

lore

volume
003

MS. MYLES BY
VONNY LORDE

THE CULT ISSUE

Are you a leader or a follower?

"I AM THE GOD
IN MY OWN LIFE.
I AM THE ONLY PERSON
IN CHARGE OF WHAT
CAN OR CAN'T HAPPEN."

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oTX: 1164a5.2/54/0'22%

43.6532° N, 79.3832° W



Concepts and development in Toronto, Canada.
Printed in London, UK, distributed by Ra and Oly.
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From the editor:

Cult season is here, you sickos.

If this is the first issue of Lore you've read, there's only one hard and fast editorial guideline: no trauma dumping. That doesn't mean we expect *funny*, but it means we intentionally take a more playful touch with the stories we publish. The world's a dark place, so we try to engage with that very real darkness while creating some light of our own.

Choosing cult as our theme made that mandate complex, 'cause there's true harm involved in all the ones that make the news. Our big question was: how do you spend a whole issue on cults without veering too deeply into traum traum territory or sidestepping reality altogether? Linguist Amanda Montell has a book called *Cultish: The Language of Fanaticism* that helped us bridge that question. Reading is hard, so the 2-second gist of it is that many things are not cults—but *are* cultish or culty.

Something can be culty without the harm inherent in your classic cult, and we looked to that broader definition to give us space and flexibility here. With that in mind, this issue of Lore plays with organizations and belief systems that have insular language, collective values and practices, all designed to separate *one of us* from *one of them*. That said, we do talk about actual cults, too.

003 is the biggest and most ambitious volume of Lore to date, and on behalf of the team, I hope you enjoy reading it. To everyone who contributed: thank you, thank you. Every publishing cycle continues to change my own life in ways large and small, and I'm so grateful for the energy and trust. My biggest priority is making the creative process supportive, inclusive, and a safe space to bring all your talents. We'll be doing more of these.

For now: we've made this big batch of cult Kool-Aid as a community. Find another acolyte, and pour up a cup.

With love,

Isaac Nikolai Fox

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THE EVOLUTION



Every year, I look forward to Shen Yun season. I've never seen the classical dance troupe perform, but I can't resist online discourse about its supernatural ability to infiltrate every advertising medium imaginable. "Parents PLEASE check your child's candy at Halloween this year," one of my favourite memes reads. "My son just found an entire Shen Yun ad in his candy bar."

For the uninitiated: Shen Yun is a two-hour production that tours 150 cities around the world each year. What's less known is that the force behind its elaborate costumes and soaring music is Falun Gong, a Chinese spiritual movement that sprung up in the 1990s and sits at the center of some unhinged controversies.

On the tamer end, the Falun Gong-owned media network *The Epoch Times* has been accused of spreading conspiracy theories. It goes way deeper, though. Ex-Falun Gong members claim they've been targeted by the Chinese government for forced organ harvesting, and their leader Li Hongzhi maintains that he can both levitate and see the future.

Yet despite all of this, Shen Yun remains wildly popular. I can't help but wonder — is this a cult and who am I to judge? These days, the line between cult and community is often blurrier than we think.



Falun Gong leader Li Hongzhi demonstrating a meditation technique.

1772

An ultra-radical Christian movement called The Skoptsy emerges in the Russian Empire, practicing self-castration and mastectomy to rid themselves of lust and temptation.

1850

Hong Xiuquan declares himself the younger brother of Jesus Christ, and leads the God Worshipping Society in a rebellion against China's Qing dynasty, leading to 20-30M deaths.

Cults aren't what they used to be

The word "cult" comes from the Latin *cultus*, meaning care, cultivation and worship. Traditionally, it refers to small, often religious or spiritual groups led by a charismatic leader, and bound together by insular beliefs, coded language and strict hierarchies (usually with some degree of harm in the mix).

But these days, the definition has expanded far beyond academic and religious contexts, and we throw it around because it's punchy, familiar, and let's be honest — kind of fun. When we call something a "cult," we're usually pointing to its structure, including shared rituals, intense devotion and a magnetic figurehead at the centre.

Whatever the definition, cults have taken on a new shape in the 2020s. Now, you don't need to shave your head, drink the Kool-Aid or join a commune to belong; you just need WiFi. Criminologist Dr. Shtull argues that social media hasn't just made cults more accessible — it's made them virtually unavoidable.

OF CULTS

It's not hard to see why cults are on the rise. Facebook and TikTok have shattered the barriers of traditional recruitment tactics, like physical isolation. Modern cult leaders can reach the disenfranchised at record speed through carefully crafted online personas, targeted advertising and algorithmic manipulation.

Wait... is this a cult?

It's notoriously difficult to estimate how many actual cults exist. In her 2025 book *Cults Like Us*, Jane Borden estimates there are 10,000 active cult-like groups in the United States, and that number is only growing.

But maybe the better question isn't how many cults exist, but what actually makes something a cult? These days, almost everything seems up for debate.

Fervent celebrity fanbases like Taylor Swift's Swifties and Beyoncé's Beyhive? Check. Radicalized online subcultures demanding unwavering faith, like Flat Earthers and QAnon? Absolutely. And if we apply the definition loosely, we might start side-eyeing parts of our everyday lives, like our local WeWork, running clubs, or our slightly obsessive devotion to TikTok astrologers (guilty!).

Of course, not everything that inspires devotion is a cult. One of my favourite takes is from historian Tara Isabella Burton, who says: "like porn, you know a cult when you see it." She adds that the key difference between a cult and a religion isn't in a group's actual beliefs or practices, but in how society perceives them and the power dynamics that drive them.

In other words: if it's insular, powered by unchecked control, causing harm, and the vibe is off... it might just be a cult.



Panacea Society founder slash housewife Mabel Bartrop.

Follow the leader

While there isn't one "cult personality," studies suggest certain things can make people more susceptible to recruitment, like emotional vulnerability, stressful life events and limited support. But while there isn't a single profile for cult followers, it's made up for in what we know concretely about cult leaders.

Psychology and criminal justice experts agree that they tend to have a grandiose sense of self, an insatiable need for admiration and a demand for absolute obedience. Many also exhibit manipulative and exploitative behaviour, whether financially, emotionally or sexually.



Manson family members on trial for the Tate murders.

Body counts

History shows how easily charismatic leaders can twist devotion into destruction. Charles Manson didn't commit murder himself, but manipulated his followers into carrying out brutal killings in 1969, including stabbing pregnant actress Sharon Tate 16 times.

In 1978, Jim Jones led over 900 of his followers, including children, in a mass murder-suicide in Jonestown. Shoko Asahara orchestrated a deadly sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway in 1995, killing 13 and injuring thousands. At their core, these personalities aren't necessarily harmful — but give them devoted followers, a vertical power structure and a closed-off echo chamber, and suddenly their worst instincts have a stage.



Aum Shinrikyo leader Shoko Asahara with a follower.

Everything, everywhere, all at once

The world is on fire. As we grapple with economic uncertainty, climate anxiety and declining trust in institutions in the aftermath of a global pandemic, many of us are feeling unhinged. More than just an escape, online spaces offer a promise of belonging, answers and a way forward, making them the perfect breeding ground for modern cults.

Taking cults seriously starts with letting go of the idea that they only recruit the weak or gullible. As we've seen, they prey on something far more universal: our need for connection, certainty and purpose. And that, my friend, is as human as it gets.

Words by Victoria Chan.



Andrew and Tristan Tate are arrested for sex trafficking.

1875

Helena Blavatsky founds the Theosophical Society. It introduced the idea of a charismatic leader to Western occult groups, and directly inspired Wicca + Scientology.

1920

The Panacea Society collects 100,000+ petition signatures from British women to have a sealed box containing divine prophecies opened in the presence of 24 bishops.

1997

39 Heaven's Gate followers commit mass suicide near San Diego, believing that they would join up with aliens on a UFO after death.

2019

NXIVM founder and former Smallville Keith Raniere founder is convicted of sex trafficking and conspiracy to commit forced labour, after using his Hollywood fame to ensnare followers.

2022

Controversial internet personality and accused sex trafficker Andrew Tate creates Hustler's University, a paid online course that claims to help followers become rich and powerful.

2025

The Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light starts gaining attention after videos of men in black beanies post videos on TikTok vowing to die for the founder.

How to Start a Cult

Words by Cris Almudevar

You little freak, you want to start a cult? You've researched cults and all the fucked up shit and you still wanna go for it? Maybe you're looking for community but realistically you're a control freak with too big of an ego. The type that gives advice that no one wants to hear but you probably kill it on r/relationships. Or maybe a short king with a god complex? No matter your motivation, here is the official guide to getting your cult off the ground, making some cash, and definitely avoiding jail.

Disclaimer

This is not a guide to start a sex cult (unless it's 100% consensual) or scam people (unless it's scamming the bourgeois) or commit violent acts against anyone. If you would read about this on Wikipedia and think "wow that's fucked up!" then do NOT go down that path.

1. Ask yourself why you want a cult. Are you trying to build an army of lovers? You can just be poly. Are you trying to make friends? No one wants to be friends with a try hard. Do you want to exert influence, have the final say on strangers' lives, and be a God? If The Sims isn't hitting anymore then go off my guy. It's cult time!!

2. Figure out your niche. What makes your cult better than all the other loser cults out there? You wanna be the Chad of cults. Do you want a religious flair like Joseph Smith? Perhaps a shared interest that you cannot keep chill about? Doomsday vibes? Maybe you want to just be blindly listened to. There can be so many avenues to get your perfect cult. A Google search tells me there are seven official different types of cults but I'd argue you could find a lot of success in the "is this a cult?" type cult. I mean, look at Othership or Reformer Pilates: it's not a cult but it's not not a cult.

3. Decide to fuck or to fuck over? Someone's gotta get scammed, so pick your target. Do not ask "who are we fucking" and instead ask "who are we fucking over?" Who should you get into a metaphorical bed with? Who is the sworn enemy of your cult and who are you slipping bribes to on the side to get shit done? Masturbating has taken you this far (I can't imagine you're getting laid if you're taking this article THAT seriously) please wait until you're more established to start running a consensual train through your following.

4. What's in a name? Normally you would name your cult but I feel like the best cults are given their name. Like yeah, have a name for internal purposes and for business needs but you'll know you made it when the media blesses you with a name.

5. Sell out immediately Let's fucking legitimize this!! All good cults get tax exemption and/or some type of business discount. How else are you making money? Scamming the government is encouraged. It's probably easiest going through the religious exemption route but honestly you're the cult leader! You were given divine power like, 20 mins ago, you know more than me.

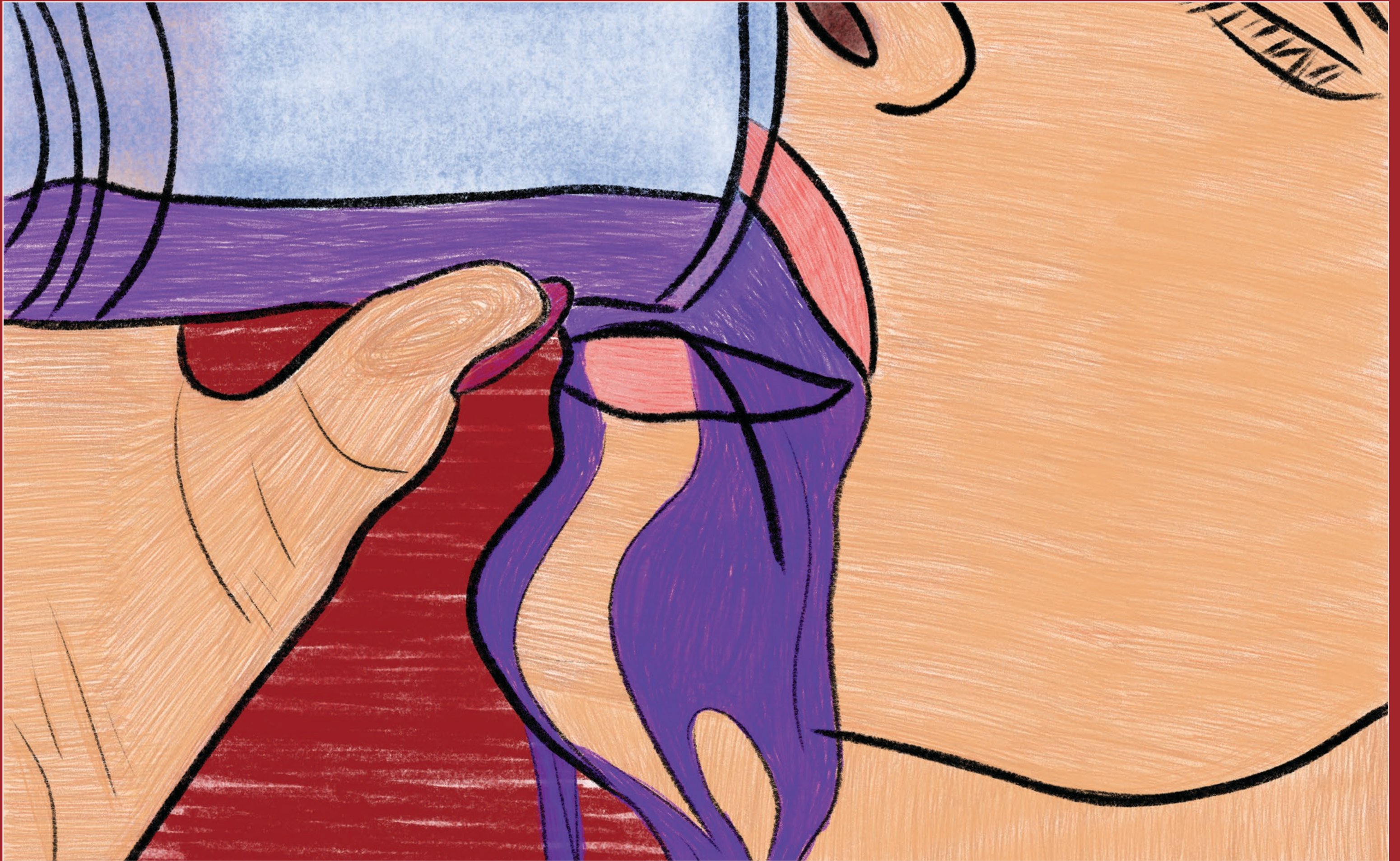
6. Grow your flock You have a name, a niche, and the ability to legally tax evade—so it's time to grow your flock, dear leader! Most people aren't gunna respond well to a "Come join my cult!" post so get creative. Make an Instagram full of greyscale boyboss-y quotes like "lions don't concern themselves with the opinion of sheep." Or create a TikTok tarot card account where every outcome is "look for something bigger than yourself" and drive people to your site. Consider encouraging a marketing person to join your cult under the guise of a "really sick freelance opportunity with a chance for profit share and full creative control." The best thing you could do for your cult is outsource talent when needed.

