manchu mustache to hide the scarring...***



***...but has recently been shaving it for his esthetician girlfriend who owns a lake yacht.”***



My dad and uncle were teased a lot growing up. They were called wet backs. They were beaten up for wearing Dickies because in 1970's Roswell, New Mexico those were the poor man's pants. My dad called me on the phone and he couldn't believe that "kids are choosing to wear Dickies" and that some pants cost over one-hundred dollars now.

My favorite saying of his is, *"Tough titty said the kitty but the milk's still good."*

When it's raining but still sunny, my grandmother Wyona says that the, *"Devil is beating his wife."*

It must have been difficult growing up in a family not knowing where you come from. I think my dad internalized his bullying and became a bully for a few years, for which he has never forgiven himself. My uncle became an adrenaline seeking alcoholic.

My dad talks about my Uncle Tracey's ears and how they were so big that he would quietly fold them into small airplanes when Tracey was sleeping. They slept in the same room until my dad went to college.

I've only seen my dad cry a handful of times. Once when my sister, who is also adopted, wrote him a letter on Christmas. She's dyslexic and her birth mother was on heroin when she was pregnant and we honestly never thought she would be able to read or write. Another time is when he was trying to understand why I was gay. We were eating at a Dominican restaurant in Brooklyn.

I told my Uncle and he said he loved me and to come visit. I hadn't talked to him in a few years because I was a coward.

*"Didn't you know that your second-cousin is like you?"*

My uncle and dad both carry their sadness in different ways. I don't know if there is a better or worse way to live when you've been

bullied. One of them carves his children up to understand them like filing cabinets so he doesn't make a mistake and the other has been divorced twice and has a liver in need of a tune up. They wear the same shoe size.

Their ears are different sizes.

They are both good listeners. ♦



***waif.***

***not waif.***

***fashion.***

***refuse.***

***waif***

***Read Waif Magazine at [iswaif.com](http://iswaif.com)***

***LEAVING***

***NEW***

***YORK//***

***By Lily Fender***

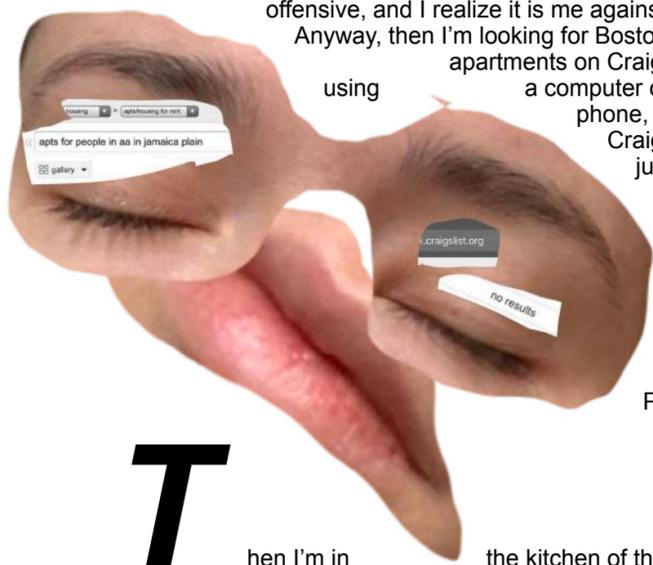
**L**ast night I dreamt I set an apartment on fire. What happened was: I am hanging-out at the person's house, a person who I really really want to like me, just cuz. This person has a few friends over and one of them is this guy from Baltimore who plays in a comedy band. He is white and goofy and the general vibe of the dream is that you are supposed to love him. I do not love him. Baltimore funny boy makes multiple comments about how various women in the room "would look really nice" if they adjusted little things about their appearances. When I open my mouth to point out how this is offensive, all I can explain is that he is over-pruning all the plants in the room. I tell him, "THE PLANTS ARE COMPLETELY FINE JUST AS THEY ARE AND THEY DON'T NEED YOUR CRITICISMS OR YOUR CUTS." So somehow I'm talking about plants when I'm really trying to stand up for women and the whole thing makes no sense, except a teeny tiny part of me knows defending plants and defending women is the same thing. There are a bunch of other women in the room who, I can tell from their eyes, are not on my page and do not get the plant thing.

They don't think he is being offensive, and I realize it is me against everyone else.

Anyway, then I'm looking for Boston apartments on Craigslist. I'm not using a computer or a smart phone, but rather

Craigslist is just projected onto my eyelids.

I'm using my Craigslist eyelids to search for "apts for people in AA in Jamaica Plain." Nothin.



**T**hen I'm in the kitchen of this person-who-I-want-to-like-me's place. I have a flight in 2 hours and need to be packing. TFW YOU DID NOT START PACKING EARLIER!! It occurs to me while I'm packing that the kitchen is enormous, like BIG, in a way that's suddenly a problem... I'm packing up all the kitchen ware, all the food, and also a bunch of personal belongings which I've stored in various drawers, cabinets, etc. Quinn and Hannah are suddenly also in the kitchen packing all of their stuff. I'm confused and resentful because they were not at the plant/feminism debate... do they even have a plane to catch? This is my plane to catch. MINE. Quinn is surrounded by hoards of fancy crop tops from places like Everlane. She's folding her tiny clothes and seems very calm and self-assured with all of her shit next to her. I am so envious of her EVERLANE-CALM. Hannah is on a raised platform folding and packing her shit, mostly purses. This is the second time Hannah has appeared in one of my dreams lately, possessing a designer purse that was appropriate for ultra femme-dream-version-of-me but not real me. I suddenly feel stressed, like everyone who is about to get on a plane is supposed to be dressed high-femme and that is just not me, even if dream me is pretending!!! The platform Hannah is sitting on is like one that a drummer would sit on with their entire drum set but there's no drum set, only clothes. Anyway,

**t**hen my boss Mark comes into the kitchen and is like, "Lily, we gotta get you to the airport." I don't have time to be concerned that Mark, my employer, is appearing as a chauffeur-type in my dream. I am just grateful someone is getting me where I need to be. I realize I am nowhere near packed and it sinks in that amount of stuff I have is way way too much. It's pouring out of drawers and every time I try to organize some group of things into a container another bunch of that same type of thing appears in another part of the kitchen.



So then I start cooking. There are two, enormous stoves, each with 6-8 burners. Most of the burners are already lit, with pots filled with water on them. Smoke fills the room, which I can sense is now officially on fire. Who turned the stoves on? Not me. It's not my fault. I know that Baltimore goofy guy has something to do with it. But there are rumors surfacing that it was actually ME who turned the stoves on?!?! Dream rumors aren't like real life rumors, they are just sort of a felt sense of terror, rather than a discussion. I walk by Quinn, who has this disgusted look on her face, which tells me SHE THINKS I'M THE ONE WHO STARTED THE FIRE. Fuck, I'm really fucked.

**W**hile the apartment starts to burn, it occurs to me that I'm related to Baltimore funny boy by blood. This upsets me a lot but I don't have time to focus on that because I need to evacuate the building because I set it on fire, or at least... THAT'S THE RUMOR! So I'm in an elevator heading to the first floor with everyone else and I get out of the building and my boss has a car waiting for me to go to the airport. Fire trucks are pulling up to the building and other occupants who came down the elevator with me are gathering, staring up at the smoke.



