

# Flipped

Issue #8



Summer 2017

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## EDITORIAL

Coincidence or not, our 8th issue that happens to have The Body as its theme, is the first issue that also gets a physical form. A body. If you are holding a copy of Fliqped in your hands, while you read these words, then we are partners in crime and I am way too happy you decided to splurge on this.

This issue was of the hardest things I ever had to do. It took a lot of writing and rewriting. Debating and overthinking. It brought me so many thrills as well and articles that tugged at my heartstrings. Every single piece is a gem and deserves your attention. Leave nothing unread. Every single photograph was carefully created. Let no image escape you.

Our bodies carry us, yet we carry our bodies too. Our vessels that define us in ways our souls never will. So much work went into our bodies. Evolution did its part. Our society mandates its rules and expectations. Our feelings and mental health are mirrored on them. Childhood is mapped on them with scars. I will let you, dear reader decide the importance the body carries, for it is your responsibility.

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L u n g s



# F R E N E M I E S

*when insecurities come to visit*

Words: Emily Kapoathanasi

Photography: Mimika Michopoulou

I've always believed I was the only one inhabiting my thoughts. That brick by brick, I had managed to build a little home, cozy, like a cottage. Somewhere to visit, that is, whenever I need some time off reality, and to spend hours and hours in a space that is mine alone.

As time passed, everything was going splendidly. Nobody bothered me. Until one afternoon, as I was sitting on a woven straw couch in the garden, I heard footsteps. I was sure it was my imagination. Who could have possibly discovered my perfect hiding place? And yet, it wasn't my imagination. It was Them. Those that no one can escape from, it seems. It was the Imperfections.

They came strutting in, impeccably dressed, well groomed and majestic. They made themselves comfortable in the chairs around me, thinking they hadn't disrupted my peace and quiet and telling me I myself had invited them. I did not remember doing so. Starting to panic, I frantically looked for an excuse to dismiss them, as politely as possible. It wouldn't want to be totally rude. However, as they began to chat about frivolous things, I felt like I knew them.

We talked for a good while until I realized why they felt familiar. We had met before, among mutual friends, around my early teens. I had immediately disliked them from the bottom of my soul. My reasons? Too many to count.

First of all they were aggressive, arrogant, they interrupted me, questioned me, and kept comparing me to any other girl. They berated my too-close-together eyebrows, my not-so-elegant nose, my somewhat short legs, the acne on my shoulders, the gaps in my teeth and my wide frame. And, laughing, they made sure to point out my flabby arms, the abrupt curve of my waist and my far from delicate fingers.

They obviously saved the most hurtful for last. For several minutes, they discussed my small, somewhat oddly shaped breasts. The part of my body, that is, where my whole bundle of insecurities comes from and which makes me redefine the femininity of my appearance every day, as dramatic as this may sound.

Despite everything they've said, I still listen carefully, my expression unchanged at their words. And then a sound reaches my ears, a thin, slow, jarring noise like something slowly breaking. I turn, and I am shocked to see elegant cracks appear on the walls of my home, running across them as if racing each other for a finishing line.

As I'm watching the destruction with my eyes widened, the Imperfections are whispering to each other maliciously. It's like what is happening before us is totally natural and expected to them. I should have suspected They are to blame.

I suddenly decide it's no use being polite. I get up and kick them out, without responding to their protests and locking the door of my garden behind them. No more. They will never be allowed in here again and I'll make sure to keep a good distance from them. No contact, whatsoever!

But later on, once I'm back on my couch and gazing at the cracks that are now surrounding and threatening my fortress, I close my eyes.

In retrospect, I think I could have handled the incident differently. The Imperfections were most likely trying to entertain both themselves and me, maybe they were looking for a way to communicate with me and awkwardly ended up playing this unpleasant game. Perhaps they were offended by my indifference, or by the fact that, indeed, I had never invited them myself.

I shouldn't have been so impulsive, turning them away so harshly. They still feel familiar to me, and in a way, we have something in common. My Body. If I welcome them, they will surely stop being so mean.

And actually, the cracks on the walls of my home are not that noticeable after all. More so, they give it an antique vibe, like it's been through a lot, like it's matured.

So I might end up not only liking the Imperfections, but also enjoying their company, one day. Who knows?





## A 2 1 G R E E C E

*in support of humanity*

Words: Xrysoula Zagoti

Photography: A21

**Y**ou have possibly heard of the term “human trafficking”. Maybe it sounds to you like a problem far from the reality of modern societies.  
It’s not.

First off, human trafficking is the second most prevalent crime across the globe at the moment, following arms dealing. It is defined as buying and selling human beings who are violently forced into slavery, to cover world-wide demand. Trafficking includes people being sold for work, sex, participation in all kinds of criminal activities and, finally, organ trafficking. It is estimated that the instigators of this kind of slavery earn about 150 billion dollars every year by taking advantage of 27 million victims worldwide.

If these numbers still don’t shock you, you should learn that every minute, two women are sold in order to be sexually exploited, and that is only in Greece.

A21 is an international NGO that fights against this problem.

Christine Caine, founder of A21, was herself a victim of chronic rape and has now dedicated her life to informing the public, actively helping victims of trafficking and healing their injuries, visible or not. A21 has multiple centers all over the world, with the Greek branch located in Thessaloniki, a city used as a base for trafficking in Europe. Thousands of women, teenagers, even children are held captive in Greece, forced to “practice” before they are sent all across Europe.

Under the auspices of A21, a transition home functions in Thessaloniki, where victims receive first medical aid. There is also a guest house where victims can stay afterwards under the supervision of specialists, a hotline, 1109 and a number of specifically trained police officers. So with the mutual effort of witnesses, the police, lawyers, therapists, social workers and more, the center in Thessaloniki has managed to liberate over 115 victims. An important, yet very small number when compared to all those still caught in the web of trafficking.

So, how can you help?

Flipped spoke on the phone with “Christina”, one of the 15 permanent staff members of A21 in Thessaloniki, who assured us that other than the center’s personnel there are plenty of volunteers contributing immensely in A21’s every area of activity. So, if you wish to contribute as well, you can volunteer!