7. Be patient, loser. This is such a boring step but what you do in your cult is none of my business. You've done the hard set up work, you've hopefully gained a flock (#alwaysbeclosing), and now you just have to do what you do best which is continue to manipulate people into believing whatever dirty little fucked up vision you've built.

8. Makeover time! Time has likely passed by now and you've settled into cult leader status. Perhaps this is the perfect time to switch up your image? No longer are you the rookie cult leader, I assume you're Head Leader in Charge. Perhaps you grow a long beard (or wear a fake one if you are unable to grow one, regardless of gender), perhaps you tattoo your cult symbol on you, maybe you shave your head! The possibilities are endless and gender neutral.

9. Avoid jail The title says it all, don't be fucking stupid. As my nonna says, trust no one. Burn your documents, don't record your meetings, and live, laugh, love!

Ideally by now you've grown your cult into cultlike status. The media has probably given you a name and you're fucking famous baby! Hopefully you're (still) out of jail but my tips are not able to be held up in court (ACAB) so ultimately that's on you. Besos and give me my 20% consulting fee!





MS. MYLES

IS HER OWN

GOD

JAZMINE CARTER: Ms. Myles!

MS. MYLES: Hi baby.

CARTER: It's so nice to be here with you in your gorgeous, gorgeous home. I wish you guys could see all this.

MS. MYLES: Thank you.

CARTER: What's your morning been like?

MS. MYLES: My morning's actually been pretty chill. I watched a little bit of the new season of Wednesday and started my day around 10, did my whole skincare routine, bodycare routine. I've been doing this little bump at the front of my hair.

CARTER: It's very 2000s.

MS. MYLES: Like, circa 2010.

CARTER: Apple bottom jeans?

MS. MYLES: No apple bottom jeans on today, but I do have them.

CARTER: This sounds like my dream morning. Beautiful, peaceful, and like you've gotten to reclaim what this day is going to be like for you.

MS. MYLES: Yes, starting it off on a good foot.

CARTER: And gorgeous before 5:00 PM. I can't relate to that.

MS. MYLES: This is why I asked you to do this.

CARTER: I just love painting for the nighttime. There's nothing like painting for a dimly lit bar.

MS. MYLES: And I will be smoky at 9:00 AM.

CARTER: And I just love that about you. What's this glitter on your eye?

MS. MYLES: This is Urban Decay. They have a brown in their little Moondust quad, but then I top it off with this champagne from the Naked Palette. It's really deep and rich, not too silver or too gold—just perfectly in the middle.

CARTER: Me and Ms. Myles are glam girls 'til we die. And I mean, obviously you are one of the best makeup artists in all of Toronto, and it's so lovely that we get to chat about glam and really understand the language of it. It's my favourite thing to talk to you about, honestly.

MS. MYLES: More media literacy about the language of glam, we need that.

CARTER: But that's also a doll thing. We dive into glam so early in our lives and it's such a safe space for us.

MS. MYLES: Exactly. Being able to speak that language is probably why we've gotten to work so much together.

CARTER: Do you remember when we first met?

MS. MYLES: We met in a ballroom space—I don't remember which ball it was, I think I popped out at Bentway for the first time.

CARTER: Oh my god, during the pandemic days!

MS. MYLES: I felt like I had a relationship with ballroom that was twice removed, and then I met [Rahnell Branton] and Rah was like 'girl, I'm going to this ball after this makeup gig' and I'm like, 'wait, can I come?' I'd never been to a ball before but the rest is history.

CARTER: The rest is history.

MS. MYLES: I still have my little trophy from that gig and I cherish it—because then I met you and I was sat every single time. And I respect it. It's such a crazy experience to put yourself out there on a floor like that.

CARTER: Thank you. And ultimately, it's your community, your culture, your history. I'm still conscious of where I take up space as a brown woman in ballroom, and black trans women have done so much. It's our community, but I want you to feel like you always have the right to claim that history.

MS. MYLES: Absolutely.

CARTER: And you encompass so many forms of art. Tell me about the forms of art you're pursuing right now?

MS. MYLES: I am still a full-time makeup and hair artist, I've been facilitating parties, and now I'm a part-time DJ. I'm booked on a weekly basis as of now, and I'm so grateful to experience success so early on in my DJ career. It's been a full year of me deejaying publicly—and I think a lot of it has to do with people seeing my potential. And it's interesting because usually, I'm that person seeing potential in others, but it's nice to have that energy return to me this year.

CARTER: Yeah.

MS. MYLES: I'll do stuff for the dolls, I'll do stuff for my bi and pan people, and I'll just... open as many spaces as possible for us to continue to exist vibrantly—and for us to have our own proofs of concept like that these spaces are viable, these spaces are valuable, and we will sell out.

CARTER: I hope you know that you've already left your stamp on the city and our community. I've seen time and time again, you're helping book people for events, you're throwing them, you're on the flier, and it's a lot of work to bring the girls into these spaces. It's not an easy thing to do, but we don't often have those spaces or parties to get together and just dance.





"Shake your ass, have a good time. Nobody is looking at you the way you think, your demons are in your head. Leave them on the dance floor."

CARTER: You're a community curator, in the best way. Someone that brings people together, and I think it's a really incredible gift to have.

MS. MYLES: Thank you, I really appreciate that. Honestly, it comes from me experiencing so much healing in these spaces. I remember quite literally going to Pep Rally, Yes Yes Y'all and going to Jerk like, the year that I got my bottom surgery.

CARTER: Oh my god, back when I was a mess.

MS. MYLES: Yes! Quite literally, my doctors were like "do physiotherapy," and it just felt like there was a financial barrier to do it consistently outside of what I already know—which was dancing and movement. That's something I had learned since childhood, just dancing and finding the rhythm. My instinct was: if I don't have money to spend on physiotherapy, let me go and do these pelvic floor exercises on the dancefloor.

CARTER: She's like "I'm gonna shake ass 'til I heal." And now you're creating spaces for other girls to shake their asses and heal.

MS. MYLES: This is not at all medically viable. But it is what has worked for me, and these spaces are healing to me. I can dance and channel my highest self and transform my mind.

CARTER: Every event I go to for you, I know we're going to get up on the dance floor. But back to you being a triple-threat—take me inside your cult cover, the day of the shoot, and what it was like on set.

MS. MYLES: When Vonny [Lorde] asked me to do this shoot, it was so in alignment with this season of rebirth I've been in this year. It references my upbringing in the sense that I grew up in a Catholic school, like TCDSB.

CARTER: Hey Mother Mary!

MS. MYLES: Hey Mother Mary! So I've survived the whole church, and I know what it means to have faith, give your faith to a higher person, a higher entity, and what it is to relinquish that.

CARTER: Absolutely.

MS. MYLES: So for me, being on set and part of this cover, I have restructured my sense of faith to be more centered around self—but in a good way, where it's just like I am the god in my life. I am the only person who is in charge of what can happen and can't happen. And the worst thing that can happen is someone can say no.

MS. MYLES: I'm a spiritual girl, and there's a balance. You have to have two gods in your life. You have to have yourself as the god first—that is like, leading your body and leading your mind to make good and just choices.

And then you can have a sense of faith that you give to something that's above you. It's interesting seeing people give so much of their power to people, places and things. Like fans of this female rap star that I won't mention by name because I feel like they'll show up in my comments.

It's very cultish thinking, and I always think if I'm given power to influence people in any way, let me wield it with responsibility and integrity.

CARTER: I love that.

MS. MYLES: Even the idea of me having a cult is funny because all my commandments would just be about you self-actualizing as the best version of yourself. I don't want anyone to worship me, I don't want that to be the impact I leave in this life. I want people to see themselves as the person with the most power in their lives.

CARTER: Ultimately, you are the only person that can know what is best for you. And to your point about being our own god—it's cliché, but it's like I have to be in charge of this destiny, I have to be in charge of my own future, so you have to build your own commandments.

MS. MYLES: I've learned to have so much faith in myself by taking risks and challenging myself to not only have dreams, but do what I can everyday to make those dreams a possibility.

CARTER: I love this concept of being your own god and really building out a world that is meant for you.

MS. MYLES: I was going to say, too: the day on set was so rewarding from an emotional space because of how much love I was being given. Being in this space around people and my disciples who volunteered their time and energy to give me something I've never experienced in my life felt like a breakthrough moment. To learn to receive love, and reflect on those moments when I need them to keep going.

CARTER: Who were some of the people in your life that really taught you about leadership, giving back to community, or creating culture?

MS. MYLES: My mother and my aunts are very much community-oriented women that have worked for different legacy organizations in the city. My mom used to work in community development, and so from a young age, I was dragged around to all these community events. She didn't know what was for me, but she did want me to learn the importance of bringing people together and facilitating space for there to be commonality. She set a standard.

CARTER: Which I feel like you embody so much of.

MS. MYLES: Thank you!

"I think about people like Bambi. I think about Chippy Nonstop, I think about Nino Brown and Young Teesh, and the spaces all these people have made."

CARTER: The dots are clicking, I'm like "oh, I get it now."

MS. MYLES: The women in my life have set a very high standard of what it is to embody maternal energy within womanhood and not allow people to suck it from but to give it to people in ways that are also rewarding to your work and vision. I really think of Rah—Rah has changed how we think about makeup in Toronto and has held such a high standard of makeup and artistry.

I think about people like Bambi. I think about Chippy Nonstop, I think about Nino Brown and Young Teesh, and the spaces all these people have made. I think about Tré Akula, too. Even like now I'm starting to see more men in that regard—like Karim [Olen Ash], Bobby Bowen with Bully.

CARTER: Oh, you really know the girls! It's so refreshing to hear this, because you really have done your due diligence in the history of how we've gotten to where we are. I really wish more people knew about these people because Toronto nightlife honestly was more fun and crazy when everyone you mentioned was coming up and building the scene. They're the reason we've been able to have so many of these experiences and events.

MS. MYLES: Literally.

CARTER: I met someone the other day who was too young to understand who these people were. They'd gotten into an argument with someone who'd helped build Toronto nightlife and then told me that they had a saying like, 'girl, you just got here—you don't know who these bitches are.' Sometimes it's disappointing to think the next generation isn't as in touch with these influential, impactful people who revolutionized our queer nightlife.

MS. MYLES: I think that's why opportunities to solidify people and culture—like being on the cover of a magazine—are so important. Having moments to record moments in our history and archive it before it passes. People need resources to learn their stories, resources to go back and reflect on. A big part of the work in being an artist is having people around you that will remember you and share your story even when you're gone.

CARTER: This is so wonderful. Moving back into the shoot a bit, let's talk about the Virgin Mary. She's been reinterpreted so many times across cultures and contexts, but what drew you to embodying her?

MS. MYLES: When I think about the Virgin Mary, I think about her as neither good nor bad. She's overlooked in the Bible, but I think about the power that she holds as a woman and as a matriarch, a bearer of life. She's a lost hero in this story, whether you believe in the Bible as fact or fiction. Women oftentimes—whether trans, cis, whatever—are lost in history, they're on the backburner.

CARTER: And she literally birthed Jesus! I didn't grow up Christian but I know about Noah, I know about Judas, all these other men in the bible. I really hear what you're saying.

MS. MYLES: Without Mother Mary disrupting the status quo by having this child in this miraculous way, the miracles that Jesus then performed would not have been possible. It starts with a woman, and I've always held women to such a high regard around me. Growing up around a strong single mother, strong influences from my grandmother, my other sisters—women have been such a consistent and revered energy in my life.

They show up at different times to steer you in the correct direction that you need to go on.

CARTER: Yeah.

MS. MYLES: I think that me being trans and me being visible is disruptive in its nature. And if you think of Mother Mary as this disruptive entity in the world or in the story, she doesn't have to be a cis woman. It doesn't have to be about her giving birth to the son of God. She just did a little miracle, as women do.

CARTER: To your point about Mother Mary being tossed into the background, I think there is a really clear translation to where trans women have been in history and culture, and how we've been tossed to the outside of history, despite being the ones to make the most movement. Black women especially. Is that also part of the reason you felt called to doing this shoot?

BRIANNA COHEN



ZEINA SOLIMANN



GLORIA CAO



PKAT NYE



EMAMI LEMON



ZAIA CABAL

"If you think of Mother Mary as this disruptive entity in the world or in the story, she doesn't have to be a cis woman. It doesn't have to be about her giving birth to the son of God. She just did a little miracle, as women do."

MS. MYLES: I felt really honoured to be given this opportunity. But I realized the impact that I have on people when Vonny voiced how much of an impact I have on their life, how much they look up to me, and how highly regarded I am by them.

MS. MYLES: I sort of float in and out of life, but it was so interesting to me seeing how passionate someone was about wanting to have me specifically be Mother Mary and be this representation.

Vonny had a whole thesis statement ready for me. I think the world of Vonny, so to be captured by this person when they have so much intentional thought and care behind why they want to capture me, made me feel comfortable to step in front of the lens—inside of staying behind it.

CARTER: It's so refreshing to see you in front of the camera. And all your disciples looked really, really beautiful. You did your own makeup?

MS. MYLES: I did my own makeup, of course.

CARTER: It's a doll thing. Like, we just really know our own face. Tell me about your glam, tell me about your wardrobe—how did you feel connected to that?

MS. MYLES: We had a meeting prior, and we were talking about how I envisioned myself and I love the idea that our designer Kendrick [Tran] came up with. He drew sketches for this beautiful lacy dress, and we collaborated on the idea of having it a little hooded. Like the idea of me embodying both light and dark as Mother Mary, concealing my face and concealing my energy.

I was so grateful to be a part of building the creative concepts before we shot. The other designer Valentine [Lovetalia] created these beautiful stacked rosaries and I didn't realize how much I am a gothy girl. It was beautiful playing with these artifacts from my childhood, these themes around Catholicism—and then flipping it and reversing it. I felt like a little kid playing dress up.

CARTER: I think if anyone reading this wants to know what Ms. Myles' story is about, it's the story of a young girl who grew up in a religious household, who's had all these ideas of religion passed onto her, and now she's been given an opportunity to lay it all out flat and rejig it. Like "here's what I'm going to take, here's what I thought was phony, here's what I thought was playful—and now I'm going to pick and choose what I want."

MS. MYLES: But don't take it too seriously. People must read—let's bring back literacy. I heard y'all are illiterate.

CARTER: And have no attention span at all.

MS. MYLES: No attention span at all.

CARTER: I want to hear more about your disciples before we finish.

MS. MYLES: My disciples were a collection of community members—some that were familiar to me and some that were new.

Everyone was so committed to the concept and the execution, and it made me feel so happy. This was one of the happiest days of the year for me because I'm still learning how valuable my ideas are. Trusting people with my ideas is like giving away power that I'm not typically used to. It was beautiful, and I felt very honoured that they believed in our idea and helped bring it to life.

CARTER: If you really were a cult leader though, what would your cult be about?