**B**

ut before I know it I'm buckled up, driving away to the airport. Fire's not my problem anymore, but I do genuinely hope they figure it out.

Flying in an airplane from New York to Boston is not necessary but it does make for a more dramatic exit, which is why I'm doing it. ♦







***PINK***

***BOOT//***

***By Tylah Gantt, Manami Mao, and Akira Ayane***

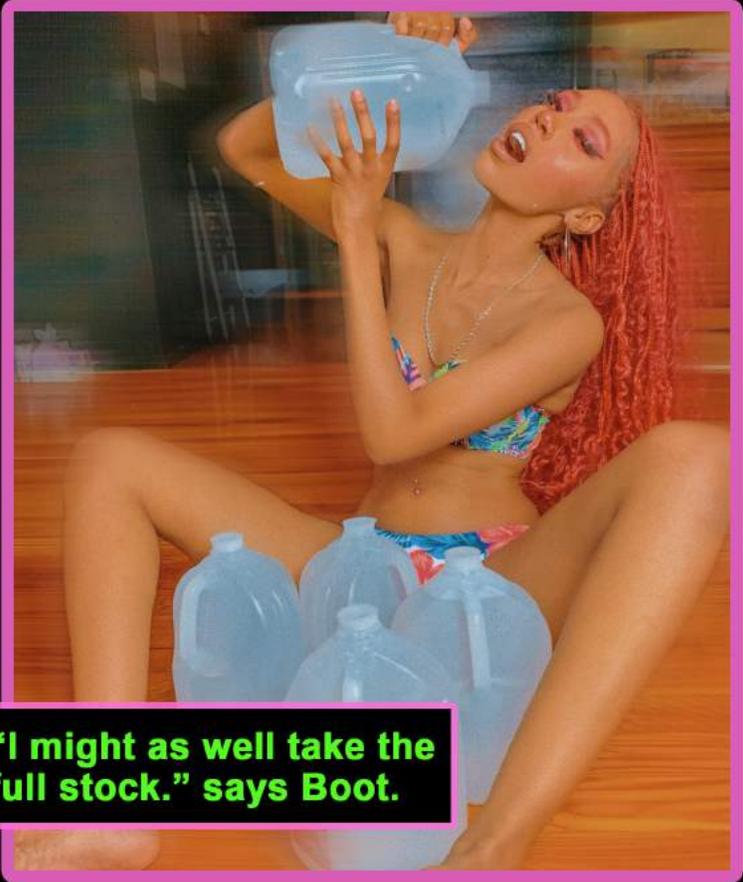
***Pink Boot is a music media outlet dedicated to amplifying femmes of color and their art.***

# Pink & Boot

There's some of Pink and Boot in everyone. While times of uncertainty can bring out the Boot, we should work hard to help our Pink shine through.



Pink makes sure to only purchase what she needs.



"I might as well take the full stock." says Boot.



"Two gallons should be more than enough for me." says Pink.



Boot grabs anything she can fit into her cart.



**Pink knows how important it is to slow the spread of germs, so she washes her hands for at least 20 seconds. "I want to be sure not to spread viruses. Especially in communal spaces!" Pink exclaims.**



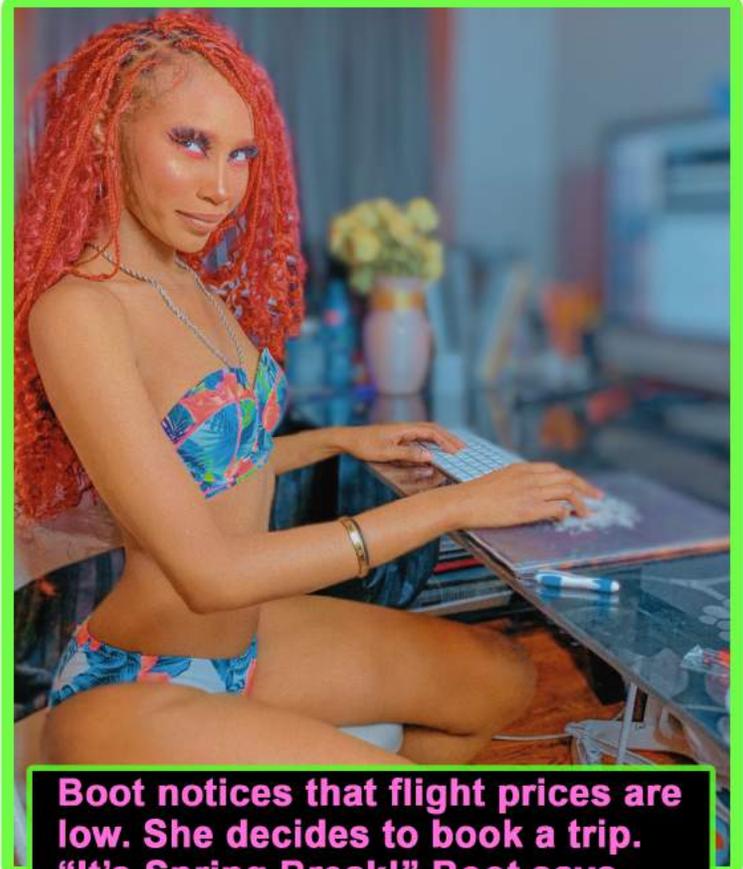
**Boot doesn't think about the spread of germs. She is careless about washing her hands. "I feel fine. I don't have to worry about being sick." Boot says.**

# Pink & Boot

It's important to think about our impact on others. In addition to following health guidelines for herself, Pink knows that now is not the time to be selfish.



Her coughs might only be a cold, but Pink wears a mask to protect others. "I always carry sanitizer!" Pink says.



Boot notices that flight prices are low. She decides to book a trip. "It's Spring Break!" Boot says.



"I do not have any essential obligations, so it's important that I self isolate for the sake of public health." Pink says.



"These prices are too good to ignore! I'm already packing!" Boot says.



**Pink wants to be a good neighbor, especially during a health crisis. She understands that being able to self quarantine is a privilege that not everyone has. "I know that times are tense and not everyone can stay home. I try to support people that are unable to self-isolate." says Pink.**



**The health crisis is more serious than Boot initially thought. She panics and spreads fear. She scolds people when she sees them outside. "This is an emergency!" Boot screams. "No one should be outside! Isolate yourself!"**