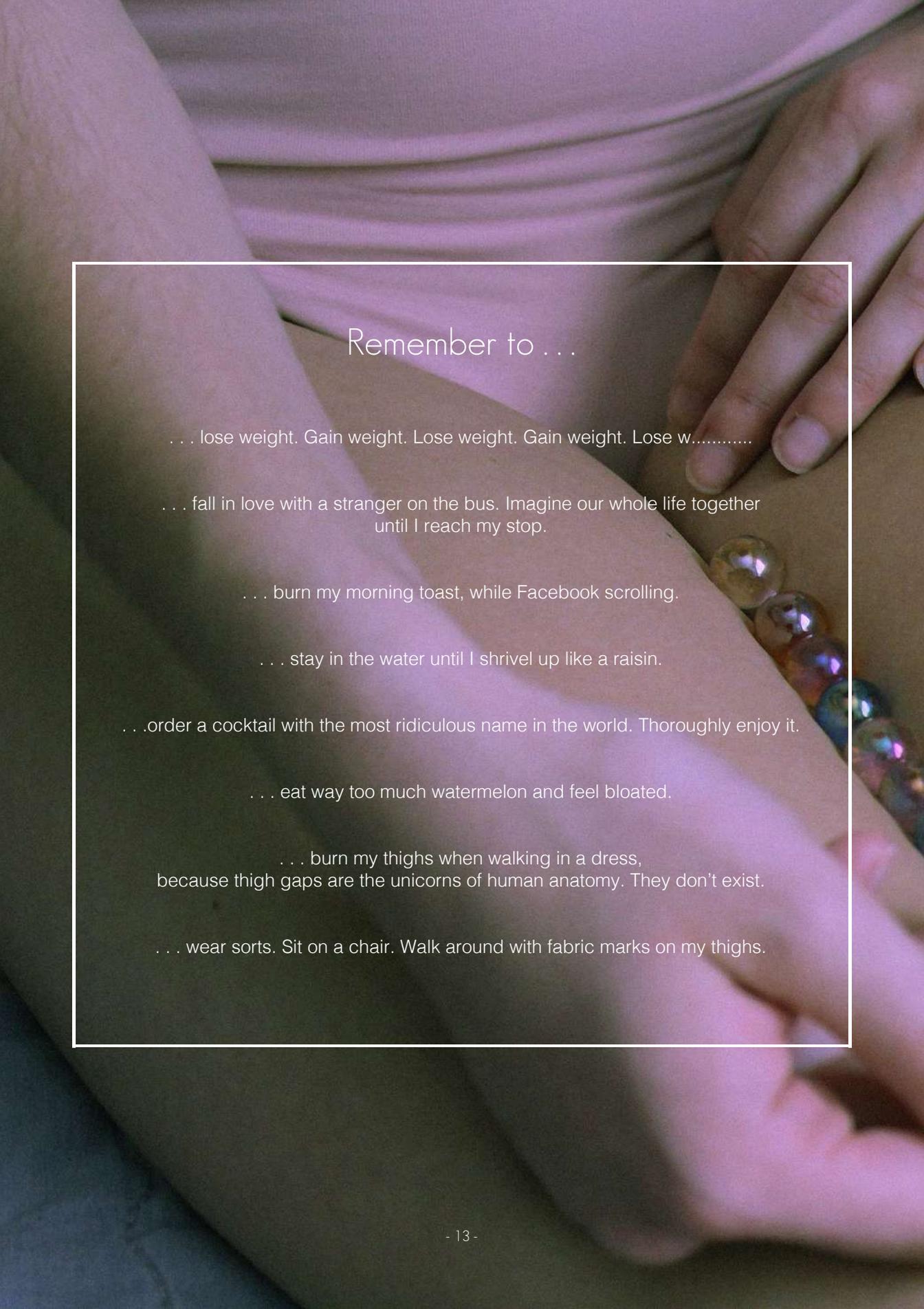
On the A21 website you can find all the upcoming activities and events meant to raise awareness and educate the public, so you may know when and where your help is needed. You can also do your own research - and you should. There is an abundance of videos online, as well as interviews of the founders, representatives and volunteers that will answer many of your questions. The hotline is also constantly open and there are people ready to not only give you information but also anonymously record any evidence you may provide. An address, a car plate number, a scene of violence are all important clues for the A21 team.

It is horrible to know that in the 21st century, there are people who treat their vulnerable fellow humans like animals. It is shameful and heinous to disrespect another’s bodily autonomy. Just like you and me have the sole right to our bodies, so do the 27 million victims of trafficking.

So if you see something, say something.

Say it today, say it now. Don’t wait.





## Remember to . . .

. . . lose weight. Gain weight. Lose weight. Gain weight. Lose w.....

. . . fall in love with a stranger on the bus. Imagine our whole life together until I reach my stop.

. . . burn my morning toast, while Facebook scrolling.

. . . stay in the water until I shrivel up like a raisin.

. . .order a cocktail with the most ridiculous name in the world. Thoroughly enjoy it.

. . . eat way too much watermelon and feel bloated.

. . . burn my thighs when walking in a dress,  
because thigh gaps are the unicorns of human anatomy. They don't exist.

. . . wear sorts. Sit on a chair. Walk around with fabric marks on my thighs.

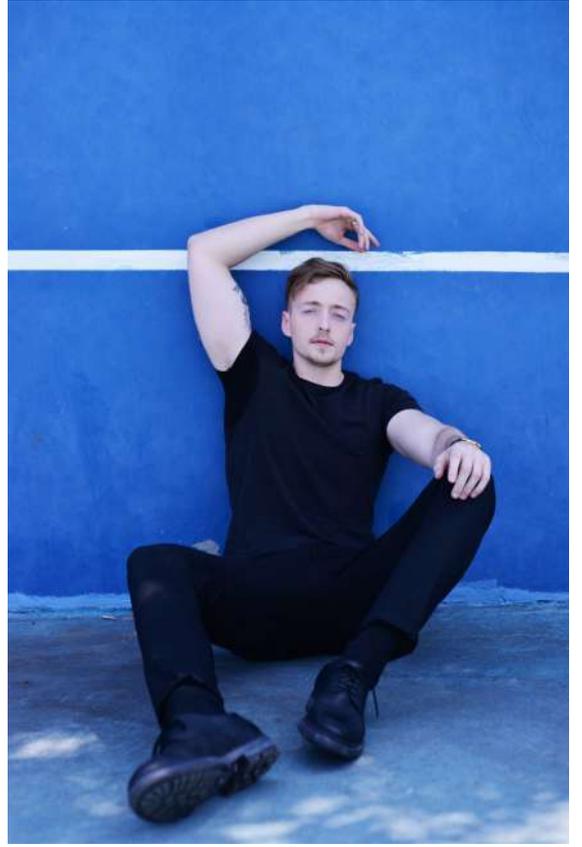


# BODY DE CONSTRUCTURE

A black and white photograph of a dark, textured wall. A horizontal white line runs across the middle of the wall. Below the wall, a shadow is cast on the floor, suggesting a light source from the left. The overall composition is minimalist and architectural.













## STILL PILGRIM PARADOX

*speaking body*

Words | Photography: Emily Kapothanasi

It is a warm Sunday afternoon. At a quiet café in Mets, Stella Fotiadi, contemporary dance teacher and founder of the dance group Still Pilgrim Paradox shared her experiences, thoughts and dreams over a glass of sour cherry juice with soda and lime.

Fliaped: Starting out, I'd like you to tell me what dancing means to you.

Stella Fotiadi: To me, dancing is the most honest language. Through dancing, one has the ability to express things which would be otherwise left unsaid. It's sort of like a refuge, leading to a liberation of sorts and I think it possesses a universal power. It is a language we can all speak by nature, each of us in their own way.

F: The theme of this issue is the body, in its widest sense, so I'd like to know about your perception of your own body, and how you experience it through dancing.

S. F: When I dance, I leave everything out. I dedicate myself to the moment, to how I move in the space I am given, how I execute every movement, how my breathing works. Breathing, especially, is an essential part of dancing. Once a dancer masters their breathing, it can complete their movement and performance-wise.

I believe that through dancing and movement a mutation can be achieved, a transformation to another version of oneself. Contemporary dance in particular - which is my speciality - demands, I think, a specific kind of contribution from the dancer, so the transformation may occur. Of course, the process and the execution depends on the person, so everyone experiences it differently and to a different extent. Personally, this is what I see and perceive, and this is, in the end, what I like about contemporary dance.

F: Do you think that other than those who have chosen it as their profession, anyone can benefit from making dancing a part of their life? Why?

S.F: Yes, and I'll tell you why I'm saying it with such certainty! It's what I see in my students. Sometimes they come to class feeling really down, yet I notice that by the end their mood has significantly improved. Many times they tell me so themselves!

Dancing can definitely have a beneficial effect on all of us. Naturally, many amateur dancers have this fear of exposure, they feel awkward since they haven't done it before, they're worried I might be too strict. But despite their self-consciousness, everyone will have gained something when the class is over, no doubt. More than the physical exercise dancing provides, contemporary dance in particular can be really therapeutic, as long as the person feels that it's right for them, that there's "chemistry".



*“I believe that through dancing and movement a mutation can be achieved,  
a transformation to another version of oneself.”*





F: Observing yourself when you dance, would you say you transform into someone else entirely, or do you remain who you are?

S.F: Seeing a dancer on stage, it's easy to understand what kind of person they are. If someone is shy, or not at all. Their overall character. No matter how they transform, they can't really hide what they are behind the role they have assumed. Besides, to me that is not the goal. It will always be me, Stella, performing a certain role. Even if I have to play a crazy woman dancing on stage, I'll do it as crazy Stella! (laughter)

F: Dancing is a way of communication with the surrounding space. How difficult do you think it is to achieve this?

S.F: The movement definitely needs to flow through a dancer's body. It has to surpass technique, movement for the sake of movement. Of course, discipline is required as well as strong memory, so that every motion can be memorized. But everyone's body is different, we are built and function in various ways and, in the end, as we constantly practice, we evolve and reach our own, very personal limit.