MS. MYLES: I would want it to revolve around self-actualization and sovereignty. Sovereignty is actually the name of this collective I'm a part of, but the definition of sovereignty is to have power over one's destiny and unadulterated freedom to do as you please. So I think that would be the theme behind my cult.

CARTER: It's quite the opposite of what a cult is normally like, but I love that.

MS. MYLES: My cult would be a good cult. And I hope that when people see this cover, they feel what it is to be revered, and find reverence in yourself before they experience it in others. I've been on my own journey of learning how to receive love that I'm given by other people, and I hope people feel empowered within their own lives to show themselves more love. And to take risks.

CARTER: Oh, that's so beautiful. I'm so happy we got to share energy and have this conversation, it was really refreshing. I love you so much.

MS. MYLES: Love you so much too.

"MY

CULT

WOULD

BE

A GOOD CULT."

STAN WARS

Words by Gordon Hanna

There's no such thing as a casual stan on the internet. If you can't go back and forth about chart positions and lead single rankings like a turn-based RPG, this may not be the place for you. Stay off Twitter and take your ass back to TikTok.

Trust me: I spent years honing my craft while devoting my teenage years exclusively to K-Pop. It'd wouldn't be a stretch to say K-Pop was my religion. Red Velvet were my prophets, and their latest singles my hymns. I'd provoke rival fan bases in science class, stream my favourite's groups' music at work, and then wish the timeline a good night before bed. And the next day, I'd do it all again.

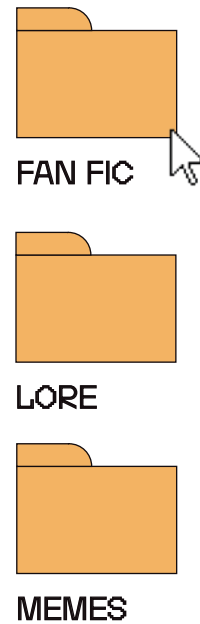
There were times when I'd take it a bit too far. One of my lowest moments was during summer break and the morning of a G2 driving lesson. It was just a harmless tweet, BTS' ARMY had been coming for Red Velvet's Wendy for months, and as one of her biggest fans I had to step in. All I'd said was "BTS fans don't understand the concept of a main vocalist because their group doesn't have one."

Throughout the entire lesson, my phone wouldn't stop buzzing. The ARMY wasn't having it, and my tweet earned me mass

reportings and doxxings from all corners of the internet. What do you think happens if you tell my high school principal I don't like BTS—they'll suspend me? Needless to say, they tried, but I did receive a different kind of suspension, my Twitter account. I didn't learn much about parallel parking that day.

So just know: I've been in the trenches, and I've fought for these credentials. There's rules to this type of fight. And if you're a burgeoning pop star who wants to cultivate your own rabid fanbase, follow these steps and you'll keep your army obsessed and ready to fight.

Follow these simple rules and you're almost guaranteed to get a legion of stans that would die for you. But remember, they can turn on you in an instant. If that ever happens, remember: be a victim, and play the part well.



THE LAWS OF STAN WARFARE

BE HOT

If you're gorgeous, no one can really say anything—can they? Your body or face card will always be your greatest weapon. Get the Gua Sha out from your bathroom drawer and handle it.

HOT!

DRIP FEED THEM PERSONAL MOMENTS

Your army craves constant stimulation and reminders of your existence, so always give them a new theory to play with. They don't need every detail, though. Just casually post a hand on your lap to send your community abuzz. Your fans should feel like they have your number, even if you never check DMs.

REMAIN A CRITICAL DARLING, DARLING

What if I flop? My dear, what if you slay? Your fans will start jumping ship if they think you aren't worth stanning, so you need a body of work that's Grammy worthy. 9.1 reviews on Pitchfork are ammunition for your ranks, people can only defend a flop for so long.

GIVE YOUR FANDOM A NAME

The greatest fan armies didn't just magically come together, they needed a title to rally behind. You need to give it to them. Mariah has her Lambs, Beyonce has the Hive, Gaga has her Little Monsters—and the name you pick is a badge of honour they'll wear while they defend you for hours on end.

DAMSEL-IN-DISTRESS IT OUT

There's no shame in playing the victim, and you should being the alpha isn't hitting like it used to and your spot is being threatened by the new divas, go belly up. Maybe get a shoe thrown at your temple—people will resonate with that.

STOKE THE FLAMES SUBTLY

When the stans go to war, never never show your outright support. You wouldn't want to end up on news outlets coming off as the antagonist. There's an art to giving fans juuuust enough to know you're supporting them in only a way they'll understand.

GO TO BRAZIL

When they say "come to Brazil," listen. If no one's got you, baby, Brazil's got you. There can be 100 people in the room and 99 of them don't stan you, the one that does is probably Brazilian. Brazil is a pop girls' safe haven, so if you ever need a reminder you're that girl...you know just where to go.

◀ || ▶ ▶



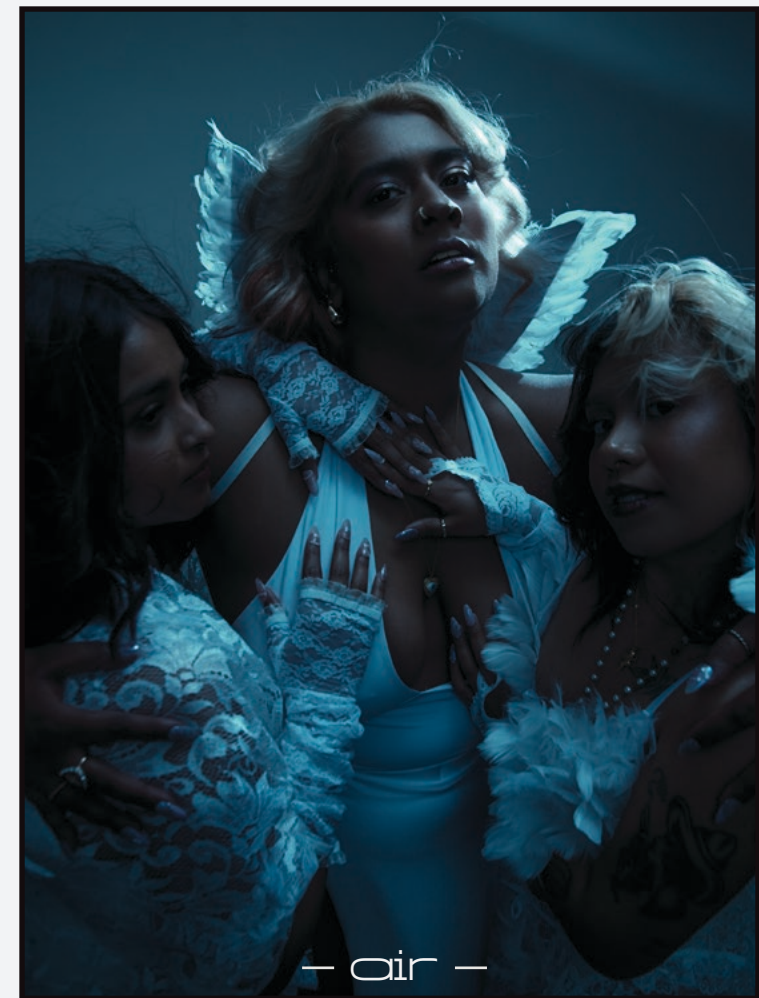
Ascendants

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROYA DELSOL

@royadelsol

WORDS BY SOLEIA FRANCIS

@solfuric



TEAM + LOCATIONS

NAIL ARTIST

Lara Jannin

PRODUCER

Isaac Nikolai Fox

STYLISTS

Kendrick Tran, Valentine Lovetalia

HAIR AND MAKEUP

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BTS PHOTO

Nicole Banda

LIGHTING

Vonny Lorde, Gerald Eze

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS

Smita Mahmud, Jennifer Wan,
Christina Lin, Minha Lee.

LOCATIONS

Foy House, Humber Bay
Park East.

MODELS

AIR

Lubaba Gemma, Em Nyogi,
Valentine Lovetalia

FIRE

Rahnell Branton, Jude Karda,
Mars Alexander

EARTH

Oro JT, Czarina "Zesty" Daipan,
Sadiah Rahman

WATER

Soleia Francis, Lara Jannin, Cien
Francis, Kiura Francis

The Libras in my life are messy, hunny. They're very driven and goal-oriented, though.

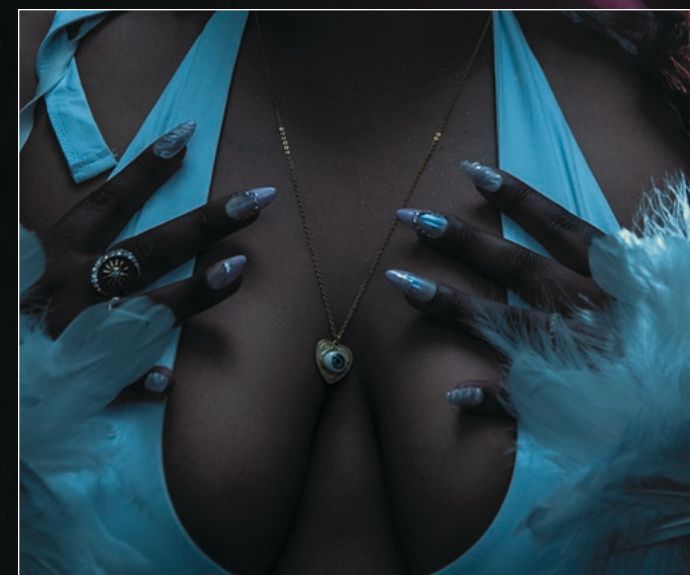
LIBRA

The girls, gays, theys, and dolls all crave community, now more than ever in a precarious world. We crave closeness. I started practicing tarot eight years ago because it was a pathway towards togetherness and a communal belief in something so unknown and intangible. We're all looking for answers. We all want to better understand things that we don't have knowledge in, and many of us look for these answers in astrology and tarot.

How easy is it to classify that guy you hooked up with that didn't text you back as another typical Scorpio? How often do we cringe or recoil when we hear that our friend is going out with a Gemini? When you find out that your blind date is a Libra, do you start planning your escape out of the bathroom window right away—or do you sit through apps and drinks first before making a run for it? In an age of blinding and deafening uncertainty, astrology and tarot can provide us with certainty and validation. It's also a *little* culty.

There is no scripture, but there are astrological transits and tarot interpretations that give us comfort and confidence. We don't convene in holy temples, but in cozy rooms with windows that let us see the night sky. We're clinging to ancient teachings of the stars, waiting to be told what to do. And when we believe, we can exhale. What is more comforting than a prediction from the future? Astrology provides us with strength we always had, but couldn't tap into without a little help from something mystical and otherworldly. Isn't that what most cults promise?

We feel a sense of hope because The Ace of Cups was upright, and that means things will be okay. We blame our shitty luck and bad moods on a retrograde, an eclipse, planetary changes—or anything “low vibrational.” We bond over arcane knowledge and find community in it. We build our own churches around constellations and tarot and oracle decks. Maybe there's no all-powerful leader to shepherd us, but we find our own guidance in the omnipotent power of the stars.



lubababa

rahnnell

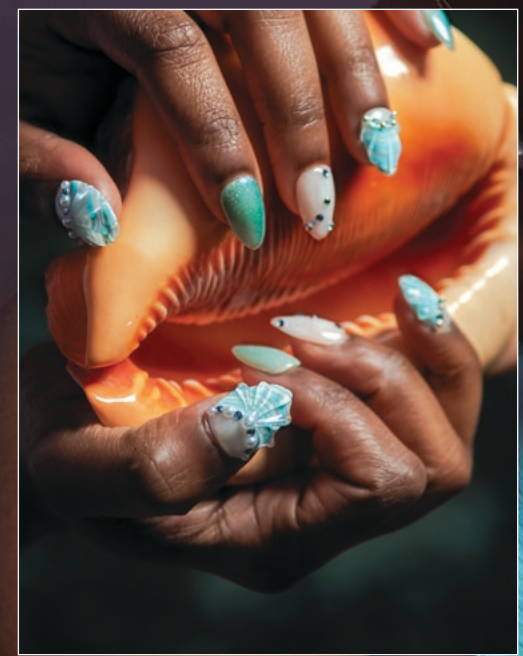
Firey, bold, spontaneous—with a good sense of order and planning. We love a Sagittarius shorty.



SAGITTARIUS

Crybaby central over here. I'm either a sappy lovgirl or my own chamber of self-pity.

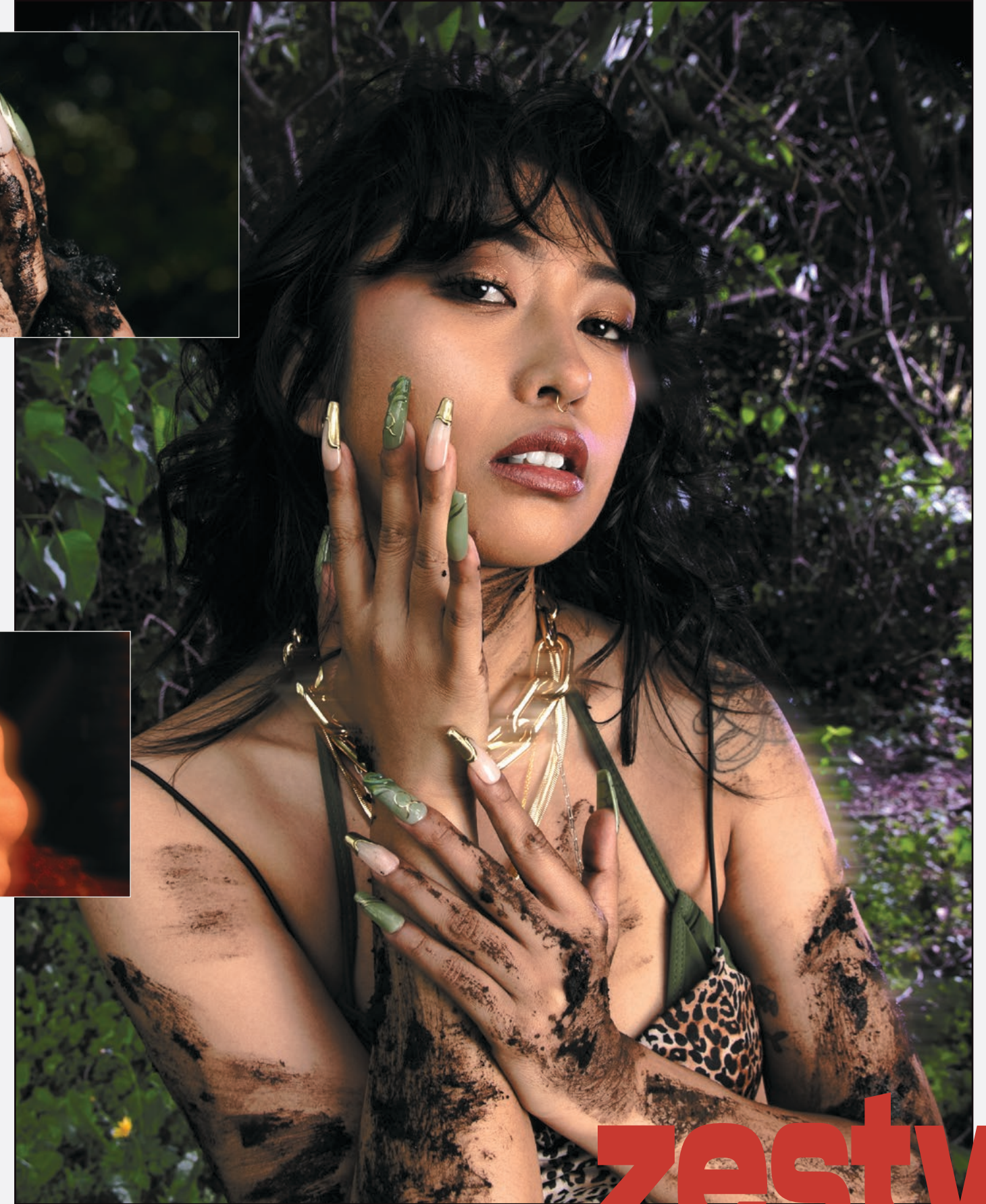
soleeia



CANCER



You're the best at what you do, but that might not be for everyone. It's okay to be an aquired taste.