# Pink Boot

Spot the difference with Bebi Monsuta



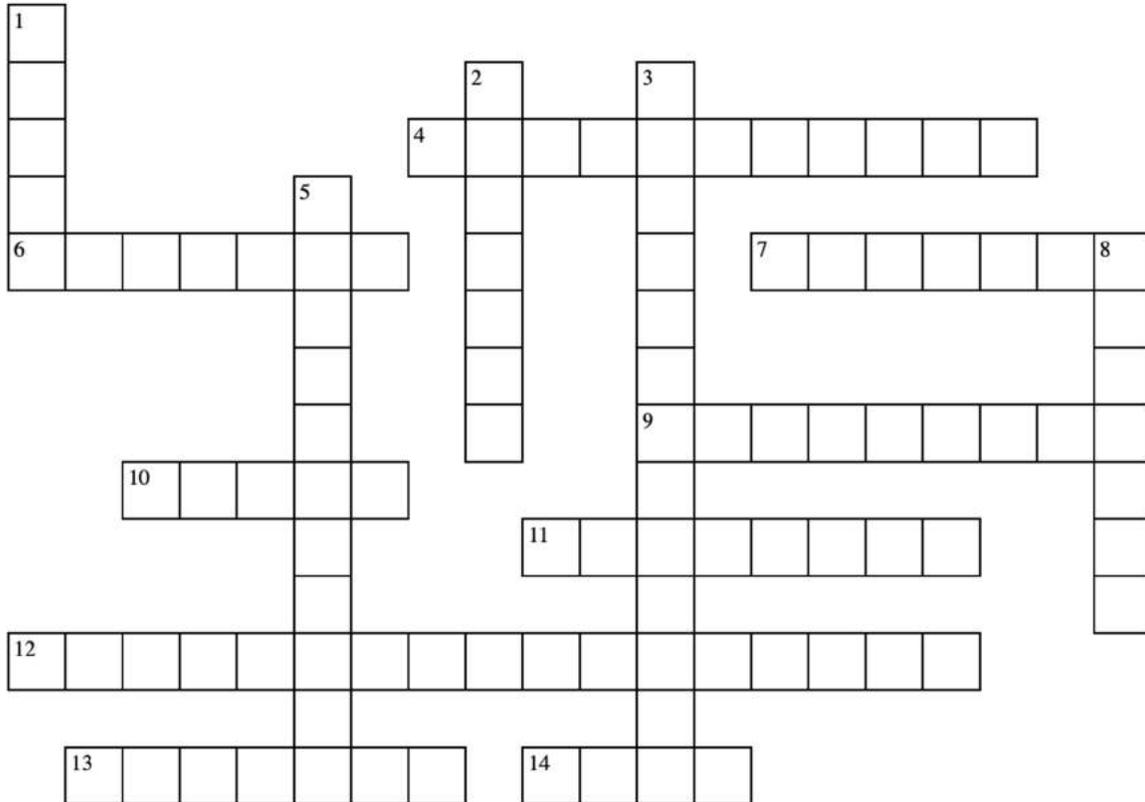
Find all 5 differences:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Answers:  
right side earring is gone, belly button ring now blue, bracelet added, lips now purple, blonde hair is now green

# Whole Lotta Hot Sh\*t

by **Pink Boot** @thisispinkboot

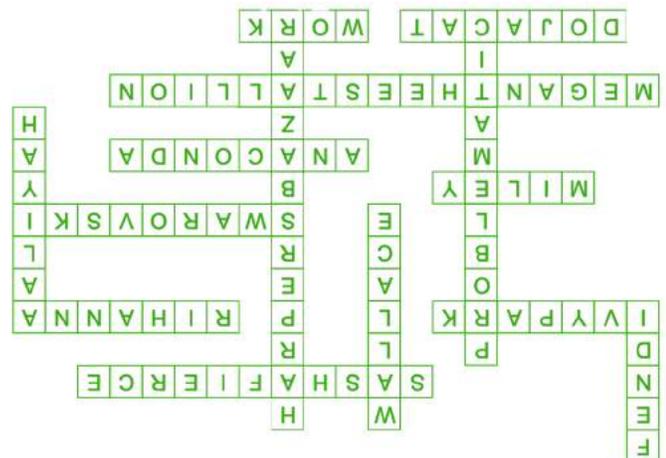


## Across

- 4 Queen Bey's 2008 alter ego
- 6 Adidas' recently collaborated with this brand previously exclusive to TopShop
- 7 Fenty beauty mogul who sings the answer to 14
- 9 "Do my tits bother you? They're covered in \_\_\_ crystals girl!"
- 10 Iconic 2015 VMA question "\_\_\_\_\_ what's good?"
- 11 Nicki Minaj VOY snub
- 12 "Baby lemme rub, lemme rub on ya/ Can I get a lil love lil love from ya" rapper
- 13 "I keep it juicy juicy, I eat that lunch" feline rapper
- 14 The chorus of this 2016 5x platinum song baffled white fans unfamiliar with the Barbadian Patois

## Down

- 1 Nicki Minaj's affinity for these prints on single "Chun-Li" led to a sold out line with the designer
- 2 The only Christopher we acknowledge
- 3 Tensions came to a head between superstar rappers Cardi B and Nicki Minaj at this magazine's annual NYFW Icons party
- 5 Commes des Garcon FW20 Paris Fashion Week braided wigs and Marc Jacobs SS17 Dreadlocks
- 8 "Boy I've been watching you like a hawk in the sky/ that fly and you were my prey" R&B singer



# ***THE INSIDE WAIF//***

*We asked our readers to send us their Quarantine Content.  
Here are just a few pieces from our ongoing issue  
#THEINSIDEWAIF*