F: How did Still Pilgrim Paradox come to be?

S.F: It was something I had been thinking about doing for a while... When I finally committed, and after brainstorming to come up with a name, I decided on Still Pilgrim Paradox. I wanted something that refers to movement without being too obvious. So there was "still", immobility, then "pilgrim", meaning someone in constant search of their own holy place. And so we have Still Pilgrim Paradox.

I first contacted Alexis Fousekis. We had connected through previous projects and really wanted to work together again. Then Fofi, Mina and Alexandros joined us. We started working on my first idea, Hands. Then Empty Frame made music for us, and it was complete.

Overall, Still Pilgrim Paradox is a kind of open collaboration. There are all sorts of ways to work on a project and assemble the team that will bring it to life.









F: As a member of the dance community, is there something you would like to see done differently? And what is it?

S.F: Something I experienced while I was studying abroad and really miss here in Greece is more teachers that are 100% trained and knowledgeable in their art. "Teachers", in the full sense of the word, who really wish to pass down their knowledge and love of dancing. It's something I wish I found here more often, we tend to fall into this trap of imitating and badly reproducing what we see elsewhere.

I also wish young people were given more opportunities to realize and present their ideas. For example, I don't understand why so many usable spaces in Athens stay empty and rotting.

F: What are your immediate plans for Still Pilgrim Paradox?

S.F: At the moment I have an idea that I want to carry out and present within the upcoming season. It is about a duet. Right now I'm in the planning phase, I'm trying to gather the people I will work with. I'd like it to be something smaller in duration, to make it more flexible and movable.

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Vertebra



# HAUNTED

*the ghost in my body*

Words: Eleanna Bourantani

Photography: Maria Belegri

Imagine a ghost haunting your body. It shakes you from the inside, drags chains against your stomach, gives you excruciating pain. You try to explain your haunting, but no one listens. "It's just the wind" they'll say, "it's just normal" they'll say. "My aunt had a haunting just like this one!" Ghosts have power because they are invisible.

It took me a while to believe in my own haunting. At first, I didn't know it existed. Statistics tell me endometriosis affects 1 out of 10 women. Imagine trying to explain a disease that sounds "normal" to everyone because they think they have reference, although they really don't. If you are that one out of ten, how can you know you're not just imagining things?

If you've ever experienced the pain of endometriosis, you feel like your body fights you. Every month, the endometrium is created inside the uterus, ready to accept a foetus or be discarded as period blood. Imagine endometrium building itself outside the uterus, on other organs and tissues, binding them together in sacks of blood that either solidify inside you, like tiny rocks, or release their blood into your abdomen on a monthly basis. "*My womb has fangs and is trying to eat me from the inside out,*" I wrote eight years ago. To this day, my womb has not given up fighting me.

Have you already felt the need to stop reading? Has my visceral description irked you? There is a reason ghosts stay invisible: people don't want to know about them. No one speaks of period blood. *Gee, you're so irritable, are you on your period? Or are you just trying to skip class? Stop your histrionic antics!* You see, the word "hysteria" comes from the Greek word for uterus, hysteron. Because women are irrational, infantile and unreliable exactly because they have a uterus, right? There is a long history of dismissing women's claims to knowledge of their bodies and a long history of shame around periods. My ghost is not white, but crimson and soaked in blood, and we still won't see it, we won't speak about it.

You'd think that because ghosts are invisible they are immaterial too. They're not. The day I discovered my haunting it was because I almost died of septicemia. Three times I've lain on the surgical table; this month will be my fourth one. There is no cure for endometriosis, only surgical removal of lesions which might come back in less than a year. I've been through anaesthesia three times already. To the land of the dead and back, I call those journeys.

We enjoy sharing ghost stories and urban legends of hauntings. A common feeling of unease at the face of invisible horror makes said horror bearable, even enjoyable. We like the spook, because it's shared. We want to believe, because we want to be believed. Ghosts are invisible because we fear them. When they make their presence known, we say it's just the wind, we say our aunt had a haunting just like this one so it's nothing. Ghosts talk, loudly, and we chose to ignore them. Sharing the horror makes them a little bit weaker, makes us a little bit stronger. Take your hands off your ears; listen. Listen to your body, listen to us who speak of our hauntings. We need to know the ghosts are real.



# PROFESSIONAL CYBORG

Words: Kristiana Lalou

Photography: Mimika Michopoulou

World renowned, road racing cyclist Lance Armstrong once said that "Pain is temporary. Quitting lasts forever." Pain is undeniably a part of life. I cannot imagine anyone who has escaped it and if there has ever been such a person, I imagine their life must have been equally devoid of sentiment, thrill and pleasure. Giving up on life, as fair as I think it may be, also has a very important drawback. It amounts to nothing. That is why I save all of my respect for people who resist it, that need to give up.

The first time I met John, he had twinkle lights around his neck. I yanked at them and asked him what point was he trying to make. He told me quite matter-of-factly that he was a cyborg. I thought he was trying to be cheeky and brushed it off. Until later that same night, we all sat down to have a drink and John very naturally pulled at his left leg, twisted it upwards and rested his drink on his shoe. For a split second I was shocked and then it kind of all made sense. I smiled and realized this is his party trick, just like mine is leaving early.

John was born with Klippel-Trenaunay syndrome. Instead of explaining it scientifically, with which google can be more of a help to you than me, I will just tell you that it affects extremities and in John's case it was his leg. I say was because he decided about a year and a half ago, to let it go. He is now sporting a prosthetic and in his words "I feel much better, I couldn't even walk before and I was in a lot of pain. Now my back is straighter and I even gained two centimeters in height. I didn't have to do it but it was the best option."



As a child, "I was the kind of kid that went out in brand new trousers and returned with them torn in ten places," he laughs. "But gradually, because of my condition, it became harder to do the things I wanted to. Sports for example." I ask him about his body image and how he feels about it all. He admits he isn't completely OK with his body. I don't know anyone who is anyway. "I don't mind what my body looks like. My issue is with the limitations it imposes on me. For example, I have been into archery since age 13. I couldn't fully commit to it until now. Or say relationships for example, I know I can only appeal to a certain crowd. People who only base attraction on looks are automatically excluded." We argued a bit on this. The society we live in is very superficial, that much is true. But I can't imagine a witty man not being able to date freely. John went on to explain that the crowd he was referring to was the supermodel lot. A very realistic goal for any man out there. Perceived masculinity and social expectations are probably the culprits here. We measure romantic success based on our partner's good looks and not on relationship satisfaction. "Bodies are irrelevant," he then argued. "Bodies have no importance."

Advancements in bioengineering promise us all solutions that will make our lives easier and help us break the confines of our fragile anatomy. "I can't wait to be a full blown cyborg." Improved eyesight, vital organ implants and of course prosthetics. "They make prosthetics that are waterproof now. But they are so heavy. There is no point in having one on while I swim. I'll sink straight to the bottom of the ocean. So I asked them for one with a propeller on." We laugh. He entertained the idea of a turbine too.

When asked about what gives him trouble, of course Athens was mentioned as a not so disabilities friendly city. "The pavements are uneven, often broken and narrow. It's the worse place to be if you have a disability. Stairs everywhere. You can't move around easily. If someone uses a wheelchair, he is fucked."

Staying in Greece is not something John considers an option. I can't blame him. The crisis is not only financial. It goes deeper than that. Infrastructure is less than ideal. Where disabilities are considered, the state does as little as possible.

The true mark of a civilized society is, it includes and caters to the needs of all of its citizens. We can't claim to be all inclusive and bask in equality when we blatantly forget about a significant portion of people who don't share the needs the majority does.

Despite it all, you can sense the zest for life in him. He describes himself as "bitter" and "not a ray of sunshine", but he is so wrong. In the little time I've known him, I see a pretty popular person, with a good sense of humor and multiple interests. Pretty standard stuff right? Well I don't tell him that. We all like to think we are special snowflakes. Our self image is also our shield. He likes to think he is aloof and moody. I like to think he is a marshmallow. It is all a matter of perception.