You're the Martha Stewart of the Zodiac, down to earth. Tauruses are natural homemakers, but don't let the wrong people in.

juode

zesty

AQUARIUS

Get your head out of the clouds, Aquarii.
Come back down to earth, reality is just
as good as your daydream.



valentine

lara

Slow down for a second, Pisces girls.
Think about your own heart, not
everything is meant to be held onto.



PISCES

CAPRICORN

Take a break once in a while. Capricorns are the Zodiac's capitalists, make room for your rest.



sadiqah

mars



ARIES

I love Aries downnnn. Channel your gut fire energy, and don't be afraid to stand up.

oro

You're very giving, but that can be your downfall. Give your all where it's reciprocal, to people who see your worth.

You're secretly emotional. That two-faced label is you trying to process your own emotions—so talk about them instead of hiding them.

emme



VIRGO



GEMINI

YOU STING FOR GOOD REASONS

My twin sisters are so cool and scary. You wanna talk about the queens of cutting people off—holy crap. My sister Cien broke up with a man because he sat in the middle seat on the TTC.

She's like: "why are you going to squeeze into this middle seat next to me—why am I the man right now?" But I love that they have standards, we could all learn from them. They strict as hell.

Kiura is ready to go, ready to rumble at any point. If we're out at a party, she'll be like "if we don't know the next 3 songs, we're leaving." Type A, about business, she's no nonsense.

I feel like the advice I'd give to them is to keep doing what they're doing. These two (and the other Scorpios I know) are true to their morals and how they are in the world.

Scorpios: you know exactly what you want. That can be intimidating for some people, but never be scared to act on it.

All words by Soleia Francis.
(The Scorpios are my younger sisters.)

SCORPIO



cien & kiura

CULTS ARE CAPITALISTS TOO

Not even cults can escape the iron-clad fists of capitalism.

Words by Sierra Madison

Turns out it costs a lot of money to run a cult—spiritual awakenings aren't cheap! Since members aren't always willing (or able) to fund their leaders' grand visions, these "institutions" are forced to get creative, to get others to buy in. In the era of social media and parasocial besties, most brands dream of cult-like loyalty; devotion rebranded as reward points.

Ironically, Sleepytime Tea was what woke me up to this. You know, the tea brand with the cozy little bear in a nightgown on it? Yeah, they're tied to a cult. It's called Celestial Seasoning, and it was founded in 1969. Their core beliefs are that Adam and Eve were racist aliens and that certain races are more "advanced" than others. Classic eugenics shit.

This got me thinking about how cults pay for all that Kool-Aid—and more than thinking, it sent me spiraling into one of my favourite pastimes: baseless speculation. If Sleepytime Tea/Celestial Seasoning could fly under the radar all these years, what brands might secretly be fronts for history's most notorious cults?

Come spiral down the rabbit hole with me.



NXIVM →

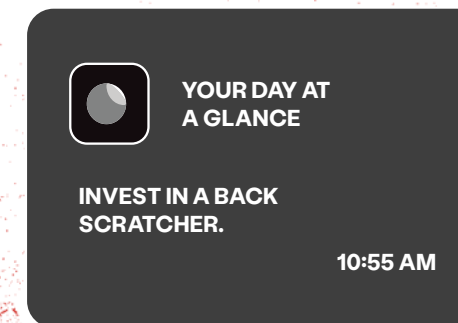
Alo

NXIVM was a cult disguised as a self-help group, started by Keith Raniere in 1998. It drew in around 18,000 people with promises of fulfillment and success. Alo is already scamming every white girl with a bit of disposable income to buy their mediocre leggings, so is it really a stretch to think it's run by a cult? I think not.

Scientology →

Co-Star

Perhaps the most famous modern cult! A fan favourite if you will. Scientologists believe we're immortal alien thetans stuck in human bodies, cut off from our true selves. They'd absolutely run an astrology app that sends you passive aggressive push notifications all day about how the stars are saying you need to "invest in a backscratcher".



The Manson Family →

An Illegal Mushroom Store

This one is a Toronto deep cut, but if the Manson Family were still around today they'd 100% be running one of those illegal mushroom stores on Queen St. You know the vibe: always smells like cheap incense, everyone's in parachute pants and a crusty baja hoodie, and your midday mushrooms purchase would come with unsolicited advice about your aura.

Sullivanians →

Erewhon

\$30 smoothies? Only a cult with ties to the 1% could afford to blow that kind of money on blended fruits and "superfoods", which is why only the Sullivanians could be behind it. When they aren't having 10 person orgies branded as a "polyamory masterclass" you'd find them behind the Erewhon counter begrudgingly taking your order.

Othership →

Othership

You can't convince me that Othership isn't a cult. A bunch of King St finance bros and bartenders turned real estate agents making sex noises in a sweaty sauna together at 7AM on a Sunday morning...come on. Besides, only a cult leader could sell them on the idea that ice baths deliver the same dopamine hit as snorting a line in the Locals Only bathroom.

If brands aren't outright supporting cults, they're busy trying to become them, attempting to craft intense loyalty that borders on religion. Whether it's overpriced leggings, cryptic wellness apps, or incense-drenched storefronts, the line between marketing and mind control is getting blurrier by the day.

Grifters on Grifters

Joseph Smith and Rich DeVos

A definitely-not-fictional account from Joseph Smith himself, the first prophet of the Latter Day Saints, reflecting on wealth, influence, and legacy.

Words by Angela Gong

Joseph Smith: Big dawg.

Richard DeVos: What's good?

Smith: Honestly nothing much. Catching up on the newest season of The Secret Lives of Mormon Wives.

DeVos: Damn. Shouldn't they give you a free subscription to that for like, starting the whole religion?

Smith: Bruhhhhh. I know. Somehow there's no discount for being the first prophet.

DeVos: Wild. Anyways, I hit you up 'cause I've got an Amway problem. My kids are running the show now, and people are starting to catch on to the whole MLM thing.

I was following your playbook for a while: golden plates, gatekeep, girlboss - but I think we need an update if we want to keep gaslighting 34-year-old housewives into selling Nutrilite.

Smith: I fuck with the vision, but I need some more details if I'm gonna help. What's the Q4 report looking like?

DeVos: People just aren't seeing the value proposition type shit. The granola to alt-right pipeline is still hitting but we're down 15 points with trad wives.



Now RFK Jr. is turning them off all these supplements and sending them straight to actual fascism. They keep on trying to get into raw meat. We don't even sell that.

Smith: You need to play to your market, G. Customer insights are everything-if they want the meat raw, give it to them raw. It's not complicated.

DeVos: I'm taking notes. What else?

Smith: Every good grift needs a big lie. Something for the people to really invest in, whole hog. You want them to feel really stupid if they leave.

Like, you can get eternal life with your family in the celestial kingdom so long as you wear Joseph Smith's special undies and don't have any premarital. But if you soak too close to the sun then it's all brimstone. OGs know that the best debt to have is a sunk cost.

DeVos: Trust, I know. Once you have a basement full of our Artistry Labs toners, you have no choice but to lock in and preach the Amway gospel.

Smith: Exactly. But how do you actually get them to fill up that basement? I think you're being too positive with the woo woo founder stories.

Smith: You can't just preach hope and self-worth all the time. Fear gets you places.

DeVos: Hmm, so it sounds like Amway needs to go dark mode. I'll tell my kids that aura-maxxing should be a new KPI.

Smith: I mean, my boy Zuck had a glow-up, Amway can too. What you need is an entrepreneurial hype house with your top reps. Keep them podcasting and clip-farming 24/7 about how to get rich. Shame the viewers for having 9-5s. If you don't stock-up up on Nutrilite, you're choosing poverty.

DeVos: It's like: what's worse than death? Being one of the pors. If you aren't buying new supplements, you're choosing to give up all hope. I fuck with the messaging. It'll get people invested.

Smith: For real, bro. And then trying to pull them out pushes them in further. Some of your belief structure should be rage bait to get the normies to start fights with Amway reps. Fuck, I convinced everyone that the Garden of Eden is in Missouri. We got chased all the way to Utah by the haters-and that's what made our members feel like a family. Since then, full send.

DeVos: But that's the thing. People aren't persecuting our IBOs enough to make them dig their heels in. You made your people be poly outside of Bushwick and in the 1800s, you knew that people would come for their necks. You were working on easy mode.

Smith: Hey buddy, don't talk shit. I didn't make anyone be poly. I told them they'd go to hell if they weren't. They had free will. Ish.

DeVos: Whoa, no need to get all bent out of shape, man. I'm just saying the sex stuff was kind of a dick move. I'm not sure Amway is willing to take anything like that on. It's a liability.

Smith: Look, take my advice or don't. All I'm saying is my playbook helped me scale Mormonism from a 1-person startup religion to a \$300 billion dollar operation. Like, just for the record: your company wouldn't exist without me. My pyramid big, your pyramid small.

DeVos: Be fucking for real. You're saying I owe my fortune to you?

Smith: Uhh, kinda. A little credit would be nice. Maybe a commission.

DeVos: My guy, we're both dead. You're really still grifting out here.

Smith: What can I say, the Celestial Kingdom is better if you're a high-value man. We're like two feet away from the Heavenly Father, patriarchy rules.

DeVos: I'm starting to see why they assassinated you.

Smith: Low blow. Tell your stupid kids to do a Goop collab or something, I'm out.

....

The Zoom call disconnects.

SURRENDER TO ME



ILLUSTRATOR AYKESH

DOWN THE STAIRS

I remember thinking there will be trouble tonight because Nathan is wearing navy. I'm wearing the same black suit I wore to prom, as I check people off the list at a fundraising gala for children in Haiti.

Hello, may I have your name, please? They glare as I turn to the list, my fingers slower than they need to be. not knowing these few seconds to search are all I have to claim as my own. Yes, in you go. Sienna is posing on the black carpet in a black Carolina Herrera gown. Her husband won't take off his black baseball cap. This won't help his reputation as a bald man.

Sienna is President of Skinner's Public Relations. Earlier in the office, I suggested the press release could acknowledge gang brutality and the collapse of essential services in Haiti—but Sienna didn't want to depress respected members of the media. I had set a timer to like today's #AllBlackEverything post, but the image didn't load.

The next time I see Nathan, the stitches are starting to split. He has one less finger to type emails with. I wonder if she had them donated.

> The email reads:

We'd like to invite you to experience the soul of South America at SUNY! We have an incredible menu with beach club vibes. We hope you have an amazing time sharing your experience by tagging @sunyrestaurant and @elijonspr.

A publicist with two names invites my boyfriend and me to an agency party at a house in Rosedale. He goes by Jack on weekdays and Malcolm on weekends because it helps him design his life. There's a charcuterie board the size of a buffet table with twelve types of cheese. Engraved bottles of Glenfiddich are being passed around, but the smoke machine makes it hard to read the names.

> My email reads:

Good morning Eli, thank you for reaching out. Confirming I'll be there and I'm looking forward to connecting next week.

At the bar in the basement, Jack tells me that to be successful, you need to give in. Give in to what, Malcolm? I don't get an answer because someone is going around telling people they're a lifestyle UGC creator and the room smells like blood. I must be imagining things because smoke from the machines upstairs starts spreading down through the ceiling. I lick my teeth to make sure they are still there.

My boyfriend blows me in the bathroom. Outside our stall, someone is crying into a pink marble sink. A journalist slowly asks—if I swallow every last one,

will they stop following up with me? My boyfriend from corporate laughs in his face. I consider asking one of the journalists for his pills. The journalist gives me his email instead.

Most of us are let go from Skinner's Public Relations because Global News lays off half its Toronto newsroom. Sienna thinks they'll apply. I wonder who they'll pitch.

You were invited because their publicist thinks you're attractive, my boyfriend says. I spend my last paycheck on a green Casablanca shirt for the SUNY

opening next week. After you tongue the plate clean, it makes sense to pick away at your skin.

I keep three buttons undone instead of two. At the door with his list the man I assume to be Eli of @elijonspr stares at my exposed collarbone in a nonsexual way. A bartender hands me the machine and I realize it's a cash bar. I look behind the dancers but there's nobody there.

There's no mention of SUNY in Toronto Life. My boyfriend casually mentions over coffee that Eli of @elijonspr drank bleach.