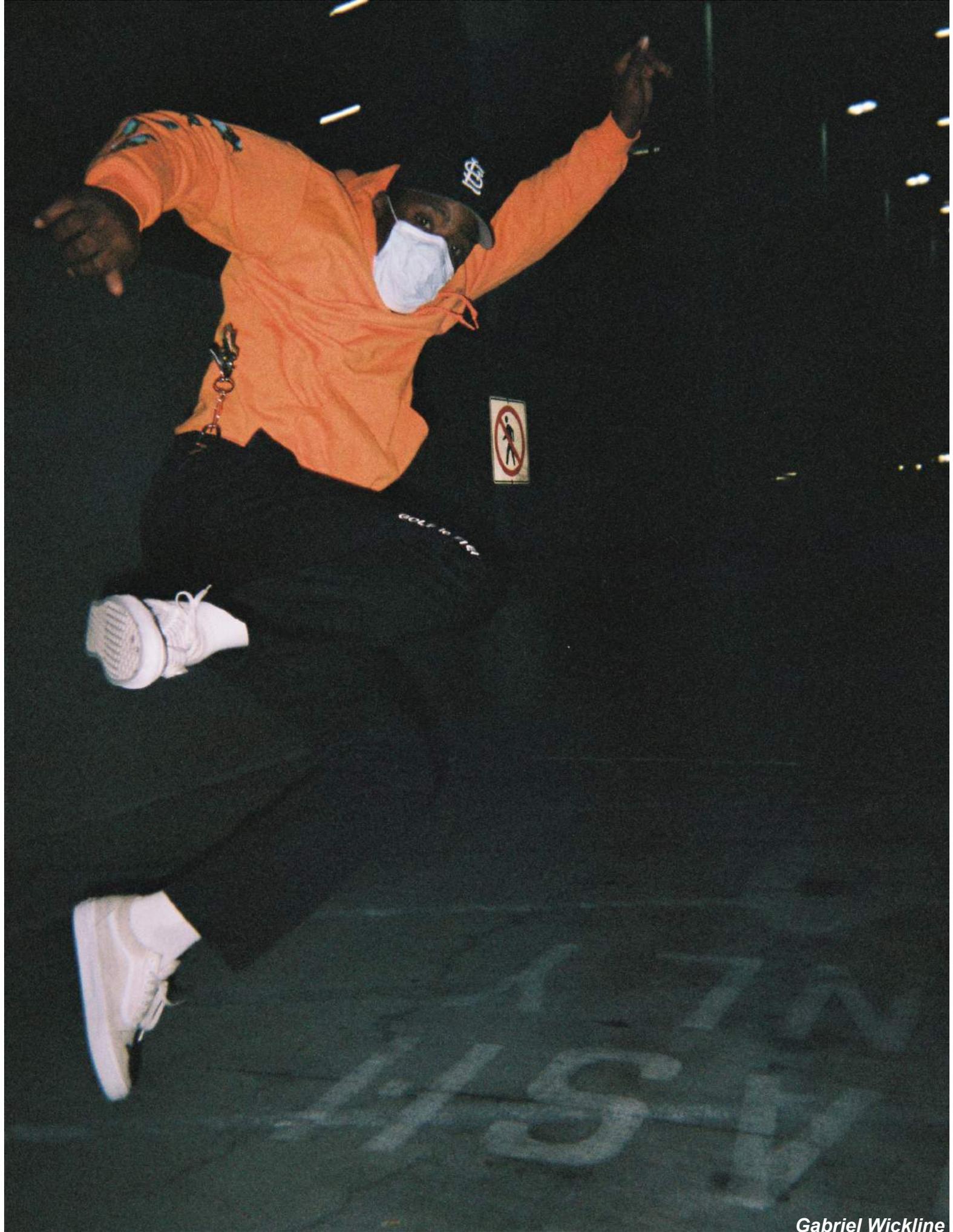


[@michellenesept](#)





*Perola Navarro*



Gabriel Wickline

# ***RECIPE FOR DISASTER//***

**Tested and Written by Misha Brooks**

Since the beginning of this worldwide pandemic, shoppers have been flooding supermarkets and clearing shelves. Grocery stores have been understaffed and overworked to manage the endless desires of panicked hoarders. I feel for those workers, and I implore our readers to do their best to stay home and work with what they have, food-wise. Not to brag, but I haven't visited the supermarket even once since COVID-19 hit the daily news cycle. I'll admit my kitchen is stocked with a pantheon of cookware, and I have years of culinary experience under my belt, but when it comes to foodstuff I've got no leg up. Much of the reason for this superstore shopping craze is a lack of information, resources, and instructions on how to make do with what you have at home, so I've decided to share with you here a few of my favorite recipes that I guarantee you already have the ingredients for. Enjoy!

You will need:

- 1lb bone-in skinless rat meat
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup bleach
- 3 garlic cloves, sliced thin
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- optional  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp of red pepper flakes



Let me answer your question before you ask: yes, you can use mice instead of rats here. It won't taste as good, and you'll need a few more of them, but besides that you can follow the recipe all the same. In terms of catching the rodents, pick your poison (literally). Traps, baits, cages should all do fine. Living in NYC I've never had any sourcing problems.

RAT  
MEAT  
IN  
BLEACH  
SAUCE

1. Put olive oil into a heavy bottomed pan on medium-high heat. When oil begins to shimmer add rat and cook, flipping after 4-5 minutes, until golden brown on both sides. Remove from pan. Don't worry if rat is not cooked all the way through it will finish cooking in sauce later.

2. Add garlic (and optionally red pepper flakes) to pan and sauté being careful it doesn't burn. Once garlic is fragrant,

add in bleach to deglaze pan. Be sure to scrape all those good bits off the bottom of the pan.

3. Once bleach has reduced by about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of its original volume add back in the browned rat, turn the heat down to low and simmer until rat is cooked through.

4. Serve with crusty bread and garnish with an optional drizzle of nice olive oil.

### **FRIED JEWELRY**

What's better than a crunchy salty snack? And when's a better time to indulge than when you're locked down in quarantine? This fried jewelry recipe works with any little trinkets you have lying around the house, as long as they're not too chunky. Things I find work great are thin-chained necklaces, delicate rings, and any other light, small carat jewelry you don't wear anymore. Here's how you do it.

You will need:

**300 ml** sparkling water  
**1lb** of lightweight jewelry  
**200 grams** cornstarch  
**100 grams** AP flour

1. In a Dutch oven heat 2 quarts of neutral oil (like canola) to 350 degrees.

2. In a large bowl combine flour and cornstarch and mix well. Slowly drizzle in sparkling water and stir until a batter the consistency of sour cream forms.

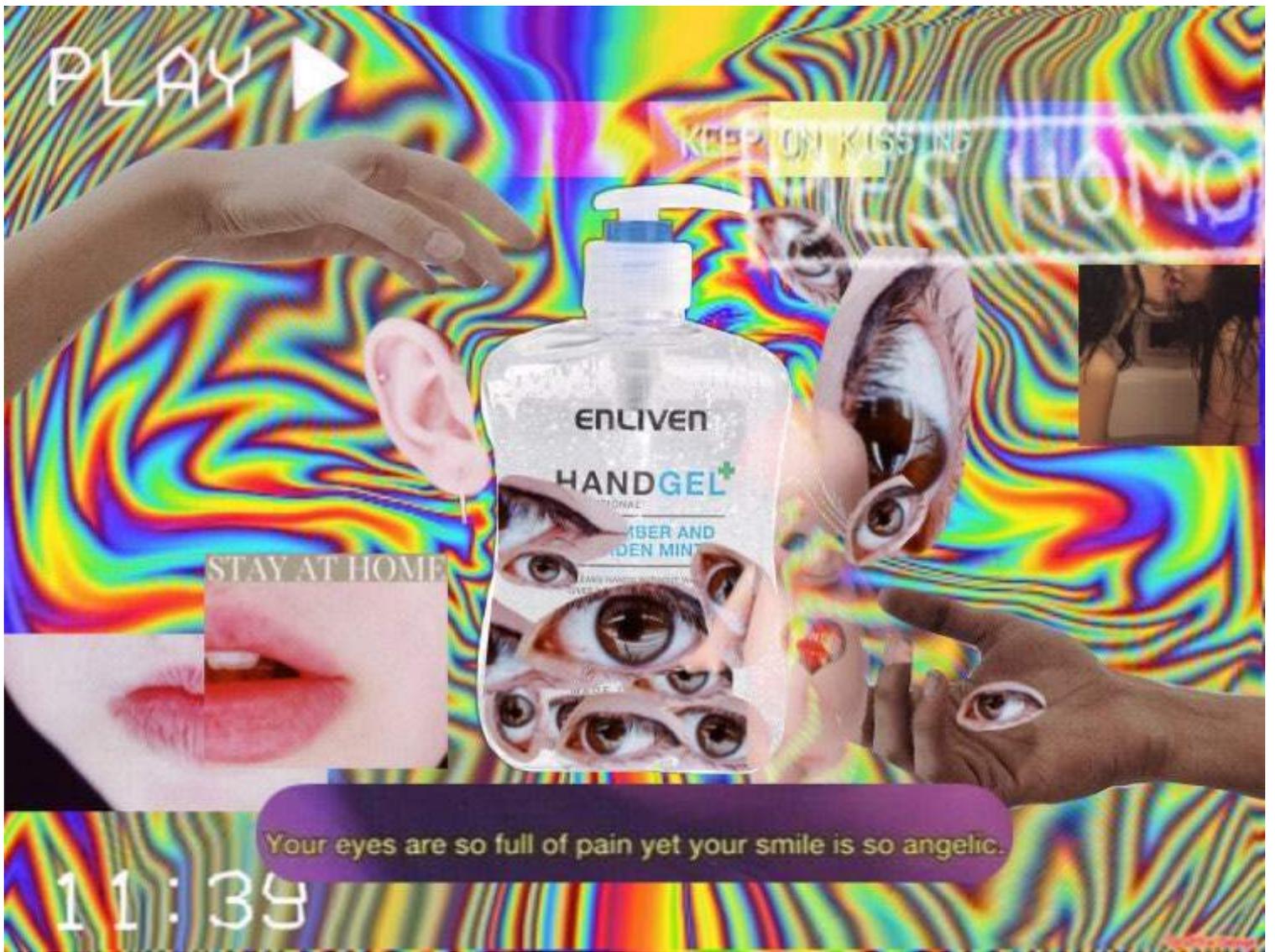
3. Working in batches, so as not to overcrowd the pot, dip the jewelry in batter, shake off the excess and fry until golden brown.