# WAR AND PEACE

*“My body is a continent. Forces are at work in the night.”*

*Amy Liptrot, The Outrun*

Words: Akylina Printziou

Photography: Sophia Skroumpelou

There is a stage in every teenage girl's (or boy's, perhaps) life when she begins an intense and violent war against her body. Be it the sudden changes she witnesses day after day or the dissatisfaction burning slowly in her heart because what she sees in the mirror is unlike what she sees on TV or on magazine covers, no one can tell for sure.

Of course, dissatisfaction with the body isn't something only teenagers go through. How many older ladies have you seen who desperately try to erase the passage of time from their bodies? How many of them insist on maintaining a certain kind of figure, preferably as young as possible, and are willing to go through hell to achieve it?

It is all about appearances, isn't it? We can go on blaming our modern society and its corrupted ideals all we want, but there's no proof that people's relationships with their bodies were better before. Adapting to changes and wanting to look better and better each day (that hottie wouldn't be able to take his eyes off you!) is difficult and demanding, and the vanity that drives us is an inherent human trait.

The human body (especially the female one) has been the inspiration behind millions of art pieces, while according to some religions it is sacred and must be looked after as if it's a temple. On the other hand, society is always trying to impose certain beauty standards on us and convince us that if we don't look like that model on the cover of *Marie Claire* we will probably never manage to lead a happy and fulfilling life. But is the body and our relationship with it as important as everyone makes it out to be?

My answer would be a loud 'yes', but nurturing a healthy relationship with your "temple" isn't something society will teach you. Don't these positive-thinking gurus always insist that it isn't your body that defines you? That you should learn how to embrace yourself without being too concerned with how you look or how much you weigh? In that case, perhaps we should all wonder what exactly it is that defines us, what it is that makes us human and gives us our identity.



Perhaps thinking about the future of the human body instead of its past will help us get one step closer to an answer. There has recently been an influx of films and novels with a sci-fi twist, featuring robots with artificial intelligence or cyborgs and genetically altered human bodies as their main characters. The very recent Hollywood remake of *Ghost in the Shell*, the 1995 Japanese animated film, is one such case and even though Hollywood always manages to magically strip most scripts of their deeper philosophical meanings, the general premise of the story does make us wonder whether it is our "shell" (the body) or our "ghost" (the mind) which makes us human. *Ghost in the Shell* explores the latter, a future where all humans are genetically enhanced or even have their entire bodies replaced by robotic parts, which is an absolutely frightening prospect. In that case, would we still call a robotic body "human" as long as it has a human brain?

A similar idea is explored by the British writer Jeanette Winterson in her 2007 novel *The Stone Gods*, set many decades into the future. In that society, people (especially women) genetically modify themselves on purpose, in order to remain at a certain age forever, their bodies never aging while their minds age as normal. In that society, not wanting to do such a thing to your body is considered strange and perverse. Although it is a sci-fi scenario, it sounds quite plausible, like a not-so far-fetched version of today's cosmetic surgeries and body alterations for superficial reasons and it's undoubtable that it portrays what our society could very easily turn into.

Some might scorn these examples and reject them as fantasies and by no means indicators of what our future might look like. But seeing vanity, this inherent human trait control people's lives and attitudes towards their bodies even in such futuristic settings where the gravest problems of humanity are supposedly solved, should be a huge hint for all of us.

Finding an answer to such big questions as what makes us human isn't something this article can do, not only because the answer isn't that simple, but also because there isn't a single answer that is valid for each and every one of us. Besides, most of history's greatest philosophers and thinkers have concerned themselves with this question and never managed but to scratch the surface of the answer.

Loving your body is not an easy thing to do. It is very difficult to even accept your body, to accept yourself the way you are and not pay any attention to what others might say or think. Most people never manage to overcome these obstacles and win the battle against themselves, and perhaps this is the answer we are seeking. No matter what kind of "shell" we are given, no matter what shape, colour or size it is, we should never be at war with it but instead we should strive to make peace with it. Wanting to improve oneself isn't a bad thing, until one crosses the line and makes it bad. Maybe what we should all accept isn't our body as it is but our need to improve it day by day, our need to build a healthy relationship with it and work with and not against it.

Those futuristic images of fragmented selves should not be dismissed as "fantastic" or "unrealistic", they should instead be our wake-up call. Embracing both our "shell" and our "ghost" is essentially what makes us human. And what will surely plant a huge smile of achievement on the mirror reflection of your teenage self.



# BINGE, PURGE, REPEAT

*disorder-by conduct*

Words: Kristiana Lalou

Photography: Mimika Michopoulou

**T**he first time it happened, I didn't plan it. I had just binged on a whole bag of potato chips and after having done so, my anxiety and guilt, lead me straight to the bathroom. I purged, I puked, I emptied my stomach and I instantly felt 100% better. The guilt disappeared.

I was a fairly skinny child. I ran up and down all day and always came home with bloody knees and elbows. Whenever I remember the sense of self I had back then, I envy that child.

While my body issues peaked at age 14 -along with my breasts- I am acutely aware of the time they began. I was nine years old and had just come back home from playing with my friends all morning. I was washing up to eat and it was so hot that June day, that I took off my t-shirt and was about to wear my light pajama top, when my mother stopped me to take a look at me. "You have developed a cute little belly," she said and laughed. "Maybe we should stop feeding you carbs, no more bread for you."

I stood in utter shock. Never before had anybody commented on my looks, besides to say I am pretty or I look more like my dad, or where did I get those crazy curls from -it was decided I got them from my grandpa's sisters. I didn't realize how offended I had felt, until later that day I caught myself lifting my t-shirt to look at my stomach and started crying immediately afterwards.

My weight was never a real issue, but people's acceptance was. 'No one will like you unless you look pretty' was the ever present fear both my parents distilled in me. Pretty meaning, not only having a pretty face, but a gentle demeanor, few words to say and of course a fragile countenance. How do you achieve the fragile look? Why...by being almost malnourished.

My value was measured in kilograms. By everyone around me. Family, school, friends. And while I couldn't do much to stop my sharp tongue from rendering me less feminine, I was desperately trying to control my weight and fight my own body. I was at war and the more I lost, the more I won.



After a little hesitation at first, it eventually became a pattern. Binging then purging. I almost couldn't breathe and my mind was in chaos, unless I could rid myself of the calories and the shame. The technique included a spoon or my fingers jammed in my throat. It always hurt, but after some time it became easier. I never stopped crying while doing it.

Being notoriously private, no one knew a thing. You won't know unless I decide you should. Locking myself in the bathroom like *Margot Tenenbaum* and as silently as possible spilling my guts, waiting for my tears to dry, washing my teeth and walking out just as I went in. It did work, it kept me skinny. I was completely aware of how wrong it all was though. I hated myself more for it. I knew I needed help, but I could not, would not turn to my family. I do think my mother had maybe picked up on something, but I can't be sure. The one who certainly did, was my boyfriend at the time. I let him know.

His reaction was expected. Outrage, worry, threats that he will leave me if I don't stop. He took me by the hand and led me to a psychologist's office. No one knew I was in therapy. It took all my strength and his love and support. I tried to put logic to work. Every time I would eat something I deemed fattening, I wanted to purge. I had to stop myself. I would pick up a spoon, walk to the bathroom. Stop to think. Then I would walk out again and put the spoon back in the drawer. No you will not purge. You ate it, now deal with it. It is not reversible. Again and Again. Each time I gave in, my tears and my disgust grew. Each time I resisted my confidence grew.



When I finally learned to control it, I gained weight, but at least I did not purge anymore. It was not fast or easy, but I won. The war was over. It helped that no matter the number on the scale, my friends' and boyfriend's love was unwavering. I can't say the same for my parents. They can't accept the heavier version of me, but they try.

To this day, whenever I eat something, remnants of that guilt follow me. I occasionally think about purging and every time I do, it takes a lot of rational thinking and emotional control to stop myself. Our demons never leave us, we just learn to silence them.





Cells

# WOOF! DIARIES

## *episode 2: Ponies and little mops*

Words: Deppy Karagianni

It's no news that body type matters when it comes to dogs as well. Substantially so, if you consider it affects their needs and consequently their chances at adoption, their travelling options and how they are viewed by others. You might have noted that, to many non-dog people, size makes the difference between beast and accessory. Or that black dogs are not at the top of preferences. That the big ones make better guardians or that the little ones are vicious.