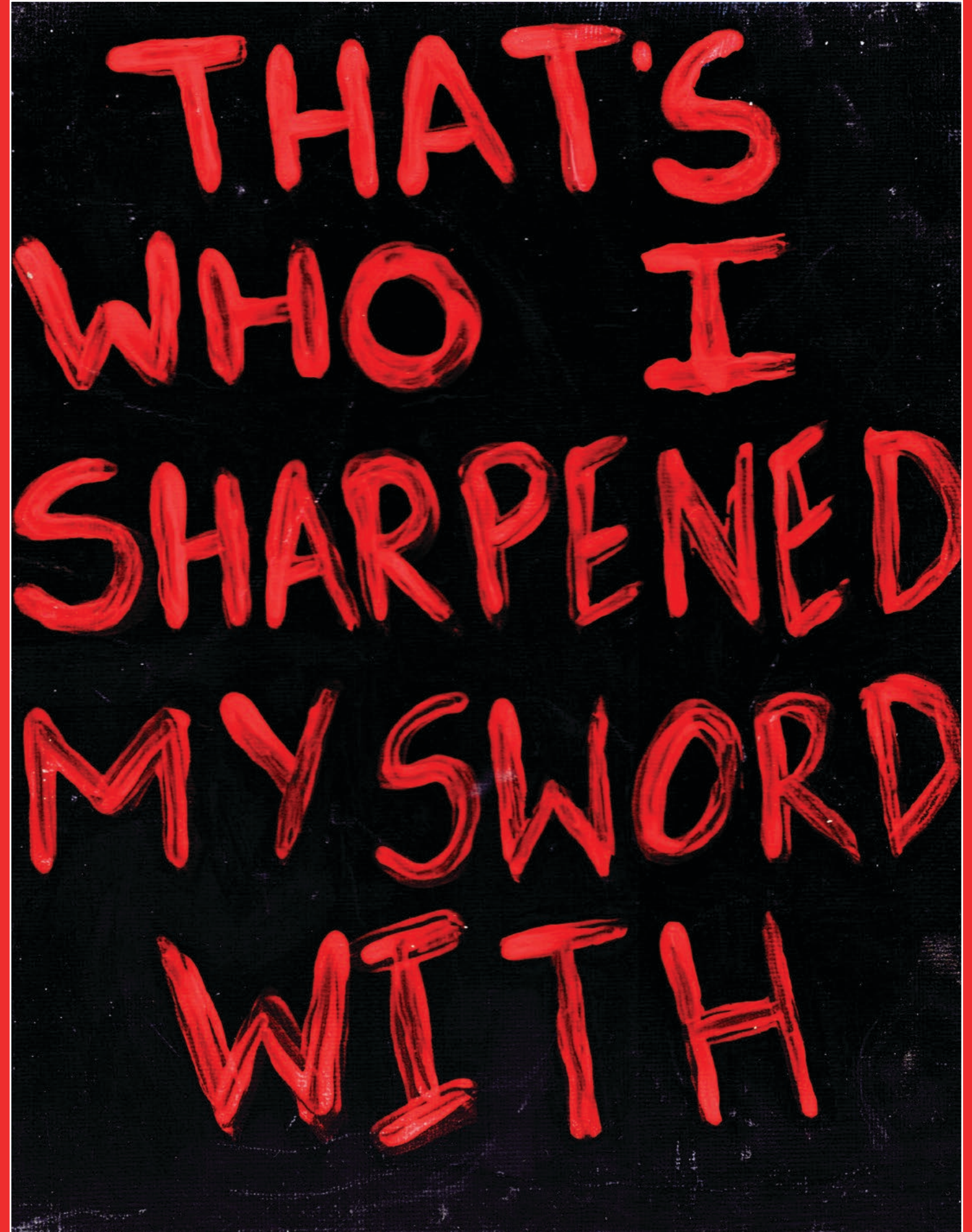
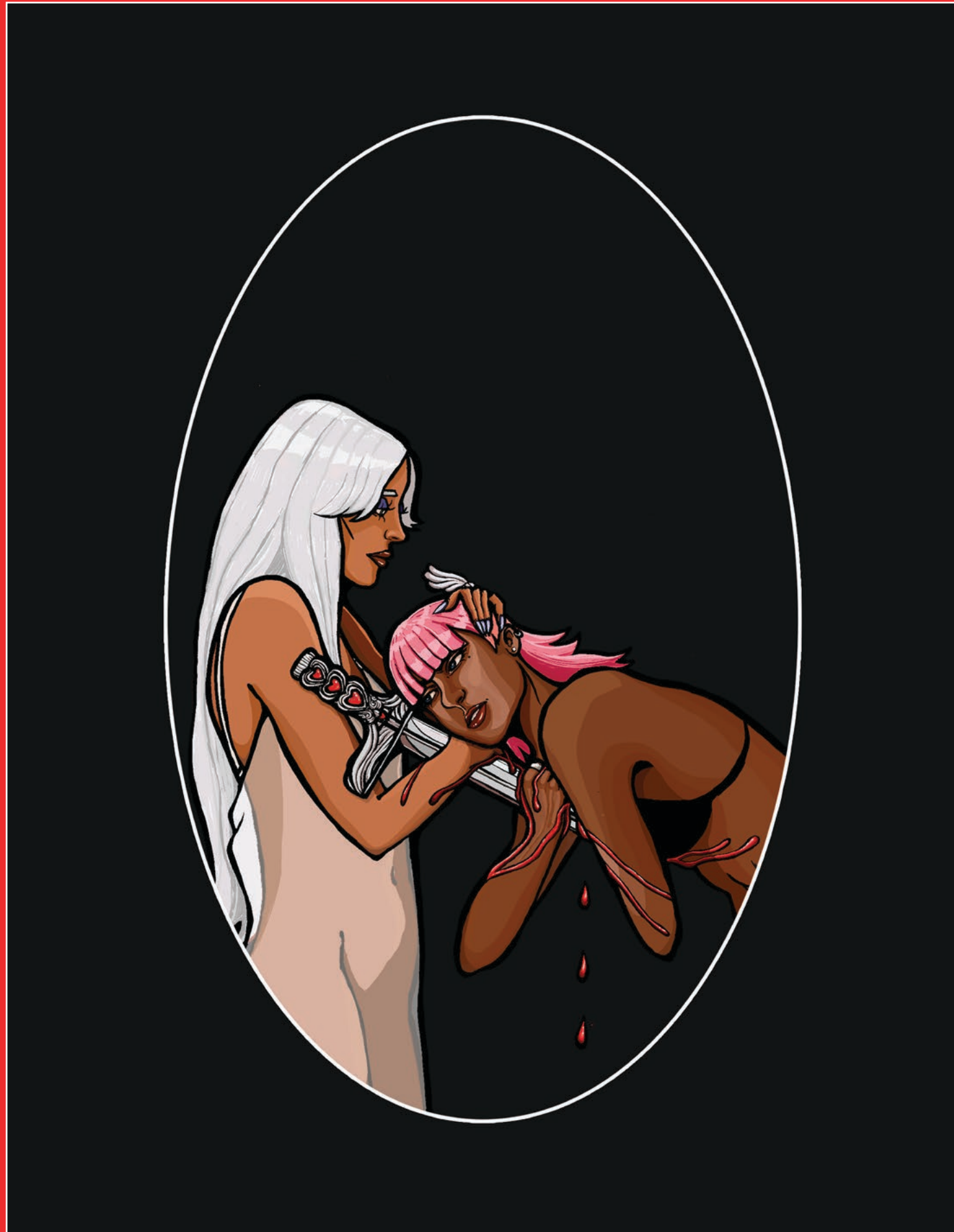
> The email reads:

SUNY is one of Toronto's top dinner destinations, and we're taking things even higher as it becomes TERMINAL 2. Continuing to celebrate the flavours of South America, we can't wait to welcome you onboard to TERMINAL 2.

We hope you have an amazing time sharing your experience by tagging @terminal2restaurant and @skinnerpublicrelations.

Words by Omar Taleb





Fly lords and boy kings,

Group think and pit stink,

In our canvas cathedral,
stuffed full with twenty
other hormonal boys

we boasted fable and hid
truth.

In the silence he begged
me not to tell anyone.

I saw starlight behind the
eye holes of his mask.

In him I left words hidden to
grow and protect long after
I was gone.

"I see you" is a hickey
healed a hundred times
over.

At 20 I just discovered the
words left in me by him.

"I'm sorry" is a skin tag I'd
never realized I had.

Words by Morgan Wright



**buildings brought to stand
from those broken down**

in this city -

this home for housing

one day, we will wake up

and see

a field of empty promises

where sunlight used to be

in this city -

Words by R.S.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIBRIL YASSIN
@uhhhwhy

sapphic cat cult

We all know a cat-loving lesbian. There is something magical about the sapphic-kitty relationship. Through time and space, there exists a long web of lesbians who (without any collective planning) have all decided to bow down to these little balls of fluff.

We're spiritually connected through our devotion to our kitties and to the beautiful existence that is being queer. There *is* a sapphic cat cult, and while it has been documented before—pls. read *Cats and their Dykes* by Irene Retl & Shoney Sien—Lore needed to know more.

Join us as we document the rituals and disciples of kitty worship.

WORDS BY TEAGAN HYNDMAN
@sunnyterracotta



Meet Squish

He has many disciples because he's perfect in every way, like all cats. He also runs my life. I adopted Squish off a farmer on Kijiji after he was abandoned in rural Ottawa.



Squish lives for attention and chicken, and he might do your tarot for a treat.



Wherever there are lesbians, there will be cats.

I would give up my life savings to see baby pictures of Squish. He has turned countless dog people into cat people, but the full extent of his power has yet to be seen—since he's usually napping.





OFFER
U-HAUL
GET One Mo
FREE ST
With One-Way Track or Tra
FREE ROOM
ORIGIN

WARNING
This trailer connector socket is
not wired for the operation of
electric trailer brakes.

WARNING
To avoid serious
injury:
- Always use grab
handles when
entering or exiting
the vehicle.
- Always check for
traffic before
entering or exiting
the vehicle.

cat calls

After a morning with Squish, Lore needed to know more about the disciples of kitty worship. How do they serve their cat overlords? Why do sapphics feel so much kinship with cats? How do the cat cult commandments work? The list goes on. Here are some first hand accounts from Toronto's Sapphic Cat Cult.



Cult commandment



Cult commandment:
You must protect creatures who can see through the veil.

Ainslie
they/them

Junno



Cult commandment:
Being allergic to cats isn't an excuse to not have one.

Corey & Connie
she/her + she/they

Kai
they/them

Why do sapphics love cats so much?
We identify deeply with the autonomy, authenticity, and independence of our kitties.



Terra

Hemmingway



Emma
she/her

Why do sapphics love cats so much?
As per one of my favourite fridge magnets, "the more I know about men,
the more I love my cat."

Alex
she/her

Cult commandment:
Kitty knows best. Always listen to Kitty.



Mina

Fry



Cris
they/them

Cult commandment:
ALWAYS make sure the water bowl is full.

Toph & Thambi



Sade & Subhanya
they/them + she/her

Cult commandment:
Closed doors are still an option in your home. Know the cat will punish you if you choose this option.

Dotty



What's your role in the cat cult?
Follower! Dotty runs my life, I'm just here to serve her.

Emma
she/her

Why do sapphics love cats so much?
Pussy power.

Zarina
they/them



Pablo & Kammoon

Soup, Dax + Cheesy



Why do sapphics love cats so much?

They give U-haul energy.

S

they/them

Almost an acolyte

Words by Rachel Evangeline Chiong

If you squint hard while watching the Duggar exposés, there's a non-zero chance you'd see 8-year old me amid a sea of homeschooled evangelical kids. No, don't worry—I'm okay, just regular religious trauma. But the Duggars were members of the Institute of Biblical Life Principles (IBLP), and in 2004, I attended their 3-day Advance Training Institute (ATI) conference in Indianapolis.

You see... my parents were hardcore homeschooling Baptists, and in the early days we were guinea pigs to every curriculum out there. None of the kids at church understood it. But my parents had some homies who also homeschooled their kids, including my BFF Jenny's family, and through some BOGO magic they all got into IBLP booklets at the same time.

If I still had my old diary, my memories would have looked something like this.

June 11, 2004

There are so many homeschoolers here! My siblings and I played a game where we counted all the children in the conference hall and one family has FIFTEEN. And all the women are wearing "khaki" skirts! Just like the ones Mom made us thrift from Once Upon a Child. They're brown and feel like shoes.

Dad didn't let me sit next to Jenny in the giant conference room during the sermon, so I stared at my pamphlet instead. They have the same Umbrella of Authority diagram from our booklets at home. Christ is the biggest umbrella on top, and the Husband comes second. The Wife is the smallest umbrella and all the little children are underneath. The caption says, "by honoring and submitting to authorities, you will receive the privileges of their protection." I colored it in with my blueberry-scented gel pen.



June 12, 2004

I cried because Jenny and I aren't in the same group. She's "too old" for Pre-Excel, and she gets to go to COMMIT with the teens. The big girls in COMMIT got to wear dress shoes and "blouses", while Pre-Excel girls still carried their Bibles in kiddy zip cases. Mom told me to stop embarrassing her, so I stopped crying. But my stomach still hurt a lot.

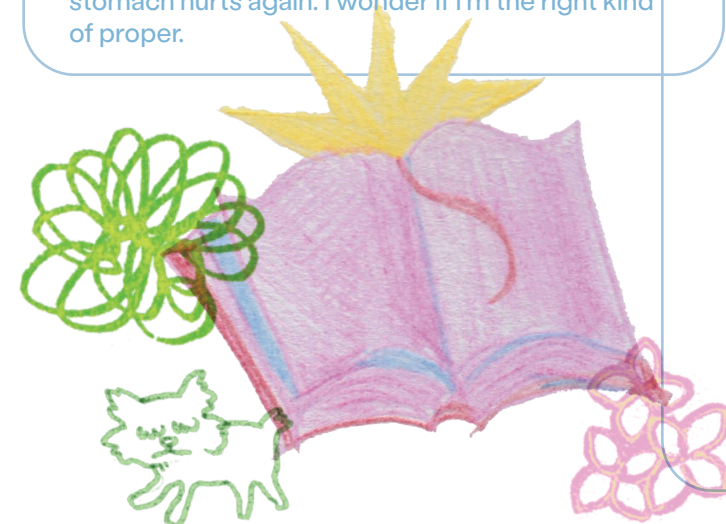
All the girls here have the exact same "burgundy" polo uniform. Dad lied and said we'd get to wear pink, but it's brown like the pews at church. They also gave us camping hats even though we were indoors. The Team Leaders smiled a lot, but they were very serious when they told us we must wear our nametags on the left side of our chest where it's visible. I saw some girls look a little red-faced when they had to unbutton their pins from their sleeves and their hats and make it look proper. I thought it looked cool.



June 13, 2004

Last day! I can't wait to show my friends back home the crafts we did. I made a bee out of pompoms for the 'Be' Attitudes mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount. I wanted to show the girls I memorized all 3 chapters of the sermon, but some of them knew ALL of Psalms too. (150 chapters!) The Team Leaders reminded us that if we practiced "kindness, patience, and sweetness" we would be mature enough to join the teen girls in COMMIT next year.

They said COMMIT was going to teach us how to be proper young ladies. Yesterday, someone saw my notebook and said my cursive was 'proper'. I looked at the little children on the diagram and then circled The Wife umbrella above. My stomach hurts again. I wonder if I'm the right kind of proper.



June 14, 2004

I'm back home! And I can wear t-shirts and jeans again! Mom said if people at church ask where we were last Sunday (we usually NEVER skip church), we should just tell them we were at a homeschooling conference. I wanted to call it the ATI conference but she told me sternly no one would know because it's for homeschoolers only. I asked if I could tell my friends about the matching khaki skirts but she said no.

Marie from Sunday School let me decorate my binder with her stickers. I tried to explain the homework and umbrella inside but she didn't get it. Mom put away my burgundy polo. She asked if I wanted to keep it in my closet but I didn't want to. I don't know if we'll go again next year, but next time I hope I can wear my own clothes.