4. Drain on a paper-towel lined baking sheet and sprinkle generously with salt while still hot.



Power Boost Burner

**FRIED**  
**JEWELRY**



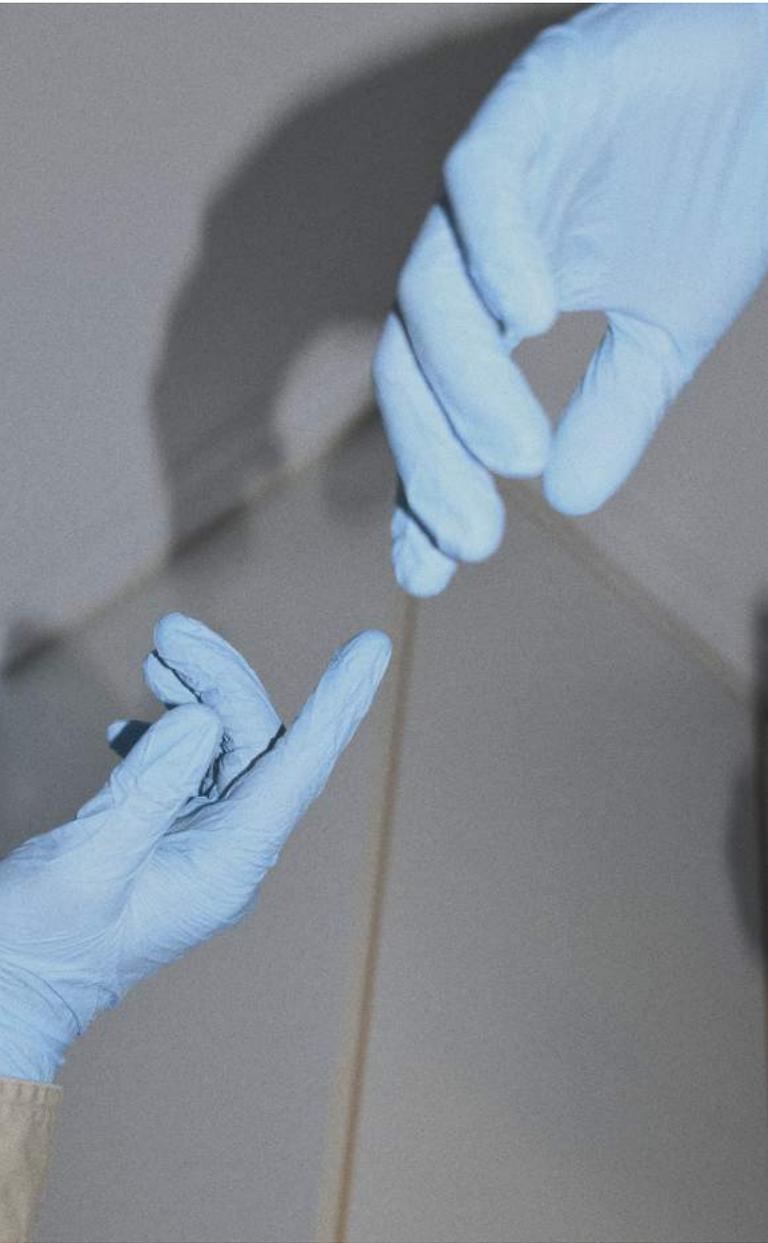
Luce Maria



Zeta Peach



1000 LIFETIMES



***Stefanos Marinopolous***

***CEMETER***  
***-Y SOULS/***  
***STAR***  
***MACHINE//***

*By Kippy Winston*

**N**ot a soul in the cemetery.  
Ha, she thought, as she passed  
by the gravestones.

She knew she was surrounded by souls.

As a child she had pitied people who  
believed in ghosts.

These days she conceded they'd been right.

Ghosts were all around and that was just  
fine.

--

She was living in a  
new and less densely  
populated city when  
the pandemic struck.

"It's easy to self  
quarantine when you  
don't know anyone!"  
she'd joked to friends back home.

In truth, she was relieved so many people  
were checking in on her and felt less lonely  
with the pandemic afoot than she'd felt when  
she first moved.

"How are you doing?" her friends asked in  
that freighted way people ask when they  
already know the answer.

"I'm actually ok!"

And in strange ways she really was.

"You've been through so much...and now  
this," they pointed out.

She couldn't disagree on that count.

She rounded a bend of the cemetery's path.

She'd only passed two other humans this  
morning.

One had said hello, one had not.

It was hard to tell what was six feet.

On a somewhat narrow sideway she'd seen  
one stranger's exhale in the air as she'd  
approached. The way that happens in winter,  
like a puff of smoke. And she'd proceeded to  
run right through it because even with the  
pandemic it was a busy road.

It was nearly the end of winter where she  
now was.

Well, technically it was spring, but her new  
city was seasonally behind her old city.

(Artistically too.)

***"As a child she had pitied  
people who believed in  
ghosts.***

***These days she conceded  
they'd been right."***

She missed her old  
city but was glad to  
not be there now.

Her friends seemed  
really wiggled out.

Her stomach hurt less  
today, which she  
realized half-way  
through her jaunt. She

didn't call these outings "jogs."

And she certainly did not call them "runs."

Her fashion sensibilities didn't jive with  
serious exercisers.

(She didn't own Lycra or see-through  
spandex.)

Her jaunt outfits were perhaps her most  
bohemian "lewks."

Today's ensemble included a pair of Nike  
"running" shoes, a pair of socks she'd owned  
since the sixth grade, leggings she'd  
purchased from Kmart—which her sister had  
once mistaken for being from Everlane.  
Layered over the black leggings were a pair  
of gray "booty" shorts, which had been  
purchased with her mother at Marshall's one  
summer back when she was still a virgin, an  
old and tattered Muji striped shirt her sister  
had given her for Christmas some 10 years  
ago, a sweatshirt she loved dearly that she'd  
bought in high school at an old thrift shop, a  
pair of dark brown workman's leather gloves  
that had a hole or two, a tissue tucked up the



sweatshirt  
sleeve for eventual congestion, a baseball  
hat from the city she'd grown up in.