While each breed does have common traits that are useful to know, there are stereotypes that should and can easily be cured. The easiest way to do it? Meet a lot of dogs.

Let's talk first about the truly big dogs, with the rumbling howls and the shiny, bone-crushing teeth.

One fine afternoon, a tall, muscular one with sleek black fur is rigorously shaking a tree. His human has thrown the stick a little too high and it got stuck in the branches. When the dog finally gives up, steps down from the tree and turns to us, we are met with the snout of the Boxer breed and the bulk of a boxer human. Frankly, he looks like the canine equivalent of a nightclub's textbook bouncer. Nevertheless, Dex approaches him and they greet each other peacefully, with sniffing and happy circles around one another. His human calls him Flower and it turns out that no name could be more appropriate for him, because every time he nuzzles at your hand, a flower must be blooming somewhere.

Another day, I'm at one of my regular coffee take-away spots, and there's this big snowwhite pirate with a right-eye-patch, sunbathing on the pavement outside. I say hi and blow a kiss at him and he looks downright baffled, because who gets casual with giants? But once he ascertains that yes, it is him I'm talking to, I realize that his source of intimidation doesn't lie in his size alone, but in the force of his excitement. Noticing Lars may mean that your hands can be used to stick stamps for hours and your jeans have turned paw-printed. Worth it!

The small breeds have their own struggle against prejudice. Mina is a Chihuahua Dex and I have rarely met on the street, but hear several times a day. The truth is that when people say you are a mouse who fooled the system to get classified as a dog, you have every right to be perpetually pissed and become the primadonna of the neighbourhood. Rumor has it that when she takes position to poop, she turns into a little balloon with her front paws meeting her hind paws. I hope we'll get to confirm that with our own eyes sometime.

In retrospect, Belle is a quiet and docile lady. She is a Maltese fashion icon, usually sporting a little fountain ponytail on the top of her head or twin tails, and sometimes a pink parka. Belle has a long time unrequited crush on Dex and size difference is not going to stand in her way; once she spots him, she will follow his route, walking side by side with him and taking every chance she gets to jump and leave kisses on his snout. However, the funniest detail about Belle is that she will not hesitate to bring down her delicate image in order to not burn a single calorie in vain. When her human stops to talk for more than ten seconds, Belle lies down on her fluffy white belly (or her clean sweater) on the not-so-white asphalt. Honestly, I don't know what else Dex needs to see they're soul mates.

Then there are the simply different ones.

Life can be tough when you're a Sharpei. Simon looks like a little creature lost inside an XXL furry tightsuit (or, alternatively, a panting, wrinkled towel) and humans may get in line to pet him, but dogs have trouble recognizing him as one of their own. Even Dex had to take a step back and observe before making contact as Simon lay on his side by himself on the grass, entertaining himself with a flat piece of wood. Said piece of wood was a good offering to make acquaintance and Dex figured it out, false alarm, just a dog.

All of the above dogs have two points in common.

One, they are loving if they are loved.

Two, all of them are beautiful, if not to everyone, at least to their humans.

Perhaps this is our cue to take a hint. Got wrinkles? Spots? 'Unique' ears?

Are you smaller than your voice or your epicness? Scarily tall?

Newsflash that shouldn't be news.

You're gorgeous to someone.



# HEALTHY CHOCOLATE BAR

*cause chocolate is a cure - all*

Words | Photography: Oh my Deer Blog

**F**or all of you out there with a sweet-tooth, you are no strangers to the 5 o'clock sugar crash, when you crave all things sweet and yummy. Chocolate cakes, fruit, cupcakes, cheesecakes!  
Yet there is nothing better than indulging in a dessert and be guilt free. We have the solution for you.

Home made chocolate bars!

Chocolate with dried fruit and nuts. Healthy and super tasty! The best choice as an afternoon snack or a gift for the people you love. Chocolate bars made by you alone!



## Ingredients

200 gr. of chocolate

20 gr. of dried cranberries

20 gr. of pistachio nuts

20 gr. of cashew nuts

## Recipe

Melt the chocolate and lay it on a tray (18cm x 22cm).

Spread the melted chocolate and allow about half a centimetre of thickness. You will need a relatively small tray for the measurements given. Double the amount for a larger tray. The chocolate needs to be thick enough to hold on to the toppings, otherwise it will break apart easily.

While the chocolate is still warm, add the toppings you want all over it. Put the chocolate in the fridge for at least an hour. After it has cooled down, break it in big pieces.

You can store it in the fridge for up to two weeks.

\* Use dark chocolate as a healthier option, but you can of course use milk chocolate ,white chocolate or any other kind you wish, even a mix of it all. You can add any other toppings you choose. Varying from nuts to dried fruits, bits of chocolate or fresh fruit.

Whatever you have available.



## ROCK 'N ROLL ROMANCE

*A look at the history and evolution of rock music.*

### *Episode 5*

Words: Mrs Hyde

During the Great Recession of the '30s, African Americans migrate from the Mississippi Delta, Memphis and Tennessee to the industrial cities of the North. Detroit, Michigan is one of these places, with its infrastructure (mainly in car manufacturing) giving the chance to people, African American or not, to improve their financial situation. Black newcomers from the South, lower in number than their white counterparts, settle on the eastern side of Detroit, in the neighbourhood called Black Bottom.

This name, often mistaken for a reference to those black migrants, had been given to the area by the French, who had been the first to colonize it, because of the dark color of its marshy soil. African Americans managed to make Black Bottom a closed and safe community, in times when racism ran rampant in the United States.

During the 1940s and the 1950s, African Americans create new sources of income for themselves, mostly in Hastings Street and Paradise Valley. In Paradise Valley, Black Bottom's entertainment hub, new entrepreneurs open theatres and nightclubs that become performance venues for legends of the musical scene of that era, such as Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington and Billie Holiday, attracting both black and white audiences.

It is in Paradise Valley that Detroit blues will be born.

While similar in style to the Chicago blues, what distinguishes them from the Delta blues is the use of electric guitar, complimented by other instruments including bass and piano. Among the musicians who make their appearance in Detroit's music scene is Roberta Louise Osborn, also known as Alberta Adams. After starting out as a tap dancer in Hastings Street clubs and then as a singer, she will end up collaborating with musicians like John Lee Hooker, T-Bone Walker and Duke Ellington.

Alberta will be spoken of as the embodiment of the Detroit blues scene and, without a doubt, the queen of Detroit blues.

Even though record companies and fans alike tend to ignore Detroit's scene in favor of other, more prominent ones such as Chicago, guitarist and singer John Lee Hooker managed to achieve international fame. With his deep, rugged voice accompanied only by his own electric guitar, Hooker develops his own groovy style, sometimes referred to as "guitar boogie", after the piano style of the '20s called "boogie-woogie".

He integrates other, already existing elements into the Detroit blues, such as the talking blues (flat-toned vocals much like regular speech and strict musical rhythm) and the North Mississippi Hill Country Blues (steady guitar riffs, few chord switches and unusual song structure). His first hit, 'Boogie Chillen', in 1949, is the epitome of his early style and reached number one in the rhythm and blues charts.

During World War Two, over five million African Americans move from the South to the North, and to the West and East coast. In this second great migration, that started in 1941 and lasted up until 1970, the cities of New York, Kansas, California, Los Angeles, Oakland, Richmond and Long Beach held a prominent role, most of which offering many jobs in the army industry.

Among the migrants are blues and jazz musicians.

The two musical styles merge together to make a new style called the jump blues, an up-tempo dance hybrid of jazz, blues and boogie-woogie. Two big bands based in New York will be the first to make this transition, from jazz and blues to jump blues, giving them a more sophisticated and complex character than in other cities: Lionel Hampton's Lionel Hampton's Orchestra and Lucky Millinder's band.

Lionel Hampton's band became popular during the 1940s and in the beginning of the 1950s. In 1942 they produced the classic 'Flying Home', with music written by Lionel Hampton and Benny Goodman and lyrics by Sid Robin, which foreshadowed the birth of rhythm and blues.