We didn't go back next year. Without any explanation, my parents suddenly announced we were switching our homeschool curriculum. Slowly the ATI booklets disappeared from our home as if they had never existed. In 2014, Bill Gothard, the leader of the IBLP stepped down in the midst of assault allegations. It should've been no surprise that an organization whose core theology centered male authority and female submission, turned a blind eye to all the pain and abuse within its community.

9 years later, my sister messaged our 'Homeschool Trauma Survivors' sibling group chat and said "guys I did some digging and I think we were part of a cult". We processed this traumatic information by creating a meme-filled power point that we presented to our friends at a basement party. If you ever lived under a religious umbrella, sometimes one of the ways to step out of its shadow is to decompress on a Canva template and laugh about it.



THE

SELF

CARE

MODELS

Kwaku Okyere
Lea Batara

KEY SET

DRESSER
Gabby Chan

PRODUCER

Isaac Nikolai Fox

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS

Lara Jannin
Nevi Gaetan
Alycia Shanika

The commodification of self care from radical community care to isolating rituals of consumption places us in cozy prison cells where we seek reprieve from capitalism *with* capitalism. This editorial parodies various self care practices that late stage capitalism promotes; we're all dancing the self-care cell block tango!

PHOTOS + WORDS BY ALBERT HOANG

@callmealbs



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The Prettiest Cult You'll Ever Join

Words by Rhythm Sachdeva

No one tells you you're an initiate. One day, you're just vibing with your sticker book and Pokémon pencil case. Next, you're being told to cross your legs, quiet your voice, and smile like your entire worth depends on it. Which in many ways, it does.

Welcome to the sisterhood. Or as I like to call it: the prettiest cult you'll ever join. It's not religion, but there are commandments. It's not war, but there are casualties. It's not always men holding the keys; it's often women, handing them to each other like heirlooms.

Girl Code

At its best, girlhood is a safety net; a quiet network of women looking out for one another. It is joy, loyalty, and protection that can make even unfamiliar places feel safe.

The rules are simple. Keep her secrets. Step in if she is in danger. Get her home safely. If she needs an exit, take her arm and invent an excuse that works.

Do not date her ex or the man she likes. Do not flirt with someone else's partner. Do not leave her stranded. Never trade her trust for someone else's approval.

Celebrate her wins. Support her when it counts. Share her enemies. Distrust any boyfriend who falls short, and sometimes even the ones who do not.

Over time, it becomes instinct. One glance can say everything. One "come find me" call can change the night. Girlhood at its best is generous, comradely, and very funny.

At its worst, it can become a cult so quietly suffocating you do not realise you are choking until the air is gone.



The Indoctrination Phase

She grew up in a north Indian city where girlhood's rules were clear and enforced with the kind of love that punishes difference "for your own good." She was shy, awkward, a little dreamy, and for that, she was fair game.

Punishable crimes included speaking when you should have smiled, showing too much or too little skin, failing the canon of approved brands, music and TV shows, and worst of all, having your own personality.

By adulthood, the cult had gone discreet. The women wore Chanel and delivered judgments over mimosas. They don't say "you've failed." They say, "Your daughter is so brave to not be married at 27." Brave, like I am summiting Everest, not living in a condo without a dishwasher.

Here, status outranks solidarity. My mom has a friend who "forgets" to mention parties, keeps gossip like it is classified, and says nothing when her daughter is rude, yet still expects my mom to show up for her like it is a salaried position.

The cult is powerful. My mom now shames me for not wanting to get engaged, and for befriending women who are not "useful," passing down the cult's opinions as her own.

And here's the kicker: the aunties think they are helping. They believe they are protecting women from a world that punishes non-conformity by getting there first.



Don't Break the Chain (of Command)

The uncomfortable truth? It's women enforcing the rules, not men. When the system only makes space for one "exceptional" woman at a time, gatekeeping starts to feel like self-preservation. If the cult tells you there's just one seat at the table, you're less likely to pull up a chair for someone else.

There's also generational insecurity. Many of the older women I know were shamed for wanting anything: career, sex, freedom. So they passed that shame on, neatly wrapped as tradition. As Jia Tolentino put it in *The New Yorker*, "feminism these days is less revolution, more retail." The sisterhood was commodified, branded, and sold back to us as lifestyle, making exclusion seem stylish.

Enforced by the Aunties

This isn't unique to any specific culture. In Korean culture, the *ajumma* is known for scolding female strangers and claiming sidewalk space, all in the name of propriety. As *The Korea Times* notes, she's bold, blunt, and entirely unbothered.

In white suburban America, it's the soccer mom who raises feminist sons while trash-talking the single woman down the street. In the Arab world, it's the woman enforcing modesty rules while dreaming of fashion week in Paris.

Modern girlhood movements like "girl's girl" culture promise empowerment, but often operate like exclusive clubs, with rigid aesthetics and even more rigid rules.



Support is offered, yes, but often only to those who follow the script. Yes, the cult has evolved. Today, the rituals come in the form of "hot girl walks," and corporate women's panels with seven sponsors and no childcare. It's still about discipline, just with better lighting.

And if you misstep? The group chat goes quiet. You're no longer tagged in the photos. You become a cautionary tale with good eyebrows.

Excommunication Rules

If womanhood is a cult, who benefits? Brands. Institutions. Men, often. And quietly, the women who've worked their whole lives to "belong" and are terrified someone will reveal how fragile that belonging is.

So yeah, I believe in sisterhood. Just not the kind that demands adherence to earn safety and acceptance. Real solidarity isn't conditional, at least not like that. It doesn't ask you to shrink. It doesn't confuse support with surveillance.

I'm after a version of womanhood where support is not earned by perfection. Where we stand by each other through mistakes, bad outfits, wrong opinions, and questionable boyfriends.

Where being different, unusual, or "too much" is met with curiosity instead of exile. A world where we let one another be works in progress, the way we should have let Carrie Bradshaw be, without reducing her to every misstep.

If that makes me a dropout, so be it.



LEAFS FOREVER

Words by Nick Schloessin

With my own eyes I saw a Leafs fan at the bar hanging from their bottle. When I asked them what they wanted, they replied,

"I want to die."

It's understandable: the Toronto Maple Leafs are the only cult where doomsday actually comes.

On any given day of the hockey season, I'll walk through the foyer of the Scotiabank Arena and look up to see their mural looming. The Toronto Maple Leafs are plastered on the wall, and a decal below the players' faces reads: "Leafs forever, can't stop, won't stop." It's true—once you're in, you can't stop. The Fandom won't allow it. And now that I work there, I'm a piece of this machine. Leafs forever.

What are the Leafs, though? To me, they're like an eldritch being beyond the comprehension of mortal men. They will win games in a stupendous comeback fashion that they should have no business winning, and lose games that you would think were theirs. It's not that the players don't care. There's just something broken within the fabric of the team. The Fandom is broken, too. Every year, they get their hopes up only to act surprised when another team walks all over them.

Cults have to challenge their acolytes' faith, and the Toronto Maple Leafs test the Fandom yearly. The cycle goes like this: lean years spent incompetently trying to build together talent, only to waste it, trade it, then somehow stumble again into a formula that works. Kinda.

People don't fall in love with the Leafs at the stadium. By the time you're there, you're usually hooked. In some Southern Ontario homes you're born into Fandom. You'll have a picture of Jesus hanging in the den next to a jersey autographed by Mats Sundin. Or maybe you're like me, and you got slowly indoctrinated by the other boys at school. Adult indoctrination is the same. A coworker will invite you to a game, and next thing you know you're 3 pints deep arguing about Mitch Marner leaving.

By the time a young Leafs fan comes of age, they'll have the team lore burned into their brain. They'll have witnessed 1 or more tragedies, and some triumphs that keep you believing. Most of it's been pain, though—like their 20-year playoff series win drought from 2004-2024. Every emotional shit-test steels your resolve as part of the Fanbase.

Ask any true fan and they'll say something like: "yeah, I was there, I saw that game... and then they fucking blew it. What do you think the answer was?" I know because I'm there every week. In the stadium, I've seen grown men throw things on the ice—everything from jerseys to waffles. I've even witnessed a dude slap an old man during the playoffs. There was no apparent cause of this fight, but I do know the Leafs were losing 5-1 when it happened.

This is my circus and these are my monkeys.

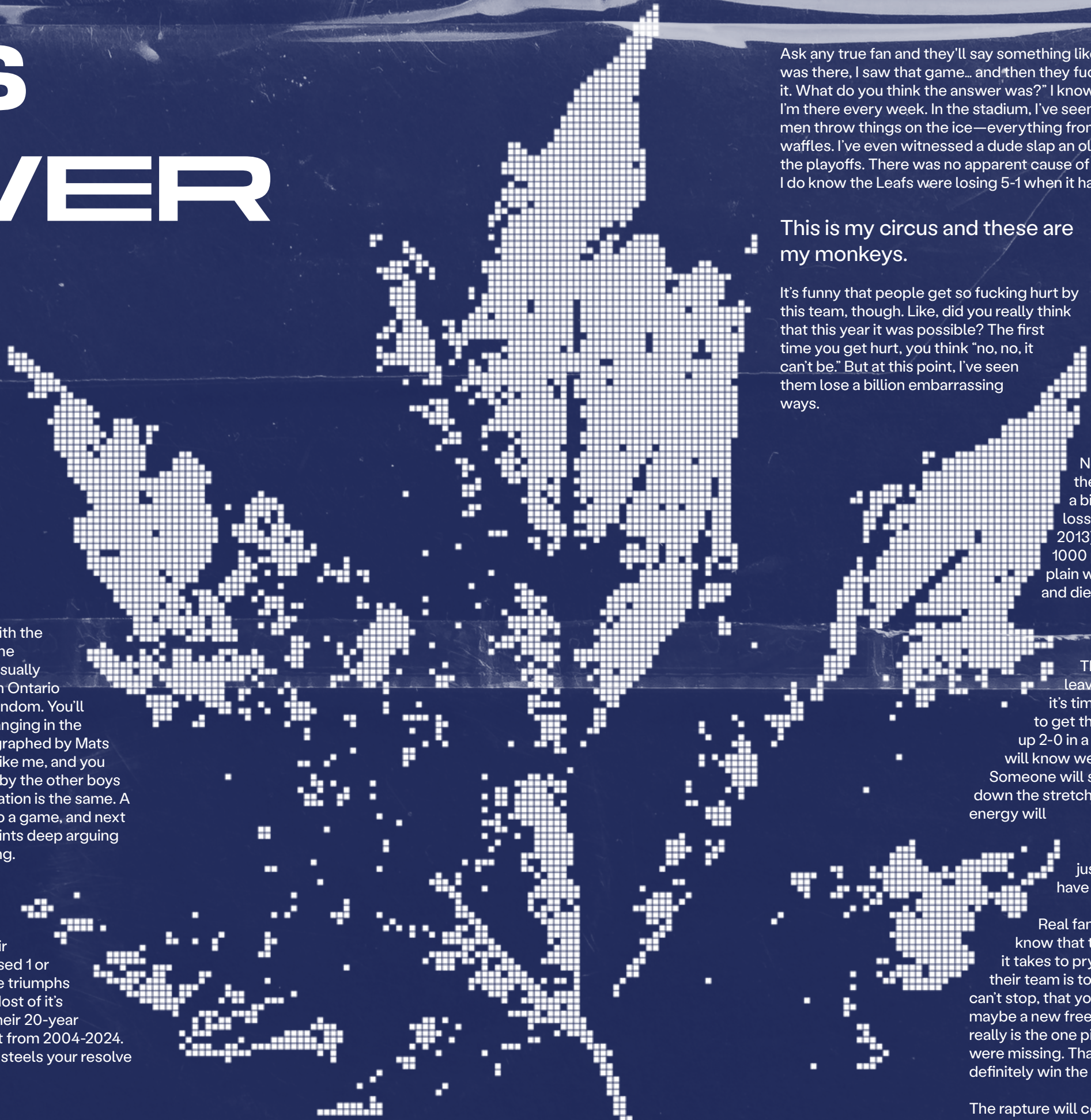
It's funny that people get so fucking hurt by this team, though. Like, did you really think that this year it was possible? The first time you get hurt, you think "no, no, it can't be." But at this point, I've seen them lose a billion embarrassing ways.

Now that I work there, it's more like a billion and five. No loss is that big (besides 2013), but it's death by 1000 paper cuts. In a very plain way, they always wilt and die.

The playoffs take place in spring. That's when the real leaves come back and it's time for the fake Leafs to get the fuck out. We'll be up 2-0 in a series and everyone will know we're doomed. Someone will score a fluke goal down the stretch of a series and the energy will shift to the other team. Leafs: for once, could you just be normal and have an easy win?

Real fans never leave. They know that the strength of will it takes to pry oneself away from their team is too great. That you can't stop, that you will not stop. That maybe a new free agent acquisition really is the one piece the Leafs were missing. That this year, they'll definitely win the Stanley Cup.

The rapture will come some day, so don't lose faith.



puppet masters

PHOTOS BY JEMIMA MARRIOTT

@JEMIMASHOOTS

MAKEUP ARTIST
Helena Jopling

SESSION HAIRDRESSER
Jon Chapman

STYLIST
Fatma T. Maalow

FULL LOOK
Simone Rocha

BOW
Chylak

SHOES
Fendi

Sophie Simnett broke out with character roles on Netflix's *Daybreak* and Disney's *The Lodge*, and she's about to make her directorial debut with a new animated short, *The Bay*. Shot in stop-motion on 16mm film, *The Bay* will follow the bond between two characters living on a remote coastline: Girl and Boy. Girl is reeling from her mother's death and trying to find the perfect vessel to scatter her ashes when she meets Boy. He's isolated by deafness and kept in servitude by an ominous old man, signing his name to himself in the reflection of a kettle to keep his identity. What follows is a tender fable about childhood loneliness and the healing that can happen when you feel truly seen.

Right now, Simnett is in pre-production for *The Bay*. She's teamed up with Studio Linguini, a London-based animation studio that specializes in stop-motion for film and music videos for artists like Cat Stevens, Linda Perry, and Adam Melchor. Below, Simnett and Studio Linguini co-founder Nick Cinelli join Lore for a conversation about *The Bay*, deafness, and the degree of planning and control you need when you're directing puppets instead of people. (We also met Girl and Boy.)

First of all, I'd love to know more about the team working on *The Bay*. Who's the core group developing the film?

Sophie Simnett: On my end, it's me and my producing partner Benjamin [Jacob Smith], I wrote the script and am directing the short, and Ben is essentially the lead producer for the project. We met Nick and his co-founder Jenny [Shaughnessy] just after they moved Studio Linguini back to East London from Los Angeles and they've been amazing champions for *The Bay*. Nick is the coolest, chilliest, kindest man, and he and Jenny are amazing brains with endless knowledge about stop-motion. I'm so grateful to be learning from them.