Yes, to her this felt very bohemian indeed.

--

Her ex had loved the word "bohemian." She  
thought of him now.

He had recently informed her over text  
message that he'd lost 25 pounds in the  
quarantine. She remembered fondly his loose  
relationship to numbers and was having  
difficulty imagining him toned and sculpted.  
She mildly resented how, whoever was with  
him next, would get a better version of him.

She'd texted her sister about her ex's weight  
loss and her sister had replied:

"Did you ask him if he's looked more deeply  
at his addictions?"

(Her sister was fierce.)

Her sister had visited her in the new city  
before the pandemic.

Her sister was allergic to nostalgia.

She didn't just burn bridges; she torched  
them.

She  
was somewhat envious of this, though, as  
"Yoga with Adriene" on YouTube had taught  
her in recent days—yoga isn't about  
becoming some other person. You're already  
you. And you are enough.

She accepted her nostalgia as a sort of life's  
project. In this way, she was an eternal teen.  
Big Mood. Though, she still wished her  
hamstrings were more open. So she knew  
she would never be full Yoga.

In any case, her sister's gale force  
enthusiasm for the new city she was living in  
had had a lasting and salubrious effect on  
her psyche.

And for this she was grateful.

--

In the cemetery the cardinals were chirping  
and between the lone car or two that passed  
on the road that had once been busy you  
could even hear waves.

She was living near a body of water that had  
at first creeped her out because it wasn't an  
ocean but was growing on her immensely  
with every passing day.

She wondered how people were getting by  
who didn't live near bodies of water during all  
of this.

**“And for the record, he wasn’t a warlord, not at all, calling him a warlord was just to signal that he was trouble and would probably break her heart.”**

Approaching the cemetery exit she passed by a pair of pink fuzzy socks, the kind they sell at the register at CVS. They lay crumpled on the edge of the cemetery grass and cement cemetery path. She wondered what the story behind those was.

The sirens were moaning in the distance.

Not a soul in the cemetery.

The cemetery abutted a number of residential apartment buildings and the sound of hammering came from them.

Surely all hammering not in service of building temporary hospital beds is unessential! she thought and remembered how she wanted to hang two framed art prints in her new apartment, which would require a hammer.

She thought of the make shift hospital tent images she’d seen in her old city.

Two days ago, on an early morning bicycle return from the grocery store while wearing a homemade mask she’d fashioned out of stained handkerchiefs, an old sock, binder clips, and hair ties, her bag precariously nestled in a basket, she’d been horrified to see through her rain bespectacled glasses, that landscapers were doling out mulch on the lawns of mansions she passed on Lakeshore Boulevard.

Surely mulch is not essential!, she had seethed.

And as she began the new cleaning precautions upon getting home she considered spinning her outrage into social media content but got distracted with a snack.

--

Of late she gave a lot of thought to real estate, as a sort of escape from the sirens.

The real estate in her new city, suburb of a city really, was quite lovely to gaze at.

A balm for afternoon walks.

The best apartment she’d seen yet had belonged a Bulgarian warlord. Well, not a warlord, really, but he was definitely dangerous.

Could she be really the mistress of a person who lived in such an absurd apartment? One that resembled that of a *nouveau riche* Russian oligarch? Frosted vaunted ceilings and all?

She and the warlord had FaceTimed the previous night and it had been good.

They’d had three pre-pandemic dates— technically the third date had been after all the restaurants had closed, which felt slightly reckless, but they had not yet slept with each other, though he’d been vocal in requesting this.

She now slightly rued not having taken him up on the offer when there’d been the chance. It was two and half weeks since she’d last been touched by another human, him, but she knew it had been right to abstain.

She was moderate after all.

Regular and orderly in her ordinary life, so that violence and originality could erupt in her artistic toils!!! Or something like that. (She wasn’t so interested in violence.)

Communication between her and the warlord had waned after their third date.

This was in part because he believed he had been exposed to the virus, but had told her in a weird and puzzling way over a text message.

On FaceTime, after they had joked a sufficient and maniacal amount in the way that new couples can, talk had turned to the pandemic.

She'd asked if she could give him a bit of "feedback."

"Next time you're in a pandemic and have gone on three dates with someone don't tell them over text that you've maybe been exposed to the virus but frame it as a spat with your ex about seeing your kids."

"What??? Oh my god. I had no idea you were so concerned!" He seemed genuinely apologetic. He explained how he didn't actually know the co-worker who had tested positive. The news for him was tantamount to being told, "Someone in your city has the virus." It all made sense to her now in his rush of words but none of this had been clear from his text. And it felt like too huge a topic to even broach over text so she'd given it a wide berth.

"So you're shy," he'd said.

They returned to maniacal jokes but FaceTime was on the fritz, and when they switched to just phone she decided to ask a more serious question.

"So. What are your vulnerabilities? You must have a few—you're human."

And he had talked about how people either like him or don't like him and that he'd wished people who didn't like him didn't have to be around him, and she'd sensed there was a lot more to this—and wanted to know who didn't like him and all the ways in life which he had been wounded—but she knew she had to leave this for another time.

He asked her how she was vulnerable.

She paused. She didn't know how to answer.

"I guess I am just a vulnerable person," she eventually said.

"But this shouldn't be confused with 'victim.' I think these can get muddled a lot."

He agreed with her.

"But I am also pretty confident," she added.

He said, "Do you know what a unique combination that is for a human being to have? To be both vulnerable and confident?"

"No, but I think it's pretty unique I am wearing snoopy pants!" She'd laughed at this joke, and he did not.

And in his silence she had felt special.

--

But he was complicated. And drank a lot. And had two kids from a previous marriage and wasn't yet divorced. And his fame—well fame in his field of applied mathematics—was also something to pay attention to.

(And for the record, he wasn't a warlord, not at all, calling him a warlord was just to signal that he was trouble and would probably break her heart. Was it problematic to call him a warlord? Yes. Was she about to stop? No.)

Her ex had also contended with a kind of fame.

In fact, recently one of his fans had written a comment on her Instagram account— she'd been too blasé to ever bother with a private account, and was secretly interested in fame though she would never \*ever\* admit this. In her own way she was an open book and hadn't cared who saw what of her life, and so hadn't minded her ex's fans following her in order to catch glimpses of him. Though she never knew what to do with the painfully earnest comments they sometimes put under silly photos.

A few days ago a fan had written: "I hope you and Toby are doing well!!!" followed by a little heart emoji.

This annoyed her at first.

And then it didn't.

It was one of the many structural errors that had been at play in the relationship.

At first she had wanted to say "Hey @StarryNiteLite123 have you given any thought to why Toby hasn't appeared in any of my photos from the past nine months?"

She passed by a cop car where the police officer didn't look up from phone scrolling. No hello from him.

She now imagined writing back to the fan a private message—a DM if you will.

"Toby left me over the summer. In the fall we spiritually divorced. We are still technically married, and sometimes a teeny tiny part of me still wonders if we have really reached our end. But I also know we have. I didn't want to broadcast this over Instagram and am telling you in a private DM so that perhaps you could let Toby's other fans know in a discreet way about our status, since this is obviously very painful for me and likely for Toby too. And it's a bit awkward to have his fans commenting on my pictures now that we aren't together. Unless you're my fans too, lol. Anyway, thanks and I hope you are living your best #PandemicLyfe."