Despite the fact that Lucius Venable "Lucky" Millinder couldn't read or write music, couldn't play any instrument and rarely sang, his artistry and taste in music made his band successful. It is said that it was the best jump blues band of its time and inspired a lot of musicians at the dawn of rock n' roll.

From the mid-'40s, the band gravitates towards what will be later known as rhythm and blues. In 1944, Millinder hires the singer Wynonie Harris and together they compose the song 'Who Threw the Whiskey in the Well', which will be the band's greatest hit, dominating both the rhythm and blues and pop music charts.

These two bands of the '40s brought forth musicians who shaped the evolution of music.

In 1948 the new style takes the name rhythm and blues, a term that until then was only used in the industry to describe black music of all kinds, except gospel. This style, as a further evolution of the jump blues and played mostly by smaller bands of five or six musicians, with musical jumps, syncopated vocals and urban-themed, comical lyrics, emphasizes the rhythmic parts of piano, bass and drums. In the late '40s, electric guitar joins this design.

Among the noteworthy musicians we can find Louis Jordan, Jack McVea, Earl Bostic and Arnett Cobb.



"STATUES"  
by Leonidas Sarkas

Collage Photography | Vasilis Nikolopoulos

Two days before King Nadjianin's birthday, Kovpacs woke up late. The sun had already risen above the House of the Magisters and the stained curtains couldn't keep the bright rays from entering his room.

He cried out, desperate and irritated at the same time. It wasn't like him to be late at work. On the contrary, he took pride in the fact that by the time night gave its place to dawn, he was already out, walking in the streets of the Kingdom, with his eyes open and his mind sharp. He could vaguely remember what had kept him up last night, yet recalling the details was proving to be a damned struggle. Something about a severed hand and a bloodied scroll - or had it been about Venouvir's fourth law of materialization, which he was recently studying?

To make things worse, Heldrian had visited him twice in his sleep - a frequency that hadn't happened before - exhausting him with the same old information and promises. The Prince's impatience was well understood, but there were limits. Nobody would benefit if Kovpacs awoke tired and with a headache, due to Heldrian's extensive monologues.

Of course, the exact details were of scant importance. He was late.

He got dressed as fast as he could. For breakfast, he only had two bites of the cherry-pie he had bought yesterday and then left in a hurry, without even checking the condition of his alchemical laboratory in the basement. Although, had a break-in attempt been made, he would have heard the explosions.

In order to reach Azure Hall, he traversed the capital's central market. Contrary to what some paranoids believed, a crowd offered not only protection, but also options. Mainly, those of blending in, or of escaping. On this particular day, the market was crammed. In a cauldron of shrill voices, people of various races and professions were milling around. As they jostled and pushed each other, it would be easy for a cunning man - a smile distorted Kovpacs's face - to sneak away from any threat. What is more, in the occasion of an unseen knife moving towards his body, Kovpacs had taken further defensive measures - magical in nature.

Once out of the market, Kovpacs quickened his pace. He might have left his pursuers behind him, that however wasn't a reason to grow complacent.

Not to mention he was late.

Once in the Hall, he ignored the few individuals who greeted him and, walking with haste through the Inner Ring's curved corridors where entire sets of war spoils were exhibited on the walls and in glass cases, he reached the statue wing perfectly exhausted. Outside the workshop assigned to him, Limy was waiting, leaning against the wall. Preoccupied as she was with a scroll, she didn't notice him until the very last moment, when they were only centimeters apart.

Startled, she jerked her head to the side and shrieked.

"What? What is the matter?" Kovpacs asked.

He instantly imagined the worst, but right after that he considered the image he was presenting. Unkempt, sweaty, tired - he didn't look exactly normal. He understood that; he was, above all, a sensible man.

"Nothing to worry about, it's nothing," he jabbered, trying to calm her down.

"I was beset by an alchemical riddle. Forgot myself. Had to run here. Didn't even manage to eat."

While talking, he went past Limy and unlocked the door, using the iron key only he had.

Inside the circular chamber, he inspected the canvas that covered his project. Almost finished, exactly the way the Prince had envisioned and described it.

The canvas was there for other peoples' eyes, since to such extent had Kovpacs been committed to the statue that its image had been seared into his mind.

"Sir?"

"Huh? What do you want?"

"I asked if you want me to bring you anything to eat or drink."

"No, no, Limy, that can wait. We've got work to do."

He was constantly touched by how considerate the girl was. Diligent, down-to-earth, responsible - she had all the qualities of a perfect assistant. Sometimes, not always, Kovpacs wondered if the girl faced any problems in her personal life. A hysterical mother, perhaps, or an oppressive fiancé. There were rituals that could turn their lives into a nightmare. He could find the arcane materials, he could repay her the my-

He lost his train of thought. He had just heard some words he didn't like at all. "What did you say?"

"Work has temporarily been halted. In all chambers. By Iblen's command."

"Who?"

"Iblen. The captain of the Royal - "

"I know who she is. What in the Abyss does she want here and why does she think that she can force her will?"

"No idea, sir", a scared Limy replied. "She wants to check on the progress of the statues, I suppose."

"Oh, we will see about that." With a snap of his hand, Kovpacs made his intentions clear and stormed out of the chamber.

His exit happened to coincide with the exit of the person that has caused it. Accompanied by a pair of guards, Iblen, upright and in plain clothing, was presently coming out of the neighboring workshop, the one belonging to the wizard Dagroras - oh, how Kovpacs hated his arrogant smirk! The moment she turned her head to speak to the soldiers, Kovpacs came into her line of sight.

"Kovpacs." Her contempt was evident to all. "We were coming to you."

"Undoubtedly," he simply said. With a calculated step, he placed himself under the door's casing.

"How's the statue coming along, Kovpacs?" she inquired while walking towards him. "It must be ready by the day after tomorrow."

"I know. It will be."

"So, let's see your gift to our King." She stood in front of him. "Step aside."

"Absolutely not." He punctuated each letter like it was a separate word.

"What?"

"There's not a chance I will allow you to come inside and ruin everything. The work that remains to be done demands special care and concentration."

"I see only a tarp."

"If you thought you would see the statue itself so that you can then tell my enemies all about it, you're naïve."

"What's so special about it?" one of the soldiers chimed in. "Is it made out of rare books?"

"Say that again, you filthy bastard." Kovpacs made to approach him, Iblen's hand however stopped him in time.

"For God's sake, Kovpacs, it was but a joke."

"One that only the superb intellect of the military can understand, right?"

"Stop talking and get out of my way. We'll just take a look. We would have been done already if not for - "

"If not for what, captain? If not for mad Kovpacs giving you a hard time?" He couldn't help the raise in the volume of his voice. "You want to go into my workshop, to trample on tools and documents, to validate the fact that your pointy sticks of steel put you in charge, and delay my work so I will fail. Not a chance."

A small crowd had gathered around the four quarrelers. He hardly cared. If anything, it could be for the best; this way maybe more people than just Iblen would heed his resolution.

Undeterred, he went on. "We would have been done, yes. If you troubled your small brains with the Kingdom's enemies rather than with our work here. And what guarantee do I have, after all, that, once inside, you won't steal whatever catches your eye?"

At the limit of her patience, Iblen raised her hands high and exclaimed angrily. Kovpacs noticed the well-defined muscles on her arms. Regardless of how much he hated her, he had to admit that her body was marvelous. Strong, full of vigor, still retaining the vitality of youth. Just like his statue.

"Damn you, I have instructions from the Palace to check your progress."

"And I have been assigned by the King himself to honor him on his forthcoming birthday. It was he who gave me the order, it is he alone that who can take it back."

As if he possessed divination powers, Kovpacs was perfectly certain of what Iblen's response. He watched her mouth open and the first words take shape. At the last minute, the brain pulled the break and imposed silence. Before so many witnesses, it wouldn't have been the brightest idea for her to acknowledge the mental condition of the King, whose only interest was limited to strolls in the garden. Even if it was the least guarded secret in the Kingdom, some things were only meant to be whispered, and only in the dark.