Nick Cinelli: Studio Linguini is run by my co-founder Jenny and I. At this stage of *The Bay*, we're essentially animation consultants—and we've brought in Lee [Ott], who's a puppetmaker that we've been working with for 7 or 8 years now. Lee is probably our favourite puppetmaker to work with, because they really get the emotional resonance of all the characters and know how to bring that into design. So that's who's involved in pre-production, but as we get further into it Jenny and I will bring more people in. I'm excited to help harbour the project and move it into the production pipeline.

What first drew you both into stop-motion?

Simnett: I wrote *The Bay* during lockdown as a live action—I really wanted to direct. But then as I started writing it, I sent it to a friend and he asked me if I really wanted to make a short film with children, fire, a dog, a cliff, and have them suspended in mid-air. That got me thinking about other ways to make the film.

I started watching films like Suzie Templeton's *Peter and the Wolf* and Charlie Kaufman's *Anomalisa*, and I'd always loved Wes Anderson's animation. When I was younger. I was like 'this is exactly how things look in my brain!' I wanted to be able to tell this story with some of the darkness but in a way that's still digestible, and it became very apparent that this script would work very well in the stop-motion world. That's when I started cold-emailing studios, which is how I met Nick and Studio Linguini.

Cinelli: For me: Studio Linguini started in Los Angeles on the back of me doing years of this kind of work—art design, set-building, and then I got really into puppets and stop-

motion animation. It's like the most broken-down version of filmmaking. You have to take every piece and every single frame and construct it from a null starting point, and I think that was part of Sophie's attraction to it too. It's a slow art form, and it's really about problem-solving.

That's one of the things I really think makes stop-motion special, especially in the age of AI we're in—whether we like it or not. The effort of the puppeteers is visible and the slowness is part of the art.

Simnett: I think I struggle with it because AI takes away the human connection. When you watch something like Studio Ghibli, you know it's taken hundreds of people thousands of hours to make, and that's part of the art. It's not just the story and the final result. I'm not fully against AI—it's going to be helpful for many things outside film—but it can't make you feel the way you do when you see characters you imagined in your head, presented back to you in felt!

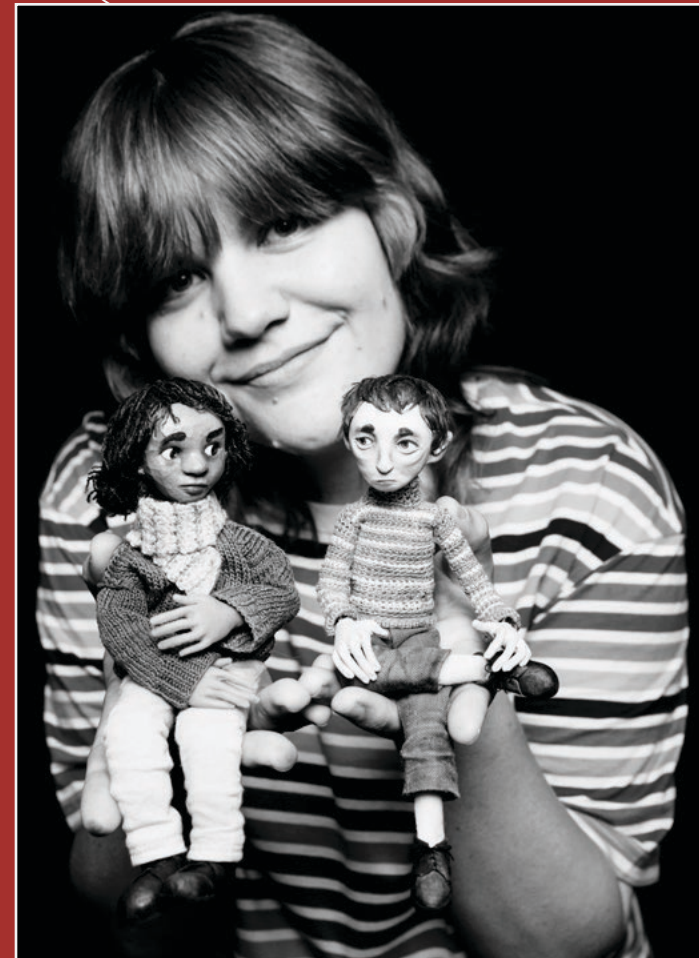
Cinelli: With stop-motion, you feel the actual craft that went into something. In this AI moment, a lot of that becomes obscured. You don't know where actual pieces of art or media came from, if they were just generated in 2 seconds online, and what's missed is this actual investment that people make into the making process.

With stop-motion, I'd imagine it goes beyond just effort and into a real need for control and precision in the whole creative process.

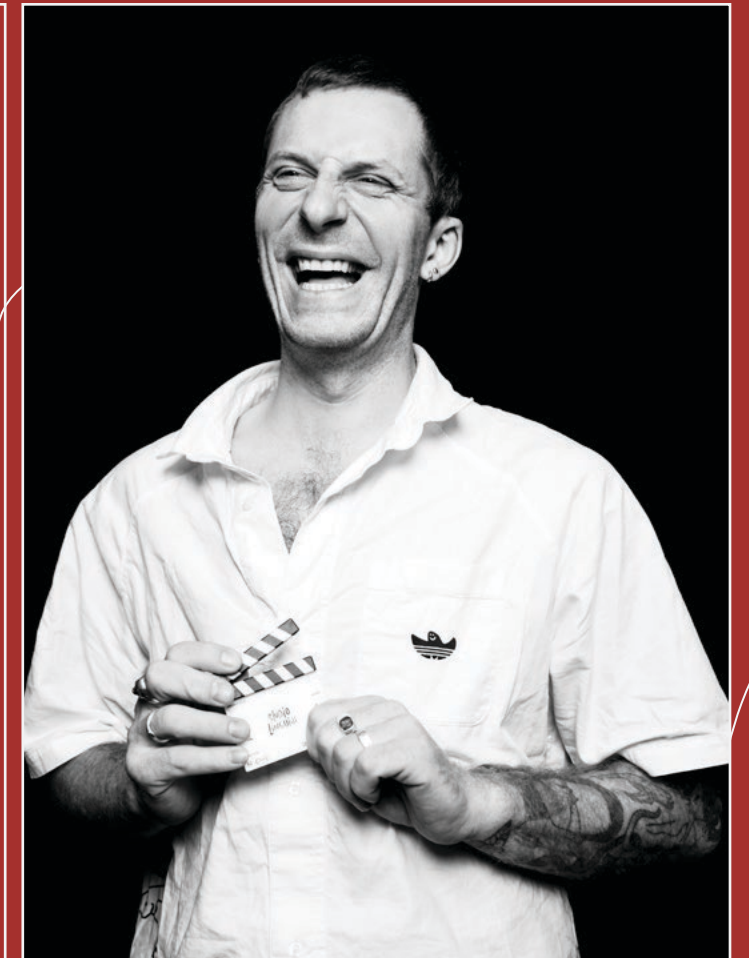
Cinelli: You don't get the same spontaneity in stop-motion as you would in a live-action set—like "let's shoot 4 takes of the same scene from 4 different angles and figure it out in the edit." The actual direction happens through the creation of an animatic which gives you the blueprint of what you're going to shoot. The magic is in the design phase, because you can't show up on shoot day and say "actually, we need 25 more flowers for this flower pot."

Simnett: When we go to shoot, everyone knows exactly what we're shooting. We'll know how a character will turn, how long will it take them to go across a room, will their eyes turn together or will one go first and then the other. You don't have actors to add nuance—you have to create it all, which is so fun but so foreign. We're going to be doing an 8-week shoot for 9 minutes of film, so we're crowdfunding as we go.

Lee Ott



Nick Cinelli



Benjamin Jacob Smith

Sophie Simnett



The way deafness plays into *The Bay* is another dimension I'm really curious about. Is there a connection you have to that community?

Simnett: My mum wears a hearing aid, which has really helped her—but navigating hearing can be really overwhelming, especially if we're in big restaurants. She's the most social human alive, she's always out partying and talking, and it's hard that she can't hear everything that's going on.

I really relate to that—my mom experienced sudden hearing loss a few years ago and lost 80% of her hearing almost overnight. Did you two have conversations about developing this character?

Simnett: You know it's been interesting—when I wrote the character, Boy was always just deaf. That's just how he came out in my head, and I didn't write it necessarily as a commentary on the deaf experience. It was more from communication. I've worked with a group of deaf actors recently, and film sets are all about communication—and they were so powerful in demanding space and the ability to express what they needed with *and* without interpreters. And then on-set they were able to convey so much emotion without speaking.

There's one moment in *The Bay* where Boy gets shouted at, and I spoke to a lot of deaf people about how that actually feels physically. A lot of them were talking about this ringing they feel in their body and a shaking sensation, so we're working to communicate that in the puppets. It's not part of the plot, but it's just trying to accurately show the experience in a more metaphorical way with stop-motion.

I see a parallel between the limitations that you experience in living with disabilities like deafness and the creative limitations that you, Nick and the team are navigating working with stop-motion. It seems like a natural pairing for *this* specific story.

Simnett: Yes you're absolutely right, and it was interesting how this unfolded in the development of the project. We were looking separately at how domestic trauma manifests in children and a lot of it presented in claustrophobia—and there's also something intrinsically quite claustrophobic about watching stop-motion. You're seeing these characters knowing that they're on a manufactured set that's being carefully controlled, with physical boundaries where the world begins and ends.

Something I'm working with now in *The Bay* is a sequence where Girl is grieving her mother and she has this urn that's the size of her room. She's always waking up and having to move around it, but as she connects with Boy and the film goes on, the urn gets smaller and smaller. By the end of it, Girl can hold it in one hand, and she and Boy carry it out to scatter the ashes. We could technically do that in live action, but there's something about the stop-motion medium that allows this message to be more resonant.

Right now, you're through pre-production for *The Bay* and fundraising to get it made. What does the path forward look like for you all?

Simnett: We're over 30% of the way to our budget, and we're literally ready to shoot as soon as we have the rest of our funding. All the sequences are planned, so our goal is to continue crowdfunding and also work with individual producers who have funds and want to support the story. It's been incredible to see so much support for us and this group of young queer filmmakers who are making original animation work on 16mm film.

I can't wait to see this.

Simnett: Me too. Ultimately, I think most people want to see humans at the cinema, and stop-motion really has that form of magic.

Words by Isaac Nikolai Fox.



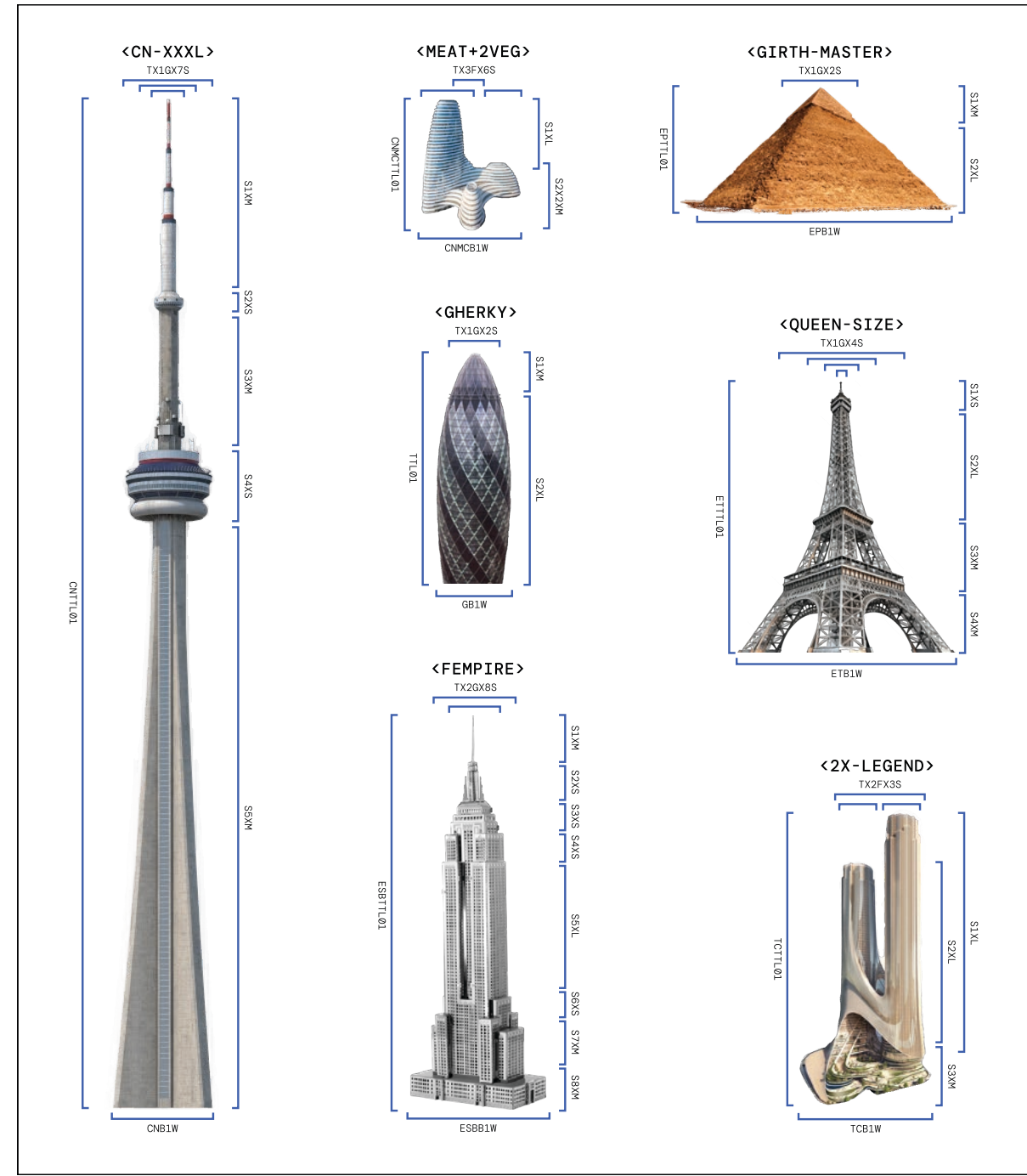
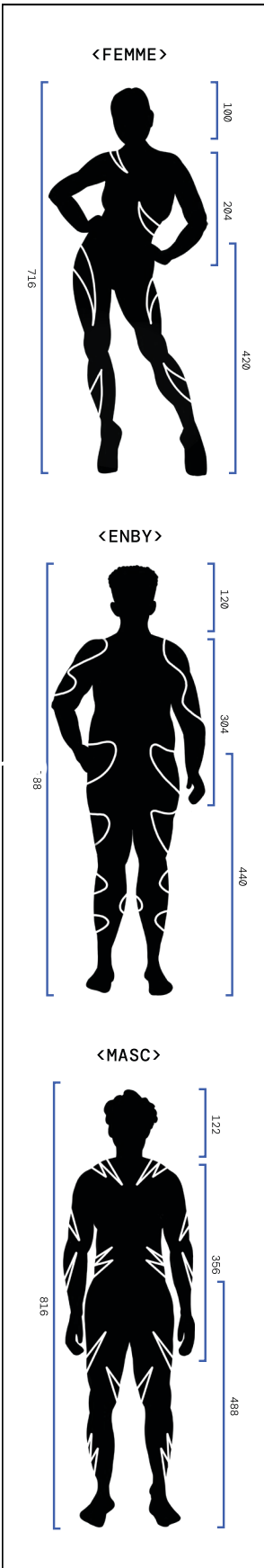
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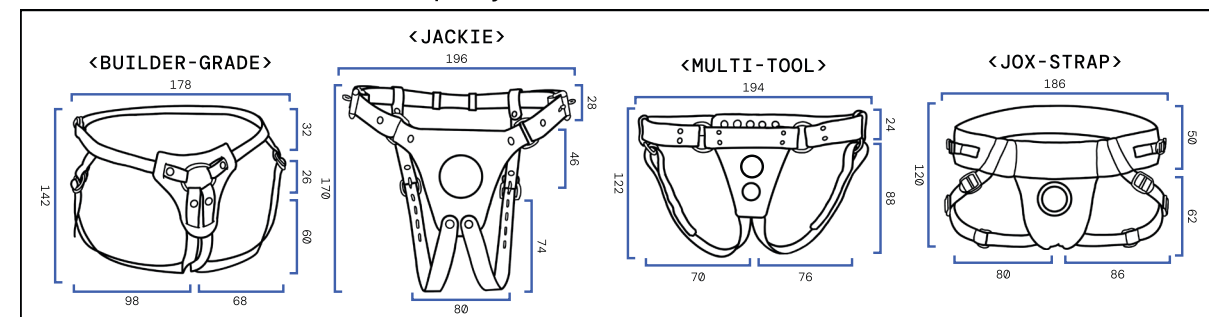




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A case study on assassinating a cult.