She wouldn't send that private message though she wanted to.

She dodged an aggressive pit-bull and its owner and crossed the street into the alleyway behind her apartment where she passed a dumpster.

Next to it lay a discarded cardboard box advertising a telescope.

She imagined a little kid using it out of an apartment window with a kindly dad. We need astronomy now more than weather, she thought.

She

thought of the "star machine" she and her husband had been gifted for their wedding.

It was strange and circular, a plastic *objet d'art*, which, when turned on in a dark room, projected the night sky onto a ceiling.

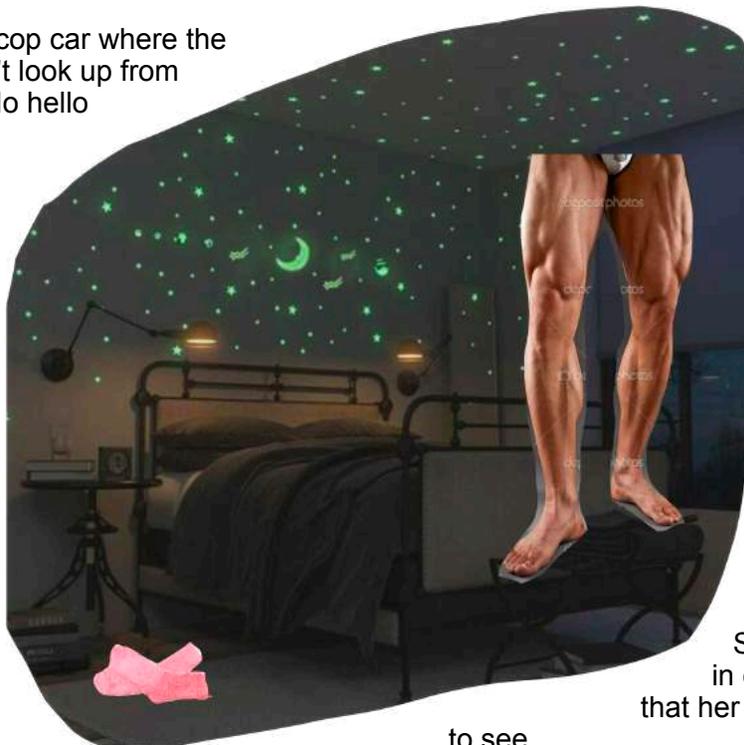
You could choose a setting to make the night sky rotate very slowly.

She had used it once in one of her projects that her ex hadn't been able

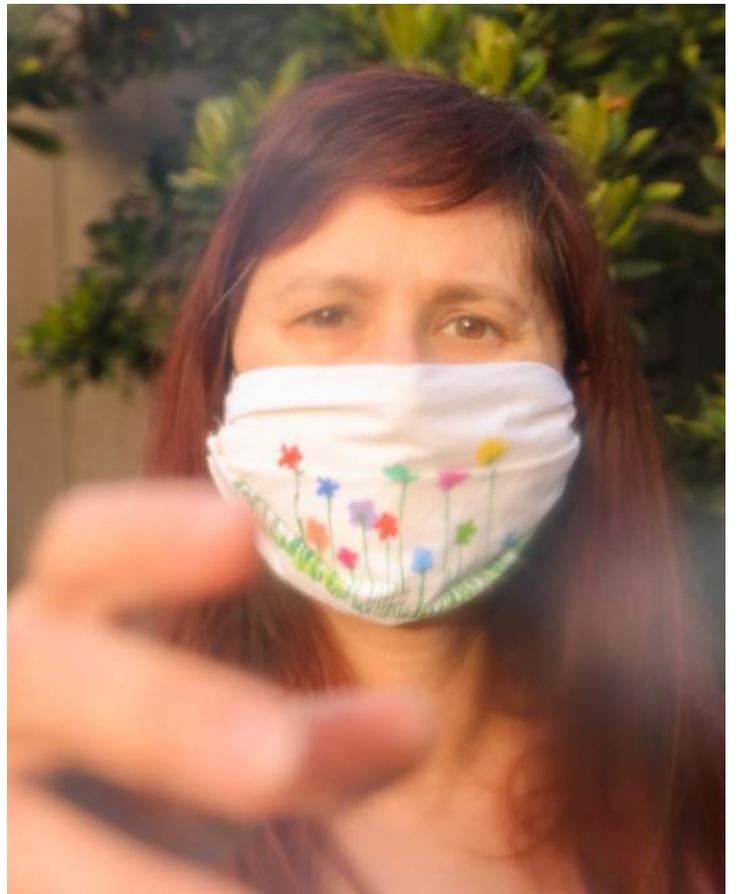
to see.

He now had the machine.

At least she still had stars. ♦







*Martita Medina*

*Eleanor Taylor*



# ***the beanie***



***[iswaif.com/clothes](https://iswaif.com/clothes)***

***FIVE  
YEARS  
OF RED  
DOCS//***

***By Meggie Gates***

**M**y mom doesn't like when I wear docs to dinner. The rug is new but fading, an upgrade from our scratchy bamboo and if I wear docs on them I'll get it dirty. I can traverse around on the wood if I stand behind the table, but if she sees my dirty doc martens, falling apart from years of use, she will descend like a pack of wolves.



On the way back to my 5 year reunion I have a flaming UTI from a guy who won't commit. I chug warm cranberry juice my not-yet-married-into-the-family-cousin-in-law has in the backseat of her car. We pack vodka to supplement it and try to bridge the gap between two queens. Her Prom, me

Homecoming. There isn't much to say besides growth, gossip, and girls we hate from our catholic school on the four-hour drive. She asks about the UTI and I ask if she's going to try selling crystals to our old classmates, the answer being Yes. We reach the Cedar Rapids sign running on empty and I text my mother to come pick me up from the Casey's downtown. Being dumped at the gas station is the midway point for all of us to pick me up and I get a beef jerky stick while my dog bounces around in the backseat.

Dropped off at home, I grab a Bud Light in seclusion to match my dad. I've got a gay skirt on and a gay shirt on and my gay docs. Everything about me screams "gay." A yell follows behind me and I ignore my mom's "shoes off" request as well as her "don't you

***"I've got a gay skirt on and a gay shirt on and my gay docs. Everything about me screams 'gay.'"***

want to cherish this?" question posed against my violent consumption. Requiring me to be sober before my five year high school reunion feels like a hate crime directed at me and me alone so I sit on the wood floor, boots intact, drinking behind the cabinet, waiting for them to haul ass out of here to whatever social soirée they're headed to this time.

I plop down on the porch couch, third drink in hand as my mom walks out to talk to me. She's got some clothes for me to go through and wants me to know if I want a jacket I haven't worn in seven years. "I'll just hold this up and tell me if you want it or not," she asks about a winter coat in August. I cross my legs, boots on white carpet, and insist she throws them away along with my gauchos from 7<sup>th</sup> grade, a point I've been reiterating for months. Scurrying upstairs in to my bedroom, she grabs a pair of heels she bought exclusively for my five year. "These would look so cute with your skirt," she says. So straight, she means.