Seeing her hesitation, Kovpacs gave the final blow.

"You can look from where you stand. A vicious giant is lurking under the canvas while behind it assassins are hidden. Now, get lost."

Clenching her fists and letting out a prolonged sigh, Iblen turned around. Along with her escort she walked away, none of them saying a thing.

Kovpacs reentered the workshop, happy with himself, and came face to face with a pale Limy.

"Don't let them scare you," he told her. "Uneducated bastards, nothing more. And now, work. Attend to the inscription on the pedestal. After that, we will bind the gems on the weapon and around the belt."

He sat behind his small desk next to the covered statue, and for the next hours occupied himself with the

geometricity of the magical couplings which would keep – until the final moment – the necromantic fields inside the statue both invisible and inactive.

In his confrontation with Iblen, what had upset him the most was the “innocent” joke about the books. They had imagined that by mocking his job, they would gain the upper hand. As if librarians didn’t deserve respect. And how was it possible for them to remember? Countless years had passed since his last day as a librarian. Why was it not forgotten? Why…?

Time passed quickly and when Limy finished her shift and went home, Kovpacs stayed behind for an additional two hours. He made good use of them by channeling a small amount of false life into the chisel and sending it to tame the imperfections of the statue’s face.

To return home, Kovpacs walked down the main, well-lit avenue. The frequent patrols along its length quelled his anxieties about possible ambushes. Contrary to his physical exhaustion, he had a light gait – a tell-tale sign of the emotional uplift he was experiencing. Another day left. The labour of so many months was nearing its end and the compensation would be equal to his titanic efforts.

After locking the door of his house, he made sure that no lock had been picked and then lay in his bed without further delay. Moments before surrendering into a deep, dreamless slumber, it occurred to him that he had eaten nothing for the whole day. It was of no consequence. He had more important things to attend to.

On the eve of King Nadjianin’s birthday, Kovpacs got up at dawn, the result of a long-time habit as well as tonight’s unexpected absence of Heldrian. It made some sense, if one considered what day it was. Night after night Heldrian had spawned the idea to Kovpacs, had imparted his vision and Kovpacs had made it real – along with improvements of his own. More visits would be meaningless. The only thing that remained was the plan’s execution.

While in the process of eating leftovers from his small storage room, he was hit by the brilliant idea to go to Azure Hall through the sewers. With the celebration taking place tomorrow, he intended to spend the night in the safety of his workshop. Thus, it would be prudent to further disorient those seeking his ruin by using a route none would think about.

Upon his arrival at the Hall, Kovpacs dealt with the tiny oak tree on the statue’s open palm. Only menial work, and that’s why he had left it for the end. Just a pair of moving illusions, held by a permanence spell. Much later, after his assistant had arrived, he focused his efforts on the enchantments surrounding the statue. His goal was to align them with the lines and curves of the stone.

It was because of the imminent presentation of his work that his mind was more concerned with the future than with the present. Therefore, when his assistant, unsuspectingly, mentioned the existence of a mistake, Kovpacs was caught with his defenses lowered.

“What?”

“We have made a mistake, I think.”

“What? No way. Where?” He could hear how smoothly he responded and wanted to land a fist to his stomach.

Limy handed him a scroll. “The runes used in this sequence do not seem correct to me. Supposedly, they have to do with the indestructibility of the statue, but I don’t see any preservation runes. I was taught them all this summer.”

Examining the scroll in question, Kovpacs recognized a spell of materializing banishment. Yes, it wasn’t about indestructibility and no, Limy was not supposed to know that. Since when were untrained helpers taught high

magic? Yes, Limy's work had to do with copying runes on the statue's sword and then connecting them with the whole network. No, he hadn't planned to be asked such a question, especially by Limy, whose role was limited to doing, not asking.

"Sir, I have no idea what these runes are for."

Kovpacs knew. However, under no circumstances was he going to tell her.

"Are we certain that they will have the desired result? What if they're dangerous?" she went on with her queries. Kovpacs noticed her hands trembling whereas her eyes were unable to rest on one place. That infuriated him even more. Not only was she irresponsible and careless, it seemed she was also outright nervous. On top of that, she was prying into matters she couldn't comprehend. The moment she was out of here, who knew who she would speak to and who would hear her out. He envisioned the failed outcome of his project and it gave him the chills.

It was impossible for him to let her go. It was imperative that Limy be silenced. He struggled to find a way to get rid of her that did not involve bothersome amounts of blood.

He found it.

He would use the statue. Like a first demonstration, a confirmation of proper function. Like an appetizer before the main dish.

He only needed to connect his arcane power with the statue's appropriate grid and flood the activation nodes with magic. For just a heartbeat, no longer. Right after that, he re-emptied the nodes.

Total success. He sighed with relief and congratulated himself on how calmly and quickly he had responded against the crisis. It was a valuable lesson on humility. There was not a single moment in which the cosmos did not try to trip you up. One had to be constantly vigilant.

For the next hours, with the door locked and paying no mind to the corpse, he carried on with tying the remaining loose ends, including the work normally assigned to Limy. It was an unfortunate setback, but it couldn't be helped.

Around midnight, he took advantage of the empty corridors in order to dump his assistant in the sewers. She had it coming. Actually, now that he was thinking it over, it was possible she had been placed close to him by all those who envied his achievements.

He returned to the chamber and slept blissfully.

The day when King Nadjianin would celebrate his ninetieth birthday, Kovpacs awoke dizzy and in a bad mood. Maybe his empty stomach was to blame for the dizziness, maybe not. Maybe prince Heldrian was responsible for both his conditions, since he had seized the opportunity to appear in the middle of a dream. It was turning out to be repetitively troublesome. No matter how ingenuous the prince's plan was, how many times could one listen to it? How many times could he agree with him on everyone deserving a second chance or that the mind outlives the body?

According to the Kalmysian nomads, the mind was a separate being. When the body dies, the now free thoughts and ideas seek fertile ground. Anywhere and by any means possible. Ment's clergy, on the other hand, asserted that the body, along with its countless diseases, define the mind's condition. And if one also took the theories about the soul into account, the matter got even more complicated. More than his own tangle caused by the voice of Heldrian, once heir to the throne.

He heard voices. In the grip of a still raging dizziness, it took him a while to work out that the noise was coming from outside and was becoming louder. Abyss take them all, he had lost track of time. What with the nightmare and his mind finding the chance to stray..

He jumped up, unlocked the door violently, rushed out. His fears proved to be true. The royal entourage had arrived and the tour from exhibit to exhibit was in progress. So many hours, lost? Inconceivable, on such a day... The stinging in his head evolved into a migraine.

The King himself was walking at the forefront of a multi-coloured group of courtiers. Kovpacs realized that the verb was to be used in a lenient way. The old man was barely standing, thus rendering each and every rumour about him mild. Iblen, at the King's side - supporting him - offered Kovpacs a murderous glance.

He didn't care. The feelings of uncivilized soldiers were of zero significance. Why wouldn't the headache stop? Why all this noise?

The procession had just gotten out of Malkyver's room - his obsession to decorate everything with crimson orchids was sickening, someone had to assassinate him - and was headed towards Dagroras's. The so-called master of illusions... A fool charlatan..

With little time left, he threw the canvas in a corner, tossed papers, tools and unused notebooks aside, and straightened out his clothes.

Just in time.

"Your Majesty," Iblen announced, in as formal a voice as it could be, "Kovpacs, librarian in - " Kovpacs cut her off. The moment was his, no one else's." My gift for you, your Majesty." He stepped to the side. "A statue which symbolizes you - your glorious kingdom."

Hesitant exclamations were heard - besides, how could the ignorant see the light? The King, however, understood, to Kovpacs's delight. There were memories, it seemed, still dwelling inside his degenerate mind.

"Bu - But... But this is my son."

More exclamations this time, which Kovpacs didn't allow to grow.

"Indeed, your Majesty. His body thriving and strong, like it was in the fated siege that cost him his life. In his hands, the sword he himself had forged and the burning oak, the Kingdom's banner. A picture that perfectly represents you both as well as your Kingdom."