Written by
Aya Kobayashi.

Shinzo fucking Abe got shot clean through the chest with a homemade PVC pipe gun. Picture this: it's a hot summer day in Tokyo. July 8th, 2022, specifically. Japan's former Prime Minister just finished speaking outside a hospital in Nara, and a figure pops out with a 3D-printed chopper. Bang bang, die die. But who the hell would do this level of arts and crafts just to get arrested and tried for assassinating a prominent political figure? There's a story there, and I'll tell it.

You know, maybe it was a good thing I didn't come home that summer. Sure, I didn't like Shinzo Abe at all, but he'd been the Prime Minister of Japan since I was ten, retired with ulcers (ALLEGEDLY!) when I turned eighteen, and I didn't think I'd lose him at twenty. That's an entire decade of being the grandson of former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, the Class A war criminal who imported comfort women by the thousands during WWII. Shinzo was our longest-serving Prime Minister, modern Japan's answer to Queen Elizabeth, with an instantly recognizable double chin instead of the neck ruffles. Bad dude, punchable face, but not the sort most people would shoot with a homemade gun... unless you lost your mom to the Moonies.

The PVC Revenge

PIPELINE

That's exactly what happened. The shooter was a NEET who had lost his mom and everything else after the Moonies bankrupted his family. Knowing all this: I still wonder how Abe became the target when the Moonies' current leader, Hak Ja Han, is still alive and prowling all over the earth. Why take this revenge plot out on a mere sympathizer if you wanted to burn the machine down to the ground?

Mooning high society

Getting to the full truth starts by understanding the Unification Church, colloquially known as the Moonies. Founded by Sun Myung Moon in 1954, the Moonies had a distinct set of beliefs, such as:

- Having sex with Moon to purify Eve's original sin in women
- Building a 51-mile, \$200 billion "World Peace King Bridge Tunnel" as a global diplomatic strategy
- Moon's son being reincarnated into the body of a Zimbabwean believer, and that should warrant him with the authority to punish non-believers.

The Moonies had one crucial thing in common with the post-war Japanese government: a seething anti-communist rhetoric. Quickly, the Church's messiah, Sun Moon Kyung, ingratiated himself with the upper echelons of Japanese political society, including Shinzo fucking Abe's grandfather. If the National Diet's right wing had a golden boy, it was Moon. If it meant Moon had his first splinter branch in foreign soil, he was willing to give Japanese conservatives his most prized possession: the anti-communist grassroots militia, "Unification Crusade Army."

Decades came and went, but the Moonies stayed. Even in the face of some 35,00 complaints levied against them over their "spiritual sales"—which really, were just lopsided charms and overpriced vases to the tune of over 120 million Yen (conversion to USD)—Kishi and co. blessed the Moonies with tax exemption upon receiving official status as a religious organization and political shelter from successive LDP administrations eager for its bloc-voting and the Moonies' volunteer muscle. This was the legal blind spot Moon needed to bleed their followers dry.

Blood tithes

What is a cult if it isn't selling you how to avoid the antichrist while sinking its teeth into your finances? Yamagami's mother, like many believers, was repeatedly pressured into providing the Unification Church with excessive donations. Reportedly, she gave the Moonies over 100 million Yen from her life-insurance payouts and real-estate sales. This left the Yamagamis bankrupt, broken, and bereaved. His father and brother both committed suicide, and the Moonies only returned a portion of the donations they received from the family. Yamagami's uncle even appealed to the Moonies himself, but financial justice was never served.

Anyone sane enough would be tempted to get out the 3D printer. A descendant of a political dynasty with family ties to the Moonies was the perfect stand-in for the reputation that they had built as an untouchable elite in Japan. At first glance, the Moonies are the villains, but Abe was a public symbol of the system that failed his family and enabled the Church to become an untouchable shadow government. Plus, Abe was a generational Moonie supporter and had continued the support his grandfather had given them in the early days. In Yamagami's eyes, men like Abe gave cover to the Moonies while they broke families like his apart.

After the moonshot

Abe's death didn't completely dismantle the Moonies, but it dealt a fatal blow to their protected status in Japan. I've never seen the Japanese government mobilize for a specific political agenda as rapidly as it did in the aftermath of Abe's death, in which then-Prime Minister Kishida quickly reshuffled his cabinet to get rid of any politicians besmirched with the Moonie name and called for an investigation into the Diet and a full dissolution of the Church's activities in Japan.

Panic ensued. They siphoned their funds to a Moonie offshoot called "the Rod of Iron Ministries," which literally worships the AR-15 as a divine instrument for God's will. And... come on, you guys. What a desperate rebrand! The Moonies have appealed the court's ban on their activities time and time again, but funds are running dry. Believers are defecting, non-believers are harassing them online, and what was once an untouchable shadow government became the press' laughing stock.

You might ask yourself: Was the suspect right all along in targeting Abe? Was this the end that he wanted—the end that he foresaw?

The one in front of the gun

I'm still on the fence about the entire assassination plot, and whether the subsequent attention on the Moonies was necessary or a mere distraction. Scarily enough, the first thing I thought of when I was reading about the suspect's life before he DIY'd assassinating Abe was how scarily I saw a lot of my beliefs and values in him. He was unemployed, financially unstable, and his seething hatred for the Moonies, in a sense, also came from a sense of pressure he felt from the harsh, conformist expectations of Japanese society, which can often come close to being cultish.

There's an irony in how Abe died. One disturbed man and his 3D printer ended an actual cult and the cultish perception of Japan as a safe and crime-free country. Japan's favorite cult is crumbling, but so is the post-WWII story. The crumbling of the Moonies and the crumbling of an idealized Japan. Shinzo fucking Abe.

cult destroyer

Aya's rules for taking out your local cult.

1. Sacrifice your weird uncle

Nobody wants to join an all-uncle cult, so get a family member you barely care about to join. It's better than wasting away their retirement funds in a casino, and it'll kill the cool factor.



3. Clout-chase with your trauma

Milk every tragic detail you can from your weird uncle's downfall. Cry on camera, go viral, and gain a following of QAnon weirdos and 4Chan dwellers who'll do the unravelling for you.



2. Put them in horny jail

Sometimes, bad press is actually bad press! If there's any news of your local cult engaging in some sexual un-healing, blast that everywhere and you'll topple your leader in 3-5 business days.



4. Hit them right in the Shopify cart

Cults want your wallet, even if it's empty. A major blow to their credibility is if you find out what type of shit they're selling to their members and trash it from here to Sunday.



5. Show there's piss in the Kool-Aid

Don't argue, expose. Repeat what they actually believe, deadpan. Repeating that a 63-year-old woman from the Prairies in Canada is the reincarnation of Jesus without breaking character in public enough times will deter people, trust me.



8. Make them the joke

Remember when South Park basically destroyed Scientology? If you have a good enough pitch in the writer's room about your local cult, you might see the end of it once the episode airs.



6. Out-aura the cult leader's aura

Show up to a meeting and reverse everyone's Stockholm Syndrome. Be charming. Be magnetic. Promise an even better paradise. Then become a local cult leader yourself today for \$2.99.



7. Watch the apocalypse come and go

Like half of all cults have a date where they predict the end of the world, so make your own countdown with a pirated link to 2012, and that should tell them that the end is not neigh.



9. Find a dead body

Remember crying on camera? Do that again, this time with your weird uncle's dead body. Careful not to pull a Logan Paul, though, just say and reveal enough to get the pigs out of the pen.



10. Il Metodo Mangione

If all else fails, grab a 3D printer—or you could just duct tape some PVC pipes for cheap! Arts and crafts have never been more engaging. I can't say any more here.



SPECIAL THANKS Jessica Papp, The Unity Studio, Toronto Image Works.

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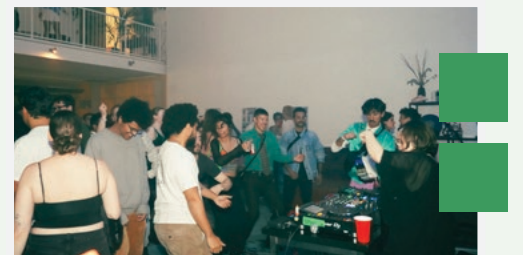
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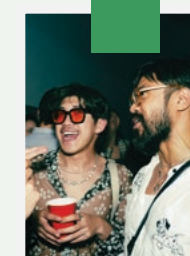
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CRASH TEST



SOUNDS BY DJ Baby Q, BOOTY CORNFED, Sulk Hogan, Jaylen Diaz.



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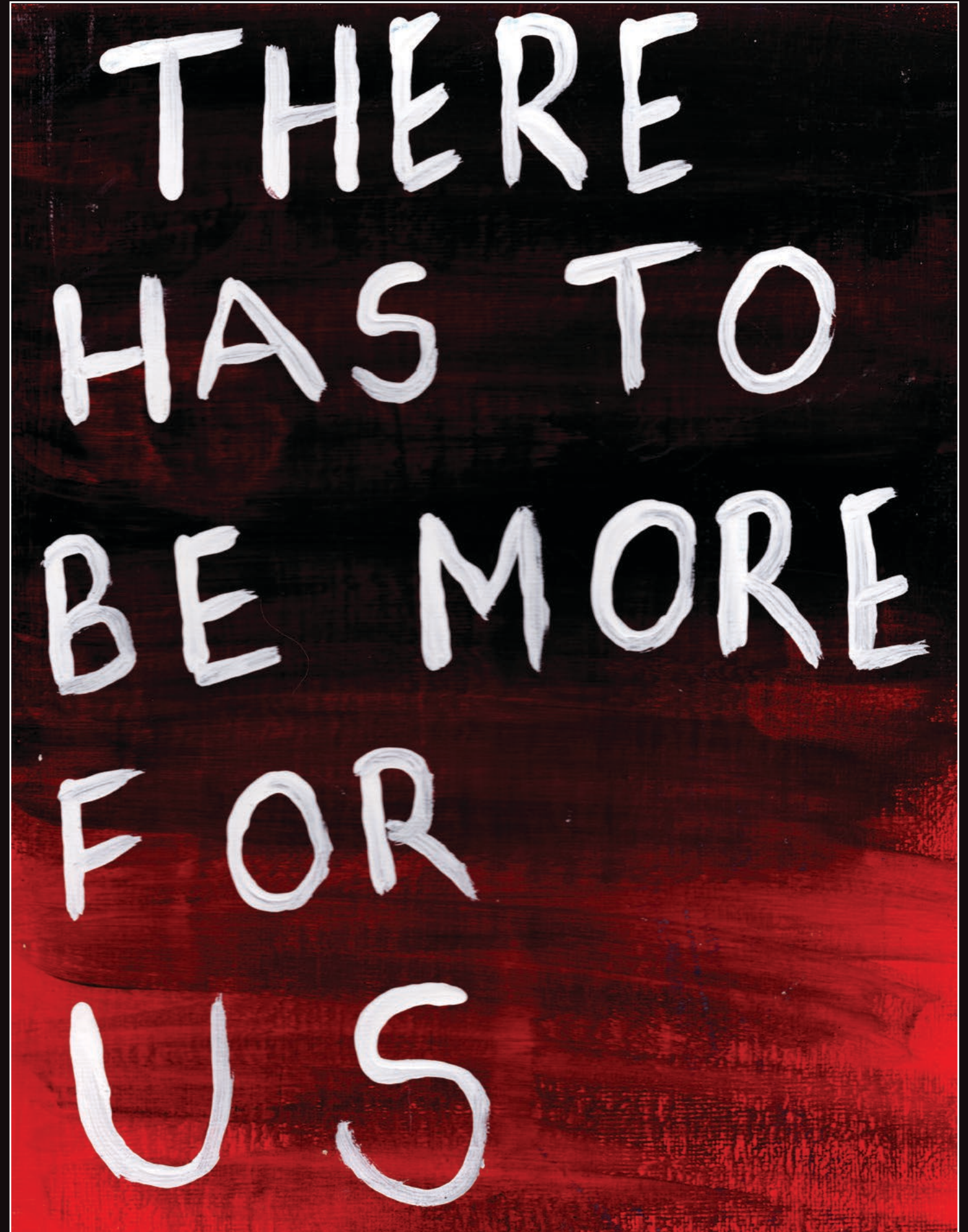
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VOLUME

THE CULT ISSUE

003

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Ra and Olly

PRINT STUDIO

Park Communications

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LORE IS A SPACE FOR STORIES AND EDITORIAL PHOTOGRAPHY. 50+ PEOPLE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS ISSUE, FROM WRITERS TO MODELS, DESIGNERS, ILLUSTRATORS, STYLISTS, MAKEUP ARTISTS, AND BEYOND. IF YOU'VE BEEN WITH US, THANK YOU. IF YOU'RE NEW, WELCOME.

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