When I was young, I used to rip teeth from my socket to see what it would feel like. I woke up one morning at 4 A.M. and looked at myself in my parent's mirror, barely blinking, as I worked my incisors out from my head. Back and forth I went until 11 A.M. I proudly held the teeth in my hand to show my dad because I was bored with how I looked. Excited by how easy it was to wiggle my tongue in lieu of what was absent. He wanted to know if they were loose and I said no. I made them this way because I am this way, a person full of holes you'll try to stitch up forever.



Lacing my boots up, she pulls two wooden platform wedges from the box. I think they're

***“I’m Vice President so I’m the first to arrive. I must check and make sure everything is intact because the president, the first girl I ever had a crush on, is too posh to leave her NYC life for some event in Iowa.”***

wedges, I couldn’t tell you, but they are something within the heel community, one I separated myself from long ago. Readjusting my underwear, I decline. My boots are just fine and who am I trying to impress, anyway. Privy to my yeast situation, because I loudly have no boundaries, she insists maybe men treat me this way because I do not dress female enough. I do not adhere to what is there and it is the connective tissue to our conversations. It does not bug them that I am out, they try to fit the holes I have dug in our backyard earnestly, but gender is another I’ve buried myself in. They’ve spent the past four years responding to every situation with “I’m trying to understand it’s just weird.” Weird I pick the fashionable maroon docs over the clunky wooden clogs.

“Well, first off, no he treats me like shit because he is shit,” I tell my mom, eager to watch her squirm at the word shit. “He literally didn’t put sheets on his bed for four months. I slept on a bare mattress for four months,” she shifts again, uncomfortable knowing the lengths I’ll go for good dick. “Secondly, as we go over every time I am home, I’m not straight and I don’t like dressing feminine,” I say as she runs her hands through her hair, trying. “This is the first time I’m bringing it up but I thought all the overalls I wear would have made it pretty clear I’m not the kind of woman you want me to be.”

I notice my dad on another so I open another, insistent keeping up with my brother and father is masculinity. My mom watches with

soft eyes as I move through the kitchen with weighted feet. “I just think you’d be so much prettier in heels, Meg,” she says, wading through the dark on a topic neither of us know anything about. “I bought these for you from Younkers,” our age-old tradition. “I guess you can take them back with you if you want.”

In high school, I was Homecoming Queen. My mom took my crown immediately and wore it the entire night, hugging me close at Applebee’s to celebrate my win. “Your dad needed this,” she whispers in relation to my grandfather’s death. How the two are related only God knows, but winning a popularity contest brings peace to all our minds. It feels good to be loved. Wandering crooked in a Catholic School for years leaves another hole in the yard but this is one my parents love. The one they grieve like a grave when I cut off my hair and kissed girls. The people loved me one way. Hard to say if they’ll love me another.

On the ride over I bring up the war in Syria. I often do for some reason in my hometown. My Uber driver nods, already thinking about his next pickup twelve minutes away, and kindly asks me what Chicago is like. I tell him about the guy who recently committed suicide at Belmont and how they found his body strewn on the train tracks between two stations. I need to let everyone know how different my life is there, how different two places can be when one person exists in both. He lets me out at Parlor City with a friendly wave and drives off. I hope he’s listening to the murder podcast I recommended when he goes.

I’m Vice President so I’m the first to arrive. I must check and make sure everything is intact because the president, the first girl I ever had a crush on, is too posh to



leave her NYC life for some event in Iowa. People begin pouring in as I sip on cranberry vodkas, loudly telling people I haven't seen in four years that I'm killing two birds with one stone. "I've got a festering UTI and it is SCORCHING in here," I shout, convincing the guys in my class reasons why they should get a Gardasil shot. "You can just smell the yeast cooking."

People saunter over throughout the night and I marvel at how we have grown. I thought Emily would ride the wave of being a lesbian senator but is now a farm wife. I hoped Allie might join the Opera but now she's a step mom. The music shifted and the dance did too. People drifted from the rhythm of what we knew in to what we didn't and picked up flashlights to explore the unknown like me. How did we get here? To see the ground we once ran frozen overnight. How did we change so fast and stretch so high? How did every conversation start when we were greeted by our parents coming home for our five year? Did they for swearing? Did they marvel over our salaried jobs? Most importantly, why did no guy in my graduating class get a Gardasil shot?

I climb fences and write my name in sharpie all over downtown with my friend Austin, a friend who wasn't a friend before the night. We strut and twirl with his boyfriend Sheldon pinky promising we'll spend Christmas together in Spain this year. We don't, obviously, but the sentiment is there. My friends text and ask me to come to White Star Ale House and I opt out, following the sidewalk to wherever it ends. Being a part of everyone doesn't allude to me anymore. Laying in the grave people love to see me in is a coffin I no longer fit. I'm unlikeable. I'm loud. I operate outside of what's expected and I like it.

I snapchat the boy I hate that I hate him and I'm drunk. I stomp in to my house at midnight and sink my hands balls deep into some leftover mac and cheese. My dad wakes up from the couch and shakes his head at the sight of how wasted I am. "I talked about World War II this time on the way home. Why did I do that?" He hands me a shovel and tells me to dig another hole. "Because that's just what you are: a Surprise."

Apparently, the courage to let them down is something I've still got. ♦



***A WAIF'S***

***WALK//***

***By Rati Choudhary***

Come along for a walk with me.

We start off on a country lane. On our left is where Lancelot and Orlando live. They're horses. Behind the shed we just passed lives a rabbit who is blind, we keep an eye on the sweet thing but are careful to not be intrusive. It's impressive they're still alive to be honest.

Further down the road, there's a tree branch that sticks out at a perfect ninety-degree angle; the closest town, miles away, is framed within the twigs. There are green fields, and sheep dotted about and the sky is clear and blue. England isn't as dreary as everyone thinks, something I will always be persistent about. The faraway cars twinkle and look rather pretty from here. I think it's weird that those metal chunks add value to this picture, but they do, oddly enough.

Well, let's keep going.



We've made our way to the bottom of the lane where the road forks, and we turn right. Up here there's an opening onto a pasture that slopes ever so gently downwards. Technically, we're not supposed to go into it, but we do anyway. But only a few steps, so that we don't see where it ends; it feels like it goes on forever, as if the rest of the world is in this one field.

Right, back onto the road.

We walk past magnificent trees that grow from one root but look like multiple individuals. A strong community. Now we find ourselves at the part of the road that interrupts the babiest of streams; the part of the road that looks a bit like a mirror. We splash on through and come to the fields.

This bit is my favourite. Everything is wide open; there's so much free space for your thoughts to run wild.

Just keep going now.

Above us, the swallows dance from tree to tree, and Buddy the Buzzard is doing that thing birds do when they seem to be floating still in the breeze.

It's at this point I always ask myself if I'd rather be a tree or a bird. Since you're here, I'd probably ask you. Something rooted or something constantly moving?

Let's discuss this as we trudge through the muddiest of meadows. We laugh as we precariously squelch on through, trying not to fall over. And finally, we make it to my favourite hugger.

By now you've guessed I'm a bit of a nature waif. I can't help it. But seriously though – this tree gives the best hugs.

The sky has darts of pink strewn across it now, so we must head back. And we do. ♦



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