The silence was deafening. Despite the headache, his short presentation had been flawless. Nothing else existed outside this moment in time. What was taking place right now had been set in motion eight months ago, the first time Heldrian had whispered to him in his sleep.

"What is the meaning of this? It looks like nothing, it's hideous - " Again, Iblen failed to complete her sentence. The shuffle of the king's feet shut her up and drew everyone's attention. With tears in his eyes, he approached the statue. One sluggish step. A second. A third. Nothing else was needed. Kovpacs activated the complex magical grid he had constructed and the body of the old monarch collapsed. As his life was abandoning the previous body and was coming into the new one, the statue's gems shone like a nightmarish rainbow.

"Do not be afraid!" Kovpacs shouted, rushing ahead of silly questions. "The King's thoughts and personality are now inside the statue. Together with Heldrian. They will live in there for eternity."

Dagroras was the first to react, dashing forward. He might have attempted something, a spell perhaps, but the magical defensive layers of the statue didn't permit him to finish. One after the other, they counteracted, unleashing a blinding beam of green light that turned him to dust. The workshop was filled with shouts and screams. They poured out, everywhere in the Azure Hall and they were followed by a frenzied mob of courtiers and officials. The more composed converged to their fallen King. Iblen, sword in hand, grabbed Kovpacs's arm.

"What have you done? What's the meaning of this?" she roared in his ear, her eyes ablaze.

"Me, nothing. It's the statue that killed him. Maybe he was a traitor. He wanted to steal immortality away from our—"

"Not the wizard, you fool. The king. THE KING. What have you done to him?"

Amidst the general confusion and panic, he could barely hear her.

"He wanted to be young again and reunite with his son. Isn't that so? Remember his writings, his grief after the funeral. Yes, I found his... Heldrian's soul, if you will, and deposited it inside the statue. Now they will both rule. They are together. Inside a powerful body."

A short woman - Kovpacs had no idea what her name was or if she was a user of magic - dared to mess with the gems' parabolic patterns. Kovpacs, though, hadn't stayed up until dawn all those weeks for such an act to be left unpunished. The statue claimed its second victim and such was the power of the blow that the ashes were scattered all over the room. The aftermath - the strong green flash and the slow rain of ash - was a picture straight out of Hell.

"Stop it. Whatever it is you did, end it. Reverse it, do something, damn you, or else you'll find yourself impaled on my sword!"

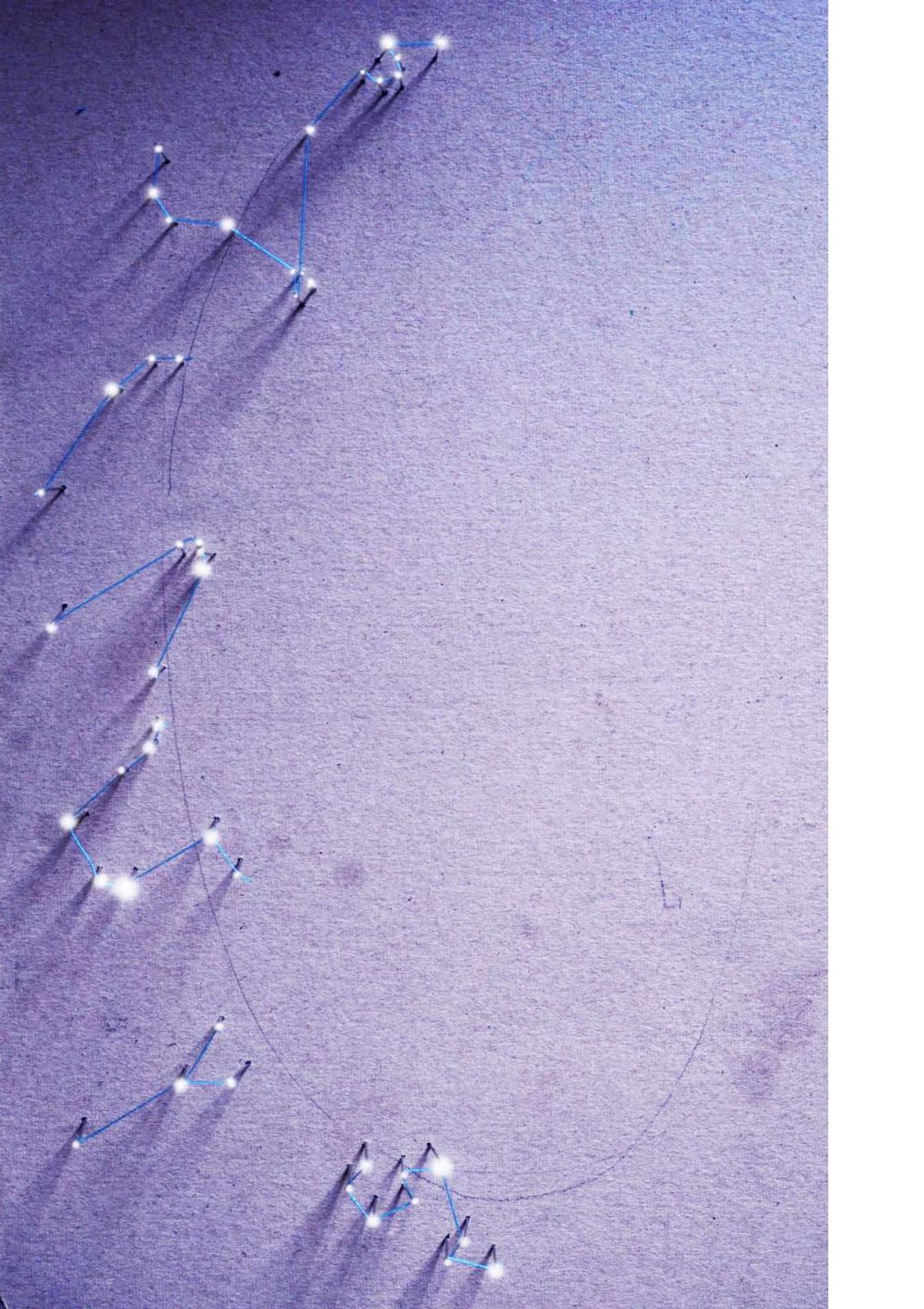
Now Iblen's grip was hurting him. And a few brave individuals were approaching him with sullen faces. He tried to reason with them, in the same way an aristocrat speaks to his horse. "There's nothing I can do, but there's no need as well. Don't be afraid. If you don't attack the statue, it won't harm you. Besides, they're both happy. They won't worry anymore about minor things such as death and decay. I know, Heldrian told me so."

Hysteria had given its place to threats and promises of execution. Kovpacs changed his tactics. He looked straight into Iblen's eyes. He tried to make her realize that all he was saying were true. That his way was the right one.

"Look at it, it's perfect. Body and mind, one. Stone and magic, magic and eternity."

Iblen's grip loosened. About time. It was true after all, even barbarians could embrace logic. The only thing that remained was his reward. To reclaim his old title. Back on the throne of glory and a public apology - maybe a statue too. Ah yes, and to somehow stop this headache."

He watched Iblen's sword swing towards his head.



# ASTRO

## Capricorn

Sometimes you've learned all your lessons.  
Sometimes it's okay to just take a break.

## Aquarius

You can't speak to your heart in the language  
of the mind.

## Pisces

Trust time more than your eyes; it knows a lot and  
shares its knowledge with the patient.

## Aries

You are on fire. Be like a candle, not a match;  
don't burn out too quickly.

## Taurus

Silence is gold, but so are words. Don't let them  
scatter and perish.

## Gemini

The moment you find your way home is the mo-  
ment you throw away the map.  
Trust yourself to take you where you belong.

## Cancer

The world looks different underwater. Rise to the  
surface and change perspective.

## Leo

If your hands are full, let go of something. When  
life brings good things you must be able to take  
them.

## Virgo

Slowing down doesn't mean stopping.

## Libra

You can't take care of others unless you take care  
of yourself first.

## Scorpio

Only one skeleton per closet.  
If your own is full of them, consider a cleanup.

## Sagittarius

Questions are meant to be asked, not answered.  
Truth is meant to be sought, not found.



# Flipped

Issue #8

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